

ONCE UPON A TIME IN NORTH PARK A STORE NAMED BECAUSE OF PIGGIES

By Katherine Hon

Does the name “Piggly Wiggly” ring a bell? It may seem funny to some, but in the southeastern United States, it means a favorite grocery store. Though none remain in California, “Piggly Wiggly,” the original self-service grocery store, was an integral part of North Park’s history.

Piggly Wiggly® is a registered trademark of Piggly Wiggly LLC, and today there are more than 600 independently owned and operated stores in 17 states. Clarence Saunders founded Piggly Wiggly with his first store in Memphis, Tennessee in 1916. The typical way of shopping at the time, where customers would give their orders to clerks who would then gather and package the items, seemed inefficient to him. His novel solution was to provide baskets to customers as they entered the store, let them stroll the aisles and pick their own items, and then pay for purchases in cash on the way out of the store. Predicted to fail, the new store was instantly popular, and by 1922 there were thousands of Piggly Wiggly stores across the United States. Saunders issued franchises to hundreds of grocery retailers, who continued to successfully operate the stores even when he ceased to be involved in the company in the early 1920’s.

The first San Diego Piggly Wiggly opened at 1040 7th Street in October 1922. The second store came to North Park in December 1922, and was located at 3837 30th Street in the building near University Avenue that now houses George’s Camera. The December 8, 1922 *San Diego Union* article announcing the store opening noted that this location “was chosen because of repeated solicitations from that neighborhood that we establish a PIGGLY WIGGLY store in that part of San Diego.” Starting in the late 1930’s, the building at 3015 North Park Way, now the Bargain Center, was a Piggly Wiggly.

An April 4, 1925 news article about the fifth store opening at 5th and A Street praised the North Park resident who was behind the San Diego operations, Dudley D. Williams. The article stated:

“The story of PIGGLY WIGGLY in San Diego is the story of one man’s faith in the future of the city, a faith so strong that he invested every dollar he owned in the PIGGLY WIGGLY business here. D. D. Williams, general manager of PIGGLY WIGGLY stores in San Diego, was attracted to the city in 1922, through favorable reports of the city and the recommendation of the Chamber of Commerce. He came, he saw, he stayed AND INVESTED... While PIGGLY WIGGLY comprises a chain of almost 2000 stores throughout the country, the stores here are San Diego concerns in every sense of the word. Mr. Williams has made San Diego his permanent home, his employees are San Diego men and home-owners, and San Diego-made products are for sale on the shelves of the stores. ‘It is PIGGLY WIGGLY’S policy to keep San Diego money in San Diego,’ says Mr. Williams. Growth of the stores in San Diego is attributed to the unique merchandising system of PIGGLY WIGGLY. Food articles are arranged in attractive manner so folks can ‘help themselves,’ it being found from experience that the average buyer prefers to make his own

selections. Only nationally advertised and high-grade goods are on the shelves, prices are right and strict sanitation prevails. It was only two months after the first store was opened at 1040 Seventh Street, in October 1922, that Store No. 2 was opened at Thirtieth and University, the following December. Then came store No. 3 at Fifth and University in July, 1924, followed by No. 4 at Copeland and University in December of the same year. Now comes the opening of Store No. 5 ... PIGGLY WIGGLY, grateful for past and present patronage, will continue to boost for San Diego, grow as the city grows, and give the public the same honest, efficient service that has won for it the enviable reputation it now enjoys."

Dudley Williams lived with his wife Elma in North Park at 3675 31st Street. In 1926, he commissioned a house at 3594 28th Street from well-known North Park builder Joseph Kelley. This was Dudley Williams' home for the final 20 years of his life, at which time he was the proprietor of 24 markets.

The Piggly Wiggly website, www.pigglywiggly.com, says Saunders' reason for choosing the intriguing name for his store "remains a mystery; he was curiously reluctant to explain its origin. One story is that he saw from a train window several little pigs struggling to get under a fence, and the rhyming name occurred to him then." This story was related in an April 4, 1925 news article headlined "STORE NAMED BECAUSE OF PIGGIES." The article states:

"Many persons wonder how Piggly Wiggly stores got their name. Here's the explanation! The founder first originated the scheme of doing away with clerks so as to reduce cost and enable purchasers to buy more cheaply. Then he conceived the idea of having a turnstile leading into aisles which would convey the customers through all parts of the store so that they would pass every variety of article in the establishment, conveniently placed on shelves . . . a name was next in order. Since the presence of people strolling through the winding aisles suggested little piggies wiggling through fences in search of food, the name Piggly Wiggly came to mind. This was decided upon deliberately to make people laugh and put them in good humor. It was figured that because of the unusualness of the name it would impress itself upon the minds of men and women and that their curiosity would be aroused to see the inside of the store and make purchases in it. How successfully the psychological plan worked out is best demonstrated by the presence of hundreds of thousands of Piggly Wiggly customers who refuse to deal anywhere else."

According to the Piggly Wiggly website, Piggly Wiggly's introduction of self-service grocery shopping revolutionized the grocery industry. Among many modern conveniences, the store was the first to:

- Provide checkout stands
- Price mark every item in the store
- Use refrigerated cases to keep produce fresher longer
- Design and use patented fixtures and equipment throughout the store
- Franchise independent grocers to operate under the self-service method of food merchandising

So thank Clarence Saunders and Dudley D. Williams for initiating a more efficient way to grocery shop. With all the time you save, you can do this Piggly Wiggly Cross-Word Puzzle from 1925 (sorry, no prizes remain, however).

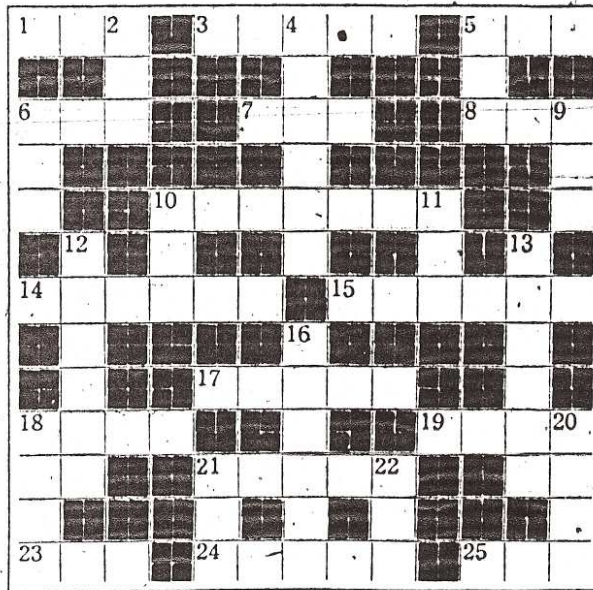
Cross-Word Puzzle Contest

PIGGLY WIGGLY Cross-Word Puzzle

Solve this Grocery Puzzle and Win a Prize

Horizontal No. 6 is "RIT"—Now go to it!

- VERTICAL**
- 2—Kind of powder sold in Piggly Wiggly Stores.
 - 4—First word in this business.
 - 5—Sometimes troublesome in cereals.
 - 6—Kind of bread.
 - 9—Slang for insane—squirrels like it.
 - 10—First word of a Scottish musical instrument.
 - 11—Necessary to clean glass cases.
 - 12—Packed sweet and sour.
 - 13—Not edible until cured—grown in California.
 - 16—Rhymes with Wrigley—same as No. 15.
 - 18—Grown in the garden in spring.
 - 20—A kind of pickle.
 - 21—A pitcher and six glasses.
 - 22—Fish eggs.



- HORIZONTAL**
- 1—Often takes the place of coffee.
 - 3—Made Hood River famous.
 - 5—Used at checking counter—made of paper.
 - 6—Never say dye, say—
 - 7—Eaten with ham or bacon.
 - 8—A weapon.
 - 10—Kind of fruit jar.
 - 14—Associated with the words "All Over the World."
 - 15—Descriptive of an oriental dance.
 - 17—Food is flat without it—adds flavor.
 - 18—A tree fruit.
 - 19—The source of most food—birds like it.
 - 21—One of the prizes offered.
 - 23—Kind of cleanser.
 - 24—Kind of spice little used.
 - 25—Stops friction, good on salads.

PRIZES

- First 5 correct answers, 3-lb. can of M. J. B. Coffee each.
 Next 5 correct answers, 10-lb. sack of Sugar each.
 Next 10 correct answers, 1 lb. of Challenge Butter each.
 Next 10 correct answers, 8½-oz. Jar of Gold Medal Mayonnaise each.

Turn in at Store No. 5

Name

Address

You will find the answers on the shelves of PIGGLY WIGGLY. Contest closes with the closing of Store No. 5 Saturday night. One contestant cannot win more than one prize. Neatness and time of submitting solution will count in case of ties. The decision of the judges will be final. Winners will be announced Saturday, Easter eve.

Buy your own
 with
 purchase to help

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|---|--|--|---|---|
| Store No. 1
1040 Seventh Street | Store No. 2
Thirtieth and University | Store No. 3
Fifth and University | Store No. 4
Copeland and University | Store No. 5
Fifth and A Streets |
|---|--|--|---|---|