

1900 - 1910

These years are that fabulous, fascinating, golden era that introduced the 20th century to history! Good years because the world was at peace even though the period was the start of imperialism.

Cars sped along at 9 miles per hour. These were the days of the Wright Brothers and the "Whopper Flying Machine." Spectator Sports became important. Society summered at Newport.

True, the beautiful City by the Golden Gate was leveled and burned in an earthquake in 1906 and there was a money panic in 1909. A good President, William McKinley, was assassinated. Women were marching for their rights. There were low wages and child labor while get-rich-quick millionaires rode in private railroad cars. But - whatever the trouble - people were sure they could fix it. The solutions differed, of course. There was Teddy Roosevelt with his "Big Stick" and Square Deal, and Carry Nation and her hatchet.

People were having fun! They were singing "Meet Me In St. Louis, Louis" and going to the fair in St. Louis in 1904. "Alexander's Ragtime Band" was the rage. "School Days" tinkled in every Pianola. The country enjoyed the "Chocolate Soldier" and sang "Down By the Old Mill Stream." Everyone danced the "Triple Boston." An attempt was made to introduce the tango but it was discarded as too naughty. Near its decade's end, people were shocked by women's trend to bloomers and finally, women would not stay "put." They were starting to smoke and more - wearing the new sheath dress, a shocking thing - and there were daring dances called the "Bunny Hug," the "Grizzly Bear" and the "Turkey Trot."

In 1908, Henry Ford produced a cheap car, the Model T, and the automobile gave promise of being an integral part of the American scene.

Yes, America was on her way!

So was Fair Oaks! And here is Mrs. Norton Archer to tell you about it...

FAIR OAKS from 1900 to 1910

Mrs. Norton Archer

I little thought that at this point in time, I would be coming to the Woman's Thursday Club from Earl LeGette, a school that is located on the erstwhile property of a several times past president and active member of the Thursday Club, Mrs. George King. Their home is one that was later bought by the George Millers and was eventually sold to subdividers.

By 1900, Fair Oaks was a community being touted by Eastern Land Companies and many families had come to "the home of fruit and beauty," settled, and were making Fair Oaks a growing village. Several of the early families and their descendents, whose names have a familiar ring, still reside here: Hinsey, Broadley, Slocum, Holst, Osgood, Rice, Rose, Craige, D.C. Dickson, Green, Buffam, Roediger, C.H. Cunningham, Gunn, Kale and Fowler. No doubt, there are more. These families and many others worked and played in Fair Oaks.

In looking over some Sacramento Bee and Union clippings of 1900-1901, these items were gleaned:

TRANSPORTATION

The roads were dusty in summer and slippery in winter. One old trail followed roughly what is now Sunset Avenue. Cattle trails led to water holes. One such trail was just beyond the concrete bridge on Winding Way. It was a meeting place for wild hogs.

Going or coming from Sacramento was an all day round trip, either around by Folsom or through Carmichael tract and across the American River Bridge. There was early promotion for a bridge across the American River at Fair Oaks, and it was finally completed in March 1901. This washed out in 1907 and another was built.

The residents also pushed having a railroad. In June 1901, the railroad line to Fair Oaks was completed. Mail delivery began In May 1900.

CIVIC PROBLEMS

There were schools to be started. Four Gables in the east end of Fair Oaks, a private home, was a school for boys for a time.

Mrs. U. B. Watkins, whose name is still standing on Watkins Drive, was the first teacher in 1901. She taught in a two-room school at approximately the site of the Short Stop Store on Fair Oaks Boulevard.

High School children went to Sacramento, many by train.

In 1902, a school, which is now the Community Club, was built by Joseph Broadley.

A one-room school was built on Winding Way - now a home.

The bank was established in 1905 with A. J. Hodge as president and C. H. Slocum, two of whose daughters, Mrs. Art Broadley and Mrs. Ruth Gilmore, still live in Fair Oaks. Mr. Slocum was cashier. It was located about where Dr. Martin Wood has his present office (7974 California Ave.).

In 1904, R. A. Rose started the phone system. One of his daughters, Mrs. A. J. Linn, was a past president of the Club.

The Robinson Buffam Company in 1909 operated a water distributing system that was in operation in Fair Oaks until an irrigation district was organized.

CHURCHES

Methodist on the corner of Watkins and Sacramento was the first church with Presbyterian organized in 1902. The Methodist Church was remade into a home and is now undergoing further remodeling.

Dr. Robert Bramhall was the first doctor in 1901.

George Carr, a dentist of Sacramento, practiced in Fair Oaks Mondays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In 1904, the Olive Mill was built.

In 1906, Fair Oaks Fruit Company was organized.

One of the most controversial problems was the granting in 1901 of a saloon license at the south end of the bridge. There were bitter accusations against the Board of Supervisors for granting the license. After many pros and cons the saloon was built and remained for many years. As a direct result of this, a W.C.T.U. was founded in Fair Oaks in May 1901. There was to be no liquor sold in the town of Fair Oaks and it was many years before this was changed.

As can be seen, the years 1900-1910 were years of growth and the women of the community felt a need for a cultural and social group. In 1902, a group met in a private home and elected Mrs. J. C. Buffam president. Later the meetings were held in the Murphy Block. The constitution of this group stated that the object of this club is to be social intercourse and intellectual betterment of its members. This can be illustrated by a fact related to me by Mrs. Arch McDonnell, an early member. She said that Miss Etta Cornell, early secretary of the Club, walked from near the Grange Hall in Mills to attend the meetings, a distance of twelve miles round trip. She was avid for social and intellectual contacts.

The Club drew its members from a large area: Carmichael, Orangevale and Mills.

Among the names of the first members was Mrs. S. O. Osgood, mother of two later members, Mrs. DeWitt Rice and Mrs. Bert Kerns, and grandmother of a past president and active member, Mrs. Norman Langness.

Two whose names were on the membership list and are still taking an active interest in life are Mrs. Arch McDonnell (May Deterding) and Mrs. Don Slocum (Hortense Gore).

The dues for the Club when first organized were \$1.10, 10 cents of which went to the State Federation of Women's Clubs. In 1909, dues were raised to \$2.10.

At that time, a name was presented for membership and voted on at the next meeting. Three black balls would eliminate.

In looking over programs of that time, a wide variety was noted, many having a contemporary sound today: Studies of Russia, Japan, Negro of Today, Property Rights of Married Women in California, Xmas Vacation in Africa, Goal of Our Restlessness, Why Should We be Governed by Temperance in Eating.

Music was predominant in programs. Special programs were devoted to musical selections.

In 1905, the Club supported the Women's Improvement for Legislative Action on protecting land from dredgers and compelling them to level dredged ground. This was defeated with the results that can be seen today.

In May 1909, a resolution was made to investigate the advisability of building a clubhouse. On October 14, 1909, plans were presented. Mrs. A. D. McDonnell of Carmichael, past member and daughter of Mrs. Deterding, a past president, related that her mother spent many hours working on the plans for the club. To attend meetings, they drove over ten miles round trip. Mrs. Longbotham, sister of Mrs. Deterding, sang at many of the programs.

These early women set the precedent of work and play for the following years. Their interest in civic affairs was great and it is thanks to their efforts that we are here today.

It seems fitting to close on a couplet from a 1902 program:

"But now my task is smoothly done,
I can fly or I can run."

THE TEENS

1910-1920 The End of Innocence

America was in a period of clamor, of bewilderment, of unrest. We were reviewing all of our social conceptions. In the decade the problem focused most sharply on the plight of labor. One half of the working population toiled up to twelve hours daily - sometimes seven days a week - for bare subsistence wages. More and more Americans were willing to discard outmoded values. They realized that life would never again be simple.

Early in the decade came tragedy. The unsinkable Titanic had a rendezvous with ice in the black waters of the North Atlantic. 1500 people were lost, including the cream of Society.

The age-old battle between the sexes took a new and unsettling turn during this decade. A new kind of female emerged, one who smoked cigarettes openly, drove automobiles, bobbed her hair and generally kicked up her heels in a manner that shocked her elders. Gone was the tight corset but in came the hobble skirt. And the demure Gibson Girl was taking up tennis and golf! Then came the homely vehicle that changed America - the Tin Lizzie!

The automobile and increased leisure permitted tourists to hit the trail and the great outdoors. Congress was impelled to set up a National Park Service in 1916 to save wildlife and protect our forests.

At the start of the second decade, the camera was just old enough to become reliable and compact. It was the start of photography as an art.

During this decade motion pictures and Hollywood came into their own. By the end of the decade they even earned a modest reputation as an art form. Names that became well known were Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Theda Bara, and Fatty Arbuckle. A new kind of movie called the serial hit its stride in 1914 - "The Perils of Pauline" - with Pearl White. Then came the Extravaganzas - D. W. Griffith's "Intolerance" and "The Birth of a Nation" and Cecil B. DeMille's glittering productions such as "Male and Female."

During this second decade Broadway became the entertainment capital of America, and possibly of the world. It became known as the "Great White Way." Florenz Ziegfeld made "Glorifying the American Girl" his motto. Among his stars were Marilyn Miller, Eddie Cantor, Fannie Brice, Will Rogers, Ed Wynn, W. C. Fields, and the ballroom stylists, Vernon and Irene Castle. Women copied the gowns, mannerisms and

hairdos of Mrs. Castle. Men picked up the racy humor of Will Rogers.

George M. Cohan was the most active figure in the theater.

Much of the music to which America danced was the work of Irving Berlin.

Popular musicals were the "Desert Song" and "Firefly."

Popular songs were "Oh, You Beautiful Doll," "Whispering," "Beautiful Ohio," "Nola," "Pretty Baby", "Alice Blue Gown", "Danny Boy", "Look for the Silver Lining" and the "Missouri Waltz."

Popular dances were the Castle Walk and the Turkey Trot.

Another very successful World's Fair, the Panama Pacific International exposition, was held in San Francisco in 1915. A portion of San Francisco Bay was filled to hold the many beautiful buildings, among them the Palace of Fine Arts, which is still standing. The balance of the fairgrounds is now that exclusive district, The Marina.

Woodrow Wilson became President in 1912. At last came a period of moral awakening. Child labor reform was only one sign. Another was the spate of laws governing factory safety, minimum hours for women, workingmen's compensation, and improvement of working conditions. The public mood for Prohibition was now sweeping the land. America was going to make great ethical advances.

But in the summer of 1914, the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated and Germany invaded Belgium. Within a few brief years, the tramp of marching feet stamped out such pleasant thoughts as ethical advances.

For awhile America continued to drift along, enjoying Eskimo Pies and winding up the Victrola to hear "Sylvia" one more time. But the country suddenly woke up.

"All Europe on Verge of War" ran the shocking headline in the "Denver News." People were stunned! "Unthinkable," said Woodrow Wilson. Almost overnight America lost a happy, easygoing, confident way of looking at things. Along came the songs, "There's a Long, Long Trail a Winding" and "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier." Atrocity stories and V-Boat sinkings shocked the nation. Our economics were affected. Prices soared. Nothing was simple anymore. And then came our "War Years" as the Yanks took on Kaiser Bill.

We all went along as the problems grew. We sang "Over There," "How You Gonna Keep'em Down on the Farm" and "K.K.K.Katy." We saw that certain spark that always keeps America growing, and knew that America would go on.

The end of the war came with the signing of the Peace Treaty at

Versailles, France, June 28, 1919.

We were ready for the next adventure. That was the way it was at the end of our Teen Decade.

Now here is Iva Langness to tell us what it was like in Fair Oaks during that ten-year period.