Carlsbad Time Lines

Q4 2026 *Carlsbad, California, Historical Society*

President's Letter

Entering the final months of 2026 I want to thank those members who've given their time and energy to the historical society this year, helping us in fulfilling our mission, and enabling our organization in preserving, promoting, and enhancing knowledge of our city's history. As an organization dedicated to reaching out to the community through educational and social events, we can acknowledge we've been on target this year.

In addition to our physical presence, our online visibility is contributing to our mission. The total number of visitors to our website has increased to several thousand a month. Numerous email questions, each month clarifying historical data or asking additional questions is the norm. Our Google Maps visitor reviews have totaled over 8,000 since December 2024.

School tours and casual weekend visitors are becoming a common occurrence (we sure could use additional volunteers to help with school tours). Guest talks have been scheduled throughout the year, the latest by John Thill during our October 3 Annual Meeting, speaking about his grandparents, and his recent book Love Letters from California. His book was much more than just letters and it presented interesting data and photographs of the growth of Carlsbad and Oceanside. As the British say, "We were gob smacked by the historical data" included in his book.



John Thill lecturing on his book "Love Letters from California"

In this newsletter you're going to find some updates to historical facts about Carlsbad, a little background regarding beaches, and rocks, and the importance of creating your own oral history accounts of life in Carlsbad.

I also want to highlight Maude Fennel, aunt to Kay Christiansen, one of our founding members. Kay's generosity has allowed us to continue in a financially safe place for decades. Maude's artistically painted Christmas cards were her gifts created through water colors and sent to friends as a holiday wish and also a present. Wishing you all Happy Holidays, and hope to see you at Magee on Sunday, December 6 from 2-4 pm to eat a few cookies and meet up with old friends.

Let's talk rocks

The past few months have seen an abundance of rocks on our beaches. Many "old timers" remark this is just a natural occurrence on Carlsbad beaches. Other more recent arrivals lament the loss of sand, and our loss of access to the beach lifestyle we've all grown accustomed to in the past few decades.

Below you'll find a few excerpts from written manuscripts, oral histories, written books and online videos. All these sources discuss rocks, both on the beach and also inland; some used locally, some exported for commercial use, and all part of our "Carlsbad History of Rocks".



"Crystalized" rocks at Mount Calavera, and mining operation with rail cars

The first we can document is the Calavera Lake which is an extinct volcano, with the lake itself a manmade reservoir created in the 1940s, and located in the dammed up-stream. In many areas locally we find rocks from two separate eruptions. Looking around town, you'll find that earlier Carlsbad residents used some of these rocks in creating rock walls. The rose garden at the Army Navy is one such example. Please note the Kelly family held this area in common as Lot L, when the original Rancho Agua Hedionda was subdivided. It was rented out to rock mining companies as a source of income.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xp8lavOW9dw

"At the Field at Mt. Calavera Nature Preserve in Carlsbad you see an exposed throat of a volcano and spectacular and rare dacitic columnar joints and the three types of rocks next to each other: sedimentary, metamorphic, and igneous."

March 31, 1888 Carlsbad Sea Lion -– Issued every Saturday by Theo. Steinhilber (Carlsbad's first newspaper)

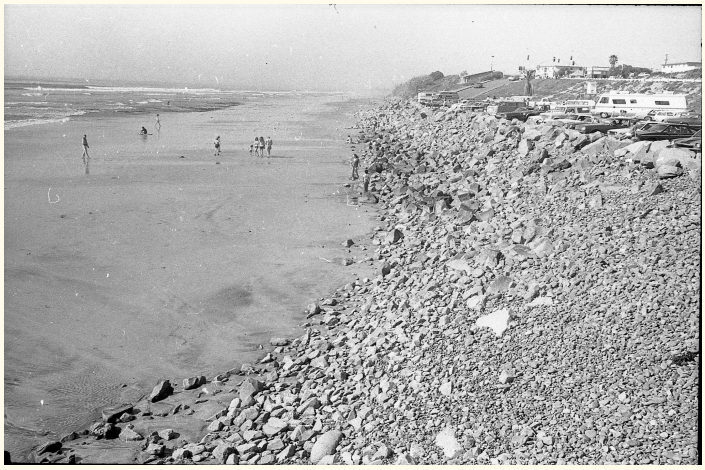
The Sand Stone Quarry Company has just been organized backed by capital and already several large contracts have been made with San Diego builders. JW Johnson and JE Egan of Waco Texas are the moving spirits. They will ship their rock from Carlsbad. The quarry is located two miles from here.

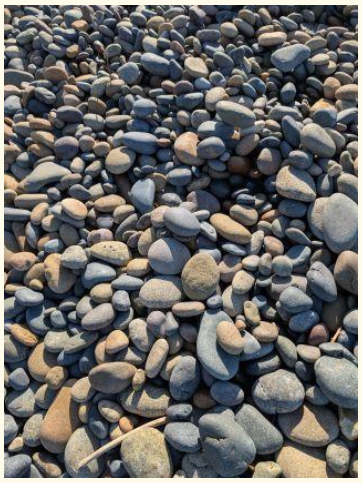
Next let's take a look at beach rocks, the topic of much discussion this year. Beach rocks are well known along our beaches by geologists and rock hounds. Not only are they well documented, they also were a source of income.

A History of Carlsbad by Jack Harmon; 1961

The war (WWI) brought one enterprise to the neighboring community of Encinitas which employed several Carlsbad men: Rob and Roy Carpenter, Albert Kreutzkamp and Jim Young. Prior to the war a particular type of round, blue stone of notable hardness had been imported from Belgium for use in the mines of Arizona and Nevada. These stones were used in the tube mills to help grind the ore. The war forced the end of these shipments, but, fortunately for Carlsbad, the same stones were found on its beaches. This gave employment to approximately eight Carlsbad men, for hundreds of carloads of these rocks were shipped from Farr Station for use in the mines of Arizona and Nevada.

Chris's Granite Paradise https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZiHJ_zuU-s





Old picture of Ponto area and picture showing blue rocks

May 27, 2026 #rockhounding #earthscience #geology

For anyone who likes rhyolites, basalts, and other volcanic rocks in the form of beach cobbles, North and South Ponto Beach in Carlsbad, California (just north of San Diego) is definitely the jackpot in terms of endless rocks to dig through! In these three videos, all recorded in one day's long visit to the site, we check out a lot of cool and interesting rocks, as well as get into an in-depth discussion about the geology and history of this massive gravel berm. It is a fascinating story that includes volcanic activity in Mexico, changes in the direction of longshore drift over geologic time periods, variations in sea level over the ages, and now the interruption in current longshore flow caused by the jetties - all coming together on this beach to form one of the largest and most persistent cobble berms on the West Coast. How many different forms of rhyolite can there possibly be?

https://www.youtube.com/@chrissgraniteparadise2656

Third Grade Jefferson School Tour - November 6





Touring the Shipley Magee Barn

The third graders from Jefferson Elementary School toured the Shipley-Magee House and Barn on November 6. Prior to their visit they had been lectured by our president Susan, at their school. They were well prepared, they were excited and had lots of good questions.

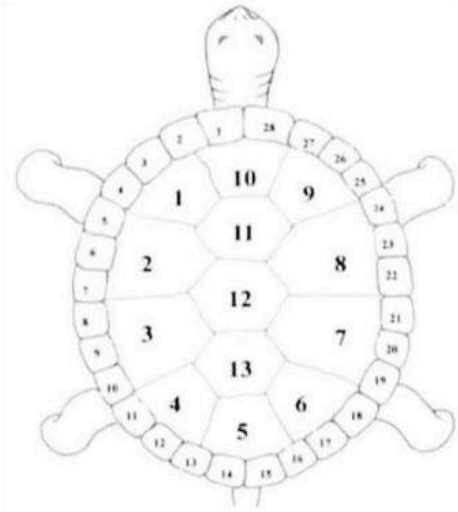
Sea Turtles and the Indigenous 13 Month Lunar Calendar

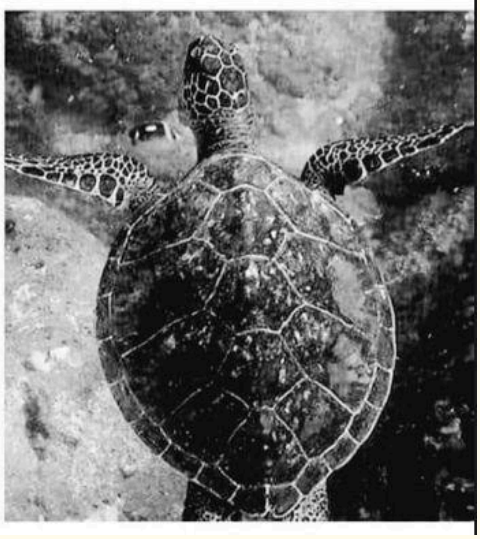
One of the mothers of the Jefferson School pointed out, when shown the sea turtle we have in the barn, that the indigenous people had a 13 month calendar and the turtle has a hexagonal pattern containing 13 cells on their backs. Not only that, but the number of indentations around the edge of the shell is 28 - the number of days in a lunar cycle, and the number of days in a 13 month calendar!

This calendar was proposed as an international standard in 1902 and the United Nations later considered it. George Eastman from the Eastman Kodak Company instituted its used at his company until 1989.

13 Moons and 28 days on all turtle shells. This equals 364 days, plus one day of rest. All indigenous people around the world knew the wisdom of the turtle and followed a 13 month calendar; after all, there are 13 moon cycles in a year and 27 to 29 days per cycle.

It's almost as if white man subtracted one month in order to sever the connection between the people and the sun,moon, and stars which are themselves a giant clock.





Maud Fennel - Mother of Jay Christiansen



Maud Fennel

1878-1951

Bookkeeper by profession, artist by avocation.



Christmas Card created by Maud Fennel

Oral Histories

As the end of the year approaches, consider taking a little time out of your schedule and start recording some life events; either personal or first hand accounts of things you've seen or experienced. One of the greatest resources for historians is reading a first person account. It can shed light on why things are the way we now experience, clarify a topic of confusion or misunderstanding and point the way to document the facts. In our reference section at Magee, we've a collection of oral histories that help us understand Carlsbad's past.

Some families were extremely prolific in writing , family histories, casual events taking place in town, and political activities such as the Kelly and Shipley/Magee families, and for this reason we can focus on their families in our newsletters, and use their recollections as starting points for research.

We're including a brief excerpt from an oral history interview with former Mayor Manuel Castorena, this is an example of how an oral history recollection adds to our understanding of Carlsbad history.

Date of Interview: June, 1996

Interviewer: Natalie Vermilyea

Transcriber: Denice Sande

NV: Carlsbad has annexed quite a bit of surrounding property in the last few years. I believe they annexed Leo Carrillo's ranch. Did you know Mr. Carrillo?

Castorena: Yes, I did. As a matter of fact, when I took Jarvis to see Mr. Exton, the owner of the Exton and Nichol's Drug Store in Oceanside directly across the street was a dentist office. The dentist was Leo's brother. We became good friends and Dr. Carrillo liked to go fishing, "a country town doctor," so to speak because when he got the urge to go fishing, he would hang out a sign "gone fishing," and he would be out on the pier fishing.

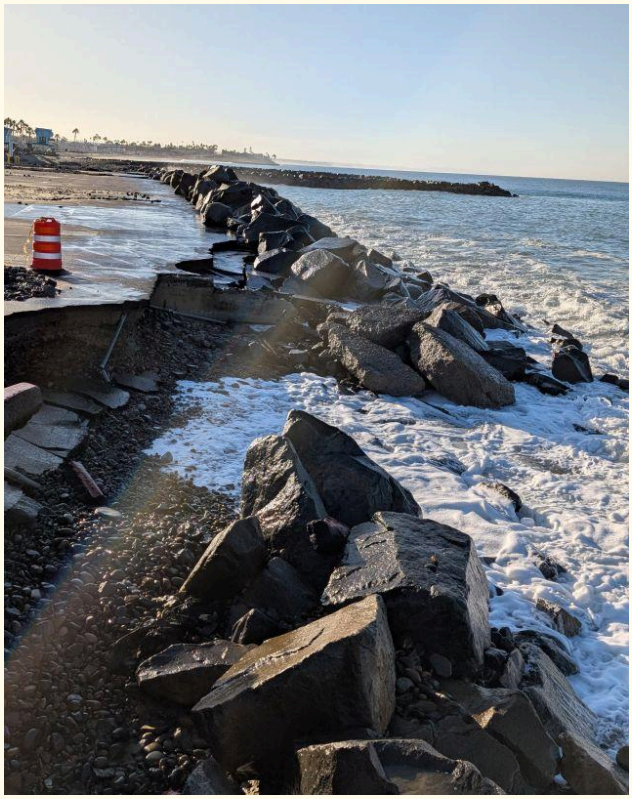
It was through him that I met Leo and Leo was starting to become an actor, but he was not the actor that he was later on.

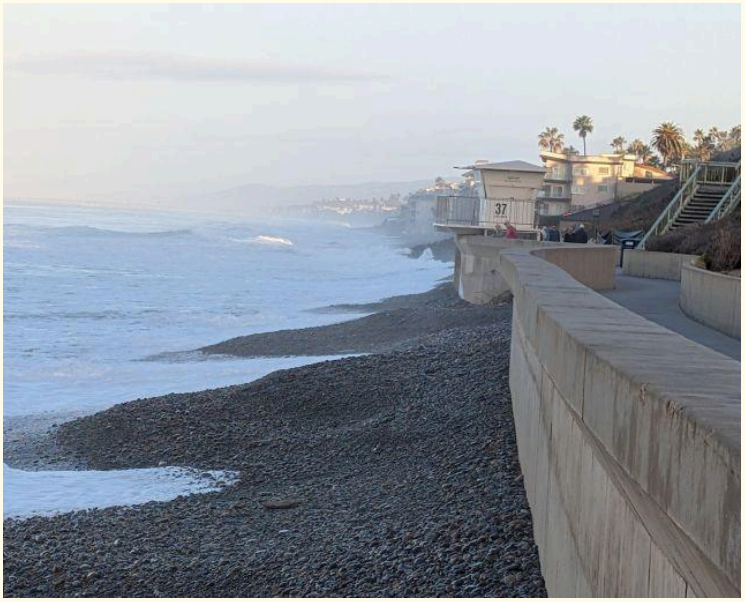
NV: Did he buy property in the area or did he buy the ranch later?

Castorena: Not at that time. Dr. Carrillo owned property over there but not Leo. I don't know exactly when Leo acquired this property here. At that time, Leo used to go around the service clubs giving after dinner talks. He liked to mimic, and he used to be a master at mimicking Chinese and Italian. He could say more with his hands than he could with his mouth. Later on, he became a character actor and a star in his own right.

NV: He spent quite a bit of time here in Carlsbad, didn't he?

Castorena: Yes, then he acquired his ranch. After he became an actor, I had my Oceanside store. Whenever he came from Hollywood, he used to come buy and pick up some things and go right on. Mr. Delpy was always with him.





Recent picture of Tamarack parking lot

No sand in front of the seawall

Carlsbad Beaches Disappear

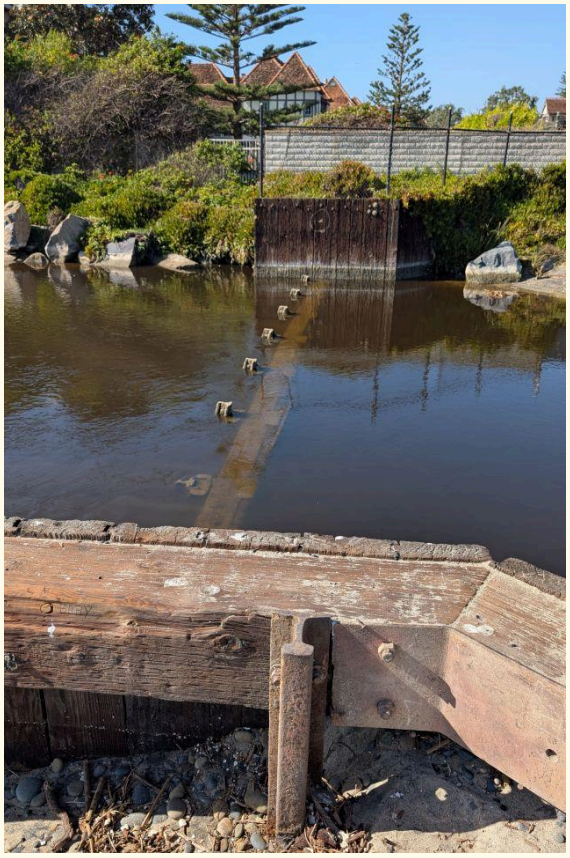
You have probably seen that the State Beach parking lot at Tamarack has been in the national news. The sand in front of the lot is completely gone, the boulders defending it have shifted, and now the waves have started to destroy the asphalt parking surface. Waves are constantly breaking over the rocks and washing deep into the lot while depositing sand and rocks.

On the other hand, beaches in Carlsbad that have not been artificially covered by pumping sand on them have not suffered as much. We have not had any homes affected. For example, the homes and rental structures around Magee Beach (or Beech Street Beach) have boulder defenses in place and have never had any sand added. Just over the border, Saint Malo beach looks almost the same as usual.

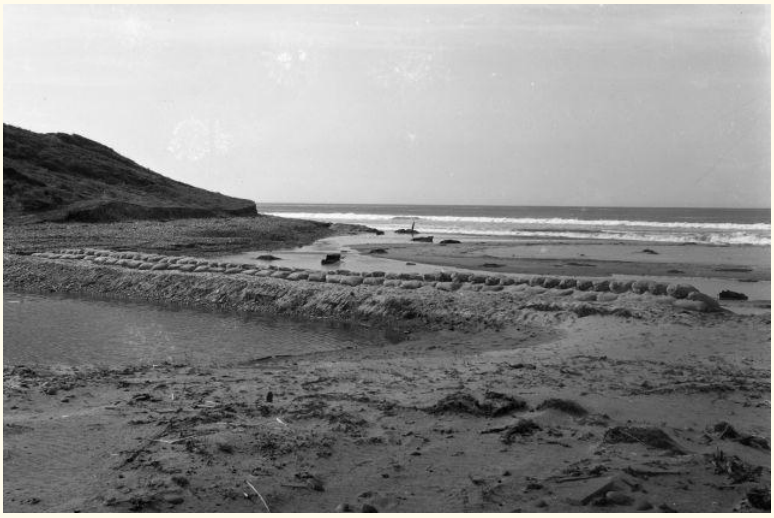
Super El Niño has started. The current measured rise in Pacific Ocean temperature is around 3 degrees Celsius. To heat up the entire ocean by just one degree requires the release of energy equivalent to 1000s of times the annual global energy consumption (or 84 million 1Giga Watt power plants). It turns out that most of the warming of the Earth is occurring in the oceans!

The **daily** amount of solar energy striking the Earth is - surprisingly - twice this much. Daily**.** However, most of this energy is reflected back to space. But a small change in the absorption or reflectivity of our

atmosphere can have serious effects. Even too much ocean water evaporation can increase the amount of heat retained by the atmosphere, potentially causing a run-away global warming.



The weir at Buena Vista Lagoon



Detwiler Feb 1929 picture of end of lagoon

Buena Vista Weir Removed

During the recent high tide and rough wave action, earth movers removed the gate to the weir at the end of the Buena Vista Lagoon. The lagoon drained for several days and it looks like the water level dropped about 6 to 8 inches. However, the ocean has piled up sand against the weir, and the water has stopped flowing.

Historically, the Buena Vista Lagoon had a wide opening to the sea. The development of Saint Malo Community resulted in land fill on the north end of the opening, the installation of the weir, and the raising of the lagoon water to satisfy the needs of the residents of Saint Malo. For years now the restoration of Buena Vista Lagoon has been under investigation. Funding has so far produced only engineering studies on how and where to dredge. Carlsbad could eventually get a lot of free sand on its beaches, when the dredging starts.

La Posada de Guadalupe Adds 15 Beds

This shelter for homeless people is run by Catholic Charities of San Diego. It opened in 1992 to provide beds to migrant workers that were sleeping in the farm fields. La Posada was hoping to add more capacity but has been able to raise only 360,000 dollars than should be matched 1 to 1 to 720,000.



La Posada de Guadalupe on Impala Drive Carlsbad

The Great Dying Lowered the Temperature of the Earth

This was a catastrophic population collapse driven by European colonization of the Americas starting in 1492. A landmark 2019 study by researchers at University College London (UCL) published in Quaternary Science Reviews estimated that ***56 million*** *Indigenous people died by 1600—representing* ***90%*** *of the pre-Columbian population and roughly* ***10%*** *of the entire global population at the time.The UCL study revealed that the Great Dying had such a profound impact that it physically altered the Earth's atmosphere and climate.*

It was caused by epidemics, warfare, slavery and social collapse.

The number of deaths resulted in a drop in farming (causing reforestation) and a reduction in the burning of fires that lowered the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere by a fraction of a degree. This has been called the Little Ice Age.

It was big. It is the largest population loss in human history in percentage terms. It is second only to World War II (80 million deaths). It surpasses the Black Death.



The Great Dying

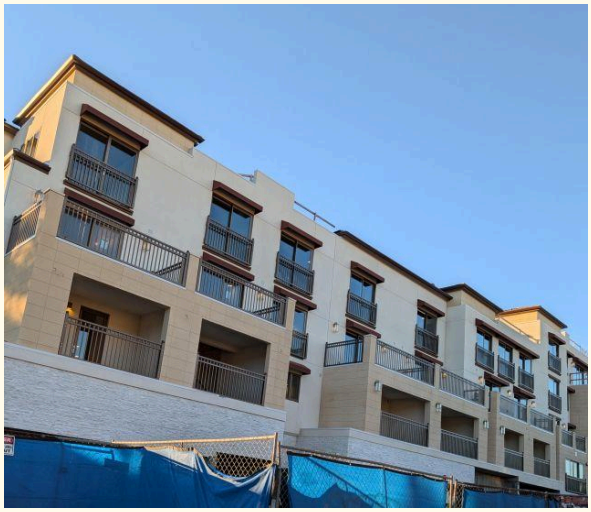
"Carlsbad Mineral Springs Health Resort" Nearly Finished

Started in May 2018, and after several starts and stops, this Resort will open soon. It is being built next to the original site of the Frazier Well and of the hotel built by the founders of the first Carlsbad Land and Water Company: Gerhard Schutte, Samuel Church Smith, D.D. Wadsworth and Henry Nelson.



The original Carlsbad Hotel at the site of the Frazier Well





The new Carlsbad Mineral Water Resort to open soon

New Life Member

Madelein Mamaux

New Sustaining Member

Bonnie Dominguez - in memory of husband Bill Dominguez

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*Open Saturday and Sunday, 11 am to 3 pm

*Private Tours by appointment

*School, Scouts and Families welcome