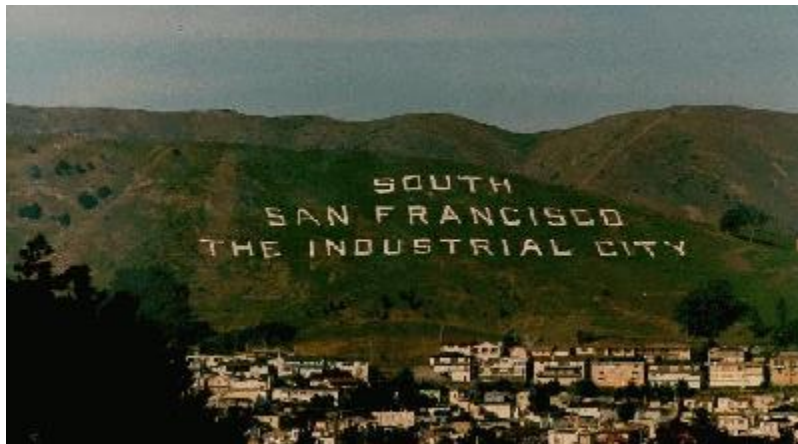


Sign Hill

In 1923, the South San Francisco Chamber of Commerce published articles in the town's newspaper, the Enterprise, promoting the community and its businesses. One of the slogans was: "Think well of your town, speak well of it, remember you live here. Buy here. Keep your tax dollars at home." As a temporary publicity gimmick, the Chamber painted the words "South San Francisco, The Industrial City" in powdered lime on Sign Hill. In 1928, a \$5,000 bond measure was approved to put the 60 foot letters in cement.

Permanent Sign

In April 1929 the Cement Gun Construction Company of South San Francisco made the letters permanent at a cost of \$4,845 after the voters approved (by a margin of 3 to 1) a 7 cents city tax for this purpose. The Chamber felt the sign was the best advertising the city could have and in 1996, through the efforts of Edna Harks, town historian and archivist, Sign Hill was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of the Office of Historic Preservation.



Electric Sign

In 1932, the hill was decked out with another high-visibility project -- at the time the largest electric sign in the world. About 388 feet long, with thousands of lights, it was mounted on piers at the top of the hill. Fourteen messages, 15 seconds each, flashed such slogans as "Drink Acme Beer," "Buy Bakery Goods," "Maxwell House Coffee, Good to the Last Drop" and "White King" (a laundry detergent) "Washes Everything." This less historic sign was destroyed by heavy winds in 1940s.

Traditions

Generations of residents and visitors have climbed Sign Hill, which rises before San Bruno Mountain, for the joy of sliding down the giant letters on a sheet of cardboard.

Football

A discontinued tradition involved painting the "c"s on the sign blue and the "s"s red in significance of the annual "Big Game" played by Stanford University and the University of California, Berkeley. However, a new tradition has replaced it. Every year the football teams of the two high schools located in South San Francisco, El Camino High School and South San Francisco High School, compete in the "Bell Game," the last football game of the regular season for both teams. It is said that students from South City paint the "SC" in blue before the start of the Bell Game and students from El Camino paint the "EC" red.

Electric Pole

On the top of Sign Hill, a tall pole with electric lights serves as an electric Christmas tree, which is typically lit from the day after Thanksgiving until January 6. The "tree" is visible for many miles at night. In 2008, that same electric pole was modified to hold a vertical number 100 to celebrate South San Francisco's 100th year as an incorporated city.