

A
Brief History
of
Burbank, California

Printed by
The City of Burbank

A Burbank Chamber of Commerce Service Bulletin

and 494
BURBANK'S

50

GOLDEN YEARS

1911 - 1961

PART I

RANCHES, RAILROADS AND REAL ESTATE: THE YEARS BEFORE THE INCORPORATION OF THE CITY JULY 8, 1911.



A reproduction of the original tract map used by the Providencia Land, Water and Development Company.

Burbank was born during the Southern California land boom of the 1880's when thousands of Americans came West during the railroad rate war between the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe.

The newcomers so completely Americanized their little town that Burbank's Indian and Spanish heritage survives today only in street names. Almost completely forgotten are

the city's first inhabitants, nomadic Indians of the Shoshonean language group who lived in wigwags, were noted basket-weavers and spoke the Cahuilla dialect.

The lasting mark made on the area by the Spanish is San Fernando Road. It appears to follow the route of the old road that linked the San Fernando and San Gabriel missions.



cop. 2

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portion of the present-day city was part of the first California rancho, *rancho San Rafael*, granted to Don Jose Maria Verdugo in 1788. The other rancho which played a part in Burbank's history, *Rancho La Providencia*, was created by Mexico after independence was won from Spain in 1821. It bordered San Rafael's southwest boundary.



Los Angeles attorney Jonathan H. Scott acquired the Burbank portion of *Rancho San Rafael* in an 1857 land swap to become the area's first American landowner. However, neither Scott nor the Americans who purchased the *La Providencia* property developed their lands.

It wasn't until the late 1860's when the properties were united under single ownership that Burbank's future began to take shape.



New Hampshire-born dentist, Dr. David Burbank, active in Los Angeles real estate ventures, purchased the *Scott Tract* and the ranches. He acquired clear titles to both in 1871 through court actions.

Dr. Burbank raised sheep on his ranches properties and occasionally sold small plots of land. The Southern Pacific Railroad purchased the right-of-way for its main line along San Fernando Road on Feb. 28, 1873, for \$1. Its first train passed through Burbank on April 15, 1874. In 1877 Thomas Story, who was to become the city's first mayor, bought 80 acres from the dentist to start a small farm.



A grammar school was opened on an acre of Valley land donated by Dr. Barbark on June 3, 1873, and the area's first church was dedicated on Sept. 14, 1884 as the Providence Methodist Episcopal Church.

But the major turning point in Barbark history was the 1884 rate war between the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific railroads. Fares from Kansas City to Los Angeles dropped to \$5 for a short time in 1887.

The rush to California that resulted from this price war brought with it a brief period of frantic land speculation. More than 100 towns, including Barbark, were founded during the boom.

With townships accessible by rail at a premium, Dr. Barbark was able to sell the Valley properties he purchased for approximately \$9,000 to a group of Los Angeles land speculators for \$250,000 in 1888.



The speculation formed the Providence Land, Water and Development Co., laid out a business district and divided surrounding properties into small farms and residential lots. They called the town Barbark and opened the tract for sale on May 3, 1887.

The promoters gave the town wide streets, a \$30,000 hotel and started construction on a "brick block" building at San Fernando Road and Olive Avenue. A horse car line was operated on tracks up Olive so buyers could ride from the train station to hillside lots. On the trip back the horse boarded the car for the downhill ride.



Before the year was over advertisements in Los Angeles newspapers were claiming Barbark sales of \$475,000. The Barbark Times, the little weekly newspaper begun on Nov. 12, 1887, repeated the speculator's claims, boasting Barbark's climate "prolongs the lives of the feeble and enhances the enjoyment of the robust."



Photograph of "Brick Block" building built by
Providence Land, Water and Development
Company

1887 Photograph of Olive Avenue looking west
showing original tracks for horse car line.

But high interest rates and a glutted real estate market put an end to the land boom in April, 1888. As property values tumbled, the Providence company failed; Barbank's newspaper and its only industry, a furniture factory, went out of business; and Barbank lots were advertised as the "cheapest land in California."

Although the boom's death killed 62 of the new towns, Barbank residents stood fast and faced the years of drought and depression that followed. Sheep returned to graze the hillsides, and Barbank became a center for saloons, vineyards and wineries.

The little village had a taste of international attention in 1904 when the undefeated heavyweight champion of the world, James J. Jeffries, bought a ranch in Barbank.

A flood in 1905 brought rich top soil to cover the sandy Valley land. In 1906 a bank, high school and weekly newspaper opened. The town's population was nearing 400. Barbank was ready to become a city.

THIS IS THE FIRST OF A SIX-PART SERIES
ON THE HISTORY OF YOUR CITY. A VALUABLE
ADDITION TO YOUR HOME LIBRARY.



Los Fernando Hotel and Other Homes 1911.

Burbank began its "50 Golden Years" as a city on July 8, 1911, when voters approved incorporation by an 81 to 51 majority.

Incorporation resulted from efforts by Burbank settlers to take advantage of the second great San Fernando Valley land boom which started in 1885 with the announcement that Los Angeles would bring water to the Valley by 1912 with the Owens River Aqueduct.

The promise of increased land values had combined with agricultural prosperity to attract newcomers to Burbank, but townspeople saw even greater possibilities for their "Panama City" if it could become a residential suburb.

They realized that the macadam strip in the center of San Fernando Road, built in 1810 with County "Good Roads" bond funds, would not solve their major problem—transportation from Burbank to Los Angeles.



First City Seal highlighted the landscape which founders claimed was "second to none great anywhere."



City boundaries in 1911, with 2.50 square miles and 1961 annexation of 9.14 square miles.

BURBANK THE PANDORA CITY

*Legend on the Southern Pacific "Old
Burbank, Amazing Place" Signs
at the San Fernando Valley.*

already was in operation on his Olive Avenue track, between Lake and Flower streets.

Fawkes' efforts failed, and construction on the streetcar line started.

Paved streets and electric lights were the next attractions sought by Burbank boosters. These improvements could come quickly with self-government, so the drive for incorporation began early in 1911.

The July 8 election resulted, giving the Valley its first independent city, with an area of 2.58 square miles and a population of slightly more than 380.

A governing body, the board of trustees, was named in the same election. Its members soon adopted a city seal, ordered street improvements, licensed businesses, and prohibited gambling and the sale of liquor.

However, the big day in 1911 was Sept. 23 when the first Pacific Electric car rolled into town over Glendale Boulevard tracks.

The hubbub celebrating the event at-

Consequently, a campaign was launched to acquire a branch of the electric railway line that served Glendale.

The streetcar company was agreeable, but demanded a \$40,000 guarantee and right-of-way land.

Opposition to the public fund raising in 1910 was led by J. W. (Jack) Fawkes.

Fawkes, who built the "Fawkes' Patented Aerial Car" in 1893, wanted to run a monorail line from Burbank to Topolino (South Glendale). One 50-passenger monorail car

Celebration day, Sept. 23, 1911. Olive Avenue and Third Street.



tracted five thousand persons to the present County Courthouse site. Although Gov. Hiram Johnson failed to appear as advertised, the visitors were entertained by orators, horseback contests and a baseball game between the "Sharon Bloomer Girls" and the local boys' all-star team.

The \$214 profit from the barbecue, added to \$750 of county road money and \$100 loans from private citizens, provided the first city funds.

Despite the streetcar line's failure to produce a residential boom, Burbank pushed



Pacific Electric streetcar of 1911

ahead with plans for paved streets, electric power and a reliable water supply."

On March 28, 1913, \$750,000 in bonds was voted for municipal water and electric facilities, another achievement to boast about when the city was again crowded with visitors that year on the 4th of July.

Thousands lined five miles of straightaway through Burbank to watch Barney Oakland and 49 others in "speed machines" roar by enroute to Sacramento in "the greatest automobile race ever known."



Local company called it "Tusker" tank but only the Burbank men's right-of-way demands placed the machine's installation in Santa Monica in 1913.

The year of 1914 opened with Burbank's first first in the Pasadena Tournament of Roses parade winning second prize. The year also saw the first streetlights turned on and the beginning of the move by valley farmers to annex their land to the city.

"Come in, neighbors; the water's free," the city dwellers told the farmers who feared being absorbed by Los Angeles, and the farmers did, adding 9.14 miles to the city area when annexation was officially completed on April 19, 1915.



Rose Parade float of 1914 depicted the character of the golden cage shown by a dragon. Float of parades displayed local farm products.

Progress continued in 1906 with the approval of a bond issue providing \$55,000 for a city hall, electric light works, and the apparatus to replace the volunteer fire crew.

A new era in Burbank's development came in 1917 when townspeople raised \$25,000 to buy a 20-acre farm site at the corner of Alameda Avenue and San Fernando Road for the Moreland Truck Company.

The news that Burbank was to have a major industry pushed America's entry into World War I off the front page of the Burbank Review.

As Burbank boys were called into service, citizens formed a home guard and sold Liberty Bonds. High praise went to the city marshal when he stopped a resident from playing "Die Wacht am Rhein" on a phonograph.

By 1919 Burbank had weathered both war and the Spanish influenza epidemic which closed city schools. It was ready to begin the third stage of its history—realization of the old dream of residential development.



First City Hall, 1911, Blue Ribbon.



Moreland Truck Factory represented Burbank's potential in industrial growth.

**BURBANK
FOR HOMES AND HEALTH**

On Southern Pacific and Pacific Electric Lines,
from Los Angeles, Pasadena, Glendale,
and Fullerton, Orange, Anaheim, and
Santa Ana, California.

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BURBANK'S

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GOLDEN YEARS

1911-1961

PART 3

THE "BOARING" TWENTIES



HOMES
HOLLYWOOD
HOME RULE
BURBANK IN THE TWENTIES



he love of Hollywood, a warm climate and the popularity of the automobile made Southern California the terminus for the largest internal migration in American history during the "Roaring Twenties."

The land boom that resulted changed Burbank from a ranching and farming community into a residential city with diversified industry, and newcomers sent the city's 1920 population mark of 2,013 soaring to 36,682 by 1930.



San Fernando Blvd. and Olive Avenue 1927.

The course the community was to follow began taking shape in November, 1919, when Hollywood real estate promoter Ben W. Marks purchased a portion of the Stough Ranch properties for subdividing.

During that month the first Burbank motion picture company, Sacred Film, Inc., bought a small parcel of the hillside ranch and started filming Biblical stories.

Movies were big news in Burbank throughout the Twenties, with production companies shooting many scenes on city streets. Tourists enjoyed seeing themselves on the silent screen, but local boosters were irked because the Burbank railroad depot was often used when a "tick town" setting was needed.



Burbank High School, which opened its doors in September, 1909, and retaining past and present scars by 1919. During decade, community's educational facilities, evidenced from high school and elementary school to one corner high, two junior highs and seven elementary schools.

The decade's organizational trend also began in Burbank at the close of 1919 with the formation of American Legion Post 158 and troops of Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls. The first local service club followed in 1922 when a Kiwanis chapter was formed.

The community began dropping its rural ways. Municipal garbage pickup was undertaken in 1920; sidewalks were laid in 1922; and, in April, 1923, the federal government officially recognized Burbank's growth by dropping the village mail delivery classification and substituting city postal delivery service.

Many small real estate promotions were attempted during the year, and tracts such as "Schwarz Heights, Burbank's Beauty Subdivision," began replacing old-time ranches.

Prohibition was strongly supported by an active WUTU throughout the Twenties, and Burbank police were noted for their crackdowns on stills and "blind pigs." In 1921 federal agents were assisted by the local officers in a raid on a still operated by some Glendale policemen.

Reorganized from a city marshal's office into a police department and uniformed in 1923, Burbank officers also earned a reputation for enforcing traffic laws so thoroughly that revenue from fines frequently exceeded department operating costs.



Wentworth, Ben. First National Highway picture during decade of transition from stagecoach importance to a modern picture record, the first to picture city North Hollywood—the scene

that revenue from sales frequently exceeded department operating costs.

1922 when Marks outlined plans for developing the Stough property into a "dream



Warner Bros. First National Vineyard. Shows colossal growth of the industry in Burbank during decade of transition from silent movies to "talkies." Despite community's growing opposition to a motion picture center, the local early hotel inspired proposed campaign to rename city North Hollywood—the name later adopted by Los Angeles.

the properties with mule teams, graded and improved streets, including Hollywood Way, and began a sales campaign that saw as many as 150 salesmen in automobiles taking prospective buyers around to view the lots and houses.

White's company handled \$10 million worth of real estate transactions in seven years as would-be purchasers flocked to the subdivision to enjoy street dances and watch spectacular stunts that included a daredevil pilot crashing an old biplane into a house. And the motion picture companies came to Burbank as White predicted. In 1925 the Harry Webb Production Company built a "western street" set in the area which became the site for First National Pictures' huge plant in 1928, and, following a merger in 1929, the headquarters for Warner Bros.



Leashed Wings takes off from wood-covered field near Angles (John Henry) in 1918. "Gangster" sign in background was emblem of ill-fated film. New 1930s development which had caught its start in 1924 is Burbank.

While the Webb company was building its set, another organization, the "Burbank Motion Picture Studios," started work on its facilities at Hollywood Way and Verdugo.

With Burbank booming, a board of freeholders was formed by the city trustees in

1916 to develop a city charter which would assure protection from interference by the state legislature in local government.

Voter approval of the charter in January, 1927, gave the city home rule, replaced the board of trustees with a city council and created the post of city manager, a trained administrator who was to carry out policies legislated by council.

An early action by the new government created a regular fire department to replace the volunteer fire service and construction began on an addition to city hall for a fire station, as well as two branch stations in the valley.

But the improved fire service could not halt a huge head fire which roared over the foothills and into the exclusive Sunset Canyon area on Dec. 4, 1927. Ninety-eight homes were lost in the worst disaster in the city's history.

Burbank's unparalleled progress continued despite the fire, and the optimistic view of the future was supported by the United Aircraft and Transport Company of Seattle which began construction of the "first \$1 million airport in the United States" near the Turkey Crossing industrial section in 1929.

With streets improved and curbs installed, it appeared that Burbank's vacant lots would soon be covered with new homes—when the stock market crash brought the boom of the Twenties to a sudden stop.

Industrial growth kept pace with other Burbank advances. Jorgens opened the Caribbeana Soap factory on Verdugo Road in 1925, while Empire China Company, a glass plant and an aluminum company built factories off San Fernando Road at Turkey Crossing—where Lockheed located its small airplane factory in 1928.

Real estate activity, however, overshadowed everything else in Burbank during the 'Twenties.



Calling silent, when newspaper printed with editorial, much talk of real (cheap) house opportunities in Burbank during Twenties. Shells sold its local police made city voluntary place for housekeepers and newcomers.

The first major tract was announced in 1912 when Marks outlined plans for developing the Stough property into a "dream



an industrial growth of this industry in Burbank. The so "Stough" property community's previous (cheap) early, found original proposed campaign as, later adapted by Lockheed.

city" that would be the Wilshire Boulevard district of the San Fernando Valley.

Marks, who donated the present site of McCambridge Park to the city for a planned municipal center, envisioned the location of the southern branch of the University of California in the Verdugo foothills with his San Mar Hills residential properties adjoining the campus.

But Westwood promoters had a stronger lobby. The once favored Burbank site for the university was rejected; an effort to create a University of International Relations as a substitute failed; and Marks' promotion began a slow collapse that ended in financial disaster, defaulted bonds and confused property title claims.



"Rock West" or Magnolia Hotel, and Hollywood Way toward Magnolia Park National Bank, Burbank Daily (1912) and early section 1912, all cited by developer E. L. White.

Burbank dairy operator Earl L. White joined his promotion at the middle income group and met with phenomenal success. On Sunday, March 4, 1923, he opened his 450-acre tract—Magnolia Park.

White, who saw the potential in Burbank to create another Hollywood, cleared

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GOLDEN YEARS

1911-1961 **PART I**

PLANNED PUBLIC WORKS PREPARATION FOR THE FUTURE, BURBANK IN THE DEPRESSION DURING THE THIRTIES.



The Santa Monica Blvd. looking north toward Olive Avenue, 1929.

National publicity, not local conditions, brought the Depression to Burbank in the Thirties.

Although the community was in the midst of one of its greater booms, the bad news that followed the stock market crash in 1929 caused a general business slow-down that frightened local investors.

* The resulting inability to borrow money stopped the growth of the Magnolia Park development and home building throughout the city. Business expansion also suffered. The Maynard Truck Company closed its doors, and Lockheed Aircraft began having financial difficulties.



But Burbank citizens didn't sit idly by, bemoaning the hard times and waiting for aid from the federal government.

City council trimmed 10 per cent from the wages of city employees and used the money to create an Employment Relief Department.



Churches, service clubs and lodges launched their own relief programs to provide baskets of food for the unemployed as a "Hooverville" sprang up along the Southern Pacific tracks.

And many unemployed Burbank citizens didn't wait for help from city government or local organizations. They founded their own cooperative, trading their skills as barbers, carpenters or shoe repairmen for food and services.

The city continued to look optimistically toward the future, and the relief programs were used to clear the way for Burbank's expansion as the unemployed were put to work paving streets, building flood control channels and cutting fire breaks and roads into the hills.

This optimism was reflected in 1931 when the city signed a contract with the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation for 25 million kilowatt hours per year of electricity from Boulder Dam on a take or pay basis. At the time, the city was using only 13 million kilowatt hours per year.



His crew working on Burbank's first main drain drain project.

The establishment of the "alphabet soup" federal unemployment relief programs, such as the WPA under the Roosevelt administration merely augmented the civic programs and were put into effect locally under the control of the city government.



Despite the optimistic spirit and vigorous local efforts to halt the depression, the downward trend continued into 1933-35 when the city relief programs listed 1,688 heads of families on the rolls.



Extensive damage done to Burbank in the early 30's as the result of 1931 fire and the drought.

Adding to financial problems was the great Long Beach earthquake of 1933 which damaged Burbank school and business buildings.



Thomas A. Brown, listed, was condemned due to structural damage caused by the Long Beach earthquake.

Members of the Burbank American Legion, who maintained a mobile soup kitchen, went to the stricken beach area and operated in Compton for four days and nights. They reported, however, that there was no panic in the disaster area and they fed more sight-seers than Compton people.

Meanwhile, Burbank city government and business continued to work toward better times.

In 1934 the entire city electrical system was changed from 50 cycles to 60 cycles to prepare for the power from Boulder Dam. A program to service or replace all the city's electrical motors, at a cost of about \$150,000, was undertaken. The conversion was extended all the way down to electric clocks, and city workers entered homes to adjust higher priced clocks or simply supply new clocks for low priced models.

Industry also prepared for expansion as Warner Bros., despite a disastrous fire in 1935, opened a sound stage building program which was to make its Burbank motion picture plant the largest facility of its kind in the world, and 1935 saw the location of Columbia Studios on the Hollywood Way site which became known as the "Columbia Ranch".



Raising the foundation for the present City Hall.

The spring continued into 1938 with a vastly improved employment situation created by work at Lockheed Aircraft Corporation and by the construction work of the Metropolitan Water District.



Market Street from where famous visitors (including, perhaps, Ford) sit of the 1914 Market under light striking night.

Lockheed, reorganized under the leadership of Robert Gross, had nearly 1,200 on its payroll by the end of 1936.

Pioneering with a twin-engine all-metal transport plant, the Electra, and building on the reputation made by its famous Vega and Orion airplanes, Lockheed took over the facilities that had been built by other firms at the old Turkey Crossing industrial tract.

Additional employment opportunities were created as the Metropolitan Water District project to bring water from Boulder Dam came closer to Burbank and a program of civic building was stepped up.

A new main library building was constructed near the corner of Glendale Boulevard on East Olive Avenue in 1938 and was operated by the county library service until 1958 when the Burbank Public Library became a city department; the same year the new post office building opened its doors two blocks down the hill.



Burbank's drawing of the new main Burbank library building in 1938.

THIS IS THE RESULT OF A SIX-YEAR JOURNEY

THE JOURNEY OF A SIX-YEAR JOURNEY



Architect's drawing of the new main Burbank Library building in 1935.



BURBANK'S

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GOLDEN YEARS

1901-1961

PART 2

PROSPERITY, FLAMES AND POSTWAR ADJUSTMENTS

No event in Burbank's history caused greater change in the community than America's entry into World War II.

The decade of the Forties opened on an upswing after bank's 14,877 citizens were being served by a new city hall on Olive Avenue, a flock of 280 city employees and the community's first steam generating plant to produce electric power locally for industry and homeowners.

The completion of Walt Disney's studio on a 16-acre city on Buena Vista Street late in 1939 had reinforced the city's position as the world's motion picture producing center, and production of already in Los Angeles continued to increase as United States and military workers were added to those already placed by Great Britain.)

BURBANK IN THE FORTIES



The rapid industrial expansion of Burbank's aviation industry was creating problems for the early city, even before America was brought into the war on Sunday morning, Dec. 7, 1941, when Japanese bombers attacked Pearl Harbor.



Two planes takeoff into Burbank's sky, but they didn't see as far as they could see that day at 1941. That is to say, they didn't.

Burbank's Police Department had jumped in size from 38 men at the start of 1940 to a total of 41 men in order to cope with new situations created by war production in the mid-1941. The lack of traffic control signals in the valley section of the community where most of aircraft workers jammed streets created a difficult problem for both citizens and workers who lived outside the community. When delays at the aircraft factory changed, growth from Lockheed had to be called on to assist Burbank officers in directing traffic at various intersections until signals could be installed.

Burbank police also had to assume a role in the government security effort at the outbreak of the war when they were ordered to gather up cameras, binoculars and even motion picture projectors owned by German residents in the town.

Japanese nationals, who operated truck firms and restaurants in Burbank, were sent to relocation camps outside California, ending the last stage in the city's evolution from an agricultural-based economy.

Bombing, blackouts and air raid drills became the order of the day. School children were fingerprinted for identification purposes in the event of an attack.

Rationing replaced prices in the main store lots of businesses, who had to begin to deal with a system of stamps and points needed to qualify purchasers for food, drugs and a myriad of various items. Gasoline rationing made helping motorists a common sight.

Shortage in non-rationed items also plagued shoppers. One enterprising San Fernando Boulevard merchant caused a major traffic jam and earned nationwide publicity when he staged an outdoor of event for wartime—a sale on alarm clocks.



"Don't you know there's a war on?" became the most familiar phrase on the lips of those for disgruntled shoppers.

War bond rallies and dances were staged around the clock in the city for war workers on day, evening and graveyard shifts.

The manpower shortage made the working women common place even in factories, and, in June, 1943, when Lockheed employment hit its wartime peak of 30,000, nearly 15,000 workers were women.



Disney Studios designed the poster for the picture *Bambi*.



Disney Studios designed the poster for the picture *Bambi*.

The motion picture industry, like the aviation industry, met wartime needs. Disney Studios, which turned out cartoons designed as training films, were listed 94 per cent of its production was for government agencies. And Disney artists, without charge, created more than 200 military mascot designs for units in every branch of the service.

Camouflage changed the face of Burbank. Buildings which housed strategic war production facilities were disguised with palm and cactus in vine-like fields, hills and residential areas.

Despite restrictions on housing materials and ceilings on prices which limited home building, Burbank's population jumped to 50,000 by 1943.

The wartime boom turned Burbank into the gateway to the Los Angeles area for air travelers as Lockheed Aircraft Terminal became the main landing place for commercial airlines flying to Southern California.



Just out with wings of sight to South Harbor.

And Burbank gained one of the San Fernando Valley's major medical centers on Feb. 1, 1944, when the Sisters of Charity of Providence opened the Richard St. Joseph Hospital, built with contributions from local residents and businesses.

The cultural side of community growth also was not neglected. On July 27, 1944, the Burbank Symphony Orchestra made its debut.



Lockheed factory became replica of residential area after it was cloaked under mask of World War II camouflage.

But Burbank's industrial expansion based on war production came to a halt with the Japanese surrender on Aug. 14, 1945.

By that time employment at Lockheed had dwindled to 15,000, about a third of its all-time high, and the company had received cancellations on more than \$1 billion in orders, ship production H2S aircraft between Pearl Harbor and V-J Day, including nearly 10,000 P-38 twin-engine fighters, C-119 four-engine B-17 Flying Fortresses and about 5,000 patrol bombers.

However, the end of the war did not mean another recurrence of hard times in Burbank.

Unlike other towns in Burbank's vicinity, wartime prosperity was followed with postwar growth, despite occasional setbacks.



The rising trade boom meant eight in Burbank during postwar boom.

Lockheed aircraft survived cancellations of wartime contracts and cutbacks without big layoffs because it had prepared for peace with the development of the popular Constellation line of long-range airliners, as well as pioneering experiments which led to production of the P-48 fighters plane, the first jet fighter adopted by the Air Force.

One setback for the city took place in December, 1946, when most major airlines announced they were shifting operations to the

new Los Angeles International Airport, ending the problem of landings held by Lockheed Air Terminal, the world's largest privately owned airport, as the main commercial air passenger field in Southern California.

However, real estate values increased with the end of building restrictions and construction flourished. Burbank citizens hailed postwar prosperity with the Burbank on Parade celebration in 1947, the first of a series of community events continued for more than a decade.

Returning servicemen, like many who came to the city to work during the war, were finding Burbank to be an ideal location for homes, and the list of potential home buyers trying to find a place to live in the city led to the

creation of the giant postwar housing tracts which pushed the town's population nearly 20,000 over the wartime mark in 1947, more than double the 1940 census figure, at the end of the decade.

Meeting the growth problem created by this postwar boom was to be the major task of the city during the next 10 years. **A**

BURBANK'S

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GOLDEN YEARS

1911-1961

PART 2

MUNICIPAL GROWTH, SERVICE AND PLANNING THE STORY OF BURBANK IN THE FIFTIES AND SIXTIES

A new era began for Burbank as mid-century. For the first time in the town's history a period of prosperity did not come to a halt with the end of a cycle of unbridled growth. The wartime industrial boom had been followed by a postwar real estate boom, leaving few undeveloped areas in the community. Burbank had passed through the period of growing pains of a city.

The community had become what its early promoters hoped it could be, a combination of an industrial and a residential city.

But, hampered by wartime restrictions and postwar shortages, the city government had been hard pressed to provide the municipal services required by the growing community.

In 10 years the population had doubled, and the number of city employees working to meet the needs of Burbank had increased from 100 in 1940 to 500 in 1950.



Highway development greatly speeding traffic east to San Fernando Valley.

The city's first municipal water stadium had been provided with the opening of Vending Park in 1908 and the public service administration building on Mississippi Boulevard provided additional space to house a major function of the municipal government, but more recreational facilities for citizens and added facilities for government were needed.



Municipal water stadium at Vending Park.

As an office of the county clerk and Barback's first full-time Superior Court opened in a new County Courts Building near city hall early in 1908, and Westlight Blvd in Sough Park, an outdoor theater for community cultural events, opened later that year.

Forest roads, at one time nearly a rarity in the fast growing community, became common places, with city administrators able to provide swift improvements thanks to the city-owned asphalt plant, and city council during the decade soon found its concern on paving was reduced to putting an end to unpaved alleyways throughout Barback.



Great Park, Barback Hall, where during the summer season Barback citizens are surrounded with high quality entertainers. For example, Barback and Barback House.

Growth in development of the city's industries continued, however the tremendous boom during the war years decade overshadowed later developments.

Barback's electronics, assembly and other light manufacturing industries thrived as advanced technology was applied to consumer products and the needs of a government concerned with industry and economic up defense.

Barback also continued to serve as the major center for motion picture work, adding only



For General Products, Barback's first major industrial plant.



Fire Department Headquarters. Berkeley's fire vehicles are comparable with the finest in the nation.



The city had almost completed in 1961, known as the Filmmakers' and Film Building Under.

vision production in its many industries during the 1950s. The National Broadcasting Company purchased the site for its new television studios in Olive Avenue and Alameda Street in 1950 and began building its studios to the site location from Hollywood United Productions of America, with a mechanistic approach to film capturing, opened its studio in the Filmmakers' and Film Building Under, including the list of major motion picture studios in the area nearby which already included Warner Bros., Columbia Pictures, Disney Studios and Twentieth Century.



the city's northwestern growth, showing a large, modern building complex with a flat roof and a parking lot in front.

A major stream of early Burbank developers was nearly fulfilled in 1950 when efforts were made to have the permanent Los Angeles State College campus located on a McClure Canyon site near the new surrounding Ben Mar Hills subdivisions. But the effort was the same late as Ben Marks' attempts during the Twenties to have the UCLA campus established in that area, and what may have been Burbank's last chance to gain one of the Southwest's major institutions of higher learning was lost.

The decade also was not without its local major disaster. In 1952 two fires swept through several stages at Warner Bros., causing damages that ran into the millions in the world's largest motion picture production plant.

By 1953 the rapid residential growth that was triggered during the years of World War II and the postwar building boom finally started to slow down as the city's population passed the 50,000 mark and the number of houses and apartments within the community topped the 20,000 figure. In the same year St. Joseph Hospital opened a new \$1 million wing, boosting its capacity to 250 beds and retaining its position as the San Fernando Valley's leading medical center.

A minor innovation which added just under a half-square-mile of land to Burbank's northwestern boundary completed the city's territorial growth.

A highlight of this period of expansion was the city school system. Unlike many northland school districts, including Los Angeles, Burbank school administrators and board of education members anticipated problems of growth, as half-day students were never found on students as one of Burbank's 10 elementary, three junior and two senior high schools.

Meanwhile, the need for providing facilities for the increasing number of services the city government was supplying grew more pressing.

In a move to find a solution, a citizens advisory committee on capital improvements, composed of representatives from nearly every civic organization, held its first meeting on July 28, 1954. Together with local government officials, the citizens surveyed community needs and proposed a 10-year capital improvement program expected to cost more than \$10 million.

On April 3, 1955, Burbank voters went to the polls and voted 10,732 to 3,883 to provide \$5,000,000 in bond funds to finance the long-range program.

Additional funds for the 10-year development plan were to come from the annual revenues of the city government, and the city sales tax was increased a half per cent specifically for this purpose so that the financing of the program would not add to Burbank's traditionally low property tax rate.

Once adopted, construction of the facilities moved ahead quickly. By 1961 most of the major projects were completed, giving the city a new main fire station, two additional branch fire stations, a city hall annex to house the police department and jail, a police pistol range, a major recreation center at McCambridge Park, a new city street department yard, seaplanes bringing the Burbank Channel and railroad tracks on Olive Avenue, Magnolia Boulevard and Burbank Boulevard, as well as the first golf course in the city since the closure of the old Sunset Canyon Country Club during the depression years.

Additional local cultural facilities and im-

provements of the main library, as well as construction of a clubhouse-community center at the 18-hole Delfell Golf Course were the only remaining major projects in the Mayor program not completed in Burbank during the decade of the Sixties.



Before it has become golf course, clubhouse is ready to be site of the library and clubhouse extension and more. A club house—currently under study and to complete in early 1967.

The early accomplishments of the 10-year Capital Improvement Program, coupled with development of extensive off-street parking facilities in the downtown area, gave a boost to efforts to create a well-known, modernized shopping area in the San Fernando Boulevard business district.

By providing the municipal facilities expected to meet the town's needs until 1975, Burbank's 50,000 citizens look forward to even greater prosperity and increases in the multitude of municipal services they expect to enjoy from a city government following a program of careful, but rapid progress.