

# Carlsbad Time Lines

Q1 2020

*Carlsbad Historical Society*

## President's Letter

Dear Members,

As each year passes and we enter a new year, we as a historical society are motivated to actively pursue ways and methods of preserving our local Carlsbad history. Through creation of displays, offering informative talks to the wider community, digitizing and cataloging donated papers and photographs, we are creating a research organization as well as a social group. At the end of last year the importance of these activities became apparent, when we were able to participate in the 125th Anniversary celebration of St. Michael's Church, assist researchers from many different fields pointing them to the best resources for their work, and continue with our digitization program of our own historical documents and adding them to our website. This year we'd like to continue our efforts, and hopefully return to interviewing many of our fellow members and local residents in the hopes of preserving their contributions to our town. In this newsletter, you will find articles from several of our board members detailing their efforts to our historic preservation efforts. And as the year progresses we hope to see you at some of our events.



The Twin Inns Chicken visited St. Michael's

## The Shipley Family Connection to Carlsbad and St. Michael's Episcopal Church -Part One

Susan Schnebelen Gutierrez

This year St. Michael's celebrated their 125th anniversary. I want to share with you a little bit of history regarding one of the church's founding families, the Shipleys, whose generosity and contributions helped to lay the foundation for this celebration.

Many of you may have heard of Florence Shipley Magee, whose gifts to St. Michael's included the donation of land for the current church and the commissioning of the beautiful St. Michael and the Dragon stained glass window. But, you might not have been aware that Florence Magee's parents, Alexander and Julia Shipley were equally giving and very involved in the formation of St. Michael's.

The Shipleys were one of the earliest Carlsbad Families arriving in 1890. Their strong ties to England laid the groundwork for their close friendship to other local expatriate British residents, the Shaw and Ramsay families. All three families were practicing Episcopalians, and, by contributing money and labor, these families became the cornerstone for the creation of St. Michael's, Carlsbad's first church.

The story of the Shipley Family, their background, how and why they arrived in California, and their contributions to our city and to St. Michael's really is the story of California- a family still tied to the East and yet dedicated to making a new life in the West.

In 1883, the Santa Fe Rail service was given permission to lay a rail line through the coastal area of Robert Kelly's Rancho Agua Hedionda, thus creating a direct north-south rail service connecting San Diego to Los Angeles. Rail lines opened up San Diego County coastal land for development. And when mineral and potable water was found along the rail line in this area by John Frasier, it created a real estate advantage. Water in a desert is a highly prized commodity, and mineral water was especially valuable. Health spas and artesian water areas were all the rage throughout the United States in the 1880s.

With water as the draw, a real estate development company was created, the Carlsbad Land and Water Company. By 1886 the Directors of the company; Gerhard Schutte, Samuel Church Smith, Henry Wadsworth and

Henry Nelson purchased land nearest the rail line and subdivided it into building plots. Trees were planted, dirt roads laid out, and a four story health spa hotel was built, all focused on the claim of artisanal water similar to that of the famous Karlsbad Spas in Europe. Three of the Directors built homes, two of which are still standing, albeit with modifications. The current Magee House on Beech St., the current home of the Carlsbad Historical Society, was built by Samuel Church Smith, and the San Diego / Land and Water Company Restaurant was the former Gerhard Schutte home. However, disaster struck within four years, by 1890, in the form of a severe drought. As water became scarce, the significance of a health spa dependent on water lost its value. Scarcity of water also created issues for families dependent on work associated with the health spa hotel and well, and people left town. Those who left included three Carlsbad Land and Water Company Directors. Gerhard Schutte was the only remaining member.

Vacant property became available for purchase. It was during this real estate recession that Alexander Shipley and family arrived in Carlsbad.

Alexander Shipley was 48 years old when he first set eyes on Carlsbad. In 1890, during one of his many excursions searching for the perfect climate and health spa, the Shipley family stopped in Oceanside, rented a buggy, and toured the area. Samuel Church Smith, the original owner of the currently known "Magee House," had left town and listed his property for sale.

Alexander Shipley purchased the small home near the rail line and the artisanal water well and some surrounding land from the Carlsbad Land and Water Company. Between 1890 and 1893, the Shipley's commuted between their Calistoga home and Carlsbad. Finally, in 1893 they sold their northern California home, and moved permanently to Carlsbad.

Once in Carlsbad, we've learned from correspondence, census records, and city registries, that Alexander spent most of his time supervising his investments, traveling for business and health, and often combining both. To say the family was well off is an understatement. The Shipley's were the wealthiest, most educated, most well traveled and well connected family to ever come to town. Alexander, did not labor as most residents. He didn't ranch or farm. He was a businessman and intellectual. He had one separate building on his property dedicated exclusively as a library.

Julia, his wife, oversaw the running of her home. She had staff to clean, garden, and take care of their horses and buggy. Julia focused her time on their daughter Florence, traveling, joining a variety of women's organizations, and participating in church activities. Her closest friends in Carlsbad were members of the Shaw and Ramsay families, who were British Expatriates.

Settling here in 1893 the Shipley's found no established churches in Carlsbad. We must keep in mind that this area was mainly ranch land, and with a very diminished population living in "town", and with limited amenities, social and intellectual pursuits. If residents wanted to attend religious services, they traveled to Oceanside. The Carlsbad Community Church was not established until 1924 and St. Patrick's Catholic Church in 1943.

The significance of the Shipley's befriending British expatriates, and joining efforts to create and establish a parish cannot be ignored or overlooked. They had money, and interest, and opportunity in creating a local Episcopalian church.

Establishing St. Michael's pulled the community together to form a cohesive town, after so many had left due to the drought. This was a turning point in the town's history.

To be continued...



Joan Langen Fessenden

## Our Annual Meeting

Ken Langen

On October 27, 2019, our annual meeting was held at the Langen Family home on Carlsbad Boulevard, Old Highway 101. Around 40 members enjoyed a brief talk, toured the home, and were treated to music by Dave Kirkman, Patti Langen, and Janie Rossall. Ice cream and refreshments were served. The 1954 coastal mural (16' X 8' oil on canvas) of Carlsbad was on display. Our featured speaker was Joan Langen Fessenden, the oldest of seven children of Ray and Rose Rita Langen. Her talk traversed the 1925 bungalow house's history with her family's timeline, from Minnesota to California and beyond. She spoke of family roots in the Mississippi River Valley of Minnesota, of the decision to move West for her father's health, and of the purchase of

the home in 1953 for \$9,500.00. She finished with a tribute to her parents, an update on her siblings, and an explanation of the use of this heritage home. The historical society is grateful to the Langens for sharing their home, history, and hospitality.



Clementine (Tina) Woster Colling

**Tina Colling Passing**

One of our longtime and much loved members passed away in December of 2019. Tina will be missed by family and friends and remembered with much fondness and admiration. In addition to the Carlsbad Historical Society, Tina was an active and participating member of the Carlsbad Community Church and a docent at the Guajome Historic Adobe. Tina was originally from Plattsmouth, Nebraska, and there met her future husband Jerry when he was in pre-medical school at the University of Nebraska in Omaha. They were blessed with 67 years of married life. Together they moved to California when Jerry was in the Navy and later set up a medical practice. They originally bought a house in Terramar and then had a dream home built in the adobe style in Old Carlsbad. Together they have five children: four sons, and one daughter; eleven grandkids; eleven great-grandkids; and two great-great grandkids.



St Michael's old church

**QUASQUICENTENNIAL**

By Ginny Unanue

That is the term for a 125th anniversary. In 2019, St. Michael's by-the-Sea in Carlsbad celebrated this. The church was the first one in Carlsbad, and for a number of years, the only church. It was originally located on Carlsbad Blvd., across from Norte Restaurant, where the 7-11 mini mall is now.

Built in 1894, it was built by Fred Ramsey, and his two brothers-in-law, of the Shaw family. It was built of redwood, which is anathema to insects, which is one of the reasons the original church is still standing, now serving as a chapel. Funding was provided by a visitor from England, who after traveling from Carlsbad to north of Oceanside to the only existing north county Episcopal church, All Saints' Church, stated that Carlsbad needed its own church, and donated the munificent sum of \$500.

The original church was moved in 1958-59 to its new location, 2558 Carlsbad Blvd., where a new and larger church was built. Florence Magee donated that property to St. Michael's to build the new church.

The celebration of the anniversary was attended by Mayor Matt Hall, reading a Proclamation from the city, and several neighboring venues of the church, including a representative of Carlsbad By The Sea retirement community, and the head of the Army & Navy Academy, and the Bishop of the Episcopal diocese of San Diego

The Carlsbad Historical Society gave a presentation on Carlsbad history and the early church fathers, including the Shipleys (Florence Magee's parents). Susan Gutierrez, the Society's President and resident acknowledged local history expert, showed a Powerpoint slide program she had

prepared and gave the accompanying explanation of this early history.

finance reports are available to Board Members, electronically too.

Other items include the following:

- [Regional Historic Preservation Study Carlsbad 1980](#)
- [Cultural Resources Survey 1990](#)
- ["Life on a San Diego County Ranch" \(~1925\) by John Kelly](#)
- ["A History of Carlsbad" \(1961\) by Jack Hamon](#)

Our next goals are to begin scanning our document files and inventory files. We are open to suggestions on other documents that we should add to our website.



The Shipley Buggy at St. Michael's Garden

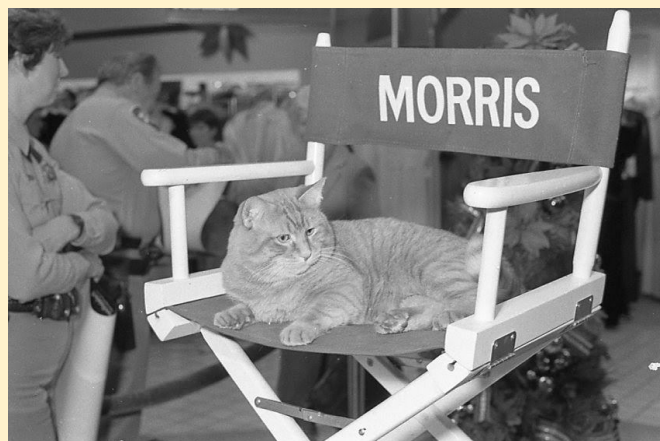
### Digitization Program

It is hard to get away from the wave of digitization taking place everywhere. We have started scanning a lot of our files and making them available to the public, or restricted to our members, and more restricted to our staff. Placing documents and photographs on-line has multiple advantages: security, so they will not get lost due to acts of God; access, so anyone can reach them anywhere in the world; ease, because searching with electronic tools is much faster; and also advertisement, since Google robots will read our documents and present them to search engines.

Mostly we have scanned documents at the Carlsbad Libraries. Their printer/copiers have a scanning mode that writes the results to a thumb drive. The scan of double-sided color documents is fast, since the document feeder works very well. Later the output files in PDF format can be organized and compiled using free tools on the Internet.

We started digitizing most of the collection of books and papers from [Allan O. Kelly](#), and we have a separate tab on our website for him. Oral histories, that had been done in collaboration with the Carlsbad Library, have been scanned and uploaded to a members-only section ("[secure](#)"). Oral Histories of Oceanside have also been added. The complete Historic Resource Inventory, which dates to 1990 is available online; this is a street by street description of the homes in Carlsbad, including property details, maps, and sometimes aerial photographs.

Recently [Newsletters](#) from our organization, going back to 1983, have scanned and added to our website. Minutes and



**Morris the Cat  
Visits the Carlsbad Plaza Camino Real Mall**

Shortly after the new Plaza Camino Real Mall opened, there were many promotional events that took place. For example, we found this photograph of Morris the Cat in the black and white negatives that were donated to the Carlsbad Historical Society by the North County Times.

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Open Friday, Saturday and Sunday 11 to 3 pm.  
Private Tours with Tea are given  
Monday through Thursday  
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY  
[www.carlsbadhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.carlsbadhistoricalsociety.com)