



# Fair Oaks Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Preserving and Perpetuating the Heritage of Fair Oaks, California

APRIL 1991

NUMBER 15

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Bill McPhail

There is a good chance that this quarterly newsletter will reach all of you after the April 7th 2nd anniversary of our wonderful History Center located in the Administration Building of the Cemetery District at New York and Olive Streets. With all of the efforts that have been made by History Center Director Gayle Anita, Don and Jennifer Kenmonth, Bob Massey, the Ladies of the Thursday Club, and many other supporters, I am going to continue in my role of perpetual optimist and say, past-tense, that the gathering was a great success, attended by hundreds of Society enthusiasts, with splendid food and some exciting new displays. We have introduced a new walking history game -- Pioneer Search -- that captured the imaginations of many, especially youngsters, who learned that cemeteries tell the real history of a village, town, or city.

If this arrives in your mail BEFORE April 7th, help make my remarks true by joining us at 1PM for a fine old-fashioned afternoon with games, prizes, hayrides, fine food, and our wonderful friendship.

This column is really written to underscore our April 23rd meeting at the clubhouse, 6 p.m., as usual. Our guest speaker will be Bonnie Warren, Consumer Affairs Director for Bel Air Markets, who will take us back in history and contrast your supermarket shopping experiences of 45 years ago, when Bel Air first opened its doors, to those that you enjoy today. Bonnie joined Bel Air Markets in 1974 after graduating from C.S.U.-Los Angeles with her Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics. 1974 was the year that consumerism became a word and concept firmly established in our language and society. That was the year of meat boycotts and customer demands for nutritional listings on packages. It was Bonnie's first job with Bel Air to explain the company's position on a variety of issues, to listen intently to customer complaints, demands, requests, and suggestions, to recommend to Bel Air that their supermarkets make necessary changes to meet our shopping needs. Bonnie suggested; Bel Air listened.

Bonnie Warren has many other stories to tell, including information about Sam Hom, who operated the Sunshine Supermarket at the corner of Sunset and Fair Oaks Boulevards. Thirty years ago, this market became the Bel Air Market of today. And Sam Hom? He continues to work for Bel Air.

Last, but not least important item: Please continue to look in your basements, attics, closets, and garages for items of historical significance to our Fair Oaks community. Old San Juan Records, history books about the Colony, early newspapers, pictures, and letters -- all are needed for our microfilm records. Let Gayle Anita know that you have an item to be photographed and we will borrow it for a few days, to be returned after filming it for our archives. See you April 23rd!

Don't forget to bring your favorite potluck dish and a friend, too!!

## QUARTERLY MEETING

April 23, 1991

*Program Topic:*

### History of Food Marketing in the Fair Oaks Area

Bonnie Warren, Consumer Affairs Director for Bel Air, will discuss the history of local food markets.

**Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse**

7997 California Avenue, Fair Oaks

Lower Level Dining Room

Phone 965-9887

Social Hour 6:00 p.m. - Potluck Dinner 6:30 p.m.

Select a casserole, salad or dessert and make your reservations with J. Campoy, 967-6968 or Jennifer Miller-Kenmonth, 961-0637



**Fire Belles of another era.**

*Photo donated by Iva Langness*

## Fair Oaks Historical Society

P.O. Box 2044, Fair Oaks CA 95628

A non-profit educational corporation established to develop, preserve and share Fair Oaks community history.

Meetings, open to the public, are held quarterly; on the third Tuesday in January, April, July and October. Meetings consist of a social period at 6:00 p.m., a potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m., an educational presentation related to Fair Oaks history, and a short business meeting.

Membership is open to all persons interested in Fair Oaks regional history. Interested persons can obtain information at the regular meetings, by writing to the Society at the above address, or by calling one of the officers listed below.

### Officers:

President .....	Wm. R. McPhail, 967-6000
Vice-President .....	Warren McWilliams, 961-9012
Secretary .....	Donald Kenmonth, 961-0637 (482-0340)
Treasurer .....	Charles Hull, 965-6210 (962-3194)
Newsletter .....	Alfreda Weiss, 965-0759
Parliamentarian .....	Theo. L. Olson, 967-5538
Auditor .....	Alfred B. McKenzie, 961-1642
Budget .....	Gayle Anita, 961-6912
Historian .....	Robert L. Massey, 967-6197
Membership .....	June Melvin, 967-5605
Publicity .....	Bob McCafferty, 961-8318
Refreshment/Dinner .....	Lois Frazier, 967-2967
Registration .....	Jennifer Miller-Kenmonth, 920-0531
Ways and Means .....	Janet & Warren McWilliams, 961-9012
History Center .....	Gayle Anita, 961-6912

The Newsletter is published preceding each quarterly regular meeting, and is distributed by mail. Subscription is included in membership dues, and is available to non-members upon pre-payment of Two Dollars per year.

The Newsletter welcomes articles and items for publication. Articles must relate to the history of the Fair Oaks area, and must be submitted to the Editor no later than the First of January, April, July, or October to be considered for publication in those respective months' issues. The Editor reserves the right to amend or omit items.

## Help Celebrate the Fair Oaks History Center First Anniversary

on  
Sunday, April 7, 1991  
from  
1:00 to 5:00 pm

7789 Olive Street  
Fair Oaks Cemetery  
Administration Building

### Fun and Prizes

### Photo Contest

Bring a favorite photo about Fair Oaks.  
Awards for the winners!

Refreshments/Libations  
Snacks by the Thursday Club

## Notes from the FAIR OAKS HISTORY CENTER

by Gayle Anita

We finally have our micro-film reader hooked up, thanks to Charles Beebe who was kind enough to volunteer his time and talent one Sunday to install an electrical outlet for the reader. It works beautifully. It is great fun to review the issues of the FAIR OAKS POST. We are looking forward to having more material on microfilm.

Sarah Goller has been an invaluable help to our History Center. As our archivist, she has patiently been labeling and organizing photos and various pieces of memorabilia into a comprehensive system. Sarah also turned out to be an entertaining hostess for a group of people from the Cordova Senior Center who visited our History Center on February 20. After spending time in our museum, Sarah took the group on a walk through the cemetery and pointed out the various pioneer grave sites. Of course the club was treated to many of Sarah's charming stories along the way. All in all, it was a lovely day.

Our historian, Bob Massey, has brought us some interesting photos and newspapers. Many thanks, Bob!

Iva Langness, always gracious and helpful, continues to donate valuable treasures as she comes across them.

Mary Scott has loaned us a pretty parlor table to replace the one which had to be reclaimed by a member who recently moved.

It is this sort of cooperation that will help our Museum accumulate a collection of which we can be proud.

## FAIR OAKS HISTORICAL DATES

MARCH 1895, EASTERN PROMOTERS PURCHASE LAND FOR DEVELOPMENT.

NOVEMBER 1895, SPECIAL EXCURSION TRAIN ARRIVES IN FAIR OAKS.

NOVEMBER 1895, FIRST SETTLERS ARRIVED IN FAIR OAKS.

FEBRUARY 1896, FIRST POST OFFICE.

JUNE 1896, WATER TURNED ON IN THE NEW COLONY PIPE SYSTEM.

OCTOBER 1896, FIRST PUBLIC SCHOOL OPENED WITH 40 STUDENTS.

NOVEMBER 1898, FIRST ELECTION IN FAIR OAKS, 88 TOTAL VOTES.

SEPTEMBER 1900, FAIR OAKS WATER COMPANY INCORPORATED.

MARCH 1901, CONTRACT MADE TO SHIP FAIR OAKS FRUIT TO SAN FRANCISCO.

MARCH 1902, WOMEN'S THURSDAY CLUB ORGANIZED.

JULY 1903, RURAL MAIL DELIVERY BEGINS IN FAIR OAKS.

OCTOBER 1907, FAIR OAKS ROAD COMMITTEE FORMED.

APRIL 1931, NAME CHANGED FROM FAIROAKS TO FAIR OAKS.

DECEMBER 1931, SEASONAL TOTAL 90 CARS OF ORANGES SHIPPED BY RAIL.

DECEMBER 1932, DISASTROUS FREEZE DESTROYS ORANGE INDUSTRY.

JANUARY 1951, HOUSE AND STREET NUMBERS REPLACE RURAL ROUTE NUMBERS.

SEPTEMBER 1976, FIRST MEETING OF FAIR OAKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

# WATER STORIES

(Excerpts from FAIR OAKS AND SAN JUAN AREA MEMORIES, San Juan Record Press, Fair Oaks, California, 1960. Edited by Selden Menefee, Patricia Fitzgerald and Geraldine Fitzgerald.)

One time when a main line broke, Eric Fulton came into church during the service, spoke to the minister then dismissed the congregation so they could hurry home and fill all available containers. If anyone did run out of water, however, he could go across the river and get more at the rock crusher. *Iva Rice Langness*

When you stand on Folsom Dam and look upstream you can imagine that you are seeing 23 miles of the old North Fork Ditch. It was dug in 1854 and was practically in continuous operation until 1954. The ditch was dug by miners who were paid so much per foot and they took their pay half in cash and half in script. *L. K. Jordan*

Down by the depot of Fair Oaks there was a big water tank and windmill. This was where the water wagons got their water to sprinkle the streets of the town. *Earl Beauchamp*

At the time (1897) the population of the colony was about 300, and the dwellings of all descriptions numbered about 75. The fact was now recognized that without enlarged water mains the extended growth of the colony must come to a halt. *S. E. Kieffer*

It was July 1, 1896 before the first water ran through the pipes. Previous to the installation of the pipes, the only way to secure water was for us to go for it either out to the ranches or drive down to the river for it. There was just a narrow trail down to the river and it was very steep and very hazardous. Most of the water, therefore, was obtained from the ranchers living north

of Fair Oak. They had windmills and tanks, and they were glad to let us take full barrels. *John E. Holst*

In 1909 only about half of the normal rainfall fell in Northern California. In consequence the grain and hay crops were very light. Land owners along the river in Sacramento County were rather fortunate, although the streams in the foothills went dry. Water in the wells ceased altogether. Well owners were desperate and drilled deeper and deeper into the ground in pursuit of water. I remember that although the American River was unusually low, cattle were nevertheless driven for miles to the river. The catastrophe of those dry years hit the smaller and less prosperous ranchers very hard and it was they who suffered the terrible financial setbacks. I remember an unusual phenomenon. There was simply no force in the current going downstream on the Sacramento River and the tides coming in would push floating objects back upstream. The people and cattle who lived here in Fair Oaks survived those two dry years fairly well. We managed to get through the drouth because we had our irrigation ditches and we did our best to co-operate in not wasting water. *John E. Holst*

## VISIT THE FAIROAKS HISTORY CENTER

7789 Olive Street

Open 2nd Sundays

Noon - 4 p.m.

Located in the administration building on the west side of the cemetery, across the street from the church. For information or to arrange group visits at other times, phone 961.6912 or 967-5605.

## MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership fees for 1991 may be paid at the general meeting or mailed to the address below. We hope each current member will want to rejoin our Society and invite others to join. Giving a membership as a gift to a relative or friend is a gracious and appreciative way to say 'thank you'.

We meet four times a year; on the fourth tuesday of January, April, July, and October; for a time of fellowship, of family gathering, for edification of the area in

which we live and the sharing of a common goal -- preservation of our community heritage and the identity of Fair Oaks.

If mailing, use the coupon below (or enclose the same information on a piece of paper if you don't want to cut up your newsletter).

Dues are: \$8.00 for an Individual Membership,  
12.00 for a Family Membership  
25.00 for a Supporting Membership  
100.00 for a Life Membership

----- ( Cut along this line ) -----

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

First Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address / P.O. Box No. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:

C. H. Hull, Treasurer  
7887 Olive Street  
Fair Oaks CA 95628

Fair Oaks Historical Society

FAIR OAKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 2044  
FAIR OAKS, CA 95628

Address  
City State Zip Code  
Post Office Box No.  
City State

MEMBERSHIP

100.00 for 1 Year  
50.00 for 6 Months  
25.00 for 3 Months  
10.00 for 1 Month

FAIR OAKS HISTORICAL CENTER  
1881 THE

# Fair Oaks Historical Society

P.O. Box 2044, Fair Oaks CA 95628-2044



Donald & Jennifer\* Kenmonth  
8546 Phoenix Avenue  
Fair Oaks CA 95628

MEMBERSHIP