



Growing Up In The Santa Clara Valley: From Picking Prunes To Submarine Service

Dr. Thomas L. Allen

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This book begins with reminiscences of growing up on a fruit ranch (apricots, prunes, peaches, and walnuts) in the Santa Clara Valley, now commonly called Silicon Valley. Our 28-acre ranch was located between Santa Clara and Sunnyvale, with a Cupertino address. I was the youngest of five children. As I got older I progressed through the various ranch chores, from cutting apricots and picking prunes off the ground, to picking apricots and peaches from a ladder, and dipping prunes before they were set out on trays to dry in the sun. Other jobs included irrigating, driving the tractor and truck, and setting out smudge pots ahead of an expected frost. My education was at Jefferson Elementary School on Lawrence Road, Santa Clara High School, and the University of California, Berkeley. Having gone through the Naval ROTC program at Berkeley, when I graduated in February, 1944, with a degree in Chemistry, I also received a commission as an Ensign in the U. S. Naval Reserve. I volunteered for submarine duty, and following Submarine School I was ordered to duty on the U. S. S. Bluefish, on which I completed three successful war patrols. While at Submarine School I married Patricia Powers, whom I had met at the beginning of my senior year at Berkeley. The book ends when the Navy released me to inactive duty in February, 1946, and I began graduate studies in Chemistry at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in Pasadena.

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