

How Well Do You Know Your Town's History?



1961, looking east across Oak Avenue to Sepulveda Boulevard and the Standard Oil Tank Farm south of Rosecrans Avenue before the Pen & Quill Hotel was built.

By Jan Dennis

One of the most important decisions made by the Manhattan Beach City Council during the "Decade of Progress" was the closing of the walk streets. Some 4,700 signatures had been collected in a three-week campaign to keep Manhattan Beach walk streets closed to vehicular traffic. It was the desire of the residents to maintain the unique personality of the neighborhoods. In 1962, an ordinance was endorsed by the Council, even though the City Attorney felt the ordinance was worthless. The walk streets were to stay closed permanently.

Another decision made in 1962 was the renewal of the Manhattan Beach International Paddleboard Race, which had been abandoned in 1961. It had been held annually since 1955, with two exceptions--in 1959, when its finish line at the City Pier was undergoing repairs; and in 1961, when rough seas made holding the race unsafe. The events thrilled thousands of residents and visitors alike, bringing media attention to the city.

By 1966, Manhattan Beach was primarily residential, with a population of 36,078, a 6.3 percent change from 1960, a median income of \$8,289, and a median age of 29. The dynamic capital improvement programs truly were a testimony to its "Decade of Progress." Nearly every phase of the City's operations had been vastly upgraded, and groundwork had been laid for more spectacular improvements in the years to come. Capital developments during the past decade had been achieved without resorting to bonded indebtedness.

In 1967, there were many specialty projects. More and more property owners requested lot splits. Gas lighting assessment districts were requested, with one being at 31st Street between Bell and Laurel avenues. Also, the lettering "Manhattan Beach Welcomes You" was planted in violets on the City Hall front lawn with annuals planted to replace ice plant around the north parking lot.

Another project was the drilling of four new injection wells located in the Santa Fe Railway right-of-way between Elm Avenue and Flournoy Road along Valley Drive. Salt water intrusion had been a major problem in the South Bay area for two decades. The original effort to prevent contamination of the fresh water aquifers had been designated the "Manhattan Beach Experimental Project." The construction was a portion of the overall improvement in the Ground Water Replenishment District project of the West Basin.

One of the largest joint projects between El Segundo and Manhattan Beach was the improvement of Rosecrans Avenue. The first section to be improved was between Sepulveda Boulevard and Aviation Boulevard. In October 1967, the water division worked at relocating meters and fire hydrants for the purpose of putting in new curbs. The roadway also had to be closed to lay the multitude of pipelines, mostly oil lines, which crossed Rosecrans at two points from El Segundo.

Work by the contractor had been suspended for approximately five months under conditions of the contract with the Los Angeles County Road Department, which provided for this period of suspended activity to allow Standard Oil Company to construct and relocate its underground oil and petroleum products transmission pipelines.

After the completion of Rosecrans east of Sepulveda Boulevard, it was time to redesign



1966, looking west from Rosecrans Avenue and Sepulveda Boulevard before the Eucalyptus trees were removed and the widening of Rosecrans Avenue began.

Rosecrans west of Sepulveda to Highland Avenue. In April 1968, with the cooperation of Standard Oil, the Edison Company's high-tension power lines were relocated north of

the original location. By 1969, the majestic rows of eucalyptus trees were removed, never to be replaced.

To be continued... •

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