

HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT: THE YEAR 1948

BY TOM DAWDY

In 1948, we became “The City of Millbrae”. The journey became a reality on **January 14, 1948** when several Millbrae residents traveled to Sacramento to charter Millbrae as a city. 1948 was a banner time for us, but what about the rest of our first year as a city? Here are several stories of our town’s inaugural year as a city, taken from the archives of our local newspaper at the time, the *Millbrae Sun*.

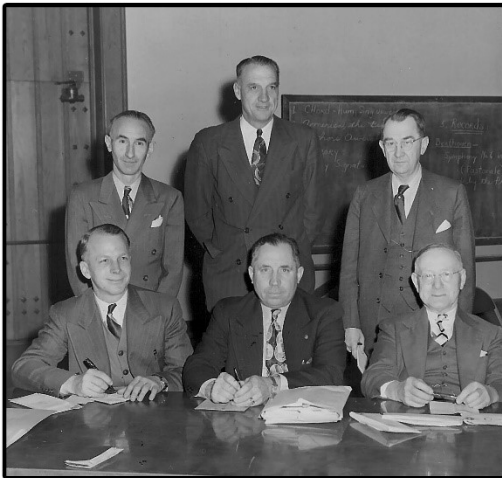
This year, the residents of Millbrae are celebrating the **75th Anniversary** of our city. Many of our city services began to be formed in 1948. We did have a **Police Commission**, which regulated Millbrae’s police force, but Millbrae really wanted their own **Police Department**. To establish an official Police Department, Millbrae needed a Police Chief. There were ten applicants for the job, and in the end **CHP Officer Walter Swope** was chosen as the first Chief of Police in Millbrae. Soon after, three officers were named to the MPD under Chief Swope — **Lawrence Pickett, Howard Schroeder** and **W.H. Stelter**. This made the MPD a four-man force.

Millbrae’s first Council were **Harold Taylor, George Kelly, James Kilpatrick, George Warman**, and **William Leutenegger**. William Leutenegger was elected Council Chairman at their first meeting, held at Taylor School. This made Leutenegger Millbrae’s first official Mayor. In April 1948, the City of Millbrae held their first municipal election. Prior to the election, the Council agreed that the “high man” on the polls would be the new Mayor of Millbrae. James Kilpatrick edged out William Leutenegger by 13 votes, followed by Harold Taylor and George Warman. **Frank Oehm** was also elected, replacing George Kelly who did not file for re-election. Also, **Isobel Smart** was elected as the City Clerk and **Reif Schneider** as the City Treasurer. Things were falling into place in our new city. We had a new Council, City Clerk, Treasurer, Police Department and **Les Pallas** continued as Fire Chief.

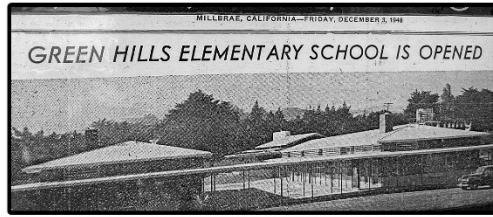
Early on, gambling was still somewhat legal in Millbrae. During the fiscal year ending in June 1948, seven Millbrae taverns still had licenses for “payoff machines”. In February 1948, the *Millbrae Sun* reported that these license holders were confident they could pay off the police to “look the other way.” In October 1948, Police Chief Swope clamped down on all gambling in Millbrae. He gave operators of all establishments with any type of payoff machines or book making their last warning to “clean up or shut up”.

So many exciting things happened in Millbrae’s first year as a city. In February, our City Seal was created by Millbrae artist **E.C. Williams**. In June, the Planning Commission approved the **El Rancho Motel**, which was described as a 40-unit “modern in every way” motel. In May, residents of the **Millwood** and **Capuchino** subdivisions got mail delivery, followed by **Meadow Glen** in July. In September, PG&E installed real streetlights in the Capuchino area, and the cows began to move out of the **Millbrae Dairy** after 78 years of operation. There was a movement to extend California Drive from Burlingame to San Bruno, since the **Street Car Railway** franchise would expire in 1950. The street cars were losing \$240 a day, so in 1948 it was announced this would be their last year. On January 16, 1949 the last car ran from San Mateo to San Francisco. In November, **Green Hills School** opened up in Millbrae to accommodate all the new “Baby Boomers” coming to live in Millbrae.

In the Millbrae Museum, we are fortunate to have a collection of old *Millbrae Sun* newspapers describing many of the events that happened in Millbrae during the early days. If you have some free time, you might consider stopping by the museum to read through the old papers to read about Millbrae’s events that make up our history today. Hopefully our local schools will enlighten our youth with some facts on how Millbrae became a city.



**Millbrae
1948**



SUGAR	POWDERED OR BROWN	1-Lb. Pkg.	5c
CATSUP	HUNT'S C. H. B.	156c. Bottle	12c
EGGS	BABY NULAD STRICTLY FRESH	Doz.	49c
CLOROX	THE GENTLE BLEACH	Doz. Bottle	10c
COFFEE	M. J. S. DRIP OR REGULAR	2-1/2L. Tin	85c
DREFT	SUDS - NEW and IMPROVED	1-Lb. Pkg.	23c

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WILLIAM F. LEUTENEGGER ELECTED FIRST MAYOR OF THE CITY OF MILLBRAE



W. F. LEUTENEGGER



HAROLD G. TAYLOR



GEORGE KELLY



JAMES T. KILPATRICK



GEORGE T. WARMAN

...to see council membership to act as tem...brae incorporation committee since Farrell for their services to the