

WILSON
DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
(SAN DIEGO COUNTY)

EDGAR M. GILLENWATERS
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL REPUBLICAN
CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

January 6, 1966

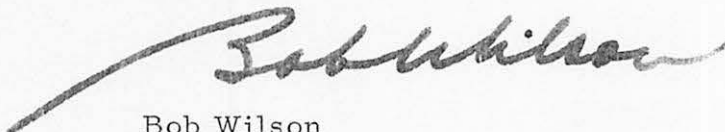
Dear Sir:

Several San Diego constituents have asked that we inquire whether the Department of Interior has in previous years given consideration to establishing Old San Diego, the first permanent colony on the West Coast, as a National Park or Monument.

In the event it has not been considered before, we would appreciate having your thoughts on the possibility of establishing this historic location as a National Site. At this time I am not proposing that Old San Diego be so designated; rather I am writing merely for the purpose of gaining your thoughts on the matter.

Please see the attached newspaper story for further information on Old San Diego.

Sincerely,



Bob Wilson
Member of Congress

Mr. George B. Hartzog, Jr.
Director, National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C.

R. Holland 1/11
 R. Young 1/11

Business 1/12

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Hon. Bob Wilson
 House of Representatives
 Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Thank you for your letter of January 6 inquiring about the feasibility and possibility of establishing Old San Diego as a national historic site. We appreciate the newspaper clippings on Old San Diego which you so kindly sent with your letter.

The National Park Service is presently conducting a nationwide study entitled the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings under the provisions of the Historic Sites Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666). The purpose of this study is to identify those historic sites throughout the country which qualify for national recognition, and as each study of a theme or period of history is completed it is presented to the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments for consideration, as provided for by the Historic Sites Act. The Advisory Board is composed of eminent private authorities who advise the Secretary of the Interior on questions of national historical significance and other park matters.

When the Advisory Board considered the theme study entitled "Spanish Exploration and Settlement" it considered the specific sites of San Diego Presidio and Old San Diego. The board recognized that the Presidio had significant historic values and recommended it be made a Registered National Historic Landmark, which was subsequently done. However, it did not consider Old San Diego as having exceptional historical values. These decisions were reached at their 40th meeting, held April 20-22, 1959.

Historic sites and buildings established as units of the National Park System must be judged to possess national historical significance and to meet standards of suitability and feasibility for park purposes as well. Legislation by Congress is ordinarily required to authorize the establishment of areas administered by the National Park Service.

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In view of the action by the Advisory Board, we believe Old San Diego appears to be more suitable for preservation through community and state efforts, than for recommendation and development on the national level by the Federal Government. In many cases, the strongest supporters of community projects are the state preservation agencies and the state and local historical organizations. This certainly appears to be the case regarding Old San Diego.

We understand several groups have been making strong efforts toward preserving the old town. The local historic groups have been quite active, being spurred on particularly by the ladies of the Junior League. The success of their efforts will be best brought about by the actions of the local governing bodies. Judging by the newspaper article, preservation has apparently been given tangible support by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. State help appears to be in the offing.

As you probably know, there is considerable local discussion over how Old San Diego will be preserved and in what form. We hope that the local groups which have long been interested in the preservation of the old town, will be able to reach a solution mutually agreeable to them and insure the preservation of this site.

We hope the foregoing information will be helpful to you. We appreciate your interest in historic preservation.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) A. C. Stratton

Acting Director

Enclosure

cc:

- RH - Branch of History
- RH - Mr. Holland
- SIR - Mr. Melvin

RHolland:snc 1/11/66

Newspaper Clipping returned to Congressman