The Willow Glen Neighborhood
Then and Now

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by April Hope Halberstadt

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Foreword

"Good neighborhoods make great cities!"

Janet Gray Hayes, former mayor of the City of San Jose

Neighborhoods are the basis for community life—the real heart and soul of a city is in its residential neighborhoods. A neighborhood is the place where people relax and recover from the stress of the workplace, where they raise their families, display their possessions. If a man's home is his Castle, then the neighborhood is his Kingdom.

Growing up, it is the neighborhood where we learn to help out, where we learn about trees and flowers, where we learn about friends, test relationships, learn to get along. Growing older, it is the neighbors who help out, feeding the cat and watering the lawn when we go on vacation.

In San Jose, we are very fortunate to have a number of neighborhoods that are more than a century old, places we call "heritage neighborhoods." Many of our heritage neighborhoods are models of urban self-renewal, changing and yet remaining the same. These neighborhoods are a most precious resource because they provide stability and continuity to our city and our urban life.

San Jose is blessed with a mild climate and most of our early houses were built with rot-resistant redwood. The effects of weathering and deterioration are surprisingly minimal, so some of our oldest neighborhoods have maintained their property values, still commanding higher prices than many new neighborhoods with larger structures.

In San Jose, some of these heritage neighborhoods are readily identifiable; Naglee Park, Hanchett Park, Palm Haven, and the Rose Garden. These older neighborhoods retain their desirability because they are comfortable, delightful places to live. One area in San Jose is especially noted for its wonderful neighborhoods; that area is known as Willow Glen.

Chapter 1
The Willows and the Waters

Like many towns, the destiny of the village of Willow Glen was determined by its landscape. It was the abundance of water that made the area both attractive and forbidding. Water provided irrigation for the bountiful orchards but it also meant regular floods that damaged crops and fields. The early farmers built canals, opening the area to cultivation and settlement. It was the productive Willow Glen area that would give the entire Santa Clara Valley the name "Valley of the Heart's Delight."

Noted for the abundance of willow trees, the village known as La Abra was located between two major creeks on the valley floor. Smaller creeks also flowed through the area, joining the two larger water channels, known as Los Gatos and the Guadalupe creeks. The presence of the many smaller streams created a marshy area, frequently flooded by winter rains and reportedly so wet that it was a good place to hunt ducks. Willow trees, cattails and tules or *tulares,* plants that favor marshes, grew abundantly between the creeks.

Willow Glen is located in the center of the valley floor, situated on silty alluvial deposits composed of clay, sand, and gravel. The soil is especially rich and fertile, full of minerals brought down from the Santa

While overflowing creeks used to bring enriching minerals to Willow Glen farms, as the area became more populated the flooding interfered with local commerce. Here, the empty Goodyear tract, off Willow Street, is flooded on March 7, 1911.

San Jose Historical Museum

Cruz Mountains by the creeks that used to overflow during the winter rainy season. The water table, the water below the surface of the ground, is very high on the valley floor. Even during dry summer months, water is just beneath the surface. It is often said that the ground water of the Santa Clara Valley is its most important resource.

Even today the sandy, soupy soils are sometimes a problem for local residents. Streets, sidewalks, and house foundations are prone to crack and heave in response to the action of the waters still running just below the surface. However, despite the problems caused by the waters, Willow Glen has always been a very desirable location to live.

The first settlers in Willow Glen were the California Indians of the Costanoan tribes. The creeks and marshy areas supported an abundance of fish, geese, game, and wild berries. Costanoan village sites, refuse heaps, and burial sites have been found along the banks of the river as it stretches from Alviso near San Francisco Bay, south to the Coyote Valley.

El Pueblo San Jose de Guadalupe

The Spanish who explored and settled California in the late 18th century established three types of settlements. They built a *mission* or religious settlement, a *presidio* or fort, or they established a town or *pueblo*. The purpose of a pueblo was to grow food to supply the soldiers and horses of the nearby presidio. The San Jose pueblo was organized to grow food and hay for the presidios in San Francisco and in Monterey.

Land in the Willow Glen area was originally part of the San Jose pueblo lands. At first, the area was used only for hunting and to gather willows and reeds for baskets. The land was too swampy and unpredictable for cattle ranching, the primary agricultural occupation of the early Spanish settlement in California.

The Guadalupe River, which forms Willow Glen's eastern boundary, was declared to be the dividing line between the lands that belonged to the Mission de Santa Clara and El Pueblo San Jose de Guadalupe, both established in 1877. These two Spanish settlements were established relatively close to each other, and the boundaries between the two settlements soon became the subject of early disputes.

The *padres* at the Santa Clara Mission felt that the pueblo settlers were corrupting the newly baptized mission Indians. The *pobladores*, those early residents of the pueblo in San Jose, had their own concerns; they were always recruiting labor to help them on their ranchos. Both groups argued over cattle, grazing, and farm lands. Historian Frederick Hall says that the dispute about the boundary between San Jose and Santa Clara arose about 1797. After several appeals to the Spanish government in Mexico, a line was finally fixed halfway between the two settlements. That halfway line still remains as the old channel of the Guadalupe River.

Altogether, three pueblos were built in California; the pueblo of San Jose was the earliest. When the three pueblos were first established, each pueblo was allotted four square leagues of land, according to Spanish law. This allotment could be measured in a square, or it could be elongated in order to fit with the landscape. Pueblo lands would be rented or sold as needed to provide money for the little town. The four leagues were divided into *solares* or house lots for the pueblo residents; farm lots called *suertes* which could be sold for revenue; vacant land or shared community area called *ejidos;* and large cattle pastures known as *dehesas.* The pueblo itself was governed by a council of the residents called the *ayuntamiento*. The mayor or presiding official was known as the *alcalde.*

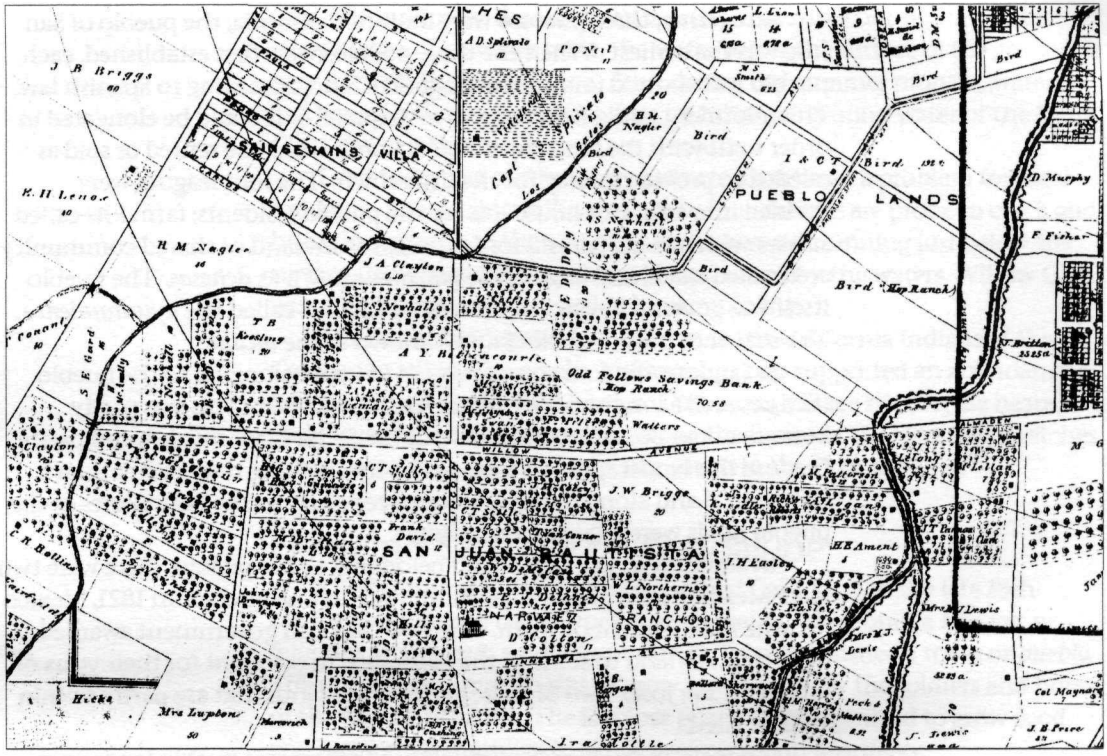
In San Jose, the four square leagues of land belonging to the pueblo land covered a longish area with an irregular border. This was partly because of the boundary dispute with the Santa Clara *mission,* and partly because this landscape is a valley with a meandering river rather than a flat plain. Land along the river flooded regularly so the boundaries of the pueblo lands were adjusted accordingly.

In addition to the valley land belonging to the pueblo, there were two large Mexican land grants adjacent to the San Jose pueblo. In 1821, Mexico became independent of Spain. The new Mexican government awarded large tracts of land to some of the *pobladores* in payment for their years of service in San Jose. Two of these grants cover lands that are partly within Willow Glen.

Old maps of pueblo lands show that the San Jose pueblo lands were also divided into two giant parcels, fitted around the Guadalupe River and the two Mexican land grants. The lands of Pueblo Tract Number I were large, covering much of east San Jose to the foothills, between the current day Berryessa Creek and Tully Road. The western boundary was the Guadalupe River. This huge, irregular plot of land also includes the northern half of today's Willow Glen. Pueblo Tract Number II includes an area adjacent to the quicksilver mines in New Almaden.

Early farmers who settled in Willow Glen acquired their farm lands by buying them from the San Jose pueblo. Since selling the *suertes* was an important source of revenue for the pueblo, the *pobladores* were usually happy to see a buyer with ready cash. Prospective buyers petitioned the *alcalde,* a survey of the desired farm land was made, and the necessary document to transfer legal title was drawn. If the council, or *ayuntamiento,* had no objection, the sale was completed. The *alcalde* was not only the notary; he was the repository for mortgages, deeds, and other documents.

San Jose histories report that although the pueblo started out with four square leagues, the boundaries were stretched until the pueblo lands eventually covered over one hundred square miles. These properties were sold, and the money used to finance schools and other civic improvements in the town of San Jose.



Historical Atlas Map of Santa Clara County (1876)

The 1876 Atlas of San Jose *by Thompson & West shows the names of many early property owners in the Willow Glen area. While not always absolutely accurate, maps such as this one do provide an important record of early settlement in Willow Glen.*

Mexican Land Grants in Willow Glen

One large Mexican land grant, San Juan Bautista, also known as the Narvaez Rancho, was given to José Agustin Narvaez in 1844 by Governor Manuel Micheltorena. It covered about 8,900 acres and included the parts of San Jose we now know as Hillsdale and southern Willow Glen. Historian Pat Loomis reports that Narvaez shared his birthday with the feast day of St. John the Baptist. His land grant commemorated both names. The hills to the east of Willow Glen, behind the Oak Hill Cemetery, are a reminder of this early grant. They still carry the name San Juan Bautista Hills.

The other Mexican land grant touches the most northern part of Willow Glen near the Roberto-Suñol Adobe, on Lincoln Avenue near Highway 280. This grant is known as the Rancho de Los Coches. The grant once covered over 2,200 acres and originally belonged to an Indian named Roberto. Both Roberto and Señor Narvaez sold portions of their huge ranchos to immigrant Americans who were interested in buying farm land.

Americans began arriving in San Jose in the late 1820's. John Burton from Massachusetts may have been the first, arriving in 1829 and marrying Juana Galindo in 1831. The Bidwell-Bartelson wagon train arrived in 1841,

bringing the first Yankee families overland to San Jose. Buying and selling pueblo and rancho land was a common occurrence after 1830, as more settlers arrived.

The boundary between Pueblo Tract Number I and the Narvaez Rancho is approximately Willow Street. Pioneer rancher Isaac Bird, whose property is near today's Bird Avenue, originally bought his land from the San Jose Pueblo. Most of the remaining Willow Glen orchardists and farmers—the Cottles, the Kirks and the Settles—bought farms that were part of the Narvaez Rancho lands. And the property acquired by Antonio Suñol, which eventually became part of the Roberto-Suñol Adobe, was once part of the Los Coches land grant.

La Abra Becomes "The Willows"

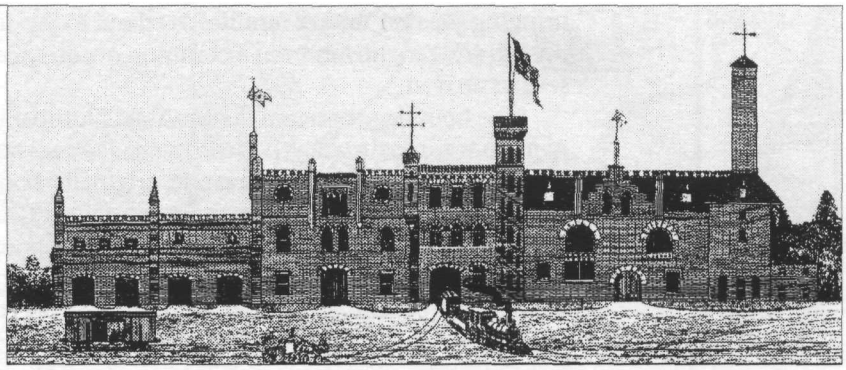
The news of gold at Sutter's Creek quickly attracted people from all over America. According to the special census of 1852, there were an estimated six thousand people in Santa Clara County. There were six times as many hungry residents, over thirty-six thousand, in San Francisco. The population in San Francisco continued to grow enormously; nearly 57,000 residents were counted eight years later, in the 1860 census. In contrast, the population in Santa Clara County was only about 11,000 at that time.

These population numbers are important to remember because they provide an important clue to the Willow Glen economy in 1860. All of those 49ers had to eat! And there was no agricultural land in cold, foggy San Francisco. The best land and the best produce were just to the south, in the sunny Santa Clara Valley. Wheat, fruit, cattle, hay for the horses; these were all provided by Santa Clara Valley farmers. Early records show that wheat and other grains were the major crops produced in the first few decades of statehood.

The area of Willow Grove, as Willow Glen was sometimes called, was one of the best farming areas near the pueblo of San Jose. Wheat and barley, potatoes, onions, bean and corn, were all cultivated and grew easily. Strawberries and citrus, hops and tobacco were also early crops. And farmers grew acres of hay to feed horses. The *pueblo* of San Jose had provided cattle, wheat, fruit, and hay to support the *presidio* in San Francisco. Now local farmers were supplying food for the hungry Gold Rush immigrants living in San Francisco. Willow Glen farmers had a ready market for their produce.

One of the most significant crops from early Willow Glen was hops, an important ingredient in the brewing of beer. Beer is made from malted wheat and barley, the two largest crops produced in the Santa Clara Valley during the 1860's. Isaac Bird of Willow Glen grew the best hops around. San Jose's first brewery, the Eagle Brewery, located at the corner of San Carlos and Market, began producing beer in 1853. Another important local producer, the Fredericksburg Brewery, was built on The Alameda,

The Fredericksburg Brewery, established in the early 1850's and located on The Alameda, was San Jose's second brewery. Businesses such as this processed the wheat, barley ,and hops grown in nearby Willow Glen.



Pen Pictures of the Garden of the World

making beer for thirsty Californians until the Prohibition years, which began in 1918. Wine was another important early product; grapes also grew abundantly here. Beer and wine were not only grown but bottled in Santa Clara Valley. These were important early food processing industries, providing beverages for thirsty San Franciscans.

The first strawberry plants were brought to the Santa Clara Valley in 1852 and cultivation quickly spread. Strawberries appeared in Willow Glen farms in the 1860's. Later on, the cultivation of strawberries shifted to the Alviso area, but early farmers experimented with fruit crops of all types. Fruit cultivation, especially orchard fruits, quickly spread after the annual flooding was controlled, and the area became known for its abundant crops of cherries, pears, and other fruit.

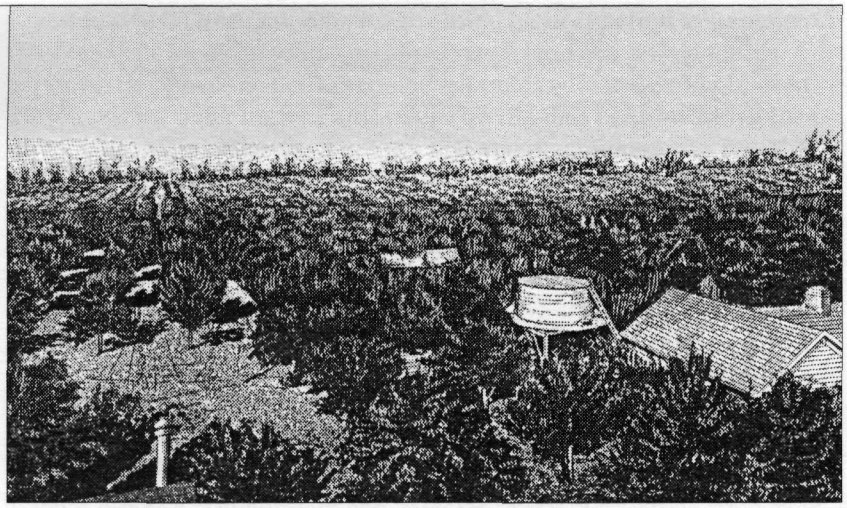
Historian H. S. Foote writes in *Pen Pictures of the World* that "The plantings in the celebrated Willow Glen District were commenced in 1858 when William C. Geiger set out a portion of his cherry orchard on Willow Street." A few years later, Campbell T. Settle planted his orchards of apples and pears on the northeast corner of Lincoln and Minnesota avenues. At that time, the only road was still called El Abra, the street we now call Lincoln, and most of the farm land was owned by Settle, Cottle, and Zarilla Valencia. Miles Hills and a Mr. Sampson soon bought the Valencia land and divided it into 10-acre lots.

How profitable was fruit farming in Willow Glen? The economics was so promising that within just thirty years, orchard land became extremely expensive. Judge David Belden wrote an article in 1887 for a popular magazine of the time, *The Overland Monthly.* He described the benefits, and the considerable costs, of locating a business in Santa Clara Valley. He points out that all the most desirable land has already been taken but a newcomer might still be able to buy property to establish a farm.

Already valuable, Willow Glen farms cost ten times as much as other farm land in the San Jose of 1887. Belden wrote,

"These are the approximate rates at which (a buyer) will find lands held: the willow lands at from $400 to $1000 per acre, according to

Farms and orchards located in the Willows were enormously productive, quickly giving Willow Glen a national reputation as a fruit growing area. This sketch from Foote's Pen Pictures of the Garden of the World *is reproduced from an early photograph of F. F. Britton's orchard.*



Pen Pictures of the Garden of the World

improvement; the adobe lands at from $75 to $125 per acre: the loamy and gravelly lands from $50 to $100; hill land adapted to fruit at from $10 to $40 and grazing land from $5 to $10."

More than a hundred years ago, the wonderful soil in Willow Glen could already command a price ten times higher than any other location in the Valley.

The First Founders

So who were these hardy farmers who can be regarded as the first founders of Willow Glen? Some information is available about most of the twenty-eight individuals who signed a letter to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors in 1853, asking for a good road.

James W. Weekes is the first name on the list. A native of London, England, he was a sailor who arrived in California in the 1830's. He married Ramona Pinto, daughter of one of the pueblo families. The 1852 census shows his occupation as "Judge" and he is known to have served as the *alcalde* for San Jose in late 1847 to February 1848. Weekes was 37 years old when he signed the petition and his family included his wife and five children, ages four to eleven.

Benedict Kamp is the second name that appears, and he was a European immigrant with a large family. Born in Germany, he married a woman from Kentucky. They lived in Indiana before moving to California around 1849. The 1852 census lists ten children in this family, ages 6 months to 16 years.

Adolpho Vinagre immigrated from Chile and he too seems to have married a *pueblo* woman. Four children; Miguel, Juana, Guadalupe, and Fecunda completed their household.

To the Honorable Board of Supervisors
of the County of Santa Clara
State of California

We the undersigned Petitioners, represent to your honorable Board, that we are in absolute want of a road to our Settlement called La Abra. Your petitioners would most humbly ask therefore for a public highway thirty feet beginning at or near the house of Cirilo Valencia thence Northwest crossing the Rio de los Gatos near the house of Jose Señols where it strikes the section line; thence westward on that line, to where it crosses the road on the Meredian some three hundred yards Southeast of the house of B. Hanson

Your Petitioners would further say that this short distance of a road would not only be of great convenience but is of immediate necessity as we are entirely blocked up. Therefore for the same we forever pray

Abra 26th July 1853.

Signers	Signers
James W. Weekes	Jose Joaquin Arriaga
F. Hamp	Mariano Padillo X
Joseph Gale	Jose M. Morfin
A. Jones Jr.	Theodore Robles X
James F. Clark	William O'Connor
J. W. Powell	Richard Williams
Adolfo Vinagre	Jos Pearce
Santiago Rodriguez X	Cirilo Valencia
Felix Buelna	James H. Falkner

B McMonne
Jose Camberos
Jose Mª Rodriguez
Francisco Garcia X
Francisco Pacheco X
Demetrio Sepulveda X
N M Pingrat
H C Melone
Isaac Bird
John Yontz

The founders of Willow Glen signed this petition for a good road in 1853. Many marked their signatures with an "X" but the community that remains is a lasting reminder of their endeavors.

A native Californian, Felix Buelna listed his occupation as "ranchero." This onetime Mexican soldier acquired ranch land as a reward for his services. He signed the petition on behalf of his wife and eight children. He joined two other native Californians on the 1853 petition asking for a good road: Joaquin Narvaez with his wife and six children, and Tomas Pacheco with his wife, Hilena, and six children.

Some signers did not list families in the census information. Kentuckian Henry C. Melone, the first Santa Clara County clerk, signed the petition. So did John Yontz, the first duly elected sheriff of Santa Clara County who also served as the tax collector. We know that the remainder of the Yontz family arrived from the East in 1854 to join him in their Willow Glen home.

The signature of Isaac Bird, a native of England, stands out prominently. Bird takes his place in history for introducing the cultivation of hops. Other signers have slipped into obscurity. José Maria Rodriques, laborer Richard Williams and ranchero Theodoro Robles were three signers whose personal history is now unknown.

Beginning of the Village

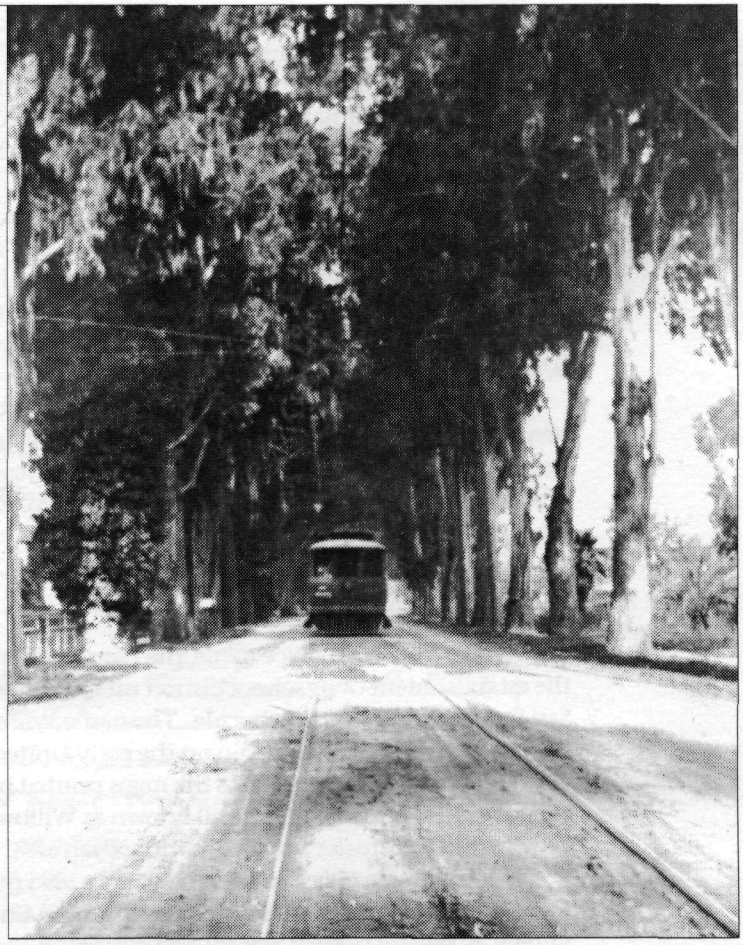
As an identifiable place name, the name Willow Glen dates back to the establishment of its school district on November 4, 1863, according to San Jose historian Clyde Arbuckle. The name Willow Glen also appears as the name of the local Township on the early United States Coast & Geodetic Survey maps as well as the maps printed by Thompson & West in their Atlas in 1876. Today it is still known as Willow Glen, even though it is now part of the greater San Jose metropolitan area.

However, Arbuckle also says that before 1895 the little post office, located on the corner of Minnesota Avenue and Cherry Street, was not known as Willow Glen; it was called Kensington. After January 14, 1895, the post office became known as Willowglen (one word). Kensington House, at the corner of Cherry and Minnesota avenues, was the site of the original post office and store. The building was later razed and a fire house now stands on the site.

The early residents of "The Willows," or Willow Glen, added a few stores to their little area so they would not always have to travel into downtown San Jose to shop. The Willow Glen Elementary School was eventually located closer to the crossroads of Minnesota and Lincoln. A small business district formed around the post office across the street on Minnesota.

If you visited Willow Glen around 1900, you would find a few businesses clustered near the intersection of Minnesota and Lincoln avenues. Lincoln and Minnesota were known as major thoroughfares, heavily traveled by fruit growers and maintained by the County. The trolley line to San Jose also ran along Lincoln Avenue, and those Willow Glen residents

The trolley ride to Willow Glen was very pleasant in the 1890's. Then, Lincoln Avenue was lined with tall, fragrant eucalyptus trees.



San Jose Historical Museum

who had business interests downtown rode the convenient trolley to work.

It was a pleasant and memorable ride when the trees were in bloom. Lincoln Avenue was lined with tall, fragrant eucalyptus trees. Riding the trolley in the spring was an unforgettable experience, with the pastel blossoms from dozens of orchards contrasting with the gray-green foliage of the eucalyptus-lined boulevard. A newspaper article from 1894 says "The Willows district is the most noted in the county. The roads are reported as numerous and well-kept. Most roads are gravel and kept well sprinkled, bordered by lines of walnuts, eucalyptus, elms, and pepper trees. Fan palms are also reported as adding 'a peculiar charm'."

Roads and Streets: Artificial Boundaries of Willow Glen

Willow Glen is bordered by rivers and creeks. They provided the natural boundaries to the neighborhood for nearly 150 years. Major county roads were also important perceptual boundaries for the district at one time. Old-timers knew that when you crossed Meridian Road, you really were not in Willow Glen. Today the routes of the major freeways outline the district, although they extend the traditional boundaries of Willow Glen somewhat. Today we consider the Almaden Expressway and Highway 880 (also known as old Highway 17) as boundaries that mark the east and west edges of Willow Glen.

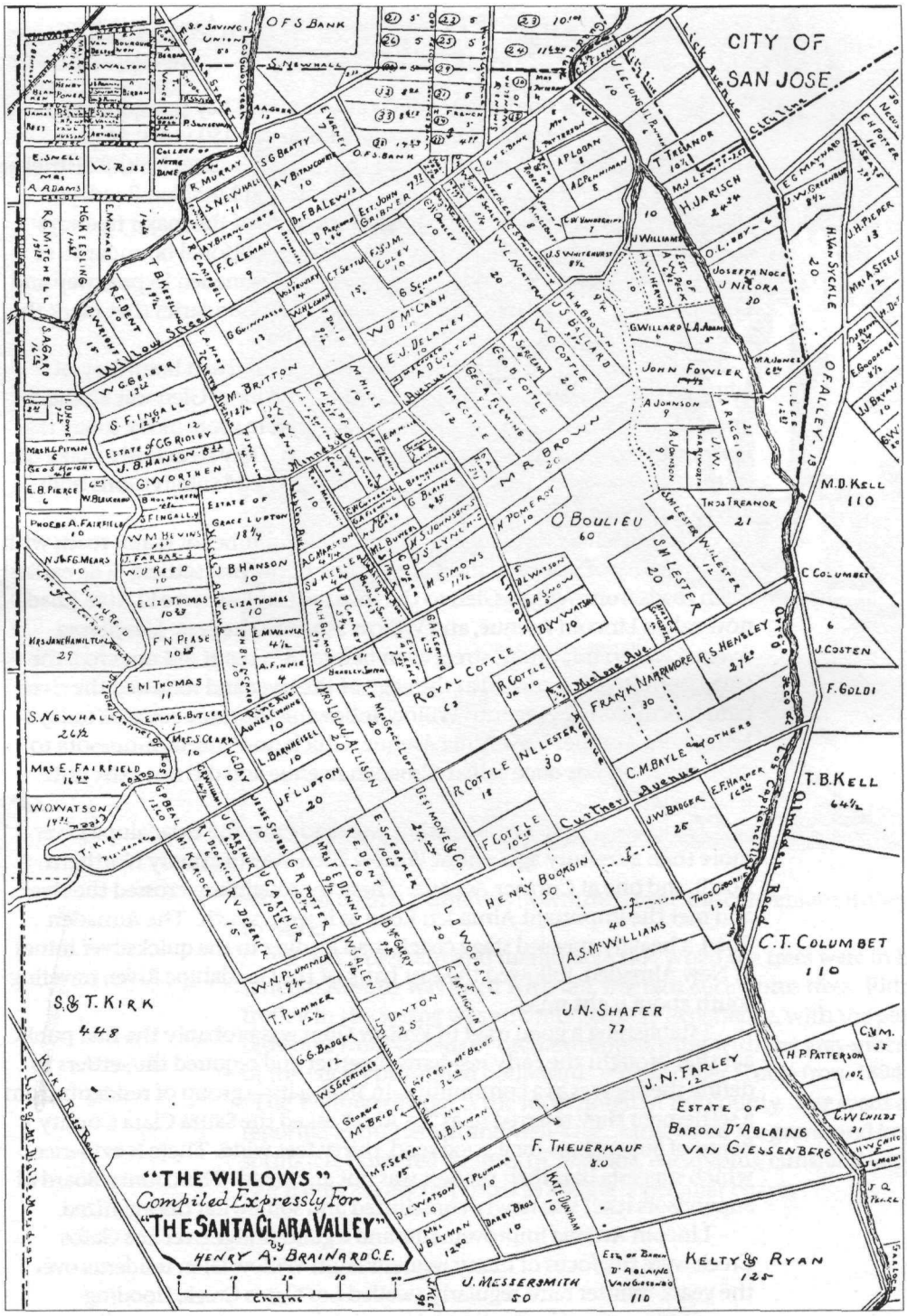
Old-timers considered Malone Road as the southern boundary of Willow Glen. It was the legal boundary when Willow Glen was an incorporated city in the 1920's. But today's residents are more likely to say that Foxworthy now forms the southern boundary. They frequently make the distinction between Old Willow Glen and the "new" subdivisions built after World War II.

Within Willow Glen itself, there are still a number of major roads with a long history of service, dating to the time of the first settlers. The earliest main roads from Willow Glen to the town of San Jose were El Abra Road, now called Lincoln Avenue, and Willow Street to the east. Minnesota Avenue was an important street even before 1875 but it did not cross the Guadalupe River. It turned at the edge of the river and followed the river bank north, converging into Willow, following the same route as today's Minnesota Avenue. West Alma Avenue, which now meets Minnesota to cross the river, was once called Almaden Avenue and did not exist until much later.

There were, however, two other places to cross the Guadalupe River more than a century ago: one at Willow Glen Way (formerly Northern Road), and one at Curtner Avenue. These thoroughfares crossed the river and met the important Almaden Road as it went south. The Almaden Road, a heavily traveled stage coach road leading to the quicksilver mines at New Almaden, followed the east bank of the Guadalupe River, traveling south about eight miles.

Establishing a good road to Willow Glen was probably the first public act that brought the early residents together and required the settlers to define themselves as a community. In 1853, a little group of residents from a settlement they referred to as "La Abra" asked the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors for a good road, thirty feet wide. There is evidence which suggests that their request was not answered. The county Board of Supervisors itself was newly constituted and somewhat disorganized.

Lincoln Avenue improvements and a good bridge over Los Gatos Creek were the focus of many requests from Willow Glen residents over the years. Winter rains regularly swelled Los Gatos Creek, flooding


"THE WILLOWS"
Compiled Expressly For
"THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY"
by
HENRY A. BRAINARD C.E.
CITY OF SAN JOSE
Lick Avenue
Willow Street
Alma Street
Coleman Avenue
Julian Street
Park Avenue
Lincoln Avenue
Cortner Avenue
Delmas Ave.
Guadalupe River
Los Gatos Creek
Los Gatos Creek Road
Kirk's Race Road
Chains
O F S BANK
S. NEWHALL
S. G. BEATTY
A. Y. BITANCOURT
F. C. LEMAN
J. B. CAMPBELL
T. B. KEELING
H. G. KEELING
R. G. MITCHELL
R. E. BENT
D. NEVERT
W. C. GEIBER
S. F. INGALL
ESTATE OF C. G. RIDLEY
J. B. HANSON
G. WORTMEN
ESTATE OF GRACE LUPTON
J. B. HANSON
ELIZA THOMAS
F. N. PEASE
E. M. THOMAS
EMMA E. BUTLER
MRS. S. CLARK
MRS. E. FAIRFIELD
W. O. WATSON
T. KIRK
S. & T. KIRK
448
G. BEATTY
M. KEIRCK
R. V. DEBERRICK
J. C. ARTHUR
J. F. LUPTON
L. BARNHEISEL
MRS. LOUD
MRS. ALLISON
MARGARET LUPTON
DES MONES & CO.
ROYAL COTTLE
R. COTTLE
F. COTTLE
N. L. LESTER
R. S. HENSLEY
FRANK NARRAMORE
C. M. BAYLE
E. F. HARPER
J. W. BADGER
HENRY BOOMSIN
A. S. McWILLIAMS
J. N. SHAFER
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C. T. COLUMBET
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T. B. KELL
M. D. KELL
110
O. BOULIEU
60
M. R. BROWN
W. C. COTTLE
J. S. BILLARD
H. W. BROWN
E. J. DELANEY
W. D. McCRAY
M. BRITTON
G. GUINNESS
J. W. COLLINS
W. C. COTTLE
GEO. B. COTTLE
GEO. A. FLEMING
R. SEGELKEN
A. COTTLE
A. COLLEN
M. MILLE
G. BLAINE
H. POMEROY
S. M. LESTER
D. W. WATSON
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S. M. KEELER
W. H. GRIFFITH
G. A. FLEMING
E. M. WELSH
A. FINNIS
L. BARNHEISEL
J. F. LUPTON
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R. COTTLE
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F. COTTLE
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E. F. HARPER
J. W. BADGER
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HENRY BOOMSIN
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A. S. McWILLIAMS
J. N. SHAFER
77
C. T. COLUMBET
110
T. B. KELL
J. N. FARLEY
ESTATE OF BARON D'ABLAING VAN GIESSENBERG
F. THEUERKAUF
80
KELTY & RYAN
125
J. MESSERSMITH
50
ESTATE OF BARON D'ABLAING VAN GIESSENBERG
110
J. N. FLORA
30
JOSEFFA NOCE
H. JARISCH
T. TREANOR
JOHN FOWLER
O. BOULIEU
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M. D. KELL
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C. COLUMBET
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F. THEUERKAUF
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KELTY & RYAN
125
J. MESSERSMITH
50
ESTATE OF BARON D'ABLAING VAN GIESSENBERG
110

Left: This map by Henry A. Brainard, circa 1886, shows how the Pueblo lands were sold and resold and divided up into increasingly smaller parcels purchased by persons eager to take advantage of Willow Glen's excellent farming conditions.

northern Willow Glen and washing out the road. By 1865 this main road needed major attention again. A petition signed by pioneer Campbell T. Settle petitioned the Supervisors for a public road calling it Willow Glen Road. By 1872 the name had been changed and the petition asking for widening to 60 feet refers to the street as Lincoln Avenue. The name was reportedly changed to Lincoln Avenue just after the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln in 1865.

The first official United States Coast & Geodetic Survey map of Willow Glen from 1895 carefully documents all important roads and other features. Although the U. S. Post Office may have not yet recognized the name Willow Glen at that time, the name is clearly on the map. It also shows the streets used more than a hundred years ago. Major roads in the Willow Glen of a century ago that are still in daily use include Lincoln, Willow, Minnesota, Pine, Malone, and Curtner.

The houses and businesses of a hundred years ago can still be found along the streets that were once country roads. This little store with the false front is at 1301 Cherry Avenue, adjacent to several elegant Victorian houses.

Nancy Newlin

Many smaller local Willow Glen streets appear on the 1895 USC&GS maps. The streets of Broadway, Newport (then called Washington), Lupton, Cherry, Bird, and Willow Glen Way were all important connecting roads, used by the residents of Willow Glen long before the turn of the century. These roads are all clearly marked on real estate maps drawn by civil engineer Henry A. Brainard in 1886.

Creeks and Rivers: Natural Boundaries of Willow Glen

Arroyo Seco de los Capilancillos joins with the Arroyo Tulares de Las Canoas in eastern Willow Glen, adding its capacity to the Guadalupe River. These waterways frequently flowed over their banks in wet winters, making the eastern edge of Willow Glen swampy and unreliable as farm land. Along the western side of Willow Glen, Los Gatos Creek flows down from the Santa Cruz mountains. These two creeks eventually converge in downtown San Jose below Santa Clara Street.

Mushy soils from the creeks and rivers made early farming efforts difficult. During an especially wet winter of 1866, Los Gatos Creek flooded so high that it jumped its banks, creating an entirely new channel. When it finally receded, there was a completely new creekbed. We still mark the event as a Willow Glen street name, which recalls the old, dry creek bed-Dry Creek Road.

Both major Willow Glen waterways were channeled for farm use by a pair of enterprising Yankees. Theophilus and Socrates Kirk bought farm land along the south bank of Los Gatos Creek about 1853. They built a diversion ditch and formed the "Kirk Ditch Company" in 1859. It was reportedly still operating as an irrigation system until the 1960's.

On the other side of Willow Glen, the swampy lands adjacent to the Guadalupe River were tamed by engineer Frank Lewis. Valley pioneers James and Margaret Reed, survivors of the famous Donner Party, owned substantial tracts of land along the river. Frank Lewis was married to Martha (Patty) Reed, their daughter. Beginning construction in the 1860's, Lewis built a channel for the river water still known as the Lewis Canal.

The Lewis Canal drained the smaller waterways, combining them into a single drainage structure. Channeling this river opened the area for agriculture and later development. By 1876 the Lewises began to divide their family land into 10-acre orchard parcels in order to sell it. The Lewis Canal still survives, currently used by the Santa Clara Valley Water District as the main channel of the Guadalupe River between Curtner Avenue and Willow Street, according to historian Glory Anne Laffey.

The Roberto-Suñol Adobe

The oldest house in the Willow Glen area is just adjacent to the boundaries of Willow Glen across Los Gatos Creek and to the north. Known as the Roberto-Suñol Adobe, or called Laura Ville, it is a house that is closely linked with early wine production in the Valley. This little adobe house on the outskirts of the San Jose pueblo was originally the ranch house for the 2,219 acre Rancho de Los Coches.

The rancho had been a gift from Governor Manuel Micheltorena in 1844 to its first owner, an Indian from the Santa Clara Mission named

The Roberto -Suñol Adobe was once a single story adobe house, but when Captain Splivalo acquired the house and vineyard in 1853, he built a second story. It is located at 770 Lincoln Avenue.

Nancy Newlin

Roberto. The exact date of the construction of the adobe is not clear, since Roberto had actually occupied the land from 1836. But, by 1847, Roberto had sold his ranch to Antonio Suñol.

Suñol divided the rancho into three parts, keeping one third for himself and selling a third to his daughter, Paula, and her husband Pierre Sansevain. Although Sansevain and his wife already owned an adobe house in the San Jose pueblo, they acquired the rancho land to grow wine grapes. According to historian Pat Loomis, Sansevain made the first real champagne in California.

In 1853, about the same time the first Founders petitioned for a good road to Willow Glen, Sansevain sold his little adobe and the surrounding vineyard of 55 acres to an Italian sea captain who was also a vintner, Captain Stefan Splivalo. Splivalo made the little adobe his home in 1853 adding a second floor to the house and improving the grounds. A black fig tree in the yard of Captain Splivalo's estate was for many years considered to be the oldest fruit tree in San Jose.

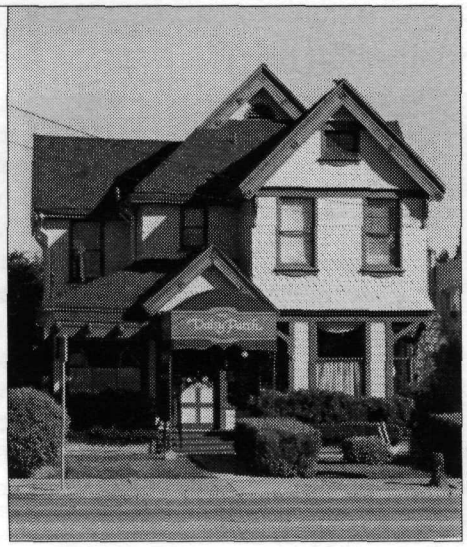
The presence of the Sansevain family lingers in the area. The names of Pierre Sansevain, or Don Pedro as he was called, and his wife Paula are on two nearby streets. The Roberto-Suñol adobe is now on the National Register of Historic Places and is protected by federal law. It is an important building, so historically valuable to our heritage that the path of Highway 280 was realigned to avoid damaging this famous house. This beautiful landmark is Willow Glen's only remaining building from pueblo days, and one of a very few adobe buildings left in the Santa Clara Valley.

Chapter 2
The Orchard Years

Taming the meandering rivers and building good roads and bridges opened Willow Glen for orchard development. Although the area had already proven to be productive farm land, fruit brought a much higher price in the marketplace than hay and hops. So agricultural land use in Willow Glen quickly changed in the late 1860's, becoming orchard land nearly overnight. Orchards and fruit production were important industries for more than eighty years.

The evolution of the Willow Glen community is sometimes seen as having five stages. In the first stage the land was in its natural state, with only the Indians as inhabitants. During the second stage, The Willows was divided into large land grant ranchos and farms with hundreds of acres, most of the tillable acreage held by such enterprising farmers as Zarilla Valencia, the Birds (1850), and the Cottle family (1854).

Just a generation later, by the mid-1880's, fruit production nearly replaced all other types of crops and the typical farm orchard covered only about 10 acres. While a few farms still had hundreds of acres under production, they were the exception rather than the rule. Typical farms were more like the William C. Geiger's 13-acre cherry orchard on Willow Street, or the 10 acres belonging to Miles Hills at the corner of Minnesota and Lincoln.



Nancy Newlin

Once a farm house located on a 10-acre parcel at the corner of Minnesota and Lincoln, the Miles Hills house was moved around the corner in the 1920's when the Lincoln Avenue commercial strip was developed. It is located at 1115 Minnesota.

The third stage of Willow Glen development is characterized as the era of the small tract orchard. The Market Street & Willow Glen horse trolley began service in 1876, made possible by a new bridge across the Guadalupe River. Later replaced by an electric car line along Willow Street, public transit helped open the northern portion of Willow Glen for residential development. City homes on country lots—orchards and dairies and chicken farms with a public trolley at the front door—Willow Glen offered the best of both worlds.

Dr. H. M. Hervey divided his orchard on the Guadalupe River into one-acre parcels around the turn of the century. Small residential tracts close to the railway, along Brooks, Fisk, and Broadway avenues, were selling around the same time. The Cherryhurst subdivision on what is now Newport Avenue first opened in 1909. Large scale residential development began to appear after the turn of the century.

Then, in 1913, the Newhall farm on Coe Avenue was sold to build the Palm Haven subdivision. Subdivision construction was well underway in the 1920's when unincorporated Willow Glen was still seen as the best of both worlds, offering a location near city services without paying city property taxes. Construction slowed to a halt during the Great Depression of the 1930's and then World War II in 1941, but the change was inevitable. Small town Willow Glen enjoyed autonomy for just a few years, from 1928 to 1935, during the fourth stage of its development.

The Willow Glen neighborhood is now in its fifth stage of development. It is completely covered with structures and only minor reconstruction is under way as deteriorating houses are replaced. But it still draws much of its character and its identity from the Orchard years, the decades when Willow Glen was the heart of a California industry that fed the entire country.

Subdivision Patterns

Most of Santa Clara Valley was divided into square and tidy parcels, section and quarter section farms of 640 and 160 acres when official US government surveys were first completed. The Mount Diablo Meridian was established in 1851, setting Meridian Road as the base line for future measurement. But early farms and home sites in Willow Glen were rural lands of the pueblo, settled before this official United States survey.

While land within the pueblo and then the city of San Jose was officially surveyed and formally measured on grid lines, the boundaries of rural acreage used terrain and local landmarks to determine the metes and bounds. So the boundary of a farm in early Willow Glen might be described with measurements such as "beginning at the center of the Guadalupe Creek" or perhaps "the live-oak called 'El Encino' about 20 inches in diameter." Farmsteads in Willow Glen fronted along the early traditional roads, which were sometimes winding. So orchard acreage

along these roads was subsequently divided in long narrow parcels to give new farmers access to a thoroughfare.

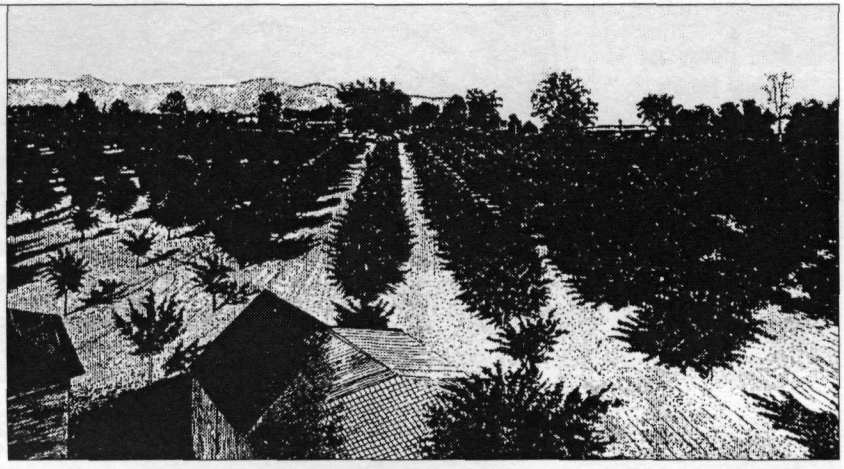
When home sites of an acre or less were introduced around the turn of the century, the shape of the lots was determined by the septic system. Although the nearby city of San Jose had a public sewer system in place as early as 1880, rural homes in Willow Glen depended on a septic system with an underground drain field to handle their household waste. So residential lots in Willow Glen tend to be narrow and long with the drain field for the septic system established behind the house.

Fruit Growing Becomes an Industry

Improvements in the fruit preserving and processing industry for both canners and dryers intensified the demand for more production. To meet demand, orchards quickly spread throughout the Santa Clara Valley. Smaller orchards in Willow Glen soon found themselves in competition with large growers in the West Valley and Edenvale areas.

Although San Jose had been sending local produce to San Francisco on the railroad beginning in 1864, the industry grew in another direction after the Golden Spike was driven in 1869, completing the railroad network across America. The dried fruit industry in the Santa Clara Valley began in the late 1850's, but it was rancher Henry Coe who developed the process of sulfuring apricots during drying to help preservation. This important improvement increased production enormously.

San Jose soon added canned fruit to the fresh and dried fruit it was sending to market. The commercial canning process was developed around 1870, when Dr. James M. Dawson and his wife set up a little canning operation behind their home on The Alameda in 1871.



Enormous orchards such as this acreage belonging to Hugh Leigh soon became the exception rather than the rule. Today only the name remains as one of the largest thoroughfares in the Valley.

Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World

In just four years the Dawson company built a new packing house and shipped 4,000 cases of canned fruit a year. When refrigerator cars were introduced in 1875, the local railroad experimented with sending fresh produce to eastern markets in these new cars. These developments, combined with the close proximity of some of the most productive orchards in the world, would quickly create worldwide markets for fresh, canned and dried fruits, nuts and vegetables from Santa Clara County.

The Fruit Years in Willow Glen

The Secret was out: you could plant any tree in the Valley and get fruit in nearly unbelievable quantities. If Santa Clara Valley was the center of the California fruit industry then Willow Glen was at its very heart. The railroad to the East opened in 1869 and California fruit quickly went to fruit exchange markets in Chicago. The first commercial fruit cannery was located nearby on The Alameda. Willow Glen orchardists loaded their fruit into wagons and delivered it to the dryer, the cannery, or the nearby fruit exchange warehouse, just north on Lincoln Avenue. Processed and

This headline and illustration from an 1894 issue of the San Jose Mercury were part of a long article describing the prosperous orchards and lovely homes in The Willows.

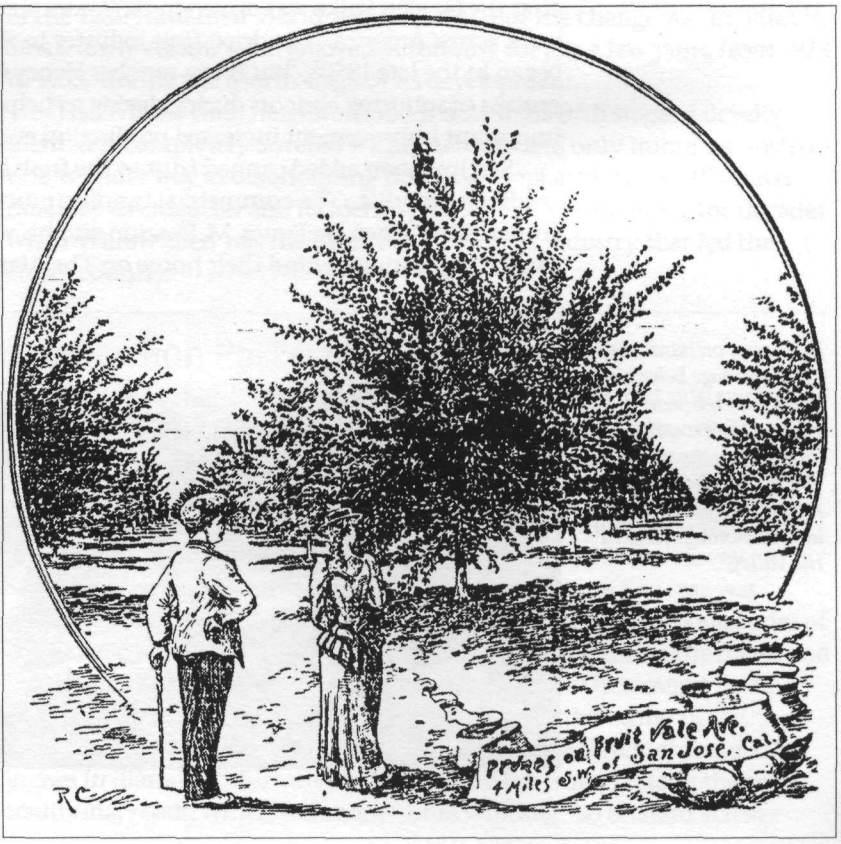
ORCHARD HOMES.

The Noted Willows and Adjoining Districts.

WEALTH OF TREE AND VINE.

Orchard after Orchard of Heavy Laden Trees—Elegant Homes, Beautiful Gardens.

San Jose Mercury News



San Jose Mercury News

packed, the fruit was soon loaded on waiting railroad cars. It was a very short, simple, and direct trip between the tree and the train.

Willow Glen farmers and orchardists had ready markets for their fruit and the railroad, the cannery and the dryer were all close by. Historian Clyde Arbuckle reports that the Alden Fruit & Vegetable Packing Company, managed by Willow Glen's own Campbell T. Settle, was turning out 4,000 pounds of prunes every 24 hours. By 1876, San Jose was easily the fruit shipping center of the state, according to Mr. Arbuckle.

The orchardists organized themselves into Growers groups in order to market and sell their fruit easily. And the largest group of all became the West Side Fruit Growers Exchange of Willow Glen. Organized and incorporated by Colonel Philo Hersey, the group eventually included 436 growers. The packing plant was located just north of Willow Glen on the narrow gauge railroad tracks at Sunol Avenue and Auzerais Street.

With more than 500 stockholders by 1896, the West Side Fruit Growers Exchange was easily the largest business organization in Willow Glen, most of them member growers. The Exchange built large warehouses and facilities for drying and grading fruit. Most of the fruit canners, dryers, packers, and shippers were clustered around the narrow gauge railroad lines just north of Willow Glen above Los Gatos Creek.

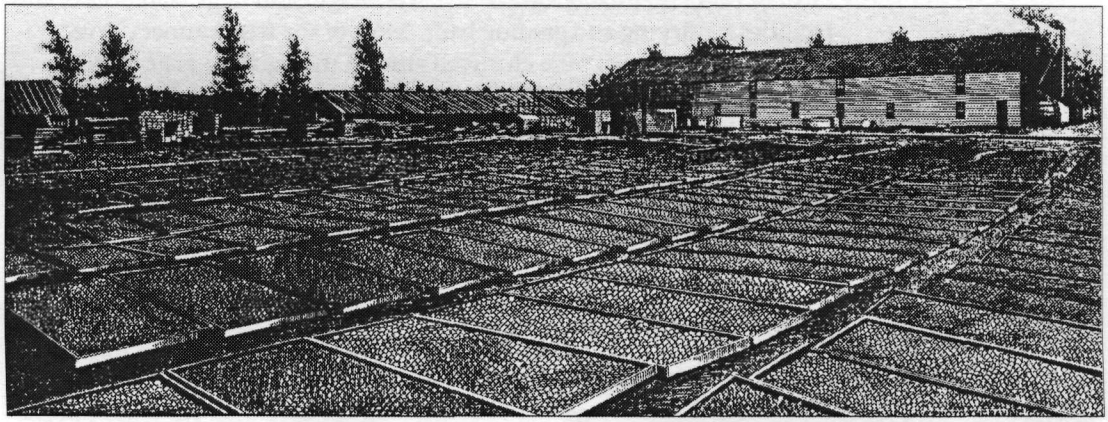
The Willow Glen Dryer was an exception, since it was located in southern Willow Glen on Pine Avenue near Lincoln. But the George N. Herbert Company was on Lincoln near the railroad and the Santa Clara County Fruit Exchange was on nearby Sunol Avenue next to the narrow gauge railroad.

Fred Lester hauling prunes with his Yuba tractor to the Rosenberg packing house about 1910. Taken in front of the Lester home on Lincoln near Malone.

Lee Lester

The Santa Clara Valley Fruit Company was another fruit dryer who purchased green fruit, dried, and sold it. This establishment made prunes its specialty according to notes in the book *Sunshine, Fruit and Flowers.* The George N. Herbert Packing Company was a partnership between George N. Herbert and J. W. Raines, who also specialized in prunes. Their fruit drying establishment was located at the junction of Lincoln and Moorpark and was described as being in " the midst of the Willows fruit district."

It was frequently difficult to tell which farmers could be called growers and who were known as packers and shippers. It seemed that every orchardist with a little extra money invested in a related enterprise. Willow Glen resident Joshua Cozzens started with a small orchard around his home on Minnesota Avenue, then leased land at the corner of Dry Creek and Kirk Road, ending up with over 500 acres in fruit production. His enterprise included 300 acres in prunes, 150 in pears, and 50 in apricots. His fruit processing business passed to his son, John Cozzens, who then managed the company for many years.



Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World

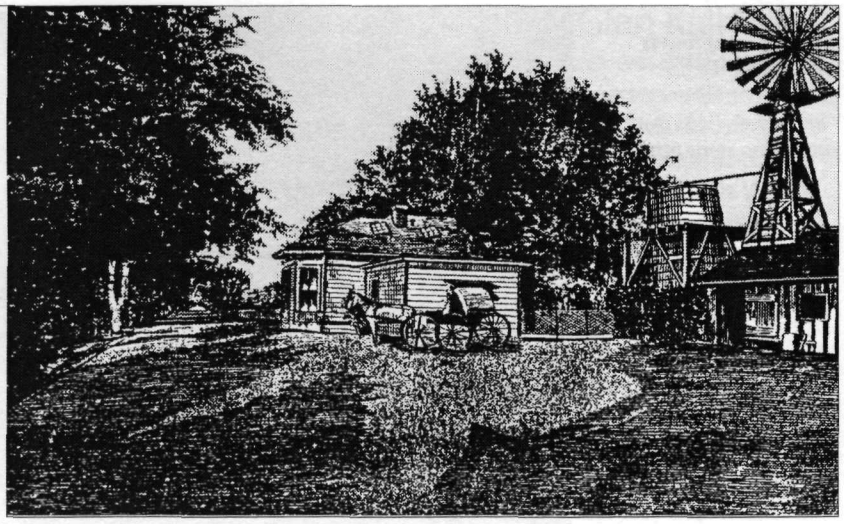
Three generations of the Cozzens family transformed a small orchard into an enormous fruit packing enterprise.

A smaller enterprise, but apparently just as productive, was managed by two widows, Mrs. Sarah T. Ingall and her mother, Mrs. Rebecca Taylor. Mrs. Ingall owned two orchards: a 12- acre orchard on Cherry Avenue and a smaller orchard of four and a half acres on Hicks. They cultivated cherries, apricots, and prunes, realizing $5,000 from their crops in 1887. Like her neighbors, Mrs. Ingall also built a drying shed capable of processing more than four tons of fruit a day.

The orchard industry of Sylvester Newhall is another typical Willow Glen fruit business outlined in *Sunshine, Fruit and Flowers.* Newhall was a grower and nurseryman who built his home near Lincoln Avenue on a 10-acre parcel that later became the Palm Haven subdivision.

"Nothing more directly reflects the wealth or poverty of any locality than the character of its residences. Handsome and commodious

Mrs. Sarah T. Ingall bought a beautiful little orchard in 1875 and developed it into a comfortable country place with a good income for her young son and widowed mother.



Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World

homes indicate wealth and taste upon the part of the owners. For this reason, particularly, in this publication, attention has been given to residences, urban and suburban. One of the representative orchard homes shown is the residence of Sylvester Newhall, on Lincoln Avenue, just south of Los Gatos Creek.

Mr. Newhall was one of our pioneer nurserymen. He naturally engaged in fruit-growing, and now owns seven orchards, aggregating over two hundred acres, prunes being the principal crop. Of these he raised and dried over four hundred tons last year. He also raises cherries, peaches, pears and apples, all of which in the Willows section are particularly profitable. Mr. Newhall has been a resident of the county thirty-nine years, and he has done as much as anyone to develop the horticultural interests of the county and the State."

Toward the 1880's and 1890's the Willows area was particularly attractive to investors who liked to experiment with horticulture. Dr. J. P. Dudley's farm on the Almaden Road, south of San Jose, is mentioned as an example. According to the history books, "Dr. Dudley has a beautiful place of 140 acres. Here he practices experimental agriculture and horticulture. He is the manufacturer of a health tonic known as Dr. Dudley's Condensed Grape Must."

But other farmers were more traditional.

"One of the most attractive orchards in the Willows is that owned by O. M. Boyle. Situated as it is in the heart of the prune belt of this valley, his returns from his forty-acre tract are simply marvelous. Mr.

Not all grape growers made wine. Dr. J. P. Dudley bottled a "healthful elixir" from processing grape must.

Sourisseau Academy

Boyle conducts his business upon scientific principles and one can see upon his model orchard what results can be attained by strict attention to the smallest details. A practical horticulturist, he is ever on the alert for enemies of the orchard. A drive through his place is a revelation, even to old-time fruit growers. In connection with his orchard he has a drier with a capacity for handling some seven tons of fruit, beside that which he raises.

Mr. Boyle takes the safe middle ground in most questions upon which there is a radical difference of opinion among fruit men, such as pruning, irrigating, spraying, etc. He has no less than three or four sources open to him by which, in dry seasons, he can cover his land with water. Bounded on the east by the Guadalupe Creek, his orchard is rich in deep alluvial soil and his prunes are richer in saccharine matter than is found even in our favored valley. Mr. Boyle, a lifelong newspaperman, seems to be happy and contented in his new sphere, and well he may be, for truly his is one of the show places of the Garden of Eden."

The Fourth Ward and the Willow Glen Railway

In the early days of San Jose, the Willow Glen area was called the Fourth Ward. The City had been divided into four quarters called wards or fire districts in 1853. The intersection of Santa Clara and Market streets formed the four corners. Willow Glen and the neighborhoods in the southwest quadrant were known as the Fourth Ward. The Fourth Ward included the neighborhoods along east Willow Street now known as the Goosetown area. The cannery area to the north of Willow Glen was also part of the Fourth Ward.

The Market Street & Willow Glen Railway was incorporated in February 1876 to serve the little Willow Glen community. Downtown San Jose already had a little horse car railway, running down Santa Clara Street and then along The Alameda to the Santa Clara Mission. But residents of Willow Glen wanted to be able to get to town for shopping and banking, too.

Wealthy Willow Glen farmers were prominent investors in this new little railway line. Calvert and Isaac Bird and John Auzerais were early investors. Others were Oliver Cottle, Sylvester Newhall, John C. Bland, Thaddeus Warsaw Spring, James R. Lowe, Rufus C. Swan, and Charles B. Hensley.

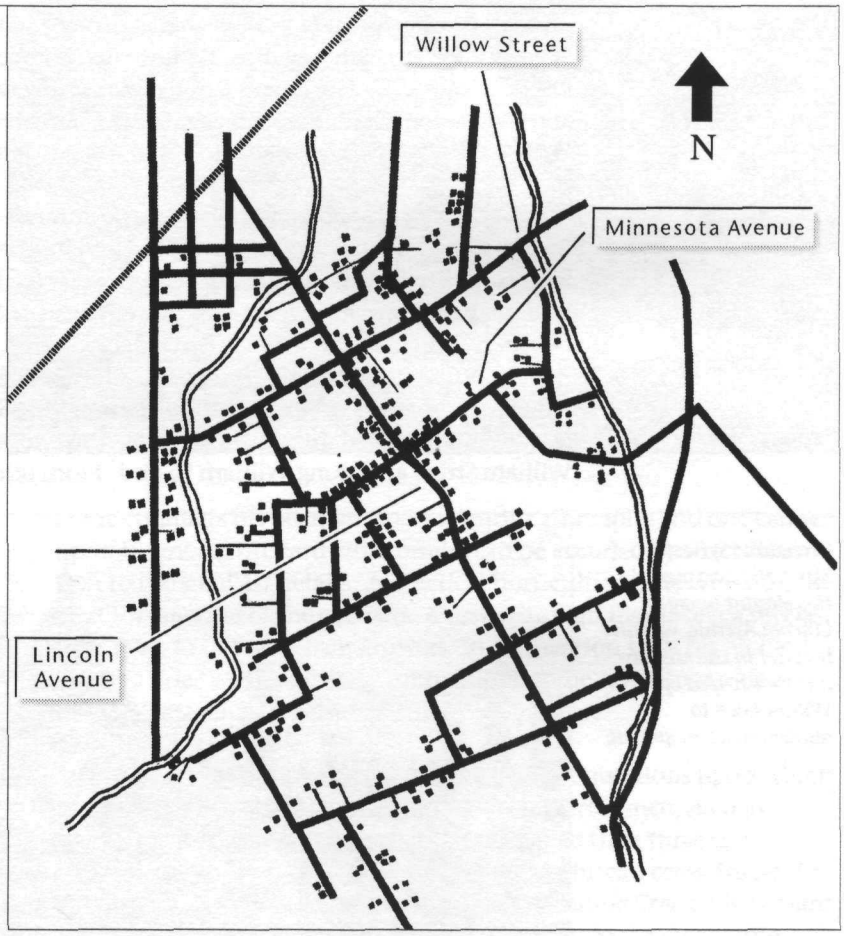
According to historian Clyde Arbuckle, the Willow Glen horse cars ran along Market Street to San Fernando, then to Vine Street and over to San Salvador (now called Auzerais) and across the bridge to Delmas, then to William Street and along William to Bird. From Bird the railway went all

Orchardist Sylvester Newhall, who owned this elegant home on Lincoln Avenue, was an investor in the railway line that helped open Willow Glen to residential development.

Sunshine, Fruit & Flowers

the way to Willow Street. From Willow the route went down along Lincoln Avenue. The end of the line was the intersection of Lincoln and Minnesota Avenues.

Advent of the railway service had an immediate effect on the property of Willow Glen, raising property values and promoting residential development especially along Bird and Willow Streets. Looking at the maps for 1895 it is easy to see that the houses in Willow Glen are clustered along those two streets, within easy walking distance of the rail line.



This drawing, made from a portion of the 1895 U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey map of the Santa Clara Valley, shows how houses with barns were clustered along three major streets: Willow, Lincoln, and Minnesota.

April Halberstadt

The Willows Reading and Study Club

Friendships are as important as family life. In the days before regular telephone service and the entertainment provided by radio and television, friends took turns amusing each other. Reading aloud in a pleasant voice, singing, and playing a musical instrument were all important social accomplishments and were shared with friends.

Ladies in town had a predetermined day each week set aside for visiting with friends. The society "Blue Book" as it was called, listed them all. So if you wanted to make a visit, you checked your little directory to see which day your friend was planning to be home to meet visitors.

The *Blue Book* for San Jose, printed in 1903, lists only a few Willow Glen ladies who were "in Society." And even fewer have a visiting day listed.

Barnhisel, Mrs. L. Lincoln Avenue, corner Willow
Booksin, Mrs. Henry, Jr. on the Meridian Road, First Wednesdays
Lester, Mrs. Nathan Lincoln Avenue near Cutter
Lewis, Mrs. F. B. A. Lincoln Avenue near Willow
Rucker, Mrs. Joseph corner Lincoln and Pine, First and Third Fridays
Waldo, Mrs. J. A. Bird Avenue

In semi-rural areas such as Willow Glen, visiting friends sometimes required a long buggy ride. So women's clubs were one of the earliest groups formed to provide social company for isolated farm wives. Two of the earliest clubs in California were in Santa Clara Valley; the "We and Our Neighbors" club in the West Valley and the Willows Reading and Study Club in Willow Glen.

Founded before the turn of the century, both clubs were composed exclusively of women. Like their urban sisters, they too had decided to set aside one day each week to socialize and improve their community. Rather than specify a unique "at home" day, these ladies decided that they would all meet on the same day. They brought their sewing, books, music, and refreshments and gathered at someone's porch or parlor.

Formed in 1896, the Willows Reading and Study Club was originally limited to residents from The Willows. Their original charter specifies that members live within a mile of the intersection of Willow and Bird streets. This requirement was later amended to Willow and Lincoln. The membership was limited to just forty women.

The club met every Thursday at 2 p.m. Their charter says they met for "mutual improvement" and to "promote sociability." But the Willows group appreciated serious academic accomplishment, and members would take turns writing and reading papers on important subjects. Many members were highly educated and widely traveled. Some, like Agnes

Howe and Frances Fox, were noted educators of significant regional and national importance.

So in addition to reading and discussing books, members heard papers on various subjects. A subject such as the paper prepared by Agnes Howe on "Publicly-Owned Water Power versus Privately Owned Water Power" might be discussed. Guest speakers, such as Mrs. Lucy McClintic, were invited to speak; she shared her expertise on the subject of "unemployment." The information and ideas discussed at these weekly gatherings provided intellectual stimulation. The thoughtful ladies of the Willows Reading and Study Club and similar groups have had a far-reaching influence on both their families and their community.

Business at the Turn of the Century

The Willow Glen of 1900 had a few nonresidential buildings clustered near the intersection of Minnesota and Lincoln Avenues. Known as major thoroughfares that were maintained by the County, this important intersection was known as "The Corners." The new Willow Glen Elementary School now occupied one corner; it was completed in 1897. The remaining three corners were still dominated by large Victorian farm houses: the Miles Hills house on the northwest corner, Mrs. Colton's home across the street on the northeast, and one of the Cottle ranches on the third.

The grocery store and post office were just around the corner on Minnesota, but it was soon moved to a Lincoln Avenue address. There were fruit dryers and processing companies in several locations, although the sheds of the commercial fruit exchanges were just north of the Creek. It is easy to think of Lincoln Avenue as a somewhat rural lane, but during the fruit harvesting season, dozens of heavy wagons and trucks loaded with prunes, pears, and apricots headed north along Lincoln on their way to the rail head.

Blossom time in Santa Clara Valley—it was a sight that hundreds of tourists flocked to see. The most productive fruit orchards in California would all be gone by the 1960's, replaced by residences. Fruit wagons would be replaced by station wagons. Today the most predominant crop in Willow Glen is children. It is also still one of the most beautiful areas in California.

Chapter 3
The Village Becomes a City

The vote to incorporate the village of Willow Glen took place in 1927. Even though the vote is now beyond the memory of most residents, the vote remains as a defining moment in Willow Glen life. It was the moment when Willow Glen formally proclaimed the identity of the community. It was that crystal moment when it was clear to everyone that Willow Glen was not a suburb of San Jose. It took a crisis with the railroad to bring the community together, but the crisis became the opportunity to declare independence. It is a mentality that remains today. Willow Glen residents are loyal to their neighborhood; identification with the City of San Jose is frequently in second place.

It is difficult for us to understand the mixed feelings that the Willow Glen community once held concerning the powerful Southern Pacific Railroad. In Santa Clara County, the railroad was originally seen as an important asset to the entire area. Its appearance was eagerly awaited when it first arrived in San Jose in 1864. Produce from Willow Glen went to feed San Francisco via the railroad, several times a day.

But over the years the railroad became less respected even as its importance to the local community increased. The railroad became enormously wealthy and increasingly heedless about local concerns. Since the overwhelming business of the Valley was fruit production and the railroad was the only way to ship the fruit to eastern markets, Southern Pacific held a virtual monopoly on shipping. In 1917, shipping tariffs eased somewhat when the Western Pacific Railroad finally made is appearance in San Jose. The Western Pacific quickly began competing with the Southern Pacific for the fruit packers' business.

The address books of many Willow Glen fruit dryers also list a third railroad. The George N. Herbert Company is listed in the city directory at "Lincoln av corner Narrow Gauge." Near Willow Glen, in that area just north of what is now Interstate 280, a number of fruit packers had built large processing plants and warehouses. These companies were served by a narrow gauge railroad system known as the Pacific Coast Railroad. It was the Pacific Coast Railroad that first brought fruit down from the orchards in the Santa Cruz foothills to packing houses in north Willow Glen.

San Jose residents were very familiar with the disadvantages of living near active railroad lines. The Southern Pacific route went through the middle of downtown San Jose, down South Fourth Street, belching soot and ashes, and tying up traffic four times a day. Once seen as a benefit to

the community, all of the railroads were now part of a curious love-hate relationship. The tangle created by the railroad lines and warehouses in the Sunol-Stockton Street area, the dirt, noise, and the congestion, were not wanted in beautiful, serene, Willow Glen.

Thoughts of Incorporation

The thought of municipal incorporation for the village of Willow Glen was not a new idea. The San Jose newspapers first reported in 1891 that local residents were talking about incorporation. Debate became more serious when a petition for an election was filed with the county Board of Supervisors on October 15, 1917. The petition stated that the "Town of Willow Glen" had 1,276 inhabitants. But although this early effort went to the petition stage, it did not result in a vote for incorporation.

The incorporation issue surfaced once again when the Southern Pacific Railroad announced plans to realign their trackage, a project that would have cut through the middle of Willow Glen from Coe Avenue to Almaden Road. The city limits of San Jose ended near Bird Avenue and nearly all of the Willow Glen community was within the unincorporated area in Santa Clara County. The railroads could establish routes in unincorporated areas without community consultation.

Residents became quite vocal about the railroad proposal. The influential residents of the new Palm Haven tract were among the loudest. Palm Haven had been annexed to the City of San Jose in 1922; residents were not willing to have their beautiful neighborhood or their expensive homes threatened by a dirty, noisy, railroad. The Save the Willows Committee was formed to work on the issue.

Incorporation of Willows Carries; Vote 686 to 364

San Jose Mercury News

A headline on the front page of the Mercury announced the formation of the City of Willow Glen.

Incorporation to become a city occurred on September 8, 1927, with a vote of 686 to 364, to prevent the railroad from establishing a route through the community without first making a formal request to the town council. Willow Glen was classified as a sixth-class city under California statutes, the smallest classification allowed. The railroad fought back with a case that eventually went to the United States Supreme Court, but the little town prevailed.

The City of Willow Glen was somewhat short-lived, in existence for only nine years. But the experience established a special bond among members of the local community. Fifteen community members were nominated to serve on the new Willow Glen Council; five would be chosen. The elected members of the first Willow Glen City Council included Paul F. Clark as mayor, with Joseph Hageman, Dr. Roscoe A. Whiffen, Albertus R. Webster, and Louis C. Rossi as council members.

Mayor Paul Clark was a successful attorney and noted politician from the Nebraska legislature who had retired to the Willow Glen area in 1914. He built his home on Minnesota just south of Lincoln Avenue. His friend

MAYOR
PAUL F. CLARK

CLERK
DANA THOMAS

TREASURER
CHAS. J. CLARK

CITY OF WILLOW GLEN

OFFICE OF CLERK
1151 SETTLE AVENUE

COUNCILMEN
PAUL F. CLARK
JOS. HAGEMAN
L. C. ROSSI
A. R. WEBSTER
R. A. WHIFFEN

July - 10 - 1928

To the Honorable
Board of Supervisors
Santa Clara County

This is to inform you that the City Council of Willow Glen at their last regular session endorsed by resolution the suggestion plan - which you will find enclosed relative to changes in present basis of values for assessment of property in Santa Clara County -

Yours very sincerely
Dana Thomas
Clerk

This letter to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors from the City of Willow Glen details the city council's action on a matter involving property assessments in the County.

and former law partner, Charles S. Allen, also retired to San Jose the same year, building a home in the new Palm Haven subdivision. This talented duo were certainly a match for the legal challenges posed by the railroad and the railroad's local attorney. There can be no doubt that their important contributions had a profound impact on the viability and vitality of the city.

The actual boundaries of the City of Willow Glen were debated, of course, but the final line was heavily influenced by topology—the creeks had won again. On the west, the boundary was the old channel of Los Gatos Creek. The northern boundary was Coe Avenue and the city limits of San Jose. On the east the Guadalupe River defined the border; the southern line was Malone Road.

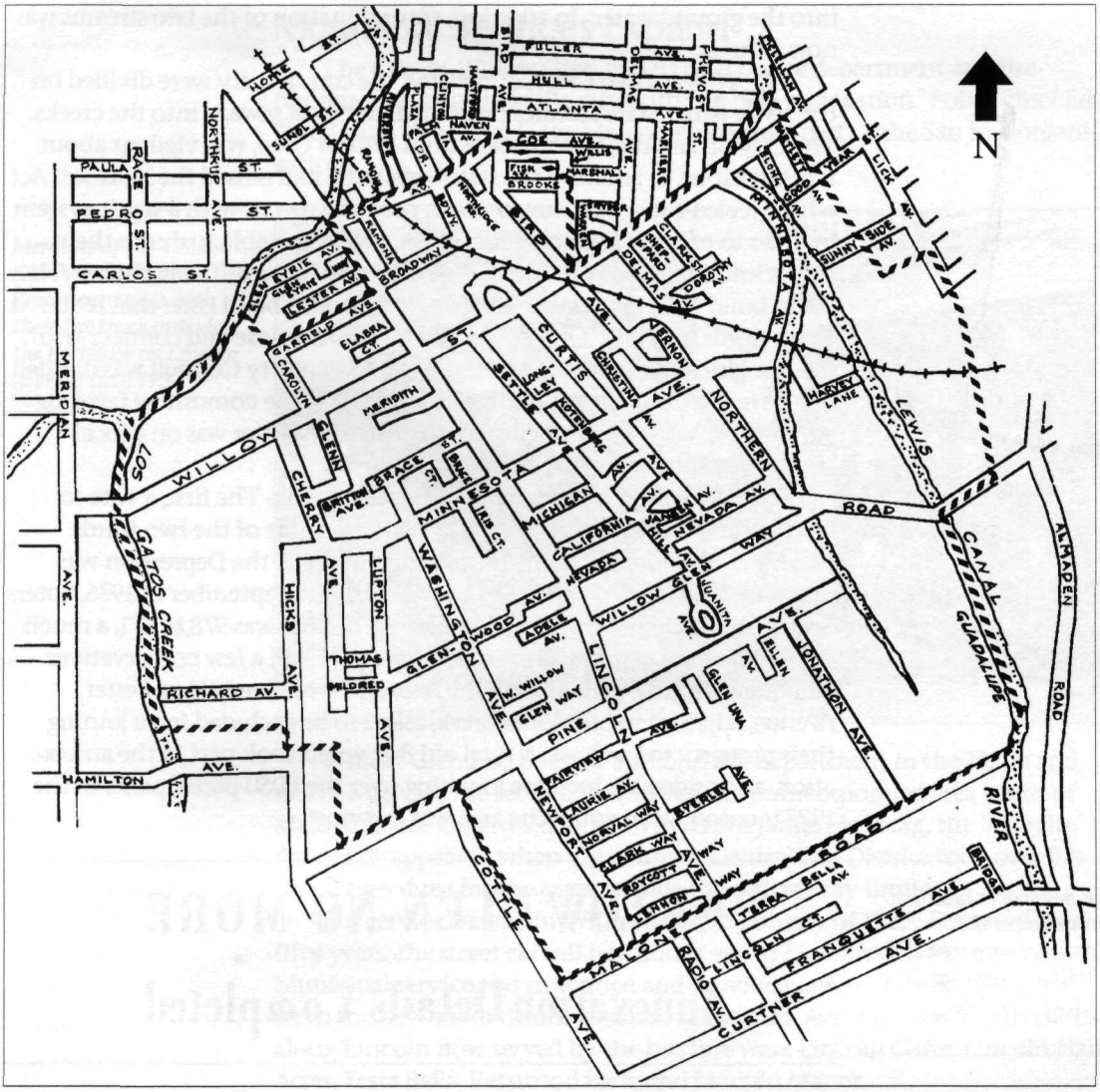
There were a few jogs in the boundaries, due to the independent natures of some opinionated individuals. The little neighborhood next to Los Gatos Creek on Glen Eyrie and Lester Avenue was not in the city. Neither was the land southwest of the intersection of Pine and Cottle. But the little tract fronting Lelong Avenue asked to be included, even though it was on the other side of the Guadalupe River. When the lines were finally drawn, the title on the map said, "City of Willow Glen, Incorporated," 1927; population, 3,293.

Records show that the debate over incorporation did not end with the election. After the immediate threat of bisection by the railroad had passed, highly independent individuals in the Willow Glen community proposed to "disincorporate." Two years later there was another annexation proposal, this time to merge Willow Glen with the little village of Robertsville, located a bit farther south. This proposal never resulted in an annexation.

Willow Glen residents remained very interested and opinionated about local land use within their city. There were constant discussions, squabbles, and debates as new little residential subdivisions within Willow Glen were built. There was the problem of the sewers that caused a good deal of comment and argument. It was the sewer issue that finally forced Willow Glen to forsake its independence and join the City of San Jose.

The first bid to consolidate with San Jose to resolve the sewer question came in March, 1930. But the national economy was in turmoil and Willow Glen residents were not ready to make any major changes. A ballot measure for disbanding the City of Willow Glen was put to the vote in September of 1931 and was defeated, 807 to 653 votes.

Paul Clark served as mayor until his death in 1931. Then councilman Joseph Hageman took office. He was followed by Dr. Roscoe A. Whiffen, a local physician who had also served on the Willow Glen City Council. The last mayor was William B. Puterbaugh, owner of the San Jose Dental Lab. Puterbaugh was the mayor who formally transferred Willow Glen to the City of San Jose.



Nancy Newlin/Craig Mineweaser

The broken line on this map shows the Willow Glen City limits, probably in the early 1930's. The Palm Haven area, north of Coe, was already part of the City of San Jose.

Annexing to San Jose

Willow Glen fell victim to its own popularity as a residential area. Increased population brought sewage problems and by the late 1920's there were consistent indications that a real sewer system was needed. New houses were built with individual septic tanks and it was apparent that this was not going to continue to be an acceptable solution. Willow Glen continued to have a very high water table and effluent was leaching

into the ground water. In addition, contamination of the two streams was now a threat.

The Willow Glen City Council and the community were divided on the sewer issue. State statutes precluded dumping sewage into the creeks. The City of San Jose, downstream from Willow Glen, was vigilant about transgressions. In addition the state legislature had passed the Mattoon Act which levied a special surtax on each property owner with a septic system in order to provide financing for sewers. No longer able to dump their drains into Los Gatos Creek, the little city now had a difficult choice. They could build their own sewage treatment system, a bond issue that required a two-thirds majority. Or they could annex to San Jose and connect with the San Jose sewer system. Even the Willow Glen City Council was divided on the issue. Councilman Louis C. Rossi was on the committee favoring annexation, whereas Councilman Albertus R. Webster was on a local committee supporting the bond election.

So Willow Glen held a pair of critical elections. The first, a vote to issue bonds to pay for a new sewer system, fell short of the two-thirds majority. The poor economy during the middle of the Depression was probably a factor. In the second election, held in September of 1936, voters decided to annex to the City of San Jose. The vote was 978 to 871, a much closer race than previous elections. There were still a few conservatives who preferred to be left alone. The residents who lived along Lester Avenue, adjacent to Los Gatos Creek, asked to be excluded from joining their property to San Jose. A total of 1,849 voters took part in the annexation, a considerable increase in voting over the 1,050 participants in the 1927 incorporation vote. The area was growing!

A newspaper headline announces the annexation of the City of Willow Glen into the City of San Jose.

WILLOW GLEN NO MORE

* * * * * *

Annexation Details Completed

San Jose Mercury News

A newspaper article reported that "consolidation with San Jose offers the cheapest and best solution of Willow Glen's vexing sewer problem." There was Works Progress Administration (WPA) federal money available to help connect Willow Glen to San Jose sewers. The newspaper headline on October 2, 1936, proclaimed the end of an era said "Willow Glen No More."

Municipal Services Expand

The City of Willow Glen had its own police department and fire fighters that came into the city with the 1936 annexation. Police chief Ed Pracna and Fire Chief Steve Mascovich became part of the San Jose organizations.

Members of the Willow Glen volunteer fire department pose with their fire truck outside the firehouse on Lincoln Avenue, circa 1932.

Clyde Arbuckle Collection

Willow Glen also boasted a second fire department in the 1920's and 1930's, a private fire service that served the unincorporated area south of Malone Road. Organized by siren inventor James Hedburg, the little fire district disappeared when the county's Central Fire District took over fire protection duty for the areas outside the official city limits.

Bus service arrived in Willow Glen in January of 1929. For more than fifty years, the street car rail terminous was at Lincoln and Minnesota. Municipal service was expanded and provided public transportation to serve the new subdivisions south of Minnesota Avenue. New subdivisions along Lincoln now served by the bus line were Lincoln Gates, Lincoln Half Acres, Terra Bella, Restwood Park, and Lincoln Manor.

New Neighborhoods

The 1920's saw scores of new homes built in Willow Glen. The little city had quickly earned a reputation as a well-managed place to live. People saw Willow Glen as a place that offered all the benefits and amenities of living in town without having to pay city taxes. Even when the city was incorporated, the tax rate was low. In 1932 the comparative rates were $0.77 for Willow Glen and $1.83 in nearby San Jose. One by one, the 10-acre orchards were subdivided into one-acre parcels or smaller subdivisions.

In general, there was a tremendous surge in residential construction during the late teens and the decade of the 1920's. Home building in California, in San Jose, and in Willow Glen followed a national trend. There had been a depression following World War I, but by 1922 the economy was improving.

There seemed to be two types of developers building residences in Willow Glen during this time. The professional realty company would find a contractor or builder, then market and manage the sales and construction of a small subdivision. This type of development was characterized by such businesses as Cooper & Challen Realty and Rucker Realty.

Another developer was an individual contractor who would design, build and sell a few homes at a time. The Wolfe family and Thomas A. Herschbach were some of the best known individual Willow Glen builders. The Herschbach homes included the Lincoln Acres subdivision; Wolfe homes appear throughout Willow Glen. In addition, there were many other small builders and contractors, such as John S. Newell, a contractor and orchardist who built his beautiful family home at 838 Minnesota Avenue in 1927.

Palm Haven

Palm Haven, located north of City of Willow Glen, was one of the most ambitious early residential subdivisions in San Jose. It is a unique development because it was conceived as a complete and landscaped neighborhood, following the pattern of the highly successful Naglee Park and Hanchett Park developments built in San Jose a decade earlier. Palm Haven was technically outside the official city limits of the early City of Willow Glen and was annexed to San Jose. However, even today Palm Haven considers itself closer in spirit to Willow Glen than to downtown San Jose.

The land for the Palm Haven subdivision was acquired from the estate of orchardist Sylvester Newhall, whose famous nursery was on Coe Avenue. Originally platted in February of 1913 by Alfred Eaton and Grace Ryden with Thomas A. Herschbach, the first developers seemed to have difficulty selling home sites in the area. The subdivision was replatted and reorganized in 1916 with banker William Knox Beans and San Jose Abstract & Title Company managers Leonard P. Edwards and James M. Pitman as developers.

James Pitman moved from downtown Naglee Park to Bird Avenue, perhaps to supervise his new project. Pitman acquired a unique Willow Glen home nearby, designed by Frank D. Wolfe, at the corner of Bird and Brooks avenues. In addition to developing residential real estate, Mr. Pitman was also an active orchardist and fruit grower. Records in 1909 show him as secretary of the Grand View Heights Citrus Company and owner of 1700 acres of citrus in Tulare County.

This ad for Palm Haven described all the benefits of building in such a unique subdivision.

San Jose Mercury News

Perhaps the sewer problem proved to be a deterrent to development. Perhaps it was the economic and social climate of World War I and the economic depression that followed. Construction of custom-built homes in Palm Haven was extremely slow; only eight houses were built by 1917. But the pace seemed to increase after the Palm Haven neighborhood officially entered the City of San Jose in 1922. Palm Haven was then connected to the municipal sewer system. By 1925 there were 50 highly individual homes in the neighborhood, each custom designed for the owner. There was eventually a total of approximately 165 homes in this unique subdivision.

Palm Haven residents were as unique as their homes and as community-oriented as their neighboring City of Willow Glen. In early 1918, Palm Haven residents formed the Palm Haven Tract Association, a non-profit group with a board of directors, which collected an annual fee from each household to maintain the park in the middle of Palm Drive. The association lasted until early 1935.

The houses of the first Palm Haven residents set the example for subsequent neighbors. One of the most interesting houses is also one of the earliest, the home at 901 Plaza Drive designed by Frank D. Wolfe for retired attorney Charles S. Allen. Allen was a law partner of Paul F. Clark, who became the first mayor of the City of Willow Glen. Allen served for many years as the president of the San Jose school board.

Another early home was built at 685 Palm Haven Avenue for James G. Shontz. Developer and real estate financier Thomas A. Herschbach also built an early Palm Haven house on Plaza Drive, but soon moved to live closer to the rest of his family on Cherry Avenue. Three other early homes, built before 1917, were on Clintonia Avenue, Hartford Avenue, and on Plaza Drive.

A spectacular early house at 940 Plaza Drive was the home of attorney Lewis Dan Bohnett. Born in nearby Campbell, Bohnett attended local schools and the University of California. Bohnett served as Deputy County Clerk until he was elected to the California legislature in 1908, serving several terms. Bohnett was a State Assemblyman representing the 56th District, and a partner in the firm of Bohnett, Hill, and Campbell.

Architect Frank D. Wolfe and his brother Ernest Linwood (Lynn) Wolfe lived in Palm Haven for several years. Consistent with their customary practice of living in the homes they built for several years, Frank lived in a Colonial revival style house at 925 Plaza Drive, and his brother Lynn lived in a stucco bungalow at 911 Clintonia.

North Willow Glen Annexed

The population of Santa Clara County grew rapidly, within both urban and rural areas. The City of San Jose itself grew by leaps, bounds, and annexation. For more than 60 years, the city of San Jose had covered

only a small area, roughly between Taylor and Keyes streets and the two major waterways, the Guadalupe River and Coyote Creek. Then the little town known as East San Jose was added to the City in 1911.

Starting in the early 1920's, a number of annexations took place at the request of the residents, many of them from areas on the south side of town. The little village of Willow Glen first began to think about being included. The Palm Haven neighborhood became part of the City of San Jose on August 31, 1922. The Stockton Avenue cannery district that served many Willow Glen orchardists was annexed in the 1920's.

The Hester-Hanchett neighborhood and College Park areas also requested annexation in the 1920's. When Willow Glen was finally added to the City it was just one of many rural areas included in the city limits. By 1938, the newspaper reported a total of eleven annexations with several more neighborhoods already petitioning for addition. The incentive to annex had been provided by the requirement to build sewers.. or the fear of being taxed for them.

Willow Glen residents along Carolyn Avenue, that group of rugged individuals that first resisted joining any town, asked to be added to Willow Glen in August of 1932. The Blewett Avenue neighbors between Willow and Minnesota streets joined the little City of Willow Glen earlier in the same year.

Although most of Willow Glen area joined San Jose in 1936 when the city was officially annexed, there were still a few sections in some neighborhoods that were not included. These areas considered themselves part of the greater Willow Glen area but were not within the legal boundaries of the City of Willow Glen. Then in 1938, the 30 acres next to Los Gatos Creek was added to San Jose. The neighborhood bounded by Lincoln, Garfield, and Carolyn avenues and Los Gatos Creek also asked to be connected to the new sewer system.

The Willows, a small area south of Willow Glen, submitted their petition for annexation in November of 1938. This tiny neighborhood was next to Highway 101, bounded by Foxworthy, Dry Creek, and New Jersey avenues. The Willow Glen area came into the City of San Jose in several parcels, annexations voted in by the local residents. In 1952 the 15 acres between Curtner, Booksin, the San Jose City limit, and Willow Glen District #10 were added.

Residential Subdivisions

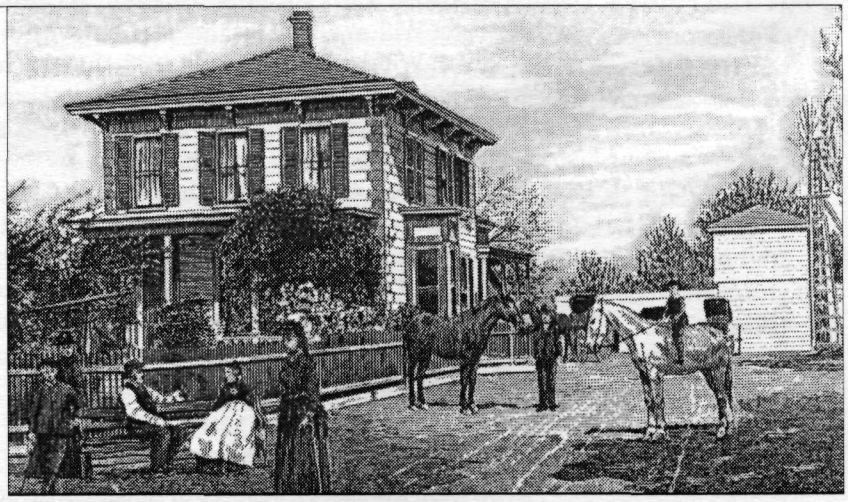
In general, the first great surge of house construction in Willow Glen took place during the 15 or so years between World War I and the Great Depression of the 1930's. There had been some residential subdivision after the turn of the century. The small farms with orchards of five and ten acres were not economical and were competing with large growers. So, one by one, smaller farms were subdivided, some sold as individual lots by owners and others sold to real estate professionals for development.

The first subdivisions divided the land from large orchards into small orchards. As many of the pioneer orchardists from the Gold Rush days passed away, their estates were divided into 10- and 20- acre parcels. The 200-acre Curtner tract on Curtner Avenue adjacent to the Guadalupe River, was divided in 1880. The Leigh family tract was divided in 1882. The Kirk brothers, Theophilus and Socrates, divided most of their tract into 10- and 20-acre parcels in 1890. Then the 10-acre orchard parcels were broken down to even smaller areas, just for residences.

One of the first little orchard areas opened for development was the Hervey Homestead, once part of the Pueblo lands. Showing one acre lots along both sides of Hervey Street, lots in the little tract between Minnesota and the Guadalupe River were available in 1906. The 10-acre area was originally acquired from the pueblo by H. M. Hervey, a '49er who settled in San Jose in 1852. Like most of his neighbors, the history books list his occupation an "orchardist". But the Hervey homestead was not completely sold to residential builders. In 1933 the Hervey family sold a substantial portion to George Arata who moved his Arata Dairy to Hervey Street.

The Oliver Boulieu estate let the Rucker Realty subdivide some of their acreage on the northwest corner of Pine and Lincoln in 1903. This desirable intersection was on two roads that were maintained by the county. The subdivision map shows a three acre chicken ranch, surrounded by smaller one and two acre lots.

Once one of the largest orchard acreage in Willow Glen, the desirable Boulieu estate between Minnesota and Pine was all subdivided before 1920.



Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World

The cherry orchards of western Willow Glen also began to disappear after the turn of the century. Cherryhurst was opened for development in 1909. J. K. Boulware of the real estate firm of Case, Short & Ryan opened the land on Minnesota for builders with residential lots from Hicks to Washington Avenue. Washington Avenue's name was changed to Newport

in 1963. Perhaps the change was meant to end the confusion with Washington Street in downtown San Jose. Cherry Park was developed more than a decade later. Subdivision maps filed by owner Cesare Breschini dedicated Cherry Avenue and opened 30 more lots to Hicks Avenue in 1923.

The Heart of the Willows subdivision was developed by John Lester who filed his subdivision maps in April, 1913. This early subdivision includes 48 lots which front on Pine Avenue along Jonathon Avenue.

Terra Bella subdivision was developed by Cooper & Challen Realty, Victor Challen was the salesman. Lincoln Gates was a restricted residential tract on the west side of Lincoln Avenue, developed by Rucker Realty starting in 1927. Located near Malone Road behind the school site, it was a highly desirable location. Builder W. L. Atkinson was responsible for the design and development of Lincoln Manor.

This early photo of Brace Avenue shows the rural conditions that early Willow Glen subdivision owners had to contend with. The two houses on the left, 1144 and 1148 Brace Avenue, are still standing. Others have been replaced with apartment buildings.

Crothers Realty developed housing on both sides of Lincoln between Pine and Curtner avenues They also developed the 67 acres of the original Lester home and orchard near Los Gatos Creek, marketing the neighborhood as South Lincoln Park. Thomas A. Herschbach is credited with developing and building a number of subdivision including Lincoln Residence Park at Lincoln and California, the homes on Willow Glen Way, and the neighborhood around Telfer Avenue.

Salvador P. Cristina, along with his wife Annie and his son Tony are shown as the owners of the little tract that was built on both sides of Richard Avenue. Once part of the Narvaez Rancho, the 30 lots on both sides of the street are known as Cristina No. 1, subdivided for development in December of 1920.

The greatest period of home construction in the Willow Glen area was between the years of 1900 and 1930. There was a slow period during a national economic downturn just after World War I, but residential building increased again in the early 1920's. Construction came nearly to a standstill during the Great Depression of the 1930's, although a few builders continued to construct small cottages.

Mansions, Farm Houses, Cottages, and Bungalows

Older houses are always source of interest and delight because they provide so much information about a community and its early residents. Houses are the ultimate cultural artifact, giving us historical information about the owner, the builder, the neighborhood, and the community, all at a glance.

Because most of Willow Glen has always been a residential community with single-family zoning, many of its early farm houses and unique homes still exist. Most structures built before 1920 were built of redwood or Douglas fir, and since the climate in the Valley is so mild, the house have resisted weathering, insects, and rot.

Nancy Newlin

The Maynard House, at 1151 Minnesota Avenue, is one of Willow Glen's most spectacular houses. It was built in 1892, reportedly as an engagement present.

Early Willow Glen houses from the orchard days show architectural styles similar to other farm houses across America. Built by local craftsmen from pattern books, they echo the popular trends across the American landscape. In Willow Glen there is a wide range of Victorian-era buildings, from the simple, vernacular cottage known as the Wells House at 1185 Pine, to the glorious, elaborate, late Victorian Queen Anne style

Maynard House at 1151 Minnesota. The Maynard House is the most spectacular pattern book house built in Willow Glen. It was built in 1892 from the designs of George F. Barber & Co. of Knoxville, Tennessee.

Strictly speaking, Victorian architecture includes several styles of building constructed during the reign of Queen Victoria of England. Victoria enjoyed a long and glorious reign from 1837 to 1901, a time when there was a tremendous interest in invention and domestic improvements. Milled lumber and manufactured nails, introduced about the time that Victoria ascended the throne, made it possible to build spectacular houses. Victorian era residences flourished in California due to the availability of building materials and the relative prosperity of the residents.

Willow Glen has a representative selection of the popular Victorian styles from every decade, most in wonderful condition due to the use of redwood for construction lumber. The various styles built during the Victorian years are known as Italianate, Stick style, Gothic, Second Empire, and Queen Anne.

The Kirk-Farrington house at 1615 Dry Creek Road is an Italianate style Victorian built in 1878; the William Cozzens house at 1195 Minnesota is a wonderful example of Victorian Stick style built around the same time. Compare these two houses with still another Victorian, built a generation later. The Maynard House, a late Victorian era structure built in 1892 is frequently described as a Queen Anne Victorian because it includes features such as a round tower and decorative shingles.

Architecture at the Turn of the Century

By the 1890's, people were tiring of the fussy Victorian styles and a new order of house design became popular. This style was much more suited to the climate and the patterns of living in the Valley, a style that featured large, comfortable porches, and garden views. The San Francisco Bay area was a magnet to newly trained architects from the famous Beaux Arts in Paris.

Architects in Santa Clara County were already looking ahead when a long article on local architecture was published in the San Jose *Daily Mercury*, January 1, 1892. Written by local architect Francis W. Reid, the article clearly states that old fussy styles are "being rapidly replaced by buildings characterized by stricter adherence to architectural principles." He notes with gratitude that "in this county, quaintness and oddity of effect is seldom desired. The extreme types of Old Colonial, Knickerbocker, Queene Anne and Eastlake have few admirers."

Building design was taken over by architects and engineers who had been specifically trained in both architectural esthetics and construction. Although there were many builders and carpenters in California from 1849 who practiced as architects, beginning in 1902 California required architects to be licensed and pass a competency exam.

The Wolfes and the Herschbachs

San Jose had several local architects who were instrumental in developing a new style of architecture, houses that were uniquely suited to the local building materials, the local climate, and the lifestyle of the owners. Willow Glen is extremely fortunate to be the home of two building dynasties, the Wolfes and the Herschbachs. Both families built many Willow Glen residences and both families had several members of their family in the building trades.

The Wolfes

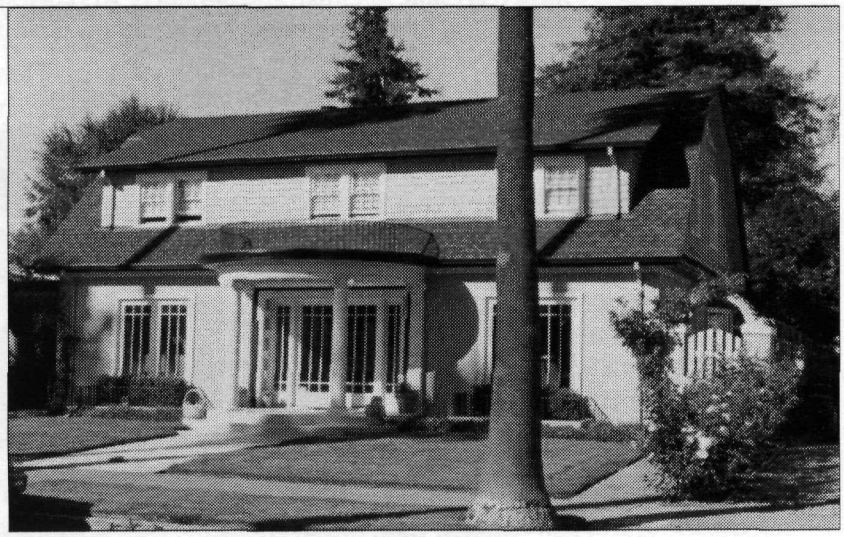
The Wolfe family appears on Bird Avenue in the late 1880's. The family seems to have consisted of builder Jeremiah Wolfe, with his wife, Susan, and three grown children, Frank, Cora, and Ernest Linwood (Lynn). Jeremiah built the family home which was at 1060 Bird Avenue in 1890. It is probable that Jeremiah Wolfe built the nearby Geer house at 795 Coe at about the same time.

Nancy Newlin

The Wolfe family encompassed all building styles. This late Victorian was the Wolfe family home, built in 1892 by Jeremiah Wolfe.

Historian George Espinola relates that Frank D. Wolfe first appears in the 1890 City Directory listed as a builder and contractor. He was about 27 years old and may have worked with architect Joseph O. McKee. By 1895

Wolfe had established his own architectural practice and had designed a number of large buildings in San Jose, including the King Conservatory of Music at 261 North 2nd Street, now known as Germania Hall.



Nancy Newlin

Although architect Frank D. Wolfe is better known for his unique bungalows and prairie style residences, he built homes in a wide range of popular styles. This Colonial Revival style house at 925 Plaza Drive was his personal home in the Palm Haven area.

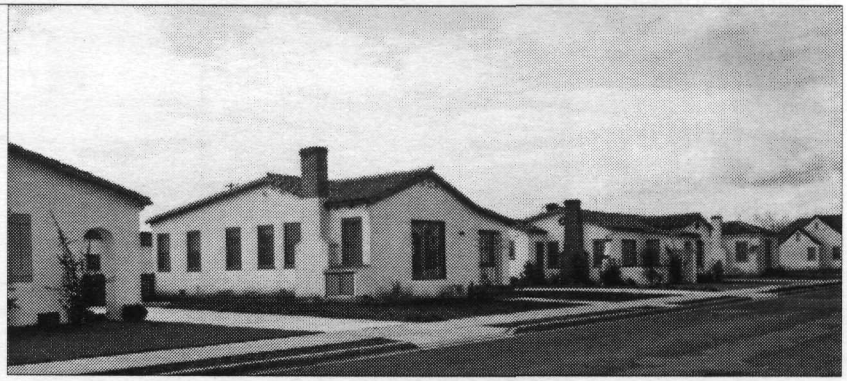
In 1900 Wolfe formed a partnership with Charles McKenzie and together the pair designed dozens of houses in Naglee Park, Hanchett Park and the Willow Glen area. Sometimes Lynn Wolfe would be the builder for houses designed by his brother. A typical collaboration was the house built in 1903 for Arthur Penniman at 650 Willow; it was designed by Frank Wolfe and built by Lynn Wolfe.

Frank Wolfe's son Carl eventually trained as a draftsman and architect, working with his father and uncle. The Wolfe family members were prominent figures in Willow Glen social circles. Cora Wolfe was an active member of the Willows Reading and Study Club and many meetings of the group were held at the Wolfe home on Bird Avenue. According to George Espinola, the Wolfe family was close friends with the Blewett family of Willow Glen, even sharing a fishing retreat in Monterey they called the Blue Wolf. Ruth Blewett was also a member of the Willows Reading and Study Club.

Houses along Bird Avenue that have been built or attributed to the Wolfe family include the family home at 1060 Bird, the William Biggs house (1904) at Bird near Coe, the Wolfe-Pitman house at 595 Brooks (corner Bird and Brooks), and the Emil Buchser house (1931) at 1553 Bird Avenue.

The Herschbachs

The Herschbach family also developed many neighborhoods in Willow Glen during the heyday of construction. Thomas A. Herschbach was a real estate salesman and developer who first worked with the Joseph Rucker Real Estate Company. The Herschbach family home was at 1180 Cherry Avenue. His brother, Robert C. Herschbach, was the builder and contractor and sometimes the two collaborated.



Special Collections, San Jose State University

Thomas Herschbach was a builder with a long and important tradition in Willow Glen. This 1939 photo shows homes on Telfer Avenue that Herschbach built.

Thomas Herschbach is credited with building many fine Willow Glen subdivisions on both sides of Lincoln Avenue between Minnesota and Pine. The houses on Michigan and California, on Willow Glen Way and Searles, were all Herschbach buildings. He is also credited with building the Stone Church of Willow Glen Presbyterian on Clark Way, donating the roof for the church when the congregation's building fund ran out of money.

Notable houses in the Willow Glen area built by Robert C. Herschbach include the James W. Chilton house (1915) at 1050 Bird and his own home at 1532 Newport.

Children of both families sometimes worked in the building trades or in their fathers' office. Albert Herschbach, a carpenter, also built Willow

Nancy Newlin

The Stone Church, at 1108 Clark Way, was built by Thomas Herschbach.

Glen homes. Two other homes associated with members of the Herschbach family are 1097 Nevada and 1163 Mildred.

Willow Glen Styles

Willow Glen offers many kinds of residential architecture, representing a particularly wide range of early 20th century designs. The predominant building type in Willow Glen for the last century has been single-family detached houses. Although there is a special emphasis on cottages and bungalows with a Spanish theme, styles include all representative American designs such as Colonial revival, moderne, Tudor, adobe, and Mediterranean. Homes in Willow Glen reflect all of these styles and this diversity attracts new residents to the neighborhood.

California developed some regional architectural style variations that are worth mentioning, especially since they reflect the use of local building materials such as redwood shingles and local stone. There are many interesting houses in the Santa Clara Valley with unique stucco and tile treatments, the work of local craftsmen. Santa Clara Valley houses are also noted for their porches and the integration of the porch or patio with the garden that immediately surrounds the house. Houses built before 1930 tend to have a generous entryway porch as well as an enclosed sun porch to enjoy the garden during winter months. House built later, especially those ranch style homes built after World War II, have their garden living area in the rear, usually surrounding a patio.

The following stylistic periods in American architecture, classified by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, were adapted from well-known style guides. Some homes in Willow Glen are good examples of these styles.

Significant Era	Architectural Styles	Willow Glen Example
Pueblo Period (1777-1853)	Adobe	Roberto-Suñol Adobe, 770 Lincoln Ave.
Victorian Era (1837-1901)	Italianate	Kirk-Farrington House, 1615 Dry Creek Rd.
	Queen Anne	Maynard House, 1151 Minnesota Ave.
	Stick/Eastlake	Cozzens House, 1195 Minnesota Ave.
	Vernacular	Wells House, 1185 Pine Ave.
Early 20th Century (1900-1930)	Beaux Arts	1535 Lupton Ave.
	Colonial Revival	Richards House, 1550 Hicks Ave.
	Tudor Revival	1710 Lincoln Ave.
	Mission/Spanish Revival	645 Riverside Ave.
Early 20th Century (1900-1930)	Prairie School	Clark House, 1147 Minnesota Ave.
	California Bungalow	1485 Lupton Ave.
Modern (1930-1940)	Moderne	1065 Pine Ave.
	International Style	1104 Willow Glen Way
Post-War Tract 1945	Ranch Style	1322 Britton Ave.
	Eichler	1658 Fairlawn

Chapter 4
Willow Glen Grows Up

It takes more than houses to build a real community. Good neighborhoods are formed by people working together, sometimes to improve the schools, sometimes on community projects, and sometimes meeting just to have fun. Many Willow Glen families have known each other over several generations, all starting out at Willow Glen Elementary School. Willow Glen's dynamic community life was created, supported, and maintained by several of its important social institutions. Schools and churches, retail shops and services, libraries and parks are all important parts of Willow Glen's wonderful heritage.

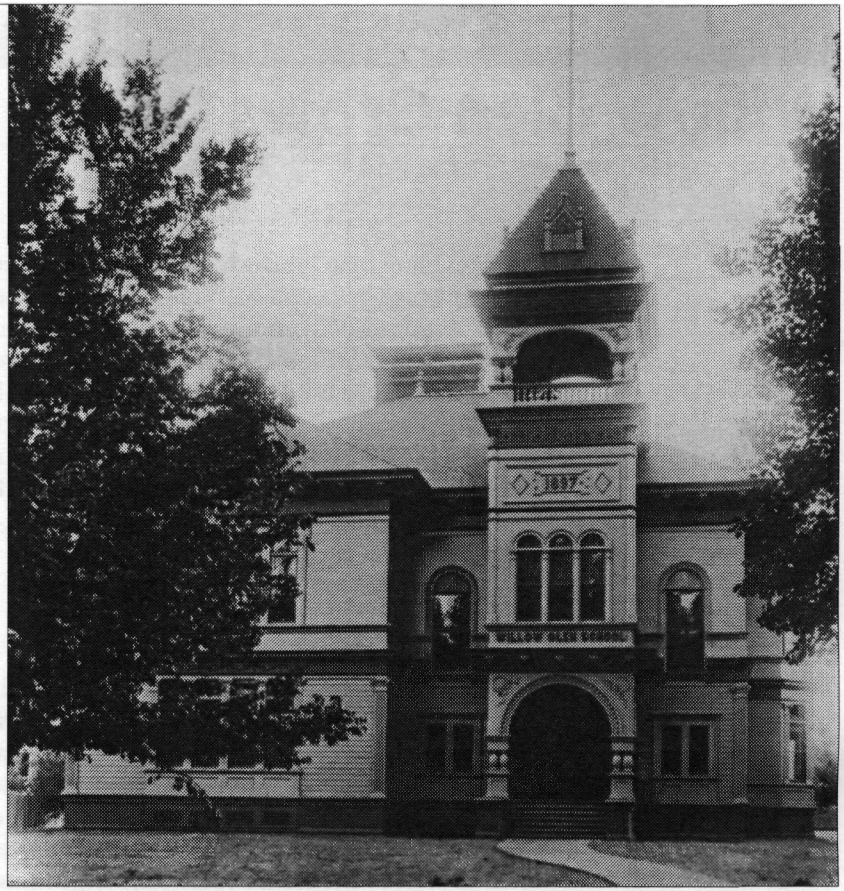
Schools are a Good Start: Willow Glen Elementary School and Others

The Willow Glen Elementary School is probably the earliest and most important institution in Willow Glen. Some historians say that the actual name of Willow Glen first came into use when the school was first organized in 1863. The Willow Glen School, as it was then known, was at the corner of Malone and Lincoln avenues on land donated by pioneer farmer Royal Cottle. The school building was moved closer to the middle of town in 1897, to the corner of Lincoln and Minnesota. While the Willow Glen Elementary School building itself has been rebuilt several times, it has remained in the same location for a century.

The schools districts that currently serve neighborhoods in the greater Willow Glen area include San Jose Unified School District, the Cambrian School District, and the Campbell School District. Willow Glen was an independent County school until the city of Willow Glen was annexed in the 1930's; then the elementary school became part of the San Jose school district.

The center of educational life in Willow Glen for a century was the impressive Willow Glen Elementary School structure at the corner of Minnesota and Lincoln. The building housed students from kindergarten through eighth grade. The second elementary school in the community, built in the 1930's, was the River Glen School. But it was a small school with only a half-dozen teachers. Willow Glen Elementary was much larger, a kindergarten through eighth grade program with nearly two dozen teachers and staff. Since it was an independent school for decades before becoming part of the San Jose School District, the site at the corner

The Willow Glen School was the pride of the community in 1897. This is the first school built on the corner af Minnesota and Lincoln. It would be replaced by at least two other schools.



San Jose Historical Museum

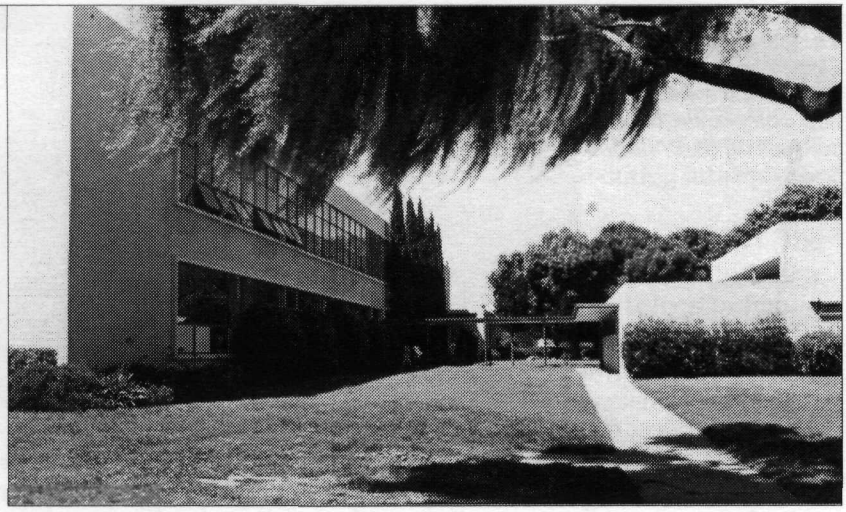
of Lincoln and Minnesota was the location for a number of school facilities. Besides the school a number of auxiliary structures were built at the site including shop buildings and an additional kindergarten.

A new building just for the kindergarten was built on the Willow Glen Elementary site in 1948. It was designed by San Francisco architect Gifford Sobey and was destroyed by fire in 1975. However a modern complex was already in place; an all new Willow Glen Elementary was completed in 1972 although it only had students up to sixth grade.

For many years the Willow Glen community did not have a high school building. The San Jose School District became a Unified School District in 1944, that is, a district with both elementary schools and a high school. Students from the Willow Glen area attended high school in either Campbell or near downtown San Jose.

A Willow Glen High School was first discussed in 1933. But it took years of planning and discussion before Willow Glen actually acquired a high school of its own. The new structure was finally completed in 1950,

The Willow Glen High School at 2001 Cottle Avenue was opened in 1950. Designed by a firm of architects from Los Angeles, the campus is typical of schools with a suburban design.



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and 552 students showed up when it opened its doors. Herman R. Buchser became its principal in 1951, and directed the growth and development of this important institution for many years.

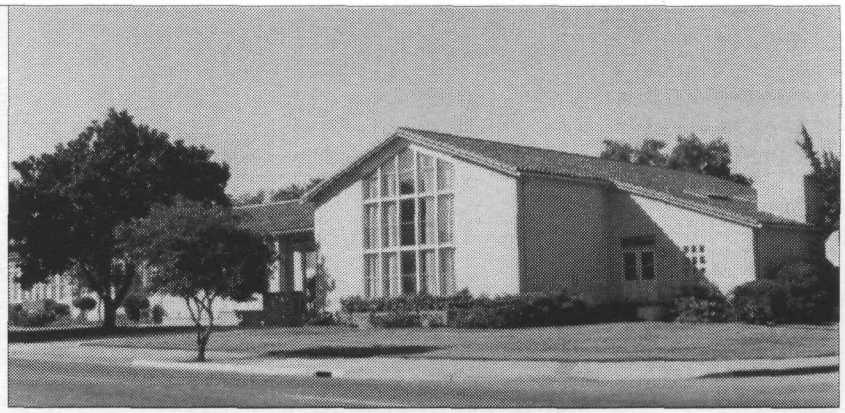
The Willow Glen High School was designed by the Los Angeles architectural firm of Marsh, Smith & Powell. The project took several years to complete and the finishing touches were added in 1958, when noted California landscape architect Douglas Bayliss was hired to design the grounds. Broadway Elementary School on Broadway near Lincoln was one of the first new elementary schools, completed in 1947 and designed by Franklin, Kump and Falk of San Francisco. It is now a Continuation School.

In the small city of Willow Glen, these were the schools that nearly all children attended for generations. Willow Glen Elementary School was originally the focus for the community for nearly ninety years, until additional schools were added in the 1950's. As the Willow Glen neighborhoods expanded, more classrooms and more facilities appeared at that corner site.

By the late 1940's it was very apparent that the Willow Glen area was in great need of new school facilities. Building of any kind had been nearly nonexistent during the Depression years of the 1930's and then through the World War II years of the early 1940's. School construction was in great demand. Along with an impressive new high school and a new junior high school, complete with swimming pool, sports fields and other amenities, a number of elementary schools were also built.

Several more Willow Glen elementary schools appeared in the building boom of the 1950's. A new River Glen Elementary School was designed by a San Jose architectural firm, Higgins & Root, completed in 1955. Both Booksin and Schallenberger were designed in 1954 by Kress, Goudie and Kress.

The former Lincoln Glen Elementary School, at 2175 Lincoln Avenue, is now a community center and home of the Willows Senior Center.



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The San Jose Unified School District made some major readjustments in the 1970's, closing a total of nine schools and rebuilding others. Several elementary schools were completely rebuilt including Hester, Trace, Lowell, and the Willow Glen Elementary schools.

The Lincoln Glen School on Lincoln Avenue, and the Kirk Elementary School at 1601 Foxworthy were declared to be surplus. They were sold to the City of San Jose in 1983 for use as community centers. The sale was controversial; a condominium development was planned for the Lincoln Glen School. The City acquired the properties under provisions of the Naylor Bill, a statute which allows other governmental jurisdictions to have priority when public facilities are surplus.

Today there are eight public schools operated by the San Jose Unified School District in the Willow Glen area. There are five elementary schools; Booksin, Gardner, River Glen, Schallenberger and Willow Glen. There is also the Willow Glen High School and Junior High School campus (Markham School) and the Broadway Continuation School.

Where there are schools there are Parent-Teacher groups. One of the most important community groups in Willow Glen for more than a century has been the gathering at Willow Glen Elementary School. More than any other group, these parents have had an enormous influence on traffic safety and community programs, in the school and in the nearby neighborhoods.

St. Christopher's and Presentation High School

The Catholic community in Willow Glen traditionally attended Sacred Heart Church on Willow Street. A growing population needed to be served and a new parish was established with temporary quarters in 1951, worshipping in a cherry shed owned by Joseph Castello at 2350 Lincoln Avenue. Property was acquired at the corner of Curtner and Booksin and a small church was built, but it too served the congregation for only a short time. It is now part of St. Christopher's School.

A new church was designed by architect George Steuer and built at the corner of Curtner and Booksin. The structure was completed and dedicated in 1957 under the direction of pastor Father John Healy. Total cost of the project was $194,000. The first altar for the church came from the Notre Dame Convent in downtown San Jose. It reportedly now rests underneath St. Christopher's, too heavy to be moved during subsequent renovations.

St. Christopher's School is staffed by Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are one of the oldest religious orders in California, arriving in San Francisco in 1850 at the request of the local bishop. Their presence was an important reason for the eventual location of a nearby high school for young women, located behind St. Christopher's on Plummer Avenue. Presentation High School was completed in 1962, the pioneer class of 73 freshmen students entering in October of 1962. About 700 students now attend the school.

The design and engineering for Presentation High School was produced by the San Jose firm of Ruth and Going, Inc. The long, low single story structure sits back from the street and fits in well with the surrounding residential neighborhood. The school has grown over the years but additional facilities have been added at the rear of the site.

Both St. Christopher's and Presentation High School are noted in Willow Glen and throughout San Jose for their commitment to community involvement. The spirit of involvement is heavily encouraged and about a third of the Presentation High School students give their time to some community project. Although both schools are relatively new in the long history of Willow Glen, both are noted for the tremendous strength of their parent-teacher groups.

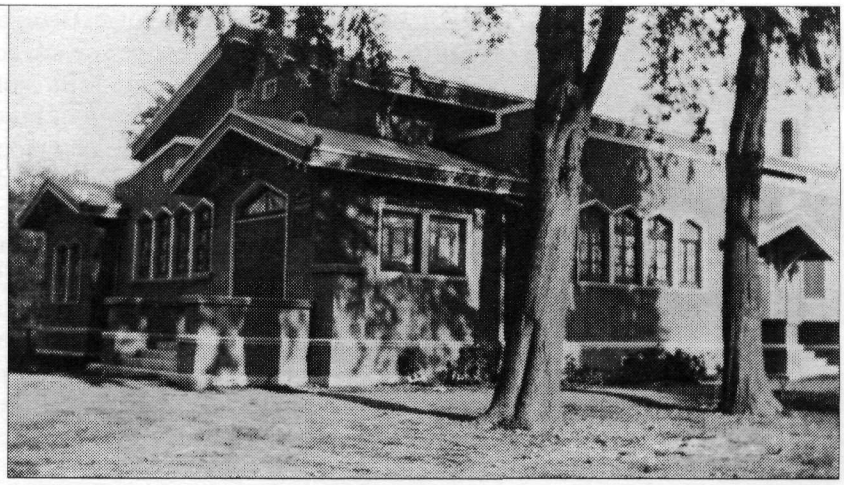
Churches in The Willows

Probably the second most important social institution in Willow Glen was the local Methodist Church. Organized the same year as the Willow Glen elementary school, 1863, it too brought neighbors together on a regular basis for community activities.

The Willow Glen Methodist Episcopal Church, as it was originally known, first came into being as a Sunday school. Started in the 1860's, the little congregation met in the first Willow Glen public schoolhouse on the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Malone Road. By 1870, the congregation had built a small frame structure on Lincoln Avenue on land donated by John Sharpe. Church notes say that local farmers named Lupton, Hicks, and Hamilton helped support the church, for all of them were early members.

The little church struggled for survival. There was no pastor from 1877 to 1892. At one time, around 1897, the church property was even up for sale and the property was vacant for five years. But Mr. Henry French, a

The Willow Glen Methodist Episcopal Church was located on Lincoln Avenue until 1947. The building was designed by notable San Jose architect William Binder.



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member of the congregation, kept the candle glowing. By 1902, Dr. J. H. Wythe of nearby Campbell had revived the Sunday school.

Growth in the surrounding community enlarged the congregation and a new church was planned adjacent to the existing 1870 structure. There were four enormous eucalyptus trees on the site that needed to be cut in order to accommodate a new building. Unfortunately one of them fell across the frame church making it unusable. Although a new building was underway, the congregation had to meet in temporary quarters at the elementary school on Lincoln Ave.

The Methodist congregation moved into its fourth location, a handsome single story stucco structure designed by William Binder in 1914. The reported cost of the church was $6,500 although funds were still needed for additional work. This building at 1164 Lincoln served until 1947, when the church moved around the corner to its existing site at the corner of Minnesota Avenue and Newport. This new church experienced a terrible fire in 1966, but was quickly renovated and refurbished.

The Methodist congregation is the oldest in Willow Glen. In keeping with its traditional community spirit, the building is also a meeting place for nonsectarian activities. The Boy Scouts, the Lion's Club, and others use the church hall for gatherings.

There are at least half a churches in Willow Glen that are tucked quietly away in the middle of residential neighborhoods. This is a peculiar characteristic of land use in Willow Glen, a church in the middle of the block, comfortably accommodated by its residential neighbors. Some of them are congregations with a long history in the area; some are newer. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is on Cherry Avenue, the Reorganized German Church is on Newport Avenue, the Church of Religious Science is on Clark Street and the Lincoln Glen Mennonite Church is on Booksin. These are just a few of the many houses of worship within the neighborhood.

The Stone Church of Willow Glen Presbyterian is on the corner of Clark Way and Lincoln Avenue. Built by Thomas A. Herschbach in 1947, the church is adjacent to a subdivision also developed by Herschbach. It is reported that the building fund of the church was depleted during the construction, so the new roof was donated by Herschbach.

Parks and Open Spaces

The Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek form two long, leafy arms around Willow Glen, sheltering all sorts of birds and small mammals. There are migratory fish in the stream and salmon are frequently seen, trying to swim upstream to the gravel beds near Los Gatos to spawn. Both waterways are now part of the Santa Clara Valley Water District, an agency that manages both water resources and flood control in the valley. The creeks are part of a county-wide water conservation system.

Water resources are a valuable commodity to a farmer. Early Willow Glen orchardists, such as Socrates and Theophilus Kirk, built water diversion ditches to irrigate their orchards. But the valley experienced both wet years and dry years and it soon became apparent that both water conservation and flood control were important considerations. Lewis Dan Bohnett, a Willow Glen attorney and state assemblyman, was a prominent figure in early water conservation legislation.

Creating a district with joint authority came much later. The legislation for the twofold water district was authored in 1951 by John F. Thompson, a State Senator from Santa Clara County. The new Santa Clara Valley Water District eventually replaced a somewhat piecemeal system of smaller conservation and flood control jurisdictions.

There has still been widespread flooding in Willow Glen over the years. The most recent floods, in 1995, closed the Guadalupe Parkway and caused millions of dollars in damage to nearby neighborhoods. Since the 1980's, the Water District has been working with the County Parks System and various regional open space authorities to create a system of trails and parks along the valley waterways. This network of open space adjacent to the creek is more than just a parkway. It is an important wildlife habitat, an aquifer recharge area that allows rainfall to seep deeply underground, and a flood control buffer for the nearby neighborhoods.

One of the first creekside parks in Willow Glen was the Willow Street Park now known officially as Bramhall Park. There are several parks in the Willow Glen community, places for neighbors to picnic and play. Along with the creeks, they help create a leafy setting and a focal point for Willow Glen neighborhoods. River Glen Park, Bramhall Park, sometimes referred to as Willow Street Park, tiny Wilcox Park, Wallenberg Park, and River Glen Park are important community amenities. Parks range in size from River Glen Park with baseball diamonds, home of the Lincoln Glen Little League, to the leafy glade of Wilcox Park.

Bramhall Park sits on the site of the 13 -cre cherry orchard owned at one time by the Geiger family. It is a popular location for family events ,such as childrens' birthday parties and holiday celebrations.

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The Willow Glen Park children's playground was developed in 1946. The park land had been set aside but was mostly orchard property. In 1948 local volunteers cleared the remaining cherry trees from the old William C. Geiger orchard to create the Willow Street Park. A master plan for the park was prepared in 1954 by Frank Bramhall, and a park building was built the same year. One of this park's unique early features was the lawn bowling green, built in 1967. It also has a large baseball diamond with bleachers and is the home of the Willow Glen Little League.

The park's official name since 1970 has been Bramhall Park in commemoration of the first City of San Jose Director of Parks and Recreation, Frank W. Bramhall. Mr. Bramhall passed away in 1969. At one time there was a suggestion that since so many people in the community refer to it by its early name of Willow Street Park that the name be changed again. But they were quietly reminded of Mr. Bramhall's significant contribution to San Jose and efforts in Willow Glen; there would have been no park at all without his work. Members of the Bramhall family felt he would have been deeply honored by this remembrance. So the name remains, a reminder that wonderful parks do not just happen; they are the product of someone's vision and effort.

The River Glen Park was developed with construction and conveyance tax money, another special program that Glenites supported. Tired of seeing the fees from local development spent on projects in the suburbs, voters insisted that revenue generated from local building permits be spent in the local area. The baseball park, the home for the River Glen Little League, was the happy result of that effort.

The charming green oasis known as Wilcox Park was developed when the subdivisions known as Wilcox Park were established. The park was the result of a gift of land to Stanford University from the estate of attorney Edwin A. Wilcox and his wife Mary. The Wilcox house itself faced Pine Avenue. Upon the death of the couple, two acres of the undeveloped land was left to Stanford University who in turn gave it to the City of San Jose.

Raoul Wallenberg Park was named to honor a Swedish citizen who saved 100,000 Hungarian Jews from certain death by spiriting them out of Europe during the Holocaust of World War II. In the 1970's the park property was undeveloped and was known informally as Curtner Park. An orchard that was on the property was going to be a park feature, but the trees were mistakenly removed. There was no money budgeted to develop the park, so for years the land was an eyesore, attracting occasional dumping.

The singular achievements of Raoul Wallenberg came to light in the late 1970's and in 1981 President Reagan approved a special act of Congress making Wallenberg an honorary American citizen. This distinction was granted to only one other person, Winston Churchill. San Jose was one of many communities across the nation interested in providing a memorial to Wallenberg's extraordinary bravery. The question was asked in City Hall, "Is there a room at the library or something appropriate we can name to commemorate the work of this noteworthy person?" The park on Curtner was the answer. Work began immediately to improve the park and dedicate it to the memory of Raoul Wallenberg.

The local community organized around the national efforts to commemorate the work of Raoul Wallenberg. A number of related activities were initiated in San Jose including an essay contest about the importance of Raoul Wallenberg. The winner of the essay contest was a German exchange student from nearby Willow Glen High School. A piece of original music was written and performed at the dedication ceremony. The dedication on the plaque at the park notes that Wallenberg was "a shining light in a dark and depraved world and with his mission of mercy redeemed the reputation of humanity."

Business in Willow Glen

The stores and shops near the corner of Lincoln Avenue at Minnesota are some of the oldest along the street. An important crossroads for more than a century, this important intersection was also the terminus for the Santa Clara & Willow Glen Railway, the end of the trolley line that served this community.

Lincoln Avenue and the merchants whose businesses are on this important thoroughfare are at the core of the Willow Glen community. Lincoln Avenue is where neighbors meet. Although the major grocery stores, the Safeway, the Red & White Market, and later the Lucky store, all

once located along Lincoln, have now moved away, new businesses have taken their place. Large retail chains that have now outgrown their original Lincoln Avenue floor space have sensibly relocated to nearby malls. Lincoln Avenue carefully retains its scale and pedestrian character, much to the delight and benefit of local shoppers.

For the most part, the existing retail buildings that define the architectural scale and character of Lincoln Avenue were built between 1925 and about 1945. A few are two stories tall; most are a generous single story in height. Many buildings feature Spanish colonial details: red-tiled roofs and eaves; decorative tile wainscotting and wrought iron grille work.

Starting at Minnesota Avenue and walking along the west side of the street, the first business on the corner for many years, according to old city directories, seems to have been a gasoline station. This corner had been a 10-acre orchard, acquired by Miles Hills in 1868. Mr. Mills sold all but one acre on the corner.

Alex T. Gordon bought the corner lot in 1921 and used the Victorian era house as a grocery store. He then moved the house around the corner to 1115 Minnesota in order to build the retail buildings, including the Lutha Apartments building retail structure at 1377 Lincoln. The house that once served as A. T. Gordon's grocery is now known as The Daisy Patch, a gift store. Mr. Gordon understood the benefit of owning corner properties; records from 1905 show that he also owned the northwest corner of Lincoln and Pine at that time.

Businesses in the 1920's and 1930's

Hundreds of new residents moved to Willow Glen in the 1920's and local businesses were established to serve them. The new City of Willow Glen needed a downtown after its incorporation in 1927. What kinds of businesses were there in 1930? Service stations for that wonderful new machine, the automobile—three of them to pump gas and wash the windshield. Those were the days when autos needed a lot more attention than they do now. There were three meat markets, too, as well as two beauty shops and a barber. A dry cleaners, a florist, a gift store, a hardware store, and a pharmacy were other local businesses.

Business Near Lincoln and Minnesota

Adjacent to the service station at the corner of Lincoln and Minnesota there seems to have been a grocery or meat market. Early records say it was Gordon's grocery, then A. A. Smith grocery, and then the S & S grocery, a small local chain. The Lutha Apartment building was next door, accommodating retail businesses downstairs and medical offices upstairs. Although it was called an "apartment," the upstairs tenants for many years were dentists. The Willow Glen Pharmacy, later known as the Lawrence Pharmacy was the next business, located at 1383 Lincoln. After nearly 20 years in this location, they moved closer to the corner, 1395 Lincoln, next

As these ads from an old business directory show, Willow Glen residents had a wide range of services available in their neighborhood.

to the gas station. While the number of businesses decreased during the Depression, the shopping strip was quickly on the rebound as soon as the economy improved.

There were some municipal buildings along Lincoln Avenue, too. The Willow Glen City Hall and the fire station were located on Lincoln, although the mailing address of the little town is listed as 1151 Settle on their letterhead in 1927, the home of the City Clerk Dana Thomas. The city of Willow Glen practiced every economy, combining the city hall and fire department in one building. One item they did spend money on however, was the new fire engine. It is said that the new American LaFrance fire engine purchased by the City Council was the pride of Willow Glen. This fire company became known as Engine No. 6.

Serving on the City Council was a volunteer job; no one was paid. The fire department was a volunteer organization too, with 25 members organized by Fire Chief Howard M. Buffington. Notes from an interview with Mr. Buffington reveal that the fire volunteers were budgeted one dollar per member per month. He commented that it was just enough money to hold a really good barbeque every few months. The volunteers met once a month to practice hose operations and take care of any other business.

Even though it was a small town, Willow Glen was serious about its municipal responsibilities. The 1935-1936 business directory lists the

"The Corners" (corner of Lincoln and Minnesota) in the 1930s.

Nancy Newlin Collection

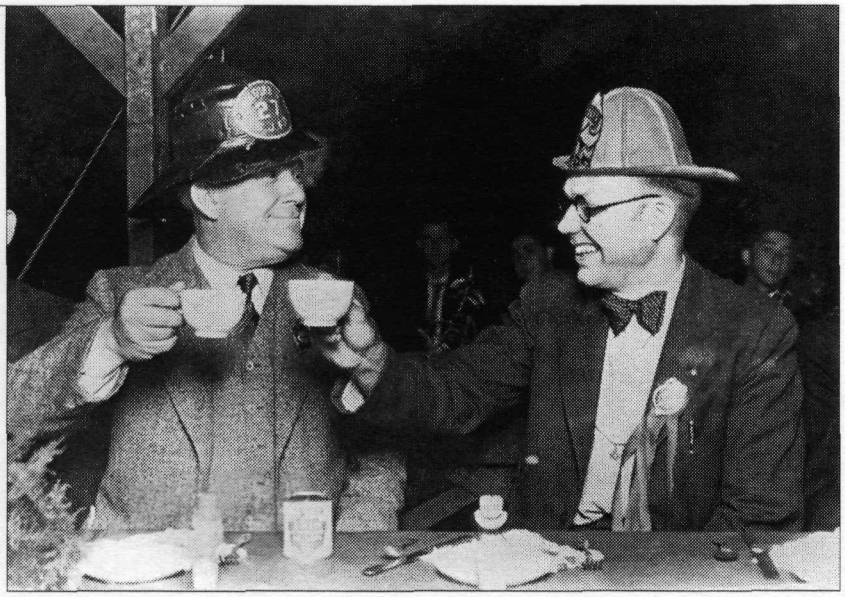
following individuals as City Officials. The mayor was William B. Puterbaugh and members of the council were N. L. Austin, L. A. Bergna, Albertus R. Webster, and Dr. Roscoe A. Whiffen. The city staff included H. N. Bishop as engineer, E. A. Bruntsch as the planning commissioner, G. D. Warwick as secretary, Dana Thomas as the judge and city clerk, Charles J. Clark as the treasurer, Ed Pracna as the chief of police and Joseph Hageman in charge of the street department. Willow Glen built a City Hall, completed in 1929 for $4,000, and located in the heart of the business district on Lincoln next to Brown's Hall.

The Lincoln Avenue shopping area developed in several stages and the growing process was frequently painful. Although "The Corners" had commercial structures since the 1920's, there were still many beautiful homes with mature trees fronting along Lincoln. In October, 1945, the boundaries of the business district expanded. The land-use zoning along the street was changed from high density residential (R-3) to a commercial zoning (C-2) to accommodate the proposed construction of the new post office.

Debate on the issue was loud and torturous. Land on the west side of Lincoln between Brace and Willow was now included in the business district. Lincoln Avenue had always had a great number of businesses, but the majority of structures along the street were actually residential. This changed in a hurry and the remaining home owners were not all happy about the situation.

The Willow Glen area had acquired its own post office in October of 1944 and needed a new building. Until this time the post office had rented space in a local store. Now there was federal money available for construction of a new building if a site could be arranged. The establishment of a

Howard Buffington (left), the first Fire Chief of Willow Glen was one of the best known and most beloved figures in the city. He is shown here with John Davis, possibly at one of the monthly meetings.



Leonard McKay Collection

post office for Willow Glen was the first substantial land use change, rezoning the street from residential to commercial all along Lincoln. Merging and blending the remaining residential structures into the commercial framework has been a continuing design dilemma.

A newspaper article totals the numbers of early commercial establishments along Lincoln Avenue. They count seven businesses in 1927, eight in 1928, nineteen by 1929 and thirty-two by 1930. The businesses included all sorts of neighborhood establishments: the pharmacy, doctor and dentist offices, barbershops, real estate offices, and gas stations.

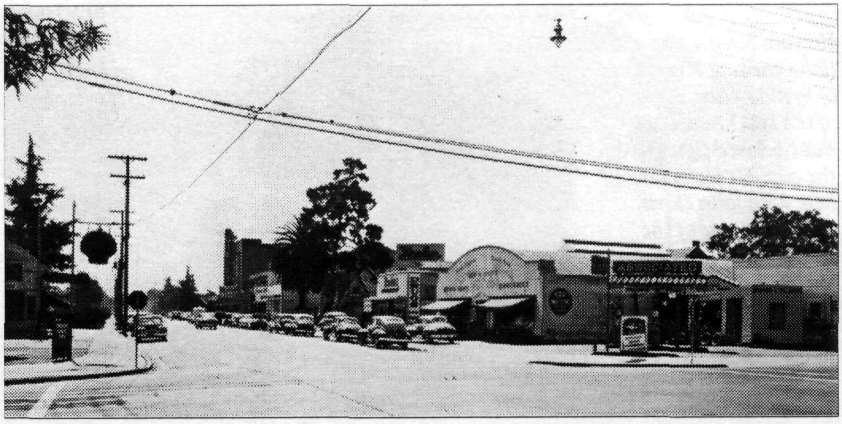
Business Near Lincoln and Willow

Although Minnesota and Lincoln are known as "The Corners", there is a second important business intersection, Willow and Lincoln. This corner also held a cluster of businesses: a service station, a meat market, a liquor store, and a pharmacy. Originally part of the Campbell T. Settle ranch, the property was subdivided and sold, Settle retaining only a 15-acre parcel on the corner. This valuable property was acquired in the 1920's by San Jose businessman George Prindiville.

Prindiville further subdivided the land and according to some sources, built several small business buildings facing Willow and around the corner on Lincoln Street. One of these remains. The building was first a dry cleaners, then a creamery, and then a small pizzeria for many years. Under new ownership and rebuilt with a wood fired oven, the restaurant in this building, Willow Street Wood-Fired Pizza, is a local favorite.

Some of the more successful businesses that remained on Lincoln Avenue for decades were the Lawrence Pharmacy (1923), the Willowette

The Garden Theater is open and downtown Willow Glen is looking pretty prosperous in this picture from the early 1950's.



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Bakery (1930), George and Inman Clothiers (1946), Robert Sawyer China and Gifts (1946), Bergmann's Department Store (1946), Lincoln Lane Foods (1947), and La Villa Delicatessen (1947).

The Garden Theater, first established in 1949 by the Lima family, was a favorite destination for many Willow Glen families during the 1950's and 1960's. Movies were family entertainment before television. The Saturday afternoon movie matinee was an important event for children.

Willow Glen acquired an additional major grocery in December of 1949 when a new Lucky Store opened at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Willow on property owned by George Prindiville. The Lucky grocery would join the existing Safeway and several smaller grocery stores to serve growing Willow Glen.

The commercial area has grown and changed, new shops appearing and replacing older establishments. Some of the "newer" stores on Lincoln Avenue include Alta, a specialty clothing store for women (1983) and

Lincoln Avenue at Willow, looking north, in the 1950's. None of the buildings remain today.

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The pride of Willow Glen when it was first opened in 1949, the Garden Theater was noted for its Saturday matinee movies for all the local children.

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Hicklebee's (1978) a book store and reading center for children's books. Alta is a store with deep roots in Willow Glen. Its founders, Willow Glen residents Kim Kmetovic and Susan McCarthy, were next door neighbors and best friends beginning in 5th grade. Starting out as clothing designers and wholesalers, they opened their retail business one year to sell their excess inventory. Hicklebee's was founded by two sisters, Valerie Lewis and Monica Holmes. More than just a children's book store, they are a reading resource center for teachers and students alike, an important asset in a community that values education.

A note to sleuths and historians who are doing research on Willow Glen businesses with Lincoln Avenue addresses. The address numbers in Willow Glen changed several times over the years, first following a numbering system imposed by Santa Clara County, then another system when Willow Glen was incorporated in 1927 and a third system in 1936 when the street became part of San Jose.

The grocery stores that were once an important part of the life on Lincoln Avenue have moved on, looking for larger property with bigger parking lots. Both Safeway and Lucky, once important shopping destinations on Lincoln Avenue, have relocated their stores. Lucky is now on the corner of Bird and Minnesota and Safeway has moved to Almaden Road. The Lincoln Lane food store has closed and changed ownership, reopening as an ethnic market, then closed again. Cosentino's Vegetable Market at the corner of Union and Bascom on the far southern edge of Willow Glen, remains an important local Willow Glen shopping resource.

The post office had a dual addressing system for many years, showing many residences and businesses with both a street address and a post office box number on the Willow Glen rural routes.

Businesses at Lincoln and Coe in the 1950's.

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Merchants Associations

Early-day Lincoln Avenue merchants formed their first business association in the 1920's. With less than a dozen businesses, the group was pretty informal in the beginning. But the growth of the Willow Glen residential community through the 1920's and 1930's encouraged other businesses and offices to open along Lincoln Avenue. In 1949, the Willow Glen Merchants Association changed its name to the Willow Glen Business and Professional Association.

The Willow Glen merchants protested the bypass of Lincoln Avenue by the new 280 freeway in 1966. The freeway and exits were redesigned to avoid the destruction of the historic Roberto-Suñol adobe. But the closest access to the freeway was now at either Bird Avenue or Meridian. Merchants felt that being isolated from freeway traffic would kill business on Lincoln Avenue in Willow Glen. Nevertheless, a Lincoln Avenue exit was not built, and this, in retrospect, has served to curb undesirable high-speed traffic through the Lincoln Avenue business district.

Not all early Lincoln Avenue was devoted to business establishments. There were small clusters of businesses at the two major intersection; Lincoln and Willow as well as Lincoln and Minnesota. Between those two business clusters were also many houses and a few apartments. Some beautiful homes once lined Lincoln Avenue, and the overall character of the street remained residential until after World War II. Even today many businesses blend the character of a shop within an old house. The showroom of Blaine's Lighting on Lincoln is a typical example.

One of the most critical land-use problems came when the historic Buffington House was sold. Architectural historian George Espinola attributes the design of this beautiful shingle-style house to architect Frank D. Wolfe. A sentimental favorite with Willow Glen neighbors, the large, ornate 1905 Buffington House was scheduled to be demolished, then relocated, then remodeled. Today, it serves as a real estate office.

Through the diligent efforts of Willow Glen residents, the 1905 Buffington house at 1226 Lincoln Avenue, possibly designed by architect Frank D. Wolfe and scheduled to be demolished, is now a city landmark and home to a real estate firm.

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Willow Glen residents fondly remembered Santa Clara County Deputy Sheriff Howard M. Buffington, who had served as the first fire chief of Willow Glen. Buffington was the sheriff during the infamous 1933 lynching of the Hart kidnappers in St. James Park. His widow Lulu continued to live in the house at 1224 Lincoln for decades and Willow Glen remembered them both with great affection.

It is difficult to believe this interesting house could be destroyed. After plenty of public discussion, the house was finally saved, and today is a distinctive commercial office. Today it is a local landmark (San Jose Landmark #35), a proud symbol of Willow Glen's appreciation of their unique local history.

Through the years the Willow Glen Business & Professional Association has worked to maintain the economic viability of Lincoln Avenue. In good times and bad, during growth and recession, Lincoln Avenue businesses have served their neighbors for more than seventy years.

Other Businesses

While the merchants along Lincoln Avenue tend to get most of the attention, there are a number of other important business establishments scattered throughout Willow Glen. There are several "corner markets," little neighborhood grocery stores from an earlier age when housewives walked to a nearby store for a bottle of milk or a loaf of bread.

Crisham's market on Coe is an early grocery with a false front, built in the 1920's to serve the residents of the Palm Haven and Broadway neigh-

borhoods. Another small false-front store is at the corner of Clark and Willow streets. There are several such establishments remaining in Willow Glen, reminders of our more pedestrian past.

And one additional establishment has been a Willow Glen landmark for decades. The Lima Family-Erickson Memorial Chapel at the corner of Minnesota and Bird belongs to a family that has always contributed to the character of Willow Glen. The wonderful collection of animated Christmas figures that are now featured during the holiday season in downtown San Jose originated with the Lima family. Now known as Christmas in the Park, this elaborate holiday display delights children of all ages.

The Library

Along with churches, schools and shopping, there is one more institution of great importance to the vitality of Willow Glen life. The first public lending library in Willow Glen was a County library. It was established in a corner of the Willow Glen Methodist Episcopal Church in 1930. The Willow Glen Library became a branch of the San Jose Public Library in 1937 when the town of Willow Glen area was annexed.

In 1947, the library was located in a building at 1312 Lincoln Avenue near Brace. The City Fire Department Engine No. 6 was located a few doors down at 1342 Lincoln. The City of San Jose allocated funds to build a new combination fire station and library structure in 1947. San Jose architect Edward Kress of Kress & Gibson designed the building. The library moved into this new building on Minnesota Avenue in 1949 and has been in the same location ever since.

By 1957, Willow Glen had outgrown the combination fire station/library structure on Minnesota and voters approved money to make major changes. A new fire station was built and the library expanded into space left by the firemen. In 1964, the library was remodeled and expanded at its existing site. Just ten years later the library building was badly damaged by fire, causing many to comment that if the library had only stayed with the fire department, then... But the fire damage was quickly repaired and

The Willow Glen Library at 1157 Minnesota Avenue has served Willow Glen in its present location since 1949.

a refurbished library was soon open to the public again, later in 1975. The fire station, Station No. 6, is now at the corner of Minnesota and Cherry avenues.

The Willow Glen Library has been used as a community center over the years, a meeting place for the community when issues needed attention. The Willow Glen Neighborhood Association was formed here at a community meeting in 1973. A year later, when a fire closed the library, it was the same Neighborhood Association, which insisted that the City of San Jose open a temporary library in a portable building at the site. The Willow Glen Library was just too important a community resource to lose for even a few months.

Chapter 5
New Willow Glen

The Willow Glen community was defined as a unique entity once again in the 1970's when the city of San Jose was divided into voting districts. Willow Glen became part of a newly created City Council district in 1978. Although the official name of this new political area is Council District 6 and it encompasses other neighborhoods, local residents call it the Willow Glen District. Major adjustments were made to the district boundaries after the 1990 census. This district now includes not only most of Willow Glen but a great portion of the historic older neighborhoods to the north along The Alameda.

The incredible population growth in San Jose during the 1960's and 1970's put new pressure on the entire community. San Jose was shifting from a city based on an agricultural economy to a city based on industry, as dozens of new businesses located in the Santa Clara Valley. New workers needed new neighborhoods, and new neighborhoods needed more roads and schools. In addition, the construction of major shopping malls changed Willow Glen shops, increasing competition.

Early Willow Glen subdivisions were created during the days when families owned one car and the housewife could walk over to the butcher on Lincoln Avenue to pick up some nice chops for dinner. Now the mobile society traveled to a full service supermarket for groceries.

But Willow Glen was full of young, energetic residents who wanted to make sure that the wonderful character of their community was maintained—despite the pressures of more people and more traffic. When the City proposed road widening and other major projects, residents got together once again to preserve their community.

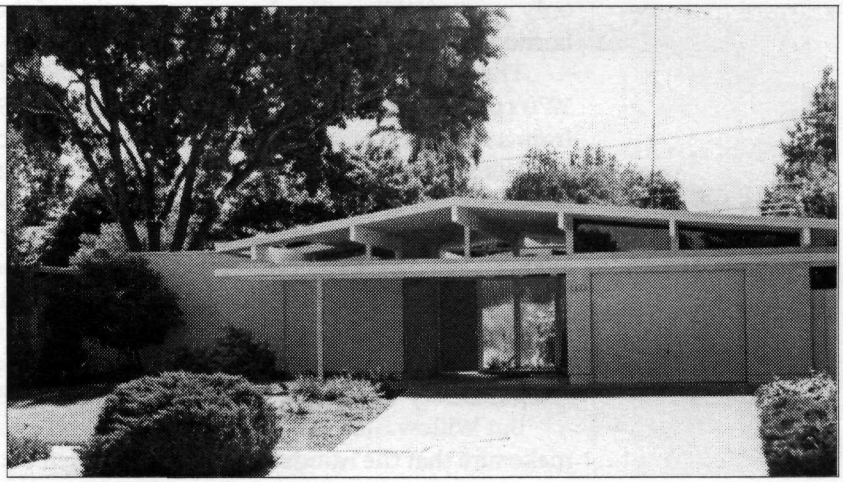
Suburban Spread

Old Willow Glen and new Willow Glen—residents take special pride in living as close as possible to "The Corners," seen as the heart of "old" Willow Glen. Residents of older areas feel socially superior to homeowners in the newer houses along Foxworthy and Meridian Avenues. Even though newer houses are larger, with better construction and garages suitable for modern vehicles, there is a curious snobbery among some residents who feel "older is better."

It is hard to pinpoint the exact date when the suburbanization of Willow Glen began. Urban planners tell us the change took place in the late 1940's, just after World War II. That is when the federal government

provided money for housing for returning soldiers under a program called the G. I. Bill of Rights. Home builders quickly took advantage of the subsidies, building large subdivisions of nearly identical structures to meet a critical housing shortage. That is when people really began to buy automobiles again too, and both events had a big impact on land use in Willow Glen.

Large new subdivisions quickly circled the edges of Willow Glen, bringing an entirely new architectural style of residence known as the ranch house. Santa Clara Valley, formerly a community of porches, became a world of patio living when contemporary designers built houses that emphasized private space in the rear of the house. One of the most dynamic early subdivision builders was a contractor named Bill Eichler. The homes in the Fairglen neighborhood and in the Cherry Glen subdivision are some of the many Eichler homes.



Nancy Newlin

An Eichler home, located at 1658 Fairlawn, is typical of a great number of the style built during the great building boom after World War II.

In addition, a number of large employers built new plants in San Jose, attracting hundreds of highly-educated workers. The Nuclear Energy Division of General Electric was located near Willow Glen. IBM also opened a plant just to the south. Companies such as Memorex, Tandem, and Intel were opening new facilities and Lockheed was growing. The largest tracts of land open to housing developers were the orchards, preferably those close to Highway 17 or 101 for their commenting workers.

Shopping Centers

Local residents and merchants along Lincoln Avenue were extremely upset in October of 1966 when a large shopping center was proposed at the corner of Bird and Minnesota. The property was owned by the Buchser family, longtime residents of Willow Glen. Emil Buchser was the superintendent of schools in Santa Clara County; Herman R. Buchser, a former

principal of Willow Glen High School was president of San Jose City College. The family had strong ties within the community and Herman Buchser's home was located nearby on Bird Avenue.

Now, suddenly, the neighbors felt betrayed, worried that a new shopping center would not only compete with existing Willow Glen merchants, but that traffic from a large commercial center would invade nearby neighborhoods.

The Willow Glen Neighborhood Association

The new suburban neighborhoods brought an entirely new group of residents, many folks moving to Willow Glen from outside of California. This group contained many political activists, at least philosophically, people who were frequently speaking up on important issues. While protesting the war in Vietnam had been a focus for some, many more were interested in local issues. Generally speaking, the activists were interested in social change, in human rights, in protecting the environment, regulating big business, and controlling urban sprawl.

So when urban planners proposed doubling the width of peaceful Cherry Avenue to accommodate more traffic, local residents were willing to fight City Hall. Young, energetic Glenites formed a new neighborhood association in 1973, the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association (WGNA), to look at issues that affected the neighborhood. The traffic impact led their list.

The City of San Jose had already widened Bird Avenue near the new freeway (280) and Willow Glen neighbors were horrified at what they saw. Dozens of beautiful houses had been removed and the City was poised to widen Bird Avenue all the way to Minnesota Avenue. Cherry Avenue on one side of Willow Glen, Bird on the other. And there was talk of widening Pine between the two to provide additional roadway capacity. The new WGNA members had their hands full.

The new young residents who inhabited Willow Glen proved to have the same values as the older residents. Family values came first. Community projects followed closely behind. It took several years of meetings and lobbying but the road widening projects were dropped. Today, traffic flows on nearby Highways 85 and 87, away from the quiet residential neighborhoods. Meridian, Bascom and Leigh Avenues have easily absorbed north-south traffic planned for the heart of Willow Glen. The fight on Cherry Avenue, keeping it to two lanes, took place in May, 1973.

Cherry Avenue

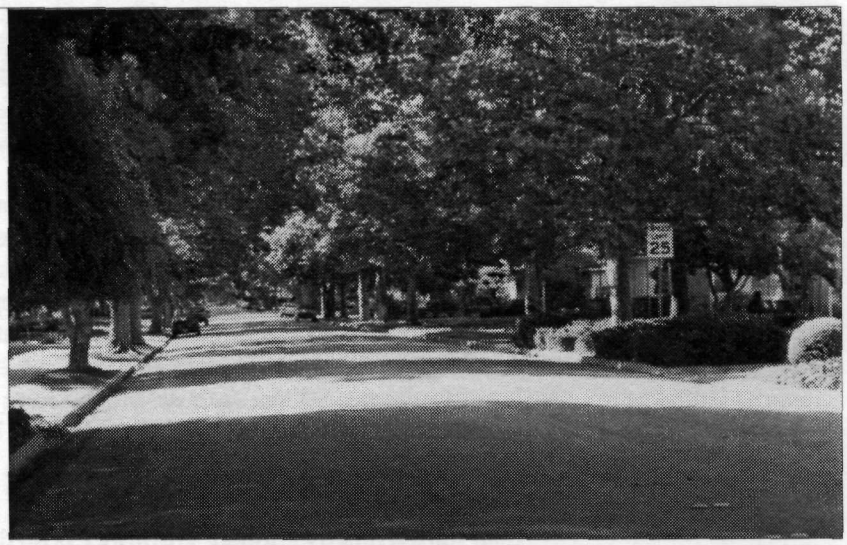
It all started quietly enough The notice posted on the project caught the attention of Becky Worsham. Dropping children at a nearby school, she saw an official posting and called neighbor Hannah Kennedy to ask her opinion. The posted notice concerned the removal of a house at the

end of Cherry Avenue. It seemed that the City of San Jose was finally getting ready to take out the last house at the end of Cherry near Dry Creek Road in preparation for widening the entire road to four traffic lanes. Parts of Cherry Avenue below Pine had already been widened.

Becky Worsham, along with Hannah Kennedy and Margaret (Margey) Schumb, formed an important core in one small group of community activists. They had already made their presence felt in the community by speaking out against a high-density housing project on Iris Court. All members of the League of Women Voters, this group of friends, along with a much larger network of determined activists, understood the impact of the planned road widening immediately.

Cherry Avenue was planned to have a new bridge crossing Los Gatos Creek in northern Willow Glen. Removing the last house and building the bridge would create a major crosstown thruway that would eventually link Cherry with Race Street in the north and travel across Foxworthy and Branham Lane, meeting Chynoweth in the south. It would have looked like Meridian Avenue and it would have had a devastating effect on nearby neighborhoods.

These traffic "improvements" were necessary because the City of San Jose had put itself in a terrible bind. San Jose was then the fastest growing city in the United States. The City had already approved large tracts of land for housing, thinking that the major components of the critical transportation network would appear as promised. Many of the housing developments were already completed.



Nancy Newlin

Peaceful Cherry Avenue was once destined to be widened to four lanes and upgraded to serve as a crosstown route. Stopping this City of San Jose project united the Willow Glen neighborhood and led to the formation of the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association.

Although there had been plans for many years to build State Highways 85 and 87, these highway construction projects were currently on hold. State funds were going for mass transit. Now there were massive

traffic jams along Highway 101 as thousands of workers tried to drive from their new tract homes in southern San Jose to their jobs in the northern part of the County.

San Jose traffic engineers had some solutions. They changed a number of downtown local streets to one-way pairs, dedicating one entire street to traffic flowing north, the adjacent street to traffic going south. The first pairs created were Almaden and Vine streets through the downtown, along with 3rd and 4th Streets and finally 10th and 11th Streets. But traffic through Willow Glen was still a problem. The solution was to widen both Cherry and Bird Avenues.

Willow Glen residents had seen the impact of increased traffic and one-way pairs on the nearby neighborhoods, especially the fragile and historic community known as Goosetown near Sacred Heart Church. It was very clear to Glenites that the street widening would not just remove houses and change the lives of the residents who lived on Cherry Avenue. The project would cause the deterioration of the entire western side of Willow Glen.

Becky Worsham recalled that her response to the posting was to pick up the phone and request a delay in the public hearing. Her next action was to organize a community meeting at the Willow Glen Public Library. WGNA was formally organized at that time, with both Becky Worsham and Hannah Kennedy as officers.

The hearing on Cherry Avenue at the City Council was as eventful as the community meeting in the public library. The City Council was determined to proceed with the road widening, saying that since the City had already purchased the house, they had to go forward. Then they made a tactical error; the Council took a short recess.

Becky Worsham took the opportunity to rush to a pay phone and call her husband, Dan. "Is it okay to buy another house?" A little bewildered, Dan agreed, "Well .. sure." Becky hurried back to the meeting and announced to the City Council, "There's a buyer for the house. The City will not lose any money. Now can the project be stopped?" Unable to quickly form a response, the City Council delayed the project.

Cherry Avenue was just one of a number of proposed road and street widening projects that the WGNA addressed in the coming months. With Margey Schumb coordinating and advising, both Becky Worsham and Hannah Kennedy took turns moving the Association from one strategic neighborhood issue to the next.

The year of 1973 was significant for another important issue; local schools. That was the year that San Jose residents became aware that local schools could not accommodate their children without resorting to double sessions. Concerned parents initiated and passed a resolution known as Measure B. New homes would not be built in areas where schools were already overcrowded. From now on, school construction and housing construction went together.

The public was very aware that urban sprawl created traffic problems. And more traffic meant bad air, congestion, and overall deterioration of the quality of life in Valley. Willow Glen residents and the WGNA were willing to tackle the problems, one by one or all at once. Fortunately the City was also aware there were problems and was preparing to deal with them.

About that time the Planning Department of the City of San Jose undertook the enormous task of closely examining every part of the General Plan for the entire city. The General Plan is the overall master development plan for the city, setting out which areas in the city will be devoted to housing, which to industry and which to schools. The capacity of roads and streets are also outlined by the General Plan.

This massive effort to rewrite the Master Plan for the City of San Jose was known as Planning 75 and took nearly two years. Willow Glen citizens who participated in Planning 75 learned a great deal about local land use policies, information that helped enormously in the later battles with City Hall.

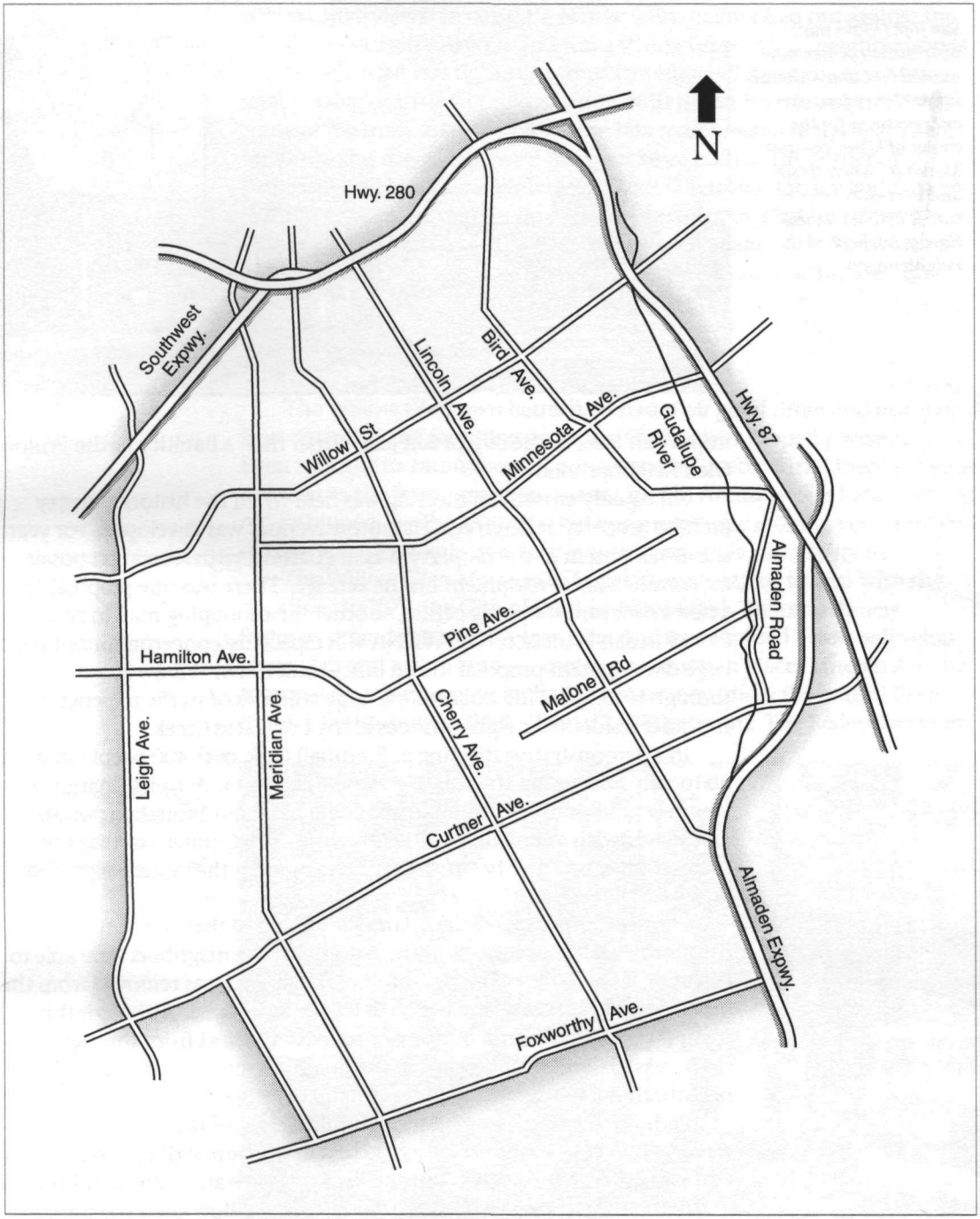
The Post Office and the Ainsley Orchard

Although WGNA was successful in subduing the traffic planners and changing the street widening plans, there were still other problems related to land use. Two of the most significant challenges they faced were from big developers; one was the United States Postal Service, and the other one was a shopping center builder.

On the surface, it might seem that having a larger post office in the Willow Glen community would be a good thing. It would create additional jobs, always in demand, for semiskilled workers. But it quickly became clear that the new facility planned for the corner of Meridian and Hamilton would very unattractive and create a neighborhood nuisance. The facility was going to be a central mail processing facility for the four-county area, a plant that worked around the clock with heavy truck traffic.

Plans had already been drawn up and a new facility, with a reported $11 million price tag, was soon going to be built. Because the U. S. Postal Service is an independent business and not under direct control of the federal government, Congressman Norman Mineta could only advise, not intervene. In an emotional community meeting, after many others had spoken, Willow Glen resident Rabbi Joseph Gitin delivered some memorable words from theBook of Leviticus in the Bible. He reminded the group that the Hebrew symbol for home means "freedom." Willow Glen residents felt that their homes and their freedom were being threatened by this project.

The postal service planners withdrew their request and found another site in the industrial area of North San Jose for their mail processing facility. Now located on Lundy Avenue, the mail processing center is an



Dave Olmos

The current boundaries of the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association.

San Jose's main mail distribution center, now located on Lundy Avenue in North San Jose, was once destined for the corner of Hamilton and Meridian, where its size and the heavy vehicle traffic activity would have overwhelmed the neighborhood.

Nancy Newlin

important asset to the city of San Jose, rather than a liability to the Willow Glen neighborhood.

An equally emotional meeting was held when the historic Ainsley orchard property at Leigh and Hamilton avenues was developed. For years the development of the property was in question with several proposals for commercial development on the acreage. There was one proposal for a new Pruneyard shopping center, another for a shopping mall to rival Pier 39 in San Francisco. The WGNA was especially concerned about one large development proposal to add offices and to cut Willow Street through to Leigh. This would allow large volumes of traffic to penetrate the quiet residential neighborhoods along Los Gatos Creek.

In a demonstrative meeting at Bramhall Park, over 400 people showed up to rally and go to City Hall to oppose the project. Activist Charlotte Wendel could not find a suitable marching band but brought a portable tape player with a copy of the 1812 Overture. The Council hearing also turned out to be a highly emotional meeting with the project approved on a 4 to 3 vote.

Former Councilman Nancy Ianni commented that, at the time, the community felt that it had lost the battle. But the neighbors were able to ensure that the Willow Street portion of the project was removed from the proposal, a very critical concession as it later developed. Although this particular project was not built, keeping Willow Street from through traffic has made a big difference in the quality of life in that part of the neighborhood when the parcel was finally developed.

Perhaps the most significant accomplishment of the WGNA was the election of Nancy Ianni herself as the first City Council district representative for District No. 6. When district elections were announced in 1978, the Councilman that seemed destined to represent Willow Glen was Joe Colla. Already a veteran on the San Jose City Council, Colla was known for his

conservative views. In contrast, Nancy Ianni had spoken out against the widening of Cherry Avenue and was a strong supporter of neighborhoods.

Willow Glen was fighting against the encroachment of some very unappealing apartment projects being built in San Jose during the 1970's. Some of the most unattractive stucco box structures were the apartment buildings and the White Front discount store built at the corner of Parkmoor and Meridian. Willow Glen was determined to try and preserve the high-quality residential design and construction that had always characterized the Willow Glen neighborhoods. Nancy Ianni provided a clear vision regarding the types of land use and quality of architecture suitable for Willow Glen neighborhoods.

Lincoln Avenue Revitalized

The Willow Glen merchants have had their good times and bad. Local fears regarding the shopping center on the Buchser property were justified. Even though the businesses did not compete directly with Lincoln Avenue merchants, the fresh new shops made Lincoln Avenue stores look drab and old-fashioned. By the 1970's the old businesses were looking very tired and shabby and merchants were losing customers to the nearby malls.

The Willow Glen Merchants Association struggled to deal with the situation. In 1979, the City of San Jose hired Frank Taylor as its new Redevelopment Agency director. The Agency proposed a new redevelopment plan and a new funding strategy was soon in place. Lincoln Avenue acquired a sizable grant of revitalization money under the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The Redevelopment

The benches, plantings, street crossings, and sculpture on Lincoln Avenue are the result of the revitalization project, completed in 1990.

Nancy Newlin

Bergmann's Department Store, which opened with much fanfare on November 2, 1946, finally closed in the 1990's. The building is now home to multiple businesses.

San Jose Mercury News

Agency was willing to pay a professional administrator to coordinate and manage a revitalization effort. Lincoln Avenue became a Business Improvement District.

In 1982, the Downtown Willow Glen Advisory team was formed and the City of San Jose budgeted $50,000 to plan improvements. A team of consultants was hired to look at the Lincoln Avenue buildings and plan a

The Garden Theatre is now home to a variety of businesses.

Nancy Newlin

strategy to improve the structures as well as increase retail businesses. The consultants were a team comprised of Astone Associates, Architectural Resources Group, and John M. Sanger Associates.

By 1989 the detailed studies were completed, proposals and solutions discussed, the designs had been reviewed and approved and the contracts awarded. It was seven years in preparation but the actual construction was

done very quickly—in just nine months. By 1990, the $3 million facelift, featuring new sidewalks, gateways, and 147 new sycamore trees was finished. Lincoln Avenue merchants celebrated the event with their annual Summer Sidewalk Sale, an event which was reportedly profitable for the first time in several years.

But the national economy was in a downturn and local business in general was doing poorly. Lincoln Avenue merchants followed the overall trends. The Garden Theater closed in 1991, unable to remain open in the competition of the mega-theater and home video chains. New owners tried dividing the interior into a number of small shops but later failed. In 1994, it reopened with a new developer and a number of small commercial establishments.

The early 1990's were dark days for other Lincoln Avenue retailers. Bergmann's Department store finally closed, unable to withstand the pressure of competition from the shopping malls and the changing taste of local consumers. The death of founder Conrad Bergmann also reportedly placed an enormous tax burden on the family, and the store was finally sold.

The Willow Glen Resident Newspaper

Willow Glen is a one of the largest small neighborhoods around. It had the chance to redefine itself as its own town still one more time in 1987, when it developed its own newspaper. The Willow Glen *Resident* is a very important way that this community keeps in touch with itself.

A Willow Glen newspaper was an idea whose time had come. Founder Joe Guerra noted that the Willow Glen *Resident* was actually the third local newspaper that appeared in Willow Glen in the mid-1980's. The first two had been extremely short-lived. The Willow Glen *Town Crier* appeared in 1985 and was published for only six months before the publisher took the funds and left town, leaving some very disgruntled advertisers.

The Willow Glen Resident has been a part of Willow Glen life since 1987.

Willow Glen Resident

The staff of the defunct little paper tried to pull the pieces together and continue publishing as the Willow Glen *Sun Times* but they too soon went out of business.

Realtor Joe Guerra had been president of the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association, then president of the Willow Glen Business and Professional Association. When the newspapers disappeared, several local

merchants came to Joe and commented that the newspaper had been very good for business and they missed it. Then they suggested that as president of the association, Joe should consider putting out a newspaper.

Joe was a Realtor, not a journalist. But he had lived in Willow Glen all his life and he knew everyone. He also knew what people wanted to see in their paper. Besides, he realized, that between the neighborhood association and the merchants association, he was already attending most community meetings and events anyway. It was not difficult to write up his notes and include them in a newspaper. So after consulting with a few experienced printers and business acquaintances, the Willow Glen *Resident* was born as a monthly newspaper in October, 1987.

Today it would be difficult to imagine Willow Glen without its newspaper. No other San Jose neighborhood has a paper of its own. But no other neighborhood has its own downtown with a group of local merchants who want to communicate with their customers. Other residential areas in San Jose are served by malls of one sort or another, shops with little community focus. The activities of local schools, stores, and residents are the complete focus of the Willow Glen paper.

The Willow Glen Resident *reports on neighborhood events such as this photo of Dancin' on the Avenue, from a June, 1997 issue.*

Christian del Rosario/Willow Glen Resident

Joe Guerra sold his paper to publisher Dan Pulcrano and David Cohen in 1992 and turned from editing to local politics. Today, the Willow Glen Resident is a weekly newspaper, published by the Metro Publishing Company, a Bay Area publisher with eight small community papers.

House Tours and Farmer's Market: Willow Glen Stays Vital

Willow Glen offers newcomers and visitors a chance to get to know their community. There are several events that are held in Willow Glen, inviting folks from outside the area to visit and participate. For about 30 years the Fair Glen Art Fair was an annual event. Talented neighbors in the Eichler-built subdivision along Fairglen Avenue behind St. Chistopher's Church met to display and sell various kind of art and crafts. This annual show is in hiatus as rising liability insurance has caused organizers to currently forgo this event, but enthusiasts are optimistic that it will return.

There are other important opportunities for public socializing in Willow Glen. One event is Founders Day, a celebration which takes place in September to commemorate the election long ago when Willow Glen voted to become a city. Originally organized by Nadine Cassarino for the merchants along Lincoln Avenue, this street fair closes a portion of Lincoln Avenue to traffic and allows businesses to move out into the street for a day of festivity.

And another important annual event which defines Willow Glen's character has been held for about fourteen years. It is the Willow Glen Life Styles home tour, showcasing half a dozen Willow Glen homes each year. The tour is a benefit to raise funds for the San Jose Day Nursery, a day care center that serves all children in San Jose. It is typical of the Willow Glen spirit that neighbors generously open their houses and allow their privacy to be invaded in order to benefit the entire community.

Nancy Newlin

The farmer's market is located in the Willow Glen Elementary School parking lot on Saturday mornings during the summer months.

The Life Styles home tour is a unique event because it celebrates both the diversity of the architecture of Willow Glen and the diversity of the lifestyles. Unlike house tours which feature decorator dream houses, the Willow Glen Life Styles tour shows actual houses of real people.

The advantages of the annual Life Styles tour have become more apparent through the years. It is the event that many people point to as defining the Willow Glen character, noting that these are residents with enough confidence and enough community concern to open their homes for a benefit. It is a home tour to which many people can relate since there it offers a wide variety of houses available for touring. The event probably attracts new home buyers to the area becausee they feel Willow Glen is a good place to live.

Although Founder's Day and the Willow Glen Life Styles home tour are annual events, there is always something going on in Willow Glen to bring neighbors together. These days there is the weekly farmer's market held at the Willow Glen Elementary School, a good place to buy really fresh and sometimes unusual produce. There are Little League games, flea markets, and garage sales. The bulletin board at the Willow Glen Library is still an important hub of community activity; so is the Senior Center on Lincoln Avenue.

After more than a century, Willow Glen residents and their homes remain the basis for urban life in Santa Clara Valley, good neighborhoods making a great city.

Willow Glen Names

Almaden, New Almaden

The road leading to the Quicksilver Mines of New Almaden is an important historic boundary for Willow Glen. The old wagon road known as the road to Almaden, followed the Guadalupe River along much of the way. Heavily traveled, the Almaden Road was a major thoroughfare through Santa Clara Valley. The name Almaden was taken from the name of the Almaden quicksilver mines on the frontier of Estremadura in old Spain.

Quicksilver, or mercury, was a critical ingredient to the production of gold from ore. These mines in California were the only known location of this essential element outside of the mines in Spain.

Arroyo Seco

From the Spanish words meaning Dry Creek, a description of intermittent streams which only flowed during the rainy season.

Bird

Isaac and Calvert T. Bird, father and son, immigrated from England to Alabama in 1849, then came to California in 1850. Isaac Bird was one of the founders of the Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Society. Son Calvert Bird was a teacher who became an attorney, serving as commissioner of the United States Circuit Court. Bird Avenue became a county road in 1888. The Birds and the Cottles were some of the important financial backers and supporters of the Willow Glen Railway.

Blewett

Blewett Avenue in Willow Glen was named for a family whose address was actually on nearby Settle Street. They owned a sizable orchard behind their house which was subdivided. The street was named when their orchard was divided into lots.

Booksin

Henry Booksin was an orchardist who bought 80 acres in the Willows in 1881. Some of his orchards were on Meridian Road near the old channel of Los Gatos Creek, and part of his property was located on what is now Booksin Avenue.

Brace

Brace Avenue is named after an early Methodist bishop, an acquaintance of Dr. Joseph H. Wythe. Wythe was the son-in-law of pioneer Miles Hills and pastor of the Methodist church in Campbell. Wythe is credited with helping the little Willow Glen church survive, working to reorganize the

Sunday school around 1902. Wythe built some small cottages for retired ministers on the far side of the Hills' 10-acre property located at the corner of Lincoln and Minnesota. Brace Avenue is named for Bishop Brace.

Bramhall Park
This important Willow Glen recreational area on Willow Street was named for Frank W. Bramhall, a Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of San Jose who passed away before he could retire.

Branham
Isaac Branham came from Kentucky, and established a 50 acre vineyard in San Jose. He was a member of the governing board of the San Jose pueblo 1849.

Britton
Martin Britton moved to The Willows in 1866; his son Frank owned 50 acres in the Willows in 1887. The Britton orchard was near the street which bears their name.

Broadway
A very early little neighborhood in northern Willow Glen, lots were sold in the Bettencourt subdivision around 1890. This is one of the first neighborhoods to develop as the result of the nearby trolley.

Buchser
Subdividing the orchard property owned by the Buchser family caused a great deal of neighborhood concern. The orchard is now a shopping center at the corner of Minnesota and Bird.

Canoas
According to California place name authority Erwin Gudde, the term comes from the Spanish word for canoe or trough. There are two Canoas Creeks in California, one in San Jose and one in Fresno. There is also a Canoas Canyon in Monterey.

Carolyn Avenue
The Carolyn Avenue neighborhood was finally added to Willow Glen on August 29, 1932.

Cherry Avenue
The land around Cherry Avenue was once the site of a large cherry orchard. Cherries were introduced to Willow Glen by William C. Geiger in 1868. Records show that twenty years later he was making $6,000 per year from his crop. His property is now Bramhall Park.

Clark Street and Clark Way
A portion of Clark Street off of Willow was developed before 1900 and shows on early maps. Clark Way was named later when the Cottle family property became the Lincoln Gates tract.

Clark, Paul F.
A community leader and the first mayor of Willow Glen, it is likely that Clark Way was named to commemorate this outstanding leader. His wife, May Roberts Clark was a president of the San Jose Women's Club in 1916 and was an accomplished poet and author.

Coe
Coe Avenue was named for Henry Willard Coe who arrived in San Jose in 1847. A rancher and orchardist, the family grew hops and fruit on 150 acres near Bird Avenue. Henry Coe is credited with developing the process of apricots during drying to preserve them. The family sold their orchard property and moved to the East San Jose foothills in 1874. Henry Coe Regional Park was also named for him.

Cottle
Cottle Avenue is named for Ira Cottle, a Willow Glen farmer with 60 acres on Lincoln Avenue. He came to Willow Glen in 1854 and was from a family of ten children, six of whom lived in the Valley. Royal, Ira, Oliver and Ellen Cottle all lived, more or less side-by-side, in The Willows. Ira Cottle bought his home on what later became Minnesota Avenue in 1858. He acquired 125 acres of the Narvaez Rancho, in 1858 for $2500.

Royal Cottle farmed 140 acres in Willow Glen and was one of the first farmers in the area to grow wheat. He felt strongly about education and donated land to establish the first elementary school in Willow Glen at the corner of Lincoln and Pine. The school site was moved when a new building was erected in 1897 on the corner of Minnesota and Lincoln.

Dry Creek
In 1866 an enormous flood changed the course of Los Gatos Creek, creating a new channel. Once known by its Spanish name of Arroyo Seco.

Foxworthy
Alex Foxworthy was a farmer from Kentucky who arrived in Santa Clara Valley in 1875 and acquired 80 acres in the area.

Franquette
The franquette is variety of walnut, developed in the 18th century by a French horticulturist named Franquet. It was once the most popular variety of walnut grown in Santa Clara Valley. A similar variety, the

Mayette walnut was developed by another French gardener, Mayet, about the same time. It, too, became a commonly grown local variety.

Hervey
Between Minnesota and Carmel streets, this street was named for Dr. H. M. Hervey, an early orchardist whose 10 acre property adjoined the street that carries his name.

Hicks
Hicks was named for pioneer Captain A. H. Hicks.

Keesling
The Keesling family arrived in Willow Glen in the late 1873 and quickly became a local dynasty. By 1918 an article in the newspaper counts the total family members at 98. Thomas B. and Elizabeth Keesling owned 20 acres on Willow near Carolyn Avenue and had a substantial house built in 1882 by architect Joseph O. McKee. They were the parents of eleven children, many of whom became prominent figures.

Son Francis Marion Keesling became an attorney and the state head of the Masonic Lodge. Horace G. Keesling was a well-known writer and edited the weekly Home & Farm supplement of the Mercury *News*. His house on Hamilton Avenue was designed by architect Frank D. Wolfe and built by contractor Howard Waltz.

Kirk
Theophilus and Socrates Kirk were brothers who drove a herd of cattle from Missouri to California in 1853. Theophilus owned 468 acres near Dry Creek along Kirk Road. They sold their interest in an Ohio salt mine and invested in a San Francisco mercantile establishment. In 1893 they bought 8,000 acres near Booksin and Leigh, from Dry Creek to Foxworthy.

Kotenberg
Named for a property owner, Ella Kotenberg, who owned nine acres of orchard on Settle Street.

Leigh
Hugh Alexander Leigh owned 164 acres near the southern border of the old channel of Los Gatos Creek.

Lelong
Named for early settler who purchased an orchard from members of the Reed family. The orchards of J. Lelong were subdivided in 1887 to form the Willow Glen Tract.

Lester
Nathan L. Lester came to San Jose in 1883 and bought homestead land on Lincoln Avenue. A native of Connecticut, he first came to California in 1861 and raised wheat in Napa for several years before returning East. He brought his family to California in 1883 and raised prunes on 31 acres. Two of his sons, Nathan L. and William Walter Lester continued their father's prune growing business, acquiring several other orchards in the area. Nathan became a director of the California Prune and Apricot Association. William was chairman of fund-raising for the Congregational Church in Willow Glen.

Lincoln Avenue
Originally known as the road to La Abra, the main street of Willow Glen appears on an 1865 petition for road widening as Willow Glen Road. By 1872 it needed to be widened to 60 feet and the petition describes it as Lincoln Avenue.

Lupton
Durah Lupton came to California in 1848 and bought a Cherry Avenue farm of 50 acres. The street was named in 1910 for his son, Jonathon Lupton.

Malone
Malone Road is named for F. S. Malone, an early farmer. This individual is sometimes confused with Henry Clinton Melone, an outspoken individual who was the first County clerk in 1850, then became the County treasurer.

Minnesota Avenue
According to a reported interview with Elsie Wythe, the street was named by resident Miles Hills who lived at the corner of Lincoln and Minnesota. She said he named it after his home state but other sources note that Hills came from Connecticut.

Newhall
Sylvester Newhall was a nurseryman with a residence on Lincoln Avenue. Newhall came to California from Massachusetts in 1850 and to San Jose area in 1857, acquiring 49 acres in San Jose. His tract of 10.8 acres on Coe Avenue was included in the Palm Haven residential development.

Newport
This important early street was known as Washington. The name was changed in 1963, perhaps to avoid confusion with Washington Street in nearby San Jose,

Northern Road
This small road next to the Guadalupe River was named for early settler H. W. Northern.

San Jose de Guadalupe
The formal name for the pueblo is Pueblo de San Jose de Guadalupe, "The town of Saint Joseph on the Guadalupe River." The Virgin of Guadalupe is the patron saint of Catholic Mexico and the name Guadalupe appears on many topographical features.

Settle
Campbell T. Settle lived at the southwest corner of Willow and Lincoln. He was on the board of the Farmer's Union, founded in May 1874 and later served as its president. He was instrumental in founding the Willow Glen street railroad. Mayor of San Jose in 1884, Settle was a Republican who had little regard for journalists. They returned the favor by referring to him as "Czar Settlesky." He operated the largest prune dehydrator in the county in 1876 for the Alden Fruit and Vegetable Company, turning out 4,000 lbs of prunes a day. A charter member of San Jose Grange No. 10, he was a leader in conserving state water resources.

Sunol
San Jose's first postmaster bought 2,219 acres of the Rancho de Los Coches from an Indian named Roberto, the original grantee. Willow Glen Streets named for members of the Suñol/Sansevain family include Pedro, Paula, Josepha and Carlos. Carlos Street is now named Fruitdale Avenue. Lonus Street is Sunol spelled backwards.

Telfer
Named for William Telfer, a business associate of developer Thomas A. Herschbach. William Telfer was an insurance agent who developed a subdivision along Telfer Avenue; Thomas A. Herschbach developed and built several houses for him on Telfer Avenue.

Whitehurst
Named for farmer J. S. Whitehurst who owned eight acres fronting on Minnesota around 1886.

Bibliography and Resources

Material from this book comes from many sources. Where possible, we have tried to verify sources and locate original documents for our narrative. We do however, welcome additions, corrections, and comments. Please direct them to the publisher, Renasci, P. O. Box 28338, San Jose, CA 95159-8338.

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Landmarks in Willow Glen

State and National Landmarks

Roberto-Suñol Adobe
The most important registered landmark in the Willow Glen area is the Roberto-Suñol Adobe. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is also a landmark of the State of California. The house is located at 770 Lincoln Avenue.

County Landmarks

Buffington House
Located at 1224 and 1226 Lincoln Avenue, this shingle style house of the early 20th century is thought to be the work of architect Frank D. Wolfe.

Cozzens House
Listed on both the County Inventory of Historic Sites as well as the City of San Jose historic inventory, this home was built for a pioneer Willow Glen orchardist William Cozzens. Located at 1195 Minnesota Avenue, the structure is an Italianate Victorian reportedly built in the mid 1870's. It was originally built by William Cozzens, a Willow Glen fruit producer.

Kirk-Farrington House
The Kirk-Farrington house, located at 1615 Dry Creek Road, is an Italianate Victorian built in 1878 Theophilus Kirk. It is both a County landmark and a City landmark. The house also appears in the inventory of the Historic American Building Survey (HABS). It is listed as City of San Jose Landmark # 11.

Maynard House
A Queen Anne Victorian, the Maynard House is located at 1151 Minnesota Avenue. It was built in 1892 by Edward Maynard. He reportedly built the house as an engagement present but when the house was completed, the engagement was broken. He is said to have lived in the house only a few years. Construction started in 1890 and was completed in 1892. It is reportedly 5,000 square feet.

Richards House
Located at 1550 Hicks, the original Beaux Artes Colonial was built in 1915 by Dr. Charles Richards. He was the first radiologist in the city of San Jose, and built a big house in Naglee Park designed by Wolfe and McKenzie costing $7,000 before he moved to the Willow Glen area. It is presumed that the architects for his Willow Glen home was also Wolfe & McKenzie. A talented musician, Richards' special interest was the San Jose Symphony. The house has been extensively remodeled.

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About the Author

April Hope Halberstadt is an urban geographer, historian, and preservationist who has lived in San Jose since 1973. She has written books on historic railroad depots, farm nostalgia, tractor history, and portraits of two agricultural machinery giants, J.I. Case and the Hart-Parr/Oliver companies. Her husband, Hans Halberstadt, is also a writer and photographer. The Halberstadts live in a Naglee Park (San Jose) bungalow, built in 1908.

The Willow Glen Neighborhood
Then and Now

Willow Glen has been a unique Santa Clara Valley community for more than a century. Its bountiful orchards supplied the 49ers, then became the heart of California's fruit industry. Once incorporated as a city, Willow Glen retains its identity as a neighborhood whose residents actively participate in local issues. Willow Glen remains a Santa Clara Valley treasure.

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