

Easter 1958



EASTER BUNNIES (Junior Grade)—Preparing to hide 75 dozen Easter eggs in the park for the second annual Kiwanis-sponsored Easter egg hunt scheduled for Saturday are George Miller, committee chairman; Richard Blake, committee member; and Ernie Fritcher, Kiwanis president. PROGRESS PHOTO

## Annual Easter Egg Hunt Slated Saturday Morning at City Park

*George Miller*

Christmas 1957



## The Bickel Family

by Bob Bickel

In 1917, Velma Catherine Gray and Frank Bickel came to Brea, California because Velma's stepmother, "Haney" Blanchard, and her husband, Ben, lived here. Eventually, Frank and Velma bought the house next door to the Blanchards at 210 N. Orange, where they lived until 1942. Frances Elizabeth Bickel was born August 27, 1921 at Fullerton General on Pomona Avenue in Fullerton. Robert Gray Bickel was born June 16, 1927 at Fullerton General.

Back in the '20s and '30s there were fields all around, and the children could play anywhere—in fields and streets. We took our BB guns and hunted rabbits where Kirkhill Rubber is now. Barbecues were held in the park, and Ed Peterkin would bring field or packing boxes for us to play in and use for seats and tables at our picnics.

Frances graduated Brea Olinda High School in 1939 and married Grover Miller the same year. They had three sons, Mike, Steve and Tony, who still live in Southern California. Frances passed away in 1993.

Bob Bickel graduated BOHS in 1945. He and Shirley, who was from El Segundo, were married in 1950 at St. Mary's in Fullerton. Their reception was held at the Woman's Club in Brea. They lived behind Roy Eubanks at 210 S. Orange, first downstairs for \$35 a month and then upstairs for \$50 a month.

Eventually they bought at 507 S. Poplar. Shirley was working at Oilfields Bank in 1951, and Bob at the Brea Post Office (1949-1951). Bob joined Union Oil in October, 1951, and for a time was in the Police Department reserve. The Bickels moved to 831 Lemon around 1955.

Bob and Shirley Bickel have three children: John Matthew (1952), Jim Francis (1953), and Karen Lee (1955). While raising their children, Bob and Shirley were active in Brea PTA, scouts, little league and sports boosters.

John Bickel is married to Pam Kaiser. They have a daughter, Allison, a son, Sean, and a grandchild, Sidney. Jim Bickel has five children, Chad, Jill (who is expecting), Ora, Crystalline and Angel. Karen has three daughters, Janice, Katie and Stacie (a newborn).

Bob Bickel retired in 1986 and Shirley in 1992. They enjoy traveling and going to openings at the Brea Gallery.

July, 1996

# SCHWEITZER FAMILY

Frank Joseph Schweitzer was a long time resident and civic leader of Brea. Born in Toledo, Ohio in 1877 Frank moved to Olinda in 1905, several years before the formation of the township of Brea. At the time he was a machinist and obtained a job in an oil tool shop under the direction of W. D. Shaffer. In July of that year he sent for and married his longtime sweetheart, Julia E. Meissner. They had a daughter Dorothy born in 1909 and a son Frank Jr. born in 1911. In 1912 the family built a house on Madrona Ave. in Brea in which they lived until 1925. Frank then built a house on East Elm where he planted a five acre orange grove.

Frank was very active in the fight to incorporate the City of Brea. Even though he did not seek public office, three months after the city incorporated in 1917, Councilman M.I. McCarty resigned and Frank was asked to fill his post. He served in this capacity until 1938, 21 years! Throughout these early years Frank was very involved in establishing the necessary services and operations a new city demanded. He headed the drive to acquire the necessary land for a city park and a city hall building, he worked for the construction of a sewage treatment plant and bringing water to the citizen's of Brea. He designed the initial layout of City Hall Park as well as the "Brea Welcomes You" sign that once spanned Brea Blvd. Although he had many opportunities to become Mayor, he always refused stating he would rather be a worker than a boss. However he did serve as Mayor Pro-tem on many different occasions.

Upon moving to Brea in 1912, Frank became superintendent of a gasoline extraction plant until it was sold to a major oil company. He then, along with a few friends, began Brea Tool Works becoming its first Secretary/Treasurer. It eventually sold to Baash-Ross Tool Company which later became Shaffer Tool Works. Frank then became superintendent of Brea Brick Company until the source of clay was exhausted and the concern moved to Alhambra. He then worked for Duro Engineering and later back to Shaffer Tool Works as Superintendent and Chief Engineer. While at Shaffer Tool Works he designed and patented many oil well drilling devices until his retirement in 1942.

Frank and his wife Julia were both very active in community affairs. In 1914 they helped establish the Brea Christian Church. Julia was its first Choir Director and Superintendent of Sunday School classes for more than 30 years. In 1947 the Sunday School building was dedicated in her name upon her death. She was also a charter member of the Brea Women's Club. Frank was an active member of the Chamber of Commerce as well as The Brea Lions Club until his death in 1960.

Frank's son, Frank Joseph Schweitzer Jr. was born January 8, 1911 while his parents were living in Olinda. He entered Brea Grammar School, now the Brea Junior High School the first year it opened. He entered Brea-Olinda High School and was among the first class to graduate that entered as freshman. After high school he went to Fullerton Junior College and later the University of California at Berkeley majoring in Engineering. He returned to Shaffer Tool Works working for his father. Upon Frank Sr.'s retirement Frank Jr. stepped in as the new Chief Engineer.

In 1938 on a blind date, Frank Jr. met Eltha Ruth Huntington of Anaheim. They became engaged and married on June 2, 1939. The couple had three sons, Charles Lewis born 1942, Donald Laurence born 1947 and James William born 1953. Frank Jr., like his father, was a very active member of the community. He joined the Brea Lions Club in 1948 becoming its President in 1978. He was awarded the highest honor Lions Club International can bestow on a fellow lion, the "Melvin Jones Fellow Award" in 1983. Frank Jr. ran for and was elected to the City Council in 1950. He served for over 12 years becoming Mayor in 1960 - 62. While on the Council, Frank was most proud of spearheading the annexation of a large portion of land just east of town. Brea beat Fullerton by just one day, largely due to Frank's efforts.

During and after Frank Jr.'s tenure on the City Council he was very active with many other city and community projects. He was a member of the Brea Christian Church, The North Orange County YMCA and the American Red Cross. He along with LaVita Daetweiller organized Brea Bonanza Days, now the Brea Country Fair, as well as the Brea Historical Society. Many of the pictures the society now has are pictures Frank took or collected throughout his lifetime. He has been honored with many awards including the Brea's "Citizen of the Year" in 1966, "Citizen's Make a Difference" award and "Citizen Grand Marshall" of Brea's 75th year celebration. After a lifetime of service Frank passed away August 17, 1993.

Ruth Schweitzer, has also been an active Brean. She has been a Member and President of the Brea Women's Club as well as the Brea Republican Women. She has worked actively with Meals on Wheels and the Brea Christian Church for many years. She too has been bestowed with many awards and honors, one of which was "Brea's Woman of the Year" in 1976.

Brea Man of the Year 1966

Founder of the Brea chapter of the American Red Cross

Chairman of the Brea Golden Jubilee

Chairman of the US Bicentennial celebration

Co-Originator of the Brea Liberty Bell idea

Co-founder of the Brea Historical Society

Co-founder of Brea Bonanza Days (now the Country Fair)

Member and President of the North Orange County YMCA

Citizen's Grand Marshall at Brea's 75th year celebration

**Frank J. Schweitzer Sr.**

Moved to Brea in 1912

One of founding officers of Brea Tool Works (later Shaffer Tool Works)

Played vital role in Brea's acquisition of water

Charter member and Co-founder of Brea Christian Church

On Brea City Council from 1917 - 38

Member of Brea Lions Club from 1948

Designed the "Brea Welcomes You" sign

Negotiated sale of land from Union Oil for City Hall Park

Designed layout of City Hall Park

Negotiated with Architect for design of City Hall building

Planted and cared for first rose garden in City Hall Park

**Frank J. Schweitzer Jr.**

Born in Olinda in 1911, moved to Brea in 1912

One of the first lifeguards at the City Plunge

Brea City Council from 1950 - 62

Brea Mayor 1960 - 62

Active member of Brea Christian Church 1914 - 92

Member Brea Lions Club 1951 - 93

President Brea Lions Club 1978 -79

Honored with Lions International Melvin Jones award

LLOYD AND FRANCES REESE  
JANET, MARTHA AND CAROL  
1953-1990

Lloyd Reese and his wife Frances moved to Brea in 1953 to live in a new house on Alder Street (the edge of town) where their children, Janet, Martha and Carol, were born. They later moved to Palm Drive, Larchwood Drive and finally to Santiago Canyon Way (the site of the old Reese Ranch).

Lloyd was employed by Aerojet-General Corporation, working on Minutemen missile projects when he became interested in city government. He served on the Brea Planning Commission for six years, was a City Council member for four years and mayor of Brea from 1962-1964. While on the City Council, there were many late nights as the city of Brea struggled with growth policies, appointing a new police chief, fire chief and city administrator and adopting an ambitious 20-Year Master Plan for regional parks.

It all became worthwhile when the Reeses represented the city of Brea at the U.S. Mayors' Conference in Hawaii where Frances met President Kennedy and Lloyd revisited what was left of his old World War II U.S. Marine Corps training base. While taking in the beauty of the islands, Lloyd expounded the glories of Brea when meeting with "big city" mayors.

Lloyd also served the city on the Orange County Citizens Direction Finding Commission. He was president of the Brea Lions Club, an associate of North Orange County Realty and served on the Southern California Bank Board until his death in 1990.

Frances was a member of the Mariposa School faculty for many years. She served as a teacher, substitute teacher, librarian and started the computer lab. Through the years, she was active in the Brea Congregational Church, Girl Scouts, P.T.A., Brea Women's Club (an honored "Woman of the Year") and the Republican Women of Brea. Frances now lives on Balboa Island.

Janet, Martha and Carol were active in the Brea schools. All daughters are university graduates and actively pursue careers and homemaking.

## The Burt Family Burt's TV and Appliances

by Mae Burt

In the spring of 1950 my husband, Jess, and I became aware that the area where we lived in Los Angeles seemed an unsafe place to rear our three sons. Jess had grown up in the unincorporated area known as Florence, near Huntington Park. During high school he'd had a summer job here at Kirkhill Rubber where he made beach balls. So, when we were looking for a place to move our business, Burt's TV and Appliances, we met Thomas Kirkhill in Brea. He assured us that Brea was a growing, thriving town with a great future... the best place to locate a business.

The old residence at 114 South Pomona Ave. was for sale. We agreed to the terms of the seller, Claude Cheek, and prepared to move in when school was out. We had heard great things about Brea's school system.

All the stores were "mom and pop," and Ronald, Gilbert and Douglas grew up considering the owners as friends and not just merchants. Mr. and Mrs. Vogtman ran the Brea Market on our south side, and Bob and Mattie Shanks owned the barber shop on the north.

Soon we needed more room, and we made plans to build on the rear of our lot. However, after we had the permits and materials, Jess was seriously injured in an accident and I had to proceed with the building. Although relatives came to help on weekends, most of the time I worked alone. I finished the roof by November 1st, just before it began to rain. Then in 1958 we bought a home on Alder Street, tore down the old frame building and bought the barber shop next door.

With its "hometown" atmosphere, Brea was a great town to grow up in. Our boys loved the schools and their classmates. I became involved in church activities and the PTA. I also joined the Brea Woman's Club and enjoyed working for the community with the other members for many years.

The boys grew up and married local girls. Ron married Shirley Margerisan of Brea, Doug married Judy McGowan of Brea, and Gil married Cheryl Waddell of La Habra. These couples gave us eight grandchildren, who in turn have produced (so far) eight "greats," four in Nevada and four in Arizona.

During the '70s Jess's health failed, and the property was sold to Bill Brundige. Jess died in 1975 and Ron in 1983, but I am still living in Brea.

July, 1996

## THE RUSSELL FAMILY

In 1912, James E. Russell, his wife Sadie, and their three younger sons, Robert, Donald, and Melvin, moved to Brea, then called Randolph. Mr. Russell soon opened a watch repair and jewelry store while Mrs. Russell managed her music store in the same building. Sadie was active in PTA, women's groups, and the Brea Congregational Church, of which she was one of the founders.

Robert, who was 15 and an animal lover, had captured and tamed (somewhat) a local bobcat kitten which he named Stutz. The cat's favorite lounging place was on one of the store counters, much to the distaste of Mrs. Russell. She insisted that the cat had to go, so it was sold to a passing circus.

Robert (Bob) married his wife Mabel in 1918 and they moved to Blythe for about 2 years. After moving back to Brea, they began their family. Their 3 surviving children were Roberta, Dean, and Willa.

After working 41 years for Union Oil Company, Bob retired. He passed away in 1983 and Mabel passed away in 1986.

Roberta (Bobbie) married Glen Cutright in 1943 and lives in Downey. Dean married Sarah Collins in 1946 and lives in Elk Grove, CA. Willa (Billie) married Gerald Bowland in 1949 and still lives in Brea. Gerald retired from teaching at Brea Canyon High School. They have 5 children and 5 grandchildren.

June 1996