

# FULLERTON HERITAGE

Fall ❁ Volume 19 ❁ Number 1 ❁ November 2012

*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.*

## Housing World War II Veterans

by Debora Richey

On June 22, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law the *Servicemen Readjustment Act*, popularly known as the G.I. Bill of Rights, which allowed servicemen and women the opportunity of resuming their educational or technical training without paying tuition (up to \$500 per school year), as well as the right to receive a monthly living allowance while pursuing their studies. The federal government also paid for all necessary school supplies, such as paper, pencils, notebooks, and student body dues. Initially there was skepticism that veterans would enroll in colleges and universities, which until then had been attended primarily by the well-to-do, but at its peak year in 1947, there were 1.7 million veterans enrolled in higher education, with ex-servicemen accounting for forty-nine percent of college admissions under the G.I. Bill. By the time the Bill expired in 1956, 7.8 million of 16 million World War II veterans had participated in higher education or training programs.

By the end of the second World War, Fullerton College (then Fullerton Junior College) had only 71 male students. Initially only 15 veterans enrolled in 1944-45, but by 1946-47, that figure had jumped to 843. The campus had the largest freshmen classes in its history, and men soon outnumbered women by two to one. In desperate need of federal funds, Fullerton College administrators applied for certification from the Readjustment Division of the California Department of Education, becoming in January 1946 one of six schools in Orange County approved to educate veterans under



*Veteran housing at Fullerton College, near the school farm, 1949  
(courtesy of FUHS)*

the G.I. Bill (400 schools were available throughout California). Fullerton College administrators and boosters actively recruited ex-servicemen, but the campus faced one major problem: there was no available  
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## Fox Theatre Update

by Tom Dalton

Fullerton Heritage started the "Save the Fox" project over 10 years ago with several FH members becoming founding members of the Fullerton Historic Theatre Foundation (FHTF), which now owns the theatre. Having been on the FHTF Board of Directors for almost three years, I've had the privilege of collaborating with the tireless volunteers who are working to restore our historic and beautiful Fox to its original grandeur, while updating the access and fire / life / safety features of the building and installing a state-of-the-art sound system and new lighting. All of this effort takes a tremendous amount of time and money but we are determined to see this project through!

As you drive by, please notice the new plaster and paint that have

been applied since our last newsletter. What you *don't* see is the new roof, fire sprinkler system, seismic retrofit, and orchestra pit, among the many other upgrades that have been installed.

Recently the City started at Chapman and Harbor the right-turn lane cut-out project that is scheduled to be completed by mid-November. As soon as that work is finished we expect to see tenant improvement work begin on the Firestone Building and, before long, new businesses moving in and giving fresh life to the northeast corner of the Fox property.

The FHTF is indebted to the City of Fullerton for its help and expertise in this on-going project and is most grateful to the California Cultural and Historical Endowment (CCHE) for their \$1,983,375 grant. We just completed the final billing for the grant, using the

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## Advocacy Issues

by *Kate Dalton*

### Livingston House

We have great news to report on the status of this Fullerton Significant Property, located at 117 W. Valencia Ave. that we discussed in the last newsletter. The property was bought and the new owners have restored the exterior of the house to required historic preservation standards and rehabilitated the interior into rental units. The owners are in the process of proceeding with the necessary CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) study as part of their desire to add additional dwelling units to the rear of the large property. Fullerton Heritage has offered the owners help with the historic research needed for the CEQA review as well as our gratitude for saving this piece of Fullerton's pioneer history.

### Burdorf House

This is another Fullerton Significant Property, located at 247 E. Valencia Ave., which had been neglected and fallen into serious disrepair. The new owner has rescued it and just completed a historic restoration of both the exterior and the interior. We are so pleased with the exceptional quality of the restoration that we asked and the owner has agreed to allow us to make application to the City for Local Landmark status on his behalf. We have added this property to the list of four new applications that we will make to the Landmarks Commission within the next few months after all of the necessary research is complete.

### Window Replacement on Historic Homes

After highlighting our new flyer in the last newsletter, several window replacements without permit and review have been reported. The bad news is that this continues to happen, but the good news is that more people are aware of the issue and reporting unpermitted work.

Following the removal of original double-hung wood windows and sills and subsequent replacement with vinyl sliding windows at 346 W. Malvern Ave., the City contacted the owners and required that they remove the inappropriate windows, rebuild the window frames and sill structures and install double-hung windows resembling the original windows.

Another instance at 241 N. Brookdale Pl. was reported and the project stopped by the City when the owners began tearing out all of the windows without permit. After review, they were required to change the replacement window style to one that is appropriate to the period of the house, including sills and framing. The finished project, while not as good as when the original elements were intact, is a vast improvement over what would exist had we not had Preservation Design Guidelines in place and enforceable. Now, our goal is to continue to educate homeowners to do the proper thing before doing damage to original historic elements of their homes. Please continue to watch for inappropriate work in the preservation zones and alert the City (714) 773-5799 or (714) 773-5704 as soon as possible. Contact us on the Fullerton Heritage Hotline at (714) 740-3051 for further information on how you can help.

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## The Amerige Brothers Building Needs Some TLC

by *Terry Galvin*

You may have noticed that the Amerige Brothers' Realty Office (Fullerton's first commercial structure, built in 1887) has been moved to make way for the new Community Center that just opened in Amerige Park. The historic structure is now facing Commonwealth Ave. between the ball field and the Center and is very prominently displayed for public view.

From a distance the small frame building still looks good, but on closer inspection, it is clear that the last renovation was almost 30 years ago. Unfortunately, there are no funds left from the Community Center project to bring the structure back to a desirable condition, but the project did include a new foundation, front porch, rear stairs, and electrical service for the historic building.

Fullerton Heritage has approached the City to offer assistance in rehabilitating the Amerige building so that it can once again stand proudly as the oldest evidence of the founding of Fullerton. Our plan is to make this a community project as was done in 1983. The same type of work is needed – new roof, sign, electrical elements, window repair, and lots of sanding and repainting on the outside, with similar work on the inside.

When the building was last renovated, almost everything was donated – money, materials, and labor - making it truly a community labor of love and a display of respect for Fullerton's history. The small (320 square foot) building does not require large quantities of materials, but because there is no civic funding available, donations

and volunteer labor will be essential to the success of the project.

If the City Council is receptive and an agreement can be reached on issues such as scope, responsibilities of each party, and various procedural items, Fullerton Heritage will make this a major priority for next year, with the goal of completing the work no later than May 2013 (Fullerton's founding month).

Stay tuned for further details on this proposal. Once the Fullerton Heritage Board gives the final approval to proceed, we will spread the word and look to our loyal membership and beyond for support and assistance in seeking out potential donors and volunteers. In the meantime, you are welcome to share your ideas on the Fullerton Heritage Hotline at (714) 740-3051.

# Veterans

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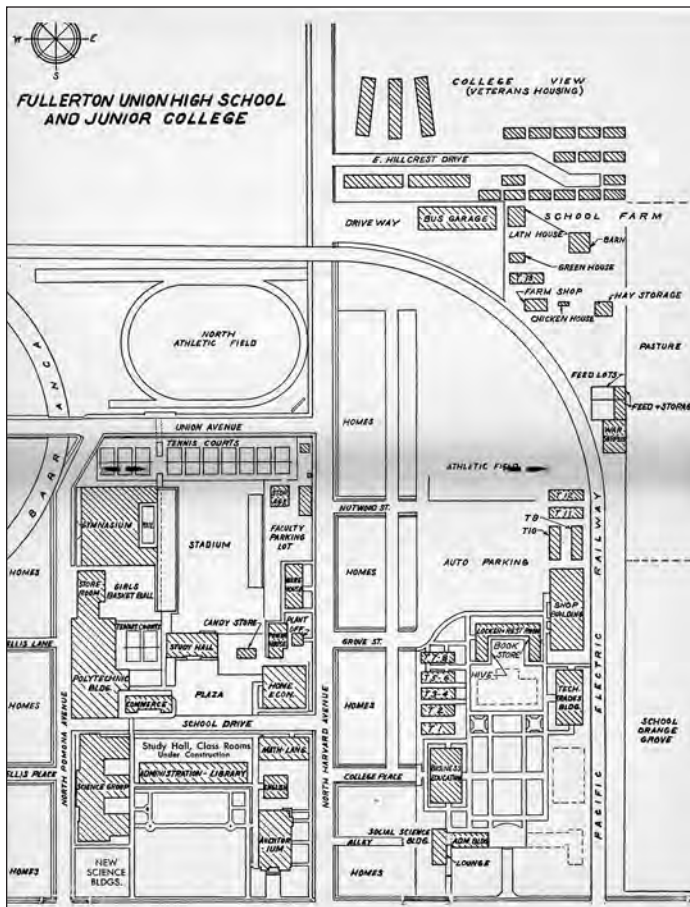
housing for veterans. The City of Fullerton had experienced severe housing shortages decades before the War, and veterans found it almost impossible to find places to live in town. The problem was exacerbated by the age of the returning veterans: most were older than the typical Fullerton College student, and many were married with small children.

Campus administrators and interested citizens quickly looked for ways to provide housing for both single and married veterans. Ice cream store owner Harold Moore and other Fullerton residents were advised that the former Bastanchury Ranch home, located at the end of Las Palmas Drive on the outskirts of town (419 East Las Palmas), was available for rent. Constructed in 1926, the large, two-story dwelling was the last home built on land held by the Bastanchury Family. In 1946, the vacant residence was rapidly converted into a Veterans' Home, housing 25 to 40 single G.I.s, each paying \$50 a month. New paint was added to the kitchen, pantry, and back porch and improvements were made to the garage and grounds,



*Veteran housing units being installed in 1946. The units remained on campus until 1955.*

*The barrack-styled housing units were situated on the north part of the Fullerton College campus. (Top right corner of the map below.)*



which included a tennis court. The Veterans' Home had the distinction of being the only school-sponsored dormitory for veteran students in Southern California. When it became known that the new students needed household items, the Fullerton College Associated Women Students organized a veterans' shower in October 1946, and then presented the men with dishes, silverware, towels, pot holders, pots and pans, and other homemaking items. The school board hired a couple to oversee the single veterans, but the men themselves formed a committee to deal with everyday activities.

With the single veteran housing problem solved, the College started to look for ways to accommodate married veterans. In February 1946, the Federal Housing Authority announced that Fullerton College was to receive 25 dwelling units for occupancy by veterans and their families, making the College the first in California to take advantage of the federal offer of free housing. Eventually 51 wood and metal units were moved from the Santa Ana Air Base to the campus. Each unit was divided into three terraces on which were located one, two, and five room dwellings. All of the units came with kitchen ranges, iceboxes, wash basins, and bathroom fixtures. The ex-military barrack-styled housing units were not the most stylish or comfortable, but they accommodated 125 veterans and their families (pets were allowed). Married faculty members who had served in the military were also given College housing.

Initially the veterans' quarters were to be situated near the front of the campus, but the Board of Trustees was able to purchase, in March 1946, 4.1 acres for \$10,126 from city librarian Carrie Shepard and her mother, Dixie Carolyn. Adjacent to the north boundary of the College, with a 276-frontage along North Harvard (now Lemon) Avenue, the newly acquired property became the perfect site for the former military housing units. In many ways, it was the ideal housing solution for the College. The federal government provided the housing units for free, the state government paid for installation and utilities, and Fullerton College donated the land. A private road, known as East Hillcrest Drive or College Village Drive,

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# Annual Meeting Recap

by Ernie Kelsey

If you weren't able to attend Fullerton Heritage's Annual Meeting on July 8, 2012, you missed a great event! We had almost 50 people in attendance and a great time was had by all. It was a beautiful day with the historic Red Cross building located in Hillcrest Park serving as an excellent backdrop for this annual adventure.

First, Tom Dalton reviewed some of Fullerton Heritage's accomplishments for the year. These include, but are not limited to: our continued support for the Fox Theatre restoration, the eight downtown walking tours we led, our ongoing advocacy for preservation zones, plus local, state and federal landmarks, and the support of Fullerton's general plan update. We also updated our Preservation Resource Directory for homeowners, led the Fullerton Grove Local Landmark project, the Amerige Brothers' Realty Office project, and were one of the sponsors of the Local History and Heritage Conference held at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center. We created a Resource Flyer and placed it at City Hall to help answer questions from owners of historic properties, compiled some excellent newsletters and produced and distributed a very informational Window Replacement Flyer.

The audience then heard a financial update by FH Treasurer, Noelle Rossi. Noelle reported that FH has over \$11,000 in the bank we can draw upon to continue the support of the preservation of our City's history.

Next up was the presentation of several awards, the first being the *2012 Fullerton Heritage Scholarship* to Denise Lemos-Hueth, a history major at Fullerton College. Denise and her family were

in attendance sharing in the thrill of her award. We then gave the *Community Advocacy Award* to Mike Ritto of All Media. Mike was the brainchild behind the *We Love Fullerton* banners you see around town. Along with his family and friends, we all enjoyed seeing Mike receive this special award. He truly does love Fullerton! Next we presented Diane Oestreich with our *Community Education Award* for her research and documentation of the history of Fullerton Union High School (FUHS). Diane's work includes the 200 page book, *The History of Fullerton Union High School, 1893-2011*.

And finally, Kay Miller was presented with the *Preservationist of the Year Award*. Kay worked for the City of Fullerton for many years in many areas and her love for the City is evident in everything she does (including her license plate!).

We were then all treated to a talk by Diane Oestreich, a former Fullerton High librarian, about her book and what it took to write the full history of the school. Diane is an excellent presenter and had the crowd laughing with her anecdotes about FUHS. Did you know FUHS had its own foundry at one point? How about the canoe races on the front lawn? And what about all those tunnels underneath the school? You'll have to buy the book to learn more. (The book can be ordered at [www.fullertonhshistory.com](http://www.fullertonhshistory.com).)

The meeting was capped off by everyone enjoying refreshments and social time. The Fullerton Heritage Annual Meeting is always a fun, informative event. If you couldn't make it this year, make sure you get it on your calendar for next year!

## Veterans

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provided access to the small community, which had named itself College Village. The unofficial mayor of this small village was Student Body President Chuck Bell.

The Veterans Administration provided a subsistence allowance of \$50 a month for veterans without dependents and \$75 for those with dependents. That money did not go far for veterans supporting families and many took part-time jobs on campus. A Veterans' Center was also set up on campus to advise veterans on matters pertaining to insurance, education, vocational benefits, loans, and any other activities that students wished to have explained. Special counseling was also established for the disabled, blind, or amputee veterans. To accommodate the young wives and



*Residents at the Veterans' Home greet their new roommates. (courtesy of the Fullerton College Library)*

mothers living in the units, Fullerton College began offering courses (e.g., child care, home economics) that would appeal to them. The low rent, nearness to campus, and the easy availability of part-time work at a time of critical housing shortages were greatly appreciated by the ex-G.I.s and their families.

To accommodate veterans who were not attending Fullerton College, the City of Fullerton moved barrack-styled wooden housing units to 396 West Truslow, and the Veterans Housing Project remained in use until 1952. That same year, residents living near Fullerton College began to complain about the "disgraceful" condition of College Village, demanding that the units be removed or demolished. Nearby residents were particularly upset with laundry hanging outside the homes. When veterans

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## President's Corner

by Ernie Kelsey

You'll notice there's a new name under the "President's Corner" column in this newsletter. That's because after almost 20 years, Fullerton Heritage has a new President. Hello everyone, my name is Ernie Kelsey and I'm the person that will be attempting to fill **Tom Dalton's** shoes - and they are big shoes to fill!

I want to make it clear that Tom is not leaving Fullerton Heritage. In fact, after I was voted in as President, he was voted in as vice-president - good news for all of us! Words can't describe what Tom has done for this organization. We're extremely fortunate to have him (and his lovely wife Kate) involved as much as they are. So, as the new President I am very lucky to have Tom and the entire FH Board of Directors to help me lead this wonderful organization.

But not to worry, you won't see any changes in Fullerton Heritage's role in our community: foster an appreciation of our cultural history and ensure the preservation of our historic architectural resources and environments. This is our core mission and the reason I joined Fullerton Heritage over six years ago. We will continue to focus on our three "pillars:" Advocate, Communicate, and Educate. These three pillars guide us in our ultimate goals of membership engagement (it continues to get better) and membership growth (it's flat - ask your friends, family, and neighbors to join!).

There has been a lot going on since our last newsletter. Elsewhere in this issue you can read about our Annual Meeting. We've been up to other great things, too. After much anticipation, we finally saw the U.S. Post Office on Commonwealth Ave. take its place on the National Register of Historic Places. This distinction came after waiting over a year from when we were told the site was "approved," so it's true that good things happen to those who wait (and are patient!). Thanks to **Deb Richey** and the entire Board for their help on getting this fantastic building recognized for future generations.

I would also like to thank **Dave Temple** for all his years of hard work and dedication on the Fullerton Heritage Board of Directors. Dave remains an active member, but has resigned from the Board

for the time being. That being said, I would like to welcome **Maureen Burton** to the Board. Maureen lives in one of Fullerton's most charming local landmark homes and loves Fullerton's rich history. She is a great addition to the Board and is currently helping answer the many calls we receive on the Fullerton Heritage hotline. Welcome, Maureen!

I'm also very excited about Fullerton Heritage's involvement with the restoration of the Amerige Brothers' Realty Office. This modest building is a historic gem in our City and with the help of FH has found a permanent home adjacent to the City's new Community Center. Fullerton Heritage is taking the lead (spearheaded by co-chairs **Kate Dalton** and **Terry Galvin**) on the full restoration of the building. (You can read Terry's article about the project elsewhere in this issue-ed.) So, watch for more information about how you can help - both with donations and with the sweat equity this fine historic treasure needs and deserves. Meanwhile, we're currently working on two more properties to add to the Local Landmark registry, so look for more information on these efforts in the future.

We've also been busy with Downtown Walking Tours, our ongoing advocacy efforts, City Council outreach, updating our website, and a new project that involves Fullerton Heritage funding a photography student to create a portfolio of significant City architecture for future reference. These are examples of a great team doing great work!

Thank you all for your continued support of Fullerton Heritage. Please visit us online at [www.fullertonheritage.org](http://www.fullertonheritage.org) or "friend" us on Facebook. Tell your friends - the more people working to preserve our wealth of historic resources, the better!

## Exciting News!

Fullerton Heritage is announcing a Historic Home Tour for June 2013.

There will be many volunteer opportunities. If interested in being part of the team, please leave a message on our Hotline (714-740-3051) or at our Facebook page.

## Veterans

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and their families protested that they could not afford apartments—then renting for \$80 to \$90 a month—the Fullerton City Council allowed the housing units to remain. By then, Korean War veterans had moved into the housing. By 1955 though, the number of veterans attending Fullerton

College decreased and residential and apartment developments in the hill area above College Village increased, and it became evident that the rundown units were no longer compatible with their surroundings. The last veteran family moved out in June 1955, leaving College Village, once jammed bumper-to-bumper with cars, a ghost town. The decision was then made to close down the housing. Bids were opened on the build-

ings. Some of the units were demolished, and a few were relocated to other schools, including La Habra and Buena Park High Schools. In 1960, the school district built new headquarters, the District Center, on the hillside north of campus, and in 1966, Berkeley Avenue was widened and extended to Harbor Boulevard, finally removing all trace of the units that once filled the north part of the campus.

## Meet Edgar Lara

by Debora Richey

As part of the Fullerton Historic Survey in 1978, photographs were taken of historic residences, commercial structures, and other properties for identification purposes. Over the years, those photographs have been invaluable to homeowners, local historians, and City staff. Photographs were randomly added later to the Fullerton Public Library's Local History Room collection, but it had become increasingly obvious, especially with many buildings turning fifty years old and thus eligible for Local and National Register status, that another round of photographs was needed.



*Photographer Edgar Lara is documenting historic buildings and neighborhoods around Fullerton.*

To update the Library's photograph collection, Fullerton Heritage has engaged Edgar Lara, a Fullerton College photography student, to take shots of historic buildings and neighborhoods around Fullerton. If you work or live in an older part of the city, it's possible you might run into Mr. Lara, so please come out and greet him.

To introduce himself to Fullerton Heritage members, Mr. Lara was asked to come

up with a brief autobiographical sketch:

Edgar Lara is an Orange County-based photographer who has been capturing people and special events since his teen-



*An example of the high quality work being done by Edgar Lara – a new photo of the Fullerton Police Department, originally dedicated as City Hall in July, 1942.*

age years. After obtaining his certification at Fullerton College, it became apparent that his passion for photography had evolved. His love for photography goes beyond pointing a camera and taking the picture. To him, being able to capture that special moment for his clients is what inspires him to continue down this career path. Edgar is comfortable and relaxed in both the studio and shooting on location, possessing the ability to be creative even under pressure. He currently lives in Orange, California with his wife Alexa and his goofy German shepherd. When not on shooting assignments he can most often be found enjoying company with friends, spending endless hours at the beach, or relaxing at home with his wife and pup.



*The John Hetebrink House, the finest example of residential Mission Revival architecture in Fullerton*

## Fox

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proceeds to accomplish much of the work that has been done over the past two years. Also, the Foundation has been awarded an additional \$300,000 grant from the CCHE to restore the artwork in the theatre and we are currently working to get the \$180,000

grant matching funds together so we can continue with our restoration. Fundraising is always a challenge, so we would appreciate any year-end charitable contributions that you could make to assist us with this current challenge.

If you aren't already a Friend of the Foundation please consider joining and help us keep the momentum going. The website is [www.foxfullerton.org](http://www.foxfullerton.org).



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