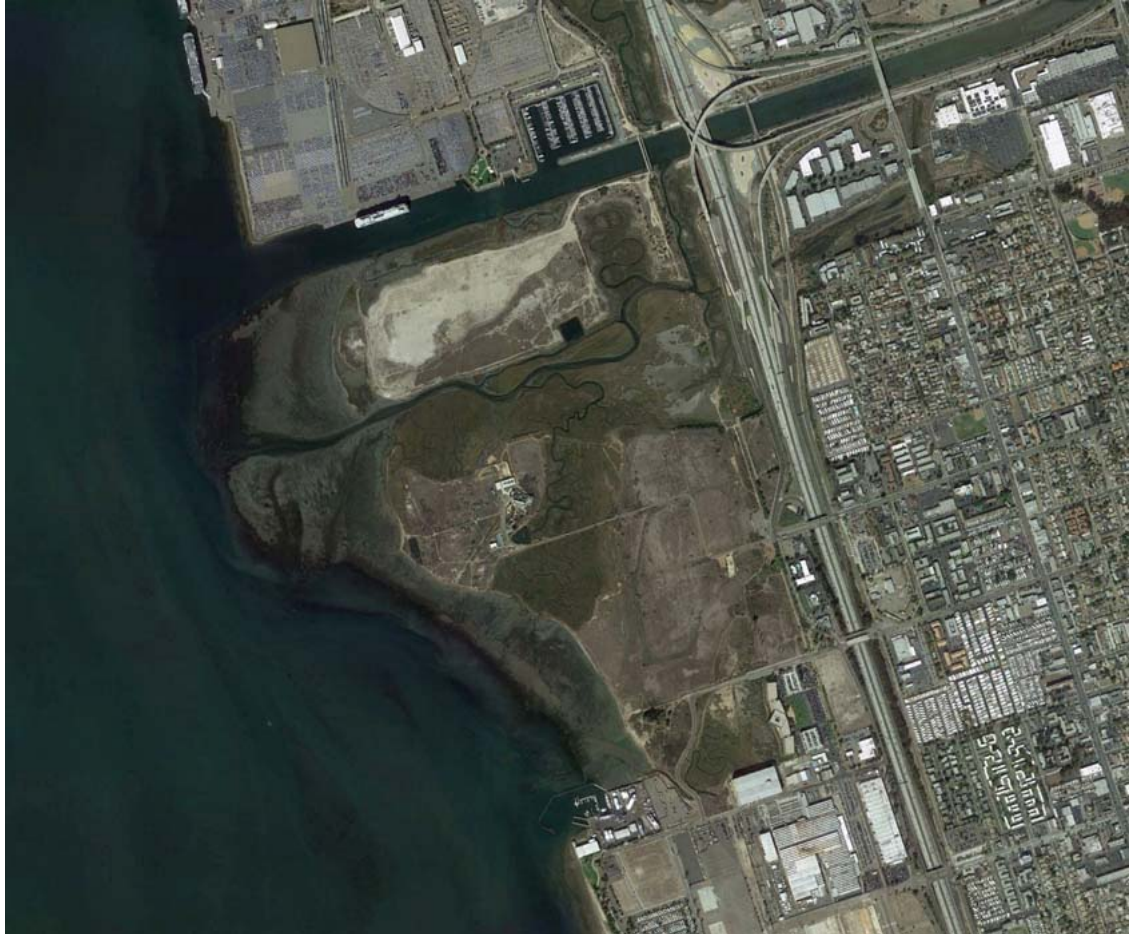


Gunpowder Point History

by Steve Schoenherr



Gunpowder Point is bordered by the Sweetwater Flood Channel on the north, Interstate 5 on the east, G Street on the south, and the bay on the west.

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From Gunpowder Point to killer tomatoes, the city's bayfront has a colorful history. The Hercules Powder Company owned a factory that harvested potash acetone from kelp, according to Chula Vista history books. Those materials were used to make gunpowder and cordite, a smokeless powder used by British forces. A large kelp-processing plant was built at Gunpowder Point and three kelp-harvesting machines operated day and night. About 1,500 people worked shifts around the clock, taking a trolley line, called the "Potash Special," to the factory from Potash Junction, at E Street. But the workers and the city paid a the steady jobs. Sea breezes carried the stench of rotting kelp daily, and every time a worker went home he had to take off all his clothes, take a shower and into fresh clothes before entering the house. The war's end eliminated demand for gunpowder and cordite, and the kelp-processing plant was shuttered in 1920. The abandoned buildings were taken over by the San Diego Oil Products Corp., which turned the site into the largest cottonseed warehouse in the country. The c also produced cottonseed meal and cottonseed oil at the warehouse. But in 1929 oily hulls that were being used to feed cattle on the land caught fire. The fir

for days, causing an estimated \$330,000 in damage. From 1930 until the middle 1970s, the land on Gunpowder Point was used for farming. There were four farmhouses, a bunkhouse and a cafeteria with a tortilla-making machine. The tomato fields became a convenient stage for a young filmmaker named Steve I 1974, Peace and friends filmed a movie on the fields and at the neighboring Rohr Corp. plant, now owned by B.F. Goodrich. They had permission to film at not on the fields, so they resorted to guerrilla filmmaking. "It was just run and gun," recalled Peace. The film, a spoof called "Attack of the Killer Tomatoes," a cult classic and spawned sequels and a cartoon show. And today Peace is a state senator who represents Chula Vista, among other cities. The farming even ended, and the bayfront site became an illegal dumping ground. Hundreds of tons of trash was later removed, and in the early 1980s the city created the Chu Nature Center. Opened in 1987, the Nature Center has since become an accredited museum and every year hosts about 50,000 visitors who view exhibits on ecology and see endangered birds, stingrays and other wildlife. In 1989, the area around the Nature Center, known as the Sweetwater Marsh, was declared a wildlife refuge. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Dec 15, 1999.)

PREHISTORIC

In the Cretaceous era 100 million years ago, "there was a vast deep sea covering the area in which California exists today. The continental shoreline lay far t near the present Utah-Colorado border. The deep marine waters over the San Diego area hosted a large variety of interesting organisms. Giant marine reptile as mosasaurs, preyed on fish and on large mollusks. Microscopic plankton drifted near the surface, while strange-looking mollusks, brachiopods, and micro-inhabited the ocean floor. Beginning in late Eocene era 40 million years ago, oceanic waters retreated from much of southern California, reflecting a worldw lowering of the sea level." (Clifford, *Geology of San Diego County*, 1997, p. 52-68)



In the late Miocene epoch 10 million years ago, the sea again rose and covered the coastal plain sedimentary layer known as the San Diego Formation up to 300 feet thick. From 2 to 5 million : during the Pliocene era, a large shallow crescent-shaped coastal bay stretched from Mt. Soledad Rosarito. Gunpowder Point was covered with this shallow coastal sea. The fossil of an extinct w from this Pliocene era was found in Chula Vista and given the unique name "Valenictus Chulavi and is on display in the San Diego Museum of Natural History.

The waters receded in the Pleistocene epoch, and falling temperatures produced a series of Ice / 700,000 to 10,000 years ago. Water and ice created rivers that cut canyons in the emerging dry l creating the landscape of the San Diego coastal plain that exists today. The fossils of a mammoth ground sloth have been found in the Sweetwater Valley from this cold era. Evidence of the first live in Chula Vista began to appear at the end of the Ice Age 10,000 years ago. Nomadic hunter: the San Dieguito people pursued large game such as the mammoth with crude spears. Very little of these early hunters and no skeletal remains have been found. What does remain at sites scatte around San Diego County are lithic scraping tools that were used to remove meat from the bone animals and to crush berries and acorns against stone bowls.

About 6,600 years ago the sea level stabilized at present day levels and San Diego Bay took on shape. By 4,000 years ago the ocean currents pushed sand northeast to form the Strand along the western side of San Diego Bay. The La Jollan people lived 7,500 to 3,000 year ago. The Kumeyaay migrated to this area sometime between 3,000-2,000 years ago. Evidence of their occupation of Gunpowder point, i arrowheads and metates for grinding acorns, have been found throughout the lower Sweetwater Valley

YACHT CLUB 1889-1916

In early 1889, a small group of farmers formed a sailing group with members using a makeshift landing for launching their boats at the undeveloped foot of in Chula Vista. In 1897, the San Diego Land and Town Company offered new settlers to Chula Vista, a waterfront park to use for social gatherings. They also to help the Yacht Club to build a wharf at the end of D Street, using iron and heavy flooring from an old railroad wharf in National City. A second wharf wa: about 1901 at the end of F Street, replacing the original D Street pier. Club members constructed a clubhouse built of redwood on the end of the pier and pai donations. (Willett, John, "Chula Vista Yacht Club's History 1889-1924 & 1987-2004," in Otay RVP folder, County Historian Office.)

1903 - Some members of the Yacht Club were also founders of the Chula Vista Gun Club that meet weekly on the bay front to shoot clay pigeons. (San Diego Union, Jan. 6, 1903)

1911 - The great social center of Chula Vista in 1911 was the Chula Vista Yacht Club. On sunny Saturdays, the club's 12 matched sailboats would put out into the bay for races. And on Sunday afternoons, whole families would sail over to Coronado for the band concert. They also spent the summers sailing to Tent City on the Coronado Strand, just south of the Hotel del Coronado (Chula Vista Star-News, July 22, 1932 and Oct. 15, 1961.)

1916 - F Street was extended to the waterfront. T. B. Frost built a plank roadway from end of F Street to end of the Chula Vista Yacht Club wharf. But due to the great flood of 1916 that filled the bay with mud and debris, the Yacht Club dwindled and no longer met to sail. (City Council Minutes, Feb. 2, 1916)

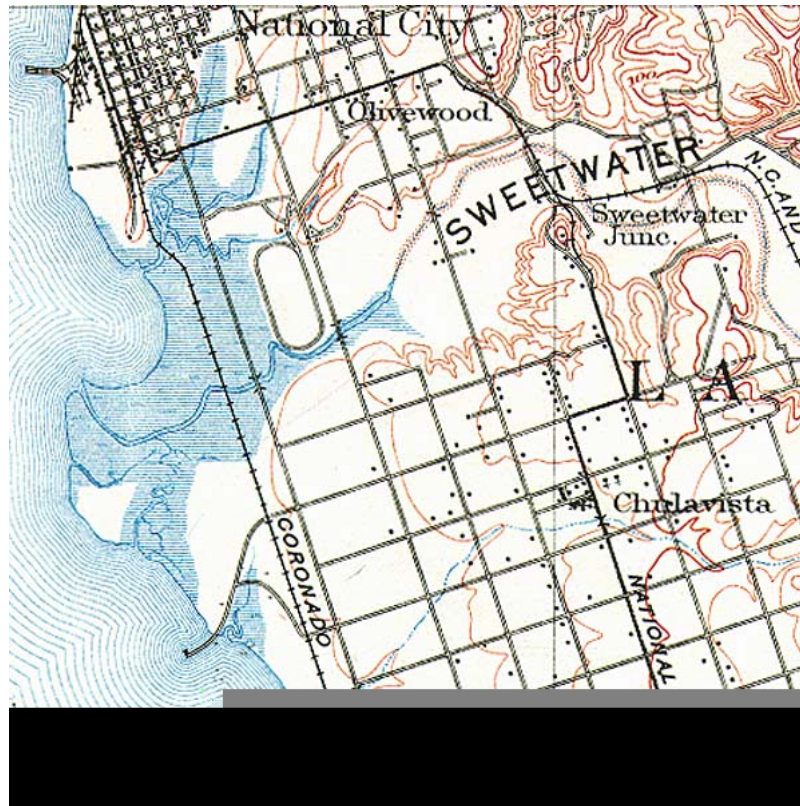
1948/04/02 - Yacht Club may be formed due to growing interest and petition signed by 2500 people at recent San Diego boat show, and the mouth of Sweetwater river has been surveyed and considered by federal government for suitable as small craft harbor. The Yacht Club was formed by 25 boat owners from National City and Chula Vista at meeting Wednesday night, with Frank Willits as temporary chairman. However, the Yacht Club was disbanded and the South Bay Boating Club operated the small boat ramp and the end of G Street in 1963. Ronald Komendera was Commodore of the Club. The club held an annual Polar Bear Day on the Silver St members required to lie on a 900-pound blocks of ice for a minute, and then ski on the bay. (Chula Vista Star, Apr. 2 and 9, 1948, Mar. 17, 1963; San Diego Dec. 31, 1967.)



Muriel Rogers with little cousin N front of Yacht Club pier ca.

SWEETWATER RACE TRACK 1893-1913

Horse riding and racing of all kinds was popular in the South Bay. There were several race tracks along the border in Tijuana and Siempre Viva. Ralph Gran the Sweetwater Race Track along the southern edge of National City in 1893.



The USGS topographical map of 1904 shows the oval Sweetwater race track west of National Avenue and east of Bay Boulevard. The Coronado Railroad opened in 1888 along the west side of Bay Boulevard. Two roads cross the tracks from E Street and G Street and converge on the Yacht Club pier.

1893/11/27 - The New Race Track. Impromptu Running Race that Came Off Yesterday. The Sweetwater race track is now being rolled and scraped preparat final completion and acceptance from the contractor. The judges' stand was completed Friday and the work is now progressing rapidly on the grand stand, w be of 120 feet frontage and accommodate 1,000 spectators comfortably seated. A top dressing of four inches of sand has been pat on the bicycle track and or this will be put four inches of adobe soil. This will be put on soon and the grading completed by next week. The Sweetwater track is attracting much attentic horsemen and the bicycle track is not less popular with wheelmen. Yesterday a good-sized crowd of San Diego and National City people visited the grounds were favorably impressed with the work done on both tracks. An impromptu running race between K. V. Bedpath's black horse and Ned Bryan's pinto was a best two in three, for a \$20 perse. The black won the first heat, but the wiry pinto carried away the other two. The track is in fine condition and is used daily training entries for the Christmas races. (San Diego Union, Nov. 27, 1893)

1893/12/07 - (photo)"Christmas Races A Spur to the Race Track." Work was begun yesterday on a spur from the National City and Otay railroad to the Swe race track, a distance of about half a mile. The spur will be completed as soon as possible in order to be ready to handle the business at the Christmas races. ' stand at the track is almost finished and commands a fine view of both the horse and bicycle tracks. The former track is already very fast and no pains are sp improve it in every way. The bicycle track, though not yet tested, was constructed to be equal to any in the West. (San Diego Union, Dec. 7, 1893)

1894/07/07 - C. C. Seaman has leased the Sweetwater race track. (San Diego Union, July 7, 1894)

1896/04/02 - Seaman lawsuit vs. Ralph Granger been dismissed. (San Diego Union, Apr. 2, 1896)

1900/07/20 - Sweetwater race track is to be rebuilt, was washed out by flood 5 years ago. (San Diego Union, July 20, 1900)

1902/01/01 - The Sweetwater race track has recently been leased by J. C. Wallace, a horseman of Denver, Col. Wallace brought several fine horses with him training them, together with several others on the track. There are at present nineteen horses stabied at the race track and more are expected to arrive very sh several turfmen have contracted to have their stock trained there. George W. Deford is breeding and raising some very fine stock here, and everything looks promising for the industry to prosper in this section. The Sweetwater track, which is constructed on tide land and is thus sub-irrigated. is said to be one of th tracks in existence for training and developing horses, as the springiness of the soil prevents them from becoming track sore. (San Diego Union, Jan. 1, 190)

1909/11/03 - The location proposed for a San Diego County Fair is the old Sweetwater race track site south of National City. This is a tract of land of 160 ac by the San Diego Land & Town company. It is proposed to purchase 80 acres of the tract for the use of the association as a fair grounds. At present there is a course on the land, and the plan is to rebuild this, making it a regulation mile track, constructed in conformity with such plans as will insure It being a very s one. While those interested have no binding option on the site, it is understood that should the association desire to purchase It will be given the first chance. year ago a price, which was about \$150 an acre, was made to J. C. Wallace, and it is thought the land can now be purchased at the same figures. Wallace has delegated to look after this end of the project, as he is well acquainted with the realty needs of the association. Besides the racing feature, the association pla each year-an old-fashioned county fail, where local products of all kinds will be placed on. exhibition. A grand stand will be constructed, as well as exhibitic The land is particularly well situated for a fair grounds site, as the topography of the ground la diversified enough to meet all needs. The part to be occupied

track is a level stretch of sufficient dimensions to insure the establishment of a mile-oval race course. Several hills overlook the race course site, and on these are located the buildings which will be used for exhibits. The track is outside the corporate limits of National City and within a few blocks of the car line of the Southern Railway company. Arrangements for transportation will be made as soon as sufficient stock has been subscribed and the association is incorporated. The new institution for San Diego has been talked of for many years, but this is the first time that definite steps have been taken toward the organization of a county association. (San Diego Union, Nov. 3, 1909)



Fred Higgins rode his sulky with horse "Prince" at the Sweetwater race track in 1912.
Motorcycle races were also held on the dirt track through 1913.
(Photo courtesy of the Bonita Museum)

DUROSTONE COMPANY 1910-1916

1910/03/12 - Last week papers executed for a magnesite factory in Chula Vista between F and G streets, by Theron H. Tracy, pres of Durostone Co., on 91 a water frontage. Shipments of crude magnesite ore have started arriving in San Diego Bay from island of Santa Margarita. Tracy Brick and Art Stone Co. was from 1910 to 1916. (National City News, Mar. 12 and July 9, 1910.)

1910/04/17 - Work Begun On Big Durostone Plant. Factory comprising group of 10 buildings occupies site on Harbor Front. If you were to ask the average man to direct you to Marmorsa, he probably would tell you that no such place is on the map. He would be right so far as the old map goes, but when the plans of the Durostone Company of America are completed, Marmorsa will be one of San Diego's leading manufacturing suburbs. With a large force of workmen employed laying the foundations for the plant, between National City and Chula Vista, the nucleus of what promises to be a mammoth enterprise is forming. Work on it is to be rushed so that numerous orders now on the company's books may be filled and delivered to the trade. The tract upon which the factory is being built, which is owned by the Durostone company, comprises about 56 acres, with a frontage of nearly three-quarters of a mile on the bay. The foundations for a few buildings are now being laid. The largest building will be the cabling house, three stories in height and 50 by 112 feet in dimensions. The other buildings and their dimensions are as follows: Warehouse, one story, 40 by 112 feet; office building, 56 by 112 feet; laboratory, 16 by 48 feet; mill building, 24 by 84 feet; chen building, 24 by 28 feet; kalsomining building, 38 by 84 feet; crushing building, 18 by 98 feet; chemical storage building, 20 by 38 feet. The restaurant building is constructed in the shape of an "I" and will be nearly 100 feet in length. The restaurant is to be for the accommodation of the company's workmen. The building under construction will be of wood and corrugated iron, but the company intends to replace these with substantial buildings of its own product after the plant is in operation. A spur line has been extended from the main line of the San Diego & Arizona railroad to the factory site, and much of the material used by the company will be transported by rail. The magnesite will be unloaded from the vessels arriving from Magdalena at a wharf which the company intends to build on its own land. The finished product of the plant will be shipped by rail. The company's plant will be lighted and operated by electric power, transmitted over a cable line with the San Diego Consolidated Gas & Electric company, which is now installing at a cost of about \$25,000. Magnesite, which the company has the concession to mine on the island of Santa Margarita, in Magdalena bay, is the raw material forming the basis of the company's product. In durability, strength and finish it has been pronounced by architects and builders to be superior to other materials of which the cost is many times greater. The uses of magnesite are practically unlimited, ranging from the manufacture of solid blocks of artificial marble to liquid paints, plasters and cements. The supreme virtues claimed for magnesite are that it is fire, water and acid proof and is practically everlasting. Architects and building contractors have pronounced samples of the finished product of the Durostone company to be ideal material for all kinds of construction. The process of manufacture consists in the combining and mixing of certain chemicals with the crude magnesite. The first step is to grind it to a fine powder, mixed with chemicals, then molded. Mixed with sawdust, the finished product forms a slab of such toughness that nails can be driven into it without splitting or chipping it. While magnesite can be applied to numerous uses, the Durostone company will, at the outset of its operations, confine its manufacture to standard lines of building materials; marble slabs for the outer facings of buildings, taking the place of the terra cotta now in use; marble wainscoting and interior finish of all kinds and in every color and design; high grade building bricks; fireproof roofing and fireproof floorings. The first contract which the company secured was for a \$150,000 hospital building in Los Angeles. Other contracts practically assured will keep the plant running at full capacity some time. (The San Diego Union, Apr. 17, 1910)

DUROSTONE PLANT NEARS COMPLETION

Mammoth Industry Promises Much to This Community

Photograph of Buildings Erected by Durostone Company of America at Marmarosa, on the Bay Front Eight Miles South of the Business Center of San Diego at an Initial Cost of \$45,000.



The Durostone plant was featured in the San Diego Union newspaper July 31, 1910. The Marmarosa railroad station on the San Diego & Arizona railroad line was located a

1910/07/31 - Durostone Plant Nears Completion. Rapid progress is being made at Marmarosa, eight miles south of this city, by the Durostone Company of / the construction of its mammoth plant, which, from all indications, will be the largest and most important manufacturing establishment in the vicinity of San Diego. The large buildings are now practically completed. Several carloads of the machinery and equipment have arrived and are being installed and the remaining pieces of machinery it is now on the way from the east. Officials of the company expect to have the plant in operation by September next. Probably very few people realize the size of the plant that is being established here. The company owns 56 acres of fine, level land which has a frontage of about a half mile on the bay and stretches east so that it is about 600 or 800 feet from the right of way of the San Diego & Arizona Southern railway, which is about 600 or 800 feet from the right of way of the San Diego & Arizona Southern railway. The Chula Vista Yacht club's wharf is located on the property of the Durostone company. The plant proper will consist of six main buildings, covering about 100 acres, which, together with the equipment, will represent, when completed, an outlay of \$45,000. The company also intends to put in a wharf later, for the purpose of receiving the magnesite and other materials used in the manufacture of durostone and for shipping the finished product. The six main structures which have been erected include the calcining building, 54 by 112 feet; the moulding or casting building, three stories, 48 by 112 feet; warehouse, two stories, 48 by 112 feet; office building, 36 by 112 feet; laboratory, 18 by 56 feet, and transforming house, 20 feet square.

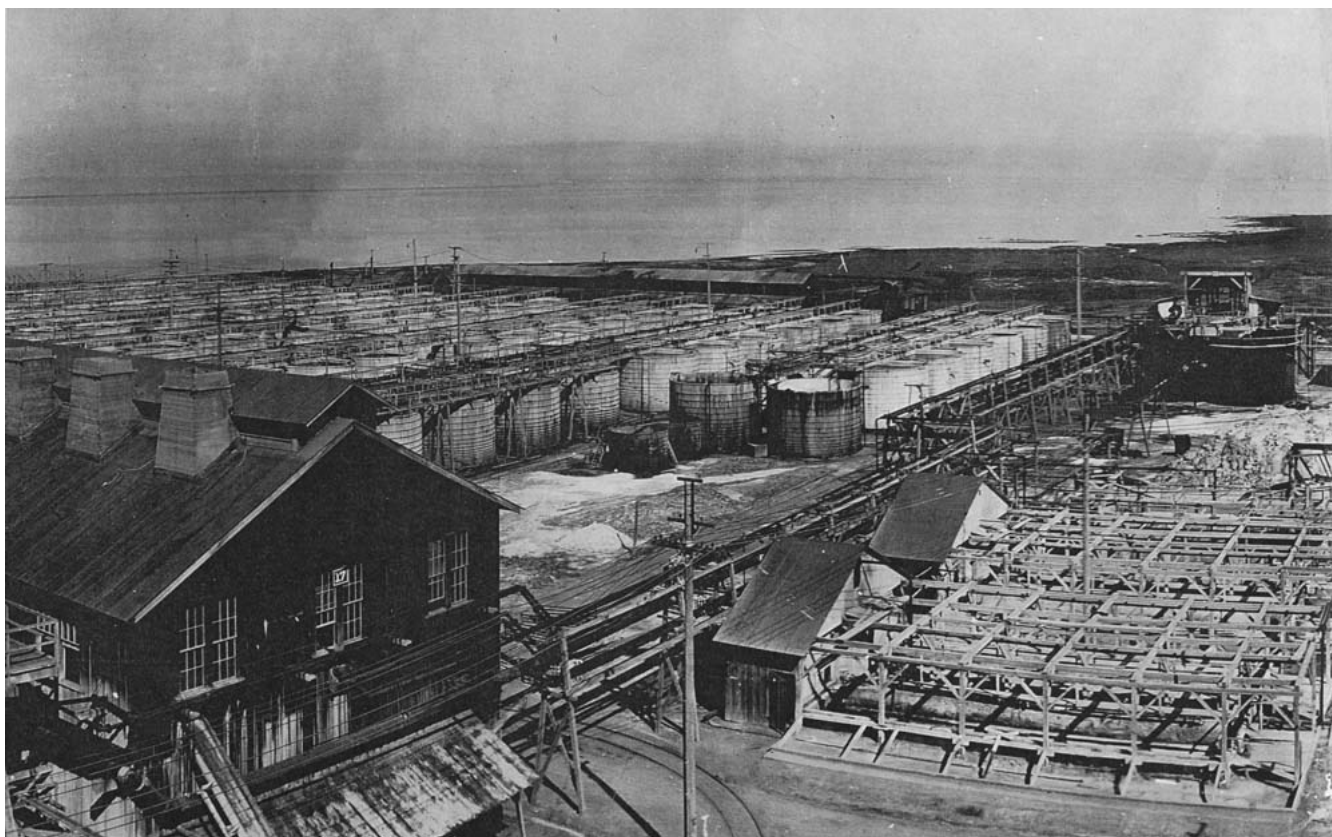
The machinery and equipment will be as modern and up to date as money can buy. All materials used in the manufacture of the durostone or artificial marble will be crushed and ground by machinery, conveyed from place to place by mechanical devices and mixed by machinery. The magnesite will be first loaded into bins on the railroad cars. From the bins it will be fed into a conveyor belt which will dump it into a crushing machine. It goes into the machine in chunks about the size of a man's head and comes out about the size of an ordinary lemon. Leaving the crusher it will be picked up by another conveyor belt and carried along to a roller. This machine reduces the size to about that of a small walnut. From there it will pass on to a bin room which it will be fed into the calciner. This machine under the action of crude oil tire throws off the carbonic acid gas from the magnesite, leaving magnesia of commerce or oxide of magnesium. The calciner is a massive boiler-plate contrivance, which is mounted at an angle on wheels. It is revolved under power as the magnesite passes through it. It is 40 feet long, 5 feet in diameter and weighs 10 tons. From the calciner, the material will automatically pass into a cooling room and thence into a ball mill which will reduce it to a powder as fine as flour or Portland cement. This substance is thence to be transferred by conveyor belts to bins in the third story of the moulding or casting room. Here there will be 30 bins having a total capacity of 120 tons. There also will be on this floor bins of a total capacity of 1000 tons for storing the different kinds of filler used in making various varieties of stone to be turned out by the company. The filler passes through the same process as the magnesite excepting that it does not enter the calciner. From the bins the magnesite and filler will be fed to mixing machines on the first and second floors. Hereafter, the material which has passed through the mixing machines will be run into moulds. Four hours later the moulds are removed, producing the finished article. The ceilings or the casting room will be lined with a network of trolleys so that all the manufactured products will be mechanically conveyed from place to place and removed to the warehouse, where they will be allowed to stand for three or four weeks before shipping. On the second floor of the warehouse will be a pattern room and carpenter shop. The machinery, breakers, rolls, mixing machines, elevator belts, travelling cranes and practically all machinery in the plant will be operated by electric power. The San Diego Consolidated Gas and Electric company has recently put in a special power line, seven miles in length, from San Diego to the plant, at a cost of about \$25,000. The Coronado Belt line has run switches to the company's land, beyond the main buildings; water has been piped to the property and telephone communication has been established, so that all the necessary preliminary work has been completed. In addition to the improvement being made here, the company has a gang of men constructing a wharf at Santa Marguerite Island, Magdalena bay, where its almost inexhaustible deposits of magnesite are to be mined. T. H. Tracy, president of the company, returned a few days ago on the steamship Manuel Herreras. He went down by the chartered boat John A., which carried a cargo of lumber, a pile of machinery, hoisting engine and supplies for the men who are building the wharf. The John A. is expected to arrive within the next two weeks with a 500-ton cargo of material. During his visit to the island, Mr. Tracy made a thorough examination of a selected number of the numerous magnesite deposits and returned fully satisfied that the supply of the purest magnesite found anywhere in the world is inexhaustible and the conditions for economical handling ideal. In a single deposit he says will yield loads of the mineral can be broken down by a few shots and that it will be unnecessary to mine anywhere else, for years to come. Preliminary surveys for a railway from the mines to deep water, a distance of three miles, were also made during Mr. Tracy's visit and at an early date, the company expects to actively take part of its enterprise, with a view to bringing the crude material into San Diego at the lowest possible cost. Meanwhile the wharf, providing a depth of 24 feet at low tide; will greatly facilitate and economize the shipping of the first cargoes. The manufacture of building materials from magnesite, although a long established and important industry in Europe, is comparatively unknown in America, because hitherto no deposits of big commercial value have ever been discovered either in the United States or South America. With the discovery, and exploitation on a large scale, of the vast magnesite deposits in Mexico the commercial position, it is believed, will be entirely changed and an unlimited supply of the magnesia of commerce, scientifically the finest cementing and heat resisting product in the world, will be made available in America for industrial uses at a price that will enable the material to be brought into universal use. To Face Buildings Among the many purposes for which it may be put are the manufacture of marble slabs for the outer facings of buildings, taking the place of the terra cotta now in general use; marble wainscoting

interior finish of all kinds and in every color and design: magnesite bricks for the lining of crucibles in steel making, fireproof roofing and flooring of the most beautiful description. One has only to visit the offices of the Durostone company in San Diego and inspect the samples there shown to understand the unlimited commercial field for these magnesite products. Chemical Process and Cost. Magnesite products are made by simple chemical hardset process, without firing pressure, as in the case of terra cotta, tiles and ordinary bricks, and without cutting and hand polishing, as in the case of marble slabs or scagliola work. They come forth from their molds shaped and polished for immediate use. Hence the products form what is said to be the highest grade building materials at a cost far below the cost of the building materials now in use. List of the Officers. The officers of the company besides President Tracy are Edmund Mitchell, first vice president, Downing, second vice president, and J. W. Lindsay, secretary, treasurer and attorney. Mr. Tracy is one of the best known machinery experts in America, having at one time been manager of the Allis-Chalmers company of New York, Chicago and Milwaukee. Mr. Mitchell, for the last eight years a resident in Southern California, made a life study of industries throughout the world, having been retained at all international expositions from the world's fair at Chicago in 1893 onwards as an expert writer for the technical press and magazines, also for British colonial governments. Mr. Downing is an experienced South Dakota lumber man, who for many years carried on his own successful business, and coming to reside in San Diego has been drawn back into active commercial life by the attractions of Durostone. Lindsay was for many years district attorney in South Dakota, and is well known among business men in San Diego by having filled the office of secretary of the chamber of commerce before associating himself with the Durostone company. Seats on the board of directors are also held by A. C. Riordon, the well known man and capitalist, and Ralph Granger, president of the Merchants National bank. (San Diego Union, July 31, 1910)

1911/01/02 - [Full page ad](#) for the Durostone Company in the San Diego Union newspaper.

HERCULES POWDER COMPANY 1916-1920

The largest and most successful World War I California kelp Company was owned by the Hercules Powder Company. Hercules Incorporated was created on January 1, 1913 following a U.S. Government antitrust suit against the Du Pont de Nemours Powder Company. At the conclusion of the lawsuit, the new company was awarded eight black powder mills, three dynamite plants, and several patents for the manufacture of smokeless sporting powder (explosives used in rifle and shells). The court order also required that Hercules compete vigorously with its parent company in the area of explosive manufacturing and marketing. During World War I Hercules produced 20,838,000 kilos of cordite for the British Government, demonstrating its ability to develop new production techniques in order to meet wartime needs. Hercules has since broadened its territory until today it is one of the largest diversified chemical producers in the world. (Chula Vista Historical Society Bulletin, March, 1989)



The Hercules Powder plant fermented kelp in a tank farm of 200 large wooden vats.

1916 - It was the military that resurrected the South Bay during World War I, which came fast on the heels of the catastrophic flood. Gunpowder Point in Chula Vista earned its name from the area's first large-scale industry: the Hercules Powder Co., which located there in 1914 and harvested kelp for acetone, a component of gunpowder, throughout the war. U.S. Cavalry troops established Camp Hearn [Hearn] in 1916, just north of Imperial Beach, to guard against feared incursions of Germans coming up from Mexico. During World War I, the Army used what is now Ream Field in Imperial Beach for gunnery practice. North Island became a permanent naval air station in 1918, and the first civilians were hired there as laborers and clerks the following year. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Dec 31, 1919)

1916 - Hercules Powder - "It stands on the flats far out on the point which is the northwestern corner of Chula Vista, right on the bay front. Hercules Powder Company site 1916-1918 cost \$1,750,000, huge building 100x300 ft, partly underground, employed 1400 in three 8-hour shifts, workers carried by streetcar tracks where freeway is today, doors locked when Armistice signed Nov. 11, 1918, made acetone for British from kelp, workers included late Harley Knox, :

San Diego, who was a sample boy for the kelp juice in the tank farm of 200 50,000-gallon receptacles, fermentation caused pungent aroma to the east and so. Another byproduct was acetic anhydride used as fire-proof dope to cover Army planes. A pier 1200-ft long was used to unload kelp harvested as far north as Barbara. 1400 people worked there, including Win Kinmore and Johnny Gardner, father of Jack Gardner, also Frank Norton, Cy Taylor, workers made \$165 month. There were 200 tanks in the tank farm for kelp juice fermentation, each 50,000 gallons, caused bad odor. Another byproduct was acetic anhydride used as nonflammable dope for covering AAF planes. Also developed from kelp was potash salt, iodine. ("Red-Roofed, Barn-like Powder Plant," San Diego Union 1957, Misc. Clippings San Diego History, Box 40EG-40060, Sweetwater Authority Archives.)

1916/02 - The Hercules Powder Company was created Jan. 1, 1913, as a result of a federal antitrust lawsuit against Du Pont. During WWI Hercules made 20 kilos (20,000 tons) of smokeless cordite for the British, made from kelp. Hercules built a new plant in Chula Vista beginning in Feb. 1916, including 156 redwood digestive tanks to ferment the kelp to make acetone and potash. Hercules built three giant kelp harvesters in 1916 to cut the sea plant in large quantities. In 1917 the plant was dismantled. (Neushul, Peter. "The Hercules Powder Company," in Chula Vista, the Early Years. Vol. 1. San Diego CA: Tecolote Publications, 1993, p. 36.)

1916/02 - In February 1916, Hercules began the construction of a \$7 million kelp processing plant on a 30-acre track tideland, now known as "Gunpowder Field." Completed in only six months, the plant had 156 redwood tanks for "digesting" macerated kelp. The tanks were 15-feet tall, 25 feet in diameter and held 50,000 gallons of kelp "liquor." It was thought to be the largest tank structure of its kind in the world. With the country at war, security at Hercules was tight. The factory was enclosed by barbed wire and armed guards patrolled the perimeter. "The entire process is not only a secret one," noted the Union, "but the Hercules object to being bothered by idlers. Photographers are chased away with avidity." Profits from the sale of potash and acetone for making ammunition were large at Hercules during the war years but dwindled sharply after 1918. In January 1919, Hercules announced that the Chula Vista plant would close. A "War Worker" was awarded to each employee along with thanks from the U.S. government for their "vital part in the prosecution of the war, second only to the part played by the man in actual contact with the enemy." ("Chula Vista kelp factory helped win World War I," The San Diego Union-Tribune, May 3, 2008, clipping in Chula Vista vertical file, California Room, San Diego Public Library.)

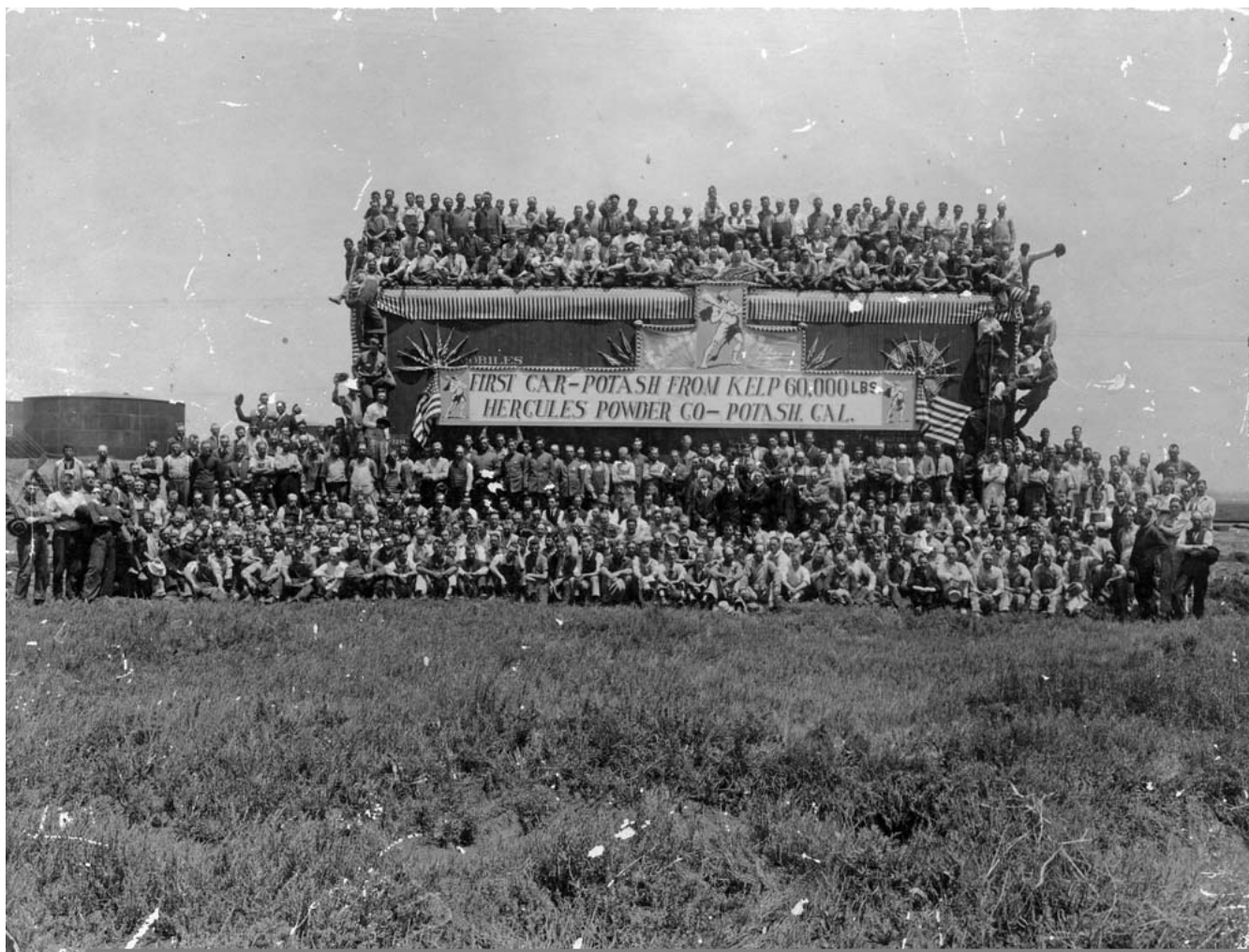
1916/02 - Before World War I, the majority of the world's supply of potash for fertilizer had come from the Stassfurt mines in northern Germany. Most California companies (there were eleven in 1916) extracted potash from kelp by means of a method similar to that used in Scotland. However, the largest plant, built in Chula Vista by the Hercules Powder Co., developed a completely new process for extracting not only potash but also acetone and numerous other chemicals. Between 1916 and 1917, Hercules was the largest foreign manufacturer of cordite for the British, delivering a total of 23,000 tons. Hercules was also the most successful manufacturer of acetone during this period, producing over 11 million pounds, half of which was sold to British manufacturers for production of an additional 10,000 tons of cordite. In July 1916, the Hercules processing plant began operating twenty-four hours a day. Hercules employed a total of 1,100 workers in its harvesting and processing operations. There were three twelve-hour operating shifts of approximately 200 employees each and an additional 200-man shift that worked during the daytime only. Every Sunday one of the twelve-hour shifts had the day off. Each of the three harvesters had a crew of twelve men, who lived and worked on the plant. Hercules was very concerned with the possibility that the plant might be sabotaged or that a competitor might steal its ideas. Consequently, the entire facility was surrounded by a high barbed wire fence, and armed guards were posted at all times. W. W. Downs of Olympia, Washington, and his younger brother R. O. Downs of Chula Vista, both worked at the Hercules plant during the war. Downs described the work as very dangerous, particularly in the section of the plant where acetone was being produced. Although there were few accidents, R. O. Downs recalled that Basset was blinded while working on the production of acetic anhydride (a solvent which was a by-product of the acetone-extraction process). Perhaps the most memorable aspect of the Hercules plant was the smell, which he described as "like driving a dog off a gut-wagon." Hercules developed a fermentation process to extract acetone, potash, and numerous other products from the kelp. In order to run this enormous processing plant with kelp, Hercules needed an extremely productive and efficient harvesting operation. After finding that the Pacific Kelp Mulch harvester design was unable to cut enough kelp for the Chula Vista plant, Hercules' engineering department designed a new self-propelled kelp cutter with a greater carrying capacity. The new harvester used a cutting mechanism similar to those on grain reapers.



The Bacchus was one of three kelp harvesters designed by Hercules Powder Company engineers.

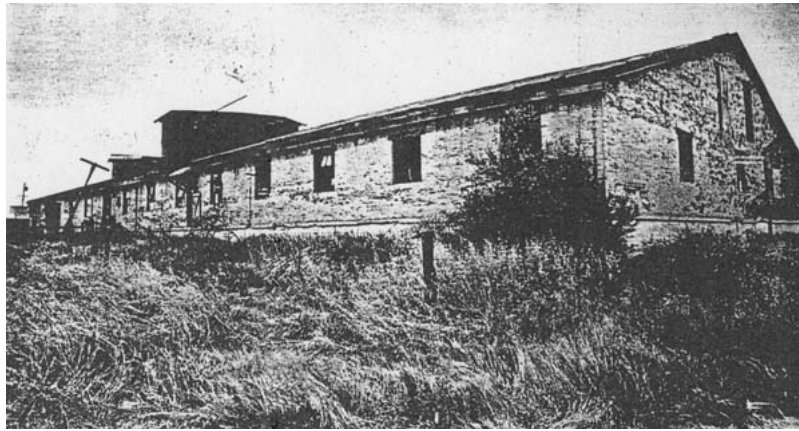
In early 1916, Hercules built three giant harvesters, the Joplin, Kenvil, and Bacchus, each costing \$75,000. Hercules' harvesting fleet, the largest in the world included nine transport barges, four towboats, and a floating machine shop." The harvesters operated day and night, returning to port only in very heavy weather. The speed of the cutters was 7 knots in open water and 4 knots while cutting. The harvesters were serviced by the floating machine shop, enabling them to remain at sea while being repaired.) The pumps used to transport the chopped kelp from the ocean to the Chula Vista plant were perhaps the most efficient components of Hercules harvesting system. Hercules harvesters did not return to the plant with their loads; they pumped their cargo through a pipe boom into barges that remained at the pier. At the pier, the kelp slurry was pumped out of the barges, through a pipe, and up to the processing plant on shore. Electromagnets along the pipe removed metal objects that might damage the pumps. Although the Hercules harvesting system was very efficient, less kelp was available than had originally been anticipated. The Chula Vista plant could accommodate from 1,500 to 2,000 tons of kelp per day, but, because the harvesters had to secure raw material at great distances, only 1,000 tons of kelp were processed daily. According to Morris, Hercules cut 5,000-6,000 tons per cutting on the Imperial Bed (off Coronado), 25,000-28,000 tons on Point Loma Bed, 10,000-12,000 tons on La Jolla Beds, 10,000-20,000 tons at Laguna, and 20,000-25,000 tons at San Clemente Island. Periodically, Hercules made cuttings at San Nicholas Island, Santa Cruz Island, and along the coast between Gaviota and Point Conception. Morris stated that "beds should be cut and left to grow for at least three and a half or four months between cuttings." Despite occasional shortages of raw material, Hercules produced more than enough acetone for its British contracts. Following the completion of the Chula Vista plant in July 1916, Hercules produced 228,000 gallons of acetone per month, the former U.S. output. Encouraged by Hercules' ability to produce large quantities of acetone from kelp, the British offered the company a contract for another 100,000 pounds of cordite under the same conditions. Amazingly, Hercules was able to fill both orders, delivering the first in February 1917 and the second and final in June 1917.⁵⁷ British efforts to increase their own acetone production met with little success, prompting them to introduce a new variety of solventless cordite (RDB) and to increase consumption of single-base nitroglycerin powders. Finding that wood distillation was an inadequate source of acetone, the British began to experiment with a process of fermentation from maize suggested by Dr. Chaim Weizmann of Manchester University in April 1915. In February 1916, work began on the conversion of six distilleries for acetone production. Plagued by shortages of skilled labor and the limited supply of maize, only two of these factories ever produced acetone. Their combined output prior to February 1917 was 228 tons monthly, using 4,560 tons of maize. These factories ceased production on February 1917, when it became clear that supplies of acetone from the United States and Canada, along with increased use of Cordite RDB, eliminated the need for a British supply. Despite the decreased British demand for acetone, Hercules continued to produce chemicals from kelp to fill wartime needs. In July 1917, the company began to manufacture esters, primarily ethyl acetate, for use in artificial leather and lacquer preparation. Work also began on the manufacture of new solvents, particularly ethyl anhydride, which was used to produce cellulose acetate for noninflammable airplane dope. This was an ideal substitute for the more dangerous cellulose nitrate. Chemicals were also used to manufacture belt cement for gluing together strands of leather belting, and film cement for joining together motion picture films. Tars left over from acetone production were used to make an acid-proof paint. Hercules also experimented with destructive distillation (dry kelp) to produce kelp refuse from the fermentation process. Despite this and other campaigns, Hercules was unable to justify continuation of its kelp operations at Chula Vista. In January 1919 shift superintendent H. T. Bonfield notified workers of the company's decision to close down the plant. Employees were each sent a copy of the chemical exposition booklet and commended for their creativeness in the development of the many chemical extraction processes on a factory basis. Workers were also awarded a "War Workers Badge," authorized by R. A. Greene of the Ordnance Department, who lauded their efforts as "a vital part in the prosecution of the war, second only to the part played by the man in actual contact with the enemy." In a letter to each of his Bonfield also acknowledged that Hercules' wartime development had been rapid and that the production of acetone and potash at the Chula Vista plant had helped greatly in the successful conclusion of World War I. In 1916 alone, Hercules had earned over \$16 million in profits and had paid stockholders a dividend of \$95 per share. Hercules was joined in its efforts to develop chemicals from kelp by the federal government, which made a belated attempt to help California's kelp companies develop marketable peacetime products for

Neither effort resulted in a substitute for the vast quantities of potash and acetone produced during the war; as a consequence, the Hercules plant was shut down in 1920. Despite the successful development of new processing techniques at the government plant, private industry that might have benefited from its research was no longer able to compete when the German embargo on potash had been lifted. American purchasers signed contracts with the German Kali Syndikat for 75 percent of the U.S. consumption, and with the French for the other 25 percent. An embittered J. W. Turrentine described the signing of the contracts as "not only direct blow at the American industry but effectually designed to kill it." Turrentine felt that kelp-potash production in California was a short-lived enterprise because of the inefficiency of processing techniques developed by most of the private kelp companies. This shortcoming severely limited the ability of the industry to compete with German exports once the embargo had been lifted. Unfortunately, the industrial innovation and technological creativity so effective during the war were not applicable with the lifting of economic sanctions and the cessation of hostilities. California's World War I kelp companies formed one of the largest industries ever created for the processing of raw materials from the ocean. Despite the efforts of both private and government scientists, the industry was unable to realize the economic potential of giant kelp. Hercules extracted numerous chemical products from the kelp but overlooked the economic potential of alginates, which later became the basis for a new multimillion-dollar kelp industry. Yet, despite its failure to survive beyond World War I, the California industry developed techniques that may still be of value to a future California kelp industry. In December 1974, the American Gas Association funded a \$20 million research project to investigate the possible use of giant kelp as a new source of energy, methane gas.⁷⁰ Investigators found that, when subjected to anaerobic digestion, kelp had a higher per unit production of methane than any other biomass tested. If a kelp-to-methane industry were to develop, the large-scale harvesting and processing techniques and many valuable kelp products discovered by the World War I industry might once again be used. (Neushul, Peter, "Seaweed for War: California's World War I Kelp Industry," *Technology and Culture* 30 (July, 1989), pp. 561-583.)



Hercules Powder Company employees posing in 1916 for group photo with railroad car, "First Car - Potash From Kelp 60,000 lbs Hercules Powder Co - Potash Cal"

1916/02/16 - Ordinance No. 55 that had been introduced Feb. 9 was passed after a second reading: "An Ordinance ratifying and confirming the franchise granted by the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for the Bay of San Diego, on the 3rd day of February, 1916, to the Hercules Powder Company, a Corporation, and assigns, granting the right to construct, erect and maintain a wharf of usual pile construction upon certain lands within the corporate limits of the city of Chula Vista, California, under certain restrictions. and upon certain terms and conditions" and said ordinance having been read for the second time was passed, adopted, and ordered published in the Chula Vista Review, by the following vote, to wit: Ayes: Barnes, Eitzen, Geyer, Monroe; Noes: None; absent, Wharton. (City Minutes, Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Feb. 16, 1916.)



Ruins of the Hercules Powder plant in 1957

1917 - Hercules Powder Plant long gone, but old red-roofed barn-like tower remains. The concrete foundations 100 x 300 are used by nearby vegetable farm store crops and supplies. Johnny Gardner, father of Jack Gardner on the Sweetwater District school board, said "I remember I made \$165 per month - and then \$200 - and I was the boss." Other workers were Frank Norton, former postmaster, and Cy Taylor, acting police chief. Harley Knox, late mayor of San Diego, Wilbur Bradley's (of National City) sample boy who would pull a quart can of kelp juice from the tanks - there were 200 50,000 gal tanks - every morning so could run a test on the fermentation. Another byproduct was acetic anhydride used for dope to cover army planes. Bradley and Guy McMains, Chula Vista business whose sons continue the business today, was in the tower Christmas after 1941 looking for Japanese planes. A rumor during WW2 was that the building was storage of bootleg used cars that were sold to local buyers (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 29, 1957.)

SAN DIEGO OIL PRODUCTS COMPANY 1920-1929

The future of Gunpowder Point after World War I was to be industrial. The tidelands of San Diego Bay, from Dutch Flats south through Chula Vista were developed by the San Diego Chamber of Commerce Industrial Lands Committee led by William Kettner. During the war, this committee had successfully raised money to buy Dutch Flats and then sold it to the Navy for the Marine base. The Navy base in San Diego was officially established in 1919. Kettner's concrete shipyard of 1918 became the 32nd Street Navy Repair Yard and Destroyer Base in 1922. An area west of Pacific Highway at Laurel Street totaling 144 acres filled by dredging to create the first segment of Lindbergh Field which was dedicated in August, 1928.

San Diego Oil Products Corporation

AUTHORIZED CAPITAL \$4,000,000.00

A Fine Opportunity

The San Diego Oil Products Corporation, incorporated in 1920 under the laws of California, will engage in the refining of oil products.

The Company through purchase of the Hercules Powder Company's plant and part of its equipment, at Chula Vista, California, has become the owner of one of the finest industrial sites on San Diego Bay, with a complete wharf to deep water, industrial railroad rights of way with spur tracks to the San Diego & Arizona Railway and San Diego Electric Railway, complete power plant and machinery, which together with the new equipment will make one of the most up-to-date cottonseed oil refineries in the United States.

The Company's various equipment permits of its engaging in practically every branch of the oil refining business, including cottonseed oil, vegetable oils, etc.

For the present the Company will confine its efforts to the manufacture of cottonseed oil. There is always a fixed market for cottonseed oil, and inquiries for by-products, which include edible oils, soap stock, cottonseed pressed cake for cattle feeding, hulls and lint, assure the Company of a ready market for all of its

products. The Company is assured of all the raw material necessary for the operation of its plants from the cotton districts of Imperial Valley, Yuma, Salt River, and adjacent Valleys.

A conservative estimate of the Company's earnings from the cottonseed oil branch of the business alone, is sufficient to cover preferred stock dividends several times over. Future development of the Company's business will increase the earnings substantially.

The Management

Among the men associated with me in this enterprise are:

F. M. White, Chairman of the Board; C. H. Bencini, President and General Manager; Duncan MacKinnon, Vice-President; R. D. Spicer, Vice-President; Jack C. Thompson, Secretary; R. E. Anthony, Treasurer; Rufus Choate, W. S. Dorland, R. V. Morris, A. P. Johnson, Jr., J. W. Sefton, Jr., Nat Rogan, George W. Marston, Carl Heilbron, G. A. Davidson, Senator L. A. Wright, M. F. Heller, Sam S. Porter, Fredk. W. Stearns, D. W. Ponting, O. W. Cotton, Gordon Gray, Clement B. Stern, B. W. Sinclair, Ed Fletcher, I. I. Irwin.

Only a very limited number of shares is now offered at par to the public—five thousand in all. It is an 8% cumulative Preferred Stock, and with each share present purchasers will receive a \$25 Common Stock Bonus. This offering therefore combines with perfect safety and a high rate of interest the probability of considerably increased values.

Come to Headquarters!

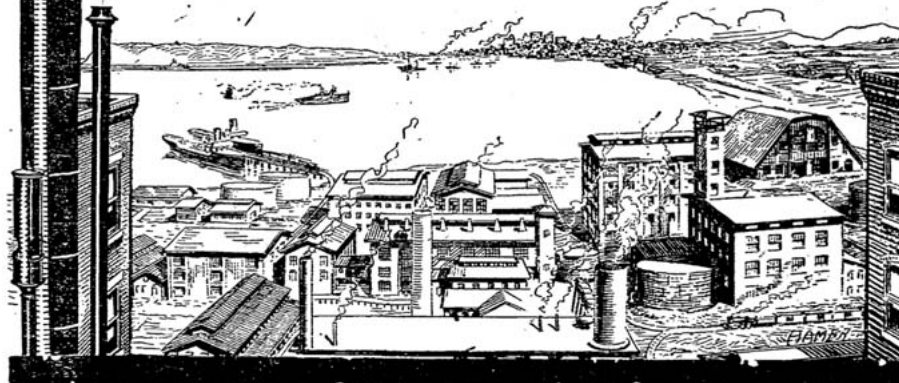
Tuesday, November 16th is the day the books will open and close. Oversubscriptions may be prorated down to the amount stated; but reservations may be made today at the headquarters of the San Diego Oil Products Corporation, U. S. Grant Hotel Building, or through any of the following gentlemen:

Duncan MacKinnon or Alexander Reynolds, United States National Bank; C. W. Landis or Rufus Choate, Union National Bank; Jack C. Thompson, George Burnham, or R. K. Williams, Southern Trust and Commerce Bank; J. W. Sefton, Jr., C. W. Wilson, or R. E. Mueller, San Diego Savings Bank; A. L. Verner or R. D. Spicer, Stephens & Co.; W. S. Dorland, Security Commercial and Savings Bank; A. P. Johnson, Jr., Southern Title Guaranty Co.; H. E. Anthony or C. H. Anthony, Merchants' National Bank; I. I. Irwin; Nat Rogan; Warner Edmonds, People's State Bank, Chula Vista; Oliver Bower, People's National Bank, National City; J. L. Matthews, National City State Bank, National City; Q. B. Wetzel, State Bank of Ramona, Ramona; B. C. Beers, First National Bank, Oceanside; F. D. Hall, First National Bank, Escondido; G. L. Strobeck, Cuyamaca State Bank, El Cajon; A. W. Wohlford, Escondido National Bank, Escondido; Charles T. Chandler or W. B. Miller, University Avenue Bank; P. V. Morgan, East San Diego State Bank; H. C. Park, Bank of La Mesa.

COME IN TODAY AND TALK IT OVER.

William Kettner

Sales Manager.



The advertisement for the San Diego Oil Products Corporation in 1920 featured smoke billowing from two large smokestacks. For promoters such as William Kettner, smc symbol of progress. (San Diego Evening Tribune, Nov. 8, 1920)

1920/04/09 - "The International Oil and Transport company has secured the \$2m Hercules plant here and will refine petroleum, vegetable oils, sugar and ma toilet soap." (Chula Vista Star, Apr. 12, 1940.)

1920/10/27 - "Everything is hustle, bustle and activity at the old Hercules plant on the bay front in this city, the state of the new cotton seed mill. Hundreds c workmen are employed by the Hercules people in their endeavor to keep ahead of the San Diego Oil Products Corporation, who with an equally large force bricklayers, carpenters and laborers, are rushing work on the new buildings that will be needful fo the new enterprise." (Chula Vista Star, Nov. 4, 1933.)

1920/11/06 - Chula Vista Oil Products Company. That there is a tremendous market for products that will be manufactured

in Chula Vista by the San Diego Oil Products corporation from cotton seed, linters, soya bean oil, copra and other raw products was the statement made yesterday by C. H. Bencini, general manager of the local corporation, who has had nearly 25 years experience in the cotton seed oil industry. Bencini said that there are 235 cottonseed oil mills in Texas which operate only during a part of each year due to scarcity of raw products. The wonderful trade opportunities of the San Diego Oil Products corporation's plant at Chula Vista are shown by the fact that the immense resources of the great cotton raising districts of the Imperial Valley and Arizona lie virtually at San Diego's back door, assuring sufficient raw material to keep the local plant operating every day in the year. According to Bencini, the markets for cotton by-products and other commodities which the San Diego Oil Products corporation plans to deal in extensively, extend to every part of the globe. While cottonseed oil will be one of the principal products of the local industrial plant, other important commodities for which there is a ready market and consistent demand will be manufactured. These include meal cake, a part of which will be fed to a herd of 7500 head of cattle that will be fattened at the Chula Vista plant at frequent periods for the Pacific coast markets: production of a high grade mixed feed for dairy cows, and the manufacture of linters from short staple cotton that is used mostly in the production of fine mattresses. Later the facilities of the plant will be extended to cover the production of soya bean, copra and other vegetable oil products. The cottonseed oil mill, Bencini said, will employ between 150 and 200 men. As far as possible local men will be employed, but the nucleus of the working force will be obtained from mills formerly operated by Bencini in Texas and who have had considerable experience in cottonseed oil manufacturing. A large force of workmen has been busy for the last few weeks erecting the cottonseed oil mill and storage sheds on the site of the property acquired by the San Diego Oil Products corporation from the Hercules Powder company. Bencini estimates that in acquiring such parts of the plant adaptable for the mill the San Diego Oil Products corporation saved nearly \$70,000 in initial construction work. The group of prominent bankers and business men who form the directorate and advisory board of the San Diego Oil Products corporation believe local investors will find an unparalleled opportunity in associating themselves in the development of the industrial plant at Chula Vista through their financial and moral support. A limited amount of stock in the corporation is now placed on the market for the advantage of San Diego investors. Subscriptions for this stock may be made now. The actual sale of this stock will be for one day only. This will be Nov. 16. Officials of the San Diego Oil Products corporation announced yesterday that a number of San Diegans have the impression that the corporation plans to engage in the development of oil lands. To correct this, Bencini says that the plant at Chula Vista is to be used exclusively in the manufacture of cotton products, soya beans and vegetable oils. "The San Diego Oil Products corporation does not intend to expend any of its funds in leasing oil lands, in the production of crude oil, or in any manner whatsoever other than the efficient operation and development of the allied industries of which cotton by products and vegetable oils form the basic raw materials." Headquarters for the sale of the limited amount of stock offered to the investing public by the San Diego Oil Products corporation were established yesterday in the U. S. Grant hotel building. Congressman William Kettner, sales manager, will be at the headquarters the greater part of each day. Subscriptions for shares may be made at the Grant hotel headquarters of the corporation, at the various banks, at Stephens & Company, the Nat Rogan company, or at the office of I. I. Irwin. (The San Diego Union, Nov. 6, 1920)



William Kettner

1920/11/08 - A Fine Opportunity The San Diego Oil Products Corporation, incorporated in 1920 under the laws of California, will engage in the refining of oil products. The Company through purchase of the Hercules Powder Company's plant and part of its equipment, at Chula Vista, California, has become the owner of the finest industrial sites on San Diego Bay, with a complete wharf to deep water, industrial railroad rights of way with spur tracks to the San Diego & Arroyo Grande Railway and San Diego Electric Railway, complete power plant and machinery, which together with the new equipment will make one of the most up-to-date cottonseed oil refineries in the United States. The Company's various equipment permits of its engaging in practically every branch of the oil refining business including cottonseed oil, vegetable oils, etc. For the present the Company will confine its efforts to the manufacture of cottonseed oil. There is always a fixed market for cottonseed oil, and inquiries for byproducts, which include edible oils, soap stock, cottonseed pressed cake for cattle feeding, hulls and lint, assure the Company of a ready market for all of its products. The Company is assured of all the raw material necessary for the operation of its plants from the cotton districts of the Imperial Valley, Yuma, Salt River, and adjacent Valleys. A conservative estimate of the Company's earnings from the cottonseed oil branch of the business alone, is sufficient to cover preferred stock dividends several times over. Future development of the Company's business will increase the earnings substantially. (Signed,) William Kettner, Sales Manager (San Diego Evening Tribune, Nov. 8, 1920.)

Trainload of Cotton Seed for Big Plant Here Expected as First Freight Over S. D. & A. Line

HUGE WAREHOUSE TO STORE SUPPLY NEAR COMPLETION

General Manager of Railroad
Predicts Great Success for
Enterprise.

SHOWS HIS FAITH
"If any of you men do not think that the cotton seed oil industry is a profitable business I will agree, with any three others in San Diego, to purchase every share in the San Diego Oil Products corporation and conduct this industry by ourselves."

This statement was made at the Kiwanis club luncheon yesterday by C. H. Bencini, president and general manager of the San Diego Oil Products corporation.

Bencini's outline of the tremendous industrial possibilities of the new Chula Vista plant made a strong impression among the members of the Kiwanis club who were present at the luncheon. Bencini declared that cotton seed oil is being imported into California from Texas in vast quantities and still the supply is far short of the demand.

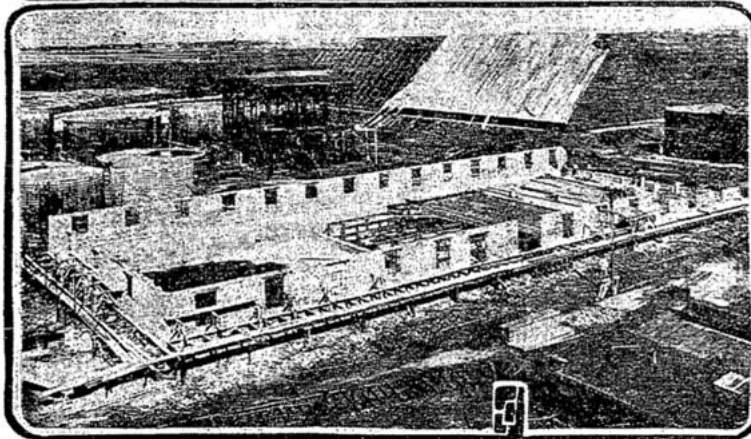
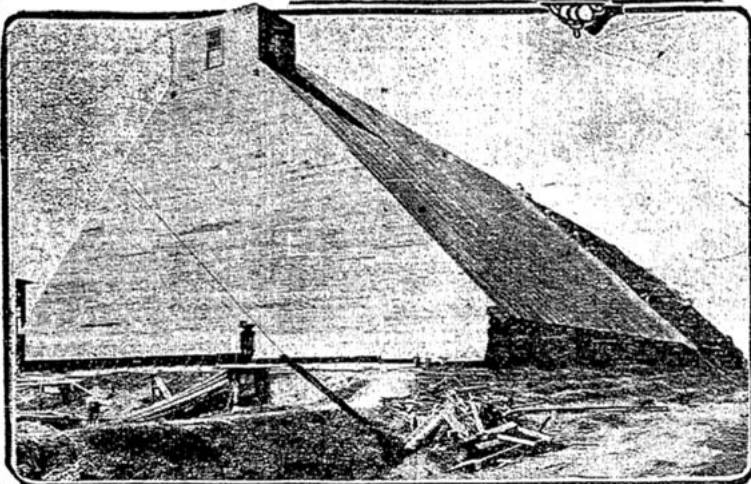
Prediction that the first westbound trainload of freight that will move over the San Diego & Arizona railway, following resumption of traffic within the next few weeks, will consist of Imperial Valley and Arizona cotton seed consigned to the cotton seed oil mill of the San Diego Oil Products corporation at Chula Vista, was made yesterday by D. W. Pontius, general manager of the S. D. & A.

Mr. Pontius further believes that the magnificent industrial plant now nearing completion at the head of the bay is only a forerunner of additional manufacturing establishments that will be attracted here by the success of the plant of the San Diego Oil Products corporation.

Commenting on the cotton seed oil mill and allied industrial plant to be operated by the San Diego Oil Products corporation Mr. Pontius said: "Something over a year ago at our chamber of commerce annual dinner, I stated that the completion of the San Diego & Arizona railway would justify the establishing of a cotton seed oil mill in San Diego. That is not a statement today but

(Continued on Page 15)

Photographs showing progress being made in the construction of the San Diego Oil Products corporation's cotton seed oil plant at Chula Vista. At top, cotton seed warehouse, largest structure of its kind in the United States. The warehouse, which will be completed next Saturday, will have a capacity of 15,000 tons of seed. Below, photograph of cotton seed oil mill. The cotton mill building will be ready for installation of cotton presses and other machinery by Nov. 20.



Photographs showing progress being made in the construction of the San Diego Oil Products corporation cotton seed oil plant in the San Diego Union, Nov. 10, 192

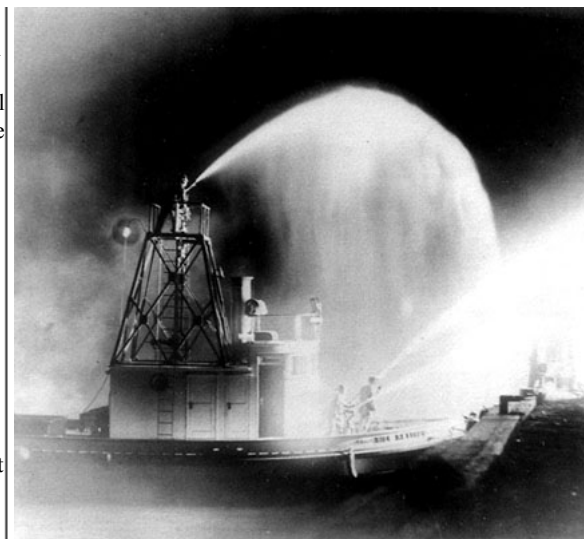
1920/11/12 - Plan Old-Fashioned Barbecue Monday At Chula Vista Plant. In order to give San Diegans who are interested in the establishment of the San D Products corporation's cotton seed oil mill and allied industrial plant a t Chhla Vista an opportunity to view the great amount of constructive work that has b accomplished during the past few weeks, an old fashioned southern barbecue will be held a ttthe plant Monday noon. Invitations to attend the barbecue at the seed oil mill have been issued to the members of the chamber of commerce, the Ad club. Rotary club, Kiwanis club, the Merchants' and Manufacturers' asso and other organizations. All business men and investors of San Diego who are not members of these organizations, but who desire to attend the barbecue, ar requested to call at the headquarters of the San Diego Oil Products corporation, at the U. S. Grant hotel. Such invitations will be cordially issued. Officials o corporation announce, however, that no one without an invitation card will be permitted to enter the grounds at Chula Vista. The barbecue, which will be un personal supervision of C. H. Bencini, president and general manager of the San Diego Oil Products corporation, will take place in the cotton, seed warehou noon. Seats will be arranged for 250 guests. Carcasses of beef, barbecued southern style, will form the principal item for the luncheon. Guests will be told o of the San Diego Oil Products corporation and how the cotton seed will be handled from the time it arrives at the plant from Arizona and the Imperial valley byproducts are ready in various forms for the market. Among the speakers will he Congressman William Kettner, C .H. Bencini. Nat Rogan and George Bur San Diego Evening Tribune, Nov. 12, 1920.)

1922/09/22 - The cottonseed plant will resume operations after several weeks shutdown. Cottonseed is arriving at the mill at the rate of 9 cars daily. (Chula Sept. 25, 1942.)

1923/11/28 - On Nov. 28, 1923, the fire department and Chula Vista suffered what still holds the record as the largest single fire in the history of the city. Fla raged in four buildings used for cottonseed storage at the San Diego Oil Products Company at the foot of D St. The fire was fought by the Chula Vista Mode company from San Diego, one from National City and a fire boat from San Diego. This was also the only time a fire boat has ever been used on a fire in Chl All four buildings and their contents were destroyed for a fire loss of \$331,135. ("CV department 50 years old," Star-News, May 2, 1971.)

1923/11/28 - Raging Flames Destroy Large Seed House At S. D. Oil Products Plant. A spectacular blaze, said to have been caused by a short circuit in an electrical transfonner at

the San Diego Oil Products company's plant at Chula Vista, early this morning, destroyed the company's big seed house, and consumed four San Diego & Arizona freight-cars loaded with cotton seed that were standing at the long discharge platform. The loss was estimated by C. H. Bencini, president and manager of the plant, at between \$400,000 and \$500,000, all of which is fully covered by insurance. The fire was discovered shortly after midnight by the night watchman, who, while making his rounds, saw the massive door of the seed house in flames. He immediately sounded the plant's whistle and telephoned to both the Chula Vista and, National City fire departments. Two companies answered the call but the blaze had gained such headway that they were forced to confine their efforts to protecting the adjacent buildings. Seeing that the fire was getting beyond control and that the rest of the plant was in imminent danger of destruction, a call for additional aid was sent to San Diego, and the fire boat *Bill Kettner* and engine company No. 12 responded. The San Diego firemen found the huge warehouse in flames, as were the cotton plant and a string of six box cars belonging to the San Diego & Arizona railway. Of wooden construction; the seed house, which is 800 feet long, 300 feet wide and 90 feet high, soon became a roaring inferno, long tongues of flame shooting skyward to such a height as to be plainly visible in many parts of San Diego. The dry timbers of the enormous building fed the raging flames until nothing but charred debris remained. Because of the prompt action of the firemen the mill-house adjoining was saved from destruction as were all the other buildings at the company's plant. The seedhouse was about half filled with cottonseed, all of which was destroyed at an estimated loss of more than \$400,000. In order to feed the several thousand head of cattle in the pens adjoining the mill, where they are being fattened for market, immediate shipment of cottonseed already contracted for by the company will be made Arizona and Imperial Valley. According to Bencini, the seedhouse will be reconstructed as soon as possible. This work, it is estimated, will require three months during this time the company will suffer no loss as it carries \$1000 a day occupancy and use insurance. The Oil Products company took over the plant of the Powder company in 1920, and since that time have been engaged in the manufacture of cottonseed oil and by-products. Several thousand head of cattle, which being fattened for immediate shipment, will be cared for today by undamaged cotton-seed dug from the bottom of the feed piles, it is said, and arrangements been made for more seed from Imperial valley and from Arizona. (San Diego Union and San Diego Evening Tribune, Nov. 28, 1923.)



fire boat *William Kettner*

1923/11/29 - Burned Seed Warehouse To Be Rebuilt At Once. While the ashes and embers of the seed house are still smoldering, the San Diego Oil Product Company at Chula Vista will let contracts tomorrow for rebuilding, according to C. H. Bencini, president and manager of the plant. "Contracts for the new building will be let tomorrow and the contractors will start actual construction of the buildings as soon as it is possible to get the necessary material," he said yesterday. There are several conjectures as to the cause of the fire, but as far as I have been able to ascertain, it remains a mystery. "It possibly will take at least three months to complete the new structures, which will be modern in every way. Work will start first on the seedhouse and the new building may possibly be larger than the one destroyed by fire, which was 800 feet long, 300 feet wide and 90 feet high." According to other officials of the company, a large consignment of cotton seed received at Chula Vista yesterday from the company's warehouse in the Imperial Valley to be fed to several thousand head of cattle that are being fed for shipment. The fire damage is estimated at \$500,000, covered by insurance. (San Diego Union, Nov. 29, 1923.)

1924/02/23 - San Diego Firm Oil Seed House Chula Vista Plant to Replace Fire Loss Will Be Most Modern in Country. Improvements, in the form of a new seed house, are now being added to the San Diego Oil Products company, which will make its plant at Chula Vista the most modern and probably the best cottonseed oil mill in the country. The new structure is replacing the old seed house which was destroyed by fire several months ago. The framework for the house is already about half way up and it is expected that the building will be completed in another month. The structure will be 600 feet long by 100 feet wide and will store 15,000 tons of cotton seed. While it replaces the former house that was destroyed by fire, the new house is a great improvement over the old one and will be constructed entirely of steel and concrete and made completely fire-proof. (San Diego Union, Feb. 23, 1924.)

1924/03/21 - Cotton Seed plant has resumed operations, after closing for 6 months due to \$300,000 loss from big fire. -- (Chula Vista Star, Mar. 23, 1924.)

1924/08/19 - Mr. G. J. Paulson introduced the subject of the location of the Potter Radiator Plant in this city. He said that he had ascertained that the plant he had in mind could be located on Chamber of Commerce land, one in National City and one in Chula Vista; he had interviewed the constructing engineer of the company, found that the National City land will require the expenditure of considerable money to provide wharf facilities, while the Chula Vista site has a wharf belonging to the Cotton Seed Plant, but that it will require a railroad spur of about 200 yards. It appears that Mr. Bencini, of the Cotton Seed Plant, and Mr. Nat Bogan, of San Diego, are working to have the plant located here, and upon Mr. Paulson's suggestion, the Board appointed Mr. Warner Edmonds as a committee of one, to confer with two gentlemen named above, and endeavor to get the location of the plant in this city. If the plant is located here, it is understood that E Street will have to be widened and put in shape, to the plant, which is proposed to be located just south of the Cotton Seed Plant. In addition, the clerk was directed to write to Mr. Jerry Sullivan in San Diego, who is part owner of the local lumber yard, and ask him to assist in this work, if agreeable to him. (City Council Minutes, Aug. 19, 1924.)

1924/09/11 - City engineer reported that he had seen the owners of the Cottonseed Plant, and had been informed that the Cottonseed Plant will procure 1/4 Section 161, necessary to complete the street into the Plant, with the understanding that the street will be graded and surfaced by the city. (City Council Minutes, Sept. 11, 1924.)

1924/10/08 - Another shipment comprised of 5000 tons of cotton seed meal cake from the Oil Products company located on the bay front in CV will be shipped to the United Kingdom during the next two months. The first shipment of the cake will leave the plant for Liverpool about October 19. (Chula Vista Star, Oct. 13, 1924.)

1925 ca - San Diego Oil Products large round building similar to quonset hut (8403, Photo Archives, San Diego History Center)

1925/07/07 - The SDER trackage across the Sweetwater Valley to Marmarosa line generated almost no traffic. An end to CV service was approved on April 30, 1925, the last runs were made by CV streetcars with Sutherland buses starting service on May 1. The overhead, poles and track bed were removed, but most of the track remained in place for the SD&A's steam freight operations to the Chula Vista packing plants. (Forty, San Diego's South Interurban, 1987.) 1924/06/03 - San Diego Oil Products company asked, by letter, that some repairs be made to the road leading to their plant, and along Bay Boulevard from D Street to the northerly city limits. A letter from the San Diego Lands, Inc., in which it was stated that this road had been deeded to the city was also read. The clerk advised the board that no such deed is now on file and there is no record of it ever having been recorded in the County Records Office. Matter referred to the City Attorney. (Minutes of the Board of Trustees, June 3, 1924.) 1925 - The Pierce family came to National City in 1922. My father (

Pierce, worked for the Santa Fe Railroad here for thirty-three years. They bought a little house on Wilson Street near the railroad tracks. He hunted ducks in lone estuaries and bay shores of National City and Chula Vista. About four blocks from us, at Thirty-first and National Avenue, now National City Boulevard gloriously beautiful little lake called the "Duck Pond." I would ride my horse, Curli, past the Duck Pond, past Badders Riding Stable, across the little bridge river, and down what is now Broadway, Chula Vista, where for a while there was a blacksmith, who trimmed his hooves. The Duck Pond was fed by a spring. Thirtieth Street, and Ma said the tide came in and washed it out every day. It was guarded by giant eucalyptus trees that formed a horseshoe around and behind it. (Irene Pierce Harville, Family, Friends, and Homes. San Diego CA: Tecolote Publications, 1991, p. 282)

1925/12/15 - The city attorney reported on the rental of wharves crossing the city's tide lands, in the case of the San Diego Oil Products Wharf, to the effect franchise heretofore made with the State Harbor Commission, prior to the acquisition of the tide lands by the city, will continue in force, and that the rental is paid by the above company is \$12.50 per month. City Clerk instructed to collect the rental for both wharves now in the tide lands. (City Council Minutes, Dec 1925.)

1926/01/29 - A large herd of cattle arriving at SD Oil Products plant to be fattened for market. (Chula Vista Star, Jan. 29, 1926)

1931/06/02 - Councilman Conyers stated that a Mr. Anderson had approached him and asked for an expression of opinion of this Council on the matter of A leasing the former kelp plant building, and installing therein a plant for the manufacture of chicken feed, to be manufactured from shark meat. Mr. Anderson Cl. Conyers the plant would give off no odor, and would be conducted in a sanitary manner. Cl. Conyers was instructed to inform Mr. Anderson that this Council cannot prevent him from starting such a plant, but that if he does start it, and it becomes a public nuisance, steps will be immediately taken by this council to remove it. (City Council Minutes, June 2, 1931.)

1932/01/05 - The Department of State Lands, by letter, notified this city that the city has jurisdiction over the construction, alteration and maintenance of structures on the tide lands, which have been granted to the city. This in accordance with Chapter 402, Statutes of California, 1931. The Santa Fe Railway Company, by letter, asked the council to properly grade the city road leading to the cottonseed plant, at Bay Boulevard, in order that people will stop crossing the land of the Santa Fe. Referred to the City Engineer for action. (City Council Minutes, Jan. 5, 1932.)

1932/11/01 - A proposition having been made to this city by the Receiver of the above mentioned organization, to sell to the city the cottonseed plant wharf at that plant for the sum of \$100. Feb. 7, 1933: City ruled that the Hercules Powder Company is responsible for the wharf Feb. 20, 1933: It develops that a transfer of the franchise from the Hercules Powder Company to the San Diego Oil Products Corporation, had been approved by the State Harbor Board in 1925, but He is still responsible for rental of the Tidelands, and will pay a lump sum of \$700 on this matter. Hercules franchise on the wharf cancelled Apr. 4, 1933, and wharf turned over to the city. (City Council Minutes, Nov. 1, 1932.)

1933/05/02 - Mr. Clem Stose, of San Diego, who had offered to take over the cottonseed plant wharf, wrecking it for the material to be salvaged, appeared and renewed his offer, including the offer to hire Chula Vista unemployed for this work, except his foreman and pile pulling crew. He agreed to give the city 500 10-inch pipe for use as culverts. (City Council Minutes, May 2, 1933.)

1934/03/30 - The old Hercules Powder wharf was sold to San Diego Marine Construction Co. and is being shipped to Scammon's lagoon 250 miles south. (Chula Vista Star, Mar. 30, 1934.)

CALIFORNIA CARBON 1925-1929

More industrial development took place in the 1920s south of the Oil Products plant. California Carbon and Pacific Marine Chemical built kelp extraction plant on the foot of F Street, using the old Yacht Club pier.



The aerial photograph of 1928 shows the Oil Products plant on Gunpowder Point and the long pier built in 1916 by the Hercules company. At the bottom of the photo is the Pacific Marine Chemical plant and the old Yacht Club pier. Railroad spurs are shown cruing off F Street and to the Oil Products plant from the Coronado Belt Line Railroad that taken over by John D. Spreckels and renamed the San Diego & Southeastern Railroad. The San Diego & Arizona railroad built by Spreckels in 1919 is at the far right of the photo. Several orchards of lemon trees can be seen between the two railroad lines.

1925/07/17 - California Carbon Co. acquired an addition to its factory site of 10 acres leasing from E. Cardinale the former property of the Chula Vista Yacht Club consisting of the pier going out from F Street and one acre of land on the north side of F Street. (Chula Vista Star July 17, 1950.)

1926/01/08 - The manufacture of carbon will be begun at the California Carbon Company plant on the Chula Vista bay front at F Street next week. A. H. Beckman, manager and industrial engineer for the company is installing equipment, and the depositing chambers and dryers for the kelp laid on concrete foundations. Offices and laboratory have been built. Two kinds of carbon will be produced, one kind is used in refining of sugar, another kind used in paints and cement. J. H. Beckman is VP of the company. (Chula Vista Star, Jan. 8, 1926)

1928/01/12 - A building permit for \$10,000 was issued today to the Pacific Marine Chemical corporation at the foot of F Street. The company will extract potassium iodine, acids and salts from kelp. Operation of the plant is expected in about 60 days, when the first unit capable of handling 100 tons of raw kelp daily will be completed. (The San Diego Union, Jan. 12, 1928)

AIRPORT 1922-1966

Two small airports were located near Gunpowder Point. The Chula Vista Airport of the Tyce brothers was located below G Street in Chula Vista, on the same site as the Rohr Aircraft plant. The National City Airport was northeast of Gunpowder Point in the Sweetwater River valley, on the same site as the old Sweetwater Race Track.



The National City Airport is at the bottom of this photo taken in the mid-1950s that looks to the south, with National Avenue at left and the four-lane Montgomery Freeway. Gunpowder Point is at the upper right and the salt ponds at the far end of the bay at top.

Roland Tyce, born in 1902, and his brother, Robert, lived with their parents in Chula Vista in 1921. Their father owned the Tycrete Chemical Company near western end of G Street near the bay. The young men bought some surplus Curtiss Jenny components and built up an airplane. Navy Chief Petty Officer Jack taught them to fly. They flew from the area south of G Street, and opposite the Tycrete Company, land described as Santa Fe tract. A surplus Thomas Morse joined their squadron. The graded strip measured 1800 feet and was crosswind most of the time. In 1925 the brothers helped organize the Chula Vista Aeron Club, perhaps the first flying club in the San Diego area. President was Joe Crosson, to become famous as an Alaskan pilot. Dan Burnett became Vice President. Later, Burnett helped build Lindbergh's famed Ryan Spirit of St. Louis airplane. Rollie Tyce got the job as Secretary. The club flew two Jennys. Historically had a short life and wasn't as profit-making as the Tyce brothers hoped. The Tyce School of Aviation began about 1930 at the same address, 850 G Street. Rollie's logbook listed several airplanes including a Lincoln PT, two PTKs, an Aeronca, a Buhl, a Great Lake 2-T, and a Fleet biplane. Late in 1940, Rohr Aircraft Company bought ten acres of Santa Fe tract from a willing Chula Vista city government and began erecting the buildings that represent Rohr Industries today. Rollie Tyce, the flying school to Lindbergh Field. Chula Vista Airport vanished from subsequent San Diego City Directories. ("South Bay Airfields," Family, Friends, and History, pp. 506-507.)

1933 - The National City airport has been on rented land of the estate of Thomas Sharp since 1933. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 4, 1960.)

1945/08/29 - Breise Flying Service is located at the National City Airport (The San Diego Union, Aug. 29, 1945)

1946/01/15 - County Board Bans Chula Vista Airport Move. Asserting that they did "not want their chimneys knocked down, then babies disturbed and property values jeopardized," more than a score of Chula Vista residents successfully protested to the county supervisors yesterday against the proposed transfer of the Trim airport from the west to the east side of Highway 101 on the boundary between National City and Chula Vista. Aaron Reisling, Chula Vista councilman, said the council was unanimously opposed to moving the airport because Chula Vista is planning to construct a playground nearby, and children would be endangered. Two petitions containing the names of more than 90 property owners and opposing the change in sites were filed with the supervisors. On motion of Supervisor DeGraff Austin and seconded by Dean Howell, the board unanimously rescinded its action of last November granting a zone variance to Trim which would have permitted him to move his planes and hangar across the highway. Angered by the outcome of the hearing, Trim told newsmen he may abandon the airport and establish a hog ranch on the property. (The San Diego Union, Jan. 15, 1946.)

1950/08/10 - National City is annexing 104 acres strip to C St, including the National City airport strip owned by T. S. Sharp of San Diego. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 10, 1950.)

1953/11/05 - Carly Madsen Early Flying Instructor In South Bay Area. In the middle and late thirties one of the main centers of the then drowsy community

National City and Chula Vista was the National City airport run by the popular Carly Madson. Here gathered aspiring young aviators from the South Bay and learned the ABCs of flying from Carly and his staff of instructors. Among the budding flyers taught by Carly were such well-known birdmen as Chuck Wolfe of Wolfe Airpark; Bill Gibbs of Gibbs Flying Service; Gerald Dennis of El Cajon Flying Service; Jack Dowdle of Swift Air Service at Lindbergh Field and Fred now running the National City Airport. Others who learned the secrets of the airways from Carly were Judge Clarence Terry of the San Diego Municipal Court and John Dougherty, the famous "Flying Deputy" of the San Diego Sheriff's Dept. Both Terry and Dougherty lost their lives during the Second World War. When Carly first came to National City he found the airport in dire need of improvement. The runway was barely long enough to accommodate even the smallest aircraft and there were no lights for night flying. Carly brought his hangar with him when he set up the local airport by dismantling the one used at the Linda Vista Airport which had operated since 1933. Camp Elliott now stands on the site of that old flying field. With the improvements to the field completed Carly soon found that he had Mecca for all the air-minded youths of the surrounding area. The demand for more and more instruction enabled Carly to steadily expand the facilities of the airport and to improve the field accordingly. Although instruction was the main business, Carly also took countless sightseers on scenic trips around San Diego Bay and many a young couple to Yuma to tie the marital knot. One of the biggest events in the life of the South Bay residents at that time was the parachute jump held at the field. At about 3 pm each Sunday a daredevil chutist would leap from a plane circling over the airport, thrilling the thousands of spectators who gathered on the highway and on the bluffs of the valley. When the war broke out all civilian airports on the coast were ordered closed and Madson was forced to leave the fruits of many years labor. The field soon degenerated into a cow pasture with cattle grazing where once planes had taxied. Carly then went to Long Beach and became a test pilot for Douglas, working the kinks out of such famous aircraft as the A-20 "Bostons," B-17 "Fortresses," C-47 "Dakotas," and A-26 "Invaders" in the war he was called to Dallas, Texas, where he flew for Lockheed, testing the P-38 "Lightning." While flying one of these, it disintegrated in mid-air for Carly to bail out. The great speed at which he was traveling ripped a section out of his parachute and he hit the ground with such force that he injured his back seriously. After cessation of hostilities, Carly returned to Chula Vista, flying for some time with Pacific Southwest Airlines. He is now in the appliance business in Chula Vista but manages to fly enough to maintain his prized instructor's rating. In the 23 years he has been flying Carly has had many thrilling and humorous experiences. In the latter vein he recalled the method he utilized to replenish the gasoline supply at the airport. When more gasoline was needed he would fly the aircraft over the bulk oil plant run by Dick Wilson and proceed to circle the area until he had attracted the attention of Wilson. He would then cut the engine and yell that he was out of gasoline at the airport and needed half a dozen barrels right away. "Save me the trouble of phoning," Carly explained. (Aviation Anniversary Edition, Chula Vista Star, Nov. 5, 1953.)

1953/11/05 - Red Campbell, defender of Singapore, got his license at National City airport from Carly Madsen 1938, enlisted in the RAF Aug. 1940, sent to the Squadron 121, the second Eagle Squadron that was made up of many Southern California boys, flew the Hawker Hurricane, in Nov. 1941 sent to Gibraltar await the carrier Ark Royal that was supposed to take him to Singapore, but was sunk days earlier, learned of Pearl Harbor while waiting at Gibraltar, then a New Zealand Squadron 258 and sent to Singapore, fell to Japanese, sent to Sumatra, then to Java by boat and truck, found a handful of planes to fly against the Japanese, attacked a fleet of 200 enemy planes with three others, was shot down into jungle, fled to hills to fight with guerillas, captured Mar. 25, 1942, released VJ Day to British hospital, now employed by SDGE and lives in Lemon Grove. (Aviation Anniversary Edition, Chula Vista Star, Nov. 5, 1953.)

1954/09/16 - Homeowners between 4th and National protested low-flying planes from National City airport. Troy Smith of 69 Smith St showed a picture of that dropped into 5th Avenue. (Chula Vista Star-News, Sept. 16, 1954.)

1954/12/09 - Byron Jacquot and Vernon Bowman take over National City airport. (Chula Vista Star-News, Dec. 9, 1954.)

1955/02/03 - National City airport is in the flat lands west of National Ave bet Chula Vista and National City, has 25 private planes based at the airport owned by Byron Jacquot and Vernon Bowman, skipper of the tuna boat The American Beauty. Jacquot met Bowman when he was flying for him as a fish spotter. Prior Jacquot spent 3 years as civilian instructor for AF cadets at Tucson AZ (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb. 3, 1955.)



EXPANSION—That's what was made possible last week by the C-47 Division 11.1 of the Naval Reserve, when they moved two Quonset huts to National City airport to be used as offices and classrooms for Civil Air Patrol Squadron 83. The squadron boasts 40 members and 25 cadets, plus three vehicles and a plane.



BOB ABRAMS GETS READY TO TAKE OFF ON SEARCH FOR LOST BALLOONIST In the cockpit of pre-war Air Force plane is Lee Louis, KOGO-TV cameraman.

On the left, Quonset huts being moved to National City airport for use by Civil Air Patrol Squadron 83 (Chula Vista Star-News, Dec. 6, 1956.) On the right, Bob Abrams of 83 prepares to search for a lost balloonist. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan. 23, 1964.)

1958/02/20 - Big 40-foot high hangar built at NC airport, with wood, shaped like Quonset hut. (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb. 20, 1958.)

1960/07/24 - National City to annex 100 acres south of its city limits for an airport. (Chula Vista Star-News, July 24, 1960.)

1960/08/03 - Chamber Groups Backing Airport. (photo) Discussing possibilities for South Bay Airport are. from left, Dale Faris, National City Chamber of Commerce industrial development chairman; Wallace Hartin, Chula Vista harbor commissioner; Byron Jacquot, airport manager; Walter F. Hodge, National City Gene Gosch, Chula Vista. Airport enthusiasts from Chula Vista, National City and San Diego overflowed National City Airport cafe for breakfast yesterday any move to continue a South Bay Airport. The meeting, called by Chamber of Commerce groups, adjourned to the afternoon City Council meeting in National City and in the evening to the Chula Vista City Council. The group asked a joint committee study of possibility of the airport continuing as a South Bay or Twin City Airport. The land on which the South Bay Airport Co. operates the 40-acre field is for sale with 68 more Sweetwater Valley acres. It is part of the estate of Thomas Sharp and an auction is scheduled at 10 a.m. Aug. 12 in Superior Court. The estate has received a \$486,000 offer. The delegation to the city councils include Walter F. Hodge, former mayor; Donald Norman, Dawson Smith and Clinton Matthews, also a former mayor, of National City. Others were Robert Keyes, Lawrence Kuebler, Wallace Hartin, a harbor commissioner. Gene Gosch, chamber manager, J. D. Peters, Jack Lester and H. C. Emerson of Chula Vista. Mayor Thelma Hollingsworth of National City appointed Councilmember Cecil F. Allen, harbor committee chairman, and Luther G. Reid and City Manager James A. Bird to make study. Hodge said the airport would serve small businessmen. Emerson, a Rohr Aircraft Corp. official, said large firms also are interested. Diego Xavier, a tugboat pilot, said a fleet of 30 tuna seaplanes could use the river channel planned nearby. (San Diego Union, Aug. 3, 1960)

1960/08/04 - National City and Chula Vista to discuss new airport; the National City airport has been on rented land of the estate of Thomas Sharp since 1932. Byron Jacquot, airport manager. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 4, 1960.)

1960/08/04 - A two-city airport was discussed by leaders from National City and Chula Vista, as National City airport to lose its lease due to sale of land by Thomas Sharp. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 4, 1960.)

1960/08/14 - National City Airport sold for \$486,000 to John Sachs and Edward Weerts, purchased from the Sharp estate, will be developed as commercial airport and M Management Co. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 14, 1960.)

1964/01/24 - Robert Abrams is a Chula Vista resident, and is owner of the Chula Vista Clinical Laboratories. Bob is a pilot and squadron operations officer. deputy commander of the search and rescue mission, flying his own plane, a North American AT-6, a pre-war Air Force training aircraft. His plane and other the South Bay Civilian Air Patrol Squadron 83 were among dozens of military and private aircraft aloft fruitlessly searching land and sea for a woman balloon who had vanished in a rain cloud over stormy Catalina Channel. The downed orange and white balloon and the body of Mrs. Barbara Keith, 42, a Hartford, grandmother of 10, was picked up out of the sea Monday afternoon, 26 miles from where eight hot-air balloonists had taken off on Catalina Island to race to California mainland. One racer made it to land. Six others were pulled alive from the ocean. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan. 24, 1964)

1964/08/17 - National City Airport Due To Be Sold, Closed. Industrial Zone Use Possible. The last privately owned airport in San Diego County, believed by Chula Vista and National City officials to be highly important to their communities, apparently will be sold soon and closed. Realtor A. W. Stephens of San Diego "large" Los Angeles group probably will buy the 108-acre National City Airport, which lies in the unincorporated area bounded by National City, Chula Vista, National Avenue and Montgomery Freeway. "A very large Los Angeles outfit is real interested in the airport land," Stephens said. "We'll probably have an announcement within two weeks." Stephens said the firm recently bought other lands from him and has fill dirt necessary to build up the low-lying airport. "The airport probably will develop an industrial zone," Stephens said. "They might keep the landing strip for use of men in the industrial site with planes. But as an airport facility probably will be closed." Owner Ed Weerts of San Diego will sell the land for \$1,750,000. Stephens said. Weerts and John Sachs of San Diego bought the airport four years ago. Sachs sold out to Weerts. Byron Jacquot has owned the airport franchise since 1954. "I want to see the airport stay, no matter who owns the land," said Jacquot, long-time South Bay aviation figure. If a city owned it, the airport wouldn't be a money-maker as such. But revenue filters from numerous sources: Taxis, motels, hotels, restaurants. "This airport is handy for businessmen in Chula Vista and National City, and is essential to both communities." Because of possible channeling of the Sweetwater River and proposed state freeway construction, Jacquot operates on a month-to-month lease. "I hope no one expects me to invest money here when the lease is the way it is," Jacquot said. "But with a 10-year lease, say, a man could build T-hangars to rent, bring in a good restaurant and maybe put in a golf driving range and extend the runway to 3,000 feet, so commercial two-engined planes could be handled. "The land-owner as well as owner could derive some nice revenue then." Airport facilities consist of three large hangars, a small cafe and four small quonset huts. "I used to have 65-70 based here," Jacquot said. "But a lot of owners took them away because of the dust and dirt. Now I have 47. But I could tie down 275 if the place were fixed." Jacquot said the airport, built in 1932, is the oldest in the county other than Lindbergh Field, and is the last privately owned. The airport's asphalt runway is 12,400 feet. National City Mayor Richard E. Gautreaux said his city would be interested in buying the airport as a joint venture with Chula Vista. Both cities passed resolutions recommending that the river be channeled through the middle of the property. This would kill the airport. The cities and the Unified Port District asked the Army Corps of Engineers to make a study on feasibility channel location. (San Diego Union, Aug. 17, 1964)

1966 - Between 1954 and 1966 Byron Jacquot owned and operated the National City Airport. The facility was closed in 1966 to make room for industrial development. and Jacquot moved his flying service to Brown Field. In 1967, he was elected to the board of directors of the Otay Municipal Water District representing residents in the Otay Mesa area. During WWII Jacquot served aboard an aircraft carrier operating in the Pacific area where he saw considerable duty. His mother Josephine, a well-known local artist, has lived in Chula Vista 47 years. (Scrapbook clipping, Pacific Southwest Association of Realtors Area, Chula Vista, CA.)

FARMING 1938-1979



Workers pick tomatoes near the bayfront (Chula Vista Star-News, June 17, 1973)

1938 - Subaru Muraoka emigrated from Japan in 1916 and married Haruko Miura in Hawaii in 1927 who was an American citizen born in Hawaii. Roy Mui born in 1930, in the family home at 844 1st Ave. The family was able to own land because Haruko was an American citizen. It was 12 acres planted in lemo provided a cash income for the family, paid by the Sunkist coop one year after harvest. They also leased land at Gunpowder Point 1938-41 where cattle had compacted the soil. They were able to keep the land during WW2 internment, was held by Laubmayer, and Haruko sold it sometime during the war. Subaru went to a camp in Montana, then to Crystal City, Texas where he joined the family that had been sent first to Poston. After the war, they returned to Chula V were fortunate to have money to start over. They leased land around 1st Ave between Palomar and Orange. At Gunpowder Point, the water was severely red the 1960s when National City drilled wells in the Sweetwater Valley. This was north of the farms leased by Sam Vener and by "Nakaji" [prob Takidje Hirai : wife Matzumo, a rancher with house at 150 Bay blvd]. Roy does not recall the dump at Bay Blvd and D St., but does remember the dump in the center of to Parkway is today, and the smell from the black smoke when in burned. (Roy Muraoka, interview, July 20, 2010.)

1941/06/20 - Joe Schadek, a salty and picturesque character along the waterfront for the past 20 years, recently purchased 76 acres of land bordering CV's st which since 1932 has contained a number of weather-beaten and unoccupied buildings that, ghostlike in appearances, have merely served as silent monumer earlier era of industrial activity and success. During WWI this site located at the foot of D St served the most vital units of our then national defense program harvested kelp to make potash for munitions. Ten years later, it was a cottonseed plant. "Once again the CV water front became a bee-hive of industrial acti an army of men at work and funnels of smoke from the former potash buildings casting shadows of smoke over the blue waters of the bay." Until 1932 wher cottonseed plant closed. Now, Schadek is laying sewer mains, replacing water mains, grading, tearing down, building up. He is removing the mammoth pota 340 x 100 ft. and he wants to dredge a channel 50 ft wide and 1500 ft long to where there is a natural yacht harbor site." (Chula Vista Star, June 20, 1941.)

1941/08/11 - Joe Schadek, who recently purchased the property known as the California Cotton Oil Products plant, requested that the road which leads into l be straightened and repaired at the earliest opportunity. Street Commissioner Perkins having previously examined the road assured Mr. Schadek that as soon was available the road would be properly repaired. (City Council Minutes, Oct. 14, 1941.)

1942 - Fred James was born in National City in 1939, is a retired school teacher CVHS. Grandfather was Fred William James who came to NC 1912 from E founded the F W James Nursery at 5th and National in NC, a location that is now just east of I-5 freeway, also had big flower store on National Avenue. Fred was Edward E. James, born 1911 in England. Fred's father's older brother was George James, partner in nursery. Edward E. James operated a farm on Gunpo Point 1942 to ca 1950, had been a Japanese farm before location, was asked to take over operation of farm by Walter Benny, Agriculture Inspector. Edward l also had farm out 8th St in NC, 32 acres below Wellington Castles in Paradise Valley, until ca 1959. Edward E. James farmed celery along F St, sold celery t in WWII. (Fred James interview Apr. 27, 2009, Chula Vista, CA.)

1946 - Cozza Farms, 1st farm of Frank and Jim Cozza, was located on Gunpowder Point. The farm at the end of D Street owned by & leased from Santa Fe from 1946 to 1954. Frank Cozza & Sam Hasegawa managed the farm, and Jim Cozza and Tosh Hasegawa managed the produce end in LA. The Hasegawas Kinzaburo - also farmed at the Chula Vista site until his death in the early 1950's. The main crop was tomatos, but included other truck farm vegetables durin other seasons (e.g., lettuce, cucumbers, etc.). In 1954 this lease expired & Cozza Farms was outbid by Sam Vener. Cozza Farms purchased the old C.S. How farm above & below San Ysidro Blvd. in 1954. (email from Sumiyo E. Kastelic, daughter of Tosh Hasegawa, May 16, 2012

1955/06/30 - Sam Vener farm offices were located at end of E Street. (Chula Vista Star-News, June 30, 1955.)

1956 - Ben Segawa sprayed the farms of Sam Vener who had a large farm 100 acres near the bayfront where Anthony's is today, liked to have Japanese fore: his Mexican farm workers. Henry Nagachi was a foreman in the 1960s and 1970s. (Segawa interview, Feb. 17, 2010.)

1964/04/30 - Argentina Gardano from Chula Vista's sister city of General Roca in Argentina visits the 100-acre tomato farm of Vener at end of E Street (Ch Star-News, Apr. 30, 1964.)



Vener farm packing labels Venco and Deb (named after Vener's daughter Debbie) from the collection of Ben Segawa.
The photo of Sam Vener is from the San Diego Union, Dec. 26, 1965.

1965/12/26 - Faced with soaring production costs and an uncertain labor supply, the South Bay's multimillion dollar fresh tomato crop is apparently on the verge of slipping into plastic greenhouses. Two factors are shaping the trend. One is climate control in the hothouse, the other is the fact that three times as many plants are set out in the greenhouse as in the field. Together, according to Samuel S. Vener, large scale grower, packer, and shipper, these will jump production in the greenhouse to nearly eight times what it is in the open field. During recent heavy rains when it was impossible to pick in the field, the Vener company was harvesting and shipping regularly from its 33 new plastic greenhouses, covering about three acres. Vener says that during part of November and December the South Bay has been a fresh tomato market to itself. The price was high, and storm loss to the industry in the county may run as high as \$15 million. It will be at least \$10 million in December. Doing research as he grew his first crop in his hothouses, Vener says some problems cropped up, but nothing that cannot be overcome. He believes that soon not all of the South Bay tomato industry will be grown in polyethylene greenhouses. Vener himself plans early expansion of his hothouse ranges. "The tomato must move from the extensive to intensive farming," Vener says. Plastic hothouses appear to be the answer. Because he can grow more on less acreage, less land is used. One acre of field grown tomatoes should produce 2,000 flats or about 40,000 pounds, but these will not all be No. 1s. Vener says. But in plastic hothouses, an acre can yield 300,000 pounds of fruit, all top quality. "We made some mistakes the first year, but the potential is there," Vener says. There are many advantages, he points out. Workers can be employed the year round. Weather won't stop work on planting, cultivating, picking. Nor will it interfere appreciably with production. Working conditions are more pleasant in the greenhouse. Sustained cloudy weather might slow development of the fruit some, but climate can be completely controlled, he says. Heat, humidity, and cooling are all automatically controlled in his houses. Automation reflects a 90 to 95 per cent control. At 12,000 tomato plants can be crowded onto an acre in the hothouse, compared to 4,000 in the field. Plants are tied and trained to grow up a cord. In preparing for greenhouse growing soil must be totally fumigated for various maladies and pests, and this expense can run as high as \$1,000 per acre. Vener says. Basic nutrients are added to build the type of soil best suited to greenhouse production. Plants may be closer together because they do not need the usual amount of spreading for protection from the elements. Irrigation is semi-automated. Fertilizer can be applied simultaneously, although some is done manually. Soil and leaf samples are taken two to four times a month. Vener has designed his houses so that ends can be removed to allow tractors to go in and pull out old plants. Under his program 300,000 tomatoes will be planted in February for harvest from mid-April to August, about five months. Another planting is scheduled in late September for harvest beginning in mid-November and continuing through January. Selection of varieties is much more important than for field grown fruit, he says. Vener says that a 50-acre production in the fall would be 15 million pounds of tomatoes at a minimum net back to the grower, after packing, of 20 cents per pound. Recently the figure has run as high as 40 cents per pound after packing. Vener says this would mean a return of \$60,000 per acre on greenhouse tomatoes. Cost of production, including planting, soil control, growing, and harvesting will total \$7,500 to \$10,000 per acre not counting a heavy capital investment, he says. Vener expects the next advance will be the use of computers to assist in the analysis of greenhouse economics in the growing of tomatoes. If the farm is well managed in the first place, computers may even be more productive. (photo) Sam Vener inspects some of the crop which was grown in one of his 33 greenhouses which are covered by sheets of polyethylene. San Diego Union, Dec. 26, 1965)

1975/08/04 - Samuel S. Vener opened his fields to the public; Vener's 25-yr old son Louis, a graduate of the UC Davis, said the season for early tomatoes had begun and his father decided to let the public harvest about 40 acres of "choice table tomatoes" (San Diego Union, Aug. 4, 1975)



Free tomatoes...there for the picking. And entire families get into the act. A loaded truck in the foreground, the Vitalepota family (above) gathers tomatoes in Sam Vener's field to the public Saturday and Sunday. Augusta Carter (right) walks away with an armload, while Harold Jensen (below) fills up boxes to help feed his three adopted children. 1,000 people turned out to pick the red tomatoes when Vener opened his Chula Vista fields. His foreman explained that it was no longer profitable to send pickers into the field as many tomatoes remained. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 7, 1975.)

1977/04/07 - "Attack of the killer Tomatoes" film to be released July or August, produced by John DeBello, Costa Dillon, Steve Peace, seniors at BVHS on \$100,000. From 1930 until the middle 1970s, the land on Gunpowder Point was used for farming. There were four farmhouses, a bunkhouse and a cafeteria with a tortilla-making machine. The tomato fields became a convenient stage for a young filmmaker named Steve Peace. In 1974, Peace and friends filmed a movie in the fields and at the neighboring Rohr Corp. plant, now owned by B.F. Goodrich. They had permission to film at Rohr, but not on the fields, so they resorted to filming in the fields. "It was just run and gun," recalled Peace. The film, a spoof called "Attack of the Killer Tomatoes," became a cult classic and spawned sequels and a cartoon show. And today Peace is a state senator who represents Chula Vista, among other cities. The farming eventually ended, and the bay-front site became an illegal dumping ground. Hundreds of tons of trash was later removed, and in the early 1980s the city created the Chula Vista Nature Center. (San Diego Union Tribune, Dec 15, 1999, and Bonita Post, Apr. 7, 1977.)

1979/04/01 - An era ended in Chula Vista this week. Bayfront farmlands operated by Sam Vener are now fallow, perhaps waiting for Chula Vista's bayfront redevelopment. \$1.9 million worth of Vener's farm equipment has been auctioned off. While reasons for the farm's closing are somewhat shrouded in mystery, it was no secret that every piece of equipment associated with the Vener farm was up for sale. Prospective buyers came from all around, Nevada and Baja, to eye trucks, tractors, a complete tomato packing line, even redwood stakes. Some 250 in all, clad in boots and cowboy hats, pointed fingers at auctioneers as they bid for farm implements. A spokesman with the auctioneers said 860 lots of goods, with as many as 40 items to a lot, were up for grabs at the auction. But the closing of Vener's farm marks the end of a 33-year Chula Vista tradition. The 82-year-old Dallas Texan came to California in 1941, eventually coming to the South Bay in 1946. A former director of the Western Growers Assn., Vener was also a member of the Chula Vista Commission, founder of Temple Beth Shalom and an unsuccessful candidate for Congress in a 1966 election bid against Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin, D- Chula Vista. After that election bid, Vener gained backing from then movie star and gubernatorial candidate Ronald Reagan, who supported the plan to dedicate land for school facilities under certain conditions at no cost to the school districts. Developers would have to give the districts a hand if overcrowding. But so far neither has decided whether they'll need the developer's help. The Chula Vista district owns three unused 10-acre sites east of 805. One is south of J Street, just west of the Rancho; another is at the end of H with Vener's campaign ads. The city's bayfront redevelopment plans call for housing and park lands along Vener's 25 acres located at the foot of E St., and while Vener apparently will hang on to the land, the closing of his farm does eliminate one obstacle. Both Vener and Santa Fe are adjacent landowners, were recently dealt a setback in their inverse condemnation suit against the city. Both are seeking damages from the city for a down-zoning of their property that limited what the land could be used for. A recent state Supreme Court ruling held that a landowner may not recover damages by charging that down-zoning of his property is a roundabout condemnation. City Attorney Don Lindberg says he will try to have the two suits dismissed. Both Vener's and Santa Fe lands are part of areas slated for commercial and tourist bayfront facilities. (Chula Vista Star-News, Apr. 1, 1979.)

SEAPLANE BASE 1941-1957



A Consolidated PB2Y3 is hauled up the seaplane ramp at Rohr for conversion to carry cargo in June 1943.

1941/04/18 - Seaplane base: "The amount of \$2,381,820 was the accepted bid of the Case Construction Co. and the American Concrete and Steel Pipe Co. for the building of the new naval seaplane base which will be located directly opposite Chula Vista on the bay side of the Coronado strand." (Chula Vista Star, Apr, 1941.)

1943/10/08 - Rohr announced will spend \$650,000 to build seaplane base repair unit. (Chula Vista Star, Oct. 8, 1943.)

1946/03/17 - The dredging of the projected seaplane base in south San Diego Bay was completed on March 17. This project produced 22,000,000 cubic yards of material which was placed along both sides of the Silver Strand. (Reupsch, Carl F., "Port of San Diego)

1952/07/22 - Navy has designated a 24-acre area in San Diego Bay from a point near National City to Chula Vista as a restricted seaplane base. (San Diego Union, July 22, 1952)

1953/11/20 - There are "persistent rumors" that the Navy plans to take over a 250-acre area on the Silver Strand for a seaplane ramp. (San Diego Union, Nov. 20, 1953)

1954/01/06 - Navy has plans to develop seaplane operating lanes in San Diego Bay. (San Diego Union, Jan. 6, 1954)

1955/11/08 - Cmdr. N. A. Johnson, chief of staff to the commander of naval airbases, 11th and 12th Naval districts, said the Navy plans to build a \$34 million seaplane base in the South Bay. The first increment of \$20.5 million to dredge and build facilities between the Amphibious Base and fence line on the Silver Strand will be made in 1957. The Navy contemplates a ship channel in the South Bay and will move its seaplane operations from off North Island to the South Bay. Aircraft traffic pattern will not affect National City or Chula Vista but will have a detrimental effect on Rancho Carillo which is being developed on the Silver Strand by the City of Coronado. (San Diego Union, Nov. 8, 1955)

1956/12/20 - One Seadrome runway in the bay to be closed. (San Diego Union, Dec. 20, 1956)

1957/01/28 - Navy to spend \$5 million to dredge bay for relocated seaplane base in center of bay. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan. 28, 1957.)

1957/02/15 - Bob Wilson (R-Chula Vista) favors \$12 million plan to dredge San Diego bay for a seadrome, although IB and Coronado are opposed. (San Diego Union, Feb. 15, 1957)

1957/05/28 - A letter was read from the Planning Commission requesting that Mr. Wesley Mohr be retained to represent the City in coordinating our plans for development with the San Diego Gas & Electric Company and Rohr Aircraft. Mr. Mohr explained that because of changes in the Navy's Seaplane base plan: now be necessary for the Gas Company to do their own dredging, and as Rohr Aircraft was also planning dredging operations, it behooved the City to take full advantage of these dredging operations by negotiation with these Companies. Due to the time element the Gas Company was of the opinion discussions by 10 groups representing several bodies would not be feasible. It was moved by Councilman Dillon, seconded by Councilman DeWolfe, and carried, that the Mohr and Plourde Company be hired for a period not to exceed 100 hours at \$10 per hour for negotiating with the Gas Company and Rohr Aircraft on their dredging operations; the money to be appropriated from unappropriated surplus of the General Fund. The motion carried. (City Council Minutes, May 28, 1957.)

1957/05/30 - Chula Vista wants to dredge a deep water channel, with SDGE and Rohr. SDGE had planned to get cooling water from seaplane base off the Silver Strand Channel, but Congress withdrew appropriations. Now, it plans to get cooling water from deep water channel. Rohr wants to dredge and create a 25-acre fill of tidelands. (San Diego Union, May 30, 1957)

BAYFRONT REDEVELOPMENT 1957-Present



National City's 24th Street Marine Terminal was created by the diking that began in 1957 and the creation of the Unified Port District in 1962.

1957/04/04 - Mohr report of 82 pages delivered to Chula Vista city council, titled "The Integrated Master Plan for Industrial Development of the South Bay". It recommends Chula Vista dike the water front near Gunpowder Point, then down to G Street. The dike would allow several hundred acres of filled tideland created, and industry to locate there. (Chula Vista Star-News, Apr. 4, 1957.)

1957/09/12 - City Council voted \$20,000 to begin diking of Gunpowder Point in coop with Santa Fe Railroad, as recommended in the Mohr report. (Chula Vista Star-News, Sept. 12, 1957.) This diking north of the Sweetwater river created the 24th Street Maritime-Industrial Complex in National City dedicated October 29, 1968.

1957/11/19 - 1st mention of phrase "Gunpowder Point" (San Diego Union, Nov. 19, 1957)

1959/06/25 - A small boat marine possible for Chula Vista bayfront at Gunpowder Point abandoned loading slip. City budget has allocated \$3000 for a launching ramp. State Division of Small Craft Harbors approved Chula Vista plan for a boat launching area, and hoped a larger marina in the south bay could be developed. (Chula Vista Star-News, June 25, 1959.)

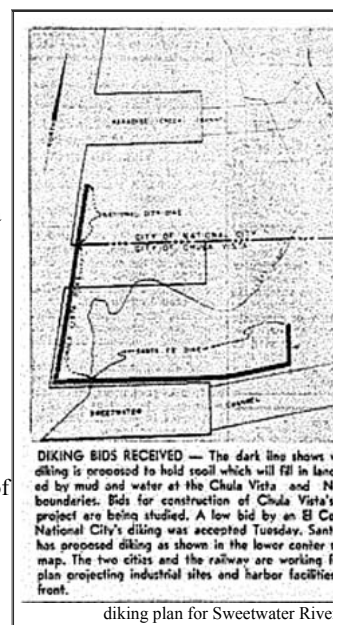
1962/07/05 - Chula Vista now has a boat ramp at G Street, was approved by City Council last year. (The San Diego Union, July 5, 1962)

1962/11/06 - Voters approved the creation of the Unified Port District. (Chula Vista Star-News, Nov. 11, 1962.)

1963/01/03 - The first meeting of the newly created San Diego Unified Port District Board of Port Commissioners met on January 3. This board consists of seven members, three from San Diego and one each from the other four bay cities of Chula Vista, National City, Imperial Beach and Coronado. (Reupsch, "Port of San Diego: its Character and History," unpublished report, April 27, 1970.)

1963/03/17 - Port Director said first job of the new Port District in Chula Vista will be to build a breakwater and protect the boat launching ramp that is in pretty bad shape, and will install a pay telephone on the dock, and will put in center channel markers. The South Bay Boating Club will operate the small boat launch and facility and wants to put up a building. Development of Chula Vista's of tidelands and the \$3 million National City 24th Street marine terminal have top priority in the Port District's master plan. (Chula Vista Star-News, Mar. 17, 19, 1963.)

1964/11/03 - A harbor bond issue in the amount of \$10,870,000 was approved by the voters to permit the construction of a new terminal on Lindbergh Field marine terminal at 24th Street in National City, and to complete Harbor Island. Voters approved bonds Nov. 3. (Reupsch, Carl F., "Port of San Diego: its Character and History," unpublished report, April 27, 1970, in the Office of the District Clerk, San Diego Unified Port District.)



diking plan for Sweetwater River

1965/01/28 - A new Industrial Committee of the NC Chamber of Commerce, led by Frank Anderson, former USC football star and manager of tidelands ch firm Van Waters and Rogers, are preparing for the new 24th street marine terminal. (Chula Vista Star-News Jan. 28, 1965.)

1965/08/22 - Port Authority will seek federal funds to complete National City's 24th street marine terminal. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 22, 1965.)

1967 - The major portion of work to be done in the first phase construction at the National City Marine Terminal was completed. Wharves at the north end of terminal went into the cargo handling operation in November, and the wharves at the south end, called the Sweetwater Berth, received first cargoes of lumber in 1969. Harbor Island became a focal point of interest in 1968 as prospective tenants presented their proposals to the Port District Commission. By the end of one tenant, Far West Services, Inc. had completed construction of three restaurants: one, on pilings at the east end of the island, and two, aboard a Mississippi Riverboat replica moored nearby. Two marinas and one large motel were under construction by year's end, with another hotel slated for ground-breaking in 1969. A lease for another restaurant, to be located on the west end of the Island, also was granted early in 1969. A 5-acre site for a major hotel on the island's still was awaiting a lease award by mid-1969, but with many applicants ready with proposals. The many activities around the Bay demanded further growth by the Port District. Consequently, a \$25.4 million bond issue was submitted to the District voters and approved in November, 1968. The bond issue is to provide funds for a \$10.9 million development of an air terminal expansion at Lindbergh Field; \$4.6 million for construction of a World Trade Center building at the Pacific Highway that also will house the Port District's general offices and \$9.9 million for further development of the National City Marine Terminal and excavation of a deep water channel to South Bay. The strong financial position of the Unified Port District in recent years has permitted a continuing decrease in its tax requirements. The 1968 tax rate was \$.045 per \$100 of assessed valuation as compared with \$.082 per \$100 when the District's first tax rate was levied in 1951. The Board of Port Commissioners have indicated that further decreases are anticipated and that elimination of the tax rate by 1970 or 1971 is a possibility. ("History of the Development of the Port of San Diego," unpublished report, April, 1969, in the Office of the District Clerk, San Diego Unified Port District.)



This 1966 aerial photo shows the result of bay dredging that created the 100-acre National City Marine Terminal fill and the 75-acre Rohr fill.

1967/01/11 - Judge Lawrence Irving orders 188 acres of marshland be turned over to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to permit work to continue on South Bay Freeway. Suit was brought by Sierra Club to save habitat of least tern and light footed clapper rail. January 11, 1987 A:5:1 (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan. 1

1967/03/02 - Sam Vener protested alignment of Tidelands ave from G St north to city limits and of E St west of I-5, through his land used to grow tomatoes. Vista Star-News, Mar. 2, 1967.)

1967/07/30 - Editorial - National City will soon vote on an Area Redevelopment Agency to get fed aid to redevelop 100 acres of undrained wasteland west of Ave bet 18th and 30th, adjacent to the 24th St Marine Terminal; some 200 property owners in this slough; this agency is being opposed by the Home Protection League that is led by a John Bircher and is ag fed aid. (Chula Vista Star-News, July 30, 1967.)

1968/07/28 - Dredging Chula Vista's future J Street Marina will get under way by Sept. 1. (Chula Vista Star-News, July 28, 1968 (illus) A: 4: 1.)

1968/10/06 - Unified Port District officials asked if a Chula Vista showboat would be feasible at the J Street Marina. (Chula Vista Star-News Oct. 6, 1968)

1968/10/10 - Unified Port District took action to improve Chula Vista's tidelands and amended contract for dredging boat channel to serve Chula Vista Marina include \$75,000 for a new dredge and fill project. Dredging will begin next month and will create new jobs, extend channel south along the bay front, and create acres of land at the foot of J Street. (Chula Vista Star News, Oct. 10 and 17, 1968.)

1968/10/31 - Street boat ramp to be closed during for marina. G Street boat ramp open again but boaters look to new marina which is still some 2 years away. Vista Star News, Oct. 31 and Dec. 1, 1968.)

1968/11 - In 1968, the major portion of work to be done in the first phase construction at the National City Marine Terminal was completed. Wharves at the of the terminal went into the cargo handling operation in November, and the wharves at the south end, called the Sweetwater Berth, received first cargoes of April, 1969. ("History and Development of the Port of San Diego," unpublished report, April, 1969, in the Office of the District Clerk, San Diego Unified Port District.)

1968/11/29 - Dredging Nearly Completed In Chula Vista Marina Project. Dredging of 750,000 cubic yards of bay bottom to create 37 acres of land and deep channels off Chula Vista boat ramp and a planned marina will be finished in two weeks. But that is just part of "Operation Big Ooze" to put this South Bay on boat-building and marina maps. The Unified Port District has its work cut out for it. There are many obstacles between now and completion of a \$3 million improvement that may give Chula Vista an attraction to outshine Shelter Island in San Diego. The best bet is it will be about two years. Mother nature been laying down the main obstacle for eons of time, time when Otay and Tia Juana rivers raced and bubbled towards the sea with buckets of slit and the two joined near the present South Bay's south end to create the ooze. "That black organic mud is our big problem," said Rear Adm. James R. Davis, USN Ret., port works officer. He said there is a layer of it 6 and 1/2 feet deep and deeper in places and the port cannot pump it to sea as has been done in many West Coast ports. "We have two ways to get rid of it," said Davis. "We can pump it to the southwest corner of the bay for an enlarged bird sanctuary or dig a huge hole in the bay and bury it." He estimated cost of eliminating the mud alone at from \$500,000 to \$1 million. "We hesitate to give dates for completion of any specific thing in marina area," said Davis. "Target dates become absolute," much as Thanksgiving or Christmas, for boat lovers and community boosters who are waiting. The problems upset the dates." He said dredging operations which closed the G Street boat launching ramp are completed and the ramp is reported and will remain until there is at least a partial marina between the feet of I and J streets. This work provided a deep channel and another six acres of tidelands fill, near the foot of J Street, Davis said, and the Rohr Corp. is considering leasing it. "They want to build 60-foot to 80-foot aluminum boats there," he said. "They are building the Kearny Mesa marina but it is a bit of a problem to get a big boat down from the Mesa and launch it." He said two more years will be needed to do the contemplated tidelands work. He said this includes completion of Tidelands Avenue, other streets, drainage, water and other utilities, fire hydrants, everything to make the usable for industry and nearby recreation. "Work will start soon to push out the south peninsula to enclose the marina area," he said. The present project is planned besides the six acres at G Street another 31 acres near the foot of J Street, mainly for industry. Davis said previous port bond funds were exhausted in present contracts but newly-voted bonds will bring resumption of work. "Eventually Chula Vista will have a marina area with more boat slips than Shelter Island," he will cost somewhere between \$3 million and \$5 million to create, depending on mud and other problems." Asked about a proposal for use of a present San Diego Coronado ferryboat, after the bay bridge opens, as a floating theater, Davis said. (San Diego Union, Nov. 29, 1968)

1968/12/22 - Creation of 100-acre bird sanctuary using mud from dredging for J Street Marina suggested. (Chula Vista Star News, Dec. 22, 1968.)

1969/04/30 - Three Marinas Expected To Spark New Boating Boom. A South Bay boating boom is assured by plans for marinas at Chula Vista, Imperial Beach and Coronado's Silver Strand. Land for the three marinas all of which will have public facilities already has been set aside. At National City, the San Diego Unified Port District recently opened the county's largest small-boat launching ramp. The new ramp, dedicated April 20, is at the 24th Street Marine Terminal and from the mouth of the Sweetwater Flood Control Channel. The 10-lane concrete ramp is 150 feet wide and is complemented by a paved and lighted parking lot, landscaping and rest rooms. Port commissioners are considering a proposal for a maritime park adjacent to the launching ramp for fishing, picnicking and other activities. "I have an idea that this little area is going to turn into about the hottest small-boat facility in the county," a port official said. Previously, the only launching ramp in the South Bay area was the three-lane facility north of the Rohr Corp. plant in Chula Vista. That ramp, said the port official, will be supplemented by a marina planned at the foot of J Street in Chula Vista. When the marina is finished, he said, it will have restaurants, hotels, a small-boat launching ramp and some more than 1,000 yachts. "It will have a land area about the same size as Shelter Island," the official said. Already, 31 acres for the marina have been created from dredging of the bay channel. As soon as federal funds are available to help finance further dredging, three additional land projections will be formed at marina site, the official said. In Imperial Beach, the city is purchasing 40 acres southwest of Ream Field for a public marina to be built in conjunction with a multimilliondollar residential marina planned there. The public marina, in the southern part of the city, will have 316 yacht slips and a small-boat launching ramp, said City Atty. Max Wiza. Fifteen acres of the Coronado Cays residential marina being built on the Silver Strand will be developed for public use. The public probably will be used for a small-boat launching ramp and a park, said the port spokesman. The Coronado and Imperial Beach residential marinas will have homes with private docks. Coronado Cays is scheduled to open in midsummer, but construction has been delayed on the Imperial Beach project because of negotiations over land. Further in the future is a second entrance proposed for the south end of San Diego Bay. Studies are being made to determine how tidal currents will function in the bay if the second opening is made. (San Diego Union, Apr. 30, 1969)

1969/08/07 - San Diego Port Commission reaffirms 1963 county master plan for developing the Chula Vista tidelands. Rohr leases 4.7 acres on Tidelands near J Street Marina for parking lot. Port district commissioners object and want master plan. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 7 and Dec. 21, 1969.)

1969/10/02 - House subcommittee on public works approves appropriation of \$100,000 for dredging of South Bay; \$150,000 for preliminary work on Sweetwater Flood Control Channel. (San Diego Union, Oct. 2, 1969.)

1969/10/05 - Shellmaker, Inc., won contract to dredge bay for new J Street Marina, will take 50,000 yards of mud from marine canyon west of J st and make

east side. (Chula Vista Star-News, Oct. 5, 1969.)



The Chula Vista boat basin was dredged by the San Diego Unified Port District and the dredge materials were used to construct the 72-acre wildlife refuge 2,500 feet east of the harbor. The wildlife refuge in Chula Vista was completed Dec. 1980. The 6-acre Chula Vista Bayside Park was dedicated Nov. 19, 1982. The 237-space Recreational Vehicle first phase (200 slips) of the Chula Vista Marina opened Mar. 11, 1983. The Bayside Park expansion was completed in Chula Vista Apr. 11, 1987, adding three acres of park beach. (San Diego Business Journal, April 28, 2003)

1970 - "The battle to renovate the city's bayfront began in 1970 and is still being fought against an array of opponents ranging from the billion-dollar property company, Santa Fe Industries, to an obscure endangered plant, the salt-marsh bird's beak. Santa Fe Industries, which owns most of the city's bayfront property to create a huge industrial complex on its land to house new customers for Santa Fe's railroad freight business. City officials wanted a mix of parks, housing attractions and industry. A compromise was struck that shrunk Santa Fe's industrial plans and added a waterfront hotel and convention center on Gunpowder Point. One Chula Vista city official whose tenure spans the environmental struggle recalled bitterly that Chula Vista's bayfront development plan predates the creation of the state coastal watchdog agency in 1976, and should have been grandfathered into the state's coastal plan. The official, who requested anonymity because of the Club's suit against the city, charged that Chula Vista has been "penalized and persecuted because we were the last wetland area in the bay that had not been touched upon." Again, a compromise was struck that removed plans for a large convention center and whittled down the proposed 700-room hotel to 400 rooms. Regional state coastal commissions gave grudging approval after extracting environmental guarantees from the city reserving more than 200 acres of the choicest marsh for the least tern and the light-footed clapper rail, two endangered bird species. But the battle did not end there because the city, in order to build a resort hotel on Gunpowder Point, must first build a road across the wetlands area reserved for wildlife. Two federal agencies, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Fish and Wildlife Service, have opposed the roadway. The only way out to the scenic point at present is on foot, via an earthen dike across the marsh. The city also faces a law passed by the Sierra Club, which opposes any development on Gunpowder Point because of its potentially harmful impacts on the last undamaged saltwater marsh remaining on San Diego Bay." ("Chula Vista, County's 2nd Largest City," Los Angeles Times, May 26, 1986.)

1971/01/07 - Building moratorium placed on 400 acre waterfront area. Chula Vista and the Port District are negotiating with consultants Sedway and Cooke to get a contract worked out allowing Sedway and Cooke to study the Tidelands area and the J Street marina. Firm of Sedway and Cooke has been hired for preliminary planning study of tidelands. Port District will pay half the cost. Port District seeks \$1 million in federal funds for dredging and preparing small marina at Chula Vista. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan. 7 and Feb. 14 and Apr. 21 and May 27, 1971.)

1971/08/12 - Preliminary report of Tidelands study by Sedway and Cooke contains no recommendation for future development. The November report by Sedway and Cooke on tidelands recommends industry be discouraged and bayfront be used for recreation. (San Diego Union, Aug. 12, 1971)

1971/11/07 - A preliminary study released last week may be a big turning point in the development of the Chula Vista bayfront. Was commissioned jointly by Chula Vista and the Port District. The first report of the consultant was made last summer. While making no formal policy recommendations, the report indicated that conversion of the area to recreational uses would be economically feasible. (San Diego Union, Nov. 7, 1971)

1971/12/05 - editorial cartoon "Chula Vista Riviera" - Chula Vista is trying to protect and develop its waterfront, stopped by industry 2 years ago, commissioned new study by Sedway & Cooke whose report was issued 2 weeks ago (Chula Vista Star-News, Dec. 5, 1971)

1971/12/05 - "CV's waterfront" editorial - When we were growing up in a big eastern city and foolish enough to believe Chamber of Commerce brochures, our vision of California was one of sandy beaches and a wide-open shoreline . . . a place where pretty girls in bikinis lolled on golden sands under palm trees . . . where one could step out just about anywhere along the vast coast and feel the water running between his toes. We all know that today not much of this is true . . . that most of California's shoreline is barred to the public because it has been snatched up by special interests for subdivisions or factories or speculation or other forms of economic exploitation. Just two weeks ago, a legislative effort to protect what's left was doomed by a state Senate committee in thrall to these special interests. But we are pleased that, in Chula Vista at least, something is being done to protect what shoreline the city has. We are referring to the city's bayfront, that substantial still-undeveloped area flanking the Rohr Industries and San Diego Gas & Electric Co. plants. This has been targeted in the city's and the Unified Port District's master plans for more heavy industry and marine terminals until the present City Council two years ago began to question the wisdom of such development. The council last year clapped a moratorium on any more building in the area. Then it persuaded the port district to join with it in commissioning a new study of potential uses. Sedway & Cooke, an outstanding firm of urban and environmental planners and designers, were commissioned to do the \$48,000 study. Two weeks ago, it made its report. Its conclusion: "Major industrial development should not be promoted." Instead, the planners recommended that much of the area be left in its natural state, and that the rest (except perhaps for the northernmost eroded part adjacent to a proposed flood channel) be used primarily for public recreation, such as hotels, motels and restaurants, and small-scale water-related businesses. Already the sniping has begun. The largest single property owner in the area, the Santa Fe Railroad, doesn't like the idea (naturally, since motels and boat repair shops don't generate much railroad traffic). Suddenly this firm, which obtained this land virtually as a gift from Uncle Sam almost 100 years ago and has let it lie idle ever since, is concerned about Chula Vista's tax base. National City officials, whose concept of heaven is smokestacks belching out city taxes, don't like the idea either; they're afraid that, if adjacent tidelands are left in their natural state, they won't get more freeways leading into their city. But we like the plan. We don't weep for Santa Fe, we're not enamored of freeways and, if there are problems of ingress and egress to National City's new International Telephone & Telegraph cable plant (as the city contends) these should be worked out independently. As for potential tax revenue, Chula Vista already has one of the lowest municipal tax rates in San Diego County. A bayfront saturated with industry might drop it a few pennies lower; maybe it would save the average family 50 cents a year. But if people really want to save money on taxes, they should move to the City of Commerce, where they could live among smokestacks and pay hardly any taxes at all. We like the new waterfront plan because it will provide open space, and because the fast-vanishing waterfront should be for public enjoyment, not private enrichment. We hope that the Chula Vista City Council and Unified Port District do not yield to pressures to emasculate this plan, and that they begin implementing it as soon as possible. (Chula Vista Star-News, Dec.



1972/06/22 - Sedway-Cooke planners oppose industry for future waterfront use. Public response to map proposals drawn up by the Chula Vista planning department for bayfront development was varied this week at an open hearing before the Planning Commission. But the reaction swerved towards favoring either industrial parks. There was little middle ground. The Chula Vista League of Women Voters said it favors the planning department's proposals for the tidelands, but it wants parks. The planning department's maps call for integrating parks, housing, commercial zones and marinas on bayfront lands. Jeanne Hermanson, league president, urged that an area of marshlands suggested for commercial use be made into additional park areas. "We strongly favor the development of the bayfront . . . to the people of Chula Vista as well as the city," she stated. On the other hand, Sam Vener, owner of some 26 acres of tomato-growing land, indicated he wants the area used for industry. Speaking for Vener, Attorney Doug Royer asked that the area remain zoned for industry. Vener has paid high taxes for use of the land. Since he bought it in 1955, according to Royer. He doesn't want to be deprived of a high return when the land is used for industry, stated Royer. He called the mapping of the area for recreational, residential and commercial use "untested," and said the stakes "are entirely too high" for such use. David "Bud" Wilson, head of a Chula Vista Commerce tidelands task force committee, urged the commission to study the Stanford Research Institute study financed by Santa Fe Railroad. But he said the bayfront area is too valuable to be marred by industry. Jim Johnson, treasurer of the South Bay Citizens Planning Committee, said city studies have indicated that 87% of Chula Vista people want public parks and beaches on the bay. He said "an industrial park would be welcome in Chula Vista, but not on the bayfront." (Chula Vista Star News, June 22, 1972.)

1973/01/28 - Anthony's Fish Grotto has announced plans to build a seafood restaurant near Chula Vista's bayfront at the foot of "E" Street. It is the first business to be built on the city's bayfront development plan. (Chula Vista Star News, Jan. 28, 1973.)

1973/04/26 - The Sedway-Cooke Study of Chula Vista's bayfront has been completed and is being distributed by the planning department. The city hopes to stand on the Sedway-Cooke study before May 19 when a 90-day moratorium on bayfront development will end; several projects on E st. are being delayed, including two restaurants and a motel complex. (Chula Vista Star-News, Apr. 26, 1973.)

1973/05/20 - The Chula Vista City Council has extended a moratorium on building on the bayfront lands for another three months and has asked the Planning Commission to open rezoning hearings on the property now designated for industrial use. The Chula Vista Planning Commission has embarked on a campaign to force land developers to build unique projects in the city's bayfront area. (Chula Vista Star-News, May 20, 1973.)



Sam Vener was exempted from the bayfront moratorium and allowed to build temporary greenhouses (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 16, 1973.) (photo) greenhouse going up near E St. of Sam Vener (Chula Vista Star-News, Nov. 29, 1973.)

1974/08/03 - Annual Bathtub Regatta Planned. A Bathtub Regatta will be held next Saturday at National City's 24th Street Marina, sponsored by the Chula Vista Jaycees, with an expected field of 50 bathtubs racing the quarter mile from Chula Vista to National City and back. The marina is on the city limits line between two cities and the race course is laid out across the line. Last year, the annual Jaycee regatta was held at J Street in Chula Vista. Several tubs got stuck in the mud according to race chairman Jim Keeline, and rather than slow down the race again this year, the Jaycees decided to move to National City. Three classes have been set up: A stock class for tubs with pontoons and speeds up to eight miles an hour; eight modified stock class which permits open hull designs with hydrofoils and speeds of 15 to 18 miles an hour; and a super stock class which permits open hull designs, bigger engines and engine modifications. "These tubs hit 30 miles an hour and above, said Keeline." The Bathtub Regatta schedule is for tubs to check in from 8 to 9 a.m. and for elimination heats until noon. Spectator events are planned from 12 to 1 p.m. Feature races will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. "Then we will have paddle races," said Keeline. "All tubs will have the engine off and two people will paddle them out and around a buoy. Under these conditions, the tubs can sink very easily." (San Diego Union, Aug. 3, 1974)

1975/03/02 - Chula Vista, National City and the Unified Port District are ready to stand up to state and federal environmental agencies over bayfront development plans. -- Chula Vista and Coast Commission disagree on bayfront redevelopment plan. (Chula Vista Star-News, Mar. 2, 1975)

1977 - The federal government contributed funds to dredge the channel to 35 ft deep, took 28 months, and made possible 30-40% of Port cargo to be handled at the National City Marine Terminal, which has 340,000 sq ft warehouse space. ("National City Centennial 1887-1987," The Star-News, Chula Vista CA, 1987.)

1980 - "National City now has the largest boat yard in San Diego County due to the Pepper Park launching ramp." (Morgan, National City, The Kille Morgan Boat Yard 1960-1986, 1994, p. 64)

1982/02/07 - Construction is expected to begin this year on a \$20 million pier to National City by Atkinson Marine repairing and overhauling Navy. The proposed pier was approved by the Unified Port District in early January. Construction of the pier will enable Atkinson to hire between 400 and 500 more shipyard workers. Construction on the pier is scheduled for 1983 if permits for dredging and construction can be obtained. The pier will be 1,200 feet long and 100 feet wide and will provide facilities for vessels smaller than aircraft carriers. Atkinson also plans to install an 800-ft by 150-foot floating dry dock that will expand capabilities for repair and overhaul work. Atkinson leases 14 acres from the district just north of the 24th St. Marine Terminal. Additional water acreage will be leased from the port district as well as 3.5 acres the Navy. (The Imperial Beach Star-News, Feb. 7, 1982)

1984/03/12 - Plans for a major boat-repair yard, which officials say will fill the last gap on the Chula Vista waterfront, have been announced by Southwest Marine Inc. Art Engel, president of Southwest Marine, said he also hopes to reactivate pedestrian ferries that once plied the harbor. Engel and other company officials outlined their plans for the proposed \$5.3 million facility at the foot of G Street, between the Sweetwater flood control channel and the J Street Marina, at a Chula Vista mayor's breakfast yesterday. James L. McArthur, special projects coordinator for Southwest Marine, said the yard will accommodate vessels up to 120 feet displacing up to 100 tons. There will be parking for 380 vehicles, which he admits is excessive, but which will be provided in anticipation of a future restaurant if it is needed." The facility will cover 8.53 acres of water and 12.15 acres of land on a 35-year lease from the San Diego Unified Port District. Spoil from dredging

submerged area of the project to 11 feet will be dumped in an ocean disposal area southwest of Point Loma. McArthur said the 100 slips in the project will include both transient and permanent mooring accommodations. Two 100-foot slipways will be available for hauling large vessels out of the water for hull and bottom work. Shore facilities will include a one-story administration building, a ship chandlery, yacht brokerage, small restaurant, laundry and other facilities for yachtsmen and boat owners. A 23,000-square-foot storage building will hold 200 to 250 small boats stacked three high but accessible enough that any of them can be put in or out of the water on short notice from the owner, McArthur said. Engel said his company started on the project site in 1977. He now operates San Diego Marine Constructors with shipyards in San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco and American Samoa. The firm has about 1,700 employees and anticipates hiring another 60 initially at the Chula Vista site, Engel said. He said his company, which also operates the Star & Crescent Boat Co., is undertaking a study to reactivate pedestrian ferries between North Island Naval Air Station and San Diego. Ferry operations across the bay ceased when the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge was opened because of a requirement that no alternative means of public crossing be allowed until the bridge is paid for. That is expected in 1987. Engel said he hopes also to be able to provide pedestrian ferry service for South Bay residents between 24th Street Marine Terminal in National City and North Island. (San Diego Evening Tribune, July 12, 1984.)

1984/07/27 - Chula Vista and Port District officials plan to meet Tuesday to figure out how to enforce safety regulations aboard a party barge anchored in the San Diego Bay. "We are concerned about dangers in the way people are transported to the barge, whether there are adequate sanitary facilities, and whether the barge is a hazard," said Gene Asmus, assistant city manager for Chula Vista. The barge, known as the Castle, is anchored 300 yards off the J Street Marina. Asmus said the barge is within Chula Vista's city limits, but the port has jurisdiction over the bay. The meeting Tuesday, he said, "is to sort out the overlapping jurisdictions." Because the barge is permanently anchored, the Coast Guard considers it a "land structure" and has limited jurisdiction, Asmus said. On Sunday night, however, the Coast Guard stopped operation of the 41-foot shuttle which transports party-goers back and forth from shore. Lt. Michael McCoy of the Coast Guard marine safety office said the shuttle was stopped because of navigation violations and because it lacked the proper number of fire extinguishers, life preservers and navigation lights. Jim Morgan, who built the barge from four surplus fiberglass Navy landing craft to accommodate up to 300 people, has criticized officials and gone so far as to say they are conspiring to put the barge out of business. Asmus and Port District officials said they are only interested in ensuring the public safety. Morgan filed a \$500,000 lawsuit against the Port District for damages to the barge when it broke from its mooring in November and drifted onto rocks near the J Street Pier. Jim Anderson, a Port District spokesman, said the port also objects to the use of the J Street launching ramp by the Castle operator to transport party-goers to the barge, on grounds that this interferes with use of the ramp by boaters. Steve Queen, operator of the shuttle, a surplus Navy utility boat, said Sunday's action by the Coast Guard was harsh. (San Diego Evening Tribune, July 27, 1984.)

1985/02/04 - Despite Port District ordinances designed to stop them, parties are still being held aboard the floating castle off the Chula Vista J Street Marina bayfront park, according to Jim Morgan, builder of the unusual floating party palace. Citations have been issued to the operator of the boats that ferry party-goers from the marina to the Castle and claims for damages have been filed against the Coast Guard and the Unified Port District, said Morgan. Those claims are preliminary to the filing of lawsuits, he said. Last September, without attacking the Castle itself, the Port District enacted legislation that would prohibit the commercial transportation of passengers from the J Street Marina floating dock to the party boat, which lies about 1,000 feet offshore and outside the Chula Vista limits. Port officials said the Castle led to congested parking, and the floating dock at the J Street Marina was so overloaded it was partly submerged at times. Meanwhile, the parties continue, averaging about one every two weeks, said Morgan. The boats that ferry the party-goers to the Castle operate independently. The Castle, also known as Excalibur, can be rented for \$1,000 for 22 hours on the weekends and \$700 for weekdays. (San Diego Union, Feb. 4, 1985)

1987 - The 18-yr old fishing pier [built in 1969] at Pepper Park will be extended 40 ft, making a 99-ft pier. ("National City Centennial 1887-1987," The Star Tribune, Chula Vista CA, 1987.)

1987/03/17 - The America's Cup will be exhibited April 11 at the J Street Marina aboard Dennis Conner's Stars and Stripes '86 yacht as part of Chula Vista's Heritage Day festivities. "This will be the first time the cup will be displayed on a boat," said J. Ric Williams, chairman of the heritage committee. The yacht that sailed to victory in Australia, but is one of the winged keel boats Conner used to practice for the racing competition, according to Councilman David Malcolm. Malcolm said the boat will be towed in the water from the Kona Kai Club, where it is moored, to the J Street Marina. Malcolm said he didn't know if Conner would attend the festivities. Malcolm echoed Williams' comments that it will be the first time the cup will be on a boat. "The cup had been displayed in Diego City Hall or other places, but never on a boat," Malcolm said. "People will be able to go on the boat, go down below and experience what it must have been like for Conner and his crew." This will be the city's first Nautical Heritage Day. "The reason for the event," Williams said, "is to raise the awareness that Chula Vista is by the bay and that it once was the location of class racing." Officials hope to make Nautical Heritage Day, which is sponsored by the city of Chula Vista, Chamber of Commerce and the San Diego Unified Port District, an annual event. The festival, tentatively scheduled from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., also will mark the dedication of the city's first swimming sandy beach. Arts and crafts, exhibits, entertainment and food will be available. (San Diego Union, Mar. 17, 1987.)

1988/09/08 - The refurbished and expanded Pepper Park in National City opened. (San Diego Business Journal, April 28, 2003)

1990/08/09 - The Pasha Group began importing vehicles (Isuzus) at the National City Marine Terminal. A total of 15,589 vehicle units were imported the first year. Pasha now imports over 300,000 vehicles annually. A deal between General Motors Corp. and the Pasha Auto Group has paved a new route from San Diego to Detroit for pricey Cadillac sedans and sport utility vehicles. The terms of the agreement between the Detroit automaker and the National City office of the Corte Madera based global transporter were not revealed. At present, Pasha's National City operation concentrates on processing and handling imports, including Honda, Nissan, Toyota, BMW, Volkswagen, Audi, Porsche, Bentley, Lotus and Isuzu. In late March, the Pasha Group home ported a \$90 million, 579-foot-long cargo ship, the Jean Anne, at the Port of National City and began transporting Chryslers to the Hawaiian ports of Honolulu, Hilo, Kahului and Nawiliwili. Built in Pascagoula, Miss., the Jean Anne is the first cargo ship to make San Diego a home port in more than a decade. At present, Pasha, which operates in facilities that are both in and out of the National Marine Terminal, exports and imports about 300,000 autos annually. Its chartered ships sail every other week. To date, the Jean Anne has sailed to National City three times. The Pasha Group is a privately held, 60-year-old company that moved its local operation to National City from the Port of Los Angeles 10 years ago. It has 300 offices and agents' offices worldwide. The firm does not report revenue figures. The San Diego Unified Port District reported total operating revenue of \$22.9 million from its maritime division, including cargo and cruise ship business in fiscal 2004, which ended in June. That's up from \$19.3 million in fiscal 2003, and up from \$16.1 million in fiscal 2002. ("S. D. Shipper," San Diego Business Journal, April 18, 2005)



Barkett Bayfront Plan 1993

1992/01/22 - City Council last night approved a conceptual development plan for an ambitious, \$500 million bayfront project, after a two-year environmental process for the controversial project by Chula Vista Investors and William Barkett. Taking a crucial step forward on a long-delayed proposal, the Chula Vista Council last night approved a conceptual development plan for an ambitious, \$500 million bayfront project. On a unanimous 5-0 vote, and after two hours of discussion, the council finally wrapped up a two-year environmental review process for the controversial project. During the discussion, council members continued to tinker with language in a series of amendments conditioning the approval. Even with last night's approval, the proposal of Chula Vista Investors and William Barkett will undoubtedly undergo further revisions as it goes through several more review-and-approval stages at both the city and state government levels. The project, as currently envisioned, would boast 1,610 hotel rooms, 1,000 residences, an indoor ice rink, a tennis academy, a convention center, retail shops, many acres of parkland, two man-made lagoons and a Cultural Arts Center. Last night, the council chopped one proposed high-rise from the project, leaving only 17 stories. Malcolm, who is a Coastal Commissioner, bluntly said that the commission will not look kindly on the 17- and 22-story high-rise structures now proposed for the bayfront. (San Diego Union Tribune, Jan. 22, 1992)

1993/01/16 - The state Coastal Commission yesterday approved a Chula Vista bayfront development of William Barkett that could bring four high-rise hotels to a bustling waterfront community on what is now a ragged piece of vacant land. In a 9-0 vote, the commission ignored the recommendation of its staff, which had suggested that the 170- to 229-foot high hotels be drastically scaled back to a maximum of 70 feet. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Jan. 16, 1993)

1993/09/08 - A negotiated deal that would have given the developer of the proposed bayfront resort millions of dollars in subsidies met solid resistance from City Council last night. An agreement reached between the city staff and developer William Barkett of San Diego unraveled as council members picked apart many of the attached strings. They objected to plans to give 30 percent of the project's income, after city expenses, to the landowners represented by Barkett, who do business through Chula Vista Capital. The deal he had hammered out in recent weeks with Barkett included the developer's agreement to contribute \$1 million up front toward the convention center, envisioned as a \$40 million indoor entertainment facility. An additional \$6.5 million would be contributed as construction continued. Barkett had also agreed to build a 5,000 seat sports arena/ice rink and underground parking garage for an estimated \$20 million to \$35 million. Those facilities have been pressed by City Council. Barkett's own plans include several hotels, apartments, commercial and retail centers, parks and a lagoon, to be built over 20 years. Barkett, saying he had sunk \$35 million into the project already -- including \$17 million for the land west of E Street -- added that he was "flabbergasted to think the council does not want it." (San Diego Union-Tribune, Sept. 8, 1993.)

1994/04/13 - UPD will buy the 2.7-acre Shangri-La property at 980 F Street and will build a park. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Apr. 13, 1994)

1993/09 - B.F. Goodrich's September purchase of the Rohr facility along the bay front also is creating optimism at City Hall. The southern half of the old Rohr facility, partly owned by the San Diego Unified Port District, and port and city officials have talked about tearing down the buildings there and developing the site. A plan for a 100-room Sheraton Hotel adjacent to the marina is expected to go before the Port Commission soon. City and community leaders say the Sheraton would draw more tourists and business travelers to Chula Vista. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Feb 14, 1998.)

1997/11/01 - On Friday night, Chula Vista Mayor Shirley Horton was to tell a San Diego advisory committee why a vacant, 115-acre waterfront site in her city would be a perfect place for the Padres to play. (Stars and Stripes, Nov. 1, 1997.)

1998/02/24 - Jake's South Bay, home to the power lunch bunch, is getting a make-over. The restaurant is changing its name to G.W. Sharkey's, adding a bar and introducing live entertainment. The changes are aimed at creating a more casual atmosphere, said General Manager Bill Quaiver. The restaurant, off Mission Parkway and facing San Diego Bay, has become a landmark since it opened about eight years ago. An aerial photograph of the restaurant is on the cover of a new map. Politicians and businesspeople make and break deals over grilled ahi or prime rib. And Jake's is a popular setting for wedding receptions and private parties. This summer, the restaurant was sold to Pacific Ocean Restaurants, owned by John Creed and Mario Ernst. The new operators decided to make changes. The first was the name. The G.W. stands for great white and the decor will definitely have a "Jaws" feel. A shark tank will be installed in the entrance and diners will see restaurant employees feed baby sharks squid and other bait. Also, the restaurant will be decorated with shark jaws. The menu will see only a slight change, with steaks, pasta and seafood to primarily seafood. But Quaiver said the restaurant will keep its popular prime rib. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Feb 24, 1998.)

1998/09/18 - It's been called a symbol of 1960s industry. Now, San Diego Gas & Electric's power plant in Chula Vista could be headed toward the scrap heap as a huge swath of San Diego Bay for development. SDG&E and the San Diego Unified Port District announced yesterday they have reached a tentative agreement for the port to buy the plant for \$112 million. As part of the deal, SDG&E would donate nearly 200 acres to the port. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Sep 18, 1998.)

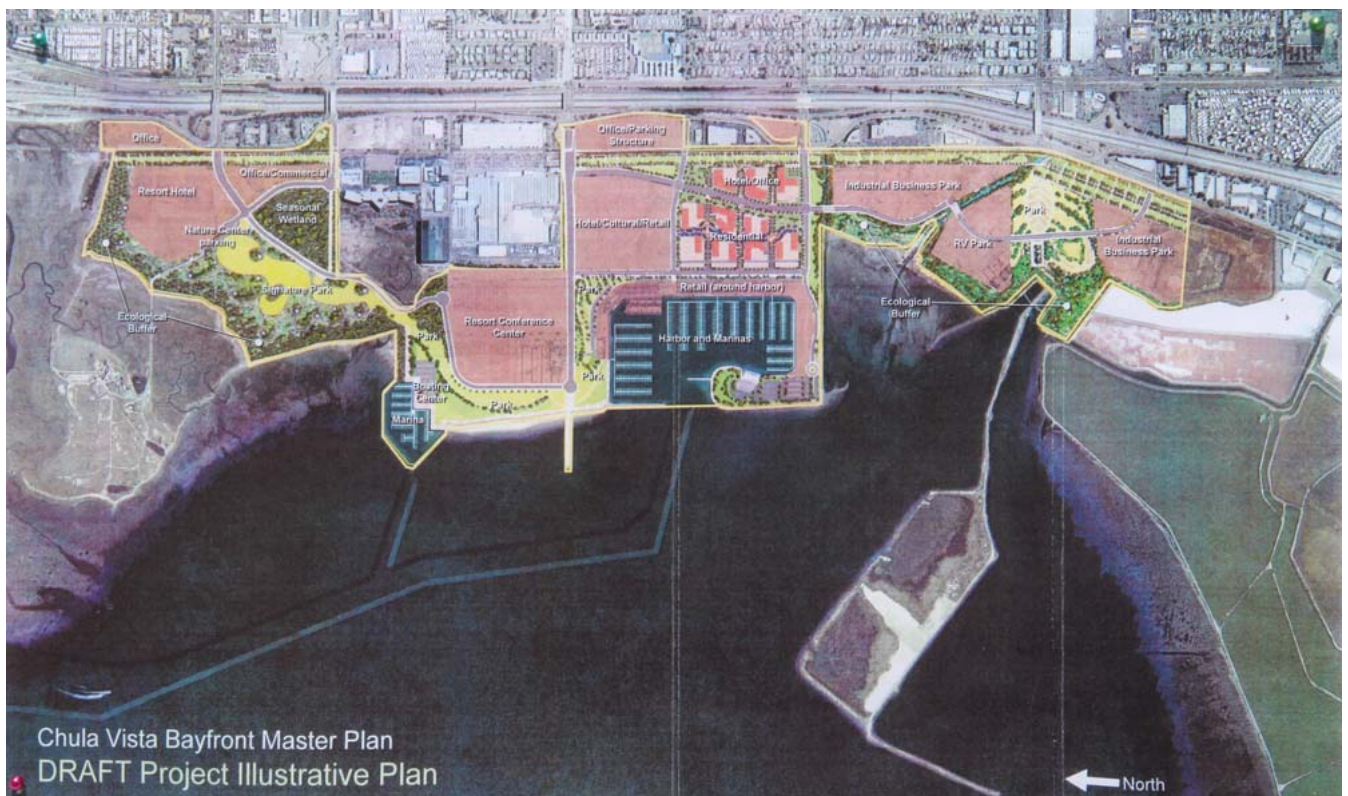
1999/01/30 - The state Lands Commission gave its blessing yesterday to the purchase of salt-producing ponds to create a national wildlife refuge and the acquisition of an electric power plant. The Port District will pay \$20.5 million to obtain more than 1,400 acres of land owned or leased by Western Salt Co., most of which combined with other state land to eventually create a 2,200-acre wildlife refuge. The port, which also operates Lindbergh Field, would pay for the acquisition from its airport funds. "This is considered by many to be one of the largest and most significant steps ever taken in the protection of wetlands and (coastal) wildlife in Southern California," said Curtis Fossum, senior counsel to the Lands Commission. Besides shallow water, the area includes eelgrass beds, mud flats, and salt ponds at the south end of San Diego Bay. The high ground of the dikes is critical nesting habitat for at least nine species of ground-nesting birds. The birds include the California least tern, an endangered species, the Western snowy plover, a threatened species, and other terns such as the Caspian, gull-billed and Sooty terns. In addition, the salt ponds make up one of only two nesting sites for elegant terns in the United States. The deal also allows the port to add more parking when needed at the new wing of Lindbergh Field's Terminal 2. When the port acquired part of the former Naval Training Center, the agency also inherited an established nesting area for the California least tern. That would have prevented the port from fully using its portion of the former Navy base unless the port had relocated the terns. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had eyed a portion of Harbor Island as a replacement site, which the Port District wanted to use for a hotel. Now, the port does not have to worry about least terns tying up either the Naval Training Center or the Harbor Island locations. In addition, a portion of the wildlife preserve could serve as a mitigation bank for the Port District when it undertakes projects that require filling-in of tidal areas. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Jan 30, 1999)

1999/07/15 - The San Diego Unified Port Commission voted to buy half of an 85-acre site on the southern portion of the BF Goodrich complex. The plan is to demolish buildings and clean up the property for development. The site runs from H Street to J Street, just west of Interstate 5 to Marina Parkway. The port is setting aside \$2.1 million for a second part of the overall development plan -- to extend H Street west through the property and to the edge of the city's bay front. Other projects are in the works. One is a hotel on port land in the southern portion of the bay front. The other is a larger hotel, residential and commercial project called Crystal Bay, north of the Goodrich site. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Jul 15, 1999.)

1999/12/15 - Much of the city's hope for redevelopment of the waterfront is pinned on one project: the ambitious, \$587 million Crystal Bay development, which is expected to go before the City Council this month. Being promoted by local developer William Tuchscher, Crystal Bay would turn a vacant 127-acre piece of land west of Interstate 5, at the foot of F Street, into a shopping and entertainment mecca envisioned to draw visitors from both sides of the border. The project would include 2.7 million square feet of development, including a hotel, office buildings, shops and homes. Also planned are a retail-entertainment center with restaurants, stores and a multiplex theater. South of the retail area, closer to the water, would be a resort hotel with 450 rooms, restaurants and 50,000 square feet of banquet meeting space. And not far from the hotel would be about 1,000 condominium and rental units, some of them in two 16-story towers. In November 1998, the City Council gave Tuchscher an exclusive right to develop that site but told him to return with more details on the site plans and financing. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Dec 15, 1999.)

2001 - Pacifica Development acquired an option to lease 95 acres on the mid-bayfront property from Chula Vista Investors. Pacifica entered into an exclusive negotiating agreement with the City at that time, submitting a proposal known as "The Bayfront Village". A 9-12 month process began with the goal of creating a footprint that could be acceptable to the Fish and Wildlife Service, local groups and environmental organizations. What resulted was a proposal for an intensive unit mixed use development on the mid-bayfront property adjacent to the Nature Center and other sensitive resources. In response to opposition, the City held meetings with all the parties involved. Pacifica scaled back the proposed development from 3200 residential units to 1950 residential units and renamed the project Bayfront Commons, to differentiate from the prior plan. Aside from residential, Bayfront Commons also proposed 150,000 square feet of retail, 60,000 square feet of office space, a 14 story maximum building height, and a wider buffer (100-foot expansion of the buffer between the refuge and the perimeter roads) than the proposal. This amounted to 43 acres of open space and 80 acres of developable land on the mid-bayfront property. Even with this reduction in residential development, opposition persisted due to the overall intensity of the proposed project. Concern over the project continued. On June 26, 2002, the Port Commissioners and Chula Vista City Council initiated an overall master planning effort, rolling the Bayfront Commons into the bayfront master plan process (The Bayfront Commons has been redesigned and is now known as the Pacifica proposal). (Bamberger, "A Historic Perspective: Chula Vista Bayfront Planning and Development," 2008)

2002/01/16 -- The Port and City of National City held groundbreaking ceremonies for the future National City Marina. (San Diego Business Journal, April 1, 2002)



Bayfront Plan 2004

2004/04/01 - On Tuesday, the City Council and San Diego Unified Port Commission got a glimpse of the types of projects that could work on the bay front, a consultant's market and feasibility studies. The council and port commission will narrow its focus next month by selecting three overall development proposals about 550 acres on the bay front. The port district controls about 400 acres of that. The rest is privately owned. In a letter to the council and port commission group that owns and operates the San Diego Sports Arena expressed interest in building a "world-class conference and events center within the Chula Vista master plan area." That group, Arena Group 2000, is looking at sites throughout the region, according to the letter, dated March 24. Ernie Hahn, the general manager and Brad Raulston, development manager, did not return calls seeking comment. The city and port agreed in October 2002 to create an overall development plan for the bay front, which stretches from the Sweetwater Marsh Wildlife Refuge to just south of the South Bay Power Plant. The agencies then hired a waterfront development consultant team for \$850,000 and agreed to split the cost. Last month, Pacifica Co. joined in the bay-front planning process. The developer had been building a 3,400-home residential village on the Mid Bayfront, a 127-acre site at the foot of F Street. The privately owned Mid Bayfront is the only area on the bay front where homes can be built. The port cannot build homes on land it controls. However, the port and developer are looking at a land exchange to allow homes to be built on more environmentally suitable land. In her presentation, Lynn Sedway, who did a market and economic study of the bay front, said having people live on the bay front will expand its retail and commercial development options. Sedway presented three development plans, each emphasizing different themes. One focused on attracting companies to bring jobs to the waterfront. A second focused on tourism options, such as aquariums. The third explored civic uses, such as a large park. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Apr. 1, 2004)

2005/05 - National City isn't that bad after all. Retailers such as Wal-Mart, which opened on Highland Avenue in 2003, and Costco, which is planned for 2006, have noticed too. Within a year, three community venues will open. An arts center, where folks can sculpt or dabble in painting, is planned for the old library building. A theater for children and adults will open in about a year, and an aquatic center at Pepper Park will launch preliminary programs in June. A full-scale facility opening in 2006. The public won't have to pay high prices to enjoy the activities, but their tax dollars are paying for the facilities. The city's Community Development Commission is footing the nearly \$4 million bill. Mayor Nick Inzunza said the projects are a priority. After July 4, kayaking and rowing classes will begin on the Sweetwater flood channel at Pepper Park, said Tina Williams, executive director of the South Bay Family YMCA, which will operate the aquatic center. By summer 2006, a permanent building with a classroom and offices will offer wind surfing, rowing, parasailing, nature exploration and other activities. "This is a first for the South Bay," Williams said. "I don't think our residents, particularly in National City, have access to bayfront or access to the waterfront. This will be a wonderful recreational opportunity for our children and their families." (San Diego Union-Tribune, May 29, 2005)

2005/10/01 - The developer of downtown San Diego's ballpark district wants a chance to build a resort and conference center on Chula Vista's bay front. JMI was one of three companies to submit an application of qualifications to the San Diego Unified Port District by yesterday's 10 a.m. deadline. The Port District controls most of Chula Vista's bay front. The other applicants are Gaylord Entertainment of Nashville and Foxworthy Inc. of San Diego. Gaylord, whose plan was made public in June, was given pre-qualified status and has already begun discussions with the port to build a hotel with up to 2,000 rooms and a conference center with 100,000 square feet of meeting and exhibit space. John Kratzer, the president of JMI Realty, is working with the San Diego Convention Center Corp. to vie for the project. They are proposing an Olympic Village Resort and Conference Center, featuring a hotel with at least 500 rooms. The convention center would have at least 100,000 square feet of exhibit space and 75,000 square feet of meeting space. Kratzer said he sees the project linked to the Olympic Training Center in east Chula Vista. He said the resort could help the city market itself as a home to Olympic athletes. The port commission had considered granting Gaylord an exclusive negotiating agreement in August. Gaylord is nationally known for its large hotel and meeting facilities that cater to the convention industry. The company owns Opryland in Nashville, Tenn., and has resort hotels and convention centers near Dallas and Orlando, Fla. A fourth property is scheduled to open in Prince George's County near Washington, D.C., in 2008. Gaylord was looking for a West Coast site and approached Chula Vista officials several months ago. For a city that has tried for decades to attract private investment to its bay front, Gaylord's interest was a godsend. Chula Vista and port officials have created an overall land-use plan for 550 acres of the city's underdeveloped bay front. The plan calls for a mix of housing, retail, a commercial harbor, hotels and a conference center. Kratzer said JMI didn't know until Gaylord's interest was publicized that Chula Vista was ready to develop a hotel and convention center on its bay front. The company was looking

major project after finishing its part of the 26-block ballpark district. The team of JMI and the San Diego Convention Center Corp., Kratzer said, brings a track record of redevelopment success and local experience. He doesn't see the project competing with downtown San Diego. The Olympic Village convention center was significantly smaller than what Gaylord is proposing. The 2.8 million-square-foot San Diego Convention Center is larger than both proposals. The third applicant, Douglas Foxworthy, said in his letter to the port district that he envisions more than just a major hotel and convention center. He said the project could include entertainment and education development. JMI Realty was created in 1992 as a subsidiary of the investment management company of the John Moores family. It was the developer for the ballpark district in downtown San Diego. Its projects include Petco Park, the Hotel Solamar, the Omni San Diego Hotel and Marriott Mar. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Oct. 1, 2005.)

2006/07/21 - After nearly a year of negotiating, Chula Vista and the port district reached an agreement with Gaylord Entertainment yesterday that outlines the company's \$716 million investment in a resort hotel and convention center for the city's bayfront. Gaylord, a publicly traded company, first approached the port district in June 2005 about developing a resort hotel and convention center. The company sees so much potential in the project that in its annual report released March 2006, Chairman Colin Reed said Gaylord wants Chula Vista to be its "West Coast flagship location." Yesterday, the company agreed to build a 1,500-room resort hotel and 400,000 square feet of meeting space, along with shops, restaurants and entertainment venues. If the deal is approved, Gaylord could break ground as early as next year and open the complex by 2011. Some officials from the San Diego Convention Center initially objected to the idea of a convention center in Chula Vista. Last July, San Diego City Councilwoman Donna Frye sent a letter to the three city of San Diego representatives on the port commission, asking them to stop talking to Gaylord to allow for public review of the project's regional impact. The bayfront comprises 550 acres of mostly industrial and marsh land, much of it under federal jurisdiction, that stretches from the Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge to just south of the South Bay Power Plant, an area 100 acres larger than Downtown San Diego. In San Diego terms, that's bigger than north and south Embarcadero combined. Chula Vista has long dreamed of improving its bayfront. As early as 1972, former Chula Vista mayor and current county Supervisor Greg Cox started pushing for a resort hotel. His predecessor, Mayor Will Hyde, also thought the bayfront needed a makeover. (San Diego Union-Tribune, July 21, 2006.)

2006/09 - The Sweetwater District (129 acres) is slated to be developed in the first phase of the project. The Sweetwater district is known to Chula Vista residents as the "mid-bayfront". The Sweetwater District is adjacent to the bay, adjacent to U.S. Fish and Wildlife wetlands and the Chula Vista Nature Center. Generally, the Sweetwater District encompasses land north of the Marina and the boatyard, along Lagoon Road / F Street. Planned development for the Sweetwater District includes a 21-acre "signature park", a 41-acre ecological buffer around the park, a 500-750 room hotel near the entrance of the Nature Center, and mixed use office/commercial/recreation. This area is slated to be low-scale, low density, in terms of the character of development for the Sweetwater District. The Sweetwater site is regarded as environmentally significant; it is recognized as an important part of the Pacific Flyway, and, because over 95% of all wetlands in San Diego have been destroyed, the pressure to maintain and enhance the 5% left is even greater than would otherwise be. The Harbor District (280 acres) includes 1,300 residential units, the proposed 1,500-2,000 Gaylord resort, mixed use commercial, retail, and restaurants, restructuring of the marina itself and the navigation of a boutique hotel of 500 rooms, an 18-acre park and 9-acre shoreline promenade, development of a pier from the H Street shoreline, and redevelopment of the former BF Goodrich/Rohr South Campus. The Harbor District will be subject to the most intensive land development for the Sweetwater District. The Otay District (153 acres) includes port land south of the marina and the South Bay Power plant - identified as an "energy utility zone". The Otay District will be part of Phase II, slated for development from 2012 to 2017, and include the RV Park, the Energy Utility Zone, residential development, and restoration of Telegraph Creek Channel. (Bamberger, "A Historic Perspective: Chula Vista Bayfront Planning and Development," 2008.)

2007/05/03 - In a critical step in developing the Chula Vista bayfront, the Port of San Diego yesterday began the final phase of demolishing an aerospace facility used to be the city's largest employer. The factory, Rohr Aircraft, was a government contractor that supplied aircraft parts during World War II. Later acquired by Goodrich Corp., the company left behind more than 60 industrial buildings that blocked water views. The Port and the city of Chula Vista spent years working with Goodrich to relocate its operations farther from the bayfront. A three-phase project to demolish the old factory buildings began in 2005. The final and most intensive demolition phase began yesterday. Crews started the process of razing the last 15 buildings, which block access to a site for a \$1 billion hotel and convention center that's being planned by Nashville, Tenn.-based Gaylord Entertainment. During the next six months, the contractor, Miller Environmental, will tear down the buildings and remove their foundations. The H Street corridor will be completely cleared to allow for a future extension of the roadway into a pier. The \$4.8 million final phase is expected to be finished by November. The total cost of all three phases is \$6.5 million. City officials believe Chula Vista's 550-acre bayfront has great potential for commercial development and public access once the aerospace factory is gone. The city also wants to demolish the 47-year-old South Bay Power Plant by 2012. Demolition will free up land for redevelopment under the Chula Vista Bayfront Master Plan, which includes Gaylord's 32-acre complex as well as 200 acres for parks, two other hotels, restaurants, shops and condominiums. The plan, finished in 2005, was drafted cooperatively by the Port and city. (San Diego Union-Tribune, May 3, 2007.)

2007/08 - National City's three-mile-long bayfront is a humming example of a working waterfront, one so successfully administered by the San Diego Unified Port District that it seems inevitable that even greater days lay ahead. A new day, however, may be dawning. National City is about to see the opening of its first recreational marina, Pier 32, with 250 slips next to a boat launching ramp and Pepper Park on the Sweetwater Channel right before it meets the bay. In that spot, off Bay Marina Drive, Sycuan Tribal Development Corp. and MRW Group will break ground in October on a \$30 million, 174-room hotel and a 16,000-square-foot two-story commercial building. And three sites in the area are being offered for restaurants. Along with economic return, Mayor Ron Morrison says the city's goal for a greater connection to the waterfront is growing. This feeling was amplified during a recent public reception at Pasha Group's automotive shipping operation. Guests standing on the National City Marine Terminal experienced 180-degree waterfront views. Responding to the city's desire is Knight & Carver Yacht Club, one of the largest businesses on National City's waterfront. Its expansion plans include space for a small waterfront park and restaurant. Pasha, which is celebrating its 60th year in business this year and opened operations on the National City bayfront in 1990, illustrates the conundrum. Considered a model civic player, it has expanded its use of waterfront property. When founded it employed 30 Teamsters who processed 30,000 vehicles. Today it employs 220 Teamsters and will move more than 450,000 vehicles this year. Most days, Pasha has about 500 total employees on the terminal. About half the cars it unloads are sold regionally, with the rest sent by railway to destinations in southern and eastern markets. John Pasha came to National City to head the Corte Madera-based company's operation in 2002. He is a third generation Pasha. George II founded the company, George III is chairman and his brother, George IV, is president and COO. The port has recently released a study showing that autos and lumber are the right cargos for this terminal for the next 30 years. Over the next several years, much of National City's waterfront focus will be on 60 acres not now occupied by maritime uses. The land was at one time discussed as a potential site for a football stadium but the city, led by the mayor, now is promoting the idea of a new sports arena on up to 25 of the acres. The Port and the influential Port Tenants Association are both in favor of the idea. ("Tapping Into The Bayfront Economic Might," San Diego Metropolitan Magazine, August 2007)

2007/09/13 - Two sites, one on Chula Vista's bayfront and the other on rolling open land on the city's east side, are emerging as the leading candidates for a new stadium in South County that could cost as much as \$1 billion. The Chargers paid \$220,000 to the design firm Cooper, Robertson & Partners to rank four locations in Chula Vista. The firm, based in New York, evaluated size, availability, parking potential, transportation access, environmental concerns and commercial development prospects. The top two sites are the 139-acre bay-side parcel where the South Bay Power Plant operates and a vacant 500-acre parcel one mile east of state Route 56 and about a half-mile south of the Windingwalk neighborhood at Otay Ranch. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Sept. 13, 2007.)

2008/03 - Marina Gateway Plaza. A \$30 million bayfront hotel project financed by the Sycuan Indian band is providing a significant boost to National City's awaited redevelopment efforts to create an attractive marina entrance. City officials, political leaders and Sycuan tribal members broke ground yesterday on Marina Gateway Plaza, a project that includes a 173-room Best Western Hotel, a full-service restaurant and 16,000 square feet of commercial and retail space project, just west of Interstate 5 on Bay Marina Drive, will begin the bayfront's transformation from an industrial area to a commercial and recreational center, officials said. From a podium overlooking the San Diego Bay, National City Mayor Ron Morrison said projects are coming together after years of acquiring lengthy cleanup work and getting developers on board. "Our marina is being completed, and more development is expected," Morrison said. "But this is the project that gets it all started." The project will create an estimated 100 permanent jobs and bring in \$600,000 in annual property and hotel tax revenue to the two-story building, with retail on the first floor and commercial and office space above, will be built between the four-story, 100,000-square-foot hotel and the 10,000-square-foot restaurant. Morrison reminded the more than 100 invited guests of the hotel project's significance. First, three properties had to be acquired as part of the plan to revitalize the lackluster entrance to the city's bayfront. The land was acquired after years of legal wrangling. Then there was the \$1 million cleanup of the site from the California Integrated Waste Management Board. The project site formerly was home to two slaughterhouses, one of which, Cuyamaca Meats, closed in the late 1990s. Morrison said state and federal environmental agencies, local transit officials and the California Coastal Commission were involved in reviewing the project because much of the area borders the Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. The construction of the hotel will dovetail with this spring's planned construction of a 245-slip marina on land owned by the Port of San Diego. The \$8 million marina, which is being built next to the Sweetwater River Channel adjacent to Pease Creek, will include a deli, community rooms, office space, as well as a plaza area, boardwalk and 223 parking spaces. Officials say the marina could open by late April. Morrison said the city is negotiating with Sycuan and MRW to develop two sites across from the Marina Gateway Plaza. Proposals include more restaurants and commercial space. Daniel J. Tucker, Sycuan tribal chairman, said he and partner MRW Group look forward to beginning work on the hotel project and transforming the 6.3-acre site into a hospitality and retail center. (San Diego Union-Tribune, March 19, 2008)

2014/10/14 - The Port of San Diego Board of Commissioners on Tuesday voted to begin negotiations with a developer to build a bayfront hotel and convention complex on a 535 acres in Chula Vista. Houston-based Rida Development Corp., which has built major hotels in Houston, Pittsburgh and Orlando, Florida, is the only firm to respond and qualify for the job, according to a report from port staffers. Tuesday's action authorizes staffers to work out an exclusive negotiating agreement with Rida that would last nine to 12 months. Port officials envision a development next to the Chula Vista Marina that would include about 1,600 rooms, 415,000 square feet of meeting space and 100,000 square feet for restaurants. Additional hotels and retail space could be added to the project. In November 2008, Tennessee-based developer Gaylord Entertainment abandoned a \$1 billion plan to build a 1,500-room hotel and convention center complex on the waterfront. Gaylord cited financial challenges when negotiations with organized labor stalled. The company, which runs the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, has since merged with Marriott and did not submit a bid. The port is working off a master plan for the Chula Vista waterfront that was approved by the California Coastal Commission in 2003. The port and city government have formed a joint powers authority to handle governance, infrastructure financing and some capital funding for the convention center portion of the project. (City News Service, Oct. 14, 2014)

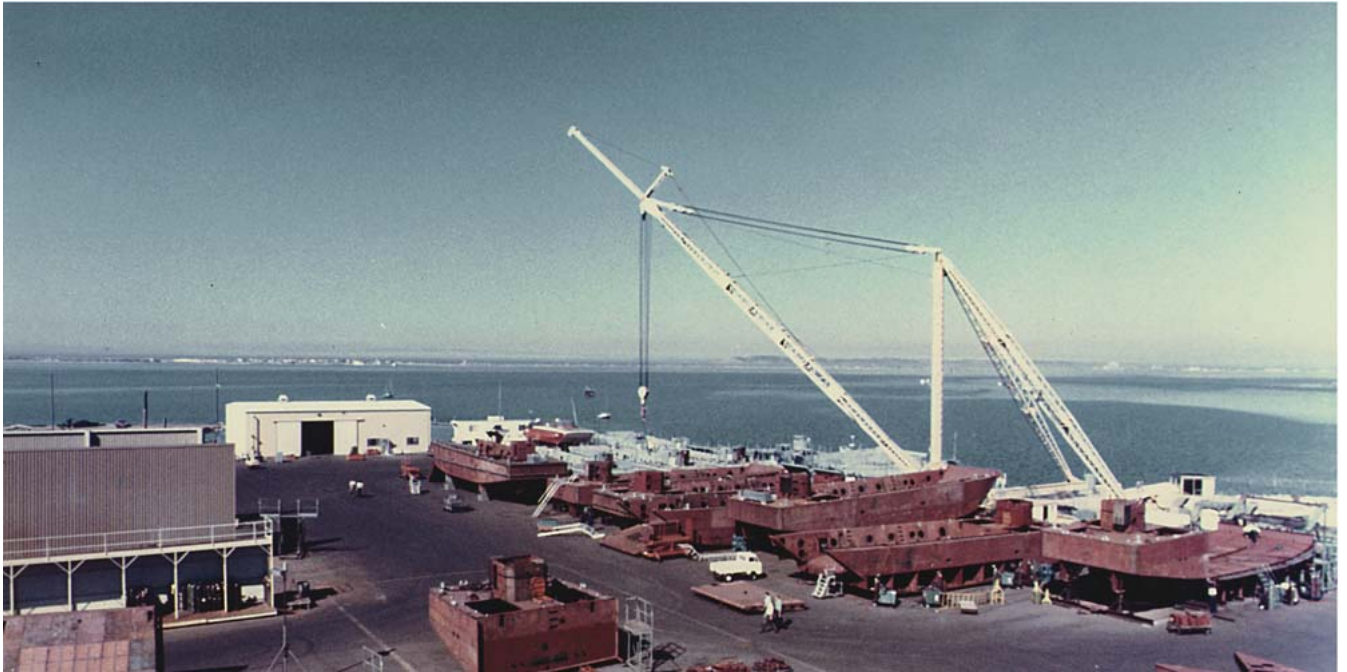


Rida Bayfront Plan 2014

BOAT YARDS 1961-Present

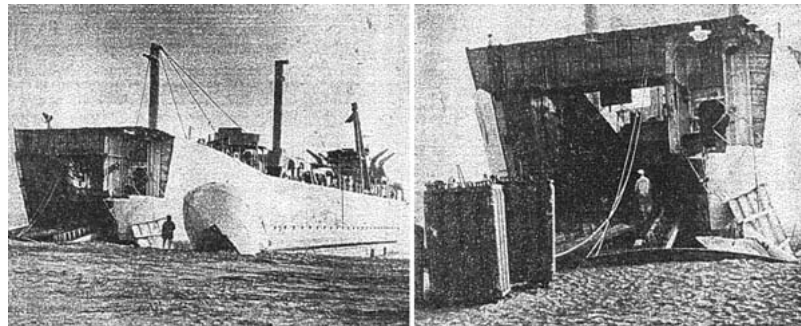
Two centers of boat construction developed near Gunpowder Point in the 1960s. One center was at the foot of F Street, on the site of the old Yacht Club and California Carbon plant. Here was located the Shangri-La restaurant of Andrew Hom, Rayne Soft Water of James Cappos, and the boat yards of Whiteman & Chaffee. Bill Poole's Boat Yard was at this location until all buildings were removed after 1983 for the restoration of the Sweetwater Marsh. Poole moved to

center at the end of G Street. The two small boat yards of A-1 Metals and Marine were located at the end of G Street until the area was dredge filled for the [redacted] Company in 1968. Rohr established a boat yard on the fill land in 1970. This site was taken over by Art Engel's Southwest Marine in 1976, and by the South Yard in 1986 that became the Marine Group LLC in 2006.



In the 1960s, Rohr diversified into maritime products, building this boat yard at the end of G Street on the landfill west of the Rohr plant

1961/04/20 - First tidelands lease approved, one acre at the end of G Street, leased to A-1 Metals for 90 days for \$500 to dismantle an LST. (Chula Vista Star Apr. 20, 1961.)



A-1 Scrap Disposal crews dismantled this Navy surplus LST. A-1 was the first firm to gain a tideland lease from the city. The firm will scrap the big ship, selling parts and materials. Another storage operation has been granted approval for another lease on the Chula Vista tidelands by the City Council. (Chula Vista Star-News, May 11, 1961)

1961/05/25 - Anthony Martinolich of Sierra Sand Co. applied for a lease next to Rohr for a shipbuilding plant, next to the place where the LST is being dismantled. Martinolich wants to build new 100-ton tuna clippers or purse seiners. The Martinolich Shipbuilding Co. operated in San Diego 1946 to 1957 when it was sold to NASSCO. (San Diego Union, May 25, 1961)

1963 - In 1963 Andrew Hom built his restaurant Shangri-La on the Chula Vista bayfront at the end of F Street, starting with a box-shaped old hanger floated from North Island, and fixed to pilings over the water. Hom dreamed to make it into a convention center and marina and hotel complex. The restaurant opened December 1963 but closed March 1965. Structure was still standing in 1982, but razed by Wildlife Refuge project. (Rojas, John. "Shangri-La," in Chula Vista, the Early Years of San Diego CA: Tecolote Publications, 1993, pp. 40-43.)



Nearing completion on the Chula Vista tidelands at the foot of F Street is Andrew Hom's "Shangri-La" convention center, restaurant and motel complex. Late deliveries of carpeting and a Chinese stove were blamed for delay in the opening, originally scheduled for Dec. 14. A spokesman for Hom said he hopes to open the restaurant this month. The convention center originally had been named the "Harbor House." (C Star-News, Jan. 2, 1964)

1965/09/05 - Rohr Corp., the aerospace industry's largest subcontractor, yesterday disclosed it will broaden its product diversification by building a patrol boat contract. "It's right down our alley, aluminum fabrication and aluminum welding," said Fred H. Rohr, chairman/founder of the Chula Vista-based company. In bidding, Rohr Corp. won a contract, worth some \$188,000, to construct, equip and test a 65-foot-long coastal vessel for the California Department of Fish & Game. This is Rohr Corp.'s first boat contract although the company in recent years has been studying the marine potential and has developed and built an experimental speedboat capable of doing a dazzling 42 knots. This craft, the X-1, has been donated to COMBO (Combined Arts of San Diego) for sale at a fundraising auction. Chairman Rohr said contract construction of marine craft appears to offer considerable potential and fits the company's capabilities. Metal forming equipment for the fabrication of aircraft and antenna structures will be available for the boat project, he noted. It will be the first craft of its type to enter DFG service and will be based at the marine patrol headquarters Terminal Island. It will be used for commercial fish and sportsfishing patrol between Santa Barbara and Diego counties and on offshore islands. Capt. Walter Putman, the patrol's new vessel, signed by marine architect, will replace an "old tired" 63-footer picked up after World War II. Powered by 340-horsepower twin diesels, the patrol boat expected to cruise at up to 42 knots, about the same speed that the vessel it will replace could do in its prime. Hull, bulkheads and structural members of the craft will be fabricated welded Type 5083 aluminum, a special alloy developed for saltwater service. The vessel will have an 18-foot beam and 6-foot draft. It will accommodate a crew of six although it will normally carry four men. Rohr Corp.'s Antenna division at the Chula Vista plant will build the craft. Company responsibilities include the installation of powerplants, major equipment and instrumentation, including radar, radio telescope, depth sounder, automatic pilot and direction finder. Work is to get under way when material now on order arrives. Upon completion, the craft will be trailered to 10th Avenue Terminal in San Diego for dockside tests and trial runs in San Diego Bay. Delivery to the DFG is scheduled for next March. Rohr Corp. started out as an aircraft industry subcontractor but has diversified into the production of space hardware, large antennas and factory-built homes. (San Diego Union, 1965)



First boat ever built on contract by Rohr Corp. big aircraft firm, is this 65-foot, \$178,500 patrol craft for the California Department of Fish & Game. (The San Diego Union, July 24, 1966.)

1967/11/05 - Kettenburg, Rohr Team Up For Aluminum Boat Project Kettenburg, Rohr Team Up For Aluminum Boat Project. Big and small businesses, working together in San Diego, are constructing 35-foot utility boats for the Navy. Unexpectedly, though, the small firm, Kettenburg Marine, is the prime contractor and the large company, Rohr Corp., is the subcontractor. Kettenburg has 100 workers and annual sales near \$3 million. Rohr employs nearly 12,000 and posted fiscal sales of \$250 million. Despite their size differences, Kettenburg and Rohr form an effective team. Rohr fabricates the welded hull and applies one coat of primer. Kettenburg, a 48-year-old Point Loma firm, finishes up by installing engines and outfitting, painting, testing and delivering the vessels. Under the U.S. program set aside for small business, Kettenburg won a \$760,000 contract for 19 of the work boats, a new type made of a highly weldable, corrosion-resistant aluminum called 5086. "We anticipate bidding on another group in the near future," says Paul A. Kettenburg, president. During World War II, the company built about 35 footers which supplied seaplanes with fuel, ammunition and bombs. The first of the 19 utility boats was launched Thursday and is scheduled for sea trials Wednesday and delivery two weeks later. Four more hulls are taking shape. Kettenburg Marine expects to deliver three boats this month and about three more the month thereafter. Rohr gets about \$25,000 per hull. The new utility boat is versatile. Its 36-foot draft and hinged bow ramp permit quick loading and offloading. A pair of 135-horsepower GM Detroit diesel engines get up to 22 knots. Aluminum boats for saltwater use have sprung into prominence only in recent years, and San Diego has figured in the pioneering. An early all-aluminum hydrofoil built in 1960 by Chaffee Machine, a firm no longer active, operated between Santa Catalina and the mainland. Now the aluminum welding and fabricating know-how developed by Rohr as the aircraft industry's No. 1 subcontractor is being applied to building boat hulls. This is not a totally new thing for Rohr. A few years ago, Fred H. (Pappy) Rohr, the late founder-chairman, developed the experimental X-1 and later the Gemini 7 and 8 for a fundraising auction. Last year Rohr produced the 65-foot patrol boat Bluefin for the California Department of Fish & Game with Kettenburg as subcontractor. Rohr's "shipyard" is on a landlocked Kearny Mesa in part of the former Astronautics material control warehouse at 5201 Ruffin Road. The boatbuilders have use of some 35,000 square feet of a large paved area outside the huge building. Part of the structure had been occupied by the ill-fated Twincor apparel factory. Because its Chula Vista facility was crowded, Rohr's Antenna division took part of the building in March 1966 to build portable ground antennas for satellite communication. Some aluminum antenna work still is being done there, but the production of five 18-foot-high destroyer escort rudders under a \$212,000 award from Lockheed Ship Building & Co. is being done in Chula Vista. Aluminum boatbuilding fits well into the Rohr Antenna division and is designed to keep the Kearny Mesa branch alive, explains Chuck Keyte, division marketing representative. "We continue to look for other structural work for this area because that is its orientation," he adds. Keyte sees the possibilities of building material racks, shipping "bucks" for aircraft use, pallets and other devices of aluminum. Frank Helt, who has been with Rohr 10 years and in the aircraft industry since 1937, is foreman of boat manufacturing, heading 20 of the 30 Kearny Mesa workers.



Floyd "Tod" Chaffee with his revolutionary aluminum hydrofoil Catalina ferry in 1961

Electrolysis, the battery-like action which eats away at aluminum hulls, can be curbed in several ways, Helt says. On the Bluefin, dissimilar metals are separated from the hull by non-conductive materials and the hull is protected by small plates which give up zinc to electrolysis, saving the hull's aluminum. Reports indicate the Bluefin

excellent anti-electrolysis and anti-corrosion characteristics, Helt says. Measures similar to the Bluefin's are used on the Navy-designed utility boats. The boat plates, of quarter-inch-thick Kaiser aluminum are fitted with four metal-yielding zinc pieces, each measuring 4-by-12 inches and a half-inch thick. (San Diego Union, Nov. 5, 1967)

1967/06/25 - James Capps established Rayne Soft Water Service at 965 F Street. (Chula Vista Star News, June 25, 1967.)

1967/11/30 - The yachting world is swinging to a new beat, the world of multi-hulls. There are catamarans, trimarans and light, fast outriggers. Multi-hull construction has become an art and the state of the art has developed to a high degree. Now, builders of multi-hulls are banding together at small boat yards, groups and just helping-hand neighbor boat builders, but with qualified professionals to give advice and correct potentially dangerous mistakes. One of the professionals lending the novices a hand is Mike Flynn, who with his partner, Jack Norcross, operates one of the South Bay's newest small business enterprises Makai Marine at 809 G Street, Chula Vista. (San Diego Union, Nov. 30, 1967.)



Makai Marine at 809 G Street (ramp), makes multi-hull yachts and the trimaran that was designed by Norman Cross, occupies part of the old Tyce Engineering firm across from Rohr; operated by Mike Flynn and Jack Norcross. (San Diego Union, Nov. 30, 1967)

1968 - The first stage in the development of a small craft harbor in Chula Vista was completed on January 31. This work included the placement of over four thousand cubic yards of dirt and nearly fifteen thousand tons of rock to create a dike and filled area. This also provided a connection between J Street and the terminus of Tidelands Avenue on the seventy-five acre fill. (Reusch, "Port of San Diego," 1970)

1969/05/04 - Rohr wins contract to build three patrol craft for Fish and Game Department. Aircraft concern becoming boatbuilder. (Chula Vista Star-News, and Sept. 14, 1969)

1969/11/20 - Rohr by 1970 will possess the technology and facilities for complete boat contracting from design and fabrication to outfitting and testing. (The San Diego Union, Nov. 20, 1969)

1970 - As far back as 1970, Rohr was involved in marine technology. The U.S. Navy awarded Rohr a \$9.5 million development contract to build, outfit and test 61 LCM-8 landing craft. Marine technology became a major Rohr activity with the incorporation of Rohr Marine, Inc. in 1976. In late 1976 Rohr Marine was awarded a Navy contract for design of a 3,000-ton proto-type. The wholly owned subsidiary also tested the 100-ton model of the surface effect ship in Maryland. (Dean, Ada. *Fred H. Rohr: A Man and His Corporation*, 2007.)

1970/04/01 - Todd, Jack and Ed Chaffee are building aluminum boat for Marvin E. Whiteman at the site of old Shangri-La. Marvin Whiteman is businessman, boat builder, and yacht club director; lives in Coronado. Construction crews steady the hull of an 85-foot power yacht being built at Whiteman Yacht Co. on the Chula Vista waterfront. The aluminum-hulled luxury yacht will have two 1,000 horsepower engines when completed, giving it a 21-knot cruising speed. The hull weighed only 32,000 pounds when it was turned over yesterday. It was built upside down, then turned over for completion. Marvin Whiteman, president of the company, will use the boat. (San Diego Union, Apr. 1, 1970)



LCM-8 landing craft in 1971

1970/05/08 - Navy awarded Rohr a contract for 61 Navy landing craft. "Since diversifying into the marine market in the mid-1960s, Rohr has built large yachts, military boats and commercial vessels. Under government procurement procedures, the Navy purchases the LCM8's for the Army which has used them for several years to transport troops and supplies. The welded steel boats are 73-feet long, powered by four diesel engines which develop 600 horsepower. Final delivery expected to July 1972. Rohr recently expanded its marine manufacturing facilities with completion of a 130,000-square-foot building and boatyard capable of launching a vessel weight up to 100 tons." (The San Diego Union, May 8, 1970.)

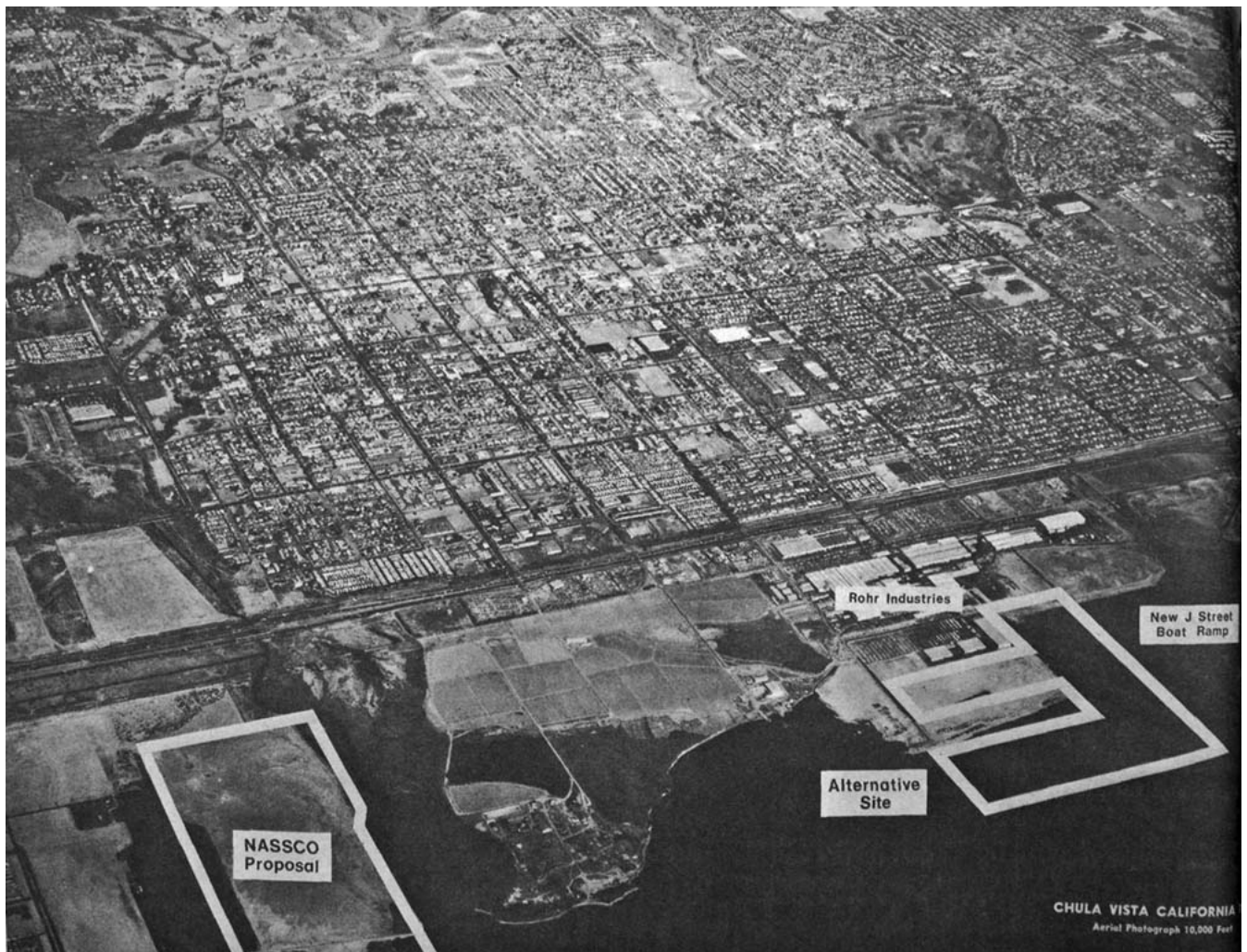
1970/05/21 - New Boat Affords Luxury Fishing. Bill Poole's new boat, the 95-foot Cape Polaris, will be launched at Newport Beach Sunday and make its first sportfishing run off San Diego on May 29. Cape Polaris, most powerful twin-screw sportfisher in the world and the largest ever launched on the West Coast with 1,920 h.p. and can range 2,000-plus miles without a stop. It will carry and comfortably fish 70 persons, Poole says, but it will cut this figure to 32 for the long trips into Mexico for which it is particularly fitted. The latest Polaris-series boat in the Poole stable is estimated to have cost \$300,000 and follows Milida (the first Polaris), the second Polaris and Polaris Mark III. Poole, born into a sportfishing family, has a gaudy record as a fish-finder and catcher for 25 years out of San Diego. *** Cape Polaris is luxurious by sportfishing standards. It is air-conditioned throughout, has 18 staterooms with fresh water wash basins, freshwater shower, reading lights at every bunk. It has TV in a lounge which seats 40 persons, has three fathometers and a radar sweep of 64 miles. It has triple bait tanks, a 14-

hold with a sharp freeze section. The boat, whose name was chosen in a contest to which 2,000 responded, has piped-in music, a universal PA system, an all gallery with char-broiler and is carpeted throughout. It is white in color with blue accents. "It's wild inside. Red, orange, blue, yellow. My touch," says Mrs. carries a six-man crew and, after three-days of shakedown activity off Newport Beach, will make the Coronado Island yellowtail run from Fisherman's Land 29. Champagne and hors d'oeuvres will launch the boat fittingly on Sunday. No beer bust for Cape Polaris. *** NOTES: Another giant sportfisher, a 105-foot Bruce Barnes is building at Rohr Aircraft, is tentatively ticketed for a late June launching. It, too, will be tied up at Fisherman's which Barnes and Poole own Department of Interior estuary-conservation film, praised by the critics, will be paired with a Beatles film to reach a youthful audience. 'Crisis' takes a look at pollution but outlines saving moves in estuarine waters. (San Diego Union, May 21, 1970)

1970/09/20 - Marine transportation systems are another phase of Rohr's diversification effort, including current production of 61 LCM-8 landing craft under million Navy contract plus a variety of their craft ranging from a private yacht to a big sportfishing vessel. Rohr continues to research and develop high-speed vehicles and is testing one on San Diego Bay at speeds of 75-80 mph. (The San Diego Union, Sept. 20, 1970.)

1971/06/27 - A luxury yacht launched, built by Whiteman Yacht Co., 980 F St, boat owned by Marvin E. Whiteman, launched off Rohr's G St boat ramp (San Diego Union, June 27, 1971)

1972/10/15 - The Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce this week exhorted the City Council, state and federal agencies to do everything in their power to provide bayfront a home for a proposed \$110 million shipyard facility. The resolution, which had only three opponents, changed the chamber's stand from one favoring 'concept' of a shipyard on the bayfront along with Chula Vista's recreational-tourist-commercial plan for the area. Both the city and the Unified Port District give National Steel & Shipbuilding Co. any commitment to reserve a place for the company's proposed facility for huge super-tankers until the company produces firmer plans of its own. NASSCO contends that it cannot vie for the lucrative tanker contracts until it knows it will have a site for the shipyard. The shipbuilder facility is not large enough to accommodate the size of super-tankers or liquid natural gas tankers NASSCO would like to build. Chula Vista has approved bayfront plan that would provide a recreational-residential-commercial complex, but councilmen, eyeing a much needed tax base, agreed to consider NASSCO proposal. The shipbuilder planned to construct the shipyard on the northwest corner of the bayfront, but city officials prefer a site near Rohr Industries which not seriously disrupt recreational uses of the bayfront area. However, a deep water channel must be dredged as far south as J Street to accommodate the shipyard, and the councilmen indicated that getting approval from environmental agencies that have jurisdiction in the bay would be difficult, if not impossible. Chamber president, told directors that if the chamber "sticks with approval" of the city's recreational plan, "we, in effect, say we don't want NASSCO." Director Thomas Money observed that the city needs a larger tax base to finance recreational and ecological projects. Mark Greene, director, urged the chamber to add words "now" to the motion to encourage the City Council to take immediate action. "National City is hustling NASSCO," he reported. "I've been debating Chula Vista business and opening in National City myself. If we have 10,000 employees (from the shipyard)," he added, "I may reconsider." Greene urged the chamber to take a strong stand on the shipyard. "I don't know how we can vote any other way," he asserted. "We ought to get NASSCO down here." David Wilson, a member of the Chula Vista Planning Commission, said he favored a shipyard near Rohr and San Diego Gas & Electric "so we have three industrial areas and still maintain a very desirable tourist-recreation area." The other proposed site for the shipbuilding facility, the northwest corner of the city's bayfront, not desirable he added, because it would "completely change the flavor of the entire section." The bayfront is too interrelated an area to carve it up that way, added. He criticized governmental agencies that are blocking dredging in the southern end of the bay and squashing NASSCO's hopes of building a shipyard at Rohr. "The bay is a natural asset that must be dredged," he contended. "It's frustrating to see desirable things that should be done thwarted." Wilson opposed chamber decision with Keith Wilson and Dr. Les Pelman. Keith Wilson said he favored a shipyard, but had "reservations for having industry of this type go anywhere." Spelman raised a question of possible collusion between NASSCO and Santa Fe Railroad, a major property holder on the bayfront to increase the value of the land. (Chula Vista Star News, Oct. 15, 1972)



NASSCO plan (Imperial Beach Star-News, Sept. 14, 1972)

1973/08/19 Chula Vista's planning Commissioners are enthusiastic about seeing National Steel and Shipbuilding Co. build its supertanker shipyard near the boat launching ramp. Port District Commissioners feel that the northwest corner of the Chula Vista bayfront is the only place in San Diego bay suitable for construction of a new shipyard. National Steel and Shipbuilding Co.'s proposed Chula Vista supertanker shipyard would be the 13th facility in the United States capable of building the large tankers. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 19 and Nov. 15 and Dec. 27, 1973)

1974/06/29 - Rohr Industries, Inc. is one of two firms selected to continue work on a highspeed, 2,200-ton air-cushion ship, according to Rep. Bob Wilson, I San Diego. Wilson said Rohr will receive \$30 million to build a prototype of a cross between a patrol boat and destroyer that is capable of 90-mile-an-hour speed. Navy officials in Washington say no program award has been made, Wilson said he had been assured that Rohr and Bell Aerospace Co. of New Orleans will have the Navy's approval to build prototypes. Wilson said Rohr will receive \$13 million for design work for the fiscal year which begins Monday, and an additional million the following fiscal year for actual construction. The contract will mean jobs for an additional 500 persons at Rohr. A Rohr spokesman said the contract actually begin producing the air-cushion boats could be worth \$1 billion a year. Aerojet Surface Effect Ships Division of Tacoma, Wash., and Lockheed Missiles and Space Division of Sunnyvale also were competing for the contracts. Wilson's announcement appears to contradict previous statements by the Surface Effect Office in Washington. Naval officers said they would be awarding contracts for further development of subsystems, including the waterjet inlet technology, habitability and seal material and development. Where all four firms are proposing water jet propulsion, Rohr and Aerojet had similar design concepts for the craft which capture the air cushion, as do Bell and Lockheed. The Navy apparently has selected one of each of the two design concepts for development and testing. Wilson said the big question is whether a 2,200-ton ship can operate in high seas and stormy weather. The 2,200-ton ship is the next step in development of a 10,000-ton destroyer-size ship and possibly a 10,000-ton amphibious landing craft of the future. The Rohr proposal calls for a 238-foot ship with six General Electric turbine engines, two to drive the lift fans which create the internally generated cushion of air, and four to propel the craft. The missile-armed ships are expected to have twice the speed capabilities of a submarine. Because of their minimal contact with the water, the surface effect ships are expected to be difficult to detect and maneuverable enough to dodge torpedoes. (San Diego Union, June 29, 1974)

1975/05/22 - The Royal Polaris sport fishing boat launched at end of F Street on bayfront by Bill Poole. She was designed and built by Todd Chaffee, San Diego builder. Poole and partner Bruce Barnes run Sportfisherman's Landing in San Diego. Poole is the original long-time skipper in San Diego. Poole's been in the business for 27 years. Soon, another boat, an 85-footer, will be seen growing up among the tomatoes at the edge of South Bay. Poole's wife Ingrid says South Bay interior decorator, Marjorie Evans of Interiors by Marjorie Jean, has been of enormous help. Barnes, who is skipper of the sportfisher Qualifier W5, has said in old days, for sophisticated electronic gear, we had a compass and a bent alarm clock. His critics say Poole is too hard-driving, too competitive, that he sometimes goes for fish which more taxing than some of his passengers care to cope with. He counters by saying he's used to going for the big catches and the big fish. He said that in sportfishing you have to do 40 things just right, all at the same time. (Imperial Beach Star-News, May 22, 1975)



The Royal Polaris sport fishing boat (Imperial Beach Star-News, May 22, 1975)

1975/05/22 - The Royal Polaris is still the fastest long-range sportfisher in the world! She is 113-feet in length with a 29-foot beam and is driven by three 34 Caterpillar diesels. Her range is virtually unlimited due to her enormous fuel, bait, and refrigerated fish storage capacities. She is equipped with all the latest navigational and fish-finding gear. Accommodations aboard the Royal Polaris are first class. She boasts: 18 air-conditioned staterooms (some with private bathrooms); a beautifully appointed lounge with spacious seating for 30 people; TV, VCR and stereo are available for your entertainment; There are comfortable lounging on the upper deck for the pleasure of sun worshippers. The Owner and Captain of the Royal Polaris is Frank LoPreste , a legendary sportfisherman, who is a co-captain Steve Loomis . The hands-on expertise provided by LoPreste and Loomis largely contributes to the unequalled success of this operation. (Royal <http://www.fishermanslanding.com/pages/Royal%20Polaris.php>)

1976/12/23 - Engel and his Southwest Marine gets Navy contract on site at end of G Street leased from Rohr. Arthur Engel started his company two months before 6 other ship repair contractors in San Diego. [in 1978 lawsuit, Engel claimed Campbell, NASSCO, San Diego Marine Construction and Triple A Machine Shop 80% of shipbuilding and repair business]. A \$3.8 million Navy contract has been awarded to a recently established firm here to repair and renovate 14 mechanized landing craft (LCM). Officials in the office of Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin, D-Chula Vista, announced yesterday that the contract has been awarded to Southwest Marine Inc., which is leasing facilities at the foot of G Street from the Rohr Corp. Arthur Engel, company president, said the company was established about two months ago and just qualified for this type of contract "a couple of weeks ago." "We're a master ship repair contractor and there are only about six others in the San Diego area," he said. "We also just got word that we received an \$18,000 contract from the Navy to repair a boiler." The company has 15 employees now and "we plan to have 100 working within the next three or four months." The 14 LCM's have to be delivered back to the Navy by Aug. 31. The Van Deerlin spokesman said the contract is designed to extend the lives of these vessels by about 10 years. "This is part of the new economy program conducted by the Navy," he said. (The San Diego Union, Dec. 23, 1976)

1977/05/07 - Rohr Marine Inc has moved from Kearny Mesa to Chula Vista to make Surface Effect Ship (SES) for the Navy. The \$139 million contract was awarded in Dec. 1976. (The San Diego Union, May 7, 1977)

1977 - Art Engel said his company [Southwest Marine Inc.] started on the G Street site in 1977. He now [1984] operates San Diego Marine Construction Co. shipyards in San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco and American Samoa. The firm has about 1,700 employees and anticipates hiring another 60 initially at the Chula Vista site, Engel said. He said his company, which also operates the Star & Crescent Boat Co., is undertaking a study to reactivate pedestrian ferries between North Island Naval Air Station and San Diego. (The San Diego Evening Tribune, Mar. 12, 1984)

1977/06/02 - A workman at the Poole Boat Co. in Chula Vista is hard at work preparing the craft for its final destination (the San Diego sportfishing fleet. Chula Vista's flourishing young boat yard on the bay at the foot of F Street is the birthplace for two new vessels In San Diego's sportfishing fleet. Last week saw the launching of Jeff Jones' Apollo which will be operating out of Fisherman's Landing. Another launching is planned for sometime for Bobb's another charter sportfisher which will also work from Fisherman's landing. The Apollo didn't scoot down a ramp, nor slide down the ways into the bay, she was hoisted into the water by crane. Three more of Tod Chaffee's beautifully designed and crafted aluminum hulls still gleam there at the boat yard and there are several more to be started soon. One of the hulls still lies upside down. That's how Chaffee builds them, starting with the keel. When welding is all complete inside and outside, he roils the hull over with a crane. This is about a 20-minute operation, and the vessel then stands upright on the ground on a specially-built cradle ready for the house, cabin and engine to be built. Chaffee has been in boat building in San Diego for over 40 years. He's nationally known for his genius in working with wood and metal and tops the list among boat builders who work with aluminum. Two super deluxe yachts are in the works, one, a 78-footer for National Yacht Facilities and the other will be Mr. and Mrs. Daley's plush 82-foot yacht. On an encouraging note for those who like the briny, but whose stomachs rebel when the water gets rough: These new yachts will have stabilizers built to cut down on the roll and pitch action in heavy seas. This will make for a much smoother and

comfortable ride for land-lubbers and Dramamine freaks. The Poole Boat Co., Inc. names as sole stockholders in the closed corporation, Bill Poole, Tod Chaffee, and Homer Craig. According to Craig, they employ 46 people, the majority of whom live in the South Bay Area. Jim Capps told me there has also been talk of building sail boats, that the owners of the yard don't plan to confine building to power boats only. According to Bill Poole, his Royal Polaris will be sport fishing full time from now til the end of April. She's just has a complete overhaul and renovation job. I freely confess to prejudice. I feel sort of like the Royal Polaris of my kids, having watched her construction so closely while doing research for a couple of features and a magazine article on the boat. Poole won't claim it the world's largest sportfishing vessel. I suppose it's pretty hokey to get all choked up at a boat launching, but when that beauty went into the water, for me, it was a big deal. I especially liked the part where they threw Poole and wife, Ingrid into the bay. When Poole isn't fishing, it seems he's hunting. He and Ingrid are off to Zambia soon. I'm looking for many more beautiful boats to be hoisted into the waters off F street. (The Imperial Beach Star-News, June 2, 1977)



"Spotted a boat at the J Street ramp last week that looked as if it might have come straight out of "Star Wars" What I beheld was a boat with a hull platform 30 feet long, resting between a pair of hollow tubes resembling torpedoes, but pointed at each end. The tubes are 16 inches in diameter and are set 8 feet apart. All of the hull is supported by aluminum struts attached to yet another pair of tubes set 30 inches underneath. These tubes are similar except they have small ailerons attached. . . . Sitting aboard looking dapper as ever, was the boat's designer and builder, Tod Chaffee, a partner in Chula Vista's Poole Boat Co." (Jackie Dewey in The Imperial Beach Star-News, July 14, 1977)

1977/08/14 - Charles Hurd and Herb Engel at Southwest Marine, Inc. that began operations in Dec. at the end of H Street and already has \$6.3 million in contracts. (The San Diego Union, Aug. 14, 1977.)

1977/11/29 - Rohr Marine gets \$3m contract extension for SES boat (Surface Effect Ship), work began in 1970. (The San Diego Union, Nov. 29, 1977)

1979/02/14 - Congress kills the SES boat that Rohr had been developing. (The San Diego Union, Feb. 14, 1979)

1978/10/30 - Landowners oppose Bay Front plan. James Capps thinks the city's Bayfront Redevelopment Plan is for the birds. The birds, the least tern and the clapper rail, are the only ones that will end up using the bayfront property, including his own, he dourly predicts. The city has set its sights on Capps' soft water service and his boat repair yard, or rather the bayfront land at the foot of F Street where they are located. Two other parcels there are also coveted. In an attempt to win approval from the Coastal Commission and U.S. Wildlife Service approval to develop the rest of the bayfront, the plan has been modified to earmark the property at the foot of F Street as a future wildlife habitat. Capps' businesses and others there would be torn down and the land turned into a marsh. Ironically, says Capps, the dirt from his lot could be used to fill in an existing marsh nearby so it could be used for industrial development. In addition to Capps, who owns Rayne Soft Water Service at 965 F Street, the adjacent Poole Boat Co., the other landowners involved are Willine Whiteman and Frank Ballistrieri. Whiteman owns Whiteman Yacht Co. at the old Shumacher building, 980 F St. Ballistrieri owns the Marina Motor Hotel at 960 F Street. Whiteman said that when she first read that the city wanted to use her land for a parking lot, she could hardly believe my eyes." The three property owners, who employ a total of 55 persons, have decided to fight the city's bayfront plan and have hired an environmental consultant, Robert Small, to represent them. Small, who headed the county's environmental development agency several years ago, said at a City Council hearing on the plan that it is unrealistic and ill-founded. He said the city's proposal to fill in the existing marsh between F and G streets "is in clear violation of the Coastal Act. Capps' property has been tied up in a legal nightmare since 1972. That was when the city first placed a moratorium on it. The freeze was to remain in effect for three years as the city went about redeveloping the area. Now, six years later, the city has decided to eliminate the industrial and commercial use at the foot of F Street. Capps said Paul Desrochers, the city's redevelopment director, has told him he could probably locate his business across the way from his current site, on the existing marsh the city wants to fill and turn into an industrial site. "The environmentalists are not going to allow them to fill any marshes," Capps said. Capps, whose father farmed the land where the Chula Vista Shopping Center stands, says he laughs when he reads the government reports on protecting the habitat of the clapper rail and the least tern. That is because he can remember chasing the birds out of freshly planted celery fields. Capps said the least terns have to make its breeding grounds at the beach, and the clapper rail is not as fussy about its habitat as the Fish and Wildlife Service is indicating. Capps said the three property owners cannot sell their land, nor can they plan for the future with the cloud that hangs over them. "As soon as you talk about selling and you start talking about the redevelopment project, they lose interest in a hurry," he said, adding that the city will have to pay fair market value for his property if it is purchased. He questioned what the value will be after six years of indecision by the city, and no opportunity for growth. "I would be happy if the city could find another location for my businesses," he said, "but the prospects don't look good." Capps said he has to be on the west side of Interstate 5 to get boats his company makes into the bay. "They're too heavy to take over the freeway overpasses and too tall to lake under them," he said. Capps said the ocean is an ideal location for his water softening business, since he is able to flush salts directly into the bay. Capps said he flushes the salt into the ocean and Western Salt Co., located to the south of L Street, reclaims the salt. Then he uses the salt again in the water softening process. He said he uses about 25 tons a week. Whiteman said the city should consider using the salt for other purposes.

Shangri-La, which once served as a dinnerhouse nightclub with seating for 2,400 persons, as a tourist attraction. "Some of the most popular restaurants and shopping villages are built new, and then by costly processes made to look old. You have an existing building which is structurally sound, facing the cool bay and with the built-in aura of fun and intrigue. "This structure and surrounding property could, with a little imagination, be the beginning of your recreational The San Diego Union, Oct. 30, 1978)

1978/12/11 - James Capps, who owns Rayne Soft Water Service and Poole Boat Co. on land just north of the old Shangri-La, said Morgan attempted to sell the hangar, but he did not want it. Gene Grady, Chula Vista's building and housing director, recalls the ingenious method Morgan and Horn used to float the huge like structure on the pilings that were to serve as its foundation. They floated the hangar into place during a high tide, then lowered the building in place as the allowed water to escape from a specially prepared dike, he said. Grady said the hangar, though old, was structurally sound when it arrived on the shores of Chula Vista and remains in good shape. (The San Diego Union, Dec. 11, 1978)

1979/02/14 - Congress kills the SES boat that Rohr had been developing (The San Diego Union, Feb. 14, 1979)

1979/06/06 - Willine Whiteman must move from F Street. When Hom went broke in 1962, Whiteman's husband Marvin bought the Shangri-La and turned it into a facility to build aluminum yachts. Now it is leased to Risi Industries that is developing a mail sorting system for the Postal Service. James Capps' business (The San Diego Union, June 6, 1979.)

1980 - NETR online historic aerial of 1980 is the last to show Rohr boatyard with crane at end of G Street. These were gone in 1981 aerial. (NETR online historic aerials, <http://www.historicaerials.com/?javascript>)

1980/06/10 - Last week Rohr was awarded a \$3.4 million contract from Navy for the design of an air-cushioned landing craft (SES). About 70 employees of the Marine Division would be involved in the study for about 17 months. The 70 are among the 250 left in the Marine Division that reached a peak employment of 700 until its primary contract for the development of an air-cushioned destroyer was canceled several months ago. (The San Diego Union, June 10, 1980.)

1980/12/05 - Rohr to sell Marine Division due to the cancellation of the SES. (The San Diego Union, Dec. 5, 1980.)

1981/01/31 - Rohr Executives buy Marine Division. The SES program was canceled in Dec. 1979 by the Carter administration. RMI, Inc. is to be formed by Eggington, Datrell Reed, Pat Burke. It will continue to operate in its National City plant. RMI located at 225 West 30th St in National City. (The San Diego Union, Jan. 31 and Mar. 19, 1981.)

1981/11/04 - South Bay Boat Yard, a wholly owned subsidiary of Southwest Marine, gets lease on land and sea on north side of G Street. Port Commission's Decisions Should Give Boost To Chula Vista Economy. Despite some "lingering concern" by its mayor, Chula Vista apparently did well for itself yesterday in decisions by the San Diego Unified Port District. First, the port commissioners reversed a staff recommendation and decided to try to accommodate with Southwest Marine to allow it to put up temporary structures for Navy personnel on district tidelands in Chula Vista. This will enable Southwest Marine to carry out a ship-repair contract for the Navy. Mayor Will Hyde had objected to the housing. But he was "delighted" with the commission's grant of the development of a marina and recreational-vehicle park on tidelands in Chula Vista. In another action, the commission postponed discussion of a new contract with the Harbor Police Officers Association. This may bring a court suit by the association. The controversy over Southwest Marine, one of the large repair contractors on the West Coast, dealt with its plans for land and water recently leased by a wholly owned subsidiary, South Bay Boat Yard, on the north side of G Street at the northern terminus of Quay Avenue in Chula Vista. Southwest Marine, which operates two other ship-repair facilities here, mostly for non-Navy ships, was the apparent low bidder on a \$13 million contract to repair the Juneau, a landing platform dock vessel. But under Navy policy the contract will not be awarded unless suitable on-shore quarters and a mess hall are provided for the Juneau's 468 officers and crew. During the eight months that the Juneau will be repaired at the 32nd Street Naval Station, Southwest proposed to put up the quarters on its Chula Vista leasehold. The port district staff recommended that this be turned down. One of its main objections was that it would "preclude marine-related industrial uses from being developed," as the port master plan calls for, a stand seconded by Mayor Hyde. Port director Don L. Nay told the commission the proposal would "make a bunkhouse out of a potential shipyard." He and Hyde also felt that, as Nay said, "we'll have problems getting rid of a use that is temporary." And Nay wondered why Southwest could not utilize Navy land. Attorney Milton Fredman and president Arthur Engle argued that that the repair project would be a spur to the area's economy, and that the company planned to bid on other repair jobs. It pointed out that if Southwest loses the job, it will go to a San Francisco company that was the second lowest bidder. As for the fear that the quarters would be permanent, Fredman said, "If the port district tells us to get off, we'll get off." The commissioners decided to approve the company's proposal subject to a meeting to settle the minds between Southwest and the port staff on wording the lease so that there is an "ironclad" agreement that the temporary structures would be removed in three years. Commission chairman Phil Crease* also obtained company assent to improving appearance of the leasehold with staff-approved fencing and landscaping since the land is next to a proposed marina. (The San Diego Union, Nov. 4, 1981)

1981/12/09 - Project For Housing Sailors OK'd, Despite Objections By Hotels. Over objections from the Holiday Inn at the Embarcadero and the El Cortez, port commissioners yesterday approved a \$1.4 million project to provide temporary housing for crews of Navy ships being repaired here. Approval was also given to turn the one-time airport restaurant, Boom Trenchard's, into an office building. Earlier this year, the commissioners rejected a plan that would have put the Club there. Southwest Marine Inc. was given the go-ahead on moving mobile homes onto a site near its Chula Vista ship repair yard to house 436 sailors whose ship is being overhauled and repaired. Representatives of the Holiday Inn at the Embarcadero and the El Cortez Center said they were not given the opportunity to house the sailors. Those statements were labeled a "smoke screen" by Southwest Marine's attorney, Milton Fredman, a former port commissioner. After reviewing correspondence and the situation, the port commissioners were sympathetic to Southwest Marine's views and granted the construction approval. Actually the commission had no business being in the middle between the hotel operators and the ship repair yards, because housing of the crews is a matter between the ship repair yards, said Sam Timmons, senior vice president of National Steel & Shipbuilding Co. He reinforced Fredman's contention that if San Diego gets the contracts to repair and overhaul Navy ships - contracts that are especially needed now during a period of lagging ship construction in the nation - the shipyards are going to have to be competitive. Hotels are too expensive to house crews, he said. The shipyards that were awarded the contracts must provide the quarters although it must meet Navy specifications, said Capt. John McKechnie, a contracts officer from the Navy Bureau of Shipbuilding and Repair. Southwest Marine, Atkinson Shipbuilding and NASSCO are major contractors in the ship-repair business here and are seeking large shares of the work to be done on 21 vessels over the next three years. Southwest Marine's attorney, Fredman, pointed out that the housing will be temporary, for only three years, and it will be available to other shipyards if it is not being used at any given time. The installation will include dining hall facilities as well as housing for the crews. Fredman said the plan is to locate the area away from the port district's tidelands, preferably zoned for mobile home park use, and establish housing there after the three-year term ends. Port Commission Chairman Phil Creaser opposed the project. He said he felt that the shipyard should have talked with El Cortez and Holiday Inn officials to see if other arrangements could have been worked out for keeping crews there. Port commissioners were split 5-2 on the plan to establish office space at the site of the former Boom Trenchard's Restaurant with Louis Wolfsheimer and Maureen O'Connor dissenting. O'Connor said she was not willing to give the plan even conceptual

approval until she is shown how a system of subleases from the master tenant, Torrey Enterprises Inc., to other office users would be worked out "I would be to give it six months," she said. With the preliminary approval, Torrey officials will meet with port district staff members to draft a lease and bring it back to commission within 30 days. Possibilities for a parking garage to ease the lack of space near Seaport Village appeared-remote yesterday, after a two-member committee of the port commission recommended against such a structure. Commissioners William Rick and George James recommended that a 40-acre parcel property be developed for ground-level parking. That cannot move ahead until next April when Harbor Drive in that area is relocated. : Port commissioners until next week a full discussion of the training of Harbor Police. Gary Park, president of the San Diego Harbor Police Officers Association, hinted that legal might be taken after Jan. 1 because 21 officers have not had the necessary police academy training required under a law that becomes effective then. The Police Officers Standards and Training agency for the state has indicated it will send a report to the port commissioners by Dec. 15 that will detail the need to meet legal qualifications for peace Officers. Although the main discussion was put aside until next Tuesday, Port Director Don L. Nay said that the plans have been for all harbor police officers through the academy here. Two are enrolled and Nay said two more are being enrolled in January for the 10-week, 400-hour course San Diego Union, Dec. 9, 1981.)

1982/01/11 - Southwest Marine recently purchased a waterfront facility from Rohr to build a pair of Navy fueling barges. Also in Chula Vista is the project for portable housing to handle 435 crew of the Navy supply ship Juneau. (The San Diego Union, Jan. 11, 1982)

1983/03/23 - Chula Vista Awaits Decision By Port District On Boatyard. A new \$4 million pleasure boat repair and storage facility supported in concept by the City Council may be added to the city's bayfront if it receives Unified Port District approval. Southwest Marine Inc. wants to develop 10 acres of bayfront land at the foot of G Street to build a facility to store more than 200 boats on land and 80 slips for boats awaiting or undergoing repair. City staff members said the facility would create about 80 jobs. The council, sitting as the Redevelopment Agency, approved the plan in concept last week, but the facility would be under the jurisdiction of the Port District and must receive Port District approval. Don Hillman, manager of the Port District property department, said he would meet with representatives of Southwest Marine this week. He said the company could either seek port approval of the concept and then do an environmental impact report on the project or could do the EIR first and take the whole package to the board. An EIR would take about 30 to 60 days, Hillman said. (The San Diego Union, Mar. 23, 1983)

1983/04/07 - Poole Boat Co fire. The 8-yr old company has been operating at the foot of G Street for 3 years. Yacht Firm Fire Damage Put At \$200,000. A fire gutted the Poole Boat Works in Chula Vista, causing an estimated \$200,000 damage, but firefighters managed to save a \$2 million yacht being built adjacent to the structure. Chula Vista Fire Marshal Ted Monsell said the cause of the blaze is under investigation. Homer Craig of El Cajon, a partner in the yacht-building firm, made the \$200,000 damage estimate. "The Fire Department did a fantastic job in saving the yacht, an 80-footer 90 percent complete and originally scheduled for launching June 12." Craig said. A Chula Vista police officer spotted the haze shortly after 1 a.m. Tuesday and alerted firefighters, Monsell said. Monsell said firefighters from Chula Vista, National City and the Montgomery Fire District battled the blaze for an hour before bringing it under control. They remained at the scene until about 4 a.m. doing cleanup work. The firefighters poured water onto the \$2 million yacht to keep it from burning. Monsell said. It was first estimated it might be two or three weeks before work could resume but after making a closer inspection Craig said the firm's 30 employees will be back at work by the end of this week or the first of next week. The eight-year-old firm, which has been in operation at the foot of G Street for three years, is building two sports fishers and several other yachts. Craig said. (The San Diego Union, Apr. 7, 1983.)

1984/03/12 - Plans for a major boat-repair yard, which officials say will fill the last gap on the Chula Vista waterfront, have been announced by Southwest Marine Inc. Art Engel, president of Southwest Marine, said he also hopes to reactivate pedestrian ferries that once plied the harbor. Engel and other company officials outlined their plans for the proposed \$5.3 million facility at the foot of G Street. James L. McArthur, special projects coordinator for Southwest Marine, said the yard will accommodate vessels up to 120 feet long, displacing up to 100 tons. There will be parking for 380 vehicles, which he admits is excessive, but which was provided in anticipation of a future restaurant "when it is needed." The facility will cover 8.53 acres of water and 12.15 acres of land on a 35-year lease from the San Diego Unified Port District. Spoil from dredging the submerged area of the project to 11 feet will be dumped in an ocean disposal area southwest of Point Loma. Engel said his company started on the project site in 1977. He now operates San Diego Marine Construction Co. with shipyards in San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco and American Samoa. "This project has been sort of a dream of ours since we sat in a little trailer on this site back in '77," he said. He said his company, which also operates the Star & Crescent Boat Co., is undertaking a study to reactivate pedestrian ferries between North Island Naval Air Station and San Diego. He said he hopes also to be able to provide pedestrian ferry service for South Bay residents between 24th Street Marine Terminal in National City and North Island. (San Diego Evening Tribune, Mar. 12, 1984)

South Bay Boat Yard in 2004

1986 - As a company history notes, the well-known Engel Brothers (Herb, Art and David) let the quality of the work done at their yard to slide. Business fell and the family hired a young boating expert named Todd Roberts to close the place. Roberts whittled the work force to five people. But along the way, he sensed that he could reverse the yard's fortunes largely by hustling for contracts to service large, privately owned yachts, a fast-growing corner of the boating industry. He asked the Engel brothers for the chance to try. They said yes, making the 29-year-old Roberts vice president and giving him a very short period of time to turn things around. (San Diego Union, Aug. 21, 2010)

2006/05/19 - Next year the South Bay Boat Yard, which opened in 1986, completes its \$6 million makeover. The 35-year lease expires in 2020. The largest part of the project involves the addition of a travel lift that will hoist and move boats to dry work space. It is to arrive in October and will be the largest of its kind in the United States, able to hoist more than 600 tons. The new lift will be assembled on site and be operational in December. To accommodate it, the yard is adding two 150-foot-long piers. After the remodel, the yard will be renamed Marine Group LLC. (San Diego Union-Tribune, May 19, 2006.)

2006/05/19 - Within the next year, some of the world's largest and most luxurious private yachts might be making a call on Chula Vista's bayfront. That's on the South Bay Boat Yard, which opened in 1986, completes its \$6 million makeover. Work began in early March, and the project, which includes the country's largest boat crane, is to be completed in December. "We've moseyed along in the yacht business for 25 years," said Todd Roberts, vice president of the yard. "We were wandering through the woods, looking for our way. Now we've stepped forward." South Bay Boat Yard has a lease with the San Diego Unified Port District for 12 acres ashore and 8.52 acres of water at the foot of G Street. The 35-year lease expires in 2020. In January 2004, the port and the city wanted to move the boat crane because it was felt an on-site expansion or overhaul would disrupt bayfront development. Environmentalists said they wanted it moved because industrial work would harm marine life. The yard is adjacent to the Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, near a trailer park on the bay. However, the Port District decided last July to allow the owners to overhaul the yard. The port also said the yard could remain until a better site is found. The largest part of the project involves the addition of a travel lift that will hoist and move boats to dry work space. It is to arrive in October and will be the largest of its kind in the United States, able to hoist more than 600 tons. The lift now in use at the yard can pick up 100 tons. The new lift will be assembled on site and be operational in December. To accommodate it, the yard is adding two 150-foot-long piers, which handle craft up to 225 feet long and 54 feet wide. The lift, using slings, will hoist boats from the water, carry them across

paved lot and set them on blocks in repair lots. After the remodel, the yard will be renamed Marine Group LLC. It will continue under the same management said. The boatyard, one of nine on San Diego Bay, has 36 employees and annual revenues of about \$5 million. After the overhaul, Roberts expects to hire about 100 more employees and reach revenues of more than \$12 million. "We think this will be a huge economic boon to San Diego Bay and will make it a destination for mega-yachts," said Jim Hutzelman, assistant director for community services at the port. The yard services about 300 boats a year, Roberts said, and focuses on specialty vessels: yachts, oil skimmers, speed boats, security boats and the Navy's coastal combatant craft, which are smaller than destroyers than barges. The port district is looking for an alternate site for South Bay Boat Yard, and one possibility is Harbor Island, across from San Diego International Airport. The port has said the yard will stay in the area even if it does not remain in Chula Vista, Hutzelman said. (San Diego Union-Tribune, May 19, 2006.)

2010/04/08 - The 30-year-old ship used in the filming of "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" is undergoing routine maintenance at a Chula Vista boatyard. Marine Group Boat Works is painting and making repairs to the 1.1 million pound HMS Surprise, which should take about two more weeks. The ship is a 179-foot replica of an 18th-century British Royal Navy frigate and belongs to the San Diego Maritime Museum fleet. "This is the second time we hauled it out of the water," said project manager George Sutherland. "We did it two years ago in 2008. Vessels regularly have to be pulled out of the water to clean them up." The 24-gun ship will include bottom and topside paint, and repairs to hull fasteners, planks and rudder. The ship cannot be out of water for more than two to four weeks while the wooden hull will dry out. While the HMS Surprise is getting work done, tours are available to local students and Chula Vista organizations. "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" was filmed over five months at 20th Century Fox's former Baja Studios, south of Rosarito Beach. The film, starring Russell Crowe, debuted in 2003 and won Academy Awards in cinematography and sound effects editing. Marine Group Boat Works has been in operation for 21 years and recently opened a second location in San Jose del Cabo in Baja California. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Apr. 8, 2010.)

WILDLIFE REFUGE 1975-Present

City planners also examined the area along the shore of San Diego Bay and created the Bayfront Development Project for 850 acres of land west of Interstate 5 north of "L" Street. Their plans envisioned residential and commercial uses and included a marina and other development by the Unified Port District, as well as a business park, green belt, public parks, wildlife sanctuary and a 400-room hotel on Gunpowder Point, the former site of the Hercules Powder Company. This redevelopment project is still undergoing review by various agencies. The decade of the '70s brought with it a new awareness of the environment and the realization that natural resources were limited. Endangered plants and animals, archaeological sites and fossil beds all became subjects of concern. Citizens and planners began looking for ways to preserve the natural environment while providing for continued growth. (Webster, *Chula Vista Heritage 1911-1986*. City of Chula Vista, 1986.)

Chula Vista Bay Master Plan Ecological Resource Map, July 2012

1975/02/02 - Chula Vista, National City and the Unified Port District are ready to stand up to state and federal environmental agencies over bayfront development plans. (Chula Vista Star-News, March 2, 1975)

1975/06/08 - Gunpowder Point, the most valuable part of Chula Vista's undeveloped bayfront, is once again back into the city's redevelopment plan. The federal Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife has dropped its demands that the valuable real estate overlooking San Diego Bay remain undeveloped. Chula Vista had planned otherwise, and its City Council had approved a master plan calling for a water-oriented playland with a hotel, convention center, shops, restaurant and a golf course. And Gunpowder Point, with its proposed hotel-convention center complex, was to be the key point until the federal agency, which has reviewed the plan, said the land couldn't be developed. Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin (D-Chula Vista) is credited with getting the federal agency to back off and to demand that Gunpowder Point be left for the birds. The city council held a conference with Van Deerlin to complain about federal intervention in the bayfront and the congressman promised to help. The news this week shows he did just that. "Through the good efforts of Congressman Van Deerlin they (the bureau) compromised," said Jack Henthorne, Chula Vista Community Development Coordinator. Asked about details of the "compromise," Henthorne went on to say "it's really a compromise. They just gave it up." The move is a victory for the city which has run into numerous environmental objections over its bayfront redevelopment project. Part of Sweetwater Marsh is located in Gunpowder Point area. The redevelopment plan calls for keeping much of the Sweetwater Marsh in its natural state with development kept to an inland island for the multi-story resort hotel and conference center. Tennis courts, restaurants, and shops, as well as controlled viewing near the marsh area to view the wildlife are in Chula Vista's plan for Gunpowder Point, the site of a wartime gunpowder manufacturing plant. All those plans in the air when the federal agency strongly objected to development there and said Chula Vista had to give up development on Gunpowder Point before the city would approve plans for the Sweetwater Flood Control Channel, which will be built to the north. John McLaren, aide to the congressman, confirmed the news. "I did it reluctantly, it seems," McLaren said, adding the bureau is holding firm to its demands that 140 acres of marsh, including Paradise Creek marsh in National City, be preserved. That 140 acres does not include Gunpowder Point. They say it is not truly marsh, and the Army Corps of Engineers would have a hard time justifying a stand that Gunpowder Point should be purchased. McLaren said another reason behind the bureau's change of heart about Gunpowder Point is its economic future, and the bureau questions if it is economically feasible anytime in the foreseeable future for a hotel-convention center to be built there. That, however, does not wrap up the environmental intrigue on the Chula Vista bayfront. The city staff is now concentrating its efforts on the G St. marsh near Rohr Industrial Park. federal agencies also want preserved as a bird sanctuary. The city had other plans for it, designating it as an industrial and office area because of its nearness to the airport. (Chula Vista Star-News, June 8, 1975.)

1978/10/08 - Chula Vista city councilmen are beginning to despair over whether the Bayfront Redevelopment Project will ever become reality. Chances for developing the area seem to be diminishing with time. At least some councilmen and staff members are becoming frustrated with attempts to work out conflicts with various state and federal agencies. In a public hearing this week on a local coastal plan which includes the project, the City Council, sitting as the Redevelopment Agency, heard discouraging testimony from agencies and citizens involved. Before the project can be started, the city must get approval from the state coastal commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. So far, the plan's most formidable opponent has been the Wildlife Service. A letter to the council notes the existence of two endangered species in the area, the least tern and the light-footed clapper rail. The Wildlife Service said the coastal plan should protect these areas and the city should replace any marsh land it destroys to build Tideland Ave., planned for extension north to National City. The letter notes, "If a local agency proposes a project which is clearly in conflict with existing laws and policies and stands little or no chance of being approved, we feel it should be pointed out as possible . . . so appropriate changes can be made . . ." Scott said after reading the letter he felt "complete frustration." He said the staff has made gains with the agency, but written stands bring the city back to "square one." Scott then commented, "No matter what we do, it's not going to get by Fish and Wildlife," on the other hand, needs the road as access to its bayfront development. Scott noted consultants have advised the plan would be worthless without Tide Street. According to Boyd, what the city now has to determine is whether it can get a plan accepted which includes the street. "Once we define a project," he said, "we can discover if it's too expensive to be feasible." Councilman Greg Cox, acting mayor due to Will Hyde's absence, asked if the plan could be approved by the state coastal commission without the consent of the wildlife service. Warren responded, "I don't know." Boyd later said the state commission might certify the plan, but put it on unworkable conditions on it. The Redevelopment Agency also asked its lawyer, Cliff Reed, what would happen if the city didn't adopt a coastal plan. "If we

adopt a plan," Reed said, "the state will do it for us." The lawyer said if the state designates the marsh as open space, it should compensate the property owner. The Santa Fe railroad owns the majority of the bayfront land. It has already filed a \$7 million inverse condemnation suit against the city and lost. The case can still be appealed. Other landowners are Frank Balistreri, Jim Capps and Willine Whiteman. They opposed the plan saying it is based upon "false premises, design (and) ignorance of the California Coastal Act . . ." Doug Boyd, assistant community development director, said later he wasn't at all surprised by the opposition. He stressed it is only the opinion of local fish and wildlife office. Boyd feels political pressure by Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin (D-Chula Vista) could be brought to the regional office in Oregon. Councilmen also heard from Bruce Warren, executive director of the regional coastal commission. Warren said, "Somewhere along the line we will support this plan, but there are still problems. "We do need to preserve the marsh. The question is whether we can have some economic development along the bayfront. " The bayfront plan calls for the building of a hotel, a mini-convention center and a public park on Gunpowder Point. It includes another hotel in the marsh and various shops and restaurants. Boyd said a key problem in the plan is the extension of Tidelands Ave. over the marsh area. Consultant Robert Small represents the three owners. He said the residents are also anxious to have a bayfront plan, but not this one. Small noted the plan fails to recognize the present businesses and suggests they be used to replace elsewhere marsh land degraded. Others, who spoke in favor of the plan, included representatives of the League of Women Voters, the Chula Vista Gardening Club. The Environmental Control Commission unanimously endorsed it. After hearing testimony, the three councilmen presented suggestions for loss as to what to do next. Cox commented that when the plan was first suggested, "it was so environmentally sensitive that people laughed at it. "Now it's not so sensitive enough." Scott kidded that it was all Warren's fault. Warren used to be city planning director and helped formulate the plan. His commission now has problems with it. The councilmen told him, "If we hadn't listened to you we could have started with heavy industrial use and bargained from there." On a more serious note, Scott later said, "We'll keep working (on the plan) . But it has to be discouraging." (Chula Vista Star-News, Oct. 8, 1978.)

1979/09/20 - The state Coastal Commission Tuesday effectively vetoed Chula Vista's efforts to turn its bayfront into a \$200 million tourist-recreation center. At the commission meeting in Los Angeles, approved the city's Local Coastal Plan, it attached several conditions which will prohibit complete bayfront development. Environmental concerns were the prime factor that led the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the state Fish and Game Department to protest the original plan. The city desired to build a major hotel complex on the 40-acre marshland known as Gunpowder Point. But because that area is home for the endangered least tern and light-footed clapper rail the plan was scuttled. Instead, the commission urged the city to use Gunpowder Point for nature study and limited public recreation and vehicular access. The blow did not come as a surprise, according to city officials. Mayor Will Hyde said Tuesday night the bayfront development plans are rejected but they will have to be reanalyzed." Redevelopment Director Paul Desrochers told the council he would return to the Oct. 4 council meeting with a report of the city's options. Desrochers was at the Los Angeles meeting along with assistant Doug Boyd. "It's a pretty bitter pill to swallow," Desrochers told the council last week. Desrochers said the city has spent about \$500,000 on the project. He said the commission chairman was apologetic before the Tuesday bayfront vote. Desrochers offered funding to help the city alter the plans. After leaving the city council meeting, Desrochers told reporters some of the city's options include legal action to overturn the commission's decision or simply "lying back and taking it. At this point, I just don't know," he said. City Councilman Greg Cox was the most vocal at the council meeting in his feelings about the coastal commission decision. "I'd like to express my disgust at the bureaucracy (of the commission)," Cox said. "I think Chula Vista has been very environmentally concerned. I would really just like to express my outrage. "As far as our plans for recreation-oriented development along the bayfront, I think they've been stymied if not completely stopped." Another of the conditions imposed on the bayfront plan by the coastal commission was that the city not extend Tidelands Ave. north across the Sweetwater Marsh. The road construction, the commission decided, would destroy certain environmental resources. The commission recommended the city move the major area of development from Gunpowder Point to the 130-acre Vener Farm site, which has been rejected in the past because of its proximity to industry. City plans for a D Street fill were also hindered because that area is a nesting ground for the endangered tern colony. The city hoped to construct a medium-density residential development in that area north of Gunpowder Point. Part of the concern about the environmental character of the Sweetwater marsh rests on the fact that it represents 75% of San Diego Bay's remaining natural marshland. The marshlands are known to be used by at least 15 species of birds, nine species of fish and 11 species of invertebrates. These species, according to a commission staff report, have become endangered largely because their habitats have been destroyed or significantly affected by man. The commission concluded that the protection of the marshlands is of "critical statewide and national importance to the preservation of wildlife." (Chula Vista Star-News, Sept. 20, 1979)

1979/09/20 - The state Coastal Commission, while approving Chula Vista's Local Coastal Plan, attached several conditions which will prohibit complete bayfront development. Vetoed by the commission were a Gunpowder Point hotel and extension of Tidelands Avenue. The future of the Chula Vista's aborted bayfront development is up in the air. The city is looking at acceptable alternatives. Some development will occur along Chula Vista's bayfront, even though the state Coastal Commission has turned down a large part of the plan. Two motels and three restaurants are scheduled in a small portion north and south of E Street, east of the rail road track. Chula Vista City Council is going to court over a state Coastal Commission decision that effectively scrapped the city's bayfront development plan. A bayfront motel, the Ramada Inn won unanimous approval from the Chula Vista Planning Commission for a site at Interstate 5 and E Street. The motel will have 193 rooms, a restaurant and recreational vehicle park. (Star News Sept. 20, Oct. 7 and 11, Nov. 11, Dec. 16, 1979)

1985/08/03 - Mayor Gregory Cox has few kind words for the Sierra Club. "The Sierra Club is a single-purpose organization that has ridiculed our community and the public, frankly, to the point of people in North County trying to dictate what's good for Chula Vista and the citizens of the South Bay," he said. Chula Vista's million bayfront development plan has been challenged by the Sierra Club in court, with the group seeking to overturn the Coastal Commission's approval of the project in 1984. If the Sierra Club wins, the city will have to start planning all over again. Cox said the city has been trying to develop the bayfront for 15 years and already has spent more than \$1 million on studies and consultants, and \$50,000 to protect the city's interest through legal fees. This morning, Cox is expected to present his case before U.S. Sen. Pete Wilson. After a special briefing by city leaders, Wilson is expected to tour the project site. Cox said he needs Wilson's help at the federal level in getting a permit to build an access road to Gunpowder Point, an area described by the Sierra Club as necessary habitat for wildlife. The club announced that it would seek a court injunction to stop any activity on the road until the lawsuit is settled. Cox said he also fears opposition from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He said the agency could order another environmental study, and the mayor said another study would be unnecessary. That, he said, would cost the city \$50,000 and delay the project two years. "I hope that Fish and Wildlife won't make a decision on the threat of litigation," he said. "We have spent all the money and all this money already. And for the first time in 15 years we have the complete approval of the state, the Coastal Commission, the Coastal Commission and the California Fish and Game and the city of Chula Vista, all working together to implement a plan." Cox said that despite the Sierra Club's allegations, the city is environmentally conscious. In 1970, before the Coastal Commission was established, the city rejected a plan that would have filled in the marsh on Gunpowder Point for development. "I also don't understand how the Sierra Club professes to try to preserve the environment and spoke against our application for a Coastal Conservancy grant," he said. The grant, which eventually was approved, is to be used for cleaning the marsh, developing information on the habitat and developing a restoration plan for additional marshland. "I question their motivation -- are they anti-Chula Vista or pro-environment?" Cox asked. Once the access road is built, the city plans to build a nature center at Gunpowder Point in time to celebrate the city's diamond jubilee in 1986. (San Diego Union, Aug. 3, 1985)

1986/12/05 - A California Water Commission meeting in San Diego allowed several commissioners to tour one of the more complex projects the group has considered, the South Bay's Sweetwater Flood Control Project. Six of about 14 state commissioners toured the site of the flood control project yesterday with representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the state Department of Transportation and the county. What commissioners saw was a project within a project, one of completion, but one that has been hampered by environmental lawsuits and an unusually complex chain of agencies working together. "The right of way is

cleared since 1972," said Dale Hoffland, principle civil engineer with the county Department of Public Works. "There are so many agencies involved. ... It w to 10 years waiting for state Coastal Commission clearances." The channel, which runs almost exactly between National City and Chula Vista, is entwined v construction for state Route 54, an extension of the South Bay Freeway that would connect Interstates 805 and 5. The new connector's eastbound and westb eventually will run on either side of the flood channel, and bridges over the channel will carry relocated trolley tracks and utility lines. From the concrete underpinnings of what will be a state Route 54 on-ramp from Interstate 5, the flood control channel looks like little more than a rock-enforced riverbed carry trickle of a stream. But the Sweetwater Flood Control Project is designed to handle the vast amounts of water expected when cyclical storms thunder through 100 or 250 years. Such floods have caused extensive damage to the area in the past. The \$110 million project is financed through \$86 million in federal high funds and \$17 million in Corps of Engineers Improvement funds, with the remainder coming from local resources. Two contracts totaling \$55 million have l awarded for the construction, which is under way. As if the number of government agencies involved were not enough of a complication (one source calcula different entities involved), environmentalists with the League for Coastal Protection and the Sierra Club filed suit in federal court in September to stop wor project, asserting that marshlands nearby, which had been promised as a preserved natural habitat for endangered species, were not secure. The bargain to pr marshlands was struck in December 1984 when the county agreed to acquire 188 acres of marshland within a year from the owner, the Santa Fe Land Impro Co. Several endangered bird and plant species live in the wetlands near Chula Vista. Santa Fe agreed to donate the land in exchange for the assurance that th company could develop bay-front projects, specifically the \$2 million nature interpretive center at Gunpowder Point and a 400- room resort hotel. However, for the marshlands has not yet been turned over to the county by Santa Fe, and environmentalists see the freeway and flood control channel project going th without the wildlands. That prompted the September suit which may lead to a court-ordered halt when the matter is heard in Superior Court this January. A v stoppage on the flood control project may not halt the freeway connector portion of the construction, but the project as a whole would move more smoothly phases went in together. Ironically, all concerned seem to be in favor of the channel. "The Sierra Club has no problem with the flood control channel," said V Hagstrom, project manager with the Army Corps of Engineers. "They just want their mitigation." (San Diego Tribune, Dec. 5, 1986.)

1987/04 - Long valued by environmentalists both for its own unique saltwater ecosystem and as a major link in the California flyway system, the South Bay Sweetwater Marsh area is now being invaded by construction projects which threaten four endangered species: the Californian least tern, the lightfooted clay Belding's savannah sparrow, and a fragile plant known as the saltmarsh bird's beak. The Sierra Club in 1986 filed lawsuits claiming County of San Diego vic promise in Dec. 1985 to take over the 188 acres of Sweetwater marsh for a migration area to preserve wildlife. The federal government agreed in 1981 to ac march for a vital preserve. The original land owner, the Santa Fe Land Development Co. has refused to sell it the marsh was to be kept for preservation. The land company's Gunpowder Point interest and its involvement in the 1984 legal action both stem from its membership in the well-known Chula Vista Invest Company (CVI). It is CVI's partially contested Bayfront Development Plan which would build roads, shopping malls, residential areas and tourist facilities o 790 acres of South Bay land, including the Sweetwater Marsh region. ("The Beginning of the End Of Sweetwater?" Hi Sierran, April 1987, clipping in Bon vertical file, California Room, San Diego Public Library)

The marshlands of Gunpowder Point, map from National Wildlife Refuge report of 2006.

1992/07/18 - The Sweetwater Flood Control Project was finished in the summer of 1992. The Sierra Club temporarily stopped construction of the Project wi lawsuit, forcing the project's original price tag to go up by millions of dollars. The suit was settled when Santa Fe Land Co. donated about 300 acres of the Sweetwater Marsh to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a refuge for the endangered least tern and light- footed clapper rail birds that were threatened by construction. The Army Corps of Engineers created 36 acres of new estuary and 16 acres of new marsh, in addition to extending a 400-foot-wide flood contri channel to San Diego Bay. Most of the project was federally funded, Caltrans officials said. (San Diego Union-Tribune, July 18, 1992.)

NATURE CENTER 1986-Present

The Chula Vista Nature Center opened in 1987

1986/06/21 - City officials yesterday broke ground on a \$2 million nature center, the first project of a 681-acre bayfront development that has been planned i years. "It's an exciting day for Chula Vista," said Mayor Gregory Cox. "It's ironic that the first development is not for a hotel, motel, restaurant or office buil for a nature center. "It shows a continued concern and commitment on the part of the city of Chula Vista to protect and preserve the environmentally sensitiv our bayfront while allowing the property owner a reasonable opportunity to develop the non-environmentally sensitive areas." Cox addressed a group of 70 j the morning ceremony, which was followed by champagne and orange juice. The city has struggled, in and out of court, to bring about development of its \$5 million, bayfront project and to provide public access to the bay. But yesterday, despite the ongoing controversy and litigation, development began. Delays c permits have set back the opening of the center. Cox had hoped to schedule the grand opening of the center on Oct. 17, the same day as the city's 75th diamc jubilee. Instead, Cox is hoping to have a "topping party" in October, at which the center's roof will be installed. Opening is now scheduled for January. The 1 square-foot center was designed by Winn and Cutri Architects and will include an exhibit hall, auditorium, library, offices and classrooms. The center will p public educational facilities, wetland preservation and a scientific study area of wetland ecology. Construction of the center is financed with redevelopment i and a \$375,000 state Coastal Conservancy grant. The city's redevelopment agency has budgeted \$200,000 for furnishings and displays inside the center. Cox yesterday that the figure may jump to \$400,000 because of the cost of the displays. He said the city will be attempting to secure grants to help finance those said the entryway is planned in a "boat-house" concept and includes a series of displays that will hang from the ceiling and focus on the marshland ecology o Gunpowder Point. Cox said the same firm that designed displays at the Monterey Aquarium in central California is working on the interior plans for the nat "Today I'm delighted something positive is finally happening on the bayfront," Cox said. "The land has been privately owned for 104 years. The nature centi will provide the first opportunity for Chula Vista residents to have access to the bay. It will be a resource for students and people who choose to visit Chula V San Diego Union, June 21, 1986.)

1986/07/09 - Mayor Cox announced that on October 17 the "E" Street/Bayfront Trolley Station will open. There will be shuttle buses going from the Trolley to the Interpretive Center. Mayor Cox noted the financial cooperation of the Coastal Conservancy Trust for this Nature Center. (City Council Minutes, July

1987/07/03 - Tomorrow is the scheduled opening of the Chula Vista Bayfront Nature Interpretive Center. The opening of the \$2.2 million facility is significa because it's the first public facility to be built on the city's bayfront and because it will open up a privately-owned area to the public. The center will feature o on the geology, ecology and natural history of the Sweetwater Marsh -- the last salt water marsh remaining in the county. The focus of the center is to show l fish, plants and animals in the marsh live together. Thirty live animals and 14 types of fish will be on exhibit, including a bat ray petting pool. Schools are ex

play a big part in the use of the building. Trails are planned for the wetlands. The center also includes an auditorium, a research library and bookstore. Tomo festivities will begin at noon. Parking will be available on Bay Boulevard, north of Anthony's Seafood Grotto, with shuttle buses providing transportation to at no charge. The buses are needed to take guests to the nature center because there is no public road available. Entertainment will begin at 12:30 p.m. and be provided by Stu's Crew. Guests will be welcomed by Mayor Greg Cox and will include Dr. Gordon Snow, assistant secretary of the state Resources Agency; Trujillo, superintendent of Sweetwater Union High School District, and the center director, Dr. Steve Neudecker. The center will open until 4 p.m. at no charge to the public. Fireworks on the bayfront will begin at 9 p.m. The center is located on Gunpowder Point, which had been the site of the Hercules acetone factory, which produced gunpowder from 1911 to 1925. The point offers a view of the bay, Coronado Bridge and San Diego and is the location of a projected 400-room hotel which would be the centerpiece of the city's bayfront development. (San Diego Union, July 3, 1987)

1988 - The Sweetwater Marsh Unit of the National Wildlife Refuge was established, and the land under the Nature Center became federal land protected by Fish and Wildlife Service.

1989/06/06 - The minimum-security inmates from the Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility on Otay Mesa are part of a cooperative work program involving the city of Chula Vista and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to begin clearing away wood, discarded cars and other junk from Gunpowder Point. The inmates, who are scheduled for release within the next year, will be working 40 hours each week and earning \$36 each month through the summer. Plenty of work awaits the inmates. Dilapidated farm houses, piles of copper coil, 4-foot wood crates, abandoned car and boat parts and chunks of concrete are among the debris strewn across the 36 acres of Gunpowder Point. The point has been the site for agricultural and industrial uses, including the manufacture of bomb fuses by the Hercules Powder Factory. Nearly two dozen other cleanups have been conducted on the point, but none of this magnitude, officials said. "We're glad to have to remove some of these scars on the land," said Stephen Neudecker, executive director of the Bayfront Conservancy Trust, which oversees operation of the Chula Vista Nature Interpretive Center. The collected debris will be separated into three piles. Wood will be thrown into a swimming pool-size cement d possibly be burned later. Metals will be placed into dumpsters for possible recycling, and plastics will be placed in other dumpsters for disposal at the dump. Dumpsters are being provided free by Laidlaw Disposal. Wildlife officials thought it would take five years to clean Gunpowder Point, but the intense work may speed that process up. Once the area is cleaned, wildlife officials hope to plant species that are native to the area and perhaps create a hiking trail on the Gunpowder Point is among the 316 acres of the Sweetwater Marsh dedicated as national wildlife refuge last August. The cooperative effort began several months when Chula Vista Mayor Greg Cox toured the Donovan facility and learned more about the prison's work programs. (San Diego Tribune, June 6, 1989.)

1995/12 - Dr. Floyd Wergeland was an ophthalmologist with the Eye Physicians Medical/Surgical Center in Chula Vista and a long-time resident in Bonita. When he visited the Nature Center in December 1995 to look at the progress of the construction of the Clapper Rail Exhibit, he pledged a significant gift in January that would allow the completion of Phase II of the exhibit. His contributions made possible the groundbreaking for the new David A. Wergeland Shark & Ray Exhibit on May 1, 2002. David was Dr. Wergeland's brother who died in 2000. The dedication sign in the exhibit notes "As a former Eagle Scout, David loved the outdoors and naturally supported the mission of the Chula Vista Nature Center and its many projects. It is here that his passion and legacy can be shared with others." Dr. Wergeland also helped with the avian husbandry building and has been a supporter and benefactor of the Center to the present day. The Wergeland Family Display Center was opened in July 2006.

Dr. Floyd Wergeland in the Shark Exhibit of the Chula Vista Nature Center.

1995/08/17 - Continued city funding of the Nature Interpretive Center here has been called into question because loans to the center exceed \$3.6 million and are increasing. And the likelihood that the loans will ever be repaid is remote, given the apparent collapse of a proposed \$600 million bay-front resort, city officials said. The Nature Interpretive Center was built in 1987 with the expectation that commercial development along adjacent bay-front land would pay for the center's operation. But development has not materialized, and property owners abandoned plans for the resort after a marketing study concluded that plan was financially unsound. The 3.2-acre nature center on Gunpowder Point Drive operates at a \$375,000-a-year loss, and it is increasingly difficult for the city to cover that loss, said councilmen Steve Padilla and Jerry Rindone. Stephen Neudecker, the director of the Nature Center, said chances of finding other sources of money are slim. The center charges admission (\$3.50 for adults, \$1 for children over 6), but Neudecker said fees only raised about \$47,000 last year. The center has been nationally recognized and is one of 11 museums in San Diego County to be accredited by the American Association of Museums. The center also is the home of "one of the most endangered birds on the planet," Neudecker said, referring to the light-footed clapper rail. Center grounds also have a shrub found nowhere else in the United States.

the frankenia palmeri. Until the ARCO Olympic Training Center opened earlier this year, he said, the Nature Interpretive Center was Chula Vista's only tour attraction. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Aug. 17, 1995)

1995/12/09 - Roland Daniel and his diving buddies spent almost four unsuccessful years trying to raise abalone at the Chula Vista Nature Center in hope of replenishing the ocean with the hard-to- come-by mollusks. But all of the abalone died. Problem was, the water in the tanks wasn't good enough for the abal Clams, oysters and other filter-feeding critters can't thrive in the water, either. That's because even though the nature interpretative center sits on San Diego l land overlooking sparkling waters that are ideal for sea life, water for its aquariums and petting pool is trucked in from La Jolla. Stephen Neudecker said the first took over eight years ago as executive director of the facility he was flabbergasted to learn that the water was trucked in weekly. It costs \$1,250 a month Neudecker made it his pet project to build what is called a flow- through seawater system that would pipe in water directly from the bay. When it comes to r marine life and doing research, the trucked-in water isn't as high quality as fresh seawater, he said. The state Coastal Conservancy has awarded the nature ce \$400,000 grant toward construction of a \$450,000 pump system to bring in bay water. Up to \$100,000 is in the offing from the San Diego Unified Port Distr Neudecker said. As planned, a 2-inch-diameter pipe would pump in 75 gallons a minute, which would circulate through the aquariums and the shark- and-st petting pool. Then the water would be discharged through another pipe into a swale in the wetlands surrounding the center, Neudecker said. He said construc the system could begin early next year. Although the nature center owes nearly \$4 million to the city of Chula Vista, the grant money is specified for the pur and cannot be used to repay the city, Neudecker said. The center was built in 1987 with the expectation that commercial development along adjacent bayfront would pay the center's \$500,000 annual operating costs, but the development has not materialized. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Dec 9, 1995)

1995/12/09 - The state Coastal Conservancy has awarded the nature center a \$400,000 grant toward construction of a \$450,000 pump system to bring in bay planned, a 2-inch-diameter pipe would pump in 75 gallons a minute, which would circulate through the aquariums and the shark and stingray petting pool. (Diego Union-Tribune, Dec 9, 1995)

1999/06/23 - The latest attraction at the Chula Vista Nature Center isn't a thrill ride or a multimillion-dollar exhibit. It's basically an oversize bird cage with : interesting occupants, including a couple of endangered clapper rails, a disabled egret and two other birds that think they're household pets. As it celebrates i year, the little-known but well- respected Nature Center is opening its biggest attraction yet. The light-footed clapper rail aviary is an enclosed habitat design create a natural setting for several birds in need of help and protection. The aviary has been planned for five years and built largely with donations, at a cost \$300,000. Done in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the construction of the aviary started about two years ago and was completed last Se Birds began occupying the aviary in the winter, but it hasn't been until the past couple of months that details of the exhibit were finished. What visitors will : large habitat covered with netting and attached to two enclosures. There's a tidal slough with a computer-generated tide that comes in and out at the appropri and it's stocked with pickleweed and cord grass that birds use for building nests. But the stars of the show are two clapper rails -- small, brown birds that hav endangered over the years because of the destruction of their habitats by development. The aviary couldn't come at a better time for the Nature Center. While accredited museum, the center gets only about 50,000 visitors a year and is subsidized by the city of Chula Vista. In recent months, the center has lost its lon director and seen San Diego Zoo officials turn down a long-sought merger plan. Officials note that the city has reinforced its commitment to the center by pr to spend nearly \$44,000 for an avian specialist to oversee the new aviary and a growing bird collection. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Jun 23, 1999.)

2010/06/15 - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is breaking ground on a \$4.5 million headquarters today for the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Comp South Bay facility will serve as an administrative facility, service building and interpretive "portal" for visitors interested in the ecology of the South Bay. Th building site -next to the Chula Vista Nature Center -was selected in hopes of boosting collaboration for wildlife conservation efforts and improving onthe-g management for nearby habitat restoration projects, said Andrew Yuen, project leader for the refuge complex. "We also have a great opportunity to stimulate economy of San Diego County by the construction of the new buildings," Yuen said. The main facility will be about 6,500 square feet, including offices, sto and a conference room. A separate building will provide a work area for maintenance activities. PCL General Contractors is in charge of the project, which i paid for with money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. (San Diego Union-Tribune, June 15, 2010.)

The former Chula Vista Nature Center, now called the Living Coast Discovery Center, is located in the center of Gunpowder Point

ROADWAYS AND BICYCLE PATHS

The bike path under the I-5 and SR 54 interchange crosses the Sweetwater flood channel.

1888 - The man who built the Hotel del Coronado also built a commuter railroad around the bay. Elisha Babcock began construction of the Belt Line on Nov 1887, and was completed June 8, 1888. According to Irene Phillips, "the little train traveled from the vicinity of the Coronado Hotel, down the Peninsula, ov narrowest portion of the Strand where there are just 150 yards of sand between the placid Bay and the tumultuous Pacific, around the Bay, through National into San Diego. The first train made the circuit on August 7, 1888." (Phillips, Irene. "Don Pedro's Cattle Range," The Journal of San Diego History 2, July 1

1907 - John D. Spreckels bought the NC&O in 1907 and electrified the line, creating a streetcar system known as the San Diego Southern Railway. Spreckel began construction of a new railroad in 1907, the San Diego & Arizona, that ran from San Diego to Tijuana by 1910. After Spreckels died in 1922, his heirs wanted the railroad, and sold it to the Southern Pacific by 1932 when it was renamed the San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railway. The Santa Fe continued to : freight trains over the SD&AE tracks until 1968. After storm damage in 1976, the Southern Pacific decided to abandon the line, and it was sold to the San D for a trolley line that opened in 1981. ("Railroads of the South Bay," South Bay Historical Society Bulletin, July 2014)

1909 - The California Legislature authorized the first State Highway Bond Act that established a State Highway system and authorized construction of 3,05 highways. Highway 101 with a bridge across the Sweetwater River was built in 1912, using National Avenue that was paved in 1924. (Faigin, Daniel P. Cal Highways. <http://www.cahighways.org/>)

1951 - The Montgomery Freeway was constructed during 1950-51 as a southerly extension of a wartime Harbor Blvd built in 1943 in San Diego. The Califc Highway Commission passed a resolution to construct a freeway from the Mexican border to Harbor Blvd. on August 21, 1947. The freeway was given the : "Montgomery Freeway" in honor of John J. Montgomery, a pioneer in the field of gliders who is said to have made the first glider flight in 1883 along his fa was on the right of way. In 1957-1958, Montgomery Freeway (U.S. 101) between Mexican Border and National City upgraded to full freeway status with cc

of interchanges at Dairy Mart Road, 27th Street, and Palomar Street. This freeway was upgraded to eight lanes in 1973, eliminating almost all traces of the c
freeway, all US 101 signs removed and replaced by I-5 signs. (<http://www.gbcnet.com/ushighways/US101/101pics1.html>)

1959/05/10 - Congressman Bob Wilson requested \$75,000 for an Army Corps of Engineers study of Sweetwater flood channel (Chula Vista Star-News, Ma
1959.)

1965/02/21 - Army Corps of Engineers approved the Sweetwater Flood Channel. (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb. 21, 1965.)

1968/07/25 - Assembly bill authorizing the Sweetwater Flood Control Project was passed by California legislature (Chula Vista Star-News July 25, 1968.)

1969/07/31 - I-5 widening began in summer 1969, and the E Street ramp construction began in July. The I-5 widening between E Street and Palm Ave began
1971. In August 1973 the widening of a 9-mile stretch of I-5 in South Bay was completed. (Chula Vista Star-News)

1972/01/07 - Chula Vista Interchange Closing Due. Interstate 5, Entry From E Street Shutdown Planned. Motorists will have to do without one of the main g
into Chula Vista for about four months beginning sometime in the next few weeks. Milton Costello, resident engineer for the state Division of Highways, sa
yesterday the interchange on Interstate 5 at E Street will be shut down until early spring while workmen change it to handle traffic to and from the widened i
The work there is part of a \$16.7 million project to expand Interstate 5 from four to eight lanes between E Street and Palm Avenue in Imperial Beach. "The r
rains put us a little behind schedule, so I don't know the exact date the interchange will be closed yet, but it will be late this month or early next month," Cos
He said the interchange will not be closed until the new overcrossing at F Street is opened to traffic. It will serve as part of a detour system to partially replac
Street interchange. Detours will provide a southbound off-ramp over the bridge and back to E Street and a northbound on-ramp near E Street. Northbound tr
be able to leave the freeway at G Street and use a detour to reach E Street. Costello said he expects the 4.3-mile-long widening project to be completely finis
spring of 1973. By that time, all existing interchanges at E, L, H; Main and Palomar streets and Palm Avenue will be open to traffic. And a new interchange
will have been added to the freeway network. (San Diego Union, Jan. 7, 1972)

1975/06/29 - Project cutbacks in the state Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will deliver a serious blow to the South Bay, delaying or eliminating free
projects and laying off employes, an official said this week. Improvement of Interstate 5 between Chuhl Vista and National City will probably be delayed a y
plans to connect Highway 54 to Interstates 5 and 805 may be delayed indefinitely. (Chula Vista Star-News, June 29, 1975.)

1977/06/26 - Design work has already begun on an \$850,000 project to construct a bicycle "commuter" path around San Diego Bay. The roadway exclusivel
bicycles would begin in Coronado, wrap around the bay through Imperial Beach, Chula Vista and National City and wind up in San Diego. The approval of
project was announced this week in Sacramento by the state Department of Transportation (Cal-Trans). "We haven't gotten the official word from Sacramen
we've already hired the designing engineer," said Bob Roland, the "non-motorized coordinator" for the local Cal-Trans district. "We're just tickled pink about
Mostly, it will be a separate facility (away from main arteries) all the way around the bay." The legislation authorizing the work was passed two years ago ar
written by the South Bay's foremost bicycle enthusiast. Sen. James Mills (D-San Diego). "This bikepath will provide a much-needed alternative commute fo
thousands of bicyclists each week," Mills said. He estimated about 30,000 bikers would use it weekly. The project should be completed by 1979. (The Impe
Star-News, June 26, 1977)

1978/12/10 - Plans for the Sweetwater Flood Control Channel are not dead. even though the project is not included in the President's budget. The Army Corp
Engineers plan to seek authorization to spend \$2.5 million to buy 180 acres to preserve for wildlife in the channel area. Army Corps of Engineers moves ahe
plans for a \$25 million Sweetwater Valley Flood Control Channel. Opposition is expected because the channel area is home for two species of endangered b
:4 November 16, 1978 Sweetwater flood channel backed; local ecologist protests. December 10. 1978 A:1:2 (Chula Vista Star News, Jan. 26 and Nov. 16 1'

1982/02/28 - 4,000 bicyclists to ride through South Bay. It's all part of the annual event known as the Grand Bicycle Tour of Five Cities, sponsored by the S
Council of American Youth Hostels Starting at 7 a.m. today bike riders of all ages will begin pedaling from the county Administration building on Harbor D
will ride over the Coronado bridge, an experience considered to be the highlight of the 35-mile tour < into Coronado and along the Silver Strand to Imperial
Imperial Beach, the halfway point of the ride, cyclists will be offered refreshments at the AYH facility on Palm Ave. Then it's back to the bikes and on throu
Vista and National City before returning to San Diego. This year's tour will mark the third time bicyclists have toured the five area cities en masse. The annu
was almost called off this year when traffic mishaps occurred last year on the Coronado bridge, in Coronado and Imperial Beach. California Highway Patrol
said a group of cyclists went the wrong way on a bridge onramp and nearly caused several accidents. Coronado police said the steady stream of bicycle rider
traffic in that city to a halt for a few hours. In Imperial Beach, along Imperial Beach Blvd. near Marina Vista Park, designated as a rest stop and refreshment
riders disobeyed traffic signals and caused congestion, police said. Determination on the part of AYH officials this year paid off though, and just a week ago
California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) issued AYH a permit to allow bicyclists on the Coronado bridge this year. Before gaining approval from
CalTrans, AYH officials had to convince the California Highway Patrol and other law enforcement agencies from the five cities involved along with the City
of San Diego and Coronado, that the ride could be held safely this year. (The Imperial Beach Star-News, Feb. 28, 1982)

1983/04/28 - California Coastal Commission gives approval to construction of the Sweetwater Flood Control Channel, a section of state Route 54, and wide
Interstate 5. (Chula Vista Star-News, April 28, 1983)

1983/06/08 - The long-delayed Sweetwater River Flood Control Project took a leap forward yesterday as the House passed a bill providing \$4.9 million to s
construction. The \$4.9 million for Sweetwater pleased San Diego County representatives who have been awaiting such action since 1972. Final authorizatio
Sweetwater project was made possible when the federal government agreed in 1981 to buy 180 acres of land to protect the habitat of the least tern and clapp
two endangered birds whose nesting grounds would have been disturbed by the flood control work. County lobbyist Roger Honberger praised Rep. Duncan
Coronado, for his effort and persistence in making sure the funding was in the bill. "It wouldn't have happened without him," Honberger said. (San Diego T
June 8, 1983)

1984/01/28 - The California Department of Transportation will advertise for bids Monday on the first phase of a \$100 million flood-control and freeway con
project in the Sweetwater River Valley. Completion of the fourth and final phase of the project is scheduled for 1988, said Caltrans spokesman Jim Larson.
finished, the project will consist of a 3.4-mile flood-control channel, part of which will separate the eastbound and westbound lanes of a 1.9-mile connector,
between Interstates 5 and 805. Larson said the first phase will provide the I-5 and Route 54 interchange just north of E Street in Chula Vista and will be mc
noticeable to motorists because it includes widening of southbound I-5 to four lanes between E Street and 24th Street in National City. "The first contract v
build an eight-lane, high-speed detour on I-5 through the valley," Larson said. "Then we'll raise the permanent roadbeds and start on the interchange." South

now narrows abruptly from four to three lanes at 24th Street causing nightly rush-hour traffic jams and numerous accidents. Thirteen traffic fatalities have been recorded there since 1977. While Route 54 has been on tentative highway construction schedules for more than 20 years, it is a relative newcomer as far as flood control channel is concerned. That project was proposed by county officials in 1941. The Army Corps of Engineers will construct the flood-control channel which will be about 250 feet wide at the base and will vary from 300 to 400 feet wide at the top. The excavated material for the channel will form the base for a four-lane highway along each bank. The I-5 detour will involve moving 865,000 cubic yards of fill material and the filling of 11 acres of wet marsh near the Sweetwater mouth. However, Caltrans plans to restore at least 11 acres of marshland and possibly more. (San Diego Union, January 28, 1984.)

1984/05/11 - After 22 years of playing a major role in delaying construction of State Highway 54 through the Sweetwater Valley, the California least tern will have its final say in the matter. A ground-breaking ceremony scheduled today in National City was ballyhooed as the "beginning of major construction" for an Interstate 54 interchange and for the Sweetwater River flood-control project. The first phase of the project will be a high-speed, eight-lane detour on I-5 between 24th Street in National City and E Street in Chula Vista. "But we can't begin building the detour until Aug. 15 because this is the nesting season for least terns," said the state Department of Transportation (Caltrans) spokeswoman Shirley Webber. Army engineers will build the flood-control channel, part of which will separate eastbound and westbound lanes of State 54, which are to be built by Caltrans. That freeway will connect I-5 and I-805 with four lanes in each direction along a 1.9-mile length. The flood-control channel will be 3.4 miles long. Part of it already has been built to skirt the Plaza Bonita shopping center. The remaining 1.9 miles will be concrete-lined, about 250 feet wide at the base and 300 to 400 feet wide at the top. Webber said the next phase of construction will include realigning I-5 from 24th Street to 24th Street, building a section of channel between San Diego Bay and Highland Avenue, reconstructing part of National City Boulevard over the channel and realigning the San Diego Trolley tracks near the freeway interchange. The cost of the second phase is estimated at \$40 million. It is scheduled to be completed by late 1985 or in 1986. The \$33.6 million third phase will see extension of the channel to east of I-805. Phase 4, scheduled for completion in 1988 at a cost of \$10 million, will end the project. One of National City's contributions, \$128,000 to widen the National City Boulevard bridge over the Sweetwater channel, was approved this week by the City Council. Webber said today's ground-breaking would be the culmination of 22 years of almost unceasing pressure by local city, county and federal legislators and leaders for the flood-control channel and an east-west highway through the valley. (San Diego Evening Tribune, May 11, 1984.)

1986/12/05 - A California Water Commission meeting in San Diego allowed several commissioners to tour one of the more complex projects the group has considered, the South Bay's Sweetwater Flood Control Project. Six of about 14 state commissioners toured the site of the flood control project yesterday with representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the state Department of Transportation and the county. What commissioners saw was a project within a project, one of completion, but one that has been hampered by environmental lawsuits and an unusually complex chain of agencies working together. "The right of way has been cleared since 1972," said Dale Hoffland, principle civil engineer with the county Department of Public Works. "There are so many agencies involved. ... It took 10 years waiting for state Coastal Commission clearances." The channel, which runs almost exactly between National City and Chula Vista, is entwined with construction for state Route 54, an extension of the South Bay Freeway that would connect Interstates 805 and 5. The new connector's eastbound and westbound lanes eventually will run on either side of the flood channel, and bridges over the channel will carry relocated trolley tracks and utility lines. From the concrete underpinnings of what will be a state Route 54 on-ramp from Interstate 5, the flood control channel looks like little more than a rock-enforced riverbed carrying a trickle of a stream. But the Sweetwater Flood Control Project is designed to handle the vast amounts of water expected when cyclical storms thunder through the area every 100 or 250 years. Such floods have caused extensive damage to the area in the past. The \$110 million project is financed through \$86 million in federal highway funds and \$17 million in Corps of Engineers Improvement funds, with the remainder coming from local resources. Two contracts totaling \$55 million have been awarded for the construction, which is under way. As if the number of government agencies involved were not enough of a complication (one source calculated 15 different entities involved), environmentalists with the League for Coastal Protection and the Sierra Club filed suit in federal court in September to stop work on the project, asserting that marshlands nearby, which had been promised as a preserved natural habitat for endangered species, were not secure. The bargain to protect the marshlands was struck in December 1984 when the county agreed to acquire 188 acres of marshland within a year from the owner, the Santa Fe Land Improvement Co. Several endangered bird and plant species live in the wetlands near Chula Vista. Santa Fe agreed to donate the land in exchange for the assurance that the company could develop bay-front projects, specifically the \$2 million nature interpretive center at Gunpowder Point and a 400-room resort hotel. However, the marshlands have not yet been turned over to the county by Santa Fe, and environmentalists see the freeway and flood control channel project going through the wetlands without the wildlands. That prompted the September suit which may lead to a court-ordered halt when the matter is heard in Superior Court this January. A court stoppage on the flood control project may not halt the freeway connector portion of the construction, but the project as a whole would move more smoothly if the two phases went in together. Ironically, all concerned seem to be in favor of the channel. "The Sierra Club has no problem with the flood control channel," said Val Hagstrom, project manager with the Army Corps of Engineers. "They just want their mitigation." (San Diego Tribune, Dec. 5, 1986.)

1989/05/26 - The final phase of Route 54, a freeway section that will follow the border between Chula Vista and National City, is expected to start in several weeks now that the state Transportation Commission has approved a \$20.5 million contract for the project. The east-west highway will stretch two miles from Interstate 5 to Interstate 805 before heading south toward E Street in Chula Vista. About 35,000 motorists are expected to use the new route daily once it is completed in late 1990, according to Jim Larson, a spokesman for the state Department of Transportation. The project was started in 1984. The California Transportation Commission approved the contract for the last segment of the four-phase, \$100 million project last week. According to Larson, the route will eventually extend 16 miles to San Diego, but no timetable for that extension has been set. Cox said he now would like to see funding approved to complete the Sweetwater Flood Control Channel project, which runs near the Sweetwater Marsh. The federal government failed to fund the \$25 million project in the 1989-90 budget. Both the freeway and channel projects were delayed when an environmental dispute erupted between the Sierra Club and the U.S. Corps of Engineers. A federal court order was issued in March 1988 limiting the amount of freeway construction that could take place until the issue was resolved. The bayfront land is home to two endangered bird species -- the California least tern and the light-footed clapper rail. In March 1988, 300 acres of private, environmentally sensitive land crucial to Chula Vista's bayfront development was donated to the federal government by the Chula Vista Investment Co., a joint venture of the Santa Fe Land Co. and Watt Industries, thus allowing the freeway to proceed. (San Diego Union, May 26, 1989)

1990/12/11 - A one-mile stretch of freeway connecting Interstate 5 with Interstate 805 in the South Bay opened yesterday, about six years after work began. Eastbound lanes opened to traffic yesterday afternoon. Westbound lanes near I-805 were scheduled to open today. Only three-fourths of the \$17 million project has been completed. The four ramps connecting I-805 to the new freeway are complete, but only two of the four at the I-5 interchange are finished. The final portion of the project will be completed in mid-1992, according to Caltrans. (San Diego Union, Dec. 11, 1990)

1992/07/18 - When work began eight years ago on the Interstate 5-State Route 54 interchange project, Ramon Ruelas was an entry-level Caltrans employee out of school. Today, Ruelas has worked his way up the Caltrans ladder to become a resident engineer overseeing the entire job, underscoring the long and arduous nature of the nearly finished enterprise. After years of labor and legal wrangling, the long-awaited Interstate 5-State Route 54 interchange project is set to fully open to commuters. That means life will get a little less hectic for about 150,000 drivers who daily use that stretch of South County highways. Starting this weekend, motorists will be able to access Route 54 from the south on I-5, and by Monday, motorists traveling west on Route 54 will be able to connect to southbound I-5. Caltrans officials said. Also, the ramp from southbound I-5 onto E Street is expected to open today, and by mid-August, the connection from northbound I-5 to eastbound Route 54 will be open. Malcolm said that before the upgrading of the area, the I-5 freeway portion between E and 24th streets "was the most dangerous stretch of highway in the county."

stretch of any two-mile segment in the state of California." The \$20 million interchange is the final phase of an \$89.3 million project that began construction years ago. The complicated project extended Route 54 from I-805 to I-5; realigned the trolley; created a new river channel between National City and Chula Vista and brought I-5 up to interstate standards from 24th Street in National City to E Street in Chula Vista. The Sierra Club temporarily stopped construction with lawsuit, forcing the project's original price tag to go up by millions of dollars. The suit was settled when Santa Fe Land Co. donated about 300 acres of the Sweetwater Marsh to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a refuge for the endangered least tern and light-footed clapper rail birds that were threatened by construction. The Army Corps of Engineers created 36 acres of new estuary and 16 acres of new marsh, in addition to extending a 400-foot-wide flood control channel to San Diego Bay. Most of the project was federally funded, Caltrans officials said. State Route 54 is part of a 33-mile link of freeways around San Diego called the inner loop, which eventually will include the east-west Route 52 between La Jolla and Santee, and the north-south Route 125 from Santee to San Diego. It is being built as an alternative route to traditionally used freeways. The transportation corridor is seen as so important that Caltrans also plans to widen Route 54 and add four more miles of interchanges -- at Valley Road, Woodman Street and Briarwood Road. (San Diego Union-Tribune, July 18, 1992)

1994/02/03 - South Bay commuters are expected to gain some relief from traffic congestion on state Route 54 next year after Caltrans expands a two-mile stretch of the road from four to six lanes, officials said yesterday. "We're turning what's an expressway into a freeway," said Caltrans spokesman Kyle Nelson. Construction starts in May or June and finish by early summer of 1995, costing an estimated \$19.8 million. The 2.1 mile segment to be expanded starts west of Woodman Street and ends east of Briarwood Road. This is the second stage of a project along Route 54 that began west of Interstate 805 and ended west of Woodman Street, which was completed in November. Route 54 is part of a network of proposed roads in the region, known as the inner loop. The widening of this highway is designed to eliminate stop-and-go traffic, and thereby improve air quality and lessen fuel consumption, Nelson said. About 50,000 commuters drive Route 54 each weekday, and 100,000 vehicles are projected to be using the highway daily by 2010, officials said. Another project slated to start in 1996 would connect state routes 54, 125, 94 and Interstate 905. The estimated cost is \$146 million, Nelson said. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is spearheading the Route 54 widening projects through Proposition A, the 1987 local half-cent sales tax initiative for road improvements, a SANDAG official said. Meanwhile, Caltrans is about to start on a \$4.32-million seismic retrofitting program involving 11 bridges countywide, three of which cross the Sweetwater River. The aim of these projects is to support columns to withstand earthquakes. Project engineer Hanh Khuu said this retrofitting program has been in the works for about 18 months and was prompted by the recent earthquake in Northridge. Work on the three South Bay bridges, however, may proceed only between September and March so as not to disturb area wildlife, said Khuu. "It's a window of opportunity there and it has to do with the mating season of endangered birds," Nelson said. The three-lane northbound and southbound bridges where Interstate 805 crosses the Sweetwater River both will be retrofitted, Khuu said. The third bridge to be strengthened is a two-lane connector between northbound I-805 north and eastbound Route 54. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Feb. 3, 1994)

2004/07/01 - Some three decades in the making, the bicycle route encircling the south end of San Diego Bay is nearing completion. The past decade has seen construction of new bicycle paths along the bay shore in Coronado and Imperial Beach, and work has just been completed on a miniature two-lane bicycle path linking National City and Chula Vista. This latter segment of bikeway includes a graceful bridge over the Sweetwater River tidal channel. Using the new link to piece together a six-plus-mile excursion that visits the bayside waterfront of both cities. A pleasant place to start pedaling is Pepper Park, a public boat-launch at the south terminus of Tidelands Avenue in National City. Nearby, at the corner of 32nd Street and Marina Way, you pick up the designated bicycle path (C for cyclists, pedestrians, too). Ongoing construction in this area will eventually lead to a small-boat harbor and various commercial venues -- National City's attempt to emulate Chula Vista's developed harbor and bayside park facilities a little farther south. The bicycle path ahead skirts portions of the Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, where moist and not unpleasantly rank odors hint at the biological richness found in shallow tidal channels and uplands covered in salt-tolerant vegetation. The path soon leads to a point under the spaghetti-like ramps of the Interstate 5/State Highway 54 interchange, where signs indicate a junction between one path leading east toward Plaza Bonita, and another path going south toward the Chula Vista Marina. Take the latter, and swoop over the brand-new bridge. Continuing south, at times separated from I-5's auxiliary ramps by only a low concrete railing, until you reach E Street. A parking lot for Chula Vista Nature Center visitors lies on the right. Go straight on Bay Boulevard, sharing space with the sparse car traffic. Traffic is heavy here only when workers are arriving or departing their workplaces. At Marina Parkway (J Street on the left), turn right to initiate a looping return, using Marina Parkway and Lagoon Drive to get back to Bay Boulevard. The area seems relatively quiet now, but future hotel development along the Chula Vista bay front could change that. If you care to extend your reconnaissance of Chula Vista's shoreline a bit further, make a side trip on Bay Boulevard for a mile south of J Street. You'll pass the natural-gas-fired South Bay electric generating station, and pull up alongside the South Bay Salt Works, where mammoth mountains of raw, granulated salt can be seen. The southernmost extremity of San Diego Bay is one of the few sites in the country where seawater is concentrated and evaporated with the help of solar energy to produce a pure form of sodium chloride (common table salt). (San Diego Reader, July 1, 2004)

2007/10/06 - California 54 is the Filipino-American Highway (originally called the South Bay Freeway). The freeway was renamed the Filipino-American Highway on October 6, 2007. California 54 straddles the Sweetwater River between Interstate 5 and Interstate 805 (separating National City and Chula Vista), then turns northeasterly toward the Paradise Hills community of San Diego and the unincorporated community of Bonita. The freeway currently ends as it approaches Sweetwater Road, but it is under construction to become a full freeway all the way to the newly opened section of California 125 near Jamacha Road (San Diego County Route S-17). (San Diego Union-Tribune, Oct. 6, 2007)

2008/09/06 - A few things to keep an eye out for tomorrow during the first Bike the Bay ride: the animals at the Chula Vista Nature Center, the salt works in Chula Vista and, of course, the view of the city while riding over the San Diego-Coronado Bridge. Bike the Bay is a noncompetitive, 25-mile ride along the Bayshore Bikeway, a scenic route that winds through San Diego, Coronado, Imperial Beach, Chula Vista and National City. The ride will start at 7 a.m. at Embarcadero Park South on Harbor Drive and is limited to 2,500 registered riders. "It's a unique bikeway: It's flat and scenic and really highlights the diverse communities of the five cities surrounding the bay," said Andy Hanshaw, organizer of the ride. He's been riding the bikeway for the past several years and thought it would make a nice community ride. "Then you add the bridge, and it makes for a really special event," Hanshaw said. Two lanes will be open to cyclists only during the ride from the bridge to Coronado. There will be two-way traffic for cars on the other side of the bridge. The event will serve as a fundraiser for the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition and is open to anyone 14 and older. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Sept. 6, 2008.)

The I-5 and SR 54 interchange over the Sweetwater flood channel.

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