



# FULLERTON HERITAGE

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*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.*

## Fullerton's Fairest of the Fair: Part I

by Debora Richey

To celebrate holidays and special events, the early settlers of Fullerton looked to three types of entertainment: parades, dances, and beauty pageants. Although now considered somewhat old-fashioned and passé, it would be the beauty contests that would last into the 21st century. The city's first beauty queen was May Heaslip, who was selected Floral Queen to preside over Fullerton's ten-year anniversary celebrations. On July 3, 1897, at 6 a.m., there was a firing of a cannon and the ringing of bells, followed by a grand floral parade of floats led by Miss Heaslip and her maids of honor down Spadra Road (now Harbor Boulevard) before 2,500 densely-packed spectators. After literary exercises, orations, athletic contests, and a picnic dinner, the queen and her court of pleasing young women

were feted at a ball at Chadbourne Hall. Because there was no professional photographer in Fullerton, the young women went to Santa Ana to pose for a formal picture, the only snapshot that survives of the anniversary festivities.

The comely Miss Heaslip would be the first in a long line of Fullerton beauty queens. Residents would continue to organize spring festivals and citrus exhibitions that involved the crowning of maidens. Starting in the 1920s, Fullerton College began staging a May Fete featuring the traditional dance around a maypole, as well as interpre-

(continued on page 4)



*Fullerton's first beauty queen was May Heaslip, who served as Floral Queen for the city's ten-year anniversary celebrations in 1897. Because Fullerton had no professional photographer, the young women went to Santa Ana for this formal photograph. Seated, bottom row, left to right: Myrtle Lovering, Mary McEachran, Ruth Smith. Seated, second row, left to right: Mable Schulte (Gregory), May Heaslip (Floral Queen), Anna Vail (Gardiner), Eva Lyons (Smith). Standing, left to right, Anna Hansen, Ethel James (Kitching), Grace Smith. This is the only surviving photograph from the 1897 celebration. (Photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library)*

## Santa Fe Loading Dock Update

by Terry Galvin

On October 7, 2014, the City Council gave unanimous support for the request from Fullerton Heritage to restore the loading dock roof at the historic Santa Fe Depot complex.

As with the Amerige Brothers Building last year, the work will be done with community support and dona-

tions, with no cost to the City. Now is the opportunity to come forward with offers of time, materials, or money to get started. Suggestions of potentially interested individuals or businesses to contact will also be welcomed.

Flyers have been prepared and are available to anyone who has connections with organizations that might have members who would be interested

in participating. Building plans for the work have been donated and are currently being reviewed. For this project we will need volunteers with construction backgrounds and experience along with our regular volunteers who did such a fantastic job on the Amerige Brothers Building.

Just call the FH Hotline at 714-740-3051, leave your name and number, and we will get back to you. Thank you for your support!

# Advocacy Issues

by Kate Dalton

## Design Review Committee

At its meeting on May 22, the Design Review Committee approved a second dwelling unit at 120 N. Lincoln Avenue in the College Park Preservation Zone. While the project is somewhat large and at the maximum allowable floor area ratio, it is well designed, meets all of the zoning standards and design guidelines and demonstrates the use of high-quality materials.

On October 9, the DRC approved another second unit in the College Park Preservation Zone at 126 N. Berkeley Avenue. This homeowner previously requested to demolish his historic home built in 1914 and replace it with two new units on the property. The original house was in good condition, so Fullerton Heritage opposed that request, City Staff agreed and the owner was told that he would have a difficult time making a case for demolition. He decided not to pursue demolition of the vintage home and instead submitted plans for demolition of only the rear garage and workshop (which were in severe disrepair) and construction of a new second unit over a four-car garage at the rear of the property. The design includes replication of the distinctive architectural features of the original house and the use of high-quality materials that will match the original as closely as possible.

Both of these new houses are good examples of sensitive infill projects in our historic Fullerton neighborhoods.

## Hillcrest Drive Preservation Zone

The homeowners in the historic Hillcrest Drive neighborhood (Hillcrest Drive, Hillcrest Lane, and the properties on the west side of Lemon Avenue between Valley View and Berkeley Avenue) recently approached Fullerton Heritage to request assistance in pursuing preservation zone status for their neighborhood. We have held several meetings with the homeowners, City Staff and Fullerton Heritage Board Members to explain the process, the Preservation Zone Ordinance and Design Guidelines, the ramifications of being a preservation zone and to answer questions from the homeowners. Following those meetings, a few homeowners stepped forward to organize the effort and have circulated a petition to gauge the degree of support and assess whether some property owners need more information. They have now submitted their petition to the City, which will begin the formal process to rezone the neighborhood. We will continue to offer our guidance and support as they move through the process of consideration before both the Landmarks Commission and the City Council.

## Downtown Core and Corridors Specific Plan Update

The proposed Specific Plan to guide future development of the downtown core and the major commercial areas in central and south Fullerton has been under study and review over the last

18 months. This important document, which would change the way new development is designed and approved from the present process, received a recommendation of approval by the Planning Commission in the summer, and it now awaits a final determination from the City Council. The City Council decided in August that there needed to be more discussion on various features of the proposed Specific Plan along with more public input. Accordingly, the City Council has scheduled a series of public forums or “study sessions” that will take place sometime later this year after the November election. A final City Council vote on the Specific Plan will likely be in December or early next year.

Throughout this period of study and review, board members of Fullerton Heritage were actively involved in the development of the Specific Plan. Based on recommendations from Fullerton Heritage, a number of changes were made to the initial draft to ensure historic properties and residential preservation areas within the study area would be sufficiently protected from any future new development on nearby property and to prevent an over-development of the downtown area. Also, changes were made to the Specific Plan that will allow proper public review and input to proposed development before any decision would be made.

As now drafted and proposed, the Board of Fullerton Heritage is comfortable that there are now standards and provisions in the Specific Plan that will safeguard the preservation of historic properties and neighborhoods including the downtown core. Of course, Fullerton Heritage intends to actively follow the upcoming “study sessions” on the Specific Plan and will voice its opinion when the City Council finally conducts a public hearing on the matter.

## Miscellaneous Issues

Following the restoration of the historic Amerige Brothers Realty Office last year as led by Fullerton Heritage, we had requested permission to make application to the State of California for “Point of Historical Interest” recognition for Fullerton’s oldest commercial building. The City Council unanimously approved our request on August 19; we will be completing the necessary application as soon as possible and will keep you informed as the process moves forward.

Reportedly, the long vacant position of Community Development Director will soon be filled following an outside search process that is nearing completion. We are very eager for this important position to be filled and to begin establishing a good working relationship with the new director, who guides preservation issues in Fullerton.

### Find Fullerton Heritage on Facebook

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

## President's Corner

by Ernie Kelsey

Greetings Fullerton Heritage members, Happy fall to you all! It's hard to believe that Halloween and Thanksgiving has come and gone, our clocks have fallen back, and the yuletide season is upon us. Time flies by when you're having fun, right?

And boy is Fullerton Heritage having some fun! Our Annual meeting was held back on June 29 at the Fullerton Museum Center and was a big success. We had about forty members attend and were treated to a fun two hours. We reviewed Fullerton Heritage's successes for the year including: our ongoing support of the Fox Fullerton restoration project, our efforts to designate and promote local landmarks (including a renewed effort to add more local landmarks), our newsletters, walking tours and our financial status. We also saw the Fender Radio Service building added to the National Register of Historic Places and continued our efforts to obtain Landmark status for the Beckman Instruments building and the Hunt Wesson Branch of the Fullerton Public Library.

We also celebrated some award winners at the Annual Meeting. Nora Matti was this year's winner of the Fullerton Heritage Scholarship award. The Research Award went to Walt Johnson to recognize his passion for the City of Fullerton. A special recognition award was presented to Don Hoppe, Dennis Quinliven and their teams at the City of Fullerton for their masterful relocation and rehabilitation of the Commonwealth bench in front of City Hall (I have seen more people using that bench over the past six months than in the previous 30 years!) And finally, our Above and Beyond Award was happily given to our own Deb Richey for her tire-



*The Hillcrest neighborhood in the 1920s*

less research of this wonderful city of ours. She's always there when we need to find information on anything Fullerton.

The meeting concluded with a heartfelt discussion of the legacy of Leo Fender and was facilitated by his beautiful wife, Phyllis Fender. It was a fast 30 minutes and everyone present got to hear about the Leo you don't always read about in the history books. Mrs. Fender is a big supporter of Fullerton Heritage and gave a delightful talk! We all then enjoyed some refreshments and sweet treats and agreed it was a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

What else is happening with Fullerton Heritage? Look for our popular walking tours of our Downtown and Historic Hillcrest Park to resume in the spring of 2014. We'll post the schedule on our website and in the Fullerton Observer and many other places as well. We're already planning our Second Annual Home Tour for June 27, 2015. Mark your calendars now, as this will be even better than our last home tour! It's going to be a fantastic peak into the "hidden" Hillcrest neighborhood with some very gorgeous and well-maintained historic houses. In fact, Fullerton Heritage is currently working with the homeowners from this neighborhood and the City of Fullerton to declare this beautiful area a Preservation Zone. Stay tuned for more details.

We hope you've had a great year and please, follow us on Facebook and tell your friends and family to join Fullerton Heritage. We need everyone's support so we can continue to help to foster an appreciation of our city's cultural history and to ensure the preservation of our historic architectural resources and environments.

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## Welcome New Members!

Fullerton Heritage extends a warm welcome to our newest members: Dave & Anne Alloway, Laura & Travis Austin, Peter & Margaret Bakulich, Tony Bushala & Family, Patricia Ducey, Mike & Karen Ritto, and Jessica Warren.

*With my warmest regards,*  
Ernie.

## Fairest

(continued from page 1)

tive dances, pantomimes, and glee clubs singing a variety of tunes. The May Day Queen was selected from the college, but her court included elementary and high school girls. Beauty pageants were a surefire draw with the crowds, and as many as 2,000 spectators would show up for the May Day crowning. Selected by civic leaders, the winning young woman always represented the finest spirit and virtues of Fullerton, although she was usually a member of the social elite. There was never any suggestion of worldly behavior among the proposed candidates. When Fullerton residents celebrated the city's Golden Jubilee in 1937, townspeople agreed to elect the queen by popular ballot, but when married Pearl McAulay Phillips won over four single Fullerton College co-eds, many in the community were scandalized.

In the Victorian and Edwardian eras, no self-respecting mother would allow her daughter to appear before leering men. Competing in beauty contests—then called “pulchritude competitions”—based on physical charms was considered immodest and uncultured. To get around the unseemliness of a pageant, friends would often select a woman from a wealthy family and present her as queen at an extravagant evening ball with only the finest families in attendance. Soon commerce entered the picture as businessmen would sponsor an expensive ball for a young woman. It was a win-win situation for everyone. The selected young woman, and her court members and pages, could enjoy the fantasy of being queen or princess for a day, and the sponsors had a girl

who could sell products. No event was more elaborate than the three-day Carnival of Products held from October 15-17, 1905, in the county seat of Santa Ana. Queen Ethel the First (who in private life was Ethel Chapman, daughter of Charles C. Chapman, Fullerton's first mayor) started the parade in a golden phaeton drawn by four white horses blanketed in white satin. Over 18,000 people watched as agricultural floats dedicated to Orange

County commerce followed, including floats made entirely of pumpkins, dried red peppers, and white sugar loaves. One float was a corn house built to match the San Juan Capistrano Mission, complete with ringing bells. Products were exhibited in a great tent where booths showcased the agricultural items produced by various towns. At 8:30 p.m., the court ball of Queen Ethel started with the elite of the county in attendance. For its women readers, the newspapers noted that Ethel Chapman wore a gown of royal blue satin embroidered in gold, an ermine-lined coat with a Medici collar, and golden slippers “buckled with brilliants”. Miss Chapman would be Orange County's first official beauty queen.

By the 1920s, lineups of bathing beauties had become more acceptable as women gained independence. The flapper era ushered in a new breed of



*After her selection as Miss Fullerton in 1928, Ada Williams suggested that she might stay in Fullerton to complete her high school education. She chose instead a movie contract from the Fox Film Corporation, appearing in a number of B movies as either Ada Williams or Ada Ince. This is a movie still of Williams and Rex Bell from Fox Film's Joy Street (1929), one of her early films. Williams played “a member of the young whoopee set” in the movie. (Photo courtesy of Walt Johnson and the Fullerton Public Library)*

women who smoked, drank, danced, and voted. When beauty pageants were deemed legitimate public events, commercial sponsors realized that the pretty women were a lucrative symbol of their products. Swimsuit competitions started when promoters maintained that girls needed to be judged in swimwear to determine their active good health. Many of the entrants were poor working girls who loved dressing up in glamorous clothes, and organizers catered to their taste by including evening gown competitions in their programs. The talent portion of the competition would not come until the late 1930s and early 1940s. There were few formalized rules. Many of the young contestants were attracted by the romance of the contests, but for others, especially those who were poor, the cash prizes were the main incentives

(scholarships would not be introduced until after World War II). The average first place cash prize was \$200, along with a “galaxy of prizes” which could include a Hollywood screen test. “It Girl” Clara Bow’s big break came when she won a beauty contest, and many of the young women hoped to be “discovered” by a motion picture casting director.

In the 1920s, agricultural exhibitions or fairs became the major vehicle for capturing a beauty contest title in Orange County. Hundreds of pretty girls from around the country competed each year. Miss Valencia was usually selected the first day, and she would reign for the rest of the fair. Runners-up in the beauty contest formed the queen’s court and attended upon her at all appearances. California Valencia Orange Shows started in Anaheim in 1921; Orange would follow in 1927; and Fullerton began its own Valencia Orange Festival in 1934. The first California Valencia Orange Show opened on May 17, 1921, in Anaheim, with a telephone address by President Warren G. Harding, whose sister lived in nearby Santa Ana. The exhibitions featured the county’s most important product, the Valencia orange, with growers going all out to create elaborate arrangements. All exhibition displays were constructed of local Valencia oranges. Often the displays conformed to exotic themes, such as Egypt, Aladdin’s lamp, Fairyland, and Robinson Crusoe. As much as \$10,000 to \$15,000 worth of oranges was sacrificed for each fair. Local groups, agricultural cooperatives, and packing houses would sponsor contestants, each vying to become Miss Valencia or Queen Valencia. Cities and towns in Orange County would have preliminary queen contests to select the girl to represent their community, and there was serious competition between the sponsors of individual girls. When 400 newspaper representatives selected Miss Ada Williams, a Fullerton American Legion entry, as queen of the 8th annual Valencia Orange Show in Anaheim in 1928, her win was seen as a great victory by Fullerton residents. There was similar joy when the Twenty-Thirty Club’s selection, Coda Mae Wright (116 West Maple), a Fullerton Union High School graduate, was named Miss Valencia at the coronation ball at Fullerton’s Valencia festival in 1935. Selected by casting directors from major Hollywood studios, Wright was judged in four categories (25 percent each): poise, beauty of face, beauty of figure, and personality. At her coronation, Walter Muckenthaler conferred the “robes of royalty in the Kingdom of Valencia” on Wright.

The all-time most famous beauty queen from Fullerton was Ada Williams (1913-1975), who was 15 when she won the Queen Valencia pageant in 1928. Her 13 beauty contest victories, marriages, divorce, and films would make national headlines and, and movie magazines of the day reported on her social life. Like many beauty competitors, Williams and her mother would travel around the country from pageant to pageant. In 1927, Williams, who was just 14 years old, won both the Miss Miami and Miss Florida contests and was first runner-up in the Miss United States pageant. For the contests, she wore her signature colors: pink silk hose, a green swimsuit, and matching green shoes.

After the Miss United States contest, Williams and her mother promptly left for Los Angeles in the hopes of obtaining a film contract. While in Florida, Williams had been “adopted” by the Florida wing of the American Legion, and began making appearance at Legion events in California, including the November 11, 1927 Armistice Day celebrations in Fullerton. City war veterans were charmed by Miss Williams, who was given a prominent position in the parade grandstand, and sponsored her as the Miss Fullerton representative in the 8th annual California Orange Show in Anaheim. During the Miss Fullerton competition, Williams stayed at the California Hotel, purchasing all her pageant clothes from local stores, including Minister’s department store. She reigned as queen of the orange show from May 24 to June 3, 1928, catching the eye of casting director Joe Egli, who signed her to a five-year contract with the Fox Film Corporation. Because she was only 16 years old, Williams needed the courts to approve her contract. In 1929, she married William Ince, son of pioneer motion picture producer Thomas H. Ince; the couple divorced in 1934. Her second marriage in 1935 was to Ray Dodge, a wealthy jeweler and Olympic Games distance runner in 1924. The blonde starlet acted in a handful of films as Ada Williams and Ada Ince, appearing opposite such low-budget cowboys as Hoot Gibson and Buffalo Bill, Jr. Her brief movie career was over by 1935, but a few of her films, such as *Frontier Days* (1934) and *The Vanishing Shadow* (1934), can be seen on YouTube.

Perhaps because of the pre-selection of pretty Ada Williams, a nonresident, as Miss Fullerton in 1928, the 1929 competition was open to any Fullerton female with physical stamina and agility. On May 3, 1929, 30 comely competitors

(continued on page 6)

## Fairest

(continued from page 5)

showed up at Fullerton Junior College (FJC) to compete for the Miss Fullerton title. Each of the contestants was equipped with a large wooden spoon and an orange, and the one who rolled or pushed their orange the fastest to the entrance of the 9th annual Valencia Orange Show in Anaheim would be declared Miss Fullerton, representing the city at the fair. Police sirens halted traffic as the contestants propelled oranges through traffic, orange groves, and thoroughfares, a 2½-mile course. Tagging along were the Fullerton Junior College marching band and reporters with newsreel cameras, both sound and silent. Marguerite Kroeger, a FJC freshman, was declared Miss Fullerton, with a winning time of 29 minutes and 14 seconds. She was presented with a silver loving cup by George Reid, general manager of the Valencia show. The 1929 contest would go down as one of the most novel in the city's history. Marguerite Kroeger (later Spitzer) would go on to graduate from UCLA and teach kindergarten and the first

grade in the Fullerton Elementary School District for 25 years. She passed away in 2013 at the age of 102.

Fullerton's last major beauty queens before World War II were Mrs. Pearl McAuley Phillips and Miss Catherine Morgan, crowned Queen and Miss Columbia respectively of the city's fiftieth anniversary celebration. Both women would be presented at the coronation ball on May 13, 1937, and featured in three showings of the pageant, Conquest of the Years, given in the Fullerton high school stadium. By 1938, there was a serious decline in beauty contests. As businesses declined, sponsorship dwindled, but there would be a resurgence of competitions after World War II.

For a photographic parade of Fullerton's early beauty queens, including Ethel Chapman, Ada Williams, and Pearl Phillips, please see the Fullerton Heritage website ([www.fullertonheritage.org](http://www.fullertonheritage.org)).

## Save the Date

As noted in the President's Message, the next Fullerton Heritage Historic Homes Tour has been scheduled for June 27, 2015. You don't want to miss this very special event!

## Fox Theatre Update

by Tom Dalton

Dripp Coffee, the new tenant for the Firestone Building adjacent to the Fox Theatre, has completed the building plan check process with the City and has begun construction on their tenant improvements. The project should be completed sometime not long after the first of the year.

The Fullerton Historic Theatre Foundation has been busy lining up vendors for the start of the restoration of the inside of the theatre and the restrooms. As previously reported, we were awarded an additional \$300,000 grant by the California Cultural and Historical Endowment to complete this work, along with the addition of a new fire alarm system. The vendors for the roof sign and fire alarm system have been chosen and work has begun. The bid for the first phase of the interior restoration is ready and was sent out for proposals at the beginning of November. We expect to complete this phase of the project by the end of January, 2015.

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



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