

Historic Highway 395

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Founded

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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

Bonsall

by Jeffery G. Harmon

Our journey begins at the intersection of S. Mission Road and State Highway 76 in the community of Bonsall. Tucked in the valley of the San Luis Rey River, Bonsall is a community with orchards, thoroughbreds, and small town charm. Travelers tend to zip through Bonsall on the way to the shores of Oceanside or to the gaming tables of the Pala Casino. However, upon closer inspection, this tiny North County gem has a few treasurers waiting to be discovered.

Bonsall was originally named Mt. Fairview. In the 1870s it was known as Osgood. In 1889, three different names were submitted for the newly established post office: "Reed", "Favorite", or "Bonsall". Washington D.C. chose Bonsall, which was named after James Bonsall, a retired Methodist preacher who had developed a fruit tree nursery in the area.

Heading west on Highway 76, we come to Camino Del Rey. We turn left and crossover

the San Luis Rey River to the south side of Bonsall. Perched on top of a bluff, sits the Old Bonsall School House. Opened on August 26, 1895, this beautiful one-room school house resides on the new Bonsall Elementary School's front lawn. On a personal note, my mother and her two sisters attended this school when they were children.

Driving further down Camino Del Rey, we come to the San Luis Rey Downs Training Center. The Downs has been an auxiliary training track since 1984. Four Kentucky Derby winners began their early training at this facility. Also this was the former home of Azeri, the 2002 Horse of the Year. According to one source, "Azeri has won more purse money than any other female in the history of North American thoroughbred racing."

Returning to Highway 76, we turn west and continue through Bonsall. We turn right on Holly Lane and find a parking

space by a closed road. This deserted pavement is a segment of Historic Route 395. Walking along its path will lead you to one of the most enduring North County landmarks, the Bonsall Bridge.

Built in 1925, the bridge is an open spandrel arch design, the only one of its kind in Southern California. It was placed on the National Register of Historical Places in April 1983. When US Highway 395 was realigned in 1948, the bridge continued to service State Highway 76 until 1990. In that year a \$4.5 million dollar bridge was opened to traffic. Soon after the Bonsall Bridge was closed to traffic and transformed into a pedestrian bridge.

In 2010, a \$200 million construction project began on Highway 76. From Melrose Drive in Oceanside to S. Mission Road in Fallbrook, the two-lane windy road began to be transformed into a four lane highway. The project includes a new two lane bridge

The Driver's Seat

I attended the Memorial Day services at the Elsinore Cemetery. Located a few blocks north of Historic Route 395, the cemetery was decorated with flags honoring those who served in our military.

The opening ceremonies began with one skydiver displaying the flags of the Arm Forces and another skydiver displaying a large American flag. As the day's events unfolded, I reflected on how the military advocated for the realignment of Highway 395.

Prior to World War II, the highway meandered from town to town, up and down mountain grades, across rivers and through many business districts. When war broke out, the Pacific Coast Highway was vulner-

able to enemy warships. The highway was closed each night at 5:00 p.m. and lights went out. The only route open between Los Angeles and San Diego was Highway 395.

The military needed to move troops and material quickly. For national defense, the highway had to be straightened out. After the war, the highway was listed as a top Peace Time project. Military officials continually pressured government officials for funding and construction of the new highway. From the early 1940s through 1955, the "Cannonball" highway was constructed.

Today, military convoys can be seen driving north and south on Interstate 15 and 215 freeways. Thanks to the

military, cities' growth along the freeway corridor has benefited from the realigned routes.

As Taps signaled the end of the Memorial Day services, I thought of all the military personnel who took that final drive on Route 395 to defend our country and our freedom that we all cherish. We honor all those that paid the ultimate sacrifice. We wish to thank all the men and women and their families in the Armed Forces who sacrifice on a daily basis for our American way of life.

Jeffery G. Harmon

Editor

Bonsall Continued....

across the San Luis Rey River. Completion of the project is scheduled for December 2012.

The construction project is taking a huge chunk out of the geographical features of Historic Route 395 through Bonsall. Soon over 24,000 cars will zip by daily through the area not thinking twice about Bonsall and its highway history. Fortunately, the Bonsall Bridge will stand as a lasting memorial to a wonderful road.

This will conclude the first part of our exploration of US Highway 395 in North San Diego County. Next we will begin exploring the route in Southwest Riverside County. So remember, exit the Interstate, slow down, and Take a Drive on Route 395.



Pictured: Carl Ames, President of the Kiwanis Club of Sunrise Vista and Richard Fox, Member of the Historic Route 395 Association

On April 27, Richard Fox shared the history of US Highway 395 with the Kiwanis Club of Sunrise Vista. If your organization would like a 395 presentation at your next meeting, please contact us.

Spotlight: June 25, 2011 Fun Run & Car Rally

On June 25, 2011 we will be celebrating the anniversary of the 2008 Legislation that designated US Highway 395 a historic route.

The festivities will begin at 9:00 a.m. with two Fun Run events along the historic route. At 9:00 A.M. Steve Varner will be leaving the Centre City Café in Escondido and I will be leaving the Perris Theater in Perris. We will meet at the Elder House in Fallbrook. From 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. there will be a free concert, food and beverage vendors. Here is a closer look at our three locations.

The Fun Run Destination: The Elder House

127 West Elder Street, Fallbrook, CA 92028



The two-story Elder House was built in 1883 by Elmore Shipley. He was one of three men who participated in a building competition. The criterion was to build the best and most attractive home for no more than \$3,000. Shipley didn't win the contest, but his house is the only one of the three homes still standing today. The house has had several different owners over the years. In the 1980s it was Grandma's House Restaurant. In the 1990s it was the Fallbrook Country Day School and in the early 2000's it was the New School. Today it is home to the Fallbrook Village News/Valley News/Anza Outlook.

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

Missing an issue?
<http://www.temeculahistoricalociety.org/hwy395.html>

Photos of Old Town Temecula Are Wanted

The Vail Ranch Restoration Association (VaARRA) is seeking historical photos of Old Town Temecula to be used in a new Arcadia book they will be putting together as a fundraiser for VaARRA. If you have photos from the 1980s or before of any places in Old Town, please contact Loretta Barnett (mlbarnett55@verizon.net), Rebecca Farnbach (rebfrnbach@aol.com), or call Darell Farnbach (951-552-3516) and they can make arrangements to scan your photos.

The Northern Starting Point: The Perris Theater (a.k.a. The Chief Theater)

279 South D Street

Perris, CA

Tom Sharpe began building the Chief Theater in 1945. With Hollywood-like fanfare, the theater opened in the spring of 1946. After Sharpe died in the 1950s, his son Ted took over the family business. Theater ticket sales began to decline as television popularity grew. The theater was sold and through the years several owners have come and gone. In 1993, the theater was seen in the movie, *Calendar Girl*, starring Jason Priestly. Finally, the city of Perris purchased the theater and began a \$75,000 renovation project. The historical building, now full restored, serves as a community theater for special events.



The Southern Starting Point: Centre City Café

2680 S. Escondido Blvd

Escondido, CA 92025



The Centre City Café is in a former 1960s Denny's restaurant facility. After Denny's closed this location, the building went through several owner changes. In 1997, San Diego Home Cooking opened the Centre City Café. The restaurant not only offers American comfort foods but also homemade Hungarian dishes. They like to boast that they are either the first or the last business you come to on Escondido Boulevard, depending on which direction you are driving from.

*The Historic Route 395
Association Presents*



**The First Annual Historic Route 395
“Drive 395”
Fun Run & Car Rally**

On June 25, 2011

Two simultaneous Fun Runs will begin at 9:00 AM

Northern Point of Departure

The Perris Theater in Perris, CA

Led by Route Member Jeffery Harmon

Southern Point of Departure

The Centre City Café in Escondido, CA

Led by Route Member Steven Varner

**Each Fun Run will follow the Historic Route 395
to the Elder House in Fallbrook**

where there will be music, food, beverage and fun!

For more information contact (951) 837-5905 - jethrosire@yahoo.com



Highway 395 Remembered

By Fred Puhn

Here is my most memorable story about old 395:

I was a student at SDSU from 1956 thru 1961. My friend, Gerry, and I were hooked on old Italian sports cars. Around 1959 we both bought cars from an Italian salesman and drove them to school. I bought a 1949 Alfa Romeo 6C2500SS Farina convertible and Gerry bought a 1952 Fiat 8V competition coupe.

Gerry's Fiat was a real race car. He bought the car from Lorenzo Bandini, who later drove Formula One for Ferrari. Lorenzo's car was street legal, but it had all the racing equipment.

Gerry and I drove the Fiat up Highway 395 to Riverside to see the sports car races. To make the trip fun we left around midnight from the SDSU cam-

pus. The road was deserted that late at night and there were no cops. To get the Fiat running smoothly you really had to get the revs up. Since the car had no speedometer we just ran it up to about 5500 rpm in 4th all the way. The speed was about 100 mph. We turned on the huge speed lights to augment the headlights. This is how the Fiat ran in the Mille Miglia. With no stops and no cops we made it from SDSU to the middle of Riverside in 80 minutes! I am sure this is a record that will never be broken. Those were the days

To learn more about
Historic Route 395 visit:
[http://www.floodgap.com/roadgap/
395/](http://www.floodgap.com/roadgap/395/)

Now available: Special Edition:
The Bridges over Lake Hodges
Please email your request.

**A HISTORIC ROUTE 395 ASSOCIATION
PUBLICATION**

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Meeting Location:

Rainbow Oaks Restaurant

Time: 8:00 a.m.

June 4, 2011

July 9, 2011

August 6, 2011

Along the Concrete



Reprint: The Vista Press July 17, 1930

Gathering Discusses Highway. Promotion of "Three Flags" Road Project taken up at Reno Meeting

Reprint: Los Angeles Times, May 15, 1932

Plans for future development and promotion of the Three Flags Highway, extending from Banff National Park, Canada to La Paz, at the southern end of Baja, California, Mexico, were evolved at the convention of the Three Flags Highway Association at Reno, Nev., recently.

Delegates were present from cities all along the route, which traverses the Pacific hinterland in four states, through Oroville, Wenatchee, Yakima, Washington; Bend, Klamath Falls, Oregon; Susanville, California; Reno, Carson City, Nevada; Owens Valley, Lancaster, San Bernardino, Riverside, Elsinore, Escondido and San Diego. From Southern California representatives assembled in a caravan at Lancaster, leaving there for the Nevada City. A strong organization was

perfected; S.W. Dow of Lone Pine was elected president. Representatives of this state, Oregon, Nevada and Lower California were present at the meeting.

It is expected that the Three Flags Highway project will gain momentum rapidly. Sponsored by the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce, it is planned to popularize it as a new route for north-south tourist travel. Motorists who take the coastal highways will appreciate the change of scenery and points of interest by following the Three Flags route in returning, it is believed. It is brought out that some of the most majestic scenery in the west including, Mt. Whitney, Yosemite, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Crater Lake, Mt. Hood and Banff Park, are along the route, and that the great

majority of the roads in the interstate highway are improved State routes.

The Three Flags Highway is also a part of the International Pacific Highway System, a project being sponsored by the Automobile Club of Southern California and The Canadian, Mexican and United States governments, which is planned to eventually extend from Fairbanks, Alaska along the west coast of North and South America to Buenos Aires, Argentina.