

Guided by History, a Blog about History & Community posted by Ryan Baum on 6/1/2011

When most people think of California, they think of sun and gold. When thinking of California and oil together, they think of the automobile lifestyle and gasoline consumption. Likewise, when people think of Orange County, Calif. , most think of Disneyland or its many fabulous Pacific Ocean towns. Few, however, might realize that California and Orange County have deep roots in oil.




Here is the story of one thread of California's tapestry with oil.

For centuries, Native Americans used pitch or tar from natural seeps in Southern California for caulking canoes and sealing water containers. One of the original Spanish land grants in the Los Angeles area was Rancho La Brea, which contained what is still known as the La Brea Tar Pits. (Brea is Spanish for tar.)

Commercial oil development in California began in 1865, six years after the world's first well drilled in Titusville, Pa. The first California well was in Humboldt County in the far northern part of the State. A decade later, oil was discovered in Los Angeles County in 1876. Four years after that, oil was discovered in northern Orange County in what would become the Brea-Olinda field.

Support towns sprang up quickly around these new fields. Workers, suppliers, and businesses blossomed, fed by the black gold pumped to the surface. Among the towns founded along the base of the Puente Hills was Brea, incorporated in 1917. Naturally, a bank quickly followed. A group of local investors formed Oilfields National Bank of Brea and received national bank charter number 13001 on October 14, 1926. The President was Alonzo Brown and Vice President was William Jackson, a doctor at the Brea Emergency Hospital.

As with many banks during the Depression, Oilfields National was severely stressed. Similar to other banks such as Coast National, it sought a new charter to gain a new beginning and allow for an orderly resolution of problem loans on its original charter. Consequently, it received a new charter number 13877 as the Oilfields National Bank in Brea.

The Brea-Olinda field has produced nearly 450 million barrels of oil since first discovered. Amazingly it still has over 400 wells which continue to produce 132 years after the field's discovery. 

Oh, and Oilfields National Bank continued independently until 1955, when it merged into the California Bank, a precursor to First Interstate that merged with Wells Fargo in 1996. So just like the oil fields of its naming, Oilfields National Bank, as part of Well Fargo, is still producing today too!

http://blog.wellsfargo.com/guidedbyhistory/2011/06/a_tapestry_of_oil.html

Shirley Mae Bickel

Bickel, Shirley Mae 78, died December 22, 2011 at her home in Brea. Shirley was born May 12, 1933 in Albany, Oregon. She was a long time Brea resident, moving there June 17, 1950, the day she married the love of her life, Robert "Bob" Bickel, who survives along with their three children, John (Pam), Jim (Joy), and Karen. She was a phenomenal grandmother to her 10 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, and 1 great-great-grandchild.

Shirley started her banking career at the Oilfield National Bank in Brea, and retired after 25 years from First Interstate Bank. After retirement she kept herself busy by being involved with The Brea Senior Center, and many other community activities.

A celebration of Shirley's life will be held at St. Angelas Merici Catholic Church in Brea on Saturday January 14th at 10 a.m. In lieu of flowers please send donations to St. Joseph Hospice 1845 W. Orangewood Ave. Suite 100A, Orange, CA 92868.

Published in Orange County Register on January 4, 2012

Oilfields National Bank, Brea



Feb. 1941

Society

Lincoln Given in Form of Farewell Party

Mrs. Alex Forkus, Jr., was hostess in her home Tuesday at luncheon for a number of Mrs. Don Churchill and Mrs. Maude Churchill were the honored guests. They are leaving in the near future for the Don Churchill home in Connecticut.

A Valentine theme was used and mainly full cups added to the table setting. A Basin course of chicken à la King was served.

Those present besides the hostess and the two honored guests, were Mrs. Frank V. Stupp, Mrs. Marie Triffin, Mrs. Ray Clouston.

Frances Smith enjoys "Fantasia" with Club Members.

Miss Frances Smith was among those who recently enjoyed "Fantasia" Walt Disney's new picture in Los Angeles when quite a group of Pullerford Junior school members went to see the popular production.

After the theater party the group stopped at a restaurant to top off the evening with a bite to eat.



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LINCOLN

1809 1865

Abraham Lincoln was born February 12, 1809. On this anniversary of his birth, the officers and personnel of Oilfield National Bank pause in due respect for the unusual qualities his memory commands. His honesty, indeed, his integrity in mind and his undoubted sincerity of purpose are qualities that this institution holds high in its scale of values; qualities that it attempts to emulate in all its dealings.