

# My 50 Years in Palms

By DAVID I. WORSFOLD

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Dave Worsfold, the writer of this series, is a recognized historian and dedicated civic worker who celebrated his 50th year as a Palms resident on Oct. 8. He has worked for the betterment of Los Angeles, and particularly for the West Side, for 37 years and for 24 years served as secretary of the Palms Chamber of Commerce. A World War II Navy veteran, Worsfold resides at 3637 Motor Ave., Palms.

Worsfold mentions many of his own personal experiences while growing up in Palms, but he carries the thread of history in the relating of these experiences.

I have lived in Palms for a half century. My parents, Ira Worsfold and Elizabeth Rickle Worsfold, were first influenced by the Perrines to come to Palms. Sirrel Perrine was married to my cousin, Anna Worsfold Barnum. In Dec. 1906, Sirrel started the first newspaper in this area, The Palms News, and in 1907, before I was born, he became the first secretary for the Palms Chamber of Commerce. It was not until the 1930's, after I had been secretary for some years, that I found out Perrine was one of my predecessors.

My father was born in Waukegan, Illinois, and lived there for forty-four years. He was one of the first architects in the United States, and had a successful practice in Waukegan for twelve years, but after a more than severe winter he and my mother decided to go West. They did not plan on going to Los Angeles, for with no industry and very little employment there was not much hope in settling here permanently. Father knew that a small town with prospects of growing would be the place, and his choice was Corvallis, Oregon—a college town. He built a new home next to the campus and rented an office in town with the hopes of building up a practice, but Corvallis was a slow growing town, and there was no need for an architect—my father's limit was two years.

At this time in Palms there was a new development underway; several buildings were already started and there were many more to come. The promoters behind this were also backing Perrine's new newspaper, The Call. Sirrell and Anna urged my folks to come to Palms. They knew that father was certain to at least get carpenter's work, for Perrine did have an "in" and could help. Dad came on ahead of the rest of the family, and stayed with the Perrines in their new home on Delmas Terrace.

(This is the only street in Palms that never had its name changed.)

After father was working he sent for the rest of the family. My mother, my sister Iva, my brother Richard and I arrived in Los Angeles on October 8, 1914, via the Pacific Electric to Palms, but I thought I saw Culver City. It was not until much later that I found out the community was Palms: it was the Palms School District, the Palms Post Office and the Palms Voting Precinct.

The county had just paved National Boulevard, and on our first Sunday here the family walked seven miles to Santa Monica, then to Ocean Park and Venice, another three miles, and finally home on the red cars. Home was a house on Fifth St. that we rented for ten dollars a month. This is now the home of Henry Kidson. The wealthy Kidsons could well afford Bel Air or Trousdale Estates, but stay in Palms because it's home town. I guess I stay for the same reason. We didn't stay long in that first house, but moved up the block to 7165 Fifth St. I remember that the landlord was in Utah and that the rent was ten dollars a month. In back of the house was a tall eucalyptus tree, and we nailed steps up to the sky, or about sixty feet.

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# 50 Years in Palms

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the second article in a series on the history of Palms written by David I. Worsfold, recognized historian and civic leader who celebrated his 50th year as a Palms resident on October.

In 1914, promoters were trying to change the name of Palms or supplant the old town for the glory of Harry Culver, which would enrich the big property owners by moving the business center to their property. The Palms leaders were attempting to stop them in their scheme of changing the name and moving the business center and probably destroying the old town.

The Palms leaders worked for annexation to Los Angeles. The area proposed included all of the Culver investment—Sherman and Clark subdivision (Tract No. 2444) Nolan Park and Track No. 1775. The vote in April, 1914, failed to gain the  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority and a re-drawing of the boundary lines to exclude some land and some opposition voters made possible the

later incorporation of Culver City. The area known as Ivywild was also excluded and so was the area west of Overland Avenue, but the rest of the community voted annexation on June 1, 1914, under the name of Palms. This happened in my tender years before I came here, when I didn't know or care.

On New Years, 1915 the family walked over the Palms Hills to see the Beverly Oil Wells. I had never seen oil wells in Illinois or Oregon and so this was something new. In mid-January we walked to the big Rand house on a high point of Baldwin Hills. In February dad started working on the first movie studios here, the Kalem Co. This later became the Essanay Studio. The name came from the initials S and A, from Spoor and Anderson who came from Waukegan, Ill., my birthplace. Of course the first studio here was in Palms as there was no Culver City yet.

I had started first grade in a brand new school at Corvallis, and arrived in Palms in time to start the second grade in a brand

new \$60,000 school. The old Palms School was built in 1888, and was still standing; my father helped to tear it down. The few children from the new development went to Palms School because there was no other school except way out in the farm area, which was the old La Ballona School and was a poor building. When it became necessary to build a new building, the children of that district were sent to Palms.

My first friends in Palms were Cedric Hutchison, who lived on 3rd Street, and Earl Messick, who lived across the alley on 6th Street but my closest friend was Alex Gill. They had a ranch on Washington Street and 6th Street. There was always a lot of action there; the old lima bean ranch had horses, pigs, mules and a cow. Brother Dick and I played in the barn and on the pepper tree and the windmill. After 50 years my brother intimately knows the area where the ban ranch was, but now it's called Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios. He started working there in 1925, and is there now.

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# My 50 Years in Palms

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the third article in a series on the history of Palms written by Mr. Worsfold, a recognized historian and civic leader who celebrated his 50th year in Palms on Oct. 8.

On May 22, 1915, Los Angeles voted the approval of the annexation of Palms. Los Angeles had gained 200 per cent in population from 1900 to 1910, then increased from 319,000 in 1910 to a half million in 1915, so the annexation of Palms helped.

In May Dad helped tear down the old Palms School. He found two pigeon squabs in the belfry and brought them home. We raised pigeons for many years.

Dick and I, with other kids from the neighborhood, played cow pasture baseball on the vacant lots in the block. We roamed the valley, the Baldwin Hills, and the Palms Hills (now called Cheviot Hills), the other Gill ranch, which is now Westwood, Holmby Hills, U.C.L.A., Westwood Village and Century City. This was really the Wolfskill ranch; the Gills were tenant farmers. Most of the ranch was purchased in 1919 by Arthur Letts, founder of the Broadway Department Store. The Gills dry-farmed lima beans and barley until 1922, when subdivision started. When bean threshing time came we often went to the various farms where Gills threshed for other ranches and so I got acquainted with most of the valley. We covered a vast

area by much walking, some riding on horses and mules and in Gills' Stoddard-Dayton auto. We knew the irrigation ditches, the walnut groves, the grape vineyards, the watermelon patches and anything else we found interesting. Sometimes we picked walnuts for a few cents, and after the thresher moved to a new location we picked up many pounds of beans.

I found a gopher snake that had been run over by a street car and so I dragged it home. All the curious cats approached the snake and I whipped that snake at them, but then came along the Messick toddler and I whipped the snake just toward him. My father saw the action and I was whipped. This the only spanking I can remember in my life.

We had fun sailing boats in the gutter during a heavy rain. We built coasters and coasted down the steep unpaved Lowe's Hill—now Overland Avenue. And when we overturned we were buried with fine dust. I learned how to swim in Ballona Creek back in early 1915. Our favorite swimming pool was at the end of Jackson Avenue. The area between P. E. Del Rey Line and the creek was part of Palms long before Harry Culver started his subdivision. On hot days, after crossing the railroad, we would take off our clothes and run naked to the creek. Last one in was a dirty name.

About at the end of Irving Place there was a ford crossing of the creek, and downstream

from the ford to Jackson Avenue the creek was wide and deep, plainly showing that it was once the channel of the Los Angeles River. Near to Jackson Avenue was the flume where some water was diverted into the irrigation ditch. That ditch once went west to about Lincoln Boulevard, and the street south of Venice High still bears the name Zanja Street because it followed the zanja.

To the Spanish and Meixcans the zanja was very important, as water was the life of the ranches.

The creek was always sparkling clear, except after a storm. It was a charming setting with sycamores, many willows, cat tails and rushes, some shallow pools with sandy bottoms, some deep pools with mud bottoms and mud turtles. It is a shame that

some of that natural beauty was not preserved.

Along the creek on Chris Machado's property was a big pear tree and several fig trees that supplied fruit for the kids. Wise Chris knew that it was better to give the kids some corn and watermelons than to shoot them and get into trouble, as did one of the Lowe family, who paid dearly for shooting one boy.

The city changed 5th street to Vinton Avenue and nearly all the other names. In 1916, the big thing was tearing up the oil roads and construction of sidewalks, curbs, paving and electrollers. Palms changed from an old fashioned rural farm town to a modern community with much better streets than the new Culver development.

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# My 50 Years in Palms

By David I. Worsfold

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the fourth in a series of articles on the history of Palms written by Mr. Worsfold, a recognized historian and civic leader who celebrated his 50th year in Palms on Oct. 8.

In late 1916, my friends, the Gills, moved. The house, barn and all were jacked up and moved from Washington Street and Jasmine Avenue over the P.E. Railway to First Street. The eleven acres South of Washington was to be a movie studio. In a political move in 1917, dad lost his job as a guard at Juvenile Hall, but he soon got a new job at the New York Motion Picture Corp. building the first structures at the new studio, now the giant MGM. Dad switched from the New York Corp. to the Keystone Biograph to Inceville, Paralta Studio, then the Triangle Studio and finally back to New York Motion Picture Corp.

I vaguely remember a celebration for the incorporation of Culver City. So what? The promoters called it Culver City four years before it was a city. When I became interested in History many years later, I looked up the records and found that the election date was September 15, 1917, and that the incorporation was illegal—or at least highly irregular—but it stood because no one con-

tested the issue in the courts.

The World War didn't have much affect on me, as none of the family were in the service, but we kids dug our own trenches and played war. I remember the War Bond Issues, and when we had to wear gauze masks because of the influenza. Finally the schools were closed for a time.

In the meantime dad worked at Hart's Studio, Universal Film Co., and in late 1918 he worked for the Milwaukee Building Co. Contractors on the new Ince Studios (now Desilu).

In 1918, my sister, Iva, started at Venice Union High School. This set the pattern followed by Richard and I, because the nearest high school in Los Angeles was Polytechnic, some eight miles away.

Los Angeles High was downtown and not at the present location. While as a student at Venice, Iva posed for statue for art professor, Harry Winebrenner. Myrna Williams and Doug Armstrong also posed for the group statue. A later demolishing of Venice High left only the group statue. It was also doomed, but loyal Venicians campaigned to save the statue. No, not because of my sister, but because the famous movie star, Myrna Loy, posed in the group. Incidentally, Myrna was a Palms resident.

Thinking to make a permanent mark in history, several kids

scratched their initials in the new cement steps at the United Brethren Church, but the cement worker saw the initials and covered them, but not until he had copied and given them to the principal.

John McCarthy drove a buggy all around the valley to deliver groceries for the Palms Mercantile Co. Irish "Mac" generally took one or more boys to ride with him. Once we stopped at Dr. Iles just as a scream was heard. Mac grabbed the buggy whip, running to the house, and shortly emerged with a long snake which he said was a copper head. When he delivered at Partenico's (where Helms Bakery is now) or at De Bartolo's (where Culver High is now) he sampled

the grape juice while the kids sampled the fresh grapes right off the vine. I knew two of the McCarthy boys, Tom and George. Tom later owned five drug stores, then served as councilman and was mayor of Santa Monica.

We hiked in the Santa Monica Mountains several times, and once when I was alone I hiked via Brown's Canyon (now Beverly Glen) clear over the ridge to what is now Mulholland Drive, and onward to Ventura Boulevard; it was twelve more miles and there was no road for half the distance. Many times I heard rattlesnakes but didnt see them. I don't think I really wanted to see them.

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# My 50 Years in Palms

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the fifth in a series of articles on the history of Palms written by Mr. Worsfold, a recognized historian and civic leader who celebrated his 50th year in Palms on Oct. 8.)

There was a gravel pit at Elenda Street and the Del Rey Car Line. It had a deep hole and we swam there as well as in the Ballona Creek. At the pit, Dick, Alex and I built a solid shack salvaged from a Harry H. Culver Co. billboard that had liberally covered the landscape. Once while at the shack we heard a train screech to a stop, and we emerged from the pit to see why; at the cowcatcher was a demolished motorcycle, and some cars back were the remains of a man—my first look at death.

We built a sturdy boat and rowed it up and down the wide and deep portion of the creek. The lumber for the boat was also salvaged from a H.H. Culver billboard—there were too many anyway. We dug a cave in a cliff at the Baldwin Hills that overlooked the valley. We also had a cave in the center of what is now Century City.

In 1918, we became residents of Motor Avenue. The house was a funny house; each room was an addition to the original one room; and each was of a different material. Our block was unique: there was one school, one church, and one house. (Later one store.) We moved everything, including our cats and pigeons, and we planted a garden. I planted a pepper tree in the yard and it is still there in the Palms School yard.

There were three earthquakes

in 1918, and after a false alarm the World War finally ended.

In 1919 we thought we'd stay a while. I remember my father getting his money together so he could buy the house we lived in; it cost \$1500, a lot of money then. The owner lived in South Pasadena and wanted to sell out because it was so far from her home. The price was more than we could afford, but the payments were low. In 44 years the price has risen 22 times its original, but the family doesn't own it now.

In 1920, a reception was held at Goldwyn Studios, and I remember seeing General Pershing. Oil fever broke out when Duplex No. 1 was spudded in, but no oil was found because they had reached their limit of drilling. Forty years later a deeper drilling discovered oil north and south of my place, and I am probably over the center of the newest pool, but I'm still waiting for my royalties.

I was chosen from the Palms School to attend special art classes at the old Olive Street School, and I became acquainted with Downtown Los Angeles. I went to Little Bear Lake—now called Arrowhead — and never caught a fish. I picked Bartlett pears and worked in the packing house for 10 days in Littlerock, and I learned how hot the desert gets in August.

In 1920, Harry Culver hurt Palms once more. He was on the Board of Trustees for the Palms School District when the movement came to change the name to Culver City School District. Merchants sponsored a Boy Scout troop but couldn't find enough boys from Culver City and

so they invited Palms boys. I freeze; we had frozen water pipes was one of the boys that joined. for two days.

The majority of the boys were from Palms, and so I suggested that they call it Culver Palms; but the sponsors cold-shouldered the idea. I didn't think it was right, for it was to serve the boys and not to advertise Culver City.

I remember the earthquakes that hit Inglewood; we could feel the ground shake even in Palms. An elevated water tank spilled much of its contents but didn't crack or fall. The County Flood Control started deepening and straightening and widening of the Ballona Creek right below First Street. This destroyed our swimming pools and much of the beauty of the creek, but it was something to see the big machinery. A short time later the city dumped raw sewage into the creek and goodbye swimming fun.

The Burkhard Oil Well No. 1 was sunk in 1921 and also didn't find oil. A red letter day came in my life when Henry's circus came to town and opened at Motor and Woodbine Street. Will Rogers, my favorite, came and bought tickets for a dozen kids. I was one of the lucky ones that day.

There was no junior high then and so I graduated from the eighth grade at Palms Grammar School in June, 1921, and soon started at Venice High where brother Dick was attending, and where sister Iva had graduated in 1920. Twenty years later I persuaded the Board of Education to purchase the site for the Palms Junior High.

I went to Atascadero with dad to help build a garage for my aunt. Early 1922 we had a real

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the sixth in a series of articles on the history of Palms by Mr. Worsfold, a recognized historian and civic leader who has lived in Palms for 50 years.

In January, 1923, the police pinched the gang for coasting down Jasmine Avenue Hill in an old wagon, and so we had to go to the Juvenile Bureau. They said the charge was foolish. Four months later, Edgar and I were picked up for more serious charges: stealing wood and violating the curfew law. I had just finished working for Miss Merrill of the Meralta Theater. I had been given permission to obtain the wood left behind from a "Our Gang" picture and were taking this when we were nabbed by the police. While we were being booked, Miss Merrill came by and saw what was happening, then bounced into the station, saying, "What's going on here?" She detected alcohol on the policeman's breath. What she then said was not very lady-like but it was convincing enough so that we were let go.

During my three years at Venice High School I was bashful and never participated in sports or even dated. I didn't have many friends; I wasn't much of an ex-

trovert. I'm sure I was afraid of people especially the opposite sex, but I did debate with many people on various subjects.

I became aware of the changing from farm to subdivided land when the bean farm opposite Venice High was subdivided. The Gills farm at Pico and Sepulveda became the start of Westwood, and the Gil farm on First Street was replaced by a horse racetrack. Without legal gambling, the race track was destined to fold and become a board track for auto racing.

I saw one of the races on the old Beverly Racetrack when Gaston Chevrolet and two other men were killed in a spectacular crash. Several Palms boys had walked up the ditch and under the fence to the parking lot; we couldn't get into the grandstand or the center of the track, and so to see the race we climbed up the outside of the track just at the South-East turn that was about 200 feet from the point of the crash. The rolling cars stripped much of the fence and here we were high up in the air with no place to go. Death came very close that day; one of the boys must have had a rabbit's foot with him that day.

In July, 1923, Edgar Wilkerson and I went to Catalina for a week,

and one day we walked 24 miles from Avalon to the Isthmus. We didn't plan to go so far and had no lunch. We picked some cactus pears and at Middle ranch we borrowed three or four plums. For the last 13 miles we had no water. At the Isthmus we bought a sandwich and promoted a ride on the Virginian back to Avalon. Kids today are softies, they ride just to go three blocks.

In 1923, when land was being subdivided at Stilson Street (now Palms Boulevard) west of Overland Avenue, I objected that the street was not being laid straight, and 40 years after that I was working to get the city to straighten and widen Palms Boulevard.

Because I lived next door to the

Palms School, the principal, Mrs. Gamble, offered me the job of assistant part-time janitor at the school. The job paid \$39.37 a month, and I took the job. I never did understand the odd amount of money, but I banked more than \$600 on the job. Dad was supporting me while I was attending high school and so I saved the whole salary. I later used \$230 of it for my first car, a used 1922 Ford model T that I called the green lizard. Besides the money on the janitor job, I received priceless memories from the regular janitor, Jim McKie, a Scotchman with a sense of humor, an infectious laugh and a brogue so thick you could cut it with a knife.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the seventh in a series of articles on the history of Palms by Mr. Worsfold, a recognized historian and civic leader who has been a Palms resident for 50 years.

In 1918, I worked in one scene for my first and last movie. It was called "Doing Her Bit" and was a war picture. I was playing marbles on a set called Finnegan's Alley (east side, New York); an ice wagon passed by and I hopped on for

a ride. I was not movie struck and didn't even collect my pay, but I did witness the taking of dozens of pictures, some of them real thrillers. Once they buried dynamite and built a brick building upon it, then blew it up in a picture called "Dangerous Days." A war movie had a front line trench and various apparatus. Late that night Alex and I experimented with a machinegun that was loaded with blanks. A quick dozen shots into the quiet night no doubt woke up all the studio Police. In one picture a circus tent full of people was supposedly hit by lightning, (with the help of gasoline). The people emerged from the tent screaming, and then the circus wagons appeared into the crowd of people. Several were hurt, but the horses didn't know that it was only a movie scene.

1924 was a year I remember well. The Ocean Park pier burned down and there was much excitement. I changed from Venice High to Polytechnic High to attend a class in mapping. I was always interested in maps and with a little training and a lot of love, mapping became my career.

I did some hiking in the Angeles National Forest, Tujunga Canyon, Sturdevant Falls, San Gabriel Canyon and other places. I remember the start of the first "Flight around the World" with Douglas planes from Clover Field in April 1924 and shortly after I had to try

an airplane ride. Of course I asked the pilot to fly above Palms so I could see how it looked from the sky.

Sometimes the gang hopped freight cars on the railroad and rode to Santa Monica, Sawtelle and Beverly Hills. Once Don Taggart climbed on the caboose and a brakeman kicked him right in the pants. He flew off the train and disappeared. We found him in a deep hole that was dug for a new telegraph pole. He wasn't hurt, yep, kids were tough.

When school was out George Thompson, Charlie Finger, Dick and I went to Yosemite but only to Wawona Big Trees because we couldn't afford the \$5.00 permit fee for the National Park. Then we went to Oakland, Santa Cruz and then home. After just one week, we had itchy feet, and George and John Finger, Ed Wilkerson and I went to Phoenix. That trip stretched to El Paso, to Socorro and then the money ran out. We wore out all of the tires on the terrible roads in New Mexico and Arizona, and the radiator on our Chevrolet was leaking. We bummed some gas to get to Springerville. Then we were stranded, broke, and hungry, waiting for mail and money. We were saved by a free barbecue where George P. Hunt was campaigning for re-election as Governor of Arizona by campaigning against Los Angeles and California. Some forty years later the Arizona people are still campaigning California. When we were leaving Springerville we bought some second hand tires and went to the grand canyon. We were broke again and I celebrated my 17th birthday with nothing to eat. We became stuck again when the car broke down at Crozier Ranch. Each of the four boys hitchhiked separately home.

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# My 50 Years in Palms

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the eighth in a series of articles on the history of Palms by Mr. Worsfold, a recognized historian and civic leader who has been a Palms resident for 50 years.

In 1925 I attended the new Harding High School in Sawtelle, now University High in West Los Angeles.

Scoutmaster Meeson asked me to be assistant scoutmaster for the Boy Scout Troop that met at Palms School. The troop once camped at Topanga Ranch and the boys hiked over the ridge from Topanga to La Tuna Canyon. Everything went well until the Brown boy panicked and I went back to help him down a steep bank to the road. He let go and kicked, and then we were both sliding toward a cliff so I grabbed the only bush and saved a fall. Wouldn't you know it? It was poison oak. This was about or during the time that the earthquake hit Santa Barbara.

In July, Mr. Jennings of the School District said they wanted our house for an addition to the school. In August they gave us \$6,000 for our house and in September I started work at Baake-Edington Nursery on Sawtelle Boulevard. (It is now smack in the middle of the big Freeway

Interchange.) We looked at the houses at the end of the Washington car line. A house at \$6,000 was a good buy and we could save much money with lower carfare to downtown. I will always be glad my folks decided to stay in Palms. My life would be different if we had moved. In Palms I grew up with the town and helped to get important improvements.

I started 1926 with my first traffic ticket for no tail lights and it cost me \$5 to enrich Culver City. At the end of January we were in our new home at 3619 Motor Ave. and I was busy landscaping the lot.

Sister Iva was guardian of a troop of Camp Fire Girls and she became a newspaperwoman when she started at the Evening Express. She stayed until the paper was sold and merged with the Herald. Dick quit the studio and started as a cameraman on a local newsreel. I tried the Auto Club and several map makers but didn't find a job. I took a Civil Service examination for topographical draftsman and passed but was 18th on the list and figured I wouldn't get a job so I went to Atascadero and worked at my aunt's place. I got a job at the creamery in San Luis Obispo at \$90 a month. After a few days I got a call from my folks to come home as I had been cer-

tified for a Civil Service job and I started working on May 10, 1926, for \$125 a month for the Department of Water and Power.

My birthday came on July 18 and I took my sister and Mable Haven to the beach. Coming home we were hit by a dreaming motorist. The Ford was turned over and the girls were thrown out and scratched and bruised but I emerged from the wreck without a scratch.

In early 1927, I bought my second hand Ford, a coupe, for \$245 and soon left on my first paid two-week vacation. Harold Wood and I toured the Redwood, so called, highway to Oregon Caves, north to Portland, and we visited some friends I had known 13 years before at Corvallis.

I remember the barn dance at the La Lomita Rancho. The jolly community affairs. Today, the old Bain's La Lomita home is part of the Notre Dame School on Overland Avenue opposite Palms Park. I joined the Palms Chamber of Commerce in 1927 not thinking that 37 years later I would still be an active member. Soon I was also a member of the West Los Angeles Improvement Association.

I saw the home on Motor Avenue that was wrecked by an explosion of an illegal whisky still. In 1928, the Saint Francis Dam broke, causing death and de-

struction. On the weekend I walked miles in the canyon to see what had happened.

I had never gone to sea except for my trips to Catalina and so I booked passage on the Emma Alexander to San Francisco, Victoria and Seattle. The stop at Victoria in 1929 was my first trip into Canada. I have spent several vacations and many a weekend relaxing on Catalina Island. The gang often called me the "Catalina Kid."

I bought a lot of my own on Motor Avenue for \$2100 and later Dick and I built a house that is still my home today.

In 1929, I was elected as secretary of the Improvement Association and served in this capacity for five years. In 1930 I was active on the Palms Zoning Committee and the city zoned the area just about the way the committee recommended. The Palms Chamber of Commerce honored me by electing me vice-president.

To condense many years into a few paragraphs, I campaigned for the Colorado River Water Project, for reduction of telephone rates, better transportation and adequate city planning. In 1939 I joined the Historical Society of Southern California and started gathering facts for a history of the Ballona Valley which I am still working on.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the last in a series of articles on the history of Palms written by Mr. Worsfold, a recognized historian and civic leader who celebrated his 50th year in Palms on Oct. 8.

In 1940, I started the campaign for Palms Junior High School. In the meantime, I circulated petitions for storm drains, street lights, street name changes, boulevard stop signs, traffic signals and alley paving jobs, worked for a park, schools, street improvements and anything the community needed. Although locally I was not given much recognition, in my office I was called the "Mayor of Palms."

I was appointed to fill a vacancy on the County Central Committee of the Democratic Party and at the next primary election I was third highest of seven positions and had over 7000 votes.

In 1941 I bought my first new car and picked it up at the Chevrolet factory in Flint, Mich. From there I toured eastern Canada and New England states.

My work for a junior high site was ended when the School District bought my recommended site. It was at this time that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941. I didn't wait for the Draft Board to call me. I heard about the Naval Construction Battalions and the need for men with many different trades. With 16 years of experience on map work I could be valuable and maps were important to wage war.

I joined the "Seabees" on June 20, 1942. I was on active duty from Nov. 1, 1942, to Dec. 7, 1945. My tour of duty included 16 months on four islands of Alaska with the 45th Battalion and eight months on Luzon in the Philippines with the 11th Battalion. I helped build sets for war shows from defense workers at San Francisco, Vallejo and Berkeley. I shipped out on Admiral Byrd's Polar ship "Southern Cross," the "President Monroe" the Los Angeles built liberty ship "Patrick," victory ship "Sumpter," Dutch merchant ship "Slotterdyke" landing ship tank, pontoon barge and was shipwrecked at Dutch Harbor on the ancient "S.S. Yale" built in 1907.

Inever was shot at or saw the

enemy but I battled some of the world's worst weather, williwaws in the Aleutians and typhoons in the Philippines and saw two volcanoes in eruption. The war experiences would be a separate story to tell some other time. I was honorably discharged on Dec. 7, 1945. (Pearl Harbor Day).

A month after my discharge, I saw the business manager of the School District to see the status of Palms Junior High School. War had stopped any construction on the site which had been owned for four years. Mr. Ni-becker said the school was contingent upon a proposed bond issue and they couldn't start the plans until they had orders from superintendent of schools. I wrote the superintendent, Mr. Kersey, and asked for action.

It was ironic that my two pet projects had to be in conflict. The school district made plans for the Junior High to straddle Ocean Park Avenue, now Palms Boulevard. I suggested a Junior High south of the highway, an elementary north of the highway. The City required the opening and paving of Ocean Park Avenue but when the school contract was let in 1948, the plans showed two fences across Ocean Park Avenue to block the highway. Then the fight began against the highway and I was right in the middle of the battle favoring the highway as essential to the City and several hundred people strongly against it.

The greatest and longest controversy in the history of Palms lasted eight years and was decided by the courts so that the highway was opened and paved with a tunnel under it connecting the two parts of the school. When the highway was passable for five miles it was silly to have four names on it so I circulated a petition and obtained signatures of owners of two-thirds of the

frontage. An ordinance of the City Council signed by the Mayor established the name Palms Boulevard.

Time was going faster and I was slowing down when I passed the double five but I thought I was in good shape, however, my appendix was not.

In the first week of January, 1963, I was admitted to the hospital on Sunday just before midnight and this thing couldn't wait so they operated about 2 a.m. Call it peritonitis, or what have you, it was bad but I wasn't going to die, I would be OK in a few weeks.

After five days I was ready to go home for slow healing, but something happened and I nearly died. My wife, Jean, saved my life by summoning the head nurse

Mary Mel Smith, and she got the doctors immediately, an embolism stopped my clock, almost completely. They finally dissolved the clot in the brain but I was paralyzed and it was a long time before I was able to function half normally.

Many doctors and nurses worked on and with me and I want always to remember them but particularly Kathy Crosby because she was there to serve and certainly did not need the job. Her encouragement at a critical point was invaluable. At that point I didn't know if life was worth living because I couldn't write or even pronounce my own name.

Well, I did get better and back to work and resumed my civic work.