

## History of Carlsbad

In 1881 John Frazier settled on 160 acres, just south of the Buena Vista Lagoon and established a small settlement referred to as "Frazier's Station." He drilled a well looking for much needed water in 1883 and found water that he claimed to have cured of his illnesses relating to stomach and kidney problems.<sup>i</sup>

The water was said to have been analyzed and it was claimed to have the same qualities of water found in Karlsbad, Bohemia. Gerhard Schutte and D.D. Wadsworth purchased the water rights, and together with other investors, formed the Carlsbad Land and Water Company and laid out a town site by the name of Carlsbad.

Mr. Schutte built a home that later became the Twin Inns, a long standing landmark, presently known as Neiman's Restaurant on present day Carlsbad Boulevard. By about 1888 a train depot and several stores were built and the small village prospered with a population of about 300.

Carlsbad suffered an indignity in 1907 when the name on its railroad station was shortened to Carl. With great protest, petitions were filed and the name was soon restored.<sup>ii</sup>

Franz P. Hosp, a florist and nurseryman from Riverside, planted 45 acres of land with over forty thousand eucalyptus trees overlooking the Buena Vista Lagoon.<sup>iii</sup>

In 1914, the South Coast Land Company purchased the properties of the then-defunct water company and the community became largely farming. A flower growing industry began in the early 1920's. Sam Thompson, owner of the first avocado orchard in Carlsbad, was largely responsible for making Carlsbad "The Home of the Avocado".<sup>iv</sup>

The main business district was located on First Street, now known as State it was one of only two paved roads, the other being Lincoln, now known as Carlsbad Boulevard.

From 1918 for many years, the Twin Inns, owned by E.G. Kentner, was one of the most popular stops along the highway in North County and was famous for its chicken dinners.

The Carlsbad Mineral Springs Hotel opened in 1930 and brought into town an elite clientele for rest and mineral baths.<sup>v</sup> This hotel was successful in helping to establish Carlsbad as a resort town.

Carlsbad, situated on the coast, forty miles from San Diego, is an ideal place for summer or winter recreation, being noted for its clean, sandy beach, excellent surf-fishing and grade A avocados. Besides these striking features, Carlsbad has been acclaimed to possess a spring similar to the world renowned one, which is situated in Bohemia – the only two now known.<sup>vi</sup>

In 1936 the Army Navy Academy relocated from Pacific Beach to Carlsbad and occupied the former Red Apple Inn.

One of Carlsbad's most famous residents, actor Leo Carrillo, purchased the Los Kiotes homestead in 1937, a small portion of which would later become a city park.

By 1950, downtown street names changed from First to State with the remaining numbered streets changing to Roosevelt, Madison, Jefferson and Harding, respectively.

The city of Carlsbad was incorporated in 1952 with C.D. McClellan serving as its first mayor.

## The Route through Carlsbad

The road north of Carlsbad to Oceanside was at times difficult to negotiate. Crossing Buena Vista Lagoon could prove to be a challenge for all travelers. In 1903 work was done to level the road between South Oceanside and Carlsbad by a crew of men headed by G.D. Love.<sup>vii</sup>

The difficulty of crossing the lagoon would be eliminated in 1907 when the County Board of Supervisors approved the building of three bridges over coastal sloughs at San Dieguito, La Costa and Carlsbad. The contract for the three wooden structures was awarded to Charles Steffgen of San Diego for approximately \$10,000.<sup>viii</sup>

In March of 1909 the Auto Club placed signs on the route to and through Carlsbad “marking every turn and danger point along the way”.<sup>ix</sup>

The “Plain Truth” reported in February 1914 that a new highway was being built across the slough at Carlsbad. The highway entered Carlsbad via First Street (now State Street) and turned west at Elm (now Carlsbad Village Drive) then south on Lincoln Avenue (now Carlsbad Boulevard). In June of that year, contractors reinforced the bridge over the slough and put in additional pilings because the ground was “found to be softer than was first thought to be the case.”<sup>x</sup>

By March 1914, a highway work camp was set up at Carlsbad and workers began working on the last mile of the contract that would complete the state highway from South Oceanside to Del Mar, a distance of nineteen miles.<sup>xi</sup>

In 1915 the wooden bridge over the Buena Vista Lagoon was replaced with a concrete structure to the north, and to the south, the bridge over the Agua Hedionda Lagoon was widened considerably, from 25 feet to 75 feet.<sup>xii</sup>

With a torrential rain lasting five days, and flood waters raging from the nearby mountains down swollen rivers and streams, the flood of 1916 impacted every community along the coast from Orange County to Tijuana. The waters damaged the coast route through Carlsbad and wiped out the approaches to the concrete bridge. A crew worked diligently to repair it quickly. Railroad tracks were damaged and mail delivery was halted. It would take months to recover fully from the affects and repair the highway.<sup>xiii</sup>

For years Escondido had held an annual Grape Day Festival, which is still popular today. In 1917 Oceanside felt the need to compete with its own event that showcased its main crop, lima beans. Bean Day was not nearly as successful and lasted less than five years. Carlsbad wanted to join the festivities by celebrating “Avocado Day” that began in 1925. It brought the desired publicity and recognition and was decidedly more popular than the ill-fated Bean Day.

Mr. and Mrs. C.G. Williams opened “The Highway Drug Store” serving both residents and travelers along the coast road.

In 1925 Roy Chase built the Los-Diego Hotel on the southwest corner of State and Grand. It was managed by Mr. and Mrs. C.T. McKeehan and catered to the traveling public. The unusual name, of course, referred to the two large cities north and south of Carlsbad, Los Angeles and San Diego and was “the logical stopping place on the main coast highway between these two cities.”<sup>xiv</sup> It was a two-story Spanish-style structure, which boasted of private baths, hot water and steam heat.<sup>xv</sup> Carlsbad was certainly proud of its new addition, but the establishment would suffer after the coming realignment of the coast highway, which took traffic directly to Carlsbad Boulevard.

In early 1925 the California Highway Commission applied to the Railroad Commission for permission to construct an overpass over the tracks of the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company at Carlsbad.<sup>xvi</sup> When complete, this new overhead crossing bypassed State Street and brought traffic directly to Lincoln Street or Carlsbad Boulevard, thus eliminating a sharp right angle turn onto Elm Street from State Street. Several accidents had been blamed on the crossing including two fatalities which occurred in 1923 when a Mrs. H. Shippen and her daughter Kathleen were struck and killed by an oncoming train after an ill-fated crossing.<sup>xvii</sup>

Construction of the overhead crossing began in April of 1927 and was completed by Coon Brothers of Riverside in August.<sup>xviii</sup> This overhead crossing was “another step in furthering the plan of the Division of Highways to build safety into state roads.”<sup>xix</sup> The new overhead was 165 feet long and built at a cost of \$19,803, which was shared equally by the railroad company and the state. Along with the new overhead construction the side track was relocated. The total cost of the overhead crossing with the approaches totaled nearly \$40,000.<sup>xx</sup>

With this new overhead and alignment, the Highway 101 now bypassed State Street and ran directly along Lincoln Street, or Carlsbad Boulevard. New businesses such as The Red Apple Inn, the Sea Auto Inn and the Carlsbad Mineral Springs Hotel were soon constructed along the new route to take full advantage of the increasing traffic through the city.

The Red Apple Inn was designed by Robert Baird. It touted 20 guest rooms, a restaurant and true to its name, was decorated with an apple motif. In 1936 the Red Apple Inn was purchased by A.C. Anderson and later became a part of the Army Navy Academy.

With the popularity of leisure travel increasing, the demand for auto courts and campgrounds grew. Carlsbad had its fair share that catered to the traveling public.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Biehl opened the Apex campground west of the coast route at the south entrance of Carlsbad. They offered “cabins with clean beds, running water and kitchenettes”.<sup>xxi</sup> It also provided a much needed gas pump for motorists continuing south or north.

Located at the north entrance of Carlsbad was the Shade A Sea Auto Inn owned by Fred Schwartz, who also operated a gas station across the street. The auto inn property also would later become a part of the Army Navy Academy.<sup>xxii</sup>

Roy’s Service Station was a service station as well as a tourist camp owned by Leroy Sloan. The entrance to Roy’s was “imposing” with “two arched entrances leading from the highway into the court” and planted with flowers and shrubs and was a “showplace on the Pacific highway”.<sup>xxiii</sup>

The Twin Inns became more popular than ever and increased the size of the dining room. “Watch for the chickens” was the admonition for children as they passed by the Twin Inns which was a popular landmark. Signs posted along the coast route advertised fried chicken, “nothing but.”<sup>xxiv</sup>

For years “Carlsbad’s one and only street light, which was a 150-watt bulb enhanced by a sixteen-inch white reflector” was located downtown near the Twin Inns.<sup>xxv</sup>

Carlsbad street names changed in 1946. First Street became State, because of its one time status as the State Highway.

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<sup>i</sup> From the *"History of San Diego County"*, published by The San Diego Press Club, San Diego, 1936, Carl H. Heilbron, Editor in Chief

<sup>ii</sup> *The Plain Truth*, 1907

<sup>iii</sup> *Windows on the Past*, Susan Schnebelen Gutierrez, 2002

<sup>iv</sup> *Oceanside Blade*, January 13, 1923, “The Home of the Avocado”

<sup>v</sup> *Windows on the Past*, Susan Schnebelen Gutierrez, 2002

<sup>vi</sup> *Carlsbad Journal*, undated article

<sup>vii</sup> *Oceanside Blade*, Saturday, June 27, 1903

<sup>viii</sup> *Oceanside Blade*, March 16, 1907 “Bridges For Coast Road”

<sup>ix</sup> *The Plain Truth*, March 1909

<sup>x</sup> *Oceanside Blade*, June 13, 1914

<sup>xi</sup> *Oceanside Blade*, March 21, 1914, “Twenty-three Miles of Forty Completed”

<sup>xii</sup> *History of Carlsbad*, by the Friends of the Public Library, Carlsbad, California

<sup>xiii</sup> *Oceanside Blade*, January 22, 1916, “Southern California Suffers In Grip of Destructive Floods”

<sup>xiv</sup> *Carlsbad Journal*, undated article

<sup>xv</sup> *Oceanside Blade*, March 5, 1925 “Splendid New Hotel Los-Diego Formally Opened At Carlsbad”

<sup>xvi</sup> *Oceanside Blade*, February 12, 1925 “Ask Permit For Overhead Crossing At Carlsbad”

<sup>xvii</sup> *Oceanside Blade*, September 13, 1923, “Fatal Accident at Carlsbad”

<sup>xviii</sup> *California Highways*, July 1927

<sup>xix</sup> *California Highways*, August 1927, “The Carlsbad Overhead”

<sup>xx</sup> *California Highways*, August 1927, “The Carlsbad Overhead”

<sup>xxi</sup> *Seekers of the Spring*, Marje Howard-Jones, 1982

<sup>xxii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xxiii</sup> *Carlsbad Journal*, undated article

<sup>xxiv</sup> *History of Carlsbad*, by the Friends of the Public Library, Carlsbad, California

<sup>xxv</sup> *Seekers of the Spring*, Marje Howard-Jones, 1982