The Great Tide Pool

TALES OF PACIFIC GROVE, CALIFORNIA

by local award-winning author, Brad Herzog

THE LAST HOMETOWN'S FIRSTS

IIn honor of New Year's Day, the first of the year, I've decided to research some of Pacific Grove's most iconic firsts in America's Last Hometown – original happenings dating back more than a century. We'll start a long time ago…

- The first inhabitants of the Pacific Grove/Monterey area were the Ohlone Rumsen, a Native American group that populated the Central Coast starting around 1500 years ago.

- Cabrillo Point in PG, now the site of Stanford University's Hopkins Marine Station, is named after the man credited with first "discovering" Monterey Bay. João Rodrigues Cabrilho landed there on November 16, 1852

- Point Pinos Lighthouse has been illuminated in three different ways over its 180 years of service – first by whale oil (1855), then kerosene (1880), and finally electricity (1919).

- The first permanent house in what is now Pacific Grove was built for Reverend W.S. Ross in January 1874, the same month that Lighthouse Road was constructed to transport supplies from Monterey to Point Pinos.

- Only three months after the first Methodist camp meeting was held in Pacific Grove (August 1875), other visitors to Pacific Grove were first noticed – monarch butterflies.

- The first wedding to take place in PG occurred in 1883 at James Stevinson's house at 129 Pacific Avenue, a smaller replica of is home in the San Joaquin Valley.

PACIFIC GROVE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & TOURIST CENTERS

- PG's original schoolteacher was a woman named Carrie Lloyd, who taught the first classes in 1884.
- Considering that wood-framed buildings were a constant fire threat, it's ironic that PG's first volunteer fire chief (1885) was a fellow named Cypress Johnson.
- In 1886, PG's first post office was created – in a one-room building next to Lloyd's Vegetable Store.
- The first person buried in El Carmelo Cemetery in PG, in 1889, was a woman melodiously named Lavinia Goodyear Waterhouse, who died at the age of 81.
- The first president to visit Pacific Grove was Benjamin Harrison, who rode on the first trip of the Monterey and Pacific Grove Street Railway in 1891. President William McKinley visited PG a decade later. The last and only other sitting president to visit: Bill Clinton in 1998.
- Electric lights made their first appearance in PG in 1895, three years before the first streetlight was installed at 502 Forest Avenue, in front of the house belonging to Charles Tuck, who was simultaneously Pacific Grove's city marshal, tax collector, truant officer, health officer, curfew bell ringer, and dog catcher.
- In 1896, PG's first permanent telephone was installed at the home of influential early citizen, Dr. Oliver Trimmer. It was connected to a pharmacy run by Charles Tuttle.
- PG's first brick building was constructed in 1901 at 208 Forest Avenue.
- The first high school constructed in PG, which was completed in 1911, is now Pacific Grove Middle School.
- The first meeting held at the newly completed City Hall building occurred in 1912. That same year, a hardware store owner in town bought a single-cylinder Oldsmobile and initiated the first automobile delivery service.
- Pacific Grove's Chamber of Commerce was first incorporated in 1915. That means the Chamber, for whom these stories are written, celebrates its 110th anniversary this year!