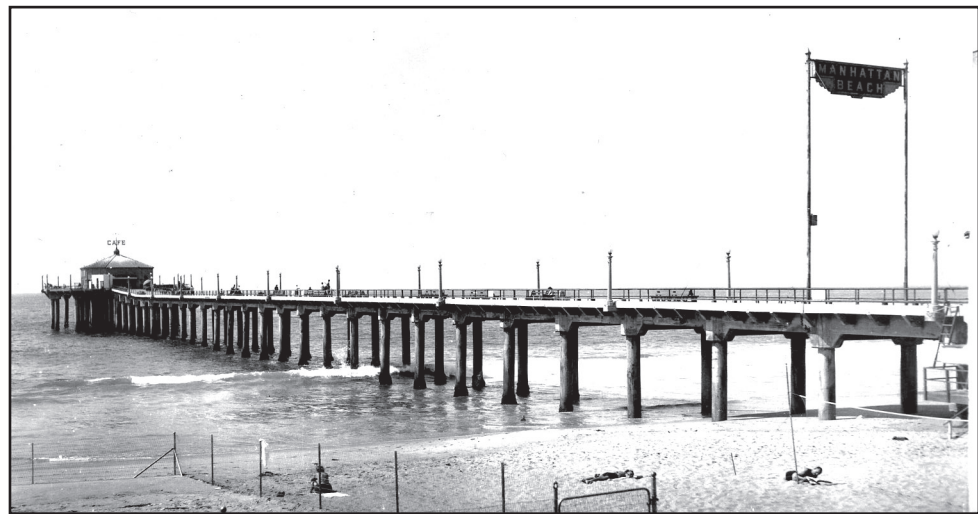


# How Well Do You Know Your Town's History?



This photograph shows two things that no longer exist – the controversial McCarthy fenced-in plot of beach, and the Metlox-crafted sign reading "Manhattan Beach." Note the shallow beach.

Abridged from *A Walk Beside the Sea*  
**By Jan Dennis**

The beach-related controversy between Mr. Neil S. McCarthy and the City of Manhattan Beach went on for years. McCarthy's attempt to put up barbed wire around his beach property, located between 1st Street and 13th Street, was stopped. When three men, one being McCarthy's son, attempted to build a fence around the plot of land, they were thrown into jail. However, McCarthy did succeed in fencing in his beach portion, being made possible by the California Supreme Court.

After the Supreme Court case, McCarthy installed a smooth wire fence around his beach property and charged a penny or a nickel admission to the gated area, much to the community's displeasure. Due to residents' protests, the Manhattan Beach City Council moved to make beach admission charges illegal.

McCarthy had purchased the land in 1938 from James Cortelyou. Unable to sell the property, McCarthy tried unsuccessfully to subdivide the tract of beach into 60-foot beachfront parcels. The Manhattan Beach Planning Commission in 1943 passed a resolution asking the country to buy the private beach. However, it would take the state until 1956 to agree to the purchase.

Eventually, the fence was destroyed by a storm, never to be replaced, and the Manhattan Beach shoreline was truly a public beach for all to enjoy. More can be read about the McCarthy beach in *A Walk Beside the Sea*.

While the beach issues were being resolved, other land east of Sepulveda Boulevard was becoming urbanized. The fox, chicken, mushroom and truck farms were disappearing and the community's population was growing. To enhance living conditions in the area and to seek recognition and representation, the Manhattan Beach Property Owners' As-

sociation was formed.

In 1942, the group completed the "Soil Section Community Hall," located on the corner of Herrin Street and Manhattan Beach Boulevard. Like a Midwestern barn-raising, the hall was built with contributed funds and donated goods and labor.

One of the first demands would be to receive better fire protection and a direct phone line to the fire station, which was located in the City Hall on Highland Avenue. It would not be until 1954 when Fire Station Number Two was complete and dedicated at the cost of \$36,000.

Another area east of Sepulveda, which had not yet been subdivided into building lots, was the \$60,000 purchase by the Pacific Title Company as an investment. Prior to World War II, it was thought that the Star Nursery Company was soon to either purchase or lease the property.

It was indicated that the soil was particularly adaptable to raising azaleas and special

types of trees. Japanese gardeners were in the process of digging wells and putting in poles to string wire fencing around the entire acreage. With the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which brought the United States into World War II, the Japanese-American residents of this area were sent to internment camps. There were several locations in the South Bay area established for internment centers.

The property was never developed into a nursery. After the war, the entire acreage was sold to the Manhattan Beach School District for much less than its value. Since Manhattan Beach students were attending Redondo High School at that time, it was determined a high school should be built on part of the property.

As in most cities, the war brought many changes to this community. It was a time of gold stars hanging in windows, rationing, blackout curtains, paint-on stockings and chenille robes.

To be continued... •

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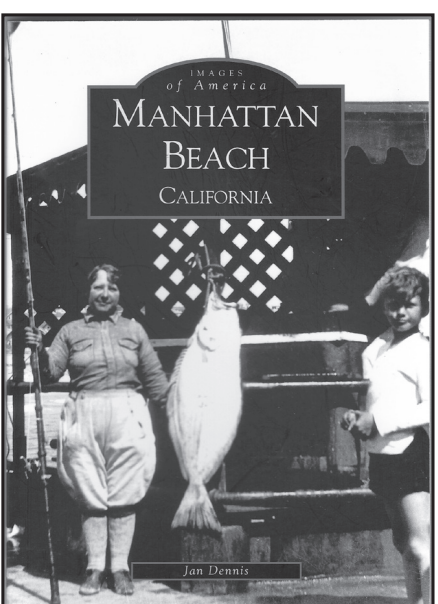
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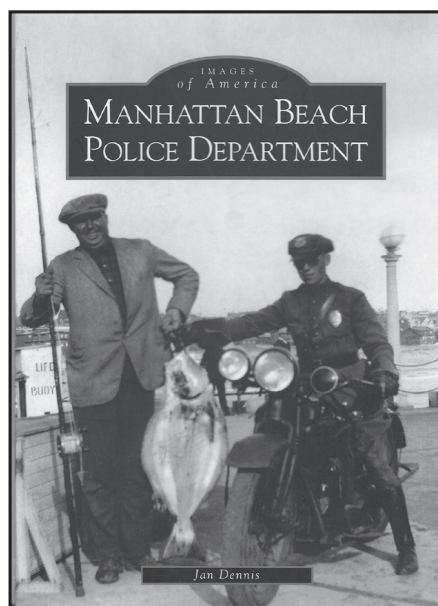
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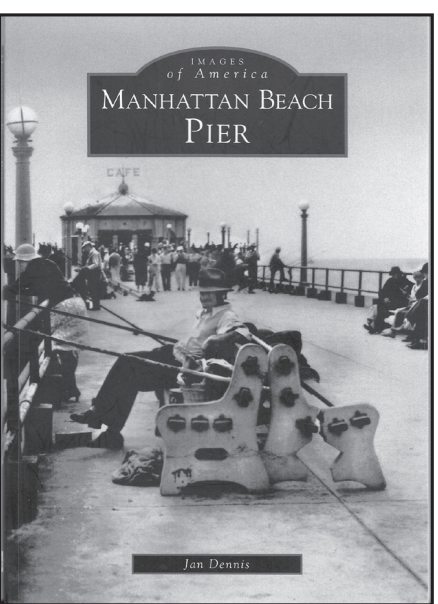
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