So You Think You Know the Golden State?

A Story of Southern California Told in 100 Buildings

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Cruden Bay Books

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A STORY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TOLD IN 100 BUILDINGS

Cruden Bay Books
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Introduction

If those walls could talk…this is what they would say. A story about Southern California.

Koalas... Spanish missions... funiculars... amusement piers... Eichler Homes... sport fishing... stylish gas stations... Mid-century Modern... surfing... fast food... Harvey Houses... 20 mule teams... oil gushers... blimps... the CCC... fire lookouts... aviation milestones... Japanese internment camps... octagon houses... Carnegie libraries... post office murals... Googie architecture... railroading marvels... citrus... Frank Lloyd Wright... utopias... The Beatles... cliff swallows... This book will have you telling stories like a native in no time.

The photos and stories collected here are a fast and fun way to learn the explanations behind the quirks, the traditions and the secrets that make Southern California uniquely California. Why was the first lighthouse in SoCal a failure? Solved. Where did the tradition of the Hollywood studio tour begin? A mystery no more. Who had the idea for the world famous Muscle Beach? Identified. Where was the Golden State's first airport? Revealed. What company manufactured the kit house Richard Nixon grew up in? Nobody knows.

Imagine a group of settlers arriving in an undeveloped location. First come shelters in which to live and then structures in which to work and shop. There are buildings for worship and education. As the community grows government buildings are required. With prosperity comes places in which to spend leisure time. And each step along the way builds a story only Southern California can call its own. A story told in 100 buildings. Almost all of the selections within are open to the public, or at least visible from public spaces. So, if you haven't seen these landmarks in person, fire up your GPS and get out and see the story of the Golden State standing in plain sight on Southern California streets!

Mission de Alcalá

San Diego

1769

Spanish explorers had been poking around the Pacific Coast from Mexico for the better part of 250 years before Governor Don Gaspar de Portola stood on a hill in what is now San Diego on July 1, 1769 and claimed "Alta (Upper) California" for Spain. The resulting Spanish mission system was a masterclass in colonial bureaucracy. The missions would be established by Catholic priests accompanied by civilians and military personnel to create settlements strung along the Pacific Ocean and knitted together overland for 600 miles by a road known as the Camino Real. Before a mission could become reality a priest needed to wade through months of paperwork at every level of Spanish government. The desired site needed to have an ample supply of fresh water, abundant timber, and terrain favorable for growing crops. San Diego de Alcalá, founded by Father Junípero Serra, would be the first of the 21 missions. Serra selected a new site after five years and constructed a wooden church that was soon burned by the native peoples he was trying to sell on Christianity. A replacement was raised in adobe brick that was replaced in 1813. After Mexico won its independence in 1821 all the missions in Alta California were secularized and the mission church descended into ruin. The restoration cavalry arrived in 1931 to revive the National Historic Landmark. Much has been reconstructed but one of the bells in the tower, cast in 1802, is original.

Mission San Juan Capistrano
San Juan Capistrano
1776

Inside a 250-year old Spanish mission is a chapel where Saint Junípero Serra once conducted mass; it is the oldest standing building in California. At the same time inside the mission is a room dedicated to a Louisiana-born composer of pop and R&B songs. Leon René penned "When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano" and the Ink Spots and Glenn Miller both took the sentimental ode to lost love to the top of *Your Hit Parade* charts. Later Pat Boone and Elvis Presley put their interpretations on wax. So it was that San Juan Capistrano became the most famous of the 21 missions created by the Spanish to spread christianity across Alta California. The cliff swallows cashed in as well - even though a billion birds nest in the Golden State on their migrations back from South America many people believe they are all cliff swallows and the only place they stop is in Mission San Juan Capistrano. For nearly 100 years the Mission has celebrated their return on March 19, the Feast Day of S. Joseph, even though typically the exhausted birds arrive weeks before. René also slipped in the mission bells into his song, of which there are four, including two original to the that Saint Serra would have heard. That's the power of song.

La Purísima Mission

Lompoc
1787

Franklin Roosevelt's greatest contribution to building in California came with the establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), putting young men to work during the Great Depression developing parks and rural roads. Until the program ended with World War II more than two million men (no women were permitted in the program) found employment, housed in government-run camps. Enlistees made $30 a month, $25 of which was sent straight to the families. "Roosevelt's Tree Army" planted 3.5 billion trees, built 3,000 fire towers and created 711 new state parks. Nowhere was the CCC busier than the Golden State. More than 33,000 men were on the government payroll in California - no other state had more than 20,000. FRom the 168 camps across the state the CCC energized the California State Park system building trails, buildings and campsites. When the CCC camps closed down California had 1,500 new structures, including a rebuilt La Purísima Mission that was once known for its hides and blankets. Using traditional building methods and materials the adobe ruins became the most extensively restored of all California missions. In 1976 Governor Jerry Brown established the California Civilian Conservation Corps styled after the New Deal's most popular program. In the half century since more than 120,000 Californians have served in America's oldest and largest conservation corps.

Mission Dam

San Diego

1803

Water in the West. It is the foundational issue for the 80 million people who live in the beyond the Mississippi River, half of whom reside in California. The very first attempt to solve the problem took place at the head of Mission Gorge on the San Diego River. By 1800 the Mission San Diego de Alcalá, the first of Alta California's 21 missions, was flourishing with 50,000 acres. Harvests were bountiful and the livestock inventory counted more than 30,000 head. And water was running low. After a drought the Franciscans got busy erecting a dam and five-mile aqueduct. Spain and its New World rival England approached colonization differently - where the British saw people already living on the land as impediments to be removed the Spanish considered the indigenous people as potential Catholic converts. They might even be citizens once the appropriate religious and cultural values were absorbed, of course. And they were also an invaluable labor force. The Indians used cobblestones and brick for the dam that was 13 feet thick, 12 feet high and 220 feet long. The bed of the two-foot wide aqueduct was lined with tile to prevent seepage. All was complete by 1817 but Spanish rule was running out. With Mexican independence in 1821 and American annexation in 1848 the mission fell into ruins. But later settlers recognized a good thing when they saw it and patched up the dam - it continues to disrupt flow in the San Diego River to this day.

El Molino Viejo

San Marino

1816

This is Southern California's oldest commercial building, although the first water-powered grist mill built in the region hasn't been put through its original paces for 200 years. Father Jose Maria de Zalvidea designed the water-powered mill for the San Gabriel Mission. Water flowed through a flume into the lower story of the two-story adobe building and turned a grinding wheel on the upper floor. The walls were constructed five feet thick to withstand the vibrations of the machinery and the exterior lined with a mortar made from burning sea shells. Buttresses on the corners made sure everything was supported. No wonder the *Los Angeles Times* reported in an 1896 article that the mill survived with "no sign of decay…the cement of which the structure is made apparently defies time." Despite the impressive feat of adobe style engineering the mill was abandoned in 1823 for a more efficient model. So began an odyssey that saw the Old Mill transformed into a gracious residence, spend some time as a golf clubhouse and eventually converted into an art gallery and home of the California Philharmonic Chamber for concerts on the patio each summer. When Los Angeles County went looking for sites to nominate for the National Register of Historic Places the Old Mill was one of the first places they came.

Avila Adobe

Los Angeles
1818

This is the oldest building in Los Angeles, created from sun-baked adobe bricks in 1818 by Don Francisco Ávila, a wealthy cattle rancher. During the last gasps of the Mexican-American War U.S. Navy Commodore Robert F. Stockton fought his way into Los Angeles from San Diego and made the adobe, the largest structure in the area, his temporary headquarters for what turned out to be the final three remaining days of the hostilities. The adobe spent many deteriorating years as rental property until earthquake tremors finished it off in the eyes of the City, which condemned the structure in 1928. It was that date with the wrecking ball that ignited Christine Sterling's campaign to resurrect Olvera Street. The San Francisco socialite turned Angeleno was smitten with the town's Spanish-flavored heritage. Sterling dreamed of a Mexican marketplace that would mix Latin romance with a healthy dose of American capitalism. She was able to tickle the imagination of *Los Angeles Times* publisher Harry Chandler and on Easter Sunday 1930 the Paseo de Los Angeles opened as "A Mexican Street of Yesterday in a City of Today." It was an instant success and today Olvera Street continues to pay homage to Old Mexico in 27 buildings housing shops and restaurants as part of Los Angeles State Historic Park.

Casa de Estudillo

San Diego

1827

San Diego lays claim as the birthplace of California by merit of Franciscan Friar Junipero Serra's mission established in 1769. The area's defensive position was established on Presidio Hill and the town grew up around its base. Under Mexican rule after 1821 the tiny community gained the status of El Pueblo de San Diego. This expansive U-shaped adobe at the center of town was constructed by Captain Jose Maria de Estudillo who commanded the San Diego presidio. The walls range in thickness from three to five feet, the better to support massive beams. When Richard Henry Dana published his account of his life at sea in *Two Years Before the Mast* he described his stop at the port of San Diego in 1835 thusly: "about forty dark brown looking huts...and three or four larger ones, white-washed." When California became a part of the United States in 1850 San Diego, with a population of 650, was incorporated as a city and named the county seat of the newly established San Diego County. The Estudillos stayed until 1887, long after most of their neighbors had left "Old Town" for "New Town" four miles to the south and closer to the harbor.

Rancho Los Cerritos
Long Beach
1844

Serving in any of the four Spanish presidios in Alta California in the 1700s was not a plum assignment. Out on the frontier, many hundreds of miles from Mexico City. As a perk soldiers were allowed to raise cattle and maybe sell a few head at a small profit. Manuel Nieto was looking for more grazing land so he went to ask the governor, Pedro Fages. Will 300,000 acres do? Done. There were whispers of Russian colonization and the Spanish crown was eager to populate the territory so enormous land grants became the norm. Mission priests complained that this was excessive and the award was cleaved to 167,000 acres. The land was eventually divided among Nieto's heirs but there was still 27,000 acres for family member Juan Temple to buy in 1843. Temple was born in Massachusetts and went to sea as a merchant. Temple anchored in Alta California in 1827, learned Spanish and became a Mexican citizen. As a newly minted ranchero Temple erected the finest Monterey-style adobe house in the region. He expanded his land holdings to run as many as 15,000 head of cattle. When the United States won California in 1848 his beef fed gold miners and his land created early Los Angeles. But drought in the 1850s killed the cattle and a flood crippled his developments. Temple moved to San Francisco in 1866 and sold what was once the most prosperous rancho in early Southern California for less than a dollar an acre. He died two months later.

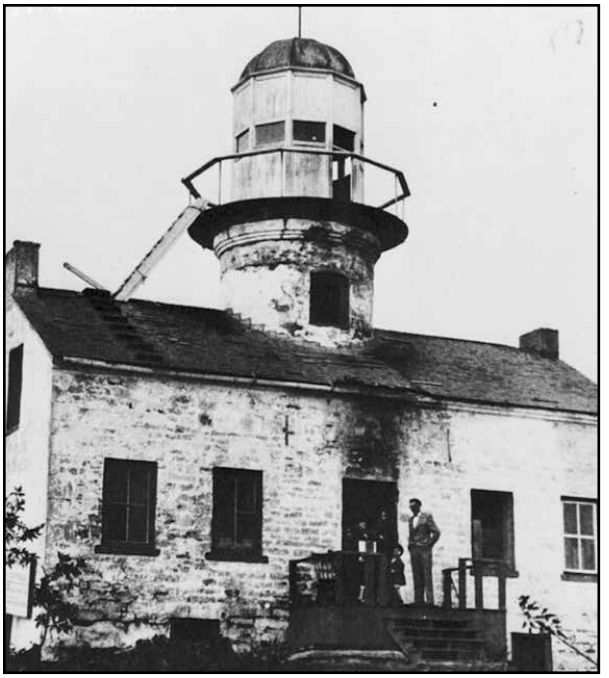
Davis House

San Diego

1850

The San Diego Presidio was the first European settlement on the Pacific Coast of present-day America, founded as a military post by Gaspar de Portola in 1769. Situated on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the location provided a fine defensive position but the town that grew up around the bluff was four miles away from one of the finest natural harbors on the West Coast. During the California Gold Rush of the late 1840s thousands of potential settlers stopped in San Diego but few stayed. In 1850, months before California would be admitted to the Union, William Heath Davis, descended from a long line of Boston shipmasters, was one of the first to move out of the developed part of town to take advantage of that harbor. Despite spending an estimated $60,000 on the project his wharf was crudely built and in 1853 the steamer *Los Angeles* barreled into it and the damage was never repaired. Davis was long gone by 1862 when the United States Army dismantled his wharf and used the timber for firewood. Somehow his pre-framed lumber "salt box" house that he had shipped from New England never met the same fate. While its neighbors were being torn down or dismantled to get out of the way of the rapidly developing San Diego the Davis House trundled on and eventually was moved to begin a new life as a museum.

Old Point Loma Lighthouse
San Diego
1855



On September 28, 1850, by an Act of Congress, $90,000 was appropriated for "a lighthouse at Alcatraz Island, for a lighthouse at Point Conception and a fog signal, for a lighthouse at Battery Point entrance of the Bay of San Francisco, for a lighthouse at San Diego, for a lighthouse and fog signal at Monterey, for a lighthouse at Farallones off the harbor of San Francisco and a fog signal." These would be the first six lighthouses erected on the West Coast. All were to be fashioned in the style of a New England cottage and all were to be completed by the first of November 1853. Low bidders on the contract were Francis Kelly and Francis Gibbons of Baltimore and it took the Marylanders more than a year to assemble all the material and hire the bricklayers, carpenters, blacksmiths, masons and other craftsmen for the trip around South America to California. The supply ship did not pull into San Francisco Bay until December 1852. The Alcatraz light went up first; the San Diego lighthouse was lit on November 15, 1855. The brick tower must have gone up exceedingly fast or the weather was unusually good because the builders didn't notice that the location, despite being 422 feet above the sea, was almost always shrouded in thick fog and low clouds. In 1891 a more functional light was constructed at a lower elevation but the southernmost of California's original six lighthouses was preserved and the National Park Service today uses it to interpret the days of oil lamps and clipper ships.

Butterfield Station

Oak Grove

1858

John Butterfield ran his first stagecoaches in Utica, New York in the 1820s. He became part of the three-company consortium that founded American Express in 1850. Butterfield won the nation's first contract to deliver mail from Memphis and St. Louis to San Francisco in 1858. Soon Butterfield selected a southerly route and laid out 175 stations, including this one-story adobe building nestled in a grove of ancient oak trees. Butterfield utilized quick-stepping celerity wagons for the 25-day journey. No passenger was ever killed by outlaws on a Butterfield stage before the overland mail service was torpedoed by the Civil War in 1861 and the telegraph shortly thereafter. John Butterfield died at the age of 67 in 1869, six months after the driving of the Golden Spike that began operation of the Transcontinental Railroad that would render stage travel obsolete as well. This stop between Fort Yuma and Los Angeles is one of only two original Butterfield Overland Mail stations known to remain.

Drum Barracks

Wilmington

1862

The question of slavery in California was settled from the get-go. The Compromise of 1850 admitted the 31st state as "free" in exchange for putting the federal government in charge of the Fugitive Slave Act that returned escaped slaves to the South. There may have been no slaves in the Golden State at the outbreak of the Civil War a decade later but there was plenty of secessionist sympathy, especially in the southern part of the new state. After all the century wasn't half over and Californians had already been ruled by Spain, Mexico and the United States. Why not go it alone? For the time being the monied interests of Northern California insured the state would remain pro-Union. The federal government established DRum Barracks as a Union Army headquarters for the District of Southern California to shore up security for the Union, garrisoned by as many as 7,000 troops. The post was principally a supply depot but 2,000 volunteers in the California Column marched as far east as Texas, engaging in the westernmost skirmishes in the Civil War and helping win the Battle of Picacho Pass in New Mexico that ended Confederate dreams in the West. Meanwhile 17,000 Californians would sign onto the Union cause and fight in all the major battles in the East, the highest per capita recruitment of any state. Within a few years of Confederate surrender all remaining troops at Drum Barracks were re-assigned to Fort Yuma in the Arizona Territory. The 19 buildings were auctioned off and only the Officers Quarters remains, doing duty as a Civil War museum.

Ah Louis Store

San Luis Obispo

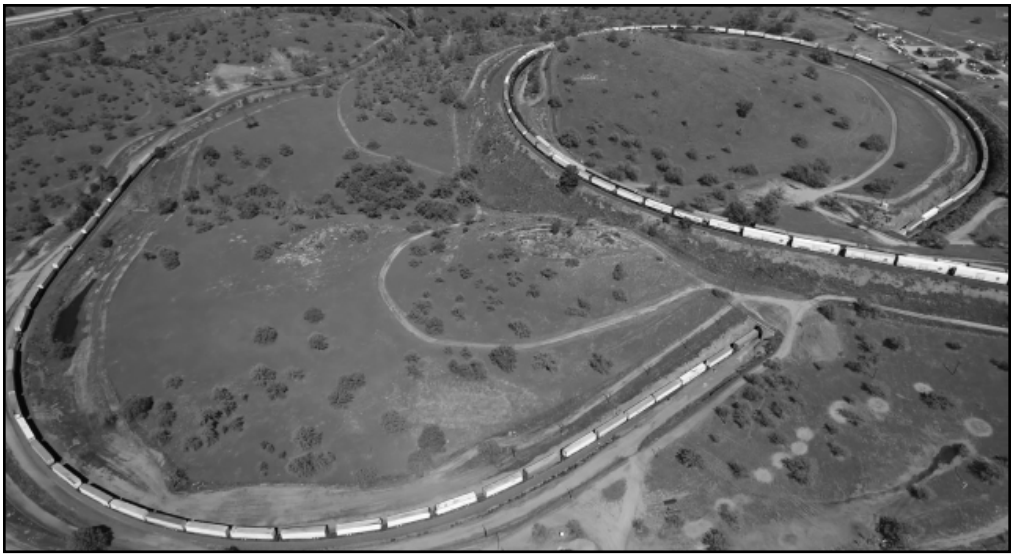
1874

No building looms larger in the American mythology than the country general store. Some in these rural communities would be fortunate to come in and browse for "store-bought goods" but everyone was a regular at the general store. The post office was usually in the back and it was the place to come for provisions, local news, a game of checkers, or just to warm up by the ubiquitous pot belly stove. Ah Louis was no different except his customers were separated from their homes by an ocean. He catered to his clientele by stocking Chinese culinary staples from bamboo shoots to duck eggs. Shoppers could also browse a selection of Chinese books, traditional clothing and herbal medicines. Ah Louis rebuilt the original wooden store and home for his family of eight from bricks he fired in his own kilns. His bricks raised many of the buildings in San Luis Obispo and he won contracts for constructing local roads and drainage projects so his customers also became his employees. The coming of Rural Free Delivery by the U.S. Postal Service in 1896 marked the beginning of the end for country stores. Not only was it not necessary to come in for the mail but catalogs from the likes of Sears & Roebuck and Burpees - the merchants called them "town killers" - began to become commonplace. Ah Louis was 90 when he closed the store in 1930 and he died six years later.

Tehachapi Loop

Tehachapi Pass

1875



The Golden State has no shortage of wonders that make jaws drop open - the Tehachapi Loop has been doing it for 150 years. In the 1870s the Saluda Grade was constructed straight up the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina at a 4.24% grade - the steepest mainline grade in the United States. At the same time the Southern Pacific Railroad was looking at a 77-foot climb up the Tehachapi Mountains in less than a mile with the stipulation that the grade be no more than 2.2%. Chief Engineer William Hood's solution was as simple as it was ingenious - a single ribbon of track coiling under itself through a 428-foot tunnel. More than 3,000 Chinese workers, skilled in the use of black powder and not averse to swinging a pickaxe, did most of the work sculpting the land for 28 miles through the Tehachapi Pass. In addition to the Loop the line, which was the final rail link between San Francisco and Los Angeles, required 18 tunnels and 10 bridges. Watching steam engines pull trains through the Tehachapi Loop was a marvel in the early days and even more magnificent today as mile-long freight trains cross over and under themselves. Considered one of "Railroading's Seven Wonders," the Loop still funnels up to 40 trains a day through the Tehachapi Mountains.

California Star Oil Works
Newhall
1876

The origin story of California's oil industry doesn't sound a whole lot different than Jed Clampett and the *Beverly Hillbillies*. Seems Ramon Peria shot a buck in Pico Canyon in the winter of 1865 and tracked the dying animal to a spring that was seeping oil. Charles Mentry, who had worked the Pennsylvania oil fields in the country's first "Black Gold Rush" in the 1860s, was hired to supervise a drilling operation for the claim grabbed by the California Star Oil Works Company. His first three wells dug in 1875 and 1876 were mostly dry but not disheartening. On September 26, 1876 Well No. 4 reached 370 feet and Mentry had his "gusher." There were no roads into Pico Canyon and Mentry had to scramble for materials to get his 25-barrel-a-day strike under control. By the next year he had a 65-foot wooden derrick and was down to 560 feet, producing 150 barrels per day. He improvised the first pipeline in California to to get the "black gold" to a refinery. The oil boom was on. Star Oil would become Pacific Coast Oil that would become Standard Oil of California that would become Chevron. Charles Mentry would continue as superintendent of the Pico Canyon operation until his death in 1900 with California on the brink of becoming the country's biggest oil producer. Chevron would not cap Well No. 4 until 1990; it had long ago become a California Historical Landmark and was said to be the longest operating oil well in the world.

Wildrose Charcoal Kilns

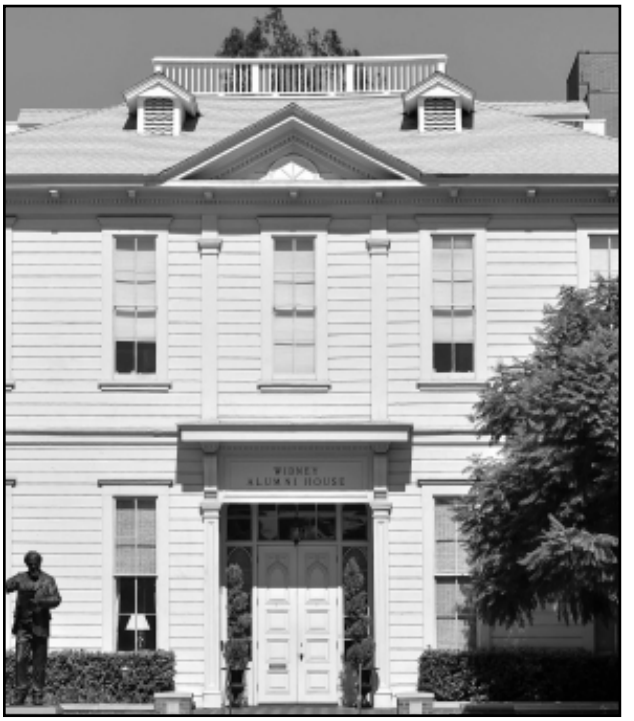
Death Valley National Park

1877

Beehive kilns were common structures in the early Western landscape. The kilns would burn timber into charcoal which was shoveled into smelters at mine sites to heat up and extract valuable metals from raw ore. Piñon pine converted into charcoal became 96% carbon and was the furnace fuel of choice since it burned more slowly than wood, created a much greater heat and sped up the refining process. The ten charcoal kilns constructed 7,000 feet up in the Wildrose Canyon appear brand new after 150 years because they almost are. George Hearst left the family farm in Missouri when he was 29 years old to join tens of thousands of other "49ers" heading for the California gold fields. Hearst prospected for the better part of ten years, buying interests in mines when he could. He developed the shrewdest eye for mining property in the West - the Comstock Lode in Nevada (silver); the Anaconda Mine in Montana (copper); the Homestake Mine in South Dakota (gold); the Ontario Mine in Utah (silver). Hearst owned a part of all of them as he built the largest private mining concern in the country. The Modock Consolidated Mining Company was not one of Hearst's bragging points. Formed in 1875 to extract silver and lead from the Argus Range west of the Panamint Valley, the mines were shortly producing ten tons of bullion, worth about $5,000, a day. The kilns were constructed 25 miles away to process the ore. It quickly became apparent, however, that there would never be enough profit coming out of the mines. Hearst and Modick Mining pulled out so fast in 1879 they say you can still smell the smoke inside the idled kilns.

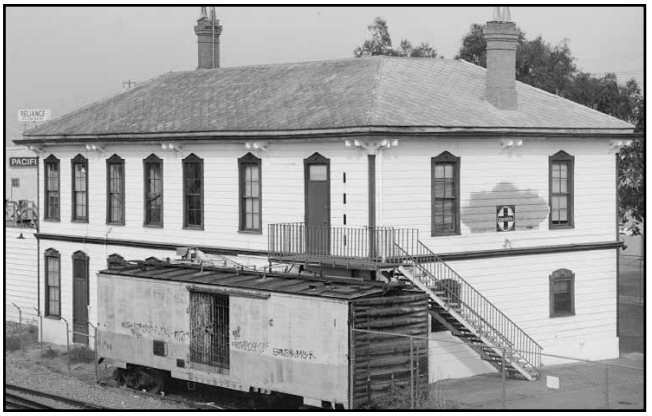
Widney Alumni House

Los Angeles
1880



Robert Maclay Widney was walking to California from his Ohio Farm in the 1850s when the Golden State's first institutions of higher learning were being formed around San Francisco Bay. He enrolled at the first, the College of the Pacific in Santa Clara. Widney graduated with an engineering degree and passed the bar. He headed for Los Angeles in 1868 with $100 in his pocket from teaching math classes and a bride on his arm. From the beginning Widney was pleased to accept Southern California land in lieu of services rendered. When he wasn't tending to his responsibilities as a judge in the Court of California, Widney founded the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. He was either responsible for or involved in bringing horse-drawn trolleys, electric streetlights and the Southern Pacific Railroad to the frontier town. But his passion lay in starting a college where "no student would be denied admission because of race, color, religion or sex." Widney finally had the land and resources to build a two-story Colonial Revival frame classroom/library to greet 53 new students on October 6, 1880. The University of Southern California would experience growing pains in the coming years but Judge Widney was always there with a chunk of land to sell for needed funds. The school's original classroom has moved around campus four times but it still stands as the oldest educational building in SoCal.

California Southern Depot
National City
1882



When the Central Pacific Railroad and Union Pacific Railroad linked rails with a Golden Spike in the high Utah desert in 1869 the United States was forever changed. The first railroad across the country even took the unofficial name "Transcontinental Railroad" and etched it into history. But there would be other rail lines that stretched across the nation that would also be impactful. In 1881 the Southern Pacific Railroad (SP), that had absorbed the Central Pacific, drove a Silver Spike in Deming, New Mexico to link Atchison, Kansas with Los Angeles with a southern transcontinental railroad. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (AT&SF), known commonly known as "The Santa Fe," was anxious to claim the Bronze Spike and break the SP monopoly to the Golden State. The California Southern Railroad was chartered as a Santa Fe subsidiary in 1880 to build from National City on San Diego Bay near the Mexico border through the Cajon Pass into the Mojave desert. The destination was a link in Barstow with the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad, a fellow Santa Fe subsidiary. The Santa Fe play did not go unchallenged by SP which caused mischief where the two sets of tracks crossed, including hiring OK Corral gunfight survivor Virgil Earp to run interference. Santa Fe's transcontinental line was complete in 1885, enabling non-stop travel from Chicago to San Diego - still one of America's busiest rail corridors. The western terminus was completed in 1882 and was ready for one of the Golden State's greatest land booms when the trains began arriving. The two-story wooden station is a double rarity - the only original transcontinental railroad terminus still standing and a seldom-seen example of the Victorian-era Italianate style in Southern California.

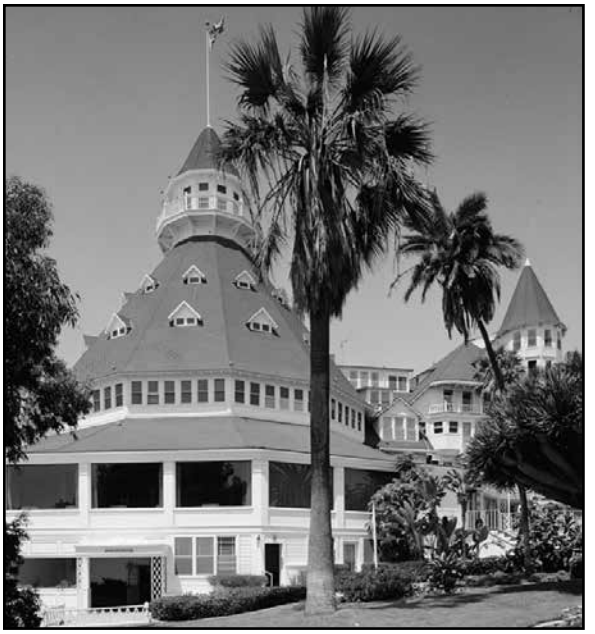
Harmony Borax Works
Furnace Creek
1883

It doesn't take long to build a lasting legend in the West. The Shootout at the OK Corral lasted 30 seconds. The Pony Express ran for only 18 months. And borax was only mined in Death Valley for five years. Cottonball borate ore is about as unsexy a mineral as is mined in the Golden State. When processed it is used as a commercial cleaner and can kill ants. What captured the public imagination was the way borax got out of the unforgiving desert and into the marketplace. William Coleman's Harmony Borax Works was able to process three tons of borax a day on site but the nearest railroad lines in Mojave were 165 miles away. It was not unusual to see teams of eight or even twelve mules hauling freight in those days so it was only natural for Coleman, endowed with good ol' American can-do-itness, to figure teams twice as big could haul twice as much. So he assembled 10 massive wagons with back wheels seven feet high - each cost a staggering $900 at the time - and hitched them behind a team of 20 mules. An iron water wagon was added to the mule trains for the 10-day journey. Despite primitive roads no wagon ever broke down. The Harmony Borax Works shut down in 1889 and two years later 20 Mule Team Borax was being marketed by the Pacific Coast Borax Company. It remains one of the few American consumer brands from the 19th century living in the 21st and spawned a popular radio anthology series, *Death Valley Days*, in 1930. After moving to television in 1952 the 20 Mule Team was seen for another 18 years. Of the 452 television episodes, 21 were hosted by Ronald Reagan, his last work as an actor.

Hotel del Coronado

Coronado

1888



John D. Spreckels came by his money the old-fashioned way - his father was one of the wealthiest men on the Pacific Coast - Claus Spreckels, the Sugar King. John started out working in Hawaii sugar plantations for the family business but he would make his own name in transportation and real estate, so much so that when he died in 1926 at the age of 72 he would be eulogized as "one of America's few great Empire Builders who invested millions to turn a struggling, bankrupt village into the beautiful and cosmopolitan city San Diego is today." His interest in the town started in 1887 when he brought his yacht *Lurline* into the harbor to stock up on supplies. Spreckels thought enough of the nascent town to construct a wharf and coal bunkers at the foot of Broadway but he was just getting started. He gobbled up the Coronado Beach Company with its signature hotel and island in 1888 when the real estate market collapsed. In an age of grand Victorian resorts The Del was going to be the largest wooden structure ever built. To make sure the million board feet required was available the investors contracted for all the lumber from California's largest miller, Dolbeer & Carson in Eureka. Spreckels then acquired the San Diego street railway system, put the horses out to pasture and installed electric street cars. At this point he was the wealthiest man in San Diego, estimated to pay 10% of all property taxes in the county. When the Spreckels family sold the property in 1948 The Del was one of the world's finest resorts as it remains today.

Post Office
Kaweah
1890

The America of the 19th century was a place of cheap and plentiful land, often far from the tentacles of government interference. It was ripe for social experimentation and the creation of utopian communities. Some pursued a more utilitarian vision of an ideal society while others were religious based. Burnette Haskell and James Martin were certainly of the former persuasion with general helpings of anarchism tossed into the stew. Haskell had led the International Workingmen's Association in San Francisco based on the teachings of Karl Marx but he skewed more radical after his wealthy uncle gifted him a newspaper called *Truth*. The plan was to buy land in the rugged Sierras that the the railroads had rejected for $2.50 an acre and finance their Kaweah Co-operative Commonwealth by harvesting Giant Sequoia timber. With a following of 53 mostly skilled laborers and trade union men the commune was started as a tent camp in 1886. All work was considered of equal value by men and women and early signs were promising. The collective grew to 150 members but a byzantine system of rules delayed the building of necessary infrastructure. The Keawah colony unwound in 1890. Accounts differ as to why. It may have internal bickering and the flaws of the leaders or it may have been the heavy hand of government and corporate interests who invoked eminent domain to create Sequoia National Park from Kaweah land that year. The colony was dissolved in 1892 and the only remembrance is one of the smallest active post offices in America.

Longfellow House

Los Angeles

1893

Orson Squire Fowler was responsible for two wildly different fads in the middle of the 19th century. One was phrenology, the practice that mental acuity could be determined by the bumps on one's head. The other was eight-sided houses that he championed in a book called *The Octagon House, A Home for All*. Neither are much in vogue these days but the octagon at least made sense. The houses offered a greater space-to-surface ratio and thus were cheaper to construct than rectangular houses. You could get more interior light and greater cross-ventilation, both important considerations in the days before electricity. But the lack of square corners would play havoc with interior designers. Octagons enjoyed a longer popularity with barns where furniture wasn't as much of an issue. Gilbert Longfellow was certainly one who enjoyed octagon living. He built his first eight-sider in Maine and after his wife died he moved to Pasadena and constructed this octagon. It is the only original 19th century octagon house in Southern California. It managed to sidestep the bulldozers long enough to find a home in the Heritage Square Museum, an open-air architecture refuge.

Bradbury Building

Los Angeles

1893

If they handed out Oscars for Best Actor By A Building Off The Lot the lobby at the Bradbury Building would be stuffed with statuettes. If you watch any movies or television at all you have seen the fabled five-story atrium. A partial list of the Bradbury's screen credits include *D.O.A.*, *I the Jury*, *Blade Runner*, *Chinatown*, and *500 Days of Summer*. Heart, Janet Jackson, Earth Wind and Fire and Genesis all used the Bradbury Building in music videos. Lewis L. Bradbury made his money in Mexican mines in the 19th century and spent it on Southern California real estate. Approaching his 70th birthday in 1892, Bradbury planned his greatest building but his chosen architect, Sumner Hunt, was not producing plans to match his gradiose vision. Bradbury sacked Hunt and hired one of his draftsman, George Wyman, to design his building. Wyman delivered an Italian Renaissance five-story showplace in brown brick, sandstone and terra cotta panels. But the Bradbury Building's true glory was revealed once inside and the full-height center court - dressed in marble, polished wood and ornamental ironwork - was experienced. Bradbury started with a $150,000 budget but wound up spending over $500,000 because of his insistence on using only the finest building materials. Alas, Bradbury never saw the finished product; he died shortly before the opening in 1893.

Desert Queen Mine

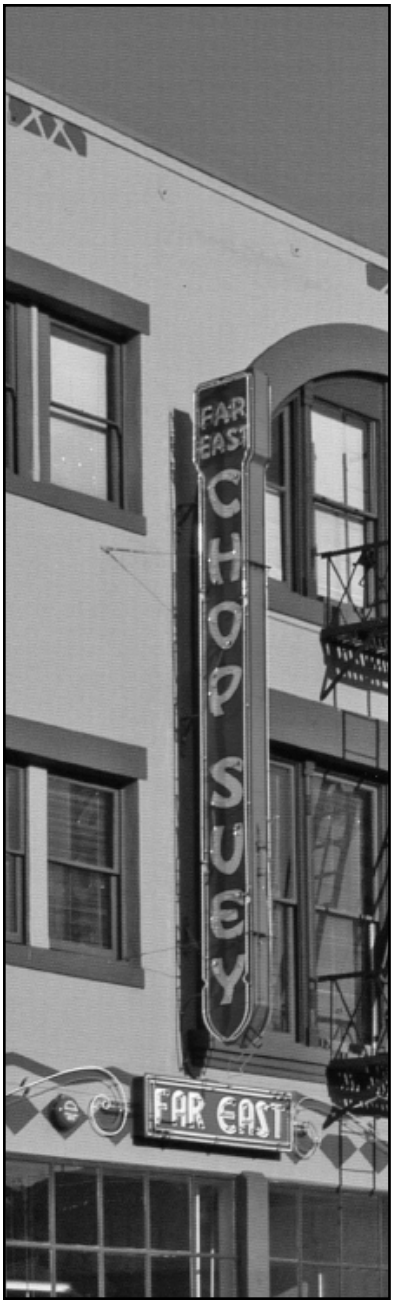
Twentynine Palms

1895

The Golden State comes by its popular monicker honestly - California has more gold mines than the next four states combined. The state has not been the country's leading producer of gold since the 1960s and the rise of machine-driven open pit mining. But California is still the gold standard for the lone prospector looking to strike it rich in placer mining. Frank James was just such a man when he discovered gold here in the 1890s. It was the unluckiest day of his life. Straight out of a Hollywood script, James had his claim jumped by a gang of good-for-nothings. Jim McHaney and his band were well-known in the Colorado Desert as cattle rustlers and horse thieves. If the McHaney Gang happened on a lone prospector they wouldn't hesitate to steal what they could and run the miner off the claim. When the outlaws learned of the James strike they headed out to seize the mine. When James refused he was forced to sign over the rights and then killed. The back shooter claimed self-defense and was acquitted. McHaney was soon shipping ore and borrowing from the banks to expand operations, digging shafts as deep as 75 feet. McHaney operated the the Desert Queen for twenty odd years before losing it in a 20th century way that contrasted sharply with the 19th century way he obtained it - the bank foreclosed on his loans. The Desert Queen remained productive into the 1960s. Today the mine shafts, tunnels, deteriorating buildings, and rusted equipment are reached by an easy hike in Joshua Tree National Park.

Far East Building

Los Angeles
1896



In the middle decades of 19th century California Chinese workers were not only tolerated, they were recruited. The Central Pacific Railroad sent agents to Canton Province to hire thousands of peasants. But after the Panic of 1873 the job market tightened and the Chinese were feared competition for low skilled jobs. The door shut with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that barred any Chinese laborers from entering the country for 10 years. Lawmakers saw the restrictions not so much as discriminatory as practical. After all, in their minds Chinese workers were never expected to actually to move to America, just work here. So for ten years they could go on doing the same work in their country and then return when the good times were back. And the law made exceptions for merchants, teachers, students and the like. So Japanese began arriving, enough so Los Angeles had a Little Tokyo by 1885. The community boasted the largest Japanese population in America when World War II came to these shores. The residents of Little Tokyo were dispersed into relocation camps for the duration of the war and the neighborhood never recovered. The restored Far East Building, once home to a popular eatery, is a rare 19th century souvenir in Little Tokyo.

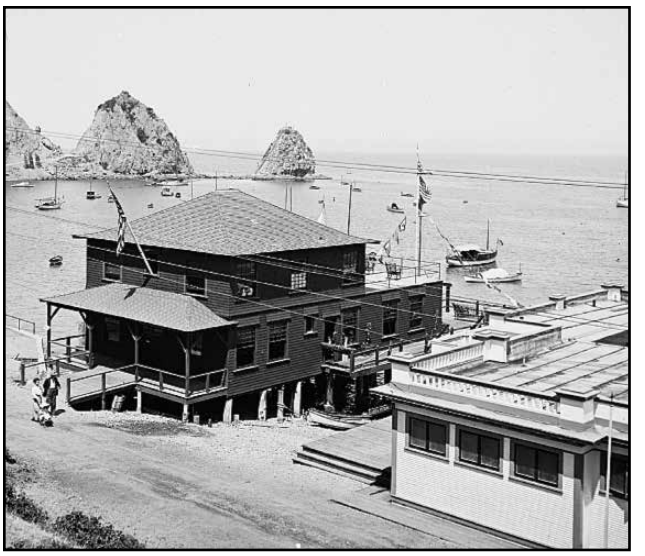
Redlands Country Club
Redlands
1897

In 1890 it was possible to count the number of golf courses in the United States on one hand. By the time the new century arrived there were over 1,000; California boasted nearly 100. Where exactly that mania kicked off is a matter of debate. Some say it was English polo enthusiast Charles E. Maud who laid out some holes at Pedley Farms in the heart of Riverside orange groves in 1892. Others point to a course laid out by local businessmen that lies beneath UC Riverside today. Meanwhile Del Monte Country Club was becoming the first true nine-hole course in the Golden State in 1897. In Southern California the oldest course lying on its original golfing grounds is at Redlands Country Club. Redlands was working to build its reputation as a tourist destination in the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains at the time. Not every visitor was impressed with the 2,129-yard track with oiled-sand greens. A traveling golf writer, Thomas H. Arnold, spat, "The course is not easy of access, and the lay of the ground, along the foot-hills is quite undesirable for golfing. Besides this, the course is badly laid out and is sadly in need of remodeling." Nonetheless, Redlands was among the five founding clubs that formed the Southern California Golf Association in 1899, along with Los Angeles Country Club, Pasadena Golf Club, Riverside Polo and Golf Club and Santa Monica Country Club. In 1927 the Redlands Course received a true pedigree when it was redone by legendary golf architect Alistair Mackenzie who was just a few years away from designing Augusta National of Masters fame. A year later Charles Maud retired to Redlands; he probably played the new course.

Tuna Club

Avalon

1898



For most of its life in the 1800s Catalina Island was the provence of cattle herders. A Michigan land speculator named George Shatto bought the island for $200,000 in 1887 to take a stab at development. Shatto constructed a pier and then a hotel and started the town of Avalon and then…defaulted on his loans. Freight ship owner Phineas Banning, who would become known as "the Father of the Port of Los Angeles" paved the way for his three sons to buy the island. Their Santa Catalina Company formed in 1894 to create "California's wonderful mountain and sea resort" just a 3 1/2 hour ride from Los Angeles - on a Banning boat, of course. The Bannings built water and sewer services, created dance pavilions and encouraged activities such as golf, tennis and deep-sea fishing. The private Tuna Club created strict rules for big game sport fishermen as to conservation and "sporting behavior" that became the framework for trophy fishermen worldwide. The Bannings improved their fleet of steamship shuttles to cut the 22-mile crossing from the mainland to 90 minutes. Meanwhile Banning employees informed non-company cruise ships that they were not welcome to dock on the private island paradise. The good times evaporated on November 29, 1915 when a fire of dubious origins burned through the town of Avalon. The Bannings got to work immediately rebuilding, including a new home for the Tuna Club, but the costs were crippling. In 1919 Catalina was sold to a consortium led by chewing gum magnate William Wrigley, whose family still owns the California island jewel.

Hollywood Forever

Los Angeles
1899

Until the late 1800s most towns had never had public parks before, that was what cemeteries were for. Folks of all classes could come to the open space and enjoy nature, have a picnic, and stroll through sculpture gardens. In Los Angeles that has sort of never changed. People were still watching movies through a peephole on a Kinetoscope when the Hollywood Cemetery accepted its first interments. The locals - and there were only about 500 of them - were none too happy to have a cemetery intruding on their lemon groves. Developer F.W. Samuelson promised he was creating a lawn park, they wouldn't even notice the headstones. Promise. The graveyard and the movie business would grow up together. When the Eastern studios moved to Hollywood a chunk of the cemetery was sold to Paramount Pictures and later some more land to RKO Studios. The landscaped grounds were studded with palm trees and ponds and ever more elaborate funerary art as legions of entertainment industry figures chose Hollywood's oldest cemetery for their final resting place. Dark times clouded the cemetery when ex-con and swindler Jules Roth gained control of the business in 1939, draining profits and not having the good grace to die for another 60 years at the age of 98. New ownership poured millions into restoring Hollywood glamour to the graveyard and changing the name to Hollywood Forever. Thousands attend evening movie screenings on the lush grounds, right behind the Douglas Fairbanks memorial - as would be expected from any proper Hollywood cemetery.

Orange County Courthouse
Santa Ana
1901

In 1886 the *American Architect and Building News* polled 75 American architects to determine the nation's ten most admired buildings. Buildings by Henry Hobson Richardson, a New Orleans-born architect working out of Boston, filled five of the ten spots. So 1886 was a good year for Henry. It was also a bad year because he would die prematurely at the age of 47. Afterwards his brawny interpretation of the popular Romanesque style was wildly in vogue for the next decade. In that time nearly every civic structure built in America received the same treatment of rough-hewn stone, broad gables, a powerful arched entranceway, arch-head windows grouped in sets of three, multiple colors, and perhaps a tower or two based on Richardson's work. Architect Charles Strange drew up the plans supposedly based on a courthouse in Iowa that was probably based on another courthouse someplace else. Groundbreaking took place on July 4, 1900 as part of festive Independence Day activities. Topping the bill was Emil Markeberg, a celebrated "aeronaut" who had been performing stunts from balloons since the age of seven. As his balloon rose 500 feet above the courthouse grounds the strap he was clenching in his teeth while hanging from the basket snapped. The local press spared no sensitive readers in their report of what happened next: "The aeronaut shot toward the earth like a cannon ball, so quickly that people below could scarcely get from under him. Before the thousands of spectators realized what a terrible fate had befallen the aeronaut he lay lifeless at their feet." Elsewhere it was reported that Markeberg's wife of four years had objected to his appearing at the exhibition and, in true Hollywood fashion, had agreed to allow him to go only after he promised the ascension would be his last.

Angels Flight
Los Angeles
1901

No state does funiculars like California. Funiculars are different than cable cars - the railways use two counterbalanced cabs that move in tandem on opposite tracks, one moves up and the other comes down at the same speed. The system is typically propelled by an engine room, not a motor in the cab. The first two-track layout was constructed on Telegraph Hill in San Francisco in 1884. The "Los Angeles Incline Railway" was initiated in 1901 to conquer the 33% grade to the tony residential neighborhood of Bunker Hill. Designed by the Merceau Bridge & Construction Company, the funicular operated for 68 years with only one derailment. After countless appearances on film the Los Angeles landmark was dismantled only to be refurbished and reassembled a half-block south of its original route in 1996 to complement California Plaza. Two orange-and-black railway cars, *Olivet* and *Sinai*, ply the 298 feet between Hill and Olive streets on "The Shortest Railway in the World." The fare on Angel's Flight is $1.00 but only 50 cents if you are holding a Metro Pass.

Continental Building

Los Angeles
1903

When the first skyscrapers were constructed in Chicago in the 1880s they posed a problem for architects - how do you design a ten-story building? The solution was to emulate classic tripartite columns so the early high rises featured an oversized and elaborate first two or three floors (the base), rows of unadorned central stories (the shaft) and an ornate upper story and cornice (the capital). John Hyde Braly and his son, Arthur, were part owners of the Southern California Savings Bank when they successfully lobbied the Board of Directors to build a 12-story, 151-foot steel frame headquarters in 1902. Entrusted with designing the city's first skyscraper John Parkinson swallowed the tripartite playbook whole. Shortly after its completion, City Council passed a height restriction of 150 feet to insure impending growth would not deprive Los Angeles sidewalks of their patented sunshine; it would stay in effect until he 1950s. Today Los Angeles boast 34 buildings taller than 500 feet, with more on the way. The square tower, known originally as the Braly Building, takes a star turn in the movie *500 Days of Summer* when Joseph Gordon-Levitt sits on a bench with Zooey Deschanel at Angels Knoll and waxes rhapsodic about the highly ornamental Beaux Arts upper floors.

Carnegie Library
Oxnard
1906

When he decided to retire in 1901, while in his mid-60s after building the world's greatest steel works, industrialist Andrew Carnegie met with financier J.P. Morgan to discuss a sale. It was not a difficult negotiation. Morgan asked Carnegie to write down a price. The steel magnate scribbled "400 million" and slid the paper across the table. "Congratulations, Mr. Carnegie," said the banker. "You are now the richest man in the world." That's over $5 billion in 1924 dollars. When Carnegie got his first raise as a teenager working in the offices of the Pennsylvania Railroad - to $35 a month - he wrote years later, "I couldn't imagine what I could ever do with so much money." Now he had to give away $400 million. He only managed to disperse $350 million, with much of the largesse going to construct more than 2,500 public libraries across the world. California received 121 grants to build 142 libraries. No community was more gung-ho for a new library than Oxnard. The town raised on sugar beets was just six years old when first mayor Richard Haydock wrote a letter to Carnegie in 1904. No boards and foundations for the new philanthropist - he gave away his money personally. Oxnard got $10,000 but when officials figured they could get a city hall out of the deal they went back and asked for $2,000 more. Carnegie agreed. Little Oxnard landed Franklin Burnham, who had designed Georgia's state capitol, as architect and he delivered a classical confection of Doric porticos on all four sides. The landmark building was the first California Carnegie to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Andrew Carnegie would later run into J.P. Morgan again, lamenting, "I should have asked for $100 million more." "You would have gotten it," said Morgan.

Scripps Institution
La Jolla
1907

There was only one way to do natural science in the 1800s - find an animal, kill it, and bring it back to the laboratory for study. According to his own tally "conservationist" Teddy Roosevelt killed 11,397 animals from elephants to salamanders. The laboratory was sacrosanct. While teaching at the University of California in Berkeley William Emerson Ritter had other ideas. It was necessary, he believed, to study animals in their natural environment. He wanted to teach marine biology at the ocean. This was no impulsive whim. Ritter spent 11 years scouting out the ideal site for "a laboratory capable of great things." He found it on the headlands above La Jolla Cove and with E.W. Scripps newspaper money one the nation's foundational institutions for oceanographic study was founded. To tether the public interest to their work the Birch Aquarium was established with 19 tanks. Scripps Institution of Oceanography was incorporated into the University of California in 1912 and has become world famous for its marine observation research, including pioneering the field of climate science with precise measurements of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Meanwhile the aquarium has gone beyond being the public face of the Scripps Institution's scientific work to one of San Diego's most beloved museums, hosting half a million visitors each year.

Los Angeles Aqueduct

Los Angeles

1908

With water, Los Angeles is one of the great cities of the world. Without water, Los Angeles would be…….? William Mulholland, Chief Engineer of the Bureau of Los Angeles Aqueduct, had no interest in finding out the answer to that question. He convinced the City to tap into the Owens River and bring its water 233 miles to Los Angeles via gravity alone. Mulholland went on a buying spree obtaining private property and water rights in the Owens Valley, which would revert to desert without the river. Moral outrage ensued but money always wins. Some would say the farmers came out far the better in the deal, making more than their crops would ever have yielded. Not that Mulholland was worried about life in the Eastern Sierras. The resulting aqueduct would take five years to construct and be hailed as the greatest engineering triumph of the day, save for the Panama Canal. Of the 233 miles, 43 needed to be tunneled out of solid rock. The longest of the 142 tunnels was the five-mile Elizabeth Tunnel; planners anticipated it would require five years alone to finish and it was completed in little over three. The aqueduct was periodically sabotaged in protest but the California Water Wars might have fizzled away had the St. Francis Dam not collapsed on March 12, 1928, sending a wall of water hurtling towards the Pacific Ocean. The final death toll was placed at 431. Mulholland, then 72 years old, took full responsibility and soon retired. The tragedy was merely a blip in the history of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. The original system is still a major source of water for Los Angeles, still considered a modern engineering marvel. A second aqueduct was added in the 1950s and William Mulholland continued to be showered with honors.

Gamble House
Pasadena
1908

In 1952 the American Institute of Architects issued a citation lauding two California architects for creating a "new and native architecture." Truly American styles of architecture are few and far between but brothers Charles and Henry Greene were scarcely known, despite the fact that houses they influenced stood in just about every neighborhood in the country. The Greenes popularized the philosophies of the Arts & Crafts movement in England that sought to reintroduce the handiwork of the craftsman into an increasingly mass-produced world. Their rambling rustic-feeling houses came to be known as Craftsmans after the magazine produced by furniture maker-turned writer Gustav Stickley. Smaller houses were called bungalows, a word derived from thatched huts in colonial India. Their "ultimate bungalow" is now a National Historic Landmark created for a scion of the Procter & Gamble soap fortune. California bungalows, with their natural materials and prominent front porches swept the country and were the dominant style for small houses through the first half of the 20th century. Despite their popularity the brothers stuck close to home, taking few new clients and even refusing repeated offers to take their talents to nearby Los Angeles.

Mount Wilson Observatory
Pasadena
1908

In the 1860s Benjamin Wilson cut a trail up the mile-high mountain that would take his name, searching for suitable building timber. He didn't find any and he also probably didn't notice on the way down how amazingly stable the air was around the mountain. It was those atmospheric conditions that would have astronomers drooling over Mount Wilson in the coming decades. Not that it would be easy. None other than John Muir, who seemed to have trekked across every inch of California at one point or another - it's no coincidence that the naturalist was selected to be on the back of the California state quarter, described Wilson's Peak as "more rigidly inaccessible than any other I ever attempted to penetrate." The first attempt to plunk a telescope down on the summit in the 1880s was sabotaged by weather and shallow pockets. Meanwhile, sitting in gloomy Wisconsin with the world's largest telescope, George Ellery Hale would not be dissuaded from his dream of California's abundant sunshine. He landed on the Carnegie Institution of Washington advisory board determined to tap the unlimited resources of the foundation. The cocksure Hale was well into his plans on Mount Wilson when he received word of the necessary funding. Within four years a quartet of the world's largest celestial-scanning devices were revolutionizing what Hale was calling "astrophysics," making observations of the sun never explored before. In 1917 an unprecedented 100-inch telescope was trucked up the Mount Wilson Toll Road. The discovery of the expanding universe that began on Mount Wilson continues to this day.

Mount Whitney Hut

Lone Pine
1909

The highest point in the United States was identified by a California Geological Survey team and named after the team leader in 1864. There are a dozen peaks within shouting distance of Mount Whitney that are over 14,000 feet so at 14,495 feet it just stands out by a little bit. In fact a team member named Clarence King assumed he had been to first to ever reach the roof of America in 1871 but in fact he had summited Mount Langley. When he realized his error two years later King was now only the fourth person to complete the ascent. Residents in Lone Pine down below realized they had a cash cow in America's highest peak and hired Gustave Marsh to carve a pack trail to the summit in 1904 which is still in use today, eleven miles long and considered an "easy" climb despite the altitude. Just four days after Marsh was finished a U.S. Bureau of Fisheries employee was struck by lightning and killed while enjoying his lunch atop Mount Whitney. Plans were hatched to construct a summit hut for shelter and scientific use. Marsh got that call again and completed a three-room shelter in just a month, using mules to haul materials up the mountain. The Smithsonian Institution footed part of the bill and within months scientists on Mount Whitney confirmed there was no water on Mars - at least that could be observed from their telescopes. The granite shelter remains the highest permanent structure in the Lower 48, and one of the most photographed wilderness buildings. Mount Whitney is the most desirable peak to "bag" in the country and more than 20,000 hikers each year visit the summit hut - only those lucky enough to win a lottery a year in advance can use Gustave Marsh's pack trail.