

The 1950s: Poodle Skirts, Pony Tails, Elvis and the 1-5 Freeway

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As we move in this column from 1913, Tualatin's year of incorporation, toward the current time, we have reached the 1950s, a time of great change.

The most explosive thing that ever happened to Tualatin since the last ice age floods has to be the building of the Interstate Freeway, which ran from Canada to Mexico. The portion at Tualatin was opened in the mid 1950s. The project slashed through the fertile Willamette Valley, forever changing the dynamics of the land and its people. Previously, 99 East and 99 West were the north and south routes, with many exits, making traffic slow and cumbersome. The Federal Expressway, with limited off and on ramps made travel more expedient in a time when most folks drove automobiles.

Before the freeway was built, Avery Road connected with Robbins Road off 65th (Meridian Road). John Nyberg and Julius Martinazzi were among the landowners whose property was condemned to make way for the road.

Larry Lee remembers hauling hay for my grandfather on the road bed before it was paved. Huge bulldozers and other large equipment lined the route, and there was a fellow in Norwood who had a good business in selling freeway equipment until the feds caught him up with him and sent him up the river.

The first Crawfish Festival was held in 1951, sponsored by the VFW who were raising funds to pay for their new Quonset hut building. The parade assembled at the grade school, and wound down Boones Ferry to end up at the city park. There was a street dance at the VFW hall, where the first Crawfish Festival Queen was crowned.



High school girls swept their hair back in pony tails, wore full skirts, and like elsewhere in the country, swooned over hip-swiveling Elvis Presley as he sang "Heartbreak Hotel" on the Ed Sullivan show. Television was new and exciting. The first time I saw TV it was down at the feed store, where the owner, Mr. Madgen, invited his customers to come watch a prize fight.

Women that had done men's work at the shipyards were now expected to return to the kitchen, as servicemen returned to take up any jobs that were available. Television ads encouraged women to purchase time saving appliances. Every home could now own a refrigerator and freezer. Previously, families could rent a "locker" at

Walt Hauxhurst's meat market cold storage unit. But some women were never again content to be homemakers, and started up their own businesses, like Claire O'Callahan and Peggy Gensman, who bought up rental homes and opened real estate offices.

Life was sure different back then. Kids walked, rode their bikes or horses along the road without fear; the economy was good; and Jason Hervin purchased a failing cannery on Nyberg Road and hired many local folks to help produce and deliver the famous Blue Mountain brand of pet food.

The Tualatin school system did not offer pre-school, but in 1958 the basement of the Methodist church was used for kindergarten classes for those who could afford to pay.

Now that the war was over, car companies were producing models that reflected the new interest in the space age. Sleek, long cars with wrap around windshields and flying fins replaced the modest sedans of yesteryear. Credit cards were introduced, and families were enjoying consumer goods like never before. Some folks

that remembered the Great Depression warned of the danger of using credit cards. "Never go into debt" was what the old folks, who had seen mortgages foreclosed, cautioned. But who ever listens? For those who do not remember history are doomed to repeat it.



Loyce Martinazzi was born and raised in Tualatin and is passionate about Tualatin History. She is currently Master of Winona Grange, Co-Founder of the Tualatin Historical Society and Co-Author of *Tualatin... From the Beginning*.



The "White Store" originally was owned by Ed and Grace Robinson, who refused to sell groceries to the Sasaki family when they returned from the internment camp. Vic Hanegan bought for the Sasaki's, who remember him with gratitude. The store was on the corner of Seneca Street.



Winona Grange's boys quartet performed at Tualatin Grade School in 1951. Left to right: Keith Dickson, Ken Dickson, Wesley Carr, Homer Zuver. Jim Russel on the squeeze box, Helen Hansen on fiddle and Gladys Bacon at the piano.



The Nyberg chicken house being moved east to Clayton's place. The bridge is under constructions. The little girl is Orrie Nyberg, who was crowned Crawfish Festival Queen when she was a teenager.



Hervin Company's Blue Mountain pet food trucks. Tualatin--Going to the Dogs!



Nyberg Road before the freeway. Lucky for us the Nyberg's owned a camera.



The John Nyberg house had to be moved to make way for the freeway.