

EL CERRITO, CALIFORNIA

El Cerrito, Spanish for "Little Hill," is a bustling and modern community today, sandwiched between Albany and Richmond along busy San Pablo Avenue. Quaint houses in the hills look down upon an active commercial strip with two BART stations, and over the bayfront, where warehouses and processing plants in neighboring Richmond hum night and day. But as modern as this community is, its roots are deep. In the early 1900s, only about 1,500 people lived in these hills, then a scruffy cattle-grazing enclave known as Rust. Founder William Rust had a blacksmith shop at the site of the present-day Ace Hardware. Soon, the community's name was changed to El Cerrito. A tax was levied on the 20-odd saloons scattered through town so that streets could be paved and a modern city administration could be set up. The town grew steadily, especially in the postwar boom years, and today houses roughly 23,000 people in a pleasant and sylvan bayside environment.

The El Cerrito Historical Society delves into its photographic archive to present a collection of images that tell their community's unique history. Featuring such landmarks as the It Club, the Grand Central Hotel, the original fire station, early businesses, and other sites, this engaging retrospective also pays tribute to those who have, over the last century, called this area home.

The Images of America series celebrates the history of neighborhoods, towns, and cities across the country. Using archival photographs, each title presents the distinctive stories from the past that shape the character of the community today. Arcadia is proud to play a part in the preservation of local heritage, making history available to all.

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