

Historic Highway 395

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Founded

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Mission Statement

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



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Telling the story, one mile at a time.

Sedco

by Jeffery G. Harmon

In November 1912, the Braly-Janss Investment Company bought land along the southeastern section of Lake Elsinore and began the Ford subdivision. The Southern Elsinore District Company bought the three thousand acre Ford subdivision in 1917 and renamed it Sedco. The name Sedco was coined from the company's initials. Today the community is bordered by Lemon Street in the south, Malaga Road in the north, Mission Trail on the west and Grape Street on the east.

Between 1934 through the early 1950s, U.S. Highway 395 and State Highway 71 were consigned on present day Mission Trail. In the 1950s, 395 was rerouted through Menifee Valley in the east. During this transition, state officials decided to reroute State Highway 71 between Alberhill and Murrieta. The only obstacle for the new route was the Sedco community. The residents voted in favor of the

new route and construction soon began.

When State Highway 71 shifted east to the present day interstate route, Sedco was divided in half. Sedco Hills referred to the area east of the highway and Sedco to the west. However, today the area is more commonly known as Sedco Hills.

While driving through Sedco on Mission Trail, there are several places to see. First there is the Lakeview Chapel with a small bell tower beside it. The bell dates back to Thanksgiving Day 1888 when it was dedicated to the Wildomar's United Presbyterian Church.

Next there is the family owned El Comal Restaurant serving tasty Mexican and Salvadorian food. Beyond the restaurant, there is The Hideaway, a local bar. It is rumored that at one time the bar was operated by the Hell's Angels.

If you turn onto

Sedco Boulevard you will discover the hidden gem of the community, Lake Whitney. The six acre lake was built by George Whitney so that he could fish whenever he liked. George planted over 600 palm trees around his lake. The centerpiece of the lake was a small island. When the new highway was constructed, the lake was cut in half and the island became a peninsula.

In 1960, he started Whitney's Drinking Water Company, which provided natural, pure drinking water bottled daily. The business is no longer in operation. Today Lake Whitney can be seen from Interstate 15. Look for a tall ring of palm trees next to the west side of the interstate and you will have found Lake Whitney.

In 2008, Sedco became a part of the newly incorporated city of Wildomar. However, life hasn't changed much in

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Palomar Observatory on Sunday Tour

Riverside Daily Press, April 8, 1939

One of the most delightful Sunday trips is that to the Murrieta and Temecula district, including Murrieta Hot Springs, Warner Hot Springs, Pala and Palomar, the later points just over the line in San Diego County.

Our motoring party left Riverside in one of the 12-cylinder Lincoln Zephyrs belonging to Warren Anderson Company at 9:25 a.m. and in a few minutes we were slipping up Box Springs Grade as if it were level road. The silky power of this car is a surprise to everyone, as is the beauty of the design and the up-to-dateness of its construction and appointments. The car we drove was equipped with the overdrive which makes it possible to obtain four or five miles additional mileage per gallon.

Promotion Days Recalled

The well kept vineyards and deep green alfalfa fields of the Perris Valley line the highway, the former calling to mind the many promotion schemes which bilked the suckers in years gone by. Much of the property in the valley has been sold time and again to hopeful city folks who dreamed dreams of wealth and happiness on their own little farms only to be disappointed.

Perris, gay with colored banners advertising its annual Perris Valley Livestock show April 14 and 15, is reached as the mileage indicator reads 17.2 miles and we turn right to Elsinore. At the top of the hill just outside Perris we reach the first of the "Palomars" on this trip.

This is the Palomar School for Boys, formerly El Perisito Resort. Later we come to Palomar Hotel at Temecula, a

Palomar service station, a Palomar Rancho and finally the Palomar Observatory.

View of Lake Thrills

After 12 miles through the foothill country we arrive at Elsinore and at the south end of the main street are thrilled with a view of the beautiful lake, which is almost overflowing. Its deep blue against the darker blue of the hills is entrancing, as it reflects the morning sun on its mirror-like surface.

We continue around the east end of the lake through fields of lupines, desert verbena, sage and an occasional patch of California poppies to Wildomar, where Oscar S. Brown and family hold forth. This is a region of picturesque old ranch homes and pastoral scenes to delight the eye of the artist.

We pass the village of Murrieta and enter the real Indian country of Riverside County. This region was formerly the home of the Temecula Indians, a tribe of the San Luisenos, now living in Pechanga Canyon, and is a center of prosperous farms, orchards and cattle ranges.

Home of Helen Hunt Jackson

Forty-seven miles from Riverside we arrive at Temecula, where Helen Hunt Jackson lived while she gathered material for her story of Ramona and two miles further on, turn left toward Aguanga on the Imperial Highway. Just after we pass Aguanga we cross the San Diego County line, the indicator reading 69.8 miles.

A few miles further we come to the old Butterfield stage

station at Oak Grove, picturesque reminder of the early days. In this 110 year old tavern, which was an overnight stop in the years from 1858 to 1861 when the stagecoach was the only means of overland travel between San Francisco and the east, meals are served to travelers by the present proprietor, Mrs. Kate Gearhart, either in the old-fashioned dining room or on the table under the spreading oaks. We sign our names in the old register, its pages bound in covers of petrified wood.

A few blocks further on are the Oak Grove public campgrounds, where meals may be prepared at the camp fireplaces and eaten under the oaks.

Immense Oaks Beautiful

The immense live oaks of this part of the state are beautiful and a bit further on we traverse vast areas of Manzanita with its red trunk and green foliage, mountain lilac with its pale blue bloom, white blooming dogwood, sage and flowers. The scenery and type of plant life changes frequently along this highway and every turn of the road provides a picture.

We arrive at Warner's Hot Springs, just 88 miles from Riverside and continue on our way to Palomar. The road leads past Lake Henshaw, one of the largest artificial lakes in Southern California, a paradise for fishermen, and we drive half way around the lake and three miles past Rincon, where we turn right up the hill toward the observatory.

This road is almost entirely paved, but tourists are

warned to avoid the unpaved mountain roads during the rainy season as they become very slippery and dangerous.

Triumph of Man

The observatory itself is all that anyone could imagine. Immense and grim in its majesty, it stands at the top of the world as a triumph of man's ingenuity and genius. When the immense mirror is installed, the visit to the observatory will be even more interesting than it is today, but even now it is impressive.

The Observatory is located on Mt. Palomar at an elevation of 6125 feet above sea level, on a 320 acre site. Although not yet completed, it is sufficiently constructed so that visitors may readily comprehend how important this giant telescope and observatory, with its scientific investigations of astronomical phenomena, will be to civilization.

When completed, the project will have cost about \$7,000,000, according to the superintendent in charge, but the 200-inch, 18-ton reflector mirror, which is now being ground at Caltech, will probably not be placed in position until 1940. However, as it is today, it is a worth while goal for a Sunday tour.

Two other Telescopes

Two other telescopes are located on the mountain, the 48-inch Schmidt telescope, the mirror for which is now being ground at Caltech and the 18-inch Schmidt telescope, already in position. It is on this last that Dr. Fritz Zwicky has made noteworthy studies of exploding stars.

At the observatory our mileage indicator reads 115.6 miles from Riverside city hall, and the trip so far has been filled with delightful experiences, magnificent views, restful colors, comfort-

able ride and the smooth purr of 110 "horses" under the hood with pleasant conversation to pass the time.

We decide to return by way of Pala, home of Pala Mission and travel down the grade over the well paved road past the Pauma and Mission Indian reservations, the San Diego County road camp where the prisoners who constructed the highway are housed and arrive at the picturesque old mission built by the Spanish fathers.

Turning right, we travel the Pala Grade highway for 9 ½ miles and arrive at the main San Diego Riverside highway. Two miles further on we again reach Temecula at 143.1 miles.

Visit Hugo Guenther

Ten miles north of Temecula we turn right to Murrieta Hot Springs and drop in to see Hugo Guenther of the deep bass voice. This is one of the most popular spas of Riverside County and is a small city in itself with its own stores, shops, post office, swimming pool and every form of recreational activity.

The Siloam spring at the resort will boil an egg in 10 minutes. Its temperature is 170 degrees, and there are many other springs to provide the curative waters for which this resort is known. Drinking of mineral water, and hot mud and mineral

baths have performed miracles in numerous cases, it is claimed.

Excellent meals are served in the dining room and the resort is just the right distance from Riverside for an enjoyable ride.

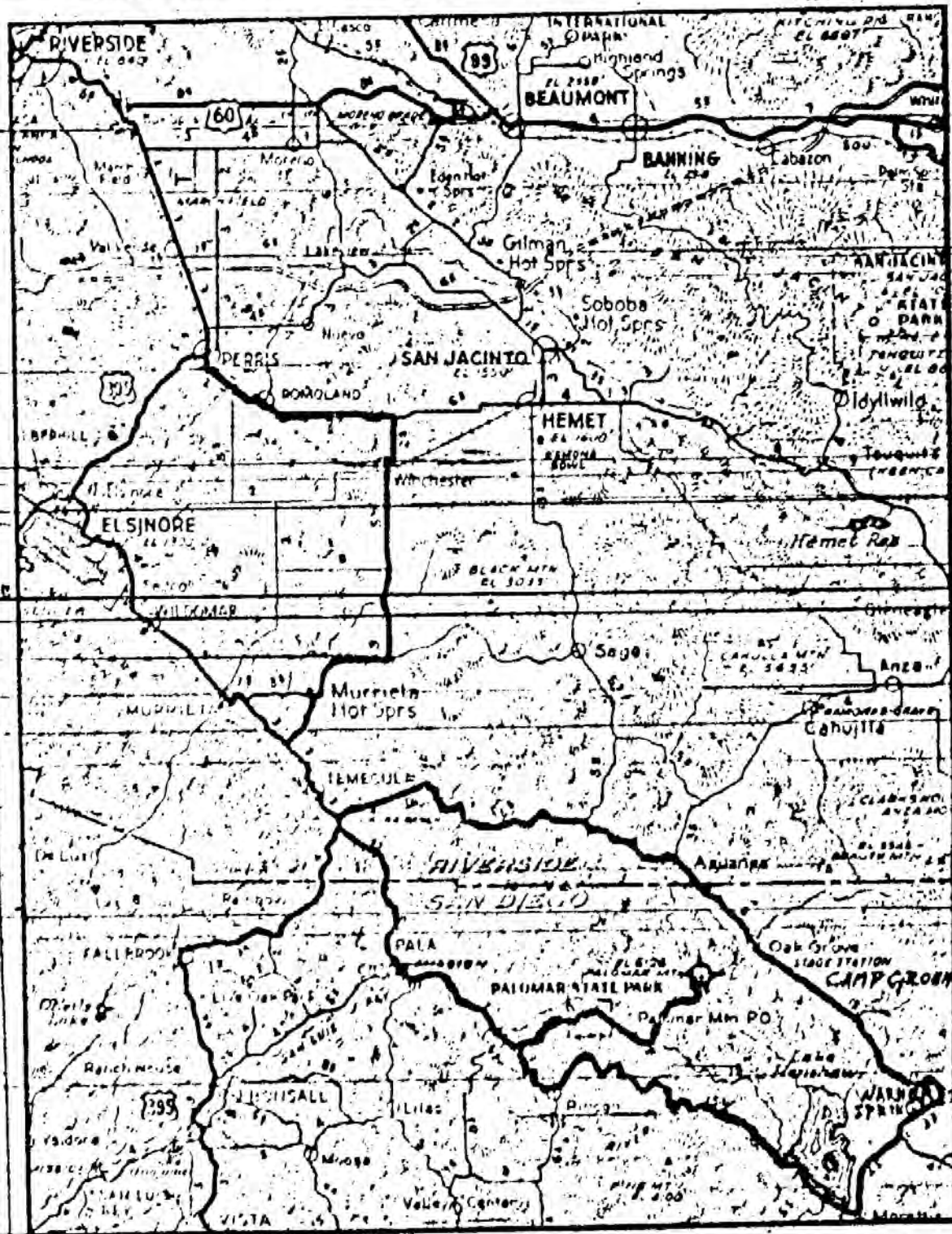
Just as the sun sank over the hills we started for Riverside, through Winchester, the Menifee Valley, Romoland and Perris, and passed March Field as the red lights marking the field boundaries were turned on.

We stop at Al Woodsy's (?) roadside stand to sample his delicious orange juice and arrive at the city hall in Riverside after an enjoyable day's trip. Our speedometer reads 182.2 miles of delightful touring through the sunshiny, lazy land where the early Californians enjoyed life and carved out a livelihood from the fertile acres.



A Lincoln Zephyr at Pala Mission

Scout Car Tour Route to Palomar



Route of tour with Mt. Palomar and giant observatory as destination. Courtesy Automobile Club of Southern California.

Spotlight: The Escondido History Center

By Jeffery G. Harmon



The Escondido History Center at Grape Day Park

Along Historic Route 395, on present day North Broadway in Escondido resides Grape Day Park. A whimsical public art installation called Vinehenge makes visitors smile as they enter the park. The art is a giant purple grape cluster with a slide inside accompanied by multiple grapevines for children to climb and explore. The piece was created by local artists, Valerie Salatino and Nancy Moran and installed in 2004.

Also in Grape Day Park is a historic village, a cluster of turn-of-the-century buildings that have been relocated, restored and preserved. The center piece of the buildings is the 1888 Escondido Train Depot. The green Victorian Stick architecture harkens us back to the days when a steam train ran along the railroad tracks between Oceanside and Escondido.

The depot was once located on West Grand Avenue. In 1976, the building was relocated to Grape Day Park. Today the depot is home to the Escondido History Center, a museum dedi-

cated to preserving and sharing the history of Escondido, nestled in the Hidden Valley.

Museum artifacts tell the story of Escondido from its earliest residences to the modern age. The first people to live in the area were the Luiseno and Kumeyaay tribes. Grinding implements, stone tips, baskets, and other items tell the story of the first people who lived a peaceful life before Europeans came to the California shores.

In 1843, a 12,653 acre Mexican land grant was given to Juan Bautista Alvarado. It was called Rancho Rincon del Diablo, translated means “the devil’s corner.” According to one source, the rancho was given this name because it was not part of the San Luis Rey Mission lands. The land was not “blessed” by the padres and therefore, it was the devil’s land.

The rancho thrived from 1843 through 1855. After Alvarado’s death, his heirs did not want to settle in the area. The land was sold off to other interests. Eventually, the Escondido

Land and Town Company purchased the lands in 1886. Soon railroad tracks were laid from Oceanside to Escondido and the first train rolled into the valley on December 31, 1887. The two-ton safe from the land company is on display.

A surprising exhibit told the story of the mining operations in the area. There were fourteen mines dug around the hills of Escondido, all in search of gold. On display are an old ore car and a gold stamp device. Despite all the miners’ hard work, very little gold was discovered.

Escondido’s main export was the citrus industry. The area slogan was, “the sun kissed valley.” The slogan was shortened and today we know it as Sunkist. However, the trees could not grow without ample water. Herculean efforts were made to divert water to the thirsty valley. Wooden water flumes transported water from the San Luis Rey River in the north to the Escondido farms. After the completion of Lake Henshaw, more water flowed into the area, and the crops flourished.

My children enjoyed experiencing the touch table. My daughter enjoyed running her fingers on the furs and my son enjoyed holding the two animal skulls. The hands on exhibit give visitors an opportunity to touch artifacts, evoking a sense of wonder and curiosity.

There are also several railroad artifacts that share the story of the train depot. A large floor scale shows how goods and services were weighed, charged and shipped by rail. There is a

Train Accident on Highway 395

By Jack Story

When I was in high school and a few years after, I lived with my family in a house on present day Palomino Road, which is about two miles southeast of downtown Fallbrook. The road's original name was Dean Martin Lane, named after my grandfather who once owned the house that I lived in. At night, when I went to bed, I always heard the Woo, Woo, of the train whistle as it alerted folks that it was about to cross Elder Street and then Main Street, the original Highway 395 route. I remember the far off lonesome sound of the train always gave me a feeling of tranquility as I dozed off to sleep.

Late one afternoon, while I was in a bus with other high school kids returning home from an athletic event, I witnessed a collision between a pickup truck and a train at the railroad crossing on Main Street. The bus driver, Jimmy Banks from Pala, had stopped at the railroad tracks to let the train pass by. The train was heading north-

east towards Main Street crossing. At the same time, an old pickup truck had pulled away from the front of Whiteys bar, where the old hotel was located and headed south on Main Street. The truck driver ran into the train as it started to cross the street.

I watched the whole thing unfold as did the rest of the kids on Jimmy Banks' bus. The impact caused the pickup truck to spin around and head back the way it came. Its throttle was stuck wide open. In an erratic driving pattern, the truck ended up in about the same spot that it had started from, in front of Whiteys, against the curb, burning rubber and making a loud racket. Jimmy Banks left the bus and ran over to the truck to help get things stabilized. I assume that the train must have completely stopped after the impact.

I don't recollect anyone being injured in the incident. I can't remember the name of one

person who was on that bus with me, even though I must have known them all at the time. It would be fun if someone who was with me on the bus could recall this event and maybe add something to it.

I wonder if there were any other recorded train wrecks involving traffic on old 395. Maybe this was the only one.

Jack Story

President, Fallbrook Historical Society

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Send us your photos and your memories!

History Center Continued...

telegraph station and a few other buttons, which most people can't help touching as they pass by.

A trip to the museum is not complete without going behind the depot and exploring Railroad car #92. The car was built by the Pullman Company in the 1920s. The interior has several passenger seats and a mailroom. The car's centerpiece is the H-O model railroad that depicts the twenty-two mile railroad line from Oceanside to Escondido. My children enjoyed chasing the

train from the Escondido Depot around the Buena bend and onward to downtown Oceanside. It is a site that all ages will enjoy.

After exploring the museum, brose in the front lobby gift shop. Currently, the museum is selling souvenir Historic Route 395 signs, and magnets. Please let the staff know that we sent you.

As you leave the depot stroll along the sidewalk and examine the other historic buildings in the park. There is the blacksmith guild, where occasionally local artisans visit and ply their

craft with hammer and anvil. There is a 1901 red barn and windmill. There is a Queen Anne style farmhouse, and the Center's office is housed in Escondido's first public library.

After a pleasant afternoon visiting the Escondido History Center, we return to the car and continue driving down Historic Route 395. As we drive away, we imagine hearing a train whistle announcing its departure, heading west to the ocean and beyond.

**A HISTORIC ROUTE 395 ASSOCIATION
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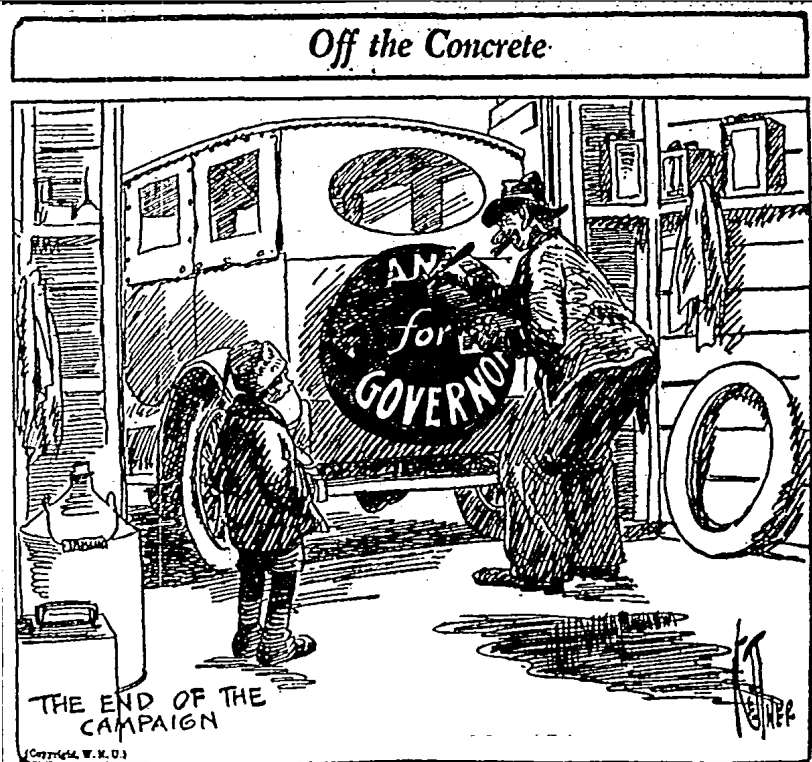
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Announcement:
October 1st
Monthly Meeting
8:00 a.m.

Rainbow Oaks Restaurant



Reprint: The Vista Press November 13 , 1930

If you have a personal story, an article or photos of Highway 395,
please share them with us.

Sedco Continued....

this quiet neighborhood. Within the last year, the first traffic signal was installed at the intersection of Elberta Road and Mission Trail. However, most cars still zip on by the area without a second glance.

Our driving tour of Sedco comes to an end at the intersection of Malaga Road and Mission Trail. Join me next time as we head north into the city of Lake Elsinore. So remember, get off the interstate, slow down, and "Take a Drive on Route 395."



Lakeview Chapel on Mission Trail in the
Sedco subdivision of the City of Wildomar