Coronado Cays History

The Coronado story began in 1542 when explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo sailed into the San Diego Bay and took possession of the entire area for Spain. The area remained unsettled for almost 200 years with the peninsula remaining bare.

In the early nineteenth century, whalers using Coronado as a safe harbor, built hide houses in which to work. After gaining its independence from Spain in 1821, Mexico issued land grants for various sections of California, thus creating the grand ranches of this period. On May 15, 1846, Governor Pio Pico issued a land grant to Don Pedro Carrillo for "the island or peninsula in the Port of San Diego." Carrillo's ownership of the land was brief, as he sold the property for $1000 in silver just five months later to Bezer Simmons, an American trading ship captain.

The peninsula changed hands several times over the next 39 years until Elisha S. Babcock, Jr., Hampton L. Story, and Jacob Guendike, purchased it for $110,000 on November 19, 1885. Babcock invited Heber Ingle, his brother-in-law, and Josephus Collett, a railroad stockholder, to become investors. Thus, the founding fathers organized the Coronado Beach Company on April 7, 1886.

Work began to build the resort community with construction of water and irrigation systems, division and landscaping of lots and laying of railroad tracks. With increased publicity of the upcoming hotel and the launching of the Coronado Ferry Boat on August 19, 1886, interest in the community was high. On November 13, 1886 the Coronado Beach Company sold 350 lots ranging in price from $500 to $1000 for a total of $110,000.

Groundbreaking for the Hotel Del Coronado was held on March 19, 1887, and the hotel was completed in early 1888 officially opening its doors to the public on February 19th. By the fall of 1887 and throughout 1888, Coronado was developing into a community with the founding of various organizations, including a boating club, athletic club, and a baseball club. The first school session began on January 24, 1887 in a walled tent until construction of the first schoolhouse was completed in 1888.

In July 1887 John Spreckels bought the interest of Hampton Story in the Coronado Beach Company. Over the next three years Spreckels bought controlling interest in the company and became the sole proprietor of the Hotel Del Coronado. He also established Tent City and consummated the sale of North Island to the U.S. Government in 1917. The Hotel del

Coronado became one of California's most popular destinations. With the rise of Tent City, vacationers flocked to Coronado for summer fun, including swimming, carnival booths, sailing, fishing, tennis, and even jackrabbit hunting. Tent City lasted for 39 years closing in 1939 to make way for the Silver Strand Highway.

Just nine years later in 1948 the City of Coronado annexed a 275-acre bayside parcel of land known as Rancho Carrillo located along the Silver Strand Highway at a cost of $175,000. During the early 1900's the land was used for a hog farm and the city purchased the property for disposal of rubbish and trash.

In 1964 the Coronado City Council valued the property and offered it for sale with a price tag of $4 million. In 1967 with commencement of construction of the San Diego Coronado Bridge, Atlantic Rishfield in conjunction with Cedric Sanders Associates purchased the parcel for $4.2 million. Towards the end of 1967 dredging for the marina was started. Fill was used to create the two "islands" at the Cays. Crown Isle, which is now the location of Loews Coronado Bay Resort Hotel, and Grand Caribe Isle which is now the location of the Coronado Cays Yacht Club, Cays Homeowners Association, boat brokerage offices, and realty offices.

By 1968 the planned development was implemented with the Jamaica Village homes and Green Turtle Cay lots for sale. Following the sale of Atlantic Richfield of its development to Signal Landmark, Inc. the official opening of the development took place on September 13, 1969 with a "boat ribbon cutting ceremony." At that time purchase prices ranged between $29,500 and $126,000 for lots and from $49,000 to $74,900 for homes.

Now in the 21st century, in Coronado Cays where the $30,000 to $125,000 lots are non-existent and homes worth a million or more are being torn to the ground to rebuild a state of the art home worth $3 to $4 million or more. The same homes that sold for $50,000 to $75,000 in 1969 are now selling for as much as $1,500,000 and up.

It's all about the lifestyle – the magic of the water. Twelve hundred condos, town homes, tract and custom homes with 600 plus boat slips located on San Diego Bay, California's only residential marina community South of Newport Beach.

Coronado Cays is a mix of retirees, professionals, and young families with children. Thirty-two percent of the ownership is second homes for desert based and inland Southern California residents and others seeking the enjoyment of the water.

There are 10 exclusive villages all connected by lushly landscaped green belts with parks, tennis courts but no shops or mini markets and no schools. The children ride busses to the Silver Strand Elementary, Coronado Middle and High Schools located two miles and six

miles respectively, all of which have exceptional national rankings. With its semi-isolated location, the crime rate is low because of the limited access with just one land entrance.

In 1991 the $80 million 440-room 5-star Loews Hotel opened and quickly became an integral part of the community. Cays residents are offered a special discount for hotel, food, beverages and merchandise and the hotel hosts the CCHOA annual meetings.

On September 2, 1994 dedication ceremonies were held for the $4 million yachting complex, Coronado Cays Yacht Club. A spectacular lighthouse-shaped building at the water's edge overlooks the club's 56-slip marina and serves as a landmark for boaters. Equity membership is limited to 499.

With the sun glistening across each water inlet and your boat in your own backyard, the magic of the water is yours to see, touch and sit on. That's the lifestyle of Coronado Cays.

But there is more… much more for all ages to enjoy. Coronado and Coronado Cays is an aquatic wonderland nestled between the waters of San Diego and the inviting waves of the Pacific Ocean.

April brings the Annual Coronado Flower Show. Friendly competition to showcase home front gardens, floral arrangements, plants, cactus, bonsai and numerous other classical floral designs and exhibits.

Relaxation never sounded better with Coronado's summer Sunday Concerts-in-the-Park. Bring your picnic basket, blankets and beach chairs. It's a great family event to enjoy the park and the music.

Each 4th of July thousands of people blanket the streets of Coronado to celebrate this special patriotic day. The parade begins at 10:00 AM with military and civic groups, marching bands, classic cars, floats and clowns. In the afternoon the U.S. Navy SEALS demonstrate their military skills over Glorietta Bay with a mock combat battle and a surprise beach attack. The Coronado 4th of July day tradition continues with a concert in the park and ends with an explosive fireworks display in the sky over Glorietta Bay.

Other recreation choices include: Coronado Municipal Golf Course, a championship 18-hole bayside golf course. How about cycling and skating – there are 15 miles of scenic and flat bike paths. Tennis anyone? 19 public tennis courts are available. Boating and sailing – a full line of sailboats, paddle boats, motor boats, and charter fishing boats available on Glorietta Bay. And there are beaches, miles of beaches and parks.

References:

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- The San Diego Union-Tribune June 14, 1998
- Coronado Visitor Magazine Summer 2001 and Spring 2002
- Editorial revisions and additions of William L. Hamm