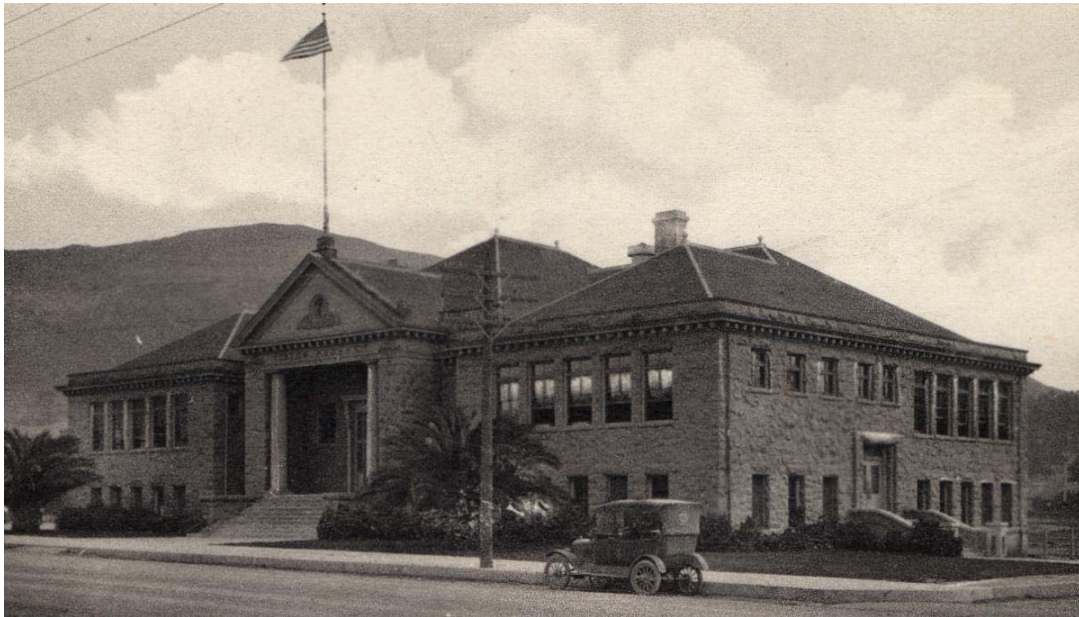




HISTORY CENTER

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Rock Solid Buildings



San Luis Obispo's original Senior High School

The Four Buildings of Stone from Bishop Peak

In the early 1900s, San Luis Obispo quarried rock on the south west side of Bishop Peak to build four buildings in the city. There were also a few curbs and terraces made of the rock and a long, high retaining wall in front of what was once Judge Tom Norton's home on the corner of Buchon and Chorro Streets. The wall attains a great height as it runs along the property on Chorro Street.

[CLICK HERE FOR A STREET VIEW OF THE RETAINING WALL](#)

One of the buildings is already gone but there are three remaining. With proper respect, let us speak of the deceased first.

In 1907, a handsome Senior High School, of dacite porphyry, for so the rock is called, was built on Marsh Street between Toro and Essex (now Johnson). It cost \$23,792.50. In 1929, this became the Junior High School and a series of wooden additions was made at this time. In

1954, the square of ground, with the buildings on it, was sold to the Safeway Store for \$212,000. So the building was razed with great effort with a huge swinging wrecking ball. One wonders what happened to the stone blocks. [ed. note: Today, this is the site of the shopping center featuring Smart & Final, Rite Aid, Pancho's, and Yanagi, among other businesses. There are some accounts that the wrecking ball bounced right off, and they had to use dynamite.]



The Carnegie Library was erected in 1904. The lower portion of the building is of the dacite porphyry from Bishop Peak. The upper part is of brick with yellow sandstone trim called Caen Stone quarried in the Los Berros area of South County. Andrew Carnegie gave \$10,000 to build the library, but only \$9,750 was used. The library moved out in 1955 because it had outgrown the building and the History Center of San Luis Obispo County has occupied the building since 1956.

A third building is the Presbyterian Church on Marsh and Morro Streets. Built in 1905, its style is handsome and dignified. It is the way you think a church should look. It is partially covered with Virginia creeper, and is a beloved landmark in the city.

[CLICK HERE FOR A STREET VIEW OF THE CHURCH](#)

Then there was one house built of the stone in 1907. It is at 1318 Chorro Street. It is in simple California bungalow style. Dr. D.B. Mazza, early San Luis Obispo veterinarian, was the builder.

[CLICK HERE FOR A STREET VIEW OF THE HOUSE](#)

Written by Louisiana Clayton Dart in 1978

Remembering Anita Garcia

Longtime History Center friend and volunteer Anita Garcia recently passed at the age of 109. Pete Kelley, author and historian, chair of our Exhibits Committee, and good friend of Anita's, wrote this biography of her remarkable life:

On May 1st, 1910, at the Arroyo Grande spa, Newsome Hot Springs, Anita was born. Her maiden name was Jones and her parents had a ranch in Huasna. Anita was the great -granddaughter of Francis Ziba Branch, the founder of Arroyo Grande. Her parents moved into town so that she could walk to kindergarten.

As a child in Arroyo Grande, Anita took piano lessons at Halcyon. She told me that hopping on her bike to pedal to her lessons, her mother would warn her saying "Watch out for those Dunites".

After high school Anita attended Santa Maria Junior College now called Hancock college. She won a scholarship to Oakland's Mills College.

In 1934 she married Lorenz Richardson and had two daughters, Sharon and Carol.

She loved to square dance. That is where after being widowed for many years she met, and married Ernest Garcia.

Anita was very active in both the County History Center and the South County Historical society. Garcia was a long time docent, on the Board of Directors and program committee chair person at the History Center. She was active with the Camp Fire Girls and the Monday Club. Anita became very active as a BlueBird and CampFire leader with her girls. In 1951 she became the Executive Director of the Camp Fire Girls and was Director at Camp Natoma for at least 10 years. She finally retired mid '70's.

At the age of 100, Anita left San Luis, moved to Minden, Nevada, to be with her older daughter. Her last few years were in a care home in Santa Rosa, near Carol.

When she was asked what was the secret of her longevity she replied "good genes and daily dark chocolate"

Anita passed two months short of her 110th Birthday. She was buried in the family plot in Halcyon on March 3rd. A celebration of her life is being planned for summer.

Looking for more to do?

- Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#). In addition to our regular Theme Monday and Throwback Thursday posts, we'll now be posting every weekday with photos from our collection that will inspire activities you can try in your very own homes.
- Take a [virtual walking tour](#) of historic San Luis Obispo. These video series feature short vignettes about significant local landmarks.

If you have any ideas of content you'd like to see, share it with us! And if you enjoy what we share with you, and if you are able to, would you please consider [supporting us](#)?

Thank you for being a part of our community. Everybody stay healthy and safe.

Sincerely,



Thomas Kessler
Executive Director

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