

SANTA MONICA BAY CITIES

[BEING BOOK NUMBER TWO OF INGERSOLL'S CENTURY SERIES OF CALIFORNIA
LOCAL HISTORY ANNALS]

PREFACED WITH

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
A CONDENSED HISTORY OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

1542 TO 1908

SUPPLEMENTED WITH

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF LOCAL BIOGRAPHY

AND

EMBELLISHED WITH VIEWS OF HISTORIC LANDMARKS AND PORTRAITS
OF REPRESENTATIVE PEOPLE

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CHAPTER XII.

PACIFIC BRANCH NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VETERANS.

THE United States has made liberal provision for the support and care of her volunteer soldiers. After allowing them pensions and land bounties, it became evident as early as 1865 that a large class of disabled and elderly veterans required care and attention which could only be given in an institution especially adapted to the purpose. In consequence of this demand, Congress passed an act establishing a National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, in 1865. Later branches of this home were established in various parts of the United States. These establishments are governed by a Board of Managers, subject to the supervision of the War Department. There are now ten Homes in the United States.

In March, 1887, an act authorizing the establishment of the Pacific Coast branch was passed by congress and in November of that year a commission of which Gen. William B. Franklin, president of the National Board of Managers; Col. William Blanding, of San Francisco; Col. E. P. Brown, Gen. James S. Negley and six other members of the National Board, were members, met in San Francisco to consider the several propositions which had been made for sites for the new branch. A large number of propositions were submitted from every section of the state. Many of these were generous in providing free land and other inducements to secure the Home; but only two offers were made of a free site and also a cash bonus.

The commissioners, after a careful consideration of the proposals, visited the various localities selected as worthy of serious consideration. A number of offers had been made from Southern California localities. One which presented many favorable points was near San Diego. Another very generous offer was that of the Inglewood-Centinella people. The choice in Southern California, however, soon narrowed down to two proposals,—that of the Hesperia Land and Water Co., of San Bernardino county, offering 500 acres of land, with water, and \$250,000 cash; and that of Messrs. Jones, Baker and Wolfskill, offering 300 acres of land, a supply of water equal to 120,000 gallons per day, and \$100,000 in cash—to be expended in improving the grounds.

The commission after going carefully over the land, investigating the sources of water supply and the conditions generally, were banqueted at the hotel Arcadia and left for the north. They left California without announcing a decision; but before reaching Washington, they decided by a vote of eight to two, to accept the Santa Monica proposition. In December, 1887, Col. Charles

Treichel, of Philadelphia, was appointed governor of the new branch and in January, 1888, he arrived on the ground and took charge of the preparations for the establishment of the institution.

The branches are all under the management of the National Board of Managers, with a local manager and a corps of officers. The officials are always men who have served with honor as officers of the United States Army. Colonel Treichel, the first governor of the Pacific Branch, made a brilliant record with the Army of the Potomac. He was several time wounded, and the end of the war found him Major of the Third Pennsylvania Cavalry and Brevet Colonel of the U. S. Volunteers. Under his direction work was begun to supply the grounds selected as the site of the buildings with a sufficient amount of water from temporary wells, while the survey for a pipe line and reservoirs was made under the supervision of Col. Mendell, of the U. S. Survey force. By July 4th, the first building on the grounds, "Junipero cottage" was nearly ready for use by the governor and the flag pole was in place for the raising of the flag which marked the occupancy of the grounds by the U. S. government.

The location of this branch has proved to be almost ideal. Owing to the failure of "boom" laid plans, the cash bonus was not paid to the government by the Wolfskill ranch owners, but in lieu of this they placed at the disposal of the Home a tract of 330 acres, thus giving the government over 600 acres of land, a large part of which was tillable. The site chosen for the buildings was a gently sloping elevation, commanding a fine view, sheltered from winds of the north by mountains and open to the ocean breezes. It was planned to distribute the buildings in the form of a crescent, facing the south, and this general plan has been followed. The early appropriations were not large and at first the buildings were very simple in design and structure. The first barracks were completed in December, 1888, and were at once filled, a number of old soldiers having collected about the Home and been accommodated in camps until the buildings were ready. The dining hall and hospital were also built this year.

Up to the present, eleven barracks have been put up. Each is two stories, surrounded on three sides by verandas and equipped with all modern conveniences. From 150 to 200 men are accommodated in each, under the government of one of their own number who is known as "Captain," who is responsible for the conduct and order of his building.

The dining hall and kitchen have been several times enlarged. The kitchen is provided with every convenience for facilitating the work of preparing three meals a day for from 1,000 to 1,500 people. The dining hall will now seat nearly a thousand men at a time. As the appropriations have come in from year to year, new buildings which provide for the comfort and happiness of the old soldiers have been erected. For many years the library was

located in the Headquarters building; but in 1906 Markham Hall, a handsome structure was erected. On the lower floor is a beautiful and well appointed library and reading room. Above is an assembly room for the use of various societies and public meetings. In 1900 the chapel was erected. This is a pretty building, unique in that under one roof is a Protestant and a Catholic church—separated by a thick wall. The organ in the Protestant chapel was prestend by T. H. Hatch, a member of the home—a musician and composer. The new hospital, built in 1904, is most complete. Here the old veterans receive every attention that can be given in the best equipped of private hospitals. A corps of nurses is employed. Ward Memorial Hall, built in 1898, provides a fully equipped stage and a pleasant gathering place for amusements, concerts, and so on.

The buildings are all surrounded by carefully kept grounds, which are adorned with trees and flowers. This is one of the most beautifully arranged and kept parks in the country, and the climate gives perpetual bloom and greenness, making it a perennial garden of beauty. The many trees which have been set out on the Home grounds have now attained a fine growth and some of the long avenues through the reservation are delightful and enticing drives and walks.

A large amount of hay and grain are raised on the place each year, beside all the vegetables and most of the fruit required for the table. Now the citrus fruit orchards are coming into bearing and considerable shipments of fruit are made beside supplying the Home. Fine stock—cattle, horses and hogs, are kept and thus the Home is in part self-supporting. In 1903-4 the farm is reported as netting \$25,069 to the institution.

The postoffice at the Home was established October 1st, 1889, with Henry T. Lenty as postmaster. In 1895 it was made a money order office with all the facilities of a city office. A large amount of business is transacted yearly through this office, the money order department especially handling an unusual volume of business as many of the members send a portion, at least, of their pension funds to families.

The Home is abundantly supplied with water for domestic use and for irrigation. The first arrangement was a series of reservoirs in Rustic canyon with a pipe line to the grounds. During the dry seasons of 1898-1900 this source of water supply proved insufficient and wells were put down. Later arrangements were made with the West Los Angeles Water Company to supply water and in 1905 the government made an appropriation for a storage reservoir to hold a million gallons of water. This is located on the Home grounds. An electric light and power plant was erected on the grounds and

furnished the needed "juice" for the Home until 1902 when contracts were made with the Edison company to supply the service.

Since the establishment of the Pacific Branch about \$800,000 has been expended by the government in permanent improvements. The annual expenditures of the institution average about \$350,000. Between \$200,000 and \$300,000 is paid annually as pensions to the members of the Home. It will be seen that this means a large amount of money which is annually expended largely in Southern California and much of which is turned into local channels. Beside this, the beautiful grounds and the whole institution is a great attraction and one in which the people of Southern California and particularly of the Santa Monica Bay Region take great pride.

The first governor of the Pacific Branch, Col. Treichel, died March 28th, 1894, having always suffered from the effect of the wounds received during the war. He had shown himself an able man and had brought the institution safely through the most critical years of its existence and created a beautiful and orderly home, well managed and popular among the veterans of the west, for whose benefit it was intended. Col. Treichel had contended with many difficulties and obstacles in laying the foundations of so large an establishment; but he had given himself to the work with great devotion.

Governor Treichel was succeeded by Col. J. G. Rowland, who remained in charge of the Pacific Branch until April, 1897, when he was transferred to the Leavenworth Branch and Col. A. G. Smith, of the Leavenworth Home, was brought here. Governor Smith was a strict disciplinarian and made many new rules and regulations which were intended for the general good; but which some of the veterans felt were infringements of their personal liberty. The feeling against him was strong among a few of the members, although the majority believed that he had only the best good of the institution in view. On September 26th, 1898, Albert Bradley, who had previously shown symptoms of insanity, shot Governor Smith as he was passing through the grounds. It was feared at first that the wound would prove fatal; but no vital point had been touched and Governor Smith recovered although never entirely restored to health again. After this unfortunate affair, he resigned and retired January 1st, 1899. He was succeeded by the present incumbent, General O. H. La Grange.

October 20th, 1899, another tragedy startled and saddened Home circles. Major F. K. Upham had served as quartermaster and treasurer of the Pacific Branch since April 20th, 1895. He was genial, kind and lovable and most popular with the officers and the members. On this morning as he was preparing to go to the railroad station for money to pay the employees, he accidentally struck one of his pistols in such a manner as to discharge the contents

into his body and cause instant death. Great sorrow was felt by members of the Home, by officials and the public generally at this untimely loss. Major T. J. Cochran was appointed to fill the vacant place and still remains in the position.

One of the best-known officers of the Home was Major H. G. Hasse, who for eighteen years filled the office of chief surgeon of the Home. In 1905 he resigned and his place was filled by the appointment of Dr. O. C. McNary, formerly of the Leavenworth Home.

The first member admitted to the Pacific Branch was George Davis, late of Company B, 14th N. Y. Cavalry. He was transferred from the Dayton.



SOLDIERS' HOME.

Ohio, Home and came with Col. Treichel as his clerk. In December, 1888, a number of veterans who had gathered on the grounds in anticipation of the opening of the Home, were received into the barracks. In March, 1889, one hundred members of the Yountville, Cal., Home were brought to the new Home. The Yountville Home had been established in 1883 by private contributions from the G. A. R. and Mexican Veterans' societies. The next year the state adopted it, allowing \$150 for each veteran cared for by the institution. Later it passed under control of the United States government, and is still maintained as a home for members of the G. A. R.

Applications for quarters in the Pacific Branch are always far in advance of the room, for the advantages of climate and favorable location attract many of the "old boys" from other parts of the United States. There are at present 3,619 members, of whom 2,088 are present. The death rate among these old

men is, of course large, yet it is small in this Home, when the age of the men is considered and also the fact that a large proportion of them have been in some manner disabled. At first the National Home was intended only for those veterans who had been so disabled that they were unable to earn a living, and who were dependent. The rules for admission have been gradually broadened until now any veteran who can show an honorable discharge can be received into the Home. Many avail themselves of the privilege temporarily or for only part of the time, thus receiving the benefits of hospital treatment and care when ill.

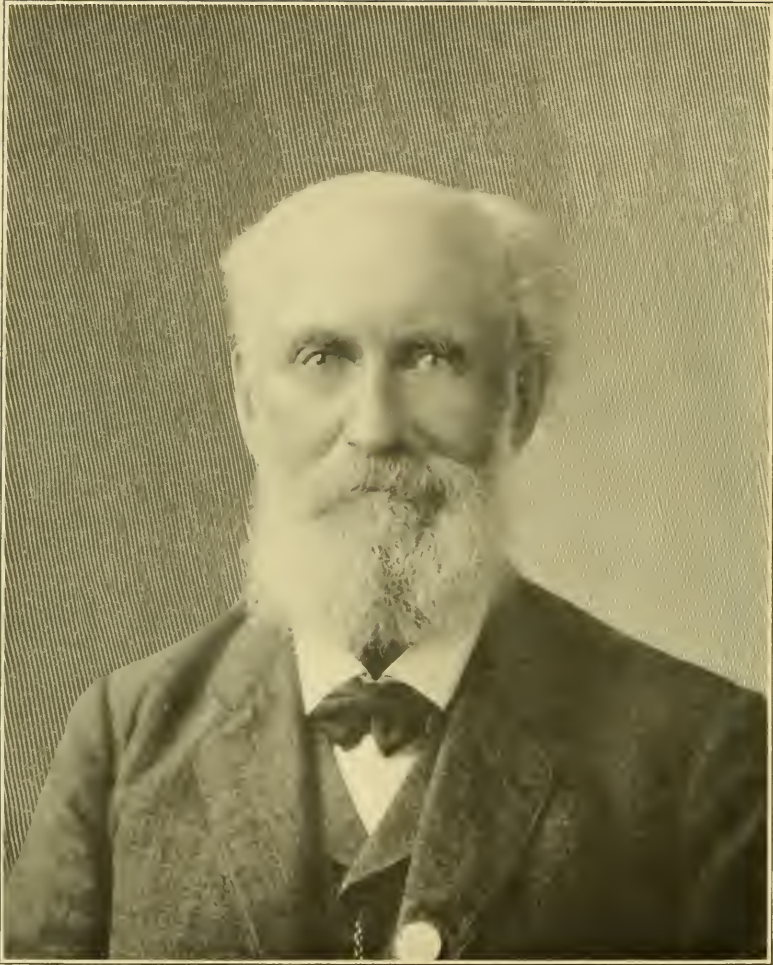
Everything is done to make the institution as homelike as possible and to interfere with the personal liberty of the members as little as possible. Only such discipline as is absolutely necessary to obtain order in a large body of men is enforced. Members of the Home receive pensions, when entitled to them; and as many as are able or desire it, receive employment about the Home, being paid for their services. A number of them have homes at Sawtelle and reside with their families, while receiving the benefits of membership in the Home.

Two Grand Army Posts are maintained, the John A. Martin Post and the Uncle Sam Post. A Masonic society and various other organizations are sustained by the members. Frequent entertainments are given for their benefit in the theater, assembly hall and churches, and the men entertain themselves with tales of their fighting and active days as they sit about the parks and the verandas of their barracks. An abundance of reading matter is supplied by the library and the members are many of them regular subscribers for magazines and daily papers.

In 1898, during the Spanish war excitement, a company of 500 was organized by the old soldiers and volunteered its services in case of need. Had this company of veterans been called into the field, it would have undoubtedly acquitted itself with credit beside younger men.

After "pension day" a large number usually go out on furlough, and some of them spend their money foolishly. Every effort is made to protect them by the Home management and by the city and county officials, yet "blind pigs" and disreputable places exist and the soldiers find them. The arrest of veterans are made much of by the newspapers and the public, yet the proportion of disorder is small and crimes are seldom committed by members of the Home.

The passing of the veterans of the civil war is only a question of a comparatively few years now, and it is only just that every effort should be made by the government and the citizens of the United States to make these remaining years pleasant—at least to provide all possible comforts and care, when necessary, for these heroes of the past.



STEPHEN H. TAFT.

CHAPTER XIII.

SAWTELLE.

THE lands now included in the thriving town of Sawtelle were originally a part of the San Vicente grant. Traces of the old adobe homes of the Sepulvedas; the two springs because of which the name of Santa Monica was bestowed, and of the old burial ground of San Vicente rancho are found here. When, in 1896, Messrs. Sherman and Clark acquired the old Los Angeles and Pacific right of way and proposed to build an electric line to the beach, they asked the citizens of Santa Monica and the Jones and Baker interests for a cash subsidy to aid them in the work. In response to this request, Messrs. Jones and Baker donated to the company a tract of 225 acres, now included in the townsite of Sawtelle. Mr. Sherman soon offered to sell the land for cash as he said he couldn't build a railroad with land. Messrs. R. F. Jones and R. C. Gillis purchased this tract, which lay just south of the Soldier's Home. Up to that time there had been no settlers on this land, the only building being a shack at the railroad crossing which was known as Castle Garden. Messrs. Jones and Gillis considered the possibility of selling this land in small tracts to old soldiers and finally secured from the management of the Home permission for members to build houses and reside outside of the reservation without losing their membership in the Home.

In 1896, Rev. S. H. Taft, who had had past experience in building up a town, having been the original proprietor of the beautiful town of Humboldt, Iowa and the founder and first president of the College of Humboldt, located in that town, was invited to inspect the land of the Pacific Land Company. He gave it as his opinion that it would be quite possible to develop a thriving community here, provided water could be obtained. The company was already putting down wells and was successful in obtaining a fine flow of water from two wells. They put up a 50,000 gallon tank and began to lay pipes and grade streets. In February, 1897, the company asked Mr. Taft to take charge of the new enterprise upon a commission basis. Mr. Taft consented to do so upon three conditions,—1st, That the company should fix a maximum and minimum price upon all lots and acreage in the plat surveyed; and leave him at liberty to sell within the limits named. 2nd, That he should have absolute control of all sales and that no other parties should be given authority to make sales; in case of the company selling lands he to receive his commission on same. 3rd, That his control of the enterprise should continue for five years.

Under this agreement Mr. Taft assumed charge and at once began the

erection of a cottage and office and the transformation of a barley field into a town. The original plat embraced between two and three hundred acres, unbroken by any road except the electric line. The first work was to make a crossing at Fourth street and a little later to secure the co-operation of Governor Smith of the Soldier's Home in opening up Fourth street from the Home buildings through the town plat and also the consent of the San Vicente grant owners to continue the road to the public road from Santa Monica to Los Angeles, thus giving a new and better road than had previously been available to the Home grounds. Trees were set out along Fourth street and other streets were graded and planted with ornamental trees.

The office of the company was opened in "Lawn cottage," May 1st, 1897 and almost immediately Mr. Laird completed a building on the block purchased



FIRST HOUSE ERECTED IN SAWTELLE. 1897.

by him at the corner of Oregon and Fourth, the first lots sold on the new town site. Mr. Laird opened here the first grocery store in the settlement.

Mr. Taft at once took steps to secure a school district. He found in the fall of '97 that there were thirteen children of school age, but the law required fifteen before a district could be formed. Matters came to a standstill until Mr. Taft accidentally learned of a bee keeper who had a ranch about two miles north of the Soldier's Home. He at once drove up to the bee ranch and to his delight found that the bee man had four children of the necessary age. The next day Mr. Taft went before the supervisors with his petition and early in 1898 a new school district was set aside and named Barrett district, after Gen. A. W. Barrett, for many years local manager of the Home and an old friend of Mr. R. C. Gillis. A site was selected for a school house and an acre of ground for school purposes was purchased of the company for \$150.00. During the summer a school house, 10 by 12 feet in size was erected on the east side of Fourth street and in September, 1898, the first school was opened, with Miss Goldsmith as teacher and with five pupils. Mr. Taft had also begun correspond-

ence to secure a post office for the new town. The postal authorities expressed a willingness to establish the post office but objected to the name "Barrett" on account of its similarity to Bassett. Mr. W. E. Sawtelle had lately become interested in the town and his name was suggested; he consented to its use and it was sent on to the authorities who accepted it. This led to the change of name of the school district and town to Sawtelle.

May 25th, 1899, the editor of the *Outlook*, after a visit to Barrett Villa, writes:

"Barrett is yet an infant in age, it being but twelve months since its lots were placed upon the market. But it is a stalwart youth in development and strength. It has several miles of neatly graded streets lined with young palms and other varieties of beautiful trees. It has a church, a model school house, a town hall, a nobby little depot and many beautiful cottages surrounded by well kept grounds.

"Barrett is on the electric car line fifteen miles from Los Angeles and about three miles from Santa Monica. A spur of the Southern Pacific system extending to the Home, touches its eastern limits.

"It lies three miles from The Palms and five miles from Ballona. Broad and fertile fields lie around it in all directions, and a few miles away is the Sierra Madre range of mountains with its towering cliffs, its rugged gulches and its beautiful canyons. Invigorating ocean breezes tempered by a sweep over the land, give it an irreproachable all the year climate. A broad extent of ocean is visible in one direction, and the city of Los Angeles is in view on the opposite side. Underlying strata at a depth of about 70 feet furnish an inexhaustible supply of pure soft water. The surface soil is perfectly adapted to the growth of the lemon and the deciduous fruits, all ornamental trees that adorn Southern California, small fruits, flowering shrubs and plants of every variety, lawns, and garden vegetables.

"Barrett's many advantages are easily set forth. They are:

"Its beautiful location; its accessibility and low rates of fare either from city or seashore; its pure water supply; its adaptability to vegetable growth of every character; its school and church privileges.

"The moderate price asked for building sites and acreage and the liberal terms of payment granted; its peculiar and unequalled climatic advantages; its proximity to one of the most interesting National institutions—the Veteran's Home, with its 2000 members. Several prominent citizens both of Los Angeles and Santa Monica have already purchased lots here and will at once begin improvements upon them. Among these is Mr. Sawtelle of the latter place, who has already beautified a block on one of the principal streets."

The Pacific Land Company had fixed the prices for land at from \$80 to \$100 for inside lots; \$150 to \$200 for corner lots and acreage from \$150 to \$200. A considerable number of old soldiers availed themselves of these prices

to obtain lots or acreage, many of them buying on the installment plan and paying as their pension money came in. It was noticeable that some men who had hitherto squandered their money in dissipation now purchased land and became valuable citizens. Many families of veterans and widows also secured little homes here. Mr. Taft wrote a series of articles for the press setting forth the opportunities offered in the new settlement for obtaining homes and also sent out many circulars which attracted attention. As the town has grown and increased in population, values have also increased very rapidly. Many of the original settlers have now disappeared, having sold out to advantage, or lost their holdings. The town was within the mile and a half limit for saloons



PUBLIC SCHOOL, SAWTELLE.

imposed by the government for the Soldiers' Home, therefore no saloons could be legally maintained within it. This was also an inducement to early settlers.

During 1899 a school house was built on the land purchased for the school at a cost of \$600. This original building is included in the present building, which has been erected at different times as the room was required. July 4th, 1899, the name of the town was formally changed to Sawtelle. At the same time a flag was raised on a sixty foot pole, erected in the park, which was given the name of Gillis park. A school bell which had been purchased by the contributions of the Pacific Land Company and many citizens and soldiers, was put in place and rung for the first time.

The electric people had erected a neat depot and the Holiness church had secured a building on lots at the corner of Second street and Indiana avenue; a number of cottages had been erected and several stores had been opened; among the first merchants were Mr. Shull of the Shull Hardware store; F. B. McComas; Farley Brothers and Wyant, who built Wyant hall.

During 1899 Mr. W. E. Sawtelle became interested in the Pacific Land Company and in 1900 he superseded Mr. Taft as manager of the company and has since been the chief spirit in the various improvements and the steady advance made by the town of Sawtelle.

At the beginning of 1901 about one hundred families had located within the limits of the new town and ten new houses were then in course of construction. Two churches, the Holiness and the Free Methodist had been organized and the Holiness people had secured lots and erected a chapel. The town had a full complement of business houses and the volume of business was surprisingly large. During the year several new blocks were laid out and many sidewalks were laid, streets graded and other improvements made. In February, 1901, the *Pacific Veteran-Enterprise*, was founded by Mr. A. A. Bynon, who later sold the plant to Mr. Fitzgerald. In April, 1902, Miss Susie Pierson Miller became the editor, a position which she still fills.

The fact that water could be obtained almost anywhere in the vicinity of the town by putting down a well and that the soil was fertile and easily worked, made it possible for purchasers of acreage, or even of lots, to raise garden stuff, potatoes, small fruits, and so on, to advantage; while every house is surrounded by flowers and shrubbery. The raising of beans has proved most profitable. Almost every property owner in the vicinity of Sawtelle finds it possible to make a living at least, off from a very small tract of land. This has been the chief reason for the rapid settlement of this locality. The Lindsey tract of 100 acres, the Pacific Farms tract and later the Artesian tract have been added to the original town site of Sawtelle, thus largely increasing its acreage. In 1902 the population was estimated at 500 and more school room became necessary. Bonds to the amount of \$4,500 were voted for an addition to the building.

In 1903 The Pacific Land Company built a two story brick building which contained several stores. In March, the Santa Monica Bank opened its Sawtelle branch in one of these rooms under the management of Mr. Schuyler Cole. The Sawtelle Water Company was incorporated this year with W. E. Sawtelle, W. T. Gillis, J. E. Miles, B. A. Nebeker and A. M. Jameson as directors.

1904 opened with a sensational bank robbery and a destructive fire which, on January 27th swept away several buildings on Fourth street. This year C. B. Irvine started the Sawtelle *Sentinel*, an enterprising weekly, which is now published by Henry Schultz. The town was now well supplied with religious organizations, the Baptist, Methodist, Christian and Seventh Day Adventists having formed churches. A Women's Christian Temperance Union, and a

number of Lodges and Orders had organizations also. The town had now acquired such a population and importance that its citizens began to discuss the propriety of incorporation. Fire protection was needed and some better method of controlling the influx of gamblers and "blind pigs" which had followed Santa Monica's house cleaning efforts. The matter was discussed for more than a year before any decisive action was taken. The Sawtelle Improvement Association was formed during the year and took an active part in the effort to secure incorporation. At a mass meeting held January 6th, 1905, W. B. B. Taylor, S. H. Taft, O. W. Jewett, Henry Schulz and others urged the matter. The question came to vote on August 15th, 1905 and was lost by a vote of 79 for to 130 against. A good deal of feeling and excitement arose over the result. It was proposed that Sawtelle seek annexation with Santa Monica, since she would not establish an adequate government of her own. Petitions to this effect were circulated and the idea was discussed by the Improvement Association; but nothing further came of the proposition.

In 1906 the question of incorporation was again opened. Sawtelle now had a population of 1500 and the necessity for a better form of government was pressing. After a public meeting where the pros and cons were fully discussed, officers for the new town were nominated and on November 16th, 1906 another vote was taken which resulted 241 votes for incorporation and 58 against it. The trustees chosen were C. J. Nellis, chairman; E. E. Mudge, F. C. Langdon, J. E. Osburne and A. J. Stoner; clerk, Leroy Fallis; treasurer, George W. Wiseman; marshal, J. P. Keener; W. B. B. Taylor was appointed city attorney and O. W. Jewett was appointed city recorder. The incorporation included a territory a mile square and extending to the town limits of Santa Monica on the west. The new government has not been able to entirely satisfy all and there has been talk among the dis-satisfied of dis-incorporation; but this is merely talk and the town will continue to advance—not retrograde.

During 1906 Mr. F. E. Bundy erected a handsome two-story brick building on Oregon avenue and several other business blocks were added. The Citizens State Bank was established in 1906, its officers being R. F. McClellan, president; W. E. Sawtelle, vice-president; H. W. Crane, cashier; directors, R. F. McClellan, L. D. Loomis, J. L. Brady, D. L. Allen. Many pretty residences were built and the town made rapid advance. The opening up of the Westgate section and the building of the Westgate branch of the electric line brought rapid development in that direction.

Naturally the location of Sawtelle in close proximity to the Soldiers' Home has been an important factor in its substantial growth. As the nearest business point a portion of large sums annually distributed as pensions is spent among its business houses, and the traffic and trade of the veterans and their friends has formed a solid basis for the prosperity of the town, which now numbers about 2,000 inhabitants.