



# California Girl: Growing Up in the Great Depression

*Elsie McCain White*

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## **California Girl: Growing Up in the Great Depression** Elsie McCain White

Today, Sunnyvale is “The Heart of the Silicon Valley,” booming center of a booming industry. In the 1930s, it was a sleepy town surrounded by orchards, its rapid growth of earlier decades depressed by the economic woes sweeping the country. Middle-class families adapted because they had to. Fathers grew vegetables and kept chickens in the back yard. Mothers made their daughter's dresses from feed sacks and worked seasonally at fruit processing. Families couldn't always afford to buy a Christmas tree. There was no money to keep a car. World War II brought greater prosperity, but shortages kept life simple and teenagers were glad to join their mothers in sizing fruit or working summers in one of the big local canneries. Kids walked, rode their bikes, or roller skated everywhere. a big night out was going to the movies or the roller rink with girls you'd known since first grade. In this heartfelt memoir, Elsie McCain White, daughter of the concrete contractor who installed many of the town's sidewalks, recalls what it was like to grow up in that time and place when fruit ruled the economy and a girl's friends and family mattered most of all. 19,025 words. Family album with 29 photographs.

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