

FAIR OAKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER VOLUME 35 -- JANUARY 23, 1996

QUARTERLY POTLUCK - GENERAL MEETING

JANUARY 23, 1996 -- 6:00pm

Program Speaker: George Chan
CHINESE INFLUENCE IN FOLSOM

Location: Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse (downstairs)
7997 California Avenue.

Please bring a casserole, salad, or dessert to share with members.

PRESIDENT:

Ralph Carhart
961-4301

VICE PRES.:

Iva Langness
967-5054

SECRETARY:

Bonnie Drago
726-7310

TREASURER:

Carol Crowther
961-7096

PARLIAMENT'N:

June Melvin
967-5603

STANDING COMMITTEES

AMENITIES:

BUDGET:

Gayle Anita
961-6912

HISTORICAL:

Bob Massey
967-6197

MEMBERSHIP:

Marilyn Pearce
961-8415

PROGRAM:

Iva Langness
967-5054

WAYS & MEANS:

Roseanne Crandell
967-2102

GENERAL COMMITTEES

AUDITOR:

Dorothy Dykeman
967-6713

DOCENTS:

Lois Frazier
967-2967

HISTORY CENTER

Gayle Anita
961-6912

NEWS EDITOR:

Nancy Sherman
967-1539

PUBLICITY:

Bob Erbacher
966-2524

REGISTRATION:

Marilyn Pearce
961-8415

P RESIDENT'S MESSAGE : RALPH CARHART

I have greatly enjoyed the past two years as President of the Fair Oaks Historical Society. It was especially rewarding to serve the Society during the Fair Oaks Centennial celebration. At the upcoming General Meeting on January 23, 1996 Iva Langness will be installed as President, Ed Eubanks as Vice President, Bonnie Drago as Secretary (returning) and Steve Abbott as Treasurer. Before I retire to Past President duties, I want to thank all of the members of the Society for making 1994 and 1995 such a great success. Fellow officers Iva Langness -- Vice President and Program Chairman, Bonnie Drago -- Secretary, Carol Crowther -- Treasurer, June Melvin -- Parliamentarian, Warren McWilliams -- Past President, all have provided constant support. Committee Chairpersons were diligent and successful with their responsibilities: Nancy Sherman -- Newsletter Editor and Entertainment Book Fundraiser; Bob Massey -- Historian; Marilyn Pearce -- Registration and Membership; Bob Erbacher -- Publicity; Gayle Anita -- History Center and Budget; Lois Frazier -- History Center Docents; and Dorothy Dykeman -- Auditor. It was a special luxury to have Horace Crandell as Ways and Means Chairman and a terrible loss when he passed away. There were many

Announcing the Christmas Day arrival of one Mr. Christopher Hardie Hill . Proud parents are David and Jennifer Hill; proud grandparents are Peter and Nancy White and Dick and Jeanne Hill. A very special congratulations goes to young Christopher Hardie Hill as a 7th generation native Californian.

others whose help in being docents, setting up the dinners, participating in fundraising, representing the Society at other meetings, and providing similar contributions, was essential to our success. To all of you and to all the membership, my sincere thanks.

Special thanks is also owed to the Fair Oaks Centennial Committee and Chairperson Jeanne Hill for planning the special events which occurred throughout 1995. The Committee, established as an offshoot of the Society, drew representatives from all sectors of the community to coordinate and create a multitude of events including the Historical Society's Centennial Kickoff (last January), the Time Capsule placement in Plaza Park (in September), the Women's Thursday Club Costume Reception, the special Sacramento Symphony Performance in Fair Oaks Park (in October), and the Commemorative Postal Cancellation (in November). Besides these very special events the Committee helped incorporate the Centennial into the Fair Oaks Fiesta and many other events.

At the last meeting of the Executive Board, we nominated to the Sacramento County Historical Society's 1995 Awards Program, the following women for their work in researching and producing the book, FAIR OAKS -- THE EARLY YEARS : Lois Frazier, Iva Langness, and Marguerite Smart. The awards program honors significant contributions to the field of history in the areas of Education, Publication and Preservation. FAIR OAKS -- THE EARLY YEARS Was the cornerstone of our Centennial Celebration and a very professional product as you know. Not surprisingly, the ladies were selected for this prestigious honor. They will be presented a joint award at the Sacramento Historical Society's Annual Awards Banquet, Thursday, January 25, 1996 at the Shepherder's Inn. Guests who wish to attend should call me or Iva Langness for details.

Business at the upcoming General Meeting will include installation of new officers, approval of our 1996 Budget, a report from Auditor Dorothy Dykeman, and a report from the Bylaws Review Committee Chairperson, June Melvin. The Bylaws Review Committee was appointed by the President to make recommendations to the General Membership regarding possible Bylaws amendment. Of particular concern was whether or not the designated Standing Committees should be reorganized to more accurately reflect the ongoing activities of the Society while keeping the Board a reasonable size.

Finally, just when I thought I could slack off, Iva Langness has asked me to chair a special committee to investigate the feasibility of establishing a larger History Center under the auspices of the Fair Oaks Recreation and Parks District. Our general intent is to determine if the District's "Oak Room" (the original library) could be dedicated as a repository for local artifacts, photographs and documents, serving as a more effective center for cultural research, education and recreational activities. Any members interested in participating in the study and the formulation of recommendations should call me (961-6301).

Don't forget to bring your check book to the next meeting so you can renew your membership. Or, better yet, mail your check in now using the form on the back of this newsletter. Again, thanks for all of your support and see you on January 23rd..

T REASURER'S REPORT : CAROL CROWTHER (961-7096)

The current (January 8, 1996) balance is \$6789.29.

WAYS AND MEANS REPORT : ROSEANNE CRANDELL (967-2102)

To date, the **ENTERTAINMENT, 1996** book sales has earned the Society \$144.00. Thank you to all of you who participated in the book sale.

DOCENTS' REPORT : LOIS FRAZIER (967-2967)

On December 10, 1995 the Society hosted a Christmas Season Open House. Steve Abbott filled our new display case with many interesting local items from his personal collection. Children's books were collected and donated to the local school libraries. Cookies and hot apple cider were enjoyed by all.

My sincere thanks to the following people who have been docents at our **History Center** in 1995:

January:	Marilyn and Chuck Kendrick
February:	(Lois Frazier) and Bonnie Drago
March:	Meg and Larry Smart
April:	Janet and Warren McWilliams
May:	Closed..
June:	June Melvin and Leigh Landis
July:	Adele Copeland and Ione Radonich
August:	Meg and Larry Smart
September:	(Lois Frazier) and Bonnie Drago
October:	Iva Langness and Barbara Gilmore
November:	June Melvin and Alfreda Weiss
December:	Christmas Open House

The History Center is in the Administration Building at the Fair Oaks Cemetery District Office. The History Center is open to the public every second Sunday of the month from 1:00 - 4:00pm. If you would like to volunteer as a docent, please call Lois Frazier.

**please address your dues' checks
to Fair Oaks Historical Society
for this year, 1996..... thanks**

Sarah's footsteps in winter

Winter weather to the farmer in the early days of Fair Oaks was the enemy. Many battles were lost to freeze, rain, and wind. Many families just gave up and moved away. Battle gear included a one-piece pair of woolen long underwear, heavy denim overalls, a flannel shirt, and high lace-up rubber boots worn over thick monkey socks. Over all of this went a Levi jacket that was lined inside with heavy quilted flannel.

I remember my Dad so well wearing this outfit trudging down to the barn, with his worn out dress hat pulled down tightly over his head, puffing on his pipe.

Years and dates are not relevant to the man whose livelihood depends upon a winter crop. Dates are only remembered if they are in conjunction with someone's funeral or the birth of a child. Perhaps a holiday, but that does not say what year.

We do remember winter weather in our family very well. When my Grandfather Vincent came to Fair Oaks he was promised tropical weather with the proof being date palms and banana trees growing already along the roads.

It was not too many years later that the weather changed and we had a freeze that lasted for days. The beautiful flourishing citrus groves turned into a blackened forest of Hell. Farmers were devastated. Some just left and abandoned their land. Some pulled the trees and replanted their orchards. Some of us waited as we were advised by the county farm advisor. The next July the trees sprouted new growth from the grafting; dead wood could be identified and cut out.

In later years we began to smudge the acres of commercial cut flowers and about fifteen acres of oranges. At first, we lit small fires in cans my father made from a circle of tin with a grate in it. The small three foot high and perhaps twelve inches across can was filled with dry straw and coal. They were set in the daytime and quickly lit when the cold hit in the night. My sisters would get up in the night and help to keep the fires going and then go off to school in the morning.

Every evening the radio was turned on and we listened to the frost warning report for all the districts in the state; my Dad could then calculate what the possibility of freeze might be for that night. There was something to me as a child about the dew point that was very ominous. We had our own warning system that registered the temperature and when it got down to a certain point it would set off a very loud warning buzzer in the cellar right under my bed. Lights went on and it was mass panic attack as everyone dressed and got ready to drive to the other place as we called the twenty acres we owned on Kenneth.

After the war, we were able to purchase fuel oil and fill huge smudge pots with oil that would heat a larger area. These were easier to handle but laid a layer of black noxious smoke over the countryside. I remember them laying in a rusty pile next to the barn when the ranch was sold. Probably the most interesting thing about the fuel oil was the effect on the folks who stole gas from us. Whenever my Dad found gas missing from the barrels he would switch barrels. We would find broken down cars all up and down Sunset Avenue for days.

Rain was never too much of a problem for us since our land was very sandy and the water soaked in quickly. Other water drained in to nearby creeks which used to flow in low places through most of Fair Oaks. Rain never stopped us, we wore big yellow rubber raincoats and black high

top galoshes that had the most fascinating buckles. We went about feeding the livestock, chickens, hauling in firewood, and loading trucks just as usual. Probably the most amusing sight I can remember about the rain was seeing my little dumpling of a mother milk the tiny Jersey cow in the rain. She would throw a canvas over her and the cow while the cow ate a bucket of sweet molasses smelling mash. Her swaying back and forth as she milked and the cow raising its head up and down as it ate under the canvas made a wonderful animated object.

Not so amusing was when all the water from the creeks joined with all the water from the river and it flooded. Many times the original American River flooded and caused great damage and grief. I can remember when my sister was very pregnant, we went out to the bluffs by the bridge and saw the water up to the bottom of the bridge. Men were trying to push logs and debris from under the bridge to save the bridge from being damaged.

Perhaps the worst thing about rain is when it is followed by strong winds. Many times the rain would soak the ground and then the wind would blow. One great wind storm came about two weeks after I was born and caused severe damage. Many orchard trees of great age were blown over. That wind caused my Uncle to stop drinking. He came home from his mail route and got himself something to warm him up. A little while later he looked out the window and saw the garage leaning at a jaunty angle. He decided right then and there he had to give up the bottle. The wind had come up without him realizing it and blew the garage over.

Fog was never much of a problem for us. Our little farm was so self-sufficient we did not very often have to go any where when it was foggy. Those days we worked in the warm barns sorting oranges and repairing farm equipment. Warm nights were spent by the wood stove cracking walnuts and almonds. We made great batches of fudge, peneuche, and divinity. Relatives came and we played cards and ate good food.

There was a Christmas Eve I remember when we had gone to my Kennedy grandparents in Loomis. When we started home late at night down the foggy country road we hit fog so dense my Dad could not see even the hood of the car. There was no center line in those days to open the door and follow so my mother got out and walked along the edge of the pavement in the gravel holding onto the car fender to guide my Dad as he drove down the road fuming and swearing.

Winter weather in Fair Oaks as I remember it was a time for expletive Biblical works, being bone-aching cold, wet to the skin and only being able to warm one side at a time next to a wood burning stove. There were many years I saw my parents sick at heart over a crop lost to the *grim reaper.

(The Vincent family farmed in Fair Oaks from 1906 to 1974),

SARAH VINCENT GOLLER
DECEMBER, 1996

*grim reaper= grim(relentless);reaper(cut or clear/as a crop).



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 CITRUS HEIGHTS CA 95610

FAIR OAKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 POST OFFICE BOX 2044
 FAIR OAKS CA 95628



FAIR OAKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME _____ (circle:renewal/new member) DATE _____
 ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____
 TELEPHONE _____ amount of \$ enclosed _____ for _____ number of persons.

I would like to be a docent at the History Center for this
 month/months _____; no. of people with me will be _____.

ANNUAL DUES -- ALWAYS BEGINNING JANUARY 1 OF EACH YEAR

INDIVIDUAL	\$ 8.00	MAIL TO: Marilyn Pearce 4104 EARNSCLIFF AV FAIR OAKS CA 95628
FAMILY	12.00	
SUPPORTING -- (Organization/business)	25.00	
LIFE	100.00	
FAMILY LIFE	150.00	

THE FAIR OAKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, P O BOX 2044, FAIR OAKS CA 95628, IS A NON-PROFIT EDUCATIONAL CORPORATION ESTABLISHED TO DEVELOP, PRESERVE, AND SHARE FAIR OAKS COMMUNITY HISTORY. PUBLIC ATTENDANCE IS ENCOURAGED AT QUARTERLY MEETINGS SCHEDULED ON THE FOURTH TUESDAY IN JANUARY, APRIL, JULY, OCTOBER OF EACH YEAR. THE POTLUCK DINNER MEETINGS BEGIN AT 6:00PM WITH ATTENDEES BRINGING POTLUCK DISHES. TO ATTEND AN EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING OR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING MEETING AGENDAS, CONTACT THE PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY. THE SOCIETY IS OPEN TO ANYONE INTERESTED IN FAIR OAKS REGIONAL HISTORY. CONTACT THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON OR ANY OFFICER IF INTERESTED IN JOINING.