Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

While Riverside City College is in the midst of the 2015 summer semester, we take a look back at posts from 1939. In October and November of that year, the “Arroyo” student newspaper ran a series of articles by Riverside Junior College Faculty reminiscing about what they did during past vacations. The fifth and final article in this series appeared in the November 1, 1939 edition of the newspaper and was written by H. Norman Spohr (Music 1927-1940). Spohr is seen in the two photos below. The top photo is the 1927 RJC Faculty. Spohr is in the middle row, second in from the left. The second photo shows Spohr directing the RJC Choir in 1929.

Spohr’s column was entitled “Vacation Memories”.

July 13, 2015
“THE HIGH SPOT in my vacation this summer was an eight-day auto trip which I took with my family through the Southwest, going by way of El Paso to San Antonio and thence to New Orleans, and returning by way of Baton Rouge, Dallas, Santa Fe, and Needles. It was not a long vacation as far as time was concerned; but we managed to travel nearly five thousand miles, and I had a chance to visit certain places again that I had not seen for more than twenty years, besides getting a rest from the incessant grind of teaching. Many impressions remain. First there was a renewed wonder at the size of this corner of our country and at the many rich cities it contains. Then, too, I could not help but marvel at the progress that has taken place in the past twenty-five years. Back in 1916, I had occasion to spend a considerable time in this part of the world, and with a fairly good memory of things as they were in that day, I found it interesting to compare conditions as they exist today with those I had once known. At that time, the only sure means of transportation had been the railroad; communication had not yet received the powerful stimulus of the radio; cities seemed smaller and more individualistic, many of them even to the point of being unique; and people in the widely separated districts seemed “different,” not only in speech and manners, but in ideals and attitudes. Today one city is very much like another, all striving for size of population, and all trying to look, as far as possible, just like the others. Old romantic spots are still venerated, to be sure; but even San Antonio and New Orleans seem more aware of their modern buildings and their teeming streets than of their historical monuments, while Santa Fe, which alone seems to hang on the past, has largely spoiled the effect by permitting souvenir ‘shoppes’ to flood the place. Remembering the wretched roads of a quarter of a century ago, highways were a source of constant joy to us, particularly through Texas, where a wonderful system of roads has just been completed. And in Louisiana, we crossed over many fine bridges that had been recently erected by the WPA under the leadership (and name) of Huey P. Long or some on of his followers. Mr. Long, incidentally, is still pretty much of an idol to the people of Louisiana, his house in New Orleans being pointed out by guides as about the most important spot in the city. If people at one time differed from each other in various parts of the country, such is not true today. There are minor differences of speech, to be sure; the people of eastern Texas are more courteous than some to be found elsewhere; and the energetic citizens of New Orleans toot their auto horns until they fairly drive mad the stranger who is within their gates. But taken by and large, Americans are Americans today, and South and East and West are being levelled into one common society. The talkies and the radio, I believe, are responsible for this change. Strange as it may seem, the voices of Charlie McCarthy and Dorothy Lamour sound as clearly and as frequently in the historic atmosphere of New Orleans (I was there on a Sunday) as they do in Los Angeles. And the theaters of San Antonio are commonly filled with the descendants of drawling Texas cattlemen, listening to the sometimes dignified English of our Hollywood Thespians. One of the happiest impressions of our trip was derived from the fact that fine roads, good cars, and careful drivers (even if they do a bit fast at times) are making travel safer. We saw only one traffic accident on the entire trip, and that was not at all serious. Moreover, we did not see more than a half dozen traffic officers outside of large cities. A depressing thing we did see, however, one that sticks out in my memory above all else—and that was a host of dejected-looking people headed for California in dilapidated
cars bearing the license plates of the Dust Bowl states. One cannot help admiring the courage of these unfortunates for making the effort to start life over again. At the same time, one wonders how sincere that effort is, and just how California is going to be able to stand the impact of such a large immigration."

Below are photos of Spohr as seen in various yearbooks. The top two are from 1930 and 1937, the bottom two from 1938 and 1940.

The Riverside City College Instructional Media Center is bringing you this five-year countdown to RCC’s 100th Anniversary. Our intention is to give everyone a weekly glance at the many people and events that have been a part of the college. Our thanks go to the RCC Digital Library Archives and the District’s Office of Strategic Communications and Relations for allowing us to use their photo and newspaper collections. Thanks as well to all of the
RCC students and Faculty Advisors that were a part of the yearbook and newspaper staffs. Thanks also to Tom Johnson and Gilbert Jimenez who wrote “the book” about RCC’s history. “Riverside City College 1916-1981- A 65 Year History” is available in the RCC Digital Library. For copyright purposes, all images originating from Riverside City College publications and the District's Office of Strategic Communications and Relations are the property of the Riverside Community College District.