

## Muriel's PDX then & now

### PDX 1949-1953

We came to a sleepy Western town. If I remember rightly, there were no high rises: the tallest buildings were 12 to 15 floors high. SE Fifth & Yamhill was inhabited by a semi-open market for fruit & veggies & meat stalls. There was no waterfront park—I believe that had to wait for Neil Goldsmith. Rather, a highway ran alongside the river.

The social scene—seen from our newcomers' eyes—consisted of an impenetrable old upper class society, a flock of young professionals mostly from Chicago & points east but also from the NW, and everyone else (nice people we didn't know & probably never would). There was also a well-organized Jewish community which reached out to us but we didn't reach back very much as these folks (the ones we met were mostly in business) were not as interesting as our new professional friends and we didn't wish to become "ghettoized" socially or any other way.

Coming from Chicago, civic PDX appeared clean & open—remarkably free from graft & criminal elements (what I learned later was that graft & collusions etc. etc. were very much ongoing, below the surface, but virtually nonexistent when compared to Seattle). Wide-eyed & enthralled with our new city, we became precinct committee people. Once within the D party fold we lost some of our innocence in a successful ouster of a badly tainted sheriff (I believe his name was Elliot—maybe some one knows the details that I've forgotten).

As for the landscape: cows grazed along the south side of Beaverton-Hillsdale hwy—less than a quarter of a mile west of Hillsdale. Why I remember none on the north side of the hwy I don't know but I believe they were only on the south side. The piece of hillside we bought ½ mile up from Hillsdale had enough second growth that the trees we took down paid for the long driveway from street to our front door. If I recall rightly, our ¼ acre view (all the way to the coast range) property cost \$1,000.

Restaurants & entertainment: The New Republic—in the same place now as then—has an upgraded name & probably an upgraded menu (we typically got #1—chop suey, fried rice, egg foo yung for \$1.00). Adele's at about 8th & Taylor featured good middle-European food, & then there was the (I believe the name was Pango Pango) Pacific-island style "night club" which had a dance floor--& Nick's Coney Island on the East side. BYOL was the law. Rose's arrived sometime around 1951, 1952 which was an important culinary addition. We got our rye bread and bagel (13 for the price of 12) @ Mosler's bakery: it was probably on first near Sherman or Sheridan in the old Jewish/Italian neighborhood.

The good news was an excellent symphony orchestra with a full season of music. We heard Artur Rubenstein @ one of these concerts. I recall the Paramount theatre

downtown (where the Schnitz is now) among others. The Belluschi designed Art Museum was up & running so we didn't feel like we were in a cultural desert. And we had a choice of 2 newspapers: the Oregonian & the Journal.

PDX now: to my eyes an architectural catastrophe

Where oh where is a design committee with taste & interest in preserving greenery & light & spaciousness in built-up areas? Certainly not here. I won't carry on about my distress with the many huge squared-off structures hugging the sidewalk so that nothing green can tickle its toes. The lack of imagination & any pretense of beauty is appalling--& we'll be stuck with these for generations to come. The latest concern has to do with our welcoming, vibrant west side waterfront. Will it be diminished & rendered inaccessible by a huge developers' dream project that is now in the works?

Can we come up with any better solutions to providing good housing @ reasonable prices? Certainly the proposed waterfront project won't be of any help to everyday working people.

OK: these are my 2 cents.