



From Slum Town To Up Town: Tualatin in the 1990s

WRITTEN BY: **LOYCE MARTINAZZI**

When Tualatin's first City manager, Yvonne Saarinen Addington was looking to start an Urban Renewal district to help fund the downtown area, she was told "first, you've got to have "blight." The man pulled back the curtains and said "My God, do you have blight!"

Now, my family has known Yvonne's family since the early 1900s, and she was always a spunky girl, so it did not surprise me that Yvonne was able to secure urban renewal funds to renovate the run down so called down town.

Steve Stolze, mayor of Tualatin, carried on Yvonne's dream, and envisioned an identifiable downtown that was pedestrian friendly, using urban renewal funds. The City condemned many properties, tearing down old buildings. Some demolitions were admirable, however, to lose the beautiful old Tiffany house and the historic John L. Smith house was painful. The 1940 Grange hall barely escaped the wrecking ball.

After a decade of spirited, and sometimes contentious planning sessions, the Commons was built and became an undisputed success. It's an elegant town center, with shops, restaurants, housing, "hoffices" and a hotel rimming the three acre lake. Seasonal events like *Art Splash*,



The City acquired land and built many parks. Here is a photo of an old barn in Browns' Ferry Park.



Children play in a steam at Ibach Park.



Friday Night Summer Concerts, Farmers Market and the *Giant Pumpkin Regatta* draw a wide community for family fun. And it salutes the past: a history of the area is written in the paving stones near Hayden's Restaurant.

The city grew out in all directions. West, to develop the Hedges Creek area, now the location of the Police Department and the Heritage Center. Then Kaiser Permanente Medical Offices and more industry came. South and east grew with more upscale residences as developers scrambled to find more open land. And north, the old Durham gravel pit has been filled and converted into Bridgeport Village. The gravel pit had been formed by the flooding at the end of the last ice age.

With Scoggins Dam and up-river dredging, the 1974 flood was supposed to be the last. But in February, 1996, the combination of frozen ground, melting snow and heavy rainfall did it again. I remember that floodwaters measured four feet in the basement of the Grange hall. The furnace was ruined, the Wolfe Stove that the Grange had purchased in 1946 was heavily damaged, and the oven still needs to be replaced.

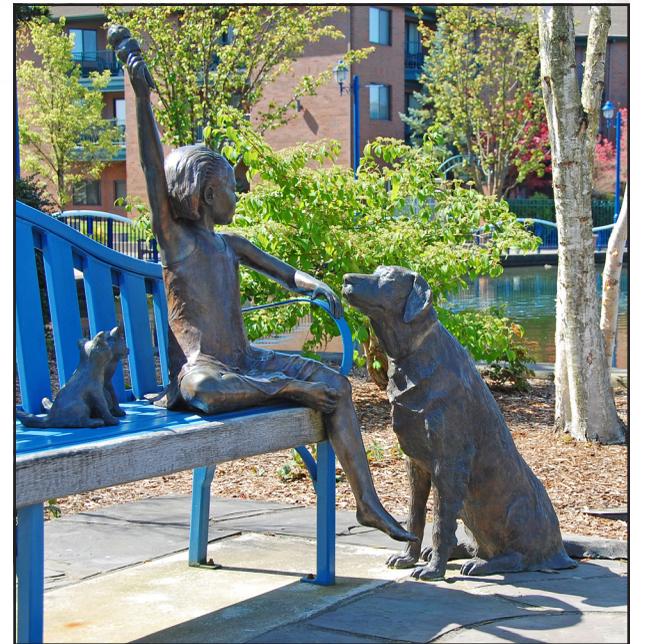
The population of Tualatin rose from 14,847 in 1990 to 22,943 by 2000. As the population grew, just like in the past, a new school was needed. The old 1939 brick school, so beloved by so many students, was declared unsafe. A new Tualatin Elementary School was built on Avery Street, and opened in 2004.

Sometimes when I am driving across the bridge, I wonder if old timers like John Sweek, Charley Roberts, or even my grandfather would recognize Tualatin today.



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*.

Author's note: In last months' story, hurriedly written, as usual, I left out some important farmers in the area. The Itel family (pronounced Ee-tel) purchased land on Tualatin-Sherwood Road in the 1890s, operating a dairy farm first, then building up a custom farm business. In 1926 the Itels secured a bus contract for Tigard and Tualatin schools and delivered students to and from schools for 40 years. The Koch family (pronounced Coach) settled across the road from the Itels in 1938, and eventually owned 120 acres, growing hay and grain and milking Guernsey cows. Ron and Kay Koch started a U-pick farm, growing berries, pumpkins and other produce. The Koch family has moved to St. Paul, but Earl Itel still lives on the old place.



A pet sculpture stands near the former location of Hervin's pet food factory.



John L. Smith, owner of the Smith Sawmill and the Tualatin Brickyard, built this house and lived in it until he was killed in an accident. The house was on the corner of Boones Ferry Road and 84th street, and was demolished to make way for the apartments around the Lake of the Commons.



Jurgens Park is located on Jurgens and Hazelbrook Roads. The playground features a covered bridge, like Taylor's Ferry Bridge that once crossed the Tualatin river one mile west.