



What Price "Progress" in Huntington Beach? A Preservationist's Perspective on the Oil and Real Estate Booms of the 1920s and 1980s

Barbara Milkovich

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Planning policy is a volatile topic for Orange County residents as the region responds to increasing immigration and accompanying traffic. Relatively new cities as well as long established ones are struggling to retain the ambience that attracted current residents and yet offer expanded opportunities for newcomers.¹ For an older city like Huntington Beach, the struggle quickly develops into a clash between the historical/cultural legacy and new economic growth. That intrinsic cultural legacy is most often represented by the built environment. By removing the older, historic structures, the developer removes the visible

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cultural heritage of a community and masks its past achievements. Perhaps it is time to include the historic perspective while shaping the appearance of older communities. Perhaps it is time to decide if we want to live in cities that are mere geographic points on a map, or those in which the built environment reflects both history and unique character.²

Within the last sixty years, two dissimilar economic developments have been imposed upon Huntington Beach, both of which obscure the visible past and thus the historic presence of the older portion of the city. The present public and private proposals (1989) will eliminate the majority of the historic homes and most of the commercial structures

that survived the onslaught of the first development, the 1920-1927 oil boom.³ In both instances, substantial pressure for change has come from outside the city.⁴ Protesting residents were unable to stop the changes in the earlier period and, at this writing, appear unable to resist the newest transformation as well.

From my point of view as the founding chair of the Huntington Beach Historic Resources Board, I see an utter lack of local official commitment to the national policy of historic preservation.⁵ As cities changed during the 1960s, it became apparent that nationally historic and architectural "shrines" were being lost to rampant destruction. Policy was formulated by a congressional committee to protect not just these "shrines," but also neighborhoods and business districts that influenced the aesthetics of the community. The result was the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.⁶ Yet, here in this Orange County city, few leaders know that the law demands the preservation of these historic resources whenever possible. Worse, few understand that dwellings and commercial buildings of all shapes and sizes may constitute historic resources because of who or what they represent. Not only is an elegant home such as the 1920s mansion built by oilman Marcus M. McCallen worth saving, but so too are the modest home and commercial structures of Matthew Helme.⁷ Destruction occurs in the name of progress in this city, once so rich in these resources, because of a lack of understanding by those in control of planning decisions.

I first became interested in the historic resources of Huntington Beach when I assisted with the historic structures study in 1985-1986.⁸ The first assignment I had was to photograph the handsome old Holly Sugar Plant bungalow style office, the last remaining building of a major local industry. I was about two hours late. Unknown to anyone but the issuing clerk, the owner of the property, the Huntington Beach Company, had taken out a permit the night before to demolish this familiar landmark and accomplished the task at first light.⁹ There was nothing we historical society members could do. All was quite legal, but a city treasure was gone forever. Four years later, the site is still empty, awaiting the owner's plans for a residential and industrial project.

Next to be lost was the venerable Golden Bear. A favorite restaurant of John Barrymore and Errol Flynn in its heyday, the 1930s, it had experienced a renaissance during the 1960s and 1970s as a try-out house for modern entertainers. Despite world-wide protest it, too, was demolished.¹⁰ Like the Holly property, this also is vacant, although developers started a movie-theater complex there in the spring of 1989.¹¹ In November 1988, the Huntington Beach City Council approved the destruction of an entire

BARBARA MILKOVICH is founding chair of Huntington Beach's Historical Resources Board and archivist for that city's historical society. She holds a B.A. degree from the University of Colorado and an M.A. degree from California State University, Long Beach, where she wrote a thesis centered on the development of the oil industry in Huntington Beach. In the fall she will matriculate in the public history doctoral program at the University of California, Riverside.

Milkovich/What Price "Progress" in Huntington Beach?



COURTESY CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

FINALLY A UNICORN
 THE WINTER WIND BLOWS COLD THRU THIS EMPTY BLDG
 THERE ONCE WAS HERE A MAGIC PLACE
 WHERE PEOPLE SANG AND PLAYED
 HERE ONE MOMENT. GONE THE NEXT
 I CAN'T SEE IT ANY MORE
 THE SONG GOES ON FOREVER, AND MAGIC PLACES ARE
 WHEREVER THERE IS MAGIC THERE IS
 FINALLY A UNICORN



REMAINING PHOTOS COURTESY OF AUTHOR

(Clockwise) Anonymous citizen expresses profound regret at demolition of favorite coffeehouse and entertainment center; artist's rendition of Phase I theater complex, Main and Pacific Coast Highway, on site of the former Golden Bear restaurant; Councilmen and City Princess prior to demolition of historic downtown.

historic commercial block to provide parking for this theater complex.¹² The near future holds the probable demolition of one remaining major landmark, the magnificent old pier, built in 1914.¹³ Little or no attention has been paid to the impact of the loss of these historic structures on the character of Huntington Beach.

Bricks were donated to the historical society from the Holly Sugar building in partial recompense for the obvious loss.¹⁴ Sterile documentation will be done for the commercial block. Artists' renditions are available of the Golden Bear and will be made of the old pier. The historic context, however, will be lost forever. No document can ever replace a living structure. While knowing that all of these structures would have required considerable rehabilitation to meet safety standards, I am left to muse over the irreplaceable loss of these buildings. I wonder if their fate would have been different had our decision-makers cared about the historic fabric of this city. Perhaps one day, when they finally feel the loss of the historic city, they will recall that development also means to enhance that which exists, not just to destroy a resource in order to build anew.

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As noted above, once before, in the 1920s, Huntington Beach lost much of its identity because of outside economic pressure. Today, in addition to a significant residential neighborhood, the commercial core (which was carefully protected by the Board of Trustees in the 1920s boom) is also under siege from development pressure. Surely a compromise can be attained that will not rob Huntington Beach of the remainder of its cultural foundation. While there are no pat answers at hand, perhaps the situation that confronted city residents during the decade of the oil boom should be reviewed and lessons drawn from that cultural disaster be applied to the contemporary public policy debate.

In 1919 Huntington Beach was a quiet, residential "Home City," little more than three-miles square, stretched out along the white beach. It had been conceived in 1901 as a resort similar to Atlantic City and named Pacific City to capitalize on the name association with that popular tourist area. Change came soon, however. Los Angeles land developers marked it as interim destination for the first Orange County route of the electric railway, and in 1903 renamed it Huntington Beach, after the founder of the Pacific Electric Railway, Henry E. Huntington.¹⁵

By 1905, the community's leaders were bold enough to offer a new location for the Long Beach-based Southern California Methodist Association's summer camp.¹⁶ For the next fifteen years, the Methodist camp drew religious minded visitors to this tiny Orange County beach community. Other groups, notably the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and the Orange County Socialists, also used the camp and thus exposed Huntington Beach's residents to a variety of ideas. Nothing, however, really prepared the people for the impact of the 1920 discovery of oil at the edge of town.

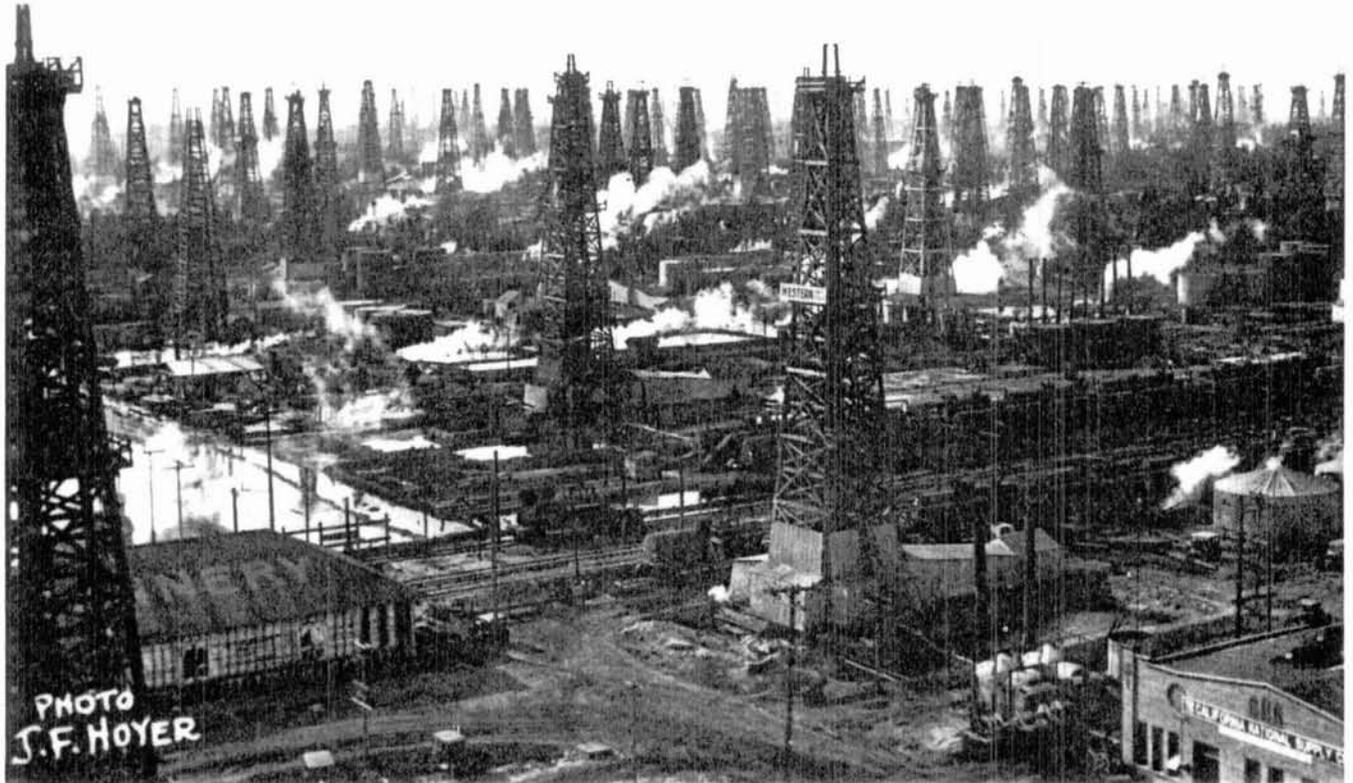
Fuel resources in other parts of the Los Angeles basin had provided enough gasoline and oil for local use prior to World War I. The influx of war-related population and the increased use of autos, however, in addition to an increased awareness of military reserve needs, led to new prospecting along the Orange County coastline.¹⁷ Early residents believed there might be oil near Huntington Beach because they had seen evidence of gas escaping naturally from the surrounding peat bog and marshlands.¹⁸ Thus, they were not surprised when, in October of 1919, Standard Oil of California leased large blocks of undeveloped land to explore for oil. In fact, residents were thrilled with the discoveries. Bob McGuire remembers the excitement of the gusher, Bolsa Chica #1: "It was just a fantastic thing to contemplate a gusher . . . to all of us, it was totally new . . . quite a spectacular thing to see."¹⁹

Exploration of the major new oil field at Huntington Beach virtually eclipsed other economic activity within the community. For example, the Holly Sugar Company's sugar beet processing plant, which hired local workers, stopped operation at the beginning of the boom. As a result, the urban community became dependent on the instability of oil development and fluctuating oil markets worldwide.

Although retail sales and some oil-related industry entered the local market, other industry did not. Long-time business leaders, nonetheless, seemed unable to comprehend the impact of the oil industry on the city during the 1920s nor react realistically to the changes in the physical structure of Huntington Beach. Rather, they continued to promote the development of additional industry in areas that already were slated for oil exploration by private owners.²⁰

While production in the oil fields increased during 1920-1921, an acute housing shortage developed in town. Within a year and a half, the city's resident population had grown from just over 1,600 to 7,000 people, with another 4,000 job-seekers drifting around the town without a place to stay.²¹ Oil workers were often housed in tourist apartments or rooms over commercial buildings where, it is said, three men on different shifts would rent one bed.²² Residents converted garages to apartments and rented spare rooms, but still the need for housing was beyond the immediate capability of the boom town.

The larger oil companies tried to fill in the housing gaps for their employees by renting large homes or building bunk houses for single men.²³ Local businessmen were aware that they would not get the business of the oil-field employees unless housing could be found for the new fami-



Huntington Beach oil field circa 1920.

lies.²⁴ As a result, community leaders also tried to provide additional housing for the newcomers. Tents left over from the summer encampments were again erected on the campground and used year round by new families. According to Albert Watkins, who lived in the tents for three or four years, these dwellings "had a wood floor and walls up about four feet, and the rest was tent."²⁵ Other semiconstructed housing, called bungaloes and built of beaver board, was only slightly better.²⁶ Despite the primitive nature of these shelters, they remained in use for several years. Finally, new capital came into the city and permanent cottages and bungalow courts, some still in use in 1989, were erected to ease the crisis.²⁷

While the city leaders struggled to find housing for the residents, other facets of life were also affected by growth of the boom town. The initial blow to the cultural milieu of the impacted city came a few months after oil prospecting began. The Methodists had been planning a major expansion of their camp location at Huntington Beach for several years. Suddenly overwhelmed by escalating land costs and the oil boom town atmosphere, the religious leaders closed their camp instead after the discovery oil well, Huntington #A-1, was completed in 1920 and moved their program to Pacific Palisades. Thus, while its beach was still a tourist destination, the city lost the cultural advantage of the Methodist camp.

Social conflicts developed as well between long-time residents and the migrant oil-worker population. Some of them, seemingly humorous in retrospect, represented a serious attack on the social mores of the community. Bowing to pressure from businesses, the city Board of Trustees approved new pool hall licenses, but forbade card playing in the new pool rooms.²⁸ After much controversy, a professional boxing arena was allowed to operate for the pleasure of the "oil boys." However, once the community members adjusted to living in an oil boom town and accepted a second, larger boxing arena, the younger local men began to join in amateur boxing matches.²⁹ This social activity was quite a contrast to the prayer and song meetings that, only a few years before, had been major social gatherings for the young people.³⁰

During this period, city services were severely strained. New streets were paved and sewers installed. Responding to the increased need, the police department reorganized and expanded. Correspondingly, its annual budget rose from \$1,000 in 1920 to \$30,000 in 1927. Although municipal revenues did rise some six times over the 1920 level, municipal costs rose fivefold.³¹ Ironically, the city had no direct oil revenue at this time because its public land was held under deed restrictions that limited its use.³² Nevertheless, a new city hall and a new high school were erected during the early 1920s.³³ As the surface limits of the oil field were

determined, it became apparent that it extended toward the residential city and the beach, not inland into undeveloped farm land. One of the problems the city trustees faced as a result of the expanding oil field was whether the production areas should be circumscribed to prevent encroachment upon the residential and commercial districts. The trustees' attempts to deal with this problem led to controversy among neighbors and conflict with the Methodist Association. Contrary to the impression presented by historian Gerald Nash that Huntington Beach did not care about the impact of oil exploration on its environment,³⁴ at least city officials were sensitive to the environmental effects. Despite the efforts of the Board of Trustees to regulate drilling procedures to protect both the oil strata and the neighborhoods, a majority of the electorate ultimately determined that unrestricted drilling would take place in the greater portion of the city.

Even sixty years later, Ray Vidal, who lived in the neighborhood during the boom, could not accept what happened and why. "It [Huntington Beach]," he told me, "was really lined out to be a beautiful city." And when I asked why the drilling was permitted, he straightened up and continued, "It was like everything else, the greed proved that everyone wanted to get rich."

In September 1920, the Board of Trustees identified a zone in which oil drilling would be prohibited. This restricted area encompassed the west-side residential area, known as the Town Lot section, a small portion of the east-side section, and the business district. Immediately the Huntington Beach Company protested because it held undeveloped land inside the proposed boundaries and, as a consequence, that portion of the boundary was redrawn.³⁵ The Methodist Association also protested inclusion of their campground because there were no permanent residences on it.³⁶ Residents whose homes surrounded the campground, however, were afraid of exploitation by outside interests, even the familiar Methodist Association.³⁷ If the association's oil production company were to drill and discover oil, citizens reasoned, the Methodists would get the revenue from the oil pool under the entire residential area. The trustees agreed with the people and refused to exclude the campground. Subsequently, Huntington Beach was sued by the Methodist Association. This suit became a

precedent-setting case that upheld the Board of Trustees's right to establish a restricted zone within the city boundaries.³⁸

The internal pressures for drilling, however, were too great for the trustees to withstand once the extent of the field was apparent. Many residential property owners were anxious to profit from the sale or lease of their property for oil production. Their frustration with drilling restrictions grew as Standard Oil continued to drill adjacent to the Town Lot area. These residents, together with the real estate interests who bought and sold town lots for speculation, pressured the municipal government to approve drilling in the residential section, regardless of the impact on the community.

In addition to the profit motives of directly affected property owners, there were other compelling reasons for expanded drilling operations. The local economy was based largely on wages from oil-related employment. Because the city was isolated from the mainstream of industry, continued drilling provided the major source of employment for resident industrial workers.

Two years after the first restrictions were in place, some local residents petitioned for a change in the boundaries to allow drilling in the lightly built section between 17th and 23rd Streets, adjacent to the Standard Oil production site. The local newspaper, the *Huntington Beach News*, opposed the change in boundaries because it would limit already scarce housing and drive rents up on the remaining structures.³⁹ True to the newspaper's predictions, home building activity stopped temporarily in the potentially affected zone. Because of the political controversy, the trustees were unwilling to make a decision to lift the restrictions. Residents themselves presented an initiative petition to lift drilling restrictions and forced the trustees to call an election on the issue, but the initiative was defeated by a vote of 559 to 358.⁴⁰

Standard Oil continued to drill methodically next to the Town Lot area and along the beach front as the residents continued to debate lifting of the restrictions. Because of the overproduction from this and other new fields, an oil surplus developed and prices dropped.⁴¹ For a time, interest in drilling within the neighborhood flagged. But by 1926 the situation had changed. Most of the drilling was finished in the original drilling area and jobs were dwindling. As the local employment situation worsened, people pressured the city council to change the restrictions in the Town Lot section nearest the Standard Oil lease. Arguments for lifting restrictions in the residential sections now became more compelling because new drilling activity would provide immediate jobs for the unemployed and income to those who had built rental housing for oil workers.⁴²

Property owners on the west side once more debated the residential zone drilling restrictions. The basic arguments about oil exploration were unchanged. Some owners thought that the Standard wells close to their property lines would eventually drain oil from under their land. Many of them still wanted the opportunity to lease their residential property for exploration before the oil pool was exhausted. Others, however, were reluctant to allow any exploration in their neighborhood because of the inevitable devastation to residential property. Even sixty years later, Ray Vidal, who



Huntington Beach coastline, after 1926 oil boom.

lived in the neighborhood during the boom, could not accept what happened and why. Huntington Beach, he told me, "was really lined out to be a beautiful city." And when I asked why the drilling was permitted, he straightened up and continued, "It was like everything else, the greed proved that everyone wanted to get rich."⁴³ Once again, the restricted zone was put to a vote, but this time electors approved opening part of it for exploration. In November 1926, residents voted to lift drilling restrictions from the rest of the city, except for the Main Street commercial area.⁴⁴ A second oil boom had begun.⁴⁵

Before the Board of Trustees opened the first section to exploratory drilling in April 1926, state oil and gas officials had met with the potential operators to try to eliminate or control close well spacing in this Town Lot section.⁴⁶ State officials argued that drilling wells too close together in the earlier subfield had damaged production there by reducing the gas pressure. Fewer wells, they said, could have produced more oil. Their efforts for moderation were unsuccessful, and leases were again consummated on lots as small as twenty-five feet wide.

By September, two wells had been completed successfully in two subsurface strata. Once the existence of oil had been confirmed, drilling intensified. According to F. A. Graser, the "closest drilling and the fastest development in the history of the state" was the result of the destruction of this substantial residential area. Peak production in this small section, called the 17th Street Section, was reached in December 1926 at 63,400 barrels per day from 78 wells.⁴⁷

It is almost impossible to illustrate the magnitude of the neighborhood upheaval and subsequent loss of population. The first homes in the city were mostly small beach cottages designed for summer living. Only a few substantial dwellings, including the Shank House, were built early.⁴⁸ After about 1915, however, larger bungalows were built in the 17th Street Section, which was the first target for resi-

dential area drilling. The new oil subfield encompassed about fifty square blocks of recently built housing by the time oil drilling was allowed in 1927. Long-time Huntington Beach resident Delbert Higgins, in his historical account of the area's oil fields, wrote that several hundred homes were moved during the 1926-1928 period.⁴⁹ Smaller houses were simply demolished. Many of those moved were substantial homes, owned by well-to-do residents who also left Huntington Beach. (Future research may indicate that this exodus constituted a "brain drain" for the city as well as a housing stock loss.)

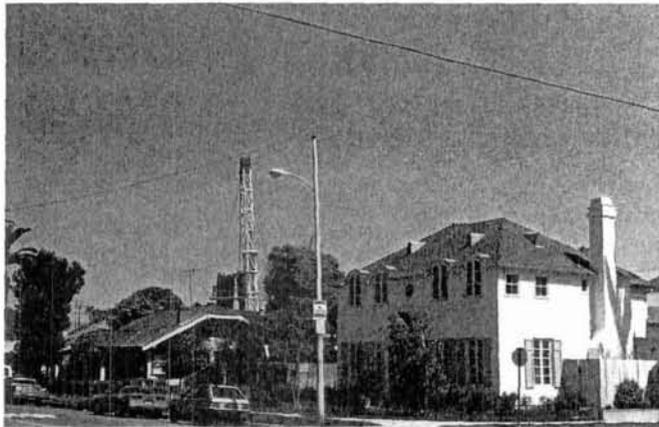
Photographs of the era show the oil-well rigs towering over beach visitors at the shoreline and nestled among the houses. In fact, the oil wells were such a dominant feature of the city that movie producers used Huntington Beach and the surrounding fields for locations to film Texas oil-field backgrounds.⁵⁰ Although 1980s residents complain about the few remaining pumps and pieces of equipment still visible on the beachfront, the contemporary population must have accommodated them. Fae Clapp, who owned a hamburger stand/beach equipment rental business on the pier, thought that people did not mind the wells on the beach because other ones were strung along the coast all the way to Long Beach. "It [the oil production on the sand] didn't seem to bother our business,"⁵¹ mused Clapp.

As work in the town lot field tapered off in late 1928, an oil bearing sand, deeper than any previously found at Huntington Beach, was discovered in nearby Santa Fe Springs. Local residents duly expected Huntington Beach to be the next field to be explored for the new sand, especially after several producers, including Standard, began testing for it in the local field. By early 1929, however, the major oil companies were suffering an oil glut; since this situation threatened a price reduction similar to the one in 1923, they tried to restrict their own production to forestall federal controls.

Standard Oil shut down thirty producing wells in the Huntington Beach fields in April 1929 to reduce production and urged the city to look to other sources of revenue beyond the oil property tax. Residents were unhappy with the cutback in local production, but when the deep wells drilled to locate a new oil sand were unsuccessful, the question of new production at Huntington Beach became moot.⁵²

Oil production undoubtedly altered the physical and economic growth of the little city. In another era, timely capital investments might have eventually broadened the industrial base or created substantial residential neighborhoods and new tourist destinations after this drilling phase was completed and the land restored. It was, however, the beginning of the Great Depression, and there was little capital for any economic expansion. While the period of intensive commercial growth and development lasted only a decade at Huntington Beach, the oil field continued to produce. Ultimately, there were more strikes and more homes lost to the lure of black gold.⁵³

It would be almost forty years before the City of Huntington Beach awoke from its lethargy. When the population of the Los Angeles basin mushroomed in the mid 1950s, the still small city annexed an inland farm area, which was soon developed for large tracts of homes.⁵⁴



Typical town lot block in today's Huntington Beach; note mixture of old, new, and oil development.

Although it appeared to outsiders as if the town was booming, the new growth did little for the old city. New retail malls were built where the new people lived, and the original commercial area was deserted by long-time retailers.⁵⁵

In 1967, the Huntington Beach City Council established itself as the Redevelopment Agency and began to plan massive projects to encourage revitalization in the beach front and old commercial district.⁵⁶ Presently, the proposed 1980s commercial buildings are only in the construction drawings stage. Renderings, however, suggest that they will resemble the modern Mediterranean style currently popular throughout Orange County, not that of traditional Huntington Beach Main Street.⁵⁷ While an occasional structure such as the Depression Era post office may remain, the unique collection of older buildings that catalog the community's history will be no longer.⁵⁸

It is time for Huntington Beach to reflect on the drastic cultural impact of the oil boom and not allow the remnant of its historic cultural identity to be obliterated by a modern economic boom.

By the early 1960s, the older residential portion of the city had become what James Farquhar, editor of the *Huntington Beach News*, had feared most: an oil field, not a city beside an oil field. Rigs and other production equipment were scattered among the homes that remained, making the area unattractive to home buyers.⁵⁹ Finally, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, many of the oil operations were consolidated behind landscaping screens, and residential building began again in the Town Lot area.

The new housing is of a different style and mass from the old. Typically, new dwellings are placed on twenty-five-foot wide lots and tower three stories—well above the modest bungalows that remain from the early city. Whether they are attractive is a judgment of taste. Certainly they are

out of harmony with the neighborhoods of old Huntington Beach.

While the destruction of the entire public commercial area is without precedent in the city's history, a parallel exists between the new development of the Town Lot area and that of the economic crisis of the 1920s. Homes are being ravaged, demolished in the name of economic expansion and replaced with disparate structures. As when the oil rigs intruded on this area in 1926, a bit of history is lost each time an older structure is removed and replaced with a modern one.

Between 1985 and 1988, approximately one-tenth of the historic building stock was demolished. The drive to remove these small quaint homes and replace them with larger ones continues unabated in 1989.⁶⁰ If the spirit of this old city is to persist so that future residents can relate to their history, there must be a commitment from the com-



McKee House on 11th Street. Overwhelmed by new construction, with luck it will be moved to a historic park area.

munity to save some of its built heritage. Inland cities like Orange have done so by providing mandatory design guidelines for their historical sections. Coastal cities like Laguna Beach take pride in their historic environment and closely restrict development.⁶¹ It is time for Huntington Beach to reflect on the drastic cultural impact of the oil boom and not allow the remnant of its historic cultural identity to be obliterated by a modern economic boom.

At the waning of the oil boom that had inundated the quiet City of Huntington Beach in the 1920s, Farquhar, the prescient *News* editor, predicted that someday residences would reap greater riches for the community than oil.⁶² The 1980s and 1990s may bear out his prophesy. It is my hope, however, that future developers will respect the design, as well as the mass and scale, of the old neighborhoods they invade, rehabilitate older dwellings whenever possible, and allow their new structures to blend in with the heritage of the past.

ENDNOTES

1. Larry Agran, "Orange County Populism and the Politics of Growth," *Journal of Orange County Studies* 1 (Fall 1988):8.
2. While this paper addresses only cultural benefits of historic preservation, there are many financial incentives to restoration as well. See, for example, *Report to the President and the Congress of the United States*, an annual report prepared by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and *Historic Preservation in California*, which Les-Thomas Associates compiled for the California Office of Historic Preservation in 1986.

Milkovich/What Price "Progress" in Huntington Beach?

3. The *Downtown Specific Plan*, prepared by the Huntington Beach Planning Division in November 1983 as a guide for development in the commercial area, has been modified several times, but is still the basic document. This document is available at the Planning Department, City of Huntington Beach. Residential areas are not as yet included in any specific plan for the historic portion of the city.

4. Two of the three major commercial developments underway in 1989 are the Waterfront and Pier Colony. The first, a hotel complex on Pacific Coast Highway between Beach Boulevard and Huntington Street, is being developed by RLM Properties of Newport Beach; see "Development Agreement and Commercial Master Site Plan—The Waterfront," staff report to the Huntington Beach City Council, 15 August 1988. Pier Colony, a theater complex at Main Street and Pacific Coast Highway, is being largely financed by Haseko Incorporation, a California-based subsidiary of Hasegawa Komuten Company, Limited, of Japan; see "Staff Report to Huntington Beach City Council," 21 November 1988. In addition, a five-level parking structure, with commercial space on two levels, is being planned jointly by the Redevelopment Agency and a private developer. In the initial oil boom, major outside companies such as Standard Oil and Union Oil held the larger leases. Even smaller oil companies were usually composed of nonresident businessmen and out-of-town investors, so these profits, too, were spread over a wider geographic area rather than returned to local investments.

5. The Historic Resources Board is an eleven-member board appointed by the city council to advise it on historic issues within the city (Ordinance #2895, April 1987). Needless to say, the opinions and observations presented in this article are those of the author and do not reflect either board or council policy or positions.

6. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, *Twenty Years of the National Historic Preservation Act* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986), 16-17.

7. The Helme-Worthy store and residence at 513-519 Walnut Avenue and 128 6th Street (adjacent) were listed on the National Register on 31 March 1987. Both structures were part of Pacific City, and existent on site before 1904. Helme was a businessman, a member of the first Board of Trustees, elected in 1909, and subsequently Chairman of the Board (mayor). The former McCallen residence is located at 216 Crest Avenue. McCallen was an important oil producer in the Huntington Beach field as well as a city councilman and mayor.

8. The Huntington Beach City Council commissioned and funded the city's first historic structures survey in the spring of 1985, but only after a "blitzkrieg" appeal by the historical society. Society members, including the author, assisted the city's consultant, 30th Street Architects of Newport Beach, conduct the survey. Subsequently, the survey document was revised and brought into compliance with the categorization of the National Register of Historic Places by a second consultant, Johnson Heumann Research Associates of Hollywood. This second document was received and filed by council on 6 February 1989. At this time, the city council directed that the planning staff explore tools to address historic resources in the residential areas and to identify landmark structures. Ten days later, the city council began—literally (see note 12 below)—the demolition of the historic commercial area. Both documents are on file at the Planning Division, City of Huntington Beach.

9. "Huntington Beach Preservation Group is Unable to Save 1920 Building," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 January 1986.

10. See, for example, "The Day the Music Died," *Los Angeles Times*, 21 May 1986. According to one Golden Bear menu (in the possession of the author), some of the notable artists who performed at the restaurant were Hoyt Axton, Judy Collins, John Denver, Jose Feliciano, Robin Williams, Billy Joel, and Steve Martin. At the time the city council approved the demolition, an informal petition was presented to it that contained some 2,000 names (gathered in less than forty-eight hours at the site of the restaurant) of persons protesting that action. The city council ignored the petition.

11. Ground breaking for this project took place on 10 March 1989.

12. City of Huntington Beach, "Notice of Public Hearing," 7 November 1988. The Huntington Beach City Council took action in its evening meeting on the date of this notice. A ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the beginning of the demolition was held on 15 February 1989. During the festivities, carefully recorded by video cameras, city council members themselves began the demolition with picks and shovels. To compare the timing of this demolition with the beginning of the theater project, see note 11 above.

13. "Rebuild the Landmark Huntington Beach Municipal Pier," press release 88-86 (1988) by City of Huntington Beach. At the request of the Huntington Beach Historical Society, the California State Historical Resources Commission, on February 3, 1988, nominated the pier to the National Register of Historic Places. The city council formally objected to this action.

14. The Huntington Beach Company donated bricks from the destroyed building to the historical society for a pathway in the newly developed Newland House Museum garden.

15. Barbara Milkovich, "A Study of the Impact of the Oil Industry on the Development of Huntington Beach, California Prior to 1930" (M.A. Thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 1988). This study details the early development of Huntington Beach and the 1920s oil boom. The author plans to expand the scope of the inquiry through World War II during the course of her doctoral studies.

16. *Long Beach Daily Telegram*, 14 March 1905.

17. Gerald Nash, *United States Oil Policy: Business and Government in the Twentieth Century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1968), 244.

18. "Will Oil Be Found Also?" *Huntington Beach News*, 12 August 1921.

19. Bolsa Chica #1 "blew in" on 14 November 1920 at a surprising 3,000 to 5,000 barrels per day and firmly established the new field. Robert McGuire, interview by Barbara Milkovich, 8 July 1986. Copies of this interview and others subsequently cited in this study will be available in 1989 at both the Huntington Beach Historical Society and at the Special Collections section of the California State University, Long Beach, Library.

20. Ray Stricklin, interview by Barbara Milkovich, 15 February 1988.

21. "Long Beach Paper Tells of Oil Field," *Huntington Beach News*, 5 August 1921.

22. Delbert Higgins, "Oil Fields. A Brief History of the Oil Fields at Huntington Beach, California," December 1976, typescript, Central Library, Huntington Beach, California. Hereafter cited as "Oil Fields."

23. "Oil News of the Mesa District," *Huntington Beach News*, 2 July 1920. Ray Stricklin, whose father designed and built the bunkhouses, has described them as long structures with about twenty individual rooms to a building. Each room was furnished with an iron bed and a dresser. Altogether, according to Stricklin, there were twelve to fourteen of these buildings, plus a recreation hall, cook house, and four shower buildings. Ray Stricklin, interview by Barbara Milkovich, 14 December 1987. Settlements grew up around the perimeter of the oil field on the inland side for oil workers and their families. These settlements included Liberty Park, subdivided by Texaco employees, and Ocean View and Boulevard Gardens, both Standard Oil employee tracts. See Higgins, "Oil Fields." Midway City, also begun in response to the housing crisis, still exists, but the others have been assimilated into Huntington Beach.

24. The Chamber of Commerce claimed merchants were losing an estimated \$50,000 in monthly income because the oil-related families lived elsewhere.

25. Albert Watkins, interview by Barbara Milkovich, 22 April 1989.

26. These measured 10 x 16 feet and each had a 4 x 12 foot kitchen tent behind it. "Robert Wright to Build 50 Houses," *Huntington Beach News*, 1 July 1921; City of Huntington Beach, "Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting," 20 June 1921. Higgins, in "Oil Fields," refers to the site as "cardboard alley."

27. *Huntington Beach News*, 21 April 1922.

28. *Ibid.*, 19 May 1921. Because Huntington Beach was incorporated as a sixth-class city, its governing body was called the Board of Trustees. The chairman acted as a mayor, with the board equivalent to a city council.

29. City of Huntington Beach, "Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting," 4 April 1921.

30. Fae Clapp, interview by Barbara Milkovich, 20 April 1987.

31. *Huntington Beach News*, 17 February 1928.

32. Had the trustees attempted to lease the park property in the Town Lot area for drilling, it would have reverted to the original owner, the Huntington Beach Company.

33. The school districts did have oil-bearing land and used the attendant profit to finance expansion. The firm of Allison and Allison designed the high school, part of which—the tower and auditorium—remains as an outstanding example of the 1920s Lombard style. The 1933 post-earthquake elementary school in Huntington Beach, now