
South Bay Historical Society Bulletin

March 2014

Issue No. 1

Welcome to the first issue of the Bulletin of the South Bay Historical Society. We first came together in August 2013 in the home of Susan Walter to form the Society. Our mission is:

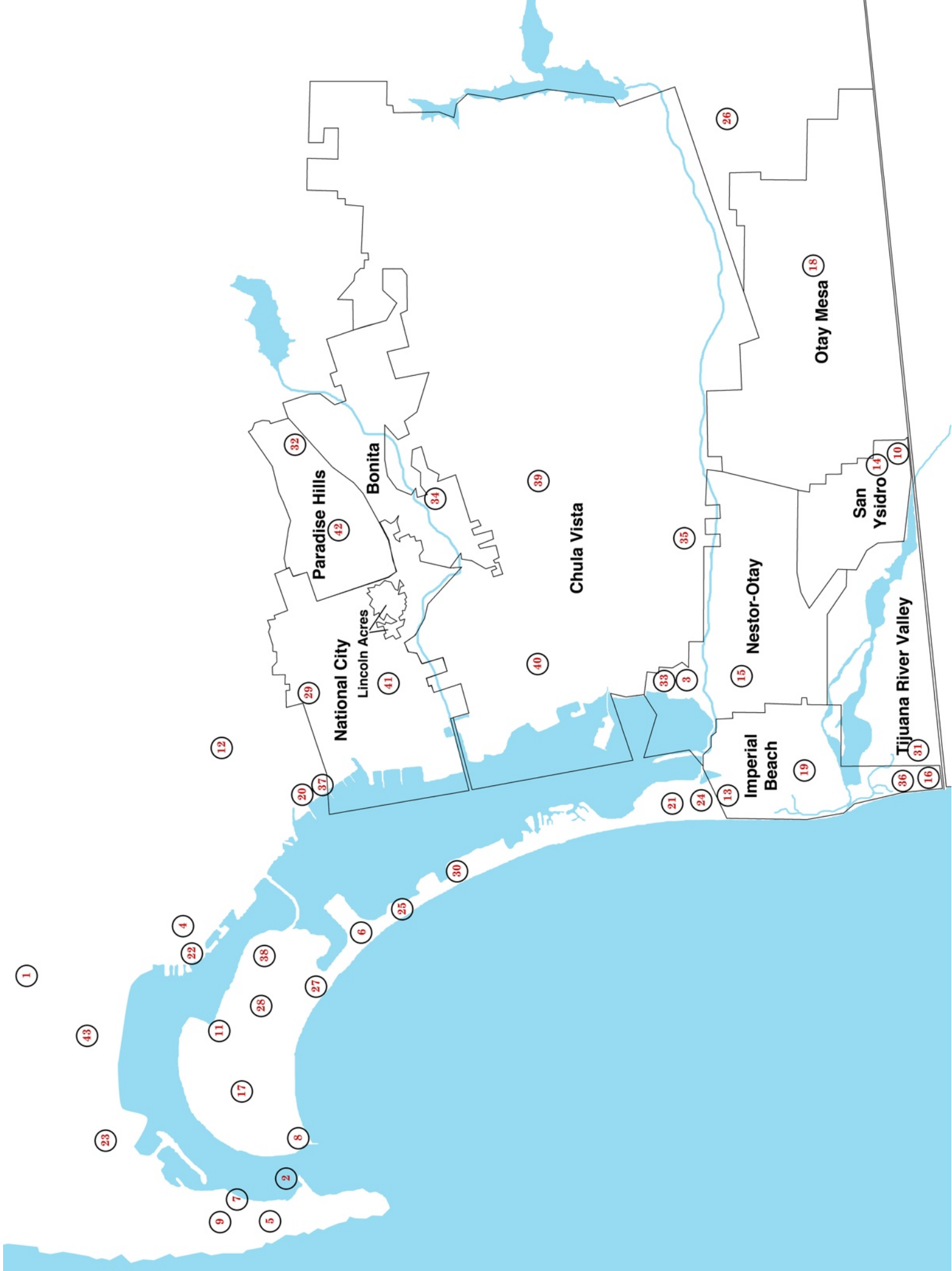
- To form a nonprofit educational organization with bylaws and a board of directors that serve the needs of its membership.
- To preserve and promote the history of the region of San Diego from National City to the border.
- To hold regular meetings that will allow all members to participate in historical discussions and join in activities that promote the mission of the Society.
- To publish a regular Bulletin and maintain a database of resources useful to the understanding the history of the region.
- To act as a clearinghouse for the many organizations in the region that are involved in education and historic preservation, and to promote the sharing of information about historic sites, family artifacts and photographs, exhibits and oral histories.

Military Bases in the South Bay

San Diego has always been a military town, from the establishment of the Presidio in 1769 by the Spanish to the present day. The map inside this issue notes the location of military bases in the South Bay, both large and small. One of the largest bases was Brown Field on Otay Mesa whose control tower pictured below was built in World War II and has been designated an Historic Landmark by the city



of San Diego. Ream Field in Imperial Beach was another large base where many local residents served and worked. Capt. Jack Evans, pictured above, lived on Emerson Street in Chula Vista and belonged to the local Masonic Lodge. In the 1960s he was commander of helicopter squadron HS-8, one of the many squadrons that gave Ream Field its reputation as the “Helicopter Capital of the World.”



1. Presidio 1769.
2. Fort Guajarras on Ballast Point 1797.
3. Camp Riley by Maj. William H. Emory 1849.
4. San Diego Barracks 1850.
5. Fort Rosecrans 1852.
6. Coast Artillery site on the Strand 1896.
7. Navy Coaling Station at La Playa 1901, on site of old Quarantine Station built 1888.
8. Army fort on North Island at Zuniga Shoal 1901.
9. Point Loma Naval Radio Station 1906; became Naval Electronics Lab 1945.
10. Tia Juana Border Camp by Army 1911.
11. Glenn Curtiss aviation school Spanish Bight 1911.
12. Chollas Heights Naval Radio Station 1916.
13. Camp Hearn by Army in Imperial Beach 1916.
14. San Ysidro Border Camp by Army 1916.
15. Palm City Border Camp by Army 1916.
16. Border Field Camp by Army 1916.
17. Army's Rockwell Field and Navy's North Isl. 1917.
18. Brown Field originally Army's East Field 1918; In 1943 the Navy took over the field of 805 acres and it was commissioned March 17 as NAAS Otay Mesa; on Aug. 25 the name was changed to Brown Field; closed and given to the city of San Diego in 1962.
19. Ream Field originally Army's Oneonta Gunnery School 1918; the Navy took over in the 1920s and it was designated as Outlying Field Imperial Beach; in July 1943 was expanded into a Naval Auxiliary Air Station; in 1950 became helicopter base and was known as the "Helicopter Capital of the World"; in 1968 became a full Naval Air Station; in 1974 was again an auxiliary landing field; in 1976 it was named Outlying Field (OLF, Imperial Beach).
20. Concrete shipyard 1918 on 35 acres dredged from the harbor; in 1922 it became the Destroyer Repair Base, then Fleet Repair Base, then the U. S. Naval Station; in 1954 it became the Naval Repair Facility with a mothball fleet of 200 destroyers; since 1965 has been known as 32nd Street Naval Station and the mothball fleet has been removed for piers serving modern Navy ships.
21. Navy Radio Compass Station 1920; in 1932 became a Navy Direction Finder Station; in 1940 became a Direction Finder Station with a unit of 112 WAVES assigned to SIGINT operations. In 1947, it became Naval Radio Receiving Station Imperial Beach, and in 1965 it received a Wullenweber Circular Antenna Array.
22. Naval Supply Depot, HQ 11th Naval District 1922.
23. Naval Training Center commissioned 1923.
24. Fort Emory established by the Army in 1941 by taking over the 412 acres of Coronado Heights. In 1950 the Navy took over all 412 acres of old Fort Emory and it became Naval Radio Station, Imperial Beach.
25. Naval Amphibious Base expanded 1941 on both the bay and ocean sides of the Strand south of Coronado. The South San Diego Bay Seadrome was a seaplane landing and takeoff area on the San Diego Bay adjacent to the Amphibious Base. The Seadrome had two runways in the bay marked by amber buoys, one parallel to the Strand, another east across the bay.
26. Target Area 32 in 1941 was a 45-acre site south of the Otay Reservoir between Brown Field and the Lower Otay Reservoir, used by the Navy for bombing training.
27. Most of the Hotel del Coronado was taken over by the Navy for enlisted and officers housing in 1942.
28. National Guard Armory in Coronado 1942.
29. National Guard Armory in National City 1942.
30. Battery Cortez coastal defense gun station 1942.
31. Auxiliary Landing Field, Border Field 1942.
32. Navy Landing Strip Sweetwater 1942, on the north side of Paradise Valley Road and west of Briarwood.
33. Army lookout station in old La Punta adobe 1942.
34. Army lookout camp in Bonita 1942.
35. Camp Weber in Otay at Main and Albany in 1942, for the Army's the 140th Infantry Regiment.
36. Fire Control Station and observation posts and machine gun range, east of Border Field auxiliary landing field 1942.
37. The U. S. Destroyer Base became the U. S. Naval Repair Base 1943.
38. Navy housing project built in Coronado at 2nd St. and Prospect Place 1943 (Sharp Hospital site today).
39. Hilltop Village defense housing project in Chula Vista 1943 (Hilltop Middle School today).
40. Vista Square defense housing project in Chula Vista 1943 (Chula Vista Shopping Center today).
41. Olivewood defense housing project in National City (National City Park Apartments today) 1943.
42. Bayview Hills Navy housing in Paradise Hills 1954.
43. Marine Corps Recruit Depot training began 1923.

THE JAPANESE COMMUNITY IN THE SOUTH BAY 1880-1948

by Harry Orgovan

The 1880s brought the first wave of New World era Japanese to arrive in San Diego County and the South Bay Region. Most were under the age of 25 and unmarried. They found work either as railroad workers or seasonal farm workers. The majority came from the southern part of Japan experiencing hard economic times. The 1900 census reported 300 Japanese in San Diego County.

They found work in the citrus groves of Chula Vista, Lemon Grove and La Mesa. Also some found employment in the salt works established in 1871 at the south part of San Diego Bay. Others were helping to build the Coronado Hotel in 1885. Once the hotel was finished some found employment as porters, cooks, gardeners and maintenance men.

By 1907 Japanese labor camps sprang up for picking and tending the lemon groves. Camps were located in Bonita Valley, and two locations in Chula Vista, at the southeast corner of Third and K and also at Broadway and J Street. The last location would later become an English language night school established 1911. These camps flourished until the 1920s.

1907 thru 1925 the Boss System of organized labor camps, utilized a middleman interpreter proficient in both languages. The bosses provided housing, food, basic needs as well as a job. The charge would be 10 to 15 percent of the workers' wages. The pay was around 5 cents an hour for a 9- to 10-hour day. Money was saved to buy farm land. Some returned home once some wealth was accumulated, to establish a business in Japan.

Suekichi Iwashita first farmed Chula Vista in 1905 and by 1910 there were 29 Japanese farmers who either leased or owned over a thousand acres in San Diego County. 1912 saw a significant contribution by Mitsusaburo Yamamoto and Fukutaro Muraoka who introduced winter celery to Chula Vista. By 1915 the number had increased to 50 farmers with the majority in the South Bay.

Records show only 21 Japanese women in San Diego County in 1905. This lack of women was helped by arranged marriages. The couple would be shown pictures of each other. Upon agreement by the families, a proxy marriage would take place. The woman would arrive after a three-week voyage to Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, already married to the husband she would greet for the first time. Her kimono would be traded for Western fashion and a photo would be taken to commemorate the occasion.

During the early 1900s hostilities grew toward the Japanese community. In 1907 an agreement between the Japanese government and the California Legislature limited the number of workers coming to America. 1913 saw passage of the Alien Land Bill in the California Legislature. This bill limited the Japanese to lease or own land. A 1920 California ballot forbade the Japanese from leasing or sharecropping. In 1924 the United States Congress, urged by California's representatives, stopped all Japanese immigration. This act cast a shadow over relations between the two countries that had been allies in World War I. Chula Vista in the 1930s was known to the Japanese in California as "the Heart of the Anti-Japanese Movement." In 1931 George Morrison, owner of a garage in Chula Vista, was charged by the San Diego County District Attorney's office with circumventing Article Nine of the state's Alien Land Law. Named as co-conspirators were farmers E.H. Doi, H.K. Ozaki, S. Shimazu, and O. Uyemoto. Around 200 acres had been rented for the Japanese farmers in name of Morrison. The defendants were accused to be in a criminal conspiracy. The case went as high as the California Supreme Court, where they were found guilty and received suspended sentences. In 1933 this

decision was appealed to the United States Supreme Court, where the criminal conspiracy clause of the Alien Land Law was struck down.

In 1923 a Japanese school was started on the southwest corner of Broadway and Palomar where today stands a memorial. In 1932 Japanese farmers and the leader of the anti-Japanese movement joined forces to bring about the San Diego County Celery Growers Union. This was achieved by an encounter between Tsuneji Chino, Fred Stafford and Isamu Kawashima, a reporter for the San Francisco Nichibei, a Japanese newspaper. This encounter took place on Stafford's open field with the question put to him, "Why do you despise Japanese people?" Stafford's reply was recalled by Chino to follow these lines. "1) Japanese farmers will not cooperate with American growers. 2) The Japanese, unlike Americans, work on Sunday and even their women and children work on the farm, and so we cannot compete. 3) Even as we speak, Japanese are immigrating here from other areas and starting to grow celery. This will result in over-production which decreases prices. 4) It appears that the Japanese possess a special talent for agriculture, but they are unwilling to teach us. 5) For these reasons, if we allow the above conditions to continue and things take their normal course, the price of celery will drop so low that we shall be forced to dispose of our land and property and our families will suffer. 6) For our own defense, there is no other choice but to expel the Japanese. 7) This is why we have united to go to the prosecutor's officer and demand the removal of the Japanese, and this is why many Japanese have been arrested, tried, and found guilty." Chino proposed an era of cooperation, sharing of knowledge and a joining of forces in one Union. The two men set out to convince each side to join forces, which culminated in the San Diego County Celery Growers Union.



Ben Segawa and Jeanne Elyea are pictured above in a reconstruction of the Poston relocation camp barracks for the 2012 exhibit "This Land Is Your Land, This Land Is My Land" at the Heritage Museum in Chula Vista. Over 500 Japanese Americans living in the South Bay were forced to spend the war in the camps, part of the 120,000 Japanese relocated nationwide.

LEARN MORE



A new exhibit will open April 6 at the San Diego History Center museum in Balboa Park, "Presidio to Pacific Powerhouse, How the Military Shaped San Diego." This exhibit is a collaborative effort of nine museums that tell the story of San Diego's military history: the USS Midway Museum and the Maritime Museum on the harbor front, the Air & Space Museum and Veteran's Museum & Memorial Center in Balboa Park, the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum on Miramar Road, the Marine Corps Mechanized Museum at Camp Pendleton, the MCRD Command Museum at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, NTC at Liberty Station, and the Coronado Historical Association Museum. Next month a new exhibit will open at the Coronado Museum, "The History of the U.S. Navy SEALs in Coronado."

Read more about our military history on the web page at <http://sunnycv.com/southbay>.

The Histories section includes a chronology of the military bases and military housing established in the South Bay. Included in this chronology are base histories quoted from the type-written manuscript of James Hinds only available at the San Diego History Research Library. At the end of the Chronology is a list of books for further reading

The history exhibit at Cabrillo National Monument is located in the concrete bunker of the old Navy radio station. On the 4th Saturday each month, volunteers in period dress interpret the history of the site. From this first station in 1917 came the expanded network of communication bases in San Diego, including the Chollas Heights antennas (no longer standing) and the Naval Electronics Laboratory. Fort Emory on the Strand was a Navy Compass Radio base in 1920 that grew into a major communications center for the 7th Fleet with a giant Wullenweber circular antenna nicknamed the "elephant cage."



NEWS from Susan Walter

We have planned the following dates for the rest of 2014. This year, all meetings will be held in the Auditorium of the Chula Vista Main Library, Monday evenings at 6:00.

May 19. Speaker: Lowell Blankfort. Topic: His experiences as editor of the Star-News.

July 27. Field trip. National City Train Depot (pending confirmation).

September 29. Speaker: TBA

November 17. Speaker: TBA

We hope you will arrive a little earlier to visit! The Auditorium will be open by 5:30. We will have a table set up at the entrance for check in. We will also have a suggestion box for you to submit comments and questions.

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Board of Directors Susan Walter, Peter Watry, Steve Schoenherr, Patti Huffman, Mitch Beauchamp

For more information, see our web page at

<http://sunnycv.com/southbay/>