

## Petaluma Train Depot



If you are standing close to the corner of Lakeville Street and Washington Avenue, you are within visual range of a lovely yellow Mission Revival style Train Station that is today, our Petaluma Visitor's Center.

The first train depot here was construction on this site in 1871 for the San Francisco and North Pacific Railroad, later becoming the Northwestern Pacific Railroad.

In 1914, to make room for a new depot building, the old wooden structure was moved SW across the yard and converted to a freight depot.

Mission Revival style architecture was extremely popular in California during the 1890's, reflecting regional influences and Spanish Colonial mission history. Southern Pacific Railroad architect D.J. Patterson designed this station, and it was favored over designs from the east giving us a unique, cultural heritage of the area.

H.P. Vogensen was a local contractor and hired for the job estimated to be about \$7,000. All trades were local except for a SF tile work firm.

If you step inside, please note the original tile floor, wood-beam ceilings and fireplace that are original.

The newly constructed depot and surrounding "park" for the Northwestern Pacific Railroad were dedicated on April 24, 1914. A reporter for the Petaluma Argus described the scene thus:

"The people of Petaluma, under the leadership of the Chamber of Commerce, convinced the railroad officials that they are fully appreciative of the efforts to give this city a model railroad reservation and model depot. Some 600 Petalumans assembled at the depot at 11am with this purpose in view."

By 1923, the area had become a popular vacation destination, and travelers could board the train in Sausalito for a journey to five North Bay counties.

Sadly, after the 1930's, the depot's importance as a Center of Transportation declined. At its height there were 12 passenger and 34 freight trains thru Petaluma daily.

In 2003, the Sonoma Marin Rail Transit Commission (SMART) approved a 25 year lease, for the revitalization of 3 buildings. A \$3.2 million renovation required, *complete interior and exterior*

*restoration* and period details were recreated using historic photos and renderings. The project was completed in late 2005, when the Visitor Center relocated to the site.

If this “wets your appetite” for these wonderful Mission Revival stations, perhaps visit the remaining 5 other stations in Marin/Sonoma County, also Burlingame, Davis, Stockton, Fresno and San Diego.





**And here is the “Pop Quiz of the Day”:**

What is the largest train station in California and the Western United States, and when was it built?

**The answer is = Los Angeles Union Station, completed in 1939.**

