

# How Well Do You Know Your Town's History?



1965, the Joslyn Center, built for the senior citizen population in town, reflects the International modern design.



1961, aerial view of the Civic Center. The three large buildings contained the City Hall, Fire Station and the Police Department.

By Jan Dennis

Abridged from *Shadows on the Dunes-An Architectural History of Manhattan Beach California* by Jan Dennis

It had been said that 1955-1965 was a "Decade of Progress." The International style and philosophy of design was here to stand and nowhere could it have been better portrayed than in the modern "flying wing" design by Rissman & Rissman Associates. The building was located on 1.5 acres of land at the corner of Valley Drive and Sepulveda Boulevard. Once known as the Pen & Quill Hotel, it was originally built by Robert Reuben, who owned the Pen & Quill restaurant (now senior housing). The hotel was physically connected over Valley Drive to the restaurant by way of an enclosed walkway.

Many years later, the appearance of the building changed dramatically after Peter Post and his family purchased the hotel. The structure was transformed into a visually 19th Century European manor house. With its shuttered windows, small gabled dormers and tile roof, the "flying wing" design transformed.

The interior had the décor of the Victorian era: cut-glass windows, mosaic floors, classical support columns and crystal panels from the original Lloyd's Brighton Bank in England, giving the ambiance of a period of gracious living. Today the grand hotel has been returned to its original modern motif.

The community continued to grow with the Manhattan Beach City Council and staff being assisted by 28 men and women on four commissions and one Board of Zoning Adjustment.

Formed in 1964, the Beautification Commission, consisted of seven members, served to keep the city landscaped and upgraded. The commission also presented monthly and quarterly awards to both homeowners and business for their efforts in beautification to their properties. The commission was later dissolved.

The other commissions, Planning (seven members appointed by the Mayor), Parking (three members), and Parks and Recreation (six members) are still in service today. The Board of Zoning Adjustment (five members) was dissolved on July 1, 1993, its duties being taken over by the Planning Commission.

From 1955 to 1965, with an increased volume of building and a philosophy of pay-as-you-go, the tax rate established by the City Council decreased. The decade saw many capital improvements, both public and residential: street construction, water and drainage systems, parks and playgrounds, sidewalks, and a whole range of senior citizen activities. However, there were still parcels of land to be developed east of Sepulveda.

There were five Standard Oil storage oil tanks located east of Sepulveda and west of Aviation Boulevard, between Marine and Rosecrans Avenue. In 1967, the Standard Oil Tank farm began to change when TRW, Inc.

purchased a parcel of the farm. A preliminary master plan was presented to the City and after approval the 150,000-square foot two-story TRW building was built on Aviation. It was at this time the Nishi tract was developed. By mid July of 1968, 31 new homes were in the framing stage of construction. That same

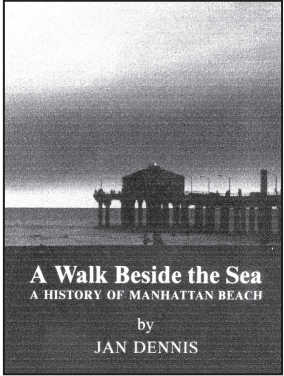
year, with the landscape saturated with houses and building permits at an all-time high, the City Council directed the City Manager to establish an Environmental Control Officer.

The new officer would serve on the City Manager's staff. The purpose of the job was to receive complaints and take action to

assure the preservation of the community's amenities, as well as maintain clear, orderly residential and business neighborhoods. The City thus embarked upon a new and different approach to preserving the community's character.

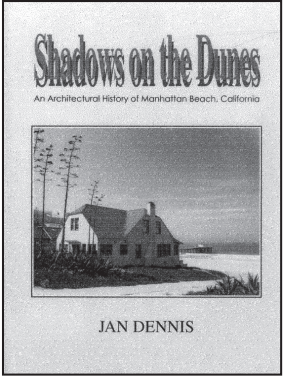
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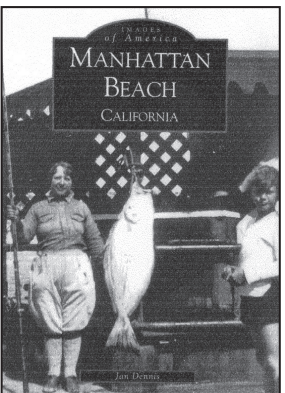
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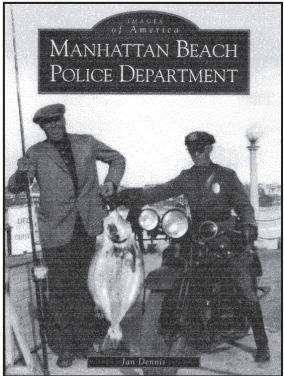
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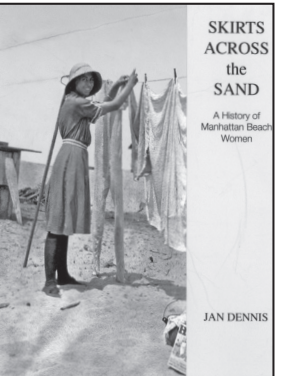
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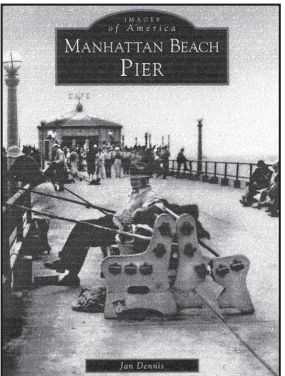
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