



# *Fair Oaks Historical Society*

**Newsletter – July 2014 # 110**

**MEETING, Tuesday July 22 5:30**

**At the Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse  
7997 California Avenue**

## ***POT LUCK MEETING Dinner line forms at 6:30***

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Joe Dobrowolski**

- The April Meeting had another great pot luck. The presentation by the Native Indian Nations representatives was interesting and informative. We were very lucky to have experts in the subject of native peoples: Sheri Tatsch PhD who has taught at UC Davis and Shelley Covert a member of the Nevada City Rancheria Council.
- The History Center will be open 5 days a week from 10:00AM to 4:00PM starting in July.
- The Society's Board voted to make Lucy Strom at 100 years old a Honorary member.
- The Society is moving our banking affiliation to the new bank in town - Sierra Vista Bank.
- Jim Pearce has been working with the Wells Fargo bank. The bank has prepared a mural of Fair Oaks History to be mounted at the Wells Fargo bank on Madison Ave. near Hazel Ave. The bank is giving the Society a \$500.00 donation for the use of the photos and for Jim's assistance.
- The new chair of the Sunshine Comm. is Jean Applegate, [jeanapplgate@att.net](mailto:jeanapplgate@att.net), 853-9021.  
Contact Jean if a member is ill .

**NEWSLETTER:** We like to deliver the newsletter by email. If you still get the newsletter by US mail please add \$5.00 to the annual membership dues. If you know of someone who has not received their newsletter please contact me.

**HISTORY MINUTE:** I hope that all of you are enjoying the personal recollections, historical experiences, and remembrances of Fair Oaks. If you would like to share a moment please contact me.

### **PRESENTATIONS: Trude Vasquez**

Our presenter this month will be Sacramento Librarian and Author James Scott. His third book "Sacramento's Gold Rush Saloons: El Dorado in a Shot Glass" will be the basis for his talk. His books have all been generated by research from the Sacramento Public Library's Sacramento Room resources. In October we will have a docent from Sutters Fort who will talk about fur trading in early California. Then at our January meeting we are hoping to have the docents from the governor's mansion who will come in period dress to talk about California's governors.

### **SOUP NIGHT UPDATE: Claudia Thorn**

Soup night is coming on November 7!! Tickets for soup night will be on sale prior at 5:30 PM prior to our quarterly potluck on July 22. Tickets will be sold individually at \$25 apiece or for a table of nine at \$225. This year, if you wish to purchase a table I will need a check or cash to give you the tickets. One slight change to our room set up for the event is that the raffle items will be in the Fireside room. The silent auction and live auction items will still be set up in the main room. This will give us a little more room to wander around in the auditorium.

**We need** someone to volunteer to be the **chair for our cleanup committee**. If you would like to serve on this committee or chair the committee, please contact me at 916-961-8291. Additionally, if you're looking to procure donations, at the potluck I will have a copy of the donation letter as well as the form for the donation's information. Sincerely, Claudia

## **THE DAVIS RANCH, 10850 Fair Oaks Blvd – 2014 Update**

by Sally Dunbar, Old Homes Editor

One of the longest same-family-occupied homes in Fair Oaks is fading into the sunset. This is an update to the October 2011 report by Kay Schrudder reported on the Davis Ranch on Fair Oaks Blvd, south of Sunset.

As a refresher, Walter M. Davis and wife Oma Bennett, bought 20 acres in Fair Oaks in 1906, soon adding another 40 acres. They built their home at 10850 Fair Oaks Blvd on 60 acres, which stretched from FOB to Chicago Ave. A surgeon from 1890 through 1910, Walter M. and Oma had three children - Walter J, Elizabeth, and Oma. While the family lived there in the early years, 1920 found them owning and managing the Hotel Madrone in San Francisco. Father Walter died in 1922 of a pulmonary embolism, leaving a sizable estate to Oma, including various SF properties, a roadhouse (saloon) named the Oasis, located south of the Fair Oaks Bridge, and the 60 acre Fair Oaks Ranch.



At the time of Walter's death, son Walter was managing the ranch under a crop-rent agreement, along with J.C. Lee. A letter from the father's attorney declared the "lamentable condition of the husbandry" (the place was a wreck) they found when they assessed the ranch for Walter's estate handling. Son Walter stayed at and managed the ranch from his early 20s until his death in 1939 at age 40. A letter from him to his mother in 1939 showed his frustration at the difficulty of making a profit, the lack of trusted pickers, his unhappiness at managing so much land, and his frustration at being an orchardist. Prior to his death they remodeled: removing the striking turret, and porte-cochere; adding a french door entry and dormer window; replacing the victorian columns with craftsmen columns and in the 70's adding an addition with a new kitchen.



In 1942, after Walter's death, Mother Oma ordered many fruit and nut trees planted, including quince, peach, almond, walnut, apple, grapefruit, fig, white and red grape, many of which are still found at the property. They grew 10 acres of manzanilla olives, 14 acres of mission olives, and 7 acres of olive oil. In 1944 Mother Oma and her two girls moved back to the ranch permanently. Mother Oma died in 1950, and the girls, forever remaining unmarried, lived at the ranch until their deaths in 1996 (Elizabeth) and 2006 (Oma).

In the late 1940's the Davis family sold off 10 acres near Post Rd.; in the early 50's they sold off land which is now Fair Oaks Estates - today's Pollard, Dietz and Shangrila streets; in 1972, they sold the Eastern 20 acres to Henry and Katherine Kroeger, which is now Hegseth Ct. and 6 homes along Chicago. They reserved the current 7 acres, with the house, barn and caretakers cottage.

At their death, the Davis girls left a sizable estate, including the ranch, to UC Davis School of Medicine for scholarships. After considering various proposals including high density housing, a senior medical facility, a park, and restoration of the home, the Regents sold the property to Watt Communities at Davis Ranch, LLC (assessor's office show a \$1,360,000 price), which has plans to create 17 homes sites on 7 acres. During their planning process, Watt Communities hired an Historical Survey and Assessment of the ranch, including its potential for historical significance, consideration of the family contribution to the community and to the olive industry. A copy of the findings has been presented to the Historical Society, which we have at our history center. The old Davis home, which is in very poor shape, will be demolished, thus ending 100 years of Davis ownership. The Davis family's wishes to support the Medical School have been realized.

## **HELP !!!!!!!!!!!**

**Needed** - Someone to **supervise** the care of the History Center foliage

**Needed** – Someone to care for the displays at the History Center.

**Needed** - Someone to take on the editor of the newsletter

**INTERNET ACCESS** – We have been trying to get internet access at the Center. Jim Pearce found a local proprietor, the, “**Acacia Salon**”, has internet access and Sally Dunbar who uses the salon asked and got permission from the proprietor Sharon Loken for the Society to use her internet connection. This will allow our employee Ashton Smith and visitors to do research on assignments regarding Fair Oaks history. A connection via Pacbell would cost about \$100.00 a month. Patronize those who support the Society

**ACACIA SALON** Sharon Loken\_\_10414 Fair Oaks Blvd 916-967-9101

***Raffle donations are needed for the July Meeting***

***Lets make the raffle something people want to stay for...***

Call Trude Vasquez at 916-966-5499

or Claudia Thorn at 916-961-8291

**Prepared by Joe Dobrowolski, FOHS President & Editor**

**Contact me if your membership information or an item in the newsletter is in error**

To reach me use the US mail address on the front or email me at [joesextra@pacbell.net](mailto:joesextra@pacbell.net)