

## Cayucos Veteran's Hall: A New Beginning



Architectural rendering for the rehabilitation project, front elevation. Note the square front facades on the western side of the warehouse, where Cass had originally added sheds to the warehouse. Studio Design Group Architects, Inc.

The rehabilitation of the Cayucos Veteran's Hall has been underway since December 2022. This historic building holds special significance to the community of Cayucos, and its reopening will signal a new phase for the public gathering place, which has been closed since 2016.

The Cayucos Veteran's Hall was originally built by James Cass in 1875 to serve as a warehouse for his shipping business. In addition to containing a post office and general store, the warehouse was used to keep harvested goods and dairy products safe while awaiting shipment to larger markets. Neighboring farmers would congregate at the Cass Warehouse the day before ships arrived, an ad hoc social gathering that came to be known as "Butter Day." During the height of the shipping industry in Cayucos during the 1880s, up to 125 wagons traveled to Cass's warehouse on Butter Day.

Cass died in 1917 and his beachfront property was sold to the Paso Robles Beach Company in 1923. By this time, road and railway infrastructure had improved, and maritime shipping was being replaced by overland transport. Cass's wharf, which once provided an essential link to larger markets, was increasingly used as a fishing pier and a sightseeing location. The warehouse was moved from the starting point of the pier to its current location on the beachfront, adjacent to the pier. The buildings changed hands multiple times before the State of California became the owner of the pier, beach, and warehouse in 1940. In 1956 the warehouse was renamed the Cayucos Veteran's Memorial Hall and continued to be used as a gathering place for the local community until its closure in 2016.

The current rehabilitation effort will strip away some of the modern features of the building that were added during the mid-twentieth century, including the drop-down ceiling and exterior stucco. The rehabilitation will expose the original wood siding and ceiling trusses. A new foundation will elevate the warehouse to prepare for sea level rise, ensuring its safety and accessibility for generations to come.

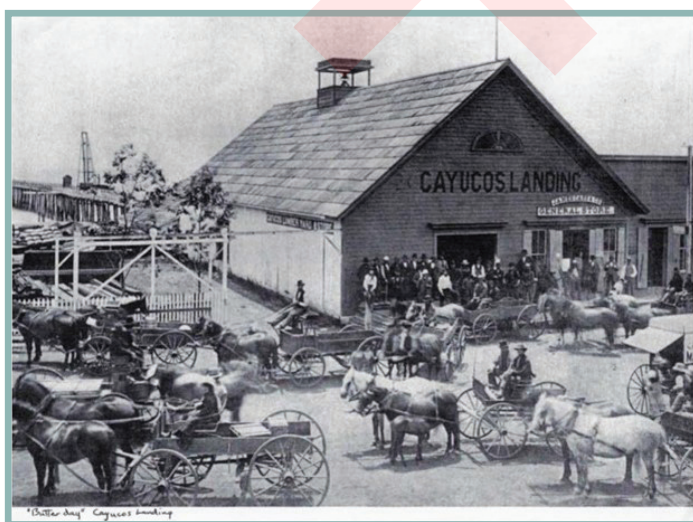
This project will re-introduce the Cayucos Veteran's Hall to the community as a gathering place, a role it has filled since the lifetime of James Cass: in 1877, the San Luis Obispo Weekly Tribune noted the use of Cass's warehouse as a ballroom in celebration of the anniversary of the Independence of Switzerland, an event celebrated by the large Swiss-Italian immigrant community of the area. Cass's warehouse has always been used as a gathering place by the local community, and this project will return this special space to its original purpose and appearance.

### About the Author:

*Dr. Amy Hart is a State Historian with California State Parks. She earned her M.A. in History from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and her Ph.D. in History from UC Santa Cruz. You might see her walking around the Cayucos Veteran's Hall in a hard hat as she monitors the rehabilitation of this important historic building.*



Lithograph of the Cass Warehouse published in Myron Angel's 1883 book, History of San Luis Obispo County, opposite p. 341.



"Butter Day," Courtesy of the Cayucos Historical Society.

### SPECIAL THANK YOU

CHS wants to thank David Garcia and Phil Cabernoch with JG Contracting and Terry Paris with the County for all their support of CHS.

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*"A picture is worth a thousand words."*

Cayucos Historical Society (CHS) has hundreds of photos and documents that trace the development of our little town. The preservation of these historical assets will tell the story of Cayucos for many generations to come and we are excited to announce that we will be placing them into the premier archival program, Past Perfect.

Ethan Weinschenk, a county native with a deep love of history, has joined us to undertake this monumental task. Although Ethan will be supporting this work for minimal compensation, our organization needs your help in financing this project.

**Help us save our irreplaceable memories of  
Cayucos and make them accessible to everyone.**

Any assistance you can provide to help fund this effort will be critical to the success of preserving the rich cultural history of Cayucos.

**If you are interested in supporting this effort,  
please mail your donation to:**

Cayucos Historical Society  
P.O. Box 143  
Cayucos, CA 93430

Also, if you are aware of any group or organization that may provide grants for this type of work, please let us know. Just like our town came to be, we all know it takes a village.

Thank you so much for your continued support  
~ *Cayucos Historical Society*



**ABOUT ETHAN** Ethan holds a Masters in Library and Information Science from San Jose State University and a Bachelor's in Humanities from CSU Monterey. He currently uses his talents and volunteers at the SLO History Center, CSU East Bay Library, National Steinbeck Center, Diocese of Monterey, and Cal Poly.

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## Join us for History Night!!

Date: October 6th, 2023

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Cayucos School  
Auditorium

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Museum

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