



Walk-In Refrigerator

After the 1914 major remodeling of the Camarillo home, which included a redesign of the front staircase and opening of the front parlor to become a reception area, Adolfo Camarillo began another important modernization in 1915.

That was the year he attended the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) in San Francisco. Even though war had started in Europe, it was a world's fair full of hope and aspirations for the community of nations. It celebrated the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 and San Francisco's recovery from the 1906 earthquake. More than 18 million people attended the ten-month long event that was situated on 635 acres with eleven Palaces of Progress displaying 70,000 exhibits. It is here that we are told that Adolfo saw the walk-in cooler that set off the 1915 remodeling and updating of his home.

Adolfo purchased the walk-in from Kirchner in Los Angeles. Its size and cooling needs probably necessitated building it in the original breakfast room. The cooler was delivered as a kit. Newspaper articles from 1915 document that Adolfo was also rebuilding the entire kitchen by adding cupboards, the vitrolite (structural or milk-glass) wall and "other labor saving furniture."

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Because it dates from 1915, it is very likely that Adolfo's walk-in refrigerator was

originally cooled with ice and salt. The wooden box walk-in design for this cooler was popularly used in restaurants and shops. It could hold up to four half-sides of beef. Carmen Camarillo was known for being very capable of handling butchering duties.

On the east porch is a condensing unit that is stamped with the company name "Hussmann-Ligonier." The mechanism was upgraded and added either in 1929 or in the 1930s. Hussmann-Ligonier was established in 1929. On the porch is a single compressor condensing unit that is typical of the earliest mechanical refrigeration used by grocery stores and restaurants. The nation was switching from ice and salt to mechanical refrigeration to keep food safe. The Hussmann-Ligonier condensing unit is a good example of that national trend. Because there were many types of chemicals used as coolants, it is difficult to say which was used in Adolfo's update. The Hussmann company, a Missouri corporation founded in 1906, is still in business today.

It may also be possible, that in the 1960s, the condensing unit was upgraded again when members of the Order of St. Augustine (O.S.A.) established Casa Adolfo in 1966. They set about making several house repairs. The condensing unit has parts and mechanisms that date from the 1960s. Father John Keller, O.S.A. who lived in the Camarillo home, believes that the walk-in refrigerator was fully operational by the Augustinians in the summer of 1966.

Condensing Unit on East Porch

