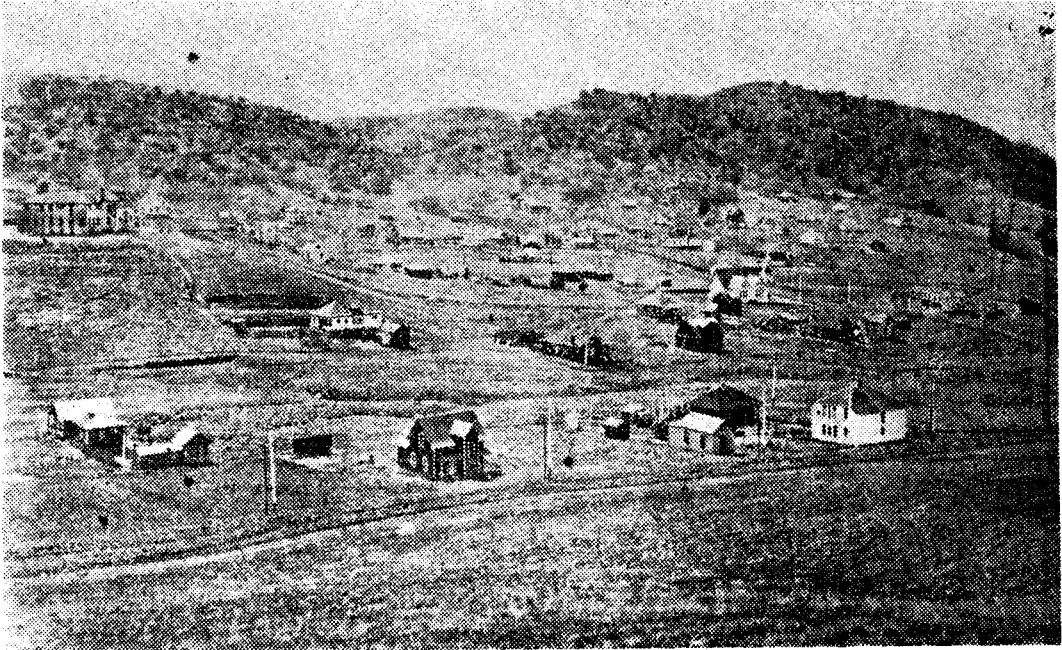


Hermon District--early 1900



Hermon District of Highland Park, located near junction of South Avenue 60 and Monterey Road, looked like this around turn of the century. Big building on hill at left is Los Angeles Pacific College, recently condemned and due to be replaced by more modern facilities. Road in foreground is South Avenue 60, long before black top went in. (See story at left by early resident of area. From historical collection of Security First National Bank).



HERMON, 1959—Dense growth of trees and many homes now dot landscape in Highland Park's Hermon District. Pacific College building still stands on hill at left. Photo was taken from South Avenue 60. (Green Sheet Photo—12th in Series)

Resident recalls early period of Hermon area

By Gladys Cornell

In this hectic age of om bombs, jet planes, stream-lined automobiles with more horsepower than comfort, and murder every day of the week, I find myself thinking more and more of those golden days of childhood in the Hermon District of Highland Park.

We lived in a small valley, surrounded by hills on three sides and the arroyo seco to the west. Our small village was named Hermon by the early settlers, Free Methodist, who established the small vine-covered church, and the school on the hill, known to everyone as "the seminary." We all attended the grammar school, Hermon School, later named Bushnell School, after its first principal, Miss Rose Bushnell. When we were ready for high school, many of us attended the Free Methodist "seminary" on the hill. Those who went to public high school had to walk to Franklin High. There was no bus in those days and it was a long walk.

WALKS TO AVENUE

Although there was a small grocery store in Hermon, we walked about a mile to the "avenue" — Highland Park's then small shopping center — to do most of our shopping.

Fruits and vegetables were often purchased from the door-to-door peddlers who came through our village two or three times a week. Most families had vegetable gardens and fruit trees in their backyards. Our yard always boasted a horrendous scarecrow to frighten the birds when the fruits and berries began to ripen. We children received many scratches, picking the luscious blackberries from our own vines.

All day long we could hear the joyous song of birds. Flocks of wild pigeons and doves fed on the oat-covered hills. Now, the roar of heavy traffic drowns the meadow-lark's sweet paen, and we are lost in the cacophony of busy suburban life.

Those were the days, when gentle dairy herds grazed upon our verdant hills, and often, in the spring of the year, shepherds brought in their sheep and set up solitary camps in small ravines. The shepherds were always bearded and not too clean, but romantic figures to the village children. The pleasant tinkle of the sheep bells drifted down from the drowsing hills, as the sheep moved slowly from slope to slope, herded by the alert, shaggy sheep dogs. I can remember stormy days, when brooding clouds hovered low over the hilltops, blending with the grey, indeterminate mass of sheep huddled closely together in the rain.

DAISIES STARRED THE SLOPES

Wildflowers were prodigal, and we climbed the hills to pick native lupines and bluebells, or yellow daisies that starred the grassy slopes and ravines. Sometimes we were lucky, and found the Johnny-Jump-up, wistful brown-eyed cousin to the blue wood violet of the Pacific Northwest. We watched for the treacherous poison oak, which twined itself through the thick underbrush and about the oak trees.

Hundreds of birds nested in the trees and grubbed for food in the lush leaf-mold beneath them. In season, we carried sacks for the delicious black walnuts, to be used for fudge or cakes.

Although a few people owned early-vintage cars, those were still horse and buggy days. It was a great thrill on Sundays to see our sister from Glendale, jogging down the rutted dirt road in her "gentleman friend's" buggy, the same buggy which he used in his plumbing business.

Transportation to the city, or Los Angeles, was by street car, and we had to walk a good mile to the street car line. On the other side of our hills to the south, we could hear the rumbly short line to Pasadena, Monrovia and other nearby towns.

NO ALARM CLOCKS

We didn't bother with alarm clocks. We could count on being awakened by the challenging crows of the many village cocks.

On warm spring and summer evenings, the children gathered at the corners, for games of run-sheep-run, or ball. Although our father was stern and held a tight rein on us, I always had time to play, and time to dream as all children do.

Before Thanksgiving there was always a mincemeat making day, and we had both pumpkin and mincemeat pies throughout the winter months.

When the fruit on our trees was ripe enough, the whole family yworked to help with the canning. We children helped mostly with the picking and peeling, and our parents cooked the fruit and put it in the sterile mason jars.

MILE HIGH COMES

In summer the ice cream wagon, that delightful relic of the golden days, painted with pink diagonal stripes, and wearing a faded blue awning, rattled down our street every afternoon. We could hear the clopping hooves of the friendly, dappled horse, long before we saw the wagon. When the small, toast-colored Italian vendor pulled up with a loud "Whoa," we were waiting in the street with our nickels clutched in sticky hands. Those crisp cones, heaped high with chocolate or strawberry ice cream, are a very pleasant memory.

We earned our candy and ice cream money by saving sacks and bottles. Once a week the "rags, bottles, sacks" man came jogging down the main street in his old, sagging wagon, drawn by an elderly, white nag.

Yes, I think often of my peaceful early childhood days in that pleasant little valley of Hermon surrounded by hills, far from the busy city.