

## St. Petersburg Proves To Be Mecca For Methuselahs

By HAL BOYLE  
ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—This is the town where they say you have to be 80 years old to get in the Junior chamber of commerce.

They have a couple of softball teams on which everybody but the water boy has to be 75 or over.

"And you ought to see those oldtimers play," said one fan. "I never heard of any of those codgers keeling over from heart trouble."

Shuffleboard is a hotter issue here than national politics, and if the local newspapers omit the shuffleboard column readers call up by the dozens to complain.

Old Folks Capital  
Elderly tourists flock here by the thousands, and St. Petersburg generally is proud to be known as the nation's winter capital for old people with enough money to follow the robins south when the chillblains season sets in up north.

But some of the young folks here don't want the idea spread around that St. Pete is just a mecca for Methuselahs.

"Don't write anything about the 3000 green benches we have here for the old folks," said one. "And don't say anymore about the sidewalk ramps we got for wheel chair patients."

Another resident complained: "We don't have an undue number of old people here. You have to remember that you don't see as many young people at resorts for the simple reason that most young people don't have enough money to go to them."

And the old folks have a good time at much less than it would cost them on Florida's east coast.

"Times were tougher during the depression," a resident said. "The cafeterias had to start throwing out tourists who came in, asked for a bowl of hot water, then poured catsup into it to make free soup."

From a town of 4000 in 1910, St. Petersburg has grown steadily to a population of between

90,000 and 95,000. But it hasn't quite filled out at the speed dreamed of by city fathers during the boom era.

"It was like a big carnival here then," said one veteran wistfully. "You could always tell the real estate men—they wore plus four knickers. They gave away free lunches at auction sales, and one man passed out saltwater taffy. Every real estate office had a negro quartet or some kind of entertainment."

Large bond issues were floated to build paved streets and sidewalks in every direction, dream lanes for dream people who were to live in dream houses that never were built. Collapse of the boom ended the dreams and left the real estate dealers nothing but their plus fours and some customers nothing but the memory of the taste of salt water taffy.

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- Beef Roast Grade "A" . . . . . Lb. 37c
- Fresh Ground Beef . . . . . Lb. 35c
- Pure Pork Sausage . . . . . Lb. 39c
- Bacon Sliced . . . . . Lb. 69c
- Hams Swift's Premiums—Half or Whole . . . Lb. 65c

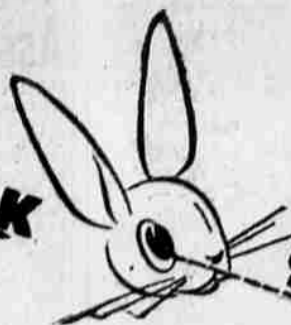
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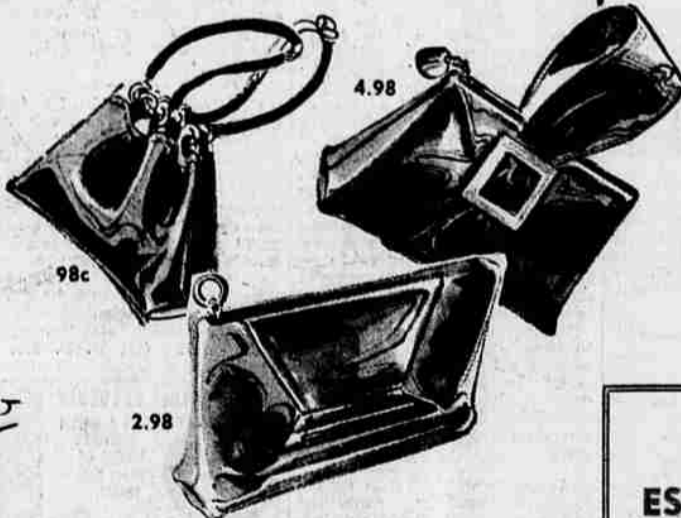
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- PELICAN— Ends Sat.—Ida Lupino in "The Man I Love." Starts Sat. Midnight—"Swell Guy" with Sonny Tufts, Ann Blythe.
- TOWER— Stage: "SHOOT THE WORKS." Screen: Claudette Colbert, George Brent in "Tomorrow Is Forever" plus "Come On Tarzan." Sunday—The Bowery Boys in "Mr. Hex" also "Six-Gun Serenade."
- PINE TREE— Ends Sat.—Walt Disney's "Make Mine Music" also "Lawless Breed." Sunday—Gary Cooper in "Cloak and Dagger" plus Bob Steele in "Durango Valley Raiders."
- RAINBOW— Saturday: Charlie Chan in "Shadows Over Chinatown." Co-hit. "Red River Renegades." Sunday: "Three Little Girls in Blue" plus "Sonora Stagecoach."

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