

Photograph of District Auxiliary Facilities from Tower Bridge
Sacramento River, circa 1942, courtesy of Division 5
Messages from Dean La Chapelle and Frank Palmer
December 2006

From Dean La Chapelle,

Regarding the photo "near Walnut Grove" of the Sacramento River. I think it is nearer Sacramento. In fact, I believe it is a picture taken from the Tower Bridge of the east bank of the Sacramento River. The docks are the Tug Boat and Barge docks that were there on the south side of the Tower Bridge through the 50s.

At about that time, early forties, between the Tower Bridge and the I Street (Rail Road) Bridge, the Army was building landing crafts on the west bank of the river where the pyramid building now stands.

If you look to the right of the last warehouse, you will see what looks like an iron frame work; like a new building under construction. That is a natural gas regulator (sort of a storage tank that goes up and down to regulate the pressure. It is still there on 2nd Street.

There is a warehouse north of Walnut Grove, which is still there and used for boat storage. The photo looks like it was taken at the same level as the levee and in the middle of the river, which further suggests the Tower Bridge. The warehouse above Walnut Grove didn't have a bridge just up stream, so the photo would have had to been taken from a very large ship.

As Sea Scout in 1954, we spent some time on the river in that area. Frank Palmer was also in the Sea Scouts as a Leader and might be able to add something

My grandfather worked in the shipyard on the west bank and I remember going there once during the war, but that was a long time ago and they're long gone. Some of the old pilings are still visible though. The river was very commercial in the fifties and sixties until the Deep Water Channel was dug and the locks built to connect the Sacramento River and the West Sacramento Port. They use to dredge the river all the time because barges were pushed all the way up to Red Bluff. The Tug Boats were tied up just below the Tower Bridge on the East side and used the warehouses for a verity of storage. I think they caught on fire in the early or mid 60's.

It's nice to see old photos that people had the forethought to keepopens the memory locker.

From Frank Palmer:'

Yes, I remember the picture. I was not there. It shows the fleet of the Sacramento flotilla, probably just after the flotilla was chartered. There was a large membership.

It was chartered as Flotilla 31, later to become Flotilla 61. I was commander in 1961. Still later, it was changed to Flotilla 35 when the divisions were realigned.

The photo was taken from the Tower Bridge looking down stream. On the left, is the Sacramento River Lines dockage facilities, warehouses and barges. This is where the Embassy Suites is now located at 100 Capitol Mall.

In the back ground is the framework of the PGE's gas storage tank facility. The tank was raised or lowered to accommodate the amount of natural gas being in storage, located at Front and S-T-U Streets.

George A. Tilton was the third flotilla commander. His term of office was 1943 to 1946. Rod Reynolds was fourth flotilla commander 1947 to 1948.