

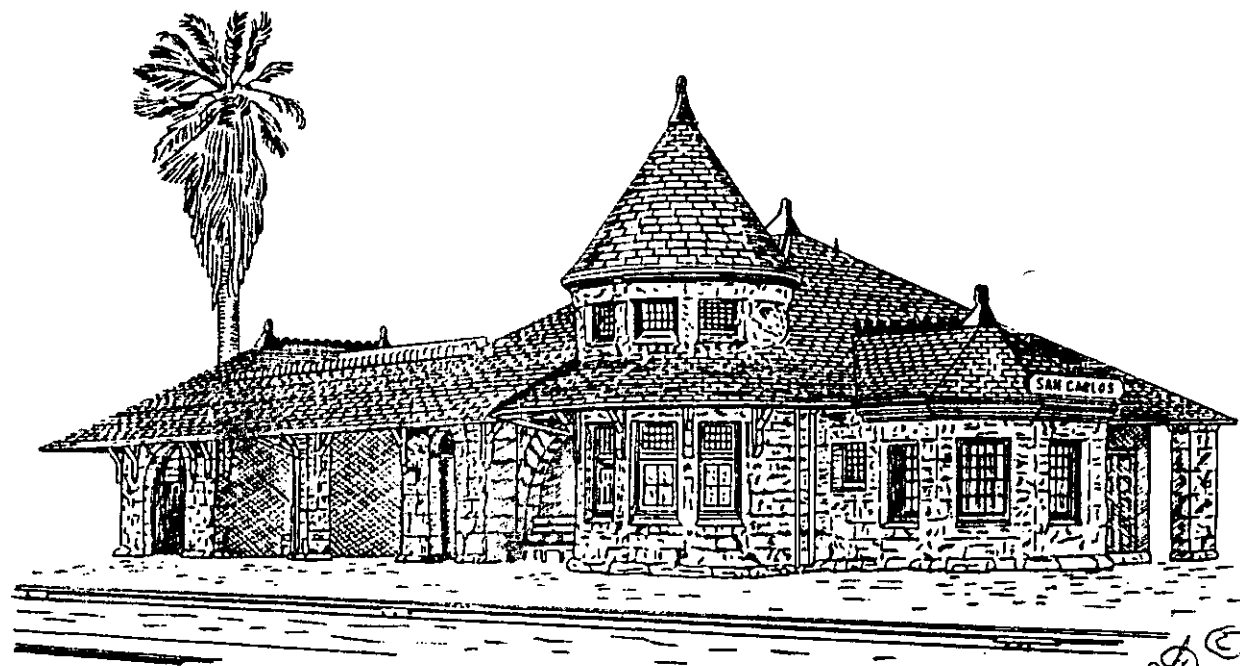
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A SHORT WALK THROUGH SAN CARLOS HISTORY

BY

THE SAN CARLOS VILLAGERS

SAN CARLOS, CALIFORNIA



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HISTORY

Although San Carlos had its major growth period after World War II, the town's roots are imbedded in California history; more closely with the development of the San Francisco peninsula.

The first known residents of our city were the Costanoan (Coast People) Indians. A peaceful tribe, they were most happy here where food, shelter and clothing were plentiful.

In 1769 Don Gaspar de Portola's expedition discovered this area and claimed it for their King Carlos III of Spain. In 1775, the first ship "San Carlos" sailed into and charted San Francisco Bay. (We wonder today if it was of the first or second instance that our town received its name.)

After several explorations which included Fr. Junipero Serra and Don Jose Dario Arguello (Captain in the Castillian Army) Mission Dolores and the Presidio in San Francisco were established. It is with Capt. Arguello that San Carlos history begins to take form.

Because of Don Jose Dario Arguello's fine job in keeping peace between the soldiers, Indians and colonists at the Presidio and Mission in San Francisco, plus his loyalty to the Crown of Spain, King Carlos III in 1795 granted to him 35,240 acres of land wherever he chose in all of Alta (Upper) California. He chose the lands of San Mateo County and San Carlos became his rancho headquarters.

Don Jose Dario Arguello became Commandante of the San Francisco Presidio (1787-1791 and 1796-1806) and the 9th Gobernador of Alta California (under Spanish rule) in 1814. He named his rancho in San Carlos "Rancho los Cochinitos". He was born in 1755 and died in 1828.

His son, Don Luis Antonio Arguello inherited the rancho. He married Maria de Soledad de Ortega and built an adobe hacienda on the corner of Magnolia and Cedar (approximately 1821) and was Commandante at San Francisco Presidio in 1806 and Presidente there in 1822-1825. In 1822 he became Gobernador of Alta California (the first native son to become Gobernador under Mexican rule). In 1823 he and his family moved to Monterey where he died in 1830. It was in his time that the rancho in San Carlos became known as "Rancho de las Pulgas" (Rancho of the Fleas). Don Luis was born in 1784 and died in 1830.

After Don Luis' death, Dona Maria returned to San Carlos, built another casa in 1839 (next to her old one) where she lived until 1854. She died in 1874. The lands of Don Luis were regranted to her in 1835. Upon her return from Monterey, there were squatters, etc. on the rancho lands. She sent for Mr. S.M. Mezes (attorney), who, by her request, subdivided the lands for purchase. For this good work, Mr. Mezes received 15% of the property (which included Redwood City and parts of San Carlos).

To bring you back to the happenings in California at this time -- there was the Gold Rush in 1849 and California Statehood in 1850. It was now that lands in the state were being turned over from Spanish hands to American.

The first American to own land in San Carlos was Timothy Guy Phelps, a mercantile merchant in San Francisco. He purchased 200 acres from Dona Maria (through Mezes). This included the adobe owned by Maria. He lived in this adobe until he built a board and batten house next to it. He later purchased up to 3,500 acres of San Carlos land. He became our first State Senator, first Congressman, Assemblyman, was our first home owner, first commuter and first public citizen. He later built a mansion on Old County Road and Holly (where 7-11 Store is now). Only 1 palm tree remains of his estate.

Mr. Andrew Julius Johnson from Denmark, employed by Mr. Phelps as foreman, per Phelps instruction planted the eucalypti that now grace San Carlos Avenue near Cordilleras in 1892.

In 1858 John Brittan, a hardware dealer in San Francisco, purchased 3,000 acres of land from Dona Maria and built his home (Wesley Bays) on what we know as St. Frances and Elm Sts. John Brittan had three children - William, Mary and Nathaniel.

It is with Nathaniel that we continue our history. In 1873 he inherited the lands between Pulgas Creek and Brittan Ave. from his father and built his Manor

House on Pine in 1881. The home included a bear pit, aviary and fine gardens. He also built a hunting lodge on Dale Ave. where he could entertain his "cronies". At one time he wished to build a Country Jinks' Clubhouse where the Bohemian Club could meet on Druids' Hill, but this never came about. The original Bohemian Club cornerstone was first layed at the corner of Orange and Elizabeth Sts. and is now at the Bohemian Club Grove, Russian River. Mr. N. Brittan was one of the founders and a past president of the Bohemian Club, which was formed in 1872. Brittan Ave. in San Carlos is named for this family. Nathaniel died in 1912. He had three children, Natalie, Belle and Carmelita. There are streets in San Carlos named after these children.

Mr. William Whipple Hull, a former miner turned brickmaker, purchased 40 acres of land from Senator Phelps in 1858. He constructed kilns and made bricks for his brickyard in San Francisco. With these bricks he built the original Palace Hotel, San Francisco's first post office and part of that city's Ferry Building. He had four children. Two of them, Guy and Asa, started a dairy on part of the land and when Guy went to work for the Southern Pacific Railroad, Asa took over the running of the dairy. We will follow the history of Asa as it is more involved with our city's history.

Asa Hull was born in 1870 and died in 1940. During the late 1800's and early 1900's grain was being cultivated on the vacant lots in our town and the milk from the dairy was being sold for \$.05 a quart (as long as residents brought their own

containers). Asa and his brother sold the farm in 1918 although Asa lived on the land of his father until his death. He was widely known for his bounty to strangers and transients alike. (I cannot help but think perhaps the well known author and philosopher Eric Hoffer stopped at the Hull's during one of his trips through the San Francisco peninsula during those times.) Asa was the 3rd Mayor of San Carlos and served three consecutive terms from 1932-1940. Hull Dr. is named in honor of this family.

To reminisce regarding the actual attempts to build our city we begin with the fact that there were three distinctive, individual attempts beginning with the coming of the railroad. Between 1888 and 1914 the San Carlos Land Company was formed with the main promoter being Capt. N. T. Smith (Treasurer of Southern Pacific Railroad). He was a long time friend of Leland Stanford. The San Carlos Land Company purchased 173.20 acres of land from Senator Phelps and tried to subdivide this property. There was a map of the town at this time which called the lands "Lomitas". Streets were graded and sewers were completed. In 1895 there were less than 50 people in San Carlos.

The second attempt to form a city came between 1907 and 1917 when the San Carlos Park Syndicate was formed. After the 1906 Earthquake this organization bought more acreage from Phelps and Mr. William Woosley in 1909 became the secretary of the San Carlos Park Syndicate. He bought the previous land holdings from the Land Company. He began the reservoir on Northam, improved San Carlos Avenue (known then as Cypress Ave.),

laid sidewalks, installed beautiful concrete urns filled with flowers along the Avenue and had a plan to use the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exhibition Ohio Building as a future clubhouse. To this end, he moved the Ohio Building to San Carlos from San Francisco on the bay on barges (unique to this time). He envisioned the city of San Carlos as the Hillsborough of the peninsula. World War I in 1917 stopped this organization's progress in the forming of our city and the Syndicate closed its books. The mortgages were then acquired by the Mercantile Trust Company (later to become American Trust).

The third and last attempt to form our city came in 1917 when Mercantile Trust placed 100 acres of foreclosed real estate (located in San Carlos) in the hands of Mr. Fred Drake, subject to their deed of trust. He finished the reservoir started by Mr. Woosley, paved the streets, formed the Sanitary District and installed gas and electricity. He helped to get homes built and later was a prime mover in getting the School District formed and the City of San Carlos incorporated. Mr. Drake became fondly known as the "Father of San Carlos".

Amid the trials and tribulations, with these three attempts to form our city, it was finally incorporated in 1925 with 600 persons in residence.

Along with the building of residential areas, commercial establishments were being formed. In 1916 a Flying Field was developed between San Carlos Ave. and Brittan (east of the railroad tracks). In 1918 the C.C.

Morse Seed Company purchased 60 acres south of Pulgas Creek (by Arroyo) to use as their sweet pea growing ground. A 1-mile long speedway was built in 1921 on the present site of Lenkurt Electric and in 1926 San Carlos Feed and Fuel joined in the town's development (see tower near Branston Road). The townspeople were overjoyed with the coming of a lumberyard in the 1920's, owned by James H. Martin (1st Mayor of San Carlos 1927-1930). They then could obtain the lumber to build their own homes.

Together with these industrial complexes being formed, other commercial businesses were being built around San Carlos Ave. and El Camino Real. A butcher shop, a restaurant, a gas station, the first general store were built to the north. Mr. Drake's building, a barber shop and another butcher shop were built to the south. On the north side of the second block (we know as Laurel St.) stood the N. T. Smith home, a bank building, a grocery store and, later, the Carlos Theatre. The McDonald home stood on the right (where Laurel Drug is now). Across and south of the depot stood Mrs. Tate's Tearoom and Munday's Grocery Store.

The Post Office was established in 1895 at the SP Depot and run by Mr. Nathaniel Brittan. As the town grew it eventually moved to four different locations to accommodate its business. A library was formed in 1910 due to the efforts of Mrs. Kate Farnham and her daughter Mary, and in 1916 San Mateo

County's first Branch was recorded as being here in San Carlos. In 1916 San Carlos needed a school; a district was formed and there were 20 pupils and 8 grades being taught by 1 teacher in 1 room in a house.

In 1923 a volunteer fire department was formed with the police chief also acting as fire chief. Before this time, a hay wagon and wet gunny sacks were drawn by Asa Hull's horses. The first church was begun (The Community Church) in 1928 followed by St. Charles in 1929.

So---from a sleepy, quiet little town with its tree lined avenue and with a population of 50 in the 1890's to its population of 600 (1925), to 3,500 (1940), to 28,200 (1981); we have seen San Carlos develop as it is today.

San Carlos has developed into a progressive and active city, a city of sound political, commercial and social structure. The citizens are active, well informed and eager to participate in the community's continuing development.

TOUR

We start and end our tour at Burton Park, although you may wish to begin at any other point along the way.

1. BURTON PARK (Brittan, Elm, Arroyo, Chestnut)

Property acquired in 1936. Amphitheater constructed in 1938 along with the adobe brick building. The park was rededicated in 1960 in honor of Edward R. Burton, Sr., City Councilman for 18 years and San Carlos Mayor for 4 years.

2. DRUIDS' HILL (East of Cedar, between Arroyo and San Carlos Ave.)

Proposed site of Bohemian Club retreat in the 1890's. Original cornerstone for the club was layed at intersection of Elizabeth and Orange Sts.

3. BRITTAN MANOR HOUSE (40 Pine Ave.)

Built in 1881 for Mr. Nat Brittan. Constructed of wood, stucco and shingles, with richly-carved window pediments, brackets and finials; imported French roof tiles.

4. BRITTAN HUNTING LODGE (125 Dale Ave.)

Built in 1872. This unusual octagonal redwood structure featuring steep gables, windowed cupola. Inside-a gaming room with a walk-in fireplace.

5. ARGUELLO ADOBE SITE (Magnolia and Cedar)
 Site of the Arguello Adobe built in approximately 1821 which was the home of Don Luis and Dona Maria until 1854. (See history.)

6. N. T. SMITH HONEYMOON COTTAGE (300 Chestnut)
 Built in 1889 as a "honeymoon cottage" to get away from the bustle of town. Built by Capt. and Mrs. N. T. Smith. Note pagoda-shaped roof.

7. HULL FAMILY FARM SITE (Hull Dr. and Laurel)
 Site of the 1880 homes and kilns of brickmaker William Whipple Hull. Also, site of Asa Hull's dairy and farm.

8. ZAIPPFEL HOUSE (371 Elm)
 Tony Zaippfel, a grocer from Woodside, built this home in the 1920's for his large family. It is said to have once had a ballroom with a mahogany bar.

9. ROSEK HOME (408 Elm)
 Built in 1912 by Mr. Adolph Paulsen, a well-borer. Descendents of the original family reside here and are restoring it.

10. SITE OF 1915 PANAMA PACIFIC EXHIBITION FLOWER GROWING ACTIVITIES. (San Carlos Ave., Elm, Magnolia, Walnut)

Site of the greenhouses built by Mr.

Andrew McDonald to house flowers for the 1915 Fair for which he won the Grand Prize for Horticulture in San Mateo County.

11. HACIENDA GARDEN APARTMENTS (SE Corner, San Carlos Ave and Elm)

Classic Spanish-style. Built in late 1920's by City Engineer Robert Klassen. Has its original well that is still in operation.

12. CITY HALL PARK (SW Corner, San Carlos Ave. and Elm)

Former site of home of Samuel Doan. Subsequent owner, Mrs. N. T. Smith. Sold to Mr. William Woosley in 1907. Only thing remaining from original site - palm tree and a few shrubs.

13. ZEH HOUSE (700 Elm)

Small red structure on Cherry St. was original vacation cottage. Capt. George Zeh subsequently built this home on Elm St. in 1918.

14. ORIGINAL CATHOLIC CHURCH (737 Walnut)

First church of the Parish of St. Charles (built 1929). Used after World War II. (Present church now at Belle and Tamarack) Original church now used as meeting hall and called "Casa de Flores".

15. HAYDOCK HOUSE (680 Walnut)

Built by Clarence Haydock (one of San Carlos' first school trustees) in 1912.

16. G. W. PHELPS HOME (620 Walnut)

Built in 1890's by George Washington Phelps (no relation to Timothy Guy Phelps). Purchased in 1902 by County Assessor Clarence Hayward. Sold in 1910 to San Carlos Park Syndicate. Now a multi-residence.

17. N. T. SMITH HOME (530 Walnut)

Built in 1893 for Capt. and Mrs. Nicholas T. Smith (Director of San Carlos Land Company and Treasurer of Southern Pacific Railroad). This house first stood on NW corner of Laurel and San Carlos Avenue. Moved in 1927 to its present site.

18. JONES HOUSE (512 Walnut)

Owned in 1920's by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Jones (niece of Mrs. William Whipple Hull). Mrs. Jones' daughter, Mrs. Claire Stewart inherited the property. Mrs. Stewart is the creator of Sorcha Boru ceramics.

19. LEMIS HOME (517 Walnut)

Built by Mr. Edward Lemis in approximately 1927. Mr. Lemis came to San Carlos in 1875 and lived with his Aunt (Mrs. William Whipple Hull) until his marriage.

20. MC DONALD HOME (501 Walnut)

Built in 1914 for Mr. Andrew McDonald (horticulturist and winner of many

awards for San Mateo County). It was here Mr. McDonald hybridized and produced the first complete white orchid grown in California. Now the residence of daughter Mrs. Beatrice Kroeck and family. (Note the cone-shaped manicured trees and well kept garden.) This house was originally located on the SW corner of Laurel and San Carlos Avenue. Moved to present site in 1927.

21. COOPER HOUSE (1338 Holly)

Constructed by Mr. William Kreger (well-known builder) for Mrs. Margaret Cooper. Subsequently sold to Mrs. N. T. Smith. Now an apartment house.

22. FIRE HOUSE (533 Laurel)

Built in 1923 to house equipment of the Volunteer Fire Department. Drill Tower built in 1926. The new firehouse was built in 1940. A replica of the original building now houses the new San Carlos Museum.

23. T. G. PHELPS HOME SITE (NE corner,
Holly and Old
County Road)

The Honorable T. G. Phelps built his mansion and had his farm close to the railroad for easy access to transportation to San Francisco where he was U. S. Customs Collector (appointed by President Ulysses S. Grant). All that remains today of his estate is one palm tree.

24. SAN CARLOS RAILROAD DEPOT (El Camino Real, San Carlos Ave.)

Built in 1888 with brownstone from the Almaden quarries. Built with the same stone and by the same stonemasons from Scotland who were hired by Leland Stanford to build original buildings at Stanford University. Is of Romanesque Revival architecture and sits on the right-of-way granted to the railroad by Nathaniel Brittan. The original building exists except for the portico for carriage trade. In 1976 it became a historical landmark (see plaque in front of the station).

25. MC CUE HOTEL (577 Old County Road)

Built approximately in 1925 as a hotel. but not used as such. Now the Depot Market.

26. DRAKE BUILDING (1101 San Carlos Ave.)

California-Spanish style, typically used in the 1920's. Built by Fred Drake. One of San Carlos' first commercial buildings.

27. COMMUNITY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH (Arroyo and Elm)

Organized in 1928. First building constructed in 1928 and has been rebuilt many times (last in 1957). This was the first organized church in San Carlos.

28. C. C. MORSE SEED COMPANY (South along
Pulgas Creek
on Arroyo)

This area site of the C. C. Morse Seed
Company's 1918 sweet pea proving grounds.

FIRST COMMERCIAL BLOCKS OF SAN CARLOS (1880's)

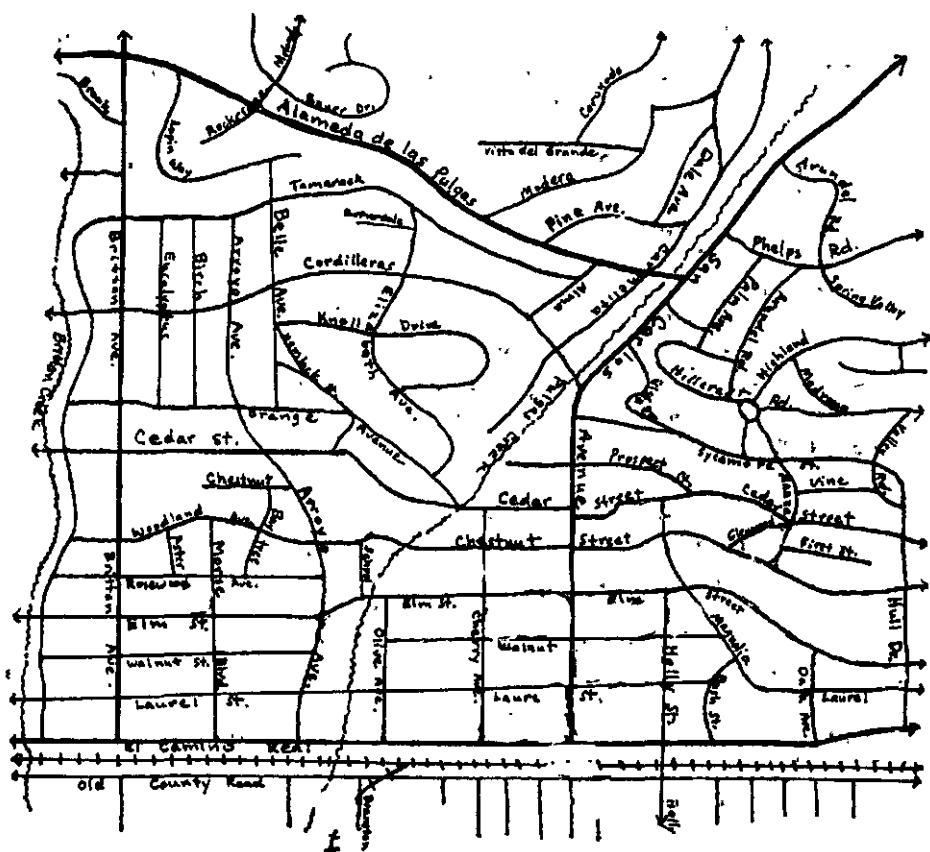
In the late 1880's San Carlos Ave. was known as Cypress Ave. Mr. Phelps' farm and mansion surrounded the SP Depot. On the north side of San Carlos Ave (first block) stood Merta's Butcher Shop (now San Carlos Liquors), the Windmill Restaurant (now Patio Bar), Conklin's Mobil Gas Station and grocery store (now a gas station). On the south side of the first block stood Mr. Drake's building, a barber shop, a butcher shop (now 1139 Club). In the second block to the north were the N. T. Smith home, a Bank of America building, Allen's Grocery Store and the Carlos Theatre. These sites are now occupied by Eureka Federal Savings (built 1979). In the second block to the south stood the McDonald home. This site is now occupied by Laurel Drug, The Added Touch, Norma's Jewelers, Ed's Smoke Shop and Tiernan's Opticians.

Along El Camino Real there was also commercial development. (We should remember that Old County Road was then known as El Camino Real and what we know today as El Camino Real was then called Maple Street (changed in 1915).

Across from the depot on El Camino Real, south of San Carlos Avenue was Mrs. Tate's Tea Room (now the Carlos Club) and Munday's (now the Hair Hunters). On the north was

Martin's Lumberyard and the Hull Brickyard. On the east was the San Carlos Flying Field, San Carlos Feed and Fuel and the San Francisco Speedway.

Map of Downtown San Carlos



SAN CARLOS VILLAGERS

The San Carlos Villagers was organized in 1949. They are now dedicated to the preservation of the history of San Carlos. In 1981, the San Carlos City Council appointed the Villagers to act as docents for the Museum of San Carlos History. The Villagers hold a group membership in the San Mateo County Historical Association.

Members consist of citizens who have lived in the Community for 15 years or more and are interested in the preservation of the history of our town.

Beatrice Kroeck, a member of the Villagers, was responsible for securing the National Historical Landmark Status for the San Carlos Train Depot, built in 1888, and placing the bronze marker on the property during the 1976 Bicentennial year.

We wish to acknowledge:

THROUGH THE YEARS IN SAN CARLOS

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