

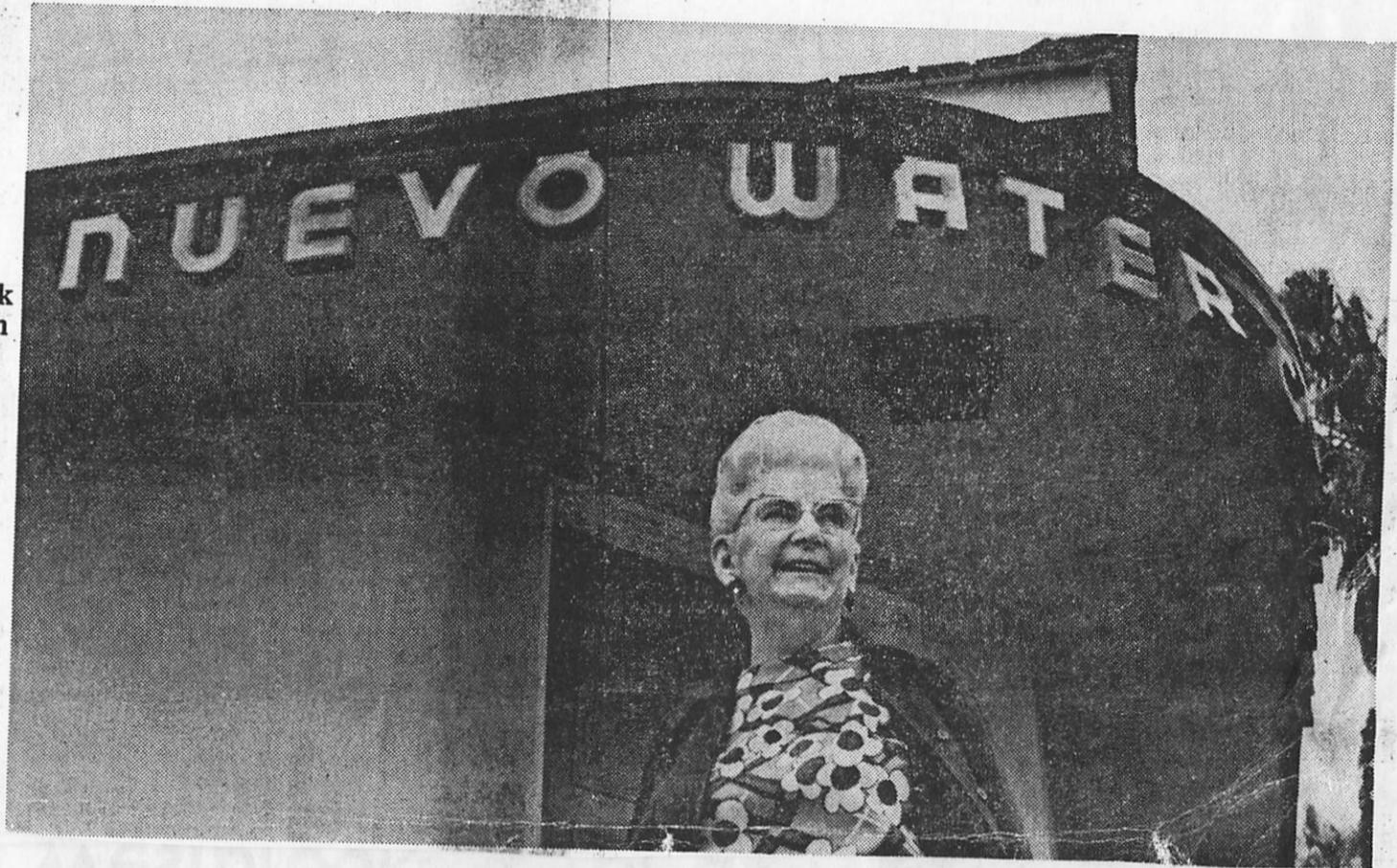
I came to visit my folks and stayed, she says, a little amazed at herself. "I'm so glad I came out here when I did —

Nuevo-Lakeview valley haven't slowed realtors.

"Oh honey, they just go for that," she

"I've always said when I retire I'll write something — a history of the area — for the school or library."

Flossie Westbrook moved to Nuevo in 1929 and stayed.



## Flossie Westbrook — for as long as anyone can remember

Photos and story

By DANA BOTTORFF

Press-Enterprise Staff Writer

NUEVO — Everybody who walks into the Nuevo Water Co. gets a "Hi, Clarence" or "Well, there's Alice" from Flossie Westbrook. She's the secretary, and much more.

She's the unofficial mayor, chamber of commerce and self-appointed historian for this unincorporated farm community of about 1,200 east of Perris.

Has been so long as anyone can remember.

"Up until a couple of years ago," Flossie Westbrook, a grandmotherly 71, says, "I could have truthfully said I knew everybody who came in that door — not anymore."

But she fools you. She seems to know everyone — their family history, what schools they went to, who they married.

Everyone knows her.

Although Flossie has set deep roots in this wide spot in Nuevo Road, off Interstate Highway 15-E, she is no country bumpkin. She lived in Los Angeles for 10 years after attending "The southern branch of the University of California — what's now UCLA." Before that, she was born and reared in Jacksonville, Ill., population 18,000.

But country living has been the thing for Flossie, ever since she came to Nuevo in 1929.

to raise my kids (three boys and a girl) with cows and chickens and so on," even though "we were never farmers."

Two sons still live on the Westbrook property with their families in their own homes.

"The Kennedys have a compound, so why can't we?" Flossie's sharp brown eyes dance.

But for all her love of Nuevo, and her fascination with its history (she knows all about the prominent farm and ranch families — the Stalders, the Archibeks, the Embertsons), the town just ain't what it used to be.

It's growing — leaps and bounds.

It's hard to measure the growth in exact population figures, Flossie explains. Nuevo is unincorporated and "it's impossible to separate Nuevo and Lakeview" the neighboring small, unincorporated town.

There are ways of measuring the change, though. Like fire plugs.

"When I came to work here we had four fire plugs in Nuevo." Her conviction defies questioning. "That I can testify to."

That was Oct. 15, 1940. Today 80 fire plugs dot the town and serve "a very active volunteer fire department."

Take water meters. The Nuevo Water Co. read 109 more meters last year than the year before.

There is smog. "It's a curse. It's just a curse."

There are real estate offices.

Even the rocky hills surrounding the



laughs. "Out in Juniper Flats (between Nuevo and Lakeview) there's a mobile home perched on every rock."

But Flossie Westbrook remains unfazed. "What can you do?" she shrugs.

She blossoms with facts and history about the valley at the slightest prompting. She has a way of turning any conversation back to Nuevo.

Over the years Flossie has sunk that knowledge into letters to school children seeking material for term papers. Copies of her letters pad her own records of Nuevo, which are illustrated with old photographs and pamphlets that lured the first residents to there. The makings of a history of Nuevo are stashed away in the tiny water company office.

Alice this is Flossie Westbrook she worked  
for years as secretary for the Nuevo Water Co.  
Any one who came in to pay there water bill  
would shoot the breeze with her & tell her  
History. She wrote it down and also  
any Child going to school that needed a  
History Paper they came to her. Thats why  
so many papers ~~click~~ click. But each one  
has something different which I have  
trued to mark. She was a great help in  
writing the family history and a very good  
friend of Martyn & Dow they.