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Former San Diego Home/Garden Lifestyles interns and San Diego Padres Pad Squad members Elizabeth Bradford and Brittney Cannizarro enjoy ice-cream cones at Petco's Park at the Park, the former site of the old Hage's dairy operation.

REMEMBERING HAGE'S ICE-CREAM PARLOR

HAGE'S ICE-CREAM PARLOR SERVED HAPPINESS to many early San Diegans. As part of Hage's Dairy at 835 K Street, downtown, the sweet shop produced and reportedly sold more than half of the ice cream consumed in San Diego between 1891 and the 1940s.

Owner Willard B. Hage moved to San Diego in 1891. Having grown up on a dairy farm in Eagle, Wisconsin, he was eager to start a dairy company here. According to San Diego History Center archives, Hage first began his dairy company delivering milk and butter to local homes. The dairy products business was highly successful — Hage's churned an average of 3,000 pounds of butter daily.

In 1926, Willard B. Hage, Jr., incorporated the separately owned Sanitary and Owl Ice Cream Co. into Hage's Ice Cream Co. An innovative man, he ran the merged operation and loved creating his

own ice-cream flavors, including burnt almond, his favorite. The parlor thrived and eventually became the largest independent ice-cream shop on the Pacific coast.



Hage's Ice-Cream Parlor, 1931

The original ice-cream parlor (see photo, left) had classic Arts & Crafts-era decorative elements such as floral-patterned frieze wallpaper, stylish period design in the back-bar cabinet glass and handmade artistic tile on the counter face. The Tile Heritage Foundation recently confirmed the tile on the front counter is called Calco made by California Clay Products Co., which operated in South Gate from 1923 into the early 1930s.

In 1954, the company merged with Foremost Dairies of San Francisco. Hage, Jr., retired in 1961 and the business continued to do well until a fire destroyed the operation in 1985. It was never rebuilt, but today the parlor's old location continues to please kids of all ages as Petco's popular Park at the Park. ♦

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