

# *Carlsbad Time Lines*

Q3 2026

Carlsbad, California, Historical Society

## **President's letter**

On June 6, 2026 the City of Carlsbad broke ground on the city's newest and biggest park, Veterans Memorial Park. At 93.7 acres and named in honor of all US military veterans it will offer a panoramic view of the Agua Hedionda Lagoon and Pacific Ocean. In this historians opinion, it is aptly named sitting directly below Evans Point which was so named in honor of USN Admiral Robley Evans commandant of President Theodore Roosevelt's 1907-08 Great White naval fleet that circumvented the world. At the highest elevation in old Carlsbad, at 353 feet, residents in the area flocked to this point to watch the flotillas white painted USN ships as they passed near enough to Carlsbad's shore on their round the world tour. Those residents that gathered on this hill viewed the sailors standing on the decks, and also heard the naval bands play.



*Google Earth view of the site for future Veterans Park*

In this newsletter we will share a few other interesting historic park facts, a few links to historic videos released at the beginning of this summer, recently received donations and a Save the Date for upcoming fall activities.

Sue

## **Stagecoach and Calavera**

(with excerpts from Windows on the Past)

In the late 1980s, Carlsbad constructed two parks, Stagecoach and Calavera, on sites that had documented historical backgrounds. Each shared the same overall park design that included large recreation centers, baseball fields, and tennis and basketball courts. However, the treatment of the historical sites was totally different. At Stagecoach Park, some conservation of the original historical structure remains, while at Calavera every aspect of its historical significance was removed.

Stagecoach Park occupies a small portion of the former Las Encinitas Rancho, a Mexican land grant given to Don Andres Ybarra in 1842. Las Encinitas, which translates into Little Live Oaks, passed through many hands. In 1860, subsequent owners Joseph S. Mannassee and Marcus Schiller converted Don Ybarra's adobe home into a stagecoach stop. The remnants of this adobe structure can still be found on the grounds of Stagecoach Park beneath a roofed enclosure.

Calavera Park occupies the site of the former Calavera School. Calavera was one of Carlsbad's earliest schools, begun in 1897 when neighboring ranchers from the Marron and Kelly families relocated an abandoned building from near the present day intersection of Interstate 5 and Cannon Road, and dragged by horse to the location of present day Calavera Park. It was to become a short lived school for the ranch children. Teacher salaries and accommodations were provided by the ranch families. Calavera itself was a rock quarry held in common by the descendants of the Matthew Kelly Family. It later became the site of "Lake Calavera" a reservoir created by damming a small creek. At the time of park construction in 1987, the land still retained some of the original school features. A cistern used for water collection and a grove of trees planted by the first group of students in 1897 was still on the property. None of the existing features were retained, protected or included into the new park design.



*Remnants of Las Encinitas Rancho/ Stage Coach adobe*





*Calaveras Damsite 1941*



*Calaveras schoolhouse*

## **Board Member Emeritus**

Decades after joining and serving on our board Ginny (Krepps) Unanue is stepping down from her board position. Ginny greeted all with a warm smile and welcoming attitude, while filling a variety of board positions, President, Vice President, Secretary and Member at Large all the while volunteering to host Victorian Teas, participate in our third grade school tours and edit our newsletter. While not on tap for as much activity, Ginny has offered her continued support and participation. Danté Farenga, one of newest members, has volunteered to fill Ginny's spot as secretary. Danté is the Development & Marketing Director for the San Diego Archaeology Center, and we look forward to her involvement with Carlsbad Historical.

## **Save the Date Guest Talk**

Oceanside local John Thill, and author of "*A California Love Story*," will speak in the Cole Library Community Room Saturday, Oct 3rd at 10:00am .

"About the Book:

At its heart, this book is a collection of my grandparents' love letters from the 1920s, when they were just two young people from the dusty, landlocked center of the country. They were dreaming of a life together in the still-small community of Oceanside, planted along the mostly raw and undeveloped coastline of California. I came to be the keeper of these letters, and their storyteller, decades later, after they'd passed."

An excerpt from his book can be found at <https://johnwthill.com/about>

## **Leopard Family Donation**

The Leopard family generously donated many letters, magazines, musical sheet music and other items that were in their possession , previously owned by Florence Shipley Magee and left in her Condor's Nest home that they inherited. We are in the process of inventorying and scanning the letters, as well as creating a searchable record. Donations such as these help add to our understanding of Florence, her family, and their place in Carlsbad history. We are very grateful for their trust in our organization to leave these items in our care.





HEINEMANN  
1025 FIFTH ST.  
SAN DIEGO, CAL.

*Florence Shipley graduation from Our Lady of Peace Academy*

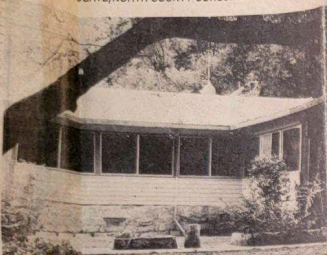




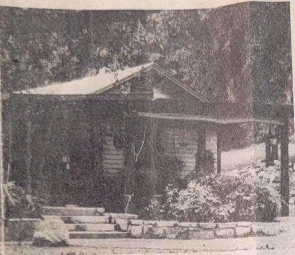
Quilt that Florence created

6 — TIMES-ADVOCATE/NORTH COUNTY CONSUMER NEWS, Thursday, March 13, 1986

ADVERTISING



This old ranch house, now beautifully restored, was originally built in 1908 by Hugh McGee for he and his wife, the former Florence Shipley. The house had been empty 27 years after McGee



died and Florence moved away before work was begun to restore it. Most of the original walls, the fireplace and the hand cut stone foundation are still in place.

## The House That Love Restored

By Nicki Monaco-Clark  
Advertising Feature Writer

Max and Marie Weber live on McGee Road in Pala on 80 acres along the western edge of the Pala range. Their home, they say, was "solidly built of sound wood" around 1908.

The house, once owned by Florence Shipley was built by her husband Hugh McGee for whom the road is named. It had been empty 27 years when Marie and her first husband Garth took to the task of restoring it.

In the early days, Hugh McGee and his brother ran cattle on the land and they farmed. The house McGee built for he and Florence began as just one room as was often the way back then.

But as simple as it was, it was solid. An unusual cut rock foundation and all the stonework along the

walkways were painstakingly fashioned by an Australian craftsman who worked for a year cutting the rocks in what had been the traditional way. Redwood pegs were placed into holes drilled two inches into the center of the rock at opposite ends. The wood was frequently soaked with water and the pegs expanded, eventually splitting the rocks into two even halves. A slow process but the cuts he made were straight and even and but for the marks made where the holes were drilled the face of each rock is perfectly smooth.

When Hugh McGee died, Florence left the land and moved to Carlsbad where there's a museum dedicated to her now. She never lived in the ranch on McGee Road again.

It was in Carlsbad that Marie and Garth befriended Florence Shipley,

"an old and helpless woman" by that time, and eccentric besides. They had no way of knowing that the old lady that they kindly helped so often owned over 1100 acres of beautiful ranch land and that she would one day give it all to them.

Garth had always wanted a ranch where he could raise his children and run cattle. One day he told Florence his dream when she asked him what he wanted most in the world. She told him about McGee Road and wondered if he and Marie would like to see it. Of course they did and loved it more than any land they had ever seen before. Massive shady oaks, fragrant sage and the old house empty now for all these years and in terrible disrepair, but still standing, well built so long ago.

Florence Shipley did indeed give them all 1150 acres with a house and barn and then had the joy of

watching them restore the house to much more than it had ever been before she died.

Garth passed away several years ago and Marie has since married Max. Their home is warm and cozy despite the gloomy rainy day when we visited. A roaring fire burned in the old stone fireplace made more efficient now by the addition of a heatlator.

Marie told us how much work it had been to fix the wreck of a house, a year just to clear away debris. Vagrants and field workers had taken refuge there many times during the years. And nature herself had been harsh. But much of the original few rooms and the porch, now enclosed, still stood. Little by little the job was done, until 22 years and \$80,000 later the house stands as a loving tribute to the kindness of its inhabitants and the generosity of its first owner.

The children are all raised now and the cattle sold. Marie still grows her garden every year and puts up vegetables in tidy jars row upon row in the stone cellar under the house. But the gardens are smaller than they used to be.

It's a good life she and Max share. The original 1150 acres have been sold off till 80 remain and Marie talks about giving each of her children 20 acres to build their own homes upon. Two gravity fed springs provide all the mountain spring water they need, enough for home use and irrigation too.

Up the hill about 200 yards is a small lake with a dock where Garth used to fish with his children and swim in the summer where his children and their grandchildren fish and swim now. The lake is not as deep as it was, but still 15 feet at its farthest and stocked with bass and catfish.

In contrast to the hand-cut stone



Max and Marie Weber.



The Webers have their own fishing hole, complete with dock and still stocked with catfish and bass.

foundation and walkways are two solar collectors to help with electric bills. And the room above the barn now houses a pool table for the children and their friends. But the house has still has a past linked to the independence and hard work of the land and the early west.

The above donated newspaper clipping from the North County Times Advocate, 1986, reports on the restoration of the house where Florence Shipley Magee and Hugu Magee lived until his death.

## **Historic Videos**

Army Navy Academy TV, created a special Carlsbad-themed episode highlighting leadership, history, service, and student achievement throughout our community. You can find it at the following link:

<https://youtu.be/-9bquMrQaGs>

Visit Carlsbad, in collaboration with Carlsbad Magazine created a six part series detailing Carlsbad's more recent history. Our Vice President, Wendy Hinman, and historical writer extraordinaire for the Carlsbad Magazine, created the series and conducted the interviews. We look forward to more of Wendy's historic documentation.

Downtown Carlsbad

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fq3p9Nn8WiM&t=15s>

Oldest neighborhood

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X19VRFShy4&t=19s>

Skate boarding

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMsHCQ4V0p0>

Surfing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU8zgK6hAeQ&t=15s>

Agricultural History

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfbFJaUUE4&t=214s>

Omni La Costa

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SL31exKBRdo>

## **Interesting connections to Karlovy Vary**

In the book [\*The Elements of Marie Curie by Dava Sobel\*](#) she mentions that the first uranium ores (pitchblend) that Marie and her husband Pierre obtained came from the mines of Jachymov, near Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad). The Curies isolated the elements radium and polonium from these ores in 1898.



Marie's maiden name was [Maria Salomea Skłodowska](#). She was a Polish physicist and chemist who became naturalized French after marrying Pierre Curie. They won the Nobel Prize in Physics for their work on radioactivity in 1904. Later, as a widow, she won a second Nobel Prize in 1911, but this time in Chemistry. She is the only person to ever win two Nobel Prizes in different fields (other than the Peace Prize).

Another interesting connection to Karlovy Vary is the name of the US currency, the dollar. The name comes from "[thaler](#)" or "taler", a name given to a popular silver coin minted for centuries, starting in 1518. The silver for the thalers also came from the mines in Jáchymov, Bohemia (then part of the Holy Roman Empire), near the town of Karlovy Vary. The name thaler was used for over 400 years, was later adopted in the United Kingdom as "dollar", and later adopted by the United States of America.



*Maria Theresa taler from 1776, named after Empress Maria Theresa of Austria.*

### **Carlsbad Historical Society**

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\*Open Saturday and Sunday, 11 am to 3 pm

\*Private Tours by appointment

\*School, Scouts and Families welcome

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