

EXHIBIT A

The El Camino Real Bell in Calabasas, CA

Calabasas Historic Preservation Commission
February 21, 2024



Purpose and Origin of the El Camino Real Bells

Traversing approximately 700 miles paralleling the California coast between San Diego and Sonoma, the El Camino Real linked four Spanish (later Mexican) presidios and twenty-one missions.

The El Camino Real bells were intended to memorialize the El Camino Real.

In 1963, the 700-mile El Camino Real was designated California Registered Historical Landmark number 784.





The bell installations were also intended to help travelers navigate the historic route via informative signs mounted on the posts – the signs provided directions and mileages to missions and/or cities in each direction.

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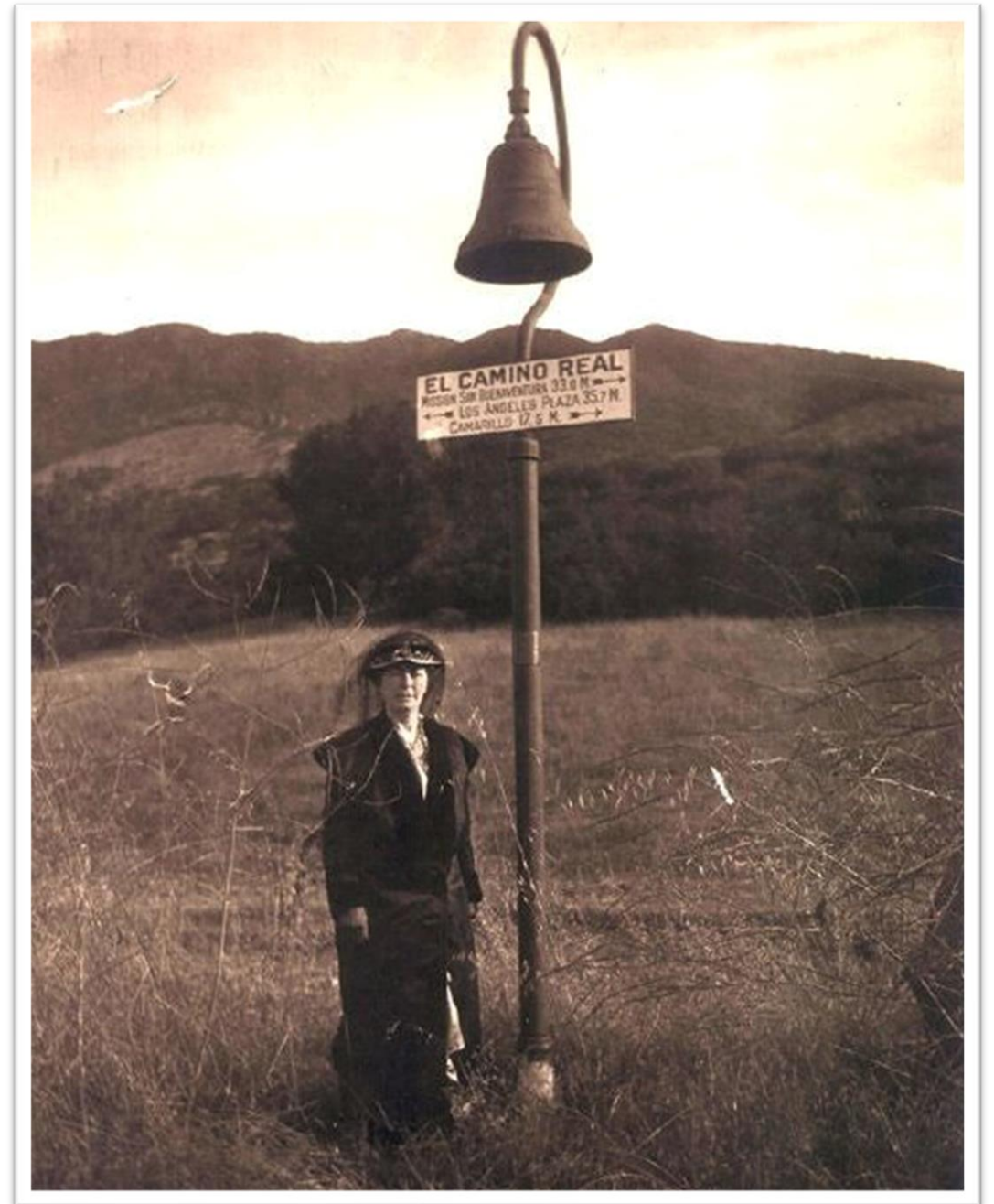


From inception, social and philanthropic organizations played a tremendously important role in the El Camino Real Bells project.

- California Federation of Women's Clubs (NFWC);
- Native Sons of the Golden West (NSGW); and,
- Native Daughters of the Golden West (NDGW).
- California State Automobile Association (CSAA)
- Automobile Club of Southern California (ACSC)
- The El Camino Real Association

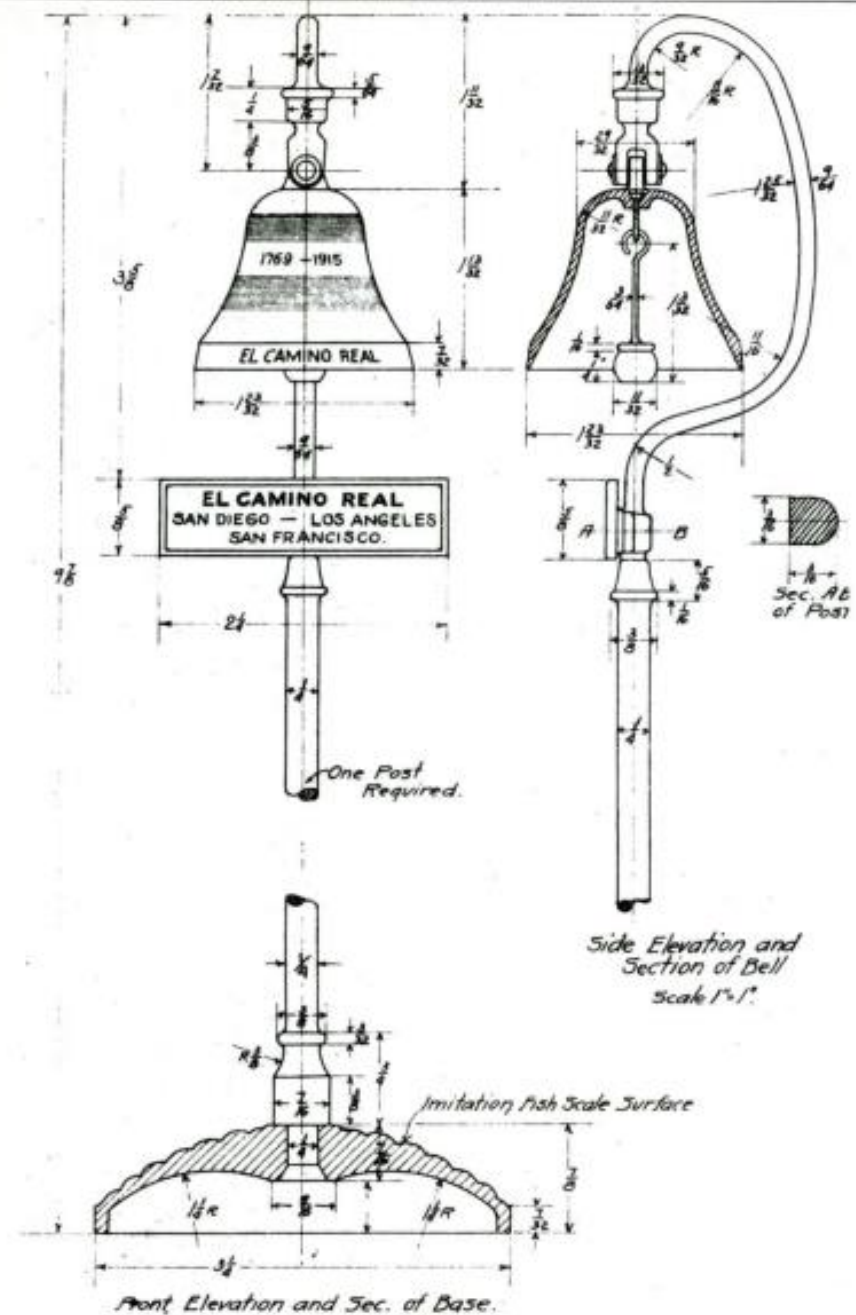
Pivotal Role of Mrs. A. S. C. Forbes

- Designed the bell and staff
- Orchestrated and oversaw the iron casting* of the bells
- Served as chair for the committee responsible for marker installations



Design and Casting of the Bells

- Casting of the original bells was accomplished by either the Pacific Sign & Enameling Company (under contract to Mrs. Forbes); the Novelty Manufacturing Company (owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Forbes); or, the California Bell Company (also operated by the Forbes).
- Over the years at least 14 variations of bell designs (exhibiting differences in profile, dimensions, material, and/or lettering) have been produced and installed along the route.



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- Final design for the bell and staff was approved by the El Camino Real Association executive committee in early 1906.
- The first of the El Camino Real bells was installed on August 15, 1906 in Los Angeles, at the Plaza Church on Olvera Street.
- The second bell was installed later that same year in San Diego.

El Camino Real Bell Installations

- The plan originally was to distribute approximately 700 bells along the El Camino Real route, at one-mile intervals.
- By 1913, approximately bells had been installed.
- Four decades later, a CalTrans inventory revealed that only 128 bells remained, and by 1974 fewer than 100 of the original bell markers remained. Contributing factors to the decline included roadway widenings and realignments, and theft.
- Between that time and continuing today, CalTrans has replaced hundreds of bells and installed new bell markers along Highway 101. Many of these new/replacement bells are cast concrete painted to emulate the appearance of the original bells. One particular CalTrans bell is located on the south side of Highway 101, between the Las Virgenes Road Parkway Calabasas on/off-ramps.
- Including all marker bells installed through the years, nearly 600 bells are estimated to be in place along the historic route today.

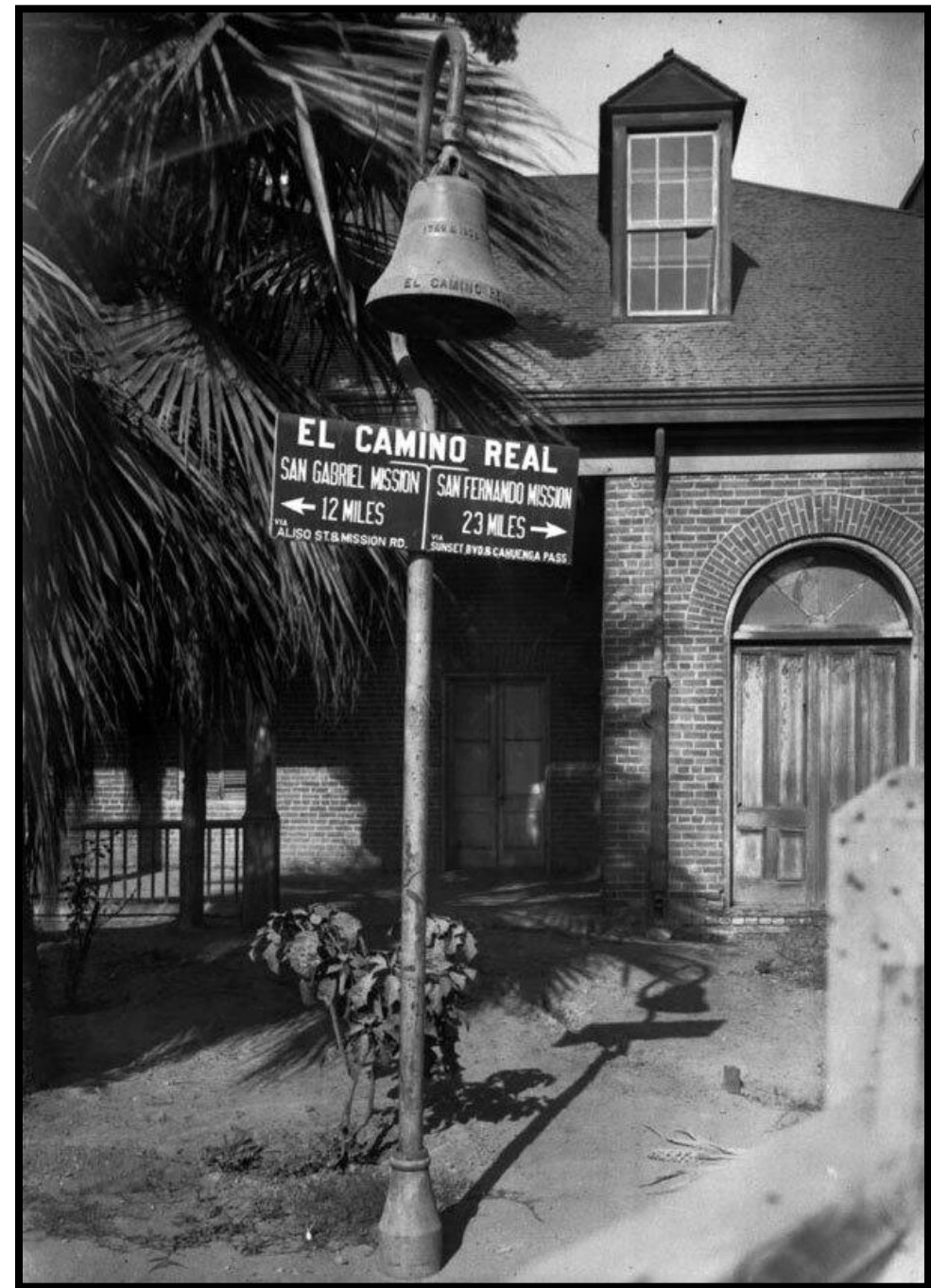
The State Dept. of Highways / CalTrans was charged with maintaining the El Camino Real bell markers; and replacing bell markers which had disappeared over the decades.

El Camino Real Bell at the San Buenaventura Mission

Los Angeles – 60 miles
(to the right, southeast)

Santa Barbara Mission – 32 miles
(to the left, northwest)







76
GASOLINE

Distinctive Characteristics

- Overall height (staff with bell) is approximately 11 feet.
- Cast iron bell with raised lettering along the rim (front and back), and across the front of the bell.
- Mounting ring inside the bell for clapper (the clapper is missing however).
- The bell weighs approximately 92 pounds, and is approximately 18 inches high and 18 inches wide.
- The iron post, or staff, consists of two segments: a 3-inch diameter vertical lower portion; and a 1½ -inch diameter curved upper portion with swivel mount, to which the bell is attached.
- Approximately 4 feet up the post is a brass dedication plaque which states that the bell was installed in 1913 by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.



1769 denotes when the “El Camino Real” was initially purposed for connecting the California presidios and missions.



**“COPYRIGHTED 1906
BY MRS. A.S.C. FORBES.”**





ERECTED 1913
BY THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

R. W. PRIDHAM CHAIRMAN
S. A. BUTLER
W. E. HINSHAW
C. D. MANNING
P. H. NORTON

So,... What about our own El Camino Real Bell, in Old Town Calabasas?

Based on the foregoing, the El Camino Real Bell marker in Old Town Calabasas is a “first generation” installation.

Also, based on historic photographs, the current location is almost certain to be the original location.



The Spanish Missions of Alta California



0 50 100 miles



Recent Interest in Removing the El Camino Real Bells

- The El Camino Real originated as a network of pathways used by indigenous peoples.
- Later, the El Camino Real served as the principal (if not only) means of connecting the Spanish, and later Mexican, missions and presidios, as well as providing for early settlement of the California territory.
- From this perspective, the El Camino Real bells are viewed by some as being monuments to a foreign nation's conquest of the indigenous people of California; and, therefore, the bells should be removed.

And....Don't Get Confused!



Sources

- *California's El Camino Real and its Historic Bells*, 2nd. Ed., by Max Kurillo, Sunbelt Publications, 2000
- National Park Service
- California Preservation Society
- California State Historic Preservation Office
- Chatsworth Historical Society

