

CONSIDERED 'SUBSTANDARD'

Palo Alto Park pool won't open this year

By PAT HATT

Palo Alto Park's historic community swimming pool will not open this year.

An atmosphere of regretful acceptance prevailed last night as members of the Palo Alto Park Property Owners Association in East Palo Alto agreed that the need for a safer and more modern design has finally brought what may be a permanent end to a community landmark.

The 75 by 175 foot swimming pool, with a history that goes back to the 1800s, cannot meet present-day requirements of the San Mateo County Public Health Department, members were told. The slope-walled pool has no automatic chlorinating and filter systems, and is considered "sub-standard" by Eugene Howell, public health engineer.

Indefinite estimates ranging from \$16,000 to \$30,000 to bring the mutually owned pool "up to code" were discussed last night, and club members agreed the price is too high.

The club and the pool committee, comprised of Mrs. Walter Werby, Mrs. Robert Anway and Mrs. Ruth Caouette, had these suggestions about what to do with the pool, and all, with cost estimates, will be discussed at the next club meeting:

1. Fill the pool with earth, pack it and have a smaller, "more practical" and modern pool constructed within the old structure.

2. Fill in the pool and then build a wading pool for children, converting remaining land into park.

3. Fill the pool and convert the entire area to a park with play equipment and barbecue pits.

Fill for the project would be easy to obtain because the earth removed to build the pool was simply piled around the edges and packed down, forming the raised mound which completely surrounds the pool, the committee said. The exact year this was accomplished is not known.

The area now known as Palo Alto Park was at one time owned by Joseph Donohoe as part of a 1,500 acre estate. Donohoe's son, Edward, had the

pool constructed sometime between 1866 and 1900, directly in the center of what is now Palo Alto Park, an area bounded by Bay Road, Menalto, Donohoe and Glen Way.

A possibility exists that Edward used the pool for a dual purpose. Clarence Kavanaugh, grandson of one of East Palo Alto's earliest settlers, says he understood that Edward used water from his swimming pool to irrigate a large prune orchard.

At any rate by 1915 the pool was no longer used for swimming but was used by A. B. Partee, on a rental basis, to irrigate prune orchards and a strawberry field, among other things.

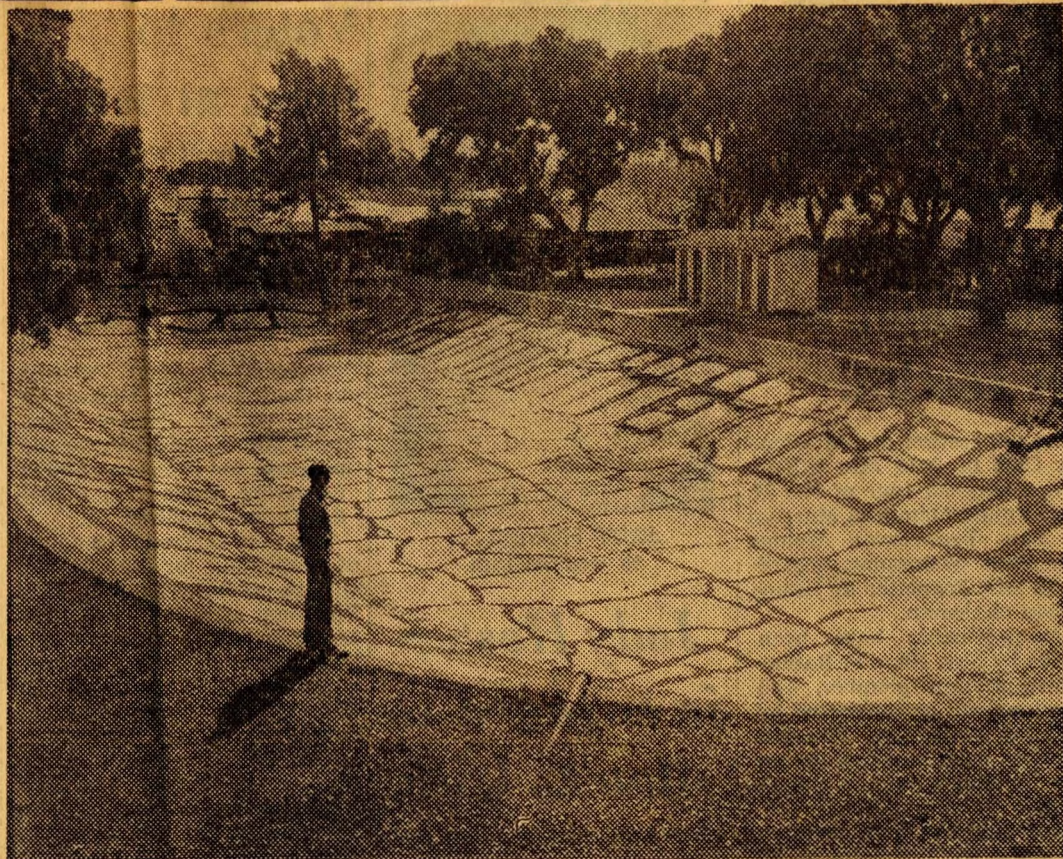
Shortly after this the Army established Camp Remount, a horse and mule depot for Camp Fremont (once located in Menlo Park) in the pool area. Frank Thompson, 466 Green St., recalls seeing men from Camp Fremont swimming in the huge pool, although he is sure its main purpose was as a water supply for animals.

The present course of Palo Verde Avenue (portions recently re-named Oakwood Drive) running directly off Bayshore to the pool and then twisting and winding leisurely to Bay Road is said to have been the path worn by the Army.

The intervening years from 1919 to 1924 saw a circus in the park area for winter training; and many families who later bought homes in the area spent weekends "camping out" around the pool.

In 1925 the Koff Realty Company took over the area and subdivided it. Streets were laid out, the pool and park revived and all used as selling points for prospective buyers. In 1929 Koff turned operation of the Palo Alto Park Mutual Water Company and pool to the property owners. The pool has been in operation every summer since with the exception of three years during World War II, when the group used it to store water for use in a possible emergency.

In the same period that 33,417 Americans were killed in the Korean war, 650,000 Americans died of cancer.



POOL TO BE CLOSED—The swimming pool in Palo Alto Park, an East Palo Alto residential area, will not open when swimming time comes around next month. Residents have decided that the cost of improvements to bring the

pool up to standards required by the county health department is too high. They're now considering what to do with the new property. Here Harry Wilcoxon, water company superintendent, looks at the empty pool.