

Resident Tells Origin of 'Ballona' Name

The origin of the name La Ballona for the valley in which Culver City, Venice, Palms and Mar Vista are located has long been a subject of controversy. David I. Worsfold, longtime Palms resident and student of valley lore, prepared the following article after an exhaustive study of the name and its probable roots.

By D. I. WORSFOLD

The name Ballona has probably been misspelled for over a century. In the first census of Los Angeles in 1836 it was spelled Bayona by one of the very few citizens who could read and write and that is surely the correct spelling.

This is confirmed by a story told by the Talamantes family to A. G. Rivera, Los Angeles County Interpreter, that the local area was named for the Spanish city of Bayona from whence one of their ancestors came.

The local story of many years duration that La Ballona was meant to be La Ballena (the Whale) is silly. It would have had to be badly mispronounced, not just misspelled. A wrong spelling ONA would have been changed to ENA if that were the way it was pronounced.

Ballona may have been a California way of spelling Bayona for Ballona would be pronounced

with the double ll having an lly sound (Bah lyo nah). The Spanish word Bayo (bah yo) means bay, and that fits the local area. The chance of it being named for a stray whale seems rather remote.

Cites Historian

Historian W. W. Robinson, in his book about this district, quotes Cristobal Machado as stating the name came from the word bay. Playa Del Rey was originally called Port Ballona and the lagoon, cliffs, hills and dunes of that section must so closely resemble the Spanish Port Bayona as to leave little room for doubt of the origin of the local name.

Bayona, located on an arm of the sea called Puerto de Bayona, is a municipality in Galicia, Spain, in the province of Pontevedra, with about 5000 population. It is formed of five parishes, Bahina, Baredo, Santa Maria Bayona, Belesar and Ramallosa. It has a prominent monument known as Monument de la Trinidad.

This information came from the Spanish Encyclopedia Universal Ilustrada. The French La Grande Encyclopedia lists Bayona as a small port with a fort and having coastal trade. It is 20 kilometers south of Vigo. There is also an off-shore island called Bayona. A map of Spain shows Bayona on the west coast just inland from

Cape Silleiro and about 15 miles north of the Minho River which is the border of Portugal. There is also a city in France called Bayonne and its name has the same origin as the Spanish Bayona. Bayonne, New Jersey, is probably named for the French city.

'Good Harbor'

Bayona, Spain, and Bayonne, France, are located in the Basque country along the coast of the Bay of Biscay. The Basque word Baia means harbor and the word Ona means good, therefore Bayona means good harbor. Those who are working for the small boat harbor at Marina Del Rey should know that the original name Bayona meant good harbor. Building a harbor here was planned at least as early as 1874.

In the book "City Makers" Remi Nadeau states that Col. Robert S. Baker, owner of Santa Monica, got a franchise for a narrow gage railroad from Los Angeles to the sea and planned a wharf near the mouth of Ballona Creek.

After Senator John P. Jones of Nevada bought an interest in Santa Monica and financed the railroad, the wharf was built at Santa Monica instead of Ballona. So a few years went by and then Moyo L. Wicks began urging construction in 1885 of Port Ballona as a tidewater terminal

for the Santa Fe Railway.

W. W. Robinson tells the story as follows: "The Ballona Harbor and Improvement Co. under the guidance of M. L. Wicks, H. W. Mills, R. F. Lotspeich, Frank Sabich and others, was organized in 1886 with a capital stock of \$300,000. Engineer Hugh T. McCrabbe was employed to lay out a harbor to 'float the fleets of the world'.

More History

"By dredging, the company hoped to create a 200-foot channel and an inner harbor two miles long, 300 to 600 feet wide and six to twenty feet deep. A right of way was granted the California Central Railway Co. (Santa Fe) and a railroad was laid, connecting Los Angeles with the proposed harbor. A small steam dredge began work and two piers were constructed."

McCrabbe also surveyed the Town of Port Ballona for M. L. Wicks. This was recorded April 29, 1887. The railroad was completed on August 21, 1887, and the first train brought a load of several hundred interested citizens. Real estate sales must have been good for M. L. Wicks. Addition to Town of Port Ballona was recorded on October 19, 1887. But the boom burst in 1888 when the harbor money ran out and the

dream of Port Ballona was just a dream. It was about 70 years ahead of time.

To verify the belief that Ballona was named for the Spanish city, I note that the original name was Ballona on the records, not La Ballona. How and when someone sneaked that "La" in front of the name isn't known. "La", a Spanish word for "the," is superfluous. A lagoon, creek, township and precinct were named Ballona without a "the" in front. The 1836 census spelled it BAYONA. If it was meant to be whale or "Ballena" it wouldn't have been pronounced or spelled "Bayona."

Residents should use the proper pronunciation instead of Ballona, often corrupted into Bologna as a joke. Being named for a Spanish city makes sense, and having a name meaning "good harbor" is now so very appropriate, for we are going to make a good harbor here in the very near future.

YOUTHFUL ANSWER

HOUSTON, Tex. (AP)—Danny Dalton, 3, was taken to Father Arthur Kae to be baptised. "What are you doing here, little boy," he was asked. "Came to get the devils chased out of me," was the reply.

More than a billion passengers ride the New York City subway in a year.