

II. Historic Overview of the City of San Diego

A. Introduction

The land use history of the Uptown Study Area provides an example of the trends and cycles of San Diego's urban development. The property has been part of every major developmental phase of San Diego prior to World War II and its history illustrates the city's development through its early boom and bust periods and its expansion into residential suburbs in the early Twentieth Century. Pressure from the Post World War II population increase brought a variety of pressures and changes to portions of the area during the last half of the Twentieth Century.

The Uptown community contains some of the oldest neighborhoods in San Diego exhibiting a variety of historic architectural types and abundant landscaping. The area also features a wide range of residential opportunities and a diverse mixture of people within a distinctly urban setting. Most of the street system and building lot development was well established prior to the need to consider the automobile as a part of subdivision planning (Community Plan 1988; Cultural Resource Inventory 1993).

This narrative history will trace the development of the Uptown Study Area along with that of urban San Diego. The historic development use of the neighborhoods correlates with the economic and social factors that influenced San Diego's growth. Many aspects of life in early San Diego will be examined. The economic booms and busts linked to railroads, other speculative ventures, and development of a military port, as well as community based developments, will be documented in relation to the people and institutions that lived in, and used the Uptown area. Subjects such as the history of San Diego's residential, business, economic, and social trends will be examined.

B. The Urban Frontier (1846-1866)

1. City Builders

The development of downtown San Diego during the last half of the Nineteenth Century and first two decades of the Twentieth Century is directly linked to the phenomena of the urban frontier in the American West. The establishment of cities and their subsequent development played a crucial role in western settlement. In many instances occupation of a region did not follow a process of gradual growth that progressed in stages from explorers and trappers to farmers and then urban centers as presented by historian Frederick Jackson Turner (Reps 1979; Turner 1894). More often than not, especially in the case of San Diego, towns and cities were the "spearheads" of the American frontier and established in advance of agricultural development. Formation of urban communities stimulated the opening of the west to farms. City builders led the way and their infant metropolises acted as advance bases to hold the land for approaching populations (Wade 1970:260; Pomeroy 1971:8-10; Reps 1979: X; Larsen 1978:4; Stelter 1973:187).

The urban frontier represented a unique aspect of the western experience and one that historians have still not yet fully explored. In spite of the emphasis by both government and the popular media on the Jeffersonian ideal of agricultural development, which proclaimed that the true destiny of American culture lay in the expansion of a society of independent farmers, during the Nineteenth Century many pioneers moved westward in search of promising urban opportunities rather than fertile soil (Pomeroy 1971:24-25; Stelter 1973:187; Wade 1970:261).

City builders were essential to urban frontier expansion. For many westerners the perceived road to riches lay by way of promoting a location with apparent, or imagined, urban potential (Bogue et al. 1970:255-256). In the far west, including San Diego, this phenomenon represented an extension of a process perfected earlier in the Midwest. During the 1830s speculators platted and promoted thousands of sites throughout Ohio, Illinois and neighboring states. Promoters purchased a tract of undeveloped wilderness, surveyed the property, produced a map of streets, parks, and future sites of universities and government buildings, and began to sell lots in their new metropolis. During the mid 1830s the "mania" became so frenzied that speculators ignored all common sense and platted thousands of sites, many of which were inaccessible. Most, of course, failed (Larson 1976:141-142; Glaab 1963:147-148; Bogue et al. 1970:255-256). This phenomenon repeated itself decades later in the growth of San Diego with the developmental attempts by W.H. Davis, Alonzo Horton, and the speculators of the 1880s. For those that succeeded the efforts of local promoters to attract business and transportation networks was vital (Bogue et al. 1970:255-256).

In order to succeed at any level city founders, promoters, and early settlers had to master the skills of urban entrepreneurship, which consisted of "organized civic entrepreneurship that enabled one community to triumph over another and win railroads, manufacturing, and other necessities of urban growth" (Larsen 1976:115). Many infant cities hoped to become the commercial center of their region (Stelter 1973:89). Although most felt this destiny had been predetermined by geographical benefits of their particular locality this was not the case. The key to urban success rested in the power of business leaders to attract capital and develop transportation systems, especially railroads (Larson 1976:141).

Competition between growing cities to attract railroads became a key factor in this process. By the 1850s the ability of a community to connect with rail lines was seen as essential to success in the public's mind (Bogue et al. 1970:254). It had been proven more than once that if cities intended to succeed as commercial enterprises railroads and real estate were fundamental to their development (Glaab and Brown 1976:114). A high correlation existed between new railroad construction, population growth, and general commercial activity. Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio had all experienced dramatic population, construction, and manufacturing increases following the completion of railroads. Atlanta, Chicago, and Saint Louis succeeded as regional economic centers following rail line connections (Fogel 1970:237-238).

These aspects of speculation, promotion, and railroad construction largely influenced the growth of downtown San Diego during the city's formative years. The city experienced three periods of heightened economic activity prior to 1920. In each, a different set of urban entrepreneurs, guided by men such as Alonzo Horton, Elisha Babcock, John D. Spreckles, and George Marston, attempted to promote the city as a major West Coast port, develop urban infrastructure, and establish direct links with transcontinental railroads. Finally, Congressman William Kettner accomplished their goal through an urban alliance with the United States Navy. Promotion during each phase affected the nature of urban development, thereby directly impacting the nature of development within the Uptown Study Area.

2. New San Diego (1846-1866)

a. New Town

The first attempt by urban pioneer speculators to establish a city on San Diego Bay occurred when a group of entrepreneurs platted the site of New San Diego in 1850. Although a failure, speculation

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stimulated by New San Diego's promotion led directly to subdivision of the Middletown Tract located along the western edge of present -day Uptown. Prior to this, European settlement had been gradual and relatively unremarkable in numbers. In 1769 Spanish missionaries and soldiers arrived at San Diego to establish the first mission and presidio in Alta California. They chose a site on a hill overlooking the mouth of the San Diego River at the current location of Presidio Park at the north west corner of the study area. By 1774 the Spanish had moved the mission six miles inland along the San Diego River to better access water for their crops (Englehardt 1920; McGrew 1922). In the 1820s Mexico received its independence from Spain and San Diego became part of the Mexican Republic. Several retired soldiers and Mexican settlers had already begun to form a small community at the foot of the Presidio Hill. By 1830 a small town surrounding a central plaza had developed (today's Old Town). The civilian residents of the town pressed Mexico for the establishment of their own municipal government. In 1834 Mexico recognized San Diego's requests and granted pueblo status to the settlement. The enduring legacy of this act was the provision for granting nearly 48,000 acres of land to the community (Killea 1966:24-32; Crane 1991:105-108; Harlow 1987). Included within these Pueblo Lands was the current study area.

During the Mexican-American War (1846-48) United States forces occupied San Diego. The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, which ended the war, placed Alta California within the United States. The new international boundary line was set at one marine league south of San Diego Bay. In the summer of 1849 the U.S. Boundary Commission Survey team arrived in San Diego to establish a base camp for the survey of the new boundary. U.S. Boundary Commissioner John B. Weller assigned the chief surveyor, Andrew B. Gray, to survey the bay to help fix the point of origin for the survey (Scott 1976:21). Gray quickly realized the potential for a new "American" seaport. When the Commission's activities were delayed for nearly a year due to political and financial considerations, he switched his efforts toward establishing a "New Town" for San Diego (Rolle 1956:90-91; Scott 1976:24-26; Newland 1992:30-35). Like most urban pioneers Gray pinned his hopes on the railroad. He felt San Diego would be the site of a great commercial port at the terminus of a transcontinental line traversing the southern section of the country (Scott 1976:24). The Pacific Railroad Convention, held in Memphis in 1849, advocated a southern transcontinental route along the Gila River with San Diego as its western terminus.

Following methods established by city builders in the Midwest during the 1830s, Gray started work toward the founding of New San Diego in January 1850. During the first six weeks of the year he and Army Lt. Thomas Johns surveyed and mapped a 160 acre subdivision and port facility adjacent to Punta de los Muertos three miles south of Old Town. The tract was located 8 to 10 blocks south of the current Uptown Study Area and bounded by present day Broadway on the north, Market Street on the south, First Avenue on the east and Pacific Highway on the west (Pourade 1963:161; Gray and Johns 1850; Poole 1854). Gray then attracted successful San Francisco merchant William Heath Davis and several prominent San Diegans, José Antonio Aguirre, Miguel de Pedrorena, and William C. Ferrell, to help finance the purchase and development of the subdivision (Rolle 1956:91-92; Scott 1976:28). On March 16, 1850 Davis, as major investor, signed a partnership agreement with Gray and the others. Four days later the investors purchased the 160 acres from the newly established City Trustees for \$2,304 (Miscellaneous Records 2:184-186). As part of the agreement Davis agreed to pay for the construction of a wharf. Davis spent over \$60,000 to complete the 600 foot long, L-shaped wharf which he located near the foot of present day Market Street. He also spent thousands more for several prefabricated wooden buildings shipped from the East Coast as well as ship loads of bricks and lumber (Rolle 1956:91-92).

At first the prospects for New San Diego seemed good. California had been admitted into the Union in September 1850 and San Diego, with its deep water harbor, held great promise for many speculators. Dreams of transcontinental railroad lines terminating at a fully developed American city on San Diego Bay motivated many to look to the sleepy town. Some felt it would be just a matter of time before San Diego's citizens moved from the older settlements at La Playa and Old Town to New Town. Gray and Davis, engaging in urban entrepreneurship, added to the potential promise of New Town when they convinced Lt. Thomas Johns to establish the new Army supply depot and barracks there instead of at its originally planned location at La Playa. By May 1851 New Town boasted several hotels, saloons, the Army barracks and supply depot, San Diego's first newspaper, a dozen houses, and semi-regular steamer service to and from San Francisco. Soon, many of the local Army officers and Boundary Commission members established new homes in the settlement (Rolle 1956:93-95; Scott 1976:31-34, 39-40; MacPhail 1979:15-17).

New Town's rapid development in 1850 and 1851 was quickly reversed. A series of setbacks for the investors and residents quickly countered their earlier successes. The population that Gray and Davis expected to flock to San Diego did not materialize. First, New Town's mostly male population helped garner it a reputation as a gathering place for "rowdies, adventurers, and drifters." This was compounded in November 1851 when the Garra Indian Uprising in San Diego's backcountry attracted nationwide attention that discouraged settlement. Added to these negative events were several severe financial disasters that crippled William Heath Davis' businesses. An 1851 San Francisco fire destroyed Davis' warehouse and cost him a reported \$700,000. By early 1852 Davis could no longer afford to bankroll the struggling development (Rolle 1956:95-101; Scott 1976:47-51; MacPhail 1979:17).

Davis' financial troubles were only the beginning of the end for New Town. In January 1852 the State Legislature repealed bankrupt San Diego's City Charter and placed a Board of Trustees in charge. Without Davis's or the city's support the development had no financial backing. Although activity in the spring of 1852 was steady, when the Boundary Commission was dismissed in May, a large contingent of the population left. Davis had already closed his own hotel and saloon in April due to bad management and high debts. Soon other New Town residents and merchants were doing the same. Some left San Diego permanently while others moved their businesses and buildings to Old Town. By March 1853 both the *San Diego Herald* newspaper and the last remaining merchant, Ephraim W. Morse, had both made the move to Old Town (Rolle 1956:98; McGhee 1950:10). The main source of activity in New Town during the latter part of 1852 had been the Army depot. In early 1853 the activity there had also declined (Scott 1976:77-78). By mid-1853 only a few Army officers were left in the nearly vacant town. A final blow to the hopes of New Town occurred when one of the steamers that occasionally docked at the wharf smashed into it. Thirty feet of the dock was destroyed, making the wharf unusable. Davis never repaired the damage (San Diego Pioneer Letters 9-27-1853; MacPhail 1979:18).

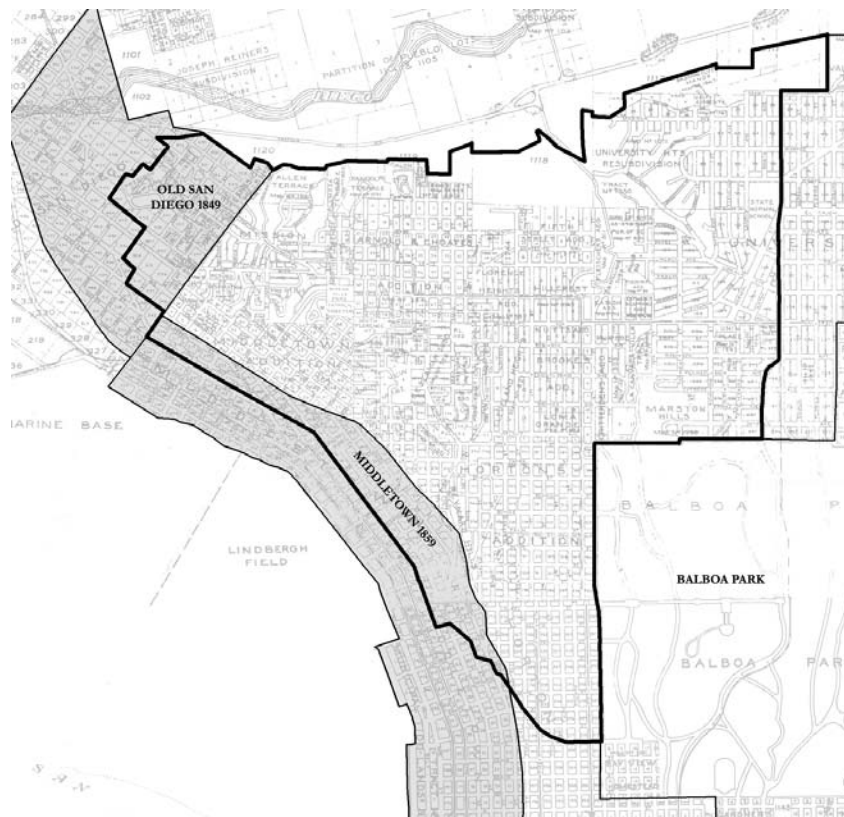
Despite setbacks New Town investors continued urban entrepreneurial efforts to secure San Diego's future as a transcontinental rail line terminus. In 1853 a group consisting of Colonel William Ferrell, Frank Ames, and John Bankhead Magruder established the San Diego Atlantic and Pacific Railroad Company. The same year Andrew Gray traveled to Washington D.C. with two petitions signed by over 70 residents asking Congress to name San Diego a port of entry and establish a post office at New Town. In early 1854 he again traveled to the nation's capitol in order to interest officials of the Texas Western Railroad Company in surveying a route to San Diego. In November 1854 the State of California chartered the San Diego and Gila, Southern Pacific and Atlantic Railroad to build a line from San Diego to the

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Colorado River. San Diego voters passed a measure granting two leagues of city land to the company (Brandes et al. 1985:44-46). Sectional conflicts that ultimately resulted in the Civil War made any attempt at transcontinental railroad promotion hopeless and the New Town venture ultimately failed.

b. Establishment of the Middletown Tract

The first wave of speculative fever that motivated the new American residents of San Diego to develop New Town inspired a second group of hopeful urban pioneers to develop another town site on the bay. This subdivision consisted of 687 acres of land located between Old Town and New Town. Its developers gave it the appropriate name of Middletown. Today most of this tract lies along the western edge of the Uptown district. American attorney Thomas Sutherland was one of the catalysts of this speculative project. Sutherland, one of the first attorneys in San Diego, had become one of the community's most influential citizens by aligning himself with the wealthy Bandini and Estudillo families. After the State Legislature created San Diego County in the Act of February 18, 1850, *Alcalde* (mayor) Joshua Bean asked Sutherland to take over the position of acting *alcalde* during the transition period from Mexican to American law during the next few months. As such, Sutherland oversaw Davis' New Town purchase in March 1850. During the next two years he would also serve as District Attorney and City Attorney, in which role he wrote the city's first ordinances (Scott 1976:29; Smythe 1908:290, 582).



Sutherland quickly joined together with nine other prominent San Diegans to begin their own speculative venture shortly after Davis and Gray's purchase. On May 27, 1850 Sutherland and his partners purchased the 687 acres of Pueblo Lands for \$3,187 through *alcalde* Joshua Bean (Deed Book B: 75-76,110). The group of investors included Sutherland, Atkins S. Wright, San Diego merchant Charles P. Noell, Boundary Commission official and lawyer Oliver S. Witherby, prominent *Californios* José Maria Estudillo and Juan Bandini, Bandini's future son-in-law Lt. Cave J. Coats, Army Engineer Maj. William Emory, County Sheriff Agustin Haraszthy, and County Surveyor Henry Clayton

Figure 2: Middletown 1859

(Brandes and Erzinger c.1980). In June 1850 the group had surveyor Clayton lay out the new development with streets and blocks. The road connecting Old Town and New Town bisected the new subdivision which featured five public squares, named after American heroes, and an open community space known as the Triangle (Harlow

1987:26,110; Reps 1979:239-241). Clayton did not, however, subdivide the entire tract. The tidelands area to the west edge of the tract and an open area south of the current Grape Street were left unplotted. The open areas south of Grape were designated as the Reservation (Clayton Map 1851). This reference was associated with a poorly documented Indian *rancheria* (small temporary village) that occupied the land (Brandes and Erzinger 1980; Carrico 1984:24-27).

Shortly after completion of the map, the partners opened their tract for sale. They made Sutherland their attorney in matters relating to the sale and conveyance of any lots or blocks in the tract. The agreement between the investors noted that they each were holders of a one tenth undivided interest in the venture. Any sales of lots or property would be divided up in accordance with their holdings and all unsold lots were to be divided in the same manner. Real estate activity in Middletown lots followed a similar pattern as that in New Town and Old Town during these early years of the 1850s. This activity slumped after 1854 with only occasional sales during the next decade and a half. Still, Sutherland and the other owners made numerous sales and conveyances of Middletown property during this period. Also, the investors offered an unspecified right-of-way through the tract for a future railroad. All this later led to numerous complications in title (Brandes and Erzinger c.1980). Sutherland's death in 1859 compounded the matter in later title contests (*San Diego World* 3-8-1873). In addition, four of six unnumbered plots north of, and associated with, Davis' New Town, all located on the north side of spring (Broadway) Street were sold to individuals as well as several other tracts of land to the west. These individual plots were deeded prior to the opening of Middletown and were known by their purchaser's names as the Bleecker and Gardiner, Summers and Tremain, Davidson, Barber, and Fitzgerald and Murray Tracts (Deed Book B; Tax Books 1873-1928; Pascoe Map 1869).

Unlike its southern neighbor New Town, Middletown did not see any development during this period. The venture, on the coat tails of Davis's New Town, also fell victim to the lack of capital and interest in frontier San Diego during the 1850s. It truly remained a "paper" town. No records, maps, or mention has ever been found to indicate any construction of houses or structures in Middletown during these early years.

Only the Indian *rancheria* on the southern portion of the tract indicates occupation of the land. Mentions of the Indian *rancheria* are also scarce and do not occur until several decades later. In 1881 the *San Diego Union* notes the existence of a *rancheria* just west of St. Joseph's Catholic Church at Third and Beech near the eastern edge of the reservation area (*San Diego Union* 7-7-1881:4). In November of that year the newspaper noted that drunken Indians who had a *rancheria* in Middletown were causing problems for the area residents (*San Diego Union* 11-10-1881:3). The only mention of a specific location of the Middletown *rancheria* comes from the *San Diego Union* of February 1888 which reported "... that there used to be an Indian *rancheria* on India between Cedar and Date and the Street was named after the squaws. . . ." (*San Diego Union* 2-3-1888:3). Although there is no proof that Andrew Gray named India Street after the local Indians, Indian *rancherias* located on vacant lots and plots around the peripheries of Old Town and New Town are fairly well documented. All during the late Nineteenth Century the displaced local Native American population attempted to adapt and survive on the margins of the new American community (Carrico 1984:24-37; Carrico 1987:18-36). The undeveloped Middletown "Reservation" served during these early years as one of those marginal settlements. Urban development of the Middletown tract would not occur until the late 1860s and early 1870s when another urban pioneer entrepreneur, Alonzo Horton, successfully established a city on San Diego Bay.

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c. Horton's Boom (1867-1873)

After the Civil War ended in 1865 interest in San Diego renewed. During the following decade San Diego saw a rise in urban speculation and development of portions of the Middletown tract. The Southern Overland Trail into California was reopened and new settlers began to move west. Plans for transcontinental railroads that had been stymied by sectional struggles and the war were reexamined and

prepared. The speculative hopes of San Diegans dating back to the 1850s for making their town a major commercial port at the terminus of a southern railroad line rekindled. San Diego residents had little money for such ventures. The city was still run by a Board of Trustees that did not hold elections to fill expired terms of the members after 1865. The lack of city business in quiet San Diego precluded the need. In fact, no one had purchased any of the city lands since 1863 (Scott 1976:152-153). That all changed in 1867.

On April 15th, of that year the steamer *Pacific* arrived in San Diego Bay and anchored off the former site of Davis' wharf. Among several passengers arriving was San Francisco merchant and land speculator Alonzo Horton. Horton came to San Diego to investigate the small town's potential for development. He was already a seasoned urban pioneer and land speculator, having previously dealt in real estate in Wisconsin in the 1830s and established a town there bearing his name (Hortonville) following the war with Mexico. Horton had moved to San Francisco in 1862 and was operating a furniture business when he heard a lecture on San Diego's speculative

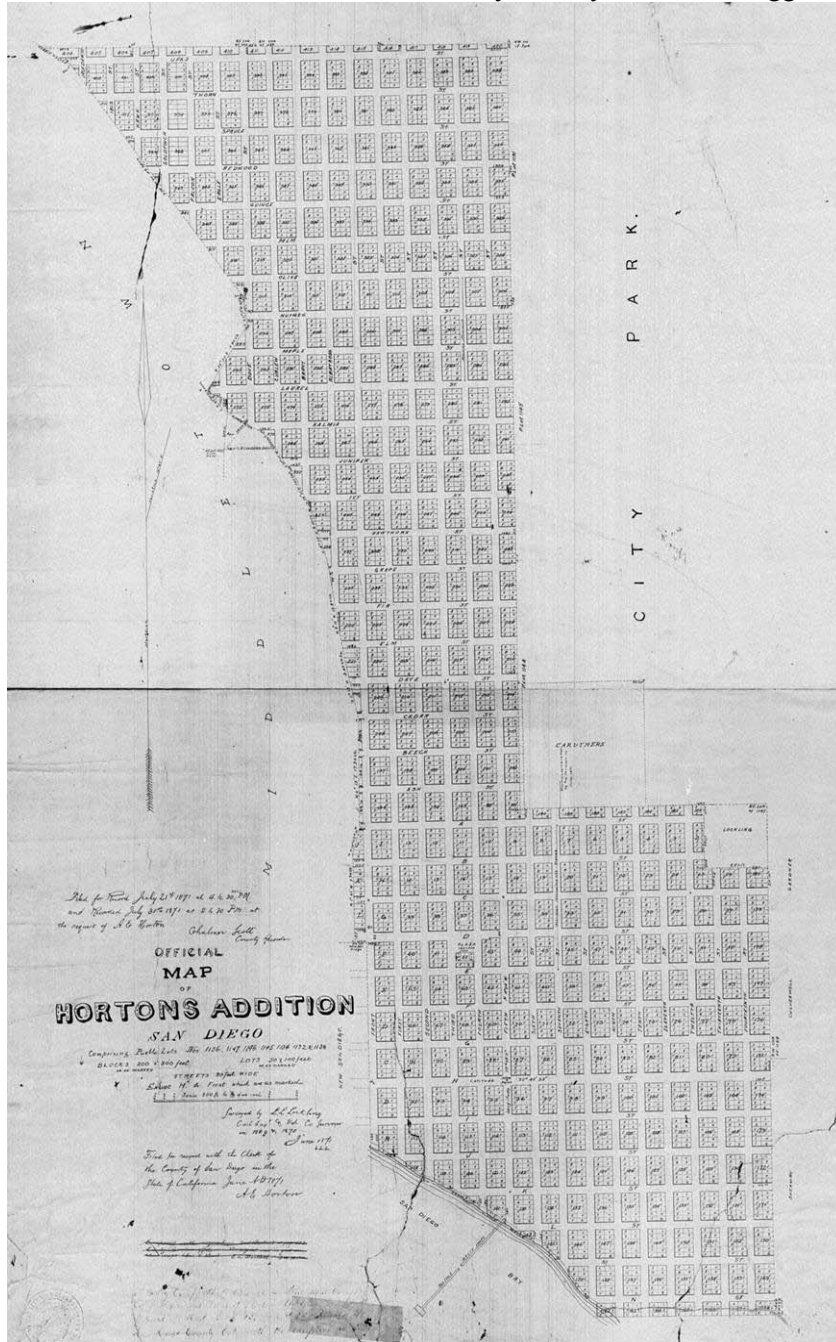


Figure 3: Horton's Addition 1871

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potential (MacPhail 1979:23). When he arrived in San Diego he liked the land he saw near Davis' New Town. He quickly inquired to local officials as to the availability of the city lands near Davis' subdivision. In doing so Horton made a valuable acquaintance with one of the community's leaders, Ephraim Morse. The former New Town resident was intrigued with Horton's ideas for a renewal of the earlier development project. Morse and County Clerk Eugene Pendleton then helped arrange for an election of new City trustees so that several of the City's "pueblo lots" could be set at auction. The financial situation of the city forced Horton to pay the costs of holding the April 27 election. Morse, Thomas Bush, and Joseph Mannassee were elected (Smythe 1908:325-337; Black 1913:90-100). At the auction on May 10, 1867 Horton purchased nearly 800 acres located east of the New and Middle Town tracts for \$265 (see Figure H1) (Deed Book 2:311; Heilbron 1987:64). Known officially as "Horton's Addition," the northern portion of his purchase lie within the present Uptown district lying north of present-day I-5, to Upas Street and east from Front Street to 15th Street.

After County Surveyor James Pascoe drew a rough map of his land, Horton returned to San Francisco to settle his finances, open a land office, and promote his venture (Scott 1976:153; Harlow 1987:137). He immediately contacted General William S. Rosecrans who was involved in several transcontinental railroad schemes. After a survey into San Diego's backcountry Rosecrans told Horton his land would be worth a million dollars if a railroad was built (Smythe 1908:336-337). Horton returned again to San Francisco to start recruiting the needed population for developing the new town. He got twenty-five families to commit to move to San Diego and promised a free lot to anyone who would build a house worth \$500 on it. During the fall of 1867 Horton hired surveyors and well drillers to layout the new subdivision (Morse Letters 5-28-1867; 10-14-1867; Scott 1976:154-55). In December he went to Sacramento to apply for a wharf franchise that was approved on January 27, 1868 (Morse Letters 1-28-1868).

During the last part of 1867 Horton's active promotion soon attracted other speculators and developers to San Diego. Stephen S. Culverwell obtained his own wharf franchise to be constructed near Davis' old wharf as well as his own tract east of Horton's. Matthew Carruthers arranged to open a lumberyard. Attorneys and speculators Charles Taggart, Salon Sanborn, and Charles Wetmore also arrived to practice law and deal in real estate (Scott 1976:156). During the next five years speculators laid out over fifteen new subdivisions around Horton's tract. These areas were located within the present neighborhoods of Hillcrest, Sherman Heights, Golden Hill, Logan Heights, North Park, Mission Hills, and University Heights, as well as 1,440 acres set aside for a city park (Harlow 1987:137-174; Smythe 1908:616-621; Montes 1977). Still, by August 1868 it was obvious that Horton's tract would be the center of the new town's development. The completion of Horton's wharf at the foot of Fifth Street in fall 1868 focused the business development of the new metropolis along Fifth and Sixth Streets south of Ash, to the south of the current Uptown Study Area

The years 1868 and 1869 were boom years for San Diego. Plans for a new railroad were helping to fuel the interest. In May 1868 General Thomas Sedgewick, surveyor and agent for John C. Fremont's Memphis, El Paso, and Pacific Railroad project published his report that named San Diego as the terminus for a planned transcontinental line (Lesley 1945:504;505; *San Diego Union* 6-14-1873). Soon both Old Town and New Town, or Horton's Addition as it was sometimes called, were booming. The prospect of the railroad brought hundreds of new settlers. By early 1870 New San Diego had a population of 2,301, with 915 residential, and sixty-nine business buildings (MacPhail 1979:41).

Although Old Town was seeing its height of activity, the focus of the community was beginning to swing toward New Town. Ephraim Morse became the first merchant to move to the development in the spring of 1869 (*San Diego Union* 6-30-1869). By late 1869 New Town residents were calling for the transfer of the county seat to their settlement (*San Diego Union* 7-21-1870; 9-1-1870). Opposition from Old Town residents delayed the transfer of the county records until April 1871 but the change was inevitable. By 1872 the county had completed a new courthouse located at D and Front Streets to serve as the center of local government (Smythe 1908:383-385).

The next three years were ones of steady growth. Although 1870 started with the failure of the Memphis and El Paso Railroad, prospects from several other railroad ventures and a small gold rush in the Cuyamaca Mountains continued to fuel development (*San Diego Union* 9-22-1870; McGhee 1950:69). Over two hundred seventy buildings were constructed in the new town in 1870 alone including the one hundred room Horton House Hotel (*San Diego Union* 12-29-1870; 10-6-1870). Other developments included the town's first telegraph connections, its first bank, several new schools, two newspapers, twelve large mercantile houses, various retail establishments, and numerous saloons (*San Diego Union* 3-24-1870; 12-29-1870). The Texas and Pacific Railroad Company's emergence as the leading prospect for the completion of San Diego's railroad connection in March 1871 cautiously inspired the citizenry of the town. The continuation of a severe drought and the previous failure of the Memphis and El Paso dropped real estate prices from their 1869 boom time levels. Still, 1871 saw the construction of fifty-one new buildings, the establishment of a chamber of commerce, fire department, and the beginning of construction of the new courthouse (*San Diego Union* 1-2-1872).

San Diego's promise seemed assured when in May 1872 the U.S. Congress passed the railroad bill that approved funding for the Texas and Pacific's transcontinental line to San Diego. This ignited a feverish real estate boom (Smythe 1908:354-355; Lesley 1945:505-506). Ephraim Morse wrote to out-of-town business associates that lots along Fifth Street that had been priced at \$800 were suddenly selling for \$2,000 (Morse Letters II: 209-211). San Diego's population swelled to an estimated 4,000 and in the spring of 1873 construction of rail bed was begun. Unfortunately San Diego's boom was abruptly ended in the economic panic of September 1873. Tom Scott, the president of the Texas and Pacific, lost expected financing after the company's banking houses in New York failed and European banks refused to loan the funds. In December 1873 the Texas and Pacific Company became insolvent. By 1875 the population had dropped back to roughly 1,500. The failure signaled the end of the Horton era boom and initiated a quiet decade of slow development (Smythe 1908:359-375).

The remaining years of the 1870s are often referred to as "quiet" ones. Hopes remained tied to the railroad. During the late 1870s Texas and Pacific President Tom Scott continued to try and finance the transcontinental line to San Diego. His efforts were ended when the mighty Southern Pacific Railroad completed a line south from San Francisco through Los Angeles to Yuma by 1877. This effectively blocked the Texas and Pacific from constructing their road (Lesley 1945:506-509). Historian Elizabeth MacPhail referred to this period as "Living on Climate and Great Expectations" (MacPhail 1979). In reality the boom had brought "... a new wealth, new energy, and new type of settler to the region" and the area continued to experience steady growth. The boom of the '70s had transformed Southern California from a sparsely populated land of small pueblos and large ranches to one of cities supporting a well developed agricultural hinterland (McWilliams 1946:117). During the period numerous farming communities became firmly established in the county (Van Wormer 1986a, 1986b). The first pioneer farmers came to San Diego in the 1870s as a result of Horton's real estate promotion. They moved into the

county's coastal and foothill valleys that constituted the choice agricultural regions of the growing city's vast hinterland (Van Wormer 1986a).

3. The Study Area Pre-Development (1869-1879)

a. The Case of Middletown: Pueblo Lands and Squatters

It was during the period of Horton's Boom that legal title to the Middletown tract was resolved. The course of securing the title to bring the Middletown lands into developable condition was not easily traveled, however. Middletown and New Town, as well as Horton's Addition and many other subdivisions platted in the 1860s were all pieces of the original Mexican era Pueblo Land Grant of San Diego. The City's, and San Diego land owners', attempts to secure title to their Pueblo Lands Grant in the years after the U.S. occupation reflect the difficult legacy of the corrupt and unprincipled business and legal practices of Gilded Age California. The California Land Claim Act of 1851 presented those owning Mexican era grants a difficult bureaucratic process for securing title to their lands (Robinson 1948:100-109). San Diego based its claim on the 1845 Fitch Map which designated the Pueblo Lands as roughly eleven leagues of land (48,556 acres). In 1854 the city trustees petitioned the Board of Land Commissioners to approve the map. The Board did so, issuing a decree of confirmation on January 22, 1856. By that time the City had surveyor Charles Poole incorporate all of the various subdivisions including Middletown into the official city map of the Pueblo Lands. The Board requested an official government survey which U.S. Surveyor John C. Hays completed in 1858. In the survey Hays noted that San Diego should be issued a patent for the Pueblo Lands (Crane 1991:113; Harlow 1987:31-32, 43).

However, for reasons unknown, the Land Office never issued the patent. The city trustees did not see reason to concern themselves with what they saw as a technicality until the activity during Horton's Boom. By the end of 1868 the city trustees, in addition to Horton's purchases, had sold another 2,500 acres of Pueblo Lands to other speculators and settlers as well as set aside 1,440 acres for a city park. At this point the trustees requested their patent from the U.S. Surveyor General. Land Commissioner Joseph Wilson, however, replied that the survey had not been fully approved and would require republishing. In February and March 1869 Wilson advertised that the Pueblo Lands surveys would be held for ninety days to hear any objections. The republishing opened the door to a wave of unscrupulous speculators, bureaucrats, and entrepreneurs who looked to cash in on the delay (Crane 1991:118; Harlow 1987:34-40).

The most troublesome of the many fraudulent claims was that from the new Board of Trustees themselves. The board members quickly hired a new city attorney, Charles P. Taggart, to help them in their claims. Taggart and the trustees (former sheriff James McCoy, Matthew Sherman, and José Estudillo) claimed that the Hays survey had improperly left out the low tide line lands along the bay front, as well as the Coronado peninsula (Coronado). In support of their case, Taggart presented an altered copy of the Fitch Map. The unscrupulous attempt of the trustees angered many land holders in the city including those who had claims to bay front lands in Old Town, New Town, La Playa, Horton's Additions, and Middletown. In addition Ephraim Morse and Alonzo Horton and others counter filed against the trustees' claims (Crane 1991:118; Harlow 1987:34-40). The trustees' actions split the city between what Morse called the "Taggart Clique" and the pro-trustees *San Diego Union*, against Morse's "tide-landers" and his paper the *San Diego Bulletin* (Morse Letters II: 376-377; McGhee 1950:80-82).

It took the Land Office nearly two years to settle the claims against the Pueblo Lands. During this time all Pueblo Lands titles were opened to other challenges, including squatters. Ephraim Morse served as real

estate agent for many speculators and out-of-town owners of the western edge of the city including some New Town and Middletown lots. His correspondence from this period regularly commented on the area's problem with "jumpers." These people would move onto a lot, fence it in and try to take ownership (Morse Letters II, IV). This often encouraged property owners to build small houses and developments to rent out instead of leaving property vacant. A "Pueblo League" was also formed by land owners to help evict squatters and pass a resolution making squatting a misdemeanor (Crane 1991:119).

In December 1869 Surveyor General Sherman Day made the first opinion on the matter when he denied the trustees, and all other claims against the Pueblo Lands. Still, the decision had to go through the Land Commissioner and the Secretary of the Interior. In July 1870 Taggart hired noted San Francisco land attorney General Volney Howard and made a "shady" deal that if they won the tidelands case for the trustees, they would receive 30 blocks of tidelands and half the Peninsula (Crane 1991:120-21; Harlow 1987:41). Morse wrote to his friends that Taggart's plan was to acquire all of the valuable tidelands, which would be worth millions if a railroad was built, and split them with the current trustees (James McCoy, A.B. McKean, and C.W. Lewis) (Morse Letters II:376-377). Taggart's unethical scheme did not come to fruition. In December 1870 Land Commissioner Joseph Wilson confirmed the Pueblo Lands and rejected the trustees' claims. Several other claimants continued to fight the ruling but a final survey was completed in 1874 which secured the City's title forever to the Pueblo Lands (Crane 1991:123).

1) Middletown: The Court Case

The fight over the Pueblo and tidelands was not the major factor in clearing the title to the Middletown lands. As noted earlier, there were certain ambiguities in the original Middletown plat that included the rights of all original Middletown investors to equal one tenth undivided interest in all the lots, the unplowed reservation, an unspecified railroad right-of-way, and other pre-Middletown plots on the south edge of the tract. These left the subdivision open to its own title challenges. In 1869, the surviving original partners, their heirs, those who claimed to have purchased lots and blocks from Sutherland and other owners, and those looking to take advantage of the unclear title situation caused by the Pueblo Lands case and others, became embroiled in a lawsuit. The plaintiffs filed the suit in the 17th District Court in San Diego including a new city map by "Taggart Clique" County Surveyor James Pascoe. The number of litigants involved and the length of the testimony reflected the troubled title situation. Over one hundred plaintiffs and defendants were named and testimony lasted for nearly three years. The names listed in the case are a veritable "Who's Who" of San Diego at the time. The plaintiffs filed under the name Joanna Baldwin, et al. Baldwin was the wife of Sutherland's estate administrator Alexander Baldwin, and they called for the partition of the property in question. The defendants filed through Cave J. Coutts, William Emory, and et al. and represented all the surviving original owners, their heirs, and those who claimed purchase through them (*San Diego World* 3-8-1873; Brandes and Erzinger 1980). The real question was the legality of any purchases, tax deeds, or sales of the undivided lots such as the reservation lands and the aforementioned tidelands.

In March 1873 Judge S.B. McKee of San Francisco issued his decision as to the partition. McKee noted that the original survey was a private one and that the original agreement was the only binding and legal way to distribute the property. Most of the decision was a written justification for the legality of claimed ownership of individuals, both defendants and plaintiffs. The crux of the decision was that the original owners, their heirs, and those they transferred those rights to, owned the property in joint interest. He declared then that "The entire tract of land--Middletown, the Reservation and Tide lands--must therefore be the subject of partition without reference to what has been done in that direction by any of the owners"

(*San Diego World* 3-8-1873). However, the judge noted that Sutherland himself, as well as most of the other original partners, had occasionally overstepped their authority in partitioning off reservation and tidelands property for sale. McKee stated that all those deeds were void as they had no agreement to do such partitioning. Judge McKee also detailed several cases of misrepresentation by unscrupulous lawyers and estate administrators in trying to obtain a portion of the tract interest. McKee listed over thirty individuals including Alexander and Joanna Baldwin, and county surveyors James Pascoe and M.G. Wheeler, as having no claim to the tract. The judge listed well over fifty “tenants in common” to the property entitled to interest in the partition as to their percentage of ownership. McKee concluded that the task of ascertaining the individual extent of ownership should be left to that of “an experienced accountant” (*San Diego World* 3-8-1873; Brandes and Erzinger 1980).

Referees for the partition of the Middletown property were then chosen and the partition began. The first order was for the making of a new map. The referees had previously dismissed Pascoe’s 1869 map as inaccurate in relation to the tidelands and his eastern boundary lines with Horton’s Addition. A new map was requested that would include the partition of the reservation and legal tideland property. Surveyor Jackson completed his map in 1873. He took into consideration the old “New Town” plots along spring (D) Street as well as the fact that the half block in the far southeastern corner of the tract (Union and D) was the site of the new county courthouse. In an effort to avoid confusion with Clayton’s original survey, Jackson started the numbering of the blocks on the southern end of the tract instead of the northern end. Tremain, Barber, Fitzgerald and Murray’s Tracts were assigned letters (A-C) and the half block for the courthouse as Block D. The block just west of the courthouse was designated Number 1. The rest of the reservation was split into 12 lot blocks except for the partial blocks on the eastern boundary, the tideland blocks, and the Bleecker and Gardiner Plots which the city had condemned as a depot site for the Texas and Pacific Railroad (these plots were given back to Bleecker and Gardiner after the T and P’s failure and numbered Blocks 299 and 300). With the completion of the map the various interests were assigned their lots and lots yet to be resold were divided among the ten original owners’ interests. Those blocks often were equally divided with each owner receiving a lot (Tax Books, Block 28 Middletown, 1875-1880). Although there would be several other legal challenges to the Middletown Case and Partition in the 1870s and 1880s, Jackson’s map was accepted as the official map of Middletown (Brandes and Erzinger c.1980).

The area within the current Uptown Study Area remained largely undeveloped prior to the 1880s. The boom of the early 1870s resulted in growth in the present downtown area south of Ash Street. The legal problems with title confirmation of the Middletown Tract retarded development in that area prior to 1873 in spite of the boom resulting from Horton’s development. Judge McKee noted in his 1873 decision that “It does not appear by the evidence taken before me that any of the grantees have taken possession of their blocks or lots and improved any of them” (*San Diego World* 3-8-1873). Some construction did occur in the Middletown Subdivision in the mid 1870s. This was located in the current downtown south of Ash and west of Front Streets, outside the Uptown Study Area.

C. The Boom Years and the End of the Nineteenth Century (1880 - 1900)

1. The City of San Diego (1880-1900)

Following the failure of the Texas and Pacific, San Diego's urban entrepreneurs shifted their efforts to another railroad company. In 1879 they turned their hopes to the Santa Fe Railroad, which was building into California through the Needles crossing. An agreement with the Santa Fe line would be the catalyst to start the community on the road to recovery and growth in the 1880s. National City founder and developer Frank Kimball secured an agreement with the Santa Fe to terminate their new transcontinental line at National City. Part of the agreement called for the construction of the California Southern Railroad from National City and San Diego to San Bernardino where it would connect with the Santa Fe. Construction began in 1880 and the California Southern reached the Southern Pacific's junction at Colton in August 1882. The first trains arrived in San Diego during the fall of 1882. The coming of the railroad instituted a period of steadily increasing growth (Lesley 1945:510-512). From a population of roughly 2,600 in 1880, San Diego grew to an estimated 5,000 by 1885 (Pourade 1964:141).

Development of Southern California during the last half of the 1880s permanently altered the entire region. By the middle of the decade the area had been engulfed in an unprecedented land boom (Lothrop 1993:268; Dumke 1944:137). The Santa Fe initiated a rate war with its competitor the Southern Pacific. It offered to ship freight between Chicago and San Diego at 40 cents per 100 pounds as opposed to Southern Pacific's rate of 42 cents plus litherage fees from Wilmington near Los Angeles (Lothrop 1993:268). The resulting rate war drove fares to an unprecedented low, bringing thousands of passengers to Southern California. Suddenly the growth of San Diego accelerated. In 1886 the city's population jumped from 7,500 to 12,000 resulting in a general construction and real estate boom. During that year 913 buildings were completed (*San Diego Union* 1-1-1887). At the peak of the boom in 1887 train passenger arrivals averaged 5,000 per month and people were sleeping in tents for a dollar a night. During that year the number of newly constructed buildings numbered 1,760 (Dumke 1944:269; Pourade 1964; Van Wormer 1983a; *San Diego Union* 1-1-1888).

Land speculation, however, not construction, provided the real stimulus to the economic boom. In actuality the Southern California boom was a city platting craze resulting from railway competition similar to what had occurred in the Midwest before the Civil War (Dumke 1944:274). Land investment fever had seized Southern California by the spring of 1887. Speculation ran out of control as town sites were subdivided throughout the region (Guinn 1907:282). In a span of 36 miles between Los Angeles and San Bernardino 25 town sites were platted (Lothrop 1993:268). Of these paper towns one contemporary observer noted ". . . it mattered little where the town was located. A tasteful lithographed map with a health-giving sanitarium in one corner, tourist hotel in the other, palms lining the streets, and orange trees in the distance . . . and the town was successfully founded . . ." (Guinn 1907:282). As the boom accelerated and real estate prices skyrocketed, land speculators began to subdivide and market tracts of land throughout San Diego County. Approximately 30 real estate tracts were subdivided in the county between 1886 and 1888 (Dumke 1944:147, 193; Pourade 1964:207).

The population of San Diego rose from the estimated 5,000 in 1885 to over 35,000 at the height of the boom in early 1888 (Smythe 1908:416; Pourade 1964:171-174). The massive and rapid growth of the city required the development of many new improvements. The boom triggered the first utilization of the

watershed of the coastal mountains with the construction of the Cuyamaca Flume. It also brought street paving, electrical street lights and railways, a sewerage system, new schools, churches, business buildings, and hundreds of new residences. It was estimated that over \$10 million in new improvements were constructed during the period (Smythe 1908:413-434).

The boom ended suddenly when the bottom fell out of the real estate market in the spring of 1888, with disastrous consequences for many. Many landowners were left with huge debts and tax assessments they could not repay. Many of the investors and residents of the city and county were ruined by the speculative fever of the boom (Van Dyke 1888; Dumke 1944; Van Wormer 1983). One of the major factors in the bust of the boom in San Diego was linked again to the railroad. Because of repeated washing out of the California Southern lines in Temecula Canyon, the Santa Fe began construction of a coast line from Los Angeles to San Diego. When the line was completed in August 1888, the Santa Fe removed their yards from National City to Los Angeles. After the Temecula Canyon line washed out again in 1891 that route was abandoned, leaving San Diego at the end of a branch line that ran along the coast (Lesley 1945:514-515; McGhee 1950:224-225).

2. Uptown Study Area Development (1880–1900)

a. West Park Neighborhoods

The area west of Balboa Park between Ash and Walnut Street on the north and south and Curtis and Dove Streets on the west was laid out in 1869 as the northern portion of Alonzo Horton's subdivision. During the boom of the 1880s the first residential districts in the southern portion of the Uptown area west of City (Balboa) Park were established. This included the area bounded by Ash to the south, Balboa Park to the east, Walnut to the north and present-day I-5 to the west. Prior to the boom of the late '80s, the only structure standing in this area was the Florence Hotel, located at the corner of Third and Fir. Built in



1883, the Florence was one of the earliest attempts to draw prospective buyers north of Ash Street. While first regarded as being located "in the sticks" when it opened in 1884, it became the showplace of San Diego during the 1880s, attracting many residents to the neighborhood and stimulating real estate development in the surrounding area (Community Plan 1988; Cultural Resource Inventory 1993).

Figure 4: Florence Hotel 1895

The great influx of population saw the boundaries of urban development move north of Ash Street. In 1885 Third, Fourth, Fifth, Date, Cedar, and Elm Streets were graded. Fifth Street was paved as far north as Ivy Street. To accommodate the Florence Hotel, the San Diego Streetcar Company operated horse or mule drawn street cars on tracks up Fifth to Fir. By 1887 The Fourth Streetcar line extended from the

harbor north to its terminus at the proposed college site in University Heights (the present day intersection of Normal Street, Park Boulevard, and El Cajon Boulevard). This allowed low density, linear development to occur as far as two miles from downtown 1880s (Ford 1978). Upper Fifth Street, which was the choice residential section of San Diego, was building up rapidly. Promoters felt that "the time is not far distant that every man that builds a house, from San Diego to University Heights, will have a near neighbor" (*Golden Era*, Nov. 1888). The Fourth Streetcar Line, one of the first electrically-powered streetcar lines in San Diego, had plans which included the extension of the line along present-day El Cajon Boulevard to La Mesa, but the line folded after the real estate boom ended in 1889 (Ford 1978; Cultural Resource Inventory 1993).

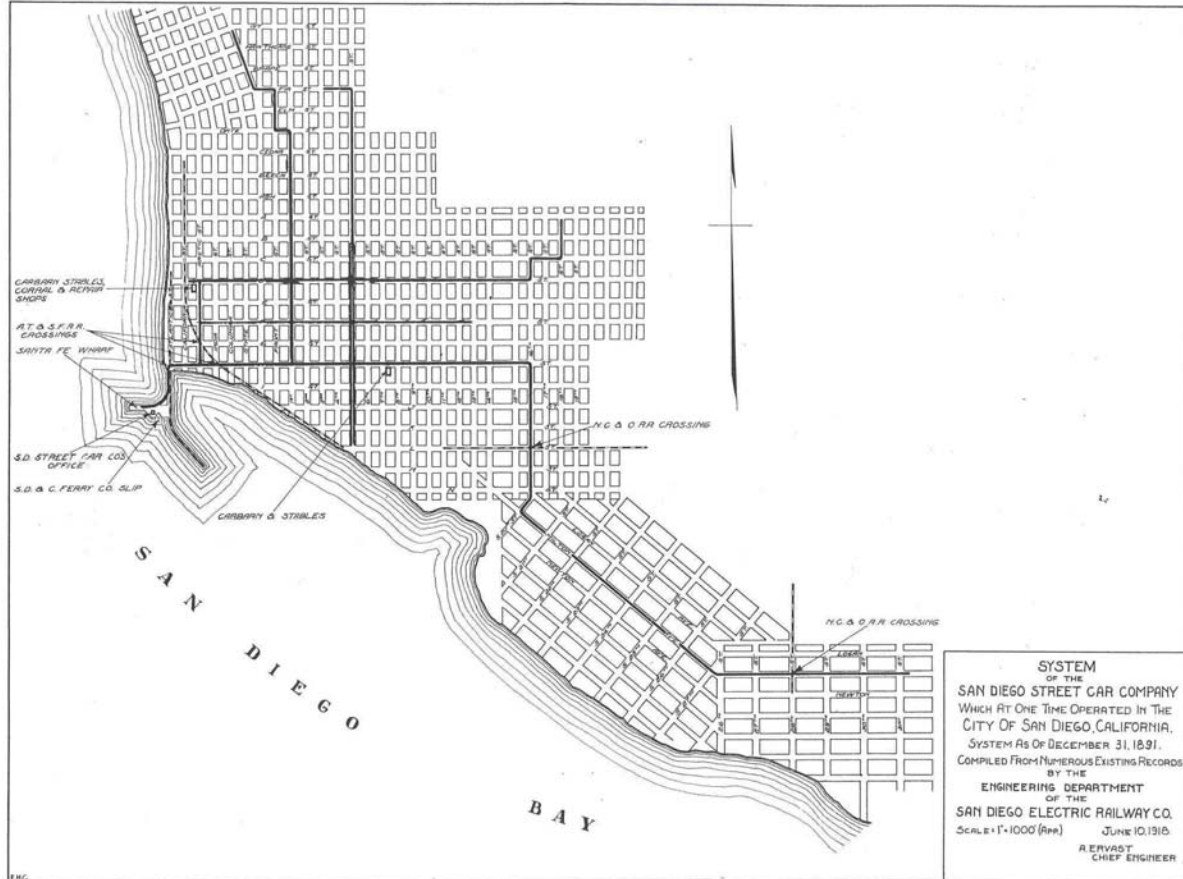


Figure 5: Street Car Map 1891

b. Hillcrest - University Heights

The area north of Walnut Street, which is now encompassed by present-day Hillcrest, was subdivided along trolley lines that were extended north and east of the city to University Heights in the late 1880s. Before 1907 these neighborhoods saw very little development. Major tracts platted during this period included Nutt's Addition (1890), Brook's Addition (1889), and Crittenden's Addition (1887) (Robbins 2003) as well as Fifth Street Addition (1889) (Subdivision Map 577), and Cleveland Heights (1890) (Subdivision Map 621). Construction was sporadic, consisting of a small number of buildings scattered near the trolley route.

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The only other area of any significant development within the Uptown Study Area during the period was the subdivision of University Heights, which saw limited growth at this time. Established during the boom of the late '80s, University Heights came into prominence in 1887 as the site of a future college "to be called the San Diego College of Arts of the University of Southern California." The erection of this building was assured from the fact that the college owned every alternate lot on the tract, "and the money

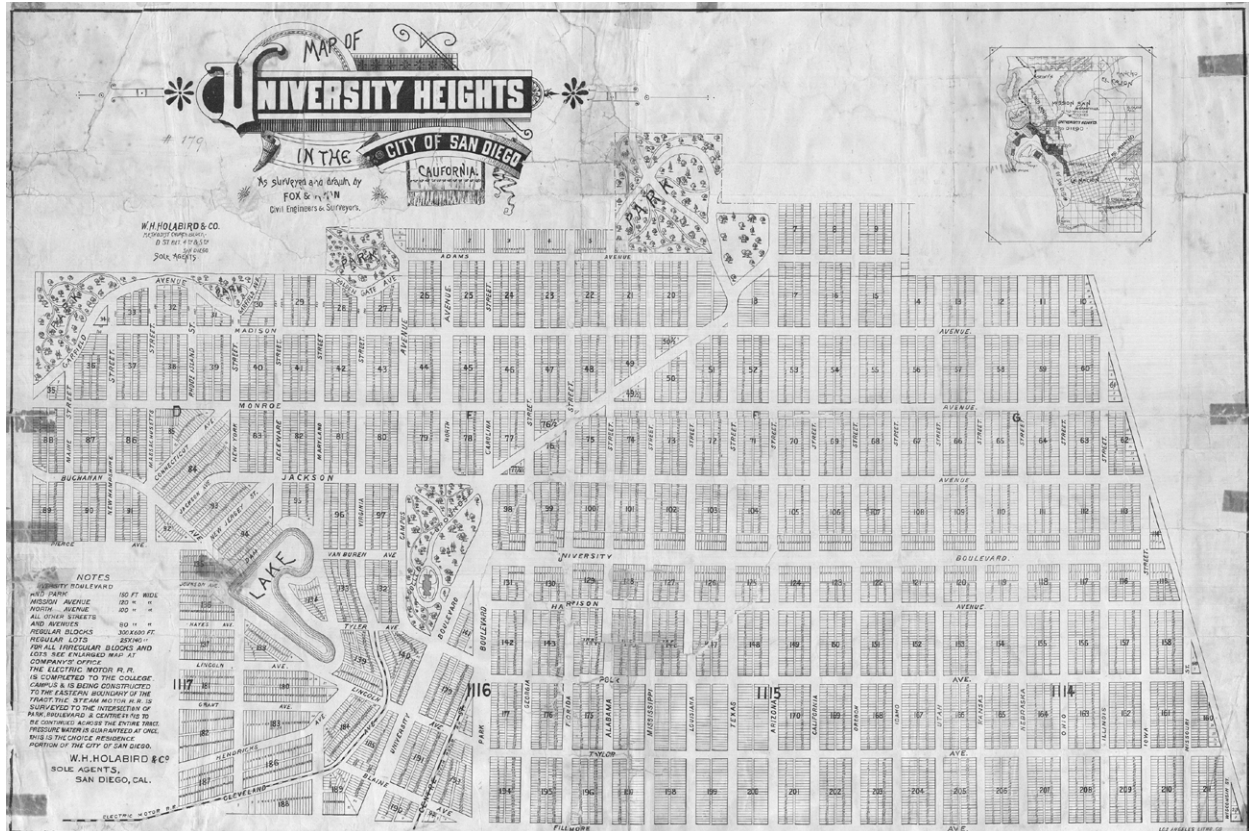


Figure 6: University Heights 1888

and revenues derived there from must be devoted to the erection and endowment of this building." The subdivision could be accessed by rapid transit. "It is a ride of but a few minutes from the post office, either by rapid transit electric road or by the steam motor" (*Golden Era* 1888). The "steam motor" had been built by Elisha Babcock and H.L. Story as a steam powered street car line named the University Heights Motor Road (or Park Belt Line). It traveled through the southeast section of San Diego, up Switzer Canyon through City (later Balboa) park, and onto the University Heights mesa. As already mentioned, the electric motor railway extended up Fourth Street to Normal Street, which it followed to the proposed college campus, at the present intersection of Normal Street, Park Avenue, and El Cajon Boulevard, and then across the new subdivision to the southern edge of Mission Valley (Davidson 1939; Montes 1977). An ad in the *San Diego Union* of November 23, 1888 proclaimed "... the electric Motor is now running half hour trips – Ride out and take a look into the Mission Valley from the bluff three blocks north of campus" (*San Diego Union* 11-23-1888).

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- ◆ City of San Diego, Planning Department, 202 C Street, San Diego, California 92101 ◆
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◆ Walter Enterprises, Stephen Van Wormer, Historian and Susan Walter, Oral Historian,
238 2nd Avenue, Chula Vista, California 91910 ◆

In January 1888, the Joint Committee on Streets and Parks recommended the laying out a boulevard in City Park to connect with University Heights Boulevard. A drive "150 feet wide along the ridge where the road now extends" was proposed. This eventually became Park Boulevard (*Daily San Diegan* 1- 5 -1888). With the collapse of the boom the grandiose plans for University Heights suddenly ceased, as they did for most other boom era subdivisions. The University of Southern California abandoned the campus and it became the site of the State Normal School in 1899. Development remained a liner concentration along the street car lines and near the intersections of Normal Street and Park Boulevard.

c. Middletown

The portion of the Middletown tract within the Uptown Study Area saw little development during this period. Described as a wedge between downtown and Old Town, the portion of the Middletown tract included in this study is bounded by Laurel on the south, Washington on the north, Goldfinch, Reynard Way, Curlew, Dove, and Front Streets on the east and the I-5 freeway on the west. Continued litigation in the 1880s restricted development on some Middletown lots. In April 1887 realtors Howard and Lyons advertised 164 lots, "each 25 by 100 feet in Middletown Addition."

. . . some of the lots in the ravines sheltered from the winds, and warm enough to ripen bananas and pineapples placed at 60 and 75 dollars each. Others on the hillsides and summits whereby you can see bay and city, and the ocean from the Mexican hills to . . . Point Loma to False Bay and beyond . . . are placed at one hundred and twenty five and one hundred and fifty dollars each. It is not possible to make a mistake in purchasing one of these lots. The main pipe of the present water company runs through the tract, and the flume of the new water company must cross the hills above it. We are now cutting a wagon road from the Old Town Road. When the motor road, now projected to Old Town, is built these lots will be within ten minutes ride of the Horton House. These lots will then sell for thousands. . . . (quoted in Brandes and Erzinger 1980).

By 1887 the tracks of the San Diego & Old Town Railway reached from downtown San Diego, up through Middletown to the plaza at Old Town San Diego. In spite of construction of the street car to Old Town, development north of Laurel remained extremely limited in the Middletown Tract prior to the collapse of the boom in 1889. Some industrial use occurred in the area, as exemplified by the Rankin Brickyard, once located at what is now Reynard Way and State Street in 1888 (Bevel 1996).

3. Post Boom 1890s

By the 1890s the city's population had settled to around 17,000. The ending of the boom ushered in a period of slower but steady growth during the next decade for San Diego. Although many residents and speculators had been ruined in the bust period, the nucleus for the development of the modern city had been started. The growth in population also brought about some ethnic diversity in the establishment of small Asian and African-American communities within the city (Liu 1977; Carlton 1977; Lewis 1991). It also triggered the beginnings of suburban growth. Subdivisions such as Golden Hill, Sherman Heights, and Logan Heights, as well as the Banker's Hill area and the University Heights Subdivision within the Uptown Study Area, were all initiated during this period. They represented the start of the coming transformation of the city's residential areas away from the downtown area (Crane 1991; Norris 1983). During the 1890s, then, San Diego continued to take advantage of the climate in the development of the

health and resort industry. Historian Raymond Starr best describes this period as one of "quiet consolidation" of the community's assets as they waited for the next boom that they believed would surely come (Starr 1986).



Figure 7: Timkin House (Courtesy of Ann Weaver)

D. The City Emerges (1901 - 1940)

1. The City of San Diego (1901-1920)

The first decade of the Twentieth Century would see San Diego's third great population boom. In sheer numbers it was the largest permanent gain in the city's history up to that time. From 17,700 residents in 1900, city inhabitants increased to 39,578 by 1910, constituting an increase of 21,878 individuals or 123.6 percent (Census 1913). Unlike the accelerated growth periods of the 1870s and 80s, these flush times did not follow a boom and bust cycle. Beginning in mid-decade increased development continued through the teens and twenties, permanently transforming the city and study area.

Although growth during the 1890s had been extremely unremarkable, showing a net gain of only 1,541 new residents, urban entrepreneurs continued to pursue the dream of a great commercial port (Census 1913). Efforts, now spearheaded by Elisha Babcock in connection with J.D. Spreckles developed infrastructure that would lay the foundation to allow the growth that occurred during the next decade. John D. Spreckles, a wealthy sugar fortune heir, filled the economic vacuum left by the collapse of the 1880s boom and dominated urban entrepreneurship in San Diego during the early Twentieth Century. His effect on San Diego development between 1900 and 1920 was profound. Spreckles' efforts began in the 1890s with development of a water system. In 1895 he formed the Southern California Mountain Water