

HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT PREPARATION TEAM

The following individuals have contributed toward the preparation of the Redondo Beach Historic Context Statement. Any omissions are accidental.

Consultant Team

Marguerite Duncan-Abrams
Historical Resources Management
544 Prescott Street
Pasadena, CA 91104
(818) 797-5807

Barbara Milkovich, Ph.D
Joseph J. Milkovich and Associates
6032 Dundee Drive
Huntington Beach, CA 92647
(714) 897-9766

Planning Department Staff

Randy Berler - Senior Planner
Anita Kroeger - Associate Planner

City of Redondo Beach
Community Development Department
Planning Division
415 Diamond Street
Redondo Beach, CA 90277
(310) 318-0637

State Office of Historic Preservation

Maryln Lortie
Historian II
Department of Parks and Recreation
State Office of Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001
(916) 653-6624

Preservation Commission

Jonathan Eubanks - Chairperson
Sammie Haley - Vice Chairperson
Gloria Snyder - Secretary
Robert Cardona - Commission Member
Marvin Cheeks - Commission Member
Pamela Lemke - Commission Member
Wayne Powell - Commission Member
*Frank Bostrom - Commission Member**

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Frank B. Gilbert
Senior Field Representative
National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 673-4214

*Past member of the Preservation Commission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	Pages 1 - 4
Statement of Purpose	1
Context Statement Overview	1
Selection of Context, Time Period and Format	
Methodology	
Geographic Framework	3
Historic Context	4
TRANSFORMATION FROM PASTORAL ECONOMY TO COMMERCIAL ECONOMY 1834-1888	Pages 5 - 10
The Pastoral Period: 1834-1887	5
Local Economic Development - The Great Ranchos	
Local Economic Development - The Salt Works	
Agricultural Era: 1881-1887	7
Early Development of Redondo Beach: 1887-1888	8
Physical Evidence	10
EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF REDONDO BEACH 1888-1923	Pages 11 - 28
Development of Redondo Beach Townsite: 1888-1905	11
Industrial/Commercial Development	
Resort Development	
Railroad Connections	
Civic Development	
Physical Evidence	
The Harbor - Expansion and Transition: 1905-1923	16
Resort Improvements	
Industrial Developments	
Development of Clifton-by-the-Sea and Hollywood Riviera	
North Redondo Beach: 1905-1923	22

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Carlson and Peck's "Redondo Villa Tracts"	
Redondo Villa Tract Residents Work to Define Their Community	
Civic Development and Community-based Promotion	
Physical Evidence	26
Original Townsite	
North Redondo	
CULTURAL CONSOLIDATION AND THE SEARCH FOR NEW ECONOMIC VITALITY 1923-1939	Pages 29 - 37
Original Townsite	29
Residential Developments	
Industrial Developments	
Resort Developments	
Civic and Commercial Developments	
North Redondo - A New Beginning: 1923-1927	32
Expansion of Commercial and Residential Development	
Civic Developments	
Annexation of North Redondo - Growing Together 1927-1939	34
Industrial Expansion	
Infrastructure and Civic Improvements	
Residential Development	
Physical Evidence	36
Original Townsite	
North Redondo	
WORLD WAR II EXPANSION 1940-1950	Pages 38 - 42
Original Townsite	38
Residential Growth	
Resort Development	
North Redondo	39
Transition to a Residential Economy Accelerates	
Commercial Expansion	
Civic Expansion	
Physical Evidence	40
Original Townsite	
North Redondo	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Conclusion	42
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	Pages 43 - 45
SUMMARIES	Pages 46 - 83
Clifton-by-the-Sea	46
Hollywood Riviera	53
North Redondo	58

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Historic themes serve as a unifying vocabulary which is essential to the identification and explanation of the historic resources within a community. The purpose of this Historic Context Statement is to develop a sound understanding of the major themes of Redondo Beach history. Once identified, the Historic Context Statement will serve as a frame work into which the City's cultural and architectural resources may be placed and interpreted for the future benefit of the community-at-large. This Context Statement will also serve as the foundation for:

- The update and completion of the 1986 Redondo Beach Historic Resources Survey;
- The re-evaluation of building ranking, including the large percentage of buildings currently holding a "C" ranking. Those holding "A" or "B" rankings may also be re-evaluated for possible landmark or National Register listing;
- The identification of historic landscapes;
- The establishment of goals and priorities for the incorporation of the City's historic resources into a city-wide plan;
- The expansion of the City's volunteer landmark program by providing an incentive which enhances the attractiveness of this program to potential participants;
- The future publication of materials highlighting the unique aspects of the community's heritage;
- The creation of training material for City staff and commission members.

CONTEXT STATEMENT OVERVIEW

Selection of Context, Time Period and Format

A number of possible contexts were identified and evaluated. Not all fully encompassed the historic resources of this community. Other themes were found to overlap. The context of "Economic Development" was selected, therefore, as the most effective format for the identification, evaluation, registration and treatment of historic resources in Redondo Beach.

The time period selected for this Statement extends from the issuance of the original land grants by the Mexican Government in 1834, through the City's post-war development. 1950 was selected as the approximate date of closure for this report since it allows for the recognition of resources which will reach the "50 years or older" requirement by the year 2000.

For discussion purposes, the approximate 115 year span covered in this report has been

divided into the following four segments:

1834 - 1888	Transition from Pastoral Economy to Commercial Economy
1888 - 1923	Early Development of Redondo Beach
1923 - 1939	Cultural Consolidation and the Search for New Economic Vitality
1940 - 1950	World War II Expansion

In the second and third segments of this report, the material is organized by two geographic regions: the coastal region including the original townsite, Clifton-by-the-Sea and Hollywood Riviera, and the inland region known as north Redondo. Although the history of north Redondo is directly linked to the history of the coastal region, separation between the two areas recognizes the fact that north Redondo was a distinct community prior to its annexation in 1927. This format also allows for greater attention to detail - an important element in the understanding of the area's development. Unlike the coastal portions of the City, north Redondo's heritage and historic resources have received very little scrutiny since histories of the community have been published and the area was not included in the City's Historic Resources Survey conducted in 1986.

At the end of each segment, we have included a section entitled "Physical Evidence." The purpose of this segment of the report is to suggest the kinds of structures which existed in each era, rather than to attempt a full identification list. Using hints from within the Context Statement, future investigators will be alert to evidence of historic Redondo Beach and be able to identify significant structures as well as fill out the interpretations of current historic resources. In discussions of the City's history after 1905, separate Physical Evidence sections have been provided for the original townsite and north Redondo. In north Redondo, where significant growth has occurred within the last fifty years, the existence of all historic structures identified in this report should be investigated and confirmed.

A bibliography and summaries of primary research materials appear at the end of this report. Summaries attached include material relating to the history of north Redondo, Clifton-by-the-Sea, and Hollywood Riviera. These summaries reflect only a portion of the substantial collection of news paper clippings and documents compiled by local historian and Preservation Commission member, Gloria Snyder. Her collection and knowledge of the community has proven an invaluable source in the preparation of this report. Mrs. Snyder may be reached for data through the City of Redondo Beach, Preservation Commission.

Methodology

Preparation of this Context Statement was based upon the requirements outlined in the City's request for proposals. Following an initial field review, consultants presented a three-phase work program to be completed within a thirteen week time frame. During Phase I, secondary historical sources including books, theses and articles which discussed Redondo Beach were examined in order to develop a list of potential contexts. This list was then reviewed by members of the City's Preservation Commission. Following their review, the investigation of research materials was expanded to include primary resources such as newspaper articles, personal narratives, historic maps, and population data. At the completion of the first phase, consultants met once again with the Preservation Commission to approve the context selected and to review an outline for the proposed Context Statement. Phase II involved the preparation of an initial

draft which utilized secondary and primary historical data. This draft was reviewed by the Preservation Commission, the State Office of Historic Preservation and a representative of the National Trust. The third and final phase of the project involved the preparation and submittal of a final report and Context Statement.

GEOGRAPHIC FRAMEWORK

Redondo Beach lies on the western edge of the Peninsular Mountain Range which runs northwest and southeast along the coast of Southern California. It is approximately 17 miles from the City of Los Angeles, situated on the southern end of modern Santa Monica Bay. The incorporated city rests on portions of three historic ranchos: San Pedro, Los Palos Verdes, and Sausal Redondo.

Several distinct sections make up the modern city of 6.35 square miles. The original city was established in 1887. The area of this original site covered 1214.08 acres or approximately 2 square miles. A second section to the northeast, the Redondo Villa Tracts, was first subdivided in 1906, and became part of the city in 1927. This annexation brought an additional 2252.6 acres (approximately 4 square miles) of rural territory to the original townsite and created a city structure reminiscent of two rectangles set side-by-side, one set slightly above the other, which overlap at one corner. Today, the area included in the 1927 annexation is generally referred to as "north Redondo." Clifton-by-the-Sea, adjoining the original city on the south, began in 1906. A portion of it annexed to the city in 1913, and other tracts within the area have annexed at different times since then. The final section, Hollywood Riviera, lies south of Clifton-by-the-Sea and is divided between Redondo Beach and Torrance. These latter areas, although originally distinct, today blend into the resort and residential ambiance of the original city.

Although most people think of the Los Angeles basin as being quite flat, Redondo Beach is surrounded by rolling hills. The hills are indicative of the earthquake faults deep within the subsurface, and associated deposits of oil. Both factors have shaped the historic identity of the region. Saline deposits located a few yards inland from the sea formed a third factor which virtually defined the site of Redondo. These deposits, which appear on many historical maps as a salt lake, salt pits or salt works, served as a defining landmark during the Spanish and Mexican periods and well into the Pastoral period. Anthropologists have placed a Native America village known by a variant of the root word *engnor*, meaning salt, at the location (Johnston 1962, 93). This long-identified site continues to define modern Redondo Beach. Today, the Southern California Edison Steam plant with its towering discharge stacks and handsome concrete facade rises near the location of the original salt pits and serves as a visual reference from most main thoroughfares of the city.

The original community of about 1214 acres was planned in 1887 on a natural amphitheater above the beach. Because of the limited acreage, the land was devoted to residential resort living and wharf related industry. Only a few yards out to sea, the amphitheater continues into a deep water canyon. Early promoters of the town pointed to the flat surface of the water

and commented that oil deposits seeping up from the canyon helped to keep the water calm. Experience, however, has shown otherwise. The bay, while partially sheltered, is subject to severe storm action. The storms, and the first breakwater designed to protect the beach front changed the configuration of the shoreline even before construction of the present Southern California Edison plant in 1946 and King Harbor marina in the 1960s.

In recent decades, Redondo Beach has undergone many changes, especially along the waterfront where the marina, King Harbor, has replaced most of the early industrial area and the associated small dwellings. Modern condominium developments, which now stand in place of the original downtown business district, have further altered the character of the area. Only one pre-1945 wharf, the Monstad Pier, remains to recall an earlier stage in the City's development.

The northern section of the community, composed of approximately 3000 acres and first known as the Redondo Villa Tracts, is entirely different. Here the land is gently rolling and dry. The soil, however, is productive. Over the years, many small farms and dairy-type operations prospered here. During the late 1920s, oil was discovered in this section, as well as in nearby Torrance, forming the Redondo-Torrance oil field. North Redondo, which was originally subdivided as an agricultural area in 1906 and later experienced further subdivision during the Depression and post-war era, is today defined by its dense population and a broad range of architectural styles.

Because of the salt lake, transportation linkages between Redondo, San Pedro and Los Angeles formed very early. When the Santa Fe railroad entered the basin, it made Redondo Beach a terminus for shipping. Two electric railways followed, which served the tourists who flocked to the pleasant beach in good weather. Evidence of these early railway lines remains today and can be seen in street curvature, the location of major intersections and the location of the City's principal commercial centers.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Most people think of Southern California as a region with only a recent heritage. It was, however, explored and claimed by Spain within the same time frame as the English colonists' establishment of their footholds on the Atlantic Coast. In fact, while the American Revolution raged on the East Coast, Spanish Friars worked in the Los Angeles basin to establish missions and introduce European agricultural and architectural practices. The City of Los Angeles, which dates from 1781, preceded efforts to settle the southern portions of the east including areas which today constitute the states of Tennessee, Kentucky and Arkansas. By the 1830s, contact between Americans traveling by ship from Boston and the owners of Southern California's large ranchos had been established. Despite these initial contacts, however, the "American West" in the early 1840s still meant the area between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River, a region that included much of the present-day Midwest. Today, Southern California's historic sites and traditional names bear testimony to the long period of Spanish and Mexican rule as well as the settlement of America's frontier.

TRANSFORMATION FROM PASTORAL ECONOMY TO COMMERCIAL ECONOMY 1834 - 1888

THE PASTORAL PERIOD: 1834 - 1887

The fifty year period from approximately 1834 to 1887 is usually called the Pastoral Period in Southern California because it was characterized by a blend of Mexican and Anglo ranching life. Rancheros, or ranch owners, raised cattle and horses on vast open plains. Before the gold rush of the 1850s, the cattle were raised primarily for their hides — California dollars— which were sold to seafaring merchants in exchange for finished goods and supplies from places as far away as Boston. Romantics have pictured this period as one of leisure and plentitude, but, in truth, it represented the frontier living of a European society.

The pace quickened and life became more complex for the rancheros at the conclusion of the Mexican War in 1849. In this year, the United States and Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ceding much of the Mexican north (the American Southwest), including California to the United States. The following two decades were marked by turmoil for the Mexican ranchers who made and lost fortunes from cattle sales to feed northern California miners during the great gold rush of the 1850s. These ranchers borrowed heavily from Americans to finance their efforts to prove land claims or meet other obligations, and faced with foreclosure, often lost large portions of their ranchos to satisfy comparatively small debts. Finally, their wealth was decimated by a series of natural disasters, and by the mid 1860s it had become clear that the rancheros were unable to continue ranching in the style of their forbearers. Land sales mounted and American settlement increased. By the 1880s, the era of the ranchos was over. While the Mexican owners' losses were tragic, they meant that incoming Americans could acquire large tracts of land for a comparatively small price. Small farms dotted the plain between Los Angeles and the coast, and towns developed on the open land a full decade before the founding of Redondo Beach.

Local Economic Development —The Great Ranchos

Unlike some of the late nineteenth century towns platted along the coastline, Redondo is laid out over portions of three different rancho: San Pedro, Los Palos Verdes and Sausal Redondo. All three ranchos date from the Spanish period (ending in approximately 1822) when civilians were allowed to graze cattle on lands not claimed by the Missions. Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1822, and soon began to secularize the Mission lands, granting them to former soldiers who had held Spanish grazing rights. Since these three ranchos were already in secular hands, the governor gave their owners grants to them beginning in the mid 1830s.

San Pedro, the largest and oldest of the three, covered approximately 43,000 acres (Robinson 1939, 224) and lay in an arc, bounded on the east by the San Gabriel River, on the south and west by the Pacific Ocean, and on the north by “a monument of stones, extended westward from the San Gabriel River to certain well-known salines, or salt pits, on Redondo Bay.” (Cleland 1951, 9). Today, its boundaries include most of the original city of Redondo Beach as well as modern Torrance, Gardena and Compton (Cleland 1951, 12-13, frontispiece).

Early in his administration of Rancho San Pedro, a Dominguez ranch manager gave the Sepulveda family permission to graze their cattle on part of the property. Eventually the Sepulvedas claimed the section as their own. Their claim was later upheld by the Mexican government in the 1830s, creating a separate ranch, Rancho Los Palos Verdes. Its boundaries included the Palos Verde Peninsula, and contained about 31,000 acres (Robinson 1939, 222). The Hollywood Riviera and Clifton-by-the-Sea sections of Redondo are carved out of this rancho.

The third rancho, Sausal Redondo, lay along the coast, north of the original Redondo Beach townsite and contained about 22,500 acres. It was later combined with another rancho, Aguaje de la Centinela, by an American owner before he subdivided it. Modern histories of the area usually contain references to both ranchos. North Redondo, however, includes approximately 2300 acres of the inland side of only Rancho Sausal Redondo. El Segundo, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach and Manhattan Beach overlap both ranchos (Robinson 1939, frontispiece).

Local Economic Development — The Salt Works

The salt pits defined the future city of Redondo Beach and the first American industry along Redondo Bay. At their largest, these salt deposits formed a spring-fed lake 200 yards wide by 600 yards long. The lake was located some 200 yards inland from the ocean and approximately 6 to 10 feet above sea level.¹ In 1854, the United States Government approved the patent for Rancho San Pedro which confirmed its ownership to Manuel Dominguez. Dominguez then sold about 215 acres, including the salt lake to two Los Angeles merchants, Henry Allanson and William Johnson, who organized the Pacific Salt Works (Gillingham 1961, fol. 258 and Johnson 1965, 25). They began to manufacture salt using wood fired boilers to hasten evaporation. A newspaper article explained the process in 1856:

The water is drawn from the lake through an iron pipe by means of a force pump, and is conducted into a reservoir, from which it is led by a wooden pipe into the kettles in the boiling house. As the salt forms in the kettles it is removed, and water added in proportion to the

¹Prior to 1830, the Missionaries claimed proprietorship of the mineral resource. Spanish records, however, suggest that instead of utilizing this source, the natives traveled to Imperial Valley for salt (Johnson 1965, 25). After that time, probably because the mission lands were secularized, both Native Americans and Europeans began to harvest the lake for domestic salt.

evaporation.²

In addition to these kettles, they also used flat tanks to manufacture salt by solar evaporation. The salt works operation, however, was not successful because of the high costs of shipping. It was cheaper to ship salt by water from New York to San Francisco, than it was to ship the product overland to San Pedro, and from there ferry it by "lighter" (flat bottomed barge) out to ships in the harbor which carried it to San Francisco. While their product was excellent, the local market in Los Angeles was not strong enough alone to support them. They failed in 1862, and another Los Angeles merchant, Frances Mellus, purchased the business and continued the solar operation. His widow, remarried to Jean Trudell, continued to produce salt and refine it at the Trudell mill in Los Angeles.

Despite the quality of its product, the Salt Works did not survive following the Southern Pacific Railroad arrival in Los Angeles in the mid 1870s. Although the railroad reduced the cost of marketing some of the region's products, it brought outside competition to local industries in Los Angeles, including the salt works. Salt could be shipped to Los Angeles from the Salton Sea via the railroad cheaper than it could be hauled the sixteen miles from the bay by wagon. In 1881, the inland company, the Liverpool Salt Works, bought the Pacific Salt Works, and abandoned it. The impressive buildings were still standing in the mid 1880s, but all traces were gone by 1901 (Johnson 1965, 28-30). In modern times, the Native Daughters of California dedicated a plaque to the memory of this first industry. It read:

This marker locates the site near which the Indians and early California settlers came to obtain their salt, which at many times was more valuable than gold (Johnson 1965, 23).

AGRICULTURAL ERA: 1881 - 1887

The American development in Southern California began with the dissolution of the Ranchos in the 1860s, but accelerated in the 1870s in anticipation of the coming of the railroad. During this relatively short period, 1881-1887, the landscape of Los Angeles changed from open range to small farms and tiny hamlets. Some visionaries looked west toward Asia for trade opportunities as well as possible sites to construct local harbors. Others looked inland and planned railroads to reach these harbors. Los Angeles became the confluence of the dreamers of commercial trade. When the Southern Pacific Railroad arrived in 1887, the lands between it and the coast became valuable links between the city and the water's edge. Cities such as Santa Monica, already a favorite camping and picnic site, were plotted as cities on paper and shaped by speculation and developers' expectations. Because developers of the coastal region sought to balance profitable tourism with the industrial potential of ocean ports, the communities they created were planned to allow for both types of commercialism. Modern notions of separation

²*Los Angeles Star*, 26 September 1856 in Thompson & West, reproduction 1959, 68.

of residential or resort and industrial uses in coastal city planning were not yet in fashion.

Los Angeles' economy expanded steadily with the arrival of newcomers and the growth of businesses. Promoters descended upon the region. Most of the newcomers came to invest in land for themselves, or to promote real estate investments by others. Land sales escalated as the ranchos were subdivided, sold and sold again. Finally the peak of the boom came in the summer of 1887 after the arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad to Los Angeles broke the Southern Pacific monopoly. During this three month period, \$38,000 worth of land was sold in Los Angeles County alone (Dumke 1970 ed., 9-10).

The boom of the 1880s was largely an urban phenomenon. Although land was sold in farm size parcels as well as town lots and continued to be prized for farming and orchards, the emphasis had clearly shifted to town building. Urban capital financed the boom; city realtors promoted it. Sixty towns were developed along the coastward plain of Los Angeles in 1887-8. Most of those along the water's edge, including Redondo Beach, promoted themselves as potential harbor sites. Two Los Angeles based developers of Redondo Beach, Judge Charles Silent and Nathan Vail, were involved in planning at least one other town nearby — Inglewood — and owned a large block of land north of the original townsite. This site encompassed nearly half of what is now known as north Redondo and was purchased by the two prior to their establishment of the Redondo Beach townsite. Silent and Vail exemplify the kind of land developers active along the coast during the boom period. With offices in Los Angeles, they began the development and then sold out to go on to other opportunities. Unlike many of the inland colony founders, they had no real personal ties to Redondo Beach. They were, however, interested in the commercial potential of a new bay community.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF REDONDO BEACH: 1887-1888

Except for the small section sold to the Pacific Salt Works Company, the Dominguez property remained intact until the mid 1880s when it was divided among surviving family members. Three Dominguez daughters shared in the section which fronted on Santa Monica Bay. Charles Silent, president of the Redondo Beach Company, purchased 1000 acres from them according to an August 1887 agreement (Solano-Reeve Collection). The property included the 400 acre section called "Ocean Tracts" and approximately 600 acres from the tracts immediately east of the Ocean section, called the "Dunes Tracts." He and his partners, including N. R. Vail and Dan McFarland, began to promote and create a new city on the bay. William Hammond Hall, California State Engineer, prepared the original site map for the town.

The period of control by Silent and his partners was brief, but important to the physical configuration of Redondo Beach. Undoubtedly aware of the popularity of seaside camping and resort living, the company proposed a seaside village, built in tiers above the beach. Hall, who had designed Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, created a village plan, incorporating romantic street names evocative of the Spanish period and, cleverly included names of Dominguez family women. Pebbles from the beach front included a variety of precious and semi-precious stones,

so the intersecting streets were given jewel names like Diamond, Emerald and Carnelian. The company officials planned to capitalize on the beach by constructing a hotel and pleasure pier built with iron standards but when Hall realized that rolling breakers in the bay meant the existence a deep off-shore canyon, he recommended that they also consider Redondo Beach for a commercial harbor.

An early plat map drawn by Hall reflected the company's plans for a resort and commercial center. It showed the supposed depths of the deep harbor and a "Y" shaped pier for ship and pleasure boat landings in the center beach front. North of the pier, was a railroad yard, and to the south, a large hotel surrounded by park like gardens. Set inland a few blocks was the Chautauqua complex, a sure draw for tourists of the era.

The Chautauqua movement was a phenomenon of the late nineteenth century which spread across the United States. Designed to educate people who were not able to participate in traditional higher education, it provided a four year course of learning in science and literature to be used in home study programs. People worked alone or in literary circles, studying and discussing the material year around. The highlight of the year was usually a conference of Chautauquans held in a park setting. These conferences drew thousands of participants, and were a major attraction for a resort community.

The Southern California Chautauqua had been established at Long Beach in 1886. The organization built an auditorium and met there in the summer of 1887. By fall, however, some of the leaders became concerned that they did not have enough room in bustling Long Beach to expand. At this point, the Redondo Beach Company offered them 600 lots to sell with the understanding that profits from the land sale were to be invested in the construction of the Chautauqua buildings. In their effort to attract this group, the promoters created the Chautauqua symbol, the "Lamp of Learning," in the street pattern north of the proposed Chautauqua complex site, and named the streets for men who were important to the Chautauqua movement. As a result of the generous offer from the Redondo Beach Company, a group moved from Long Beach to Redondo to begin a rival center.

Established at the height of the Southern California real estate boom of the 1880s, Redondo Beach was one of the towns which showed great promise as an industrial harbor and a resort. Its own story is a part of the story of the growth of greater industrial Los Angeles. Its experiences mirror those of other coastal towns whose economy is based on the ocean. The city began in a region which was already becoming urbanized in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and was linked to the growing metropolis of Los Angeles by rail from its inception. In another location, far from a large city, it might not have been able to survive the loss of its major industries to become an established choice residential and resort city in the 1990s. Here, however, it was able to survive because it could depend on the metropolitan area for jobs, as a market for its produce and as a source for professional services.

Physical Evidence

The first hotel, wharf, and Chautauqua were under construction at the end of this period, but no structural evidence remains of any of them. What does remain, however, are corridors and street patterns and markings on historic maps. Many maps dating after the 1850s show the salt works on the bay where Redondo is now, reemphasizing the importance of Redondo's first industry. Boundary lines between ranchos often became corridors or early wagon roads. Thus, the boundary between Rancho San Pedro and Rancho Sausal Redondo is roughly modern Ripley Avenue while the boundary between San Pedro and Palos Verdes ranchos is still defined by the alley between Knob Hill and Avenue "A". Other streets are named for prominent property owners in the area. For example, Vail Avenue takes its name from one of the founders, but also probably from the fact that it connected some of the Vail family holdings and modern Artesia Boulevard. It is also likely that Grant Avenue is named for the land grant boundary north of Ripley. Remnants of the "Chautauqua Lamp of Learning" are still clearly visible in the formation of Vincent Street, El Redondo Street, Spencer Street and Vincent Park. Fleming Street, which originally formed the northern side of the lamp, subsequently became a part of the high school campus. With the exception of El Redondo, these streets reference local and national founders of the Chautauqua movement. The ocean front has changed greatly since the first plan was laid out, but the inland side of the original city conforms closely to the original site map.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF REDONDO BEACH 1888 - 1923

DEVELOPMENT OF REDONDO BEACH TOWN SITE: 1888 - 1905

Industrial/Commercial Development

Despite efforts by the original Redondo Beach Company to popularize their newly established city, sales were slow during 1887 and early 1888 as the Southern California building boom faltered. Los Angeles businessmen had expressed interest in the potential port, but did not come forward to finance the venture after reading a report on the harbor's potential published in 1887 by Col. G. H. Mendell of the US Army Corps of Engineers. Although confirming Hall's investigation of a deep sea canyon, Mendell failed to offer enthusiastic support of the site. (Karr 1947, 10). Two outsiders, however, were interested and invested in town lots as soon as they were available (Karr 1947, 11). Within a short time, they purchased the Redondo Beach Company, renamed it the Redondo Beach Improvement Company, and continued to pursue the goals of the founders.

The two, J. C. Ainsworth and R. R. Thompson, were experienced steam boat captains. Ainsworth, from Oregon, also had timber and lumber connections in that state and planned to ship lumber to Southern California where it was needed in the growing construction market. They began to champion Redondo Beach's harbor for deep water shipping. Promotional literature published by Ainsworth and Thompson claimed that the deep water harbor was sheltered and because of the depth, the waves were smoother than elsewhere along the coast. Knowing that time meant money to freighters, they also emphasized that Redondo was closer to San Francisco and to Los Angeles than San Pedro, its nearby competitor.

A contemporary, Horace Bell, was less charitable toward the Redondo harbor's potential. In his 1930 memoirs, Bell wrote that although the bay at Redondo appeared quite calm on a mild day, it was subject to the force of the northwest wind which brought "the rollers in with crushing violence" (Bell 1930, 270). Nevertheless, Ainsworth and Thompson continued in their efforts to promote a dock basin in the old salt lake, wide and deep enough to "receive the largest ships afloat." They also promoted steamship lines to China, Australia and South American from their Redondo harbor (Bell 1930, 271). Unfortunately, Bell was the better observer. Storms did wreak havoc with the various piers which were constructed in the bay, destroying most of them.

At the time the Redondo Beach Improvement Company (Ainsworth and Thompson) began its operation of the harbor and townsite, several local ports were vying for federal assistance to develop as *the* port of Los Angeles. San Pedro had the backing of wealthy merchants and businessmen in Los Angeles who could, and did, influence the politics of the harbor fight in Washington, D. C. Because of their influence, the old landing at San Pedro

appeared to be the favorite, but there were other possibilities. The Southern Pacific Railroad, at first unwilling to share the landing at San Pedro, promoted its Port Los Angeles harbor at Santa Monica. An abortive attempt was made to create another port on the mud flats of La Ballona, a site between Santa Monica and Redondo Beach. Finally, there was Redondo Beach. Ainsworth lobbied to have it included in the formal study for federal assistance along with Santa Monica and San Pedro but in the end, the latter was made the port for Los Angeles.

There were several good reasons why Redondo could not become the principal port. The deep water canyon, while it allowed for the dockage of larger ships, it also made jetties and breakwaters difficult to build. These would be necessary storm protection for a major port facility. Further, the amount of flat land for warehouses was restricted. Redondo was laid out in an amphitheater shape, with a comparatively narrow and limited beach front. San Pedro, on the other hand, had room for future expansion on the flat land around its landing. Because of the space, San Pedro fit the preconceptions of the federal government for an international port.

In the 1880s and 1890s, Americans were confident in their ability to become a major international power. Business leaders envisioned unlimited international trade opportunities once a canal was cut through the Isthmus of Panama, linking the two oceans. Although the French had failed, the Maritime Canal Company, an American organization, had just been chartered to cut through Nicaragua. (MacCullough 1977, 240). Many believed it was simply a matter of time before someone joined the Atlantic and Pacific with a canal through that narrow barrier of land.

In 1890, Admiral Mahan published a book explaining his theory that national superiority and commercial greatness depended upon supremacy at sea (MacCullough 1971, 251). He believed that the canal was a first step toward gaining this supremacy. His theory was hugely popular among Americans and fueled the ambition of California businessmen as well as political figures including future president Theodore Roosevelt. Thus it is no wonder that the idea of becoming an international port inspired the efforts of the promoters of Redondo Beach, even if the possibility was remote.

Redondo opened its first wharf in June of 1889. By December, it had handled over eight tons of freight. Several cost factors sustained the popularity of this port site despite the limitations placed on the city's ability to construct an extensive jetty and breakwater system. First, was the presence of the off shore canyon which allowed deep drafted ships to transfer their cargo directly to the dock area without the use of flat-bottomed barges called "lighters." This cost advantage was further enhanced by the strategic location of Redondo. As long as sailing ships plied the Pacific, Redondo was in a good position to receive lumber and general merchandise shipped south in coastal waters from San Francisco. In 1892, for example, Redondo handled a full 60% of the water traffic in and out of Los Angeles, excluding lumber and coal (Karr 1947, 20). Ships from the east coast generally rounded the Horn and set a course westward to pick up the trade winds to San Francisco because that was easier than trying to make San Pedro first. Calling at Redondo instead shaved a few hours off the sailing time from San Francisco. This advantage, of course, disappeared with the coming of the steam ships and the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 (Karr 1947, 21-22).

At the same time that the competition for port funding began, the Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF) selected Redondo as its Los Angeles water terminus. Although it could have used the harbor at San Pedro, it chose to avoid competition there with its rivals, the Southern Pacific or the Los Angeles Terminal Railway. It incorporated the Redondo Beach Railway to connect the little community with Los Angeles. The following year the Redondo Beach Railway was consolidated with the Southern California Railway, also a Santa Fe subsidiary. Even if it had not brought other business to the port, the Santa Fe's own supplies of hardwood ties would have been enough to support Redondo because it was expanding operations in Southern California and laying massive amounts of new track.

The third major source of support for the wharf and harbor during the 1890s came from inland. Because coal and wood were in short supply in the general area, oil was used for industrial fuel by the turn of the century. Major oil strikes had been made in the Los Angeles basin, notably at Whittier and Fullerton, but there were no refineries to process the oil locally. The Pacific Coast Oil Company, ultimately owned by Standard Oil, contracted with the Santa Fe for tankers to ship crude from the fields to its storage tanks at Redondo. From there, the company shipped the crude in ocean going tankers north to its refinery at Alameda and then returned to Redondo with refined fuel oil for the region's growing manufacturing sector.

A local lumber industry was an outgrowth of the effort to popularize the community and encourage local building. Originally lumber was provided at cost to anyone willing to build at Redondo. Early lumber yards included the Willamette company (replaced by Montgomery and Mullen Lumber Company), and the Frazier Yard, both near the salt lake in what was becoming the industrial district. Later firms including Ganahl and Patten-Davis (Patten-Blinn) established wholesale yards in the same area. The Redondo Planing and Feed Mill was nearby on a triangular area of land formed by the intersection of Beryl, Broadway and Pacific (Catalina). This was a large concern which, in 1893, processed some 800,000 feet of lumber for the Los Angeles sewer outfall under construction.

Resort Development

Ainsworth and Thompson finished the iron wharf at the base of Emerald Street and the elegant hotel in 1890, just in time for the first Chautauqua meetings. The Chautauqua Auditorium was also completed that spring. It was an imposing eleven-sided cement faced structure, designed to seat some 4000 participants. Unfortunately, the rival Chautauqua group only met there two years before they were reconciled with the Long Beach group. In 1892, they returned to Long Beach and abandoned their fine auditorium and dreams (*Rural Californian* 1890).

The hotel, which fortunately proved more successful, was a confection of turrets, gables and chimneys. It had 225 guest rooms and a bath on every floor. It even had steam heat and Otis elevators for the comfort and convenience of guests (Redondo Beach Centennial Magazine). Hotel Redondo's kitchen was filled with modern appliances including large refrigerators. The larder, the company anticipated, would be supplied by the hotel's own dairy, orchard and kitchen gardens. The public gardens around the hotel were carefully landscaped and complimented by other gardens nearby. The name for the pebble beach, "Moonstone Beach," romanticized the

seashore with visions of an expanse of semi-precious stones underfoot. This was, indeed, a destination for tourists! It was also a source of employment for Redondo residents who made up the larger part of its staff of cooks, cooks helpers, laundry workers, house and grounds keepers.

Railroad Connections

During 1888, the Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF) selected Redondo as its terminus. Although it could have used the harbor at San Pedro, it chose to avoid competition there with its rival, the Southern Pacific. It incorporated the Redondo Beach Railway to connect the little community with Los Angeles and handled some passenger traffic along with freight. The following year the Redondo Beach railway consolidated with the Southern California Railway, also a Santa Fe subsidiary.

Convenient light rail service completed the picture for tourism. In 1889, the Redondo Beach Improvement Company purchased a narrow gauge steam railroad, the Rosecrans Rapid Transit Company, renamed it the Redondo Railway and routed it from the depot behind the hotel through Inglewood to Los Angeles. Several years later, Ainsworth and Thompson formed a new company, the Los Angeles and Redondo Railway, to operate the rail line and wharf. L.T. Garnsey, one of the company partners, became president. By 1896, Garnsey had added another wharf to the ocean front. Passenger service increased as the resort became widely known through advertising. In 1896, the narrow gauge handled over 15,000 passengers, and by 1902, it served some 20,000 passengers (Karr 1947, 46). Undoubtedly flushed with success and mindful of the impact of new technology and growing competition from other light railways in the basin, the railroad company switched from dirty, noisy steam service to clean, quiet electric rail service in the latter year. Two years later, passenger traffic reached 111,360. In 1903, the company expanded and improved rail service, added a third pier at the southern end of the ocean front, and built a railroad yard in the northern industrial section of the community.

Civic Development

Redondo, like many of the successful boom cities, incorporated early, in 1892. An 1892 newspaper article suggests the rationale. The article averred that the city needed to have industry and recommended its residents support efforts to win a smelter that Los Angeles was considering (*Redondo Beach Compass* 3 Dec 1892). In order to become a player in the effort to attract business and industry, the community needed municipal authority to make infrastructure improvements. Once the city incorporated, it could bond itself to pay for public improvements such as fire fighting equipment or good roads. In addition, incorporation gave civic leaders some control over building practices so they could designate building materials used in the city's business or industrial districts. Fire insurance companies, for example, were more likely to insure businesses if these controls were in place, and businesses were more likely to invest in permanent construction if they could get insurance.

Still another reason for incorporation was to provide municipal services to the growing community. In order to compete for either tourist or residential dollars, communities were beginning to offer more services such as street and residential lighting. In communities such as

Redondo Beach which did not operate their own utility system, the Board of Trustees utilized private companies to provide residential electrical service. Unfortunately, many of these early private companies were under funded, as was apparently the case with the first companies selected to operate in Redondo. A local company formed by Addison and Lindsay received the first electric lighting plant franchise in 1896, but within a year the Board of Trustees was dissatisfied with the service. By 1901, the City had contracted with another small company, United Electric, Gas and Power Company. This company consolidated with Edison the following year.

Edison built a substation in Redondo Beach in 1910 to facilitate the transfer of electric power from its generating plants located outside the city. During this same period, Henry Huntington constructed a large generating plant on the site of the original salt works to power his interurban Red Cars in the Los Angeles area as well as in such distant cities as Riverside, Redlands and San Bernardino. Huntington's power plant should not be confused with the domestic electricity supplied to the City by Edison. Confusion between these two sources of electrical power frequently exists due to the fact that in 1917, Edison purchased Huntington's Pacific Light and Power Company and all assets, including the Redondo plant.

As the collection of beach cottages coalesced into a stable community during the 1890s, other civic elements fell into place. By the time the town incorporated, six denominations served the community and began to erect their churches. Of these early church complexes, only the Christ Episcopal Church at 408 S. Broadway remains, but the other congregations are still active.

Women's organizations also contributed to the public environment. Community women participated in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in the 1890s. While the W. C. T. U.'s principal interest was liquor prohibition, the women were also interested in community betterment. In 1893, a year after the Chautauqua left, they established a free reading room at the entrance of Wharf #1 in a building provided by Ainsworth. The community supported the reading room through book donations. In 1895, the reading room was donated to the City to become the first local library.

In 1908, a group of twenty women formed the Redondo Beach Woman's Club. Although this organization began as a literary society it quickly became one of the City's most active participants in the move toward community betterment. In 1913 the Club established a subsidiary organization, the Civic Outlook Club, specifically for the "study of political, economic and civic questions and for the improvement of local civic conditions." One woman served as president for both organizations and both were affiliated with the California Federation of Woman's Clubs. The Civic Outlook Club worked closely with local men's organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the local Real Estate Board and the Elk's Club to obtain its objectives. Under the leadership of May Hopkins, the Woman's Club succeeded in blocking a move by Los Angeles based interests to develop the City's beach front property. This struggle led to the establishment of the City's first public park and the election of May Hopkins as the City's first woman mayor.

Physical Evidence

Pictures suggest that the public buildings and gardens from this era were very attractive, however, only one tree, the Moreton Bay Fig in Veterans Park has survived and is designated Landmark No. 13. Veterans Park is the original hotel site. The gardens have been divided for housing. During these two decades of prosperity, three separate wharves were built in Redondo and damaged by storms so that they, too, were ultimately demolished. Their legacy, however, is reflected in the small working man's cottages and apartments near the north end of the beach. While a destination for resort goers, Redondo was a residential community of working men and their families. Although most of the remaining structures are modest cottages, there are a few larger ocean front homes which were built by early inland residents as vacation homes. Two of the earliest modest cottages are at 216 and 218 North Catalina. A Queen Anne style cottage, Landmark No. 5 has been moved to Heritage Court at Dominguez Park. The Bissen House in north Redondo is Landmark No. 14, at 2604 Fisk Lane. Christ Church Episcopal, located at 408 South Broadway and constructed in approximately 1893, is the oldest remaining church.

THE HARBOR - EXPANSION AND TRANSITION: 1905 - 1923

The years immediately following the electrification of the LA and Redondo Railway were prosperous ones for the city of Redondo Beach. Since the port of Los Angeles was not yet complete, Redondo was still an important off loading bay for lumber and oil. Tourism continued to flourish, and industry was attracted to the community by an ambitious city promotion program.

Redondo Beach experienced a revival or reawakening in 1905 when electric rail magnate Henry E. Huntington decided to invest in its future. In reality, however, Redondo Beach owes its physical character and development pattern to the contributions of three separate real estate groups of community promoters. The first was headed by Silent, McFarland, and Vail; the second by Ainsworth and Thompson; and the final one by Henry E. Huntington. In their time, each promoted a discrete vision of the future for the seaside town and built on the successes of its predecessors. Silent, McFarland and Vail envisioned a quiet seaside resort town when they laid out the original city. A few months later, Ainsworth and Thompson expanded their ideas to conceive a major international harbor to serve Southern California's expanding commercial ocean trade as well as its expanding tourist trade. The twentieth century real estate magnate, Henry E. Huntington, built upon the goals and dreams of these earlier promoters and with his virtually unlimited resources, was able to complete their dreams of both a seaside resort and an ocean industrial port. While the regional reputation of Huntington tends to magnify his contributions to Redondo Beach and the other Southern California towns he developed, it in no way obscures the vision and efforts of those who came before him.

As part of his scheme to develop subdivisions in Southern California, Huntington extended his Pacific Electric rail service (the Red Cars) from Los Angeles to Long Beach in 1901 and then, three years later, along the coast into Orange County, to Huntington Beach and on toward Newport Beach. Apparently, he wanted to reach the Santa Monica Bay as well, but he was blocked by two flourishing electric trolley systems, the Los Angeles Pacific Railroad and the

Los Angeles and Redondo Railway, both serving Redondo Beach. He had to either compete with these two, or purchase one of them.

On July 7 1905, Huntington purchased the interests of the Redondo Beach Improvement Company. Then just four days later, he purchased the Los Angeles and Redondo Railway. With these two purchases, he secured a foothold on the bay. Townspeople welcomed his investment of money and reputation. Huntington's brother-in-law, Burke Holladay, expressed amazement at Huntington's investment in Redondo Beach. In a letter to a family member, Holladay wrote:

Redondo has been a dead town. . . . The hotel never paid....The name Redondo made a Los Angeles capitalist shy like a horse at an auto. But on Friday last, it came out that Mr. H. E. Huntington had bought the entire townsite of Redondo from the Redondo Land Co. and that he would offer it for sale. Oh! What a change in the twinkling of an eye. Immediately the people of Los Angeles rushed in droves to Redondo to buy, buy, buy... (Friedricks 1992, 90).

In his letter, Holladay recognized that Huntington's association with the city could reverse all traces of an earlier negative trend and make the city an attractive speculative investment. This is exactly what happened. For several days, following the announcement of Huntington's investment in city property, the town was overwhelmed by buyers and sellers, each anxious to profit on Redondo Beach land. Then, like the boomlet the year before at Huntington Beach, it was over. Some unwise speculators had lost thousands in their ventures. Huntington, however, sold about \$3 million worth of property in the frenzy, almost as much as his original investment in the land and railway (Friedricks 1992, 90). These were the short term effects. Huntington's decision to invest in Redondo Beach, however, also created a long term impact on the viability of the community.

Other investors followed his lead. At least one opened large tracts of previously undeveloped land nearby and subdivided it for agricultural uses. These tracts, the Redondo Villa Tracts, became an extension of Redondo Beach later when annexed in 1927. Within the original townsite, development also occurred as investors who had purchased lots prior to Huntington's investment subdivided and developed these sites, nearly completing the settlement of coastal Redondo Beach. At the same time, Huntington also purchased additional land outside the original city, and created another diverse community, Clifton-by-the-Sea. The final result was that the region developed steadily, with a variety of areas to appeal to incoming residents.

Resort Improvements

Huntington pursued a double policy in Redondo Beach. He invested millions in resort improvements, and built an electric power generating station to service his Pacific Electric system, region wide. His first improvement along the waterfront was the Mission style pavilion, near Emerald along the ocean, which was completed in 1907. This three story building housed local commercial businesses on two sides, a restaurant, and a theater to attract tourists. Two years later, he built the huge bath house nearby. Between them was another tourist attraction,

the Casino. Advertisements and promotional literature from this period claimed the facility at Redondo was the largest heated salt water pool in the world. Ingenuously, the warm water for the pools came from the cooling water of the generating plant. Since the ocean was too cold for swimming much of the year, this Moorish structure must have been a major attraction to athletic visitors. It had three separate pools, Turkish and steam baths, and 1000 small dressing rooms to accommodate some 2000 bathers. (Friedricks 1992, 91).

Resident business people organized themselves to boost the community in order to continue to attract tourist dollars and other new business. When Roosevelt's "Great White Fleet" visited the port in November, 1907, a citizens' committee prepared a large reception for the visitors. Afterwards, they formed themselves into a permanent organization which became the Chamber of Commerce (Karr 1947, 52). Civic organizations sponsored tours to other communities to boost Redondo, offering speeches, band concerts and many varieties of promotional literature. As a result of the community support, everyone who came to Redondo, left a booster with advertising buttons or brochures. The rallying cry was "When you Boost the Booster you Boom the Boom." (Karr 1947, 54).

The resort community offered some activity for every visitor all year, whether it was swimming, shopping, dining or just strolling along the Moonstone beach to enjoy the view and collect precious and semi-precious stones. A midway, El Paseo, developed with a roller coaster, carousel and tamer amusements including shooting galleries where good shots could win small prizes and motion picture theaters and concerts. Following the popular trend, Huntington's Redondo Beach Improvement Company expanded the summer tent city with tents for rent by the week or month. Families from the hot inland valleys could relax on the beach for as little as three dollars a week in a small tent (electric lights were extra), and use the bathhouse nearby or fish from one of the three wharves (Karr 1947, 53).¹

The abundance of activities coupled with the quick, convenient electric rail to Los Angeles made Redondo a major resort destination before auto roads were completed. Tourists had their choice of travel on two electric rail systems. One was the "balloon route" of the Los Angeles Pacific (Southern Pacific RR purchased in 1906) which went from Redondo north along the coast to Santa Monica, inland to Los Angeles and back to Playa del Rey (former La Ballona) before returning to Redondo. The other, the Los Angeles Redondo, was an inland route through Inglewood to Los Angeles and back through farmland and orchards. Both made several trips a day. Within a short time, the beach became popular for large group picnics and conventions. Forty two groups brought some 36,000 people to the beach in 1910, and by 1913, as many as 20,000 visited on a summer Sunday (Karr 1947, 55).

¹One news article published in 1946 noting the loss of the city's famous "Tent City" offers a description of its location: "At its height, Redondo's "Tent City" stretched from the Masonic Temple along the beach to El Paseo. The city park, the Bank of America, the Elks Club are all located on what was once "Tent City" in Redondo Beach, where people from all over the United States came to bask in the warmth and hospitality of California sunshine" (Snyder 1, 19 July 1946).

Storms, however, continued to pound the area. A major storm in 1915 caused considerable damage to public and private property along the beach. As a result, a bond issue was passed to build a new pleasure pier in hopes of reviving the tourist trade, dampened by the storm. This pier, called the Endless Pier, constructed of concrete and steel, was triangular shaped, with the point out into the surf. There, a platform was built with a sun room, restaurant and resting areas, complete with tables and chairs. According to the Chamber of Commerce literature, some 10,000 people could be entertained there at one time. During its 1916 construction period, it was damaged by another storm, and just twenty months after its completion, partially destroyed in a third storm. By this time, the initial wharf was gone and the second one, silted by shifting sand had become too shallow to use. It, too, was damaged in the 1915 storm and removed in 1916.

Despite these blows to its harbor, the business community did not give up hope of becoming a major freight port for Los Angeles. The lure of trade through the Panama Canal was too great. The Chamber of Commerce decided that a breakwater would improve the attractiveness of the port, which by 1912 was in decline as a freight destination. The city was included, at their request, in still another federal study. Once again, it was rejected for funding. This time, ironically, because it did not handle enough commerce to warrant the expenditure (Karr 1947, 66). Another plan was proposed in 1915 to improve the port, and a supportive bond issue passed. But, as luck would have it, the construction company which was to build it, failed (Karr 1947, 70).

Industrial Developments

Almost simultaneous with his investment in the resort, Huntington began his industrial investment. In 1902 Huntington helped reorganize a small electric power company, the San Gabriel Electric Company into the Pacific Light and Power Company (PL&P). It then provided the power to operate his electric rail systems and provide power to communities they served. As the electric rail systems grew, the need for power in the basin increased. The PL&P had two hydro power plants outside the basin providing electricity, but Redondo presented a third plant site with plenty of water for cooling and oil for fuel (Myers 1986, 59).

At the time, Redondo was supplied with domestic power by a predecessor of the Edison Company, not by PL&P. The Redondo plant, however, was still important to the local economy because it provided employment for residents and warm water for the plunge. Residents were proud to point out the modern plant as evidence that Huntington was seriously interested in the growth and prosperity of Redondo Beach. The plant was completed in 1907, and despite older technology, proved to be the most efficient steam plant in the United States. Three years later, the PL&P expanded the plant and installed modern 12,000 kw turbo-generators (Myers 1986, 61). The plant was of no small importance to Redondo for it employed 150 men and added greatly to the assessed valuation of the town. In 1913, however, a new hydro electric facility was completed at Big Creek in the high Sierras and this local plant was placed on stand by, meaning a serious blow to the Redondo Beach economy. In 1917 Edison purchased the Pacific Light and Power Company, its franchises, properties and business from Huntington but used the plant only

in emergency power situations until it was dismantled in 1935.²

Community leaders rankled at the control the Huntington interests had over the direction of future growth for Redondo Beach. They were unwilling to give up the authority to design their own economy, but, in truth, had very little leverage either with Huntington, nor with other potential investors. Still the Chamber of Commerce made a number of efforts to attract new industry before the First World War. One of its first hopes was an auto factory, the Pacific Motor and Automobile Company. As was fairly typical, the land company donated land, and citizens bought shares in the company in 1908 to encourage it to locate at Redondo. Although the land was just outside city limits, officials anticipated benefit to the city, anyway, because the factory promised jobs for 100 men. Promise, however, faded into failure as the company folded after completing just one vehicle (Snyder 2, 19 Nov 1908).

In addition to this disappointment, other industrial contributors to the local economy left about the same time. In 1911, Standard Oil Company dealt the community a major blow. It built a refinery at El Segundo, seven miles away, and stopped using the port for shipping crude to the northern refinery. The Santa Fe Railway, which had been a major port user, transferred its local business to San Pedro as soon as the harbor was ready, and sent its lumber to San Diego where it was building rail lines. As if adding insult to injury, Huntington also removed his industrial component. The need for additional power to Los Angeles' domestic and rail needs soon outstripped the capacity of the Redondo Plant. In 1913, the company completed another remote hydro plant, Big Creek, in the Sierras, and no longer relied on the old plant at Redondo.

The Chamber, as yet unwilling to rely on a tourist dominated economy, continued to flirt with other industrialists. A second major attempt to create a local industry began in 1911 with talks to establish a foundry at Redondo. The company, Warman Steel Casting Co., required a locally subscribed bonus and the donation of land, but agreed to build at Redondo near the electric rail tracks and Coyote Ave. It expected to employ 50 men who would become city residents. The company built its plant and began operation. In accordance with its agreement with the Chamber of Commerce who in turn had agreed to pay the company a performance bonus. Unfortunately, the Chamber reneged on its portion of the agreement when its members refused to contribute the funds they had agreed to raise. The company continued its operation

²Henry Huntington's Pacific Light and Power Company and later, California Edison, provided employment opportunities for men living within the Redondo Beach community. This in itself was important for the city's economic development. However, the presence of the Edison Company in Redondo Beach held additional significance. By the early 1920s, residential growth through out Southern California was dependant upon the availability of domestic electricity. Any number of residential subdivisions could be planned, but without proper electrical services development plans could not proceed beyond the planning stage. Edison's decisions of where to concentrate its funding for electrical expansion directly impacted a community's ability to achieve its future expansion and development aspirations. As a result, the presence and involvement of Edison in Redondo Beach was seen by the leaders of this community as vital to their ability to obtain a full growth potential and maintain a competitive edge over neighboring cities. It is little wonder that Redondo Beach was the first community in California to establish an "Edison Club." Through out the 1920s and well into the 1940s, this club served as one of the city's most active social organizations and viewed as an important link between the corporation and the community at large.

for several years, expanding the plant, but sued the Chamber. In 1917, the final judgement went against the company. Tellingly, within the year newspaper clippings reported that another industry was invited to establish a plant at the old Warman site (Snyder 2, 8 June 1917, 26 April 1918). Apparently, the Warman company moved to Huntington Park and continued business there (Snyder 2, 13 Jan 1922).

The deep water canyon channeled schools of fish toward the shore at Redondo, making the wharves a fisherman's paradise. As a result, a small commercial fishing industry thrived there. After the Endless Pier was built in 1916, a fish cannery opened and raised hopes of new dock side or factory employment. This plant operated briefly before the owner bought another cannery at San Pedro and moved most of the packing operation there. The plant at Redondo then turned to relishes and speciality seafood items. Finally, in the early 1920s, it introduced a bottling plant for soft drinks and continued with this mixed operation (Snyder 2, 26 April 1918; 3 Feb 1922, 21 April 1922).

These various set backs for the City's economy laid the ground work for calls in early 1925 for the annexation of the Redondo Villa Tracts located to the north. Annexation was seen by the Redondo Beach community as a way to reap the benefits of a promising agricultural site as well as an opportunity to acquire additional vacant land for possible industrial development. Further discussions of the City's annexation move are offered in subsequent sections of this report.

Development of Clifton-by-the-Sea and Hollywood Riviera

One section of the coastal city developed slightly differently than the main portion. Clifton-by-the-Sea³ was also a Huntington project, begun in 1906 on the south end of the community on land which had been part of Rancho Palos Verdes. Unlike the original city which he simply revitalized, Huntington planned Clifton as an entirely new development for high income families. Stringent building restrictions enforced his intent (Snyder 7, P.E. Topics, November 1906). Streets and promenades were laid out and a country club planned on the formerly vacant site. Several golf courses were proposed over the next decades, including one "lying south of Ave "C." For some reason, the section did not seem to catch the imagination of the public, and building progressed slowly. In 1913, the western portion of Clifton, amounting to 121.87 acres, was annexed to the city. Several attempts were made to annex other sections, but the area was sparsely settled and residents were reluctant to become part of the City. Since the area had not been part of the city from the first, many of its services were not up to the standard of Redondo's and required improvement at some extra cost. It appears that the few residents in the area were not willing to increase their taxes to make the improvements (Snyder 7, 5 Mar 1926). Finally, in the early 1980s, the last section of the area, "Clifton Heights," became part of Redondo Beach.

³Early advertisements for this development utilize both the "Cliffon" and "Clifton" spelling. The latter was an abbreviated version of the former, and both offer reference to the Palos Verdes cliffs. Both names were derived from the longer name of "Cliff town by the Sea."

One more southern portion of the city, Hollywood Riviera, reflects the dreams of planners anxious to promote the community as an up scale residential and resort area. Hollywood Riviera was designed during the oil and movie fed boom of the 1920s. Its promoters envisioned an exclusive area, reached from Hollywood by a boulevard which avoided the traffic of Los Angeles. The interesting thing about its development was the introduction of modern planning concepts by Charles Henry Cheney, who was developing a community in neighboring Palos Verdes. Cheney was an innovative land planner who believed in general planning for an area rather than piece meal responses to developers requests. He hoped to create a wide park along the coastline from the wharves at Redondo through his new community. Although Cheney encouraged the City to purchase park land along the esplanade, a private buyer took control, and built on the property. Today the subdivision has some residential areas and a lively commercial center.

Much had happened to Redondo Beach in the first decades of the twentieth century. Its port had expanded with lumber shipments, been stifled by the refusal of federal money to complete a breakwater, and finally begun its decline. Industry which had shown much promise initially, had been lost to new technology and other expanding communities. The tourist business had been encouraged by the building of the great pavilion and bathhouse before 1910 and become the dominant factor in the city's economy. Storms, however, damaged or destroyed the attractive wharves before 1920, impacting the businesses, and the old hotel was forced to close.

Yet, despite all the set backs, the community was strong. It had more churches and strong fraternal organizations. It had, by default, determined that it would be a residential city and its goal was to provide a quality living experience within its boundaries. Because of the high assessed valuation of the power plant and other industries during the 1900s, the city had a comfortable tax base. The tax rate could be kept low for local property owners and still generate enough revenue to fund most public services. As a result, Redondo could afford to pave its streets, build and maintain sewer systems and construct new civic buildings. (Karr 1947, 53). It had also built good schools and a city hall. Future decades would see the gradual completion of business districts and expansion of residential neighborhoods in the original city and in north Redondo.

NORTH REDONDO BEACH

1905 - 1923

Carlson and Peck's "Redondo Villa Tracts"

The development of the approximately four square miles of land currently located in north Redondo Beach began in 1905 when W. H. Carlson became the managing land agent for George Peck and his entire Redondo Villa Tract. Peck had originally purchased the property in the late 1880s and in response to the announcement of Henry Huntington's investment in neighboring Redondo Beach, entered into an agreement with Carlson to develop his property. Under their agreement, Carlson made all arrangements for the sub-division and marketing of the property. Purchasers of the property paid Carlson directly who in turn paid Peck \$20 for each lot sold. Upon receipt of this payment, Peck agreed to release the deed for the lot to its new

owner.

The first section subdivided and marketed by Carlson opened in 1906. Generally referred to as the "Redondo Villa Tract," its boundaries are today defined by Ripley Avenue, Artesia Boulevard, Slauson Lane, and Prospect Avenue. One year later, Carlson subdivided an additional 160 acres within the "Redondo Villa Tract B." Today half of this tract falls within Redondo Beach and the other, to the west, within the City of Manhattan Beach. In both areas, Carlson selected street names which made direct reference to the leading industrialists of his era and which created an illusion of wealth for the area's barren and gently rolling hills. Names such as Morgan, Stanford, Vanderbilt, Carnegie, and Rockefeller today offer testimony to Carlson and his hopes of future prosperity. Carlson also constructed a magnificent three-tiered, mission-style gateway marking the entrance to his sub-division, a small mission-style office structure and at least one large residence.

Carlson's plans for the Redondo Villa Tracts placed heavy reliance upon Huntington's large capital investment in order to define and establish the marketability of his development. Once Huntington laid the necessary rail connections and invested in local civic and infrastructure improvements, Carlson moved quickly to take advantage of the resulting land boom as well as Huntington's well-financed publicity blitz. While paying homage to Huntington as "Southern California's greatest financier, capitalist and captain of industry," Carlson took full advantage of Huntington's capital investments by offering free rides to Redondo Beach and his property every day on Huntington's Red Cars. Offers of free passage appeared in advertisements through out 1906 and 1907.

Unlike Huntington who promoted town lots, Carlson planned for a mixed use development characterized by small resident-occupied farms. Within the Villa Tract, suitable lots could be had for as little as \$4.00 down and \$90.00 total. This approach was in keeping with advice offered by the era's agricultural leaders who encouraged people with little investment capital to purchase small farms and produce specialty crops. In particular, investors were encouraged to investigate the potential for poultry and dairy production as well as dry farming techniques. Through the careful selection of products, small farmers in the area could be provided with a reasonable level of assurance for future profitability. This was especially true for the farmers of the Redondo Villa Tracts located within easy transport distance to the large Los Angeles market. Advertisements placed by Carlson emphasized the close proximity between his Redondo Villa Tracts, Los Angeles and neighboring Redondo Beach. Carlson's selection of a rural development plan proved to be very successful. It also set into motion a pattern for an agricultural economy in the north Redondo area which continued well into the 1940s and 1950s.

In 1907 Carlson expanded his holdings through the purchase of property in Hermosa Beach, Shakespeare and Manhattan Beach. This purchase extended his development site from the western edge of the Redondo Villa Tract to the ocean shore. While all of this land lies outside current-day Redondo Beach, this segment of Carlson's purchase was important in that it reflected the beliefs and aspirations which defined this period of Redondo's history. Like his contemporaries, Carlson aggressively promoted all aspects of the area's growth potential while

at the same time working to establish a strong hold over at least one section of property which extended from the ocean front, inland.⁴ In one 1907 interview Carlson stated,

I believe in the future of Los Angeles and in the fact that it is closely connected with Redondo, Hermosa and the beach places in this district and it will be only a short time before that seashore is a portion of the Greater Los Angeles (Snyder 1, 7 March 1907).

One year after making this statement, Carlson made a bold and financially risky move to link his entire holdings through the construction of an intra-development electric rail line. Within three months of the announcement of these plans however, came word that Carlson's Los Angeles Securities Company was experiencing serious financial difficulties. Immediately, creditors moved to place attachments on every article of value that could be located within the Villa Tracts. Hermosa authorities also moved to stop construction on the railway. By early 1909, however, Carlson had reached a tentative agreement with the city of Hermosa and announced the opening of his Port Orient Railway. All residents living within his Villa Tract rode for free. Unfortunately for residents of the Redondo Villa Tract who relied on Carlson's Port Orient railway as their primary link with surrounding communities, the railway lasted little more than a year.

Redondo Villa Tract Residents Work to Define Their Community

While Carlson struggled to provide assurance to his creditors, residents of the Redondo Villa Tracts moved quickly to secure their interests in their property. For most, this meant the immediate payment of \$20 for each lot held. As middle-man between George Peck and the individual purchasers of lots, Carlson had failed to pass on to Peck the \$20 down payment paid by each lot holder. As a result, residents of the Redondo Villa Tracts found themselves paying the \$20 twice in order to secure title to their land. Immediately following this drain on resources came the announcement that the area's main supplier of water, the Hermosa Water Co., planned to increase rates by 300 per cent. These early economic disruptions led to the formation of a cohesive community identity within the Redondo Villa Tract area at a very early stage in its development. Unlike the residents of neighboring Redondo Beach who continued to rely on support from absentee investment interests in the selection of community direction, residents of the Redondo Villa Tract area organized themselves into a cooperative stock company in an attempt to identify alternative water sources and specialty crops which would prosper in the coastal environment.

The cultivation of the "Spineless Cactus" as an inexpensive cattle feed offered one such opportunity. In 1910, advertisements for the "Ocean Villa Intensive Farming Colony" began appearing in local newspapers. Carved out of the original Carlson holdings near Belvedere in the Grant School district, the colony specialized in the growing of spineless cactus, herbs,

⁴Although the city of Shakespeare no longer exists, evidence of its earlier location remains in the southwestern portion of Manhattan Beach which borders Hermosa Beach and where streets are named for famous poets including Longfellow, Tennyson, Keats, and Shelley.

chrysanthemums and gladiolus. Aggressive promotion of the colony's principal product (spineless cactus) as well as its land holdings lent a unique and exotic aspect to this project and to the entire community. Early advertisements highlighted numerous positive features of the Colony including its close proximity to Los Angeles, its oiled road and the fact that each lot came with a pre-drilled and active well. Lots could also be purchased pre-planted with choice varieties of spineless cactus and gladiolus. Project developers guaranteed that cultivation of the cactus alone would pay back the purchase price of any lot. House plans were also available for the construction of a modest residence ranging in price from \$45 to \$75. Advertisements stressing the ingenuity and economy of the Colony's house plans noted the combination sleeping porch and living room. Purchasers of Colony property also had the option of either marketing their crops themselves, or joining the Colony's co-operative partnership which helped members market their product in return for a fifty per cent share of profits (Snyder 1, 27 Nov 1914).

Civic Development and Community-based Promotion

The construction of a school house within the Villa Tract "Grant" district in 1908 served as one of the clearest physical indications of an emerging cohesive community identity within the north Redondo area. By 1911, the Grant district, today defined by Artesia Avenue and Aviation Boulevard, had begun to emerge as the center for the Redondo Villa Tract community. Within the area defined by the junction of these two major streets could be found Grant School as well as the community's principal business district. Residents of the neighborhoods in this area were the first to form organizations which promoted the community's interests.

In 1912, for example, residents formed the Redondo Villa Tract Improvement Association. Officers for the new organization represented local community builders and businessmen. While similar to the Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce which formed four years earlier, the Improvement Association expanded its focus to include, in their words, "the forging of a prosperous future, making every necessary improvement relative to the community's welfare and building up the Villa Tract in every way possible."

Like the men, the wives of Improvement Association members also expressed concern over the conditions and future of their young community. At the urging of both the Association and the editors of the Redondo Reflex, the women formed the Ladies' Circle which sought ways of voicing their newly acquired right to vote in a "positive and progressive manner" (Snyder 1, 2 May 1912). Immediately following World War I two new community booster organizations formed. The first to form was the Grant District Civic Society which represented the interests of those residents who hoped to help their district move away from its rural economy toward a more urban future. This was followed by the formation of the Villa Tract Chamber of Commerce which represented the area's expanding commercial and real estate interests.

As additional property sold for rural development, residents of north Redondo approved a series of bonds for the construction of three schools on the Grant site, each larger than the one it replaced (Snyder 1, 11 Sept 1908). After World War I, the community founded its first Parent Teacher Association which aggressively pursued a community building program. As a result, the

school district added an auditorium and classrooms in 1919, and a free standing building in 1922 (Snyder 1, 13 June 1919 24 March 1922 and 28 April 1922). The expansion of the Redondo Villa Tract community and its relatively prosperous state was also evidenced in the dedication of the Grant Community Church. This appears to be the area's first church and like the school, was located within the Grant district (Snyder 1, 23 May 1922).

The continued sale of property within the Redondo Villa Tract area led to an organized movement toward annexation of the area in 1913 (Snyder 1, 1 Aug 1913). Four years later, in 1917, the issue formally went before the voters. Calls for annexation originated from both members of the Improvement Association as well as members of the Redondo Beach booster community. Leading the crusade against annexation, however, were the combined interests of the area's larger land owners. This group ultimately succeeded in squashing the Association's efforts by successfully promoting their argument that annexation would result in increased taxation. Residents of the original Redondo Beach townsite expressed annoyance over the Villa Tract's decision to reject annexation since many believed that ties with their northern neighbors would not only strengthen the entire community, but would also provide an expanded revenue base for the maintenance of the Redondo Beach harbor.

Despite its continued growth, the rural composition which characterized the Redondo Villa Tract remained essentially unchanged during the first two decades of the twentieth century. As a result, local boosters found it difficult to gain wide-spread support for their plans to modernize and partially urbanize their community. Community improvements during this period were limited to the resurfacing of the infamous "Hermosa wash-board" on Camino Real (Pacific Coast Highway) and the construction of a community club house on a lot owned by the newly formed Chamber of Commerce, adjacent to the Redondo Villa Tract arch. This trend continued until the early 1920s and the discovery of oil.

On the 27th of February, 1920 J. D. Millar of the Interstate Realty Company of Los Angeles announced his purchase of 2,300 acres within the Villa Tract for the purpose of oil exploration. Within a year of Millar's development of his "Redondo Oil Lots," practically all land from Riverside Boulevard (190th) south to San Pedro Boulevard and from Redondo to Torrance had been leased for oil exploration and production. News articles from the period report that most of these leases were held by large companies. The first promising signs occurred on December 9, 1921 when Santa Fe well No.1 began to flow. Located at the far southeastern corner of present-day north Redondo, this well offered strong incentive for the purchase and sale of property located within the eastern section of the Redondo Villa Tract (Snyder 1, 9 Dec 1921). These two oil production projects began a sporadic land boom which continued over the next ten years and resulted in the further subdivision and settlement of the area.

Physical Evidence - Original Townsite

There are numerous pictures of the massive recreational structures which dominated the water front during this period. Unfortunately, like those of the earlier period, they were removed during the renewing of the harbor. One business structure, in particular, does remain and is on

the locally designated list of historic landmarks. This is the classic revival Redondo Van and Storage building at 321 Diamond Street. Another private structure devoted to public service is the California Water Service Company Utility Building at 403 South Irena. Several homes from this period are also on the local landmarks list. These include representatives of Colonial Revival styles such as the Sweetser home at 417 Beryl Street and a group of Craftsman and California Bungalows. Once again, many of these are modest homes, reflecting the working class families who populated the community. The Original Townsite Historic District/Gertruda Avenue Historic District, contains one and two story shingle homes which were owned by many of the city's professional men. Some of the other public buildings constructed in this general period include the First Methodist Church at 243 South Broadway and the Woman's Club (1922), which has been named to the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1913, Redondo Beach annexed the western portion of Clifton-by-the-Sea. At the time of annexation, a few homes had been constructed by Huntington and his investors. However, much of the property remained vacant. Various development schemes were advanced over the years, most of which involved the construction, relocation or enlargement of the area's golf course. Today, Huntington's original Clifton development is easily identified in the "L" shaped street pattern created by Avenues A through I (which form the lower or western portion of the "L" and are in the vicinity of Catalina Avenue, the Esplanade and the ocean) and Avenues A through D (which form the upper segment of the "L" to the east and are perpendicular to Catalina Avenue and the Esplanade).

When first laid out, Huntington set the eastern avenues of his development aside for future rural/residential sites where lots were to be at least a half acre in size. This meant that new home construction was concentrated in the area closest to the ocean. As a result, housing in the eastern portion tends to be more recent than that located within the first two blocks bordering Catalina. Within the center of the "L" which defines the original Clifton site, is an area composed of parallel, curved streets surrounding Palos Verdes Boulevard. Although annexation records are not completely clear, this area appears to have been annexed to the City some time between 1913 and the early 1920s. Beginning in the late 1920s, at least a portion of this area served as the Redondo Beach Community Golf Club. Today, modern apartment houses now occupy the gentle terrain of the former golf course.

In the late 1920s, Avenues J through M of Huntington's Clifton-by-the-Sea were purchased by Clifford Reid and integrated into his Hollywood Riviera sub-division. To facilitate the development, the City of Redondo Beach voluntarily vacated its street easement rights. Today, very little remains of either the Huntington or Reid developments. A small portion of Avenue J is still visible although renamed Avenida Del Norte. Few if any residential sites exist in Redondo Beach since the majority of 1930s Mediterranean homes were constructed on the hills which lay within the city of Torrance. As a result, the Redondo Beach portion of the Hollywood Riviera development is composed of commercial structures located in the "Village" centered on Catalina Avenue.

Physical Evidence - North Redondo

Between the time of its original subdivision in 1905 and the early 1920s, numerous structures were constructed in the north Redondo area. Unfortunately, few if any non-residential buildings remain to remind us of Carlson's original Redondo Villa Tract development. Most notable was the Grand Gateway to the tract with a central arch wide enough to accommodate at least five carriages placed side by side. The small mission-style office building is also gone.

Other buildings important to this area's development include the Grant Community Church located at 1908 - 1910 Mathews Avenue and the Chamber of Commerce community club house once located adjacent to the Grand Gateway. Some structures may still remain from the early business district which began around Artesia and modern Aviation as early as 1911. If these structures exist, they may not be easily recognizable because of subsequent remodeling. Homes constructed as a part of the Ocean Villa Intensive Farming Colony ("Spineless Cactus Colony") may still exist. All would be modest residences and not immediately apparent for their architectural significance. One outstanding landmark, the Bissen (Fisk) House, located at 2604 Fisk Lane and constructed in approximately 1905, is an example of the farm houses constructed in the north Redondo area.

CULTURAL CONSOLIDATION AND THE SEARCH FOR NEW ECONOMIC VITALITY 1923 - 1939

ORIGINAL TOWNSITE

Residential Developments

After the first world war, there was a brief flurry in the harbor when lumber shipments increased to provide housing for newcomers to Los Angeles. This was soon over, and the harbor continued to decline as a shipping point. El Paseo, however, remained a popular spot for visitors, and provided income for local businesses. Booster minded residents no longer sought outside investment in industry to sustain the economy, but concentrated on being a residentially oriented community.

By 1920, Redondo Beach had grown to about 5000 residents. More were flocking to north Redondo, inland. Redondo expected to grow rapidly in the optimistic decade of the 1920s. Edison, in fact, expanded its potential service to the city, increasing it to take care of 2,900 new homes, 15 new factories and some 15,000 new residents. Even with that, the district manager anticipated that more capacity would be needed within two or three years (Snyder 3, 9 March 1923).

Industrial Developments

Due, perhaps to the recognition that Redondo's harbor would never achieve major status, the community attitudes about industry within the city changed in the early 1920s. Some Redondo Beach residents were gathering opposition to the smelly industrial operations on the beach. A section of attractive homes had grown up inland of the lumber yard, and its residents were tired of the pollution from the lumber mills. Other residents were displeased by the noise and disruption of the trains going to Wharf #3 along the ocean front. As a result of their 1923 complaints, the Trustees proposed to withdraw the Pacific Electric's franchise to operate the wharf. This meant that ships would no longer call at Redondo because the railroad would not be able to carry freight inland. It also meant the end of business for the lumber yards, dependent on the wharf for shipments of lumber.

After protests from the lumber companies and their more than 200 employees, the Trustees reversed themselves and extended the franchise until 1926. Then, the Pacific Electric stopped operations and dismantled the old wharf. This was the last of the original three piers built at Redondo. Its loss meant the end of the shipping port era for the city. The residents had indicated they were no longer interested in being home to industry. Instead, they sought to emphasize their community's potential as a resort and residential location.

Industry, however, was not through with the City of Redondo Beach. Massive oil strikes were made along the coast in the early 1920s at Huntington Beach, Long Beach and Santa Fe Springs. Unlike most major oil fields, these new fields were within an urbanized area which had been subdivided by previous development. People who might not have been interested in a new distant oil strike stood to profit here because they owned small, potentially oil rich plots of ground within the general area. Even if they did not own land, they could easily visit the oil production sites and become caught up in "oil fever," investing small sums in questionable companies (Tygiel 1994, 16).

Both factors impacted small communities like Redondo Beach because of the amount of revenue involved. The dilemma was real. If a city governing body allowed wholesale drilling within its built up area, producers might destroy the local streets and sewer system in the rush to develop production. Whether or not the effort was successful, the municipality would have to find the funds to repair the damage. If, however, a city refused to permit oil exploration, no one, especially not the municipality, profited directly from the oil boom. The only benefit to city residents would be temporary profits from business activities which provided housing, goods and services for oil related workers. They would still be faced with providing new infrastructure from their own taxes to accommodate oil workers and their families who were in the area only as long as the drilling continued.

Two wells were sunk within the city limits of Redondo Beach when the oil boom began. Faced with the obvious chaos and potential destruction of their community, the city trustees hesitated to allow additional oil exploration. A January 1922 ordinance allowed the Trustees to permit drilling after a public hearing, but the Trustees refused to grant additional drilling permits even with an exorbitant fee. In March of 1923, the voters turned down an ordinance to allow drilling within the city limits, and, instead, approved one to prohibit drilling in the town. Their determination to prevent pollution of their residential district caused the Trustees to take a first step toward modern planning by delineating residential and industrial zones within the city.

The City of Huntington Beach finally allowed drilling in that town in 1926, and Redondo area producers attempted to get permission to drill within Redondo city limits as well, based on that capitulation. Once again, they were refused. By this time, oil exploration had begun in north Redondo. When north Redondo was annexed the following year, a compromise was reached to continue oil production in that section. Although indications were strong that there was oil in the northeast and southeast corners of the original city, exploration was not permitted there until 1935, after the Great Depression. Then the Dominguez park area was leased by the City and production begun. Thus, while oil production disrupted the expansion of the northern and uninhabited eastern corners of the city, it had no impact on the shape of the original city, nor on its built environment.

Resort Developments

Sport and commercial fishing were popular activities at Redondo because the deep water canyon off shore acted like a channel drawing schools of fish toward the harbor. The loss of the piers, therefore was a blow to the fishermen since they had used wharf #3 as well as the ruined

endless pier for landings. In 1925, the City Trustees granted a franchise over the tide lands to H. C. Monstad for a 300 feet fishing pier next to the endless pier. Although the pier was privately held, Monstad allowed the public to use it for a fee (Snyder 6, 1 Oct 1925). Finally, in 1929, the city demolished the concrete endless pier and built a new one, this time on a wood foundation.

Over the next few years, Monstad converted a number of older ships to fishing barges, anchored in the bay, and ferried sportsmen out to them. In time, he built up the largest sport fishing business on the coast. The barges were well fitted with restaurants, sitting rooms, and even overnight accommodations for those who wanted to be on the water at first light. His first barge, the *Lahina* was a barkentine, the first one ever to be converted into a fishing barge. Unfortunately, it was wrecked by storms off Palos Verdes in 1933.

In 1931, the residents considered a bond issue to purchase the Monstad pier, but it was defeated by north Redondo voters. Perhaps the city was lucky it did not purchase the pier. A decade after Monstad built the pier, he was forced to extend it another 100 feet because the concrete waste from the endless pier had changed the currents and sand had drifted under the end of the pier, making it too shallow. Remarkably, the pier is one of the survivors of the storm wracked bay and still stands in 1995.

Sport fishing continued during the Great Depression, but other businesses along the El Paseo suffered and became run down. For this reason, the community did not complain at first when gambling came to Redondo. There had always been small games with small prize gifts, but after about 1936, high stakes gambling, complete with a gangster element took over the waterfront. Shabby storefronts turned "glitzy" with new games and new players. The Wagon Wheel Restaurant, in the northeast corner of the Pavilion was one of the on-shore sites. It became a key club -- members and guests only -- and offered casino gambling. At least one local concessionaire offered gambling in his own store front. Still others ran fast yachts out from Monstad pier to gambling barges in the outer waters. Unfortunately, Monstad was also involved. After one of his sons' ship was raided and gambling paraphernalia tossed overboard by zealous law officers, Monstad suffered severe financial difficulties and committed suicide (Snyder 6, 15 Dec 1939).

Although the "new" money was a welcome addition to Redondo's depression economy, the gangster element eventually got out of control, and citizen groups rallied to stop gambling. The Junior Chamber of Commerce, in fact, was established for that reason. Finally, they created enough public pressure to close down the games and rid Redondo of gambling. This "questionable" source of income had carried Redondo's economy through the Great Depression by encouraging visitors, but with the beginning of the war time build up, was no longer welcome.

Civic and Commercial Developments

As early as 1905, financiers realized that the Hotel Redondo was not a money maker. Over the years it changed hands many times, but the new owners were unable to profit and community members began referring to it as an "outmoded dinosaur" (Johnson 1965). Finally in the early 1920s, the City purchased the land and proposed that the structure be converted to

a city hall. Voters failed to support this move and instead insisted on the creation of a public park. Thus, Veterans Park came into being and the lumber from the old hotel sold for \$3070. In 1930, a Spanish Colonial styled library was built on the site to serve the community.

Even though the Chamber and other Civic groups did not attract industry to Redondo Beach, they still benefited. In 1920 a glass manufacturer considered a site at Redondo, and finally settled on one at Hermosa Beach. Redondo Trustees recognized that resident workmen would be hired there, too, and joined the Trustees of Hermosa to offer financial incentives to the company. The company, Wuchner Glass Co., did locate at Hermosa and was successful for several years.

Perhaps the most notable result of these years was the establishment of a Planning Commission and setting of zoning regulations within the community. The civic leaders designated one section of town, near the old salt lake and lumber yards as the industrial section. They encouraged small businesses, including auto sales and merchants in another, on Catalina Avenue, which became another business district within the City. This made it possible for contractors to complete the infill residential development, knowing that their structures would not risk inclusion in a non-residential zone.

NORTH REDONDO - A NEW BEGINNING: 1923 - 1927

Expansion of Commercial and Residential Development

During the 1920s, the small commercial area centered around Grant School and the intersection of Artesia and Aviation boulevards continued to develop. One article published in the Redondo Daily Breeze noting this expansion trend stated:

In addition to home building activities the Riverside-Redondo blvd. (Artesia) promises to be a coming business section and the past few months have seen the establishment of several new gasoline stations, stores and at least one new industry. Lots on the Boulevard have doubled in value in the past six months and realty experts see further phenomenal advances in the value of the boulevard lots. (Snyder 1, 1 May 1924)

A variety of factors lay behind the area's commercial growth. Many of the businesses established during this period, especially the gasoline stations and eateries, relied upon the expanded use of personal automobiles as increasing numbers of people made the trip between Los Angeles and Redondo Beach by private car.¹ The area's expanding population also played a

¹Not all eateries were completely legal. In 1923, the "Long Horn Inn" located a quarter mile from Grant School on Redondo (Artesia) Blvd., was raided by members of the dry squad from the district attorney's office in Los Angeles for the illegal sale of liquor (Snyder 1, 9 November 1923).

significant role as housing tracts began to replace the area's single-family farms which had previously defined this northern area.

The establishment of housing tracts in the Redondo Villa community during the early 1920s was directly related to the exploration of oil. While exploration continued in the area's northeastern section, interest in the western portion of the Villa Tracts suddenly erupted as word of oil "pouring" from beneath the cap of a Hermosa oil site spread. This shift to the west resulted in yet another localized land boom as news articles perpetuated images of real estate agents "lining up to buy every available tract in the district" (Snyder 1, 27 Feb 1926). Paralleling the increased efforts in oil exploration came a demand for new home construction in almost every section of the Villa Tract. One news article joyfully referred to this period as the "new era of activity" (Snyder 1, 1 May 1924).

Civic Developments

The expanding population in north Redondo also led to calls for a variety of civic improvements. By 1926, for example, the Hermosa-Redondo Water Company experienced serious difficulty meeting the growing demand for residential water service. Only by installing new lines and a pumping facility capable of handling greater volumes of water was the company able to briefly stay abreast of demand. The water company's success was short-lived however. The improved water service had raised property values which in turn led to an enlarged building program as land owners either subdivided previously rural or vacant land.

The area's growing population also meant an increased need for educational facilities. As attendance at Grant School approached 200 in 1923, the community joined in the approval of a community-wide \$195,000 bond issue for the construction of new school facilities in their district as well as in Redondo Beach, Hermosa, Manhattan and Perry school districts. Community leaders also joined Redondo Beach in a partnership which led to the widening of Redondo (Aviation) Boulevard between Grant School and Pier Avenue.

The expanding population led to renewed efforts by the Redondo Villa Tract Chamber of Commerce to create a more urban environment. The Chamber's first major success in this direction occurred in 1926 when it convinced the County Board of Supervisors to reverse its decision to issue a permit to a large hog-raising operation which had received permission to establish in the north Redondo area. Immediately following this victory, the Chamber formed an annexation committee to once again pursue the annexation of the Villa Tract and Grant district, this time to the city of Hermosa Beach. Those in favor of annexation argued that it would encourage new development in the area and would give the Villa Tracts "an identity of real value." Those opposed countered with claims that annexation would lead to increased property taxes. In the end, this latter argument proved more persuasive and annexation efforts failed by a vote of 185 to 15 (Snyder 1, 22 Feb 1926).

ANNEXATION OF NORTH REDONDO - GROWING TOGETHER: 1927 - 1939

One year after its failed attempt to annex to the city of Hermosa Beach, the Villa Tract Chamber of Commerce joined forces with several leading organizations in Redondo Beach and organized yet another annexation drive.² Behind this new effort lay the threat of a million-dollar street paving program proposed by Los Angeles interests who owned 37 per cent of area's property. Chamber representatives argued that the proposed program was a blatant attempt to recoup lost profits from unproductive oil land, rather than a genuine attempt to modernize the community (Snyder 1, 2 September 1927). This argument succeeded, and on September 20, 1927, voters approved the annexation of the Redondo Villa Tracts to the city of Redondo Beach by a slim margin of thirteen votes.

More than 90% of the eligible voters cast their ballots. At the time of its annexation, the north Redondo area served as home for more than two thousand residents. "It is by far the greatest thing that has ever happened to this city," declared Henry Froude, president of the Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce (Snyder 1, 23 Sept 1927). Not all considered the annexation in such a positive light, however. In 1928, several Los Angeles commercial interests filed suit seeking a reversal of the annexation decision. These suits were followed by yet another in 1930. Finally in 1931, the last legal obstacle to the complete and definite annexation of the Villa Tract had been removed.

Industrial Expansion

Behind the move for annexation lay the hope of community leaders and real estate interests in both the Villa Tracts area and the original town site that vacant land within the north Redondo area could be developed as future industrial and oil production sites. This hope grew out of the fact that oil drilling had been banned within the original Redondo Beach city limits. Within a month of annexation in 1927, rumors spread of a well-defined pool of oil under the central portion of the Redondo Villa Tract within the vicinity of Gates and Vail streets. In response, real estate values in the area once again assumed the proportions of a boom as speculators raced to profit from the latest flurry of excitement. In 1929, speculation shifted once again, this time to a new field which had opened to the east of the Redondo Villa Tract in the Lawndale area (Snyder 1, 7 Oct 1927, 29 Oct 1927, 3 March 1929).

The period immediately following annexation also marked the establishment of the Golden State Fireworks Manufacturing and Display Company, one of the area's more significant and interesting industries. Located at 1537 Stoutenborough Lane (Hill Lane), in the large tract of vacant land which is today defined by High, Meyer, Ralston and 190th streets, this company was the only one of its kind in California. The proprietor, Patrick Lizza, had moved to the Redondo Villa Tract from Pennsylvania where he had served as president of the Continental Fireworks Manufacturing Co. This move not only brought him closer to his major west coast customers

²Organizations in Redondo Beach who joined with the Villa Tract Chamber of Commerce in its annexation effort included the Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce, the Redondo Beach Realty Board, the city's Board of Trustees, and the editors of the Redondo Beach Daily Breeze (Snyder 1, 12 August 1927).

who included the California State Fair at Sacramento, The Los Angeles County Fair at Pomona, and the Tulare County Fair, but also placed him in an excellent position to enter the expanding special effects market created by the film industry. With the establishment of this firm came a small population of specially trained workers from New York, New Jersey and Chicago.

Infrastructure and Civic Improvements

Infrastructure and civic improvements in north Redondo increased between 1927 and 1934. These improvements, which occurred despite the deepening economic conditions brought on by the Great Depression and the 6.3 magnitude earthquake which struck the area on March 10, 1933, were indicative of the strong community environment which had come to characterize this area. Most notable among the improvements made during this period was the resurfacing and modernization of roads, the construction of a new fire station at 2021 Redondo Beach (Artesia) Boulevard, and the reconstruction and expansion of the Grant School complex which had been almost totally destroyed in the earthquake. Funding and labor for these projects came from State Emergency Relief funds as well as the Federal Public Works program.

Not all physical improvements to the area were municipal in origin, however. In 1930, the California Water Service Company dedicated its new Pump Station No. 12. Located on Blossom Street, one and a half blocks north of Redondo-Riverside (Artesia) Boulevard, the new pump station was hailed as "the most artistic improvement constructed in the Villa Tract section to date." More than a pump house, this carefully designed building offered testimony to the future growth and prosperity of the Redondo Villa Tract and its newly established identity as a member of the Redondo Beach community (Snyder 1, 24 Jan 1936, 6 Dec 1938, 19 July 1929, 11 Jan 1935, 5 Dec 1930).

The period between 1927 and 1939 also marked by the construction of two new social halls. By 1931, a substantial Romanian community had developed in the Villa Tracts. The community constructed a club house at 2215 Grant Avenue, between Rindge Lane and Slauson Avenue for business and social gatherings. Following the Long Beach earthquake, the Romanian Society Club House also served as the meeting site for the Grant School PTA until the North Redondo Community Hall could be constructed in 1934. This second social hall, frequently referred to simply as the "Club House," served as the central meeting site for a variety of north Redondo civic organizations including the PTA, the Grant Community League, and the Shore Acres Improvement Association (Redondo Beach City Directories, 1933 and 1936; Snyder 1, 18 Sept 1931, 16 March 1934, 19 Oct 1934).

Residential Development

Although the sub-division forces which were apparent during the early 1920s subsided somewhat during the Depression era, residential tract development continued in north Redondo. Most notable was the Shore Acres sub-division created by the Home Extension Association. Located near the junction of Mathews Avenue and Phelan Lane, this housing project attempted to strike a balance between the original rural identity associated with the Redondo Villa Tract and the more recent identity of residential sub-division. Included as a part of this housing project plan was a co-operative market site where residents of Shore Acres sold produce raised on their

property. Each Saturday residents sold flowers, fresh vegetables, fruits, eggs chickens and even canaries to the surrounding communities from the community's market house. A parking area adjacent to the market house was also provided by the Home Extension Association in an effort to attract customers from the surrounding communities of Torrance, Manhattan Beach, Inglewood and Hermosa Beach (Snyder 1, 1 June 1934).

In 1937, the Redondo Beach City Council formally recognized the increasing residential nature of north Redondo in its acceptance of a Planning Commission recommendation that the area known as Villa Tract No. 2 be rezoned from unlimited industrial to suburban uses.³ Since its subdivision as rural farm land in 1905, north Redondo had experienced several shifts in its economic identity. The first shift occurred in the early 1920s when the land originally subdivided by Carlson for rural development suddenly became popular for its oil producing potential. The annexation of the area in 1927 and its identification as the city's future industrial site, resulted in yet another shift. Following annexation, almost the entire eastern section of the original Villa Tracts was zoned for industrial purposes. The construction of the Golden State Fireworks Manufacturing Company on property adjacent to Villa Tract No. 2 in 1928 appeared to confirm this industrial trend. By the early 1930s, however, dreams of unlimited oil production had faded and speculators who had purchased land during the oil boom were seeking opportunities to subdivide their property into residential sites. This move marked the third shift in the area's economy and set into motion a struggle between those seeking residential development and those who sought to perpetuate an industrial economy.

Physical Evidence - Original Townsite

Two moderne style buildings stand out as representative of the depression years, the high school science building at the southeast corner of Diamond and N. Francisca, and the handsome Eagle's Lodge, 128 S. Catalina. The period revival Monstad House, 559 Avenue A, in Clifton, is important because of its association with the family. Spanish Colonial residential styles, however, appear to be more numerous as representatives of the period.

Catalina Avenue serves as the primary north/south link between the previously separate communities of Redondo Beach, Clifton-by-the-Sea and Hollywood Riviera. At one time, all three townsites had commercial districts centered on Catalina Avenue. Over time, as the surrounding residential areas developed and began to overlap, the three commercial centers also expanded and merged. Today, Catalina Avenue is characterized by its close proximity to the beach, its attractive landscape and streetscape, and its pedestrian-friendly environment.

Physical Evidence - North Redondo

A number of civic improvements occurred in north Redondo during this period as the community moved away from its original rural economy toward the establishment of industrial

³ Today, this tract is defined by Inglewood, Vail, Robinson and Artesia avenues.

and residential sites. One notable addition to the area was Villa Tract Pump Station No. 12, constructed in 1930. Site selection and building design were performed by the Public Works Engineering Corporation. William O. Wilkins of Redondo Beach served as contractor. Although small, great care had been taken in the attention to architectural detailing. Ornamental green scroll work and three large flower boxes adorned this small Mission-style building. Inside, plumbing equipment moved water through newly-laid lines from Hermosa reservoir to the surrounding community (Snyder 1, 24 Jan 1936, 6 Dec 1938, 19 July 1929, 11 Jan 1935, 5 Dec 1930).

The construction of a new fire station at 2021 Redondo Beach (Artesia) Boulevard also reflected the expansion of north Redondo. Tentative sketches for the station were approved by the Redondo Beach City Council in 1935. The building itself required a total city expenditure of \$1,500 for materials — an important consideration for a city suffering the restraints imposed by the Depression. Construction labor was provided through the Federal PWA program. The new station opened for business in December of 1938 (Snyder 1, 6 December 1935, 6 December 1938).

The Romanian Society⁴ club house, located at 2215 Grant Avenue and the North Redondo Community Hall offered residents a much needed opportunity to socialize. Both were located within the Grant district, in the center of the community's greatest residential settlement. Residents of the Shore Acres sub-division met in the Community Hall regularly in order to attend Improvement Association meetings. Both served as important gathering sites for numerous organizations throughout the Second World War. Demand for the Community Hall became so great in fact, that prior to the construction of a new hall in 1940, the City Council had to intervene in order to settle scheduling disputes.

Tract housing construction occurred during this period despite the economic pressures of the Depression era. Most notable was the Shore Acres sub-division located near the junction of Mathews Avenue and Phelan Lane. Plans for this sub-division included a co-operative market house where residents could sell produce raised on their property. This development marked the community's transition from its earlier rural environment to the modern tract housing system. The Manny House (1934), one of the City's historic landmarks, is an outstanding example of the many private residences constructed during this period. Undoubtedly others exist which merit equal recognition.

Oil field structures tend to be ephemeral. Most disappear shortly after production was over, but here again, there could be concrete platforms or even vestiges of aging pumper rigs nestled into an otherwise unremarkable landscape.

⁴Building permits identify the full name of this organization as "The Romanian Beneficial Society."

WORLD WAR II EXPANSION 1940 - 1950

ORIGINAL TOWNSITE

Residential Growth

Although the city of Redondo Beach was unable to attract war-time industry, its residential sector expanded significantly during World War II as new families working in the defense plants near by chose to locate in Redondo Beach. Areas of the original city which had not been built up prior to the war, suddenly were subject to infill housing. In particular, new housing took the place of truck farms in the eastern corners of the city where oil prospecting had limited earlier development. Important construction efforts also took place in north Redondo where greater areas of vacant land were available. Tract style building predominated although many returning veterans built their own small homes on individual lots.

The old Edison plant had been dismantled in 1936, to the dismay of the community.¹ In 1940, the City purchased the site, undoubtedly hoping to identify war related industrial uses for the complex. The remaining skeleton, an eyesore by then, was finally demolished in 1946. During and after the war, however, people moved to the region in great numbers. The housing market grew rapidly as newcomers demanded places to live and raise their families. Ironically, in 1946, the Southern California Edison Company realized that it needed to supply even more power to the South Coast, and took out permits to rebuild on the same site.

Resort Developments

Largely due to the effort of the Junior Chamber of Commerce to revive the city after the gambling left, bonds were passed to build a breakwater. The structure, it was hoped, would finally protect the harbor and encourage boating, if not shipping from the piers. Using the \$300,000 bond issue and a 245,000 grant, they built their long desired breakwater in 1939. The breakwater, unfortunately, proved to be a mistake. When the inevitable storms hit that year, a great deal of property along the beach front and old El Paseo was destroyed. The Breakwater had changed the movement of sand. Before storms pushed the sand northward, and it drifted back along the shoreline. Now, however, the breakwater prevented its southward movement. As a result, beach front property disappeared in the accumulation of sand. Residents agreed to an assessment in 1944 to build a seawall, but the erosion continued.

¹Between approximately 1938 and 1940, the Edison property appears to have been purchased by the City for \$25,000. This purchase led to a libel suit filed by City Attorney Frank Perry and former councilman Paul Temple against Melvin More, Thomas Hoyt, Frank Davis and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Turner who claimed that the true asking price was \$17,000 and that the difference of \$7,500 (\$25,000 - \$17,000) had been pocketed by city officials (Snyder 3, 18 April 1940).

NORTH REDONDO

Transition to a Residential Economy Accelerates

On the night of February 9, 1940 the southeastern section of the north Redondo community seemed to explode in a glorious display of fireworks. That night and for weeks afterward, people came in droves to see the accidental destruction of the Golden State Fireworks Manufacturing Company. They parked in all the vacant lots, in residents' driveways and in the open wheat fields. "The experience was beautiful, exciting and scary, and I will never forget the night of the blazing skies and red rockets," stated one resident (Snyder 1, 19 May 1994, 16 Feb 1940). Although the company reopened on its original site during World War II and produced more than one hundred million artillery shells, prospects for its continued operation grew dim as the north Redondo community moved to fully embrace its post-war suburban identity.

A striking element of the residential growth in north Redondo following World War II were the tent communities which began to appear as veterans returned from the war. Faced with an acute shortage of rental property, veterans began purchasing vacant lots on which to build their future homes. As an immediate answer to their families' housing needs and as a means of safeguarding valuable lumber, many veterans erected large tents as temporary shelters. As increasing numbers of tents began appearing in north Redondo, neighboring residents demanded that the City Council ban all forms of temporary housing (Snyder 1, 19 July 1946).

Within two years of the Council's eviction of tent residents, property owners in north Redondo organized to boost building area minimums from 480 to 750 square feet. This debate, which eventually led to modifications in the district's building code, illustrated the significant changes which had occurred in north Redondo following World War II. Slowly at first and then more rapidly, a strong community of suburban residents had replaced the earlier sparse rural community which typified this area through the early 1940s. As increasing numbers of veterans and their families chose to settle in Redondo Beach and purchased the newly-constructed homes in and around north Redondo, the demand for a more urban setting and conveniences increased (Snyder 1, 5 Nov 1948).

The Redondo Hills tract, north of Robinson Avenue, between Inglewood and Vail avenues was the first to develop. Following that, Safeway Homes offered property and houses adjacent to Redondo Hills. After fraud charges were proven against Safeway, a second concern completed the project. Another company, Security Construction Company of Los Angeles developed 54 individual home sites throughout the area.

The increased demand for residential housing eventually culminated in the adoption of a re-zoning ordinance banning all poultry, rabbits, milk cows, horses and other domestic farm animals from the north Redondo area. Long-term residents strongly opposed this rezoning effort on the grounds that North Redondo had developed as a rural community. Many had invested their life savings in the purchase of small acreage in order to raise their own domestic animals and be somewhat self-dependent. Referring back to statements made by the original 1927 Annexation Committee that there would be no restrictions against local farming efforts except those already

excluded by the County Health Department, some long-time residents attempted to block the zoning change. Unfortunately, the regional wave of sub-division combined with the tax advantages offered the city by real estate development companies were against such grass-root efforts to retain the rural environment.

Commercial Expansion

In 1945, the area of Redondo Beach (Artesia) Boulevard between Aviation Boulevard and Rindge Lane experience a small but important burst of commercial development. Many of the locally owned and operated stores already in the area also expanded during this period including the addition of a retail jewelry store to the novelty manufacturing studio operated by J.H. Kitchin at 1935 Redondo Beach Boulevard, the addition of a beer garden and drive-in cafe to Al's Cafe located at 1901 Redondo Beach Boulevard, the sale of Carr's Drive Inn and adjoining filling station located at 2600 Redondo Beach Boulevard and the expansion of its menu under the new name of the "Corner Inn", and an addition to Donlou's Market located at 1512 Pier (Aviation) Avenue.

Civic Expansion

Immediately following the War, a new organization formed to investigate and promote the needs of the north Redondo community. More than one hundred people attended its first meeting to hear various proposals for community improvements.² These included diverse projects such as improved bus service, new street paving and the construction of a new school. These efforts paid off when, in 1946, the community received its bus service as well as a promise of federal funding for a new police substation, recreation center and public library. In 1948 a special lighting district was created by the city council to serve the area and reduce crime (Snyder 1, 2 Aug 1946, 28 Nov 1947).

Physical Evidence - Original Townsite

The original townsite, Clifton-by-the-Sea and Hollywood Riviera were not immune to the pressures brought about by wartime industry and returning veterans. Building permit records indicate that the Redondo Improvement Company filed for permits for a construction company, Drachlis and Bergman, to build in-fill residential structures at Gertruda and Sapphire, as well as in the Knob Hill area. Another builder, B. B. Karger, built several 2,700 square foot homes on Miramar and Sierra Vista, between Torrance, Pearl, South Guadalupe and Camino streets. Since all the Karger homes were the same size, they may also be similar styles, as if they were tract housing. In-fill building continued south into Clifton-by-the-Sea and Hollywood Riviera. There the property was held by the Redondo Huntington Company, another Huntington enterprise. The builder, W. Vaughn Scott, proposed to build "Better class homes on higher ground" there near South Elena Street. He also anticipated a commercial district along Elena Street. Scott apparently had control of nearby property in Hollywood Riviera as well and, in 1945, advertised

² In news articles which report the activities of community groups, this new organization is alternately referred to as "The North Redondo Civic Center Citizens" or the "The North Redondo People."

that 458 home sites were available there. At the same time, an early regional developer Clifford Reid, sold his Hollywood Riviera investments, presumably to a new developer who continued to build in the area.

Since the first Redondo Beach survey was completed in 1986, it did not consider homes or commercial centers built during the 1940s. We suggest the survey be augmented to look for some of these 1940s homes and businesses since they represent the war and post-war expansion period. If, as we anticipate, a site inspection does uncover some of these structures, it will indicate the pervasiveness of the building boom throughout the city. The styles and overall quality of the remaining structures may also indicate a different social or economic level from that in north Redondo, or they may suggest that the two areas had much in common in this stage of the City's development.

Physical Evidence - North Redondo

The ten year period between 1940 and 1950 brought many changes to the north Redondo area. Civic improvements, commercial development and residential construction merged to reshape the community. The following offers a partial listing of these changes and related structures:

In 1940, the Redondo Beach city council approved plans for a new and expanded North Redondo Community Center to include a civic auditorium and a library. Preliminary drawings, plans and elevations were prepared by Walter O. Wurdeman of Wurdeman and Becket, a Los Angeles architectural firm. Following approval by the council, the city prepared an application for WPA Federal Aid to construct the project. These plans were placed on hold however by the entrance of the United States into the Second World War in 1941.

Immediately following World War II, residents of Redondo Beach voted with an overwhelming majority to modernize and expand their school system in the northern areas of the City. With the issuance of a new bond and the receipt of \$55,000 from the federal grant program, Redondo Beach began construction on the Lincoln School located on Vail Avenue between Farrell and Plant avenues. Three years later, additional rooms were added to accommodate the increasing number of students (Snyder 1, 4 May 1945).

In 1948, the City began negotiations with the owners of a ten-acre site located on Lillenthal and Ripley avenues for the construction of a new elementary school. This effort was designed to alleviate over crowding at Grant and Beryl schools.

In 1945, J.H. Kitchin and his wife expanded their Novelty Manufacturing Studio located at 1935 Redondo Beach Boulevard. The couple also owned the Southwest Souvenir Company which was located at the Pier. The Kitchins had established their manufacturing company on Redondo Beach Boulevard prior to the war. Here they manufactured abalone pearl, agate and moonstone jewelry which they sold in their store on the Pier. By the end of the war only the Kitchin's novelty company and one other remained in Redondo Beach area out of an original

eighteen such operations. The Kitchins' novelty shop had been able to survive the war years using a large stock of gold wire, moonstones and abalone pearls. In 1945, as supplies became available once again, the Kitchins expanded the operation by adding a retail gift shop to the factory. Here, they sold costume jewelry, Laguna Pottery, watches, etc.

Announcements for the large Redondo Hills subdivision containing 145 , five and six-room houses appeared in 1943. Constructed on land purchased by Mrs. May Isabel Campbell-Johnson, Redondo Hills represented 70 acres located north of Robinson Avenue, between Inglewood and Vail avenues. Plans included the paving of streets and the laying of sidewalks. The initial ten homes were constructed on Pinkard, May and Timothy Avenues. Later in 1947, an additional 97 homes were completed on Perkins Lane and the surrounding streets which included Barkley Lane, the 2900 block of Gibson Lane, Blaisdell avenue, Carlsbad Street, Faber Street and McBain Street.

In 1948 plans to complete North Redondo's "New Tract" were announced by Safeway Homes Limited. Located within the remaining triangular section of the tract bordering the Redondo Hills development, Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Inglewood Avenue, the new Safeway sub-division offered promises of 150 new, two-bedroom homes set in a fully restricted site.

A second major developer who began work in North Redondo in 1948 was the Security Construction Company of Los Angeles. Rather than purchase and develop a single large tract, this housing construction company purchased individual 54 individual lots through out the area on which they constructed forty homes which sold for \$4,000 and fourteen homes with sold for \$3,200. Advertisements for the project stated that all homes constructed would have three rooms and a bath and would be planned so that two additional rooms could be added without disturbing the original floor plan. A full list of all addresses is provided in the article entitled "\$200,000 Permit Value for 50 Small Homes On Scattered No. Redondo Sites" (Snyder 1, 13 February 1948).³

Conclusion

Lawrence Halprin once wrote that "the ultimate purpose of a city in our times is to provide a creative environment for people to live in." (Halprin 1963, 7). In this study we had tried to identify those creative elements which set the City of Redondo Beach apart from other beach communities. Those elements are the basis for explaining why Redondo Beach is where it is, and most important, what kind of a city it is. Is it important to know why the streets have certain names? Is it important to know why there is a park on the Esplanade, or why the high school is located where it is? Perhaps not. But knowing the answers to these questions creates a bond between modern residents and those who lived here decades ago and maybe, helps to explain why you live in Redondo Beach and why you think it is a special place to be.

³A complete listing of all 54 addresses appears on page 82 (North Redondo Summary) of this report.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Published Material

- Barsness, Richard W. "Iron Horses and an Inner Harbor at San Pedro Bay, 1867-1890." *Pacific Historical Review* 34, no. 3 (August 1965).
- Barsness, Richard W. "Railroads and Los Angeles: The Quest for a Deep-Water Port." *Southern California Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (December 1965).
- Barsness, Richard W. "Los Angeles' Quest for Improved Transportation, 1846-1861." *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 46, no. 4 (December 1967).
- Bell, Major Horace. *On the Old West Coast*. New York: William Morrow Co., 1930.
- Cleland, Robert Glass. *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills: Southern California, 1850-80*. San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1951 (1941).
- Gregory, Howard. *Southern California Seacoast, Then and Now*. Redondo Beach, CA: Howard Gregory Associates, 1981.
- Fredericks, William B. *Henry E. Huntington and the Creation of Southern California*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992.
- Gillingham, Robert Cameron. *The Rancho San Pedro: The Story of a Famous Rancho in Los Angeles County and its Owners, the Dominguez Family*. Los Angeles: Cole-Holmquist Press, 1961.
- Gregory, Howard. *Southern California Seacoast, Then and Now*. Redondo Beach, California: Howard Gregory Associates, 1981.
- Grenier, Judson. *California Legacy: The James Alexander Watson, Maria Dolores Dominguez de Watson Family, 1820-1986*. Watson Land Company, 1987.
- Halprin, Lawrence. *Cities*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1972 ed.
- Johnson, Ken. "Fun, Frustration and Fulfillment." Manuscript, 1965. At Sherman Library, Corona del Mar, CA.

- Johnston, Bernice E. *California's Gabrielino Indians*. Los Angeles: Southwestern Museum, 1962.
- Karr, Albert S. "The Port of Redondo: 1887-1926." Thesis, presented to the Department of History, University of Southern California, April 1947.
- Klein, Norman M. and Martin J. Schiesl. *20th Century Los Angeles: Power, Promotion, and Social Conflict*. Claremont, California: Regina Books, 1990.
- McCullough, David. *The Path Between the Seas*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977.
- McWilliams, Carey. *Southern California, An Island On the Land*, 8th ed. Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1946.
- Myers, William A. *Iron Men and Copper Wires: A Centennial History of the Southern California Edison Company*. Glendale, California: Trans-Anglo Books, 1986 (1983).
- Redondo Beach Centennial Magazine. "Redondo Beach — A Century in the Making." c. 1992.
- Rice, Richard B., William A Bullough, and Richard J. Orsi. *The Elusive Eden: A New History of California*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1988.
- Robinson, W. W. *Ranchos Become Cities*. Pasadena, California: San Pasqual Press, 1939.
- The Santa Ana Valley of Southern California: Its Resources, Climate, Growth and Future*. Santa Ana, California: Santa Ana Valley Immigration Assn., 1885.
- Scheerer, Loretta Louise. "The History of the Sausal Rancho." M.A. Thesis, University of Southern California, 1938.
- Serpico, Paul. *Santa Fe Route to the Pacific*. Palmdale, California: Omni Publications, 1988.
- Shanahan, Dennis. *Old Redondo*. Redondo Beach, California: Legends Press. N.d.
- Solano-Reeve Collection*. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
- Starr, Kevin. *Inventing the Dream*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- *Material Dreams*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Tatum, Donn Benjamin, Jr. "The Rancho Sausal Redondo." M.A. Thesis, University of Southern California, 1968.

The Santa Ana Valley of Southern California: Its Resources, Climate, Growth and Future. Santa Ana, California: Santa Ana Valley Immigration Assn., 1885.

Thompson & West. *History of Los Angeles County, California, 1880.* Reproduction with introduction by W. W. Robinson, Berkeley: Howell-North, 1959.

Tompkins, Walker A. *Little Giant of Signal Hill: An Adventure in American Enterprise.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964.

Tygiel, Jules. *The Great Los Angeles Swindle: Oil, Stocks, and Scandal During the Roaring Twenties.* New York: Oxford Press, 1994.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1920 *Census of Redondo Beach Township.* Bureau of the Census, Washington, D. C.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1910 *Census of Redondo Beach Township.* Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.

White, Gerald. *Standard Oil Company of California: Formative Years in the Far West.* New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Wright, Ralph B., ed. *California's Missions.* Covina, California: Hubert A. Lowman, 1972.

Private Collection

Snyder, Gloria. This is a substantial collection of newspaper clippings and documents regarding various aspects of the history of Redondo Beach. Files pertinent to this investigation include:

1. Clipping file on North Redondo, 1906-1990s;
2. Clipping file on various lumber companies doing business in Redondo Beach, 1890s-1980s;
3. Clipping file on the Pacific Light and Power Company and the Southern California Edison Company, 1906-1946;
4. Clipping file on street name changes in Redondo Beach, 1887-1995;
5. Building permits, various years;
6. Clipping file on Monstad Pier.
7. Clipping file on Clifton-by-the-Sea.

Mrs. Snyder may be reached for data through the City of Redondo Beach, Preservation Commission.

CLIFTON-BY-THE-SEA

The following material presents a chronological summary of events related to the development of Clifton-by-the-Sea.¹ Many of the early news articles summarized here, were written by members of the Redondo Beach booster community and should be interpreted with caution. Henry Huntington's announcement of his intention to create an "upper-class" residential community led boosters to make extravagant and often premature statements of future development plans. Such statements continued following the annexation of this area as the City attempted to find the right combination of resort and residential features to attract investors. As a result, some news articles contain both fact and fiction.

- 17 Jul 1905 Henry Huntington purchases Downey Ranch. This site adjoined Redondo on the South and consisted of 1,010 acres.
- 19 Jul 1906 Huntington names new tract: "Clifton-By-the-Sea."
- 27 Dec 1906 Huntington hires the architectural firm of Hunt and Gray to design a 2-story, 9-room house on tract for himself.
- Nov 1906 Reports state that Clifton-by-the-Sea is "established as a resort by H.E.J. Downey, H.E. Huntington, Peter and Walter Martin, and Mrs. Eleanor Martin." The area consists of 125 acres to be divided into blocks for residential use. Additional acreage to be divided as demand dictated. Streets, cement promenades, curbs and walks were laid out within days. Plans to erect Clifton Inn and Golf Club also made. "One of the special features of this new resort is the building restrictions which specify the character, cost and style of house the investor must erect; and nothing of the cheap order will be permitted at this charming place. Clifton-by-the-Sea is to be a high class watering place of the kind that will attract the best class of people from all parts of the world." *Photo of proposed Inn - architect not Hunt and Grey.*
- 1907 Financial panic of 1907, limits ability to sell property.
- 24 Jan 1907 Myron Hunt and Elmer Grey to supervise construction of a \$6,000 club house at Clifton. Foundation for Walter Martin's home also laid. Martin resides in San

¹News clippings summarized in this section are contained within the "Clifton-by-the-Sea" file compiled by Gloria Snyder. Ms. Snyder may be reached through the City of Redondo Beach, Preservation Commission.

Francisco.

- 16 May 1907 L.T. Garnsey to build Mission-style residence at Clifton.
- 11 Jun 1908 Plans to drill for oil just south of Clifton announced by Robert C. Davis and J.M. Langdon. Their plans include the construction of a 1500' wharf at Malaga Cove. Announcement follows the discovery of oil at Palos Verdes. Ability to drill limited by property owners' refusal to lease land.
- 1909 *Photograph - View from "Sea Gull Inn at Clifton-by-the-Sea. (Looking S., of course.) View of Esplanade (100 ft. wide) and residence - shows curbs and street lamps. Huntington's Home. "Magnificent views, a perfect bathing beach, sanitary sewers, artisan water, gas, electricity, shade trees, telephones and direct car service to Los Angeles every twenty minutes, combine to make this the most attractive place of seaside residence in southern California. Building restrictions are rational yet rigid, while the price of lots is very moderate for property of this character."*
- 1909 Redondo Beach looks forward to the completion of the new Country Club plans at Clifton. Its opening means income to city through the attraction of "society people from all over the world." "Whatever obstacle in the past that prevented the building of the clubhouse, courses and grounds has been, we understand, overcome and nothing is now in the way except to cooperate." Reports surface that plans for a clubhouse have been approved and accepted. Redondo Beach residents hope that Clifton will become "the mecca of society and will be the home of many winter and summer residents....Such matters as golf, tennis, cricket and polo appeal especially to the wealthier classes and many will build handsome residences here if they are offered inducements." Redondo Beach residents also hopeful that completion of Clifton will mean the construction of a boulevard from Santa Monica to Redondo Beach. Many hope that it will lead to "a building boom [in Redondo Beach] that would be unparalleled." In addition to Huntington, investors also included J.S Wollacott and Root Osborne.
- 15 Feb 1909 First effort to annex a portion of Clifton-by-the-Sea. Ordinance No. 301 voted upon by residents of Redondo Beach. "Whether or not new uninhabited territory adjacent to and to the West of city shall be annexed." Fails.
- 3 Oct 1909 *Photo of cliffs and sea, proposed polo club house. [LA Herald Sunday Magazine]*
- Map of Clifton showing relationship to surrounding communities. [Seaver Center for Western History Research, Natural History Museum of LA] This map includes an area to the east which does not appear on tract maps on file with the Redondo Beach planning department.*
-

- 26 Jan 1911 Thomas Bendelow, manager of AG Spalding & Bros. in Redondo Beach hired to lay out golf links at Clifton. Accompanied by C.H. Burnett, manager of LA & R Railway Co. and O. N. Tomilison of Redondo Improvement Co. Plans to be submitted to Huntington.
- 5 Oct 1911 Hunt (architect) and family return to Pasadena after winter at home in Clifton.
- 23 May 1912 Clifton expanded to 200 acres. "During these eight years' time the completion of the county highway from LA to Redondo , via Inglewood, and from the southerly boundary line of Redondo through Clifton, eastward to the town of Wilmington has also added impetus to the growth of this immediate locality."
- 1912-1913 *Advertisement for Clifton-by-the-Sea in city directory.*
- 5 Apr 1913 H& H Realty Co. out of Minneapolis contracts with Huntington and J. Harvey Martin of San Francisco to handle land sales and development. Within 6 weeks all principals in the company have fled town. "There is nothing left to remind the inhabitants of this beach of the existence of the H&H Realty company, except the signs about town and a few unpaid bills. Next!" [9 May 1913]
- 18 Apr 1913 Second move for annexation of Clifton.
- 18 Jly 1913 Western portion of Clifton annexed. "Clifton-by-the-Sea is now a part of the city of Redondo Beach, having been overwhelmingly voted into this municipality on Wednesday, with the following results: 197 in favor and 6 against in this precinct and 6 in favor and none opposed in the Clifton precinct. " Homes of Huntington and Robert Burdette and Esplanade viewed as assets to the city.
- Clifton Tract at time of annexation to city in 1913 consists of 121.87 acres. Villa Tracts annexed in Sept. 1927 consists of 3688.55 acres. Information contained in letter from Redondo Beach city engineer D. L. Bundy to Guy Marion, Manager of Research Dept of LA Chamber of Commerce. Dated 26 April 1940.
- 13 Feb 1914 "New Boosters for Clifton." Campbell and Bentley of Los Angeles serve as selling/managing agent for property still held by Huntington and new owners—The Judson Syndicate. Huntington's house to be converted to an inn. Martin house to be club house. Plans to "open up" the eastern portions of Avenues A, B and C. Existing streets to be re-improved and sewer system to be expanded. "Why this subdivision has lain idle for so long a time has been a mystery to the real estate operators, especially as so much money had already been expended on it." Described as 1171 acres which includes a 9-hole golf course.
- 6 Mch 1914 Description of Clifton property to be placed on the market: "The original subdivision which was annexed to the city along with additional subdivision

extending easterly from the original and located over the high and lightly ground adjoining Redondo Beach on the south." New subdivision extends from Elena (now PCH) to the eastern line of the ranch property. Lots on eastern end will be divided into 1/2 acre lots. Those closer to the west to be regular business size. Plans for \$25,000 in improvements including grading of new golf course. Improvements completed 100 acres at a time. Golf links to take up considerable portion of old Downey ranch. Club house semi-public in nature. Sea Gull Inn granted liquor license. Bath house for general public use.

Note: This description appears to include not only the eastern portions of Avenues A - C, but also the area to the south which today surrounds Palos Verdes Boulevard and is defined by Avenue D, Pacific Coast Highway, and Prospect Avenue. A portion of this area probably served as the golf course since the club house was constructed on Avenue C.

20 Jun 1914 E.C.D. Price, former promotion and publicity manager of San Francisco commercial club, appointed "booster-in-chief" at Clifton. Price builds a home (Swiss chalet style) on Avenue C near Catalina. Cost of home estimated at \$4000.

26 Jun 1914 Club works to recruit memberships from Redondo Beach community. At this point, golf course reported to cover 118 acres.

4 Sept 1914 \$60,000 worth of land sold in area annexed to Redondo. Coincides with announcement of plans to build exclusive club and residential area on Palos Verdes. Woman's Club also announces plans to build new club house in Clifton at the corner of Elena and Ave. A.

Huntington-Redondo Co. continues to advertise as owners of Clifton-by-the-Sea where "The contour of its hills and slopes presents a series of elevations, rising ever upward from the shore to a height of 200 ft. along the eastern range of sentinel hills."

18 Jly 1919 Home of T. Yoshida robbed. Owner is described as a Japanese rancher living at Clifton.

12 Aug 1921 "Entire Clifton Property to be placed on market. Realty firm with offices in Los Angeles, Pasadena, Santa Monica, Long Beach and Santa Ana to dispose of Huntington-Redondo land." Seen by community as an incentive for greater building in the area. Entire holdings of Huntington-Redondo Co. turned over to R.E. Ibbetson and Co. of Los Angeles. Coincides with laying out of "Redondo Country Club" on approx. "100 acres lying south of Ave. C." Advertisement by Redondo Country Club states: "We wish to announce that the organization of the Redondo Country Club is now accomplished (all rumors to the contrary

notwithstanding)." Located at the "head of Ave. C." 100 new members sought. By 1922, only 47 members have been recruited. Many golf tournaments and club events held at site into 1930s.

- 2 Apr 1923 City Resolution No. 488 - "Closure of the following streets by the City Council: Avenues J, K, L and M of Clifton-by-the-Sea lying between Esplanade and Elena (PCH) and that portion of Elena lying between Avenue I and M in Clifton. All alley ways also closed to public use."
- 9 Nov 1925 Redondo Palisades Organization (syndicate) purchases land from Huntington Land Co.. Development plans include a golf course and housing built over a large area of beach-front property. Although the property is not a part of Redondo Beach, local boosters are pleased with promises by the syndicate that all advertising will include positive statements about Redondo. Developed by Carlin G. Smith and F.F. Hayward.
- 5 Mch 1926 Meeting held to discuss annexation of "Clifton Heights". Area described as east of Elena (PCH), toward Palos Verdes Estates. At issue is the cost of sewage and fire protection to be provided by Redondo Beach. Cost estimates of connecting insufficient Clifton sewer system to Redondo system are high.
- 30 Sep 1927 All residents South of Opal (Torrance Boulevard) invited to join Clifton Advancement Association which seeks annexation to city, improved sewers and improved schools. In Feb of 1928, Charles Henry Cheney addresses Association. During meeting, members also discuss proposed improvements along Esplanade and Avenue I.²
- 6 Jan 1928 New subdivision (Hollywood Riviera) adjoining Redondo Beach under way. Clifford Reid Co., Inc. developed the 500 acres which lay to the south of, and adjoined, Redondo Beach.³
- 20 July 1928 *Advertisement for Redondo Country Club with offices at Avenue C.* Comprised approx. 100 acres S. of Ave. C. Club hopes to sell additional memberships in order to make improvements and to expand.
- 18 Jan 1929 Clifton Heights annexation discussed. Legally known as Lot A of Rancho Palos Verdes.

² Charles Henry Cheney was one of the most prominent city planners on the West Coast. In addition to acting as principal planner for Palos Verdes Estates, he also created city plans for Santa Barbara, Riverside, Fresno, Alameda, Oakland, Los Angeles, and Portland, Oregon.

³See summary of Hollywood Riviera development.

- 16 May 1930 In formal vote, Clifton Heights rejects annexation to Redondo Beach - 65 against, 23 in favor. "Better to annex to Torrance than Redondo under present conditions," state members of the Clifton Heights community.
- 30 Sept 1937 Report of property sales in Clifton section of Redondo Beach: Knob Hill and Esplanade property purchased by Tom Bowman (druggist) - sold by Dr. A.T. Hembree. Bungalow court at Ave. D and Esplanade purchased [constructed?] by Ella Bain. Lot on Ave. F. sold to L.H. Bigelow. Three vacant lots on Avenues C, G and F sold.
- 7 May 1942 City seeks annexation of approximately 175 acres of unimproved land southeast of city. Property held by Huntington Redondo Company. Development planned by W. Vaughn Scott who hopes to build "better class homes on higher ground." A number of businesses reported to look with favor on the new development and the possibility of establishing a business section on south Elena Ave. Actual construction begins in 1948.
- 29 Nov 1943 Formal announcement of yet another annexation proposal. Area to be annexed South of Knob Hill, east of Elena. Population of area has more than doubled since 1938 and includes approximately 180 homes and a population of 500. Police and fire protection by Redondo Beach offered as an incentive. City guarantees that residents of the area will not be assessed for any existing bonds. City also offers better library services and lower utility rates than that currently offered by county. Annexation offer rejected.
- 15 Oct 1946 *Advertisement for Veterans' Homes with an ocean view at South Elena Ave and Ave. G (just North of Hollywood Riviera). 3 bedrooms, fireplace, double garage. Rayden Building Co., 1511 South Elena. Also 22 Feb 1947.*
- 5 Jun 1948 *Photograph of new residential subdivision project by W. Vaughn Scott Co. in Clifton Heights area.*
- 3 Jan 1951 Redondo Beach City Council plans to annex a strip of land from Torrance. Goal is to encircle Clifton Precinct and end possibility of Clifton Heights' annexation to Torrance. Suggested by property owner Shelley Jones of 204 Ave. G. Plan includes 21 lots running along eastern boundary of precinct from Ave. A to H. Made possible under the Annexation of Uninhabited Territories Act of 1939. Eventually Redondo hopes to annex entire Clifton district which has successfully resisted all prior efforts to annex. Only 4 families live on the 21 lots. Would cut out a portion of the 'L' shaped county territory with ran from PCH east to about Susana Ave and from Ave. A to Ave. D and portions of Ave. H.
- 8 Feb 1951 City annexes a total of 26 lots -- affects only 9 residents.

- 25 May 1952 An additional 22 lots annexed by Redondo Beach. City charged with "gangster tactics" by residents of Clifton area. Like earlier annexation, an expansion of the "shoestring annexation" designed to cut Clifton Heights off from Torrance.
- 24 Apr 1959 City makes another attempt to annex Clifton Heights and Clifton Acres.
- 30 Jly 1959 Developer applies for permit to construct subdivision in area east of Tulita Ave. (Prospect?) and south of Ave. H. Includes 28 lots. Residents on Ave. H oppose development plan. Residents argue that because the south end of tract is bounded by swamp, drainage issues will develop. Tract finally approved Sept. 1, 1959. Developer agrees to defend city against any law suit arising from damage caused by development.
- 7 Jan 1968 City continues in its efforts to annex Clifton Heights after fire at 522 Ave. A kills woman. Incident raises issue of limited city fire response. Area to be annexed described as 15 sq. blocks with 2,000 residents -- bounded by PCH, Knob Hill, Cessionee Ave, Irena Ave. and Ave. D.
- 21 Mch 1978 Clifton Heights residents continue to fight annexation efforts. Redondo Beach looks to 1976-7 Municipal Organization Act (MORGA) which allows cities to annex county islands of less than 100 acres without a vote of affected residents.
- 23 Mch 1978 *Small map of area fighting annexation.*
- 6 Jun 1978 Preliminary zoning plans for proposed annexation area offered to city council.
- 24 Sept 1978 City investigates possibility of a "reverse contract" with county as an alternative to annexation. Under contract, county would pay the city for services offered to Clifton Heights. Proposal made in response to argument that annexation was necessary because Clifton Heights residents utilize city services without proper reimbursement. City services to area amount to \$50,000 / year.
- 15 Apr 1979 Redondo Beach City Council approves plans for annexation of Clifton Heights. Residents protest annexation plans.
- 26 Nov 1980 LA County Board of Supervisors approve annexation of Clifton Heights.
- 15 Dec 1981 Torrance court rules in favor of annexation by Redondo.
- 11 Feb 1982 Superior Court of Torrance upholds Redondo annexation. At this time, approximately 1570 people lived in 778 homes in the area.

HOLLYWOOD RIVIERA

The following material presents a chronological summary of events related to the development of Hollywood Riviera.¹ This area, located to the south of Avenue I, was established in the late 1920s. Promoters of the development envisioned an exclusive residential area. Promotional materials, designed to attract Hollywood's elite, made reference to the site's similarity to the French Riviera and to the protection offered by restrictive covenants.

The original boundaries of this community included the southern portion of Henry Huntington's Clifton-by-the-Sea and extended into the northern portion of Torrance. Prior to its sub-division, the site also served as a landing field for small aircraft. Today, little remains of the original development. Miramar Park marks the location of the original club house which served as a focal point for the community, and apartment houses now stand in place of many earlier Mediterranean-style homes.

- 20 Feb 1920 Redondo Improvement Co. grants use of land, free of charge, for use as a landing field by Pacific Aero Club, Inc. Strip to be 600' long and 30' wide. Site: between I and L Avenues, Catalina and Elena Avenues. Aero Club asks City to prepare field by levelling and oiling and possible construction of a hanger. In return, Club promises to "make Redondo Beach a center of aeronautical activity, and give the city a great deal of up-to-date publicity." Club's request presented to the Redondo Beach City Council who in turn ask the Street Engineer to investigate the proposal. Council not convinced that air flight still a novelty since almost every other coastal city offered flights for fare. City seeks a valid commercial operation, not one requiring city resources.
- 2 Apr 1923 City Resolution No. 488 - Closure of the following streets by the City Council: Avenues J, K, L, and M of Clifton-by-the-Sea lying between Esplanade and Elena (PCH) and that portion of Elena lying between Avenue I and M in Clifton. All alley ways also closed to public use.
- 1 Sept 1926 Hollywood-Redondo boulevard opens. Will allow south bay cities direct access to Hollywood with out making the circuitous trip thru Los Angeles or Santa Monica. In Redondo, coast boulevard (PCH?) forms the link. Palos Verdes Blvd., which ran through Hollywood Riviera on Torrance side, also a part of the boulevard.

¹ News clippings summarized in this section are contained within the "Hollywood Riviera" file compiled by Gloria Snyder. Ms. Snyder may be reached through the City of Redondo Beach, Preservation Commission.

- 6 Jan 1928 New subdivision adjoining Redondo Beach under way. Clifford Reid Co, Inc. plans to develop the 500 acres lying south of, and adjoining, Redondo Beach. Site joined on south by Torrance. Formerly part of the Huntington tract. Strongly supported by Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce. Reid invited to speak to the Chamber on his development plans. Talk draws record attendance.
- 21 Jan 1928 First called "Hollywood Shores" then changed to "Hollywood Riviera." Includes a portion of land within city limits. Reid's plans reviewed by the Planning Commission. Plans will require the vacating of that portion of Esplanade between Avenues I and M. Malcolm Waddell serves as contractor to construct ornate, one-story sales office building. Built in a half square with a 3-story observation tower in the center. Has colonnade front and fountain in the court yard. Tract to open on February 18, 1928. Opening draws huge crowd. Mark Daniels serves as landscape architect and city planner. *Photograph of dedication ceremony.*
- 23 Feb 1928 Meeting held to discuss the future of the "bluff lots." Organized by the Clifton Advancement Association. Charles Henry Cheney (prominent city planner -- created plans for numerous cities including Palos Verdes, Santa Barbara, Riverside, Fresno, Alameda, Oakland, Los Angeles, and Portland, Oregon) also present to discuss curve of Esplanade and its intersection with Hollywood-Palos Verdes boulevard.

Following Cheney's talk, the real issue is introduced by Redondo mayor London who explains that Pacific Electric railway owns all beach frontage between bathhouse and Knob Hill. Proposes selling this land to Strong and Dickinson Co. who will in turn dedicate a part of the sand to the community and install walks and promenades. Objections raised when it is learned that S&D plans to build on the ocean side of the Redondo Beach city park and will allow for construction of buildings back of the present Esplanade property. Building in front of park will obstruct view from park which was established specifically for its view. Those owning property on the Esplanade also object to plans to block their views. "Among the most interested people opposed to the plan was Mr. Robert Frick, prominent Los Angeles attorney, who is prepared to fight any such action."

Presentation to Woman's Club: George Evans states that plans to sell property to S&D are supported by Chamber of Commerce, the Realty Board, and the City Planning Commission.

Plans for the S&D development and the Reid development raise the issue of zoning. The beach front, from the bathhouse to Knob Hill, is connected to the Clifford Reid development. Clifton Association votes unanimously to urge County Supervisors to continue with their plans to condemn the beach property for purposes of a park.

Charles Henry Cheney argues that Redondo must not sell its "birth right" but must "make concessions and yield the smaller desire to that of the greater good." Cheney calls Redondo the most "backward community in Southern California" in an effort to wake community up to the need to protect its beach-front from improper development. Argues that "only by using the sweep of the times as a swimmer uses the current, will the city keep its head above water." Clifford Reid Co. is purchaser of the Esplanade property. Cheney believes that the city should reach an agreement with S&D to develop that property and develop a common zoning plan with the city's help. Agrees with this park/beach plan but states that the County does not have the funds to proceed since they "were forced to buy a subdivision on Riverside boulevard which was destined to be made into a Negro settlement and which would have ruined this beach for any and all time." Cheney also opposed to the S&D plan and calls it a crime to back buildings up against Esplanade homes. Cheney frustrated with Redondo Beach voters who he believes had an opportunity to buy the beach property from the County at a low price, but who failed to respond quickly enough. Argues that only choice left for City is to buy frontage or let County move forward on condemnation and dedicate the use to a major park system. Cheney calls for Redondo Beach to stop its internal fighting and work on an over-all plan or else end up like "Humpty-Dumpty."²

- 28 Feb 1928 Clifton Reid seeks to relocate sewer from its current position just South of Avenue I where the waste runs directly into the sea. When Huntington owned the property, this was not an issue since no development plans existed. However, when sold to Reid, the need became more apparent. Reid also hopes to change the direction of Esplanade south of Avenue I.
- 1929 Laying of corner stone for Hollywood Riviera Beach Club. Opens 27 June 1931. Residents of Hollywood Riviera automatically become members but dues are required to use the swimming pool and to attend most events. Country Club to be deeded to the landowners along with 1000 feet of beach frontage. Club House contains large dining room where deluxe dinners cost \$1.25. Constructed by Clifford Reid and managed by his brother-in-law, Roy Stewart until 1942.
- 29 Nov 1929 First glider demonstration held on the hills behind Hollywood Riviera tract. Unfortunately, day selected for the meet has no on-shore wind. *Photograph of local pilots standing on airstrip which was located several miles north of the current Torrance Airport.* Gliders launched using a rubber shock cord.

²Cheney's involvement in this issue is not surprising. Beginning in approximately 1913 and continuing well into the 1940s, Cheney served as one of the nation's leading theorists in the modern city planning movement. Cheney's efforts to move the City of Redondo Beach toward the establishment of zoning controls reflected not only his desire to "protect" property values in his Palos Verdes development, but also his desire to expand the use of zoning in Southern California.

- 1 Dec 1929 30,000 attend **America's first major glider meet**. Held on Hollywood Riviera field.
- 4 Mch 1930 Ground-breaking ceremony for Club house. "The project, believed to be unique in the annals of western community development, represents a gift of virtually \$1,000,000 by the Reid organization to property owners of Hollywood Riviera," stated publicity. Organized as a co-operative, non-profit arrangement where director is authorized to operate the club for the benefit of the property owners. Club House serves as a focal point for the Hollywood Riviera development project. Reid hopes the area will appeal to "Hollywood types" and patterns his development after the French Riviera. Few movie stars or Hollywood people actually purchase, however. Plans hindered by Depression and by restrictive covenants which do not allow Jewish property ownership. This of course excluded Louis Mayer, Sam Goldwyn and many members of the Hollywood crowd.³ Spanish names given to the streets and building restrictions limited construction to the "Old World" style.
- 1937 Reid offers the Hollywood Riviera / Palos Verdes site as possible location for exposition planned by Los Angeles in 1942. Site contains 248 acres and was one of the smaller ones offered.
- 1940 Clifford Reid elected president of the Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce and the South Bay Realty Board.
- 25 Jne 1942 A Cavalry Troop of the Reserve Unit, California State Guard stationed at Hollywood Riviera Stables. During WWII anti-aircraft guns are installed next to the clubhouse to help defend California's coastline. Club closes during the war but re-opens in the late 1940s.
- 2 Jly 1942 Hollywood Riviera Beach Club remodeled and reopened for business. Given a tropical atmosphere.
- 1945 *Advertisement for Hollywood Riviera lots by the W. Vaughn Scott Co. (Developers since 1921). 458 home sites available.*
- 1947 Reid sells his investment in Hollywood Riviera. Reid continues to live in his 6,700 square foot home on Via Monte D'Oro until his death in 1957.
- 1955 Portion of club washes away in storm.

³ It is interesting to note that Mayer later purchased a 144 acre ocean frontage site on the hills just outside of Redondo Beach, off Palos Verdes Parkway and west of PCH. In the long run, Mayer's purchase probably proved a greater financial success than Reid's Hollywood Riviera development. In 1954, this area, now a part of Torrance, was subdivided into 176 home sites. Charles E. DuBois served as architect for entire community.

- 1957 Portion of club washes away in storm.
- 1958 Fire destroys Club House. Because it sat on the border between Redondo and Torrance, the cities decide to construct a park on the site rather than rebuild. Now the site of Miramar Park.

NORTH REDONDO BEACH

The following material presents a summary of events related to the development of north Redondo Beach.¹ Like the summaries of Clifton-by-the-Sea and Hollywood Riviera, this summary is laid out in chronological order. However, because of the amount of material provided, and because of the need for a more detailed analysis of the area's development, this portion of the report has been divided into the following three sections which are consistent with the main body of the Context Statement: Early Development (1905-1923), New Economic Vitality (1923-1939), and World War II Expansion (1940-1950). Sub-headings, within each of the three principal sections, have also been utilized.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT 1905 - 1923

Peck and Carlson subdivide and develop Redondo Villa Tract property.

- 1905 Carlson becomes land developer for entire "Redondo Villa Tracts" owned by George Peck who originally purchased all of what is now North Redondo for \$30 an acre in the late 1880s. Carlson agrees to pay Peck \$20 for each lot. Peck will then transfer the deed or title of the land to the new purchaser. Carlson takes advantage of Huntington's purchase and development of the original Redondo Beach townsite. Just as the original town site experienced a week-long boom, so too did the property to the northeast. Many of the lots originally purchased for \$90 or \$100 sold for \$150 or \$200 within a few weeks.
- 1906 Carlson's Los Angeles Securities Company (located in the Garland Building at 124 S. Broadway Blvd, Los Angeles) acquires and subdivides 160 acres in the Redondo Villa Tract. This is in addition to the 3700 lots already contracted for in this northern area. Possible to purchase a lot for only \$4 down, \$4 per month for a lot costing a total of \$90. Lots are generally 100' x 60'. Carlson offers free rides to Redondo every day by electric line every 20 minutes. Those interested can pick-up their free electric railroad tickets from his office.

In one advertisement Carlson recognizes his debt to Huntington when he states:

To Caesar she (nature) gave Mark Anthony and

¹News clippings summarized in this section are contained within the "North Redondo Beach" file compiled by Gloria Snyder. Ms. Snyder may be reached through the City of Redondo Beach, Preservation Commission.

Labienus, to Napoleon, Lebefore and Ney, to Washington, Knox and Hamilton, and in our day in quite a different sphere she has given to Redondo Beach H. E. Huntington, Southern California's greatest financier, capitalist and captain of industry .
(Snyder 1, 26 July 1981)

1907 Redondo Villa Tract 'B' opens for development. Today, half of the original area is within the city of Redondo Beach. The western half now a part of Manhattan Beach. Original boundaries of the eastern portion of the tract are roughly defined by Artesia and Manhattan Beach, Vail and Aviation.

Carlson gears his sales pitch to those living in the Los Angeles area as well as those living as far away as the eastern states. For those traveling from the east, Carlson offers special deals to help cover travel costs. Once in the Los Angeles area, prospective buyers can take advantage of the free rides to Redondo on the electric line. In addition to offering travel incentives, Carlson also promises that "If at the expiration of one year from purchase this \$90 lot is not worth \$112.50, or 25 per cent increase, based on the price at which our corps of salesmen will then be selling similar lot, we will refund all of the money you have paid us, with 6 percent interest additional."

Carlson advertises the area as "ideal for the poultry business" since the climate was mild and, with its close proximity to established urban areas, the availability of labor offers profitable returns on investment as well as easy access to both rail and shipping lines. If additional investment capital is necessary, Carlson states that one need look no further than Los Angeles and its 12 commercial banks. Carlson repeatedly emphasizes the close the relationship between his Villa Tract development and the original Redondo Beach original township to the south.

Carlson's Los Angeles and Orient Railway.

1907 Carlson expands his holdings through the purchase of 407 lots in Hermosa and 25.25 acres of residential property in Shakespeare and Manhattan from the partnership of Burbank and Baker. In addition to land, Carlson's purchase includes water lines, sewer lines, buildings and public walks in a huge tract of land which extends from the western edge of Redondo Villa Tract to the Hermosa ocean front. In one 1907 interview Carlson states "I believe in the future of Los angles and it is closely connected with Redondo, Hermosa and the beach places in this district. It will be only a short time before that seashore is a portion of the Greater Los Angeles. The section is growing and I believe that Redondo will have a population of 30,000 within three years." (Snyder 1, 7 March 1907)

1908 In 1908 Carlson makes a bold and financially risky move to link his Redondo and Hermosa holdings by building an intra-development electric rail line. Within three months of the announcement of these plans however, comes word that Carlson's Los Angeles Securities Company has been placed under the charge of the State Bank Commissioners. Apparently, the great panic of 1907 had affected Carlson more than he had indicated to his investors. Once his financial difficulties become public, creditors move quickly to place attachments on every article of value that can be located within the Villa Tract, including automobiles, horses, hay and wood. Carlson's largest creditors in Redondo include the Redondo Hardware Company, The Breeze Publishing Company, the Redondo Milling Company, George S. Funk & Son, and J. F. Reber & Co.

While no mention of railway equipment is made in early creditor lists, Carlson has already started to lay lines at the time of the Commissioner's take-over. His Port Orient rail comes under attack from city authorities in Hermosa Beach who demand that Carlson tear up all rails and ties since he has failed to obtain the proper franchise agreements and is in essence a trespasser.

1909 Carlson reaches a tentative agreement with the city of Hermosa and announces the opening of his Port Orient Railway which runs from the "Culler station" to the Hermosa City Park. Residents living in his tract rode for free.² Later, in December, Carlson adjusts his route to include only a portion of Hermosa and redefines the terminus as Manhattan Beach.

1910 Unfortunately for residents of the Redondo Villa Tract who rely on Carlson's Port Orient railway as their primary link with surrounding communities, the railway lasts little more than a year. In 1910, representatives of Huntington's Los Angeles Pacific Railway investigate the possibility of moving into the territory held by the Los Angeles and Redondo railway. This area includes the right of way formerly owned by the defunct Port Orient and Los Angeles railway company. Residents of the Redondo Villa Tract look with favor on move, especially since Hermosa Beach would serve as the new termination point.

Carlson out of the picture - Redondo Villa Tract residents on their own.

Carlson's removal spurs interest in the definition of a community identity and, unlike the original settlement area, an earlier rejection of support from absentee

²The Port Orient Railway appears to only run through areas of the Carlson holdings which are now in Hermosa Beach. This line also appears to be separate from the street car line laid by Carlson in 1905-1906 to move prospective purchasers through the eastern portions of his Redondo Villa Tract. A small drawing of this street car, which was acquired following the San Francisco earthquake in 1905 appears in one of his advertisements for the tract.

investment interests.

Despite adverse conditions for expansion, residents of the Redondo Villa Tract continue to develop their property. Residents moved quickly to secure their interests in their property. For most, this means the immediate payment of \$20 for each lot held. As middle-man between Peck and the individual purchasers of lots, Carlson had failed to pass on to Peck, the \$20 down payment paid by each lot holder. As a result, residents of the Redondo Villa Tract find themselves paying the \$20 twice in order to secure title to their land.

Immediately following this drain, the Hermosa Water Co. announces plans to increase rates 300 per cent. In response, residents organize a co-operative stock company for the purpose of purchasing a set of well drilling tools and putting down wells. Two residents who already have wells and wind mills offer to supply water to their neighbors for domestic use in the event the Water Co. moves to shut off their supply to the community.

Spineless Cactus cultivation.

Viewed as a possible element in the north Redondo local economy. Cultivation of the "Spineless Cactus" promoted as an inexpensive cattle feed. Colony structure serves as an impetus for further residential / rural development in the area.

1908 Credit for the development of the first viable spineless cactus is given to Luthor Burbank. However, in 1908, F. P. Hosp of Riverside publicly announces that he had in fact developed at least four varieties of "Spineless Cactus" in his Riverside garden. Hosp argues that the cactus has grown in Italy for years and that its fruits commonly appear in markets. Hosp states that a specimen has also grown in the gardens of the Santa Fe Rail company at Santa Ana since 1898. According to Hosp, he provided specimens to a plant collector of the U.S. Pomological Bureau who then passed it on to Burbank. Hosp offers little support for the potential of cactus as cattle feed.

As far as the value of the spineless cactus for stock feed is concerned much has been printed in the papers that is nonsensical. There is but small nourishment in it even though animals eat it, and since it has been deprived of the protection furnished by nature, viz., its spine, stock turned loose upon a field of it would make an end of it. (Snyder 1, 9 Jan 1908)

1910 Such statements did little to deter hope in the potential marketability of the Spineless Cactus. In 1910, advertisements for the "Ocean Villa Intensive Farming Colony" begin to appear in local newspapers. Carved out of the original Carlson holdings near Belvedere in the Grant School district, the colony specializes in the growing of spineless cactus, herbs, chrysanthemums and gladiolus. Aggressive promotion of the colony's principal product (spineless cactus) as well as its land holdings provides a unique and exotic aspect to this project and to the entire community.

Advertisements highlight a number of positive features of the Colony including its close proximity to Los Angeles, its oiled road and the fact that each lot comes with a pre-drilled and active well. Many of the lots have already been planted with choice varieties of spineless cactus and gladiolus. Project developers guarantee that cultivation of the cactus alone will pay back the purchase price of any lot. House plans are also available for the construction of a modest residence ranging in price from \$45 to \$75. An ingenious and economical feature of these plans is the combination sleeping porch and living room. Those interested in investigating the proposal are asked to contact J.P. Luxford and W. H. Sexsmith in the Redondo Beach office located at 121 S. Pacific Avenue or the Ocean Villa Cactus Colony office located in the Marsh-Strong Building in Los Angeles. Automobiles are available to transport potential investors from either office site.

1914 Four years after the original advertisements for the Colony, the Ocean Villa Intensive Farming Colony announces the formal opening of its community. Chartered Pacific Electric cars bring city guests as far as Belvedere from which point autos convey the passengers to the tract to view the property and to sample a variety of delicacies including cactus spread, cactus on ice, and cactus salad.

Purchasers of the Colony property have the option of either marketing their crops themselves, or joining the Colony's co-operative partnership which provides help in the marketing of their product, and of course, shares fifty per cent of their profits (Snyder 1, 27 November 1914).

Establishment of poultry farms.

1914 While some what less exotic than cactus farming, poultry operations offer the Redondo Villa community another alternative to water-intensive farming. In 1914, C. R. Clifton establishes a large operation at the corner of Longfellow Avenue and El Camino Real, approximately two and a half miles north of the original Redondo Beach settlement. Sixteen large poultry houses are constructed to accommodate several thousand chicks on a site named the "Villa Charles Sumner."

Civic development in north Redondo.

- 1908 **Grant School.** A school house is constructed within the Grant district to replace a former temporary structure for the community's 23 students. In a letter to the Redondo Reflex editor, community leaders proudly point to their plans for a \$3,500 school house as evidence that they are "bound to grow in spite of all opposition." (Snyder 1, 17 September 1908) Two years later, the newly constructed building served as the site for the graduation of three students.³
- 1914 By 1914, it is clear that the small rural community located in the Redondo Villa Tract had not only survived its early financial crisis but has continued to grow. In response to the needs of the expanding community, residents of the Redondo Villa Tract vote in favor of bonds amounting to \$5,500 for the construction of a new elementary school on the grounds of the existing Grant school. Supporters of the bond issue organize automobiles and wagons to carry voters to the polls. At the close of the day, 107 people have voted, of which 94 are in favor of the bonds. Later that year, the community turns out in force for the graduation of five students from its newly furnished school. The entire student body in 1914 consists of seventy-seven pupils who attend classes in four rooms.
- 1918 The community forms its first **Grant School Parent Teacher Association**. Within a year the association has organized an improvement program which calls for the sale of \$10,000 in bonds. Funds received from the sale of these bonds are ear-marked for the construction of a 150 seat auditorium, an additional classroom and an enlarged playground area. (Snyder 1, 13 June 1919)
- 1922 In 1922, the PTA once again rallies to organize yet another bond issue, this time in the amount of \$30,00 for the construction of a new building to be located in front of the existing school structure. The need for a new and expanded school reflects the growth which the entire community has experienced since the founding of the school twelve years earlier in 1908. ⁴

³Two members of the graduating class included Eva and Orville Meadows, children of newly-elected school Board Member J.H. Meadows. In 1911, Meadows formed a real estate partnership with M.M. Holmes and established an office on Gould Avenue. From this point forward, Meadows played a prominent role in the formation of the young community.

⁴ The headline for this article, "P.T.A. Organized at Grant School," implies that a PTA did not exist for the Grant School district prior to this date. This is not accurate since earlier news reports indicate that the first PTA organized in 1918. Officers selected during the 1922 elections included Mrs. Redding, president; Mrs. Jim Hay, vice-president; Mrs. Hartman, secretary-treasurer; Mrs. Mack, chair of the entertainment committee with Miss E. Frank and Miss Vivian I. Pillard, teachers in the Grant school as assistants; Mrs. White, chair of the membership committee with Mrs. J.N. Stewart, Mrs. May Goddard, Mrs. Rutledge and Mrs. Sallie Lilly as assistants. (Snyder 1, 28 April 1922)

- 1922 **Grant Community Church.** The expansion of the Redondo Villa Tract community is also evidenced in the dedication of the Grant Community Church. This appears to be the area's first church and like the area's school and businesses, is located in the Grant district. In addition to services, a Sunday school is also organized for resident children. (Snyder 1, 23 June 1922)

Community Builders - local business development, the "Improvement Association" and the "Ladies Circle."

- 1911 The development of Gould Avenue (Artesia) as the principal business district for the north Redondo community begins in approximately 1911. The first reference to the establishment of a business along this route appears in an article in the Redondo Breeze dated March 16, 1911 which notes the establishment of a real estate office in the Grant School area of Gould Ave. by one of the area's leading citizens, J. H. Meadows. In the following year Charles Snyder establishes a grocery store. (Snyder 1, 16 March 1911)

- 1912 A community "**Improvement Association**" forms. Officers for the new organization represent local community builders including Charles L. Merrill, president; J. H. Meadows, treasurer; and W. H. Kortz, secretary. While similar to a chamber of commerce which focuses on the promotion of commercial interests, the Improvement Association expands this focus to include, in their words, "the forging of a prosperous future, making every necessary improvement relative to the community's welfare and building up the Villa Tract in every way possible."

At the urging of both the Improvement Association and the editors of the Redondo Reflex, the women form the **Ladies' Circle** which meets regularly at the home of Mrs. W. H. Kotz and seeks ways of "voicing their newly acquired right to vote in a positive and progressive manner. (Snyder 1, 2 May 1912)

Early annexation movement.

- 1912 The desire for a community identity is evident as early as 1912 when boosters somewhat half-heartedly suggest the creation of a townsite and the erection of a city hall. Such plans never materialize, especially when it becomes clear that the site chosen for the structure is already in use as the Grant School playground (Snyder 1, 20 September 1912). While few take these early efforts to create a separate town site seriously, the underlying desire to create and promote a community remains evident well into the post-war period.

1913-1917 The formation of the Improvement Association coincides with a growing interest in and the sale of property within the Redondo Villa Tract area. From 1912 until the beginning of World War I in 1917, this area experiences considerable growth which in turn leads to the first call for annexation in 1913. One article published August 1, 1913 sums up the activity:

More prosperity is evident at the Villa Tact than any surrounding place, it would seem from the number of new houses that are at present going up. Not less than eight or ten houses are now in the course of construction. There are about 200 people living on the Villa Tract. It is time that Redondo Beach annexed this territory. (Snyder 1, 1 August 1913)

Four years after this editorial appears annexation becomes a ballot item for Redondo Villa Tract voters. On October 26, 1917, by a vote of 124 to 44 the voters of the "eastern annexation district" turn down the proposition to annex itself to Redondo Beach. The importance of this issue is evidenced by the fact that practically all of the 170 registered voters of the district go to the polls.⁵

Leading the crusade against annexation are the combined interests of the area's larger land owners who fear increased taxation. Residents of the original Redondo Beach townsite express annoyance over the decision to reject annexation since many believe that ties with their northern neighbors would not only expand and strengthen the entire community, but would also provide an expanded revenue base for the maintenance of the Redondo Beach harbor which they believe unfairly benefits the large land holders of the annexation area.

Following the decision to reject annexation, boosters living within the Villa Tract areas continue their efforts to define and promote their community.

1917-1920 Immediately following World War I two new community booster organizations form in an effort to move north Redondo away from its rural economy toward a more urban future. The first is the **Grant District Civic Society**. The **Villa Tract Chamber of Commerce** is the second organization to form and represents the area's expanding commercial and real estate interests.

1920 The Grant District Civic Society makes its public debut by raising the controversial issue of establishing a street lighting system for the Redondo Villa

⁵A news article published at the time of the vote defines the "eastern annexation district" as "a strip of land east of Redondo Beach and Hermosa Beach of about seven and a half square miles in size. This territory included the Villa Tract, Meadow Park, Perry, Belvidere and the Dominguez rancho." (Snyder 1, 26 October 1917).

Tract. Property owners holding large sections of farming or unimproved acreage uniformly oppose this plan for essentially the same reason they had opposed annexation efforts. Fearing a disproportionate increase in their property taxes, these owners succeed in voting the proposition down. Undaunted, the Civic Society then introduces several more plans designed to modernize and partially urbanize their area. These plans include the modernization of road surfaces and the rejuvenation of efforts to establish a local water pumping station in an effort to remove the area from the control of the Hermosa Water Company.

- 1921 The road resurfacing plan becomes a reality. By working closely with the Redondo City Council, City Engineer and Los Angeles County Supervisors, the Grant Civic Society succeeds in obtaining the funds necessary to resurface the famous "Hermosa wash-board" on Camino Real. This is a great triumph for the Society since this highway serves as the primary link for the Redondo Villa Tract to neighboring Redondo Beach and Los Angeles. Later that year, ties to Redondo Beach are strengthened further when that city completes an extension of Beryl Street to connect with the Riverside-Redondo Boulevard (190th).

1921 also marked the first major fund-raising event held by the Villa Tract Chamber of Commerce. Set to the theme of a "County Fair" and centered around the highly visible Villa Tract arch, this event provides the funds necessary for the Chamber to begin its work on the construction of a community club house on one of several lots owned by the Chamber adjacent to the arch. News articles describing these plans state:

The association has been holding meetings in the assembly room of the Grant School house and the new building is planned to take care of any public or community entertainments. Dances and social gatherings such as have been a feature of the association's gatherings will be held there.⁶

It will be the aim of the members to keep the club house always open for the use of the public. A motion picture machine will be numbered among the many modern features that will be embodied. The building will occupy a very sightly location near the arch and that it will be a decided acquisition to the thriving community adjacent is a foregone conclusion. (Snyder

⁶ Officers of this organization, which appears to have formed in approximately 1920, included W. L. Barnard, president; W.F. Howard, vice-president; Mrs. Keller, secretary; and Mrs Fertaine, treasurer. Snyder 1, 14 October 1921.

1, 9 September 1921)

- 1922 When finally completed in 1922, the new stucco Club House serves as both the home for the Chamber of Commerce and as a community center. With its large dance hall, dining room and stage, demand for the Chamber of Commerce building is immediate by a community eager to host concerts, dances and lectures. Spurred on by the success of their building campaign, the 150 members of the Chamber quickly adopt plans for a community-wide improvement program which includes a drive for better gas, more water and better roads. They also renew the discussion of incorporating the Villa Tract as a separate city. (Snyder 1, 28 July 1922)

Oil speculation results in land boom in north Redondo.

- 1908-1920 From approximately 1908 through the first few years following World War I, lot sales in the North Redondo area continue to grow at a steady rate. As the community grows, the area immediately surrounding Grant School slowly emerges as the community's commercial and social core. Despite these changes, the rural composition which characterize the Redondo Villa Tract remains essentially unchanged. As a result, local boosters find it difficult to gain widespread support for their plans to modernize and partially urbanize their community. This trend continues until the early 1920s when one very important factor -- the discover of oil in surrounding areas -- results in a land boom.
- 1920 On the 27th of February, 1920 J. D. Millar of the Interstate Realty Company of Los Angeles announces his purchase of 2,300 acres within the Villa Tract from the Peck and Newmark interests. Following his purchase, Millar immediately employs a geologist to survey the land for oil. He also subdivides his property into "Redondo Oil Lots" and formes the "Redondo Oil and Land Company" in order to begin formal prospecting for oil. A growing sense of anticipation results as the surrounding community closely watches Millar's project. (Snyder 1, 27 February 1920)
- 1921 Within a year of Millar's purchase, practically all land from Riverside boulevard (190th) south to San Pedro boulevard and from Redondo to Torrance has been leased for oil exploration and production. News articles from the period report that most of these leases are held by large companies. The first promising signs occur on December 9, 1921 when Santa Fe well No. 1 begins to flow. Located at the far southeastern corner of the present-day North Redondo area, this well offers strong incentive for the purchase and sale of property located within the eastern section of the Redondo Villa Tract. (Snyder 1, 9 December 1921)

**CULTURAL CONSOLIDATION
AND THE SEARCH FOR NEW ECONOMIC VITALITY
1923 - 1939**

Commercial development.

1923 New filling station opens in Villa Tract January 24, 1923.

In addition to home building activities the Riverside-Redondo blvd. promises to be a coming business section and the past few months have seen the establishment of several new gasoline stations, stores and at least one new industry. Lots on the boulevard have doubled in value in the past 6 months and realty experts see further phenomenal advances in the value of the boulevard lots. (Snyder 1, 1 May 1924)

Long Horn Inn opens. Advertisements describe it as "A First Class Cafe, Mammy Cloe Famous Southern Chicken Dinners, Music, Dance. Quarter mile from Grant School on Redondo Blvd." Two months after opening, Inn is raided by members of the dry squad from the district attorney's office in LA. Two arrested for possession of liquor. (Snyder 1, 8 Aug. 1923 and 9 Nov 1923.)

Civic development continues.

1923 **Grant School.** Attendance in 1923 reaches 185. School is growing in both numbers of students and buildings. \$195,00 in bonds are approved for work in Redondo, Hermosa, Grant, Manhattan and Perry school districts.

Adoption of zoning regulations and community planning.

31 Oct 1924 Widening of Redondo (Aviation) Blvd. between Grant School and Pier Ave.

6 Jan 1926 Chamber fights development of Hog Ranch. Successful in convincing County Board of Supervises to revoke permit. Chamber also hears and approves plans by county to form strip of parks which would include portion of Redondo-Riverside Blvd., the "Negro Slough district," and 120 acres west of the south extension of Catalina Ave from Ave. I to Palos Verdes line, including beach frontage up to the bathhouse. Charles Henry Cheney is one of the presenters for

the county. All property within city limits to become city property.

Renewed annexation movement caused by street improvement proposal.

- 6 Nov 1925 First move by large property owners to pave all streets in Redondo Villa Tract. Chamber of Commerce calls meeting to discuss community options.
- 6 Jan 1926 Chamber forms annexation committee to approach city of Hermosa Beach.
- 7 Jan 1926 Hermosa City Council hears proposal to annex Redondo Villa Tract and Grant District. Receives petition favoring annexation. Council decides to hold special election on matter.
- 19 Feb 1926 Villa Tract Chamber in favor of annexation since it will result in increased police and fire protection. Will include area east of Hermosa up to Santa Fe right of way.

The tract will be given an identity of real value, the petitioners urge, in the annexation instead of remaining an isolated country tract of no definite identity." Villa Tract is a beautifully rolling country, with unsurpassed view and excellent soil, making ideal homesite, where modern improvements are obtainable, and those in favor of the annexation are firm in the belief that the move will be a very advantageous one by way of encouraging new developments. (Snyder 1, 22 Feb. 1926)

- 26 Feb 1926 "Annexationists Lose in Villa Tract." Project is beaten 185 to 15. Main objection is the ambiguity over taxes. Area is growing and residents fear increase in school taxes for growing children population. Chamber claims many votes illegal and will renew campaign.

Residential development - closely tied to oil development.

- 26 Feb 1923 Vail Ranch, at intersection of Riverside Blvd and Culler's Crossing, a few miles northeast of Redondo, is subdivided. 92 acres purchased by George Bates, an investor in Los Angeles. W.W. Daune of the Villa Tract will serve as real estate agent.
- 1 May 1924 "Villa Tract is showing activity - Hermosa Oil Wells said to be responsible for

boom. New houses, most of them of four and five-room construction, have been or are being constructed in almost every section of the tract and the water company has received a record number of applications for water connections."

A new era of activity in the Redondo Villa Tract is substantiated by water company who is providing hook-ups for the large number of homes being built in the area. Residents of Villa Tract see this as an indication of a sudden awakening of interest in their area. Vail Ranch increases price of several hundred lots in response and withdraws half from the residential market in response to discovery of oil.

17 May 1924 Opening of "Lilliandale" a subdivision located at the junction of Hawthorne and Redondo Blvd. (190th). Developer (Economy Home Builders, 1310 S. Hill St., LA.) gives away a \$2,500 home free. Local agent is G.H. Belknap, 327 Diamond St, Redondo. *Large advertisement.*⁷

27 Feb 1926 "Interest Keen over oil well," states one newspaper. The article continues:

Real estate dealers have been busy lining up ground in the district, where oil operators are said to be buying every available tract. The Villa Tract has for a number of years been a source of speculation as regards oil production, and many experts believe the Hermosa field as the territory is called, to be the next big oil field....since the oil has been found pouring from under the cap hundreds of people have visited the well daily. (Manhattan-Pacific oil well on Gould in the present city of Hermosa.)

12 Nov 1926 Although the Hermosa-Redondo water co. has been able to keep up with new construction demand in Redondo Beach, it is having difficulty in Redondo Villa Tract. Up to this point, Villa Tract customers were serviced adequately, but with increased demand, water co. installs a new line and pumping facility capable of pumping much larger amounts of water. News article describing building boom states:

This improved water service [in turn] has resulted in an enlarged building program in Redondo Villa Tract and continued increasing growth, with probable increase in property values there, is expected by those

⁷Is not clear whether this subdivision is located today in north Redondo or to the south in Torrance. Description of location in advertisement indicates it is in Torrance.

well acquainted with the possibilities of the district.

Events leading up to annexation of north Redondo: Growing Together.

1926 - 1929 **Search for Oil.** Oil exploration occurs within Villa Tract. "It is believed that a well-defined pool of oil will be found under the central portion of the Tract." ["Will drill for oil in Redondo Villa Tract". 23 Sept 1927]

7 Oct 1927 "Villa Tract Land Prices Booming," states article.

Real estate activity in the Redondo Villa Tract is fast assuming the proportions of a boom with the prospect of oil being discovered there within the next few weeks. Prices are mounting steadily skyward with no end in sight. Two lots which sold two months ago for \$800 were resold last week for \$1600, an increase of 100 per cent. Yesterday they were priced at \$2600 and the owner was confident they would be sold before nightfall. This is only a single instance of what is going on in the vicinity of Gates and Vail streets where oil is being drilled for.

29 Oct 1927 "Oil operators are watching test well drilling in Redondo Villa Tract." Article continues:

Real estate men are the only ones so far to profit by the flurry of excitement in the Tract and they are letting no grass grow under their feet. A number of field offices have sprung into existence during the past few weeks and the section is experiencing something in the way of a boom.

15 Mch 1929 A new field opens to the east of the Redondo Villa Tract in the Lawndale area. Exploration in this area revitalizes speculation that the largest oil field is to the south of Lawndale rather than further east. Rumors generated by real estate men abound that an extension in the southerly direction will soon take in the Redondo Villa Tract.

1928 **Golden State Fireworks Manufacturing and Display Company.** Patrick Lizza who moves to Redondo Villa Tract from Pennsylvania where he served as president of the Continental Fireworks Manufacturing Co. Establishes the Golden State Fireworks Manufacturing and Display Company at 1537 Stoutenborough

Lane. Only one of its kind in California. Makes move to be closer to his major west coast customers who include the California State Fair at Sacramento, The Los Angeles County Fair at Pomona, the Tulare county fair, etc. Brings in specially trained workers from New York, New Jersey and Chicago. Also moves here to respond to the growing need for special effects from film industry.

Annexation of north Redondo.

1927 168 sign petition to annex Villa Tract to Redondo Beach. Move for annexation organized by Chamber in response to plans to pave 64 miles of Villa Tract streets. Estimated cost of paving is 1.5 million or 2.5 times assessed value of individual property. Paving program being advanced by "Los Angeles interests who own 37% of property in Villa Tract and who purchased in response to oil speculation but now seek to pursue residential development. Viewed by residents and Chamber as a "real estate promotion scheme, fostered by certain corporations, with the idea of boosting the price of lots which they plan to put on resale with high pressure methods and not for the purpose of promoting the interests of the resident population or the general public." Chamber argues that "a wealthy Los Angeles banker who has vast holdings in the disputed territory is behind the paving project which is being foisted upon the Redondo Villa Tract." Later identified as Carlin G. Smith

Redondo Beach Chamber works closely with Villa Tract Chamber to organize successful campaign. Advantages to annexation: will mean Villa Tract residents will have full ownership rights of 7-acre park, 23-acre sewer farm, a mile of ocean beach frontage, a city hall, a library with 17,000 volumes, a fire station and equipment, a Chamber of Commerce building, a band stand and a city supply yards at North Redondo and Gertruda Ave. Redondo Villa Tract Chamber becomes member of Redondo Beach Chamber three days after the election.

12 Aug 1927 Article in favor of annexation states:

The district is a sparsely settled, rural community, devoted chiefly to gardening and small ranching purposes. The Residents of said tracts consist largely of elderly persons, whose earning capacity has ceased, and working men, many of whom are at present out of employment. Most of these people have settled on these inexpensive and unrestricted lots mainly with the thought of escaping excessive taxation and assessments. The levying of this exorbitant assessment under present economic conditions would be an

oppressive burden on practically all of the resident population, and in many instances would amount to confiscation of the people's homes, which are their only possession.

Oil drilling has a feature position in the annexation campaign. Chamber presents idea of Villa Tract as Redondo's future industrial manufacturing site especially for those companies manufacturing marine equipment. Chamber combats rumors that annexation will mean the end of future oil exploration in area. Assures residents that current oil production ban in place in Redondo Beach will not be extended to include their area once annexed.

20 Sept 1927 Annexation vote. Population in north Redondo area more than 2000. Wins by a majority of only 13 votes, 443 voted, 226 in favor, 213 opposed. Grant district opposes annexation. More than 90% of eligible voters cast their ballots.

23 Sept 1927 "Prominent men declare Villa Tract annexation will mean much to entire community."

It is by far the greatest thing that has ever happened to this city, declared Henry C. Froude, president of the Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce. Redondo Beach needed just such a victory to make it realize the power of co-operation. Every department, the board of trustees, the realty board, the Villa Tract annexation committee and the Chamber of Commerce fought shoulder to shoulder on this proposition and they won. It was a hard struggle, but their efforts -- their combined efforts -- were amply rewarded.

1928 Los Angeles commercial interests file suit in opposition to annexation. Seek to reverse decision. Chamber of Commerce vows to fight to the highest court.

1931 Redondo Beach City Attorney reports to the council that the last obstacle to the complete and definite annexation of the Villa Tract has been removed. City Attorney is referring to several lawsuits which have been brought by property owners in the Villa Tract challenging the annexation process.

Civic developments following annexation.

1930 **School construction financed with federal funds.** In 1930, Grant School expands once again with the construction of a new Kindergarten, a Domestic

Science room, and basement showers. Community support for this work indicates the growing need for school facilities in the northern section of the city. Attendance during the dedication ceremony for the new structure is so large in fact that the entire auditorium and a class room are required.

- 10 Mch 1933 Long Beach earthquake, magnitude of 6.2, strikes the Southern California area. Destroys the Grant School structures containing the auditorium and class rooms for first and second grade. Following the quake, tents are erected on the school grounds and classes resume.
- 19 Jan 1934 *Photograph of tent facilities at Grant School following 1933 earthquake.*
- 2 Nov 1934 Demolition of the auditorium and elementary school building by SERA workers. Plans made for the construction of a new \$35,000 structure. However, actual construction is delayed by the collapse of the bond market and the school district's inability to sell bonds approved by the residents.
- 1935 Portion of Grant School District not within the Redondo Beach City limits annexed to the Manhattan school district. Move made primarily to relieve overcrowding in Grant School.
- 1935 -1936 Following the annexation of a portion of the Grant School district, the Redondo Beach board of education submits an application for \$75,000 in state and federal funds to finance the erection of a new school house. The need for this application, made to the State Emergency Relief Association and the Federal Public Works Association, becomes apparent when the bonds previously approved by voters become void once a portion of the school district is annexed to Manhattan. In 1936, Grant School officials receive word that they will indeed receive Federal WPA funding. Within nine months construction on the new Grant School is completed. At the time of its dedication, Grant School has a total enrollment of 397 students. As school enrollment increases, so too does the demand for further building construction. Through the further aid of PWA funds and labor, a new cafeteria and auditorium is built at the Grant School.

Roads, infrastructure and civic improvements in north Redondo.

- 19 July 1929 The Redondo City Council states its intention to move forward with plans to begin work on improvements promised to the northern area residents during the annexation campaign. Improvements include the resurfacing of many roads in the Redondo Villa area, the construction of a fire station and the establishment of a

branch library.⁸

- 5 Dec 1930 **Villa Tract Pump Station No. 12.** The California Water Service company dedicates its new Pump Station No. 12. Located on Blossom Street, one and a half blocks north of Redondo-Riverside Boulevard (Artesia Blvd.), the new pump station is hailed as "the most artistic improvement constructed in the Villa Tract section to date." Site selection, building design and construction are all performed by the Public Works Engineering Corporation. William O. Wilkins of Redondo Beach serves as contractor. "Although small, great care is taken in the attention to the architectural detailing of this building. Ornamental green scroll work and three large flower boxes adorn this small Mission-style building. Inside, pumping equipment moves water through newly-laid lines from the Hermosa reservoir to the surrounding community. More than a pump house, this building offers testimony to the future growth and prosperity of the Redondo Villa Tract and its newly established identity as a member of the Redondo Beach community." [*Photograph.*]
- 1934 Residents of the Redondo Villa Tract protest the inadequacy of municipal improvements made in their area. As with earlier city-improvement efforts, the Grant Civic League (now called the Grant Community League) leads the call for increased police protection, the expansion of city sewer service, and the establishment of a community hall. As a result of efforts by the Grant Community League and other local organizations, a series of improvements are made in the north Redondo area utilizing city, state and federal funds. Extensive re-shaping of the area limited by the Great Depression and results in at least one instance of ill-will as residents of north Redondo compete with other areas of the city for scarce municipal funds.
- 11 Jan 1935 **Street improvements and repaving in north Redondo.** The Redondo Beach City Council instructs its City Engineer to prepare an application to the State Emergency Relief Association (SERA) requesting \$6,500 to \$7,500 in street improvement funds.
- 1939 Following the April elections in 1939, funding disputes reach a dangerous high as rumors begin to circulate that north Redondo Beach might secede from the city and incorporate as a separate area. This movement subsides within a year however, as the entire city focuses its attention on the war in Europe.
- 18 Sept 1931 **Romanian Society** of Redondo Beach purchases a lot within the Villa Tract and

⁸ In 1930, the Redondo Beach Library Board and the Public Properties, Piers and Parks Committee are directed to arrange for the conversion of a city-owned building located in the Villa Tract area in order to house the new library branch. (Snyder 1, 2 May 1930)

in order to construct a clubhouse. The site is located on Grant Boulevard between Rindge Lane and Slauson Avenue. News articles published at the time of this purchase state that "many Roumanians live in the Villa Tract and will appreciate a meeting place for their business meetings and social gatherings."

Following the Long Beach earthquake in 1933, the Romanian Society Club House also serves as the meeting site for the Grant School PTA until the new North Redondo Community Hall can be constructed.

- 16 Mch 1934 Construction of a new **North Redondo Beach Community Club House**. Club House is located within the new "Shore Acres" sub-division somewhere near the junction of Mathews and Phelan lanes.

Demand for the new Community Hall is immediate. As a result, scheduling becomes an issue as a variety of north Redondo civic organizations attempted to reserve time. Redondo Beach City Council votes to open Hall to any social organization from area. Scheduling issue arises after Shore Acres Improvement Association asserts that they were required to pay a use fee while Grant Community League is allowed to use site free of charge. The Hall also serves as the meeting house for the Grant PTA and the Redondo Beach High School night school.

- 1935-1938 **North Redondo Fire Station**. Tentative sketches of a new fire station are approved by the Redondo Beach City Council. The building itself requires a total city expenditure of approximately \$1,500 for materials. Labor is to be provided through the Federal PWA program. Construction on the new station begins once the city purchases a lot located at 2021 Redondo Beach Boulevard. In 1938, the station opens for business.

- 1934 **Concentration of business on Riverside-Redondo Blvd.** *Photograph showing Bill Valenzuela's Filling Station located at junction of Ford and Pier (Aviation).*

Residential development in north Redondo.

- 1 June 1934 First reference to the Shore Acres sub-division created by the Home Extension Association. Located near the junction of Mathews and Phelan Lanes. This housing project includes a co-operative market site where residents of Shore Acres sell produce raised on their property. Each Saturday residents sell flowers, fresh vegetables, fruits, eggs, chickens and even canaries to the surrounding communities. The market site includes a market house which is 300 feet long and parking space for automobiles. Community also organizes a Shore Acres Improvement Association within first year of settlement.

Photographs of family plowing site located near Mathews and Blossom in the 1930s. Photograph of Mrs. Merrill in her yard located near Mathews and Blossom.

- 20 Aug. 1937 **Exclusionary zoning.** The trend for sub-division of the north Redondo area continues with a recommendation from the City Planning Commission that the area known as "Villa Tract No. 2" be rezoned from "unlimited industrial to suburban uses." This recommendation made in response to a petition submitted earlier that year to the City Council which noted the increasing residential nature of that area and requested that land-use laws reflect the change. The district affected by the approved rezoning includes the territory from Redondo Beach Boulevard (Artesia) to Robinson Street, and from Inglewood Avenue to Vail Avenue.

WORLD WAR II EXPANSION 1940 - 1950

Industrial / Commercial Developments.

- 9 Feb 1940 On the night of February 9, 1940, the sound of loud explosions, bright lights and breaking glass resounds through the neighborhood located near Meyer and High lanes. The **Golden State Fireworks Manufacturing Company** has exploded. As the underground powder kegs ignite, the earth shakes. "The experience was beautiful, exciting and scary, and I will never forget the night of the blazing skies and red rockets," states one resident. (Snyder 1, 19 May 1994)
- 1941 After considering relocating outside the city, the fireworks company decides instead to rebuild on their north Redondo site. This the city allows and during the war the company produces 103 million, 20 millimeter shells for the War Department (Snyder 1, 4 February 1947).
- 1945 **Burst of local commercial operations along Redondo Beach (Artesia) Boulevard.** The area of Redondo Beach Boulevard between Aviation Boulevard and Rindge Lane experiences a small but important burst of commercial development. Many of the locally owned and operated stores already in the area also expand during this period including the addition of a retail jewelry store to the novelty manufacturing studio operated by J.H. Kitchin at 1935 Redondo Beach Boulevard, the addition of a beer garden and drive-in cafe to Al's Cafe located at 1901 Redondo Beach Boulevard, the sale of Carr's Drive Inn and adjoining filling station located at 2600 Redondo Beach Boulevard and the

expansion of its menu under the new name of the "Corner Inn", and an addition to Donlou's Market located at 1512 Pier (Aviation) Avenue.

J.H. Kitchin and his wife also own the Southwest Souvenir Company located at the Pier. The Kitchins established their Redondo Boulevard site prior to the war. Here they manufacture abalone pearl, agate and moonstone jewelry which they sell in their store on the Pier. By the end of the war only the Kitchin's novelty manufacturing company and one other remains in the Redondo Beach area out of an original eighteen such operations. The Kitchins' novelty shop survives the war years using a large stock of gold wire, moonstones and abalone pearls. In 1945, as supplies become available once again, the Kitchins add a retail gift shop to the factory on Redondo Boulevard where they sell costume jewelry, Laguna Pottery, watches, etc.

Civic Developments

- 1940 In 1940, the Redondo Beach City Council approves plans for a new and expanded **North Redondo Community Center** to include a civic auditorium and a library. Preliminary drawings, plans and elevations are prepared by Walter O. Wurdeman of Wurdeman and Becket, a Los Angeles architectural firm. Following approval by the council, the city prepares an application for WPA Federal Aid to construct the project. These plans are placed on hold however by the entrance of the United States into the Second World War in 1941.
- 1945 **Formation of a new community organization - the North Redondo Civic Center Citizens.** Forms to investigate and to promote the needs of the north Redondo community. Calling itself The North Redondo People, the group meets to hear plans for a proposed bus service on Aviation which will extend into the new Redondo Hills subdivision, plans to lay a two inch coating of asphalt on every street in north Redondo so that the new bus service can be extended throughout the community, and the possibility of obtaining street lighting in the community. The superintendent of schools also outlines the school needs and the plans to build a new school on Vail Avenue once a new bond issue is approved by the city voters. More than 100 members of the north Redondo community attend this first meeting.⁹

⁹This appears to be the first meeting of the organization since the agenda also includes the election of officers who include Paul Heinzl of 2804 Vail Street as permanent president and E. Johnson as chairman of the board of directors. During the meeting, a letter from Sunset Stages is read proposing a bus route which would begin at Emerald Street, downtown Redondo, move north along Hermosa, turn east on Pier Avenue, turn north on Aviation and east again on Manhattan Beach Boulevard to the new Redondo Hills subdivision.

- 1946 These efforts pay off when, in 1946, Major General Fleming of the Federal Works Administration announces that the city is to receive the necessary funds to construct a new police substation, a recreation center and a public library in north Redondo Beach.¹⁰ 1946 also marks the beginning of the long-anticipated bus service to the new tracts opening in northern areas.¹¹
- 1947 In an effort to reduce residential burglaries, the north Redondo People work closely with the Edison Company to create and execute a street-lighting program.¹²
- 1948 Creation of a special lighting district by the Redondo Beach City Council.
- 1945-1948 **Lincoln School.** Immediately following World War II, residents of Redondo Beach vote with an over-whelming majority to modernize and expand their school system in the northern section of the city. With the issuance of a new bond and the receipt of \$55,000 from the federal grant program, Redondo Beach begins construction on the Lincoln School located on Vail Avenue between Farrell and Plant avenues (Snyder 1, 4 May 1945). Three years later, additional rooms are added to accommodate the increasing number of students.
- 1948 **Washington and Adams Schools.** The City begins negotiations with the owners of a ten-acre site located on Lillenthal and Ripley avenues in order to construct a new elementary school. Designed to alleviate over-crowding at Grant and Beryl schools.

Residential developments.

- 1946-1950 **Continued growth of bedroom community due to war effort and returning veterans.** A very interesting element of residential growth in north Redondo are the tent communities. Large numbers of tent-residences begin appearing in the north Redondo area as veterans return from the war to find an acute shortage of rental property. In response, veterans begin purchasing vacant lots on which to build their future homes. As more and more tents are erected, either as temporary shelter or as a means of safe-guarding valuable lumber, neighboring residents demand that the City Council ban all forms of temporary housing in an effort to protect property values and public health (none of the tents or temporary shacks

¹⁰ Actual construction of these three structures did not begin until after April of 1947 when the City Council calls for the completion of the required paper-work out of fear of losing this funding (Snyder 1, 11 April 1947).

¹¹"North Redondo Bus Line starts at long last" (Snyder 1, 4 January 1946). "FWA grant for North Redondo library and substation" (Snyder 1, 2 August 1946).

¹²"North Redondo Beach wants street lights to cut down thievery there" (Snyder 1, 28 November 1947).

are attached to the city sewer system).

One 1946 editorial questioning the resulting eviction notice issued by the Council states:

Comes now a shortage of places to live. Perhaps there is a greater danger of theft of lumber than ever before. It is more valuable than it ever was. Is that why we have so many tents in North Redondo? As memory takes us back farther -- unless our memory has slipped in our old age, wasn't it tents that made Redondo Beach famous? Surely "Tent City" in Redondo Beach was famous from coast to coast 50 years ago. Tent City stretched from the Masonic Temple along the beach to El Paseo. The city park, the Bank of America, the Elks Club are all located on what was once "Tent City" in Redondo Beach, where people from all over the U.S. came to bask in the warmth and hospitality of California sunshine. But City Council says there shall be no more tents in Redondo Beach. So much for that. (Snyder 1, 19 July 1946)

Additional building restrictions on new construction in north Redondo. In response to an increase in demand for residential housing throughout Redondo Beach, but in particular in north Redondo where vacant land is plentiful, the City Council develops a re-zoning ordinance banning poultry, rabbits, milk cows, horses and other domestic farm animals from the north Redondo area. Many long-time residents strongly oppose this rezoning effort on the grounds that north Redondo has a long history as a rural area where many residents have invested their life savings in the purchase of small acreage where they can raise their own domestic animals and be somewhat self-dependent. Those opposed to the zoning change, refer back to statements made by the original 1927 Annexation Committee that no restrictions will be made against local farming efforts except those already excluded by the County Health Department. Unfortunately, the regional wave of sub-division combined with the tax advantages offered the city by real estate development companies are against such grass-root efforts to retain the rural environment of north Redondo Beach.

1947 As the North Redondo area moves away from its original rural environment toward its current suburban composition, an increasing number of housing tract residents begin to take an active interest in the limiting of industrial development in their area and the re-zoning of large tracts for strictly residential use. One struggle arises in early 1947. Residents work to block the owners of the Golden

State Fireworks Manufacturing Company from expanding their business following the disastrous fire and explosion seven years earlier.¹³

1948 Property owners in north Redondo also organize in an effort to change existing residential construction ordinances which allow for the construction of small residences. Some residents oppose the "shanty town" appearance of the north Redondo area while others claim that small structures encourage the practice of loan sharking because banks and the FHA will not issue loans on extremely small residences.

4 Nov 1948 The Redondo Beach City Council convenes before an over-flowing audience to hear arguments for and against a proposal to boost building area minimums from 480 to 750 square feet. A well organized group from the North Redondo Beach Property Owners' Association argues that the Council should increase building minimums. On the opposite side, two realtors and several small home owners argue for the maintenance of the 480 square foot minimum. In response to one real estate agent's argument that veterans should be offered homes that they could afford, one veteran states "I think my kids are entitled to more than a two room shack."

This debate, which eventually results in modifications to the district's building code, illustrates the significant changes which have occurred in the north Redondo area following World War II. Slowly at first and then more rapidly, a strong community of suburban residents have replaced the earlier sparse rural community which typifies this area through the early 1940s. As increasing numbers of veterans and their families choose to settle in Redondo Beach and to purchase the newly-constructed homes in and around north Redondo, the demand for a more urban setting and conveniences increases. Consistent with these changes is the fact that many of the new home owners who appear before the city council to argue for the increase in the minimum square footage are World War II veterans.¹⁴

¹³News articles contained in the North Redondo file do not indicate whether the Golden State Fireworks Company was issued a permit and allowed to manufacture signal flares for use by railroads, highway crews, merchant marine and police departments as proposed by the owner in 1947. Strong incentives for issuing the permit existed for the city. In addition to the employment opportunities, the factory also paid approximately \$20,000 each year in tax revenues to the city.

¹⁴ Several weeks after their presentation to the city council, the North Redondo Property Association met to appoint a special committee to aid the council in making the requested changes to the building code for their district. Although articles in the north Redondo file do not indicate whether this change was made, an investigation of the current building code would probably confirm that the change was adopted.

Tract housing in north Redondo.

1943-1947 **Redondo Hills.** Announcements of a large subdivision to contain 145, five and six-room houses appear in April of 1943. Constructed on land owned by Mrs. May Isabel Campbell-Johnson, Redondo Hills represents 70 acres located north of Robinson Avenue, between Inglewood and Vail avenues. Plans include the paving of streets and the laying of sidewalks. The initial ten homes are constructed on Pinkard, May and Timothy Avenues. An additional 97 homes are built in 1947 on Perkins Lane and the surrounding streets which include Barkley Lane, the 2900 block of Gibson Lane, Blaisdell Avenue, Carlsbad Street, Faber Street and McBain Street.¹⁵

1948 **Safeway Homes Ltd.** In 1948 plans to complete North Redondo's "New Tract" are announced by Safeway Homes Limited. Located within the remaining triangular section of the tract bordering the Redondo Hills development, Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Inglewood Avenue, the new Safeway subdivision offers promises of 150 new, two-bedroom homes set in a fully restricted site.

1948 **Security Construction Company of Los Angeles Homes.** Another major developer who begins work in north Redondo in 1948 is the Security Construction Company of Los Angeles. Rather than purchase and develop a single large tract, this housing construction company purchases 54 individual lots through out the area on which they construct forty homes which sell for \$4,000 and fourteen homes, each costing \$3,200. Advertisements for the project state that all homes constructed will have three rooms and a bath and will be planned so that two additional rooms can be added without disturbing the original floor plan.¹⁶

Sites where Security Construction Company Homes of Los Angeles plans to build homes:

40 homes valued at \$4000 each are to be built. All to have 3 rooms and one bath, with room to add 2 more rooms. The following 35 sites are listed in the news article dated February 13, 1948:

¹⁵"Half Million Building Project to get underway" (Snyder 1, 2 April 1943). "Open 97 homes in new R.B. Tract" (Snyder 1, 3 October 1947).

¹⁶"\$200,000 Permit Value for 50 Small Homes On Scattered No. Redondo Sites" (Snyder 1, 13 February 1948).

NORTH REDONDO BEACH

2012 Belmont	2225 Graham
2117 Belmont	2700 Grant
2103 Carnegie	2702 Grant
2105 Carnegie	2407 Grant
2607 Carnegie	2411 Harriman
2701 Carnegie	2507 Harriman
2114 Clark	2408 Hill
2120 Clark	2410 Hill
2521 Curtis	2419 Hill
2523 Curtis	2007 Huntington
2021 Farrell	2506 Huntington
2023 Farrell	1915 Perry
2113 Gates	2018 Pullman
2115 Gates	2020 Pullman
2620 Gates	2414 Ralston
2622 Gates	1512 Steinhart
2207 Graham	1027 Vanderbilt
2223 Graham	

14 homes valued at \$3200 each are also scheduled to be built. All have 3 rooms and one bath. All 14 sites are listed in the news article dated February 13, 1948:

1731 Carver	1902 Pullman
1735 Carver	1904 Pullman
2110 Dufour	2313 Ralston
2112 Dufour	2315 Ralston
2421 Hill	2406 Ralston
1203 Krutchmitt	2408 Ralston
1900 Pullman	2410 Ralston