The History of El Cajon
VALLEY OF OPPORTUNITY

PIONEER BUSINESSES

Bascom & Benton, Butchers

F.E. Kimball, Periodicals Stationery &

Knox Hotel & Livery

Crescent Wheels, J.H. Dodson, Bicycles

John Obrist, Restaurant El Cajon Bakery &

George McIntosh

Alec Judson, Egg Rancher

Uri Hill & Co., Bostonia

OLDEST Stacey Dairy

Hotel del Corona, Mrs. Knowles, prop.

Hall & Kessler Co., Saw Sharpening

Culbertson Bros., Bicycles

Cordelia Wine Co.

OLDEST G. Paul, Grower

C.W. Potter, Grower

El Cajon Hotel, J.D. Rush, Prop.

Dr. Mathewson, Bostonia Physician

SPRING

A. Ballantyne, Rancher

J.F. Harbison, Bee Keeper

E. Fletcher

OLDEST A.G. Harbaugh, Rancher

J.P.R Hall, Rancher

Chas. Balthaser, Restaurateur

W.D. Hall Company

Isaac Lankershim, Rancher

H.A. Seidel, Watchmaker & Jeweler

L.S. Rosenberger, Storekeeper

John Obrist, Restaurant El Cajon Bakery &

E.B. Wright's Harness Shop

The History of El Cajon
VALLEY OF OPPORTUNITY

COMMISSIONED BY THE CITY OF EL CAJON

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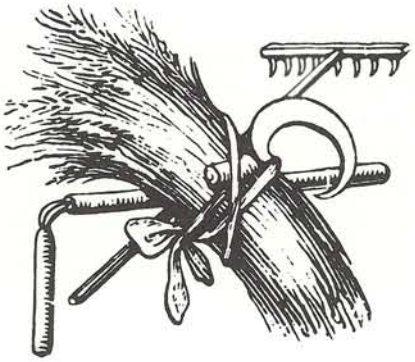
Commemorative Quilt, designed and crafted by Lynn N. Patoff.

EL CAJON, nestled comfortably in its broad valley and set back from the ocean to the west and the mountains to the east, is a microcosm of American society. The city reflects the sometimes overwhelming changes that transformed America from an agrarian to an industrial society. Settled as a farming and ranching community more than one hundred years ago, the valley quickly became a showcase for Nineteenth Century farming and ranching techniques. As the Twentieth Century dawned, pioneer families joined a new wave of settlers in making the most of new ideas in transportation, agriculture, and industry. After World War II, another wave of people came to the valley, this time bringing stimulating new ideas about industry, business, and government. Today, the city is the leading industrial and retail center of San Diego's East County. But, for all of today's urban amenities and services, the people of the valley retain the pioneering spirit that turned a land once fit only to graze mission livestock into a bustling, progressive city. And, as in the last century, its citizens remain dedicated to the idea of progress through old-fashioned perseverance and hard work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This account of the history of El Cajon is a blending of research and recall. Memories of people actually living the events described in this book are used to illustrate and substantiate facts found in research. My thanks go to those dozens of individuals who consented to be interviewed. I am also grateful to those who agreed to validate the research: Museum of Man Curator Ken Hedges, Geologist Richard Smith, Historian of the El Cajon Historical Society Chloris Scott, Past President of that Society William Burns, descendant of an early settler Julie Baker Adkins, grandson of Madam Schumann-Heink Hubert Guy, and El Cajon City Councilwoman Harriet Stockwell. Their painstaking aid in validating the research has been of immeasurable help in the production of this book. For providing photographs to illustrate the events in this publication, I want to thank the *Daily Californian* newspaper, Historical Society President Russel Stockwell, the *San Diego Union*, fire photographer Randall Lee, David A. Parham of the U.S. Military Heritage Society, Shirley Massie of the Helix Water District, the Ramona Historical Society, the State Historical Society, the San Diego Historical Society, and Edward Fletcher, Jr. And for final proofing of the galleys, thanks go to Councilwoman Harriet Stockwell and Cajon Valley Union School District Personnel Commissioner Virginia Levenson. Special thanks go to editor Richard O. Lay. I am also grateful to the El Cajon Historical Society's Board for affording me unlimited access to their records, as well as to those many families who so kindly and generously offered the use of photographs and stories from their family's albums and histories.



PREHISTORY

Untold millennia ago, seven islands dotted the coastal waters of what is now Alpine. Three of those islands we now call Point Loma, Coronado, and North Island. The others – Helix, Cowles, San Miguel, and Black – are the mountain sentinels ringing our valley.

But, before man arrived to name things, the Pacific Slope upon which we now reside lay uneasily beneath a churning sea. For hundreds of thousands of years the area was beset by repeated upheavals, alternatingly thrusting the slope upward, then allowing it to subside beneath the seething surface of the sea. In this rising and falling, enormous land formations began taking shape; among them, the mountains and foothills around El Cajon Valley. The only gap in the ring of mountains was an opening at its northwestern end through which the San Diego River still flows in its course from higher, eastern mountains to the ocean. It was once believed that the bed of the San Diego River – at the bottom of Mission Gorge – was carved by the water spilling from the valley. But, with no evidence of a stream system within the valley capable of removing such an enormous amount of water, or of Eocene deposits along the north, east, and south walls of the valley, scientists cannot say exactly what happened.

When the upheavals at last subsided, the southern slope had been thrust up above the ocean, exposing the prominences we now call Helix, Cowles, Black, and San Miguel. Within their encircling embrace was a squarish basin roughly five miles long and three to four miles wide. Although five hundred feet above sea level, the valley retained water in the form of a non-marine lagoon.

Today, the geological formations marking the valley's north, south, and east walls are chiefly deeply weathered granitic rocks interspersed with local outcroppings of unweathered, spheroidal boulders.

In sharp contrast, the origin of the valley's western wall is quite another story. Rather than granite, this distinctly different formation consists of nearly horizontal layers of Eocene age sedimentary deposits – mostly well-rounded cobbles, gravel, and sandstone.

Why do three of the valley's walls differ from the fourth? And why are there no traces of the western wall's sedimentary formations elsewhere in the valley? No one knows for certain. However, geologists have reason to believe that most of the west wall's slope area north of Interstate 8 is underlain by material deposited by ancient slides.

For the most part, the flat valley floor is of hard, granitic rock, punctuated here and there by rocky hillocks and outcroppings. In some areas, a 50-foot layer of decomposed rock rests on top of the granite bedrock. Atop that is a thicker layer of clay, covered by a thin veneer of alluvial soil. Geologists speculate that the clay was deposited during the Eocene epoch some forty million years ago when the valley was a broad lagoon. Today's rich topsoil is a gift of eons of rainfall that washed decomposing rock down from the surrounding hills.

Over the ages, the combination of sunshine and intermittent rainfall contributed essential nutrients to the soil. Plants began to grow and fossils found in the region tell us that saber tooth tigers, bison, mammoths, and even camels flourished here long before man came to the valley.

No one knows for certain when man first arrived on the West Coast, but early peoples were already here when the Paleo-Indians arrived from the north. Called San Dieguito by anthropologists, these newcomers lived side by side with the people already here. From the natural transition that occurred between the two cultures came the La Jollans, a people signaling the beginnings of what cultural anthropologists term Southern California's Milling Stone Horizon.

Toward the last of that civilization – some 2,000 years ago – a group living in the San Diego region was speaking a Yuman language.

"Materially uncomplicated" is a phrase sometimes used to describe local Southern California Indians, but that is not meant to imply that they were simple. In truth, they were interacting sensibly with their environment. Plants long considered to be "natural" vegetation were, in actuality, planted by the Indians in a method known as "interplanting." They were carefully cultivating land areas and burning regularly to rid land of undesirable plants. This encouraged growth of tender new plants, some of which were used to make baskets.

Kumeyaay baskets were as beautiful as they were functional. Similarly, their pottery was beautiful and practical. In like manner, these Indians fashioned flake stone tools, trail shrines, rock paintings, manos and metates, mortars and pestles, rabbit blankets, carrying bags, rattles, flutes, cradleboards, pendants, ceramics, beads, and cobble choppers.

In addition to being skilled in crafts, the Kumeyaay were adept at telling intricate stories and singing complex song cycles. They enjoyed a comfortable relationship with nature as well – a balance of practical, spiritual, and scientific. Their use of medicinal herbs, observation of the equinoxes and solstices, and even their games – highly competitive and carried out by teams over miles of ground – showed a sharp awareness of themselves and the world in which they lived.

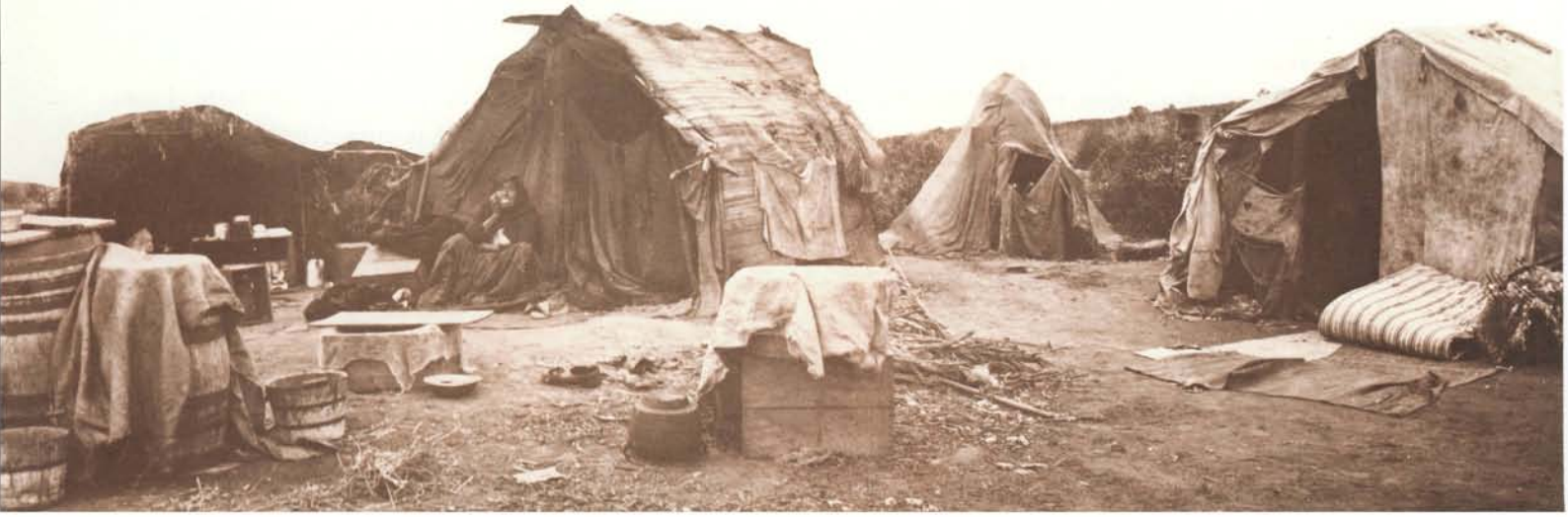
Southern California Indians have also been called nomads, but that is another false charge. Nomadic peoples have no home, but wander constantly from one place to another.

Kumeyaay ancestors had at least two permanent sites they regarded as homes, and returned to them regularly. Between encampments families traveled in groups, using well-marked, territorially prescribed trails through forests, canyons, mountains, and deserts.

Little remains to mark Kumeyaay dominion over Southern Californian coastal and mountain lands. Only a few artifacts survive. The Kumeyaay, a people closely attuned to their environment, stood little chance of withstanding the overwhelming impact of the white man's culture.

Arrival of the Spanish in the Eighteenth century marked the beginning of a slow, inexorable decline of Indian society. Despite the intervention of the padres, the Indians were valued only as laborers by soldiers and settlers. Thus, when the mission and rancho eras ended, many Indians found themselves abandoned by those who had used them. Denied land, having accepted the white man's ways, and being exposed to the white man's diseases, the Kumeyaay found themselves stripped of their native heritage.

By 1900, about 1,500 Indians remained in San Diego County. Within the next sixty years, their numbers began to increase because they were protected on local reservations. Their descendants recall the ancient ways of their forefathers and are proud of that heritage.



EXPLORERS, PRIESTS & RANCHOWNERS 1542–1865

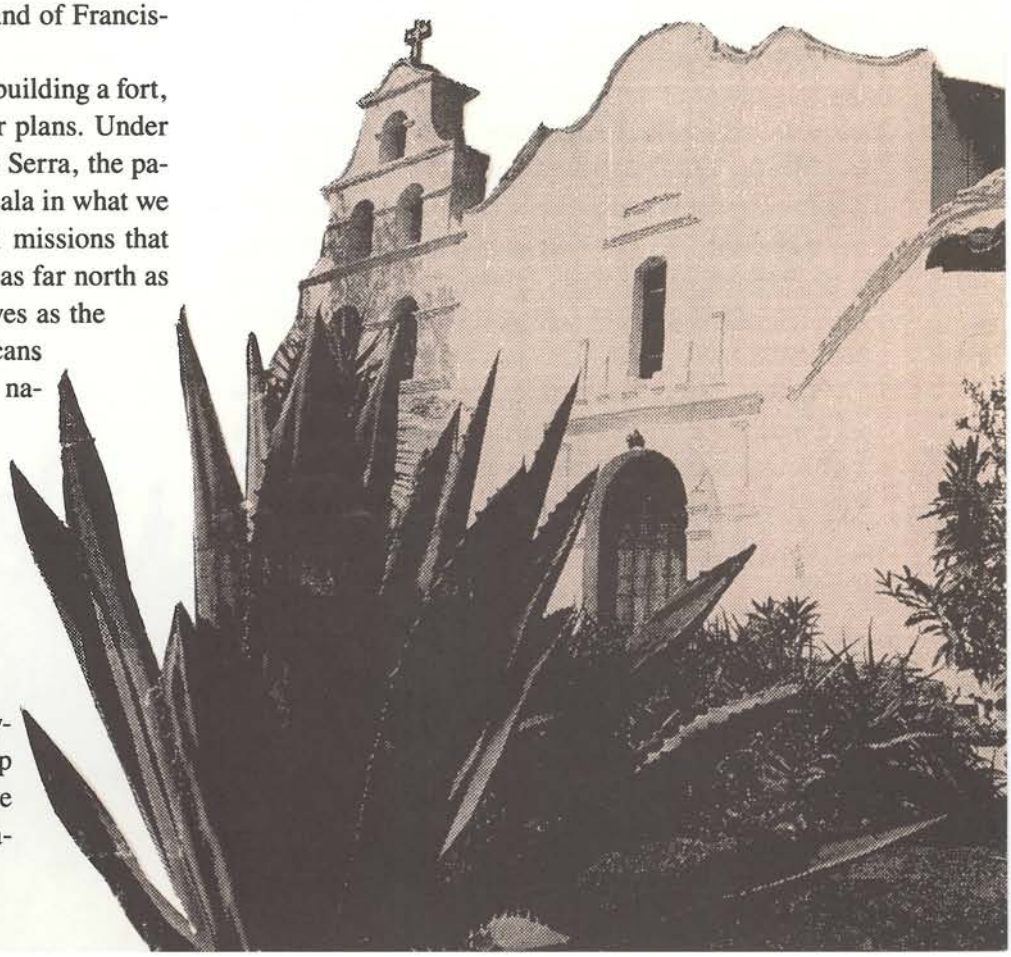
In 1542, Spanish navigator Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo explored the Pacific coastline, seeking either the mythical "Straits of Anian," believed to be the way to the Indies, or the fictional island of California – home of a tribe of Amazons fictionalized by a fanciful Spanish writer. Instead, Cabrillo discovered San Diego's fine natural harbor. Naming it San Miguel, he claimed it and all that the eye could see in the name of the King of Spain. Sixty years were to pass before a Spanish cartographer, Sebastian Vizcaino, renamed the bay San Diego de Alcala. For the next 167 years, the harbor was forgotten.

Only when the Spaniards, busy with wars, learned that others – the Russians in Northern California and American colonists in the East – were exhibiting interest in Pacific coastlands did they send a small company of soldiers overland from Mexico to secure their claim to the land. With them came a band of Franciscan missionaries.

The soldiers immediately set about building a fort, the Presidio. The Franciscans had other plans. Under the leadership of Friar Francis Junipero Serra, the padres built the Mission San Diego de Alcala in what we now call Mission Valley, the first of 21 missions that within the next few years would stretch as far north as the Sonoma Valley. Regarding themselves as the protectors of the Indians, the Franciscans planned to return mission lands to the natives as soon as they were considered civilized enough to cultivate it properly. Converting as many to Christianity as possible, the Franciscans began teaching area Indians to plow, plant, and harvest.

Fifteen miles eastward up the San Diego River (five Spanish leagues from the Presidio), the padres discovered a valley. Identified on an early map as El Cajon because of its box-like shape, its name was changed by the padres to Santa Monica. They first used it as grazing land for their livestock, but soon planted the luxuriant valley to beans, corn, and grapes. On its eastern side, they found a glen and used it to run pigs. Its name, logically enough, became Canada de Los Coches (Glen of the Hogs).

By the late 1780s, mission records show 116 "souls" living in the valley. How many of those were Indians, and how many were soldiers or padres, is not known. However, someone was tending a vineyard covering at least 20 acres. In addition, approximately 35 acres had been planted with two and one-quarter fanegas of seed corn and two fanegas of beans. (A fanega equals approximately 1½ bushels). With today's equipment, fifty-five cultivated acres seem meager, but in those days plowing was accomplished with a steel-shod stick and a mule.



Crops flourished in the rich soil, so much so that the governor distributed food to the local gentile (wild) Indians who worked with the mission's baptized Indians. Certainly, this generosity came from the best of intentions, but the decision to feed the Indians marked the beginning of their end. Less and less did Mission Indians go on their seasonal round to hunt and collect food. Instead, they began to depend upon the white man's wheat, barley, corn, and beans. Within a generation, their traditional methods of survival were forgotten. Another marked change came when the Indians discovered that, in accepting the white man's ways, they were expected to abide by his laws. Among other unfathomable restrictions, this meant accepting a European concept of private ownership of land – something quite beyond the Indians' comprehension. As *they* saw it, the land had always belonged to them.

Another European innovation was dawn-to-dusk farming. Accustomed to their own methods of managing their environment, the Indians did not understand the need for ten and twelve hours a day in the fields. But, they learned. Following the direction of the mission fathers, they continued subduing the valley's wild tangle of grasses, partitioning it into sections, and planting and tending crops – further transforming both their and the valley's natural state.

Then, in 1821, Mexico declared itself independent of Spain and claimed the provinces of California and Texas. It was the end of the mission way of life.

Actually, the Spanish government had been granting huge parcels of lands to favored individuals as early as 1773. The Franciscans, anxious to keep the land for the Indians, determined to limit these grants. They were able to restrict privately owned ranchos to a mere 20 until 1821, but were powerless once the Mexican government took over. Large parcels were immediately granted to influential members of the Mexican society.

In San Diego, the third largest land grant in the area was made to Dona Maria Antonia Estudillo de Pedrorena. A daughter of powerful Mexicans living in Old Town, she accepted the parcel called Rancho El Cajon, a grant so large that it encompassed all of what is most of the El Cajon Valley and Flinn Springs. Totaling eleven square leagues (about 48,800 acres), its boundaries were irregular, running from the flanks of Mt. Helix on the south, west to the old Padre Dam, north to include the San Diego River to what would become San Vincente Dam, and east to the tree-studded area now known as El Monte Park.

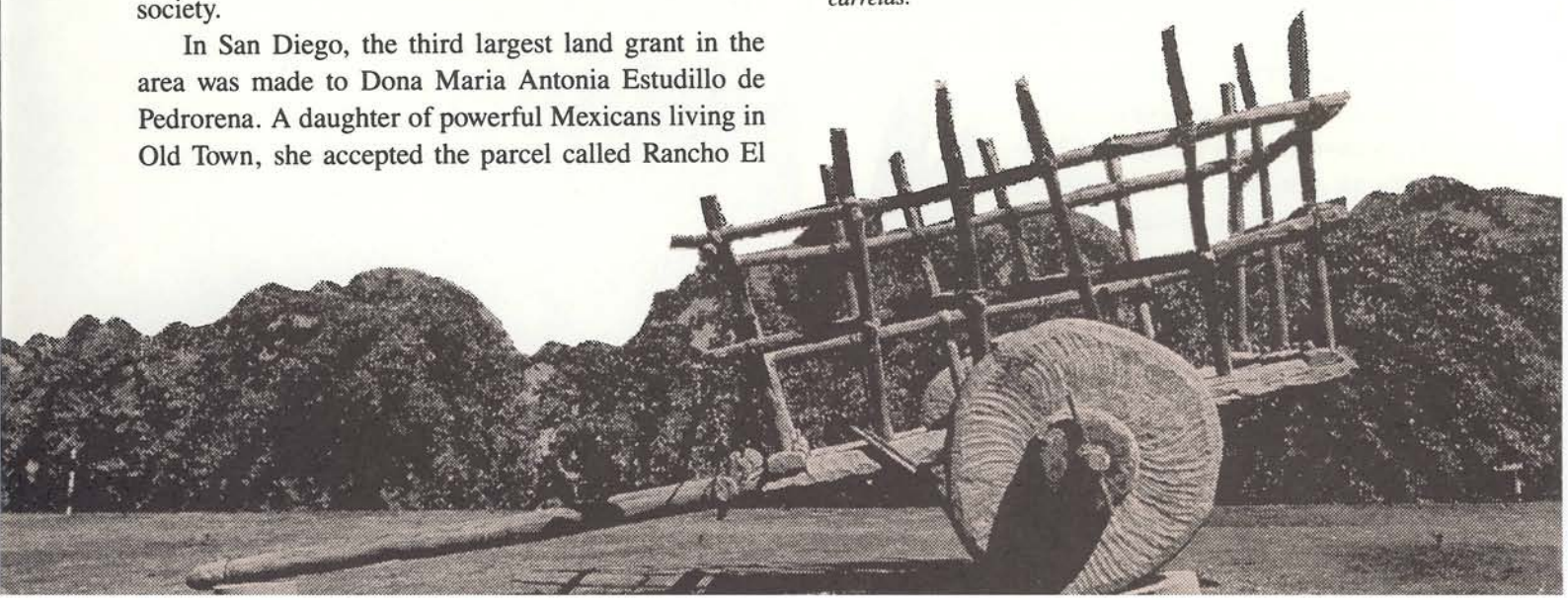
The Pedrorenas used this vast acreage to raise large herds of cattle whose hides were destined for distant shoemakers. The vineyards and croplands so patiently planted and tended by the mission fathers and Indians were forgotten, and the valley fell into neglect and disarray.

Richard Henry Dana, author of *Two Years Before The Mast*, was engaged in the coastal trade 30 years before, chiefly collecting hides for the Boston shoe market. He chronicled the time he spent in Old Town, curing the hides at the bay shore – a particularly malodorous and unpleasant business.

On the eastern edge of the valley, the old pig run, Canada de Los Coches, a 28-acre enclave within Rancho El Cajon, was granted to Apolinaria Lorenzana. Rancho Los Coches was overseen by an American blacksmith, Jesse Julian Ames, and his Spanish wife, Dona Perfecta Espinosa de Ames, though they lived in Old Town.

Don Juliano, as he was called, was highly regarded in Old San Diego. Formerly an otter hunter in Rosario, Mexico, Ames and his bride left Mexico when relations between the United States and Mexico grew hostile. He joined the American volunteers and was commended for his services. When the war ended, Ames settled in Old Town and became a black-

Until Julian Ames built the first spoked-wheel wagon, everyone used crude wagons called carretas.



smith, a city councilman, and an innovative leader in the community. In fact, it was he who had built the first spoked-wheel wagon in Southern California. Everyone else was using carretas: clumsy carts with wooden axles and crude wheels fashioned from the cross-sections of large trees.

Ames' wagon was a forerunner of the wagons brought to San Diego in 1847 by the Mormon Battalion. The Mormons opened a new wagon road from Santa Fe through mountains, desert, and hostile Apache territory. It had been a grueling chore; they had dug a line of wells to supply future travelers, and hand-chipped their way through canyons too narrow to allow wagons to pass, labors appreciated later by the floods of adventurers, settlers, missionaries, and gold-seekers making their way to California.

Ames also built the first all-wood, two-story house in Old Town. But, with the end of the Mexican War in 1848, the U.S. Cavalry stationed in San Diego left, seriously diminishing Ames' blacksmithing business. Even after California became a state in 1850, Ames could not find enough business to support his large family; most newcomers to the state stopped in San Diego only long enough to replenish their needs, then headed for the gold camps to the north. So, at age 56, Don Juliano loaded his wife and eight children into his famous wagon and moved inland to the abandoned Rancho Los Coches.

The Ames family was not entirely alone in the valley; there were plenty of Indians, and the Sanez family had come from Arizona by covered wagon a few years earlier to set up housekeeping.

After first constructing a temporary house of branches, brush, and reeds (much loved by his children), Ames built a permanent house of adobe. He was helped in this construction by area Indians. Around the house, they planted a double row of cactus that, within a few years, became a formidable fence. They also built a large lean-to kitchen, a barn, a workshop, and a grist mill.

During the next few years, his family hosted military couriers from Fort Yuma carrying civilian and Army mail from the East Coast and to points throughout the West. Later on, riders carrying the Overland mail on pack mules made regular stops at Ames' ranch. This line was referred to as the "Jackass Mail" – a derogatory term coined by a San Francisco newspaper editor dead set against allowing the southern part of the state access to modern transportation or mail services. The Jackass Mail line was later awarded to the Butterfield line, whose riders, too, halted at the Ames ranch.

Stagecoaches provided slow and uncomfortable travel for passengers, even after springs were added to eliminate some of the jouncing.

During the years that Don Juliano and his family lived in Los Coches, much happened in the world that would eventually affect those living in Southern California. Would-be miners and immigrants were coming West. Using the quickest route then available, they boarded ships in Europe and on the East Coast to sail around the South American continent and up the North American coastline to San Francisco. Some individuals, hoping to save time, disembarked at Panama and hand-carried their luggage across the jungles of the Isthmus to the Pacific shoreline where, often ill with malaria, they caught another ship north. Not until 1914 was the Panama Canal completed, which shortened the trip from the East Coast by weeks.

But, in 1861, Ames was busy planting grapes, peaches, figs, apricots, olives, and other fruits. He was also raising sheep and some cattle. Then came word that war had broken out between North and South. It mattered little to Ames, or other Southern California residents. The rest of California was a hotbed of politics – indeed, the provision in California's constitution prohibiting slavery was the reason that California had been denied statehood for so long. The compromise reached by rewording the State constitution finally allowed statehood. (Many see that political conflict as instrumental in postponing the Civil War for a decade). But, when war finally came, the only noticeable change for Southern Californians was the closing of the southern wagon route.

Not that the road's closing slowed visitors to the Ames ranch; his grist mill was used by ranchers from as far away as Los Angeles County. When a new couple, the Flynns, moved in nearby, the two families became very close. So close that, later, the Flynn's son would marry Julian and Perfecta's daughter, Mary.

Reaching Ames' ranch was not easy for drivers or travelers. In Butterfield's most active year of coach service, the line employed 65 men and owned 50 coaches and 400 mules. The average rate of travel over the 1,476-mile route from New Orleans to San Diego averaged about 40 miles a day. At most, only 40 complete trips were ever made over the entire route before service ended.

From New Orleans, travelers took a mail steamer to Indianola, Texas – a wearying trip of 540 miles. The next leg of the journey was a dusty 140 miles aboard a mail coach to San Antonio. There, they caught the San Antonio & San Diego Mail Line stage which, for passengers and drivers alike, was a grueling test of courage and endurance. The route took them over mountains and through deserts for a total of 1,476 miles. For at least part of the way, travelers were obliged to walk. And, after all that, the first decent station they found was at Vallecitos. They went from Vallecitos to the Ames ranch, then on to San Diego.

In 1866, Perfecta Ames was pregnant with her eleventh child. She went into labor in the middle of the worst rainstorm anyone could remember. Realizing that she needed a doctor, Don Juliano hitched up his wagon and started for Old Town, intending to use the road alongside the San Diego River. But the road was awash, and so was Mission Valley. Fighting fast-moving flood waters, he finally made it into Old Town and collected the doctor, then headed back along the higher, but longer, road back through Spring Valley.

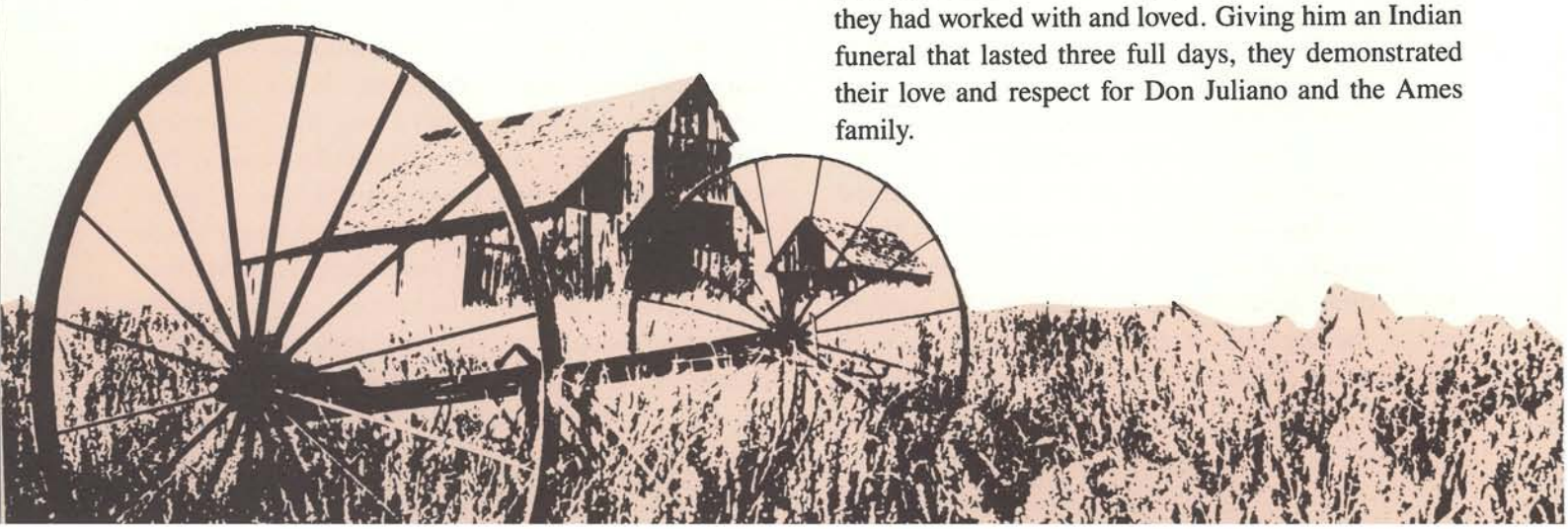
Even that road was nearly impassable. Mud built up on the wheels, slowing the wagon until, finally, it bogged down completely. In a desperate effort to free the wagon, Julian bent to lift a rear wheel while the doctor stuffed weeds and grass under it to provide traction. Straining against the dead weight of the mired wagon, Julian heaved with all his might. It required more strength than he had to give, and he toppled over ... dead. The doctor, in unfamiliar country in the middle of a downpour, did the only reasonable thing – unhitching the horses, he sent them out into the storm, hoping they would head for home.

It was the children who heard the horses first. Thankful that their father and the doctor had finally arrived, they rushed outside. When they found only the horses, the family knew something was terribly wrong. The shock was so great that Perfecta's labor halted. At daybreak, the older boys rode out to find the doctor waiting beside the body of their father. Lifting Julian into the wagon, they took him home to Perfecta. Then the entire family, with Don Juliano still in the wagon, started out for Old Town.

The waters through Mission Valley were still rampaging, and the battle to reach town was stalled when they were forced to stop at Mission San Diego de Alcala. Dona Perfecta, determined that her husband would be buried with the full blessings of the church, waited in the wagon at the Mission, while her sons forded the swollen river and went into town for help. They returned with friends on horseback and helped float the wagon through the deep waters until they reached Old Town, where they buried Don Juliano.

Perfecta Ames did not return to the ranch until after the baby was born. Within hours of her return, hundreds of Indians swarmed up the hill toward the ranch. Although the Ames had always been close to the Indians, the staggering numbers of them frightened her. Would they be hostile, now that Julian was gone?

Perfecta's fears proved groundless. Men, women, and children were there to pay their respects to a man they had worked with and loved. Giving him an Indian funeral that lasted three full days, they demonstrated their love and respect for Don Juliano and the Ames family.



TYCOONS & SETTLERS 1866–1911

In the turbulent years following the Civil War, war and famine throughout the world created an unprecedented market for grain – wheat in particular. And because the distinctively flinty, California-grown wheat resisted mildew and rot during long sea voyages, a dual market developed: one for the wheat, the other for flat, fertile land upon which to grow it. With an eye to a quick killing, speculators soon began buying land in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys.

A few land speculators, San Franciscan Isaac Lankershim among them, ventured south in their quest for suitable wheatlands. Here, they found the El Cajon Valley and its rich, level land. Spreading as far as the eye could see were acres of wild flowers, old vineyards, and wheat. Quickly realizing Rancho El Cajon's potential, Lankershim moved to buy the valley property from the Pedrorena heirs.

For whatever reason, Lankershim did not deal directly with the Pedrorena family. Instead, he returned to the Bay Area, entrusting Joseph Knapp, an itinerant San Francisco preacher, to strike a deal for the property. Elder Knapp, who by virtue of being a religious man had won Lankershim's trust, proved to be somewhat less than trustworthy. Securing an option for himself to buy all of Pedrorena's land for a dollar an acre, Knapp returned to San Francisco, where he turned a tidy profit by selling 9,000 acres to Lankershim for $27,000. He threw in an option to purchase the rest of the land for a dollar an acre.

In the long run, Knapp was only a minor irritation. Lankershim's big problem was the U.S. government, which refused to accept the legality of Mexican land grants, much less convey clear title to them.

Lankershim had intended to subdivide his spread into smaller wheat farms, a plan that drew spirited objections from the people already living on the land: small farmers and ranchers who regarded themselves as homesteaders. Considering their claims to be as legal as his, they flatly refused to leave. For his part, Lankershim considered them squatters and, by 1869, was vexed enough to send a San Francisco attorney, Major Levi Chase – a title earned during the Civil War – to San Diego to establish his legal title to the property, finalize the sale, and evict the stubborn squatters.

It took seven long years of tedious, expensive litigation before clear title was gained; a process that ultimately led to the nation's Supreme Court and President U.S. Grant. The rest of the land cost Lankershim more that $37,000, bringing his total investment in the parcel to $64,000.

But, even while the land was in dispute, other settlers began moving into the valley.

Amaziah Knox, El Cajon's first businessman.

One was a transplanted New Englander, Amaziah Lord Knox. He, too, had been hired by Lankershim. Knox and Lankershim's 18-year-old son drove a four-horse team to the Valley from San Francisco, probably along El Camino Real – the Royal Road – which, a century after Fr. Serra's passage, had been improved to accommodate stagecoaches and wagons. Knox and the boy were sent to build a frame ranch house and to oversee planting Lankershim's land to wheat, which was sowed by hand. Knox's salary was $30 a month plus a 10-acre plot of land. Knox worked for Lankershim until he left to guide a work party that was installing telegraph lines through the mountains and on into the desert.

Lankershim also paid his attorney, Major Levi Chase, in advance with land. That proved to be a shrewd move on Lankershim's part, for ownership of a portion of the disputed property gave Chase incentive to get clear title. Chase's legal fee, 7,624 acres of land, which ran from the valley floor near today's Claydelle up into the foothills now known as Calavo Gardens, Shadow Hills, and Horizon Hills.

In the valley, Chase built an elegant weekend retreat. Despite the doubts of friends in San Diego, he became a gentleman farmer. His experiments with new agricultural techniques encompassed an assortment of fruit trees, including apples, plums, oranges, lemons, and peaches. On the flat, he planted grain fields, irrigating them with the aid of wells and a steam-driven pump.

Unlike other valley ranchers, Chase believed in deep plowing and used gang plows to prepare the soil for his unusually large plantings of corn and barley. With these methods, Chase turned his ranch into a showplace. So successful was he that years later, in an address before the County Horticultural Society, he championed the accomplishments of inland fruit growers and forecast that the fruit producers of San Diego's back country would make it one of the wealthiest sections of the nation. He provided figures to support that claim.

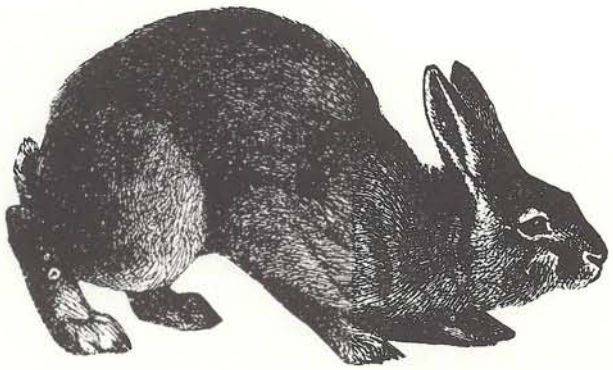
"On ten acres of vineyards costing $50 to $150 an acre, a family could live comfortably with a first-year investment of $15. That took care of root stock, supplies, and labor. The second-year outlay totaled $6, with $8 spent in the third year. (The extra two dollars represented pay for a man to prune the vines.) With a vineyard of that size, a rancher could expect to raise

After fruit was stripped from the trees, it was boxed, then brought by wagon to ships waiting in San Diego harbor.

eight tons of grapes and, at $20 to $35 a ton, his net profit would be at least $1,500." Summing up, Chase stated that with "industry and intelligent care, any poor man in California may become well off in ten years on ten acres of vineyard land."

Not that many of the settlers were poor; most were of considerable means and, with hard work and good business sense, they did very well. J.O. Miner over on the northwestern side of the valley regularly hosted up to 27 guests in an elegant boarding house he maintained on his private ranch. William Hill opened another boarding house almost as large and as well kept as Miner's. At each house, guests were constantly entertained with riding parties, picnics, fishing, and hunting.

And hunting was *the* thing for affluent Americans in the 19th Century. There was plenty of game in the valley: quail, wild geese, plover, rabbits, and hares were available for the sportsman's gun and fish for the creel.



In San Diego, R.G. Clark gave up his bee business to become a rancher. Buying property in El Cajon, he named it Centennial Ranch and planted fruit trees, vines, and grain. The first in the valley to dry grapes into raisins, Clark's fruit was of such superior quality that he was soon encouraging others to plant them. R.T. Robinson saw the results and sent word to growers in Riverside, urging them to invest in El Cajon property. Many did, and during the next 20 years, the El Cajon Valley raisin industry grew into a business that in good years grossed three-quarters of a million dollars.

Josephus Asher, once a government customs agent in Old Town, then a nursery and flower shop owner in San Diego, became interested in the horticultural opportunities of the inland areas. His pioneering work in orchard culture played an important role in development of the valley.

The Lankershim family was also influential in San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles. Lankershim's son became known as Colonel Lankershim, and built the Lankershim Hotel. Isaac's daughter also did well; she married her father's partner, Jan Van Nuys.

George Cowles raised raisin grapes so successfully that he challenged other raisin growers throughout the world to have experts measure their grapes against his.

"Bring 3,000 boxes of raisins to [a state exhibition in] San Francisco and see," Cowles advertised, "and winner take all."

No one accepted his challenge and, time would prove him, Asher, Robinson, and Chase right: the El Cajon Valley had the most perfect climate and soil in the world in which to grow raisin grapes; a belief substantiated years later when valley grapes won first prize at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago.

To the east of Chase's property, in the hills ringing the southern part of the valley, Edwin Brayton and his wife established a ranch just up from Jamacha Road. It is due to them that one particular hill is now dubbed "Monument Hill." When the elderly fathers of Edwin and his wife died, they were buried on the property at the foot of a huge granite boulder. Above the graves,

The first step in turning raisins into grapes was to place trays of the fruit in the sun to dry.

the Braytons affixed a white marker on the towering rock – a fitting monument to their fathers.

Farming was far from the valley's only successful business. J.S. Harbison and R.G. Clark had earlier opened the inland areas to agriculture by setting out bee hives in back-country canyons. By 1873, those hives were producing more than 30 tons of comb honey each year. By the end of the decade, Harbison would be the largest producer of honey in the world.

Amaziah Knox returned to the valley to find a hubbub of activity. Not only were there dozens of new ranches, there was a dramatic increase in the number of people simply passing through the valley. Ambrosio and Joe Ruis drove their hogs to the San Diego market through the valley, a trip taking two weeks from start to finish.

With news of gold strikes: one at Pike's Peak in Kansas Territory and another closer to home, traffic increased even more. The latter, in the nearby mountain community of Julian, brought thousands of prospectors by horseback, stage, wagon, and on foot into Southern California. Seeing lines of men and ore wagons traveling the old wagon roads across the valley, Knox got an idea. Carefully, he noted the routes they took.

Many followed the road from San Diego that ran along the San Diego River through Mission Valley and Mission Gorge down into the El Cajon Valley. To get to the mountains, they continued on by way of Eagle Peak and Pine Hills.

Others came from National City through Paradise Hills, Spring Valley, Jamul Rancho, and Campo. Still others came over Grossmont Summit, stopping at the Ireton house to change horses and continuing down the steep grade into the valley. It was this route that most interested Knox, for it angled across the southern portion of the valley until it reached a point where it abruptly turned north. Fortuitously, that turning point was near the property he had received from Lankershim.

Day after day, Knox saw men trooping through the valley, traveling alone and in groups. Some traveled on foot, others on horseback. Still others drove teams of mules and horses that hauled huge wagons of ore and supplies. In a continuous stream they came, in buckboards, rigs, and stagecoaches. One stage, aptly called the "Big Wagon," carried up to eighteen passengers. Too big and bulky to make the narrow mountain roads, the Big Wagon went only as far as the tiny community of Foster, which lay just past Cowlestown. At Foster, passengers transferred to smaller stages.

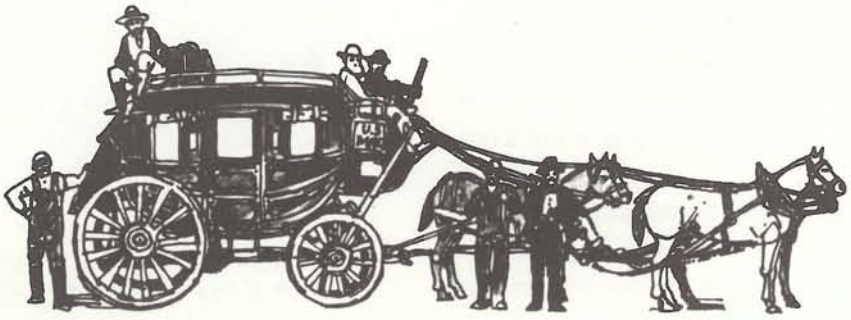
Getting up and down the poorly maintained mountain roads was not easy. Frequently, to negotiate the descent down the precipitous grades, stagecoach drivers and teamsters would slow their wagons by using an iron drag shoe, or by jamming a pole between the spokes to lock the rear wheels. To slow them further,

The trail to the Iretons led along what is now Brier Crest Road to the place where Brier Patch School/Grossmont Hospital Brier Patch Complex stands today. Officially designated as a stage stop by Mr. Birch, of the Birch Line, the Ireton house provided water and, perhaps, fresh horses to both the Birch line and Frank Frary's stagecoaches. An advertisement in a San Diego newspaper stated that the Frary line ran three times a week from San Diego to El Cajon, Santa Maria, and Ballena Valleys and to the Banner mining districts.

By the 1880s, travel was somewhat less challenging than in the 1850s, when the paper ran the following suggestions to anyone venturing as far southeast as Yuma. Passengers were instructed to bring:

1 Sharps rifle and 100 cartridges
1 Colt revolver
1 Belt with holster, knife, and sheath
1 pair thick boots
1/2 dozen wool socks
5 woolen undershirts, 2 thick drawers
1 wide-awake hat
1 cheap sack coat
1 soldier's overcoat, 1 pair gauntlets
1 pair blankets, 3 or 4 towels
1 bag needles, thread, sponge, hairbrush, comb, and soap

The fare for this adventurous trip? $35 in gold or silver.



they often roped a full-size tree to the back axle as a drag. Naturally, passengers disembarked and made part of the trip on foot. On the steeper pitches, even supplies were removed and loaded onto wooden boats called stone sleds, which were carefully guided down the grade by men with ropes.

But not all newcomers entering the valley were simply passing through. Affluent settlers had, within a span of a short eight years, neatly fenced and sectioned off much of the valley. One of them, Dr. Shepherd, built a home on what is now Fourth Street. Others included Uri and Renette Hill and their children, who arrived and established a ranch.

Uri, a successful farmer from Minnesota, had been instrumental in organizing a Presbyterian church in his home town. In a few years, he set out to do the same in the valley.

The Hill ranch, built on the northwest corner of what is now Chase and Avocado avenues, was named Claydelle, a combination of the names of their first two children; Clayton and Della.

Hill planted 2,000 acres in grain and 190 acres in fruit trees. On a separate 515 acres in what was then called Sweetwater Valley and is now the Hillsdale section at the foot of Chase and Jamacha, he raised grain, Durham cattle, and Norman-Percheron horses. The Hills brought the population of the valley to a total of 25 settler families, or 90 individuals – six of whom were children.

Whenever there are a half-dozen or so school-age children, Americans are quick to establish schools. Although in 1877 only two Americans in a hundred graduated from high school, people in El Cajon determined to raise that average by establishing the El Cajon Valley School District. Their first school opened in a squatter's hut on Knox's empty property ... the

Uri Hill

same property where, night after night, teamsters, exhausted from wrestling ore-laden wagons through narrow mountain passes and up and over the tortuous Mussey and Grossmont grades, tethered their mules and horses. They called that dusty ten-acre parcel at the bend in the road "Knox's Corners."

Watching the parade of freight wagons, stagecoaches, muleskinners, and miners who stopped night after night on his property, Knox began thinking about building a hotel. After all, he reasoned, more and

The Knox Hotel and a barber shop, on the south side of Main Street near the corner of Magnolia Street.

more people and supplies were coming into the valley, and each year more ore, wheat, wool, and honey were going out. It seemed reasonable to assume that those coming into and going out of the valley would be far more comfortable sleeping indoors.

So, in 1876, Knox built his hotel. Two stories high, with seven rooms, it was a building that would become the cornerstone of El Cajon's business district. Before long, the building would house the valley's first post office, and Knox would become the community's first postmaster. Classified as a fourth-class post office, it would be moved from business to business in the early years, with the title of postmaster automatically awarded to the host business owner.

So successful was his hotel that Knox soon added a corral, a livery stable, and a kitchen from which travelers were fed, even if they lacked the price of a meal. It was said of the humanitarian Knox that he always cared about the less fortunate, which was certainly true in the case of the widow Illa Birdseye and her two small children.

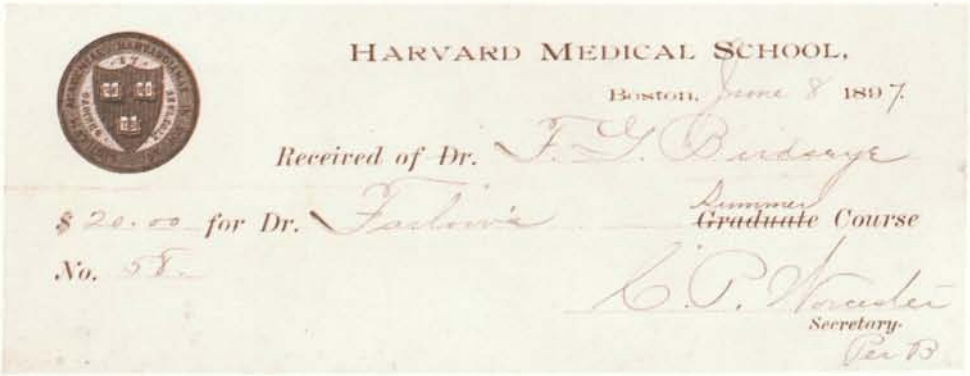
Illa's husband, Enoch, like so many other people in Southern California, came West for his health. He built a small home at the base of the smaller of two peaks later named Mount Helix and Grossmont. But, for Birdseye, the dry inland air was not enough. He died within the year.

At that time, the Grossmont area and La Mesa were undeveloped, so Illa and the children were virtually alone. Hearing of their plight, Knox took them in. In the first of the valley's many romances, he and Illa married a year later. From their union came a son, Charles Randall Knox – later to become an El Cajon doctor, and a daughter, Alice Mabel, who became a registered nurse. Enoch Birdseye's son, Frederick, would also become a physician. He practiced in New York until his retirement, then returned to El Cajon. Illa's daughter, Theodora, was destined to become a local schoolteacher, as were so many daughters of early families.

Widow Illa Birdseye.

Throughout the 1870s, Knox continued to be an extremely active man. Not only was he the proprietor of an increasingly busy hotel, but a charter member of the state's International Order of Odd Fellows, the roadmaster responsible for maintaining the dusty road from Grossmont Summit to his hotel, and a deputy sheriff.

John Rea was another man who knew the value of a corner lot. The former beekeeper bought ten acres



HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL,

Boston, June 8 1897.

Received of Dr. F. G. Birdseye

$20.00 for Dr. Fairbrie Summer ~~Graduate~~ Course

No. 58

C. P. Worcester

Secretary.

Per B

It cost Frederick Birdseye all of $20 for Harvard Medical School's summer session at the turn of the century.

Students and teachers in El Cajon's first grammar school.

kitty-corner from the Knox Hotel and built a grocery and hardware store on the site. Behind the store, he built a house. Both were a short distance from the new El Cajon Grammar School constructed facing the busy traffic on Magnolia.

The two-story, two-room school building housed students on the ground floor. Both Catholic and Presbyterian church services and community meetings were held upstairs. When the number of students outgrew the single school room, a larger school was constructed behind the old one and the old building was sold to the Catholic Church. The Presbyterians built a church on Highland Street and that building became the center of many valley activities, offering everything from potluck dinners to lectures on Shakespeare. Uri Hill added a parsonage on his property. When that first church burned down after the turn of the century, it was dependable Uri Hill who exchanged a larger lot he owned on Farragut Circle for the original church land.

The new school, with a couple of annexes added through the years, remained where it was until 1921, when some of the buildings were moved for use as annexes to the new El Cajon School on Main Street. One problem was the seasonal stream that cut through East Main Street, across Magnolia next to the school, and on through what is now the vest-pocket park at Park and Magnolia. A wooden bridge allowed traffic, and children, to cross safely enough during normal weather but during the winter rains, the creek often overflowed, turning the street into a quagmire. Naturally, the children loved the mess; their parents and teachers were less enthusiastic.

Between the mid-1870s and 1886, the William Ogden, George Walsh, and Thomas Miller families arrived in the valley. Ogden built a two-story frame house on his property on the west side of Magnolia near today's Wisconsin Avenue. The Millers established a 60-acre cattle and dairy ranch in the area between the present-day Johnson Avenue and Fletcher Hills.

Pepper Drive and Peerless Valley

Walsh bought land in the Peerless Valley area near Pepper Drive and built a ranch house. As a 14-year-old, Walsh had come west by wagon train. Traveling under the sponsorship of another family, he shot most of the game for the train while en route to California. In addition to raising citrus on his new ranch, Walsh raised horses, and his method of corraling those horses was a bit unusual. To avoid digging post holes,

In places, Hawley's flume was little more than an open ditch.

he attached fencing material directly to the tree branches. Surprisingly, it worked very well.

A.W. Hawley was another newcomer, with his sons S.B., Allan, and George. The elder Hawley, a horticulturist, bought land along both sides of Pepper Drive between what is now Wintergarden and the base of Fletcher Hills. From Nebraska, A.W. elected to live in the El Cajon Valley because he recognized it as an ideal place to grow grapes. To irrigate the thirsty soil, he dug wells. For a growing family, he built a house and added a cistern to hold rainwater. When the wells and cistern proved inadequate, he spent $60,000 in cash to build a wood and cement flume to bring water down from Lake Cuyamaca into the northeast end of the valley. So successful was his irrigation system that, years later, he and his wife divided their land into 40-acre parcels and gave them to their children.

Flinn Springs

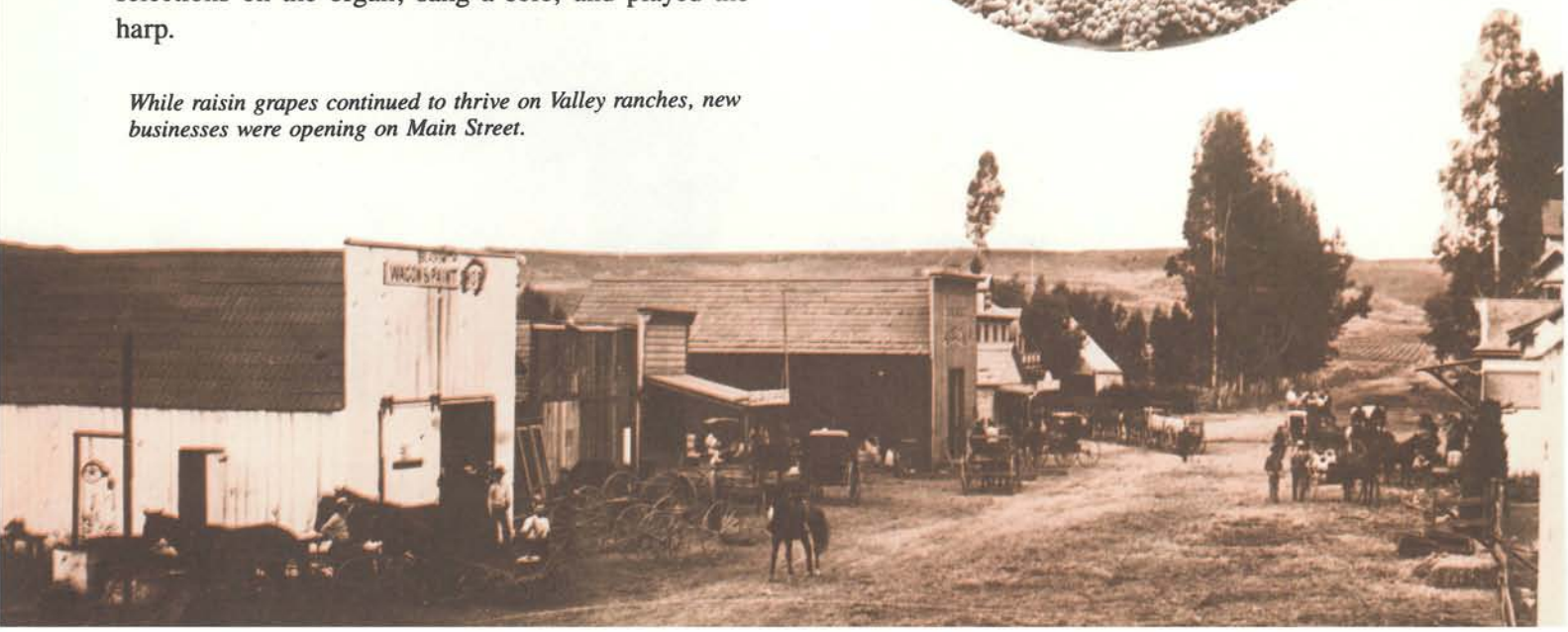
But, while the Hawleys were busy establishing their ranch, William and Sarah Copeland moved into a place just beyond Flinn Springs. There they built a house for their four remaining children; three died young, as was all too common in those days. Their daughter, Charlotte, secured a position in Alpine as music instructor at a resort built for wealthy eastern tuberculosis patients. The resort provided an abundance of the only prescription doctors had for the disease in those days: sunshine, rest, and clean mountain air.

It was while Charlotte was giving lessons in pump organ and the lap harp that she became acquainted with a young carpenter, John Chalmers Chambers, who had been hired to build additional cottages at the resort. Their marriage ceremony at Ye Alpine Tavern was performed only after the talented Charlotte played selections on the organ, sang a solo, and played the harp.

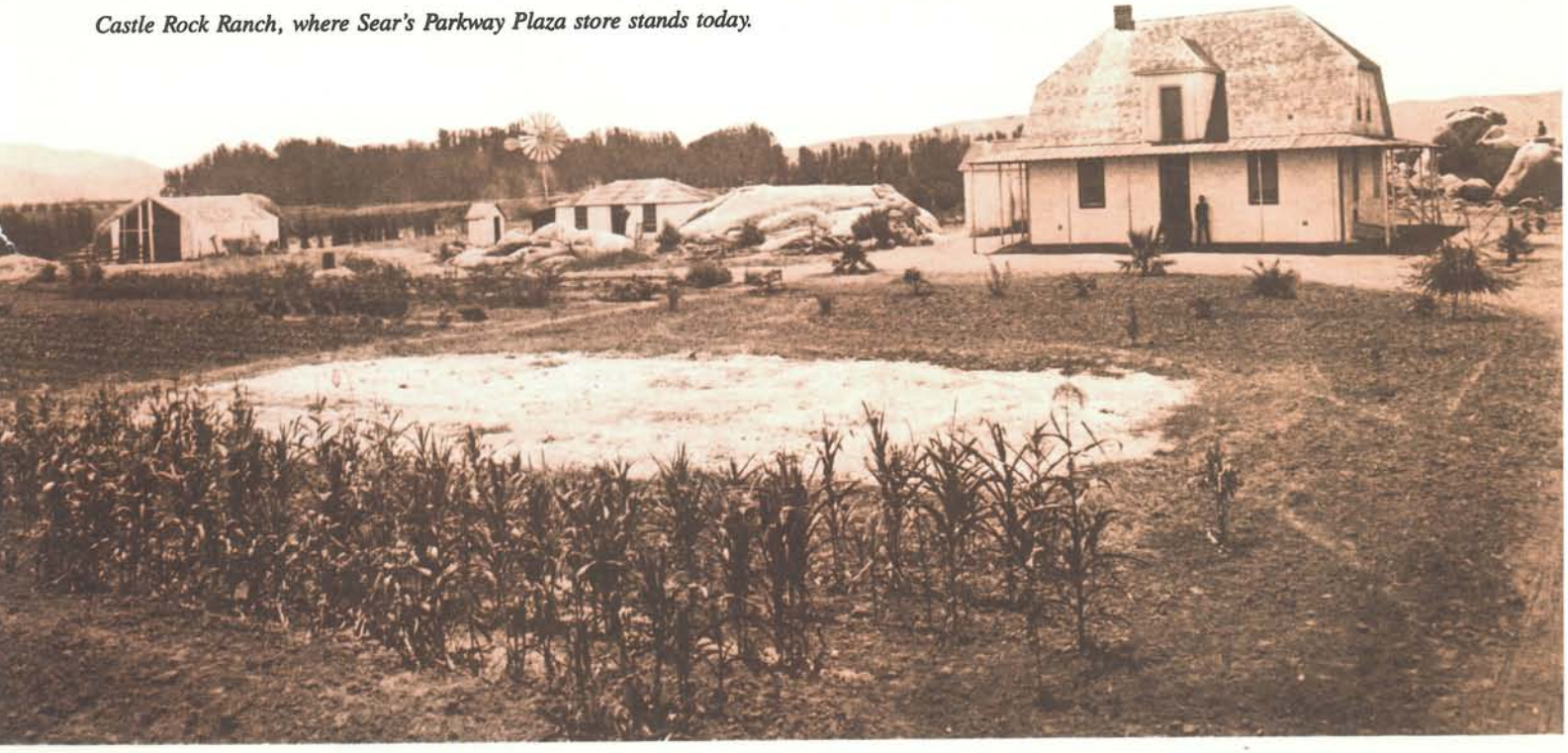
Years later, while attending a Los Angeles Symphony concert, Charlotte's son was struck by the similarity between a harp used on stage, and the harp owned by his mother. After the concert, he examined the harp and, engraved on its base, he found his mother's name. How it got into the hands of a musician in the Los Angeles symphony is not known.

Socially, the valley kept pace with the influx of newcomers. Settlers danced at the El Cajon Hall, attended church services and meetings, played cards, and enjoyed the new game of "Bingo." A few women got together and formed the El Cajon Parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West. The settlers, most of whom were well educated, also read a great deal. Newly published books like "Ben Hur," "Uncle Remus," and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's first Sherlock Holmes thriller were exchanged time and again. Youngsters read the newly released "Little Lord Faun-

While raisin grapes continued to thrive on Valley ranches, new businesses were opening on Main Street.



Castle Rock Ranch, where Sear's Parkway Plaza store stands today.



tleroy" and Mark Twain's "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court."

Out on the ranches, raisin grapes were producing increasing tonnages of world-acclaimed fruit.

One reason for the superiority of valley raisins was, of course, the rich soil in which the grapes were grown. Another was the process by which local ranchers produced the raisins. Under their direction, field laborers spread bunches of grapes evenly on large, wooden trays and set them in the sun to dry. After a few days, when the grapes were partially dehydrated, the trays were carried to an unventilated building and stacked tightly until the raisins began to sweat. It was this process that made the raisins plumply soft, pliable ... and remarkably delicious.

The Josephus Ashers who, back in 1878, had plunked down $1,025 in gold coins to buy R.G. Clark's Centennial Ranch (all land sales in those days were based on cash), had renamed it Castle Rock because of the enormous boulders on the place. In the boulders were mortar holes used by generations of Indian women to grind acorns and seeds into meal. Occasionally, when the Indians returned to help with the harvests, they, like their forebears, would use the old grinding holes to grind their acorns and seeds.

For the growing Asher children and their friends, the rocks were a gigantic jungle gym, providing climbing boulders they named the "elephant's back," the "sofa," and the "chair." Near these huge rocky formations, Asher built a thick-walled adobe house and reservoir.

Situated close to where the railroad would eventually pass on its way to the settlements of Cowlestown, Lakeside, and Foster, Castle Rock Ranch soon became a center of valley activities. Not only did people come to visit and to swim in the reservoir, but they came to admire Asher's amazing array of peaches, pears, plums, apples, pomegranates, persimmons, quinces, apricots, figs, berries, and olives.

Years later, the Castle Rock land was purchased by the Busch family, who removed the second story and remodeled the structure. Later still, it was owned by other families. One of them, the Simpsons, tore down the adobe house and replaced it with a distinctive rock house. The last owner, before selling it to make way for Parkway Plaza's Sears store, used the grounds as a riding stable.

In those years of the mid-1880s, national events combined to create a land boom in Southern California. One result of the influx of settlers was a need for a town meeting hall. Shortly, a building that has come to be known as the Weinstock Building, was erected a block east of the Knox Hotel. There, townspeople would hold dances and club and lodge meetings. In this, El Cajon's first multipurpose center, a special trap door was built into the ceiling. Raised and lowered by chains, the door supported a piano, which

came down for festivities, and was stored aloft when not in use.

Land parcels began changing hands with regularity. North of present-day Greenfield Drive, a ranch was given the name Orlemvine to represent the oranges, lemons, and vines grown there. Later purchased by the Catalpha Company, the ranch was then subdivided into smaller parcels of land and sold. Another enormous tract was purchased in the northeastern part of the valley by a group of Boston investors, who immediately laid out a townsite (Bostonia) and began planting acres of citrus groves and raisin grapes. Beyond and below the hills east of El Cajon, 720 acres had been purchased by Joseph H. Weddle. On that land, now belonging to Singing Hills Country Club, the Englishman built a beautiful home, raised cattle and alfalfa, and began setting out acres of olive trees. Many of those trees still survive.

Douglas Gunn, former editor of the *San Diego Union* and author of the book *Picturesque San Diego*, wrote that El Cajon was "filling up rapidly with the best class of people." One such family, T. F. Miller, his wife, and ten children, planted 25,000 muscat grapevines and fruit trees on property they purchased on the west side of Magnolia between what is now Wisconsin and Broadway. One of Miller's sons, Joseph, later owned 100 acres between Magnolia and Johnson Avenues.

About the same time a Scotsman, Arthur Ballantyne, arrived with his son, Thomas. Arthur was looking for a place for himself and his other sons to live. He found it in Lakeside, across from today's El Monte

Arthur Ballantyne

Park. All four of Ballantyne's sons were influential in the development of El Cajon: Thomas owned a ranch on the northwest corner of Magnolia and Fletcher Parkway. James ran a dairy farm on Magnolia. John owned vineyards on Broadway and become a member of the El Cajon school board. Arthur, Jr., only 17 when he arrived from Scotland, had to walk all the way from the pier in San Diego to Lakeside because the stage was not running that day. After the turn of

The busy railroad at the west end of Main Street.

the century, Arthur's nephews, John, Andrew, and James, also came to the valley.

Over on the southwestern slopes of the valley, above western Chase Avenue and along the sloping foothills of Grossmont, S.M. Marshal established the 200-acre Alta Ranch next door to Dr. Johnson's property. On Marshall's ranch site, near where Anthony's restaurant stands today, Hervey Parke, one of the partners in the Detroit-based Parke-Davis Pharmaceuticals, later built a lavish home and named it Villa Caro. Whether Parke owned or leased the property is not known but he did convince his partner, Davis, to buy part of the Jamacha Rancho. Called Villa Karma, Davis' spread supported horses and citrus. Davis installed a dam and irrigation system, and later built a post office.

With so many people establishing ranches, not all was sweetness and light. One incident pitted fruit growers against honey producers. Major Chase filed a law suit against beekeeper J.E. Castle because he believed Castle's bees were destroying his fruit. It was an old argument; bee experts had demonstrated time and again that honeybees did not harm unblemished fruit but, with Chase's threats of legal action, Castle moved his array of hives eastward.

Certainly, there was no dispute about the success ranchers were enjoying. Wagon after wagon loaded with fresh and dried fruit and other valley products headed for the wharves of National City and San Diego each day. From there, they were shipped by sea to Los Angeles, the railhead of Southern California's only railroad. And that was another old argument: why didn't San Diego have its own railroad?

The Railroad Arrives . . . Finally

Well, it was not for lack of trying. Any number of men had worked to interest railroad magnates into running a line to San Diego. In fact, Major Chase was so anxious to move his crops to market faster that he offered $10,000 to any company willing to bring a railroad to El Cajon. But politics and money kept the railroad from reaching San Diego until 1885. And then, it was not until 1889 – a full two years after El Cajon's main street was laid out – that the railroad tracks finally crept over Grossmont Summit. From there, they ran down into El Cajon Heights, with a stop at the Marshall/Parke railroad platform. Eventually, a spur was extended across what is now Gillespie Field, through Cowlestown (which became Santee after the widow Cowles married Milton Santee), to the tiny community of Foster. At the height of the valley's land sale boom, the San Diego Cuyamaca & Eastern Railroad ran as many as eight passenger and four freight cars a day in and out of the valley.

One reason so many passenger cars were necessary was that the major transcontinental railroads were caught up in an all-out fare war, hoping to entice potential settlers West, there to buy the countless acres the railroads owned adjacent to their tracks. Their ploy was highly successful: beginning in 1885, the cheap fares prompted a flood of passengers from the East and Midwest. J.P.R. Hall was one of them. For $1 apiece, he brought his wife, Charlotte, their 9 children, and his parents, from Michigan to Los Angeles. It was on one of their stops that an Indian took a liking to young Jesse and proposed swapping one of his chil-

Luxurious Hotel del Corona was a welcome sight to those arriving by train, wagon, or stagecoach.

dren for him. Appalled, J.P.R. swept his family back into the safety of the train.

Railroads also promoted America's untold expanse of free and inexpensive land to the British, Scandinavians, Swiss, and the Dutch. So successful were they that entire so-called emigrant trains were filled with foreigners eager to begin new lives on their own land. Still other trains were filled with people seeking a healthier climate. In those days there was neither cure nor protection from malarial fever or tuberculosis, and those afflicted with the diseases flocked here by the thousands. The San Diego Union reported:

"A recent article in a scientific magazine assigns San Diego to fifth place in the whole world as having a climate favorable for consumption."

Filled with sixty or seventy passengers, train cars quickly grew fetid with the odors of burning cinders, cooking, and cigar and pipe smoke. Wood smoke from the iron stoves used to heat the cars added to the pall, making even the healthy ill. At night, passengers slept side-by-side on bug-infested, straw-filled cushions piled atop wooden boards running from bench to bench.

Wealthy passengers traveled in the new Pullman cars, which were regarded as luxury transportation but, in truth, were little better than any other accommodations. Though there was a dining car, most passengers found the food revolting and were forced to race along with the common folk to bolt down the greasy food served by station lunchrooms.

Disembarking in Los Angeles, San Diego, and even El Cajon in the next few decades, prospective buyers like the Overmeir, Cailland, Ellis, and the Dennis families were met by real estate agents, farm land salesmen, or townsite representatives. Taken by buggies to staked-out farmland, buyers often purchased on the spot.

Another Hotel

By 1886, the increasing crowds in the valley warranted another hotel, and Anna Stough Knowles, daughter-in-law of San Diego tycoon Oliver Stough, and wife of Captain Amos Knowles, built the elaborate Hotel del Corona across the street from Knox's Hotel. The Corona was to El Cajon what the Horton House was to San Diego. Within the Corona's spacious dining room, thousands of dinners were served to prospective buyers after a trip up to the hotel's cupola and sky view veranda for an unbroken view of the fertile valley.

Perhaps it was from that cupola that William So-

mers first saw the valley. Enthused by the sight, he built a home and began selling real estate. He married Sarah Hawley, and later became the editor of the *El Cajon Valley News*. Road commissioner and citrus farmer Willis Parsons and his wife, Marcia, moved into a house on Chase Avenue.

More Newcomers

That same year, William Stell and his brother Harry arrived, pausing on the stage trip from San Diego at the prosperous saloon and eating house (the "eight-mile station") near Grossmont. They had worked their way across the country, and the first thing they did was to get a job haying in the Hillsdale fields in the Jamacha area. The rest of their family joined them while the Stell brothers were "proving up" 160 acres south of Dehesa Road. To "prove up" was the same thing as homesteading, which required seven years of farming. Sadly, William and Harry's sister, Magdalena Stell Briggs, and her husband were killed in a buggy accident on Grossmont Summit in 1888. They left behind a young boy who was raised by William and his mother, Barbara.

Later, William clerked at the E.E. Burgess store and, after seven years, bought an interest in what became the Stell-Burgess store. Later, still, it became the Stell-Clark store. Stell managed the store for a total of 22 years while continuing to farm 300 to 500 acres. During eight of those years, Stell was also postmaster, and mayor, or Chairman of the Board, as it was known then, for a total of twenty years.

Eugene Vacher arrived with his wife and daughter. Son of a French Consul, he had grown up in Paris and on the Isle of Jersey. Both he and his father loved stostories of America and, when a friend of the family offered to take Eugene to America, his father allowed the 14-year-old to go. After a stint on a farm in Michigan, Eugene worked as a cook on a land survey team, as a clerk in a company store, and as a teacher. He even taught French in a school for the blind. Then, however, he met a young lady named Kate Stewart and married her. In time, they had a daughter named Lillian. But Kate, like so many of that era, contracted tuberculosis.

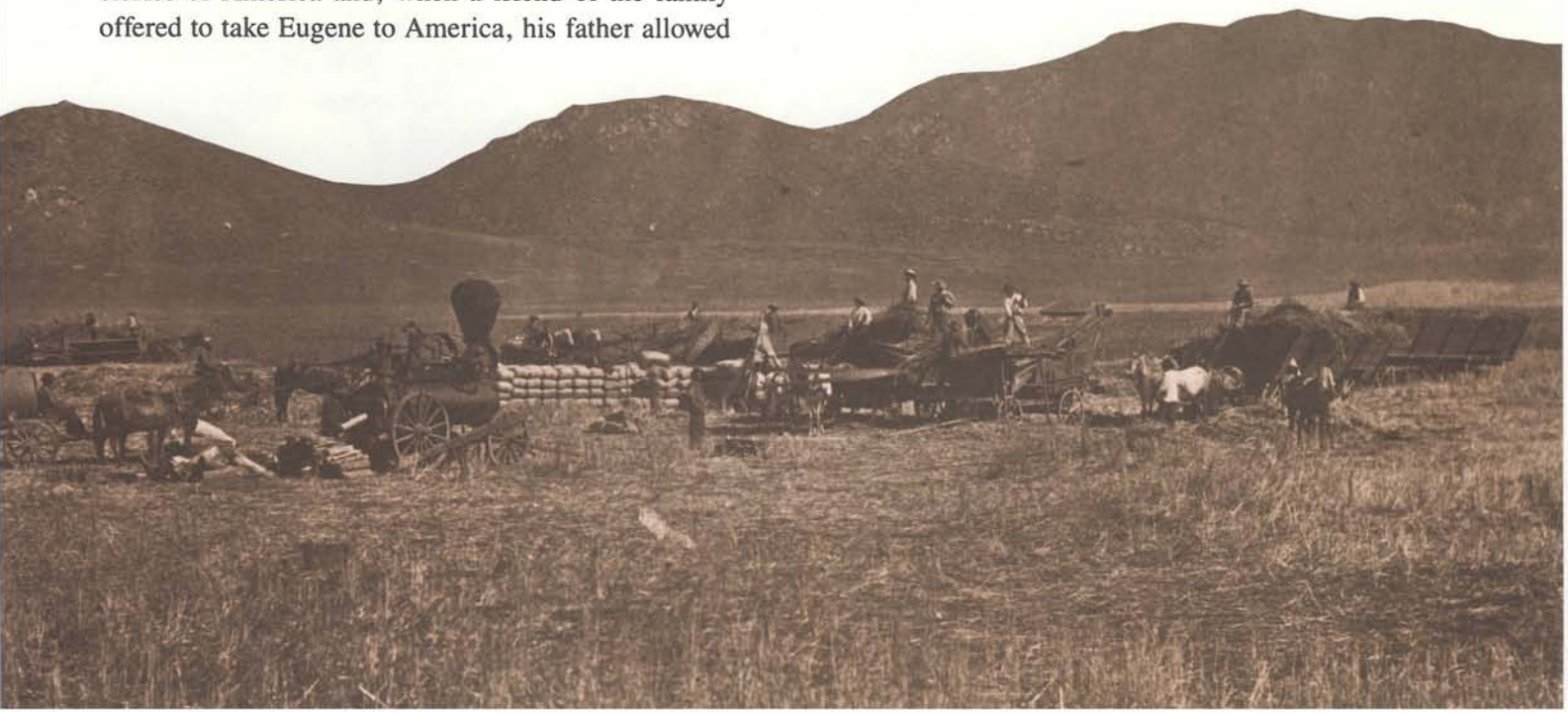
The young family moved to Florida seeking a cure, but Kate's health did not improve. Finally, doctors suggested that they move to California. At least, the doctor told Eugene, her final months would be more comfortable.

Once in San Diego, the Vachers took a buggy out to the El Cajon valley and toured the entire area until Kate found the "perfect place."

Eugene, Kate, and Lillian immediately joined the Presbyterian Church and became friendly with other settler families, the Asher family in particular.

Much of the valley's continued growth was due to viticulture, which had gone from fewer than 5,000 vines in 1877 to as many as 21 million vines by 1889. With the raisin industry growing like wildfire, three companies were formed to process and sell raisins. There was the El Cajon Vineyard Company, formed by Dr. R.E. Johnson. He assumed the presidency and his neighbor, C.S. Marshall, became secretary/treasurer. Packing houses started up with names like El Cajon Vineyard Co., Gregory Fruit Company, Kessler Packing Company, Ogden Packing House, and Liffering

Steam-driven machines helped harvest wheat more efficiently and quickly in the late 1880s.



Lemon & Packing Co., El Cajon Raisin Company, Holt Raisin Company, Bostonia Ranch, J.J. Gordon, and Klauber & Levi.

The El Cajon Raisin Company was owned and controlled by local raisin growers. Equipped to seed, stem, and pack its own raisins in one-pound packages, the company was able to sell its products directly to Eastern distributors. This allowed valley products to flow directly from the fields to consumers without going through brokers. The California Raisin Growers' Association, managed by George Hawley, did much the same thing. These associations represented a vineyard territory of approximately 3,000 acres, of which Ballantyne, Stell, El Cajon Vineyard Company, and Bostonia Ranch were the largest.

William Stell's brother, Harry, met young Victoria Griebnow of San Diego. Married in 1894, they had four sons, one of whom died as a teenager.

Out near Harry's property, on what is now Dehesa Road, a cemetery was established. Not far away, at Lexington and Jamacha Roads, a winery and wine factory were built. That factory would later be purchased by Stell & Burgess. Eventually, twelve wineries and one distillery would do business in the valley. It was said that, to understand the need for so many wineries, one only had to taste the local water.

A Consolidated School District

Because houses were separated from one another by sprawling vineyards, orchards, and fields, schools began springing up in different sections of the valley. Each school became a completely separate district. The Meridian School and School District was built in the Bostonia area. On its opening day in 1889, thirty students enrolled. Four years later, trustees of the El Cajon, Meridian, Cowles, and Lakeside School Districts joined ranks to form a single district named Cajon Valley Union School District. Until a high school was built after the turn of the century, high school students attended classes upstairs at Meridian School. Before that, older students had taken the train to San Diego's Russ High School.

Down by the railroad tracks in the El Cajon Heights, near the El Cajon Vineyard Company's destemming plant, the *El Cajon Star* began publishing, and W.D. Hall, newly arrived back in town, went into the lumberyard business with Charles Kessler.

Hall had grown up in the valley, the first of 11

Teacher Ada Cross and her students.

children born to J.P.R. Hall, a rancher who started out in 1886 with a 40-acre tract of vineyards and fruit trees in Bostonia. The following year, the family purchased another 20 acres and put them in hay for their cattle and horses. Helping J.P.R were W.D., his oldest son, and several other sons. There was Julian, who later had a ranch in Bostonia; Samuel, who became a secretary for the Los Angeles Athletic Club; Jesse (the one the Indian wanted), who became supervisor of Stanislaus forest; and Arthur, who became an engineer with Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co. Two girls, Helen and Marie Elizabeth, were teachers. Tragically, another son, Johnnie, died at eight years of age and, three beautiful young girls, Burdette, Mary, and Rosa, contracted tuberculosis. Isolated in the attic of their home behind the Hall Company, the three succumbed to the disease while still young adults.

W.D. had struck out on his own when he was 18, working in a San Diego shipyard and as a carpenter on the luxurious Hotel del Coronado across the bay. To

J.P.R. Hall (back row, center) and Charlotte's (far right, back row) children and grandchildren.

mark his participation in building the Hotel Del, he carved his initials on one of the posts in the cupola. At the finish of that job, he bought 29 acres to the east of his parents' land but soon left Southern California for Oregon. He then went East, where he met and married Florence, a distant relative, who it was said was a niece of Ulysses S. Grant. A few years later, W.D. brought her and their two small boys, Skip and Rex, back to the valley to live. The lumber business he bought with Kessler down by the El Cajon railroad tracks had been a division of Russ Lumber Company.

Main Street

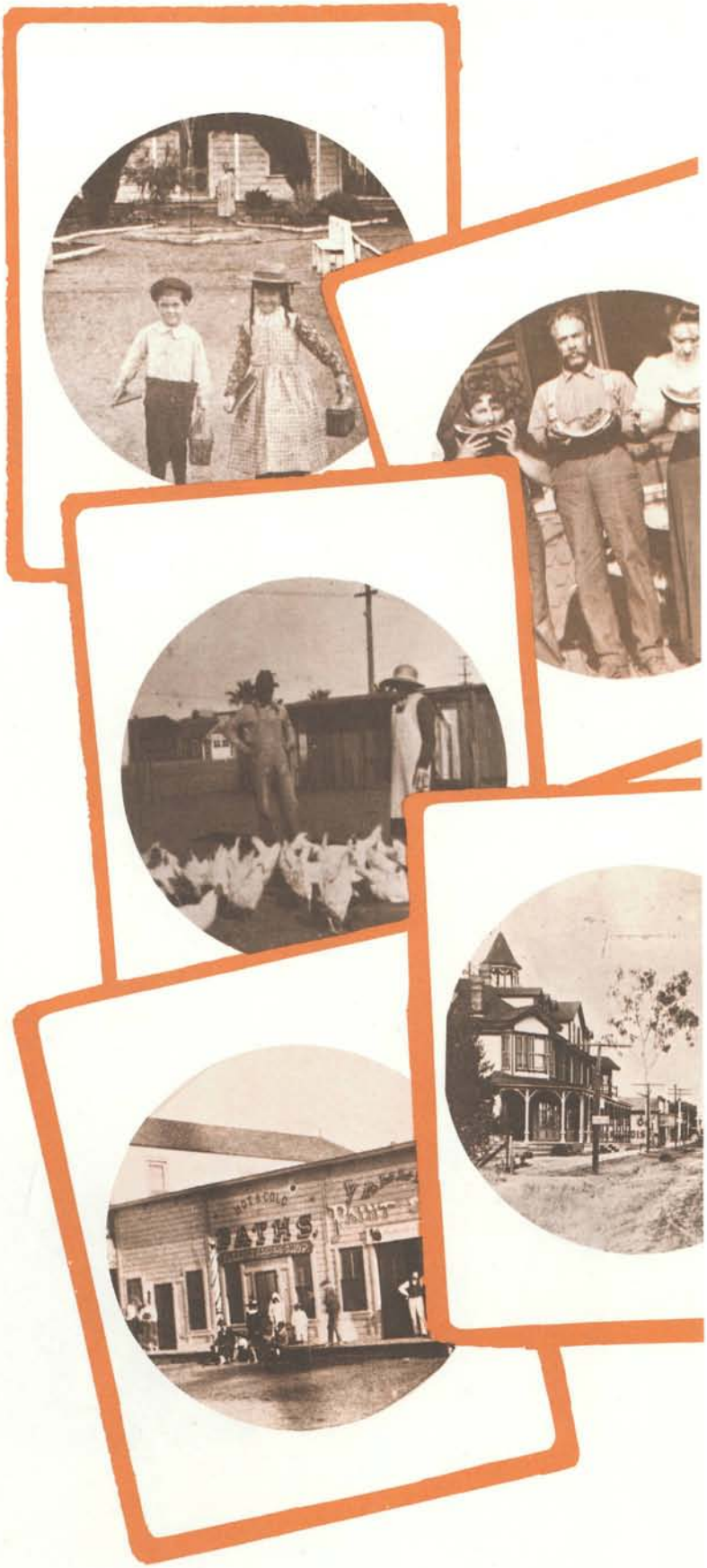
Up on Main Street, business was expanding, boasting three saloons, a butcher shop, a barber shop with hot and cold baths, and a billiard parlor. Down the street and across from Rea's store, an entire block of stores had been built. The middle section of these stores was developed by the town blacksmith, a Nova Scotian immigrant named Duncan McFadden.

McFadden's shop, corrals, and barn had originally been on the opposite side of the street, to the west of the Corona Hotel. He moved his business next door to the Bascom meat market, adjacent to Burgess's general store and warehouse on the corner of Magnolia and Main. In the empty space between his new blacksmith shop and the El Cajon Hall on the corner of Prescott, he built a two-story building. The store space downstairs he rented to Dr. Derbyshire, the valley's sole physican, whose duties included dispensing the new chickenpox vaccine. Derbyshire also owned a small drugstore in the building, which he soon sold to Albert Brouwer.

McFadden reserved the three-bedroom residence upstairs for his own family. Behind the building, he built a showroom for farm equipment, a well, a windmill, water tanks, stables, and corrals. Next, between his shop and home, he built three small shops and rented them to F.E. Garvin, a painter; I. Lindstrom, a shoe repairman; and Otto Brennscke, a barber who, after installing two fine new bathtubs, advertised "five baths for $1.00."

By 1887, three telephone lines had been run over Grossmont summit, ending in a main switchboard in Rea's store. In San Diego, many people were enjoying telephone service but, in El Cajon, the only branch offices were at Dr. Johnson's residence on Grossmont, the Boston Ranch, and Santee's Lakeside Hotel.

Down Main Street, E.B. Wright opened a two-story harness and bicycle shop across from McFadden's stores. The shoe repairman then moved his shop



from the McFadden Block to the north side of Main street. Brouwer, followed suit, moving his store to a place next to Brenner's barber shop and pool hall.

Nearby, W.D. Hall bought seven acres for $60 and moved his and Kessler's old wooden lumberyard building from El Cajon Heights. There, they began selling lumber, gasoline engines, and mill work. After advertising in the paper for a "water witch" to locate a strong-flowing artesian well, Hall dug a well and built a water tank large enough to supply the entire community during times of drought. Installing a roller and steam boiler, he also processed barley for local farmers. Later, Hall piped Main Street and supplied it with water. Hall, always the first to embrace new ways of doing things, also installed the village's first electrical power system. One of his peculiarities was his penchant for acquiring surplus materials, a belief that served him well in the years to come.

The *El Cajon Valley News*, the forerunner of today's *Daily Californian* newspaper, moved from the railroad tracks to offices near the end of Main, in the rear of the El Cajon Hall.

In the Foothills

Throughout the valley and beyond, commercial ranching expanded as more and more land was planted in groves, orchards, wheat, and vineyards. Among new residents were J. Maxwell Paul, a representative of Russell, MacFarlane & Co. Woolens of Scotland, and his diminutive wife Eliza. They bought the Frydendale orange ranch near the Vachers, out on what would one day be named Fuerte Drive. It was Paul's son, Herbert, who planted a pepper tree that was to reach gigantic proportions by the time J. Maxwell's four grandchildren rollicked around in its branches. But, in the tree's infancy, Herbert had to erect a fence around it to protect it from his mother, Eliza, who had a terrible habit of flattening it with her buggy wheels.

Getting the paper out at the El Cajon Valley News.

A peculiarity of the Paul home was the unusually low doorknobs. Eliza, too short to manipulate regulation-height implements comfortably, had all the doorknobs lowered. Her husband, J. Maxwell, so ill aboard ship that he had been measured for a coffin, lived another eleven years with his family.

Edith Paul, second from the youngest, stayed on the ranch with her mother and, after her mother's death, ran the ranch, with the help of a loyal foreman, Neil Stewart.

The Flume

Valley fruit production was on the increase; but, as perfect as the valley was for agriculture, it lacked one thing: a consistent source of water for irrigation.

The same seasonal shortages hampered the growth of San Diego. To correct the deficiency, a company was formed to build a wooden aqueduct, the San Diego Flume Company. Designed to bring water some 33½ miles down from the Cuyamaca mountains, the flume ran through Boulder Creek and the El Cajon Valley before terminating near the brier patches near the Ireton stage stop in Grossmont. The plan was to release water along the way to irrigate crops in agricultural areas. Though their project was ridiculed from the very beginning, flume backers persevered.

Valley residents A.W. Hawley, William Robinson, and Milton Santee were among those investing heavily in the venture. Constructed largely by Chinese coolies using redwood lumber floated and shipped down from Northern California,.the flume required 100 wagons, 800 horses and mules, 315 trestles - some soaring 56 feet in the air - and nearly nine million board feet of lumber to complete. The Los Coches trestle alone was a challenge. More than a mile long, it was built in a long horseshoe shape. Eight tunnels were built through the mountains, the longest of which was the Lankershim at 1,900 feet. It took four years of audacious engineering and daredevil construction to finish this aqueduct, which was 70 inches wide and 14 inches deep.

Men building the flume lived in tent cities. Doctor Pollard, newly arrived from Utah and without credentials to practice medicine in California, lived in one of those tents five days a week. At day's end on Fridays, he and his son, Walter, walked back to False Bay (today called Mission Bay) along the well-traveled banks

Sorting fruit at one of the valley's packing houses.

of the San Diego River, hoping that someone would give them a ride.

In 1886, Cuyamaca Dam was begun to store and divert water for the flume line and, in 1888, the Sweetwater Dam did the same. As each section of the flume was completed, a bulkhead was installed and the flume flooded with water, which allowed El Cajon ranchers to purchase water service even as work continued into Grossmont. One of the problems with the flume was that debris and logs occasionally dammed the water. A solution was found when someone figured out that the flume could be patrolled by flat-bottomed boats. It was an idea that inspired an entirely new sport.

Stringing boats together with chain and rope, boatloads of adventurous souls began "shooting the flume." In a ride much like amusement park flume rides today, excursioners rocketed from Cuyamaca Lake to the end of the line. Unfortunately for sleeping residents along the aqueduct, the excursions did not always end at dusk.

Miners, after imbibing red-eye enthusiastically during an evening of cards, had a habit of flinging themselves aboard the flat-bottomed boats and, singing rousing renditions of then-popular songs, heading down the flume. All along the line, homeowners would be awakened by the rapidly moving choir singing lusty versions of "Oh Dem Golden Slippers," "Alouette," and "Sweet Adeline." Accompanying the boozy chorus were exploding sounds as the revelers lobbed empty whisky bottles against nearby boulders.

Building the flume was an impressive technological feat but, because of the sudden end of the land boom in 1888 and a seven-year drought beginning in 1897, it brought little or no profit to those underwriting the project. In drought years, men who had built the flume were rehired to dig wells in the San Diego riverbed in the El Monte basin to feed water to the flume. Then the Sweetwater trestle collapsed from high winds and had to be replaced with a cement syphon. Later, the flume's complex exterior surface was coated with a rubberized roofing material to control

Teams of mules and horses hauled nine million board feet of redwood lumber to building sites along the flume line.

leakage problems. For all its financial problems, the flume stimulated the growth of the inland area.

Too, the flume contributed an entirely new source of entertainment. Valley boys, in particular, were drawn to the forbidden, and the redwood trestles and the narrow boardwalk running alongside the water-filled flume beckoned deliciously to the daredevil in each, despite dire parental warnings.

The boardwalk had been designed as a walkway for flumewalkers, who monitored the flow of water, fetched out dead snakes and animals, and repaired the aqueduct. Abel Ruis was one of them; so was Salvatore Contreras. They walked the flume, making repairs necessitated by time, and by boys with guns, who found the aqueduct an irresistible target. But it was the flume itself that came to provide the biggest thrill of all. In dry seasons, many an inland boy was known to hoist his bike up into the aqueduct and use it as an elevated highway all the way to Grossmont. And, as late as the 1970s, teenagers were known to float surfboards down stretches of the flume remaining in the back country.

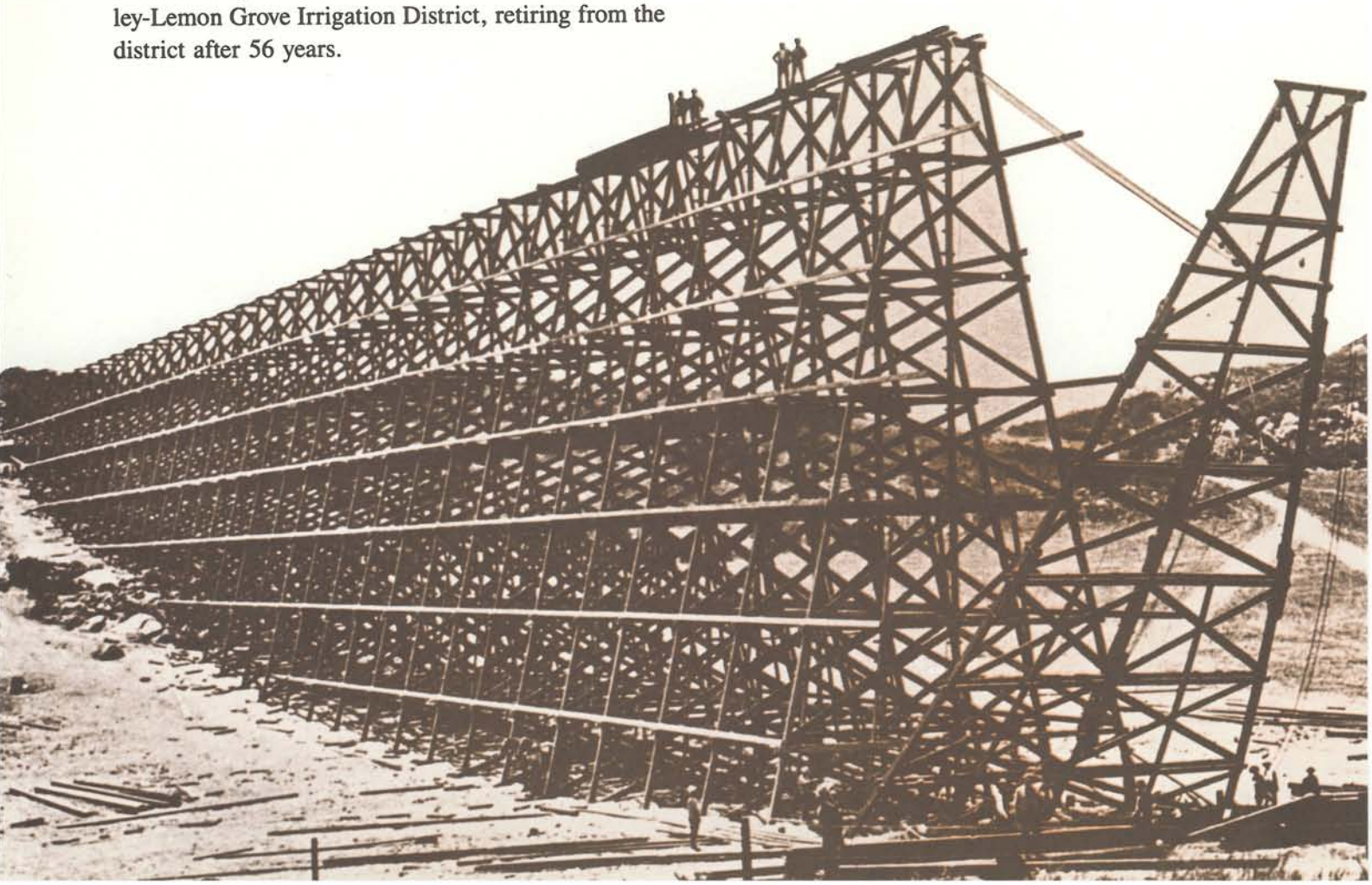
During these years, Ambrosio Ruis, a Yaqui Indian, was a harvester in the valley wheatfields. His son, Joe, was a flume superintendent and, later, would become a superintendent for the La Mesa-Spring Valley-Lemon Grove Irrigation District, retiring from the district after 56 years.

Bostonia

Out on the Boston Ranch on the northeast side of the valley, a large ranch house, several cottages, two packing houses, a winery, a warehouse, and barns had been completed. Fifty acres, planted with 3,500 citrus trees and five hundred acres planted with muscat grapes, were yielding bountiful crops. Overseen by the dependable Coyotte Davis, the grapes were picked, cleaned, destemmed, graded, and packed right on the property.

Each ten-acre plot had been bordered with a double row of olive trees; a plan suggested in pre-train days by Kate Sessions, known as "Mother of Balboa Park," as a method of shading harvested fruit. However, the arrival of the railroad allowed fruit to be harvested, packed, and shipped out without worry about sun damage. Still, the trees, grown tall and full, lined the dirt roads and gave welcome shade to passing wagons and weary travelers.

Some flume trestles soared 56 feet in the air.



One trestle, more than a mile long, was built in the shape of a horseshoe.

Miss Sessions also designed the landscaping on the Pepper Drive property owned by the Hawleys and later purchased by the Judson family of New York City.

Within the Boston Ranch, a small townsite had been laid out, with young olive trees lining its prospective streets. A landmark in those early days was a stone fountain, built at the center of the junction of what is now Broadway and Second.

A favorite story of oldtimers was the saga of the mother duck. It seems that the bird wandered in one day and adopted the fountain as her private swimming hole. Teamsters grew used to seeing her paddling around while they watered their horses and mules. But, the day she brought a "family" she became a legend.

Somewhere, the duck had found and hatched a clutch of chicken eggs. Thereupon, she set about teaching the chicks how to be responsible ducklings. Day after day, she led the chicks to the fountain, waddled up a board, and plunged into the water. Behind her, the chicks scurried to the lip of the fountain, cheeping in dismay. Ignoring their cries of alarm, the duck continued swimming, determined to show by parental example what she expected of them. For weeks, she waged her fruitless campaign, much to the amusement of the teamsters. Finally, the chicks grew up, the duck gave up, and the mule skinners realized anew that "you can lead a chicken to water . . ."

The fountain also provided water for Mexican and Indian families who camped nearby in temporary shelters built of wooden grape trays when they came to the valley to help with the harvest.

The Indians played a game called Peon, a guessing game where hands passed around sticks beneath a tightly stretched blanket. Music was supplied by chanting women as men sat around the blanket, surreptitiously passing the sticks from hand to hand. The chanting, stopped suddenly to catch someone with the

A landmark in those early days was the stone fountain.

Young olive trees marked streets on the Bostonia Ranch.

sticks, was a sound quite foreign to settlers and their dogs, alike. As the game speeded, bets were shouted, the keening chants grew louder, and dogs across the valley began baying in reply.

Behind the Bostonia Store was a private dance hall used for social functions ranging from formal dances and parties to meetings dealing with discussion of palmology, literature, history, and drama. The hall became a favorite place – a tradition continuing half a century later when the Bostonia Ballroom was *the* place to go to hear country and rock music.

Close by was the Bostonia post office. In 1895, a redwood Episcopal church named St. John's was built.

People came from as far away as Spring Valley, Knox's Corners, Dehesa Valley, Flinn Springs, Alpine, Descanso, and Jamacha to go to the Bostonia store to purchase their supplies. Good management and fair prices were partially responsible, but so were improved roads.

In San Diego, public transportation went from horse cars to the ill-fated electric cars, and on to cable cars. The County began assuming responsibility for some of the more heavily used, but hitherto unmaintained, roads in the back country. The rutted, rock-strewn, eight-mile road up the Mussey Grade was replaced with a new, eight- to ten-foot-wide, road. The new road was well traveled, not only by people on horseback, but by small stagecoaches and freight wagons. Even when pulled by up to six horses, the largest wagons could seldom make more than a mile an hour going up the narrow, winding road. Which is why that, on this road, an old freighting tradition was continued.

Drivers of large freight wagons fastened a set of five brass bells to the collar of each horse in their lead teams. The clangor of the bells warned smaller rigs that a larger outfit was coming up behind. Custom dictated that smaller wagons pull off at the nearest turnoff to let the bigger rigs pass. Another custom dictated that, should a driver of one of these larger rigs require help on the road, the rescuer was entitled to a set of the lead animal's bells. On the Mussey Grade, it was a real challenge to retain one's bells.

In 1890, the Lewis Rosenbergers bought the Pennell ranch and moved in, bringing with them their son, Charles, and daughters, Lillian and Mabel. Ranching, for Lewis, ended after an accident incurred while digging a well.

Bostonia Store was the center of many valley transactions.

It happened while he was on a ladder. There was a confusion of buckets and shovels and Lewis lost his footing and plummeted to the bottom of the well shaft, breaking both heels. Unable to work his land, Lewis purchased a store on the northeast corner of Magnolia and Broadway.

Later, after their parents purchased land on the east end of the valley along Flume Road, Mabel married Arthur Ballantyne, and Lillian married his brother, Thomas. When Thomas died in 1919, Lillian married his cousin, James. James' brothers, Jack and Andrew, also married local girls: Vera Ashley and Erna Schutte, respectively.

At the east end of the valley, the Cross family built a ranch. Over on the southeastern corner of Washington and Magnolia Avenues, the Fourney family built a home. About the same time, Jesus Rios and his wife, Rita, moved their family into an adobe house at the foot of Dehesa grade. Later, the Rios family moved to La Cresta, where each school day, the children trooped several miles down into the valley to attend school.

In December 1892, Allan Hawley married Annie Miller. To them were born Allan S. Warren, Olive (who eventually married W.H. Somers, the new editor of the *El Cajon Valley News*), and Forrest.

Two years later, Miss Maggie Walsh bought ten acres adjoining her father's tract in Peerless Valley at a cost of $97.50 an acre, with an additional fee for water rights. Though she owned the property, she remained in Oakland to maintain a tailoring business she owned with her sister, Minnie. Later, she met and married Charles Roether, a San Francisco piano-mover. They had three sons: Jack, Charles, and George, called "Dord."

Out on Nidrah Road, Anna Johnson built a ten-room cottage. Her brother, Dr. Charles M. Johnson, had acreage next door, upon which he built a raisin packing plant.

An Official Survey

About the same time, a man with a wheelbarrow began surveying county roads. His innovative use of a common wheelbarrow was curious: an odometer, new to most, clicked off the revolutions of the wheel that measured the distance he traveled. He also had a clinometer that indicated grades, and a compass for direction. The information given by the devices was penciled on a work sheet as Porter Perrion Wheaton trundled his wheelbarrow from the San Diego Post Office to National City. From there he headed east. Traveling every cow path, trail, and road within 80 miles of San Diego, he plotted everything, every ranch, homestead, town, school, church, mountain, farm, and river. In the seven months the survey took to complete, Wheaton would pushed his wheelbarrow a total of 2,328 miles.

The Rosenbergers.

The survey had been commissioned by the Board of Supervisors to provide a map reflecting the boom of the 1890s. Existing maps, drawn in 1850, indicated few of the back country spreads, much less the unregistered squatters, prospectors, homesteaders, and cattlemen. Suspecting that the map would be used in an upcoming tax roll, a few land owners tried to offer Wheaton pigs and heifers to ignore their presence, but he could not be bribed. Their worries were well-founded: San Diego County's first real map added a great number of parcels to the tax roll.

Boom – Then Bust

But, by 1894, signs that the land boom was fizzling out were indisputable. After the 1888 boom, which brought 35,000 newcomers into the San Diego area, everything went bust. For the next twenty years,

real estate and bank deposits were down. In El Cajon, people who had been wealthy found themselves land poor. Their financial discomfort was reflected by the editor of the *Valley News*, who offered annual subscriptions that usually sold for 25 cents in exchange for butter, eggs, wood, vegetables, fruit, spring chickens, setting hens, "or any other product of land and sea that could be eaten, worn, or bartered." Of course, added the publisher, "If a subscriber has four bits handy, it will be quite as acceptable."

Out on Jamacha Road, Hillsdale School opened. John Ballantyne, a member of the school board that hired pretty, young Theodora Birdseye as the teacher, subsequently seconded the board's confidence in her by marrying her.

Ballantyne had plenty of opportunity to woo Theodora, even though she was extremely social. He squired her to dances sponsored by the La Cintra Club and held at different packing plants, spent evenings playing cards, and attended an unending list of private receptions and parties provided by the Ladies Aid Society, Wednesday Club, the Grange, fraternal organizations, theatrical groups, and the Presbyterian Church.

He also had his choice of local band and orchestra concerts, and numerous musicales. When rail service became a reality, John and Theodora were among the couples making up theater parties to San Diego.

And Duncan and Christy McFadden were in the middle of it all, busy with baseball, musical and social groups, dances, whist and bridge games. Which is why it was doubly sad when, they, too, went bust. By now, everyone was feeling the pinch. Even people like A.W. Hawley. Earlier, A.W., the man to build the valley's first flume, divided his land among his older children, giving each 40 acres in the Pepper Drive area.

Hillsdale School, on Jamacha Road.

El Cajon's first baseball team.

But his investments in the San Diego Flume Company brought him aggravation instead of financial return. Repeated assessments ate into his capital and when, in January 1895 he died in his San Diego home, his wife moved back to El Cajon to live with her son, Warren, and her sister, Dane. Later, the three would move into a new house built by Warren, but Warren would die at the age of 33 of tuberculosis contracted during his college days in Nebraska. His brother Guy, too, would die of tuberculosis, also at the age of 33.

In those financially trying times, it was young Murdock (called Murdo) McFadden who tried his best to liven the community's spirits on a Fourth of July evening. With a fellow conspirator, he stealthily placed several sticks of dynamite in the center of Main and Magnolia. Then, using a miner's trick, he "capped" the dynamite with his teeth, lighted the fuse, and bolted for safety. The boys' quick retreat was made even quicker by a horrendous explosion that shattered every window in downtown El Cajon. The sheriff did not catch up with Murdo until the next morning. The encounter with the law, underscored by a measure of parental disapproval, reportedly nipped in the bud an otherwise promising career as a terrorist.

Matching the drop in land prices was a faltering business climate. Editorials in the *Once=A=Week* newspaper, which sold annual subscriptions for 25 cents, were at once firm and hopeful in backing a "buy-local" policy:

"It is a fact that goods can be bought as low in El Cajon as anywhere in this county, the big village not excepted."

But, even loyalty could not hold back hard times. McFadden the blacksmith was neither renting space in his buildings nor supplying locals with ironwork. Ranchers could not afford to pay for his services. McFadden even tried selling some of his prized Arabian horses, but there were no takers. When gold strikes in Canada's Klondike seemed to offer financial hope, he left John McKinnon, a former employee, in charge of his blacksmith shop and, with two friends, headed north. There, along with thousands of other gold-seekers, McFadden clambered up through the infamous Chilcoot Pass into White Horse. Overheated by carrying a backbreaking load, he removed his parka to cool off. That regrettable action was to strike him down.

That year, the Klondike field yielded $22 million

in gold, although none of it came to McFadden. Weakened by pneumonia, he died in Skagway and was buried in Sourdough. He was only 44 years old. Ironically, gold was discovered that same year a few miles from his own back yard. A mine, on Major Chase's property between what is now Merritt and Mollison, showed some gold; something it has done ever since.

With land sales at a standstill, Uri Hill, who had been co-owner of the El Cajon City and Land Company with his son, closed down his business and bought the Bostonia Store. And then, as if the McFadden family had not suffered enough, one September night in 1895, their block of buildings caught fire, touched off when the owner of a Chinese laundry in one of the shops tripped over a coal oil lamp. The entire complex was ablaze before anyone knew it.

There was, of course, no fire engine and, within a few hours, everything that Duncan McFadden had worked for was gone. Homeless, his widow Christy and their children worked for a time at odd jobs to make ends meet. It was after moving to San Diego that Murdo got a job as an agent with Wells Fargo in San Diego. Years later, he became San Diego's City Engineer for Streets.

The End of the World

In the last year of the century, two school teachers, Adelbert Durbin and his wife, Emma, and their three daughters arrived at the El Cajon train station. It is reported that Emma, upon disembarking from the train at the El Cajon station, demanded of her husband:

"My God, man, did you bring me to the end of the world?"

Life in the valley may have seemed pretty crude to Ohio-bred Emma, but, to El Cajonians, things were pretty darned sophisticated. After all, the Durbin's goods had arrived by train, the family was picked up and taken to their new home in a horse-drawn bus. And, on their 36 acres of land a ready-built house awaited them, along with a barn, several chicken houses, seven acres of producing lemon and orange trees, and a cottage for the hired help.

And there was a social whirl in place; right off the bat, the family joined the Presbyterian Church, where they struck up friendships with the Hills and the other families in town. There were a number of things for families to attend; progressive eucher parties,

McFadden was always the man behind the camera, but in this rare instance, he took the place of the regular saxophonist, giving us a glimpse of the man who played an important role in developing Main Street.

Wednesday Club meetings where musical and artistic presentations were given to more than a hundred guests, I.O.G.T. meetings, Forester meetings and dances.

For the Durbin girls, there was school. At Hillsdale School, they were taught by Anna Asher. When they finished their studies there, they went off to high school, which was housed on the second floor of Meridian School several miles away. When they graduated from high school, all three girls went on to San Diego Normal School where they all became teachers. Only Etta married. She and her husband, C.F. Mercer, had a daughter they named Patricia.

All of the Durbin sisters attended San Diego State Normal School and became teachers.

Teachers

One of the Normal School's first graduates was Josephine Asher, who started her long and distinguished teaching career at the El Cajon School. The community was justifiably proud of her and their other graduates, for San Diego State Normal, housed at that time on the third floor of a building at Sixth and F streets, turned out well-prepared teachers.

That was not necessarily true in other communities. Across the nation, old world methods of education were under attack. Strident calls for reform were heard, although, as bad as they were, conditions had

Ladies visiting on a warm, summer day.

improved since 1869 when Harvard Medical School's dean refused to administer written exams to students because "A majority of the students cannot write well enough" to take an exam.

At San Diego Normal, standards were strict. Students graduating from grammar school were accepted, but required to take four years of study to be teachers. High school graduates needed only two years of preparation.

Hayrides provided another form of socializing.

Main Street

On Main Street, J.H. Dodson was giving up his job as postmaster to become El Cajon's first Justice of the Peace. As postmaster, J.H. Dodson had transferred the location of the post office from the grocery store to a corner drugstore. The move itself was not remarkable – the post office was moved back and forth across Main Street for years. What was remarkable was that Dodson was capable of pushing the two wheelbarrows full of equipment himself for, back in 1885, Texas doctors had given him only a year to live. He defied them by living to be 92.

As Justice of the Peace, Dodson ended what was then a highly popular sport: racing horses on Main Street. His concern was for the women and children who were sent scurrying by the flying hooves. To protect them from the hell-bent-for-leather racers, Dodson threatened to fine each racer three dollars for each violation. So hefty was that sum that it eliminated horse racing on Main Street. Later, a racetrack was built behind the renovated schoolhouse/Catholic church on Magnolia.

Dodson was unusually community-minded. He organized and directed the Presbyterian Church's first choir. With McFadden gone, he also directed the El Cajon band. The band performed so well that when it competed with San Diego's band in a rivalry concert held in Horton Plaza, El Cajon's band won. That win was a precursor to many first places to be collected by future El Cajon musical groups. Dodson also won the hand of pharmacist Brouwer's daughter, Dena.

End of a Century

As the 19th Century drew to a close, it marked changes in the quiet valley of yesteryear. Hundreds of people lived in the villages of El Cajon, Santee, Foster, Peerless Valley, and Decoteville. These communities were separated by sprawling wheat fields, vineyards, and lines of fruit, pepper, and olive trees.

Folks in Bostonia were talking about their new physician. Dr. Eugene Mathewson, recently arrived from Colorado. He, too, was trying to recover from tuberculosis. Mathewson became the doctor for everyone living between the mountains and San Diego. To reach patients on his far-flung route, he traveled by horse and carriage. For those closer to home, he rode a bicycle.

A man who loved good food almost as much as he loved hunting, Mathewson always carried a frying pan with him. Catching sight of a deer, he would shoot it and immediately remove the liver. In as little time as it takes to tell about it, he would have the liver sliced, sizzling in his frying pan, and ready to eat.

Mathewson's professional services were required for everything from carbuncles and broken bones to scalpings. Once, a grape picker ended a spirited argument with another picker by taking his hooked grape knife and lifting the victim's hair. When the injured man was carried into Mathewson's office, the good doctor calmly washed sand and grit from the fleshy underside of the scalp piece, repositioned it on the man's skull, and stitched him back up. Except for a frightful headache, the man suffered no lasting effects from the experience.

Postmaster and Justice of the Peace, J.H. Dodson.

In "town," a volunteer fire department formed, with young Rexford Hall assuming the role of volun-

teer fire chief. A hand-drawn fire cart was purchased and housed in Hall's father's old, wooden office there on Main Street. W.D. had altered the building so the cart could be stored inside.

As the community grew, the social settlers added new organizations to the community. There was a Literary Society, the Ladies Aid Society, a Horticultural Society, Eastern Star, and Christian Endeavor, as well as an orchestra and a minstrel troupe.

A sign of the growing sophistication of the community was the rechristening of the Knox Hotel as Hotel de Knox. An annex was added to it, and aptly named the El Cajon Hotel. The Corona, still the most glamorous of the two, maintained its lofty stature by installing a new invention – screen doors. But screening was only one of many new products reaching the market around the turn of the century. Over at Balthauser's store, the owners were considering adding food sealed inside metal cans. Sales of Del Monte, Beech-Nut, Dole, and Borden were spurred by the invention of the can opener. Before that handy gadget appeared, cans had to be opened with a hatchet or knife.

Down the street from Balthauser, the Rumsey brothers opened a store of their own and advertised in the newspaper. So did Fred Valenzula – a self-described expert in well digging and water locating. Also running regular ads was a young fruit broker named Ed Fletcher, who offered an impressive assortment of fruit boxing materials.

Fletcher knew the back country well. In February 1899, he and his family stayed for a protracted period at the Hotel del Corona. In the same month, Hervey Parke, resident of the luxurious Villa Caro Ranch, died at the residence of Colonel Randlett in La Mesa. It was an event that would have immense consequences both for Fletcher and the entire inland area.

As the century ended, county homes were still lighted by coal oil lamps, although, in San Diego, incandescent lights were available for home use. While San Diego streets were being illuminated by modern arc lights, El Cajon had no outdoor lighting at all. In San Diego there were electric cars to carry passengers from downtown clear out to Old Town. In El Cajon, travel continued to be by wagon, stage, horse, or foot.

TURN OF THE CENTURY

The new century brought monumental change to the way Americans lived and earned their living. In the 19th Century and before, most adult males were farmers. Some were subsistence farmers, growing just enough to feed their families; others earned handsome incomes by selling surplus crops and produce. But the 1893 Chicago World's Fair gave Americans a glimpse of a brave new world.

There, ordinary citizens saw tangible examples of the exciting advances being made in medicine, communications, transportation, agriculture, and industry. For the first time in history, average Americans realized that they had options in the way they wanted to live. The response of an enthusiastic public to the Chicago Fair changed the course of the nation – and the world.

Mr. and Mrs. Average American were strongly influenced by what they saw other Americans doing. The awesome beauty of the exhibition buildings, and the exhibits within, showed them that Americans – as well as Europeans – had talents. That was an entirely new concept to a nation of immigrants and, by European reckoning, a nation of rather backward provincials.

For the first time, Americans took pride in themselves. Looking at the gleaming domes, the long lines of white columns, the intricate landscaping, average folks realized that beauty had a value of its own – particularly American-made beauty. Americans suddenly recognized that they were no longer backwoods pioneers, but leaders in a new world of innovation and production. National pride was born at the Chicago World's Fair; it became fashionable to boast of "American know-how." And everyone wanted a part in it.

* * * *

A number of El Cajon exhibitors were at that Fair, exhibiting fruit from Villa Caro and other ranches. In fact, raisins from the Asher and Bostonia ranches won first place.

And El Cajonians, like all other fairgoers, saw and wanted the new marvels on display there. Though most American homes lacked indoor plumbing, their owners suddenly wanted porcelain toilets and bathtubs. They wanted washing machines, home heating devices, automobiles, electric flat-irons, zippers, typewriters, razor blades, brassieres, and scores of products made of aluminum. Returning home, they told friends and neighbors of the wonderful new inventions – wonders soon unveiled to those on the remotest ranches and farms by way of Sears, Roebuck's new illustrated catalog. American creativity, ingenuity, and production had first spawned, then fueled, American consumerism.

On the other hand – that brave new world and the wonders of Chicago notwithstanding – it was not until 1913 that a city water system was even proposed for El Cajon. Consolidated Gas and Electric Company began providing electricity for street lights, but a sewer system was not in operation until 1919. Even then, only a few families hooked up.

Two of the factors making it possible for people to earn the extra money needed to purchase the new products were simultaneous advances in stock-breeding and agriculture; together, they enhanced the quality and quantity of both crops and livestock. With improved transportation, refrigeration, and preservation, more food was shipped to a wider market, which resulted in more cash for those who remained farmers. Even the city-dweller aspired to own all the new gewgaws. And it was possible – after all, a male stenographer (and most stenos were male) could expect to earn up to $10 for a five-day week, and an unskilled girl could earn as much as $2.50 for a six-day week.

Not all of the changes were economic: change touched every segment of the population, for the very fabric of the population was changing. Until 1890, most immigrants came from northern and western Europe. Then immigrants began arriving from the Jewish ghettos of Europe and from the Latin and Slavic countries.

That population shift was soon obvious in El Cajon. The valley's first residents were a mix of native Indian and Mexican families. The next wave of settlers was, for the most part, American-born and Northern European. After 1900, however, settlers began arriving from the Middle East, and Central and Southern Europe.

In 1987, sixty or more different nationalities live within the city's borders. Today, in Cajon Valley High School alone, Principal Arthur Pegas reports that 24 distinctly different languages are spoken.

But, in the 1890s, America had just begun its surge of expansion and prosperity – its Manifest Destiny – when a number of catastrophes struck. They began with the San Francisco earthquake, which required millions of federal aid dollars to rebuild the city.

Following that came a money drain from the Russo-Japanese war, strikes in the East, and the expense of excavating the Panama Canal. Those difficulties were underscored by a late season for farmers that spelled financial disaster for many, followed by a number of large railroad expansion programs. Wall Street panicked and banks closed. When that was capped by a presidential assassination and "Rough Rider" Teddy Roosevelt replaced William McKinley in the White House, the financial and political reverberations affected even the remotest outpost of America.

In a new century, everything is possible!

Unitarian Minister Philip Thacher had that in mind when he arrived in the valley with his second wife, Alice, and four of his six children. They settled on a 525-acre ranch on the old Jamacha Rancho, property later occupied by the Cottonwood Golf Course and Ivanhoe Ranch.

Philip Thacher and W.D. Hall look over the land.

Thacher's land, bought from Robert Kelly and Colonel Eddy, was only part of the original property granted to Dona Apolinara Lorenzana back in 1840. The rest of the rancho would be sold in 1905 to Joseph Sefton.

Sefton, President of the San Diego Water Company, lined the entrance to the ranch with palm trees. He also planted eucalyptus and pepper trees, groves of oranges, grapefruit, olive, and lemons, and fields of grain. Upon his death, Joseph, Jr., and his cousin, Warren Crouse, took over the property and leased sections to the Mendenhalls, Eugene Vacher, and Willis Parsons.

Parsons, who started out in the valley as foreman at the Chase Ranch in 1885, was a widower in the early years of the young century. Left with four small children and busy running the ranch, he pretty much

Pete's Store on "the Jamacha."

left the upbringing of six-month-old Herman, Willis, Jr., Harold, and Everett, to Chase's Chinese cook. Sadly, baby Herman died within a year. Parsons then bought a ranch in the hills south of the valley. Of school age by then, his three remaining sons attended Hillsdale School, where they first came in contact with teacher Eva Cox. Willis, Jr., called by his middle name, "Beth," hated her – which made everything pretty uncomfortable when his father brought her home as his second wife.

Other families were expanding, too. A third son, Hal, was born to Henry and Victoria Stell, who were living on Dehesa Road, and a son, Edward, Jr., was born to the aspiring fruit broker Edward Fletcher and his wife, Mary. Edward, Jr., as a teenager and a man, became his father's partner in developing county property and providing water to the inland area.

In San Diego, attractive Edna Friedrick arrived with her father to live in a handsome house on 9th and Ash. From Brooklyn, and extremely wealthy, the family began investing in San Diego property. Edna, fresh from a triumphant – and lavish – debut in New York, immediately joined the social whirl in San Diego by becoming a member of Zlac's third rowing crew. Within a few years, she had met and married Lester Walton of Yuba City. Edna eventually insisted that they move to El Cajon.

Up in the hills southeast of the valley, Kate Vacher succumbed to the tuberculosis that had plagued her for years. Her husband, Eugene, remained a widower for seven years. Another to die that year was Trinidad Rodriquez. A resident of the valley for many years, he left behind a large number of descendants.

On Main Street, the I.O.U.W. lodge purchased the two-story building once owned by Rumsey, and then by Clark. The upper story was reserved for their meetings, the first floor remained a public hall. Over the years, the building was in constant use: the Foresters met there, the Farmers Institute used it for its annual meeting, families held weddings, politicians staged rallies, the *El Cajon Valley News* set up shop there, Father Uback used it for Sunday mass, and Presbyterians held Christmas activities there.

Lester Walton

Edna Friedrick Walton

Twin Mountains

Up on the summit west of Main Street, the Marshall/Parke property, called Villa Caro, was put up for sale, and the fruit broker, Ed Fletcher, was determined to buy it. Although the property was available for less than $12,000, Fletcher did not have the money.

Not having the cash was agonizing for Fletcher, believing as he did in the potential of the inland area. He also knew the ranch's real value. Unable to raise the money locally, he went back East to try to get it from his family. They turned him down, despite hearing that the $11,500 sales price included 40 acres of citrus orchards, an enormous lily pond, outbuildings,

The "pond" on the Villa Caro Ranch is now the lake at Anthony's Grossmont restaurant.

and a magnificent Victorian home furnished with $85,000 worth of furniture. Even his description of the brush-covered mountain, better known later as Mount Helix, failed to impress them. Disappointed, Fletcher headed home but, on a whim, decided to tour the new Yellowstone Park. It was there, on a six-horse touring stage in the Park, that he met William B. Gross.

As it turned out, Gross, an actor and theatrical agent who was searching out land investments, made Fletcher's Villa Caro purchase possible. After visiting the ranch in 1902, Gross immediately put up half the money. Fletcher borrowed the rest from Joseph Sefton at San Diego Trust & Savings Bank and made Villa Caro the Fletcher family home.

Fletcher knew that proper roads and a dependable source of water were necessary for the back country to flourish, a need reinforced by the three-year drought that had begun in 1901. It was a time when valley ranchers and businessmen were going to extreme lengths to get water.

One attempt relied heavily on old military superstition. Homer and Gale Wright's grandfather had always maintained that, during the Civil War, rain followed the cannonading and musketry of combat. Valley men set out to shake rain loose from the heavens with gunpowder, dynamite, and mortars. Their bombardment continued non-stop for three days, until a mortar backfired, injuring both Joe Miller and Rex

One of the cannons used (more or less successfully) to blast rain from the skies.

Hall and bringing a halt to the pyrotechnics. When, a week later, rain began to fall, there was no agreement as to whether it was the result of the explosions, or simply a summer rainstorm. Not that it mattered; at long last, rain was quenching the thirst of the parched valley land.

Fletcher soon began subdividing his property east of El Cajon Boulevard on both sides of Washington Street. Hoping to sell the property to out-of-towners,

The train station at Villa Caro on Grossmont.

he pitched a huge tent on the property and arranged to bring trainloads of people down from Los Angeles. Disembarking in El Cajon, prospective buyers were loaded onto carriages and taken to the property, where lunch and the grand tour awaited them. Yet, times were hard and, for all Fletcher's salesmanship, the subdivision languished for more than twenty years.

Fletcher then began work on the Murray Hill Subdivision, named after his partner, James Murray, who became a partner in the ill-fated San Diego Flume Company. The two bought the flume system, minus the El Monte Pumping Station, and named it the Cuyamaca Water Company. Fletcher and Murray paid considerably less than the $150,000 that had been invested in the venture, but spent enormous amounts on building Murray Dam and replacing portions of the old wooden aqueduct with underground concrete syphons.

In the valley, spurred by the belief that eucalyptus trees would be purchased by the railroad for use as track ties, ranchers began planting them in huge groves. Down the eastern slopes of Grossmont, stripling trees soon lined the roadway clear to Main Street. One tract covered 20 acres on the south side of Chase Avenue, on Hardin Drive. Another grove covered the grounds where Cuyamaca School stands today. When the growers learned that eucalyptus wood was too soft and brittle for railroad ties, the wood was used to fuel valley fireplaces and stoves instead. Several of those groves remained as late as the 1940s.

Out on Dehesa Road, the El Cajon Cemetery was

in terrible condition so, in 1903, J.P.R Hall and L.R. Clingham formed a cemetery association. J.P.R's daughter, Marie Hall, took association minutes. It was the beginning of a family legacy.

W.D. Hall became president in 1919. His son, Rex, took over in 1949. Charles and Iola Hall Roether followed, upgrading and expanding the graveyard. The old portion was left as it had been at the turn of the century, but the new part was planted and maintained. The association also hired a sexton to oversee the cemetery; in later years, the Native Sons of the Golden West made an annual project of sprucing up the grounds. In 1980, Charles and Iola's daughter, Madge Sperry, assumed what had become a family obligation.

After scouting out land, Matilda Hofflund, wife of Alex and mother of seven children, settled her family in Bostonia. Alex, a Swede who, years before, had replaced an American conscripted for service in the Civil War, later became a citizen, settled in Illinois, and used his wartime savings to go to college. After marrying Matilda, he established a successful farm in the Midwest and, later, was as successful a real estate agent as he had been a farmer.

In those days, the Hofflunds enjoyed an upper-class life. There had been maids, and a dressmaker who moved in twice a year for a month at a time to sew all of the clothing for the family and help. But, the malaria that Alex had contracted during the war returned, and Matilda was forced to take him and the rest of the family to a warmer climate. So weak was

One of the many eucalyptus groves in the valley.

The Hofflund family.

Alex that Matilda closed up everything herself and moved West with her husband, two sick children, five healthy ones, and all of their possessions.

Deciding upon a new home in the El Cajon Valley had hardly been a choice made in haste. Before making a final selection, Matilda had ridden all over the county in a stagecoach. Finding Bostonia most agreeable, she bought a house, some acreage, and the Bostonia Store. Then, she placed her two oldest sons, Raymond and Eugene, in charge of the store.

Being postmaster was one of the responsibilities of running the store, but both young men were also skilled in other kinds of letters. Raymond was an editor of the *Evening Tribune* and a frequent contributor to the *Saturday Evening Post*. He courted a Kessler girl, married her, sired four children, then died of tuberculosis. Eugene Hofflund was also a successful writer, with stories and articles published in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Their sister, Mabel, no less talented than her brothers, had graduated from Northwestern University and the Chicago Art Institute before coming to El Cajon. At the age of 21, she fell in love with merchant and farmer William Stell. Thirty-seven-year-old William was as well known for his ability to squire a lady around a dance floor as he was for hard work, and he fairly swept Mabel off her feet. Mabel, however, was

Mabel Hofflund Stell and daughter, Leslie.

in no position to marry: her mother needed her to help care for her ailing father and two ill younger brothers. Eight years passed before Mabel felt free to marry.

Stell was more than ready to wed, but his mother, Barbara, was against it. Having run his household for a number of years, she was not about to relinquish control. During the eight years William and Mabel went together, Mable and Barbara Stell worked out an understanding; so, by the time the couple married, the two women were able to live together quite peaceably.

Any successful farming community is made up of men who, out of necessity, become skilled in a number of crafts. As a community becomes more sophisticated, those auxiliary skills are taken over by specialists. In the still-unsophisticated El Cajon Valley, there were as yet few specialists. Most graduates of the local high school worked the family farms. Even those who went on to college planned to return to the valley and work alongside their fathers. Girls got married, or became teachers *then* got married.

Thus, it was unusual when Amaziah and Illa Knox sent two sons and a daughter to medical schools. Frederick Birdseye and his half-brother, Charles Knox, became doctors; their sister, Mabel Knox, graduated from Missionary Nurses Training School in Battle Creek, Michigan, and accepted a post in Oakland, California. Before long, however, she was needed at home to care for her father. Even after both parents were dead, Mabel did not leave the valley; instead, Mabel devoted a lifetime to medical service in the El Cajon community, as did her brother, Dr. Charles Knox.

W.D. Hall was a businessman who understood a farming community's need for various services. He had long since installed a roller and boiler to process locally grown grain. He was also engaged in the well-digging and pump business, because pumping water from wells into holding tanks was a big business.

To meet other needs of the community, Hall installed a machine that made ice in 100-pound blocks, and a machine shop outfitted to repair and maintain farm machinery. In the store, he stocked wicks, kerosene lamps, glass chimneys, and other home and barn supplies.

Hall was a man of strongly held opinions. So completely did he believe in the honorable association between a retailer and his suppliers that he had nothing to do with salesmen who turned up at the Hall & Kessler Company. Therefore, when the kind of salesman Hall disliked most arrived one day to sell him pump supplies, W.D. tersely explained that he already had a supplier. Smiling a broad, insincere grin, the salesman kept talking, which annoyed W.D. no end.

The story goes that on the following Sunday, while Hall was out for a drive with Florence, he dropped in on a farmer who wanted him to dig a well. Who should he find there ahead of him? The smiling sales-

Wells were used to pump water into water tanks, like this one.

man, with his pump supplies spread out on the ground. Seeing Hall, the salesman straightened, smiled, and extended his hand. Outraged by the salesman's blatant attempt to steal his customer, Hall hauled off and lambasted him a good one.

* * *

"I remember," Hall's nephew Sammy says, "In those early years I would come down from Los Angeles to spend the summer with my grandfather, J.P.R. I worked in the fields extracting honey, picking fruit, and building boxes – which we purchased in pre-cut pieces and then nailed together. We would pack them with fruit and take them into San Diego to a wholesaler. The round trip down El Cajon Boulevard took the entire day."

J.P.R expected a full day's work from his workers. Sammy recalls the day he picked quinces and fed them to the cow. J.P.R displayed a bit of the family temper when he discovered Sammy's mistake . . . the quinces had soured the milk!

"I spent a lot of time after work with my cousin, Ray, killing snakes and nailing them to the barn wall," Sammy remembers. "If you prepared snakes just right, you could drain the oil out of them and, when you collected enough oil, you used it to fuel your lamps."

The cousins also trapped lynxes, wildcats, and mountain lions in the valley because each pelt brought $2 to $3 in San Diego.

Then, in 1905, Sammy's cousin, W.D. Hall, bought Kessler out. Hall & Kessler became the W.D. Hall Company.

Not too far away, F.W. Wilde presented a triangular piece of land to the community for use as a park. The lot was bounded by Lexington, Prescott, and Highland streets. It later became the site of the El Cajon library, But, for a few more years, books circulated among friends, or out of the drug store on Main Street. That same year, 1906, George and Sarah Sears arrived with their sons, George Meredith and Aubrey.

After working the family ranch with his father, young George became a San Diego police officer, starting out as a patrolman and retiring as Chief of Police. Soon after becoming a policeman, George married Lucille Griffin. They had two children: George Gordon and Phyllis Jane.

Aubrey Sears became a rancher and cattleman and married Marion Hall, one of W.D.'s daughters. They had two children, Aubrey M. and Florence.

* * *

Reverend Philip Thacher and his second wife, Alice, produced their third child (his sixth) and named her Rebecca. Rev. Thacher's oldest son, Philip, a member of the Berkeley ROTC, was called into service to prevent looting when the earthquake and fire of 1906 destroyed San Francisco. Also summoned to the scene was Edward Fletcher, then a major in the National Guard, with his San Diego unit.

"I remember," says Ed Fletcher, Jr., "Seeing him strapping on his saber. Frightened, I asked: 'Is there a war, Dad?' "

George Gray arrived in San Francisco the day after the quake aboard a ship from Australia. After taking a look at the damage, he remained aboard until the vessel docked in San Diego. Almost thirty years later, Gray became mayor of El Cajon.

In that year of 1906, however, Charles Roether was more stunned than most to hear of the earthquake, for he was in El Cajon and his wife and small children were living in Oakland. In the valley to check on the condition of his wife's Peerless Valley fruit trees, Roether soon learned that his family was safe, but that San Francisco has been destroyed. A piano-mover in that city, Roether figured that his business was lost and

Main Street at the turn of the century.

sent for his family join him in El Cajon. His wife, Maggie, and her sister, Minnie, sold their belongings and tailoring business. Then, packing up young Jack, "Chip," and "Dord," the two women left for El Cajon. Maggie and Charles built a home on the land Maggie had purchased years before next to her father's property and the Roethers became permanent valley residents.

The Roethers were not wealthy, but in those days it was possible to live well off the land. On land irrigated by a syphon system on the old Hawley flume line, they raised fruit trees, grapes, and household foods. Anything else they needed, they bartered for with eggs and truck crops.

The flume line originated as an open ditch along the edge of the hills from the top of Tunnel Hill. It then went on toward Santee, carried in underground cement and board pipes. Overflow water was dumped into a Santee lake. Hawley's flume, rebuilt three times before the San Diego Flume Company began supplying the valley with water, continued to supply water for years.

"I remember my neighbors so well," recalls Jack Roether today. "There were the Culbertsons, the Hawleys, Captain Greene, John Wise, the Cotas, the Arbayllos, and the Somers. All such good people."

Roether remembers that Somers, a friend of President Roosevelt, made speeches on his behalf when Teddy ran for president on the "Bull Moose" ticket in 1912.

There were also the Rodigs, and the large Talemante family, whose sons played professional ball as young adults. Over in nearby Decoteville lived the Peel and Fox families. Fox owned a lemon ranch on Tunnel Hill, as well as Lion's Gentlemen's Furnishings in San Diego. Near them lived the Miners, whose ranch was sold to two ladies from Oakland and given the name Edgemoor Farm. Years later, Edgemoor became a County home for the elderly.

Maggie Roether believed in helping others, and delivered many neighbor children, among them some of the Mukai babies. Others Maggie "saw to" were the Shepard brothers. Though both had college degrees, they were elderly and very poor. Maggie saw to it that they got enough to eat.

A Sunday Outing

One of the things "to do" in the year of 1906, was to take a weekend drive into the back country of the El Cajon Valley. For most, it was because the valley was so beautiful. Main Street also had the reputation as a rowdy place, complete with drunks, gambling, fights, and an occasional murder.

One Saturday night, William Stell noted a stranger – a handsome Mexican – in the store. After closing for the night, Stell stopped by the hotel bar, looked

Tasaburo Mukai

During World War II, Tom Mukai (right) was trained by the U.S. Army to infiltrate wartime Japan; happily, the war ended just one week before he and his group were set to leave, whereupon they served as interpreters for American occupation forces.

over the crowd, then walked down Main street to a barber shop. While awaiting a haircut, he heard someone yell, "Man killed!"

Hurrying with the others into the street, Stell saw the handsome Mexican sprawled in the dust, a knife stuck in his chest. The murderer, an avenging husband who had tracked his rival to El Cajon, escaped to Tecate. But, two years later, he was captured and brought back to El Cajon for trial.

A few weekend visitors came by automobiles, though most still traveled in wagons. Out from San Diego, the touring parties took the road through the tiny village of La Mesa, then climbed the grade up what would be called Mt. Gross for an unobstructed view of the neat patchwork of farms and ranches down in the valley. There always seemed to be someone along who knew the latest figures: valley ranchers were shipping up to 150 carloads of fresh grapes, 150 of oranges, 120 of lemons, 100 of dried fruits, 50 of olives, 35 of honey, 200 of grain, 300 of hay, and 50 of various green fruits each year.

The tourists then began the descent along the well-kept dirt road lined with eucalyptus trees. Many of the trees had been brought out to Villa Caro by train each weekend and planted by Colonel Fletcher and his son, Ed, Jr. These plantings were the first step in Fletcher and Gross' grand plan for Mt. Gross, and the larger hill beyond.

Their idea was to bring artists, writers, and musicians out to set up a "Bohemian" colony of talented people. Once the land was landscaped and divided into view lots, Gross intended to sell wealthy entertainers on the idea of purchasing vacation homesites. Fletcher had already filed a subdivision map with the county, naming the area Grossmont Park. Soon, he began laying out lots – but not ordinary, rectangular lots. To take advantage of the spectacular view, each lot was carved out of the hills, then linked with others by charming, wandering roads. Not everyone believed that the two men would pull off their plan. Scoffers called their efforts "Freaky Fletcher's Fancy Flight."

The derogatory title was often quoted by Sunday drivers as they neared the village of El Cajon, which consisted of a few stores and several homes. On the south side of Main, across from the Hotel del Corona, was the ivy-covered Corner Saloon. And in front of

Col. Edward Fletcher and Mme. Schumann-Heink at her home, Casa Ernestina, on Grossmont overlooking the El Cajon Valley.

the saloon was a well-used watering trough. West of the saloon was the Knox Hotel and livery stable. Amaziah and Illa Knox, however, were no longer there; they had moved out to the house that Amaziah built for Lankershim so many years before. West of the hotel there was nothing.

On the northeast corner of Main and Magnolia was the Stell-Burgess Mercantile Company, which also housed the post office. East of it were a jewelry store, paint shop, drug store, pool hall, Abel Adams' harness shop, and the W.D. Hall Company. Across the street on Main at Magnolia was the old warehouse. East of that were Bascum's meat market, a Chinese laundry, the Valley Blacksmith, and Rumsey's store. Across Prescott, then called South Lincoln, on the corner, was the El Cajon Valley Development Company, owned by George Sears, Sr., William Stell, and W.D. Hall.

As the tourists turned at Magnolia and headed out of town, they passed the only business on the street. Set behind the Corona Hotel stood the Knowles House Restaurant, owned by Lethia Knowles. Out past Pepper Drive, they passed the Harry and Fred Patterson places, then on toward the village of Lakeside and the magnificent Lakeside Inn. Pausing there, they marveled at the two-mile auto track built by the inn's owner – a track that became world famous when Barney Oldfield's racer attained the awesome speed of a mile a minute, inspiring the phrase "going like sixty."

After that record sprint, Oldfield reported that, at sixty miles an hour, he was going so fast that he was unable to breathe. In fact, he turned off his engine at that point and coasted across the finish line.

Beyond Lakeside was Foster, the point where most wagons and cars turned back because the roads into the mountains were still too rough for pleasure driving.

El Cajon Hotel

Within a few years, weekend drivers found a number of changes in the village of El Cajon.

The addition to the Knox Hotel, called the El Cajon Hotel, was owned by Benjamin McKinney and his wife, Laura. B.F. had started out in the valley by managing the Chase Ranch. After he bought the hotel, he became a familiar sight in his carriage, and later his auto, as he drove to and from the train depot to pick up and deliver guests and baggage. Once at the hotel, Mrs. McKinney and daughter Mae took over, lavishing service and attention on their charges.

Two other McKinney children, Ruby and E.F. (called Dick), moved into town later. And, by the time B.F.'s brother, Finch, arrived, the family already owned two houses on Prescott and three on Lexington. Finch was killed by a "machine" one Sunday evening

Knox Hotel before the annex was added.

Knox Hotel after the addition, and after cement sidewalks were added; the street remained unpaved for years.

on Mollison Avenue as he returned home from the theater, prompting the newspaper editor to admonish automobile drivers and pedestrians alike to exercise more care when walking along the "highway" at night. Finch's niece, Ruby, at that time the chief operator for the telephone company in El Cajon, was to be the last long distance operator in the firm's downtown San Diego office.

El Cajonians have always been sports crazy, and community support created another town baseball team. Like McFadden's original team, this one was made up of local businessmen. Their playing field, such as it was, was situated on what is now Park Street. Later, semi-pro ball was played on a field behind and west of the Corona Hotel.

Fair Dealing

Land sales began picking up again, and real estate man Al Miller opened an office in the Corona Hotel, where he brought interested customers from San Diego. Meeting them at the train in his surrey, he would deliver an eloquent spiel about the wonders of El Cajon, frequently using the phrase "Valley of Opportunity." He backed up that claim by driving them

Ruby McKinney running the telephone office.

B.F. and Laura McKinney with his auto.

up into the foothills for a panoramic view of the valley. After awing them with his tales and the view, he escorted them back to the Knowles' House restaurant behind the hotel on Magnolia for the restaurant's special chicken dinners. Mrs. Knowles charged Miller twenty-five cents for each.

Time and again, Miller's view, slogan, and dinner worked on prospective buyers. Believing that no one ever loses by dealing fairly with people, he lived that belief. A good example was the time an old man saw some property he wanted and gave Miller a check as down payment. But, within days of their agreement, the man learned that a relative back East had died. Unable to go through with the deal, he went to Miller, regretfully telling him that he had to back out of their transaction. Without hesitation, Miller went to his cash drawer, pulled out the old man's check, and returned it. Gratefully, the old man accepted. For Miller, the incident was forgotten.

Two decades later, a purposeful young man walked into Miller's office and introduced himself as the grandson of the old man who departed so suddenly. With that, he extended one of Miller's old cards. Well-thumbed and worn, the card looked as if it had been held often during the passing years. Telling Miller that the old man had often fingered the card as he spoke of the agent's kindness, the young man explained that it was the death of the old man's daughter that had called him back East.

"His daughter was my mother," said the young man. "She died when I was born."

Raised by his grandfather, and listening to his oft-repeated stories of the beauty and richness of the El Cajon Valley, the young man had come West to rekindle his grandfather's dream. Would Miller find a ranch for him?

Miller did. He had been right all along: fair dealing always pays.

A Bank for the Village

In 1907, ten of El Cajon's leading businessmen applied for a bank charter. Starting with $5,000 in capital, Thomas Ballantyne, C.O. Nichols, George Sears, William Stell, C.O. Graves, Allen Hawley, H.G. Candee, J.G. Burgess, and Hornbeck established the Cuyamaca State Bank. Hawley was named president and Candee cashier. Young Philip Thacher, newly graduated from Berkeley, was hired as the bank attorney.

Housed in the first floor of the El Cajon Hall at the corner of Main and Prescott Streets, the bank had a total of 20 stockholders. No dividends were paid for another five years but, for the next 40 years, the Cuyamaca State Bank was the only banking institution in El Cajon. In 1910, a new bank building was erected on the site of the old ivy-covered saloon on Main and Magnolia. The ground floor of the two-story building was occupied by the bank. The second floor was rented to the Masons and some lawyers.

In that same year, W.D. Hall wired his property for electricity. Hall always maintained that he did so because, with eleven children, his wife had too much

Troops from Camp Kearny passing through town in the early 1900s.

laundry to do by hand. However, the lines also led into the company to run a five-horsepower machine a full nine hours each day. The service cost the thrifty W.D. only 25 cents a day.

Another event in 1908 was the opening of the long-awaited El Cajon High School on what is now Third Street and Broadway. Students carried four subjects and bought their own books. Each subject involved five recitation periods, which obliged students to spend at least two hours in study each night.

Near the school, aviation enthusiast Don Gordon carefully built an engine-powered glider. On his first flight, the craft barely cleared the ground – but it did fly. That was only the beginning for Gordon; over the next few years, he built four airplanes and flew them over the Bostonia area.

Many years later, Gordon's exploits gained him entry to the exclusive aviation club known as the Early Bird Society, which was a group of aviation pioneers who had made solo flights in powered aircraft before December 17, 1916. At his induction into the society at the San Diego Aero-Space Museum, he donated an airplane engine built in 1911 by the Wright brothers. Two of his guests at the ceremony were Jack Roether and Rexford Hall, who as youngsters were awed spectators as Gordon took off into the wild blue yonder.

During the Civil War, Charles Chase, son of Levi Chase, had left school without Levi's permission and found himself assigned as a drummer boy to his father's regiment. At the end of the war, Charles was sent packing back to school, and Levi returned to the law then moved to San Diego. Upon his father's death, Charles elected to divide the family's valley property into smaller parcels and sell them. He engaged Al Miller to handle the subdivision and sale. Miller found an Eastern investor, who purchased the land for $150,000.

* * *

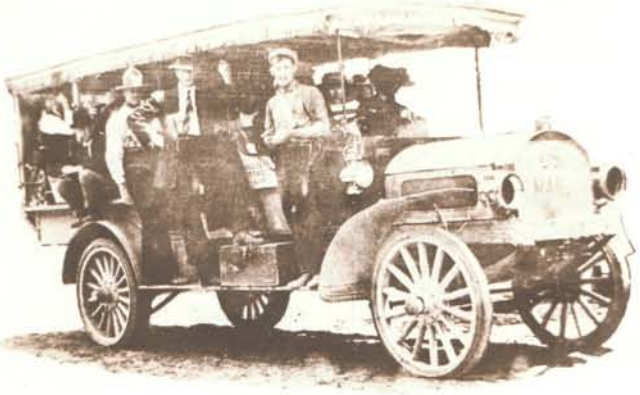
When W.H. Fisher purchased H.L. Christian's 80 acres near the Chase property, he named it El Granito Rancho but, after being advised by a local Indian of the medicinal qualities of a stream on the property, he changed the name to El Granito Mineral Spring.

It was peaceful at El Granito but, a few miles away, things got a little livelier upon occasion. Two jails had been built in town: a steel-barred jail for men, and a wooden-barred structure for women. As a boy, Ambrosio Ruis, called "Bocho," lived on Prescott Street with his parents. One of Bocho's childhood responsibilities was to carry lunches, prepared by his mother, to the men and women in the Magnolia and Douglas street jails.

In 1908, Roosevelt's Great White Fleet arrived in San Diego to much fanfare. Welcomed by the San Diego Chamber of Commerce and City, the ships' officers were taken by car and carriage out to El Monte

Schoolteacher Josephine Asher Vacher

Eugene Vacher with son, Eugene, Jr.



Mail was delivered to the ranches and farms by way of a mail truck along the "Star" route.

park for a picnic. On the way, they paused for refreshments at Col. Fletcher's Villa Caro, where Mrs. Fletcher had prepared an enormous bowl of punch, surrounded by a beautiful display of the ranch's navel oranges.

"Someone," says Ed. Fletcher, Jr., who remembers the occasion clearly, "spiked the punch and, before they left, Villa Caro was the scene of one wild orange fight."

Early in 1911, twelve-year-old Agnes Chambers and her father moved from Flinn Springs into a house behind what one day would be called Library Park. Agnes' sister had stayed with the Stells some time before while attending high school. Now, with her sister gone and her brothers either in college or the army, Agnes was left to keep house for her father. It was a big responsibility for such a little girl, for her father was seldom home. He worked 16 to 18 hours a day for W.D. Hall, filling orders for lumber for the Julian mines. There was little time for Agnes to play, what with school and housework, but when she could steal the time, she played with the Moriarity, Wilkes, Adams, and Rios children, who lived nearby.

Dehesa Road Folks

Three families from the East purchased the 40-acre Armour citrus ranch, which was located on what is now the southeast corner of Granite Hills Drive and Dehesa Road. Of the men: Charles C. Clark, a storekeeper; Frank Beatty, a contractor; and C.O. Smith, editor of an Eastern newspaper, only the Clark family was already living in the San Diego area. While Beatty and Smith returned to the East to collect their families, Charlie and Rose Clark and their sons, Karl and Hal, left San Diego for El Cajon by street car and then by train.

Met at the El Cajon depot by a farm wagon driven by Marcus Medina, Mr. Armour's hired hand, they rode to Main Street, where arrangements were made for groceries and the mail. Then it was on toward Chase's grain fields on Washington. At Mollison, grain gave way to orchards as they rolled out toward Granite Hills Drive . . . past the Caldwell place . . . and on until the orchards yielded to vineyards. Just past the Springsteads and the Kesslers, they found

Gathering of officers of the "Great White Fleet" at Col. Fletcher's Villa Caro ranch.

their ranch tucked among citrus trees. Their new home, beyond the well and a water tank, was an old packing house.

In the spring, the Smiths arrived and took up residence in the loft of the building. With the Beatty's arrival a short time later, it was time to draw lots for building sites. The Smiths got the flat ground by the citrus orchard and eucalyptus grove. The Clarks drew the land on the rim of the hill, and the Beattys claimed the site to the east of the Clarks.

The Clarks, Beattys, and Smiths on their property in the Granite Hills/Dehesa Road area.

With the division settled, the Clarks returned to Kansas to collect their furniture and to buy an E.M.F., the forerunner of the Studebaker. What a dandy automobile it was! The very latest in style and convenience, it had acetylene lamps, running boards, a motor (that needed a lot of cranking), and isinglass curtains to protect them from the rain. With them, they brought a Kentucky thoroughbred and a hunting dog. Traveling as fast as they dared, they stopped only for meals at Harvey Houses, which were the only really dependable restaurants. It took four full days to get back to California.

Once settled in, the three families became close friends of nearby egg ranchers Edward and Laura Shea, and their daughter, Helen. Almost immediately, the families began picnicking and camping out together. So close did the four families become that it became a tradition to spend holidays at the Shea house on Madison Avenue. After dinner, the children played chase and tag while the eight adults retired to the card table to play bridge, whist, or 500.

* * *

In those days, El Cajon's social life was quite well prescribed. A family was expected to go to church – there were four services each Sunday at the Presbyterian Church – and families took Sunday drives in the afternoons. Other nights of the week, adults played cards, attended dances, and if invited, the ladies belonged to the Colonial Book Club. Limited to 16 to 20 members, the club met once a month for lunch and

El Cajon's First Presbyterian Church, later called Community Church.

contract bridge. Each member was expected to purchase one book a year to be shared with other members.

* * *

In 1911, widower Arthur Embelton and his five children arrived from Mexico to purchase 20 acres on Chase Avenue, near what is now Emerald Street. The children were immediately enrolled in grammar school. Although their father was English, the children spoke only Spanish. A few years before, it had been the increasing numbers of non-English-speaking children that forced Theodore Birdseye and other teachers to go to the local newspaper to ask voters to allot more money for schools. At that time there were 128 students in El Cajon School, many of whom spoke little, or no, English. With some classes numbering more than fifty students, more teachers were sorely needed. But, with abolishment of the poll tax, state and county contributions had dropped from $15 per pupil to $10. Birdseye pleaded:

"We do not wish to cut teachers' salaries, but in San Diego, teachers no better than ours are receiving $100 a year more."

The amount necessary to improve education dramatically? A total of $700.

Arthur and Gilbert Embleton quickly learned to

The Sheas and friends outside their home at 1776 Madison.

speak English. Later, they took jobs as flume walkers, leaving home for two weeks at a time to patch the leaky aqueduct and clear away collections of soaked debris slowing the flow of water. Arthur later became a teamster, for a time driving the Yosemite stagecoach, and still later driving one of the teams dragging an earthmover to pave El Cajon Boulevard.

James A. Harris, a Confederate veteran and land developer, seeing great possibilities in El Cajon, built a home for himself and his wife, Minnie, on Orange Street, west of Magnolia. The house included an extra-large roof, which allowed them to collect water for their cistern. In dry seasons, it was common for Minnie to hear a knock at the door and find a child with a pail "come borrowing" water.

Harris bought additional land to the east to get rid of the owner's exceptionally noisy donkeys, then subdivided the acreage and began building some major streets. That done, he proposed the organization of a Chamber of Commerce and began working for the incorporation of the city. Minnie helped by carrying a petition of incorporation around to area residents.

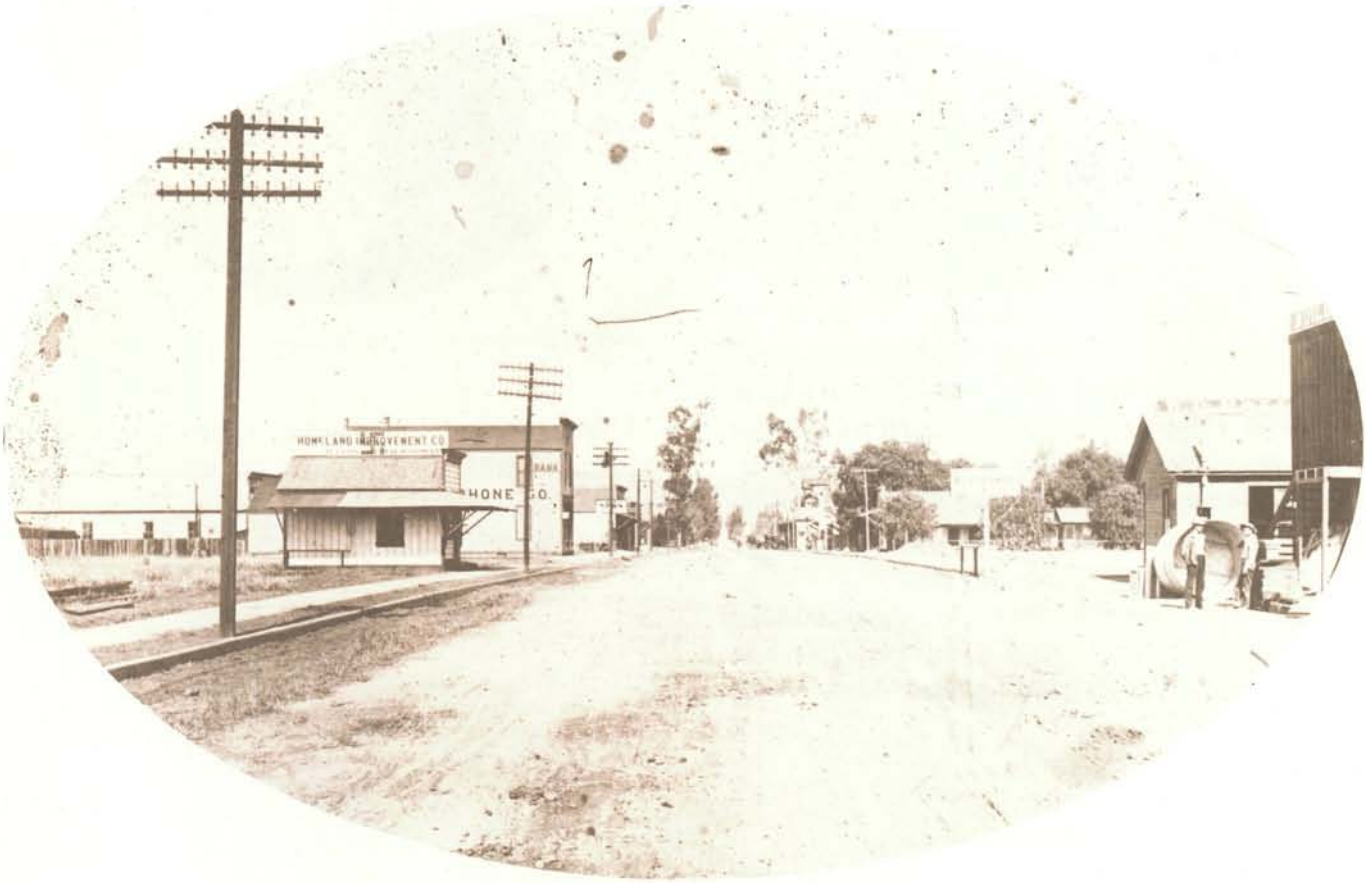
Not everyone was in favor of cityhood. For example, the proposed city boundaries had two men up in arms. P.M. Price and Alexander Legge hired a lawyer – who was at that time Mayor of San Diego – to challenge having their property along Chase Avenue included. Other landowners on the northern side of the boundaries felt the same way. The opposition sent the question to the county surveyor, who revised boundaries to exclude property owned by W. Farley, John Ballantyne, Miller and Roberts, Josephus Asher, Price, and Legge.

James A. Harris and his wife, Minnie.

With that controversy ended, the cityhood election on November 12, 1912 recorded the votes of 158 persons: 123 favoring cityhood, 35 against. The new city covered nearly one and one-quarter square miles.

The stylish Embleton men on their way to church.

Main Street in the early part of the century. The dirt street is graded, and sidewalks and utility poles have been installed.



TOWNSPEOPLE 1912–1929

The next few years saw Americans concerned about a revolution in China and war in the Balkans. The U.S. Marines landed in Cuba and Nicaragua, the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution empowered Congress to levy graduated income taxes on incomes above $3,000 a year, and then came formation of the Federal Reserve System, labor woes, challenges to male supremacy from Suffragettes, the beginning of World War I in Europe, and completion of the Panama Canal.

Locally, the main topic of conversation continued to be the drought, but taxes, wars, banks, voting, strikes, and the opening of the Panama Canal eventually had considerable impact upon the people living in the valley.

In this, the first year of El Cajon's cityhood, citizens devoted most of their attention to what would most benefit the community. First off, the Trustees appointed a City Health Officer, made arrangements to grade streets, considered constructing badly needed bridges, mapped the city, and ordered dirt streets to be sprinkled on a regular basis.

Though city streets were somewhat improved, roads beyond city limits remained appallingly rough. Some stretches were still so cluttered with rocks and boulders that stage drivers often resorted to dynamiting their way through.

Oddly enough, road authorities accused the new Mack trucks of ruining the roadways and banned the newfangled rigs from many roads and streets. Only when automobile owners, sick and tired of jacking up their cars and pushing them over rocks, rebelled and brought their increasing political clout to bear, did most counties and cities begin to pave roads.

On a regional basis, representatives from San Diego, Los Angeles, and Phoenix met in 1912 to select a route for a highway running from the Pacific coast to Arizona. When they failed to agree, San Diegans decided to build their own road. The project proved to be difficult, and was made more burdensome when newly formed Imperial County could not raise the money to build a wooden road over the sand dunes.

Once again, Colonel Fletcher stepped in, helped raise the money by subscription, and saw to it that a plank road was built to the Colorado River. It was over this road that many El Cajon couples eloped to Yuma; a long way to go, but Arizona, unlike California, had no waiting period for those eager to wed.

Ordinances, Laws, and Newcomers

As a new city, El Cajon needed to enact laws to make the transition from a village to a town. Among the first such decrees were ordinances banning range cattle from municipal streets and prohibiting hog ranching within city limits. Trustees followed that up by planning a city water system and electric lights for downtown streets.

For their part, local citizens joined the volunteer fire department, supported the school district, and tied the community closer together with socials, school programs, and parties – like the annual Christmas party, when toys, clothing, and candy were distributed to valley children.

These early efforts at creating a city were scarcely begun when members of the Woman's Progress Club declared that far more had to be done to make the city truly respectable. Unequivocally, the ladies demanded stronger enforcement of liquor laws and an end to rowdyism.

Truth be told, El Cajon was known as a wide-open town. In response to the Progress Club's outcry, the city moved to rid downtown of saloons and the toughs that habituated them. Not that the ladies won their demands entirely on their own; remember that nationwide Prohibition was only five years away – the women's anti-liquor actions reflected a national trend.

Going along with civilizing the city, the Board of Supervisors granted the City Marshal authority to carry a rifle – and underscored that authority with 5,000 rounds of ammunition. Not that the marshall was the only armed man in town. Neighboring ranchers were asked to refrain from firing guns on their own property because their stray bullets were endangering townspeople.

Other changes included the sale of the Knox Hotel to W. L. Wilkerson, a campaign by the Woman's Assembly to build Library Hall in the triangular park off Prescott Street, and the arrival of a new minister for the First Presbyterian church.

Reverend Charles Richardson proved to be a blessing to the new city in many ways. He began by changing the church's name to "Community Church" in hopes that a more generic name would bring in additional parishioners. After all, there was competition for worshippers, with a new Methodist church in Santee, a Presbyterian church in Lakeside, and the newly formed Seventh-Day Adventists planning a church of their own.

The first sign of dissatisfaction with the way the Board of Trustees was handling things cropped up when only one of the original members, J.B. Rumsey, was re-elected. The ousting of the others portended ill for the young city. Other elections and other close calls followed.

Yet, a festive touch was added to the city calendar with establishment of Orange Day on February 22 – a day set aside to celebrate the orange harvest. The San Diego newspapers had a field day heralding the benefits, advantages, and opportunities of El Cajon. And their readers responded: horses, buggies, and automobiles vied for parking spaces as people flooded into town. Even more people arrived by train, filling every available vehicle for the ride to the business district.

Main Street was lined with fruit displays extolling the amazing productivity of the valley. Grapefruit from the Seidel ranch measured 20 inches in circumference and weighed more than three pounds apiece. Tangerines were so large that many people assumed they were oranges. Boxes of prize-winning raisins were in the spotlight, as were abnormally large Elberta peach tree branches – a sign proclaimed that the branches had grown no less than ten feet in length and an inch in diameter in one year. Bottled soda water from the El Granito Springs Company was on sale, as were penned hogs and poultry.

More Newcomers

Those early days of El Cajon cityhood saw a steady flow of new citizens. The Clement Busch family bought the Josephus Asher ranch in the center of the valley. Busch, his wife, and his children, Dinon, Karl, and Ruth, chose to live in the valley on the recommendation of their relatives, the Donohues. Busch remodeled the former Asher home by removing the top floor and adding on to the first floor. The Busch children enjoyed the six-foot reservoir just as much as the Asher children had.

Swedish immigrants Anna and architect Edward Liljenberg arrived in the valley about the same time, and started an avocado, lemon, grapefruit, peach, and Valencia orange ranch. As time went by, the couple had a son, Stanley, and two daughters, Melva and Irene. Both girls became educators.

Independent Anna was one of the first women in the valley to own her own automobile, a sprightly little Model T in which she wheeled around town on the slightest pretext. Folks wondered who did the more gadding about in their cars – Anna or Minnie Harris, the mayor's wife.

Arthur and Mabel Ballantyne recorded the birth of a son, Arthur, Jr., the third-generation Ballantyne

Busch children swimming in the reservoir.

Orange Day attracted people to Main Street from all over San Diego County.

Arthur and Mabel Ballantyne on their wedding day in 1897.

Ballantyne brothers: John, James, Arthur, Thomas.

Lillian, Marion, and Tom Ballantyne.

male in El Cajon to be named Arthur. Baby Arthur had three older sisters, Ann, Torry, and Lillian. A brother, Robert, was born later. The children's father, Arthur, Sr., opened the first automobile agency in El Cajon. Later, he went to work for W.D. Hall, ultimately becoming the company secretary.

The Ballantyne clan was a large one. The newborn had an Uncle Thomas, owner of a ranch at Magnolia and Fletcher Parkway. Thomas married Lillian Rosenberger, baby Arthur's aunt. Another aunt, Marion, married Clifford Smith and soon gave Arthur a cousin, Winifred.

Another uncle, James – always referred to as "James at Santee" to differentiate him from another James in the family – owned a dairy ranch on Magnolia. Then there was Uncle John, a rancher; the one who, while on the school board, hired the spirited, young Theodora Birdseye as a teacher and promptly married her. John, always active in civic organizations, was one of the founders of the Farmer's Insurance Exchange, and became a director of the El Cajon Valley Irrigation District. Ballantyne Street and Ballantyne Elementary School were named for him. He and Theodora had a daughter, Jean.

The family's other James, called J.L., did not arrive until 1915. He married Lillian Ballantyne, the widow of his cousin, Thomas. And there was Uncle Andrew, who married Erna Schutte and provided baby Arthur with two more cousins, Elizabeth and Erna Louise.

Uncle Andrew helped organize El Cajon's first volunteer fire department. He also served on the city council, as president of the Chamber of Commerce, in the Masonic Lodge and Shrine, Eastern Star, and American Legion. Uncle Jack, a brother of J.L. and Andrew, served first with Canadian forces during World War I, then with the United States military. His service did not call for him to fight in the trenches; instead, he entertained troops as a prizefighter and as an exhibition soccer player.

Col. Ed Fletcher and Grossmont

Back in 1902, Colonel Fletcher and his foreman had begun development of Grossmont by tying rags on trees and bushes to mark out fourteen miles of narrow road. Ever the promoter, Col. Fletcher prevailed upon famed actress Lillian Russell in 1913 to officially open the first road. Lots originally offered for $800 an acre began rising in price after internationally famous operatic contralto Madame Ernestine Schumann-Heink erected a magnificent estate on a lot command-

From the balcony of her Grossmont estate, Mme. Schumann-Heink could survey the entire El Cajon valley.

ing an unobstructed view of the valley and the Cuyamacas beyond. Casa Ernestina, as she named the house, was completed in 1913.

Poet and composer of "I Love You Truly," Carrie Jacobs Bond had earlier built a house nearby. Next to purchase land was William Havrah Hubbard, a Chicago and San Diego music critic and editor. Then came German contralto Johanna Gadski; Venezuelan composer and pianist Teresa Carreno; the composer of "Land of Sky Blue Water," Charles Cadman Wakefield; and Owen Wister, creator of "The Virginian," the novel that set the tone for Western novels for generations.

Though the death of Wister's wife brought an end to his plans to live on Grossmont, he built a house there and named three streets: Molly Woods Avenue, the name of his school-marm in "The Virginian", Wister Drive, and Virginian Lane. Other celebrities followed in quick succession, echoing the words Schumann-Heink wrote to Fletcher:

"I read so much about 'Paradise'; well, I think I found my dreams realized when I saw Grossmont in our blessed California."

Before long, Grossmont enjoyed a modest renown as a peaceful retreat for artists whose concert tours were long and demanding. Committed to the area, Schumann-Heink purchased a citrus ranch on the northern slope of Grossmont, between Chase and Washington in El Cajon, that had once belonged to Hervey Parke. Her son, Ferdinand, opened a butcher shop on the ground floor of the lodge building on Main Street. So popular was he that, when he married, the city fathers passed a resolution wishing him happiness. Schumman-Heink's daughter, Marie, married Hubert Guy and they moved to the citrus ranch and converted it to a modern poultry ranch. Today, their son, Hubert, and his wife, Jean, live in Casa Ernestina.

William Gross, too, occupied a home on Grossmont, an estate that he designed himself to fit on the El Granito Avenue lot. Later, Madame Schumann-Heink bought that home for her son, Henry.

With the roads in and buildings going up, Fletcher sold his home to Grace Godwyn-Sperry, who turned it into the Grossmont Inn, a deluxe restaurant for discriminating guests from San Diego and beyond. Guests at the Inn were met at the Grossmont train station, cloaked by the driver in linen dusters, and driven across the summit to the Inn. There, greeted by white-gloved servants, they were ushered to broad porches from which they could survey the purple mountains in the distance and the rolling foothills encircling the lush, green valley below.

Inside, they enjoyed an exquisite meal prepared by a French chef. The chef had been imported from the East coast to preside over skilled cooks who produced three magnificent main meals a day, as well as an un-

forgettable high tea. For six years, the Grossmont Inn hosted the wealthy and well-known. When closed as a commercial business, the building was taken over as a home by a succession of owners, including Ed Fletcher, Jr., and his wife, Mildred, in the 1920s.

But, in 1914, even with Grossmont property selling well, Colonel Fletcher did not slow down. As he wrote to his children in his book, *The Memoirs of Edward Fletcher:*

"Your mother and I bought Grossmont in 1902. It was a gamble but our dream was there and it was 'bread and butter' to us during the hard days." He also says, "My love of the back country, its possibilities of development, both land and water, had a strong appeal to me."

Fletcher's words foretold his continuing involvement with the inland area. As a State Senator, he influenced others to back San Diego and East County projects. Champion of highways, dams, railroads, and land development, he was willing to donate personal land to make proposed changes realities.

In the years to come, Fletcher donated the land between Mt. Helix and Grossmont to the irrigation district to build a dam and a lake. After installing electric and water lines, he donated land for Grossmont High School. He also lent a hand to the cultural arts, loaning Villa Caro ranch land to a theater group and building an outdoor stage for them. Their productions drew audiences from all over the county. At one time, he even owned part of a movie studio filming in the area.

Valley Land Continues to Develop

When R.T. Robinson purchased the 100-acre Dougherty citrus grove over on the east side of the valley and built a home, no one suspected the magnitude of the project. The house, sited on a hill overlooking the valley, was to have twelve rooms. In the year that it took to build the estate, the family occupied an entire floor of the Hotel Del Coronado. Robinson, an heir to the Case Threshing Company family, called the ranch Rancho La Morada. In later years, the Diachiaras purchased the ranch, added another 15 rooms to the house, and turned the property into an olive-producing ranch. The house has since been known as the Olive Hills Mansion.

Robinson was known for more than being wealthy and owning a fabulous estate. An aviation enthusiast, he commissioned Wright Aeronautics of New Jersey to build an engine identical to the one ordered by

Col. Fletcher, his son, Ed Fletcher, Jr. (in jodhpurs), and their auto crew, out to set a coast-to-coast record.

Charles Lindbergh for the *Spirit of St. Louis*. Robinson's engine was completed first, allowing him to present it to Lindbergh, who used it on his historic New York-to-Paris flight. Robinson also built San Diego's El Cortez Hotel and the San Diego Athletic Club.

Growing Up in the Valley

In the early years of the Twentieth Century, life in East County offered plenty of work for everyone – children, too. Youngsters were kept busy filling wood boxes, caring for animals, milking, blacking boots, and sweeping porches.

Roger Beatty, who grew up on his family's place on Dehesa Road, remembers complaining, unsuccessfully, to his mother that he was the only boy in school who had to wear a white shirt, long black stockings, high-top shoes, and knickers. Eugene Vacher remembers wearing them years after Beatty's ordeal. And much later, in the mid-1940s, newcomer Robert Browning wore much the same clothing to his first day in school. Bob, whose family had just moved here from what his mother deemed the "Genteel South," still remembers that outfit:

"I wore a Little Lord Fauntleroy shirt with ruffled collar, a tie, and dark plaid knickers."

He also recalls his classmates' reaction to his antebellum finery:

"Stunned," I think best describes them, Browning says. "Then they broke into hysterical laughter." When the school bus arrived and they were all aboard, Alan Hall whipped the troops into a fervor by shouting "Nobody should have to dress that way!" That started a charge on young Bob and he was swiftly "depantsed." When the bus arrived at school, however, the boys relented and restored both Bob's trousers and his shredded dignity.

"Alan became my best friend after that," Browning says. "I knew that he was just trying to let me know that I was improperly dressed for El Cajon. Little did my mother know that she had sent me out into the midst of a bunch of western ruffians."

For boys and girls in the early years of the century, there were far more clothes to be donned than there are today. Girls, in particular, wore layers of clothing that included bloomers, slips, long white stockings, button shoes to above the ankles, a dress, and sometimes a pinafore.

Getting to school took many children along Main Street, which smelled temptingly of yeasty bread and rolls from local bakeries. Children traveled on foot, on

bikes, or on horseback. Corrals at the high school and El Cajon Grammar school were filled with horses ridden by students and teachers alike.

Inside the grammar school, children sat at desks fastened firmly to the floor. At the front of the room, right in front of the teacher's desk, was a line of benches where the boys and girls were summoned to recite their lessons.

At recess, a favorite game among the younger boys was "shinny," a game similar to ice hockey, but played on dirt. The puck was a small tin can, the hockey stick any convenient stick or tree branch, and the goal simply a line scratched in the dust. And like most boys' games, it had its hazards: after a spirited game or so, the battered cans developed sharp corners and edges. Despite teachers trying to outlaw the game, the boys formed impromptu teams and played on.

After school, eight-year-old Leslie Stell often invited her friends home. Her house, behind her father's store on Main and Magnolia, had an enormous yard, edged at the back by a row of pepper trees bordering what is now Rea Street. Leslie and her friends loved to climb those trees, taking with them games like Parchesee and Authors. There, perched on the limbs of the trees, they would giggle, sing, and play their games. Not that playtime lasted very long, because, Leslie, like other girls her age, had to practice the piano or some other instrument, see that her room was tidy, and set the table for dinner. In the spring and summer, her chores expanded to encompass picking garden vegetables for dinner.

Leslie Stell and her mother at the beach.

For children and adults alike, entertainment was found at the annual Chautauqua shows, which set their tents up north of Park Street. Begun back east in 1874 as an educational movement for Sunday School teachers, the traveling tent show at first featured only lecturers. After 1909, music, magic, and humor were added, making Chautauqua an important training grounds for musicians and entertainers. But, first and foremost, Chautauqua brought culture to those living in farming communities, small towns, and villages. While adults enjoyed the lectures and speeches, children endured the high-falutin' words only because they knew the "good stuff" came later.

Logs from northern forests were rafted down the coast to San Diego mills. Families on excursion could take a steamer to the mouth of the harbor, then board a log raft under tow. Despite the children's pleas to "go faster!", log rafts moved slowly – once under way, there was no way to stop them.

Trying Times

There were times throughout the year when children and their parents differed on what was entertainment and what constituted disaster. During the 1913 freeze, for instance, when water in the flume froze solid, the youngsters went skating. But their parents knew that cold weather brought little reason to rejoice. For a week and more, night temperatures dipped into the low 20s, and citrus began dropping off the trees.

The freeze spelled the end of Beatty, Clark, and Smith's hopes of becoming successful ranchers. The partners' badly damaged trees were no longer capable of producing enough fruit to support all three families.

Clark began clerking at the Stell store. Within two years, he and Stell formed a partnership and built a new store on the southeast corner of Main and Magnolia, calling it the Stell-Clark Company.

Smith went back to the newspaper business. After running the *El Cajon Valley News* for a while, he bought the *La Mesa Scout* and published it, too. Publishing a newspaper was something he was well suited for, and Smith came to realize how much he had missed that profession while trying to be a rancher. Beatty, the only farmer in the group to begin with, kept the ranch going.

The 1913 freeze did not discourage others from trying their luck in the valley. Particularly when there was a scarcity of chickens in San Diego. The Spainhauers, the Greenwoods, and Elmer and Jeannie Rogers started poultry farms. Before long, there were so many chicken and turkey ranches in the area that owners formed the San Diego County Poultry Producers Association. Following the poultry farmers were the dairy farmers, and a number of people like Dewey Buckel were full of high hopes for profitable investments. Though the poultry ranches and the dairies continue operating for many years, they were to face tough times in the decades that followed.

Still More Newcomers Arrive

During that year of the freeze, the Mueller family arrived from Montana and enrolled their son, Edwin, in Grossmont High School. A bright student, he went on to the University of California, but cut short his studies to join the French army in the early years of World War I. In France, he served in the ambulance corps, was injured, and returned to El Cajon, where he accepted the Red Cross' offer of a cross-country speaking tour. When America entered the war in 1917, Edwin enlisted and was serving at Verdun when the Armistice was signed.

In 1920, Mueller was elected mayor of El Cajon. Two years later, he won election to the Assembly and, in 1926, became a State Senator. During those terms in Sacramento, he sponsored a bill that led to development of a state park on Mission Bay. He was also a strong supporter of legislation creating both the American Canal and Hoover Dam.

Descendants of the pioneer Ruis family are Daniel Ruis, his wife, and children: (top, l-r) Debora; Abel; Daniel, Jr.; Cyndi; Philip; and Tim. Middle: Patrick, Marie Antoinette. Seated: Danny, Sr.; his wife, Elia; Matthew; and Frederick.

In 1913, another newcomer at Grossmont was teacher and coach Jack Mashin. A remarkable man, Mashin had attended Montana State College as a football star, left school to go with his National Guard unit to pursue "Pancho" Villa down on the Mexican border, then joined the Army Air Corps in World War I. He retired from Grossmont in 1960 after leading dozens of football, basketball, and track teams to championships. During those years, he was selected by the State Department to coach the Pakistani team for the 1956 Olympic Games. That same year, he also helped coach the Navy's Olympic entries. Two of the men who had trained with him at Naval Training Center won gold and silver medals. In 1964, Mastin accepted a position at Grossmont College as a field coach, and remained there for another 18 years.

But, in 1913, El Cajon citizens began requesting improvements to their city. To pay for the work, the Trustees were forced to levy taxes in the amount of 90 cents on each $100 of assessed valuation. It was hardly a popular decision! The city marshal, appointed official Tax Collector, reported plenty of grumbling.

With so many people moving into the area, former "bronc buster" Ambroisio Ruis was hired as a U.S. marshal and constable. Known from his Julian days as a "town tamer," Ruis assumed the post he would hold for 30 years. With the ability to speak several languages – English, Spanish, and several Indian dialects – he was called upon frequently by the courts and Father LaPointe, the priest responsible for St. Mary's Church in El Cajon, as well as the reservations in the backcountry.

It was said of Ruis that he was a great tracker, a phenomenal runner, and that he could track "a cockroach through a wheat field." As a lawman, Ruis used distinctive methods to make prisoners sorry that they had taken up a life of crime. One of the marshal's favorites was to bind his prisoner hand and foot, dump him in the back of a wagon, then head for town over the roughest roads he could find. While his way of imprinting upon a prisoner's mind the right of law and the wrong of lawlessness did not always deter a man from repeating an offense, few criminals dared show any feistiness while they were under Ruis' supervision.

Ruis married twice and had a total of twelve children. His son, Joe, became a businessman, a banker, and a bank stockholder with Cuyamaca State Bank. It was on Joe Ruis' word and a handshake that many a local loan was sealed.

The Rios were another pioneer family that flourished in the valley. By the 1960s, there were four generations of Peter Rios with birthdays exactly 30 years

Attorney Philip Thacher; below, his wife, Ada, and their offspring: Philip, Emily, and Edwin.

apart. The senior Rios, called "Tata" by his family, owned 18 acres on Rios Canyon Road, where he raised horses, cattle, grain, and vegetables. Both Rios Elementary School and a road were named in his honor.

Attorney Philip Thacher, active on the local school board, met a pretty school teacher named Ada Lee Cross and convinced her to marry him. They moved to a ranch on Pepper Drive and raised three children: Edwin, Philip, Jr., and Emily. In the years that followed, Philip, Sr., became a justice of the peace and El Cajon's city attorney. An athletic man, he rode a bicycle to work each day. With C.S. Judson, he developed Pine Valley and, as a water expert, constructed that community's first water system.

Philip, Sr., also planted acreage out on East Pepper Drive and in a section of Hillsdale overlooking the home Jamacha ranch.

Philip and Ada's daughter, Emily, grew up and married John Hood, a Marine pilot. Philip Jr., eventually became a chicken rancher. Edwin, upon graduating from Stanford University, followed in his father's footsteps and became a lawyer. In his lifetime, he was also a justice of the peace, chairman of the County Republican Committee, and a municipal judge. He married Nadine Smith, and they had four children; Penne, Gary, Bonnie, and Glenn.

J.P.R.'s daughter, Mary Hall, after saving a percentage of her teaching money came home to complete her own education. After graduating from San Diego Normal School, she left the valley for 16 years to teach in other communities. Then her parents fell ill, and responsible Mary returned to care for them. When they died, she stayed on in the family home. At her funeral, many years later, she was buried beside other family members at the El Cajon Cemetery. Reverend Richardson's eulogy emphasized that Mary's "entire life was one of rigid adherence to the principles of righteousness and service" – and that hers was an inspiring influence in the community. It was the highest praise a woman could aspire to in those days.

In 1913, eighteen-year-old Rexford Hall graduated from El Cajon Union High School. Still at the corner of Third and Broadway, the school graduated a class of 14 students: Rex, Myrtle Sears (called "Tweet" by her friends), Muriel Emery, Carroll Smith, Eva Farley, Marion Ballantyne, Roy Legge, Abbie Hawley, Elsie Rodig, Blair Temple, Laura Ehlers, Uradell Bruce, Morton Thacher, and Gertrude Smith. In the fall, Rex headed for the University of California at Berkeley.

El Cajon High School.

A Favorite Teacher

Southeast of the valley, a baby girl born to Josephine and Eugene Vacher lived but a few, brief months. The child's death was devastating for Josephine, coming as it did in the same year that her beloved mother and father passed away. When the grief did not diminish, family members began to worry. Would she ever recover? It was during this difficult time that her uncle, a trustee in the Tecate School District, offered her a job teaching in a school on the border. That job, with all of its demands, was the saving of Josie. Leaving her husband and son, she set up housekeeping in a cottage close by the school. Occasionally, Eugene drove to Tecate with their five-year-old, red-haired son, Gene, to spend a few days with her.

So well liked was Eugene, Sr., that Captain Mosely, whose cavalry unit was stationed on the border, staged a full mounted review of his command to honor

Eugene, Josephine, and Gene Vacher on the Fourth of July.

the Frenchman on his birthday. Young Gene got a present, too: Mosely gave him a pocket watch, which the lad cherished. The friendship between Mosely and the Vacher family did not end when Josephine left Tecate the following year – it lasted a lifetime.

When Josephine Vacher returned to the valley, she accepted a teaching job at the old El Cajon School. One of her first-grade students that year was her own six-year-old son, Gene. The boy, conversant and literate in both English and French, rode to school with her each day in a horse-drawn buggy – until automobiles caused the horse to shy. The day the horse balked on Parson's steep grade down to Chase Avenue was the last day Josephine drove to school. From then on, she and Gene took the school bus. The bus, a wooden cab atop a Ford chassis, had benches on both sides, with a third running down the center. Mr. Sheppard, the driver, took a liking to the Vachers and willingly picked them up for concerts and other local entertainment, too.

An early school bus.

The year Gene was in first grade, his mother brought a bird's nest to school, placing it high on a cabinet so no one could see or touch it. During science period, she retrieved it, tipped it to one side and pointed. The children gasped, for inside the nest was a lining of fiery red down.

"Guess," directed Mrs. Vacher. "Guess where the birds got the red to line their nest."

Turning as if one, the entire class stared at Gene. Sure enough, the red lining within the nest was the same blazing color as Gene's hair.

It seems that Eugene, Sr., gave the boy haircuts out in the yard. The birds, seeing the fine, bright strands, used them to "feather" their nest.

Karl Busch was also in that class, and recalls a sandbox and miniature samples supplied by Josephine. It was an activity that Busch recalls with enthusiasm.

"Mrs. Vacher was a wonderful teacher," he reminisces. "She brought in dozens of different miniatures, and allowed us to build a block of stores and then fill them with tiny supplies." The fascination for miniatures remained with Karl for a lifetime. Until his retirement, Busch was employed by General Dynamics ... as a model builder, working not with Lilliputian villages but with aircraft, missiles, and space vehicles – all the toys of the Space Age.

When Gene got a little older, he followed family tradition and studied music. His trumpet and cornet lessons were on Saturdays in San Diego and to get there, he and at least one parent caught Mr. Adams' stage line. Dropped off in El Cajon, they transferred to the motorized stage that took them into San Diego. Saturdays in downtown San Diego were a big event for the little boy. After his lesson came shopping, lunch, and then – only then – came the theater.

Captured by the magic spell woven by vaudeville's singers, dancers and musicians, Gene loved the Savoy, the Pantages, the Plaza, Superba, Colonial, Californian, Spreckles, Fox, and Balboa theaters. It was at the Spreckles that he first heard John Philip Sousa play his famous marches. There, too, he saw Craetore's band, the famous vaudeville team of Gallagher and Shean, and the masterful musicians of the French Guard Republican. So great was the child's love of the latter that, years later when stationed in France as an Army Bandmaster, Gene had his band play Gallic tunes whenever he was on a bill with the Republican. In turn, the French band played American music.

El Cajon remained a highly successful farming community well into the 20th century. Rich in fruits and truck crops, even small landowners made profits, as much as $2,000 a year – a good living in those first decades. That is why the Cornelius family, and Edna and Lester Walton came to El Cajon. They were not the only ones. In fact, the population had grown so rapidly that a delegation from the inland area went to Sacramento to urge state highway commissioners to pave a road from San Diego through La Mesa, and into El Cajon.

John and Nancy Cornelius were soon joined by their son, Barney, who developed a 15-acre ranch at

Lexington Avenue and Anza and lived there until 1925, when he moved to La Cresta, an area he later subdivided. Barney and his wife had six sons and a daughter. John's sister, Rheudia, also moved to the valley, bringing her daughter, Violet, and son, Vernon, to run a chicken ranch at Ballard and Washington.

Former Brooklyn debutante Edna Walton had her eye on the 50 acres next to the W.D. Hall Company, but was convinced to purchase the old Lankershim place from the Knox family. The Walton's adopted son, Perry, grew up in that old house near Madison and Third. He watched his once-wealthy parents struggle unsuccessfully to develop a paying farm but, despite their labors, there was never enough water. They never really got the hang of dryland farming, and then came the Depression years. Although they continuing living in the valley, their savings just seemed to waste away.

Edna and Lester Walton's son, Perry.

Panama-California Exposition

In 1915, the biggest thing in Southern California was the Exposition held in San Diego's Balboa Park to mark the completion of the Panama Canal.

San Diego had never presented a more beautiful face to the world. Magnificent buildings and lavish landscaping welcomed hordes of fair-goers. Exhibits from other cities, states, and counties caught the eye, as did moving pictures, races between auto drivers Cliff Durant and Barney Oldfield, and exotic dancers. Visitors flocked to an authentic Chinatown and a rebuilt Indian Village. They toured the beautiful Panama pavilion, and marveled at the menagerie – a rather prosaic collection of animals that formed the nucleus of today's world-famous San Diego Zoo.

The Exposition was opened by President Woodrow Wilson, who switched on a light hanging from a balloon to illuminate the fairgrounds. Dignitaries visiting the exposition over the next two years included the new President Theodore Roosevelt, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Roosevelt and his wife, Eleanor.

The Rainmaker

For vistors to San Diego, it was easy to believe that everything was just about perfect in Southern California. But the truth was that the area continued to suffer from drought. Mountain lakes were so low that wells were dug in the East County to supply water to the flume. So precarious was the balance between vegetation, humanity, and water, that, in January 1916, the San Diego Common Council entered into a deal with Paul Hatfield, a rainmaker. Hatfield not only promised to deliver rain, he vowed to fill the city's new Morena Reservoir "to overflowing." If, that is, the Council would pay him $10,000.

Critics scoffed, but the desperate Council agreed, and Hatfield and his brother hauled their equipment out to the dam and built a tower.

Now, Hatfield never claimed to actually create rain. Rather, he explained that he "persuaded" nature to release the moisture naturally present in the air. When conditions seem to him to be propitious, the rainmaker climbed his tower and began releasing his

Sweetwater Dam under construction.

own special blend of chemicals. On January 14 – a Friday – rain began to fall. It rained heavily for two days. So heavily that, by the third day, much of El Cajon Valley was under water. At Main and Magnolia, water was knee to hip deep.

For children, the heavy rains were wonderful; fish washed down from Lake Cuyamaca to swim in normally placid creeks, where the kids tried to catch them. But, for adults, it was one more disaster. Out in Santee, the San Diego River rushed toward the sea, submerging Walter Dupee's three-year-old polo barn, drowning the magnificent horses inside. All over the valley, barns, houses, bridges, and railroad tracks washed away. Still, the rain continued to fall.

Fording the San Diego River.

For weeks it rained. Sweetwater Reservoir filled to overflowing, sending cascades of water into the Sweetwater Valley. Otay Dam gave way, releasing even more water and leaving only anchoring sections of the dam behind.

Cuyamaca Reservoir was brimming over, filled by torrential rains totaling 14.38 inches. Yet Morena Reservoir, the one Hatfield promised to fill – and upon which his agreement with the city was based – was *not* full: eighteen inches remained between the water level and the top of the dam. Determined to collect his fee, Hatfield continued to release his magic mixture of chemicals into the cloudy skies.

As the rains continued unabated, there were rumors the earthen Cuyamaca Dam, owned by Colonel Fletcher, was breaking. Knowing that he could count on his son, Ed. Jr., because of the long hours the sixteen-year-old youth had contributed working on building Murray Dam, the colonel sought the boy's help.

"Son," Ed, Jr,. remembers his father saying, "The phone lines are out and there's no way of knowing what's happening up at the dam. But I've got to know what's going on – too many people could be hurt if it goes out."

"But, Dad," Ed protested, "A car can't get through the mud."

"I know," replied the Colonel. "Take the car as far as it will go, then get a horse."

Taking a ranch hand, Art Nelson, with him, Ed started out with the car, but got no farther than the Knox Hotel, where the car bogged down. It was 1:30 in the afternoon by the time they had rented horses from the livery stable and set out across a valley mired in mud.

They rode out East Main to Second Street, then headed for Bostonia. As they started up Tunnel Hill, their horses repeatedly lost their footing. They struggled down into Johnstown. When they finally reached Los Coches Creek, it was to find the bridge washed out. Stripping off their clothes and balancing them on their heads, they swam their horses across the swiftly moving river. Then on to Chocolate Creek where, again, the bridge was out.

Once again they removed their clothes and swam their horses across. By the time they reached the Willows, east of Alpine, it was hours after sunset. Exhausted and covered with mud, they bathed, ate, then slept until dawn.

At sunup, the two set out again, across Viejas Valley and grade, and on to Hulbert's Grove resort, where they knew they could get a meal. There they were received with open arms, for no one else had made the difficult trip in several weeks. After lunch, they started out again and, at last, reached Green Valley Falls. At that elevation, a light snow was falling and a skiff of snow covered the ground. A thin sun showing through the clouds let them know it was getting late.

Once again, they found a bridge washed out, and again they stripped, bundled their clothing, and forced their reluctant mounts to ford the icy stream. On the far bank, shivering with cold, they dressed, remounted, and urged their horses forward. It was dark when they reached the damkeeper's home.

But the damkeeper and his wife were not there. Taking flashlights, Ed and Art went down to the dam, where they found the couple frantically filling and hauling bags of dirt to reinforce the top surface of the

dam. Ed saw that, while the dam was still intact, the log boom had broken and the water level was right at the lip of the dam.

Another sweep of his flashlight showed that both spillways were open and water was being released downstream. Still, areas along the lip of the dam were eroding where wind-driven water was tearing away the dam's earthen edge.

Catching sight of them, the beleaguered damkeeper motioned for them to fill anything they could find with dirt and place the bags along the dam's upper rim. Ed and Art spent the next two hours filling sack after sack with dirt and hauling them out onto the narrow top of the water-soaked dam.

Thanks to the determined efforts of the four, and because it had finally stopped raining, the dam was saved.

Unknown to officials in San Diego, or victims of the storm, another little drama was unfolding closer to home. Everett Parsons was checking his flood-ravaged property when he spotted two men struggling to ford the rain-swollen Sweetwater River. He gave the pair a hand in crossing the stream. It wasn't until they were on their way that it dawned on him that the bedraggled men were likely the Hatfield brothers ... surreptitiously making their way out of town.

Just a little over a year after the flood, the Panama Exposition ended. As exciting as the opening ceremonies has been, its most touching moments came at its closing.

World War I

The exhibits closed for the last time at 10 p.m. on December 31, 1916. Just before midnight, the crowd fell quiet as buglers stationed on the balconies around the Panama exhibit sounded taps.

As the final notes faded away on the soft midnight air, the organist in the organ pavilion began the familiar chords of "Auld Lang Syne." Then Madame Schumann-Heink added the richness of her powerful contralto to the poignant words of farewell. Tears flooded her eyes as she lifted her voice and sang:

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot..."

Not that anyone in the audience would forget the Exhibition, or what they had seen there. In particular, they would not forget the enactment of trench warfare witnessed that very day.

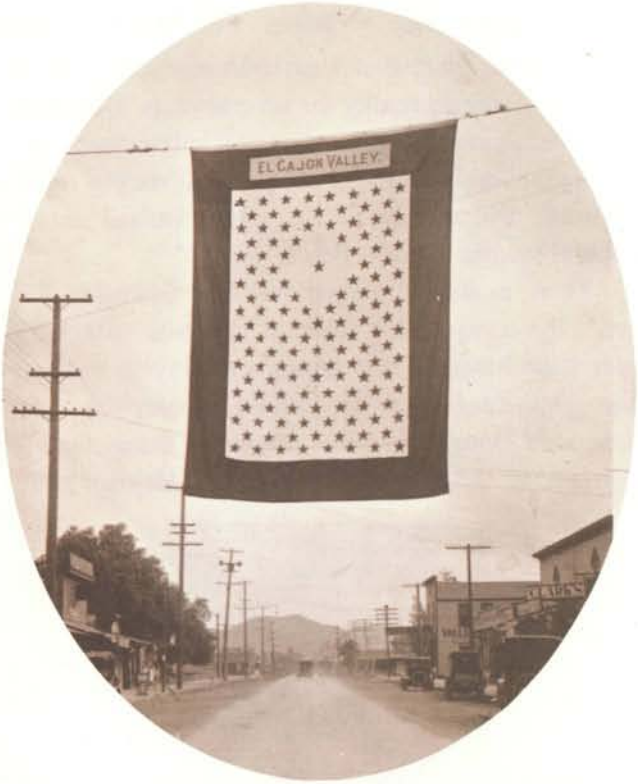
Earlier, the First Battalion of the 21st Infantry had shown, with shocking reality, what was happening to the soldiers in France, bringing the European conflict uncomfortably close to home. For Madame Schumann-Heink, a native of Austria-Hungary, the war had been an agonizing reality for several years. One of her sons was already aboard a German submarine.

As the last notes of the song ended, rockets arched skyward, and a blaze of fireworks spelled out the hopeful words: "World Peace, 1917."

Then, as a band played the "Star Spangled Banner," those assembled stood at attention with hands over their hearts. Their hopes and prayers were not answered; a mere one hundred and twenty days later, American Doughboys were preparing themselves for war, among them Madame Schumann-Heink's sons.

For years, since the fighting in Europe began, Schumann-Heink had opened her Grossmont home to soldiers. She called them "her boys" and they affectionately called her "Mother." But, in 1915, the government assigned agents to investigate everyone of German descent. Despite having become an American citizen in 1905, Schumann-Heink was placed under surveillance, with a squad of soldiers posted outside the walls of her Grossmont home. Learning of this surveillance while on tour in Chicago, she retaliated by hiring armed guards to line the inside of the wall. After a short time, the absurdity of two lines of guards eye-balling each other over the red tiled wall ended when the government realized its error and called off the entire affair.

Schumann-Heink went on to preside at Liberty Bond rallies all over the country, selling more War Bonds than any other individual in the nation. Her



concerts for servicemen earned her letters of thanks from every state governor in America. Near the Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park, a plaque in her memory reads:

"In Loving Memory. Madame Ernestine Schumann-Heink. A Gold Star Mother. A Star of the World."

Julian Hall in uniform, 1918.

Even before America became directly involved in World War I, Camp Kearny and Fort Rosecrans quickly filled with soldiers, and W.D. Hall and his crews were busy night and day delivering wood for buildings and barracks. Valley farmers and ranchers, too, were busy because, when there are army camps, there is an endless need for food. With these two new outlets for the farmers' and growers' crops, the economy of the valley picked up noticeably.

Then, just before Easter in 1917, Saint Mary's Catholic Church on the corner of Park and Magnolia caught fire and burned to the ground. Reverend Richardson immediately offered the Community Church to Father LaPointe for holiday services. The fire was a serious blow to the Catholic community, for St. Mary's served 15 back country missions as well as parishioners living in the valley. The Busch boys were

After church services at a back-country mission.

among the altar boys who made the rounds with Father LaPointe to serve mass on the Indian reservations. With the help of the community, Father LaPointe moved quickly to rebuild the church.

At a fund-raiser picnic held at El Granito Springs Ranch, Clement Busch arranged for Madame Schumann-Heink to sing and, as an eye-catching way to raise money, he placed the fire-damaged church bell, bottom up on a table, so people could toss in their contributions. After the new church building was erected, it served the community until 1959, when it was replaced by the larger Holy Trinity Church on Ballard Street.

* * *

As a student at the University of California in Berkeley, Rex Hall met and fell in love with

in a full-length navy blue skirt, white shirtwaist, suit coat, and gloves.

Met at the steamer pier by Rex's father, W.D., Irene motored back to El Cajon along the main road, which followed much the same route as today's Highway 94. Out from the city they motored, then up and over Grossmont Summit, passing the grand Grossmont Inn, and down into the valley along a eucalyptus-lined avenue to Main Street. It was Irene's first visit to El Cajon; she next came to the city as a bride. That visit occurred only a few months later because a date with Rex culminated in a proposal.

Rex had just been accepted by the Army Corps of Engineers and wanted to marry before heading overseas. Irene accepted and the two raced off to the license bureau, only to find it closed. A sympathetic clerk took pity on them, showed them where to buy a wedding ring, and then took them to a minister. The clerk was not finished though, he thereupon served as their best man. The grateful couple took a 12-hour honeymoon, after which Rex reported back to Angel Island and almost immediately was sent to France.

Irene returned to Berkeley to get her teaching credential in Domestic Arts and Sciences. Upon graduation a year later, she accepted a job offered by W.D., who at the time was a member of the El Cajon School Board. El Cajon's high school needed an instructor who could teach history, civics, health, beginning and advanced cooking, and elementary and advanced sewing, as well as one who could coach girls' athletics after school. For all this, the school board offered $90 a month. Irene grabbed it!

Rex and Irene Hall on their wedding day, 1917.

Taking an apartment in San Diego, she caught the train to La Mesa each morning, then shifted to the school bus headed for El Cajon. Because her cooking classes were responsible for providing the student body with hot lunches, the bus always waited for her while she picked up supplies at Jorgenson's Meat Market and Best Spot Market on Main Street.

But, in her first year of teaching, Irene was involved in a automobile accident that killed her mother and severely injured her sister. After settling her mother's estate, Irene brought her sister back to the Hall house until she had recovered enough for the two of them to get an apartment of their own in San Diego.

"I can never say enough good about the Halls," Irene says today. "They took me in without a word. Always, they showed me kindness and love."

During the war, one of the more enterprising chicken ranches in the valley installed night lighting – a new method of enticing chickens to lay eggs through the night. Youngsters Dinon and Karl Busch were camping out one night when the sudden glare of lights from the chicken ranch convinced them that the Germans were invading El Cajon. Even when reassured by their parents that their fears were unfounded, the boys decided to sleep the rest of the night indoors.

Armistice: Peace at Last

Harry Hill, who owned a pharmacy at the corner of Main and Magnolia, awakened with a start when the telephone shrilled at 4 a.m. on November 12, 1918. The voice on the other end of the wire informed him that the "war to end wars" was over.

Hill rushed outside, picked up an iron bar, and began whacking joyously on the community fire bell – in reality, a broken train wheel hung on a post. The clamor awakened everyone in town. Townspeople rushed into the streets in various stages of undress, fully expecting a disaster – like the one that had occurred some time back when someone set the Bostonia packing houses afire.

During that fire, the high school building, the Bostonia barn, and the store were also burned, by whom, no one ever knew. The store was saved by grape pickers, with help from the volunteer fire department, though the department was scarcely more

than a horse, a cart, and a pump pulled by a dozen or more husky men.

But this time, Hill's night-time clamor was welcome news. The war was really over. The boys would be coming home!

Still, everyone realized that the end of the war also meant the closing of Fort Rosecrans and Camp Kearny. That meant that the valley's prime customers for food products would end. The ranchers, realizing that they would have to find new markets for their produce and fruits, formed the El Cajon Citrus Association.

W.D. Hall was also making postwar plans. For him, the end of the war presented another opportunity. Knowing that the military installations would soon be abandoned, he bid on the buildings and won. As soon as he could, he began dismantling the camps. Each nail was drawn from the lumber, straightened, and saved. Little did he suspect that the nails he retrieved and stored in mule feed boxes would linger in his warehouse until the next world war. Then, with the need for nails so great that any price could be placed on them, he sold them for five cents a pound. The rest of the building materials he salvaged from the camp buildings were also sold to valley ranchers and homeowners.

After the 'Great War'

About this time, teenager Logan Meachum and his family moved from a place at the bottom of Tunnel Hill to El Granito Springs Ranch. They had come to San Diego at his Uncle Lee's urging. Hearing Lee's description of El Cajon, Logan's father, "Gil," sold his flour mill back east, collected his extended family, and loaded all their belongings into a freight car headed for California.

Reaching San Diego, they moved to Mission Hills, but were never really comfortable there. Though fairly well-to-do, they were a farming family and did not fit in with the bankers and businessmen who were their neighbors. So they moved to the Santee area, where they started a dairy farm and raised hogs. When they lost everything they owned in the 1916 flood, the family moved to a piece of land at the bottom of Tunnel Hill, then to El Granito Springs Ranch.

At the ranch, they found the bottling house still there, with cases of soda pop left from the days when spring water was being shipped all over the country.

Logan remembers that, during those years, Italian pickers camped on the El Granito Ranch while they harvested valley grapes. Once, while the men were out working in the fields and the women were doing the wash, one of the children found a shotgun and began playing with it. Another child grabbed at it and, in the tussle that followed, the gun went off, hitting one of them in the thigh.

The gun's report had mothers racing in from the washline and the fathers in from the fields. Logan, racing toward the encampment to see what was going on, was swept up by weeping women and shouting men. Everyone frantically piled mattresses into the back of a truck, the child was tossed onto them, and the men took off for Dr. Knox's office. Logan was left behind, amidst a flood of Italian prayers and tears.

Knox patched the boy up, but the wound became infected. In the days before wonder drugs, there was nothing Knox, or any other doctor, could do. Half a world away from home, the boy died of blood poisoning.

All through the war, and after, valley fruits and vegetables continued to sell well. Avocados, then known as "butter fruits" brought $4 to $6 a dozen. Muscat grapes, shipped East in refrigerated railroad cars, continued to show a profit. But, the local well-being was deceptive. The first sign of trouble surfaced when the city began letting employees go. Money was tight, said the city fathers. Unfortunately, it was just the beginning of the city's tribulations, for their troubles were not over – not by a long shot!

Departmental needs became increasingly difficult to fill. First, the volunteer Fire Department requested 200 feet of hose. Then a State Health Board representative wanted to check the purity of the city's water. As the city's financial woes mounted, trustees began abandoning their posts. Maybe, said some, incorporation was not such a good idea. An election was held and a total of 330 votes of confidence encouraged city fathers to keep trying. But the grumbling continued.

On Main Street, Charlie Clark sold his interest in the Clark-Stell Store and bought Rumsey's general store. Outside of town, on property owned by Joe Miller, Michael Geraci moved in with his wife and ten children; Hazel, Frances, Mary, Sarah, Rose, Michael, Joe, Pete, Vic, and George. The family leased additional property and raised grapes for many years. But, when the ground water became too alkaline to grow grapes well, the family gave up the vineyards and formed a shipping service to transport other people's grapes to market.

Some Clever Planning

With an eye to the future, city fathers paid the State Highway Department $6,000 to pave a strip 20 feet wide and 2,000 feet long down Main Street. Then, they convinced the same Department to accept that strip as part of the new highway. Colonel Fletcher was on the Highway Commission that agreed to pave that first highway through El Cajon, which went as far as Flinn Springs. The townspeople were exultant. With major traffic going right through the center of town, some said, business would prosper. However, the street was not widened until 1934, and only then after considerable dissent.

The Boys Come Home

In 1919, the boys finally returned home from the war. A gala celebration welcomed the 105 men who returned and honored the thirty-eight who had not yet been released. Milton Rodig, W.J. Taylor, and Archie Miller, killed in action, were never coming home.

Homecoming festivities kicked off with a parade at 2:45 in the afternoon. The 105 returning heroes lined up at Main and Magnolia, looking smart in their uniforms, and to the cadence of the Naval Air Station band, they marched to Library Park, where there were prayers and speeches. A concert, presented by Camp Kearny's 22-piece regimental band, followed. As the final act of the ceremonies, the service flag that had spanned Main Street since August of the year before was demobilized. Then, it was time to feed the conquering heroes, and El Cajon's mothers and sisters, wives, and sweethearts dished up sumptuous chicken dinners for them all.

Karl Clark had returned to find his father seriously ill. Taking over the family store, he ran it until the following summer, when the family sold the business to Abraham Weinstock. Karl, behind two years in his college work, returned to Berkeley, where he competed his course work, graduating with his younger brother, Hal, and their El Cajon neighbor, Helen Shea.

Hal went on to the San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo and became a student pastor in a charming little church in Yosemite National Park, the chapel that Karl and Helen selected for their wedding. The newlyweds set up housekeeping in a house on Greenfield Drive. Karl taught at Grossmont High School for many years and he and Helen raised three children: Carol, Alice, and Granville.

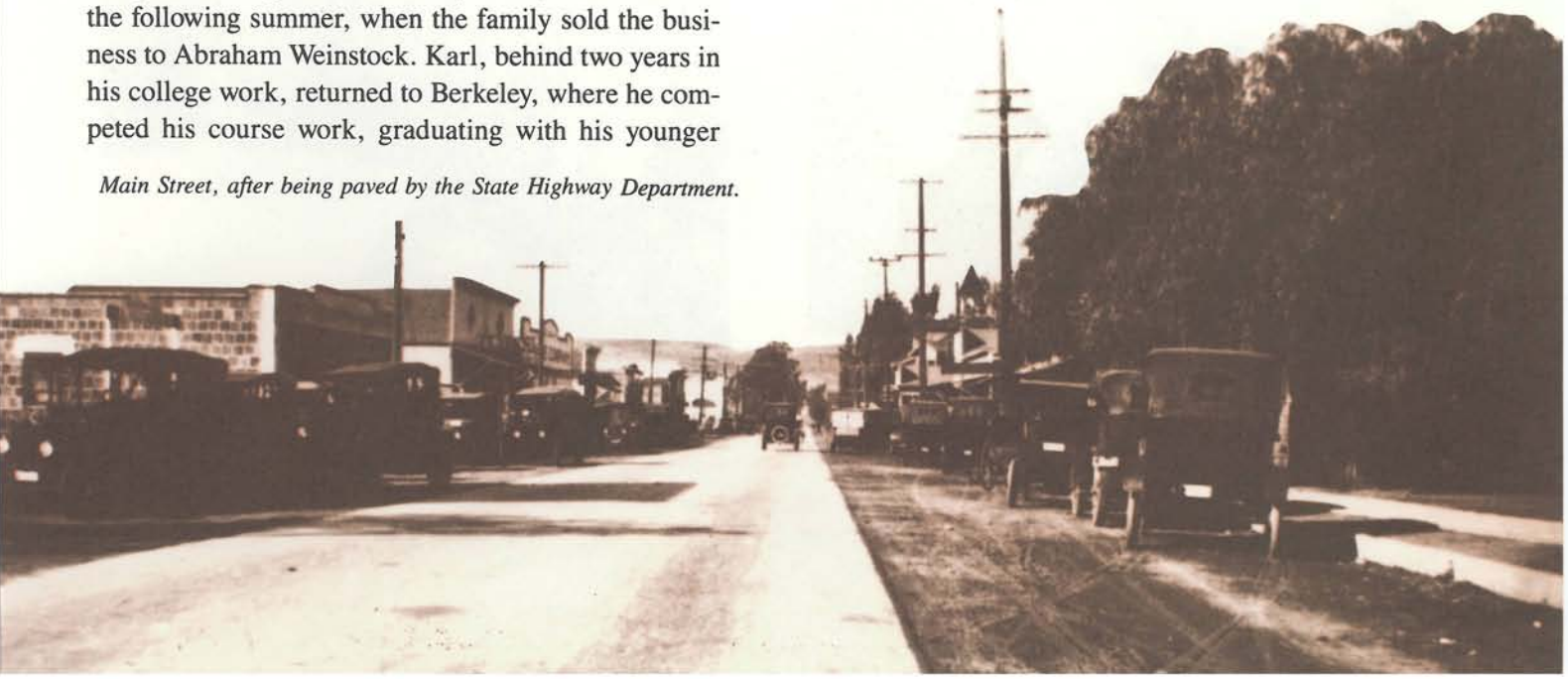
Hal Clark was ordained by the Presbyterian Church and went to Scotland to work on his doctorate, taking his mother, Rose, with him. Later, he went to China as a missionary. Again, his mother accompanied him and, at age 60, she learned to speak Chinese.

In China, Hal met his wife-to-be, Antoinette. The missionary couple remained in China until 1949, when the Communists forced them out. They then returned to El Cajon with their children, Mary, Anne, and Jean. Although the family spent the years until Hal's retirement in Northern California, he and his wife returned to El Cajon to retire.

The Weinstocks, to whom the Clarks sold their store, had moved to the valley from San Diego, where Abraham had been the Associated Press telegrapher. But Abe had long wanted to own his own business, so he bought Clark's store.

His son, Paul Weinstock, remembers reaching Grossmont summit for the first time. It was raining hard and, as they looked down at the few lights in the valley, the lights blinked out. The rain had shorted out the electrical lines to the city. So, in darkness, the Weinstock family drove along the narrow cement rib-

Main Street, after being paved by the State Highway Department.



bon of a street to the El Cajon Hotel, where they lived for several months.

Jack Roether returned from the Army much thinner than when he left, having lived for seventeen days on water, quinine, and strychnine – the Army's cure for influenza. He came home, got a job as a fruit tramp, became a district manager for the American Fruit Growers Association, and married tiny Morjie Hall, who worked for her father at the lumber company. And it was hardly a temporary job: Morjie was there for 47 years.

About the same time, the building called the Stell-Clark building was moved from its location on the corner to a lot across from the store the Weinstocks had just purchased. Moving the building was no easy task. The structure was jacked up and three-inch iron pipes placed beneath it. Then three men, using large wrenches, rolled the pipe, and the store, to its new location.

Before long, C.S. Judson of Bostonia was back from Washington, D.C., where he had been working on the war effort. Once back, he purchased the Lakeside Inn and 40 acres of unimproved land at the northwest corner of the El Cajon Townsite. Six years later, he bought the Cuyamaca State Bank.

George Graves, home from service with the Grenadier Guards, met Helen Harris and, soon after, eloped with her. When the Graves returned, they lived in the Bostonia area for a while, then built a 13-room home on the former Gordon Ranch – where St. Kierans Church is today.

Rex Hall came home, too. He and Irene set up housekeeping in a house on Julian Street, where they lived for nine years until they built a home on Park Street, near Morjie and Jack Roether.

Irene and Rex Hall began their family, which included Rex, Jr., Alice, Herbert, and Carol. Alice became an educator, and Carol a nutritionist. Rex, Jr., called Rexie by the family, was killed in Phoenix during a routine aircraft flight after having flown 52 wartime missions as a cargo pilot and fighter pilot in Korea. He left behind his wife, Phyllis, and two children, Peter and Kenneth. Herbert, born with a congenital lung cyst that left him susceptible to recurring cases of pneumonia for two decades, recovered fully at the age of 20 after the cyst was removed.

While the Hall families were expanding, acreage out on Bostonia Ranch was being subdivided into half-acre tracts and quickly snapped up by people wanting homesites. In Bostonia, a large dance hall was erected on Broadway, east of Second Street. The hall was exceptionally popular until 1932, when it was destroyed by fire. Rebuilt, it was named the Bostonia Ballroom.

Irene and Rex Hall.

Herbert, Rex, Jr., Alice, and Carol Hall.

THE TWENTIES

In 1920, 105.7 million people lived in the United States, and for the first time in the nation's history, more people lived in cities and towns than on farms. From that time on, fewer and fewer Americans lived on farms until, in 1970, there was but one farmer for every 22 city-dwellers. Prohibition forced California vineyard owners to market their harvests as table grapes, farm prices declined, and food prices began a 72% fall. Strikes and communism became bywords, the American Civil Liberties Union was formed, women won the vote, Charles Ponzi's schemes bilked thousands out of their savings, for the first time election results were heard on radio, and the "Sultan of Swat," Babe Ruth, began a 14-year baseball career. The "Roaring Twenties" ended in the Wall Street crash that plunged the nation headlong into the Great Depression.

With the end of World War I, a new prosperity came to El Cajon and, with it, a new resolve to make El Cajon an even better community. One of the first steps was formation of the Grossmont Union High School District. Plans were made to build a high school, Grossmont, on land donated by Colonel Ed Fletcher. While the new school was being built, students went to Lakeside's Riverview School. The old El Cajon high school building became a dine and dance hall named "Rainbow Gardens," a swanky place complete with rainbow lighting effects.

In those days, students got to school in Model T cars or in buses driven and maintained by other students. Kids being kids, there were days when student drivers staged races. More than one student remembers staggering out of a bus and claiming that making it home safely was nothing short of a miracle.

Eventually, the elementary school districts joined to form a single district, called the Cajon Valley Union School District. Trustees purchased acreage from W.D. Hall on East Main Street and built the new El Cajon Grammar School. There, parents and teachers formed the city's first Parent-Teacher Association.

Continued Selling of the Valley

A full-page ad, placed in the San Diego *Union* by the El Cajon Chamber of Commerce, called attention to the many advantages of living in El Cajon:

The valley lands, and the lower slopes of the foothills, offer people of moderate means unlimited opportunity to raise avocados and citrus fruits, grapes, persimmons, deciduous fruits, or garden produce of all kinds. The entire valley is ideally located for poultry raising.

Shortly after this ad appeared, prices rose on valley land. General farming land was going for $100 an acre, truck gardens at $200 an acre, and land with citrus groves for over $1,000 an acre.

It was about this time that Robert and Mary Flournoy brought their young daughter, Elizabeth, to the

El Cajon Grammar School on Main Street, dismantled because it was not earthquake-proof.

valley. First, they tried to raise chickens on property backing an alley that later became Avocado Boulevard. When that did not pan out, Robert opened a grocery store way out on Main and what is now First Street. Feeling that it was just too far out of town, he sold that store in 1924 to buy another, the Pepper Tree Market, which was in the middle of things. The market was noted for the huge root beer barrel at its entrance and the best hamburgers in town. Flournoy also bought a five-acre ranch at the end of Greenfield, where he grew avocados and grapefruit, and raised a few chickens.

None of this was easy for Flournoy, a German-born engineer whose legs had been crippled in an accident while working at Tallulah Falls Dam. But, one good thing had come from his accident: while recuperating, he met a nurse who became his wife. He never regained full use of his legs and used crutches for the rest of his life. Not that he allowed the wooden sticks to slow him down, particularly when there was a chance to fulfill his passion for fishing.

As a teenager, Sam Maniscalco, whose family owned a store on Main Street, admired Flournoy.

"He was a wonderful man," Maniscalco says today. "I remember picking him up in my car and taking him out to Scripps pier for a day of fishing. He really liked that, and I'd have done about anything just to be in his company. I remember carrying the tackle while he stumped along on those crutches, swinging his legs until he got out to the pier."

Another store opened on Main Street in the early Twenties when David Raeburn, his wife, and his children, Mollie and Dave, opened a grocery and variety store. Later, they converted the building into an arcade.

Next to the space formerly used by Cuyamaca Bank, Chet Hardin established a drugstore. Within a few short years, Hardin became the largest single owner of downtown business property. He was also a founding director of Southland Savings & Loan Association, and a charter member of the El Cajon Elks and Kiwanis clubs. A benevolent man, he provided the ground for the Kiwanis Club's first building.

The Home Team

When the Frank Butlers arrived, it meant a boost for the home team because Frank took over the baseball coaching duties for the community. Hanging

around the field while the team practiced and played were Butler's children: Dorothy, Frances, Grace, and Frank, Jr. Twelve-year-old Frances helped her father by keeping score, so she was involved in some pretty exciting games featuring players Gil Embleton, Al Jenson, the Talamante brothers, F. Garcia, H. Thomas, Herb Covrierre, Clifford Smith, S. Bothroff, Jack Roether, and Jack's teenaged brothers, Dord and Chick. So well did the team play over the next few years that increasingly large, enthusiastic crowds gathered for every game.

Sometimes, as in the championship game against East San Diego, fans were even treated to a little mayhem.

It seems that San Diego's pitcher had once played for El Cajon. Perhaps the man's manager had a few doubts about the pitcher's loyalties because, when Dord Roether hit a double and his brother, Chick, sent the next ball out of the park, the irate manager was so riled that he bolted toward the mound, bellowing, "You threw that ball so's he could hit it!" He followed up his accusation by knocking the pitcher flat.

Needless to say, El Cajon won that championship and bands played and people shouted and crowds gathered to cheer the team on.

Not that the players' skills were limited to the ballpark. Gil Embleton worked for the citrus packing house across the railroad tracks and, in addition to being a standout ball player, became a master of the Masonic Lodge. Ed Mueller, the team manager, later became a state assemblyman. The Roether brothers ran a tomato packing plant and were active in civic affairs. Though, for a time, things were not going so well for Jack Roether. Stricken with tuberculosis of the spine shortly after he married Morjie Hall, he was confined to bed for two years, spending long days and nights immobilized in a little cottage on his parents' property.

Jack's long, lonely days were greatly brightened when his employees at the American Fruit Growers Association bought him a radio. The ballgames and programs were something for Jack to share with Dr. Mathewson, a frequent visitor. It was the doctor who remarked on one particularly hot day that he would sure like to teach Jack's mother, Maggie, how to make beer. At Jack's urging, he did just that and, for the rest of that blistering summer, the two sipped chilled home-made beer while listening to the radio. Dr. Mathewson needed those relaxed moments with Jack; his workload had increased dramatically by the spread of smallpox among the local Mexican and Indian families. So much so that the city council hired a public nurse to help quell the epidemic.

Out past the southern end of the valley on the Thacher ranch in Jamacha, Frederick, Morton, and Becky remained behind when their father, Reverend Philip Thacher moved to La Mesa with his third wife. Becky remained on the ranch. Frederick later moved to Los Angeles. His brother, Morton, married Enid Mallory and, after a few years and a few children, Morton was transferred to Ethiopia by the Caterpillar Tractor Company. After making arrangements for his wife and children to join him in Africa the following year, Morton went on ahead. Tragically, it was the last time he saw his youngest child. While Morton was en route to Africa, his three-month old son died of heart failure, a complication of pneumonia.

In Africa, Morton became a close friend of Emperor Haile Selassie, who decorated him for constructing roads in that country. Four of Morton's children stayed on in Egypt when they reach adulthood, but the fifth, Robert, came to El Cajon in 1935 to live with his Uncle Philip.

Another Fire on Main Street

In December 1920, a visitor at the Corona Hotel knocked over a small stove and started a fire that swiftly consumed the elegant hotel. Before anyone could stop the flames from spreading, the beautiful structure was fully ablaze. Young Arthur Ballantyne, home alone with his older sisters while his parents were playing bridge at the 500 Club, heard the clamor of the fire bell. Next, he heard his oldest sister order the next oldest to stay behind; an order punctuated by the slamming of the front door. The sister left behind handed down the same order to the next youngest until the last girl had no one to pass it on to but Arthur. Arthur heeded it no better than they. The five youngsters streaked down the street until they reached a vantage point offering them the best view. The hotel was already an inferno.

Adults were slinging water as fast as they could, but it did little good. Attorney Philip Thacher was there with the rest of the men, trying to save the lovely old building. Fire trucks from as far away as San Diego rushed to the scene, but their efforts were in vain; little more than a pile of smoking cinders greeted their arrival. Philip was at least able to rescue something from the disaster, and the piano he saved from the flames was later given to him for his efforts.

The ashes of the Corona were hardly cool before

The crossroads at Main and Magnolia. The Hotel del Corona had been located in the empty spot in the foreground on the left side of Main Street.

the first rumors were heard about the State Highway Department's plans for Main Street. It turned out that the rumors were true! The State wanted enough setback along Main Street to allow the construction of full-sized sidewalks.

Storekeepers fumed. Either entire buildings had to be moved back, or the front portions of the stores had to be removed. There were bitter objections, even after the State limited the excavations to the ground floor, which left two-story buildings with a considerable overhang. It was a few years before the highway actually went through, but even then merchants were unready to accept the loss of so much showroom area. It also meant that they had to install pillars and archways to support the second floors, even though the alterations created a distinctive architecture that bestowed a certain charm on Main Street, and provided welcome shade for shoppers.

Still, merchants resented their losses. Perhaps it was for that reason that William Stell sold his grocery business to Payne & Smith, who, upon taking over, declared that they would henceforth run the business on a cash-only basis. Such changes were only the beginning, to the delight of some and despair of others.

As streets around Main and Magnolia Streets started filling in with houses, new buildings sprang up in the business district. Over a span of ten years, buildings were erected that became known by the names of their owners: Lyons, Van Wagner, Maniscalco, Sears, Salazar, Edison, and Bush.

Teachers

After seven years of teaching, Principal/teacher Mary Kennedy married Justice William Collard and promptly retired, leaving Myrtle Sears, Muriel Miller, and Josephine Vacher as the only teachers on the staff. The classrooms were horribly overcrowded: in Josephine's classroom alone there were 92 youngsters.

Out at Hillsdale School in Jamacha, there was only one teacher. Dorothy Chase, the granddaughter of Uri Hill, had in her first class Gene Vacher, returned to school after a year's convalescence for a heart murmur. Gene's musical talent was so remarkable that he played in an adult community band that boasted Fred Alden, Harry Hill, Harry Appleman, Dr. Stone, Mrs. Dodson, and her daughter, Dorothy. For Gene, playing with adults was second nature; everyone in his family played at least one instrument. However, for a career, Gene wanted to be in the foreign service, like his French grandfather.

Gene's uncle, Robert Asher, Josephine's brother, was a true loner. Unable to get along with his father,

Aubrey and Marion Hall Sears.

he moved to Palomar Mountain, where he homesteaded two 40-acre sections. Later, he leased two additional sections from the Federal government, land that later became part of the Palomar Observatory grounds. Robert lived in a wood-shingle tent whenever the weather turned bad, but mostly he lived in the open. Gene, who idolized his offbeat uncle, visited him sometimes, and delighted in camping out.

Robert spent his life collecting arrowheads and stones from Palomar. He also raised bulbs and ferns, selling them from a lath house he owned in San Ysidro to customers all over the nation. In his later years, he left Palomar, donating his land to the Baptist Boy Scout Camp. He then built one of his shingle tents in the Vacher front yard and lived out the remaining years of his life there.

During the Twenties, the Fansher family arrived from El Centro. Son Gale later married Nellie Hall and opened a gas station on Main Street. The other boy, John, became a pharmacist and, in 1987, became the city of Ramona's Honorary Mayor. Julian "Skip" Hall, who was working for his father in the lumber company machine shop, had to be treated by Dr. Knox when a carbuncle got out of hand. There in Knox's office, he discovered Lois Ross. It was not long before Skip was inviting Lois to accompany him on his nightly rounds as he lighted the town's street lamps. Soon, they married and started a family: two boys, Ross and David, and a girl, Margaret Ann. Knox's office became the scene of yet another romance when Lois' sister fell in love with and married Dr. Knox.

Making Movies

In the early years of film, Lois Hall became the local movie house pianist. She was not the only one in town to be involved with that industry. Charles Potter

Young Gene Vacher and cornet, with family members. Eugene, Sr., and Josephine are at right.

and his son, Oscar, were brought down from Julian as extras because they were considered "real cowboys." The Embletons were eagerly sought out by the movie-makers - not as actors or even "extras," but because their house was the only one in the area with indoor "facilities." It was to the Embleton's Chase Avenue home that actors and actresses retreated whenever they had a chance to break from shooting scenes.

The hills around the valley provided movie makers with a number of wonderful natural "sets." Directors used the railroad tracks and the rocks as backdrops, and many was the time that cowboy star Tom Mix and his faithful horse, Tony, thundered along the ties and through the hills in an effort to evade the inevitable bad guys.

Arlene Frear Boyers recalls being a part of the film industry in those early days:

"The first Columbia signature was filmed at the barn where Anthony's Restaurant on Grossmont is now," she relates. The original Columbia featured the regal figure of a goddess in long, trailing robes of white. At her feet, children capered amongst the clouds; and Arlene was one of them.

The area became so popular that the S&L Film Company, a production company, solicited private investors to finance construction of a major studio on Grossmont. Stock was sold to build a million-dollar, 292-foot-long building near the Villa Caro lily pond.

Opening ceremonies brought celebrities from as far away as Hollywood and other points north. They joined a local throng numbering nearly 20,000. What a blow it was a short time later to discover that the whole thing had been a scam. The first clue was the abrupt disappearance of S&L's president. The second was that the investors' money was gone, too.

To make some use of the structure, Colonel Fletcher and a group of stockholders purchased the studio and turned it into a roller-skating rink. When that folded, the building became a dine-and-dance hall. After the building burned in 1934, the land lay unused for years.

Crest

Movies weren't the only entertainment during the Twenties because, then as now, Southern Californians loved the great outdoors. Families trooped to the beach and packed up to go camping in the mountains. That is why in 1924 so many responded to the offer of cheap vacation land when the San Diego *Sun* newspaper offered cut-rate lots in Suncrest, a nine-square-mile mountaintop northeast of El Cajon, as premiums for readers willing to pay for a year's subscription. Though promoted as vacation cabin sites, many of the tiny lots were not purchased until the Depression, and then not for cabins but for permanent homes. The McColl/Macpherson clan bought several lots to build a family compound of cabins. Nearby Oakridge was bought by the Fletchers - family members called it "Ma's Hideout." For years, the family allowed service groups to use the ranch for social and fund-raising functions.

On the Harbison Canyon side of the mountain, the

Girl Scout troop on a campout at Dr. J.M. McColl's cabin on Crest Drive.

All along Main Street, new buildings went up, and cars and shoppers filled the newly paved street.

Cornelius family homesteaded a good-sized parcel of land some years before the *Sun's* sales promotion. Mrs. Cornelius's daily ritual included hitching up the wagon and driving her children down the mountain road to attend school. Later, when the Dickinson family moved in, their children, too, rode to school with Mrs. Cornelius. When still more families moved in, the Corneliuses purchased a bus to transport them. The bus went by the name of the "monkey's cage" because the youngsters were such a giddy bunch.

In Town

The Twenties, under Mayors William Stell, George Gray, and Edwin Mueller, brought more improvements to El Cajon, including the first steps toward zoning in 1922. Their efforts were supported by the quintessential volunteer, Reverend Charles Richardson, who continued performing any and all duties the city deemed necessary. He was not the only helpful citizen, of course. Under volunteer Fire Chief Rex Hall's direction, the fire department acquired mobile fire-fighting equipment. Hall remained volunteer Fire Chief for ten years, assisted by Andy Ballantyne as Assistant Chief, and a score of other men willing to risk life and limb to keep the community safe from fire.

Though the fire equipment was touted as "mobile," it was not all that modern. It was simply a chemical cart with a long wooden tongue that volunteers dragged to the scene of nearby fires. For the more distant fires, an automobile was commandeered to pull the cart. However, the coupling device was, again, a man – who sat in the back of the car and clung to the cart's tongue for dear life.

Along with other improvements came subdivisions, incorporations, speedcapped streets, and a sewer system, although few actually intended to take advantage of the latter. Installed by W.D. Hall, the sewer system was designed for 4,000 hookups, but 3,812 people resisted the lure of indoor plumbing; only 188 households actually installed toilets and hooked up.

With all the building going on, business was good enough for W.D. Hall to replace the old building he had hauled up from the railroad tracks with a two-story main building and warehouse on East Main. The

old building was altered to house the city's firefighting equipment. Not too far away, next to the El Cajon Theater, Mrs. Sam Domnitz opened a sweet shop that was an immediate hit with the younger set.

It seemed that everywhere you turned, there were new buildings going up and, with so much going on in El Cajon and with so many people buying automobiles, the Automobile Club of Southern California offered to provide all directional signs for the city. Unfortunately, they did not also provide for law enforcement to guarantee that automobile owners drove carefully, so the city's Street Commission asked for funding to hire a "speed cop."

In the Country

It was getting to the point, many old-time residents said, that you hardly knew a soul when you went shopping on a Saturday night. To them it seemed that the flood of outsiders would never stop.

For instance, there was that Missouri man, the old codger who fought in the Civil War ... claimed he was a descendant of Patrick Henry. Well, he bought a poultry ranch out in Bostonia. And who would have thought the Edgemoor Farm would be sold to the County, or that the Cross family would sell 50 acres to J.E. Cunningham of Anaheim? And had you heard about what the Lowe family was doing with the old Mexican adobe out north of Pepper Drive? Why, they had it remodeled so you'd hardly recognize it.

Rex and Irene Hall's daughter, Alice, loved going to the Lowe's house. Barbara Lowe and her daughters, Kate, Ellen, Frances, Jean, and Marion, were so gregarious, and Mr. Lowe played classical music on the phonograph all day long. To Alice, it was heaven on earth.

Over in the new Palm Acres subdivision, John and Arvilla Stout bought two acres and built on it. Their daughter, Mildred, had just graduated from the school they were now calling San Diego State College and was teaching seventh grade. Even then, Mildred was someone to reckon with. In 1932, still single, she surprised everyone by buying a home of her own. "Who would have thought it," people said. "And her a single woman."

Years later, Mildred Zinn remarked to friends, "There were only nine lights that could be seen at night in those early days. Now, you can't even count them." After her marriage to Carl Zinn, Mildred continued teaching and later became a school principal.

Another Local Man Finds A Bride

Young Ed Fletcher, up at Berkeley to visit friends, found himself fixed up with a young lady for a dance one evening. He had met Mildred Burke, briefly, a few years before when she was dating one of his brothers, but Ed did not really remember her. Mildred did not remember him, either, and was, at first, reluctant to go out with him. After all, Ed was a pretty sophisticated 23-year-old, and she was only 20. After some coaxing from the other couple, she finally agreed and they all crammed into a Model T Ford and took off for the dance.

Ed, at once charmed by Mildred's pretty, impish face, was delighted at the close quarters that obliged her to sit on his lap. It was a proximity that developed into romance, and then love. In 1924, they were married and, after a trip to Europe where she was pursued by Denmark's Prince Eric - who mistook her for movie star Colleen Moore, the couple returned to live in the old Grossmont Inn. Some time later, they learned that Prince Eric was in Malibu, and always wondered if he had come to follow up on his meeting with "Colleen Moore."

Ed and Mildred eventually had three sons: Edward III, Michael, and Lawrence, all of whom grew up to become influential in the inland area.

Ed raised cattle out in the Cuyamaca Street area, and had tomato fields in Fletcher Hills. He also continued developing inland property. One of his projects was the road to the top of Mount Helix. Upon completing the road, he amassed the materials needed to build the nature theatre on the mountain peak, on land donated by his father. The outdoor amphitheater, commissioned by the Yawkey family of Minneapolis, was designed by architect Irving Gill's associate, Richard S. Requa. The amphitheater was an instant hit with locals and visitors alike. It made Easter morning services, held on the summit of Mount Helix since in 1917, far more comfortable.

Another Hall Company Employee

Charlie and Minnie Burns arrived in town after a devastating disappointment in Holtville. There, two of their best cows drowned in an irrigation ditch; then, while the two of them were working in the milking barn, thieves had stripped their home of everything they owned - even the lightbulbs.

Charlie had been walking back to the house when he first saw the truck, laden with all of their worldly

Clifford and Lindin Burns, with friend, Stanley Conont, and neighbor, Mr. Burry.

possessions, pull away. Racing back to the barn, he threw himself on a horse and lit out down the road after them. Man and horse chased the truck all the way to the border, but could not catch up to it before the robbers gained the safety of Mexico.

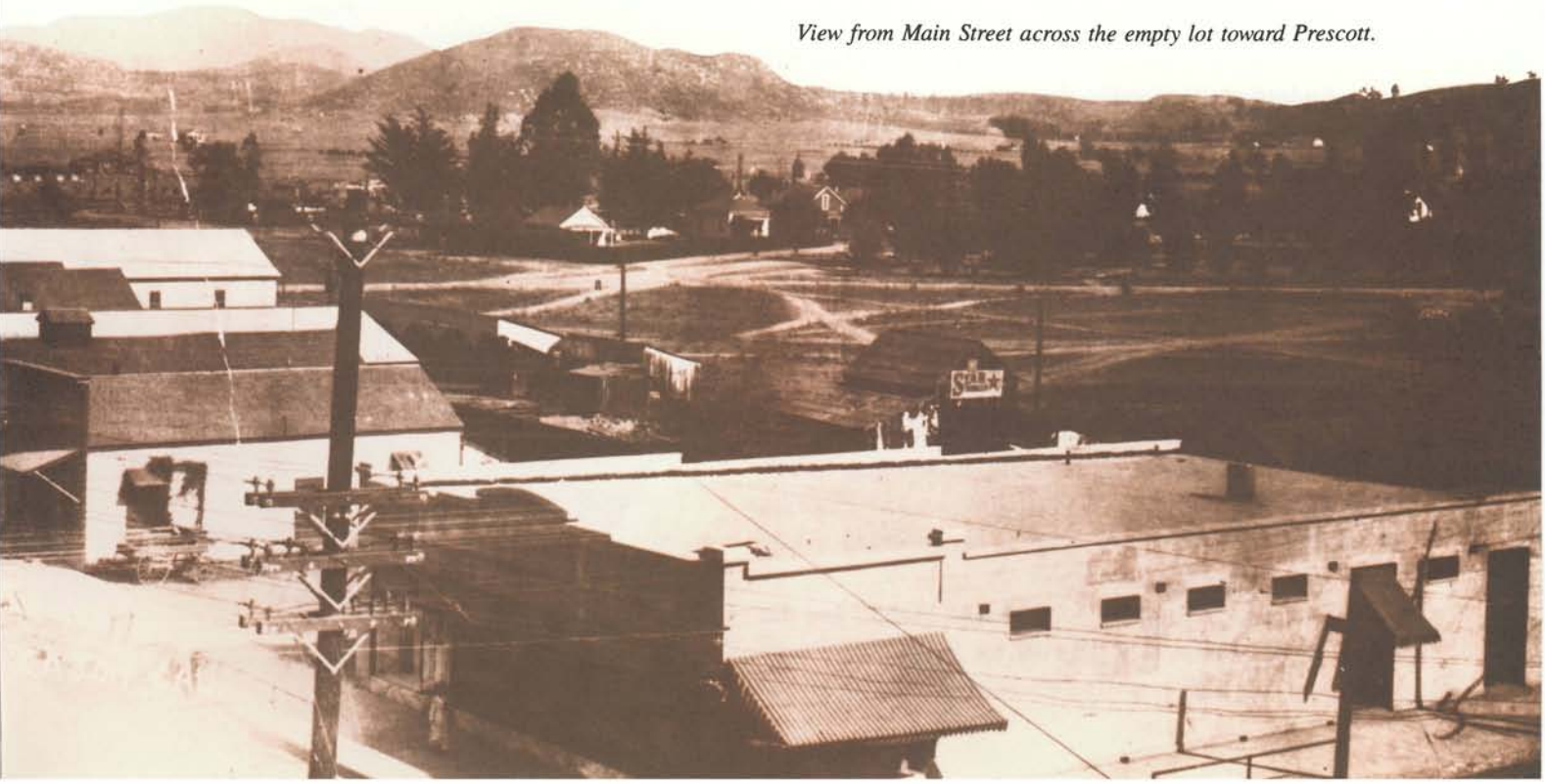
Charlie returned to the ranch empty-handed, and he and Minnie decided to throw in the towel and move. The tried Jacumba for a year, then moved to El Cajon to begin again. They brought with them the only things they still owned: a car, the clothes on their backs, and four young children, Clifford, Linden, Mildred, and, the baby of the family, four-year-old Bill. The day they arrived, Charlie headed for the W.D. Hall Company and applied for a job. He got one as a driver and remained with the company until he was of retirement age.

Rotary and other Civic Groups

When the Rotary Club was chartered in 1926, it came as no surprise to anyone that the ever-dependable Rev. Charles Richardson accepted the presidency. They were even less surprised when he took over the role of City Health Officer when the post was vacated. With other changes in city government afoot, others exhibited the same selflessness. City Trustees began assuming responsibility for a number of city departments. Ballantyne took the police, lights, water, sewer, and fire departments. Sears inherited finance, police, fire, water, and streets. And Fuller took lights, finance, and sewers. When the posts of Recorder of the Board and Building Inspector remained empty, good old Rev. Richardson added them to his list of duties. Rex Hall continued as Fire chief, Rumsey became the City Engineer, and Mollins was made City Marshal.

Gus Broberg, a barber and devoted Rotarian, was just as dedicated to improving the community as council members, and he was determined to establish a Boy Scout troop. Several earlier efforts at scouting had

View from Main Street across the empty lot toward Prescott.



Harry Anderson saluting his Boy Scout color guard in front of Troop 46 headquarters.

failed, but Broberg believed that, if they could get Harry Anderson to head the troop, it would work.

Anderson was no newcomer to working with boys; he had been active with Scouts and the YMCA for a number of years. He agreed but made one stipulation – if he asked for something, the Rotarians would get it for him with no questions asked. When the Rotarians agreed, Harry started out with a few boys in a shack across the street from his home. It was a makeshift camp until Broberg and Jack Roether helped him build a proper clubhouse, using wood donated by W.D. Hall. The other Rotarians were as good as their word: whenever the Scouts needed supplies or transportation, they were provided. So active was this troop under Anderson's leadership that within a short time, El Cajon's Troop 46 was the largest troop in the world.

Anderson believes his troop was so successful because he exercised the military-type discipline he had learned as an army corporal in Panama.

"The kids respected the discipline, and they respected me," he says.

Anderson was married to Marge Dobson, the postmaster's daughter. Their marriage had begun with an elopement, a plan hatched the summer he was working at a YMCA camp in the mountains. When Marge and her sister, Dorothy, came up to Pine Hills Lodge to visit him, he looked at her, decided it was time, and popped the question.

It seemed an equally good idea to Marge, and the three of them promptly took off for Yuma. Even with the old plank road gone and a newly paved strip all the way, they did not reach Yuma until midnight. On the way, they made only one stop, in El Centro. Because Harry had not tarried long enough even to change his clothes, he dashed into a men's store and purchased a nifty pair of golf knickers and a sweater.

Reaching Yuma, they registered at a hotel and told the desk clerk of their intention to marry right away. Unsurprised, the clerk called a minister, who arrived with almost magical speed, his clothes thrown hastily over his pajamas. Not until after they took their vows, did Harry inquire about the man's fee. Stunned to discover that most people paid the man $10 for his services, Harry turned to Marge. He was wearing *his* money; it had been invested in his rakish new outfit. Marge dug in her purse and pulled out the ten dollars.

Years later, Cecil Cheeseman took over Troop 46 and built a Scout camp on Dunbar Lane. The camp, which included a dam and a pond, was named for Gus Broberg. Still, by that time Troop 46 had slipped in the ratings; it was only the *second-largest* troop in the world! Although Troop 46 was made up of ten patrols in Campo, Julian, and other backcountry communities, a troop in England captured first place. However, El Cajon had something that the English troop did not have. They had scouts of Japanese descent, and Ricky Shiosaki, the Hashimoto brothers, and the Yamaguchis were active participants.

More Berkeley Romances

After a year at prestigious Mills College, Leslie Stell transferred to the University of California at Berkeley,

The old plank road that ran across the desert between San Diego and Yuma, Arizona.

and who did she run into on campus? Roger Beatty for heaven's sake, whose family lived on Dehesa Road. Roger was a few years older so Leslie had had little contact with him in El Cajon, but, on the basis of a common background, they began to date.

Grant Hall, another valley resident, was also at Berkeley and, one day while strolling across campus, he caught sight of a strikingly pretty girl. Investigation turned up the information that her name was Helene Hughes, and that she was a member of Delta Zeta sorority. Knowing that Leslie Stell was also a Zeta, Grant called Roger Beatty and asked him to arrange an introduction to Helene. The introduction led to a date at a local club, where Grant and Helene danced the night away to music by Horace Heidt and his band..

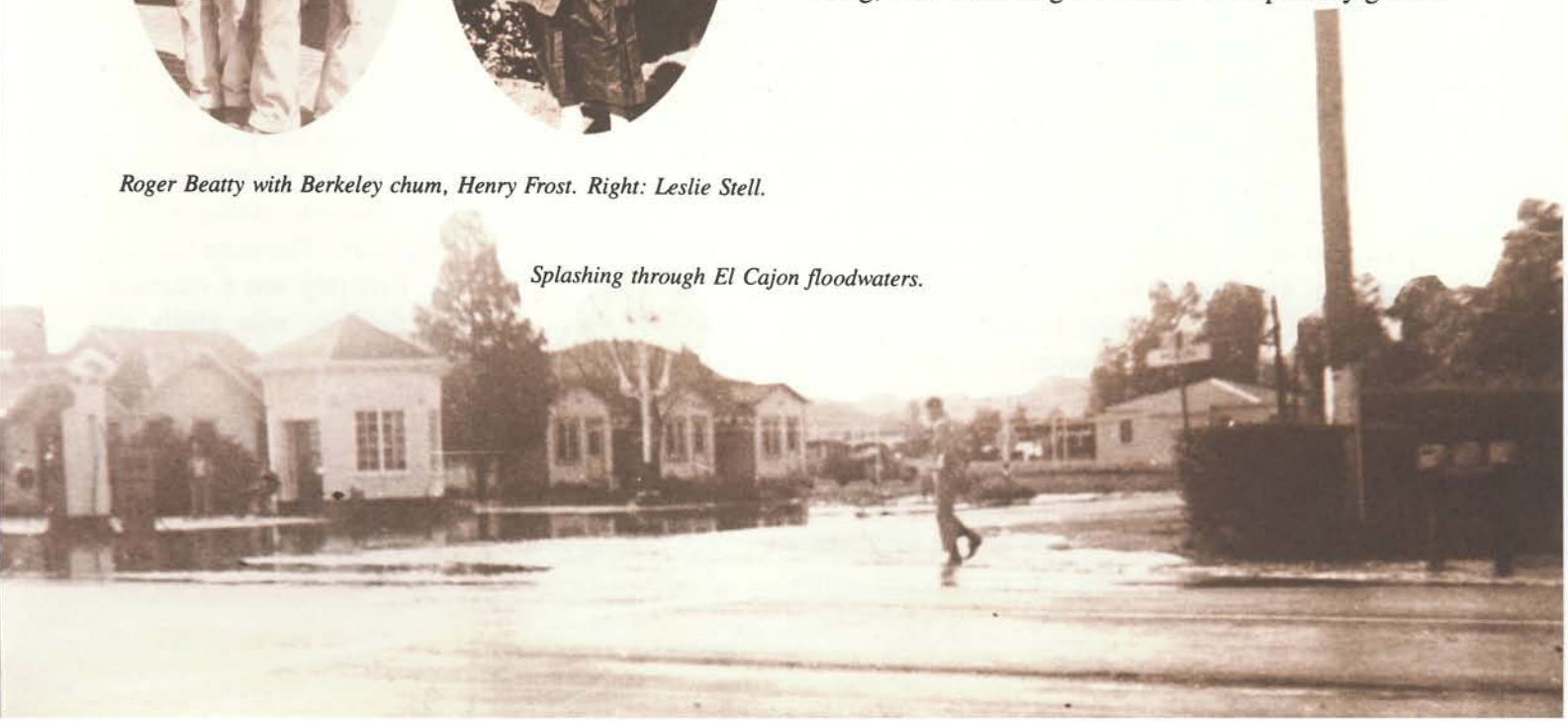
Before long, Helene and Grant were regularly seen together, often backing his Model T up the hills around campus. As thrifty as his father, Grant believed that backing up hills used less gas than driving in the normal manner.

Roger Beatty graduated first and took a job in nearby San Francisco, while Leslie went on for her Master's degree. When she had her Masters in hand, she and Roger married, and returned to El Cajon, where Roger went to work for W.D. Hall until he was able to open a contracting business of his own. Leslie began a teaching career that eventually led to positions at the County of San Diego as a Coordinator, instructor at San Diego State, and a post as a school principal. Like her Hofflund uncles before her, she was also an author, writing for both the State Department of Education, and Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

While the four were still on campus together, Grant Hall arranged for Helene to meet his parents. In a *deja vue* series of events, Helene's life would parallel that of her older sister-in-law, Irene Hall. Like Irene, Helene arrived on the sternwheeler *Harvard*. And, again like Irene, she soon suffered the devastating loss of her mother. But, for that first get-acquainted visit, everything was happiness as Helene stayed with Jack and Morjie Roether in the family compound on Park Street. The family loved her and she loved them.

In 1927, while Roger and Leslie, and Grant and Helene were in Northern California, 24.55 inches of rain fell in the El Cajon Valley; 12.78 inches of it in February alone. Streets flooded, as they always did when it rained. Country roads were almost impassable. Out toward Jamul, the bridge washed out when a floating house rammed into it. Damkeepers reported that water had risen nine feet and more, making it a muddy, sloppy Spring because there was no way to get rid of the flood waters. In the years to follow, more dams would be built to help control flood waters in the rainy season, but it would not be enough to rid city streets of standing rainwater. City fathers tried everything, even stemming the floods with specially graded

Roger Beatty with Berkeley chum, Henry Frost. Right: Leslie Stell.



Splashing through El Cajon floodwaters.

streets. That worked poorly, of course, and merchants and homeowners complained. It was up to the city to take care of rainwater, wasn't it?

* * *

Two young men missed the entire flood season that year. With jobs hard to find, Hal Stell and Dord Roether took off by steamboat for Guatemala, where Hal's uncle owned a mahogany tree plantation. They figured to do a little hunting, work on the plantation, make bags of money, and return to El Cajon as wealthy young men. They arrived in Guatemala to discover that white people were not allowed to do physical labor. That took care of making a lot of money! There was still hunting.

For six months, the two hunted and lived the easy life of planters but, when they were finally ready to come home, they did not have enough money to pay for their passage. By selling their rifles and guns, they had just enough for steerage tickets, which was just as well because they brought back with them a jaguar, cages of parrots, and stacks of skins and hides.

Once Dord Roether was home, he began noticing that the little girl who used to hang around the baseball field, Frances Butler, had grown up in a most comely fashion. He courted her, they fell in love, married, and had a son named George.

Recalling Dord's flamboyant return to the valley, Frances reports, "Dord eventually sold the jaguar to the San Diego Zoo, which later sold it to San Francisco's zoo. We heard that it was the first jaguar ever to breed in captivity."

The Ultimate Chicken Ranch

Chris Funk, who was recovering from severe burns suffered while in the Navy's Lighter-Than-Air Division in San Diego, moved to El Cajon at his doctor's suggestion. Physicians offered no better prescription for recovery in those days than to "move to the country, buy a chicken ranch, and putter your way back to health." After two years in Balboa Naval Hospital, and ten major operations, Funk was ready to try anything. He brought his wife, Evangeline, and his children, Chris Jr., Dorothy, Evangeline ("Vangie"), and Helen to a three-acre property outside of town at the corner of Main and Mollison.

First, he built a house. Then he began uprooting most of the existing vineyard. That done, he brought in three round metal chicken brooder houses – real innovations, for chickens are of limited intelligence and have a habit of crowding into corners and smothering one another. Round brooders were one answer to their suicidal tendencies.

It was Chris' plan to sell these profit-saving brooders to local poultry ranchers, but it was the beginning of what would become the Depression, and few were willing to part with their money. While waiting for times to get better, Chris raised chickens in his brooders in what proved to be a highly successful operation. His poultry ranch was so immaculate, modern, and productive that Grossmont High School's Future Farmers of America regularly toured the place.

Still, the Funks earned barely enough to live on from their poultry business. But, despite their financial difficulties, the Funk family was a happy one. When the trees that Chris and Evangeline planted grew sturdy enough, the children entered into the latest fad and determined to set records for tree sitting. Evangeline supported this madness by hoisting food and snacks up by rope but, when night's long shadows began spreading across the valley, the Funk children willingly abandoned their plans for fame.

To the delight of all children in the area, a carnival arrived each year and pitched its tents on the Funk's property. Chris and Evangeline were as thrilled as the children, because the carnival paid them $10 a day for rental – and $10 was hard to come by, with the Depression getting worse instead of better. The Funk children were wild with delight because they received free tickets for everything. Anticipation was half the fun, and long hours were spent before the circus arrived arguing which was better, the Ferris wheel or "Ossified Roy" – the latter a man who, legend had it, one day simply turned to stone.

Depression

The Funks supplemented their income with food from others who planted vegetable gardens on their land. A Mr. Heijal planted cabbage and potatoes, then gave the Funks the culls, which the inventive Evangeline fried, boiled, baked, mashed, scalloped, and fixed every other way imaginable. The same methods were applied to cabbage. Bartering was a means of survival for many valley families, who gladly exchanged rhubarb, boysenberries, grapes, and oranges for the Funk's eggs and chickens.

Times were hard for everyone. But, somehow, well-loved children transcend hardship and have fun, anyway. When Main Street was widened and retarred, kids flocked from all over the valley to pull off sticky chunks of the black stuff to use as chewing gum. And

George ("Dord") and Frances Roether

Evangeline Funk with baby Chris.

Helen, Chris, Dorothy, and "Vangie" Funk.

then there were Saturday nights when they accompanied their parents "to town" for the week's shopping.

On Saturday nights, everyone in the valley crowded into town. Indian families, rancher families, and farmer families mingled on Main Street. There were hails and farewells and jokes and commiserations on the sidewalks, and plenty of sales inside the stores. Kids had purchases to make, too. They roamed from store to store trying to find the best bargain on candy. A nickel was enough to get a whole sack of peppermint, or a few sticks of hard candy. Dozens of kids sneaked off from their parents to hang around candy displays at the Black Diamond Market, Weinstocks, the Pepper Tree, or at Chet Hardin's and Harry Hill's drug stores. It was such a struggle to make a decision.

Sundays were special too, because that was the day that people came visiting. Rides out to the country were popular with people stuck in the city all week, so

friends and family from San Diego, and even farther away, came out to spend the day. In anticipation of visitors, the Funk children shared Saturday night baths in a big metal tub while Evangeline read the next day's Sunday School lessons to them. Then, wrapped in big towels, the children sat around the stove and studied.

In the morning, the whole family went off to church. On the way home, Chris took the children to the Union Ice House for ice. Once home, they filled the ice cream freezer with a tasty mixture of cream, eggs, sugar, and vanilla, then packed the container in ice. With the children taking turns cranking, the mixture soon set up, which was Chris' signal to cover the whole works with a gunny sack to keep it frozen. Then the entire family waited, with varying degrees of patience, to see who would come visiting. On exciting occasions like these, the children wondered why adults kept talking about the Depression. What was depressing about this?

But, to parents, the Depression had real meaning. It meant worrying about providing children with a balanced diet, paying the taxes, saving for your old age. It meant watching your children go to school without shoes. The Funk children, like many valley children, got new shoes only rarely. And when they did, the shoes were purchased a few sizes too large and the toes padded with cotton to leave plenty of room for growth. So, the day that young Vangie got a new pair of shoes – costing an incredible $1.99 – it was a big day for the entire family.

Vangie, wearing her beautiful new shoes, cut across the weed and grass-infested lot toward school, reminding herself to stay away from Crosspatch's house. "Crosspatch" was the children's name for a lawyer who lived on Main Street. He was a one-armed man with a peculiar penchant for leaping out from behind his bushes and brandishing a stick at every child who dared disturb so much as a leaf of his hedge. Concentrating on avoiding him, Vangie was not thinking about her new shoes. Therefore, it came as a shock to feel one of her shoes slip away. Gasping and spinning about, Vangie pawed frantically at the tall grass and weeds, but the shoe was nowhere to be found. Crying for help, she soon had the entire family searching high and low, but the shoe was gone.

In 1953, when Vangie Nelson bulldozed the foundation for her children's specialty shop, the Kid Korral, on the family's Main and Mollison property, what did the dozer churn up, but the shoe lost so many years before. Apparently, it had slipped off her foot and fallen into a gopher hole, hidden away for 23 years, waiting to be reclaimed.

The Silver Screen

Over on Chase Avenue, a Columbia Pictures film crew arrived with director Frank Capra to film "Flight," starring handsome Jack Holt, Ralph Graves, and the glamorous Lila Lee. Set in Nicaragua, the script called for three companies of Marines from the San Diego base, a landing field, ten planes from North Island, and a host of extras. West of Magnolia on Chase, a landing field was prepared. Dozens of Army tents and false-front headquarters were erected. Then the shooting began. It was almost for real; during one scene, extras took their roles so seriously that they peppered the real Marines with rifle blanks. Offended, the Marines retaliated, and a real battle was halted just in time.

Among the onlookers during the melee was pharmacist Harry Hill's enterprising young daughter, Dorothy, who was running a profitable little business. With her parents away on a trip, Dorothy and her friend, Edith Ellis, carried jugs of ice water to the set and sold water by the glass to the thirsty actors. Harry Hill would never have known of his daughter's entrepreneurial talents if Jack Holt and a car full of actors had not driven by the drugstore one night and called to Dorothy – by name. When her father demanded to know how it was that she was so familiar with actors, she had to confess. Her father's firm disapproval ended what could have been a beautiful business career.

Charles W. Potter, the cowboy/actor who owned the Warlock mine in Julian, moved to El Cajon and took up real estate. Along Chase Avenue, Ed and Hazel Morath moved into a large home and named it Rathmoor. The house, and its springtime lavender blaze of wisteria became a focal point for local garden tours. Morath, a realtor and avid mountain climber, became co-founder of the Adaman Club, an organization whose members climbed Pike's Peak each year on New Year's Day. In future years, he became active in the formation of Grossmont Hospital. For more than two decades, he was also the treasurer of the United Presbyterian Church.

As the Thirties approached, the El Cajon Valley had become a loosely knit community of ranchers, farmers, and city dwellers. Much more growth was to come.

GROWERS & PRODUCERS 1930–1949

There were 6.3 million farm families in the nation, but half of them produced less than a $1,000 worth of fiber, food, or tobacco a year. Four of every ten farms were being worked by tenant farmers. Worse, the average farm family produced less than $400 worth of marketable goods. To grow enough to sell, farmers mortgaged their farms and purchased the machines they needed to remain competitive. By doing so, American farmers raised their indebtedness from $3.2 billion to $9.2 billion in only 20 years. Then, times got worse!

The first hints of drought appeared in the Great Plains and the American southwest, the beginning of the twin scourges of dry wind and weather that were to create the Dust Bowl. Painter Grant Wood captured the essence of beleaguered farmers everywhere in his portrait of a grim farm couple. He named it "American Gothic."

By 1933, 15 million city-dwellers were out of work and the words of new president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, gave them scant comfort: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Despite his claim, stock market prices continued to fall, and more than four million people were unemployed. For Californians there was a gleam of hope when Prohibition was repealed, but real recovery did not begin until the WPA job corps was formed. In those dark days, it was hard to recognize the good things that were happening: the beginning of international air mail delivery, the discovery of sulfa and penicillin, and the completion of Boulder Dam for power and better irrigation of farm crops. At the moment, they were not nearly as important as regular paying jobs.

Worldwide, other nations were also experiencing financial depression. An intense young man named Adolf Hitler proclaimed himself dictator of the German Reich, Josef Stalin rose to control the Soviet Union, and German U-boats began sinking British ships in the first stages of World War II.

Gold!

Adjacent to the site of today's Fuerte School, gold was discovered on Everett Parsons' citrus ranch. Parsons, a grower, assayer, and part-time gold miner, eventually dug a tunnel that extended under what is now Fuerte School playground. As he and his friends angled the "Orange Blossom" tunnel 90 feet underground, they were soon deep enough that they had to have air pumped down to them and work by the light of carbide lamps.

To process the considerable gold removed from the vein, Everett brought the only stamp mill in the county down from the Julian mines and installed it on the property – parts of the mill are now housed at Big Oak Ranch. Unfortunately, the vein petered out and, when the high water table flooded the mine, they turned the tunnel into a well.

There were many miners in those days working small strikes all over the Southwest, and they brought their ore samples to Parsons. After processing the samples, he mailed them to a bullion smelter in San Francisco. Frances, Everett's daughter, remembers that her father always wore a gun.

"He was uneasy, sometimes, because he usually had a pretty good supply of gold around. Then, as now, you couldn't be too careful."

Frances also recalls the activity at the old Chase Ranch gold mine, which continued to produce gold for another decade.

Another memory is the Indian camp at the end of Monte Vista Road, back of the Vacher ranch. In particular, Frances remembers the "Old Chief" who rode solemnly by her as she waited for the school bus to take her into El Cajon Grammar School.

"He always rode a white horse," she recalls. "He rode the animal bareback, and he always seemed so calm, and so proud."

There were a fair number of people living in the Hillsdale, Jamacha, and Fuerte areas in the Twenties,

and the old Hillsdale School provided a place for their Jamacha Community Club to hold dances, card parties, and classes offered by the Ladies Home Department of the Farm Bureau.

In town, Helix Water District employee Salvadore Contreras married Alice Ruiz. Contreras had patrolled the flume for years but now was an explosives expert. He and Alicia had eleven children: Raul, Amelia, Salvadore, David, Robert, Ofelia, Linda Rose, Sylvia, Ronald, Alicia, and Carol.

In 1930, an exceptionally tall, handsome young man arrived at the El Cajon Grammar School. John Montgomery, a graduate of San Diego State College and Stanford University, began a long and distinguished career as a teacher and coach. One who appreciated the young educator's skills was board member R.H. Flournoy, whose daughter, Elizabeth, was in junior high school at the time. Four years later, when Montgomery became a Principal and Superintendent of the district, Flournoy invited him home for dinner. It was there that John got to know the talented and sassy Elizabeth.

Liz and her sister, Lucile, had been home for only a short time. They had been sent East when their mother died suddenly of a brain hemorrhage. In Georgia with her father's relatives, independent Liz discovered the limitations of an overly genteel life, an existence governed chiefly by "can'ts" and "don'ts." Homesick, she had implored her father to let her and Lucile return and, finally, he had agreed. Now, having dinner with John Montgomery, Liz had one more reason for being glad to be home.

Newlyweds John and Elizabeth Montgomery.

In the months that followed, Liz was paired off with John Montgomery at social functions, but they had no formal dates. The time finally came when John invited her to accompany him to a school administrators' meeting and banquet at the Carlsbad Hotel. Excitedly, Liz looked forward to the weekend. Then, on the day of the event, she woke up with a funny, itching sensation. Racing to the mirror, she found herself covered with tiny, red bumps. When John came to pick her up, she tearfully confessed that she had the three-day measles.

As always, John was calm. Carefully, he examined her face and declared that she looked just fine to him and, at his insistence, she accompanied him to the dinner meeting. That started two years of dating, culminating in a wedding in the Chapel of the Roses in Glen Abbey Memorial Park. As guests assembled, Hazel Vellman played the organ and Gene Vacher played "Oh Promise Me," "Because," and "At Dawning" on his trumpet.

The Montgomerys settled down to married life, with John running the school district and Liz spending her time raising their two daughters, Roberta and Jean, and playing in local musical groups and orchestras.

John Montgomery remained Principal and Superintendent of the elementary school district for 21 years and was honored for his remarkable service in the 1970s when the district's only middle school was named for him.

Gene Vacher, the trumpeter at the Montgomery wedding, had just recently graduated from college and was recovering from the disappointment of discovering that there simply were not enough diplomatic jobs available. He decided to get a teaching credential instead. At San Diego State College, he further developed his considerable musical talents. He also replaced future radio and television star Art Linkletter on the Aztec campus radio station when Linkletter turned his back on a teaching career to take a chance on the new medium called radio.

Agriculture Hit by Depression

All through the Depression, valley citrus and grapes sold so well that the El Cajon Valley Citrus

Association and other packing houses operated full time. Slightly less than perfect citrus was given to the government to be distributed to less fortunate communities. A tomato packing shed operated by the Roether brothers continued shipping all through the Depression. The Roethers' shed was housed in half of Colonel Fletcher's old raisin packing shed, which occupied the land that today is the site of El Cajon's Transit Center. The other half was used for packing by Ed Fletcher, Jr.

Never before in our nation's history have there been more ill-fed or hungry Americans. Congress authorized the Red Cross to distribute 40 million bushels of wheat to needy families. Within months, another 45 million bushels were added to the giveaway. Yet, farm prices of wheat, oats, sugar, wool, and cotton continued to fall.

Soon, the Depression's impact was undeniably being felt in the valley, and many citizens had become downright needy. The County Welfare Commission tried to help by petitioning the Board of Supervisors to exempt certain properties from taxes.

Other attempts to ease the financial crisis helped, too. In 1932, twelve tons of government flour were allocated to the valley, and a number of local families were qualified to get it. For older citizens, there was relief when a newly enacted state pension paid anyone 70 years or older a dollar a day, *if* they had lived in the state for 20 years or more.

Farmers were not the only ones to feel the squeeze. Service station owner Gale Fansher, guaranteed $125 a month from the Union Oil Company, should have been fairly well off, but he was not. To collect that amount, he had to keep his station at Main and Orange streets open from six o'clock in the morning until ten at night. One terrible day, he sold only one can of kerosene and a lone gallon of gas. His take for the day: $1.25.

Five-year-old Tom Hodgins was too young to worry about the Depression. His attention that day in the mid-Thirties was fixed upon his arm. He had fallen and broken it, and his father had immobilized it with a splint until they could get the boy to Dr. Knox. As Tom sat in the yard, waiting impatiently for his mother to get dressed, he toyed with his cap pistol. Soon, he spotted the open bunghole of an empty 20-gallon gasoline drum. Firing his pistol into the drum should make a greatly satisfying echo, he reasoned. Tom stuck the gun barrel into the hole and, grinning with anticipation, squeezed the trigger.

Gale Fansher's gas station on Main Street.

The next thing he knew, he was sprawled on the ground yards away and his skin felt as if it were on fire. In the blue sky overhead, he saw the drum sailing higher and higher. He watched it begin to fall and, within seconds, heard the crash as it landed between the Bostonia substation and a house next door. The impact was followed by the dry rattle of fire in the parched grass.

Tom's mother heard the explosion and bolted through the door. Stifling a scream, she raced to her little boy's side. Recognizing immediately how badly burned he was, she rushed him to Dr. Knox, who swiftly painted Tom all over with purple ointment, then wrapped him up in gauze until he looked for all the world like a mummy. The next stop was County Hospital in San Diego, where Tom was put into bed, his bed tented, and a light bulb hung inside the tent – the only method then known to treat burns. Today, fully recovered, he is known as "Smokey Tom," a member of the Campo gunfighting stunt team.

Another Hall Marriage

Grant Hall's fiance, Helene Hughes, graduated from Berkeley in the depths of the Depression. Luckily, she got a job with Bank of America in San Francisco, and boarded in that city with her sister, Ruth, who was a student. Because Helene's salary did not cover living expenses, her parents paid the rent. Grant, who had not yet graduated, helped Helene and Ruth with their food bill by bringing left-overs from the Sigma Chi fraternity house whenever he visited.

Then, unexpectedly, Helene's father died. When, shortly after, her mother also died, it was left to Helene to settle their estates. In the midst of heart-wrenching decision-making and confusion, Grant arrived and convinced her to marry him. After a hurried wedding in the Bay Area, they came to El Cajon to live with W.D. and Florence. Iola Hall Roether, her husband, Chick, and their baby, Madge, were living there, too.

Grant went to work for his father for 35 cents an hour. When W.D. gave them a lot on Park Street, Grant and Helene used plans from the store – and Roger Beatty's expertise at digging basements – to build a house at a total cost of $6,000. In the next few years, children began arriving until the Grant Halls had four: Alan, Steven, Roger, and Sally.

Of W.D. Hall's company, his grandson, Roger, says decades later:

"I remember the marvelous clutter of my grandfa-

Grant and Helene Hall with their four children.

A Hall family gathering.

ther's lumber yard. There were surprises everywhere; once I found some old, wooden gun cases. When I pried them open, they were full of unused Civil War percussion rifles. Funny," he muses. "I don't know what ever happened to those guns."

Hall's firm was always a family operation. Even as a schoolboy, Roger had his own corner of the Hall Company where, in the Sixties, he displayed and sold products of his own choosing. Money collected for the boy by other salespeople went into a big metal pipe, which Roger emptied every day after school. His younger sister, Sally, and his cousin, Melinda Roether, become part of the Hall's tradition of working for the company by serving coffee and doughnuts on Saturdays.

It was about this time that a W.D.-inspired Christmas tradition began. Christmas Eve was always spent with W.D. and Florence. The new tradition had adults attaching original poems to the gifts they exchanged. Few family members showed any real literary talent, but those poems came to be treasured items. Typically, thrifty W.D.'s poems were always jotted down on whatever was handy.

Rex and Irene's daughter, Alice, remembers those Christmases, too.

"The gifts that we exchanged were inexpensive," she says. "Unlike a great many people in the valley – like the family that came from one of *the* five families of Hawaii – the Halls were not wealthy. We were merchants. The big landowners were the ones with fortunes. I guess you could call *them* the landed gentry."

W.D. Hall continued to play an active role in developing the city. When he expanded sewer lines to new parts of the city, it was over the objections of a great many residents, who felt that it was downright pretentious to tie into the fancy new sewer system.

"Who cares if it's in the house or outside? . . . just so long as it's close at hand" demanded one irate citizen.

The next big improvement came in 1935, when Main Street was widened. That it was needed was not in doubt; more than 6,000 vehicles were entering and leaving the city every 24 hours. Still, widening streets cost money . . . and money was getting tighter every day.

But not for young Arthur Ballantyne, newly graduated from high school and with a job at the Hall Company. Thrilled to be making money, he worked six days a week for $16. On Sundays, he attended services and meetings at the Presbyterian Community Church, and that is where he met dark-haired Pauline Douglass. Within a short time they were going together and, within four years, were married. Their first home was a one-bedroom house he built next door to his mother's home. Later, he laughingly told people that he built there because he could not afford a water meter of his own. Arthur was a highly skilled carpenter, self-taught. And it was this skill that got him hired by the Grossmont High School District, from which he eventually retired as the maintenance department foreman.

And then a young man arrived in town who proba-

bly understood hard times better than anyone else. He drove into California in a six-year-old Chevy sedan pulling a trailer filled with everything he owned in the world. Eighteen-year old Willie Carroll first got a job as a milk bottler, at $1.50 a day. But, good money that it was, it was not enough. Not content to work for someone else, he opened a barbershop, then two . . . then three. He saved his money. He bought property. He also married tiny Douglas Bowling and they had two children: JoAnn and Jerry. All the while the children were growing up, Willie continued buying property so that, by the Seventies, he owned seven health care facilities offering services from residential to acute skilled nursing care. He also owned a pharmacy, a supply store, and a mortuary.

The Matoon Act

Just when it seemed that things could not be financially any worse, the realities of State legislation called the "Matoon Act" become clear.

The way the Matoon Act was written, it penalized property owners who were delinquent in paying property taxes by pyramiding back taxes. It was not unusual during the years that the Matoon Act was in force for families to find themselves owing $50,000 in taxes on a house and land worth only a few thousand. Bill Guerker, a *San Diego Sun* newspaper deliverer, was offered land time and again by desperate farmers. Because he was frequently paid for those newspapers with oranges, chickens, eggs, and vegetables, he was not in a position to assume anyone's loans or taxes.

Henry and Victoria Stell were among those who lost their land, and Henry was forced to hire out to other landowners to make ends meet. When a desperate farmer offered him ten acres at Chase and Fuerte for "any amount you want to pay," Stell had to turn it down. When things got better, however, he bought a different ten acres from the same man.

Colonel Fletcher, elected to the legislature, rounded up enough votes to kill the Matoon Act; but, like millions of others in the state who had seen their taxes rise out of sight, it took Fletcher years to get his own holdings out of the red. And then, just about the time his taxes on those holdings were paid, and just about the time it looked like the Depression was easing so that folks could start buying his properties, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

The War Years

The Forties began with eight million Americans out of work. There was help for the elderly when the first Social Security checks were issued, but for everyone else the outlook was bleak.

Things were even worse in Europe. Poland had fallen to the Germans, then France. England was being bombed, and Americans were distinctly uneasy about their involvement in these affairs. And then, on December 7, 1941, bombs fell on Pearl Harbor. America declared war on Japan, then on Germany. World War II was a reality for Americans. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected to an unprecedented fourth term as president.

The first half of the decade of the Forties was one of global warfare, ending only when Germany, then Japan, surrendered to the Allied powers. The final acts of World War II, destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the "atomic bomb," presaged emergence of the United States as the predominant economic, technical, and military power in the world.

Changing Main Street

By 1940, Main Street had been widened and businesses covered three entire city blocks. One of the service stations in the business area was Wright's Super Service, run by Homer Wright's sons. The old general store built by Homer in 1892 was going under the name of the Valdon Hosiery Shop.

Former Police Chief Rex Huffman recalls that "There used to be a sign in the middle of Main and Magnolia that read 'Population 876'." He laughs, "That number was a big lie. There weren't anywhere near that many!"

That was before the big influx of people. El Cajon would have likely remained a country town had it not been for the war. But, with soldiers, sailors, and Marines swarming into San Diego for training, seemingly overnight the town filled up with their wives and sweethearts.

When Charlie Parsons was recalled by the Navy and transferred to Hawaii, it never occurred to him that he was moving his family into danger. So, on that sunny morning of December 7, 1941, when his daughter Laura awakened to the sounds of battle, no one was worried. At least not at first.

Thinking that the planes overhead were part of a sham battle, Laura noticed that the planes carried strange red circles on their wings. In the next room, she heard her parents bickering over who was fixing what for breakfast.

"Dad!" she interrupted. "The planes are dropping bombs and there's a lot of smoke out in the har-

bor." Charlie paid her scant attention; he was more interested in having waffles that morning.

In fact, the family took almost no notice of the action going on practically next door, other than to step into the street to watch it throughout the morning. Finally, although there had been nothing on the radio about the "exercise," Charlie grew uneasy and returned to the base.

A short time later, large trucks pulled into the Navy housing area and women, children, cats, dogs, and birds were rounded up and evacuated into the nearby jungles. As they were being herded aboard the trucks, the three Parsons children were separated from their mother. It was three days before they were reunited, but the children did not worry. To them, war was not a reality; rather, being packed up and trucked deep into the jungle was just like going to camp.

At home in El Cajon the day after the attack, Ed Fletcher looked out of his living room window at the valley below. It was a sight that always filled him with pleasure. But not on that day. With a start, he realized there were a great number of trucks and people moving onto the family's eucalyptus-covered Villa Caro property off Chase Avenue. Glancing over to the Cuyamaca Street property where he ran cattle with Dr. John Steen and Forrest Hawley, he was even more startled to see strangers on horseback driving off his herd.

Angrily, he jumped into his car and sped down the hill, heading first for the Cuyamaca Street spread. He got only a few feet onto the property when he was stopped by armed guards. Demanding to know what they were doing on his property, he got a fast answer.

"It isn't your property, anymore, buddy! It belongs to the U.S. Government, now."

Furious, Ed raced over to the Villa Caro property and discovered that the military had appropriated that land, too. Gone were the family's plans for selling the lots. Instead, Villa Caro was turned into a training ground for medics and the National Guard. The Cuyamaca land was turned into a Marine paratrooper school "for the duration." And, as if that were not enough, most of Fletcher Hills - where Fletcher had his tomato crops - was taken for an artillery school. (At war's end, the cement foundations for the military mess hall were not removed. Today, they are part of one of the stores located between Fletcher Parkway and Fletcher Hills schoolgrounds.)

"Oh, that paratrooper bunch was wild," Ed recalls. "It didn't take them long to establish a tradition for graduating classes - the minute they finished their graduation ceremonies, they'd hightail it over to the La Mesa Inn, drink themselves blind, and then break the place up."

On December 7, 1941, Philip Thacher, Jr., was far from Pearl Harbor aboard the cruiser USS Chicago. *Two years later, the young officer was still aboard that ship and smug about stockpiling a dozen cases of Coca Cola when the* Chicago *was torpedoed and sunk. Drifting on the surface of a tropical sea, Thacher was not troubled by possible sharks or even capture - what irritated the living daylights out of him was the thought of those precious bottles of Coke, forever out of reach at the bottom of the Pacific.*

When war broke out, Gene Vacher was married, the father of a child, and a teacher at the El Cajon Grammar School with John Montgomery as his principal. Gene volunteered for the Navy but, as the father of an ill child, and with teachers at a premium, he was rejected. He continued teaching until 1946, when he was finally accepted into the service.

While the younger valley men went off to fight in Europe and the Pacific, citizens of all stripes assumed war-related home front duties. Mrs. Abraham Weinstock, president of the Woman's Progress club, called a mass meeting of women to help the Red Cross gather necessities for refugees in war-torn Europe. The club had done did the same thing 25 years before, for a similar need during World War I. Attorney Edwin Thacher became the chairman of the El Cajon Valley Rationing Board. Not that they were the only volunteers: *everyone* became involved in the war effort in one way or another.

On December 11, 1941, the city council called a special meeting to adopt an ordinance authorizing Mayor Claude Kenyon to proclaim and enforce rules and regulations for air raid and blackout plans. The following year, a tower was erected at a cost of $150 and used as an Air Warning Tower.

Outside the city limits on the east end of Lexington near the Cloud, Longman, Cunningham, Danetta, Daggs, and Rice families, the Army set up a vehicle repair unit on the site of an old winery. There was one distinct problem with that site, however: no water. The Clouds solved the problem by offering the soldiers access to their pump. The family charged nothing for that water, although they continued supplying it to the camp throughout the war. The children were particularly impressed by the guard stationed at their well; his sole duty was to make certain that the well and the line to the camp were not sabotaged.

San Diego policeman John Cloud had brought his

John, baby Joel, and Ben with Frank Cloud on their East Lexington property; below: John, Ben, and Sarah Cloud.

wife, Sarah, and their sons, Ben and baby Joel, to El Cajon because Ben had been diagnosed an asthmatic. Enrolled at El Cajon Grammar School as a fourth grader, Ben loved his new life in the country. Too young for World War II, Ben Cloud admired the military men and loved watching the Marine airplanes flying over the valley. His turn to serve his country would come later in a future American conflict.

The planes young Ben watched were part of a Marine Corps paratroop school, Camp Gillespie, on the north side of town. Established in 1942, the facility was named for Major Archibald H. Gillespie, who, as a lieutenant of Marines during the Mexican War in 1845, helped free California from Mexico in the battles of San Diego, San Pedro, and Monterey Bay. Almost a century later, other Marines received the first part of their training at a camp named for Gillespie.

Staff Sergeant Gene Engel of the 2nd Marine Division drew the unenviable assignment of driving an amphibious tractor loaded with Marines onto the fiercely defended beachheads of Tarawa and Saipan.

On Saipan, the islanders had been told by the Japanese that Americans were gigantic devils who were coming to kill their children and abuse their women. So completely did the natives believe these stories that many leaped to their deaths from seaside cliffs at the first sight of the advancing Americans. Seeing those natives hurling themselves onto the rocks below, and seeing dead Americans being slapped about by the surf, Engel and two others left their vehicles and went looking for revenge. Several miles inland, they discovered the entrance to a cave and, suspecting that Japanese troops were inside, Engel shouted for them to come out. No response. As he drew back his arm to pitch a grenade into the cave, he heard a cry. Engel paused, and again he called out:

"Come out. We won't hurt you."

This time, there was a response. Stiff with fear, 25 islanders emerged. One, a woman, carried a three-month-old baby. It was the infant who had cried out.

Cowering until they saw the crucifix Engel wore, the islanders instantly lost their fear at the sight of the cross. Approaching him, each islander kissed the crucifix before following the three Marines back through the jungle and down onto the beach to comparative safety.

After the war, Engel, who had been stationed at Camp Pendleton during his Marine service, made El Cajon his home, as did many another veteran in the postwar years.

Back On Main Street

War or no war, American citizens and America's fighting men had to be fed. Aubrey Sears, seeing a need for meat processing and packing, started up a plant on West Main close to the railroad tracks. It was near yet another military installation, a motorized infantry unit.

On North Magnolia near Main, Milt and Nini Paris bought the old Knowles Restaurant and turned it into the city's first funeral parlor. It would remain the only such parlor until the late Fifties, after the business had been moved up the street and enlarged. Milt fit right into the community; he was asked to be on the city's original Planning Commission, was on Rex Hall's Civil Service Commission, and was one of three men to revive a moribund Chamber of Commerce.

W.D. Hall continued installing and repairing pumps, for many in the valley still had no access to water other than from wells. But, the well business was not the only business that was booming. For Homer Meachum, the demand for furniture was so great that he moved his Main Street store into a two-story building down the block. The new building even had an elevator, the only one in town. He, his brother, Logan, Logan's wife, Geraldine, and all the other employees worked long hours during the war, because a flood of new residents required home furnishings.

Logan was in charge of a new warehouse that had been hurriedly built to handle the unexpected demand from the new residents. The newcomers, here with the armed forces or as defense workers, quickly discovered an appalling lack of housing. Desperate for places to live, they actually took over old chicken

World War II ration book.

shacks and began transforming them into habitable living quarters.

To make their makeshift homes liveable, they went to the W.D. Hall Company to get wood. Then they headed for El Cajon's general stores. At Meachum Furniture and Weinstock's they bought mattresses, linoleum, hardware, and everything else that would turn their makeshift shacks into homes. When they wanted groceries, they shopped at the new Safeway Store, Bennetts, West's, or the Black Diamond.

"It was so much fun," sighs Geraldine Meachum. "We had never had so many customers, and they bought everything in sight." Says her husband, Logan, "Saturday night was the big night. Everybody came to town, and you saw everyone you knew in the stores."

"Ed Cartwright, the policeman, was always so nice," Geraldine recalls. "He would go right out in the middle of Main Street, and stop traffic, because it was the highway and very busy. Then he'd help us ladies across the street."

Cartwright was not the only law officer to take extra care of local women. On the way home from nursing one night, Mabel Knox was tailed by a car. Uneasy, she accelerated. The car behind speeded up. When she slowed down, the car behind followed suit. Not until she arrived home did she discover that the car following her was a police car. The officer, recognizing her automobile and knowing that she lived a good distance from town, was just making certain that she got home safely.

During the war, Rex Huffman took over as Police Chief. One of his first assignments was to revoke permits allowing citizens to carry concealed weapons within city limits. For some, this was bad news, but not for a local character known as Pistol Pete, a man of under five feet with the unmistakably smooth hands of a gunman. Pete swaggered about town with a brace of matched, ivory-handled pistols on his hips. As a guard out at Edgemoor Farms, Pete held a gun permit, as did many local merchants. What with the war and all, it did not hurt to be careful.

Pistol Pete was not the only character in town. There was a man everyone called "Jud" and, if it is true that a society is judged by the way it treats its weaker links, El Cajon merits high marks for the way Jud was treated.

"I remember him so well," says Disa Christianson Campbell, an employee in Cajon Valley Union School District's special education department. "Jud,

Police Chief Rex Huffman with patrolmen Andy McReynolds and Harold Petree.

who was considered 'simple,' was about 30 when I knew him in the late Forties and early Fifties. I remember that he loved to direct traffic and, of course, he chose to direct it on Main Street, which was also Highway 80.

"He'd stand there out in the middle of the street and blow his whistle, and everyone would stop their cars and wait for him to wave them on." She pauses, thinking. "No one thought anything about it, you know? They just humored him, and we kids thought he was terrific. And then one day he just disappeared. I don't know what ever happened to him."

Growing Up In Wartime

While adults worried about kinfolk fighting in the Pacific and European theaters, children in the valley were growing up in much the same fashion as their parents before them. Recalling racing barefooted through the valley's broad expanses of wheat and vineyards, Norm Carruth considers his childhood as being downright blissful. Horseback riding and hiking all over the valley, he got to know every nook and cranny of the place.

Of particular interest to Norm was the medic training camp up the road and across from his father's blacksmith and gun repair shop on El Cajon Boulevard.

"I remember that army camp so well," says Carruth, who now owns the repair and key shop on the site of his father's blacksmith shop, "The men lived in tents and when the winter rains came, it didn't take long before the tents, and the men huddled inside them, were soaked clear through. It got so bad that my folks, and all of our neighbors, took the soldiers into their homes until everything dried out. That camp was simply unliveable during the rainy season."

Gordon and Barbara Smith on what was Ballantyne Lane.

Out on Mollison, Marge Garcia was only four years old when the war began. She remembers little except the blackouts, which frightened her to death. Her parents, Antonio and Lillian Solis, ran a turkey and citrus ranch, and that is where Marge, her sister, Victoria, and her brothers, Anthony and George, grew up. Gene Harriett Keightly remembers those days, too. She clearly recalls seeing tanks on maneuvers on the streets of El Cajon.

The Keightlys lived with Mrs. Keightly's parents, August and Anna Marie Renebeck, on Chambers Street. August, a German immigrant, was a superb carpenter. Besides building their house, he had, years before, built a beautiful wine press: a machine that had gotten him into considerable trouble during Prohibition, because August had also been a very good winemaker.

August owned a good-sized vineyard on Main and Chambers, and he used the grapes to make a heady wine that became extremely popular with many in the valley. When Prohibition came along, he ignored it – until the night the sheriff shut him down and hauled him off to jail.

"My grandfather never quite believed in Prohibition," Gene chuckles. "I mean, here was a man who had never been in trouble in his life, and he was mortified at having to spend several days in jail for something he thought was ridiculous. It's something the family never let him forget . . . the whole incident was quite hilarious.

"But," she adds, "He did stop making wine."

Another child during those years was Al Archard, who has strong memories of growing up in the Forties, and of the "giant of a man" who spanked him. The man told him that the spanking would hurt him more than it would Al . . . but Archard was having none of that! Not until the big man apologized after the paddling, with an earnestness that was unmistakable, was young Al convinced that Principal John Montgomery was speaking the truth. So impressed was young Archard that he "straightened up." Looking back at Montgomery and the teachers at El Cajon Grammar and Grossmont High schools, Archard says admiringly, "Those teachers were solid."

Outside of school, Archard spent considerable time hunting lynx and wildcat, both in the valley and up in the mountain community of Suncrest

* * *

Over the years, Suncrest properties had sold until there were dozens of vacation cabins and permanent homes in the two little communities of La Cresta and Suncrest. There was a spirit up there on top of that mountain that was decidedly unique. Perhaps it was the isolation that drew people closer together. Maybe it was the pioneer type of person who chose to live there.

At any rate, the dedication of Crest people to their community was never more obvious than when five men mortgaged their homes to built a water system, which, years later, was assumed by Padre Dam. Residents also formed a volunteer fire department - called the Smoke Eaters - which was manned by women when the men were away. Self-sufficient and independent, the residents wanted only to be left alone. Well, that is not completely true; they would have liked to have had their mail delivered to their homes. To get delivery, Crest citizens appealed to Jack Roether, who had been appointed Postmaster when John Dodson retired.

With his background in business and bookkeeping, Roether had easily passed the postal examination and won the job. He had just recently had all the houses in town numbered, and mail was being delivered to those homes. But, numbering and delivery for Crest residents, as well as those in Dehesa, Alpine, Japatul, and other small communities, took a few more years. Until then, mail continued to be delivered to fourth-class community post offices, or by rural Star carriers.

As in most communities, post office employees are frequently the first to know when people move in and out of town. Certainly, Jack Roether knew who lived where, and what lots, homes, and parcels were changing hands, or were being incorporated into the city. He knew when Robinson's huge old house on the hill sold to olive grower Leonardo Dichiara.

Dichiara promptly added fifteen rooms, set about enlarging the olive groves, then moved an olive crusher and other production equipment in to produce olive oil. The Dichiaras were the last single family to own that large holding. Renamed Rancho La Morada, the land was later divided and sold off for housing developments.

Elsewhere in the Greenfield/Bostonia area, other parcels were moving, too. In Bostonia, Hazel and Arlo Sperry moved their two children onto 46 acres of citrus land. Hazel immediately plunged into social and school activities, which led to her life-long fascination with El Cajon's history. Hazel, taking copious notes in her crabbed, spidery handwriting, began interviewing and recording that which had gone on in the years before. Her careful cataloging of those early people and events became the foundation upon which the El Cajon Historical Society was later formed. Without her notes, letters, and stories - carefully held together with seamstress's straight pins - much of El Cajon's history would have been lost forever.

New residents Frank and Betty Evans moved into the old Harbaugh ranch on Washington in the Granite Hills area and named it Buckeye Ranch. There, they

Hazel Sperry, El Cajon's first historian.

raised horses and taught generations of children and adults to ride. When they moved in, they could see from their house all the way to El Cajon Boulevard because there were only five houses in between.

Several miles to the south of Buckeye Ranch, in the hills on Fuerte Drive near the Vachers and the Parrott families, two chicken ranches were established. Right across the road from one another, the Hoopers and the Townsends built a series of long, raised chicken houses.

South of them, the Monte Vista Ranch was deeded to Thomas E. Sharp, and facilities and plantings were immediately upgraded. During the war, when his son, Donald N. Sharp, was reported killed, Thomas donated half a million dollars to build Sharp Memorial Hospital in the young lieutenant's memory. That gift did not mean that Sharp accepted his son's death. When Thomas died in 1959, it was discovered that he left half of his estate to Donald, whom he continued to believe was simply missing in action. Not until 1970 was the property deeded over to what is now the Rancho San Diego Land Company. In the 1980s, large, new tracts of houses were begun on the land.

Harry Phillips and his father began rebuilding mine shafts in the old Chase Ranch gold mine. Unfortunately for Phillips, his dreams for a fortune in ore were sharply curtailed by the $35 an ounce gold price ceiling established by the government back in 1934. Convinced that the gold policy was a international bankers' plot, Phillips spent years writing unpublished essays on what he saw as a conspiracy to keep gold out of the hands of ordinary people.

A couple of miles to the north, on the rim of the valley overlooking Chase Avenue, Dr. Carlton Williams, a prominent San Diego dentist, built a barn to house his prized show horses. Building during the war was not allowed, unless the structure was deemed "essential," a term that included shelters for animals. Williams' new barn was one of the few buildings on the east side of Mt. Helix above Grossmont. Dr. Williams and his wife, Evelyn, their young daughter, Lynne, and son, Jeffery, actually lived on a ranch at Fuerte and Chase, just below the rim property. Another daughter, Gayle, was born on the ranch, but it was up at the barn that trouble was brewing.

One particularly galling wartime restriction involved telephone service. People waited years to get a phone, including a neighbor up on the rim who had been waiting for two years to get telephone service. Unaware that Williams had transferred his home phone into the barn until he could build a house on the same property, the neighbor was mystified one day while out walking to hear a phone ring. The unmistakable sound stopped her dead in her tracks.

Dr. Carlton Williams, astride one of his favorite horses.

As the ringing continued, she walked toward the barn. The closer she got, the louder the ringing, and the more furious she became. When she reached the barn, there was no denying that the phone was inside. Whirling, she headed for home and, by the time she got there, she was in such a high dudgeon that she dashed off a letter to the telephone company. (Had she had a *telephone*, she would have *called*.).

"I know," she wrote sarcastically, "that Dr. Williams' horses are intelligent. But they are not so intelligent that they deserve a *telephone!*"

Williams had the phone installed in the barn because he and his family spent so much time there. An avid horseman – he was one of the originators of the Del Mar Horse Show – he spent most of his evenings and weekends with the horses. His daughter, Lynne, also rode, as did many of their friends. On weekends, by scrimping on the meager three gallons a week that an "A" gasoline ration card allotted them, friends, like the Bakers, drove out from the old Talmadge Park neighborhood to join them for riding and picnics.

Planning for War's End

By the time it became evident that America would win the war, it was equally evident that El Cajon would never go back to being the sleepy town of prewar years. To prepare for the future, the City Council asked civic leaders David Raeburn, R.L. Swearengin, Andrew Ballantyne, Claude Kenyon, Abe Weinstock, George Sears, and Roger Beatty to come up with a plan to cope with the stresses of the postwar years.

It was well that these men designed such a blueprint for civic growth because, within two years, 120 new retail businesses had opened their doors, 51 new business buildings were built even though Main Street property values escalated. Retail sales soared to $11.5 million and – even more astonishing – there was a population growth of 3,900 citizens in two years. That meant more homes, more schools, and more city services.

Young businessman Tom Jackman recognized that this influx of people also meant the potential for continued business growth. His suggestion was to develop vacant property at the north end of town. Jackman, who owned a small construction firm, had built a number of houses on Johnson Avenue, but he envisioned using the empty land surrounding Gillespie Field for industry.

Steve Fletcher of the Fletcher Company, which owned the land, agreed with Jackman and sold Tom his first five acres. With that, Jackman went out and began to sell his idea of an "industrial park" to others.

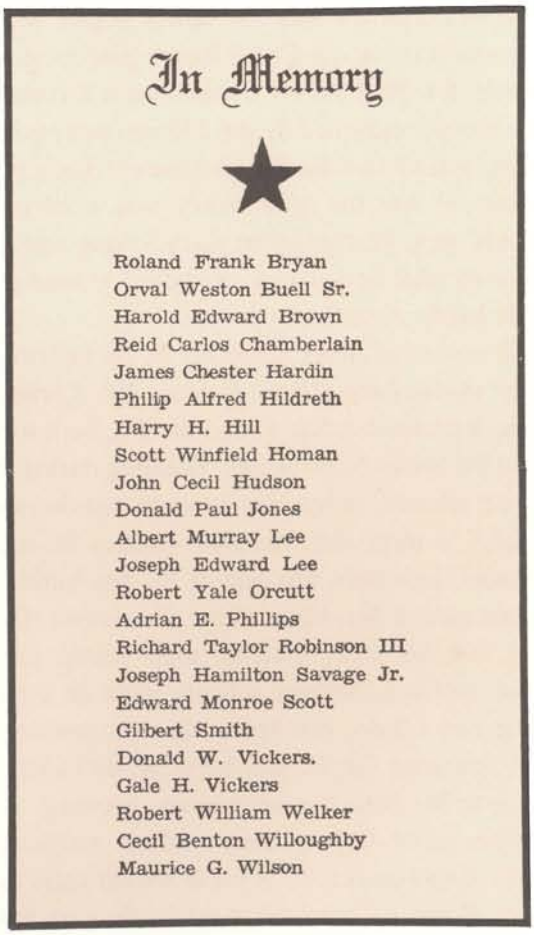
Peace at Last

War's end brought a housing shortage and unprecedented demand for consumer goods. It also marked the end of price controls. Prices took an immediate rise – after strikes idled some 4.6 million workers before wages were brought in line to match prices. Returning GIs crowded colleges. They married, beginning what was called a "baby boom." America helped war-torn Europe and Japan rebuild their cities through the Marshall Plan, the Central Intelligence Agency was formed, Israel won U.S. recognition, Truman was re-elected over Thomas Dewey, and the United Nations established the World Health Organization. Also during the Forties, Dr. Kinsey's report on sexual behavior shocked the nation, the Olympic games resumed, China fell to the communists, and the Iron Curtain became a reality with the blockage of Berlin. Civil war broke out in Korea, Radio Free Europe was established, and France began its ill-fated war in Indo-China.

The end of the war signaled a return of El Cajon's men and women in uniform. A signboard, called the Roll of Honor, had been erected on an empty lot next to Harry Hill's pharmacy. The names of 534 servicemen and women were listed on that board; all but 23 of them returned to collect their nameplates.

During the war years, there were few parades, though many civic activities took place in the USO building built near the library by the Rotary Club. Police Chief Rex Huffman remembers that on Saturday nights there were so many Marines, sailors, and soldiers brawling in the middle of Main and Magnolia streets, that cars could not get by.

"Nobody ever got seriously hurt," says Huffman. "And, we always had a shore patrol riding with us



In Memory

Roland Frank Bryan
Orval Weston Buell Sr.
Harold Edward Brown
Reid Carlos Chamberlain
James Chester Hardin
Philip Alfred Hildreth
Harry H. Hill
Scott Winfield Homan
John Cecil Hudson
Donald Paul Jones
Albert Murray Lee
Joseph Edward Lee
Robert Yale Orcutt
Adrian E. Phillips
Richard Taylor Robinson III
Joseph Hamilton Savage Jr.
Edward Monroe Scott
Gilbert Smith
Donald W. Vickers.
Gale H. Vickers
Robert William Welker
Cecil Benton Willoughby
Maurice G. Wilson

Programs Courtesy El Cajon Valley News

during the war, so things never really got out of hand. It was just that the servicemen were high spirited."

Once the war was over, a festive parade honored local servicemen – accompanied by a drive to raise the money to build a war memorial building in the names of two fallen sons: James C. ("Jimmy") Hardin and Reid C. Chamberlain.

Druggist Chet Hardin and his wife donated the land for the memorial building, which was built on Chambers Street on land owned by American Legion Post 303.

Another parade was held in 1947. The brain child of businessman Tom Wigton, it was called the Mother Goose Parade and was meant for the enjoyment of children. Wigton's parade committee included Chamber of Commerce members J.W. Milston, James Free, Max Glaser, C. Rupert Linley, Hamilton Judy, and Carlyle Reed.

Their first parade was a small, night-time affair. Within a few years, it was a major southern California event that brought hundreds of thousands of spectators to downtown El Cajon to enjoy marching bands, equestrian entries, and increasingly more lavish floats. Wigton and his wife, Evelyn, owner of a local women's wear store that spawned a small chain of stores, sponsored floats for the next 30 years.

Bob Swearengin, owner of the Valley Commercial Bank, which later became Security First National, was a staunch supporter of the Mother Goose parade, as were Milt Paris and Ben and Mary Lou Montijo. Ben, a skilled woodcarver, created many of the floats. And, on her day of days, when Mother Goose rode regally down the street, it was the Montijos who worked her innards and drove the tractor that pulled her along.

The entire community got involved in the parade. Men built floats, women sewed costumes and, when the big day finally arrived, gardens all over town were stripped of flowers. Granted, the parade was a great success; still, there were problems over the years.

"Those first parades made some people pretty mad," confesses Tommy Caldwell, a volunteer policeman for those early events. "With the highway running right through town, we had to halt all east and west traffic until the parade was over. We'd have a lineup of cars for miles."

Once, one of the Bradley Stable horses became startled and broke loose, leading everyone a merry chase before he was finally caught and calmed down.

The triumphant parade held at war's end.

One of the first Mother Goose Parades.

Then there was the time that the Princess had to ride in a car because her royal float developed a flaw that toppled it and made it useless. There was also the time that Santa Claus concealed a bottle of holiday cheer beneath his jacket - presumably to protect himself against the cold. Imbibing enthusiastically along the parade route, Santa was visibly feeling no pain by the time the parade was over and had to be hustled away, out of sight of the children.

But those were minor problems compared to the 1963 parade. Scheduled for Sunday, November 24, the parade was delayed for a week when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas on the 22nd. With the nation in mourning, the 1963 parade was somber, indeed.

One of those who became involved with the Mother Goose parade was a relative newcomer to the area. Nat Eggert, a CPA, moved to El Cajon because he and his wife, Madeleine, were sick and tired of living in quonset huts. Out of the Marine Corps, but still living in Oceanside, they had had it with temporary housing, mildew, and fog. So they moved to El Cajon and, by 1962, he had contributed so much to the community that he was voted Citizen of the Year.

Eggert was also a member of the El Cajon Irrigation District board back when much of the valley was still making do with wells - yet some of those wells were running dry. To supply water to everyone who needed it, the board looked into allying itself with another water supplier. After much work and maneuvering, an election merged the El Cajon Irrigation District with the La Mesa, Lemon Grove, and Spring Valley Water District. After some required legislation, the two companies did, in fact, become a single water district, with a single representative from the old El Cajon Water District sitting on the new board. Later, the district's name was changed to the Helix Water District.

A 40-year bond issue to pay for new facilities was passed, and Eggert jokes:

"Jack Schrade suggested to the state that I take his place on the Helix board when he was elected senator. The first time I was up for election, I said that nobody should stay on a locally elected board for more than one term because they either became indifferent - or crooks."

Laughing, he says, "Well, I've been elected eight times and I'm neither. And I hope to last until 1992, because that is the year we pay off our bond and I want to be there to celebrate."

"Carlyle Reed was the man who really understood what was happening," says Eggert. "He had just sold the newspaper and had a little radio station on the second floor of the W.D. Hall Company. When he interviewed me, I realized just how good a handle he had on things.

"Reed said, 'With water, El Cajon can grow.' And he was right! Because areas that had been too dry to build on could be developed. Colonel Fletcher recognized it first. In Southern California, water is the key to everything."

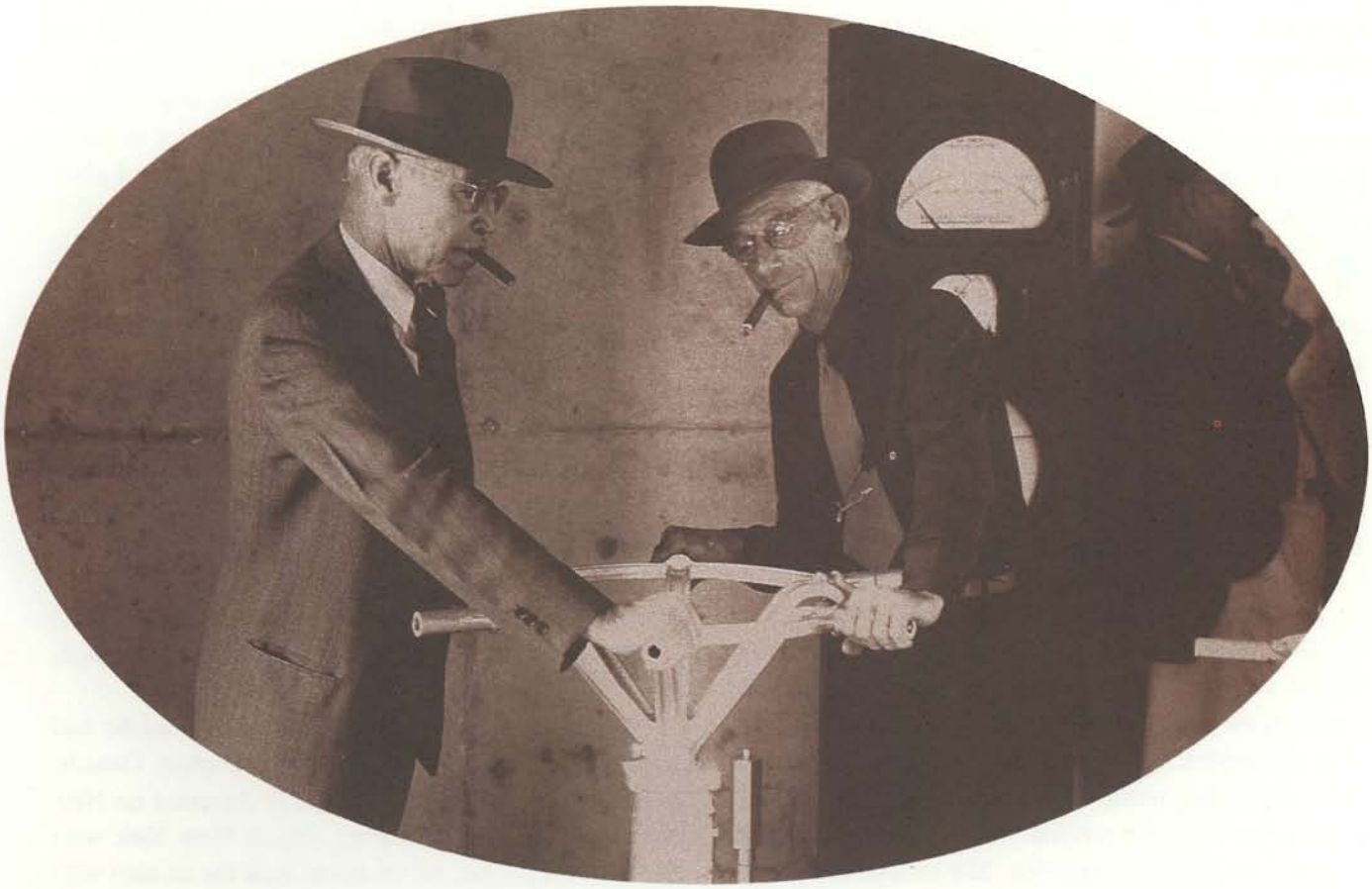
Although Helix Water District shared water storage with the City of San Diego at the El Capitan and San Vincente reservoirs, Helix board members took no chances. Across from Lake Jennings, they built a filtration plant. Then, in 1944, foreseeing the growing need for water, they became charter members of the San Diego County Water Authority with the express purpose of importing water from the Metropolitan Water District in Los Angeles. That move gained San Diego County an allotment of water from the Colorado and Feather Rivers. In the Sixties, the district built an additional water storage facility at Lake Jennings.

The foresight shown by directors and board members in providing a secure and sufficient water supply opened the way to accommodating the enormous numbers of people who moved into the area in the decades that followed.

Nat Eggert continues to participate in every aspect of the water district. He represents Helix on the San Diego County Water Authority, which is made up of 23 agencies that supply over 90% of the people living on the coastal slopes of the county. Eggert has been president of the Association of California Water Agencies, and of the San Diego County Water Authority. He was also appointed by Supervisor George Bailey to serve on the Assessment Appeals Board for San Diego County.

Industrial Area Takes Shape

North of town, on the former grazing land that Tom Jackman envisioned as the future Industrial Park, S. L. Kousens opened the Peerless Manufacturing Company in the mid-Forties, in Jackman's first prefabricated steel building. The industrial area in its formative years was not exactly in the heart of town: during the first few years in the building, Kousens grew



In 1947, Helix Water District officials Chet Harritt and Rube Levy opened the way for Colorado River water to reach San Diego.

used to shooing inquisitive range cattle away from his door.

Nearby, another business started up. Carlos Hull opened a sheet metal and stainless steel pipe and tubing company, and called it Valley Metal Works. He also made window frames, some of which were installed in Grossmont Hospital when it was built. In 1977, the company was sold to the Hodgetts family, who increased business so significantly that, eight years later, it was purchased by Handy and Harmon.

Another business, Parts Engineering, begun about the same time by Jay Van Vechten in a workshop on his property just off Jamacha Road, was taken over by two of his three sons, Jim and Pete, when they returned from the service.

Main Street Changes

Ellsworth Statler, a member of the Statler hotel chain family, and his canny lawyer, Ben Mathews, came to the valley to look over its potential.

Eying the empty south side of Main Street, the two questioned the local belief that the bare property would never amount to a hill of beans. They doubted it even more when they measured the property and found that the lots on the south side were at least 50 feet deeper than those on the north side. At Mathew's urging, Statler began buying up the south side of the street. Newspaperman Carlyle Reed says that it was Statler's purchase of the old El Cajon Hotel and other properties that got things moving.

Not everyone approved, and Reed remembers:

"As I once remarked to W.D. Hall, who decried the rapid changes taking place, 'If drastic changes don't take place soon, many of us in business will not survive - including the *El Cajon Valley News.*' "

Paying $8,750 for the 75-foot frontage at Main and Magnolia, Statler started a retail business development that eventually included a Thrifty Drug Store and a Carl's Shoe store. When he bought Homer Dow's Ford Agency at Main and Magnolia to build J.C. Penney's first El Cajon store, the town really took on a new look.

Down the street, Charlie Parsons returned from Hawaii at war's end to run a service station-garage and radio repair store. Helping him after school was his pretty daughter, Laura, who was in her early teens. She was in the station the day that Perry Walton arrived home from the service. In her hand was a stack of tickets for a church function. She noticed the young man joking with her father, but she did not recognize him. He was, after all, considerably older and had left Grossmont High School before she entered. However, a sale is a sale and, brandishing the tickets, she asked Perry to buy one.

It had been a long time since Perry Walton attended a church supper but, looking at Laura, he suddenly took on a new interest. There was a small problem, though; he had squandered his Navy paycheck in celebrating his return.

"I'll be back right after next payday," he promised.

Laura figured that was the last she would see of him. But, on payday, Perry was back to purchase a ticket. That church supper was the beginning of a romance that saw them wed before Laura graduated from high school. Later, their two sons, Richard and Charles, were born about the time that Perry's parents - Lester and Edna Walton - subdivided and sold the old Lankershim farm that they had struggled unsuccessfully to make pay.

On a lot on Renette Street where, until 1946, there had stood only a cardboard house, a retired New York policeman turned western artist, his wife, and son built an house of adobe bricks they had hauled themselves from Jamul. When that was finished, Olaf and Mae Wieghorst bought the lot next door and built a stable, cantina, and art studio. Building supplies, of course, came from the W.D. Hall Company.

One day, young Roy Wieghorst was sent to Hall's to purchase a shovel. W.D. looked down at the slightly built lad and asked, "What size do you want, son?"

"The lightest one," Roy replied.

W. D. placed one shovel then another on a scale used to weigh nails. When one of the oldtimers asked what he was doing, W.D. drawled:

"Just sellin' shovels by the pound."

Wieghorst's reputation as a painter started out slowly, with the artist sometimes trading his paintings for goods - even turkeys. But, when he held his first home exhibit, his increasing fame drew 700 people from as far away as Los Angeles and Hollywood to attend the showing, which included a barbecue, and some trick roping and riding performed by his son, Roy.

Determined to live in the American West he had seen portrayed by artist Frederic Remington, Danish-born Olaf Wieghorst had arrived in America on New Year's Eve in 1918. Jumping ship in New York with $1.25 in his pocket, he set out to look for an aunt who had a home in the city. Unfortunately, the only English

Roy Wieghorst, son of artist Olaf Wieghorst, completing one of his daring tricks.

words he knew were, "yes," "no," and "sure." Which is why he spent two nights and a day riding the subway before he was finally helped to find his aunt's house.

Mabel, a young girl who helped his aunt, took one look at him and decided it was worth the effort to teach him English. Olaf looked at Mabel and was a willing pupil.

It was while watching a newsreel of the United States cavalry in hot pursuit of Pancho Villa that Olaf decided that being a horse soldier was the life for him. He enlisted, bid his aunt, uncle, and Mabel farewell, and was soon on his way West. At Fort Bliss, Texas, Olaf was initiated into the ways of the cavalry. When he left the service, he became a cowboy, gaining experience as a cavalryman and cowpuncher that taught him all there was to know about marching, drilling, guns, and horses – invaluable information that he would use later in his paintings.

It also taught him how much he missed Mabel, so he went back to New York and married her. To support his bride, he became one of "New York's Finest" in the mounted police division. During years of prestigious duty on the bridle paths of Central Park, his proficiency as a horseman and his budding artistic talents made him a legend.

Olaf Wieghorst paints the things he knows: horses, cowboys, Indians, the life of a West that is no more. There were people in El Cajon who saw what he was doing and believed in him. Jack Schrade, the owner of a western store (and later a State Senator), displayed Olaf's paintings in his shop, while Bill Casper, owner of a club on the outskirts of town, sponsored a drill team that Olaf wanted to begin for teenage riders.

Over the years, Wieghorst's paintings have made him world-renowned, with his works in major collections. Presidents Eisenhower, Nixon, Ford, and Reagan purchased his paintings, as did Bing Crosby, Burt Reynolds, Clint Eastwood, Roy Rogers, and Gene Autry. Perhaps his best-known painting, "Navaho Madonna," sold for one million dollars.

In 1946, while the Wieghorsts were getting settled, Dr. Carlton Williams sold part of his Avocado/Chase Avenue property to builders for a Safeway store and moved the family up near his barn on the southern rim of the valley above Chase Avenue. Williams' older daughter, Lynne, followed in her father's stirrups by showing horses at competitions all over the state.

Her father, as president of the Del Mar Horse Show, devoted an inordinate amount of time and energy to making that show the largest, and one of the most prestigious, horse shows in the world. Over off Russell Road, Lynne, her father, and neighbors – Larry Fletcher, Marjory and Jack Mosher, David and Phil Maddox, the Kuerbis boys, Bud Baker, and Bill Moore – hoed and shoveled and raked property donated by H.H. Howell for corrals and a Pony Clubhouse. Years later, a Little League ballfield was added.

Bud Baker, one of the youngsters clearing the land, was the son of Mearl and Gwen Baker, who were close friends of the Williams family. After years of coming "out to the country," the Bakers built a house on Melva Road. For Gwen, it was like coming home; her father, George B. Wright, had been a beekeeper in the Grossmont area years before. And, it had been her uncle, architect Richard Requa, who had designed the Mount Helix Amphitheater.

Dinner club owner Bill Casper, with Olaf Wieghorst and drill team.

Mount Helix Amphitheater architect Richard S. Requa

Although Mearl continued his San Diego-based business, Baker Hardwood Lumber Company, the entire family was very active in East County. Bud Baker grew up to follow in his father's footsteps and head the lumber company. He also became a volunteer in the El Cajon mounted police unit. Bud's younger sister, Julie, became an elementary teacher and later designed a special El Cajon history program for district students. In 1987, Julie Adkin's program for developmentally unready kindergartners, "Children at Risk," gained statewide attention.

But, while the children were growing up, tragedy struck the Williams family. Young Jeffery contracted measles, which was followed by a fatal case of meningitis. Unwilling to live in the house where there were so many memories of the boy, the family sold the place to the John Alessio family. The Alessios turned the house into a showplace and years later sold it to the William Cowlings who, by adding tennis courts and designing a new interior, made it into an even more lavish estate.

Disaster struck other families when the disease, polio, reached epidemic proportions all over the nation. So concerned was the city council in 1948, that they notified food-handling establishments that all garbage cans had to be sprayed with a DDT solution to prevent the spread of the crippling disease.

* * *

When former Marine Lieutenant Bill Burns came home to visit his mother in the family home on Prescott Street, he had already weathered a broken marriage and a failed turkey processing business. It had been a difficult few years since he returned from the service, which explained his rather half-hearted agreement to drive his mother over to the Clifford Smith home. Once there, though, the sight of the slim, smiling Levi-clad girl emerging from the Smith house, had Bill hoping that his luck had taken an abrupt turn for the better.

Winifred Smith was also a veteran. A WAVE lieutenant commander during the war – she had been in the second Navy class at Smith College – she was now home between careers. She remembered Bill from

WAVE officer Winifred Smith

high school, and had considered him pretty "fast." She quickly learned that the years had not slowed him down one bit! Within minutes he was asking, "Are you married? Are you engaged? How about a date tonight?"

They went to the Marine Officers Club for dinner, and dated steadily thereafter. In the autumn, when she left for a teaching job in Pomona, Bill followed. A year later they married and returned to El Cajon so that Bill could finish up at San Diego State. Because they needed the money, he joined the Marine Corps reserve, drove a school bus, and worked with the grounds crew at Grossmont High School. After graduation, he won a coveted job as Grossmont District Purchasing Agent.

Recreation

Out in Bostonia, a whole new concept in entertainment was introduced by the Peterson family. Families, and young people on dates, piled into their cars and drove to their new drive-in theater. As excited as everyone else were the Peterson teenagers, Jane, Donna, Sue, and Kay. But the drive-in, as fun as it was, was not the only entertainment in town. There was a regular movie theater, there were dances out at Casper's Ranch Club, dinners at Casper's and, for a change of pace, there were meetings and socials at Casper's.

The Forties ended on a hopeful note. With the war ended, people were making up for lost time, and there seemed to be few limitations that hard work could not overcome.

Bill Casper and Jack Maranda at a Lion's Club function at Casper's.

INDUSTRIALISTS & MODERNISTS 1950–1987

The Fifties were years of expansion and tribulation. The Korean war set the stage for an armed confrontation between the East and West that continues three decades later. And it was a decade of names: Dwight Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles, Richard Nixon, Nikita Khrushchev, Mao Tse-Tung, Harry Truman, Senator McCarthy of Red "witch-hunt" fame, and Hungarian freedom fighters. The Korean conflict prompted the largest U.S. peacetime budget in history: $71.6 billion. At home, wages and salaries were frozen, strikes threatened, and railroads and steel mills were seized by federal troops. Still it was a decade of innovation: Xerox copy machines, videotape, tape recorders, computers, transistor radios, contraceptive pills, and Kellogg's Sugar Frosted Flakes. The world witnessed its first thermonuclear reaction, and the Supreme Court ruled racial discrimination in schools to be unconstitutional. In the Fifties, the nation's population increased by 2.8 million, the largest single-year advance on record. The Gross National Product, which had been $99 billion in 1940, nearly tripled to $284 billion. In 1940, one farm worker produced enough food for seven people; in 1950, one farmer fed 15.5 persons. On the medical front, poliomyelitis killed or crippled more than 50,000 Americans until Dr. Albert Sabin and Dr. Jonas Salk produced the polio vaccine.

The beginning of the decade was marred by the police action – another war – in Korea. One of the first to learn of it was Bill Burns, a Marine reservist with the 11th Tank Battalion. Recalled to active duty from his new job as purchasing agent for the Grossmont High School District, Bill kissed his wife goodbye and reported to Camp Pendleton.

Another retread was history teacher Phil Morell, a member of the same reserve unit as Burns. Morell only had a short time to explain to San Diego State professors that, in the fourth week of a six-week summer course, he had to leave. Though Bill and Phil arrived at Pendleton together, within a month they went different ways. Burns was put in charge of the base brig at Pendleton for a time, then sent to Fort Knox to motor transport mechanic school. Phil was sent to Korea. With Morell went another reservist, a 20-year-old college student named Bob Cornett. The biggest crisis in Cornett's life to date had been juggling time between his classes at San Diego State and his job delivering the *Evening Tribune* to newsstands along El Cajon Boulevard. Then a mimeographed letter starting "Report to Duty" arrived and all else was forgotten.

After a few days in Japan, the reserve unit was loaded onto landing craft and followed assault troops ashore at Inchon. A tank gunner, Cornett was an inexperienced corporal, while Morell, having fought at Iwo Jima and other Japanese-held islands during World War II, was a seasoned Marine major. Battles like Chosin Reservoir followed Inchon, and the Marines, who had fought their way to the 38th Parallel only to face the unexpected onslaught of Red Chinese troops, learned the bitter meaning of what it was to "advance to the rear." During the long months that followed, there was plenty of time for introspection.

"I feel that I was extremely fortunate to be a Marine reservist at that time," says Cornett today. "I was fortunate to be called to active duty and given an opportunity to fight for my country. That experience formed the basis for my entire adult life. It whipped me into shape, gave me direction, forced me to plan a better life for myself.

"Don't get me wrong," he hastens to explain. "The last thing I'd wish for is another war. But there is something about doing something for your country that allows you to rid yourself of selfishness much earlier in your life."

When his time was up in Korea, Cornett was involuntarily extended, promoted to sergeant, then counseled to stay in the Corps and get another stripe. But those long hours of thinking about his future had

made up his mind. He was going to finish college.

"My parents had not even finished high school," he says. "And I was determined to get a degree and make something of myself. When I got home, the G.I. Bill had not yet been activated for Korean veterans, so I worked the graveyard shift as a machinist, first at Convair and then at Solar, to pay my way through school. Later, I got a daytime job driving a bus for Grossmont High School District. By then, the G.I. Bill had been reinstated, so the last years of college were easier."

Bill Burns, too, returned home with a new outlook on life, the result of a speech made by his commanding officer:

"You are among those who survived," the officer said. "That puts each of you under obligation to give service to your community."

Bill took those words to heart; one of the first things he did upon returning to El Cajon was to become an active member of the Lions Club.

In 1966, incoming Lions Club president Bill Burns received congratulations from outgoing president Trent Huls. Foreground: Dr. Don Erikson.

Winifred Burns (second from right) assuming the presidency of the Lioness Club, with board members Barbara Damron, Reola Bush, Vivian Dedrick, Dee Omahen, Dorothy Maranda, Agnes Thiem, Mary Viercant, and Judy Hollingsworth.

Preparing the ground for Parkway Plaza in 1965 on Fletcher Parkway – all the way out at the "north edge of town."

"Whoosh"

The frenzied pace of the new decade seemed to mirror a desire to make up for lost time. As *San Diego and Point Magazine* reported in a 1958 series on the city: "El Cajon – whoosh!"

The flood of newcomers had not stopped. Housing tracts were springing up all over, new businesses opened their doors, and the press of newcomers forced schools to double sessions. For their part, citizens wanted paved streets, relief from flooding, more health care facilities, more policemen, and better fire protection. The sudden demands for increased city services made it obvious that the old mayor-council system could no longer keep pace. After considerable

Parkway Plaza upon completion.

study, El Cajon switched to a city manager type of government.

Among the first changes was creation of a Master Plan for the city, followed by a rezoning of all city property to R-1. Within city hall, civil service procedures were adopted for selecting personnel, and departments were established for planning, engineering, purchasing, finance, civil defense, and personnel. Yet, as rapidly as changes were made, they barely kept pace with the influx of people and the escalation of their expectations.

Tracts adjacent to the city and in Fletcher Hills were annexed, adding four and a half square miles to the city. By, 1958, at the peak of the boom, building permits were issued for $24.5 million in new construction, including more than 2,200 permits for homes. In response, new schools and hospitals were built. More policemen and firemen were hired, backed by new radio equipment in police and fire department cars and trucks. While most streets in the city remained unpaved, they were widened to handle traffic more efficiently. Parks were built and a Boys Club established. A separate association of real estate agents was formed: the El Cajon Board of Realtors. There were new clubs and lodges, including BPO Elks Lodge No. 1812, Soroptimists International, and the League of Women Voters.

All of these people represented immense purchasing power. To meet the needs of shoppers in the city and in areas beyond El Cajon city limits, an 81-acre regional shopping center – Parkway Plaza – was built on land once part of the old Castle Rock Ranch. To pay for much of this expansion, citizens voted for a one percent sales tax.

By the beginning of the spectacular Sixties, the population of El Cajon had grown an astounding 623% – from 5,418 persons in 1950 to 37,618 in 1960. It had been the most explosive decade of growth in the history of any comparable community in the nation.

A Postmaster Retires

Over a span of some twenty years, Jack Roether, postmaster of El Cajon, had watched the city balloon from 1,478 people to almost 40,000. His staff had grown from 5 to 103 postal workers. Roether, who was past president of both Rotary and the Chamber of Commerce, was also active with Boy Scouts, Masons, El Cajon Valley Gun Club, and the American Legion – the latter an allegiance born of time spent as a coast artilleryman in World War I.

Just as Roether had returned from World War I so many years before to begin life anew, Roy Wieghorst returned from service during the Korean War to pick

When Jack Roether (right) left his position as postmaster, the Chamber of Commerce sponsored a retirement party. Here, a special plaque is presented by a San Diego postal official, commemorating Roether's many years of service.

up where he left off. Returning to San Diego State, he earned a degree in engineering. For sheer enjoyment, Roy also resumed riding, polishing his trick riding act for competition. Another equestrian interested in competition was attractive Barbara Perry. Barbara lived with her mother and sister in Fletcher Hills. Wild about horses, Barbara belonged to a number of riding clubs. She knew Roy; they had first met in 1949 when she was a freshman at Grossmont High School and he was 19 – a college man.

It was at Tanner's Horse Auction at the corner of Broadway and E. Main that Barbara had first seen Roy. With her older sister, Joan, Eileen Buckels, and Evelyn Davis (later a Mother Goose Princess), Barbara had come to watch the horses.

Roy had come with Ray MacMullen, also to look at the horses. Neither Barbara nor Roy had paid much attention to one another then, or during the next few years when they met at the Bear State ice cream parlor or roller-skated at the lighted outdoor rink at Chambers and West Main. Beyond, that is, trying to outdo each other at horse shows in Del Mar, the Pine Valley Rodeo, the Aztec Ring east of 70th, the Rock and Ride Ring out on Greenfield, and the Suncrest Horse Show and rodeo.

However, in 1954, Barbara looked at Roy with entirely new eyes when he asked her to be part of his trick riding act. It did not take Barbara long to realize that she was in love with him. Further, she knew perfectly well that he was in love with her, even if he was not yet aware of it. Taking it upon herself to speed his discovery of the fact, she used an age-old plan. Pursued by an ardent Navy officer, Barbara went to Roy, batted her enormous brown eyes, and pleaded for help.

"Tell him that we're engaged so that he'll leave me alone," she begged.

Gallant Roy did just that. Not surprisingly, it was only a short time before they *were* engaged. A wedding followed in the spring of 1956. The newspaper had called Roy East County's "most eligible bachelor." Well, he *had* been, thought Barbara.

Olaf Wieghorst, Roy's father, was becoming well known for his western art. People like John Wayne and Leonard Firestone of Firestone Tires were beginning to collect his paintings. In fact, when the tire magnate wanted a painting of his horse, Bay Fern, Firestone flew into Gillespie Field on his private plane to close the deal. Shortly after, a huge van rolled up in front of the Wieghorst house on Renette and Sunshine streets. Inside were Bay Fern, his trainer, and his groom. Each day, the van rolled up, the trainer trotted the animal out, and he and the groom waited until Olaf was finished painting. Then they led the animal back into the van and left until the next day. The painting of Bay Fern led to other commissions for Wieghorst.

* * *

When Phil Morell returned from Korea, it was to a rousing welcome at Grossmont High School. Pushing to the back of his mind the memories of the Yalu River, Hung Nam, and Pusan, he threw himself back into teaching and coaching while expressing amazement at how much everything had changed in the year and a half he had been away. Helix and Grossmont

The Wieghorst-Perry wedding was the "wedding of the year."

were still the only schools in the district, but Grossmont was on double sessions until a new school, El Cajon High, was completed in 1955. It was to that new school that Morell went as vice principal, staying there until assigned to Granite Hills in 1960 as principal, a post he held for 23 years. But, upon his return to El Cajon in 1953, the staff and students turned out to welcome him home at a gigantic rally. Cheerleader Lynne Williams remembers how everyone applauded and cheered:

"He was wearing his uniform," she recalls, "and he was absolutely gorgeous."

Lynne, like her father, Dr. Carlton Williams, was a real go-getter, and it was while she was attending a leadership conference at Camp Cuyamaca that she met Bernard Martin. It was the beginning of a lifelong romance. While Lynne attended San Diego State and Stephens College, Bernie went on to USC and dental school. Upon graduation, Lynne got a job teaching in Los Angeles. Within a year, she was vice principal of the school. Bernie graduated from dental school, they married, then the two of them lived in another part of the county until 1967 when they returned to El Cajon.

Today, Dr. Martin is as inveterate a horse lover as his father-in-law, and a member of the El Cajon Mounted Police, a group established in 1950.

In the years that Bernie was establishing a practice, Dr. Carlton Williams continued his interest in horse shows. He also became the Chairman of the Medical Association's Commission for San Diego City, which built University Hospital and purchased Edgemoor Hospital as a medical facility for the elderly. He went from president of the San Diego Dental Society to a leading role in the State Dental Society, and was for six years the Speaker of the House for the American Dental Association. Dr. Williams was a speaker at the international association, Federacion Dentaire Internationale, for ten years and, in 1986 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, was named President-elect. In 1987, he became that organization's president – only the third American to hold the post since World War II.

Unlike Roether, Wieghorst, and Morell, who had been glad to leave the service and get on with their lives, Gene Vacher was making the army a career. Divorced, he moved from his station in New Mexico to assignments in Pasadena, Washington, and then – as a bandmaster – went on to the Presidio in San Francisco. From there it was Korea, back to the States, then to France.

In France, he met a widow named Mary, who had taken the position of secretary to the Assistant Commandant to Headquarters at her son's insistence when he was assigned to Germany.

"Mom," Mary's son had said, "It isn't fair. *You* are the one who has always wanted to come to Germany. Why don't you come on over." She did just that and got a job to boot. She also met Gene Vacher; they were married in romantic Orleans, France, in 1961. From there, they were transferred back to the States, first to Fort Chaffey then to Fort Hood in Texas. During Vietnam, they were stationed in Germany at U.S. Army Headquarters, Europe, where Gene was made the Assistant Chief of Bands at Heidelberg.

* * *

For most people, the Fifties and Sixties were a time to regroup and make up for years lost to the Depression and war. Businesses flourished. Houses were built and sold in such numbers in the inland areas that the El Cajon Board of Realtors experienced a flood of new members. It was a trend that continued. Within twenty years, the El Cajon board merged with the La Mesa Board to form the East San Diego County Board of Realtors. At the time of their merger, their combined memberships numbered a remarkable 1,095.

City Councils under Mayor Hamilton Judy, Al Van Zanten, Lloyd Loftus, Dick Brown, Karl Tuttle, James Snapp, and Robert Cornett passed resolutions to ban the sale of crime horror comic books, regulate firearms, require that fences be installed around swimming pools, rename streets, open council meetings with prayer, and make it unlawful for a person to drive while intoxicated. The city fathers also took a survey to discover the desires of the citizenry, then created a master land use plan and, in a lighter moment, promoted a police department dog named "Sarge" to the rank of Lieutenant for apprehending a robbery suspect. They limited talk by citizens at council meetings to five minutes each, and acted to give 50% of each year's business licenses to the Chamber of Commerce to promote the city. In perhaps a more far-reaching move, the state opened bids for construction of Freeway 8 east to Flinn Springs.

Flood control and drainage continued to be an issue. So did redevelopment, even after a Redevelopment Agency Board was formed. As before, these issues created controversy and, at its peak in 1958, a new city manager entered the scene. Robert Applegate, newly arrived from a similar position in Oregon, came to the city when there was but a single stoplight at Main and Magnolia, only a few paved streets, no provision for drainage, an aging sewer system, more people than the city knew what to do with, and a lot of angry citizens.

Their anger was understandable; five years before, the population had been at 5,000. Now it was 25,000 and, in the 24 years that Applegate would be city manager, the population would soar to 76,000. During those 24 years, Applegate oversaw installation of 221 drainage projects, 258 subdivisions, 756 street improvement projects that added 80 miles of improved

streets to the city, and 98 sewer projects. City property grew from 1.9 square miles to 14.2 square miles. Single-family residential permits alone reflected an evaluation of more than $208 million, multiple family dwellings had an evaluation of over $356 million, and commercial and industrial permits totaled $167-plus million.

Always with his eye on a way to save the city money, the canny Applegate was the one who convinced the state to install ramps every half mile on the new Interstate 8 . . . at no cost to El Cajon taxpayers.

"It was the opening of the freeway that opened El Cajon up to more even development," says long-time resident and *Daily Californian* Executive Editor Del Hood.

"Earlier," he relates, "growth had been encouraged by the return of servicemen who had been stationed here during the war. Expansion of the aerospace industry helped, too. But, much of the credit for the way in which that growth was handled must go to the city's leaders at that time because they were systematically getting the needed infrastructure in place."

City Manager Robert Applegate.

High school student Mike Thomas did not pay much attention to most improvements in town, much less the infrastructure. But, the day the freeway opened, he took special notice, thinking what a crime it was to waste that pristine stretch of beautiful new concrete on regular traffic. He and a group of teenage car enthusiasts hatched a plan: they would turn it into a drag strip.

Blocking off all westbound traffic on a memorable Friday night, they rerouted unsuspecting drivers over to old Highway 8. With traffic out of the picture, the inviting stretch of new concrete belonged to the teenagers. Their victory was short-lived, for rather humorless highway patrolmen showed up in a few hours to close down their action.

* * *

But, in 1958, the freeway was not yet built, and Applegate had just entered the fray. A former engineer, he realized that a city, like a building, needed to have a firm foundation if it were to survive the pressures of use and time. In El Cajon, that meant that much had to be done that was not immediately visible, and he knew from experience that citizens would complain. Nonetheless, he began by creating an infrastructure of staff and services that, ultimately, delivered to taxpayers a complex drainage system and a money-saving hookup with the Metropolitan Sewer System.

Only then did he begin on above-ground improvements: a new police station, a public works facility, a fire training facility, three recreation centers and swimming pools, landscaping projects in parks and streets and center dividers, and the completion of the prize-winning Superblock. Applegate somehow managed to fund all those improvements with grants, joint powers agreements, lien contracts, and good old-fashioned cash. By the time he retired in 1982, every improvement he had overseen for various city councils was paid for. Just as impressive, not one project had incurred long-term taxation for citizens. Long-time city council member, and one of the mayors to serve with Applegate, Bob Cornett remarks:

"The guy was absolutely amazing! He provided the financial know-how we needed to turn this town

into a real city. It was a real pleasure serving with him."

Former Mayor Jim Snapp says: "Bob Applegate was the most efficient and professional city manager I've ever met. He educated us as politicians, and brought the city up to speed."

But, before all that was accomplished and the kudos lavished, there were taxpayer revolts, threats of recall, bombastic interruptions at council meetings, and the ultimate rejection by voters: defeat of bond issues needed to pay for improvements. While many people attended council sessions during those years, none was as diligent as Marie Ulbrick, who covered the meetings for the League of Women Voters. For twenty years, Ulbrick was the ultimate observer of the goings-on at city hall. Delight Swain was there, too. City clerk since 1951, Swain continued in that position for 18 eventful years.

Despite vociferous disagreements over lot-splits and zoning laws, improvements were made and orderly growth was managed. Through it all, *El Cajon Valley News* editor Si Casady reported what was – and was not – happening. In his distinctive, crusty, no-nonsense manner, Casady inflamed some readers and delighted the dickens out of others.

Yet for all its ferment and change, the town seemed a wonderful place to the Stephani family, here on a vacation from New York. In fact, when they returned to the Empire State to face another winter, El Cajon seemed a paradise in comparison. Night after snowy night, they relived driving from Phoenix to El Cajon in their 33-foot Spartan Royal Mansion trailer.

Often, they spoke of the welcoming lights of the Chieftan Trailer Park on the outskirts of town. Louise, Charlie, and the children had enjoyed that park so much that they stayed for several days. When they returned to New York, the children, Carol, Carl, and Diane, talked of all the places they had visited: Los Angeles, San Francisco, and the historical sites of the Midwest and East. They decided that they liked El Cajon the best. As the interminable winter months dragged on, the family vowed to return to El Cajon.

The rationalization given to other family members was that the climate was better for Louise, and that sixteen-year-old Carol wanted to attend San Diego State College to become a teacher. The following year, the Stephanis pulled up stakes and headed west in their trailer. Returning to the Chieftan Trailer Park, they

Counselor Carol Clarke with Cajon Valley youngsters.

enrolled Carol and Carl in El Cajon Valley High School and Diane at Meridian. The children were in school only a week when the earthquake of 1955 struck.

"Welcome to California!" they said to each other.

Charlie got a job at Ametek-Straza and the family lived at the trailer park until it became obvious that Carl had grown so tall that he could no longer stand up inside the trailer. It was time for a house, and they found a perfect one for them out on Pepper Drive. Carol, who graduated third in her class at El Cajon High School, won an El Cajon Woman's Club scholarship that helped pay the $32 San Diego State charged for each semester's tuition.

Carol's first job after getting her degree was at Johnson Avenue School, supervising summer school classes. Hired later as a full-time teacher, she eventually became a counselor at Greenfield Junior High. In the interim, she married and had a son, Victor Clarke.

Carl Stephani graduated second in the class of 1959 and was Senior Class President. After two years at U.C. Riverside, he joined the Peace Corps and was sent to Colombia, South America, to work in community development. From there, he went to Georgetown University, Berkeley, then Syracuse, where he earned a Masters degree in City Planning.

It is a fact of life that what is new becomes old and passes on. In the Fifties, El Cajon lost three men who had given direction and remarkable dedication to the community. Just before Christmas in 1951, W.D. Hall died. His son, Rex, managed the lumber company until 1964, when his brother, Grant, took over. Just six months after W.D.'s death, Reverend Charles F. Richardson passed away. Richardson had served the city as a judge, justice of the peace, tax collector, tax assessor, city clerk, building inspector, and health officer; he had even been editor of the El Cajon Valley News. *Hearing the editor complain that he had not had a vacation for over five years, Rev. Richard stepped in.*

Then, in 1955, the legendary Colonel Edward Fletcher died. He, like Hall, left dedicated sons behind to carry on the work he had begun so many years before.

Industrial Park

The demise of the El Cajon Citrus Association in the Fifties marked a fundamental change in El Cajon. The era of citrus growers and packing plants was over. The grower had been supplanted by the industrialist and businessman. This flowering of industry was aided by the widening and paving of an old farm-to-market road that was given the name Fletcher Parkway.

Steven Fletcher, then the President of the Highway Development Association and brother of Ed Fletcher, Jr., remembers the Fletcher Company giving the right of way to the County through Fletcher Hills and down to Johnson Avenue. Later, when the freeway went through, it was the Fletchers who sold the dirt to build the railroad overpass to the State – at 5 cents a yard. Wisely, the Fletchers selected the dirt they wanted removed. And, once a large knoll had been removed, the site was used for another tract of houses.

The Fletchers were not the only ones to benefit from the road construction, for both Fletcher Parkway and the freeway had tremendous impact upon the growth of the Industrial Park.

* * *

In the Fifties, Valley Metal Works, in keeping with technological advances and the ever-more stringent demands of aerospace, nuclear, and petrochemical industries, expanded its product line to tubular products manufactured from exotic superalloys and refractory alloy metals. In the 1970s, the firm developed methods for precision, defect-free welding of pipe and tubing constructed of high-performance metals.

New companies began to set up in the industrial area: Chem-Tronics, NTH – which became the Special Products Division of Carpenter Technology, Jonny Shower Door, KCY Tractor Company, WILPAC Manufacturing, California Aircraft Products, Lakeside Welding, Parts Engineering, Hewitt and Faust, and Quadel, Inc. Later would come Webb Designs, Jackman Wheels, Soniform, California Cooling Supply, Caldera Spas & Baths, Hardie Irrigation, Bordeaux Printers, and Exhibit Concepts.

Diversification became a hallmark of the Industrial Park: manufacturers, cabinet makers, contractors, drafting companies, electronic equipment suppliers, airplane and helicopter repair and service firms, and packing and crating services operated side-by-side.

Parts Engineering, run by Pete and Jim Van Vechten, manufactured flexible bellows assemblies used on the Titan, Atlas, Minuteman, and Polaris missiles and space launch vehicles. A true family affair, Parts Engineering occupied a full 20,000 square feet in the in-

James Van Vechten (standing) and members of the Cosmic Corporation board.

dustrial section. The name was changed to Cosmic Corporation and, eventually, the company was purchased and renamed Precision Metal.

The Van Vechtens lived in a compound of homes just off Jamacha Road. Jim and his wife, Emily, raised their four children, Bob, Tom, Bill, and Kathy, on that Jamacha property. Their home was not far from pediatrician Dr. Marshall Persky's offices, which proved fortunate when young Bill suffered head injuries in a go-cart accident. Emily quickly called Dr. Persky's office, only to learn that he was leaving immediately; word had just come that his father had died.

Dr. Marshall Persky and several of his patients.

Emily's heart sank. Dr. Persky was the only pediatrician in either El Cajon or La Mesa. But, before she had a chance to ask what she should do, Emily heard the doctor's voice in the background:

"Tell her I'll be right up."

"I'll never forget how that wonderful man took care of Bill," Emily says today. "He rushed right over, checked Bill out, and telephoned another doctor to meet us at Grossmont Hospital's emergency door. Then, he picked Bill up and carried him out to my car. Only then, bless him, did he go on to his own family crisis."

Marshall Persky, his wife, Janet, and their children, Bruce, Richard, and Gail, although fairly new in town, were very active. Dr. Persky was one of a committee of 13 who founded Grossmont Hospital, where he was Chief of Pediatrics on 11 separate occasions. When he also became active at El Cajon Valley Hospital years later, Chief of Staff Fred Baughman labeled him the "resident conscience" of that institution.

Tart-tongued and soft-hearted, Dr. Persky was revered by two generations of parents as well as by the medical and business communities. However, his affiliation with the Van Vechten children earned him a penalty at a Rotary luncheon, all because of another call he made early one morning.

Dr. Persky and Nat Eggert were in the habit of taking a morning ride on their horses before going to their offices. Their outings usually took them through the Van Vechten's property. One morning, Jim Van Vechten asked the good doctor to come in and take a look at Kathy, who was ailing. Persky dismounted, checked her out, then pronounced her down with the measles. Whereupon, at the next Rotary meeting, Van Vechten fined the doctor for "making horse calls."

When Marshall Persky retired it seemed the whole world attended his farewell party; but, of all the accolades he received, his greatest satisfaction remains that eight or nine former patients are now practicing medicine.

"Maybe," he says, "I made a difference."

* * *

When Jack Meyer, a purchasing agent for a large aerospace firm in Northern California, decided that he wanted out of a big company environment, he was immediately hired by the Van Vechten brothers. Meyer

knew a considerable amount about other manufacturers in the area; for years he had regularly contracted with John Ibey, John Straza, and John Hewitt and Norm Kirkpatrick. Meyer admired the entrepreneurial spirit of those men and he also liked El Cajon, so he moved his wife, Arla, and their children into the area.

Arla was, at first, appalled by the dry, bleak hills around El Cajon. Today, after living in different parts of the country, she acknowledges their special beauty. Says the exuberant Arla:

"I think the mountains are beautiful, now. But the real reason we have stayed in El Cajon is the community spirit. People here honestly care about one another and the community in which they live. We are lucky enough to have kept a small-town atmosphere in a fair-sized city. We love it here, and wouldn't live anywhere else."

The Meyers immediately entered the social and professional life of the city. Jack joined Rotary Club, became a Boys Club Director, a San Diego Planning Commissioner, a founder and chairman of the American Valley Bank, and a member of the East County Economic Development Council. He stayed with the Van Vechtens until the company was sold in 1952, then became manager of Aeroflex, then Callahan Mining, Pathway Bellows, and Metal Hose.

It was Jack's idea for Metal Hose to buy Pathway Bellows because that company manufactured metallic and nonmetallic bellows and expansion joints as well as industrial dampers, making it a diversified firm that, unlike so many others, was not limited to aerospace. Another company under Jack's management was Callahan Mining, which later purchased Pathway Bellows.

Over the years, the company's volume grew from $90,000 to $20 million a year and, in 1981, the four principal officers, Jack Meyer, P. Michael Coffee, William Lewis, and Wayne Suerth, formed a corporation to purchase Pathway Bellows from Callahan Mining. At that time, Meyer was elected to the position of Chairman of the Board and President. He also turned his interests toward investments and real estate which, today, include developing the hills above Singing Hills County Club.

In 1955, four men transformed the old Widdell ranch into the Singing Hills Country Club: E.C. "Babe" Horrell, Cecil B. Hollingsworth, Gomer J. Sims, and R.M. Price. The transformation of the long valley was almost immediate. The men first built the 18-hole East, or Oak Glen, course. Only months later, another 18-hole course was completed. That year, Singing Hills hosted the San Diego Open, later known as the Andy Williams Open. Over the years they added a clubhouse, a lodge, and a third golf course called Willow Glen – the longest of the three. Later, another 20 units were added to the lodge, then another 20, then an 11-court tennis complex, and another twenty lodge units.

Industrial Area Takes to the Air

During these years of rapid expansion, a number of industrial firms began acquiring others to form larger companies. Pathway Bellows was one, Ametek-Straza was another. California Aircraft Products, created by John Straza, was wedded to a number of other small firms and named Straza Industries. When it was sold to Ametek, Inc., it became part of an established New England manufacturer recognized as a leader in high-technology products ranging from jet and turbine engine components to remotely piloted submersibles.

With sales ultimately reaching $50 to 60 million each year, it became a Fortune 500 Company: a multi-divisional, multi-national corporation with annual sales in excess of $500 million. Of 6,600 employees worldwide, more than 900 are employed in El Cajon.

Chem-Tronics, Inc., entered the fledgling chemical milling business in a small, rented space in World War II surplus barracks. Daniel Brimm, James Lowrie, and Dr. Bernard Gross began the company as a job shop for local airframe companies needing small,

Present-day Pathway Bellows, Inc. officers: Michael Coffee, Executive Vice President; Jack B. Meyer, President; William M. Lewis, Vice President/Marketing; William S. Reimus, Vice President/Engineering; Wayne M. Suerth, Treasurer.

custom-made aluminum assemblies. Soon, they were forging and extruding exotic metals that resisted rust and corrosion. Later, the chemical milling process was applied to jet engine components and to integrally stiffened structures for engine and airframes.

In the 1980s, the firm was purchased by the Interlake Corporation of Oak Brook, Illinois, and began using numerically controlled equipment and computer-based management systems on jobs for such aerospace clients as General Electric, Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, and Rolls Royce.

By the end of the Fifties, the Industrial Park's annual payroll was in the neighborhood of $18 million and visionary Tom Jackman was honored as El Cajon's Citizen of the Year.

* * *

The industrial area borders Gillespie Airfield. That field, constructed by the U.S. government in 1942 as a paratrooper training facility, was given by the military to the County of San Diego after the war. Annexed to El Cajon, the airfield was promoted as the executive's airport for "the man with a briefcase and in a hurry."

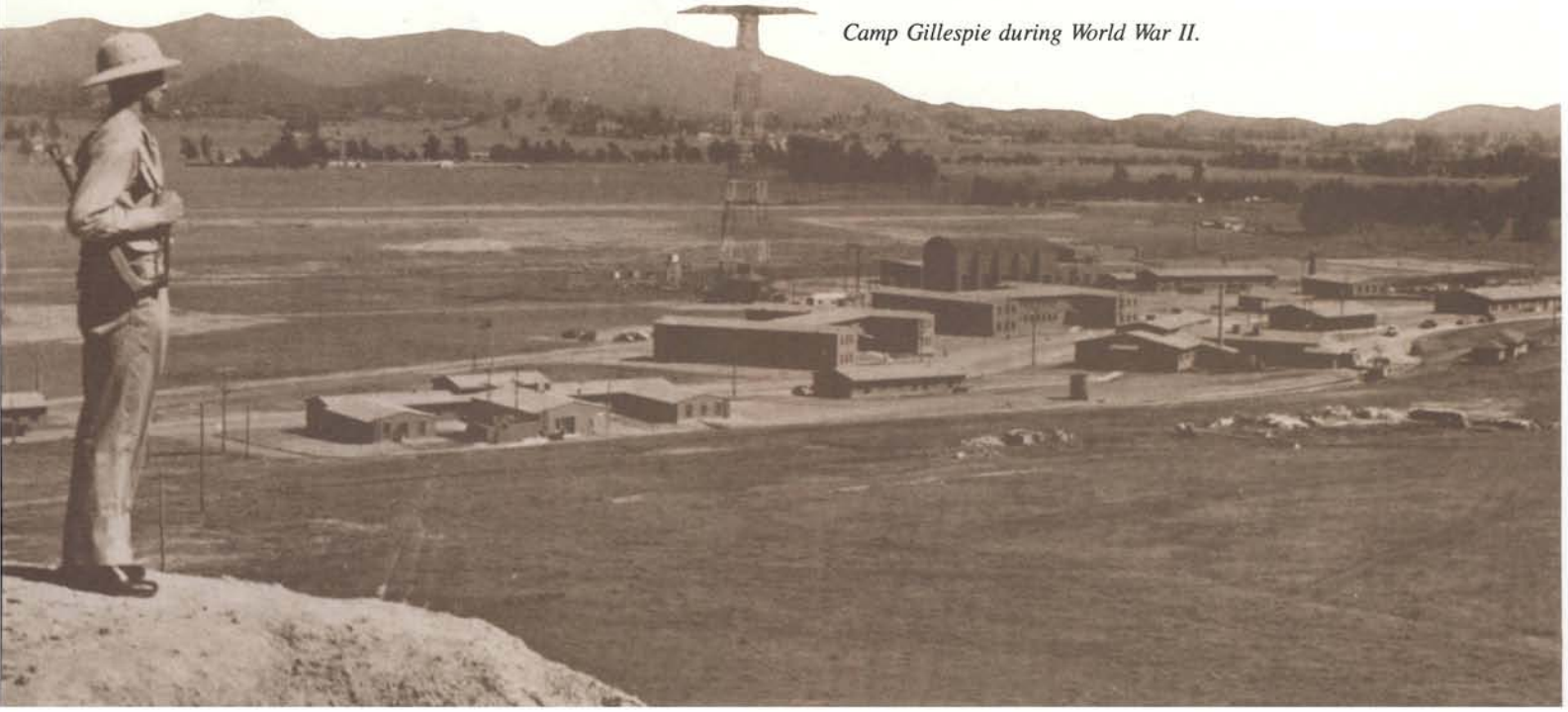
When ex-Army Air Corps Captain Harry Culver was hired to replace C.J. Rust as Senior Airport Manager, the old Marine Corps parachute towers were still in place. The three structures rose 256 feet in the air, as tall as 25-story buildings. They remained standing until the Navy dismantled them in 1953.

The airport was one of the primary reasons that a number of industries located in El Cajon, despite the fact that it had only two runways, no separated taxiways, and a Unicom but no tower.

The periphery of the field was lined with a collection of old army buildings, an 18-hole golf course, and a pistol range. Businessmen needing a nearby airport for small package pickups and deliveries made good use of the field. Among the early boosters of the field were Arnold Dahl, self-appointed industrial land flying realtor; newspaper editor Si Casady; Travelodge's Roger Lutes, William Hirschy, Richard King, William Clark, and Clarence Prescott; Jim Kinsella and Jim Van Vechten of Parts Engineering; and Charles Cordell, a wartime Marine Corps aviator and Corsair ferry pilot.

Gillespie's takeoffs and landings climbed over the years until, in 1970, there were 318,791 runway movements, making Gillespie the busiest general avia-

Members of the Sheriff's Aero Squadron in 1975.



Camp Gillespie during World War II.

Gillespie Field in the early postwar years.

tion airport in the county. In 1962, a tower, operated by the FAA, was installed, followed by erection of an administration building. Ten years later, the Aviation Committee of the Chamber of Commerce under the leadership of Dave Hafford and Jim Snapp – and with the help of Congressman Bob Wilson – got an instrument landing localizer installed.

Today, Gillespie Field is one of the busiest FAA-licensed airports in the nation. To come is a full instrument landing system, something that supporters believe is necessary because of dangers posed by local fog.

Retail Business District

In San Diego, brothers-in-law, Sandy Alter and Ed Hoffman heard of the phenomenal growth going on in El Cajon and decided to open another store. Naming it Howard's Men's Shop, they stocked it with their usual high-style inventory. Right away they discovered that they had seriously miscalculated valley clientele. Inland men, they found, were conservative, and relied upon familiar brand names because they wanted quality and style they could depend on.

Alter and Hoffman moved out their high-style clothes, restocked, and began a twenty-year relationship with valley men who knew precisely who they were and what they wanted to wear.

"The Fifties and Sixties were a time of growth," says Alter. "When you have growth, things can get pretty volatile. Everyone had a different idea of how things were supposed to be done, and it was thanks to people like Jim Snapp, Bob Cornett, Dick Brown, and Howard Pierce, that things got done right!"

* * *

Another "doer" in town was Chuck Ferree, who arrived in the mid-Fifties to build a Woolworth store; which was the first completely self-service store in the nation. Woolworth's was the second largest retail chain in the country, and Ferree had risen through the company ranks to win the El Cajon assignment – a real plum.

Ferree did not at first realize that the local power brokers were sizing him up when John Gibson invited him to a Valley Club meeting at the Best Spot Restaurant. Ferree, meeting Rex Hall, Jack Roether, Si Casady, Claude Long, and Tom Wigton, had no idea that he was being introduced to the city's informal power group. He soon learned that Rex Hall was the town's

elder statesman, and the rest were champion shakers and doers.

There were Mike and Steve Fletcher, Howard Pierce, Charlie Cordell, Jim Snapp, Bob Cornett, Jim Chadwick, Bob Swearengin, Truman Vincell, Wally Millsten, Harry Culver, Andy Ballantyne, Dr. Lowell Smith, John Lax, Boyd Anderson, Lloyd Loftus, Karl Tuttle, Art Decker, and Marvin Jackson. Meeting these men changed Ferree's life.

"I didn't appreciate what John did for me at the time," Ferree says now. "But it was certainly the beginning of a great many things for me."

One of the "great many things" was a job with the Chamber of Commerce that opened up just when Ferree was about to be transferred to another Woolworth's store. Dickie, his wife, did not want to go. Neither did Ferree, so he took the Chamber job; one that he enjoyed for many eventful years.

"Working with those members was one of the most inspiring experiences I've ever had," Ferree says. "They were the most prestigious, powerful group of leaders – volunteer leaders, at that – that I've ever worked with."

And, what those leaders wanted for El Cajon was an extension of the city's manufacturing firms. They knew that only through continued industrial development would the community's economic base be expanded. With the city council firmly behind them, Ferree and the Chamber developed a five-year plan. They then set about romancing company leaders looking to locate, or relocate, in the southern part of the United States.

With the cooperation of those in charge of Gillespie Field and local businessmen-pilots, Ferree and Applegate flew all over the nation, searching for just the right kind of industries to bring into the city. Their efforts were completely underwritten by individual chamber members.

By the time a prospect arrived in town, the chamber and council members, Ferree, and Applegate were ready to woo him. First they showed him available buildings, land, and the airport. Then, when the prospect had seen everything in town, Ferree unveiled his secret weapon. Asking, with elaborate casualness:

"Oh, do you golf?"

Most often, the man did, and Ferree turned his car toward Singing Hills Golf Course and Country Club. Driving down Dehesa Road, the prospect got a bird's eye view of the gorgeous emerald fairways and greens. And he was hooked!

Few other communities offered so eager a power structure, available land and buildings, an airport, and an exemplary golf course. It seemed that El Cajon offered everything anyone could want. So many firms agreed that it was not long before all available buildings were taken.

That was when Bob Hamman got involved. Hamman, a general contractor, had been building custom homes and apartment complexes for a number of years. Responding to the need of incoming manufacturers, he began constructing industrial buildings. But he did it differently than most.

Using the new method of concrete tilt-up construction, he built facilities for Buck Knives, Moceri Produce, Windowmaster Products, Payne Industrial Park, Specialty Manufacturing, Jackman Wheels, Cypress Industrial Park, Chem-Tronics, Kahl Scientific Instruments, and a score of smaller buildings. In the 1970s, Hamman's sons, Jeffrey and Gregg, came into the business with their father.

When Buck Knives hired Hamman to build a new building for them, they told him that they wanted it large enough to last for many years. Hamman constructed a building and manufacturing plant for them that incorporated more than four acres of floor space under a single roof.

Buck's distinctive product was certainly nothing new to the Buck family: it was designed at the turn of the century by Hoyt Buck, then a young blacksmith in Leavenworth, Kansas. What set his knives apart was quality: Buck had developed an ingenious tempering process that made it possible for blades to be honed to incredible sharpness and to hold that edge.

Still, in the early 1900s, Buck could not sell enough of his knives to support his growing family. He was, at various stages of his career, a logger, a millwright, a streetcar conductor, an insurance man, and a minister. But always, he was a knifemaker. It was while he was a minister of a church in Idaho that he began making knives for airmen stationed nearby.

At the end of World War II, the Bucks moved to San Diego and with their son, Al, continued making knives – though still not as a full-time business. When Hoyt Buck died, Al kept making the knives, even though he sometimes had to drive a bus to keep the business going. But, mail order ads in sports magazines turned that tide. And, when it did, Al's young son, Chuck Buck, helped his father keep up with the new demand by grinding the teeth off the old files they used for new knives. Buck Knives might have stayed a

moderate-size small business had it not been for the Folding Hunter, a breakthrough that revolutionized the market.

From 1980 on, with Chuck Buck as President of the firm and Al as Chairman of the board, Buck Knives manufactured dozens of specialty knives as well as bayonets for the U.S. Army. In 1987, the firm began manufacturing a new line of outdoor sports clothing.

* * *

Yet, for all the sophistication of an Industrial Park, there were still people whose businesses retained a small-town flavor. Jean Immenschuh, who ran the Ivanhoe Ranch, was one. Rising just after dawn, she saw to the planting and harvesting of oats, and tended her cattle and quarter horses.

Buell ("Stoney") and Bonnie Stone's Stoney's Rock and Roll Market out on Jamacha Road at Granite Hills Drive was another country-style business.

Named by the Stone's teenaged daughter, Michelle, and a niece, Naome Moreno, Stoney's Rock and Roll Market was an instant hit with the community. Nationally, it was voted the year's catchiest name by telephone operators. The catchy name may have been the draw at first, but it was the warmth of Buell and Bonnie that brought people back time and again.

The Stones had opened their market with almost no money, but so solid was their reputation – they had owned an earlier store – that suppliers stocked the shelves on credit. Not that their inventory was, at first, large. But, over the years it grew until Stoney's was known far and wide for its choice meats and fresh fruits and vegetables. Despite its gourmet-quality victuals, however, Stoney's was a down-home place whose owners' antics kept the customers in stitches. Like the time Bonnie and Stoney took bets on the sex, size, weight, and time of birth of their third child, Tina. Fifteen hundred people entered that contest. There were parking lot events, too; dog shows, a wedding, and a razzle-dazzle go-cart contest in which their youngest, two-year-old Bonnie (called "J.R."), was planted in the go-cart and put on display.

Stoney's Rock and Roll Market remained a local institution for 24 years. It was the arrival of supermarket chains that turned the financial tide for Stoney and Bonnie. When the big stores arrived, the market went from being *the* supply source in the area to little more than a convenience store. The final blow came when Jamacha Road was widened, and the Buells closed the doors. Typically, the closing was as unusual as any of their other special events.

The old cash register was placed in a coffin and four hundred and fifty black-clad "mourners" arrived to bid it a final farewell. A eulogy was delivered by silk-hatted City Attorney Lynn McDougal, who arrived mounted on a black horse and solemnly opened the ceremony by intoning:

"Dearly Beloved Brethren and Sistern, Ladies, and Gentlemen:"

Things went downhill from there. McDougal ended the "service" with a poem:

Beneath this sod lays Stoney's Rock & Roll
Sadly the customers hear the bell toll
Although for many this day is crappy
You can bet your hocks John Kaelin's happy.

Kaelin, owner of a similar store several miles to the northeast on East Main and Madison streets, was also a tradition in El Cajon.

Beginning in 1951 in a liquor store where Highway 8 now crosses Main Street, John worked with his

Former landmark: Stoney's Rock and Roll Market on Jamacha Road at Granite Hills Drive.

Buell and Bonnie Stone with daughters Michelle, Bonnie J.R., and Tina Louise.

father as a two-man team. As one of a few retail shops in the inland area to stay open nights, weekends, and holidays, the store built a devoted clientele. When the store was replaced by the freeway, the Kaelins moved the business a few blocks away.

Four times, John added on to the new store, stocking the additions with groceries and other supplies. His final expansion was an elaborate meat locker and catering area. But, on the way to that, he suffered a major financial setback.

In 1976, Kaelin, like many other businesspeople across the nation, was selling Universal Money Orders. When that company suddenly went bankrupt, Kaelin's customers were left with worthless paper. Though Kaelin had no legal obligation, he assumed responsibility for the money his customers had lost. Immediately covering his customers' losses, he began six years of litigation with insurance companies. Still, when all was said and done, Kaelin was out some $60,000. Typically, he takes an optimistic view of the situation:

"The publicity helped the business."

It certainly did that; today, there are customers who, remembering Kaelin's loyalty to his patrons, will shop nowhere else.

John Kaelin, never seen in anything but old-fashioned bib overalls, explains what many have thought to be an eccentricity:

"I was chasing a shoplifter down the street one day," he says. "I had been on a diet for a time and knew that my pants were a little loose, but I sure didn't expect them to fall down while I was chasing that guy. There I was, out in broad daylight, and sprawled all over the street with my pants down around my ankles. I vowed then that it would never happen again, and that's why I always wear bib overalls."

* * *

Early in the Fifties, Navyman John Reber was stationed at NAS North Island and lived in El Cajon with his wife, Barbara. In 1954, he was transferred to Hawaii and then left the Navy for a job with Pacific Telephone. In 1966, he was transferred to El Cajon, this time accompanied by Reber children Nancy, Gerald, Jeffery, and Scott.

For Barbara Reber it was a homecoming; her parents, Mary and Clyde Allen, had lived in El Cajon since 1951. Her uncle, "Ruff" Allen, lived in a rock house that he had built in 1936 at the end of Stony Knoll Road off East Lexington. Clyde's Richfield Gas Station was on Main Street, across the street from a lot where Henry Kozak would build a restaurant in a few years.

John was not back in town long before he became acquainted with a man named George Connolly – an individual who would inspire an interest in politics that would lead John Reber to become mayor of El Cajon.

SOARING SIXTIES

The Cold War was nowhere more evident than in the Berlin Wall separating East and West Berlin. It was also manifest in the Bay of Pigs confrontation between the U.S. and Cuba. But President John F. Kennedy rebounded by creating the Peace Corps, an echo of his inaugural words: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." The gross national product grew from $284 billion in 1950 to $503 billion in 1960. Government spending, which was 27% of the total, was up 6% in those ten years.

By 1970, the U.S. economy was booming. Unemployment hit its lowest level in 11 years, the prime interest rate leveled at 7% and, for the first time in history, the Dow Jones Industrial Average topped 1,000. The average American farm worker produced enough fiber and food for 47 people.

The Sixties were the formative years of the Space Age. Yuri Gagarin was the first man to orbit the earth; John Glenn was the first American. America pressed the Space Race that culminated in Neil Armstrong's descent to the Moon's surface: "A small step for man . . ." The Space Age gave birth to many of the electronic and computer miracles that we take for granted now. The laser, communication satellites, artificial human hearts, the integrated circuit – all were products of the Sixties.

The decade also brought its share of drama and tragedy. John Kennedy died at the hands of an assassin; Rachel Carson's Silent Spring *awakened a generation of environmentalists, and the Cold War erupted in Southeast Asia, setting the stage for the Vietnam War. While Americans were fighting in Vietnam, freedom riders began civil rights demonstrations in this country, marking the beginning of a nationwide civil rights movement.*

In the early stages of America's involvement in troubled Southeast Asia, Grossmont High School graduate and naval aviator Ben Cloud was flying reconnaissance missions over Laos from a carrier in the South China Sea. Because the U.S. was not yet actively fighting the North Vietnamese, American pilots were forbidden to fly over North Vietnam. Thus, to reach Laos from their carriers in the South China Sea, reconnaissance pilots flew a circuitous route to and from their objectives. Cloud made a number of these flights. But one of his last flights turned out to be much different from all the others.

His catapult launch from the carrier aboard his unarmed Crusader photo-reconnaissance jet was uneventful, as was the flight into Laos. On this particular flight, he flew alone, without a fighter escort. Naturally, that was the day that ground fire hit his aircraft. A glance at his instrument panel told him that he was losing fuel rapidly. Cloud knew that he was in trouble: his plane at takeoff held just enough fuel to get him to Laos and back along a path that skirted North Vietnam. Now, with his fuel supply drastically reduced, he

Naval aviator Ben Cloud and his Crusader jet.

knew that he could not possibly make it back to his ship along his planned return route.

Cloud had no choice; he would have to cut across North Vietnam. Judging from the hostile reaction he had received from ground troops in Laos, he figured that his chances of making it back to the ship were not all that good.

"It wasn't what I had planned," explains Cloud. "But I reasoned that I might as well take advantage of the situation, so I kept my camera running."

Expecting at any moment to be blown from the air, Cloud took his plane low - less than 2,000 feet above ground - right across downtown Hanoi. From the cockpit, he could see that, on the ground, the North Vietnamese were engaging in the precise activities that Command Headquarters needed to know about. Cloud saw defensive fortifications going up all across North Vietnam. He saw surface-to-air missiles installations, and large numbers of troops; troops who were now staring up at him in absolute disbelief. Incredibly, no one fired at Cloud's *Crusader* as it streaked out of sight.

"I think they were too surprised," Cloud laughs, "Certainly, I was surprised to be there." By the time that he reached the coast, his fuel gages were on dry. Fortunately, tankers were waiting for him, and they pulled his aircraft along as they refueled it.

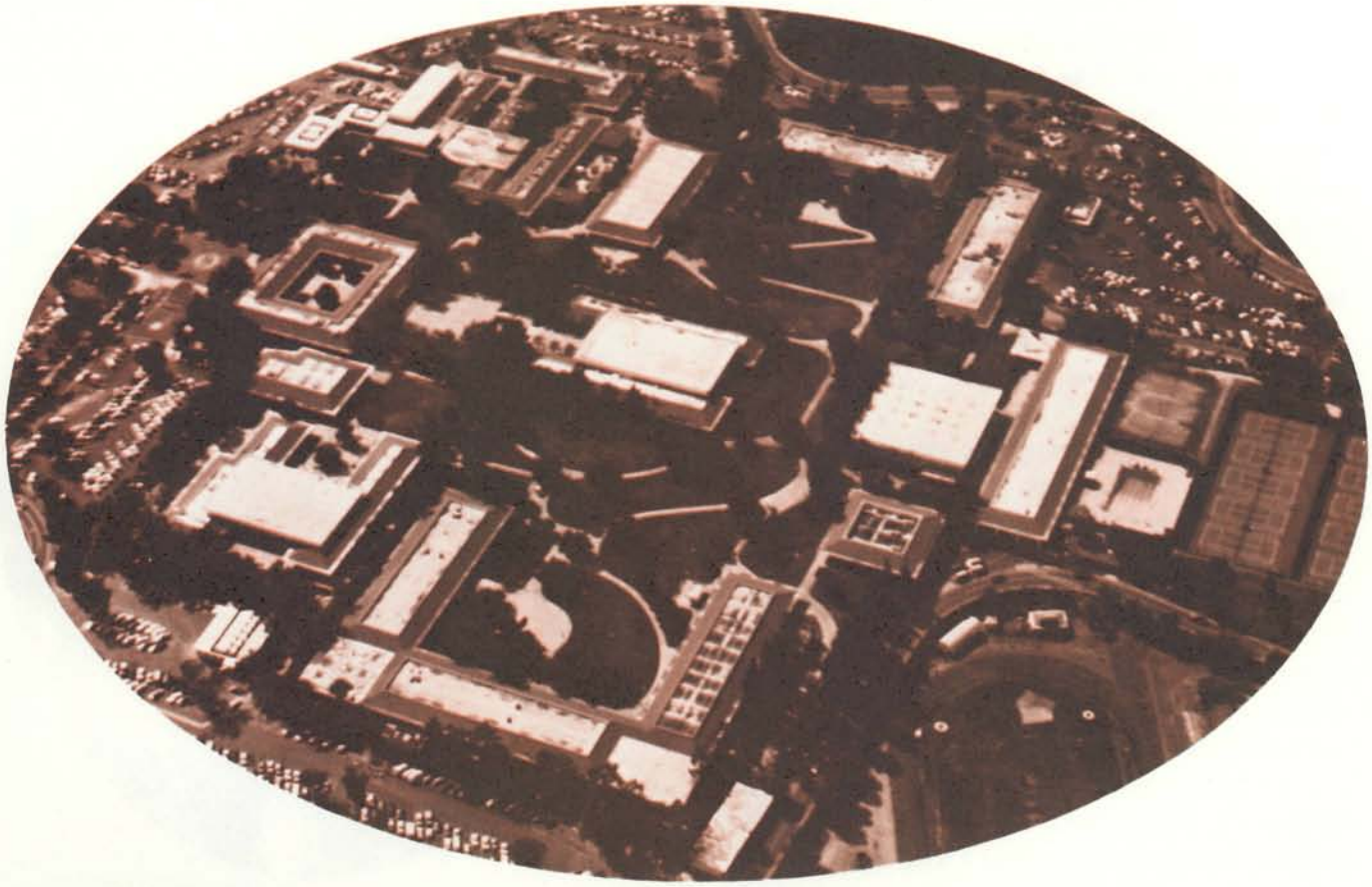
Upon landing, Cloud learned that he and his highly classified film were being sent directly back to Washington D.C. to brief senior military and civilian officials on information gathered that day. President Kennedy used Cloud's photographs showing the North Vietnamese buildup in addressing the U.S. public and, later, in dealing with the United Nations.

When his time in Vietnam was up, Cloud was transferred to the Naval War College in Rhode Island, then to the aircraft carrier *USS Kitty Hawk* as Executive Officer.

Grossmont College

In 1963, Grossmont College put the finishing touches on its brand-new permanent campus in Fletcher Hills. It had taken three years of sharing the Monte Vista High School campus (forcing both schools into double sessions) and a special bond election to make the new campus a reality.

In its first year of sharing the high school campus, Grossmont College's initial enrollment of 1,538 was greater than any hitherto experienced by a California public junior college.



Grossmont College

Initially, the college's governing board had been the same board governing the Grossmont Union High School District. Thus, high school superintendent Lewis F. Smith served as college superintendent until Harold G. Hughes was appointed to the college's superintendency/presidency by board members Clarence Foster, Robert Brown, Portia Goode, Rexford Hall, and Palmer Svahlstad. By 1964, when 3,702 students entered the new campus, it was obvious that additional buildings would have to be constructed and that plans had to be made for the eventual construction of a 1,500-seat college-community auditorium.

Within only a few years, it was inescapable that population growth in the area would be sending far more students to Grossmont College than had been anticipated. There were other surprises. When state legislation decreed that there be separate boards for high schools and junior colleges, a new college board of trustees was elected. College officials revised their estimates and decided that, before 1970, they would have 4,800 full-time students.

In 1987, thanks to its innovative programs, solid academics, and an outstanding faculty (there are eleven Fulbright scholars on the staff) the enrollment stands at nearly 15,000. Grossmont President Ivan Jones sees a continued growth in the size of the student body, as well as a diversity of ages within that student body. A second campus, Cuyamaca College in the Rancho San Diego area, has a student population of some 4,000 and is headed by President Samuel Ciccati.

Shift of Retail Trade

Completion of Interstate 8 through El Cajon not only changed the traffic patterns in and around the city but it opened the way for a new shopping center on Fletcher Parkway. Another change became evident the moment Parkway Plaza opened: the city's business district began receding from Main Street.

In its first year, Parkway Plaza attracted 10 million customers, who spent an estimated $75 million. With the city collecting one cent in sales tax on each of those dollars, the city's tax base improved significantly. But, downtown – as a shopping area – was in decline. Concerned, the city fathers decided to build what councilman and former mayor Dick Brown called the "Superblock."

Designed to alter Main Street in looks as well as in function, the plan was for the Superblock to become both a governmental and financial center, surrounded by specialty shops.

As community leaders had done before in developing the Industrial Park, those in the private sector working to make the Superblock a reality signed pledges that they would make no personal financial gain from anything regarding the redevelopment area. In full agreement with that pledge, Howard Pierce, a realtor and councilman, began acquiring land for the city in the name of Economic Growth, Inc., a nonprofit agency. The agency moved quickly to purchase land occupied by the W.D. Hall Company along with contiguous property.

With the demise of the W.D. Hall Company, grandson Herb Hall opened Inland Supply, Inc. Smaller than the Hall Company, Inland Supply nonetheless follows a Hall maxim – give the best service, and supply what your customers need.

With the land for the project secured, City Manager Applegate started working out the process by which the city could finance building a new City Hall, Council Chambers, a Performing Arts Center, and an East County regional building for county business. His solution was joint powers agreements with the County of San Diego and Grossmont College. The City would donate the land for the building if the

Groundbreaking celebrated by Grossmont College Board President Sidney Weiner, Councilwoman Lucille Moore, Mayor James Snapp, and Councilman Dick Brown. Both Moore and Brown later were elected to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.

County would begin building a six-story $5 million structure within the year.

The same kind of agreement was used with Grossmont College: the city donated the land and one-half of the building costs for the college's 1,200-seat community auditorium while the college agreed to pay the other half of construction costs as well as to own and maintain the building. The facility was named the East County Performing Arts Center, today better known as simply ECPAC.

The complicated package worked because, as Applegate says:

"I had good people to work with – people on the college board and at the County, a thoroughly dependable architect like Art Decker, and a council dedicated to the public good."

Applegate philosophizes: "You must remember that a good city council is not defined by individual personalities, but by each member's devotion to the city."

Dr. David Feldman, Vice Chancellor of Grossmont-Cuyamaca College, and Director of the Channel 10/Grossmont College Poll, remarks:

"The East County Performing Arts Center has made an incredible difference in the inland east area. Just as La Jolla Playhouse was instrumental in establishing La Jolla as a cultural center, and the Old Globe Theater lent its distinctive theatrical culture to Balboa Park, the Performing Arts Center turned downtown El Cajon into a regional center for major cultural events."

Jim Snapp, an insurance man, had been the mayor behind many of these changes. The city's first mayor elected directly by the voters rather than being selected by the council, Snapp took over in 1968 after serving on the Planning Commission for more than five years. It was an experience that gave him an insight into the conflicts he knew would arise with the changes that had to be made.

During Snapp's tenure as mayor, the population of the city jumped to 75,000. At the beginning of his term, when he read the estimate of the city's future population given by a consulting firm, it stunned him – and everyone else on the council. The report said that they had to get moving immediately on improvements.

"You can't believe how angry people can become," Snapp says now. "There was always one group or another storming into council meetings to object to something. In fact, there were times when we had to adjourn the meeting for a week until we could book a school auditorium because there were too many people to get into the chambers."

It was an era that saw the beginning of SANDAG (San Diego Association of Governments), and adoption of the City's first general plan. Harriet Stockwell, a "pioneer" of Fletcher Hills and fresh from an appointment to the Park and Recreation Commission, joined 59 other citizens on the General Plan Citizens Committee. She then accepted Mayor Snapp and Councilman Bob Cornett's request to take a seat on the Planning Commission. As Cornett said to her:

"Put up or shut up."

She continued to "put up" by serving out the remainder of Lucille Moore's city council term when Moore was elected to the County Board of Supervisors. Stockwell also served on a multitude of local societies and associations, the League of Women Voters, PTA, El Cajon Woman's Club, Historical Society, Sister City Committee, United Way, Women's Architectural League, and Friends of the El Cajon Library.

Stockwell, born on a cattle ranch in Montana, was used to hard work. Her father settled in northeastern Montana in 1897, one of the first non-Indian settlers in the territory. Stockwell's family raised Red Polled cattle and rounded up and broke wild horses to sell to the army at Fort Snelling. During the Dust Bowl years, they pastured cattle for other ranchers whose water sources had dried up.

Harriet's mother had the first stove and oven in that part of Montana, and neighboring Indian women carried their bread dough in their aprons to bake in that oven. Harriet learned to bake in the same oven, experience that won her a first job as pie and bread baker in a local restaurant. She worked seven days a week for $5 and room and board. Her next job was as a stenographer in the Soil Conservation Association office in the county seat where she computed acreages, crop allowances, sold crop insurance, arranged grain loans, and platted farm boundaries on aerial photographs.

While visiting a sister in San Diego before World War II, Harriet got a job as a secretary at Consolidated Aircraft – the forerunner of today's Convair. In 1947, she left Consolidated and, after a number of jobs, went to work for San Diego County as first a secretary and then an administrative assistant. It was there she met and later married Russ Stockwell, an architect in the Engineering Division of the Public Works Department.

In 1955, Russ and Harriet, with an infant son, Gary, built a new home quite a way outside San Diego, in a quiet, unincorporated area called Fletcher Hills.

* * *

Almost from the day it opened in the Sixties, Kozak's restaurant on Main Street became *the* place to go for a cup of coffee, breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Owner Henry Kozak says the reason that his place was an instant attraction was because:

"I'm pretty chintzy. If I don't get a good deal for my money, I don't go back. That's why I give my customers a good meal for their money."

Kozak had the whole family working for him, even his son, Tom, who was only eight at the time.

"That Tom," Henry says, "He'd get up on a plastic milk case and wash dishes faster than you could imagine. I swear, he was the best dishwasher I ever had."

Occasionally, however, the press of customers became too much even for Henry Kozak. Like the time a drunk drove right through the rear dining room windows and did not stop until his car slammed into the bar.

"I thought," the drunk explained reasonably enough, "that this was a *drive-in* bar."

Kozak, upon discovering the horrendous hole in the side of his building announced:

"You see the wall that isn't here anymore? Well, picture this – I'm going to move that wall out 20 feet, and someone *else* is paying for it." And with that, Kozak expanded his dining room.

One of the things discussed at Kozak's was the concerted effort community leaders were making to sensitize citizens to the changes in American society. As part of President Johnson's program for a better nation, a number of El Cajon business and professional leaders joined in a committee determined to make it unfashionable to use derogatory terms when speaking of members of minority groups.

On that committee were the city's real heavyweights: Municipal Judge, the Honorable Alfred Lord; Mayor Jim Snapp; Editor and Publisher of the *Daily Californian* Richard Baker; State League of

Opening of Soroptimist Thrift Store: Nat Eggert, Chamber of Commerce President; Carol McLeod, Miss El Cajon; Karl Tuttle, Mayor; Chloris Scott, former newspaper editor and Executive Director of the Girls Club; and Mae Weinstock, past president of Soroptimists.

Women Voters past president Harriet Stockwell; Administrative Analyst for the Sheriff's Department Fred Cicalo; Clergyman Gordon Mackensen; businessmen Don Miller, Milton Kossy, and Sandford Alter; Vice President of Grossmont College Erv Metzgar; manufacturer John Weymiller; president of the Chamber of Commerce Dale Randles; former police officer and businessman W.W. "Pete" Peterson; former Mayor and businessman Karl Tuttle; president of Grossmont College Harold Hughes; attorneys George Hurst and Tom Gallagher; newspaperman Larry Freeman; the Chamber's Chuck Ferree; CPA Nat Eggert; Superintendent of elementary schools Dr. Ted Dixon; realtors Charles Decker and Carlton Post; city councilman Bob Cornett; civil services commissioner Lucille Moore; educator Mary Grady; and social worker Wes Beckman. Alone, and in small groups, these people spoke at service clubs to promote the worth and dignity of all individuals, and to support equal and fair treatment for everyone.

City Policy

In the Sixties, the city made it policy to provide city services only to areas within city boundaries. Therefore, when officials found that 40% of city land was still vacant, they stopped annexing, rezoned the land, and began facing the problem of flooding. One of their first moves was to relocate drainage channels to remove rainwater from city streets.

"I've always been amazed that people object to the installation of curbs," remarks former Mayor James Snapp. "Curbs are not designed to provide parking spaces for cars; they are engineered to remove water. Before we put curbs in, houses and businesses all over town flooded. It was a mess!"

There were, of course, those who objected – but the city installed curbs anyway, ending ruinous flooding in El Cajon. A Public Works Building and Yard was built too, and the Heartland Fire Training Facility, which serves the El Cajon, La Mesa, Santee, Spring Valley, Lemon Grove, Lakeside, Mt. Helix, and Santee fire districts.

Reunion

The last year of the decade marked the twentieth reunion of the Grossmont High School class of 1949. The committee to locate long-lost classmates was hard at work tracking down former classmates. Diane Daggs, by then married to Dick Ridgeway, an All-American basketball player she met at UCLA, took the letters A-D. Who should she find on the list? Her old neighbor, Ben Cloud.

A phone call to his mother told Diane that Ben was a naval aviator, stationed at nearby Miramar, where he commanded a fighter squadron. When she reached him, Ben was delighted not only to attend the reunion, but to meet Diane's husband, Dick, and their sons, Richard and Robert. There followed a number of double dates, with Diane determinedly matching Ben up with her friends. Then, without warning, 49-year-old Dick Ridgeway suffered a fatal heart attack. Diane, alone with two sons to support, returned to teaching at Granite Hills High School.

* * *

The Sixties ended on a note of expectation. Locally, business was good, jobs were plentiful, and building was on the upswing.

Chamber of Commerce Aviation Committee, co-founders of Powder Puff Derby (with local chapter of the "99s"), sponsored women pilots in their first race from Gillespie Field to Chattanooga, Tennessee. Standing: Charles Cordell, Jerry Hollingworth; seated: Chuck Ferree, James Snapp, Fred Hunt.

* * *

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* * *

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EL CAJON COMES OF AGE

Civil war in Nigeria ended, the military assumed power in Libya, Israeli and Arab forces fought the 18-day Yom Kippur War, Ferdinand Marcos assumed power in the Philippines, the first international hijacking took place, and OPEC nations tightened control over Mid-East oil prices, triggering an energy crisis in the United States and Europe. In 1970, the U.S. Gross National Product reached $977 billion, up from $503 billion a decade earlier. Five percent of the U.S. work force was unemployed – the highest rate in fifteen years.

The Supreme Court upheld busing of schoolchildren to achieve racial balance, Vietnam casualties increased as the Paris peace talks dragged on. The "Watergate" scandal widened until Richard Nixon resigned as President of the United States. Vice President Gerald Ford assumed the presidency. In 1976, James Earl Carter became the 39th President of the U.S. and the nation celebrated its Bicentennial.

As the 1980s began, a wave of refugees from the war-plagued Middle East and Southeast Asia entered the United States. Japanese industry began a series of major challenges to American business, and the U.S. and the People's Republic of China re-established diplomatic relations. And erstwhile movie star and former California governor Ronald Reagan was elected President.

The decade saw the emergence of Third World nations, eruption of Mt. St. Helens, deployment of more sophisticated weapon systems, major advances in heart surgery and transplants, and the use of computers in nearly every facet of our society. It was also an era of international terrorism, growing concern over hazardous wastes, the spread of AIDS, and continued strife in Central America and Africa.

The Great Fire

September 1970 was unusually hot and dry in Southern California, as had been the summer months, so it came as no surprise when one more fire erupted. Fire Captain Jim Van Meter of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection had just returned from a fire near Tecate, where he had a close brush with death in a flareup, when he and his crew wearily responded to another fire call. "Just one more," he thought, and was quickly on his way.

It was not just one more fire; it was *the* fire of the era: the great Laguna Fire.

Ignited by a spark from a shorted-out electrical wire, the Laguna Fire began in the mountains and raced toward the sea, driven by exceptionally strong Santa Ana winds. The bone-dry wind parched the air, the forests, and the brush, turning the Southland into a tinderbox.

Within four days, the wind-driven blaze threatened most of San Diego county. In the inland area, it roared through parts of Alpine, Jamul, Harbison Canyon, and Pine and Japatul Valleys.

Saturday, September 26

Philip and Jeanne Thacher and Philip's sister and brother-in-law, Emily and John Hood, owned a poultry ranch in the Japatul Valley. They knew about a fire to the east, but, on that Saturday evening, the fire seemed too far away to worry about, and Philip and Jeanne joined thousands of other San Diego State fans at the Aztec football game.

Though the horizon was illuminated by firelight when they got home at 11:00 p.m., they went to bed without worrying. Four hours later, they were awakened by a deputy sheriff, who ordered them to evacuate. Stunned, they saw that the fire had traveled so swiftly in the few hours they had been asleep that it had swept through Kitchen Creek in Pine Valley, burned through Corte Madera, and was about to consume their mountain.

Quickly gathering items of clothing, they fled with their 14-year-old son, Randy. Son Phil was in the service, and another son, Fred, was staying with a

friend. Jeanne, Phil, and Randy headed for the home of their other son, Greg. After a few hours, around 5 a.m., on September 26, Fred and Greg went back to the house to see what had happened.

When the phone rang at Greg's house, Jeanne answered and heard Fred saying, "It's just about to blow, Mom. what do you want from . . ." Jeanne stared unbelievingly at the phone. It had gone dead.

At the other end of the line, Fred made for the front door, stopping only to grab Charger tickets for Sunday's game. The wind outside was at gale force, blowing so strongly that, to reach the car, he had to get on his knees and crawl. With Greg behind the wheel, the two tore out of the driveway and headed back toward town. They had gone only a quarter of a mile when they heard the house explode behind them.

The fire swept westward, propelled by "devil" winds that reportedly were gusting at 70 miles per hour. The fire, after gutting parts of Pine, Lawson, and Japatul Valleys, raged on toward the heavily populated areas east and south of El Cajon. More than 100 fire trucks, 20 Conservation Camp crews, and 55 bulldozers struggled to protect homes and establish fire lines while one arm of the fire headed for Jamul and Procter Valley.

Sunday, September 27

That same night, Lowell and Candy Hallock of University City had gone to a party. Their family ranch, the Triple H Ranch & Cattle Company, was in the fire's path but, surely, they told each other, the fire would be stopped long before it got to Lawson Valley. So certain were they that the couple left for Chula Vista, but they called the ranch and left a number where they could be reached.

Out in Lawson Valley, Lowell's father, Lowell, Sr., and 70-year-old grandfather, Grant, were keeping in touch with law enforcement agencies on the fire's progress – not that there was anything to be concerned about, of course. When Lowell, Jr., was called away from the party to the phone, his heart gave a lurch. No one but his father knew where he was. His father's voice on the line said that deputies were ordering them to evacuate.

"We're not leaving," the elder Hallock had told the deputies, "unless you bring in trucks to evacuate the livestock."

Caring for their livestock was more than just a financial issue with the Hallocks; it was a way of life. Descended from North Dakota cowboys, Lowell, Jr.,

knew that he was as responsible for the welfare of the cattle as were his father and grandfather.

He and Candy hurried home, changed their clothes, picked up his father's wife, Jane, and headed for Lawson Valley. It was 1:30 in the morning. Along the horizon, fires lined the mountain ridges, lighting the night sky with a halo effect that stretched for miles.

At the Highway 94 and Lyons Valley Road intersection, they were stopped by the Highway Patrol, warned, then allowed to go on to the ranch. Once there, the three men huddled and agreed that they would stay at the ranch and fight off the fire. Come daybreak, they decided, they would use their bulldozers to cut a firebreak around the entire ranch. Then, with water supplied by an electrical pump, they would hose down anything that caught fire.

While the men made their plans, Candy and Jane gathered up personal items, stowed them in the car, and retreated to University City. For the remainder of the night, the three men kept watch. They saw Lyon's Peak burst into flames, and watched the fire draw inexorably closer. Throughout the night, news continued to come from law enforcement officers until no doubt remained . . . the fire was coming through their property. The only question: *When?*

As dawn neared, it occurred to the Hallocks that the fire was bound to leave them without electricity. They would have to power the pump with an auxiliary gas-driven motor. A quick check told them that it would be wise to get extra gasoline. When the first smudges of daylight on Sunday, the 27th, broke through the thick pall of smoke, the trio found that they were also low on gas for their vehicles.

Lowell, Jr., put two empty 55-gallon drums in the back of a pickup truck and headed for El Cajon. Out Lawson Valley Road to Lyons Valley Road he sped, then to St. Pius X Catholic Church and down what was then called Mexican Canyon Road. From there he wound his way down Steele Canyon Road to the Cottonwood Golf Course. At every intersection, he passed blockades manned by deputy sheriffs and the Highway Patrol.

When at last he reached the Rocket gas station at First and Main streets, he spent agonizing minutes waiting for someone to arrive and open the station. Then, filling one drum with gasoline and the other with diesel fuel, he started retracing his route. He got as far as the Catholic Church on Lyons Valley Road when the deputies stopped him.

"This is as far as you go," they said.

"I have to go on through," Lowell insisted. "My father and grandfather are out on the ranch, and they need this gas to keep the water lines going."

"Sorry, buddy. We can't let you in."

"Then you'd better shoot me," the young stockman replied, "because I'm going through."

Whipping around the barricade, he barreled up Lyons Valley Road along the switchback that led to Lawson Valley Road and Skyline Truck Trail. Topping the rise, he increased his speed as he rounded the corner . . . directly into a solid wall of fire. Suddenly, he was surrounded; in front of him and to each side, everything was aflame. Frantically spinning the truck around in the middle of the road, he sped back down the mountain. So fast was he traveling that his little Datsun took corners on two wheels. But, behind and beside him, the fire was keeping pace.

Popping sounds on either side caught his attention: oak trees were erupting in giant balls of fire and rolling around in crazy circles. Other, deeper, eruptions told him that the houses he had just passed were exploding, too. When he finally reached the intersection at the church, there was so much smoke and fire that he had little choice but to make a blind turn into Mexican Canyon.

Flames during Laguna Fire were so intense that mature oak trees exploded.

A short distance down the canyon he saw trees exploding *ahead* of his truck, sending fireballs a hundred feet in the air. His truck, although laden with two

full drums of fuel, was jerked all over the road by the firestorm-induced winds.

Lowell Hallock, Jr., knew that he was a dead man. Worse, without the fuel he was carrying, so were his grandfather and father.

With tears of frustration streaking his face, he pumped desperately at the gas pedal. And then, through the smoke and gloom, he caught a glimpse of green. He could not believe it . . . it was the Cottonwood golf course, and it was not on fire. With hope reborn, he aimed for that green.

Rocketing down the hill toward that spot of green, he suddenly became aware that flames no longer raced alongside. A startled glance assured him that the fire had been left behind. When he reached the golf course, he chanced to look back and saw that, behind him, the canyon was acting like a funnel, sucking the flames south and west. Drawing a deep breath of relief, Lowell sped to the closest telephone: the pay phone at Stoney's Rock & Roll Market on Jamacha Road.

"Then I made a mistake," Lowell says. "I called home."

Candy and Jane insisted that he wait until they got there. All three of them, they said, would go out to the ranch together. Suspecting what they would find, Lowell did not want them along.

The ride back to the ranch was interrupted by deputy sheriffs and highway patrolmen intent upon keeping out looters. Convinced that the three only wanted to check on the welfare of their family, the patrols allowed the Hallocks through.

"It was smoldering like a war zone," Lowell says today. "It is impossible to describe the devastation. And the smell; you never forget it."

Climbing the mountain road, they passed smoking trees, downed power lines, and burnt-out ruins. Cresting the mountain, they took the little road that shielded the ranch from view. Not that there was anything to see but a landscape of black except for the reservoir, which shone an incongruous bright blue. Then, ahead, an unexpected patch of green. Green? It was the ranch!

Tearing down the road, they screeched to a halt, shouting and hoping that someone would answer. From around the side of the barn came two black figures: Lowell, Sr., and Grant Hallock.

The men had survived because 70-year-old Grant Hallock had stuck to his post throughout the holocaust. The fuel supply had held but, with every hose running full tilt, an automatic shutoff valve had shut the pump down. As oak trees around him exploded from the heat, the old man had kept his thumb firmly on the pump's manual override switch. Paint blistered on the pump; still the older man held on. His courageous action had saved the ranch.

While the Hallocks were having their reunion, television personality Robert E. Lee, known as "Dude Bob" to lovers of western movies, was up in the Cuyamaca mountains with his photographer son, Randall, photographer Jack Dickerson, and a dozen underprivileged children. Lee, producer/director of the programs "Seapower," "Passport to Adventure," and "Assignment San Diego," had brought them all up in a rented motorhome to tape one of his adventure programs. It turned out to be a bit more adventurous than he anticipated.

When the fire erupted in the mountains nearby, his first thought was of the children. His second was of the rented motorhome. "Get them out of here!" he ordered his son.

Randall, after dropping the youngsters off in Southeast San Diego and getting the family car, headed back to the Cuyamacas. By then the sky was dark, and the firelines clearly visible.

Randall rejoined his father and Dickerson and the three set out to photograph the fire. For hours, they roamed the mountains. With embers showering down around them, they sped down trails and roads. When the fire grew too hot, they turned the car around and dashed away. The trio captured spectacular footage of the fire and the efforts to combat it.

Sunday, September 27

The next day, a capacity crowd had converged on the stadium to watch the Chargers and Raiders battle to a 27-27 tie. San Diego *Tribune* reporter Rick Smith would later describe the day as being "apocalyptical" because of the crowd and the dense pall of smoke. Instead of the usual description of an autumn day in San Diego . . . "hot and hazy," Smith would describe it as, "Hot day . . . 89 degrees . . . and smokey."

Indeed, the sky was so dark at midday that the stadium lights were turned on. The game was scarcely under way when stadium announcer Tom Murphy began making a series of announcements for East County residents to call home immediately. Then, his voice growing more urgent, Murphy began calling out the names of streets and subdivisions in the back country. People living near Sunrise Highway, Pine Valley,

Alpine, Jamul, Harbison Canyon, and Jamacha Road gasped, hurriedly gathered up their things, and quickly left the stadium.

Charger secretary Pat Rogers lived near the Elks Club on Lexington in El Cajon. That morning, looking out toward Granite Hills Drive, she saw the soot-filled sky and worried about former Charger player and current stadium announcer Emil Karras and his family. She called and, when Emil's wife, Lois, answered the phone, Pat asked, "Are you in trouble?" Lois answered with one word: "Yes."

Pat and her son, Patrick, raced up to help. The youth went up on the roof to water it down, while Lois and the Karras children packed the family car and began hauling some of the animals away. Emil and Pat led a younger, skittish horse to a neighbor for safekeeping. Sixteen-year-old Patrick, directed by Lois to "grab the most valuable things you see," conscientiously scooped up Emil's football trophies and hauled them to safety. Lois and the children went to a friend's house while Emil and Pat drove to the stadium and the game.

Although the Karras household was undamaged in the fire, someone called the press box during the second quarter and told Emil that his home had burned to the ground. Devastated, he and Pat left at halftime and returned home only to find the caller had played a cruel joke.

Meanwhile, out at Singing Hills, the fire was clearly visible as it boiled up and over surrounding ridges. Fairways and greens of the golf course had been turned into a refugee camp by worried animal owners. Horses, cows, even a few goats, had been brought down and staked out. In addition, there were antique cars there, driven onto the greens by their owners.

Around the periphery of the courses, the sprinklers were on to keep the ground wet. To the northwest, on the ridge above the course, apprehensive homeowners kept their eyes on the advancing wall of flame and hosed down their roofs. If the green belt of the golf course did not halt the rapidly approaching wall of flame, their houses would be next.

Foreseeing danger in a line of oil-rich olive trees, Singing Hills owners Jerry Hollingsworth and Steve Horrell ordered a number of the big, old trees knocked down by a tractor and covered with several feet of dirt. They knew that if the fire got too close, the oily trees would explode. It was the efforts of those at Singing Hills that made the golf courses an invaluable fire break. Without those greens and fairways, nothing could have prevented the fire from cresting the ridge and burning straight through to the city of El Cajon.

In a small draw north of the Division of Forestry headquarters on Jamacha Road, the fire broke through and burned the telephone cable serving the buildings. Forestry officials were without telephone service for a full three hours until Telephone Repair Supervisor John Reber arrived with a crew to string temporary lines and restore some measure of service. Reber then diverted a contruction crew from Pine Valley to make permanent repairs.

In Crest that morning, the fire at first had been only a thin, wavy orange and red line on the horizon. Nonetheless, as the leaden night skies reflected the fire's glare, Kathryn Hawkins grew increasingly uncomfortable. Her foreboding stemmed not only from the advancing fireline, but from the hot, dry Santa Ana wind that was driving the flames far faster than anyone had anticipated.

When she voiced her uneasiness on this, the day of the annual horse show, some scoffed. But Kathryn, unwilling to take chances, instructed her three young daughters to lead their horses down Suncrest to Mercedes Siciliano's corral. But, as the girls started out, a fire truck roared past them and blocked off the road. Turning about, the children went the other way, down La Cresta Road.

It was a dangerous route at the best of times, but on that morning bumper-to-bumper traffic made it even worse. Cars and horse trailers were heading up to the show ring as the girls led their horses down to Greenfield Junior High School. Other worried animal owners were already at the school with their horses, goats, and ponies.

Throughout the day, kindly neighbors brought buckets of water to the animals. Back at the house, Kathryn was trying to get her enfeebled mother-in-law, the family parrot, and several dogs and cats into the car so she could drive them to safety.

Just before 9 o'clock, she pulled down onto Greenfield Drive and drove to a friend's house. When she returned, only half an hour later, she noticed how much darker the sky had grown. Hot winds gusting at an incredible eighty miles an hour were blowing smoke and ashes everywhere.

At the foot of La Cresta Road, police blocked off incoming traffic. Prevented from returning home, Kathryn could only stare. La Cresta Road had all the appearance of a roadway under siege. Residents lead-

ing animals on halters and leashes, and homeowners with cars and truckloads of furniture and clothes, intermingled with the horse show crowd. All were frantically trying to get off the mountain.

Stunned, Kathryn fought back tears. Joining the girls at the school, she found the horses well cared for and took the girls to stay with relatives. The rest of the day and night was spent waiting for news – any sort of news. Listening to the radio was frustrating, and so were television newscasts; one news story conflicted with another until it was hard to know what to believe.

Only when she, her brother, and sister-in-law were allowed through the barricades in the morning did they discover what had happened. Fire departments from all over Southern California had swarmed up the hill to converge upon the tiny mountain community, but nothing they did could stop the fire. Because of differing radio frequencies, there had been major problems with communication among the different units.

By 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the fire storm had roared up the canyon walls to ping-pong capriciously through the McColl/Hawkins property, where it burned one of the houses and ignored the other two before rolling on into the community. Many more houses would have been spared, had it not been for animals whose fur was set afire by falling embers. When the terrified creatures retreated under porches and wooden steps, their burning coats ignited those structures, too. One hundred and fifteen homes burned in Crest; about the same number burned in Harbison Canyon.

Many homes were only charred ruins after the fire.

That morning, as Kathryn and her relatives rode solemnly along the still-smoking, blackened streets, they saw looters already poking through the ruins. Not long after, SDG&E arrived on the scene and set about restoring electrical power to the community. Days later, telephone service was re-established when the telephone company brought up a mobile unit with phones.

Individual citizens took the lead in helping others. One, a woman known only as Mrs. Sperry, had come to this country as a refugee during the Hungarian Revolution. Accustomed as a person could be to disaster, she single-handedly organized distribution of food to fire crews and fire victims by having meals cooked and served out of the Crest Club House, which the fire had spared.

Pacific Southwest Airlines immediately offered special flights over the disaster area and donated the money it raised to the Crest civic group. Granite Hills High School students set about earning money for fire victims. Other community groups and individuals contributed as well. Some of that money went to purchase young trees to replace those destroyed by fire.

The Hoods and the Thachers returned to their Japatul ranch on Sunday to find 3,000 fairly contented chickens. One reason that the birds survived was that water hoses had ruptured, wetting them down as the fire swept through. Only 13 chickens were lost, although many had lost toes. The Hood's house was still standing, but the Thacher home was gone. Moving a camper onto the property, the Thachers lived in it for two weeks until their insurance company loaned them a mobile home.

In one of those quirks of fate, the line of mailboxes out on the road mirrored what had happened to the houses in the neighborhood. Just as the fire had freakishly consumed one house and ignored another, it burned only the mailboxes of those homeowners whose houses had burned.

After the smoke faded and reconstruction had begun, inland area fire departments upgraded their communications systems to make certain that the communications net would not fail again. El Cajon, Santee, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Lakeside, and the unincorporated areas formed an alliance, establishing El Cajon as the official centralized dispatch center and creating the Heartland Fire Training Unit. In the 1980s, El Cajon added paramedic services, a new fire station, and

new fire engines. Unfortunately, the new engines were not available in 1981 when yet another fire swept through much of the same area.

Sister Cities

Another commitment made during Jim Snapp's term as mayor had originated with President Eisenhower's "People-to-People Program." Eisenhower's idea was to foster an exchange of people and cultures in a step toward building better relations among nations. Believing in this, Snapp initiated the Sister City Committee.

The city's first sister city was Goulburn, Australia, and in a gesture to make the Sister City program a little more personal, a representative group of citizens traveled "Down Under" to Goulburn, where they were royally welcomed by the town's citizens.

* * *

Later, in 1979, John Reber also visited Goulburn. As Mayor of El Cajon, he was greeted by Goulburn's regally attired Lord Mayor. Dressed in a full-length red velvet robe adorned with an ermine collar, and wearing a chain and medallion around his neck, the Lord Mayor invited John and Bobbie Reber to accompany him to the Lilac Festival, where he was to crown the event's queen. First in a procession of cars, the Lord Mayor's official auto flew the flags of Australia and the United States on its front fenders. As they drove into the stadium, they paused along an entry wall, awaiting their cue to drive in.

Two small boys were sitting on that wall, and one was heard to say:

"I say, Nigel. Who are those people in the car?"

The other lad leaned way over and peeked inside the open windows of the car. His eyes opened, his jaw dropped, and he answered:

"Blimey. It's the royal family!"

* * *

El Cajon's second sister city was Sulzfeld, Germany, the third was Comondu, Mexico. Under Sister Cities President Russel Stockwell in 1985 and 1986, El Cajon donated a fire truck, airlifted supplies after a devastating fire, and sent four truckloads of school furniture and a truckload of medical supplies and toys to the Mexican county. In 1986, Comundu's Ballet Folklorico performed in El Cajon's East County Performing Arts Center.

El Cajon's Sister City members in Australia: Norma and Bud Edelman (second and third on left), Bette and Jim Snapp, Ellie and Frank Brazda, and Frances and William Houghton.

So successful has been the Sister Cities program in El Cajon that the city won a trophy from the U.S./ Mexico Sister City Association, and a Readers Digest Foundation award from Sister Cities International. President Russel Stockwell accepted the prizes in 1987.

Sister City President Russel Stockwell with trophy.

El Cajon's Second Elected Mayor

From 1955 to 1976, insurance agent Bob Cornett had been a highly involved member of the city council and, in 1976, was elected mayor. Looking back at the growth pangs of El Cajon, Cornett says:

"The Fifties and Sixties were times of excitement, of building and perfecting. It was a time of deciding whether to keep El Cajon as it was, or whether the time had come to alter and grow.

"The Sixties saw the beginning of federal grant monies," he reflects, "And there was considerable discussion, and argument, about whether the city should even *apply* for funds, because with governmental funding came strings. There were many people who were afraid of those strings."

However, the decision was to use federal money, but only to construct permanent improvements.

Knox Hotel and Other Historical Buildings

In 1972, the City of El Cajon purchased the old Knox Hotel building from the family of retired lawyer S.H. Mathews, intending to turn the old seven-room building into a historical museum. The Mathews had moved the building from Main Street to the southeast corner of Lexington and Magnolia streets years before. It was the city's plan to move it to the corner of North Magnolia and Park and turn it into a historical museum. It was an idea first suggested by the Friends of the El Cajon Library. Hazel Sperry, the woman who had spearheaded collection of valley memorabilia, photographs, and interviews, was named the El Cajon Historical Society's first Historian.

Bob Cornett, Mayor James Snapp, Howard Pierce, driver, George Quidort, and Al Van Zanten prepare to take the first ride in a City-sponsored Dial-a-Ride cab.

Historical Society members: President Russel Stockwell, Mae Weinstock, Jeanne Thacher, Joan Cooke, Mildred Kennel, Jonna Waite, Vice President Elaine Eberle, Chloris Scott, Treasurer Darlene Dahms.

The old hotel was spruced up and furnished by society members and community volunteers, then opened to the general public. Today, the hotel regularly hosts school groups, scouts, and the public several days a week, giving visitors a glimpse of how it was a century ago in El Cajon.

Other historic sites and buildings have had different fates. Some were reclaimed, like the abandoned church on Highland that became Christ Church Unity. Installed on that property today is an authentic Tiffany church window, around which the congregation plans to build a new church. Other buildings were moved, like some of the houses originally owned by members of the Hall family. Another structure, the Embleton house, met a less dignified end: it was donated to the city to be burned by firemen as a part of their training.

The old Bostonia store and winery were demolished years ago, as were three old water tunnels once used as part of the flume east of El Capitan Lake. Other old buildings have fallen into disrepair, been remodeled, or simply torn down.

But the old Judson house, built back in 1892 out on Pepper Drive, went from the Pattersons to the Mills families before becoming a clubhouse for the Pepperwood Mobile Home Park. Yet another old structure, one of the first commercial buildings in El Cajon, was moved for a time next to another historical landmark.

That happened because former mayor Albert Van Zanten purchased the old J.P.R. Hall home, built back in the 1880s. A few years later, after his family moved into the house, Van Zanten found himself the recipient of the Hall Company's original lumberyard office, which had been converted into the City's first firehouse by W.D. back in the 1920s. Discovering that the building was about to be destroyed, Van Zanten claimed it in the name of the city. Two years later, the firehouse was moved to the Inland Supply Company on East Main and Jamacha Road. Fittingly, Inland Supply is owned by Herb Hall, the great grandson of J.P.R., grandson of W.D., and son of Rexford Hall.

* * *

In 1977, career Navy officer Ben Cloud received his next assignment. He was to go to Naples, Italy, as commanding officer of the U.S. Naval Support Organization, which meant he would be in charge of U.S. and NATO forces in Southern Italy. As military "mayor" of Southern Italy, he was to interface with the Italian government and provided services for NATO forces in that country.

It had been seven years since Ben had returned to El Cajon to attend the Grossmont High School reunion. Seven years since Dick Ridgeway had died so suddenly of a heart attack, and seven years of seeing

Ben and Diane Cloud in their Dehesa Road home.

Ridgeway's widow, Diane, occasionally, and writing to her often. It was time, Ben Cloud decided. Time to go home and marry Diane.

After Ben and Diane were married, they went off to Italy, where Ben administered military schools, hospitals, exchange stores, airports, and saw to gasoline, autos, and supplies for American and NATO dependents. Diane, who had taught Spanish for a number of years, was soon her new husband's match in speaking fluent Italian. The Clouds returned to El Cajon in 1984 when Ben retired, and now live in a house perched over Dehesa Road, high above Singing Hills Golf Club.

City Hall

During the 1970s, El Cajon's population continued to grow, which meant that the city was compelled to annex property, improve the city's infrastructure, and work with other governmental entities to deliver the best services to citizens at the lowest possible cost.

A key figure since 1968 in riding herd on the legal ramifications of city growth has been City Attorney Lynn McDougal. McDougal, responsible for keeping up with the changes and nuances of municipal law so that he can advise the city council in their actions, is known for his timely humor. In keeping city councils out of time-consuming and non-productive litigation, he frequently relies upon humor to equalize touchy situations.

"We have to look at ourselves realistically and, when appropriate, laugh at ourselves," he says. "Otherwise, the intensity of a situation can get blown all out of proportion."

As an example, he tells the story of a church representative who, many years ago, asked the city council to approve construction of a cemetery on property fronting on Madison Avenue. When the neighbors of that property heard what the church intended to do, they were violently opposed and packed the council chambers to voice their displeasure. The church representative began his proposal by saying, in an unfortunately lofty and pompous voice:

"A decent burial ground has been a part of the Christian religion from some 1,600 years before the birth of Christ. As a matter of fact, Abraham's relatives carried his body hundreds of miles back to his birthplace just so he could be buried in his homeland . . ."

At that point, someone in the audience broke in to ask:

"If they could haul Abraham that far in *those* days, don't you think you could haul *your* folks about five miles out of town?"

The cemetery was not built inside the city limits.

But other things were. Streets were realigned and combined when necessary to meet the pressures of modern living. McDougal remembers the night a council was to decide on renaming a street.

Two streets, Concord and Lexington, had been joined and, to make it more efficient for the postal, police, and fire departments, it was decided to change the name of the Concord section to Lexington Avenue. There were those who objected – strenuously and emotionally. Person after person stood up to say how they loved the name Concord, and did not want it changed. Then a woman stepped forward carrying a wooden shingle. On it was carved her street address. She brandished the shingle, saying:

"I presume that I can no longer use this on my mailbox but I just wanted you to know that you are rendering obsolete this carving made by my son . . . who was recently killed in Vietnam."

Although there was not a dry eye in the house, council members had to consider the welfare of the total community, and the street name was changed.

The city also instituted far-reaching changes in the area's sewer and flood control systems. El Cajon is riddled with fresh water springs. To make things even soggier, excess water from the surrounding hills, and the homes on the hills, was constantly washing down and flooding the structures and land below. To protect homes and businesses, the city installed an intricate network of cement waterways for drainage and flood control. A sewerage system was also designed and rebuilt to carry waste water from high areas to low, converging at the northwest corner of town, where the system ties into the Metropolitan Sewer System. From there, sewage is carried from inland communities out through Mission Gorge and on to the Metro waste plant at the tip of Point Loma.

Just as excess water and sewage must be channeled away, electrical power must be brought in. San Diego Gas & Electric has supplied the county with gas and electricity since the early part of the century. In 1985, the Southwest Power Link was completed. Spanning 280 miles of mountains, valleys, and desert between eastern San Diego County and Arizona, the link can transmit up to 1,000 megawatts of power. This connection with the Southwestern United States power grid broadens SDG&E's energy mix and provides a more reliable power supply.

The City Today

In 1974, Bob Cornett was mayor when Telephone Company executive John Reber decided to run for a seat on the city council. Helping Reber in his successful election bid were Superior Court Judge G. Dennis Adams, former Assemblyman and State Senator Bob Wilson, Traffic Commissioner Joseph Stacey, Person-

City Council members trying out their new seats: Merrill Groat, Lucille Moore, John Reber, Howard Pierce, and Mayor Robert Cornett.

nel Commissioner Richard Hunt, and former Traffic Commissioner Lenny Estrada.

In 1976, the buildings in the Superblock were completed and dedicated. Shortly thereafter, Cornett resigned as mayor and the city council appointed Reber to take his place. That left Reber's council seat vacant and Jack Hanson, a former candidate for the council seat won by Dona Foster, was appointed to fill the vacancy. In the next two elections, Reber was reelected mayor and, as one of his duties in 1984, he helped promote the 1984 Olympics by carrying the Olympic Torch through the city on its way to Los Angeles. That torch is now on display at City Hall.

The newly seated Hanson had been backed by local sports groups who wanted better representation at City Hall. Those groups represented a large number of parents from the Boys Club and baseball, football, and soccer leagues. Organized athletics for youngsters had been around for a number of years. In 1961, a local team had gone on to win the Little League World Series championship, and in 1977 the El Cajon Western Little League won the United States National Championship. That was the same year that El Cajon parents formed their own AYSO boys' and girls' soccer leagues, with coaches Byron Summers, Dave Mackie, Bob Smith, Frank Peeleman, and George Logan leading the way.

* * *

"I'm proud of what has been accomplished during these years," John Reber says, referring to the unprecedented spirit of cooperation that prompted individuals, groups, and organizations within the community to join forces to build the Superblock, create playing fields for youth sports leagues, lay the groundwork for trolley service to East County, and raise funds for a new library, a new fire station, and a neighborhood center.

These dedicated citizens allied with the County Board of Supervisors and Grossmont College to complete the Superblock. By working with Cajon Valley Union School District, playing fields were updated and are well maintained – an important accomplishment in a situation where the city has too little recreational land and the school district has plenty. Because the school district cannot afford to maintain playing fields for the public, the city maintains the grass playing fields on school district property.

The first phase of the "Superblock," with its completed City Hall and Council Chambers.
Below: East County Performing Arts Center.

It is this type of cooperation that has provided many local conveniences without undue cost to the taxpayer. In 1987, new projects were started. One involves redevelopment of old Library Park and the land between Lexington Street and Douglas that once housed city and county offices. Within that project, the city is contributing financially to the expansion of the El Cajon Library. The city has already built a new fire station, and is in the process of building a Neighborhood Center.

Officers James Coddington, Gary Sper, David Chighizola, Richard Blackmore, Steve Byrd, and Leroy Bloom with their police dogs. The City's Police Chief is Darwin Sinclair.

The new Fire Department building, part of a larger redevelopment that once held city offices. Roger House is the City's Fire Chief.

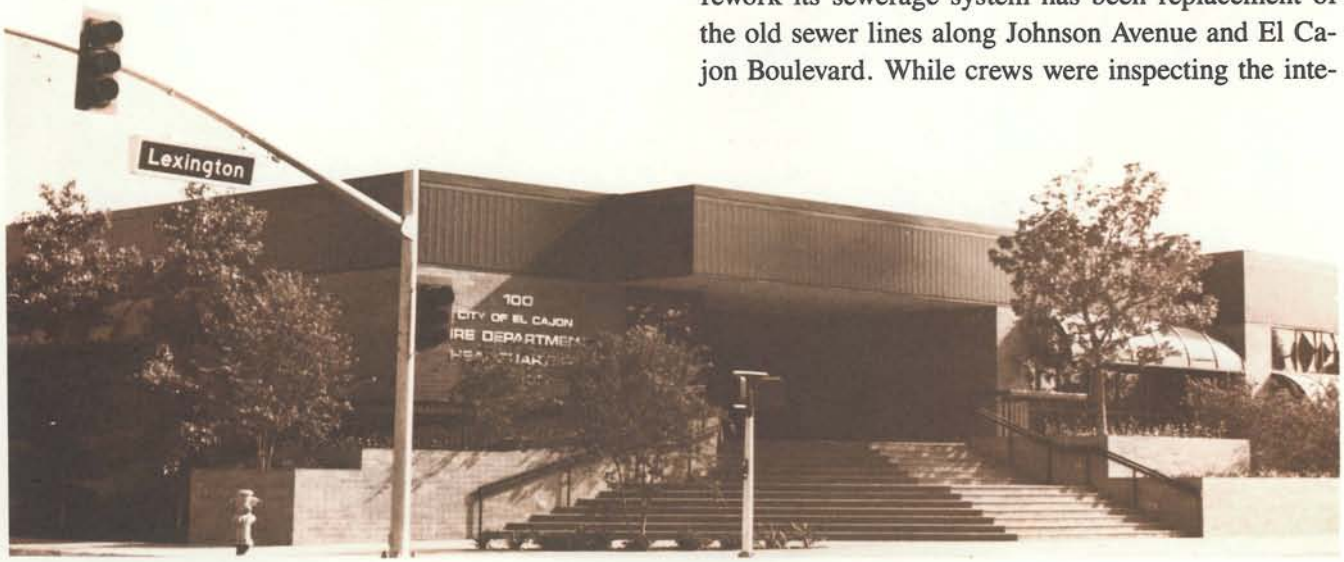
Another bold move on the city's part was annexation of Gillespie Field, which opens the way to an expansion of the industrial park in cooperation with the County Board of Supervisors, the owners of Gillespie Field. Redevelopment of El Cajon's downtown area was given new impetus by an expansion of the project area and demolition of the first old buildings along Main Street. Although modernization of the downtown area has not progressed nearly as rapidly as city fathers had hoped, the city council (which sits as the Redevelopment agency) has paved the way for an orderly, albeit slow, revamping of the old, rundown city center into a governmental, judicial, and business centerpiece for the community.

The heart of the redevelopment area is the showpiece City Hall, ECPAC complex and grounds, and the County Regional Center.

"Perhaps the very lack of progress over the past few years," one insider observed, "will provide an opportunity for much more dramatic improvement for the economic and cultural development of downtown."

Geologist/engineer Richard Smith was a party to many of those changes. He credits former mayors James Snapp, Bob Cornett, and the late councilman Howard Pierce for getting him interested in local government. Appointed to the council to fill the last year of Dan Conaway's unexpired term and elected since, Smith brings an added insight to city affairs.

First appointed to the El Cajon Building Authority Board, then to the Planning Commission, Smith was a member of the firm that acted as the City Engineer for El Cajon and prepared the master drainage study for the city. One aspect of the city's continuing project to rework its sewerage system has been replacement of the old sewer lines along Johnson Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard. While crews were inspecting the inte-



rior of the lines with a television camera, they discovered that a leak was allowing a fresh water spring to flood the lines with 10,000 gallons of water a day. That was a costly leak, because El Cajon pays the City of San Diego for each gallon of water sent through their system to the sewage station in Point Loma. A quick repair saved the city thousands of dollars each year.

Harriet Stockwell, appointed to replace Lucille Moore on the city council when Moore became a County Supervisor, ran successfully for a city council post in 1980 and was re-elected in 1986. During those years she also held a variety of local, county, and state positions involving charter review, public land law, educational goals, voter registration, general plan preparation, transportation, environment, water quality, health planning, and employment issues. She was also appointed by three different governors to state positions.

In 1982, City Manager Bob Applegate retired and was succeeded by Bob Acker, Applegate's assistant since 1970. Then, in 1983, another new member was elected to the council.

Joan Shoemaker, wife of Steven Shoemaker and mother of six children, became interested in government when the city began to face the problems posed by overcrowding, annexations, and change. After serving on the City Planning Commission for four years, she won a council seat.

Another new service provided by the city is the transit center for the trolley line, which is scheduled to begin service to downtown San Diego in 1989. It was Mayor Reber's participation on the Metropolitan Transit Development Board that helped secure that trolley service for the city. But then, all council members are members of other organizations that further the welfare of El Cajon. Mayor Reber serves on the El Cajon-San Diego County Civic Center Authority, and the Transportation/Public Works and City Selection Committees of the League of California Cities Committees.

Harriet Stockwell, has represented the City of El Cajon as chair and vice chair on the San Diego Association of Governments Board of Directors, as president of the California Association of Councils of Governments, on two committees for the National Organization of Regional Councils, and on three committees of the League of California Cities. Stockwell was one of the founding members and the first president of the East County Economic Development

City Council, presenting a plaque to representatives of the William Lee Co., honoring Marshall Scotty's Playland as the County's oldest amusement park.

Planning Director Ray Henson, Director of Public Works John Pizzato, City Manager Robert Acker, City Attorney Lynn McDougal, and City Clerk Marilyn Linn.

Council, an organization of chambers of commerce and a variety of private businesses dedicated to economic development of the several communities of the Inland East area. She also serves on the Automated Regional Justice Information System and the Cajon Valley Education Foundation.

Richard Smith is a member of the Harry Griffen Park Joint Steering Committee, Heartland Fire Training Facility Authority, Employee Relations Committee of the League of California Cities, Cities Advisory Committee to the Local Agency Formation Commission, and the San Diego Association of Governments.

Jack Hanson serves on the Heartland Communications Facility Authority, Public Safety Committee of the League of California Cities Committee, Cities Advisory Committee of the Local Agency Formation Commission, Metropolitan Transit Development Board, San Diego Transit, and Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies. Hanson is also chairman of the city's 75th Birthday Celebration.

Joan Shoemaker previously served on the county Emergency Medical Care Committee, and now represents the San Diego Division of the League of California Cities Community Services Committee, is the alternate on the joint powers Heartland Fire Training Facility, the San Diego County Disaster Council, and is Chairman of the city's Constitution Bicentennial Committee.

A Community of Volunteers

But, then, the city is full of achievers. In the years between 1980 and 1982, Jenny Lee Irey was one of thirty American floral designers invited to decorate the White House for Christmas. For the year 1986, fifteen "Women of Dedication" were honored in San Diego, and Vickie Butcher and Carol Alessio were among them. Professor John Somerville received the Gandhi Peace Award in recognition of his anti-nuclear activity. Teachers and staff at Crest and Meridian schools in the Cajon Valley Union School District won accolades, too, when they were rated as "Distinguished" by state education officials.

Scouts Susan Turk and Nancy Gavin received Girl Scout Gold Awards, while Todd Watts, Robert Rynearson, Walter Watts, David Riley, Gary Nelson, Jon Wilkinson, Fred Miller, and James Godfrey recently received Eagle Scout Awards. Sandy Carlson was selected as the 1987 Miss El Cajon, with Marsi Shoemaker as runner-up.

A New Kind of Citizen

In the Eighties, the population of El Cajon and its contiguous areas continued to grow. Some of its newest members were families newly arrived from nations torn by war in the Far East and Middle East. The most obvious difficulty facing most such new citizens was unfamiliarity with the language. Immigrant children also found it difficult to adjust to a peacetime culture.

At school, they were reluctant to allow their siblings to leave their sight. Elementary teachers found that younger children were reluctant to go out on the

playground and when they did so, they darted uneasy glances at the sky. Inside the classroom, an accidentally dropped book would send these children scrambling frantically beneath their desks to cower until convinced that it was safe to come out. Unused to dealing with children who had been traumatized by war, El Cajon instructors found entirely new challenges in teaching.

"As difficult as it had been for them," says Cajon Valley Union School District Principal Lupe Buell, then in charge of the ESOL program, "that first wave of students had it easier than the boat people who came later because the first group was well educated and wealthy."

But, when the communists took over in Vietnam and Laos, they killed off the intellectuals and teachers. Many of the families left, fleeing to the jungles. Others were imprisoned. Thus, by the time later refugees arrived in the United States, they lacked an education and were poor and traumatized.

"Fortunately," says Buell, "School districts were better prepared the second time around. Something was in place."

What is now in place in both elementary and high school districts are English preparedness programs to

First-place winner of Historical Society's essay contest Colleen Carrol, with Kally Davis (second), and Kenny Smith (third).

Mayor John Reber and Councilwoman Joan Shoemaker with Bicentennial Flag.

get foreign-born students ready for regular classes. Today, El Cajon has an influx of Cambodian, Chaldean, Chinese, and Hispanic peoples. Other newcomers come from Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy, Iran, and Jewish centers. Elementary school district Superintendent Ron Hockwalt believes that this influx promotes a rich, cultural diversity for all students.

"We are becoming more and more of a mixed socio-economic and ethnic community," Hockwalt observes, "and I see that as highly positive."

Supporting Hockwalt's claim is the work being done by San Diego State sociologist Shirley Thomas, and her UCSD psychologist husband, Charles, who work to keep alive black traditions, both in their classes and at home. Believing that it is vital for black families to maintain their connections with black culture, the Thomas' remain as actively involved with the San Diego black community as with East County's predominantly white citizenry.

Asians, too, have come to El Cajon in considerable numbers. Uk Kyong and Lee Prince arrived from Korea fourteen years ago. Adopted by an American family stationed in his country after the war, Lee was sent to college in the United States, but returned to Korea to marry television actress Uk Kyong. The two were soon off to the University of Guam where Lee earned his degree and Uk Kyong went to work at various U.S. post exchanges.

Still, despite her jobs in American military stores, Uk Kyong knew little English when the couple arrived in El Cajon in 1973. Lee, by then an engineer, was away at work all day and Uk Kyong was pretty much isolated until a Korean friend suggested that she attend beauty school. Desperate enough to try anything, Uk Kyong signed up at El Cajon's Jeboutique College of Beauty.

That move began anew the classic tale of an immigrant who made good, a story repeated time and again by generations of citizens undaunted by hard work and with the will to dedicate themselves to excellence.

By the dint of hard work, Uk Kyong became so skilled a hair stylist that she was soon traveling around the Southwest instructing other hair stylists in the

Councilwoman Harriet Stockwell and Councilman Richard Smith.

Supervisor George Bailey (left) with Grossmont Cuyamaca College Foundation officers. President Carol Dorman, Dr. Samuel Ciccati, Lowell Hallock, and Robert Muscio.

Mother Goose Board: Gary Conway, Roy Woodward, Jan Herring, Doug Curlee, Ben Cartwright, John Maguire, Micke Shaw (front row) Nat Eggert, Patti Shryock, Guy Shackley, president Ralph Roelofsz, Dorothy Maranda, Kay Toci.

ways of her art. Today, Uk Kyong owns her own studio. And, like many other grateful immigrants, she returns to her adopted community a measure of what she has received. Since 1985, she has hosted an annual fashion show benefitting local charity and civic groups, including Girls Club of East County and Grossmont Cuyamaca College Foundation.

Uk Kyong is not alone in contributing to the community. Seven hundred other El Cajonians were on hand at the Boys Club of East County's annual dinner. Chaired by Gene Sapper, the club recognized those who had contributed to the welfare of youth in the El Cajon community. President Ralph T. Richey presented the Bronze Keystone Award to Ray E. Ehly for 15 years of dedicated service. The evening earned $114,000 for Boys Club programs.

Other enthusiastic groups helped the East County Girls Club earn $80,000 toward continuing its programs, and supported youth sports leagues, Eastern San Diego County Junior Fair, educational foundations, and many cultural, social, business, and professional activities. It is all those thousands of volunteers who make the El Cajon community a better place in which to live.

High Schools

Today, 84,000 persons live within El Cajon's city limits. Many thousands of others living in surrounding County areas have an El Cajon mailing address. And many living in those areas are also deeply involved in El Cajon clubs, organizations, charities, and businesses.

While the El Cajon post office serves these areas beyond the city's borders, the Grossmont Union High School District, which covers 465 square miles, is the

Councilman Jack Hanson and John Martinelli in a Soroptimist Follies spoof.

single governmental agency uniting *all* of East County.

Grossmont High School District's Superintendent Robert Pyle's Committee for the 21st Century is already preparing to anticipate needs and requirements in the years to come; but, at the core, the teacher is always the key.

"We were all deeply affected by one or more teachers in our lives," says Pyle. "Each of us learned to cope better with life's challenges simply by observing how a favorite teacher, coach, or custodian handled people and events. Modeling appropriate behavior and attitudes is what teachers have *always* been about."

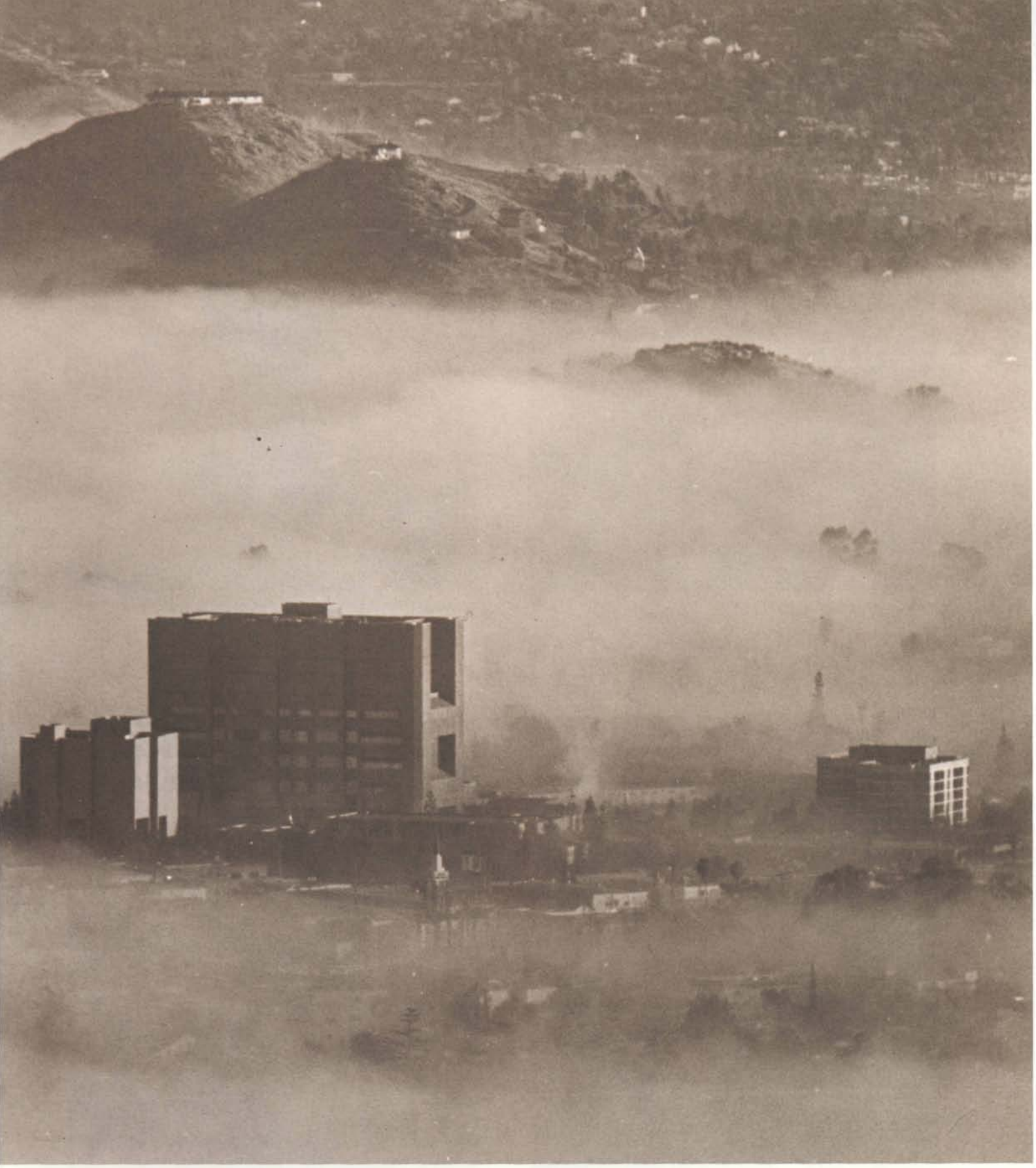
Business Community

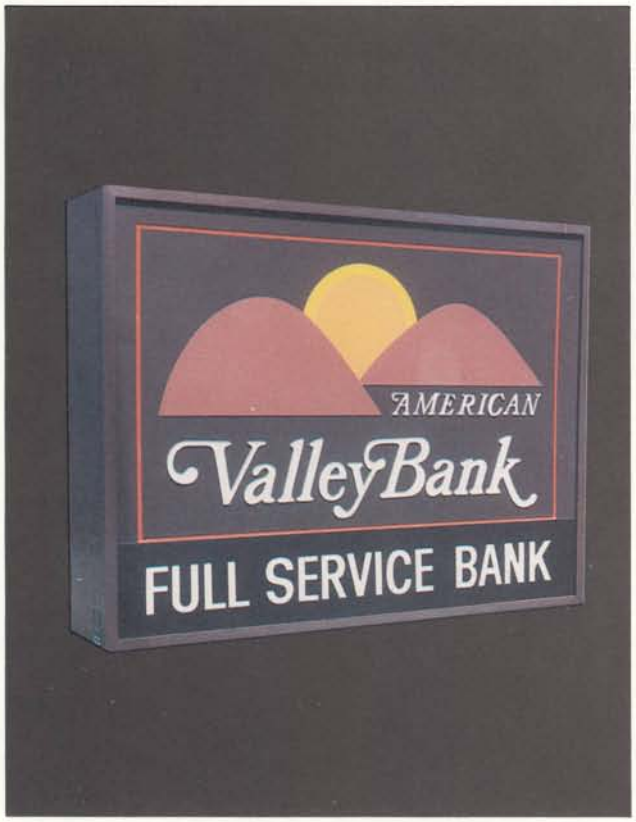
No longer limited to Main and Magnolia Streets, the business and professional community thrives throughout the city. It is the free enterprise system at its best and, to teach students about the relationships among the business, governmental, and educational communities, the Chamber of Commerce, the City, and the Cajon Valley Union School District united to design and implement an innovative economics program called Awareness Week. That program is now in its sixth year and involves eighth-grade students in both public and private schools.

Other programs sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce under former Executive Director Jules Rouse were "Survival in the 80s" breakfast workshops, the El Cajon Business Forum, Small Business Workshops, the El Cajon Business Fair, and Achievement Expo.

As the new Chamber president, banker Ron Fields looks forward to dynamic internal growth within the city:

"Redevelopment will bring to citizens a downtown business district that is a pleasant place to browse and shop, as well as a hub for businesspeople and professionals."



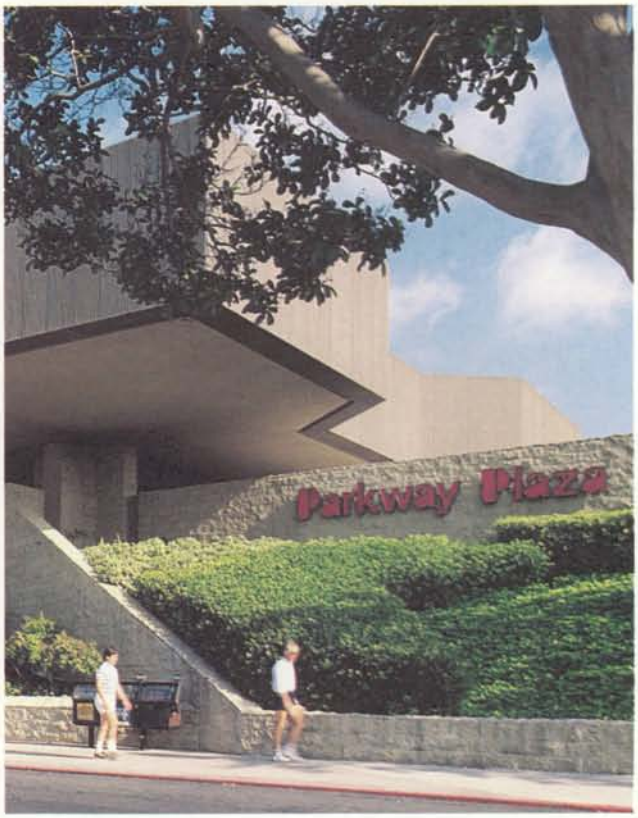


American Valley Bank

Art World Western Heritage Gallery

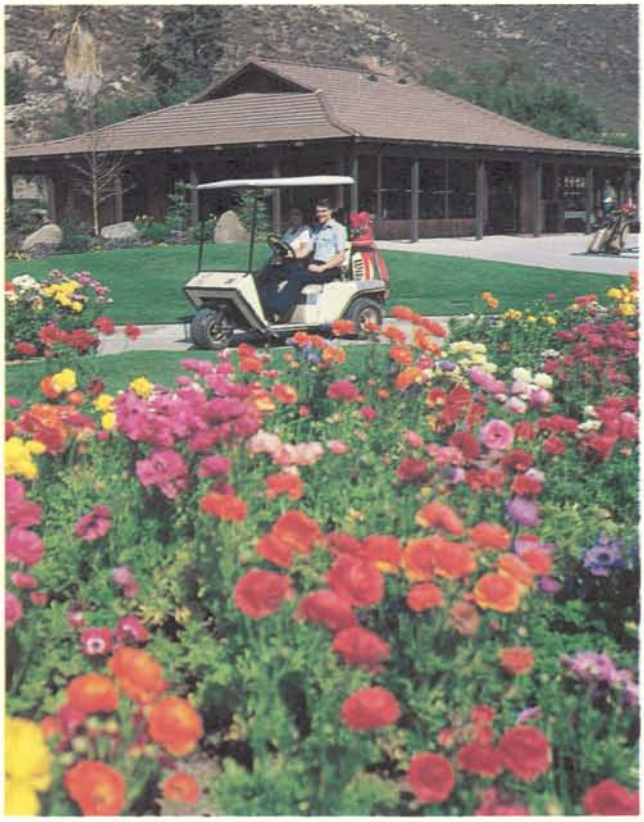
The History of El Cajon VALLEY OF OPPORTUNITY

Buck Knives



Parkway Plaza

Daily Californian Newspaper



Singing Hills Country Club and Lodge

The History of El Cajon VALLEY OF OPPORTUNITY

Grossmont Cuyamaca College District Foundation

San Diego Gas & Electric

MAYORS OF EL CAJON

President: Board of Trustees

J.A. Harris 1912
John R. Rogers 1914
Myron W. Prisler 1915
Louis Forney 1916
F.S. True 1917
O.D. Imes 1918
Ed A. Mueller 1920
Lee T. Meachum 1924

Chairman: Board of Trustees

William Stell 1926

Mayor (Appointed)

William Stell 1932
George F. Gray 1934
H.F. Merchant 1937
Gail F. Wright 1938
Claude H. Kenyon 1940
James E. Hunt 1949
Nelson M. Fleming 1952
John R. Steele 1954
C. Hamilton Judy 1956
Karl R. Tuttle 1958
Robert L. Cornett 1962
C. Lloyd Loftus 1963
Earl C. Freeland 1964
Albert L. Van Zanten 1965
Richard R. Brown 1967

Mayor (Elected)

James Snapp 1968
Robert L. Cornett 1976
John W. Reber (appointed) 1978
John W. Reber 1980

El Cajon Citizen of the Year
1955–1986

Senator Jack Schrade *1955*
Rexford Hall *1956*
Tom Wigton *1957*
Tom Jackman *1958*
Lewis Smith *1959*
Joseph O'Connor and Ailene Saunders *1960*
Karl Tuttle *1961*
Nat Eggert *1962*
Bob Swearengin *1963*
Mrs. & Mrs. Elmer Wiesendanger *1964*
Dr. George C. Brown, Jr. *1965*
Dr. Lowell Smith *1966*
Charles W. Decker *1967*
Chloris Scott *1968*
Ken Brown *1969*
Howard Pierce and Portia Goode *1970*
Richard Brown *1971*
C. Rupert Linley *1972*
Harriet Stockwell *1973*
Lynn R. McDougal *1974*
Jim Snapp *1975*
Bob Cornett *1976*
Lucille Moore *1977*
C.V. Ferree *1978*
Hazel Sperry *1979*
Penne L. Thacher *1980*
Charles E. Cordell *1981*
Vincent R. Ciruzzi *1982*
Mary Funk *1983*
Robert O. Webb *1984*
Jack L. Hanson *1985*
Russel Stockwell *1986*

* * *

75th Anniversary Celebration

Executive Committee

Jack Hanson – Chairman
Doreen Bauman
Carol Dorman
Eldonna P. Lay
Mark Lewis
Yvonne Johnson
Dr. Joann Smith
Gordon Smith
Deborah Street

* * *

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