

FULLERTON HERITAGE

Fall ∞ Volume 20 ∞ Number 2 ∞ May 2014

The mission of Fullerton Heritage is to foster an appreciation of our city's cultural history and to ensure the preservation of our historic architectural resources and environments.

Orangethorpe: More Than A Street

by Debora Richey

When the county of Orange incorporated in 1889, a number of towns, including Fullerton (1904), Newport Beach (1906), and Huntington Beach (1909), quickly followed suit. During these early years, Orange County had about fifty unincorporated villages and towns, ranging in size from a few families to a sufficient population needed to incorporate as a city. Started by turn-of-the-century land and oil booms, many of these communities quickly vanished while others were paper towns that never developed past the planning stage. Others would thrive for decades and eventually be annexed to cities during the aggressive annexation wars following World War II.

Some of these now forgotten towns had unique and colorful names: Arch Beach, Clair, Loara, Myford, Coast Royal, Delhi, Smeltzer, Port Orange, Seawood, Saint

James, and Earlham, a Quaker settlement named for a college in Indiana. Others were named for a particular crop or industry: Berrydale, Carbondale, Celery, Olive, Dairyland, and Petrolia. Still others were named for their owners or developers: Doheny Park for oil man Edward L. Doheny; Harper for grain farmer Gregory Harper; Barber City for Long Beach realtor Henry Barber; and Randolph for Epes Randolph, Vice President and General Manager of the Pacific Electric Railway.

The most important of these long-lost towns to Fullerton history is Orangethorpe, which briefly incorporated in the 1920s to avoid annexation to Fullerton. In 1860, settlers began moving into territory northwest of Anaheim, eventually naming the area Orangethorpe. Like the county and the city of Orange, the name played on the appeal of the word "orange," combined with the Old English word "thorpe", meaning a villager. Land in the area, which was for



Orangethorpe School. Leo Fender (second row, second from left) and his classmates. Courtesy of the Anaheim Public Library

the most part dry desert filled with cactus, castor beans, sagebrush, and mustard, was selling for ten dollars an acre. In 1872, early farmers and ranchers banded together to build an irrigation ditch which brought much needed water to the area. That same year, a little whitewashed school, the first in northern Orange County, was constructed at the northeast corner of Nicolas (now Euclid) and Orangethorpe Avenues. Two

(continued on page 3)

Santa Fe Loading Dock in Jeopardy

by Terry Galvin

The historic Fullerton Santa Fe Depot is on the National Register and is in very good condition – except for a portion of the loading dock that has been unusable for about 15 years. The rest of the building and the other part of the loading dock are leased; between the City and the lessee, the building is being fairly well maintained.

The narrow part of the loading dock has been deteriorating because the roof no longer drains properly. Major pieces of the main structural beam have disintegrated because of the water damage. The City braced the roof many years ago so it is not in danger of collapsing at this point, but repairs should be made in the near future to arrest the ongoing deterioration.

The Fullerton Heritage Board has been researching the alternatives and has been assured by a preservation architect and structural engineer

(continued on page 5)



The loading dock of the historic Santa Fe Depot.

Advocacy Issues

by Kate Dalton

Design Review Committee

On February 13, 2014 the DRC considered the addition of two new residences on a property at 188 Hillcrest Dr., site of the historic Chaffee home. The request for the needed lot split to accommodate the new homes was originally denied by the Planning Commission and on appeal to the City Council, but the owner sued the City for the right, and as a result of the legal settlement, the lot split was approved with the condition that the DRC review the development plans for compatibility with the historic nature of the area. The DRC was not pleased with the position they were in, having to review a project that they generally agreed was too dense for the historic neighborhood. Despite the historic significance of the homes

in the neighborhood, it has no protection against this type of development because it is not a designated preservation zone. Thankfully the architect has experience in preservation and did a good job of designing the homes to minimize the impact to the surrounding neighborhood, but there was only so much

<h3>Walking Tour Schedule</h3> <p>May 31 . Hillcrest Park. . .9 a.m. June 7 . . Downtown . . .9 a.m. June 21 . Hillcrest Park. . .9 a.m. July 12 . . Hillcrest Park. . .9 a.m.</p>
--

that he could do and the project that was approved will substantially alter the historic streetscape. The DRC made several requirements to make the project more compatible, but again, their influence was limited. Many of the surrounding neighbors objected to the mass and scale of the additional homes and their negative impact on the historic Chaffee home as well as the historic neighborhood. Following the meeting, a group of the neighbors reached out to Fullerton Heritage requesting information and assistance in pursuing preservation zone status for their neighborhood. A committee is currently working with them to start the process with the city.

At the March 13 DRC meeting they approved a request for a remodel to the front façade at 217 N. Berkeley in the College Park Preservation Zone. The project met all of the zoning standards and design guidelines and will be an asset to this important historic neighborhood. The DRC also approved a large new development of several units at 131 E. Brookdale Ave. in the Barranca Preservation Zone. The DRC approved the site plan and architectural details of the proposed Craftsman style project. The project must also go before the Landmarks Commission for a zoning change to allow the greater density being requested. The area was previously zoned R-3 and during that time an apartment building with several units was built next to this proposed project. The zoning was subsequently changed to lower density R-2 when it was designated a preservation zone and most of the other properties on the block have one

home. Because this project is at the end of the block along the flood control channel and is very well designed to be compatible with the historic homes, it will be an asset to this historic neighborhood despite the request for higher density.

After many years of neglect the property at 201 W. Brookdale Ave. in the Jacaranda/Malvern/Brookdale Preservation Zone has new young owners who are restoring the original house and have proposed an addition that was approved by DRC on April 10. They will build an addition along the back of the house, as well as a guest unit attached to the detached garage along the alley. They are duplicating all of the architectural features of the historic home, ensuring that their project will be a welcome improvement to their historic neighborhood.

Window Replacement Issues

Despite Fullerton Heritage's intensive education campaign, too many homeowners in the residential preservation zones are still changing out their windows without the benefit of permits and design review that are required. We have had numerous calls to the FH Hotline (714-740-3051) from owners in the preservation zones, reporting these unpermitted projects, which are helping us and the City monitor the problem, but we are certainly fighting an on-going battle. Please continue to watch and support our effort to maintain the architectural integrity of our historic homes. We will also be requesting closer scrutiny and review on the part of City staff when window permits are issued to ensure that the replacements are really necessary (as opposed to repair, when feasible, that is called for in the Design Guidelines) and that the style is appropriate for the home.

(continued on page 6)

Fox Theatre Update

by Tom Dalton

Lease negotiations between the City and Drupp Coffee, the new tenant for the Firestone Building adjacent to the Fox, are complete. The ribbon cutting ceremony was held on April 15th and we expect construction on the tenant improvements to begin very soon.

The Fullerton Historic Theatre Foundation, through its "Friends of the Fox" annual donation drive, has already received over \$20,000 from the community to help with the restoration of the theatre. The Foundation is currently doing restorative work on the rooftop sign and decorative plaster work around the stage using funds from a \$300,000 grant awarded by the California Cultural and Historical Endowment. The Foundation raised the \$180,000.00 grant match funds that are required for the \$300,000.00 grant and the in-kind labor and supplies totaling \$141,220.00 from Bivar, Inc., Henry Armenta, and Ejay's Machine Co., Inc. are a major part of that grant match. We are extremely grateful to these three companies for their generous support of this important part of our project.

If you aren't already a Friend of the Foundation, please consider joining and help us keep the momentum going. The website is foxfullerton.org.

President's Corner

by Ernie Kelsey

Spring is in the air! We've changed the clocks, winter has gone, and summer is fast approaching. It's hard to believe that 2014 is moving so quickly.

Fullerton Heritage is moving quickly too. Our support of the Fox Fullerton Theatre restoration continues as well as our ongoing advocacy for projects including the Hunt Branch of the Fullerton Public Library, the main Administration building at the former Beckman Instruments, as well as several historic residences. All of this is in addition to our ongoing advocacy to support historic preservation and our city council and public outreach.

We're all very excited about getting the original Fender's Radio Service (107 S. Harbor Blvd) on the National Register of Historic Places! This was something we worked on for over a year with the

culmination of these efforts happening last February 18 when we presented the National Register plaque to the Ellingson brothers (see photos on page 4). We were very fortunate to have local City officials and Mrs. Phyllis Fender in attendance. Another historic building being recognized!

We have more tours coming up – you can see the dates in this newsletter. Contact the hotline at 714-740-3051 or tours@fullertonheritage.org to reserve your spot today (tours are free for Fullerton Heritage members!).

Our 2014 Annual Meeting is practically around the corner. This year the meeting will be on Sunday, June 29, 2014 at the historic Fullerton Museum Center, beginning at 2 p.m. Come on down and hear about what Fullerton Heritage has been up to this past year – you'll be glad you did – it's a fun two hours.

Enjoy your spring everyone and see you at the Annual Meeting!

Orangethorpe

(continued from page 1)

years later, a two-story school was constructed at Orangethorpe and Brookhurst Avenues, and the first school was brought to the new site and became part of the larger building. Prior to the building of the first elementary school in Fullerton in 1888, Fullerton students attended the Orangethorpe School.

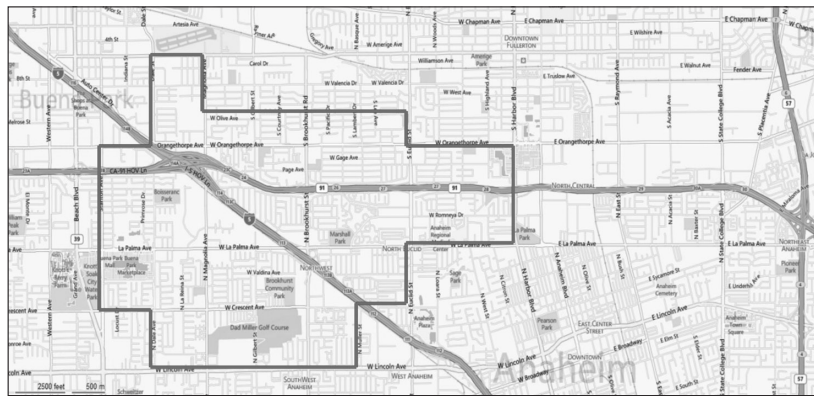
Settlers were attracted by the rich, fertile soil in the district, initially growing apricots, walnuts, and alfalfa, but switched to more lucrative citrus groves in the 1910s. Initially, the rough roads in Orangethorpe were difficult to navigate, but in 1913, as part of the Good Roads Movement, Orange County Supervisors made the area a top priority. New paved roads were constructed starting with Orangethorpe Road, enhancing community life and the ability to ship agricultural products. The

Orangethorpe National Farm Loan Association, formed in 1917, also brought needed capital to farmers.

By 1915, Orangethorpe had grown to

Well into the 1950s, Orangethorpe consisted primarily of grove homes surrounded by grove upon grove of orange, lemon, and walnuts trees. Farmers and ranchers in

Orangethorpe formed a tight-knit community, and their parties, weddings, and vacations were regularly reported in the society columns of the *Anaheim Gazette* and the *Fullerton News Tribune*. Many important Fullerton families—the Royers, Gardiners, Spencers, and Hiltchers—came from the Orangethorpe district. The most famous individual born in Orangethorpe was guitar legend Leo Fender (1909-1991),



Boundary of the city of Orangethorpe, 1921 – 1923 (courtesy Bob Linnell)

6.25 square miles, sandwiched between Anaheim, Fullerton, and Buena Park. The town limits ran roughly from Stanton Avenue on the west to Harbor Boulevard on the east and from Lincoln Avenue on the south to approximately Olive Avenue on the north. Orangethorpe was larger than Brea or La Habra, but had no police, firemen, or city hall. It did have an elected Treasurer, City Clerk, and Board of Trustees, which met once a month at the Orangethorpe School. The treasury consisted primarily of income derived from a one dollar an acre assessment from Orangethorpe residents. City services were provided by the county.

who attended the Orangethorpe School. In the 1930s, the gregarious developer Max Royer (1230 W. Orangethorpe) became the unofficial Mayor of Orangethorpe and one of its biggest boosters. After World War II, original settlers and their families began selling off acres of their land to developers. Gradually the orange and lemon groves were plowed over and replaced with tract and Ranch-styled homes. Glimpses of what early Orangethorpe looked like can be found in the few designated Significant Properties that remain: the Gardiner House (1155 W. Orangethorpe, 1925), the imposing Mary

(continued on page 6)

Find Fullerton Heritage on Facebook

Remember to find us on Facebook:
<http://tinyurl.com/d2cro9o>

Fender Building Placed on National Register



Fender's Radio Service building (107 S. Harbor Blvd.) front as it appears today.



Exterior of Fender's Radio Service in the late 1940s. View is looking north on Spadna Road (Harbor Blvd.) with Fender's shop on the left. From the Southern California Edison Archive. Courtesy of The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.



Fender's Radio Service National Register dedication ceremony, Feb. 18, 2014. From left to right, Mayor Doug Chaffee, Rick Ellingson, Mrs. Leo (Phyllis) Fender, Steve Ellingson. (You can read more about Leo Fender on the Fullerton Heritage website.)

Dock

(continued from page 1)

that the situation is not terminal. Replacing the missing portion of the main beam, reattaching the bracing to it, and replacing some roofing material and adding roof drains should solve the problem. That, along with some work on the column bases, will stabilize the structure to the point that the loading dock will again be usable for many years.

The Board plans to pursue the concept of preparing a proposal to the City along the lines of last year's Amerige Brothers Real Estate Office restoration project. Fullerton Heritage could coordinate and manage the fund-raising and construction based on plans prepared by the preservation architect and structural engineer.

The loading dock is part of the Santa Fe Depot and is included in the National Register designation. Because of the importance of the railroad in the City's history and development, keeping the entire depot property in good condition is essential and worthy of the community's support.

The Board will keep the membership informed if the City would accept this concept. If so, then Fullerton Heritage would embark on a publicity campaign to see if the community will show the degree



Fullerton Heritage is seeking ways to repair the loading dock roof to arrest the deterioration, restoring this element of the National Registered Fullerton Depot.

of support that would be required to restore this significant component of the depot.

George Amerige

by Warren Bowen

FH Board Member and lifelong Fullerton resident Warren Bowen shares these biographical anecdotes about George H. Amerige, who with his brother Edward founded Fullerton in 1887 – editor.

Much of what George Amerige did was related to the property he still owned all those years after the founding of the town and its growth into a city, visiting with tenants and working to develop the downtown block of business buildings, including what is now the 100



Fullerton co-founder George H. Amerige. In 1937 he wrote, "There is a secret in building a town. It takes a stiff backbone, a spirit of progressiveness and determination to win out, and a disposition that can stand all sorts of criticism."

moved to the park.

Among the places I recall taking George and his wife Annette (they had no children) was a trip to Anaheim to visit the SQR store, north Orange County's only real department store which quickly overpowered several companies occupying Fullerton's Chapman Building's ground floor and basement. I think we spent one day at Orange County Park, later called Irvine Regional Park, then as now a leading



George Amerige poses in what is now downtown Fullerton. The small building in the background is the Amerige Bros. Real Estate Office, recently restored by Fullerton Heritage.

outdoor recreation place with its scenic lake and redwood rowboats. George also kept a close watch on the many new houses that were going up in Fullerton. Mrs. Amerige usually went with her husband on his visits to people and places, except his regular dinner meetings with the 20-30 Club, a young men's service club of which George was an honorary member. One aspect of his regular visits to their meetings was characterized by passing out cigarettes to the fellows, usually in small packs of half a dozen smokes. I think George had a tie to the company that made Camels - perhaps a stockholder who was drumming up business. In any case the Club loved to have him and later took a leading role in getting Commonwealth Park re-named Amerige Park. The Club had a monument to George placed in the Amerige Park as a part of the City's 1937 Golden Anniversary of the founding of the town. (note the picture of the "wooden nickels" which were circulated on that occasion).

At those times, agriculture was the economic base of all of Orange County. The Ameriges had a sixty acre orchard of English

walnuts. They shipped carloads of the nuts east, packed in burlap bags. Unlike the many carloads of citrus and other produce shipped, the nuts did not require iced railcars.

Annette Jackson had become Mrs. Amerige in Boston, 1894. She is believed to have been a long-time acquaintance of George, as he was also reared in Massachusetts. After marriage, the Ameriges lived in Fullerton for the rest of their lives. George's brother Edward had died in 1915 leaving him with lots of property in Fullerton. Although it was not usual for married women to take an open public place except beside their husbands, Annette assumed a leading role in Fullerton's civic and social activities, was a member of the Order of the Eastern Star and the P.E.O. and was

very proud of the home she and George built at 615 No. Spadra Road. Annette continued to live out her life there with her caretaker friend Ruth Bastanchury of the large family of Basque descendants in Fullerton. At her death, Mrs. Amerige left large monetary bequests with local people who had befriended her.

Born in Malden, MA in 1855, George Amerige died in 1947 at 92. Annette Amerige passed away in 1961.



"Wooden Nickel" certificates with George Amerige's image, issued in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Fullerton.

Orangethorpe

(continued from page 3)

Spencer House (1520 W. Orangethorpe, ca. 1913), and the Clarence Spencer House (1400 W. Orangethorpe, 1915). The owner of the Clarence Spencer House, a Craftsman bungalow, has recently applied for a Local Landmark designation for her home.

For a few years, Orangethorpe residents had a feud with the city of Fullerton. By 1920, food processing companies, such as the Val Vita Cannery (later Hunt Foods), were taxing Fullerton's sewage system beyond its capacity. To relieve the situation, the Fullerton City Council proposed situating a "sewer farm" at Brookhurst and Crescent Avenues. Plans were formulated to purchase the Philip A. Stanton ranch and annex it to the city by means of a thirty-foot shoestring strip extending southward along Magnolia Avenue. The prevailing wind was toward the east, and ranchers of the Orangethorpe area rose up in protest. Fullerton city officials countered that the project was not a sewage farm but a "municipal farm" that would be constructed with the latest odor-eliminating technology. Unconvinced, Joseph E. Durkee and Herman Allgeyer called an open air meeting held at the corner of La Palma and Brookhurst Avenues. A war chest was created, with each farmer contributing one dollar for each acre of land owned. Lawyers were quickly hired, and in October 1920, Superior Court Judge R. Y. Williams declared the annexation illegal, noting that the annexed land was not "contiguous territory" under the meaning of the *Annexation Act*.

The city of Stanton had incorporated in 1911 to stop Anaheim's plans to build a sewage plant in the area, and residents of Orangethorpe decided that the best solution to the problem would be to also organize into a city. A petition to incorporate was speedily signed and presented to the Board of Supervisors, who fixed the boundaries of the proposed municipality and set an election for January 7, 1921, at which the local residents could decide whether they wished to be a city. Out of the 200 registered voters, 124 ballots were cast in favor and just 32 against creation of a city named Orangethorpe. Clarence S. Spencer was elected Treasurer; Lloyd P. Nichols, City Clerk (the only paid position); and the Trustees were Martin J. Herzler, Herman Allgeyer, Samuel. D. Winters, and John. M. McDuell. In 1923, a sewer line running from Fullerton to the ocean was planned, ending the sewer farm threat, and on December 31, 1923, the residents of Orangethorpe voted to unincorporate. In 1954, the school district was divided between Fullerton and Anaheim, and the entire Orangethorpe area was eventually annexed to Anaheim, Fullerton, and Buena Park, although a few pockets of unincorporated county territory remained for many years. In 1956, the Fullerton City Council approved rezoning portions of Orangethorpe Avenue to C-1 (light commercial), and businesses began moving into the area. After annexation, Orangethorpe homeowners quietly assimilated, with very few current Fullerton residents remembering this neighboring community.

Welcome New Members!

Fullerton Heritage extends a warm welcome to our newest members: Mark Flannery, Kim Grime, Nicholas Nicholas, Ashley Smith, Ryan Smith, Jack & Sharon Volkov.

Advocacy

(continued from page 2)

Historic Bench Repair

Thanks to input and support from Fullerton Heritage, the historic stone bench at the corner of Highland and Commonwealth was removed from between the equally historic cypress trees, moved back from the corner and restored. It looks better than it has in decades and the trees will be healthier as well, now that their trunks are not being obstructed by the stone bench. In extricating the bench from between the trees, Staff had to actually leave a few pieces of stone in the tree trunks, in order to not damage the health of the trees. The new space will also include a stone path from the corner up to the bench and new landscaping. Many thanks to Dennis Quinlivan, Deputy Director of Public Works for Fullerton and his team, for designing and executing this important project. They have preserved a wonderful bit of Fullerton's history for future generations.



Board of Directors 2013-2014

Warren Bowen / Maureen Burton
Kate Dalton / Tom Dalton
Terry Galvin / Ann Gread
Joel Gread / Ernie Kelsey
Bob Linnell / Debora Richey
Noelle Rossi

Fullerton Heritage / P.O. Box 3356
Fullerton, California 92834-3356
Hotline: (714) 740-3051

www.fullertonheritage.org
Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/d2cro9o>

Newsletter
Joel Gread, editor
Jim Powell, layout & design