

IN TOUCH with 13th Avenue

HISTORY

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Chi fraternity house was directly across the avenue from The Lemon O. The original Sigma Chi house was built in 1910 and was replaced by the larger house in 1929.

Two sororities were also built on East 13th during the 1920s. Alpha Xi Delta was located where 7-Eleven is now and the Phi Mu house was also built. The Phi Mu building was sold and became The Excelsior Cafe in 1971.

During the 1920s, if upper classmen on East 13th didn't like a freshman's attitude, they dunked him in a big barrel of water that was in front of the College Side Inn. University students walked the avenue wearing sandwich boards advertising campus events and held doughnut sales on East 13th to raise money.

By the mid 1930s the block of East 13th was basically set, Richard said.

"It started to get very busy and it started to become more like the village it is today," he said.

Richard said the government sparked a controversy in the late 1930s and early 1940s with a proposal to run Highway 99 through the middle of campus on East 13th. The University fought the idea and Franklin Boulevard was chosen for the highway instead. But the traffic on East 13th had become a fight between the University and the city.

In the 1940s, East 13th became an extremely busy, and traffic, which had been a controversy all the way back to the 1920s, became hazardous.

"Students had to dodge logging and delivery trucks during class breaks," Richard said.

Sept. 26, 1946, University student Donna Siegman was struck by a car on East 13th during a class change. She was quoted in the *Emerald* as saying, "I waited for one car to pass before crossing the street, then I started across. The next thing I knew I was flying through the air." Siegman suffered minor injuries and was treated and released.

However, the incident revived the traffic fight and the city started to explore its options. In the fall of 1947 the city unsuccessfully tried to ease the traffic problem by installing traffic lights where East 13th intersected with Kincaid and University streets. The lights would go red for 10 minutes while students would change class. The experiment, which was tried again in the 1960s, didn't last long.

"The traffic would back all the way up to the public library," Richard said.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, many other

In the late 1800s, East 13th was nothing more than a path between two parcels of land.

options were discussed, but the traffic remained the main problem on East 13th.

The 1960s and early 1970s marked the greatest period of change for the avenue. Some of the last changes to the village of shops and bars west of the University took place during that time.

The Sigma Chi fraternity house was torn down in 1962 and was replaced by the U.S. Bank. About the same time, The Lemon O was leveled. A bar called Duffy's was built on the old Lemon O site in 1971. (Duffy's name was later changed to Guido's.) In 1964, The College Side Inn was torn down and replaced by the University Bookstore. When 7-Eleven replaced the Alpha Xi Delta house in 1971, the avenue's current makeup was basically set.

The most significant change to East 13th took place when the campus section of the avenue was closed in 1970. After about 50 years of controversy over what should be done about the traffic problem, University students took a stand.

During a week of anti-ROTC demonstrations and numerous confrontations with police, some students focused their anger and took over East 13th April 26, 1970. Students erected barricades made of bricks, mortar and bike racks on the avenue at the intersections of Kincaid and University streets. Signs that read "Detour. The People's Street" were posted on each barricade.

For three days students guarded their barricades and repaired damage done by several unhappy citizens of Eugene who rammed the structures with their cars. The students tore down the barricades when the city agreed to discuss closing the section of East 13th permanently. The city closed the section for good later that fall.

Since that time, East 13th has remained for the most part unchanged. Richard said some of the smaller businesses have come and gone, but the overall makeup of the avenue is the same.

Old businesses like the Kampus Barber Shop and Taylor's (now Taylor's College Side Inn) are joined by new businesses like the Red Dragon Tattoo Parlor to make up the current East 13th, which still serves as the gateway to the University.

—Matt Bender

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