

Mattei's: 1880 – 1962

- 1880** Pacific Coast Railway funds a narrow gauge railroad line to connect San Luis Obispo to points south. Ultimate goal is Santa Barbara.
- April, 1882** Railway reaches Central City (Santa Maria).
- 1885-1886** Felix Mattei builds the modest Central Hotel and restaurant in Los Olivos. Food and lodging is provided for stagecoach travelers between Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo (Until 1887, there was no land route out of Santa Barbara except a stagecoach south towards Los Angeles or a stagecoach north towards San Luis Obispo. The only other land route north was a very narrow trail through Gaviota Pass that was notorious for ambush, robbery and murder).
- 1887** Southern Pacific Railroad arrives in Santa Barbara with service to and from Los Angeles.
- November 1887** Pacific Coast Railway arrives in Los Olivos with service north to San Luis Obispo and the wharves at Avila Beach. Los Olivos becomes the end of the narrow gauge line. Not by coincidence, Mattei's hotel and restaurant is located immediately across the street from the train station. (In 1887, the Southern Pacific Railroad stops in Goleta. The link between Goleta and Surf (west of Lompoc) cannot be completed due to the impassable terrain of Gaviota. In the late 1880s, the money, will, and technology for a coastal rail route through Gaviota did not exist.)
- For fourteen years, the stagecoach line between Santa Barbara and Los Olivos was the only coastal segment between Los Angeles and San Francisco that did not have train service.
- 1887-1901** Having captured the best location at the end of the rail line, Mattei's hotel provides food and lodging for most people traveling between Santa Barbara and Northern California. During this time, Mattei also establishes a stagecoach line between Los Olivos and the Gaviota wharf.
- 1890** The Hotel Los Olivos, constructed by the railroad two years earlier, burns down and Mattei renames his hotel Hotel Los Olivos.
- March, 1901** Southern Pacific finally completes the link between Ellwood and Surf. Stagecoach service is discontinued between Santa Barbara and Los Olivos. All mail and passenger service north is now routed through Gaviota and Lompoc where trains still run today.
- June, 1901** Los Olivos gets its first visit from a "horseless carriage". Mattei's subsequently becomes an Auto Club Blue Diamond destination, only the fourth business to be AAA "approved".
- 1901** Mattei's becomes a popular stop for automobile travelers, and continues its role as a picnic destination for tourists using the narrow gauge rail line until 1933.

- 1910** Mattei begins to display a Mattei's Tavern sign and roughly two years later, paints out the Hotel Los Olivos sign on the building.
- 1900-1915** Mattei builds five cottages to house his guests who come to enjoy fine dining, fishing, hunting, etc., as well as the "west cottage", with 5 bedrooms and a large parlor with a fieldstone fireplace.
- 1911** Mattei ends stage service between Los Olivos and Gaviota. It is alleged to be the last regularly scheduled stage coach in continental United States.
- 1916** Surprisingly, Highway 101 is routed through Buellton, rather than Foxen Canyon, thus bypassing Mattei's. However, Mattei's is "reinvented" as a retreat for the rich and famous, and as a staging area for the film industry.
- 1930** Felix Mattei dies and his son Fred and his wife, Elaine Spaulding Mattei, take over ownership and management of Mattei's Tavern, continuing the family tradition of hospitality until 1962.
- 1962** Mattei's Tavern leaves family hands.

Mattei's: Interesting Facts

1. Mattei's Tavern was built in 1886. At that time:
 - There were only 38 States and only nine States west of the Mississippi.
 - The total population of California was 864,000 (today, San Jose is larger).
 - The total population of Santa Barbara County was 9,513.
 - The president was Grover Cleveland.
2. The famous wicker room was added to Mattei's in 1910.
3. Many famous persons stayed at Mattei's including: Clark Gable, Marjorie Main, Bing Crosby, Herbert Hoover, Harry Chandler, Rosalind Russell, William Jennings Bryan, Montgomery Ward, the Rockefellers and the Vanderbilts.
4. In 1910, Mattei's famous chef, Gin Lung Gin took over the kitchen and stayed until he passed away in the 1947 and is buried in the Oak Hill cemetery in Ballard, along with Felix Mattei.

5. In addition to his business endeavors, Felix Mattei was a Justice of the Peace for 12 years, served on the Los Olivos School Board and was a member of the Masons and the Elks. When he died in 1930, his funeral cortege was three miles long, the largest funeral in the history of the Valley.
6. In 1930, the inaugural event associated with the creation of the Rancheros Visitadores occurred—a springtime ride to Mattei’s Tavern, followed by a celebratory meal.
7. The Keenan-Hartley House, which is a designated Historic Landmark, was moved to the Mattei’s site in 1998.
8. In the early 1970’s, Friends for the Preservation of Mattei’s, Inc., is formed by Leonard Firestone and others with the goal to preserve the tradition and history of Mattei’s for posterity.
9. **Mattei’s is, without a doubt, the second most significant historic site in the Santa Ynez Valley (after Mission Santa Ines) and one of the Top Ten Historic Sites in Santa Barbara County.**

Recognition by Organizations

1. Friends of the Pacific Coast Railway; October 31, 1987. Commemorates Mattei’s as the site of the Los Olivos Coast Railway complex-the end of the line
2. Wells Fargo Old Stagecoach Route-1861 to 1901. Commemorative sign sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank, Goleta Beautiful, Goleta Historical Society, City and County of Santa Barbara, De La Guerra Y Pacheco Chapter 15 E Clampus Vitus et al
3. Native Sons of the Golden West; August 7, 1963. Designation as an historical monument by Santa Barbara Parlor 116 of the Native Sons.

4. On May 12, 1997 the Santa Barbara County Historical Landmark Advisory Commission voted unanimously "to designate the entire Mattei's Tavern property as a Place of Historical Merit."