

City of Norwalk



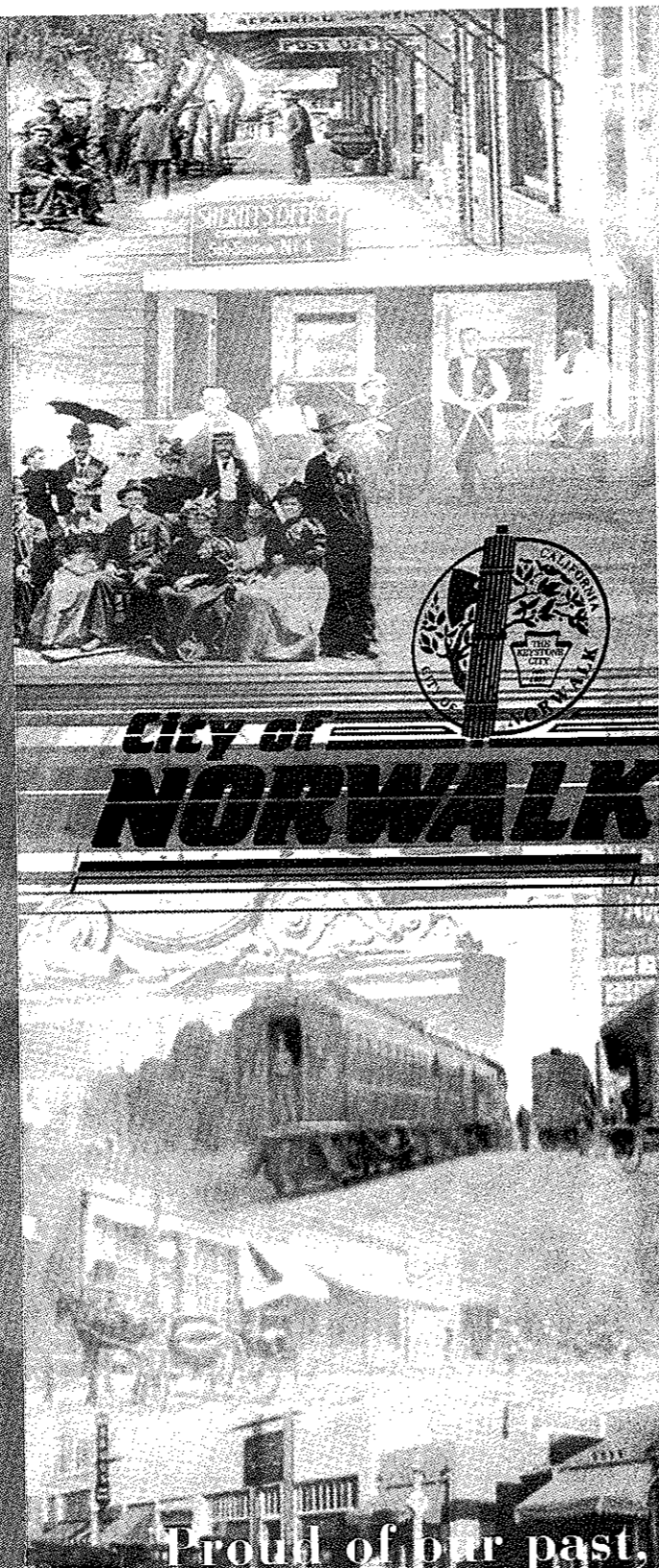
The Norwalk emblem consists of a bundle of rods, having among them an axe with a projecting blade and an olive branch. The emblem denotes power and strength of government. The branch of leaves signifies integrity, growth in knowledge and understanding.

Did you Know...

- The oldest standing building is the Gilbert Sproul Museum
- Diana's Tortillas packaging has "Made in Norwalk" printed on it.
- The darkest soil is found North of Imperial Hwy.
- The lightest soil is found South of Alondra Blvd.
- Norwalk has been in many motion pictures, feature films, television shows, commercials, and music videos, such as Grease 2, Karate Kid, Speed, The Wonder Years, The A-Team, CHiPs, and Benedryl, Levis, LIFE, Oreo Cookies commercials
- Beginning his run for the White House, Jimmy Carter visited Norwalk in 1974 to help campaign for Norwalk Councilman Bob White who was seeking a seat in the House of Representatives. Other Norwalk locals that followed political footsteps were former council members, Senator Cecil Green and Congresswoman Grace Napolitano
- The Norwalk All-City Band served as the official band from Southern California at the White House Inaugural of President Jimmy Carter in 1976.



City Hall
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Norwalk, California 90651-1030
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- 1869** Gilbert & Atwood Sproul purchased 463 acres of land at \$11.00 an acre from Charles F. Brown and Alfred Robinson. This area became the City of Norwalk.
- 1874** Gilbert Sproul filed the first official surveyed map with the County of Los Angeles. He also donated 23 acres to Southern Pacific Railroad for the train station and stipulated a passage stop.
- 1879** Norwalk Depot was erected and Front Street was established as center of town.
- 1880** D. D. Johnston organized the town's school system. He also provided Tom Lumbard the money for Norwalk's first industry—the cheese factory.
- 1887** Edwin Cawston brought 52 ostriches from South Africa. His farm was located on Bloomfield Ave.
- 1893** First Edition of the Norwalk Call was published.
- 1905** Natural gas came to Norwalk.
- 1912** Electricity made Norwalk a brighter place.
- 1914** Phone Service arrived connecting Norwalk to Los Angeles.
- 1916** Metropolitan State Hospital opened in Norwalk.
- 1923** Norwalk Chamber of Commerce organized. Construction of Excelsior Union High School began.
- 1933** March 10th 5:56pm, earthquake rocks Norwalk.
- 1934** 20th Century Fox selected Norwalk as the site to film "The Chief" starring Jane Withers & Ed Wynn.
- 1937** Massive flood cut all rail and road service to and from Norwalk for two days.
- 1939** Southeast Recreation & Park District formed to preserve public spaces for relaxation.
- 1940** Southeast Recreation & Park District conducted ground breaking to create Norwalk Park. Norwalk's population grew to 5,775 largely due to the war industry.
- 1946** Hollywood returned to Norwalk as Lana Turner and John Garfield star in "The Postman Always Rings Twice."
- 1950** Population recorded at 35,000
- 1951** Norwalk Square opened as one-stop shopping center.
- 1955** Groundbreaking for the Santa Ana Freeway begins. The community grew to 75,000. Plans for the Cerritos Junior College District approved
- 1957** August 26, Norwalk was certified by the Secretary of State as California's fifteenth largest city.
- 1961** Norwalk adopted Hermosillo, Mexico as its Sister City.
- 1963** Southeast Superior Court selected Norwalk as its new home.
- 1970** Norwalk broke ground for the current Sheriff's station located on Civic Center Drive.
- 1974** "The "Hustle Bus" began service in Norwalk.
- 1975** Hargitt House was donated to the City to be used as a museum.
- 1976** Peg Nelson became the first woman to be elected a member of the City Council. Patriots concourse begins construction to commemorate the city's bicentennial.
- 1980** The Southeast Park District dissolved after 40 years. The City of Norwalk assumed responsibility for improving the quality of life for residents by adopting the Recreation Department.
- 1981** Excelsior High School graduated it's last class and closes it's doors to learning.
- 1982** Arturo Sanchez local Halloween Parade became a city wide event. Cable television arrived in Norwalk. The City celebrates its 25th birthday. Construction for the Century 105 Freeway contined.
- 1984** The Olympic Torch was carried through Norwalk celebrating the championship spirit.
- 1988** The Norwalk Twin Cinema was demolished.
- 1991** The Norwalk Arts & Sports complex opened its doors.
- 1995** Once again, railroad service returned to Norwalk with the Metrolink and the Green Line Service.
- 1996** The Norwalk AMC 20 theater welcomed guests to its lavish accommodations.
- 1997** Eleanor L. Zimmerman is elected the 40th Mayor of Norwalk. Norwalk celebrates its 40th birthday

Proud of our past. Confident of our future

City of Norwalk

Our History

Norwalk is a residential community located seventeen miles southeast of Los Angeles. Incorporated as a city on August 26, 1957, it has grown to be one of the key sites of the Los Angeles Metro Green Line, the first fully automated rail rapid transit line in the United States. Norwalk is home to Cerritos College, a community college, and has many recreation and cultural opportunities. In addition to the Norwalk Golf Course, there are two historical museums—the Gilbert Sproul Museum and the Johnston Hargitt House Museum—and the Norwalk Arts and Sports Complex, which opened in April 1992. The Los Angeles County Southeast Superior Court Building, Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Station are also housed in the Civic Center area of Norwalk.

How it Began

Originally the land that became known as Norwalk was home to the Shoshonean Indian tribes. They survived primarily on honey, an array of berries, acorns, sage, squirrels rabbits and birds. Their huts were part of the Sejat Indian village.

In the late 1760s, Spanish settlers, padres and missions flourished in the area. In 1833 the Mexican government passed the Secularization bill which returned the Indian tribes their land. Since the Indian tribes had become so dependent, they suffered the loss of much of their culture, and were unable to successfully cope with the return of their land.

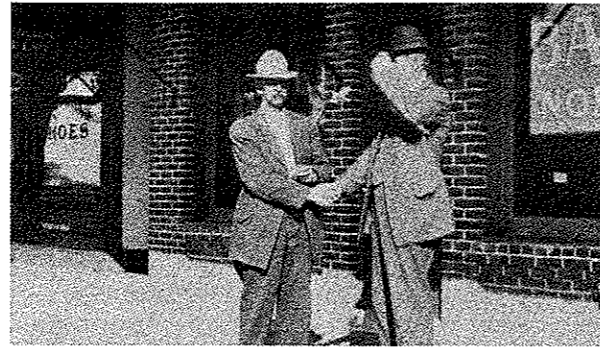
The Rancho and mining days in California ended around the 1860's and the land was subdivided once again and made available for sale. Word of this land development reached the Sproul Brothers in Oregon. They recalled the fertile land and huge sycamore trees they saw on an earlier visit to the southern California area. In 1869, Atwood Sproul purchases on behalf of his brother Gilbert 463 acres of land at \$11 an acre in an area known as Corazon de los Valles or "Heart of the Valleys."

The name was later shortened for Easterners who had trouble with the pronunciation to "Corvalles." In 1871 the first church service was held. By 1873, news of a railroad service coming through the area was committed. The Sprouls deeded 23 acres and stipulated a passenger stop clause in the deed. Three days after the Anaheim Branch Railroad crossed the "North-walk" for the first time, Gilbert Sproul surveyed a town site. In 1877 the name was recorded officially as Norwalk.

While a majority of the Norwalk countryside remained undeveloped during the 1880's, the Norwalk Station allowed potential residents the opportunity to arrive in the "country" from across the nation. The pre-1900 era also brought the "first families" to Norwalk, including the Sprouls, the Johnstons, the Settles, the Chapmans, the Paddisons, the Orrs, and many others, that grouped together to shape the future of this community.

The first school system in Norwalk was pioneered by D. D. Johnston in 1880. He was also responsible for the first real industry in town, a cheese factory, by furnishing Tom Lumbard with the money in 1882.

Norwalk celebrated the famous "Gay 90's" with the construction of a number of fine homes that were located in the middle of orchards, farms, and dairies. One of



those residential landmarks was built, in 1891, by the D. D. Johnston family and subsequently became known as the Hargitt House. Today, you have the opportunity of visiting the Hargitt House Museum, 12450 Mapledale, which was donated to the people of Norwalk by Charles ("Chun") and Ida Hargitt.

At the turn of the century, Norwalk had become established as the dairy "Heart of the Valleys." Of the fifty local families reported in the 1900 census, most were associated with farming or with the dairy industry. Norwalk was also the home of some of the largest sugar beet farms in all of Southern California during this era. As the years passed, the community continued to grow. Permanent educational facilities were constructed, electricity and telephone service installed, and railroads and highways linked Norwalk to state-wide markets.

On May 10, 1933, at 5:56pm, a small earthquake jolted Norwalk, and soon swelled into one of the greatest quakes ever experienced in California. Many historical buildings fell along Front Street, and among the reported casualties was a student at Excelsior High School.

During the reconstruction following the quake, new buildings sprang up along Firestone Boulevard, while many of the buildings on Front Street were not replaced, thus, changing the center of the business from Front Street to Firestone Boulevard.

Other disasters to hit Norwalk were three massive floods, in 1937, 1947, and 1959. Several inches of rain fell on the community during the storms, resulting in cars floating down streets. Future floods were alleviated by the construction of multi-million dollar storm drains.

Norwalk's worst disaster, in its 110-year history, occurred in February of 1958 when a huge four engine Air Force transport collided in mid-air with a sleek twin-engine Navy anti-submarine bomber. Falling to earth near the intersection of Firestone and Pioneer Boulevards, the crash claimed the lives of forty-eight passengers and local residents.

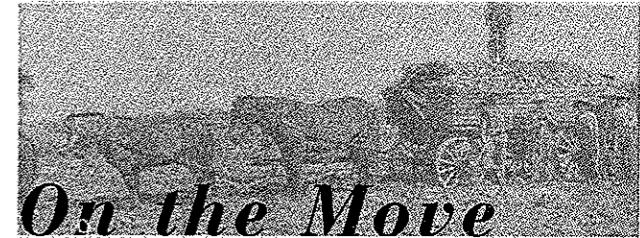
Richard and Pat Nixon started on their road to the White House with a local Congressional race in the early 50's. During that time, Nixon served the Whittier-Norwalk areas as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Mrs. Nixon was an alumna from Excelsior High School in Norwalk. Also in the 50's was the completion and opening of the Norwalk Square Shopping Center at the "Five Points" intersection, as well as the completion of numerous churches in the city.

Cityhood

During WWI, Norwalk had little affect by the property increase around the San Gabriel Valley. However, by 1945, the Norwalk rush was in full boom. War workers now poured into town, resulting in bank deposit increases, as well as population increases. By 1950, population grew to 35,000, opposed to 5,775 in 1940, and it was still growing faster than ever. As a result of the huge population growth, the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce triggered the drive for incorporation, and an election was held on July 23, 1957. By a vote of more than five to one, Norwalk voted itself an incorporated city. Five councilmen were elected, and the first mayor of the city was Roy Reynolds, with Don

Redman as vice mayor. On August 26, 1957, Norwalk was officially certified as a City of General Laws, and as California's 15th largest city by the Secretary of State.

Norwalk's first City Hall was located in a three-room office building on Firestone Boulevard, east of San Antonio Drive in 1957. The second City Hall was located at the former Nettie L. White School on Walnut Street in 1958. The final location of City Hall, it's present location, is on the corner of Imperial Highway and Norwalk Boulevard, which was constructed in the 60's. With cityhood came impressive improvements in such services to local residents as progressive health and building standards, increased law enforcement, storm drainage improvements, and city-wide street lighting districts.



The 1960's and 70's brought more city services to Norwalk. The Southeast Superior Court selected Norwalk as its new home in 1963, while seven years later, the Sheriff's Station located on Civic Center Drive was being constructed. In 1974, the "Hustle Bus" began. Norwalk is one of the few cities in Southern California to have its very own bus system, more then two million people have ridden the "Hustle Bus."

Norwalk continued to improve the quality of life for residents by adopting the Recreation Department in 1980. Eleven years later, the Norwalk Arts and Sports Complex was constructed, providing various activities for residents of all ages.

The rapid growth of the city was also evident in the 1980's and 90's. Cable television arrived in Norwalk, as well as the construction of the Century 105 Freeway in 1982. Once again, railroad service returned to Norwalk with the Metrolink and the Green Line Service in 1995. Today, Norwalk continues to be "On The Move."