

## The 1940's

In the late 30's the thunderclouds of war were rumbling all about us. But we remembered how we had sacrificed our young men to pull Europe out of World War I and we became anti-militant. Isolation was our political religion.

The decade started with F.D.R. seeking an historical third term. But suddenly lightning struck. It all happened so fast that few of us could comprehend what really was happening in Europe. In just three months Hitler had smashed six countries and bragged that he would parade through London in two more. Then Hitler and the Axis made two tragic mistakes. The invasion of Russia was his first, and the second was "the day that shall live in infamy" - the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor by Japan.

Suddenly war became a raw, bloody reality for those of us who remember that Sunday, December 7, 1941, when our radios shouted the still unbelievable news broadcast that our nation, our land was under attack!

Immediately our patriotism ran high, women became truck drivers and factory workers, and the entire nation worked together to "Win the War."

By 1944, three and one-half million "Rosie the Riveters" stood side-by-side with six million men, turning out everything from cargo ships to planes. Citizens bought War Bonds, we grew our own food in "Victory Gardens." Civil Defense Corps volunteers were bumping into each other spotting for planes and ships thousands of miles away. We stockpiled used metal, gasoline, cigarettes, meat, and some foods were rationed. Remember our old ration books with various colored stamps? The 1940's tested the American spirit and found it worthy.

The war in Europe was doomed! D. Day under General Eisenhower was at hand. And so the breakthrough came and the war was all but finished.

As the war was winding down, F.D.R. delivered his fourth term inaugural address in January 1945 with Harry S. Truman as his V.P. On April 12, F.D.R. was dead as the result of a cerebral hemorrhage. On May 8, 1945, President Truman proudly proclaimed V.E. Day.

In July of 1945, Truman received word that the atomic bomb was ready and made the terrible, torturing decision to end the war in Japan swiftly and brutally rather than to continue losing American lives in traditional warfare. On August 6, the first bomb fell on Hiroshima; three days later, another hit Nagasaki. Six days later, Japan surrendered to the Allies. It was V.J. Day on September 2.

There was Peace on Earth again! We looked forward with hope.

There was a United Nations now - our own sinecure for world security. Our boys came home again to begin a new life!

Women's clothes always reflect the mood of the period. Stark military modes gave way to the ultimate in femininity. Dior proclaimed the longer, more lady-like skirt. Hats were everywhere - large, or small and perky, bedecked with flowers and flattering face veils, plus a matching handbag and gloves, and very often a fake corsage flower. To offset the long skirt, a well-turned twelve inches of leg and ankle was accentuated with spike heels, platform soles, or ankle-strap sandals. Factory-torn fingernails grew again and were painted in vivid shades to match equally vivid lipstick. Men's suits had pinstripes galore, wide lapels and cuffed trousers.

In the mid-forties a strange thing took place. Those adolescents of ours obtained a new label - teenagers - and became a cult to be commercially catered to as never before by every industry, publication, or fad. Girls appeared in baggy, rolled-up jeans and sloppy shirttails, and even striped football sox. Bobby sox, saddle shoes, penny loafers and baggy but expensive sweaters were in. Boys wore sloppy trousers, loafers, and dangling shirttails. A weird outfit, the Zuit Suit, appeared, but was too extreme to last. A regular Friday night ceremony was an all-girl sleep-in called a slumber party. On Saturday Night teenagers flocked to the soda-shop with the best stocked jukebox. The music business had an explosive growth! In the mid-forties a frail, callow looking youth captured the scene, and thousands of young girls swooned and screamed in ecstasy as he groaned. The voice was Francis Albert Sinatra.

Every household had a record player and who could forget such popular songs as "I'll Walk Alone". "Rum and Coca-Cola", "White Cliffs of Dover", "I'll Never Smile Again", "Swinging on a Star", "Cow-Cow Bogie", "Far Away Places", "My Foolish Heart", "You'll Never Know" and "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree."

Some of the most popular movies were the "Road to" series with Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and Dorothy Lamour.

Popular singers were Bing Crosby, Kate Smith, Doris Day, and Ella Fitzgerald.

Glenn Miller, the Dorsey Brothers, and Vaughn Monroe led the leading bands. Remember that wonderful Big Band sound as Miller played "String of Pearls", "Kalamazoo", "Serenade in Blue" and "Moonlight Serenade." And we must include the hauntingly beautiful number, "Sweet Leilani" as played by the Harry Owens Orchestra and sung by Hilo Hattie.

Post-war Broadway ushered in the brightest epoch of musical comedy and straight drama in many a year. Enter: "Annie Get Your Gun",

"Carousel", "Kiss Me Kate", "Oklahoma", and "Brigadoon." Drama excelled with Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" and Tennessee William's "A Streetcar Named Desire." "The Glass Menagerie" was drawing large crowds.

In 1946, television burst upon the American scene. Do you recall your very first set? It was most likely an ungainly looking little brown box with a ten or twelve inch screen. But how we loved it? Kids were singing, "It's Howdy Doody Time" and becoming "Mouseketeers" or riding with the "Cisco Kid." And evening shows made T.V. viewers of former movie buffs - dramas, musicals, whole Broadway plays and movies - and even "soap operas." News became live and instant. Sports came into our very own living rooms. Then color - and real men walking on the real moon. Perhaps no other miracle of science has changed our life style so drastically as T.V.

In the 40's, we went from a technological evolution to a scientific explosion which gave us atomic energy, radar to guide ships and airplanes, and ultimately the route to the moon.

The decade ended with the conviction of Alger Hiss for perjury and the cold war heating up in Korea.

Here is Mae Dunham and the 40's in Fair Oaks.

### Fair Oaks during the 40's

Mae Dunham

I and my late husband moved to Fair Oaks in the spring of 1940. I will try to remember it as it was then. The library was where the Park District office (4200 Temescal Ave.) is now. Stark's Drug store was located in the building where the Irrigation District offices (10148 Fair Oaks Blvd.) are now and Charles Kanoff worked there after school and weekends. Later he went to C.O.P. - now U.O.P. After graduation, he came back to work full time and eventually to buy the business. The drug store had a fountain and was the only place to buy a snack except the Dog House. This was a rather narrow lunch counter located next to the Town House where a lawyer's office now is. It was run by a couple of Russian women.

The Town House building was a lot different then and served as the offices of Drs. Blunden and Archer. When they built their offices across the street, the owners built the bar across the front and the restaurant at the end. They then named it the Town House. The Dog House was moved up the hill near the Leoni Real Estate office. It was combined with another building to make a house. The Hinseys lived here (7995 California Ave.) for several

years. When the park district bought the land, it was removed along with Gladys Johnson's Beauty Shop.

One of the main topics of conversation those days was the amount of interest that some of the failed banks would repay. Early in 1940, the Pacific States Savings and Loan announced that they were ready to make a repayment of 7 1/2%. Many Fair Oaks people had invested their money there. To many people, it seemed obvious that the economy needed mending and one of the popular remedies was called Technocracy. Technocrats - or people with technical ability - would run things. But the depression was ending and they faded away.

To illustrate that there is really little change over the years, there was a request for government subsidized housing. The government would pay the cost. The rent would be \$15.00 per month and would include heat, light and water. The costs would be amortized in 30 years.

Phoenix Field was planned with Dr. Blunden as one of the starters.

The Fair Oaks Irrigation District dug its first well.

On April 18, Mrs. Saverien gave a shower for the expectant Mesdames Archer and Blunden.

John Holst was reelected to the school board by a vote of 117 to 0.

Civic or improvement clubs had a habit of being formed when something needed action, but they tended to die away afterwards. In 1941 the club got active. The purpose was to raise the price of olives. This year the price offered was 150% of the previous year while the retail price went up 400%. Oil finally sold for \$172.00 per ton.

In February, land on the Bald Spot was divided into lots - 25x100 feet. That summer Ralph Hinsey built the store now occupied by the A1 Foods (10149 Fair Oaks Blvd.).

In July, Mather Field neared completion and the Governor signed a clean water bill.

The Justice of Peace Court had occupied the back half of a small wooden building next to Dr. Archer's office. John Brevick's Insurance office was in the front. It was felt that a larger and more dignified office was desirable so it was moved to the new building where Frank Leoni's office (7995 California Ave.) and a beauty shop are now. Later it moved to the present day Justice Court.

After Pearl Harbor all of the West Coast was pretty jittery. All sorts of blackout regulations were in force. The siren you hear at 11:00 a.m. on the last Friday of every month was started then.

In 1943, George Kellam bought the department store from the Booths. This was located where Dr. Applegate and Coopers Insurance now have

their offices (7988 California Ave.).

Concern was felt about the rise in delinquency among the young.

In December, the locker plant opened. It is now the Ice House and houses a number of specialty shops.

In 1944, a dope ring was broken up on Phoenix Avenue.

An Oak tree used to stand in the triangle at the intersection of Fair Oaks Blvd. and Entrance Streets. In some street widening, it was felt that this tree should be removed. There was a great outcry by the Garden Club and others, so the tree was given a few more years of life.

All this time, the town was without a bank. Several solid citizens, headed by George Kellam, bought shares and started the Fair Oaks National Bank. It opened in a building on the west side of Fair Oaks Blvd. across from the Plaza (10145 Fair Oaks Blvd.). The vault in the basement of the drug store was used and money went back and forth across the street.

Myron Woods built the building that now houses the drug store and fabric shop. He had the Chrysler agency and in 1946 sold four cars. As soon as Starks moved to their new location, the bank moved into their place.

At the south end of the old bank building, there was an addition that held the bookkeeping department and Wayne Rice's Jewelry Store. There were two apartments upstairs.

Mrs. Conkey ran a general store on the corner of Fair Oaks Blvd. and California Avenue. The Fergusons ran a hardware store where the Stockman is. They lost their lease and bought out Mrs. Conkey who wished to retire. Mrs. Ferguson's daughter, Lou Robles, and husband Ted came to help her. Ann Faist and her husband opened the Stockman bar which they ran for many years.

There was talk of a dam on the American River.

The Civic Club was busy protesting a ruling on oranges which was felt to be unfair to the small grower. As a result, counties with less than 750 acres in oranges were exempt. The leader in most Civic Club crusades was Louis Rahlins, an ex-Russian and ex-Navy man. He was ready to do battle with anything or anyone at the drop of a hat.

A new post office had to be found. We had outgrown the old one. Some people wanted to put it in the Plaza but it went instead into the store now occupied by Western Auto (10145 Fair Oaks Blvd.).

The Olive Growers advertised for help. The pay was \$.95 per hour. At this time, there was no public swimming in the area, so swimming classes were held at the foot of Pennsylvania.

The Fitzgeralds sold the San Juan Record to Leon Wheaton and in 1948, he sold it to Selden Menefee who expanded it to include publications

for all the suburban area.

What was it like in the Woman's Thursday Club of Fair Oaks during the forties? In 1940, they had a membership of 44 and Iva Langness was secretary. Dr. Blunden addressed us on child welfare. The club house roof needed repairs. At the end of the club year in June 1940, there was a balance of \$151.82 and the building fund had \$5.25.

In October, the roof was mended at a cost of \$292.95. They owed only \$100.00 and this was reduced to \$50.00 by December. How was this to be raised? They could either have a big card party or also everyone could give a dollar. It was decided that those who wanted a party could have one while the rest gave their dollar. They raised the money.

On June 1, 1941 they had \$142.89 in the treasury and there were 74 members.

Everyone was urged to work for defense. There was a nursing class each Monday from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Fair Oaks School. During club meetings there was babysitting in the Federated Church. The Crocker Bank is now on that site.

There was a club dance on January 1, 1942.

On February 12, 1942, they had a poetry day when six poets read their own poems. They were Mesdames Harriet Camden, Arwyl Jones, Bell Howard, Norris Phelps and Geraldine Fitzgerald. They also attended classes in nutrition, Red Cross sewing, and surgical dressings.

At the end of the year, there were 60 members and a balance of \$132.99. Vivian Archer was elected president.

We were asked to salvage scrap, save grease and observe the speed limit of 35 miles per hour. There were ration stamps for meat and sugar and gasoline.

Names of service men were to be given to Mr. Wheaton who would send them free copies of the Record.

The club made a ruling that a guest might be brought free for two meetings. After that, it cost \$.25 per meeting - unless the guest was a house guest.

Balance June 1943, was \$124.64. During the year \$104.50 was given for the war effort. This was 18% of the budget.

In 1944, Dr. Archie Polstar addressed us on "Child Delinquency and what to do about it." Katherine Kitchen urged us to use more soybeans.

Balance on hand June 1944 was \$595.92 with \$88.58 given for the war effort. Membership was 61. There were 181 boys and girls in service of whom 10 were either dead or missing.

In 1945, there was a bus trip to San Francisco to the blood bank on

February 7.

Dana Bowers, the highway landscape engineer, gave a talk illustrated with a film on his work,

Eighty-three Christmas boxes were prepared for wounded veterans. \$1306.25 in War Bonds were sold by the club. In 1946, our quota for War Bonds was \$2000.00 and it was met.

Mrs. Rider gave the pros and cons on the seventeen propositions on the coming November election. The meeting time was changed from 2:30 to 2:00.

On January 9, 1946, the balance was \$353.48 so \$50.00 was given for cancer control. The program was a talk on counseling on post war problems. That year \$884.00 was received for rental of the clubhouse. New plywood tables were received from Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Bostvick of Fish and Game talked on deer in California.

In March of 1948, it was decided to stop having two meetings a month but to have only one with sections meeting once a month. This was to be tried for a year.

In December, we were asked to sign a petition to have a building code for Fair Oaks.

In 1949, we adopted a club song, "Fair Oaks, the Home of Fruit and Beauty." The words were written by Mrs. Arwyl Jones and the music by Mrs. Camden. Mrs. Dearoff compared European and American fashions.

Eastern Star moved their meeting place from the Woman's Club to the Civic Club.

Consolidation of the elementary school districts with the San Juan High School District was under discussion.

On September 8, the fire marshal required that improvements be made on the clubhouse. At this time, the club finances were not too good: Club treasury, \$197.81; building fund, \$92.47; floor fund, \$264.03; music fund, \$482.30, or a total of \$1036.61. Bids were asked for and they ranged from \$995.00 to \$2,150.00 depending on the grade of flooring. Mrs. Archer secured a private loan for \$2,500.00 at 6%. This was to be repaid in seven years with monthly payments of \$36.53. Stage curtains were to be cleaned and made fire resistant for \$.07 a square foot.

In November, a fire in some shavings near an exit caused damage of \$500.00. This was covered by insurance.

This may sound as though we had rather dull meetings, but this was not so. There was a great deal of talent among the members. The musical talent furnished a good part of every program. Original poetry and stories were read at many meetings. Plays were given and dances held. When you

note that the music fund of \$482.30 was the largest, it is apparent that was where the priorities were.