



The Splash

Spring/Summer 2021

General Meeting:

Virtual Meeting;

June 15, 6:30 PM

Click Eventbrite site to register

Upcoming Events

- General Meeting: June 15 6:30 PM
Amos White from 100K Trees
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/amos-white-presents-100k-trees-tickets-157677215797>
- **Creek Cleanups TBD** Group volunteer activities are not yet cleared through the City of San Leandro

This Issue:

It All Started With...

A History of San Leandro, its Plaza and How it All got Here
Words and illustrations By Lary Huls

Sometimes it's gratifying to know where we've come from — our history. I received this presentation from the Friends' new Board VP, Lary Huls. In his tongue in cheek version of San Leandro history, Lary actually starts *before* the beginning. He includes delightful details that died-in-the-wool San Leandrans will surely recognize. This piece is all about the Plaza in San Leandro, the official center of town. An important detail we will add is that the Plaza in San Leandro is located where it has always been for a very real reason. San Leandro Creek was an important source of water for early residents. And, it has always been a tidal waterway. That means when the tide is up on the Bay, water rises in the creek. Brackish tides historically reached all the way from the Bay to E 14th Street. Trading with small boats could take place four times a day (two in, two out) on that tide, thus making that area a natural center of commerce.

We hope you find Lary's Plaza tutorial informative and entertaining. It should be enjoyed with a full picnic basket.

(Continued in next column)



Before the beginning, there were hot lumps that eventually settled down and were covered with a molten scum of rocks. These insignificant lumps came together to form the first union, our sun, the heating system. And above this glowing gas bag rotated the earth, a cateye among aggies*. Later, when it cooled down during this extinct time, clamosaurs and oysterettes appeared as appetizers. Millions of months and 28 days later these oysterettes migrated on their fake feet to Northern California and settled in. Eventually these split and evolved into grizzly bears and oak trees.

* <http://www.firesigntheatre.com>

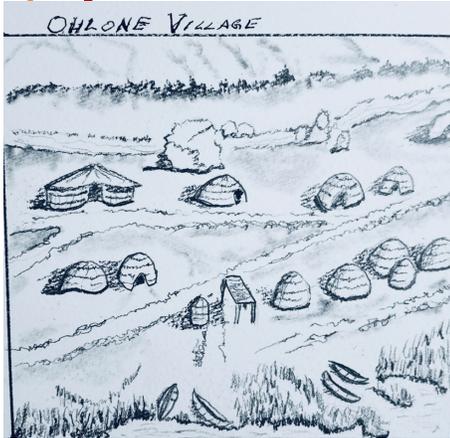
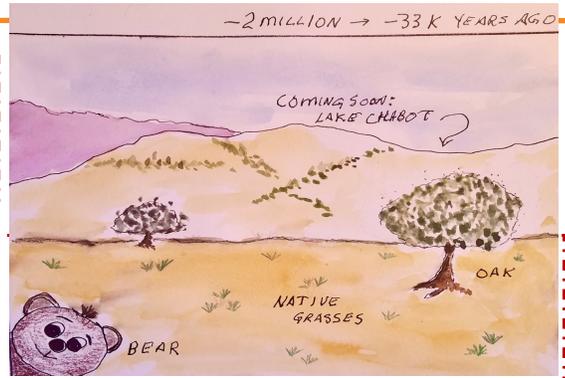
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Officers and Board of Directors:

President Michael Gregory; **Vice President** Lary Huls, **Secretary** Jan Woycheshin, **Treasurer** Carol Bardoff,
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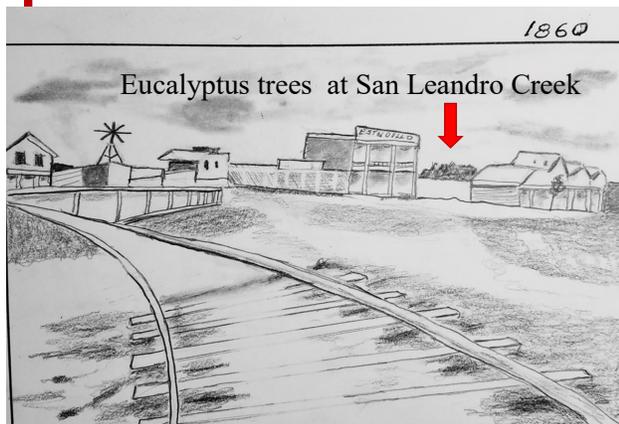
Friends of San Leandro Creek is a 105(c)(3) non-profit organization made up of citizens, students, and businesses dedicated to improving community understanding and awareness of San Leandro Creek and its watershed.

And that was San Leandro for several million more months. And the bears and oaks were happy. Notice, with all those bears, no picnic baskets.

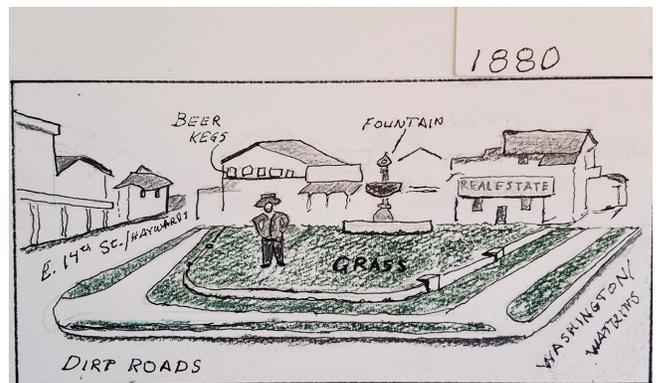


Then some people crossed the bridge and stole the bear's land. Those people that ended up in what came to be known as San Leandro. They called themselves the Lisjan Ohlone. Still no picnic baskets because the bears were still around. Tules were everywhere. Every part of the tule was used for houses, lodges, boats, decoys and ramadas. The Lisjan didn't passively pluck the tule, they actually farmed and cultivated them to get the best yield.

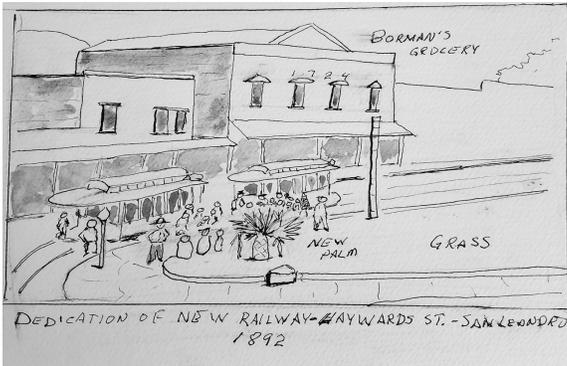
In 1820, after time was invented, the Mexican army came through and stole the land from the Lisjan and, by 1842, had divided up the land into two huge land grants. The area from San Lorenzo creek to San Leandro Creek was essentially granted to Joaquin Estudillo. While Estudillo was working his way through the Land Grant process, people took advantage of the confusion, moved in and stole parts of his land. There were so many of these folks that the area became known as Squatterville. One such squatter was Mulford who started oyster farming. Ultimately Juana (Senora Estudillo) gave 200 acres to become a town. Buildings soon started being built around what became the San Leandro Plaza.



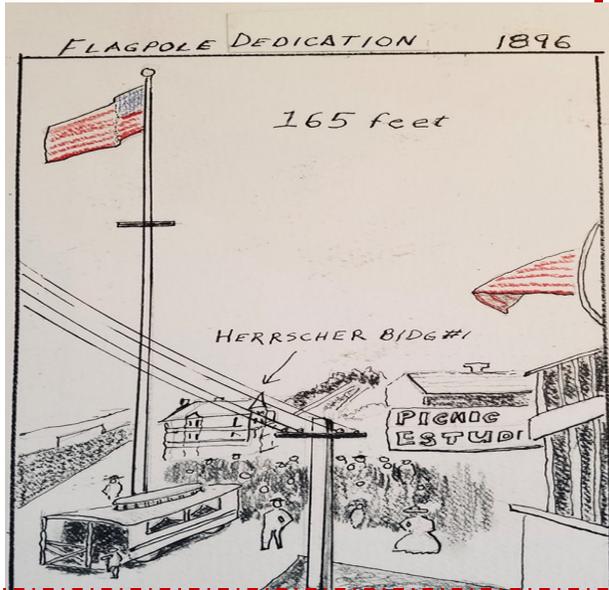
1860 Estudillo House Tracks turn and go down Ward/Estudillo to the Bay.



1880 Sidewalk here is probably made from oyster shells! Curb and short retaining wall however are concrete. People used concrete, as far back as the Roman Empire—by adding lime to gravel, sand or clay. This required lime from a natural product the Ohlone thoughtfully left all over the place, and Mr. Mulford was harvesting by the bushel: Oyster shells. Note no Herrscher building yet, but someone is selling land; and there is a tavern, storing beer kegs on the sidewalk awning. 1st sign of fountain.



1892 The dedication of the new train going down Haywards St. (later E 14th St.) This shows what a civic gathering place the Plaza became. July 4 celebrations, the original Cherry Festival took place here. Note newly planted palms. There was one in each corner.



1896 Herrscher building - a very fancy Queen Anne style building. Note picnics are all over so bears have been displaced. Train is sitting at odd angle, off any available track, (see train curtains), flagpole platform. Later site of rescue when a man doing work up there fell off and dangled until somebody climbed up and rescued him.



Ca: 1914

1914 Mixed vehicles; wide sidewalk still appear to be crushed oyster shells.

1930's Note half grown palms in background; at 4, 7 and 11 o'clock.



Herrscher Bldg., #2

First Palm

1930's



Eucalyptus trees at San Leandro Creek

1940-1945

1940-45

Note Safeway (9 o'clock); today it is about 100 yards to the south. Also note Chop Suey house at 3 o'clock. Some original Chinese presence remained (after building the dam at Lake Chabot).

(Continued on pg. 4

1968

All soul goes out of the plaza. Primarily a place for cars to park. No seating, everything reduced to squares boxing in the trees, which have no reason to be there. Sometime in the next few years, the plaza is torn out and replaced in its current configuration.

Note trees in background where creek is located. Today they are about 150 years old. Unfortunately they are eucalyptus, still grand old trees at about 5 feet in diameter.

Eucalyptus trees at San Leandro Creek

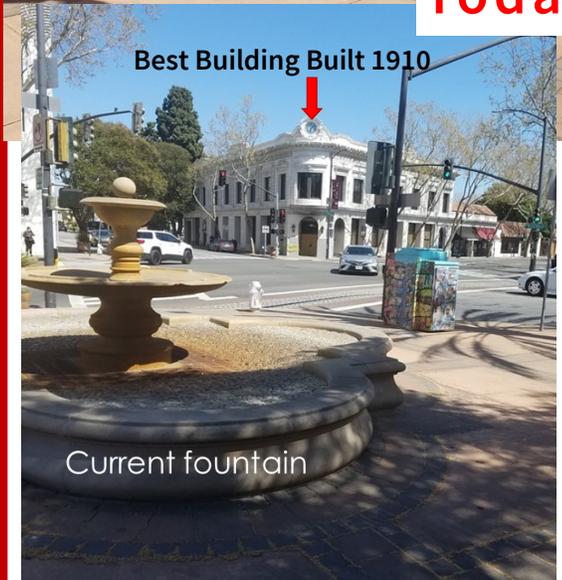


Sizzler is the site of the old Estudillo House. At least there are some tables and chairs there. And a native oak. Ironically, palms have been brought back, but they have no relation to the oak and really look like a misguided patch job.

Today



Best Building Built 1910



Current fountain

Fountain has been a continuous feature almost from the beginning, although it has moved. It is now about 15 feet from its original site.

Old and new together. Best, the founder of what became Caterpillar tractor, built this building to be a bank.

All is not lost: The Best Building & the roving fountain.

Pave way for: The current Plaza, parking!

Lost art: The Bears, the Lijan, Estudillo House and the Herrscher buildings. And of course the charming Plaza itself.

True blue: The celebrated sunny skies of San Leandro.

Beg, borrow, steal: The palms and the land itself.

Just deserts: Picnic baskets are now safe!

Lary
2021

**We're on the web:
www.fslc.org**



The San Leandro Creek Watershed Awareness Program is a comprehensive watershed education program funded by Alameda County Flood Control and Conservation District, with additional support from the City of San Leandro, implemented by Friends of San Leandro Creek. Thank you to the following for your continued support: Alameda County Public Works, The City of San Leandro, The Watershed Project, and FSLC Members and Volunteers like you.

Have you Paid your 2021 Renewal Fee? It's so easy (& cheap!!)

Friends of San Leandro Creek Membership Application

Make checks and please remit to:

Yes, I would like to become a member/renew my membership in the following category: (Please circle one)

Friends of San Leandro Creek
C/O RHSD
835 E. 14th St.
San Leandro, CA 94577

- Student \$ 1 Individual \$5 Family \$15
- Non-Profit \$25 Business \$100

Friends of San Leandro Creek is a 501(c)(3) not for profit corporation. Your donations are tax deductible

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Or, click here to pay on-line: <http://fslc.org/membership/> for a paper-free membership!

Special Thanks to our Up-To-Date 2021 Members:



- Liam Gaudy
- Virginia MengeFirby & Family
- Maureen Forney & Great Old Broads for Wilderness
- Darlene Ceremello & Family

- Kelly Havens & Family
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Only Rain Down The Storm Drain!