

## Trip 2 – Episode # 35 – Lompoc, City of Murals

Our friend Esther hadn't been to Lompoc, but her daughter-in-law Carolyn had read about it and told Esther it sounded pretty cool. So she passed on the suggestion. Good enough for us.

Also, we were on our way to San Francisco where we hoped to meet up with said friend Esther and said daughter-in-law Carolyn, and we felt duty-bound to file a report.

So, to Lompoc we went.

The little reading we had done told us that Lompoc was a city of murals. We had seen a lot of places that had murals on various walls throughout their town. One of the best known is Chemainus, on Vancouver Island, which we had been to last summer when we took Charles on his first big adventure. Since then, we've seen many more.

Well, wouldn't you know it?

Chemainus was the inspiration for Lompoc's mural craze.



Apparently, a couple from Lompoc travelled to Chemainus back in 1988, and discovered that the town had started creating murals as an economic rebuilding tool. They were so impressed, they went back to Lompoc and sold the town on the idea.

Apparently, Lompoc had been through a series of unfortunate turns that caused businesses to close down over the years. One of the most significant happened in the late 80s. The Space Shuttle was scheduled to start launching from the nearby Vandenberg Airforce Base, and with job opportunities growing, businesses in Lompoc took off (haha). But when the Challenger disaster happened, the program was shut down, and Lompoc suffered a serious downturn. The mural concept was introduced not long after that.

And in our short visit there, it seemed to us that the whole town of Lompoc had gotten behind the idea. Wherever there was some kind of wall, there was art.

Under windows...



On sides of buildings...



In  
gardens...



In one alley, a man who looked like he might have just left his Harley and was on his way to the tattoo parlour explained to us, apologetically, that one of the regular murals was missing (because they were fixing it) and the alley just didn't look right without it.

In another parking lot, a woman, who saw us snapping photos, told us that we could get a map that would guide us to all the murals at the Chamber of Commerce.

This was clearly a community project.

Many of the big murals captured significant events in the town's history. And they included explanations that told the story.

The first mural painted was this one, a salute to the original residents, the Chumash people.



Others tell the story of local tragedies...



Others capture different periods of the town's history, like this one about the (failed) women's temperance movement.





Lompoc was founded in 1874 as a temperance colony, but all the dynamite in the valley and mobs of ax-wielding women couldn't keep liquor out of town.

A fierce Lompoc housewife named Mrs. J.B. Pierce appointed herself Lompoc's Carrie Nation and gathered a band of ladies to fight the evils of alcohol. In 1883 they were a part of a vigilante committee that strung a rope around a building, yanked it off its foundation and pulled it for a block-booze spilling out as it went.

As years passed, the wets' grew in number and eventually the courts nullified the no-booze restrictions.

Some celebrate significant aspects of Lompoc's local commerce, like the vineyards that produce their wines.



Some promote businesses that had been part of the city throughout its history.



Some acknowledge cultural eras.





This one has quite a story too.



**Lompoc Mural Society**  
ESTABLISHED 1962

Mural In A Day 1999

## GREAT FLORAL FLAG

MASTER ARTIST:  
**ART MORTIMER**  
SANTA MONICA, CA

In 1941, when the nation was deeply engulfed in World War II, Bodger Seed Company of Lompoc undertook a special tribute to our troops fighting around the world. They planted 600,000 larkspur and calendula flowers in the field to the west of the city under Look Out Point. The following Spring (1942) the more than nine acres of plants blossomed into what is believed at the time to have been the largest floral flag in the world. The flag was replanted with different dimensions in 1943, 1945, 1952, and once again in 2002.

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And sometimes there was just a wall with a beautiful piece of art.



And there was a whole different kind of beauty that had nothing to do with murals.





So, we were glad we'd heard about Lompoc, and happy in the knowledge that we could give our friends in San Francisco a favourable review.

But before that, we had a lot of road to travel. Right up the coast. Where there was lots of drama.

Not this kind of drama (although we were intrigued by this building).



This kind of drama.

