

# Historic Highway 395

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**Founded**

December 4, 2010

**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

### Vista Part 2

by Jeffery G. Harmon

Our journey continues at the intersection of East Vista Way and Civic Center Drive. The Vista Magnet Middle School for Science, Math & Technology is located at the southwest corner. This campus was the former Vista High School from 1938 through 1971.

As we travel west, East Vista Way becomes Vista Village Drive. Between the school campus and Vista Village Drive is a landscaped walkway named Rotary Lane Park. In 1965, The Vista Beautification movement began. Rotarians donated \$1000 towards this walkway beautification project, which was completed in 1966.

We leave Vista Village Drive at the Main Street intersection and drive into the historic downtown district. We are immediately greeted by a whimsical sun kite art piece, titled Winds of Change by artists Rick & Jaydon Sterling-Randall. This is one of a multitude of public art pieces in-

stalled throughout the downtown area.

“Kites over Vista” is a public temporary sculpture exhibit created by the City of Vista’s Public Arts Commission. The Commission states on their website, “The goal of the “Kites” exhibit is to promote artists and their work to residents and visitors of Vista.” Several “Kites” have been donated to the city and have become permanent displays, while others have been sold to businesses and private collectors. The program is in its fourth year. (I am waiting for an artist to produce a Historic Highway 395 “kite. I have a drawing. Is any artist interested?)

As we drive pass S. Citrus Avenue we see a colorful mural on the side of a business. “Kites” is one of many public murals painted throughout the downtown area. To see all of Vista’s public murals and sculptures, visit the city website for a self-guided walking tour map.

When visiting the downtown area, it is best to park your car and enjoy a leisurely stroll. I park my car in front of the Avo Playhouse. Built in 1948, the Avo Playhouse is home to Moonlight Stage Productions. The Playhouse was bought by the city and restored in 1995. Annually over forty thousand people are entertained at the Avo.

There are two other performing art venues in the downtown area. The Broadway Theater is located behind the Avo on East Broadway. Opened in 2004, this theater was voted Best Theater in San Diego in 2007 and 2008. The theater is an intimate 49-seat auditorium and claims to be for the “theater going public”.

In 2007, the Broadway Theater opened the Off-Broadway Theater on Main Street. It is Vista’s exclusive children’s theater. Their website states,

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## Vista Part 2 Continued

“The Off-Broadway Theater has something going on 48 weeks a year. No other youth theater on the west coast has more youth productions running under one roof than we do.”

I begin my walking tour by traveling up Michigan Avenue and turning on Visatacado Lane. Here I discover Vista’s 561 foot long mural titled, Vistacado Parade. Dedicated in 2005, the mural cost \$75,000. Artist Clayton Parker, a local artist, created a breath-taking mural illustrating Vista’s history, buildings, stores, and faces of historic people throughout the community. The timeline begins with the Native Americans, the mission and the rancho period. Then it transitions into Vista’s agricultural heritage. Finally, the mural turns into a 1950s Vistacado Parade.

The mural wraps around the western end of the business block and then continues on N. Indiana Avenue to the front door of Gallery 204. The gallery building was built in 1936, and was the former Vista Pharmacy and Safeway grocery store. Today Gallery 204 is operated by the Vista Art Foundation. This non-profit group promotes the arts for children and the community.

I turn the corner and stroll back down Main Street towards the Avo Playhouse. The many historic buildings on Main Street date from the 1920s through the 1950s. The most recognized historical building is the First National Bank on the corner of S. Indiana Avenue. Today the building is used for professional offices. A historic downtown walking tour map can be picked up at the Vista Historical Society Museum at Rancho Minerva.

There are several restaurants and cafes in the downtown area. Some can also be found on Broadway Avenue and other side streets. For example, Allen’s Alley Café is the longest continuously opened restaurant in Vista. Their website claims that they have the most famous biscuits and gravy in Southern California. Whatever your cravings may be, you are sure to find your favorite dish in the historic district.

I return to my car, and continue driving down Main Street. Our journey comes to an end at the intersection of Main Street and S. Santa Avenue. Join me next time as we complete our tour of the City of Vista.

So remember, get off the interstate, slow down, and “Take a Drive on Route 395.”



The Avo Playhouse on Main Street in Vista, CA



The Historic Route 395 Exhibit at the Rancho Buena Vista Adobe  
in Vista, CA

Produced by the Red, White and Blue Society

## Spotlight: The San Diego Automotive Museum

By Jeffery G. Harmon



The San Diego Automotive Museum is located in the historic Balboa Park in the City of San Diego. To visit the museum, travel on Park Boulevard (once a part of Historic Route 395) to Presidents Way and turn into the park. Turn left on Pan American Plaza where you will find the museum's parking lot.

"Luigi", a yellow 1969 Fiat 500, is parked at the front entrance of the museum. Upon entering the front doors, visitors find themselves in the museum's gift shop. The store offers many automotive related items including collectible toy cars, tin auto signs, and automotive books. After visitors purchase their tickets at the counter, they then enter the large exhibition hall.

The permanent exhibits can be found around the hall's perimeter. Rotating exhibits are displayed in the center of the hall and change about every four months. This provides a different museum experience three times a year. The featured exhibit during my visit was titled, Woodies, which runs from February 3, 2012 ~ May 27, 2012.

One of the earliest "Woodies" was a 1909 International Harvester Model A "Auto Wagon" With no windshield, car doors, or bumpers, this vehicle looked more like a freight wagon that had lost its team of horses.

The 1931 Ford Model A Boat tail Speedster is a unique signature piece. With its smooth wood siding, the vehicle looks like a cross between a speed boat and a race car. The detailed restoration of woodwork and craftsmanship help make this car look like it just came off the showroom floor.

There are many other makes and models in the Woodie collection. These cars are privately owned by area collectors. Leaving the "Woodies" exhibit, I begin touring the permanent museum collections.

The first exhibit brings a smile to your face and a twinkle to your eye. It is titled, Barn Find. A 1928 Studebaker was parked in a shed in Imperial Beach for forty years. Once recovered, the vehicle was displayed in the museum as it was found. The back drop is a wood barn with miscellaneous car props and barn items. The

Studebaker sits in the middle begging to be found by visitors.

Along the north side of the exhibit hall is the museum's motorcycle collection. The Indian motorcycle exhibit begins with a 1914 C-3 Big Twin Side Car. My favorite Indian was the 1942 "Army Model 841" This motorcycle appears to have seen action on the frontline. It is easy to imagine the bike being returned to the states and cruising on the old highways.

There is a small Harley Davidson collection. A rusty 1916 Harley Davidson looks like it was freshly picked from the back of a hayloft. The 1926 Harley Davidson Model A "Peashooter" is in pristine condition. However, the pea color paint would have to be changed before I consider riding it.

The European motorcycle collection includes British, German, Italian, and Spanish makes and models. The red Italian 1928 Moto Guzzi Falcon motorcycle looks like a work of art.

The final motorcycle exhibit centers on the career of Steve McQueen. His racing gear and bike are on display along with a list of his movie credits. In many of his movies he did his own driving. He is quoted as saying, "I'm not sure whether I am an actor who races or a racer who acts."

On the west side of the hall is the Show Stoppers exhibit. These vehicles are priceless works of art. Beautifully restored, each vehicle is built with power, grace and elegance. The restoration of the 1931 Cadillac 452 V16 Roadster took the owner many years to return the vehicle to factory standards. The labor of love and determination can be seen in every detail of the car.

## San Diego Continued..

The most unique piece in the museum has to be Louie Mattar's Fabulous \$75,000 Car. Louie transformed his 1947 Cadillac into the first modern motor home. In 1954, he traveled 7,482 miles non-stop from Anchorage, Alaska to Mexico City, Mexico (Of course, he traveled a portion of Highway 395

during this trip). To see how he accomplished this incredible feat, you have to watch the exhibit's video.

As I exit the exhibition hall and re-enter the gift shop, I stop and see a Historic Highway 80 sign displayed on the wall. I think to myself, "The museum needs a Historic Highway 395 sign". Of course the gift shop has Route 66 signs for sale. Maybe they could

start selling Route 395 signs as well.

As I get into my car and drive back onto Historic Route 395, I think of Louie Mattar's Fabulous Car. I don't think I would want to drive 395 continuously; there are too many places that I would want to stop at along the route.

### Committee Hears Highway Matter, Chamber of Commerce Group Endorses "Three Flags" Association

Reprint: Riverside Daily Press, August 8, 1931

Riverside will participate in the Three Flags highway promotion activity, if enthusiasm evinced by a special committee of the Chamber of Commerce, meeting with highway boosters, yesterday afternoon, is a true indication of the manner in which chamber directors will greet the proposals.

The highway in question would extend from the Rocky Mountains National Park in Alberta, Canada, to the southern extremity of Lower California.

First organization to promote the interests of such an international thoroughfare was formed at a meeting under the auspices of the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce. The organization is known as the Three Flags Highway association. Robert R. Seriven, president of the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce, is president of the association. He, with Paul B. Hubbard, editor of the Lancaster Ledger Gazette, W. G. Scott, executive director, conferred yesterday with Riverside chamber representatives, including Albert G. Cage, Harry W. Hammond, Charles F. Woods, DeWitt V. Hutchings, C.W. Cell, A.C. Fulmor and Earl W. Porter.

#### Route Recommended

The Riverside committee in conference with the highway association

officials recommended a variation in the proposed route after it reaches Riverside, suggesting that travel by way of the Inland route, touching Elsinore, Escondido and Fallbrook, would effect a saving in distance and also be more pleasant in warm weather. Lancaster promoters agreed with the Riversiders that this routing is worthy of consideration as a possible alternative to travel through Imperial Valley to Calexico and to Mexicali in Lower California, thence westerly to Agua Caliente and Tia Juana, then southerly to Ensenada and eventually to La Paz at the southern extremity of Lower California.

Total length of the route would be 3000 miles, 500 in Canada improved, 400 in Washington, 400 in Oregon, 900 in California and Nevada, estimated about ninety percent improved, with remainder in process of improvement and all in fair shape for touring with the road in Lower California north of Ensenada in good condition for travel.

The purpose of the association as set forth yesterday by the Lancaster officials, is to unite all the communities along the highway in a system of active cooperation to secure by all legitimate means a fair share of the north and southbound international and

interstate motor traffic for the Three Flags highway.

The Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette, in a recent article, listed the objects of the highway as being the development of natural resources, aiding of industry, the provision of healthful and educational recreation, the increase of prosperity by provision of a steady flow of cash revenue to every community through which it passes, and finally to carry on and promote the commercial progress, the social-economic advancement and the permanent friendship of the three great nations that control the west coast of North America.

The Riverside Chamber of Commerce committee was enthusiastic over the proposal that Riverside participate in the association and a recommendation to this effect will be filed with the board of directors for action, it was indicated.

We are on

**Facebook!**

Please "Like" us!

Send us your photos

and your memories!

## My Reminiscences of Silver Springs, Part 4

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

Walter, my husband, started working at the Naval Ammunition Depot in 1941. At first he was a guard, and then later he was their water maintenance person. Because of his new job, there was less need for me to keep the café open for long hours. Eventually Silver Springs Café was operated briefly by Pearl Morrison's relatives. Later, we sold the building to the Wolfes, who moved it into town and placed it on their lot by the Odd Fellows Hall. They used the building as a residence for many years.

I continued to do floristry work. We remodeled the flower shop and moved it closer to our house on the hill (but it was still fronting U.S. 395). As time passed and Fallbrook continued to grow, Gladys Kuhn and I decided to

open a flower business and gift shop in town. We rented a place adjacent to Raymond Wayman's real estate office on Main Street.

I continued to do some cooking. On Thursdays, in the early 50s, I prepared Rotary luncheons in the meeting room of the Masonic Hall. In the 60s, I worked the snack bar at the new Fallbrook High School.

After the big freeze, my husband and I sold Silver Springs Ranch and moved a half mile north to a twenty acre lot on what is now Hughes Lane. We kept the name Silver Springs for a gem and mineral business which had grown out of our hobby of collecting rocks. There is a road named Silver Springs Lane near our former property, but the pumping of underground water has eliminated

the old spring.

People still remember Silver Springs Café. In 1975, when I attended the high school reunion at Live Oak Park, I took along some of the early pictures of the café to share. Howard Farmer and his classmates (1939) wanted copies made for them.

When I go to Harrison's Pharmacy for lunch, I visit with the old timers who gather there. Our talk is often about the old days when some of them used to gather at the Silver Springs Café. Someday I'm going to have a reunion of my own and bake pies for all my old customers.

Elizabeth Yamaguchi gave Jeffery Harmon permission to reprint her work in 2001.

In memory of

Gertrude C. Hughes (1903-1984)

Elizabeth Hughes Yamaguchi  
(1928-2008)

## Driver's Seat

The Historic Route 395 exhibit at the Rancho Buena Vista Adobe in Vista, California closed on February 24, 2012. The exhibit was produced by members of the Red, White and Blue Society, a chapter of the National Society of the Children of the American Revolution.

The Society promotes patriotism, studies of American history and participating in community service. Tanya Griffith, Senior Society President, worked with the Association, the Vista Historical Society, and many others to produce this exhibit. The young people participated by designing posters and maps depicting the history of the highway and assembling the exhibit.

On January 4th, Tanya Griffiths wrote, "The exhibit is all

set up. There are many pictures! Our kids had fun putting it all together today."

We were proud to have partnered with the young members of the Red, White and Blue Society in sharing the history of this road that binds our communities together.

In other news, in January two more Historic Route 395 signs were stolen in the Rainbow community. This brings the total to five. The County of San Diego installed these signs in 2008 and pays to replace them. If you live along a portion of the route, please let us know of any vandalism or theft so that we can get the signs replaced quickly.

Please let friends and neighbors know that souvenir signs are available for purchase at several locations. I will be posting a list in this newsletter. If your or-

ganization or business would like to sell signs please let us know. Let's work together to promote and preserve this historic highway.

Finally, I will be presenting the History of Highway 395 at 6:00 p.m. on March 26 at the Little Temecula History Center in Temecula. It will be a part of the Temecula Valley Historical Society's monthly meeting. I am sending out a personal invitation to all of you to come out that night. I hope you can join us. For more information visit: <http://www.temeculahistoricalsociety.org/>

Currently, we are short on personal stories and photos. We need to hear from you. Please send them in so that we can share your stories and photos with our readers. Thank you.

Jeffery G. Harmon, Editor

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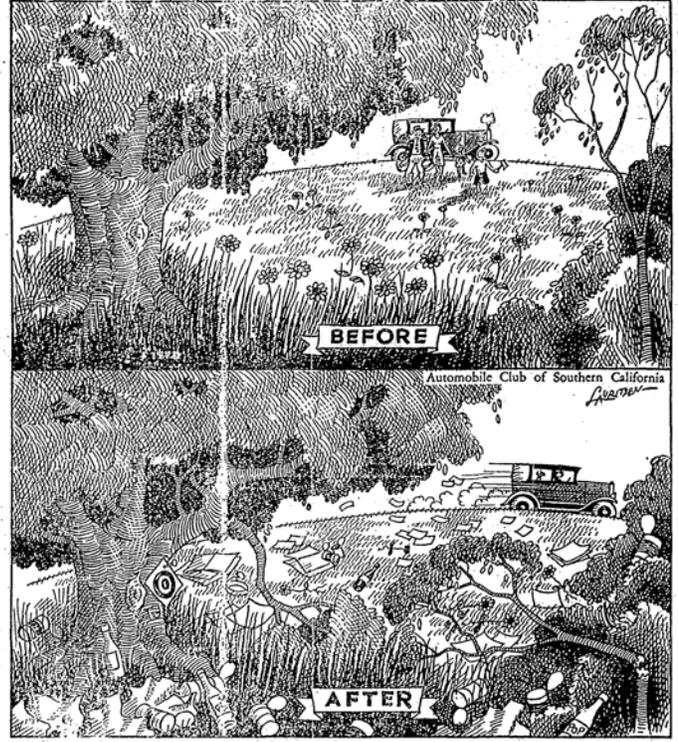
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**Announcement:**

March Monthly Meeting  
Cancelled

**OUR THOUGHTLESS MOTORISTS-NO. 2**



Reprint: The Vista Press March 6, 1930

## Souvenir Historic Route 395 Sign Retail Locations



**Escondido History Center**

321 N. Broadway  
Escondido, CA 92025  
(760) 743-8207

**Little Temecula History Center**

(cross streets ) Red Hawk Parkway/  
Temecula Parkway

<http://www.vailranch.org/3385.html>

**Vista Historical Society & Museum**

2317 Old Foothill Drive  
Vista, CA 92084  
(760) 630-0444

**Rainbow Oaks Florist**

4805 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Fallbrook, CA 92028  
(760) 728-9902

If your business or organization is currently selling signs, please send us your name, address and phone number so that we can publish your information in our monthly newsletter.

If you are interested in selling signs for your business or organization please contact Tom Casey (760) 622-8414 or email: [tom@rainbowcrestranch.com](mailto:tom@rainbowcrestranch.com)