



# SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT

## Fair Oaks Historical Society

October 2021 Newsletter

Issue No.: 138      Editor: Wendy Key

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### President's Message

**Bob Sours**

Hello, everyone. I'm always happy to be invited to say hello. The year has been as hectic and stressful for everyone again like last year - I'm sure. This pandemic is a stubborn adversary and keeps finding new, unvaccinated targets to fill its mission.

In spite of the pandemic, and with such a wonderful group of Board Members to work with, I feel that together as a team our History Center has hardly lost a step. Maybe it's just the fall weather, but I do not think so.

Like last year, we must apologize for the lack of events (potlucks) and especially the General Meeting this month. The Soup Night has also been set back until February 2022. If I could read the "tea leaves", I'm sure we would get a message that the pandemic is winding down a bit for us to enjoy the holidays, even if only in small groups - masks and all.

If you haven't been able to visit the History Center this year, maybe you will stop by over the holidays, and see our new displays, updated scrapbooks, and so on. If for nothing else, just to say "Hello".

### **CALLING ALL FAIR OAKS ARTISTS!**

With all the beauty Fair Oaks has to offer, it's hard not to be inspired by our little town. We'd love to feature local artists in our newsletter, so if you've got some artwork you want to share, we want to see it! Please submit only original artwork or photography via our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/247133988638300>), by email to [keywendy@gmail.com](mailto:keywendy@gmail.com), or in person. Be sure to identify your submission with #NewsletterArt so that we know we've got your permission to publish. Looking forward to seeing what this community has to share!



## Lois' Memorial Bench

Jim Pearce

The pieces finally came together; bench, plaque, photo - so we had a small dedication ceremony Saturday, September 11, 2021 on the History Center patio. We decided to not host a crowd, all at one time, but rather invite the members to drop by during the day to avoid a COVID event. Jim baked Lois's favorite oatmeal cookies and Bob Sours picked up some cider for refreshments.

The bench story is worth repeating. The Board decided to do something significant in memory of Lois and all agreed a park bench on the patio would be appropriate. So, they sent Jim off looking for a bench. He looked online and found a number of benches priced from \$400 to \$1500 but decided to try and find a local vendor. He talked to Guillermo Barron, General Manager of the Fair Oaks Cemetery, about where they get their benches and Guillermo said "I'll give you one. After all Lois has done over the years for the cemetery, I think it's appropriate if we donate a bench in her memory."

So, Jim picked up the bench, ordered a plaque, and Lois is memorialized. All members are invited to visit the History Center and take a moment to reflect on Lois's contribution to the Society.



## Peg Leg Pete and the Fair Oaks Dump

Jim Pearce

If you lived in Fair Oaks in the 1930s and 1940s, you disposed of your garbage and trash at the Fair Oaks Dump on the north side of the river at the end of Pennsylvania Avenue. The overseer of the dump was an old man the locals called “Peg Leg Pete” (or just Peg). Stories abound from the “old timers” about how he subsisted by reselling the “junk” that residents brought to the dump, milked rattlesnakes and sold the venom to hospitals, that he lost his left leg in World War I, he had a hoard of gold buried in his shack, and that he was generally unkempt with a long grey beard and shoulder length grey hair.



In the years that I’ve been involved with the Historical Society, I’ve made several attempts to track down information on Peg Leg Pete and find out more about him. Totally unsuccessful. Without his real name, locating historical documents on him is impossible.

At a recent FOHS Board meeting, Lynn Steen handed me an envelope with photos of Peg and the dump. She also said that her mother was the Fair Oaks correspondent for the Bee and had done a story on Peg in the 1940’s. Things just get better. Newspapers.com had just finished doing a complete scan of the Bee which was word searchable. That enabled me to find the article, and Peg’s real name. Onward.

B. Oviatt Giberson, aka Peg Leg Pete, was born in Indiana in 1880 and in his younger years seems to be a bit of a wanderer. He registered for the WWI draft in 1918 in Salem, Oregon and listed his occupation as “Horse Trader.” He was rejected from service due to “Left foot amputated nine inches below knee.” So, we know that Peg’s loss of his leg was not war related.



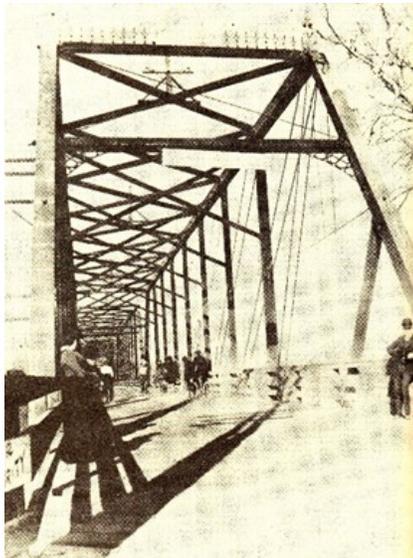
A little speculation - Peg's tenure at the dump began in 1932, just into the depression, and a hobo camp was located on the south side of the river at the rock crushing plant. The residents of the camp came in on the spur line of the Fair Oaks railroad and camped along the river. It's a reasonable assumption that Peg arrived that way and stayed. That would also explain his leg loss. It was common for individuals riding the rails to stumble when trying to climb on a moving freight car and suffer serious injury.

Peg lived at the dump in his "tin can palace" for 15 years until the county moved the dump to the vicinity of Coloma Road and Folsom Blvd. Peg's tenure as self-appointed "keeper of the dumps" was recognized officially. He was made a deputy sheriff and authorized to regulate the dumping. He probably stayed on in that capacity until he officially retired in 1965. He died in Placerville in 1968.



### The American River Bike Trail - not a recent addition

**Jim Pearce**



You might think the American River Bike Trail was constructed during the construction of the Parkway in the 1950s, but you'd be mistaken. Actually, the Trail construction was begun by the Capitol City Wheelmen bicycle club in 1896, starting the cinder trail from Sacramento to Brighton. It was a huge success. 500 bicyclists rode the trail on April 12, 1896. A second section was completed to Alder Creek (Lake Natomas) but the funds ran out. Folsom merchants came to the rescue and the trail was completed to Folsom. Although rerouted and resurfaced with decomposed granite, the trail has seen continuous use for over a hundred years.

Photo: Capitol City Wheelmen cross the original Fair Oaks Bridge about 1905.





**Fair Oaks Pioneers Honored on Thursday Club's Golden Anniversary, 1953**

**Sandra S. Navarro, Ph.D.**

The Woman's Thursday Club of Fair Oaks was organized in the summer of 1902. Fifteen charter members met in the Fair Oaks Hotel and later in the San Juan Hall (above the Fair Oaks Hardware and Variety Store) until a clubhouse was built in 1914.

The club's fiftieth anniversary, its golden anniversary, was celebrated in January 1953. The program honored Fair Oak's "early day settlers." The Woman's Thursday Club of Fair Oaks is still vibrant in 2021. It maintains an archive documenting its activities throughout its nearly 120-year history.

This archive includes an invitation to the club's Golden Anniversary and Pioneer Tea held on January 18, 1953, and a follow-up article which appeared in the *San Juan Record* (a newspaper published in Fair Oaks). The article identifies the honored guests as the town's pioneers who had lived in Fair Oaks for at least thirty years. Some of these "made the first trips from Chicago to open up the Fair Oaks Colony."

A photograph of some of these honored guests is also in the club's archive.

Guests in the photograph are identified as (standing on the floor) Mrs. Norman (Iva Rice) Langness, Arthur Broadley, Mrs. Arthur (Hazel Slocum) Broadley, Arch McDonell, Miss Elinor Bramhall, Mrs. R.N. Bramhall (the only remaining charter member of the Thursday Club), Mrs. Catherine Van Maren (of Citrus Heights), Mrs. Mae Van Maren Stock, John Holst, Mrs. Lillian Shannon, Charles Woodmansee, Mrs. Mabel Cunningham Collins, Mrs. Ella Vaughn, Miss Esther Kirschman, Mrs. Vivian Archer, Judge Joseph Diestel (who introduced the guests), and County Executive Charles Deterding (a pioneer Carmichael resident). Appearing in the upper row are William Gregory, De Witt Rice, Mesdames Mae McDonell, Gertrude Glafcke, Eva Gregory, Agnes Cunningham, Margaret Beach, Barbara Beach, Mrs. Bert (Ethel Osgood) Kerns, Bert Kerns, A.M. Fowler, Mrs. Geneva Watson Smith, and Abby and Sim Green.



## Fair Oaks' Women of Influence : Leanna Watkins

### Wendy Key

Leanna Watkins came to Fair Oaks with her husband, Uriah Watkins, in 1896. Uriah was a Civil War veteran, a successful orchardist, and one of the founders of the Pioneer Methodist Episcopal Church of Fair Oaks. Leanna, however, was a remarkable woman in her own right and had been a teacher in Kansas before moving to Fair Oaks. When she moved to Fair Oaks, she brought with her textbooks for elementary school age children and Sunday school literature. When Leanna discovered that there was no school in session in Fair Oaks, she reached out to the mothers in the community and asked if they would like to send their children to her home where she would be glad to teach them. Since the Watkins' only had a two-room cottage at the time, Leanna held her school sessions under the large oak trees on their property for two to three hours in the late morning, thus founding the first school in Fair Oaks.



In addition to teaching the children of Fair Oaks, Leanna also taught adult Japanese workers in the area who wanted to learn how to read and write. According to the Memories book, many of these laborers were wood cutters and land clearers. For a small tuition fee, Leanna taught them to read and write in English during evening classes held at her home under the trees. Leanna passed away in 1935 and is buried with her husband in the Fair Oaks Cemetery.



Leanna and Uriah Watkins celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary (circa 1915).



# October 2021 Financial Report

Bob Vogel, Treasurer

| 2021 FAIR OAKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY TREASURERS REPORT - OCTOBER 7 |      |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               |                    |
|---|------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| INCOME  | CAT. | JAN.               | FEB.               | MAR.               | APR.               | MAY                | JUNE               | JULY               | AUG.               | SEPT.            | OCT.          | NOV.          | DEC.          | TOTALS             |
| MEMBERSHIP DUES   | 1    | \$328.12           | \$330.00           | \$50.00            | \$85.00            | \$30.00            | \$24.12            | \$70.00            | \$45.00            | \$20.00          |               |               |               | \$982.24           |
| MEETINGS - RAFFLE/WINE  | 2    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$0.00             |
| DONATIONS/MEMORIALS   | 3    | \$387.17           | \$265.00           | \$90.00            | \$25.00            | \$150.00           | \$625.88           | \$226.00           | \$2,981.43         |                  |               |               |               | \$4,750.48         |
| SALES   | 4    | \$261.00           |                    |                    |                    | \$80.00            | \$58.00            | \$24.00            |                    | \$31.00          |               |               |               | \$454.00           |
| MISC./ROYALTIES   | 5    |                    |                    |                    | \$130.34           |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$130.34           |
| SOUP INCOME   | 5A   | \$2,506.00         | \$1,875.00         |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$4,381.00         |
| <b>TOTALS</b>   |      | <b>\$3,482.29</b>  | <b>\$2,470.00</b>  | <b>\$140.00</b>    | <b>\$240.34</b>    | <b>\$260.00</b>    | <b>\$708.00</b>    | <b>\$320.00</b>    | <b>\$3,026.43</b>  | <b>\$51.00</b>   | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$10,698.06</b> |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>   |      |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               |                    |
| MEMBERSHIP  | 6    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$0.00             |
| ORGN.MEMBERSHIPS  | 7    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$0.00             |
| SALES / INVENTORY   | 8    |                    | \$56.50            |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$56.50            |
| STORAGE LOCKER  | 9    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    | \$1,417.00         |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$1,417.00         |
| WEBSITE   | 10   |                    | \$310.00           |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$310.00           |
| NEWSLETTER  | 11   | \$609.53           | \$44.00            | \$43.10            |                    |                    |                    |                    | \$134.09           |                  |               |               |               | \$830.72           |
| PRINTING  | 12   |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$0.00             |
| POSTAL BOX/ STAMPS  | 13   |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               |                    |
| TAX PREP.   | 14   |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    | \$192.00           |                    |                  |               |               |               |                    |
| MISC.   | 15   |                    | \$35.00            |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               |                    |
| <b>HISTORY CENTER</b>   |      |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$0.00             |
| MAINTENANCE   | 16   |                    |                    |                    | \$75.00            | \$75.00            |                    | \$225.00           |                    | \$588.45         |               |               |               | \$963.45           |
| DISPLAYS  | 17   |                    |                    |                    |                    | \$723.29           |                    |                    | \$237.00           |                  |               |               |               | \$960.29           |
| INSURANCE   | 18   | \$585.00           |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    | \$215.00           |                  |               |               |               | \$800.00           |
| SUPPLIES  | 19   | \$107.64           |                    |                    |                    |                    | \$106.67           |                    | \$265.23           | \$27.63          |               |               |               | \$507.17           |
| UTILITIES   | 20   | \$33.56            | \$108.94           | \$37.23            | \$112.30           | \$37.73            | \$109.36           | \$38.42            | \$124.26           | \$51.55          |               |               |               | \$653.35           |
| SECURITY  | 21   |                    |                    | \$45.00            | \$135.00           |                    |                    | \$135.00           |                    | \$135.00         |               |               |               | \$450.00           |
| MISC.   | 22   |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$0.00             |
| <b>MEETING EXPENSES</b>   |      |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$0.00             |
| ROOM RENTAL   | 23   |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    | \$325.00           |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$325.00           |
| WINE/FOOD   | 24   |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$0.00             |
| SUPPLIES  | 25   |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$0.00             |
| MISC. /OTHER  | 26   |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$0.00             |
| SOUP NIIGHT   | 27   | \$239.75           | \$793.90           |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$1,033.65         |
| GENERAL STAFF. COST   | 28   |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                  |               |               |               | \$0.00             |
| <b>TOTALS</b>   |      | <b>\$1,575.48</b>  | <b>\$1,348.34</b>  | <b>\$125.33</b>    | <b>\$322.30</b>    | <b>\$836.02</b>    | <b>\$216.03</b>    | <b>\$2,332.42</b>  | <b>\$975.58</b>    | <b>\$802.63</b>  | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$8,534.13</b>  |
| <b>NET CHANGE</b>   |      | <b>\$1,906.81</b>  | <b>\$1,121.66</b>  | <b>\$14.67</b>     | <b>-\$81.96</b>    | <b>-\$576.02</b>   | <b>\$491.97</b>    | <b>-\$2,012.42</b> | <b>\$2,050.85</b>  | <b>-\$751.63</b> | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$2,163.93</b>  |
| CHECHING ENDIING BAL.   |      | \$16,511.98        | \$17,633.14        | \$17,647.81        | \$7,565.85         | \$6,989.83         | \$7,481.80         | \$5,469.38         | \$7,530.23         |                  |               |               |               |                    |
| ONE CD  |      | \$26,072.56        | \$26,072.56        | \$26,072.55        | \$26,123.41        | \$26,123.41        | \$26,123.41        | \$26,176.08        | \$26,175.08        |                  |               |               |               |                    |
| SAVINGS ENDING BAL.   |      | \$9,456.91         | \$9,456.91         | \$9,457.14         | \$19,457.14        | \$19,457.14        | \$19,457.59        | \$19,457.59        | \$19,457.59        |                  |               |               |               |                    |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>   |      | <b>\$52,041.45</b> | <b>\$53,162.61</b> | <b>\$53,177.50</b> | <b>\$53,146.40</b> | <b>\$52,570.38</b> | <b>\$53,062.80</b> | <b>\$51,103.05</b> | <b>\$53,162.90</b> | <b>\$0.00</b>    | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$0.00</b> |                    |

## Announcements and Reminders



Thought the elections were over? **Think again!** It's time to vote for the next Fair Oaks Historical Society President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. We'll be voting by mail, so if you haven't received your ballot in the mail already, then keep an eye out for it and be sure to send us your vote!

It's about time to start thinking about holiday gifts. We're doing a trial run on the FOHS 2022 Calendar and expect to have them available by early November. Costco has resumed printing poster board prints and we can restock our favorites. We have books, mugs, tapes and other goodies for sale at the History Center. Drop in and look around.

We know you love Fair Oaks history, but do you also enjoy writing and/or researching about the past? Maybe you just have some memories you'd like to share about living in Fair Oaks over the years. Either way, we'd love to hear from you and include your stories and memories in future newsletters. Please submit your written creations on our Facebook page, by email to [keywendy@gmail.com](mailto:keywendy@gmail.com), or in person. Be sure to identify your submission with #NewsletterStory so that we know we've got your permission to publish. :)



**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 \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT JIM PEARCE:** 916-961-8415 [jpearce4104@gmail.com](mailto:jpearce4104@gmail.com)

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

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