



HIGHLAND PARK'S "HIDDEN LAKE"—Highland Reservoir, located at Avenue 63 and Crescent Streets in Highland Park, which holds more than 20 million gallons of water, has seldom been seen in "undressed" condition (center and right photos) by local residents. Wooden reservoir roof (left) was in such a bad state several years ago that Department of

Water and Power re-roofed the entire covering, taking these photos during the course of the work. Note rowboat tied to post in photo at right, used by senior pump man Jack Shaw for inspection "cruises." The reservoir is the source of most of water distributed in northeast and east area of Los Angeles. (Dept. of Water and Power Photos)

Colorful California landmark of northeast community hidden behind Burbank School

By WAYNE WILSON

A strange-looking row of wooden corrugations directly behind Luther Burbank Junior High School has been the subject of much curiosity over the years here, with many visitors and residents alike wondering about its function.

Giving the appearance of a buckled hard-wood floor, it is actually a roof covering more than 20,000,000 gallons of water at Avenue 63 and Crescent streets.

Highland Reservoir and the adjacent Garvanza Pumping Station is the source of most water distributed in the northeast and east area of Los Angeles by the city's Department of Water and Power.

BUILT IN '89

The Garvanza water system was built in 1889 by a man named Rogers and at the time was only the third pumping system in the City of Los Angeles.

An "ancient" water wheel in the Los Angeles River was the first and a system from Buena

Vista Reservoir in Elysian Park to the old Plaza downtown was the second.

The Garvanza pumping system, including the Highland Reservoir, was purchased by the Los Angeles Water Works Co., an independent corporation, and later leased and bought by the city.

Those were the days when North Figueroa Street was known as Grasshopper Avenue and Avenue 63 was named Latrobe.

54 YEARS AGO

In 1902, Buena Vista and Highland pumps supplied the entire pumping area of Los Angeles, using 337 miles of pipelines to accommodate 23,180 services for the population of 120,000.

Today, the same pumps would last only 19 minutes, with more than 5400 miles of pipelines to 561,000 services for more than 2,000,000 persons.

With the Buena Vista plant now abandoned, Highland Reservoir will be the oldest in the city still in use.

FIRST METER

The first water meter in Los Angeles was installed in the Highland Park area on Aug. 16, 1889, by Charles Stein's Winery.

The source of most of the water for the reservoir at that time was the Los Angeles River and a series of natural wells near Avenue 45 and York Boulevard. Where Sparklett's Company now stands.

Today, most of the water for the Highland Reservoir comes from the Hollywood Reservoir, which gets its water from the Owens River Aqueduct, the Metropolitan Water District in Eagle Rock, and Silver Lake.

According to Jack Shaw, senior pump man at Garvanza Station, the reservoir has been roofed twice, and its present capacity is considered to be 20,536,000 gallons, although it was originally designed to hold 19,979,245 gallons.

OLDER THAN CITY

Marvin Owen, engineer in charge of pumping plants and reservoirs, related a colorful story of the history of Los Angeles water rights to the Journal recently, pointing out that they were actually established two years before he city was founded.

According to Owen, the Los Angeles River was discovered on Aug. 2, 1769 by a Spainard named

Gaspar de Portola. He named it Rio Porciuncula.

King Carlos III of Spain decided a few years later to establish a buffer colony between the Spanish villages of San Diego and Monterey, proclaiming that all water from the Rio Porciuncula would belong to the people of that village.

And, on Sept. 4, 1781, 11 families from San Diego marched northward to what is now called the Plaza near Union Station and named their community El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora La Reina de Los Angeles.

Forty-three letters were in the name of a village containing only 44 residents.

Highland Park is now part of that "village" and a portion of its colorful history is reflected in the cool stillness under that strange-looking row of wooden corrugations at Avenue 63 and Crescent streets.

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