

Historic Highway 395

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Mission Statement

The preservation and the promotion of Historic Route 395 from San Diego to the Cajon Pass.



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Telling the story, one mile at a time

Fallbrook, Part I

by Jeffery G. Harmon

We begin our journey in Fallbrook at the intersection of East Mission Road and Main Avenue. We turn south onto Main Avenue and enter the historic downtown district.

Main Avenue provides a cornucopia of cultural experiences with quaint restaurants, art galleries and delightful shopping. This stretch of US 395 is best experienced on foot. I parked my car across the street from the Mission Theater, and began exploring this beautiful town.

The Mission Theater is a North San Diego County treasure. Built in 1948, the theater provides cozy stadium seating with a small retro lobby. Wonderful community theater programs are enjoyed year round.

No trip to Fallbrook is complete without stopping at Swirlz Candy & Party Emporium (213 N. Main). Upon entering the store, a kaleidoscope of confections can be found for the young and old.

The *Candy through the Ages* isle divides each item by decade from the 50s through the 80s. They claim to sell 52 different chocolate bars. While visiting, ask for a sample of their avocado fudge. It is a store specialty and the taste will delightfully surprise you.

Fallbrook has a deep appreciation for the arts. There are several galleries found on Main Ave. A short walk down the street brings you to The Fallbrook Art Center (103 South Main). With rotating exhibits throughout the year, the Art Center provides opportunities to enjoy a variety of artists. In April, the Opened Juried Show will present regional artists' works in all mediums and disciplines.

Another activity you can do is to go on an art walk. It showcases the many public art pieces displayed throughout the downtown area. There are beautiful murals painted on the sides of several buildings. My favorite is *Main Street*

circa 1920, by Jim Fahnstock. Also there are beautiful bronze sculptures found throughout the district. For example, *Bearfoot in the Park*, depicting two bear cubs wrestling, marks the Village Square entrance across the street from the Art Center.

Another hidden art treasure can be found on Ash Street. A small pedestrian bridge has been transformed by artists Wendell Perry and Peter Mitten. My children's favorite public art piece is the *Happies* by Barrett DeBusk. Originally, the piece was "on loan" by the artist, but the community fell in love with the whimsical piece. Funds were raised and the *Happies* has become a permanent fixture on the corner of Fallbrook Street and South Mission Avenue.

Traveling west on Alvarado Street, you will find the Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Museum. The museum's centerpiece is a mastodon skull, which was found during the excavation of the

The Driver's Seat

While at the Temecula Rod Run, a gentleman approached our booth and asked, "Why is the route historic?" I wanted to reply, 'Because we say so!' Fortunately, Dick Fox, an Association member, spoke up and began explaining to the visitor the historical significance of the route.

Why is the route historic? It is the highway that conquered the west. Known as the "Three Flags Highway," it united three countries, from the Mexican to the Canadian borders.

In the wake of World War II, the highway was seen as a line of national defense. Nicknamed, "The Cannonball Highway," construction projects began to realign the original route and mold it into a direct north-south route between the San Diego Naval Yards and March Air Field.

However, there are deeper reasons why this route is historic. It united farm communities, Main Street business districts, and large urban centers. It harkens us back to a simpler time when mechanics were more valuable than the service station buildings, restaurants ri-



Jeffery G. Harmon (left) and Dick Fox (right) at the Temecula Rod Run. These souvenir Historic Route 395 signs are available for purchase

valed mom's home cooking, and hotel's treated guests as long lost relatives.

Along this highway, millions traveled and made their living, from all walks of life, from celebrities to thieves. This is the highway we love and cherish. This highway has been designated historic, so that its legacy can be shared with future

generations. Why is this route historic, because millions of people say so! So exit the Interstate, slow down and Take a Drive on Route 395.

Jeffery G. Harmon

Editor

Fallbrook, Part I Continued....

parking lot across the street. Make sure to enter the darkroom and turn off the lights. A phosphorus rock collection will glow under the black lights.

There are many restaurants along Main Avenue. There is the Wayside Café which serves fulfilling breakfast plates. Down the street, Las Brisas Taqueria, a Mexican food restaurant, serves delicious

dishes with its own authentic flavor. Next door is the Firehouse Broiler, which is housed in Fallbrook's original firehouse. The restaurant serves up savory BBQ dinners that satisfy the heartiest appetite.

Fallbrook's Historical Downtown District is a great weekend destination. On April 17, 2011, the 25th Avocado Festival will take

place. During this time of the year, the population triples and Main Avenue transforms into a giant street fair. Come join the festivities and explore Historic Route 395.

Join us next time as we conclude our journey through the community of Fallbrook.

Spotlight: Little Temecula History Center

Leaving Historic Route 395 and traveling east on Temecula Parkway/ State Route 79 South, you will find a big red barn with a corrugated metal roof, next to a Kohl's department store. This is the Little Temecula History Center, opened since June 2008. On Sunday afternoons, the "barn doors" are swung wide, and several historic vehicles our rolled out front.

Staffed with friendly volunteers from the Vail Ranch Restoration Association (VaRRA), the museum is a delight to visit any time of the year. Darell Farnbach, president of the association, provides a wealth of knowledge and shares his passion and perseverance for the preservation and restoration of the Vail Ranch historic site.

When I mentioned to my children that we were visiting the Big Red Barn this afternoon, they immediately asked if they could climb into the stagecoach when we arrived. A 1950s movie replica of the Overland Stagecoach is housed in the first barn room. Volunteers encourage visitors to climb aboard, shut the door, and imagine hearing the thundering hooves, and the cracking whip as the dusty desert trail passes by.

I enjoyed meandering around the front yard and viewing the multiple of vehicles on display. There is a reconstructed chuck wagon, built on top of a Studebaker spring wagon. A 1926 Model A pickup truck which sports the Vail Ranch name on its doors. My favorite is the 1932 Ford Sedan with a right handed steering column. It was used on the Ranch of Silver Waters in Asuncion, Paraguay. On the Sunday we visited, the 1889 spring buggy was finally rolled out after an extensive restoration.



The second barn room houses a 1926 Model T Ford Roadster parked next to a growing collection dedicated to Al Knott's Garage and Historic Highway 395! Knott's garage was a staple on the highway for over forty years. Next to the Ford is a 1915 Boyle-Dayton gas pump. This is an incredible piece, not to be missed.

Also in this room is a kitchen exhibit complete with a Prizer Duplex stove (1920s – 1930s). This stove burned either gas, wood, or coal. It is an unusual piece and a joy to study the craftsmanship that went into its manufacturing. There are exhibits of period clothing, the Emigrant trail, and more information on the Vail Ranch.

The third room houses an extensive Native American library and items related to the Luiseno people. This room is also used as a meeting room for the Temecula Valley Historical Society. Each month they hold their meetings here at the barn and there is always wonderful speakers presenting a wide range of historical interests.

In the back of the barn there is a growing collection of farm implements. The volunteers always like

to ask the children what they think each piece is. The answers always produce chuckles and smiles. Currently, one of the tractors from Temecula's Great Tractor Race is housed in this area.

Reluctantly, my children clamored out of the stagecoach, bidding farewell to their imaginary Butterfield Stagecoach journey. As the sun began to set on the Santa Rosa Mountains, we climbed into our car, "cracked the whip" and "raced the horses" back to Historic Route 395. To learn more about the Little Temecula History Center visit <http://www.vailranch.org/index2.html>

By Jeffery G. Harmon

To learn more about
Historic Route 395
visit:
<http://www.floodgap.com/roadgap/395/>

Reader's Corner: Stories of US Highway 395

US Highway 395 Commute

By John Flohr

In 1974, John Flohr, a San Diego resident, attended Miramar Community College, located by the Miramar Road exit along US Highway 395. He recalled driving on the highway during his commute from his residence to the college.

Leaving San Diego he would head north, driving through Murphy Canyon Road (designated Route 15 in 1969). He would connect with US Highway 395 at the present location of Interstate 15 and State Route 163. At this junction, signs were posted on US Highway 395 allowing motorists to drive on the shoulders.

John explained, "In the morning, northbound motorists were allowed to drive on the shoulders. In the evening, the southbound motorists were allowed to drive on the shoulders. This changed the highway from two lanes to four lanes, accommodating the heavy Navy commuter traffic."

"It was wild being allowed to drive on the shoulders!" John exclaimed, "You prayed that your car didn't break down. Beyond the shoulders there was nothing but a drop off."

Driving on the shoulder wasn't the only perils John had to face.

"I often had a difficult time merging onto the highway. I once asked a police officer for any helpful suggestions."

"He said, 'You aim at the most expensive car and go for it.'"

John smiled as he said, "When I approached the highway, I spotted the biggest Cadillac heading my way. So I aimed my car, and stepped on the gas. The Cadillac immediately slowed down, allowing me to merge safely onto the highway."

After finishing college, John joined the service and left San Diego in 1976. When he returned around 1984, he was amazed to see that the highway had transformed into a major interstate. He no longer needed to drive on the

shoulder or aim for a Cadillac in order to merge onto the highway.

"All I could say was 'Whoa!'" John exclaimed.

I grew up in Riverside. I recall the drive down Hwy 395 in the 1960's through Temecula. The town consisted of a hotel, a store and a bar. There was just one stop sign before the Rancho California development came to town. Back then it was pretty much open countryside from Perris to Escondido.

I remember the trip to San Diego as a rather harrowing experience for a young driver with a new license. The road had a reputation of being very dangerous. Much of the stretch was "3-lane" with a shared center passing lane. Cars in either direction could pass a car if the center lane was clear. Trouble is you never knew when two people, who were going in opposite directions, would look at the clear center lane and decide to pull out and pass cars at the same time. It resulted in a lot of head-on collisions. By upgrading the highway to Interstate standards in the years since, no doubt saved many lives.

Craig Libuse

When I was a councilmember on the Poway City Council, I sponsored a resolution that designated the Poway portion of the original section of U.S. 395 as an "historic route" and had signs erected. The signs are along Pomerado Road and Old Pomerado Road, the original route of the old road. I remember taking that route in the mid 1940s as a kid coming to San Diego from the Redlands area of Riverside County.

Bob Emery

To read more about the 2005 Poway sign installation visit:

http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20050302/news_1mi2oldhi.html

Note: Bob Emery served on the Poway City Council from 1980-2008.

Lake Hodges Field Trip Report



Steve Varner exams a buried “C” Block

Barbara Baker, Steven Varner and I met at 9:00 a.m., March 5, at the kiosk near the Sunset Drive Parking lot, next to the North Shore Lake Hodges trailhead. The purpose of the field trip was to visit two highway segments. These segments were once US Highway 395 (1934 – 1955).

The tour began at an open meadow, east of Interstate 15. The group went off trail to observe two “C” blocks, which denoted where US Highway 395 once was. “C” blocks were boundary markers used by the State Highway System from 1914 – 1934.

While walking the meadow, I picked up a piece of discarded highway and showed it to Barbara. Steven then discussed the composition of the highway, explaining the mortar to cement ratio. Barbara was amazed that pieces of the highway could still be found lying around sixty-one years later.

The group proceeded to return to the paved trail and walked under the Interstate 15 bridges. Swallows were observed nesting underneath the north bound bridge. It was also noted that the Lake Hodges’ water level was at a record high. At this point of the tour, another couple joined the group.

Here a discussion was given about the 1955 bridge and the 1969 bridge locations. I brought photos to help orientate the group. The liveliest topic was trying to determine the location of the Bernardo Bridge (1919-1968). Steven described it as a 45 degree angle southeast from the new pedestrian bridge.

A short hike later, and the group reached the west paved segment of US Highway 395. Parts of the highway’s dividing line could still be seen on the

trail. Steven scoured the hillsides, searching for “C” blocks. His efforts soon paid off when he located one protruding from the ground, partially hidden by scrub brush.

As the group continued walking, I pointed out the charred remains of the highway guardrail along the east side of the trail. One of the visitors asked about the potential of the lake flooding the road. It was pointed out that the water level had crested and was flowing over the dam. The road had been built high above the crest line.

Near the pedestrian bridge, Barbara showed the group where the interpretive panel would be installed. It would be one of three panels being created for the area. The panels would discuss US Highway 395, water conservation and the pedestrian bridge. Here Steven showed the group where the Bernardo Bridge was previously located. He also pointed out a rusted metal stake, possibly used during the bridge construction.

The couple left the group to photograph the wildflowers. Steven, Barbara and I began hiking back to the parking lot. Along the way, I discovered a second “C” block. Steven and I went off trail in search of more blocks. I nearly stumbled over another one. Due to erosion, the three foot cement post was buried, with only an inch protruding above ground. Steven removed the grass and dirt to reveal the “C” indentation.

Further surveying was done in the area, but no other blocks were found. As the group returned to the east side of Interstate 15, they spotted a white egret strolling by a previously viewed “C” block. The egret soon took flight, its broad wings carrying it to the tree tops.

The trip ended at 11:00 a.m. Barbara thanked Steven and me for our expertise. She now had a better understanding of the multiple bridge locations in the region.

If you or your organization would like to schedule a trail tour, please send the request via email.

By Jeffery G. Harmon

**A HISTORIC ROUTE 395 ASSOCIATION
PUBLICATION**

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Meeting Location:

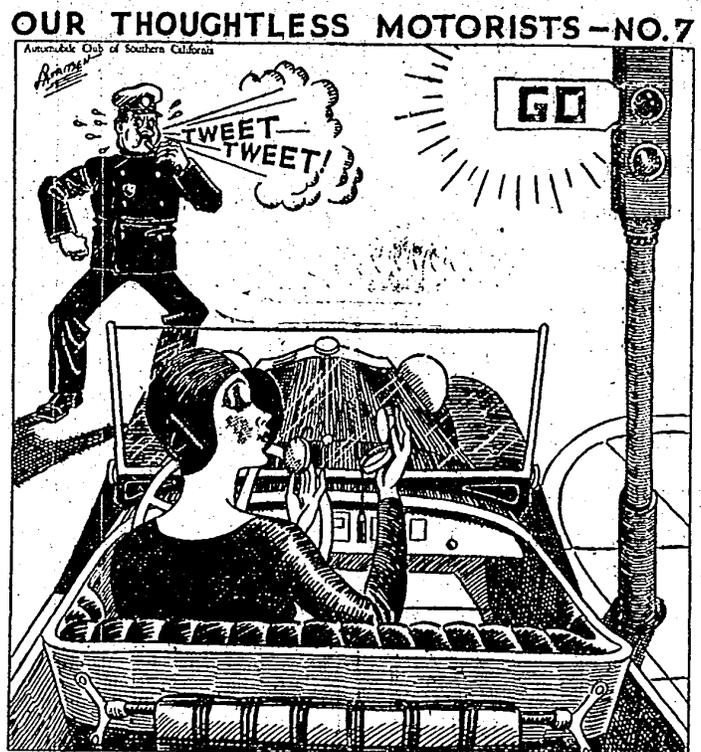
Rainbow Oaks Restaurant

Time: 8:00 a.m.

April 2, 2011

May 7, 2011

June 4, 2011



Reprint: The Vista Press June 19, 1930

Elsinore is Midway on New Inland Mission Road

Reprint: Lake Elsinore Valley Press, August 15, 1913

The "Mission Road" was the name given by resolution adopted by the Board of Supervisors this morning to the road now known in different localities as the "El Eonte Road", Corundrum St., "Box Springs Grade", etc.

The boards of other counties through which this road passes are requested in the resolution to cooperate in an effort to have the entire road called the "Mission Road", and that as a distinctive feature a giant mission cactus be planted along such highway and that signs indicating the points of interest also be placed along said road.

The above named highway leads from Los Angeles to San Diego, passing through Eastlake

Park, Puente, Pomona, Ontario, Wineville, Riverside, Perris, Elsinore, Temecula and Escondido and is the most direct roadway connecting the old Los Angeles Mission church, San Gabriel Mission, The Mission Play, Mission Indian School of Riverside, Father Serra's cross on Mt. Rubidoux, the Pala Mission, Mission San Luis Rey, the Glenwood Mission Inn, Soboba Indian reservation, Warner's ranch, San Juan Capistrano and Mission of San Diego.

The board adopted a resolution signifying the supervisors' intention to proceed at once to acquire necessary land to purchase or condemnation to give the portion of the state highway proposed to extend through Riverside County a minimum width of 60 feet the whole

length of such portion of roadway.

Supervisor T.F. Flaherty was authorized by this resolution to take necessary steps to carry the resolution into effect.

The proposed piece of highway to be built by the state through this county runs over and along the present county road from the Riverside County line near Wineville to the West Riverside bridge.

Join the Discussion:
<http://www.americanroads.us/forum/index.php?board=28.0>