

In Tualatin the 20s Roared Then Came Crashing Down

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Business was booming in Tualatin after the First World War, as gasoline filling stations replaced the old Blacksmith shops and farmers hauled wagon loads of onions, potatoes and grain to the Southern Pacific depot to be loaded onto rail cars and shipped to Portland or San Francisco.

Although the area was incorporated in 1913, prohibition later closed the saloons, but the El Rey still operated as a pool hall in Old Town. Kids were caddying at the golf course, picking berries, or weeding onions to earn spending money for school clothes or a bicycle, and to boot often helped milk a line of cows before walking off to school.

Both elementary and high school students were being taught in the 1900 schoolhouse. In 1922 twenty students graduated from the high school, many of whom matured to become fixtures of Tualatin life: Beatrice Cole, first woman principal; Pearl Krause Jeager, who taught multiple generations of Tualatin's 4th graders; Nellie Wesch Elwert, who later became famous as Tigard High School's commercial teacher; the father of myself and my four sisters, dairy and produce farmer and Cowboy Extraordinaire, my dad, Arthur 'Art' Martinazzi.

Tualatin built its first City Hall along Boones Ferry Road in 1923 on land donated by Zeke Eddy. The building cost \$1146.90, serving as a location for city council and fire department meetings for four decades.

The Methodist church, built in 1910 burned down in 1926, and the congregation had a new craftsman style church built along Boones Ferry Road. Caroline Smith, of the Smith sawmill and brickyard family, donated the property for the church site. That craftsman-style building still stands, moved to a new location in Old Town, and now serves as the Tualatin Heritage Center.

Then in 1929 the stock market crashed, throwing the economy into a tailspin, and affecting Tualatin residents just like the rest of the country. No jobs were to be had, and farmers could hardly sell their produce for the cost of growing and harvesting. Families moved in together to share living expenses, and the row of fine houses along Boones Ferry went a-begging for paint and repair. Hobos wandered around the countryside in search of food wherever they could find it. Jane Ibach told me there was a "jungle" or hobo camp near the Oregon Electric tracks. Often she would offer some of the men a good home cooked meal in exchange for wood chopping or other tasks. It was rumored that families who were generous with handouts had their property flagged as a signal to other homeless men.

The government organized the Civilian Conservation Corp and set up camps where men could find work building needed infrastructure. Local men Ted Saarinen, Leonard Pohl, Bob Gilliland, Wayne Howard and others worked in the Coast Range building bridges, roads and lookout stations to fight fire.

Pay was \$30 a month and they were required to send \$25 back to their families.

Lack of jobs devastated the community, and some families resorted to accepting government relief, a type of welfare. I remember (barely) my mom and dad saying they would starve before they took relief.

The old school ended high school classes in 1936, as the school was too crowded and run down, but grade school students were to stay on for three more years. Tigard had a high school and Sherwood was building one, and the Sherwood School District asked Tualatin residents to petition the school board to send their high school students to Sherwood.

Recently the Tigard Historical Society donated a document to the Tualatin Historical Society which included 70 signatures from tax payers in the Tualatin district. Stated on the petition were these reasons for choosing Sherwood:

1. Sherwood, like Tualatin, was a rural community; Tigard was suburban.
2. The tax rate for Sherwood was 2 mills cheaper than Tigard.
3. Going to Sherwood would eliminate students having to cross at Galbreath, the most dangerous railroad crossing in the state, with five fatalities. (Galbreath would have been the railroad crossing just north of the Tualatin bridge.)
4. Sherwood High School will be opened in the fall of 1937.

No one knows for sure how the school board voted, but for years Tualatin students could choose either high school. In 1938 the old school was so full that the first grade students held classes at the City Hall on Boones Ferry Road. My sister Joanne and my neighbor Rosanne Harr attended there.

Then, with funds from the Public Works Administration and local bond sales, work on the new brick school

began. Local men got jobs working on the school building, revving up the sluggish economy, and the new school opened in the fall of 1940.



Loyce Martinazzi was born and raised in Tualatin and is passionate about Tualatin History. She is currently Master of Winona Grange, Co-Founder of the Tualatin Historical Society and Co-Author of *Tualatin...From the Beginning*.



The row of nice houses along Tualatin Road fell into disrepair during the great depression years.



The Nyberg sisters playing in their dad's old gravel pit near the present day Tualatin Woods.



Tualatin's football team in the 1930s. Johnny Jurgens third from the left, back row. Coach is Don Galbreath, and Clayton Nyberg is the little water boy.



When the Tualatin River flooded its banks in 1937, men in a rowboat picked up kids and took them to school.



Tualatin High School girls posing by their school, around 1920.



The Blank and Byrom families about to take a ride in their car. Notice that the top is canvas, which could be rolled up, making the car a convertible.



Cars lined up along the Oregon Electric Railroad. July 4th celebrations were often in held in the park to the right. The Smith sawmill buildings are at the far end, close to the river.

