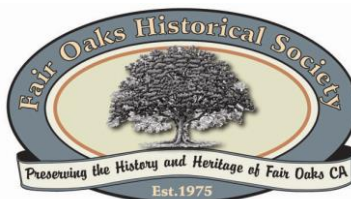


Fair Oaks Historical Society

Newsletter – October 2017

Issue Number 123

Ralph Carhart, Editor



www.fairoakshistory.org

QUARTERLY POTLUCK & GENERAL MEETING

6 p.m., Tuesday, October 24, 2017

Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse

7997 California Avenue

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

“What’s New at the Fair Oaks History Center”

Bob Sours, Jim Pearce and Wendy Key

President’s Message

Frank Wolfe

Where has the time gone. It seems like just yesterday when we were installed as new officers, and now the second year is almost over.

Really good news— Our new docent, Bob Sours, under the able direction of Jim Pearce, is making some great improvements to the History Center. If you haven't been there lately, I urge you to drop by some weekend and see the changes. At our upcoming General Meeting you'll hear a lot more about this. I hope you will join us.

The Chicken Festival was September 16. Jim and Marilyn Pearce and Lois Frazier spent the day at the History Center welcoming visitors. Jim's famous cookies added to the day. Val and I stopped by with my grandsons. They enjoyed Jim's commentary, and ten-year-old Nigel is showing some real interest in our local history.

I thank all of you who continue to devote your time and energy to the Society. I am especially thinking of Claudia and her Soup Night committee. As usual, Soup Night is a sellout, but you can ask to be on the waiting list in case openings occur. Another way you can help is to donate a raffle or silent auction item. Please contact Valerie Hart at 916-827-5243 to do so. This event is our major fundraiser and it needs everyone's help.

A final note. The nominating committee will announce candidates who will be voted on at the October meeting. If you are interested in running for an office or being on the Executive Committee, please contact Pat Vogel or Terrie O'Donnell.

See you on October 24.

Photos from our July General Meeting:



Memorial Book – Don't forget that we have a Memorial Book which provides a special way to remember those who have passed away or to honor someone for a special event or tribute. Names and event (but not donation amount) are recognized in the newsletter and printed in the Memorial Book which is on permanent display at the History Center. Download the contribution form from our website or call Jim Pearce at 916-961-8415.



What's happening...

Jim Pearce, History Center Ops & Membership Chair

What's new at the History Center...

We'll save some of the "What's New" for the October meeting, but a few tidbits:

Bob Sours noticed that it wasn't obvious whether we were open or not, with the little sign in the window. So, he suggested we get a neon sign and some flags. Now, when people go by we're pretty obvious. He also rearranged the furniture to make the place more family friendly.



We had a great time at the Chicken Festival, with Marilyn and Lois sitting on the patio welcoming passers by and treating our guests to Jim's oatmeal cookies. We estimate we had about 75 visitors, very busy all day.



Sometimes we don't get any new donations for months, but in the past month we've had three people drop in with old photos and documents. We're grateful to the Smith (Robert) family for thinking of us as they started clearing out Bob's possessions. We now have Bob's 1937 aerial photo of the Fair Oaks area and can work up a good scan of the details before we take the original to storage for safe keeping.

Carol Brewer came by with a box of materials from her late mother, June Melvin, and followed up with another folder of materials for both the History Center and the Woman's Thursday Club. An example of what she donated was an original typed list of all the donors to fund the first Thursday Club building, and several original deeds. We've scanned the materials and provided the Club with a CD of the images.



We got a surprise call from Marc Miller, grandson of George Miller, the prominent Fair Oaks resident who bought the King ranch on Kenneth Avenue many years ago. Marc came by the History Center with a folder of photographs and documents.

Jim is going to be busy scanning all these materials, but we need to have it done. If the building goes up in flames, we want the originals protected in storage while the scans will remain available at the History Center for research.



Soup Night
Claudia Thorn, Chair

Soup Night tickets, as expected, sold out by the end of the July meeting. If you decide not to attend the event or have a vacancy at your table, let Claudia know as early as possible so we can fill the room from our waiting list. Above—the Committee is working on the centerpieces

Val Hart, our Auction Chair, will be accepting donations at the October meeting. If you have a donation, please be sure you submit it with a donation slip.

Board Meeting Minutes and Treasurer's Report

Minutes of the October 4 Board meeting and the latest Treasurer's report will be available at the General Meeting on October 24.

Old Homes of Fair Oaks

Jim Pearce

Morrow home, 7788 Sunset Avenue

James S. Morrow built the house at 7788 Sunset Avenue about 1906. He had a varied career, spending about five years each in a variety of business endeavors, including a stint in San Francisco from 1880 to 1886 where two of his children were born. He then returned to Chicago and worked his way up within the Libby Fruit Company to the superintendent level in 1900.



In that role he was assigned to supervise all of Libby's canneries on the Pacific Coast.

His office was in San Francisco, but he chose to live in Fair Oaks. He is listed as an original investor in the Fair Oaks Colony in 1895, thus he was familiar with the area. He bought the entire tract of land north of the old Fair Oaks Cemetery over to Sunset Avenue—bounded on the east and north by New York and Minnesota Avenues. He built his home at the northeast corner across from Cunningham's Victorian.

Morrow retired about 1925 and moved to Alameda. He died in 1944 at the age of 94 and is buried in Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland, California. Their's was a large family, and there are a number of Morrows still living in the Sacramento area. In fact, our member Barbara Morrow Roper lives just a couple of blocks away.

The home on Sunset Avenue still exists and is for sale for \$280,000. The listing says the house is 1422 square feet. The listing agent is Toddy Schultz, Lyon's Realty, (916) 342-3573. Their website says there is a pending offer.

Related story: On a December day in 1917, an anonymous note appeared on the desk of a clerk at the Libby, McNeill & Libby Company in Sacramento:

“Mr. White: Can you arrange to put me up a number of cases of canned whisky, using some of your vegetable or fruit labels on the cans? Will be back at 5 this evening. Will make it worth your while. T.P. “



But no one appeared at 5:00 p.m. to conclude the "business arrangement" to secretly can whiskey and label it as produce. The clerk reported the matter, which was turned over to police. James S. Morrow, the general superintendent who supervised all Libby canneries on the Pacific coast, dashed to Sacramento from his San Francisco office and immediately got to work to clear up what the Sacramento Bee reported as "an attempt to use the cannery for bootlegging purposes."

The main cannery still stands at 1724 Stockton Blvd.

Follow up on the strange life of Rebecca Murphy



Mr. and Mrs. Murphy
Just after their marriage in September, 1898

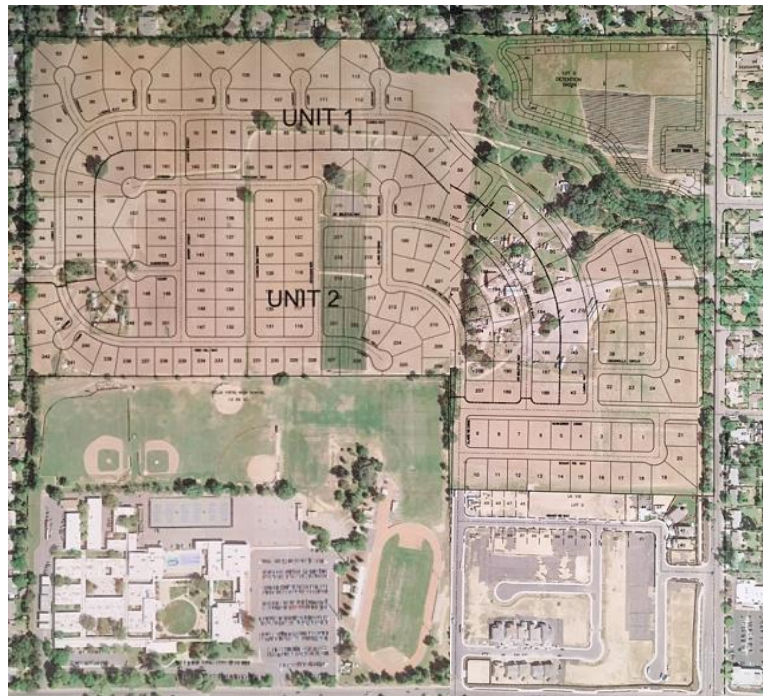
In the April Newsletter Jim brought attention to a new story on the FOHS website regarding the life of Rebecca Johnston Murphy, founder of the Murphy Building, and added that we were trying to find a copy of a book she wrote after the death of her husband. Our new volunteer, Wendy Key, decided to take on the task of tracking a copy of the book down. She finally found one at the Ohio State Historical Society, and they were willing to scan the book at a reasonable cost.

We were hoping for a tell-all book with a section on her relationship (pretty bad) with his children, but the book turned out to be a testimonial to her husband with little we didn't already know. But, we did get a photo of Rebecca alongside her husband.

Development Underway at the Gum Ranch

Elliott Homes has begun extensive earthmoving on the old Gum Ranch, north of Bella Vista High School. Owned and farmed for years by the late Irving Gum, the property will soon sprout the first phase of what will eventually be about 260 new homes. For at least the past seventy years in Gum ownership, the property was planted successively with wheat, pumpkins and strawberries. Over the years many development offers came and went.

Part of the original farm was acquired by the San Juan School District in the 1960s for the high school. And, more recently, the southeast corner of the farm was sold and currently is being developed by M BK Homes.



Besides homes, the Gum Ranch will include a new 0.8-acre mini-park within the MBK development—"Madison Place Park". Within the Elliott project a new 3.5-acre park will be developed along the south side of Arcade Creek which runs through the property. North of the creek, along Kenneth Avenue, a flood protection basin is being excavated to accommodate rare, but large flows of water that have been known to occur in extremely wet years. The basin, creek and four acres of oak-tree-mitigation area are in negotiation for inclusion in the new "Gum Ranch Park".

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)