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Sourisseau Academy

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presents:

“Whatever Happened to the Corner Market?”

By Ralph Pearce

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A photo recently purchased by *Les Amis de Sourisseau!*

January 2015



[1] Long before the modern “supermarket” and “big box” stores of today, San Jose residents purchased vegetables from green grocers, meat from butchers, and bread from bakeries. Our first image beautifully captures the staff of the San Jose Rochdale Company, established in 1903, proudly displaying their fine fruits and vegetables about 1910. This was a cooperative grocery, operating under the Rochdale model popularized in California in the early 1900s. By 1910, there were fifty Rochdale stores in California; but by 1913, they had folded due to increased competition by other wholesale ventures. The San Jose store closed in 1912; and the following year, Wemple Grocery Co. took over this location on the southwest corner of Third and Santa Clara Streets in the Odd Fellows Building. The old market site is now occupied by Hank Coca’s furniture store.

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[2] Here's a fine c1910 photograph of our friendly and helpful staff of Wendt's meat market (with knives at the ready!). Located at 100 North Market at St. John Street, the building was erected in 1867 by Gottlieb Wendt, a native of Germany, and was already forty years old at the time of this photograph.

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[3] Fast forward to 1960, the old building is still there on the southeast corner of Market and St. John Streets and featured "Old Smokie" wood smoked bacon. The store was sold in 1964 by founder Gottlieb Wendt's grandson August, and the space today is occupied by a small open-air parking lot. Oh well, easy come, easy go!

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[4] What a lovely circa 1911 photograph of the J. H. Trexall grocery store, which was located across the street from Lowell Elementary School on the corner of South Seventh and Margaret Streets. The location of the store might well explain the large group of children in the photo, though we're not sure why it's predominantly composed of boys. Mr. Trexall appears to have considered his location, and it's not too surprising to see school supplies, cold soda, and ice cream prominently featured in his signage.

January 2015



[5] And remarkably, the old J. H. Trexall grocery store building still stands at 700 South Seventh Street, just north of Highway 280. It wouldn't be hard to imagine the building being restored to its former glory. (photo by Ralph Pearce)

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[6] The concept of self-service “super markets,” which combined meat, dairy, baked, and general grocery products into one large store, was conceived in the mid-teens and began to catch on in the 1920s. The Sixth Street Super Market was a short-lived Depression-era market located at Sixth and Santa Clara Streets from 1933 to 1934.

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[7] Chinese American entrepreneurs Mr. and Mrs. Lee Yee Choy opened the Palace Market in the early 1940s on San Jose's busy South First Street. Later, it was operated by their son, Jerry Lee, who also employed his children. Notice the intriguing Bennie's mobile newsstand and refreshments vehicle parked in front.

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[8] Now this is a market that many will immediately recognize, one that has served the Willow Glen neighborhood for over seventy-five years. In the mid-1930s, Peter Romano had a small market in the building next door. After the large market at 1003 Lincoln Avenue (at Coe) was built about 1938, Romano moved into the new structure. Abraham Rosenberg soon joined him, relocating his Best Meat business from Santa Clara Street. As shown in this wonderful 1943 photograph by Casper Laws, the market eventually became Rosenberg's Market, and then Lincoln Lane Foods by the early 1960s. Today, it serves the Willow Glen community as Arteaga's Food Center. (Photo by Casper Hall Laws)

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[9] The Food Bowl supermarket is part of the Ann Darling Shopping Center located at 1620 McKee Road. The shopping center was constructed in the late 1950s, and the supermarket was completed about 1962. By 1960, San Jose was expanding rapidly, with county farmland being sold to eager developers. With the growth of suburbia came a need for convenient shopping, and shopping centers such as this one began to appear near the new housing tracts. Many of these mid-century modern complexes have been given repeated facelifts to keep them up to current tastes, but Ann Darling has survived drastic renovations. (Photo by Arnold Del Carlo)

A photo recently acquired by *Les Amis de Sourisseau!*
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DEL CARLO STUDIO

[10] This is a beautiful interior shot of the Food Bowl in the early 1960s, replete with arched pre-stressed beams to create a vast space uninterrupted by support posts. Do you recall the long aprons the grocery clerks wore to protect their white shirts and slacks? Like the uniformed service station attendants and milk on your front porch, that's now part of another era. (Photo by Arnold Del Carlo)