

Historic Highway 395

Volume 1, Issue 12

December 2011

Founded

December 4, 2010

Mission Statement

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



Inside this issue:

<i>Lake Elsinore Part 2</i>	1
<i>Driver's Seat</i>	2
<i>Spotlight: Colton Area Museum</i>	4
<i>Reader's Corner</i>	5
<i>Silver Springs Part I</i>	6
<i>Recent Sign Donations & Sign Inventory</i>	7
<i>News Archive</i>	8



Telling the story, one mile at a time

Lake Elsinore Part 2

by Jeffery G. Harmon

Incorporated on April 9, 1888 when the area was still a part of San Diego County, Lake Elsinore has changed over time through population growth and development. The name Elsinore was plucked out of Shakespeare's play, Hamlet, by founder, Margaret Collier Graham. Here, in Historic Downtown Lake Elsinore, three major highways converged, making the town the center of commerce and tourism. Strolling along Main Street reminds visitors of simpler times.

With my car parked at City Park, I begin touring Main Street on foot. At the corner of S. Main Street and E. Prospect Avenue, we see the tallest historical structure in the downtown area. Built in 1887, the two-story Consolidated Bank of Elsinore provided banking services on its main floor and a large hall on the second floor. From 1898 through 1900, the Elsinore High School utilized the second floor.

In 1916, the bank was

sold and became the Ambassador Hotel. After World War II, two more floors were added to the building. Elsinore's first elevator was installed in this four-story building shortly after. The hotel remained in business for many years until it was sold and converted into apartments. Today the building sits empty. It is a shell of its former glory with boards covering the windows, and a sale sign hanging on the door.

Continuing down Main Street, we come to the Lake Elsinore City Hall. Built in 1934 at a cost of \$15,000, the city administration has continued to serve its residents from this historic location. The building is not equipped to hold city council meetings. The council chambers are located down the street at the Lake Elsinore Cultural Center. The city plans to one day build a new civic center at a different location.

Across the street is a two-story white façade building with to large decora-

tive urns. This is the former Elsinore Theater, opened to the public on March 28, 1925. Mr. and Mrs. H.C. Scott contracted to have the theater built at a cost of \$20,000. By 1950, the theater was replaced by the new Lake Theater on Graham Avenue. In 1960, the Elsinore Theater building was gutted by fire. Today the old theater building is used for retail and professional offices.

Two doors down is a two-story brick façade named the Morton Building. Built in 1926 by George H. Morton, the building served as a mercantile store and professional offices for many years. There are rumors that at one time the building was used as a brothel. Today, the building has been restored and continues to serve the community.

The intersection of Main Street and Graham Avenue has been the hub of

Continued on Page 3

Driver's Seat

On December 4, 2010, Tom Casey, Steve Varner, Dick Fox and I met at the Rainbow Oaks Restaurant in Rainbow, California and formed the Historic Route 395 Association. We decided on our mission statement, and set goals for 2011. Now as we come to the end of our first year, it is time to reflect on what we have accomplished.

In January, the San Dieguito River Park JPA invited the Association to participate in creating an interpretive panel to be installed on the north shore of Lake Hodges where the highway once crossed. Currently, the panel is in the production phase and will be installed in the near future.

Also in January, we met with members of C.I.N.C.H. (The Council of Interpreting North County History). Through their network, we found new resources and new contacts for helping the Association in research and preservation.



Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!

The Rancho Buena Vista Adobe was the stage for our first presentation on the history of the highway. Since that time we have given presentations in Vista, San Diego, and Escondido. Each presentation provided new contacts who were interested in sharing their resources and their personal experiences of the old highway.

Our first field trip took place on March 5th at Lake Hodges. We explored the remnants of the highway along the path and were shown where the future interpretive panel would be installed.

At the Spring Temecula Rod Run, the Temecula Valley Historical Society first started selling souvenir signs to road enthusiasts. The society could not keep the signs in stock, because people kept asking for more.

Tom Casey donated two signs to the City of Escondido. The signs were installed on April 1st, in time for the annual Cruisin' Grand season. Since Tom planted the first seed, the City of Escondido has seen more signs donated and the route is starting to be filled.

June 25 was our First Annual Historic Route 395 Fun Run. The press coverage was amazing and many participants joined us on our journey to Fallbrook. The event was deemed a great success and there were requests for another run in 2012.

In August, a booth was donated for the Association to attend the annual Vista Rod Run. During the event, Tom Casey received eight sign donations for the City of Vista.

Finally, our last presentation of the year took place in October at the annual meeting of the Pio-

neer Room in Escondido. A week prior, a news article appeared in the North County Times announcing the event. Within 24 hours, the Association received six sign donations. After the presentation at the library, another six signs were donated. We are grateful for the overwhelming response.

This is just a few highlights from our first year. At this moment, we have over one hundred signs installed. Our monthly newsletter is emailed to 138 individuals and organizations, and we have 149 subscribers on Facebook. We are grateful to the Temecula Valley Historical Society for posting our newsletter on their website. Finally, to all those that have donated signs, invited us to speak, supported our efforts, and shared your stories with us, thank you. We could not have accomplished it without you.

What is in store for 2012? The Association hopes to install more signs, do more presentations, and do more fun runs along the route. You can help in many ways. We need your suggestions, your expertise, and your personal stories to help continue the preservation and the promotion of this historic highway.

If you haven't attended one of our monthly meetings, please make it a goal for 2012. If you need a speaker for your next meeting, please contact us. This highway belongs to all of us. This ribbon of asphalt binds us together, unites our history, and provides opportunities for us to work together to promote our communities and our region.

So remember, get off the interstate, slow down, and "Take a Drive on 395"

Jeffery G. Harmon, Editor

Lake Elsinore Part I Continued...

commerce activity for many years. Here California State Highway 71 came through from Pomona and traveled south to San Diego. State Highway 74 began at San Juan Capistrano, crossed the Ortega Highway and passed through Elsinore towards San Jacinto in the east. Finally, U.S. Highway 395 came from Perris, down Main Street and then headed south towards San Diego. We will turn west on Graham Avenue to view a few historic landmarks.

Located on the corner of Spring Street and Graham Avenue, the Crescent Bath House is a regional historical gem. Built by Elsinore founder, Franklin Heald, in 1887, the bath house reminds us that the city was once a world famous resort community. The wealthy and the afflicted would come to Elsinore to bathe in the hot sulfur mineral water, soaking in its "healing" properties. The bath house stopped operations in 1945 and was sold. It was converted into an antique store, and renamed the Chimes. In 1975 it was listed at a National Historic Landmark.

Across from the bath house one can find the Elsinore Train Depot. It was built in 1882 by the California Southern Railway Company near the Elsinore Junction. In April 1896, the depot was relocated to this location when the spur line was constructed between the Junction and Alberhill. Today the depot is the home of the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce.

There are two businesses on this block that need to be especially recognized. Opened in 1886, The Elsinore Pioneer Lumber Company is the oldest active business in Elsinore. It has been owned and operated by the same family for three generations and is a mainstay in the downtown area.

Next door is The Wreck. In 1913,

a livery stable was constructed at this location. Later a garage replaced the livery stable. A recreation center was built next, complete with a bowling alley. Today it is a pool hall, named the Wreck, where old timers congregate and share stories of days past.

We return to Main Street and continue walking north. We pass by the Lake Elsinore Barber and Beauty Shop at 115 N. Main Street. This shop has been cutting residents' hair since the mid 1920s. The barber, Fred Dominguez, has been serving customers since 1954. In 1959, he bought the shop and has been operating it ever since. On occasion Fred can be found sitting outside the shop on a bench, ready to chat with anyone passing by. Inside the shop, one can see a museum collection of photos and advertisements from decades passed.

There are several restaurants that one can enjoy in the downtown area. A local favorite is Guadalajara's Mexican Grill and Cantina at the corner of Peck Street and Main Street. It was founded in 1986 by the Solano family, and offers great tasting Mexican food. The owners expanded their business in 1997 and opened a second restaurant in Temecula. This is a great place to rest one's feet, and to eat some delicious chips and salsa in a friendly family restaurant atmosphere.

At the corner of Heald Avenue and Main Street is the Lake Elsinore Cultural Center. The building was completed in May 11, 1924 for the Methodist Episcopal Church. Colorful stain glass windows, each donated by church members, adorn the central hall. The basement is the home of the Lake Elsinore Historical Society Museum. (See Volume I Issue 5 for more information)

Our final stop is The Grand Army of the Republic building located at the corner of Franklin Avenue and Main Street. It was dedicated on July 4, 1887 by Union Veteran Soldiers. As the number of veterans dwindled, the building passed through several civic groups. In 1907, Elsinore High School used the building. As time passed, it was the Odd Fellows Hall and then the American Legion Hall. The building then became Hall's Feed Store. Today, the building is empty, waiting for its next transformation.

After a leisurely stroll through the historic downtown area, it is time to return to my car. There are still many wonderful historical buildings waiting to be discovered. To learn more, visit the local museum where volunteers are always eager to answer questions.

Join me next time as we conclude our historic highway journey through the city of Lake Elsinore on Highway 395.



Lake Elsinore City Hall
on Main Street

Spotlight: Colton Area Museum

By Jeffery G. Harmon



Between 1889 and 1929, Andrew Carnegie financed the construction of 1,689 libraries in the United States. One Carnegie library, The Colton Public Library, opened on November 11, 1908. The library served the city for many years, until a modern facility was constructed in 1982 and the building became vacant. In December 1991, the Colton Area Museum official opened in the historic Carnegie library. Today, the beautiful building educates visitors about the diverse history of Colton, a city at the crossroads of two major railroad lines.

A couple blocks north from the original U.S. Highway 395 route, the Colton Area Museum is located at the corner of N. La Cadena Drive and G Street. A replica of a 12-foot historic clock resides near the street corner. On the base of the clock is a historical photograph showing the downtown location of the original clock. Bright, colorful rose bushes line the sidewalk leading to the stairs and the entrance doors beyond the twin columns.

Upon entering the museum, my eyes are immediately drawn to the rotunda's ceiling. A slight concave indentation in the ceiling evokes the senses that this is a place of learning. The rotunda is the museum's main lobby. Behind the desk, a volunteer greeted us with a smile and kindly asked us to sign the guest book. The rotunda divides the museum's exhibits into two parts. I began my tour in the south wing.

I get at taste of daily life in historical Colton as I am invited into the sitting room of one of Colton's early homes. Antique furniture encircles a fireplace, reminding us that before televisions, family and friends would gather together to discuss the issues of the day, share stories and laugh.

The next exhibit is women's clothing from the 19th and early 20th century. Colorful dresses, a variety of gloves, and ornate purses adorn several glass cases. Ostentatious feather hats, hat boxes, and other pieces give us a sense of what residents wore, and where they might have traveled in a bygone era.

As my eyes looked up, I saw vintage Colton business signs adorning the perimeter of the walls around the wing. I saw no sign or mention of U.S. Highway 395. In most instances, city merchants used local street names rather than highway designations in their advertising. The museum volunteer guided me to two photo albums with historic area photos. There I continued searching for highway signage, but found none. I did, however, enjoy perusing the album and looking at all the black and white photos.

I then crossed the rotunda and headed into the north wing. I finally entered the one exhibit that I especially wanted to see during my visit. The Earp Family History exhibit is housed in a land office replica with Wyatt Earp's name painted over the doorway. According to the museum's brochure, Wyatt Earp never lived in Colton, but his brother Virgil Earp was Colton's first city marshal in 1887.

During his time as marshal, Virgil took part in the "Frog War" at the Colton Crossing. Two competing railroad companies fought over the right-of-way to cross paths in Colton. Tensions mounted, guns were out, and at any moment a blood bath could have occurred. Virgil, realizing the danger, holstered his gun, and ended the standoff. The Colton Crossing was established.

Another part of the Earp family history ends in Colton. Morgan Earp, a younger brother of Wyatt and Virgil, was assassinated on March 18, 1882 in Tombstone, Arizona. His body was brought to Colton where the Earp's parents

Colton Continued

were living at the time. Today Morgan Earp is buried in the Hermosa Cemetery in Colton. The Earp Family exhibit is worth the trip to the city of Colton. It is a historical legacy that Colton is proud to be a part of.

Continuing my tour of the north wing, I am amazed to see the collection of taxidermy animals. Elk, deer and bison heads adorn the walls. A collection of Southern California birds is displayed in a glass case. Smaller area creatures reside on the shelves. The exhibit reminds visitors that animals once roamed where city streets now lie.

There was a Native American collection complete with artifacts from local, southwest and the central plain tribes. A medicine man's bison head piece, complete with horns, rests on a glass pedestal. I began to wonder what ailments the shaman might have cured, or how many families he may have affected during his time of service in the tribe.

On another wall is an aerial photograph of the city of Colton. With my finger, I was able to trace U.S.

Highway 395's route through the city. The train tracks are visible and so is the famous Colton Crossing. A large white patch in the lower left corner is the Colton Portland Cement Company, which operated from 1894 till 1958.

An exhibit of the cement company tells its history, from its earliest beginnings to its final days. Photographs, artifacts and news articles share this company's important contribution to the development of the city. However, it does not mention that the cement was used in the construction of many of the early highways, and bridges in Southern California. (A portion of cement highway can still be seen peaking through asphalt in Colton).

As I concluded my tour of the museum, I asked the volunteer if there were other historical sites in Colton to see. I was given directions to Virgil Earp's home, which is now a private residence and is only a few blocks west of the museum. I was also given the locations of two historical train depot locations. I was told that one of the depots is scheduled for demolition to make way for an elevated rail line that will one day

break the bottle neck at the Colton Crossing.

Once back in the car, I traveled south and rejoined the Historic Route 395 at the intersection of La Cadena Drive and Valley Boulevard. I heard the whistle of a north bound freight train as it rumbled through Colton. As the train disappeared over the horizon, my thoughts turned to a famous lawman, whose calm reserve prevailed over two conflicting railroad companies and helped bring to pass a peaceful resolution.

To learn more about the Colton Area Museum visit: <http://coltonareamuseum.com/>

A final note: N. La Cadena Drive was once Business Route 395 when U.S. Highway 395 was realigned to where modern Interstate 215 now is located.

Reader's Corner

I still remember going over the old Hodges Bridge, as it was in use until about 1954 or so. We frequently visited a family that had ten acres of lemon trees in Chula Vista. It was quite a road trip along the Miramar-Lake Hodges alignment. There was nothing between Felicita and Clairemont Mesa. It was a busy two-lane highway through desolate undeveloped land. The area would eventually become the communities of Rancho Bernardo,

Rancho Penasquitos, Mira Mesa & Miramar.

At the south end of the old Hodges Bridge, a coyote had gotten tangled in the barbed wire fence by Battle Mountain. The coyote died and as time passed, it became a skeleton. When my brother, Larry, and I were very young, we would hide our eyes when we drove past the gruesome skeleton.

Daniel Hagan

We are now on

Facebook!

Search: **Historic Route 395 Association**

Please "Like" us!

Send us your photos and your memories!



My Reminiscences of Silver Springs, Part 1

Reminiscences shared by Mrs. Gertrude Hughes with her daughter, Elizabeth Hughes Yamaguchi in May 1983. This is part one of a four part series.

In 1929, Walter, my husband, and I located a ten acre ranch three miles south of Fallbrook. The sale price was \$10,000. We had moved to Los Angeles from Cincinnati a few years previously, and had been looking for a place to farm. We took a train trip to Oregon, and made weekend investigations of Rancho Santa Fe and Vista, but in the end, we chose Fallbrook. We sold our house and lots in South Gate as partial payment, and moved to our new home, Silver Springs Ranch, in 1931.

Halfway up our hillside was a three bedroom house, near a small planting of lemons. At the foot of the property, adjacent to the Inland Highway U.S. 395, (now South Mission Road), were some old buildings which had been used as a service station and garage. (Much later, I heard that these buildings were used as a pick-up point for illegal merchandise during Prohibition days.) Behind the service station was a creek, and behind the creek was a 15 gallon per minute spring from which the

ranch took its name. Below the rocks, from which the spring flowed, the water formed a pool in a cement catch basin, and there was a roof over the whole area.

In 1932, I was expecting my fourth child. Walter arranged for Mrs. Conner, from Temecula, to help me occasionally during the week. Jackie, my youngest daughter, was delivered at Silver Springs Ranch in October by Dr. A. Morgan. Walter's sister-in-law, Cecil Hughes, whose husband was working for a nursery in Carlsbad, came to stay with me. Shortly after this, Walter became seriously ill while working on the job in Los Angeles, and we had to move back to be with him.

Walter recovered, and we returned to Silver Springs in 1935. I was 32 years old. Only President Roosevelt's Homeowner's Loan Corporation had prevented us from losing the ranch. Since the Depression was on, there were no jobs. Walter started welding pipe and installing irrigation systems and water pumps. I opened a sandwich stand, using the tiny

service station building. In addition to preparing hamburgers and selling coffee and cold drinks, I pumped gas and sold oil. I bought gasoline from Jim Armfield's Union 76 wholesale place. Walter grew gladiolas and dahlias. He displayed them in huge metal urns, which he had made, hoping to attract more customers.

There was a deep ravine behind the sandwich stand. There our creek ran through a culvert under 395, and also filled a heavy cement cistern. We filled this with spring water to make it an inviting place to stop. Walter piped the water to a faucet near the cistern, but we didn't charge people for our spring water. It was very pure and doctors recommended it for their patients. Consequently, people came from as far away as Oceanside with bottles to fill. One old timer told me he remembered our spring as a stopping place to get water when they made the trip by wagon from Escondido to Escondido.

People trusted each other in those days. I never thought of taking my rack of oil cans in at night when I closed up shop. One Sunday morning when I came down to work, I was disheartened to find two cans missing. However, the following Sunday, I found the two cans had been returned, along with a note of apology. My faith in mankind returned. Times were hard, and my daughter, Mary Jane, (who worked for the Bank of America until she retired in 1981) recalls how people would start their cars at Anthony's road – across from the present Professional Building at Rocky Crest Road – and coast the rest of the way to our place to get a gallon of gas.

Permission to reprint this article was granted by Elizabeth Hughes Yamaguchi in 2001.

Recent Sign Donations

City of San Diego

Peggy & John Keating - southbound Park Blvd center island, just south of University

Donated by the Linsdau Family - northbound Park Blvd center island, just north of University

Donated by George Edw. Seymour (2 signs) - southbound Park Blvd, just south of Broadway and northbound Park Blvd, just north of Broadway

Donated by Mary Kao - westbound El Cajon blvd, west of 805 Fwy

Donated by Education Consultants + Origin-Terminus - southbound Park Blvd at Market

Donated by the Okey Family - southbound Park Blvd center island, just south of Howard Ave

City of San Marcos

Donated by Dan Collins - westbound Mission Road at Palomar College

City of Escondido

Donated by Suzanne Jakovac - South Escondido Blvd at 9th Street (first choice) or West Mission in front of the US Post Office

Donated for Jared, Hannah, Simon, Abby Kenan, Micah, Emilyh, Sarah, Michael - eastbound West Mission Avenue, just east of Nordahl Road

Donated by Champions Restaurant - southbound South Escondido Blvd, just south of Second Avenue

City of Vista

Donated by Santa Margarita Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution - on eastbound Santa Fe, just east of Main

Thomas "Bull" Morton SDSO Ret - westbound Santa Fe, just west of Smilax

If you would like to Donate a sign,

please contact

Tom Casey at (760) 723-3232 or
tom@rainbowcrestranch.com

Sign Inventory as of November 11, 2011

31 – County of San Diego

6 – City of Murrieta

2 – Interstate 15 (Fallbrook)

14 – City of Temecula

4 – City of San Marcos

13 – City of San Diego

4- City of Perris

4- City of Lake Elsinore

12 – City of Escondido

2 – City of Riverside

8 – City of Vista

Please note: This inventory does not include the signs installed by the City of Poway in 2005.

Six signs were installed on Pomarado Road by the City of Poway in 2005.

**A HISTORIC ROUTE 395 ASSOCIATION
PUBLICATION**

24580 Leafwood Dr.
Murrieta, CA 92562

Phone: (951) 837-5905
email:jethrosire@yahoo.com



Announcement:

January 7th Monthly Meeting
8:00 a.m.
Rainbow Oaks Restaurant



Reprint: The Vista Press November 28, 1929

U.S. 395 Highway Signs Being Changed to 15E

Reprint: Rancho News (Temecula) May 15, 1975

AREA WIDE – Route shields directing traffic to Route 15E are being placed on cross streets connecting with Route 15E according to California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) spokesman Richard Slater.

Slater stated, "The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has given its approval to change the route number along the former U.S. 395 in the Riverside and San Bernardino area. This route has had numerous route designations in the past. The current ones are State Route 60, Temporary Interstate 15, Route 15E and U.S. 395. In addition to these designations, California also refers to the same stretch of road as Route 194 on its legal documents."

Slater added, "The removal of the U.S. 395 signs along this route, from the Mexico-California State Line south of San Ysidro to its junction with I-15, 13 miles south of Adelanto, will simplify signing for the motorist." The deletion of U.S. 395 through this reach was passed by the California Legislature, effective July 1, 1969, and approved by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

"The new 15E signs along with the U.S. 395 shields have been displayed for the past two years to give motorists time to get acquainted with the route number changes and allow map makers time to make the change," stated Slater.

"The Route 15E designation should not be confused with the new Interstate 15 freeway currently under construction. The State Legislature and the FHWA have both approved the I-15 alignment from Rancho California to Devore via Lake Elsinore, Corona, Norco, Ontario and Fontana, generally along the existing Routes 31 and 71 alignments," explained Slater.

Installation of the Route 15E shields and removal of the Temporary I-15 and U.S. 395 shields in the Riverside and San Bernardino area is expected to take approximately three months to complete.