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JUNE 14 & 15, 2003



IN CELEBRATION OF
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
AND THE STEWARDSHIP OF
HISTORIC HOMES IN CHULA VISTA



June 2003

Thank you for celebrating Chula Vista's historic legacy with us!

We, the historic homeowners of Chula Vista, are honored to share with you six amazing historic homes, a delightful lecture series ("Stepping Back in Time"), a no-cost Mills Act Workshop, and an Heirloom Discovery Clinic. We invite you to look, learn, and laugh a little with us as we take you on tour. Ultimately, we hope you share a little of what you learn this weekend with others, so that we all think a little when it comes time to preserving the character of our community.

Our goals to broaden awareness about historic preservation and to educate people about the Mills Act are being realized. No longer do people scoff when we talk about the benefits of preserving the older neighborhoods -- they sit up and take notice. They see the power of preservation. They see our determination to keep the best of the past preserved for the future.

Our next goal: to use these gems of local architecture to inspire you to appreciate the quality of Chula Vista's older architecture, and to see with new eyes some of the wonderful buildings you may have passed by your entire life. If you own a vintage home, our goal is to have you consider getting it historically designated. Why bother with preservation, designation, and the Mills Act? Because Chula Vista is a city with an interesting past and a bright future. Our city is worth preserving. Our stories are worth sharing. And a strong city builds on the strengths of its past.

This year we are delighted to have Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny as our Honorary Chair. Senator Ducheny has been a longtime supporter of historic preservation, someone who lent her assistance to the cause years before it was popular to do so. Thank you, Senator Ducheny, for all the help. And thanks too to our "celebrity docents," city council members Mary Salas, John McCann, and Jerry Rindone, who will be taking turns serving as your "celebrity docent" at the historic houses. This proves that our elected officials are good sports and good friends of preservation!

We give a big round of applause to our sponsors and our volunteers, without whom this event would not be possible. Thank you all for making our community nicer by being part of this special weekend. Proceeds from the events benefit the nonprofit Chula Vista Heritage Museum Society and the Historic Homeowners Historic Preservation Fund.

From our house to your house, we hope you enjoy this Chula Vista preservation celebration!

The Historic Home Tour Steering Committee

Historic Home Tour Steering Committee

Pamela Bensoussan • Glenda DeVaney

Carlos Fox • Jill Galvez

Corinne McCall • Jim and Imozelle McVeigh

John and Nancy Parks

Louise Torio, Historic San Diego Marketing & Consulting

This Year's Historic Homeowners, Stewards of their Exceptional Chula Vista Homes

Margaret Norton (The 1912 Cook Ranch)

Lucy & Carlos Fox (the 1921 Dupree-Gould House)

Elizabeth Galligan (the 1929 Sample-Galligan House)

Carlene & Jerry Scott (the 1929 Cleaton Robertson House)

Jill & Victor Galvez (the 1949 Hadley Johnson House)

Terry & David Camarata (the 1950 Atherton House, "Southern Beauty")

The 2003 Chula Vista Heritage Museum Society Board of Directors

John Parks, President • Pamela Bensoussan, Vice President

Glenda DeVaney, Secretary • Jim McVeigh, Treasurer

Carlos Fox • Jill Galvez

Pilar Denis Khder • Corinne McCall

Imozelle McVeigh • Nancy Parks

Peter Watry

Museum Manager: Kim Laru, Chula Vista Public Library



The Chula Vista Heritage Museum collects and preserves historical data pertaining to Chula Vista and the South Bay in order to document the history, growth, and development of our area.

Museum Location: 360 Third Avenue.

Call the museum at 619-427-8092

Join the Heritage Museum today!

The Heritage Museum Society is a nonprofit organization and a Chapter of the Friends of the Chula Vista Library.

Cover photos all from the Heritage Museum archives, except for the photo of Elizabeth (Ish) Galligan (at right) and friend with a World War II transport plane in India when they served in the Red Cross.

THANK YOU!

To the generous historic homeowners:

Terry & David Camarata, Lucy & Carlos Fox, Elizabeth Galligan,
Jill & Victor Galvez, Margaret Norton, Carlene & Jerry Scott

To the Steering Committee and Others Who Did So Much:

American Society of Appraisers, Flag Crafters,
Louise Torio, Steve Veach of Veach Illustration & Design

To our Major Sponsors:

The City of Chula Vista, Otay Land Company, McMillin,
EastLake Company, Otay Ranch Company, Home Depot,
The Star-News, and San Diego Home/Garden Lifestyles.

To Our Volunteer Appraisers at the Heirloom Discovery Clinic:

Pamela Bensoussan, Milroy Harrison, Margaret Mannatt,
Georgie Stillman, ASA, Jo Ellen Cole, GG,GFA

To those Showing Their Wonderful Historic Automobiles:

See our list of contributors on Page 45.

To our wonderful volunteers:

Thank you for caring about historic preservation.

CONGRATULATIONS TO
2003 CHULA VISTA PRESERVATIONISTS OF THE YEAR
LUCY AND CARLOS FOX

Lucy and Carlos, owners of the Dupree-Gould House (C.V. Historic Site #22 and one of the best examples of Craftsman-style architecture in Chula Vista), are honored this year for accurately recovering the form and details of their historic home, removing later inappropriate work, and replacing missing original work with an emphasis on historical accuracy.

Carlos also generously donates his time to serve on the Heritage Museum Society Board and has served on all the Historic Home Tour Steering Committees. Congratulate them when you see their house on tour!

Lucy and Carlos were selected as this year's recipients of the prestigious honor by the Resource Conservation Commission in Chula Vista.

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHULA VISTA

The Chula Vista area was part of a Spanish land grant known as Rancho del Rey, the King's Ranch. Under Mexican rule in 1821, this ranch became known as Rancho de la Nacion. It encompassed National City, Chula Vista, Bonita, Sunnyside, and the Sweetwater Valley. In 1845 the ranch was granted to Juan Forster, son-in-law of Mexican governor Pio Pico. Ten years later Forster sold it to F.A.L. Pioche, a Frenchman from San Francisco, who sold out to the Kimball brothers (Frank, Warren, and Levi).

Frank Kimball, a real estate developer, built the towns of National City and Chula Vista. In 1885 he brought the Santa Fe Railroad to Southern California, with its first terminus in National City. Several directors of the Santa Fe Railroad and Colonel W.G. Dickinson, a professional town planner, formed the San Diego Land and Town Company. They began developing the area by subdividing a 5000-acre portion into five-acre lots with avenues and streets 80 feet in width and a steam motor passing through the center. During the boom of the 1880s these five-acre lots sold for \$300 per acre. The purchaser was required to build thereon, within six months, a modern style house costing not less than \$2,000.

The Sweetwater Dam was built by the San Diego Land and Town Company to bring water to Chula Vista; a railroad was built to connect Chula Vista and Otay with National City and San Diego. The people coming to Chula Vista raised lemons, and in time the area became the largest lemon-growing center in the world.

The city was incorporated in 1911 with a population of 550. After its incorporation, Chula Vista continued to be a leading lemon-growing center. Other important crops were tomatoes, celery, and salt. The Western Salt Works has been operating on the Chula Vista bayfront since the beginning of the century. From 1916 to 1920, Chula Vista had a kelp processing plant that produced potash and acetone to make cordite used by the British to make bombs in World War I. This plant, now known as Gunpowder Point, had the largest kelp harvesting fleet and tank farm in the world at that time. Just after World War II, Rohr Aircraft Company was established on the bay front.

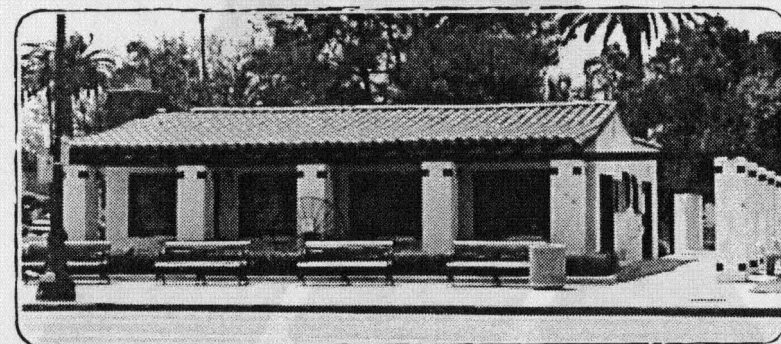
The current rapid population growth and activity in Chula Vista is such that could not have been imagined in 1911 and now the city is looking back in the hopes of recording and preserving its history for future generations.

(Excerpted and edited from a 1993 Heritage Museum publication, "A Brief History of Chula Vista.")

TOUR STOP

THE CHULA VISTA HERITAGE MUSEUM 360 THIRD AVENUE, CHULA VISTA

YEAR BUILT: 1946 • ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: SPANISH REVIVAL

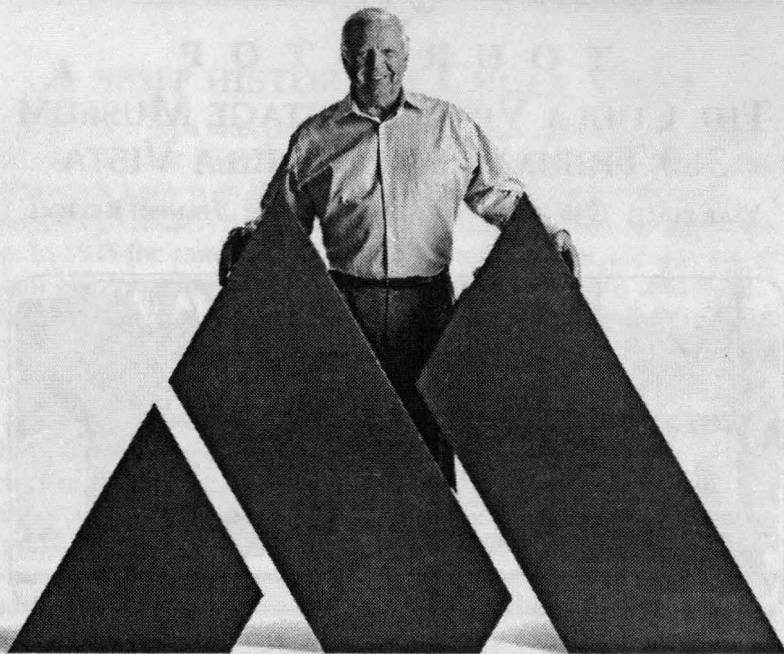


The Chula Vista Heritage Museum is dedicated to preserving the history of the region. The museum is housed in a 1946 building on Third Avenue that was once home to the Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce. Exhibitions presented in the museum display historical photographs, collectibles and artifacts from the area.

Brochures and maps are available covering such topics as the citrus industry, regional water history, historical buildings, native plant life, and the history of Chula Vista's Third Avenue Business District. Step back in time as you learn about the changing businesses of the past -- the merchants, their products, and the people who worked here.

The museum has installed a Walk of History featuring twelve vintage photographs depicting the colorful past of Third Avenue. The photos are installed on pedestals along this beloved tree-lined avenue that represents the heart of the town's historic core. In some cases, the buildings are the same as those pictured 70 or 80 years ago; in others, the historic buildings are long gone, offering viewers a "then and now" experience. In addition to the displays, the Heritage Museum offers a free Walk of History self-guided tour booklet that provides more detailed information.

The Heritage Museum has reprinted a number of the historical journals written by Chula Vista's legendary local historian, the late John Rojas. Additional works published recently include a free guide to the City's public art and a tantalizing Lemon cookbook. This year the Chula Vista Heritage Museum will celebrate its 10th anniversary with the installation of the original century old bell from the old "F" Street elementary school that was recently recovered with the help of San Diego County Supervisor Greg Cox.



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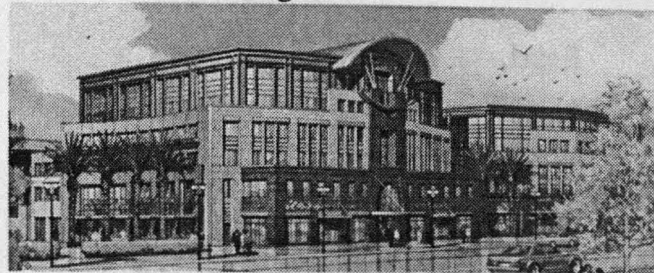
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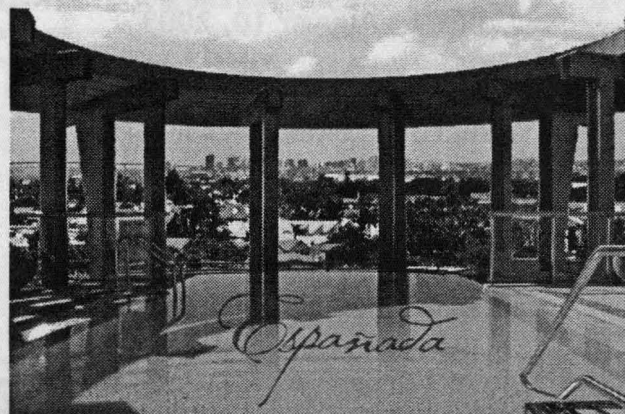
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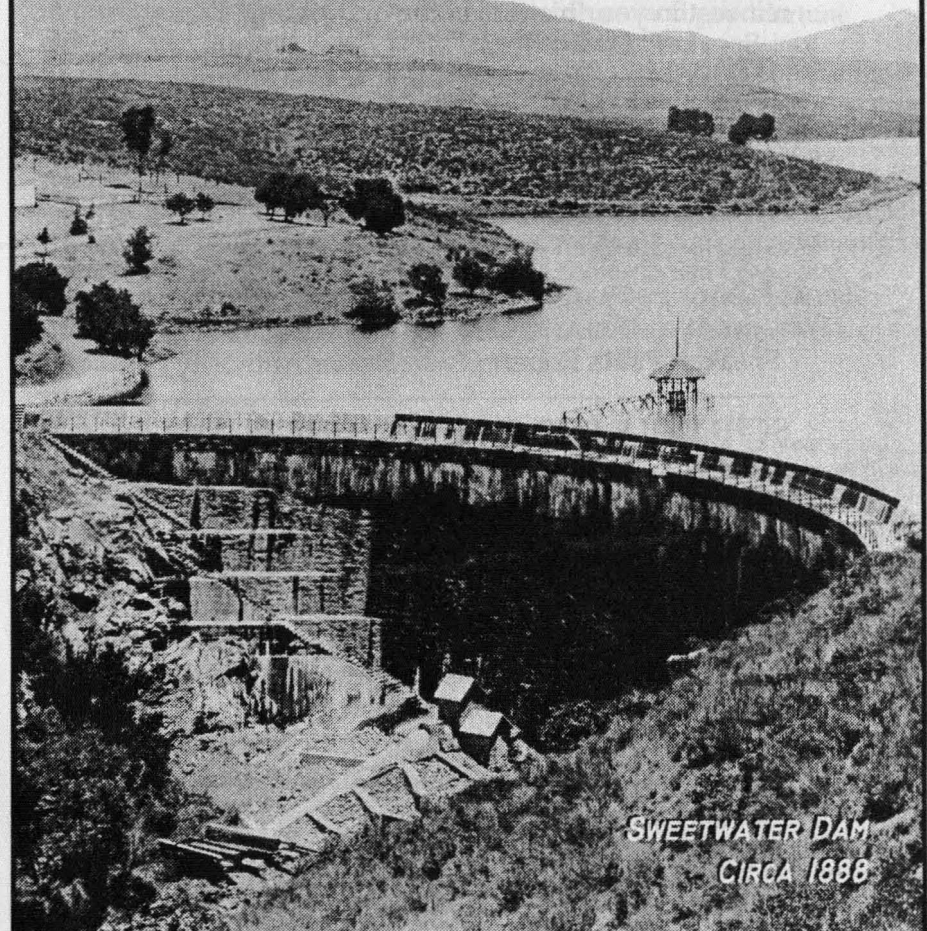
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The pioneers who planned and constructed Sweetwater Dam created a stunning heritage and impressive responsibility. Sweetwater Authority treasures its mission to assure safe, reliable public water service for its current and future customers in Chula Vista, National City and Bonita.



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**MILLS ACT WORKSHOP,
"STEPPING BACK IN TIME" LECTURES,
AND HEIRLOOM DISCOVERY CLINIC
AT THE CHULA VISTA WOMAN'S CLUB**

ALL TALKS TO TAKE PLACE AT THE
HISTORIC CHULA VISTA WOMAN'S CLUB
(HISTORIC SITE #12), 357 G STREET,
BETWEEN THIRD AND FOURTH AVENUES

SCHEDULE FOR SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 2003

"SAVING MILLIONS WITH THE MILLS ACT," 10:30 a.m.
Learn about reducing your property taxes in order to
reinvest in your historic home or building. Free.
Speaker: Louise Torio, Mills Act Advocate,
Historic San Diego Marketing & Consulting

"STEPPING BACK IN TIME" LECTURES
\$5 PER PERSON PER LECTURE, OR \$10 PASS FOR ALL LECTURES

"CHULA VISTA HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE," 11:30 a.m.
Speaker: Pamela Bensoussan

**"FROM FLOODS TO FAMINE, DAMS TO DELUGE: CHULA VISTA'S
WET AND WILD RELATIONSHIP WITH WATER," 12:30 p.m.**
Speaker: Paula Roberts, Sweetwater Authority

SCHEDULE FOR SUNDAY, JUNE 15, 2003

**"PRESERVING FAMILY ARCHIVES/RECORDING ORAL HISTORIES,"
11:00 a.m.** Speaker: John Panter, San Diego Historical Society

"FENG SHUI FOR THE HISTORIC HOME," 12:00 noon
Speaker: Jill Galvez

**"THE FUN, THE STRANGE, THE INTERESTING OBSESSIONS OF YOUR
NEIGHBORS: WHAT CHULA VISTANS COLLECT," 1:00 p.m.**
Speaker: Georgie Stillman, ASA

HEIRLOOM DISCOVERY CLINIC

Sunday, June 15, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m., \$5 per item.
Let the experts from the American Society of Appraisers help you
identify what you have in the attic!

OUR SPEAKERS

PAMELA BENSOUSSAN

Pamela is an antique and fine arts appraiser by trade and a preservationist by avocation. She serves on the Chula Vista Resource Conservation Commission and is vice president of the Heritage Museum Society Board of Directors. Pamela is a recipient of the Congress of History of San Diego and Imperial Counties Award of Honor (2002) for her preservation work in Chula Vista. She is also steward of the Greg Rogers House, Historic Site #1.

JILL GALVEZ

Jill became interested in Feng Shui in 1998 when an interior designer friend suggested that her home decor projects could become more manageable with this 3,000 year old practice. After making a few Feng Shui-inspired modifications, Jill noticed a tremendous improvement in her family's health, relationships, and good fortune. She has been practicing and consulting with Feng Shui ever since. Jill has helped bring good luck and opportunities to friends and family members. Jill owns the Hadley Johnson House, on tour this year.

JOHN PANTER

John is a certified archivist, a staff member at the San Diego Historical Society (since 1999), and a Chula Vista resident who speaks extensively on how to preserve your family's archives and keep your prized family possessions safe for future generations. He comes to San Diego after a career that has taken him from California State University in Fresno to Archivist and Historian of the Parish of Trinity Church in New York City.

PAULA ROBERTS

Paula Roberts has been with the Sweetwater Authority for 17 years and currently serves as Director of Public Relations. She is well versed in the water system's heritage and history.

GEORGIE STILLMAN

Georgie Stillman, ASA, has been an appraiser in the San Diego area for almost 30 years. She holds Senior American Society of Appraisers designations in the areas of antiques, decorative arts, and residential contents, and she has held many positions of leadership in the appraisal profession.

LOUISE TORIO

Louise Torio is an advocate of historic preservation, cultural heritage tourism, and the Mills Act. For her preservation efforts, she was recognized this year by both the Congress of History of San Diego and Imperial Counties and the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego. Currently, she has two homes under Mills Act contract.

THE CHULA VISTA WOMAN'S CLUB 357 G STREET, CHULA VISTA

(BETWEEN THIRD & FOURTH AVENUES) C.V. Historic Site #12

YEAR BUILT: 1928 • ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL



Founded in 1913 as the Chula Vista Improvement Club, the Chula Vista Woman's Club has provided valuable service to the community by raising significant funds for charities. (The original Woman's Club building is still located at 382/384 Del Mar, and was recently designated as Chula Vista historic site #61.) In 1921 the Chula Vista Garden Club held its first flower show at the club, and spectacular flower shows were held annually through 1947. The Literary Group was active until just a few years ago, and Fiesta de la Luna started here in 1930.

By 1927 the Woman's Club needed a larger space. Thomas Howe offered two lots on G Street, Arthur Done was selected as contractor (he later became mayor in 1930), and the distinguished Edgar V. Ullrich was chosen as architect.

The G Street clubhouse is Spanish in style, with stucco walls, a tile roof, and an interior courtyard with Spanish tile fountain. The main structure is an auditorium that opens into a wide tile-covered loggia. The mortgage-burning party for this historic building was held in 1945.

On Saturday, June 14, and Sunday, June 15 (Father's Day), be sure to take in some of the fun, fascinating lectures give by local experts. And don't miss the Heirloom Discovery Clinic, where the professional members of the American Society of Appraisers will donate their time to benefit the Heritage Museum Society while giving you their opinions of what you bring by from the attic!

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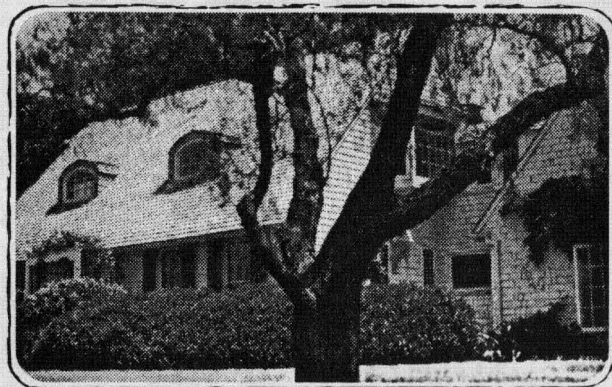
See the Dupree-Gould House
featured in the June issue.

TOUR STOP

THE HAZEL GOES COOK HOUSE 62 COOK COURT, CHULA VISTA

C.V. Historic Site #20

YEAR BUILT: CIRCA 1912 • ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: CAPE COD



A rare treat, this 1912 Cape Cod treasure has not been seen by the public since the surrounding property was sold more than a decade ago and a gated community built around the site. We think of "orchard homes" as being in the Victorian style, but this home is a later example of the genre. Originally it was surrounded by many acres of plantings. Now this 3,400 square foot home sits on a more modest half acre, but what a home!

It's easy to see the original 1 1/2 story home in the center of the structure, with the wooden shingled exterior, curved gable dormers, and center entrance. One wing features a curved two-story addition that links the main house with what was the carriage house. The other wing features delightful built-ins. This is an example of post-Edwardian construction in Chula Vista, and it was built by a very important woman.

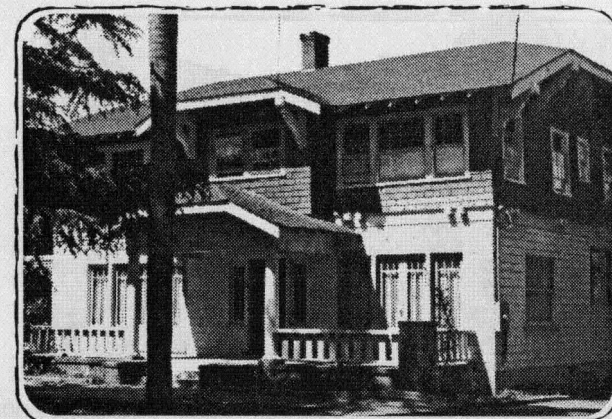
Hazel Goes Cook and her husband, Maxwell Cook, came from Chicago and bought five acres in 1911, and by 1912 had built the main house. Eventually Hazel's holdings reached 100 acres of lemon orchards. Due to the great freeze of 1914, then the great torrential rains of 1916, the first lemons off the ranch were picked in 1920 (lemon trees take several years to mature). In 1953 over 7,000 boxes of lemons were shipped from this ranch! Hazel was president of the M.O.D. (Mutual Orange Distributors) Packing House for many years and served on the Chula Vista Union District School Board from 1922-1972 (yes, 50 years!). Hazel passed away in 1978 at age 93. Her beautiful home is significant because of its association with an important lemon rancher and outstanding citizen of Chula Vista.

TOUR STOP

THE DUPREE-GOULD HOUSE 344 HILLTOP DRIVE, CHULA VISTA

C.V. Historic Sites #22

YEAR BUILT: CIRCA 1921 • ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: CRAFTSMAN



If this house looks a little familiar to you, maybe you remember it from the 2001 tour. The house is back not only because it is extraordinary and because we like to show people what we mean by a "work in progress," but because its owners, Lucy and Carlos Fox, are Chula Vista's Preservationists of the Year! The preservation work on this magnificent Craftsman is inspiring. See what's "new" here!

The original owner, Frank Dupree, was a rancher, cattle buyer, Chula Vista Police Chief, and served as a Council Member from 1940-1942. When he owned it, the many acres contained a three-car garage, a barn, and lemon groves. Chief Dupree sold the property to Dr. Victor Gould and his wife Geraldine. It was Dr. Gould who sold the surrounding acres. When the Foxes bought the home in 1998, they removed 13 layers of paint from the gumwood, they took down wallpaper and restained woodwork, they built a Craftsman-inspired fence and had lighting hand crafted to match, and they rebuilt the soon-to-fall-down porte cochere. They repaired the additional bedroom and bath in the garage, redid the electrical system, did extensive landscaping... and had two children! The Fox home is a busy place!

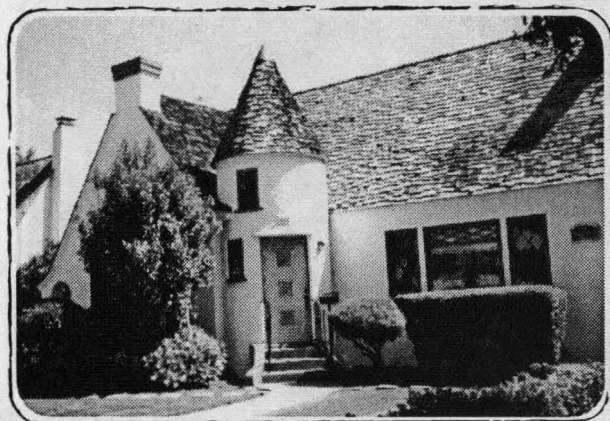
This is an example of what can be done by those who first learn what is appropriate for their period home and then seek to do the very best they can. It's also a testimonial to the Mills Act property tax reduction for historic home ownership: the more you do, the more you want to do to reinvest in your vintage home.

TOUR STOP

THE SAMPLE-GALLIGAN HOUSE
466 E STREET, CHULA VISTA

C.V. Historic Site #50

YEAR BUILT: CIRCA 1929 • ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: FRENCH ECLECTIC



Some historic homes need lots of tender loving care to bring them back to life after decades of insensitive ownership, but not this beauty, located in the area of town formerly known as "Smailey's Park." This gem has been in Elizabeth Galligan's family for 66 years! Originally her family lived in Oregon. When her dad came to the area on business, he loved what he saw. As Elizabeth puts it, "It was New Year's Day, 1937. My dad was staying at the U.S. Grant Hotel in downtown San Diego. He crossed the street to relax in Horton Plaza -- in his shirtsleeves. No coat, on New Year's Day! When he saw Chula Vista, he thought it was the closest thing to heaven, and he moved the family down that year." The house was only eight years old when little Elizabeth, her parents, and three siblings moved in.

The turret is the striking feature of this 1920s beauty, and the interior is a feast of original details. Enter the home and see how skilled workers duplicated the look of stone in the plaster work inside the tower. See the charming fireplace and original sconces. Wonder what was used to hold up the curtains in 1929? Take a look at the original iron curtain rods! Other treats: an amazingly original kitchen, complete with all its built-ins; an Oriental rug in the dining room, circa 1900, that came with the house when Elizabeth's parents bought it; and a charming late Art Deco bedroom set in the back bedroom -- also bought with the house. But don't miss Elizabeth's Red Cross uniform, a reminder of the year she spent in India doing her part to win the war!

TOUR STOP

THE CLEATON ROBERTSON HOUSE
462 E STREET, CHULA VISTA

C.V. Historic Site #56

YEAR BUILT: 1929 • ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: TUDOR



Mr. Cleaton Robertson was the branch manager of the California Water and Telephone Company when he built this 2,200 square foot Tudor home in 1929. He lived here until 1940, and the home changed hands three additional times before the Scotts purchased it in 1981.

As a Navy family, the Scotts had their share of moving around. Originally from Indiana, this is their second time living in Chula Vista -- and they don't plan on living anywhere else! They love their steep pitched roof with five gables (front, back, and side) and the casement windows with multipane glazing in a diamond design. The beauty of the 15-foot domed living room ceiling, solid mahogany woodwork, and sizable floor-to-ceiling fireplace is hard to beat. Although built in the same year as the Sample-Galligan House next door, the house has a very different feel.

All the hardwood flooring downstairs has been restored, and in the process the Scotts replaced floor furnaces with central air and heating. Take note of the original wall sconces in the dining room and living room. Also look at the charming bathroom and the kind kitchen remodel when the "hardest-working room in the home" was no longer functioning. But you'll see vestiges of the past in the laundry room near the back door, where the large, lovely original sink still serves in style. These homes are bigger than you might think.

When the two E Street homes on the tour were built, they had very large front yards. The eventual widening of E Street also took its toll on the Robertson House: the pepper tree in the front yard, next to the sidewalk, was in the middle of the front yard when it was originally planted!

TOUR STOP

THE HADLEY JOHNSON HOUSE 7 CRESTA WAY, CHULA VISTA

C.V. Historic Site #58

YEAR BUILT: 1949 • ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: POST-WAR CAPE COD



Most people think of a small home when you say "Cape Cod," but this post-war fantasy house is anything but! The year was 1949. Builder Hadley Johnson of the H.H. Johnson Construction Company spared no expense for his own rambling home. The large rooms, the flowing spaces, and big storage areas showed that this was the home of someone who lived large. After noticing the steep roof pitch and the many gables, take a look at the den, where this master builder branded his initials over the fireplace!

Hadley and Eloise Johnson built the house as a place to raise their three children, twins Pat and Penny, and Dennis. Hadley was the first to build on Cresta Way when Hazel Goes Cook subdivided her ranch and sold these lots, and the remaining seven lots were bought by many of Hadley's friends. His prominence as a builder was statewide: he built homes in Chula Vista, Del Mar, and other locations around San Diego County, as well as in Sacramento and in the desert communities. He was known as a great innovator in home building, as well as a great friend.

Hadley was an avid hunter and golfer, who kept a ranch in Jackson, Wyoming. He played a key role in the development of Cabo San Lucas in Mexico. He was a founding member of a private hunting and fishing club that included Bing Crosby, Desi Arnaz, and Baron Hilton (of the Hilton Hotel chain). The private club, known as Las Cruces, owned 125 linear miles of oceanfront land in Baja California. Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball built a home in Las Cruces, and often entertained the Johnsons and other Cresta Way residents when they visited the area.

TOUR STOP

THE ATHERTON HOUSE, A.K.A "SOUTHERN BEAUTY" 415 HILLTOP DRIVE, CHULA VISTA

C.V. Historic Site #59

YEAR BUILT: 1950 • ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: NEW ORLEANS FANTASY



After the war it was time to dream big. When attorney Keith Atherton and his wife Lucille decided to build their Chula Vista dream home, they bought this subdivided lot from (you guessed it!) Hazel Goes Cook's property, then they went to New Orleans to soak up the architecture and design of the region. The result is a stunning home that probably has the most decorative wrought iron work in San Diego County!

The Athertons lived here for about ten years, then sold to Dr. and Mrs. Leckman, who lived here until 1999. The current residents bought the house in 2000 after David admired the house most of his life: as a child he was the paperboy for the area!

Unlike some of the homes on the tour, this house had some hard wear over the past 50 years, which is not unusual. The house has been returned to its original splendor. First, the signature wrought iron was removed, cleaned of many layers of paint, restored, and reinstalled. Next, an inappropriate backyard addition with seven awkward entrances was taken down so a simpler addition, in keeping with the spirit of the original home, could be created. Then the original landscape design by Milton P. Sessions, nephew of Kate Sessions, was found, reviewed, and incorporated back into the plans. Here's one historic home where you'll find aluminum windows, because that was state-of-the-art technology in 1950! Many of the original windows were rusted and warped, so new custom windows were made to duplicate the old.

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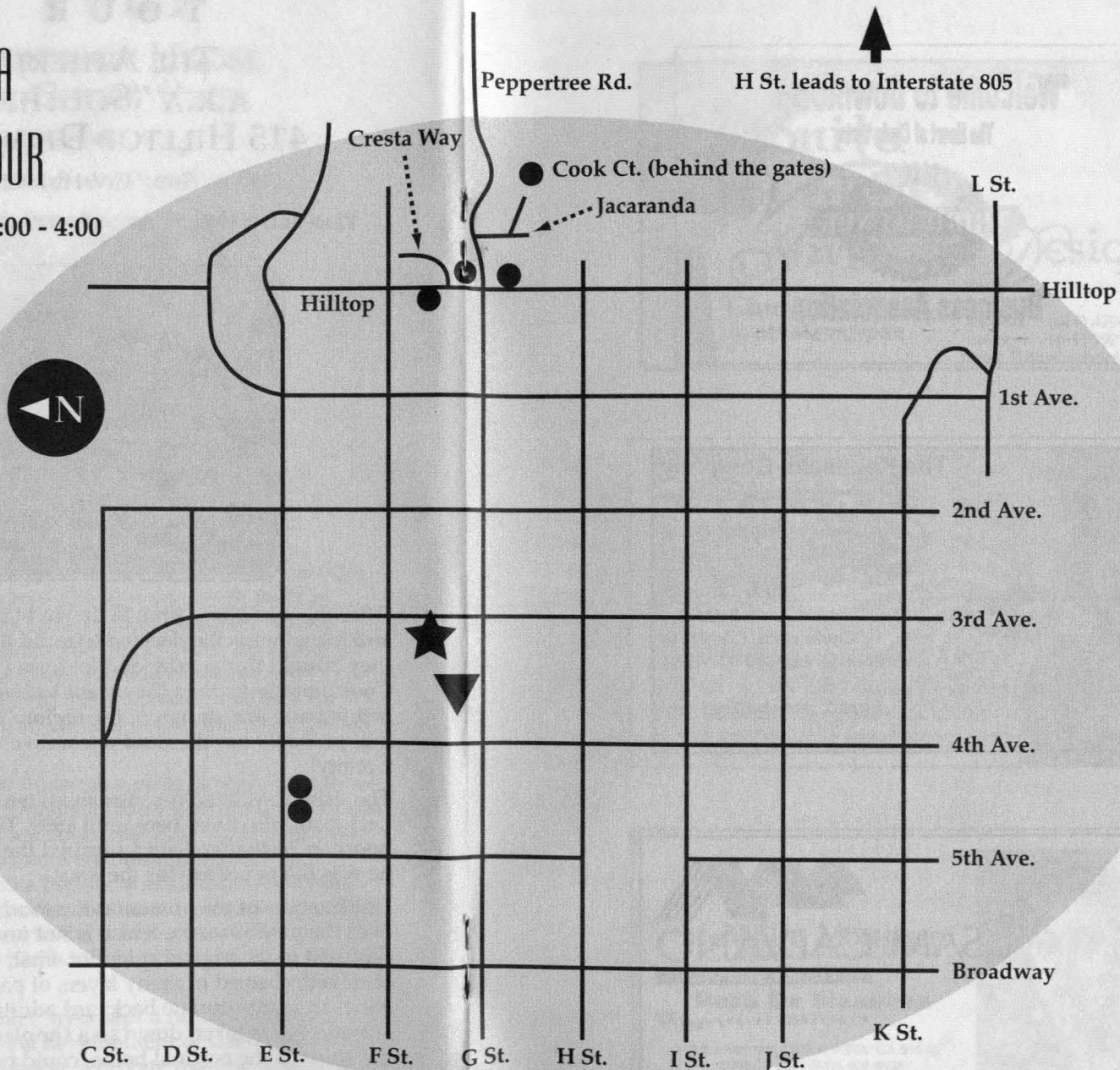
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THE MILLS ACT: WHAT DOES IT DO FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION?

BY LOUISE TORIO

**LEARN MORE AT THE NO COST
MILLS ACT WORKSHOP ON SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 2003
CHULA VISTA WOMAN'S CLUB, 10:30-11:30 A.M.**

What is the Mills Act?

The Mills Act is property tax reduction for designated historic properties. The tax savings can be used to help maintain the historic property. Each city must vote to adopt the Mills Act and write the local ordinance.

Why is it called the Mills Act?

It's named for the author of the legislation -- historian, statesman, and writer James Mills. Senator Mills is well known for being an advocate of mass transportation, for creating our San Diego Trolley system, and for his strong support of historic preservation in our region. Senator Mills lives in San Diego County.

Why did the Chula Vista City Council vote to bring the Mills Act to Chula Vista?

Because by voting to adopt legislation that gives tax incentives to designate, restore, and preserve historic properties, owners reinvest in their own properties and neighborhoods benefit from the restored buildings. A small investment on the part of the city can yield big benefits for everyone.

What other cities in San Diego County have the Mills Act?

The cities of Chula Vista, San Diego, Escondido, La Mesa, Coronado, and National City have the Mills Act, as does the County of San Diego for the unincorporated areas of the county. Several other cities are looking at adopting the Mills Act. Right now, almost 400 historic properties are covered by Mills Act contracts in the County of San Diego, more than any other county in the state! The Mills Act is a successful preservation tool that more cities are discovering.

Will any old building qualify for the Mills Act?

No. A building must be historically designated, on at least the local level, to qualify. Currently, there are about 58 historic sites (mostly homes) designated in Chula Vista.

How can I get my Chula Vista property historically designated?

You may submit an application to the Chula Vista Planning Department for review by the Chula Vista Resource Conservation Commission and then approval by the Chula Vista City Council. Your home need not be on the incomplete 1985 Historic Property Survey to be eligible for historic designation.

In Chula Vista, do historic commercial buildings or multi-unit buildings qualify for the Mills Act?

Yes, so inappropriate remodels of once lovely vintage buildings can be corrected and the buildings returned to their original historic exteriors.

If I apply for a Mills Act contract, what am I committing to doing?

You are making a legal contract that shows you believe in historic preservation and want to keep and protect your historic building for future generations to enjoy. The contract stays with the building, so future owners get the benefits of the Mills Act and in return must obey the same rules and conditions as the original applicant.

Tell me more about the Mills Act contract.

The Mills Act is a 10-year, endlessly renewable, legally binding contract with the city. After your building is designated as historic, you would fill out a Mills Act application and submit it to the city with a minor fee. When your Mills Act application is approved, you would be sent a contract to sign and have notarized. By signing this contract, you are agreeing, in principle, that in return for the tax savings you are going to preserve your historic structure. Your Mills Act contract, if you are in good standing and not in violation of the ordinance, is "endlessly renewable." You will always have ten more years on the contract.

How much property tax can I expect to save with the Mills Act?

The tax savings can be large, often 30-70% and sometimes higher. The County Assessor's Office determines the tax savings by applying a complex formula to the current amount of taxes being paid to determine the new amount.

Under a Mills Act contract, do I have to open my home to the public?

No, but if you'd like to open your home for a future historic home tour, please call the Chula Vista Heritage Museum Society!

What happens if I sell my historic building?

The contract stays with the property, not the owner. The new owner assumes the benefits of the Mills Act. Lucky for the new owner!

I live in a city that doesn't have the Mills Act. How do I go about lobbying my city council for this preservation tool?

Call Mills Act advocate Louise Torio of Historic San Diego Marketing & Consulting at 619-233-8833 to see how you can organize like-minded citizens to bring the Mills Act to your city.



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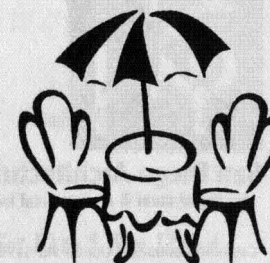
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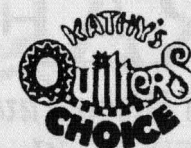


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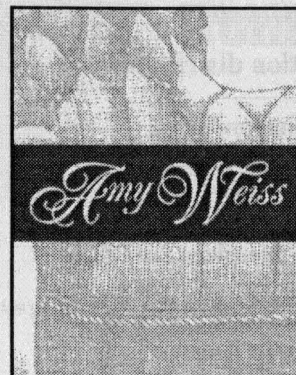
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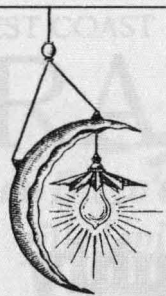
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ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE: CHULA VISTA'S STORY

BY PAMELA BENSOUSSAN
CHULA VISTA HERITAGE MUSEUM SOCIETY

Chula Vista's wonderful old houses are nestled along peppertree-lined avenues within the historic core of the city. In an area of a few square miles, you'll find an eclectic mix of architectural styles revealing layers upon layers of the city's past.

Chula Vista was originally laid out and subdivided into five-acre lots, facing 80'-wide streets, which sold for \$1500 in 1887. According to this master plan, the city was conceived as a gentleman farmer's suburban resort community. Purchasers were required to sign contracts stipulating they would build a house of a modern style "of approved plan and taste" within six months. The houses were to cost not less than \$2,000 (well over \$200,000 today!) and have at least 1-2 stories and a 125' setback. The earliest homes were built in a variety of traditional Victorian styles, many of which still survive today and are fondly referred to as Chula Vista's "orchard houses." After 1900, a transitional style emerged featuring large houses of Victorian proportions and early Craftsman-styled interiors.

In 1908 the first subdivisions were created within the original five-acre lot areas. These newer, smaller parcels measured a generous 165' x 291' and were offered as "villa lots" for \$1,000 each. The new streets were planted with tropical trees, continuing a landscaping theme started in the 1880s.

At the turn of the century, Chula Vista was a bustling farming village and would become the (self-proclaimed) "lemon capital of the world," boasting eight packinghouses and thousands of acres of orchards. Inexpensive "folk" cottages, precursors to the bungalows, were built for farm managers and trades people. These cottages featured front porches, swept dormers, and hipped-roofs, sometimes using river rock for visual interest, or front porch piers made from concrete rock-faced "wizard blocks," which you could make yourself using a newly invented machine sold by Sears. By the time the city incorporated in 1911, construction of the popular bungalow style houses had begun in earnest.

An Eclectic Spanish style followed the bungalow trend. A large number of "mission revival" cottages were built to supply an increasing demand for individual homeownership, and large tile-roofed "Monterrey-style" mansions were designed for the flow of affluent newcomers migrating to California from the East Coast.

Eventually many of the 1908 "villa lots" were subdivided into parcels

approximately 80' x 291', and post World War II box-like houses soon sprouted up between the bungalows and Victorians. These deep lots still exist, contributing to the area's unique quality. Today most of the bungalows sit on 70 to 80' wide lots, generously set back from the street, with huge back yards and mature landscaping. The orchard houses dotting the landscape are set back even further, sometimes almost hidden from view by homes built closer to the street after more recent lot splits. Early views of the community on display at the Chula Vista Heritage Museum show these majestic orchard houses perched on the highest mounds surrounded by vast acres of agriculture.



AN UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN FEEDING CHICKENS IN THIS PHOTO FROM THE HERITAGE MUSEUM ARCHIVES. HELP US IDENTIFY THIS HOUSE!

After the war years, some traditional styles of local architecture were transformed by builders with imagination and whimsy, and imported styles were added to the mix resulting in a new stock of mid-century Chula Vista housing referred to as "post-war fantasy." Parallel to this trend and continuing into the sixties was a continuation of the development of the traditional California Ranch style house.

When driving through old Chula Vista, the layers of its history can be read in the styles and placement of these wonderful old homes. To find the old houses, look in the areas between Interstates 5 and 805, framed by Broadway and Hilltop (east and west) and C Street and L Street (north and south). First and Second Avenues have a particularly large number of old houses, as do the Alphabet streets running east and west. Delmar Avenue between I and J Street has a large number of wonderful old bungalows on generous lots. On your ride, look for the graceful palm tree-lined Seavale Street at the northern end of Second Avenue

and the quaint Church Street running parallel to Third Avenue between E and G Streets.

In 1985, coinciding with preparations for Chula Vista's 75th anniversary as a city, a group of homeowners, Chula Vista Historical Society members, and historians began walking the streets of Chula Vista to pinpoint the city's old houses. As a result of this grassroots survey, an inventory was compiled and adopted by the City of Chula Vista containing more than 200 houses and commercial buildings singled out as historic resources. At that time, approximately 40 of these homes were designated as Chula Vista Historic Sites and given corresponding numbers. The original inventory of Chula Vista Historical Sites can be viewed at the Heritage Museum, and serves as an important resource for those who've just purchased an old house. Now, eighteen years later, the inventory needs updating. Within the last two years, 20 more homes have been added to the Register of Historic Sites. The City of Chula Vista and the city's Resource Conservation Commission are revisiting the historic designation process and, with the assistance of the Heritage Museum Society, will be gearing up for a new, more complete survey and a comprehensive historic preservation plan.

Led by a preservation-friendly city government and an energetic group of homeowners, the community hopes to increase public awareness of the large number of these wonderful old houses remaining in the city's historic core. The Chula Vista Heritage Museum Society is fulfilling an important role in this goal and is fast becoming a model example for historical societies around the county. This all-volunteer group has been willing to take a proactive stance on preservation issues, and the group sponsors tours, lectures, and educational workshops.

Meanwhile, efforts are being made by the City, with the help of the Downtown Business Association, to revitalize the historic commercial center, Third Avenue. In 1907 the National City and Otay Railroad line, built to accommodate small steam engines, was converted to an electric streetcar line running north and south along Third Avenue through the heart of this historic district. Third Avenue at F Street is still the commercial and civic core today, only a landscaped meridian has replaced the streetcar line. The Heritage Museum's "Walk of History" displays vintage photos along the avenue to show "then and now" views of this historic business district. A weekly Farmer's Market and Blast from the Past vintage car show are contributing to the reanimation of this historic district. A subsidized facade improvement program is in place that can assist shopowners in restoring the historic look and feel to so many of the original commercial buildings that are still standing.

The historic homeowners of Chula Vista encourage you to see some of the county's finest historic homes and to visit our downtown museum.

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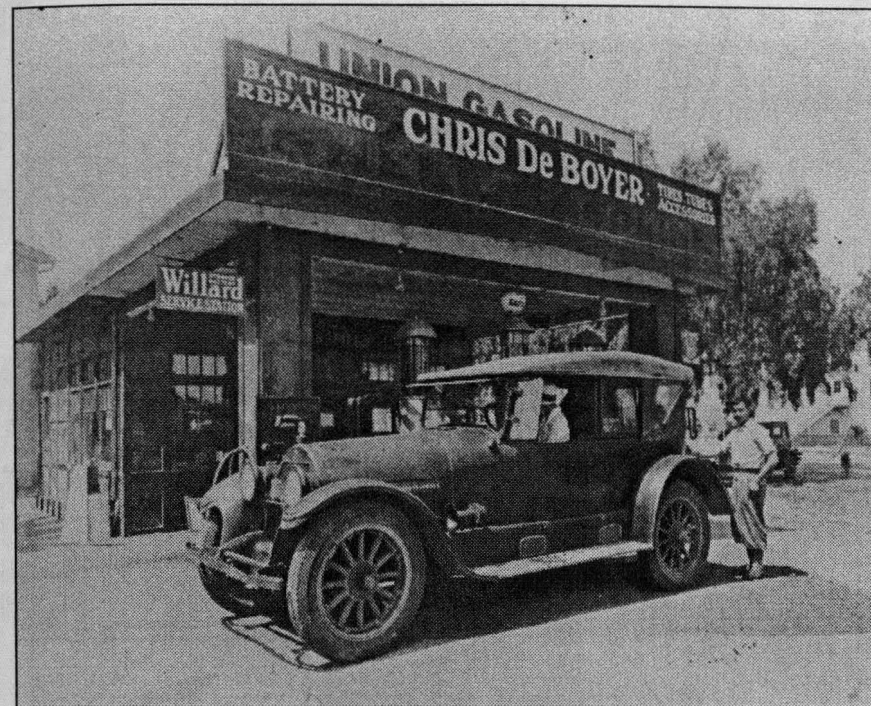
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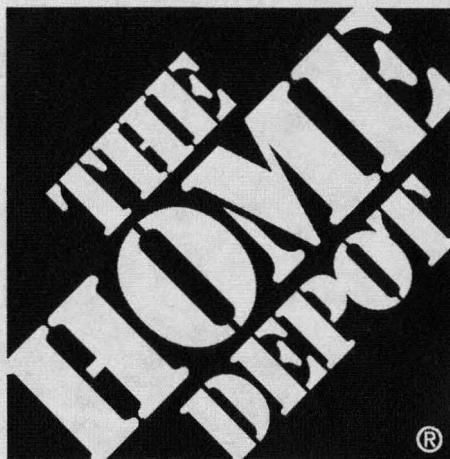
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