

HUNTINGTON BEACH  
HISTORY  
(REFERENCE  
PAMPHLET FILE)

# BICENTENNIAL

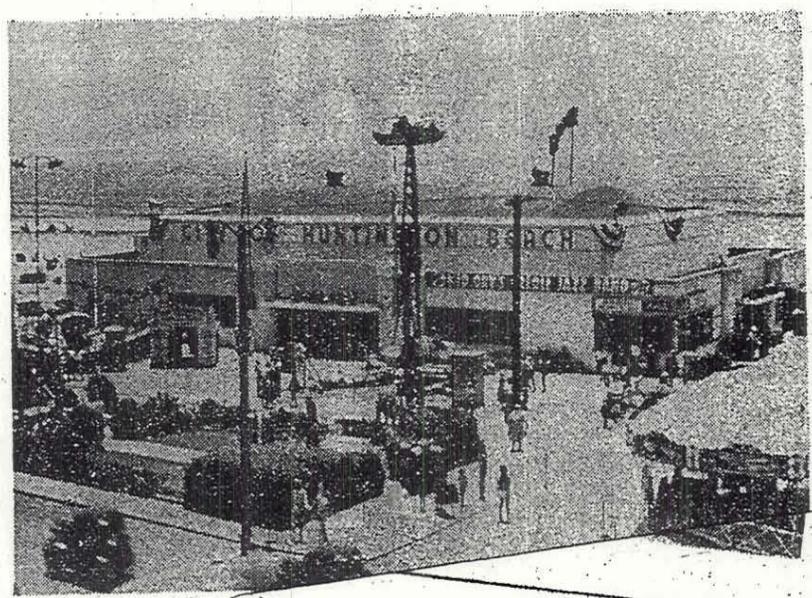
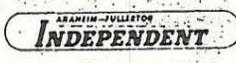
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A historical perspective of Huntington Beach



Huntington Beach, the Bicentennial City of the State of California

July 1, 1976



# Oil ... oil ... a rebirth

By STEVE MARBLE  
The area was known as "Gospel Swamps". It was a haven for religious revival meetings as well as fugitives from the law. The swampy willow thickets were ignored by the masses and considered worthless by the real estate prospectors.

No one could foresee the future, the violent storms, an oil boom, a population boom and a tidal wave of surfers. No one had any idea that the bean fields would yield a crop of new houses or that the tidal flats would hold a \$100 million marina and large estate type homes.

But men like John Bushard, S.E. Talbert, Bruce Wardlow, William Newland and P.A. Stanton knew the area had promise. They had dreams but it's doubtful that any of them could even imagine the Huntington Beach of today.

One man, P.A. Stanton, took a good look at the shell littered beach and saw a western Atlantic City. Pacific City he appropriately named the area. But a year later he sold his interest to the Huntington Beach Company, a group of businessmen from Los Angeles, and in 1904, as Henry Huntington extended his railway into the small sleepy town, the town was renamed Huntington Beach.



**REAL ESTATE OFFICE**— Thomas Talbert was one of the early real estate brokers in Huntington Beach. Talbert was a pioneer and early land owner in the area. Photo courtesy City of Huntington Beach.

### P.E. HITS TOWN

The day the Pacific Electric Railroad hit town was the day that changed things for good. Over 50,000 people poured upon the tiny town. Many of them were lured by the efforts of the many real estate promoters in the area but many of them came just to see the town's first parade and free barbecue.

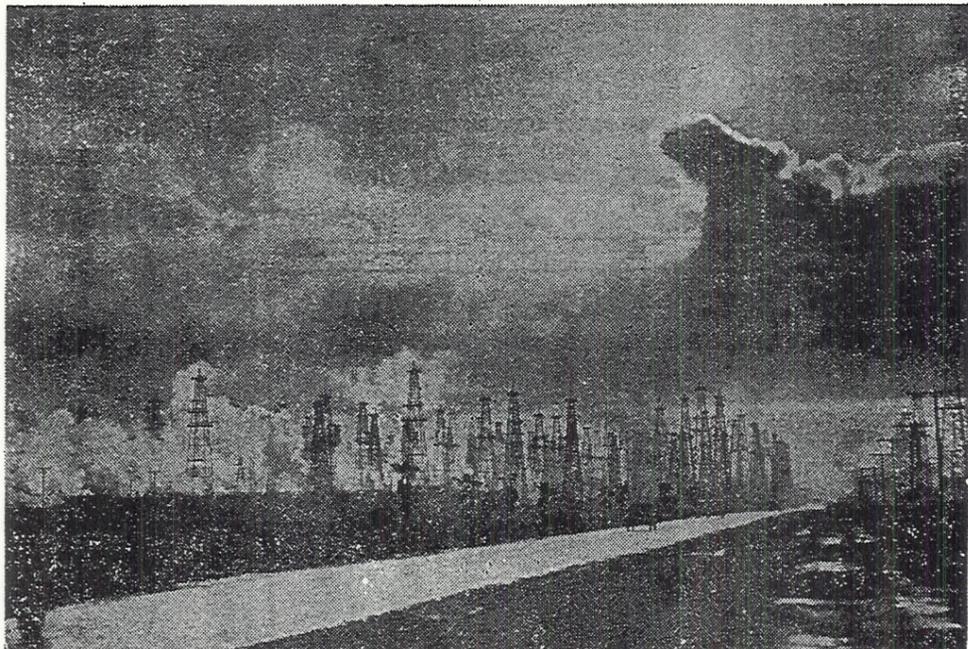
To further encourage this new migration the Huntington Beach Company built a half mile long wooden pier. Fishermen flocked to the pier and sunbathers discovered the surrounding beach area as

favorable. A tent city was set up to accommodate to crowds. When the wooden pier was broken up in a violent sea storm the local citizens rallied to pass a \$70,000 bond issue which made it possible to build the new concrete pier in 1914. The new one was the longest highest and only solid concrete municipal pleasure pier in the United States. More recently it has become wildly known as the site of the annual U.S. Surfing Championships.

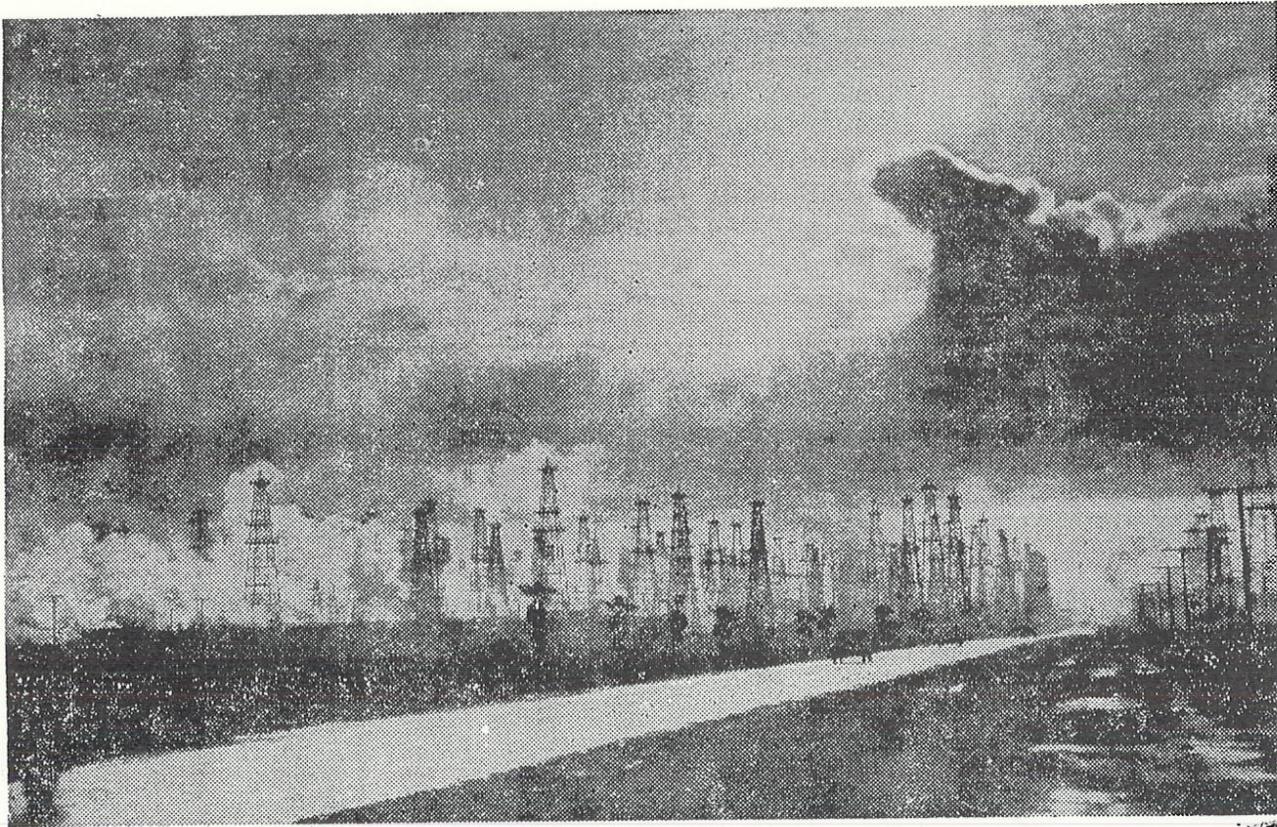
### LAND PURCHASE

One early and colorful

bit of Huntington Beach history was the Encyclopedia Britannica land purchase. Thirty five acres of land was purchased by the encyclopedia company from the Huntington Beach Company at \$200 an acre. The land, which the encyclopedia company divided into very small lots, was used as an incentive device to encourage people to buy the encyclopedias. A person buying a complete set of Encyclopedia Britannicas got a small but nevertheless honest chunk of Huntington Beach.



**BLACK GOLD AND RAINDROPS**—Like an artist's painting is this picture of Huntington Beach in its earlier days. A thunder shower accents the towering autos of the 1920s chug along high speed highway upon it would have driven in those days.



**BLACK GOLD AND RAINDROPS**—Like an artist's painting is this picture of Huntington Beach in its earlier days. A thunder shower accents the towering oil wells as

autos of the 1920s chug along the narrow highway, a far cry from today's high speed thoroughfares; at 55 mph it would have been a daredevil drive in those days.

## THE H.B. STORY

### —LIKE FICTION

On the 4th of July in 1904 the seaside community of Pacific City opened its arms to Henry Huntington and his Pacific Electric Railroad. The little town's name was quickly changed to Huntington Beach. But this area had inhabitants and a history long before this event.

More than 1500 years ago Indians of Shoshonean stock came and claimed a small 100 mile strip of coastline which included Huntington Beach. One group of these people the Gabrielenos, inhabited the northern half of the territory, and the Luisenos, the southern half. Evidence supports the idea that these Indians remained in this area until as "recently" as 200 years ago.

In 1784 Huntington Beach came under European control. The Spanish Governor of California gave the area to Jose Manuel Nieto, who held onto it until 1861. At this time it was purchased by Abel Stearns, who went on to form the Stearns Rancho Company and used the land to grow grain and run his cattle and horses.

#### CHRONOLOGY

1901 — The town of Shell Beach is transformed into Pacific City by P.A. Stanton, the man who dreamed of setting up a west coast town to rival Atlantic City.

1902 — The first pier is built. The long wooden structure attracts first fishermen to Huntington Beach.

1904 — The citizens of Pacific City lure Henry Huntington and his railway company into town by promising to name the town after him. Huntington Beach is on the map.

1906 — The first wooden pier is ruined in a violent sea storm.

1909 — Huntington Beach becomes the 6th incorporated city in Orange County. The first library is purchased for \$50.

1912 — Huntington Beach accepts beach frontage from the Huntington Beach company and begins to build roads to increase beach traffic.

1914 — The new concrete pier is built after the city rallies to pass a \$70,000 bond issue.

1920 — Oil is discovered in Huntington Beach and reaches a total production of 119,000 barrels per day.

1923 — The new city hall is built on the site where the old grammar school was located.

1933 — An earthquake damages city hall, auditorium and library. The damage in the city hall was so great that the offices had to be moved into tents surrounding the area until the damage was repaired.

1939 — The fire department gets a brand new station at Main, Pecan and Fifth streets. Another raging sea storm sends waves crashing over pier and again inflicts such damages.

# 338 books to 125,000 How the library has grown

By STEVE MARBLE

OCEN-BP-HB-LM-AF BICENTEN

The five-story building with its indoor gardens, bubbling fountains and vast expanses of glass walls looks like some idealist's conception of the perfect meeting place for a town with several hundred thousand residents eager to jump into some academic activity.

Indeed it is that and more. It is certainly a far cry from Huntington Beach's first library. This was a roofless small building purchased for \$50 in the early 1900s and housing only 333 volumes. In contrast, the new Huntington Beach Library, Information and Cultural Resource Center cost close to \$5 million and has the capacity to house a total of 350,000 volumes. Presently the stacks hold approximately 125,000 volumes.

But the new library, which sits on a slight hill overlooking Huntington Central Park, is much more than a storage place for books, according to Library Director Walter W. Johnson. Inside the architecturally unique building, facilities are ready to serve the public in a variety of ways. The library has been so designed that nearly 30 per cent of the major floor's area is clear of the book storage stacks. An art and book shop, numerous displays, a music department, wide open reading areas as well as a stretch of microfilm machines fill up some of this open area.

All of this must be a particularly amazing sight to those who have watched the 68 years of library development in Huntington Beach. The tiny library of 1909 was replaced in 1913 when the City

Council received a \$10,000 grant. The Carnegie Library was built.

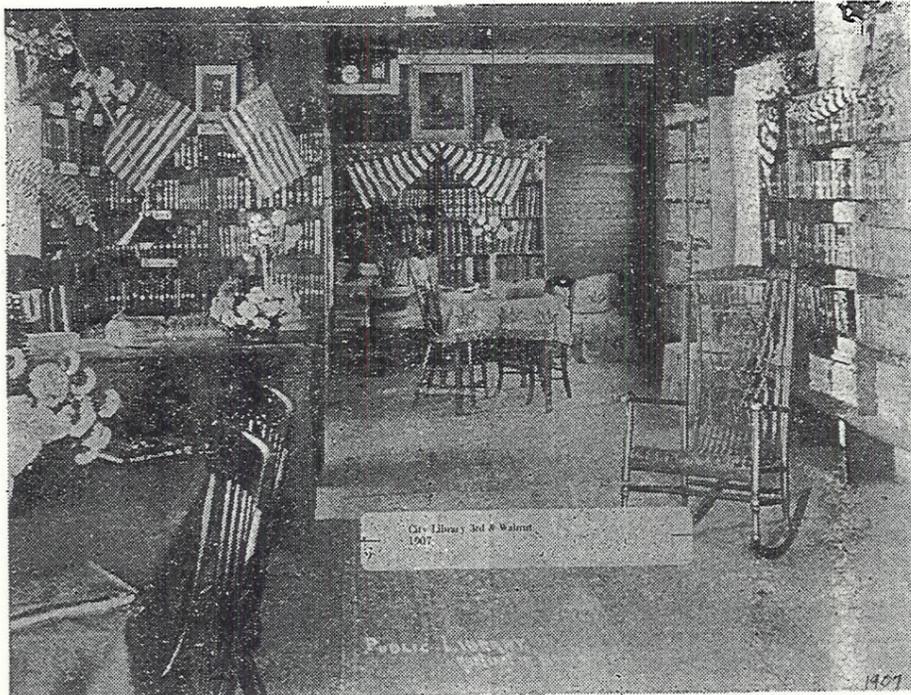
In 1933, the Carnegie Library suffered considerable damage in the great earthquake which struck the area. The building was repaired and turned in 40 years of service before the front doors were closed for good. By this time the number of books had grown to 42,000.

In 1951 a new library building on Main Street was dedicated by Mayor Vernon Langenbeck. The library was built at a cost of \$140,000. The new Huntington Beach Library started its existence in 1967 when Johnson created a program citing the library needs for a growing community and the Talbert Avenue site was chosen. The work, however, had only begun. It would be eight years before the new library was dedicated.

The entire project was almost nipped in the bud when local voters turned down a bond issue designed to fund the project.

## ON THE COVER

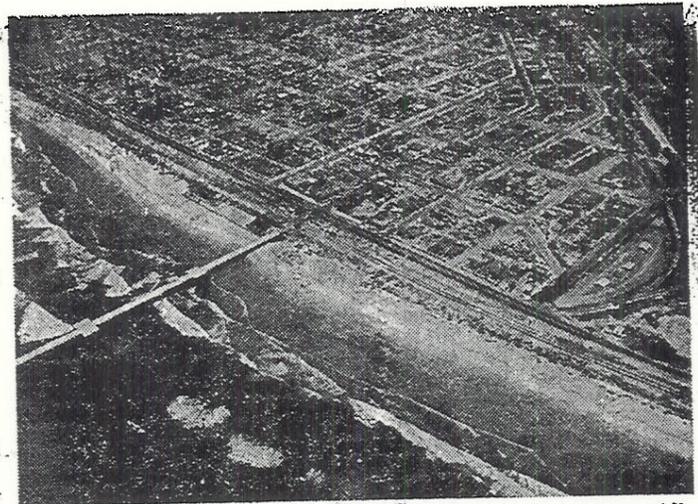
Top: A view of Main Street looking towards the ocean. Huntington Beach was a small sleepy little town until the oil explosion in 1920, Upper Left: Early store in Huntington Beach, Lower Left: Oil wells, a symbol of the new found wealth in the 1920's, shadow bathers — at Huntington Beach, Lower Right: Pavilion at base of pier brought in customers and early bands. Here Kid Ory's Creole Jazz Band is advertised.



CITY LIBRARY of Huntington Beach in 1907 was quite different from today's facility. This was cozy, too, even though it is in sharp contrast with the modern

library in a five story building with indoor gardens and bubbling fountains. Photo courtesy of the City of Huntington Beach.

709 1907



**HUNTINGTON BEACH** — Bird's eye view of pier and rapidly expanding Huntington Beach in 1920. Oil wells, shown in top left of picture, had come in over night in 1920.



**DOWNTOWN** — A view of Main Street looking inland from Pacific Coast Highway. Many of the buildings shown in the early 1900s photograph remain intact and open for business.

It's actually a barn

# Playhouse popular

The Huntington Beach Playhouse, more popularly known as the "Barn", has been bringing joy and talent to the citizens of Huntington Beach for 13 years.

The Huntington Beach Playhouse received its name, its officers, its projects and its dreams one year before the Huntington Beach Company offered the group the use of the "Barn." This first year was one of struggle and financial difficulties. But, the group possessed such enthusiasm that through a fund-raising luncheon and several loans they scrapped enough together to pay the royalties for their first production, the Mary Chase comedy "Harvey".

This first production was put on in the music room of the Huntington Beach High School. The group was pleased with the production but had their eyes and ears open for any suggestions that

might lead to a permanent home. What they found was not only a permanent home but a spot that was already a landmark to the local citizens.

The "Barn", which was just what the name implied, had been used by the Huntington Beach Company for livestock and grain storage. When the playhouse group first set up shop they looked about and saw owls and pigeons already at home.

"The atmosphere could not have been more perfect," several members were supposed to have exclaimed.

In keeping with the rustic atmosphere of the new playhouse the group chose to put on the prison camp play, "Stalag 17". Every member of the playhouse group worked hard to turn the barn into a thrust theater with risers on three sides. By opening night, July 24, 1964, the essentials were there; seats, painted walls, areas

to dress in and primitive lighting. The list of comforts ended there.

But the public turned out to enjoy this new cultural spot and didn't even complain that they had to walk down the hill to get to the portable restroom. Community theater found a home in H.B. that night.

Success led to improvements. With the profits from the first productions the group saw to it that the barn got dressing rooms, storage places, indoor plumbing with all the comforts, a much needed theater, new seats, ceilings, new walls and a strong steady stream of customers. Scholarships were set up for deserving students and a children's theater began in the summer of 1968.

In honor of this year's, bicentennial the playhouse group put on "Little Foxes". Information on the playhouse can be found out by calling 842-5421.

## House saved by public

Standing on a grassy mesa that contains the Newland House one can almost imagine what it must have been like 78 years ago when William Taylor Newland broke through the swampy flatlands to build this house. The ocean would have been shimmering in the distance, the gulls would be squawking as they flew over the tidal basins and the wind would rush up this one unique mesa and softly part the grass.

It must have been a sight like this that encouraged William Newland into undertaking the arduous task of hauling lumber and supplies all the way from Newport Beach by

horse and wagon. Using many of the tools at hand in this new and unsettled area, Newland went down to the beach and hauled gravel from the beach. Newland and his wife, Mary Zuanita, set this gravel in the sun to bake off the salt and water and then used it to cement the houses foundation.

What sprang from this hard labor was a finely shaped two-story Victorian style mansion that to this day catches the eye of anyone whizzing down Beach Boulevard. As the town of Huntington Beach grew up through real estate campaigns, oil exploitations and a brand new railway line, Newland

raised his family on the hill and took an active interest in steering the young town's growth.

Newland was instrumental in starting the first school for Kindergarten through sixth grade students. He helped build the first church, organized the first bank and establish the first newspaper. He was also instrumental in starting the first high school district, that included Westminster, Springdale, Fountain Valley and Huntington Beach, in 1906.

The Newland mansion had caused an impressive gathering of community spirit.

# HB parade set for national TV

Crisp clear notes dance under the blue sunny sky, a myriad flowers sweep by the crowd and sounds of delight are heard as one beautiful float is followed by another.

The folks of Orange County have become accustomed to Huntington Beach's annual 4th of July spectaculars but this year the whole nation will get a treat it has yet to experience. The estimated attendance of one million people, the celebrities, the 50 or so floats, the 21 marching bands and the entire colorful display will be brought into the living rooms of millions across the nation.

This year's parade, "Sounds of Freedom", has been deemed important enough by television network NBC to be shown nationwide. The parade has also been officially tagged by the California Assembly as the Bicentennial Parade of the State of California.

All of this seems well earned for a city that for 72 years has crowded Main Street with eager faces waiting to see the parade. Down through the years there have also been baseball games, firework displays, free barbecues, rodeos and patriotic speeches by the score. Celebrities from actress Jane Mansfield to Disneyland's mouseketeers have served as grand marshals.



EARL HOLLIMAN — Star of the TV series "Police Woman" will be grand marshal.

And this year is to be the best and biggest parade ever, according to Parade Director Steve Pressley. Earl Holliman, star of TV's "Police Woman", will be this year's grand marshal. Newscaster and Huntington Beach Parade veteran George Putnum will be equestrian grand marshal. David Spielburg, co-star of the TV series "The Practice", and Williams Smithers, star of a new fall series "Executive Suite", will be on hand.

The entry coming from the furthest distance is the 6th United States Army Band from San Francisco. The band, noted for its wide repertoire, will perform in Lake Park after the parade.

## BICENTENNIAL EVENTS

JULY 2 — Downtown Merchants' Guild Festival.

This is a four day festival that is open to the public. The first and second blocks of Main Street will be closed off to the traffic. Vendors and shop owners will be displaying their goods in a flea market atmosphere. Entertainment, contests and music are in the lineup.

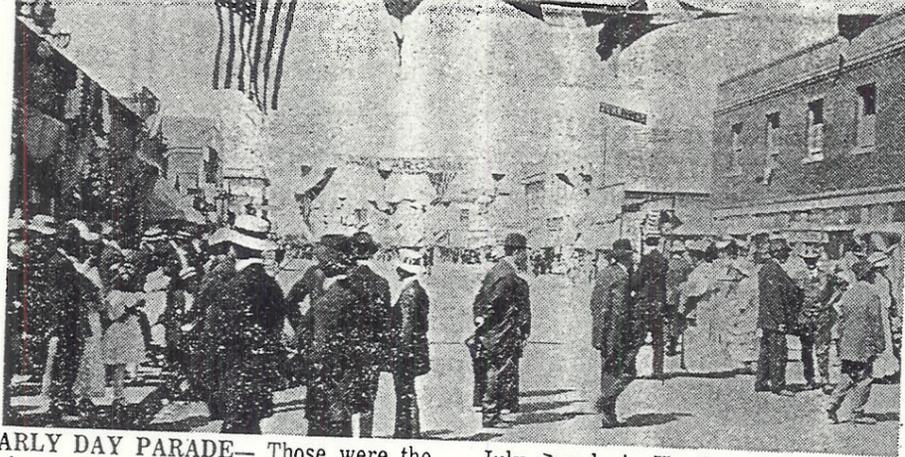
JULY 3 — DMG Festival continues.

JULY 4 — The Huntington Beach 4th of July Parade will start at 12:30 p.m. following the Mayor's reception. The parade will last approximately two hours. Right after the parade there will be a "old fashioned" 4th of July celebration in Lake Park. The public is welcome.

JULY 5 — The final day of the DMG Festival.



A DAY IN THE SUN— A scene of 1928 in Huntington Beach. Local historian Bud Higgins remembers well— he was on duty as a lifeguard when photo was snapped. The strand was a bit crowded as sun lovers came to the beach to enjoy a day of picnic and getting sunburned. Nothing has changed, except they come by the thousands and millions yearly.



**EARLY DAY PARADE**— Those were the days, the early 1900s, when you put on your best suit, or dress, instead of swim trunks and bikinis to watch a Fourth of

July parade in Huntington Beach. Note the men's headgear and the elegant straws. Photo courtesy First American Title Insurance Co.

## Got name and parade same day Happened in 1906

Seventy-two years ago Huntington Beach received its name and its first 4th of July parade. Some 50,000 people swarmed upon the sleepy seaside village to watch the red railroad cars of Henry Huntington's Pacific Electric Railroad roll into town. A parade, a free barbeque, speeches, games and a firework display followed.

A precedent had been set and 4th of July celebrations skyrocketed until the parade became the second biggest in the state. Except for the war years each July has brought a new and more ambitious spirit to the parade.

1905 — Huntington Beach celebrated its first birthday with close to 12,000 people and was billed as "The greatest little town around".

1908 — William Newland was marshal and an Egyptian Fortune Teller performed. Races, baseball games, music, dancing and fireworks were some of the events.

1910 — The newly completed Plunge and Bathhouse was the center of interest this year. Another baseball game, which the whole town turned out for was held.

1921 — The parade committee set \$50 aside to be divided into three prizes for the best decorated auto or float. Boxing matches

replaced the baseball game.

1927 — An estimated 65,000 people turned out to see the fireworks, a Baby Parade and a "Bucking Ford".

1930 — A record 200,000 people flooded Huntington Beach and were entertained by the "Wild West Rodeo", featuring Bonnie Gray and her champion jumping horse, which managed to leap a Cadillac stuffed with five passengers.

1935 — William "Generalissimo" Galliene, manager of the Chamber of Commerce organized the event and guided the 4th of July parade into the position it now holds in the state as second only to the Pasadena Tournament of Roses. T.B. Talbert was grand marshal.

1940 — The two mile parade drew 100,000 people and the actor, Nat Pendleton, was grand marshal.

1948 — The first Huntington Beach Air Show was held in conjunction with the celebration. The "Firecracker Queen" descended in a helicopter and greeted the audience.

1953 — The crowds watched 300 entries follow. Grand Marshal Victor McLaglen, the movie star.

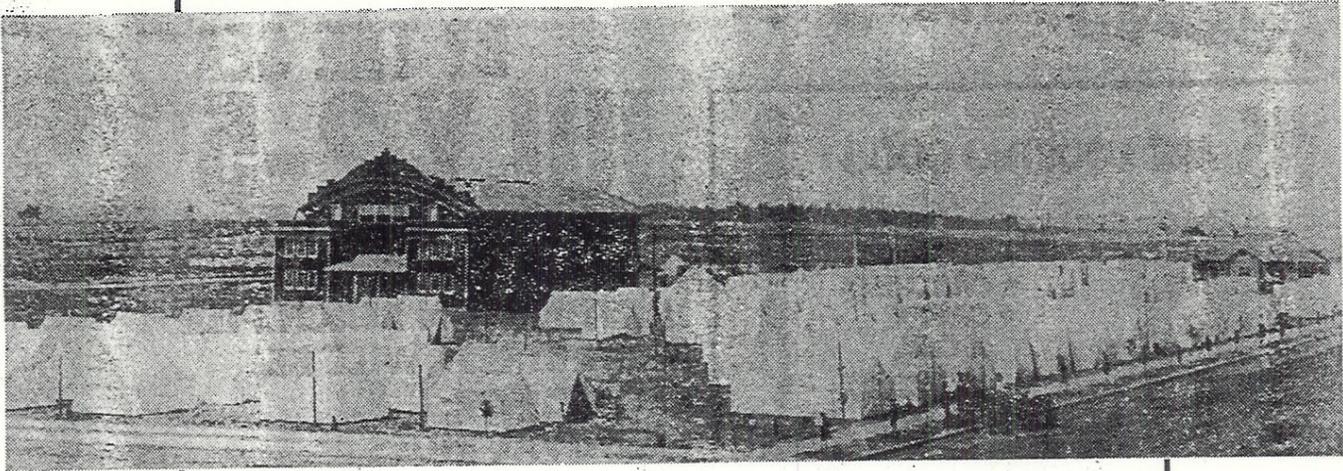
1959 — For the first time, a woman headed the parade, Jane Mansfield was grand marshal.



**HARD WORKING TEAM**— Members of the Bicentennial Commission which has been the backbone of many activities, are: back row, from left, Haydie Tillotson, S. Smith, Joe Whaling, Peggy Freeman,

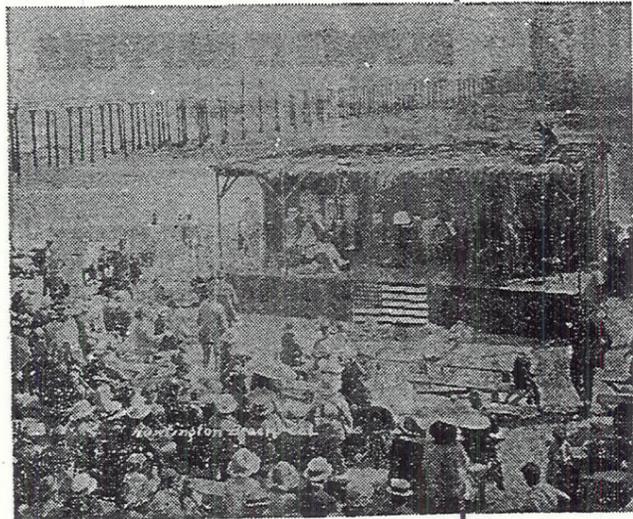
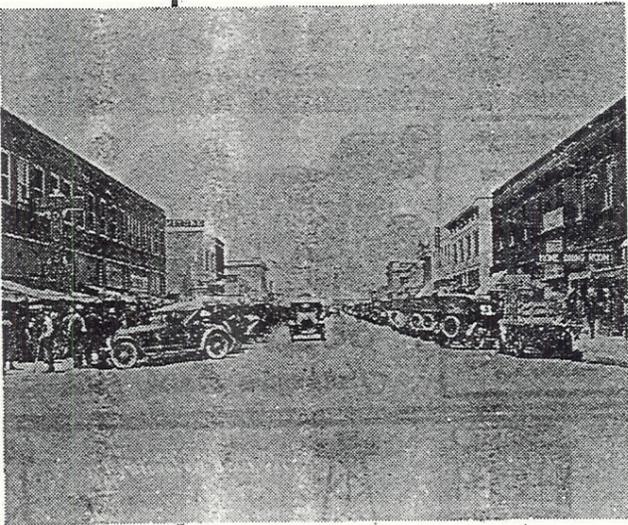
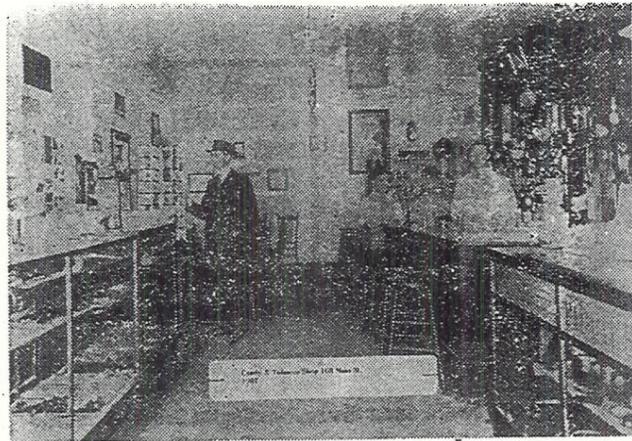
Steve Pressley (parade director ; second row, Louise Woodruff, Idelle Jungbluth, Carole Wall, Connie Bauer, Bill Reed; kneeling, Layne Neugart and Diane Jackson.

# The Way It Was



## EARLY DAYS

This is Huntington Beach when it was still a sleepy little village. In those early days the population was less than 1,000. The town was a popular retreat for religious groups and the surrounding swamps made a hideout for fugitives. Clockwise (1) Tent city in 1906, set up for Civil War veterans and also used by religious groups. (2) Candy and tobacco shop on Main Street in 1907; Eddie Darlings owned this drug store and later took his business to Garden Grove. (3) Early day photograph of beach and pier; a band has just finished performing for beach fans. (4) downtown Huntington Beach of yesteryear.





**PEACEFUL** Yes, that WAS Pacific Coast Highway in 1906. Nothing like the busy strip it is now, with whizzing cars and surfers crossing the lane. One lone pedestrian occupies the entire

section. Note a pavilion at far right. In center is what might have been a fast food take-out place. Between that building and pavilion is an electric car.

## HB always a magnet Sparkling beach lures millions

Millions used to go there. A few hundred years later an occasional hardy sunbather would scramble down the bluffs to go there. And now an estimated 7 million people make the trek to the sandy seaside of Huntington Beach.

The beach first started to get visitors when a 1,000 foot pier was built in 1902. Two years later with the

addition of the pavilion and bathhouse the crowds increased. The bathhouse was a special treat to the visitors. At the time it was one of the few places in the country that actually contained salt water which had been pumped up from the ocean. A seal named "Bill" was kept in a tank near the pavilion and aroused visitors' curiosity.

### A LOOK AT THE FUTURE

The downtown Merchants Guild Festival has not only become a very welcome addition to the 4th of July activities in Huntington Beach but it just might be an introduction to the downtown Huntington Beach of tomorrow.

The Bicentennial Festival, which runs from July 2 to the 5th, will temporarily close Main Street from Pacific Coast Highway to Olive Street. It will have flea market atmosphere.

The first wooden pier was busted up in a violent sea storm. It was eight years before a new pier was built. It was then that the 915 citizens of Huntington Beach came together with a gallant effort that saw the passage of a \$70,000 bond issue and the construction of the new 1,320 foot long concrete pier. It was the longest, highest and only solid concrete municipal pleasure pier in the United States.

At 11 a.m. June 12, 1914, the new concrete pier was officially dedicated. The day was a bright one in Huntington Beach history. The Donatelli Italian Band played while Japanese fencing and sword dancers performed. Later in the day there were band concerts, races and many other events.

Years later, after an additional 500 feet had been added to the pier, a heavy storm sent 23 foot waves crashing over the end of the pier. Once again the pier sustained heavy damage. This time, in an all out effort to keep this from happening again, sand and rock were hauled from Catalina Island and built into U-shaped reef 150 feet from the pier's end. This helped slow down the current as well as helping in the propagating of fish and other marine life.

There were other reasons why people began to flock to the beach. One of the reasons was the plane rides leaving from the beach area next to the pier. World War I planes, "Jenny" biplanes, provided joy rides for the tourists for the reasonable rate of \$5 a ride or \$10 for a loop the loop special. A tragic air accident put an end to this activity.

The guiding pioneers

# People who stood out in HB's early history

It's 1976. The Bicentennial year.

The word evokes a hundred different feelings and a hundred different theories on just what it means. But if anytime seems right for reviewing the past and those of the past that have made the present possible, this year is that time. Any list of names involved in Huntington Beach history would undoubtedly fall short of being complete but the following people would be on the top of any list of pioneers and guiding leaders.

### SLATER FAMILY

William Slater, born in 1883, came to this area when he was nine. As the years passed he decided that he wanted to have his own land and raise crops.

This was far from an unusual dream during this time.

Slater acquired his first 20 acres of land in the area now situated between Slater Avenue and Golden West Street. He married in 1908. His wife, Bonnie Clay, was the first Springdale School teacher. They lived on a ranch located on the land that Slater farmed. Over the years Slater acquired a good portion of the land within or surrounding Huntington Central park.

The Slaters raised celery, sugar beets and later lima beans. In 1964, one year before Slater died, he sold the major portion of his land.

### PRESTON FAMILY

In 1904 a wagon rolled into Huntington Beach.

Lewis Preston and his wife, Sarah, stepped from the wagon, took a look around and purchased the property that is now located at Beach Boulevard and Warner Avenue.

Preston and his eldest son, William, spent long hard hours trying to find a way to reclaim the swampy land. They dug out peat and tried to fill the swampy area with anything at hand, including old car bodies and scrap. The plan backfired as the junk sunk to the bottom, leaving water and peat on most of the land.

The Preston family helped build the Methodist Church on Warner Avenue and Gothard Street. They also started Sunday School classes there and at the Baptist Church in the area.

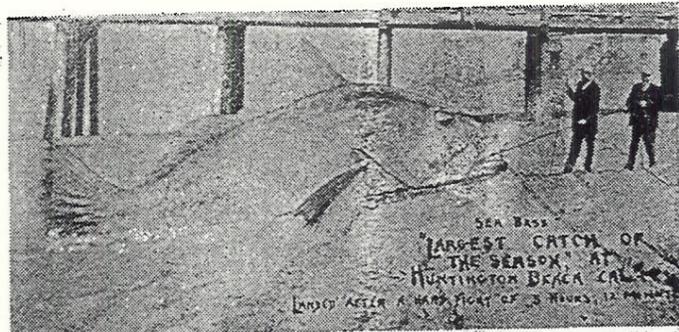
### MORSE FAMILY

George and Rozella Morse moved into a ranchhouse, located on a hill overlooking the mesa where Huntington Central Park now exists, and tried their luck with farming. The water seepage in this area was so bad Morse was forced into figuring out a good drainage system.

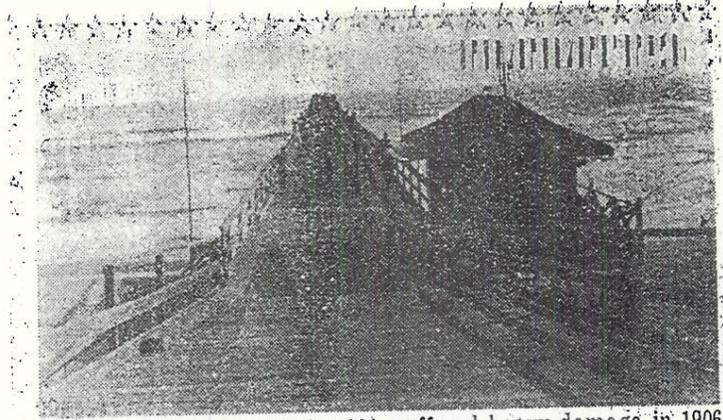
Morse discovered along with many other irritated farmers that this area was fed by underground springs. He finally gave up his attempt at digging out all the peat and turned to selling it. Small electric cars were installed at the lower level to haul the peat up the hill to the factory where it was ground and compacted. The firm also built gas tanks to try and convert the peat into gas.



**FIRST MAYOR**— This photograph of Ed Manning, Huntington Beach's first mayor, was taken in 1909.



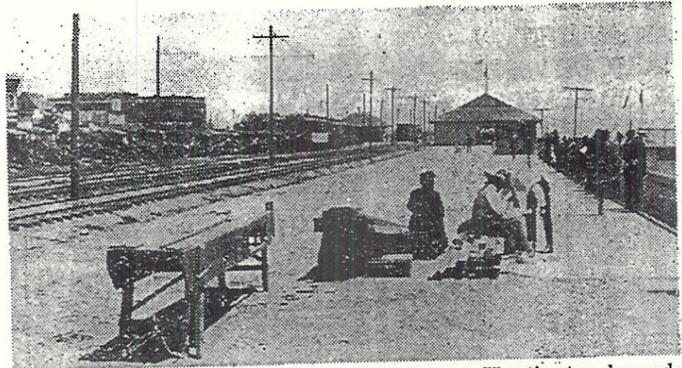
**WHAT A CATCH** and what an advertising stunt. This was the way the people of old Huntington Beach lured outside fishers to their area. If there was a nearby saloon and somebody staggered out, imagine how they must have felt. They saw a "pink" fish instead of an elephant. Of course, a swirling wind was always periling this clever ad.



**OLD WOOD PIER**, built in 1904, suffered heavy damage in 1906 and was finally replaced in 1914. The pier was the major attraction in early 1900s and was frequented by fishermen.



**BLACK GOLD** —The Huntington Beach skyline takes on a different appearance today than it did in 1920s when the oil boom literally put the city on the map. In photo above oil rigs look like skyscraper city. (Photo courtesy Huntington Beach).



**WAITING FOR THE TRAIN**— In 1904 Henry Huntington brought his Pacific Electric Railway and its renowned "big red cars" to Huntington Beach. In appreciation the city fathers named their town after him. Photo courtesy of the City of Huntington Beach.