

Life in the 1910's

Industry

Established as an industrial suburb to San Francisco in the 1890's, South San Francisco continued to grow during the decade from 1910-20.

A new rice milling and storage facility was established near the meat packing plants on East Grand Avenue. Fuller Paint Co. continued production out on Point San Bruno, and new chemical plants joined the industrial mix:

- Presto Lite, a bottled gas company (1913)
- American Barium Co. (1916)
- Carson Chemical Co. (1916)
- Amalgamated Paint Co. (1917)
- Catalytic Chemical Co. (1919)

1906 Earthquake

As San Francisco rebuilt after the 1906 earthquake, Steiger Terra Cotta fabricated tile building exteriors that resembled carved stone. Many of these facades can still be seen on financial district buildings constructed during that time. The Panama Pacific Exposition of 1915 was a grand celebration of that recovery.

Immigration

American Marble and Mosaic (1913-43) imported many skilled marble workers for the quarries of Carrara, Italy. These workers joined the growing community of unskilled Italian, French, Portuguese, and Greek workers that had recently come to work in the steel and meat-packing plants.

Steel

Steel foundries and metal production industries were built near the new train yards and Bayshore Blvd (later Airport Blvd.). Pacific Coast Steel (later Bethlehem Steel) came in 1910, Shaw Batcher Steel (later United States Steel) begun in 1913, and Enterprise Foundry arrived in 1914. Steel production companies included Doak Sheet Metal (1910), Meese and Gottfried Co., makers of elevating and conveying machines (1911), Pacific Car and Equipment, manufacturing train carriages (1911-28), California Curb Bar Co. (1916), American Corrugated Culvert Co.(1916-18), California Iron Works, a scrap yard (1917-29), and Edwards Wire Rope Co. (1916-81). This last company would later provide the cables for the Golden Gate Bridge.

Body, Spirit & Mind

Grand Avenue saw the building of a new South San Francisco Hospital (at Spruce Ave.) 1915, Andrew

Carnegie funded the Grand Avenue Library in 1916, and nearby All Souls Catholic Church was built in 1917. The first graduating class of 1917 (three members) celebrated at the South San Francisco High School on Spruce Avenue.

Spanish Flu

The Flu epidemic of 1918 saw the closing of all schools. The new high school was set up as a soup kitchen, and Principal Mr. Britton brought food to stricken families. Everyone wore masks when outside and heavy veils were worn by women to hide them.

Military

About twenty local boys were sent to fight in World War I, but none saw action. They all participated in the first Armistice Day celebration at the newly-finished City Hall on November 11, 1920.