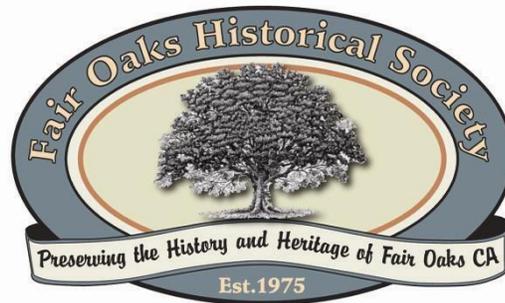


Fair Oaks Historical Society

Fair Oaks 125th Anniversary Newsletter – Fall 2020

Issue Number 135

Ralph Carhart, Editor



www.fairoakshistory.org



President's Message

Bob Sours

2020 will be remembered as an historic year—

COVID-19 struck a blow to our country, the world and our community. It has altered every aspect of our lives—social, economic, political and more—masks, social distancing, virtual meetings, postponed events, loss of business and jobs. Moreover, sadly, it has inflicted illness and death on far too many. We will take precautions this winter while we await effective vaccines and hope for return to normalcy in 2021.

Less than two months after our 2020 Board of Directors was installed at the January potluck meeting COVID-19 became epidemic and the Board decided, out of caution, to close the History Center. A few days later restrictions were announced by the Governor and local officials that solidified the Board's action and led to cancellation of the April potluck meeting. At present the History Center remains closed and our quarterly meetings remain suspended.

On the bright side—

2020 also marks the **125th ANNIVERSARY** of the founding of Fair Oaks, and we are not letting that milestone pass unrecognized and uncelebrated. This newsletter is devoted to illuminating that time, beginning in November of 1895, when the first trainload of “excursioners” arrived to scout for homesites in the newly subdivided Sunset Colony of Fair Oaks.

Condensed herein is an account, written by Stephen Kieffer in 1902 for the *Fair Oaks High School Advocate*, that recounts the early years when the colonists built their homes, cleared their property, planted their orchards with citrus, olives and fruit trees, and dealt with life in the colony before roads, water pipes, schools, churches and other basics amenities were in place.

More on the bright side—

In spite of the closure, our Board has remained active by e-mail and telephone, and immediately proceeded to make the best of the time out. The result was painting of and repairs to the History Center building, additions to our website and Facebook group, and work on our History Center “Theater,” virtual walking tours and other projects. Our newsletter and my periodic blogs have served to keep members informed, and plans for the February 14, 2021 “**Virtual Soup Night**” have been developed (See page 22). In addition, we've produced a 2021 Souvenir Calendar that is available for purchase (\$15).

With new technology we are also transforming the History Center to a more virtual operation. We'll still have the theater, photos, maps, scrapbooks and displays, but with our walking tours and vintage-sites reports we'll also be marketing the Village and surrounding community as the “real museum.”

Until we can meet again, we wish you a **Safe and Happy (Virtual?) Holiday Season!**

Founding the Fair Oaks Colony

**Condensed from the account by Stephen E. Kieffer
(Civil Engineer for the subdivision of Fair Oaks)
in the “*Fair Oaks High School Advocate*”, 1902-03
(Read the full version at fairoakshistory.org)**

On December 24th 1844, Micheltorena, Governor of the Californias under the Mexican regime, granted to Joel P. Dedmond the land on which Fair Oaks now stands. The original area of the grant was 19,982 acres, as eventually surveyed by the United States Government.

The original notes of the survey and subdivision of this tract, made in 1857, record the fact that many ranch houses were scattered over the area, indicating a feeble attempt at soil cultivation during the mining days, all signs of which had long disappeared before Fair Oaks was brought into existence.

Of the original San Juan Grant, a strip, some five miles long and one and a half miles wide, along the American River, remained, through the years unoccupied—a wild, heavily timbered area broken by canyons; a paradise for game and the hunter, but little known otherwise.

The area was traversed by one road which wound through its length, and by a well-defined cattle trail that followed near the river bluffs. Near the wagon road the original Fair Oaks settlers found the remains of an old orchard growing among the oak trees, and at another point a well forty feet in depth gave evidence of past life and occupation.

Beyond these meager evidences of a past human habitation there was nothing to dispute possession with the wild game and wilder hogs and cattle.

This was the condition of affairs in the fall of 1895.

At that time the Howard & Wilson Publishing Company of Chicago, who were looking for California lands to colonize, selected the San Juan grant as the best suited for the purpose, and decided to open it to settlement. The owners of the grant were Clarke and Cox, of Sacramento, and under an arrangement with them the Howard & Wilson Publishing Company subdivided about 4,000 acres of the land into 5, 10 and 20-acre tracts and placed them on the market.

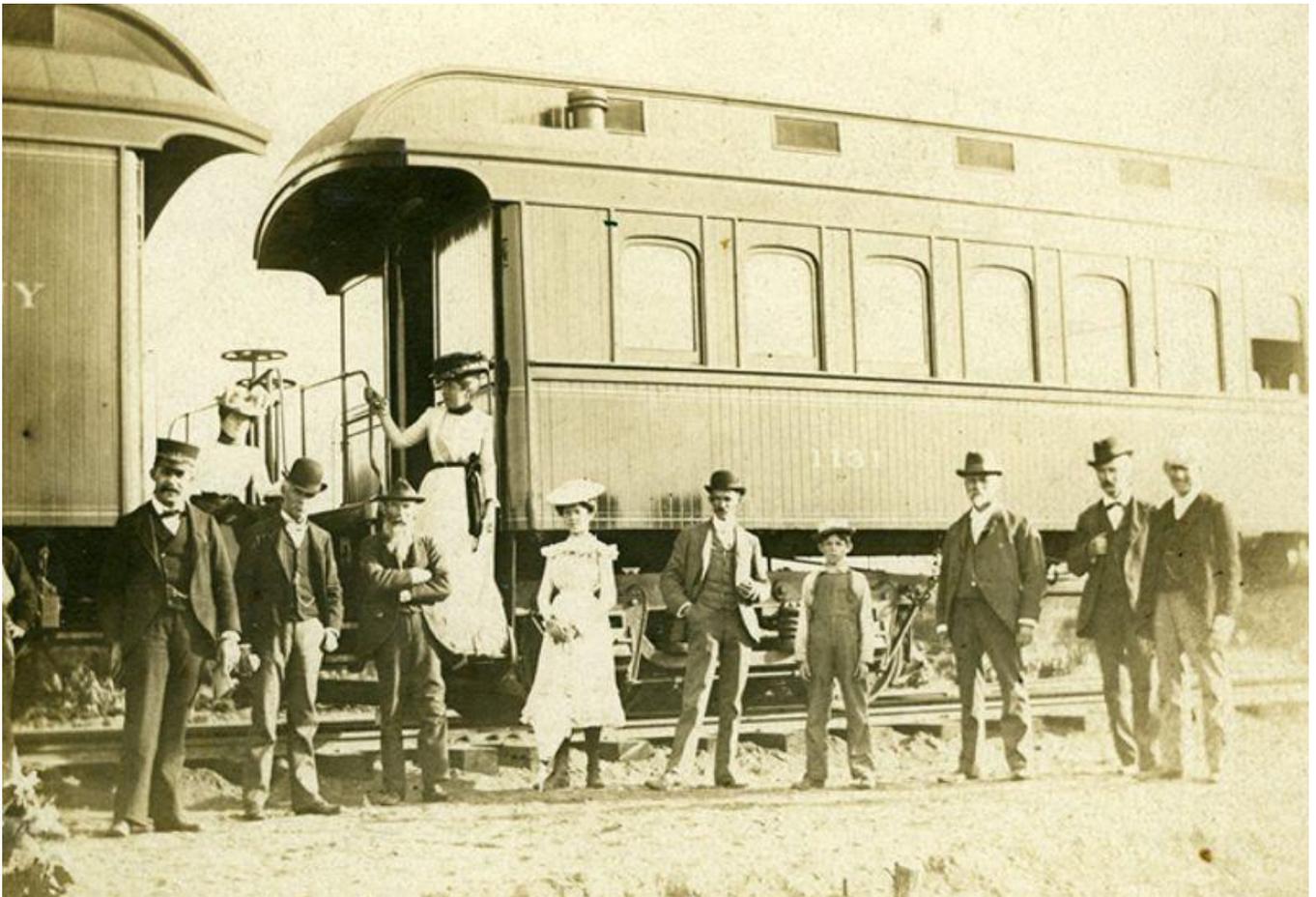
The original name given to the subdivision as a whole was the “Sunset Colonies,” comprising three separate subdivisions called the “Fair Oaks Tract,” the Fair Oaks Addition” and “Fair Oaks City,” the distinctive name of “Fair Oaks” being derived from the beautiful oak trees with which the country was forested.

On the 24th day of December 1895, the original maps of the various subdivisions were placed on file in the Recorder’s office of Sacramento County.

As the result of wide advertising a large number of people were brought to Fair Oaks on the initial "Homeseekers Excursion," which reached California about the middle of November 1895.

The Sacramento Record-Union and the Bee of November 19, 1895, devoted lengthy articles to a description of the party and its entertainment.

Occupying a train of five sleeping cars the party, to the number of 113 and representing fifteen states east of the Rockies, arrived in Sacramento on the evening of Monday, November 18th.



On the way down from the summit delegations of citizens met the train at Auburn and Newcastle and gave to each person fruit and flowers of every description. A delegation of prominent citizens from Sacramento went up the line to meet the excursionists at Auburn. On the evening of arrival in Sacramento the citizens of that city tendered a reception to the excursionists at the Crocker Art Gallery. The visitors were welcomed in an address by the Mayor of the city, and a letter of regret at his inability to be present was read from the Governor of the State.

On Tuesday, November 19th, the trip was made by special train to Folsom, stopping at several points along the line to inspect orchards and vineyards. After an inspection of the Folsom power house and dam, carriages were taken and the drive made through

Orangevale to the present Fair Oaks townsite. Of the ushering in of Fair Oaks' first settlers we will quote from the Bee of November 20th:

“The Howard & Wilson party, from Chicago after inspecting the Folsom dam and powerhouse yesterday afternoon, were carried in coaches, wagons, surreys, carryalls and an assorted lot of vehicles through the orange groves of Orangevale, heavy with their golden fruit, through the virgin woods of the San Juan grant to the townsite of Fair Oaks, situated on the high bluffs of the American River, opposite Natoma.

“The party included 106 excursionists and seekers for homes in California's wonderful climate, 18 of them women. The party was swelled by Sacramentans and guests to nearly 130.

“After eating supper in the temporary hotel building at Fair Oaks the delighted excursionists amused themselves in various ways. Five hundred feet in front of the hotel, on the brow of the bluff, 125 feet above the American River, a magnificent bonfire of several huge oak trees illuminated the woods and lighted up the river and the orchards on the bottom beyond it for miles. About the fire sat a number of the party enjoying the night panorama spread before them and glorying in the realization of climate yarns which had beguiled them westward. Men in their shirtsleeves were busy erecting tents and arranging sleeping accommodations, and the tired excursionists retired early to rest.

“Today after breakfast the party started to thoroughly ‘do’ Orangevale. They will also examine Fair Oaks lands.”





Similar excursions to the one described were brought out during the following months until by the month of April 1896, about 2000 acres of land had been sold to prospective settlers. A number of the first purchasers remained on the ground and began to establish homes at once. The temporary hotel already referenced to was the first building erected on the colony.

The pioneer residence and store was built by Mr. L. M. Shelton and the second residence was built by Mr. J. E. Holst. Following these came others in rapid succession, although building was hindered by heavy winter rains, until by the spring of 1896, about a dozen houses were scattered among the timber over an area of four square miles.

Those were truly the pioneer days of the colony. As yet there were no laid-out roads, no water pipes, no schools or churches, and no postal facilities. The only roads were tracks marked by the will or fancy of the first traveler, to be afterward followed as a matter of course, and wound over hills and through dale among the timber. It was easy to get lost, as more than one person found out to his inconvenience.

THE GREAT WEST

FAIR OAKS COLONY

Sacramento's Suburban Site for Little Farms

5, 10 and 20 Acre Tracts AVERAGE PRICE \$150.00 PER ACRE, INCLUDING A PERPETUAL WATER RIGHT.

Only \$30.00 Per Acre

TO BE PAID IN CASH AND \$30.00 PER YEAR PER ACRE FOR BALANCE.

CALL AT MY OFFICE AND LEARN ABOUT THIS BEAUTIFUL FRUIT COLONY WHERE ORANGES AND OLIVES ARE GROWING IN ABUNDANCE FOR THE 800 PEOPLE AT FAIR OAKS, WHO ARE CONNECTED WITH SACRAMENTO BY 17 MILES OF RAILROAD.

GEO. P. ROBINSON, :: 1006 Fourth Street

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

During the first winter the source of water supply was the nearest water course, from which water was hauled in barrels and tubs for domestic use. Those living near the hotel in the townsite pumped by hand from a well 175 feet deep all the water they used for domestic purposes. Some invented a yoke which fitted over the shoulders and to each end of which a bucket was hung, and in this manner water was carried a quarter of a mile and more. For a short time a daily stage carried passengers freight and mail between Sacramento and Fair Oaks. All mail was addressed to Sacramento and then forwarded unofficially by stage or the first convenient conveyance to the hotel, where it was distributed, or, rather people helped themselves to it.

Materials for building were hauled by team from either Sacramento or Roseville, distant 15 and 9 miles, respectively.

Everywhere the sound of saw and ax during the day and the light of brush fires at night told of the efforts being made to subdue the forest and prepare the land for the planting of orchards. In this labor of clearing the land alone as high as 600 Chinese, Japanese and white laborers were employed at one time.

Between November 1895 and June 1896, fully 600 acres of land were cleared of a dense forest of oak trees, and planted to orchards of citrus and deciduous fruit trees. All of this life and activity was dependent upon the construction of a water system for the supply of irrigation and domestic water. The source was the North Fork ditch, the nearest point of which was eight miles from the center of the colony, and owing to the rolling topography of the country it was necessary that this water should be conveyed by pipes under pressure to each tract.

The construction of this pipe system was commenced by the Howard & Wilson Publishing Company on April 11, 1896, and was pushed rapidly to completion. In all 19.3 miles of main and lateral pipes were laid by the company, and it is probable that private owners laid at least twenty miles of service pipes for the distribution of the water for the various tracts. Water was turned into the pipes on June 30, 1896, marking a new era in the development of the colony.

Prior to the completion of the water system and before the close of the rainy season, there had been considerable activity in the colony in setting out of orchards of deciduous fruits and olive trees, but no attempt was made toward the planting of citrus trees until water for irrigation was assured.

Early in July the first large shipments of orange and lemon trees arrived from Southern California, and were planted in orchard rows on various tracts in different portions of the colony. In the planting, citrus trees took the lead in numbers, followed next by olive and then by deciduous fruit (which were almost entirely planted in small assorted lots for home consumption).

By the middle of July about 500 acres were planted to orchard, in the ratio of about 300 acres of citrus trees to 200 acres of all other varieties. With the planting of the citrus trees the first season's work on the colony practically came to a close.

On November 20, 1895, the first visitors arrived to disturb the solitude of the unbroken forest, and on July 20, 1896—eight months later—at least 600 acres of land were cleared for the plough, of which 500 acres were planted to orchard.

During the enforced rest from clearing of land and planting of orchard, occasioned by the summer months of 1896, the people took their first practical lessons in the art of irrigation, and with the less "strenuous" life came the opportunity, heretofore lacking, of looking around and seeing wherein they could improve their general surroundings. The task presented to their view was one of no small magnitude.

Already steps had been taken to have a post office established, which was done on February 12, 1896. Mr. L. M. Shelton was appointed the first postmaster. The mail came by way of Sacramento to Folsom, and then delivered by carrier once a day.

The Post Office Department decided that the name of the office could not be Fair Oaks, because there was another office of that name in the state, and that the post office must have some other name than that by which the colony was known. The difficulty was finally overcome by making the word "Fairoaks" (all one word), a ruling little adhered to by the public.

With the very inception of things, religious services had been instituted in the colony, the first services being held in the general assembly room of the hotel. Clergymen of various denominations officiated at different times during the first winter, but the Methodists predominating in numbers, a Methodist church was finally organized, and with the warm weather of spring the pastor of the church Rev. Mr. Shelton, began holding regular services in a large tent in the townsite.

The point of next greatest importance was the subject of roads. During the construction of the pipe system the surveyed roads had been cleared to permit the laying of pipes, but no grading had been done. The roads still followed the old winding course, much of which crossed tracts that had been plowed up for the planting of orchards, thus compelling still further deviations and windings, until a trip from east to west of the colony was not a joy. A campaign was inaugurated for "good roads," which finally bore fruit the following winter.

Of first importance at this time was the recognized necessity for a public school for the education of the children of the colony, who could no longer be overlooked. As yet there was no machinery in existence whereby a public school could be established and a teacher paid.

Steps were taken to form a school district, the Fair Oaks school district being carved from the districts of Orangevale and San Juan. There was no taxable property to justify the building of a school house, and the per capita fund available from state and county school funds was barely sufficient to pay a small salary to the teacher for eight months of the year, with a very limited equipment for the school room. The first Board of School Trustees was appointed by the County Superintendent of Schools and held office until June of 1897.

The first public school in Fair Oaks opened in October 1896 in the upper story of (then) Dean's hall, near the hotel. This was the only building in the colony at that time suitable for such purposes. The number of pupils in attendance during the first year was about forty.

During the summer of 1896 the population of the colony was steadily growing, and new dwellings were erected.

With the opening of the winter season of 1896-97, great activity again prevailed clearing and planting of land. By the spring of 1897 approximately 1,000 acres of land were planted to orchard.

The second winter of the colony's life was entered upon with the topic of road building as the vital issue. The heavy teaming between Fair Oaks and Sacramento, occasioned by hauling the thousands of cords of wood awaiting a market (as many as 75 teams of from two to ten horses being engaged in the work), resulted, when added to the natural difficulties—in an aggravated case of bad roads. Early in the season the Howard & Wilson Publishing Company began the grading and bridging of the main roads through the colony making fairly passible about six and a half miles of roads that served as trunk lines for the heavy travel. Several miles of lateral pipe lines were also put in during the winter, for the purpose of opening new land to settlement. Up to this time most of the development had been in the eastern portion of the colony, in what was known as Fair Oaks Tract, with only here and there a small tract cleared in the Addition.

A gradual development now took place in the affairs of the colony for a period of two years. The great rush of the first two seasons was not repeated.

Sales of land to the aggregate of 2,200 acres were made by the Howard & Wilson Publishing Company up to the close of 1898, when for various reasons they were compelled to relinquish all business connection with the colony.

In June of 1897 the first school board was elected in Fair Oaks, and during the summer following contributed materials and labor on the part of the Howard & Wilson Publishing Company and the people, resulted in the erection of a very neat and commodious school house. This building was occupied for the first time in September 1897. The colony still

suffered from a dearth of public buildings, and the school house for many months served not only as school, but as church and town hall.

At the time the population of the colony was about 300, and the dwellings of all descriptions numbered about seventy five. There was little change in these figures at the close of 1898.

By this time in the neighborhood of 1,200 acres of trees were planted in orchard, in the ratio of about 800 acres of citrus trees to 400 acres of all other varieties. The class of residences began to improve, the new ones being of a higher order than most of the earlier ones, while many of the latter were enlarged or improved.

During the early winter of 1899 a new Methodist church of handsome design was erected in the townsite at a cost of \$1,700, the congregation having entirely outgrown the seating capacity of the school house. The building was dedicated on Sunday, May 7, 1899, thus welding another important link in the chain of the colony's life and history.

In September of that year was incorporated the Fair Oaks Development Company for the purpose of developing and selling the Fair Oaks lands. Although it was obliged to discontinue operations at the close of 1901, as a result of its efforts, however, several things of lasting good to the colony were brought about.

For several years there had been felt in the colony a growing necessity for better communication with the outside world, and especially for a bridge across the American River which would give access to the extensive region and the railroad south of the river.

Back in the summer of 1899 an agitation was started and the County Supervisors were petitioned for such a bridge. Finally, in August 1900 the County Supervisors passed the order for erection of the bridge. Its construction was begun in January 1901 and it was spanned for travel early in March. Cost was in the neighborhood of \$30,000.

At the same time the Development Company was negotiating for the establishment of suburban railway service with the colony. An arrangement was brought about whereby the Southern Pacific Railroad built a branch line a distance of two miles to the end of the new Fair Oaks Bridge, and a 45-minute service of two trains per day each way between Fair Oaks and Sacramento was established. Train service was inaugurated in June 1901.

With the passing of the years the orchards had come into bearing, and in 1901 the Fair Oaks Fruit Association was organized to handle the fruit crop, and a packing house and olive mill were erected.

Editor's note— In closing his account of Fair Oaks founding Stephen Kieffer offered: "In view of the record of the past it is not a vain prophesy to say...more than ever will Fair Oaks be recognized as a factor in that new empire of the west which is rapidly being built up."

READ MORE OF STEPHEN KIEFFER'S ACCOUNT ON OUR WEBSITE



Mrs. Anna M. Buffum's.
A Young Orange and Olive Orchard.

San Juan Hall.

"Strathmore," Mr. George Strath's.
Mr. W. R. Gore's.

Mr. A. L. Birchard's.
Mr. J. N. Cunningham's.

"Glenmerle," Mr. A. T. Hodge's.

Across the American River.
Southern Pacific Train and Station.

SCENES AT FAIR OAKS, SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

“A Walk in Fair Oaks- a Bridge to the Past and Back”

Story by Wendy Key

It's a chaotic morning. Emails keep coming in non-stop and the phone is ringing off the hook. I look at the clock in the bottom right-hand corner of my monitor and sigh, it's only 8:30 a.m. It's going to be a very long day. I look out my window and see the blue skies and the trees. There are couple house finches eating of the bird feeder I put in front of the window and they are singing back and forth at one another. It makes me smile.

According to the weather forecast, it's going to get to 102 degrees today. I'd like to get in some exercise, and decide now is as good a time as any to take a break and go for a walk before it gets much hotter.

I put on my shoes and go to the door. I hesitate for a moment and then decide I'm going to leave my cell phone behind. *Work's been taking too much of my time these days*, I tell myself. A quiet walk along the river will be good for me. Feeling a little guilty, I walk outside and lock the door behind me leaving work inside.

I walk down to Bannister Park, past the political protestors and supporters of the Governor who lives in the area. Once I'm on the bike trail and surrounded by the oak trees and dredge piles, things start to quiet down.

I always love walking along this part of the trail. I can hear the scrub jays squawking in the trees and the oat titmice chattering at each other. Every now and then I hear something rustling in the dried grass, but every time I look to see what it is, it's managed to hide again. I love the way the sunlight shines through the oak limbs and leaves.

It's beautiful and I can't help but wonder what this area looked like a hundred years ago. I imagine that there are even more trees and birds and animals. It must have been so peaceful. About this time, I reach the parking lot along the river and decide to cross the PCA Bridge.

This part of the walk pulls me back out of my imagination and into the present. It's August in 2020. It's hot. There are people everywhere with their rafts, camp chairs, fishing poles, and umbrellas. Kids are playing in the water and dogs are leaping after sticks with a big splash.

As I look down the river, I see clusters of rafters floating down the river listening to loud music. I feel conflicted when I listen to the music that's filling the air – It's nice that people are enjoying the river too, but why can't they do so without drowning the noises of nature? I'd rather listen to the waves of water in the river and the birds and the breeze.

I continue walking along the trail and under the Sunrise Bridge. It's cooler under the bridge and the sound of cars driving across the bridge is constant. There's a tree at the bottom of the bridge that always catches my attention. It's halfway under the overpass in darkness and halfway in the light. The part of the tree that gets natural light is green and

alive; the part of the tree under the bridge is nothing but branches. *That's got to be a metaphor for something in life*, I think to myself.

I approach the Old Fair Oaks Bridge and smile. I love this bridge. It's beautiful and gets me thinking back about what times might have been like back when Fair Oaks was a smaller, quieter town. As I walk across the bridge, a couple with a stroller and some kids on bikes pass by me. I stop in the middle of the bridge and look up the river towards the bluffs. The view is magical; it never gets old. There are swallows flying around, landing on the bridge and taking off again. I see ducks and geese floating on the water below.

I enjoy imaging the simpler times in Fair Oaks and finish walking across the bridge towards Fair Oaks Village.

Suddenly, something changes.

I step off the bridge and onto Bridge Street. I look down at my feet and realize I'm standing on a dirt road. That's not right... I turn and look behind me. The bridge is still there, but the water under the bridge is low. Really, really low. There are no brightly colored inflatable rafts and even if there were, I don't think they'd float very far before getting caught on a sandbar. In fact, everything just looks empty. I don't see any people and I can't hear the nearby traffic. Instead I hear a constant, industrial hum and scraping noise filling the air and coming from the far side of the river. I remember that I left my cell phone at home and try not to panic.

I look back up Bridge Street hoping to see something familiar. I see the palm trees that line the road, but they aren't very tall and don't tower over the road. Everything else I can see is dried grass, dirt, and oak trees.

Behind me I hear some rustling and the sound of children in conversation. I turn back towards the bridge and see a group of 5 or 6 kids slightly out of breath climbing up the side of the bluff just to the right of the bridge. The kids are wet and dirty and look to be between 10 and 12 years old. They're laughing and teasing one another, and their conversation stops when they see me.

I wave and say hi, not sure what else to do and they take off running down the street towards the Village. I watch them run before I notice that one little girl has stayed behind and is looking at me. She looks at me like she has a question and then finally asks, "Where did you get your clothes?"

I look down to remind myself what I'm wearing – black yoga pants, a purple tank top, and some Nike walking shoes. "I got them online," I tell her.

She gives me a funny look and I wonder if maybe she doesn't know what the internet is. Finally, she nods her head. "Yeah, I got mine off the clothesline too." And just like that, she's settled everything in her mind.

Relieved, I ask her what that constant grating and pounding noise is. She looks at me flatly and says, "I knew you must be new to town". She has me follow her up a dirt path

to the left of the bridge and up onto the bluff where we can look out across the trickle of water that is the American River. She points to the other side of the river at piles of rock and large machinery, “That’s the rock crusher. The dredging machines dig up the dirt and rock looking for gold and then all the rock is sent over to the plant and crushed.”

With a shrug, she tells me that she and her friends have been looking for gold, but they haven’t found any yet. She says her mama and her mama’s club petitioned to stop the dredging equipment from tearing up the vineyards, but their petition was denied. “Mama says that vineyard was the biggest in the whole country!” she boasts.

I take in the view and am in awe. It’s familiar, but not. I look to the girl by my side and ask her, “Where exactly are we?”. She tells me we’re in Fair Oaks. I’ve always loved the view from the bluffs but looking out and to the south now I’m starting to put the pieces together. Gold River should be where the rock crusher and the train station are. I’m definitely not in the Fair Oaks I know anymore...

“It’s a nice town. You’ll get used to it,” she tells me. “My name is Ellie and I’ll be your friend,” she says with a smile.

I smile back, “Thank you. My name is Wendy.” Looking past her to the east, I suddenly see a magnificent Victorian mansion. “Who lives there?” I ask.

She turns around to see what I’m looking at. “Oh, Mr. and Mrs. Straith used to live there. They’ve moved and someone bought the place, but they haven’t moved in yet.”

We turn around and start walking in that direction until we hear hammering and men shouting at one another. We change direction and walk towards the noise until we are out of the grass and standing on Main Street and Capitola. There are a couple men, one sitting on a roof beam, another on a ladder, and piece by piece they are taking down an old wooden building. A couple horses are grazing beneath the large, beautiful oak trees and a wagon sits nearby.

“Hullo, Misterns Broadley!” Ellie shouts with a wave. The man on the ladder stops what he’s doing when he sees us and climbs down. “Hullo, Ellie. What adventure are you on today?”

“I’m showing my new friend, Wendy, around town. She’s new here.”

Mr. Broadley looks me up and down, no doubt taking in my choice of clothing. I’m beginning to feel self-conscious about my clothes. A purple tank and yoga pants definitely don’t fit in around here.

“Hullo, Wendy. My name is Murray and that’s my brother, Harold, over there. Where are you from?” I tell him I’m from San Francisco hoping that explains my strange clothing. He gives that a slow thoughtful nod.

Before he can ask me anymore questions, I ask him why he’s taking down the building so carefully. He tells me that this building was originally constructed in 1895 and served as

the Fair Oaks Hotel when the colonists first arrived. It hasn't been used in the last decade, but it's got some good lumber and he's always had his eye on this plot of land.

He tells me that he's going to reuse whatever materials haven't rotted to build himself a new home and workshop. He's thinking of going into the plumbing business. His family has been building homes in Fair Oaks for years now, and all the nicest houses want plumbing.

One of the horses whickers and we turn to see Ellie walking up to the bay mare with a handful of dried grass. Mr. Broadley kindly tells Ellie that Bella always appreciates a snack.

Ellie holds out her hand for Bella and after Bella begins chewing the grass, Ellie gently rubs the horse's soft black muzzle. Mr. Broadley turns back to me and welcomes me to town. Politely he suggests that Ellie introduce me to Blanche Vaughn at her dress shop on Howard Avenue and then excuses himself to get back to work taking down the abandoned building.

When Ellie wipes her hands on her pants and heads back to Main Street, I'm relieved that she took Mr. Broadley's hint and that we are leaving the Broadleys behind. I'm embarrassed about his comment suggesting we go to the dress shop, but I'm also curious – *what DO the dresses look like? Are they comfortable?*

As we're walking down Main Street, Ellie tells me that she sees horses less often these days and now everyone wants to have a Ford truck to get around in. She tells me that garages are being constructed on Bridge Street and that soon everyone will be able to go to Sacramento whenever they want and won't need to take the train or get a ride from Mr. Beauchamp.

We walk past a simple two-story building with a porch. The sign says it's a general store and there's a man sitting in a rocking chair on the porch with an old, sleeping hound dog at his side. The hitching post in front of the store is empty.

"Hullo, Mr. Shelton!" "Hullo there, Ellie," he replies with a wave.

We turn left onto California Avenue and Ellie decides that this is where the tour will officially begin. She points to a small building to the right, "That's the library." I look up at the library and then look past it at the big building on the hill.

Ellie sighs, "That's my school. They built a new high school for the older kids a few years ago and they are talking about building a new grammar school. I can't wait to go to San Juan High School."

As we continue our walk along California Avenue, I can't take my eyes off the two-story school building. It's starting to show its age, but it's still sturdy and the bell tower is secure. There are a few children playing in the grass on the shady side of the building.

We keep walking until we get to the Slocum-Gore General Store. There are two Model T's parked out front and one gray horse tied to a post. I've always wanted to see a general store like this so I ask Ellie if we can go in.

She doesn't mind and once inside heads straight to the part of the store where they sell the candy while I slowly walk a loop around the inside of the store. It's beautiful. There are magazine racks with publications, canned goods on shelves, and colorful pickled fruits and veggies in glass jars. The shelving is made of wood and the wooden countertops are polished above dusty glass cases. The glass looks like it had been cleaned that morning, but the dust from the day has already started to accumulate. The dust on the counter tops isn't so bad since people have been placing items on the counter and then removing them when they leave. The cash register at the back of the store is ornate with brass buttons and filigree.

Suddenly I realize that people are giving me odd looks and remember that yoga pants don't belong in this decade. I find Ellie and we head back outside.

As soon as we step out, a man's voice says "Why hello there, Ellie! Did you know your mama's been looking for you?"

As I turn to see a thin older man standing in front of a barber shop, Ellie puts on her most innocent smile and says "Hi Mr. Vaughn. If you see my mama again, can you tell her I'm on my way?"

Mr. Vaughn seems to know that Ellie has no intention of heading home just yet but agrees that he will pass on the message if he sees her mama.

We hurry past the post office and Ellie slows down as we walk past the bank at the corner of Howard Avenue and California Streets. A gentleman in a suit is standing in front of the bank and talking to an older woman in skirts. The woman notices us first and gives Ellie and me a disapproving look.

Ellie is anxious to cross the street, but a wagon loaded with empty wooden boxes is crossing in front of us passing in front of the two-story gingerbread style building on the corner.

Politely Ellie says, "Hullo, Mrs. Johnston. Hullo, Mr. Slocum." Mrs. Johnston begins to say something about Ellie's mama and points to the telephone building north of California Street, just past a grassy overgrown lot, but the wagon has passed, and Ellie takes off at run crossing Howard Avenue.

I don't want to be rude, but don't know what else to do, so I follow her westward down California Street and we make a right onto Crestline Avenue before she slows back down to a walk. Before I can ask her why we were running, she tells me her papa works at the Almond Growers Association just down the street.

As we walk down the hill, I can see the Fair Oaks Fruit Company, the Olive Plant, and the Almond Growers Association buildings right next to each other. They cover a sprawling

44,000 square feet, beyond which are orange orchards and the occasional farmhouse as far as I can see. I'm struck by how beautiful Fair Oaks is and slow my walk to take it all in.

As we walk up to the buildings, we see the wagon with the empty wooden boxes being unloaded by Japanese and Native American men. The men wave at Ellie as she skips past them with a friendly smile. I wave back at them as we walk inside.

There are two men talking at the counter and they seem surprised to see us. "Hi, papa! Hullo, Mr. Hinsey!," Ellie shouts.

Ellie's papa kneels to give her a hug and then looks at me and asks where she found this new friend of hers. Ellie explains that we met at the bridge and I'm new to town, so she's showing me around.

Ellie's father listens to her story with a thoughtful nod, then tells Ellie that he and Mr. Hinsey are busy talking business. He gives her a few coins and suggests that we get some ice cream up at the Murphy Building. He tells us we'd better hurry on our way though, Ellie's mama has been looking for her, but a quick stop for ice cream should be okay.

Ellie smiles and her father returns the same mischievous smile I'd seen on Ellie's face when Mr. Vaughn mentioned her mama was looking for her earlier.

We start our walk up Entrance Street and pass Rice's Blacksmith Shop and the Beauchamp lot on our way back to Howard Avenue. It's striking to see the horses and worn blacksmith tools to the left and a couple automobiles on the right.

We turn right onto Howard Street and walk up to the ice cream parlor. It's a hot day and the parlor is crowded with teenagers and a few children. Ellie orders us some ice cream and we sit down on the wooden planks outside the San Juan Building to eat before it melts.

As we eat our ice cream, I take in the overgrown lot across the street. There are palm trees planted around the sides of the lot, but the lot itself looks like it hasn't been used in years. There's the brown, Robinson-Buffum building just past the open lot and people can be seen occasionally walking in and out of the building.

A young woman in a smart dress walks down the stairs at the front of the building and winds her way towards us as I'm lost in thought looking at the field. She stops and says hello to Ellie and noticing me, tells me that there's been talk that the lot has been purchased by the Fair Oaks Civic Club and will be turned into a town plaza.

"It'll be much nicer in town when the plaza is complete, and that field has been cleaned up" she tells me. She then turns back to Ellie and says, "Ellie, your mama has been looking for you all day."

"I know, Iva," Ellie replies with a resigned sigh. "I'm just going to finish my ice cream and I promise I'll go home."

Just then we hear four loud siren blasts. Everyone around us becomes alert and darts in different directions. Iva looks at Ellie and tells us she best be getting back to work and hurries back to the telephone operator's office in the Robinson-Buffum Building.

I look over at Ellie and she is quickly eating the rest of her ice cream. She tells me that the water is about to be shut off for 4 days - that's what the siren means, one blast for each day the water is expected to be turned off. We finish our ice cream and Ellie stands up to leave.

"ELEANOR ROSE!" we hear a woman shout. Ellie freezes in place and a woman comes running up to her, grabbing her by the arm. "I have been looking for you all day! You are coming home this instant!"

Ellie's mother sees me and gives me a concerned look.

"You must be new here. The water is about to be shut off, so if you know what's best you'll be heading home too and filling as many buckets and tubs as you can with all the water you'll need the next four days. Now if you'll excuse us, we will be doing just that. I look forward to meeting you properly when things get back to normal."

Ellie waves goodbye and hurries off with her mother towards Sacramento Street.

With everyone hurrying in different directions, I decide to walk towards Sacramento Street too. I don't know where I'm going or how I'm going to get back home to my Fair Oaks.

I turn right onto Sacramento Street and stop in front of Odom's Blacksmith Shop. For the second time today, I start to feel panic welling up inside me.

I hear another siren and turn to see a modern fire truck racing past me towards Sunrise Boulevard. I turn back to look at the blacksmith shop, but it's now the Fair Oaks Historical Society building.

With relief, I realize that I'm back in 2020.

I walk up to the Historical Society doors and see Bob Sours and Jim Pearce inside.

Grateful to see people I know, I hurry inside and interrupt Jim and Bob as they are talking about History Center operations. Before they can say anything, I ask them if the water is running. They look at me funny, but yes, the water is running.

I tell them about my day. Bob is delighted, but Jim is skeptical. We shuffle around yearbooks on the back bookshelves and find an Eleanor Black in the Grammar School's 1923 class photo.

I look at Jim and tell him I knew him it was for real! Bob smiles at me with excitement in his eyes. I smile too. I'm grateful to be home, with people I know and love, and with running water! What an adventure that was!

“Virtual” Soup Night

Claudia Thorn, Chair

Because of the continuing Coronavirus pandemic this season’s Soup Night will be a little different. But your support of this Society fundraiser is just as important and appreciated. Soup Night will be a “virtual” event on Valentine’s Day, February 14, 2021. Tickets (\$20) will be available through the website. Stay tuned for more details.

Soup preparations, a custom soup bowl, cozy and dessert will be packaged for drive-by pickup on Saturday, February 13 at a designated location. A raffle is also planned, and items will be on display in the Village and later available to the winners when they pick up their soup. Need I say we are soliciting those raffle items and welcome donations from members and merchants you patronize.

Memorial Book

Lois Frazier

Remember that the Society maintains a Memorial Book as a special way to remember those who have passed away or to honor someone for a special event or tribute. The names of those remembered or honored (stating the special event or tribute) are printed in the Memorial and Honor Book which is on permanent display at the History Center.

Recognition of each contribution also will be printed in the newsletter. The amount of the contribution will not be printed in the book or the newsletter.

You can download the recognition/contribution form from our website. You can also contact Jim Pearce (916-961-8415 or jpearce4104@gmail.com) for the form or for assistance.

Membership Reminder

If you haven’t renewed your membership yet, we urge you to continue your support of the Fair Oaks Historical Society and the Fair Oaks History Center. You can check your current status on our website (www.fairoakshistory.org). On the top of the home page we’ve highlighted the “Join, Renew, Donate” link. We’ve also created a credit card link so you can join, renew or donate from home. Alternatively, you can copy and complete the form on the back of this newsletter and mail to P.O. Box 2044, Fair Oaks, CA 95628.

Treasurer’s Report

Bob Vogel

As of November 10, 2020 the Society’s accounts were: Checking \$8,356.09; Savings \$9,456.67; Certificates of Deposit \$26,020.08; Total \$43,832.84

A Short History of the Vault

Jim Pearce

During the transition from the Finegold's Coins business to Walter Nash Jewelry at the corner of Fair Oaks Blvd. and California Ave., I had a tour of the remodeled inside of the building courtesy of FOHS member Vicki Walter. Off to the back (south) was an old bank vault door which piqued my historical interest. Was it original or did it arrive in one of the many transitions of the building? And, what about the safe deposit boxes? Fortunately, there are a number of bank histories and memory documents which allude to the history of the vault.



First, the history: The Fair Oaks Bank was chartered by Charles Slocum and Ralph Gore in 1909. At the southeast corner of Fair Oaks Blvd. and California Ave., it remained a bank until 1933 when it closed because of the Depression. The building was purchased by Carl Stark and became Stark's Rexall Pharmacy.

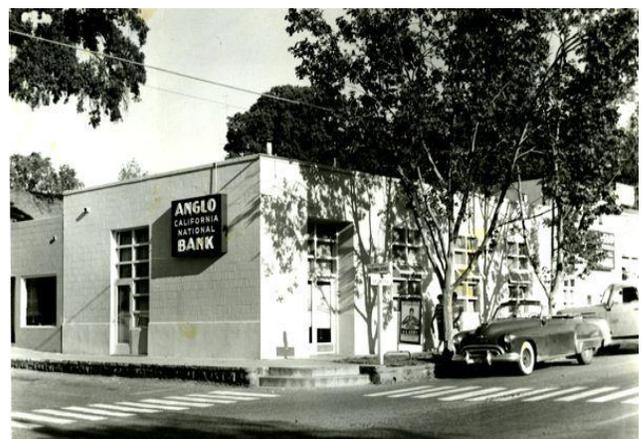


Fair Oaks Bank Building, occupied by Stark's Pharmacy, abt. 1945

For their tenure in the building, the owners kept the safety deposit boxes available to the residents. Presumably, the vault remained in the basement.

In his recollections, long time manager of the bank Bill Pugh stated, "For 14 years Fair Oaks had no bank. Carl Stark opened a pharmacy and soda fountain in the old building and rented out the safety deposit boxes to local citizens.

By 1952 the bank had outgrown its facilities and the building was torn down and replaced by the one now occupied by the Irrigation District offices. The old vault is still located there and is used as a file storage room. Before the new building went up, it was decided the huge vault, in place since the days of the old Fair Oaks Bank, was too big to build around. Bank officials made plans to



move it to Suburban Bank's Carmichael branch. But they were told the vault would probably crumble enroute. So the order was given to take it down, which workmen said could be done in a couple of days. "It took them three weeks to knock the vault down," Pugh recalled. "We took 14 tons of steel out."

The old building had a basement-- the new building does not. And recollections of our old timers suggest that the safety deposit boxes and the vault were in the basement until it was razed. Presumably, reference to the vault are to the door, which is a beautiful tribute to the Herman Safe Co. who built safes and vault doors from 1889 to now, and not to the room behind it.



Carl Stark and businessman George Kelliam moved the bank out and sold it to the Water District in 1960 who in turn sold it to Finegold's in 1970. The Water District used the vault as a file storage area.

In 2020 Keith and Vicki Walter bought the building and renovated it in part to house their daughter and son-in-law's jewelry business which had previously been next door.

Be sure to check out the vault door when you do your holiday shopping (the Walter – Nash Jewelers has a very nice selection) and don't forget to rent a safety deposit box. You'll be looking at a slice of Fair Oaks History.



2021 FOHS Calendar

The Calendar Committee; Bob Sours, Wendy Key and Jim Pearce, chose 12 of our classic photos for the 2021 calendar. Cost is \$15 and all proceeds go to the History Center. We are also giving away the 2019 and 2020 calendars— get 'em while they last.

Elections

The Officer-nominating Committee (Jim Pearce, Pat Vogel, and Terrie O'Donnell) met (virtually) and asked the current officers (virtually) if they would be willing to serve another term. All (President – Bob Sours, Vice President – Terrie O'Donnell, Secretary – Carolyn Spotts, and Bob Vogel – Treasurer) agreed. Additional nominations may also be made. Board action and election will take place in January 2021.



Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District Marks its 75th Anniversary **Sabrina Bernardo, Recreation Supervisor** **Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District**

In 1945 members of the community were successful in establishing the Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District (FORPD). The new District immediately sought to acquire the site of Plaza Park, which was at risk of becoming a parking lot, and the nearby school building. It obtained a ten-year lease on the building from the school district for \$1 a year.

In 1949, the District bought the Clubhouse and Plaza Park from the school district for a nominal sum under \$500. Plaza Park is central to the community's "Fiesta" (first begun in 1928, then reestablished in 1947) and the autumn "Chicken Festival," which tips a feather to the flocks of wild chickens that inhabit the Village.

The present Community Clubhouse was built on the foundations of the original Fair Oaks school as a Work's Progress Administration (WPA) project during the great depression in the late 1930's/ early 1940's and remains the venue for many public and private events including meetings of the Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club of Fair Oaks and the Fair Oaks Historical Society, as well as many District activities. The Fair Oaks History Center was once located in the Clubhouse's Fireside Room and the Sierra Chapter of the American Theater Organ Society tends to the facility's grand old theater organ.

Village Park is a neighborhood park located adjacent to Plaza Park and the Veteran's Memorial Amphitheater. The park was acquired in 1949. The location is home to Concerts in the Park and is also part of the overall celebration of the Fair Oaks Chicken Festival. The park includes a band shell on which public and private events are held and a playground for young children. Several portions of the park, such as the retaining wall in

front of the Community Clubhouse, were constructed as Works Progress Administration projects; look for the signs of these hardy construction projects by their markings: WPA 1940.

A developer donation in 1954, Montview Park is a seven-acre park situated along Sunset Blvd. The park is known for its signature bowl shape which protects the site from the noise of the outside world. The park includes an olive grove at the north end and a playground for young children.

Acquired through Sacramento County in 1957, Bannister Park is a 10-acre park located in the southwest corner of the District. Originally, the District maintained and had control of the recreational improvements of the park while Sacramento County held title of ownership pending the outcome of plans for freeway Route 244, which was to cross the northeast portion of the property. The freeway never came to fruition and title was officially given to FORPD. The park began with only a baseball field. Existing features of the park are two soccer fields, outdoor exercise equipment and a connection to the American River Parkway bike trail.

In 1957, the District also acquired the property that was Jim David Park. The park housed t-ball fields in the southwest corner of what would one day become Phoenix Park.

Miller Park was also acquired in 1957 and is a 10-acre neighborhood park located on the southwest corner of Sunset & Kenneth Avenue. The park houses 8 tennis courts, two practice courts, a basketball court, and most recently a 9-hole Disc Golf course. The District purchased Miller Park from George and Ann Miller for \$10,000. Because of lack of funds, developmental work at the park was minimal except for extensive grading and construction of tennis courts at the site. The tennis facility led to the organization of the Fair Oaks Racquet Club in 1961. The Club and the Park Board co-sponsored tournaments and the Board funded tennis instruction.

Originally owned by San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD), the Fair Oaks Preschool houses the District's Parent Participation Recreation Play Based Preschool Program. The school fosters learning, relationship building, and learning through play and exploration for children ages 3-5 years old. The facility originally hosted an "adult education" preschool and was operated in conjunction between FORPD and SJUSD; however, the District became partners in the operation of the Preschool in 1961 before finally taking full ownership of the facility and programs therein in 2010.

Also, in 1961, the District acquired the Fair Oaks Old Library Building. The Fair Oaks Old Library building was originally constructed in the late 1930's and is the oldest known structure in the District. It was the site of the first Fair Oaks Library and was home to the District office until 1992 when the office moved to its current location. Currently, the building is still used for classes, meetings, and rentals.

It wasn't until 1964 that FORPD formulated its first Plan for Development of Park & Recreation Services. Hard copies of this plan are still maintained at the District offices.

Five years later, the District received land in Donahue Grove. This site would be part of what would later become Fair Oaks Park. Many of the original trees from that time still stand in the grove on the northern side of the park. Two years after that in 1971, the remaining land that would complete Fair Oaks Park was acquired. Fair Oaks Park has many amenities and is home to an array of year-round recreational activities including Camp Fair Oaks, Adult Softball, and Junior NFL Flag Football. It is the host location to the District's annual Easter Eggstravaganza and some of the District's largest events.

Also, in that year, construction on the Fair Oaks Veteran's Memorial Amphitheater was completed. In 1969 the board budgeted \$7,000 to construct the Veteran's Memorial Amphitheatre. Park employees and contractors completed the facility in 1971 though it wouldn't be until 1982 that the Fair Oaks Theatre Festival was founded by local citizens. The Theater Festival offers theatrical performances each summer.

In 1972 the Sailor Bar property previously owned by the District was traded to the County for a 30-acre site south of Phoenix Field which had been acquired by the County through an inverse condemnation suit. Sailor Bar then became part of the American River Parkway system. The Phoenix Field site provided acreage for a community park for the residents in the eastern part of the district which was developing rapidly. Phoenix Park, including the former Jim David Park, is the largest park in the District. Sixty acres in size, the park is located south of Sunset Boulevard and east of Hazel Avenue. Previously, due to the Phoenix Field Airport flight path, severe restrictions were placed on the use of the western portion of the park. Vernal Pools make up roughly 17 acres of the park. The Phoenix Park Vernal Pools is a 17-acre open land area which is a federally recognized Natural National Landmark. The Vernal Pools are seasonal depressional wetlands that are ideal to visit in rainy seasons. A wide variety of species, both plants and animals, only exist within this ecosystem. The naturally occurring wild flowers are a truly breathtaking sight to see. Just remember to stay on the trails, as the ecosystem is a fragile and protected space.

Through 1980 and into 1981, the theater organ which can now be found in the Community Clubhouse was installed by members of the Sierra Chapter of the American Theater Organ Society. The organ was received from Cal Expo, which was rapidly turning towards an agricultural focus. Sierra Chapter members spent over 10,000 hours among its members installing the organ into the Clubhouse. Over time, the organ has gone through many changes, improvements, and additions. What was once a two-manual console grew via those changes into the current incarnation which is an organ with thirteen ranks of pipes. The organ is a valued and unique asset to the community.

The Fair Oaks Park Community Garden originated in 1981 with the development of 47 plots and later expanded to the current 84 plots in 2010. The 1.85 acre Community Garden in Fair Oaks Park exists to provide gardening space to locals and to promote good gardening techniques. Hundreds of pounds of fresh produce are donated annually to the local food bank. The produce donated to the food bank is grown by gardeners in their

individual plots as well as designated food locker plots that are maintained by the garden coordinators and additional volunteers.

In 1983 the Rotary Club raised funds and contributed labor to upgrade the basement of the Clubhouse into habitable space. The space is now called Village Hall. Ten year later Rotarians constructed the arbor in Plaza Park.

The District office was originally located in the Fair Oaks Old Library building. In 1992 the District acquired the Fair Oaks Courthouse on Temescal Street and renovated it for use as an administration building. The current District Office is the result of those renovations.

In 1995—Fair Oaks Centennial year and the Park District's semicentennial year— Plaza Park was chosen for the burial of a time capsule to be opened in 2095.

In the late 1990s the Theater Festival obtained funding to construct major improvements to the Fair Oaks Veteran's Memorial Amphitheater including restrooms, snack bars, a ticket gate and entry garden.

The Fair Oaks Youth Advisory Board (FOYAB) began in 1997 when a group of Juniors from Bella Vista High School approached the District to use one of the District's facilities for a Junior Prom. The District told them they could use the facility if they would help the District to start a Youth Commission. The students agreed and met with staff and the student government class to develop the program. The FOYAB commissioners were selected through an interview process and were required to commit to community service in Fair Oaks. The members were chosen based on extra-curricular activities, enthusiasm, and above all their desire to commit to being an active participant in FOYAB. The group is responsible for several events for the general public in the District. Unlike other Youth Commissions whose goal was to make decisions that directly impact their peers, FOYAB planned quality programs that benefit all sectors of the community.

The Fair Oaks Horticulture Center is an instructional facility designed to educate home gardeners and landscape professionals in the planting and care of ornamental and edible plants. It was established in 1998 as a Sacramento County UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) project in collaboration with the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District. UCCE Sacramento County Master Gardeners maintain the one-acre center and hold periodic workshops and open garden days.

Located in the southwest corner of Phoenix Park are the Phoenix Park Community Gardens. They have 54 plots and were officially established in the spring of 2005, making this the youngest community garden in the District. The gardens offer a safe and wholesome environment for its members to garden in a healthy, non-toxic and sustainable way. The gardeners come from all walks of life. Much of the Garden's excess produce is shared with the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post to help meet the needs of their members.

In 2006 the first Fair Oaks Chicken Festival was held. Originally created and hosted by the Fair Oaks Rotary Club, the event has since grown in size and has been taken over by FORPD. The Chicken Festival is a unique event which invites all members of the community. It offers live music, one-of-a-kind vendor offerings, an impressive selection of food trucks, beer tasting, a cluck and crow contest, and games and activities for kids.

Later that same year the Phoenix Dog Park was founded. It is situated on the site formerly occupied by the Jim David t-ball fields in the southwest corner of Phoenix Park. There are three fenced-in areas: one for smaller dogs, one for larger dogs, and a special needs area for disabled, shy, or aggressive dogs. All areas allow for off-leash fun for our furry friends.

In 2008, the District procured Vintage Woods for \$1 from the Fair Oaks Water District. Vintage Woods serves an important function enabling a pedestrian connection between local residents and the nearby Raley's shopping center.

Several years later in 2015, the District completed the construction of the Kathy Jones Memorial Walk Path in Phoenix Park. Kathy Jones was a prominent member of the Fair Oaks community who walked Phoenix Park daily. Kathy Jones passed away on October 17, 2013, but with her previous help on a successful fundraising campaign, including a generous donation from the Fair Oaks Foundation for Leisure & the Arts, the park's walking path now extends 1.79 miles throughout the park.

Madison Place Park was received from MBK housing developers and sits near the corner of Kenneth and Madison avenues. The property includes an open space for free play and a playground. This public park was given to Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District in 2018.

The Fair Oaks Bike Park, first designed by the American Ramp Company, was installed in the Spring of 2018 in Phoenix Park where it offers a skills course for young riders.

The FORPD Board of Directors adopted a policy in October 2018 designating all District parks and facilities smoke, vape & tobacco free— this to provide a healthy, family-friendly, and clean environment for residents and visitors. The goal is to reduce tobacco & vape waste, lower the risk of fires, and limit public exposure to secondhand smoke.

In November 2018 the residents of Fair Oaks passed Measure J. Measure J is a \$26.9 million General Obligation Bond which will fund major projects to improve and expand the facilities provided by FORPD. The District is grateful that the voters of Fair Oaks approved this reinvestment in their community. The 30-year bond will fund improvements throughout the District and provide new recreational opportunities for the entire community.

Miller Park Disc Golf Course is a 9-hole course designed with the intent of providing a challenge to youth and families as they build their skills in the sport while still providing a space which can entice professionals. Play begins in open fields before passing into a natural oak grove in the rear of the park. The course then crosses a small creek to play

through an area filled with olive trees. The course is quiet and welcoming to families looking to get exercise and meet some of the local disc golf regulars. Remember to share the park with those enjoying other activities. The Miller Park Disc Golf course construction began in 2019, with a soft opening occurring in November of that year. Construction continues on the project.

Funding was allocated in 2019 from the District's Measure J General Obligation Bond to renovate the entire site of Plaza Park, Village Park and the Community Clubhouse. New features will include enhanced Plaza seating, including an outdoor bistro-style seating area adjacent to Fair Oaks Boulevard, an outdoor stage for public and private events, increased parking, an updated playground with a hillside slide, improvements to the Clubhouse interior, improved ADA access to the Clubhouse, and improved ADA connectivity throughout the entire park site in the area. Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2021, and once completed accessible pedestrian walks will be continuous throughout Plaza Park, the Veteran's Memorial Amphitheater, the Community Clubhouse the Arts & Crafts Building, and Village Park. The project will combine the various park facilities into one cohesive unit.

In 2020, Family Freeride, a local non-profit, proposed plans for an enhanced bike park. The FORPD Board of Directors approved Measure J funding to improve the Bike Park and make it a popular destination for those looking for a real thrill on two wheels.

Also, in 2020, funding from the Measure J general obligation bond was allocated to perform extensive renovations to the outdoor stage structure of the Veteran's Memorial Amphitheater. The facility will retain its open-air seating, but the stage will be revamped with a new and expanded interior which will include multipurpose rooms, a black box theater, improved theater support, additional restrooms, and ADA access into and throughout the facility. Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2021.

Jim Streng Park will be a new $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre pocket park located north of the American River adjacent to Hazel Avenue off of Swallow Way. It is on excess land from the recent Hazel Avenue widening project given to the district by the County. The project, which is currently awaiting construction, is being funded through various sources, including Measure J funds. Construction will begin in late 2020 or early 2021. Plans include a natural play area and a full playground.

Gum Ranch Park is an 8-acre park that is currently being built by Elliott Homes, developers of the former Gum property between Bella Vista High School and Kenneth Avenue. When completed, this public park will include two playgrounds, restroom, picnic shelters, a splash pad, and pickle ball courts. A walk path will connect the local neighborhoods and pass through the entirety of the park property. The park district recently acquired the adjacent land through which Arcade Creek runs. Gum Ranch Park will open in 2021.

Celebrating Marguerite (Meg) Smart on her 100th birthday.

On Thursday evening October 15 friends and neighbors showed up at Meg Smart's door to wish her a happy 100th birthday. She was impressed with the turnout.

Born on October 16, 1920 to LeRoy and Minnie Etzel. Meg and her younger sister, Bette, grew up in Roseville, California. After graduating from Roseville High School early, Meg attended the College of the Pacific in Stockton, CA. She graduated from COP at 19 years old with a degree in education. She fell in love with and married Lawrence (Larry) Smart who she had known in high school. They were married on July 16, 1942 in New York City while Larry attended officer's candidate school and completed his training to become a Captain in the Army Signal Corps. While Larry was deployed in Europe, Meg taught elementary school during WWII. In March, 1955 Meg, Larry and their three children, Kirk, Ross, and Laurie moved from Roseville to Fair Oaks where they purchased the Western Auto Associate Store.



Upon arrival in Fair Oaks, Meg was interviewed by a reporter from the San Juan Record, the local newspaper, about her impressions of Fair Oaks. Meg said, "I thought the town was the Beverly Hills of Sacramento County. It was a wonderful place to live and raise our children. It was a growing, thriving town. With Aerojet and the Mather Airforce Base nearby, it was a good place to start a new business. Our children could walk to Fair Oaks School. The community was very friendly. We did not have to lock our doors; the milkman would put the milk in the refrigerator in the mornings. We had all the shops we needed including, grocery stores like Milligan's Red and White Store, the Stark's Pharmacy, a bank and library, nice restaurants such as George's Oak Room and the Townhouse, a women's and men's clothing stores, Lang's Hardware & Home Appliances, and the Western

Auto Store. Fair Oaks even had its own movie theater. The area was beautiful with oak trees, orchards, and the American River at the end of my street.” The Smarts made their home on Toyon Avenue, with neighbors who have continued the history of Fair Oaks friendliness and support, where Meg still lives today.

As a mother of three young children, Marguerite helped Larry with his business, managing the books for many years while he managed the store. She also was a substitute teacher for the San Juan School District. Meg was never one to sit still, she immersed herself in the community.

An avid bridge player Meg also taught bridge. Her bridge group formed an investment club and made enough money for everyone to travel to Hawaii and also take shorter trips to places like San Francisco. She was an active member of the Parents Club of Fair Oaks School, serving as president and when her kids grew older she was the President of the Bella Vista PTA.

Meg joined the Woman’s Thursday Club of Fair Oaks, a social and philanthropic club, in 1958 serving as President in 2001 and 2002 and is life time member. In 1970, she joined the Fair Oaks Rotary Inner Wheel as a charter member serving as president in 1972 and 1973. Meg was also a Charter member of American River Hospital (Mercy San Juan Hospital) Auxiliary, serving for 30 years, including holding office as its President. She was a volunteer at Sacramento County Children’s Receiving Home for 15 years. Meg and Larry also helped those in need by volunteering at the Sunrise Food Ministry for 20 years.

Meg is a life time member of the Fair Oaks Historical Society. In 1995, Marguerite, Lois Frazier, and Iva Langness wrote the book, “*Fair Oaks... The Early Years*”, for the Fair Oaks Centennial. They were awarded the Sacramento Historical Society Merit Award for their effort.



NEW MEMBER APPLICATION AND MEMBER-RENEWAL FORM

Dues are for the Calendar Year, January 1 to December 31.

Dues are payable on January 1, and become delinquent February 1.

New members joining after October 1 will be considered paid for the following year.

Please check one: **NEW MEMBER APPLICATION** **RENEWAL**

Name(s) _____

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 FOR PRINTED NEWSLETTERS
(DELIVERED QUARTERLY BY US POSTAL SERVICE)**

I AM INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING DONATION TO SUPPORT THE HISTORY CENTER:

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

Amount enclosed \$ _____ Check number _____ Date of check ____/____/____

Mail a copy of this form with your check payable to:

FAIR OAKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 2044

FAIR OAKS, CA 95628.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT JIM PEARCE: 916-961-8415 jpearce4104@gmail.com