

How Well Do You Know Your Town's History?



Corner of Manhattan Beach Blvd. and Manhattan Avenue looking East on Manhattan Beach Blvd. 1940s

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

More and more people realized the excellent quality of life and the pride taken by its residents in the community. In a 1941, Chamber of Commerce slogan contest, the community was promoted as "Manhattan Beach for Home Life and Shore Life." A prior slogan, "Manhattan Beach the Safest Beach in America," gave the beach area a prime destination for fishing, sunbathing and surfing.

There was a great deal of attention given to the shoreline, however there was more to land development than the beach area. In January of 1940, a debate over the development of the Sepulveda Boulevard corridor occurred between the City Council and many property owners, who had formed the Sepulveda Property Owners Association. The

group advocated either a business zone for the entire length of the street...to no zone at all.

The Planning Commission had proposed to the Council that the two-mile street frontage be zoned residential. However, it would not preclude spot zoning for business, providing the business concur to certain restrictions as to subject and type of structure. The issue was sent back to the Planning Commission to ponder. In later years, the entire street frontage would become zoned for business only (C-2 General Commercial).

Controversy was put before the City Council again. With the continuing growth of the community and the expanding population, it was realized that the city needed a newer and larger dumpsite. Prior to a formal site, trash was placed in a hole and covered with sand, only to find much of the trash uncovered after a bad windstorm. In the 1920s,

the largest trash site was located south of Manhattan Beach Blvd., between Valley Drive and Highland Avenue, behind the Community Church. The good parishioners of the church were instrumental in getting the rubbish site relocated.

Over the years, trash disposal areas had been located in various locations within the city limits. A site developed by the WPA in the 1930s was west of Valley Drive at the southern end of the Dorsey Field. The area was filled in and is now the location of the Joslyn Center.

By the Spring of 1940, the site located at the end of 29th Street in the 500 block was discontinued and a committee appointed to study the problem.

For a short time the rubbish was hauled to a private dump site near Inglewood. However, the \$40 per day charge at the location, was found to be too costly for the city and the program was disbanded. After an attempt to operate their own trash service, the city elected to have the trash hauled by outside contractors.

The end of an era began on May 12, 1940,

with the gradual phasing out of the Pacific Electric Red Cars. Since 1925, the company had lost \$30 million in revenue. With the demise of the system the company ventured into bus transportation. They claimed the bus service offered cheaper service. The new motor coach service provided 74 trips, except Sundays and holidays, between Los Angeles and the South Bay. The fifteen new buses had thirty-seven seats with individual lights, reclining seats and ran every half hour.

A year later the 139 miles of Oceanside track was torn-up at the rate of a half-mile a day. Residents worried that the right-of-way would become a commercial blemish to the Strand.

To avert a situation, the Manhattan Beach City Council ruled that the land, which had been valued at \$180,000 in the city limits, could only be for beach use.

The beach was always an issue. The city quickly adopted new ordinances to fend off Neil S. McCarthy's attempt to place barbed wire around that part of the beach, which he owned.

To be continued... •



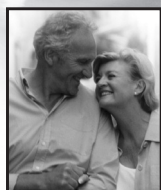
Intersection of Manhattan Beach Blvd. and Manhattan Ave. looking South on Manhattan Ave. 1940s

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