

Army of Termites Constantly Marching

Don't be alarmed, but an army of termites is constantly on the march against Torrance.

This community is not immune to the tiny, undermining insects any more than other Southland cities. In fact, M. K. Pike, Torrance exterminator, says: "The reason I moved my business to Torrance was because Torrance was full of termites."

Never one to create fear in minds of householders, Pike, who has been in the business 17 years, nevertheless says the termites menace, like the common cold, ants, the housefly, and the baby's whooping cough, have to be faced.

In the Soil

"More than 25 per cent of old houses and a goodly percentage of new homes get infested with termites," said Pike. "The soil

clan. However, they resemble an ant and swarm like the household pest.

"Best way to guard against termites in a home is to have an inspection once a year. These inspections cost only \$5. However, it doesn't take termites long to wreck a house or larger building once they start gnawing."

Are Useful

Although he kills them by the billions, Pike admits that even termites have a useful place in the world. Nature intended them to eat the dead wood in the forests. They do not attack the live parts of a tree.

If anyone doubts the existence of termites in Torrance, Pike is currently working on some prize exhibits he will show them. These included one house teetering on its foundations after having provided feasts for months for both subterranean and dry wood termites, and also for dry rot. The owner is tossing a coin to decide whether it is worth saving.

One of Annabelle's 117 Kids Shut Down the GP Refinery

When the boys at General Petroleum's Torrance refinery got talking about the old days, one fondly-remembered name always comes up—Annabelle.

Annabelle was a cat, and she was famous for her prodigious interest in three things . . . mice, food, and . . . well . . . she had a whole of a lot of offspring!

When General Petroleum bought its refinery site from the Dominguez estate the land was being used as a vegetable farm.

Field mice were as thick as flies. Nobody knows just who first discovered Annabelle, but when Paul Sanders took over the refinery from the construction crews, she was already famous—or should we say, notorious.

Two Crude Stills

In February, 1929, Sanders and 33 men put the little plant "on stream." Where nearly a thousand men work today around the dozen-odd towering processing units, there were then just two simple crude oil stills.

Every morning Sanders would make the rounds and personally visit every man on the job. Annabelle would accompany him, perched on Paul's shoulder. The only time she was absent was when she was about to produce another litter. Then a sign would be posted at her chosen spot in a control house—"Maternity Ward."

Between her inspection tours with Sanders and her feeding times—every shift had a hand-out for Annabelle and a refinery works around the clock—she managed to keep the mice well under control.

Pulled Switch

But it lay to one of Annabelle's offspring to set a new mark of achievement for the feline world where oil refineries are concerned. This cat shut the whole place down!

Some time after Annabelle had passed to an untimely reward under the wheels of a truck, a nameless descendant was chasing a night bird near the electrical transformer station. The cat gave a leap at the bird and missed, landing on a sensitive point in the electrical apparatus.

A huge flash occurred and everything electrical in the refinery stopped . . . pumps, instruments, lights . . . everything. Trained to handle emergency power failures, the processing unit operators quickly shut down the whole plant without loss.

When the cause of the failure was learned, Sanders asked the head electrician to take a survey to find out which would be the greater nuisance, field mice or Annabelle's 117 offspring. Said the electrician, who may have been prejudiced by the job of removing the singed remains from the transformers, "I'll take mice any day!" Sanders reluctantly banned cats henceforth.

When General Petroleum began its Torrance operations in 1929, it already had a successful 17-year history behind it.

In 1910 a group of small crude oil producing companies in the San Joaquin Valley were brought together under the name of the Esperanza Consolidated Oil Company by a group of men, including Captain John Barneson, a retired sea captain.

Barneson felt that the natural market for San Joaquin Valley petroleum was in the Los Angeles area, particularly at the new Los Angeles harbor.

Became GP

In 1912 Esperanza became General Petroleum and the company built a crude oil pipe line over the Tehachapi Mountains, along a route now followed by Highway 99 down San Fernando Road and into the city of Vernon. There a refinery was built to "top" the crude oil—remove its gasoline and kerosene. The fuel oil was then piped to San Pedro and sold to shipping firms for steamer fuel or exported to the Far East.

After a few rocky years, the company finally prospered and the Vernon refinery grew to be one of the most important refineries in the area. The time when it would outgrow its "close-in" location was foreseen and the Torrance site was purchased. Actual construction of the Torrance refinery was speeded up by important crude oil discoveries in the Santa Fe Springs field near Norwalk, California. New capacity was urgently needed to process the new, flush production since California had no oil conservation plan then as it has now.

Growing Yearly

Since 1929 the Torrance refinery has seen a steady addition of processing units, each bigger, more complex, and more expensive than the previous ones. Even the depression failed to slow the refinery's growth, and World War II brought about the installation of what then was the biggest single installation of Thermoform Catalytic Cracking units to make aviation gasoline. In 1953, it has already been announced, a huge new processing unit of a newly perfected design will be added at a cost in the neighborhood of \$10,000,000. It is called a Thermoform Catalytic Refiner.

Sanders, now General Superintendent with several hundred men reporting to him, can see

the two original crude units from his office window. They seem lost among the newer, larger units which surround them.

Far from seeing each man in the refinery each day, Sanders is now hard put to see the 28 supervisors and foremen under his direction, though he still arrives at the refinery early each morning before the overnight crew leaves.

Still On Job

Of the original 33 men who started up the refinery in 1929, 20 are still on the job at Torrance. They include:

- Fred Arnold, 1016 S. Juanita Ave., Redondo Beach.
- G. L. Bowers, 1260 W. 52nd St., Los Angeles.
- E. L. Coburn, 1238 W. 162nd St., Gardena.
- C. A. Collinge, 3663 W. 2nd St., Los Angeles.
- Otto Collins, 915-A So. Maple St., Inglewood.
- J. E. Curley, 1112 S. Fir Ave., Inglewood.
- O. N. Duncan, 850 Tulalosa Ave., Redondo Beach.
- Ernest Erratt, 2611 Voorhees Ave., Redondo Beach.
- John Gobble, 7001 Ramsgate Place, Los Angeles.
- C. H. Harris, 757 Athens Blvd., Los Angeles.
- Arnold Johnson, 1122 W. 81st St., Los Angeles.
- J. G. LeMat, 1439 W. 91st Place, Los Angeles.

- C. C. Lenarth, 727 Esplanade, Redondo Beach.
- R. G. McLeod, 1408 S. Sloan, Compton.
- T. J. McDermott, 4800 S. Normandie, Los Angeles.
- N. O. Morin, 1308 Beech Ave., Torrance.
- John Neel, 1039 Orchard Drive, Inglewood.
- Harold Pitts, 1227 W. 82nd St., Los Angeles.
- George Pottorf, 1724 Magnolia Ave., Manhattan Beach.
- Sidney Prigg, 910 Holly St., Inglewood.
- H. J. Neiman, 11256 Virginia Ave., Lynwood, who was the construction foreman in charge of building the first units, is today still at Torrance in the Engineering Department. From his original construction crew, these men are now working at the refinery:

- R. S. Brown, 2470 Ohio Ave., South Gate.
- C. F. Duck, 2217 Hatchway St., Compton.
- J. F. Keller, 11203 La Salle Ave., Los Angeles.
- Frank Largent, 1115 Kay St., Compton.
- Fernando Martinez, 911 1/2 St., Hermosa Beach.
- George Nicoll, 9637 Dearborn Ave., South Gate.
- E. W. Schneider, 1444 W. 58th St., Los Angeles.
- John R. Sullivan, 572 W. 149th St., Gardena.
- Victor Pellino, 501 S. Gertruda Ave., Redondo Beach.



COMMUNITY SPIRIT . . . An example of local Pacific Electric employee participation in Torrance community projects is cooperation in periodic Red Cross blood drives. Photo shows Mrs. Don Hyde, recruitment chairman of Torrance branch of the Red Cross Blood Bank, planning recent campaign with Frank H. Markley, superintendent of rail equipment at Torrance PE shops.

Local Electric Shop Owner Comes From Family of Electricians

Pete White, owner of the Torrance Electric Shop, comes by his craft naturally, being a member of an electrical family. Pete has two brothers and six cousins who are electricians and he married the daughter of an electrician.

Starting as an apprentice in Oklahoma City in 1936, Pete learned his trade while playing ball for a large company that prided itself on a semi-pro team. Later he was foreman for Fishback & Moore in New York and supervised installation of one of the largest overhead crane systems west of the Mississippi, at the Douglas Aircraft plant in Oklahoma City.

Coming to Torrance seven years ago, Pete worked for B. J. Scott at Torrance Electric, a firm now with 30 years' local

MacDonald to Head Area Mortuaries for Pierce

Thomas L. MacDonald will head the Inglewood-Crenshaw area of Pierce Brothers Mortuaries, it was announced this week by James R. Pierce, vice-president and general manager of the firm.

MacDonald, who has been with Pierce Brothers since 1924, will continue as manager of the Inglewood unit.

Mrs. June Herzog has been appointed as resident manager of the Crenshaw mortuary under the new set-up. She has been with the firm since 1942.



PETE WHITE service. When Scott retired, Pete became owner of the company which does residential, industrial and commercial installation and repairs. Working with Torrance Electric is a staff of five including Pete's brother Hob and wife, Mozelle, who is bookkeeper. A brother, Lytle, works for the Edison Company here. Pete and Mozelle have a son, Rodney, six. They attend the First Baptist Church. Pete is a member of the Masons and Master Electricians.



EARLY FLOAT . . . Torrance's entry in the 1914 Rose Parade is shown here in this 28-year-old photograph from the collection of City Clerk A. H. Bartlett. The float was entered by the Thomas D. Campbell Co. for Torrance.



"The first hundred years are the hardest . . ."

That's an old and accepted phrase . . . but hardly true with the City of Torrance. The city's rapid growth and the coming of many new industries to the area demonstrate the wisdom, careful planning and efficient management of founders and civic leaders.

This same wisdom, planning and efficient management will continue to increase this city's importance to Southern California's business economy. The members of the Flying Red Horse family at the Torrance Refinery are proud to be a part of this progressive city and to have helped build it to its present size.



GENERAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION

(A Flying Red Horse Company)