

I·M·A·G·E·S

SUNNYVALE'S HERITAGE RESOURCES

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First Edition

Preface

This publication is the product of a process begun in the late 1970s to alert Sunnyvale citizens of the impending loss of many buildings reflecting their rich cultural heritage. Mrs. Ann Hines became the principal facilitator of Sunnyvale's historic preservation movement. She provided the inspiration and leadership which led the City Council to provide funds to conduct the City's first historic preservation inventory in 1979, develop a Heritage Preservation sub-element for the General Plan in 1980, and adopt a Heritage Preservation Ordinance creating a Heritage Preservation Commission in 1980.

In 1987 a review and update of the inventory, embodied in this publication, was conducted by the California History Center at De Anza College, Cupertino, under the sponsorship of the City Council and coordinated by the City's Heritage Preservation Commission and Department of Community Development.

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Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| I. Purpose of the Inventory | 1 |
| II. History of Sunnyvale | 3 |
| III. Sunnyvale's Historic Architecture: A Builders' Legacy | 17 |
| IV. Sunnyvale Landmarks | 23 |
| V. A Sunnyvale Inventory | 43 |
| VI. Sunnyvale's Lost Resources | 129 |
| VII. Nostalgic Sunnyvale | 131 |
| VIII. Planning Sunnyvale Preservation | 141 |
| IX. Researching Your Older Sunnyvale Home | 143 |
| X. Tips on Improving Your Older Sunnyvale Home | 145 |
| XI. Glossary | 147 |
| Bibliography | 149 |
| Acknowledgements | 153 |

I. Purpose of the Inventory

Comprehensive planning for the present and future of Sunnyvale's built environment requires awareness and understanding of the various forces which shaped the community over time. The City's history is evidenced most visibly in its older structures and existing neighborhoods. They enhance the community's identity and help define its character. By retaining and maintaining representative examples of these building forms, we are in a better position to judge our present values and community progress.

The information contained in this book is intended to help Sunnyvale citizens and property owners gain appreciation for those community cultural resources which connect the present with the past. Since some cultural resources which have historical or architectural significance in one community may go unnoticed in another, it is important to understand that community sentiment is as much a criteria for evaluation of the City's assets as are the standards which have been established by qualified historians.

Selection for this inventory was based on a number of factors, which included citizen input as well as professional historical and architectural judgements. Properties listed were chosen because they are exceptional examples of architectural styles, represent elements of reasonably intact and contiguous older neighborhoods and street scapes, or possess historical significance relative to Sunnyvale. The inventory is by no means meant to be final; it represents a continuing process. It is hoped that as interest is heightened, further cultural resources will be documented and added to the City's official list.

The material developed through the inventory will afford recognition of Sunnyvale's rich heritage. It will provide

planners with a base from which to develop policies germane to neighborhood development, conservation, and housing. It will provide the basis for legal and financial tools to protect and enhance historical resources to the community's economic and cultural benefit.

PACIFIC OCEAN

SAN FRANCISCO BAY

SAN FRANCISCO
SAN MATEO
REDWOOD CITY
MILPITAS
SAN JOSE
SAN BRUNO
CUBERT

SUNNYVALE

CITY OF DESTINY
OF SANTA CLARA CO. CAL.

W. E. CROSSMAN CO
SOLE AGENTS.

COMMERCIAL ART CO. 518 N

II. History of Sunnyvale

Sunnyvale possesses some of the most fertile land in California, a product of centuries of geologic action and alluvial settlement. Stevens Creek and other streams running out of the Santa Cruz Mountains deposited heavy loam sediments atop a coarse gravel base, forming rich soil with excellent drainage. The same geologic forces created a belt of Artesian wells, which would provide economical irrigation with the introduction of agriculture in the 19th century. Finally, a moderate climate generally free of the coastal fogs historically associated with the San Francisco Peninsula contributed greatly to the region's natural abundance.

Human habitation may have begun in the area as much as 20,000 years ago, while earliest permanent occupation of the Central Coast appears to have been about 10,000 years ago. Archaeological and historical research established the Ohlone people as the descendants of the earliest inhabitants. The Spanish called them *Costeños* or People of the Coast. Before the Spanish arrival in the 18th century, as many as 10,000 of these hunters and gatherers lived in the coastal area between San Francisco Bay and Point Sur, south of Monterey. Demographically they were broken into about forty different groups speaking twelve to fourteen distinct but related languages. Around 250 people comprised the average group or village.

The Ohlones maintained villages along the San Francisco Bay shore, in close proximity to fresh water sources. Their conical hut dwellings were made by lashing bundles of tule rush to a framework of arched willow poles. Acorns gathered from the vast oak forests of the Santa Clara Valley were their principle staple, but the Ohlones were also expert hunters and fishers. They practiced land management by using fire to

keep brush from taking over meadowlands, and this provided grazing habitat for game and fostered certain grass and flower types for the dietary chain. In short, they maintained a balanced rather than exploitive relationship with nature, and balance seems to have been the key to their culture as well.

Unfortunately, the Spanish did not see a native civilization which had achieved a balanced way of life "capable of perpetuating itself for century after century without the people destroying each other or their natural environment." They did not recognize that the park-like beauty of the pre-European peninsula was a product of the Ohlone's superb range management. Rather they saw an "idle, improvident, and brutish" society, the ideal raw material for "an abundant harvest of souls."

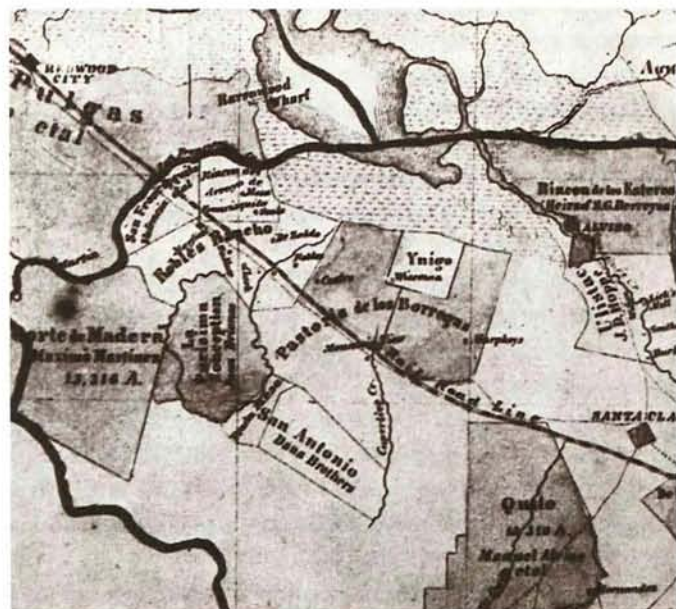
Initial Spanish settlement in the Sunnyvale region came with the Mission Santa Clara de Asis, founded on January 12, 1877. It was the eighth in the chain of 21 California missions which eventually stretched from San Diego to Sonoma, each separated by a day's horseback ride along a dusty trail called the Kings Highway: *El Camino Real*.

Under Spanish colonization policy, the missions were not intended to be permanent. Each mission was to draw in the indigenous native population for a period of about 10 years, where padres would teach the Indians to be agriculturists, tradespeople, and good Christians. At the end of this training, the Indians were to receive their own farmland. The missions were to become parish churches. Admirable in theory, this proved impracticable, and the California missions continued until forced secularization in the 1830s.

Very few Christianized Indians realized the promise of land after secularization. Instead, California's Mexican governors

granted the mission lands principally to the descendants of the early Spanish-Mexican settlers. An exception was Rancho Posolmi y Posita de Las Animas, now part of Sunnyvale. This 1,696 acre land grant was made to the Indian Lupe (or Lopez) Ynigo on February 15, 1844.

But 8,800 acres of former Mission Santa Clara sheep pasturage were granted in 1842 to Francisco and Inez (Castro) Estrada. Their Rancho Pastoria de Los Borregas today is encompassed by the cities of Sunnyvale and Mountain View. Through a series of circumstances, the land passed to Inez' father, the former Alcalde (mayor) of San Jose, Mariano Castro. He occupied the Rancho in 1843, where he raised cattle, horses, sheep, and a few crops.



Pastoria de los Borregas.

California History Center.

In 1850 Martin Murphy, Jr., purchased 4,800 acres of Castro's Pastoria de Los Borregas for about a dollar an acre. Among the earliest Anglo settlers in the Santa Clara Valley, the Murphy family had been part of the first successful immigrant crossing of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in 1844. They expressly sought to live in a Catholic community, and Martin Murphy, Jr.'s purchase of the land south of Permanente Creek began their life in California as landed Irish aristocracy.

Murphy designed a 30 room manor house for his new "Bayview Farm." As there were few sawmills in California capable of doing the work he required, in 1851 he had the house prefabricated in Bangor, Maine, and shipped around the Horn for assembly. Murphy raised grain and stock, introducing American strains of cattle and the Norman breed of horses to the region. He planted some of the first orchards in the Santa Clara Valley and also is credited with early use of farm machinery.

Bayview Farm became a political and social center for the region, and the family's "Old World" hospitality was unfailing. The Murphys set aside a room for Archbishop Alemany and hosted many weddings and baptisms. In 1850 the initial meeting of the State Supreme Court occurred in the house. The Murphys made major contributions to development of the valley, including support for Santa Clara University and the Convent of Notre Dame. A large wooden platform used at their golden wedding anniversary in 1881 was employed to construct the first chapel in Mountain View, and a huge barbecue initiated at their anniversary party became one of the valley's biggest annual social events for the next 25 years.

In 1864 Murphy allowed the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad a right of way across his property, his agreement securing passenger stops at "Lawrence Station" in Santa Clara



The Murphy home, brought
around the Horn.

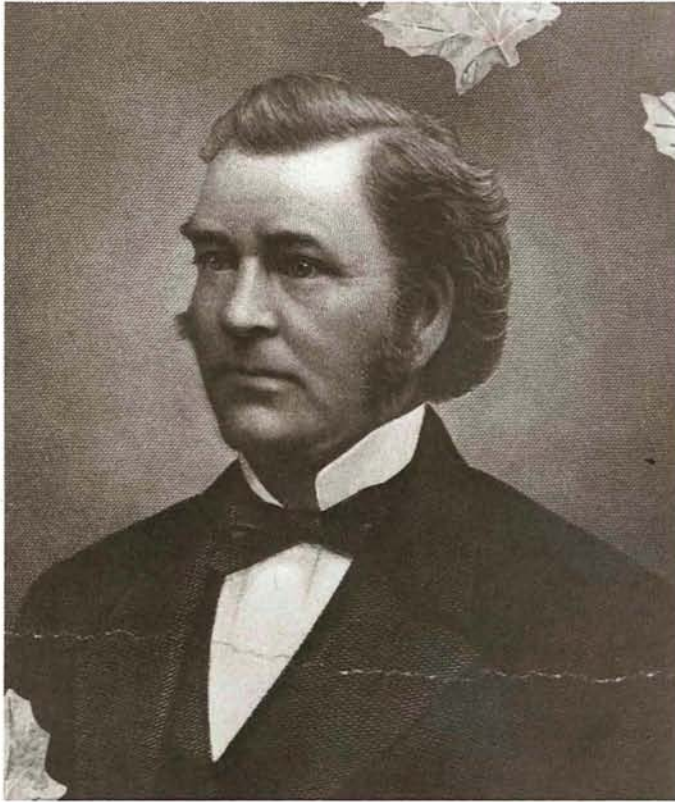
California History Center.

and "Murphy Station" in what would become Sunnyvale. The railroad afforded swift and easy access to the San Francisco market and paved the way for greater settlement and broader agricultural development in the Santa Clara Valley.

Ideal growing conditions brought other enterprising farmers to the Sunnyvale area during the last half of the 19th century. In 1851 William Wright of Maryland arrived by way of the Mother Lode to mine the golden harvest of Santa Clara Valley's wheat and barley. In the 1860s George H. Briggs came from Boston and introduced steam powered irrigation in his

orchards and vineyards. The Collins brothers of New York established the 320 acre Pebbleside Winery in 1862, which daily produced 300 gallons of prize winning wine for the San Francisco market. Their achievements are still recognized by well known local place names and through the City Landmarks program.

After Martin Murphy, Jr.'s death in 1884, his children divided almost 5,000 acres of land. Smaller farms began to appear in the area now called Encinal, the Spanish word meaning "where the live oak grows." Murphy's son, Patrick,



Martin Murphy, Jr.

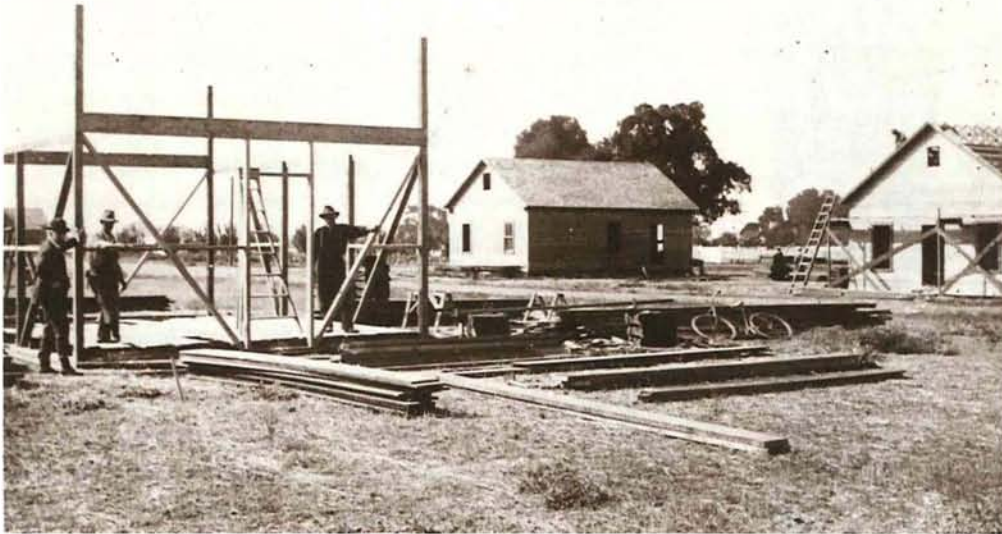
California History Center.

inherited the Bayview Farm, kept it in agriculture, and leased 200 acres west of the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks to Antone Vargas, a Portuguese farmer. Vargas cultivated wheat and avoided high railroad charges by shipping his crop to market by water from Jagel's Landing, near the site of present day Moffett Field on San Francisco Bay.

The local self-supporting farms required little outside labor, even for the harvest. Neighbors helped neighbors, and during the off-season the county paid farmers \$4.00 a day to haul gravel for paving county roads. Yet Encinal residents felt the nationwide depression of the 1890s, and Patrick Murphy was forced to sell all but seven acres of his Bayview Farm. In 1897 realtor Walter E. Crossman purchased for \$38,000 the 200 acres which Antone Vargas had been leasing. Vargas then bought 10 acres on Mary Avenue from Crossman and continued to farm on vacant parcels of land. Today redwoods planted by his son Manuel in 1900 flank the entrance to the old 10 acre ranch on Mary Avenue.

The 1900 Santa Clara County Directory listed about 60 entries for Encinal, including Murphy Station, Fred Cornell's general store and Encinal Post Office on the corner of Murphy and Evelyn avenues, and the grammar school built in 1899. On his site immediately south of the Southern Pacific right of way between Bayview and Mathilda avenues and extending to the County Road, Crossman planned a town, but the area grew slowly at first. Only one carpenter, Thomas Spencer, was listed in the 1900 directory.

W. E. Crossman (far left) visiting
an early Sunnyvale residential
construction site.

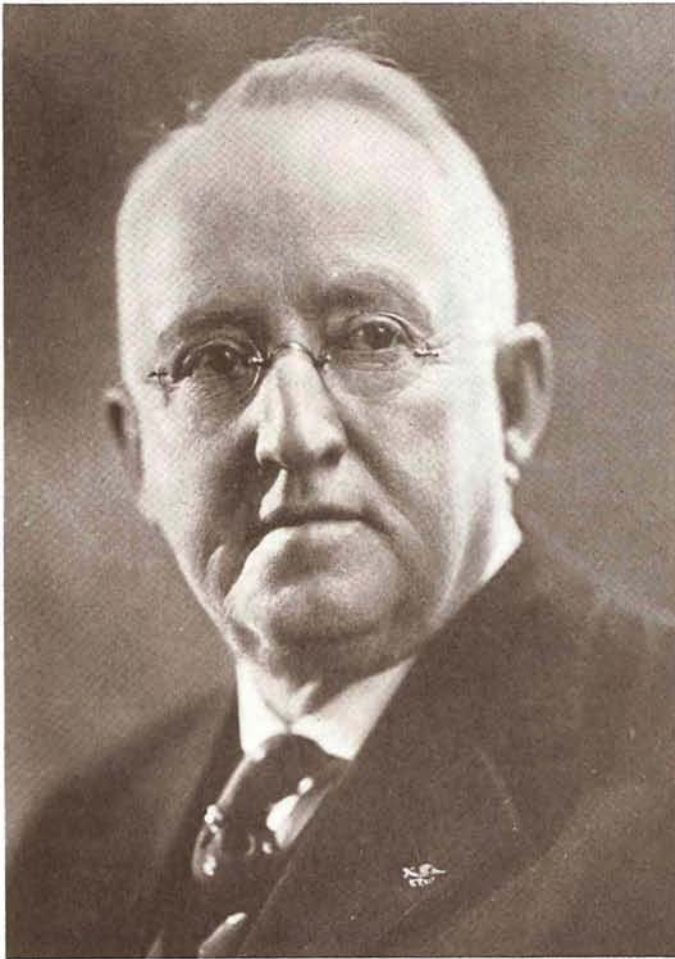


The Camera Mart.

Local tradition suggests that Crossman may have come up with the name Sunnyvale, which the new community adopted on March 24, 1901. Certainly, he was responsible for the establishment of the "City of Destiny" and its initial economic growth. He was far more than a real estate developer. He laid out the City in such a way as to facilitate future physical expansion as well as placate nervous neighbors in Mountain View, Santa Clara, and San Jose. Crossman drew a "shoe string strip" of land into the bay as far as the Alameda County line to secure potential port access. Jagel's Landing became Port Sunnyvale, part of the original townsite, and the strip of land

became a spine from which much of Sunnyvale's future industrial expansion would grow.

Carl and Hannah Olson typified the multi-national immigrant families that responded to W. E. Crossman's offer of a free train ride, barbecue, and generous terms for five acre orchard sites. The Olsons paid \$750 for their parcel on McKinley Street, between Taaffe and Murphy streets across from Encinal School. They hired Danish carpenter Byrnal Brynelson for \$2.00 a day to build their modest \$300, three room, wood framed house, and they spent another \$150 to sink an 80 foot well.



C. C. Spalding.

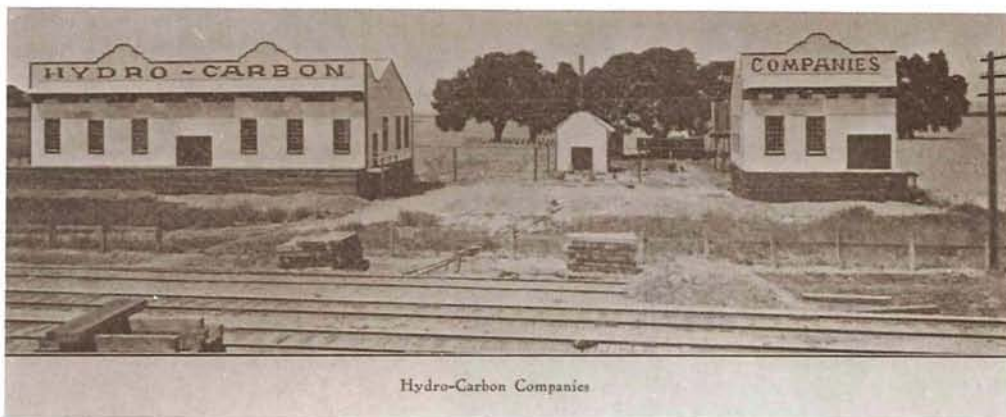
History of Santa Clara County (1922).

The town had a Volunteer Fire Department, its own brass band, and a newspaper, the *Sunnyvale Standard*, established by J. H. McCarthy in 1905. C. C. Spalding had started development of the south end of Murphy Avenue and opened Sunnyvale's first bank. With his brother-in-law, C. L. Stowell, he also built the S. and S. Block, which included a public hall. Many new business buildings went up in the Mission and Mediterranean architectural styles, reflecting a then current revival of interest in California's Spanish heritage. They replaced the wood-framed, false fronted stores that characterized Sunnyvale's earliest commercial development.

Following the San Francisco earthquake in 1906, W. E. Crossman began to promote Sunnyvale as an ideal industrial community. He attracted the Joshua Hendy Iron Works, Jubilee Incubator Company, Goldy Machine Company, Hydro Carbon Company, and the Libby, McNeil and Libby Food Processing Plant. In 1906 about \$200,000 was invested in plant development and another \$150,000 in residential and commercial construction. To accomplish the building, over 18 carpenters, five contractors, two lumber yards, McGlaufflin's Milling Company, and the newly established Century Paint and Roofing Company located in the town.

A nationwide depression which started in 1907 temporarily slowed Sunnyvale's rapid growth. Nevertheless, contractor George D. Huston still offered free plans and bonded work to build housing in return for 25 percent down "and the rest at your leisure at six percent net." Despite the financial hard times, which lasted for five years, City boundaries expanded from 200 to 2,000 acres. From a population of not much over 100 in 1900, Sunnyvale grew to over 1,200 people by 1912.

That year an advertisement in *Collier's Magazine* described Sunnyvale as "a manufacturing suburb of San Francisco" and the Santa Clara Valley as "a poor man's paradise." Modern municipal sewer and water systems and two new schools had



Hydro-Carbon Companies

Hydro-Carbon Companies,
c. 1910.

California History Center.

Live in your Own Home



I will build it for you
I furnish plans free of charge
I furnish cash bonds on all work

All you need is 25 per cent
to pay down and the rest at
your leisure at 6 per cent net.

References Furnished

GEO. D. HUSTON

Contractor & Builder

Address: Sunnyvale Post Office
Sunnyvale, Cal.

been completed, and the community's Chamber of Commerce paid for an election which resulted in Sunnyvale's formal incorporation on Christmas Eve. In 1913 El Camino Real was paved, denoting the automobile's rise and improved access to markets. A number of additions to the new town also were developed, among them Diana Park and the Fair Oaks Addition. Colonel Harvey C. Fuller, who laid out another tract, named Florence, Charles, and Waverly streets after family members and his Iowa birthplace.

Despite industrial growth, agriculture remained the mainstay of Sunnyvale. Most land parcels were between five and ten acres in size, and a five acre plot which sold for \$750 in 1900 had increased in value to \$3,500 by 1912. Older families continued to hold some of the best acreage, such as the Spalding Tract along both sides of El Camino Real in the area now known as the Old San Francisco Road. Such areas boasted Queen Anne cottages and Colonial Revival residences,

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Washington Street looking toward
Murphy Avenue in 1906.

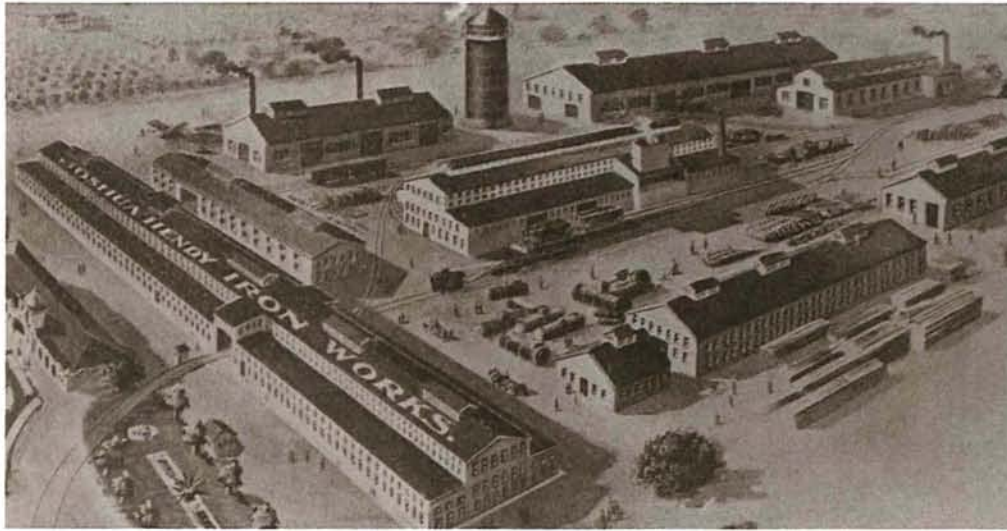


The Camera Mart.

while the California Bungalow became common in areas developed after 1910. Low and comfortable with open plans, bungalows were reasonably priced and appropriate to the environment.

World War One brought an influx of new settlers. The Hendy Iron Works' 900 employees went on a 24 hour work schedule, producing marine engines and armaments, while

other companies and farms expanded to meet new demands. The war and postwar era witnessed stabilization of the community axis from which modern Sunnyvale would develop. Industrial plants and the railroad stretched east-west, while the Murphy Avenue business district ran north-south. Single family homes, generally built on 25' × 100' lots, bridged the manufacturing and commercial areas.



The Hendy Iron Works.

California History Center.

Cottages for factory and cannery workers clustered around the plants, and more pretentious residences lined Sunnyvale and Mathilda avenues.

Some of the more substantial public buildings in the community benefited from professional architectural design. William H. Weeks, for example, planned the 1925 Fremont High School. But the majority of new buildings were the product of contractors and carpenter builders. Their use of popular pattern book designs established the residential and commercial character of the City. One such builder was Welford Cochrane, whose daughter Edwinna (Annette)

Cochrane Benner served on the City Council for 27 years and in 1924 became one of California's first women mayors.

The Tudor and Mediterranean revival houses prevalent in the historic neighborhoods adjacent to Murphy Avenue particularly were popular during the 1920s, their fashionable Old World look symbolizing the benefits gained from a growing economy. Yet Sunnyvale remained a close, neighborly community. Local farmers still gathered to exchange daily news at the Murphy and Evelyn avenues corner watering trough, and everyone enjoyed Saturday night dances at the City Hall during canning season.

Schuckl cannery workers.



California History Center.

In the late 1920s considerable growth occurred, Sunnyvale's economic base expanding with over a million dollars in industrial development. The Schuckl Canning Company bought out Sunnyvale Canneries in 1929, building a new facility in 1931 and pioneering aseptic canning. The firm had its own kindergarten for employees' children, and about 40 worker cottages were built for seasonal help in what is now Washington Park. An expanding poultry industry brought development of Easter Gables subdivision along

Crescent Street, where neat bungalows on deep lots had chicken houses built behind them. Meanwhile, the South Shore Port Company improved Port Sunnyvale to accommodate vessels of up to 500 tons, and the U.S. Navy began to investigate the area as a potential site for a West Coast lighter-than-air landing facility.

Because of the foresight of W. E. Crossman and others, the 1930s depression did not affect Sunnyvale as adversely as it did other communities. A decline in manufacturing put some

The Sunnyvale Naval Air Station.



California History Center.

factory workers off their jobs, but many, as in the brief economic turn down after World War One, were able to find work in agriculture. Indeed, 1934 marked the peak year for Sunnyvale's canning industry.

Construction of the Sunnyvale Naval Air Station, later renamed Moffett Field after Admiral William A. Moffett, Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, required 850,000 man hours of work. The project generated almost 5 million dollars in wages for Bay Area residents by the time it was completed in 1933. Development of the air station facilitated the widening of Murphy Avenue and prompted more growth along the

commercial artery in anticipation of a business boom.

The onslaught of World War Two brought the boom in both business and new building. Because a large number of Sunnyvale companies turned to war production, the region was declared a Critical Defense Area and permitted to build new housing. Victory Village, between Fair Oaks and Bartlett avenues east of the Hendy Iron Works (today's Westinghouse Marine Division plant), was constructed between 1943 and 1944. It remains as one of the best single examples of California's important wartime housing tracts.

The war tipped the balance between agriculture and

industry. Both high wages and available work created an agricultural labor shortage. Orchards were still profitable but now secondary to industrial development. Population increased to 4,300, and larger industrial firms moved into the community, with Westinghouse, for example, taking over the Hendy Iron Works. Sunnyvale became "the industrial economic heart throb of the Peninsula."

A brief economic decline at war's end spurred the City and Chamber of Commerce into action. A Citizens Committee was formed to hire a dynamic Chamber manager and draw new industry to the area. The new manager, Al Spiers, arrived in 1946 and industry followed. Spiers brought almost 100 new companies to Sunnyvale during his tenure in office. By 1948 the City and Chamber had worked out a five point development program which included safety, new housing, new industries and businesses, a new post office, and a City recreation program.

Spiers spent much of his time working with residents on economic development needs and clean industry concepts. He sought non-polluting industrial parks which in part would develop off the "shoe string strip" which W. E. Crossman had created when he laid out the town in 1898. Meanwhile, the City adopted a council-manager government under a new charter and combined police and fire responsibilities in a Public Safety Department, one of the state's first such agencies. This began a series of innovative actions that in time would make Sunnyvale one of the most efficient local governments in the country.

By 1950 Sunnyvale's population reached 9,829, and its first major industrial annexation occurred the next year. Lockheed Corporation's Missile and Space Division gave three reasons for coming to Sunnyvale: the climate, access to the academic environment of the peninsula, and the City's quality planning. Lockheed's arrival increased the community's population to

22,500 in four years. Taxes on farmland rose rapidly, making agricultural use impracticable and spurring land owners to sell or develop residential subdivisions and shopping centers. A new City Hall was constructed by decade's end, and an urban renewal program began to assure downtown health and vitality.

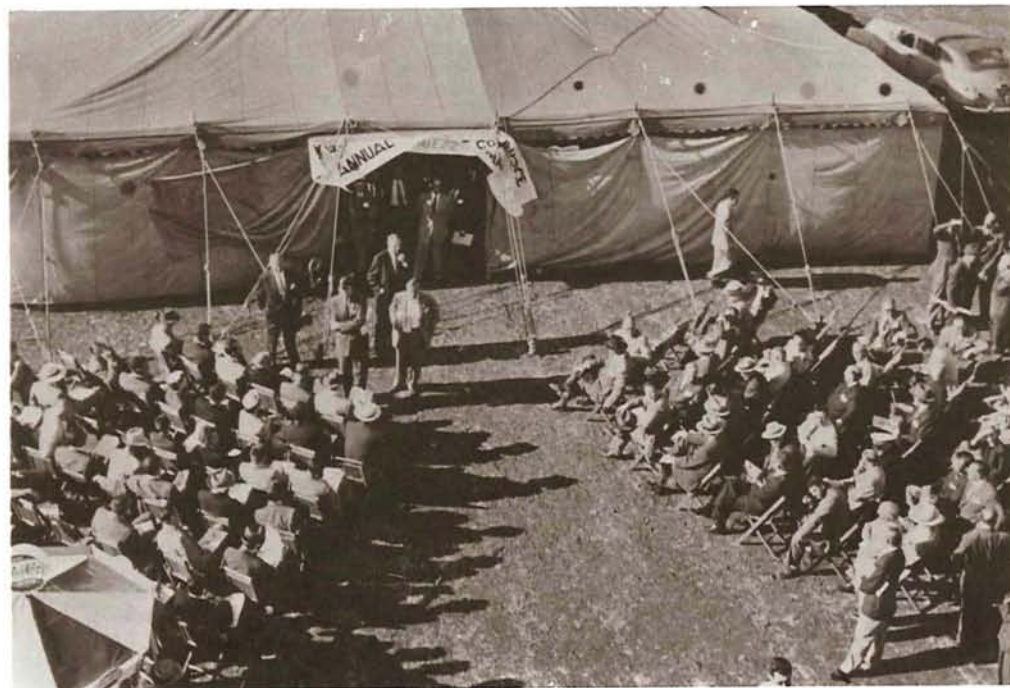
Sunnyvale entered the 1960s with 53,000 residents. Transportation corridors and street patterns changed to accommodate steadily increasing automobile traffic, and Sunnyvale became the second largest city in Santa Clara Valley. Libby, McNeil and Libby's work force expanded to 2,900, making the agricultural processing firm the third largest employer in the City. But more and more orchards were being torn out, and houses tied to Sunnyvale's past were being razed, including Murphy's Bayview Farm. Change seemed unalterable.

By the 1970s Sunnyvale came to the end of an expansionist period, in which 30 years of growth principally had seen agricultural land converted to urban uses. Its boundaries pressed against those of its neighbors and little undeveloped land remained within them. The City entered a new phase of its life, one in which growth and change would involve either the replacement, remodeling, or conservation of earlier structures. Any new development now would be immediately adjacent to earlier structures and neighborhoods, and it inevitably would affect the old.

Recognizing the potential loss of important historical and cultural resources as well as areas of community character

OPPOSITE: A growing community. *California History Center.*





The Chamber of Commerce explains Sunnyvale's growth at a news conference, June 8, 1955.

California History Center.

interested citizens began working with the City during the 1970s to survey and inventory the remaining historical structures, sites, and neighborhoods. That continuing process has led to this publication in an effort to help Sunnyvale citizens understand the importance of preserving as much of

their community's rich legacy as possible. Since learning from the past prepares us for the future, today's existing cultural resources will insure the visual vitality of Sunnyvale street scapes, serve as reminders of the "City of Destiny's" past, and help us build even a stronger tomorrow.

III. Sunnyvale's Historic Architecture: A Builders' Legacy

Sunnyvale's architecture is straightforward and direct, reflecting the community's working class character. Even well-to-do farmers and industrialists who figured prominently in the City's growth and development generally chose to build larger examples of practical and efficient bungalow and period revival styles, which today constitute the majority of the City's older housing stock.

Except for a few public structures, Sunnyvale buildings were constructed almost entirely by contract or on speculation by contractor/builders. They used popular house plans from pattern books, catalogs, and lumberyard fliers, plus mail order designs available through the *Sunnyvale Standard*. In most instances the homeowner was an active participant in determining the house's final appearance. Therefore, while practical and moderately priced, these homes were up to date and contemporary with the taste of the times.

Architectural styles change with time and fashion. Often one period overlaps another in local popularity so that design elements of a particular style are found incorporated in another. Such was the case in Sunnyvale, where owners and builders alike freely interpreted the wide variety of available building designs and plans. The following descriptions of building styles associated with the Sunnyvale's development offer general guidelines to help citizens better understand their community's architectural heritage.

Pioneer Buildings (1851-1900)

Very few of Sunnyvale's pioneer residences still stand, and over time all have been modified from their original appearance. Most were constructed after 1864 when the railroad built through Martin Murphy's Bayview Farm. Murphy designed his own spacious, rambling two story home. He flanked its basic Gable "I" form with large shed wings which enclosed the ends of an open double porch.

Murphy's generic design came from traditional North American forms that were passed on to successive generations of builders and designers through the use of materials, shapes, textures, spatial organization, proportions among elements,



and systems of ornamentation. In the West simple straightforward "I" or "L" shaped envelopes with gabled and hipped roofs stemmed from remembered older eastern models, and construction depended on availability of materials.

Murphy's home was fabricated in Bangor, Maine, where the parts were numbered and lettered. It was transported by sailing ship around Cape Horn for assembly by Murphy and his ranch hands.

The Landmark William Wright home at 1234 Cranberry probably was built in 1862 and is the only standing example of this pioneer style. A 1918 remodeling modified it somewhat.

Queen Anne (1880s-1910)

The Queen Anne style was introduced from England at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876. It spread quickly to become one of the most common house styles in America.



Its row house form, for example, abounds in San Francisco.

Irregular in composition, Queen Anne structures vary widely in size and design. The most common examples are in wood and display a variety of shapes and decorative details. Common to the style are bay windows (angled and square), stained glass, a variety of surface textures, including shaped shingles, and decorated eaves and porches, gables, towers, and turrets.

In Sunnyvale the Queen Anne's principal expression was in a cottage version. Remaining examples of these one and a half story farm houses and town residences can be seen at 901 Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road and 471 South Frances. A particularly nice later version of the style which also incorporates Colonial Revival features is at 358 Florence.

Colonial Revival (1840-1950s)

The Colonial Revival style reflects the rebirth of interest in



early English and Dutch houses of the Atlantic seaboard which followed the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. The Georgian and Adam styles form the backbone of the revival and can be seen best as the application of decorative elements from these modes to earlier house types. Typical features are the palladian window, swags and garlands, classical portico entries, and small square or diamond paned windows appended to Queen Anne, stick, and shingle house styles.

The style was popularized nationally through women's magazines, particularly *The Ladies Home Journal*. Local contractor Harold C. Ray illustrated his 1908 *Sunnyvale Standard* advertisement with a photograph of a two story example. In spring 1924 William A. Radford's Chicago Architectural Mail Order House exhibited plans in the *Standard* for a six room Dutch Colonial house designed for a narrow lot.

A Dutch Colonial house designed by the San Jose architectural firm of Wolfe and Higgins can be seen at 113 South Mary Avenue. A transitional version from the Queen Anne style can be found at 585 Old San Francisco Road, while architect Louis Scott's 1939 Georgian revival home for the Diesner Family is at 500 South Frances.

Craftsman/Bungalow (1905-1930s)

The Craftsman/Bungalow forms come from a variety of sources including the English arts and crafts movement, oriental wooden architecture, California adobe dwellings, Swiss chalets, and log cabin structures. The quality of execution that separates the craftsman style from the later pattern book Bungalow resulted from design by an architect rather than by a builder. The Craftsman/Bungalow structures were generally informal in plan, elevation, and detail. They both answered a recognized need for simpler residences,



especially for the working classes.

Despite a multitude of styles, these buildings had certain basic characteristics. They hugged the ground with low pitched, projecting gable roofs generally with exposed rafters. They incorporated large porches, usually under a secondary roof supported by square or elephantine columns. They expressed the material from which they were made and, when carefully sited, settled well into their environments.

Well designed bungalows abounded in Sunnyvale. A wide variety of available ornamentation plus changes in gable motifs, differing window placements, and varied use of materials made it an ideal style for early tract housing. It was possible to build rows of these five and six room working class cottages without having to repeat plans on the same block.

The Obourn Tract on the south side of McKinley between Carroll Street and Bayview Avenue attests to this style's flexibility. Charles Parkinson of Parkinson Brothers Lum-

beryard used tree trunks to post his full width front porch in a particularly fine example of the craftsman Bungalow at 519 South Murphy. A later 1920s pattern book version graces the former site of William Schmidt's Columbian Poultry Farm at 1535 Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road.

Spanish Eclectic Styles (1900-1950)

The earliest manifestation of this style was the Mission Revival, begun in the 1890s. It was viewed as a progressive architectural form because of its unadorned simplicity. Its principal features included large expanses of whitewashed stucco walls, usually covering wooden balloon frames. Its low pitched roofs were capped with red tile. Arched windows and arcaded porches were common. Parapet walls and curvilinear gable ends reflected the shapes of California's mission facades.

Its initial appearance in Sunnyvale was in the form of commercial and public buildings. Built between 1907 and



1908, the Administration Building at the Joshua Hendy Iron Works and Libby, McNeil and Libby's first cannery structures were in the Mission style as was the First Baptist Church, designed by contractor Harold C. Ray. The vocabulary of the style also was employed in the design of C. C. Spalding's Bank of Sunnyvale at the corner of Washington and Murphy Avenue.

Many of the commercial structures built between 1908 and 1940 along the 100 block of Murphy reflect the Mediterranean influence, be it Mission or Spanish Colonial Revival. The latter was a popular house form in the late 1910s and 1920s. These generally had twisted decorative columns and cast or curved ornaments, especially around windows and doors. Windows were relatively small and irregularly spaced. The style employed colored tile work and wrought iron window grilles and was more formal in appearance than the Mission Revival.

Fremont High School, designed in 1925 by William H. Weeks, is an excellent example of the Spanish Colonial Style, as is local architect Louis Scott's four unit 1930 apartment building at 523-25 South Murphy. Scott also was responsible for a number of fine residences constructed in this style shortly before World War Two. One of these is at 505 South Frances.

Tudor (1920-1940)

This building style was especially fashionable in Sunnyvale during the 1920s and 1930s, rivaled in popularity as a vernacular style only by the Spanish Mediterranean modes. The popular name for the form is historically inaccurate, since few examples closely mimicked the architectural characteristics of early 16th Century England. Instead, its principal design elements were loosely based on a variety of late medieval English prototypes, ranging from thatched roof folk

cottages to grand manor houses.

The Tudor style appeared in builders' pattern books through the late 1940s. They were identified by steeply pitched roofs, usually side gabled with a facade dominated by one or more prominent cross gables. They also were characterized by tall, narrow windows, usually in multiple groups and with multi-pane glazing. Decorative non-structural half-timbering graces about half of Sunnyvale's examples of this style, and most have massive chimneys crowned by decorative chimney pots.

Raymond A. Matthews designed and built some excellent examples of this house form in the 1920s, and his son Burr "Monte" Matthews built others in the 1930s. Included among them is the Matthews' family home at 580 South Frances. Near it, at 498 South Frances, is Louis Scott's 1936 Tudor design for R. C. Turvin, which was featured in a 1940 Chamber of Commerce publication as "a typical Sunnyvale home." Many Scott and Matthews designs incorporated decorative



plaster finishes with swags, garlands, and other devices enriching the wall surfaces. They were the product of a local plastering contractor named Waddington. Finally, William Meyers, a contractor from Cupertino, was responsible for the few fine half-timbered brick Tudor houses in Sunnyvale, such as the 1940 one at 505 Murphy.

Prefabricated/Mass Produced Houses (1851-1945)

One of Sunnyvale's most interesting and least appreciated architectural legacies is the large number of quality prefabricated and mass produced homes built as a part of the World War Two national defense effort.

Prefabricated and mass produced houses were not new to Sunnyvale. Martin Murphy's Bayview Farm had been prefabricated in 1851, and Libby, McNeil and Libby, other canneries, and the Joshua Hendy Iron Works built blocks of mass produced temporary worker houses on their plant sites in the early 1900s. It is unknown whether all these firms purchased their low cost industrial houses from mail order firms, such as Alladin Read-Cut Houses, or produced them internally as did Libby.

Although historic precedent for such houses was set by these pioneer Sunnyvale industries, the scale and volume of their production during World War Two was unprecedented. Hundreds of modest five and six room homes were built in dozens of housing tracts which replaced prune, pear, and apricot orchards north of the Southern Pacific Railroad right of way in that part of Sunnyvale once known as the "low lands." The City's heaviest building permit valuation years for both commercial and residential construction came in 1941 and 1942, and Hendy's work force alone expanded from 3,000 to 7,677 between 1942 and 1943.

Contractor Samuel Hyman designed and developed Victory Village, typical of these wartime housing tracts. Hyman was

given permission to construct 250 units on a 38 acre tract adjacent to the Hendy plant at Fair Oaks and California avenues, although he completed only 55 of them. The one story, wood framed, two and three bedroom homes were priced at \$4,000. They had flat, slightly overhanging roofs, trellised front porches, and large backyards. Today some lots still contain fruit trees from the orchards which they replaced. Originally projected to last only a few years as temporary housing, Victory Village is still intact and most of its houses have only minor alterations.

Another interesting product of this period in Sunnyvale's housing development was the construction of Homewood Tract house #212 at 301 North Arques Avenue near Murphy.

The little two bedroom, five room home was erected in just eight hours by a crew of 25 builders working for the Pacific Home Company.

House #212 brings a logical conclusion to this discussion of Sunnyvale's architectural heritage. Like Sunnyvale's first home, the Bayview Farm, it was fabricated in one location and transported to its final construction site. Both houses were the product of expanding building technology based on standardized materials and facilitated by rapid and far reaching distributive systems. Perhaps most important, both were the product of the builders' profession, Sunnyvale's architectural legacy.

