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# South Bay Historical Society Bulletin

July 2015

Issue No. 9

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Monument School was the oldest school in the county when this photo was taken in 1938.

## The Tijuana River Valley Historic Sites

by Steven Schoenherr

In this issue of the Bulletin is a map of historic sites in the Tijuana River Valley. Since the 1980s the valley has change dramatically. Several severe floods destroyed homes and farms. The creation of the Estuary Reserve and the Regional Park have reduced private property to only a few hundred acres in what was once called an "Agricultural Paradise" of 5000 acres. The valley is losing its cultural heritage in order to preserve a natural environment. Thousands of Native Americans lived in the South Bay from 9000 years ago to the several large Kumeyaay villages of the last thousand years. The valley was the true "Birthplace of California" in 1769 when the Spanish missionaries first set foot on the new land crossing from Mexico to San Diego Bay. In the 1860s Americans homesteaded what had been Rancho Melijo

until the Arguellos lost their title. The farmers built roads and towns with names such as Monument, Oneonta, Nestor and Palm City. Immigrants came from Italy and Armenia and Japan to flourish in a cosmopolitan community. Swiss dairymen brought prosperity. The military at Border Field and Ream Field brought people and development. Schools brought education, starting with a little one-room schoolhouse on the edge of a mesa near the border. The racetracks of Tijuana demanded horses to fill the needs of gamblers and tourists. Tijuana became "Sin City" and the Tijuana Valley became the "Thoroughbred Capital of the West." Ranchers and breeders and trainers and jockeys took up residence in the valley where there was plenty of room to practice their craft. The residents of the community came together to deal with the problems of water and pollution. They were a bold and daring people, unafraid of the travails that came upon them. The legacy of these pioneers in the valley is rapidly disappearing. It should be remembered.

## Tijuana River Valley Map Numbers

1 - Monument No. 1 was erected in 1851 by the U. S. Boundary Commission, and renumbered as No. 258 in 1898 by the Barlow-Blanco Commission. This monument gave the valley its first name. It was in this "Monument District" that the first American farms were homesteaded in 1869, from the border north to the bay, and from the ocean east to the border crossing at Tia Juana City that later became San Ysidro. The farm of A. J. Russell in 1871 near the monument provided mulberry leaves to Felipe Pazza who raised silkworms and produced silk from the worm cocoons.

2 - Border Field State Park was dedicated in 1971 by First Lady Pat Nixon. The Army established Border Field in May, 1916, as an outpost to defend against an invasion such as Pancho Villa's attack on Columbus, New Mexico, on March 9, 1916. Similar camps were located at Palm City and San Ysidro from 1916 to 1920. The Navy expanded Border Field in the 1920s, built five machine gun circular ranges along the beach, a large oval track for moving target practice, and 35 buildings by World War II.

3 - Lichty Mesa was owned by the Lichty family. Carleton Lichty was a partner of Baron Long who owned the U. S. Grant Hotel and built the Agua Caliente Hotel in 1928. Carleton started his career as a bellboy in the Grant Hotel and was manager of the Hotel del Coronado when President Nixon came for a state visit in 1970. Carleton's uncle was Roy Lichty who developed Talmadge Park in

1927. Lichty Mesa was the site of significant archaeological findings during the construction of the triple fence in 2008. These findings were evidence of the habitation of Native Americans 9000 years ago. The Tijuana River Valley was the home of several large Kumeyaay villages, including Melijo near Smuggler's Gulch and Tijuana south of the border that is the origin of the name of the valley and river.

4 - Bunker Hill is the mesa named for the World War II observation bunkers built into the top of the mesa in 1942. No guns were placed in these bunkers. They were observation posts only, called Base End Stations, meant only to observe and report to Fort Rosecrans on Point Loma.

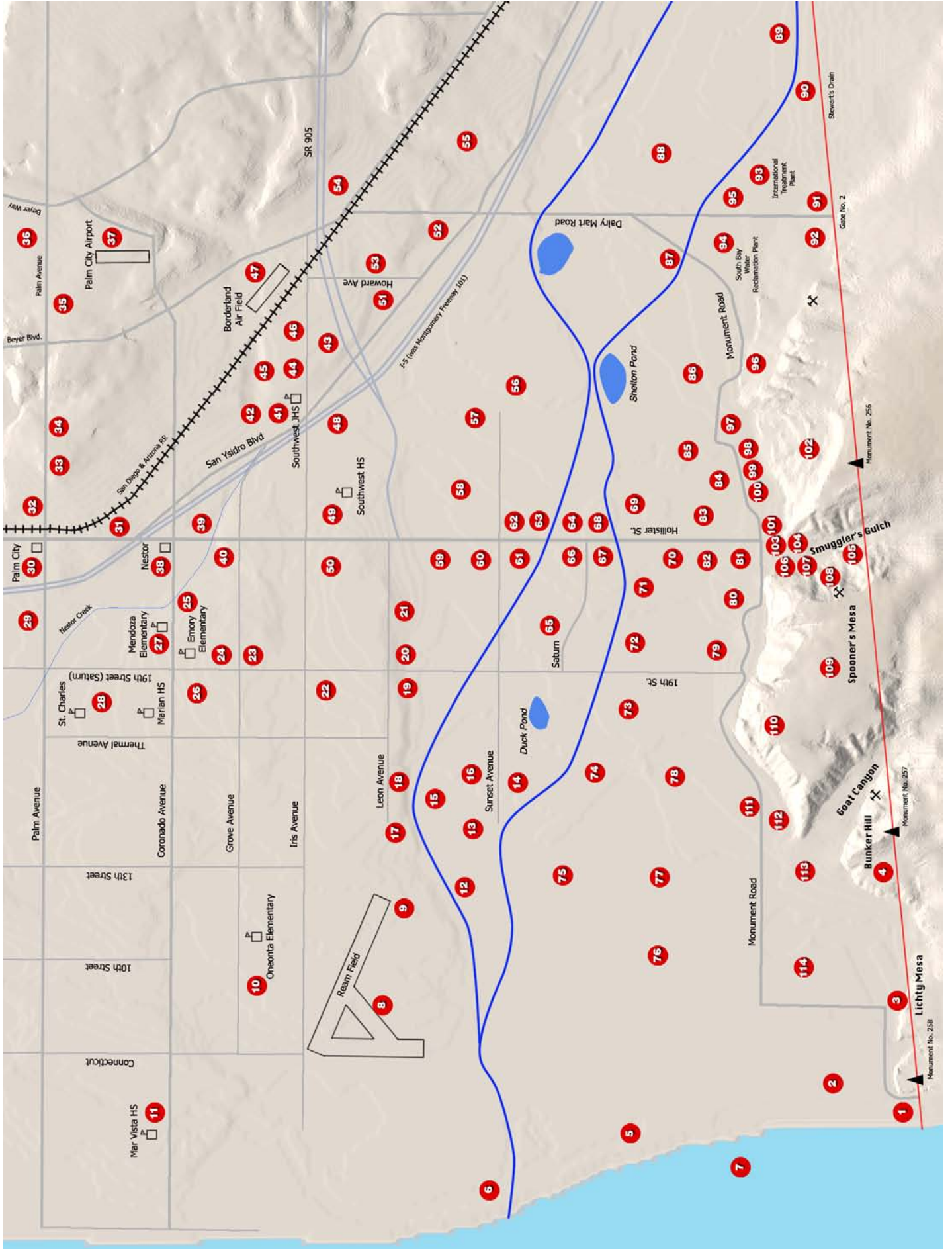
5 - The coastal area between Monument Mesa and Imperial Beach was owned by Elisha Babcock, the developer of Coronado, Coronado Heights, South San Diego and Imperial Beach from the 1880s to the 1920s. Babcock organized the South Lake Gun Club for patrons of his Hotel del Coronado to hunt ducks and quail in the Tijuana and Otay valleys. In the 1930s this area was owned by James Crofton who was a developer of Agua Caliente.

6 - The Tijuana Slough is the salt marsh at the mouth of the Tijuana River. It is at the end of a river 120 miles long with a watershed of 1750 square miles, most of which lies in Mexico. The final 6 miles of river north of the border has changed course several times due to flooding, especially in 1895, 1916, 1927, 1980 and 1993. The



Map of the South Bay region from *The Great Southwest* magazine, May 1891.





Slough since 1980 has been part of the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve.

7 - The South Bay Ocean Outfall pipeline carries treated water from the International Wastewater Treatment Plant and San Diego's Water Reclamation Plant out 3 miles into the ocean and discharges it at a depth of 100 feet. The 144-inch diameter pipeline was built in 1999 but it was not the first attempt to transport sewage into the ocean. In 1937 the federal government funded the Border Sanitary Project that constructed a 16-inch diameter pipeline from San Ysidro along Monument Road into the ocean. However, it was washed out in a 1941 flood and never repaired.

8 - Ream Field is known today as Naval Outlying Landing Field Imperial Beach. It began as the "Aviation Field" in 1910 where Charles F. Walsh and Bernard F. Roehrig designed and built their own airplanes, Bill Mendoza remembers that his uncles who came to the valley in 1910 loved to go to the field and watch the test runs of these "flying machines," the first such planes to be built in California rather than imported from the east. In 1918 the Navy established the Oneonta Gunnery School on this site to teach aerial gunnery to Air Service pilots preparing to fight in World War I. On October 1, 1918, it was renamed in honor of Major William R. Ream of San Diego, a reserve Army military aviator and the first flying surgeon to be killed in an aircraft crash.

9 - Oneonta was a boom town incorporated in 1887 and attracted settlers such as Civil War veteran James Luther Patterson, William H. Holderness, J.A. McCann, Hollis M. Peavey, J. T. Schultz, and Charles E. Smith. A sanitarium and school were built, and every effort was made to promote morality and decency; "No Saloons, Fists, or Bullfights" were allowed, and the local Prohibition Club had 34 members. A post office was established in 1888, kept by Charles E. Smith in his general store. Advertisements proclaimed the little town to be "The Pasadena of San Diego County." "This charming locality is located upon an elevated mesa close by the sea, at the foot of the Tia Juana Valley. An arm of the sea putting in at this point, defined by clearcut banks, affords the finest fishing to be found anywhere within reach of San Diego. The ocean beach and the surf close by is as good as the best. The picture of the Tia Juana Valley presented from this point is one strikingly beautiful." (Union, Aug. 25, 1887). The town was flooded in 1895 and abandoned. Most of the 450 acres of the town became part of Ream Field.

10 - The Abner Whitely ranch of 160 acres was located on the north side of Oneonta and eventually was absorbed into the suburbs of Imperial Beach. However, two adobe homes survive today from the Whitely ranch, one owned by Dick and Jackie Palmer on Beverley Avenue, and one by Brian Bilbray on 9th Street. Oneonta Elementary School was opened in 1960.



Sunset Avenue was unpaved and frequently flooded (1937 photo from the Sweetwater Authority).





Palmer adobe on Beverley Ave dates from the Whitely Ranch.

11 - Mar Vista High School opened in 1950, finally providing an alternative to the long walk to Sweetwater High School in National City that was the only high school in the South Bay from 1922 to 1948 when Chula Vista High School began at Brown Field. Malcomb Whitt remembered that before World War II this area was open fields. "There used to be an antelope trail two feet deep, went from North Island down through the Tia Juana River. It cut through where Mar Vista High School is now. The antelope grazed at North Island in those days and if water was scarce, they'd go clear to the Tia Juana River to drink. The last antelope was killed at the foot of San Miguel Mountain. They used to sell the carcasses, 75 cents for the little ones, \$1 for the big ones." (*Reminder*, Aug. 20, 1975)

12 - Eisenmeyer Fruit & Improvement Company was on the south side of Oneonta, at the end of Sunset from the 1890s to the 1930s. Nicholas Eisenmeyer and his wife Anna were known for success in growing walnuts along the river, and claimed, "Almost every inch of the Tia Juana valley is adapted to walnuts." (*Union*, July 10, 1894)

13 - William Holderness was a Civil War veteran and one of the original settlers of Oneonta, living on 104 acres at the end of Sunset with his wife Leona. He recalled that in 1888 the total population of the valley was only 50 people and only 300 acres were under cultivation. His son Skiffington became a large landowner in the valley and his wife Ruby served on the Emory school board. Ruby died in 1984 at the age of 95, and her nephew Vance McBurney had a large citrus orchard at Palm and Desty Street next to August Lindgren, the Swedish immigrant who invented the Moline plow in Moline, Illinois.

14 - Italian immigrants settled on the south side of Sunset in the 1890s. Giovanni "John" Semenza founded his farm near Oneonta in the 1890s. His son Lorenzo Semenza married Harriet Wolfe and lived on the family farm. His daughter Rosie Semenza married Joseph Poggi and lived on the farm next to Lorenzo. Another son Albert Semenza

farmed on eastern Monument Road. Norman Semenza was the son of Lorenzo and Harriet and farmed radishes on West Tijuana Street.

15 - The Southern Syndicate were a group of investors who bought land in the valley south of Leon Avenue in the 1920s and 1930s. Percival Thompson, brother of former Chicago mayor Big Bill Thompson, was a stockbroker who lived in Coronado and was known as a hunter and sportsman. Edward H. Post was a capitalist who lived in San Diego and joined Thompson in buying land in the valley.

16 - The Syndicate invested in drilling for oil on the Holderness farm in 1934, led by Syndicate member Joseph Sefton, Jr., whose father had founded the San Diego Savings Bank. A large crowd attended the spudding-in ceremony March 11, 1934, with radio and newsreel coverage of Minna Gombell, the Hollywood actress wife of Sefton, breaking the bottle of champagne. No oil was ever found in the valley, although investors kept drilling on several different farms through the 1950s.

17 - The Rudolf Schulenburg farm was at end of Leon in the 1890s. Today this is the site of the Border Patrol Horse Patrol headquarters.

18 - The Southern Breeze ranch of Dolly Opel is on the south side of Leon, on high ground above the river flood plain. Dolly and her husband Don Opel had their first ranch on Sunset but were flooded out in 1993, and moved to higher ground.

19 - The George Loustalet dairy was located at 19th and Leon. George was born 1870 in France, came to the valley in 1888, had farms and a dairy business in the Tijuana River valley until he was wiped out by 1916 flood. His son Edward moved his house to Palm City, but kept dairy cattle on 200 acres in the valley. In the 1930s Robert Egger bought the Loustalet property and it became part of the Egger dairy business.



The Egger farm and barn on 19th Street.

20 - The Egger farm is at Leon and 19th Street. Robert Egger was a Swiss dairyman from the Imperial Valley who moved to the Tijuana River Valley in 1930 to improve his health. With his wife Emma, Robert became a large landowner in the valley and in Imperial Beach, and was a leader among the Swiss farmers who founded the Swiss Club of San Diego County in 1939. His grandson David Egger manages the farm today.

21 - The Jay Jackson ranch on Leon Ave was established by Jay's father, James Russell Jackson, in 1954. Jay's grandmother, Agnes Jackson, came from Scotland to the Puget Sound region with her family in 1886 when she was 3 years old. After marrying James Jesse Jackson, she moved to San Ysidro in 1916 and started a dairy on Willow Street. After the 1927 flood, she moved to higher ground on Beyer Way until she sold the dairy in the mid-1940s. Her son James Russell Jackson became a truck farmer in San Ysidro, married Eleanor Kramer, then bought 40 acres south of Leon in 1954. Jay was 10 years old when he moved from San Ysidro to a 10-acre ranch that his mother owned, just north of his dad's 40-acre farm. Adjacent to this parcel was the house and water tower at 2055 Leon that was built in 1912. Bill Mendoza's family lived in this house in the 1930s; then it was owned after 1941 by Benjamin Parr, a butcher from Chicago, until Parr's wife died in 1970 and the house was sold to Jay Jackson.

22 - The orchard of Dr. P. A. Wood of San Diego was located west of 19th Street in the 1890s, where apricots and blackberries and peaches were raised.

23 - The Zumstein home is still located at 1323 19th Street. Swiss dairyman Meinrad Zumstein and his wife Margaret came from Holtville in the Imperial Valley in 1941. His sons Leo and Joe and Walter farmed in the valley, and his daughter, Margaret, married Julius Hofer, Jr.

24 - The Hofer home was located at 1215 19th Street. Julius Hofer immigrated from Switzerland in 1916, and lived in the Imperial Valley until moving to Mission Bay in San Diego in 1940, and then to South San Diego in 1952 with his wife Rosa and 3 children. With his son Julius Hofer, Jr., he operated a dairy on 19th Street and on 40 acres near Gate No. 2 at the border. Son Walter Hofer operated a cattle ranch in Descanso. When Julius retired, the property on 19th Street around Emory School was subdivided in the 1980s, and today has street names such as Hofer Drive, Zurich Drive and Yodel Lane.

25 - Emory Elementary School was dedicated in 1930 and named in honor of General William Emory who led the survey commission in 1848 that drew the boundary line with Mexico.



Jay Jackson house and water tower on Leon Avenue were built in 1912.



26 - South Bay Community Park was dedicated June 19, 1946, on 5 acres donated to the county by Robert and Emma Egger. An annual barbecue and bazaar was held in this park after 1948 to benefit St. Charles Catholic Church. This park was the site of the very first Schwingfest of the Swiss Club held in 1949. After the city of San Diego annexed the South Bay in 1957, the park was re-dedicated Sept. 12, 1957, as the Robert Egger, Sr., South Bay Recreation Center.

27 - Mendoza Farms was located where the Teofilo Mendoza Elementary School is today on Coronado Avenue west of Nestor. Teofilo Mendoza, father of Bill Mendoza, was born in Mexico in 1904, paid a 50-cent fee and crossed border to Texas in 1910, then came to California to join Teofilo's older brothers Sotero and Rosalio in San Diego. The brothers worked construction at the 1915 Expo in Balboa Park. Teofilo worked at the poultry farm of Christopher and Olivia Spooner on Spooner Mesa, lived in the stone house in Goat Canyon until 1930, then moved to Leon Avenue, married Maria, and farmed on Coronado Avenue. Bill was born in 1933 when his family was living in the old Parr house at 2055 Leon Avenue. His parents raised rabbits and chickens, traded with the Eggers next door for milk. When Bill was 10 he worked at the Smokehouse in Nestor. In 1947 the Mendozas bought 10 acres on Coronado where the Mendoza School is today, and began truck farming until

the property was sold to the state in 1992 for a school. Teofilo also raised cattle on land leased from Lillian Rottman at 19th and Sunset, and he leased land on the east side of Hollister south of the river for watermelon. While plowing the field he discovered a large fossilized whale skeleton from the Pleistocene era when the whole valley was under water.

28 - St. Charles Catholic Church was founded in 1946 on land donated by Robert Egger, and classrooms that became St. Charles Catholic School began in 1948. Marian Catholic High School began in 1960 on 20 acres donated by Robert Egger. In 2007 the school buildings were closed and the high school was moved to Chula Vista as Mater Dei Catholic High School.

29 - The Egger-Ghio Farm was located on 200 acres between Palm Avenue and the bay, owned and operated by Emil Ghio and Robert Egger. In 1982, 34 acres were developed as the Southland Plaza Shopping Center. The Egger Highlands north and west of the shopping center remained undeveloped.

30 - Palm City was a station of the National City & Otay railroad in 1887 and on the San Diego & Arizona Railroad in 1910. It was an important junction of County Road No. 1 (Hollister Street after 1957) that ran south to the border, and Palm Avenue that became state highway 75 to



The building of the Nestor store and post office is still located at Hollister and Coronado.

Coronado. Early valley settlers William Beardslee and E. Aylworth, both Monument school trustees, built farms near Palm City. The Army established Camp Hearn in Palm City 1916-31 to guard the border. Also nearby were the first Japanese to farm in valley. The Iguchi brothers and Sataro Owashi began farming in 1915. Sataro's son, Joseph Owashi, was born on the Palm City farm. After returning from the World War II relocation camp, Joseph continued farming in the South Bay where he was the San Diego County Farmer of the Year in 1970, president of the San Diego County Japanese-American Citizens League, and founding president of the Chula Vista Vegetable Growers Association.

31 - The Golden West Packing Company was located along the railroad tracks on the south side of Palm City. Owned by Emil Ghio and Robert Egger from the 1950s to the 1970s, it was one of the largest farm processing companies in the county.

32 - The Silver Strand Dairy at 2350 Palm Avenue was operated in the 1920s by James and Pauline Lathers.

33 - A number of large homes were built on the high ground east of Palm City. The Kretsinger House built in 1889 is at 2539 Palm Avenue and is San Diego Historic Landmark No. 1046. Rancho Las Palmas at 2567 Palm Avenue was built in 1928 by Wirt Bowman, owner of Agua Caliente. In 1952 it was sold to Dr. Michael Bajo who for many years was the only physician south of Chula Vista. James Crofton lived on a horse ranch just south of the Bowman house. Across the street on the north side of Palm Avenue, before the rode was widened and the house

removed, lived Harry Harrison, author of the novel "Soylent Green."

34 - The Highland Reservoir is located on the highest ground above Palm Avenue one-half mile east of Palm City. The first reservoir was built in 1893 by Elisha Babcock on the pipeline from the Lower Otay Dam to Coronado. In 1964 the present 3 million gallon steel tank was built by the California American Water Company.

35 - Montgomery Memorial Park was established by the county in 1946 in order to erect a monument commemorating John J. Montgomery's glider flight in 1883. It became a state park in 1951, then a San Diego city park in 1962. Luckie B. Waller donated 35 acres in 1964 to enlarge the park.

36 - Montgomery High School was built at Palm and Beyer Way in 1971, the seventh high school in the Sweetwater Union High School district. Joseph Torres was the South Bay's first Mexican-American high school principal.

37 - The Palm City Airport for small planes was operated by Robert Jacquot 1931-41 where he also ran the Grande Vista School of Aviation. It was leased by the San Diego Flying Club 1938-41.

38 - Nestor was one of the several boom towns founded in the late 1880s by promoters who hoped to sell orchards and farms, similar to what Col. Dickinson was doing in Chula Vista. Its name came from state assemblyman Nestor A. Young who was one of the promoters and who



The Egger-Ghio Golden West Packing Co. was next to the tracks in Palm City.



owned a farm in the area; people would say they lived “over by Nestor’s place” and the name stuck. The name became official when the Oneonta post office was moved to the town in 1902. The Nestor Methodist Church was built in 1896 on land donated by Capt. John Folks. It originally began in 1888 as the Tia Juana Valley Methodist Sunday School, meeting in an upstairs room of the Oneonta school.



Nestor Methodist Church was built in 1896.

39 - John Harvey Folks was the founder of the Highland District in the 1880s and owned several hundred acres between Nestor and Sunset Avenue. He was always called Captain Folks because he held that rank with Illinois Infantry in the Civil War. He was a newspaper editor in Kansas who came to the valley in 1884. He allowed a school to open in his store building in 1888, and donated the land for the construction of the Highland Elementary School, built on the site of today’s Southwest Middle School. In 1920, the Highland, South San Diego and Oneonta schools united to form the South Bay Union School District.

40 - The Purple Cow Dairy at 1296 Hollister was started by John G. Vacchetta and I. G. Piper in June 1958, and was then known as simply the Palm Dairy. In 1960 Vacchetta place a fiberglass purple cow, 8 feet long and 5 feet high, built by Walter Hardy of Chula Vista, in front of the store and it became a South Bay landmark. In 1970 the store was purchased by Roger Graham and became Freshies Palm Dairy.

41 - Southwest Middle School is located on the site of Capt. John Folks store which was used for the Highland Elementary School in 1888. It became one of the first three junior high schools in the South Bay in 1929, along with National City and Chula Vista, and was enlarged with PWA federal relief funds in 1936.

42 - The Andy Smith ranch was directly north of the Southwest Middle School. Smith was a big thoroughbred trainer, operating his ranch for 50 years from 1940s to 1990s. Andy pushed hard to get thoroughbred ranchers to come back to the valley after C. S. Howard died in 1950.

43 - The Howard ranch was a large and well-known thoroughbred farm that bred and trained horses for racing in Agua Caliente and Del Mar. It originally was the San Ysidro Stock Farm founded by Marvin Allen, one of the “Border Barons” who built casinos and racetracks in Tijuana. After Allen died in 1933, it was owned by Jack P. Atkin who came to San Diego from England in 1913 and joined the A. B. W. partnership with Marvin Allen and Frank Beyer. Atkin was an associate of James W. Coffroth at the old Tijuana Hippodrome racetrack that opened Jan. 1, 1916. Atkin called his stock farm the Pasadena Stable and Stud during the golden age of horse racing in the 1920s and 1930s when San Diego was known as the “Thoroughbred Capital of the West” (*Union*, Dec. 31, 1939). It was at Atkin’s stable that Roy Rogers’ horse Trigger was born in 1934 under his original name Golden Cloud. After Atkin died in May, 1938, his ranch was purchased by Charles S. Howard who owned the Ridgewood Ranch in Mendocino County where he trained his champion horse Seabiscuit. Howard had boarded Seabiscuit at Atkin’s ranch when the horse ran on the Agua Caliente Handicap on March 27, 1938. Although Seabiscuit returned to Ridgewood, Howard bred and trained many other horses after he bought the ranch from Atkin. Howard died of a heart attack in 1950 and his ranches were sold by his heirs. In 1954, the Howard ranch was converted to farmland by the Cozza Farms. All traces of the ranch disappeared in the 1970s with the construction of the I-5 and highway 117 (later SR 905) interchange.

44 - The two-story house at 2876 Iris Avenue was built in 1956 for Frank Cozza.

45 - Frank Tachiki farmed north of Howard Ranch up to Palm Avenue after World War II.

46 - George and Isabel Wallace lived at 2914 Iris Avenue and farmed 12 acres in celery and tomatoes from the 1930s to 1965. Isabel Wallace served on the board of the South Bay Union School District. Several acres of land owned by the Wallaces were sold to the county in 1946 for Montgomery Park.

47 - Borderland Air Field was built in 1931 by T. E. Jacquot and R. C. Hutton and was known first as the Border Air Service Field, serving as an air taxi service to the Tijuana race tracks and casinos. In 1946 the name was changed to the Borderland Air Field.

48 - James Parsons owned the Hope Farm and raised his famous “Seth” horses from 1919 to 1939.

49 - Southwest High School opened in 1975 on land owned by John D. Weatherbie, who came from Canada in 1908 and opened a blacksmith shop in Nestor.



Hollis Peavey in Mt. Olivet Cemetery (*IB Star* Feb. 16, 1984).

50 - Mount Olivet Cemetery on Iris Avenue is a private cemetery established in 1899 by Hollis M. Peavey.

51 - John Schussler owned a 100-acre ranch from 1885 until moving to Chula Vista in 1911 where he became city marshal in 1912.

52 - The Schnell dairy was started by August M. Schnell in 1888 and sold milk to the Hotel del Coronado. In 1899 his son, Henry, organized Schnell's Sanitary Dairy and in 1913 merged with other producers to create the Producers Mutual Dairy Association. It was known as the PM Dairy and was one of the early milk cooperatives in San Diego county. Schnell sold the PM Dairy to Arden Farms in

1928, and then sold Arden Farms to Harold Grey in 1933. In 1937 Henry Schnell and Harold Grey formed Dairy Mart Farms at the original site of his father's first dairy. They changed the name of the road that ran south to the border from Arden Way to Dairy Mart Road. When Henry died in 1957, his wife Phyllis took over the dairy until it closed in the 1970s.

53 - Jim Mascari was born 1928 in Boston, served in the Navy, moved to Howard Avenue in the early 1950s, and began raising thoroughbred horses. By 1954 he was racing his horses at Agua Caliente. He had three ranches: the 3 acres on Howard Avenue, 14 acres on Otay Mesa next to the Cliff Clayton ranch, and 11 acres at the border near the international gate. He kept up to 150 horses on his three ranches and transported horses to Agua Caliente in five trucks. During the 1960s he had an exclusive contract with Caliente owner John Alessio as the sole transporter of horses to the track across the border.

54 - The Ord Speedway was built by Harold Ord of Imperial Beach and was used to race jalopies in the early 1950s.

55 - There were a number of horse stables east of Dairy Mart Road that made the South Bay famous as a thoroughbred capital. Wilbur L. Stanfield was a well-known race horse owner of the old school who kept a stable until he died in 1934. A. L. Jones began as a trainer for Marvin Allen in the 1920s and had a ranch at San Ysidro with a famous sire called Sunshot. The Melwood ranch produced a remarkably successful stallion, Bargello. Some of the other great breeding farms were owned by Wally Zager, Cliff Clayton, Forrest Burkholder, D. C. Haskett, Louis Almgren, and Dr. Chester Wilson.



Old Dairy Mart Road in the center of this photo ended at Gate No. 2. The Cozza Farm is shown near the top and the Hofer Dairy is shown at the location of the flood gates, bottom left (Oct. 11, 1966, photo courtesy IWBC).



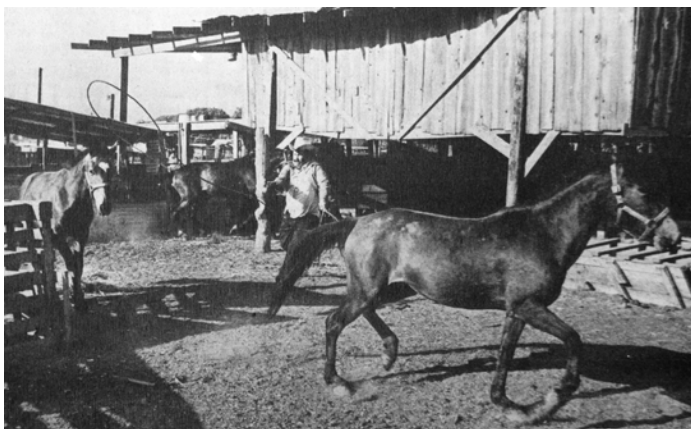
56 - The Southwest Little League baseball fields were dedicated in 1997 at the eastern end of Sunset Avenue. Before the 1980 flood, the League played at the western end of Sunset on Navy land. After the fields were washed out, Robert Egger swapped 20 acres with the Navy and gave the Little League a temporary place for games until the county built the current fields.

57 - Japanese farmers returned from relocation camps after World War II and worked at a number of locations along Sunset Avenue. East of Hollister were the farms of Fred Iguchi, Tbuneiki Hirata, Miochi Kido, George Niso, Nobuso Kido, Yaemon Hamano, Roy and Frank Segawa and the Imazuma family. West of Hollister were the farms of Sam Itami, Tbuneiki Hirata, Toki Yano, and Tokugoro Furuta.

58 - Danny Marschall grew strawberries on his farm north of Sunset, until it was flooded in the 1980s. His strawberries were exported to England for the annual Wimbledon tennis tournament. The land is now the site of Suzie's Farms. Danny and his wife Gloria and his son Matt were well known in the valley for helping residents during the floods. The Dairy Mart Bridge was rebuilt after the 1993 flood and dedicated to Danny Marschall.

59 - Sandi's Stables were founded by Ron Mullis in 1985 as a horse rental business, then taken over by his son-in-law Dan Kackert and his wife Teresa in 1994 until they closed the stable in 2004.

60 - The Manuel Campos horse ranch on 10 acres at the corner of Sunset and Hollister was previously owned by Rafael Corral who learned to round up and train wild horses in Durango, Mexico. He used his skills to round up and train wild horses for the Adopt-a-Horse program that began in 1973.



Rafael Corral roping horses (*IB Star* June 10, 1984).

61 - The Community Garden is located on county property in the flood plain of the Tijuana River.



Camp Yamamoto was the first summer camp of Boy Scout Troop 52 in the Tijuana Slough in August, 1933 (courtesy of Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego).

62 - The Blanco Brothers ranch is on land originally settled by Egit Arakelian and his wife Madeleine who immigrated in 1888 from Armenia. In the 1970s the ranch was purchased by the African American brother and sister, Sim and Sarah Wallace, who erected the sign "SS Friendly" over the entrance.

63 - The Wigginton ranch at 2191 Hollister Street was founded in 1989 by Bobbie and Lionel Wigginton and Ellis Wigginton, Lionel's father who came to California from Oklahoma in the Dust Bowl. They leased the ranch in 1989 from the Davisson sisters, Hattie Mary and Clara May, who had inherited it from their father, but would lose ownership to the county in 1990 after a three-year eminent domain lawsuit. The Wiggintons were founding members of TRVEA, the Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Association, that was organized in 1989 to stop the county and state from closing the horse trails in the valley. Walt Rose and Fred Esparaza got 12 volunteers together to form a Mounted Assistance Unit. For several years TRVEA met at Southwest High School, and then moved to the Wigginton Ranch.

64 - Wild Willow Farm and Education Center was located at 2291 Hollister Street on the lands owned by Egit Arakelian.

65 - Effie May Morton developed the largest of San Diego county's 50 organic farms in the 1980s on 143 acres along the Tijuana River, but the valuable topsoil on the farm was destroyed in the 1993 flood.

66 - The Bird and Butterfly Garden is part of the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park that was established in 1989. The park building at the entrance to the garden came from the Sheldon ranch. The garden is located on the site of the California American Water Company plant built in 1936 to pump water from ground wells to Imperial beach and Coronado. Henry Meyers was the manager of the plant until he retired in 1968.



Ruins of the 1936 Cal Water plant in Bird & Butterfly Garden.

67 - The Dick Brown ranch at 2336 Hollister Street was located across the road from the water treatment plant in 1965.

68 - The house of Tiburcio and Antonia Martinez was located at 2291 Hollister until it was washed away by the flood in 1980.

69 - The Rottman farm was located east of Hollister south of the river. Ignatz and Malvine Rottman immigrated from Hungary in the 1890s. Teofilo Mendoza was leasing land on the Rottman farm in the 1930s to grow watermelons when he found a large fossilized whale skeleton while plowing the ground.

70 - Nick Cappos grew cabbage on 60 acres and sold his crop to the Colonel Sanders processing plant on Federal Boulevard, but lost his house and farm in the 1980 flood. The land is now county-owned and leased to Jessica and Garret Winne for Pony Land.

71 - The horse ranch of David and Jeanie Gomez was located on the east side of Hollister. David was president of Citizens Revolting Against Pollution after the 1993 and served on the task force to seek ways to protect the valley from future floods.

72 - The Frank Tachiki farm was along 19th street in the 1950s and 1960s.

73 - The ruins of the Peavey house and farm can still be seen on the west side of old 19th Street looking north from Monument Road. Before the 1980 flood, 19th street ran through the valley to Imperial Beach, but the county did not repair the flood damage and the road is closed where Hollis Monroe Peavey built his first house in 1895. His son Newell J. Peavey farmed and managed dairy land that included part of Ream Field before World War I. Newell was a director of the PM Dairy after the war. After a flood in 1922 swept through the old home, it was sold to Floyd and Minnie Sniff, and the Peaveys moved to a new house on Leon Avenue. Newell retired in 1952 and his son, Hollis Newell Peavey, managed the farm until the land became subdivided in the 1970s.



Shelton Ranch house built in 1970, now park ranger headquarters (photo courtesy Donna Shelton).



74 - Galen and Louise Watts owned the Double WW Ranch near the site of the Kumeyaay village of Melijo that was called Sancti Spiritu by Father Juan Crespi when he crossed the valley in May 1769.

75 - George Wetmore was one of the early settlers on Otay Mesa in 1885, and also farmed in the Tijuana River Valley north of Monument Road. This was the site of the Triple S Ranch of Errol "Skip" Skibbee and his wife Sally until the 1993 flood.



Girl Scouts at the Double WW Ranch (*IB Star* Sep. 2, 1984).

76 - Larry Kuebler was related to the Wetmore family and had a farm south of the Wetmores in the valley. Lawrence C. Kuebler was born in 1912 on his father's 4500-acre ranch on Otay Mesa. He became a developer in the South Bay in the 1940s and a founder of the Otay Water District in the 1950s. He and his wife Mary died in a plane crash in Utah in 1975.

77 - Randolph West bought his farm on Monument Road in 1949.

78 - Kikuichi Marumoto farmed in the valley in the 1930s with his wife Mary Wada, brother-in-law Frank Wada, and daughter Jeanne, who later became a nurse and married William Elyea. In the 1920s this land was owned by Herbert Peery.

79 - George Yamamoto bought his farm in 1963 from Paul Oyama. George was the son of Naburo Yamamoto who farmed in Castle Park after World War II. The land on the east side of old 19th Street was owned by John and Pearl Hull in the 1930s. Today it is the Medallion Farm of Bing Bush, Jr.

80 - Jim Martin has owned the Beach Rides stable since the 1970s. His house at 2140 Monument Road was built before World War I by a Japanese family. In the 1920s the ranch was owned by William Holcomb. In 1946 the ranch was sold to Bert Forsyth from Canada who owned Mexican Village in Coronado and the Skyhawks hockey team.

81 - Dick Tynan and his father-in-law Walter Kimzey bought the ranch at 2202 Hollister Street in 1978 from Bert Forsyth and Joseph Goforth. His house was built in 1904 by the Miller family; Lucy M. Miller was a teacher before World War I at the South San Diego School. In the 1930s Joseph and Marguerita Goforth raised chickens and rabbits, and later established a poultry hatchery in La Mesa. Dick Tynan has served as president of TRVEA, and has been on many of the committees after the 1980 flood representing the residents of the valley before county, state and federal agencies.

82 - Jesse Gomez grew corn, zucchini, tomatoes and watermelon until the land became too saline after the 2008 flood.

83 - Suncoast Farms is owned by Mike and Emma Spurling. Mike's father, Wayne Spurling, bought the ranch in 1977 from Eugene de Bogary who came to the valley from Texas in the 1930s. Wayne Spurling was a trainer for many years for horses that raced at Agua Caliente.

84 - River Valley Ranch owned by Martha Torkington.

85 - Charles S. Rex owned the horse ranch on Monument Road from the 1940s to the 1970s.

86 - William Ober bought his farm of 175 acres in 1902 and with his wife Cora raised a family of 9 children. He raised alfalfa for his herd of 40 dairy cows.



Public art on the Dairy Mart Bridge dedicated 1999.

87 - Dairy Mart Road was originally called Arden Road when Henry Schnell sold his father's dairy to Arden Farms in 1928. Henry Schnell was a leader in getting the federal government to build a barbed wire fence along the border to keep out Mexican cattle with tick fever. The road became Dairy Mart Road in 1937 when Schnell and Harold Grey formed Dairy Mart Farms. When the old Dairy Mart Bridge washed out in 1978, the road was realigned westward to join with Monument Road. The 2nd

bridge washed out in 1993, and the 3rd bridge was dedicated in 1999 to the memory of Danny Marschall. At five benches along the bridge are photos and quotations that tell the history of flooding in the valley.



Alois Stockalper at Swiss Park Schwingfest 1984 (*IB Star* 6-28).

88 - American Sod Farms has operated since the 1980s on land previously owned by Walter E. Stewart. Floyd Wirthlin was president of AmSod and was elected to the Tia Juana Valley County Water District in 1989 with his son, Floyd Wirthlin, Jr.

89 - Jess Garcia farmed along the flood channel in the 1990s.

90 - Walter Stewart came to the valley in 1911 and by 1948 owned 500 acres. His extensive farming operation earned him the nickname "King of Potatoes." His home near the border was washed out in the 1916 flood, at the location that came to be called Stewart's Drain. His son Victor Stewart continue farming until the 1960s. Mexico built a concrete flood control channel on its side of the border in 1967, but San Diego Mayor Pete Wilson in 1974 refused to continue construction of the channel north of the border, allowing the problem of floods and sewage to continue in the valley. As a stopgap measure, the Army Corps of Engineers in 1976 condemned the last 90 acres of Stewart's land to build a dissipator system of pools. In 1983 the International Boundary and Water Commission built a 13-acre holding pond near Stewart's Drain.

91 - Gate No. 2 was an alternative location to cross the border after the barbed wire fence was built in 1910. It was originally used to allow animals to cross the border after inspection, but it became popular with Americans and touring companies as a shortcut to Tijuana. Mexico

closed the gate to Americans in 1913. The gate was officially reopened in 1929 and staffed by customs officers, but was again closed in 1932 when Highway 101 was paved to San Ysidro and a new custom house and Gate No. 1 was built.

92 - Julius Hofer established a dairy next to the border in the 1950s. From 1956 to 1965 it was leased to Alois Stockalper, a Swiss immigrant who came to Hofer's dairy from the Imperial Valley. With his son "Rudi" Stockalper, they leased the Hofer dairy from 1956 to 1965. Bill Kreinbring leased the dairy from 1970 until 1981, then sold his cattle and started the Southwest Feed store on Monument Road.

93 - International Treatment Plant was constructed by the International Boundary and Water Commission in 1997. After the failure of the dissipator pools to stop the sewage flow in the floods of 1980 and 1982, the city's O'Leary Report of 1983 recommended the construction of the treatment plant and ocean outfall pipe. Construction of the 75-acre treatment plant began in 1994 with a groundbreaking ceremony July 15 featuring Vice-President Al Gore. Construction of the plant was finished in April, 1997, and the ocean outfall pipeline was finished in Jan. 1999.



Rep. Bob Filner gave red boxing gloves to Vice-President Al Gore at the the IBWC plant dedication July 16, 1994, to thank the vice president for "delivering a knockout blow to Tijuana sewage in this river valley." (*Union* July 17, 1994)

94 - The South Bay Water Reclamation Plant was built by the city of San Diego and dedicated Dec. 8, 2001, after four years of construction, and began operation in May 2002.

95 - Cozza Farms was located on 60 acres at Dairy Mart Road and Tijuana Street in 1966. Frank and Jim Cozza had started farming on Gunpowder Point in Chula Vista in the 1940s, bought the Howard Ranch in 1954, then moved



to Dairy Mart Road and farmed until the International Treatment Plant was built.



Louis Shelton (r.) and Willy Layton in 1951 (photo courtesy of Donna Shelton).

96 - The Shelton ranch was built by Louis Shelton who came to Chula Vista with his wife Helen in 1929 and ran the Bay View Dairy in Chula Vista 1929-37. After managing an Arden Dairy distributorship in the South Bay from 1937 to 1945, he moved to the valley and bought his Monument Road farm of 145 acres from the Ober family in 1947. Willard Layton was an ex-Marine who married Glendon Shelton, daughter of Louis and Helen, and helped run the dairy that came with the Ober property. A small house was moved to the Shelton ranch in 1950 from the Harley Knox dairy near Goat Canyon. Louis Shelton ended his dairy business in 1952 and turned to farming with the help of his son Tom Shelton and his wife Donna. After the death of Louis in 1965, Tom and Donna built their ranch house on the hill that was sold to the county in 1989 and has become the headquarters of the county rangers.

97 - Southwest Feed was started by Fred Kreinbring after he closed the Hofer dairy in 1981. The property began in 1927 as the horse ranch of Carrey J. Nelson. In the 1940s it was the Lazy A Guest Ranch of H. L. Jones who was born in Texas, lived in the Imperial Valley in the 1930s, served in the Navy Seabees during World War II, then came to Monument Road to open a dude ranch. A notable feature started by Jones in 1946 was a 4th of July rodeo held across the street on the ranch of Charley Rex. In the 1970s it was the Hilltop Stables of Sheri Walters.

98 - La Hacienda Bonita at 2575 Monument Road was a motel in the 1940s, bought by Malcolm and Wanda Whitt in 1961. Whitt was born and raised in the South Bay area, herded cows up to Fort Emory during World War II and was president of the South Bay District Chamber of Commerce.

99 - Edward and Elizabeth Cuen built their house at 2473 Monument Road in 1965. Ed's father was Charlie Cuen

who started the San Ysidro Feed store in the 1930s. 100 - Charley Smith was the owner of the home at 2425 Monument Road built in 1964.

101 - Monument school was built in 1889 and today is part of the Morris residence at 2301 Monument Road. Monument school was originally built in South San Diego in 1869 by the first American settlers in the valley. The second school on Monument Road was the most southwesterly school in the United States and remained in operation as a one-room school until 1941. Cleo and Emilie Morris bought the structure for their home in 1941, and their son Delano Morris decided to remain after he retired as chief engineer at the Balboa Naval Hospital. B. J. Gautereaux, father of National City Mayor Dick Gautereaux, attended the school 1901-09, riding back and forth to the Otay Valley on the back of a little mule. He remembered "I took to breaking burros to sell to miners on their way to Mexico. It was the way I made my shoes and pants to go to school in." (*IB Star-News*, Dec. 2, 1965)

102 - James F. Wadham owned the mesa land behind Monument school. James brought his family from Missouri in 1871 and opened the first steam-powered grist mill in San Diego with Josiah Shaffer. When Shaffer moved to the southern end of San Diego bay to start the Salt Works, James F. Wadham opened a livery business and ran the stage station at the Mexican border in the 1870s. His son Fred W. Wadham was the sole customs house inspector at the border entry in Tijuana for 20 years after 1894. According to Joe Poggi, "In those days you could go back and forth across the line with no interference, no customs at all. The only customs that the United States had was just one man. That was old man Wadham, Fred Wadham. All he looked at was the horses. There was \$30 a head duty on the horses, and they smuggled quite a few horses from the Mexican side down this way because horses were scarce on this side. He was the only Custom Officer on the line then. They only looked after the horses." Fred's brother, Frank E. Wadham, helped get the Monument School moved to Wadham property at the end of Hollister in 1889. Another brother,



Lazy A Guest Ranch photo in 1950 Imperial Beach brochure.

James E. Wadham, became an attorney and was elected mayor of San Diego 1911-13.



Water tank ruins in Smuggler's Gulch.

103 - Smuggler's Gulch was settled by a dozen families before World War II, taking advantage of the abundance of fresh spring water. Joseph and Ellen Satterlee settled in the entrance to the gulch in 1918, dug 10 wells and pumped the water to a tank on the edge of the hill to sell to residents.

104 - Arthur and Catherine Welcome lived in Smuggler's Gulch in the 1930s.

105 - David and Hazel Smallcomb lived deep in Smuggler's Gulch close to the border.

106 - Emil and Clara Bruhlmeier immigrated from Switzerland and grew avocado trees in Smuggler's Gulch in the 1930s and 1940s.

107 - William and Millie Coones raised bees in Smuggler's Gulch and in the 1940s advertised "crystal pure water" for sale. (CV Star, Nov. 14, 1947)

108 - The Border Highlands was a 911-acre strip along the border, including the mesas south of Monument Road. Three sand and gravel companies in the 1970s owned 522 of the total 911 acres and carried out mining operations. These were Conrock, Nelson and Sloan, and Fenton. Conrock planned a large housing development on Spooner's Mesa, and another company financed with Arab money planned a golf course with 9 holes in Smuggler's Gulch with an electric lift to take golfers to another nine holes on Spooner's Mesa, but these projects were never built. In 1984, Consolidated Rock Products Co. (Conrock) merged with the California Portland Cement Co. to form Calmat that continued to own most of Spooner's Mesa.

109 - Spooner's Mesa was named for the family of C. R. Spooner who settled on the center of the mesa before World War I. His son C. W. Spooner operated the Spooner Hereford Ranch in the 1950s.

110 - Charles Mansir was a pioneer settler whose farm in 1871 was considered "one of the best in the valley, with some of the finest specimens of tomatoes" (Union, Aug. 16, 1871). He was born in Boston and came to the valley with his wife Mary Ann and 7 children. His son Harry Mansir lived on a ranch on the northern side of Spooner's Mesa and was known to frequently bring cattle from Mexico across the unguarded line to his ranch. When the Army patrolled the border during World War I, Mansir was required to apply for a passport.

111 - The gate to Border Field State park was erected soon after the dedication in 1971 and a concession company was hired to collect the \$1 per car admission fee. In 2014, a public art project was installed on the fence, known as the "The Border Field Gateway to Nature Communitree." Volunteers collected objects from the valley to be embedded in the display that represents the Park's native Elderberry Tree. Next to the gate is the Ocean Outfall Anti-Intrusion structure with large cement cap on top of



A large pool of water in the center of Smuggler's Gulch in 1966 was caused by the excavations of Conrock for sand and gravel. Jim Martin's ranch is at lower left (Photo courtesy of IWBC).



the 190 ft. drop shaft that connects the South Bay Land Outfall pipeline from the treatment plant to the Seabed Pipeline three miles offshore.



Rolf Lee stands next to the riser plug discarded when the Ocean Outfall pipeline was completed in 1999.

112 - Herman and Alice Smart lived in Goat Canyon just south of the Border State Park gate. Their home for 10 years from 1977 to 1987 was the most southwestern home in America.

113 - San Diego Mayor Harley Knox (mayor 1943-51) operated his dairy processing plant on Logan Avenue since 1919 and grew feed for his dairy cattle on his 360-acre farm near Goat Canyon.

114 - Joe Pollock had a thoroughbred farm called the Ocean Therapy Ranch near Goat Canyon from 1930 to 1965 where he exercised horses in salt water and in two pools built near the ocean. He found the mud of the

Tijuana Slough beneficial to the feet and ankles of the horse. At his farm on Hollister Street he grew cabbage in 1970s.



Harley Knox, the “Milkman Mayor” of San Diego.

#### SOURCES:

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- Interviews with valley residents.
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Rancher Jim Martin stands on the World War II observation post ruins that remain on top of Bunker Hill, overlooking the road leading the Border Field State Park.





The top view shows the patchwork of the many farms and ranches in the valley in 1966. In the 2015 view below, the regional park has returned most of the river bottom land to a natural state, and suburbia is encroaching from the north.