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THE EL CAJON STORY — — —

Valley History Began In The Past 2,000,000 Years

Compilation of historical facts concerning El Cajon Valley have been undertaken spasmodically over a period of years, but no complete history of this area has been printed.

The publishers of the El Cajon Valley News learned that W. S. Head, free lance writer of El Cajon had gathered many historical facts over a period of years and engaged his services for a series of articles dealing with this history.

This article is the first in a series of 52 which will appear in the El Cajon Valley News each week. It is hoped that from time to time subscribers will add to the store of information and at the end of the series all the facts can be bound into a full volume which will bring up to date the interesting history of El Cajon Valley.

No history of a particular area may be complete without a few words being said about how it came to be.

On the other hand, unless one is extremely interested in the science, study and the theory of geology, geological history can be a most boring subject. However bear with us for a few moments, and let us have a glimpse at what has taken place in these past two million years here in El Cajon Valley.

According to geologists, Southern California, and so far as that goes, the entire Pacific Slope is a relatively young country. So young in fact, that this land about us is still undergoing a number of geological changes. An example of the type of changes is the fact that Terminal Island, near San Pedro, is slowly sinking into the sea.

But back to the Valley. Let us imagine the waters of the peaceful Pacific Ocean lapping at a shore line about on a level with the community of Alpine. Next, let us stand on that beach and look out towards the open sea. There we would have observed several off shore islands. We may even go about further and identify these islands by their modern names—Don Miguel Island—Black Island—Cowles Island—Helix Island. Yes, every one mountain we know today!

That, perhaps was the begin-

ning. It was a new land rising out of the sea. Volcanic action rumbled deep within the heart of the 'Lagunas'. Generated pressures of volcanic gases pushed upwards, and along with this stupendous upheaval was formed this portion of Southern California.

But the Creator was not satisfied. The action of the sea and those volcanic pressures, permitted the entire land to sink back into the ocean waters. It is here, that geologists seem to vary in their reading of the records in rocks and formations. Some are of the opinion that this country raised and lowered four times, while the other school of thought is just as firm in the belief that the event occurred only twice.

But, regardless, with each upheaval our valley took on a new look. In periods of, say 100,000 years apart, the valley and mountains rose and sank. It is even thought that during one of these sinkings, the mighty Colorado River may have flowed over this entire area. Huge granite boulders were wrenched from their lodgings in Utah, Nevada, and Colorado and carried down stream to finally settle on the floor of the valley. Many of these boulders are still in place today.

When, finally, these mighty upheavals had subdivided, and the sea had found its place along the present shore line — when the

mountains had adjusted themselves to their present heights and shape, El Cajon Valley was left as a huge land locked salt water lagoon, ranging in depths from 30 to 75 feet deep.

As these 100,000 year periods slipped by, rains washed down from the surrounding mountains and hills bringing with them eroded particles which eventually became the beginning of the food soil we know today. These flooding rains dumped themselves into this land locked lagoon, until they reached the brink of a natural dam caused by Cowles Mountain. Gradually this water worked itself over a spillway.

Through the many centuries which followed, the valley drained its entire contents through this opening. The tremendous volume of water cut relentlessly into the earth and carved what we know today as Mission Gorge. Thus was formed the opening to the sea for the bed of the San Diego River.

For an accountable number of centuries, El Cajon Valley basked in the sun. The processes of time converted the valley floor into a fertile and productive supply of rich soil.

Thus, are satisfactorily recorded these strange facts in the formation of rocks and sands. Geologists have definitely identified all these indications. On the west wall of the Valley are six sea terraces (beaches) from the 440 foot level above sea level up to 800 feet. Samples from wells dug throughout the entire valley in nearly every case has produced layers of alluvium (a type of geological substance which indicates a once existant sea bottom.)

Strange are these facts, but so far as we know, they are true. To have been able to see these phenomena or creation may have shown much more than we have said here, but the next time you look down on this great valley of ours from a height of the surrounding hills, close your eyes for just a moment and have a look in your imagination, at 2,000,000 years ago!