

Brief History of El Cajon

Although the history of El Cajon can be traced back to the days of the dinosaur, the modern history begins circa 1869 with Issac Lankershiem when he purchased the roughly 47,000-acre Rancho El Cajon from Miguel Pedorena. He had received the property in payment of a debt owed him by the Mexican government.

Mr. Lankershiem hired Amiaziah Knox as an overseer for this large parcel of land. In 1870 things in the valley started to change when gold was discovered in Julian. Mr. Knox started to notice people that were headed to Julian to seek their fortune were stopping and camping at what is now the corner of Main and Magnolia. It is presumed that this may have been the driving force in Mr. Knox building a hotel in that area in 1876. This building was the first commercial building in El Cajon which at that time began to be known as Knox Corner's. More growth occurred with the arrival of the railroad in the 1870's.

By 1886 there was approximately 12 families in El Cajon and by 1900 the population was 563 and by 1912 El Cajon became a city and soon James A Harris became the first mayor.

Major growth occurred after World War 2 when military personnel decided to settle in El Cajon rather than returning to where they came from before their service in the war. El Cajon continued to grow into one of the larger cities in San Diego County that it is today.