

# *Fair Oaks Historical Society*

*Newsletter – January 2020*

Issue Number 132

Ralph Carhart, Editor



[www.fairoakshistory.org](http://www.fairoakshistory.org)

## **QUARTERLY POTLUCK & GENERAL MEETING**

**6 p.m., Tuesday, January 28, 2020**

Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse

7997 California Avenue

*Please bring a main dish, casserole, salad, or dessert to share.*

**“An Evening at the Movies Starring the Fair Oaks Bridge”**

### **President’s Message**

**Jim Pearce**



My two years in office are about up. It’s been an interesting time what with the great Chicken Festival car crash, two successful Soup Nights, the Rotary Theater, interesting General Meeting speakers, finalizing our 801c3 tax status, production of two history calendars and much more. I really appreciate all the help I received from the members.



I’ll be passing the gavel to Bob Sours at the January General Meeting. Bob has a lot on his agenda and he welcomes everyone’s support to pitch in and keep the Historical Society and its mission moving along. (See Bob’s story on page 4.)

# Programs

**Terrie O'Donnell, Vice President**

October's program was on the Gum Ranch development at the corner of Madison and Kenneth Avenues. Jim Pearce recounted the history of the various ranches in the area and Ralph Carhart covered the development of the Elliott and MBK housing projects and the new public parks.



Plan of Gum Ranch (east 2/3)



New Gum Ranch Park projected to be built in 2020



New Madison Place Park



Play area at Madison Place Park

## Pictures from the October General Meeting



## Our Upcoming January 28 Program

“An Evening at the Movies, Starring the Old Fair Oaks Bridge” will cover the two movies filmed in Fair Oaks— “Stunt Man,” starring Peter O’Toole, and “Letters from a Murderer,” starring Patrick Swayze. We’ll have exciting film clips from the two movies.



## **Bob Sours— History Center Docent to Society President**



Approximately two and one half years ago I responded to a notice from the Fair Oaks Historical Society that announced they were looking for a new docent at the History Center. Timing was good for me, and I applied for the position and was hired. Little did I know that I had embarked on more than a part time job.

What I found was unexpected— a group of dedicated people who, over a 45-year period, determined to capture and spread the history of Fair Oaks. Today, because of their efforts, we have a museum that holds illuminating treasures from the past— photographs, artifacts, books, newspaper articles and stories from early residents.

The unexpected part for me was what I had missed for years while living in Fair Oaks. Not only did I find a part-time job, but also a home away from home. Now, as a volunteer like the new and old friends with whom I now share a common interest, I have the opportunity and honor to serve as your President, while continuing my curator and docent duties at the History Center.

## **What's New at the History Center...**

### **Jim Pearce**

You may not have noticed that we've changed the History Center hours to better accommodate our mid-week visitors. We're now open Tuesday and Thursday, 10 to 2, and Saturday, 10 to 3. We're also available to open the History Center by appointment for visitors. Contact me for prearrangements.

We are continuing to add videos to the Rotary Theater. Latest are oral interviews with Harry and Jane Dewey, and the dedication ceremony for the Founder's Monument, all provided by Larry Fritz, and all available on our big screen. If you missed the Founders Dedication and want to see it, drop by the History Center and let us know.



We currently have four oral history videos, four video shows, two TV video clips, and three repeating slide shows. We'll put a listing of these with descriptions on the website. Just ask at the History Center if you'd like to view any of these.

We sold out all our 2020 Calendars the week before Christmas. That was 46 calendars which netted over \$250 for the treasury. Incorporating high quality historical pictures, they will remain keepsakes long after this year.

## Memorials

We're sad to report the following members who passed away last year:

**Sarah Goller**

**Rose Ann Lamb**

**Blanche Rosevear**

Donations to the Historical Society may be made in their name and the donors will be recognized in the Memorial Book at the History Center. We also acknowledge that Gary Archer made a generous contribution in the name of his father **Dr. Norton A. Archer** and his wife **Vivian**.

## Meeting Minutes and Treasurer's Report

Minutes of the October 2019 General Meeting and the Treasurer's year-end report will be available for review at the General Meeting. Account balances as of December 1, 2019 were: Checking - \$10,684; Savings - \$5,422; CDs - \$33,990; Total - \$50,096.

**January is membership renewal month.** You can renew either online at our website, in person at the History Center, at the January meeting, or through the mail, If you're not sure of your membership status, you can check on-line on our website.

## Soup Night 2019 Photos

Net Profit \$9,435



## Old Homes of Fair Oaks

**Thompson House – 7816 Sunset Avenue  
(Southeast corner of Sunset and New York Avenues)**



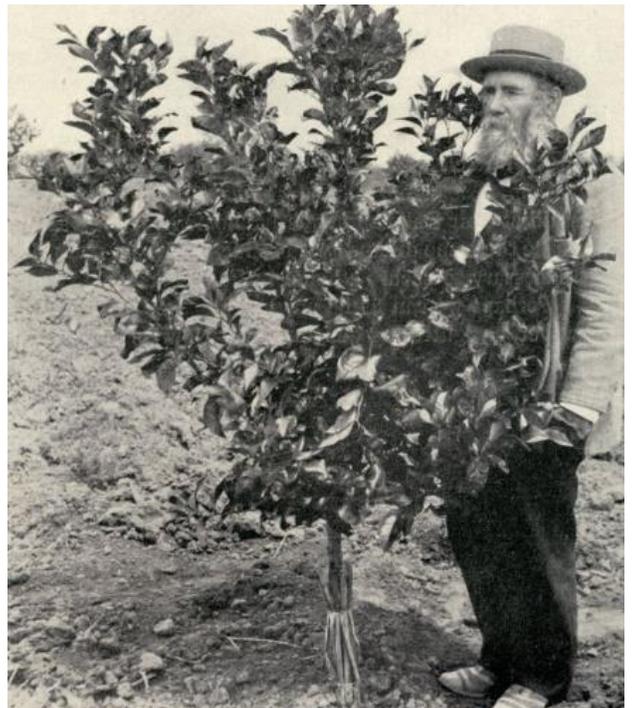
The house on Sunset Avenue & New York is known to historians as the Thompson House. It was built about 1905 by two brothers, General J.F. and Colonel E.M. Thompson, both bankers from Iowa.

There isn't any evidence that either of them ever lived on the property, and one article said they were involved with the Howard & Wilson publishing company and also invested in Florida property.

This house was researched by Steve Abbott in about 1990 in a general effort to document old Fair Oaks homes. We know of no old photo showing the home except the one of Sunset Avenue in which the house is hidden behind the trees. Steve labeled the house “The Thompson House” in his survey, so I suppose he found something in the County property records that indicated Thompson as the first owner of the property.

The list of founding fathers shows an initial investor in Fair Oaks as Gen. J. F. Thompson, Banker, Forest City, Iowa. I suspect he bought several parcels of land in the area in Fair Oaks as an investment.

The developers of Fair Oaks— the Howard & Wilson Publishing Company of Chicago— had four “Sunset Colonies” they were developing— North Carolina, Louisiana, and Los Angeles, and Fair Oaks—and other developers were doing the same thing in other parts of the country.



Thompson's biography says he was investing in land in Florida. The 1910, 1920 and 1930 censuses show Thompson living in Forest City. The brothers are shown in an early photograph of Fair Oaks colonists and investors,

I can find no record of the next two owners, Londonberg (1920) and Dillingham (1930), ever living in Fair Oaks, so the property was probably being handed around as an investment and leased out to farmers who could not afford to own the land, a very common practice.



I asked the McWilliams about the property and they verified that the Beers family owned the property in the 1940's. There was a George H. Beers in the 1940 census living in Fair Oaks, listed as a Mine Superintendent. Evidently George died and his wife occupied the place with their daughter. The other owner known by our Facebook readers was the Bartlett family in the 1970s.

(On 1.45 acres, the house recently sold for \$875,000.)

### **Thanks Sally Dunbar!**

Sally Dunbar, our Old Homes editor, signed on in July 2014 and will step down this year.

She has contributed over 15 old homes articles to the newsletter and was instrumental in creating the Google Old Homes App.

The photo is of our visit to the old Dewey house, with Sally, Eileen Dewey Thomas, and Marilyn Pearce.

Sally's busy schedule next year precludes her continuing as Old Homes Editor.



If anyone is interested in doing additional articles, let Bob Sours, Jim Pearce, or Ralph Carhart know. We have more candidate homes coming up.

FAIR OAKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 2044  
FAIR OAKS CA 95628

**TO:**

Dues are for the Calendar Year, Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. Dues are payable on Jan. 1, and become delinquent Feb. 1.  
New members joining after Oct. 1 shall be considered paid for the following year.

Please check one:  NEW MEMBER APPLICATION  DUES PAYMENT

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Membership level requested:

Individual \$20  Family (2 Persons) \$25  Supporting (Business) \$50

Single Life Member \$150  Family Life Member \$225

I am adding \$5 and request a printed newsletter by USPS \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am including the following donation to support the History Center:

Contributor \$100  Supporter \$250  Patron \$500

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check number \_\_\_\_\_ Date of check \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Please mail this form and check payable to:

“Fair Oaks Historical Society, Inc.” P.O. BOX 2044, Fair Oaks, CA 95628.

For more information, please call Jim Pearce, 961-8415 ([jpearce4104@gmail.com](mailto:jpearce4104@gmail.com))