

## A Short History of Hayward

Long before the incorporation of Hayward, the Ohlone Indians occupied the area for some 3,000 years. They lived in the hills in cone-shaped huts made of straw and mud, and hunted their meals along the shoreline. Life for the Ohlones was disrupted by the arrival of the Spanish intent on colonizing

California. In 1535, Spain established a colonial government in Mexico, which encompassed much of what is now the western United States. Late in the 1500s

and early 1600s, the Spanish explored the coast of California, hoping to find safe harbor for ships on their way to trade with China. It was not until the 1760s, when Father Junipero Serra set out to found missions along the coast of California from San Diego to San Francisco, that California was truly colonized.

The goal of the Spanish was to advance and colonize the frontier of California using the mission system. By establishing missions along the California coast, they hoped to make the California Indians into good citizens of Spain through conversion to Christianity. In 1797, Mission San Jose was founded, and included land that covers what is now the Hayward area. Ohlone throughout the Hayward area went to Mission San Jose where the padres forced them to adopt Western religion and language. The Ohlone were encouraged to intermarry with the Spanish settlers, and help farm the land surrounding the missions. During the mission era, the population of Ohlone plummeted from lack of immunity to diseases brought by the Spanish.



**Don Guillermo Castro**

After more than two decades of struggle, Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821. At this time, the thousands of acres of land that had belonged to the missions was confiscated by the new Mexican government and redistributed. As a reward for their loyalty, Mexican Governor Michaeltooreño awarded generous land grants to men who had served in the military. In 1841 and 1843, Don Guillermo Castro received a land grant of 27,000 acres that he called Rancho San Lorenzo, which covers the area that is now eastern Hayward and Castro Valley. His sister Barbara Soto and her husband received an adjoining grant for less land, which covers the area that is now western Hayward and San Lorenzo. Castro ran his ranch from his adobe home located approximately where historic Hayward City Hall is today on Mission Boulevard.

The U.S. and Mexico went to war in 1846 over territories in the West, including California. The expansionist federal government under President Polk had been disputing with Mexico for years over control of this land. For over a year, American and Mexican troops fought skirmishes throughout the west. The war officially ended, with the U.S. as victors, in February 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. California was officially part of the United States.



**Downtown Hayward looking south, c. 1870. Hayward's Hotel to the left.**

### ***A Community Grows***

Just days before the signing of the Treaty gold was discovered in the Sierra foothills. In the following years an explosion of people came to California from all over the world hoping to strike it rich. But hitting the “mother lode” was more difficult than it appeared and some unsuccessful miners gave up mining and turned their attention to the vast open land available in California. As they traveled back toward San Francisco, the jumping off point for all miners, many men found pieces of land they thought were available for settling. They squatted on the land, which was actually owned by Mexican ranchers, instead of returning home. One of these men was William Hayward, a New Englander who had traveled through Panama to San Francisco at the peak of the Gold Rush. He was unsuccessful in mining gold so he returned to the Bay Area where he squatted on Castro’s land near Palomares Canyon. Castro asked Hayward to move, but the two men got along very well and Castro needed money so he sold Hayward a parcel of land closer to Castro’s adobe.

Hayward set up a small store near what is now Mission Boulevard and A Street. This thoroughfare was well traveled by people from growing communities in the southern portion of the Bay to those in the north. Hayward’s business grew, as did the little town that sprouted up around it. Don Castro sold more and more of his land to pay off gambling debts and eventually left the area entirely. Hayward soon built a hotel on his land that eventually totaled 100 rooms and accommodated many people. Travel through Hayward increased as railroads connected Oakland and Hayward. The town gained popularity and became known as a resort destination.

In 1856, President Buchanan appointed Hayward as the town’s first postmaster and the hotel served as the first post office. Because of this, the fast growing community was nicknamed “Haywards” and soon a petition went to Washington, D.C. asking that the community be called Hayward. The United States Postal Department regulations did not allow the naming of a post office after a living person, so the town became “Haywood” for a while. The California Legislature chartered the town in 1876, which officially incorporated the city as Haywards. The city’s name changed once again in 1911 when the “s” was dropped and the town was officially called “Hayward.”



**Hayward’s Hotel, c. 1880.**

Business boomed in Hayward. Even though the town was growing, most people lived in the outlying farmland area. Hayward’s mild Mediterranean climate provided farmers the perfect environment to successfully grow fruits and vegetables. This area became particularly known for cherries and tomatoes. Agriculture flourished as landings, such as Robert’s Landing, along the shoreline made it possible for farmers to ship fresh vegetables to San Francisco and beyond.

The building boom suffered a small setback when the Hayward fault erupted on October 21, 1868. Buildings and homes crumbled and fell and the damage from the massive earthquake virtually wiped out the local railroads. But the growing community of Hayward survived with no fatalities and a strong will to rebuild.

### ***Rebuilding Hayward***

With the 1868 earthquake fresh on their minds, the citizens of Hayward learned that with progress comes disaster. Wooden buildings could easily catch fire and lay waste to the developing town, though no fires

had resulted from the earthquake. Hayward Fire Association #1 had been organized in 1865 to protect Hayward from fire with buckets of water. The original fire crew was composed of just nine men who volunteered for part time duties. In 1875, during the rebuilding of Hayward, the city opened its official fire department, which had hand-pumped hoses to put out fires.



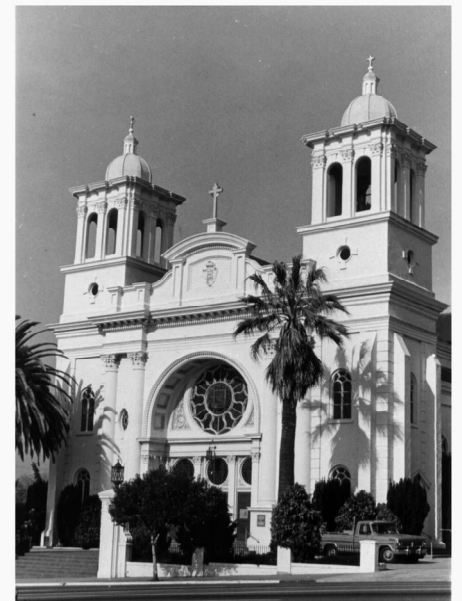
**Oakes Hotel on Castro Street, now Mission Boulevard, c. 1880.**

After recovering from the earthquake, Hayward as a resort was on the rise again. More hotels opened up in the area and Hayward's Hotel was still in prosperous operation. In 1878, William built an annex across the street that provided 20 extra rooms, a billiards hall, and bowling alley. Anthony "Tony" Oakes took over operations of another downtown hotel and renamed it the Oakes Hotel (later known as the Villa Hotel). The Oakes was the prime competitor of Hayward's Hotel. It was known as the cultural center of town because of the entertainment connections that Tony had made through his experience in hotel service. Every night, Tony led a sing-a-long and later encouraged his guests to

perform. Starting in 1870, the Oakes Hotel also became a winter home to various traveling circuses, including Montgomery Queen's Circus and Menagerie. Pens and sawdust rings were built out back to house the animals, and tourists might encounter any number of acrobats, side show freaks, and fire-eaters.

Religious and social organizations developed in Hayward at this time. Eden Congregational Church was founded in 1865 and All Saints Church was founded in 1868. Trinity Episcopal Church began services in 1886. In 1895, the Presbyterian Church of Hayward opened its doors. Fraternal groups and community service groups, such as the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF), Rotary, Lions, and the Kiwanis, began serving the growing town as well. All these organizations, many of whom still exist, were devoted to improving the quality of life in the community and beyond. Other groups were devoted to assisting immigrants coming to Hayward from mainly European countries. They helped to provide job opportunities, community information, and a sense of security in their new world.

Technology took a step forward between the 1860s and the 1880s. In the late 1860s, the area's largest landowner, William Meek, built a dam on the San Lorenzo Creek and then formed the San Lorenzo Water Company in 1869, which used wooden tanks to store water. The water company went on to lay the first main pipelines for water in the area. In 1883, the first telephone service was installed. It replaced the dispatcher and delivered messages more clearly and easily. Just two years later in 1885, gas lighting lit up the main streets of Hayward.



**All Saint's Catholic Church**

A formal public education system took root in 1876 when Laurel Grammar School (also known as Hayward Grammar School and Markham School) was built. Poet Edwin Markham, who is known for his famous poem, "The Man with the Hoe," was the principal from 1889-1890. As Hayward's population grew, so did the school system. The first high school, Union High School #3 opened in 1893. It served

students from Hayward, Castro Valley, San Lorenzo, Redwood, Palomares, and Stonybrook. In 1913, a new building opened on Foothill Blvd and was renamed Hayward Union High School. Its architecture

featured classical Greek Ionic columns, low-pitched roofs, and friezes of Greek gods. It was voted one of the most beautiful high schools in the country.



Salt marshes, c. 1890.

Around this time, the Hayward shoreline was the site of another highly successful industry: salt harvesting. Hayward was a prime location for salt production due to the shallow shoreline and salty bay. It also played a significant role in changing the salt industry when the Oliver Salt Company

discovered a way to dry and grind salt at its source, which began major solar salt harvesting in the 1890s. Salt production turned the Hayward and Mt. Eden area salt marshes into some

of the most productive salt fields in the world, totaling 17 companies, harvesting 17,000 tons of salt per year.

In 1895, Hunt's Cannery moved from Santa Rosa to Hayward in order to increase operation size and be closer to the fields that grew the produce they canned. The new plant opened on lower B Street, near the train tracks to facilitate ease of shipment. The plant offered its workers decent wages, a place to stay, and education for their children. For almost a century, Hunt's Cannery was Hayward's leading industry.



Hunt's Cannery workers. c. 1940

### ***Expansion and a New Century***

The rural town would soon give way to the modern world. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century dawned, electric generators and steam machines were installed in Hayward to produce abundant amounts of electricity. An electric trolley was built in 1892 connecting Hayward and Oakland, providing another way for people to get to Hayward for business or pleasure.

Also in 1892 a bond issue provided \$300,000 for the construction of a main sewer line from downtown Hayward to the shoreline in an effort to reduce cholera cases. Pure water and better sanitation conditions helped improve health and longevity of the people in Hayward. At this time, the Knox Water Works installed fire hydrants and built storage sites for trash on hills around Hayward. Better living conditions naturally attract more people.

With the help of the Ladies' Improvement Club, the Carnegie Library was built at B Street



Electric train arrives in Hayward. c. 1895.



and Foothill Boulevard in April 1906. Like for many other towns, the Andrew Carnegie Fund donated \$10,000 towards the construction of Hayward's library, but this sum was also supplemented by other private funds. The two-story building had a Spanish influence in architecture. First head librarian Elizabeth Prowse served the first six months without pay in order to help establish the library. Construction of "The Strip" on Foothill Boulevard forced the library to relocate in late 1948, to its current site on Plaza Square.



**Carnegie Library, April 1906.**

In 1923, the Hayward Hotel, which had helped put Hayward on the map, burned down. By this time, Hayward's reputation as a rural resort town had diminished along with the deteriorated hotels. However, in 1926, The Green Shutter Hotel, which still stands on Main Street between B and C Streets, was built. It was originally an extension of a building built in 1909. Upon inheriting the property from their father, brothers Herman and Henry Eggert decided to build an apartment building by extending the existing building. They were convinced by town leaders that a nice hotel was needed in downtown Hayward, so they changed their plans. The hotel had 55 rooms, several offices upstairs, and stores downstairs. The Green Shutter would be an anchor for downtown development for years to come.

In 1931, Hayward's first permanent city hall opened. The \$100,000 structure, which would cost roughly \$1.2 million dollars today, housed all the city's departments in one convenient location. City Hall was designed by Hayward's own architectural master, E.P. Whitman. Built at the former site of Castro's hacienda, the building was a marvel, but the land was not. City Hall had been built on top of the Hayward fault. In order to avoid an earthquake induced disaster and because city operations had outgrown the space, City Hall moved to a new high rise building on Foothill Boulevard on the former site of Hayward Union High School in the 1970s. A new modern City Hall was built on Watkins Street in 1999 to better withstand earthquakes.



**Historic City Hall on Mission Boulevard, c. 1940.**

The Great Depression of the 1930s slowed Hayward's growth, but government projects helped Hayward's working class by providing much needed jobs and facilitating new developments. The Hayward Plunge is an example of a New Deal era Works Progress Administration project. Funded by a \$26,000 bond and a \$26,000 grant, the Plunge opened in 1936.

During World War II, Hayward pitched in with the rest of the country. Lots of Hayward area boys went off to fight the war and those left behind helped however they could. Women, children, and older men took over jobs such as mail delivery, picking strawberries at harvest, and working at the cannery seasonally. Students at Hayward schools built stretchers and assembled first aid bandages. There was also a very active USO

program for soldiers and sailors stationed nearby at the Veteran’s Memorial Building. The area was also greatly impacted by the removal of all Japanese Americans to relocation camps for the duration of the war as order by the Federal Government. Many Japanese Americans owned nurseries and small farms that either had to be sold or given over to the care of trusted friends. Most of the families returned to the area after the war and it took a few years for them to financially recover from being forced to abandon their lively hood for four years.

After World War II, Hayward experienced an unprecedented growth from 14,272 to 72,000 people in just one decade. The increase was due to prosperous times caused by federal acts, such as the Federal Housing Act and the Veterans Administration loan program, which allowed more families to buy homes through government assisted mortgages. The construction of more freeways allowed people to move from cities to the suburbs.



**USO dance at Veterans Memorial Building, c. 1944.**



**“The Strip” on Foothill Boulevard, c. 1955.**

Following the war, the economy boomed and all types of business – furniture, fast food, restaurants – flourished. On March 17, 1949, “The Strip” opened. At the time it was only a string of sixteen stores that were situated on the east side of Foothill Boulevard between A and B streets. The Strip expanded quickly and by 1954, the whole of Foothill had shops. In 1957, it grew to include 21 more businesses and a ten-million dollar Capwell complex. However, the development of The Strip was both a blessing and a curse. While it boosted the city’s economy by providing a central shopping center, it also eventually brought the demise of Hayward Union High School, Markham School, and the old Carnegie Library building.

In 1962, the last class of Hayward Union High School graduated as preparations were being made to tear the school down. For the next five years, former Hayward students did everything in their power to stop the demolition. But nothing worked and the entire campus was razed in the late 1960s in preparation for the construction of the Civic Center, including a new city hall to replace the one on Mission Boulevard.

In 1957, a bill for a state college in Hayward was passed, and by 1964 construction on the new California State College began on the site of the old Hauschildt farm in the Hayward hills. In the beginning, classes were held at Sunset High School and Hayward High School until construction was finally completed. The new university gave Hayward residents a local place to further their education while keeping transportation and living costs down. There were many unique opportunities available, such as night classes and weekend activities on campus.

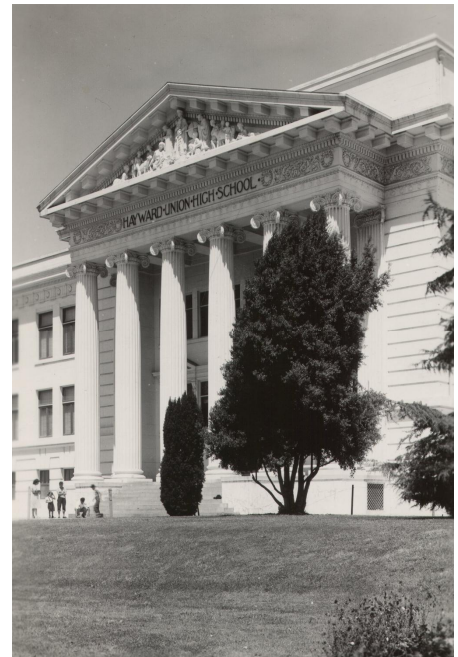
### ***A Modern and Diverse City***

By Hayward's centennial, 1976, the small town begun by a failed miner had grown tremendously.

Developments in public transportation, like BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) and freeways connected Hayward to the greater Metropolitan Bay Area as never before. Hayward's population continues to grow and become more culturally diverse. According to the 2000 United States Census, Hayward's population is:

- 34.2% Latino
- 29.3% White
- 18.7% Asian
- 10.6% African American
- 4.6% Mixed Ancestry (3<sup>rd</sup> over all in the nation)
- 1.8% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- 0.4% Native American
- 0.5% Other

In today's Hayward, there are remnants of the past dotting the cityscape, as well as evidence of a cultural evolution. All of Hayward's parks, libraries, churches, cultural organizations, service groups, charities, art galleries, special interest groups, schools, businesses and museums play a part in making a great city.



**Hayward Union High School,  
c. 1930.**

