

Proposal to Enter  
Two Significant Areas in  
Knightsen,  
Located in East Contra Costa County,  
California,  
For Historical Preservation

June 2008

KTAC MEETING  
MAR. 23 TH  
SCHOOL LIBRARY  
TUES. 7:30 PM



Town of Knightsen  
Established 1898



# Purpose



To preserve and protect the historical significance of the Knightsen named areas for the valuable contribution made to the prosperity of Contra Costa County, California



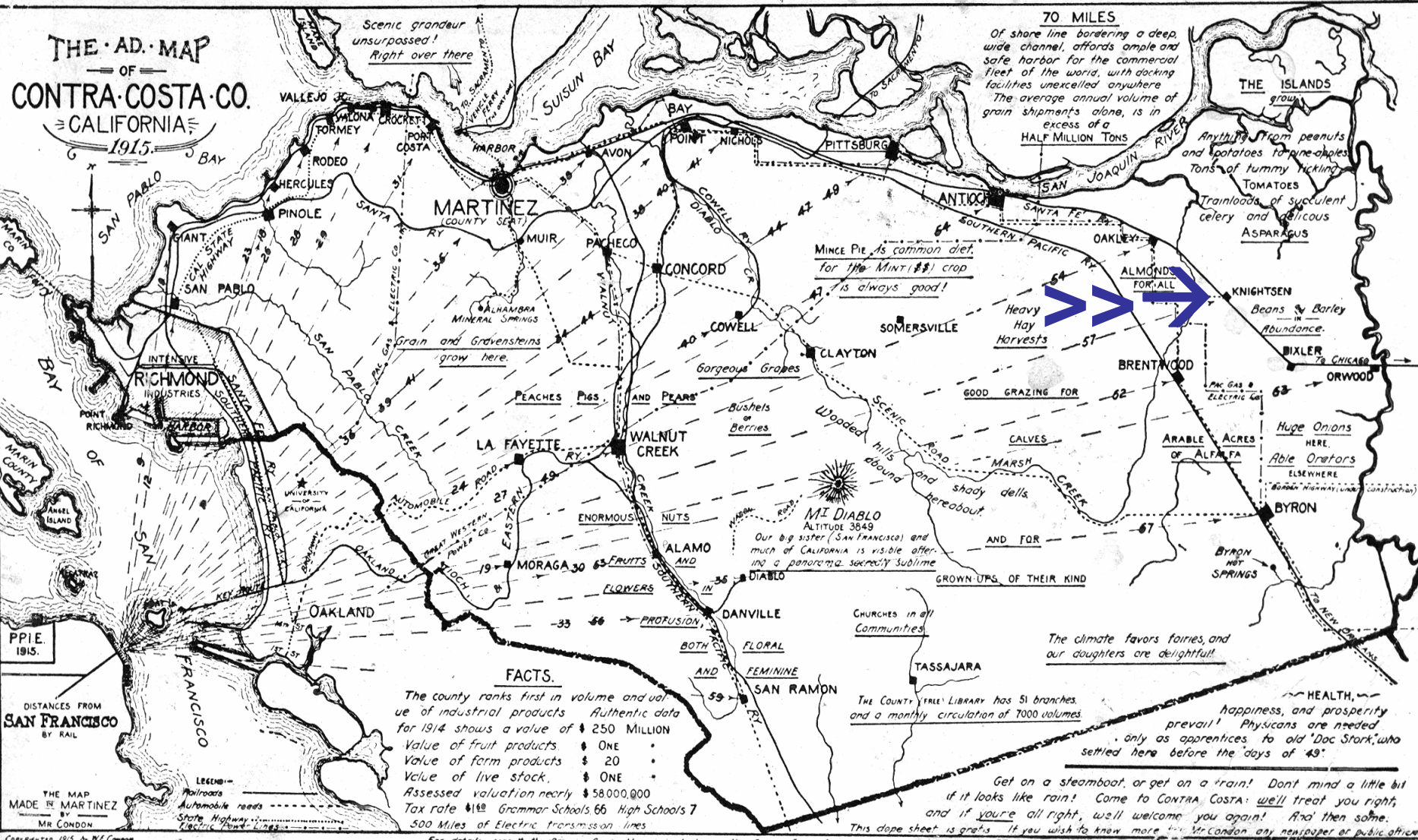
IMPERIAL SALOON  
F. STONE, PROP.  
*Valley Tavern*  
EST. 1912  
BEER

GARAGE

KNIGHTS BAR  
EST. 1912  
OLD FASHIONED BEER

IMPERIAL SALOON

THE AD·MAP  
OF  
CONTRA-COSTA CO.  
CALIFORNIA  
1915



**FACTS.**  
The county ranks first in volume and value of industrial products. Authentic data for 1914 shows a value of \$250 MILLION.  
Value of fruit products \$ ONE  
Value of farm products \$ 20  
Value of live stock \$ ONE  
Assessed valuation nearly \$58,000,000  
Tax rate \$1.00  
Grammar Schools 66 High Schools 7  
500 Miles of Electric transmission lines

70 MILES  
Of shore line bordering a deep, wide channel, affords ample and safe harbor for the commercial fleet of the world, with docking facilities unexcelled anywhere. The average annual volume of grain shipments alone, is in excess of a HALF MILLION TONS.

Any thing from peanuts and potatoes to pine-apples. Tons of tummy tickling TOMATOES. Trainloads of succulent celery and delicious ASPARAGUS.

Mince Pie, as common diet for the MINT (\$\$) crop is always good!

Beans & Barley in Abundance.

Huge Onions here. Able Onions elsewhere.

Arable Acres of ALFALFA.

WOODED SCENIC hills abound and shady dells.

HEALTH, happiness and prosperity prevail! Physicians are needed only as apprentices to old 'Doc Stark,' who settled here before the 'days of '49'.

Get on a steamboat, or get on a train! Don't mind a little bit if it looks like rain! Come to CONTRA COSTA: we'll treat you right, and if you're all right, we'll welcome you again! And then some.

DISTANCES FROM SAN FRANCISCO BY RAIL

THE MAP MADE BY MARTINEZ BY MR. CONDON

COPYRIGHTED 1915, BY P.P.I.E.

For details consult the Official County Maps on display in the CONTRA COSTA COUNTY booth, CALIFORNIA BUILDING, P.P.I.E. Compiled & Published by ARNOLD & GLASS, MARTINEZ CAL.

Record-Herald Co., Richmond, Cal.

Contra Costa County Promotional Map c. 1915 Knightsen shown

# Area of Concern and Proposed Proclamation

- The entire Community of Knightsen covers about fourteen square miles. The entire area remains rural. The two areas of preservation proposed would be about  $\frac{1}{2}$  square mile or two separate defined areas as described below.
  - **Area #1** ~ To the South located on Sellers Ave is **The East Contra Costa Historical Society** ( Just north of the East Bay Mud Right of Way) 3890 Sellers Ave.
  - **Area #2** ~ To the North is 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Knightsen Ave. **The Original Townsite Established in 1898, as described in Contra Costa County Board approval dated August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1921**

# Two Significant Historical Locations in Knightsen

**#1) The East Contra Historical Society (Site of the Nail Ranch)** located on Sellers dates back to the 1860's and today is the East Contra Costa Historical Society Property. The Society solely operates by volunteers and donations.

**#2) The Townsite of Knightsen** as settled dating back to 1883. Knightsen was named in 1898 by George Washington Knight, the AT&SF Railroad and U.S. Postal Service

# Area #1

## East Contra Costa Historical Society







**Eden Plain School House  
First Knightsen Area School c. 1868 remains today in Area #1**



**Original Nail Home c. 1860's remains today in Area #1**



jag

**Second Nail Home c. 1870s remains today in Area #1**

# Area #2

## Original Knightsen Townsite

### Established 1898



# Historical Facts

- **George W. Knight propagates and introduces The Klondike Almond from Knightsen at the 1904 Worlds Fair in St. Louis.**
- **Knightsen Farm Bureau Established 1918. Building constructed 1922 on multiple lots donated by G.W. Knight.**
- **Record shipments ( largest in California) of milk ( 2,500 Gallons a day) was shipped through Knightsen Depot during the 1920's**
- **Butch Columbo (resident of Knightsen) was a team member of the Cleveland Browns Baseball Organization.**
- **Knightsen Irrigation District formed in 1920 to irrigate 10,000 acres of local farmlands.**



Record Milk Shipments, Knightsen



**Knightsen Farm Center c. 1922 remains today in Area #2**

# KNIGHTSEN TOWNSITE

BEING A PART OF THE S.E. 1/4 OF SECTION 32, T.2 N. R.3 E., M.D.D. 8.M., CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.  
GEOGRAPHICAL CENTER OF THE KNIGHTSEN IRRIGATION DUCT.

## CERTIFICATE OF ENGINEER

I, W.F. Woolley, hereby certify that I am an, and that, at the time of making this map and the survey in which it is based, I was a Civil Engineer, that the map was drawn by me and from my own survey of the ground.  
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND  
THE Twenty fourth DAY OF September, 1920.  
W.F. Woolley

## CONSENT OF OWNER

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS: THAT THE UNDERSIGNED ARE OWNERS OF THE TRACT OF THIRTYFOUR ACRES OR THEREABOUTS SHOWN ON THIS MAP, THAT ALL ROADS AND SIDEWALKS SHOWN ON THIS MAP ARE HEREBY DEDICATED FOR PUBLIC USE.  
G. W. Knight George Thomas Thomas White  
H.W. Heidorn D. M. Heidorn S.C. Christie Helen S. Heidorn  
J.A. Bartlett J. Annen L. B. Bartlett Mrs. L. B. Bartlett  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF CONTRA COSTA D.S.  
I, W.F. Woolley, a Notary Public in and for the County of Contra Costa, State of California, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original as presented to my office in the County and State aforesaid, the day and date therein first written.  
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND AND AFFIXED MY OFFICIAL SEAL, AT  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, THIS 30th DAY OF October, 1920.  
W.F. Woolley  
Notary Public in and for the County of Contra Costa, State of California.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF CONTRA COSTA D.S.  
I, W.F. Woolley, a Notary Public in and for the County of Contra Costa, State of California, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original as presented to my office in the County and State aforesaid, the day and date therein first written.  
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND AND AFFIXED MY OFFICIAL SEAL, AT  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, THIS 25th DAY OF June, 1921.  
W.F. Woolley  
Notary Public in and for the County of Contra Costa, State of California.

## CERTIFICATE OF COUNTY AUDITOR

COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, THAT THERE ARE NO LIENS FOR QUARTY, STATE, COUNTY OR OTHER TAXES, EXCEPT TAXES NOT YET PAYABLE, AGAINST THE TRACT OF LAND SHOWN WITHIN THE RED LINES ON THIS MAP OF KNIGHTSEN TOWNSITE.  
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND THIS 25th DAY OF July, 1921.  
W.F. Woolley  
County Auditor of Contra Costa County, California.

## APPROVAL OF COUNTY ASSESSOR

APPROVED Nov 12th A.D. 1920 BY W.F. Woolley COUNTY ASSESSOR OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

## APPROVAL OF COUNTY SURVEYOR

APPROVED July 22nd A.D. 1921 BY W.F. Woolley COUNTY SURVEYOR OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

## CERTIFICATE OF FILING OF BOND

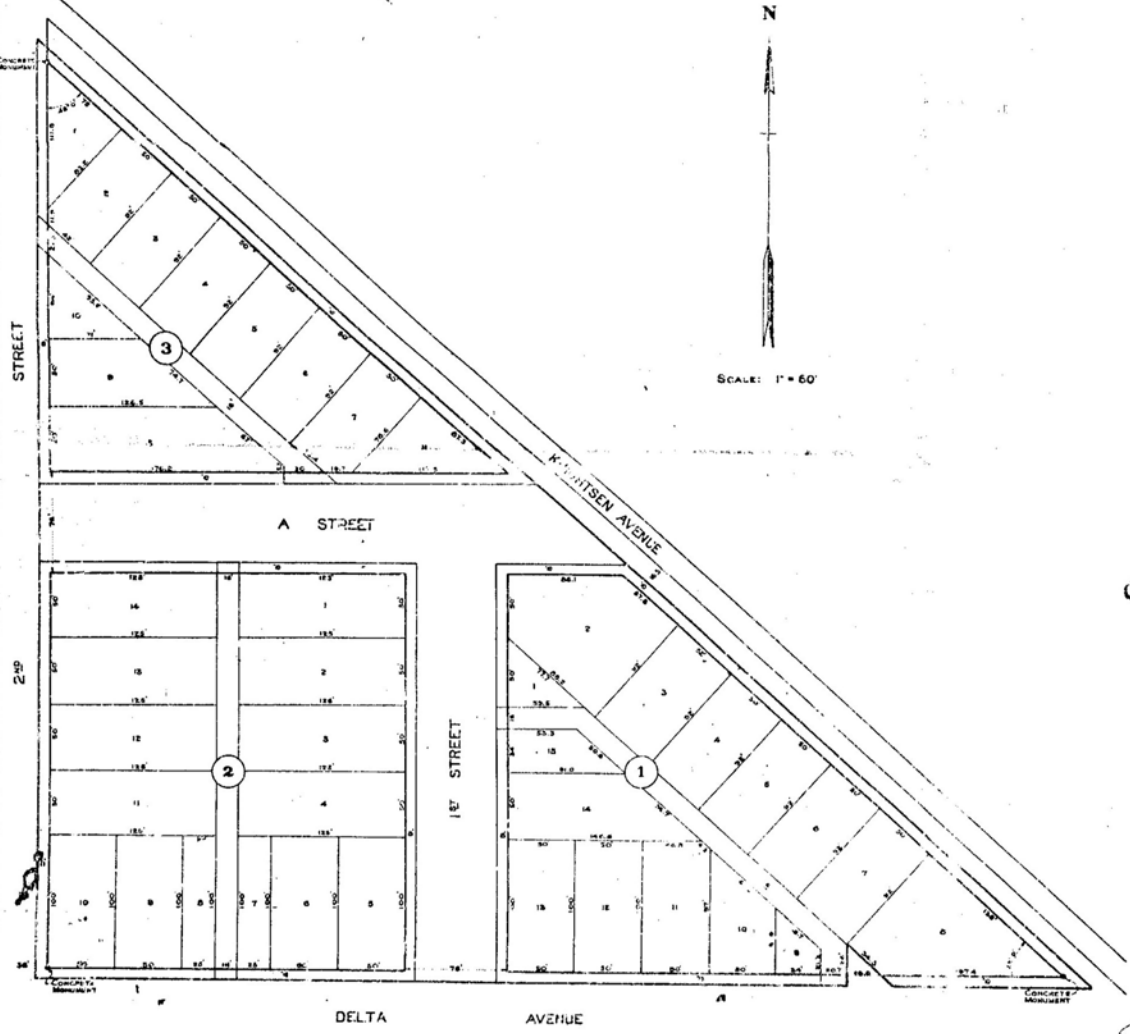
I, W.F. Woolley, hereby certify that I am a member of the Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County, California, that there has been acquired and filed in said Board of Supervisors a good and sufficient bond approved by and in an amount fixed by the said Board of Supervisors, and that the same has been made to secure to the benefit of Contra Costa County, California, the County within the tract shown on this map is dedicated, conditioned for the payment of all taxes, bonds, at the time of the filing of this bond, are a lien against said tract, or any part thereof, but not yet payable.  
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND  
THIS 13th DAY OF August, 1921.  
W.F. Woolley  
Clerk of Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County, California.

## APPROVAL OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

HEREBY CERTIFY THAT SAID BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IS THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE COUNTY, HAVING CONTROL OF PUBLIC HIGHWAYS, IN THE TERRITORY SHOWN ON THIS MAP.  
AND THAT, AFTER EXAMINATION SAID MAP, IT WAS ON THE 13th DAY OF August, 1921, SUBMITTED TO SAID BOARD OF SUPERVISORS FOR APPROVAL AND THAT, AFTER EXAMINATION SAID MAP, IT WAS ON THE 13th DAY OF August, 1921, AT A REGULAR MEETING OF SAID BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, ONLY APPROVED BY SAID BOARD OF SUPERVISORS THAT THE SAME WITHIN SAID BOARD OF SUPERVISORS (DID NOT) ACCRUE IN BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC AS SIDEWALKS AND SIDEWALKS ON THIS MAP SHOWN TO BE OPENED FOR DEDICATION.  
THAT THE SIGNATURES OF APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE HAS BEEN MADE BY ME AT THE DIRECTION OF SAID BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND  
THIS 13th DAY OF August, 1921.  
W.F. Woolley  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County, California.

## CERTIFICATE OF COUNTY RECORDER

FILED AT THE OFFICE OF Richard H. ... COUNTY RECORDER OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
THIS 13th DAY OF August, 1921.  
Richard H. ...  
County Recorder of Contra Costa County, California.



Knightsen Townsite recorded and approved by Contra Costa Board of Supervisors early c. 1900's, Description and Proposed Area #2



KNIGHTSEN TOWNSITE

SHEET NO 2 OF 2 SHEETS

The First National Bank of Antioch, a corporation, the Mortgagee of a portion of the property designated and delineated within the red lines on the annexed map of KNIGHTSEN TOWNSITE does hereby consent to the making of the said map, and that it be approved by the Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County, California, and filed and recorded in the office of the County Recorder of Contra Costa County, State of California.

Dated May 31, 1921

The First National Bank of Antioch.  
By J. H. West President  
By Hubert A. West Secretary

The Bank of Oakley, a Corporation, the Mortgagee of a portion of the property assigned and delineated within the red lines on the annexed map of KNIGHTSEN TOWNSITE does hereby consent to the making of the said map and that it be approved by the Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County, California, and filed and recorded in the office of the County Recorder of Contra Costa County, State of California.

Dated May 31, 1921

The Bank of Oakley  
By J. C. Anderson President  
By J. C. Anderson Secretary

State of California } ss.  
County of Contra Costa }

On this 31<sup>st</sup> day of May, in the year of our LORD one thousand nine hundred and twenty one, before me H. W. Fairborn, a Notary Public in and for the County of Contra Costa, State of California, residing therein duly commissioned and sworn, personally appeared J. H. West and Hubert A. West known to me to be the President and Secretary, respectively, of the Bank of Antioch, the corporation that executed the foregoing instrument, and they acknowledged to me that said Corporation executed the same.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal, the day and year in this certificate first above written

H. W. Fairborn  
Notary Public in and for the County of Contra Costa, State of California.

State of California } ss.  
County of Contra Costa }

On this 31<sup>st</sup> day of May, in the year of our LORD one thousand nine hundred and twenty one, before me H. W. Fairborn, a Notary Public in and for the County of Contra Costa, State of California, residing therein, duly commissioned and sworn, personally appeared J. C. Anderson and J. C. Anderson known to me to be the President and Secretary, respectively, of the Bank of Oakley, the Corporation that executed the foregoing instrument, and they acknowledged to me that said Corporation executed the same.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal, the day and year in this certificate first above written

H. W. Fairborn  
Notary Public in and for the County of Contra Costa, State of California.

Knightsen Townsite

Bonded, Notarized, Approved, and Recorded by Contra Costa County



jag

**Delta Road c. 1913      These Homes remain today in Area # 2**



**Addie Knight Duff Home 1<sup>st</sup> Street c. 1918 remains today in Area #2**

# Historical Facts

- **Johnny Schneider (born in Knightsen) named World Champion Cowboy 1931.**
- **Knightsen Garden Club established in 1936 continues today and meets in the historic Heidorn Building (donated to the society in the 1960's).**
- **Knightsen 4H (founded in 1934) is the longest continuing in Contra Costa County.**
- **Knightsen resident Theodore Teddy Ohmstede was Justice of the Peace in far east county. He is also honored with Liberty High School District Baseball Field naming for his well known work with youths.**
- **Knightsen resident Edna Heidorn Hill (attended Eden Plain School with Addie Knight) became a local school teacher and was honored with her name on Brentwood's Edna Hill School.**



## Wristen Home

**Wristen Home Knightsen Ave. c. 1915 remains today in Area #2**



jag

**Ohmstede Store and today U.S. Post Office  
Knightsen Ave c. 1920's remains today in Area #2**



**Heidorn Building c. 1904 Duff Store 1920's  
In use and remains today in Area #2**

# Historical Facts

- **Knightsen provided irrigation pipe for East Contra Costa County farmers and beyond. Kristich Pipe Company, one of the largest in California, is located in Knightsen and King City.**
- **Passenger train service in Knightsen continued for seventy-seven years from 1899 to 1976.**
- **Knightsen Post Office continues today and was established in 1898. G.W. Knight was the first Postmaster. Postmasters that followed were H.W.Heidorn, Rena Ohmstede Post, Margaret Hell, Myrtle Pykron, Theresa Shahan, and today Carol Halsey.**
- **Knightsen Frontier Spirit, a wild mustang horse gentled in Knightsen, was one of only four horses chosen and displayed at the winter Olympics in 2002. Frontier Spirit continues to be boarded in Knightsen.**



# Kristich Pipe, Knightsen





**KNIGHTSEN AVE.**

**Knightsen Ave c. 1920's, main area of proposed preservation Area #2**



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**Packing Warehouse Knightsen Ave. In use and remains today in Area #2**



**Home on 2<sup>nd</sup> and A street recently re-painted, remains today in Area #2**



**Knightsen Volunteer Fire Station In use and remains today in Area #2  
Dedicated as Robert V. Pastor Knightsen Station #94**



**Knightsen Saloon 1890's In use and remains today in Area #2**

# Historical Facts

- **Knightsen became the first location for Dial Telephone service in far east Contra Costa County in 1946.**
- **Sheriff RR Veale, Knightsen Resident served as Sheriff the longest in county history to date (40 years ). In 1898, he was voted in office, which was the same year Knightsen was established.**
- **Knightsen Volunteer Fire Department was formed in 1952. Its Fire Station #94 has been dedicated and named Robert V. Pastor Station #94 by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.**
- **Knightsen became a municipal advisory council in 1994.**
- **Approved by a County Board orderas The Knightsen Town Advisory Council under California State Statue Government Code.**
- **Knightsen establishes a Community Services District with overwhelming majority vote to protect Its borders and identity in 2005.**



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**Home on First Street at Delta c. 1900 In use and remains today in Area #2**





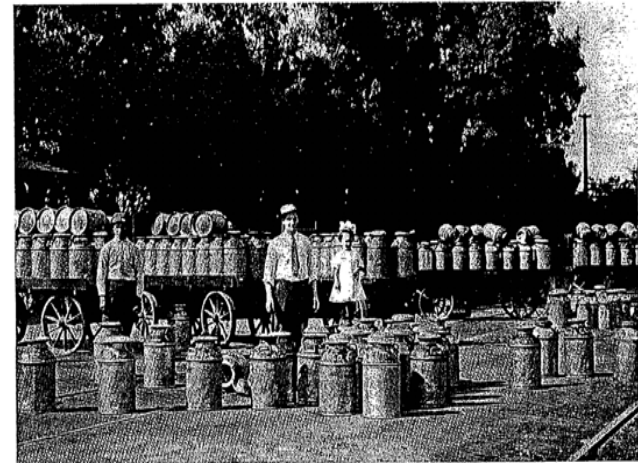
**Railroad Section Home Knightsen Ave.  
c. 1900 In use and remains today in Area #2**

# KNIGHTSEN TIMELINE

The town of Knightsen was founded in 1898 when the Santa Fe Railroad made it's preliminary survey through the area. Knightsen has played an important role in the history of East Contra Costa. Listed below is a timeline of events that took place in Knightsen.

- 1776.....Juan Bautista de Anza, a great Spanish explorer led his men through the Knightsen area. With him was Father Font, who made maps and kept a dairy every day. Font's diary described the landscape, the wildlife, and the Indians living in the area.
- 1840's & 50's....The Tule Lane area near Knightsen was used by John Marsh vaqueros for their annual rodeo.
- 1865.....Lazarus Barkley, a native of Iowa, settled on 160 acres where the town of Knightsen is today. He farmed this land for more than twenty years before selling to George Knight.
- 1868.....Eden Plain School, a one room school house, was built on the John Pierce ranch. Miss Mary Lockhart was the first teacher. Classes were held at this site for thirty eight years. This school merged with Knightsen School in 1912
- 1869.....Christian Heidorn came to Knightsen from Germany.
- 1880.....First almond trees in the area were planted by M.A. Walton, L.G. Barkley, W.F. Pierce, and Oscar Smith.
- 1883.....George Washington Knight, a native of Maine, purchased 110 acres from Lazarus Barkley. This site would later become the town of Knightsen
- 1894.....Richard R. Veale of the Eden Plain District was elected sheriff for the county, a position he held until 1928 for more than 40 years.
- 1898.....Knightsen first appeared on the survey maps of the San Francisco San Joaquin Railway (later the Santa Fe).
- 1899.....George W. Knight became the first postmaster and immediately built a building to be occupied by the new post office and a grocery, the first store in Knightsen. Knight was post master for thirteen years.
- 1900.....The Santa Fe Depot was built. It was designed by W.B. Storey Jr.. The first trains ran through Knightsen.
- 1902.....William Redmond became the town's first blacksmith.
- 1904.....Henry Heidorn established Heidorn General Merchandise.
- 1904.....George Knight exhibited Klondike Almonds that had been grown in Knightsen at the St. Louis Exposition.
- 1905.....A new Eden Plain School was built closer to Knightsen on Delta Road near Knightsen Ave. Four acres were purchased for the new school site. The new structure was completed June 1906, at a cost of \$7,000 for the building and the grounds. The school had three classrooms and a full basement. This building was replaced in 1936 when a new Knightsen School was built.
- 1906.....Walnut Grove Farm, owned by Ernest and Benjamin Burrough was established. This later became Burrough's Brothers Dairy.
- 1908.....Hotchkiss Tract flooded.
- 1910.....Ted Ohmstede moved to Knightsen at the age of three with his family. He graduated from Liberty in 1927; became Justice of the Peace in 1951; was well known for his work with the youth of East County. In 1965 the LUHS sports field was named in his honor.

- 1911.....Gottlieb (better known as George) Somerhalder, a native of Nebraska settled in Knightsen, where he farmed for many years. Somerhalder died in 1953.
- 1912.....Veale Tract of 1700 acres was sold to California Reality Company of San Jose for \$140,000.
- 1913.....Electricity came to town.
- 1916.....Record breaking shipments of celery shipped via the rails from Knightsen.
- 1917.....89 young men from Knightsen signed the roll for the draft (WW1).
- 1917.....Six dairy farmers in the area shipped a daily average of 2,500 gallons of bulk milk on the Santa Fe rails. The six dairies were : Fox, Stone Bros., Bridgeford, Burroughs Bros., Emerson, and Hotchkiss.
- 1917.....Cornelius L. "Sodie" Kriem became station master at the Santa Fe depot. He served in this position until 1938



*Knightsen Dairies shipped 2500 gallons of milk daily - 1917*

- 1918.....Knightsen Farm Center was organized. The first meeting was held on the second floor of the Heidorn Store. The first officers were Benjamin Burroughs, president; Henry Heidorn, vice president; Lillian Fotheringham, secretary; Gottlieb Somerhalder, director. The organization built their clubhouse in 1922.
- 1918.....Henry W. Heidorn became Justice of the Peace.
- 1919.....The Orwood Bridge opened.
- 1920.....Knightsen Irrigation District formed (April 1921 a \$650,000 bond issue was passed to finance the district). The following directors were chosen: Joseph Minta, E.B. Sellers, H.W. Heidorn (the district's first president), Frank H. Estes, and Byron Grigsby. Dr. Bailey was elected assessor, A.H. Shafer collector, and A.E. Bonnicksen treasurer.
- 1920.....John N. Kristich built a concrete pipe manufacturing plant on the southeast corner of Delta Road and Knightsen Ave. In 1926 Kristich sold pipe used by the Knightsen Irrigation District for \$170,000, and Byron Bethany Irrigation District bought pipe valued at \$25,000.



*Krislich Pipe Plant - 1922*

- 1922.....Farm Bureau Center was built. George and Christina Knight, for whom the town was named, sold for \$10 in gold, lots 8, 9, 10, and 11 of block 2, for the club house.
- 1924.....The Knightsen 4-H Club was founded. Paul Somerhalder was the organizations first leader. It is one of the oldest clubs in Contra Costa County. The group conducted an active learning program for the children of Knightsen.
- 1925.....Harold Bloomfields vineyards near Knightsen yielded forty tons. Bloomfield had sixteen acres in Tokay vines, of which ten were three year old vines and six acres were two years old.
- 1926.....Knightsen Irrigation Company consolidated with Brentwood and Lone Tree to create East Contra Costa Irrigation Dist.
- 1931.....Myrtle Pikron replaced Henry Heidorn as Knightsen's postmaster.
- 1931.....George Knight, who founded Knightsen, died at the home of his daughter Addie F. Duff.
- 1931.....Johnny Schneider of Knightsen won the title of World's Champion All-Around Cowboy by sweeping the finals at a rodeo in Los Angeles.
- 1936.....The new Knightsen School was built on Delta Road.
- 1936.....The Knightsen Garden Club was founded by Lillian DeVlieger.
- 1940.....The Knightsen School had an enrollment of 123 students.
- 1940.....Rena Ohmstede was librarian at Knightsen Library.
- 1945.....June Bunn started teaching at Knightsen School where she taught for 37 years, retiring in 1984.
- 1946.....The town of Knightsen had the first dial telephones in Eastern Contra Costa. There were 18 phones served out of the Knightsen exchange.
- 1951.....Ted Ohmstede became Justice of the Peace.
- 1952.....The volunteer fire department formed with fourteen original volunteers. The first fire chief was Stan Duff, grandson of George Knight. Sam Somerhalder was first captain and Angelo Ghigliazza first lieutenant.
- 1958.....Jerry Cocco became Knightsen Volunteer Fire Dept fire chief.
- 1963.....Mrs Irene Hamilton, owner of the Sportsman Club tavern, provided in her will that \$25,000 be given to the Knightsen School District for the use and benefit of young people and children in said school district. These funds were used to build the school swimming pool.
- 1968.....Judge Ted Ohmstede died of a heart attack.
- 1972.....The Santa Fe Station was demolished.
- 1994.....The Knightsen Town Advisory Council (K-TAC) was established on March 8th.  
Until Next Time....

# Timeline provided by Footprints in the Sand

By Historian  
Kathy Leighton

# Assembly



## RESOLUTION

By the Honorable Lynne C. Leach, 15th Assembly District, and  
the Honorable Richard K. Rainey, 7th Senatorial District; Relative to commemorating

### THE TOWN OF KNIGHTSEN

**WHEREAS**, The Town of Knightsen will observe the one hundredth anniversary of its founding on Saturday, September 19, 1998, with a One Hundredth Year Celebration Parade, and in recognition of its progress and growth throughout the years, it is deserving of the special recognition of people throughout the state; and

**WHEREAS**, The Town of Knightsen was founded in 1898 when the Santa Fe Railroad began a preliminary survey through the area to determine where rail tracks would be laid and which right-of-ways should be purchased for a line into Stockton, and the railroad spent more than a year grading the road and laying tracks expecting the first passenger and freight trains to arrive during the spring of 1900; and

**WHEREAS**, Knightsen's first buildings were the Santa Fe station house, railroad station, and pumping plant to supply locomotives with water and supplies; and

**WHEREAS**, The town was named after the George Knight family which stood to lose a portion of their farmland for construction of the railroad, and to assure the town would be named Knightsen, residents wrote to Washington D.C. and secured a Post Office under the name of Knightsen before the railway construction was completed; and

**WHEREAS**, George Knight was commissioned as postmaster in 1899, and he immediately built a post office and grocery store, the first retail establishment in Knightsen, that was quickly followed by an asphalt parking plaza that was built by the Legson Brothers; and

**WHEREAS**, Early settlers planted the almond trees, apricots, grapes, and alfalfa, and dairymen established their dairies in the area; and

**WHEREAS**, Prior to the establishment of the railroad farmers shipped their milk and cream to market on the same vessels that transported fruit and nut crops from Bibbes Landing, a channel off Dutch Slough at the north end of Sellers Avenue, and with the arrival of the railroad these growers and dairymen had easier access to transport their crops and milk to market; and

**WHEREAS**, There were six main dairies shipping a daily average of 2,500 gallons of bulk milk to Bay Area markets, and during the 1920s Knightsen was one of the largest milk shipping depots in California; and

**WHEREAS**, In the early 1900s, the Town of Knightsen consisted of Henry W. Helmsen's general store, a post office, Art Engleb's Saloon, Frank Stone's Imperial Cafe, William Redmond's Blacksmith Shop, a Railroad Depot, several warehouses, and a respectable number of residents; and

**WHEREAS**, In 1924, after an overwhelming election, the Knightsen Irrigation District was formed to irrigate 21,400 acres of local farmland at a cost of \$6,300,000; however, before completion of the project, the district had become part of the East Contra Costa Water District; and

**WHEREAS**, The Knightsen Farm Bureau was organized in 1918 and built a hall in 1922 on three lots donated by George Knight, which later became the heart of the community, and over the years the hall has been used for numerous civic events and as a safe haven for flood victims; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED BY ASSEMBLY MEMBER LYNNE C. LEACH AND SENATOR RICHARD K. RAINEY**, That they take great pleasure in commemorating the Town of Knightsen upon the one hundredth anniversary of its founding, and applaud the town for the outstanding contributions that it has made to the history of California.

Members Resolution No. 2125

Dated this 22nd day of September, 1998

*Lynne C. Leach*  
Honorable Lynne C. Leach  
15th Assembly District

*Richard K. Rainey*  
Honorable Richard K. Rainey  
7th Senatorial District



**State Assembly**  
**Resolution**  
recognizing  
The Town of  
Knightsen's  
100 Years  
Centennial  
1898 to 1998

**EAST CONTRA COSTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

PO BOX 202  
BRENTWOOD, CALIFORNIA 94513

March 2, 2008

Community Development Dept  
Historic Landmark Advisory Committee  
Attn: Dr. Mario Menesini  
651 Pine Street  
Martinez, Cal 94553

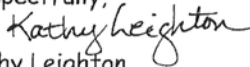
Dear Dr. Menesini,

We are writing you today in reference to the Town of Knightsen.

Knightsen has played a prominent part in the history of East Contra Costa. This community is a railroad town founded in 1898. The first almond orchards in Contra Costa were planted in Knightsen over a century ago. By the early 1900's there were six commercial dairies in Knightsen shipping over 2500 gallons of bulk milk to the Bay Area markets.

We would encourage your committee to designate Knightsen as a historic district, to be included in the Contra Costa's inventory of historic resources. The three areas we suggest being included are: 1) downtown Knightsen, 2) the Knightsen school site, and 3) the ECCHS Museum.

If we can answer any questions or supply you with any historic information please feel free to contact us. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,  
  
Kathy Leighton  
(925) 634-0917

cc: KTAC

Letter of  
Recommendation  
for Historical Inventory  
from East Contra  
Costa Historical  
Society

STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 942849  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0015  
(916) 319-2015  
FAX (916) 319-2115

COMMITTEES  
VICE CHAIRMAN  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
MEMBER  
BANKING AND FINANCE  
TRANSPORTATION

Assembly  
California Legislature



GUY S. HOUSTON  
ASSEMBLYMAN, FIFTEENTH DISTRICT

DISTRICT OFFICE  
1635 CHESTNUT STREET, SUITE A-1  
LIVERMORE, CA 94551  
(925) 606-4990  
FAX (925) 606-4488

SATELLITE DISTRICT OFFICE  
740 THIRD STREET  
BRENTWOOD, CA 94513  
(925) 513-8558

SATELLITE DISTRICT OFFICE  
1666 N. MAIN ST., 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR  
WALNUT CREEK, CA 94596  
(925) 988-6915  
FAX (925) 988-6918

May 1, 2008

Community Development Department  
Historic Landmark Advisory Committee  
Attn: Dr. Mario Menesini  
651 Pine Street  
Martinez, CA 94553

Dr. Menesini,

I am writing you today to give my full support to the Town of Knightsen and the East Contra Costa Historical Society in their request to be included in the Contra Costa County registry of historical landmarks.

Knightsen has a rich history dating back as far as 1898, and has played an important role in Contra Costa's agricultural and dairy history. The East Contra Costa Historical Society has further chronicled Knightsen's fascinating evolution from the almond orchards of a century ago to the present day.

I urge you to approve their addition to the registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Guy S. Houston".

Guy S. Houston  
Assemblyman, 15<sup>th</sup> District

# Letter of Recommendation for Historical Inventory from Assemblyman Guy Houston

**Knightsen Garden Club**  
Community Center  
P.O. Box 23  
Knightsen, CA. 94548

Community Development Department  
Historic Landmark Advisory Committee  
Attn: Dr. Mario Menesini  
651 Pine Street  
Martinez, CA. 94553

April 16, 2008

Dear Dr. Menesini,

Knightsen was founded in 1898 when the railroad came and was the main shipping point for Far East County. Knightsen played a prominent part in Contra Costa County's dairy and agricultural business for many years.

The Knightsen Garden Club is requesting that the Landmark Committee designate the downtown area of Knightsen as a historic district, to be included in the Contra Costa County's inventory of historic resources.

Respectfully,



Seth Cockrell  
President

cc: Supervisor Mary N. Piepho, District III  
KTAC

Letter of  
Recommendation  
for Historical  
Inventory  
from Knightsen  
Garden Club



**Knightsen Town Advisory Council (KTAC)**

P.O. Box 170 Knightsen, CA 94548

12/31/07

John Gonzales  
2940 Eden Plains Rd.  
Knightsen, CA 94548

RE: Historical District

Dear Mr. Gonzales:

Thank you for your presentation on the benefits of establishing parts of the Knightsen Community as a Historical Sites. It has been the long standing position of the Knightsen Town Advisory Council to preserve its heritage and rural identity. The Town Council unanimously supports pursuing the possibility of having the Knightsen Downtown Area and the Historical Society Site identified for historical preservation.

The Knightsen Town Advisory Council thanks you for your efforts in this matter, and is willing to give any continued support along the way in achieving this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alvin J. Simas Jr.".

Alvin J. Simas Jr. (Chairman)

Letter of  
Recommendation  
for Historical  
Inventory  
from Knightsen  
Town Advisory  
Council





County Supervisor Mary Nejedly Piepho, District III

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEES

Finance Committee

Legislation Committee

Family & Human Services Committee

Transportation, Water & Infrastructure Committee

Local Agency Formation Commission

Delta Protection Commission

State Route 4 Bypass Authority

eBART Partnership Policy Advisory Committee

East Contra Costa Regional Fee & Finance Authority

Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority

Airport Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Dougherty Valley Oversight Committee

East Contra Costa Habitat Conservation Plan Association, Executive Governing Board

TRANSPLAN

Tri-Valley Transportation Council

Library Regional: South & East

San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee

South West Area Transportation

April 28, 2007

Steve Lawton, Chair  
Contra Costa County Historical Landmark Advisory Committee  
c/o CCC Community Development Dept.  
651 Pine Street  
Martinez, CA 94553

Dear Chair Lawton,

I am writing to express my support for the Knightsen Town Advisory Council's interest in designating two sites in the Knightsen area, the downtown and the East County Historical Society Property, as historical sites.

The Knightsen Community was established in 1898 and thus has a rich history in Contra Costa County. I believe that the designation of these two areas will be a positive addition to the County's current list of historic landmarks and further secure the community's future.

I look forward to continuing this process and working together towards a historical designation for the Knightsen community.

As always, it is an honor to work with you in service to the citizens of Contra Costa County.

Sincerely,

MARY NEJEDLY PIEPHO  
County Supervisor, District III

*Thank you for consideration*

Cc: Al Simas, Knightsen Town Advisory Council  
Ruben Hernandez, CCC Community Development Dept.

MNP:kc

Letter of  
Recommendation  
for Historical Inventory  
from District III  
County Supervisor  
Mary Piepho

**Federal D. Glover**

Supervisor, District Five  
Contra Costa County  
Board of Supervisors



315 East Leland Road  
Pittsburg, CA 94565  
(925) 427-8138  
(925) 427-8142 Fax  
(925) 634-5915 Toll Free

May 2, 2008

Community Development Department  
Historic Landmark Advisory Committee  
Dr. Mario Menesini  
651 Pine Street  
Martinez California 94553

Dear Dr. Menesini:

As the current chair of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, and the Supervisor for the Knightsen area before redistricting, I encourage the Historical Landmark Advisory Committee to consider preserving the heritage and rural identity of the Knightsen community by designating the downtown area and the East Contra Costa Historical Society site as a historic district recognized by the Contra Costa County's Inventory of historic resources.

As a railroad town founded in 1898 and the main shipping point of far east County, Knightsen played a prominent part in local history by hosting the first almond orchards in the county, planted over a century ago, and six commercial dairies shipping over 2500 gallons of bulk milk to the Bay Area markets in the early 1900's.

Your consideration for in this matter is appreciated.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Federal D. Glover".

Supervisor Federal D. Glover, Chair  
Contra Costa Board of Supervisors

# Letter of Recommendation for Historical Inventory from District V County Supervisor Federal Glover

E-Mail: [dist5@bos.cccounty.us](mailto:dist5@bos.cccounty.us)

Antioch • Bay Point • Bethel Island • Oakley • Pittsburg

# Quantity of Parcels and Structures Within Areas #1 and #2

The number of original parcels to be included is forty-one. Some have been combined over the years making the quantity much less.

The number of remaining structures, some dating back to the 1800's, is twenty five

Contra Costa County  
Community Development Department  
Historical Landmarks Advisory Committee (HLAC)

**APPLICATION FOR NOMINATION**

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY**

NAME OF HISTORIC PROPERTY

*KNIGHTSEN TOWNSITE & ECC HISTORICAL SOCIETY*  
*KNIGHTSEN 94548 & 3890 SELLERS AVE.*

CITY/STATE

*KNIGHTSEN, CALIFORNIA.*

AREA/VICINITY

*EAST CONTRA COSTA*

COUNTY

*CONTRA COSTA COUNTY*

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO.

*VARIOUS*

NAME OF OWNER OF HISTORIC PROPERTY

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE

NAME OF APPLICANT

*KNIGHTSEN TOWN ADVISORY COUNCIL*

APPLICANT TELEPHONE NO.

*925-260-4728*

ADDRESS

*P.O. BOX 170 KNIGHTSEN, CA. 94548*

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE

*CONTACT: JOHN A. GONZALES ACT. COUNCIL PERS*

Please Complete this Application Form and Submit the Following Applicable Attachments at Least **Four** (4) Weeks Prior to the Next HLAC Meeting. **Six** (6) Copies of the Entire Application Package are Required.

- Letter Describing the Resource and Reason(s) for Nomination
- Sketch Map/Vicinity Maps/Ortho Photos
- Photographs
- Supplemental Materials/Information (if available)
- If applicable, provide owner's approval of nomination

**Please Submit the Application Package to:**

**Ruben Hernandez**  
**Community Development Department**  
**651 Pine Street, North Wing - 4<sup>th</sup> Floor**  
**Martinez, CA 94553**

**Phone: 925-335-1339 • Fax: 925-335-1222**

Application Letter  
For  
Knightsen

# HISTORICAL LANDMARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## ROSTER

Seat Title: Community Development Director  
Representative: Dennis M. Barry, AICP  
Appointed: February 12, 2002

Seat Title: Contra Costa County Historical Society Seat 1  
Representative: Dr. Mario M. Menesini  
Appointed: June 22, 2004

Seat Title: Contra Costa County Historical Society Seat 2  
Representative: Stephen R. Lawton  
Appointed: February 13, 2007

Seat Title: Contra Costa County Historical Society Seat 3  
Representative: Dr. Joseph R. Mariotti, M.D.  
Appointed: July 8, 2003

Seat Title: Contra Costa County Historical Society Seat 4  
Representative: Carol A. Jensen  
Appointed: February 13, 2007

+ + + + + + +

Staff: Ruben Hernandez, Senior Planner  
Contact Number: 925-335-1339

# Area #1 Overview



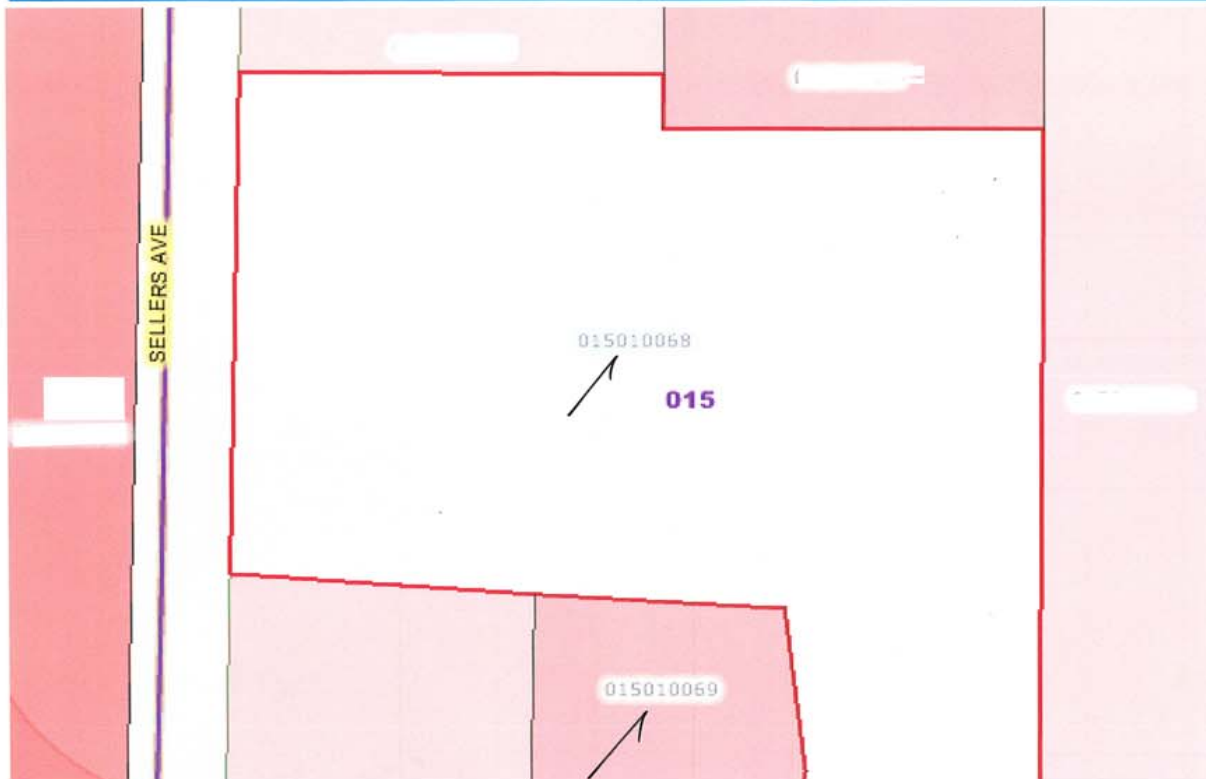
# Parcel Numbers

Contra Costa County

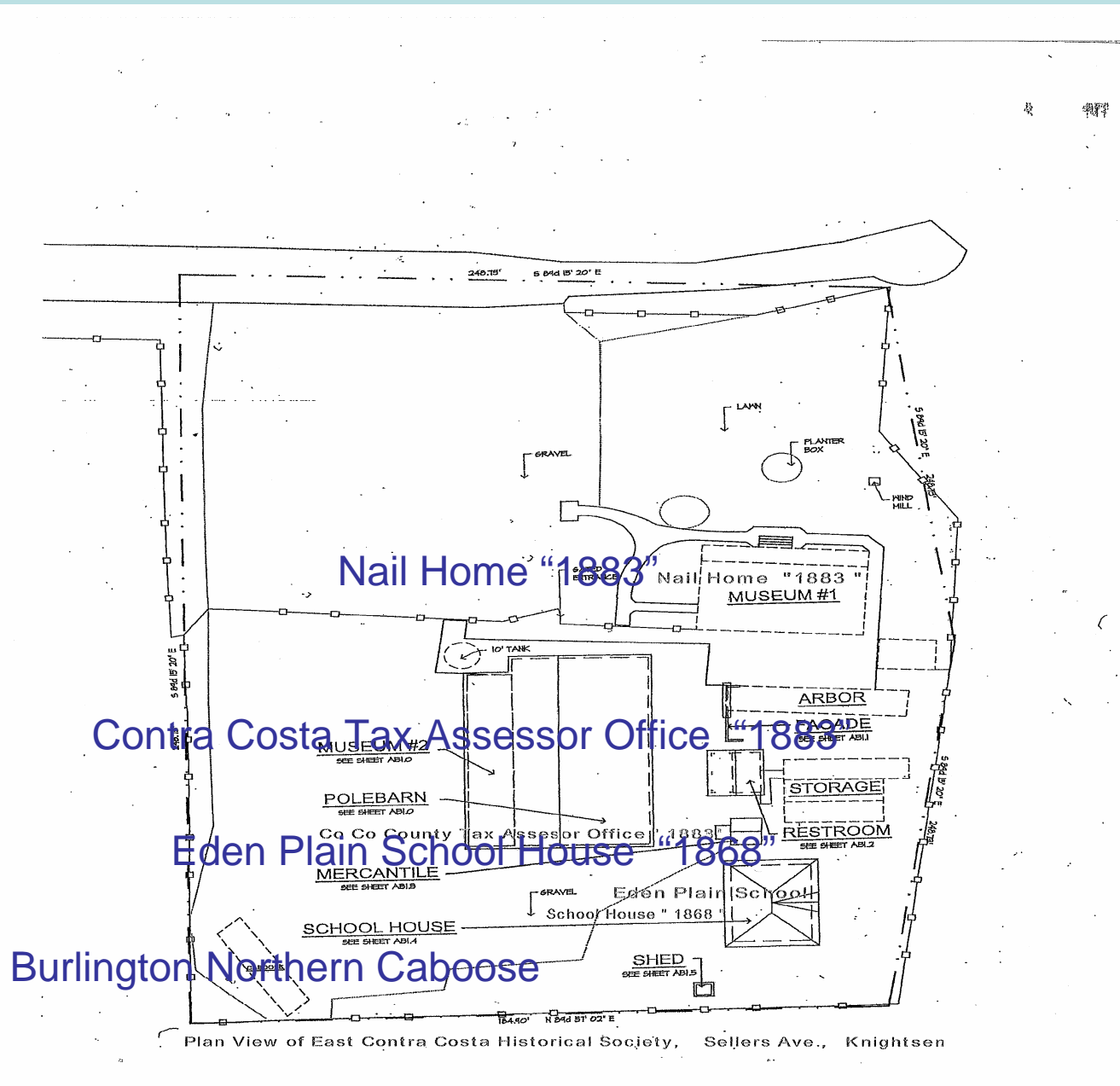


**Contra Costa County**  
*California* Mapping Information Center

Map



# Area #1 ECCHS Plot Plan





# List of Parcels Area #1

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	
1	APN	SITUS_NB	SITUS_ST	SI	SITUS_ST	0	SI	SITUS_CITY	CC	SITUS	Historic Description ( Structures)	NAME	NOTIF_STREE	NOTIF_CITY_S	NOTIF_Z	NOTIF_ZIPCODE	EXT		
2	15010068	3900	SELLERS		AVENUE			BRENTWOOD	94513		Nail Ranch ~ 1878	Property Owner	708 3RD ST	BRENTWOOD	94513				
3	15010069	3890	SELLERS		AVENUE			BRENTWOOD	94513		Nail Ranch ~ 1878	Property Owner	PO BOX 202	BRENTWOOD	94513				

## Knightsen Historical Area #1 Parcel List and Description

# Area #2 Overview

Contra Costa County

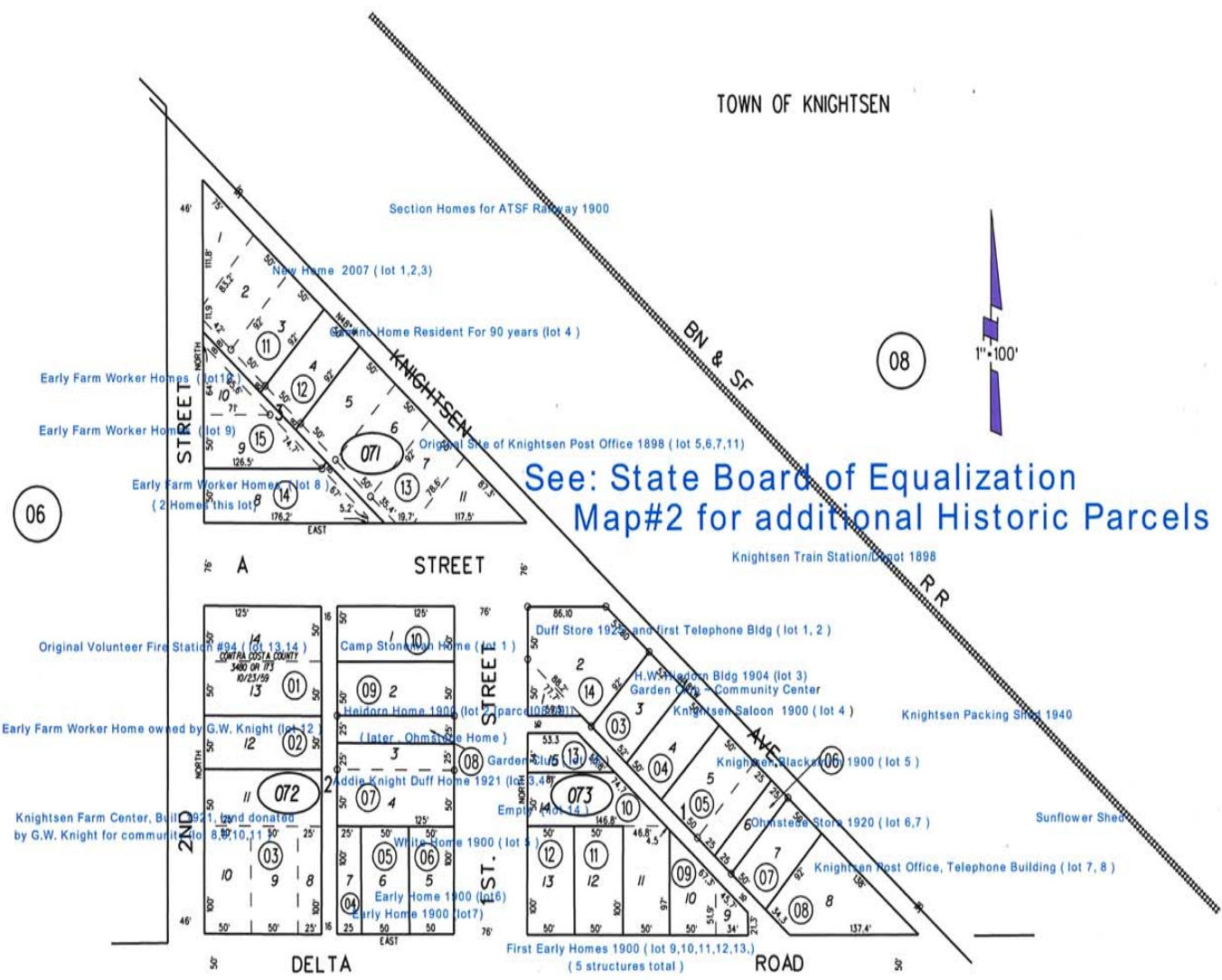


## Contra Costa County *California* Mapping Information Center

Map



TOWN OF KNIGHTSEN



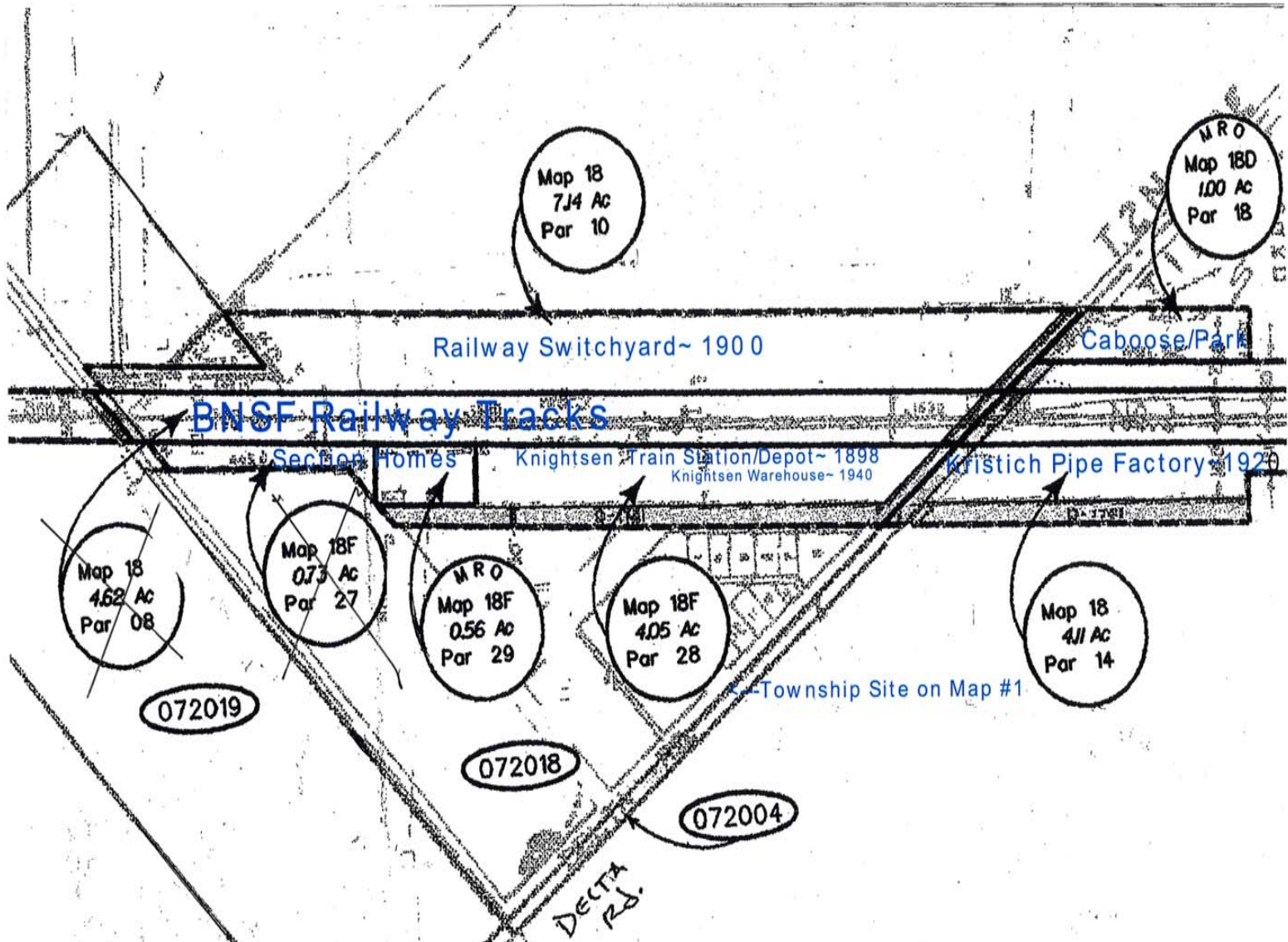
See: State Board of Equalization  
Map #2 for additional Historic Parcels

Knightsen Historical Preservation Area #2  
Map #1 of Area #2  
Contra Costa County Parcel Map

NOTE: THIS MAP WAS PREPARED FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES ONLY. NO LIABILITY IS ASSUMED FOR THE ACCURACY OF THE INFORMATION DELINEATED HEREON. ASSESSOR'S PARCELS MAY NOT COMPLY WITH LOCAL LOT SPLIT OR BUILDING SITE ORDINANCES.

June 2008

- 071
- 072
- 073
- 15
- 12/10/04
- 20



Knightsen Historical Preservation Area #2  
 Map #2 of Area #2

MAP #2 State Board of Equalization Parcel Numbers

# List of Parcels Area #2

APN	SITUS_NB	SITUS_STREE	SITUS_ST	SITUS_ST	SITUS_AP	SITUS_FR	SITUS_CI	SITUS_ZIF	Historic Description	NAME	NOTIF_ST	NOTIF_CITY_STATE	NOTIF_ZIP	NOTIF_ZIPCODE_EX
20072005	1600	DELTA		ROAD			KNIGHTSE	94548	Clark Residence ~ 1900	Property Owner	PO BOX 2	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	275
20071011	3161	KNIGHTSEN		AVENUE			KNIGHTSE	94548	NewHome/not significant	Property Owner	3161 KNIG	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	
20071015	3100	2ND		STREET			KNIGHTSE	94548	Early Farmworker ~ 1920	Property Owner	17616 HOI	GRASS VALLEY CA	95949	7686
20072008		1ST		STREET			KNIGHTSE	94548	Heidorn/Ohmstede Residence~ 1900	Property Owner	PO BOX 3	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	
020200XX									See: BOE Parcels Below	Property Owner				
20073009	1680	DELTA		ROAD			KNIGHTSE	94548		Property Owner	18540 VIS	PIONEER CA	95666	9498
20073005	3041	KNIGHTSEN		AVENUE			KNIGHTSE	94548	Knightsen Blacksmith~1900 (no structure)	Property Owner	3055 KNIG	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	
20073008	3011	KNIGHTSEN		AVENUE			KNIGHTSE	94548	No Structure	Property Owner	PO BOX 2	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	206
20073004	3055	KNIGHTSEN		AVENUE			KNIGHTSE	94548	Knightsen Saloon ~ 1900	Property Owner	PO BOX 4	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	400
20072003	3020	2ND		STREET			KNIGHTSE	94548	Knightsen Farm Center ~ 1921	Property Owner	5554 CLAY	CONCORD CA	94521	4180
20072006	15	1ST		STREET			KNIGHTSE	94548	White Residence ~ 1900	Property Owner	PO BOX 2	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	275
20071012	3121	KNIGHTSEN		AVENUE			KNIGHTSE	94548	Gamino Residence ~ 1920	Property Owner	PO BOX 8	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	
20071013		KNIGHTSEN		AVENUE			KNIGHTSE	94548	Original Post Office Site ~ 1898 ( no structure)	Property Owner	4091 ORW	BRENTWOOD CA	94513	5214
20073011	1660	DELTA		ROAD			KNIGHTSE	94548	First Homes ~ 1900	Property Owner	PO BOX 9	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	98
20080007	1810	DELTA		ROAD			KNIGHTSE	94548		Property Owner	PO BOX 1	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	100
20073013		1ST		STREET			KNIGHTSE	94548	Knightsen Garen Club ~ 1936 no structure)	Property Owner	PO BOX #	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	23
20072007	35	1ST		STREET			KNIGHTSE	94548	Addie Knight/Duff Home ~ 1918 (2 structures)	Property Owner	PO BOX 3	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	369
20072001	15	A		STREET			KNIGHTSE	94548	Volunteer Fire Station ~ 1950s	Property Owner	255 GLAC	MARTINEZ CA	94553	4825
20072002	3050	2ND		STREET			KNIGHTSE	94548	Early G.W.Knight rental ~ 1920s	Property Owner	7255 BAY	JACKSONVILLE FL	32256	6851
20072009	67	1ST		STREET			KNIGHTSE	94548	Heidorn/Ohmstede Residence~ 1900	Property Owner	PO BOX 3	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	
20073012	1650	DELTA		ROAD			KNIGHTSE	94548		Property Owner	PO BOX 1	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	148
20073003	3067	KNIGHTSEN		AVENUE			KNIGHTSE	94548	HW Heidorn Hotel/Garden Club ~ 1904	Property Owner	PO BOX 2	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	23
20072004	1580	DELTA		ROAD			KNIGHTSE	94548	Early Farmworker ~ 1900	Property Owner	PO BOX 2	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	275
20072010	79	1ST		STREET			KNIGHTSE	94548	Camp Stoneman Home ~ 1930s	Property Owner	6801 DON	SACRAMENTO CA	95842	1947
20071014	10	A		STREET			KNIGHTSE	94548	Early Farmworker ~ 1920 ( 2 structures)	Property Owner	10 A ST	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	
20073006	3029	KNIGHTSEN		AVENUE			KNIGHTSE	94548	Ohmstede Store ~ 1930	Property Owner	18540 VIS	PIONEER CA	95666	9498
20073014	3079	KNIGHTSEN		AVENUE			KNIGHTSE	94548	Duffs Market ~ 1925	Property Owner	14 DOBSC	OAKLEY CA	94561	2774
20080005		KNIGHTSEN		AVENUE			KNIGHTSE	94548		Property Owner	255 GLAC	MARTINEZ CA	94553	4825
20073010	1670	DELTA		ROAD			KNIGHTSE	94548	Empty Lot	Property Owner	PO BOX 1	KNIGHTSEN CA	94548	161
20073007	3019	KNIGHTSEN		AVENUE			KNIGHTSE	94548	Ohmstede Store ~ 1930	Property Owner	18540 VIS	PIONEER CA	95666	9498
BNSF	State	Board	of	Equalization	MAP	PARCEL#	ACRES		Historic Description	Property Owner				
					Map18	Par 10	7.14 Ac		Railway Switchyard~1898					
					Map18	Par 14	4.11 Ac		Kristich Pipe Factory~1920					
					Map18F	Par 29	0.56 Ac		Section Homes					
					Map 18F	Par 28	4.05 Ac		TrainStation/Depot/Warehouse					
					Map 18D	Par 18	1.00 Ac		Caboose/Park					

## Knightsen Historical Area #2 Parcel List and Description



# Contra Costa County

*California*

Mapping Information Center

Map



# TOTAL PARCELS AND STRUCTURES

## Area 1

2 Parcels

10 Structures

## Area 2

34 Parcels

37 Structures

# References

- **Contra Costa County Records Office**
- **Pleasant Hill Library**
- **Local lifetime residents**
- **Photos from John A. Gonzales Collection**
- **AT&SF Railroad (Santa Fe Railway)**
- **East Contra Costa Historical Society**
- **Historian Kathy Leighton**
- **Book: *Footprints in the Sand***
- **California Department of Equalization**
- **Contra Costa County Tax Assessor**
- **Physical Viewing of Structures**