(NS): Louis Rose was the first Jewish settler in San Diego, and he played an important role in the business, civic, and religious life of the town. The gold rush had brought a diverse population to the west, and Louis Rose had brought innovative ideas to the town's struggling economy. His life is the subject of this 5th program of the series, "Twelve Who Shaped San Diego".

Peter Hamlin (PH): My name is Peter Hamlin. Joining me is San Diego Historian and Chief Historical Consultant for these programs, Dr. Clare Crane.

Clare, could you characterize the period in which Rose lived here in San Diego?

Clare Crane (CC): Well, he came in 1850, and he died in 1888, so his time here in San Diego spanned the early years of the American period. In the 1850's and 1860's there wasn't very much happening, and then when Alonzo Horton came in 1867 and made his purchase of land and began to promote the city, then growth began to occur, particularly when it was through that a railroad would be completed into San Diego in the early 1870's. When that dream fell through, the San Diego lofted along again until another railroad was completed through in 1885, and that brought the big population boom. But during this period of time that we are speaking of, 1850, 60, 70's, population of San Diego was very, very small, under 2,000 people. We are talking about just a few hundred people most of the time, and rose is certainly a man who attempted to bring a whole new concept of economic development to San Diego, and to some degree succeeded, and it is, I think, interesting how Rose got here. It's a representation of what you might call the American Dream, or what Herbert Crowley refers to as the promise of American life. It's the kind of thing that drew people from all over the world to the United States.

Rose was born in Germany, in Hanover, in 1807, and migrated to the United States in the 1840's. He settled first in New Orleans and then he moved to Texas and then he joined an immigrant group that was leaving Texas in 1849 to go to the gold fields, to California. He joined that group with Governor, a man who was called both Governor and Judge, James Robinson of Texas. This group actually came to San Diego and several of them, including both Rose and Robinson, settled here in 1850. One of the things that Rose attempted to do almost immediately was to buy land. And I think this was very symbolic of the Great American Dream, that people can come here from all over the world; that they can become landowners which was something that so many people desired in Europe, and there was no opportunity for many of them to become landowners there. All of the land was already taken
up and owned by upper class titled families and held hereditarily, but to come to the United States for so many Europeans the great dream was to become a landowner.

Rose certainly did that. He acquired a total of about 4,000 acres in various places in San Diego. Roughly 2,000 acres were in the Rose Canyon area, and that's where he, on what was essentially a ranch, (this is where freeway 5 runs up there now, but think of all the things that Louis Rose did in that area) he planted tobacco, he had vineyards, and started a brickyard there. He had a cattle ranch and he butchered the cattle there and then he set up a tannery. Many of these things had never been done in San Diego before. Primarily what was done during the Mexican era was to butcher the cattle and simply take the hides and ship them out, and they were sent all the way back to the East Coast where they were then tanned and turned into shoes and saddles and so on and so forth. In a good number of instances, they were ten shipped back to California, perhaps right back to San Diego and sold in stores. But Rose thought that we could manufacture many of those things here for ourselves. So he became involved in all those different businesses and activities. And he held a political office, too. He was Postmaster. He had a couple of terms as County Supervisor, he served in the Volunteer Militia that was organized to put down an Indian uprising in 1851 - the Gara Revolt. He helped to organize the first Masonic Lodge in Southern California and the first Jewish Temple in San Diego. He is considered to be the first Jewish resident of San Diego.

Rose, among other things, donated land for the Jewish cemetery in San Diego and was, of course, active in the incorporation of the first railroad group and, even though it never laid a mile of track, it was extremely important that the San Diego and Gila Railroad was incorporated, because the City Council deeded land to it, and that land was later transferred to the other railroad corporation and enabled them to build in San Diego.

(PH): As we heard in the introductory biography of Louis Rose, he was involved in just about every activity of San Diego life in business, civic life, fraternal organizations, and, of course, the religious life of the small, but growing Jewish community. What sort of a man was Louis Rose? He's been the subject of extensive study by Dr. Norton B. Stern, who is the editor of the "Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly".

(NS): It is pretty difficult to know from the historic sources of a person who lived well over a hundred years ago, a century and a quarter ago, exactly what he was like. We can say that he was an enthusiastic person. We have evidence that he was what you might call a work-a-holic. He
was a person who was eternally optimistic, I mean his personal view of life was, "there is always a possibility".

For example, one time he sent out a couple prospectors, with provisions, to look for gold and silver, and copper, up in the hills east of San Diego. He told them not to come back to the city until they found something. But he said, "Call on me for provisions whenever you run low". This is a kind of picture of a man who is eternally looking for the gold rush to be, which is typical of people who came to the west anyway.

Louis Rose stayed in San Diego and he always tried to hit it big with all kinds of various schemes, and the evidence is that he was alternately successful and unsuccessful. That is to say he never said die. He always kept a future outlook. He was very much future minded, and at the same time, though, he was not an egotistical individual. When they put the monument up for him at Rose Canyon in 1934, his daughter Henrietta, his only child that lived to adulthood, said of him that he could have never imagined that he would have been honored with a monument. He just wasn't that kind of an individual. But he was always looking for the grand chance for the thing that would build her personal fortune and the fortunes of the community that he lived in.

(PH): The Jewish community in San Diego quickly found its place in the rapidly expanding and changing San Diego at the time just after the gold rush. Henry Swartz is a local author who has written about San Diego's Jewish history. He says the early Jews prime contribution was their mercantile skill.

(HS): You have to remember that after the gold rush time the California population ballooned from approximately 15,000 to early 400,000 in 10 years. So there was a commercial vacuum created in "where do you get woots"?, "where do you get tents"?, "where do you get tools, weapons, stationery, newspapers from your home town"? Everything was lacking, and no one seemed to know how to get it because it was 3,000 miles away, and when you got it here, how could you sell it to people who didn't have money?

Miners would say "stake me". Farmers would say "stake me". So it involved credit. So it was a very complicated arrangement and the Jews had to know-how to organize a system in which they would get their supplies from wholesalers from San Francisco on credit, then extend credit to the farmers, miners, etc. And so they put it all together, so they became more or less the merchants of the West - of San Diego.

(PH): And did they ever get burned in that situation?
(HS): Well, they got burned literally, actually, because there were three main scourges for early businessmen. One was fire. You know they built stores right close together. They were lighted by kerosene lamps which could be knocked over accidentally, or deliberately, and would wipe out a whole block. The second main difficulty was drought, especially in the Southland. As you know, last year we had a drought. Well, that was typical of Southern California. When that happened, the farmers were in deep trouble. And so what could the merchant do? All he could do was to take exchanges, lets say cattle and sheep. But if there was no grass, there was no rain, then what could he do? So it was a difficult situation. And of course, as you mentioned, the third and perhaps the worst were periodic what they call panics. These were depressions. Nobody had any money. Nobody had anything to eat. So what happened to the merchant? He would go to the wholesale demanding his payment. Then he was bankrupt. So it was a risky economy here. And sometimes it was local depressions like when, after anticipating a railroad, they didn't get it. Or, say in the 1890's, when there were national panics in which there were bank closures - nationally and locally. All so the merchants went under for a variety of reasons. So it was a chancy business like everything else in the far west. In some of those cases where their investments failed, they were likely to move to two other areas - San Bernardino and Los Angeles. So some of the prominent Jews of Los Angeles were those who failed in San Diego.

(PH): What sort of person was it who finally succeeded in San Diego. Was it a lucky person? Or how would you answer that question?

(HS): That's hard to say. I would say timing would be a big factor, and perseverance too. And, of course, they had to be very... they had to adjust, they had to learn to speak Spanish. Many of their customers were Spanish. They had to get along with city government, with the ranchers. And many of them survived because they diversified into farming, into mining, into financing, and into other kinds of businesses like that. Louis Rose started Point Loma, and it went bankrupt as a real estate development. So many of them diversified. Anacy and Schiller, for instance, imported pre-fabricated housing which they sold on the installment plan, way back in the 1860's, you see, in an effort to make a living here. They also imported lumber from the Pacific Northwest.

(PH): San Diego author, Henry Swartz, with a glimpse of the precarious economic existence of many of the residents of San Diego just after the great rush for gold began.

Song
Many of us, I think, are intrigued by the everyday ordinary life of San Diego's past. We might think what life would have been for us if you or I had lived in Old Town during this period. There's one document in particular that has shed some light on just what everyday life in Old Town might have been like. That's the diary of Victoria Jacobs. It was begun in 1856 and was published in an annotated edition, prepared by Sylvia Arden, who is the head librarian of the San Diego Historical Society Library and manuscripts collection.

There are three reasons why this was very unique. First it was by a young person. It was by a young woman—a female. And by someone of the Jewish faith. There was nothing else like this in the period of the 1850's. And we knew that. And although we had heard about her father, it's rare that you hear about the women or especially the children in the family. And she gave a rare, intimate glimpse of life in the period where there was a small population. It was an American frontier town. And here it showed people of all religions and all backgrounds living in apparent harmony. There were the Spaniards, the Mexicans, and the Europeans. And they showed a very rare kind of a life.

In 1851, there were few Jewish merchants. There was Louis Franklin, who was the brother of Maurice who came in 1853. Louis Rose, who was the first Jewish resident, Mark Jacobs, the father of Victoria Jacobs, and Charles Fletcher. And they were all doing business in Old Town plaza, and were all immigrants from Europe. So, they were the very small minority in the city. And the one thing that I found very interesting—there was no discrimination against Jewish people because she was often invited to the dances at the mission. And when the ships came into the harbor, they would come and knock on the door, and they were invited. I think because there were so few people, that the people that could communicate, they needed each other. And so their social life was not just limited to the Jewish families. We find many references to visiting the homes of the Mexicans and the Spaniards, and other people in the community. So, certainly, there was no discrimination at that time.

Sylvia Arden, who is the head librarian of the San Diego Historical Society Library and Manuscripts Collection.

Clare, I'm curious if we know much about the ethnic makeup of this city in general during this period.

Well, we certainly had a lot of evidence about the ethnic makeup of the city from the censuses. And in the first census in 1850. There are 18 or 20 different nationalities listed in San Diego. This, of course, is a direct result of the gold rush. The fact that people came
from all over the world to California hoping to make their fortunes. But, certainly, the evidence that with this number of people, less than 800 when that census was taken, that there are about 20 different nationalities represented. This gives us a very clear picture of the kind of ethnic and national diversity that characterized San Diego in those days.

(PH): Ethnic diversity also provides a challenge to the student of history. Black history in San Diego, for example. Several blacks have been studied, but there's still a lot to learn.

The portrayal of black history in San Diego in San Diego is going to be a part of the plans for the development of Old Town San Diego Historic Park. Troy Jordan is a historian at Old Town Park.

Troy Jordan (TJ): As far as black history in San Diego goes, Old Town is particular, we aren't doing too much right now to interpret it. And there's a sore lack of interpretation of black history. So what we are going to do is restore one of the historic adobes in Old Town in which blacks actually lived, had a business, and so forth. And then we will try and tie in all pertinent black history in Old San Diego in this building. It will be sort of a black history museum. The building is located, right now it's just a piece of ground, but the original building was located right near the Machados Silva's house, which is now our Old Town Visitor's Center. And it was known as the Light Freeman Adobe. Allan Light was an early day pioneer in California. He was an emancipated black from New York State, and arrived in California very early, probably in the late 1820's, maybe earlier, but by sure around 1830 he was here. And his original trade out here was primarily an otter hunter. Later on he was empowered by the governor of Mexican California to control the otter trade of the coat, to police it and make sure there was no illegal sneaking out the otter and all, to protect them and to monitor it. So he had empowered to do that. He was connected with Henry Delano Fitch in Old Town, and did some otter hunting and things like that for him. He was supposedly aboard the ship, Pilgrim in which Richard Henry Dana, Jr. had once sailed, and became known, Allan Light became known as the "black steward". Later on he settled in Old San Diego and he bought a building that Henry Delano Fitch had once owned and that was later to be known as the Light-Freeman Adobe. Richard Freeman, on the other hand, there is very, very little known about him other than the fact that he was black and was a partner of Allan Light. And what was known as the San Diego house - this was in the Light Freeman Adobe, and it was a saloon. And so for a year or so they operated a saloon in the building. But what we will try to do is portray the black history of old San Diego and their early
contributions to it - of who they were, what they were, and what they contributed to the economy of the town, how they helped to build it, and so forth. The unfortunate thing is that we don't know a lot of the names. They're just listed on the consensus and very little, of course, it being a southern town, was written about them. Again, black history just wasn't being written down in those days. So to a degree we have lost a great amount of it.

(PH): Not surprisingly, with the many cultures and races in Old Town, racial tensions often surfaced.

(TJ): For a school teacher here - at least the first school teacher at the Mason Street School, Mary Chase Walker, was involved in an incident with a black woman who she befriended and ate dinner with in one of the hotels here, and as a result, she lost her teaching job for having associated with this black woman. So the tensions existed, but I don't think they were as pronounced or as open. There may have been more underlying tensions, since actually you had a melting pot here. There were peoples from all over the world and had been from the earliest days.

(PH): Troy Jordan, historian at Old Town San Diego Historic Park. Another part of our history that is often not considered to the extent it ought to be, is the history of the people most affected by all the important changes that were occurring. The people who resided in San Diego long before any explorers, missionaries, or gold seekers arrived to this continent, the Indians. The impact on them can be gauged by a dramatic drop in population from the time of the missions through the 1880's and 90's. Roy Cook teaches American Indian Studies at San Diego State University and Grossmont College.

Roy Cook (RC): We're talking about, in specific, San Diego County, and, in general, the entire State of California, of an astounding statistic. It approaches genocide - no other term can adequately describe the horror of an 80 - 85% decimation of population. It is a number of factors that enter into that particular statistic. Lack of resistance to disease, physical murdering of people, just plain genocidal actions, people were killed a lot between 1850 and 1880, 1890. The mentality that had been promulgated from the earlier times, and again the notion that the only good Indian was a dead Indian, was part of the psychology that came out of the plains. The wars with the Indians of the plain and as they came over here, it was just a fact of the matter that it was a different colored skin person and he was there where one wanted to be.

The population went from some 250,000 to about 22,000. It was just tremendous genocidal action. The people had no idea of all this insanity regarding the yellow metal, and
would continue on with their lives as if it were normal and there was a great deal of tension and hypertension, anxiety that existed at that time, but everyone was looked upon by each non-Indian with a great deal of suspicion that your claim would be jumped as such. You shoot first and ask questions later as is the unwritten law of the West.

(CC): Of course one of the famous episodes in Helen Hunt Jackson's novel of Ramona is exactly an illustration of what you say - which was based on newspaper reports of the time. Alexandro was accused of stealing a horse by an American who didn't bother to ask him any question, simply shot him dead and went down subsequently to the Justice of the Peace and said, I killed an Indian, but he was a horse thief and there was no trial. That was the end of it.

(RC): I'm glad you mentioned that, because she's one of my very favorite writers. And I look to her as really not only being a unifying force in much of the political awareness, one of the first who was effective at bringing a political awareness to the plight, the situation of California Indians, but the first that was actually able to influence some legislation for the recognition of Indians. Shortly following the Century of Dishonor, by Helen Hunt Jackson and the Ramona story, the Mission Indian Relief Act was introduced which sought to right the wrong of the forgotten treaties and, in my opinion, lead to the establishment of certain areas in Southern California we now recognize as the seventeen local reservations.

(PH): Roy Cook, with the Department of American Indian Studies at Grossmont College and San Diego State University Clare, I want to ask you if it is correct to associate Old Town San Diego of the 60's and 70's and early 80's with our general impression of the Wild West.

(CC): Certainly it is very much like the Wild West that we see being portrayed in the movies and on television. For instance, there weren't any paved streets in San Diego until, oh, probably the 1890's. There were just these dusty streets, and if it rained it would be full of mud holes. In some of the descriptions of the time, the town is described as being small and dusty and dirty, full of fleas, that was something everyone seemed to refer to. In 1852, Grand Jury Foreman Louis Franklin described Old Town as full as drunken winos and Indians, unburied garbage, wandering cattle, and general lawlessness.

(PH): When you're talking about the Old Town of this period, one is reminded of some very interesting characters who lived there, and it's kind of an interesting period of time - Old Town Park, I would say, contains some of the memories of a very colorful group of people who lived in the
Old Town area. And Troy Jordan, who as we mentioned earlier is a historian for Old Town Park, has a few favorites.

(TJ): You'll find some historic characters such as George McKinstry, who was kind of a local salt and he had a room in one of the machado adobes and operated a doctor's office out of that. He pulled teeth here and there. He administered mainly to the Indians of San Diego County. He wandered amongst them treating them. But, if you look at the records of the old ledger of the American Hotel, which was near the machado adobe, you'll find from day to day, you'll see the bill - George McKinstry, 32 drinks, George McKinstry, 45 drinks, George McKinstry, 16 drinks and one bottle of Irish Whiskey and one bottle of this. And you can tell when he's in town because day to day there's just 30 drinks, 45 drinks, 16 drinks, 7 drinks, and later on there's nothing for George McKinstry, that's when he is out in the country somewhere. So, there's color like that.

(PH): I imagine it was a political persecution, or something like that which swayed Augustine Harastev to flee from Hungary and find his way in the new world. Well, how he ended up here exactly. I'm not quite sure, but in any event he arrived here in San Diego with his father and got involved in local business and politics and became County Sheriff. He later went on to found the California wine industry up north in Napa. And he's considered today the father of California vinaculture. From then on he goes on in the history, and I think he ended up in Nicaragua, and the last known story was he was probably eaten by alligators, fell into the river and was eaten by alligators, but nothing was ever heard from him. But, in any event, he was involved in probably what is considered the first real case of political graft in San Diego County, and that was building the County Jail here which was down the street and is now located behind the old jail motel. And this little jail, it was a two room jail, it was built out of free cobblestones from the San Diego River and free mortar from the dirt and the water in the area. It was put together, cemented together, cobble stones and mortar, and it cost the taxpayers $7,000 dollars (that's in the early 1850's). Well, the contract was awarded to none other than Sheriff Augustine Harastev. The Sheriff was involved in creating the jail, it was his business, so for $7,000 he constructed it, a little two-room adobe. As the story goes, to celebrate the opening of the jail, the incarcerated a well known town drunk. They had to have someone in the jail, naturally, to show it off. You couldn't have a jail without a prisoner in it. And so they put the poor, hapless, town drunk in there. The drunk didn't particularly care for his environment, so, supposedly with a dinner spoon, he tunneled under the wall and left a big, gaping hold in the wall and went down to one of the hotels here and started drinking again. In the meantime, a little procession wound it's way
down the street, and all the officials are gathered around, and spectators, and there's no prisoner or anything else besides a big hole in the wall, supposedly.


(CC): We were talking about the episode involving Harastev in the example of graff and cost overrun, also, I think it is interesting that San Diego lost its City Charter so rapidly after having been granted one. It was first granted a charter in 1850, and the elections held then resulted in having Joshua Bean elected mayor, and Jose Antonio was treasurer of the City. Charles Harastev, who was an uncle of Augustine, was one of the five City Councilmen, and undoubtedly there was a little bit of nepotism or conflict of interest perhaps, which we might think of today, going on in the awarding of the contract to his nephew to build the jail. The first acts of the City Council included approving maps for the layout of the town and certification of various land grants within with city limits - in the pueblo limits. And this included, of course, property for themselves - land grants that they had and their friends. They also voted themselves what were themselves - land grants that they had and their friends. They also voted themselves what were considered in those days to be large salaries, and then this contract for the jail. So, within 2 years, the City had bankrupted itself, and the State Legislature then revoked the San Diego City Charter and from 1842 until 1889 San Diego did not have a City Council. All it had was a three man Board of Trustees and the major function of that Board of Trustees was to sell land.

(PH): So the kind of thing we may chuckle about some hundred years later were actually making people pretty mad at the time?

(CC): Yes.

(PH): One of the more interesting ways to find out about the characters of history and what they were doing is to look through editions of contemporary newspapers. The old process that would have been used to print the papers in those days has held up pretty well over the years. This press can be seen at the San Diego Union Museum building in Old Town and it's still used for occasional printing jobs. And, if you are in museum, you'll see exhibits like this one and others relating to the history of printing, pictures that the story of San Diego's press. And you'll also hear some of the stories about the history of printing told by Dick Yale who runs the museum. In his family, he is the 3rd generation in the newspaper and printing business. Mr. Yale is this the kind of press you would find in the San Diego Union Office in, let's say, the 1860's - 70's?
Yes. This style press is designed by a man named Gordon, and it was around 1850 when he devised this type of movement and everything. It was so practical, that almost all the presses today of this type are still made on this principal.

Does this one still work?

It sure does.

The San Diego Union is the oldest, continuously operating newspaper, but was preceded by the San Diego Herald, which was published by John Judson Adams.

They came in here about 1851, and they operated until 1860 when they went to San Bernardino. Ames moved the plant to San Bernardino. San Diego was out a newspaper for six years, then. At that time, Ed Busyhead and Jeff Gatewood came here, rented this building, and started the San Diego Union.

And, again, it was started in the building that still stands in Old Town and is today a museum. We talk about San Diego's interesting people, and, I think, certainly one of the most amusing was Lieutenant George Horatio Derby of the Army's topographical Engineers. He came to build a dyke to rechannel the San Diego River to Mission Bay to keep it from dumping silt into the harbor. And while here, he also distinguished himself as a superb humorist and prankster. George Derby wrote under quite a few pseudonyms, among them John Phoenix and Squibob.

They say that in his home town that he furnished all the practical jokes for the whole community. They didn't need any other practical joker in town. And I was pretty much typical of his whole career. Ames had met Derby up in San Francisco- they were both Masons, and the conjecture is they met in the Masonic Lodge and Ames recognized Debby's literary ability, and Derby had written various pieces for the San Francisco papers, so Ames made a deal with him to write a few pieces in the Herald. And every once in a while, a Squibob article would appear in the Evening Journal. And of course, Derby didn't like this because they were stealing his name, and the way he could retort was he just killed off Squibob and wrote the obituary - and that ended the feud right there.

Dick Yale, who operates the San Diego Union Museum building in Old Town. George Derby also had a chance to take over the San Diego Herald and turn its editorial stance around by about 1880. And he left us some unique glimpses at early San Diego life. It's likely that an innocent reader of the Herald during George Derby's tenure as editor...
might be somewhat surprised at the type of story that he printed. There is one item for example, that says with humor a great deal about the Wild West. Here is the item:

"For Sale: A valuable law library lately the property of a distinguished legal gentleman of San Francisco, who has given up practice and moved to the Farallon Islands. It consists of one volume of Hoyles Games - complete. And may be seen at this office.

Before leaving the subject of George Derby, Clare, I think we should really look into rally what his accomplishments were as an engineer in San Diego. What did he do?

(CC): Well, as he said, "I came to dam the San Diego River, and I've done so many times since". And the San Diego River ran into and emptied into San Diego Bay. - most of the time till it was permanently channeled out into the ocean beginning in 1875. Derby's function - his assignment in San Diego - was to build a dyke, which would turn the river so I wouldn't flow into San Diego Bay and get it all silted up, but rather to channel it into False Bay, or what we now call Mission Bay. And he was successful in building that dyke in 1853, however, he was not provided with enough money to buy very permanent material, and so the dyke washed out fairly soon after that and continued to flow into San Diego Bay. And I thin that probably most of us are unaware of what a very significant contribution that had made to San Diego. The fact that the river flowed in to San Diego Bay for so many hundreds of years and dropped all the silt there, and formed a big delta is what has given us thousands of acres really that are tide lands, our Lindbergh Field - the airport - is located on what used to be part of the flat, the dutch flats, the delta area. And also many of our naval installations, the Naval Training Center, the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, the Convair and Solar Aircraft plants these are all located on tide lands and it's as if the river had made a great gift to San Diego that we've been able to utilize for these other purposes.

(PH): We have seen a collection of personalities on this program and a collection of ethnic groups as well, making up the life of Old Town San Diego in the 1850's to the 1880's. And the questions that minorities faced at that time might seem similar to today. There would have been pressure to adopt the ways of San Diego life and forget the traditions that were brought from far corners of the globe.

Louis Rose was the first Jew to settle here. And San Diego's Jewish population remained quite small for some years after. San Diego Author Henry Schwartz.
When they came West, there was a tremendous temptation to drop their Judaism. One, because it was difficult to practice. There weren't enough Jews, they couldn't have what we call Kosher meat. There was a great temptation to assimilate because that's what we thought the Anglo population would like, for us to become Christianized. But, they held on to their religion, and they held religious services. The first religious service was held in Old Town about 1852 and involved three Jews. In Judaism, it takes ten Jews to have a quorum, to have a religious service. Well, they only had three, so what do you do? You call it a (rump-minyah?) You have three so you have a service - what can you do? So they have held on, and each high holy day in San Diego, there were services, from approximately 1850 to today. And they were held in homes, above stores, and finally as more Jews came they got a quorum and then eventually they were able to build their own synagogue. Built in 1889, it now stands on the corner of 2nd and B streets downtown.

The temple Beth Israel is a part of the plan for Heritage Park. That will be a group of Victorian-Era buildings that have been moved to their present location on Juan Street near Old Town and Presidio Hill. Henry Schwartz has been interested in the temple for a long time. He's written about its history and has been instrumental in its inclusion in Heritage Park.

It will serve as a museum - one idea they have is to make it a museum of the history of the religions in San Diego - all religions with pictures of early church buildings, etc. Another part would be used for a meeting hall, poetry readings, seminars - as a meeting place primarily. Also for perhaps weddings.

I wonder if you think this would play some important role to people here in San Diego, to see the first Jewish Synagogue, the first building that represented the early Jewish settlements here?

Yes, I think that there's a feeling of continuity - what it was like in Victorian times - the simplicity of the churches and, I think Heritage Park as the County plans it, will be a significant addition to Old Town and in preserving our past.

San Diego writer, Henry Schwartz. Clare, Heritage Park is an interesting concept. Can you tell us a little bit more about it?
Heritage Park is a project of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, and under the auspices of the County Park and Recreation Department, and the Park and Rec. Department has its headquarters right there in Heritage Park, in the first house that was moved into Heritage Park - that's the Sherman-Gilbert house, a magnificent Victorian House. Well, it's right near Old Town State Park and it's a total of about make what's like a Victorian "preserve", a retirement home for Victorian houses. They will provide an example of the diversity of Victorian architecture of the times. And they will - all of them - be utilized for business purposes of one kind or another. There is going to be a restaurant in one of them, and a travel agency, and an art store in another one of the buildings. So they will all be used. They won't simply be museums, but they will illustrate the kind of activity that you can do by recycling old houses and using them for contemporary uses.

One of the exciting things about the addition of Heritage Park to the area is that now, within a walking area in the Old Town part of San Diego, there's a remarkable array of historical resources for visiting. There's the Serra Museum, Presidio Hill, including archeological digs that can be seen in progress. There is Presidio Park, there's Old town State Park, and there's Heritage Park, all really within walking distance of that same area of Old town San Diego. So it's really quite a place for people interested in either spending a day of enjoyment of learning something about San Diego's past.

Because they're located close together, they are easy for people to find and see the changes that have occurred in San Diego. They are all illustrated from the earliest Indian settlements, the old Indian villages of Kolsoi is a site on which the Presidio was built, and so we got representation of Indian occupation, of Spanish settlement, the Mexican era, and then the American settlement of the 1880's - the high Victorian architecture.

The Old Town is indeed an important resource for San Diegans and at Old Town State Historic Park there are many programs designed to teach History. And one of the most interesting is the living history program at Old Town, where youngsters are brought into San Diego's past - not only by the old buildings, but by activities re-creating life in the 1800's. The activities of that day can easily be imagined as park rangers stand behind the old Machado Stewart Adobe and dig in the mud with shovels to show how adobe bricks were made.
Park Ranger Dale Miller: We have a little hole dug in the ground here. In earlier times, they probably would have had a big ditch, so a lot of people could work on it all at once. Here we have a hold just a couple of feet in diameter. We use some of this adobe soil here. We put some of that in, we mix some straw in with it like they used to - stir it up. They say in the earlier days, they quite often would get in there and stomp out the mixture with their bare feet. Now we've been using a shovel. Then we put the mixture in little wooden molds to shape the blocks and let them dry out in the sun and then last year the children had been putting them together with more mud like they used to to make a little scale model of that early Mexican home.

(PH): Dale Miller is one of the Park Rangers who tell children visiting the Living History Demonstration about life in Old San Diego, leading them in a wide range of activities typical of the time.

(DM): Well, this is an early Mexican home. It's one of the first ones in San Diego the Machado Stewart home, built about 1830, and to try to make it a little more alive, make it appear like it did when the people were really living here in the 1800's, why we have our Living History program. And children come out - Girl Scout groups, Boy Scout groups, and sometimes school classes, and we have some bread baking in an outdoor oven like they used to do it; some hand-dipped candles - the children tie a string on a stick and dip it in the kettle over there in the melted was several times to get a hand-dipped candle. And they can take the candles or the bricks they make home. Then we do some other type cooking, some tortillas, and we grind corn on an early style grinding stone. Just anything we can do to make the house look it did when the people really were living here.

This is how they used to make their flour. We grew the corn right out here in the garden last summer. We break the kernels off and take the corn and put it up on this stone and rub a little stone against the big stone to break the corn up into flour. That's how they used to do it. Well, once we get you started, one of you want to try it?

(PH): How are the kids reacting to all of this?

Teacher: They have been very excited. They have known for a couple of weeks that we were coming. And I think this is really an interesting, they aren't aware of all this things the good old days involved.

(PH): Are they pleasantly surprised? Unpleasantly surprised? Or what?
(Teacher): Oh, I think right now it's fun. And I think after a full day of this they'd be glad to come back to blenders and food processors.

(PH): I want to ask you all if you like history?

(Child): Yeah, sort of.

(PH): What's the "sort of" mean?

(Child): Well, sometimes it's bad, sometimes it's good, sometimes it's kind of in-between. Well, history can teach you a lot sometimes, and sometimes it doesn't teach you much.

(PH): Well, what about this kind of thing, where you actually get to make candles and see how things might have been in the past. Is that better for you than saying hearing about it in a class?

(Child): It sure is. I think it teaches you a lot more.

(PH): One opinion, typical of many sampled at the Living History Program at Old Town. The history of Old Town San Diego is a fascinating chronicle - a story of great changes, of cultural developments still important to us today. And of a foundation of a city that was to move its location to what is now downtown San Diego, leaving the heritage of our city's early history remarkably intact. We can today visit the first site of San Diego and see what has been preserved as a State Historic Park. And better understand and feel a bit closer to the early inhabitants. And Old Town today as an historic site is just the beginning of an ambitious 25 years project to more completely restore Old San Diego to its original appearance during the period we've been learning about on this program.

Dr. Iris Angstandt, of the University of San Diego, is also a member of the Old town Advisory Board. She has written with Dr. Raymond Branders, a guidebook to Old Town and has been involved with its planning and development.

(IA): Yes, we are fortunate in San Diego to have this historic site and the possibility to visit something as it existed in what we call the Interpretive Period, which is approximately 1824 to 1869. Now, the plans are to restore the buildings as they existed around the plaza, but not specifically during a particular year, and we get into this problem because some of the buildings were Mexican adobes in 1830, but were turned into American homes in 1850, with wooden frames really just nailed on to the adobes and maybe a second story added. So, each building will be interpreted at a particular time either in the Mexican period, prior to 1846, or as the transition years - 1850, or strictly
American Style - 1860 - 1870. It is a fun place of learning, a place that can exist for serious students for research. It will be somewhat along the lines of colonial Williamsburg, although people always look at us as if we have great dreams, but there's no reason why our Old Town isn't as historically significant as some place like Williamsburg.

(PH): Dr. Iris Angstandt, professor of history at the University of San Diego. Our downtown area today did not become San Diego proper officially until 1871, and Alonzo Horton, the father of new San Diego, as it was then called, was the man behind our new move to this location. Horton dreamed of building a city, and he succeeded, but there were others who came to the west and bought land and tried to begin new town and new centers for commerce. Louis Rose himself began Roseville on Point Loma. Rose, too, may have hoped his development would have blossomed into a full scale city. Are there parallels between Horton, who's dream for a new location for San Diego has become the towering skyscrapers of today's downtown, and Rose, who accomplished much for San Diego during his lifetime, but his dream for Roseville is preserved in only a few business names on Point Loma today?

Norton Stern says there are parallels and also great differences.

(NS): Rose passed out of the picture during the middle of the boom of Southern California, whereas Horton lived up to and through it. Horton was a younger man and so Horton's prediction of the future of San Diego on what was then called New Town, showed a great deal of real estate savvy and was successful. And then of course he lived up through the period. A lot depends in this historical framework on when a person lives and what their age is, and what their activity is. In other works, if their peak of activity - in the cast of Horton it comes at a time when things are booming - then it will make a difference. And I think that's one of the basic differences. Rose's dream of Roseville, you might say, only came true in the 20th Century with the tremendous increase in value for business and residential area all through San Diego, and Point Loma area and so forth. And this took place long after he was gone - he was out of the picture. Of course in Rose's case, he's so very interesting and well known, simply because he was - he had his hand in so many, many things that were in effect, city building. You see he was a civic figure in addition to being a business figure, so that he had a great deal to do with just about everything of early San Diego.

(PH): Dr. Norton B. Stern, editor of the Western State Jewish Historical Quarterly. Clare, what would you say some of those contributions were, that Norton Stern referred to.
Some of the many things that Louis Rose was involved with that really are city building, in a sense?

(CC): Louis Rose was certainly one of those who shaped San Diego. He played an important role in promoting the development of the city's economy and its urbanization. Rose was one of the early city builders and railroad promoters in the 19th century San Diego. One time he owned nearly 4,000 acres of land, which represented almost 10% of the total pueblo land area, and he initiated a great variety of industries, including things like a brick yard, and a tannery on his land in Rose Canyon. He hoped to develop a city on his land in Roseville, near present day Shelter Island, and he was one of the incorporators of the San Diego and Gila Railroad, founded in 1854. Although that particular railroad never laid any track, it was the forerunner of the subsequent developments - ultimately the Santa Fe Railroad that was successfully completed in San Diego in 1885. And the completion of that railroad brought the huge population and land boom of the 1880's which laid the foundations for San Diego's modern urban development. Louis Rose, I think, was also important in his own right. He was important, in addition to that, as a significant symbol representing the diversity of the population that came here after the gold rush and the diversity of the economic enterprise which also transformed San Diego in those years. As Norton Stern wrote in his article called, "The Rose of San Diego", his name, that is Louis Rose's name, his name and fame are enshrined in the city's history and its geography. The story of his life provides one of the finest examples of the pattern established by Jewish in the far west during the mid 19th century. Rose brought to a primitive, small town, economy, innovative ideas which helped to transform it into a flourishing city. He combined economic risk investment with civic responsibility, and his range of business interests was balanced by social, political, and religious involvement's.

(PH): Dr. Clare Crane, San Diego Historian and Chief Consultant for the series on local history. During the time of Louis Rose, San Diego was moving from a struggling frontier town to a flourishing city. And an important step in that transition occurred when Alonzo Horton bought 960 acres of land in what is now downtown. The price is 27 ½ cents an acre, and the city of San Diego began to grow on its new site near the harbor. The life of Alonzo Horton is the subject of next week's program.

"Twelve Who Shaped San Diego" is a series of radio programs on local history, biographies of twelve great men and women who have left their marks on today's San Diego.
The programs are heard each week at 12:30, Tuesday afternoon, with a repeat broadcast Wednesday night at 8:00. A resource packet is available with the programs - Send $2.00 to: KPBS FM, San Diego 92182 and ask for the San Diego History resource Packet. We also welcome your comments in this series. The address again is:

KPBS FM
San Diego, CA 92182

I'm Peter Hamlin, series producer, thanking you for joining us.

"Twelve Who Shaped San Diego" is a production of public radio station KPBS FM and is mad possible for the national endowment of the humanities.