

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCE EVALUATION REPORT

JAMES CASS & COMPANY WAREHOUSE (CAYUCOS VETERANS MEMORIAL HALL)
10 CAYUCOS DRIVE, CAYUCOS, SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA



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DECEMBER 5, 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This architectural evaluation was prepared to assist the San Luis Obispo County Public Works Department and the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation in meeting pertinent regulatory responsibilities in connection with future planning for, or alterations to, the Cass Warehouse. The building is a State-owned historic-period built-environment resource (defined as resources 50 years of age or older) and requires evaluation for potential significance and to determine whether it meets the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or whether it constitutes a historical resource under CEQA. The resource has accordingly been evaluated under Section 15064.5 of the California Code of Regulations and under Sections 5024 and 5024.5 of the California Public Resource Code, in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines.

This report finds that the Cass Warehouse meets the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1, for its strong association with San Luis Obispo County's and California's late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century maritime economy; under Criterion 2, for its strong association with James Cass and James Cass & Company as the founders, developers, and principal merchants of the Town of Cayucos; and under Criterion 3, as a rare example of a late nineteenth-century wharf warehouse and a significant element of the county's and the state's maritime cultural landscape. The period of significance is from 1875, the construction date of the Cass Warehouse, to 1920, when the warehouse was acquired by the State of California

The author wishes to acknowledge the generous assistance of Louisa Smith and the Cayucos Historical Society.

INTRODUCTION

This Architectural Resource Evaluation Report elevates the James Cass & Company warehouse (Cass Warehouse) from what appears, at first glance, to be a small, localized sphere of influence, to its rightful place within the broader context of Central California's maritime cultural landscape. The term "maritime cultural landscape" was introduced in the 1970s in connection with historical maritime archaeology but has gradually expanded in usage to embrace onshore architectural resources – lighthouses, piers, breakwaters, wharves, shipyards, customs houses, and warehouses, for example – that have demonstrated associations with maritime activities and the maritime economy. Though perhaps counterintuitive, San Luis Obispo County's maritime economy was not originally focused on fishing; rather, the ports were the point of embarkation for the produce of the rocky intertidal zone and the agricultural and pastoral hinterlands, as well as the landing places for lumber and other necessary goods not available locally.

The Cass Warehouse is emblematic of San Luis Obispo County's reliance on ocean-going vessels to maintain contact with the larger world and to foster local economic growth during the second half of the nineteenth century and the opening decades of the twentieth century. Coastwise shipping was essential to the county's prosperity: long-distance travel by land was both difficult and time-consuming. It is significant that the first county railroad, the narrow-gauge Pacific Coast Railway, terminated at a wharf at Port Harford. Until the advent of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1894, nearly all long-distance travel or commercial endeavors began with a trip to the nearest wharf, either at Port Harford, Cayucos, or San Simeon. For coastal communities out of easy reach of the railroad, the sea retained its primacy in long-distance transportation until the advent of improved highways and trucking in the 1910s.

The concept of a maritime cultural landscape is especially relevant for Cayucos, inasmuch as the focal point of the community and the chief draw for outsiders has always been and continues to be the pier and waterfront. The Cass Warehouse is the oldest surviving element of the Cayucos maritime cultural landscape and the oldest building in the original townsite.

PROJECT SETTING

The project is located within the boundaries of Cayucos State Beach in the small beach community of Cayucos (population 2,592 in 2010), located 18.7 miles northwest of San Luis Obispo, the county seat, on Highway 1. The Cass Warehouse fronts on Ocean Street -- adjacent to the beach and the Cayucos Pier -- and is part of a long row of oceanfront commercial development. At this location, between the mouth of Cayucos Creek to the northwest and the mouth of Little Cayucos Creek to the southeast, the ground surface is just a few feet above sea level, sloping gradually down to the tideline. To the northwest, immediately across Cayucos Creek, the ground rises to a low knoll flanked by a wave-cut terrace. Both the beachfront and the terrace were developed by James Cass & Company and are included in the historical context for the Cass Warehouse.

METHODOLOGY

Preliminary research consisted of reviewing standard secondary sources, including general San Luis Obispo County histories (Angel 1883, Morrison and Hayden 1917, and Krieger 1988), as well as a recent local Cayucos history (Maricle 2007).

Next, an appropriate historical context was identified. While such aspects as the physical condition, style, materials, and workmanship of architectural resources can be considered to some extent on their own merits, the significance of these resources can be determined only with reference to the historic circumstances that created them. The historical context for the Cass Warehouse broadly includes the importance of coastwise shipping in County (and California) history; the role of James Cass and James Cass & Company in the development of the Cass Warehouse and the Cayucos townsite; and similar extant warehouse buildings.

Field visits were made on October 11, 2016, to see the interior structure and architectural character of the building, and on November 23, 2016, to document the historic-period built-environment resources present. Documentation included taking extensive notes on the physical characteristics of the buildings and taking a series of digital photographs, many of which are included in this report.

Additional detailed, site-specific research was conducted in the following archives:

- California State Lands Commission (tidelands survey map)
 - San Luis Obispo County Assessor (Rancho Moro y Cayucos plat book)
 - San Luis Obispo County Recorder (deeds, maps, and other official records)
 - San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors (minutes)
 - The History Center of San Luis Obispo County (photographs, maps, and vertical files)
 - The Cayucos Historical Society (photographs and vertical files)
- (Note: The San Luis Obispo City-County Library's local history collections were unavailable due to a renovation project between October 2016 and January 2017.)*

Additional research was also conducted via online databases:

- http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/PW/County_Surveyor.htm (San Luis Obispo County maps)
- <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov> (Bureau of Land Management: General Land Office maps)
- <http://search.ancestry.com/> (federal population census and agricultural census; birth and death dates)
- <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc> (California Digital Newspaper Collection)
- <http://clerk.assembly.ca.gov/content/california-state-assembly-journals> (*Journal of the State Assembly and Journal of the State Senate*)
- <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu> (*rancho diseños*)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The project area lies near the boundary between two Mexican-era land grants: Rancho Moro y Cayucos, on which the Cass Warehouse and the City of Cayucos are located, and Rancho San Gerónimo, to the northwest of Cayucos Creek. No *diseño* (manuscript map) is available for Rancho Moro y Cayucos, but the early 1840s *diseño* for Rancho San Gerónimo shows the *lindero* (boundary line) between the *sitio* (grant) of Vicente Félix (a portion of Rancho Moro y Cayucos called San Sebastián) and the *sitio* granted to Rafael Villa (Rancho San Gerónimo) (Figure 1).¹



Figure 1. By the 1840s, when this *diseño* was drawn, an adobe rancho building had been constructed on the northwest bank of Cayucos Creek (red arrow). The future site of the Cass Warehouse is to the right (southeast) of the creek. The alignment of the Camino Real (dotted line along coast) passes nearby (Source: Bancroft Library).

In the Mexican era these land grants were used almost exclusively for grazing cattle and other livestock – a land use that generally persisted through the 1850s and beyond, despite the Mexican-America War and the loss of Alta California to the United States. With the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, the ownership of Spanish and Mexican land grants was nominally guaranteed, but the respective owners were required to prove title. The Gold Rush and California’s ensuing admission to statehood in 1850 brought increased focus on the vast “undeveloped” ranchos. Squatters encroached

¹ *El Sitio del Rafael Ville nombrado S' Geronimo*, United States District Court, Southern District, Land Case 8, page 72, available online through the University of California Berkeley website, <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu>. The map probably pre-dates November 1845, when Vicente Felix sold his portion of Rancho Moro y Cojo to James McKinley (Myron Angel, History of San Luis Obispo County, p. 12).

on rancho lands, and the market for cattle began to decline as former miners took up other pursuits. The year 1862 brought disastrous floods, followed by an even more disastrous drought in 1863-1864 that destroyed the last vestiges of the Mexican-era hide-and-tallow economy. The costs of legal proceedings to defend their titles, coming on top of the loss of their herds, bankrupted many rancho owners, with the result that enormous tracts of prime California land passed out of the hands of the original grantee families and were purchased by immigrants from Europe and the United States.

By the late 1860s, ranchos in the project area began to be subdivided into smaller units of land and used for farming and dairying. Passage of the Homestead Act in 1862 also played a part, as public lands outside the boundaries of rancho land grants began to be identified, surveyed, and opened for settlement. On the northwest side of Cayucos Creek, Rancho San Gerónimo was sold off to Wesley Burnett in about 1865.² Squatters also established a small settlement, the forerunner of Cayucos, on Old Creek, about a mile to the southeast.³

On December 17, 1867, S.W. Foreman of the General Surveyor’s Office surveyed and mapped Township 29 South, Range 10 East, Mount Diablo Meridian, including both government land and portions of Rancho San Gerónimo (Lot No. 39) and Rancho Moro y Cayucos (Lot No. 38) (Figure 2).⁴



Figure 2. Detail of S.W. Foreman’s official survey of government lands and rancho boundaries, T29S, R10E, M.D.M., January 17, 1867. The red arrow indicates the future location of Cayucos.

² *Historic Spots in California*, third edition, by Mildred Brooke Hoover, Hero Eugene Rensch, and Ethel Grace Rensch, revised by William N. Abeloe. Menlo Park: Stanford University Press, p. 383.

³ Old Creek may have had its origin in a post-Mission-secularization community of displaced Native Americans. In a March 14, 1952, San Luis Obispo *Telegram-Tribune* interview with Cass’s 94-year-old daughter, Emily Burroughs, it was noted laconically that, when Cass arrived in the area in 1867 with his wife and five children, the “only other residents of the community were one Spanish family and a few Indians.” Central Coast historian Geneva Hamilton (1999:12) noted that, in 1867, there was a “still existent Indian settlement located near [John R.] Bain’s store on Old Creek....”

⁴ The map was filed with the U.S. Surveyor General on January 16, 1868.

JAMES CASS (1824-1917)

Among the settlers who arrived in the project area in the late 1860s was James Cass, a British immigrant born in Bristol – a prominent port city – in 1824. Cass made the voyage from Bristol to the United States as a boy, working for his board after a storm destroyed his belongings. By the time he arrived in New York, Cass's future appeared to be mapped out for working on a series of merchant ships, and his early career – fraught with hardships worthy of a Dickens novel – did include trade voyages on the Hudson River and to the West Indies. In January 1849, as gold fever was gripping the nation, Cass left New York for California aboard the *Orpheus*, arriving in San Francisco six months later. The day after his arrival he was assigned to the crew of the Schooner *Olivia*, running between San Francisco and Sacramento. Cass learned to be a river pilot, but was, inevitably, soon also engaged in stints of mining for gold at Dry Town in Eldorado County, Amador Creek in Amador County, and in the American River mining camps from El Dorado to Sacramento counties. Cass next tried his hand at running general stores – the Boston Store on Dry Creek near the Lone Valley, and later the Syracuse Store at Muletown, before selling the business and returning to mining. In 1854, Cass purchased 40 acres of farmland in Sacramento County (SE ¼ SW ¼ Section 28, T7N, R8E, MDM); that same year he married Mary Stone, a fellow English immigrant. Cass's four eldest children – Sarah, Charles, Emily, and Henry – were born between 1855 and 1860. Mary died in 1860, shortly after Henry's birth. Cass remarried in 1863, to Mary McMurray, and their daughter, Rosa, was born that same year.

In 1867, Cass sold the Sacramento farm, and the family relocated to the Cayucos area in San Luis Obispo County in November of that year. Cass states in his undated memoir that he purchased 320 acres of government land one mile back from the ocean in the rolling hills above Cayucos. No evidence of this transaction is recorded in the General Land Office records, suggesting that he purchased the land from a homesteader, rather than homesteading it himself.⁵ Cass farmed there for two years, during which time he began to investigate the idea of establishing a shipping port at Cayucos. He is reported to have made “soundings and surveys of the bay” in 1868-1869, discovering for himself that “the closest deep water was along the rocky shore of the present Locarno Tract [along Lucerne Road on the bluff-top northwest of Cayucos Creek]. The prospect of constructing a landing with a short wharf interested him”⁶ Cass also made a systematic study of the amount of grain and other produce being grown in the area, determining to his satisfaction that there was enough potential cargo to support his venture. His next step was to contact individuals who were already involved in the coastwise trade along California. Captain John J. Ingalls, who ran a schooner between Port Harford and San Francisco, was interested. Cass made two demonstration runs for Ingalls, piloting the schooner north from Port Harford and south from San Simeon to the anchorage at Cayucos. Ingalls must have been impressed with the prospects, as Cass was soon making arrangements to secure cargoes and spreading the word that he could ship local produce. Cass notes in his memoir that, at first, the grain sacks were piled up on straw on the beach, and that he slept next to them to protect the cargo. Without a wharf, ships had to come to anchor farther offshore, and sacks of produce had to be loaded by means of small surf boats (lighters).

The year 1869 saw the inception of the partnership of James Cass & Company (James Cass, John Ingalls, Frederick Metcalf, Lewis Schwartz, John Harford, and William Beebee). No Articles of Incorporation were located for this early date, but such a document does exist from March 14, 1893, providing some insight

⁵ A copy of the account is in the Cayucos Historical Society collection.

⁶ Undated manuscript notes, probably by Samuel Borradori, based on undated publication, on file with Cayucos Historical Society.

into the purposes of the corporation: ⁷

First: That the name of said corporation is James Cass and Company.

Second: That the purposes for which it is formed is as follows: To own, control and manage and conduct the business of Wharfingers at the town of Cayucos, in the County of San Luis Obispo, State of California, and carry on the business of Warehousemen, freighters, carriers over such wharves, ticket agents, freight agents, and all business appertaining to wharves conducted along the shores of the Pacific Ocean or any of its navigable tributaries; And at any and all other places on the Pacific Ocean, and acquire, own, hold all such lands, franchises and water rights necessary to the proper conduct of the same. To buy, sell, traffic in and deal in all kinds of goods, wares and merchandise; Buy and sell all kinds of farm and dairy produce; live-stock and poultry; To act as commission and forwarding merchants; To buy and sell, on commission or otherwise, all kinds of real and personal property, and to own and hold the same, for sale or otherwise; And to conduct a general Merchandising business; Own and control sea vessels and water crafts; Build tramways over its wharves; Buy and sell lumber, hardware and builder's materials.

Third: That the place where its principal place of business is to be located and transacted shall be the town of Cayucos, in the County of San Luis Obispo, State of California.

Cass was soon making plans to acquire the lands necessary to his enterprise. On September 7, 1869, Cass signed an affidavit before the San Luis Obispo County Clerk, attesting his intent to purchase, under the terms of the March 28, 1868, *Act to provide for the sale of certain lands belonging to the State*, a tract of tidelands lying directly south of the southeast quarter of Section 32, as well as the adjoining 400 yards running to the southeast and lying south of the southwest quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 33 of Township 28 South, Range 10 East, Mount Diablo Meridian. The tideland tract was duly surveyed in 1871 and the patent was issued to Cass on March 25, 1872.

There is evidence that Cass and his business partners seriously considered building a wharf on the northwest side of Cayucos Creek. On July 18, 1870, they acquired a 1.59-acre tract on the bluffs that included both the bluff top and the rocky intertidal zone below (Figure 3).⁸ Lightering operations would still need to use the beach for loading cargoes until such time as a wharf could be built. The first warehouses were in place – one on the bluff and one on the beach – by late 1870, as they are depicted in the January 20, 1871, tidelands survey map drawn by San Luis Obispo County Surveyor R.R. Harris (Figure 4).⁹ The purchase of the small parcel was strategic: it also came with an important water-access easement, granting them the right to:

⁷ The directors of the corporation in 1893 included original partners James Cass, Luis Schwartz, and William Beebee, as well as Cass's son, H. K. Cass, and son-in-law, A.L. Burroughs.

⁸ Wesley Burnett to James Cass et al. [Ingalls, Metcalf, Schwartz, Harford, and Beebee] San Luis Obispo County Deeds Book C, pp. 45-46, July 18, 1870. The deed describes the parcel as 1.55 acres, but the 1871 survey shows 1.59 acres. Cass, Ingalls and Metcalf were each granted an undivided fourth of the property; Schwartz, Harford, and Beebee jointly held the other undivided fourth.

⁹ *Tidelands Survey No. 8, Amended, Township 28 South, Range 10 East, Sections 32 and 33*, surveyed by R. R. Harris, January 20, 1871, on file at the California State Lands Commission, Sacramento.

improve, open, dam up, and increase by artificial means, the water in a certain Spring situate about two hundred yards distant northwesterly from the Lot of Land hereinbefore described and granted, and to conduct the same by pipes or otherwise to the Lot of Land hereby granted, and to use the same for drinking purposes upon said Land, provided that the same shall not be exclusively used by [James Cass and partners] but shall be held by them for public use upon said Land....¹⁰



Figure 3. Detail of 1.59-acre bluff-top and tideland tract acquired by Cass et al. from Rancho San Gerónimo owner Wesley Burnett in July 1870. The arrow indicates the warehouse location (see Figure 4 for the complete map).

Although no wharf was built at that location, the 1.59-acre parcel on the bluff was retained by James Cass & Company for 50 years.¹¹ The parcel is currently occupied by a residence (709 Lucerne) and a tankhouse, the latter almost certainly built by Cass to store water from the spring, under the terms of the easement. A newspaper clipping on file at The History Center of San Luis Obispo County cites “official County survey records” from 1916 (the year before Cass’s death) that refer to a “yellow tower surmounted by tank painted red, white and blue, and a wind mill about one mile north west of the town of Cayucos.”¹²

The 1871 Harris tidelands survey map (Figure 4) and a photograph from about 1873 (Figure 5) provide important evidence of the extent of the James Cass & Company operations at that early date. The principal area of activity was on the southeast side of Cayucos Creek, where Cass later built his wharf and residence. This area also became the nucleus of the community of Cayucos, and the small cluster of businesses that had originally been located at Old Creek relocated to be near Cass’s wharf. After selling off his inland ranch, Cass had “put in a stock of merchandise,” thus adding a general store to the company’s warehousing and shipping business. At this point, Cass was in his mid 40s. His varied experiences with shipping, piloting, farming, mining, and operating a general store – fortified by

¹⁰ San Luis Obispo County *Deeds* Book C, pp. 45-46.

¹¹ On February 9, 1920, James Cass & Company sold the 1.59-acre tract, including the water-use easement, to Alfred Canevascini. San Luis Obispo County *Deeds* Book 138, pp. 141-142.

¹² The Cayucos clipping shows no newspaper name or date, but was probably from the *Central Coast Sun-Bulletin*, c. 2000. The “official County survey records” have not yet been located.

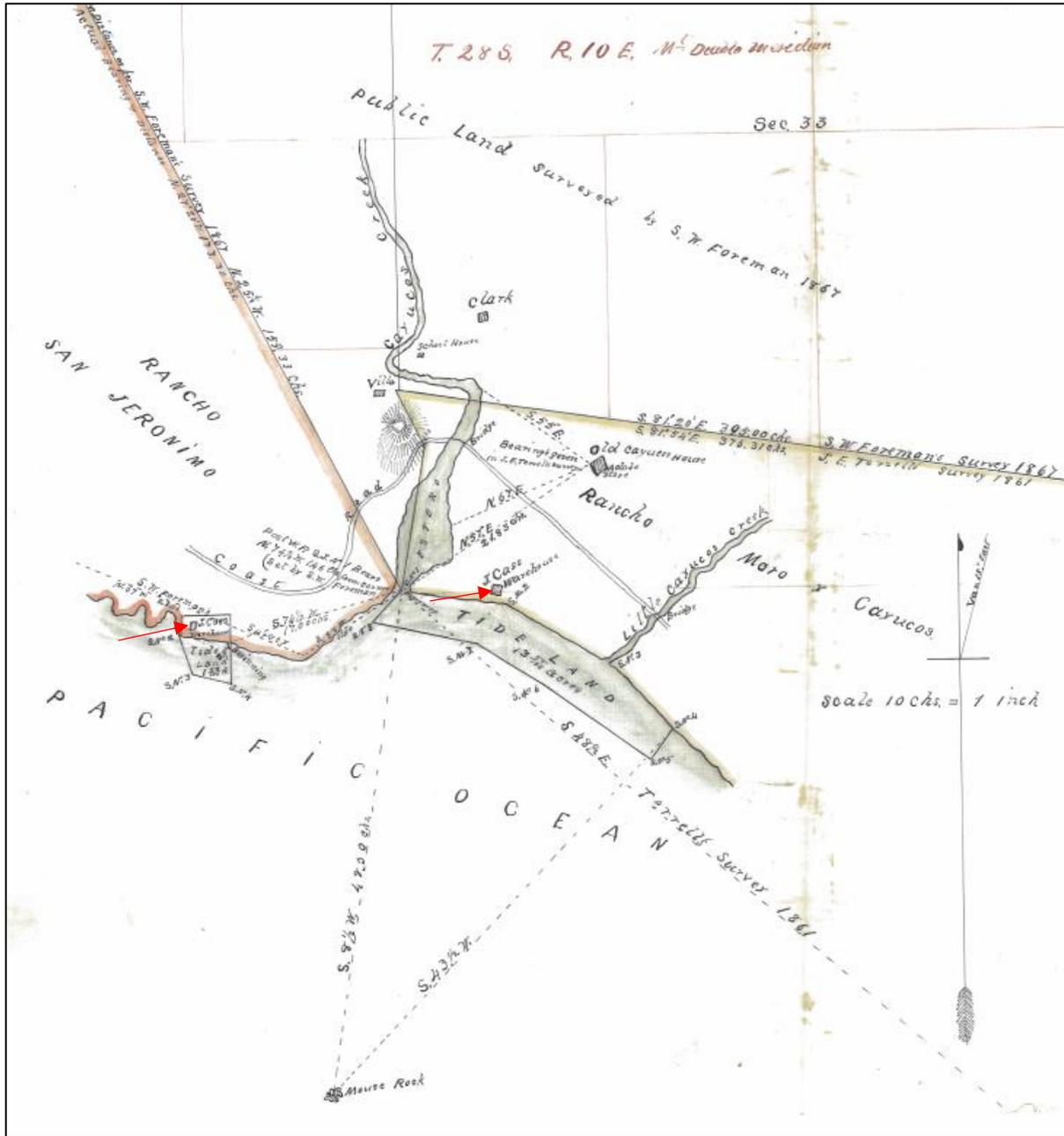


Figure 4. Tidelands Survey No. 8, Amended, Township 28 South, Range 10 East, Sections 32 and 33, surveyed by R. R. Harris, January 20, 1871 (source: California State Lands Commission). The red arrows indicate the two Cass warehouses. Only a handful of residences are evident.

undeniable personal tenacity – were coalescing into a multifaceted enterprise on the beachfront at Cayucos.

During the next few years, James Cass & Company (and James Cass as a private individual) added significantly to their holdings. On March 25, 1872, the State issued Cass a patent for the 15.14 acres of tidelands he had requested three years earlier. That autumn, Cass began construction on a 380-foot wharf, or jetty, that would permit loading and unloading of boats at high tide. Two derricks and two

chutes were also built.¹³ In early 1873, a correspondent for the *Pacific Rural Press* reported on Cass's ingenuity:

James Cass...being unable to procure a pile-driver, resorted to the novel method of screwing the piles into the ground. He cut a thread, screw-fashion, at the end of each pile, and then after sinking the stick or pile a short distance into the loose soil or sand, worked it windlass-fashion until it had reached a sufficient depth to be firm and secure.¹⁴

The earliest known photograph of Cass's Landing (as the future wharf site was first known) dates to about 1873. By this time, Cass had procured at least three small warehouse buildings, which reportedly "held goods until spring when the boats started running again."¹⁵ Schooners could now deliver lumber – brought alongside the 380-foot wharf by lighters – rather than rafting it ashore through the surf (Figure 5).

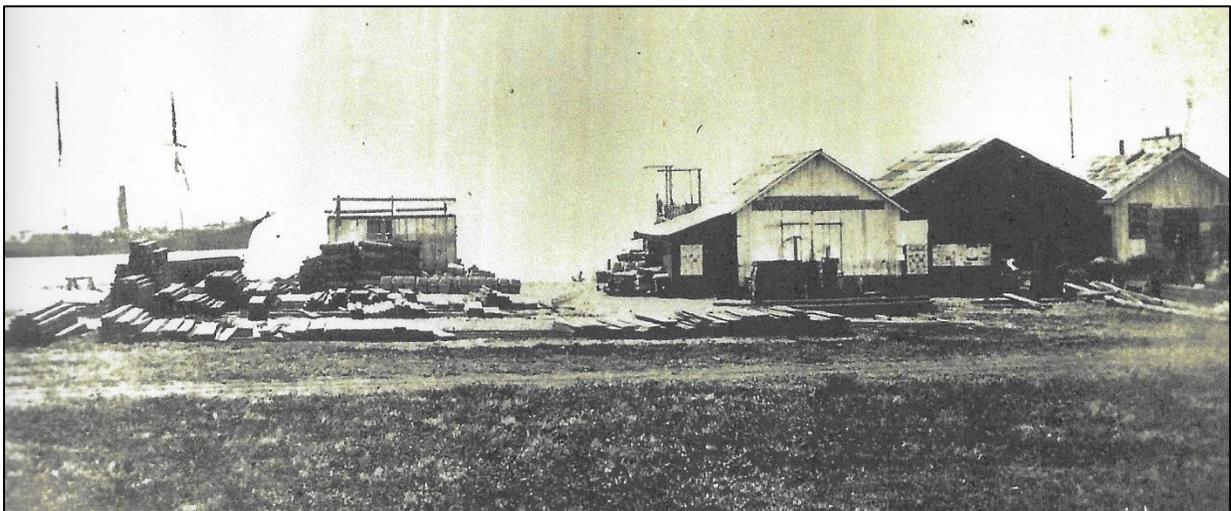


Figure 5. Cass's early store, a warehouse, and a residence clustered together along the ocean front, 1874. From this angle, the 380-foot pier would be obscured by the row of structures. The building at the extreme right was probably the first building at the landing. A frame house is mentioned in Cass's memoirs as having been purchased and hauled to the beach to serve temporarily as a warehouse. Evidence of the growing James Cass & Company lumber business is stacked alongside. (Source: Cayucos Historical Society)

Although the company's business was well under way in the early 1870s, Cass and his family still had not made a permanent move to Cayucos. On July 23, 1870, the federal census enumerator recorded James Cass, Mary, and their five children in Arroyo Grande Township. Cass's occupation was described as "keeps lumber yard," but he also owned a farm in Arroyo Grande Township, which must have replaced the Cayucos farm he had sold off to make his start at Cayucos. On August 31, 1870, the agricultural census taker recorded Cass as owning 320 acres, roughly half of which was planted to wheat and barley. The agricultural census also recorded his ownership of seven horses, six milch cows, four other cattle, and 40 swine. The fact that Cass owned a 320-acre farm but described himself as a lumber merchant says a great deal about his inclinations.

¹³ Undated manuscript notes, probably by Sam Borradori, on file with Cayucos Historical Society.

¹⁴ *Pacific Rural Press*, March 8, 1873, p. 147.

¹⁵ Undated manuscript notes, probably by Sam Borradori, on file with Cayucos Historical Society.

Increasing activity along the waterfront must have influenced William F. Babcock, the owner of Rancho Moro y Cayucos, in his decision to subdivide his holdings and lay out a townsite adjacent to Cass's Landing in 1875.¹⁶ A reporter for the *San Luis Obispo Tribune* provided the following detailed contemporary description of the changes brought about in Cayucos in the 15 months between June 1875 – shortly after the townsite was laid out – and September 1876:

One year ago, the 24th of last June, we passed by what there then was of Cayucos. It consisted of the store, warehouse, dwelling, and 380 feet of wharf—all combined—of James Cass. On the side of the hill about an eighth of a mile distant, was the old ranch-house, being the only building within sight. Last Sunday we revisited the place, and it is of what we then saw that we propose to talk. We found the scene entirely changed. In front of where the old dilapidated buildings of Mr. Cass stood, there now stands the large and commodious warehouse of James Cass & Co., a building that would do credit to any city on the coast. It is 50x92 feet in dimensions, with 14-foot walls and a broad, steep roof, affording ample storage for the products of the rich country tributary to this port. In the northeast corner a store is partitioned off, of the dimensions of 20x50 feet, where-in a large stock of goods is constantly kept on hand. Here is also the office of the steamship company, and the telegraph office. The store is ceiled throughout with alternate boards of redwood and white pine, giving to the room a warm, cheerful appearance. A car track runs through the warehouse, onto the wharf, thus affording easy transportation to and from the ships, for merchandise, grain, butter, wool, etc. Work on

THE NEW WHARF

Is being pushed rapidly ahead. Mr. R.E. Osgood has the contract, and is making a good job of it. The piles are San Simeon pine, cut near Cambria, and delivered at a cost for hauling of seven dollars each. It takes one hundred and sixty of these monster trees for the uprights to the wharf. They will average two feet in diameter at the large end, and not less than ten inches at the small. They vary in length from 35 to 60 feet. They are driven not less than fourteen feet each, into solid earth, thus standing as firm as if rooted there by nature. The extension to the wharf will be 500 feet, making the total length 940. This carries it out to 21 feet water at low tide. The wharf is sixteen feet wide, for 876 feet out, and 40 for 64 feet, where vessels will land. It is thoroughly braced, and the dock portion will have cluster piles at the corners, and fender piles every four feet around the sides. It will be seen by the foregoing that this will be one of the most substantial wharfs on the coast. The floor is thirteen feet above extreme high water. It will be about two weeks before it will be completed so that steamers will tie up alongside.

In connection with the wharf and warehouse, Messrs. Cass & Co. have a lumber yard, stocked with a supply of good lumber. A Regulator windmill elevates water from a well in the lumber yard into a tank that holds between 4,000 and 5,000 gallons, which

¹⁶ *Map of the Subdivisions of Rancho Moro y Cayucos, San Luis Obispo County, California*, surveyed March 1875, San Luis Obispo County *Maps* Book A, page 160. The indefatigable C.H. Phillips was the local real estate agent for Babcock, who lived in San Francisco.

supplies the store, wharf, stock yards and dwelling house, with ample water of excellent quality.

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS.

In addition to the above, Mr. Cass has built himself a pretty cottage and barn, which stand across the street, in the center of a lot nicely fenced, and planted with ornamental trees and shrubs. Directly opposite the warehouse is the Cosmopolitan Hotel of B. Morganti & L. Signorini, a pair of enterprising Swiss, who saw the future importance of Cayucos as a shipping point and center of trade, and went in for the most central spot upon which to build a house wherein the traveling public are well supplied with everything, from a bed to a cocktail. The store of the late firm of

DUNN, MCMILLAN & CO.,

Is another of the notable improvements. It is a splendid building, of large dimensions, with a storehouse adjoining. The store was closed, so we did not have an opportunity to see the stock, but understand Mr McMillan keeps a general assortment of such goods as are most in demand throughout the county. Mr Dunn has sold out his interest in the store to his partner, Mr. D.C. McMillan, who is ever on hand to serve his customers. The future

PROSPERITY OF CAYUCOS

Is assured, and in a few years this nucleus will have enlarged into a thriving village. It is the center of, and the shipping point for, a large area of rich farming and dairy country. We saw in the warehouse of Cass & Co., several thousand sacks of barley awaiting shipment, and there is now, in the dullest season for dairy products, an average shipment of 50 boxes and barrels of butter per week. This represents about two and a half tons. Then there is the quicksilver, the chickens, eggs, pelts, hides, grain and hogs, which swell the exports to a large annual sum. This will increase as the county settles up, which it is rapidly doing. There is a large number of Swiss settled in this vicinity, many of whom have grown rich in dairying, and others are rapidly becoming so. Were Morro y Cayucos grant all sold and settled by these industrious people it would add a large valuation to the assessment roll.

TO WHOM THE CREDIT IS DUE.

The building up this thriving town is due to James Cass, who, a few years ago, discovered its availability as a shipping point, and, single-handed and alone, began the work of building a wharf, while the incredulous stood by and laughed at his efforts to make something out of nothing. He succeeded in building his wharf out [380] feet, where, at high tide, he could lighter off and on his goods, in comparative safety, if not ease. The moment he had accomplished this, business and curses began to accumulate, until it was found that, to keep pace with the two, he must have more wharf and a larger warehouse. To enable him to do this he associated with himself Wm. L. Beebe, John Harford and L. Schwartz, under the firm name of James Cass & Co., since when the improvements we have described have been made. Had we more such men as Messrs. Cass & Co., and less growlers, our county would make a progress that all might well feel

proud of; but, unfortunately, growlers and obstructionists seem to be in the ascendant:
 —Time, alone, is the remedy for this evil.¹⁷

The official authorization for the operation of the newly enlarged wharf was given by the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors on August 7, 1876. By order of the Board, a 20-year franchise was granted to James Cass & Company.¹⁸ A list of “Wharfage rates at Cayucos” approved by the Supervisors provides a reliable idea of the types of lumber coming into the yard, the nature of the produce going out through the warehouse, and the livestock being herded through the chutes onto the wharf shortly after its construction in 1875:

Table 1. Wharfage Rates at Cayucos, November 11, 1876¹⁹

| [Imports] ^a | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| [Commodity] | [Unit] | [Wharfage] |
| On merchandise | per ton | \$1.00 |
| Lumber | per M [1,000 board feet] | 1.00 |
| Shakes | per M | .37½ |
| Shingles | per M | .12½ |
| Posts | per Hundred | 1.00 |
| Split pickets | per M | 4.00 |
| Laths | per M | .37½ |
| Shingle packages | each | .25 |
| [Exports] | | |
| Grain and Vegetables | per ton | .75 |
| Wool | per ton | 1.00 |
| Hides | each | .02 |
| Cheeses | each | .03 |
| Butter | per box | .20 (returned empty free) |
| | per keg | .15 |
| Eggs | per box (if 30 dozen) ^b | .15 |
| Quicksilver [mercury] | per flask [76 lbs] | .10 |
| Hogs | per head (over 40 head) | .10 |
| | per head (under 40 head) | .15 |
| Sheep | per head | .06 |
| Calves | per head (under six months old) | .25 |
| Cattle, horses, mules, and jacks | per head | 1.00 |

^a Author’s annotations in brackets; ^boriginal comments in parentheses

James Cass & Company were obligated to submit periodic reports to the Board of Supervisors documenting the costs of operation of the wharf and the income generated. In 1878 the company was still operating at a loss, prompting Cass to note:

¹⁷ *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, September 30, 1876, republished online at <http://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/photos-from-the-vault/article39453882.html#storylink=cpy>

¹⁸ San Luis Obispo County *Minutes* of the Board of Supervisors Book C, pages 461, 466. The Affidavit of Publication attests that notice of the wharf franchise application was published in the *San Luis Obispo Tribune* for five successive weeks, between July 1 and July 29, 1876; a copy of the affidavit is in the collections of the Cayucos Historical Society.

¹⁹ Source: Cayucos Historical Society, from Samuel Borradori, Board of Supervisors.

I would respectfully call the attention of the Board of Supervisors to the ... justice and propriety of raising our rates of toll in order that we may receive some remuneration for our outlay of Capital and Labor.²⁰

The report submitted for 1880 documents a more profitable year, though the company had yet to recoup their original expenses. By that date, James Cass & Company had spent \$15,217.51 on the wharf, including \$3,240.25 for the reporting year. Receipts totaled \$3,829.48, including \$3,170.48 from tolls and \$659.00 for dockage. No dividends were issued. The following goods were “shipped and conveyed over the wharf during the year”:

| | |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| 5,790 | packages butter |
| 1,481 | sacks potatoes |
| 20,207 | sacks wheat |
| 809 | sacks barley |
| 40 | sacks corn |
| 1,525 | beans |
| 4,729 | hogs |
| 56 | bales wool |
| 335 | tons miscellaneous ²¹ |

An outside source, writing with a global perspective in 1879, provides not only contemporary information about the nature of the shipments to and from Cayucos but also provides useful data on the conditions of the port itself:²²

OLD CREEK, San Luis Obispo Co., California, U.S.A., a hailing port in San Diego district.²³

It is sometimes called Cayucos Landing. Is in latitude 35°25' N., longitude 121°57' W.

Imports. – Lumber and general merchandise.

Exports. – Butter, cheese, and all kinds of farm produce, cattle, sheep, and hogs, chrome ore, and quicksilver.

The harbor is an open roadstead, only safe in the summer months; has no bar; depth at low water, four and a half fathoms; at the wharves, sixteen feet; rise of tide, six feet; bottom mud and sand; good anchorage.

Port Charges. – Government charges [United States law].²⁴

²⁰ *Cayucos Wharf: Report for year ending [June?] 1, 1878*, probably acquired by Supervisor Samuel Borradori, in the collections of the Cayucos Historical Society. The company noted that it had expended \$10,840.26 on the construction of the wharf alone.

²¹ *Cayucos Wharf: Report for year ending November 1, 1880, filed November 3, 1990, Nathan King, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.*

²² Hunter, Theodore, and Jarvis Patten, *Port Charges and Requirements on Vessels in the Various Ports of the World, with Tables of Moneys, Weights, and Measures of All Nations, and a Telegraphic Codex for Masters, Owners, and Ship Brokers. Part First, Containing United States and Dominion of Canada.* New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1879, p. 149.

²³ Cayucos was assigned to the San Diego Port District, rather than to the San Francisco Port District.

²⁴ Federal port charges were distinct from wharfage and warehousing fees. They included tonnage duties, permits to land certain kinds of merchandise, United States Hospital money, U.S. Commissioner’s fees, charges for releasing logbooks and ships’ papers, bills of health, and other miscellanea, Hunter and Patten, *Port Charges and Requirements on Vessels in the Various Ports of the World, 1879*, pp. 256-257.

This harbor contains two moorings, one of 2200 pounds, the other of 1200 pounds, with suitable buoys and chains.

JAMES CASS & CO., Merchants, Old Creek, Cal.

Good documentary evidence exists for the appearance of the Cass Warehouse and wharf in the 1880s, including a lithograph published in 1883 (Figure 6) and plan views from 1884 and 1885 (Figures 7 and 8, respectively). Although some artistic license has been taken (for example, the lithograph shows the windmill close to the warehouse), contemporary photographs verify the presence of the various individual elements: the windmill and elevated water tank, the lumber shed and stacked lumber, the warehouse with its shed-roof additions, the signage and the belfry with its wheel mounted bell atop the warehouse roof ridge, the flagpole and its halyard fastened to a wall cleat, the prominent “Cayucos Landing,” store signs, and fan-shaped vent in the warehouse front gable, the three older gabled buildings in a row at the rear of the warehouse, the wharf with its derricks, the livestock chutes, and even the hitching post.

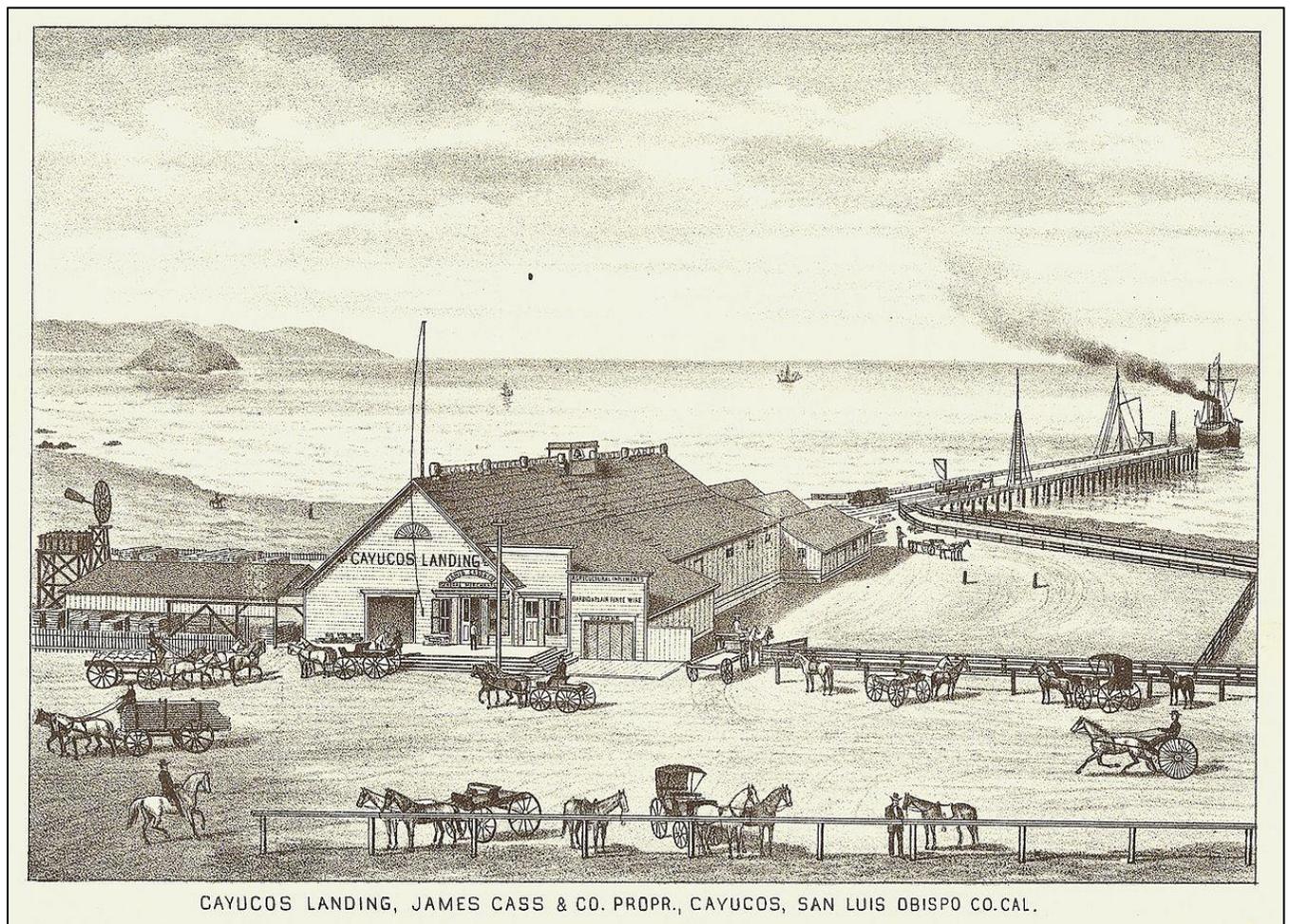


Figure 6. This iconic lithograph was published in Myron Angel’s 1883 *History of San Luis Obispo County*, facing p. 341.

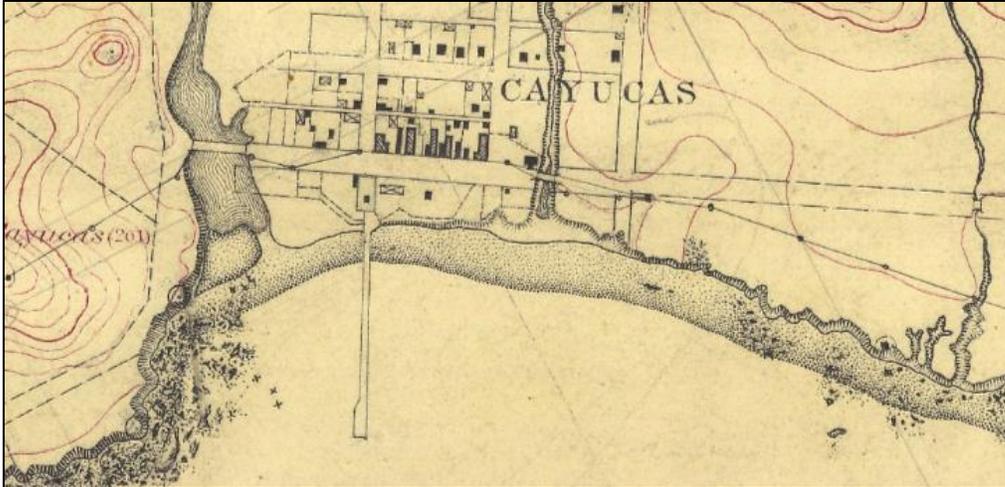


Figure 7. U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey T-sheet, Image # T1663-00-1884. Not surprising in a nautical map, the details focus on the wharf configuration, character of the coastline, and nearshore topography — but the warehouse, lumber shed, and water tank are also clearly indicated.

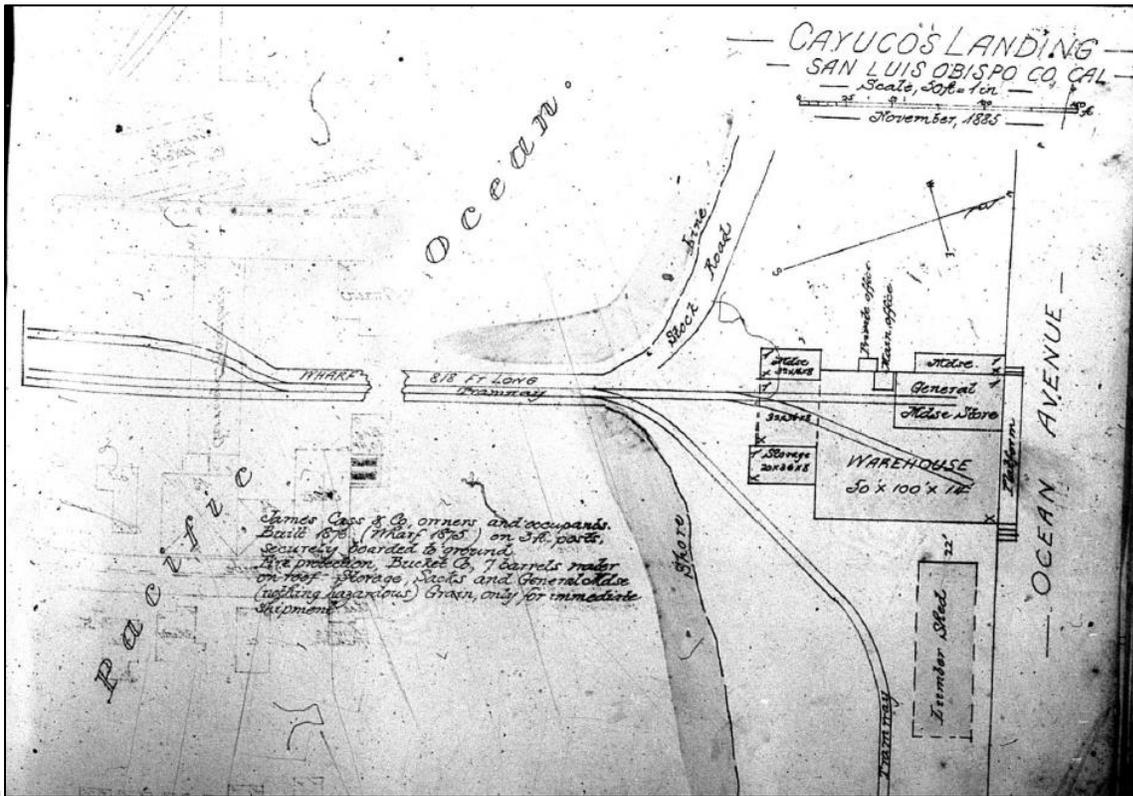


Figure 8. Plan view of warehouses and wharf at Cayucos Landing, November 1885, from Dakin's *California Warehouse Book*. Dakin's maps, like Sanborn maps, were intended for insurance underwriting purposes. Here, the interior spaces of the warehouse building are clearly defined, as well as the tramways running from both the main warehouse room and the general merchandise store occupying one corner. The one-story shed-roof addition on the northwest side was also used for merchandise.

With the extension of the wharf into deeper water in 1876, Cayucos Landing entered its fully developed phase of operations: ocean-going vessels could now dock directly alongside the wharf to load and unload cargo and passengers. In 1878 the *Pacific Rural Press* commented that Cayucos was “a small place, there being but a few dwelling houses, a hotel, the store of Messrs. Tull & Grant, and a store and warehouse owned by James Cass & Co.,” but they also noted that it was “one of the largest shipping points in the county, and an immense quantity of butter, cheese, pork and grain goes over the wharf each season. In the height of the season nearly 300 boxes of butter per week are shipped from Cayucos (Figure 9).²⁵ The new wharf “was an immediate commercial success with steamships from Los Angeles and San Francisco docking several times per week.”²⁶ The growing prosperity of James Cass & Company had a ripple effect in the Cayucos community, encouraging the growth of – and supplying the lumber to build – a modest business district (Figures 10 and 11).



Figure 9. With a width of 100 feet, Ocean Street accommodated the wagons and buggies thronging to Cayucos Landing on “Butter Day,” the day before the steamships were due to arrive, as seen in this c1880 photograph (Source: Cayucos Historical Society). As many as 125 teams reportedly could be seen at the 700-foot hitching rail across the street.

²⁵ *Pacific Rural Press*, June 15, 1878, p. 370.

²⁶ Cayucos Pier Project, <http://us-ltrcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Cayucos-Cayucos-Creek-Watershed.pdf>.



Figure 10. Businesses in the 1880s fronted on Ocean Street (Source: Cayucos Historical Society).



Figure 11. The Cass Warehouse complex is well developed in this undated (c1885?) photograph, which must have been taken from atop a derrick. The main warehouse and all three of its ancillary structures are whitewashed. The business district along Ocean Street is filling in (Source: Cayucos Historical Society).

The late 1880s and early 1890s saw a substantial growth in shipping. An unidentified publication noted:

It is often said that the well-being of a place can be measured by the length of its hitching rail. If this really be so, we think for its size that Cayucos “takes the cake” in this respect, having no less than 700 feet of this “prosperity gauge” in one line! On “butter days” there are often as many as 100 to 125 teams hitched here at a time....

Cayucos, lying on the coast almost midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco is fortunate in thus possessing two competing markets on either side; and, as showing the thriving condition of her trade, we may mention that from 8 to 10 tons of butter alone are shipped from this wharf every four days. As a rule, about 60 per cent of this is shipped to Los Angeles; the rest to San Francisco. Messrs. Cass & Co., we learn, have upwards of 200 accounts with producers, and seeing that butter is a ready-money commodity, this town may be said to be a veritable little money-bag.²⁷

²⁷ From an undated photocopy at the Cayucos Historical Society.

Agricultural exports were seasonal in nature: dairy products reliably made up the bulk of shipments in the winter and spring; bales of seaweed gathered and dried by Chinese seaweed farmers were shipped in spring and summer; grain and dressed calves were sent out from Cayucos in the fall, winter, and early spring. Imports were always dominated by lumber, arriving at the James Cass & Company lumber yards in astonishing quantities. A few excerpts from San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Luis Obispo newspapers provide a glimpse into the cargoes typical of these years:

25,000 sacks of grain shipped at Cayucos....The warehouses are all full.²⁸

[Exported to San Francisco]: 177 boxes butter, 21 cases eggs [one case equals 30 dozen], 2 sacks abalones, 40 dressed calves, 1 coop chickens.²⁹

The steamer *Los Angeles* took a large consignment of dairy produce for San Francisco today, consisting of 360 boxes of butter, 50 cases cheese, besides eggs, chickens, hides, dressed calves, hogs, etc.³⁰

The steam schooner *Navarro* arrived here on the 7th with 240,000 feet of lumber, besides posts, shingles and shakes, for J. Cass & Co.³¹

[Exported to San Francisco]: 13 packages household goods, 3 cases eggs, 11 ½ boxes butter, 84 dressed calves, 13 packages galvanized iron.³²

[Exported to San Francisco]: 5 bales seaweed, 7 cases eggs, 18 boxes butter, 4 coops chickens, 17 dressed calves.³³

[Exported to San Francisco]: 50 bales seaweed, 3 bundles hides and skins, 2 packages merchandise, 17 cases eggs, 133 boxes and 9 tubs butter, 7 cases cheese, 31 dressed calves.³⁴

[Exported to San Francisco]: 4 tubs and 4 boxes butter, 7 cases eggs, 1 coop chickens, 2 boxes grain samples, 1 box bike parts.³⁵

To accommodate the grain shipments, James Cass & Company built a two-story annex in 1893 (at a fire-safe distance from the main warehouse). The ground floor served as the granary, and the upper floor was a “public hall”:

Cass & Co.’s granary and hall is about completed. The hall is 30 x 40 with anterooms attached and is intended for public use, fraternal societies, etc., and will be fitted up with

²⁸ *Los Angeles Herald*, December 5, 1880.

²⁹ *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 2, 1893, p. 11.

³⁰ *100 Years Ago, San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, March 30, 1893.

³¹ *100 Years Ago, San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, week of August 15-21, 1893.

³² *San Francisco Call*, November 12, 1893, p. 19.

³³ *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 27, 1895, p. 15.

³⁴ *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 31, 1897, p. 12.

³⁵ *San Francisco Call*, September 9, 1897, p. 7.

all conveniences for public and social gatherings. The office of this firm is also being enlarged.³⁶

Given their substantial investments in their new granary annex, warehouse additions, and other capital improvements, one of the most significant events of the 1890s for James Cass & Company was the renewal of their wharf franchise for another twenty years – until 1916; their petition to the County Board of Supervisors was filed September 7, 1896.

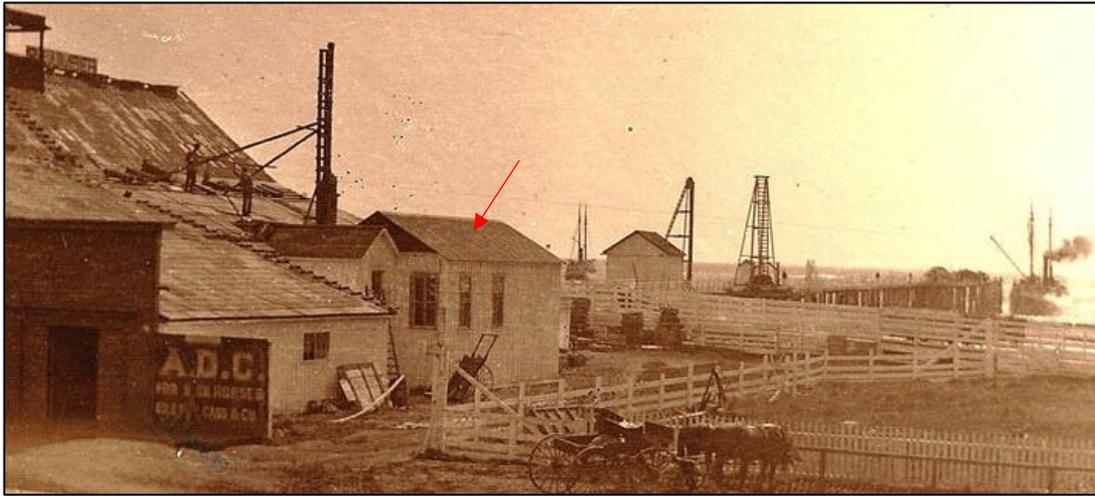


Figure 12. The Cass Warehouse office addition of 1893 is indicated by the red arrow.

A Sanborn fire insurance map provides reliably dated information about the Cass Warehouse complex in July 1895, including the expansive lumber yard with its new lumber shed, the Warehouse’s shed-roof addition for sales of agricultural implements, and Estero Hall, as the combination granary-and-public-hall came to be known (Figure 13).

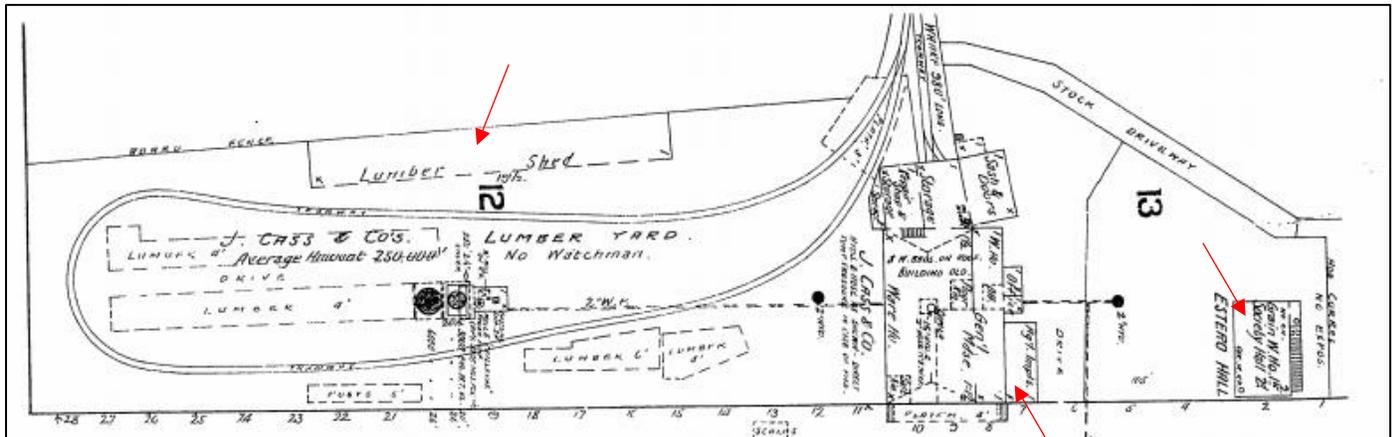
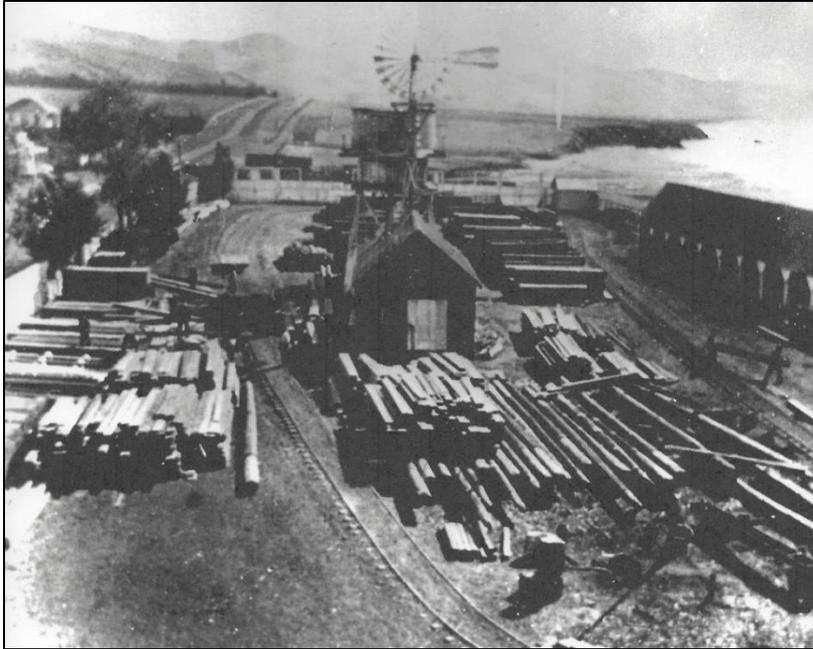


Figure 13. Sanborn Fire Insurance map, July 1895, Sheet 1, “J. Cass & Co.” Red arrows indicate the new lumber shed, agricultural implements store, and Estero Hall.

³⁶ 100 Years Ago, *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, week of September 19-25, 1893; week of November 14-20, 1893.



Jas. Cass & Co
 (Incorporated)
 Props. of CAYUCOS WHARF

Dealers in all kinds of
 rough and finished **LUMBER**
POSTS, SHAKES, PICKETS, SHIN-
GLS, LATHS, MOULDINGS, LIME,
HAIR, ETC. Also GROCERIES
HARDWARE and

General Merchandise

of all kinds. Agents for
BAKER & HAMILTON'S
 AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS,
Sain Wagons,
Benica Spring Wagons,
Buggies, Threshers and
Thresher Engines, Plows
Harrows, Etc., Etc.

Also for the
 Celebrated Aermoter Windmills,
 Union Gas Engines and the
Pacific Coast Steamers
 which call at Our Wharf every four days.

Figure 14 (left). James Cass & Company lumber yards and new lumber shed (courtesy Cayucos Historical Society).
Figure 15 (right). Advertisement for lumber and agricultural implements appearing in *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, December 25, 1901.

Plan views of the Cass Warehouse – including the 1885 Dakin warehouse map and Sanborn fire insurance maps from 1895, 1903, and 1913 – reveal modifications to the Cass Warehouse, as small ancillary additions were made to the exterior and as interior spaces were both reconfigured and repurposed (Figures 16-19).

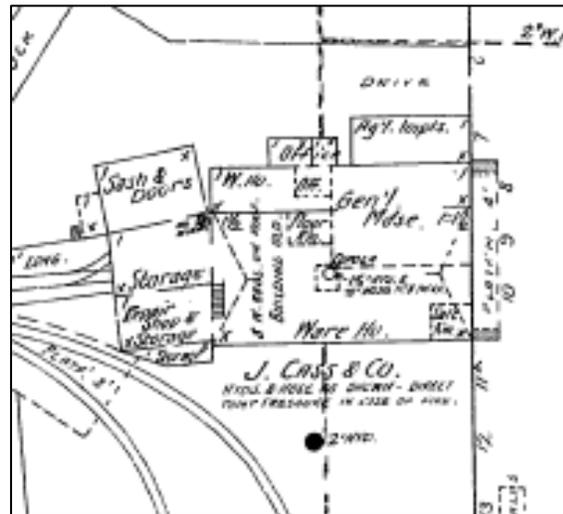
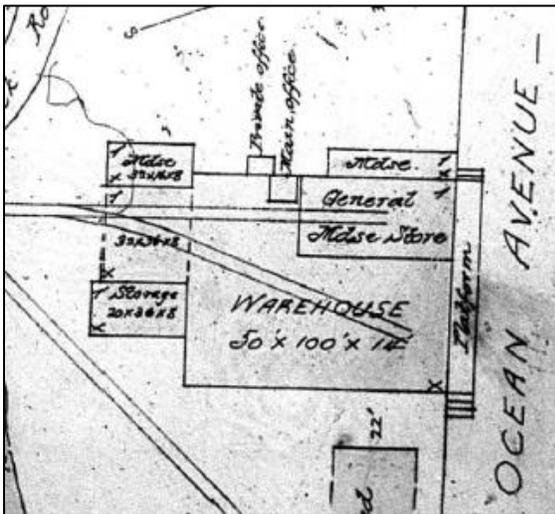


Figure 16 (left). The 1885 Dakin map is the most schematic of the four, presenting basic information on the general layout and use of the exterior and interior spaces.

Figure 17 (right). The July 1, 1895, Sanborn map provides greater detail. The three early structures are accurately placed in relation to the rear of the main warehouse, and their use is more precisely identified: sash & doors, storage, and repair shop & storage. Roof details are also provided, including the location of the belfry on the ridge.

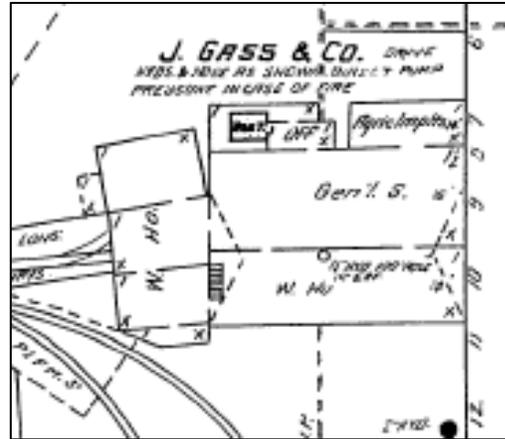
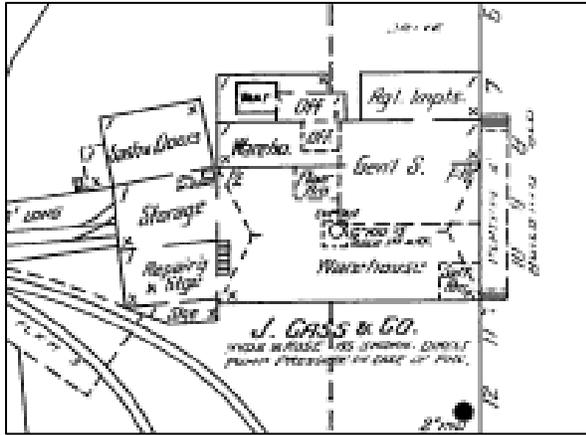


Figure 18 (left). The 1903 Sanborn map shows the results of the 1898 office remodeling reported in the *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*: “James Cass & Co. are erecting a large vault adjoining their store on the west, to better protect their books and valuable papers in case of fire. They bought the vault fittings in the Bank of Cayucos after the latter was closed and are re-erecting them on their own premises....³⁷”

Figure 19 (right). The 1913 Sanborn map documents the interim expansion of the general store and the subsequent necessary re-use of the three older buildings at the rear for warehouse purposes.



Figure 20. This c1910 photograph is believed to be of the interior of the James Cass & Company general store. It almost certainly was taken after (and perhaps because of) the expansion of the store space inside the warehouse. Here, the “dry goods” are ranged on display, and a sales clerk and her customer pose for the camera (courtesy Cayucos Historical Society).

³⁷ 100 Years Ago, *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, week of October 25- 31, 1898.

By the turn of the 20th century, however, there were strong indications that business was dropping off at Cayucos Landing. General economic conditions, such as the nationwide Panic of 1893, had led to the widespread failure of many California banks and, by extension, had cut off sources for farm credit. In San Luis Obispo County, severe drought had affected crop yields, and disastrous fires in 1893 and 1898 had destroyed most of the commercial buildings in Cayucos. As the exports reveal, the dairy industry was insulated to a great extent from these natural and financial disasters. Local dairymen – the vast majority of whom were Swiss – generally owned their own farms and dairy herds and were less exposed to the vagaries of credit. As long as green grass was available, milking, butter-making, and cheese-making continued; hogs and veal calves – the concomitant livestock of dairying -- were fed on whey and shipped live or as dressed carcasses to San Francisco markets. Winter was devoted to other farming pursuits before the cycle began again.

In 1906 over seventy dairymen who described themselves as “residents and taxpayers of the town of Cayucos and vicinity” petitioned the County Board of Supervisors “to do everything possible to hasten the building or owning of a public wharf at the town of Cayucos. We feel that a public wharf at the said town of Cayucos is now a public necessity for the reason that certain business men are now...desirous of establishing a milk condensing plant...provided that they can be given proper encouragement in the matter of shipping their out-put by water.”³⁸

The petition must have made the directors of James Cass & Company realize that selling their wharf to the county was advisable in the face of potential competition. On the last day of 1906, Cass filed a formal memorandum with the county, offering to sell not only the wharf, but all of the oceanfront lots, tidelands, and improvements (the warehouse, Estero Hall, tram tracks, fences, and corrals) for \$24,000.³⁹ Although the milk condensing plant did not materialize, Cass was still pursuing the sale of the company’s holdings in October 1907.⁴⁰

By this time, James Cass was 83 – though hale and hearty enough to have fended off an attack by two would-be robbers in 1903.⁴¹ He remained a strong advocate for the welfare of James Cass & Company. As one reporter observed in 1904, “Capt. Cass naturally takes great interest in this shipping point, for he established it and has guarded and promoted its interests for the last 35 years.”⁴² Over the years, Cass had gradually expanded his interests to include his Glenbrook Ranch (near York Mountain), where he maintained apple and walnut orchards, as well as having his own dairy and creamery operations.⁴³ Farming again prompted him to resume his subscription to *Pacific Rural Press*, a leading agricultural journal, and he intermittently contributed letters on a variety of topics, including the durability of redwood posts versus red cedar posts, and soil conditions.⁴⁴ In 1916, the year before his death, Cass resumed his earlier interest in hog-raising, with the *Pacific Rural Press* duly reporting: “James Cass of

³⁸ Petition to the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors, July 1906; a copy of the petition is in the collections of the Cayucos Historical Society.

³⁹ *In Re Cayucos Public Wharf, Memorandum of Proposal of James Cass & Co.*, filed December 31, 1906.

⁴⁰ Letter on James Cass & Company letterhead, from James Cass to H. H. Carpenter (Clerk of the Board of Supervisors), October 15, 1907; a copy of the letter is in the collections of the Cayucos Historical Society.

⁴¹ *Santa Cruz Evening Sentinel*, July, 1903, p. 1. Cass grappled with both assailants, wounding one with a pistol shot, before they fled into the night.

⁴² *Pacific Rural Press*, January 16, 1904, p. 1.

⁴³ In 1889, Cass was building a silo “to preserve green food for his cows during the latter part of the season,” *100 Years Ago, San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, week of May 21-27, 1889; in 1903, Cass was reported as having shipped “900 boxes of apples from one acre of orchard on his Glenbrook Ranch, and has 200 boxes more ready to ship,” *Pacific Rural Press* January 10, 1903, p. 26.

⁴⁴ *Pacific Rural Press*, May 9, 1908, p. 295.

Cayuocos writes that he has gone into the registered Duroc game. This is his third hog venture since the first one at lone [Amador County] in 1853.”⁴⁵

James Cass died in Cayucos at the age of 92 on March 15, 1917. His death certificate lists his occupation as “retired merchant.” His physician gave his cause of death as “old age” and “failure of the heart due to over exertion” (Figure 21). Cass was buried in the I.O.O.F. Cemetery in San Luis Obispo, next to his second wife, Mary McMurray Cass (1819-1910).

James Cass & Company, chiefly under the direction of his son-in-law Abbott L. Burroughs, lasted only another 6 years. Cass’s great-granddaughter, Florence Cass Burroughs, recollected in 1971 that her grandfather Abbott had heard of James Cass as an enterprising man and had gone to Cayucos himself expressly to get a job working for him. Burroughs became the company’s bookkeeper, ran the first Cayucos post office (located in a corner of the warehouse), and married Emily, one of Cass’s daughters. “As time went on, he became the unofficial manager of the whole business, though he did it so tactfully that I don’t think the old man ever knew how it happened.”⁴⁶

| PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS | | MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH | |
|--|--|---|--|
| 1 PLACE OF DEATH COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO TOWN OF OR CITY OF <u>Cayuocos</u> | | California State Board of Health State Index No. _____ BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF DEATH Local Registered No. _____ | |
| 2 Full Name <u>James Cass</u> | | 16 DATE OF DEATH <u>March 15</u> , 1917 (Month) (Day) (Year) | |
| 3 SEX <u>Male</u> | 4 COLOR OR RACE <u>White</u> | 17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from <u>March 14</u> , 1917, to <u>March 15</u> , 1917; that I last saw him alive on <u>March 15</u> , 1917; and that death occurred on the date stated above at <u>11 A. M.</u> The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows: | |
| 5a HUSBAND OF _____ | 5b WIFE OF _____ | Old age & failure of the heart due to over exertion | |
| 6 DATE OF BIRTH <u>November 24</u> , 1824 (Month) (Day) (Year) | 7 AGE <u>92</u> years <u>2</u> months <u>17</u> days If LESS than 1 day, hrs. or min.? | Contributory <u>Weakened heart due to old age</u> (Duration) years months days | |
| 8 OCCUPATION (a) Trade, profession or particular kind of work <u>Retired merchant</u> (b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer) | | State whether attributed to dangerous or insanitary conditions of employment. | |
| 9 BIRTHPLACE (State or country) <u>England</u> | | Signed: <u>B. H. Pelton</u> , M. D. <u>Mar. 15</u> 1917. (Address) <u>Cayuocos, Cal.</u> | |
| 10 NAME OF FATHER <u>James Cass</u> | | *State the DISEASE CAUSING DEATH, or, in deaths from VIOLENT CAUSES, state (1) MEANS OF INJURY; and (2) whether (probably) ACCIDENTAL, SUICIDAL, or HOMICIDAL. | |
| 11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or country) <u>England</u> | | 18a SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR HOSPITALS, INSTITUTIONS, TRANSIENTS OR RECENT RESIDENTS | |
| 12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <u>Do not know</u> | | Where was disease contracted, if not at place of death? Former or usual residence | |
| 13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or country) <u>Do not know</u> | | 19 PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL (10) <u>I.O.O.F. Cemetery</u> DATE OF BURIAL <u>March 17</u> , 1917 | |
| 18a LENGTH OF RESIDENCE At Place of Death <u>50</u> years months days (Primary registration district) In California <u>20</u> years months days | | 20 UNDERTAKER <u>Palmer + Palmer, San Luis Obispo</u> | |
| 14 THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE (Informant) <u>H. H. Cass</u> (Address) <u>Cayuocos, Cal.</u> | | 15 Filed <u>Mar. 14</u> , 1917 <u>H. F. Maloney</u> Registrar or Deputy | |

Figure 21. Death certificate of James Cass, March 15, 1917.

⁴⁵ Pacific Rural Press, June 24, 1916, p. 751.

⁴⁶ Transcript by Florence Burroughs, August 29, 1971, on file at the Cayucos Historical Society.

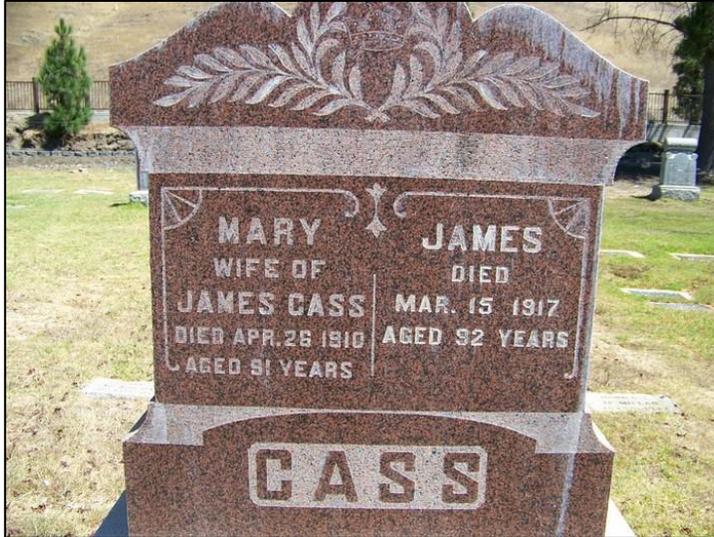


Figure 22. Grave monument for James and Mary McMurray Cass, San Luis Obispo I.O.O.F. Cemetery (Source: <http://www.findagrave.com/>).

In 1920, even before the dissolution of James Cass & Company, the Cass Warehouse and wharf were acquired by the State of California.⁴⁷ With the growing popularity of the automobile, tourism was beginning to play a larger role in the local economy. Residents of the San Joaquin Valley escaping oppressive summer heat became more frequent visitors, and the wharf, now a pleasure pier, was a popular spot with fishermen and sightseers. With the wharf no longer receiving shipping, the tramways were pulled up, and the warehouse was moved from its original location at the foot of the wharf to its current location on the beachfront. During the relocation, the three older gabled buildings that had clustered around the warehouse were removed (Figure 23).



Figure 23. In this view from the early 1920s, the warehouse has been relocated to one side of the foot of the pier – its current location. The ancillary storage and warehouse structures have been removed, with only ghosts of paint to show where they had been attached. Original openings in the rear wall of the main warehouse are also visible (Source: Cayucos Historical Society).

⁴⁷ Cayucos Pier Project, <http://us-ltrcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Cayucos-Cayucos-Creek-Watershed.pdf>.



Figure 24. An early truck parks outside the warehouse near advertising signs for gasoline and automobile services. Ironically, the rise of trucking helped bring an end to the era of coastwise shipping. The photo provides good documentation of the materials and features used on the front elevation of the warehouse, including doors, windows, horizontal wood siding, roof overhang, and loading dock (Source: Cayucos Historical Society).

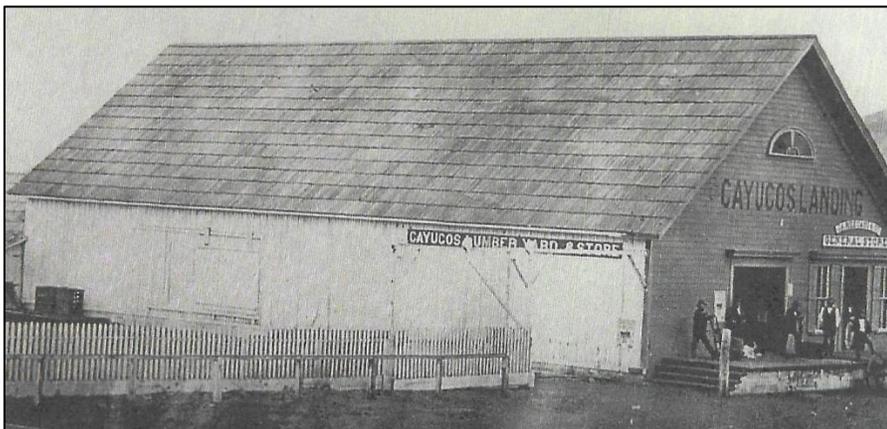


Figure 25. This oblique view of the Cass Warehouse shows the original 14 courses of roofing shingles, the mixture of horizontal (front elevation) and vertical (side elevation) wood siding, exterior-mounted sliding barn doors on the side elevation, and the large doorway leading into the warehouse from the loading dock (Source: Cayucos Historical Society).

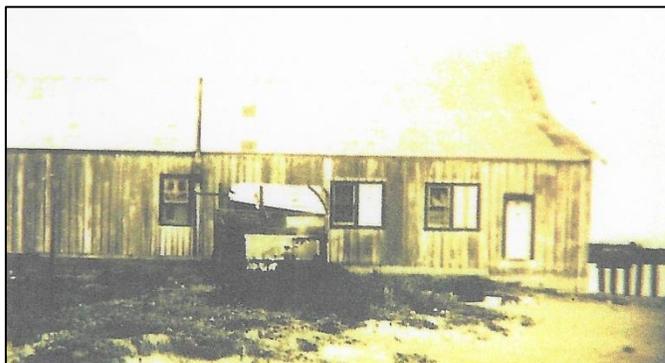


Figure 26. A photo of the west elevation, taken in 1939, documents the vertical wood siding and window and door openings (Source: Cayucos Historical Society).

CAYUCOS TRACTS OF LAND ASSOCIATED WITH JAMES CASS & COMPANY

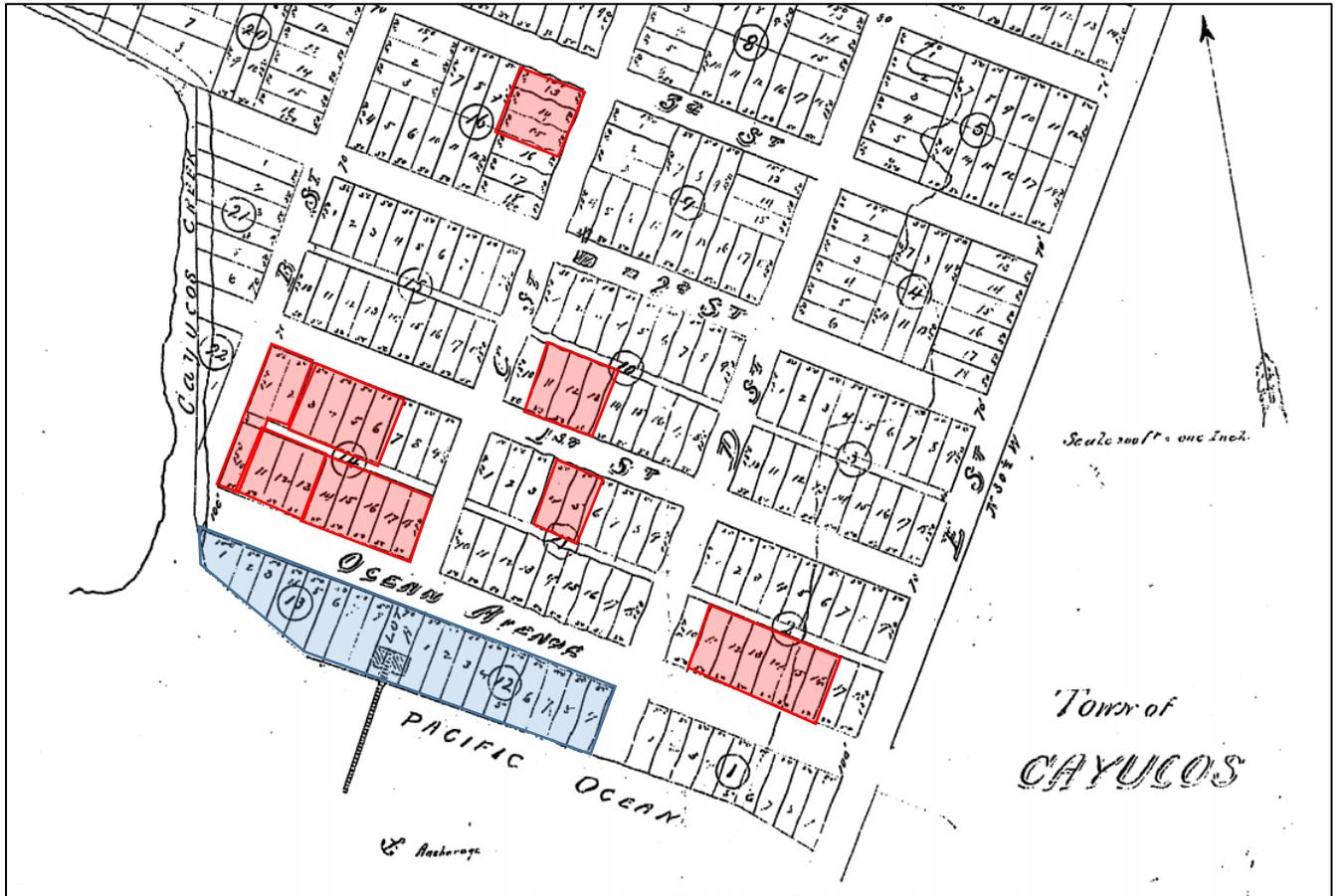


Figure 27. Lots shaded in blue are those acquired by James Cass & Company, securing the waterfront for their growing enterprise.⁴⁸ Lots shaded in red are those acquired by James Cass as a private individual. The townsite for Cayucos was laid out in 1875 by County Surveyor R. R. Harris for William F. Babcock, the owner of Rancho Moro y Cayucos.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ William F. Babcock to James Cass and W. L. Beebee, Lots 1-8 in Block 13, Lot A, and Lots 1-9 in Block 12 of Cayucos, San Luis Obispo County *Deeds* Book H, pp. 121-122, October 9, 1875, and William L. Beebee to James Cass et al., *Deeds* Book H, pp. 335-337, March 13, 1876.

⁴⁹ William F. Babcock to James Cass, Lots 11, 12, and 13 in Block 10 of Cayucos, San Luis Obispo County *Deeds* Book M, p. 348-349, October 4, 1880; Lots 13, 14, and 15 in Block 16, *Deeds* Book N, pp. 282-283, September 9, 1881; Lots 3-6, 11-13, Block 14, *Deeds* Book N, pp. 441-442, October 27, 1881; and Lots 1, 2, and 10 in Block 14, *Deeds* Book T, pp. 291-293, February 28, 1885. Also, Jane B. Slocomb to James Cass, Lots 17-18 in Block 2, *Deeds* Book 28, p. 540, September 28, 1896; Lots 5-9 in Block 2, Lots 13-17 in Block 8, and Lots 1-4, 7, and 13 in Block 5, *Deeds* Book 46, p. 508, April 3, 1900; and Lot 8 in Block 8, *Deeds* Book 70, pp. 245-246, June 29, 1906.

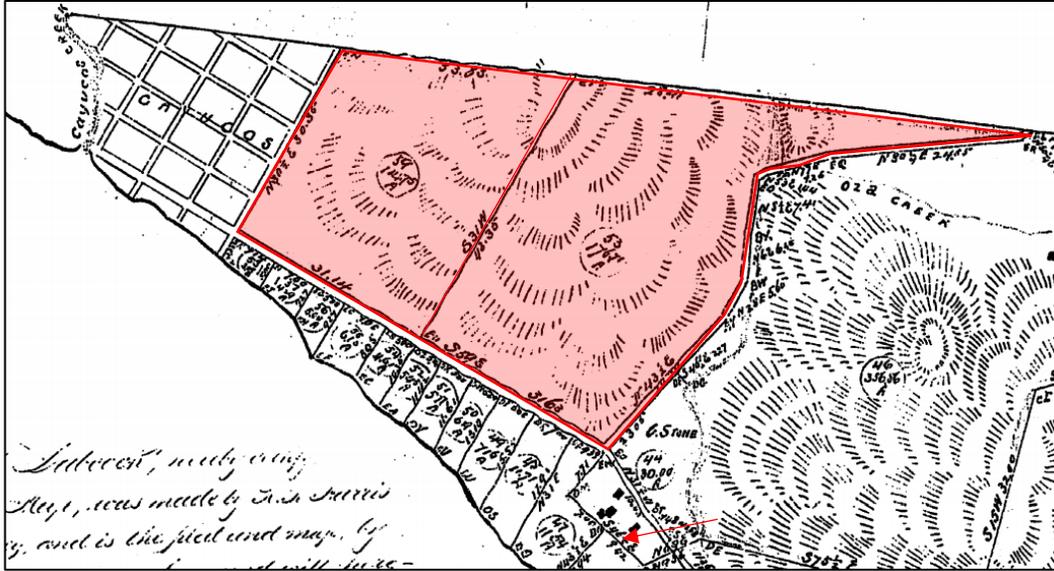


Figure 28. James Cass acquired 114.75 acres (Lot 59) of subdivided Rancho Moro y Cayucos from William F. Babcock in 1876, and another 176.71 acres (Lot 53) in 1880.⁵⁰ The Old Creek community is indicated by the red arrow.

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES ASSOCIATED WITH JAMES CASS & COMPANY:

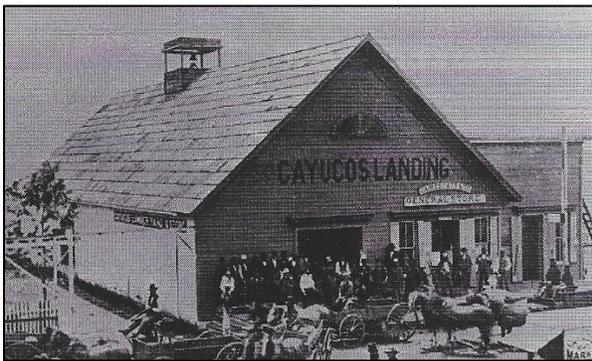


Figure 29 a-d. The subject property, constructed in 1875, was the principal warehouse of James Cass & Company.

⁵⁰ San Luis Obispo County *Deeds Book I*, pp. 339-340, December 1, 1876 (Lot 59), and *Deeds Book M*, pp. 438-440, November 9, 1880 (Lot 53).

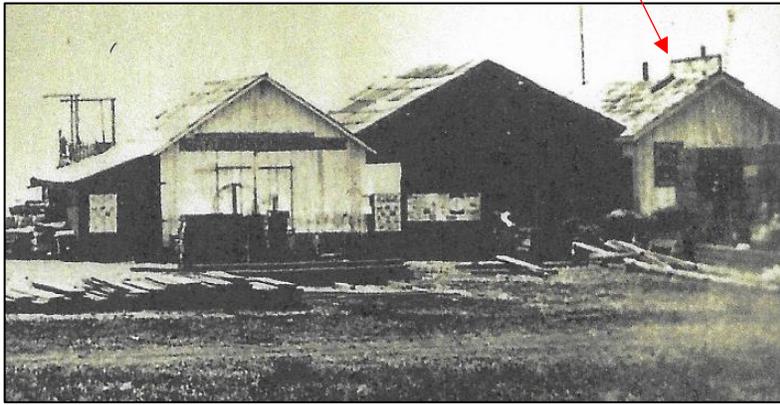


Figure 30 (left). The first buildings associated with Cayucos Landing, 1874. The red arrow indicates what was probably the first warehouse on the beach.

Figure 31 (right). Estero Hall was constructed with an annex warehouse space on the lower floor and a public hall on the second in 1893.



Figure 32. James Cass & Company wharf (c1880?). The Cass Warehouse appears at the extreme right.

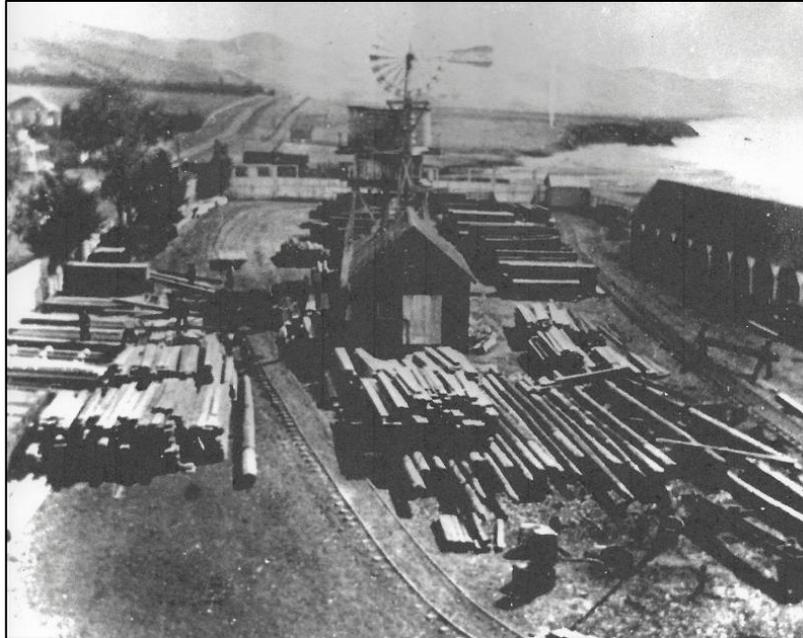


Figure 33. James Cass & Company lumber yard, tram tracks, lumber shed, pump house, windmill, and elevated water tank (c1880?). “In connection with the wharf and warehouse, Messrs. Cass & Co. have a lumber yard, stocked with a supply of good lumber. A Regulator windmill elevates water from a well in the lumber yard into a tank that holds between 4,000 and 5,000 gallons, which supplies the store, wharf, stock yards and dwelling house, with ample water of excellent quality” (*San Luis Obispo Tribune*, September 30, 1876).⁵¹ Undated photograph, Maxine Hilliard Collection, Image #2006.2.6, courtesy of the Cayucos Historical Society.

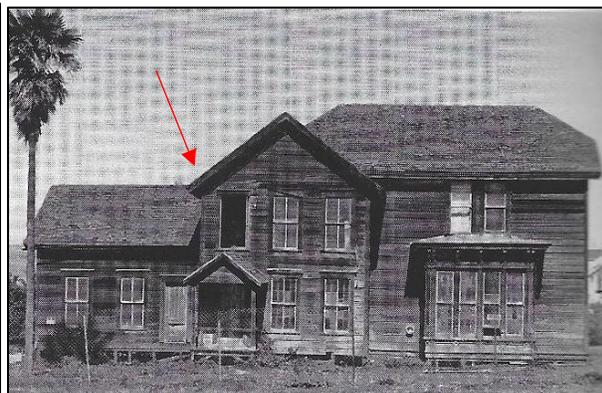
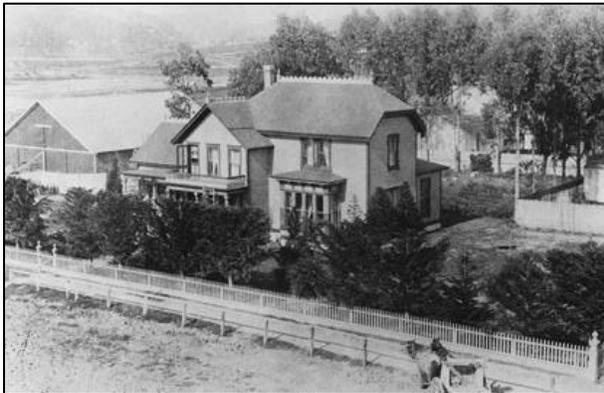


Figure 34 (left). Cass family residence in its heyday, with outbuildings, landscaping, and ornamental fencing.
Figure 35 (right). Cass family residence in 1990, prior to restoration. In this photograph it is easy to distinguish the original 1875 Folk Victorian house, with its intersecting gabled elements (indicated by red arrow) from the larger hipped-roof addition (Source: Maricle, Cass House and Cayucos, p. 8).

⁵¹ The community of Cayucos had a history of using windmills combined with tank houses. For example, an article that appeared in the *Central Coast Sun-Bulletin* on July 26, 1973, p. B-16, noted that “Windmills atop each house [sic] drive pumps which lifted well water into the adjacent tanks, providing in-house running water service”; and an article on Cayucos, published in the *Paso Robles Daily Press*, October 10, 1975, p. A-1, states that “In the original days of Cayucos, the water supply for the whole town was furnished by windmills which punctuated [sic] the skyline much as do the modern day TV antennas. There are a few of these picturesque old windmills left in town....”

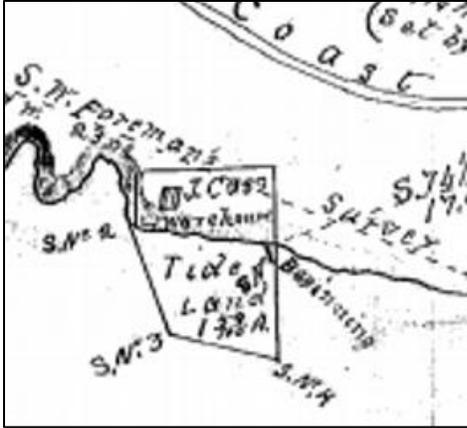


Figure 36 (left). Depicted in this detail from an 1871 tidelands survey, James Cass & Company's first acquisition was this 1.59-acre tract encompassing both bluff top and tidelands northwest of Cayucos Creek, acquired from Wesley Burnett in 1870. The tract also came with an important water-access easement. An elevated tank was mentioned on the property in 1916.

Figure 37 (right). Bluff-top parcel, now 709 Lucerne Road. The tank house is extant, though heavily remodeled.

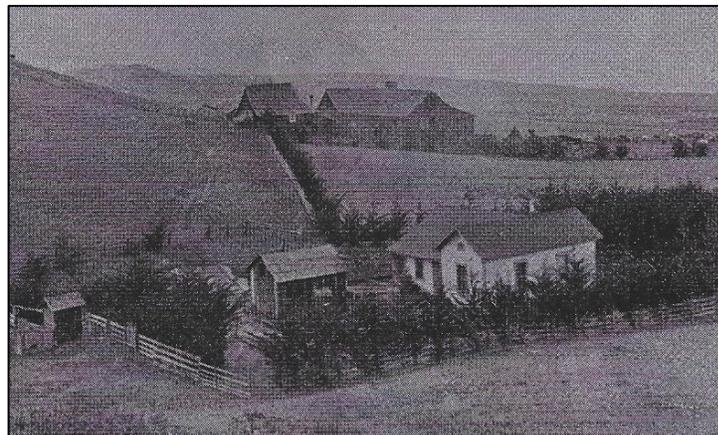
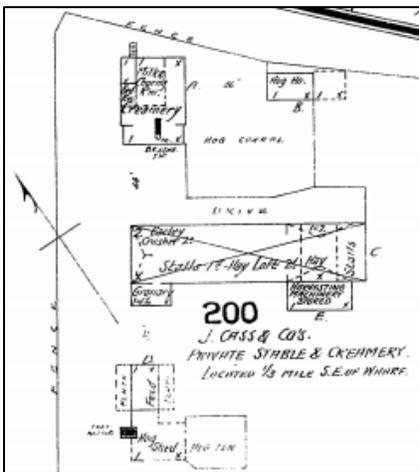


Figure 38(left). Sanborn Fire Insurance map, July 1895, Sheet 1, "J. Cass & Co's. Private Stable & Creamery." This farmstead included a stable, creamery building, and hog pens at a location 1/3 mile southeast of the wharf.

Figure 39 (right). "Cass's Dairy, 1890s." Cass reportedly had several dairies. The exact location of this one is not given (Source: Maricle, *The Cass House and Cayucos*, p. 26).

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES: JAMES CASS & COMPANY WAREHOUSE

The 1875 Cass Warehouse building has been extensively modified in the years since 1920, most notably by the application of stucco over the original wood frame structure. The following photographs (Figures 40-57) record various aspects of these exterior alterations, including modern roofing material, door and window openings, shed-roofed additions, gabled porticos, and concrete ramps.



Figure 40. Principal elevation, fronting on Ocean Avenue. The shed-roof addition on the west side is part of the historic structure, although the roof articulation has been modified on this elevation (compare with Figure 23, above).



Figure 41. Cayucos Pier Plaza at foot of Cayucos Pier, on east side of Cass Warehouse building.



Figure 42. Gable end on principal elevation with modern applied wood grid decoration. The broad eaves are original to the historic warehouse structure (compare with Figure 29 above).



Figure 43. Modern signage, access ramp, stairs, railings, door, and glass-enclosed portico associated with Cayucos Community Art Gallery portion of Cass Warehouse building. The doorway itself is probably original to the warehouse building (compare with Figure 29, above).



Figure 44. Rear view of Cass Warehouse building. The shed-roof addition on the east end of the elevated platform is a modern structure made of older materials.



Figure 45. Original historic-period roof plane articulation on rear elevation. The fascia is probably original, although the flashing was probably added with the new roofing material (Compare with Figure 23, above).



Figure 46. New addition on east side of building. This portion has no historical precedent.



Figures 47 and 48. Details of shed-roof extension of roof line on west elevation, sheltering row of windows and doorway. These are not original historic-period features of the Cass Warehouse (compare with Figure 26, above).



Figure 49. Row of windows on west elevation. These are not original to the warehouse (compare with Figure 26, above).



Figure 50. Modern window openings and windows on the east elevation.



Figure 51. Modern window openings and windows on the principal elevation.



Figure 52. Detail of modern window opening on the principal elevation.



Figure 53. Modern portico, doorway, and doors on east elevation. Community bulletin board mounted to right of doorway.



Figure 54. Commemorative plaque for Cayucos Pier Plaza.



Figure 55. Sculpture/bench/donor plaques at Cayucos Pier Plaza



Figure 56. Memorial plinth at Cayucos Pier Plaza.



Figure 57. Signage mounted on principal elevation.



Figure 58. Historic-period bell with A-frame and wheel, relocated from the roof of the Cass Warehouse to the roof of the Cayucos Fire Department, 201 Cayucos Drive.

EVALUATION OF RESOURCES

Pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the California Code of Regulations, and under Sections PRC 5024 and 5024.5 of the California Public Resources Code, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines, the James Cass & Company Warehouse has been evaluated to determine whether it meets the established criteria for eligibility for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR). The criteria for listing are as follows:

Criterion 1: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

Evaluation under Criterion 1:

The Cass Warehouse and Central California's Maritime Cultural Landscape

Maritime commerce in California's pre-statehood era was intentional but episodic -- and often outside the law. Spanish sovereignty required that the presidios and pueblos of Alta California be supplied through a combination of their own industry and the annual cargoes shipped from New Spain. Lists of requested items (*memorias*) were forwarded to New Spain, and bills of lading (*facturas*) accompanied the shipments, fulfilling or ignoring the requests, as might be the case. The War of Mexican Independence disrupted even this tenuous system, so that local needs always far exceeded local supplies. Imported merchandise was chronically hard to come by. The sheer size of Alta California and the paucity of enforcement agents meant that illicit trading with foreign ships was a way of life. Encroachment by British, Russian, and American ships caused great anxiety in Mexico City, but the government was virtually powerless to stop it, though it arrested interlopers and intercepted contraband when it could.

Once New England ships entered the Pacific in greater numbers, a relatively lively maritime economy developed. In pursuit of the hide-and-tallow trade, these ships connected Alta California to such far-flung locales as Boston, Valparaiso in Chile, the Sandwich Islands (Hawai'i), and China. A lightening of trade restrictions with foreign powers in the Mexican era encouraged the establishment of small commercial depots in California. Port facilities, however, remained rudimentary. With the spectacular exception of San Francisco Bay and, to a lesser extent, San Diego Bay, there was a general lack of good harbors in California. Roadsteads, bays, and coves were more typical -- though these were not viewed as all-weather ports.

The Gold Rush launched a new era of coastwise travel as hopeful miners and entrepreneurs surged toward Buena Yerba (San Francisco). California's ensuing statehood focused national attention on access to San Francisco's burgeoning markets. The state's growing population was soon fanning out along the coast and coastal valleys, taking up agricultural and commercial pursuits that required reliable transportation routes. Again, California's sheer size (and topography) made land routes impractical. The potential economic value of coastal shipping can be seen in the federal and state regulations that governed it and in the substantial public and private investment that supported it. The earliest legislative sessions of the California Assembly and Senate frequently addressed maritime matters raised by local constituents and county committees and recommended by the legislative Committee on Commerce and Navigation.⁵²

⁵² In the Seventeenth Legislative Session (1867-1868), for example, the Assembly approved the following, among others: *An Act authorizing the construction of a wharf in the Bay of San Luis Obispo*, January

On the Central Coast, the earliest evidence of federal government investment was the construction of lighthouses. The first on the West Coast (outside San Francisco Bay) were those at Point Pinos (Monterey) and Point Loma (San Diego), both of which began operating in 1855. Santa Cruz (1869), Piedras Blancas (1875), Point Sur (1889), and San Luis Obispo (1890) followed -- safeguarding ships plying the Central Coast between the larger ports of San Francisco and Wilmington/San Pedro (Los Angeles), as well as the intermediate ports of Santa Barbara and Monterey.

Coastal maritime activity necessarily made modifications to both the physical and cultural landscape – and both offshore and onshore. The concept of a “maritime cultural landscape” arose during maritime archaeological surveys conducted along the coast of Sweden in the late 1970s by Christer Westerdahl (1978). As Westerdahl (1992) recollected in a subsequent publication, “Strictly speaking, the land remains were not the concern of the survey proper, but underwater remains were the main point. Gradually, however, the analytical perspective was widened to include ancient monuments on land.”⁵³

Even more recently, James P. Delgado, Director of NOAA’s Maritime Heritage Program, has applied the term to the “Redwood Coast,” from Bodega Head to Mendocino, drawing attention to the “physical as well as cultural traces ranging from place names, ocean highways no longer traveled, coastal settlements, industrial structures, and shipwrecks to form a maritime cultural landscape which is unique and nationally important. This coast is a perfect illustration of how the offshore ocean connects with the shore, and beyond, in terms of humanity’s engagement with the marine environment.”⁵⁴

With respect to Cayucos, the Cass Warehouse is emblematic of San Luis Obispo County’s maritime cultural landscape. It embodies the county’s reliance on ocean-going vessels to maintain contact with the larger world and to foster local economic growth in the second half of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth century. It is significant for its association with the broader West Coast economy at a time when transport of goods was dependent on coastwise shipping, rather than on long-distance land routes. It is significant for its association with James Cass & Company (as the primary economic driver and focal point of the community in its earliest years). It is also significant for its key role in supporting the viability of vitally important San Luis Obispo County agricultural enterprises, including dairying (butter and cheese), grain growing (wheat and barley), stockraising (meat, hides, wool), and Chinese seaweed farming, as well as local industrial enterprises (mining). It is also significant for its association with the importation of vast quantities of milled lumber that had a direct role in the physical development of local communities and in the transition to American-period styles of architecture (e.g., wood siding and shingles) and land use (fence posts).

Criterion 2: Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history

10, 1868; *An Act to authorize George Hearst and [shore whaling captain] Joseph Clark to build a wharf at San Simeon Bay, in the County of San Luis Obispo*, January 23, 1868; and *An Act to authorize John S. Kimball and his assigns to construct two or more chutes at or near the mouth of Salmon Creek, in Mendocino County, and to collect tolls for the use of the same*, March 20, 1868. The Eighteenth Legislative Session (1869-1870) saw *An Act to authorize the construction of and maintenance of a wharf in San Luis Obispo County* – which may have referred to Cayucos Landing, although this has not been verified.

⁵³ Christer Westerdahl, “The Maritime Cultural Landscape,” pp. 5-14 in the *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 21(1), 1992.

⁵⁴ James P. Delgado, “The ‘Redwood Coast’: The Maritime Cultural Landscape of the Potential Expansion of Cordell Bank and Gulf of Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries,” published online at the NOAA website http://farallones.noaa.gov/heritage/pdf/The_Redwood_Coast_MCL_of_Northern_California_January7_2013.pdf.

Evaluation under Criterion 2:

The Cass Warehouse is inextricably linked to James Cass, the founder of Cayucos and the head of James Cass & Company, the most important commercial enterprise in Cayucos, and one of the most important in San Luis Obispo County for over half a century. Cass was also a large-scale property owner in the Cayucos area and beyond, personally participating in the region's dairying, horticulture, farming, and livestock raising enterprises and personally benefitting from the wharf, as so many of his neighbors did.

Criterion 3: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values

Evaluation under Criterion 3:

The Cass Warehouse is a rare example of a nineteenth-century warehouse at a small California port. Original framing and siding materials survive underneath the later, removable additions (which have no doubt contributed to the building's survival). The Cass Warehouse is a prominent building mass, and its distinctive gabled form has dominated the oceanfront since its construction. Despite being moved slightly to one side of the pier, the Cass Warehouse retains its significant spatial relationships with the associated port, pier, Cass residence, and Cayucos townsite. It should also be noted that the bell that formerly occupied the roof ridge of the Cass Warehouse survives at its current location, the Cayucos Fire Station, and is an important part of the Cass Warehouse's physical legacy.

Criterion 4: Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation

Evaluation under Criterion 4:

The Cass Warehouse, as a rare example of its type, has the potential to yield information important to the history of the local area and of California.

CONCLUSIONS

The Cass Warehouse meets all four of the eligibility criteria (Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4) for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. It is significant at both the local level and at the State level. The Cass Warehouse retains more than sufficient integrity to be able to convey a strong sense of the time during which it was constructed. The period of significance is from 1875, the date of its construction, to 1920, when the warehouse building was acquired by the State and was no longer being used for its original purpose.

This report recommends removal of the non-historic materials and restoration of the Cass Warehouse as a significant element of the beachfront.

Potential for a James Cass & Company Historic District

It is beyond the scope of the current study to demarcate a James Cass & Company Historic District, but because of its documented association with James Cass, the founder of Cayucos, and with the formative period of James Cass & Company, the warehouse would be considered a *contributing resource to a historic district* consisting of such elements as the Cass House and grounds, pier, and warehouse. A report was recently prepared (Carr 2010) suggesting that the tankhouse at 709 Lucerne, Cayucos would qualify as a discontinuous but contributing resource to such a historic district. Since that report, the tankhouse has been heavily altered, losing all aspects of integrity except for location and association.

Such a district, though not currently delineated, is consistent with the San Luis Obispo County Estero Area Plan, certified by the California Coastal Commission and adopted by the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors in 1988 (Cayucos and Rural Portions updated January 7, 2009). The Estero Area Plan already recognizes the Cass House complex and pier as historic resources in the County.

AFTERWORD

The rehabilitation of historic buildings is always fraught with difficulties – funding being perhaps the most notable. The inclusion of the Cass Warehouse in the larger context of nineteenth-century coastwise shipping presents some tantalizing possibilities for interpretation of this significant historical resource – linking it to similar enterprises at Avila and San Simeon – and even to some of the “doghole ports” of Monterey County.

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PREPARER'S QUALIFICATIONS

Paula Juelke Carr is a professional historian and architectural historian, and is on the San Luis Obispo County list of Qualified Historic Resource Consultants. She earned a BA in cultural anthropology in 1972 and an interdisciplinary MA in history, art history, anthropology, and folklore and mythology in 1981 from the University of California, Santa Barbara, with additional coursework in history at the University of Arizona in 1982-1983. She has been working in the field of California history for more than 25 years -- specifically as an architectural historian for the California Department of Transportation (District 5) from 2004 to 2015 -- and is now a consultant.