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Sourisseau Academy

Smith-Layton Archive presents:

From Willows to Glen

by Thomas N. Layton

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[141] **The corner of Willow and Lincoln.** Willow Glen is today among the most gentrified residential neighborhoods in San Jose, with the current epicenter of its business community near the intersection of Willow and Lincoln. But, back in the 1880s, the district was known as "The Willows" because of the brushy, weed-like trees that sprang from its soggy soil. (Photo by Tom Layton.)



[142] **Booksin's Orchard.** Following the construction of the Lewis Canal, which channelized the Guadalupe River in the late 1860s, "The Willows" became orchard land. By the mid-1890s, Booksin's orchard, located near modern-day Booksin School, was producing a massive tonnage of apricots and prunes. Carts stacked with drying trays were rolled into the boxlike smokehouses shown here, each of which had a concrete bowl in the floor filled with slow-burning sulfur. The doors were closed, and the apricots were smoked for four to six hours until all insects, bacteria and fungal spores were killed. The trays were then laid out for drying in the sun.



[143] **Ridley's Cherry Avenue Fruit Farm.** This c1910 photo shows women sorting and packing cherries at the Ridley family's Cherry Avenue Fruit Farm, located (of course) on Cherry Avenue.



[144] **George N. Herbert Fruit Co.** Local fruit harvests were sufficiently large that by 1890, George Herbert established a fruit-processing factory on Meridian Avenue. In 1901, he built this much larger plant on Lincoln Avenue, just south of Auzerais Avenue.



[145] **Nathan Lester farmhouse.** Meanwhile, a residential community was developing in The Willows. At first there were farmhouses, some of them quite elegant, surrounded by orchards — like Nathan Lester's house (circa 1900) on the Lincoln Avenue edge of his 30-acre property, which stretched from Malone Street to Curtner Avenue (Photo, courtesy of Linda L. Lester).

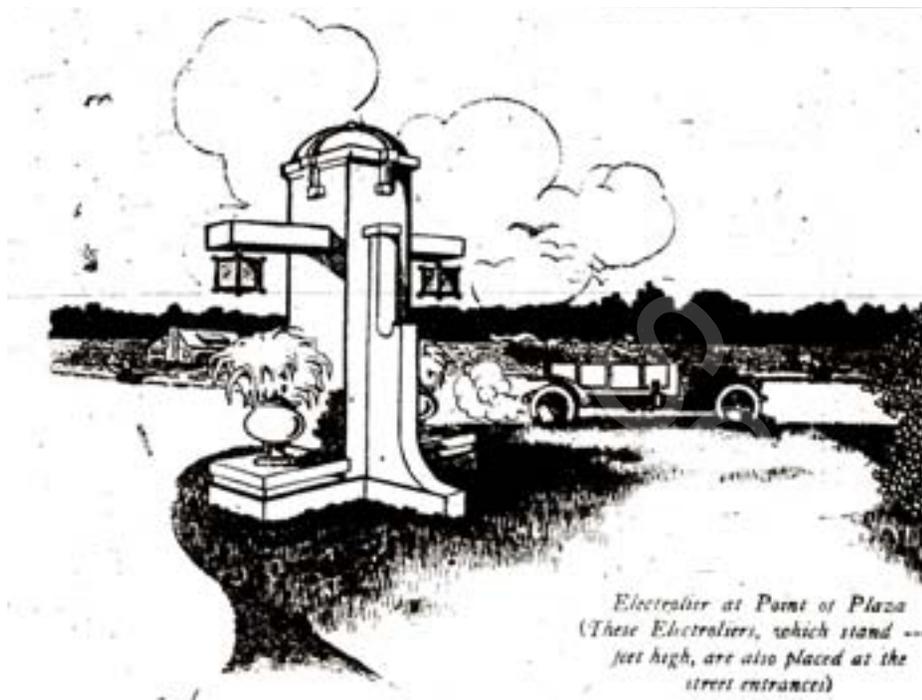


[146] **Grammar School.** The first grammar school serving The Willows was built in 1863 at Lincoln and Malone. In 1897, a larger grammar school was built at the corner of Lincoln and Minnesota —with airy classrooms surrounded with blackboards, as shown in this 1901 photograph.



[147] **1913 school newly rebuilt.** When the new Willow Glen grammar school at Lincoln and Minnesota was built in 1913, the design was by San Jose architect Frank D. Wolfe, a strong proponent of the Prairie Style. This image shows that school under construction. It would be razed in 1924 and replaced by yet another schoolhouse, which lasted until 1971 when the current school was built.

November 2016



[148] **San Jose Residential developers.** By 1913, developers were beginning to subdivide orchards into residential streets and building lots. Among the first of these was the *Palm Haven Residence Park*, a themed community, with its entrances marked with elegant electric-lantern-lit pillars. Its curved streets were lined with palm trees and modern architect-designed houses, each with a garage. In 2004, there was a community party to celebrate the rebuilt pillars, and the lanterns were officially re-lit. A century after they were planted, the palms, now 100 feet tall, still bend in the breeze above these lovingly restored Craftsman bungalows. (Michael Borbely provided the drawing of the original pillar and lantern structure. Neighborhood photo by Tom Layton.)



[149] **Bird Avenue Subway Construction.** In 1927, The Willows was incorporated as Willow Glen, to counteract the *Southern Pacific Railroad Company's* plans to operate scores of trains every day directly through what had become an upscale residential neighborhood. After a hard-fought legal battle, *Southern Pacific* finally agreed to a re-alignment, mostly to the east of Willow Glen; and in 1935, they erected a series of overpasses to elevate the rail tracks above the city traffic below. This photo shows the original overpass across Bird Avenue (later replaced when the street was widened) — where we see two cranes setting the steel rails into place. Willow Glen enjoyed its independent status for nine years until 1936 when voters chose annexation to San Jose, which offered the community its own high school and adequate sewer connections.



[150] **Willow Glen Volunteer Fire Department.** The Willow Glen Volunteer Fire Department building was constructed in 1930 at 1342 Lincoln Avenue, next door to what is now the *Vin Santo Restaurant*. This 1934 photo shows the *Willow Glen Methodist Episcopal Church* with its elegantly arched windows just to the left of the Fire Department.



[151] **Standard Oil Station.** In 1936, Willow Glen voted to become part of San Jose in order to acquire city services. Meanwhile, Lincoln Avenue had become home to a thriving business community. This 1937 photo by John C. Gordon shows the Willow Glen *Standard Station*, featuring "Red Crown" gasoline, on the northwest corner of Lincoln and Willow, a site now occupied by *US Bank*.



[152] **Rosenberg's Market.** Postcard photographer Caspar Laws did several photo shoots on Lincoln Avenue. In the summer of 1944, he stood at the intersection of Coe and Lincoln and aimed his camera south along Lincoln to record *Rosenberg's Market* (now *Arteaga's Food Center*), which featured short ribs at 25 cents per pound and toilet tissue at 5 cents per roll.



[153] **View north along Lincoln from Minnesota.** That same summer day in 1944, Laws stood in the middle of the intersection at Lincoln and Minnesota and aimed his camera north along Lincoln. Willow Glen Central Market building (now occupied by Hicklebee's Children's Book Store) and the Willow Glen Theatre (now occupied by the Thrift Box) are located on the right.



[154] **View north along Lincoln from Willow.** Around 1949, Casper Laws returned to Willow Glen and took two photos from the intersection of Willow and Lincoln. He first aimed his camera north past the *Standard Station* on the left corner and the *Safeway* grocery store on the right corner.



[155] **View south along Lincoln from Willow.** Then, while still standing in the intersection, Laws turned and aimed his camera south along Lincoln. He captured the *Shell* station on the left (now *Opa's Greek Restaurant*) and the triangular lot on the right corner occupied by an *Associated* gas station (later replaced by the *Elite Cleaners*) and now the site of *The Table* restaurant. Further down the street is the newly constructed *Garden Theatre*, completed in 1949.



[156] **Morning at the *Pronto Pup*.** During the early 1950s, breakfast or lunch was served at the Curci family's *Pronto Pup Creamery* at 1383 Lincoln Avenue, where Sausage and Eggs cost \$1.35, a "Super Burger" cost 75 cents, and a "Delicious Ranch Burger" cost 79 cents. Today, that location is occupied by *Gold Star Jewelers*, directly across the street from *Hicklebee's*. (Photo courtesy of Cookie Curci.)



[157] **Afternoon at the *Pronto Pup*.** In the afternoon the *Pronto Pup* was a hangout for high school students. Here, teenage boys — their hair combed forward into the popular jellyroll-front and with a ducktail seen from behind — try to impress the girls, one of whom has a stylish pixie-cut. (Photo courtesy of Cookie Curci.)



[158] **Curtner was a dead-end street.** In 1958, when Arnold "Del" Del Carlo shot this aerial view looking east along Curtner Avenue, it dead-ended at Booksin Avenue, adjacent to Saint Christopher's Church, facing a cherry orchard



[159] **Aerial view north on Lincoln from Minnesota.** We end this photo album in 1960, when Del Carlo swooped low in his Cessna above the intersection of Minnesota and Lincoln and aimed his camera north along Lincoln Avenue and captured this classic birds-eye view of Willow Glen's historic commercial district — much of which has been preserved through the subsequent half-century for our enjoyment today.