



## **Historic Context Statement**

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## I. Introduction

This Historic Context Statement was prepared by the El Cerrito Historical Society (the “Historical Society”). It discusses significant themes in the development of El Cerrito from its earliest beginnings through the 1960s. It identifies associated property types and their character-defining features, and provides a framework for evaluating resources for potential listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources. This information will assist city planners, property owners and the general public in understanding and assessing the potential impacts of alterations to historic properties. This context will also help facilitate activities such as landmark designations, use of the California Historical Building Code (CHBC) for qualifying properties, and eligibility for preservation incentives such as historic tax credits.

As of the date of this document, there is one historic district in El Cerrito that has been found eligible for list on the National Register of Historic places and two sites that appear eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources. There are additional sites in El Cerrito that may qualify for one of these two registers. There is at least one site in El Cerrito that is a Registered California Landmark and there are several sites that are listed on the Contra Costa County Register of Historic resources.

It is important to note that while the El Cerrito Historic Context Statement identifies key historical themes and driving factors in El Cerrito’s development, it is not intended to be a comprehensive history of the city or a definitive listing of all the city’s significant resources. Instead, it provides a general discussion of the overarching forces that shaped El Cerrito’s built environment, why properties associated with that development are significant, and elements and features that characterize its historic resources.

El Cerrito as well as the rest of the San Francisco Bay Area was inhabited by native peoples for thousands of years, as is evidenced by the shell mounds that historically dotted the Bay as well as by other physical evidence. It was an extraordinarily rich and diverse natural environment in which the native peoples were one with the environment. The history and development of El Cerrito as we know it today started with the arrival of the Anza Expedition in San Francisco in June of 1776. El Cerrito’s specific history is rich and inextricably linked to the participants in that expedition along with the historical and legal heritage that they created. In fact, the history and development of El Cerrito cannot be fully appreciated without understanding how all this history played out.

For that reason this document includes much more description of the early development of California and El Cerrito than is customarily found in this type of document. As such, there are twelve historic contexts specifically defined for El Cerrito:

- General History of Early California as it relates to Rancho San Pablo and El Cerrito
- General History of Rancho San Pablo and El Cerrito
- Land subdivision and development in El Cerrito



Railroads and the Industrial Core  
Rock and Stone Business  
Farms and Dairies  
Italian Community  
Chinese Community  
Japanese Community  
Institutions  
Gambling and San Pablo Avenue  
Mid-century Modern Architecture

## II. Definition of Geographical Area

The El Cerrito Historic Context Statement encompasses the entirety of the City of El Cerrito and a part of the City of Richmond, specifically part of a neighborhood that is called the Richmond Annex. Richmond Annex was the name of a subdivision that dates from 1912, before El Cerrito was founded and when Richmond was a small city located four miles away. The part of the Richmond Annex included is essentially the one-block wide strip located between San Pablo Avenue and Carlson Boulevard and between Cypress Avenue and Cerrito Creek. For many years this area was physically distant from the main body of Richmond and as such, the development of this area was more closely influenced by the development of El Cerrito than Richmond. The context area is an irregularly shaped area that is roughly one-and-a-half miles wide from east to west and about three miles long from north to south. . (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito, 1896-02 & 1911-07 ???????Date of Richm Annex Map?????)

As described in “General History of Rancho San Pablo and El Cerrito,” the original land grant that defined West Contra Costa County was split among a number of claimants in 1894. The boundaries of El Cerrito today, which are little-changed from when the City was incorporated in 1917, largely adhere to the property lines established in 1894. These would include generally the Bishop, Galpin, and O’Neil properties on the east; the Castro, Fitch, and O’Neil properties on the south; the Bishop, Castro, Galvin, Gill, O’Neil and Tewksbury properties on the west; and the Bishop property on the north. The western half of El Cerrito is generally flat and just above sea level, while the eastern half rises up and becomes the northern part of the Berkeley Hills. The highest point in El Cerrito is Rust summit, at 1,004 feet. The City today is 3.66 square miles with a population of roughly 25,400. The name El Cerrito comes from the name used in 1820 for today’s Albany Hill, “Cerrito de San Antonio.” ( Referees appointed by the Supreme Court of California re: Rancho San Pablo Land Case, 1894, Rancho San Pablo Map; Wikipedia, n.d., El Cerrito, California; Harold E. Salley & Edward L. Patera, 1991, History of California Post Offices, 2nd Edition, p64)

[This would be an excellent place to insert a map from the City's GIS that shows the boundaries and major physical and geographical features of the city, including major streets and neighborhoods, hills, creeks, and boundaries!!!]

## III. Methodology

### A. Professional Standards

Much of the material in this Introduction comes from the Benicia Historic Context Statement dated 9/27/2010 that was prepared by Page & Turnbull, Inc. The organization and content of the El Cerrito Historic Context Statement are consistent with federal, state and local guidelines for registering historic properties and developing historic contexts. Publications consulted in the preparation of this document include the following:

- National Park Service: National Register Bulletin No. 15 How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation
- National Register Bulletin No. 16A How to Complete the National Register Registration Form
- National Register Bulletin No. 16B How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form
- National Register Bulletin No. 24 Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning
- State of California, Office of Historic Preservation Instructions for Recording Historical Resources
- California Statewide Historic Preservation Plan, 2006-2010 (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p.4)

#### B. Repositories Consulted

Repositories consulted in the preparation of the El Cerrito Historic Context Statement include the National Archives in College Park, Maryland; the Contra Costa County Historical Society, the El Cerrito Historical Society, the library at the University of Oregon, the National Park Service collection in Richmond, the Richmond Museum of History, the Contra Costa County Library branches in El Cerrito and Pleasant Hill; the Alameda County Library branch in Albany, the Richmond Public Library, the Oakland Public Library and the Bancroft, Doe, Earth Sciences and Maps, and Moffitt libraries at the University of California, Berkeley (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p4)

#### C. Primary and Secondary Sources

Numerous primary sources of information were used to create this historic context statement. Source documents that originated within the historical period include official reports and records, media accounts, U.S. Census records, records of building construction, personal narratives, maps and photographs. Additional valuable secondary sources consulted included those that conveyed historical information through analysis, summary or reproduction of primary materials. These include later accounts of El Cerrito's history in books and newspaper articles, and significant historical writings by local residents. Two books about El Cerrito: *El Cerrito - Historical Evolution* by Edward Staniford, and *Harem Scarem in El Cerrito* by Neva Carpenter, both provide excellent material. The Carpenter book is an excellent source of background material on lifestyles in the pre-World War II days. The Staniford book contains a wealth of information about the evolution of the city from the late 1880s through the 1960s and provided considerable information used in the preparation of Sections 4J and 4K. (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p 4-5)

Historical information as well as geographical data used in the preparation of this historic context statement was derived from a reconnaissance survey in which the author traveled the length of

every public thoroughfare in El Cerrito, noting historic context, geographic and natural features, and potentially significant properties. The author also studied satellite and aerial photographs to identify potentially significant properties not easily visible from public rights-of-way. First person interviews of primary sources, largely long-time residents, performed over the past eighteen years have provided a wealth of general and specific information about historic context in El Cerrito. Hundreds of people, many life-long residents such as Ruby Hiramoto, John Gasparini, Jun Honda, Meriko Maida, Louis Nicoli, Theresa Parella, Eleanor Roat, Sam Sakai, Frank Storno, and Eiko Sugihara provided invaluable historic information about the area. (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p5)

El Cerrito has not been comprehensively surveyed or inventoried for potential historical resources. However, three professional reports written for development projects in nearby Richmond include valuable information that is applicable to El Cerrito: (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p5)

- the 1981 document, *Investigation of Cultural Resources within the Richmond Harbor Development Project 11-A*, prepared by California Archaeology Consultants, Inc for the City of Richmond;

- the 2003 document, *Not at Home on the Home Front: Japanese American and Italian Americans in Richmond during World War II*, prepared by Donna Graves, and

- the 2004 document, *Historic Architecture Evaluation: The Oishi, Sakai, and Maida-Endo Nurseries*, prepared by Donna Graves, Ward Hill, and Woody Minor.

In addition, several professional consultant reports prepared for development projects in El Cerrito include the following: (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p5)

- the 2006 document, *Historic Architectural Assessment for the Rodini Family Property* prepared for the property in El Cerrito at 1715 Elm Street, prepared by Michael Corbett;

- the 2007 document *Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project* prepared for the property at 1600 Elm Street in El Cerrito, the Windrush School site, prepared by LSA Associates;

- the 2008 document *Castro Elementary School and Portola Middle School Historic Resources Evaluation* prepared for the properties in El Cerrito at 7125 Donal Avenue and 1021 Navellier Street, prepared by PMC; and

- the 2011 document *Historic Resource Evaluation, 10848 and 10860 San Pablo Avenue*, prepared by Knapp & VerPlanck

## E. Evaluation Criteria used to Evaluate Potential Historical Resources

### 1. National Register

The National Register of Historic Places (the “National Register”) is the nation’s most comprehensive inventory of historic resources. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service and includes buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level. (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p6)

The primary guidelines for the identification and evaluation of potential historic resources are established by the National Park Service's publication: National Register Bulletin Number 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Typically, resources over fifty years of age are eligible for listing in the National Register if they meet any one of the four criteria of significance, as well as retaining sufficient historic integrity. However, resources under fifty years of age can be determined eligible if it can be demonstrated that they are of "exceptional importance," or if they are contributors to a potential historic district. The four criteria are identified as follows: (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p6)

- A. Properties associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. Properties associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction; and
- D. Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. (This criterion is typically reserved for archaeological resources.) (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p6)

## 2. California Register

The California Register of Historical Resources (the "California Register") is the authoritative listing of historical resources in California. It is used to guide state and local agencies, as well as private citizens and other interested parties, as to which properties should be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change. Properties listed on the National Register are automatically listed on the California Register as well. The criteria for listing in the California Register follow nearly identical guidelines to those used by the National Register, but are identified numerically rather than alphabetically: (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p6)

- 1. Properties associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;
- 2. Properties associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history;
- 3. Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; and
- 4. Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation. (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p6)

Perhaps the most critical feature of applying the criteria for evaluation is establishing the relationship between a property and its historic context. This is defined on page 7 of National Register Bulletin Number 15: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. It is

defined as “those patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history or prehistory is made clear.” (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p7)

### 3. Integrity

In addition to qualifying for listing under at least one of the National Register/California Register criteria, a property must be shown to have sufficient historic integrity. Page 11 of the California Office of Historic Preservation’s Technical Assistant Series No. 7, *How to Nominate a Resource to the California Register of Historic Resources* defines this as “the authenticity of an historic resource’s physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource’s period of significance.” The concept of integrity is particularly essential in identifying the character-defining features of historic resources, as well as evaluating adverse changes to them. (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p7)

The process of determining integrity is quite similar for both the National Register and the California Register. Each uses the same seven aspects, or variables, that define integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. According to the National Register Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, these seven characteristics are defined as follows: (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p8)

1. Location is the place where the historic property was constructed.
2. Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plans, space, structure and style of the property.
3. Setting addresses the physical environment of the historic property inclusive of the landscape and spatial relationships of the building(s).
4. Materials refer to the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern of configuration to form the historic property.
5. Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history.
6. Feeling is the property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
7. Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p8)

A resource either retains integrity or it does not. Generally, properties that demonstrate the highest level of integrity are those that retain all of their character-defining features. These are the physical aspects of a property that tie it to a specific time and place, such as its design, materials and decorative elements—as well as its relationship to its surroundings. Properties with exceptional integrity will have undergone few or no alterations since their construction, and will not have been moved from their original location. (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p8)

However, it is understood that nearly all properties undergo change over time, and thus minor alterations or changes are expected. Properties with sufficient integrity for listing in national, state or local historical registers will retain a majority of their character defining features, particularly massing, materials, roofline and fenestration patterns, as well as enough aspects of integrity to convey their significance. It should be stressed that historic integrity and condition are not the same. Buildings with evident signs of deterioration can still retain eligibility for historic listing as long as it can be demonstrated that they retain enough character-defining features to convey their significance. (Page & Turnbull, 9/27/2010, City of Benicia Historic Context Statement, p8)

## A. General History of Early California as it relates to Rancho San Pablo and El Cerrito

The human history of El Cerrito goes back far before the coming of European, Mexican, and American settlers. From evidence found in the shell mounds that ring San Francisco Bay, we know that Native Americans lived in the area for thousands of years. Spanish efforts to colonize *Alta California* (essentially the entire state of California from the Bay area south), as they called it, began in 1697 when Jesuit priests first started to trickle into Baja California to spread their religion and the Spanish culture. In those days Alta California was a province of the Viceroyalty of New Spain (today's Mexico); a province that was quite large and completely unexplored by Mexico or Spain. (Nelson, N.C., 1909, *Shellmounds of the San Francisco Bay Region*, 346; Nelson, N.C., 4/21/1910, *The Ellis Landing Shellmound*, University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol. 7 No. 5, p371; Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 23-25)

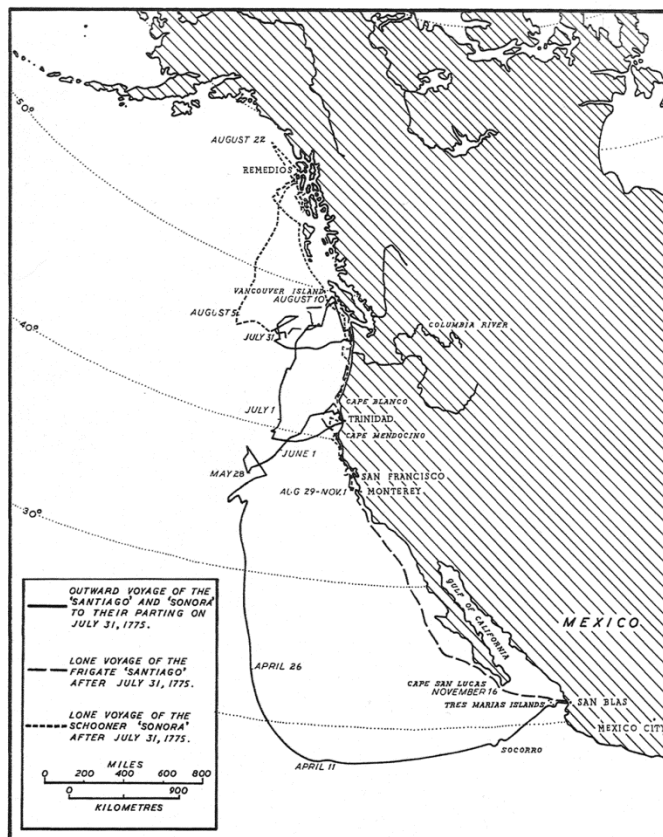
The King of Spain, through the Viceroy in Mexico City, ruled Alta California. This continued until 1821 when New Spain gained its independence from its mother country and became known as Mexico. Alta California and its residents, the Californios, were still ruled from Mexico City. Mexico opened up Alta California to settlement by Mexicans and also to naturalized foreigners who agreed to learn Spanish and convert to Catholicism. Beginning in the 1830s, the Mexican government also started to secularize the missions in Alta California. Although intended to free the indigenous people from virtual slavery by providing land where the indigenous peoples could settle, secularization primarily resulted in opportunistic land acquisition by Mexican and foreign settlers. Then in 1846 the United States literally seized Alta California from Mexico and from that point on California was a part of the United States. (George C. Collier, 1977, *Mexican Land Grants in Contra Costa County*, p4-7; Joshua Paddison, 1999, *A World Transformed: Firsthand Accounts of California before the Gold Rush*, p200; Wikipedia, *Spanish Missions in California*; Stanley Young, 1988, *The Missions of California*, p7; Sunset Books, 1964, *The California Missions*, p64)

Alta California received some early European visitors before there was ever any serious discussion of colonization. Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo is the first person of European extraction to discover and map any part of California. His small Spanish fleet of three ships sailed from the port of Navidad (near Manzanillo) on June 24, 1542. They were carrying enough provisions to last two years. Both the winds and the currents off California make sailing northward extremely challenging and his expedition spent three months fighting both. They sailed into San Diego Bay, about 1200 miles north of Navidad, on September 28th. After troubles of all kinds, including the death of Cabrillo, they finally got as far north as Cape Mendocino on March 1. While accidents were always a problem for early explorers, scurvy often took a terrible toll on ships (as well as on land-based expeditions) during extended trips. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p69-70, 102)

The next European visitor to California was Sir Francis Drake, who was searching for both a route to Asia and Spanish treasure to raid. Just north of the still undiscovered San Francisco Bay Drake spent about half of June and July of 1579 repairing his ship and exploring the local area. Shortly after he completed repairs he and his crew sailed south and looted a Spanish ship near Santa Barbara. Then he sailed west and never returned to California. About this same time Spain

was setting up trade routes between Asia and cities along the Mexican coast and the best routes meant the ships had no contact with Alta California. In 1584 one of these Spanish trading ships, commanded by Francisco Gali took a different route and arrived offshore Alta California near what was likely Cape Mendocino. Other Spanish galleons appear to have done the same, as Pedro de Unamuno anchored his ship in Morro Bay on October 18, 1587. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800* (facsimile edition), p 81-85, 94-96)

English raiders such Sir Francis Drake were of great concern to the Spanish and they began to show a more active interest in mapping the coast of Alta California. While returning from Asia, Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeño explored the coast and in fact ran aground in Drake's Bay on November 30, 1595. Once repairs were made they headed south and the ship's log gives a description of Monterey Bay on December 9, 1595. In 1602 Sebastian Vizcaino ventured out of Acapulco in May of 1601 leading several ships on a trip to map of the coast of Alta California. Fighting the inevitable currents and wind he finally reached San Diego, 1,500 miles north, six months later. After finishing their work in San Diego, they departed for Monterey. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800* (facsimile edition), p 96-97)



Getting to California from San Blas was always a struggle. On this trip the *Santiago* left San Blas on March 16, 1775. Unfavorable currents and winds immediately drove it (and the *Sonora*) about 1600 miles west and 100 miles south. It was not until more than a month later, on April 24, that the *Santiago* was back at the same latitude as San Blas. (John Galvin, 1964, *A Journal of Explorations*, p71)

One of his ships was sent home from Monterey with the sick. The remaining ships continued north. They became separated, but one made it as far north as about today's Oregon border on January 19, 1603. Its diary reports being blown south when they wanted to go north and being



blown north when they wanted to go south. When this ship finally returned to Acapulco on February 23, 1603 there were only five men still alive. But the maps that resulted from this trip were so accurate those they remained in use until almost 1800. When Vizcaino mapped the coast, he had given the name “the Port of San Francisco” to the small bay and anchorage on the lee side of Point Reyes but he did not find San Francisco Bay. This innocent naming made by Vizcaino became a source of significant confusion after the true San Francisco Bay was discovered by Portolà more than 160 years later. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 102-104.

While ships of several nations surely saw and perhaps even ventured ashore in Alta California after Vizcaino, after his trip there are no recorded instances of ships including Alta California as a destination of any sort for more than 160 years. In the mid 1700s the Spanish were feeling increasingly threatened by the activities of other nations in and around Alta California and the threat they posed to a Spanish Alta California. The very aggressive activities of the English corsairs (pirate ships) and the less aggressive but still threatening actions of the Russians in establishing settlements that were drifting further south made the Spanish very uncomfortable. Although clearly an ally of the Spanish in those times, the French claim to an enormous amount of land north and east of Alta California (the Louisiana Purchase area) was also unsettling to Spain. By the 1760s the Spanish were feeling an urgent need to establish settlements in Alta California to counter the influence of other nations and to literally plant the Spanish flag as far north as they could. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 69, 112-115, 117; Sunset Books, 1964, *The California Missions*, p39; Stanley Young, 1988, *The Missions of California*, p5)

The Spanish planned to use a three-fold plan of colonization in Alta California that was very similar to what they had done in Baja California: religious conversion, implemented by the padres and their missions; military presence, as evidenced by the presidios that would be established; and municipal organization, carried out in the pueblos by an appointed mayor and judge. One significant difference was that since the Jesuits had been expelled by Spain in 1767, the Franciscans were now responsible for the religious presence and missions that were a part of the plan. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 113-118; Sunset Books, 1964, *The California Missions*, p35; Stanley Young, 1988, *The Missions of California*, p 5,7)

In 1769 Gaspar de Portolà volunteered to lead an expedition whose goal was to settle San Diego and also to establish a presence at Monterey Bay. At the time he was the governor of Baja and Alta California. Among those participating in the expedition were Captain Fernando Rivera y Moncada with 27 light cavalry; Lt. Pedro Fages with 25 of the famed Catalan volunteers; Fathers Junípero Serra and Juan Crespi; and many others. The plan was that part of the group would go by sea and part by land. The land contingent had two separate groups leaving almost two months apart, the first lead by Rivera and the second by Fages. All three groups were to meet in San Diego on July 1. Not surprisingly, the maritime contingent had a very difficult trip and the crew and passengers had been decimated by the time it reached San Diego. The land expeditions lost many of their Christianized native people to desertion. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 113-124)

The rendezvous was made on July 1. On July 14, after two weeks of recuperation a total of sixty-four men, including Portolà, Rivera, Fages, and Crespi, set off by horseback for the Monterey Bay so glowingly described by Vizcaíno while father Serra stayed in San Diego to found the first mission in Alta California. Portolà's group followed the coast and reached Los Angeles on August 2, Santa Barbara on August 19th, and San Simeon on September 13th. Here the terrain forced them turn inland, away from the coast, and after a number of days of difficult travel the party reached the King City area on September 26. On October 1 they camped near Castroville, about four miles from the ocean. A group led by Crespi went down to the ocean and viewed Monterey Bay but did not recognize it from Vizcaíno's description. In the succeeding days all the members of the expedition came to the same unfortunate conclusion. There were several reasons for this failure including the different seasonal appearance of the countryside; misidentification of the Carmel and the Salinas Rivers; and incorrectly low latitude readings all along the trip, with those readings supporting the idea that they had not yet reached the 37 degrees indicated by Vizcaíno. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 134-154)

The expedition headed further north still looking for Monterey Bay. They reached Santa Cruz on October 18th and on October 31 sighted the Farallon Islands, Point Reyes and the Port of San Francisco. This was a cause for excitement because in addition to Monterey, colonizing the Port of San Francisco was another Spanish goal. But this was not today's San Francisco Bay; instead this was the name Vizcaíno had applied to the anchorage below Point Reyes. Sergeant Ortega and a few members of the expedition were sent to scout a route to the Port of San Francisco, largely to help prove that they truly had missed Monterey Bay. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 154-157)

While the scouting party was gone, some of the men from the main group went out hunting in the hills above Millbrae. On November 2, 1769 from the top of a ridge the hunting party gazed out upon San Francisco Bay, the first time European eyes had ever seen it. The next day Sergeant Ortega and the others returned with the news that a large estuary (the Golden Gate) stood between the explorers and the Port of San Francisco. Portolà and his party headed east across the hills to San Francisco Bay proper and spent several days exploring the area around San Mateo. The year of Portolà's expedition, 1769, is considered by California native peoples to be the time of first contact. Portolà's expedition left San Francisco Bay on November 11 and on November 28 the men were back at their campsite of October 1 near Castroville - still failing to recognize Monterey Bay. After several weeks the very dispirited band departed and arrived back in San Diego on January 24, 1770. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 157-163)

Their reports were carefully reviewed in San Diego. Both Father Serra and Captain Vila, an army officer, concluded that the expedition had been at the Monterey Bay but just failed to realize it. Portolà and Serra decided to return to Monterey and found the mission, which had been the plan assuming the expedition had been successful. Father Serra and others, plus a load of supplies, left San Diego by ship on April 16, 1770, while Portolà's land expedition, which included Lt. Pedro Fages, Father Crespi, and a number of others, departed the next day. Portolà arrived in Monterey first, on May 24th, and the ship arrived a week later. As seemed to always be the case in sailing north along the California coast, the ship was first blown south to 30 degrees (about 200 miles in

the wrong direction) and then north to the Farallon Islands before reaching Monterey. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800* (facsimile edition), p 164-169)

The mission was founded at Carmel and a few weeks later, after putting Lt. Fages in charge, Portolà departed. The news was hurried back to Mexico City, where it was received with tremendous joy. Cathedral bells rang, a solemn mass was said, and a great reception was held to celebrate this large extension of the Spanish Empire. Given this great success in extending Spain's reach, five more missions north of San Diego were then authorized; these would lead to further development of and spread Spanish influence in Alta California. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800* (facsimile edition), p 170-176)

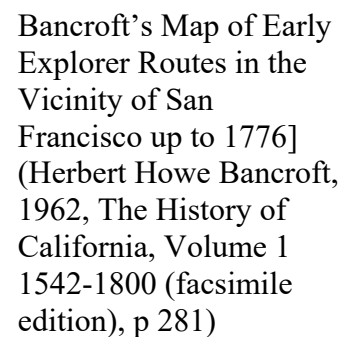
Two of these missions were to be in the San Francisco area but more information was needed about the area. The Viceroy sent orders to Lt. Fages in Monterey directing him to explore by sea or land the Port of San Francisco and to establish a mission to help secure the harbor from foreign interests. Fages was also to establish a route to the Port of San Francisco that would presumably skirt around the estuary that Ortega had identified in 1769. Fages prepared for a departure after the spring rains but in Monterey he had no priest to found the mission and he had no soldiers to establish a presidio. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800* (facsimile edition), p 176, 183-184)

Fages decided to proceed with just a small party of soldiers and left on March 20, 1772; this group of explorers became the first group of European descent to enter and explore Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Given that a primary objective was to find a way around Ortega's estuary so that they could reach the Port of San Francisco by foot, Fages led the party up the east side the bay. On March 27 the party noted the Golden Gate and three islands in the estuary; that evening they camped on the north side of Cerrito Creek. They continued north and east. The next day they continued north and east; Fages described San Pablo Bay as being large enough for "all the armadas of Spain." (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800* (facsimile edition), p 184-185; Janet Newton and Virginia Bennett, 1972, *The Fages-Crespi Expedition of 1772*, p15)

Fages and his men continued east past Antioch, looking for a way to reach the north shore of the estuary. Along the way they encountered friendly natives in several places. Fages soon concluded that they could not reach the Port of San Francisco since he had neither any boats to reach the north shore nor the men and supplies to continue further east searching for a crossing. They decided to abandon their search for a route around the bay and return to Monterey. Father Serra reviewed the trip records presented by Fages and concluded that since it was impossible to found the mission at once, they would wait for further instructions from the Viceroy. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800* (facsimile edition), p 231-232)

In August of 1773 the Viceroy sent orders to Rivera in Monterey to further explore the San Francisco area and then, with the approval of Father Serra, establish a mission. In November enough soldiers had arrived to support the mission the Viceroy requested; Rivera and his party set out on November 23. Among those in the party was Father Palou, who had been very active

The party largely followed the trail Fages had established in the previous year but headed up the west rather than the east side of the San Francisco Bay. They then headed northwest, reached Ocean Beach, and then proceeded north toward the Golden Gate. The weather had been rainy for several days and at this point Rivera decided to return to Monterey, thus postponing any further explorations. The group followed Ortega's route south along the coast and then inland. By the time they returned to Monterey on December 13, Father Palou had documented six sites he thought would be suitable for a mission. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 216-221)



The Viceroy and others continued to express their fervent interest in establishing a mission and colonizing San Francisco. The difficulty and unpredictability of sailing north along the California coast was well known. As they prepared to colonize San Francisco the Spanish realized that transporting the settlers, supplies, and livestock from Mexico to San Francisco by ship was not feasible. Instead they needed establish a dependable overland route that linked Sonora and Mexico City on the south with San Francisco and the other missions far north in Alta California. Captain Juan Bautista de Anza, an Army officer stationed at the presidio at Tubac (near Tucson) received permission from the Viceroy in Mexico City to attempt to establish an overland route to Monterey from Tubac, the northernmost Spanish settlement in Sonora. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800* (facsimile edition), p 216-221.

Anza was to make a first trip to find a feasible route and if the Viceroy was satisfied with Anza's findings then there would be a second expedition to take colonists to San Francisco. Anza's first expedition departed Tubac, Arizona on January 8, 1774. Anza's primary requirements for the route were that it i) was passable by horses, mules, and stock animals and ii) guaranteed water for the settlers and forage (when possible) and water for the animals. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800* (facsimile edition), p 220-223)

Anza's trailblazing venture was a 2000-mile round trip by horseback through uncharted territory, which Anza and his men accomplished in only four months. This included weeks spent wandering in and then recuperating from an unfortunate guess on a route through the desert west of Yuma, at which point they almost abandoned the expedition. Anza further refined the route through the desert on the way back to Yuma from Monterey. Anza's successful return to Tubac marked the establishment of a continuous overland route between Mexico City and Monterey. (Unfortunately, a few years later, the Yuma revolt of 1781 permanently closed the route.). (Greg Bernal-Mendoza Smestad, 2005, *Antepasados, Volume XI: Guide to the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail*, online version: *The Anza Trail Guide*; p 99; Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800* (facsimile edition), p 220-223)

Anza's accomplishment was breathtaking but it would have been impossible without the assistance of the local peoples all along his route. Anza's group largely followed trails that native peoples had been traveling for centuries. The local tribes knew where to find water and often provided food. A Baja California Indian, Sebastian Tarabal, guided the expedition through the most treacherous part of the trip: crossing the desert between Yuma and San Jacinto. Father Garces, the lone Franciscan missionary in the Yuma area, had developed an excellent relationship over the years with Chief Palma of the Quechan (Yuma) tribes. Chief Palma not only made possible the expedition's crossing of the Gila and the Colorado Rivers but he also provided much advice to Anza, made sure all the Quechan peoples cooperated with the expedition, and allowed a number of Anza's less-essential troops to stay in the Quechan camps rather than make the round-trip to California. Chief Palma also had his people build a raft to ferry Anza's expedition back across the Colorado on their first return trip. It took several trips to move all the men and animals across the six hundred yard wide river on the raft; Anza wrote that Palma's people "pushed and towed it across the river ... with such apparent ease and safety as I have ever experienced". Without the cooperation of these and many other local peoples, Anza's first expedition would probably have failed at best. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History*

of California, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 220-224; Vladimir Guerrero, 2006, The Anza Trail and the Settling of California p 73-74)

Although he knew that the Viceroy was waiting for his full report, Anza was not able to report to Mexico City immediately upon his return to Tubac because he had other military duties assigned to him. Anza finally arrived in Mexico City in November of 1774 to deliver his full report to the Viceroy. Upon hearing his report, the Viceroy authorized Anza to return to the San Francisco Bay with 300 settlers to colonize the area; at this point serious planning for the expedition began. Anza's recommendation that Jose Joaquin Moraga become the Lieutenant at the new San Francisco presidio was approved and Father Pedro Font was chosen as the religious leader for the expedition. (Greg Bernal-Mendoza Smestad, 2005, Antepasados, Volume XI: Guide to the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, online version: The Anza Trail Guide p 95; Joan Powell, 2016, Connections between Alamos, Sonora, Juan Bautista de Anza, and the Settling of California; Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 223-224, 257-258)

As the planning for the expedition progressed the Viceroy wrote to Rivera and Serra to tell them that a new mission and presidio was to be established at San Francisco. In order to make all possible preparations for the expected Anza colonists, Rivera was to organize an overland expedition to San Francisco. This expedition was to map the area and build structures for the new mission and colonists. In addition, two ships were to transport supplies and then provide support to the overland expedition once it arrived. On March 16, 1775 four ships set sail from San Blas for points north; the destination of two of the ships was San Francisco. (Joan Powell, 2016, Connections between Alamos, Sonora, Juan Bautista de Anza, and the Settling of California; Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p240-241)

The *Santiago*, under Captain Bruno Heceta, had orders to explore the waters far north of San Francisco and then deliver supplies for the mission and Anza colonists. The San Carlos, commanded by Lt. Juan Bautista de Ayala, was under orders to deliver supplies to Monterey and then sail northward to explore San Francisco Bay. At San Francisco Bay Ayala was i) to see if there was a channel or route between the Bay and "The Port of San Francisco"; ii) to determine if San Francisco Bay it would be a suitable port for supplying the new mission; and iii) to determine if today's Golden Gate, as seen from the east side of San Francisco Bay by Lt. Fages in 1772, was indeed a navigable entrance to San Francisco Bay. Ayala was also to meet the overland expedition led by Rivera and assist mapping the area and building structures for the new mission and colonists. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 241-247)

Ayala entered San Francisco Bay on August 1, 1775. His ship was the first recorded European vessel to enter San Francisco Bay. Ayala spent forty days anchored in today's Ayala Cove at Angel Island waiting for Rivera and his men. Ayala eventually gave up waiting and returned to Monterey but while waiting he and his men prepared extensive maps and surveys of the north and south bays. He arrived back in Monterey on September 24th. Ayala reported that not only was San Francisco Bay an acceptable port, it was one of the best that Spain possessed.

Unfortunately, neither Ayala's diary nor maps has ever been found. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 246-247)

The *Santiago* was heavily loaded with the supplies for the mission at San Francisco and provisions that would last a year. The ship quickly fell behind the San Carlos and fighting the wind and current made little progress for about two weeks. Heceta's ship reached Trinidad (north of Eureka) on June 6, where they formally claimed the land for Spain and then spent time exploring the area and repairing the mast of the San Carlos. They left after two weeks and continued north, not reaching the 49th parallel (today's Canadian border) until August 11th. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 241-243)

On the way back south, Heceta was unable to deliver the supplies he was carrying for the new mission at San Francisco. Despite sighting the Farallon Islands, he was unable to enter San Francisco Bay due to the fog. Heceta continued on to Monterey where he anchored on August 29, 1775 and proceeded to organize a land expedition to San Francisco to deliver the supplies. Heceta's party left for San Francisco on September 14th, following Rivera's 1774 route. They spent several days in San Francisco trying to locate Ayala, who had unfortunately departed several days after Heceta arrived in Monterey. Heceta's party was also unable to find the land expedition, which in fact never departed because a number of Rivera's men were already on an escort mission. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 243-248)

As Anza headed north from Mexico City after his planning sessions with the Viceroy, he and his men began recruiting colonists. They were also collecting animals and supplies for the trip to San Francisco. Anza was very careful about selecting settlers. The trip would be more than a thousand miles through largely unexplored territory and would include crossing inhospitable deserts and high mountains; fording major rivers such as the Colorado; and possibly encountering known hostile native peoples. Anza wanted to recruit strong, healthy, brave families who he felt would best handle the rigors of the trip and their new life. Intentionally or not, Anza brought settlers with significant genetic diversity to be the foundation of a new community at an isolated outpost. The settlers included people of Spanish, local Indian, and African ancestry. (Joan Powell, 2016, *Connections between Alamos, Sonora, Juan Bautista de Anza, and the Settling of California*; Greg Bernal-Mendoza Smestad, 2005, *Antepasados*, Volume XI: Guide to the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, online version: The Anza Trail Guide p 97)

Very few of the men Anza recruited were expected to be simply settlers. Most of them were signed up as military recruits and as such they would be expected to function both as soldiers and settlers, not just as soldiers stationed at a remote outpost. In their roles of soldiers they were to protect the mission and settlements from opportunistic or hostile native peoples and also protect the coast of Alta California from foreign powers. Anza arrived in Culiacan on March 25, 1775 and his most successful recruiting took place in Culiacan and Villa de Sinaloa. At San Felipe de Sinaloa Anza had opened a recruiting office. Anza induced the participation of settlers with transportation at government expense to Alta California; an array of new clothes for each individual, and weapons for the men. Pay (one peso per day) and rations began on the day of

recruitment, in itself a very sizable incentive. A law passed in 1772 allowed Anza to offer land to settlers. Exactly why Anza was able to recruit families without a major effort is speculative but a major regional flooding in 1770, destroyed the capacity of many communities to sustain their preexisting ways of life. The Stoffle-Dobbins document cited has an excellent discussion of possible reasons. (Stoffle, Dobbins, et al, 2011, Analyzing 18th Century Lifeways of Anza Expedition Members in Northwestern Sinaloa & Southwestern Sonora Mexico p 88; Greg Bernal-Mendoza Smestad, 2005, Antepasados, Volume XI: Guide to the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, online version: The Anza Trail Guide p 97-99; Vladimir Guerrero, 2006, The Anza Trail and the Settling of California p 86-88; Pearl Randolph Fibel, 1971, The Peraltas p 2)

In Sinaloa Anza recruited eleven men and their families, including the Castro family. Joaquin Isidro de Castro and his wife Maria Martina Boteller had eight children, making them one of the largest families to join the expedition; the ninth was born before they left Horcasitas. Their son Francisco Antonio Castro, who eventually became the grantee of Rancho San Pablo, made the trip as a toddler. His siblings on the trip included “Ignacio” Clemente (20), Maria “Josefa” (18), Maria “Encarnacion” (12), Maria “Carmen” (10), Jose “Mariano” (9), Jose “Joaquin” (6), Francisco Antonio (2), and Carlos “Antonio” (infant born in Horcasitas, 1775.) (Stoffle, Dobbins, et al, 2011, Analyzing 18th Century Lifeways of Anza Expedition Members in Northwestern Sinaloa & Southwestern Sonora Mexico p 88; Ron Filion-SFgenealogy, undated, California Spanish Genealogy; Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 258)

Los Alamos was the designated place for Anza to receive funds and supplies for the expedition, as well as for him to provide an accounting for the expenses of the expedition. The initial gathering point for the expedition in Mexico was the Presidio de San Miguel de Horcasitas in Sonora, roughly 200 miles north of Los Alamos. Here the settlers, supplies and animals were initially brought together. The main part of the expedition had assembled and they departed for Tubac September 29, 1775. Anza was very focused on establishing a permanent Spanish community in Alta California, so he included in the group the wife and children of Corporal Duarte, who was eventually stationed at the Monterey presidio; they joined the group at Los Alamos. (Vladimir Guerrero, 2006, The Anza Trail and the Settling of California p 83-84; Joan Powell, 2016, Connections between Alamos, Sonora, Juan Bautista de Anza, and the Settling of California; Sunset Books, 1964, The California Missions, p54)

Over Father Font’s objections Anza also allowed Señora Maria Feliciano Arballo, the widow of a recruited soldier who was killed in an Indian attack before the group left Horcasitas, to remain with the expedition. She brought along her two young daughters children. One of the Señora Arballo’s granddaughters, Felicidad Carrillo of the prominent San Diego family of that name, became the second wife of Francisco Castro’s son Victor. Señora Arballo also became the grandmother of two Alta California governors and the great grandmother of the only Hispanic, Romualdo Pacheco, ever elected governor after California became a state. Governor Pacheco went on to become a US Congressman and a US Ambassador. (Vicki L. Ruiz & Virginia Sánchez Korrol, 2006, Latinas in the United States; Linda Covella, 2000, Historical Character: Maria Feliciano Arballo)



The expedition left Horcasitas on September 29, 1775. In addition to the settlers the expedition included cowboys, mule packers, native guides, a military detachment, and three Catholic priests: Father Font, Father Eixarch (Font's assistant), and Father Garces. Father Garces, whose excellent, long-time relations with the Quechan had helped make Anza's first trip a success, was considered a diplomatic envoy and reported directly to the Viceroy, making him an equal to Anza. Father Garces was only going with the expedition as far as Yuma, where he and the Sebastian Tarabal, the native guide from the first trip, were to set off through the Colorado River Basin to assess the local people's readiness to accept Christianity and become Royal subjects. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 258-259, 732-744)

After a long Mass and sermon by Father Font on the 29th, the group tried packing up for the first time and spent most of the day doing so. They left Horcasitas at 4:30 that afternoon and traveled for less than an hour before dismounting and setting up camp. Each night the soldiers built shelters for the settlers consisting of branches and blankets and also set up thirteen tents; one each for Anza, Lieutenant Moraga, and Father Font; one for Fathers Garces and Eixarch; and the remaining nine for the troops. Anza, Moraga, and Father Font were all to have personal assistants but Anza's failure to assign one to Father Font until they left Tubac almost a month later added to the animosity that Father Font already felt toward Anza; this animosity only increased the entire duration of the expedition with every perceived slight that Father Font experienced. (Vladimir Guerrero, 2006, *The Anza Trail and the Settling of California* p 85, 93, 88-89)

Every night some of the troops were on guard duty. This was always important as Anza had learned on his first trip but particularly so for most of the trip in Sonora and Arizona because of the constant threat of attack by the Apaches. In Apache country they also planned their stops so they did not set up camp in an area that was particularly susceptible to a surprise attack by the Apaches. The trip to Tubac took about two weeks. The weather was mild, the terrain was not difficult, and they crossed some known Apache country without incident. (Vladimir Guerrero, 2006, *The Anza Trail and the Settling of California* p 86-88; Pedro Font 2011, *With Anza to California, 1775-1776: The Journal of Pedro Font, O.F.M.* p 83-85)

On October 15, 1775 Anza and the mostly complete expedition arrived in Tubac, Anza's home base. Tubac was the last place where settlers were recruited. Anza already had most of his mules and stock with him and in Tubac he recruited a number of additional colonists, making a total of 240 people who were to settle at "The River of San Francisco," as it was called in those times. Of those 240 settlers there were 27 men, 29 women, and 184 children. Among those he recruited in Tubac were the Berryessa and Peralta families, a descendent of whom Francisco Castro would marry. In the week the expedition spent at Tubac, one of the last Spanish outposts until the mission at San Gabriel, final adjustments and preparations were made. The animals on the expedition included 140 pack mules and 335 head of livestock, including 450 horses. Mules carried all equipment and provisions; there were no wagons because travel by wagon would be slower and in many places there was barely a trail much less a suitable road for wagons. All of the settlers recruited by Anza rode horses that were provided for them. Each family was given provisions that would be adequate for the trip. (Pedro Font 2011, *With Anza to California, 1775-1776: The Journal of Pedro Font, O.F.M.* p 83-85)

The expedition left Tubac on October 23 after a long Mass and sermon by Father Font the previous day. During his sermon he likened the people on the trip to the people of Israel who crossed the Red Sea to reach the Promised Land. He also reminded the settlers and the soldiers to respect all the native peoples they met and to try to avoid injuring the native people if there was a way to do so. When travelling together the expedition was about a mile long and one-quarter mile wide if the countryside could accommodate it. The Anza expedition was enormous for the time and location. The impact of this many people and animals on the local environment as the expedition passed through was equally immense. In the desert there was an advance scouting party that checked the route and ensured that an adequate supply of water was available, in some cases digging or expanding water holes. While crossing the desert the expedition was broken into three separate groups that trailed each other by a day. The expedition was very striking to the native peoples who witnessed it. Most native peoples had experienced only limited contact with other native groups, much less an enormous foreign expedition with more people and animals than they had probably seen in their entire lifetime. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 262-264; Pedro Font 2011, *With Anza to California, 1775–1776: The Journal of Pedro Font, O.F.M.* p 83-86)

The travelers generally followed the Santa Cruz River north to Casa Grande, then turned west to pick up the Gila River. The Expedition then largely followed the Gila River to Yuma. At Yuma, with the considerable help of the Chief Palma and the Yuma Indians, they crossed the Gila and then the Colorado River. From there they traveled south of today's Mexicali. On December 12, after leaving Santa Rosa (a few miles southeast of Ocotillo exit on today's Interstate 8) and before arriving at San Sebastian (about ten miles southeast of today's Ocotillo Wells on state route 78 in the lower Borrego Valley) the already poor weather turned worse on the lead party and snow began to fall heavily. (National Park Service, Anza Interactive Map; Pedro Font 2011, *With Anza to California, 1775–1776: The Journal of Pedro Font, O.F.M.* p 118-147)

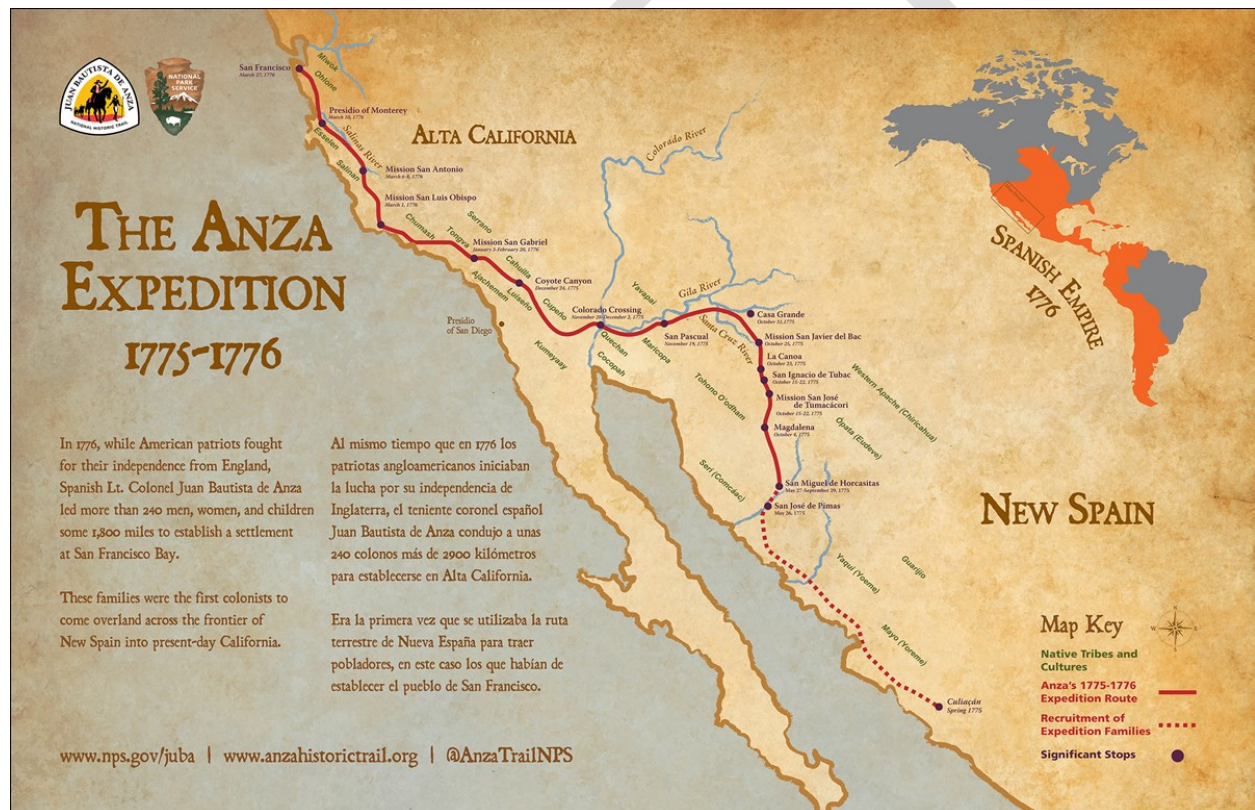
The shivering lead party was stuck for several days in the snowstorm at San Sebastian. The other two parties caught up with the lead party at San Sebastian as the lead party waited out the storm. The trailing parties had an more difficult time because they were travelling in the snow while the lead party was just doing all it could to stay warm. The expedition lost almost thirty animals during the storm. Once the storm passed they then traveled through the site of today's Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and followed Coyote Creek northwest, through the site of today's village of Anza. They crested the mountains about fifteen miles southeast of today's San Jacinto, following today's Bautista Creek into a reach of the San Gabriel Valley. (Vladimir Guerrero, 2006, *The Anza Trail and the Settling of California*, 135-146)

On New Years Day, still three days east of the Mission at San Gabriel, they crossed the Santa Ana River. The water was too high to safely ford the river so they spent a number of hours repairing the bridge they had built during Anza's first expedition. The people all crossed the rickety bridge safely and many of the supplies were also carried across it. The animals then forded the river with very light loads but two were swept away. (Vladimir Guerrero, 2006, *The Anza Trail and the Settling of California*, 147)

That same evening the expedition received news that on November 4th (about the time the expedition was at the junction of the Santa Cruz and Gila Rivers in Arizona) hundreds of Indians

had attacked and burned the mission at San Diego, killing a priest and two others. Tensions had been building between the local peoples and the mission for months, in particular cultural conflicts. (Vladimir Guerrero, 2006, *The Anza Trail and the Settling of California* p 147, 157)

The expedition arrived at the San Gabriel mission on January 4, 1776 and set up camp just outside the mission. At Mission San Gabriel in Father Font observed, “The cows are very fat and they give much and rich milk, with which they [Mission Indian women] make cheese and very good butter.” Since Rivera, the captain of the San Diego presidio, had requested assistance, Anza elected to travel to San Diego to offer aid and to bolster the mission’s outnumbered military detachment. Father Font and thirty soldiers accompanied Anza to San Diego. (Vladimir Guerrero, 2006, *The Anza Trail and the Settling of California* p 148; Edith Buckland Webb, 1952, *Indian Life at the Old Missions*, p 180; Pedro Font 2011, *With Anza to California, 1775–1776: The Journal of Pedro Font, O.F.M.* p 183)



This map is at <https://www.nps.gov/juba/playourvisit/maps.htm>

The trip to San Diego resulted in a seven-week delay in the expedition. This delay caused problems at the San Gabriel mission, which was having a difficult time feeding itself much less most of the Anza party. Because of these problems Anza found it necessary to dispatch a mule train with maize and beans to the mission at San Gabriel before he returned there. Anza and his detachment returned to San Gabriel Anza and with 17 of his recruits and their families they headed northwest and generally followed or paralleled the coastline as far as San Luis Obispo. From here they headed inland, eventually joining up with the upper stretches of the Salinas River. The Senora Arballo married Juan Francisco Lopez, a soldier stationed at San Gabriel. Lt.

Moraga and the remaining 12 recruits and their families stayed in San Gabriel until three muleteer deserters who had taken 25 horses were captured. They then departed San Gabriel and rejoined Anza's group before it arrived in Monterey. (Pedro Font 2011, *With Anza to California, 1775–1776: The Journal of Pedro Font, O.F.M.* p 202-210; Vladimir Guerrero, 2006, *The Anza Trail and the Settling of California* p 161-163, 167-168, 171-174, 176, 178)

Anza led the party into the area of the Royal Presidio of Monterey at four o'clock in the afternoon of March 10, 1776. He wrote, "In all these days of travel, we have had no losses among the people whom I have conducted except the woman mentioned as having died of childbirth on the first night after we set forth from Tubac. Other adversities experienced and related herein are those common to roads less extended and more open..." Font wrote "When we arrived at the presidio everybody was overjoyed, in spite of the fact that we were so wet, for we did not have a dry garment. We were welcomed by three volleys of the artillery, consisting of some small cannons that are there, and the firing of muskets by the soldiers. When the expedition arrived it completely overwhelmed the facilities of the presidio. (Jay W. Sharp, n.d. *The Anza Trail*; Gary S. Breschi, 1996, *Monterey's First Years: The Royal Presidio of San Carlos de Monterey*)

On March 23, 1776 Anza, Moraga, Father Font, ten soldiers and a few others headed north to San Francisco to find the best location for the new presidio, mission, and village. On March 28 Anza reached San Francisco and dedicated a site for the presidio. The group then retraced their steps to the south end of San Francisco Bay so they could explore the east side of the bay. Anza's group travelled up the east side of the bay, passing through El Cerrito on March 31. They continued east past today's Martinez and Antioch and as they began encountering marshy areas they turned southwest to return to Monterey. Owing to the fact they headed more south than west they had a much more difficult return to Monterey than the Fages party did in 1772. They did not arrive back in Monterey until April 8. On April 14, 1776 Anza, Font, and 27 others, including one soldier and his family who decided they wanted to return to Sonora, departed Monterey for Mexico City so Anza could deliver a report to the Viceroy. (Vladimir Guerrero, 2006, *The Anza Trail and the Settling of California* p 190-203; Pedro Font 2011, *With Anza to California, 1775–1776: The Journal of Pedro Font, O.F.M.* p 257-330, 344, 347)

Anza had again performed an enormous feat. There was only one death on the trip, a woman who died in childbirth on the first day out of Tubac. Three children had been born along the way. In his diary on the day he left Monterey Anza wrote: (Pedro Font 2011, *With Anza to California, 1775–1776: The Journal of Pedro Font, O.F.M.* p 86, 333-344)

"This has been the most mournful day for this Presidio ever since its existence, for at the point when I mounted on horseback in the midst of its plaza the people whom I have a lead from their homelands came recalling the good or ill treatment they have experienced from me while they were at my orders; most of them, especially the female sex, being dissolved in tears, and announcing that these were more because of my departure from them than over their own exile. I was laden with their sympathy, embraces and wishes for my good luck, along with praise I do not deserve: in gratitude for which and for the affection I had from all of them ever since the time I recruited them, and in honor of their loyalty - for until yet I have had no hint of a desertion in any of those whom I have brought to stay in this remoteness - I shall be allowed to make this record of persons who with time must become

very useful to the monarchy for whose service they have willingly left their relatives and homeland - which is all that they possessed to abandon.” (Pedro Font 2011, With Anza to California, 1775–1776: The Journal of Pedro Font, O.F.M. p 344)

In addition to this giant footprint, Anza also left a second footprint on Alta California. On his first trip Anza had relied on the native peoples for help and guidance but his small party, with no stock, had a minimal impact on the areas they crossed. His second trip was the complete opposite. The physical impact of 300 people and 1,000 animals on the countryside was devastating in the desert as well as in some fragile areas; the livestock ate much grass and vegetation that would normally be a source of food for the local peoples. Water holes in the desert were depleted and when his men dug new ones it made even less water available in the traditional water holes. As noted earlier, the impact of the expedition passing through an area was a swath a quarter of a mile wide and it left a heavy scar. Since the expedition largely used the historic routes of native peoples, the expedition was of course doing this havoc in the native peoples’ main populated areas, not in backwoods areas the local peoples generally bypassed. (Vladimir Guerrero, 2006, *The Anza Trail and the Settling of California* p xi-xii, 36-39)]

With Anza gone, Moraga set about preparing to establish the new colony at San Francisco. Moraga led the 29 families to San Francisco, departing from Monterey on June 17th. Before he could set up the San Francisco settlement he had to wait for the arrival of the San Carlos and the determination by its crew regarding a proper anchorage. Moraga and the settlers waited and waited and the San Carlos finally arrived on August 18th. After leaving Monterey it had been blown south to San Diego and then north to the Oregon border. The San Francisco presidio was founded on September 17, 1776 and the mission at San Francisco was founded shortly thereafter, on October 9, 1776. (Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1962, *The History of California*, Volume 1 1542-1800 (facsimile edition), p 286-292)

The Spanish and later Mexican settlement of California and the Bay Area occurred much later than the English colonization of the eastern United States. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the Anza expedition took place very early in American history: 1775, one year before the Declaration of Independence was signed. For the Bay Area and Northern California the significance of the Anza expedition’s arrival in the Bay Area in 1776 cannot be overstated. It was the equivalent of the founding of the Jamestown Colony in Virginia. These were the first non-native people in Alta California who were not priests or soldiers; the arrival of the settlers more than doubled the Spanish population of Alta California. (Greg Bernal-Mendoza Smestad, 2005, *Antepasados*, Volume XI: Guide to the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, online version: *The Anza Trail Guide*, p 95; DR 47)

By the end of 1776, the year of the American Revolution, there were seven missions spread out across the length of the “known” part of Alta California: San Francisco (1776), Carmel (1770), San Antonio (1771), San Luis Obispo (1772), San Gabriel (1771), San Juan Capistrano (1776), and San Diego (1769). Yet to come were fourteen more missions. They were founded between 1777 and 1823. (Sunset Books, 1964, *The California Missions* p 19)

While a few of the missions remained simple way posts on the King’s Road between San Francisco and San Diego, significant Spanish communities developed around a number of them.

For the native tribes, the missions and the presidios and villages around them were the main force that obliterated their way of life. For the Spanish, the missions, presidios and villages were the main vehicle for spreading Spanish culture and values in Alta California. At times the settlers and native peoples intermarried, helping to create the unique population in Alta California referred to as the Californios. (Stanley Young, 1988, *The Missions of California*, p 5,7; Sunset Books, 1964, *The California Missions*, p35)

In 1817, Francisco Maria Castro made his first request for a land grant of the roughly 17,000 acres that eventually became Rancho San Pablo. Governor de Sola denied the request because Mission Dolores still considered the land to be an important part of the Mission's holdings. A second request was submitted in 1823 and Governor Arguello approved it conditionally. This led to the first non-native settlement in what is now El Cerrito. In 1820, Governor de Sola granted Rancho San Antonio to Luis Maria Peralta. This enormous grant was 44,626 acres (11 leagues) and ran south from Cerrito Creek to Alameda Creek. But during this period the Catholic Church's many claims on land were becoming a problem and Spain was suffering from a severely over-extended empire. Its global colonies were extremely difficult to support and even more so to control. By 1822, it had been necessary to grant independence to many of its colonies in the new world; in most cases not voluntarily. (George C. Collier, 1977, *Mexican Land Grant Cases in Contra Costa County* p 5-6, 14-15; Pearl Randolph Fibel, 1971, *The Peraltas* p 1, facing 5)

While the causes of the Mexican and American wars of independence had a number of similarities, there was a striking difference between the participants in the two wars. In Mexico, the indigenous peoples had become integrated into Spanish society in a way that never occurred in the United States. Much of this was because of the Jesuit and Franciscan zeal that led to wholesale forced conversions to Christianity of large parts of the native population; all Christians were subjects of the King and they all intermarried. Still, many native peoples were near-slave laborers in Mexican mines and other industries. (History.com, 2010, *Mexican War of Independence begins*)

When the Mexican war of independence took place, the grievances of the native peoples became a significant part of the independence movement. As a result the indigenous peoples were given a stake in the revolutionary movement and permanent rights that were never offered to their counterparts in the United States. The native peoples in Mexico thus became integrated into Mexican Society in manner that never happened to the native peoples on the United States, who always remained outsiders. (History.com, 2010, *Mexican War of Independence begins*)

At the conclusion of its ten-year war for independence with Spain, in 1821 Mexico became independent of Spain. The last Spanish governor, Pablo Vincente de Sola, called for an assembly. The formal news about the victory over Spain travelled slowly and it was not until mid-1822 that the official news arrived in Alta California and the Assembly took place. The assembly included ten delegates: the commandants from eight presidios and the Fathers from two missions. The Governor told them of the success of the war of independence revolution and the assembly thereupon declared Alta California as being dependent solely on the government of Mexico. De Sola was appointed the first Mexican governor. (Mae Fisher Purcell, 1940, *History*



of Contra Costa County p 42-44; Monterey County Historical Society, 2010, Mexican Governors of Alta California; Harold E. Davis, 1965, A Short History of Contra Costa County, p 10)

One way the people of Mexico and the new Mexican government tried to combat the power, influence, and wealth of the Catholic church was by the “secularization” of the missions. Under secularization the government would no longer provide support to the missions and the mission lands were to be returned to the indigenous peoples. Although the secularization process did not proceed very quickly, in some cases the land was returned to the native tribes. But returning the land to the native peoples was in many cases problematic because the missions had spent the last fifty years destroying the language, skills and culture of the native peoples. When given land, few of the native people knew how to properly cultivate and tend it. (Wikipedia, Spanish Missions in California; Sunset Books, 1964, The California Missions, p43; George C. Collier, 1977, Mexican Land Grant Cases in Contra Costa County p 6-7)

Many Californios received land grants. In the case of Rancho San Pablo, the priests at Mission Dolores felt the need to establish a mission at Sonoma because there were few native peoples left to convert to Catholicism in the San Francisco area and because the site of the Mission was a poor location for a self-sustaining community. In addition, Governor Arguello was concerned about foreign influence from the Russian outpost at Fort Ross. It was 80 miles northwest of San Francisco. Accordingly, in 1823 it was decided to move Mission Dolores from San Francisco to Sonoma.. This decision allowed Francisco Castro to apply again for the grant of land that became Rancho San Pablo. This time it was provisionally approved; Governor Figueroa officially approved the grant in 1834 even though Mission Dolores never did move and instead a new mission was created at Sonoma.. (George C. Collier, 1977, Mexican Land Grant Cases in Contra Costa County p 4-6, 12-13; Wikipedia, Mission San Francisco Solano (California))

During the period of Mexican rule in Alta California, 1821 to 1846, there were several different governors. Disputes sometimes arose, mostly regarding whether the capitol should be located at Monterey or San Diego. Occasionally there was actual conflict, but casualties were few and far between. Two of these Mexican governors directly affected our local history. The first was Governor Jose Figueroa, who served as governor from 1833-1835. On June 12, 1834 he formally recognized the 1823 land grant provisionally made to Francisco Maria Castro (the father of Victor Castro). This was the 17, 938 acre Rancho San Pablo. When Victor Castro died in 1900, his married daughter Julia Galpin inherited his remaining very small stake in Rancho San Pablo. (Mae Fisher Purcell, 1940, History of Contra Costa County p 44; George C. Collier, 1977, Mexican Land Grant Cases in Contra Costa County p 15)

The other Mexican governor of local significance was Juan Alvarado. In 1836 he led a revolt and as a result Alta California was granted more autonomy from Mexico; Alvarado became the governor. In 1839, Governor Alvarado married Martina Castro, the sister of Victor Castro. He served as Governor until January of 1843. In 1843 he became the Collector of the Custom House at the state capital in Monterey. After this he and his wife Martina lived for many years at the original family adobe on Church Lane in San Pablo. The Alvarado family was later involved in the famous Emeric vs. Alvarado land case regarding Rancho San Pablo. This case ran for forty years and was not finally settled until 1894. (Mae Fisher Purcell, 1940, History of Contra Costa

County p 44; J.P Munro-Fraser, J.P./W.A. Slocum & Co, 1882, History of Contra Costa County California p 500-501)

In 1846, Alta California became independent from Mexico. This was the year of the Bear Flag Revolt but its initial impact was limited to the northern Bay Area. When the Mexican-American War broke out part of the US Pacific fleet was in port at Mazatlán, Mexico. Several ships left port shortly thereafter and headed north. Commodore Sloan raised the American Flag in Monterey on July 7, 1846. The Americans effectively annexed California by seizing all the significant settlements in Northern California, all without a fight. Some resistance was encountered in Los Angeles but the Americans prevailed after reinforcements arrived in January of 1847.. (Harold E. Davis, 1965, A Short History of Contra Costa County, p 61; Wikipedia, History of California)

American victories later that year in Southern California as part of the Mexican-American War confirmed America's ownership of California. Gold was discovered in California in 1847, during the Mexican American War. Settlers flooded into California from all parts of the world during the Gold Rush, vastly changing the ethnic profile of California. This lessening of the Californio influence continued when a second wave of immigration occurred after the Civil War. This time it was almost exclusively Americans who further diluted the influence of the Californios. When the Mexican-American war ended in 1848, the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo set out a number of provisions regarding the resolution of the war. For the residents of California, many of who had largely Mexican roots or who had come to the state during the Gold Rush, a very important provision of the treaty was that all residents could choose to be citizens of the United States. This included everyone: recent immigrants, Californios, and indigenous peoples. (Wikipedia, History of California)

A provision of great importance to those who held land grants made by either the Spanish or Mexican government was that all existing land grants were considered valid. This meant that the Castro family's claim to Rancho San Pablo was by definition valid; the provision became particularly important when people from around the world began to pour into California during the Gold Rush. During the approval process in Congress, part of this provision was amended to the effect that the burden of proof of ownership and legal title was placed on the grantees. This caused many years of trouble for the holders of the grants. (George C. Collier, 1977, Mexican Land Grants in Contra Costa County, 8-9)

Both inside and outside of California there was very strong sentiment that California should become a state. There had been six military governors of California between 1846 and 1849. On December 20, 1849, all the machinery for state government was ready, with representatives elected and sent to Washington to hasten the passage of the bill making California a state. California was admitted to the Union on September 9, 1850. (Wikipedia, History of California;; Harold E. Davis, 1965, A Short History of Contra Costa County, p 60)

## B. General History of Rancho San Pablo and El Cerrito

For this document the history of the El Cerrito has been divided into six time periods:

- Pre-contact/Huchiun, Ohlone - before 1769



- Spanish/Mission Era 1769-1821
- Mexican/Rancho Era 1822-1846
- Early Settlement/Town Incorporation 1846-1917
- Gradual Development 1918-1941
- Rapid Development during and after WW II Dates 1941 - current times

The West Contra Costa County area had been inhabited for thousands of years by Native Americans before Europeans arrived. Most of the Bay Area was inhabited by the Ohlone tribe. The local group that lived in the Rancho San Pablo area was called the Huchiuns. It was these people who encountered the first Spanish explorers in 1772. However, since Huchiun oral traditions did not allow for the keeping of any kind of historical records (or even speaking of a person who had died), we know very little about the details of the lives of our area's original inhabitants. In early 1772, Pedro Fages, who had been assigned to govern California, set out with Father Juan Crespi and twelve soldiers to explore the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay. On March 27, 1772, they camped on the bank of a creek next to a prominent hill (today's Albany Hill) opposite the Golden Gate. (Nelson, N.C., 4/21/1910, The Ellis Landing Shellmound, University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol. 7 No. 5, p 371; Harold E. Davis, 1965, A Short History of Contra Costa County, p 8; City of Richmond, 1981, Investigation of Cultural Resources within the Richmond Harbor Development Project II-A, p 4.82-4.83; Herbert Howe Bancroft, 1963, The History of California, Volume 1 1542-1800 p 184-187; Malcolm Margolin, 1978, The Ohlone Way p 148-149])



Albany Hill,  
1862  
(ECHS  
Collection,  
Courtesy  
Lewis L.  
Stein)

The shell mounds and other artifacts found over the decades at several sites around El Cerrito indicate that the Huchiun spent extended periods living in what we today call El Cerrito. Unfortunately the arrival of the Fages expedition signaled the end of a way a life for the Huchiuns, who would soon be pushed out and forced into the mission system by the Spanish. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p 13; City of Richmond, 1981, Investigation of Cultural Resources within the Richmond Harbor Development Project II-A, p 4.4, 4.82-4.83; Nelson, N.C., 1909, Shellmounds of the San Francisco Bay Region, p 349)

The Spanish did not bother to record any traditions and history of the Huchiuns since the Spanish viewed the indigenous people of the Bay Area as souls who they could turn into “people of reason” (i.e. Spanish Catholics). What is known is that local native people were very friendly and caring towards their Spanish visitors. How they related to the Spanish is described in the local Huchiun interactions with priests and soldiers that were recorded by the Spanish; chapter 4 of the Investigational of Cultural Resources document includes a number of these interactions. The native people were in awe of the Spanish religious liturgy: songs, incense, procedures and such; in fact they could sing back the songs the Catholic priests sang to them after hearing them only one time. The Spanish declined to sing back the Huchiun songs when the Indians responded. The native people were awestruck by the guns and cannons of the. (Harold E. Davis, 1965, *A Short History of Contra Costa County*, p 8; Stanley Young, 1988, *The Missions of California*, p5-7; Sunset Books, 1964, *The California Missions*, p55; Joshua Paddison, 1999, *A World Transformed: Firsthand Accounts of California before the Gold Rush*, 27-46; Randall Milliken, 1995, *A Time of Little Choice*, p 31; City of Richmond, 1981, *Investigation of Cultural Resources within the Richmond Harbor Development Project II-A*, p 4.2)

The few images we have of the Huchiun people are drawings made by Louis Choris, the naturalist on the Russian vessel the *Rurik*, which visited San Francisco in 1816 during its voyage of exploration around the world. There is no evidence of any other images of these people. The Franciscan monks at Mission Dolores did record detailed information about each person baptized. Much of the information we have about the Huchiuns comes not so much from directly-recorded history as from i) Historical documents from the Spanish and Mexican periods; ii) the diaries of a Spanish explorers and visiting world travelers; iii) the reports of Franciscan priests and Spanish military personnel; iv) the registers of the baptisms, marriages, and deaths of native people that were kept at each of the missions in the Bay Area; v) information passed on in later years by younger members of the tribe who no longer observed the custom of never discussing those who had died; and vi) analysis of artifacts and human material found in shell mounds. (Joshua Paddison, 1999, *A World Transformed: Firsthand Accounts of California before the Gold Rush*, p 137-151; City of Richmond, 1981, *Investigation of Cultural Resources within the Richmond Harbor Development Project II-A*, p 4.2; National Park Service, 2009, *Golden Gate National Recreation Area Cultural Resources Study*, p 9; Malcolm Margolin, 1978, *The Ohlone Way* p 148-149]

Captain Ayala of the *San Carlos*, as well as the chaplain, Vicente de Santa Maria, wrote about their initial encounters with the original inhabitants of the San Francisco area when they entered San Francisco Bay on August 1, 1775:

Ayala reported: “From the shore's edge, some Indians begged us with the heartiest of shouts and gesticulations to come ashore. Accordingly I sent over to them in the longboat the reverend father chaplain (Vicente de Santa Maria), the first sailing master, and some men under arms, with positive orders not to offend the Indians but to please them, taking them a generous amount of earrings and glass beads. I charged our men to be discreetly on their guard, keeping the longboat ready to pull out if any quarrelling started, and I told the sailing master to leave four men in it under arms.” (John Simkin, 1997, *Vincente de Santa Maria*)

Vicente de Santa Maria recorded in his journal: “Before the longboat had gone a quarter of a league it came across a rancheria of heathen who, seeing that our people were close by, left

their huts and stood scattered at the shore's edge. They were not dumfounded (though naturally apprehensive at sight of people strange to them); rather, one of them, raising his voice, began with much gesticulation to make a long speech in his language, so outlandish that none of it could be understood. At the same time, they were making signs for the longboat to come near, giving assurance of peace by throwing their arrows to the ground and coming in front of them to show their innocence of treacherous dissimulation. But if danger showed not its face to the officer, he saw at least the shadow of risk to his men and did not wish to approach any nearer than was necessary for the discharge of his duty. The Indians, guessing that our men were somewhat suspicious, tried at once to make their intentions clear. They took a rod decorated with feathers and with it made signs to our men that they wished to make them a present of it; but since this met with no success they decided on a better plan, which was to draw back, all of them, and leave the gift stuck in the sand of the shore near its margin. The longboat turned back for the ship, leaving the gift untaken and reporting that the place was not as it had been thought. (John Simkin, 1997, *Vincente de Santa Maria*)

“The following day the longboat returned with their own gifts. Vicente de Santa Maria recorded in his journal: “Our captain, touched by this indication of regard, showed on receiving it with respect a just acknowledgement of its worth. Therefore it was decided that very early the next morning the longboat should return the basket in which the Indians had given us their pinole, and in it trinkets made with bits of glass, earrings, and glass beads, our captain having first directed the officer in charge of the longboat to replace the stake and return the basket to the same place as before, very quietly, and at once return to the ship. This was done as ordered, and although there were some heathen nearby, our men pretended not to have taken notice of their presence. These Indians acted almost wonderstruck at so prompt and special a return of favours, marveling at the sight of the things sent from the ship.” The longboat returned and this time it was the Native Americans (probably Costanoans) who ran away: “The armed Indians, on seeing our men close by, hid themselves (perhaps in fear) among what oak trees they could find that would give them cover... Having reached the shore, he came upon a collection of things which, though to our notion crude, was of high value to those unfortunates, for otherwise they would not have chosen it as the best offering of their friendly generosity. This was a basketful of pinole (who knows of what seed?), some bunches of strings of woven hair, some of flat strips of tule, rather like aprons, and a sort of hairnet for the head, made of their hair, in design and shape best described as like a horse's girth, though neater and decorated at intervals with very small white snail shells. All this was near a stake driven into the sand. Limited though it was, we did not hold this unexpected friendly gift of little value; nor would it have been seemly in us to be contemptuous of a present that showed the good will of those who humbly offered it.” (John Simkin, 1997, *Vincente de Santa Maria*)

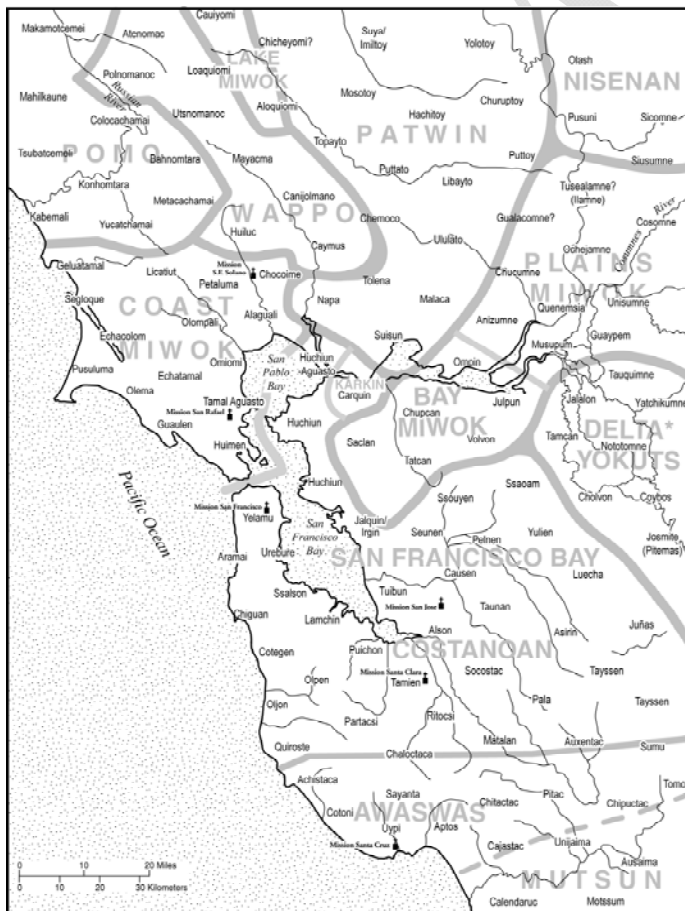
Ayala also noted:

“The heathen all round this harbour are always so friendly and so docile that I had Indians aboard several times with great pleasure, and the crew as often visited them on land. In fact, from the first day to the last they were so constant in their behaviour that it behove me to make them presents of earrings, glass beads, and pilot bread, which last they learned to ask for in our language clearly.” (John Simkin, 1997, *Vincente de Santa Maria*)



[Photo of the Shell mound at Ellis Landing (Nelson, N.C., 4/21/1910, The Ellis Landing Shellmound, University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol. 7 No. 5, p ?????????)]

The word Huchiun was rendered a number of ways in Spanish over time. Among the variations used were Xucyan, Cuchillon, Juchum, Juchiun, and Juchillon. The phrase “Los Cuchigunes” was used to refer to both the people and the land that they inhabited. This phrase has also been



Map of Native Local Tribes and Language Areas around San Francisco Bay at the Time of Spanish Entry, (California Archeological Consultants, Inc., 1981, Investigation of Cultural Resources within the Richmond Harbor Development Project II-A, p 4.88)

[ rendered as “Los Huchiunes,” and “Los Juchiunes,” and in other ways by various authors over time. (City of Richmond, 1981, Investigation of Cultural Resources within the Richmond Harbor Development Project II-A, p 4.3, 4.50\; Nelson, N.C., 4/21/1910, The Ellis Landing Shellmound, University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol. 7 No. 5, p 406)



This map shows three different spelling of the Huchiun name and the location of Rancho Los Cuchigunes, which became Rancho San Pablo (need source????????)

[This map shows three different spelling of the Huchiun name and the location of Rancho Los Cuchigunes (Rancho San Pablo)]

The Huchiuns largely disappeared as a recognizable band after 1800. Some were baptized as early as 1777, but the first large groups were not baptized until 1794. Many left the Mission during a major epidemic in 1795 but those who left at this time, as well as any remaining unbaptized individuals, returned to the Mission over the next several years. All were eventually baptized after 1800. (City of Richmond, 1981, Investigation of Cultural Resources within the Richmond Harbor Development Project II-A, p 4)

While the remaining Huchiuns were assimilated into the larger population of the San Francisco area, in more recent times the local descendants of Bay Area Ohlones have been working to revitalize the Ohlone culture and language. In the East Bay a local group of Ohlones has reorganized under the name Muwekma, a tribal name that was administratively declared extinct at the turn of the twentieth century despite the fact that members of the Muwekma tribe still survived. The Muwekma are working to revitalize the Chochenyo language of their ancestors by teaching it and documenting it. They have also written several children's books in the Chochenyo language. (Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay, undated, Language Revitalization; City of Richmond, 1981, Investigation of Cultural Resources within the Richmond Harbor Development Project II-A, p 4.53)

Francisco Castro, the original grantee of Rancho San Pablo, was two years old when the Anza expedition arrived in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1776. Francisco grew up at Mission Dolores and eventually became a soldier and was assigned to various duties in the San Jose and San Francisco areas in the thirty years he served Spain as an officer in the military. His most important official roles were serving as the Alcalde (mayor and justice of the peace) of San Jose and serving as the Majordomo of Mission Dolores in San Francisco. (Ron Filion-SFgenealogy, undated, California Spanish Genealogy)

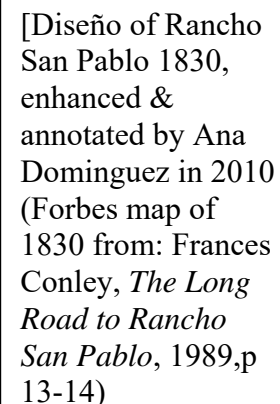
The land that was to become Rancho San Pablo (and later El Cerrito) was used as farmland and pastureland by the Franciscans at Mission Dolores in San Francisco. While under control of the Franciscans, the area was called Rancho San Ysidro de Los Juchiunes. Soldiers at the Mission were caretakers at Rancho San Ysidro and the soldiers in San Francisco made many hunting and fishing trips there. This is how Francisco Castro became acquainted with the area. In those days the entire East Bay was referred to as Contra Costa: the “opposite coast.” When California became a state in 1850, Contra Costa County originally included the northern half of Alameda County. In 1853, Alameda County was carved out of parts of Contra Costa and Santa Clara counties; what is now El Cerrito remained in Contra Costa County, becoming the southernmost city in the western section of Contra Costa County. (City of Richmond, 1981, Investigation of Cultural Resources within the Richmond Harbor Development Project II-A, p 4.94-4.96; Owen C. Coy, 1973. California County Boundaries, p 5, 91-92; Randall Milliken, 1995, A Time of Little Choice, p243; Albany Police & Fire Civil Service Club, 1947, The Story of Albany, p5; Pearl Randolph Fibel, 1971, The Peraltas, p2)

It was a common practice in the era of Spanish rule for respected men who served in the military to apply for and be granted a significant amount of land. Francisco Castro took possession of a large tract of land in 1814 which was described as being situated on the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay and which was known as Los Cuchigunes. The home he built with the help of the local Indians was described as a "walled house", having a stone fence. He planted a garden with many fruit trees and a vineyard, built a mill and sowed wheat, corn, and beans. At one point he was reported to have 600 horned cattle and 500 horses. He petitioned Governor Pablo Vincent de Sola for a land grant in 1817, but learned that the land was still claimed by the priests at Mission Dolores in San Francisco. (George C. Collier, 1983, A Narrative History of Contra Costa County, p 50-52, 56)

Francisco applied again to the Provincial Assembly on April 15th 1823. In his letter to the Assembly, he asked that he be granted and given ownership and possession of three square leagues in the place called Los Cuchigunes or ‘San Pablo’...” (Three square leagues is a bit more than 17,000 acres.) This amount of land was considered the proper size for a ranch and was not considered overly large. The priest at Mission Dolores at the time, Father Altimira, supported the grant, calling the place Los Cuchiyunes or San Pablo and noting that the Mission had formerly used it. (Wikipedia, Mission San Francisco Solano (California); Mae Fisher Purcell, 1940, History of Contra Costa County p 135)

Description in English of the boundaries of Rancho San Pablo, (El Cerrito Historical Society, The Forge, January 2008)

[Diseño of Rancho San Pablo 1830, enhanced & annotated by Ana Dominguez in 2010]  
Francisco Castro and his family took up residence at Rancho San Pablo shortly after submitting this grant request despite the fact that the grant was not officially conferred to the family until 1834, eleven years later and after much effort and cajoling on the part of the Castro family. Francisco had died in 1831 so the property was split 50-50 between his wife Gabriella Berryessa Castro and his eleven children, all as an undivided interest. The undivided interest meant that each child owned a 1/22nd interest in every square inch of the Rancho and his wife Gabriella owned an 11/22 interest in every square inch of the Rancho. Three of the children died before Gabriella, so under Mexican law their property reverted to their mother. (George C. Collier, 1977, Mexican Land Grants in Contra Costa County, MLGCCC 15-18; Mae Fisher Purcell, 1940, History of Contra Costa County, p 137-138)



The Castro heirs filed a court action in 1852 and attempted to break the will that Don Francisco had made 20 years previously. Court action followed court action and the title to the property became so tangled that none of the heirs actually knew what they owned. To further complicate the matter the various heirs periodically sold portions of their holdings to settlers and



speculators. After 42 years of litigation , the Final Decree in Partition was handed down by Judge J.C.B. Hebbard on March 3, 1894. The decree, which was 750 pages long, resolved the questions of ownership in Rancho San Pablo. The Final Decree dictated where the land owned by each of the valid titleholders was located. It also included a list of those who owned land in Rancho San Pablo and how much land each of them owned. That list is found in Appendix F. (George C. Collier, 1977, Mexican Land Grants in Contra Costa County, 15-18; Mae Fisher Purcell, 1940, History of Contra Costa County p 137-138; Joseph C. Whitnah, 1944, A History of Richmond, California, p20-25.



Victor Castro in front of his adobe in 1895 (ECHS collection)

Victor Castro built up his rancho and his reputation in a short amount of time. He built a wharf at Point Isabel and ran a ferry service between there and Yerba Buena (San Francisco.) as well as other places. He raised fruit and grain on his rancho as well as cattle. He sold and traded much of what he raised on his Rancho: for example, he traded meat and vegetables from his Rancho to visiting sailing ships in return for the boats that he used. Travelers could buy supplies from him on their way to the goldfields or elsewhere. In his younger days Victor Castro and his brother are said to have treated the local Native Americans poorly. General Vallejo disciplined the two brothers for this and they changed their behavior. In 1843, Victor Castro was appointed a juez de campo, or Justice of the Peace. He was also a member of the Original Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County after California became a State.(City of Richmond, 1981, Investigation of Cultural Resources within the Richmond Harbor Development Project II-A, p 5.3; Lee Fridell, 1954, The Story of Richmond, 21, 29-30; Mae Fisher Purcell, 1940, History of Contra Costa County p 275; Robert Brady, 2008, Victor Castro: Stranger in a Familiar Land, p 9; Joshua Paddison, 1999, A World Transformed: Firsthand Accounts of California before the Gold Rush, p205-209)



The Castro Adobe, built in 1839 and subsequently remodeled several times, was the first permanent European structure in El Cerrito. It was designed in the “Monterey Style” that was popular at the time. What little is known about the inside of the Castro Adobe was written by Captain William Phelps. He sailed into San Francisco Bay on the ship *Alert* in the winter of 1841 and spent a night at the Castro Adobe. Captain Phelps described the three-room home as having “small rooms”. In the middle room there was a pine table with five or six chairs. A wooden clock stood in one corner of the room and an open closet stood in another corner. The closet held a collection of utensils, empty bottles and other crockery. A room on one end of the home was a storage area. The boat crew was quartered with the Indians in one room, where with the many sides of leather, hides and deer skins made a comfortable bed. (El Cerrito Patch, 5/7/2013, New Glimpse of El Cerrito's First Non-Indian settler; William Dane Phelps, 1983, *Alta California, 1840-1842: the Journal and Observations of William Dane Phelps*, p247-248)

Victor Castro was known as a gracious host. The Castro Adobe was a gathering place for many of the notables who visited California during that period. Bret Harte stayed at the Adobe many times. His play *Two Men of Sandy Bar* describes the Adobe and uses the names from Victor's family. Victor Castro and many of the other Californios were said to have been hospitable in the extreme. (Earl L. Scarbrough, 1975, *The Adobe at Cerrito Creek*, p3-4; William Dane Phelps, 1983, *Alta California, 1840-1842: the Journal and Observations of William Dane Phelps*, 247)



The Castro Adobe  
ca 1890 (Courtesy  
Oakland Public  
Library)

Census records from 1860 show that a family of six Native Americans was living at the Castro Adobe. After the Missions closed the Native Americans who had been forced to live at the missions had to relocate. Unfortunately, most no longer had any land or any specialized skills they could use to support themselves or their families. As a result, many worked as tenders, vaqueros and laborers for room and board. At times the Castros had hundreds of Indians working for them. In 1853 a government agent reported on the impoverished conditions under which some

Indians were living on Rancho San Pablo. However, there is no indication as to whether this was on property owned by the Castros or someone else. (Sunset Books, 1964, The California Missions, p43; Wikipedia, Mission San Francisco Solano (California); City of Richmond, 1981, Investigation of Cultural Resources within the Richmond Harbor Development Project 11-A, p4.96)



A view of the Castro Adobe, showing the fountain in on the east side and the main buildings of the Adobe (ECHS Collection)

El Cerrito was not always covered with trees in the manner it is today. In fact, as seen in the following photo, it was an almost treeless expanse, very similar to the open land east of Interstate 80 between the California Street overcrossing in Rodeo and the Cummings Skyway exit in Crockett. Grassland was the dominant vegetation type in the valleys and the west-facing slopes of the hills. Tall stand of bunchgrass, some five feet high, covered the area west of the hills. The main concentrations of trees (mostly oak, bay, sycamore, cottonwood, alders, and willow) were in the folds of the hills and flatlands where creeks ran. Most of the area west of San Pablo Avenue, between Cerrito Creek and Central Avenue was wetlands. The County Roads Superintendent Department dumped rock here in the early days to stabilize the roadbed of San Pablo Avenue in this area. El Cerrito was part of a vast grassland. The early explorers mentioned what were likely iris, lily, and salvia. First the Spanish and later the American cultures began changing the local flora. This vegetation is illustrated in the Richard Partington painting below as well as in many early photographs. (William C. Clarke, 1959, The Vegetative Cover of the San Francisco Bay Region in the Early Spanish Period, p150-161, 166-167, 198-199; Evan Griffins, 1938, Early History of Richmond, p7; American Revolution Bicentennial Committee of Contra

Costa County, 1976, *The Anza Exploration of the East Bay 1776*, p11; Malcolm Margolin, 1978, *The Ohlone Way*, p7; Randall Milliken, 1995, *A Time of Little Choice*, p 14)



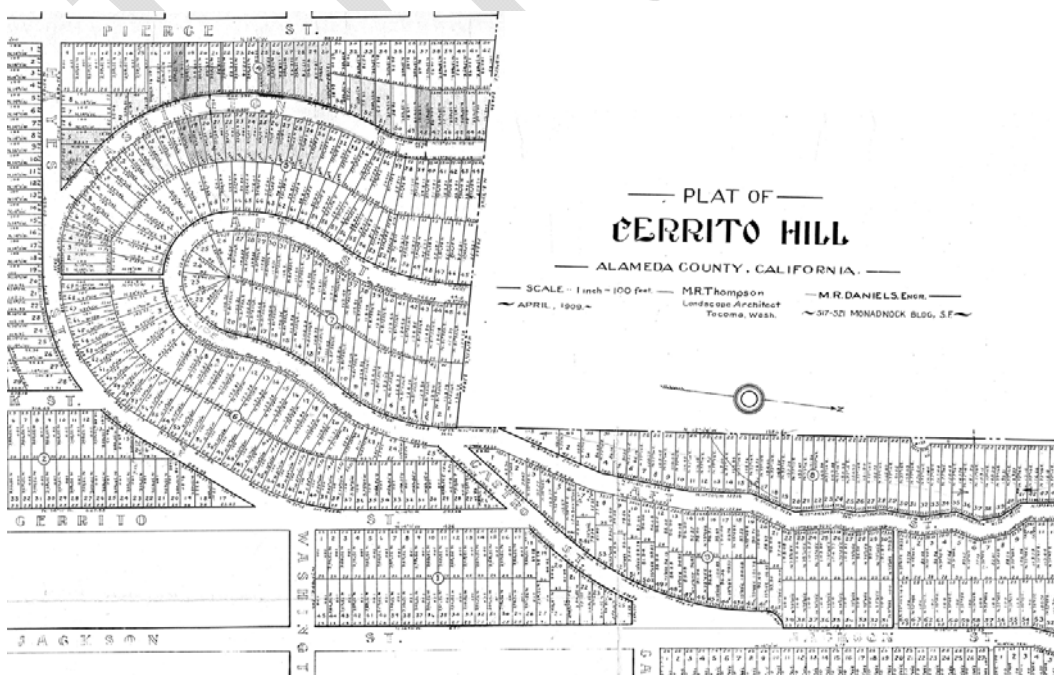
A view from Albany Hill about 1910, Note that there are very few trees except on the west-facing slopes where creeks ran. (ECHS Collection)

The name Cerrito was in common use in the area before 1900. Salley & paatera's book *History of California Post Offices* notes on page 64 that the name Cerrito de San Antonio was in use in 1820. William Heath Davis refers to "Cerritos" in writings before 1850. The name "Cerrito Creek" appears on the 1895 USGS topographic map of the area. Victor Castro named one of the streets in his 1896 New Berkeley subdivision "Cerrito Street" (Cougar Field was later built on top of the part of this subdivision that included Cerrito Street). A large subdivision on today's Albany Hill was named "Cerrito Hill" when laid out in 1909 and the lower part of Kensington's Coventry Road was named "Cerrito Avenue" when it was first laid out in 1911. (United States Geological Service, 1895, San Francisco Quadrangle Topographical Map; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, *Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito, 1896-02 & 1911-07*; City of Albany, 1909, *Cerrito Hill Tract Map*; Harold E. Salley & Edward L. Patera, 1991, *History of California Post Offices*, 2nd Edition, p64)



[Richard Partington's 1898 painting of El Cerrito and Albany Hill from ?????????? Rock near Thousand Oaks & ddddd]

When the City of Albany incorporated in 1908 its name was "Ocean View". This name caused considerable confusion because there was a city with the same name near Half Moon Bay. A petition presented to the City Council on 10/13/1908 proposed changing the name of "Ocean View" to "El Cerrito." In October of 1909 an election was held and the name of the city was changed to Albany. Today's Albany Hill was called Cerrito Hill for many years; in fact it was not until 1937 that the City of Albany decided that "Albany Hill" was a more appropriate name for the large promontory in the city's northwest corner. On April 12th of that year the Albany City Council unanimously approved Resolution 633 changing the hill's official name to "Albany Hill". [Albany Police & Fire Civil Service Club, 1947, The Story of Albany, p25)



When the City of Albany incorporated in 1908 it selected the name "Ocean View". This name caused considerable confusion because there was a city with the same name near Half Moon Bay. A petition presented to the City Council on 10/13/1908 proposed changing the name of "Ocean View" to "El Cerrito." In October of 1909 an election was held and the name of the city was changed to Albany. Today's Albany Hill was called Cerrito Hill for many years; in fact it was not until 1937 that the City of Albany decided that "Albany Hill" was a more appropriate name for the large promontory in the city's northwest corner. On April 12th of that year the Albany City Council unanimously approved Resolution 633 changing the hill's official name to "Albany Hill". [SOA p25]

RESOLUTION No. 633 and

RESOLUTION CHANGING NAME OF EL CERRITO HILL TO ALBANY HILL

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ALBANY DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

That the name of that certain elevated portion or land, or hill, located in the western portion of the city of Albany now commonly known and designated by the name of "EL CERRITO HILL" be and the same is hereby changed to "ALBANY HILL" and the same shall hereafter be known and designated by the name of ALBANY HILL.

Passed and approved by the following vote this 12th day of April 1937.

Ayes Councilman Batchelder, Hanahan, Hays, Mowday and Mayor Yenne.  
Noes None. Absent none

Dated this 12th day of April 1937.

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

1935 Resolution of the City of Albany changing the name "El Cerrito Hill" to "Albany Hill" (Courtesy Albany City Clerk)

Predecessor Communities to El Cerrito



People commonly think of El Cerrito as having been formed from the combination of two unincorporated communities: Rust and Stege Junction. But there were actually at least eleven documented communities or names used in the area prior to incorporation: Gallagher, Gills, Ingersoll-County Line, Los Cuchigunes, McAvoy's, Rust, Schmidville, Schindler, Stege, Stege Junction, and Thornton. Rust and Schmidville both had post offices although the years they were open did not overlap. The name of the Rust post office was changed to El Cerrito on August 16, 1916. These ten community names had origins as described below ( Harold E. Salley & Edward L. Patera, 1991, History of California Post Offices, 2nd Edition, p64)

**Gallagher:** One area was named for the Right Reverend Father Gallagher, a very influential priest in San Francisco. This area consisted of property on the north side of Fairmount Avenue that faced San Pablo Avenue and extended eastward to include part of what is now Sunset View Cemetery. (Evan Griffins, 1938, Early History of Richmond, p2)

**Gills:** The California & Nevada Railroad "Gills" station was about 1.4 miles north of the railroad's McAvoy's station. James Gill owned property north of Fink Lane, and the west side of that property still marks the western boundary of El Cerrito at Cutting and S. 52nd. Relatives later built a large mansion that stood at the end of Bates Drive. (Referees appointed by the Supreme Court of California re: Rancho San Pablo Land Case, 1894, Rancho San Pablo Map; The California and Nevada Railroad, 1891, Timetable effective November 1, 1891)

| 36 CALIFORNIA AND NEVADA RAILROAD.                           |       |       |      |      |                                 |       |       |      |  |
|--|-------|-------|------|------|---------------------------------|-------|-------|------|--|
| No. 1 PACIFIC CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENT CO., LESSEE. 1891 |       |       |      |      |                                 |       |       |      |  |
| From Emery.  |       |       |      |      | November 1, 1891.               |       |       |      |  |
|  |       |       |      |      | B--Daily, Sundays excepted.     |       |       |      |  |
|  |       |       |      |      | C--Sundays only.                |       |       |      |  |
| Pass.  | Pass. | Pass. |      |      | Pass.                           | Pass. | Pass. |      |  |
| C  | C     | B     |      | Mis. | B                               | C     | C     |      |  |
| P. M.  | A. M. | P. M. |      |      | P. M.                           | A. M. | P. M. |      |  |
| 4 30   | 9 00  | 4 00  | 0    |      | Lv. San Francisco.....Ar        | 9 55  | 9 55  | 5 25 |  |
| 5 05   | 9 35  | 4 35  | 8.0  |      | .....Emery.....                 | 9 05  | 9 05  | 4 35 |  |
| 5 10   | 9 40  | 4 40  | 8.5  |      | .....40th St. Oakland.....      | 9 00  | 9 00  | 4 32 |  |
| 5 15   | 9 45  | 4 45  | 8.8  |      | .....N. R. Crossing.....        | 8 55  | 8 54  | 4 27 |  |
| 5 19   | 9 49  | 4 49  | 9.2  |      | .....Lorin.....                 | 8 51  | 8 50  | 4 22 |  |
| 5 23   | 9 53  | 4 53  | 9.7  |      | .....Dwight Way (Berkeley)..... | 8 47  | 8 46  | 4 18 |  |
| 5 27   | 9 57  | 4 57  | 11.4 |      | .....University Ave.....        | 8 43  | 8 42  | 4 14 |  |
| 5 30   | 10 00 | 5 00  | 11.8 |      | .....Peralta Park.....          | 8 40  | 8 39  | 4 10 |  |
| 5 37   | 10 07 | 5 07  | 14.8 |      | .....McAvoy's.....              | 8 33  | 8 32  | 4 07 |  |
| 5 46   | 10 16 | 5 16  | 16.2 |      | .....Gills.....                 | 8 24  | 8 23  | 4 00 |  |
| 5 54   | 10 24 | 5 24  | 18.5 |      | .....San Pablo.....             | 8 16  | 8 15  | 3 51 |  |
| 6 05   | 10 35 | 5 35  | 20.1 |      | .....Mays.....                  | 7 59  | 7 58  | 3 34 |  |
| 6 14   | 10 44 | 5 44  | 21.5 |      | .....Oak Grove.....             | 7 55  | 7 54  | 3 30 |  |
| 6 18   | 10 48 | 5 48  | 22.5 |      | .....Cresceto.....              | 7 52  | 7 51  | 3 27 |  |
| 6 21   | 10 51 | 5 51  | 23.4 |      | .....Frenchmans.....            | 7 47  | 7 46  | 3 22 |  |
| 6 26   | 10 56 | 5 56  | 24.2 |      | .....Warnecks.....              | 7 42  | 7 42  | 3 17 |  |
| 6 31   | 11 01 | 6 01  | 25.0 |      | .....Fargos.....                | 7 38  | 7 38  | 3 13 |  |
| 6 35   | 11 05 | 6 05  | 26.1 |      | .....Garcias.....               | 7 34  | 7 34  | 3 09 |  |
| 6 39   | 11 09 | 6 09  | 27.3 |      | .....Orinda Park.....           | 7 30  | 7 30  | 3 05 |  |
| 6 43   | 11 13 | 6 13  | 28.9 |      | .....De Laveaga.....            | 7 25  | 7 25  | 3 00 |  |
| 6 45   | 11 18 | 6 18  | 30.4 |      | Ar. Bryant.....Lv               |       |       |      |  |

The California and Nevada Railroad makes close connections at Emery Station with Berkeley Local Trains to and from San Francisco.  
 Passengers from San Francisco will, on week days, take the 4.00 o'clock P. M. Boat, and on Sunday the 9.00 o'clock A. M. and 4.30 P. M. Boats at foot of Market Street, San Francisco, to make connections with California and Nevada Railroad trains.  
 Stage to Walnut Creek, 10 miles, connects with all trains to Orinda Park.  
 P. D. McCARTY, F. & P. Agent, Chronicle Building, San Francisco. A. M. BEAL, Superintendent, 40th Street and San Pablo Avenue, Oakland, Cal.

California and Nevada Railroad, 1891, Timetable effective November 1, 1891 (courtesy Louis L Stein)

**Ingersoll-County Line:** The area along San Pablo Avenue between Cerrito Creek and Fairmount Avenue was known as County Line, Mr. Ingersoll was very well-liked conductor on the San Pablo Avenue streetcar line. The combination of the two names was used to refer to the streetcar station in this area and by default became the name used to refer to the adjacent community. The station had a covered platform that allowed passengers to stay dry while waiting for or transferring between streetcars. The Ingersoll part of the name fell out of use when streetcar service ended. (Erle C. Hanson, 1961, The East Shore and Suburban Railway, pp 9-10)

***Los Cuchigunes:*** This is a common way (including the Spanish article “Los”) which the Spanish wrote “Huchiun”, the name the local Indians used to refer to themselves. In this case, the name refers to the area where the Huchiuns lived. (City of Richmond, 1981, Investigation of Cultural Resources within the Richmond Harbor Development Project II-A, Map 4.3)

***McAvoy:*** The California & Nevada Railroad “McAvoy” station was about 3 miles north of University Avenue. This was almost exactly where today’s El Cerrito Plaza BART station is located. Mrs. McAvoy was a sister of Father Gallagher (above). (Evan Griffins, 1938, Early History of Richmond, p2)

***Rust:*** Named for William F. Rust, a journeyman blacksmith who came to America from Hanover, Germany in 1877. The community of Rust was centered on San Pablo Avenue between Central Avenue and the county line. In 1883, Mr. Rust settled in the city of San Pablo. After briefly returning home to his native Germany, Rust built a blacksmith shop on the west side of San Pablo Avenue, between today’s Central and Fairmount Avenues in what is now El Cerrito. Mr. Rust later opened a store, and in 1909, a post office was established in his store and named “Rust” after him. The name Rust supplanted both Schindler and Ingersoll/County Line, neither of which had a post office associated with them. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p p29, 3;; Harold E. Salley & Edward L. Patera, 1991, History of California Post Offices, 2nd Edition, p184)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
VITAL STATISTICS

1. PLACE OF BIRTH. Dist. No. \_\_\_\_\_ LOCAL REGISTERED No. 176  
County of Contra Costa **STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH**  
City or \_\_\_\_\_  
Rural Registration District Schmittville No. \_\_\_\_\_

2. FULL NAME OF CHILD Emil Isaac Eckmann (If child is not yet named, supplemental report as directed)

3. Sex Male 4. Twin, triplet, or other \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Number, in order of birth \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Premature \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Date of birth (month, day, year) Sept. 5, 1916

8. Full name FATHER Henry Eckmann 17. Full maiden name MOTHER Johanna Korn

9. Residence (usual place of abode; if nonresident, give place and State) Schmittville 18. Residence (usual place of abode; if nonresident, give place and State) Schmittville

10. Color or race White 11. Age at last birthday 38 years 19. Color or race White 20. Age at last birthday 38

12. Birthplace Germany State or country \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Birthplace Germany State or country \_\_\_\_\_

13. Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, as spinner, sawyer, bookkeeper, etc. Blacksmith 22. Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, as housekeeper, typist, nurse, clerk, etc. Housewife

14. Industry or business in which work was done, as silk mill, sawmill, bank, etc. \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Industry or business in which work was done, as own home, lawyer's office, silk mill, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

15. Date (month and year) last engaged in this work \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Total time (years) spent in this work \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_\_ 24. Date (month and year) last engaged in this work \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_\_ 25. Total time (years) spent in this work \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_\_

26. If stillborn, period of gestation \_\_\_\_\_ months or weeks \_\_\_\_\_ 27. Cause of stillbirth \_\_\_\_\_

28. Was a prophylactic for Ophthalmia Neonatorum used? If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_ 29. Specify congenital crippling deformities \_\_\_\_\_

30. Number of children of this mother (At time of this birth and including this child) 5 (a) Born alive and now living 5 (b) Born alive but now dead \_\_\_\_\_ (c) Stillborn \_\_\_\_\_

31. CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE

I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child, who was alive at 3:15 A on the date above stated. Born alive or stillborn

\*When there was no attending physician or midwife, then the father, householder, etc., should make this return. A stillborn child is one that neither breathes nor shows other evidence of life after birth.

Given name added from \_\_\_\_\_ Date of \_\_\_\_\_ Address Union Savings Bank Bldg. Oakland

32. Filed Sep. 18, 1916 M. H. Hurley Registrar Date Registrar

Emil Eckmann's birth certificate showing he was born in Schmittville (ECHS Collection, courtesy of the Eckmann family)

**Schmittville:** Named for the Schmidt family, who before 1900 laid out the first subdivisions in El Cerrito, in the area east of San Pablo Avenue and north of Schmidt Lane. Schmittville actually had its own post office from 1900-1901. The birth certificate of Emil Eckmann states that he was born in Schmittville in 1916. When the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railway (the "Santa Fe") opened its line in 1904, the railroad called its station at Blake Street "Schmidt". The name Schmittville faded away, but the use of Schmidt as the name of the district carried on for a number of years, as it was still in use on the 1915 USGS topographic map of San Francisco. (United States Geological Service, 1915, San Francisco Quadrangle Topographical Map; Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, 1904, Oakland District Timetable #6 5-16-1904; Harold E. Salley & Edward L. Patera, 1991, History of California Post Offices, 2nd Edition, p193)

**Schindler:** Named for A. D. Schindler, a retired superintendent of the Santa Fe. When the Santa Fe opened its line in 1904 the station that was across Fairmount Avenue from today's El Cerrito Plaza BART station was named for Mr. Schindler. As a railroad was a very important resource and economic driver in any community in those days, it is not a surprise that this part of town became known as Schindler. The name appears on several maps in the early 1900's. (Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, 1904, Oakland District Timetable #6 5-16-1904; Lee Gustafson and



Phil Serpico, 1996, Santa Fe Coast Lines Depots, p221; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p 56)

***Stege:*** Named for Richard Stege. The town of Stege was centered at about today's S. 47<sup>th</sup> St. and Carlson Blvd. Stege was a large and successful community in the area from about 1880 until 1910. There was a post office named Stege from 1885 - 1935. (Nilda Rego, 2005, Days Gone By in Contra Costa County – Volume 3 p13-22; Harold E. Salley & Edward L. Patera, 1991, History of California Post Offices, 2nd Edition, p205)

***Stege Junction:*** Named for the place where the streetcar branch line from Pullman joined the main line, at Potrero and San Pablo avenues. Motormen on the streetcar line had their own name for Stege Junction, *Grappa Junction* in deference to one of the favorite beverages in El Cerrito's Little Italy district. (Nilda Rego, 2005, Days Gone By in Contra Costa County - Volume 3p22; Erle C. Hanson, 1961, The East Shore and Suburban Railway, p29; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p56)

***Thornton:*** Named for the Thornton family, who lived at Fink Lane (now Portola Drive) and San Pablo Avenue. The name referred to this immediate area. In 1911, Wilhelm Rust and others discussed incorporating a city that included the communities of Rust and Thornton, as found in an article from the 11/27/1910 Oakland Tribune:

“Town of Pullman to Incorporate Soon

“The new town of Pullman is to be incorporated and will include the villages of Stege, Rust and Thornton if the plans are carried out. W. SF. Huber, William Rust, C. W. Fletcher, Frank Arnold, P.W. Trainor and others are at the head of the movement. A meeting was held Friday night at Thornton Hall at which it was decided to circulate petitions asking the Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County to have the new town incorporated. These will be presented at the meeting of the board on Monday. The citizens of Richmond, who are desirous of annexing all of these towns, will oppose the measure.”

The name Stege is closely associated with El Cerrito because Stege was the first organized settlement in our part of the County - long before either Richmond or El Cerrito. In 1854 Minna Boehm Quilfelt purchased from Francisco Castro a large tract of land that ran from today's Booker T. Anderson Park southwest to the Bay. It included all of the industrial area north and south of today's S. 47th Street east of the Union Pacific Railroad. This land was a well-developed industrial area by the 1880s, and it first appears (the first time as “Steges,” then as “Stege”) in the Southern Pacific (“the SP”) timetable in 1879. Richmond is not found in the SP timetable until 1903. Stege was the center of activity in the area until Chevron and then the Santa Fe arrived in Richmond in 1900. (Referees appointed by the Supreme Court of California re: Rancho San Pablo Land Case, 1894, Rancho San Pablo Map; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p26; Nilda Rego, 2005, Days Gone By in Contra Costa County - Volume 3p13-22; John R. Signor, 2004, Southern Pacific's Western Division p384)



Map of the Stege industrial area and waterfront in 1918. Note the named industries in Stege and the railroad tracks on Point Isabel. (El Cerrito Historical Society, courtesy of the Richmond Public Library History Room)

Richard Stege married the widow Wilhelmina “Minna” Boehm Quilfelt in 1870 and moved to the area that shortly took on his name. The town of Stege developed a significant industrial base along its waterfront well before 1900, including the California Cap Works (blasting caps and related products), the Metropolitan Match Factory, the Stauffer Chemical Company, the Tonite Powder Works and the Vulcan Powder works. There are no extant structures in this area from that time. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p26; Nilda Rego, 2005, *Days Gone By in Contra Costa County - Volume 3*, p13-22)

[Photo of large monument at Stege gravesite]

Richard Stege himself was mainly known outside of Stege for the short but successful period from the mid 1870’s to the early 1880’s when he raised frogs in the ponds on the grounds of his mansion. The frogs were sold to the Palace Hotel and other restaurants in San Francisco, where they were a popular offering. The grounds of his mansion were later sold to the East Shore & Suburban Railroad and became the site of Eastshore Park. The City of Stege was never incorporated and most of it was annexed into the City of Richmond in 1912. The small part of Stege that was not annexed by the City of Richmond ended up becoming part of El Cerrito. For a number of years after El Cerrito was incorporated, the area of the original town of Stege, plus the entire area east of it (i.e. today’s El Cerrito) was commonly referred to as “Stege”. This was because of the highly-regarded industrial reputation of Stege combined with the fact that the name El Cerrito was largely unknown except to those who lived there. The Stege name is rarely heard today in reference to the general area and never among those who came to the area once the post-war boom started. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p26; Nilda Rego, 2005, *Days Gone By in Contra Costa County - Volume 3* p13-22)



Map of Stege, 1903  
(El Cerrito Historical  
Society, 2008, Tracts  
and Subdivisions in El  
Cerrito 1903-01)

An example of the early use of the name El Cerrito to refer to the community is found in an article from the Richmond Independent dated 1-27-12 that is titled, "El Cerrito Desires to abolish Water District." Two of the earliest published references to "'Cerrito'" are: In the Sacramento Daily Union, Volume 19, Number 2865, June 1, 1860 it was reported "'MARRIED - At Ceritto, Contra Costa county, May 26th, Victor Castro to Julia Lupton.'" And in. " and In the Weekly Alta California, Number 26, June 28, 1849 on page 2 in the was this advertisement, "'AUCTION — By GILLESPIE & CO. — On Thursday, the 28th inst., at 11 o'clock, A. M , near the foot of Sacramento street, for account of whom it may concern, the HULL OF THE SHIP PHILADELPHIA, as it now lies on the Contra Costa, a short distance from Cerito (sic), the rancho of Victor Castro. Also, two Boats, and any other article which may come to hand from the wreck.'"

Over time, as the population slowly increased, there was increasing sentiment that a city should be formed out of the unincorporated area north of the county line dividing Alameda and Contra Costa County. 1917 was the year that some local citizens of what is now El Cerrito decided to push for incorporation. In addition to providing local control, it was felt that incorporation would facilitate the paving and lighting of streets, the delivery of utilities, and would make the area more desirable in general. Another commonly expressed sentiment was that citizens of the area did not want to be annexed to Richmond. It has been written [a citation would be great] that George Barber and Frank Butterfield were particularly strong advocates of incorporation. Since both were building contractors, perhaps they were hoping that incorporation might provide additional business for their enterprises. (Lee Fridell, 1954, The Story of Richmond, p110-113; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p p34,56; Nilda Rego, 1997, Days Gone By in Contra Costa County - Volume 1 p146-149)

The city limits for El Cerrito originally proposed to the Board of Supervisors on May 21, 1917 were: (Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, 1917, El Cerrito City Limits (as proposed to the Board of Supervisors))

BEGINNING at the northeast corner of Lot number sixty-eight (68) of the San Pablo Rancho in Contra Costa County, California, as laid down and delineated upon that certain map entitled, "Map of the San Pablo Rancho, accompanying and forming a part of the final report of the referees in Partition" and filed in the office of the Recorder of Contra Costa County, California;

thence southerly along the eastern boundary line of said Lot number sixty-eight (68) to the southerly boundary line of said Lot number 68;

thence along said last line and a direct extension thereof westerly to a line drawn parallel to and westerly one hundred and fifty (150) feet measured at right angles from the westerly line of San Pablo Avenue;

thence along that last laid line parallel to San Pablo Avenue southerly to an intersection with a direct extension northerly of the westerly line of Lot number Sixty-one (61), San Pablo Rancho above mentioned;

thence along last said extension and along the westerly boundary line of Lot number sixty-one (61), San Pablo Rancho, and along a direct extension southerly of the said westerly line of Lot Sixty-one (61), San Pablo Rancho southerly to an intersection with a line drawn parallel to and one hundred and twenty-five (125) feet southerly from the southerly line of Cypress Street measured at right angles thereto;

thence along said line parallel to and one hundred and twenty-five (125) feet southerly from Cypress Street easterly to an intersection with a line drawn parallel to and one hundred and fifty (150) feet measured at right angles westerly from the westerly line of San Pablo Avenue;

thence along last said line parallel to San Pablo Avenue southerly to an intersection with a line drawn parallel to and one hundred (100) feet measured at right angles northerly from the northerly line of Bay View Avenue;

thence along said line parallel to Bay View Avenue easterly to the westerly line of San Pablo Avenue;

thence along last said line southerly to the northerly line of Lot thirteen (13) of the San Pablo Rancho;

thence along said northerly boundary line of Lot thirteen (13), San Pablo Rancho, westerly to the easterly boundary line of the right-of-way of the Southern Pacific Railway;

thence along said easterly boundary line of the southern Pacific Railway right-of-way, in a general southerly direction to the line dividing Alameda and Contra Costa Counties;

thence along last said line easterly and along the line dividing Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, to the southeast Corner of the San Pablo Rancho;

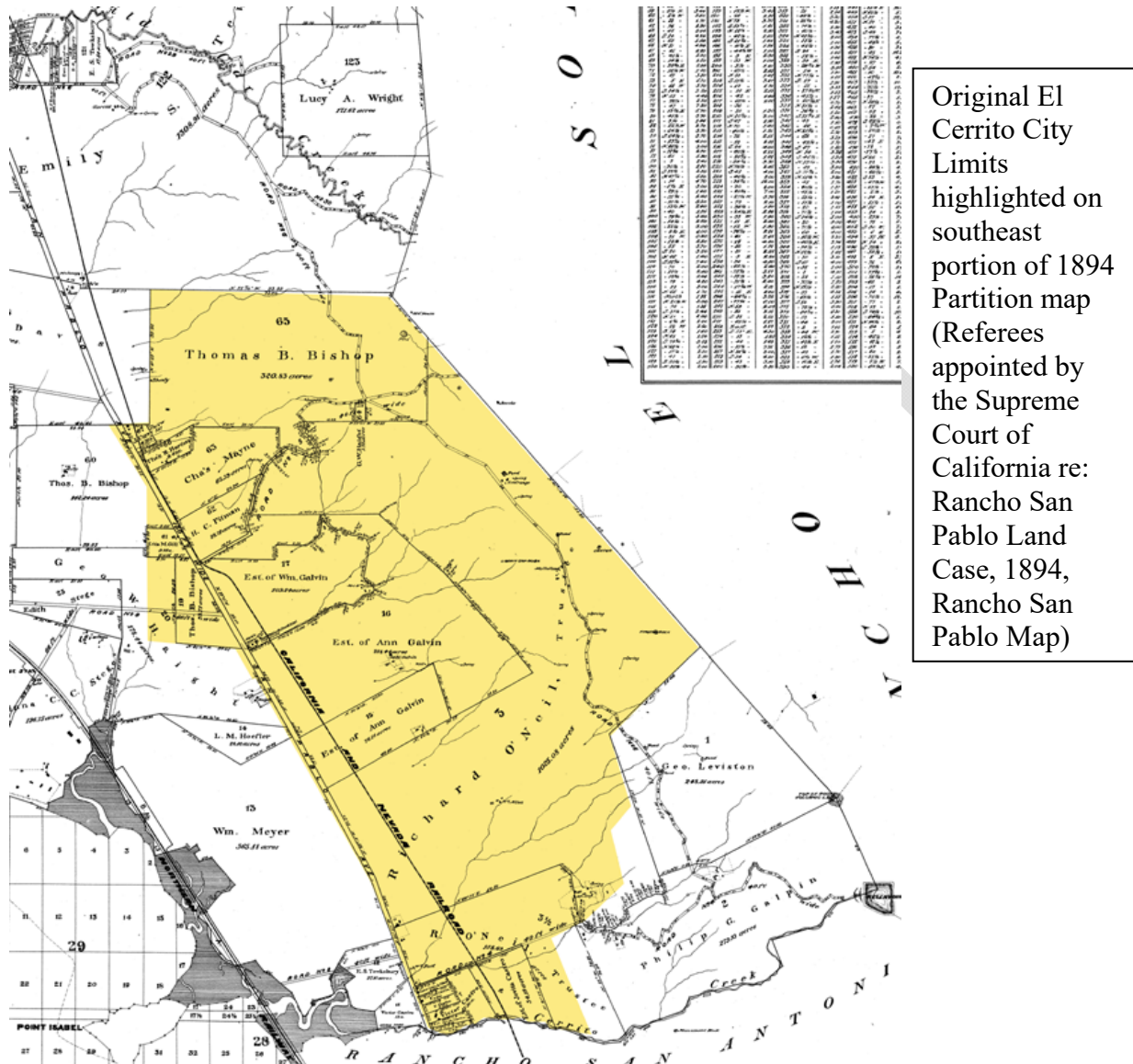
thence along the eastern boundary line of the San Pablo Rancho northwesterly to the northern boundary of Lot number sixty-five (65) of the San Pablo Rancho;

thence westerly along the northern boundary of Lot sixty-five (65) of the San Pablo Rancho to the point of beginning.

That the territory included within the foregoing boundaries comprises that part of the San Pablo Rancho bounded on the north by the northern line of Lot 65 of the San Pablo Rancho; on the west by the Richmond City limits; on the south by the dividing line between Alameda and Contra Costa Counties; and on the east by the dividing line between the Rancho El Sobrante and the San Pablo Rancho, and all situate in the County of Contra Costa, State of California..

The boundaries of El Cerrito as originally suggested by the proponents of incorporation were quite similar to what we see today. It is interesting to note that the boundaries of the city as originally laid out followed, in most cases, pre-existing property boundaries (or lines drawn from direct extensions of those boundaries) that were identified by the Court in the partition of 1894.

This partition was the ruling made by the court as to which individuals had valid title to what parcels of land in the Rancho San Pablo land grant originally owned by the Castro family. This ruling ended more than 40 years of squabbling and uncertainty. As originally proposed, the



borders of El Cerrito were exactly the same as those of the Stege Sanitary District, which had been established in 1913. As originally proposed, El Cerrito included most of the Richmond Annex and all of Kensington as well as what is inside El Cerrito's borders today. (Referees appointed by the Supreme Court of California re: Rancho San Pablo Land Case, 1894, Rancho San Pablo Map; Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, 1913, Stege Sanitary Boundaries; Mae Fisher Purcell, 1940, History of Contra Costa County p137-138)

The four primary sources of opposition to the incorporation movement were:

- i) The owners and workers at the two large quarries in town who feared that incorporation would lead the city to expand and cause the quarries to close - they were correct.
- ii) Dairymen who didn't want to pay taxes for services, streets, and lights that they wouldn't use and who feared that their herds would no longer be welcome -they were right.
- iii) Some area residents who felt that they didn't need to be paying money to pave streets and have services delivered that didn't currently exist and weren't being missed, and
- iv) Saloon owners who were concerned that the city would impose new taxes on them - this came true almost immediately, perhaps partly due to their strident opposition to the incorporation. (Lee Fridell, 1954, *The Story of Richmond*, p 110-113; Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p 34,56; Nilda Rego, 1997, *Days Gone By in Contra Costa County* - Volume 1 p146-149 p146-149)

The County Supervisors had to decide what property would be inside and what property would be outside the proposed new city. They visited the area on June 14, 1917. A few individuals petitioned the County Supervisors to be included in the proposed new city. But in most cases groups of residents and landowners petitioned the County Supervisors for exclusion. The Du Pont Company, the owners of the Judson Powder Company at the foot of Albany Hill, asked to be removed from the proposed city, as did the residents of the Richmond Annex. When territory was removed from the proposed city, the removal also generally followed lot lines set up by the 1894 partition. This included the curiously-shaped Mintzer parcel that, when annexed to Richmond, split ownership of today's Central Park between Richmond and El Cerrito. (Referees appointed by the Supreme Court of California re: Rancho San Pablo Land Case, 1894, Rancho San Pablo Map; Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p34, 56; Nilda Rego, 1997, *Days Gone By in Contra Costa County* - Volume 1 p146-149 p146-149)

In the unincorporated part of Contra Costa County that we now call Kensington, there was not much enthusiasm for being part of El Cerrito. That area was very sparsely populated in 1917. When the residents of the Kensington Park and the Berkeley Highlands subdivisions, as well as a few others, requested removal, it was a simple matter for the County Supervisors to, for example, remove Lot 1 of Rancho San Pablo from the proposed area of the new city. The owners of the Sunset View Cemetery also requested and were granted exclusion from the proposed new city. A review of the Board of Supervisors minutes indicates that the only request for exclusion that was not granted appears to be one from John Balra, a local dairyman who did not want his farm included in the new city. Although Kensington now includes land just beyond the boundaries of Rancho San Pablo, the "definition" of Kensington was originally just the parts of the southeast corner of Rancho San Pablo that requested exclusion from the proposed new City of El Cerrito. [Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p34, 56; Nilda Rego, 1997, *Days Gone By in Contra Costa County* - Volume 1, p146-149)

The revised city limits for El Cerrito to be submitted to the voters were: (Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, 1917, *El Cerrito City Limits* - as revised by the Board of Supervisors)

BEGINNING at the northwest corner of Lot number 65 of the San Pablo Rancho, in Contra Costa County, California, as laid down and delineated upon that certain map entitled "Map of the San Pablo Rancho, accompanying and forming a part of the final report of the referees in Partition", and filed in the office of the recorder of Contra Costa County, California;

thence southerly along the western boundary of said Lot number 65 to the southerly boundary of Lot number 68 of the Rancho San Pablo;

thence westerly along the last mentioned line and a direct extension thereof to a line drawn parallel to, and westerly 150 feet, measured at right angles, from the westerly line of San Pablo Avenue;

thence along last said line parallel to San Pablo Avenue southerly to an intersection with a direct extension northerly of the westerly line of Lot number 61, San Pablo Rancho;

thence along last said extension and along the westerly boundary line of Lot number 61, San Pablo Rancho, and along continuation thereof southerly to an intersection with a line drawn parallel to and one hundred and twenty-five feet southerly from the southerly line of Cypress Street, measured at right angles thereto;

thence along said line, parallel to and one hundred and twenty-five feet from Cypress Street easterly to an intersection with a line drawn parallel to and one hundred and fifty feet measured at right angles westerly from the westerly line of San Pablo Avenue;

thence along last said line parallel to San Pablo Avenue southerly to an intersection with a line drawn parallel to and one hundred feet measured at right angles northerly from the northerly line of Bay View Avenue;

thence along said line parallel to Bay View Avenue easterly to the easterly line of San Pablo Avenue;

thence along said easterly line of San Pablo Avenue in a generally southeasterly direction to the dividing line between Contra Costa and Alameda Counties;

thence easterly along said dividing line between Contra Costa and Alameda Counties to the dividing line between Lots 3 and 4 of Block 4 of the Bouquet Key Route Business Blocks as said Lots are shown and delineated on that certain map entitled "Map of Bouquet Key Route Business Blocks, Contra Costa County, Cal." filed in the office of the Recorder of Contra Costa County, February 3, 1914;

thence northerly through the center of Blocks 4, 3, 2, and 1 of said tract, and the continuation thereof to the northerly line of Fairmount Avenue;

thence easterly along the said northerly line of Fairmount Avenue to the most westerly corner of the lands of the Sunset View Cemetery Association, as described in that certain deed recorded in Volume 146 of Deeds, Page 26, records of Contra Costa County;

thence along the westerly line of the lands of the said Sunset View Cemetery Association to the westerly line of Lot One of the San Pablo Rancho;

thence northerly along said line to the northwest corner of Lot one;

thence northeasterly along the northerly line of Said Lot number One to the dividing line between the San Pablo Rancho and the Rancho El Sobrante;

thence northwesterly along said dividing line to the northerly boundary of Lot number sixty-five of the San Pablo Rancho;

thence westerly along the northern boundary of said Lot number Sixty-five to the northwesterly corner thereof, and the point of Beginning.

Contra Costa County held an election on August 16, 1917 so that residents of the proposed new city could decide whether or not to incorporate El Cerrito as a sixth-class city. The vote was 158 in favor and 131 opposed. The County Supervisors declared the City of El Cerrito duly incorporated on August 20th, 1917. Three days later, on August 23, 1917, was the day the city was actually chartered. While the proponents of incorporation had bemoaned the loss of some of the lands included in the original definition of the proposed new city, either the proponents of incorporation were amazingly lucky or the County Supervisors displayed amazing foresight and wisdom, since including any of those excluded areas might have tilted the vote in the other direction. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p p34-35; Mae Fisher Purcell, 1940, *History of Contra Costa County* p 137-138)

The structure of city government was quite simple in the early days. Five men were initially elected to the first Board of Trustees. A part-time City Clerk and part-time Treasurer were also elected. The City Council appointed George Barber as the first town marshal and also appointed a city attorney. The marshal's job included being the tax and license collector, constable, street inspector, dogcatcher, and building, plumbing, and electrical inspector. Grace Castner was the elected City Clerk. It would not be until 1941 when the first woman, Laura MacNeill, was appointed to the City Council and not until 1956 when the first woman, Doris Hormel, was elected to the Council. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p 35-36; *City of El Cerrito, El Cerrito City Council Members*)

In 1926 the City Hall was completed, including city offices, the fire department, and later the police department. It was located on the north east corner of San Pablo Avenue and minimal street. In 1925 W1925W.A.Hines, at dairy manager experience fireman then serving as deputy marshal was appointed the first paid for fire chief. In 1927 the police department was set up under Forest Wright as the first police chief and three traffic officers were hired. City government continued to grow slowly in the following years. In 1927, the state changed the way municipalities were organized and it was at this point that the "Board of Trustees" became a "City Council". It was not until the city's charter revision of 1949 (which instituted the "City Manager" form of government) that El Cerrito's city government really came into its own. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p36-38, 81)



### C. Land subdivision and development in El Cerrito

Because of the protracted dispute over the Rancho San Pablo lands, verifiable title was not to be had in this part of Contra Costa County until 1894. And not surprisingly, it was not until 1893 when the first subdivision was laid out in El Cerrito. A Santa Fe drawing that appears to be a relabeled copy of an earlier California & Nevada drawing has some interesting information about landowners in early El Cerrito. (A subsidiary of the Santa Fe purchased the California & Nevada in 1902; today in El Cerrito BART runs on the western half of the former Santa Fe right-of-way.) The drawing itself indicates from whom the California & Nevada had obtained rights to lay its track, a subject of great importance to a railroad. Based on the paucity of structures shown on the drawing, plus the fact that no subdivisions are shown, the information on the original California & Nevada drawing must have been from about 1885-1890. The following landowners granted rights to the California & Nevada over their large tracts of land, tracts whose northern and southern boundaries roughly corresponded to the current street names shown below: (Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, ca 1890, Map of the California & Nevada Railroad showing grants of Right-of-Way; Mae Fisher Purcell, 1940, History of Contra Costa County p 137-138)

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Victor Castro    | County Line to Fairmount Avenue        |
| McAvoy           | Fairmount Avenue to Moeser Lane        |
| Mrs. John Galvin | Moeser Lane to Cypress Avenue          |
| William Galvin   | Cypress Avenue to Hill Street          |
| Captain Pittman  | Hill Street to Wall Avenue             |
| Rev. James Curry | Wall Avenue north past the city limits |

At the time of the 1906 Earthquake, fifteen subdivisions had already been laid out in the area that is now home to El Cerrito. "El Cerrito" at the time was home to two Santa Fe Railway stations plus a streetcar line that ran the length of San Pablo Avenue. The earthquake and fire in San Francisco did not spur significant growth in the area we today call El Cerrito. By 1905 it was easy to reach communities of Richmond, Pullman, Stege, Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco via streetcar lines built by Francis Marion "Borax" Smith. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2007, East Shore and Suburban Railway Chronology; Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, 1904, Oakland District Timetable #6 5-16-1904; Erle C. Hanson, 1961, The East Shore and Suburban Railway p5-9, 29)

By 1915 the street grid had grown far beyond San Pablo Avenue, toward the Bay to the west and up the hills to the east. Commerce in the plan area was focused at the county line (where the Rust post office was established in 1909) and at San Pablo and Potrero Avenues (near where the short-lived Schmidville post office was established in 1900). This latter area was known as Stege Junction and became the hub of "Little Italy," the center of El Cerrito's Italian community. [(Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p p34, 42,47; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito;; Harold E. Salley & Edward L. Patera, 1991, History of California Post Offices, 2nd Edition, 184; 193 Michael Corbett, 2007, Historical and Architectural Assessment of the Rodini Family Property p9-11)

In addition to the various commercial enterprises located along San Pablo Avenue, the area was

known for the number of saloons that were located there since it was unincorporated area that received little attention from the County Sheriff. A slaughterhouse was located on Central Avenue. It received a regular supply of animals via the Santa Fe Railway, which maintained a corral where Fairmount Avenue crossed the Santa Fe tracks. Hands drove stock to the slaughterhouse from the corral, plus locals would also drive their stock along San Pablo Avenue to the slaughterhouse or to the Santa Fe corral for shipment.(Interstate Commerce Commission, 1923, Valuation Section 11 of the California, Arizona, and Santa Fe Railway: Station List; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p40, 41,47;)

[Need a Paragraph on Lincoln Highway] ????????????????

In the 1930s the Eastshore Highway (which would become US 40 and then Interstate 80) was constructed on the present route of the Eastshore Freeway from the Bay Bridge to Potrero Avenue. The WPA built the roadbed for it. This highway replaced San Pablo Avenue as the primary north-south route through the East Bay. By mid-century, the city's street grid was largely filled out and has changed little since. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito; Susan Cerney, n.d., Municipal Incinerator)

El Cerrito was almost completely subdivided by 1930 and old-timers remember two things about it: i) most places streets and sidewalks had been laid out; and ii) it was mostly vacant lots and open fields, with relatively few houses until the war years changed everything. This is in contrast



1930 aerial photo of the Albany - El Cerrito border. Compare the remarkable difference in development. Albany Hill is at the bottom and north is to the left. (ECHS Collection)

to Berkeley and Albany, which were both reasonably built-out by 1930. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito; Michael Corbett, 2007, Historical and

Architectural Assessment of the Rodini Family Property p 9-10; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p29, 45, 47)

| Period    | Structures Built | Cum Total |
|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| 1895-1900 | 5                | 5         |
| 1901-1905 | 6                | 11        |
| 1906-1910 | 49               | 60        |
| 1911-1915 | 72               | 132       |
| 1916-1920 | 78               | 210       |
| 1921-1925 | 293              | 503       |
| 1926-1930 | 347              | 850       |
| 1931-1935 | 87               | 937       |
| 1936-1940 | 927              | 1864      |
| 1941-1945 | 859              | 2723      |
| 1946-1950 | 1644             | 4367      |
| 1951-1955 | 1411             | 5778      |
| 1956-1960 | 682              | 6460      |
| 1961-1965 | 448              | 6908      |
| 1966-1970 | 178              | 7086      |
| 1971-1975 | 225              | 7311      |
| 1976-1980 | 275              | 7586      |
| 1981-2005 | 381              | 7967      |

Structures built in El Cerrito per the Contra Costa County Assessor's build dates for each parcel in El Cerrito (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2006, Build dates for structures in El Cerrito)

## EL CERRITO Home City

The city of El Cerrito is located at the most southwesterly corner of Contra Costa County and is definitely a city of homes. It has a population of 6,154 and covers an area of 2,169 acres. There are 42 miles of paved streets and approximately 13 miles unpaved.

El Cerrito has a city council form of government and consequently enjoys the low tax rate of only one dollar per hundred and is not subject to raise except by special assessment districts.

This low tax rate coupled with twenty-three minute bus service to San Francisco and express service to Oakland have undoubtedly been two of the main factors in the outstanding home-building program in the city. Over seven hundred new homes have been built here in the past two and one-half years at a total valuation of more than two and one-half million dollars. Total estimated value of the city for 1940 amounts to \$6,064,250.

The El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce is continually working to attract new home owners and acts as a clearing ground for new comers to the city and the numerous types of business to be found in the city.

El Cerrito located, as it is, between the three largest industrial counties of northern California, San Francisco, Alameda and Contra Costa, is not an industrial city but rather a distributing point for these three counties.

El Cerrito furnishes every type of home-site to the prospective buyer from the hillside, marine view lots of the El Cerrito hills down to the edges of San Francisco Bay.

El Cerrito has four fine elementary schools and will shortly see the opening of the Senior-Junior High School, one of the finest in the entire State. The city is served by four churches, has a fine Memorial Building, Girls' Community Club House and Boy Scout Swimming Pool.

## BUSINESS TRAINING

MAE J. SHANNON SCHOOL  
318 9th Street Phone Richmond 3292 Richmond

## POLK'S RICHMOND CITY DIRECTORY 1940

Copyright, 1940, by R. L. Polk & Co.  
For list of Abbreviations see page C.

### Alphabetical List of Names

A-1 Building Materials Co S F Beard mgr 6701 Fairmont av (El Cer)  
Aaland Orville G clk r118 S 11th  
Abaloz Jose lab Stauffer Chemical Co r151 S 1st  
Abbay Ethel J sten r5818 Santa Cruz av  
Abbay John A clk r5818 Santa Cruz av  
Abbay Minor A dentist 607 Macdonald av r Elks Club  
Abbay Wm N (Ethel) emp SOCo h5818 Santa Cruz av  
Abbe Ellis R (Emily) emp SOCo h5427 Hillside rd (El Cer)  
Abbey Cecil L (Alice L) emp Ford h423 6th  
Abbey Chas F (Irene) clk h7132 Potrero av (El Cer)  
Abbey Wm J (Wilda) h2316 Brooks av  
Abbey Wm J jr r2316 Brooks av  
Abbott Building 912 Macdonald av  
Abbott Clark L (Margt) corner 218 7th h2606 Yuba (El Cer)  
ABBOTT EMERGENCY HOSPITAL, U S Abbott Physician in Charge, L Abbott Hedges, MD, Associate, Abbott Building, 912 Macdonald Av, Tel Richmond 1200  
Abbott Geo E carp h714 Villa pl (El Cer)  
Abbott J E brkmm Santa Fe r Oakland  
Abbott Jack L emp SOCo r Berkeley  
Abbott Noble G emp SOCo r438 12th  
Abbott Ula F emp SOCo h2636 Clinton av  
ABBOTT URSA S (Rose K) Physician and Surgeon, Abbott Emergency Hospital, 912 Macdonald Av, Tel Richmond 1200, h5490 Barrett Av (El Cerrito) Tel Richmond 2  
Abel Calvin C (Laura) mech h224 Castro  
Abel Julius H (Mabel) gas sta 2235 Nevin av h2109 Hellings  
Abernethy Peter J (Elva) emp SOCo h2115 Dunn av  
Abney Carl T (Eunice) servmn h6911 Fairmount av (El Cer)

**E.  
J.  
F.  
R.  
E.  
E.  
T.  
H.  
Y.**

GENERAL  
BUILDING  
CONTRACTOR  
and  
ENGINEERING  
SERVICE  
1432 Kearney  
El Cerrito  
PHONE

Ad for El Cerrito in the 1940 Polk's Directory

Comparing the raw five-year totals to the pace of land subdivision in El Cerrito is informative and in fact, the numbers from 1931-1935 are unexpectedly good considering that this was the absolute depths of the Depression. This extraordinary spike in construction in 1936-1940, the final years of the Great Depression, is very interesting, given the economic times. Still, this number is corroborated by the accompanying ad from the 1940 Polk's Directory. Deeper investigation shows that early as the late 1930s defense build-up was well underway in the Bay Area, not least of which was the Kaiser shipyard in Richmond. In addition, the Golden Gate Bridge, Bay Bridge, the Eastshore Highway, and Caldecott Tunnel were all under construction at the time. The Eastshore Highway was partly a WPA project and the Caldecott Tunnel was partly a PWA project. The numbers in the War years, when building materials were rationed, are also quite unexpected. In any case, this period and the amount of residential construction it represents clearly establish a distinctive, character-defining feature of El Cerrito's townscape. (The Living New Deal, 2008, Caldecott Tunnel – Oakland, CA; Susan Cerney, n.d., Municipal Incinerator; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p 47)

This huge surge in house building could not have taken place without a large number of willing and financially able buyers. While there were a number of major projects underway as described in the previous paragraph, they would not have supported this level of home buying, much less these numbers of home buyers. The only apparent answer is paychecks fueled by illegal activities centered on gambling and, while prohibition was in effect (1919-1933), alcohol. Gambling went hand in hand with illegal alcohol and El Cerrito was known up and down the state starting in the early 1930s as the place where all forms of entertainment - fine dining, shows, most kinds of gambling, alcohol, and women were readily available. The El Cerrito Kennel Club, a dog-racing track, was in operation from 1932-1939. It is common to find a sin-based economy flourishing along county lines or where urbanized counties meet predominantly rural jurisdictions with few regulations. Daly City, just over the San Mateo County Line, was known for the same vices. There were gaming tables with cards and dice in nearly every bar on Mission Street. Even grocery and dry goods stores featured spots where games of chance of every variety could be found. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p41-50; Marcus Gonzalez, 2012, John W. Marchbank: Opportunist, Businessman, Benefactor, p3-5)

The epic Rancho San Pablo land case, Emeric vs. Alvarado, was settled in 1889, but as mentioned earlier it was not until 1894 that the court's official partition map was finalized. This did not stop enterprising real estate agents from setting up before the plan was finalized. The first subdivision in El Cerrito, the Schmidt & Fink Tract, was laid out in 1893. It subdivided most of the land between Moeser Lane and Schmidt Lane. Two more subdivisions were laid out before the end of 1894. Subdivision lines in El Cerrito largely reflected the property lines from the 1894 partition map. (Mae Fisher Purcell, 1940, History of Contra Costa County p 137-138; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p 20-23; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito)

The layout of the early subdivisions in El Cerrito combined with the right-of-way of the California and Nevada/Santa Fe have had a permanent impact on the way EL Cerrito is laid out today:

- i) The lot sizes in the Schmidt and Fink tract were about one acre. For many years much of this

land was held in large parcels by farmers and nursery families. Some of these parcels were never subdivided.

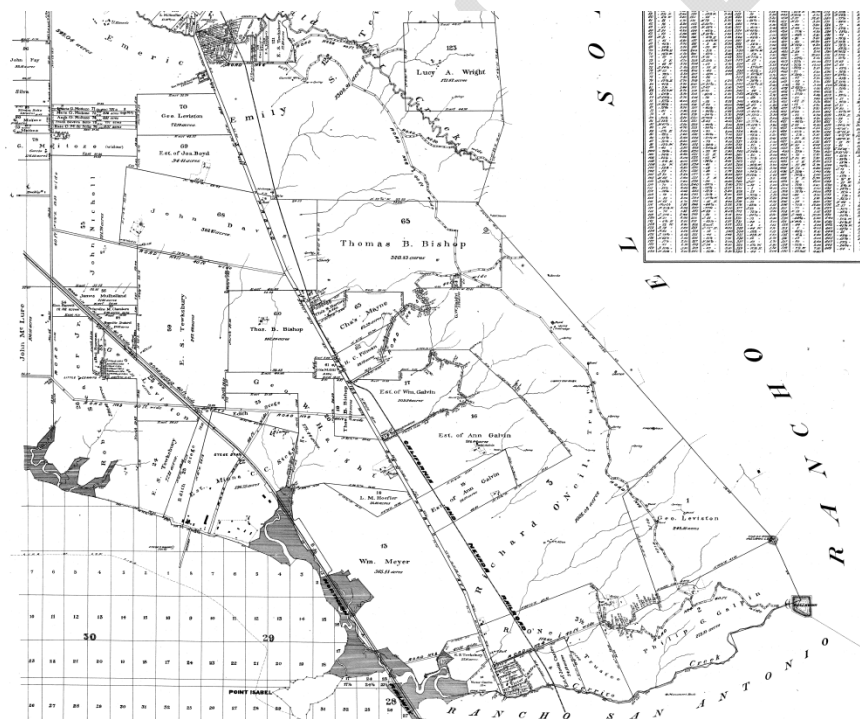
ii) Until the 1950s there were no north-south through streets that ran between Moeser Lane and Schmidt Lane except for San Pablo Avenue on the west and today's Navellier Street on the east. Even today there are still no north-south through streets that run between Moeser Lane and Schmidt Lane between Richmond and Navellier Streets.

iii) There are no east-west streets from Ashbury to San Pablo Avenue south of Fairmount.

iv) There are no East-west streets going east from Kearney between Manila on the south and Potrero on the north and then again north of Knott.

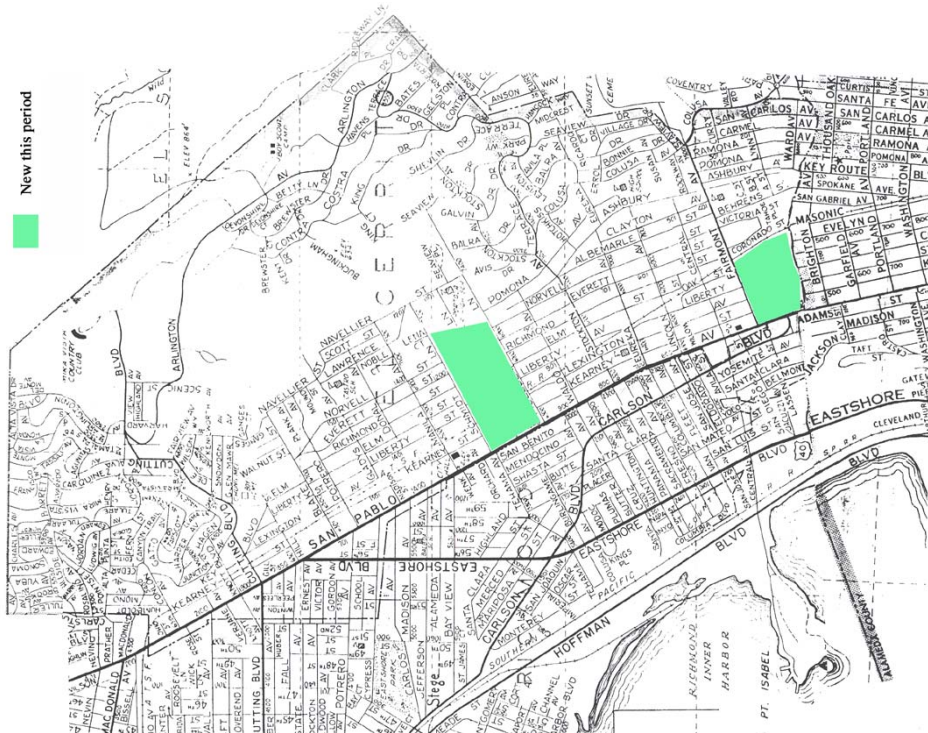
v) Since subdivisions were laid out in a piecemeal fashion, El Cerrito has a street grid where in some places through streets do not line up well at subdivision boundaries. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1893-01; United States Geological Service, 1899, 1915, 1947, San Francisco Quadrangle Topographical Map 1947)

As occurs in many cities, land that was subdivided early on is sometimes re-subdivided in later years. On the maps that follow, only the first subdivision is shown.

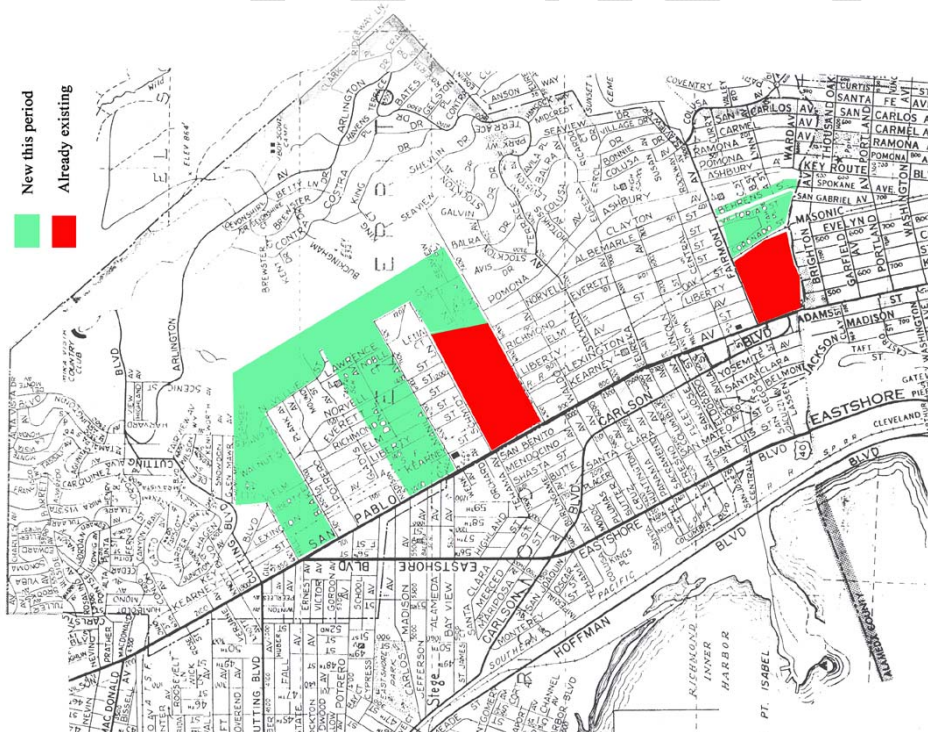


The part of Rancho San Pablo that includes El Cerrito; the top of the map is north. (ECHS Collection)

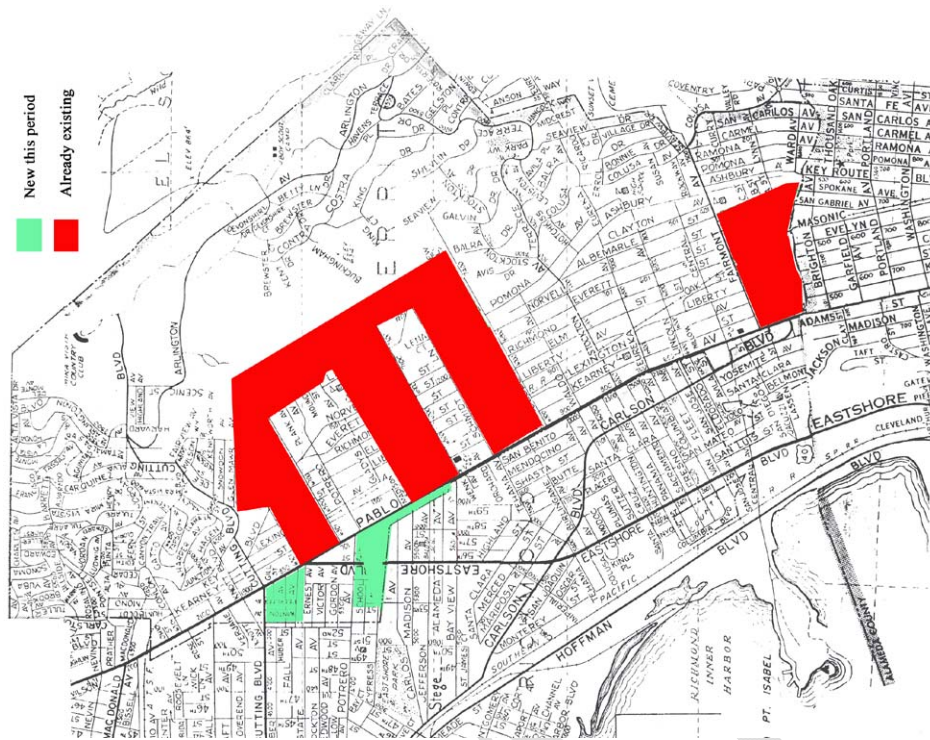




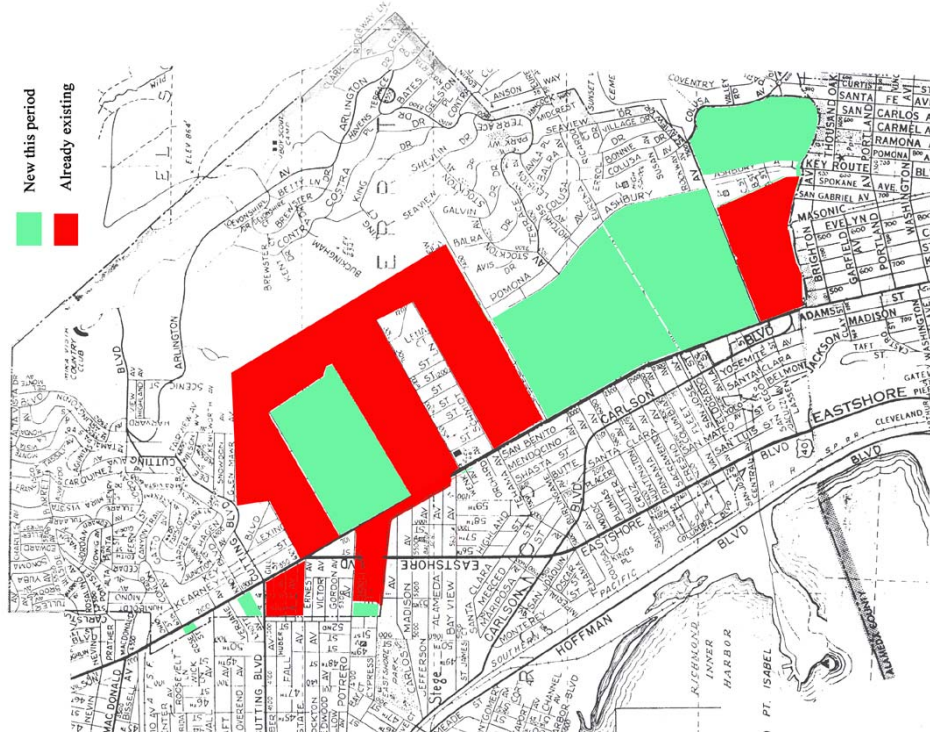
El Cerrito subdivisions, 1893-1895. The left side of the map is north (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1893-01, 1894-03)



El Cerrito subdivisions, 1896-1900. The left side of the map is north. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1896-02, 1896-03, 1896-06, 1898-00, 1900-05)

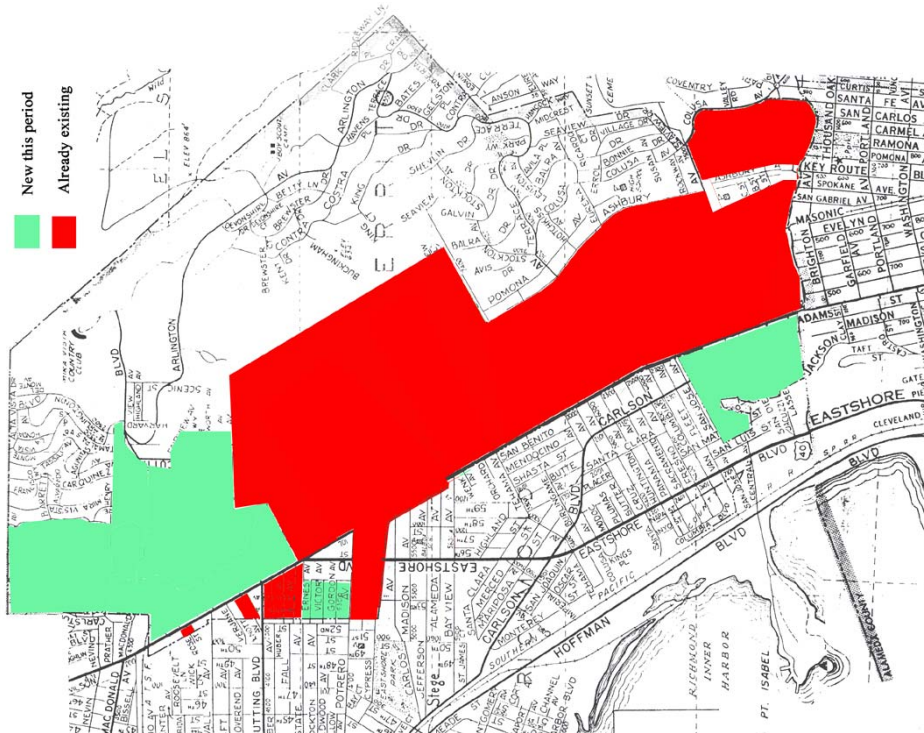


El Cerrito subdivisions, 1901-1905. The left side of the map is north (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1901-05, 1901-08, 1903-10, 1904-04, 1905-04, 1905-05, 1908-08)

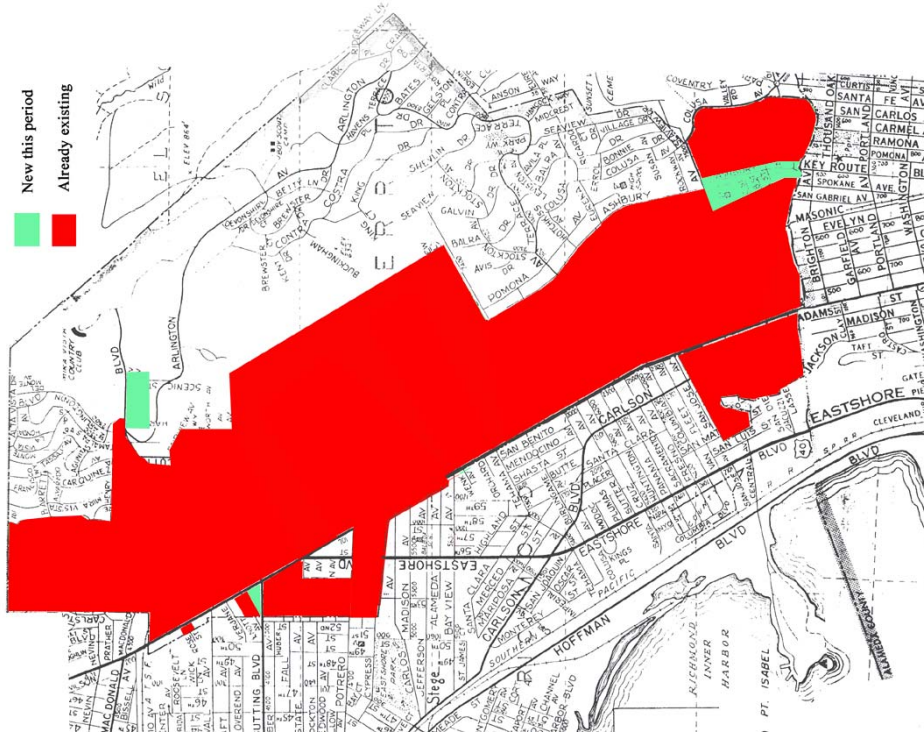


El Cerrito subdivisions, 1906-1910. The left side of the map is north (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1906-04, 1906-08, 1907-02, 1907-04, 1907-05, 1907-07, 1907-11, 1908-11, 1909-09, 1910-09)



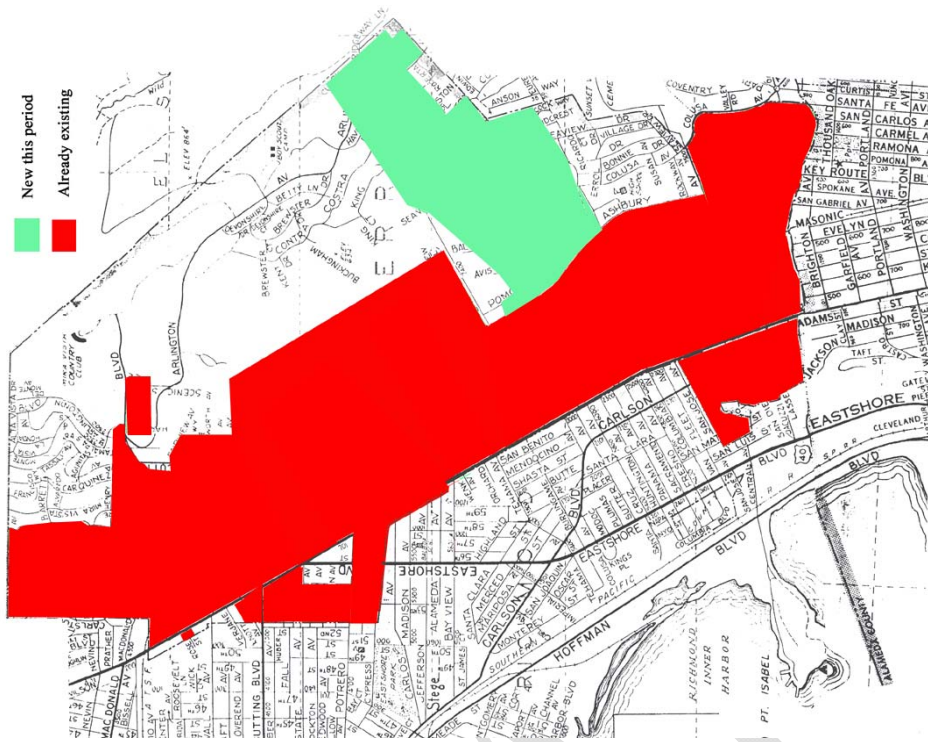


El Cerrito subdivisions, 1911-1915. The left side of the map is north.] (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1911-02, 1911-03, 1911-04, 1911-07, 1911-09, 1904-11, 1912-03, 1912-07, 1912-09, 1913-05, 1913-06, 1913-09, 1913-11, 1914-02, 1914-04, 1914-08, 1915-04, 1915-05, 1915-07)

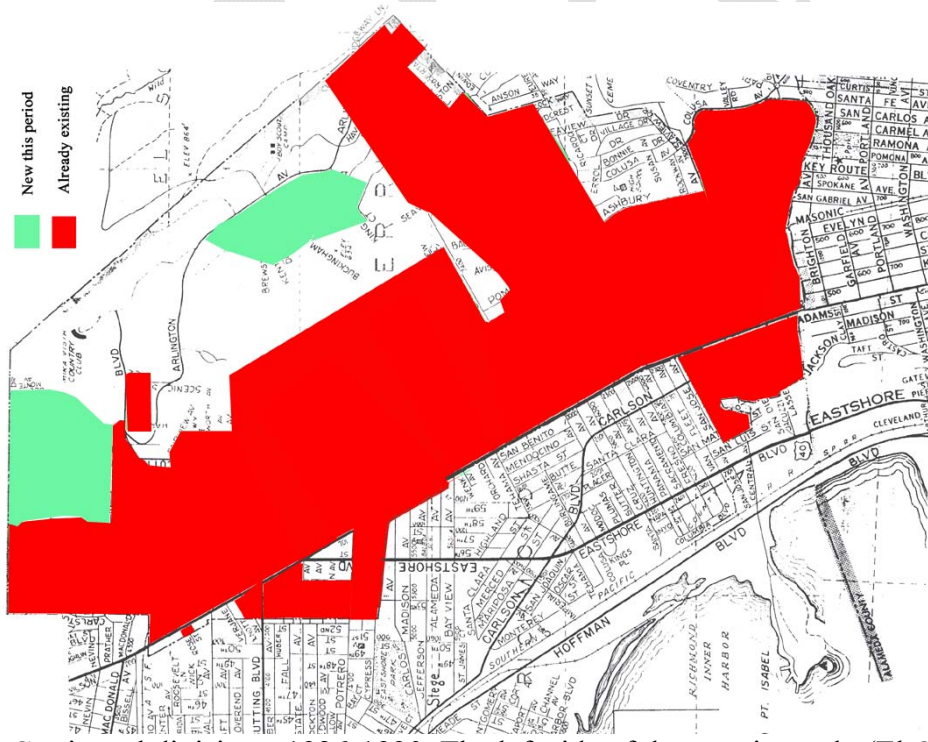


El Cerrito subdivisions, 1916-1920. The left side of the map is north (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1918-01, 1919-07, 1919-12, 1920-11)]

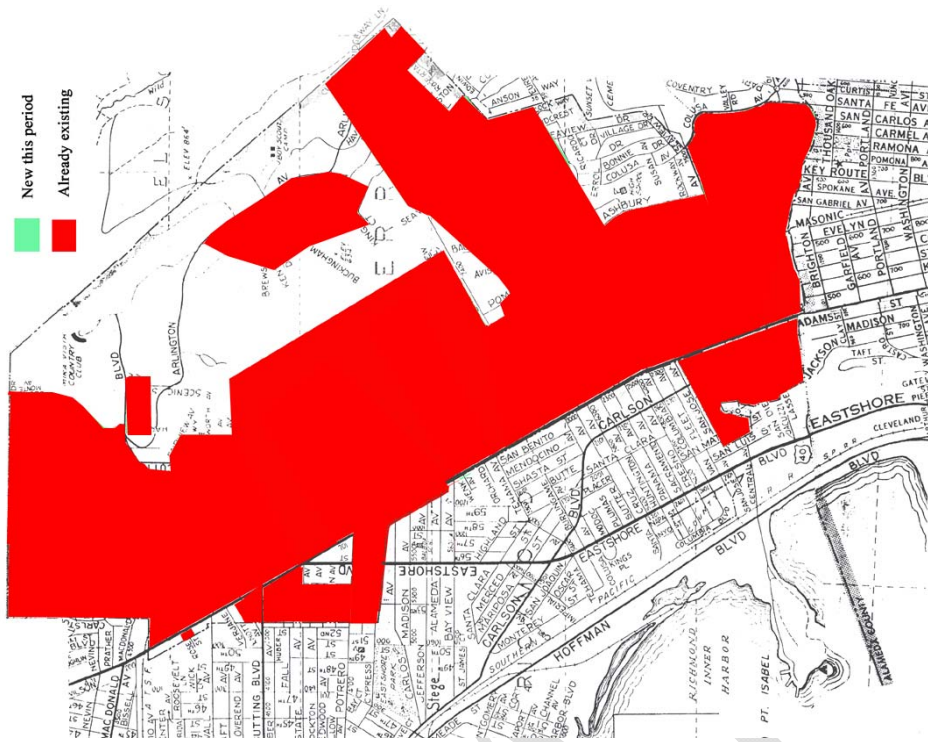




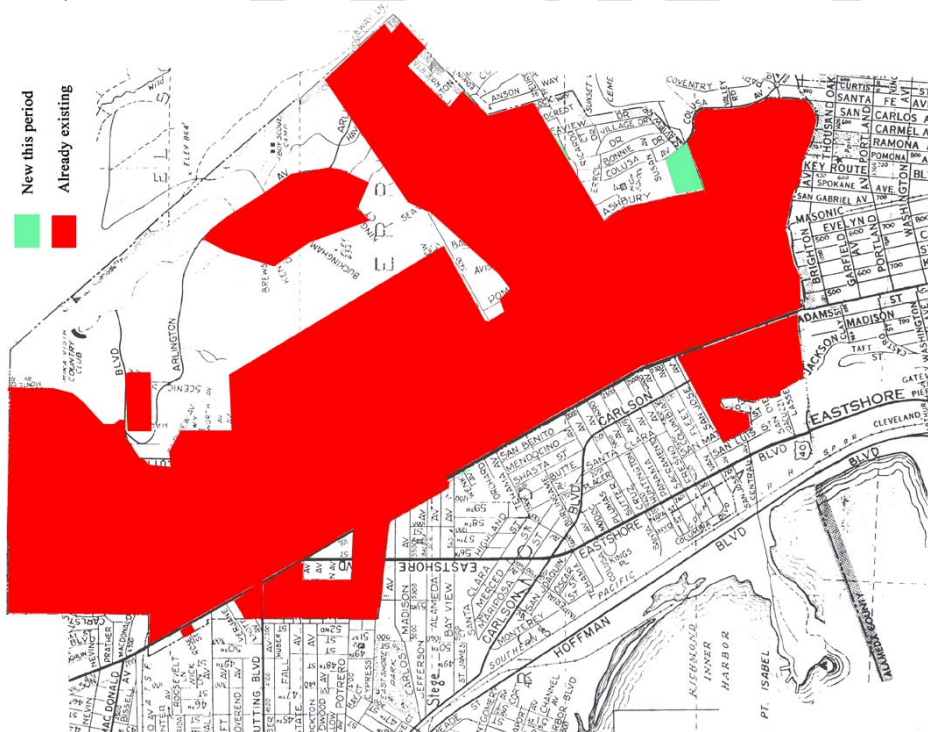
El Cerrito subdivisions, 1921-1925. The left side of the map is north (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1922-09)



El Cerrito subdivisions, 1926-1930. The left side of the map is north. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1926-07, 1926-09, 1927-04)



El Cerrito subdivisions, 1931-1935, there were no new subdivisions during this period. The left side of the map is north. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito)



El Cerrito subdivisions, 1936-1940. The left side of the map is north. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1935-09)

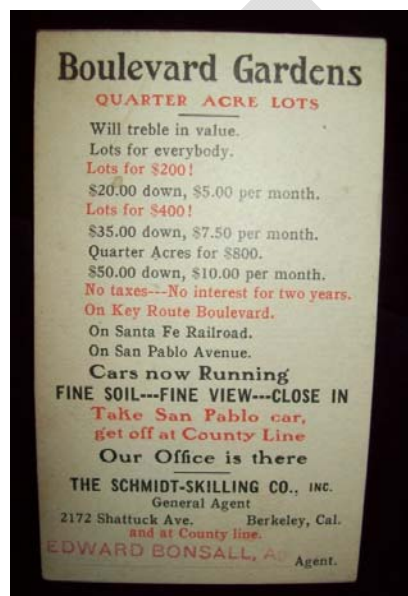
El Cerrito subdivisions, 1941-1945. The left side of the map is north. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito xxx)

El Cerrito subdivisions, 1946-1950. The left side of the map is north. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito xxx)

El Cerrito subdivisions, 1951-1955. The left side of the map is north. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito xxx)

El Cerrito subdivisions, 1956-1960. The left side of the map is north. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito xxx)

In the 1920s in the area above Stockton Avenue and Terrace Drive one could see little buildings starting to go up. This area was part of the North Berkeley Terrace subdivision and in the early years the tract developer provided enough lumber with the sale of each lot to supposedly build a small house. People derisively said it was about enough to build a chicken house and often referred to this section of town as either Chicken Coop Hill or Mushroom Hill. ( Mervin Belfils, 1975, El Cerrito Quarries)



[Boulevard Gardens Flyer - clean this up]

[-insert "Chicken Coop" flyer]

While El Cerrito did experience a remarkable surge of development during the 1930s, the city had its greatest land development after 1940. During the war years, defense workers taking jobs in the Kaiser shipyards in Richmond and other defense-related industries, moved into El Cerrito, establishing temporary homes –mostly in auto courts and trailer camps along San Pablo Avenue. This sudden influx of people created traffic congestion the city's main thoroughfare. In the postwar period, residents and newcomers alike built permanent homes on attractive hillside sites overlooking San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate. Meanwhile, developers built family duplexes and apartment buildings on the flat lands located near the city's commercial strip on San Pablo Avenue. The building boom continued throughout the 1950's and it was not until the mid-1960's when construction leveled off as all easily buildable land was already developed. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2006, Build dates for structures in El Cerrito; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p68, 71, 84)

Community leaders developed plans for guiding building construction in line with El Cerrito's image as a "City of Homes". The city council in 1953 drastically revised the zoning plan (originally enacted 1930), replacing the outdated rigid provisions with newer concepts that emphasized quality design, specific standards and flexible application. In 1954 the council adopted a Master Land Use Plan, including the preparation of a map that designated areas for single family and multiple family dwellings, apartment buildings and professional offices, commercial and industrial areas, and lands that would be set aside for parks, schools and other public uses. During the building boom, realtors and contractors held sway in the Planning Commission and City Council, securing zoning amendments and variants that did not always follow the guidelines set out in the Master Plan. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p84)

The area in the Richmond Annex known as Bayview Number 1 was an unincorporated pocket under county jurisdiction that remained after Richmond's incorporation of the surrounding area in 1925. El Cerrito citizens were embarrassed by Bayview Number 1's deteriorating condition. Even though the Wagon Wheel and other gambling casinos had been closed down, bookmakers conducted business with impunity and stolen goods were routinely resold in what became known as "No-Man's Land". The area also contained numerous sub-standard housing units and trailer camps remaining from the war, often in violation of the state building codes. It also had poorly maintained streets and sewers. Bayview Number 1 residents also received inconsistent public services, including fire protection from El Cerrito and police protection from both the county sheriff and California Highway Patrol. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p81-82)

Reform-minded elements in Bayview Number 1 and El Cerrito spearheaded the movement to annex the unincorporated pocket into the city. When the El Cerrito city council in 1951 told Bayview residents it was withdrawing fire protection because injured El Cerrito firemen were not covered by workmen's compensation there, it suggested that the community make a decision: form an independent fire district, annex to El Cerrito, or annex to Richmond. A group of Bayview Number 1 citizens followed through on the long process to win local support and overcome legal technicalities. In October 1955, annexation forces won the election, which brought the 24-block area with 1,200 residents into El Cerrito. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p 81-82)



Toward the end of the 1960's it became apparent to the city that buildable land was becoming scarce in El Cerrito. When the City Council gave attention to high-rise apartment buildings and huge town-house apartment complexes, it provoked a showdown between developers promoting such projects and homeowners who feared the huge buildings would create unattractive high-density areas with building clusters and traffic congestion which would destroy the city's image as a community of homes. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p 84)

**Oakland Tribune**  
8-8 Sun., Feb. 22, 1970

## City Ease Provided In Cabin

By BHAWATHA ESTES,  
AIBD

Your mountain lot is the appropriate setting for this enchanting cabin — as quaint as a Swiss chalet, as convenient as a city apartment.



**PLENTY OF WINDOWS FOR LOOKING AT THE MOUNTAIN SCENERY**  
Water heater closet opens to outside for ready draining

## REALTY ROUNDUP

# New Factory-Built Jobs

Factory-built housing will mean not fewer jobs in the industry but three times as many, according to Robert M. Holmes, president of the 12th annual Pacific Coast Builders Conference to be held June 3 to 5 in San Francisco.

Nor will factory housing necessarily be look-alike, he added.

"Regional differences and individual likes and dislikes will offset any attempt at overnight standardization," Holmes says.

ry, honored 14 "millionaire" salesmen recently in Beverly Hills but first handed the wife of each a crisp \$100 bill and sent them in chauffeured limousines on a shopping trip plus a tour of homes of movie stars. Eight of the winners are Northern California families.

**Exclusive Agent**  
Robert H. Warwick, of 3450 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, has been named

leasing agent for the planned 13-story 150,000-square-foot Fairmount Tower office building in El Cerrito. He reports "excellent progress in the leasing program to date." Groundbreaking for the high rise is scheduled for the spring.

**\$70 Million Plan**  
LOS ANGELES (UPI)—Edward W. Carter, president of Broadway-Hale, has announced plans for

[This is a placeholder. I believe I have seen an "Artist's View" of the Fairmount Tower.]

After much public debate, the council approved several projects, hoping the additional tax revenues would alleviate the city's financial difficulties. The projects included the 19-story Fairmont Towers (1969), which was never built, the 35-unit Rose Park Estate (1969), which was the first town house complex; and the 42-unit Wildwood Estates (1970), which required a zoning variation for its hillside location. The turning point came when the City Council approved the three-story, 400-unit Kaiser Aetna project on the old Chung Mei property. A group of homeowners initiated a referendum that won by an overwhelming vote in the 1972 election to void the project. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p 84-87)

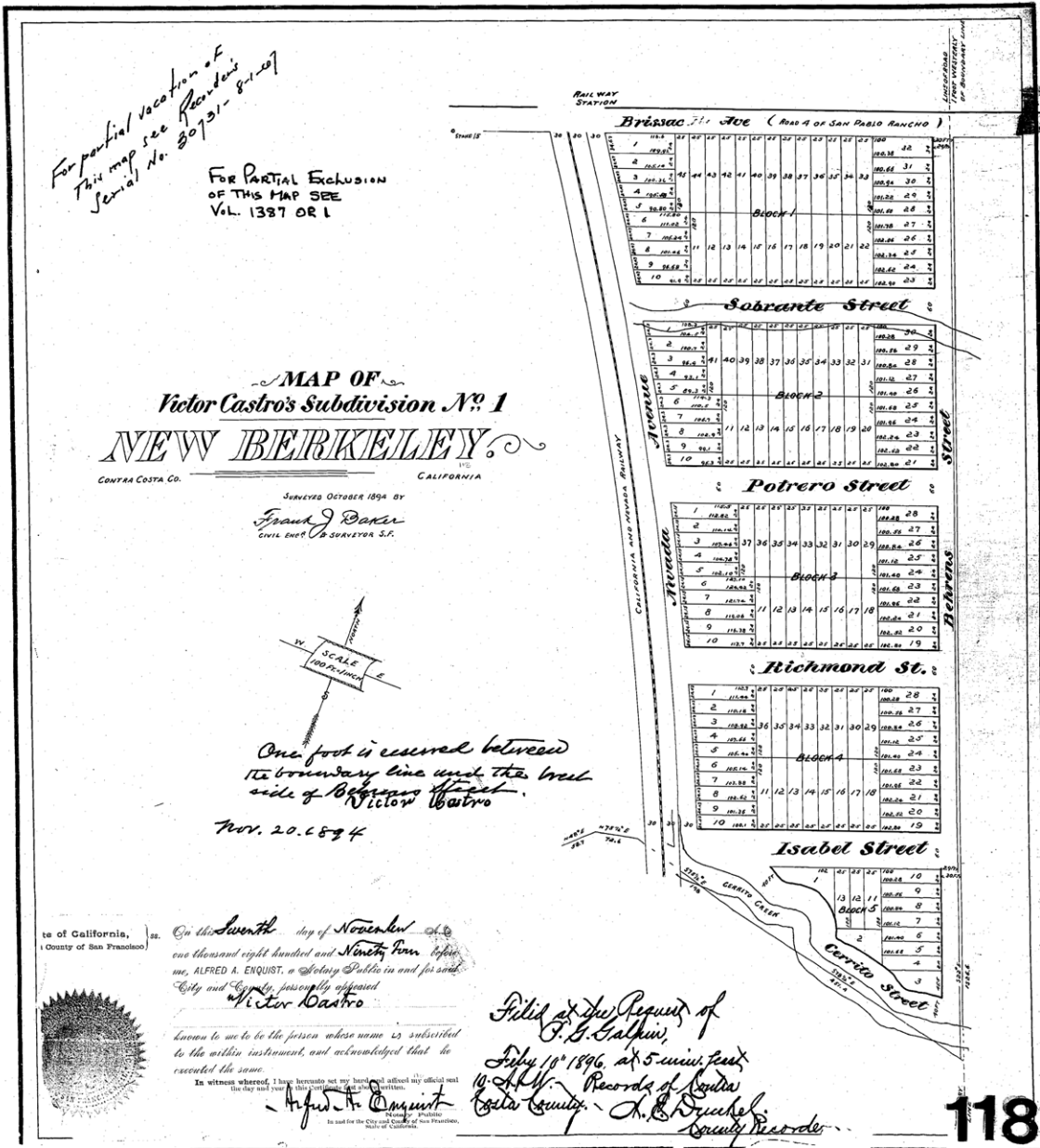
The new City Council, which had a majority representing the homeowner coalition, called a 90-day moratorium on building activity, which allowed time to clarify the single-family home concept in the General Plan as a guide for community development. In some cities at this time, racial or class-based politics had were part of a bias against multi-family housing and therefore preserved middle-class demographics. It is not known if this was the case in El Cerrito. It is known that in certain subdivisions, houses had deed restrictions that prevented sale to African American buyers. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p 87)

#### D. Railroads and the Industrial Core

It would be hard to overstate the impact that a railroad had on a town in the late 1800s and early 1900s. El Cerrito was no exception. Back when the best county roads became quagmires every time it rained and most people traveled by horse, the only reasonable way to move building products and large or heavy objects was by rail; the same was true for people who needed to travel longer distances. If you ran a fuel and feed store; if you ran a lumber yard or building supplies business; if you sold furniture or groceries; or countless other enterprises you faced a lot of extra time, work, and expense if you weren't close to rail service. Likewise, the presence of rail service made a town more desirable and was sure to be part of any sales pitch for real estate development. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p18-19)

The California and Nevada Railroad, was chartered in 1880 by Captain J. W. Smith to run from Emeryville to Salina, Utah. This bare-bones, narrow-gauge line arrived in El Cerrito in 1885 from its Emeryville terminus. Even the presence of an under-capitalized, non-mainline railroad must have been a blessing to the residents, as it would have made all nature of tasks much simpler. The presence of the railroad was significant enough that the name "Nevada" was memorialized by street names in two separate subdivisions in El Cerrito. Two stations were established within today's city limits: McAvoy and Gills. (Erle C. Hanson, 1991, *The California and Nevada Railroad* p xi, 8; Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p56; Erle C. Hanson, 1957, *Richmond Streetcars*, p3; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, *Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1893-01 & 1896-02*; *The California and Nevada Railroad, 1891, Timetable effective November 1, 1891*)

Land development and railroads (both street railroads and mainline railroads) were inextricably linked in the East Bay. The Real Estate Syndicate, owned by F.M "Borax" Smith, owned vast tracts of land in the East Bay. At the turn of the century, you couldn't sell real estate unless people had a convenient way to get to their new home/home site; while at the same time no one was going to ride your railroad if there were no houses or shopping areas as destinations. The California and Nevada timetable appearing in Chapter 3 includes an obscure but clear reference to this. The "Pacific Construction and Improvement Company" noted on the timetable was a shell company owned by Borax Smith. Not surprisingly, Borax Smith was also an important participant in the "Realty Syndicate", an entity that owned thousands of acres of land in the East Bay. Already in 1893 he was positioning himself in the real estate and the transportation business when two of his associates were elected to the C&N Board. When Captain Smith died in 1895, Borax Smith purchased all the stock of the C&N. The California and Nevada gave him access to the northern parts of the East Bay while he was also starting to collect streetcar companies located in the main population centers in the East Bay. F. M. Smith eventually gained control of the streetcars in West County when his Oakland Traction Company purchased the East Shore & Suburban Railroad in 1910. (Vernon J Sappers, 2007, *Key System streetcars: transit, real estate and the growth of the East Bay* p13, 75-78, 81-82; John Hall, 2016, *California and Nevada Railroad*)



1896 tract map showing the California & Nevada Railway, Nevada Avenue, and the McAvoy station (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1896-02)

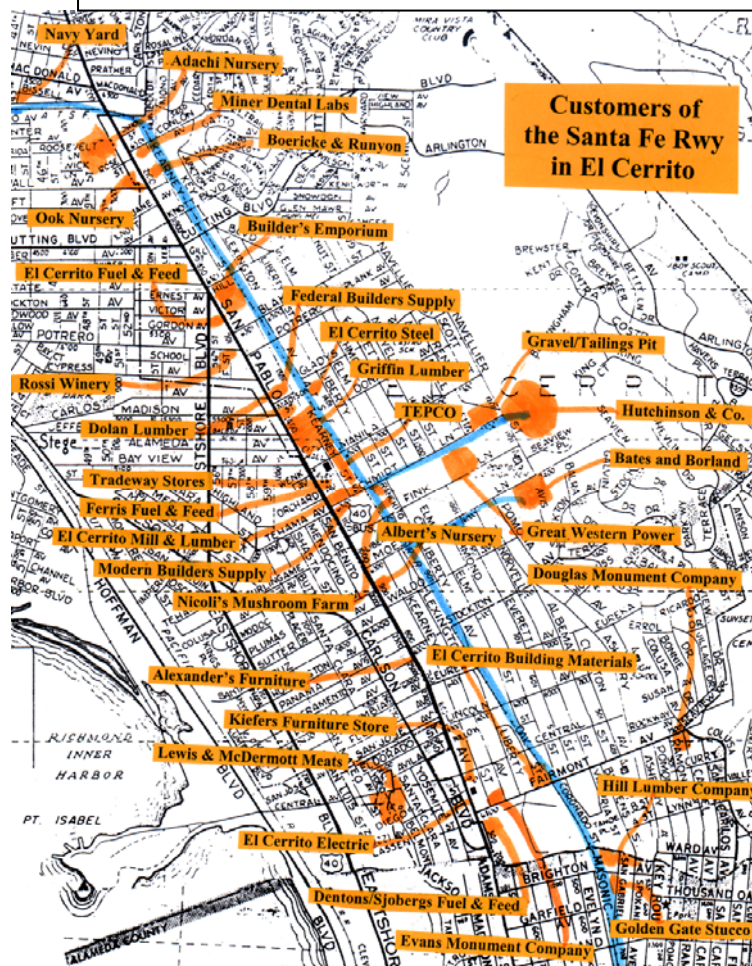
In the 1880's the California & Nevada Railroad was built through El Cerrito about where BART runs today. The first revenue train ran through El Cerrito in 1885. While this railroad always existed on a shoestring, in the horse and buggy days any railroad was a vast improvement over no railroad. The Santa Fe purchased the line in 1902 and spent the next two years replacing the rickety narrow-gauge line with a modern, heavy-duty railroad that connected to its yard in Richmond. The Santa Fe spent nearly two years and a million dollars rebuilding the line, a huge sum in those days for the distance involved and work required. The purchase by the Santa Fe (the purchasing entity was actually a Santa Fe subsidiary called the Oakland and Eastside Railroad)

changed the nature of the railroad presence by offering frequent service and making mainline passenger and freight connections a reality. The line was called the Oakland District. (Erle C. Hanson, 1991, *The California and Nevada Railroad* p8; Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p18-19, 56; Phil Gosney, 2009, *The Warbonnet* p18-19)

# VALLEY DIVISION.—OAKLAND DISTRICT.

| WESTWARD               |              |              |              | Capacity of<br>Hullop | Fuel, Water<br>and other<br>charges | Falling<br>charge<br>hauling | TIME TABLE<br>No. 6<br>May 16, 1904 | Falling<br>charge<br>hauling | Passage<br>time<br>between<br>stations | Falling<br>charge<br>hauling | EASTWARD     |              |              |              |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| First Class            |              |              |              |                       |                                     |                              |                                     |                              |  |                              | First Class  |              |              |              |
| 57                     | 55           | 53           | 51           |                       |                                     |                              |                                     |                              |  |                              | 50           | 52           | 54           | 56           |
| Leave Daily            | Leave Daily  | Leave Daily  | Leave Daily  |                       |                                     |                              |                                     |                              |  |                              | Arrive Daily | Arrive Daily | Arrive Daily | Arrive Daily |
| PM                     | AM           | AM           | AM           | Yard                  | FW<br>TY                            |                              |                                     |                              |  | N                            | AM           | AM           | PM           | PM           |
| 5.35                   | 10.15        | 8.07         | 6.45         |                       |                                     | 10.2                         | RICHMOND                            | 0.0                          |  |                              | 7.50         | 9.50         | 4.50         | 8.20         |
| 5.37                   | 110.17       | 8.09         | 6.47         |                       |                                     | 10.2                         | 1.0                                 |                              | 1.0                                    |                              | 7.48         | 9.48         | 4.48         | 8.18         |
| 5.43                   | 110.23       | 8.14         | 6.52         |                       |                                     | 10.2                         | SIXTH STREET                        | 500                          | 3.9                                    |                              | 7.43         | 9.43         | 4.43         | 8.13         |
| 5.45                   | 110.25       | 8.17         | 6.55         |                       |                                     | 10.2                         | SCHMIDT                             | 30.6                         | 5.7                                    |                              | 7.40         | 9.40         | 4.40         | 8.10         |
| 5.45                   | 110.25       | 8.17         | 6.55         |                       |                                     | 10.2                         | 1.0                                 |                              | 5.7                                    |                              | 7.40         | 9.40         | 4.40         | 8.10         |
| 5.50                   | 110.30       | 8.22         | 7.00         | 30                    |                                     | 10.2                         | SCHINDLER                           | 21.1                         | 8.0                                    | D                            | 7.35         | 9.35         | 4.35         | 8.05         |
| 5.55                   | 110.35       | 8.27         | 7.05         | 30                    |                                     | 10.2                         | 23                                  |                              | 8.0                                    |                              | 7.35         | 9.35         | 4.35         | 8.05         |
| PM                     | AM           | AM           | AM           | Yard                  | WY                                  | 10.2                         | BERKELEY                            | 02.9                         | 10.0                                   | N                            | 7.30         | 9.30         | 4.30         | 8.00         |
| Arrive Daily           | Arrive Daily | Arrive Daily | Arrive Daily |                       |                                     | 10.2                         | 20                                  |                              | 10.0                                   |                              | AM           | AM           | PM           | PM           |
|                        |              |              |              |                       |                                     | 10.2                         | OAKLAND                             |                              |  |                              | Leave Daily  | Leave Daily  | Leave Daily  | Leave Daily  |
| (13.0)                 | (13.0)       | (13.0)       | (13.0)       |                       |                                     |                              | 110.0                               |                              |  |                              | (13.0)       | (13.0)       | (13.0)       | (13.0)       |
| Average speed per hour |              |              |              |                       |                                     |                              |                                     |                              |  |                              |              |              |              |              |

The first Santa Fe timetable for the line – 1904; Schmidt and Schindler were both in El Cerrito (Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, 1904, Oakland District Timetable #6 5-16-1904 Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, 1904, Oakland District Timetable #6 5-16-1904



El Cerrito  
Historical Society  
collection



The Santa Fe had a significant presence in El Cerrito. There was a three-track yard that could store 80 cars, plus a number of sidings. Santa Fe had more than 25 customers in or immediately adjacent to El Cerrito. As early as 1913 the Santa Fe was running ten passenger trains a day in each direction between Richmond and Oakland, with stops in El Cerrito. There were also a number of freight trains each day. El Cerrito had two small "shelter shed" type stations, a corral for livestock, and housing for a section crew. With this excellent rail service available an "industrial core" developed in El Cerrito, primarily adjacent to the tracks but in some cases removed from the tracks by a few blocks. (Phil Gosney, 2009, The Warbonnet p20-21; Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, 1961, Oakland District Side-track record p34-35; Interstate Commerce Commission, 1923, Valuation Section 11 of the California, Arizona, and Santa Fe Railway: Station List; Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, 1913, Oakland District Timetable #33 3-9-1913)

| INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
|---|-----|---------|------|--|--|--------|--------|--|--|
| BUREAU OF VALUATION   |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| Revised Oct. 1, 1923.   |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| H. V. Form No. 561  |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| Owner: The California, Arizona and Santa Fe Railway Company                                   |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| Val. Section No. Calif. 11 Miles Main Line, Miles all Tracks.                                 |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| Approved: Jno. A. Calvin  |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| COST OF REPRODUCTION.   |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| Per Unit. New Total. Less Depreciation.   |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| ACCT. NO. 18. Title STATION AND OFFICE BUILDINGS  |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| Richmond, 6th St., Mile 1.0   |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| Shelter shed 8'x20', frame, built 1905 est.   | 64  | Each    | 1    |  |  | 63     | 40     |  |  |
| Grading, crushed rock and sand  | 100 | Cu. yd. | 413  |  |  | 494    | 494    |  |  |
| Total Richmond, 6th St.   | 96  |         |      |  |  | 557    | 534    |  |  |
| Schmidt, Mile 3.9   |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| Shelter shed 12'x16', frame, built 1905 est.  | 64  | Each    | 1    |  |  | 124    | 79     |  |  |
| Grading, gravel   | 100 | Cu. yd. | 143  |  |  | 155    | 155    |  |  |
| Total Schmidt   | 84  |         |      |  |  | 279    | 234    |  |  |
| Schindler, Mile 5.7   |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| Shelter shed 8'x20', frame, built 1905 est.   | 64  | Each    | 1    |  |  | 63     | 40     |  |  |
| Stock yards 48'x48', built 1914   | 87  | "       | 1    |  |  | 310    | 270    |  |  |
| Total Schindler   | 83  |         |      |  |  | 373    | 310    |  |  |
| Berkeley, Mile 8.0  |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| Passenger depot, one-story, 27'x56', frame, portico 1750 sq. ft., built 1905                  | 78  | "       | 1    |  |  | 5,300  | 4,134  |  |  |
| Furniture   | 50  |         |      |  |  | 803    | 402    |  |  |
| Lawn 500 sq. ft., 30 trees  | 100 |         |      |  |  | 50     | 50     |  |  |
| Grading   | 100 | Cu. yd. | 53   |  |  | 26     | 26     |  |  |
| Total   | 75  |         |      |  |  | 6,179  | 4,612  |  |  |
| Freight depot, one-story, 30'x51', frame built 1905 est.                                      | 78  | Each    | 1    |  |  | 2,170  | 1,693  |  |  |
| Furniture   | 50  |         |      |  |  | 300    | 150    |  |  |
| Platform 2140 sq. ft., frame  | 46  | "       | 1    |  |  | 490    | 225    |  |  |
| Total   | 70  |         |      |  |  | 2,960  | 2,068  |  |  |
| Total Berkeley  | 73  |         |      |  |  | 9,139  | 6,680  |  |  |
| Oakland, Mile 10.9  |     |         |      |  |  |        |        |  |  |
| Passenger depot, one-story, 27'x110', 2-story, 37'x18', frame, arcade 3540 sq. ft., 1904 est. | 78  | Each    | 1    |  |  | 12,230 | 9,295  |  |  |
| Furniture   | 50  |         |      |  |  | 801    | 401    |  |  |
| Platform 12250 sq. ft., brick   | 43  | "       | 1    |  |  | 2,875  | 1,236  |  |  |
| Lawn 28850 sq. ft.  | 100 |         |      |  |  | 1,147  | 1,147  |  |  |
| Piping, outside   | 80  |         |      |  |  | 708    | 566    |  |  |
| Paving 27000 sq. ft., macadam   | 75  |         |      |  |  | 5,116  | 2,337  |  |  |
| Grading   | 100 | Cu. Yd. | 2105 |  |  | 998    | 998    |  |  |
| Total   | 73  |         |      |  |  | 21,875 | 15,980 |  |  |

The stations on the Oakland District of the Santa Fe; Schmidt and Schindler were both in El Cerrito (Interstate Commerce Commission, 1923, Valuation Section 11 of the California, Arizona, and Santa Fe Railway: Station List)





Two examples of the Industrial Core along the Santa Fe right of way in El Cerrito (El Cerrito Historical Society collection, top photo courtesy of the Duveneck family)







This bridge just north of Blake Street was not built for the bike path it currently supports. It was built for 250,000-pound locomotives and long trains of cars weighing almost as much. It has 23 inches of timbers in four solid layers that are crisscrossed to support and stabilize the enormous load.

For several years the Oakland Transit streetcar line that ran up San Pablo Avenue from Oakland ended at County Line. In 1904, the East Shore & Suburban Railway, run by Col. William S. Rheem, began building a streetcar line from downtown Richmond to the main entrance of the Standard Oil plant at Point Richmond. By 1905 the line ran from

County Line straight up San Pablo Avenue to Macdonald Avenue, out Macdonald Avenue, and on to the Standard Oil plant. At the County Line it connected with the F.M. Smith's "Oakland Transit" streetcar line to downtown Oakland. In 1906, the East Shore & Suburban Railway purchased the grounds of the old Stege mansion and built Eastshore Eastshore Park. Of course they also built a branch line to the park. This branch line split off the main line at Potrero and San Pablo Avenues: - "Stege Junction". Eastshore Park was a very popular destination for a number of years. (Vernon J Sappers, 2007, Key System streetcars: transit, real estate and the growth of the East Bay p82-87; Erle C. Hanson, 1961, The East Shore and Suburban Railway, p6-11; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p34)

| Toward Oakland, Oakland and Richmond via San Pablo Ave., Potrero Ave., Road No. 13 and Macdonald Ave.---Southward |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
|---|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---|-----|----|-----|-----|----|-----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|
| FIRST CLASS   |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| TIME TABLE No. 1.   | 1     | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9 | 10  | 11 | 12  | 13  | 14 | 15  | 16 | 17 | 18  | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22  |     |
| February 15, 1912   | 1     | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9 | 10  | 11 | 12  | 13  | 14 | 15  | 16 | 17 | 18  | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22  |     |
| STATIONS  | 1     | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9 | 10  | 11 | 12  | 13  | 14 | 15  | 16 | 17 | 18  | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22  |     |
| Water St.   | 14.48 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Seventh St.   | 14.11 | 5.55 | 6.03 | 6.15 |      | 6.13 | 6.33 |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Central Car Station   |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Twelfth St.   | 13.84 | 5.52 | 6.00 | 6.12 |      | 6.10 | 6.30 |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Twenty-second St.   | 13.14 | 5.47 |      | 6.07 |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Fortieth St.  | 11.92 | 5.41 |      | 6.01 | 6.01 |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| University Ave.   | 9.13  | 5.28 |      | 5.48 | 5.48 |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| County Line   | 7.07  | 5.20 |      | 5.40 | 5.40 |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Contra  | 1     | 6.35 |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Bay View  | 2     | 5.82 | 5.15 | 5.35 | 5.35 |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Stege Junction  |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| East Shore Park   | 3     | 4.96 |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Walls   | 4     | 4.55 | 5.15 | 5.30 | 5.30 |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Dullman   | 5     | 3.85 |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Twenty-third St.  | 6     | 3.12 | 5.05 | 5.25 | 5.25 | 5.38 | 5.44 | 5.45 |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Car Station   | 7     | 2.69 | 5.03 | 5.23 | 5.23 | 5.37 | 5.43 | 5.43 |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Sixteenth St.   | 8     | 2.41 |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Tenth St.   | 9     | 2.17 |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Ninth St.   | 10    | 1.96 |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| First St.   | 11    | 1.57 |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Santa Fe Depot  | 12    | 1.39 |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Santa Fe Wye  | 13    | 1.12 |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Ohio Junction   |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Wash. Avenue  | 14    | 0.53 |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| School House  |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Oil Works   |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Run Number  | 1     | 336  | 3    | 12   | 338  | 21   | 340  | 19   | 5 | 342 | 7  | 344 | 330 | 9  | 332 | 10 | 10 | 334 | 11 | 11 | 1  | 336 | 338 |
| STATIONS  |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Oil Works   | 0.80  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Rich Line   |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Quarry  | 0.00  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Run Number  |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |
| Sunday Run Number   |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |     |    |     |     |    |     |    |    |     |    |    |    |     |     |

Through service on the streetcar from downtown Oakland to the San Rafael ferry, 1912.



Two other street railways also left their footprint in El Cerrito. In 1911, the Southern Pacific's OA&B division (the Oakland, Alameda, and Berkeley commuter division of the Southern

Key System right of way marker that was near Manila & Rivera (El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the Smith family)



Pacific) started on an extension north to Richmond. This line was to branch off the existing OA&B Solano Avenue line in Albany at Solano and Adams and then run along Adams to Cerrito Creek. After crossing Cerrito Creek the line would run along Panhandle Blvd. (now Carlson Blvd.), out Cutting Blvd., and up 10th street to reach downtown Richmond. From there it would continue to the Standard Oil plant. But construction was halted after about a quarter-mile of right-of-way and track work had been completed when a new traffic study revealed how little usage there would be of

the new line. However, this history explains the curving Carlson Boulevard of today in an area that is otherwise a standard rectangular grid of streets and it is important to note that the dates of the subdivision maps for the Richmond Annex exactly match this time frame. (Robert S. Ford, 1977, *Red Trains in the East Bay*, p123; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, *Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1912-03*)



This map clearly shows the route of the Key System from south-central El Cerrito and north (El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the Richmond Public Library)





The El Cerrito & Richmond Annex portion of SP's proposed OA&B extension (El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the Western Railway Museum)

GardensGaRdens, Boulevard Gardens-2 and Richmond Junction tract maps. This can be clearly seen at the top of the map of the proposed OA&B extension (previous page.). The wide median on Ashbury Avenue south of Fairmount Avenue is evidence of the Key System's right-of way. The curving path of Ashbury Avenue north of Fairmount Avenue and the curving path of Key Blvd. south of Cutting Blvd – both through otherwise rectangular street grids - reveal what was planned for those streets. Likewise, houses that are not parallel to the street where the former Key Route right-of-way crosses Plank and Blake are more prima facie evidence of this planned use. (Vernon J Sappers, 2007, Key System streetcars: transit, real

After the Northern Railway (purchased by the Southern Pacific in 1882, which was in turn eventually purchased by the Union Pacific in 1996) built its railroad fronting the bay, factories established locations near it on the waterfront towards the end of the 1800s. Among these were the gunpowder and dynamite plants on Albany Hill and on Point Isabel. Explosions were of such frequent occurrence that the houses nearby were said to have been built without plaster. The last explosion in 1905 destroyed the plant and killed a number of workers. (Mervin Belfils, 1975, *Slaughterhouses and More Past History*; Southern Pacific Railroad, 1962, *Industry Map of Richmond and Vicinity*; John R. Signor, 2004, *Southern Pacific's Western Division* p384)

[Looking for a good PG&E picture.]

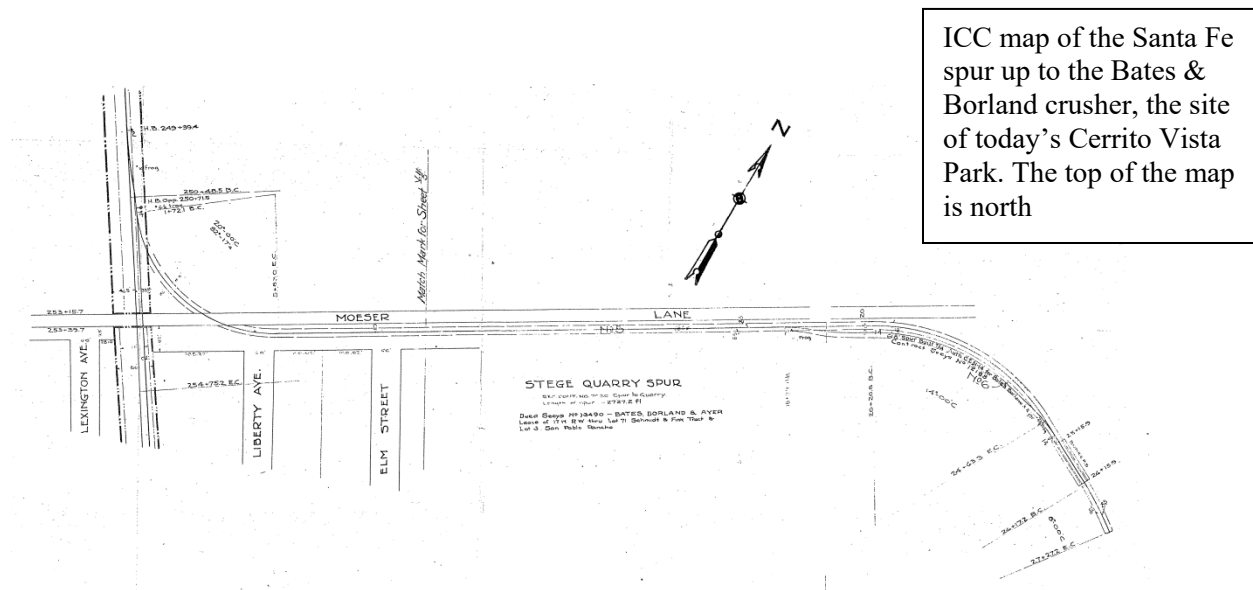
## E. The Rock and Stone Business

The rock and stone business was a significant economic force in El Cerrito in the first half of the twentieth century. There were two larger quarries and one smaller quarry located in El Cerrito. There was also a sales office for a quarry in the Glen Ellen area of Sonoma County. The “Stege Spur” track off of the Santa Fe’s main line ran up Moeser Lane. The quarries in El Cerrito were of such importance to the Santa Fe that the junction of the Stege spur and the Santa Fe main line was known as “Dwight”, it being named after Dwight Hutchinson, owner of the Hutchinson Quarry in El Cerrito. The Stege spur ran up Moeser Lane to what is now Cerrito Vista Park. Bates and Borland Company’s crusher and bunker were situated here and hundreds of railcars were filled with rock stored in the bunkers. The location where the rock was actually quarried was above Arlington Avenue at what is now Camp Herms. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p50; Phil Gosney, 2009, *The Warbonnet* 20-21; Lee Gustafson and Phil Serpico, 1996, *Santa Fe Coast Lines Depots*, p221; Mervin Belfils, 1975, *El Cerrito Quarries*)



Extant tunnel under Arlington Avenue used by rock cars on the way down the hill. El Cerrito Historical Society photo, courtesy of the Duveneck family.

A narrow-gauge tramway brought rock from the quarry at the top of the hill down to the crusher and bunkers in special metal rock cars. This tramway was a funicular railroad: it had two cars that were connected by a thick steel cable. The cable looped around a pulley at the top and the loaded car going down the hill would pull the empty car back up the hill. About where Moeser Lane and Sea View Drive intersect there was a small shed where Kip Morrill was stationed. His job was to switch the hopper car hauling rock down from the quarry onto a sidetrack so the empty car going up could pass the loaded car going down. Mr. Morrill was blind and he switched the cars around each other based on the sound the cars made as they approached. (Mervin Belfils, 1975, *El Cerrito Quarries*; Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p50)



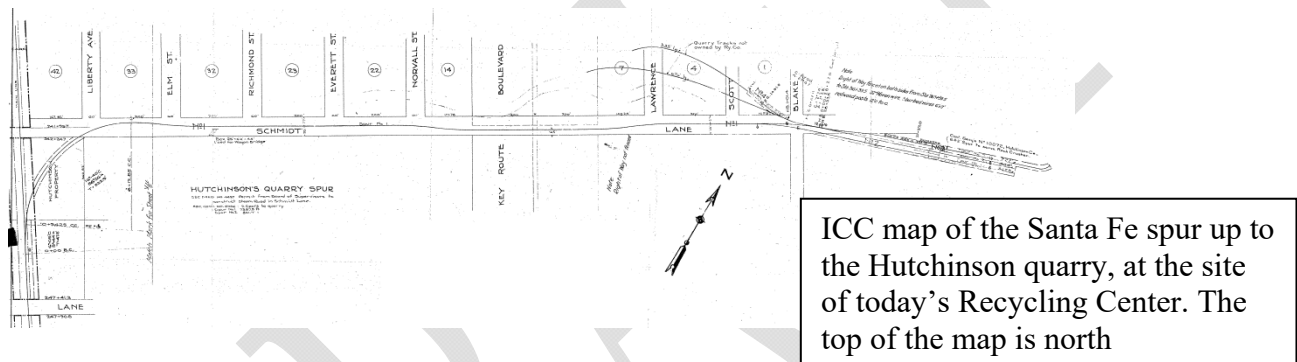
The tracks ran up the hill and through a small (extant) tunnel under Arlington Avenue to the bottom of a loading chute at the site of the Bates and Borland quarry. Smaller quarry cars from the tunnels that went in the side of the hill dumped their loads into the top of the loading chute. Once the hopper car underneath the loading chute was full it was ready to travel back down the tracks to the crusher at the bottom of the hill. In the middle of the quarry area was a shed where the dynamite was stored and the workers kept their tools. In 1930 Bates and Borland closed their El Cerrito operation and sold the quarry property to the Boy Scouts. None of the original quarry structures remain but the main part of the camp is build in the void in the hillside that is the result of the quarrying operations. (Mervin Belfils, 1975, El Cerrito Quarries; Victor Linblad, 1958, Some Historical Data on Camp Herms p1 Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p50)



The bunker at the Bates and Borland Quarry

A second large quarrying operation was the Hutchinson Quarry at the top of Schmidt Lane, situated on land that is now owned by the City. The quarry's large cut into the hill can be seen from various locations around the Bay Area. This quarry became endangered as new houses approached. Large amounts of dynamite being detonated would break windows and would cover the nearby houses with dust. People complained and the City requested that the company abandon this site, which it did in the late 1940's. The bunkers were burned in 1953 as part of a fire department training exercise. (Mervin Belfils, 1975, *El Cerrito Quarries*; Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p 51]

Mr. Anson Blake, who was in business with George Schmidt in 1897, purchased some of the Galvin property (the Galvin family is descended from the Castro family, the original grantee of Rancho San Pablo.) The Hutchinson Quarry, -opened around 1905, after the necessary property was purchased from the Schmidt family, who in turn had purchased it from Anson Blake. This property ran about halfway down the hill, about as far west as today's Cabrillo Street. [MBECQ]

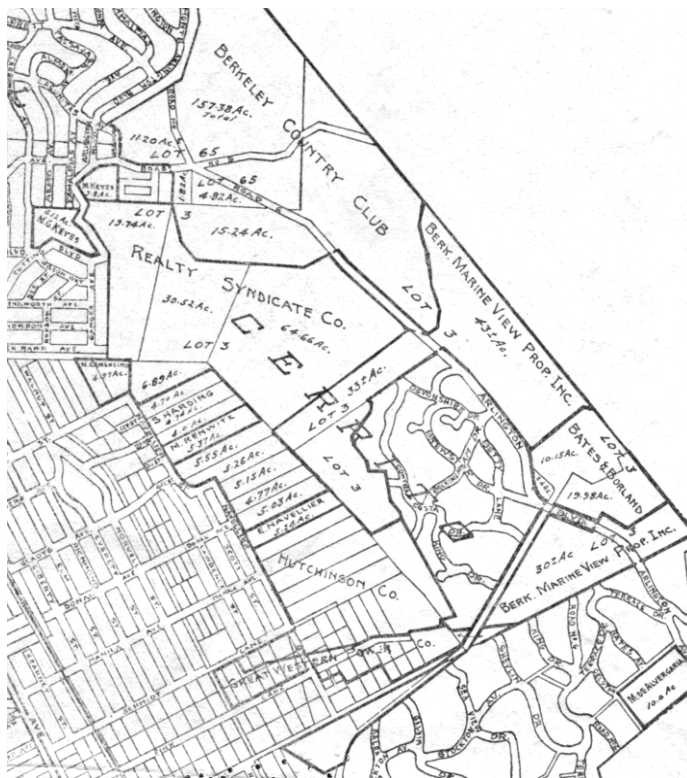


The spur track from the Santa Fe Railroad that ran up Schmidt Lane to the quarry was installed after the County Board of Supervisors issued a permit in 1913. It also left the main line at Dwight. The type of rock removed from this quarry over a period of years was rated as some of the best in the entire Bay Area for construction and fill. In later in years the Hutchinson Quarry merged with Earl Brown's company and was renamed the H&B Rock Company. Its office was located on the southwest corner of Schmidt Lane and Navellier Street. This office was moved from its former location (the old foundation that still remains at the east end of Portola Drive). This building had been previously used for room-and-board workers at the quarry prior to being moved. The quarry owned all the land on the east side of Navellier up through 1318 Navellier. The quarry also owned three houses near Navellier and Manila for its workers (1250 and 1254 Navellier still remain.) In addition to the Santa Fe, much rock was shipped out on horse-drawn wagons in the early days. Occasionally rock was transported down to the East Shore & Suburban streetcar line on San Pablo Avenue. Sometimes the streetcar company would run a train of flat cars loaded with crushed rock from the quarries; other times they added a trailer to a regular streetcar. (Mervin Belfils, 1975, *El Cerrito Quarries* ; 1930 map on next page)





Hutchinson Quarry,  
photo  
courtesy of  
the El  
Cerrito  
Historical  
Society



1930 map showing the quarry property and the route of the tramway from the quarry above Arlington to today's Cerrito Vista. El Cerrito Historical Society Collection.

In addition to the Santa Fe, much rock was shipped out on horse-drawn wagons in the early days. Occasionally rock was transported down to the East Shore & Suburban streetcar line on San Pablo Avenue. Sometimes the streetcar company would run a train of flat cars loaded with crushed rock from the quarries; other times they added a trailer to a regular streetcar.

A third quarry, which did not operate as long and which was of much smaller scale, was situated between Cutting Boulevard and Arlington Avenue, just below Murietta Rock. To get their rock they blasted the rock and also tunneled up into the hill under Arlington Avenue towards Murietta Rock. As a result of this quarrying and removal of rock, Murietta Rock is no longer as large or prominent as it once was. A Mr. Leone and his partner operated this quarry. They would haul the quarried rock away on small cars to the crusher and bunkers that were situated on the hillside. Except for the the evidence seen on Murietta

Rock itself, no traces can be seen of the old quarrying operation as this area is now entirely built out. (Mervin Belfils, 1975, *El Cerrito Quarries* )





The original Valley of the Moon Quarry building ca 1925. El Cerrito Historical Society Collection, courtesy of the Marty family

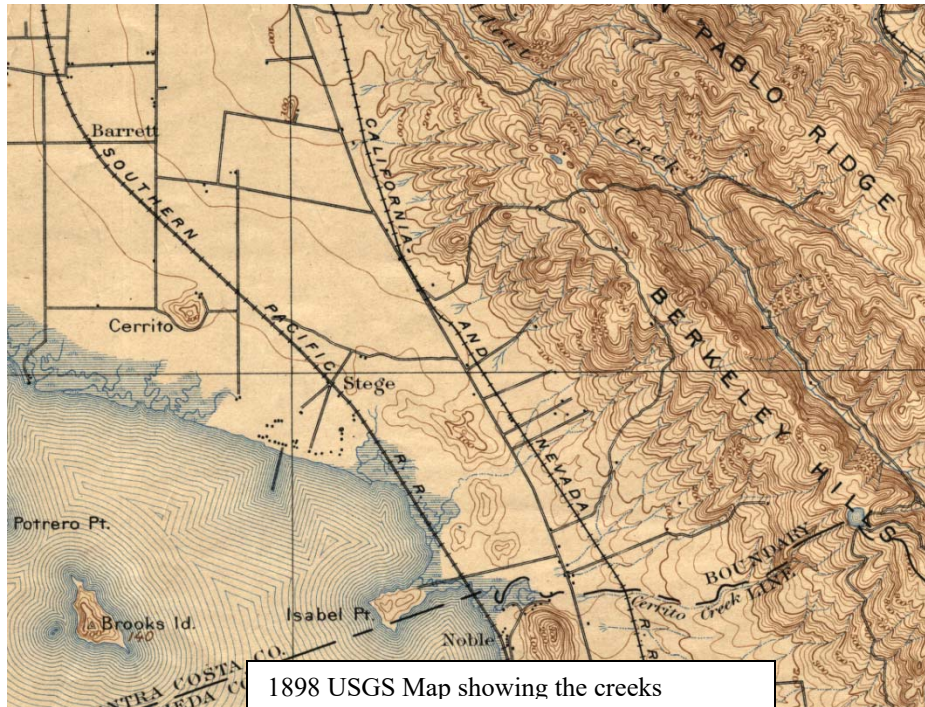
An entirely different segment of the rock and stone business that operated in El Cerrito was the sales office of the Valley of the Moon Quarry. The quarry itself was located in the Sonoma Valley off Trinity Road and this quarry had no relationship to any of the quarries located in El Cerrito. However, El Cerrito was the center of a thriving quarry business, so it made good sense to locate a sales office for the quarry in El Cerrito. The sales office was built in the late 1920s. ( El Cerrito Historical Society, 2003, Joyce Marty Oral Interview file]

An important distinction between these enterprises is that while the local quarries produced only construction-grade rock and gravel, the Valley of the Moon quarry offered a higher-priced product, decorative rock such as slate. Thus the building with its

decorative façade was an attractive standing display of the products of the Valley of the Moon quarry. Also, early pictures indicate that the Valley of the Moon quarry office started as a single gable and was later expanded to the current four, likely indicating sales went well. The building that the Valley of the Moon quarry built at 10848 San Pablo Ave. is the only remaining building in El Cerrito that is associated with El Cerrito's historical rock and stone business. (Mervin Belfils, 1975, El Cerrito Quarries; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2003, Joyce Marty Oral Interview file)

## F. Farms and Dairies

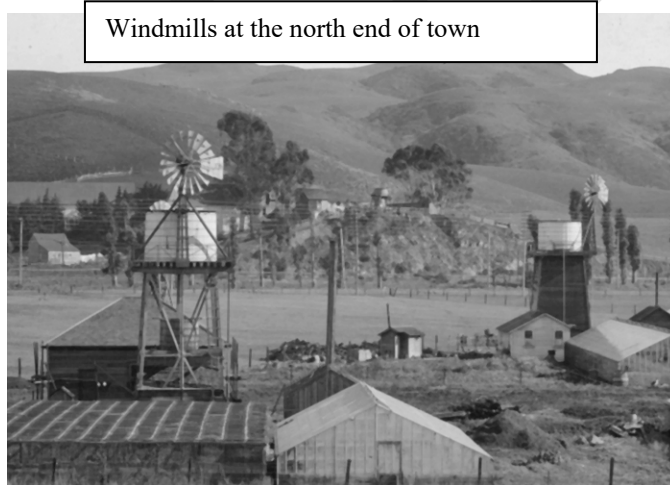
El Cerrito was an excellent location for dry land ranching, farming, and dairying. A glance at the 1898 USGS topographic map of the San Francisco area shows an interesting characteristic of the



1898 USGS Map showing the creeks

El Cerrito area: some of the creeks branched out into multiple fans once they got near San Pablo Avenue. For these creeks much of the water coming down from the hills soaked in before it was able to complete what should have been a very short trip to San Francisco Bay. What was left tended to spread out in several creek beds. The water that percolated down into the soil provided a fairly high water table and made water

readily available to those who were willing to dig or drill wells. Not coincidentally, when looking at photographs of El Cerrito from the early days, the number of windmills in the photos is striking. Most of the Japanese and Italian nurseries that sprang up in the area had their own wells. Most old-timers recall that their families had wells. Water was usually found about 20 feet down. (Donna Graves, 2004, *Not at Home on the Home Front* (Oishi) p 23; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2002-2018, Frank Storno Oral Interview file; United States Geological Service, 1899, San Francisco Quadrangle Topographical Map)]



Windmills at the north end of town

The Castros raised many kinds of fruit, vegetables, beans, corn, wheat, and livestock on Rancho San Pablo. At the time of his death, Francisco Castro had about 1,400 head of cattle, 500 horses, and 600 sheep on Rancho San Pablo. There were about 200-300 fruit trees at the adobe in San Pablo alone. Richard Henry Dana commented that great quantities of grain were grown at the missions and in Contra Costa County wheat production was at its peak in the 1880s. Captain Ellis built a warehouse to hold wheat and hay at Ellis landing. Blum & Company had a number

of warehouses across the County. Their warehouse in San Pablo had a capacity of 1,500 tons of wheat. (Mae Fisher Purcell, 1940, History of Contra Costa County p400,416; Samuel Newsom, 1907, The Home of the Castros p12-14; Joshua Paddison, 1999, A World Transformed: Firsthand Accounts of California before the Gold Rush, p 205; Earl L. Scarbrough, 1975, The Adobe at Cerrito Creek, p1; Erle C. Hanson, 1991, The California and Nevada Railroad p11; Daisy Williamson De Veer, 1924, The Story of Rancho San Antonio, p37; Harold E. Davis, 1965, A Short History of Contra Costa County, p12)]

William Rust established himself in the area by developing a good business making farm implements, for which there was great demand. This demand is a good indication that the flatlands north and south of his blacksmith shop near Fairmount Avenue were well suited for agriculture. [Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p29)

Farming was a long-time occupation in El Cerrito and the surrounding territory. The reasonably wet winters and mild summer weather, along with easily accessible well water, made it productive farmland as well as pastureland for dairying and raising cattle. The Castro family raised grain, and Owen Griffins commented in his writings that there was a considerable amount of grain grown in the area. The Glassen family farmed grain and vegetables over a large area north of Schmidt Lane. Other families grew a variety of commercial products; for example the Nicolis grew mushrooms inside darkened sheds. Both the Japanese and the Italian communities built reputations in the flower business. In fact the Japanese and Italian communities from the East Bay and the Peninsula operated their own wholesale flower market, the California Flower Market in San Francisco. As late as World War II it was still common to see farmers with teams of horses plowing fields in El Cerrito, Richmond, and El Sobrante. (Arthur Lorenzo Hopkins Film Archive; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2002, Robert Smith Oral Interview file; Daisy Williamson De Veer, 1924, The Story of Rancho San Antonio, p37; Earl L. Scarbrough, 1975, The Adobe at Cerrito Creek, p1; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2001-2007, Louie Nicoli Oral Interview file; El Cerrito Historical Society, 20012-2015, Tom Hopkins Oral Interview file; Evan Griffins, 1938, Early History of Richmond, p1,7; Donna Graves, Ward Hill, and Woodruff Minor, 2004, Historic Architecture Evaluation - Report for Eden Housing p36; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p47)





Society considers an individual to have been running a dairy farm if he had four or more cows producing milk. The amount of milk produced by four cows, even in times of low production, would be vastly more than one family and close neighbors could consume. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p47, 49; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2002, Robert Smith Oral Interview file; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2002-2006, Frank Mello Oral Interview file)



Schmidt Lane runs up the center of this picture to the quarry. North of Schmidt the fields are clearly cultivated as indicated by the breaks between the rows. El Cerrito Historical Society collection

Some of these dairy farmers just staked their cows out near their houses while others had a more formal feeding environment. This was largely a function of the size and location of the dairy



Bernice Andregg and calf in front of the hay pile on Behrens. El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the Hannon family.

farm and also the pasture land that was available nearby. The Andregg family had a dairy farm and bottling operation on their property on Behrens Street and the milk house still survives. They sold the bottled milk locally. Most of the others who bottled their own milk also sold it locally. Many of these dairy farmers had regular routes for milk delivery. During Prohibition, particularly if you had milk delivery from an Italian, you could also have grappa delivered to your front door along with the milk. The former Andregg property is the only place in El Cerrito where any physical trace of these dairy farms remains. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2002-2004, David Kayfes Oral Interview file; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2002-2014, Bernice Hannon Oral Interview file; El

Cerrito Historical Society, 2001-2004, John Gasparini Oral Interview file)

The families who did not bottle their own milk sold it wholesale in Berkeley or Oakland. Old-timers remember milk cans on the Santa Fe's platform at the Blake Street station, waiting for the morning local to pick it up. Typically the milk went to Berkeley or Oakland to be either bottled for sale there or made into cheese. Once El Cerrito incorporated, the dairy farmers were made less and less welcome. Ordinances began to restrict the range of cows, require that they be staked, and later limited the size of herds. As the population increased, neighbors were unhappy

with the sights, sounds, and odors of dairy farming. Eventually the dairy farmers either moved away or just closed up shop. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2001-2007, Louie Nicoli Oral Interview file; Richmond Independent, 1923, El Cerrito Bans Dairies in Cities; Richmond Independent, 1924, El Cerrito Bans Dairies in Cities)

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## G. The Italian Community



Dressed in Italian style on a Sunday, ca 1927. El Cerrito Historical Society, Courtesy of the Storno familv.. ca. 1927

El Cerrito had a large Italian community that dominated commerce and culture in the area near the intersection Potrero and San Pablo to such an extent that this part of town was called Little Italy. The Little Italy section of El Cerrito has been defined in two separate historic resource evaluations. These evaluations were performed by Architectural Historians who meet the qualifications of the State Office of Historic Preservation. These two reports are found under: Michael Corbett, 2007, Historical and Architectural Assessment of the Rodini Family Property; and Knapp & VerPlank, 2011, Historic Resource Evaluation for 10848 & 10860 San Pablo Avenue. Italian immigrants were drawn to El Cerrito and the surrounding area because there were good opportunities for employment for unskilled immigrants. The most common trades these immigrants had (if they had one at all) were as bricklayers and cement workers. (Michael Corbett, 2007,

Historical and Architectural Assessment of the Rodini Family Property p 10-11)

In El Cerrito the quarries provided jobs for many Italian immigrants, as did TEPCO (Technical Porcelain and China Company) in later years. In Stege there were plentiful jobs at the California Cap Works (blasting caps and related products), the Metropolitan Match Factory, the Stauffer Chemical Company, the Tonite Powder Works, and the Vulcan Powder works. In Richmond there was California Art Tile, the Ford plant, the Pullman Car Shops, the Santa Fe Railway shops, Standard Oil, and many other manufacturing and industrial companies. All these places provided many job opportunities for immigrants and, at a number of them, for skilled tradesmen as well. In the years before and during the Depression it was common for people to walk two miles or more to their job to avoid spending a nickel on the streetcar fare. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p26,50; Nilda Rego, 2005, Days Gone By in Contra Costa County - Volume 3 p 19-22; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2001-2004, John Gasparini Oral Interview file)



Starting on the Ferrario house ca 1920. ECHS Coll, courtesy of the Soldavini family.

San Pablo and Potrero was the hub of Little Italy. While Italians lived throughout the West County area, there was a particular concentration of Italian families in this area. Many of the Italians who lived in El Cerrito came from the Milan area of Northern Italy. Much of this was a result of one immigrant finding some success in El Cerrito and sending word back to Italy that a certain brother or cousin should come join him. Success also meant that if the immigrant had a family back in the old country he could send for them as well. A job that paid an unskilled immigrant

reasonable wages in America was more success than most people could ever attain back home. Until the end of World War II it was uncommon to be a member of an Italian family in El Cerrito and not be related to everyone else in town, either via a marriage or via a relative back in the old county. This kind of chain migration was not only taking place in El Cerrito. It was a major contributor to California Italian population growth in the first part of the 1900's. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2001-2012, Thelma Soldavini Oral Interview file; Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, *Living with Flowers*, p34)

Italian was often spoken at home but of course the children learned and preferred English. The community was very self-reliant and, for example, worked together to build houses. Most of the Italian families grew and raised as much of their food as they could. It was common to have a cow, chickens, rabbits, squab, and sometimes a goat. There was always a vegetable garden and fruit trees. A number of the families made their own wine. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2001-2012, Thelma Soldavini Oral Interview file; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2002-2018, Frank Storno Oral Interview file)



The completed Ferario house. ca. 1930. It's completely made of brick and still stands. . ECHS Coll, courtesy of the Soldavini family.

There were many Italian stores along San Pablo and Potrero Avenues in Little Italy. Included were stores such as Tezzi's Italian "Cooperativa", Frandio Bortolotti's barber shop, Cisi's Dry Goods, Louie Nicoli and Lou Favero's "Louie's Club", Nazarro Moro's hardware store,



The Nicoli family, ca 1917. ECHS Collection, courtesy of the Nicoli family..

Barone's European Bakery, Morotti's store, Magri's butcher shop, the Fara brothers' three stores, John Grondona's Crab Shack, and many more, as can be seen from the accompanying maps. In many of these stores it was common to hear more Italian than English until the late 30s, when the children of the immigrants began to exhibit their preference for English. Also, in those days there were a number of residences along San Pablo Avenue and of course in this area most had Italian occupants.

The Saint John the Baptist

Catholic church was the center of the Italian community and early "first communion" photos show large numbers of individuals with Italian surnames. ( El Cerrito Historical Society, 2005, *Images of America: El Cerrito* p 44, 60, 87,88; Father William N. Abeloe, 1975, *Parish of St. John the Baptist 1925–1975* p21)

The main Italian Club in El Cerrito was the Italian Catholic Federation. It was primarily a social club and it held frequent dances and picnics. Many people in town were members of the Galileo Club in Richmond. Also in El Cerrito was the Owl Club, which was mostly but not exclusively Italian. The Owl Club met in the hall above Moore's Pharmacy. Many local community activities, wedding receptions, and similar events were held either at the Owl Club or at Rossi Hall. The YLI (Young Ladies' Institute-1939) and YMI (Young Men's Institute-1945), sponsored by the Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church, were social clubs for young adults. The St. John the Baptist Church also built the "Catacombs Club" in the 1950s as a youth activities center. It had the first public swimming pool in El Cerrito. (Father William N. Abeloe, 1975, Parish of St. John the Baptist 1925-1975, p75 p22, 30-31, 40-42; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2002-2018, Frank Storno Oral Interview file; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2001-2012, Thelma Soldavini Oral Interview file)

Alcohol flowed freely in Little Italy. The Navellier family's Lafayette Park, at San Pablo and Blake, was a popular weekend afternoon destination both for locals and for those who came from a bit further away. Old-timers recall people arriving at Lafayette Park on the Santa Fe, whose "Blake" station was directly



Frank Gasparini and Louis Poloni outside the Poloni's store; this building still stands on Sam Pablo avenue. ECHS Collection, courtesy the DeMariai family.

behind Lafayette Park. As noted earlier, many of the streetcar conductors referred to the intersection of Potrero and San Pablo as Grappa Junction, rather than as Stege Junction, the name used in the railroad timetable. During Prohibition many of the Italian dairymen were happy to deliver grappa along with the rest of a household's dairy order. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p49; El Cerrito Historical Society, 1990, Don Bonini Oral Interview file; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2001-2004, John Gasparini Oral Interview file]

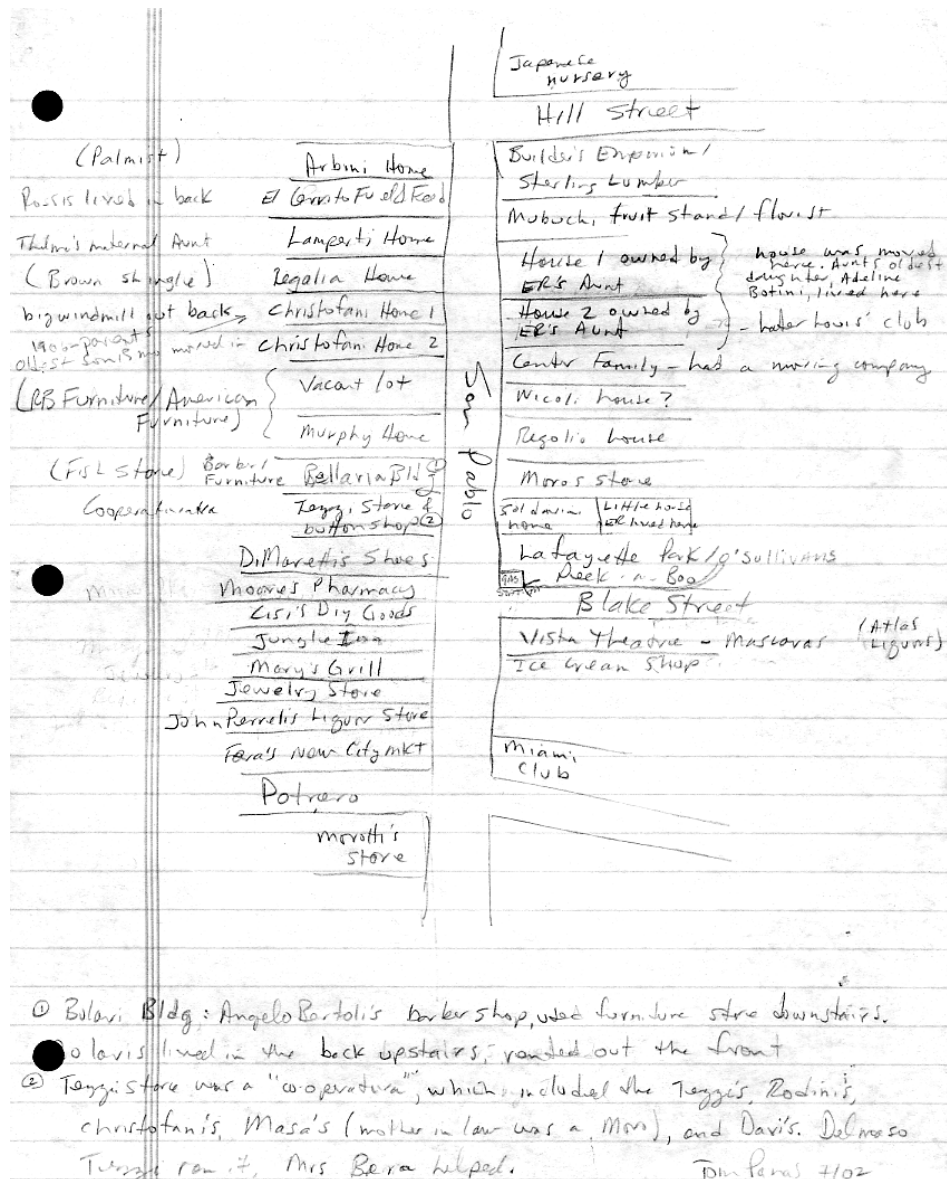
Early on, in 1907, Guilio Rossi came to El Cerrito and he established a liquor store and then a winery southwest of the intersection of Potrero and San Pablo. The grapes for

his winery came in on the Santa Fe from the San Joaquin Valley. Mr. Rossi also became a major broker for the resale of grapes. When Prohibition was enacted Mr. Rossi had to close his winery, except for a small exclusion for making sacramental wine. But the Italian community still wanted its wine and during Prohibition families were allowed to make up to 250 gallons of wine for personal consumption. Since they could no longer buy large batches of wine from Mr. Rossi, multiple families would form a pool and work with wine merchants to bring in wine grapes from the San Joaquin Valley. The grapes came in on the Santa Fe and were usually delivered to the Santa Fe depot in Emeryville. [Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p47]]

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Local families would drive down to Emeryville to purchase grapes by the ton. Some families would rent a crusher, press, tanks, and the other equipment needed to make wine. Before crushers became common family members would crush the grapes using the traditional method: by stomping on them. The grape juice was put into tanks to ferment for at least fourteen days. After most of the juice was extracted from the crushed grapes, the grape remnants were forked into a press and more juice was extracted. This juice was put into separate fermentation tanks and was carefully monitored because it could turn into vinegar very quickly. Sugar content was tested periodically and when the proper level was reached the wine was put into barrels and then split among the pool of families. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2002-2018, Frank Storno Oral Interview file)



① Bulari Bldg: Angelo Bartoli's barber shop, used furniture store downstairs.

② Pasos lived in the back upstairs, rented out the front

③ Tangy's store was a "cooperativa", which included the Tangy's, Rodini's, Christofani's, Mora's (mother in law was a Mori), and Davis. Delmaso Tangy ran it, Mrs Berra helped. Potrero #102

[this should be redone]





business to take advantage of the large lots (about 1 acre each) in the 1893 Schmidt and Fink Tract. The Figone Nursery appears to have been the first Italian Nursery in town, and the Figones were soon joined by their cousins the DiMartinis. Later, after arriving from Italy, was John Belliardo, who set up his nursery east of today's Richmond Street (which did not go through between Moeser Lane and Portola Drive in those days) and between Fink Lane (Now Portola Drive) and Schmidt Lane. The condominium development known as "Rose Place" in this same location today was named after Mr. Belliardo's Nursery. Further west the Farinas had a nursery across Fink Lane from St. John's Hall on Portola. Further south Albert Albonico set up Albert's nursery, a retail nursery, on San Pablo between Moeser Lane and Waldo Avenue. John Gerletti set up his well-known Gerletti Nursery and Begonia Garden on San Pablo Avenue just north of Orchard Avenue. His nursery ran up the hill to the "court" at the end of Wenk Avenue. ( El Cerrito Historical Society, 2005, Images of America: El Cerrito p35, 104; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p47; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2002, Alan Albonico Oral Interview file; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2003, Joyce Marty Oral Interview file;)



The retail shop of the Gerletti Nursery and Begonia Garden. This building is the last remnant of the Italian nursery community.

Italian families were present before the turn of the century in El Cerrito. As the Twentieth Century progressed they became a more dominant part of El Cerrito but then after World War II the influence of the Italian community waned as it became a smaller percent of the population and its influence, culture, and style was diluted. By the latter half of the 1950s Little Italy as a place was

clearly disappearing into the fabric of a much larger and more diverse community. (Michael Corbett, 2007, Historical and Architectural Assessment of the Rodini Family Property p9-14)

## H. The Chinese Community

On May 2, 2011 the City Council of El Cerrito passed a Proclamation declaring that May 4, 2011 was “Chung Mei Home for Boys Day” in the City of El Cerrito. This Proclamation is reproduced in Appendix A. [Much of the material in this section comes from the 2007 Historic Resources Evaluation written by LSA Associates and listed in the bibliography.]



The Chung  
Mei Home ca  
?????. EC  
Historical  
Society  
collection

### Chinese in California

As with many others, the earliest Chinese immigrants came to California during the Gold Rush. The Chinese ideogram for California, “Golden Mountain,” represents the economic importance of California for the Chinese. The economic boom created by the discovery of gold in 1848 brought political refugees and economic opportunists to California, where the tremendous labor shortage in the developing mining and collateral industries created the highest wage level in the world. The Chinese in California quickly became an integral part of the labor force, participating in the mining industry and railroad construction, as well as in the unskilled workforce of collateral industries such as laundry service. Although Chinese laborers in California were paid less than the average white male, they made considerably higher wages than their counterparts back home. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p6)

The Chinese population in California between 1860 and 1880 was more than 8 percent of the total population of the state. The overwhelming majority of Chinese immigrants, however, had no intention of emigrating permanently. The very word for emigrant in Chinese means “sojourner” and carries the implication of eventual return. The “sojourners” were encouraged to

seek their fortune in the United States and then back to their families in China. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p6)

One reason for Chinese immigrants to maintain only temporary resident status was the imbalance of males to females in California and the nation as a whole. Confucian belief dictated that a wife should stay home to care for her husband's family. In 1880, California listed more than 70,000 Chinese males, with fewer than 4,000 Chinese females. By the late nineteenth century, Oakland's "sex ratio was approaching parity," with many women finding work in food processing plants. In 1920, seventy years after the immigration to California began, the Chinese community was still a "bachelor society" with women numbering fewer than ten percent. The imbalanced gender ratio of the Chinese community within the United States remained distorted for years due to subsequent legislation that prevented further immigration by Chinese to the United States. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p7)

#### Chinese Exclusion Laws

In 1882, the United States Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which suspended immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States for 10 years, issued residency certificates to those that were already in the country and leaving with intent to return, and restated the bar against naturalization. Amendments and renewals of the act occurred over several decades when, in 1924, the United States Congress passed the Immigration Act (also known as National Origins Act) imposing a quota on immigration of only two percent of the number of people from any non-western country based on the number of people from that country in the United States at the time of the 1890 census. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p7)

Illegal immigration into the United States began as early as the exclusionary laws were instituted, and became commonplace after the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 destroyed the city's vital statistics records, which allowed many Chinese to enter the country using counterfeit paperwork. Chinese fraudulently claiming American citizenship could not only enter and exit at will, but "any child fathered abroad could also claim derivative citizenship under American laws." These children were predominantly sons; forged documentation also allowed Chinese to enter as other men's sons, known as "paper sons". (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p7)

The 1924 immigration law contributed to the already existing gender imbalance of the Chinese community, making it impossible for United States citizens of Chinese ancestry to bring alien Chinese wives to the country. The concept of paper sons further shifted the gender ratios. The census of 1930 showed four times as many married men as married women, however the wives of the majority of these married men were living in China, not America. Anti-Chinese sentiments and the gender imbalance created a growing population of children born of Chinese ancestry living on the streets; children who were orphaned by their parents "because of illness, unfit homes, abandonment, or because of the death of a parent or a parent having to temporarily return to China". These children were banned from non-Chinese orphanages due to their ancestry. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p7)

The Second World War brought a dramatic change to how most Americans viewed Chinese immigrants and those already living in the United States. Prior to the attack, Chinese in California, and the nation as a whole, demonstrated against Japan's economic and military

expansion that led to the Second Sino-Japanese War (against China) in 1937. After Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor in 1941, the status and prestige of the Chinese community was elevated in the eyes of Americans, and regard for Japan and the Japanese community in the United States fell. China, unlike Japan, had never interjected itself in the affairs of the United States, and the surprise attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, which killed over 2,400 people and catapulted the United States into the Second World War, made China an ally. Perception of Chinese Americans during the early 1940s in the United States prompted a repeal of the exclusionary laws against the Chinese which allowed legal immigration for the first time since 1882 and enabled Chinese nationals already residing in the country to become naturalized citizens. Due to these changes, the total Chinese population rose over 50 percent during the 1940s. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p7-8)

#### Institutional Homes for Children

Shelters for indigent children were not uncommon in East Bay during the twentieth century. In the late 1920s, the Alameda County Welfare Council supervised three shelters for homeless children. There were two nonsectarian children's institutions in Oakland, and several faith-based orphanages. However, those institutions had rules against accepting "children of color or Asiatic races." (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p8)

Dr. Charles R. Shepherd, an Englishman schooled at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, who also spent four years as a professor in China, recognized a need for an orphanage for boys of Asian ancestry in the East Bay. Ming Quong, a Presbyterian Mission Home for Chinese girls established in San Francisco in 1874, and relocated to Oakland after the 1906 earthquake and fire, provided a suitable home for girls of Chinese ancestry, but they did not admit boys until the 1950s. In 1923, Dr. Shepherd, established the Chung Mei ("Chinese American") Home for Chinese Boys in a wood-frame house in Berkeley. Chung Mei was the only institution of its kind in the United States. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p8)

The residents of Chung Mei attended public schools and went to Sunday services at the First Baptist Church in Berkeley. Dr. Shepherd, known as "Captain," was a "firm" and "consistent" leader who believed in the regimented style of the military to shape the children's upbringing. The boys planted and maintained their gardens, cleaned and ironed clothes, performed minstrels, and harvested fruits and vegetables to earn money. The Chung Mei Home was outgrowing itself but its relocation was forced by highway construction. Dr. Shepard had a difficult time finding an appropriate site but finally located one in El Cerrito. In 1935 a new Chung Mei home opened in El Cerrito at the site of the Current Windrush School campus on Elm Street, in El Cerrito. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p8)



The main entrance to the Chung Mei Home ca 1935. EC Historical Society collection

### Project Area Historical Overview

The Chung Mei Home was relocated to El Cerrito on land that was previously owned by the Heidie family who operated a dairy. The land was purchased for \$10,000, which was earned, by the boys through musical performances and other endeavors. The main building was constructed in 1935 and dedicated in June of that year. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p8)

By 1940, the Chung Mei Home was already in need of expansion, and again the boys stepped up to raise money for the cause. They earned \$12,000 by harvesting crops and salvaging paper and other scrap materials. Additional funds were donated by entertainer (and adoptive parent) Bob Hope, who contributed 10 percent of the proceeds from several of his Bay Area performances. Money raised locally and in the greater San Francisco Bay Area added to the fund, and in 1948 a maintenance building was attached to the east elevation of the main building. In 1949, a gymnasium was constructed to the southeast of the main building of the Chung Mei Home. Both of these buildings, incorporated motifs, fenestration, and roof lines that evoked Chinese architecture. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p8-9)

The Chung Mei Home was established to provide for young Chinese boys who were in need of care and guidance and for whom there was no other provision. After World War II, the need for welfare facilities like the Chung Mei Home was reduced because of the change in perception toward people of Chinese descent. The Chinese-American community had become fairly

integrated into general society and the children were more welcomed into regular childcare facilities and foster homes. The Chung Mei Home for Chinese Boys, the only institution of its kind, closed its doors in the summer of 1954. For over 30 years, nearly 700 boys benefited from the care, guidance, and structure provided by Dr. Charles R. Shepherd and the Chung Mei Home. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p9)

For two years the former site of the Chung Mei Home for Chinese Boys remained unoccupied, when in 1956 the “property evolved to the Western Baptist Bible College”. It was during this ownership the L-shaped building in the northeast corner of campus was constructed, as well as minor additions to the gymnasium. The campus changed hands in 1974 when Armstrong Preparatory School took over. It appears that during this ownership, the roof on the gymnasium was changed from tile to composite shingle, while keeping the roofline, ridge beam and Chinese motif, and skylights intact. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p 9)

The Windrush School purchased the campus in 1987. Windrush was a private primary education facility until 1989, when it added a middle school (grades six through eight). Enrollment today is around 250 students. Windrush School closed in 2012 and a new school, Summit K2, opened in 2014. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p9; Summit K2 School home page; Betty Buginas, 2013, Charter Middle/High School Headed for Windrush?)

#### Eligibility Evaluation

The District appears eligible for listing in the California Register at the local level under Criterion 1, because it “is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of ...history.” A historic district is described by the National Park Service as follows: “A district possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continually of sites, buildings, structures, of objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development....The identity of a district results from the interrelationship of its resources, which can convey a visual sense of the overall historic environment or be an arrangement of historically or functionally related properties”. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p14)

#### Period of Significance

The Chung Mei Home for Chinese Boys was established in 1923 by Dr. Shepherd to provide a much-needed care system for male children of Chinese ancestry that fell victim to the “bachelor society” resulted from the United States’ strict immigration laws. For over 30 years, the Chung Mei Home provided shelter and tutelage to abandoned and orphaned Chinese boys in the East Bay until it closed in 1954, when the need for this type of institution lessened due to changing American perceptions of the Chinese community. The period of significance for the District is from 1935, when the Chung Mei Home moved to the 1800 Elm Street location in El Cerrito, until 1954, when Chung Mei Home ceased to exist. The buildings that contribute to the District are those that were built within the period of significance of the Chung Mei Home: the main building, the old garage converted to an art studio, the maintenance building, and the gymnasium. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p14-15)



### Significance

The Windrush School campus was the site of the Chung Mei Home for Chinese boys from 1935 to 1954, and contributing buildings that were used by the Chung Mei boys constitute “a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction”. Under Criterion 1, the District is associated with events that have made significant contribution to the history of Chinese experience in the East Bay. Specifically, the District provided institutional care for Chinese-American orphans, which helped the Chinese community in the East Bay to adapt to the social constraints of mainstream American society. According to several undated and un-sourced newspaper articles provided by the El Cerrito Historical Society, the Chung Mei Home was the only institution of its kind in the United States for orphaned or abandoned Chinese boys. Under Criterion 2, although the Chung Mei Home was associated with Donald Powers Smith, a recognized architect, he is not a significant figure in California or East Bay history. Under Criterion 3, except for the main building, which may qualify due to it embodying distinctive characteristics and high artistic values, the District as a whole is not remarkable in design construction, or artistic values. Under Criterion 4, the District does not appear to be able to answer questions important in history. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p15)

### Integrity

The District maintains the historical integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The District is in its original location since it moved from Berkeley in 1923. It retains virtually all elements of its design, with the exception of the addition of the L-shaped building and the playing field and area. The L-shaped building, however, does not detract from the campus feeling of the district. The setting of the District retains the general flow of the pathways and relationships between the buildings and open space. Windrush School has maintained appropriate landscaping, although the landscaping on campus, specifically the several areas around the proposed construction and renovation that is slated for removal, appear to have been planted after the period of significance (Western Baptist Bible College 1956). Materials in the District buildings are generally those of the period of significance. The original roof tiles on the gymnasium have been replaced with composition singles, but the change does not detract from the setting or feeling of the building as a contributor to the District. The workman-ship of the District has been retained and can be clearly seen in the construction of the buildings, and their Chinese motifs. The Chinese architectural elements of each building link them to each other, giving a sense of unity to the District. The District retains its integrity of association as it is the same place the provisional care was provided, and it continues in an educational capacity today. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p15)

### Eligibility

The Windrush School campus appears eligible for listing as a district in the California Register under Criterion 1 at the local level for its association with Chinese experience in the East Bay, specifically the provision of institutional childcare for Chinese boys in El Cerrito. The campus' buildings, with the exception of the L-shaped building built in the late 1950s, contribute to the eligibility of the District and have the integrity necessary to convey the District's historical significance. As a California Register-eligible cultural resource, the District is a historical

resource under CEQA. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p15)

The District is significant at the local level under California Register Criterion 1 for its association with the Chinese experience in the East Bay, specifically the provision of institutional childcare for Chinese boys in El Cerrito. As such, the qualities that justify the District's eligibility for the California Register lie in its expression of institutional architecture, Chinese-themed architectural elements, and educational uses. In each area, the District maintains these expressions and, in fact, the replacement of the stylistically discordant gymnasium with an addition that displays the dominant architectural theme of the campus will contribute to the continuity of the District's historical significance. (LSA Associates, 2007, Historical Resources Evaluation for the Windrush School Project p20)

In 2013 an application was submitted and this site was found eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic places on 9/30/2013.

## I. The Japanese Community

The National Park Service has found that there are two significant historic contexts relating to the Japanese presence in the El Cerrito and Richmond area: (National Park Service, 2009, Findings on the significance of the Japanese Community in West Contra Costa County):

- 1) the Japanese American flower industry in California (Local/California significance)
- 2) the internment of the Japanese during World War II (National Significance)

### Japanese Horticulture in Western Contra Costa County

The Japanese flower-growing business was the first organized industry to put down roots in El Cerrito. At the turn of the century in the area we now call El Cerrito there were a number of independent businesses: retail stores, bars, restaurants, blacksmiths, and so on. But there were no business that sold to a wholesaler; no retail business ventures that sold their products outside the immediate vicinity if not in fact strictly to walk-in customers; no businesses in which more than one enterprise in the same industry located in the same area because a combination of business-related factors made that area particularly attractive. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p18-19, 45, 47, 50; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p3)

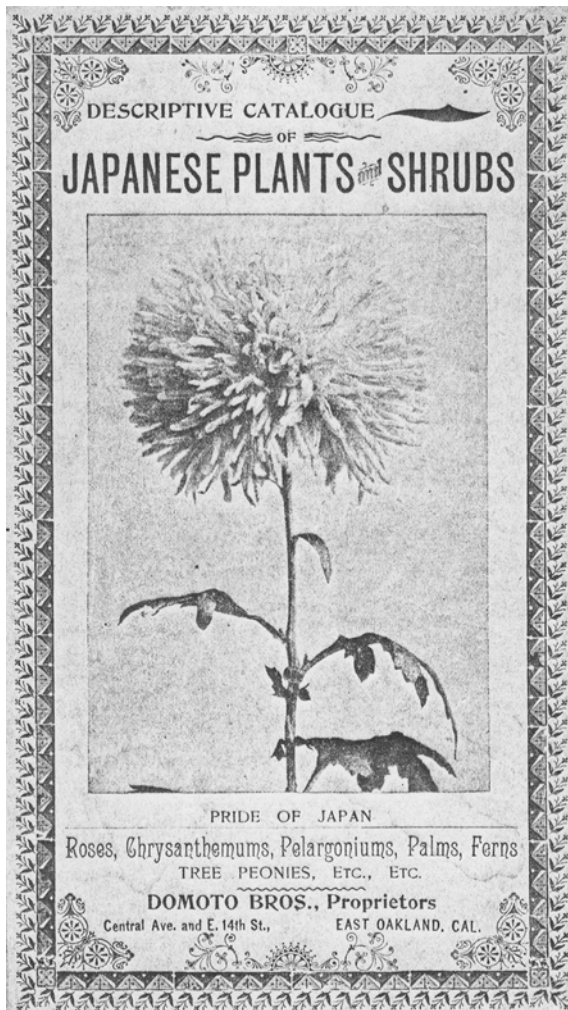
Today when we think about the clustering that takes place in certain industries and places such as Silicon Valley, we explain this clustering in terms of inputs to the process. For the semiconductor and computer industry in Silicon Valley there is an excellent combination of a talented labor pool, venture capital, a well-honed supply chain, major universities, and other factors that have made Silicon Valley a center of innovation and success. In 1900 the same kind of situation existed in northwest El Cerrito and the adjoining part of Richmond. The combination of:

- inexpensive land (a legacy of the messy land ownership situation reviewed earlier in this document, with clear title to land remaining hopelessly tangled until 1894),
- adequate underground water (a result of the local topography since a significant amount of the water that ran off the hills percolated down into the ground rather than flowing out to the bay),
- good transportation (the railroad and the streetcars),
- a well-trained labor base fired with immigrant zeal,
- good control of supply/sales to retailers
- a well-organized and centralized wholesale market, and
- excellent weather conditions

drove a horticultural industry that with mutual support and collaboration prospered for more than 100 years. (Donna Graves, Ward Hill, and Woodruff Minor, 2004, Historic Architecture Evaluation - Report for Eden Housing p36,38-39; William C. Clarke, 1959, The Vegetative Cover of the San Francisco Bay Region in the Early Spanish Period, p 68; Donna Graves, 2004, Not at Home on the Home Front (Oishi), p 23)

Any review of the Japanese flower growing industry on the West Coast is hopelessly incomplete without a discussion of the Domoto brothers, Japanese immigrants who arrived in the Bay Area from Japan's Wakayama prefecture beginning in 1884. The Domotos, who arrived from Japan

with nothing more than hopes for prosperity, built a remarkably successful nursery business. Along the way they trained scores of nurserymen (in many cases after recruiting them from their home prefecture of Wakayama) who went on to open their own nurseries up and down the East Bay, the San Francisco peninsula, and further afield. This process went on for two generations. The Domotos trained so many of their countrymen that the Domoto nursery operation became known to as “Domoto College.” The leadership of the Domotos was also instrumental in the success of the wholesale flower market that the flower growers created in San Francisco and which was, to a large part, responsible for the Japanese nursery community’s success. (Donna Graves, Ward Hill, and Woodruff Minor, 2004, Historic Architecture Evaluation (Report for Eden Housing) p39; Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, Living with Flowers, p14)



Domoto Brothers Catalog ca 1910. El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market

The first Domoto brother, Takanoshin, arrived in San Francisco in 1884 and was followed by his brother Kanetaro in 1885. In 1884 there were about 100 Japanese in the San Francisco and Oakland area. As with most immigrants, the Domotos had high hopes for success as professionals but lacking English skills they first had to learn English and they joined their countrymen working as laborers to pay for their schooling and their living expenses. So they and their countrymen worked as houseboys, janitors, gardeners and other such roles. It didn’t take too long for the Domotos to learn that being Japanese, they had few opportunities to advance to higher jobs. On the advice of an official from the Japanese Consulate who was also from Wakayama and who had observed the relatively high price of cut flowers in San Francisco, the brothers decided to open a nursery. (Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, Living with Flowers, p15-16)

In 1885, the brothers pooled their money and rented a plot of land in Oakland. Kanetaro had been a farmer in Japan and had worked in San Francisco as a gardener at the Sutro Estate, so he was in charge of tending the carnations and chrysanthemums that they grew on their land. As if that wasn’t enough, he worked essentially as a street merchant to sell the flowers they grew and also held down a part-time job. But the business must have been doing reasonably well as the

Domotos called their brother Motonoshin to America in 1887 and their brother Mitsunoshin to America in 1890. By 1892, the Domotos were able to buy two acres of land for their nursery in the Melrose district of Oakland and then in 1894 they bought an adjacent two acres. They continued to grow and prosper at this site, where in addition to their traditionally business of

raising flowers for sale they also imported for sale plants and trees from Japan, Australia, and Europe. (Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, *Living with Flowers*, p16-17)

The Domoto Brothers catalog in 1902 listed hundreds of plants, including 230 varieties of chrysanthemums alone. 1902 was also the year the Domoto brothers purchased a new, much larger site for their nursery on Krause Street in Oakland. They called it their “New Ranch” and it was the first large-scale Japanese nursery anywhere in America. As they prospered and began to more fully understand their market, the brothers realized the importance of a good staff. They also realized that more successful Japanese growers would, rather than diluting their share the market, actually enlarge the overall market by adding diversity, variety and strength. To this end they began a tradition in 1892 of returning to Wakayama each year and bringing back to America another promising Japanese fledgling that they could train, count on as reliable labor, and eventually release to succeed on his own. (Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, *Living with Flowers*, p p17-18; Gary Kawaguchi, 1995, *Race, Ethnicity, Resistance and Cooperation: an Historical Analysis of Cooperation in the California Flower Market*, 39-40; Donna Graves, Ward Hill, and Woodruff Minor, 2004, *Historic Architecture Evaluation - Report for Eden Housing* p 39)

The success of the Domotos in training two generations of Japanese nurserymen was an enormous accomplishment. But they also almost single-handedly laid the foundation and then built the rest of the structure of the organization that enabled each Japanese nurseryman not just able to pay his bills, but to literally become prosperous. This was the wholesale market that became today’s California Flower Market. From the earliest days the wholesale market was located in downtown San Francisco. The growers who participated in the market in those days were not just the Japanese but also German, French, and Italian. On market days, Wednesdays and Fridays, the first runs of the trains, streetcars, and ferries headed for San Francisco were full of ethnic flower growers bringing their products to the market. (Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, *Living with Flowers*, p21-22)

The market itself was originally an open-air operation located between Lotta’s fountain and the Podesta-Baldocchi florist shop. This location provided two conveniences to the market participants: water and easy waste disposal. In the early 1890s the Domoto’s flower wagon became the center of the market. The Domotos hauled over not just their flowers on the wagon but also those of other Oakland-area growers. The market normally opened about 7 in the morning and the nearly 100 retail florists who typically participated snapped up their purchases in less than an hour. Reporters of the time described the offerings of the market in the most glowing terms. Anything left after the initial rush was normally sold at a large discount or literally discarded, with the growers then returning to their nurseries to get back to work. (Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, *Living with Flowers*, p20-22)

The San Francisco earthquake marked the beginning of a new era for the flower market. Of course with martial law in place after the earthquake the flower market had to temporarily shut down. But within a few weeks the rules restricting transportation to and from San Francisco were lifted and the open-air market resumed. The temporary site was this time directly outside the Podesta and Baldocchi store but it lacked both the water and refuse disposal the growers had relied on at their former site. Growers feared that demand would be very weak but discovered that any change in demand was imperceptible. But City officials had other plans. As much as

possible they wanted to clear downtown streets of clutter and congestion and one way to do this was to outlaw street sales. It was at this time that the Domotos, once again charted the course, advocating that the growers find an indoor site for their market. (Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, *Living with Flowers*, p23-26)

Obviously after the earthquake, very little usable retail space was available and real estate prices, given the lack of available space, made renting space in existing buildings infeasible. But in 1909, after three years of patiently canvassing the market, the Domoto brothers finally located a space in an alley between Sutter and Post just up from Montgomery. The space seemed noticeably too small but it met the key tests: i) it was not priced unreasonably, and ii) it was convenient for the Peninsula growers, the East Bay growers, and perhaps most importantly, the florist. The new market was an immediate success and this new market at 31 Lick Place was the first of several indoor sites the California Flower Market has occupied in its more than 100-year history. (Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, *Living with Flowers*, p25-26)

The wholesale participants in the market were the Chinese, Italian, and Japanese growers. They banded together for strictly pragmatic reasons: i) they knew they would put more money in their own pockets if they could avoid selling through wholesalers, and ii) none of the three ethnic groups were remotely able to fully satisfy the diverse needs of their customers, the florists. The California Flower Market was officially incorporated in 1912 and even today the market retains a strong association with a number of independent growers hailing from several different nationalities. The California Flower Market is the reason that the communities of Japanese growers all around the Bay area thrived: surviving the bad times, doing reasonably well in the lean times, and prospering handsomely in the good times. (Donna Graves, Ward Hill, and Woodruff Minor, 2004, *Historic Architecture Evaluation - Report for Eden Housing* p36; Gary Kawaguchi, 1995, *Race, Ethnicity, Resistance and Cooperation: an Historical Analysis of Cooperation in the California Flower Market*, 73-78)

### The Nurseries in El Cerrito

[Much of the material in this section came from the document listed in the bibliography authored collaboratively by the Japanese nursery families, *The Way We Were*.] The original area where Japanese nurserymen set up shop was in the eastern reaches of the town of Stege. This area was bordered on the south by Potrero Avenue, on the west by 52nd Street, on the north by Hill Street, and on the east up to the parcels that bordered the west side of San Pablo Avenue. Today this area that was once a part of the town of Stege is all part of the City of El Cerrito (for example, El Cerrito's outlier "F Street" was laid out as a part of the town of Stege.) While the nurserymen competed vigorously they also cooperated whenever appropriate, for example helping each other build new greenhouses and perform other major tasks. This section describes the nurseries in El Cerrito in the order in which they were founded. After each family name is the name of the internment camp to which the family was sent during World War II. This section also includes a one-line entry for each of the nurseries just next door in Richmond. (Donna Graves, Ward Hill, and Woodruff Minor, 2004, *Historic Architecture Evaluation - Report for Eden Housing* p35, 38-39; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2008, *Tracts and Subdivisions in El Cerrito 1903-11*; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, *Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage*, p 2; Donna Graves, 2004, *Not at Home on the Home Front* 11,13)



**Nabeta Family (Topaz)** It was in 1902 on the northeastern edge of the community of Stege Yataro Nabeta, a “graduate” of Domoto College, purchased land and started a nursery in 1902. Mr. Nabeta was from Wakayama prefecture in Japan and he was invited to come work at the Domoto Nursery in 1892, with his wife and sons remaining in Japan. Mr. Nabeta subsequently established his own nursery in Berkeley and in 1900 established the first nursery in Stege. A few years later he called his son Torataro, who was still living in Japan, to America to work in the nursery. They grew roses in their nursery. In the late 1930s the state extended the Eastshore freeway to Potrero Avenue in El Cerrito and built Eastshore Avenue through the Nabeta (and Honda) nursery property, wiping out more than a third of it. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, *The Way We Were*, p13; Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, *Living with Flowers*, 116)

Mr. Nabeta was not an American citizen and therefore was considered an enemy alien after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was a leader in the Japanese community and the FBI considered all the leaders dangerous. The FBI arrested him in February of 1942 and the family did not know what happened to him for several months. Eventually the family received a censored letter from



The Nabeta nursery, 1940. El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the Honda Family.

him stating that he was in Bismarck, North Dakota. After about a year he was sent to Lordsburg, New Mexico and in late 1943 he rejoined his family at the Topaz internment camp. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, *The Way We Were*, p31)

Mr. Nabeta and his wife returned to El Cerrito in 1945 to find that their nursery had been completely vandalized and was essentially destroyed. After completely rebuilding their nursery and getting back on their feet the state announced it was going to extend the Eastshore Highway, wiping out the rest of the family's

nursery. The family donated what little remained of the nursery property to the East Bay Free Methodist Church, which still stands today, and started their nursery operation anew on Brookside Avenue in Richmond. Mr. Nabeta died in 1971. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, *The Way We Were*, p31)

**Adachi family (Topaz)** Isaburo Adachi came to America in 1897 at the age of 25. . He was unmarried at the time and from the Japanese prefecture of Gifu. He invited his brother Sadajiro to join him in America and found him a job at a Japanese cemetery in Colma. In 1905 they decided to build a nursery in El Cerrito. The Hill Lumber Company of Stege (until about ten years ago still a household name) built their first greenhouse and the Adachis set up a goal to build one greenhouse a year; by the time of World War I they had twelve greenhouses. In 1910

Mr. Adachi returned to Japan to find a bride and marry. He was successful and a year later his bride arrived in Seattle; about the same time Sadajiro's wife arrived in America. The families lived together for several years. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p1-2)

Isaburo and his wife had a number of children and spent some time living in Japan on and off until 1926 when Isaburo decided to become a permanent resident of America. The Adachi's first grew carnations and then switched to roses. In 1930 they added a retail store to their operation. The operation prospered and one daughter remembers how during the depression she had a new dress for graduation from Richmond High School when most of her white friends did not. On February 21, 1942 Mr. Adachi was arrested by the FBI on charges of having formed a club for Japanese ex-servicemen. He was first jailed in Alameda and then sent to Bismarck, North Dakota. Eventually he was allowed to join his family at the Topaz internment camp. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p2-3)

When the Adachis were released from camp they returned to find their house in ruins, the glass in the greenhouses completely shattered, and all of the rose plants gone. They resolved to rebuild the business and did so very successfully. Their retail stores became a household name in West Contra Costa County, with at one time three retail outlets: the main store in El Cerrito, a second retail outlet at Hilltop Shopping Center, and a large store in El Sobrante. The family leased their El Cerrito site to Home Depot in the early 1990's. Isaburo Adachi died in 1959. The El Sobrante store stayed open many more years, finally closing in 2017. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p3-5; West County Times, 2017, Japanese-American Nursery Closing Ends Saga Started in 1905]



The Maida House, ca. 1922. El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the Maida family

**Maida (Kumakichi) family** (Topaz) Kumakichi Maeda was born in the prefecture of Osaka in Japan and his wife Matsue was born in Wakayama prefecture. He came to America around the turn of the century and first worked in the grape fields in Fresno before coming to the Stege area to learn the nursery business from his cousins the Nabetas and Hondas (both were graduates of Domoto college). He and his son Eiichi Mayeda opened the Felton Nursery on Wall Avenue in 1906, growing first roses and then carnations. When Eiichi married he opened a new nursery next door to the Felton Nursery. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p22, El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p 26 )

About 1926 the elder Maeda's daughter Kane and her husband Torayoshi Maida took over the Felton Nursery and the elder Mr. Maida opened a new nursery on rented property on San Pablo Avenue in El Cerrito. He operated that nursery until 1935 when his wife died. At this point, after having successfully started three nurseries, he went

back to the nursery on Wall Avenue to live. The members of the family who were not American citizens voluntarily left the area in February of 1942 and the entire family was sent first to the Tanforan Assembly area and then to the Topaz internment camp in 1942. Kumakichi Maeda died in 1947 at the age of 88. (Donna Graves, Ward Hill, and Woodruff Minor, 2004, Historic Architecture Evaluation - Report for Eden Housing p53; Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p24)

**Sakai family** (Rohwer) 1906, East Richmond, carnations and then roses. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p44-4638; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p26)

**Oishi family** ( Topaz) 1908, East Richmond, carnations (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p37-38; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p26)

**Honda family** (Topaz) Hisajiro Honda was born in the Wakayama prefecture of Japan in 1882. He arrived in Seattle in 1899. He had been called to America by his uncle Yataro Nabeta to come work on the Nabeta nursery but before going to work for his uncle he worked as a houseboy for a family and then as a cook in the Bakersfield oil fields. In 1904 he and his cousin Torataro Nabeta went to work at their uncle Yataro's nursery in Stege (now El Cerrito). The work was hard and the wages low so they left their uncle's business and went to work on a farm in Lodi. Mr. Honda eventually worked at the Domoto nursery and returned to Stege in 1912 where he bought three acres of land from his uncle Tokokichi Nabeta. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p17)



The Honda House, ca 1933. El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the ???????? family.

The two men formed a business partnership and initially grew carnations, but the nursery eventually switched to roses. In 1913 Hisajiro returned briefly to Japan to marry a distant relative and then brought her back to America. In 1918 the business with his uncle was dissolved and his uncle returned to Japan; Hisajiro bought out his uncle's land and greenhouse. In 1919 Mr. Honda's brother Hisazo arrived in America to help with the business. His brother eventually married and opened a nursery in San Pablo off River Road. Hisajiro Honda and his wife had six children by 1928 and the oldest daughter married one of her Nabeta cousins who lived just down the lane between their houses. In the late 1930s the state

completed the Eastshore freeway as far as Potrero Avenue in El Cerrito and built Eastshore Avenue directly through the Honda/ Nabeta nursery property to connect San Pablo Avenue to the newly completed highway. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p18)

As with the rest of the local Japanese community, most of the Hondas were sent to the Topaz internment camp after spending several months in the Assembly Center at Tanforan. Hisajiro had earlier been arrested and sent to an internment camp at Sharp Park because of his association with an organization that raised funds for the Japanese cause in the Sino-Japanese War. He was released to join his family at Topaz before the end of 1942. When they returned to El Cerrito after the war the family found the nursery overgrown with weeds, all the glass smashed out of the greenhouses, and the framework of the greenhouses damaged. Until the nursery could be restored they planted fast-flowering plants to earn some money. It was several years before the nursery was back to full production. Hisajiro's son Jun was a member of the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p18-19; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p 14-15)

After completely rebuilding their nursery and getting back on their feet the state announced in 1948 that it was going to extend the Eastshore Highway, wiping out the rest of the family's nursery. So the family had to rebuild one more time, this time on Gertrude Avenue in North Richmond. This operation was all roses. Hisajiro Honda died in 1972 but his son Jun continued

running the business until he retired 1990. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p19)



Ruins of the Oshima & Miyamoto nurseries on return from Internment Camp in 1945. El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the Hocking family.

**Oshima family**  
(Gila Bend) Yuhei Oshima was born Yuhei Ota in 1880 in Yamaguchi-ken on Japan's Oshima Island. He took the name Oshima when the Yoshi Oshima family adopted him. Mr. Oshima graduated from Waseda University with a degree in Political Science. He migrated to

American in 1906, arriving in San Francisco at the age of 25. He worked in an office for a while but then went to work on farms and orchards. A few years later he moved to the Stege area and purchased a chicken farm on Wall Avenue. In 1912 his wife Yoshi came to America to join her husband. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p42)

In 1913 Mr. Oshima and Goro Kawai, a friend from when Mr. Oshima worked at Johnson Farms in San Jose, purchased the carnation nursery that was across Wall Avenue from Mr. Oshima's chicken farm. Sukemon Itami, who planned to return to Japan, had owned it. The Oshima Nursery grew and prospered and roses took the place of the carnations. Mr. Kawai soon opened his own nursery on Wall Avenue a couple of blocks west, in Richmond. Since he was so well educated, Mr. Oshima's advice was much sought-after and highly respected on a wide range of subjects. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p42)

The family was sent to the Gila Bend internment camp in Arizona instead of the Topaz camp in Utah. Son Fred was a member of the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team. When the family returned from camp they found the property abandoned and the greenhouses collapsed. They rebuilt and restarted the operation and finally sold the nursery property in the 1970s. The Oshima family also ran a retail nursery shop called "Ook's", which opened about 1956 and closed about 1970. They sold from their own stock and also sold standard nursery items. The retail operation was mostly run by Mrs. Oshima. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p43)

**Kawai family** (Left evacuation area before internment order) 1913, East Richmond, Carnations (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p26)

**Miyamoto family** (Topaz) 1913, East Richmond, Carnations & Retail Florist (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p26)

**Mayeda family** (Topaz) 1914, East Richmond, Carnations and then Roses (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p26)

**Maida (Torayoshi) family** (Topaz) 1919, East Richmond, Roses and then Carnations (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p26)

**Hoshi family** (unknown) 1922, East Richmond, Carnations (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p26)

**Fukushima family** (Topaz) 1925, East Richmond, Carnations and then Roses (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p26)

**Mabuchi family** (Topaz) Mr. Hikojiro Mabuchi came to America from Mie-ken in Japan about 1910 and was already known as a skilled carpenter. He worked as a carpenter on the construction of the 1915 World's Fair in San Francisco. He worked in several different professions in the west and Alaska before settling down in the El Cerrito area. He married Tomi Nabeta, who was living in Redwood City at the time. She was from Wakayama prefecture in Japan and as such he became closely connected to the floral industry in west Contra Costa County. Mr. Mabuchi built

many greenhouses for the various growers in the El Cerrito and Richmond area. Mrs. Mabuchi meanwhile ran a fruit stand in addition to raising three children. Over time Mr. Mabuchi became more heavily involved in the retail business and in particular he began to work seriously on building their stock of bedding plants. Their business expanded and became much more of a



The original Contra Costa Florist site at Hill & San Pablo in El Cerrito, ca 1933. El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the Yoshimoto family.

retail nursery It was located at Hill Street and San Pablo Avenue. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p21; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2010-2016, Carol Yoshimoto Oral Interview file)

In 1935 the family moved the business to a retail location between Schmidt Lane and Manila Avenue that had previously been the site of the Valley of the Moon quarry office. Mr. Mabuchi

proceeded to move a single-story residence onto the property right behind the retail shop and then raise the residence up to create a new first floor with the original residence on top of the new first floor. A door that was originally a first-floor door can still be seen on the north wall of the now-second story. A door was added between the residence and the retail shop so that the family could easily move between the two buildings. There were windows between the retail shop and the residence so that a person in the residence could see if someone entered the retail



The lath house, large greenhouse, and pond in the back of the Mabuchi's shop, 1942. El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the Yoshimoto family.

shop. Mr. Mabuchi also built a small greenhouse immediately south of the residence that was accessed from the residence. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, The Way We Were, p21)

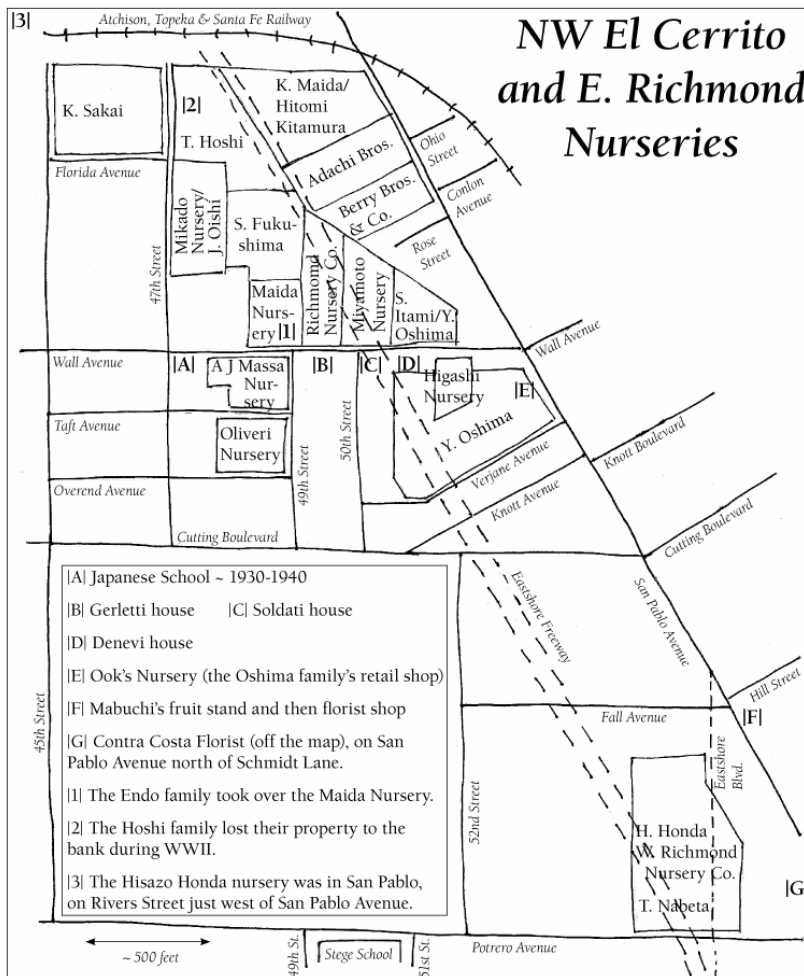
In the backyard Mr. Mabuchi built a large greenhouse and a lath house where he raised stock for sale in the store. He also built a Japanese-style garden in the back yard that included a pond where he raised turtles



and goldfish for sale in the retail shop. The family purchased the largest part of their flower stock directly from the Hondas and Nabetas rather than on the wholesale flower market. After Pearl Harbor the parents had to leave El Cerrito because it was inside the “Prohibited Area” defined by the military and no “Enemy Aliens” were allowed inside the Prohibited area. They moved in with some friends in Berkeley whose home was outside of the Prohibited Area. The three daughters continued to run the shop as best as they could until they and their parents were compelled to report to the Tanforan Assembly area; from there the family was sent to the Topaz internment camp. [El Cerrito Historical Society, 2010-2016, Carol Yoshimoto Oral Interview file)

Mr. Mabuchi’s health went downhill at Topaz and he suffered numerous smaller strokes; unfortunately the medical care available in camp for this kind of condition was minimal. He was in very poor health when he returned to El Cerrito and died in 1946. After Mr. Mabuchi died it

was all the family could do to keep the retail florist part of the business running. While they were unique among the El Cerrito and Richmond Japanese in returning to find their property in almost pristine condition (courtesy of their neighbor and close friend Fred Conwill) they now faced a challenge running the business. (Japanese Nursery Families joint document, 1996, *The Way We Were*, p21, El Cerrito Historical Society, 2010-2016, Carol Yoshimoto Oral Interview file)



Fortunately, the youngest daughter Clara was a talented flower arranger. With the support of her sister Michiko and their mother Tomi (sister Akiko moved to Chicago with her new husband

after leaving camp), they built a good business known for quality and value. With Mr. Mabuchi gone, however, there was no one to take care of the bedding plants and that part of the business was dropped. The appearance of the garden and the condition of both the greenhouses and lath house declined rapidly. The structures soon became completely derelict; Michiko's children referred to the backyard as "the jungle" and carried sticks to ward off the cobwebs and the overgrown plants when they walked through the lath house. The family ran a successful retail florist business until Clara, Michiko, and their mother sold the property to the Conwill family in 1964, at which point the three retired. Tomi Mabuchi died in 1988. [El Cerrito Historical Society, 2010-2016, Carol Yoshimoto Oral Interview file)

**Sakurai family** (unknown) 1938, East Richmond, carnations and then roses (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p26)

**Hitomi/Kitamura family** (Topaz) 1949-1971, El Cerrito, Wakayama, carnations, (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p26)

**Higashi family** (unknown) 1951-1975, El Cerrito, Wakayama, ornamental shrubs, container plants, garden plants, (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p26)

#### Societal Aspects of the Japanese Community

In 1900, when the Nabeta brothers started building their nursery near of the present intersection of Potrero Avenue and Eastshore Boulevard, the area was still called Stege. There was very little economic activity in the area. El Cerrito was not to be founded for another 17 years. "Richmond" consisted of a small settlement located in the area that we today call Point Richmond. Richmond's incorporation was still five years away. (Donna Graves, Ward Hill, and Woodruff



The Japanese School ("Nihon Gakko") at 47th & Wall, ca.1937. El Cerrito Historical Society Collection, courtesy of the dddd family.

Minor, 2004, Historic Architecture Evaluation - Report for Eden Housing p88; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p3)

These immigrant Japanese flower growers saw opportunity in West Contra Costa County where few others did. They worked together to create a very successful wholesale market for their products in San Francisco. San Francisco was the home of the largest Japanese community in the area and had a true "Japantown". Still, the local growers tried to maintain a connection their Japanese

heritage. Some of the homes had a “Japanese Room”. Very few of the homes were lacking a Japanese bath. In the 1920’s the families sponsored a Japanese school, which over the first several years moved from the Maida house to upstairs at the Honda’s packing shed to the Oishi house. But in the early 1930s the school found a permanent location at 47th and Wall, just a few blocks west of El Cerrito. While some of the families retained their ancestral religion, a number of the families converted to Christianity in the 1920’s and later years. Many of those who converted became members of the East Bay Free Methodist Church and what remains an important part of the local Japanese community. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p3; Donna Graves, Ward Hill, and Woodruff Minor, 2004, Historic Architecture Evaluation - Report for Eden Housing p32, 40-41)

However, because of their Asian ancestry, the flower growers faced one obstacle after another. California has a particularly sorry history of discrimination against Asians as the years went by. Blatant acts of institutionalized discrimination, first it against the Chinese and then applied to all Asians, were clearly documented and too numerous to count. A partial list of those is:

- In the post Gold-Rush era Chinese laborers were paid less than the average white male. (Wikipedia, n.d., History of Chinese in America)
- On March 6, 1881 the State of California declared a holiday to allow citizens to hold meetings and demonstrate support of anti-Chinese legislation. (Wikipedia, n.d., History of Chinese in America)
- In 1882 Congress passed and President Chester A. Arthur signed the Chinese Exclusion Act (Wikipedia, n.d., History of Chinese in America)
- California passed additional discriminatory laws against the Chinese, laws which were later held to be unconstitutional. (Wikipedia, n.d., History of Chinese in America)
- In 1908 an informal agreement called the “Gentlemen's Agreement” was made between the United States and Japan. Under it the U.S. would not impose restrictions on Japanese immigration and Japan would prohibit further emigration to America. While a major goal of the Agreement was to restrict the growth of the Japanese community in America, in some sense it had the opposite effect because the wives of Japanese in America were allowed to join their husbands. Allowing the wives to join their husbands had a profound impact on the growth Japanese population. (Donna Graves, Ward Hill, and Woodruff Minor, 2004, Historic Architecture Evaluation - Report for Eden Housing, p32; Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, Living with Flowers, p 39-40)
- In 1913 Governor Hiram Johnson signed the California Alien Land Law, which prohibited “aliens ineligible for citizenship” - essentially all Asian immigrants - from owning land or property. (Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, Living with Flowers, p38)
- In 1924 Congress passed and President Calvin Coolidge signed The Immigration Act of 1924, including the Asian Exclusion Act, which prohibited the immigration of East Asians. (Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, Living with Flowers, p38)
- On February 19, 1942 President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, authorizing the Secretary of War to designate certain areas as military zones. The intent of this order was to remove all “enemy aliens” from the designated area, which consisted mostly of military sites and sensitive war-related industries. The El Cerrito and Richmond areas were areas of special concern to the US government during the war due to the large shipbuilding industry in the area. “Enemy Aliens” included anyone who was not a US Citizen and who was born in Japan or one of the Axis countries. Germans and other

“enemy aliens” were allowed to return after a few months while the Japanese were not. (Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, *Living with Flowers*, p56)

- On March 27, 1942 General John L. DeWitt announced that everyone in most parts of the West Coast who had at least one great-great grandparent of Japanese descent would be compelled to report to an Assembly Center as a prelude to being removed to an internment camp. This led to the incarceration (which was eventually declared unlawful) of more than 115,000 Japanese-Americans in the western United States. This included the entire Japanese population of El Cerrito. (Gary Kawaguchi, 1993, *Living with Flowers*, p57, Donna Graves, 2004, *Not at Home on the Home Front* p20)

Very few of the Japanese in the Western United States protested this order because they felt it was inevitable given the historical blatant discrimination against their community. The phrase they used was *shikata ga nai*: “It can’t be helped”. In contrast, Fred Korematsu, a San Leandro resident, lodged a remarkable protest and refused to report to an Assembly Center because he felt people should have a fair trial and a chance to defend their loyalty at court in a democratic way. Mr. Korematsu was convicted in federal court, on September 8, 1942, for violation of Public Law No. 503, which criminalized violations of military orders issued under the authority of Executive Order 9066. His conviction was subsequently upheld by the US Supreme Court. (National Park Service, 2016, *A Brief History of Japanese American Relocation Internment during World War II*)

The children of the original Japanese immigrants were born in America, went to school here, spoke English as their first language, and considered themselves to be average American kids in every way. Even in the Depression years before World War II the nursery community was prosperous. Imagine the surprise of these American citizens when they were told they had lost their rights as citizens and were rounded and sent to internment camps. There they lived behind barbed wire fences that were patrolled by armed guards. There were lean years in the nursery business but the families had never seen living conditions as bad as those they endured in camp. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, *Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage*, p3)

Yet many of the young men volunteered to serve their country as members of the now famous 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Unit, and Military Intelligence Service. They often received the most difficult and dangerous assignments but served their country with astonishing valor and distinction. These men led the way at Anzio and fought their way to Rome and on through Italy; famously rescued the “Lost Battalion” from the Nazis in France; and helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, *Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage*, p3)

After seeing them in action, General Clark said. . . “I will say [this] about the Japanese fighting in these units. . . they were superb! . . They took terrific casualties. They showed rare courage and tremendous fighting spirit. Much can be said of the performance of those battalions in Europe and everybody wanted them. . . We used them quite dramatically in the great advance in Italy. . . ” **The 4,000 men who initially came in April 1943 had to be replaced nearly 3.5 times; in total, about 14,000 men served. They earned 9,486 Purple Hearts, 21 Medals of Honor, and an unprecedented eight Presidential Unit Citations. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team was the most decorated unit for its size and length of service, in the entire**

**history of the U.S. Military.** (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p15)

There are ten men who were El Cerrito or Richmond natives or who moved here after the war who served in the 442nd or the Military Intelligence Service: Jun Agari - MIS, Shig Doi - 442nd (2 Bronze Stars,) Howard Hanamura - 442nd (Purple Heart & Bronze Star), Jun Honda - 442nd, Shoichi Kimura - 442nd, Ben Mayeda - 442nd (Purple Heart,) George Oishi - 442nd (Purple Heart,) Fred Oshima - 442nd, Yoshiro Tokiwa - 442<sup>nd</sup>, and Tom Yamashita - 442<sup>nd</sup> (2 Purple Hearts.) (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p14-15)

## First Japs To Return Here Soon

The first Japanese family to return to this area since removal of all Japanese in 1942, will soon resume operation of a florist business at 1228 San Pablo avenue in El Cerrito.

Notice of the return of the family, Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Mabuchi and their three daughters, has been received by the operators of the Tradeway furniture business at 1230, who had leased the property of the Mabuchis.

In his notice to the present holders of the lease on the property, Mabuchi said that he will resume the florist business in the near future. It was not learned

El Cerrito Historical  
Society collection,  
courtesy of the  
Yoshimoto family.

After the war all the local Japanese families, with the exception of the Mabuchis, returned home to find their nurseries either vandalized or in ruins. In addition, they faced members of a vengeful community who considered the local Japanese to be responsible for the actions of the Japanese government during World War II. "Japs go Home" was commonly seen and heard. Still the Japanese families undertook the painstaking job of rebuilding their mostly shattered nurseries but not too long after completing that job some families learned that the State of California had decided to extend the Eastshore Freeway through their property. So these families had to relocate and rebuild one more time. But despite all these obstacles, in the years after the war the Japanese floriculture industry successfully reincarnated itself as an even more successful and prosperous community than that which had existed before the war. For many years flowers from West Contra Costa County were considered the standard against which others were measured. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p3; Donna Graves, Ward Hill, and Woodruff Minor, 2004, Historic Architecture Evaluation - Report for Eden Housing, p 43-44; Donna Graves, 2004, Not at Home on the Home Front p24-27; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2007-2013, Tom Oishi Oral Interview file)

In the early 1980s, researchers looking at the World War II internment of the Japanese and the Fred Korematsu case discovered that:

- i) the US Government had deliberately suppressed documents which concluded that Japanese-American citizens posed no security risk,
- ii) the military had lied to the Supreme Court, and
- iii) the government lawyers had knowingly made false arguments. [Appendix D]

Accordingly, on November 10, 1983, the U.S. District Court in San Francisco formally vacated the conviction of Fred Korematsu. Mr. Korematsu devoted the balance of his life to educating Americans about civil liberties. President Clinton awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States, to Fred Korematsu in 1998, saying, "In the long history of our country's constant search for justice, some names of ordinary citizens stand for

millions of souls. Plessy, Brown, Parks...Korematsu"... (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2009, Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage, p28)

In October of 1990 the US Government paid reparations to each Japanese-American who was deprived of his or her civil liberties during World War II. [Appendix D]

On September 26, 2010, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law Assembly Bill 1775, establishing January 30, the birthday of Fred Korematsu, as Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution in the State of California. (Solicitor General of the United States, 2011, Statement on the case of Fred Korematsu)

On December 6, 2010, the El Cerrito City Council passed a resolution proclaiming January 30, 2011 as Fred Korematsu Day in El Cerrito. This resolution is reproduced in Appendix D. (Solicitor General of the United States, 2011, Statement on the case of Fred Korematsu)

On May 20, 2011, the US Government formally acknowledged its errors in the prosecution of Fred Korematsu. Neal Katyal, the Acting Solicitor General of the United States, made the following statement: (Solicitor General of the United States, 2011, Statement on the case of Fred Korematsu)]

"Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States uprooted more than 100,000 people of Japanese descent, most of them American citizens, and confined them in internment camps. The Solicitor General was largely responsible for the defense of those policies. (Solicitor General of the United States, 2011, Statement on the case of Fred Korematsu)

"By the time the cases of Gordon Hirabayashi and Fred Korematsu reached the Supreme Court, the Solicitor General had learned of a key intelligence report that undermined the rationale behind the internment. The Ringle Report, from the Office of Naval Intelligence, found that only a small percentage of Japanese Americans posed a potential security threat, and that the most dangerous were already known or in custody. But the Solicitor General did not inform the Court of the report, despite warnings from Department of Justice attorneys that failing to alert the Court "might approximate the suppression of evidence." Instead, he argued that it was impossible to segregate loyal Japanese Americans from disloyal ones. Nor did he inform the Court that a key set of allegations used to justify the internment, that Japanese Americans were using radio transmitters to communicate with enemy submarines off the West Coast, had been discredited by the FBI and FCC. And to make matters worse, he relied on gross generalizations about Japanese Americans, such as that they were disloyal and motivated by "racial solidarity." (Solicitor General of the United States, 2011, Statement on the case of Fred Korematsu)

"The Supreme Court upheld Hirabayashi's and Korematsu's convictions. And it took nearly a half-century for courts to overturn these decisions. One court decision in the 1980s that did so highlighted the role played by the Solicitor General, emphasizing that the Supreme Court gave "special credence" to the Solicitor General's representations. The court thought it unlikely that the Supreme Court would have ruled the same way had the Solicitor General exhibited complete candor. Yet those decisions still stand today as a reminder of the mistakes



of that era. (Solicitor General of the United States, 2011, Statement on the case of Fred Korematsu)

“Today, our Office takes this history as an important reminder that the “special credence” the Solicitor General enjoys before the Supreme Court requires great responsibility and a duty of absolute candor in our representations to the Court. Only then can we fulfill our responsibility to defend the United States and its Constitution, and to protect the rights of all Americans.” (Solicitor General of the United States, 2011, Statement on the case of Fred Korematsu)

The building at the 10848 San Pablo Avenue site is the only remaining structure in El Cerrito that is associated with the historic Japanese American flower industry. It is one of only two



Contra Costa Florist ca 1935. El Cerrito Hist. Society collection.

remaining buildings in El Cerrito that are associated with the internment of the Japanese during World War II. It stands in part because of the humanity of Fred Conwill, who owned the Tradeway Furniture store next door and who protected the Mabuchi property while the family was interned. At a time when almost all of the illegally incarcerated Japanese-Americans had their property taken, looted, or sold by someone to somebody else, Mr.

Conwill maintained the house and retail shop until the family was able to return. This was an act of fundamental decency and integrity that was unfortunately replicated in only a few other cases in West Contra Costa County. It is something in which the citizens of El Cerrito should take pride. (Knapp & VerPlank, 2011, Historic Resource Evaluation for 10848 & 10860 San Pablo Avenue, p43,46,69)

## J. Institutions

[Additional drafting remains to be done on this section regarding Institutions]

### Education

El Cerrito's early public school system evolved in accordance with the city's gradual population growth beginning at a very early time. The 1894 Partition Map clearly shows a school across San Pablo Avenue from Carlos Avenue. The multi-room Stege School replaced the one-room Castro School around 1900. Fairmont School was opened in 1903, to which rooms were added in the following years to meet increases in pupil enrollment. When the Richmond Elementary School District (1909) and the Richmond Unified High School District (1911) were formed, they



The tile mosaic created by the students at Fairmont School, 2011. It took almost three years to finish and was completed in 1961. It includes images of many of the topics covered in this document. El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the Duveneck family.

included the Rust and Stege communities in a move to sustain low property taxes for school support. Pupils graduated from the Fairmont and Stege Grammar Schools at the eighth grade. Those who continued their education usually went to Richmond High School or Salesian High. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p62)



The original El Cerrito High main building plus the new wing along Eureka, ca 1945. El Cerrito Historical Society collection.

Public education underwent two developments during the 1920's. In 1924 the 12-room Fairmont School burned to the ground due to an arson fire. A larger school building was erected on the same present-day site. In 1927, Harding School was built on its Ashbury-Fairmount site. By this time students were attending high school in Berkeley as well as Richmond. Not until 1940 was action taken to develop a high school for El Cerrito. During the war schools went on double, triple, and even quadruple session. After the war the school district began rapidly adding schools in response to the population growth in El Cerrito. These schools included Castro Elementary, Del Mar Elementary, El Monte Elementary, Madera Elementary, Mira Vista Annex, and Portola Middle school. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p60, 97)



St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, ca 1975. El Cerrito Historical Society collection.

The school district has commissioned architecturally significant buildings in and nearby El Cerrito. These include Mira Vista School at 6397 Hazel Avenue (one block from El Cerrito); Madera School, at 8500 Madera Drive; and the the former Portola Middle School (demolished in 2012 due to an unstable slope) at 1021 Navellier Street. All three were designed by John Carl Warnecke. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p97; Architectural Record Magazine, 1955; PMC, *Castro Elementary School and Portola Middle School Historic Resources Evaluation*, 2008)



The wonderfully clean crisp lines of St. Jerome Catholic Church are reminiscent of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, by Martin Rist. El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the Duveneck family.

## Religion

El Cerrito's churches developed gradually over the years. In 1908, the seeds for two churches were planted as a result of missionary efforts by churches in neighboring communities. In the Rust community, a Methodist Church was built as a simple frame stucco building, under sponsorship of the Berkeley Trinity Methodist congregation. At Stege Junction, Father Edward Nolan established a Catholic mission. Father Nolan was the pastor of St. Paul's Church in San Pablo. The church acquired the old Castro Schoolhouse and converted it into what became St. John's Church. Both churches evolved slowly, with membership and programs remaining at modest levels for the two churches into the war years. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p62)

Religious institutions proliferated in the postwar period. Added to the two (the Catholic and Methodist) pre-war churches were 21 new churches in the El Cerrito area, including four Baptist, three Lutheran, two Congregational, two Methodist, another Catholic (St. Jerome), Assembly of God, Christian Science/ Church of Christ, Episcopal, Evangelical, Presbyterian/ Swedenborgian, United Christ and Unitarian. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p99)

The churches all emphasized social activities as well as sustaining traditional religious worship. Many of the religious institutions in El Cerrito had social organizations that were active in the community. The Catholic Church probably had the most with Young Ladies Institute, the Young Men's Institute, and the Federation of Italian Catholics, plus the Catacombs youth club and a separate group of Portuguese members who observed the annual Holy Ghost rites and festival. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p63)

[Do we need an inventory of the Churches that still exist?]

### Library

The early presence of the public library system in El Cerrito was a product of interested citizens, not County efforts. In 1913, Fay Breneman established the first Contra Costa County branch library in El Cerrito. She was the daughter of the town's first physician and she served as its perennial librarian. The library was first set up in the post office building but in 1915 moved to the Breneman home, which was located at 10135 San Pablo Avenue. (The Breneman Home was torn down in 1963.) The library relocated two years later to a house on Fairmount Avenue. Through the efforts of the El Cerrito Improvement Association, the library building was renovated in 1925 for improved services. The retirement of Fay Breneman (she served from 1913-1949) coincided with the beginning of the library's more recent development. El Cerrito built a new facility for the library in 1949 at 6510 Stockton Avenue and then expanded on that site in 1960. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p60, 99)

### Clubs and Fraternal Organizations

A number of non-religious clubs and organizations have been active in the City over the years. In the earlier times it was clubs such as the Praetorians, the Redmen, the Foresters, the Owls, and other fraternal organizations. Some were genuinely open to the public while others seem to have unwritten entrance rules. For example, the members of the Owls were almost entirely Italian. There are two long-standing organizations in town that have had a profound influence on the development of El Cerrito and whose dedicated buildings still stand. These are the Cerrito City Club (founded in 1940 by Vic Figone) and the Mira Vista County Club (founded in 1920.) (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2001-2007, Louie Nicoli Oral



The Cerrito City Club, ca 1970. El Cerrito Historical Society collection.

Interview file; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2002-2018, Frank Storno Oral Interview file)

The Cerrito City Club was an institution for many years in town. It was founded in 1942 by civic leaders whose goal was to raise \$50 to give to every serviceman who returned home from the War. They succeeded in this and also entertained and fed busload after busload of servicemen from Oak Knoll Naval Medical Center during the War. They originally met weekly at Rossi's Athletic Club on Potrero Avenue, but switched to Saint John's Hall after Rossi's burned down. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2005, Images of America: El Cerrito p117).

Using much labor contributed by its wide spectrum of members, the City Club promptly built its own space at Potrero Avenue and Kearney Street. After the War the club became more of a service and social club and was hub for business and social life in El Cerrito. A number of service clubs as well as the City of El Cerrito used the facilities at the City Club. The building was expanded in 1956. Membership began to decline in the 1980s and the Club put its building up for sale at the end of 1991. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2005, Images of America: El Cerrito p117; West County Times, 1991, Cerrito City Club Closes)

The Berkeley Country Club was founded in the 1920 by Berkeley golf enthusiasts in the days when El Cerrito was still a newly incorporated community. They asked to Robert Hunter and Willie Watson (architect of the Olympic Club) to design the layout. Mr. Hunter was a founding Club member and head of the Green Committee. Walter Ratcliff Jr., was selected to design the Club's English Tudor-style clubhouse and ballroom addition. (Berkeley Country Club, 2018, History of Berkeley Country Club)



Mira Vista County Club, ca 1960. El Cerrito Historical Society collection.

The Club suffered financial difficulties following the Great Depression, membership dropped, and other entities had visions for the property. After much consideration, the Club was reorganized and adopted the name "Mira Vista Golf and Country Club." Times improved as did the financial health of the club. The club has always been an important gathering place in El Cerrito. As part of an effort to restore its allure after the 2008 recession, the course underwent a complete restoration in 2011. This included new greens, restoration of bunkers lost over time, and creek restoration. In 2017 the club returned to its

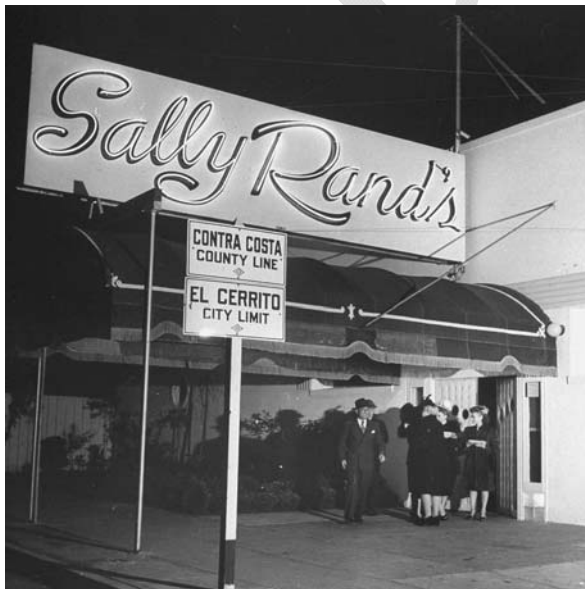
original name, the Berkeley Country Club. (Berkeley Country Club, 2018, History of Berkeley Country Club)

## K. San Pablo Avenue and Gambling

San Pablo Avenue is one of the oldest existing roads in the East Bay. It largely follows the route of Camino de la Contra Costa, which was established during the Spanish colonial era and which extended northwest from what is now Oakland along the shore of San Francisco Bay to the Carquinez Strait. It was the main road connecting many of the ranches in the East Bay and by the mid-1800s it was the route of a stage line that connected Oakland and Martinez. (Wikipedia, n.d., California State Route 123)

About 1900, business activity began to accelerate along San Pablo Avenue near the County Line. William Rust, a pioneer merchant, expanded his business operations. After returning from a trip to Germany in 1902, Rust constructed a larger building near his blacksmith shop (site of the present-day Pastime Hardware.) This building included a new hardware store, a candy store, and a butcher shop on the ground level. There was an apartment dwelling for his family upstairs. In the next few years several establishments grew up in the Rust community along San Pablo Avenue, including a grocery store, the County Line Saloon, and the East Shore and Suburban depot for the Oakland and Richmond streetcars. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p49)

By 1908 another commercial strip was taking form along San Pablo Avenue at Stege Junction. It included Joe Lavigne's Grand Central Hotel and the saloons of Mr. Marston and Mr. Regalia. But the County Line area was seeing more commercial development than Stege Junction, which prompted William Huber to relocate his law office from the Grand Central building to a new building he erected next to the 7 Mile House. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p49)



Sally Rand's club was literally at the County Line, ca 1945. El Cerrito Historical Society collection.

In 1908 a civic-minded group organized a local improvement association to build a 400-foot wood-plank sidewalk on the east side of San Pablo Avenue from the county line to Fairmount Avenue. This first civic enterprise remedied the long-standing complaint of residents and travelers who had to wade or ride through the dusty or muddy quagmire at the county line where El Cerrito Creek crossed San Pablo Avenue. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p49)

As the years passed El Cerrito's commercial strip saw few significant changes. Local businesses catered to transients and travelers who passed through town and only served some needs of residents, who often had to make trips to Berkeley and Richmond to complete their shopping lists. But by the mid-20's merchants

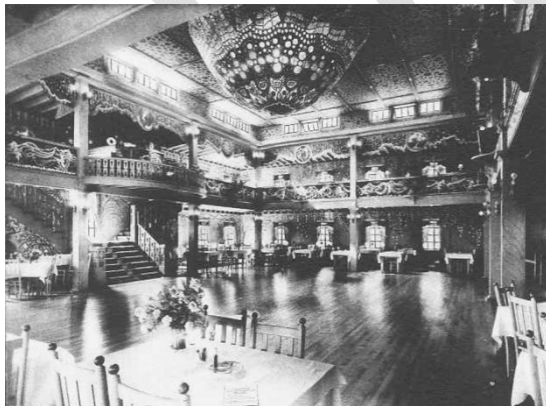


and tradesmen were moving from basic products, foodstuffs and house hardware, to specialized products for home needs, such as variety merchandise, plumbing fixtures and electrical appliances. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p49)

During the 1920's gas stations, garages and motels began to appear. By then autos, trucks and buses dominated vehicle traffic, though horse-drawn wagons were seen on San Pablo Avenue into the mid-1920's. The leading service stations were J. B. Maxwell's, Philip Lee's and the Twin Star Gas Station which fronted J. M. Beck's Garage. Prominent motels were the Bungalow Auto Court and Peek-A-Boo Auto Camp. The auto based-economy was complete with Criqui's Used Car Sales and Bennett's Auto Wrecker. None of these businesses remain. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p49)

Throughout the 1920's the city undertook an ambitious program for street upgrades. San Pablo Avenue was designated a state highway and was improved by the standard arrangement whereby the state paved the middle half and the local government paved the one-fourth portion on each side of the roadway. When the county procrastinated in paving the west side of San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito in 1926 moved to annex the roadway strip so it had complete control of the three-mile section of San Pablo Avenue within the city limits. San Pablo Avenue in El Cerrito became part of the Lincoln Highway upon the completion of the Carquinez Bridge in 1927. This was an important designation because the Lincoln Hwy was a transcontinental highway linking San Francisco and New York. At this time the route of the Lincoln Highway was changed from its original routing via Stockton to a route via Davis, Vallejo, and then San Pablo Avenue from Crockett to the Berkeley pier. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p50-56)

Fuel and feed stores supplied coal and grains all the way up to the 1960s. Lumberyards made their appearance with Sterling Lumber and then Builder's Emporium, followed by Martin Griffin, who relocated his business to San Pablo Avenue, and Modern Builder's Supply. The conspicuous feature of establishments on the commercial strip, however, was their orientation to the transient and auto trade; saloons and taverns, auto service stations, repair garages, gambling and other entertainment spots. The biggest development of the 1920s, however, was in 1928 when Mechanics Bank of Richmond converted the 7 Mile House into its El Cerrito office. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p49)



The El Nido Club, a very classy place that was a bit off the beaten track on Panama, ca 1930. El Cerrito Historical Society collection, courtesy of the Genser-Maack family.

Should I add more about the many a building materials places?

The saloons and taverns experienced the biggest ups and downs among the local establishments. Up to 1920 they abounded on San Pablo Avenue, outnumbering other businesses. Landmarks were County Line Saloon, Turtle Saloon, Panama Pacific and the saloons of Joe Villalobos, Tony Regalia and Joe Lavigne. Some establishments combined drinking, dancing and picnicking in the park-like settings, notably Henry Timm's Palm Gardens, Ernest Navellier's Lafayette Park, and Edward Wuelzer's Paradise Gardens. Prohibition greatly

reduced their numbers and changed their character. The Turtle Saloon became the Totem Pole auto camp and gas station. With the end of Prohibition in 1933, the old-time saloons reappeared but were overshadowed by cocktail lounges and nightclubs.(Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p49)

During the 1930's the gambling spots and nightclubs were the big attractions of the San Pablo strip. The pacesetters were Blackjack Jerome's with its dog track (the El Cerrito Kennel Club), Big Bill Pechart's Wagon Wheel gambling casino, and the Rancho San Pablo nightclub; in addition there was a Chinese gambling club called The Cave. By the mid-1930's, organized gambling of various types operated as sideline enterprises of other businesses. Card and dice games operated surreptitiously in the backrooms of almost all cocktail lounges, saloons and nightclubs. Some of these places had bookmaking operations. Such bookie joints for placing bets on horse races throughout the country operated undercover in wide-open El Cerrito because of opposition from racetrack corporations which sought to confine horse-betting to their track booths. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p49-50)



Classic auto-oriented industrial architecture on San Pablo Avenue, 2013. EC Historical Society Collection, courtesy of the Duveneck family.

Nightclubs flourished with floorshows ranging from the gaudy to the spectacular. The Rancho San Pablo, remodeled from Victor Castro's adobe, was outstanding with its elegant decor and wealthy clientele. Henry Molino's Kona Club had leading musical groups such as Nat King Cole's Band and the Delta Rhythm Boys. Tony Gatto's "it" Club featured comedy and striptease acts. Among the entertainers who headlined there on their road to fame were comedians Frank Fontaine, Pinky Tomlin and Dick Van Dyke plus strippers Gypsy Rose Lee, and Sally Rand. El

Cerrito was known throughout the state for its spectacular entertainment strip on San Pablo Avenue. None of these entertainment venues still exist although the shells of some of the buildings have been completely re-purposed. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p50)

As El Cerrito grew during World War II and the postwar years, San Pablo Avenue, still the city's main commercial strip, underwent a major shuffling of business enterprises. Older landmark businesses were still around. Some still operated in the original buildings, such as Adachi's Nursery, Angelo's Market, El Nido Market and the It Club. Others rebuilt modernistic structures, such as Kiefer's Furniture, Mechanics Bank and Pastime Hardware. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p87)

Many early landmarks gave way to new ones, such as the Wagon Wheel which became Eagles Hall and the Stag Inn which became Hillside Motel. Newcomer chain stores added a new dimension, especially MacFarlane Candies, Grand Auto, Safeway and Value Giant Department Store. Doctors, lawyers and architects set up their offices. Among the new entrepreneurs was Don Kimball, an enterprising inventor-businessman who established El Cerrito as headquarters

for his huge trailer-mobile home enterprise. Financial institutions established branches, notably Bank of America (1948), Central Bank (1949), Wells Fargo Bank (1952), American Savings, Fidelity Savings and loan and eventually a half-dozen others. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p87)

San Pablo Avenue became crowded with numerous small enterprises strung out in sporadic fashion, including cocktail lounges and nightclubs, retail and service stores, auto courts, trailer camps, family homes and apartment buildings. As the city grew in the 1950's and 1960's, large stores appeared; then came small shopping centers. In 1958 El Cerrito Plaza opened on the site of the old Castro Adobe, anchored by a Capwells department store. When it opened in 1958, El Cerrito Plaza was one of the first regional malls to open in the East Bay. It was anchored by the Capwell store and was a very popular destination. The opening of Hilltop Mall in Richmond had a significant impact on El Cerrito Plaza, as did other shopping areas that opened in the 1980s and 1990s. The Plaza was largely reconstructed beginning in 2000, with all the buildings being demolished except the building that houses the CVS drug store. The mall reopened in 2001. San



Originally the office of the well-known Judge Joe Martyn Turner, ca 2005. EC Historical Society Collection, courtesy of the Duveneck family.

Pablo Avenue is still the city's chief commercial area. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p88)

El Cerrito's commercial areas took on a new complexion. During the war and postwar years, San Pablo Avenue as the city's commercial strip became crowded by numerous small enterprises strung out in sporadic fashion, including cocktail lounges and nightclubs, retail and service stores, auto courts and -trailer camps, family homes and apartment buildings-a classic example of a city strip-zone. As the city grew in the 1950's and 1960's, large stores appeared; then came the shopping centers. The big break-through for

shopping centers came in 1958 with the El Cerrito Plaza, a fifty-five store unit built around Capwell's Department Store on the Castro adobe site on the city's south end. A decade later another shopping center cluster emerged in the central area (1968); it comprised the Food Farm complex, the Safeway-Value Giant complex (Moeser Center), and the Jay Vee liquors complex. On the city's north end evolved a shopping center which focused on Co-op Center and Kinney Shoes. By the 1970's San Pablo Avenue emerged with three major shopping center clusters with individual stores, shops, offices and a few houses strung out between them. The city's commercial strip still featured deteriorating business areas, which became an urban renewal project of the city redevelopment agency (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p88)

By the 1970's El Cerrito's economy had become crystallized into a pattern. El Cerrito had no central business district or downtown area, a characteristic feature of traditional cities. San Pablo Avenue is still the city's chief commercial strip but no longer the only one since the emergence of neighborhood shopping centers at Fairmount and Colusa and at Stockton and Ashbury Avenue intersections. Conspicuous among the commercial establishments on San Pablo Avenue are the variety of retail and service stores and shops, especially fast food outlets. The three major shopping centers along San Pablo Avenue still dominate commercial activity. El Cerrito Plaza was largely reconstructed beginning in 2000, with all the buildings being demolished except the building that housed the CVS drug store. The shopping center fully reopened in 2001. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, p88)

San Pablo Avenue is still El Cerrito's city's chief commercial area and in 2014 the City of El Cerrito adopted the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. This plan encourages new mixed-use development along San Pablo Avenue and near the City's two BART stations. The intent is to encourage housing near transit and to create more pedestrian traffic to stimulate new businesses. Its goal is to create a multimodal corridor than functions not just as a thoroughfare but as a place that provides opportunities for living, working and community life. (City of El Cerrito, 2014, *San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan*)

[Do we need a picture of the Plaza here? What else do we need to say here?]



## L. Mid-Century Modern Architecture

Both Elizabeth Douthitt Byrne, the retired (6-30-11) head of the UC Berkeley Environmental Design Library, and Sally Woodbridge, the author and architectural historian, assisted with the research for this chapter. Before and after World War II El Cerrito experienced a building boom. A number of homes and institutional structures in El Cerrito were designed by prominent architects who were practitioners of the Mid-Century Modernist style of architecture. This included Roger Lee, Richard Neutra, Donald Olsen, and many others. The Mid-Century Modernists' work in El Cerrito has made a lasting impact on Bay Area architecture and represents a significant historic context of development in El Cerrito. One could argue that Berkeley Hills from Oakland north to El Cerrito comprises one of the most important concentrations of Modernist houses in the country. (Edward Staniford, 1976, *El Cerrito Historical Evolution*, 47, 68; Appendix E)

J E Dinwiddie's 2 Ridgeway Ln, Wayne Andrews/ESTO

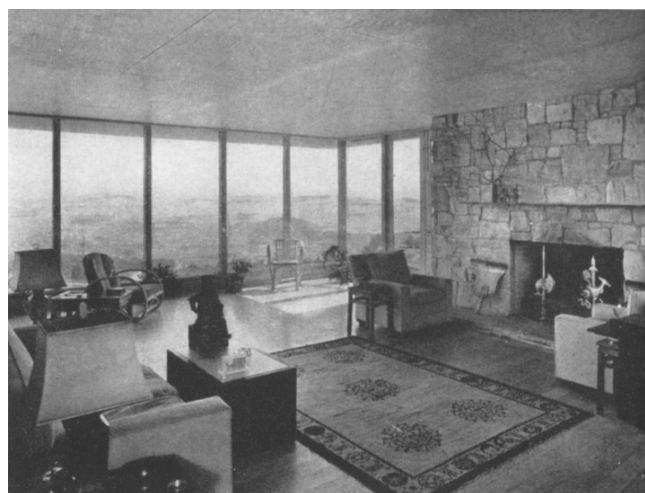


As discussed in section IV.C of this document, development in El Cerrito lagged far behind its neighbors in Albany and Berkeley. The 1930 aerial photo on page 54 (?) illustrates a barely populated El Cerrito next to a nearly built-out Albany and Berkeley. The two primary reasons for this development disparity were:

i) The tangled land titles that were not resolved until the *Emeric vs. Alvarado* case was finally settled in 1894, as discussed in section IV.B of this document. This kept the early development activity away from El Cerrito and arrested the process by which development momentum builds.

ii) The perceived remoteness of El Cerrito. One San Francisco native recalled the reaction of her mother who, upon learning that her daughter and new son-in-law were moving to El Cerrito, reacted as if her daughter was moving off the end of the earth. : (Mae Fisher Purcell, 1940, *History of Contra Costa County* p 138-38; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2002, Rose Tsaguris Oral Interview file)

J E Dinwiddie's 2 Ridgeway Lane, Home & Garden Mag.



In the 1930s El Cerrito acquired an unsavory reputation because of gambling and related activities. But this does not appear to have been a factor in El Cerrito's lagging development since this reputation was earned simultaneously with a development surge in El Cerrito. This surge



was not only out of character with El Cerrito's previous history of development, but also took place against the backdrop of the years of the Depression. Regardless, this surge led to the growth of significant infrastructure - lumberyards & mills; cement & building materials companies; and a supply of skilled tradesmen - in El Cerrito that facilitated development. (El Cerrito Historical Society, 2006, Build dates for structures in El Cerrito; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p 41, 49-50, 680)

In the midst of this of this surge the United States entered World War II. Although there was still some private development occurring during the war years, most of the resources that had been coming together in El Cerrito to support development were now focused primarily on the war effort. But the war effort and the shortages it engendered changed how people operated. For example, El Cerrito Mill and Lumber bought Modern Building Supply not so much to obtain economies of scale or competitive advantage but literally to acquire Modern Building Supply's quotas for lumber and building material. All of these materials were rationed during the war. (Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p 84; El Cerrito Historical Society, 2001, Jim Dougherty Oral Interview file)

J C Warnecke's Portola Middle School ca 1955,  
Architectural Record Magazine



California has consistently been acknowledged as the center of the postwar expansion of architectural modernism. While the ethnic diversity in California and the state's important role in the national economy are two examples of what makes California different, California has always had an unmatched appetite for the new that was not found in other parts of the country. California has not only been a focus for domestic migration but also for migration from Asia, Latin America, and Europe. Before and during World War II a number of intellectuals and artists who fled Europe bypassed the East Coast and made their

home in California. For example, Stravinsky and Schoenberg, both stars of classical music, settled in Los Angeles after fleeing Europe. During the war the Bay Area was home to more than a hundred thousand imported workers; many of whom played key roles in the design and engineering of safe, efficient, and modern war materials. (Pierluigi Serraino, 2006, NorCalMod, p14, 15, 18, 50, 52, 59)

This period was also the time when the architectural style known as "Mid-Century Modernism" began to bloom and Northern California played a major role in this. Coming out of the war there was a huge pent-up demand for housing; California in general and the Bay Area in particular had experienced a tidal wave of immigration during the war years. For example, Richmond went from 25,000 residents in 1941 to over 100,000 in 1945. Many of these immigrants liked what they saw here. Millions of servicemen had passed through California during the war and a significant number of them returned to California once they were released from their military service. After the war, some of those exiting from the military or from military contractors were

architects and engineers who had practiced their craft or who had essentially apprenticed in the military. These were well-trained, creative people who had worked with the latest materials and construction techniques during the war years. They were intent on making a name for themselves by working on projects other than mess halls, transport ships, and airport control towers. (J.A. McVittie, 1944, *An Avalanche Hits Richmond*, p20-21; Pierluigi Serraino, 2006, *NorCalMod* p37, 38,42)



John Carl Warnecke's Portola Middle School, *Architectural Record Magazine*

Similarly, many young architects and engineers whose education had been delayed or interrupted by the war began to stream out of engineering and architecture schools a few years after the war ended. They joined those who began or restarted their careers when the war had ended a few years earlier. Not all of them embraced Mid-Century Modernism, but many did and they produced some remarkable work. (Pierluigi Serraino, 2006, *NorCalMod* p20-21)

Defining "Mid-Century Modernism" is no easier than defining Modernism itself. The Architecture discussion in Wikipedia's mid-century modern article includes the following paragraph:

"The Mid-Century modern movement in the U.S. was an American reflection of the International and Bauhaus movements, including the works of Gropius, Florence Knoll, Le Corbusier and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.[1] Although the American component was slightly more organic in form and less formal than the International Style, it is more firmly related to it than any other. Brazilian and Scandinavian architects were very influential at this time, with a style characterized by clean simplicity and integration with nature. Like many of Wright's designs, Mid-Century architecture was frequently employed in residential



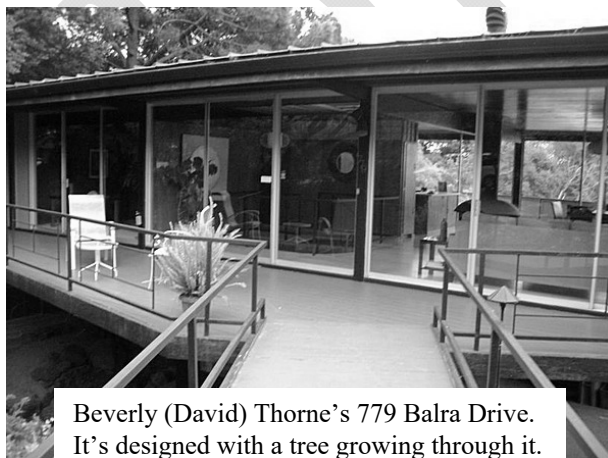
Hillside Church, EC Historical Society Collection, courtesy of the Genser-Maack family, John H. Atkinson, Jr. photo

structures with the goal of bringing modernism into America's post-war suburbs. This style emphasized creating structures with ample windows and open floor plans, with the intention of opening up interior spaces and bringing the outdoors in. Many Mid-century houses utilized then-groundbreaking post and beam architectural design that eliminated bulky support walls in favor of walls seemingly made of glass. Function was as important as form in Mid-Century designs, with an emphasis placed on targeting the needs of the average American family.” (Wikipedia, n.d. Mid-century modern)

A few words and phrases that help characterize Mid-Century Modernism would include openness; simplicity; new products and processes; and large expanses of glass. The Mid-Century Modernism movement was very diverse. The work of one class of practitioners revolved around new materials and technology, such as steel frames; the work of another class of practitioners focused on what came to be referred to as ranch-style designs; and so on, with a variety of directions taken by different practitioners who interpreted the movement by highlighting their particular skills. (Pierluigi Serraino, 2006, *NorCalMod*, p34)

In his book *Northern California Modernism*, Pierluigi Serraino refers to the large number of architects and designers from outside of California who were drawn to the Golden State and to Northern California in particular:

“It was during the forties that young designers from other regions of the United States and abroad - Donald Olsen, Donald R. Knorr, S Robert Anshen, William Stephen Allen, Jack Hillmer, Warren Callister, Fred and Lois Langhorst, Olof Dahlstrand, Mark Mills, Joseph Esherick, Henry Hill, and Bruce Heiser, to name a few - joined local talents such as Clarence Mayhew, Vernon Demars, Mario Ciampi, Francis Joseph McCarthy, Mario Corbett, William Carlett, Roger Lee, Rowen Maiden, Beverly (David) Thorne, John Campbell, Worley Wong, and John Carl Warnecke. Concurrently architects from Southern California either moved to the Bay Area - Gordon Drake and Raphael Soriano - or built a legacy there - Richard Neutra, Welton Becket, Craig Ellwood, Victor Gruen, Harwell Hamilton Harris, and George Verson Russell.” (Pierluigi Serraino, 2006, *NorCalMod*, p 20)



Beverly (David) Thorne's 779 Balra Drive.  
It's designed with a tree growing through it.

From Serraino's list of 32 of the most influential Mid-Century modernists who lived or practiced in the Bay Area, the work of eight of them is actually represented in El Cerrito. Add to this list the work of William W. Wurster, the renowned and esteemed Dean of the School of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley, plus that of John Ekin Dinwiddie, who brought Henry Hill into his firm before the War and promptly made him a partner. The result is that on display in El Cerrito is a breadth of work completely out of proportion to the community. The efforts of these and many

others who were similarly inclined architecturally created a distinctive style of development in El Cerrito. (Wikipedia, n.d., Henry Hill (Architect); Appendix E)

El Cerrito had grown from a population of about 6,000 before World War II to 18,000 in 1950. Why is it that the quiet post-war architectural backwater of El Cerrito received so much attention from an unexpected number of these leaders of the Mid-Century Modernist movement and their many disciples? Coming out of World War II El Cerrito was uniquely positioned for what became a major boom in building:

- All the trades and materials infrastructure was in place, due to the War effort and the many people at all levels of skill who were looking for work
- El Cerrito was close to Berkeley and San Francisco, important centers of architectural thought and expression in the post-war period.
- there was an enormous demand from a populace that had, as had most of America, saved a considerable amount of money during the lean war years.
- El Cerrito had an abundance of suitable land available, including many choice locations, compared to Albany and Berkeley. These cities had much less available land and among those few choice locations were available. ( El Cerrito Historical Society, 2006, Build dates for structures in El Cerrito; Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p 96; Pierluigi Serraino, 2006, NorCalMod,38,42,43, 64, 65)

In addition, after the war El Cerrito started to clean up the gambling problem and candidates from the “Good Government League” were replacing the entrenched interests on the City Council. El Cerrito was rapidly losing its moniker of “Little Reno” and was starting to live up to a new one, “The City of Homes.” Together these factors combined to make El Cerrito a



John Carl Warnecke's Mira Vista School ca 1955, Architectural Record Magazine

disproportionate recipient of attention from the Mid-Century Modernists, earning El Cerrito a reputation for architecture far out of proportion to the City's size, and

establishing Mid-Century Modernism as a significant historic context in the development in El Cerrito. [Edward Staniford, 1976, El Cerrito Historical Evolution, p 68-70, 84-87]

The following list of Mid-Century Modern structures is strictly limited to the work in El Cerrito of each of the Mid-Century Modernist architects cited above. The list would be far longer if it were to include all the notable Mid-Century Modern structures in town. (compiled by the El Cerrito Historical Society)

- John Campbell  
7110 View Avenue
- John Ekin Dinwiddie  
1 Ridgeway Lane

- Henry Hill  
1619 Arlington Blvd.  
1834 Arlington Blvd.  
863 Bates  
1465 Vista Road
- Roger Lee  
557 Ashbury Avenue  
8300 Buckingham Drive  
1401 Devonshire Drive  
1395 Rifle Range Road  
701 Sea View Drive
- Richard Neutra  
1411 Atwell Road
- Donald Olsen  
1366 Brewster Drive
- Beverly (David) Thorne  
779 Balra Drive  
8410 Betty Lane  
801 Shevlin Drive
- John Carl Warnecke  
8500 Madera Drive (Madera School)
- Worley Wong  
7110 View Avenue

Should there be a discussion of the multitude of houses that went up after the War on remaining undeveloped land? They are not "architecturally significant," but this development does define the character of much of El Cerrito. Some of the spec-built stuff is kind of interesting architecturally as well, for example along the eastern extension of Potrero (between Navellier and Arlington) and the courts that run off it.

Where, if anywhere, does BART fit into the story? We have two "modernist" stations but BART had very little impact on the built environment for its first 30+ years. Only now are we starting to see an impact, with the focus that now exists on transit-oriented development.

Should these two BART stations be on the California Register?

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## Appendix A - Historic Districts

### Existing:

Chung Mei Home Historic District School site (former Chung Mei Home)

### Possible

Ashbury 9 area

Atwell Road

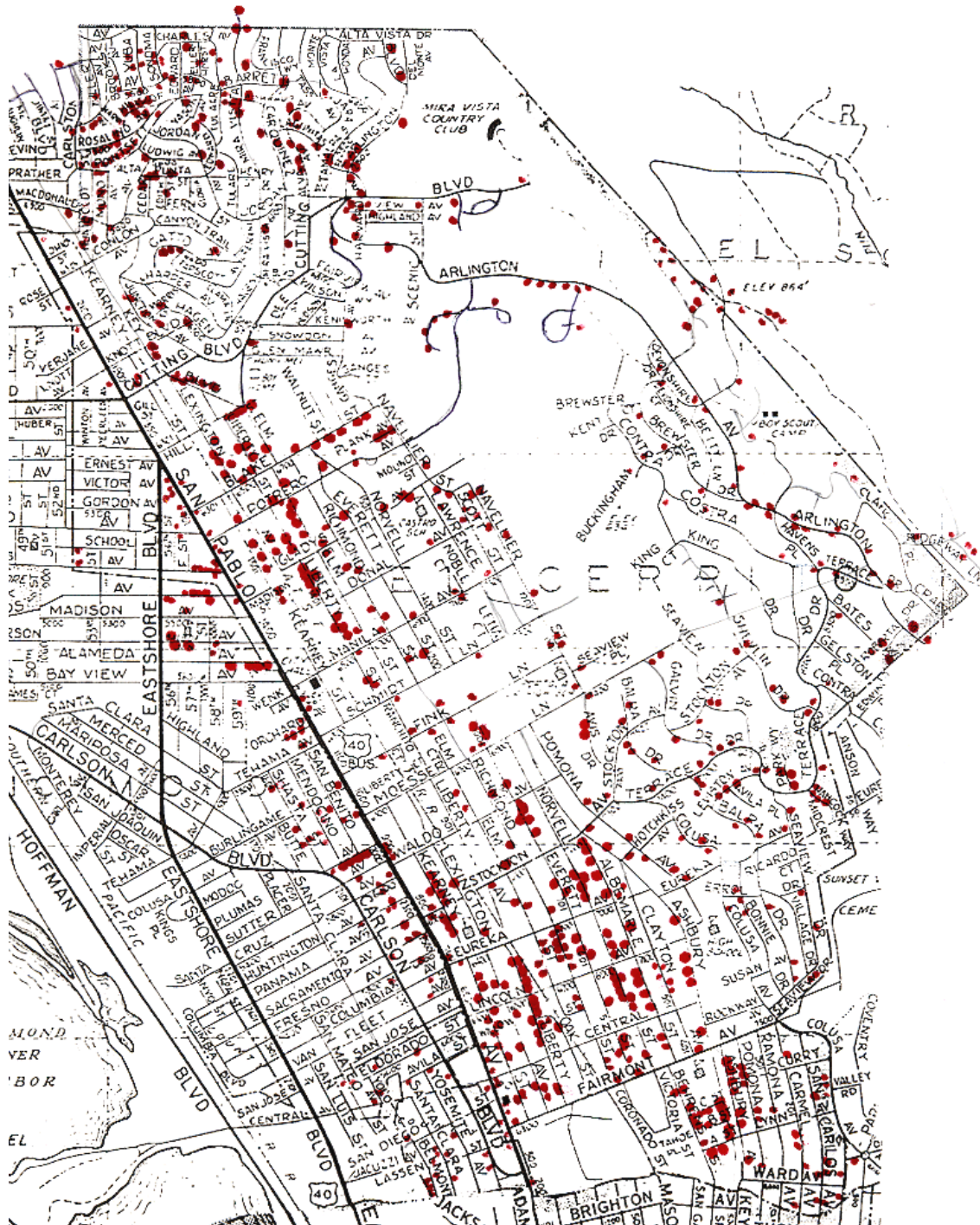
Cape Cod Houses

ElmSt./Liberty St. Little Italy residential area

San Pablo Avenue Little Italy Commercial area

[Discussion of the possible historic districts needs to be inserted here]

## Appendix B - Sites of interest to the El Cerrito Historical Society



Appendix C

***EL CERRITO CITY COUNCIL PROCLAMATION***

***Proclaiming May 4, 2011 as “Chung Mei Home for Boys Day”***

WHEREAS during the Gold Rush, Chinese saw California as a place of opportunity. The Chinese population rapidly became an indispensable part of the labor force in California, representing more than 8% of the population between 1860 and 1880; and despite the important role it played in California, the Chinese population faced extreme prejudice and discrimination, and Chinese laborers were paid less than the average white male; and

WHEREAS the state of California declared a holiday on March 6, 1881, to hold meetings and demonstrate support of anti-Chinese legislation; the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in 1882 and signed by President Chester A. Arthur prohibiting further immigration from China for ten years and forcing Chinese to choose between staying in California or returning to China to be with their families; and

WHEREAS California passed additional discriminatory laws against the Chinese, laws which were later held to be unconstitutional in and 1913 Governor Hiram Johnson signed the California Alien Land Law, which prohibited “aliens ineligible for citizenship” from owning land or property; and

WHEREAS Congress passed The Immigration Act of 1924, including the Asian Exclusion Act, which prohibited the immigration of mothers and women and to prevent creation of families and establishment of Chinese communities. The laws forbade interracial adoption and many Chinese children who were orphans or abandoned were unwelcome almost everywhere and lived on the streets; and

WHEREAS, in 1923 Dr. Charles R. Shephard, a Baptist missionary with four years of service in China, founded the Chung Mei Home to provide a home for orphaned and abandoned Chinese children, and who moved the Home to El Cerrito in 1935 to provide more space and a better environment for the boys. Dr. Shephard helped raise eight hundred (800) boys at the Chung Mei Home for Boys in El Cerrito between 1935 and 1954; and

WHEREAS, the California Heritage Council recognized Windrush School in 2001 for its preservation of the Chung Mei Home in the City of El Cerrito and the Windrush School continues to honor this tradition and the Chung Mei Home for Boys, having been the only home of its type, is an important part of American history, Chinese American History, and El Cerrito history.

NOW THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of El Cerrito hereby proclaims May 4, 2011 as “Chung Mei Home for Boys Day” in the City of El Cerrito and encourages all residents to participate in the ceremonies and events to commemorate and recognize the historic heritage of the Chung Mei Home for Boys and the diverse communities that have contributed to the City’s heritage.

Dated: May 2, 2011

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ann Cheng, Mayor

Appendix D

***EL CERRITO CITY COUNCIL PROCLAMATION***

***Recognizing and Supporting Fred Korematsu Day***

WHEREAS, on February 19, 1942 President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, authorizing the Secretary of War to prescribe certain areas as military zones and on May 3rd General John L. DeWitt ordered anyone who had at least one great-great-grandparent born in Japan to report on May 9th to Assembly Centers as a prelude to being removed to an internment camp, this order leading to the incarceration of more than 120,000 Japanese-Americans in the western United States, including many residents of El Cerrito, individuals who were vital to the growth and economy of El Cerrito, who were leaders in the nursery community, and who were among the earliest residents of El Cerrito; and

WHEREAS, Fred Korematsu, an East Bay resident, refused to report to an Assembly Center because he felt people should have a fair trial and a chance to defend their loyalty at court in a democratic way; and

WHEREAS, Fred Korematsu was convicted in federal court on September 8, 1942, for a violation of Public Law No. 503, which criminalized violations of military orders issued under the authority of Executive Order 9066, and his conviction was subsequently upheld by the US Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1980s it was discovered that the US Government had deliberately suppressed documents which concluded that Japanese-American citizens posed no security risk, that the military had lied to the Supreme Court, and the government lawyers had knowingly made false arguments; and

WHEREAS, on November 10, 1983, the U.S. District Court in San Francisco formally vacated the conviction of Fred Korematsu; and Mr. Korematsu then devoted the balance of his life to educating Americans about civil liberties; and

WHEREAS, President Clinton awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States, to Fred Korematsu in 1998, saying, "In the long history of our country's constant search for justice, some names of ordinary citizens stand for millions of souls. Plessy, Brown, Parks...Korematsu;" and

WHEREAS, Fred Korematsu died on March 30, 2005 at the age of 86 and on September 26, 2010, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law Assembly Bill 1775, establishing January 30, the birthday of Fred Korematsu, as Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution in the State of California.

NOW THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of El Cerrito hereby honors Fred Korematsu by proclaiming January 30, 2011 as Fred Korematsu Day in the City of El Cerrito and encourages all residents to contemplate the courage displayed by Mr. Korematsu, his life story and circumstances and his tireless devotion to educating others about civil liberties.

Dated: December 6, 2010

\_\_\_\_\_  
Janet Abelson, Mayor

Appendix E

***Partial List of Mid-Century Modernist structures in El Cerrito***

**John Campbell**

7110 View Avenue

**John Ekin Dinwiddie**

1 Ridgeway Lane

**Henry Hill**

1619 Arlington Blvd.

1834 Arlington Blvd.

863 Bates

1465 Vista Road

**Roger Lee**

557 Ashbury Avenue

8300 Buckingham Drive

1401 Devonshire Drive

1395 Rifle Range Road

701 Sea View Drive

**Richard Neutra**

1411 Atwell Road

**Donald Olsen**

1366 Brewster Drive

**Beverly (David) Thorne**

779 Balra Drive

8410 Betty Lane

801 Shevlin Drive

**John Carl Warnecke**

8500 Madera Drive (Madera School)

1021 Navellier Street (Portola Middle School), demolished in 2010

**Worley Wong**

7110 View Avenue

**William W. Wurster**

7007 Moeser Lane (El Cerrito Community Center)

## Appendix F

### ***Landholders in the Final Partition of Rancho San Pablo***

*decreed by Judge J. C. B. Hebbard on March 3, 1894*

|                            |        |                                     | 0.57 1/3 |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Owner                      | Acres  |                                     |          |
| Manuel C. Aguiar           | 19.92  |                                     | 41.17    |
| Anna V. Alvarado           | 2.26   | Patrick Doran                       | 0.115    |
| Antonio Dutra De Andrade   | 4.86   | Hyppolite Dutard                    | 17.32    |
| Bernardo Andrade           | 0.34   | Antonio Jose Dutro                  | 3.08     |
| Jose Baez                  | 0.41   | George Ellis                        | 11.1     |
| Dolores Castro De Barovich | 6.28   | Henry F. Emeric                     | 236.49   |
| Augustine De Contro Barroa | 38.86  |                                     | 10.195   |
| Castarina Barroa           | 7.55   |                                     | 548.04   |
| George H. Barrett          | 12.02  |                                     | 1.245    |
|                            | 40.17  |                                     | 0.86     |
|                            | 457.06 |                                     | 0.512    |
|                            | 78.675 |                                     | 0.2      |
|                            | 0.206  |                                     | 0.63     |
| Thomas Bishop              | 33.71  |                                     | 3.91     |
|                            | 87.22  |                                     | 192.97   |
|                            | 320.83 |                                     | 996.08   |
|                            | 142.24 | John Fay                            | 39.18    |
| Friederich Blume           | 45.98  | Anna M. Finch                       | 0.14     |
| Henry Blume                | 20.17  | First Baptist Church of San Pablo   | 0.09     |
| Ann Wood Boorman           | 1.29   | First Presbyterian Church San Pablo | 0.25     |
| Benjamin Boorman           | 10.03  | Lafayette I. Fish & Simon Blum      | 0.03     |
| Joseph Boyd                | 94.41  |                                     | 355.25   |
| Joaquin Braz               | 39.7   |                                     | 14.15    |
| John Cahill                | 1.45   | Josefa Castro De Fitch              | 3.12     |
| M. V. D. A. Carrick        | 9.655  | Elizabeth Fitzgerald                | 1.82     |
| Jesus Castro               | 2.36   | David A. Fitzgerald                 | 6.54     |
| Jose Ramon Castro          | 2.315  | Josefa Castro De Galindo            | 1.23     |
| Jovita Castro              | 37.31  | Philip G. Galpin                    | 279.93   |
| Louis Castro               | 3.12   | Ann Galvin                          | 76.28    |
| Victor Castro              | 15.32  |                                     | 288.44   |
|                            | 3.12   |                                     | 0.95     |
|                            | 13     | William Galvin                      | 109.24   |
| Caroline M. Chambers       | 8.66   |                                     | 0.95     |
| Valentine Chevesich        | 0.52   | Etta M. Gill                        | 9.86     |
| Charles Clayton            | 0.333  | David Goodale                       | 164.04   |
| Joaquin Coelho             | 11.55  | Owen Griffins                       | 20.085   |
| James Conlon               | 23.48  | Leota K. T. Gutierrez               | 113.25   |
| James Curry                | 4.78   | George W. Haight                    | 178.44   |
| John Davis                 | 0.665  |                                     | 1.82     |
|                            | 322.87 | John Hamill                         | 0.77     |
|                            |        | Mary Hartnett                       | 0.21     |



|                        |           |   |          |
|------------------------|-----------|---|----------|
|                        | 19.55     | Charles Mayne                           | 137.16   |
| Robert Hawshurst       | 3.57      |   | 63.39    |
|                        | 6.015     |   | 201.77   |
| Philip Hermann         | 86.58     | W. S. McClane                           | 0.765    |
| Theodore H. Hittell    | 426.37    |   | 30.35    |
|                        | 5.21      | Johanna McGann                          | 5.24     |
|                        | 28.04     | E. W. McKinstry                         | 0.41     |
| L. M. Hoeffler         | 28.92     | Charles McLaughlin                      | 16.965   |
|                        | 60.84     | John McClure                            | 100.01   |
|                        | 23.73     | William Meyer                           | 365.88   |
|                        | 11.683    | Angelica G. Moitoza                     | 8.81     |
|                        | 0.122     |   | 10.93    |
|                        | 0.46      | Ignacia G. Moitoza (Daughter)           | 7.63     |
|                        | 0.426     |   | 11.92    |
| Thomas R. Horton       | 9.41      | Ignacia G. Moitoza (Widow)              | 116.99   |
|                        | 0.425     | Jose Garcia Moitoza                     | 10.56    |
|                        | 24.11     | Maria G. Moitoza                        | 8.76     |
| William H. Horton      | 52.43     |   | 11.5     |
| David Jacob            | 0.63 1/15 | Thomas W. Mulford                       | 24.77    |
| Manuel Jose            | 2.21 1/2  |   | 23.805   |
| Michael Kearney        | 6.64      |   | 13.74    |
| Edward Kirkpatrick     | 127.95    |   | 425.21   |
|                        | 0.44 1/3  |   | 195.61   |
| Charles Kleinschmidt   | 2.985     |   | 43.74    |
| Carl Klose             | 74.2      | James Mulholland                        | 21.65    |
| Eugene Le Roy          | 0.91      | John Nicholl                            | 152.81   |
|                        | 151.71    |   | 191.76   |
| Georges Le Roy         | 161.12    | Northern Railways Companys              | 4.34     |
|                        | 8.905     |   | 10.64    |
|                        | 4.08      |   | 14.93    |
|                        | 10        |   | 16.69    |
| George Leviston        | 248.91    |   | 38.8     |
|                        | 64.39     |   | 8.09     |
|                        | 269.59    | All that portion of said Railway Lot C. | 5.58     |
|                        | 72.19     |   | 5.79     |
|                        | 3.85      |   | 10.09    |
|                        | 24.9      |   | 3.44     |
|                        | 24.9      | John Nystrom                            | 70.24    |
|                        | 11.05     | Isabella Castro De O'Neill              | 2.38     |
|                        | 11.48     | Richard O'Neill, Trustee                | 1025.08  |
| Adaline L. Linder      | 1.54      |   | 507.83   |
| Joseph Lucas           | 41.76     |   | 4.577    |
| Manuel Jose Machado    | 30.02     |   | 158.69   |
| Stillman L. Magee      | 0.56      | John J. Peres                           | 78.44    |
| Anthony Maraschi       | 501.05    | Henry C. Pitman                         | 28.71    |
|                        | 56.08     | Concepcion Castra De Provizzo           | 1.53     |
|                        | 244.96    |   | 2.38 1/2 |
|                        | 19.55     | Angelica Raposa                         | 1.56 2/3 |
| Maria Ida Margraff     | 85.44     | Ann Raposa                              | 1.56 2/3 |
| Josephine Masterson    | 0.89      | Frank Raposa                            | 1.56 2/3 |
| Virginia Lee Masterson | 11.96     | Kate Raposa                             | 1.56 2/3 |

|                                     |           |                              |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Manuel Raposa                       | 1.56 2/3  | 29.73                        |
| Margaret Raposa                     | 8.01      | 182.81                       |
| Louisa E. Rehnert                   | 6.64      | James P. Treadwell 85.84     |
| Manuel Rifeira                      | 79.43     | Jacinto Uliveira 5.04        |
| Patrick W. Riordan                  | 2.14      | Jose Ramon Valencia 1.53 1/4 |
| Jacob Romer                         | 0.36 1/3  | 2.39                         |
| Francisco Silbera De Rose           | 0.23      | Maria L. Velasco 40.29       |
| Azro Rumrill                        | 53.97     | Susan Ward 0.435             |
| Safety Nitro Powder Company         | 397.55    | Charles L. Watrous 20.085    |
| William W. Sanderson                | 1.525     | Frank Webber 85.73           |
|                                     | 20.045    | Ann R. Wilson 45.98          |
| San Pablo School District           | 0.75      | Margaret Wilson 17.27        |
|                                     | 1.5       | Frederick Wolf 33.75         |
|                                     | 0.75      | Ann Elizabeth Wood 0.25      |
|                                     | 0.59      | Frank Goodacre Wood 0.25     |
| George Schmidt & William J. Schmidt | 52.53     | Richard Cross Wood 0.25      |
| Robert Seaver, Jr.                  | 226.42    | Lucetta Wood 0.25            |
| Maria L. Shimming                   | 88.7      | Robert Newcomb Wood 0.25     |
| Antonio Perry Silva                 | 49.45     | William H. Wood 0.25         |
|                                     | 0.08      | Anna Wrede, et al 78.53      |
| Charles Silva                       | 1.05      | Lucy A. Wright 171.62        |
| Frank Silveria Soito                | 3.95      | Thomas B. Wright 1.00        |
| Rosa G. Moitoza De Soito            | 6.01      | 0.026 [HOR 20-25]            |
|                                     | 8.95      |                              |
| Anita Castro De Soto                | 2.66 1 /6 |                              |
| Edith Stege                         | 1.8       |                              |
|                                     | 78.15     |                              |
| Minna C. C. Stege                   | 196.75    |                              |
| Juanita Castro De Stevens           | 1.53      |                              |
|                                     | 2.25      |                              |
| B. R. Taylor                        | 16.515    |                              |
| Emily Tewksbury                     | 27.97     |                              |
|                                     | 77.21     |                              |
|                                     | 392.12    |                              |
|                                     | 243.42    |                              |
|                                     | 0.49      |                              |
|                                     | 2.455     |                              |
|                                     | 4.03      |                              |
|                                     | 17.54     |                              |
|                                     | 1308.91   |                              |
| Emily Tewksbury                     | 125.18    |                              |
|                                     | 4.995     |                              |
|                                     | 0.332     |                              |
|                                     | 3.54 1/3  |                              |
|                                     | 4.265     |                              |
|                                     | 0.7       |                              |
|                                     | 1.45      |                              |
| H. I. Tillotson                     | 0.82      |                              |
|                                     | 0.71      |                              |
|                                     | 0.25      |                              |
| Rene De Tocqueville                 | 4.81      |                              |