

The Homes of Early Settler Ralph (William Rolf) Gore By Sally Dunbar, Old Homes Editor

This month's Old Homes Article covers 3 homes - those owned by early FO. Pioneer, Ralph Gore (William Rolf Gore). Gore's story points out how the best laid plans don't always turn out as one would hope.



Gore arrived in Fair Oaks on one of the first excursion trains in 1895/96, bought land, then returned to Illinois to sell off his assets. He returned in 1898 to arrange construction of his first home, with his nest egg from years as a Pharmacist and farmer. He built his first home at 4849 Pennsylvania, North of Sunset, on a hill with grand sweeping views of town, overlooking "the beautiful valley" which is now busy Sunrise Blvd. Gore's home on Pennsylvania still stands, and is still beautiful. An original palm tree seen in early photos, is now towering over the home.

By 1902 Gore is teamed up with Charles Slocum in a lumber yard. Their partnership then builds the Slocum-Gore General Store, on California Street, which was later sold to John Holst (Now the Fair Oaks Brew Pub and Regent Salon). In 1909, Slocum and Gore open Fair Oaks Bank next to the General Store, with capitol of \$25,000. From 1909 through the early 1920's Slocum and Gore, as officers of the bank, recorded many loans to the homeowners and orchardists in Fair Oaks, as reflected by our current county records.

With his business activities in central Fair Oaks, it appears that early on Gore found the distance from his home on Pennsylvania over winter muddy roads and knee deep summer dust to be problematic. By 1900 he built his second home at 4348 Central Avenue, selling the Pennsylvania home in 1908 to the Wrangham family.



Gore lived on Central, close to his business interests, with his wife and only daughter Hortense, until around 1915 when he built his third home up on the bluffs of the American River, at 3935 Ridge Street. It is presumed that in the mid teens, Gore was doing quite well financially, as a banker and lumberyard owner. By 1920 Gore lists his occupation as Postmaster, a capacity he held until 1931. In February of 1929, with the Great



Depression looming, Ralph and his wife deeded the Ridge Street home and property to daughter Hortense, who by then was married to Don Slocum - son of his business partner, Charles Slocum. By October of 1929, the Great Depression is in full swing.

By the 1930 census we find Ralph renting the Pennsylvania home, and working as an operator (telephone) at the Rock Crushing plant on the river. We understand from the memories of Bob Brugger's father that Gore lost everything in the depression. In the late 1930's the Gore's left Fair Oaks for Clakamas County Oregon, to live by his daughter and son-in-law, where Ralph died 14 years later.

The three Gore homes are still standing, looking substantially the same. The grounds of Ridge Street, however, have been transformed from a 5 acre bluff estate, to one of many homes tucked onto half acres lots across the street from the newer bluff homes built in the late 1970s.