



# REFLECTIONS

THE S·O·H·O NEWSLETTER

JULY/AUGUST 1984 VOL. XVI NO.VII

## Picnic/Tour at Rancho Guajome

# A SUMMER'S PICNIC IN EARLY CALIFORNIA

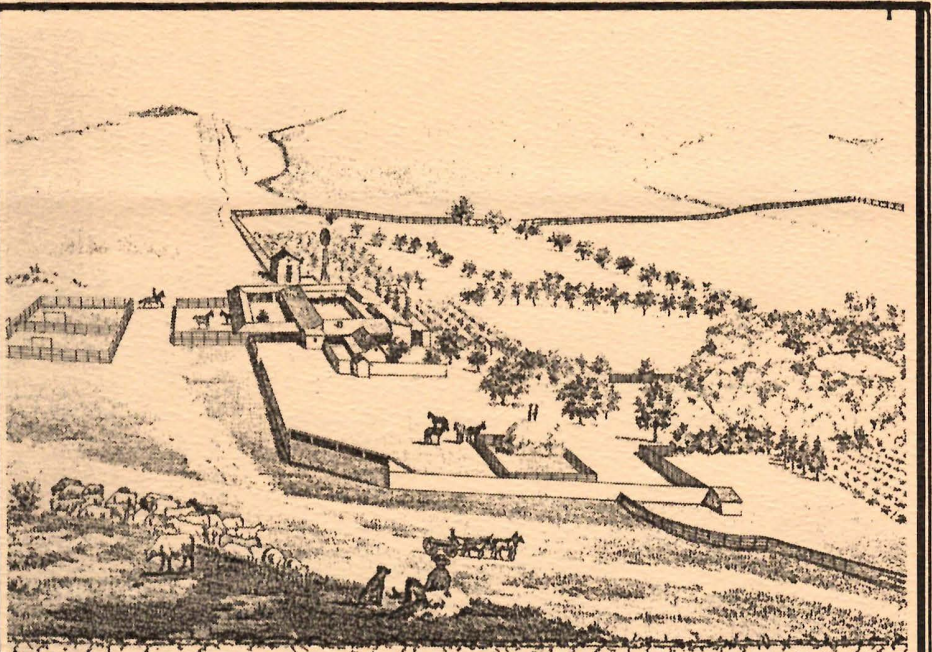
Come step back in time to early California; before freeways, smog, and suburbia. Come help join SOHO in recapturing the days of early ranchos with acres of chaparral and rolling hills.

On Saturday, July 21, we will have a very special treat. One of the most important adobe ranchos, the Rancho Guajome, will be the site of a combination tour and picnic. County historian and SOHO member, Mary Ward, will lead us through a memorable tour of the adobe. The adobe is not currently open to the public during the beginning of its restoration, so it is an extra special opportunity for us to see it.

We will meet in Heritage Park at 4:00 p.m. sharp on the grassy knoll at the corner of Juan and Harney. We will then carpool to the site, which is located near Vista. The picnic will be a potluck, so bring enough for four people. Please also bring your own utensils and a beach chair or blanket to sit on. We will be eating in the lovely patio under the trees.

For further information and confirmation, call SOHO at 297-9327.

*continued on page 3*



GUAJOME HOME OF THE LATE COL. GAVE J. GOULT'S 4 MILES EAST OF THE MISSION SAN LUIS REY, SAN DIEGO CO. CALA

Rancho Guajome as it appeared in 1883, from Wallace W. Elliott's *History of San Bernardino and San Diego Counties, California 1883.*

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Horton Plaza Needs You Now ..... p.2
- Old Town Plan: More History ..... pp.4,5,6
- Escondido Saves Depot ..... p.7



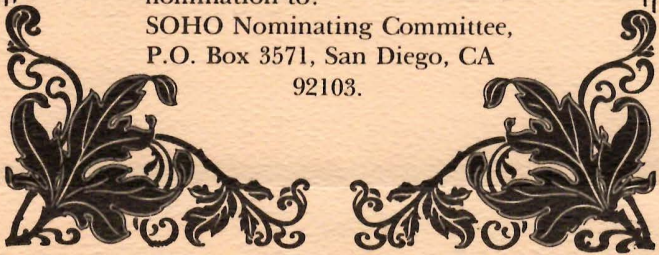


# NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

The SOHO nominating committee for 1984-85 recently met and considered nominations for officers and board members for the upcoming elections to be held in September.

The nominating committee is accepting nominations from the general membership. If you would like to submit a name, submit the name and office for nomination to:

SOHO Nominating Committee,  
P.O. Box 3571, San Diego, CA  
92103.



## REFLECTIONS

Nancy Roberts & Judy McCutcheon

Co-Editors

### SOHO OFFICERS

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Gwen McFarland	Executive Vice President
Michael Sullivan	Vice President of Governmental Affairs
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David Goldberg	Treasurer
Nancy Roberts	Secretary

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Judy McCutcheon	Claire Kaplan

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David Hutchinson	Pat Schaelchlin
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Save Our Heritage Organisation

P.O. Box 3571, San Diego, California 92103  
619 297-9327

The SOHO newsletter, *Reflections*, is published monthly. Letters to the editor and contributions are welcome. Deadline is the 15th of each month prior to publication.

# HORTON PLAZA NEEDS YOU NOW...

*Editor's Note: To All SOHO Members--the following letter was received from the Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC). Although addressed to "Workshop Participant," we urge ALL SOHO members and friends to attend and participate in these meetings. The survival of Irving Gill's Horton Plaza depends on your participation. If you are unable to attend the meetings, please send a letter to your city council representative urging support for the SOHO alternative design.*

*Dear Workshop Participant:*

*A proposed redesign of Horton Plaza park which resulted from the "Take Part Process" with Lawrence Halprin was unveiled April 12, 1984.*

*Although a majority of workshop participants favor the new design, historic preservationists prefer the retention of the original formal symmetry of the park. Others have expressed concern about the availability of funds to implement the Halprin design.*

*You can continue the "Take Part Process" for Horton Plaza by sharing your opinion as the alternatives for the park are reviewed. The board of directors of Centre City Development Corporation will deliberate on its recommendation to the City Council at a meeting at 8:30 a.m. Friday, July 6 in Rooms 207 and 208 of the Convention and Performing Arts Center, 202 C Street. At the meeting Halprin and Wayne Donaldson, representing Save Our Heritage Organisation, will present their respective designs. Comments from the audience will then be heard.*

*The remainder of the review process for Horton Plaza is:*

<i>Park &amp; Recreation Board</i>	<i>July 19</i>
<i>Historic Sites Board</i>	<i>July 25</i>
<i>Planning Commission</i>	<i>July 26</i>
<i>Public Facilities &amp; Recreation Committee of the City Council</i>	<i>August 1</i>
<i>City Council as the Redevelopment Agency</i>	<i>August 14</i>

*Again, we cannot urge strongly enough the importance of your participation in this process. If you want to see Horton Plaza saved, you must express your opinion to your city representatives. Take a moment to let the city leaders know what the real majority opinion is.*

*If you did not receive your "Reflections" in time to attend the July 6th meeting, you can still express your opinions with letters, telephone calls, and by attending the other scheduled meetings. -The Editors*



## GUAJOME CHRONOLOGY

The name Guajome, pronounced guah-ho'-may, originates from the Luiseno Indian word wakhavumi, meaning frog pond. Two ex-neophyte Indian brothers received Rancho Guajome as a land grant from California's last Mexican governor, Pio Pico, in 1845. Soon after, the brothers sold their 2,219 acre grant to Abel Stearns, a wealthy Los Angeles merchant for \$550. Stearns presented the rancho to his sister-in-law Ysidora Bandini as a wedding gift when she married the handsome young American, Lt. Cave Johnson Coutts on April 5, 1851.

Coutts had arrived on the west coast in 1849 with a company of Army dragoons sent out to reinforce American troops in California. He met Juan Bandini, one of San Diego's most prominent citizens and began to court Bandini's beautiful daughter Ysidora while he waited in Old Town to escort the American and Mexican Boundary Commissioners to the Colorado River. Coutts also surveyed and mapped Old Town, giving the streets their present historic names.

Coutts' early investments in livestock brought him huge profits from sales of cattle to northern California markets supplying beef to the forty-niners. In 1852-53, Cave Coutts constructed a large residence on his wife's property, which remains intact today as one of the best examples of Anglo-Hispanic architecture built on an original Mexican land grant.

Successive generations of Coutts heirs resided in the ranch house until 1973 when the County of San Diego acquired the property as a focal point for Rancho Guajome Regional Park. Stabilization work conducted by the California Conservation Corps and initial preservation funded by State and Federal agencies launched the rehabilitation program; however, future projects will have to be supported through public subscription and donations.



By Claire Kaplan

SOHO people are special. Their families are special; and their children are "oh, so special." Our younger generation is our most precious commodity (regardless of what we read in the newspapers), and we need their communication, their ideas, and their warmth. Soon we plan to reorganize our Teenage Membership group, and share our "good vibes" with each other.

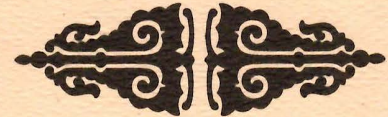
In the early days of the Save Our Heritage Organisation, we had a wonderful group of teenagers as "dollar-a-year" members. The enthusiastic boys and girls were a pleasure to be with at all times. No event was complete without this task force giving their all at the drop of a hat. SOHO's first Membership Chairman, **Bruce Hay**, organized the group and got it going. Some of the names I recall were: **Robert Mifflin Ward, Linda Hotchkiss, Mary Rodgers, Kathy Nelson, and Michael Sullivan**. The latter grew up to become one of our recent past-presidents, and never lost the SOHO spirit of caring about history and architecture.

Every fund-raiser that was held at the Sherman-Gilbert House (on its original site at 134 Fir Street) was an exciting event, due partially to the efforts of the teenage members. If the "English Garden" needed weeding, or the lawn needed mowing, they were there. They were there when we had the London Art Show (with the Beefeaters in full regalia), sponsored by the Nolan Paper Company. The house was beginning to sag at the seams, and the young people pulled it together. They gave it a quick

coat of paint and spruced it up--they made it shine. Oh, that was truly a special group of young people.

And now, waiting in the wings, are teenagers who could form a new group and share their interests with SOHO. There would be no gardens to tend or rooms to paint. They would function as hosts and hostesses at our famous tours. They would assist at the Senlis Cottage in Heritage Park. They would also help with slide shows and parties. Someday, they would take over as officers and board members, and the rest of us could sit back and beam.

All of you parents out there...watch our newsletters, or call the SOHO office for more details. We're there for you!



## CASA DE ANITA FOR SALE

The Casa De Anita (now known as the Casa de Ellena) is currently being offered for sale. The Casa, located at 9100 Wister Drive, in the Grossmont Art Colony, was built by Father William McGuire, Chaplain of the Pacific Fleet, in 1936. He built this beautiful hacienda as a retreat and a place to entertain friends and relatives while he was ashore.

During the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, Father McGuire was credited with having coined the famous phrase "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition." He also authored two books, "The Captain Wears a Cross" and "Rig for Church."

The home is located on 1/3 acre with a large outcropping of boulders with flowers everywhere and a panoramic view to the west. Special features of the home are a red quarry tile floor, original wrought iron light fixtures and curtain rods, solid wood plank doors and wood beam ceilings.

For further information, contact Doug Dowe at 462-2750.



# OLD TOWN PLAN: MORE HISTORY

By Gina Lubrano  
S. D. Union Staff Writer

Old Town is at a crossroads. Plans are under way to inject more history into the state park that some criticize as a "theme shopping center."

The city is considering a study to tighten up regulations governing land use on the park's periphery. Bids are due in July for reconstruction of three historic buildings and a flag pole in the park. The City Council will also decide soon whether to fund an \$80,000 proposal for a study of Old San Diego, the first since guidelines for the area immediately surrounding the park were drafted 12 years ago.

The independent efforts may have a far-reaching effect on the future of the area. Construction of three replicas of historic buildings, the first of eight buildings in the planning stages, are part of the 25-year plan for the state park area. The proposed city study, prompted by a citizens task force, will deal with at least five issues:

- Parking
- Business use
- Architectural design
- Tenant mix
- Organization of a merchants association

The merchants group would, as one city planner put it, "really help run things in the Old Town area."

"There are a lot of groups out there that each have an interest, but are fragmented," said Mike Stepner, assistant city planner.

The study will also address existing architectural guidelines for new construction that "have some loopholes that have allowed some buildings that are not sensitive to the Old Town character to be constructed," Stepner said. Another area of concern, he said, is business turnover. "Some areas have too many businesses of one kind...too many yogurt places, too many t-shirt places...businesses that have a tendency to go in and out of operation."

The park, criticized by some because it is not a pristine historical park, is responsible for growth in the area.

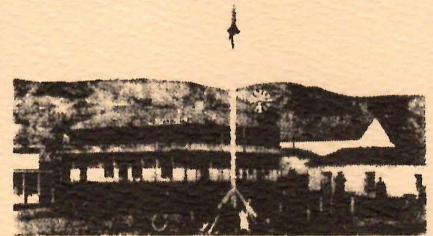
"Old Town was dead until that park project commenced," said former state senator James Mills, who rightfully calls the park "a legislative child of mine." He was the one who fought for the park even when local interest was lukewarm. Like most parents, Mills takes pride in his child, but there have been disappointments.

"It hasn't developed at the rate anticipated," Mills said. "There was an understanding on the part of all concerned that there would be a more active program of restoration. That hasn't taken place. That's a disappointment to me." He and others blame the lack of progress on historical restoration on lack of money.

"Purely and simply, it's economics and it's unfortunate," said Raymond Brandes, a historian. "We have the plan, but we don't have the money."

The state is committed to making the 12.96 acres within the park boundaries representative of the Mexican and American periods between 1821 and 1872. Yet, some wonder if it is a commitment on paper only.

"The concept of what it was meant to be has slipped away," said Brandes, who knows Old Town from the ground up. Now dean of graduate and continuing education at the University of San Diego, he is co-author of a guide to historic Old Town. He also was in charge of the state's program for archeological and historical research for the area.



Old Town Plaza, 1874, looking towards Bandini House & Estudillo House

"I have suggested it should be turned into just a state park rather than to be called an historic state park," said a disappointed Brandes. "A lot of interesting things go on in Old Town," he admitted. "Squibob Square and the Bazaar del Mundo are all very good commercial enterprises and tourist attractions. The activities--the barbecues and the art shows--all of these have a place. But when you get to the basic ingredients of Old Town--and that's the history, the architecture--then Old Town has fallen apart. There are far too many buildings that are very new and out of context."

As for the historic reconstructions planned by the state, Brandes said, "seeing is believing."

Geoffrey Mogilner, who operates Racine & Laramie and the Bank Exchange Saloon in Old Town, said he sees the intent in Old Town "to promote the feeling, not a stick-by-stick reconstruction" of what the district was like between 1821-



1872. Mogilner, whose historic reconstruction of the building he operates won an Orchid award from architects and other design professionals, points out the number of people in the area make it difficult to reproduce Old San Diego.

"How to have an historical district that will stay in business in 1984 and still give the flavor and appearance of the way it looked a century ago when there were only 200 inhabitants is not an easy challenge. It doesn't mean you don't try."

As far as Joe Toigo is concerned, Old Town ought to look like the model he made that is on display in the historical museum behind the park's San Diego Union Building.

"What really bothers me is I was hoping the perimeter of the park would carry the Old Town theme and you would get the feeling of being in Old Town," said Toigo, a history buff. What has happened instead is that office buildings and other commercial buildings compete for space outside the park.

"Eventually, we will have to change the name of Old Town; it's getting so new and so modern you won't be able to call it Old Town," Toigo said. "It's overcrowded and over developed; that's the biggest problem."

Mills said when the concept of the park was new, "I had hopes that a lot of the restoration would be done by private investors." The state has appropriated \$1.1 million for reconstruction of the plaza flag pole, Casa de Wrightington, the Light-Freeman House and the U.S. House. Bids will go out next month. State officials anticipate the year-long construction project will begin in August. The Light-Freeman House and the Wrightington House will adjoin one another and will be leased to the Mexico Shop. Use of the U.S. House has not been determined, but state officials said the building was used commercially and as sleeping quarters.

Three more buildings, Rose-Robinson buildings, the Alvarado House and the Alvarado-Johnson adobe, may be reconstructed next year. About \$1.8 million has been earmarked for that phase. The state also has spent \$748,000 to restore the plaza area.

Ronald F. Vaughn, an architect with the state, said plans are pending for the construction of the Colorado House and the Franklin House. But instead of the state footing the bill, concessionaires will be sought who will construct the buildings according to state designs and then operate them, possibly as hotels. The area the state dedicated as a park drew more than 4 million visitors in 1984. Out of its success has grown its problems.

"I think it's unfortunate neither the city nor the state acquired more property around the state park because it has not allowed the park itself space in which to grow," Brandes said. "Old Town was much larger than is represented by the state park. What has happened is a lot of the pseudo, quasi Spanish-style buildings out of 1920 Hollywood have sprung up all around the park and have no relation to Old Town of 1821-1872."



*La Casa de Estudillo*

Probably the most controversial projects outside the park are Cabrillo Plaza, the office building that won an Onion Award last year from architects and other professionals, and the Old Town Galleria, a project of shops and restaurants that went through troubled financial times when it

was known as Old San Diego Square. In awarding the Onion Award to Cabrillo Plaza, judges said it was "recess time" for the area Architectural Review Board. "This highly visible project at the very gateway to San Diego's precious historical district looks destined for a Knotts Berry Farm gunfight..."

Stephen Lusk, head of the task force that asked the city for a study of Old Town, defends the project, saying he believes it was designed to please the Review Board, "and did not reflect the design the applicants would have preferred."

Lusk said what happened with Cabrillo Plaza is one of the reasons the city needs to study the Old Town area and make changes in the ordinance governing the area to make it clear what is required for the area.

Architect Homer Delawie said one of the problems with the Old Town area is that there has been no new study to take into consideration the impact of growth of the park.

"We really ought to be looking to a urban design plan, where we can have higher densities, where we can have lower densities, parking and so forth. A lot of people feel that the residents are being moved out by the encroachment of office buildings. I don't think this is a reality, but it ought to be addressed."

Inside the park, the most controversial developments are Diane Powers' Bazaar del Mundo and the Casa de Bandini restaurant. Some, while acknowledging the success of the operations, are horrified with her interpretations, particularly at the Casa de Bandini.

Historians may question the place the colorful bazaar has in Old Town, but in 1977 it was awarded an Orchid because the building, an old motel, "has been reused with taste and exciting graphics."

*continued*



As for the Casa de Bandini, however, historian Stephen Van Wormer takes issue with the interior design, saying it reflects "a mythical elegant lifestyle of the Mexican ranchers...a Zorro myth."

"I don't like anything Diane Powers has done," Mills said bluntly. "The Casa de Bandini is a frightful job of hoking up an historic building. They look as if they brought in a designer from some Nelson Eddy-Jeanette MacDonald film and said, 'Here, we want you to make a theatrical set.' It's terrible." Mills said the problem with the bazaar is that "it is a theme shopping center. It would be terrific a block away."

"The question is, did we create a state park...to put up a theme shopping center? There is no such thing in any other state park."

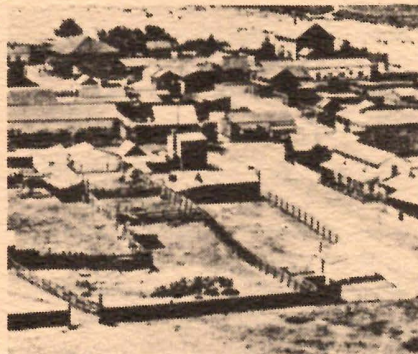
The lease the Bazaar shops and restaurants have with the state runs until 1991. The other large shopping area in the park is Squibob Square, and that lease expires in 1989. The bazaar lease, of all the Old Town concessions, is the most income producing for the state. Records show the bazaar grossed \$11 million in 1982 and \$11.5 million in 1983. The cash rental to the state in 1982 was \$221,845 and increased to \$543,661 the following year. A rate review is scheduled in 1986.

The state plan for Old Town calls for eventually replacing Squibob Square and the Bazaar with historical buildings. Whether that will be done remains to be seen.

James Neal, former manager in charge of Old Town for state Parks and Recreation and now assigned to Stockton, said the state plans to restore the Casa de Bandini to its era as the Cosmopolitan Hotel. The present appearance of the building was a compromise.

"What we wanted to do was to save the building and with the least amount of expenditure as possible convert it for something that would be appropriate for a transitional kind of phase. Some of the things you see now you won't see 25 years from now."

Lusk and others note that the Bazaar is popular with many citizens and visitors who are delighted with the mood it creates. "I think the citizens of the community would rise up in arms if they tried to tear it down," Lusk said. "I think it's far too successful. It's a political question."



*Old Town as it appeared in 1876*

Iris W. Engstrand, head of the history department at the University of San Diego and co-author of the guide to Old Town with Brandes, believes that most San Diegans are happy with Old Town.

"People like to go to the shopping center and the restaurant, and it's a lot of fun. For tourists it's a very attractive area, but I think as a historian, I would like to have more of the buildings representing Old Town as they were during the period of the late 1850's.

Unlike Brandes, she does not believe it is too late for Old Town to survive as an historic park. Although some of the leases run until 1990, Engstrand said, "There are plenty of areas that can be developed from scratch and be built and that can be historic. My personal feeling is that we don't have to disturb some things that are viable shopping areas at the moment. We can build on areas where nothing exists."

There is no question the park is popular with residents and visitors alike. Park officials estimate that for every person who pays to visit the Casa de Estudillo and the Seeley Stables or who stops at the Visitors Center, there are 12 others who visit the park. Probably those least happy with the park are those who suffer with the traffic and parking problems it has created. Residents have complained that "Old Town is sort of creeping up the hill" to Mission Hills, Stepner said.

Parking is one of the areas marked for study in the city proposal. In the meanwhile, a state project may give residents in nearby Mission Hills some relief. The project is a 120-space parking lot, some day to be expanded to 600 spaces. It's on the drawing board to be operated by a concessionaire who would be required to transport visitors to the park and back by tram. The lot is situated at Pacific Highway and Taylor Street.

Visitors who can't find parking spaces within Old Town are a great annoyance to Dr. Perry Powell and his neighbors on San Juan Road, right off Juan Street. Powell complains that visitors block off San Juan Road so that residents and others who have business in the area cannot get in or out. He said residents have met with lawyers and are considering swinging gates to close off the street.

"We're headed more down the right direction than we were a few years ago," Neal said, pointing to the planned construction.

"Everyone realizes the park--and it's not controversial to discuss--that the park is over-commercialized. The biggest problem is to bring a balance back into operation. The commercial endeavors should be supporting the historical concept. It was never the state's idea to create a theme shopping area."





# ESCONDIDO SAVES its DEPOT Or "Move it or Lose it"

Due to a community effort spearheaded by the Escondido Historical Society, the historic Escondido Santa Fe Depot (circa 1887) has been saved from demolition.

The Save Our Local Depot group (S.O.L.D.) was formed in August of 1983 to organize fundraisers to help purchase, move to Heritage Walk, and restore the depot when it was learned the railway company was planning on demolition. The organization consists of representatives from various community organizations including city agencies, the Felicita Foundation, the

Chamber of Commerce, and the Historical Society.

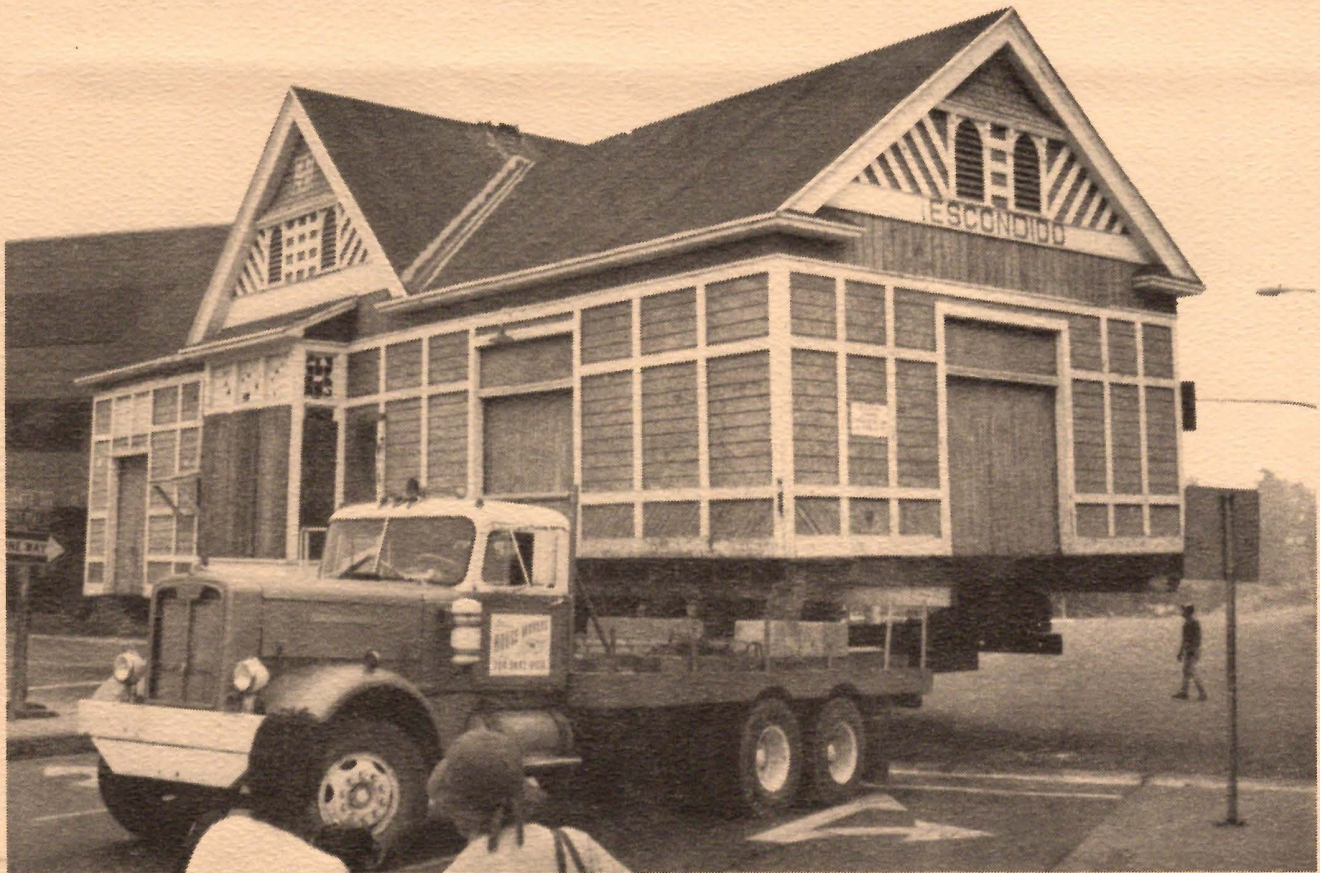
Included in the fundraising efforts was the selling of signed and numbered prints of a drawing of the depot by local artist, Stan Sowinski.

The Santa Fe Railway Company's original purchase price was \$15,000, but in the spring of 1984 the company agreed to sell the depot for \$5,000, and the purchase was completed.

On June 17th the depot was moved to Grape Day Park and Heritage Walk in plenty of time before the July 1 deadline that had been set by the railway

company for their property to be cleared. Each step in the purchase and moving of the depot was carried out under strict city rules and regulations. City staff sent out requests for proposals to eleven architectural firms in Escondido and San Diego. Robert A. McQuead, an Escondido architect who has completed several restoration projects in the city, was selected. The next phase, restoration, will begin soon.

For further details and donation information, contact the Escondido Historical Society at 619/743-8207.



Moving Day: The historic Escondido Santa Fe Depot (ca. 1887) moves from its original site to its new home in Grape Day Park on Heritage Walk.

Photo by: Scott Campbell; Ernie Cowan Photography



# MEMBERSHIP FORM



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Please complete and return to:  
SAVE OUR HERITAGE ORGANISATION  
Post Office Box 3571  
San Diego, CA 92103

SOHO depends upon membership dues, contributions, and fund raising activities to support our restoration/preservation expenses. Members receive the monthly SOHO newsletter and invitations to special events. Gift memberships are available and we will send the recipient a card in your name announcing the gift. Memberships and donations are tax deductible. Please join us!

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