

Coachella Valley's

Golden Years

COACHELLA

EARLIEST FRUIT AND VEGETABLE LAND IN CALIFORNIA
THE HOME OF THE EARLY GRAPE AND CANTALOUPE.
FLOWING ARTESIAN WELLS AT SMALL COST
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(Revised Edition)
The early history of the Coachella Valley County Water District
and stories about the discovery and development of this section
of the Colorado Desert.

\$2.50

per copy

Foreward . . .

" . . . Almost all the verdure which delights his eyes is the gift of water at the hand of man . . ." — Vol. X of John L. Stoddard Lectures on Southern California 1898.

The image of the desert has long been a hostile one.

Early explorers found the Colorado Desert no exception.

Undaunted early settlers and homesteaders brought the first changes to this concept, and water provided reclamation's magic, now apparent in the Coachella Valley.

The coming of the railroad was an important factor in opening the desert to settlement. The homesteaders were intrepid, curious and determined, and they brought perseverance to bend the will of the desert to their own plans.

The discovery of the great underground water resources by the railroad provided the first stimulus and a trickle of farmers. Additional farmers dug more wells, punched them deeper with hydraulic rigs, put electrically-powered engines to work and carried the flow of water to the thirsting, fertile land.

Then came the Colorado River through a canal 123½ miles long, converting hopes and dreams to realities, opening nearly 40,000 acres in less than two decades.

Water, machines, men and money turned the desert green, from dunes and brush to farmlands and golf courses, from a land of silence to one of industry and homes, schools, churches and recreation.

This brief history of the Coachella Valley County Water District's first years is not complete, much has been omitted, but it provides a backdrop for the distant horizons of this bountiful valley. And while we merely record the highlights, the following pages recite some of the incidents that led us to where we are today. Interviews with former district directors and a few of the pioneers, present at the time of the organization of the district, reveal in part some of the early struggles.

Too often our culture is impoverished by the lack of understanding of where we are, how we arrived, and the price paid for our arrival. Your District trusts that these pages will bring about a greater awareness of the heritage that belongs to the living, bequeathed by the early settlers, pioneers and leaders of our great Valley.

A Roman Ceasar is said to have declared that he had but to stomp upon the earth and legions would spring up to do his bidding. So men have stomped upon the Coachella Valley to harvest in a single generation a community which has leaped into astonished life with astounding vigor. It is still a land for those with skill and determination.

HISTORY OF THE COACHELLA VALLEY COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

(First edition published on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary May 1968)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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STEVE D. BUXTON

C. J. FROST

TELLIS CODEKAS, Vice President
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OLE J. NORDLAND

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(Desert Printing Co., Inc., Indio, Ca.)



Beautiful Coachella Canal, flanked by citrus, with snow-capped sentinel peaks forming backdrop on westside of Valley.

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District Brings Canal Water Magic

Irrigated Lands Today Producing \$1870 An Acre Through Vision and Toil of Early Day Pioneers

Conceived in adversity, created to meet a desperate need, nourished on the faith and determination of pioneers, the Coachella Valley County Water District's story is a saga of reclamation's magic.

It took 30 years for the drama to arrive at the climax, the result of heroic efforts by many persons. Colorado River water reached the Coachella Valley in 1948 to quench thirsting soils and offers today's miracle of lands producing \$1870 an acre or more in crops.

The names of the water district's heroes are legion. The roll includes such indomitable men as Dr. S. S. M. Jennings, Thomas C. Yager, R. W. Blackburn, Chester Sparcy, Dr. Harry W. Forbes, Truman Gridley, Lee Anderson, Robbins Russel, Ted C. Buck, E. Keith Farrar, Leon Kennedy, to name just a few of those who helped fight the battles from the halls of Congress to the corridors of Sacramento and back to sandy soils of this desert land.

The history of the District in the following pages is not in chapters, but is chronological. The chapters, if there were such, would be of the first period relating to the frustrating efforts to get legislation enabling the building of Boulder Canyon Dam and the All American Canal, and to the unrelenting effort made here in the valley to conserve the available water and protect the lands from flood damage.

A second chapter would be that of the years between the passage of the Swing-Johnson Bills to the ratification of a contract to build the Coachella Branch of the All American Canal. It is a story of reaction as well as interminable delays.

The third chapter might well be that of getting the canal construction underway, the heart-breaking budget cuts, the intervention of the war years, the impatience and patience of the District and its people when it saw the canal construction stop barely short of its goal.

Finally came the water and its impact on the valley's economy. The wildest dreams of men in the first 40 years of this century have been exceeded. The advent of Colorado River water reduced the demand on the underground basin making possible the development of the area above Point Happy into what has become America's "Golf Capital" replete with luxurious homes, golf courses, a junior college, Mt. San Jacinto Tramway, and recreational-resort development.

Interwoven in the sometimes prosaic details of the early years of the district are then these stories of courage and devotion in which all Coachella Valley may take pride.

The District's story began as early as 1915 for even then the need for a supplemental source of water was recognized if the Valley were to continue to grow and flourish. Land development had slowed, worse, water levels in wells were going down.

By 1917 with about 7000 acres of brush cleared from Indian Wells to the Salton Sea, the urgency became more pronounced.

To add to the dark horizon a proposal for a project to conduct water from Baldwin Lake and Whitewater River to the Imperial Valley fell like a bombshell on the Valley in March of

1917. Newspaper headlines in June revealed a plan proposed at an El Centro meeting. A company headed by Col. W. H. Holabird of El Centro and F. H. Merrill, O. E. Freeman and W. B. Baker of San Diego and Los Angeles was reported to be contemplating filing on 100,000 acre feet of flow. The scheme envisioned an impounding reservoir in Morongo Valley and a canal via Palm Springs to Imperial Valley to irrigate 40,000 acres there and about 20,000 acres in Coachella Valley. Power plants were proposed. Imperial Valley was asked to raise \$100,000. (See inset story from Los Angeles Times, November 9, 1917)

Nothing came of the project. The last mention was heard late in 1917 when Merrill and Baker were reported to have filed applications to generate 30,000 horsepower. The project's cost of \$4,900,000 may have dampened the early ardor for the 150,000 acre-foot Morongo Dam, 65-mile long canal, as well as a reservoir at Marshall's Dry Lake (La Quinta Cove) with a five-foot pipeline to Imperial Valley. But the scheme did serve to get the Valley aroused to seek protection of its water sources.

Valley citizens held mass meetings in Thermal and Coachella and R. H. Postlethwaite, G. H. Narbonne, Haines W. Reid, J. A. Gordon, George M. Beach, Alex Johnson and Dr. Jennings were appointed a committee to devise action in June. It was apparent that the previously organized Stormwater District was powerless to act.

Petitions were circulated to form the Coachella Valley County Water District. They
(Continued on Page 4)

WILL IRRIGATE THE COACHELLA

Project for Impounding of
Water Undertaken by Los
Angeles People.

LOCAL CORRESPONDENCE.

BEAUMONT, Nov. 8.—Surveyors employed by Pasadena and Los Angeles capitalists are at work between the Whitewater River and Morongo Valley on a project for impounding and using a large amount of water in that section. Their plans provide for taking water from Baldwin Lake, Arrastre Creek, Pipes Creek, Snow Creek and other streams and running it into a large reservoir. Water now unappropriated from Whitewater River will also be taken, and the promoters believe a sufficient amount will be secured to more than justify the considerable outlay of money involved.

It is proposed to dispose of most of the water in the Coachella Valley for irrigation purposes. The remainder will be taken to the Imperial Valley for domestic use.

COVER PHOTO

STOREFRONT ADVERTISING—These 1909 citizens got into the picture in front of Huntington & Smythe Store, Coachella's first Post Office. From left: first man unknown; Willie Huntington; A. L. Pearson; C. B. Estel, the deputy sheriff; unknown; C. B. Jones; J. L. Smythe; Frank McCarroll; Pancho Rameriz (Indian); D. Thomas and Isaac Thomas. (From A. L. Pearson Collection)



NOW DIRECTING DISTRICT ACTIVITIES IN SIX FIELDS

Inspecting the warehouse and shop facilities of the District's Headquarters on Avenue 52 and Tyler in 1978 are, left to right: Directors C. J. Frost, Steve Buxton, Vice President Tellis Codekas, President Raymond R. Rummonds, and Director William B. Gardner.

31 Directors Have Guided District's Destiny

Thirty men and one woman have served as directors of the Coachella Valley County Water District during the years of its existence.

Directors and their terms of office follow:

Dr. S. S. M. Jennings** 1918-1928 and appointed to a later term by the County of Riverside 1931-33.

V. E. Metzler** 1918-1932.

Ben L. Clary** 1918-1932.

M. B. White** 1918-1921, resigned.

C. A. Sparey** 1918-1932.

R. W. Blackburn** , appointed when White resigned, 1921-1932.

Robbins Russel, appointed to fill Jennings term, 1928-1932.

T. E. Allen** 1932-1939.

L. J. Anderson 1932-1954.

H. W. Forbes** 1932-1945, died in office

T. J. Gridley** 1932-1940.

Alvah F. Hicks** 1932-1941, resigned.

James E. Pippin** appointed by City of Indio 1932-1933.

Ted C. Buck** 1938-1947, resigned. Appointed to serve out term of G. L. Ritchey 1952-54.

J. W. Newman** 1940-1956, appointed to serve out Gridley's term when he moved from his Division.

E. Keith Farrar 1941-1950, appointed to serve out Hick's term, resigned July 1, 1950.

H. L. Ramsey** 1945-1950, appointed to complete Forbes' term.

G. L. Ritchey** 1947-1952, died in office, originally appointed to serve out Buck's term.

C. E. Faulhaber 1950-1954.

L. P. Clause** 1938-1947, appointed to complete Farrar's term. 1950-1954, resigned.

Anna Elizabeth Nelson 1954-1958.

Leon Kennedy** 1954-1976, died in office.

George Leach 1954-1977.

Raymond R. Rummonds appointed to Clause's vacancy 1954-

A Harold Bromley 1956-1968.

C. J. Frost 1958-

Sidney Witherow** 1968-1971.

William F. Lester** 1971-1973 died in office.

William B. Gardner appointed to complete Lester's term 1973-

Tellis Codekas appointed to complete Kennedy's term 1976- Steve Buxton elected November 8, 1977.

**Deceased

EIGHT PRESIDENTS

The District Board of Directors has had eight presidents presiding over it since its inception:

Dr. S. S. M. Jennings — 1918-1928.

R. W. Blackburn — 1928-1932.

Dr. Harry W. Forbes — 1932-1945.

Ted C. Buck — 1945-1947.

E. Keith Farrar — 1947-1950.

Lee J. Anderson — 1951-1952.

Ted C. Buck — 1952-1954.

Leon Kennedy — 1954-1976.

Raymond R. Rummonds — 1976-. (Rummonds has served as District member Colorado River Board of California since his appointment by Gov. Knight Feb. 6, 1957.)

Pioneers Men Of Character

Serving on the Coachella Valley Union High School board of trustees 20 years, Leland J. Yost was active in grower and valley organizations. Of the early pioneers he declared: "They were men of character and many characters. They possessed strong minds whether prospectors or agriculturist. What attracted them here was their minds filled with curiosity, inquiry and fascination with the challenges, all of which accrued to the benefit of our citizens of today."

were presented Dec. 5, 1917, to the Riverside County supervisors. Citizens told that board that with such a district the Valley would be better able to protect its water from "encroachment by outside syndicates proposing to tap the stream flows."

At the urging of Dr. Jennings, Attorney Thomas C. Yager, Chester A. Sparey and others the county water district law was considered to offer the best solution to a Valley-wide plan to protect the underground waters by filing on the streams entering the Whitewater River basin, to conserve the water entering the basin, and to seek a supplemental water supply.

Why Not a Coachella Canal?

People had become aware of the efforts of the Imperial Irrigation District to obtain a new canal to replace the old Alamo Canal which tapped the Colorado River at Hanlon's heading below Yuma and carried it through Mexico to a point near Calexico.

The new proposal would bring a canal north of the international boundary. Its elevation would be such that it could irrigate the East Mesa and the north end of Imperial Valley by gravity flow.

Why not extend an eastern high line canal branch to serve Coachella Valley?

At an election held January 9, 1918, 373 Valley citizens went to the polls and cast their ballots 324 to 49 in favor of organizing the Coachella Valley County Water District. By May 6, 1918, a board had been elected and convened with Dr. Jennings its chairman.

One of its first actions was to hire A. L. Sonderegger, an engineer, to study procedures "to protect and conserve the status of the watershed," to survey the wells from Point Happy to Palm Springs, laying "stress upon the possibilities of spreading the storm waters over the area of sand dunes and gravel beds above Edom as a means of conserving water at a very small cost."

Sonderegger as consulting engineer was to receive \$150 a month. The District on July 11 set the budget at \$20,295.

Then followed the first in a long-drawn series of actions spanning 30 years which led to building the Coachella Branch of the All American Canal and the delivery of the first water through the distribution system in March 1948.

The district's counsel, Tom Yager, a Coachella attorney whose offices were at Sixth and Vine, was instructed "to get all information possible on the Laguna Project, from the Department of Interior." By October 1918 Yager was also instructed to file on unappropriated waters of Whitewater and Snow Creek.

Relentless Struggle Begins

Thus, in routine actions, the new district board cast the die of what was to become a relentless struggle for recognition of its need for Colorado River water and protection of the underground waters.

By December of the first year a contract had been let for \$1800 to build the Whitewater Spreading Works over 960 acres of Southern Pacific lands and government lands.

On December 8, 1918, at a mass meeting of the people of



WORK HORSE AT SALT WORKS

This little steam engine was used at the New Liverpool Saltworks in the 1880's until the Colorado River broke through irrigation headworks and flowed unimpeded into the Salton Sink from 1905 until 1907. The saltworks were unundated but this engine was taken to Indio rail yards for storage. Walter Pulsifer, Oasis area rancher, recalled seeing the engine in Indio on a platform on July 5, 1907. It was believed to be one of two used to move salt laden cars to and from the works for salt shipments by rail from Southern Pacific's Salton siding. (Engine crew unidentified.)

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

the Valley, the board was given a mandate for action on an All American-Highline Canal and the board named Yager and J.L. Rector to approach the Department of Interior. Two days later the board was advised that its earlier request to the government had been met and that all public lands in the Whitewater spreading area had been withdrawn from public entry.

By March of 1919 directors had met with other interests on the new canal proposal, and Director Clary had reported that during a visit to Laguna Dam, the government was "anxious to open lands for soldiers." Veterans organizations were pressing for government support and action because thousands of acres of public lands would become available for homestead entries.

There were many organizations supporting the canal proposal. Among them were a Los Angeles group of landowners called the "West Side Imperial Irrigation District", the Imperial Laguna Water Company, and Imperial Irrigation District. Mark Rose, an Imperial Valley rancher, who was pushing for opening of the East Mesa lands, was engaged by the Coachella District for \$100 a month to represent this valley along with Tom Yager in a meeting with Secretary of Interior Lane in May.

Meanwhile stream gauging stations had been placed in the upper watershed in Millard, Tahquitz, Whitewater, Pottro Wash, Palm Springs, Falls and Snow Creek. The first water filings were made with the state at a cost of \$500.

Telegrams to Yager in Washington late in May 1919 proposed that the Coachella Valley "go it alone on a highline canal" and sever connections with the West Side Imperial Irrigation District.

The District directed Yager to specify that "9000 cubic feet per second ditch for the four districts involved was not enough" but that he should seek a "full sized ditch" and urged him to remind the government that power should not be generated at the expense of irrigation water.

First District Contract

On June 5 Yager was asked to approach the Department for

a contract for a survey of the high line canal. Yager did present that contract which was secured from Secretary Lane. On July 3 the District entered into the first of many future contracts with the federal government. The board voted \$5,000 toward the contract for a survey of the canal around Coachella Valley "on or before Sept. 15, 1919." The West Side District didn't like the contract and withdrew.

Yager, to support the District's request for the survey, offered a crop report during the Kettner Bill hearings on the proposed project in which he claimed 8000 acres were under cultivation during the year 1918-1919 with a crop value of more than \$1,000,000. (The list included 500 acres of onions at \$800 an acre, 500 acres of cantaloupes, 500 acres of dates costing about \$50 to \$75 an acre to develop.)

On February 5, 1920, the district moved its offices into rooms in the new Masonic Temple Building at the corner of Sixth and Cantaloupe in Coachella.

THEY BURNED UP ROADS

Mrs. Thomas (Eva) Hunsucker recalls a tale about Sandy Corner being atop a dune about 1917. The ranchers kept the ruts of the roads well packed with straw and brush to keep the cars from being stuck and make the trips by wagons easier on the horses.

"There was considerable consternation when one hot afternoon someone accidentally dropped a lighted 'roll-your-own' on the road and the road burned up!"

She also recalls the Coachella Valley Home Telephone and Telegraph Company with central offices in Thermal having only two lines into Indio and limiting use of the phones from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. "The rest of the hours were limited to emergency use only." Mrs. Hunsucker is the daughter of the late J. W. Newman, pioneer and long-time member of the water district board.



DOS PALMAS SITE OF HISTORY AND TRAGEDY

These crude markers indicate how grim travel was through the valley on the old Bradshaw Road through Salt Creek Wash to the Colorado River. Photo taken near old stage station at Dos Palmas. Marker says "Baby White, Borne December 1903." Herman Ebreberg, founder of what later became Ehrenberg, across from Blythe on Arizona side of river, was killed by a renegade Indian at this station on October 9, 1866. Ebreberg was Indian Agent for Colorado River Reservation at the time. He was active in surveying and mining along with Arizona pioneer Charles D. Poston.

Yager had presented a bill calling for the survey of the canal route including Coachella Valley in any All American Canal studies through Rep. Smith of Idaho.

The directors had been advised no bill before Congress could be passed in this session providing appropriation for the canal or providing for underwriting of bonds issued by the districts for the All American Canal.

WATER PREDICTION

Professor William T. Blake, geologist and mineralogist, with the Lt. R. S. Williamson expedition to determine feasible railroad routes in 1853 described the physical aspect of the Coachella Valley and Colorado Desert. In his report he made a very interesting point that predicted artesian water would be found beneath the surface of our valley. His prediction was not fulfilled for 35 years. In 1888 the Southern Pacific obtained small artesian flows at Thermal and Walters (Mecca), and six years later a successful well was put down at what was then known as Walters, according to Walter C. Mendenhall, 1909.

The directors voiced their opposition to the Soldier's Performance Right because there was no guarantee for the soldier to retain land, but offered opportunity for land speculation. They opposed the Mead Amendment "because it would not make the State of California share proportionate cost of the canal and would take land of Imperial Laguna Company." The district did not approve and "could not approve any bill that would give Imperial prior water rights."

Delays and obstacles confronted the desert areas in getting legislation through Congress, and the first opposition was publicly noted by American landowners in Mexico to the proposed All American Canal. Mexico was guaranteed half the flow of the diversion canal and gave no financial support to maintaining levees and canals, which had long irritated irrigators in Imperial Valley.

On August 5 the district finally appropriated \$5000 for work by the Reclamation Service calling for a survey and investigation of the proposed All American Canal to determine lines and contour of the canal to serve Coachella Valley. The board had also adopted a budget of \$25,120.

Board members were aware of the need for action to cap flowing wells which were "wasting water" and to file on streams. A filing was made on Tahquitz Creek and efforts were discussed to "delimit use of waters" in the watershed to present acquired rights of appropriators.

On November 19 through the efforts of the CV board a meeting was held with the Imperial Board and Reclamation Director Arthur P. Davis regarding the proposed Boulder Canyon Dam Project. It was agreed to make Davis final arbiter in the award of benefits and damages.

On Jan. 1, 1921, the board moved into the old bank building owned by Charles McDonald, at a \$25 a month rental to be shared by the C.V. Stormwater District. The First National Bank had moved to a new building at Sixth and Vine in Coachella.

In April the board requested the government to make permanent the "U. S. Public Water Reserve No. 56 created at the request of this District" in the Whitewater spreading area.

On May 15, 1921, the board advised it would advance additional money above the \$5000 already appropriated for the Kincaid Bill survey in the amount of \$1000. W. P. Rowe, water engineer, was being employed in stream gauging and in taking measurements of all wells across the Upper Valley.

Meanwhile Yager, Jennings and other members of the board were attending meetings in San Diego, Los Angeles, Riverside and El Centro as the All American Canal and Boulder Canyon Dam projects began to be tied into one congressional action, with Southern California's metropolitan areas and power utilities expressing support.

R. W. Blackburn On Board

On June 2, 1921, Director M. K. White resigned since business was taking him out of the Valley and R. W. Blackburn was named his successor.

Efforts of power companies, including Southern Sierras Power Co., to file on waters in the upper basin caused the board to urge the state to halt all new uses and limit appropriators to present uses. A filing was made on Snow Creek, and action was taken toward an enlarged water reserve, including a 99 year lease with Southern Pacific. Legislation was sought to permit storage of floodwaters for beneficial uses, and to spread waters of various creeks. The board's actions were endorsed by the chambers of commerce and the Coachella and Oasis Farm Centers.

Yager returned to Washington the month of July to represent the district at hearings on the Kincaid Bill. Yager urged that power created by Boulder Canyon Dam provide funds for expansion of the project and agricultural development and not be contracted with municipalities. The "Los Angeles Power Grab" was protested by local and county farm bureaus.

Together with the Imperial board, the Coachella board, considered whether the Boulder Dam should: Provide irrigation water for land capable of being irrigated; regulate the flow of the river for flood protection, and provide development of power. They further argued that the project cost be distributed equally over irrigated acreage; that the power generated be an asset and each acre receive a proportionate share of credit from power sales; that if not built by the U. S. the districts retain the right to participate in cost of building. The majority of the Imperial board were in favor of aligning with the City of Los Angeles and power company. Both agreed a joint plan was necessary and put the matter over to later. The Coachella District later went on its own in the above program and urged the Secretary of Interior to enter into contracts with districts sharing equitably the costs.

Telegrams were sent to Nevada and Arizona asking their concurrence. Nevada's state engineer expressed opposition to the Colorado River dam. Arizona agreed on three points — irrigation, flood protection and power — but would not commit otherwise. Los Angeles and the power companies agreed to the resolution in principal.

Coachella Protests Action

In September 1921 the boards of Coachella, Imperial, Palo Verde and City of Los Angeles met and agreed to send representatives to Denver to meet with the Reclamation Service Director Davis. The Coachella board filed a protest against the City of Los Angeles' power application to use Boulder Canyon site for power purposes because the site was needed for regulation of river floods and storage of irrigation water. Yager was directed to prepare a bill covering development of the lower basin and submit it in Washington after the Imperial District indicated it would do nothing to "bring about an early settlement of the Lower Colorado River Basin."

On November 17, 1921, the board authorized a new contract and funds toward Boulder Canyon Dam site studies.

R. W. Blackburn was named to attend a Phoenix conference of the Colorado River Commission headed by Herbert Hoover.

(Continued on Page 8)



DR. S. S. M. JENNINGS
1918 to 1928



Raymond R. Rummonds
1976 -



LEON KENNEDY
1954 to 1976

Eight Served As District Presidents . . .

In these Bicentennial years of our nation's founding, it is fitting that we honor those early settlers of this valley and the water district's boards of directors who have given us our heritage through inspired vision and dedicated efforts. So it is with pleasure the Board of Directors presents this revised edition of our popular 1968 "Golden Years" in the renewed hope that it's publication will encourage appreciation of the undaunted leadership of those who have preceded us.



Raymond R. Rummonds
Raymond R. Rummonds, President



R. W. BLACKBURN
1928-1932



DR HARRY W. FORBES
1932-1945



TED C. BUCK
1945-1947 1952-1954



E. KEITH FARRAR
1947-1950



LEE J. ANDERSON
1951-1952



EARLY DAY HOLD UP?

This youngster points a wooden pistol at restaurant on Fargo in Indio about 1920. C. W. King's real estate office and Jim's Cash Grocery in background on Fargo Street.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

He attended hearings also in Salt Lake City, Grand Junction, Cheyenne and Denver in March 1922. This same month the board members were all returned to office in a district election.

In April 1922 the board was unhappy to learn that Rep. Phil Swing had failed to insert "Coachella Valley" in the first Swing-Johnson Bill which proposed to appropriate \$45-million for the Boulder Canyon Dam and \$25 million for the All American Canal project.

Under this bill Coachella was to be included as "outside" lands, lands outside the Imperial Irrigation District, and 40% of the canal costs were to be charged those lands. Yager told the board "outside lands would be forced to finance the project with a heavy obligation already charged against them. With the bill reading 'from Laguna Dam to Coachella and Imperial Valleys' we could demand portion of the appropriation."

Coachella Demands Inclusion

The district wired Swing of its opposition: "We cannot and will not be set aside . . . without receiving just consideration and compensation for our efforts . . . bill must specifically state that it is for building of an All American Canal and High Line Canal to the Imperial and Coachella Valleys . . . Improvements below Laguna Dam should not be solely for the benefit of lands in Imperial County but should include lands in Riverside County as well . . ."

The battle lines were being more firmly drawn, lines that were not to be resolved for twelve years and three more Swing Johnson bills.

Engineer Sonderegger was determining the needs of the Coachella lands to be irrigated. University of California people were making surveys and studies as to crop needs for water and possible areas to be irrigated. Sonderegger fixed the preliminary water use figure at 2.75 acre feet per acre. State Engineer W. F. McClure drafted a proposed agreement between the states of the Colorado River Basin and a conference was set at San Diego.

The Colorado River Commission was to meet in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on a "compact agreement providing for the equitable distribution of the waters of Colorado River and its

tributaries." Attorney Yager was named to represent the Valley at this compact meeting. The Board adopted a budget of \$15,000 for the year 1922-23. Reclamation Director Davis advised the district he was proposing a 50-50 split of Colorado River water at Lee Ferry.

Colorado River Compact

As Yager left for the Santa Fe meeting the board ordered an abstract of recorded water rights on the Whitewater indicating that while the river bills were paramount the interest in protection of present water was not lagging. Yager reported from New Mexico that the commission had set up three priorities on water (1) agricultural and domestic use, (2) power, and (3) navigation, and the total for the lower basin was set at 7,500,000 acre feet per year. The upper states were to guarantee 7 1/2-million feet for a ten year period and not deplete the flow of the river below 4-million acre feet in any one year. The burden of supply of water to the Republic of Mexico was to be equally proportioned between the upper and lower basins.

Interest was electric. Dr. Jennings held the board on call. Thirteen board meetings were held during the month of November to December 2, in fact from June 1922 to January 26, 1923, the board held eight regular, eight special, and 12 adjourned meetings. It was a crucial period of legislation and agreements that would bind the course of the future. The board sought to exclude present water rights before any division of the river was agreed on a 50-50 basis. Yager wired he was returning home with a copy of the compact signed on November 24.

The board met to discuss the compact. Wires were sent to Rep. Swing, Sen. Johnson, and meetings were held with Imperial, City of Los Angeles, and Secretary of Commerce Hoover. Yager was named to represent the district in Washington. He was advised to draw a canal contract with the Department of Interior and present it for approval and later signing. (He was 10 years too early.)

An amendment was sought to the Water District Act to permit the district to develop power on Whitewater streams and the right to contract with the United States the same as irrigation districts. The District decided to enjoin the San Geronimo Power Company from additional water on the Whitewater since they had filed for more water than was available under present filings. The district supported a proposal for a branch office of the Department of Water Resources at Los Angeles. Legislation and water filing matters required four special meetings in March 1923. In May the District proposed that the government withdraw all lands from public entry lying on the debris cones in the water shed reserve. Yager also reported amendments to the water district act had passed both houses of the state legislature, and they were signed by the Governor on May 11.

The board heard George H. Maxwell, Arizona, Colorado River Association director, propose in lieu of Boulder Canyon Dam and All American Canal Act, a dam be built at Glen Canyon, and an Arizona high line canal. He said his state would carry out the project regardless. (Forty years later, a dam was completed at Glen Canyon and Arizona had warned it would build its own Central Arizona Project if legislation which has been accepted by the River basin was not passed.)

In June 1923, W. P. Rowe, civil engineer, was authorized to make a reconnaissance study of a canal route from north Blythe across the Blythe mesa, and Chuckwalla Valley, to the foothills north of Coachella Valley. It was feared that the proposed state highway bridge over Whitewater would reduce the spreading area. Later it was decided it would reduce it only 20 acres.

(Continued on Page 71)

78 Put Their Names on the 1917 Petition for District

Who were the 78 men and women who put their signatures on the petition to establish the Coachella Valley County Water District?

A typewritten copy of the original petition setting forth the proposed boundaries contains the names of many of the valley's first families.

A. B. Pilch, Riverside County Clerk, certified the petition filed December 5, 1917, which led to the county supervisors T. F. Flaherty, Chairman, C. D. Hamilton, J. T. Hamner, J. A. Packard, and John Shaver, holding the hearing that same day, setting the date of election for January 5, 1918.

Polling places were designated as follows: Coachella—school house; Cauhilla and Thermal (Consolidated)—Thermal school; Indian Wells—Blair's Barn; Mecca—school; Cabazon—Palm Springs railroad station; Edom—Mr. A. M. Sullivan residence; Indio—school; Strawberry and Palm Springs (consolidated)—Desert Inn.

The names of the 78 petitioners as recorded by County Clerk Pilch are as follows in order of signatures and voting precinct:

Dr. Stuart S. M. Jennings, Mecca; Leroy A. Newhouse, Coachella; John Albert Barton, Avery R. Parker, J. A. Gordon, Geo. M. Beach, C. A. Swanson, R. Thompson Webb, Thermal;

Charles D. James, Mecca; Kendrick Chamberlin, George W. Phelps, Harold J. Sternberg, James William Smith, Mrs. Nellie K. Smith, Mecca; Edward M. Ruoff, M. C. Von Rader, Fred Clare Smythe, Joseph H. Ramsdale, Coachella;

Alvah Otto Hayward, Harriet E. Hayward, Thermal; Louis H. Killey, John L. Smythe, E. W. Judy, Coachella; Issac Goble, Thermal; Edward N. T. Burnett, Laurence H. Paul, Mrs. Venna E. Mathews, James E. Mathews, Coachella;

Alfred N. Thayer, Mrs. June M. Leach, Duncan C. McLarty, George Mell Beach, Thermal; Alex Johnson, Indio; Bertha W. McLarty, Mattie J. Barton, Thermal; Otto I. Johnson, Indio; Ray Swartz, David Thomas, Coachella;

W. C. Gruendike, Charles Albert McCormick, Coachella; Albert Henry Bacon, R. W. Vote, Mecca; Mrs. Lillian D. Ellis, Ward N. Fancher, Hazel Fancher, Frank M. Stanley, Mrs. Iona T. McKenzie, Indio; Leland L. Fillmore, Charles S. Henry, Mrs. Meda E. Henry, Thermal;

Austin A. Smith, Effah K. Smith, Hattie K. Baker, Indio; Mrs. Linnie B. Jennings, Mrs. Emma F. Ferguson, Francis M. Ferguson, Herbert Cole, David Earl Magill, Mrs. Annie I. Cole, Albert F. Waknitz, P. M. Culley, Mecca;

Mrs. Anna M. Culley, Mrs. Laura B. Reeves, Mecca; Chas. B. Jones, Thos. C. Yager, William R. Faries, Coachella; Sumner C. McPheeters, Alvah Otto Hayward, Clarence H. Hollis, Thermal; Eugene Horstmann, Arthur M. Thomas, Coachella.

LeRoy A. Pawley, Benjamin T. Laflin, Jesse A. Ivy, Lorenzo A. Mallory, Austin B. Martin, Thermal; H. H. Middleton, Loulie N. Howell, Vivian H. Webb, Thermal;

Clarence A. Naunce, S. A. Stone, R. I. Howard, Joel P. Ivey, Emma E. Ivy, G. E. Stone, Robert P. Howell, J. Ben Ivy, Alice C. Howard, Thermal.



WHERE'S THE MECCA SCHOOL BUS?

Enroute to Mecca Grammar School in 1914 were these youngsters with their lunch boxes. On seat with books Cecelia Foulkes, driver was Violet Foulkes. Seated with hat and coat Rosalie Foulkes (Mrs. Clair Johnson), Mildred Waite, standing is David J. Foulkes, two boys on end are Farnsley brothers.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

HIGHPOINTS IN DISTRICT'S HISTORY

Oct. - Nov. 1917 — Petitions circulated, signed by 78 voters, asking election on incorporation of Coachella Valley County Water District. Notices published Coachella Valley Submarine.

Dec. 5, 1917—Petition filed. County Supervisors approve, set election. Notice published The Date Palm.

Jan. 9, 1918—Election held in eight precincts. Vote was 324-For, 49-Against, Total vote 373. Indio cast only one vote against. Coachella and Indian Wells two against. Edom and Gray-Cabazon cast no votes for and 21 against.

Jan. 16, 1918—Secretary of State Frank C. Jordan certified incorporation.

March 1, 1918—Petitions of nominations filed for five candidates for board of directors: Ben L. Clary, Dr. S. S. M. Jennings, V. E. Metzler, Charles A. Sparey, Marshall K. White.

March 6, 1918—Supervisors set election date.

March 26, 1918—203 voted. March 29 canvass showed Clary 199; Jennings 198; Metzler 201; Sparey 184; White 198. In Cabazon & Gray (Consolidated) precinct none voted, not even election board.

May 6, 1918—Board met and organized Metzler, secretary pro-tem; Dr. Jennings, president. First official action declared that Charles A. Sparey was same person as Chester A. Sparey, and appointed him to the term.

1919—District entered into first contract under Kettner Bill for government survey of All American Canal route.

1921—District enters into second government contract under Kincaid Bill for reconnaissance survey of canal route to Imperial and Coachella Valleys, and Boulder Canyon Dam site studies.

1922—First of four Swing-Johnson bills was introduced for development of the lower Colorado River Basin, including

Boulder Canyon Dam and the All American Canal. In 1923, 1926 and 1927 the later Swing-Johnson bills were introduced. The Colorado Compact was signed at Santa Fe, N.M., on November 24 proportioning the water of the Colorado between the upper and lower basin states.

1928—Swing-Johnson Bill (Boulder Canyon Project Act), passes. Signed by President Hoover.

1934—October 15, water district signs contract with Bureau of Reclamation for building Coachella Branch, and common works of All American Canal, to cost \$13,500,000.

1937—Stormwater district merges with Water District.

1938—Construction of Canal branch starts. Work halted about 10 miles southeast of Mecca due to World War II. Work resumed in 1944 and canal completed in June of 1948. Present headquarters site occupied July 1.

1947—Coachella Valley votes approval of \$13,500,000 contract dated Dec. 22 with Bureau of Reclamation for construction of underground water distribution system, drainage works and flood protection system.

1949—First water from canal officially delivered in new underground distribution system March 29 to Russel-Alexander Ranch near Thermal via Lateral 99.8.

1961—District enters the domestic water field with 1,100 water users.

1963—District contracts for 23,100 acre feet of Northern California water from State Water Project.

1964—District voters approve Rehabilitation and Betterment Loan of \$7,160,000 to provide improvement of canal, water delivery system, equalizing and terminal reservoirs.

1968—District entered the wastewater reclamation service with purchase of the Palm Desert Country Club system.



ARTESIAN WATER SPURRED EARLY LAND DEVELOPMENT IN VALLEY

A cup of cool water is taken from this flowing artesian well in the Thermal-Arabia area where much of early irrigation development was centered. Shown is Mrs. John Leach in 1906.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection



THEY CAME IN WAGONS DURING THE EARLY PART OF CENTURY

In the pictures above you see a period of about 20 of the first years of Coachella Valley development. Top— Typical of the mode of arrival of many of the early settlers. Center—The city of Coachella 1903 looking south on Front Street on what is now Grapefruit Blvd. (Highway 111). Note first Coachella School on far right, and well in center of Grapefruit drilled by Southern Pacific in 1880s at what was then called Woodspur. Bottom—Main Street Palm Springs about 1920 showing Otto Adler's Red Front Restaurant at right, Bunker's Garage in center, Nellie Coffman's cottage resort would be beyond Bunker's.

Top photo Otho Moore Collection; Bottom two A. L. Pearson Collection

First Railroad Trains Ran From Indio 1876

Crews Encountered Many Hazards While Building From Pass
vestors to back the Southern Pacific.

Data Supplied by OTHO MOORE

The Southern Pacific Railroad operated its first train from Indio on May 29, 1876, but reaching Indio was merely part of the effort that had its roots in the year 1861.

It was in that year that the "Big Four" Collis P. Huntington, Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins and Charles Crocker formed the Central Pacific Railroad to build a transcontinental link from Sacramento east over the Sierra Nevada.

In 1865 the Southern Pacific Railroad was organized to build lines from San Francisco to San Diego and eastward to meet rails being proposed to reach westward from New Orleans. A government survey had been conducted by Lt. R. S. Williamson in 1853 which recorded for the first time the San Geronimo Pass, the only one on the entire Pacific slope.

Demands Survey

Huntington dreamed of a railroad from Los Angeles east to connect several other roads and New Orleans. He tried interesting Eastern bankers in the project and had won them over. But one of the nation's financial wizards, Mr. E. Harriman, demanded a survey of the route which was started in 1871.

The surveyors for the Southern Pacific route reached the site of Indio on March 25, 1872. They reported that this point was halfway between Los Angeles and Yuma, 132 miles to Los Angeles and 612 miles to San Francisco. Others of the "Big Four" were also among Southern Pacific's backers.

Harriman studied the engineer's reports and Huntington's proposals. He became enthusiastic and interested other in-

Santa Fe Interested

About this time another company was expressing an interest in building a line to the west coast. It was the forerunner to the Acheson, Topeka & Santa Fe which was surveying a route by way of Needles, Barstow and San Bernardino to Los Angeles. This challenged Southern Pacific officials and spurred their efforts. In 1876 Charles Crocker had driven a gold spike at Lang (near Palmdale) completing the San Joaquin Valley link which linked Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Rivalry became apparent between the two companies and speed on completion was the order. The one from Santa Fe west to Los Angeles and the other from Los Angeles to Yuma.

Building a railroad was slow and laborious. Builders used horse drawn wheel scrapers and men with picks and shovels. Huge crews were organized and worked with remarkable speed.

The sub-grade was built with the scraper, then ties were placed, rails laid and spiked by hand labor with spike and maul. Then imported, screened gravel was placed between the ties, and now the gandy dancers, a nickname for the men operating the tamping iron bars, completed the road.

To keep the large crews in supplies of both material and food was no small job and often lack of material would hold up progress for days.

(Lt. Eric Bergland and 10 men and 26 mules made a second expedition in 1876 from Los Angeles to Ehrenberg, thence to Yuma and back thru Carizo Creek, Warner's Valley. He left Los Angeles February 13 and reached Ehrenberg on March 3.



INDIO DEPOT

Built in 1880's this photo shows Southern Pacific Depot Clubhouse and Restaurant about 1900 when crews had sleeping quarters above and passengers stopped for meals. First trains reached Indio, first known as "Indian Wells" on the timetables, on May 29, 1876. In 1890 the railroad opened the upstairs as a hotel and had a dining room at the depot (note "Restaurant" sign). A health camp sprung up near the depot in the early 1900's.

— C. V. Historical Society Photo

He reported that the "Southern Pacific Railroad was now finished as far as Whitewater Station, and the grading completed to a point opposite Indian Well. Two stage lines were running tri-weekly from the terminus of the railroad to Ehrenberg . . ." (Wells Express and Arizona and New Mexico Express Companies.)

The building of the Yuma line was started from Los Angeles River station late in 1874 and reached Colton July 16, 1875.

The railroad company decided to install shops and a depot at Colton and a branch line to San Bernardino while the road building crews proceeded east with the main tract through Loma Linda and Bryn Mawr where they built another branch line to Redlands to tap the orange growing area.

Traverses Pass

The crews proceeded through the San Timoteo Canyon to the San Gorgonio Pass. At San Gorgonio (Beaumont) this highest point of the pass was reached at 2480 feet above sea level which necessitated a helper engine to boost the trains over the grade from both sides of the pass.

Phineas Banning, a promoter of towns, heard of the railroad's transcontinental plans. He had obtained a large tract of land five miles east of Beaumont and established the town-site of Banning. From Beaumont the rails stretched east through Banning, Cabazon, and to Whitewater New Year's Day 1875 where the company had completed the road bed and opened a gravel pit to obtain materials for the road bed. First stations were established in the Pass at San Gorgonio (Beaumont) and Cabazon. Banning became a station in 1878.

Water was now beginning to be a problem and the engineers tapped a supply at Snow Creek where there is a year around supply from the melting snows of San Jacinto Mountain.

The water was piped to Cabazon, Whitewater and on to what is now known as Garnet, earlier known as Seven Palms. It was a Palm Springs connection point to the SP. Palm Springs



APOSTLE PALMS

This palm oasis, located near what is now Madison and Avenue 38, was the only known oasis out on the floor of the valley. Prior to the coming of the railroad it was the site of a stage coach station, on an alternate route from Dos Palmas to Thousand Palms and Two Bunch Palms to Whitewater. Pioneer Otho Moore said this picture was taken about 1912 looking toward San Jacinto.

station was opened many years later to the west. Necessary storage tanks were provided at each of these stations. The track was completed to Seven Palms in April. It was four days by stage from Seven Palms to Prescott.

Floods Cause Damage

The roadbed was now out of the mountains and reaching into the desert where cloudbursts often washed out the newly graded route. Culverts and rip-rap of rocks were necessary to



WHEN MECCA WAS WALTERS

This rare view of the Walters depot and water tower was taken about 1894. Walters siding was established in 1877 by the Southern Pacific Railroad. It was provisioning place for miners and prospectors in the Orocopia, Eagle, and Little San Bernardino Mountains in the 1880's. In 1896 the Valley's fourth post-office was established at Walters with James R. Martin, Postmaster. On September 26, 1903 the name was changed to Mecca through the efforts of R. Holby Myers, area developer.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection



FATHER OF INDIO

Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Tingman. He came to Indio as railroad construction boss in 1877, later became telegrapher and station agent in 1883; became Indio's first storekeeper with provisioning place south and west of depot in 1885; became Indio's first postmaster July 3, 1888. He homesteaded and purchased 160 acres in 1891 and laid out original Indio townsite in 1894. He drilled a well for his store and home and erected stables and a corral for travellers, prospectors and freighters. He sold his store in 1903.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

protect the grade from the floods from the canyons draining the mountains.

A new hazard confronted the engineers and crews—"blow sand." In the center of the sand blowing area it was necessary to build a siding known as "Salvia". It was also necessary to maintain a section crew to shovel out sand which covered the tracks and filled switches. During the windy season the crews could not shovel sand fast enough to clear those switches. Trains could not use the Salvia siding during sand blowing times. The sharp sand particles would cut off telegraph poles very quickly.

The road building crews laid rails on to Edom, just south of the present site of Thousand Palms, where a grove of trees protect the tracks and right-of-way from the blowing sand. Then they built on to Myoma, west of the present railroad overpass, and finally, into Indian Wells—as Indio was first listed on the railroad timetables.

Was Good Location

This was an ideal location for a sub-division and it was not only halfway to Yuma but near an Indian reservation, where labor was available and for which Indio was named, "Indio" being Spanish for Indians.

The first trains were scheduled out of Indio to Los Angeles on May 29, 1876, and they ran Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The railroad company learned that the Santa Fe was nearing the Colorado River at Needles and officials determined to make every effort to reach Yuma as soon as possible.

A townsite was proposed, water tank erected and water tank wagons were sent from Los Angeles to haul water from a spring, known in the early days as the "Twelve Apostle Palms" located about three miles northwest of Indio in the northeast quarter of Section 4, Township 5, Range 7 East. Living quarters were erected for train crews and railroad men. A restaurant which the men nicknamed "T-Bone" was open 24 hours a day.

Railroad officials were anxious to see the new facilities and it is reported one brought his wife to the new townsite. She felt sorry for the workmen and their accommodations during the terrific July heat so she engaged a competent contractor to erect a bunkhouse for the engineers and firemen. The bunkhouse had 12 sleeping rooms in a "U" shape with a porch around it so that the men could pull their beds onto it and sleep more comfortably during the summers.

A six-stall wooden roundhouse was built for the locomotives. A car department was built to repair all classes of rolling stock.

A standard well drilling contractor by the name of Rose Drilling Company was engaged to obtain water in 1884. The water problem had become very acute. The water hauling teams could hardly keep up with the needs of the rail center and the grading teams, considering the distance to Apostle Palms' spring.

Fuel for the locomotives was stored in the open on the ground. The coal was shoveled into huge buckets and hoisted into the locomotive tenders. Now a new problem was encountered. The heat of the summer's sun would ignite the coal. White men could not work in the heat, and shovel burning coal, too, so Indians were hired to do this work.

Eastern Link Built

Meanwhile in the Mississippi Basin construction of portions of what was to eventually become the Southern Pacific system had begun dating back to the 1850's under the names of various railroads. The earliest forerunner being the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado Railway Co., which built west from Harrisburg, Texas, in 1851, and the New Orleans, Opelousas & Great Western which started west from New Orleans in 1852.

The first railroad crews finished the necessary work of building structures at Indio to handle the sub-division traffic and engines and cars and rail laying crews had gone on toward Walters (Mecca) building a siding at Woodspur (Coachella), and by January 1877 were speeding toward the Yuma crossing of the Colorado River.

There were three Indian reservations near the then Indian Wells (Indio) terminal: Cabazon, about three miles east; Toro, seven miles south, and Martinez, about 13 miles southeast.

Were Good Workers

The Indian were industrious. A heavy growth of mesquite and greasewood covered the valley. The federal Indian Agent had his headquarters at Martinez. After much correspondence the federal authorities requested the railroad to build a spur track about 3½ miles east of Indian Wells for use of Indians cutting firewood which was shipped to Los Angeles for sale. This spur or siding was named "Woodspur" and did a thriving business. Later the townsite of Coachella occupied the area.

(Continued on Page 103)

FIRST DIRECTOR RECALLED HOW WATER THREAT PROMPTED CV ELECTION

Water shortage is an important topic in the Southwest as well as the entire world today. Drought in Northern California, the Midwest, and England and Northern Europe in 1976 and 1977 impressed the importance of water on the minds of all people.

Water was certainly an important topic in the Coachella Valley in 1918.

Chester A. Sparey, a member of the first board of directors of the Coachella Valley County Water District, keenly and vividly remembered those early days in an interview in 1968. He moved from the valley to Port Townsend, Washington, where he died early in 1972.

When he came to Indio in 1915 it was already apparent that the underground water supply was limited. Many artesian wells had ceased to flow in the lower end of the valley and the underground water table throughout the valley was gradually lowering. Greater pump lifts were being required.

During the spring of 1917 Thomas C. Yager called together a group of people, mainly farmers, in Coachella to inform them that he had learned that a group of men, led by a Col. Holabird, had filed on the unappropriated flow of the Whitewater, Snow Creek and other tributaries, which were the only source of supply to the underground waters. These men from San Diego and Los Angeles had an idea to impound these waters, convey them by surface ducts to the Valley, and sell us our water to save our bacons, Sparey recalled.

Yager advised the group that there was a California statute that provided for organization of county water districts. He suggested this kind of district would have authority to protect the then present water supply, to take measures to conserve it, and possibly to seek an augmented supply such as from the Colorado River. Reports of Imperial Valley's canal proposals had long been current in the Coachella Valley.

Yager was a brilliant young attorney, ahead of his time, full of ideas to benefit the valley. Sparey and others agree. He made convincing presentations and his legal services were often available whether or not the party seeking those services had any money. A graduate of the University of Southern California he and his wife first lived on the Henry Briggs place, at Coachella.

Included All Lands

At the prompting of Yager and the encouragement of citizens boundaries of the district were set up in a petition to include all the land's potential water users, including Palm Springs, which they thought had common problems and should share in the cost of conservation and acquisition of any possible supplemental supply as well as protecting the tributary streams.

The story of the first board is told elsewhere but Sparey said that money was a problem from the start. The citizens "passed the hat" to raise money for filing fees for the petition and candidates. Since it was over a year before the district as a tax levying body would receive money, the First National Bank in Coachella made loans for the first operating money.

Dr. Jennings represented the lower end of the valley and Sparey and others recall him as a fair and forceful man who en-



CHESTER A. SPAREY

Member first board of directors, served 14 years, he passed away early in 1972.

joyed everyone's respect. He was a man of keen intellect and had a retentive mind. He was a graduate of the College of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania. "He came to the valley to farm and practice medicine and rich and poor were alike to him. He gave his best," Sparey said.

Sparey credits Jennings with saving his wife Florence's life, during the flu epidemic in 1919, when she contracted pneumonia.

"He stayed by her side until she was over the hill. He was that intense about everything."

Knox White represented the Thermal area on the new district board. He was a merchant. His personal affairs took him away from the valley in 1921 and R. W. Blackburn was named to succeed him.

V. E. Metzler was a former businessman and banker from Colorado. He was developing a date garden about two miles west of Coachella, the area he represented, when he was elected.

West Side Representatives

The West Side of the Valley was represented by Ben L. Clary. He was a graduate of the nationally known Webb School in Bellbuckle, Tennessee. He is described "as a man with his feet on the ground." He and his brother, Lawson, were contract developers and operators of the large Dr. Travis Ranch near the Coral Reef.

Sparey was a native of Washington, grew up in Salt Lake City and Los Angeles. He met his wife his first week at Los Angeles High School. He attended the University of California at Berkeley. He came to the valley in 1914, rented a transit and staked out the land he was to farm 1½ miles north of Indio. Over the years he was active in many organizations. He became active in real estate and became a partner of Yager's in 1925. He was in the insurance business when he sold it in 1957, to move to Washington. He represented Indio area.

"The board held its first formal meeting on May 6, 1918, in

a vacant storeroom in the old McDonald Building on Cantaloupe (Now Grapefruit) in Coachella. Our monthly rent was \$20. Other public bodies used the room and Justice Charles B. Jones sometimes held court there. Miss Edna Pierson, sister of Mrs. A. L. Wood of Indio, Yager's secretary recorded the first minutes," Sparey recalled.

The District's first engineer was A. L. Sonderegger, a recognized hydraulic and geological engineer in Los Angeles.

Worked for Peanuts

"He recognized our poverty and worked for peanuts until such time as we were able to pay him proper fees." He was a Swiss who had secured his engineering training in Europe. He would come to the Valley by train from Los Angeles, and after meetings he invariably had dinner at the Spareys; then he and Sparey would go over District problems until it was time to put him on the midnight train.

Young Penn Rowe became the District's field engineer at the recommendation of Sonderegger and Rowe's services have been valuable to the District and Valley since. From rainfall studies, rain gauges, stream gauges, estimates were made of



PIONEER'S HOME

The home of Chester A. Sparey, 1 1/2 miles north of Indio, near Avenue 42 and Jackson, shortly after being built in 1915.

the total amount of water entering the underground each year, and it was determined early that there was only enough water to irrigate 10,000 acres with safe yield of the basin, and the wells continued down in the early 1920's.

To the south Imperial Irrigation District was working to get an All American Canal north of the international boundary. Mark Rose, one of the water leaders and directors of that district, could be called the father of the All American Canal. Soon after he started farming near Holtville he began studying the East Mesa, purchased several sections of school land, and ran a reconnaissance survey to prove the feasibility of bringing gravity water from the Colorado River. While they were at it they ran a line far enough north to prove that water could be brought to Coachella Valley. That helped stimulate interest in this area.

Kettner Was San Diego Man

The Coachella Board leaned on the Imperial Board and its knowledgeable directors and officers for advice. Yager was sent to Washington to get help with our problems. Sparey said that Congressman Kettner who represented San Diego, Imperial and Riverside Counties, was "not too friendly and not too careful for our cause. He was a San Diego man."

Yager, however, did get a friendly reception from Secretary of Interior Franklin K. Lane, a western man, interested in western affairs.

Imperial started promoting Phil D. Swing, an El Centro attorney, who Coachella also thought would be more receptive to the desert's water needs. The help of Mayor Sam Evans of Riverside, a friend of the valley, was obtained and a mighty campaign was put on that elected Swing. An auto caravan story is told elsewhere.

Sparey said that Evans was a great help to the Valley and frequently attended water board meetings and visited friends here.

"Hiram Johnson in the U. S. Senate was a further bulwark for the Valley, and our champion."

The canal project began to look a little too big for the Valley and the water board. However, the board pushed ahead and enlisted support and held meetings with the Los Angeles Department of Light and Power, and intrigued the interest of their counsel W. B. Mathews, and electrical engineer, E. F. Scattergood. Scattergood is credited with proposing that the electrical power generated at Boulder Dam would pay for that project. Coachella and Imperial contributed funds for diamond drilling operations to establish a dam site. When Boulder Canyon proved unsuitable, operations were moved to Black Canyon where Hoover Dam is located.

Sparey recalled Penn Rowe devising some heavy 12-inch wide belts to be fastened around auto wheels with riveted wood blocks and turn buckles to take a trip in two Model T's over the proposed canal route from near Andrade to south of Holtville . . . the first desert "sand buggies." Later a trip was taken from near Niland to a point near old Salton Beach.

Made Studies And Trips

"These trips gave us the opportunity to see the topography to be encountered and observe where the higher canal level would have to run and the board was always willing to make trips, make studies, to keep knowledgeable," Sparey said.

He remembered that the trip over the higher level canal route made the board and engineers realize the District might have to have some aqueduct structures or syphons, the cost of which might or might not have been offset by the savings on the smaller canal capacity proposed.

"This smaller canal capacity had an important underlying reason. We wanted to make an 80 foot power drop for a portion of the water at a point east of Coachella and carry that water around Coachella and down the west side. The balance of the water would be carried around Indio and across the railroad at about sea level. The power generated at the drop would have to pump water for the lower part of the Valley from a number of large wells. This, we felt, would have obviated the high water table in the lower Valley which we knew was bound to occur with heavy irrigation throughout the Valley and the accompanying cessation of drawing water from most of the irrigation wells."

During the 1920's the Palm Springs area tried repeatedly to withdraw from the District but the Board held fast. Their water company wanted to divert water from Snow Creek and the District held firmly opposed.

Sonderegger conceived and designed the spreading dam north of Palm Springs, Sparey said it was "nothing more or less than a heavy hog-wire fence on redwood posts with a downstream splash apron and an absolutely level top from bank to bank. It worked as expected. Flood waters deposited floating trash and debris and slowed the rate of flow which precipitated all the alluvium until the dam was filled to the top whence the water was widely dispersed into many small streams."

Regarding the board's pressing for a contract with Imperial Sparey had this recollection:

"The Bureau of Reclamation took the view that in any given project 'every acre included was necessary to the whole;' and under that theory the furthest acre served paid no more than the nearest.

"If we could get the Imperial District expanded into one large project including the East Mesa and the Coachella Valley the higher cost of bringing water to Coachella Valley acres would be off-set by the lower cost of bringing water to the East



EARLY PACKERS

Melons go to packing plant via teams and wagons about 1920. Shown is the packing plant and workers at Thermal.

Mesa acres and all the land would be under Imperial's old filings. Our Valley's proportionate share of all main canals, including the Coachella Branch, was estimated at \$7-million and the cost of our distribution system at \$3.5-million. If this consideration had been effected we would of course have had to pay our proportionate share of Imperial's then \$16,000,000 bonded indebtedness. It looked like a good buy to our board and that was what we thought was best for the valley."

The board was recalled in October 1932 but Sparey said it "left no rancor in my heart."

He remembered that when the Swing-Johnson Bill was before Congress Yager would file telegraphic reports almost daily, and when things were really "hot" the board would meet, formulate a reply, and give reactions, suggestions or instructions.

Sparey concluded his recollections with the following remarks:

"Well, the Valley now has its water and is growing and prospering beyond the wildest dreams of any of us old-timers. The present board is capable and, to me, a rather wonderful group of men. I feel, though, that all of us had some helpful part in making 'ten blades of grass grow where only one grew before'."

Tingman Was Also Prospector

The Lost Horse Mine in the present Joshua Tree National Monument was found in 1893 when "Dutch Frank" Siebold found the vein and took a sample of the gold-bearing rock back to his partner's camp, Ed Holland and A. G. Tingman. The three filed a claim. The men's horses had disappeared one night while they were camped and Siebold found the sample when he had gone looking for them the next morning. The area was notorious for horse and cattle thieves. About 1900 Tingman made some high grade ore discoveries in Pleasant Valley. Many mines were operated in the Monument area, notably the Dale Mining District, but most serious mining activities ended before World War II.

Ex-President Farrar Proud of Water System

Along with commendations for a successful commemorative year, 1968, came these words from E. Keith Farrar, member of the Coachella Valley County Water District Board on 1941 to 1950, the last four years of which he served as president.

Farrar was a member during the hectic days of World War II when every effort to get the All American Canal, Coachella Branch, completed was thwarted by material shortages and bureaucratic stalemates. He was also a member when the 1947 contract for construction of distribution system, protective works and drainage works was negotiated, approved by the voters and signed.

Farrar observed: "One thought will always remain with me and this is, the fine underground distribution system we were able to secure for our Valley. I have been real proud of the operation of the district in the nearly 20 years since I served." Farrar now resides in Palm Desert with his wife, Sarah, who has assisted in writing many of the scripts for the National Date Festival's Arabian Nights Pageants.

As a postscript it might be added that the underground system has attracted world-wide attention and the operation of the project has been acclaimed by the Bureau of Reclamation over the years.



GARD'S STORE

In 1900 in Indio Gard's store stood at corner of Fargo and Miles, where Potter Hotel now stands. Left to right: F. S. Everett, Howard Card, depot cafe manager Ralph Marshall, and one of Gard's clerks.

Channeling the Valley's Storm Waters

Whitewater Project Blunts Flood Dangers in Valley

For eons the Whitewater, San Geronio and their tributaries and canyons sent flood and storm waters into the Coachella Valley, and those waters spent themselves relatively harmlessly on the floor of the desert.

Early records indicate that the mouth of the Whitewater was at what is now known as Windy Point. Writers indicated that any flood waters reaching Windy Point fanned out into innumerable washes. After the 1916 flood, the same occurrence was noted at Point Happy, west of Indio.

Bancroft's "Guide to the Colorado Mines" (1863) notes that at Agua Blanco (White River), also presently known as Whitewater River . . . "a large stream of pure cold water, coming down from Mount San Bernardino, and which, after crossing the road twice, runs along it for a mile and a quarter, when it bears off . . . and, after running a few hundred yards, sinks in the sand."

Water flowed east and south of Point Happy through several washes, a major one known as the Noffsinger Wash and is still defined, before sinking into the underground or disappearing before reaching the Salton Sink.

Below Thermal early maps show several ill-defined depressions which occasionally carried water southward. The

present stormwater drain from Point Happy to the present Salton Sea was constructed and has been improved, aligned and maintained by the people of the valley through their governmental districts as will be later explained.

Geologists point out that the debris from the floodwaters built layers of gravel, sand, silt and clay. Well drillers have found boulders as deep as 200 feet below the surface on the west side of the valley, demonstrating the violence of ancient floods. It has been reported that a rubber tire was unearthed at the County gravel pit at the west end of Avenue 58, 20 feet below the gravel surface.

Water marks are found high in the canyons of the mountains on both sides of the valley attesting to the heavy run off from storms in the past in Box Canyon, in Deep Canyon, in Thousands Palms Canyon, and in the canyons on the west lying under the shadows of Santa Rosa and the escarpment of San Jacinto.

Nothing In Their Way

There was nothing to molest or hamper these flood waters as they disgorged upon the desert to flow unimpeded in their meandering travels towards the Salton Sink.

But today there are golf courses, subdivisions, developments, towns, communities, ranches, resorts and homes astride many of the earlier natural flood channels and courses.

Today the valley is served by two governmental organizations in regard to stormwater and flood protection. The Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District serves the area comprising Cathedral City, Palm Springs, and Desert Hot Springs including Sky and Fun Valleys. Until the 1940's when Cathedral and Palm Springs were excluded, the Coachella Valley County Water District provided works and protection of those areas which had been in the Coachella Valley Stormwater District until its functions were merged with the CVCWD in 1937.

Formed District

Prior to 1915 the people of the valley, although few in number, but with investments in ranches and new developments, largely centering around Indio, Coachella and Thermal, realized that efforts must begin to tame these flows, direct them into controllable channels, and protect the homes. Two small districts had been operating—Indio Levee District and Coachella Stormwater District.

A valleywide effort was needed to accomplish this goal. In 1915 the Coachella Valley Stormwater District was organized and the people elected three men to launch what has proved a formidable but continuing undertaking today, 63 years later, and millions of dollars have been dedicated to the proposition.

An initial board of three men was elected and met August 7, 1915, at the Thermal Cantaloupe Growers Union packing house in Thermal. They elected J. H. Northrup, West Indio area rancher and developer, as president. J. W. Newman, Thermal, manager of the growers union, as secretary. Charles McDonald, Coachella merchant, was the third director.

Settled In Coachella

For the next few years the board met at Thermal, Coachella and Indio, most times in the former two places until 1917 when Indio became headquarters. In August 1918 it began sharing offices with the new Coachella Valley County Water District in an office in the McDonald Company building on Cantaloupe Avenue in Coachella, and continued meetings in water district offices until it was merged with the water district



BOX CANYON FLOOD

Flood waters raged down Box Canyon at height of stick held by J. Win Wilson, pioneer editor of the Date Palm. The floods above Mecca on Highway 195 did damage to the east side of the valley and Mecca area and in 1941 contributed to the determination to build the present East Side Dike which protects the Coachella Canal and east side. Photo taken by A. L. Wood about 1920.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

in 1937.

On August 12, 1915, the board met in the offices of the Indio Levee District to accept a resolution by that district "agreed as per their resolution to immediately begin work and complete as soon as possible the storm drain as started by the Indio Levee District, for the protection against the stormwaters of the Whitewater River." The Indio Levee District turned over its current obligations of \$978.75 as well as office fixtures, ditches, dikes, and other works including plans, maps and plats.

To Protect Indio

The Indio Levee District represented the first organized effort to control and divert the floods. It was concerned with Township 5 South, Range 7 East, and it planned to conduct floodwaters around the growing settlement of Indio. The floodwaters were to be diverted at Point Happy to a channel which would link up with the Thousand Palms Wash channel northwest of Indio and then continue a meandering but diagonal path east of Coachella toward Thermal, evidences of which remain on some of the undeveloped lands in that area.

In 1915 directors of the Indio Levee District included J. A. Semple, W. N. Fancher and J. Win Wilson.

Hit By Deluge

A four mile levee was proposed, and one mile of that levee had been completed at the upper end when what was probably the worst flood of modern times visited the lower Coachella Valley in January 1916.

The new Storm Water District board in September 1916 named A. C. Fulmor, L. E. Carpenter and A. G. Proctor as commissioners to develop a program under Fulmor, as engineer. Attorney Purrington, Riverside, was district counsel. Studies began which included a proposal to build a diversion dam at Point Happy and divert flood waters into Green Mar-

shall Lake, Marshall's Cove or now known as La Quinta Cove.)

Routes for the proposed channel were studied and the route around Indio then south were approved. By 1917 a new board of commissioners were named: J. L. Rector, Coachella; A. H. Smith, Indio, and Floyd Dessery, Los Angeles, also engineer.

Checked Filings

In the meantime the board began studying the necessity of filing appropriations for water from the tributaries and to oppose appropriators who would diminish the estimated 67,000 acre foot flow into the underground basin from those canyons and streams.

In 1916 W. N. Fancher, C. B. Jones and J. W. Newman had been elected to the board with Fancher as president and Newman as secretary. The cost of the proposed dam and diversion at Point Happy became a matter of contention and talk of disincorporating the district gained strength, the latter move failed.

In June 1917 J. W. Reagan, chief engineer of the Los Angeles Flood Control District, studied the proposed plans for the Green Marshall Lake project, the barrier in the wash above Point Happy and use of check dams. He reported J. L. Rector's dam idea was sound and had spillway possibilities for emptying dam, that the dry lake project had ample storage for greatest floods as well as a safeguard of a spillway. He estimated the lake's capacity at "26,000 acre feet, possibly 10,000 more in absorbing values of the sand dune field and gravel beds." He recommended a 20-foot high diversion dam instead of 12 feet. He estimated the cost at about \$25,000.

Proposed Dam

The action came after studies were prompted by the 1916 flood. The dam would have required 2100 acres and a 3200 foot long structure, 127 feet wide a base.



THIS WAS INDIO UNDER SIEGE OF 1916 FLOOD WATERS

The warm rains and melting snowpack, brought mile-wide torrents of water through Indio and the floor of the Valley on January 18, 1916. C. V. Historical Society Collection photo shows Gard Building (right) including Tebo's pool hall and F. S. Everett's grocery store on left on what is now Fargo Avenue. The flood speeded efforts of the Indio Levee District and Coachella Stormwater District which had been organized to divert and control floods and build new channels east of Point Happy.

— C. V. Historical Society Photo

Other notes of interest in the early days of the district include the abandoning of the Point Happy, Green Marshall Lake project, voting of \$30,000 in bonds in September 1918. First request made for Deep Canyon flood control project came in 1922. It was completed in the early 1930's. Commissioners were Percy L. Day, Leonhardt Swingle and George H. Adams, also engineer.

Employment of Thomas C. Yager as district counsel was made effective July 17, 1918.

Members of the board from July 1918 to merger in 1937:

1918-1922: B. E. Minister, president; Dr. S. S. M. Jennings and Ben A. Teagle.

1922-1926: Fred E. Perry; Robbins Russel, and W. C. Cawton.

1926-1928: Fred E. Perry; Robbins Russel, and Fred W. Zabler.

1928-1930: T. E. Allen, Fred T. Chamberlain and George M. Ames.

1930-1937: J. A. Colbert, Lee J. Anderson, and T. E. Allen.

The minor floods of 1912 and 1915 led to the construction of levees, but the 1916 flood brought home the need for valley action.

Swept Away By Flood

J. H. Northrup had built levees to protect his land west of Indio but in doing so deflected water upon Indio. The Indio Levee District was established to protect the townsites but the 1916 floodwaters swept aside these feeble efforts. It is interesting to note that the width of Oasis Street in Indio is a fact because it was to be the site of a levee and rights-of-way were obtained for it.

Since that time the Coachella Valley County Water District estimates that nearly \$16,000,000 in protective works have been constructed on the Whitewater River Channel from Palm Canyon to Salton Sea. This does not include hundreds of thousands of dollars spent over the years since 1916 for detention dam construction and reconstruction in the area southwest of Garnet to detain the smaller floods and spread the waters upon the debris cone near the areas of the confluence of Whitewater and San Geronio Rivers.

Need 34½ Million

The district believed, in a report to the U. S. Army Engineer District, Los Angeles, Corp of Engineers, April 4, 1967, that it would cost an estimated \$34,204,000 to provide the remaining protective works.

The flood of January 17, 1916, was the result of the greatest single concentration of rainfall in any one month. More than nine inches of rain fell in two storms. The mountain slopes had been saturated in December storms. The snow pack was heavy in the Santa Rosa, San Jacinto and San Bernardino Mountains. The weather warmed and a storm deposited 4.28 inches at Beaumont and 4.40 at Cabazon, heavy rains had fallen the two weeks previous. The storm moved from west to east and by noon flood waters reached Palm Springs, receding by evening, but as it bore down the valley it picked up water from tributary canyons such as Tahquitz, Palm, Cathedral, Magnesia, and Deep Canyon.

The damages in the wake of the storm included:

Between Whitewater and Thousands Palms, eleven miles of Southern Pacific Railroad road bed washed out, with other breaks below Indio.

One Mile Wide

Indio had a sheet of water a mile wide, water was two feet deep or more on Fargo Street. Coachella, Thermal, and Mecca were under water and many miles of county roads damaged, or left in shambles, including the new paved road in the upper valley.

Nine passenger trains were marooned in Indio for more than five days, taxing the community's food supplies.

The Whitewater's meandering channel had become a narrowed, deeply scoured channel up to 50 feet deep from Cathedral City to Point Happy. The silt was deposited on the townsites and farms in the lower valley.

The previous storms had not prepared this area for the rampaging, bottom scouring flow of this flood.

Can See Channel

Present day residents may see evidence of this gouging of the river bed by inspecting the channel from Thunderbird Golf Course through Rancho Mirage and north of Palm Desert to northeast of Indian Wells.

Previously recorded floods raged through the desert area in 1862 when a lake covering more than 100,000 acres was reported in the Salton Sink. Other floods during the winter or early spring occurred in 1884, 1886, 1889, 1891, 1901, 1903, 1906, 1909, but they had left no great mark on the desert as did the flood of 1916. They created, in effect, a second mouth of the Whitewater River at Point Happy.

Otho Moore, a resident of Indio since 1898, recalled that he lived in a house on Fargo Street south of the former Plaza Hotel. "Water was waist deep in the streets," he recalled. His home was two feet off the ground and the water was bumping loose lumber against the house flooring.

The lake stretched southwest to near the Cochran-Odlum Ranch. If the railroad station had not been protected by sandbags it would have been under water. Freight cars were pulled up along side passenger cars and planks laid across to other trains so passengers could get to the depot restaurant.

Supplies were brought up from Yuma, much of those supplies carried by men walking the ties that sagged over the washed out areas south of Indio. When the tracks were repaired some trains backed to Yuma and were re-routed to Los Angeles over Santa Fe lines.

Big Flood In 1927

The storm of 1927 brought another of the severe floods. Rains fell from February 13 to 17 and it, too, saw the warm rain melt the snow in the mountains. At the mouth of Snow Creek seven inches fell in one day.

Thousand Palms wash undermined the bridge at Myoma. Deep Canyon flood waters washed out 1500 feet of highway at Cook's Ranch in Palm Desert, cutting a channel nearly 10 feet deep.

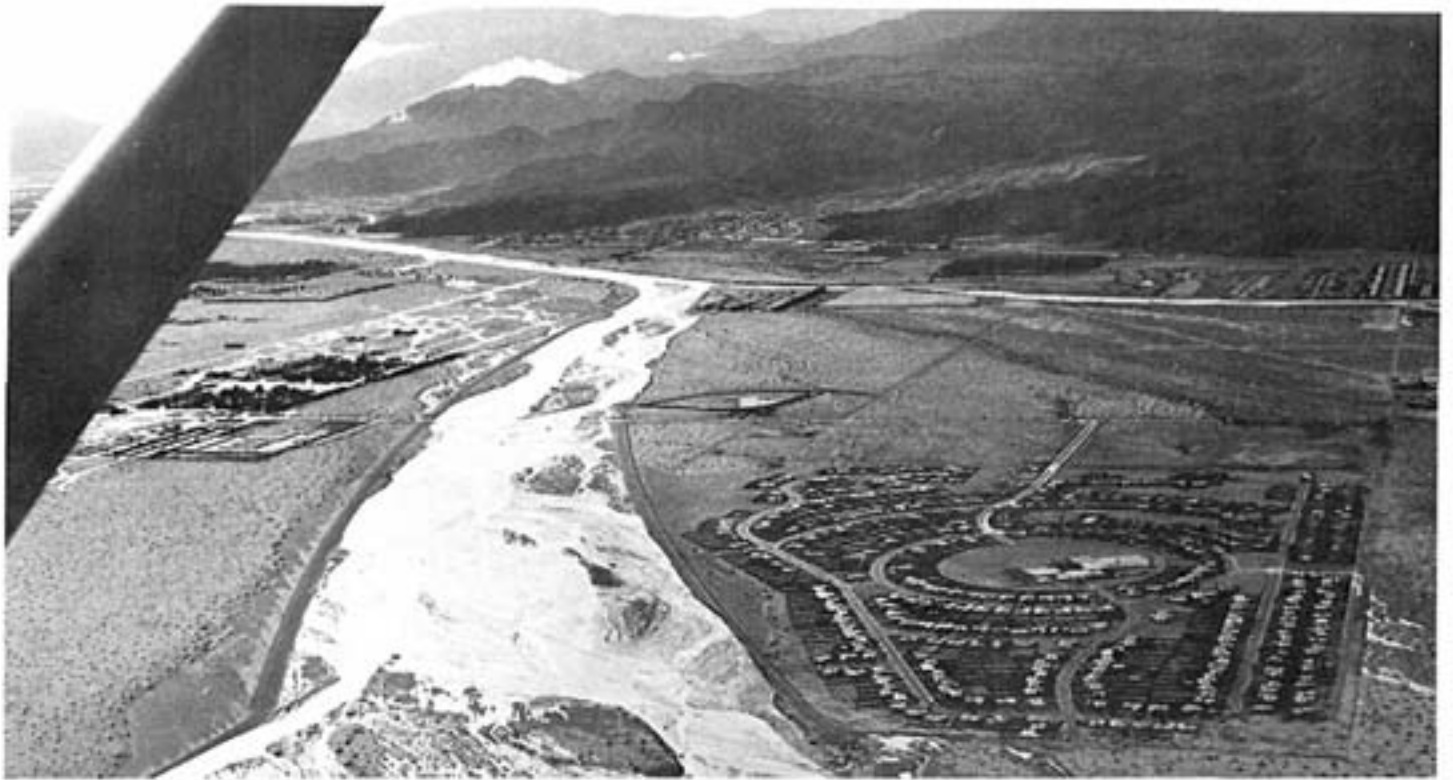
G. N. Adams, engineer and one of the commissioners on the Deep Canyon flood control project commission for the water district, reported in 1928 that at Point Happy the bed of the channel was lowered eight feet and that the "cataract below Point Happy . . . has moved up stream a distance of 4500 feet. . . moving approximately 130,000 cubic yards of material.

He also reported that on the north line of the Price Ranch a large sand dune deflected water and a levee, constructed between the dune and the east levee, forced scouring of the channel. When the entire peak of the flood passed through it had enlarged the channel 100 per cent, doubling its capacity.

The lowering of the channel exposed the railroad bridge piles. the bridge was saved by crews keeping the piles clear of trash. Two short bridges over the channel at Sparey's Crossing, Jackson Street, north of Indio were washed out, leaving the center roadway high and dry.

The old channel south east of Indio was not sufficient to carry the storm water and water flowed around a double levee at Thermal inundating that community. Below Thermal the

(continued on page 99)



DISTRICT SPREADS, CHANNELIZES, RAISES DIKES TO THWART FLOOD PERIL

One of the major responsibilities of the CVCWD is for stormwater protection within its far-flung boundaries. At top is the mile-long portion of the 4½-mile Westside Dike (paid for by Improvement District No. 1) that confines floods from mountain slopes at left and protects the Coachella Canal's Terminal Reservoir (Lake Cabuilla). Photo shows Lake in upper center. It beckons recreational vehicles and campers to the Riverside County operated facility. Bottom photo looking south toward Ramon Road (center) shows floodwaters in Whitewater River being confined by channel dikes after leaving the spreading area above Indian Avenue. Using Stormwater Unit taxes, the District has concentrated on funding the channelization of the Whitewater River flood flows.

District Began Serving Domestic Water in 1961

The District entered the domestic water field in mid 1961 under the pressure of the need for a unified agency eventually combining all the various small, often inadequate water service companies and agencies within its boundaries.

There was the requirement that the State of California could contract Feather River (State Project) water only with public, governmental agencies serving a large area.

After entering the field the District did contract in 1963, on behalf of the people of the Coachella Valley, for 23,100 acre feet of water to replenish and undergird the groundwater sup-

plies and assure the continuing progress of the urban and resort areas. At the same time the Desert Water Agency (Palm Springs area) was organized and contracted for 38,100 acre feet. (The District's domestic water service area is now generally east of Desert Hot Springs and north of the Whitewater River channel above Palm Springs and the Valley east of Cathedral City, south along both sides of Salton Sea. Desert Water Agency's area centers in Cathedral City, Palm Springs and the Desert Hot Springs area, west.)

The Board of Directors began considering the domestic water field and its problems inherent in a multitude of mutual and private water purveyors as early as 1956 when it became a member of the Riverside County Water Association. The State Water plan was increasingly discussed by 1957, and in February 1958 the District became a member of the Feather River Project Association.

Contract for Basin Water Study

Because of the continuing overdraft of the underground water basin, the District contracted with the State Department of Water Resources to make an investigation of the basin to determine the need for supplemental water.

District representatives appeared before the Teale Legislative Committee and other state legislative committees pointing out the need for supplemental water and willingness to participate in the proposed State Water Project in view of not only the diminishing underground waters but in view of the future impact of the Supreme Court's Special Master's decision limiting California's rights to the Colorado River. Local organizations were shown films and heard reports discussing water problems and future needs.

In December of 1958 the District employed Bookman and Edmonston, hydrologic engineers, to make a survey of routes and report in connection with the importation and distribution of Feather River water in cooperation with the Palm Springs Water Company, the Desert Hot Springs County Water District, and the Banning Water Company.

In July 1960 the Board signed an agreement which indicated requirements within the then 267,000 acre district would be 55,000 acre feet per year by 1990 and requested an allocation of 100,000. In a cooperative agreement with the State Department of Water Resources, the District agreed to pay \$50,000 for an investigation of the basin. The Burns-Porter Act setting up the state water project was endorsed, and the District actively showed films and spoke supporting the State Water Plan which was placed on the Ballot as Proposition 1.

First Entry Into Domestic Service

In November 1960, the District, which had been studying the need to enter the domestic water service field, considered purchasing the Rancho Ramon Water Company and ordered condemnation proceedings instituted. The company served water in the area west and northwest of Indio.

In February 1961 the district entered negotiations to purchase the La Quinta Palms subdivision water facilities on Washington Street just south of Point Happy. The same month Improvement District No. 10 was formed and annexed to the District at North Shores on the Salton Sea and two subdividers transferred their systems to the District and formed Improvement District No. 10. Cahuilla Hills sought to become an improvement district looking toward eventual water service.

The year 1961 was busy in this field and the largest Improvement District, No. 11, was formed including about

3 Dozen Emeralds on the Desert

Sparkling emeralds on the vistas of the once barren Colorado Desert's Coachella Valley are the more than three dozen golf courses which have added to the lure and lore of the area.

The early courses and dates of establishment are:

- 1926 — O'Donnell (18 holes)
- 1947 — Cochran-Odlum (9 holes) now Indian Palms (18 holes in 1974)
- 1949 — Shadow Mountain (pitch and putt)
- 1951 — Thunderbird Country Club
- 1953 — Tamarisk Country Club
- 1957 — Indian Wells Country Club
- 1957 — Eldorado Country Club
- 1959 — San Jacinto (now Whitewater Country Club)
- 1959 — Bermuda Dunes
- 1959 — Palm Springs Municipal (public)
- 1959 — Shadow Mountain
- 1961 — Westward Ho
- 1962 — Canyon Country Club
- 1962 — Palm Desert Country Club
- 1962 — Salton City Golf Course
- 1963 — Biltmore Hotel Course
- 1963 — Desert Crest
- 1963 — Tri-Palms Estates
- 1963 — Silver Spur (not completed, and abandoned)

Since 1963 the following have been built:

- Indio Municipal
- Seven Lakes
- Annenberg (private)
- La Quinta Country Club
- Palm Springs Mobile Country Club
- Portola Estates Country Club
- Canyon Estates
- Del Safari Country Club
- Canyon Hotel Golf Resort
- Marrakesh Country Club
- Riviera hotel
- Mission Lakes Country Club
- Palm Desert Greens
- Desert Air Golf Course (now Rancho Los Palmas Country Club)
- Mission Hills Country Club
- Desert Island Country Club
- Ironwood Country Club
- Sunrise Country Club
- The Springs Club
- Cathedral Canyon Country Club
- Sheffield Golf Course

70,000 acres in San Diego and Imperial Counties with the District assuming the obligations of Salton Sea Community Services District relating to furnishing of domestic water, water production and storage facilities and distribution systems. The North Shore Yacht Club Estates and Chocolate Mountain Mutual were absorbed this year into Improvement District No. 10.

In June the District noted it now had 1,100 domestic water accounts, and facilities to serve 12,000 lots. A renewed application was filed with the Department of Water Resources for state project water asking for annual entitlements of 60,000 acre feet by 1990. Desert Beach annexed to the District in October to become part of Improvement District No. 10. By adding the Rancho Ramon system, which served areas from Homeway at Windy Point, Hidden Springs in Thousand Palms, B-Bar-H Southeast of Desert Hot Springs, North Palm Springs, Madison Street west of Indio, and north of Cathedral City, the water service area was expanding the breadth of the District.

The year 1962 opened with Cahuilla Hills annexed as Improvement District No. 6, Sky and Fun Valleys annexed as Improvement District No. 8, the acquisition of the 120 Water Co. on Darby Road, the Palmeras Water Co. and Palm Island Mutual.

Annexations of land to the District and its special Improvement Districts increased as bond issues were approved by the Improvement District voters. Developers built water systems to District specifications and turned them over to the District for operation and maintenance.

Expansion Rapid in 1963

The next large addition to the domestic system occurred in

April 1963 when the Palm Desert Water Co. was acquired, the West Eldorado and Eldorado Country Club Water Companies and the Silver Spur Ranch Water Company were absorbed. As many as 20 tracts' water systems were turned over in one meeting of the District's board of directors.

Improvement District No. 6, Cahuilla Hills, and I. D. No. 8 voted bonds for water systems in 1964 and the Nairobi Estates Water Co. was acquired. This year the District, seeing a need for a comprehensive water resources and management study, employed the widely known Bechtel Engineers to undertake such a study.

The acquisition of old water systems prompted the beginning of an extensive rehabilitation and water pumping and storage program especially in the Palm Desert, Cathedral City Thousand Palms systems, in 1965.

That year the Thermal Water Company was purchased and acquisition of the Bovee Water Co., in Thousand Palms, was discussed, while construction of the I. D. 6 and I. D. 8 systems of wells, boosters, pumps, reservoirs and distribution lines was underway. The Erawan Country Club System was acquired. Training of employees in waterworks operations was also increasing with 14 receiving certificates in September. A study of feasibility of service to Bombay Beach was requested and authorized.

In 1966 the District authorized the Hayes Street pumping station and reservoir. The Shadow Hills Water Co. purchase was also authorized.

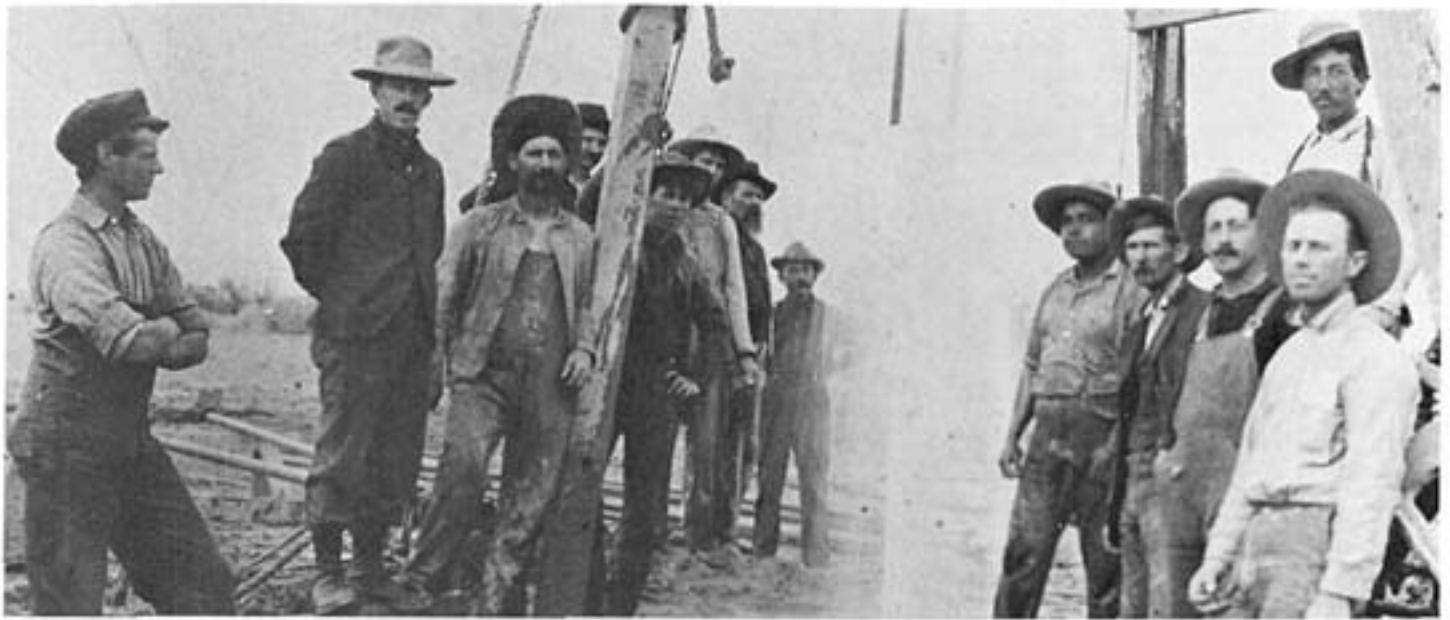
In 1967 the District took over the operation and maintenance of the Salton Sea Water District's transmission and distribution lines built in 1965, on the east and north side of Salton Sea.



INDIO HEALTH CAMP STARTED

About mid-1903, N. O. Nelson, who had come here from St. Louis, Mo., opened a health camp in Indio west of the depot, about 100 feet north of the tracks. It was principally tent houses about 20 feet apart, opened to permit air to circulate. Soon all of the tent houses were occupied by people who came from coastal cities. Dr. June Robertson was the camp doctor for several years until it was closed late in 1908. One large shelter with a permanent shade served as a meeting place. A few trees provided shade.

— C. V. Historical Society Photo



WELL DRILLING IN THE VALLEY IN 1910

Above is a well drilled by Martin & Sandford on Thayer Brothers Ranch at Avenue 61 and Pierce in 1910. (Note artesian effect.) Left to right are: Royal B. Thayer, Grant Thomas the well driller, several unidentified persons, seventh man is Lon Martin, John Coogan eighth, A. H. Sandford tenth, Fred Thayer eleventh, and A. B. Bud Martin thirteenth. — C. V. Historical Society Photo

Meanwhile upgrading the acquired systems, adding completed tract lines to the systems, drilling more wells and adding reservoir capacities, the District purchased the Palm Desert Country Club Estates water and sewer system, marking the first entry of the District in the wastewater reclamation and treatment field.

Bombay Beach Authorizes Water Bonds

The Tamarisk Water Company and Palm Valley Water Company acquisitions were authorized in 1968, and the Bombay Beach area was organized and approved bonds as Improvement District No. 14.

Groundbreaking for the Bombay Beach system occurred in a community celebration February 28, 1970, and the District brought water to two assessment districts on the North Shore of Salton Sea and one on the west shore.

The area north of the Whitewater River channel in the Palm Desert-Rancho Mirage area was formed as Improvement Districts Nos. 16 and 53 and bonds were voted for facilities.

The Rancho Mirage Water Company was acquired in 1971 and Improvement District No. 17, Middleton Road, was formed.

Tenfold Increase in Services

By September of 1973 water service connections had increased to 10,741 of which 9,413 were residential, a nearly tenfold increase from 1961's first year.

During 1973 to 1974 there were more than \$2,100,000 allocated in new construction of several million gallon reservoirs, booster stations, new transmission and distribution lines as well as wells. For example in January and February 91 new services were connected, many new fire hydrants provided, and more than 22,000 feet of 6, 8, and 12 inch water mains were authorized.

In 1975 the Deep Canyon and San Jacinto Mutual Water Companies were added to the District's system.

Although some of the systems, including the tracts and

developments, were turned over to the District, without charge, for operation and maintenance, others were acquired by purchase on the basis that revenues would pay off the costs over the years.

Since the inception of the domestic water program the District has acquired systems valued at \$5,700,000 and has constructed facilities from bond funds and current revenues. The 1976 value of the domestic water system was listed at nearly \$28,000,000.

70 Mile Service Area

The District serves domestic water in an area nearly 70 miles in length from east of Desert Hot Springs and Palm Springs to points nearly 20 miles into Imperial County on both sides of Salton Sea.

In 1977 water for the system was drawn from 60 wells, stored in 51 reservoirs with a capacity of nearly 20 million gallons, and provided fire protection from nearly 4000 hydrants. More than 16,500 water customers were served using an average of about 15,800,000 gals. daily. By June 1978 2500 more users were added.

The exchange of state project water with Metropolitan water District for Colorado River water from the aqueduct which tunnels the Little San Bernardinos and crosses the Whitewater River is of increasing importance to the entire Coachella Valley. Studies indicate that the importation of state project water by either of two routes will require a bond issue. The Coachella District and the Desert Water Agency bought additional time for increased assessed valuations to carry the burden of the extension of facilities to bring that state water to this area. By 1990 surveys have indicated that the population will be near 236,000, an increase of about 400 percent in the Coachella District area. This graphically indicates the importance of the importation of new water, especially when it is realized that water levels have been declining steadily since 1947 and pumping and energy costs are mounting rapidly.

'Doc' Jennings Called C.V. 'Canal Builder'

Blackburn Recalled Early Days of Battle for Canal

Dr. S. S. M. Jennings was the individual who had more to do with bringing water to this desert than any other person. He sparkplugged the meetings with the Secretary of Interior, the Reclamation Commissioner, and other interested groups in many places and was continually determined in his push for the water project.

"He was one of those fellows who didn't hesitate to go after what he wanted for this Valley."

That was the firm opinion of Richard W. Blackburn regarding the Coachella Valley County water District's first board president. Dr. Jennings was president from 1918 to Nov. 28, 1928 when he resigned. He was appointed to the board as a director by the County of Riverside in April 1931 and served until August 1933 when the law permitting such appointments was repealed.

Came On Board in 1921

Blackburn succeeded M. V. White, a merchant representing the Thermal area on the original board. White's personal affairs took him away from the Valley and prompted his resignation in May 1921. Blackburn became a member on the

board June 2, 1921, and later succeeded Jennings as president from 1928 until October 30, 1932. (Blackburn passed away in January 1969.)

Retired in 1968 on the family ranch on Avenue 73, east of Highway 86, Blackburn cited three incidents during the early years of the water district that have redounded to the benefit of all Coachella Valley.

One was the agreement that the agricultural interests would not be charged 25 per cent of the costs of building Hoover Dam.

High Farm Share

It had been recommended by the Bureau of Reclamation that in the development of Boulder Dam Project, 25 per cent of the costs of the dam should be charged to agriculture. There was no particular opposition to this plan of Arthur P. Davis, Reclamation Service director, by the Imperial Irrigation District people so the Coachella Valley District contacted the Secretary of Interior for a hearing. The hearing was scheduled in San Diego in the Spring of 1923 with all of the involved Western states represented and present. Attorney Thomas C. Yager was to testify regarding Coachella Valley's opposition. When the



THERMAL TOWN HALL BUILT IN 1908

Across the street from the Fleetwood Hotel was the Thermal Town Hall which faced south on Kokell between Highway 111 and Palm. The building was destroyed by fire in the middle teens.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

CV delegation arrived in San Diego, the Department of Interior officials called Yager into conference and told him they had withdrawn their position. "Tom went in front of the 200-300 present and explained" that the government had come to the realization that it would not be fair to charge the agricultural lands one-quarter of the cost of Hoover Dam.

"That was an exclusive accomplishment and one of the historical actions this District can take credit for in the early years," Blackburn declared.

The second accomplishment was to get Coachella Valley's name into the early legislation thereby establishing the foundation for the Coachella Branch of the All American Canal.

Got Name In Bill

When the first draft of the Boulder Canyon Act did not include the Coachella Valley, after much difficulty and contacts with our legislators the construction of the All American Canal to serve the Imperial "and Coachella" Valleys was included. It was only by determination and by soliciting influential support that the District achieved this victory.

He recalled that this Valley gave Phil Swing a lot of support in his first campaign for Congress when Riverside, Imperial and San Diego Counties were in the same Congressional District.

"In the 20's we took a caravan of cars to Riverside and paraded through the streets ending up with a rally on the Courthouse lawn. We had a frame erected on one Model T on which we placed a Swing and Mary Bundschuh (now Mrs. Mary Combs) would swing back and fourth while a banner proclaimed 'Swing with Swing for Congress' and it drew a lot of attention," he recalled.

A third accomplishment was to halt a move by the Metropolitan Water District in their contract for water that would have upset the priorities for the agricultural areas.

Hold Vital Session

That contract had been signed when the Imperial and Coachella Districts learned of the move. Blackburn recalled that the Districts asked for a meeting with the Metropolitan board which was arranged Wednesday, Feb. 12, 1930, at 11 a.m. He and Mark Rose and President Earl Pound of the Im-

perial District attended and were asked to present their case.

"We did and at noon were told that they would take our complaint under advisement. They were told the question had to be settled that day. They agreed to return in the afternoon. During the noon hour we agreed to keep them in session, all night if necessary. At midnight they agreed to come back in session Thursday morning. The discussions continued that day and Friday.

"In the meantime we were in touch with Tom Yager and Charles Childress, the two districts' attorneys, in Washington at each recess and during the evenings. We presume MWD was in touch with its attorney W. B. Matthews, also in the capitol. Our group agreed on a draft of a telegram we would send to our attorneys if we failed to resolve the problem and we continued to stand firm.

MWD Gives In

"At noon Saturday the Metropolitan board capitulated when we presented the telegrams we intended to send. We each called our attorneys that the contract was to be withdrawn. Monday, when the sub-committee voted on the first appropriation of \$10,660,000 (in the second deficiency bill for the building of Boulder Dam and the All American Canal), the vote was 4-3. Our opposition could have killed it."

As it was the appropriation bill in final passage carried with it compliance of the six-state Colorado River Compact, the President's proclamation of its ratification and California's agreement to limit its use to the mainstream.

On February 21, the agricultural groups underscored their victory in priority when the agreement to division of the water was entered into by all agencies. In June 1931, in Los Angeles, the agricultural groups were given the first 3,850,000 acre feet of water and the agreement was ratified Aug. 18 by all boards.

Blackburn made a number of trips to Washington regarding conferences on legislation including the Swing-Johnson Bill which was approved December 21, 1928. It was the sixth of a series of bills, the first two providing only for building of the All-American Canal, the others for the Boulder Canyon Project including the canal to Imperial and Coachella Valleys.



THIS WAS MECCA ABOUT 1904

At left is the Caravansary, gathering place of prospectors and visitors to the community of Mecca about 1903. At right is the structure to become known as the "Mission Store." R. Holby Myers, developer, changed name from "Walters" to Mecca in September of that year.

— C. V. Historical Society Photo



UNDERGROUND SYSTEM

Zanjero turns valve on westside ranch water stand of the Coachella Valley's widely recognized water-conserving 500-mile underground distribution system which delivers about 350,000 acre feet of Colorado River water via the 123 1/2-mile canal to the valley's ranches.

— CVCWD PHOTO ©1970

History should record that water district officials including President Blackburn, Chester Sparey, Ben Clary and Counsel Thomas Yager were early dune-buggy initiates.

The board had expressed a desire to see the proposed All American Canal route. On April 12, 1930, with two Model T Fords the group set out from near Yuma over the sand dunes, up the route of the high line canal which was to be the area of the Coachella Branch, to a point 13 miles east of Mecca.

Mr. Blackburn tells it this way:

"We had an itching to see the route of the canal, and see it for ourselves. So we bought two Fords, one for \$75 and one for \$125. We took the fenders off them, took a 12-inch belt and put blocks underneath so we could bolt the belts to the wheels. They worked very well. We ran as close as we could to the actual canal site-route and followed it over the dunes. We'd race along at a pretty good clip but when we came to the edge of some and looked down, some of those drops were 20-30 feet. It made the trip pretty interesting. As I recall it we had to skirt a lot of area but we made it home."

Office In Coachella

First meetings of the board were held in the building between Sixth and Seventh Streets on Highway 111 in Coachella. Later the Stormwater Board shared the offices and the Coachella Farm Bureau also held its meetings in the building.

The Colorado River Commission hearings led to the Santa Fe Compact. Herbert Hoover, later to become President, presided over the Commission which held 18 sessions as well as a series of public hearings in Phoenix, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, Grand Junction, Denver, Cheyenne and Santa Fe.

Blackburn represented the District at these meetings and recalls riding in Hoover's private railroad car from Salt Lake

City to Denver in 1922. At one time on a visit to the Coachella and Imperial delegations, Hoover was asked if he would run for President. Hoover replied: "I couldn't do that, I'm not politician enough."

Tempers Short

During the final hearings which led to drafting the Colorado River Compact on November 24, 1922, tempers flared on occasion. Counsel Yager attended the final meetings. He reported one instance was when Hoover, after a noon recess, argued with the agricultural group (Yager, Mark Rose, Earl Pound of Imperial) that "you ought to give some more, and ought to reach an agreement." Rose bristled and said: "And you can go to the devil."

From November 6 until December 2, 1922, when the copy of the draft reached the Coachella board, President Jennings had kept the board on call and it met 13 times. (Daily November 17 through 25.)

In the 1920's the board made another of the important decisions, which was to file on all unappropriated waters from the streams in the Whitewater River shed and "to delimit the use of water to present acquired rights, as well as setting in motion the setting up of water reserves and withdrawal of government lands for spreading works. The Whitewater was adjudicated in May 1924."

Appropriate \$5000

Following a mass meeting of interested citizens December 8, 1918, the board the next year appropriated \$5000 for a survey and investigation of an All American Canal route by the Reclamation Service (now the Bureau of Reclamation) under the Kettner Bill, and in 1921 under the Kincaid bill, both dealing only with the canal.

"Our board took an early position on the Boulder Canyon Project legislation that Hoover Dam should provide water for lands capable of irrigation, regulate the river for flood protection, and develop power at no cost to agricultural lands."

The Swing-Johnson Bill, Boulder Canyon Project Act, was approved in December 1928, and in March 1929 this district contracted jointly with the Imperial Irrigation District for surveys of a main canal with Coachella to pay one-fifth the cost. In May Blackburn was named to the Boulder Dam Association as a director. The board foresaw drainage problems and included studies and works in the canal legislation.

Opinions Differed

Differences of opinion arose in the valley as to whether this area should be part of the Imperial Valley or "go it alone." Blackburn recalled that Commissioner of Reclamation Elwood Mead, as well as District Engineer A. L. Sonderegger, had expressed their opinion that in their judgement the two valleys ought to be together, and after the surveys had been made and the cost estimates completed, that was the thing to do.

The board had consulted with Imperial Irrigation District which already had the know-how and experience in water matters and delivering of water, "know-how which we did not have, all led us to believe that it was in the best interests of this valley."

If Coachella united with Imperial in building the canal \$3,000,000 savings were estimated, the board believed. Ten years later the canal was built at a cost of \$30-odd-millions and that was in the trough of the depression. Three million dollars sounded like a lot of money then, and rightly or wrongly, Blackburn says, an independent district appeared to be the most costly route to travel. It was this difference of opinion that led to the October 1932 election of a new board.

Westerfields Opened First Valley Bank, 1912

The First National Bank in Coachella is the Valley's oldest financial institution being established December 6, 1912.

But there was an earlier bank of which a very interesting story is told by John W. Westerfield, scion of the First National's founding Westerfield Brothers, John M. of Banning and Harry A. Coachella.

As told to John W., a bank was established in Coachella in the early 1900's on Cantaloupe Avenue, now Highway 111, south of Hamner's Furniture. The building was destroyed by fire many years ago.

A pair of men came into the Valley and took over a building, constructing with timbers a vault which had a heavy door. They opened for business and many settlers brought in money for deposit and opened accounts. A few weeks later the bank did not open on a Monday morning and citizens, when they went into the bank, found that the vault door was easily opened and there was nothing in the safe but checks and deposit slips lying loosely in a heap on the floor.

The First National Bank was opened by John M. Westerfield, President, who was operating a bank he started in Banning in 1901. His brother, Harry A. Westerfield, had come to the Valley in July 1905 to farm. When the First National was opened in the second store of the first building north of the corner of Seventh and Cantaloupe, a total of \$2010 was deposited the opening day. Harry was Vice President and he and Mrs. Westerfield and a bookkeeper represented the total bank personnel the first days.

In 1920 the bank moved to the present location of Lopes Hardware on Sixth Street and in 1948 moved to the present modern bank building. It is interesting to note that the same architect provided plans for the Coachella City Hall, built in 1950 while John W. was the city's first mayor from December 20, 1946 to April 11, 1950.

John was born in 1893 and came west with his parents from Omaha, Nebraska. From 1905 to 1918 he attended school, graduating from Riverside, California high school in 1912, Omaha University, and Occidental College. He worked part time for his father on the ranch, calling Coachella his home after July 5, 1912. He and his brother Arthur M. Westerfield bought their first ranch in 1917 about a mile south of Coachella on Harrison Street.

In 1912 he assisted his parents in the bank, worked on the farm and was attending school, coming back to the Valley after college in 1920.

In 1923 he moved to Los Angeles where he was employed by the Pacific Southwest Trust and Savings Bank, then by the People's National Bank which was sold to the National Bank of Commerce. In 1935 he went to Phoenix, Arizona, where he was office manager for the Richfield Oil Company for the State of Arizona. He was with the oil company three years.

In 1938 he came back to the Valley to make his permanent home. At first he farmed his own place and several others including a date garden north of Indio, a farm in the Indian Wells area, and the original 40 acres he had purchased with brother, Arthur.

His brother Arthur had graduated from Occidental College in 1920 and had returned to the Valley where he lived until his death in 1950 and where he also had been connected with the bank.

First District Auditor

His father, Harry A. Westerfield, was the first auditor of the

Coachella Valley County Water District and served intermittent appointive terms over the years.

The First National Bank of Coachella took over the assets of the First National Bank of Indio which had been established in 1923 by Clarence E. French, Chester L. Sparey and others. (The Indio bank had taken over some assets of the Coachella Valley State Bank at Thermal.) When the bank holiday came in 1932 it had so weakened the Indio bank's position that the Westerfields, on encouragement from the Controller of Currency, took over the Indio institution and none of the depositors suffered. The bank has since been known as The First National Bank in Coachella.

"Those were rough days during the bank holidays and depression," Westerfield recalls.

He and Stanley G. Ottman, long-time cashier of the present First National, recall that "money was scarce in the early days of the Valley."

Dean of Valley Bankers

Ottman, son of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond G. Ottman, who came to the Valley in 1910 from Los Angeles after having come west a few years before from New York State, was connected with the bank from 1930 to 1974, which made him the dean of Valley bankers.

Ottman was born in Los Angeles. He attended college in Pomona, having worked in the local bank while in high school in 1923-23 and after graduation in 1925.

Stan remembers the days of the "Sidewinder" a train that ran from Los Angeles to Calexico daily and returned.

He has old day books of the First National Bank showing a typical day's business including a handful of loans, the largest of which was for \$100 and the others ranging from \$10 to \$25, mostly based on a homesteader's good character or to businessmen on mortgages. Deposits rarely reached more than a couple of hundred dollars a day in the 1917-1918 period.

Almost Refused Loan

"I recall one local rancher coming in all dressed up one day and my dad almost refused him a loan of less than \$50 so he could go to Los Angeles on the "Sidewinder" because he didn't recognize him," John said.

When his father came to Coachella Valley in 1905, the Coahuilla Development Company was located in Coachella and it publicized itself as borer of artesian and pumping wells. S. A. Pauley was president; C. R. Cawthon, Vice President; A. L. Selig, Secretary, and B. F. Boone, Treasurer.

In the years since, the Bank of America, Desert Bank (now Security Pacific National Bank), United California Bank, City National Bank, Crocker National Bank, First National Bank and Trust Co., and Desert Empire Bank of Cathedral City, with the exception of the latter, have established branches from Palm Springs to Salton City.

Built Indio Depot

Fred P. Jayne, formerly of Mecca, was reported by the Date Palm in March 1919 as now being in the onion business. Jayne was the contractor who built the Indio depot in the early 1880's.



BIRTHPLACE OF GEORGE LEACH FRONTED ON ARABIA TOWNSITE

John S. Leach family lived in this home when Arabia had a post office, store and cotton gin between Thermal and Mecca. J. Win Wilson operated the valley's first cotton gin at Arabia. Left to right are: Mrs. Herbert Leach, (John's mother from Massachusetts); Mr. and Mrs. John Leach; Mrs. Minnie Magaw; Mr. Lon Harvey, (Mrs. Leach's brother). Long-time water district director George Leach and sister, Mrs. Creed McIntosh, grew up here.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

Arabia: Only Authentic Valley Ghost Town

Coachella Valley has an authentic ghost town.

Today there is very little evidence of what was once promoted as "one day the leading center of commerce in the fertile Coachella Valley."

The ghost town is Arabia. At one time, nearly 40 acres were subdivided by a man named John Webb, and streets laid out. (Some early residents declare not only were several streets in but street lamp posts had been erected.)

It had already been established by the time Mr. and Mrs. John S. Leach, father of George Leach, long-time director of the Coachella Valley County Water District, came to purchase 40 acres adjoining the townsite in 1903.

The townsite of the "town of the valley" was located between Avenue 60 and 61 south of Highway 111, about halfway between Thermal and Mecca. An old date garden marked part of the area for years, planted originally by the American Date Co. east and south of what was long the Creed McIntosh home. Mrs. McIntosh is a daughter of the John Leachs.

"There was a store, a post office, and the valley's first cotton gin, operated by J. Win Wilson who established the Date Palm, a weekly newspaper in Indio in 1912," Leach recalls, continuing that "the railroad had a siding there, too."

"I was a small boy when the store was abandoned. Wilson

Disaster Strikes Durbrow

George Durbrow, who originated and operated the Liverpool Salt works on the Salton Sea (at Salton), in 1896 hired Indians to build a two-story show place Indio home just east of what is now Monroe and Highway 86. He employed Henry McKay as superintendent of his salt works, and the McKay Family lived near Salton for several years and in Coachella. Durbrow suffered a double loss that pauperized him. In 1905 the Colorado River flowed unimpeded into the Salton Sink submerging his salt works investment and the next year his San Francisco holdings were wiped out by the earthquake.

moved the cotton gin to Thermal in 1920, and that was the beginning of the end of Arabia."

Leach recalls that Arabia, besides the store and post office, had a subdivision. "Our house was next to it, roughly a quarter of a mile away. The promoters built one house which stood there many years until it was torn down about 1935 along with the store building—and Arabia was no more.

"When the road was put in between Thermal and Mecca, it didn't go down alongside the railroad but it turned south from the railroad on Pierce to Avenue 66 and then east to Mecca. That was about 1920.

100 Mules in Corral

"I remember the oil mix batch plant was located at Arabia during the road construction. The crews building the storm channel levees and the road crews used the old store building for headquarters and a mess hall. The stormwater district contractors at times had about 100 mules in a corral about 500 feet northwest of the store close to an artesian well (which is still in existence). The store was located northeast of the Creed-McIntosh home. The gin was located 900-1000 feet east of McIntosh, just about where Pierce Street continues south from Highway 111 at the railroad.

"I went to school at Thermal which had three rooms. The outside was stuccoed with rough cement, thrown at the walls to make it rough. The principal was Mrs. Walker. I graduated in 1924 and went on to the high school out on Avenue 56.

"We had just dirt roads in my grammar school days, with deep ruts cut by the steel rimmed wagon wheels. Cars would have trouble with high center. The main road from Thermal stayed on the west side of the storm channel to Avenue 60 and then east across the storm channel to the railroad, then followed the tracks to Mecca."

He told about riding the bus to high school. He rode a Model-T Ford high school bus the last year in grammar school. Before that time, they wouldn't let grammar school pupils ride the high school bus. "We walked up the railroad to Thermal

rather than take a buggy and go the long way around." When he started high school the district had a solid tired White bus, later two new Reo buses were bought, and he drove one part of the time.

Leach graduated from Coachella Valley High School in 1928. The first buildings have been gone many years. Two were built side-by-side with a screened patio between. Rooms were divided with folding doors which opened in hot weather, and ceiling fans were used.

Aphids Took the Crop

Leach's father raised cantaloupes in the early days on his 40 acres. There were no viruses or diseases in the early years and cantaloupes produced very heavy. One year the aphids took the whole crop because there were no chemicals to control the pest. Mr. Leach believes this is the reason cantaloupes went out as a leading crop.

"In those days," Leach recalls, "a group of farmers went together and built an ice plant at Coachella to ice carloads of cantaloupes and other vegetables and produce. The main area of the Valley was from Coachella south, centering in Thermal area where it was easy to get water. You'd drill a 4-inch well about 500 feet and water flowed.

"We didn't have electricity on our place until 1925 because we had plenty of water and didn't need any pumps. When the wells did go down we put in a centrifugal pump in a pit nine feet deep, that's as deep as you could dig it because of the water table. It was even higher before that, but as wells were pumped the level of the surface water went down.

"We always had a salt problem in the Thermal area. If you didn't plant a crop every year you had problems. You didn't dare let the land lay idle. We'd plant barley, keep the water on it, and the only place it would grow was in the furrows. The area was always salty if you didn't keep farming it, and farmers had to learn how to farm it, and keep farming it, which in effect was leaching the salts down.

"I remember that you could take a shovel any place between Thermal and Mecca's Garden of the Setting Sun and dig down three feet and get water. Salt was all over the lower valley.

"After the cantaloupe deal went out, farmers grew onions, white wax and yellow Bermudas. If you got 500 sacks an acre you were doing well. About every three years the market would be good, in between Texas would kill the market. On the good year, because of floods or other problems, Texas production would be down and prices would go up. On the bad years we'd try to salvage onions by storing them under shade and then go through and grade out, but usually we ended up dumping the harvest.

"I remember that 1918 was a real good year. My folks grossed about \$5,000 and since my dad hadn't been back to Boston to see his folks since he came out here in 1903 from a job as a wholesale buyer in a dry goods store, he loaded us four children and mother on a train and we went back to spend three months," he said.

Leach's father came here because Fred and Roy Thayer, eastern school friends, had encouraged him to do so. Roy sold him the 40 acres, even though he had never been on a farm before.

"He was like a lot of other early pioneers. He came here because of friends and because friends recruited friends in those days."

His home had burned twice, the last time in 1923. In 1935 he was married to Iris Humphers, whose father a railroad man, had taken his savings and rented land and farmed on Avenue 60 near Highway 86.

Mr. Leach first went to work for the U. S. Date Gardens,



POST OFFICE WAS 'OVER THERE'

Former water district director, George H. Leach is pointing toward Highway 111 and Pierce where the Arabia post office, store and cotton gin were located. Jess A. Ivey was named first postmaster in Arabia August 22, 1913. The original townsite was 40 acres. Leach was born on the adjoining site. In background of this 1968 photo was the third home built by the Leach family on the original homesite. It was destroyed by fire in the early '70's, the second home had burned in 1923.

being hired one day by Dewey Moore in 1929. A. J. Shamblin was head of the experiment station then under direction of Dr. Walter T. Swingle. Leach worked in the Mecca station which the government had on lease until 1940's.

"I remember never being bored in those days. We had work before and after school. Entertainment included going to church, to church functions, neighborhood parties, and hunting.

"Hunting was good in those days. You could go out with a 22-calibre rifle and come back with a handful of rabbits. Reservoirs attracted ducks and you could get plenty of them as well as quail. Quail were plentiful, much more than now. In the early days we didn't know much, or think much, about hunting seasons or hunting laws."

Ancient Fish Traps

Circular rock structures near the end of Jackson and Avenue 66, below the shore of the ancient Lake Cahuilla, have attracted scientists and archeologists since their discovery several decades ago. The Riverside County Parks Department and County historical commission have marked the site as a point of historical interest and recommended a National Landmarks designation. The traps were built by the early inhabitants when the Colorado River flowed into the Salton Sink and filled the depression to the forty feet above sea level mark, readily visible as a shore line along the western Coachella Valley foothills.

With People Came Demands for Schools

Indio Sent Seven Pupils to Railroad Tent School in 1896

In 1896 there were only 50 people living in the Indio environs, most of them employed by the Southern Pacific railroad, but even so the demand for education of the children mounted.

It was that year that a tent house was erected east of the railroad station and the valley's first school opened with a teacher and seven pupils.

It wasn't until six years later that the first schools were opened at Mecca, Thermal and Coachella.

In 1897 the patrons of the Indio school district caused to be built an adobe school on the northeast corner of Fargo and Bliss where the Elks Lodge building is now located. It was the first school building in the valley built for such purpose. The Indio school district was organized October 2, 1897.

The brown adobe building was also used for church worship until a two-room white frame school was built in 1909 on the lot where the Greyhound Station now stands.

The frame building was moved about 1939 to south of the old Roosevelt School on Highway 111, and was used variously as a hospital during the 1918-1919 flu epidemic, a cafeteria and finally for storage.

On June 10, 1926, a contract was let for a hollow tile school building on the southeast corner of Bliss and Oasis, to be known as Lincoln School. It was torn down in 1957. The Indian Wells "Point Happy" School was organized in 1916 and merged with the Indio District July 1, 1929.

Citizens of other communities organized schools in the early 1900's even before formal Districts were voted.

Little Green Schoolhouse

The Kokell School District was established in 1902 and a two-room "Little Green Schoolhouse" was built in 1907 where the Thermal Baptist Church stands. It was moved to a new two-room school on the present site of the John Kelley school in

1912. The first school opened with nine pupils. In 1908 the Thermal Grammar School District was organized and in 1947 it was merged with the Ensign School which had been established in 1911 on Avenue 62, and both became the Thermal Union School District. The Westside School, built in 1964, on Avenue 56 west of the high school, was part of the District all of which is now part of the unified valley school district.

The Walters School was organized in 1902 and first sessions began in 1903. It was reorganized as the Mecca Elementary District in 1910. The first school was located at the corner of Highway 195 and Hammond Road. The first teacher was a Miss Buckman until a permanent teacher Miss Mainland was employed. She later became Mrs. Dale Kiler.

The Oasis School District was formed in 1914 and first classes were held in a tent on the C. L. Edmunds Ranch, one-fourth mile south of the present school site. An acre of land was purchased in 1917 and a one-room school built, a second room was added in 1926, two more in 1932, and two more in 1940. The first teacher listed in 1920 was Miss Bessie L. Blackely. Members of her class included Richard Blackburn, later vice president of the school board, and Robert Vote, an area rancher until recently. The District had more classrooms and other buildings added, including a Sea View School at Salton City with five classrooms which beginning 1956 made a joint school district, before the lower valley districts unified early in 1970's.

The Coachella Grammar School opened in 1902 in a one-room building with eight pupils. A few years later a four-room frame school was constructed on the present site of Palm View School. It had 35 pupils by 1904 when Miss Carrie Conover was the teacher for grades 1-8. The present Palm View School was built in 1926 and modernized in 1953. Since then additional classrooms and schools were built including Dateland, Peter Pendelton and Valley View.



FIRST INDIOSCHOOL AT FARGO AND BLISS NEARLY AWASH IN 1916

Looking northwest from southwest corner of Fargo and Bliss in Indio in January 1916 flood is this view of the first adobe school building in the community. At the time of this photo the building was used by the Community Church which later became the Methodist Church. Behind the building is the green parsonage. To right is main business block at that time. The site of the church-school is now occupied by the Indio Elks Lodge building.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

Until 1916 pupils from Point Happy attended Coachella schools but a district was organized that year at Indian Wells. It's one-room school merged with Indio July 1, 1929. The Desert Center area withdrew from Coachella in 1935.

Prior to 1910 there was no high school in Coachella Valley. Students attended schools outside the valley. But the eighth grade graduating classes warranted starting a high school and it was established to begin in September 1910 in the Thermal church.

Early High School Sites

The matter of location of the high school posed two problems: Each community wanted the school and none had proper facilities. It was ascertained that there would be no pupils from Indio that year, and since Thermal had built a new grammar school, leaving the old one-room building vacant, the high school was opened there with one teacher — Mr. J. W. Warren, and eight pupils.

In 1911-1912 the attendance increased and a Miss Carrie Shephard was added. The third year Mr. Harris succeeded Warren. The Thermal Church was used for classrooms from 1910 to 1913.

Mrs. Gilbert (Martha Evans) Alderman built what is now the Thermal Hotel on agreement with the high school board that it be leased and used for school purposes. In the 1913-1914 term Mr. George Beach was principal, with Miss Shephard and Miss Lehman (now Mrs. J. F. Wise of Mecca) as teachers. The school was built with four classrooms and an assembly room, the latter now the lobby and living room of the hotel occupied by Mrs. Gilberta (Alderman) Harmon. A shed was built on the rear of the parcel to provide for the ponies children rode to school. The large poplar tree (Balm of Gilead) still flourishes and the school flag pole still exists. Because the school was not quite ready for occupancy in the Fall of 1913, Mrs. Wise recalls that she briefly taught a class in the church belfry.

The next two years were, no doubt, the most difficult of the fledgling school's history with the communities all clamoring to obtain its permanent location, especially since Coachella and Thermal with elementary class enrollments of 42 and 34 exceeded Indio's 27. But since Thermal had vacated its original building, it won the honor.

The high school sessions were moved to Coachella for a while, where it occupied part of the new four-room grammar school, and then back to Thermal. Rumor has it that at one time in its early history, the students were met on a Monday

morning and transported by hay rack to Mecca to hold school there a few days.

After carefully studying all of the propositions and arguments of each community, the board of trustees finally settled the matter by accepting a gift of 10 acres of raw land from Mr. G. H. Narbonne. This site located at Avenue 56 and Van Buren, was selected on the grounds that it was near the geographical center of the valley. Another factor, so the story goes, is that it isolated the young boys from the community's pool room diversions.

There were two graduates of the 1913 class, Ray Compton and Ova Ruggles; one in 1914, Mable Ivy; one in 1915, May Cary; and five in 1916, Arthur Westerfield, Glenford Mathews, Ethel Miller (Smart), Mary Harmon (Taylor), and Melvin Bisbee.

The first building was rushed to completion on the new site so that commencement exercises could be held for the class of 1916 in May.

The school moved from Thermal during the summer and opened with first classes on the new site in the Fall of 1916. The first building was converted to a shop unit in 1939. It was torn down and replaced with a new building elsewhere on the campus in 1952-53. In 1924 a second building was erected east of the first and served as an assembly and auditorium, girls' gym and classroom until abandoned and moved to a new site in 1941.

On July 1, 1956, with the addition of 204 square miles along Salton Sea in Imperial County, it became joint union high school district. Additional acres were added the high school site during the years to provide a campus of 80 acres.

In 1948 the Edom area withdrew from Indio Elementary and the high school districts to join the Palm Springs district.

Increased attendance from the Palm Desert through Indio area evidenced need for an additional high school in the 1950's and 40 acres were purchased between Avenue 46 and Highway 111 at the southeast corner of Clinton southwest of Indio. The first school buildings were constructed in 1958. That Fall classes opened for the ninth grade and each year a grade was added until the first senior class graduated in May 1962.

Principals or superintendents of the CV High School district over the years have been: J. W. Warren 1910-1912; Mr. Harris 1912-1913; George T. Beach 1913-1916; James Ferguson 1916-1920; Harry E. Howe 1920-1929; E. B. Dykes 1929-1943; D.

(continued on page 103)



OLD AND NEW C. V. HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1917

At left is the first high school, now the Thermal Hotel, note the flagpole and corral at rear. In 1916 the first senior class graduated from the new school on right in the Spring. The new site was on ten acres donated by G. H. Narbonne, on Avenue 56 and Van Buren. First classes began in Fall of 1916. (See schools story.) Both photos taken in 1918.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection



COACHELLA VALLEY'S FIRST HOMESTEAD AND WHITE CHILD

This 1899 view shows the home on the Original Patrick Gale "Desert Entry Act" homestead, first in the Coachella Valley. Located northwest of the Jackson Street overpass in Indio. Also shown are Mrs. Pat Gale, Mrs. Dess Courtney, F. S. Everett. The child is Miss Cindarella Courtney, first white child born (1898) on what is Towne Street south of Miles Avenue in Indio. Everett was a prominent early day businessman and citizen. The first boy was David Elgin born in 1899.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection



EDITH MANN ROSS

One of first school children in 1896 in Indio, won a bare-foot race at first July 4 celebration.

(Daily News Photo taken in 1977)

Mrs. Edith Ross, Valley's First Lady, Came in 1896

Edith Mann Ross is truly Coachella Valley's first lady.

She came here in 1896 and had resided here most of her years.

The bare foot girl of the 1890's was one of four children of the late S. A. Mann, who arrived in Indio "in time for me to start to school and help make up the first class."

The family included brothers Will, Asa and sister Polly. Mr. Mann brushed off a small ranch about four miles southwest of Coachella.

Her father and brother later went into the artesian well drilling business. Early valley reports show their name on old logs and records of valley wells.

In 1901 Miss Mann was married to Bailey Ross, a Southern Pacific Railroad switch engine engineer. The Rosses continued the interests her father began in agriculture. Her father meanwhile had started a vegetable garden south of the A. G. Tingman store in Indio. He grew tomatoes, turnips, peas, carrots, lettuce, string beans, cabbage and cantaloupes, Mrs. Ross remembers.

The Ross family was intrigued by the money being made growing cantaloupes, and Mrs. Ross recalls that Mr. Ross did the planting and irrigating while she ran the gas engine on the little pump. Their first crop ended up a failure and left them with a debt of \$40 to Wells Fargo because of the high cost of marketing. The prices were good, she recalls, but the cost of transportation, storage, cooling and harvesting at the right ripening time caused the greatest anxieties.

It was her impression that the first melons grown came from seed from the Rocky Ford melon country in Colorado, a package of seed being sent from the east by a friend of the SP agent, Will McIntyre.

From about 1902 on, the enthusiasm grew and commercial

plots were planted.

Most of the people who were in the valley when she came were connected with the railroad and none remain, she believes. Those people like her husband settled around Tingman's store south and east of where Fargo Street comes in to the railroad, or later around the store of Henry Tallent, Tingman's competitor, who built across the street on Fargo.

In 1920 the Rosses left the valley and Mr. Ross ran the stationary engines in the oil fields near Huntington Beach and San Fernando. Unemployment and health problems brought the Rosses back to the Valley where he succumbed many years ago.

The first Fourth of July celebration held in the valley was in 1897, she's not sure which date, but she recalls she was "still barefooted, and won a foot race."

Recalls Childhood Days

She also recalls walking to school each day and back home, a distance of several miles. Something "most folks today would not want to do without carrying a gun." Her first teacher was Miss Ida Barron who married Jim Ryan, local Southern Pacific engineer.

She recalls her family had the first Victor phonograph in the valley and how many railroad people and other citizens would come to their home to listen to the records in front of the long morning-glory-flower shaped horn.

She lived in Indio on Marshall Street many years and has many memories and photos and a recent honorary life membership in the Coachella Valley Historical Society to stimulate them. She moved to the coast late in 1977.

(At Indio's Centennial celebration July 3, 1976, Mrs. Ross was honored as "Indio's First Lady" by the City Mayor Raymond Rinderhagen at ceremonies at the Miles Avenue park.)

First Power Lines Boosted Pump Irrigation

Coachella Valley can possibly lay claim to the first rural electrification program, and it was largely due to the failing artesian wells and the need for power for pumps to deliver water to the lands and homes.

If the first private enterprise, the coming of the railroad in 1876, marked the first turning point, the coming of the electric lines, also private enterprise, marked the second.

The discovery of an ample supply of water, the irrigating of the first melon patches, the invigorating climate and the fortitude of the pioneers in their quest for good, cheap homestead lands, brought this second marvel of electric power for rural homes.

Power company records indicate that the supply of electricity in the valley before 1914 was limited to small areas and mostly for illumination because the source was the internal combustion engine.

In 1914 the Southern Sierras Power Company completed a 95-mile electric transmission line linking the desert with hydroelectric generating plants hundreds of miles to the north.

Power was then made available over what was then the longest electric transmission line in the world from Bishop to San Bernardino, then to Banning and then on to the desert.

Revived Agricultural Boom

Agriculture was revived by electric pumps, especially in the upper end of the valley from above Indio south nearly to Thermal, and by the end of the year few farms were without lights and power.

The transmission lines at Edom (now Thousand Palms)

provided a point where lines were sent westward across the dunes to Palm Springs at Ramon and Indian Avenues and the first sub-station in Palm Springs was established there to serve 83 customers who comprised that community.

In January 1916 Southern Sierras absorbed the Coachella Valley Ice and Electric Co. Residents were reported using 400 HP of electricity in the Coachella-Indio area.

The W. F. Holt interests, according to the weekly Date Palm, extended short lines about the Valley in 1914 and controlled CV Ice and Electric. A number of small feeder lines were built by Holt. In 1916 feeder lines were extended to all points of the valley and 37 new pumping plants (well pumps) were connected. In several cases, it was reported, the old gasoline engines had been "ditched" for electric motors. Early in 1917 the line was extended to hook up 75 HP at the Narbonne Ranch.

The company was producing 30 tons of ice daily in January, 1917. By November 1919 lines were extended to Marshall Cove (La Quinta).

In 1943 Imperial Irrigation District had purchased the electric utility in Coachella Valley and had connected its new transmission lines brought from Brawley. To meet increasing local demand, Imperial has built four gas turbines in Coachella producing 80,000 kilowatts. The first two units were completed in 1973, the last in 1976. The IID serves the area from near Washington Street east, and Southern California Edison Company serves the area west.

Fig Tree John, Proud Early Resident

A bout of influenza felled one of Coachella Valley's most fabled characters on April 11, 1927.

Fig Tree John's son, the late Johnny Mack claimed the stern, unsmiling, chisel-visaged Cahuilla Indian was born in 1770 or 1771 which would have made him about 136 years old at the time of his death.

He was said to have been born Juanita Razon. He claimed to have been an Indian guide for Gen. John Fremont across the mountains and Fremont's name is inscribed in the travertine on those mountains south of Coral Reef, on Camel Rock.

It is said that his birthplace was the little spring where he lived all of his life until the rising Salton Sea in 1905-07 caused him to move his wattled jacal of arrowweed and mud north to Agua Dulce Spring.

Some claimed he was an Apache renegade because he spoke Apache.

He gained his name from the black mission figs which grew around his original springs.

It was claimed he had a secret, hidden gold mine which he visited occasionally in the Santa Rosas. It is known that he once paid off Gene Hill, early day Mecca storekeeper in gold nuggets but early settlers claim Fig Tree John most likely got them off someone in a horse trade, an enterprise in which he delighted and was reportedly very good.

He used to ride a horse to Mecca and in later years would drive a buggy, one whose axles never knew grease, and sometimes him plump wife would ride on those shopping trips.

He liked privacy, and he was suspicious of white men. He became a friend of Chester A. Pinkham, who explored the desert in the 1890's and for whom the Pinkham Well in the Chuckawallas is named. Pinkham wrote many letters for "Juanita Razon."

He became a chief of the Cahuilla's Agua Dulce clan and was not above impressing the white man with his importance and with his desire to be left alone. He had a barbed wire fence around his spring and guarded it with an ancient Winchester. Which probably added to reports that he was surly and mean, but which reports are not borne out by those white neighbors who knew him.

It was about 1910 that he began appearing in a long military coat with brass buttons and a stovepipe hat. The battered hat, surprisingly enough, added dignity to the straight and silent man. But on his feet he generally wore nothing and it was this outfit that caught the eye of tourist and resident alike.

If he had been white he would have been tabbed a "crackpot." Early settlers never gave him that label. He stood straight and gave the impression that this was his land and that he was proud and aloof.

When the sea inundated his old home north and east of Travertine Point he proved himself a cagey opportunist. He salvaged railroad ties from the roadbed and sold them for fence posts, and the Southern Pacific apparently turned its face away from this legendary man's appropriation of his rights.

First Railroad Facilities

In 1876 Southern Pacific listed its facilities at "Indian Wells" as: One tank and well; one freight and passenger house, and one coal bin. Also on an old filing map is shown a well one-half mile north of the present Indio depot, and another well 2 1/2 miles west of Indio stating "20 feet deep, good water."



IT WAS KNOWN AS FRONT STREET IN COACHELLA IN 1913

Front Street, fronting on the railroad, later named Cantaloupe until it was renamed in the 1970's to Grapefruit Boulevard, had the Dr. English, later Schwartz, Drug Store on the left, the new First National Bank in the center, and the McDonald & Young, general merchandise, hardware and implement store on the right. First offices of the Coachella Valley County Water District were located to the right of the bank, the stormwater district also met there. The buildings, still exist, with Nick Abdelnour's Plaza Feeds now in the building on the right. Shown in the 1913 picture are Dr. Harlan, C. B. Estle, next two unidentified, Mr. and Mrs. McDonald, unidentified, A. L. Pearson and E. L. Young.

— A. L. Pearson Collection

Gridley Recalled Early Problems

First offices of the Coachella Valley County Water District were in the McDonald Building on Cantaloupe Avenue (now Highway 111) in Coachella.

Truman Gridley, who was elected to the board in October 1932, served until he resigned in 1940 when he moved from the Narbonne Ranch to Charles Crane's Sunnipalms west of Indio, recalled that the first district office was in the building where Nick Abdelnour has his Plaza Feed store now on Grapefruit Boulevard in Coachella.

The following recollections were voiced in 1968. Mr. Gridley died in 1970.

There was a drug store on the corner south and the First National Bank was in the adjoining building just to the south of the water board office, which the water board later occupied when the bank moved to its new building on Sixth Street where Lopes Hardware is located.

He became interested in the problems of the District through Dr. S. S. M. Jennings who would come to the ranch and keep him informed on District's plans.

Jennings sought to get Gridley to lead the opposition of the Valley to the early board's plans to become a part of the Imperial Irrigation District.

"I finally relented and became active and along with Eddy Burnett, J. C. Jones, Fred Brainard, Wm. Rosecrans, Lee Anderson, other ranchers, we organized the Coachella Valley Landowners Association (which Gridley headed several years.) We interested Dr. Harry Forbes in helping us and he came to our rescue. He had the political know-how and drive and

helped put over the election of a new board and get a separate contract for this valley.

Forbes Took The Lead

"Forbes did it despite the hostile attitude of Imperial Irrigation District, Secretary of Interior Lyman Wilbur, and Commissioner of Reclamation Dr. Elwood Mead. Forbes didn't like us having any part of Imperial Valley at all. He took the lead and we followed along."

He gave great credit to "Dr. Jennings for his determination and enthusiasm for the All American Canal project. He sought the canal project as one which would solve the problems of our lowering water tables and threat to our future. He was the first president until 1928 when he resigned, but he kept on attending meetings and keeping abreast of the action. In 1931 he was appointed to the board under the County Water District law by County Supervisor Shaver and served until 1933 when the provision was amended out of the law."

Some of the early problems of the District, Mr. Gridley recalled were:

The bank closures in 1932. The Valley had three banks, the First National Bank of Coachella, the First National Bank in Indio and the Coachella Valley State Bank in Thermal. After the 1932 "Bank Holiday" only the Coachella Bank survived and the district directors worked hard to get it reopened.

The Whitewater River spreading dam above Palm Springs was being washed out with every flood and keeping the channel open and improving it each year was a constant problem.

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Dale Kiler, Mecca Pioneer, Married First School Teacher

Snakes, Lizards, Coyotes, Cows, Dogs, Men Drank from the Well and No One Died

The late Dale Kiler, pioneer of the Mecca area, was active in the organization of the water district and valley affairs until he moved to Auburn, California, in the 1960's.

Kiler insisted that although Indio was a railroad center, being halfway between Los Angeles and Yuma, Mecca, first known as Walters, gained early prominence as a provisioning place.

"It was a supply point for prospectors and miners and had a spring along the road where the railroad station is today. A hole was dug down about 10 feet and water would stand. A path led down to the water.

"Snakes, lizards, coyotes, cows, dogs, Indians and white men all drank from the well and no one died," he declared.

GRIDLEY RECALLED

(continued from Page 35)

Because of the need to conserve water, the District was continually battling with duck clubs and ranchers with uncapped flowing wells which wasted water. "We did a lot of fussing about this and got the district attorney to act and Ben B. De Crevecoeur to serve papers."

In the 1920's, especially about 1924, "we had many power failures which hurt not only the business places but farmers with well pumps."

The District Board kept an eye on the mountain watersheds and "we would keep after the Forestry Service and county supervisors to maintain fire patrols and protection."

He regretted that the District did not adjudicate all the underground water and believed the coming of the canal caused the program to be dropped.

J. W. Newman succeeded Gridley on the water board when Gridley moved to the Crane Ranch. "I suggested they name him to succeed me, which they did," he said. Newman served until 1956, and he, in turn, was succeeded by A. Harold Bromley, Mecca, who did not seek re-election in 1967. Sidney D. Witherow of Mecca served until his term expired in November 1971. Wm. Lester served until his death in March 1973. Wm. B. Gardner now serves as Division IV director.

Scheduled Daily Meetings

Gridley recalled that "the District opposed the validity of the Imperial Irrigation District's 1932 contract for construction of the All-American Canal until Imperial and the Secretary of Interior advised us if we would cease our opposition we would be given a separate contract. Dr. Harry Forbes scheduled daily meetings on the matter delaying validation proceedings on one hand and negotiating details on our separate contract on the other before we agreed to validation in the state's courts."

He also recalled that when the Coachella Branch was first considered it included a power drop east of Coachella with a canal running between Coachella and Indio with pump lifts on the west side to serve the area down to Travertine Point, and another canal carrying water around Indio with pump lifts to the area to the north. This plan was later changed to the single canal extending around the valley.

What is the biggest modern-day miracle since the early days? "People," Gridley declared. "They brought their determination to open up the land and farm, they brought their vision to build the valley, and evidence of that vision is on every hand."

He said first farming started before 1898 and that year 25 acres of cantaloupes were planted by several farmers in the Mecca area and sold for \$5 a crate.

In 1899 about 225 acres were planted in the valley and brought about the same prices. Los Angeles papers began telling how farmers were getting rich raising cantaloupes and there was a rush of farmers to take up government land, which included Mr. Kiler.

He estimated that there may have been as much as 1800 acres planted in cantaloupes in 1900 along with about 500 acres of watermelons and 1000 acres cleared and planted to alfalfa and hay crops to feed horses, mules and livestock.

The summer of 1900 was hot, temperatures in June went up to 135 degrees, he recalled. He estimated about 3500 acres of land and been cleared of brush and were being irrigated and farmed. But the high June temperatures caused the melons to spoil en route to eastern markets and most of the farmers went broke.

"One young man was engaged to a nice young lady and he had promised her that they would get married as soon as he harvested his melon crop. It was quite a shock to him to learn that he was in debt for freight on melons and he took his life," Kiler recalled.

"I was just lucky. My father always said if land would not raise weeds it would not produce much. The 40 acres I farmed had weeds 10 feet high so I thought it was all right, but the weeds were salt grass. The land was salty and I did not know much about it.

"I planted 10 acres of cantaloupes but I hired Indians to dig up the mesquite trees and cut them up into stove wood which I sold for enough to pay for the work. I was lucky.

"The ten acres had only three acres that had any cantaloupes on them. I hired two Japanese to pick my melons and bring them to the packing shed where I got a job as head inspector and I made enough to pay the two employes' wages, so I broke about even. When I settled up at the end of the season I found I owed the packing house \$3.00 for seed.

"But the land was rich and I realized that it was our own fault we didn't make any money, so I stayed and made money ever since.

"I lived in Coachella Valley about 60 years."

Kiler recalled that the Mecca school was built as a one-room building in January 1902. The first teacher was a Miss Buckman, he was farming about 120 acres at Thermal and his father, mother and sister, Alice, were living on a farm one-half mile northwest of Mecca.

"I decided I would like to learn Spanish and I went to Mecca Saturday evenings and come back to Thermal Monday mornings. Saturdays I used to see Miss Maintland, the teacher. Miss Maintland became Mrs. Kiler the summer of 1905."

Smythe's Store

Smythe's general merchandise store opened in Coachella in 1904 and joined with Huntington later. After her husband's death Mrs. Lucy Smythe operated the store, later retaining it as a museum, full of Indian relics, many brought to her by friends and prospectors, many of the latter she had grubstaked. The Greyhound Bus Station operated from the store for many years.



INDIAN WELLS SEEN BY BLAKE

This rare photo taken in 1902 at Torres Indian Reservation shows typical hand dug Indian well. Note path leading to the well with water level about 20-30 feet below ground surface. Laboriously dug without implements by Indian women, Blake saw an example of it at Indian Well, west of Point Happy, in 1853 when he accompanied the railroad survey.

— Title Insurance and Trust Collection

'16 FLOOD CHANGED VALLEY GEOGRAPHY

By George Ames

"The floods of 1916 were perhaps the controlling factor in the geography" of our entire lower valley.

"Had those floods, passing Point Happy, turned southward and followed what was called the 'Noffsinger Wash' as some floods had done before that time, they would have followed a rather poorly defined line westward of the present Coachella Valley High School site and swung eastward to approach the area of the present flood channel at about Avenue 64, and thence to the Salton Sea.

"If that had been the case we might never have had our present storm channel, thus no place to direct our drainage waters — and how could we have drained our lands?"

Valley Amusements In 1901

A writer in the March 1901 Riverside Press reported: "The amusements of the valley consist of tennis, croquet, baseball, mountain climbing, and tramps along the desert."

Otho Moore's Reminiscences

Indians Dug First Wells, Hydraulic Wells Opened CV

Otho Moore, 76, laid claim to being one of the first respiratory sufferers to come to Indio, where he lived from 1898 until his death in 1970. (This is his story related in 1968.)

One of the men who voted to establish the Coachella Valley County Water District in January 1918, his father James Moore, came here in 1896 to file on land. The family came here to live 1898. Otho, six years old, had developed a cough and his parents were advised to take their son to a dry climate.

His father, James Moore, had heard glowing reports about Coachella Valley and Indio from a brother-in-law, Lincoln Casebeer, who believed money could be made in melons. The father came down and filed on 160 acres which were in the northwest quarter section west of Oasis Street, south of Highway 111.

"The land was cheap, you had to live on it. We built our home behind what is now Frances George's. We came down at about Christmas time, my mother and I sat in the back of a covered wagon on a board with pillows. The roads were poor and the wagon springs worse. We went back to Montovia where my father had been in the grocery business while my father started building the house. When we came back we lived briefly with the Casebeers at what is now the Astor Ranch which adjoined my father's filing on the southeast, directly east was the Charles Power's filing.

"My uncle and a friend, Ollie Bush, talked several others in the Redlands area to come to the Valley and they settled along the area known today as Shady Lane south of Coachella.

"We started farming and my father wasn't happy with it. He got work in the car department for the Southern Pacific in Indio and that left my mother and I to do the ranch work.

A Chore to Start

"We had five or ten acres planted and at first we had artesian water that flowed from our well. Later when more wells were drilled and the artesian pressure quit we bought a White & Middleton engine, dug a pit about 18 feet deep and installed a horizontal pump which was operated by a belt and pulley from the engine on top of the ground. Utilizing a make-and-break spark that engine with its about four-foot wheels was quite a chore to start.

"When we first came here my uncle had some seed sold him by a seed company for muskmelons and rattle-snake watermelons. The trouble was that the seed had come from plants that had grown near some pumpkin plants. The results were that the melons were more like gourds, and the 20 acre crop wasn't worth much.

"My mother, meanwhile, had obtained some seed from the James J. Gregory and Sons, seed company, in Iowa, about \$2.00 worth in little packages. She gave me a package of watermelon and a package of cantaloupe seeds. I planted a small patch and I had a good crop. I sold all my watermelons to the cafe at the railroad station. In those days trains stopped at the station to permit passengers to get something to eat, but allowed only about 20 minutes.

"A. G. Tingman, who had come here shortly after the railroad as a telegrapher, quit his railroad work and started a small store which was located back of the present Florence Cafe on Fargo. In front of his store was a small home. He had a small shed to the southwest in what would now be the highway for storing hay and grain. A corral extended toward the south and what is now Bliss Avenue.

"People ate at the railroad cafe. When the diners were added to trains the cafe became more of a lunch counter at the south end of the depot.

"My father obtained an allotment of some of the first shipment of date palms brought in by Walter Swingle. The first governmental experimental date planting was southeast of Mecca but later moved to the Fred N. Johnson place west of Indio when the Salton Sea threatened to inundate the original plantings in 1907. Johnson received 24 of that same shipment of palms.

Gruelling, Back-Breaking Job

"Land leveling in those early days about the turn of the century was a gruelling, back-breaking job. The farmers used horses and buck scrapers at first. The buck scraper was a device with a heavy board facing, braced to the back with end pieces to turn the dirt in. A rod from the two ends of the 8-to-12 foot and longer buck scrapers were attached to double trees. A great pile of sand and dirt was pushed ahead of the scraper and at intervals the man behind would raise a bar and the dirt would be scattered. It took a long time to move the dirt around, I'll tell you.

"Later we had the Fresno scraper which was a scoop and

carried about a yard of dirt. The longer it was, the better it would level.

"Some folks tried getting rid of the mesquite and greasewood by towing a 30-foot length of railroad rail, but it would tilt and catch on roots or big bushes from the high hummocks around them, or the big roots would get underneath and raise it. Some used heavy chains. The most satisfactory method was to use a plain old grubbing hoe. There was lots of hand work in everything in those days, including grubbing out bushes and greasewood and including even planting where they did it by hand or with a hand pushed cultivator. We didn't have tractors or power, you know."

Moore recalled that the first grapes planted in the Valley were a variety of Malagas which were found to be hardy. There were also grapes known as seedless Sultanas, which were early but small.

The Phoenix Road Races

Barney Oldfield and a group of auto racers came through Indio en route to Phoenix from Los Angeles in 1908 or 1909. The road race routes were through Mecca and Dos Palmas to Blythe. The 1908 race was won by a Col. Fenner with a White Steamer, in 1909 (fall) was won by Joe and Louis Nickrent in a Buick, 19 hours and 40 minutes.

"We built big bonfires and stayed up most of the night to see them go by at Monroe and Highway 111 which was then just a dirt road. At our ranch they came into a straightaway and would roar by in big clouds of dust. Near Monroe a group of young people set up the fires and kept reserves of brush to throw on the fire and light up the area when we heard them



FIRST VALLEY WELLS DUG BY INDIAN WOMEN

Coachella Valley Pioneers' Society commemorated the first wells in the valley when Otho Moore, vice president, led a group to dedicate this Society marker south of the site of the original Indian Well west of Point Happy, north of Highway 111. Moore recalled the well which disappeared after the 1916 flood eroded a deep channel at this place. He had visited the well in 1898. Left to right are: Mrs. Clara Boyer, Melvin Bisbee, Mrs. Bisbee, Helen Hester, Otto Rempfer, Otho Moore, Mrs. John Webb, George White, Tom Allen, Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Joseph Hampel, Otto Geissler, Mark Wilkin, Mrs. Wilkin. The monument is now on the northside of the highway along with a Riverside County Historical Commission marker at this site east of Miles Avenue.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

coming."

The roads were below grade because the wheels of vehicles would stir up the dust and the wind would carry it away. He recalled that part of the road was paved in 1916.

The first service station in the Valley devoted to servicing cars and selling gasoline and oil was built by P. L. Everett and was located at the southeast corner of Tingman and Fargo on a triangle of land formed by the intersection, it was not a large station but there were more cars in the Valley and more going through on the highway to Blythe and Imperial Valley. The gas pumps were operated with a hand lever.

"In those days irrigation water ran down the roads and the streets were often muddy so cars and windshields got splashed. Everett originated the idea of washing your windshield if you stopped and bought gasoline. That idea spread to other places after that."

Moore recalled the old Indian well which was located north of Highway 111 east of the Miles Avenue intersection. The well site is now in the area where the Whitewater Storm Channel is located. In the early days it was still a deep, large excavation the Indians had dug by hand and went down a series of paths or steps to water pooling in the bottom. Mr. Moore was a leader in the Pioneer Society which had a monument erected south of the well site about ten years ago. He recalled that the county had built a well there in about 1870 to assist travelers to Palm Springs. The county well was abandoned shortly after the turn of the century. Water levels had gone down in this well, also, as more wells were dug in the Valley. The flood of 1916 pretty well obliterated remnants of the old Indian Well.

From early May through late October residents didn't have any butter because they had no way to keep it, he and Mrs. Moore recollected. There was very little meat, no butcher shops until nearly 1918, and only the railroad had an ice house. That ice house had walls two feet thick. Ice was brought by trains from Truckee and was used for icing water in the passenger trains or in the cafe.

Mrs. Moore, former Miriam Greenleaf, came here in 1909 and "there was ice available then," Mr. Moore recalled. Mr. F. S. Everett had built an ice house and ice plant. One had been built in Coachella. The Indio plant was built where California Date Growers is located on King and Highway 86. A spur track was put in to ice railroad cars. The plant burned and Everett quit making ice in about 1910.

"The ice house had a big wooden floor in it and we would hold dances in it about every week. C. A. Kemp was railroad agent, and his jolly wife was a good piano player."

Mr. Moore attended school in the first school in Indio which was on railroad property east of the old depot under some cottonwood trees. In 1898 an adobe school building was built on the corner of Fargo and Bliss where the Elks Lodge is located. There were about a dozen pupils.

In 1909 the school district built a two-room frame building on the property east of Oasis between Bliss and Requa. After grammar school in the Valley he went to high school in Redlands, boarding in a home during this time until graduation in 1909.

He and Mrs. Moore met at a party at the Guy Manning Hotel located east of the present Desert Theater on Fargo. It was a two-story building. The Mannings had come from Mecca where they had operated the Caravansary. Mrs. Manning was the cook. It was the first hotel besides the railroad hotel above the depot.

Mr. and Mrs. Moore recall there were only about a half dozen young people at the party. They sat beside each other for a long time, until Otho introduced himself saying: "Well, it

doesn't look like anyone is going to introduce us. I'm Otho Moore," and, he continued "that was it."

Miss Greenleaf had come here with her father by train in 1909. Her father worked for the railroad. The family of eight children first lived in the Courtney house which was located across the street from the present Daily News in Indio. Later the family lived on the Everett ranch on Avenue 44, about midway between Monroe and Jackson, on the north side. She recalls a Dutch windmill located east of the adobe ranch house.

"Windmills were fairly popular. There weren't many, but they worked well on the 40-50 foot deep wells," Otho recalled.

The Moores were married October 13, 1911. The only thing to do in Indio was to work for the railroad. It was a railroad town in the early days. Mrs. Moore's father was night foreman and when the war came along the railroads were taken over by the government.

"They had steam locomotives. My job was to look over the engine and see if it could make it to Los Angeles or Yuma. You couldn't get repairs or new engines in those days and the ones you had had to keep going. You had to be sure the flues didn't leak or the engines might die on the trip. I had to look in there and at the fire boxes. They were hot and gradually scared my eyes. I had started university work but gave it up during the war. We had two children when I took the inspector's job."

After the war he went to Los Angeles for nearly two years to see a doctor about his eyes. He had nearly lost his vision. He then finished University and started teaching in the late 1920's, first at Moorpark, where he was for 16 years.

His parents' failing health brought him back to the Valley in 1946 and although there wasn't a teaching position at the high school, there was building to do, and with some experience in contracting gained at Pasadena, Mr. Moore went to work. While building the Leonhardt Swingle house west of Indio, he became acquainted with Supt. Gail Brumwell who would come and confer with Swingle, a school board member. Mr. Brumwell approached Moore several times because they were hunting a shop teacher. Because of difficulties in getting materials, building came to a standstill and Mr. Moore decided to take a job teaching at the Coachella Valley High School. He retired at 67 to his ranch on north Washington Street. His daughter is Mrs. Joe Shoop, Indio, and his son, Nathan, has been in Bogota, Columbia, for 30 years in the contracting business working for the government.

What was the social life in the early days? The Moores recall the dances at the ice plant, parties at the hotel, community church at the adobe school. The first community preacher was Rev. S. A. Mann, father of Edith Ross, another pioneer living until 1977 in Indio.

Mr. Moore recalled fellow pupils watching out the school window one day when a man was putting up a tent and board floor across the street south (near southwest corner of Bliss and Fargo). At recess they went over and asked the man what he was doing? He said his name was Freeman (Randolph Freeman) and "I'm starting the lowest down newspaper on earth. I think I'll call it the Submarine." That was in 1901. Moore recalled it was moved to Thermal and later to Coachella.

First Commercial Grape Planting

George Durbrow, who operated the New Liverpool Salt Refinery, and lived near the corner of Montoe and Highway 86, planted the Valley's first grape vineyard for raising a commercial crop in 1899 on his irrigated ranch. His place was often referred to by pioneers as a "showplace."

Salton Sea Proves Fortuitous Error

"A Mr. Jones (now dead) told me that he came along the west side of the great desert basin in 1862, on his way from San Bernardino to New River, and saw in the basin a great lake some 60 miles long by 30 wide. This came from the overflow in 1862."

—Lt. Eric Bergland, Report to Chief of Army Engineers 1876

The Salton Sink was explored in 1853 by William P. Blake, a young geologist connected with a party under the direction of Lt. R. S. Williamson, which had been detailed to search for a practical route east from Los Angeles for a transcontinental railroad. He named the Colorado Desert.

From the Williamson report and from the report by Lt. George Wheeler and Eric Bergland in 1875-76, which later party had as its purpose a study of the feasibility of diverting the Colorado River for purposes of irrigation, much of the earliest information on Salton Sink has been obtained.

Although Williamson's reports provided the first actual evidences of the great depression in the Colorado Desert and that it lay below sea level, the abnormality of the Salton Sink had been speculated upon earlier. In 1851 New River had been described and the overflow drainage of the Colorado River to the north had been noted.

The Salton Sink prior to the present day's Salton Sea saw short-lived and vanishing seas and lakes periodically since mid-Pleistocene time. The silts and clays of the Colorado River have been laid down almost exclusively in the Imperial Valley to the south and interlaid with the water bearing coarser, sandier alluvial deposits from the Whitewater River and tributary canyons in the Lower and Middle Coachella Valley.

Stages of the ancient lake persisted for extended periods of time and evidences are found in the finegrained deposits in the Coachella Valley alluvium.

It is believed that this earliest ancient lake which extended well into the upper valley disappeared about 1000 years ago. The early lake was first named Lake LeConte. A more familiar name has been given the ancient but more recently famous lake, Lake Cahuilla.

Salton Sink-Geologic Freak

Today's Salton Sea is the product of an error of man, while the Salton Sink depression is a geologic freak.

Geologically this entire area was once part of a larger body of water extending north through the San Joaquin Valley to near Sacramento. A great upthrust of the land lifted it forming mountains and barriers. A downfolding is credited with the trough extending southeast from San Geronimo Pass and creating the present Coachella and Imperial Valleys and the Salton Sink.

Lake Cahuilla's ancient shoreline exists. The shoreline is apparent to the eye on the mountains to the west. The line was shown by Blake's drawings in his reports and is mostly commonly noted west of Jefferson Street, southeast of La Quinta, and is visible on the slopes as it extends south into Imperial County. Travertine Point, near the county line, is a popular point of interest as most of the rocky slope is covered with the deposits laid down over the centuries while the peak is relatively free of travertine.

The remains of the ancient lake, Lake Cahuilla, is now in the bottom of the sink and is known as Salton Sea. After Blake's report the bodies of water that covered this bottom were briefly referred to as "Blake's Sea."

Deposits From Grand Canyon

Salton Sink was filled by "Old Red", as the Colorado River

was referred to, when the river carved out Grand Canyon. Its course included many canyons on that river and its 240,000 square mile system of tributaries. The silt of the Colorado is found at a depth of 12,000 feet in Imperial Valley. This silt formed the delta which rises about 50 feet above sea level and cuts off Salton Sea from the Gulf of California. At Cerro Prieto, about 20 miles south of Calexico in Mexico, there is a rocky spillway in the silt barrier dike about 45 feet above sea level, where the ancient lake's height was maintained until water at that height spilled over south into Volcano Lake and thence to the Gulf.

The delta formed by the silt deposited by the Colorado extends hundreds of miles southerly, westerly and northerly. The deposits built up over the years as the entire flow of the Colorado was time and again diverted from flowing south into the Gulf to channels and washes leading north into the Salton Sink.

Ancient Lake Cahuilla is believed to have stood at the depth of the ancient shore line which records its high water marks so vividly. At that mark the ancient lake must have extended nearly 150-miles in length, from Bermuda Dunes and Point Happy to south of the international boundary. The lake must have been an average width of 30 miles and had a maximum depth of about 300 feet.

While early records show several overflows of the Colorado River into the Salton Sink in recent times, before irrigation of the Imperial and Coachella Valleys began, the latest inundation was in 1862 and 1891 when the overflow was sufficient to cover 100,000 acres.

Indians claim the last time Lake Cahuilla appeared was more than 500 years ago. Other evidences of the lake are the ancient fish traps on the beach line west of Valerie Jean, and evidences of the sea are the ancient oyster shell beds in southwestern Imperial County as well as marine fossils found many feet above sea level throughout the desert. Other phenomena include the Indian hieroglyphs found on rocks underneath the layers of travertine.

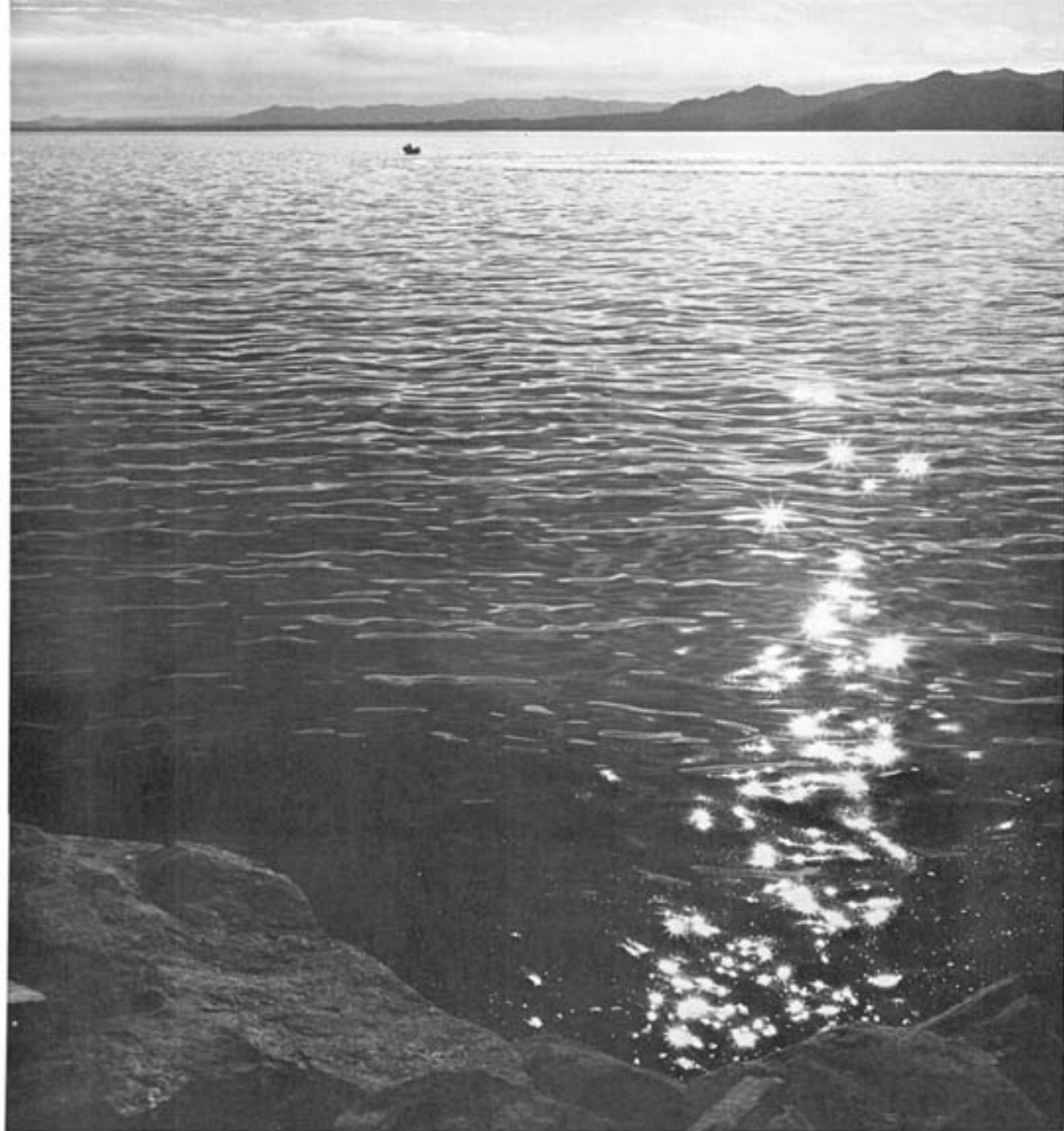
Salt Deposits Mined

The sink was dry many years when irrigation of the Imperial Valley from the Colorado began. Salt was mined from the sink. The deposits were known and described as early as 1815, and reported early by Indians. The first organized production of salt began in 1884 when the New Liverpool Salt Company began operations. The plant was connected to the railroad with a mile-long spur track at Salton. Most of the salt was obtained by scraping the playa crust with scrapers and plows.

In 1901 water was diverted from "Old Red" near Yuma and carried in canals through the Republic of Mexico to irrigate lands in Imperial Valley. In 1905 the river in flood stage broke through the river heading of the canal system, which was about 150-feet above sea level, and the entire flow of the river rushed into the Salton Sink for two years filling it to an elevation of 195 feet below sea level before it was halted in February 1907 by the Southern Pacific Company.

The water almost reached the small community of Mecca and nearly 350,000 acres of land were flooded. The salt works were 60 feet under water.

The winter 1978 surface elevation of the sea was 229 feet below sea level. The Boulder Canyon project resulted in the construction of Hoover Dam which harnessed and tamed "Old Red" and controlled the flow of the river which is now diverted by the All American Canal system at Imperial Dam to provide water to 500,000 acres of land within the Coachella and Im-



POWER BOAT CUTS STREAK ACROSS FAMED SEA'S AQUATIC PLAYGROUND

perial Valleys.

The sea has become the depository of drainage, waste and surface waters of the two valleys and its level is maintained by

these flows. Because evaporation is estimated at six feet a year, the reduction of the waters flowing into the sea would soon reduce it to a fraction of its present size.

First Automated Irrigation System

75 Miles of Canal Installations Supervised by Alert Electronic Sentinel Makes Valley's System One of World's Most Efficient

Stepping up to a panel in the headquarters building of the Coachella Valley County Water District a man presses one of scores of plastic buttons facing him in the big board.

Instantly a gauge starts revolving. It shortly stops at a figure on its dial.

The operator has just queried and received the panel's answer as to the depth of the water in a district canal 60 miles from the headquarters center.

Until now it had required as much as three hours for a man in an automobile to get that information.

This is the CVCW District's new telemetering system — one of the first all-automated water agencies in the West.

This is a part of the main brain center of the irrigation division of the Coachella Valley County Water District.

To nourish more than 70,000 acres of highly productive farmlands in this valley, most of it lying below sea level, the District transports in by canal each year about 315,000 acre-feet of Colorado River water. Traditionally the farms score the highest yield of any larger Bureau of Reclamation-sponsored area. The figure has remained around \$800 per acre in recent years.

Magic Transformation

At the eastern edge of the Coachella Valley begins the searing and forbidding Colorado Desert, of which the Valley itself had been very much a part before water achieved its magic transformation more than a half century ago.

Starting at Imperial Dam on the Colorado River, the water is diverted into the All-American Canal for a gravity flow of 155 miles to the Coachella Valley.

With most of the All-American Canal's water cargo headed for the 450,000-acre Imperial Valley, the Coachella share is turned aside into the Coachella Branch of the system 38 miles downstream. It then must travel an additional 123 1/2 miles of almost trackless desert to its terminus (at Lake Cahuilla reservoir).

All of these vital water facilities have been constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation as part of the great Hoover Dam complex whose existence has transformed the Southwest. For its part of the projects, the Water District is repaying \$27,000,000

for canal and distribution system, and an additional \$7,160,000 for a supplementary loan.

Of course, such a strung-out canal lifeline has built-in complexities for the CVCWD watermaster. He must submit his first estimate of water needs 14 days in advance. He can make one final adjustment five days prior to arrival. But after that it is the flow in the canal that is his worry.

It was because of this problem and the determination to insure utmost water conservation and service to the water users that telemetering came into use. The District's Board of Directors, headed by Leon Kennedy, farmer in the valley, and the management staff headed by General Manager Lowell O. Weeks, decided several years ago that a central control system was a "must" the first moment it could be afforded.

That opportunity came a few years ago when the Bureau of Reclamation arranged a Federal rehabilitation and betterment loan of \$7,160,000, to be repaid over 30 years. This would finance several urgently needed installations, including the telemetering system.

The system telephone lines, microwave and UHF circuits link the panel in the headquarters building with the more than 150 responsive stations scattered through the District's service area. An operator is alerted instantly by buzzers when there's trouble anywhere on the system, or, for that matter, in the central panel itself. Trouble can be corrected by radio-directed field crews before the water user is aware there's anything wrong.

Dr. Jennings Gave All To Fulfill Water Dream

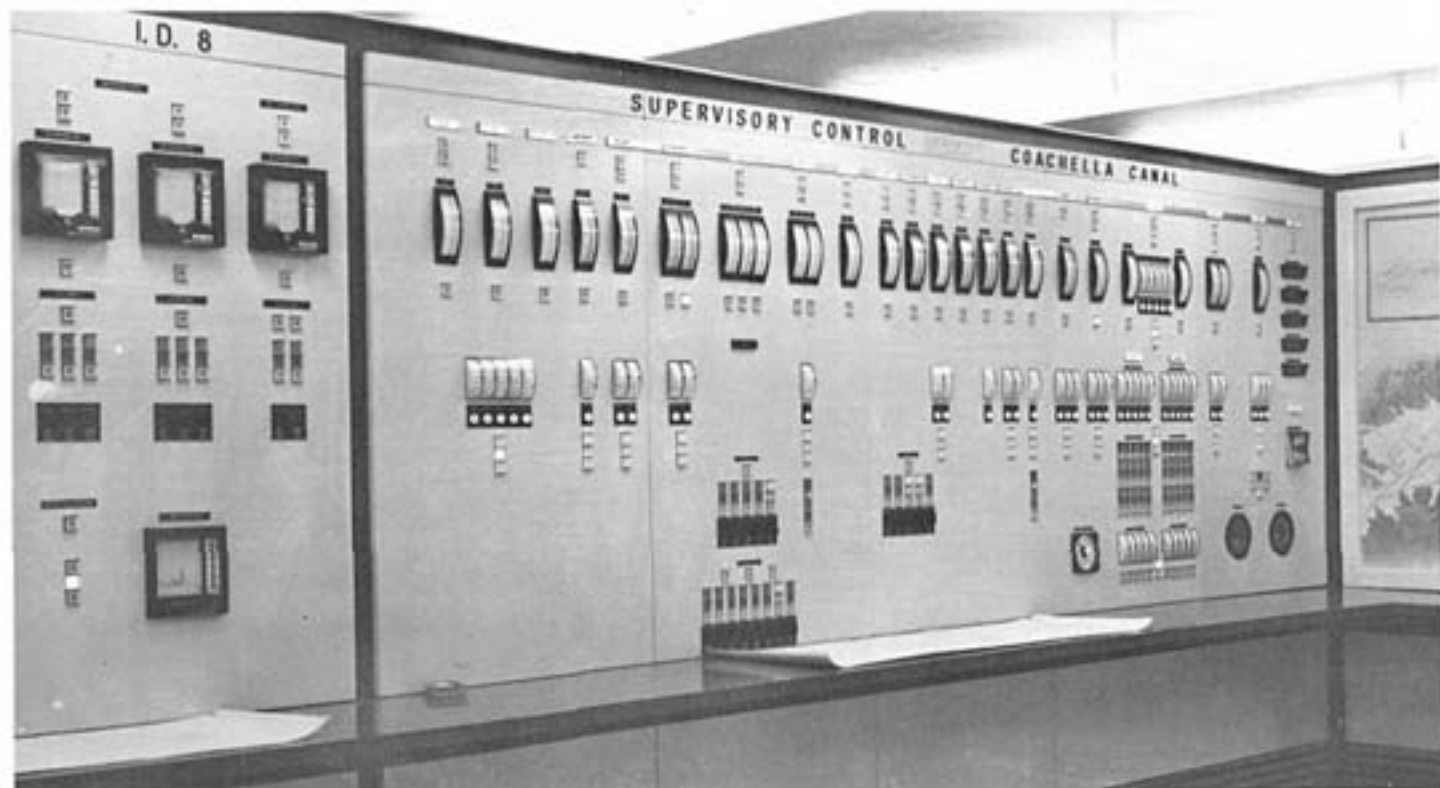
W. P. Rowe, civil engineer and consulting engineer with the Coachella Valley County Water District nearly 50 years, a recognized California water expert, had this to say:

"Dr. Jennings was a dynamic person. The Valley and the Water District were his sole interests. He dedicated himself to the district, sacrificed his practice, put up much of his own money on occasions. No matter what time of the day or night I called him he gave himself completely to my attention and was ready to go anywhere, anytime in the interests of the District. I told him once that when the project's all built, there'll come a time when people will forget what you have done and what you have given. I am personally grateful that in this history you have indicated his unstinting and conscientious service."



ONE OF 150 INSTALLATIONS

Among the 150 canal and water installations under control of the water district's supervisory control board in Coachella headquarters are these ten automatic rotating debris screens which keep the Coachella canal clean of debris. —CVCWD PHOTO



TELEMETERING CONTROLS MAGNET FOR WORLD'S WATER LEADERS

This board at District headquarters with its push button control for the 150 or more installations for water district indicates canal levels, reservoir levels, pump operations, and other information. It has drawn water and irrigation leaders to the valley to inspect both this modern set of panels and its capabilities as well as operation of the District itself.

— CVCWD Photo

Largest of the pieces of equipment operated by the remote control system is a bank of 10 husky automatic debris screens, located just ahead of the first water outlet lateral. These screens sift every cubic foot of water in the canal, removing tons of rubbish.

The original five of these screens were installed by the district in 1957, and an additional five were financed from the R. & B. program in 1967. When the first five screen went into operation the District was able to save the expense of paying 60 men who had spent the summer months and part of the winter, around the clock, keeping lateral screens free of debris.

Each of the 10 screens can be operated from the central board as well as the pump on each machine. At the debris screen site is an auxiliary diesel-operated generator that flips into operation the instant there is a break in the electric power.

Importance of water conservation and the desire for the very best service to users have been emphasized as considerations in installing the telemetering system and one other vital factor was flood control.

To maintain grade on the Coachella Canal, when constructed in the 1940's, engineers were compelled to keep it snug against a range of low mud hills for a distance of about 40 miles. Siphons carry the waterline safely under scores of major washes out of the sparsely foliaged hills. The slopes can send billions of gallons of water tumbling down the washes in times of cloudbursts or heavy winter rains.

Yet smaller washes could not be handled in the same manner and so this drainage had to be turned directly into the canal, forcing it to serve as a flood channel. This dual capacity poses a constant threat of a washout on the canal after a flash

flood has hit. It becomes immediately necessary that the gates be manipulated and evacuation channels opened.

Instead of men fighting their way to these installations by car, on foot or even horseback at flood times, the telemetering board now maintains a fingertip, instantaneous control over all of these vital pieces of equipment. Such control can easily mean the difference between canal break and orderly operation of the system.

Increased Services

The multiservices of the CVCWD also have a new bearing on the telemetering installation. The district entered the domestic water field in 1961.

The district is serving domestic water to approximately 5300 customers. The service within Imperial County is confined to domestic water systems supplying the rapidly growing homelands on the shores of the great Salton Sea, which has become a boat haven for thousands from many parts of the West. (The District in 1978 was serving 18,000 customers.)

The Coachella Valley County Water District has long been an organization well-known to irrigation district officials around the world, chiefly because of its envied underground water distribution system. The distribution grid extends 500 miles and provides metered served to each 40-acre piece of land in the valley. Today the CVCWD operates in three counties in southern California — Riverside, which includes the bulk of its territory; Imperial and San Diego Counties.

Visitors marvel at the long canal that transports the vital irrigation water across the burning desert to create an oasis and a highly productive farming area where once only sagebrush, coyotes and horned toads existed.

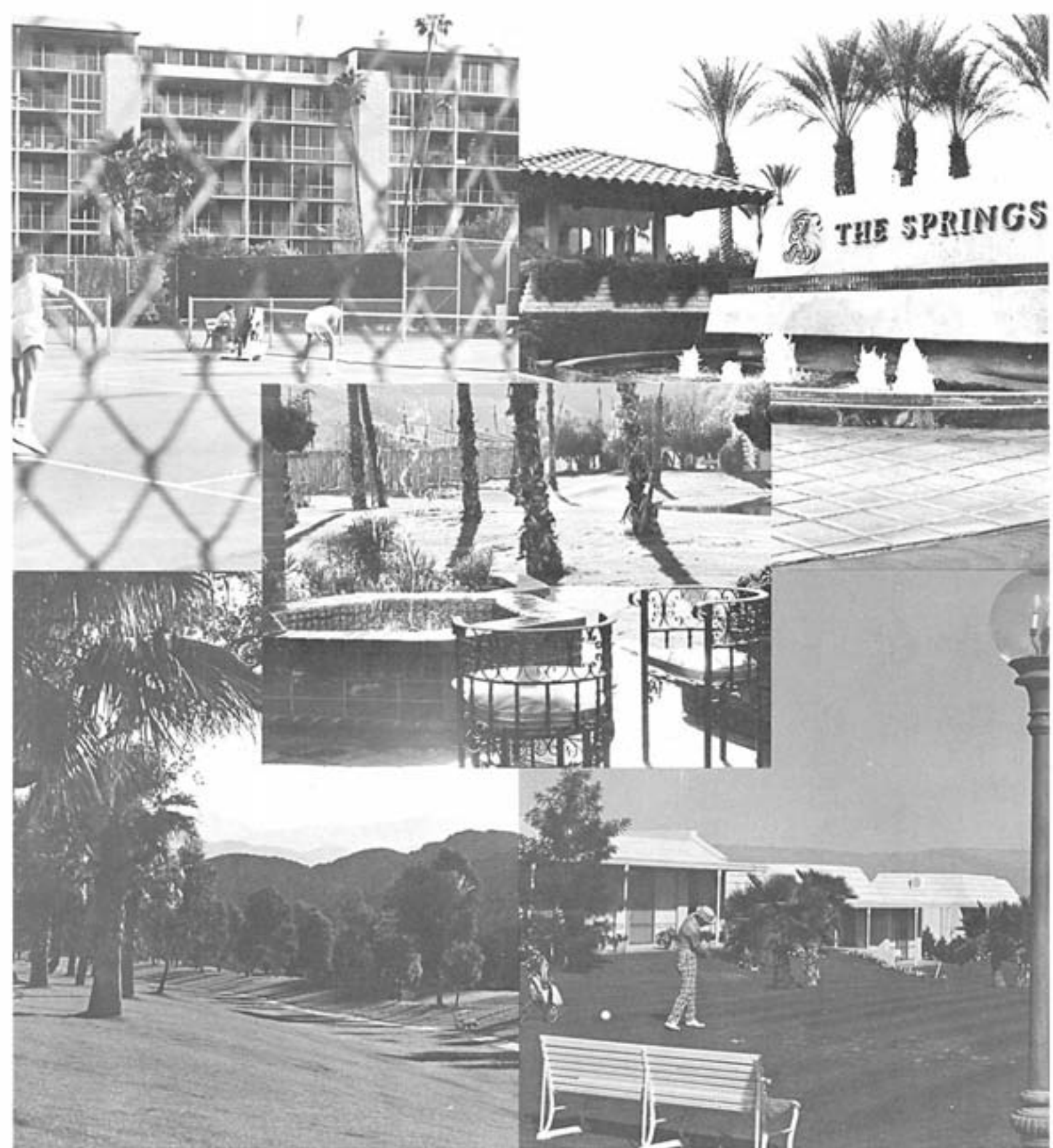
—The Reclamation Era, Feb. 1967



FROM DESERT TO CROP LANDS EXCEEDING VISION OF PIONEERS

Coachella Valley's more than 67,000 acres with Colorado River water available, grew more than 50 varieties of crops in 1977 with a gross value of more than \$110,000,000. Fruit acreage brought a gross value of \$73,674,760, vegetables \$25,603,874. Above are some of the leading crops: Beginning upper left, clockwise, grapes, Thompson Seedless and Perlette varieties on 7600 acres; Grapefruit harvest and citrus varieties 17,000 acres; Cotton was picked from some 4000 acres; Carrots were grown on about 6,000 acres, and (center) dates bagged and ripened are grown on 3600 acres.

— CVCWD Photos



FROM A LAND OF DUNES AND SILENCE TO HOMES, RECREATION

Water, machines, men and vision have turned the desert green with sparkling country clubs, golf courses, home developments, as well as cities, schools and churches. Shown here, clockwise, beginning upper left, are a few examples of the drama, development and climate: Desert Island, high rise condominiums with golf and tennis; The Springs, adjacent to Desert Island, a luxury home and golf development, both in Rancho Mirage; Marrakesh, in Palm Desert, another of the private club projects; Indian Wells Country Club one of the earlier valley courses, utilizes a stormwater channel: Center, one of the newest, Rancho Las Palmas, under construction. See "Emeralds on the Desert" page 22.

— CVCWD Photos

Advent Of Canal Water Launched Valley Development

The arrival of Colorado River water on the thirsting lands of the Coachella Valley had a tremendous impact on the agricultural economy.

Crop acreage statistics tell the pattern of growth and impetus in a coldly statistically climbing graph on the charts.

The Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner's office reports show 14,599 acres under production in 1936. By 1947 the year before the canal water arrived on the lands the producing acreage was 27,075 with over 10 per cent (2754 acres) of that acreage having been planted during the years 1946 and 1947. In 1949 there were 29,277 acres, but by 1951 there were 39,515, an increase of 10,238 acres, by 1953 the acreage had increased another 6,605, and from 1953 to 1958 the increase was 11,335 acres.

From these figures it can be seen that from 1938 to 1948 the acreage had increased from 14,221 to 27,075 or 12,854 acres. However, from 1948 to 1958 the acreage had increased 34,303 to 61,378 acres or nearly three times that of the previous decade.

The first crop census taken by the water district showed 18,959 acres irrigated in 1946, in Improvement District No. 1, and in 1977 canal water was irrigating nearly 67,000 acres.

In July 1917 the Stormwater Commissioners reported 458 acres of dates, 874 acres of alfalfa, 312 of grapes, and 3908 other crops for a total of 5552 acres.

However the county commissioner's inspector B. S. Boyer reported 2,332 acres harvested in 1915 with 2452 acres planted in new offshoots. Planted acres that year included 277 onions, 75 cantaloupes, 41 Valencias, 53 pomelos, 203 grapes.

In 1917 there were 1100 acres of alfalfa, 985 new acres of date offshoots, and 700 acres of onions.

The first year cotton was listed on the report was in 1918 when 150 acres produced 120 bales. There were 90 acres of sweet potatoes. Cotton production jumped to 700 bales from 1100 acres in 1919, with 726 acres onions, 375 acres grapes and 100 acres tomatoes.

Cotton, Onion Crops

By 1920 when 6407 acres were under cultivation 2000 acres of cotton produced 1600 bales, and 3000 acres of onions were planted.

H. G. Bloom was the inspector making his first report in 1921 when he reported 1500 acres of onions producing 750 carloads. By 1924 his report showed 8458 acres of which 4500 were in cotton producing 3150 bales, 1050 in onions resulting in 785 cars, and some lettuce was planted.

The first tangerine plantings were noted in 1926. The date

acreage had increased to 1842, and grapes to 2082, cotton on 4000 acres, onions on 1700, lettuce 300, and many new vegetables were being grown commercially.

In 1938 there were 2903 acres of dates, 2853 in citrus, 2780 in grapes, the 1945 report showed 3564 acres of grapes. In 1948 there were 4,867 acres in dates, 2,895 in citrus and 5963 in grapes. The increase in acreages was due to the promise of supplemental water from the Colorado River and the near completion of the Coachella Canal. Interest in cotton was reviving and the 1950 report shows 11,000 acres in cotton and the 1951 report shows 11,500 acres in cotton. Grape acreage grew to 8710 by 1952 and citrus reported 3111 and by 1956 10,969 acres were in grapes, in 1958 12,387 acres were in grapes.

New plantings of citrus varieties climbed rapidly in the 1950s. Nearly 3290 acres were planted in the three year period from 1956 through 1958.

Revenue Climbs

Gross revenue received from valley crops has shown a steady increase per acre. In 1938 the county reports show 15,273 acres, valuation \$1,748,854 or \$114 per acre.

In 1948 with 27,075 acres, valuation of \$15,906,159, the value per acre was \$587. In 1958 the value per acre was \$626 and in 1966 was \$840, in 1967 it was \$924.60, and in 1977 more than \$1870.

Crop patterns have changed over the years.

Many of the small truck gardeners of the 1920's and 1930's have disappeared. Most of those in tomatoes, peas, onions and other table vegetables of the 1940's have converted to other crops due to the increasing competition from Mexican grown produce.

The date acreage is barely holding as subdivisions take over date gardens. The land with taller palms, with their harvesting difficulties and lack of labor, are either not as productive or have not received the cultural care of earlier years.

The citrus industry has seen many new varieties introduced during the past two decades, and cotton acreage had declined in the past 10 years. The valley still produces a tremendous grape harvest and some 50 different crops are planted or harvested.

The two decades of the 1960's and 1970's saw readjustments in agriculture due to rising costs of energy and labor, increased costs of equipment, new harvesting machines and practices, the pressures of urbanization, restrictive environmental and governmental regulations, including the President's water policies and 160-acre limitation and residency requirements.

Jennings and Yager Lauded as "Foresighted Men"

By GEORGE AMES

The organization of the Coachella Valley County Water district in 1918 was in itself the culmination of years of effort by many people.

We had been told that before we were irrigating as much as twenty thousand acres we would be drawing from our wells more water than the watershed would replenish. Thus, sooner or later, trouble.

We in the lower end of the valley, (we were down the railroad east of Mecca) were not too concerned because our wells were flowing. "We'd still have water when those farther up the valley were suffering. — we thought!

"Not so" said Engineer Sonderegger. "They get first crack

at it. They'll suck you dry".

Time proved the Swiss to be right. Sonderegger had the habit of being right.

Five years later we were pumping. Water levels in some wells dropped nearly a hundred feet during the thirty years before canal water was available!

Special Mention

And, with no intent of ignoring R. W. Blackburn, Chester A. Sparey, Russel or Lee Anderson, and others, I'd like to make special mention of two men whose foresight and efforts did much to provide the groundwork for organization of the district that made Colorado River water available to us, Dr. S. S. M. Jennings and Tom Yager.

(continued on page 47)

Pearson 'Went Broke' First Year in Onions

A. L. Pearson was a typical pioneer of Coachella Valley who came here in 1907 "leaving a \$150 a month job in Long Beach to go broke my first year in the onion deal." He related this story in 1968.

His father had rented about 40 acres of the area from what is now Second Street to Avenue 50, between Highway 111 and Highway 99.

"We grew onion seed in seven acres and then with 17 farm workers we set the onions in the fall. When harvest came I had two car loads in New York, two on the road and the rest all crated and ready to ship when I got word . . . by mail, mind you.

"Don't send any onions," a letter read. Pearson said it meant it was a loss on those shipped, those en route and those in the crates.

Works In Store

In the fall of 1908 he went to work at the Gard store, and later came back to Coachella where he has always made his home, to work for Huntington. When Smythe bought a half interest in the store, Pearson went to work for McDonald & Young in their mercantile store on Cantaloupe Avenue. This store was located where the Nick Abdelnour Market is today and in this building the Coachella Valley County Water District had its first offices in the southern end.

Pearson was engineer at the ice plant a couple of summers. He also operated what was probably one of the Valley's first chain store operations from 1926 to 1930 when he managed the J. A. Daley's Grocery, a Los Angeles-based company. The company was later sold to Western Dairies. It had 168 outlets.

He was a bit rueful in recalling his first ranching adventure, which was also his last.

"Had Made Killing"

He said that the year before his onion experience everyone had made money, but the year he went in to grow onions so did a lot of other people.

"But when we had cars in New York, cars on the road and onions being crated, all expenses we had to pay whether the onions were sold or not, why couldn't the buyers send a telegram? We might not have lost it all."

He went into engineering and operated a dredge, the first

Jennings and Yager

(continued from page 46)

Dr. Jennings served as "family physician" to most of us—and did it with a horse and buggy—while finding time and boundless energy to devote to the water project.

Tom Yager, attorney for the district when it was finally formed in 1918, was soon recognized for his knowledge of water matters throughout the state. He guided and served the district during those first years—until his sudden and unexpected death as a relatively young man. He was down with the flu when William Mulholland, builder of the Owens Valley aqueduct to Los Angeles, died. Although seriously ill Tom couldn't bear not to pay his respects to one with whom he worked so closely for many years. He didn't live to get there, and we lost Tom Yager.

One wonders what attracted men of such stature, and there were others, to an area of such limited conveniences (and opportunities) as we had in those years. But we can all be thankful that something brought them here—and that "something" has brought to us other men when they were needed. What we have here now is a monument to their many services, and is a result of their efforts.

stream operated dredge, which pulled mud out of the San Pedro harbor. He went to San Joaquin Valley on another engineering job, returned to recover from an attack of malaria and worked on this father's "White Mule Ranch," and worked at the ice plant two summers, while also clerking in the McDonald & Young store.

He had another chance at a "million" when he developed a technique to produce clear ice and moulding it in 300-pound cakes in cans.

"You could read the fine print on a newspaper through the ice," he said, but before he could patent the operation it was so widely publicized in the ice industry's magazines that someone else grabbed my chance to make a million."

Meanwhile a family, the David Thomases, were also in Coachella coming from Oxford, Nebraska. Their daughter, Eva, had come with the family in 1902 to join Mr. Thomas who came the year before.

Mr. Thomas helped build the Huntington Store and several other homes and buildings in and near Coachella.

Married In 1911

They were married in 1911 and they recounted one experience of those early days watching Haley's Comet streak across the skies while they enjoyed the vantage of a woodpile bleacher seat.

Mr. Pearson was employed by the Army when the military took over the land and developed the Thermal Army Air Support Station. He became an engineer for the army on July 28, 1942.

He believed Mrs. Charles Jones was the first post-mistress. The office was located in the Huntington store and later was moved to the northeast corner of Sixth and Vine. He was employed by the Coachella Post Office in 1944 where he served until he retired in the late 1950's.

He served two terms on the Coachella Elementary School Board and many years on the Coachella Fire Commissioner's board. Both he and his wife had held office in the Eastern Star and Masonic Lodges, the Rebekahs and Oddfellows Lodges. She was one of the first officers of the Rebekah Lodge.

To Mr. Pearson's hobby of photography the Valley owes a debt of gratitude, because many early photos of Coachella and this Valley were taken by him and were preserved in his files.

G. W. James Reported Lake

George Wharton James in his "Traveler's Handbook to Southern California" in 1904 relates that in 1891 on June 23 ". . . a large body of water was discovered flowing into the Salton Basin some 30 miles south of the (Durbrow New Liverpool) salt works . . ." He wrote that cloudburst and possible artesian flows from the underground were rejected when Durbrow found that the Colorado River "rose in February of that year it overflowed its banks below Yuma for a distance of some 20 miles. Some portions of this overflow found its way back to the river by the way of a bed known as Hardie's Colorado, but quite a quantity found its way to the many depressions that exist between Yuma and Salton. In June another overflow . . . formed a channel which emptied into the Salton Basin. Thus the Salton Lake was formed, 10 miles wide by 30 miles long, and about five feet deep, in the deepest part. Mr. Durbrow is assured no permanent lake can exist here. Evaporation is so rapid that the waters speedily disappear . . ."

Arrival of Water Reward of First Chief Engineer

On August 1, 1942, J. H. Snyder came to the Coachella Valley as general manager and chief engineer of the water district.

"Joe", as he became commonly known, was faced with the problem of a canal built almost to the Riverside County line and war time shortages delaying its completion. He was rewarded by seeing the first canal water flow to the lands in 1948.

Active in community affairs, including the Coachella Valley Advisory Planning Committee, Mr. Snyder left the valley in 1951 to go north with the Atomic Energy Commission, from which position he retired.

His 1968 comments will be interesting to those who benefit today from the delivery of Colorado River water on the valley's highly productive soils:

Snyder's Comments:

I have for 40 years followed a policy of "not looking back" beyond my present assignment. After the interesting years at Coachella it was very difficult to shut that door and concentrate on a different type of work. This year will be the end of my engineering work with the prospect of doing, in the future, many things that we long ago planned. I will only try to recall major items during the period 1942 through 1951.

I was born in Wisconsin, grew up in southwestern Colorado, graduated from Colorado State University in 1927 with a B. S. Degree in Civil and Irrigating Engineering. My early engineering assignments had a heavy balance in water problems with a substantial amount of structural design.

In 1942 by agreement between the Board of Directors of Coachella District and Imperial District, I left the position of assistant superintendent of Imperial District and became chief engineer and general manager of C. V. C. W. D.

"Die Had Been Cast"

It should be remembered that at this time the All American Canal had been completed to Imperial Valley and the Coachella Branch was well along across Imperial's East Mesa. The "die had been cast" that this portion of the canal would be unlined and preliminary plans called for an unlined main canal and surface distribution system in Coachella Valley.

The difference between the soils, farming methods and people of the two districts was very great and the attitude toward the "New Water" was very different. Unlike Imperial Valley, Coachella had a limited water supply of fine water to which would be added the lower quality of water from the Colorado River. Coachella Valley had a high class farm operation in scattered parts of the valley, each farm with its own water supply.

Probably the most difficult problem throughout the time that I was employed at Coachella was to try to develop a common feeling for a Central Water District among all the people of the valley.

In the fall of 1942 and during 1943, the District Board gave substantial study to the Bureau plans for water service for the valley and the lined Coachella Canal with the underground distribution system was the result. There was no disagreement from the Bureau that Coachella was a very high class area and that special design was appropriate. To the engineers who participated in studying soils of the valley it was clear that the irrigation system would minimize leakage and the use of water well controlled to delay the drainage system as long as possible.

In so many irrigation projects the land owners would not face the problems of soil quality and drainage with the devastating results that are evident in most irrigation projects all over the

world.

On the negative side of the design of the distribution works, there was some consideration given to the "Pillsbury" automatic control but the design did not include this desirable feature which probably would have reduced substantially the waste from the system.

Voters Approved Contract

In order to start a distribution system it was necessary for the voters to approve a repayment contract with the U. S. Government. This contract contained the basic provision that in addition to the canal and underground distribution works that the east side flood control system would be completed without cost to the land owners. This flood control provision was the first of its kind where money appropriated to the U. S. Army Engineers was expended by Bureau of Reclamation.

The contract election was successful and evidenced a satisfactory degree of cooperation among the people of the valley.

The war years produced only token work on the canal and distribution system. In spite of the high production of foods from the valley lands the crops grown were not on the critical food list and little effort was made to incorporate new land of the valley into an expanded program.

The Coachella Valley area from its small but firm beginning is now one of the fine farm and recreation areas of the world. The leadership of your present district board and the management staff have actually done those things which in the earlier years were only hopes, with no firm plans to benefit from their accomplishment.

It was a great satisfaction to see the first water from the Colorado River flow into the valley and watch the start of an expansion program. The greatest satisfaction is that people who came to the district staff, at that time, had the quality to be leaders. A district which has basic physical qualities and the competent leadership which you have, will continue to rapidly expand into its place of importance.



ACALA COTTON GROWERS' ASSOCIATION'S BIGGEST YEAR . . . may have been in 1923-24 when this photo was taken of part of 2,000,000 pounds of Acala cotton seed. This seed was sold throughout the Southwest and Imperial and Mexicali Valleys as well as exports to French Indo-China, El Salvador, Colombia, South America, and Russia. The seed that year netted the growers \$50,000 above oil mill prices.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

Mecca to Indio, A Day's Journey

"In 1919 or the early 20's if you wanted to go to Mecca you had to plan to take a day," Leonhardt Swingle, pioneer date grower, recalls.

Swingle and his wife live west of Indio where they have resided many years. They retained a few acres of the property which they sold to subdividers.

He was one of the prime movers along with William Cook's father in obtaining the Deep Canyon flood control channel and levees that empty flood waters into the Whitewater River Channel at Point Happy. He served as one of the Coachella Valley Stormwater District's commissioners on the initial project. George N. Adams was the engineer.

Came Here In 1919

Swingle came to the valley in 1919. His father had come to Kansas after the Civil War and his mother was from Missouri. They came to Los Angeles and to Riverside in 1916. After Swingle saw service in the Army he came to the valley.

He served on the Coachella Valley Union High School board of trustees 21 years, beginning in 1933, retiring from the board in 1954. He was also one of the property owners who organized the Indian Wells Eldorado Area Property Owners Association that drew up the master plan for development of the area. That group's efforts led to incorporation of the City of Indian Wells in June of 1967 while he was serving as president. He is also a director of the First National Bank of Coachella.

Electric Pumps Gave Impetus

"When I came here Indio and the valley communities were pioneer towns. Indio was a railroad town. There were artesian wells in the area south of Thermal but in the Indio section they were pumping. The Indio area's farming impetus came with the electrical pumps.

"The first big crops were onions and cantaloupes. The melon deal started here and moved to Imperial Valley. Grapes were just getting started as was citrus. Dates were planted on the basis of promise and hope," Swingle says.

He was one of the organizers of the Deglet Noor Date Growers Association.

He recalled that J. W. Newman, who came here from Ventura County, was one of the men who started the onion cooperative.

When Swingle came here his brother Dr. Walter S. Swingle was physiologist in charge of plant and breeding investigations at the U. S. Government Experiment Station. Frances Gillan, was working in the station when she met Leonhardt and they were married in 1921.

She is the daughter of one of Indio's pioneer ministers, D. H. Gillan who began ranching at Myoma on Adams Street in December 1918 where he had a desert claim. The MacPherson ranch is now located there.

Move to Green Parsonage

Her father was a retired minister when he came here and all agreed he was an "excellent preacher." When he was asked to assume leadership of the Methodist Church, which was meeting in the adobe schoolhouse on the corner of Fargo and Bliss, he moved to the green parsonage back of the church where Ernie Chapin's garage is today. The parsonage later moved to a site across the street north of the former Indio Woman's Club, west of Petzolds on Miles Ave. east of King St.

Mrs. Swingle recalls that on December 29, 1919, the Indio grammar school principal, Miss Mary Ward, died when a fire caused by a kerosene heater destroyed her house on West Miles. The W. P. McKinney home also caught fire and was

damaged beyond repair.

Mrs. Swingle recalls that most of the congregation came to the evening service and not so many to the morning worship. The school had been purchased by the church when the school district built a frame building on Oasis and Bliss.

"I remember that it had a rather high platform in the front and crude, handmade benches. The building had a belfry on top and it faced Fargo. It also had a pedal-pumped organ.

Built Church In 1922

"The community started talking about building a new church. There was quite a debate about it and some folks were not in favor of it. A site was obtained at Requa and Fargo and the building was built that now houses the FitzHenry Funeral Home and it was dedicated March 12, 1922. The old school building, now church, was sold to the Oddfellows."

In recalling early days of the stormwater district and county water district, Mr. Swingle gave a lot of credit to Dr. S. S. M. Jennings for his untiring efforts and dedication.

"He worked hard for the valley and gave his life to it, you might say. Dr. Forbes was another hardworker. He became involved and gave generously of his talents to getting water to the valley," he concluded.



AT SEA LEVEL

Grapefruit, one of the principal crops of the valley is shown here growing at sea level. It is a leading crop in the canal irrigated area. The area served with canal water is paying the cost of the canal and distribution system.

— CVCWD PHOTO 2938

First Dates Imported in 1890 to Indio

Bernard Johnson Brought First Commercial Plantings of Offshoots

By ROY NIXON

Former Horticulturist, U. S. Date and Citrus Station
(Mr. Nixon died in January 1976.)

The date palm was introduced into the western hemisphere by early Spanish missionaries. Until very recently a few of the original palms survived in some of the mission gardens which were established in California beginning at San Diego in 1769. These palms, all grown from seeds, added an exotic touch to the landscape, but their fruit never attracted much attention because in the damp coastal climate it did not reach maturity.

In the period following the Goldrush, a few date seeds were planted here and there in the warm interior valleys of California and southern Arizona and in time the fruiting of occasional palms suggested possibilities for date culture in these districts.

The first successful importation of date palms from the Old World was made in 1890 by the U. S. Department of Agriculture under the direction of H. E. Van Deman. These palms, 68 in number were distributed to cooperators in New Mexico (Las Cruces), Arizona (Phoenix and Yuma), and California (Indio, Pomona, Tulare, and National City).

Unfortunately, although they were supposed to be offshoots of desirable varieties, most, if not all, of the palms in the 1890 importation were probably seedlings, as about half of them proved to be males and the others bore inferior fruit. Offshoots of superior varieties were not obtained until 1900 when Walter T. Swingle of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, personally supervised the selection and shipment from Algeria of 405 offshoots, including a considerable number of the already famous Deglet Noor variety. These offshoots were planted at Tempe, Arizona, in cooperation with the Arizona Agricultural Experiment Station.

Other Importations

Several other experimental importations of date offshoots were made by the U. S. Department of Agriculture during the next few years, including those by David Fairchild in 1901-02 from Iraq, Baluchistan, and Egypt and by T. H. Kearney in 1905 from Algeria, and Tunisia. Meanwhile Swingle, following his return from Algeria made a careful study of climate and soil in Southern Arizona and California and came to the conclusion that conditions in the Salton Basin were most nearly like those in southern Algeria, where the best Deglet Noor dates are grown.

As a result of these investigations the U. S. Department of Agriculture, in 1904 established a date experiment station near Mecca in the Coachella Valley in cooperation with the University of California. Three years later, because of the threatened flooding of the Mecca station by the rising waters of the newly formed Salton Sea, headquarters for experimental work were moved to a new location two miles west of Indio, where twenty acres for this purpose were donated to the Federal Government by Fred N. Johnson.

Center for Research

This second station now known as the U. S. Date and Citrus Station, has been the center for date research since its establishment. It has made contributions of vital importance on the adaptability of date varieties and conditions necessary for optimum fruit production.

The early establishment of date culture in Coachella Valley, however, must be credited to a large extent to a few pioneer settlers. One of these, Bernard Johnson, went to Algeria and in

September, 1903, returned with the first commercial importation of date offshoots mostly of the Deglet Noor variety, which he planted near Mecca, California. Acting again on his own initiative, Johnson made another small importation of date offshoots from Algeria in 1908 and a much larger one (3000 offshoots) in 1912.

Meanwhile, Johnson's date plantings and those of the U. S. Department of Agriculture had aroused the interest of other pioneer settlers. In January 1913, the Coachella Valley Date Grower's Association was organized with eight charter members. This first association was devoted exclusively to the promotion of date culture, as at that time the members had no dates to market, and the immediate objective was to make additional importations of offshoots. The most active member of the group was W. L. Paul, president and general manager. Paul had become well acquainted with Bernard Johnson and had been impressed by the importation made in 1912.

Largely by Paul's efforts sufficient interest was aroused and enough new members were obtained to make it possible for the association to send Johnson to Algeria in 1913 and for two succeeding years to bring in a total of 10,000 additional offshoots of the Deglet Noor variety.

Commercial Importation

Several other commercial importations of date offshoots were made. H. F. Cole imported 3,000 Deglet Noor offshoots from Algeria for the American Date Co. during the years 1911 to 1913, inclusive. Paul Popenoe, representing the West India Gardens, imported 1,000 Deglet Noor offshoots from Algeria and 9,000 offshoots from Iraq, mostly the varieties Halawy, Khadrawy, Kustawy and Zahidi. Nearly all the commercial date plantings in the United States are traceable to the importations during the period 1911 to 1915, inclusive.

9,000 Offshoots

However, more than 9,000 offshoots of the Saily variety were imported from Egypt during the years 1920 and 1922 for the Gillette-Rosenberger Date Gardens and the Calizona Date Nurseries which sent S. C. Mason of the U. S. Department of Agriculture abroad for this purpose.

Because of the large number of Deglet Noor offshoots imported and of its proven excellence as a commercial date, this variety early took the lead in the commercial production and in 1967 it comprised more than three-fourths of the 4,000 acres planted to dates in California. Other imported varieties have proved to have a wider range of adaptability, and outside Coachella Valley, Halawy, Khadrawy and Zahidi have been more extensively planted.

Saily, which seemed to be promising for a while has certain drawbacks under Coachella Valley conditions and plantings of that variety have been abandoned. The Medjool, introduced by Swingle from Morocco in 1927, has been increasing in popularity in recent years and in 1967 some 200 acres had been planted to this variety, about half of it in the Bard district of California near Yuma. The Medjool attracts attention because it is the largest of imported varieties of dates grown in this country.

A few dates are also grown commercially in Arizona, where there are an estimated 200 acres. Most of these are in the Salt River Valley near Phoenix and in the Colorado River Valley near Yuma. Because of higher rainfall in Arizona than in Coachella Valley, it is usually necessary, in the Salt River



BIRTHPLACE OF FIRST COMMERCIAL PLANTING OF DATES

This historical marker observes the site of the first commercial planting of dates in Coachella Valley in 1903 by Bernard Johnson on National Avenue and Johnson Street east of Mecca. The Riverside County Historical Commission marker fronts on the original planting.

Valley at least to harvest fruit before it is cured on the palm and to complete the ripening process in maturation rooms. No production figures are available but it is estimated to be less than a million pounds yearly. Most of the Arizona fruit is sold locally to tourists or through mail orders.

Palms in Texas

There are also a good many date palms in Texas, but they are nearly all seedlings in scattered plantings in the lower Rio Grande Valley and in certain localities between Laredo and San Antonio. The rainfall in late summer and early fall is too high for satisfactory fruiting of dates, although early types may ripen and are valued for home use.

From the figures given above, it is apparent that over 90 percent of the commercial date acreage in the United States is in California. Of the California acreage 95 percent is in the Coachella Valley. Fruit production in California increased from one million pounds in 1926 to 41 million in 1966. About three-fourths of the date crop is handled in one large cooperative packing house in Coachella Valley; the remainder in several other packing houses of varying size.

During recent years there has been some decrease in date acreage because of subdivisions, mostly in the area between Indio and Palm Springs.

As yet this has not lowered the total fruit production because acreage planted during and immediately following World War II has been coming into full bearing and changes in cultural practices have brought increases in palm yields. There may be some drop in production in the near future, but there is no reason to believe that the date industry is on its way out. Although profits from dates have not come up to the rosy pictures found in brochures of the pioneer era, on good soil with good management, returns have been satisfactory. Government research combined with the imagination and ingenuity of date growers and packers in solving production and handling problems have created an industry that invariably arouses the admiration and envy of those from the date-growing areas of the Old World who have seen it. There is little doubt but that dates will continue to provide the exotic atmosphere and romantic overtones that fascinate visitors to Coachella Valley.

Water Led All In Importance to Coachella Valley

Despite World War I nearing its end, the stock market crash, the depression, World War II, the most important thing that has happened in Coachella the past 50 years has been water.

That was the 1968 impression of Henry J. Briggs, Coachella, who came here in 1908 with his parents because of his mother's health.

Briggs was one of those who was active in supporting efforts to bring Colorado River water to the valley. He was one of the

auto caravaners who went to Riverside supporting the candidacy of Rep. Phil Swing, co-author of the Swing-Johnson bill signed in 1928 that made possible government assistance in building the All-American Canal.

He credited Dr. S. S. M. Jennings and Attorney Thomas C. Yager as the men behind the drive to get the canal, because as wells went down people began seriously promoting the idea of the supplemental water.

Anderson Praises Early Men On Boards For Dedication

Lee J. Anderson served on the Coachella Valley County Water District Board 22 years, as well as seven years on the Coachella Valley Stormwater District Board.

Anderson's longevity record on the board had been equalled by the late Leon Kennedy who also served 22 years. By 1977 Raymond Rummonds and George Leach had exceeded those records and Director Frost had served 19 years. Director Chester Sparey, an original member, had served 14 years.

"Ninety per cent of the progress we have made in this valley would not be here today if we hadn't obtained supplemental water," Anderson contended in 1968.

"We wouldn't have a lot of the things we have here if it wasn't for Colorado River water.

"You also have to realize that the flood protection the water district obtained for the east side of the valley, the flood protection we are now getting on the west side, and the work done on the Whitewater Channel as well as getting flooding rights over the years, have contributed greatly to our protection and to our growth.

"Those men on the first board of directors and those since have all made tremendous contributions in time, effort, money and vision to this valley," he continued.

Other factors aiding the development of the valley Anderson recounts as being the advent of air conditioning and the control of gnats.

Only a Palm Leaf Fan

"In the early days you had only a palm leaf fan, and the gnats were terrible. Doctor S. S. M. Jennings did a lot to battle the gnat infections and pink eye problems."

Anderson also credits Earl Redwine's employment as district counsel as "one of the finest things this district did. He drafted the distribution contract and fought the Bureau of Reclamation to a standstill here, in Los Angeles, in Boulder City, in Denver and in Washington. The lateral contract was written so that the Bureau of Reclamation had to finish it within the plans and specifications even though they had run out of money on the contract. That amounted to about \$4-million Redwine saved the district."

Anderson came to Coachella Valley in 1920 and went into the date growing business.

In the 1920's there were more and more farmers putting down wells with electric pumps and the power supply was erratic. There were many power outages causing problems, he recalls.

At one time the Stormwater Board seriously considered putting a dam at Point Happy to control floods and discharge water into the La Quinta basin. Land was condemned and rights of way purchased. Anderson said he was convinced the plan would never be implemented and the plan was shelved.

Anderson recalls a trip made by members of the board over

the route of the proposed Coachella Branch of the All American Canal to below Mecca on May 4, 1935.

"I made that trip all right. Whew! We started from the Pot Holes near Laguna Dam. Arvin Shaw, the district's counsel; John Graham, and a man named Sullivan, was along. I'd like to forget that trip in an old Dodge. We had to go around obstructions, roll boulders out of the way, cross the proposed syphons. I thought to myself: 'The canal can never be built through terrain like this', and those big washes worried me, but they put syphons under them."

He recalled there was an earlier plan to place a canal drop east of Coachella, irrigate the lower valley on the contour and pump into a continuation of the canal on about the present route north and to the southwest of Indio.

"You may be surprised to know we had a lot of people opposed to bringing in water. Valley land owners began holding meetings at the high school as early as 1921 to talk about supplemental water. When the first bills came before congress regarding just the proposed canal the valley had a hard time getting them to add the words "and Coachella" to the wording proposing surveys and studies of routes for the canal to Imperial Valley.

Credit To Early Leaders

"Blackburn and Yager deserve a lot of credit. They spent hours and days on trips, and went around to service clubs and organizations to tell us what our rights were under the legislation. But when the proposal of inclusion of Coachella Valley with Imperial Valley came up, most of the valley opposed it. I was concerned how this might affect my 80 acres, and what might happen if the Imperial district defaulted on their bonds. When we started to oppose there were only 13 people interested. When we learned the terms of the inclusion, obtained from Randall Henderson, publisher of the Calexico Chronicle, who was making himself unpopular defending Coachella's right to a separate contract, we gained a lot more support. Washington McIntyre was an old friend of Randall (until recently publisher of the Desert Magazine) and he'd feed us information, too.

"Dr. Harry Forbes became interested and took over the leadership in the opposition. Gridley was president of the C.V. Landowners Association. Forbes' attorney, Arvin Shaw told a gathering what the inclusion might mean. But those favoring inclusion went ahead signing up landowners. I was delegated to contact non-resident landowners and I got them to withdraw their signatures, with a few exceptions.

"After the new board was formed in 1932, one of its first actions was to oppose validation of the Imperial contract until we were assured our contract, and excluded from theirs. We were able to reconcile our differences with the help of Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes. We felt our water rights or priorities were

protected since the canal was contacted in quantities to serve both areas, and that capacity in itself constituted a right.

"We had a desert in the early years, and we were afraid it would revert to one, but we won our battle for water and democracy at the ballot box and not by riots and demonstrations," Anderson declared.

Gives Forbes Credit

Anderson also appeared several times in Washington before congressional committees supporting the All American Canal project and distribution system, but gave Dr. Harry Forbes, longtime board president, credit for getting the underground distribution and storm protection contract started in congress, and completion of the canal after work had stopped during the war.

Born in Michigan in 1889, Anderson came to California in 1908. He later located in Claremont, bought a five-acre orange grove, enlisted for service in World War II. He was in the service two years ending up in France, where he had started for the front near Luxembourg when the armistice was signed. He came back to find himself nearly wiped out because his grove had been foreclosed. Returning to Claremont he met his wife, Ruth Lyons, while foreman for a citrus association.

The were married June 8, 1919. His father-in-law, George Lyons, interested him in coming to Coachella Valley where he met William Overholtzer. He was impressed with the possibility of dates and entered into a contract with Overholtzer to plant and develop 40 acres over a 15 year period. George Lyons bought ten acres at \$200 an acre that year, 1920.

Planted Off-Shoots Direct

The Andersons lived in a tent for three years while developing the land, planting offshoots direct instead of after an incubation period in a hot house, planting cotton, and vegetables, and expanding his land ownership. In 1944 he had 184 acres dates, over 60 acres grapes, and a total of about 300 acres of farm land, including 80 acres across from the Covalda Date Packing Plant on Highway 86. He and Leonhardt Swingle opened the packing plant with \$100 down and \$100 a month for the \$8000 operation in a building built by Postelwaite and later abandoned and used for storing cotton seed. Swingle later bowed out, Anderson recalls. The Andersons operate the Covalda Date Company today.

Anderson was asked to seek a school trustee position in 1929 and served on the Thermal board for 25 years. He served several terms as president of the Coachella Valley Farm Center, an office which his son, Lee, Jr., has also held.

He recalls that the Stormwater District Board decided at one time that contracting the stormwater work was too expensive and instead bought the equipment and completed one job for \$35,000 which had been bid at \$100,000.

"During the storm and high water in 1938 we had everybody out trying to hold the dikes from Point Happy around Indio. I wouldn't have given a nickel that Indio would be saved. The dikes halfway between Coachella and Thermal went out. Then those at Thermal gave way. I remember the Freeman girl was washed into the channel but she luckily grabbed a tamarisk limb and was pulled out."

"Another time during one of the floods that came sweeping across the country I remember getting in an old wagon box and I was carried nearly to the Whitewater wash."

VALLEY STREETS GET NAMES

Henry McKay was appointed in charge of Valley road work by the county in 1917, and during his years many dusty roads were gravelled or paved. He is responsible for the Valley's north-south roads bearing the names of Presidents on the mile line and vice-presidents on the half-mile.

Generous Artesian Water Brought The Allen Family

Because his father on a visit to Coachella Valley in 1917 saw results of the generous artesian water supply he was prompted to buy 40 acres in the Oasis area — Thomas E. Allen came to this area to help his parents.

Allen, who served on the Coachella Valley County Water District Board of directors from October 1932 to March of 1938, came in 1918. Allen passed away in 1969 after relating this story:

His father, because he was unable to get a well during the war year 1917, had moved from near his wife's sister's place, the Joe Bacons, to west of Indio. He had bought the Arthur Chenoweth place where a date garden had been started.

Young Tom, who had been born in Clay Center, Nebraska, had been married in 1913 to Miss Myrtle Groat in Yates Center, Kansas. They moved to the state of Washington where he attended the state college and taught several years.

Managed Ranch

He came to the valley when his parents urged them and,



APTLY NAMED "SUBMARINE"

Although the early "submarine" dwellings, a one-room building, were metal with water piped to drip over the top and flow down the sides, to provide a cool place summer nights, this example is a more modern version with a shade roof and composition "beaver" board siding. They effectively cooled the interiors 15 to 20 degrees. Why were they called "submarines"? Not because they were below sea level, but because they were under water. Lay-over railroad crews invented them, it's said! Some had burlap coverings to spread and retain dampness.
— C. V. Historical Society Collection

together with his sister, Margaret Allen, Indio's postmistress of 20 years, they managed the ranch about 3 miles west of the small community.

For two years he was employed by the Southern Pacific Railroad and then for five years was manager of the Whittier Ranch south of Indio.

The couple then moved into Indio to Towne Street and he went into the plumbing business. They later purchased the Otho Moore home on Fargo, bought three lots of Flower Street and moved the house to that site where they lived until they moved to Ontario, Calif., in 1957.

From 1928 to 1937 he served on the Coachella Valley Stormwater District board until it was merged with the water district.

Was Also Justice of Peace

He served five years as Justice of the Peace in Indio. He also served on the Indio Elementary School Board six years as well as a term on the Indio City Council.

He was a member of the school board when the district built the two-room white frame schoolhouse on the property located at the southeast corner of Bliss and Oasis. This school was later replaced by the concrete block Lincoln School on the same site facing Bliss. The frame school building is now located at the rear of the former Roosevelt school grounds where it once served as a cafeteria and now for storage.

The Allen's children, Tom and Lynn, both attended Indio Schools and graduated from the Coachella Valley Union High School.

Mr. Allen said that his father after moving to the Chenoweth place west of Indio in October 1918 had left his daughter Margaret there while he went back to Nebraska in July of 1919. Thomas E. Allen came to assist his sister until the parents came from Nebraska in October of 1919.

Like Valley Climate

"My father was impressed with not only the water, but later with the crops that would grow, and the wonderful winter climate. The last winter in Nebraska he said he burned 15 tons of coal in the furnace. He came back to the valley to give it a nine month's try from October through July. That was when he left Margaret and I to hold down the fort until the family arrived.

"The nine months he was here he observed and even plan-

ted various crops. He was overwhelmed with the crops of figs, grapes, cotton, dates and the garden and truck crops he raised. They shipped their household goods by railroad and he and my mother and others in the family came by train."

Helped Form District

Mr. Allen recalled helping circulate the petitions to organize the Coachella Valley Cemetery District and the Indio Sanitary District. He was employed as manager of the sanitary district several years as well as the Indio building inspector.

Mrs. Allen is a native of Ontario, Canada. She recalls that there wasn't much to Indio when they came here in 1918: "Just a little strip of pavement, all the rest of the roads were ruts and sand."

"About the only social life we had in those days was attending school and parent meetings, later the PTA. Both Tom and I were members of the Rebekah and Oddfellows Lodges and earlier in the Masonic and Eastern Star Lodges," she said.

She also recalls the homemade water cooler, "a great big one, for the whole house, which kept it reasonably cool until the air got to the kitchen."

Allen said that the Stormwater District had been contracting out most of the annual cleaning of the Whitewater Storm Channel and together with Lee Anderson, another board member, the district began doing the work itself "and saving quite a bit of money." He said the old Indio Levee District to protect the community of Indio was succeeded by the stormwater district.

"One time we were attending an Oddfellows meeting out of the valley and when we returned a storm had put a lot of water into the Whitewater. The water was almost up to the floor of the old wooden bridge on the highway at Whitewater. The next day we learned it had been washed away shortly after we crossed.

"In the early days, even before we came here, flood waters used to go around Point Happy across the Clark and Allen properties, through Cochran-Odlum Ranch, as well as turning south into the Marshall Cove (La Quinta area)."

Mr. Allen's sisters, Miss Margaret Allen and Mrs. Elida Macken lived in Indio until 1967. Miss Allen maintained her keen interest in community and postal affairs. She was succeeded by Ros J. King, then Delpha H. Ferguson.

Early Crops, Water, Good Prices Boosted Area

Otho Moore, resident of Indio beginning in 1898, recalled that the hydraulic well drilling really opened the valley. He related this story in 1968:

The railroad drilled a cased well in 1884 using a sand bucket method. A rig was built and the bucket was on the end of a pulley which lowered the bucket into the well. That well was in the railroad property. A. G. Tingman, who built a small home, store, and corrals, carried water from that well to his place south of the tracks and located in the area east of the present Fargo Street and north of Bliss Ave.

Tingman hired a small rig to come in and drill him a hydraulic well in about 1898. When the Moores came in 1898 the small rig was lying abandoned in Tingman's yard. It was a hand-operated rig.

"My uncle, Lincoln Casebeer, who had filed on the southeast quarter of Section 26, south of Indio, was convinced that hydraulic wells were better and were drilled faster."

The SP's well was a 10 or 12 inch but was costly to install.

Develop Artesian Flow

Mr. Casebeer encouraged the Cathrons, who were in the

well-drilling business on the coastal plain, to come down and drill a hydraulic well in 1900. It went down about 500 feet in less than two days. The difficulty was that these wells were limited in size in those days to about three or four inches while the other types were not limited. They brought artesian water from way down and water flowed over the top.

It was this homestead land, plentiful water, health benefits of the climate, and early crops that brought people here and publicized the area. He said that in 1899 a crate of cantaloupes brought \$11 in Chicago.

"Agriculturally, the important thing was early crops and good prices."

Coachella Platted

Although quite a few people settled in the Indio area, which was merely a railroad town, there was land in the lower valley. A group of San Francisco railroad officials sent a Mr. C. E. Mauby down and he platted Coachella, which was called Woodspur before they organized because Indians would bring wood for the locomotives and Los Angeles markets to a siding there.

(continued on page 55)



FIRST AGRICULTURE IN THE INDIAN WELLS AREA

Shown here is the farm of Wm. P. Blair, one of first settlers in the Indian Wells area. Photo taken about 1909 looking south from dune about where Avenue 44 is now located south of Palm Desert Country Club Estates. Indian Wells, one of the newest cove cities, is a plush country club city. Eisenhower Mountain is in rear right. In 1916 Whitewater River carved out channel through ranch.
 — C. V. Historical Society Photo

"Land was sold, others opened up Thermal which was quite alkaline but after all the land was free when patented, and they all got water from the artesian strata. As wells were drilled in the lower valley our wells around Indio went down. My family brought in a sand bucket and drilled a larger well and installed a pump. That happened to all wells in this end of the valley. As land developed farther down the valley the farther down we had to go for water. Soon there were no artesian wells at Coachella, where the railroad had drilled a well in what is now Cantaloupe Ave. (Highway 111) It was costing more money to pump with gas and electric motors which came in with electricity after 1913."

Imperial Valley, meanwhile, had water from the Colorado through a canal which was extended through the Republic of Mexico, south of the border, and was now beginning to talk about a new, big canal to be located on the United States side of the boundary.

The problem of the canal, known as the Alamo Canal, through Mexico was that Mexico had first right to it and a group of American developers down there opposed the idea of an All American Canal.

"We saw the possibility of connecting to that canal and everyone began talking about the Imperial Valley project because everyone was afraid that with the whole water table going down that eventually there would not be enough water to serve this valley.

Water Level Drops

"In 1918 we had between 3000 and 6000 acres being cultivated. Our artesian wells were going deep, to 500 feet, our pumping wells were under 300 feet. We had problems of power and increased pumping costs while watching the water go deeper.

"By 1917 we started saying we ought to get Colorado River water, too. Many meetings were held. My mother and I helped with petitions to get the Coachella Valley County Water District organized in late 1917. The Stormwater District wouldn't do anything and it was argued we needed a water district to protect our underground water and stream flows.

"We wanted water. Lots of people supported the idea. I

recall my wife and I and my mother signed petitions for the first five candidates for the water board."

Power Comes In 1914

Mrs. Moore vividly recalls the first electricity for the valley coming in 1914 because her father's brother surveyed the route for the line coming in from Banning and Bishop, while a younger brother was superintendent of construction of the line.

"They thought we were crazy to live in this desert," she remembers.

Mr. Moore recalled the "terrible flood of January 1916," when water was "waist deep in the street in front of the present Allbright's store on Fargo, where our house was located after we moved from the ranch."

"J. H. Northrup, King C. Gillette, and Rosenberg built a dike around their places west of Indio and it ran all the water into Indio. In the early days the water ran across what is now Indio, or turned south around Point Happy and ran south across the Clarke ranch and Marshall's ranch into what was then known as Marshalls Cove (La Quinta)."

Made Street Wide

The Indio Levee District was formed to take the water around Indio townsite and Oasis Street right-of-way was reserved for a levee north and south. (The width of the present Oasis street, in comparison with other streets on each side, east and west, is attributed to the right of way reserved at that time.)

Moore and others recalled that the railroad had built a levee and channel south of the railroad tracks from near Montoe Street south to beyond the junction of Highway 86 and 111, because of the many storm flows.

At the Fargo crossing of the Southern Pacific there was a wagon bridge about where Denny's Cafe is now. It was about 25 feet wide and had hand rails on it. It was located between the tracks and the road along side; Tingman built it for access to the depot. When the stormwater channel was built around Indio this ditch was abandoned and removed in May 1919, when the new paved highway was built from Fargo south toward Brawley.

Short-Lived Tiny Railroad Began in '88 in Palmdale

The Southern Pacific Railroad reached Seven Palms station in the Spring of 1876 and by May passenger trains were running into Indio.

But few people know of the short-lived Palmdale railroad which ran from a point near the eastern end of Garnet Hill in an almost straight line on the present Farrell Road in Palm Springs to where Smoke Tree Ranch is now located south of Highway 111.

The narrow gauge railroad had rolling stock which consisted of at least two yellow passenger cars, two flat cars and an engine which was stoked with wood provided by Valley Indians. The train was called the "Cabazon."

Grading for the road was begun in March 1888 and the first cars ran in July 1888. The passenger cars were purchased from the San Francisco Railway Company, one was flat sided and the other belloyed outward. One was an open car and the other was closed. The engine was the small donkey-engine type with a flaring smokestack and was joined on the rear by an attached small coal and wood tender.

At the Palmdale end there was a roundhouse of sorts, and a "wye" at each end on the railroad permitted the engines to turn around.

One of the first shipments was reported to have been orange tree nursery stock shipped from Florida in two rail cars.

Herbert W. Bordwell was the first rail superintendent and manager of the land development company formed by H. C.

Campbell of San Francisco, W. S. Fergusson of Oakland and L. B. Holt of Riverside.

The group had purchased the remainder of unsold land after an auction and public sale was held November 1, 1887. In that auction about \$50,000 in land was sold to excursionists and land buyers, and comprised lands originally purchased from the Southern Pacific Land Company. The syndicate took an option on the unsold land comprising about 2000 acres and shares of unsold stock in the water company.

Promised Town, Plantings

A Riverside newspaper, The Press and Horticulturist, published by Holt, reported that the Palm Valley Land Co. was organized November 1887 with capital stock of \$600,000 and advertisements in that paper proposed that a new town of Palmdale was established and an 80-acre melon patch was to be planted and would sell 100 acres in 10 or 20 acre parcels at \$150 an acre. Each succeeding 100 acres would be sold in tracts with the prices escalating with each sale from \$175, to \$200, to \$225 with the fifth offering to be at \$250 an acre.

There were other land promoters active at the Garden of Eden tract which lay toward Palm Canyon. Palm Springs was being boosted by still another group. Proposals to build the railroad were announced in December 1887, which the syndicate was certain would make their lands more desirable.

Bordwell, who came from Jackson, Mich., brought a house with him, presumably a ready built and dismantled house,

Heavy black line shows boundary of the nearly 640,000 acre Coachella Valley County Water District. Dash line indicates Coachella Branch of the All American Canal. The District is in three counties, Riverside, Imperial and San Diego.

— CVCWD Drawing



which he erected on the Palm Valley land there and is believed to be the first and only substantial building built in the development.

A postoffice was established March 9, 1888. Thomas M. Sweet was the first postmaster in a store, but the development never went beyond the ranch stage. The ranch and track-laying crews lived in tent houses while building the railroad and digging an irrigation ditch which was to water the fruit trees. Trains operated only from July to September 1888.

A 19-mile rock-lined irrigation ditch from the Whitewater dried up in the summer and there was not enough water available from Tahquitz creek. The few fruit trees that had survived the trip from Florida soon died from lack of water. Meanwhile the Southern California real estate boom had collapsed and lands went begging.

There was no money to pay the laborers on the ranch and the paradise that was to be Palmdale faded.

The train and its road bed were left to the desert sun late in 1888 or early 1889 and reports have it that the engine and flat-cars and most of the rails were loaded on an SP car and taken to Bakersfield.

Abandoned In Whitewater

A photo taken by J. Smeaton Chase shows two passenger cars abandoned in what is the Whitewater flood channel in the early part of this century. The cars were destroyed by fire and the wheels, brakes, and car frames rested on the sands for many years and were seen as late as 1916 when the heaviest flood the valley has experienced buried them under the sands.

The only remnants today are a few fence posts made from

the ties. The largest remnant is the Miss Cornelia White home east of the old Desert Museum which is largely made up of the redwood ties which Dr. Wellwood Murray had gathered from the old roadbed.

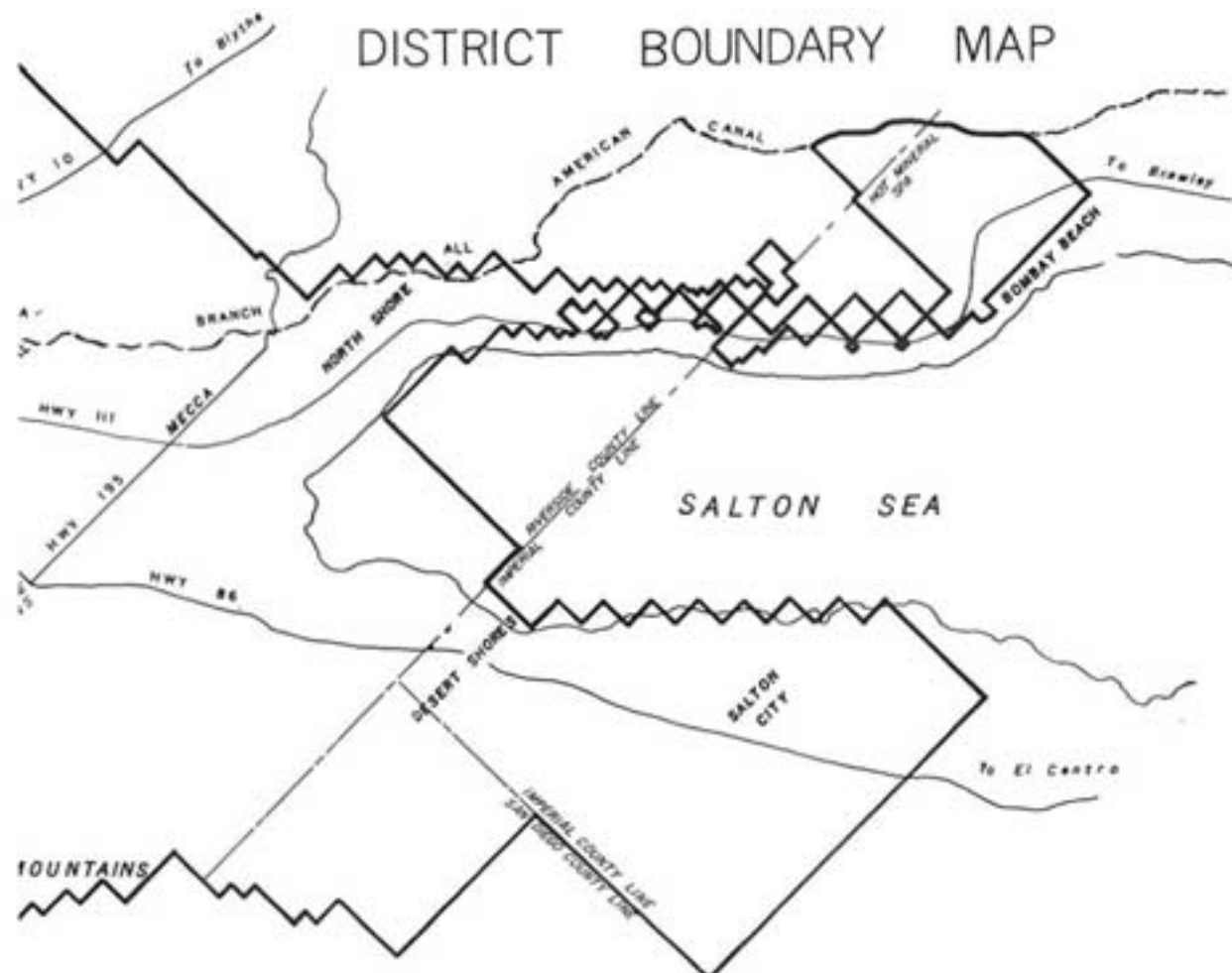
When the narrow-gauge railroad to Palmdale was abandoned, the Seven Palms station was moved slightly over a half-mile west to what is now Garnet. A one-room rest house which had been built at the original station for use of overnight passengers on the South Pacific enroute to Palmdale was torn down and Dr. Murray had it cut in two and moved to Palm Springs. He reconstructed it across the street north of the old Museum building.

Few Evidences Remain

There is little left of the abandoned right of way. Evidences can be found east of Palm Springs. Of Palmdale there is nothing.

Interestingly enough Palm Springs was the site of the first large agricultural development when in about 1887 Judge Mc Callum and associates interested in a land company irrigated 160 acres of Navel oranges. It was the largest commercial planting of its kind. The planting was interspersed with Muscat and Thompson Seedless grapes, according to Truman Gridley in the May 1926 "Development Edition" of the Coachella Valley Submarine.

About 1893 a Col. Pope, of bicycle fame, Gridley reported, planted about 80 acres of figs. Apricots and grape acreage was developed. Water, both the lack of it and water rights, caused abandonment of these agricultural enterprises.



Valley's Battle Against Salt Began in 1927

The bottom of the Salton Sink, before it was covered with water to form the now Salton Sea and the surrounding area, was a salt-encrusted marsh. In fact, in much of the area the salt crust was 6 to 12 inches in thickness. The salt was sufficiently pure that it was commercially mined by the New Liverpool Salt Company in the early 1880's.

Probably the most abundant source of these salts is the underground water that moves slowly toward the entire Coachella Basin from the mountains northwest. The water is of exceptional purity but like all natural waters it contains a small amount of salts and all of it is left behind as the water evaporates from the ground surface.

Through Evaporation

Since the ground waters rise at many locations, other than the very bottom of the valley, as evidenced at the Springs at Figtree John's, Alamo Bonita and Agua Dulce, salts are found at the surface of the ground in many areas other than in the bottom of the Sink. Indeed, wherever the ground-water level is near the ground surface the process of capillary attraction is powerful enough to draw the water to the surface where it will be evaporated and the salts will accumulate. A large area in the Coachella Valley from Coachella to the Salton Sea has soil that was quite saline.

At an early date in the development of irrigation in Coachella Valley it was believed the need for drainage would arise. In 1927 a number of shallow, perforated cased, ground-water observation wells, called "Alkali Wells," were installed, ranging in depth from 11 to 32 feet. The water levels in these wells were recorded for several years but with the diminishing water levels in the irrigations wells, due to an overdraft, interest was lost in the "Alkali Wells" and by 1940 most of them were lost or damaged beyond repair.

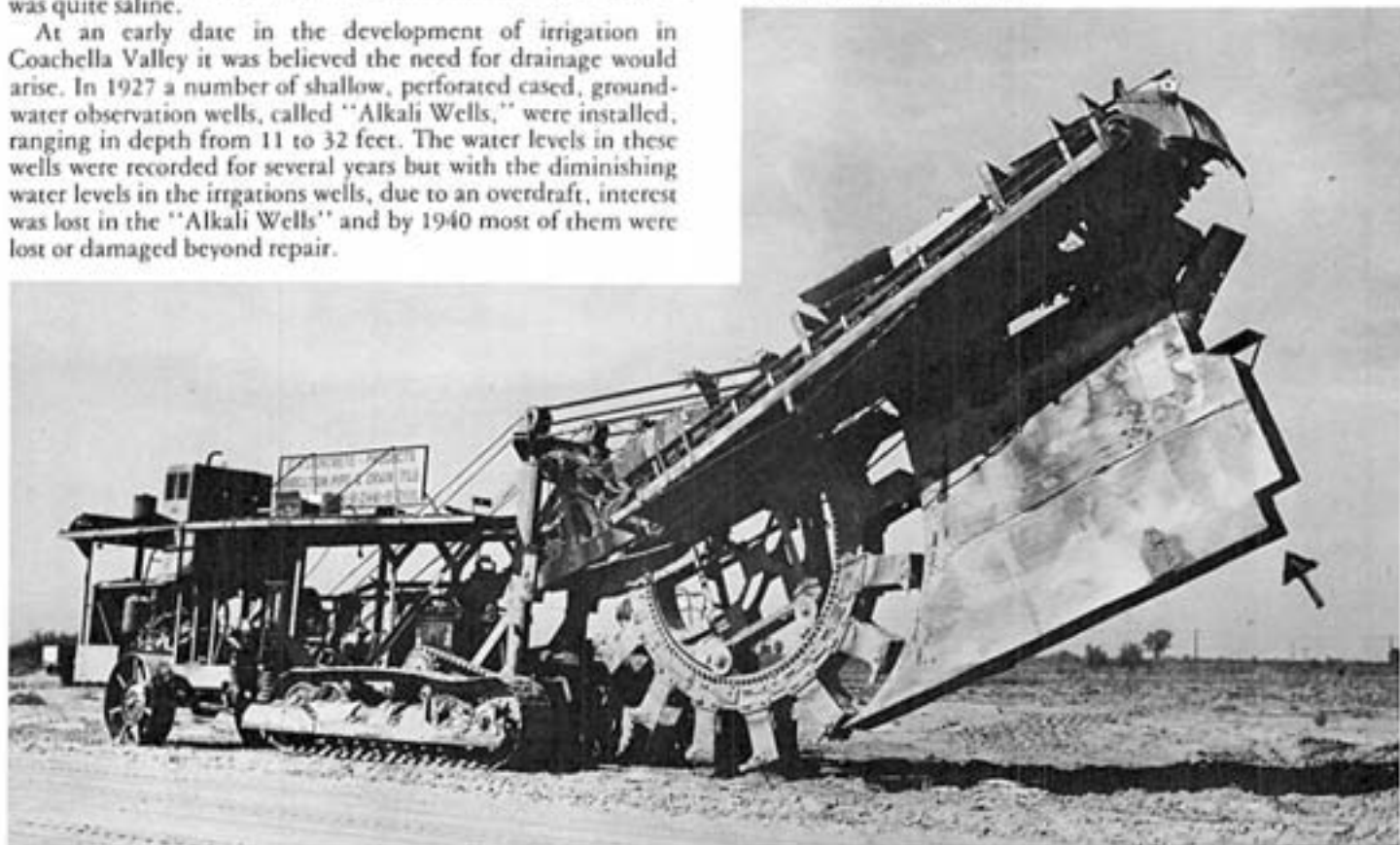
Not An Earlier Problem

As long as all of the farming, approximately 17,000 acres had been dependent for its source of irrigation water from groundwater, drainage was not an important problem, partly because of the effect of heavy pumping on artesian pressures and partly because only the better soils had been developed.

However, with the approach of Colorado River water with its heavy content of total salts, interest in drainage became very important. This new supply would cause an expansion in farming, change irrigation practices and water tables would rise which would cause serious drainage difficulties in the future.

On July 1, 1945, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed by the California Experiment Station, the United States Salinity Laboratory of the Department of Agriculture and the Coachella Valley County Water District relative to "Investigations of Salinity Removal and Control by Drainage."

In 1948 the Bureau of Reclamation also joined in this agreement and the group is now known as "Coachella Valley Drainage Cooperators." All of the agencies are concerned with the research and investigational phases of this work but the Water District is solely responsible for the design and the construction of drainage works.



BEHEMOTH LAYS PIPE LINES TO DRAIN FARMS

In one operation this big machine digs a seven-foot trench, lays a cushion of sand, installs lengths of cement pipe, and refills the trench. Arrow points to spot in underground chamber where worker is transported as he feeds pipe and tile into the ditch. Large continuous perforated plastic pipe is also used for drains. Farm and District drainage lines serve more than 35,000 acres and approximate 2100 miles in length to take the sub-surface saline waters to the drain and Salton Sea.



AN AERIAL VIEW OF MOSAIC LEACHING PATTERN

From the air the dikes contoured across farm lands hold back leaching water look like a mosaic pattern. Leaching is a process of sinking four feet of irrigation water through the soils to flush accumulated salts into drainage pipes buried about seven feet below the surface. Reclaimed land then becomes suitable for cultivation.

The problems relating to the reclamation of salt-affected soils has been studied in detail by the Cooperators and experiments relating to the removal of excessive salts from the salt-affected soils were carried out. The Colorado River water, even though it has approximately one ton of total soluble salts per acre-foot of water, is high in gypsum and is a very good reclamation water.

From data obtained from the many experiments, it was recommended that the ponding of water on the ground surface, leaching, which dissolves and pushes the salts vertically downward, is the method that results in successful land reclamation.

The most important need for land drainage in the Coachella Valley is to remove the soluble salts from the soil. In most soils and natural waters in arid regions, there is contained a large percentage of soluble salts. At the present time the drainage control system that has been installed to control the level of the ground water and to remove the soluble salts, has been the underground farm tile drainage systems. These have been adequate to control the drainage problem and are an absolute necessity in the reclamation of areas with a high water table and soil conditions as we have here in Coachella Valley.

The farm tile drainage system is laid out in a grid arrangement with a base line or collector line of 8-inch

diameter pipe with laterals of either 4, 5, or 6-inch diameter pipe depending on the length of the lateral. The average depth of the drain tile is seven feet below the ground surface. The actual spacing depends upon the permeability of the soil but for all practical purposes, because the soil profile is so stratified, practicability and not permeability determines the spacing. These farm drainage systems discharge into the outlet drainage system as provided by the Water District. There has been installed 2,100 miles of on-farm tile pipe on 35,000 acres.

The main outlet drains for all farm tile drainage system are constructed and maintained by the Water District. All of the drainage waters discharge into the Salton Sea which is the drainage basin for both the Imperial and Coachella Valleys.

Two Kinds of Drains

The outlet drains are either open drains or underground pipe drains. The open drains are used in the area between the agricultural lands and the Salton Sea and as large valley-wide collector drains where it is not feasible to use pipe. In the rest of the valley underground pipe drains are used as the outlet system. The completed system will be composed of 250 miles of open drains of which 25 miles is the Whitewater River flowing through the center of the valley.

The program of agricultural drainage for Coachella Valley is based upon the best data obtainable.

Grapes Took 10 Days to Get to New York

"Forty-eight years ago there was nothing you could buy to keep you cool except an electric fan and all that did was stir the hot air," claimed James E. Pippin, in 1968. He was a member of the Coachella Valley County Water District Board of Directors in 1932 and 1933.

He came here in June 1920 and resided on the 20-acre remnant of 80 acres which he helped his wife's uncle develop at the northeast corner of Highway 111 and Madison. (He died in 1971.)

Mr. Pippin was a native of Richland, Missouri, where he grew up on a farm. He attended Teachers College at Springfield, and while getting his education he "batched and farmed the family farm for eight years when my parents retired to town."

Was School Teacher

He taught country school for two years before going to Springfield and getting his certificate. He "still wanted to be a teacher." He was married in 1918 and came to California where his wife's uncle urged him to go into farming with him, but he returned to Missouri for two years.

He came back to go into partnership with his wife's uncle, John Schell who had bought 120 acres, 80 acres in the present place and 40 acres of Jimmy Northrup in Section 28. He managed the ranch, one of the first jobs being uprooting all the old date palms on the Northrup place because many of them were seedlings.

The first 80 was in Malaga grapes, which were recommended by the experiment station.

"In those days it took a car of grapes 10 days to get East. Sometimes they iced the cars en route, sometimes not. We planted more Malagas and when they came in three years later the Malagas were a drug on the market. Too many were planted. Those who had put in Thompson Seedless were making money because they were earlier and better eating. The eighth year we pulled out the Malagas and started all over with Thomsons and planted 80 acres of grapefruit."

Worked With Fresno

When they developed the 80 acres, Pippin said "there were two huge dunes that had to be leveled. We had the old Fresno scrapers and four horses. We'd get a bite of about a quarter of yard, drag it out two or three hundred feet and dump it and then ride the scraper back. I remember we let out the contract to a Mexican. One of them I hired in 1923 stayed with me 40 years. The present caretaker also came here about 1923."

Together with Mr. Schell, Pippin developed the Schell Ranch and Packing Co. with the packing house located on Highway 111 and now owned by Mr. Morgan Ward and his son on 60 acres. Pippin recalled that he first shipped through cooperatives but later developed his own packing operation. After selling to Ward, Pippin in 1946 built Coachella Valley Packing Company on Highway 86 where Sambo's restaurant is located, shipping citrus, corn and grapes. He also packed for others until he sold the plant about 1958.

On First Board

He was a member of the first board of the Coachella Valley Cemetery District, and was the only surviving member of that board. Charles Jones and Dr. Clark were other members. He served 18 years, many years as president, until he resigned about 1965. The move for a cemetery district was started by the Indio Exchange Club of which he was a charter member and past president. The club was meeting in the basement of the

Potter Hotel and members decided the district would be a good project.

"We didn't have a cemetery. A couple of small, poorly kept ones in various places, one in the northeast part of Indio, and the Goth Cemetery a private one west of Coachella. We removed the bodies and relocated them in the new cemetery on South Jackson after we had contacted those relatives we could for permission."

Because of his charter membership and community service, Pippin was made an honorary member of the National Exchange Club after suffering a stroke about 1955.

Honored By Masons

He was a member of the Methodist Church. He was the first member of the Masonic Lodge in the Valley to receive his 50-year pin which was presented him at the first meeting held in the new Temple on South Jackson Street in 1964. Two years later he received his 50-year gold pin from the Royal Arch Masons, presented by the Palm Springs R. A. M.

He was also a member of the Al Malukah Shrine Temple as well as Date Empire Shrine Club and Palm Springs Shrine Club.

For 48 years he had been a continuous member of the Automobile Club of Southern California.

He had been active in Boy Scouts, was a council member, chairman of Valley committees. He had been a member of the Advisory Board of the Bank of America when it started and was the surviving member of the original three man board: A. B. Martin, Tedd Johnston and Pippin.

Boosted Citrus Label

He had been a member of the Grapefruit Advisory Board, promoting the name "Coachella" on desert citrus. He had been a member of the Indio Elks Lodge.

He was a member of the Indio Elementary School Board 18 years: A. B. Martin, Pippin and Thomas Allen. The Indian Wells School District was merged with Indio during Pippin's term and he said that H. L. "Bert" Cavanagh succeeded Allen on the board. Indian Wells had a one-room school and sold it a auction.

What were those early days like? Pippin said they were "hot and dusty with snakes and winds and gnats." Refrigeration has changed the Valley.

"Often in the summer we'd go to bed and couldn't sleep it was so hot. We'd get up and dip the bed sheet in the bath tub, wring it out, spread it back on the bed, sprawl on it and by the time it was dry you'd be asleep. If you did that most any other place in the country you'd wake up with pneumonia."

Developed By Woods

"We did that quite a few years until I think it was Art Woods who invented a water cooler with water dripping on burlap, later excelsior pads, and it wasn't long before everybody had one. Art was always tinkering with something."

"Sundays we used to visit the various canyons and ride horses or picnic. We'd go to Salton Sea. The Pawleys, Smileys, Lee Andersons, and Spareys were among them. We had standing plans that next Sunday we'd go to Salton Sea or another place, Travertine Point, Narbonne Ranch, Magnesia Canyon. There wasn't a house around these places. We'd get together, compare notes on how we were getting along and learn we were all faring about alike. We didn't know how poor we were. Thinking back, it was a good life."

He recalled that the old Lincoln School was located on the southeast corner of Bliss and Oasis, facing Bliss. The first

Roosevelt School was built while he was on the school board.

Johnson Elected

"Our board employed the late Rex Johnson. The board employed teachers in the early days, too. Rex came out to see me when 'Bud' Martin sent him out. He was first hired as a teacher, later made vice principal, and when Merle Taylor died, we made him principal and the Superintendent of Schools. In those days, everyone had an opinion on how the school ought to be run, even as to where the bus runs should be located, but it was never any serious question."

When the Flying Eagle Railroad line was built to Eagle Mountain, Gil Shea the contractor invited Pippin and other officials to ride the first train up in 1948.

"Palm Springs didn't get started until after World War II." He remembered when there was "nothing between Indio and Palm Springs. Jimmy Northrup had a lot of influence, he managed to get the road paved past his place when it was improved toward Palm Springs. We bought 40 acres and A. L. Wood bought the land across the road."

Recalled Water Fight

He recalled the long struggle to get the bill through Congress to build the All American Canal and then the battle to get the Coachella Branch and a separate contract from Imperial Irrigation District.

"Thinking was divided whether we should go with Imperial and its water rights which some thought were better. People may have disagreed but they were honest in their beliefs. We got the job done and the canal built and later the distribution system, that's the main thing. The District's attorney, H. L. Carnahan, former lieutenant governor, advised the board and Tom Yager, until his death, was the District's counsel, and he was on the job all the time going to Washington and attending many, many meetings.

What are some of the biggest changes in the 48 years?

Pippin said the All American Canal water saw people begin to come here. "Three years after the canal water was in use nearly all the tillable soil in the valley was in the hands of speculators or being farmed. We went from about 16,000 acres in the early 40's to the present more than 66,000 acres today."

The second factor he discussed was tourism. With the pressure off the underground water table upper valley developments became possible. Thousands have made this their winter home and golf courses have provided a great attraction. He pointed out that there was a time that every trip to Palm Springs saw a new motel or hotel being built. "And they are still building them," he declared.

Some of the early agricultural problems he recalled came during the World War when the transient workers found other work and the labor pool dried up. Mexican laborers were brought in and now the lack of that labor has wiped out many small operators who had little truck farms and vegetable acreage. Much of that acreage has moved to Mexico.

He recalled that there were some Japanese farmers in the Valley in the early 1920's. "They were always industrious and capable farmers and either owned the land or it was held in the names of their children who were citizens."

During the depression years this valley escaped serious unemployment (in 1935 the county listed only 100 from the Valley on relief). "We escaped tax delinquencies which caused problems elsewhere in the state and nation. There were no lands of consequence sold for taxes, as I recall," he said.

Bank Site Recalled

The first building for the Bank of America was located on the island on Smurr, Miles and Highway 86. It then moved to the Lewis Building (now Abrams) across the street on Miles, then to the corner of Fargo and Bliss and later located at Bliss and Oasis.

"The bank's advisory board is the only board I am still a member of, and I went on when it was started."

He recalled that the first grapefruit planted in the Valley was the Marsh Seedless. A Grapefruit Advisory Board was organized to stabilize markets and maintain quality. "Coachella grapefruit once commanded a premium and we stamped the fruit with the name, but the growers let it get away from them and now it is all the same whether Coachella, Imperial, Yuma or Arizona. You can't even buy Coachella Grapefruit here," he observed.



VALLEY'S FIRST HOSPITAL LOCATED IN INDIO

Dr. Russell Gray operated a small hospital in building at right on northwest corner of Miles and Towne in Indio in the 1930's when this photo was taken. Dr. Gene Morris later opened the La Casitas Hospital on Miles Avenue south of the Aladdin Theatre. On Morris' death the Valley Memorial Hospital was organized and expanded that facility. In 1977 was incorporated into the Indio Community Hospital located on South Monroe today.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

Laflin Pioneered Large Medjool Variety

The Coachella Valley County Water District was organized to get Colorado River water to supplement our underground water. That was the claim of Ben T. Laflin who came to Coachella Valley to check into the date industry, liked what he saw, came back in 1912, and in the late summer purchased the 160 acres where he and Mrs. Laflin and their son and grandchildren lived in 1968 when he related the following story:

Laflin said the water levels went down in the valley as more land was cleared and farmed.

"We knew we had to do something. It became quite apparent that there was obviously not enough well water to develop the valley. Imperial Valley had been irrigating from the Colorado River with a canal through Mexico. They were talking about a new high line canal from above Yuma through the sandhills. Folks up here thought that we should bring a canal and deliver water here by gravity.

"The only way we could see to get Colorado River water was to organize a water district and with Tom Yager and Dr. S. S. M. Jennings as sparkplugs we got out petitions and voted it in."

Laflin early became interested in the Medjool variety of dates, the first eleven offshoots being imported in 1927 by Dr. Walter T. Swingle, plant pathologist with the date experiment station.

Medjools Here In 1936

These eleven were planted in southern Nevada on an Indian Reservation because French Morocco, where they came from, had been ravaged with a plant disease. The Moroccans had a monopoly on Medjools but allowed Swingle to see if he could find some disease-free palms and bring them to the United States. He found eleven in an isolated oasis. Of these, nine survived and they and their crop of offshoots were moved to the Indio station in 1936.

There were 72 plantings in Indio and the station proportioned them out to growers of good record of the valley. Mr. Laflin obtained 24.

"I never sold any but I began acquiring them from others. I now have twenty acres, which according to Dr. J. R. Furr, director of the Indio station, is more Medjools in a permanent location, than anywhere in the world. We are planning to plant the 20 acres north (between the channel and Highway 111) to Medjools from our crop of offshoots and nursery stock," Laflin said.

The date palm disease wiped out the French Morocco Medjools and the United States has furnished offshoots to get the variety re-established there. Israel purchased 200 offshoots from Laflin the summer of 1965 and because of careful handling and packing every offshoot is reported to have survived.

Laflin was a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley. He had started in mechanical engineering but changed to horticulture. He and his son, Ben T. Jr., farmed about 300 acres mostly in dates and grapes including the new Perlette varieties.

Came As A Teacher

Mrs. Laflin came to the valley as a teacher in 1918. Her first principals at the Thermal School were Mr. Wells and Mrs. Walker. She had taught a year near Kingman, Ariz., left Thermal to go to El Segundo and on September 8, 1920, she married Mr. Laflin. She retired from teaching in the Indio school system after 30 years in the classroom.

When Laflin first came to the valley he took up a relinquishment on a desert claim of 160 acres north of Palm

Desert Country Club Estates. He soon determined this was not good farm land and bought the first land of the present holding from an elderly man, James L. F. McLain. The adjoining land to the north was purchased in 1966 from Judge L. J. Martin, Tulsa Okla.

Mr. Laflin served two terms on the Coachella Valley High School District board of trustees from 1920 to 1928. His son Ben T. Jr. also served on the same high school district board as trustee. It may be the only situation in the valley where the son had been named to serve on a school board that the father also served.

Thousand Palms Got First Well Back In 1912

James A. Welcome came to the Valley in 1913, after serving four years in the Marine Corps. He worked with George Richey and Mr. Holden developing water in Thousand Palms Canyon and piping it down for use in developing land in Section 22 owned by Mr. Richey, later known as Gertrude Hittson Ranch and now owned by Martin Ruderman, and also the land now owned by Charles Doyle.

He returned to the area in 1918 after serving in the Army in WWI, clearing land for development, according to Mina Welcome, in 1968, early secretary of the Water District board.

The first well in the area was sunk by Layne Bowler in 1912 for Home Builders of Southern California in Section 19. This later became the McKesson Ranch, and is now the Harry Marrell property. The Home Builders set out some of the early plantings of figs.

There was no post office until one was established at Edom August 25, 1913 with Carrie B. Geiger as postmistress. At that time Southern Pacific had an agent and two operators. About 1922 a post office was established, using the McKesson Ranch house for the office.

The first planting of dates in the area was about one mile south of the railroad and were moved down to what is now known as the Bovee Ranch, by August Strelow, Sr., in the summer of 1923.

First Grapefruit In 1925

Fred L. Brainerd developed the first grapefruit orchard in 1925, now known as the Waldron Ranch. His father, Dr. H. D. Brainerd was a stockholder in the Home Builders and when the company dissolved Mr. Brainerd acquired the land as part settlement. W. J. Hittson planted grapefruit in the early '30's.

"Rocky Mountain" Kennedy sank a well and planted dates on what is known as Desert Moon Ranch, owned and operated by Helen Hyde, in the early '30's.

The McKessons came to the Valley about 1920, raised alfalfa, sweet potatoes, cotton, Casaba melons, early figs and olives, later planting grapefruit. They opened a service station, garage and restaurant soon after the highway was opened in 1923. Oldtimers still remember the signs along the highway "Edom where they feed 'em, and Richfield gasoline."

About 1932 an oil company set up a rig two miles south of Edom, but never started to drill for oil.

Frank Willis and wife, Maude, homesteaded what is known

as Willis Palms. He hoped to use the water, (that seeps from the hills where the palms grow) to raise early vegetables, but the water was too alkaline. Willis used to tell the story that a transient stopped at the house and wanted to work for a meal. Willis showed him the woodpile. Later he went out to check on him and found him dead. The coroner never could decide if it was the free meal or the thought of work that killed him.

The first subdivision, Shangri La Palms, was started about 1948. A move was made at about that time to change the name from Edom to Thousand Palms, the name taken from the canyon northeast of Edom.

James A. Welcome and wife, Mina, came to Edom the fall of 1923 and homesteaded 160 acres. It is a part of the original homestead that the Welcomes have subdivided. Until the highway was constructed in the spring of 1923, the area was reached by a trail over the sand dunes from Highway 111, and the road to Indio was the trail paralleling the power lines.

Allowed Army Time

In proving up on his homestead, Welcome was allowed time for his Army service, so it was only necessary to live for seven months out of the first year. When he was making plans to come down to homestead, the Welcomes had been living in

Fight Over High School Site Recalled By Gridley

Truman J. Gridley, who served eight years on the Coachella Valley County Water District Board of Directors from 1932 to 1940 came to the Valley in 1905.

His father succumbed to the talk of the wonders of this Valley by Randolph Freeman, publisher of the Coachella Valley Submarine. Freeman's blandishments fell on fertile ears because his father had experienced ten years of drought in succession in the Ojai area where Truman was born.

"They were pinched for water in the Ojai area and when Freeman told about the abundance of water and government land available, my father came down and bought 40 acres. Freeman had a paper also at Calipatria including the one at Coachella, Mr. Gridley recalled in 1968.

After graduating from Thacker school, Mr. Gridley worked for a sugar factory in Oxnard for three years. He was 23 when he came here.

He remembered Dr. S. S. M. Jennings, first water district board president, as a "fine person, a fine doctor, with a manner that deceived many because he had a wonderful sense of humor, although he was gruff, at times.

"He drove an old jalopy, a Model T, most of the time. He would often go around corners on two wheels, and I can remember many times when he cut through the Sandy Corner filling station barreling along. He was always in a hurry, but he got things done," Gridley declared.

He recalled that he came down here to farm his father's 40 acres which they later sold, then worked for other ranchers and leased other land.

23 Years with Narbonne

G. H. Narbonne, a Los Angeles man, who came west from Salem, Mass., once owned about 350 acres on the west and southwest part of the Valley. He employed Gridley in 1914 to operate his ranch and plant 160 acres to dates and grapes. For more than 23 years Gridley managed the ranch and packing house.

Narbonne had Gridley install one of the Valley's first clay tennis courts and the ranch and courts provided many Sunday gatherings with entertainment and activity in the early days.

"People would bring picnic lunches and remain all day," Mr. and Mrs. Gridley said. He recalled one summer when they

Los Angeles. "I decided I didn't want to stay there alone, so I wrote letters to the Southern Pacific, the chambers of commerce in Indio and Coachella, and W. L. Paul, Secretary of the Coachella Chamber, wrote saying an attorney was looking for a stenographer, (no secretaries in those days) but he wanted a man. I got the attorney's name and made application, got the job and came down before my husband did," Mrs. Welcome recalled in 1968.

"The attorney was Thomas C. Yager, who was attorney for Coachella Valley County Water District and Coachella Storm-water District, and through him I became secretary for Coachella Valley County Water District and Coachella Storm-water District. Dr. S. S. M. Jennings was chairman of the Board during the time I was secretary. I had to leave my work when our oldest daughter was born."

"At that time the principal interest of the District was to secure passage of the Swing-Johnson bill, providing building of Boulder Dam and the All American Canal. Mr. Yager spent many months in Washington lobbying for the bill. Conserving runoff waters from the mountains through the spreading areas, and filing on all unclaimed waters, were some of the objectives of the District," she said.

had a watermelon feed early in July but it was so cold outside that the party was indoors. It was while at the Narbonne Ranch that the Gridleys purchased and developed his home property on Avenue 66 west of Valerie Jean's. The Gridleys moved to the Avenue 66 ranch in 1942, building their home in 1943.

Narbonne was a man interested in big autos and had several machines Gridley said. Bill Bendel worked for Narbonne in Los Angeles as his chauffeur and mechanic. Bill kept them all going, the big ones and small ones. He later installed Bill on the ranch as mechanic and his brother Earl started a garage on the corner where Valerie Jean is located. In the early days it was known as "Bendel's Corner."

Gridley said that in the early days there was no road from Bendel's Corner to Avenue 62. The two miles were not open and cars as well as horse drawn vehicles had to go around east, past the Indian Reservation. Narbonne directed his ranch men to put together a crew and brush off and level the two mile strip in order to open a dirt track.

"It wasn't a road. It was a track," he said, until the state highway came through.

In the late 1930's he left Narbonne Ranch and managed Sunnipalms, just west of Indio on Miles Avenue, which was then the end of the road against the Whitewater River. He was at Sunnipalms (Crane Ranch) for about four years where he also built a tennis court and swimming pool.

The four grandsons of Charles Crane lived with the Gridleys between high school and college during this time and one day he came upon one of them digging in the ground.

He asked him what he was doing and the lad replied he was "digging a swimming pool." Gridley finished the project and the boys had a swimming pool.

The boys lived with the Gridleys "one at a time." One in 1968 was teaching at the University of Colorado and in Munich, Germany.

Gridley also served on the Coachella Valley Cemetery Board from September 13, 1954 to August 8, 1963, when he resigned.

Fight Over School Site

He recalled that at the time Narbonne gave 10 acres for the high school site, Thermal and Coachella were fighting over the

location. The school was then located in what is now the Thermal Hotel.

"It seemed like a long way out in the country then, but the way it turned out it was the best thing that happened for the high school," Gridley declared.

As a date grower, Gridley said he always remained independent of date associations. When William W. Cook's father died the date association asked Gridley to take charge and he did so for a year. Leonhardt Swingle was the packing house manager and Donald Mitchell the sales manager. The association had just built the ice plant and storage room.

"Mr. Cook was a fine man," Gridley recalled.

He also remembered the first phone service. Dale Kiler was in charge of Holtby Myer's company out of Mecca.

"The line was single wires on poles. Storms would come along and blow a pole down and we'd have no service, or poor service at best. We would call Kiler's attention to the fallen pole problem and he'd reply, 'Well, wait until a few more fall

down and then we'll put them all up,' and that sometimes took several weeks."

Early Weekend Visitors

Who were some of the people who came down on weekends and Sundays besides the Narbones? Gridley said that the most frequent visitors were the Hugh Proctors, Dr. Jennings, Chester Spareys, Logan Wilshire and Harry Marshalls, Ben Teagles, Sid Ickes, G. W. Waterbury, Clifford L. Littles, Vic Metzlers, Leonard Haywards and many more.

Mrs. Gridley was a native of Wisconsin. She graduated from Riverside High School and Stanford University. In 1910 she (Miss Beatrice Maine) taught first through fourth grades at Coachella when she met Truman Gridley. They were married in 1917 (July 17). She had also spent a year in Germany, and taught five years in the Hemet High School before her marriage and coming to live on the Avenue 66 Narbonne Ranch with her husband.

Art Wood Boosted Early Highways

BUILT FIRST EVAPORATIVE COOLER, MEMBER OF FIRST INDIO COUNCIL

One of the men who helped circulate petitions to establish the Coachella Valley County Water District in November and December of 1917 was Arthur L. Wood, Indio resident and valley booster after coming here in 1914.

He is one of those people, along with his wife Lois, who helped establish this valley as one of good neighborliness and enthusiasm and what follows is their story told in 1968:

They came west from Illinois to Pomona in 1913 to escape the bitter winters only to witness their orange-growing venture freeze out. They were ready to move again when Bert and Kathryn Woodhouse, who had taken up a homestead in the valley, urged them to join in pioneer homesteading.

Bought Land in 1914

They went to visit the Woodhouse family and caught the fever. In August 1914 they bought 40 acres from Jimmy Northrup near what is known as Shield Date Gardens. The land was already planted to figs, apricots, grapes, dates and some alfalfa. Nearby lived other settlers, their homes hidden by hummocks and dunes, but one of the factors stimulating the purchase was the windmill, a water tank and — indoor plumbing.

One of the first invitations Mrs. Wood received was to join the new Alturian Country Club which later became the Woman's Club of Indio. Mrs. Wood joined and served as president from 1916-1917 and later for a two year term 1925-1927.

Had 300 Souls

"Indio had a population of about 300 and it didn't look very promising for very many more to come here," Art said. "But a chamber of commerce was organized and we started to work. Because Indio was a railroad town we had lots of enthusiastic railroad men to help us.

"The summers were hot and dusty but the winters were warm and wonderful. Most of us stuck it out but a few quit to go back to 'God's Country' and I've often wondered where that was.

"As more people came the citizens began to think about incorporation of Indio. The vote for incorporation carried and the city was established in 1930. Some folks wanted to disincorporate but they lost that issue. LeRoy Pawley was the first mayor and he laid a dollar bill on the table with the remark

"now the city has money". (The bill is framed and hangs in the city council chambers today.) Other members of the first council were J. E. Semple, Bud Martin, C. N. Sinclair and A. L. Wood. Mrs. Ione MacKenzie was the first city clerk and Francis Koehler, chief of police. Johnny Boatright was the justice of the peace.

"Clubs were organizing in the meantime to work for the valley and civic affairs. The Indio Exchange Club was organized June 11, 1925, in the lunch room below where the Potter Hotel is now located. It was called the 'Dugout.' W. S. Myers was first president of the club of which I was a charter member and secretary."

The first important project was to establish a cemetery district since there were only a few defined cemeteries and poorly maintained.

"Another project which all the valley subscribed to was the Boulder Canyon Project Act and the All American Canal, with a branch to serve Coachella Valley. Exchangite Tom Yager, water district counsel, was the prime booster of that. Wells were going down every year. We had to have more water or the valley would dry up."

When the first city council met, after incorporation May 16, 1930, Art recalled "we gathered around a table in the town shack and tried to decide what we had to do. Being plain business people, running a city council was all 'Greek' to us. But we located a 'Municipal Handbook' with all the information we needed and went on from there, and with some dignity, I might add."

Wood gave J. Win Wilson, founder of The Date Palm a weekly newspaper in Indio, credit for boosting for roads, the town and the valley. "We needed a better highway across the country as well as through the valley. We used Box Canyon route to Blythe for many years but floods would wash it out almost every year.

"We boosted the present Interstate 10 over the hills to Blythe and Phoenix which finally ended up as Highway 60 and our motto became 'Stick-to-Sixty.'" Wood was a member of the Highway 60 committee for several decades, attending national and regional gatherings.

People in Palm Springs had unsuccessfully long sought a highway up Palm Canyon to Thomas Mountain. Several of the

(continued on page 66)



VALLEY'S IRRIGATION WATER TRAVELS DRAMATIC COLORADO RIVER COURSE

From its source in the mountains of Colorado, Wyoming and Utah, water for irrigation of farms of Coachella Valley travels a total of 1,300 miles through the most spectacular river course in the world. Principal installations along that route controlling the water flow are pictured here: 1, Glen Canyon Dam, northwest Arizona, impounding Lake Powell; 2, Hoover Dam, with Lake Mead; 3, Parker Dam, last storage location for C. V. water and diversion point for MWD to Southern California; 4, Imperial Dam, near Yuma, where Coachella water is diverted from stream, silt removal basins in right center; 5, turnout of Coachella Canal from All American Canal, across bottom (it's 123 1/2 miles to end of Coachella Canal from this point) plans are underway to line the first 49 miles with concrete; and 6, the precious water reaches the valley.

citizens of Indio including Wood and Wilson and Wilson Howell moved to get "Pines-to-Palms" highway up what is now known as Seven Level Hill and they succeeded.

Charley King, who found the desert climate beneficial, was an early aggressive real estate man. He and Gillette teamed up to subdivide a section in the southwest part of town. J. Win Wilson did the same. King donated a lot to the Indio Woman's Club. The women purchased an adjoining lot, and built the Woman's Clubhouse where it now stands. Gillette also developed land west of Indio and in the Palm Desert area.

When the power line came in 1914 it was welcome because it marked the end of the era of kerosene lamps and stoves.

Sometime after Highway 99 was paved through the valley about 1920, Dr. June McCarroll, the first SP nurse and later valley doctor, painted a white line down the center of the highway past their place at the north west edge of Coachella. She took the matter up with the Women's Club seeking to get state support. Other women's clubs joined in promoting the idea which was eventually adopted for universal use.

Art Wood remembered leasing ground for 50 years from Esten Campbell, and building Wood's Service Station on the northeast corner of Miles Avenue facing Smurr and Highway 99.

"On this lot many things were started. The lease began in 1927. The first imitation of a community library started there consisting of a bookcase filled with old, but interesting, books collected by Mrs. West, first librarian. The first desert cooler was made there, consisting of a 4 x 4 x 8 ft. frame covered with burlap, with a house fan at the bottom and the burlap watered with a hose. The first valley auto camp started there. Bulletins were mimeographed and sent coast-to-coast promoting Highway 60, the eastern portion of which was reported to have been surveyed by George Washington.

"P. L. Everett had the first filling station in Indio on Fargo near the junction of Tingman Street.

"Mr. A. G. Tingman started the original Indio Townsite before the turn of the century. Mr. John Marshall started the first water works system in Indio, with William Decker in

charge. Decker was also a member of the first volunteer fire department. The fire commissioners of the district organized in 1926 included J. Win Wilson, Decker and Wood. Charles Green later replaced Decker.

"We bought an old second hand Ford fire engine which may have been second hand but it saved the town of Indio many times. We found out it took young men to go up against those hot fires. I remember Mitchell Insolo fighting the Jim Cash grocery fire, a building with burlap ceiling and palm leaves overhead. Mitch and the boys saved Indio that night. Harry MacCausland held the title of chief the longest.

"Whitewater's coming!" That was a flood warning Art and Lois Wood heard and feared in the early days along with other pioneers.

"That alarm scared the life out of us. We had to hitch up a team and plow a ridge around in front of our places. We'd sit down to rest and then a call would come from the house: 'Hey! The water's coming in at the rear! Then the water got to the well pit. Then it found a rat hole and began to pour down, and the only way to stop it was to build a ridge around it. One farmer failed to stop the water from getting into his well pit and in fifteen minutes it had washed a hole big enough to bury a horse and filled his pit with sand."

"That's why the Coachella Valley Stormwater District was organized to get some order out of all the individual levees the land owners were throwing up and thus diverting water every which way."

In 1924 the Woods built the home they occupied on the northwest corner of King and Miles. "It was a long way out in the country in those days," Lois said, soon the Dr. Smileys, Marshall Peters, Ted Johnstons, Chet Spareys, Harry Moores, Mrs. Abrams, Ted Gentrys, Harry Whittelseys, Ernie Petzolds and others built.

Mrs. Wood was a member of the first Indio Library Board which membership she held until the 1950's. Other board members were Mrs. Fred Becker, Elizabeth Fry, Mrs. Jane Walker and Rev. Imel. She also served on the first Indio Planning Commission and Beautification Committee.



OASIS STATION ON HIGHWAY TO IMPERIAL VALLEY

THE BISBEES OPERATED an "oasis" for travellers on the Indio to Brawley highway for many years. Known as the "Oasis Station and Cafe" the area surrounding it soon assumed the name. Located north of the county line, south of what is now Valerie Jean's, (24 miles south of Indio), it was a popular rest stop. Photo taken about 1926, road was first known as Highway 99 (now 86).

C. V. Historical Society Photo

Cahuilla, Coahuilla, Conchilla, Coachella?

By Ole J. Nordland

How did Coachella Valley get its name?

The search for the origins of the name "Coachella" is allusive. There are many hints, there are few records, and there are many stories.

The most popular myth that makes interesting telling, commonly circulated, but of uncertain veracity, is one that is referred to by both Erwin G. Gudde, 1969, *California Place Names* and W. C. Mendenhall, U. S. Geological Service geologist, in a December 17, 1908 letter to the U. S. Board on Geographic Names. The story is in the following form:

The word "Coachella" came originally from the Spanish "conchilla" meaning little shells. The floor of the desert covered by the ancient Lake Cahuilla is carpeted with tiny shells, which may still be found in uncultivated areas or along the old sea's shores. About 1900 maps of the area were prepared and the cartographer made an error and changed "Conchilla" to "Coachella" . . . Or it is said that it was a printer who made the mistake in printing maps of the area . . . Or that it was the post office spelling error when it established the office at Woodspur and renamed it "Coachella".

So what do you do to trace the name?

You look for old maps, and the oldest are those provided by the Board of Geographic Names and the topographic maps of the U. S. Geological Service. The search includes early San Diego County maps as well as Washington, D. C., archives.

It is pretty well established that the valley was named early for the Cahuilla Indians who were here when the Spanish first contacted them in the 1820's. Gudde says the Spanish missions referred to a "heathen Cuchuil" Indian as early as July 30, 1783. He also found references to "Caguilla" in 1830's and in 1845 he found it in English as "Cahuilla".

The earliest map is probably one by Lt. G. K. Warren in 1857 in the Pacific Railroad Reports in which the Army Topographical Engineers' study of potential rail routes use the name "Coahuilla". The U. S. Land Office, according to Tom Patterson, Riverside historian, used the spelling "Cohuilla" and in 1873 the Widney (State Geological) Survey mapped the

valley as "Coahuilla". An illustrated map compiled for an 1883 history of San Bernardino County shows "Cuahuila Valley".

The U. S. Geological Survey reports that "the earliest topographic map in the area was the San Jacinto 1:125,000-scale map survey in 1897-98 and published in 1901. That map shows the name 'Conchilla Desert' for the northwestern part of the basin. The name form 'Conchilla' was used by scientists at that time. The map was reprinted in 1905 and the same spelling appeared.

"The adjoining Indio 1:125,000-scale topographic map, surveyed in 1901 and published in 1904, shows 'Conchilla Desert' for the northwestern portion of the basin and 'Conchilla Valley' for the north central portion. However, the stop on the Southern Pacific was labeled 'Coachella.' . . ."

Another early map of the USGS shows the large words (between Bradley Canyon and Dry Camp) "Conchilla Desert" and in smaller type (between Indian Well and Indio) "Conchilla Valley". This 1903 map shows the railroad stations with "Coachella" located between Indio and Thermal. All similar to the 1904 maps.

The railroad has no records that tell why the station was named "Coachella". We know that the siding at that location on the railroad was originally called "Woodspur".

Walter C. Mendenhall in his 1908 letter to the U. S. Board on Geographic Names in reference to the "Coachella" station wrote: "I do not know the origin of this term, but it is possible that it is a corruption of Conchilla. Whether or not that be true, the term Coachella, applied first to the station, and afterward to the entire valley about it, has become fixed in local usage, and cannot now be displaced. It appears universally in current news literature and should be recognized on our maps."

And it is interesting to note that Mendenhall's Water Supply Paper No. 225 in 1909 conforms to the use of the word "Coachella".

Henry Gannett, in a letter dated December 19, 1908, disagreed with Mendenhall and previous map makers of the



EARLY WELL DRILLING

In the early 1900's this was one of the methods used by well drillers to meet the demands of settlers. This horse-drawn steam well drill outfit belonged to C. B. Estel and is shown on Coachella's Front Street with the S. P. Depot in the background.

— C. V. Historical Society Photos



GEORGE WHITE

Attended a summer meeting in 1901 with his parents when he said settlers and the development company named "Coachella" leading to November 30 establishment of a post office by that name.

USGS. After finding on maps the name of "Conchilla" valley and desert . . . "I am strongly of the opinion that 'Conchilla' which he (Mendenhall) says means 'small shells', is a proper name, and that the name as he finds it applies to a railroad station originated in a typographical error . . ." So Gannett, once Geographer in charge of topographic surveys, shows his lack of agreement but adds to the myth and controversy.

In any case the USGS reports that "the spelling 'Coachella' was approved by the Board on Geographic Names on January 6, 1909 after the same form was found to be in the current Rand and McNally Atlas and U. S. Postal Guide. The Board's decision was reflected on the next reprinting of the San Jacinto (1909) and Indio (1910) topographic maps . . ." (To confuse more, the writer has seen an Indio quadrangle map by the USGS, printed in 1904, using the spelling "Coachella Valley".)

Inquiry into the local history reveals several other facts that led to the name "Coachella". An April, 1902 map by Engineer George Pearson reveals the name of a development company by the name of "Coachella Valley Land and Water Company". This is the group that began subdivision of Coachella, it has been reported. The company had land throughout the valley and in Coachella and Indio areas and this name crops up on title reports even today.

That 1902 map supports the following story:

George White, a pioneer of the valley, gave a first hand authentic story both logical and believable. He told Paul Wilhelm, valley historian and Ole Nordland, then editor of The Date Palm, a semi-weekly newspaper in Indio, an identical story. (John R. Holliday, early well driller, reported the same story, also.) The land and development company backed by the Southern Pacific Railroad was selling valley lots and farm land. The Coahuilla and Conchilla names were prevalent. A. G. Tingman, Indio pioneer and railroad man and merchant, favored the name Conchilla and had promoted it for several years. But not everyone liked the name so the land company called a meeting in Woodspur. They were laying out the new townsite. They wanted opinions on a name for the plat sheets and, because they were going to petition for a post office, they wanted to recommend a name. No one like the name "Woodspur".

White was a boy when he attended a 1901 meeting with his parents. He said one group wanted to call the town "Coahuilla" the name the land company was then considering, another group supported the name "Conchilla", and "the dispute was spirited". The early summer Sunday afternoon meeting at the land company's office was well attended.

The settlers argued that whatever the name it ought to be easier to pronounce than "Coahuilla" and the final agreement was a compromise — thus COA(huilla) plus (Con)CHILLA became "Coachella", (which meant nothing.) So the name was submitted to the post office department. Woodspur disappeared and "Coachella" was born by being given a new U. S. post office of that name on November 30, 1901. Elmo Proctor, a clerk in Tingman's store, reported Tingman as exclaiming: "They have given our beautiful valley a bastard name without meaning in any language!"

The first edition of "The Submarine", a weekly newspaper, published in Indio on November 27, 1901, refers to "the people of the whole Coachella Valley".

Maps now carried the name for the railroad station, the U. S. post office, a newspaper reference, and the land company listed its name as "Coachella Valley Land and Water Co."

But it took until January, 1909 to get "Coachella Valley" on all official government maps.

How did "Coachella" and "Coachella Valley" get their names? At a meeting of settlers and the developer, or by a mistake of a cartographer, printer of post office? The first appears most plausible.

Laboratory Makes Daily Water Check

Since the district's water quality laboratory opened in 1973 it has become respected by the U. S. Geological Survey, California Water Quality Control Board and county and state health departments under the guidance of chemist George Miller.

The laboratory reflects the modern scientific technology necessary to operate a sizable water district today.

CVCWD water resources engineer Bob Spencer, now retired, first requested the lab in 1962.

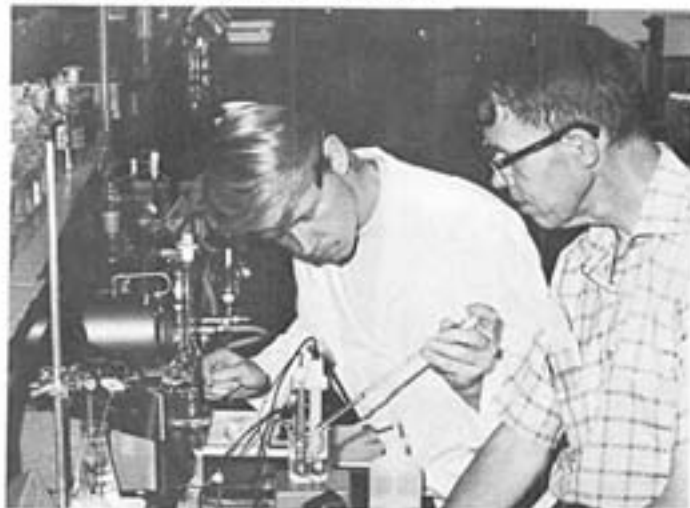
The initial lab, opened at a cost of \$56,000, was paid for with 80 percent state and federal "clean water" grant funds. Its primary functions are the constant monitoring of reclaimed waste water and domestic water for bacterial contamination and meeting mineral requirements for public health.

Data also aid treatment plant operators in more efficient use of their facilities. The lab also is used to make many tests on agricultural, domestic and waste water. Tests include analyses for more than 60 elements and compounds.

The 18 by 50-foot lab was designed by Spencer who had laboratory experience before coming to CVCWD as drainage engineer in 1951. It was necessitated by the district's expansion, especially after it moved into the wastewater reclamation field.

State health department requirements make it necessary to check reclaimed waste water daily for coliform bacteria and to make other water quality checks periodically.

The federal Safe Drinking Water Act, which took effect in June 1977, set monitoring requirements which added a heavy demand to the lab's time and resources.



WIDE VARIETY OF TESTS

The District's laboratory makes many tests on agricultural, domestic and wastewater daily. Monitoring requirements have added demands to the technology necessary. Robert Spencer, Water Resources Engineer since 1951 until he retired in March 1978, and George Miller, laboratory chemist, are shown checking a water sample.



OLD BEACH LINE NEAR CORAL REEF
(South of present Lake Cahuilla)

Coral Reef Marks High Water Beach Line of Lake Cahuilla

Ancient Lake Cahuilla's shore line was first reported by Blake, a member of the Army Engineers' expedition surveying for a railroad route in 1853. The line, approximately 40 feet above sea level, southwest of Thermal, marks the high tide line of the fresh water lake which last existed about 500 to 1000 years ago.

The shore line is not at sea level as some people would believe. The line marks the height of the delta built up by the Colorado River which for eons had carved out the canyons of the main river and tributaries and deposited the silt to form a ridge separating the areas in the United States and Mexico.

The delta ridge is about 8 to 10 miles wide on top of the delta with a thickness of about 60 miles at the sea level mark. The delta restrained the Gulf of California and the silt deposits extend west from Yuma to the Cerro Prieto Mountains on the west where the water of Lake Cahuilla spilled over and flowed into the gulf. The silt delta also extends south toward the gulf and north well into the present Salton Sea.

At Travertine Point in Imperial County is found thick deposits of travertine, most accessible to the public. (See Salton Sea Story Page 40).

Sea Rise Fringe Benefit was 1487 Salvaged Telegraph Poles for CV Telephone Company

"There is no doubt that the early development of the Coachella Valley Home Telephone and Telegraph Company was given great impetus by the formation of the Salton Sea."

So declared J. Curtis Newman, who became president of the company in 1959, now retired and a resident of Newport Beach. He has written a brief history of the early days of the phone system.

The beginnings of telephone service in the valley can be credited to R. Holtby Myers, an attorney who helped found the Redlands Home Telephone Company in 1903.

A developer of a date garden in the Mecca area and the community of Mecca, Myers named Mecca. The community was known as Walters, from 1877 when the railroad built a siding and depot there, until September 26, 1903 when Myers, founder of the Mecca Land Company, was successful in his efforts to change the name.

An early primitive line connected Tingman's Store in Indio, Huntington's in Coachella, Keith's in Thermal and Hill's Caravansary in Mecca. It was used mainly for local messages. Charlie King, later a real estate man in Indio, contrived the line in 1903 by using the top wire of the fence along the railroad as the conduit.

According to Newman, through Myers' efforts and with some capital from shareholders in the Redlands company, the telephone company was organized in early 1906. Its first office and switchboard was located in Thermal because of its central location between Indio and Mecca. Incorporation was granted March 6. On May 10, J. Turnbull was elected first president with Myers as secretary and treasurer.

"At the outset of the company, capital was raised by sale of stock. Subscribers wanting telephone service had to buy one \$100 share of stock. A total of 111 and 1/10th shares were subscribed at the organizational meeting with Myers the principal stockholder," Newman said.

"At that meeting, Myers was authorized to buy 1,487 telephone poles at a cost of \$1.50 each delivered. They were salvaged from the railroad right-of-way that was being abandoned because of the formation of Salton Sea . . . The original system linked the communities of Thermal, Coachella, Indio, Mecca, Flora del Valle and the Martinez Indian Reservation.

J. W. Newman Buys One-Half Share

"In 1908, J. W. Newman, who later was to become the chief force behind the company's expansion, became a shareholder by purchasing one-half a share, then the cost of installation of a phone. As money became harder to raise and the company's debt higher, the installation charge was one-quarter of a share." Newman came to the Thermal area to farm in 1905.

In 1912 the company boasted 118 miles of bracket pole lines, 120 Kellogg instruments, and the Kellogg magneto switchboard, and local connections as well as toll connections with the Pacific Telephone Company, California Sunset Telephone Company and the Arizona Telephone and Telegraph Co. Operating revenues were \$3,031.84. Myers was president, L.D. Mallory was vice-president, and Dale Kiler was secretary.

Truman Gridley once recalled that Kiler also acted as manager and line crew foreman. Spring and Fall rains would regularly cause floods in the Narbonne Ranch and Oasis area washing out pole lines. Subscribers would tie the lines to fence posts until new phone poles could be installed.

"And they would only come when there was enough work to make it worthwhile," Gridley declared. (In 1917 an Indio Mutual Telephone Company was reported building lines toward Palm Springs under the direction of Will Hayhurst. Date Palm June 29)

"Company reports note that the number of phones in service between 1906 and 1919 varied between 100 and 120." Newman said.

(continued on page 70)

W. D. Gibbs President in 1919

Deterioration of service, expanded population and development of agriculture during and following World War I brought many changes to the company. W.D. Gibbs, an Oasis rancher and associate of J.W. Newman in a Thermal bank, became president in 1919. The new manager was N.B. Stradle succeeding H.G. Woods, who died in Banning in October. Myers and Charles McDonald of Coachella were principal stockholders. The valley's agricultural growth caused Newman and Gibbs to seek improved service.

In February 1921 Newman was elected President, a position he held until 1959 when he became chairman of the board.

By 1928 the number of customers had grown to 373. In 1936 lines were extended to the Palm Desert area and the number of subscribers was 677. Thousand Palms was added to the service area in 1940.

World War II and the approximately 500,000 military personnel crowding into the desert area increased demands, new plant and equipment including a replacement for the Thermal switching office-residence which had served since 1906. In 1943 J. Curtis Newman was elected vice president.

By 1944 all battery telephones had been converted to dial. In 1956 the words "Home and Telegraph" were dropped from the company's name, the telegraph service having been dropped in the 1930's. The Newman family owned 80 percent of the stock.

Negotiations to merge with the California Water and Telephone Company were completed December 31, 1960. J.C. Newman remained as vice president with Chester Loveland as president, and the name "Coachella Valley Telephone Company" went out of existence.

Among early telephone service people were Will Hayhurst and H.G. Woods. Gilberta Alderman Harmon was an early chief operator.

Trained Many Early Operators

She trained new operators on the tiny switchboard and saw many improvements made to the system over the years. One of her recruits was Mary Ann Bundschuh Trager. Mary Ann was a Thermal headquarters operator from 1914 to 1918 when she was a freshman in high school, 14 years old, and the pay was 25 cents an hour. She admits she "fudged on my age to get the job."

Mrs. Harmon was operator during the time the Fleetwood Hotel, the Town Hall, and several other structures were destroyed by flames in Thermal. She recalls calling and alerting all available people and "even pleaded with the railroad at Indio to send a steam engine, water tank and hose to Thermal.

"But Thermal each time rose from the ashes. It was always a leading vegetable producing area," she said.

She and Mrs. Trager reminisced about the early switchboard days, and the multi-party lines. Although the company had some lines listed as 10-party lines, in reality the number of parties depended only on the ingenuity of the operators determining new code rings to identify customers. Sometimes as many as 16 or 18 were connected to one line.

"Boy, that was a job remembering each subscriber's code rings," Mrs. Trager admitted. (see photo page 90)

Tom Yager, Go-getter

Leland Yost, Oasis rancher, whose family came to the present place in 1902, recalled Thomas C. Yager, water district's first counsel, as a "go-getter with lots of vision. I would consider him as a man in a place ahead of his time." Yost lived at Avenue 79 and Pierce just east of the original home.



NO SWIMMING IN THE CANAL

Kathryn Garcia, fourth grader at Eisenhower School and daughter of Coachella Valley County Water District irrigation division superintendent Ray Garcia, asks that people stay away from the canal for safety's sake. Because of the district's intensive canal safety program in the schools, children rarely disrespect the signs, but, as can be seen by the bullet hole in the international symbol, this is not always the case with adults.

District Information Stresses Safety and Educational Services

Water is something most people tend to take for granted until there is a shortage. The delivery of water from where it is abundant to where it is needed is, however, a tremendous project.

In an effort to educate the community in the importance of quality water and the problems of its delivery, CVCWD works closely with teachers and service organizations.

Coachella Valley County Water District's irrigation division has attracted water leaders from throughout the world, with dozens of engineers, political leaders and agriculturalists from many countries touring district facilities each year to gather information to improve their systems at home.

To consolidate public information activities and help relieve other staff specialist of increasing public information demands, the CVCWD Board of Directors established the position of district resources director in 1973 and hired ex-newspaper reporter Dennis Mahr to fill the slot.

Water safety, always important in CVCWD's educational presentations to students and adults, was granted an even more extensive role in 1976 when the CVCWD Board of Directors created the position of educational resources specialist and hired Marilyn Mason, a certificated school teacher with 20 years classroom experience, to develop a full-scale classroom education program emphasizing canal safety and the importance and value of water.

In the first year of operation of the accelerated classroom program, more than 8,000 students were visited in kindergarten through eighth grade classes throughout the water district.

For service clubs and other organizations, the district maintains a speakers' bureau and has an extensive film library on water-related subjects.

Many Have Played Part In Drama Of District

The Coachella Valley County Water District has had a number of officers and administrative executives serving it since its inception in 1918.

In the early days, at least until the 1930's the board generally operated with a secretary who served as office manager. It also employed consulting engineers.

Attorneys who have served include Thomas C. Yager who served from May 6, 1918, until his death December 3, 1931. H. L. Carnahan, at one time Lieutenant Governor of California, served during the late 1920's and 1930's as a consulting counsel. Wallace P. Rouse served from March 19, 1932 to October 31, 1932. Arvin B. Shaw, Jr., served from October 31, 1932, until 1946. Earl Redwine, of Redwine & Sherrill, served from 1946 until his death October 24, 1967; Maurice Sherrill is now chief counsel.

Britton Was First

Many individuals served as general managers or engineers but the first General Manager was W. P. Britton who also served as secretary from May 1, 1930 to October 31, 1932. After a lapse of several years Percy L. Day became manager as well as serving as secretary, assessor and collector from May 16, 1936 to May 10, 1939, remaining after being replaced as manager in the later two positions until September 15, 1939.

E. M. Romberg became general manager and secretary on May 10, 1937 until May 31, 1942.

Joseph H. Snyder was the first person named to the position of General Manager-Chief Engineer, serving from August 1, 1942, until January 1, 1951 when he was briefly retained as consulting engineer.

Hugh M. Gallaher succeeded Snyder and served until October 31, 1952.

Came From B. of R.

C. S. Hale, who had served as project engineer on the later stages of completion of the Coachella Branch of the All American Canal and construction of the distribution system, was named to the office November 1, 1952 and served until May 15, 1956.

BOARD APPOINTED STAFF MEMBERS — *Present members of the staff include: (Seated) Lowell O. Weeks, General Manager-Chief Engineer; Walter R. Wright, Auditor; (Standing) Ole J. Nordland, Secretary; Maurice C. Sherrill, Counsel.*



Lowell O. Weeks, who had joined the District's staff in 1950 as a civil engineer and had become assistant general manager, was named general manager and chief engineer on May 16, 1956. He is still serving in that capacity. Keith H. Ainsworth has been assistant general manager since 1958, after coming to the District as hydrographer in 1948. Wm. H. Longenecker has been Deputy Chief Engineer since 1957.

In the early years of the district A. L. Sonderegger was consulting engineer from early in the district's first year of 1918 through the late 1930's. W. P. Rowe, San Bernardino, eminent civil engineer and California water expert, was one of the District's engineers through the time of the first construction of the canal and became a consulting engineer, a position which he held on retainer until his death in 1969. George N. Adams was an engineer with the district in the middle 1920's through the 1930's.

Serving as early day secretary-office managers were: V. E. Metzler, was the first, serving pro-tem until Harry Isbell was named on June 15, 1918. Others were Edna M. Cardwell, Cora M. Long, V. E. Skiles, F. W. Zabler, Mina Welcome who served from September 1923 to July 15, 1925, Margaret Kessler, Mable Craig, Margaret D. Turton, Cornelia Frick, Helen Runyon, Eleanor Caswell, Thelma Schissler, John Heinz and A. T. VanOrnum.

Serving as secretaries were: Helen Garrison, Lucille DeuPree, Margaret McIntosh, Bernice McGovern, Barbara Kersteiner (Schmid), Iris Kramer and O. J. Nordland, who also serves as Executive Assistant to the General Manager.

Serving as assessors, collectors or auditors have been: Percy Day, Helen Garrison, A. T. VanOrnum, Lucille DeuPree, Kenneth M. Kellar, A. M. Westerfield (first auditor), B. W. Harrison, James E. Lawson, Hardy H. Hoffman, Miriam C. Hale, Eugene Elms, Malcolm J. Crawford (who was also the first watermaster in 1948), and Walter R. Wright, who on May 15, 1956, was the first to be named Auditor-Controller. (Wright was to retire from the District June 15, 1978.)

Canal Water Magic

(continued from page 8)

Rowe's report indicated that the Chuckwalla route was possible for irrigating large areas including Coachella but that the lift from Hayfield to the Valley made it prohibitive.

Porter J. Preston, U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, met with Yager regarding the proposed withdrawal of public lands for a spreading grounds water reserve and a proposed contract for construction of the All American Canal with a branch to Coachella, he appeared favorable to both matters.

The Board was petitioned by a group of Indio citizens and the chamber of commerce to set up an improvement district, and issue \$40,000 in bonds to build a water system. The directors ordered its consulting engineers to study the proposal. (The September request was finally disposed of in March 1924 when 62 residents signed a petition favoring the Marshall Water System, although the chamber of commerce was still seeking public ownership.)

The District set telegrams to President Coolidge asking his support of river legislation before Congress and agreed to join the Boulder Dam Association if the District could have a member on the executive committee. Board representatives

(continued page 72)

made trips to El Centro, Riverside, Los Angeles, Phoenix and Washington.

From Washington, Yager telegraphed reports on progress of the second Swing-Johnson bill. Director Blackburn invited Los Angeles chamber representative Frank Simpson to appear before the Board to hear this Valley's problems and to seek his support. All of Southern California was again being aroused to boost the new dam and canal legislation, and copies of telegrams from coast cities, counties, chambers of commerce kept the wires hot. The Coachella Farm Center was permitted to use the District's offices for meetings.

A note in the minutes of Feb. 6, 1924: "Authorize purchase of one case of dates from Truman Gridley to be sent to Thomas C. Yager for advertising the Valley among Senators and Congressmen." (Thus even 52 years ago the value of California dates to sweeten the political offices were employed.)

Power outages and shortages plagued the valley as well as Southern California. The need for more generation of power was apparent. The possibility of Boulder Dam providing that standby hydroelectric power was tempting. Southern Sierras Power Company was asking through advertisements for consumers to reduce current uses by one-third during March and April of 1924.

President Coolidge was urged to get Colorado River legislation out of committee. The power shortage was referred to as adding to the need for the Boulder Canyon Project. Hardships on pump irrigators and crops were called to the President's attention.

On April 12 the Board joined Imperial's directors in presenting the need and propriety of the Boulder Canyon Project and All American Canal to a committee of 55 of the California Real Estate Association who had been adverse to the project.

Another Water System Problem

In Coachella a 48-hour power outage brought a request by the chamber of commerce that the District take over the Coachella water system. Wm. Kersteiner said his Coachella system was willing to make improvements if the railroad commission would approve rate increases.

Sonderegger urged the District to update its well readings, record amounts of water pumped, and establish the position of underground tables and crop water needs.

Palm Springs reported a water shortage from Tahquitz in June, 1924. A delegation including Mrs. Nellie Coffman, Cornelia White, Alvah Hicks and others sought relief, objecting to the District's protesting of Prescott Stevens piping water from Toutain Cienega in the Whitewater River. The board pointed out its protest was against appropriation of water for power uses, and that it was in the best interests of all people of the Valley to object to any new diversions.

Yager returned from another trip to Washington to report on the progress of the Swing-Johnson Bill hearings but saw little hope for passage at this term. The final proof of adjudication of the Whitewater water shed was reviewed, and \$3500 set up (in addition to the \$12,000 budget) for Division of Water Rights proceedings.

Through the efforts of R. W. Blackburn the California State Farm Bureau at a meeting in Orange endorsed the Boulder Canyon project. The District became a member of the Boulder Dam Association.

Members of the board kept abreast of all developments not only in legislation but in engineering, sites and routes for the various works. In October Directors Blackburn and Clary and Counsel Yager and others from Southern California went over the route of the proposed aqueduct line and the site of Boulder Canyon Dam.

Watershed Streams Adjudicated

The same month the final papers for adjudication of the Whitewater and tributaries was adopted after approval by the state. The cost of the entire proceeding was \$2010.

Amendments to the Swing-Johnson Bill S2903 and the Metropolitan Water District legislation were discussed but approval was doubtful again this session.

In March 1925 Yager was named to represent the district on the new Six States Compact committee. On April 2 he advised the board that the compact bill had passed the Senate. The advisability of filing on the Colorado River was referred to Yager and Sonderegger. At the August 3 meeting of the Board Yager reported Imperial Irrigation District had filed for Colorado River water, "a portion of which is for Coachella Valley."

At the insistence of Coachella, Directors Sparey and Clary were named to work with a committee comprising Woodhouse, Nussbaum and Jones on the Coachella Water System matter, in November. (In April 1926 George Kellar presented a petition from 65 citizens for and two against. Art Thomas presented a petition with 51 against the district taking over the Coachella system. Dr. Jennings urged the groups to get together. A straw vote in June was obtained by the district which indicated that most objections to the present operation had been withdrawn and the board ordered the files closed.)

Congress Told Needs

Sonderegger and Yager went to Washington late in 1925 to appear at committee hearings and to lay before the Secretary of Interior reports on the Colorado River supply and the valley's requirements based on Rowe's reports on wells and irrigated area which set forth estimated water duties.

By March 1926 Yager had been in Washington three months meeting with Secretary of Interior Work. The coastal plains would work out domestic water needs with Aqueduct Association, and efforts planned to reconcile adjudication of water rights with Arizona.

In March the board was re-elected and Jennings was again named president.

During these years 1918 to 1926 and beyond there were many associations and groups working, sometimes not exactly in harmony nor in agreement on principles, for development of the Colorado River and its various projects: For example—Boulder Dam Association, California Development Ass'n., Colorado River Aqueduct Ass'n., California Water Resources Ass'n., League of Southwest, chambers of commerce, cities, the Farm Bureau.

Men Possessed Vision

In a land such as Coachella Valley where it took a month to clear a quarter section and greasewood and mesquite bushes were pulled out one at a time with horses and a chain, the men were rugged but possessed with vision. One man trusted another and neither were rarely fooled. It was a land where ice was beginning to make the days habitable but all could remember when there was none. They remembered when fresh foods were eaten at once, canned food was staple, butter was liquid and freight prices high. John Westerfield, Coachella banker, says it was a time when bankers gambled on human beings and seldom lost. A loan might be for less than \$100 but a dollar bought more.

In August 1926 the district board's \$27,000 budget called for \$5000 for new water, \$2000 for future filings, \$2500 for adjudications, \$2500 for water rights, \$5000 for engineering and \$10,000 for legal services, indicating through figures that the battle for water was the prime effort.

The reckless use of water for duck ponds and wasting of water drew continual frowns and threats of action. Even the



DISTRICT ENTERED SIXTH AREA OF SERVICE IN 1968 — SANITATION

This modern wastewater reclamation plant serves the widely known Palm Desert Country Club Estates area. Water from evaporation ponds is used for irrigating the country club's golf course. The District took over this system early in 1968. Since then many miles of wastewater collection lines have been constructed and three plants built to reclaim water in Bombay Beach, North Shore Beach, the Palm Desert-Rancho Mirage areas, the latter with a major regional reclamation and treatment facility at Cook Street.

— CVCWD Photo

shipments of water out of the valley from Thermal were questioned. Indian claims were reviewed as they pertained to the withdrawal of lands around Salton Sea.

In January 1927 Yager and Blackburn were named representatives to present the valley's case before hearings on the new Swing-Johnson bill, and Blackburn attended the Irrigation Districts Association meeting in Sacramento to seek continued support.

In June the City of Los Angeles had filed on 1500 acre feet of Colorado River water and San Diego had also made a filing. The new California Colorado River Commission proposal was studied, the Imperial District asked Earl Pound be recommended as a member.

Under Imperial's Filing

Yager reported in July of negotiating with the Imperial District "looking forward to this District coming in under their filing of 10,000 second feet of Colorado River water."

Yager, Blackburn and Jennings went to Denver in August to present proposals to the Bureau of Reclamation and Interior officials. In October Blackburn was delegated to attend Imperial Valley and Los Angeles meetings and in November accompanied Yager back to Washington once more. The Caleb Farm Center discussed the duck ponds.

During February 1928 the Washington situation regarding the fourth Swing-Johnson Bill became critical. It appeared that the bill had its best chance of passage. The bills HR 5773 and SB3177, were reviewed and instructions phoned Yager. News clippings from coast papers were avidly read by the board and citizens of the valley. The Coachella Valley Submarine and the Indio Date Palm were headlining progress.

The Coachella Valley Mosquito Abatement District was organized with support of the water board.

The Board met 20 times during February and March to keep posted on progress in the nation's capitol. The canal features in SB728 were examined, the Ashurst amendment, the Pittman

amendment, and other legislative moves puzzled the board which was trying to keep abreast of fast-moving events. The final committee print of Senate Bill 728 was received and digested.

CV Anticipating Demands

W. P. Rowe was directed to study water filings on Colorado, the All American Canal costs, the survey route, study the profile map, and report on the economic factors. The District was trying to anticipate future government demands for feasibility.

The problem of the Palm Valley Water Company was discussed and the District directed attorneys to draw stipulation giving the water company unhampered development of Snow Creek, and various other considerations. Phil Boyd, secretary of the Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce, and Cole and Tettley of Palm Springs examined the district's books and expressed the wish of that community to withdraw from the district.

Yager advised the district in June that HR 5773 had passed the House and would go to the Senate in December. He was instructed to write the Secretary of Interior regarding progress to date of the proposed reclamation project. In November an engineering statement of the district's needs were prepared for the Colorado River Commission. Yager was sent to Washington to watch over progress of the bill in the Senate.

Dr. Jennings Disagrees

Dr. Jennings disagreed on the need to send Yager until Congress convened. On November 22 he presented his resignation to the board, which was accepted with regrets. R. W. Blackburn was named board president. On December 3 Blackburn was urged to extend his trip to Chicago and continue on to Washington to assist Yager if problems arose regarding the Senate action on the Swing-Johnson bill.

On December 22, 1928, a telegram was sent Dr. Elwood Mead, commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, reading:

"The Secretary of Interior as of the Act of May 18, 1920, surveyed Coachella Valley lands and found them feasible of economical irrigation. Nov. 20 Coachella Valley gave assurance of participation if development carried out. Assure still desire to participate. Department asked to include District in all plans and surveys toward consummation of project; have 140,000 acres irrigable lands; 15,000 under cultivation. Present development causes overdraft of 40% of available water supply. Assessed valuation is over \$5-millions. Urgency of adequate supply of water to preserve investments and extensions is apparent. . ."

Dr. Jennings, although having resigned, continued to attend board meetings as an interested citizen. Yager returned from Washington to report the Swing-Johnson Bill approved December 21, 1928, and signed by President Hoover. Yager pointed out that the "Boulder Canyon Project Act" had accomplished three things: (1) ratified the Colorado River Compact and provided if only six states ratified it would become effective providing California was one of ratifying parties and provided that California should agree to limit her use of water; (2) authorized construction of a dam at Black or Boulder Canyon; (3) provided construction of an All-American Canal connecting Imperial and Coachella Valleys.

The construction of the two works was authorized at a cost of about \$165,000,000. The act also authorized a subordinate compact between Arizona, California and Nevada for division of apportioned waters under the Colorado Compact; the investigation of the Parker-Gila project in Arizona, and future agreements among the seven basin states for a comprehensive river development program.

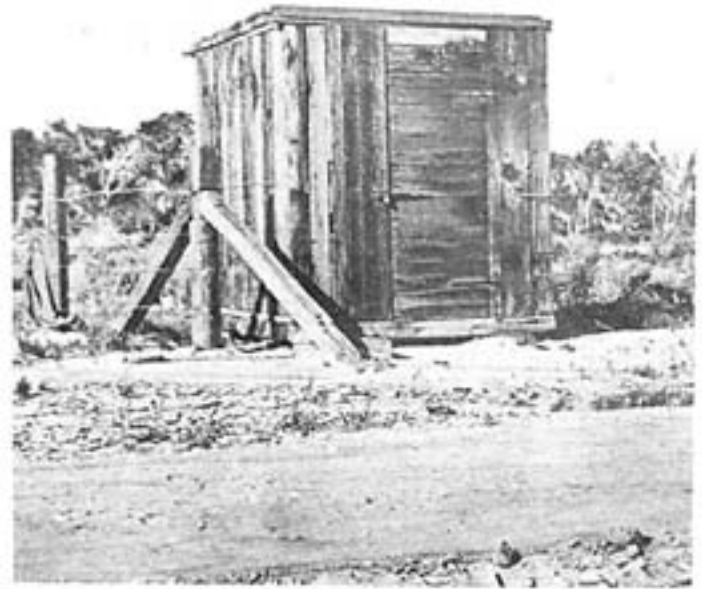
The bill provided a unique construction financing method for the dam, setting up a special fund designated as the Colorado River Dam Fund.

'One District' Proposal

Yager urged the board to begin entering into a contract for the canal construction with the Department of Interior. M. J. Dowd and Counsel Charles Childers of the Imperial Irrigation District attended the January 7, 1929, meeting expressing their belief that "the two valleys go in as one district." The board agreed to confer with Imperial on this proposal. Engineers were directed to proceed with a topographical map of the valley, to include lands possible of irrigation from the canal by gravity or pumping, and estimate the cost of the drainage system to serve the area.

By March Sonderegger had surveyed the route and was flagging it. The District authorized signing a contract jointly with the Imperial District for the U. S. to make a survey and investigation of main canal connecting Laguna Dam to Imperial and Coachella Valleys. The gross survey costs were to be limited to \$100,000, and the basis of payment was to be four parts Imperial and one part Coachella, as their shares, pursuant to Article 8 of the Boulder Canyon Project Act. The initial payment was set at \$10,000, with \$15,000 to be paid by Jan. 1, 1930, and the remaining amount of \$25,000 to be paid on the basis of notices from the government who would share one-half the gross cost. The board heard Engineer Sonderegger urge that it file on 2000 second feet of the flow of the Colorado River.

The Imperial district representatives advised the Coachella board at its meeting of May 6, 1929, that it had adopted a resolution asking \$10,000,000 for the All American Canal and the Coachella board adopted a similar resolution. Exploring an "understanding between the two districts" Mark Rose, speaking for Earl Pound, R. D. Blair and M. J. Dowd, also attending, said: "Eventually the two districts" would combine under one head. an amendment to the contract proposed by



CRIME WAS RARE

Constables in the Indio area used this primitive jail made of railroad ties to house miscreants. This 1906 photo shows timbered jail near Fargo and the railroad. Justice "was usually swift and harsh but crime was rare", pioneers pointed out.

— C. V. Historical Society Photo

the Bureau of Reclamation was read by Counsel Yager and approval was voted. A payment of \$2000 was authorized to the Bureau.

Study Copies of Contracts

By June 3 the district had contour maps prepared by Engineer George N. Adams. Blackburn had been named a director of the Boulder Dam Association. Sonderegger saw need for a drainage ditch and the board was studying a certified copy of the Coachella and Imperial contracts with the U.S.

On July 18, 1929, Robbins Russel was appointed to the unexpired term of Dr. Jennings.

Sparey, Blackburn and Yager went to El Centro to meet with Commissioner Mead where it was learned that the point of diversion for the canal would be six miles upstream from Laguna. The canal capacity would be 15,000 second feet to the syphon drop, 13,000 to Pilot Knob, to east side of sandhills 10,000 feet. A study underway would include the main canal, lateral canals and distribution system on new lands brought under development in CV as well as virgin desert lands. Imperial's director Blair was invited to attend Coachella meetings in order to bring the two districts into closer understanding. The board on November 30 repealed its April 25 filing on the Colorado. Another payment of \$3000 was made to the Bureau.

The summer of 1930, Blackburn, representing Coachella, Rose and Pound of Imperial, after a long 4-day session in June with the Metropolitan Water District Board on division of waters managed to convince that board that the agricultural interests had prior rights to the Colorado River. (A series of meetings ensued, with the various water agencies involved, leading to the Seven-Party Water Agreement of 1931.)

On February 21, 1930, the MWD agreed to an allocation of 1,100,000 acre feet, this was subsequently amended after



ROBBINS RUSSEL
Water District Director
1928-32



J. W. NEWMAN
Water District Director
1940-56



T. E. ALLEN
Water District Director
1932-39



JAMES E. PIPPIN
Water District Director
1932-33

**DIRECTORS
WHO HAVE
SERVED
THE
DISTRICT**



CHARLES E. FAULHABER
Water District Director
1950-54



A. ELIZABETH NELSON
Water District Director
1954-58



SIDNEY WITHEROW
Water District Director
1968-71



GEORGE AMES
C. V. Stormwater Board
1928-30



GEORGE H. LEACH
Water District Director
1954-1977



WILLIAM F. LESTER
Water District Director
1971-1973



A. HAROLD BROMLEY
Water District Director
1956-1968

meetings in March by the agencies which allocated the first 3,850,000 acre feet to the agricultural group, the next 550,000 acre feet to MWD, third 550,000 feet to MWD and all water in river available for California use in excess of 4,950,000 feet per annum to the agricultural group. Palo Verde Valley needs required a subdivision within the group, and San Diego presented an application for a contract.

On November 5 the Secretary of Interior saw need for the State of California effecting the allocations, and Ed C. Hyatt, California State Engineer, held a series of conferences that brought about settlement (August 18, 1931) which gave first priority to Palo Verde Irrigation District for use on 104,500 acres, second priority to Yuma project not to exceed 25,000 acres; third priority (a) to Imperial Irrigation District and other lands under or that will be served from the All American Canal in Imperial and Coachella Valleys, and (b) to Palo Verde Irrigation District for use on 16,000 acres on Lower Palo Verde Mesa, with the total beneficial consumptive use not to exceed 3,850,000 acre feet per annum. Fourth and fifth priorities of 550,000 each went to MWD, city of Los Angeles, the coastal plain and under the fifth, the 112,000 the city and county of San Diego were to share. The sixth priorities were to the Imperial and Coachella Districts in the same manner as under the third with Palo Verde also sharing in the same manner. The seventh priority for remaining water went to agriculture.

Sparey, Metzler, Russel, Blackburn and Yager made a trip over the proposed route of the All American Canal in April, 1930. They drove two Model T Fords with wide-belted rims replacing the tires on the wheels. The tour ended 12 miles southeast of Mecca. A stake survey was also made from Dos Palms and Spindle Top to a point northeast of Thermal during May.

First General Manger

W. P. Britton was employed in April as the general manager with full charge of the district's personnel. He also served as secretary. One of the first matters for restudy was the proposal that the Coachella Branch of the canal continue down the west side into Imperial Valley south to Fish Springs. The main canal was to bisect the valley between Indio and Coachella. Surveyors were already running stakes around Indio and to the west. In June the board again authorized Yager to obtain a contract with the Secretary of Interior as soon as possible either jointly with Imperial or separately.

May, June and July were busy months, including meetings with Imperial's board, with the Secretary of Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur, Commissioner Mead, and other organizations. The dedication of Boulder Dam was slated September 17, 1930.

A draft of the canal contract was under study on October 27. The Imperial District expressed reluctance to serve Coachella under Imperial's perfected water rights and urged a contract in cooperation with Coachella on assumption all lands to be served from the canal be in one district. Commissioner Mead was favoring an intermediate cross valley canal between Indio and Coachella, with a smaller canal to continue north. A power drop was to be located at the point of take off of the cross valley section east of Coachella.

The attorneys of the agricultural group and Metropolitan Water District met in October 1930 to propose amending the MWD contract with the U.S. to conform with that of MWD and the districts regarding allocation of California's share of the Colorado River water.

Jennings Wins Appointment

County Supervisor Shaver obtained appointment of Dr. Jennings to the water district board by the county board of supervisors in April 1931 under the water code which permit-

ted such appointment. Jennings thus returned to the board as a sixth director. He had been faithful in attendance as an observer.

The House Appropriations Committee visited the valley, dined at the Indio Woman's Club, and were reported by Director Sparey to have been "favorably impressed after seeing the needs and development of the District."

A delegation of Coachella Valley Land Owners posed a series of questions May 11, 1931, regarding the proposed contract for construction of the All American Canal and were promised answers in writing as soon as an engineering report was received from Bureau of Reclamation. Blackburn was authorized to set up an advisory committee on matters affecting importation of Colorado River water.

The engineer's report was received in June and the board named Blackburn and Yager to attend meetings with State Engineer Hyatt on California's limitation to Colorado River water. Jennings urged the district to get a specific amount set out in allocation for Coachella since drafts of the contract had reached final stages in meetings in Los Angeles between Imperial, Coachella and the Bureau of Reclamation.

About this time the Land Owners Association with Postlethwaite, Lee Anderson and T. J. Gridley began attending sessions of the board asking questions regarding the valley's water rights, priorities, cost of the canal and the effect of being included in the Imperial contract. A rising tide of opposition to inclusion was apparently developing, and tensions mounted through 1931 reaching a climax late in 1932. An All American Canal Club also became active.

The Seven-Party Agreement was reached August 13-18 in Los Angeles on the allocation basis outlined earlier.

The Land Owners Association urged the board to invite the Secretary of Interior to hold a meeting on the proposed canal contract and its provisions in El Centro instead of in Washington. The board agreed to make the request. However the Secretary did not comply and Yager went to Washington, returning to report that a number of protests and affidavits had been filed with the Secretary opposing inclusion of the valley with Imperial.

The board adopted an ordinance (No. 506) Nov. 9, 1931, approving the canal contract in principle and recommending that the people of the valley endorse it. The ordinance provided that the Secretary of Interior and Imperial Irrigation District had approved the contract; pointed out that it is feasible for the valley to receive Colorado River water; that contract would be effective only when major part of lands of Coachella Valley are included in Imperial Irrigation District; that in order to accomplish inclusion a petition must be signed by a majority of the property owners representing a majority of the acreage of that area praying for inclusion; that people of Coachella Valley should become conversant with terms of the contract, engineering reports, and costs to lands. The board approved employing of a person to circulate and publish information concerning the contract and reports.

Met With Imperial Board

Members of the board met with the Imperial board the next day in El Centro and advised the Imperial board that it was willing to proceed under the contract approved by the Department of Interior and that a very large majority of the property owners in Coachella Valley would petition for inclusion in event petitions were circulated. The attorneys for the two districts were directed to draw articles of inclusion to present to the boards. Yager presented these articles at the November 27 meeting which articles Jennings requested be given each board member to study.

The community was shocked by the untimely death of

young District Counsel Thomas C. Yager December 2. The board at its December 19 meeting adopted a resolution expressing its regrets to Yager's widow, commending his "good counsel" and referred to the task he has "so faithfully championed."

Directors Russel, Metzler and Clary were named to a public information committee. They recommended no employees of the district be permitted to make statements regarding the proposed canal contract, that all statements be checked, that a series of official statements be disseminated covering the water questions. H. L. Carnahan was named acting counsel and asked to study the proposed contract and conditions of inclusion.

Counsel Carnahan at the January 8, 1932, meeting recommended the board formally ratify the contract before taking up the conditions of inclusion. Blackburn was absent. Jennings voted against ratification, the conditions of inclusions were then taken up item by item and the counsel was directed to get a final draft ready. A pamphlet to describe the contract and terms was proposed. On January 18 it was agreed to include a copy of the contract with the mailing.

The board held a series of meetings with Counsel Carnahan in Riverside and Los Angeles regarding the inclusion conditions at which Imperial representatives and counsel were present. Jennings voiced opposition to statements on water rights and conditions.

Forbes Attends Meetings

During March many of these executive meetings were attended by Dr. Harry Forbes and his attorney Arvin Shaw of Los Angeles. Final boundaries of the service area were reviewed.

Wallace P. Rouse was appointed District Counsel March 19. The Land Owners group met with the board to discuss the contract, inclusion terms, water rights and other canal matters.

In executive session March 28, 1932, the board voted approval of the contract and inclusion provisions. Jennings voted "no". The form of petition for inclusion was approved, and proposed boundaries were held over for study.

A mass meeting was held by those opposing the inclusion and advocating that Coachella Valley obtain a separate contract. At the April 9, 1932, meeting of the board Dr. Forbes read a resolution adopted at the mass meeting the previous evening. The board agreed to study the resolution and agreed that the committee on negotiations should meet with Attorney Carnahan, and State Engineer Hyatt in Riverside April 16. Blackburn and Carnahan were authorized to proceed to Washington along with a representative of the land owners group. On April 16 the board was asked to accept the terms of the resolution of the Land Owners on motion by Jennings but it lost for want of a second. A motion by Sparey that it be rejected carried with Jennings voting "no." The revised boundaries for the service area were approved. The board directed the general manager to circulate the petitions for inclusion along with a statement by the board.

A-A Canal Club Heard

Sixty members of the All American Canal Club urged the petitions for inclusion be started. Spokesmen for the inclusion action were W.D. Gibbs, Lew Wester, Harry Whittlesey, A.O. Hayward and J.E. Pippin. The latter declared it was costing \$19.65 per acre on power bills alone. He said his water levels had dropped from 46 foot to the 67 foot level in past 12 years.

The board learned that Secretary of Interior Wilbur and Commissioner Mead had stated their opinions that before the Department could consider a separate contract for Coachella, the questions of power and other matters would have to be resolved between the districts. Letters from Gridley and Forbes

regarding the inclusion were referred to the attorney for reply. Jennings proposed a number of legal questions which were also referred to the counsel.

This prompted a meeting in Carnahan's office with Dr. Forbes present to request that the board name an official committee to help draft a separate contract. He proposed that the objections of the Department of Interior to a separate contract could be overcome.

Blackburn reported that meetings with Wilburn were being sought. The Land Owners also made a similar request. R. J. Coffey, the Bureau of Reclamation's regional counsel, was studying briefs filed by Carnahan and Dr. Forbes.

Urge Separate Contract

On October 27 the Land Owners set a telegram to Secretary Wilbur, a copy going to the District board, in which they urged a separate contract and requested a hearing to contest the "unfounded, excessive claims of Imperial Irrigation District in regard to its perfected water rights" . . . "urging terms of Coachella contract be concurrent, and that "no contract be signed by you with the Imperial Irrigation District that will foreclose Coachella Valley's rights to inclusion as provided in the present contract unless and until our property owners are first informed of the terms of any other contract proposal with Imperial and also your determination respecting feasibility of a separate contract with Coachella Valley."

The board, which had been unable to obtain signatures of owners of 50 per cent of the acreage for inclusion in the Imperial District, had refused to recede from its position of favoring a joint contract with Imperial, whose voters had approved their contract with the government the previous February. The Land Owners had suggested the board resign and threatened to break the deadlock by recalling the board and electing candidates pledged to carry out the separate contract program.

Climax On October 28

The controversy came to a climax on October 28 and the differences of opinion were put at stake at a special election, even though recent letters from the Secretary of Interior had indicated a separate contract would be acceptable provided Coachella could establish its ability to repay a government loan, and a satisfactory agreement was made with Imperial Valley for division of the available water.

The Friday election recalled the five elected members. (Jennings was appointive and his seat was not at stake.) the Indio precinct which polled 599 votes, voted nearly three to one against recall of the board but the lower valley's vote was strongly for the ouster.

The new board taking office and holding its first meeting October 31 at the home of Dr. Jennings included Jennings, H. W. Forbes, T. E. Allen, Lee J. Anderson, T. J. Gridley, and Alvah F. Hicks. Arvin B. Shaw, Jr., was in attendance and was named District Counsel. Allen called the meeting to order and Forbes was elected president of the board. Gridley was vice president.

Board's First Actions

The first action was that all rules, regulations and by-laws established by the board be repealed and nullified, next all employees of the district were dismissed except the Auditor, A. M. Westerfield. Helen F. Runyon was employed as acting secretary.

At the first regular meeting November 5, J. E. Pippin, Indio, became a member of the now seven-man board, being appointed by E. W. Johnston, Mayor, to a six-year term. The board adopted new rules, regulations and by-laws presented by Shaw.

Meeting the next day the board was advised by the Assistant Secretary of Interior that the Imperial contract was under discussion by the Bureau's attorney R. J. Coffee in Los Angeles and suggested the board submit its proposals to Coffee. An appointment was immediately obtained with Coffee. Secretary Wilbur expressed willingness to meet with district representatives in Palo Alto or Washington on November 16 when both districts would discuss separate contracts.

A meeting was held in Counsel Shaw's Los Angeles office November 11 with all of board present. The following points were agreed upon: (1) Coachella does not desire any provision in contract for inclusion with Imperial; (2) The District desires a separate contract; (3) There is enough water allocated even if Imperial takes 3-million acre feet out of the third priority; (4) Coachella will not accept any subdivision of water not acceptable to the Bureau of Reclamation; (5) If necessary Coachella willing that water rights be adjudicated through State Water Commission; (6) Coachella willing and ready to ratify so called Palo Verde reservation to 7-Party Agreement of August 18, 1931; (7) Coachella ready to file application under 7-Party Agreement with State Water Commission; (8) Forbes, Jennings and Shaw to go to Washington Nov. 16.

20-Year Growth Seen

Forbes on his return reported that the engineers and counsel would prepare studies and take steps to see that matters affecting Coachella are adjudicated. The board saw "an assessed valuation of \$50-millions in 20 years after canal water is served" and listed present "capital now invested of \$10-millions with a bonded debt existing in the District by schools of \$300,000."

Forbes reported that Commissioner Mead favored one district and one contract but was "aware of the Coachella land owners being adverse to assuming existing indebtedness of Imperial District during period of execution of the contract and the time water was available for delivery." He listed \$2,240,000 as Coachella's share of Imperial's present indebtedness that would be assumed after six years. The board was anxious to perfect Coachella's rights and when the All American Canal contract was presented, as consummated by the Imperial Irrigation District, the board authorized the secretary to mail out copies of it to the voters for their information.

Meanwhile the legislature began studies of an amendment to the County Water District code which would eliminate appointive board positions and permit setting up an assessor's office.

Ratify Canal Contract

The Imperial District's voters ratified their canal contract on January 12, 1933. The election prompted the Coachella board to order Counsel Shaw to go to Sacramento and file for 2000 cfs of Colorado water under the agreement of August 18, 1931. Shaw went immediately to Sacramento and reported to the board he had filed at 1:30 p.m. on January 11, 1933 but that he had learned that Imperial had filed its application at 11:51 a.m. the same day. Forbes charged that someone had informed Imperial of the Coachella District's plans.

A bill to set up the Colorado River Commission was before the legislature. The district insisted that one member of the Coachella board be a member of the board.

The board sought to reconcile differences with the Imperial



OUT OF ASHES ROSE THIS NEW DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS

The fire of 1964 razed the old buildings from the Metropolitan Water District's aqueduct camp in Berdoo Canyon. From the ashes rose this modern, efficient headquarters building, the nerve center for Coachella Valley County Water District operations. Income from the estate of the District's third president, Dr. Harry W. Forbes, which was bequeathed to the District, retired the cost of this building. The new stores, laboratory and warehouse building complex was largely built with funds obtained from sales of lands obtained through delinquent taxes. The above building houses the Forbes Auditorium where twice monthly meetings of the District Board of Directors are held.

— CVCWD Photo

Irrigation District board and asked State Engineer Hyatt to arrange a meeting "to resolve bitterness." Meanwhile, the board discussed opposing validation of the Imperial contract for the All American Canal. The move was a lever to obtain Imperial's agreement to a separate CV contract.

J. C. Jones, president of the Land Owners, fearful of any compromise with Imperial, wrote the board in March 1933 that he would proceed at once for a contract and expressed doubt if the district could obtain Colorado water in a just, equitable or economical manner under a contract with Imperial and threatened that any such compromise would be rejected by the "same majority that refused to join Imperial under the former contract...."

The district lent its efforts to obtain the reopening of the First National Bank of Coachella which had been closed by the Bank Holiday. The bank was reopening in April. Valley chambers, women's clubs and service clubs were invited to send representatives to board meetings but most of them declined.

Daily Meetings Scheduled

During May, June, July and August the board held 48 regular, special and adjourned meetings, indication of the heightening interest in the illusive separate contract being drawn for the District for the Coachella Branch of the All American Canal. Shaw went to Washington to help prepare the contract, and the Washington firm of Vogelsang & Finney were employed as Capitol representatives.

The county water district act amendments were passed and signed by the governor, Assemblyman John Phillips reported. The Coachella district was maintaining pressure on Imperial by continuing opposition, thus holding up validation of the Imperial contract.

In June 1933 the first draft of the proposed Coachella contract was studied by the board. At the meeting on the 24th a resolution was presented authorizing execution of the contract. The matter was tabled until July 3 when it was approved over objections of Pippin. The board authorized \$5000 for preliminary plans for the canal.

The board was on daily call, met and adjourned daily, on the matter opposing validation of the Imperial contract and on July 20 voted to file notice of appeal of Judge Emmet Wilson's findings in favor of validation. On July 22 the board agreed to take the matter to the Supreme Court. Shaw was advised to supplement the feasibility memorandum to the Secretary of Interior. He sought language in the contract that would assure the valley 2000 cfs Colorado River water and make Coachella a beneficiary of Pilot Knob power as well as other canal power.

The Metropolitan Water District's tunnels were inspected by Pippin and Engineer Rowe to determine if the San Jacinto tunnel was diverting water from the watershed.

During daily meetings in August 1933 two representatives were authorized to go to Washington to attend hearing of opponents to All American Canal. On August 20 the amendments to the water code took effect and Pippin and Jennings attended their last meeting. (From that date the board comprises five members elected from divisions.)

Dos Palmas Reservoir

During discussions on the proposed canal contract, and route of the canal, the board had W.P. Rowe, civil engineer, investigate the possibility of a reservoir site near Dos Palmas. Rowe made the reconnaissance survey. An application was filed seeking approval to appropriate water from Salt Creek to be stored temporarily and later to be applied beneficially (10,000 acre feet per annum) to be diverted in SE 1/4 of Section 28, T5, R11E. The proposal was later abandoned.

Meanwhile the board employed George N. Adams engineer for the Garnet and Deep Canyon spreading works and levee

project.

On December 30 the board executed its All American Canal contract which it had approved earlier. At the same time the Coachella board agreed to stipulate to a dismissal of its suit before the Supreme Court, and Imperial Irrigation District to stipulate that the contract as validated would be amended as to power possibilities to benefit to Coachella.

This brought about a Jan. 13, 1934 meeting with Imperial officials, Hewes, Rose, Attorney Childers and Engineer Dowd, for purpose of formulating an agreement between the two districts on division of water and power proceeds and proportionate contributions to be made by each district to the capital costs of the All American Canal project. Attorneys of both districts were authorized to file an appeal brief limited to those things in the Imperial contract which might impair the rights of the Coachella District under a separate contract and declare the contract invalid if it does, valid if no rights impaired.

On Feb. 14 an agreement was reached with Imperial to compromise the controversies and the agreement embodied an approved form of contract for construction of the canal between the U. S. and Coachella identified as "Annex A" to the canal contract. On February 17 with members of the Imperial board and its secretary and attorney, minor differences were approved by Imperial, and the Compromise Agreement was adopted by both Districts. The Coachella board asked the Secretary of Interior to execute a contract provided he was in agreement with "Annex A." Forbes, Anderson and Shaw were immediately authorized to go to Washington to negotiate a separate contract for Coachella.



EXOTIC CROP

Coachella Valley produces more than 90 per cent of the dates grown in the United States. The unique and almost exclusive crop, first planted in the valley before the turn of the century, dates, intrigued and attracted early pioneer growers. About 4,000 acres of various varieties are grown, the Deglet Noor being the most popular. A grapefruit grove is on the right.

— CVCWD PHOTO

Draw Lots For Terms

May 5, after the March 27 election, the board, all re-elected, drew lots for terms of office. Forbes, Allen and Anderson received four-year terms and Gridley and Hicks two year terms. The board at this meeting advised Dale Kiler of Mecca it was not empowered to enjoy the state division of highways from building the Indio-Blythe Highway 60 cutoff.

By June the District had referred plans and specifications for the main All American Canal and Coachella Branch to the engineer for study, filed a report on the Bureau of Indian Affairs on Indian lands, irrigation, studied copies of the Coachella Service Area maps, and asked Engineer Rowe to check possible interception of underground streams by MWD tunnels.

The copies of the All American Canal contract were approved by the board at its July 28, 1934, meeting and ordered it submitted to the California District Securities Commission. A public hearing was set on the contract for the district's share of the \$38,500,000 cost and whether all or only part of the district will be benefitted, and if so what portion.

Washington McIntyre identified the area to be served by the canal at the adjourned September 15 hearing. Bartlett H. Hayes opposed inclusion as did Robbins Russel. Russel feared the loss of esthetic values, the effect of humidity on dates and humans, and feared that canal water availability would increase date plantings beyond economic level of 5000 acres, as well as for grapes and citrus.

Improvement District No. 1

The area to be benefitted ordered by the board "was that outlined and shall be known and constitute Improvement District No. 1" which was the first time this designation had been placed on the service area. A special election was ordered October 9, 1934, on acceptance of the canal contract.

The contract voted upon by the people of the valley stated that it "is to provide for construction for the District of capacity in a diversion dam and incidental works (referred to in said proposed contract and commonly known as the Imperial Dam) in the mainstream of the Colorado River and a main canal and appurtenant structures (referred to in said proposed contract and commonly known as the All American Canal) located entirely within the United States, connecting said diversion dam with the Imperial and Coachella Valleys in California, to supply water from the Colorado River and the reservoir to be created by Boulder Dam for the benefit of lands now or hereafter within the District and lying within the Coachella Service Area . . ." The contract referred to "capacity provided for the District therein . . ." and that the District "pay its share of costs related to that capacity of said works bears to the total capacity thereof. . ."

Voters in four precincts in the Improvement District cast 1225 ballots of which 1207 were "yes" and 18 "no".

The board made special note of the support given in the campaign for approval of the contract to Chester Sparey, James Pippin, R. M. Wood, E. W. Johnston, Russell Nicoll, Henry Briggs and others.

Looking ahead to the time the District would need more space for its headquarters than the former First National Bank building on Cantaloupe, George Schisler proposed that the board purchase for \$1922.50 Lot 17, Section 5, T6S, R8E, a parcel of 25.3 acres north of the railroad and north of Avenue 52 off Tyler. The board took an option on the property for \$500 on Dec. 1.

The canal contract was received Jan. 5, 1935, the board ordered it recorded and validation proceedings instituted. Legislation validating the canal contract and the agreement between Imperial and Coachella on Feb. 14, 1934 was passed

and signed that same day by Governor Frank Meriam. Thanks were extended Assemblyman Phillips and Senator L. J. Difani for their help.

Arizona had not been idle, besides suing to halt construction of Parker Dam, it had also proposed a contract for Colorado River water that met with objections from California water users. The board authorized setting up a tax assessor and collector's office.

In May 1935 Anderson reported on a trip over the route and at the same time checking start of construction of the canal, from near Pot Holes and Pilot Knob along route of main canal and proposed route of Coachella Branch. Accompanying him were Attorney Shaw, R. B. Williams, E. Q. Sullivan, and John Graham. The U. S. Biological Survey discussed making a game refuge on Salton Sea below the minus 230-foot contour.

In August Dr. Forbes was in Washington to discuss the District's application for financing its capacity in the canal. A proposal to establish a Desert Plant Historical Monument (Joshua Tree National Monument) included District lands and the District protested asking exclusion of lands in which the canal would be located. A resolution was adopted in September that the Salton, Dos Palmas, and Fish Springs Areas be added to the District.

Dr. Mead's death was reported in January. The district in February joined representatives of upper basin states touring the canal and studying uses California planned to make of Colorado water. The MWD seepage question came under discussion again.

Five Divisions Set Up

Voters in the district returned Gridley and Hicks to office and agreed that five divisions be established with the board set up as: Palm Springs with 190,894 acres, Indio with 191,235, Coachella with 195,574, Thermal with 189,993, and Mecca with 184,303 acres.

Attorney Shaw representing the District in the Arizona suit in Washington was to urge the Secretary of Interior to carry out plans and location surveys for construction and completion of the main canal to Coachella, completion of Imperial Dam, and carry out field study of drainage, and laterals.

In July, 1936, the board adopted a resolution, after a hearing with state division of highways, county road department, the United States Corps of Engineers, and the Stormwater District, calling for a plan to develop a flood protection and water conservation program.

Hicks reported that the Southern Pacific was willing to sell land in the Whitewater debris cone for spreading purposes for \$3,378.75, with one-fifth cash, and one-fifth each year at six per cent until paid.

The District appropriated \$20,000 for the Bureau of Reclamation for final plans, designs and location surveys of main All American Canal to Coachella Valley and for construction of capacity for Coachella in the main canal. It was reported that \$75,000 was available from the government to the Bureau of Reclamation for this work, prompting the District to again insist surveys start before Dec. 1.

Phil Swing was employed as special counsel to assist in getting the final plans started. On September 26, 1936, the board met with John C. Page, acting Commissioner of Reclamation, E. K. Burlew, executive assistant to the Secretary of Interior, and Swing to discuss the project.

Dr. M. R. Hubberty, assistant professor of Department of Irrigation Investigations and Practices of the University of California, and Professor Arthur Pillsbury of U.C.L.A. sought the District's cooperation in preparing a cooperative survey of the valley. The board authorized the project which platted

crops and wells on a map.

The District, which had been assisting in many of the functions of the Mosquito Abatement District, heard a report by E. P. Carr and H. W. Elliott and at the July 11, 1936, meeting expressed pleasure in work of the district as a separate entity.

MWD Tunnel Study

Engineer Adams was directed to report on amount of water flowing into the MWD Cabazon tunnel and its effect on the District's watershed flow. General Manager Percy Day and Director Lee Anderson went to Yuma and reported "some surveying in progress this side of division point near Calipatria."

In November discussions were underway on the merger of the Coachella Valley Stormwater District with the Coachella Valley County Water District. A bill was introduced by Senator John Phillips to accomplish this merger, SB806. The bill passed in June and Gov. Meriam signed the act. The next step was an election set for October 11, 1937.

A federal economy program threatened funds to start construction of the Coachella Branch. President Forbes reported that \$1 1/2-million needed "had been diverted from the canal fund last year to Harry Hopkins relief program." Because a minimum of \$1-million was needed to start the canal, the board wrote Washington representatives to get the entire amount restored. The appropriation was obtained.

The creation of the Colorado River Commission and river commissioner was endorsed by the board. The District was to have a representative.

At the July 3, 1937, meeting the board learned of the illness of J. Win Wilson, publisher of the Date Palm in Indio, and by resolution urged speedy recovery, commenting upon his "stalwart and sturdy service rendered this community." Wilson died the next day.

Mayor Harry Moore asked the board to study the Indio water system and appoint a committee to report on the advantages of the District taking it over or the city assuming control. Walter Dodge, however, presented a straw vote showing 225 in favor and 8 opposed to removing the system from private ownership.

Stormwater District Merger

On October 11 the "Coachella District Merger Act" went before the District's voters for ratification. In the water district voters cast 228 votes in favor and 9 against, in the Stormwater District the vote was 200 for and 8 against. On October 16 a joint session of the two boards was held to canvass the votes. T. E. Allen, John A. Colbert and Lee Anderson of the Stormwater Board were in attendance. Validation proceedings were ordered.

The District recommended the initial capacity of the Coachella Branch of the All American Canal should be 1300 cfs at the point of entrance to Coachella Valley. The acreage in the Whitewater Spreading Area under filings was reported to be 6900 acres. The proposed Deep Canyon Project was inspected by the board.

Purchase MWD Buildings

The district purchased for \$4500, from MWD, the former hospital, warehouse, shop and garage buildings at the Berdoo Canyon construction camp and proposed to move them to the 25 acre tract east of Coachella where headquarters were to be located.

The board appointed E. R. Romberg, General Manager and Chief Engineer; A. T. Van Ornum as secretary, auditor and collector, and Percy L. Day, assessor. The board reported to the City of Indio that it was willing to proceed with installation of a water system for the city and vote sufficient bonds for an improvement district and after five years turn the system over to the city if the present laws could be amended to permit such

action and transfer to Indio of unpaid bonds. Complaints of a flowing well on the Stratton Salt Co. on the north shore of Salton Sea were ordered investigated.

F. C. Nash, A. J. Shamblin, Bert Ripple, H. L. Cavanagh, D. H. Mitchell, R. W. Webb, J. W. Stevenson and W. W. Cook property owners in the Deep Canyon assessment district appeared to discuss the levee plans. General Manager Romberg was directed to present to the War Department in Indio, March 4, 1938, a list of projects for construction by the Army Engineers for flood control and erosion protection in Coachella Valley and the Whitewater River system.

Plans for stormwater ditches in the Oasis area were outlined for a delegation appearing before the board in February 1938 consisting of Syl Sanderson, John Laxurka, H. L. Ramsey, Ira Goodpasture, M. T. Broaded, and Joe Moreno. Applications to the Indian Service for permits for channels had been made.

Max Cawthon was contacted to sink the domestic well on the District's new property. At the March election Buck, Anderson and Forbes were re-elected. A deed for 2703 acres in the Whitewater debris cone was received from the Southern Pacific.

The flood of March 2, 1938, caused considerable damage to stormwater channels and the District applied to the state for \$80,000 in emergency flood relief funds, to repair, relocate and reconstruct the channel from Indio to the Sea. The state approved \$10,000 in July.

First Canal Bids

Specifications for the first 43 miles of the Coachella Branch of the canal were ready and studied by the District. Bids were opened in Yuma on June 3. It was reported that the Imperial District has purchased 104,000 acres of Southern Pacific lands below the 230-foot contour.

In preparing to move to new headquarters July 1 the District sought a new railroad crossing, which the railroad commission approved. In the meantime the Hinkle crossing was to be used with an access road built. On April 7 a temporary stormwater protective works permit was obtained from the Indian Service for the Torres-Martinez Reservation and a final permit was agreed when consent of allottees was received. Cat and Ramon Creek protective works in cooperation with the state were approved but state funds were not available.

The Bureau of Reclamation's Counsel Coffey and District counsel began drafting the contract for the water distribution system and drainage and flood protection works, in June of 1938. Meanwhile on advice of Bureau engineers the proposed Salt Creek water appropriation and reservoir plans were abandoned. Cost of the new administration center, manager's residence, well, pump and other improvements were estimated at \$24,698.19.

Imperial Dam was completed and dedication was held October 18, 1928.

The District was asked to study the feasibility of installing a Thermal water system or taking over the present one owned by Mrs. W. E. Alderman and her daughter Gilberta (Harmon) by R. M. Wood. Mrs. Alderman had expressed an interest to dispose of the system. The district decided against a competitive system and the sale was not consummated. (It was not until 1966 that the Thermal system was added a growing district domestic water system.)

Oasis Project Bid

The Oasis flood control project bid was let to V. R. Dennis, San Diego, for \$104,411.30, which amount was deposited by the State. Shaw advised board papers were complete on Oasis rights of way except for 26 and that John Dody, Indian Superintendent, had reported signatures on individual releases and



FIRST NATIVE CITIZENS OF COACHELLA VALLEY

Taken about 1913, this photo shows Cindarella Courtney, left, first baby born in Indio in 1898 and next to her the first boy, David Elgin, born 1899. With them are two sisters of Cindarella, Lucille and Viola Courtney all born in Indio. The photo was taken in front of the Courtney home south of Miles on Towne Street about where the Southern California Gas office is located.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

casements.

By December 12 the supplemental contract for laterals was reported ready by the Bureau of Reclamation's Counsel, Coffey.

The matter of the canal route which proposed a power drop east of Coachella which would develop an estimated 2734 horse power of 12,350,000 KWH per year and produce a revenue of \$61,750 per year at a development cost of \$218,700, was given new study. Manager Romberg recommended it, however abandoning the plan would save \$214,800.

The low bid for section two of the Coachella Canal went to Morrison-Knudsen Co. for \$2,279,212.31 in June 1939.

In July 1939 the costs of crossing the flood channel and railroad and highway twice with the two canals proposed drew doubts if the savings in building the power generating site would warrant costs. Bureau Engineer Foster urged district to line canal because the loss of water would repay its cost.

The District was asked to take over the La Quinta Storm Drains and the board took the matter under advisement. Carl Zimmerman wrote the board that he was unable to work his tungsten deposit because of weather. The continuing decline in the water table was reported at 1.6-feet in lower valley, La Quinta to Travertine Point. Some 57,000 acres were on the delinquent tax rolls, and the first tax resale plan was proposed.

In January 1940, the Budget Bureau cut the \$2-millions in budget appropriation for the canal in half. But the Bureau of Reclamation say no let up in work until third contract time, which, according to Commissioner John C. Page, would be ready in two months. Congressman Harry Shepard had restored \$500,000 to the canal fund, but further cuts were feared because of defense program needs. Mr. Cronholm of the U. S. Corps of Engineers proposed a nine-mile long dam in the upper valley to impound flash floods. An earthquake in May 1940 damaged the canal under construction in Imperial Valley.

In August the annual groundwater report showed water levels falling at the average rate of three feet a year. The first section of the canal was completed in June 1940, 43.4 miles from main canal to Niland. The second section from Niland to Mottmar was under construction. The government reported the canal 31% completed on June 30, but doubted if any new contracts will be let for some time, since only \$400,000 was in the canal fund.

The District and Bureau engineers were checking over plans for building employee housing on the District's property and the board approved the project. Engineer Romberg authorized to proceed by condemnation to acquire necessary lands for building Deep Canyon spreading grounds. The project was

50% complete by Dec. 9, 1940.

Holtville planned a celebration to mark the first delivery of canal water on Oct. 12 and members of the board attended.

In January 1941 the board decided to make deliveries of canal water to each 40 acre parcel instead of each 80 acre parcel and use an underground pipe delivery system. Classification of the soils was ordered preliminary to investigation of the underground system design.

Palm Springs presented a petition and withdrawal form seeking exclusion of the Palm Springs area from the water district and stormwater district. An amendment to the water code was passed by the legislature and the District turned over tax assessing and collecting to the county except for water taxes. Another bill permitting improvements by special assessment district, such as Deep Canyon Project, to be assumed and maintained by the District had passed the legislature.

Final Laguna Payment

The District's annual report showed the final payment of \$77,289.68 made on the Laguna Dam Contract. The District was now "free of debt," with no bonds or obligations. Cathedral City stormwater channel improvements completed and cooperation of landowners commended.

A report on the Valley's Indian lands showed a total of 14,041 in Improvement District No. 1, of which 8,740 were irrigable, 4,223 temporarily irrigable, and 1078 non-irrigable.

The District initiated a hearing March 22, 1941, on the exclusion of the Palm Springs area from the water and stormwater districts. It was pointed out that while cessation of pumping for irrigation in lower valley would decrease overdraft, the lands only in Improvement District No. 1 were benefitted by the canal.

Director J. W. Newman outlined the reason for the large District boundaries established in 1918, saying: "When this district was first organized there was no allocation of water. There were diversions being made in the upper end of the valley; the one which started this was the diversion of water from San Geronio into Banning Canyon. This water diverted into Banning Canyon was water which would have come down into the Whitewater River. Under the impetus of that, the County Water District was organized to conserve and do anything we could to bring in more water to the Valley rather than to have it diverted out. These water rights have all been adjudicated and that is all now settled. This accounts for the immense spread of the District to start with."

Director Alvah Hicks, Palm Springs, pointed out that the water filings to be used in this valley, as shown by the Division of Water Resources, "is 119,000 acre feet per annum . . . Palm Springs domestic use was 91 inches or 1400 acre feet per annum." The directors voted to exclude the area.

Director Hicks resigned April 24, 1941, and new Division boundaries were set up for the directors. E. Keith Farrar, Indio, was named to succeed Hicks on May 22 in Division No. 2. The Department of Interior reported there were 160,000 acres in the irrigable area of the District with 300 farms now supporting 13,000 people. Talks opened in Washington to obtain separate contract for serving Indian lands.

August floods in Mecca area prompted first studies leading to plans for the East Side Dike to protect canal, highways, and valley properties.

Bids for the third section of the Coachella Canal were opened Oct. 27, 1941, but because higher than estimates and because of inability to insure priority of materials due to the defense program, the bid of Morrison-Knudsen was rejected. The Corps of Engineers was requested to make a study and survey of the flood control requirements on the Whitewater River.

The board by resolution asked the Department of Interior not to consider building any distribution works to the Los Palmas area after learning that the Bureau of Reclamation's soil survey recommended against service.

The rejection of bids on the third section brought new and intensive efforts on the part of the board to obtain appropriations and priorities for steel to permit work to go ahead. The events on Dec. 7, 1941, dashed those hopes for many years, although the board made many efforts through many channels to get emergency approvals. Lee Anderson was sent to Washington and Phil Swing was contacted for support. Committees of the state legislature supported the continuance.

The District advised the government that 15,000 acres were being irrigated with a crop value of \$1,800,000 and that it was estimated that 125,000 would be irrigated under the canal that would have a crop value in excess of \$15,000,000 if the canal was completed.

The growing of guayule, rubber plants, was given intensive study and promotion with the valley proposed for such planting in order to increase its priority position for completion of the canal. Growers listed 5000 acres available for guayule. The Department of Agriculture agreed with this proposal, but the canal project was held up through 1942. First discussions of the proposed Mexican Water Treaty began. Dr. Forbes argued that 600,000 acre feet of water for Mexico from the Colorado was sufficient based on present use than the 750,000 acre feet under consideration.

Snyder General Manager

During the summer of 1942 a number of resignations of officers of the district occurred and J. H. Snyder, civil engineer, was employed August 1 as General Manager and Chief Engineer. The Army leased the District's warehouses for the Camp Young, Desert Training Center, and the District learned that the Army was proposing an Air Support Command Base at Thermal. The government condemned 2540 acres at Thermal June 2.

Phil Swing advised the district \$3,000,000 now available in canal funds but only when materials available will the Bureau of Reclamation let the contract for the Mortmar to Indio Section. The District filed an application with the War Production Board to construct 22 miles of canal. The District advised it has 10,000 acres available for growing guayule but only water for 500 acres. The 4000 tons of steel required for the canal proved a great stumbling block, however. Repeated pleas were rejected including that of the importance of providing food and fibre to a nation at war.

The Mexican Water Treaty conferences by the Committee of Sixteen in Santa Fe in April and May, 1943, brought growing concern as to the treaty which would grant Mexico water that would take future priorities. California waged the strongest fight and was highly critical of Arizona for not taking a stonger stand against the proposed treaty. The Army Engineers made a flood control study of the east side along route of canal contour. The District gave the Army permission to use lands in Deep Canyon for Desert training. President Forbes went to Washington seeking War Food Administration assistance in getting canal work started again, pointing out the canal was within five miles of area to be served. The Nevada California Electric system in the lower valley was sold to Imperial Irrigation District in September 1943.

Win WPB Approval

In October the War Production Board approved the canal project from Mile 86.5 to Mile 133.5 (27 miles) with provisions for temporary timbering and other devices.

The board incorporated as a War Food Project and discussed

seeking financing for leveling 26,000 acres in project, of which 17,000 could be brought into it. Forbes and Shaw went to Washington to request the Bureau to station a resident canal engineer in Coachella, to speed up land classifications, and to seek funds for leveling lands. Bids for the canal were to be opened Jan. 15, 1944.

In January 1944 the Bureau of Reclamation was authorized to proceed with 25 houses on the District headquarters area. On Feb. 12 the District adopted a formal resolution calling for an underground distribution system to each 40 acres of irrigable land. It was pointed out that surface deliveries made land leveling more difficult, took more land out of production, would permit more accurate measurements of water use, provide better weed control, and would be most economical to operate and maintain. The Bureau of Reclamation was authorized to complete the East Side Flood Control Dikes for the Army Engineers but held up work more than two years. Priority permits for new wells drew District objections.

Include Drainage Works

Delays in the canal construction hoped for under the War Production Board sent President Forbes to Washington. A cooperative drainage, land use and experimental station by federal agencies, the Salinity Laboratory, Extension Service and District was discussed in April 1944, as need for drainage test wells was seen. Inclusion of drainage works in the distribution contract was authorized, and the District advised the Bureau of Reclamation it had been ready to execute such a contract the past three years.

California voted \$50,000 to fight the Mexican Water Treaty. In July the District refused to permit cancellation of the J. F. Shea contract for canal excavation. Well levels had dropped an average of four feet the past year and the board was adamant in its stand that Shea complete his contract. Since the District had the final word on whether Shea should be released, the Board prevailed and Shea was obligated to continue work. It demanded he get work underway in September, 1944.

In December the board and Bureau discussed possibilities of purchasing the La Quinta Hotel property for \$250,000 comprising the hotel and grounds and 400 acres of agricultural land of which 150 acres were under cultivation. The proposal was abandoned because of the time it would take to acquire the land and the need for housing was present now. The soils classification preliminary figures showed 92,000 acres irrigable. The board was successful in reducing a proposal that would have set up a countywide flood control district and with Palo Verde Irrigation District were able to exclude the two districts.

Because of insistence of the Bureau of Reclamation in including the 160-acre limitation clause in the proposed distribution and drainage contract, the board explored means of financing the construction of the distribution system through bonds. Leland Kaiser expressed an interest in the proposal.

Forbes Death Mourned

On January 31, 1945, the valley was grieved to learn of the death of Dr. Harry W. Forbes in Washington, D. C., while seeking action on the canal project and distribution system contract. The board's resolution referred to him as "a leader, a wise counselor, a kindly man, and a dear friend. During the 12 years . . . he saw visions of the valley of the future slowly but surely become realities." Similar resolutions were adopted by the Colorado River Board of which he was a member many years. His dedication to the District was evidenced when the board was advised by the attorney handling Mr. Forbes' estate that Dr. Forbes had made the District the ultimate beneficiary under his will. Two-thirds of the income from his estate was to

go to his wife during her lifetime, one-third to his sister. On the death of Mrs. Forbes two-thirds would go to the sister and one-third to the district, and on the sister's death the estate would go to the District. J. H. Snyder was named as one of the executors and trustees as well as special administrator.

On March 5, 1946, Harry L. Ramsey of the Oasis area was named to replace Dr. Forbes with Division 5 on the board. Ted C. Buck was elected president and E. Keith Farrar, vice president, at the same meeting.

Rumblings of Discontent

Rumblings of discontent were heard in the District in 1945 and 1946 against the Bureau of Reclamation's "often impossible terms" and "unwillingness" to keep the board and its staff advised. The Bureau was considering seeking a second repayment contract because the cost of the canal was going to be \$2,500,000 more than the original agreement. The district made a presentation to members of Congress; it asked Representatives Shepard and Phillips to get action on the proposed distribution contract, and reduction of what they believed were "excessive overhead" charges. Eleven years had passed since signing of the 1934 contract. The Bureau was insisting that no more work be done after completion of the Shea contract unless the supplemental contract was approved, and that the land limitation clause be inserted.

To facilitate studies of private financing and studies of the Bureau's records, the firm of Leeds, Hill, Barnard and Jewett was hired as consulting engineers through December 1945. The board decided, also, to build a high-pressure line across the valley to serve Oasis area, abandon the plan for a power drop east of Coachella and build one canal around Indio to the West Side.

The volume of activity required the board to hold two meetings a month, which it had done since August of 1945. A memorandum of agreement was approved Nov. 1 in which the District agreed to seek legislation to make the east side dike construction non-reimbursable, and that the 160-acre limitation would be a part of the proposed distribution contract. By the end of the year contracts had been proposed for completion of the canal to Avenue 57 on the west side of the valley.

In January 1946 the Cathedral City area was excluded from the water district and stormwater district at a public hearing, the exclusion included all but 40 acres of Section 33.

The district in cooperation with the Salinity Laboratory and the University of California was studying the value of drainage wells, one being put in operation on the Easley ranch. A Coachella Valley Test and Demonstration Plot agreement was signed, in which the Extension Service would oversee the plot later obtained on Highway 99. The problem of housing the employes of construction firms building the canal prompted the District to urge a Coachella public housing project.

By May 1946 work on the canal completion had progressed at such a "slow rate" the board adopted a critical resolution forwarding it to the Bureau and members of Congress. Counsel Shaw carried the district's protests back to Washington.

On July 1, 1946, because of a conflict of interest of Counsel Shaw, the board asked County Counsel Earl Redwine to handle the District's legal affairs until permanent arrangements were made. Redwine presented a draft of the proposed distribution contract he had prepared prior to conference with the Bureau of Reclamation July 9. On July 22 Redwine was retained as District counsel retroactive to July 1.

At a special meeting January 6, 1947, the Board approved the final draft of the proposed \$10,500,000 contract for construction of distribution system and drainage works, and

Avenue 57 was agreed as the terminus for the canal, due to the lack of a supplemental contract. The contract was submitted the District Securities Commission.

Meanwhile the Secretary of Interior wrote that while he approved of the contract as to form the District would have to sign a supplemental contract in the amount of \$15,506,168, which the District refused to sign. After conferences in Washington, the District and Bureau came to an agreement on a \$13,500,000 distribution contract which would eliminate the cross-valley drop lateral, and delivery to lands on the West Side below Avenue 57 would be made by a high pressure line from the east side of the valley. The West Side dike project was dropped. The East Side dike was to be non-reimbursable. Since the contract approved early in January was unacceptable the District withdrew its application for approval to the Securities Commission.

On April 1 the board formally approved the \$13,500,000 contract and resubmitted it to the Commission. President Ted C. Buck resigned May 5, 1947. Meetings in Washington, the support of Senator Knowland, and conferences in Boulder City began to get Bureau of Reclamation action. Landowners in Mecca area were proposing temporary delivery of water through emergency canals or structures but the District was reluctant to give permission in view of the unstable appropriation problems and the Bureau's attitudes.

In June 1947, the District had again reached a stalemate with the Bureau of Reclamation as to terms of the contract, refusing to amend the 1934 contract, refusing to bear the cost of the \$4,500,000 East Side dike and demanding that the 10-year development period be designated. However, the District generally prevailed and on August 7 approved as to form a new draft of the contract. Bids were called on the East Side Dike September 10. On August 26, G. L. Richey, Indio, was named to succeed Buck on the Board. Farrar, who had been vice president, was elected president of the board. Lee Anderson was elected vice president. The final revised draft of the contract was to be submitted to the valley voters. A public hearing was held October 11 on the lands to be benefitted.

The special election on the distribution contract was held December 17, 1947, and voters ratified the contract by a vote of 1137 to 19.

Indian Lands Reported

In 1948 a report listed the Augustine, Cabazon, Torres-

Martinez Indian lands totalling 32,341 acres (8,215 acres allotted, 13,400 tribal lands of which 12,775 were agricultural, 230 now farmed in Improvement District No. 1. There were 230 enrolled members. Of the lands 21,615 were in the District boundaries and 7,510 in the Salton Sea Reserve.)

The District's officers made trips to Washington regarding getting water to the Indian lands and getting contracts let for construction of Units 2, 3 and 4 of the distribution system.

The District was studying flood protection for Cat and Ramon Creeks. A June 1 recall election resulted in J. W. Newman retaining his directorship, defeating Howard Jennings. Board members were Keith Farrar, President; H. L. Ramsey, G. L. Ritchey, Lee Anderson and Newman.

Cement Plant Opposed

The House Committee on Indian Affairs visited the valley, the District's trailer housing project was completed. A proposed cement plant near Windy Point and Whitewater drew the board's opposition. In July the first applications for temporary canal water delivery was received, from Shell Ranch at 111 and Madison; Albert Keck 111 east of canal; Kennedy Bros. Ave. 54 and Jefferson; W. H. Kersteiner and Tom Sakai Ave. 48 and Madison, and George Keller Ave. 50 west of Jefferson, other applications from Russel-Alexander, Stevning and Bowlin, Mel Kent, George Gonzales, Eddie Apodac, Wm. F. Carey, Ben Marrs.

July 22 a heavy rain in La Quinta and Bear Creek caused extensive damage to the Coachella Canal and farm lands.

From August through December 1948, the completion of the canal brought a number of additional applications for temporary deliveries even as the first units of the distribution system were under construction: Leonhardt Swingle, Crane Ranch, Ralph Lucci, W. O. Tyson, George Applegarth, Clifford Burr, and C. H. Hill applied.

The Elliot Report "Plans for the Coachella Valley" were being distributed in December by the District and County Planning Commission, in what was the forerunner of valley comprehensive land use plans.

The District abandoned its tax assessor and collector's office and agreed that beginning in 1949-50 tax year the county would assess and collect District taxes.

Citing the necessity to assure the quality and quantity of water in the more than 8,000 acres the District held for flood control and water spreading in the Windy Point-Whitewater



C. J. FROST
Director, Div. 1
Elected 1958



TELLIS CODEKAS
Director, Div. 3
Elected 1976



WILLIAM B. GARDNER
Director, Div. 4
Elected 1973



STEVE BUXTON
Director, Div. 5
Elected 1977



"LEVELING LAND . . . by the Sweat of one's Brow, including the horses" . . . was the phrase used by William Cook, former Riverside County Supervisor, when he described this photo of his father, C. E. Cook, Valley leader and early planter of imported date offshoots in the area of Cook Road north of Highway 111, scene of this photo was taken in the early 1920's. Note citrus tree plantings. The ranch suffered serious damage in the 1927 flood from Deep Canyon and the Whitewater River channel.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

area, the District opposed the construction of a cement plant which could pollute the underground and retard and impair the spreading operations.

District Takes Operation of Canal

In February 1949 the District and the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation agreed to a proposal to turn over the operation of the Coachella Branch of the All American Canal from north of the lowest turnout for the East Mesa to the end of the canal at Avenue 57 as well as the protective works and the completed distribution laterals for temporary operations and maintenance. Regional Director E. A. Moritz agreed to turn over the canal in 60 days or sooner.

Requests for flood protection for the La Quinta area were received by the District. A water rate of \$1.50 per acre foot with a 50¢ gate charge adopted in March.

Warning signs were placed on canal roads to discourage use and trespassing signs also erected on the canal when it was accepted for operation and maintenance on March 25. Plans for the Palm Valley storm channel for water from Car and Ramon Creeks approved by the District and State. Rights of way were being obtained. As distribution laterals were completed they were turned over to the District for operation and maintenance by the Bureau of Reclamation.

In June the District requested the Bureau to turn over \$252,000 in equipment and housing acquired and used by the Bureau for maintaining the Coachella Branch of the canal since the equipment had been obtained and housing built under the 1934 and 1947 contracts. On the 20th the Bureau transmitted a copy of the list of available equipment. Wasteways 2 and 3 were completed.

High Pressure Line Completed

Unit No. 1 High Pressure line was completed to Oasis, the tower was yet to be completed in July. Units 2, 3 and 4 pipe laying was nearly complete except for some structures. All but

three miles of Unit 5 was complete. Pipe was being laid in Unit 6. Unit 7 bids were to be opened in August. All over the valley distribution lines and laterals were being laid. To house workers the District was operating a 50 dwelling unit and a 56 unit trailer park in Coachella. A request for five fish ponds adjoining the canal was presented the District by the C. V. Wildlife Propagation Club and the State Fish and Game, one near the storm channel west of Indio. A valleywide recreation district was also being proposed.

District President Keith Farrar and Counsel Earl Redwine went to Washington to press the District's claim for the housing on the District's headquarters grounds. A week of meetings ensued, mostly spent in trying to see the Secretary of Interior. The District insisted the housing and remaining equipment had been purchased from funds appropriated for the canal system.

"The Secretary finally came out of his office and said if we would draw up a resolution he would accept it. We did it by telephone. Redwine dictated it and the District board in Coachella adopted it, and I signed it as President. It was accepted and the District got to keep the \$252,000 in housing and equipment," Farrar recalled.

In October the District board adopted a policy that it would build the main drainage lines to benefit areas not individual land owners.

The year 1950 opened with the Palm Valley Storm Channel completed. State Engineer Ed Hiatt was sent best wishes on his retirement. An agricultural test plot was being operated by the District in cooperation with the Agricultural Extension Service on Thermal Airport lands. The University was being urged to assume operation. The delay in completion of Unit 9, Mecca area, was causing concern.

Irrigation Water Rules Adopted

Ritchey and Anderson were reappointed to the district board

and Charles Faulhaber was appointed to succeed Harry Ramsey in the Oasis area. Farrar and General Manager Joe Snyder went to Washington to seek appropriations to complete the \$13,500,000 distribution system. On July 1 Farrar resigned and L. P. Clause was appointed to the vacancy on the board. That month the first rules and regulations for delivery of irrigation water were adopted. The Senate Interior Committee approved \$1,648,300 for the Coachella Project. In August Company A, California National Guard, was given permission to use the area north of the detention dike from Monroe to Dillon Road for training purposes. The District was proceeding to obtain a right of way for a dike and reservoir between Avenues 56 and 59 and for an evacuation drain for the proposed west side dike along Avenue 64.

Protected Adjudicated Water Rights

Several times during the past several years the district, protecting the adjudicated rights to surface flows from the Whitewater and San Geronio River watershed had opposed new or increased appropriations of water. In August the bill to provide that the United States guarantee extension of laterals to Indian lands, provide for land classification and contracts for water deliveries was passed and went to the President for signature. The District filed application for a radio station and license to serve District vehicles.

In September the District obtained ownership of the District housing on the headquarters area for use by District personnel. The Bureau of Land Management was urged not to withdraw public lands in the spreading area for five-acre homesteads. Hugh M. Gallaher was employed as general manager and chief engineer to succeed Joseph Snyder who remained as a consulting engineer.

During the years 1948 through 1950 landowners sought temporary or intermediate deliveries of water from the canal as laterals were built and extended, being anxious to get land under cultivation. The board, deluged by request, often could make no promises as to delivery dates and were stymied by many factors, including the slowness of federal fund appropriations and problems of surging in the water lines. Landowners outside the district boundaries were being continually advised that there was no canal water available, no lines would be built to non-agricultural lands, and admonishments of patience were often expressed.

Seepage studies on the Coachella Branch, drainage studies on Shady Lane and the Airport, and operation of the canal and the distribution laterals occupied the District during 1951. Snyder and Redwine, District Counsel, made trips to Washington seeking completion of the distribution system in Units 8 and 9, La Quinta and Mecca areas. Snyder resigned as consulting engineer in July to go to Hanford, Washington. Lee Anderson, vice president, was named president on May 8 with Newman as vice president.

A Greyhound bus collided with a District vehicle at the junction of the highway to Blythe and the canal road and ended up in the canal on July 27. The same month water rates were raised to \$1.90 per acre foot, and a radio communications system was authorized.

By Ordinance 855 the District established a policy to extend irrigation distribution lines on the basis that the applicant deposit one-half the cost, the balance on completion, and that these costs would be refunded to the applicant on the basis of one-half the water charges semi-annually.

Surplus Land Drawings Planned

The Division of Beaches and Parks made an inquiry regarding water service for the state park on Salton Sea and the rise of the Salton Sea also brought queries from the property

owners. A moss screen on the canal had been undergoing tests and a second screen was recommended. Faulhaber was named representative to Land Settlement Board to schedule drawings for veterans for government and surplus valley lands.

The Bureau of Reclamation's request for a supplemental contract to complete the distribution system opened a series of meetings that extended over many months. The District's attitude was that the original contract called for completion of the works and the courts must decide the issue.

The year 1952 saw many laterals extended under the term of Ordinance 855. In January the 50 trailers in the Coachella park were ordered sold to highest bidders and the District agreed to enter into contracts to serve Indian lands with the Federal government when the distribution system was complete.

The District called for monthly reports from the Bureau of Reclamation on progress of the distribution system, made trips to Washington in an effort to resolve the need for funds for completion. Moss control in the canal and lines was increasingly causing problems of overtime and manpower.

The Edom area requested flood control works. Desert Beach (Roy Hunter) and Ralvet & Co. filed suit for damages due to rising sea. Leland Yost was named to excess lands appraisal board. Director G. L. Ritchey died March 15, Ted Buck was named to the vacancy July 8.

Moss problems, capacity, delivery and extension problems mounted in the lateral distribution system. On April 22 water rates were increased to \$3 per acre foot for first four acre feet, \$3.50 for next two and \$4 for all over six feet.

The District considered a \$260,000 project for a permanent bridge across the canal, detention and dispersion dike on the Mecca-Blythe highway as an unwarranted expenditure.

A delegation of farmers protested the problems of moss and tules clogging irrigation lines and screens and urged a \$3.30 water rate, which the board adopted, \$3.00 if paid in advance.

Government lands in Deep Canyon were purchased for spreading flood water and providing stormwater flows. Congress approved funds to complete the distribution system and President signed appropriation of \$1,419,000 on July 9, prompting the Board to ask for release of Unit 9 for service. Anderson resigned as president and Ted C. Buck was elected to succeed him.

Imperial Dam Board Initiated

The Imperial Dam Advisory Board was set up by the Bureau of Reclamation made up of agencies receiving water from that dam. Salton Sea level was minus 238.4 feet. The District acquired title to the C. V. Test and Demonstration Plot on Highway 99 and sought termination of the agreement with the Extension Service on operations. Hugh Gallaher resigned as General Manager-Chief Engineer and C. S. Hale, who had been project engineer for the Bureau on the canal and distribution system, was named effective November 1. W. R. Wright became Finance Officer-Auditor. Davis Dam on the Colorado was dedicated in November.

The District was busy with stormwater studies on Dead Indian and Deep Canyon, and on May 2 public auction disposed of the Coachella Housing Project, the Test Plot and Whitewater structure. The Division of Water Resources proposed a study of the underground basin with the District and Palm Springs Water Company sharing one-half and the State picking up the other half of the study costs. Water rates were reduced in December to \$2.50 per acre foot. The District discussed the U. S. Corps of engineers studying West Side and upper valley flood protection and controls. The work of Arthur Pillsbury, University of California, was commended by the C. V. Drainage Cooperative Committee. Palm Canyon flood con-

tol studies were discussed including the problems at Araby Point.

First discussions were started with Link Belt regarding traveling screens on the canal for moss control where canal enters the valley system. Other studies included a Mecca area settling basin reservoir to settle out debris. Seepage in the unlined canal was a continuing problem. Excessive irrigation water in streets and borrow pits drew comments.

The Palm Springs Desert Museum approached the District regarding leasing of 230 acres in Section 28 at the mouth of Deep Canyon for creating a restricted desert preserve for research. Present supporting the proposal were Hilton McCabe, Winfield Line, Lloyd Mason Smith, Philip Boyd and Randall Henderson. A lease at \$1 a year was signed January 27. On January 29 the District learned of the death of former Counsel Arvin B. Shaw.

The Bureau approved construction of the Mecca area settling basin. The District expressed serious reservations about the Palm Canyon flood channel and protection at Araby Point. The Bureau refused to turn over the "padlocked" Unit 9 distribution system in the Mecca area pending a court decision. Farmers and District agreed water wasted from irrigation on farms was the responsibility of farmers not the District.

Drainage problems and rising groundwater tables were being brought before the Board as the District began providing master drains with farmers constructing their own on-the-farm tile drain systems.

On May 22 the Department of Interior agreed to abide by a U. S. District court decision, with a memorandum of understanding accepted by the District for operation and maintenance of Unit 9. Mecca Farmers and local media had been critical of the refusal to permit use of the system. The county was urged to set up a branch of the County Assessor's office in Indio. On July 1 a standby (availability) charge of \$5 per acre was established on all lands served with canal water. The same month a new irrigation hazard was becoming increasingly serious — freshwater clams — especially at the ends of laterals.

Court Rules 'Contract is a Contract'

On September 14 U. S. Judge Harry Westover decreed that a contract is a contract whether between individuals or the government or an agency and that the Bureau of Reclamation was obligated to complete the canal water distribution system for the original contract price of \$13,500,000 and no supplemental contract was required.

The District for many years had been making high water table readings and investigations with contour maps as well as other related drainage studies, designing farm tile layouts, master mains, drainage outlets, leaching, soil sampling and well studies along with stormwater studies in La Quinta, Oasis, Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage, Edom and Palm Canyon areas with topographic surveys, runoff studies, need for dikes, and other engineering considerations. Groundwater studies were also continuing. The 1953 crop survey showed an increase of 11,268 acres farmed.

The year 1954 saw five to ten new irrigation water deliveries being made each month, in February water orders were reported to have increased 300 per cent in 30 days. The new equalizing reservoir was built on the west side. The District agreed to pay part of the cost of a weather forecasting station to assist farmers during the frost season. The Bureau advised the District in February that it would complete the distribution system and appurtenant works May 30 and would vacate their office building on the headquarters site. March 29 Anna Elizabeth Nelson of Thousand Palms defeated Ted Buck for Directorship on the Board. Leon Kennedy was elected to

replace Lee Anderson, who did not choose to seek reelection, and George Leach was elected to replace C. E. Faulhaber. On April 13 Kennedy was elected to the presidency an office he held until his death in 1976.

The Board asked the county to employ state laws to halt water users wasting water into county road sides. An emergency replacement fund for the All American Canal was set up by agencies served on a ten-year contribution basis.

Arizona vs California Suit

June 8 Director L. P. Clause resigned effective July 1 and Raymond R. Rummonds was appointed to the vacancy July 13. Unit 8 was completed and turned over to the District for operation and maintenance. Final design of the Palm Valley storm channel was completed. On July 14 the Secretary of Interior advised the District that \$13,410,014 was the amount to be repaid for construction of the distribution system under the 1947 contract. The special master appointed by the Supreme Court to hear the Arizona vs California Colorado River water dispute held his organizational meeting.

The Board tabled indefinitely all applications for canal water to Class VI lands. Dale Harris was named forecaster for weather station in space provided by the District. Differences of opinion and engineering brought new protests by the District regarding interference with natural flows from proposed County Flood Control works for Palm Canyon.

The County supervisors joined the District in requesting the Corps of Engineers to complete the survey of the Whitewater River system for purposes of controlling the surface and flood waters as the year 1954 drew to an end. Lake Small Fry was abandoned and parcel sold.

The annual crop report showed nearly 8000 more acres opened for farming in 1954.

Migrants camping on storm channels and drains prompted the District to ask the county to establish a migrant labor camp. The Controller General objected to relinquishing the "government camp" or housing on the District's headquarters to the District. The District contending the houses were built with funds for the canal contracts pursued the matter in Washington, and was later successful in obtaining possession. The Interior Department's proposal to sell the property was held up.

Palm Desert Surface Water Studies

Palm Desert surface water flooding prompted studies by the District. General Manager Hale pointed out that the county planning commission consider subdivisions in Palm Desert "only if the subdivision itself is protected and does not go any further." The Board asked that adequate flood protection works be required for new subdivisions as a "precedent condition." Property owners requested that Deep Canyon storm channel and Palm Valley channel be extended. Additional flood protective works were estimated to cost \$60,000. The property owners agreed to acquire rights of way for extension of the present dikes. Hale took leave of absence and the board named Lowell O. Weeks acting general manager and chief engineer on May 24.

The District entered into negotiations with the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service for exchange of District's tax deed lands in the Joshua Tree National Monument for lands outside. The Bureau's canal project office was moved to Yuma June 15, 1955. Acting Manager Weeks reported he had advised the Palm Desert committee after a field meeting that the works they were proposing for flood control were not adequate. All parties agreed to await a District study and completion of plans before obtaining necessary rights of way. Maps and easements necessary were delivered to

Palm Desert committee to obtain signatures. Congressman John Phillips advised the Corps of Engineers had \$30,000 allocated for Whitewater studies for 1956 which included an aerial survey. July 19 minor flood hit Palm Canyon and Oasis areas. Damage was done to the canal in worst storm since canal completed, from syphon 22 to syphon 7, August 17.

Flood Control Plans Pushed

In September the Board authorized proceeding to acquire fee titles to land necessary for construction of proposed Dead Indian Canyon stormwater protective works. Property owners expressed approval and plans to cooperate. The District continued its canal safety programs with large "danger - no trespassing" signs on canal banks and on concrete lining every quarter mile. During the years, and 1955 was no exception, engineering and plans for the Coachella Valley Stormwater Drain and Whitewater River Channel continued. The year's report showed 78,483 acres under the distribution system with 22,901 undeveloped and 9,182 acres pasture or fallow.

Early in February 1956 the District authorized extension of Dead Indian dike to Deep Canyon. Congressman Phillips ad-



EARLY INDIAN WELLS SETTLER

William P. Blair, early Indian Wells area settler, in photo taken about 1909, is shown cultivating melons on his homestead north of what is now the Erawan Hotel. The blairs, led by R. P. Blair, were also early well drillers in the area west of Point Happy.

— C.V. Historical Society Collection

vised the District it could take possession of the District housing and urged immediate transfer from the Bureau. Transfer was made effective July 1, ending long dispute. In April Harold A. Bromley was elected to succeed J. W. Newman, from Division IV, taking office on the 10th.

On May 15, 1956, Manager Hale resigned after 3½ years and Lowell O. Weeks was named acting general manager and chief engineer. On May 16 Walter Wright, finance officer, became District Auditor. The same month Dead Indian Dike No. 1 was completed and Dike No. 2 was nearly complete with rock rip-rapping being placed.

In October the Riverside County Water Association was organized. On October 23 Mr. Weeks was named general manager — chief engineer effective November 1. He was authorized to add new screen units for moss control on the canal each year.

Rummonds on Colorado Board

The county planning commission was invited to tour the valley and see need for flood works before subdividing certain areas, especially in flood prone areas. J. W. Newman resigned as the District's representative on the Colorado River Board of California, after 10 years and on February 6 Director Rummonds was named to represent the District by Governor Goodwin Knight. Due to the absence of the general manager attending Arizona vs California water suit hearings, the board appointed Keith H. Ainsworth, acting general manager. Link Belt was awarded the contract for five verticle travelling screens and the District authorized construction of a canal by-pass to be built at the screen structure. The Palm Valley Storm Channel extension and rehabilitation approved. A bill was passed authorizing Indian Lands water contracts. A state water plan was getting increased discussion.

The Rancho Mirage storm channel design was authorized. The House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee toured the valley October 3 and met valley leaders at a dinner at the Elks Lodge in Indio. The Frying Pan-Arkansas Project was opposed because it would divert Colorado Water from the river basin. At the same time the District opposed uses of Colorado River water by unauthorized persons who had no contracts for such water in the lower basin. Some Joshua Tree National Monuments lands were exchanged for lands located in the Whitewater River water shed and public reserve No. 56, the spreading area.

First Blow Sand Conference

Seepage in the unlined portion of the Coachella Canal prompted tests of using sediment and clay. Improvements to the Palm Valley and Deep Canyon channels were made. The District participated in the first major conference on blowing sand, (a problem that has incurred many meetings, studies and thousands of words since). The Division of Highways and Senator Nelson Dilworth traded comments on the building of the new interstate through the sand blow area. Nearly every month in 1957 through 1960 on-farm-tile drains were installed on from 100 to 300 acres. Discussions were continuing with the U. S. Corps of Engineers, as well as studies with the Soil Conservation Service, regarding flood protection for the west side of the valley, with the District exploring every possible avenue.

In February 1958 the canal by-pass was completed and two screen structures installed. The Feather River Project Association was gaining interest of the District with a membership. The State Department of Water Resources was asked to study the valley's need for supplemental water from any proposed state project. In March C. J. Frost was elected to succeed Anna Elizabeth Nelson as Director of Division I. Kennedy and Leach were re-elected from Division III and V.

In March and April storms caused flooding of channel

crossings by rains in Deep Canyon and Palm Springs. The Soil Conservation Service suggested that the District pursue Corps of Engineers assistance for flood protects. The District joined the State Employees Retirement system, in May. In April the District delivered 40,697 acre feet of water, a new monthly record. In August 1080 acres of Joshua Tree Monument lands were exchanged for 1480 acres of Whitewater River spreading grounds. The District advised the Riverside County Planning Commission there should be no construction permitted below the minus 220 foot contour around Salton Sea. The restricted Indian Lands irrigation bill passed approving contracts with Secretary of Interior providing an irrigation system to valley Indian Lands. Late in the year the Palm Canyon stormwater channel was completed and the Rancho Mirage channel work was authorized. The District contracted to pay 19.3 cents a gallon for regular gasoline and 23.8 cents for premium.

For several years the District had been making improvements to the completed distribution system laterals with gates, valves, raising baffles, exchanging line meters, replacing split pipes in cold weather, and extending District mains to improve irrigation. Farm drain tile systems were increasingly installed, in December 1958 more than 400 acres of on-farm lines were installed and during 1959 the average was between 250 and 500 acres a month.

Supplemental Water Needs Seen

During 1959 the District's representatives appeared before state water project hearings pointing out the need for supplemental water because supplies were diminishing, at the same time appearing before local agencies and community groups discussing future needs. Whitewater channel alignment completed from Date Palm Drive to Crossley Tract in May.

The District held a series of salinity study meetings with area farmers on how to deal with and reduce soil salinity. The Banning Water Co., Palm Springs Water Co., Desert Hot Springs and Coachella Valley County Water Districts joined in employing Bookman and Edmonston to make a survey on importation and distribution of Feather River Project water late in 1959.

Several projects to reconstruct or build the Whitewater River Channel were completed in 1960, one was the storm drain west of Indio and north of the Blythe Highway crossing, another above and below Ramon Road.

The District initiated plans to seek a voter-approved loan for rehabilitation and betterment of the canal and construction of westside dikes, and a terminal reservoir, in March 1960, applying for the loan in June. (A proposed contract was approved by the Board in April 1961.)

The Department of Water Resources estimates of the valley's supplemental water needs by 1990 were believed low and the District Board asked the Department to revise its estimates. The Board signed a \$50,000 cooperative agreement with the Department to study water resources and water problems in the groundwater basin, which could determine hydrologic characteristics, water quality, amount of groundwater in storage, the delineation and geology of the basin.

The District protested Salton Sea Community Services District drilling wells in Section 31, T8S, R9E, and proposing to transport water from the Coachella Basin to Desert Shores and Salton City developments, pointing out Improvement District No. 1 and the valley was in a state of overdraft and there was no surplus water for export from the basin. A legal action enjoined the exportation plan.

Speaking before valley groups and showing films, District representatives explained the State Water Plan which was on the November 1960 ballot as Proposition No. 1. Norman Fit-



ORIGINAL SWITCHBOARD
USED IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY

That is the legend on the switchboard shown above. The 1906-1924 board was donated the Coachella Valley Historical Society by J. W. Newman and is stored in the Water District's warehouse awaiting a valley museum space. Flanking the board are Mrs. Gilberta Alderman Harmon, a one-time chief operator, and Mary Ann Bundschuh Trager renewing acquaintance with the board in 1977, and recalling how they responded to subscribers. (see story page 69) — C. V. Historical Society Collection

zHenry was valley campaign chairman.

First Domestic Water Plans

The District had been studying the practicality, necessity and feasibility of entering the domestic water service field. The opportunity presented itself when the Rancho Ramon Water Company was offered and on November 8 the Board authorized the condemnation action filed for acquisition. Holdings were spread from west of Indio and from Thousand Palms to west of Desert Hot Springs.

In February 1961 owners of 771 acres petitioned the District for annexation as Improvement District No. 10. The area was served by the Chocolate Mountain Mutual Water Company. Formal annexation and formation began February 28. The Salton Sea Community Services District was also exploring means to annex the area to the District for domestic water purposes. On February 28 the Counsel and General Manger were authorized to proceed with negotiations to purchase the La Quinta Palms domestic water system. Two residential systems developed by Macco Corp. were transferred to the district and the area was organized as Improvement District No. 12. J. W. Silverman and Sam Manchell of Palm Springs Panorama accepted District offer and turned over that tract's domestic water system the same meeting. To obtain information on groundwater in the lower valley 75 piezometer wells were jetted. The Corps of Engineers studied a proposal by the county flood control district for two dams, one on San Gorgonia River.

The District agreed to a legislative proposal April 11 to form the Desert Water Agency as a special District providing the areas served by the District were excluded, noting that all natural waters in the valley had been "heretofore adjudicated."

At the same board meeting the District approved the first domestic water system for Palm Springs Panorama; heard a proposal that Cahuilla Hills become a part of the District for domestic water purposes; learned that the State would contract only with public agencies for contracts for water from the State Water Project; proceeded to annex all lands within the Rancho Ramon Water Company, (and at a hearing May 23 approved

the program); completed the first lateral to serve Indian Lands which was turned over to the District by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Section 32, T5S, R8E, and learned that efforts to remove the Colorado River Board had been defeated because of the opposition of the river water contracting agencies and people served.

During 1959 through 1961 contracts were let for alignment of the Whitewater River channel from Washington to Ramon in various segments including Wonder Palms to Country Club and Monroe to Washington, and the storm drain from Jackson St. west, Avenue 46 to Jefferson, Avenue 38 to Avenue 40.

Philip Boyd and Randall Henderson appeared before the board to review progress on the wildlife sanctuary and Deep Canyon protection. In June Improvement District No. 11 was formed including about 110 sections in Riverside, Imperial and San Diego Counties and annexed to the District in August. An application with the Department of Water Resources for State Project water asked a 60,000 acre foot entitlement by 1990. The assets and proceeds of the estate of Harry W. Forbes, early president of the District, were turned over to the District. The District completed its first month with a domestic water department. In September the Bureau of Indian Affairs completed eight lateral extensions to 240 acres. Annexation of Cahuilla Hills in November and other annexations required realignment of directors divisions to make equal in size.

Colorado River Water Decision

"Expansion in Southern California based on use of Colorado River water is at or near an end," the District directors commented upon receipt of the U.S. Supreme Court decision on the Arizona vs California suit in January 1962. Sky Valley residents approached the District about annexing to the District and forming an Improvement District for domestic water in February. (A year later proceedings were instituted for Improvement District No. 8.) Stormwater drain alignment and construction was completed from Highway 99 to Dune Palms Road and then Washington. The Division of Highways and the District agreed to reconstruction West Rancho Mirage storm channel. The Corps of Engineers completed plans for flood diversion works in Chino Canyon with the county and District agreeing to cooperate in the project. The District also agreed to provide a residence and quarters for the Coachella Valley Frost Warning (Weather) Service forecasting program beginning the fiscal year 1962-63. The District opposed the plan of Salton Sea Water District on the east side of the Salton Sea to export water from Improvement District No. 1 and the valley's basin.

Deep Canyon Expansion Set

Early in 1963 the District began negotiating with the Bureau of Land Management for purchase of 480 acres in Deep Canyon and 160 acres in the Whitewater spreading area. Water agencies contracting for State Project water from the East Branch began holding meetings and the project's audit committee was formed. Weeks and Wright appointed to represent the District. Initial talks began with Metropolitan Water District to exchange District entitlements to state water for Colorado River water from an outlet in Whitewater Canyon.

On July 16 the voters in Improvement District No. 1, the area served with Colorado River water for irrigation, approved a Rehabilitation and Betterment Loan with the U. S. for \$7,160,000 with 1424 votes cast and 1204 in favor, which permitted the District to proceed. The project would include canal improvements, telemetry, a terminal reservoir, dikes on the west side, annexation of lands to be protected by the dikes. Subdivision tracts were being completed with domestic water

systems installed and turned over to the District for operation and maintenance. The Whitewater realignment work was continuing in 1963 with the completion of the channel through the Thunderbird Golf Course, and from Avenue 40 to Rio Del Sol Road. While new farm drains were being completed and 240 acres of farm tile installed in October alone, the District was busy in domestic water field, too, drilling new wells and building new reservoirs. In November the engineering, accounting and operations departments were reorganized. Iris Kramer was named to succeed Barbara Schmid as District Secretary January 16, 1964.

On December 7, 1963, the District's Administration building was destroyed by fire. Many valuable papers were lost, but many saved, too. Temporary facilities at the Imperial Irrigation District were utilized. Improvement District No. 6 (Cahuilla Hills) organized, a bond election carried, and work started for a domestic water system.

In January 1964 the District asked the state for an annual entitlement of 23,100 acre feet of water and an additional 15,000 acre feet of unpreempted water from the state project. The District asked that water diverted from the Central Arizona Project be junior to all senior existing rights, including present perfected rights.

The District's protest of Salton Sea Water District's request for authorization of \$1,040,000 to build waterworks raised question of water rights and boundaries brought delay to the plan and conference between the two districts. Five new demossing screens on the canal were purchased under the Rehabilitation and Betterment Program. Many deteriorating water lines replaced in Palm Desert. A comprehensive Water Resources Management Study was contracted with the world-famed Bechtel Corp. which included a stormwater protective plan for the Edom Area. The Nairobi Estates Water Co. was added to the District's domestic system.

Improvement District 8 Formed

Improvement District No. 8 which included Sky and Fun Valleys and the B-Bar-H Estates east of Desert Hot Springs was annexed and formed. At an election May 19 \$4,750,000 in bonds were approved. A contract was signed with the Department of Water Resources calling for incremental increases in water deliveries from the state project from first year of 5,200 acre feet to 38,100 in the 20th year. The District began negotiations with Metropolitan Water District for exchanging state project water entitlement for Colorado River water, viewing the long term benefits as including delaying the date when bonds must be voted to build an aqueduct to tap the state project. Filling of Lake Powell behind Glen Canyon Dam brought a request from the Bureau of Reclamation to reduce water orders by 10 per cent. Bechtel agreed to make a study of alternative routes to bring state water to the valley. Several agencies that would be served were studying routes.

In May 1964 the Salton Sea Water District and the Coachella District negotiated an agreement to annex that district to Coachella, Coachella to withdraw objections to bond project, Coachella to approve all plans and specifications, Salton to convey all property, facilities and bond money to the District who would operate the facilities. Salton would levy assessments only to pay off the bonds, and dissolve the district.

Construction of the new administration building was started. The \$288,000 funding to come from insurance proceeds on the old building, and District reserves to be reimbursed from annual dividends of the Forbes Estate. A study of the Oasis flood protection was added to the report to be made by Bechtel Engineers, the area included was to be Martinez Canyon to Desert Shores.

January 1965 opened with the agreement with Salton Sea Water District, annexation of the area including the Hot Mineral Spa section and Bombay Beach. R & B work underway on the Avenue 64 evacuation channel, canal improvements, telemetering, rights of way for Terminal reservoir, and plans for dikes 2 and 4. The new administration building was completed and occupied February 12 with open house held April 15. Purchase of rights of way for the alignment of the Whitewater River Channel above Washington street was continuing. Subdivisions and tracts were being accepted at almost every board meeting from Salton Sea area to the upper valley including Palm Desert and Indian Wells. Developers constructed domestic water systems and turned them over to the District. Another effort to abolish the Colorado River Board successfully drew District objections in May. Improvement District No. 50 formed at North Shore and \$1,250,000 bonds approved July 27.

U.S.G.S. to Study Basin

In August the District entered into an agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey to investigate the valley's water resources. The Palm Desert Chamber of Commerce and the Palm Desert Community Services District asked the District to survey the need for a sewage disposal system for the area, prompting the District to authorize a study and report on sanitation facilities from Cathedral City to La Quinta. A new proposal to abolish the Colorado River Board as part of a plan to reorganize state boards and commissions again drew opposition and failed.

A November rainstorm caused considerable damage to the Whitewater and Stormwater Channels. State disaster assistance was sought and obtained. Happy Valley property owners and residents heard a discussion of water needs, feasibility and costs. The District began negotiating exchange of 555 acres of Joshua Tree National Monument lands, which it acquired through tax delinquencies, for 672 acres of government land in the Yermo area, which it would later sell.

The Palm Desert Chamber of Commerce requested the District to make a survey of needs for an adequate surface drainage master plan for Del Sol to Washington, and from the mountains on the south to Avenue 40. Wesley Hylen was employed to make the study. After the November storms the District rebuilt the dikes in the mouth of Deep Canyon, the Desert Sanctuary, and the spillway near the polo grounds.

Vice President Rummonds was complimented on his efforts as chairman of the Colorado River Board to promote peace between Arizona and California. The Board supported a Bureau of Reclamation study and investigation of the Morongo-Yucca Valley upper valley facilities needed to import water of the State Project from Hesperia Turnout on the California Aqueduct. Dale Harris, weather forecaster, since 1954 was commended. Dikes 2 and 4 and the Evacuation channel were under construction under the R & B program by mid year.

In an effort to inform farmers, educators, and business people of the value of the Colorado River irrigation program and the complexities of the District, bus tours began in 1965 were stepped up in 1966. Annexations to Improvement District No. 8 were approved. A plan by Bombay Community Services District to form an improvement district for water and sewer was studied. Desert Hot Springs and Coachella Valley County Water Districts moved forward to ultimately revise overlapping boundaries and turn over water systems to DHS District. The Department of Water Resources in July 1966 approved an exchange agreement between Metropolitan Water District and Coachella and the Desert Water Agency. Mid year the Palm Desert surface water study was completed and a

reconnaissance report on La Quinta stormwater and domestic water systems was received.

Surface Water Study Reviewed

At the close of 1966 a December 6-7 storm caused an estimated \$600,000 damage to flood channels. The U. S. Corps of Engineers began a reconstruction program in March.

Meetings were held in Palm Desert to describe the proposed surface water drainage program, costs and feasibility of forming an improvement district. Requirements for setting up and funding such a district were explained to citizens at a December meeting but no further action ensued. Vice President Rummonds was named to the Western Water Council along with State Senator Gordon Colgone. A proposal to delete funding of the Colorado River Board again brought opposition. Farmers Home Administration made a grant offer for Bombay Beach domestic water system which was approved by the Board as well as execution of an application.

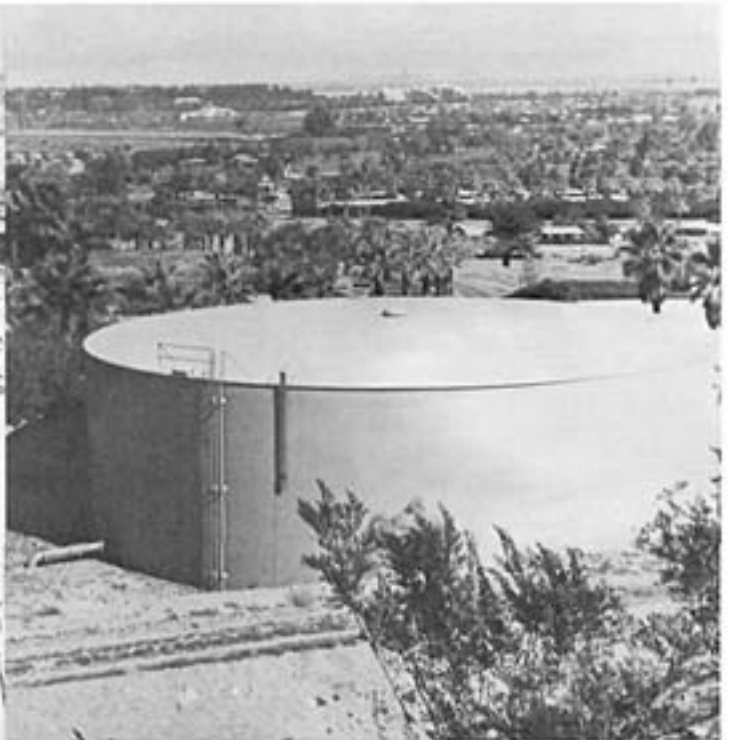
The District's "Whitewater River Basin, Coachella Valley California" floodwater study was approved and presented the U. S. Corps of Engineers at a Palm Springs hearing April 4. Action was taken to clear the way for sale of some 2,500 acres of District-owned lands. Senator Wash on the Colorado River above Imperial Dam was dedicated April 20. In May the Corps of Engineers reported plans to resume studies of flood control in the Whitewater River. Record lows in storage behind dams on the Colorado were reported. June 13 the District executed its agreement with Metropolitan Water District to take exchange water from the Colorado River Aqueduct at Whitewater. A joint powers agreement was executed with the cities of Indio and Coachella to make a surface study and investigation in the center of the valley. Realignment of the Whitewater River from Avenue 40 to Cathedral Drive and east and west of Portola was approved.

On October 24, 1967, the District mourned the death of Counsel Earl Redwine who had served since July 1, 1946. He drafted and obtained enactment of many water laws in the state relating to water districts and importation of water, he assisted in negotiating contracts for water and represented the District in the monumental Arizona vs California water suit. The Board named the firm of Redwine and Sherrill as counsels with Maurice Sherrill as chief counsel. In November the Board set plans to observe the 50th anniversary of the District (Jan. 16, 1918) and meeting of the first board of directors (May 6, 1918). The same month the county revealed plans for bridging the Whitewater at Del Sol; the District purchased the Palm Desert Country Club water and sewer systems, marking its first entry into the wastewater reclamation and collection field. Sidney Withrow was appointed Director of Division IV when A. Harold Bromley chose not to seek election. The Corps of Engineers completed reconstruction of the Whitewater River channel above Indio, was completing a stabilization structure at Paxton Road to reduce erosion, and planned another at Fillmore Street below Thermal.

Coachella Valley History Authorized

Assemblyman Victor V. Veysey supported legislation setting up a Salton Sea Salinity Committee with memberships from the two irrigation districts, both counties and interested persons to push for a solution to the increasing salinity. The District authorized a history of the District and valley to commemorate its 50th anniversary. An experimental drainage test plot in cooperation with CV Drainage Cooperators was approved to test experimental farm drainage systems.

The State Legislature honored the District with a resolution in observance of its 50 years, many cities and valley organizations congratulated the District early in 1968, one



CVCWD NOW SERVING 18,000 DOMESTIC WATER METERS

Since its entrance into the domestic water field in 1961, the Coachella Valley County Water District has experienced a record growth from 1,100 users to more than 18,000 in June of 1978 scattered over a 70-mile service area from near Desert Hot Springs to north of Bombay Beach and to Salton Sea. Scenes in domestic water system expansion are shown here. Upper left — installing main distribution line in 1960's from Palm Desert to Cahuilla Hills. Upper right — large reservoir serving Thunderbird area of Rancho Mirage and Desert Island (right center of photo). Lower left one of reservoirs serving Palm Desert. Lower right showing construction problems encountered in serving area west of Highway 74 in Palm Desert. — CVCWD Photos

group was promoting a historical festival "Jubilee '68." The District's automotive center was constructed. Myron Holburt was named chief engineer of the Colorado River Board of California in 1968, succeeding Dallas E. Cole, who had held the position six years and had served the board 37.

From the late 1960's and since many groups visited the District to observe irrigation and farming practices, the telemetering systems and water deliveries from the state, West Europe, Australia, Mediterranean, Brazil, Israel, Egypt and in fact most of the eastern and Asian hemispheres including Russia.

Congressman John Tunney and Assemblyman Veysey reported funds obtained for reconnaissance study of the Salton Sea and the Salinity Committee organized under state legislation with District President Leon Kennedy, chairman, and General Manager Weeks as representative of the District. Directors meeting room named "Harry W. Forbes Auditorium." District employees organized a Federal Credit Union. District headquarters marked as State and County Point of historical interest with a historical marker. The Living Desert Reserve was leased additional District lands in Deep Canyon. The \$1,276,900 terminal reservoir was under construction in September, and in November it was designated as a public recreational facility.

Water Systems Acquired

The acquisition of Tamarisk Water Company and Palm Valley Water Company was authorized in September 1968 and a comprehensive report on a sewage collection system and treatment facilities for the City of Indian Wells was ordered by the District.

Early in 1969 the District, Desert Water Agency and Desert Hot Springs County Water District reorganized boundaries. On January 23 flood damages totalling \$2 1/2 -millions done to the Whitewater channel, a subsequent flood in February added to the damages and federal disaster funds were sought to reconstruct the damaged portions from Palm Springs to the Salton Sea. The deaths of L. P. Clause, director 1950 to 54, in October 1968 and R. W. Blackburn, director from 1921 to 1932, and president his last four years, in March 1969 were marked by resolutions to the families. Improvement District No. 14 (Bombay Beach) organized, voted \$175,000 in bonds for a domestic water system and Farmer Home Administration offered a \$110,000 loan.

Under terms and conditions which included a recordable contract, adequate well water, periodic tests, and availability of surplus supplemental irrigation water, Class VI land owners were permitted order canal water at the regular irrigation rates plus \$4 an acre foot for a maximum of three acre feet per year. Venus Ranches was the first to apply. The terminal reservoir was officially named "Lake Cahuilla" August 12, and the Assistant Secretary of Interior James R. Smith, was on hand when dedication ceremonies marked the first turning of water into the lake October 31, 1969.

Implementation of Plan Urged

The District officially accepted the Palm Desert Surface Water Study by Engineer Wesley Hylan, dated August 1966, on January 24, 1970, with recommendations. The plan was adopted by the County Supervisors for the area. President Kennedy urged that "the people in the Palm Desert area work towards the full and complete implementation of this plan" in developments, land use and planning commission meetings.

The Bombay Beach domestic water system was completed and a community celebration held. The Bechtel Corporation was authorized to make the La Quinta Stormwater Project Plan report. The Corps of Engineers was completing rebuilding and

restoring of the Whitewater River Channel and Coachella Valley Storm Drain from Ramon Road to Point Happy and below Thermal. Four drop or stabilization structures were built or restored at Paxton Road, Monroe Street, Lateral Crossing east of Indio, south of Thermal and north of the Erawan Hotel. The exchange of Colorado River Water from the Metropolitan Aqueduct for State Project Water was approved by MWD, Desert Water Agency and the Coachella District. Early in the year reconstruction of the Deep Canyon channel for 1500 feet was approved.

A water efficiency use report on Lower Colorado River showed District delivered 94.7 per cent of the water to the farms in 1967; 93.1 percent in 1968, and in 1969 had delivered 90.6. The average for other agencies was 84 per cent in 1968. In May 1970 the District made its first formal request to make a feasibility study of lining the Coachella Branch of the All American Canal.

Wastewater Study Plan Approved

The Palm Desert Area Wastewater Study was accepted as a general wastewater master plan for the area from Cathedral City to La Quinta and requested the Board of Supervisors to incorporate the study in the county's master plan for wastewater facilities. A mile of the Palm Valley Stormwater Channel was reconstructed. The analog model of the valley's underground basin was demonstrated by the U. S. Geological Survey at the College of the Desert by the DWA and CVCWD. A new 50-year lease was executed with Palm Springs Desert Museum for the Living Desert Reserve totalling 284.70 acres. Improvement District No. 16 north of the Whitewater River in the Palm Desert-Rancho Mirage area formed with bonds voted February 16, 1971. Improvement District No. 53 also formed in Palm Desert area. In December 1970 the District and the Bureau of Reclamation executed a lease to the County Parks Department to operate the recreational facilities at Lake Cahuilla. Coachella's crop value was \$973.79 per acre, one of the highest in western reclamation areas.

Early in January 1971 the District acquired the Rancho Mirage Water Company. A new maintenance and warehouse building was authorized. The District took over operation and maintenance of the Mission Hills, Flying H, Thunderbird Water Company and other tracts water systems. Design of the Cook Street Wastewater Reclamation Plant and Bombay Beach Plant began. Bombay Beach Improvement District No. 51 voted \$465,000 bond issue for sewer facilities. Improvement District No. 17 formed on Middleton Road, with the Farmers Home Administration purchasing the bonds of 51 and 17 with grants and loans.

The District's first assessment districts were formed along both sides of Salton Sea, Nos. 60 and 61. In July the agricultural water rate was set at \$3.25 per acre foot. Desert Greens and the Desert Island system were turned over to the District. Ironwood Country Club leased Deep Canyon lands.

Lake Cahuilla Draws 2500

Early in 1972 Assessment District No. 62 brought a domestic water system to the small area near Desert Shores. Earthwork for the Cook Street plant was underway and the east dike of Morongo Creek stormwater channel was authorized. On February 12 the formal dedication of Lake Cahuilla's County Parks Department recreation facilities brought 2500 people. Improvement Districts 53 and 16 were completed bringing water and wastewater collection lines to Desert Greens and Eisenhower Medical Center. On the 26th Chester A. Sparey, the last remaining original member of the district's board, died in Port Townsend, Washington. The District was urging acceleration of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control



CHECKERBOARD OF RECLAMATION'S MAGIC OF WATER

From the Colorado River, 163 miles away, comes water by canals to irrigate the lower Coachella Valley. This view shows the crop plantings, dates in the foreground, citrus lower left, with water for about 67,000 acres, the valley produced crops with a gross value of about \$1870 per acre in 1977. This view is looking south of Indio.

— CVCWD Photo

Program at La Verkin Springs, Grand Valley and Paradox Valley.

Midsummer a dual program of \$5,000,000 for flood control and \$2,000,000 for wastewater collection and reclamation in the La Quinta area was tabled for the lack of financial feasibility, and a prohibitive tax rate. At a public hearing need for the projects was voiced, especially stormwater protection. Most of the funds for construction of the shop and warehouse building came from existing land sales on tax-deed exchanged land and other valley parcels.

Improvement District No. 54 wastewater collection facilities in Palm Desert were authorized. Middleton Road water system was completed in December. The Bureau of Reclamation report showed the valley's agricultural production of \$1,140.44, first in projects of its size.

100 Water Meters a Month

Water meter installations were proceeding at the rate of between 40 and 100 a month. Lake Perris of the State Water Project was dedicated May 18, 1973. Works in progress were many with the District commencing the Bombay Beach

wastewater system, Improvement Districts 53 and 54 sewer line extensions, a large reservoir at Thunderbird, Assessment District 62 works, drop structure at Avenue 62, stormwater channel dike work, the Vista Chino project, a North Shore Beach system. On March 12, Wm. F. Lester, Mecca area, director since November 26, 1971, died.

In March of 1973 142 new water meters were installed, in April 105, May 153 and June 170 indicating the housing developments in the service areas. Connection completed in April to permit MWD to deliver Colorado River water from aqueduct to be spread by DWA and Coachella. On May 22 Wm. B. Gardner appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the death of William Lester. He took office June 12. In August the East Rancho Mirage storm channel reconstruction authorized. By September domestic water services totalled 10,471 connections of which 9,413 were residential. The Geological Survey cooperative agreement on underground investigation was continued. In November an aquatic weed control program agreement was signed, proposing to use weed-eating fish.

An environmental impact report on the proposed La Quinta

stormwater project was reviewed and a public hearing was set December 13 for comments. The final report was adopted on January 8, 1974. The year closed with authorization for construction of a Sky Mountain Reservoir and Rancho Mirage Reservoir, for a total cost of \$530,000. The State Water Quality Control Board approved the construction contract for the Cook Street Wastewater Reclamation Plant.

Hot Mineral Spa Annexed

A resolution supporting the Salton Sea Advisory Committee's request for federal funding of a project to remove salt from the Salton Sea was adopted in February. The area around the section containing the Hot Mineral Spa was annexed to the District, about 25 sections, an Improvement District was formed and bond election held. The El Paseo-Highway 111 sewer line Assessment District (90) was established in May and Assessment District 64, water line and fire hydrant project in Rancho Mirage, was established in July.

In October the District learned the federal government was proposing to line the first 49 miles of the Coachella Branch of the All American Canal to reduce seepage losses and provide Mexico with better quality water from the Colorado River. The valley's civic organizations supported the Peripheral Canal concept for the state water project. The Panorama Mutual Water Company was acquired, and Improvement District 15, Hot Mineral Spa area, voted bonds for domestic water system on November 5, 1974.

In January 1975 the District again reaffirmed by resolution support of the desalinization of the Salton Sea and urged the Secretary of Interior to consider the priority, feasibility and benefits of the project.

The effort of the Quechan Indians to give new interpretation to rights to lands and water of the Colorado River were opposed in Washington, D. C. by District officers. A Solicitor's opinion would have granted most of their claims. Another proposed rock festival in Box Canyon drew objections because of canal and structural hazards.

In March the Deep Canyon Water Company in Palm Desert, and the San Jacinto Mutual Water Company in Rancho Mirage, were acquired. Action began that led to formation of Improvement District No. 18 in the Happy Valley (now Indio Hills) area, domestic water bonds were voted in September. The U. S. Department of Interior declared "Salton Sea project should not be federally funded." The District approved connection of Indian Wells sewer system to the Cook Street Plant pending agreement in 90 days as to handling and funding of the effluent.

State Water Route Studied

In November the District joined the Desert Water Agency, Mohave Water District, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District and San Geronimo Pass Water Agency in agreement with the Department of Water Resources for a feasibility study of extending the state water project to the Coachella Valley.

The District authorized the purchase of 350,000 Tilapia Zilli fish for biological control of weeds and moss in the canal and tile outlet drains.

Early in January Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. proposed to do away with the Colorado River Board and make it a function of the Department of Water Resources. This led to strenuous objections in Southern California and legislative action. Widespread media and local governmental support for the Board led to a compromise in which the Governor would increase the Board by five members, three public members and a member each from Fish and Game and the Department of Water Resources (the latter two to be ex officio.) Many

meetings were held with area legislators (Assemblyman Tom Suitt and Senator John Stull) by Colorado River Board Chairman Raymond Rummonds and others including District directors and staff. The Governor relented to restore the state's portion of financing of the Board's activities, and the river agencies agreed to the expanded Board.

The irrigation water rate was increased to \$4.75 an acre foot. The Board opposed the proposal to halt building of nuclear power plants on the June ballot. The proposition lost. In March a Rancho Mirage proposal to create a "Whitewater River Regional Park" was approved by the District. The rise of Salton Sea was causing concern.

In May the DWA and District signed a water agreement to control the importation of state project water, allocation of costs and the management of the natural and imported water from Fingal Point to Point Happy.

22-Year President Dies

President Leon Kennedy died June 11. Rummonds was elected to succeed him with Leach becoming vice president. Irrigation rates were increased in June to \$5.00 an acre foot. Tellis Codekas was named on July 13 to the vacancy on the Board from Division 3. In July the Bovee-Barham Water Company in Thousand Palms was taken over by the District.

The District began condemnation leading to purchasing of land for the eventual La Quinta evacuation channel taking stormwaters to the Whitewater Channel. The auditorium in the shop and warehouse building was named the "S. S. M. Jennings Auditorium," in honor of the first president. The first of many damage claims arising from the higher levels of the Salton Sea were filed in late July 1976.

Tropical storm Kathleen released unprecedented heavy storm waters in the Martinez-Oasis area and the Dead Indian-Carrizo Creek areas above Palm Desert. Heavy damage was reported in the September 10 flooding to farm lands and the residential area of Palm Desert and Indian Wells. The District immediately began seeking federal disaster relief assistance funds to restore dikes and reconstruct damaged works. The Bechtel Corporation, San Francisco engineering firm, was employed to make a technical investigation and report to the District on permanent flood protection works for the cove communities. In October a sewage treatment agreement was signed with Indian Wells. Flood damage expenses to the District had reached nearly \$490,000 the first month, the auditor reported. The U. S. Corps of Army Engineers was requested, by resolution, to include in its 1978 budget funds for reopening floodwater studies of the Whitewater River and its tributaries, and to secure funding for and construct adequate protective works for the communities of Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert and Indian Wells.

An Environmental Impact Report was ordered and a hearing was set on the draft at the February 22, 1977, regular meeting of the Board for lining the first 49 miles of the Coachella Canal. The District was informed that it had received grants of over \$3,000,000 from Economic Development Administration funds for providing sewers to residences now unsewered south of Highway 111 in Palm Desert and for sewers for a Jackson Street subdivision north of Avenue 56. Contracts for the works were let in February.

In view of the northern California drought, the Directors early in 1977 approved a letter sent all water users urging wise use of water but advising that no rationing was contemplated. An inquiry from the Governor as to the District's plans regarding the drought, prompted a reply that stated there would be no reduction of water deliveries, that foresighted planning made unnecessary rigid conservation plans, that to mitigate the



COACHELLA BRANCH ALL AMERICAN CANAL BUILDING BEGAN IN 1938

Photo above shows the construction of the main All American Canal east of Holtville. Draglines are dwarfed by size of construction. Coachella Branch began at Drop 1 on the main canal and continues 123 1/2 miles to the Lake Calhoun terminal reservoir east of La Quinta. BOTTOM PHOTO shows construction of Wasteway No. 1 on Cleveland Street west of North Shore in June of 1946. This concrete spillway is part of the control structures of the Coachella Branch. First Coachella Valley water deliveries from the canal began in 1948.

— U. S. Bureau of Reclamation Photos



affects of the drought the state should repeal wild rivers legislation, construct the Peripheral Canal, conserve water by storing flood waters, that State Project water was being wasted for Delta fish and wildlife, and that adequate works should be built to provide water as contemplated in the State Water Project plans.

Congressman Clair Burgener advised the District in February the U. S. Corps of Engineers would include \$200,000 toward reopening continuing studies of the Whitewater River Basin for flood control. The District released its entitlement for State Project Water to benefit other northern state water served contractors in March. The Board protested President Carter's proposal to eliminate many western water conservation, irrigation and energy projects. He proposed to halt funding on 19 projects, which was later revised. Studies were ordered regarding a sewage collection and treatment system at Salton Sea Beach on the west shore of the Sea. Arthur F. Pillsbury, who conducted pioneer studies of irrigation and drainage, was honored by a board resolution.

In July irrigation water rates were increased to \$5.50 per acre foot and domestic, meter installation and other water charges were also increased. The Indio Hills area, as Improvement District No. 18, voted approval of and saw construction start on a domestic water system through a grant and loan of funds from the Farmers Home Administration.

The withdrawal of the Imperial Irrigation District from the Colorado River Board of California because of a dispute with the governor as to membership on the Board, caused other agencies to increase their support of the Colorado River Board. The Desert Moon Ranch area near Thousand Palms became Improvement District No. 19 and construction of a domestic water system with Farmers Home Administration funds was approved. In September copies of the "Engineering Report of Preliminary Design and Cost Estimate for Flood Control Works for Palm Desert-Rancho Mirage-Indian Wells" prepared by Bechtel Engineering were received and copies delivered to the three cities and news media. The use of *Tilapia zillii* weed-eating fish in cleaning the canal and drains was found of continuing benefit for the District. Study sessions with the three cove cities on the Bechtel report were held. The District submitted names to an advisory committee to consider plans for development of Lake Cahuilla by the county parks department.

Meters were being placed by the District on deep well pumps in the District in a continuing program of determining pumping from the underground basin and making future replenishment determinations. The State District Securities Division approved the contract proposed for the lining of 49 miles of the Coachella Branch of the All American Canal in October. Under the EDA grant program thousands of residential properties were being connected to the comprehensive street sewer project lines being built in the portion of Palm Desert South of Highway 111, and annexations to the sewer improvement district were proceeding. An estimate of \$85-million was placed on the cost of providing flood control projects to protect the entire valley including Edom (Thousand Palms), Oasis, La Quinta and the cove communities of Palm Desert, Indian Wells and Rancho Mirage.

The November election brought a spirited campaign with incumbents C. J. Frost and Tellis Codekas winning re-election. Steve Buxton, Thermal area rancher, defeated George H. Leach for Division V, and took office the latter part of November. The Board re-elected Rummonds as chairman and named Codekas as vice chairman.

During the year hundreds of claims for damages resulting

from the Tropical Storm Kathleen were filed with the District ranging from the rising of Salton Sea to flooding in Oasis and Palm Desert areas. An environmental impact report was ordered prepared by J. B. Gilbert and Associates on a flood protection plan for an 11,000 acre area including the three cove communities. An amended contract with the U. S. for replacing the first 48 miles of the Coachella Branch of the All American Canal was approved as to form.

Early in 1978 the District increased irrigation water rates to \$6.50 per acre foot, and expanded the Bechtel Inc. scope of work to include a reconnaissance study of the Rancho Mirage flood control works. The District added new water system back-up facilities charges for new construction including dwelling unit charges and meter surcharges. New applications for national disaster assistance were made because of continuing damage to District facilities from heavy rains and flooding.

The year 1977-78 not only saw two new faces on the District's board of directors but also saw Walter R. Wright retire as Auditor-Controller and Dennis Hackett named to replace him as Auditor on June 15.

Political problems accelerated. The administration's opposition to water developments in the Western States promised problems in flood storage and hydroelectric projects. Secretary of Interior Cecil Andrus raised storms of opposition when he announced rigid and restrictive rules and regulations governing use of federal project water and a 160 acre limitation. Mass meetings, organizations of water, irrigation and agricultural interests made their opposition known and Congress began redrafting the 1902 acreage limitation law. State and Federal Fish and Game and Wildlife agencies sought to limit necessary flood control work on the lower Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel to preserve habitats. Passage of Proposition 13 to limit ad valorem taxes brought about economies and reorganizations within the District, placing a cloud on the future progress in storm and floodwater protection programs. The District froze employment, purchases and projects preparatory to determining budgetary constraints. The Bureau of Reclamation was proceeding with calling for bids for construction of the first 49 miles of a lined Coachella Branch of the All American Canal. The 1976-1978 period may well prove to have been some of the most crucial years of the District's history.

From June 26, 1948, when the Coachella Branch of the canal was completed, expansion of the irrigated areas was rapid. The first official delivery of Colorado River water via the underground distribution system was to the Russel-Alexander Ranch east of Thermal on March 29, 1949. From 1948 until today the years have witnessed not only development of agriculture and changing crop patterns, but the development of resorts, urban expansion, recreational facilities and winter golf has been short of amazing in the context of time.

Since the 1950's the District has realized a high degree of cooperation and understanding with the Bureau of Reclamation. In retrospect and in view of the 1976-1977 drought problems of Northern California, the decreased snow pack in the Sierras and the Rocky Mountains, the foresight of the early water pioneers has permitted those served by the Colorado River to harvest the fruits of those investments of time, agonies and victories in building dams, reservoirs, hydroelectric plants, canals and water distribution systems. These systems have made possible the storing of stormwaters and release of them year around to generate electricity, serve farm lands, recreation, industry and homes, in Southern California and the Colorado River basin states.

The District's foresight in adjudicating the surface waters of the Whitewater River basin, the conserving of surface and

groundwaters, the replenishment programs, the reclamation of wastewater, as well as the contracting for State Project Water, are all accruing to the benefit of residents today as well as tomorrow, giving us time to develop new sources of water while being stewards of the inheritance early valley water leaders gave us all.

Water, will and vision have been three great ingredients to the success story of Coachella Valley, and they should continue to be important facets in our history.

Storm Waters

(continued from page 20)

levees were cut in four places to drain off water. At Mecca the bridge being two feet lower than the top of the levees caused the debris and trash to lodge against the bridge, silt was deposited and the channel was filled as far back as the concrete dip in the paving. Brown's Bridge (ice plant located at Avenue 67 and Buchanan) rested on mud sills which caused it to collapse and obstruct the channel.

On July 10, 1928, the Stormwater Board received a petition signed by 23 property owners in the area damaged or threatened by the 1927 floodwaters from Deep Canyon. The signers were: Robert Webb, Jr., C. M. Wescott, Mrs. Nettie S. Cook, A. L. Cavanagh, Robert B. Murphey, Ralph M. Westcott, E. J. Louis, Jeanette Brown, Blanche A. Graham, J. A. Caldwell, E. Avery Newton, Josephine Carpenter, A. E. Cavanagh, Dewey Moore, O. B. Hansen, Aug. W. Hanson, Percy L. Day, D. H. Mitchell, Leonhardt Swingle, Clarice Leighton, Vincent W. Shutt, "being a majority of the property owners . . . do hereby petition your Honorable Board to accept as a route for said flood waters channel the one running easterly and along the base of the mountains . . ."

The project included levees, channel excavation and purchase of rights of way "to control the floodwaters of Deep Canyon and Dead Indian Creek . . ." and referred to a 1922 survey of a similar project, along the base of the mountains.

Engineer George N. Adams quoted a report by W. P. Rowe, District engineer, that there was a peak flow of 4500 second feet and it reached "the Whitewater Channel while it was in flood and built up a delta in the slack water south of Chapin's house. The cutting of the deep channels south of Cook's Ranch was due to the concentration of the waters by the new settlers in this vicinity. . ."

The commissioners acting on the orders of the Board October 9, 1928, presented its report proposing a project to cost about \$42,000 to be paid by the property owners in the area. The project was built and paid for by assessments.

Again in 1938 floods visited the desert, marooning Palm Springs tourists nearly a week, and it too was aggravated by rapidly melting snows early in March. The waters were not supplemented by heavy runoffs from tributaries and Indio, except for anxious moments, had called for teams, men and sandbags when the peak flow threatened to top the levees. The middle portion of the highway bridge below Thermal, and the east portion of the Mecca bridge were washed out. The flood waters scoured the channel two feet from Point Happy to the sea.

In September 1939 the valley had two heavy rain periods, September 4 to 6, and Sept. 24 and 25. The first storm caused heavy flood waters from the eastern canyons to damage and place Mecca under water. Railroad bridges were damaged and long sections of track were washed out for more than 20 miles

as far as Salt Creek. Water was three feet deep in Thermal and the discharge from canyons on the east side of the valley did considerable damage at Mecca.

The late September flood ran water in the streets of Indio and Coachella, many buildings were flooded, and water was deep enough for boats on Miles Avenue. On top of the earlier rain the valley became a lake with water two feet deep in Mecca, nearly 7 inches of rain had been recorded in a three hour period in Indio. L. A. Pauley's Desert Theatre was featuring "The Rains Came."

Mecca Under Water

On August 10, 1941, Thermal, Painted and Box Canyons received a cloudburst which caused water to run 30 inches deep in Mecca. Buildings were damaged, an adobe building buckled, mud and debris added to the damage. It was this storm that led to demands for flood protection and brought about the surveys by the U. S. Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation. Today the 4 1/2-million-dollar Eastside Dike protects the lower southeast valley from east Mecca to north of Madison Street on the north side of the valley. This dike was completed in 1947.

General storms caused a flood in August 18, 1945, with most damage concentrated in the Oasis area and putting 18 inches of water in Mecca.

Palm Desert Hit

July 23, 1948, saw a cloudburst type of storm drop several inches of rain on the Palm Desert cone and into the La Quinta foothills. Homes in Palm Desert and La Quinta were flooded. The highway from Cathedral Canyon to Palm Desert was damaged. Runoff from La Quinta topped the recently completed All American Canal near Avenue 53 and some lining was damaged. An earth crack opened near the La Quinta point of rocks into which water flowed, and land erosion was noted between Avenue 57 and 58 near Jefferson.

Other storms since that time in the years 1951, 1952, 1955, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1963, were minor in nature, causing some highway flooding and damage.

(The most recent storms and floods of any magnitude occurred in 1965 to 1968, and in September 1976 and September 1977. During the winter of 1977-78 succeeding storms soaked the valley and caused heavy runoffs but very little damage.)

Major Flood of 1965

Thanksgiving week of 1965 saw the valley virtually marooned for several days when storms in the upper reaches of the Whitewater washed out bridges, highways, and caused considerable damage to the highway under construction at the junction of Highways 111 and Interstate 10 as well as approaches west of Palm Springs.

It is particularly noteworthy that works constructed by the water district contained the 15,000 second feet peak flow. Fortunately the flood waters confined themselves to the historic water courses above Palm Springs.

Litigation, Indian land problems, and other impediments have caused delay in building upstream levees and protective works. The lack of a levee east of Palm Springs brought many an anxious moment. Downstream recently constructed works carried the brunt of the flood safely through golf courses and resort areas, around Indio and south to the sea with but a few exceptions. The channel banks were breached south of Thermal to cause overflows. The miracle of the storm of 1965 was that the waters spread out north of Palm Springs and reentered channels farther downstream, and second that the water was kept largely to the district-built storm channel south of Thermal.

Demand Bridges

Early reports indicated that two people lost their lives, and

several escaped drowning seeking to cross the Whitewater when it was under flood conditions. This storm and the 1966 storm waters brought about the building of the first of two bridges over the channel on Rio Del Sol north of Rancho Mirage. The second was Washington Street bridge, north of La Quinta, completed in 1976. Another bridge is projected for Date Palm Drive.

In 1966 the rains began falling in the San Geronio Pass the evening of December 2 and continued through December 3, by 3 p.m. it was flowing across Indian Avenue and a flow of 1,000 second feet was registered at Avenue 50 on the morning of December 4.

Water was receding December 5, but rains became heavier late that day. The Avenue 50 crossing was washed out with a 5,000 second feet flow. Water was flowing over most crossings from Del Sol east. By 3:30 p.m. the flow at Windy Point was 20,000 second feet and channel banks were scoured by the flow which had receded to a mere trickle by noon the 8th. Most of the damage occurred to crossings and channels south of Avenue 56 to the sea. Railroad traffic was slowed, telephone and electric interruptions were noted, and some schools were closed, damage was caused to the county bridge at Avenue 56 and the highway bridge south of Thermal.

The freakish summer storms of 1967 proved the value of improvements and repairs to the Whitewater River channel as well as the water district's telemetering system of control on the All American Canal.

The storm season began August 16 when a storm dumped heavy rain on the Chocolate Mountains causing damage to canal maintenance roads. The next day the storm hit the Palm Springs area with Cathedral City getting about 2½ inches of rain in an hour and a half. Indio was on the edge of the storm receiving .75 of an inch. The storm of August 30, dropped two inches and cut off La Quinta for several hours, isolated the Eldorado area when the Deep Canyon channel carried water. About 150 homes in Palm Desert suffered varying degrees of flood damage as well as a few homes in Indian Wells. Most of the Whitewater crossings suffered heavy damage. Mecca had an inch of rain from this storm that hit the southeast end of the valley first and then returned to lash the west side. Box Canyon road was damaged and it was closed for ten days.



EARLY HIGH SCHOOL BUS

This vehicle (a Model T) was fitted with extra seats and served as a school bus. William Cook, driver, drove the bus from Cook Road to the Coachella Valley Union High School site on Van Buren and Airport Boulevard in the late 1920's.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

On September 24 another storm hit the Mecca area and brought damage between Mecca and Niland. The county flood control district estimated \$302,000 in damages to the Palm Springs area, and had just completed a request for \$750,000 for construction of the Tahquitz Creek Flood Control project there.

The storms of 1965 through 1967 recall warnings issued by General Manager Lowell O. Weeks before the Coachella Valley Advisory Planning Committee at Ericksen's Restaurant in Desert Hot Springs in September 1964, he commented that it had been so long since the valley had seen a big rain that "this business of stormwater almost has been forgotten by the majority of the residents."

In this review of floods of the past it is well to give credit to the foresighted early residents of the Coachella Valley, who, through the storm water district and county water district board, began to take measures early to both conserve flood water and add them to the underground basin and to plan also to carry off those storm waters and protect the rapidly developing valley. That there has not been greater losses of life and property, credit should be given the men of these boards.

Get Spreading Grounds

The boards were not idle. The first boards, about 1920, began obtaining flooding rights in the upper Whitewater River from Whitewater to what is now Indian Avenue for spreading the floodwaters to allow them to percolate into the underground aquifers to replenish the basin's water. The water district not only purchased and exchanged lands totalling nearly 4700 acres but obtained withdrawal of 2,000 acres of public lands in an effort to prohibit development of those lands. Even so encroachment upon the lands susceptible to flooding have taken place and caused problems not only in protection of those lands but of lands downstream in the area of Palm Springs. The ownership of Indian lands in the area have also added complications and have delayed the building of dikes.

Build Toward Salton

In the early years, improvement of the channel from Cathedral City to the Salton Sea was undertaken. The channel from Point Happy around Indio was the first major project. Later came the building of the drain south to the Sea, then the Deep Canyon project, supported by the Palm Desert landowners. The building of spreading dams in the area between Garnet and Palm Springs were constant projects. The periodic flooding of the valley and control of the flood water has involved more than sixty years of labor and millions of dollars.

The continued and rapid development of the valley above Point Happy in the intervening years, which was accelerated after World War II by the advent of Colorado River water making possible a greater water supply available for the area, has complicated the problem of flood control so as to make those early day efforts seem child's play by comparison. The luxury golf courses, resort developments, and even subdivisions and townsites astride the early day natural flood courses serve to point up the difficulties. A major flood today, without the works built by the Coachella Valley County Water District, would bring a major disaster.

This development has increased the stakes in the continuing program of developing flood protection, while requiring every effort to conserve water in the upper replenishment areas.

The drainage area of the Whitewater encompasses the watershed of 2038 square miles. Compounding the problem is that to narrow the channels would increase the depth of the channel, for the Whitewater River course from Palm Springs to the Salton Sea maintains a fall of water greater in its 50 mile length than that of the Mississippi River from above St. Louis,

Missouri, to the Gulf of Mexico. The fall of the riverbed is 90 feet per mile at Windy Point. The erosion of a channel would be more rapid and severe without spreading and slowing the flood waters and by providing a wide channel through the populated areas.

The water district is responsible for flood protection works in about 95 per cent of the Coachella Valley, that is, within its 637,000 acre three-county jurisdiction. The Stormwater district boundaries, which have been reduced since the formation of that original District, generally begin near Whitewater and Windy Point, go east, south of Garnet, then diagonally along the foothills of the Indio Hills and the Mecca Hills, southeasterly to include the north shore of Salton Sea and the Hot Mineral Spa area in Imperial County. On the west the boundary follows the Whitewater River Channel around through north and east part of Palm Springs to near Cathedral City where it goes diagonally southeast along the foot hills of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains and the south edges of Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, and Indian Wells and the center of La Quinta, then diagonally to the Imperial-San Diego County lines near Travertine point then south to include Salton City and Desert Shore areas in Imperial County, placing the stormwater district's boundaries in two counties.

Valuable U. S. Dikes

Completed flood protection works today include the \$4.5-million East Side Dike constructed with non-reimbursable federal funds by the Bureau of Reclamation in the late 1940's. This dike protects the All-American Canal's Coachella Branch and valley cities and farms from southeast of Mecca to northwest of Indio and forms a series of detention reservoirs to store tens of thousands of acre feet of floodwaters. It was built as a part of Improvement District No. 1 projects.

The section known as Coachella Valley Stormwater Drain has been improved and widened from Point Happy to below Thermal where the U. S. Corps of Army Engineers rebuilt it in the late 1960's as a part of a \$1 1/2-million flood damage restoration program. The district continually maintains this portion of the channel since it carries some farm tile drainage water to the Sea.

The Whitewater River Channel above Point Happy has undergone considerable widening, improvement and straightening during the 1960's and '70's. Channel improvements have been generally completed from Washington Street to about a mile north of Ramon Road east of Palm Springs. Some rights of way are yet to be obtained on the west side of the channel below Ramon Road and north of the improved section. Completion of this section was expected before 1980 until the passage of Proposition 13 in June 1978.

The storms during the years 1965 through 1969 delayed the completion of the channel improvements from the Sea to the spreading area above Indian Avenue since most of the District's stormwater budget, including Corps of Engineer's flood damage repair funds, went into repairs, replacements and restoration works. Below Thermal the drain channel is defined. Funds for all District work is obtained from taxes within the stormwater unit of the District.

In 1966 at the request of Palm Desert citizens a Palm Desert Surface Water Study was made by Wesley Hylan, engineering firm. The plan was adopted by the District on January 24, 1970, with recommendations, and encouragement by President Leon Kennedy "that the people in the Palm Desert area work towards the full and complete implementation of this plan," in developments, in land use and in planning commission meetings. Riverside County also adopted the plan for the area to provide carrying off of surface water through street and other improvements.

Westside Dikes Built

One of the major construction projects which was completed recently is a portion of the west side dike system. In July 1963 the District's voters in the Colorado River water service area approved a contract with the United States for "Rehabilitation and Betterment of Works" which included the dikes designated as Dikes No. 2 and No. 4, the Avenue 64 Evacuation Channel, the terminal reservoir (Lake Cahuilla) and various All American Canal improvements.

Dikes 2 and 4, built 20 and 31 feet high, respectively, have been constructed to nearly sea level. The first extends from about Avenue 57 to the north end of Coral Reef, (Avenue 59). Dike 4 extends southeasterly from Coral Reef area to below Avenue 65. Farm lands are protected from floods and flood waters are stored, releasing the excess through the evacuation channel which has its outlet at the Coachella Valley Storm Drain. The cost of the dikes and evacuation channel was about \$3.2 millions.

Lake Cahuilla, (Terminal Reservoir), dedicated in October 1967, now serves the end of the 123 1/2 miles Coachella Branch of the All American Canal near Avenue 57. Its primary purpose is for regulatory storage, but can be used to impound flood waters. The lake holds about 1500 acre feet in the 135-acre site. It cost about \$1.85 millions. Riverside County operates the area as a regional park for fishing, picnicking, swimming and camping with 140,462 attendance listed in the fiscal year 1975-76 and about the same for 1977.

Rash of Floods

From January 24 to February 25, 1969, three pounding floods damaged storm channel crossings, roads, rail bridges, but without loss of life. The first flood crested at record flows in a 24 hour period. Restoration of the big ditch by U. S. Corps of Engineers cost more than \$2 millions.

After the third flood receded only the bridge on Highway 86 west of Indio and the railroad bridge there were usable from Palm Springs to the Salton Sea. The Highway 60 bridge at the Blythe Junction was undermined and closed. The Thermal railroad bridge and Highway 111 bridge south of Thermal were washed out as well as the Avenue 56 county bridge east of Thermal. The washout backed up Southern Pacific traffic to El Paso and to Los Angeles.

A drop structure, built after the 1966 flood on Paxton Road south of Thunderbird Country Club, proved effective and led to the Corps of Engineers building four more, one below the Highway 111 bridge at Thermal, one east of Indio at Avenue 44, one north of Indio west of Monroe, and one south of Avenue 44 north of the Erawan Hotel.

The repair of the three-year storm-damaged channel cost an estimated \$4-millions, including reconstruction of nearly a mile east from Bob Hope Drive, the Portola crossing to east and west, eastward from Avenue 44 to the Salton Sea, from Cook Street to Portola and Avenue 44, riprapping of sections above the Thunderbird Country Club, the junction of the Palm Canyon channel and near the Blue Skies Mobile Home Park.

Now Defined Drain

The section known as the Coachella Valley Stormwater Drain is a drain that is now defined and has been constructed and widened from Point Happy to below Thermal. Maintenance of this section is an ongoing program of the district. A bridged crossing has been constructed on Highway 195 by the State.

From Point Happy upstream the Whitewater Storm Channel has been widened and improved from Washington Street to about a mile north of Ramon Road. Indian rights of way and easements are being obtained to complete the works to Indian Avenue.

Other upper channel improvements have included 12,150 feet reconstruction east and west of Cook Street to eliminate an elbow in the channel and this site later became the location of the Cook Street Wastewater Reclamation Plan. The Mission Creek tributary was diked for a mile north of Vista Chino. The District cooperated with the U. S. Corps of Engineers and the Riverside County Flood Control District for the protective diking project in Chino Canyon. Improvements were built between Avenue 30 and Vista Chino. The West Rancho Mirage Stormwater Channel was improved and the East Rancho Mirage Stormwater Channel near Magnesia Falls to the Whitewater was reconstructed and improved. Plans were initiated which will lead to the eventual construction of the La Quinta Flood Control Project consisting of dikes on Bear Creek, reservoirs, detention basins and wasteway channels. The District's records indicate nearly \$16,000,000 have been spent to provide major flood protection from Windy Point to Salton Sea.

The District estimates that to complete construction of dikes, channels, control structures, bank revetments and other improvements will require an expenditure of about \$60-million. Protection of the Edom area will cost more than \$9-million; Oasis area to Travertine Point about \$21-million; La Quinta project about \$6-million, and the Indian Wells to Rancho Mirage (Cove Area) works about \$20-million.

Local Studies Made

Local stormwater studies have been made for Palm Desert, Edom, Oasis, La Quinta and the Indio-Coachella-Thermal area, by various engineering firms including the widely-known Bechtel Corporation engineers.

Cooperative studies have been entered into with the California Department of Water Resources, the U. S. Geological Survey is making continuing studies, and a comprehensive water resources management plan has been completed by the Bechtel Corporation.

While surface water studies have not been neglected, wastewater studies have also been pursued. Reclamation of wastes are continuing studies and the use of reclaimed water for landscaping and golf courses is expanding, the Abrams and State studies were completed in the middle 1960's. The District authorized a surface water drainage study by Hylan Engineering in Palm Desert in 1966.

Studies have been made in the Cove Communities by Bechtel, ordered by the District following the flood of September 10, 1976. The flood prompted the district to also call upon the U. S. Corps of Engineers to complete its Whitewater watershed studies begun in the 1930's. On April 4, 1967, the District's staff compiled a report on the Whitewater River Basin in response to a letter from the Corps and presented it at a hearing in Palm Springs, part of a continuing effort to get the Federal Government's assistance in stormwater controls.

The September 10, 1976 storm, a tropical storm named "Kathleen", roared up from the West Coast of Mexico, lashed the Imperial and Coachella Valley with heavy destructive downpours. The amount of precipitation in the upper reaches of Martinez, Carrizo Creek and Dead Indian Canyons was heavy, the heaviest in recorded history. Although Bear Creek above La Quinta, Deep Canyon and Magnesia Canyon received heavy downpours these areas apparently missed the heavier precipitations.

Heavy Volumes of Debris Noted

The water in Carrizo and Dead Indian carried heavy volumes of silt, sand and debris, rapidly eroding dikes above the Highway (74) which sent waves several feet high into protective rock-lined levees, which when they were breached wreaked several millions of dollars in damages to the subdivided central

Palm Desert area. Flows, although not so heavy from Deep Canyon, added to the burdens carried by the channels through Indian Wells. It was noted that the stormwater flow in the main Whitewater Channel was not as threatening although road crossings were washed out from Cook Street to the Salton Sea.

The Storms of '76 to '78

The September 10 storm was followed by another of lesser intensity a week later which added to the area problems of handling local runoffs. Meteorologists placed "Kathleen" in the category of a once-in-160-years plus storm in intensity.

Almost exactly a year later heavy rains in the Little San Bernardino unleashed floodwaters down Thousand Palms canyon causing damage to the Tri-Palm Estates and scouring the Thousand Palms oasis and flooding lower-lying areas, as well as filling Dillon Road with huge boulders and gravel for several miles. Damage was inflicted upon the Metropolitan Water District's aqueduct, as well, which added to the flow of water.

The winter of 1977-1978 was unusually wet with succeeding storms bringing rains. Coastal areas suffered heavy damage and mud slides from January into March. The San Geronio,

President Wilson Owned Land

President Woodrow Wilson, while president of Princeton University, bought 60 acres of land east of Indio sold to him by a Los Angeles realtor. According to the Date Palm (March 11, 1919), Wilson purchased the land "about nine years ago" and said his intention was to build a winter home. The land was east of the Weare Tract near Interstate 10 and Avenue 44.

Whitewater Rivers and Palm Canyon, Deep Canyon as well as Little Morongo Canyon all carried off heavy rains in the mountains. With the exception of river and wash crossings being torn out repeatedly, little damage was experienced other than that to the various water courses.

The District obtained federal assistance in clearing and rebuilding storm-ravaged channels and drains in the Salton Sea and Oasis areas and along the Whitewater and Stormwater channels in the 1976 and 1977 floods.

Rights of way were being obtained for the eventual La Quinta evacuation channel, and an Environmental Impact Report was ordered preparatory to eventual action on the Deep Canyon, and Dead Indian storm channels.

Daily the need intensifies for flood control works in view of the expanding urbanization on the debris cones of the mountain foothills and coves west of Indio.

The need for vigilance in water conservation is also a requisite that cannot be minimized.

Ample Water in Underground

The U. S. Geological Survey, in 1971, estimated that there are 15,700,000 acre feet of water in the valley's upper basin underground in the first 700 feet. This good news indicates that even if the valley should quadruple its 1976 overdrafting, it would have enough water to serve domestic needs for more than 100 years.

In addition the District, along with the Desert Water Agency, contracted for State Project Water totalling 61,200 acre feet annually by 1990. (The survey indicated that an average of 33,000 acre feet more water per year was being pumped from the underground basin than was naturally replenished by surface flows from the watershed's rivers and canyons).

In the report to the Corps of Engineers in 1967 the District's concluding statement remains true: "The water supply of the valley has been partially ensured until the year 1990. The last remaining deterrent to full development is flood control."

FIRST RAILROAD TRAIN

(continued from page 14)

The railroad was pushing on toward Thermal, which is believed to have been named for an SP official in San Francisco, and not for the heat whirlwind thermals that rise up out of the desert. Then the rails reached Walters (Mecca) and Caleb, and arrived at Durmid on March 8, 1877 and went on to Mortmar, Salton and Flowing Wells.

The rails reached Dos Palmas area March 16, 1877 and stages left that station every other day for Prescott and Phoenix via California and Arizona Express Co.

The problem of an adequate supply of water was again becoming acute. Each train going east to Yuma out of Indian Wells needed five water cars to make the trip. If any delays were necessary the train crews would have to set out cars on sidings to lighten the trains and save the water.

Contracts For Wells

The Southern Pacific Company contracted with Rose Well Drilling Company to drill three wells, one at Indio, Woodspur, and Thermal. An eight-inch well at Woodspur in 1880 did not supply the amount of water needed, and the one at Thermal gave the same results. They moved on to Walters, 196 feet below sea level, and here they hit a gusher of artesian water in 1894. A trestle was built and a long pipe placed atop the trestle with water valves spaced every car length to fill the tanks. The westbound trains set out the empty cars and the east bound trains would pick up the full cars en route to Yuma. Ten tank cars could be filled at a time, by artesian pressure.

A telegraph station was established at Walters and the operator was responsible for filling the empty cars as well as handling train orders.

At Yuma In 1877

Southern Pacific officials about this time learned that the Santa Fe had reached the Colorado River east of Needles and were bridging the river. Shortly after the bridge was built one of the flash floods the Colorado River was notorious for damaged the bridge beyond repair, this was a blow to the Santa Fe and work was stopped until the railroad could reorganize the work. This took some of the pressure off the SP rail laying crews who reached Yuma and bridged the Colorado on September 30, 1877. The line was completed to Tucson in 1880 and in 1881 the first train reached El Paso.

On January 12, 1883, the last spike was driven near the Pecos River, Texas, completing the Sunset Route from Los Angeles to New Orleans, a trip the Sunset Limited made in less than 40 hours.

Good Dollar Bargain

Brief mention should be made of the rail rate war of the 1887 when passenger rates were slashed to \$1 from Missouri River to Pacific Coast. These colonization efforts had begun in 1875.

In 1888, through 1891, Southern Pacific sent five-car special trains throughout the middle west with exhibits of California produce to attract home-seekers to join emigrant trains which took nine days from Omaha to San Francisco.

The water problem of the desert saw many projects proposed besides the hauling of water from Apostle Palms and the drilling of wells. At one time the railroad considered piping water from Thousand Palms by gravity flow.

The railroad opened its hotel and dining room at the depot in 1896, and later constructed a small clinic and hospital on the grounds. A health camp sprung up near the depot early in the 1900's.

The coming of the railroad opened the Coachella Valley. Although Indio was long a "railroad town", nonetheless the railroad's drilling of wells proved that there were great quantities of water which attracted settlers. So the railroad and their wells were vital keys to progress in the first three decades after the arrival of the first train in 1876.

School History

(continued from page 32)

G. Brumwell 1943-1958; Dr. John T. Shea 1958-1962; Melvin Curtis 1962-1972; Charles Pryor 1972-1973. The district was Unified with Mecca, Oasis, Thermal and Coachella and the high school district July 1, 1973, and Dr. Gene Tucker became superintendent until late Spring 1976 when Bobbie Duke became the chief administrator.

Desert Center Schools

The Desert Center Elementary School District was formed in 1935 from a part of the Coachella District, with a two-room frame school opening at Desert Center. Following the opening of Kaiser Eagle Mountain iron mine in 1950 the school population grew at the mine and a new four-room building was erected on the site of the existing school. In 1955 a six-room school was built at Eagle Mountain, extended by six more classrooms in 1957.

In 1962 the district was unified and withdrew from the Coachella Valley Joint Union School District. Before unification, however, the Coachella Valley District had built five high school classrooms, special rooms, library-study hall, gym facilities and an administrative unit. It was the CV District's third campus with Len Valore as principal.

Desert Sands Unification

Rex T. Johnson, who had taught in the Indio schools from 1932 to 1937 as a seventh grade teacher, returned in 1941 to succeed Merle Taylor as superintendent of the elementary district. Johnson died June 2, 1964, while preparations were underway to vote on unification. During Johnson's illness and following his death Gil Anderson was acting superintendent. Dr. Lester Hiebert was appointed Superintendent in August 1964. The voters approved unification in March 1965. The district became Desert Sands Unified School District July 1, 1966, and began operation of 10 elementary schools and the Indio High School on Avenue 46. Dr. Harold Schoenfeld was appointed Superintendent and took over his duties January 19, 1969. The district owns a site purchased by the earlier CV Unified on Cook and Avenue 44 in Palm Desert, an 80-acre future high school location.

College of the Desert

In January 1958, after ten years of study, voters in the Coachella Valley Joint Union High School District and the Palm Springs Unified School District voted to establish 4000 square mile Coachella Valley Junior College District. D. G. Brumwell acted as administrator for the new college board from 1958 to 1960. In February 1959 Dr. Roy T. McCall of Modesto was named the first college president. Classes started at College of the Desert in September 1962 located north of Avenue 44 in Palm Desert. The District's boundaries were expanded in 1967 by annexation of the 1358 square mile Morongo Unified School District's boundaries. Dr. McCall resigned in 1973 and Dr. Fern Stout became the second president. The College had a 1977 enrollment of more than 12,000 of which 5300 were full time students.

Leland Yost Recalled 1916 Flood, Early Crops

Leland Yost's parents were of pioneer stock. His mother's parents were among the '49ers who came West to Northern California from Kentucky. His father's family came to California from Pennsylvania on one of the railroad's emigrant trains in the 1870's.

His parents homesteaded a desert claim in the Coachella Valley on Avenue 78 west of Pierce Street in 1904 where Leland resided with his wife until his death in April, 1975. His father actively supported the formation of the Coachella Valley County Water District.

Among his recollections were those of riding a horse from the homeplace to Mecca before the Salton Sea began forming in 1906, an event he personally witnessed. It took a day to go to Indio with a ranch wagon and team.

"You could also go to Mecca and catch the SP Sidewinder to Indio," he remembered.

Cantaloupes were the first major crop harvested and shipped in the Mecca area until about 1905 or 1906 when onions were added to the rail shipments. J.W. Newman managed a cantaloupe and later an onion packing association shed at Thermal.

Some of the valley's first melons and onions were harvested where the Mecca School and former Mission Store stood. Charles Yost, Leland's father, grew and shipped some of those first crops from Mecca.

Leland recalled that from 1907 to 1915 he worked intermittently on the Oasis area ranch and remembered his father and S. C. Evans, one-time Mayor of Riverside, also a landowner, improving the roads in the Oasis area.

After coming here with his mother to join Mr. Yost on the homestead, the younger Yost went to Redlands University, coming back briefly in 1916 when the Mexican border problems took his Redlands National Guard into Army service and later into service in World War I. He returned in 1920 as a lieutenant. His father became ill and Leland gave up his promising Army career. During World War II he earned his colonelcy in the California State Guard.

General Washington's Rifle

It is interesting to note that one of his ancestors was intimately connected with the Revolutionary War. He had come to this country from Bavaria, was a gunsmith and thus was in demand. He is reported to have made a rifle for General George Washington.

Yost had a vivid memory of the Colorado River breaking through the headworks of the Imperial Valley's irrigation diversion and flooding into the valley for over two years to create Salton Sea, "coming right up to the edge of Mecca before the Southern Pacific breached the gap."

He also recalled the 1916 flood that created the deep channel



1927 DEEP CANYON FLOOD DAMAGED INDIAN WELLS AREA

In 1927 flood waters out of Deep Canyon washed out several miles of roadways before reaching the Whitewater River channel. This scene is at southwest corner of Cook Road and present Highway 111. Property owners in area with the Storwater District's assistance built the present channel along foothills in Indian Wells to divert later floods and avert continuing damage.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

bed of the Whitewater River above Point Happy. The flood, the worst in the memory of residents, scoured and deepened old channels and spread out over the valley from west of Indio to Salton Sea.

He had gone to Indio before that flood, but on the way back to the ranch he had car problems, and he stopped in Coachella for repairs. It had been raining. The skies appeared to be clearing during the night.

Moon Reflected in Water

The druggist Schwartz was in Los Angeles so his pharmacist and Yost had dinner at his place. Late in the evening, when Yost happened to look out the back door, he saw the moon reflected in water. The flood waters had risen and were spreading out over the community of Coachella nearly a foot deep by that time.

"The pharmacist and I sand bagged the drug store, piled all the stuff on the floor up onto tables and went home to bed. I remember I couldn't get the car out of the garage the next day. There was a deep layer of mud over everything as the flood waters receded.

"Trains were stalled in Indio and the passengers ate everything in town. There had been heavy snows in the mountains and then a warm rain joined to cause the heaviest runoff we had ever seen before or since.

"Martinez Canyon also ran heavy with flood waters. All the west side canyons were flooding. The roads along the railroad, which had been two to three feet deep and were frequently watered to keep the dust from churning and blown out, became rivers themselves.

"The railroad embankments provided a dike that caused water from Indio to run down the south side of the tracks nearly to Mecca. Cantaloupe Avenue (Now Grapefruit Boulevard) was like a river. Sandy Corner was under water. There was water more than two feet deep in Fargo Street in Indio. I know, because I walked up the railroad tracks from Coachella to Indio to see what was happening.

Scoured Thousand Palms Wash

"Water on the other side of the tracks picked up an old water course caused by the Thousand Palms Wash, scoured it and deepened it, and it later became the Coachella Valley Storm Drain.

"I started home. I got to the White & Albros Store in Thermal where I stopped. My father had called from Mecca to find out what had happened to me and asked if anyone had seen me. I had been gone from home five days," Yost said.

He remembered Dr. Harry Forbes, an osteopath who had been coming down from Los Angeles to build up his new ranch. Forbes established a hospital of osteopathy in Los Angeles but he was intensely interested in the valley.

"He had a crew of men moving a 60-horsepower gas engine from the Mecca rail siding to his ranch before one of the valley floods. After the flood he hired Al Starr and a cowboy teamster by the name of Ross Frances to bring the engine to the ranch. The big flywheels were loaded on a hay rack and 24 head of horses and mules were hitched to the wagons. When they got across the railroad tracks the weight sank the wagons to the axles in the salt flats. They had to abandon the wagons there until it dried out enough to get them free and moving again, as I remember it. I think it was a month or two before the rig reached the ranch."

He recalls that Attorney Thomas Yager of Coachella was the sparkplug who aroused the interest of the people in the formation of the county water district. There had been talk quite a while about needing a water district to protect and conserve the water from the upper canyon streams and even to look at some sort of a program by the valley to bring Colorado River water here.

"He was a go-getter. He helped organize and was an attorney for the Coachella Valley Stormwater District in 1915. He came to the valley from Santa Ana. He had obtained his law degree from

the University of Southern California. He and his wife first lived on the Henry and Berniece Briggs place."

"He had a lot of vision. I would consider him as a man in a place ahead of his time," Yost declared.

One Influential Farm Center

Yost also recalled that Farm Bureau Centers were organized first at Caleb, then Coachella, Oasis, Mecca, Thermal and Indio. Chet Sparey, Richard Blackburn and Yost often talked about "there ought to be just one big influential Coachella Valley Farm Center representing all crops and the whole valley.

"Blackburn did the work. He set it up so we just had one center and he was elected its first director, later moving up to County, State and National offices with the American Farm Bureau federation. He did a lot of work with state legislatures and Congress on farm legislation, and was an asset to California as well as the valley."

"One of the problems of talking about building the Coachella Branch of the All American Canal was that the Valley didn't know where it was going to get the money to do the job. In the earliest days of working toward getting approval of the canal no one knew if the government would help finance it. Franklin D. Roosevelt changed all that in 1932 and the new board didn't have the worries the old board had about money matters, at least for the canal project."

The first real big date festival was staged in Indio in the present Miles Avenue park under a single big tent.

"There were no good roads into the valley prior to about 1920. There were few places to stay or to eat but the festival was well advertised and when people got to Indio, they had no place to go except to the festival. Several prominent men and date growers had backed the show with pledges against the loan to stage the affair. A typical desert wind played havoc with the festival and the tent was damaged. The affair was not a financial success so the backers had to pay off the debt."

Date Festival Idea Ahead of Time

"The date festival was a good idea, but it was about 10 or 15 years ahead of its time," he mused.

Yost had always been active in grower and agricultural organizations in the valley. There were few organizations he had not served as a secretary at one time or another.

His father, Charles Yost, was active in the organization of the Coachella Valley County Water District. He also organized the Mecca Growers Association which shipped vegetables and grapes and later citrus from that area. Some of its early organizers included W. D. Gibbs, E. B. Ames, C. L. Edmunds and Richard Blackburn.

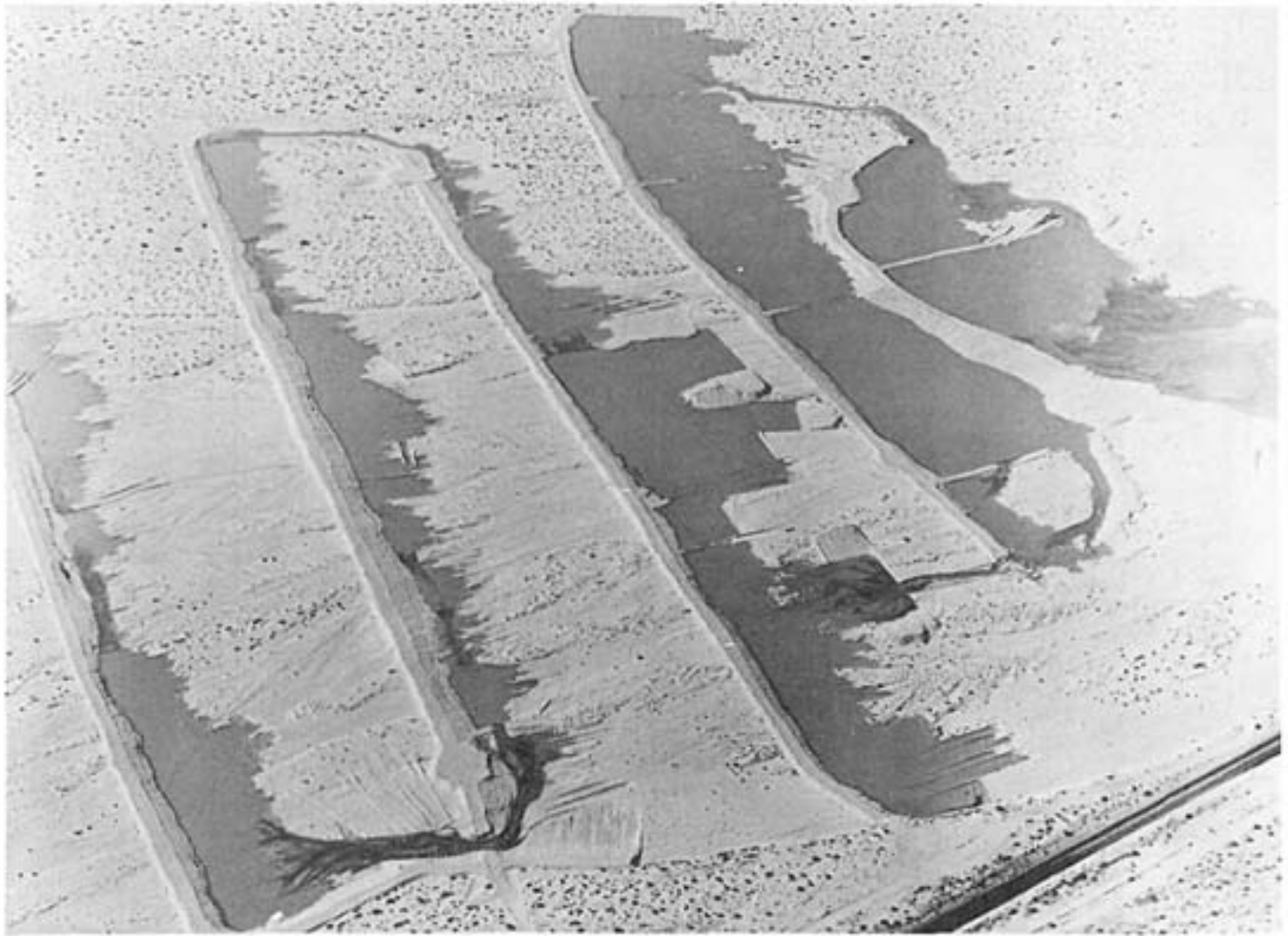
Leland Yost helped organize the C. V. Citrus Association. He was an early president of the Coachella Valley Farm Center. He was a charter member of the Coachella Valley American Legion Post 224, and served one term as commander. (The Post was dissolved in the late 1950's after turning over its funds in trust to the City of Indio to establish a uniform street flag program for holidays.)

Yost was secretary-manager of the Coachella Valley Farmers Association for ten years. He served 20 years on the Coachella Valley Union High School board and also served on the Oasis Elementary School District board of trustees.

In Many Growers Organizations

He managed the Mecca Growers Association which shipped through the California Fruit Exchange of which he was a state director, now called Blue anchor, from 1965 to 1975. He also served on the board of the California Grape and Tree Fruit League for six years. He served as a director of the California Council of Growers, and one of the first on the Board of Governors. He retired from that post in 1968.

His wife, Crystal, came to the Coachella Valley as a high school



DIKES SPREAD WHITEWATER RIVER FLOWS FOR REPLENISHMENT

East of Windy Point on the spreading area of the Whitewater River the District has constructed several dikes to intercept and pond the small floods and flows of the Whitewater River to encourage percolations into the underground basin and replenishment. Diagonally across lower right of photo is the railroad right of way. The several thousand acre spreading area is controlled by the District, the land being largely purchased by the District in the 1920's.

— CVCWD Photo

teacher in 1919. She and another high school teacher lived in Mecca at the Caravansary. She drove the school bus as one of her duties for a time. It was during this time the Yosts met. She continued teaching a few years and settled down to duties as a housewife and a bookkeeper on the ranch and the insurance business Leland was conducting up to the time of his death.

The Yosts were married March 19, 1921, in Tulare, which had been her home. She is a graduate of Stanford University, past worthy matron of the Eastern Star, and Past president of the Coachella Valley Women's Club.

The Yost's daughter Catherine is married to Dr. Richard Zimmerman of Fairfield. They have two children.

Spoke California Spanish

Mrs. Zimmerman grew up speaking "California Spanish" because after the first year she was in the care of Mexican women on the ranch while Mrs. Yost taught. All of her young friends on the ranch were children of workers of Mexican descent so she became fluent in their language, and later taught the language.

Yost recalled that the first wave of people from Mexico to

California came in about 1852 and later, most of them from the Sonora area to work in the gold fields. A small new immigration, mostly farm workers, began about 1908-1909, picking grapes, working in vegetables and on the ranches.

First Mexican Families After World War II

"The first big bunch really came during and after the first World war. They came heavily in 1917 and 1918 on the onions — it was a big operation until it went broke in the 1920's.

"Those immigrants were family groups, with wagons. They came in the fall to plant, went north, and came back around April to harvest. Then they'd go back to Mexico.

"Today," he once recalled, "Mexican-Americans not only work the farms in the valley, but they own many of them. I think this valley is one of the most interesting examples of what a foreign minority can do. It didn't happen until they grew up to their jobs, and were willing to accept the responsibilities. We grew up with them and saw them grow up, too. They have been thoroughly competent, dependable, honest and straightforward, and I'm talking about all workers from Mexico," he emphasized.

Bisbee Remembers Walters in 1901

as told by Melvin Bisbee

My first recollection of Coachella Valley was of the train stopping at Indio and my mother saying, "How hot it is!"

This was the middle of August 1901 and we were on our way to start a new home near Walters (later called Mecca).

Dad Bisbee had been a salesman for Singer Sewing Machine Company in Los Angeles, but because of his rheumatic condition, his doctor advised him to seek a dryer climate. By chance, he met a man named Bill Covington who owned some land near Walters (now Mrs. Cast's Ranch or "Garden of the Setting Sun"). Covington had recently drilled an artesian well and built a one-room house on the property. The results of this meeting was my dad going into a partnership agreement with Covington to farm the land.

This partnership between my dad and Covington was only verbal. Covington was to furnish the horses, farming tools and some financing. As the deal turned out, Covington furnished very little of what he had promised but since my dad had nothing in writing, there wasn't much he could do about it. Nevertheless, he planted a few acres to melons, some sweet corn, some oats and barley for the horses and cow.

Our family consisted of Dad Bisbee, my mother, myself 5½ years of age, my sister Ramona, 14 months, and my brother John

six weeks old. My older sister Emily stayed in Los Angeles with friends to finish school, as there was no school at Walters. When we arrived in Walters (Mecca) there was only two white women in town besides my mother. One was the wife of the railroad section foreman and the other the agent's wife. The agent and his wife had a small grocery store made from railroad ties located a short distance behind the station. The store furnished supplies to the Mexicans who worked for the railroad as well as Indians from the reservations to the west.

The first thing dad built was a small reservoir near the well to store water for irrigation. The well was located a point about where Avenue 66 and Highway 111 meet at the present time. That first year in the Valley had many hardships for us. The coyotes were so plentiful we had to keep our few chickens penned. There were so many wild burros running loose we had to put barbed wire fencing around the crops. Also we were bothered continually with Indian cattle that were let to run wild to feed on mesquite beans and browse on anything they could find.

We had been here only a short while when my sister Ramona took sick. Mother cared for her the best she could but her condition continued to worsen. She needed a doctor, so Dad



COACHELLA'S STREETS LIKE RIVERS IN 1927 FLOOD

February 13 to 17, 1927, warm rains and rapidly melting snow from the tributary canyons cut travel to the Valley. Deep Canyon washed out 1500 feet of Highway near Cook's Ranch in Indian Wells cutting a channel eight to ten feet deep. The bed of the Whitewater River was lowered eight feet at Point Happy. The stormwater-channel was not well defined from Indio beyond Thermal. Floodwaters moved into Coachella to divert south toward Thermal. Above is a view taken on Sixth Street business section in Coachella February 16.

— C. V. Historical Society Photo

telegraphed Dr. King in Banning to come immediately. Dr. King caught the first train which was a freight train to Indio and then the first one from Indio south. When he arrived, he said there was nothing he could do, the child had "cholera morbus" and was too far gone now. He took the next train back. That night Ramona died. One of the men at the station found some boards and constructed a coffin in which she was buried in the cemetery (the location which now would be under the store room at the back of the Old Hill Store).

Mecca (at that time Walters) proper when we arrived in August of 1901 was a telegraph and express office on the west side of the tracks next to the water tank where all the trains stopped to take on water for the engines.

On the same side of the tracks and north of the station was a long siding equipped with overhead water pipes to fill tank-cars. A man was on duty night and day filling them. Water was furnished for section crews and stations as far east as Yuma and south to Calexico. The water for the water tank and filling the cars came from a deep artesian well. In those early days, the wells drilled in that part of the Valley produced a flow of water with strong pressure so no pump was needed to fill the tank and water cars.

Also some of the first wells near Thermal, gave a flow of two feet above the casing. In 1905 my father bought twenty acres of land from Charlie and John King a mile south of Thermal and east of the railroad. The original well drilled two or three years before was a two-inch well and furnished water for farming ten acres when first drilled. When we took over the ranch, this well had stopped flowing and dad drilled an eight-inch well and installed a pump and gasoline engine.

The wells in the Mecca area (center of the Valley) continued with pressure for a number of years. As late as 1911, a well on the Charlie Brown ranch had pressure to turn a waterwheel for running a compressor on an ice plant as well as electric lights.

Thermal Grammar School

In 1903 Dad was farming on the MacLane Ranch (now Ben Laffin's) and I started to school at Thermal. The first school house had just been built. It was new and the painters had not finished painting the outside when school opened. It was a one room school, one teacher teaching first through eighth grades. I continued my full eight grades at Thermal School then four years at Coachella Valley Union High School.

I believe the town of Thermal has experienced a rise and fall more than any town in the Valley. Coachella has had some bad fires but Thermal has had the most destructive ones.

First there was the fire that burned a hotel and newspaper building near where Limon's Store now stands. The second fire destroyed the Nichol's Mercantile Company, then one of the largest general stores in the Valley, (where E.K. Wood Lumber Company is now). The third fire came after this corner was rebuilt and occupied with a drug store, pool hall and restaurant. Then those buildings burned.

The Fourth and Worst Fire

About this time (the year is a question) Thermal really started to boom. Mr. Fleetwood, a man with considerable finances, took over the townsite and built a three-story hotel, Hotel Fleetwood, a large townhall (about 50' x 150'), three two-bedroom cottages just west of the hotel, and a boardwalk in front extending to the main street near the railroad.

The town at this time also had a blacksmith shop, livery stable, real estate building, a church and packing sheds. About 1920: It was along the last of July or the first part of August when tragedy

First Water Delivered From Canal March 1948

Although the first official delivery of water through the new underground distribution system was to the Russel-Alexander Ranch east of Thermal on March 29, 1949, some temporary (over-the-ditch-bank) deliveries had been approved earlier.

According to Assistant Manager Keith H. Ainsworth the first of this type of emergency delivery was made by syphon from the canal at the Stevning & Bowlin Ranch.

According to Ainsworth, who came to the district as hydrographer June 30, 1948: "A few farmers bordering the canal were receiving water through syphons when I arrived.

"In July Malcolm Crawford, watermaster, and I attempted to 'legalize' these deliveries. The Board of Directors adopted a policy which was in the form of an authorization to accept these 'temporary emergency' deliveries.

"All new syphons beginning in July 1948 required approval of an application for construction and installation, which was accomplished by the water user at his expense.

"Then we contacted owners of syphons that were installed prior to July 1948 and meters were installed at that time."

First Meters Read

When the District read the meters on these syphons the first time in August 1948, the following meters were read:

Russel-Alexander, 12-inch high pressure, meter, 996.6 acre feet.

Will Ward, 12-inch low pressure meter, .37 acre feet.

Stevning & Bowlin, 10-inch low pressure, 140.5 acre feet.

Kennedy Bros., 12-inch low pressure, No. 1, 358.8 acre feet.

Kennedy Bros., 12-inch low pressure, No. 2, 254.3 acre feet.

Kennedy Bros., 12-inch low pressure, No. 3, 366.8 acre feet.

Kennedy Bros., 12-inch low pressure, No. 4, 331.6 acre feet.

Mel Kent, 10-inch meter valve, 405.8 acre feet.

Mel Kent, 10-inch low pressure, 261.8 acre feet.

George Gonzales, 10-inch meter valve, 59.7 acre feet.

Eddie Apodac, 10-inch meter valve, 40.6 acre feet.

Leonhardt Swingle, 8-inch low pressure, 2.3 acre feet.

Wm. Kersteiner, 12-inch low pressure, 182.9 acre feet.

Wm. F. Carey, 10-inch low pressure, 472.6 acre feet.

Ben A. Marrs, 12-inch low pressure, 26.2 acre feet.

George Kellar (Bourse), 10-inch low pressure, 16.5 acre feet.

DENNIS HACKETT
Auditor-Controller
Appointed June 15, 1978



struck. The hotel was empty except for one or two guests. Mrs. Thayer was managing the hotel and also acting as cook. For some unknown reason, the fire started in the kitchen on the southwest corner.

I just happened to be coming into town when I noticed the smoke rising. I was among the first to arrive at the scene. Because harvest was over and the packing houses closed, there were very few people in town.

As the hotel burned and the burning shingles were carried over town, it was not long before the roof of the town-hall started to burn. Several others and I had climbed to the roof with wet sacks and put out the first sparks that fell, but finally found that we were fighting a losing battle. So we put all our efforts in moving a piano out of the nearby Thomas Cottage that already had its roof on fire.

When it was all over, there were these losses: Hotel Fleetwood, Town Hall, Preacher Lloyd's house, Thomas house, and the cottage west of the hotel.

As a boy in Thermal, I remember how the passenger trains would stop to load express, melons, tomatoes and grapes in season. The train going west often stopped for twenty minutes or even more when the harvest was at its peak. The express train going east in the late afternoon generally stopped for only five minutes, but one or two other boys and I took advantage of these stops to sell cantaloupes and small paper bags of grapes to the passengers. One summer I cleared \$45.00 which helped to buy school clothes for our family the next year.



THERMAL BAPTIST CHURCH

A 1919 view, right, of the Thermal Baptist Church which saw some use for high school classrooms. Photo appeared in C. V. Submarine March 5, 1920. One teacher conducted 1913 classes briefly in the belfry tower. (See Schools story.)



CANAL WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION BEGAN IN 1948

Coachella Valley's Improvement District No. 1, Colorado River water service area, voted approval of the underground lateral distribution system late in 1947. This is a view of construction of Lateral 99.8 east of Thermal, excavating the pipe trench and laying 39-inch diameter reinforced concrete pipe by R. V. Lloyd & Company, contractors.

— U. S. Bureau of Reclamation Photo

Coachella Valley Was in Three Counties

Who were the first inhabitants of the Colorado Desert and more particularly the Coachella Valley?

Anthropologists state that the Cascadians were the first inhabitants of the far west, probably crossing the ice shelf in the Bering Sea, moving and fanning out over the continent more than 20,000 years ago.

These people and their descendants stopped in the Coachella Valley and the Colorado Desert on their way south to found the mighty Aztec, Mayan and Inca civilizations.

In the Joshua Tree National Monument's Pinto Basin artifacts are found of a people called "Early Horizon" culture, and sometimes referred to as "Pinto Man". These artifacts date back more than 10,000 years. The people resided around what was then a verdant area and a fresh water lake.

Once a Grassland

In the Indio and Mecca Mud Hills are found bones of prehistoric camels and other fossils to indicate that this area was once a lush grassland supporting such life.

It wasn't until the ninth and tenth centuries that artifacts and evidence of recent civilizations were presented and are noted today through campsites, trade routes, settlements and trails.

In the desert regions the Malpais culture, now specifically called San Dieguito I, left evidence of settlements and trails on old lake shores, including ancient Lake Cahuilla, and between water sources.

About 900 years ago the Cahuillas, generally considered to be connected to the Aztecs in the Uto-Aztecan language group, and Shoshone appeared from the northeast. They are believed to have made the presently definable trails through the Coachella Valley and nearby mountains, from Palo Verde Valley and the Colorado River to San Gabriel, and their descendants have added to those trails the past 800 years.

Since the arrival of the early Cahuillas and Shoshones other Indians made their appearance including the present Cahuillas. The Chemehuevi, who came to Twentynine Palms area under the pressure from the Mohave, also moved into the Coachella Valley, in recent history.

A. L. Kroeber, University of California, in his 1923 "Handbook of Indians of California", reported many Chemehuevi moved to the Cabazon reservation area, southeast of Indio, in the 1860's.

Three Groups of Cahuillas

Kroeber numbered the Cahuillas at 750, and believed they may have originally numbered more than 2500. He listed three groups: Western or Pass Cahuilla which included Agua Caliente (Palm Springs) and the San Geronio Pass area; Desert Cahuilla from east of Palm Springs to the Salton Sea, and the Mountain Cahuilla (south of San Jacinto peak and in the Santa Rosa Mountain areas.)

The petroglyphs, found in much of the desert area, include many made up to the beginning of the 20th century and are generally considered historically and archeologically local and current in authorship. The rock wall engravings or paintings are purported to mark trails, water sources, and rites.

But who were the first non-Indians and what are the important dates beginning about four hundred years ago leading up to about 1930? Early records are scanty. Fortunately the Spanish padres did keep diaries and accounts. Early frontiersmen, soldiers and prospectors added to them. The following then, will provide an incomplete early calendar of events, people and places:

1540 — It probably began this year with Hernando de Alarcon, who sailed up the Gulf of California, up the Colorado River. The Melchoir Diaz party was the land branch of the expedition. Alarcon may have reached as far inland as the present site of Needles and was probably the first European to explore Eastern Riverside County. Francisco de Ulloa had discovered the mouth of the Colorado the year previous.

1680-1711 — Father Eusebio Francisco Kino made expeditions to the Colorado. In 1701 he crossed the Colorado with the Yuma Indians as guides and may have been the first to see Imperial Valley and that section of the Colorado Desert.

1768 — Father Francisco Tomas Garces made the first five expeditions, one being with Capt. Juan Bautista de Anza in 1774 en route from Tubac to what is now San Francisco.

1774 — Capt. de Anza's first expedition crossed Imperial Valley. Both expeditions were through Borrego Valley and the San Jacinto Mountains. The Monterey to Alta, California colonizing trek was in 1775-1776, accompanied by Father Pedro Font. On Christmas Eve a baby boy was born in Borrego Canyon area.

1776—Father Garces crossed the Mohave Desert en route to the San Gabriel Mission via Cajon Pass.

1779 — Fr. Garces began establishing settlement of Yuma with a mission.

1815 — First mention of San Gabriel Mission obtaining salt from Salton Sink by Indians. Route was referred to 20 years or more.

1820—Padres at San Gabriel had established a rancho in San Geronio Pass near what is now Beaumont.

1821-1822 — Cocomarcopa Indians used the San Geronio Pass and crossed Coachella Valley to carry messages and mail to the presidios of Tucson and Sonora, Mexico.

1823 — Capt. Jose Romero and Lt. Estudillo attempt an expedition from San Bernardino through San Geronio Pass to set up route to Tucson but turned back about a day's journey from the Colorado River due to lack of water. Romero was successful a year later when after 11 days he reached the Colorado December 19, 1824, with Lt. Romualdo Pacheco. They crossed the valley via Agua Caliente, Toro, Dos Palmas and Salt Creek Wash. Pacheco reported the route was impractical but it was continually used as far as Toro for many years.

1826 — The Spanish Fathers report visits to the desert Cahuillas at Agua Caliente.

1828 — Flooding of Salton Sink reported. (The Colorado River flooding of the Sink was also reported in 1840, 1849, 1850, 1852, 1859, 1862, 1891 and 1899.)

1843 — The Spanish-Mexicans (Californios) are reported receiving increasing amounts of salt from Salton Sink using Indian trails established hundreds of years earlier. Similar reports described the salt deposits in 1848.

1845 — Benjamin D. Wilson, a Mexican citizen, was sent into the desert by the last of the Mexican governors, Pio Pico, to capture two renegade Indians. At Palm Springs (Agua Caliente), the Indians, on order of the chief, Old Cabazon, assisted by following the pair and bringing back their heads in a sack.

1846 — Brig. Gen. Kearny, Commander of the Army of the West, reached the Colorado River, en route to San Diego.

1847 — Mexicans under Gen. Jose Maria Flores, were believed to have fled through the San Geronio Pass through the Valley to Sonora, Mexico.

1849 — Dr. Oliver M. Wozencraft noted Colorado River flooding into Salton Sink and was first to put forward idea of

Capsule History Reveals Colorful Early Days

irrigating the Colorado Desert by a canal from the Colorado River. In May, with a group of men and animals, he explored the desert, found Indians successfully cultivating plots around springs and water holes. Wozencraft had taken a position as Indian Agent for the Government in San Francisco at the age of 35. Ten years later he was granted 1600 square miles of the Salton Sink area by the State Legislature, contingent upon getting Federal approval. He appealed to Congress for grants and water rights, which he was unable to obtain at the time of his death in 1887.

1849 — California gold rush brought first of prospectors through Coachella Valley, most preferring the Yuma route, Diego route, or Vallecitos and Warner's Ranch route, but some came through Salt Creek Wash from Colorado River.

1850 — California admitted to the Union as sovereign State on September 9. On February 18 San Diego County formed including the area south and directly east of Whitewater and Cabazon to the Colorado River.

1852 — Southern California Indians sign treaty, which Congress failed to ratify, and became wards of the Government. Cahuillas were to be given strip of land 30 miles wide, 40 miles long.

1853 — San Bernardino became county seat when new county was formed April 26. New county took in some of the most northern part of the valley.

1853 — Federal Government called for a survey for a southern railroad route. Lt. R. S. Williamson with J. G. Park in the field along with Professor William P. Blake, geologist, led a large party through the valley, discovering the San Gorgonio Pass as the best low-level pass on the entire Pacific slope. Blake named the desert "Colorado" giving it the name for the first time. He noted the old beach line above sea level at coral Reef and Travertine Point as well as tiny spiral shells at the base of the mountains, and on the valley floor. Indians indicated to Blake the last time water rose to the ancient shorelines was about 500 years earlier. For many years the occasional small body of alkaline water in the Salton Sink was known as "Blake's Sea." Blake, however, referred to the ancient sea as "Lake Cahuilla."

1852-1853 — Col. Henry Washington on another government survey broke a wagon road through the valley, established monument in the San Bernardino Mountains and established base line—Latitude 34 north and Longitude 117 west. He named Cathedral Canyon, because the canyon resembled a cathedral. (Cathedral City took its name from that canyon in 1925.)

James G. McDonald contracted to set up section markers from San Gorgonio to the Colorado. He noted a trail through the valley in 1855. Col. Washington employed John R. and Horace M. Frink, San Timoteo Canyon ranchers, as freighters and guides to complete the survey by 1857. They described using a trail by way of Agua Caliente to Dos Palmas, up Salton Wash, north and east to the Colorado. An occasional route was one that went east from Whitewater to Two Bunch Palms, Thousand Palms, to Dos Palmas.

1855 — San Bernardino County had a request for soldiers from San Gorgonio Pass settlers because of Indian problems in November.

1856 — Henry A. Grabb led a filibuster expedition to the San Gorgonio Pass en route to Sonora turning south through the Lamb's Canyon.

1857 — A stage line route was reportedly surveyed through

the Pass to Yuma, directed by San Bernardino County super-supervisors and supported by Dr. Isaac W. Smith and others. The Butterfield Overland Mail Line in 1858 rejected the route due to a scarcity of watering places beyond Dos Palmas and, instead, a line was routed through Warner's Ranch.

1858 — Silas Cox traveled by horseback over what is now the present railroad line and noted a trail he believed broken by immigrants on the east side of Salton Sink. The Butterfield people in checking out the proposed line with pioneer wagons dug a well at Whitewater.

1860 — The March 15 Los Angeles Star reported a strike of gold rumored on the Colorado and in May 12 edition reported \$12,000 in gold received in Los Angeles. A letter by Capt. H. S. Burton (later a General) of the U. S. Army written March 22 respecting Wozencraft's proposal to irrigate the desert . . . "I consider it (the Colorado Desert of California) an immense waste of uninhabited country, incapable of cultivation without irrigation . . . even the Indians think of this desert with terror. they believe the souls of bad Indians are condemned to wander over this desert forever, in summer without water, and in winter without clothing. . . "

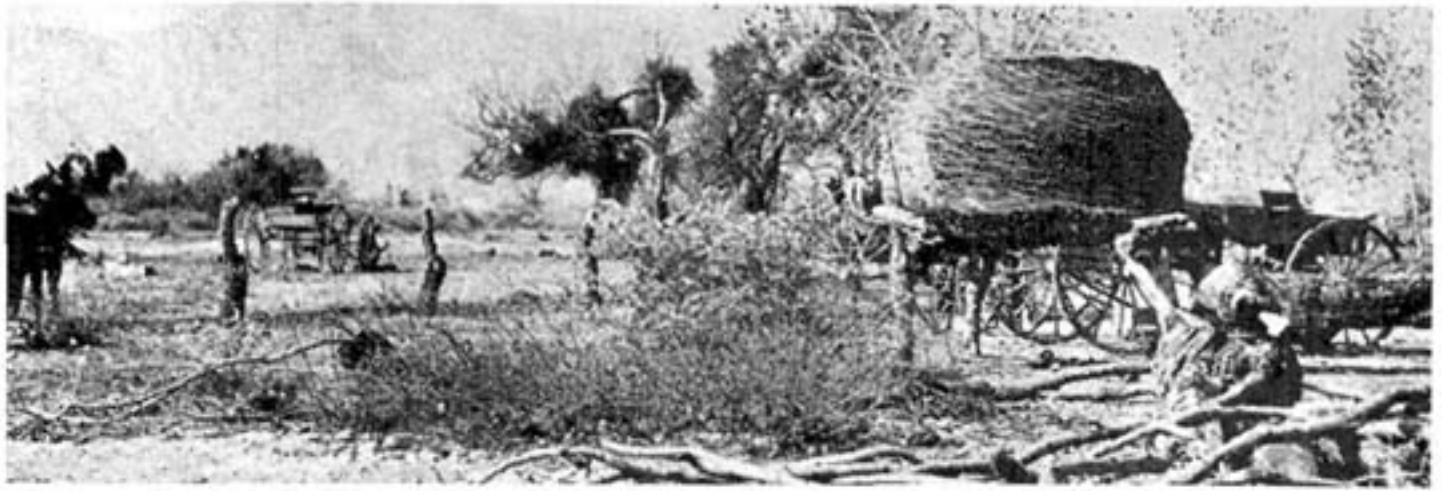
The same year in an April 14 letter also supporting Wozencraft's Mr. John Rains to the House Committee on the Public Lands: . . . "I have crossed and recrossed the above described section of country some 15 times . . . with the exception of the location of the Indian ranchario (sic), at the opening of the San Gorgonio (sic) Pass . . . there is neither water nor vegetation, and the excessive heat and drifting sands make it extremely difficult to cross over it, owing to which there has been great suffering, loss of life and property . . . on this desert of death (as called by the Mexicans) . . . I lost myself, at one time, some \$30,000 worth of sheep that I had driven thus far from New Mexico . . . "

1862 — Mexican prospectors found gold in a dry wash on the Colorado, joined by Pauline Weaver and companions they took out gold and broadcast the news at Yuma. The discovery site by Weaver was at what became known as La Paz. Weaver was one of the first settlers in the San Gorgonio Pass west of what is now Highland Springs. Gold fever mounted and men and outfits began moving west through the Pass as word spread.

The increasing number of travelers prompted William D. Bradshaw to lead a scouting party through the Pass and in a letter to the Los Angeles Star he described sites on the trail including Agua Caliente, Sand Hole (now Palm Desert), Indian Well, Torro, Martin's House, Lone Palm, Dos Palmas, Canyon Creek, Tabisaca and Chuckawalla Springs. He used maps provided by Chief Cabazon and a Cocomaricopa Indian mail runner and received help from Cahuilla Indians at Martinez. He and William Warrington established a ferry on the river, but Bradshaw never personally engaged in operating a freight line.

1863 — Freighting to the river increased and several abortive efforts were made to establish regular stage service. John R. Frink and James Grant, San Bernardino, started service in September, opened the Chuckawalla well and built a station. Los Angeles and La Paz Stage Co. began operations in August until February 1864 offering a 4 1/2 day run, their service ended when Frink and Grant got the mail contract and ran the service into Prescott and east, Grant ending up the sole proprietor of the line.

1863 — An epidemic of small pox ravaged many Desert Cahuilla Indians. La Paz was reported to have 1000 people. The



INDIAN STOREHOUSE OF WOVEN WEED

Indians cached and stored mesquite beans, seeds and other provisions in these off-the-ground platform sites with huge baskets of woven weed and mud. This photo taken near Martinez Reservation near Valerie Jean about 1915.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

Civil War having closed the Butterfield Overland Stage runs east of Yuma in late 1861 and most 1862, the Pass route grew in use. An alternate route used mainly during times the Agua Caliente route was impassable ran along the east side of the valley from Dos Palmas to Thousand Palms, Two Bunch Palms to Whitewater. Mineral City on the river became Ehrenberg in 1867.

1867 — Grant gave up his line and Phineas Banning, Los Angeles, moved into the gap carrying passengers and Wells Fargo express on colorful stages from Wilmington to San Bernardino to Yuma via Agua Caliente, a 72 hour run, which continued for several months until March 1867. Herman Ehrenberg, Arizona pioneer, was killed by an Indian bandit at Dos Palmas during the night of October 9. Agua Caliente Indians trapped the killer the next February. Ehrenberg has been reported to have been buried at Dos Palmas.

1868 — United States increased use of Bradshaw road for military and mail purposes to Prescott and Phoenix. Mail to Yuma was placed on river boats at La Paz and Ehrenberg. In April the Arizona Overland Mail was operating.

1870 — Increasing number of prospectors, settlers seeking California fortunes, stage coaches including James Grant's line and freighting wagons using Bradshaw Road, prompted San Bernardino county to dig a well for travelers' convenience at Indian Well, just west of Point Happy, because of unreliability of the 30-foot deep hand dug Indian Well.

1872 — Party surveying the roadbed of railroad reaches present site of Indio in March. Writer notes that Riverside was a sheep ranch.

1875 — Lts. George Wheeler and Eric Bergland, with U. S. Corps of Engineers survey expedition, on orders of the Federal Government to study routes as well as feasibility of diverting Colorado River for irrigating the Colorado Desert, crossed valley both ways, first in September 1875 and later in February 1876.

1876 — Lt. Bergland, east bound through the Pass, noted the railroad had built as far as Whitewater where it had a station. Stage stations had been in a state of disrepair, he said, reporting also "Wells Express Company refurbishing stations and dispatching from the Whitewater rail terminus," and new wells dug "half way between Toros and Dos Palmas and east of Mule Spring Station." Bergland reported Southern Pacific

laying rails and building grades east from Whitewater to Seven Palms which had been reached in January. The roadbed had reached Edom in February. The rails continued at Salvia, Edom and reached Indio (then known as Indian Wells) early in May. Arizona and New Mexico Stage Company organized by Charles Henry Wells, son of Henry Wells, San Francisco, with \$100,000 Wells Fargo money, (but with no U. S. Mail contract) went out of business in August. The California and Arizona Stage Line had the contract.

1876 — Southern Pacific Railroad reported first trains left Los Angeles for Indian Wells and return on May 29, on a four hour schedule. Stage connections for Prescott, Arizona were listed on the September schedule. A. N. Towne was General Superintendent for whom a street in present-day Indio is named.

1877 — "Indian Wells" was changed to Indio the Spanish name for Indian, a reservation being located just to the south of the new station and yards, and because there were other "Indian Wells" on the maps, at government request. Railroad engineers ahead of the road bed and track laying crews (made up mostly of Indian and some Mexicans) drilled test wells along the route, listing two at Mortmar (a name taken from "Mortmere" meaning dead lake or sea). On May 15 the Valley's Indian Reservations were designated as Cabazon, Agua Caliente, Torres, Martinez and Augustine. Bradshaw road was in use from the extending rail station terminals. The railroad siding at Thermal was named because of the heat of the area one report indicated.

Lt. Bergland in his report on the climate of the Colorado Desert (Coahuila Valley) wrote: "The climate in the hot months is not one in which a sane person would select in which to spend the summer . . ." He noted Coahuila Indians cultivating "Small garden plots and raise some grain and vegetables" at rancherias.

1877 — Southern Pacific crossed the Colorado River at Yuma in September and was maintaining regular schedules through Dos Palmas where Grant's stage line took passengers to Ehrenberg and Prescott. A Los Angeleno, Dr. J. P. Widney, proposed turning Salton Sink into an inland sea to change Southern California's climate and his scheme became known as "Widney's Sea."

1880 — Railroad drills well at Woodspur (also spelled

Wood Spur, now Coachella) under what is now Highway 111 (Grapefruit Blvd.). It was a small cable tool well. The siding was called Woodspur because of the mesquite wood Indians brought to siding there for rail use. This wood hauling denuded much of the area which had been heavily overgrown.

W. E. Van Slyke and a M. Byrne of San Bernardino purchased a small rancho of Pedro Chino above what is now Palm Springs and may have been the valley's first white settlers.

1881 — Jack S. Moore, Banning, staked iron claim in what is now Eagle Mountain area.

1882 — Old San Diego County map shows valley's name as "Cahuilla Valley". New Liverpool Salt Company operating by Worden, Green and Durbrow. Durbrow later built home near present Highway 86 and Monroe in Indio and rode the trains back and forth to the salt works which had a siding at Salton where there was a large settlement of Indian workers. Henry McKay was salt works superintendent. (He later gave the presidential names to the valley's north-south roads when valley county road superintendent.)

1883 — A. G. Tingman, who came in 1877 as a construction crew boss for the railroad, became telegrapher and station agent at Indio. Railroads drive last spike January 12 near Pecos River completing the Los Angeles to New Orleans Sunset Route. Railroad hotel and restaurant opened.

1884 — John Guthrie McCallum moved to Agua Caliente, built first irrigation project.

1885 — Tingman resigns from railroad job to start a provisioning place south of depot, across the tracks, thus becoming Indio's first entrepreneur. Railroad drilled a suc-

cessful cable tool and bucket well near the Indio station for depot and employees.

1885 — Non-railroad lands were opened to homesteaders. The first Coachella Valley homesteader under the "Desert Entry Act" was a farmer, Patrick Gale, who took up land in Section 23, the north part of the present Indio townsite, northwest of the Jackson Street overpass. Gale later moved to near Coachella. Gale was reported by Mrs. Edith Ross to have been given two date offshoots by C. P. Huntington, SP official, when he returned from the Mediterranean, "to see how dates would fare".

1885 — Gold mining activity mounted with additional discoveries and filing of gold mining claims being worked in the Orocochia, Little San Bernardino and Chuckawalla Mountains. Mecca, then known as Walters, became prospector's and freighter's center. Shaver's Well was drilled by the county to serve Box Canyon teamsters and travelers.

1887 — Southern Pacific passenger rates cut to \$1 from Missouri River to Los Angeles. A syndicate and promoters were selling land in Palmdale in what is now Palm Springs area, on November 1 a \$50,000 land auction climaxed a train excursion from San Francisco.

1888 — First valley post offices established, the first at Palmdale (now Smoke Tree Ranch area) on March 9 with Thomas N. Sweet as postmaster. The second was at Indio on July 3 with Albert G. Tingman as postmaster using dry goods boxes for sorting mail. A short-lived narrow-gauge railroad was built from Seven Palms to Palmdale. (See "Short-Lived Tiny Railroad".)

1888-1898—Increasing numbers of homesteaders were



FIRST DENOMINATIONAL CHURCH IN THE VALLEY

The Presbyterian Church was organized in October 1902 in Coachella, the first Protestant denominational church in the Valley, with the Rev. Albert Dilworth as pastor of a group of 25 persons. The congregation first meeting in homes, this church building was later built at Seventh and Orchard. Rev. Dilworth was the father of the late State Senator Nelson Dilworth. Above photo appeared in the Coachella Valley Submarine in April 1920.

taking up land around Indio and Mecca townsites and in lower part of valley around sidings. As stations were constructed sites were settled.

1889 — Two offshoots imported by the government in first importation of dates planted on Gale's homestead. (One is now on Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival grounds, being moved from the former Ted Buck ranch in the early 1950's. See Nixon's story on date industry.)

1890 — Father Florian Hahn, director of St. Boniface School for Indians in Banning, administered to Indians in the valley. He succeeded a Franciscan, Father William, who had been in the Valley from the middle '80's. Father Hahn's first valley church was of tree poles and arrow weed on the Martinez Reservation. In 1894 he directed the building of a 20 x 20-foot adobe chapel, which until 1926 was the only Catholic church building in the valley. Palm Springs post office established May 12 with Frank B. Houscom, postmaster. Flood washes out McCallum's 16-mile stone-lined irrigation ditch from the Whitewater River.

1891 — Tingman purchases southeast 160 acres in Section 23 where four years later (1894) he laid out the Indio Townsite. He provided a general store, had a well dug by a Pug Rhoads, provided a stable and corral for the freighters and travelers. He prospected for gold in the Little San Bernardino and grubstaked prospectors. On January 12 a Mission Indian Commission was created and authorized to select reservations for each band.

1893 — State Legislature created Riverside County taking about 590 square miles from San Bernardino County and 6,410 from San Diego County.

1894 — Using a rotary well rig, railroad drilled well at Walters bringing in a great artesian well, the pressure pushing the water nearly 20 feet into the air. Reports are that the railroad was able to fill six tank cars or more at a time. In the day of steam engines, this was a boon, because previously wells on the rail line were small and poor producers. Tingman laid out Indio Townsite. Drought parched orchards in Palm Springs area.

1895 — First valley school opens at Palm Springs, part of Banning school district.

1896 — First lower valley grammar school opened with a tent and seven pupils east of Indio depot. Railroad boosted its *railroad hotel and dining room*. Passengers had a 20 minute stop for dining with the conductor wiring ahead the food orders. Walters post office opens with James R. Martin, postmaster. Tingman had Elon Proctor drill first hand-operated hydraulic rig well back of his store.

1897 — Rev. Sylvester A. Mann, father of Edith Ross, purchased two lots in new townsite, conducted first Protestant community church service in the tent school. He came here in 1896. Indio School District organized March 2, first valley school district.

Among new homesteaders this year were: J. K. Ross, F. S. Everett, Mr. Cooper, north of townsite; Whitpin, Royal, Powers, Elgin and Fred N. Johnson, west of townsite, James Moore homesteaded in the northwest quarter of Section 26, and Lincoln Casebeer on the southeast quarter. H. E. Tallent opened the second general store in Indio.

1898 — James Moore brought his wife, Elizabeth, and son, Otho, to settle on the homestead which is included in the area west of Oasis to Monroe south of Highway 111. Cinderella Courtney, first white child born in the valley. Home was located on what is now Towne Street, just south of Miles Avenue in Indio. First adobe one room school built in Indio where Elks Lodge now stands on northwest corner of Fargo and Bliss. Indio Lodge 438, Independent Order of Odd Fellows

organized in February.

1899 — David Elgin the first white boy was born on a homestead west of Indio, the Elgins moved to an adobe west of Jackson north of the railroad. Dr. Walter T. Swingle, horticulturist with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, arranged for the first shipment of Algerian date palm offshoots. About 60 people lived in the Indio environs, 40 in Coachella and about 60 in Mecca.

1900 — First large, mechanical, hydraulic well drilled in Indio. Mortmar appears on railroad maps as a siding, previously a station only. Area well drillers included: John Holliday and partner Lincoln Casebeer, Henry McKay, Claud Cooper, Rush and Thomas, Thomas and Sanford, W. W. Wright, W. A. Saathoff and Will Everett. "Happy" Lundbeck homesteaded east of Indian Well, name immortalized when "Point Happy" named for the man known for being an eccentric.

1900 — George L. Keith became first storekeeper in Thermal, then known as Kokell (an adaptation from Coachella). Thermal was name of railroad station, which name was later adopted by community.

1901 — First water by canal from Colorado River reached Imperial Valley. Beginning in 1901 until about 1908 "colonist fares" were offered settlers from Chicago to the West Coast for \$33 and brought more than 100,000 to California. J. L. Rector credited with laying out Coachella Townsite, set aside two blocks in center of development for a city park. He organized first cantaloupe growers association and built an ice plant. Called meeting in early summer to resolve name of new community which was located at Woodspur siding. He changed name of land company to Coachella Valley Land & Water Company. Front Street was renamed Cantaloupe Avenue.

1901 — Coachella Valley Submarine, a weekly newspaper was started by Randolph R. Freeman, on November 27, on the southwest corner of what is now Fargo and Bliss. Valley's population claimed to total 250 whites and about 600 Indians. Kokell post office opens May 10 with Byron A. Nordyke, Postmaster. Coachella post office established November 30 with George C. Huntington, postmaster.

1902 — Presbyterian Church organized in Coachella. Rev. Albert Dilworth had 25 members. He was father of Nelson Dilworth, California State Legislator many years. Kokell School district organized in Thermal in "Little Green Schoolhouse" where Baptist Church is now located. It had one teacher, nine pupils in first fall class in two-room building. School moved to present location in 1912. Kokell post office became Thermal June 7 with George L. Keith, postmaster. The name Kokell exists only as a street name today and on a special school there.

1903 — Howard Ezra Gard came to Indio to work for Tingman. When Tingman sold store to Hunter and Pierce that year, Gard was employed by H. E. Tallent who operated store where Potter Hotel located today. Gard purchased store in 1906, became postmaster, Justice of the Peace, from 1903 to 1914, at age 24. Published a newspaper, Indio Index, in 1907-1909. N. O. Nelson selected a site north of Indio depot for a health camp. Dr. June Robertson (McCarroll), first railroad nurse, became its doctor until it closed in 1908.

1903 — C. V. Masonic Lodge established with J. Cathron promoting its organization. General Miles for whom Miles Avenue, Indio, named, visited the valley. Walter's School District opens school in Mecca. Miss Maintland first teacher. McDonald and Young build hotel in Coachella. On September 26 the community of Walters, named when the railroad first built siding in 1877, changed its name to "Mecca" at suggestion of R. Holtby Myers, founder of Mecca Land Company. (Westways February 1951). George L. Curtis was named postmaster of Mecca.

Bernard Johnson made first large commercial importation of date palm offshoots and planted some on ten acres near Johnson Street east of Mecca. (A county historical monument marks the site on National Avenue.) First Baptist Church organized in Thermal with Rev. Lloyd, pastor. Among charter members was J. W. Newman.

1904 — George White, 14, became first Coachella Valley graduate of a grammar school. U. S. Date Experimental Station established east of Mecca by Department of Agriculture. A new Indian plat drawn with Hunter and Perce naming some of the streets. Jess Payne and brothers came to valley to homestead. George Wharton James, writer, estimated Indian's population at about 100.

1905 — Colorado River breached new headworks of intake of main irrigation canal to Imperial and for two years the river flowed unimpeded into Salton Sink with water reaching 195 feet below sea level, nearly reaching Mecca, before being halted by herculean efforts of Southern Pacific which had moved its railroad tracks twice and was preparing for a third move to higher ground. This year J. W. Newman came permanently to the Thermal area engaged in farming and cooperative work, later became president of the Coachella Valley Home Telephone and Telegraph Company.

1906 — New Liverpool salt works abandoned because of inundation by rising Salton Sea.

1907 — February 11 rampaging Colorado River finally diverted from Imperial Valley and Salton Sink back into Gulf of California.

1908 — Kokell School District become Thermal Grammar School District.

1908 — First of three Los Angeles to Phoenix road races go through Indio and Mecca. The 1908 event was won by Col. Fenner in White Steamer in slightly under 24 hours for 418 mile trip via Salt Creek Wash. Fall of 1909 event won by Joe and Louis Nickrent in Buick, 19 hours, 40 minutes. November 10, 1910 event won by Harvey Herrick in Kissel in 20 hours, 22 minutes.

1909 — Two-room frame school house built on parcel east of Oasis, south of Bliss, in Indio. Desert Inn officially opened in Palm Springs in October offering tent accommodations and home-cooked meals, operated by Mrs. Nellie Coffman.

1909 — Thermal school trustees purchased 5 acres from Thermal Land and Water Co. for \$750. A new building to be built costing about \$6,200 stucco, mission style. The "Pasadena Colony" was growing south of Indio. A new jail was being built in Indio in February to replace the railroad tie "hoosegow" with a frame building and 18 x 20 steel cage. Los Angeles Examiner reported death of Arthur C. Bardy who was

Father Florian Hahn, Early Priest

Father Florian Hahn, a Franciscan priest, began visiting the Indian reservations in the 1890's. Before 1900 he had built the first church in the valley with the help of Indians on the Martinez Reservation, east of Valerie Jean. It was built where an adobe chapel of "The Holy Names of Jesus and Mary" was later located. The structure was cottonwood poles, and a thick matting of arrow weed with an adobe floor. He also helped the Palm Springs Indians build their original adobe chapel on their reservation.



FAMED COUNTY WELL

Some historians say this well near old Indian well west of Point Happy was dug by San Bernardino County in 1870 to aid travellers on the Bradshaw Road. Others say Mrs. Claude Ellis is standing near remnants of well in 1906 constructed by Riverside County. The Indian dug well from which the City of Indian Wells took its name was located north of this well which was near what is now Highway 111 east of Miles Avenue intersection.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection

"Founder of a settlement known as Bradyville five miles south of Indio." Indio Index reported an Indian program at Martinez with four reservations participating in games, baseball, peon, dances, fire eating. C. Paulsen Visel was editor of the Coachella Valley News. Late in February W. E. Everett, president of the Board of Trade, put on an opening dance in the new hall of the ice company's building. Music by Mrs. Kemp and Miss Fouquer. C. L. Compton was editor of the Submarine at Thermal. Four Astoria, Oregon, men were reported to have had "a successful rabbit hunt in the Indian Wells District."

1909 — Indio Index reported the Indio Health Camp had been "broken up for nearly a year" and the land located had been sold to others in April. Newspapers were advertising Boss Overalls "with the roomy seat." Fred A. Willis was reported to have bought a half interest in a palm oasis north of Indio and "will begin work at once on ditches to lead the water to his ranch which lies near where the stream has a flow of 40 miners inches, 20 of which he will divert for irrigation." A somewhat similar operation was reported for the opposite side of the valley (Deep Canyon area) "by Carpenter and Foltz where Foltz has filed on 500-inches and pipe laid to carry water some two miles distant."

A new 2-story rooming house was being built by J. F. Manning next to the Indio School on Fargo. Indio school census in May showed 43 families, 82 children of which 44 were of school age. Bruce Drummond of the Date Experiment Station advised valley residents "Shasta Daisies will do well here." The S.P. Depot park was a "beauty spot." An Oakland auto touring group en route to Maine said worst road encountered was that

from Palm Springs to Indio, driving 4-cylinder, 6-horse Thomas Flyers. C. V. News was sold June 8 to J. L. Rector, Charles M. Jones with Randolph Freeman, formerly of The Submarine to be editor. Harold Bell Wright had contracted to write five new books, he had written "Shepherd of the Hills", the Index reported. Dr. H. F. Harmer was practicing dentistry in Indio, Coachella and Mecca. Salt Lake Railroad Co. was reported surveying for a route from Flynn, near Needles, to Cabazon thence to Banning and Riverside, in June. In September Norman "Happy" Lundbeck, C. A. Chapin, Mr. Wm. Blair, J. C. O'Neal, P. J. Enright and Mitlerman were developing Indian Wells area. In October the Index reported demands were being made to remove old culvert of Southern Pacific at corner of Fargo and Miles "built years ago when the ditch along the railroad was necessary to carry off the flood waters when the Whitewater came down the valley . . . the ditch is closed above town and is utterly useless . . . the corner by the post office is filled for hours by a large stream of water coming down the road from the ice plant." The Methodist Church was organized with 22 members. Dr. J. A. Pitner, District Superintendent, completing organization. Rev. C. W. Babcock had been holding services in the old school house, in October. Indio opened new 2-room frame school Menday, November 15 on Bliss St.

1910 — A valley fair and festival of dates held at Coachella in December, with horse races on main street, barbecue, Indian dances, exhibits. Walters School District becomes Mecca School District. A Mr. Coolidge homesteads 160 acres south of Two Bunch Palms near Desert Hot Springs as first settler in that area. First C. V. High School established and opened September 10. In 1916 moved to land donated by G. H. Narbonne on Avenue 56. Coachella Valley Vegetable Union co-op started for onions.

1911 — Ensign School opens on Avenue 60, joins Thermal in 1947 to become part of Thermal Union Grammar School District. Cotton gin established in Arabia but soon closes, baled 100 bales in 1912. Economic conditions and 7¢ cotton idled the gin.

1911 — First transcontinental airplane flight from New York to Los Angeles reached Imperial Junction November 3, 1911, flew over Salton Sink to reach Banning November 4. Plane was piloted by Calbraith Perry Rodgers in a Wright Bros. plane named "Vin Fizz Flyer".

1912 — In March, The Date Palm, a weekly newspaper, established by J. Win Wilson (now Indio Daily News). In Desert Hot Springs area McGarger family homesteaded on Dillon Road. In May Woman's Club of Indio organized with Mrs. Estrella Hall, president. (It was Alturian Club, originally, changed to Woman's Club of Indio in 1916.) Methodist church, South, known as Westside Church organized by Elder J. J. N. Kinsey. Rev. J. W. Allen first pastor. Erected church in 1913.

First Housing Project

In 1882 the New Liverpool Salt Refinery Company was operating at Salton on Salton Sea. It consisted of a large refinery, several miles of rails, two small engines, twelve miniature flat cars to haul salt to the Southern Pacific main line. It employed 1800 men, mostly Yuma and Cahuilla Indians and men of Mexican ancestry. They lived in barracks at the Salton siding. The enterprise was abandoned to the rising Salton Sea after the Colorado River breached its levees below Yuma in 1905.

First National Bank in Coachella, valley's first bank, opened December 6.

1913 — Zaddie Bunker comes to Palm Springs. Carl Lykken came to Palm Springs, opened first store, became postmaster. Cabot Yerxa homesteads near Desert Hot Springs along with Bob Carr. Jessie A. Ivy named postmaster at new office "Arabia", August 22. On August 28 Thousand Palms, which was once Edom, got its post office with Carrie B. Geiger as postmistress. R. G. Ottman moved to his Coachella ranch. First graduates of Coachella Valley High School were Roy Compton and Ora Ruggles. In 1914 Mabel Ivy was the sole graduate, and in 1915 May Cary. In 1916 there were five graduates: Arthur Westerfield, Glenford Mathews, Ethel Miller, Mary Harmon and Melvin Bisbee.

1914 — Southern Sierras Power Co. transmission lines reach Coachella Valley connecting with Bishop, via San Bernardino. Oasis School District organized with first classes held Fall of 1916, one teacher, 11 pupils. Otho Moore and Erl C. Gillette started outdoor picture shows on Fargo during summers only. Charles Yost moved to his Oasis area ranch. County Supervisors call election January 23, 1915, for Indio Levee District with J. A. Sample, Ward N. Fancher and J. Win Wilson elected trustees.

1915 — Palm Springs builds first one-room frame school, which became a two-room frame school in 1922. Coachella Valley Stormwater District organized August 7 and assumed Indio Levee District works and obligations with J. H. Northrup, president; J. W. Newman, secretary, and Charles McDonald, director. (In June 1916 W. N. Fancher, president, C. B. Jones, and Newman elected for a two year term.) First units of new C. V. High School under construction on 10 acre site on Avenue 56. Edom, named after an ancient Near East country, gets post office briefly. (Edom changed to Thousand Palms in 1939, on petition of people, but siding retained name.) Dates were exhibited and awarded prizes at Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco.

1916 — Alturian Club starts first valley library in Indio with few books and apple crate shelves. Indian Wells School District organizes (leaving Coachella District) with 10 pupils and one teacher. Five graduate from new CV High school site which was completed in time for graduation but classes did not begin there until Fall. Thermal Growers Association organized to handle big onion crop. Pearson's Cash Grocery, A. L. Pearson, Prop., opened in Coachella.

1917 — County official estimates six tons of mullet being seined daily from Salton Sea during spawning season. Total mullet supply in sea estimated at 500 tons up 300 per cent from three years ago. H. T. Fothergill building new ice factory in Indio. George Phelps was putting new canvas roof on Airdrome Theatre in Coachella in March. Editor of the Date Palm saw Coachella Valley supporting 70,000 people if the 4000 acres now irrigated expanded to 10,000 acres or more. The Coral Reef Permanent Road Division, through the county supervisors, let contract for 4 1/2 miles of oiling, 24 1/2 miles of brushing and grading, and 6 1/2 miles of clearing roads for \$22,383.17 to John von Rader, Indio. March 7 petitions circulated to organize new Farm Bureau Center by Chester A. Sparey, A. G. Proctor and R. H. Postlethwaite; 73 signed up and named H. L. Young, chairman, T. J. Gridley, secretary, and George M. Beach, treasurer. Dr. S. S. M. Jennings and Beach were elected to the high school trustees. C. W. King, real estate man, startled Indio resident by hanging large banner across Fargo reading: "Indio—Where Dates Grow". In May Mr. J. S. Divers, of Divers and Lewis, was building extensive irrigation works from a diversion in Deep Canyon by pipe and concrete canal to what is now the Highway 111 and 74

junction in Palm Desert. He expected a minimum flow of 250 inches of water and planned on constructing several miles of pipe and a large reservoir. On May 18 Joseph Kelley was the first Indian man to hear the call to colors and enlist.

Indian Wells school sold \$4000 bond issue for new frame school. Valley telephone systems consolidation under way by J. W. Newman and others. The valley's agricultural crop production was estimated at \$476,557 from 3063 acres by the county agricultural commissioner. Imperial Ice and Development Co. purchased Coachella Ice plant, refurbished it to produce 30 tons of ice daily. H. B. Minister was operating former Gard and Tallent Stores. Coachella Valley Date Growers Assn. starts packing house in Thermal.

1917 — George Wharton James addressed Coachella Valley High School Graduation class on "Living Radiant Life." Graduates were Elenor Martha Ferguson, Gladys E. Fillmore, Francis E. Low, Claude A. Porter, Mabel L. Rau, Enoch Lloyd Reeves, and John H. Taylor. September 14 A. M. Peary started a once a week stage line to Riverside and return. Mrs. Bessie Baldwin was Indian Wells teacher staying at the J. C. O'Neals. The C. V. Festival of Dates was held at Coachella November 1 - 3. Newspapers were C. V. Submarine in Thermal, Victor Green, publisher, The Date Palm, Indio, J. Win Wilson, publisher and the Coachella Bee in Coachella. Will Hayhurst was reported in June to be "pushing Indio Mutual Telephone Co. lines toward Palm Springs."

1918 — After petitions had been filed December 5, 1917, an election held January 5 approved formation of the Coachella Valley County Water District by a vote of 342 to 49. Secretary of State certified District incorporation January 16. March 6 election named Dr. S. S. M. Jennings, Ben L. Clary, Marshall K. White, Chester Sparey, and V. E. Metzler to the Board of Directors which held organizational meeting May 6. California

Date Assn. built first packing plant. 40 x 120 feet in Coachella at intersection of state highway and Broadway.

Freight Lines To Mines

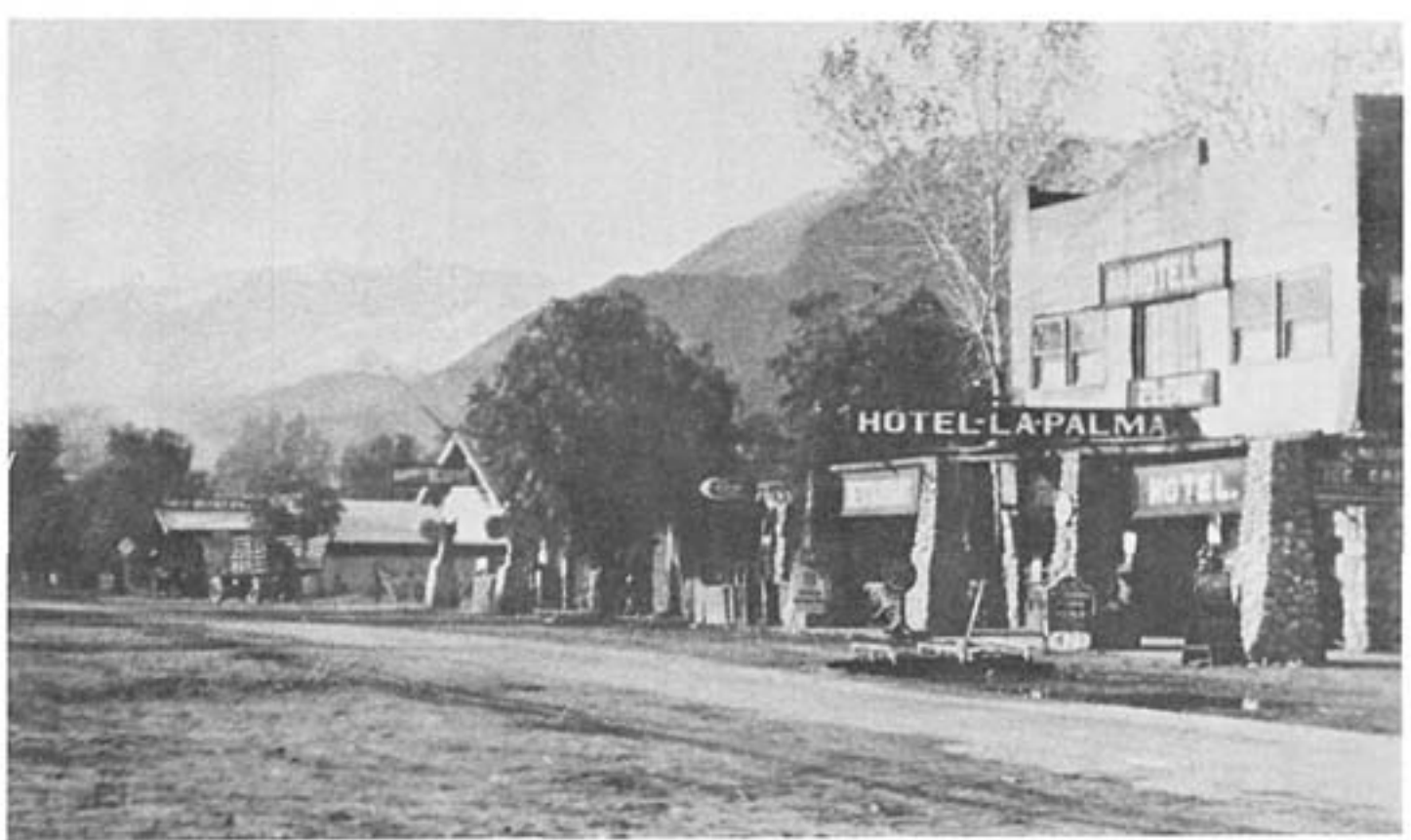
Early prospectors, miners and freighters in the Little San Bernardino and Pinto Mountains used a trail to Cottonwood Springs then to Mecca for supplies and mail in 1890. The route to Mecca took five days from the Dale Mining District, the Banning trip took six days and the trip to Amboy three days. The Brooklyn Mine was located and worked by John Burt and F. J. Botsford, Los Angeles mining men, that year. In 1898 Coachella Valley Pioneer George Blackburn and Phil Moss ran six and eight-mule freight lines into the Eagle, Pinto and Hexie Mountains from Mecca.

J. Win Wilson purchased idle Arabia Cotton Gin and put it into operation baling 125 bales from 124 acres produced by Mac and John von Rader, William Overacker and Edgar Smith. About 500 acres planted in 1919, and by 1920 it was estimated that the acreage approached 2000. On January 28, new Indio I. O. O. F. Lodge was chartered with C. W. Burdick, P. G.

1919 — Cash Buyers Union, organized in 1912, reported members shipped 12, 688 crates of Malagas this year for a total net return of \$29,289.64. R. G. Ottman was president, C. R. Cawthon, vice president, Otto Geissler, B. A. Teagle, H. W. Proctor, directors, and S. C. Fulcher, secretary-manager. In March a new Masonic Temple building was being erected in Coachella. In September Indio Lighting District completed first street lights in the valley. In November Black Lumber Co.



Heavy rains brought flooding to this intersection of Miles and Smurr in Indio in September 1939. — CV Historical Society Collection



EARLY VIEW OF PALM SPRINGS MAIN STREET

A view of Palm Canyon Drive in the late teens and early 1920's showing Hotel La Palma. C.V. Historical Society Collection.

building new lumber yard in Thermal. New Gard building on Fargo under construction by A. H. Lloyd in Indio, to have second floor meeting room. First All-American Canal report issued and first canal bill (Kettner Bill) in Congress.

1919 — Four small houses were built on Caravansary grounds at Mecca. Other buildings include garage, auto shop by W. J. Mills. Frank Coffey was reported to have shipped along with C. C. and W. C. Doren, 10,000 pounds of manganese. Charles Brown also shipped manganese and shipped two tons of rice grown on his place. H. G. Woods, first manager of the C. V. Telephone Company, was in failing health in Banning. Coachella Grammar School pupils invested \$1246.50 in war bonds and savings stamps and sent \$12 to French at Christmas for trees for children. In May Fargo Avenue was being "plowed up", palms and cottonwoods removed, to make way for new highway. Four army planes landed in Will Jim's alfalfa field west of Standard Oil plant in Coachella, sold \$14,000 in War Bonds on May 7. At end of May the old Fargo Street bridge over drain on south side of tracks was removed, and the Date Palm reported "it was always in the way." United Stages applied to serve the Los Angeles to Brawley area. In August it was reported that the Holtby Myers interests in the C. V. Home Telephone and Telegraph Company were purchased by local people. It was estimated that 300 people lived in the valley and 5000 acres were under cultivation by the Riverside Press. Electric power lines were being extend to Marshall's Cove (La Quinta) in October, where Messrs. Ickes and Morgan were building the valley's only four story house.

1920 — Indio Methodist Church sells first church building, former first Indio school building, corner Bliss and Fargo, to Oddfellows Lodge, begins building new church at Fargo and

Requa. (Church now at Requa and Deglet Noor.) Second Kettner canal bill introduced. Thermal reported shipping 800 cars of produce. In February contract let for portion of Indio to Brawley highway, including widening of former paved narrow stretches.

Thermal Growers Union elected George M. Beach, J. W. Newman, Al Hayward, C. E. Plum and S. A. Stone, directors. January 21 Coachella Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons #736, instituted in Coachella, constituted November 20, Martin Cawthon, Master, 37 members. O. E. S. instituted in February. Charles Yost named president of Mecca Growers Assn. with R. W. Blackburn, vice president; W. D. Gibbs, secretary, and E. B. Ames, C. L. Edmunds as directors.

S. P. Land Company offering three groups of lands totalling 10,195 acres, undeveloped, in center of valley, the "alkaline" area, for \$16.50 to \$25.00 an acre. A bill was introduced in Congress proposing to make Palm Canyon a National Park. Koehler Feed Store builds building on Jackson. (Fred Koehler came to the Valley in 1909, farmed on Shady Lane, Coachella, in 1918 moved to Indio and went into transfer business, then built American Railway Express building. Francis became first agent, in 1924 Francis became township constable serving until 1944. He became Indio's first chief of police in 1930.)

In March the Coachella Valley American Legion Post was organized with Jerry Roberts the first commander. In 1921 George Ames became commander; Washington McIntyre, vice commander; Leland Yost, adjutant; R. M. Wood, treasurer, and Henry Briggs, executive officer. In 1919 the valley shipped 19 rail carloads of Malaga grapes.

1920 — On April 1 the Coachella Parent-Teachers Association was organized. In May an attempt to incorporate

Coachella failed because of heavy opposition before the County Supervisors hearing. In September J. Win Wilson moved his Arabia cotton gin to Thermal on the old Johnson Lumber Co. property. On July 21 the First National Bank in Indio opened; C. E. French, President and J. C. Baird, cashier, by September 8 had deposits of \$55,884.21. The Federal census showed Indio with 1187; Coachella 1016; Thermal 888, and Mecca 583.

1920 — A six-inch rain on August 24 was reported in Santa Rosa mountains causing heavy damage in Coral Reef area as well as to Narbonne Ranch, Pawley, Nance and Webster ranches. Torro Reservation, Shady Lane was a river and Coachella flooded, a washout at Mortmere held up trains. Indio's date station reported 3.67 inches. On October 20 The Date Palm reported that "Angel's View" was first formed on the San Jacinto foothills, visible from Garnet, by an earthquake in 1918. Thermal State Bank was organizing in November (opened in February 2, 1921) with E. E. Black, president; W. D. Gibbs, vice president, and J. W. Newman, treasurer.

1922 — Mecca-Blythe road approved by Legislature with \$300,000 appropriation. Work started late in August. (Gov. W. D. Stephens had vetoed it in 1919) John Shaver reelected county Supervisor on August 31. Served about 40 years.

In the decade that followed agriculture expanded, settlements grew, schools and churches were built and community organizations were started and flourished. Water problems were given serious consideration. A few examples of activities will serve.

In 1922 the first Swing-Johnson Bill was introduced and on November 24 the Colorado River Compact was executed at Santa Fe seeking to equitably divide the water of the river between the upper and lower basins. On May 24, 1924, the Women's Club of Coachella Valley was founded with Mrs. W.

E. Yant as president. In May of 1923 Highway 99 was officially opened with a public street dance in Indio on the newly paved intersection with Jackson Street. In July 1924 the Indio Fire District was organized with J. Win Wilson, Charles Green and Arthur Wood, ending the dependency upon a volunteer program, utilizing the Southern Pacific's employees to fight fires. The first city fire engine was delivered in November.

On June 11, 1925 the valley's first service club, the Indio Exchange Club, was organized. January 12, 1926, the Coachella Valley Lion's Club held its first charter meeting. The same year Fr. Francis directed the opening of the first Catholic Church, Our Lady of Solitude in Coachella. The Indio Library grew to a small room in a water company building in 1928. After the city incorporated in 1930 it moved to the city hall in 1934 and in 1942 moved to the corner of Miles and Deglet Noor. (The Indio Library District was organized in 1940.) In 1928 the Swing-Johnson Boulder Canyon Project Act passed to control the Colorado and irrigate the deserts.

On May 26, 1930, citizens voted to incorporate Indio. At the June 4 first council meeting were: LeRoy Pawley, first mayor; A. L. Wood, C. N. Sinclair, C. L. Green, and A. B. Martin, councilmen; T. C. Yeager, city attorney, lone MacKenzie, city clerk; E. G. Brinkley, treasurer and Francis Koehler, police chief. Since then the cities of Palm Springs (Apr. 20, 1938), Coachella (Dec. 13, 1946), Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, Palm Desert and Rancho Mirage have been incorporated. Highways have been built, Interstate 10 completed, all roads in the valley were improved and paved using a special road district tax, a community junior college established and more lands irrigated because of the advent of Colorado River water via the Coachella Canal in 1949.



FREIGHTING WAGON IN 1909

Eight mule team pulled this freighting wagon to the rear of H. E. Tallent's Store in Indio in 1909. Store was where Potter Hotel is located. It was torn down when Highway 99 was paved through Indio.

— C. V. Historical Society Collection



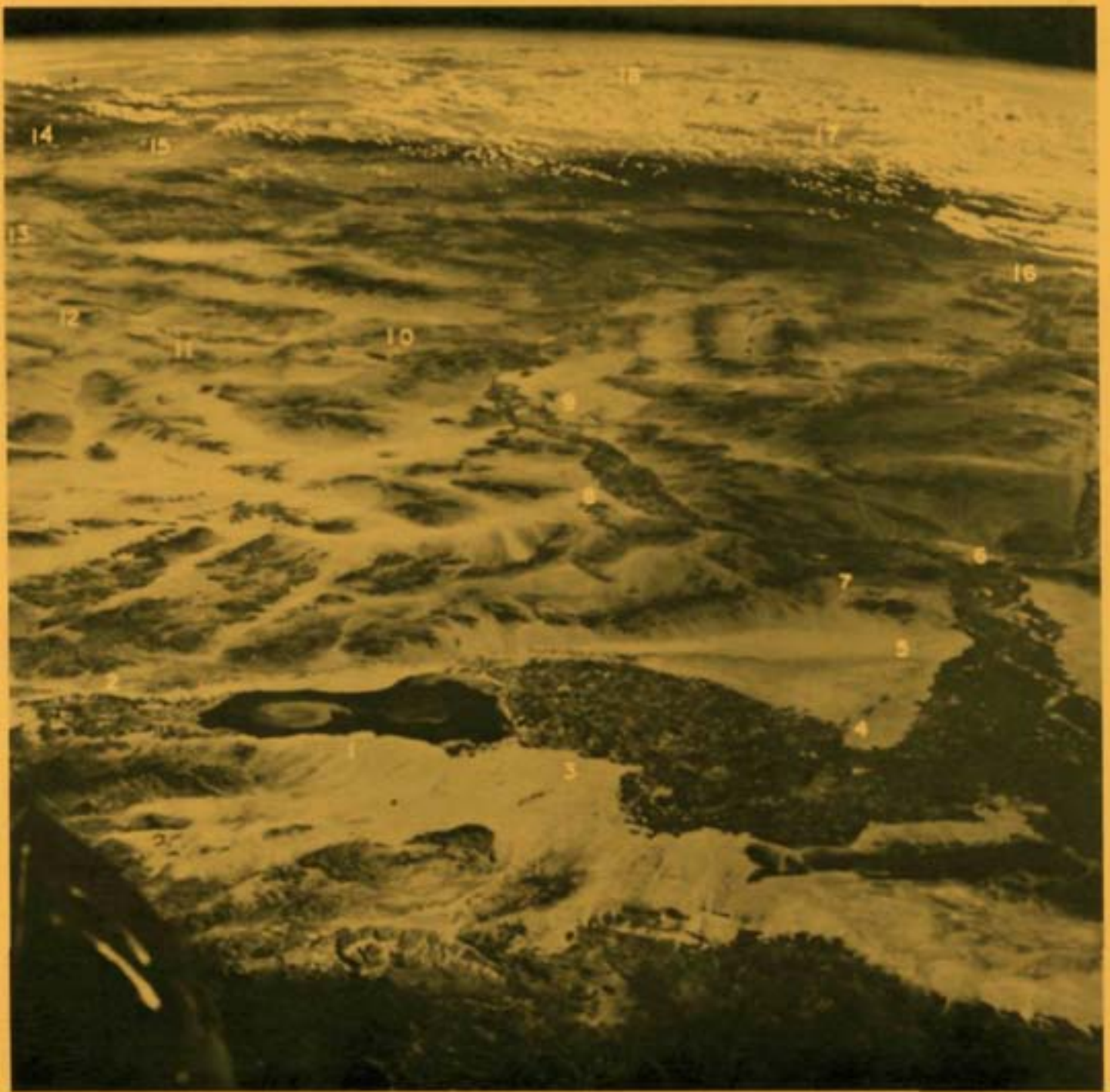
MODERN LAKE CAHUILLA AT END OF THE COACHELLA CANAL

Here's a weekend view of the modern Lake Cahulla holding about 1500 acre feet of water at the terminus of the Coachella Branch of the All American Canal, east of La Quinta, west of Jefferson between Avenues 56 and 58. Constructed in 1969 by the area served by the canal, the lake is three-quarters of a mile long and about half that wide. It is stocked with bass and catfish during the summer and trout in the winter. Operated by the Riverside County Parks Department as a recreational facility it attracts thousands of swimmers, picnickers, bikers, fishers and small-boaters. Canal water is stored in the lake which lies slightly below sea level on the edge of the ancient Lake Cahulla which covered much of the valley south of Washington Street about 600 years ago.

— CVCWD Photo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . .

Information for this historical booklet came from many sources. The reports, records, minute books of the Coachella Valley County Water District and the former Coachella Valley Stormwater District were reviewed. Credits are also given the Coachella Valley Sun and its predecessor the Coachella Valley Submarine; The Indio Daily News and the earlier weekly Date Palm; U. S. Geological Survey's Water-Supply Paper 225 by Walter C. Mendenhall published 1909; Southern Pacific Railroad; Riverside Community Book, Arthur G. Paul, Editor, History of Riverside County by John R. Gabbert; The First Thirty Years, History of Imperial Valley by Otis B. Tout; Department of Natural Resources, California, Salt in California by W.E. van Planck; David Prescott Barrow's Ethno-Botany of the Coahuilla Indians; U. S. Department of Interior, The Hoover Dam Power and Water Contracts and Related Data by Ray Lyman Wilbur and Northcutt Ely; A. L. Koeber's Handbook of the Indians of California; Automobile Club of Southern California's Touring Topics and Westways; Department of Water Resources Reports, California; Reports of Secretary of War to Congress including reports by Lts. Wheeler and Bergland in 1876; Imperial Irrigation District's Historic Salton Sea; The Colorado Delta by Godfrey Sykes and files of the Coachella Valley Historical Society. We are also indebted to many individuals interviewed: Mrs. Jane Walker, former Indio Librarian; Mrs. Louisa Ames and Ray House, former presidents Coachella Valley Historical Society; Paul Wilhelm, desert historian and columnist; Tom Patterson, Riverside historian; Francis J. Johnston, Banning historian and author of "The Bradshaw Trail"; John R. Brumgardt, county historian; Mrs. Helen Hester Leap, Otho and Miriam Moore; Melvin Bisbee, Arthur L. Wood, Lowell O. Weeks, Dennis Mahr, personnel of the water district and many other persons interested in the early days of this valley.



ASTRONAUTS CAPTURE INCREDIBLE PANORAMA OF VAST SOUTHWEST

This breath-taking view, looking across parts of three states, was photographed in 1965 by Astronauts Conrad and Cooper while circling the world at the speed of 17,000 miles an hour and at a height of 125 miles. Their capsule, a corner of which can be seen at lower left hand part of picture, was located below the U.S.-Mexico border southeast of San Diego when the picture was taken. Principal locations are numbered as follows: 1, Salton Sea; 2, Coachella Valley; 3, Imperial Valley; 4, U. S.-Mexico Line through Calexico-Mexicali; 5, All American Canal; 6, Yuma; 7, Imperial Dam; 8, Blythe and Palo Verde Valley; 9, Parker Indian Reservation in Arizona; 10, Lake Havasu on Colorado River and Havasu City; 11, Needles and Topack Marsh; 12, Cottonwood Cove on Colorado River; 13, Lake Mead on Hoover Dam; 14, Grand Canyon Country; 15, Flagstaff area; 16, Phoenix Valley; 17, White Mountain in Eastern Arizona, and 18, New Mexico, under cloud cover. Note curvature of the earth at top of photo. Negative was furnished CVCWD by NASA.



21 PUPILS, ALL AGES, AT FIRST VALLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

This adobe was built in 1898 and served as an Indio community center and for Sunday worship for many years. In 1908 the school moved, replaced by a frame 2-room building located at Oasis and Bliss. The above school faced Fargo. It was located on the north-west corner of Fargo and Bliss, where the Elks Lodge now stands. This picture was believed to have been taken about 1905. See schools' story inside. The bell in tower is now in front of the Jefferson School administration center on Highway 111 in Indio. It was donated by the railroad.

—C.V. Historical Society Collection

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