



# FULLERTON HERITAGE

Winter ❧ Volume 27 ❧ Number 1 ❧ January 2021

*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.*

## Evan J. Herbert: Ever Moving with the Times

*by Deb Richey*

From 1920 to 1960, Evan Jones Herbert (1884-1965) headed one of Fullerton's longest existing building companies. He was the only early contractor to successfully transition from the Great Depression to the post-World War II era. In the 1920s and 1930s, Herbert had the distinction of being the most formally educated of all of Fullerton's architects/builders. Both a Yorba Linda and Fullerton pioneer builder, his extensive portfolio included modest homes, large estates, duplexes, businesses, and churches. Hundreds of his buildings can still be found around both cities. Three Fullerton buildings Herbert designed and/or built are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Muckenthaler Cultural Center (1924), the Santa Fe Depot (1929), and the Johnson House (1928) on Brookdale Place. A personable, outgoing man, Herbert, the son of Welsh immigrants, was also noted for his kindness,

exemplified when he hired dozens of out-of-work carpenters and builders during the Great Depression.

Herbert, business slogan was "Dependability is my watch word". He developed a solid reputation around town for his ability to complete projects on time within a set budget. Herbert was hired by notable architects to construct homes and businesses, but he also became known for his eclectic home designs, quickly gaining a reputation for providing his clients with the homes they wanted, no matter the style, size, or lot location. He would design homes and businesses in any style his clients wanted, often mixing and matching architectural elements.

Born in Columbus, Ohio, on February 14, 1884, Herbert was orphaned at the age of 13, and moved in with his sister, Mary E. Owen. He graduated from Central High School in Columbus in 1902, with an emphasis in business. In

1907 he received an engineering degree from Ohio State University. He began working around the Columbus area as a building contractor. In 1910, at the age of 25, Herbert set out for Los Angeles, where he rented rooms in the former Bunker Hill area of the city while working on small building jobs. He soon met Eleanor Jenkins (1890-1941), the daughter of a Welsh hardware and furniture dealer. The couple married in Long Beach in 1911, producing two sons, both born in Yorba Linda: Paul Wayne (1913-1968) and Joe Allen (1915-1943).

In 1908, the Janss Investment Company purchased what would become the central core of Yorba Linda from Fullerton merchant Jacob Stern (Stern & Goodman), and began selling agricultural plots for \$150 an acre, and "choice" ranches for \$250. The Herberts purchased ten acres in what was then

*(continued on page 3)*

---

## Fullerton College Project Update

*By Terry Galvin*

The 300 and 500 buildings rehabilitation project on the Fullerton College Campus was put out to bid to four prequalified contractors in November 2020. Submittals were due on January 14, 2021. Upon receipt, submittals will be reviewed by the architect and College staff, and a recommendation will be made for the Community College District Trustees to award the project.

The construction plan is to complete the new classroom building, which is currently under construction, prior to starting the 300 and 500 Buildings. It is unfortunate that the plan for 300 and 500 building project could not have been revised and accelerated to take advantage of the sad circumstance of no in-person classes on campus.

## Historic District Signs

by Ray Sly

**D**riving around Fullerton you cannot help but stop and admire the classic homes around our city. These homes, many built at the beginning of the 20th century showcase architecture of that particular period. Craftsman, Spanish Revival, Minimalist, etc. They are truly a snapshot in time that define Fullerton. A number have been preserved, and many more painstakingly restored by their owners. As a testament to these efforts the city had designated certain areas as Historic Districts. While residents in these neighborhoods know this, an effort is underway to identify these historic districts to everyone.

States around the country including California have brought awareness to historic neighborhoods and districts by erecting signs in and around them. These signs bring attention to their historic significance and heighten interest in preservation. Fullerton Heritage, with support from the City of Fullerton, is about to do the same.

More than six hundred homes can be found in sixteen Historic Districts scattered around the city. Of these, 10 districts are also approved as Preservation Zones, and have been selected for sign designation. These 10 will receive signage naming their historic district. Installation of these signs should begin as early as January 2021. Signs will be approximately 12 x 18 inches.



*Historic District Sign Format*

---

## Jacaranda/Malvern/Brookdale Street Improvements

By Ernie Kelsey

**R**ecently Fullerton Heritage was contacted by homeowners in the Jacaranda/Malvern/Brookdale Preservation Zone concerned about some curb/sidewalk/driveway work that was being performed on Jacaranda and Malvern.

Members of the Board of Fullerton Heritage met with homeowners and the City to help understand the concerns. After much discussion, the City is working with individual homeowners to correct some of the work that was done.

During the whole process we discovered the sidewalk and

driveway residential guidelines for preservation zones are not in total support of preservation goals. So, Fullerton Heritage and the City – both the Planning Department and Public Works are going to work together to tighten up the street specific guidelines for preservation zones.

The Fullerton Heritage Board is looking forward to working with these City departments to come up with strong, solid specifications so we can continue to preserve our past so all can enjoy it in the future.

---

## Fullerton High School Auditorium

By Terry Galvin

**T**he Fullerton Auditorium project was put out to bid during November/December 2020. Five firms submitted proposals by the December 16, 2020 deadline. After reviewing the submittals, the staff recommended that the Trustees award the project to Bogh Engineering

at the January 12, 2021 meeting. The firm has experience with historic building rehabilitation and is currently constructing the new Fullerton High School gymnasium.

To make this project possible, the High School District Trustees submitted

a request for funding from the State and received a grant for \$6.3 million, which was matched by approximately \$2.2 million in District funds, including the costs of preparing the plans. Construction will take approximately one year.

## Herbert

(continued from page 1)

known as the Yorba Linda Tract, quickly constructed a home, and planted lemon and orange trees. Herbert later planted Fuerte (hardy) avocados, first brought to the United States from Mexico by Herbert's neighbor, John T. Whedon, in 1912. He became an expert on how to propagate the fruit. Herbert was a founding member of the Yorba Linda Citrus Association (1912-1965) and served on the board of directors. He also served as president of the Yorba Linda Water Company in the 1920s.

Herbert began constructing dwellings and doing other carpentry work throughout Yorba Linda. His first big project would be the Quakers' Friends Church (4845 School Street), Yorba Linda's first meeting house. In 1912, there were less than fifty residents in the tract, and the Craftsman-style church was constructed by local ranchers, who hauled the materials, dug trenches for the foundation, mixed concrete, and framed and finished the building. Herbert, who provided some design assistance and supervised construction, worked alongside his neighbors. Herbert's most significant residence in Yorba Linda remains the Mediterranean Revival home and medical office of Dr. Richard Cochran and his wife Ellen (4802 Olinda Street). It is still a private residence. Dr. Cochran was one of Yorba Linda's first doctors, and his wife was Richard Nixon's second grade teacher. In 1929, working with Los Angeles architect Clarence E. Noerenberg, Herbert built the \$115,000 Yorba Linda Citrus Association Packing House, now a commercial center called Packing House



*Evan J. Herbert in the center with his new wife Ada on the right. The couple on the far right are Alice and C. Stanley Chapman, builders of the Fox Fullerton Theatre. Courtesy of the Fullerton Public Library*

Square (18200 Yorba Linda Blvd.).

When Evan and Eleanor Herbert moved to Yorba Linda, they became close friends with Francis and Hannah Nixon, parents of future president Richard M. Nixon. Like the Herberts, the Nixons had purchased agricultural land in the Yorba Linda Tract, and the families would visit each other on weekends, with Paul and Joe Herbert playing with the Nixon boys. Herbert hired Francis Nixon as a carpenter for a number of projects, and despite Francis Nixon's often testy and stubborn nature, the two men became lifelong friends. Herbert would later serve as a pallbearer at Nixon's funeral in 1956. The Nixon Family was always grateful to Herbert for saving young Richard M. Nixon's life when he was just three years old. Out driving with his mother in 1916, young Nixon was thrown from a horse-drawn carriage, and a wheel drove over his

skull, severely lacerating the boy's head and neck. Herbert, who owned one of the few cars in Yorba Linda, rushed Nixon and his mother to an Anaheim hospital emergency room, thereby saving his life.

From 1920 to 1960, Yorba Linda went through few changes, with its population only growing from 350 to a mere 1,198. Finding little contracting work, Herbert moved to Fullerton, where he constructed a modest residence for his family at 309 West Malvern Avenue. In the 1910s and 1920s, Fullerton had a serious housing shortage, and although a newcomer to the city, Herbert soon found a building niche in residential housing, joining such well-known builders as Ernest S. Gregory, Harry Maxwell, and Arthur M. Thompson.

His luck changed significantly when

(continued on page 4)

## Herbert

(continued from page 3)

he hooked up with Golden Hill developers Walter J. Cadman and Robert E. Corcoran, Sr. Herbert was commissioned to



201 West Brookdale; photo by Bob Linnell

construct homes in the three-phase hill subdivision in the northwest part of the city (e.g., 604, 628, 629, 633 North Golden Hill). Impressed with Herbert's work, the two developers hired him to design and construct their personal residences. He built a lovely Mediterranean Revival resident for Corcoran (600 West Union Avenue, 1926), complete with tennis court and croquet grounds, followed by a graceful two-story Spanish Colonial Revival for Cadman (865 North Highland Avenue) in 1929. His most unusual home during the 1920s was a Spanish/Mayan Revival dwelling for wealthy newspaper owner and editor Hugh Edgar Johnson on Brookdale Place, which will soon be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Throughout the 1920s, he built dozens of "spec" homes that he quickly sold to homebuyers, particularly on West Malvern Avenue (e.g., 225, 229, 230, 239) and North Drake Avenue (e.g., 636, 640, 644).



637 North Wesley Drive; photo by Bob Linnell

When home construction crashed in the Great Depression, Herbert survived by building garages, home offices, and additions. He began hiring as many out-of-work local carpenters and contractors he could to work on small projects no matter the size. The early 1940s were a particularly difficult time for Herbert. His wife was killed in a traffic accident in 1941, and in 1943, his son, Joe, was killed in the crash of a World War II training plane. Business picked up in the 1940s, and he built a handful of new dwellings (e.g., 624 North Drake Avenue, 637 North Wesley Drive, 300 West Whiting Avenue), moving away from Craftsman and Spanish Colonial Revival bungalows into Minimal Traditional and ranch-styled dwellings. His most impressive post-World War II dwelling is a 1945 rambling ranch house at 1701 Skyline Drive for Thomas K. Gowan, Fullerton Mayor from 1938 to 1939. He moved from homes to the construction of new businesses, including a Van de Kamp's Bakery in 1948, and the McCormick Mortuary Chapel in 1951. He specialized in what he called the "modernization" of older business buildings in the downtown area, such as the Fullerton Building and Loan Association Headquarters, the Alpha Beta Food Market, and the McMahan Furniture Store. On occasion, he would turn a former residence into a business, such as the Donald Jones Company offices at 435 West Commonwealth Avenue in 1953, which sometimes resulted in an odd mish-mash of architectural styles. Herbert did not retire until the age of 76.

(continued on page 6)



225 West Malvern; photo by Bob Linnell

## President's Corner

### Winter 2021 Edition

by Ernie Kelsey

Welcome 2021 and Happy New Year everyone. Here's to a calm 2021 as we move into this new year that is really filled with endless opportunities.

Although the pandemic kept us from seeing each other, Fullerton Heritage was still able to get things accomplished.

We continued our advocacy for historic districts, the Amerige Brother's Realty Office, the historic buildings on the Fullerton Community College and Cal State Fullerton campuses, the Fullerton Auditorium (formerly Plummer), preservation zones and have assisted many homeowners working on improving their historic homes. We've been working with the City as usual and look forward to meeting with the new Council Members in the near future to let them know who we are and how we support preservation in our great city.

We have two Local Landmarks in the City Council queue – the historic YMCA sign and the one-of-a-kind Charles Kassler mural on the west side of Plummer Auditorium. Both have been approved by the Landmarks Commission and are awaiting the final staff recommendation to be provided to Council. In addition, Fullerton Heritage, with consent from the owners, have put forth applications for the Walter J. Cadman House (865 N Richman) and the Otto Evans House

(1203 Luanne) to be designated as Local Landmarks.

We also have another candidate for the National Register of Historic Places. As of this writing we have had a very exciting status update and we'll report on that once it's completed. Stay tuned!

If you live in a Preservation Zone, be on the lookout for new Historic District markers that are the product of excellent teamwork and coordination between the City and Fullerton Heritage.

To keep all this great work going, Fullerton Heritage needs you. Please renew your membership now. You can do it online (<https://fullertonheritage.org/join.php>) or by returning the renewal form enclosed with the Newsletter. Your involvement is paramount to the success of this vital organization. Don't delay – renew today!

Thank you all for your support over this trying year. Here's to a much better 2021!

With warm regards,

–Ernie

## New Members

Welcome new members: Claudia Gonzalez, Eric Carter, Laurel Estrada, Isabella Stoloff, Sian Winship, Bill Woodson

## Former Hunt Library Building

By Terry Galvin

The City of Fullerton has begun the process of securing an entity to use the former Hunt Library building. As the building and grounds are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, they are determining the requirements for rehabilitating the building to meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Lucien Runge, the historic architect who prepared the plans for the Fullerton College 300 building has been asked by the City to submit a proposal for design services to include seismic, ADA, and structural

analyses, asbestos removal, tenant improvements, and maintenance requirements that may be needed, along with cost estimates.

The City has also contracted with Arts OC to work with the community to explore possible program uses for the property. They are hoping to be awarded a contract to manage programming at the Hunt. Arts OC is seeking community input via an online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TTCSW92>.

Fullerton Heritage has offered as-

sistance reviewing potential plans and scope of work that affect the historic elements of the building. The historic architectural study will be completed by March 2021.

Please share your programming thoughts by completing the survey.



# Herbert

(continued from page 4)

In 1957, Herbert entered into a second marriage with Ada G. Thompson, a registered nurse. In 1958, when Richard Nixon was Vice-President, Herbert and two other Yorba Linda pioneers, Mildred Hoyt and William H. Barton, formed a committee to preserve the old Nixon Family homestead. The mail order kit home, then owned by the Yorba Linda Unified School District, was designated a Yorba Linda historic



865 N. Richman Avenue; photo by Bob Linnell

property in 1959 and is currently located on the grounds of the Richard M. Nixon Library. That same year, committee

members organized the first Nixon for President Club (“Neighbors for

Nixon”) in the nation, with Herbert serving as second vice-president. Herbert and other club members installed the first billboard in the nation advertising Nixon as the next President of the United States on September 16, 1959. The Nixon booster club would inspire dozens of other clubs to form in California. Herbert became a founding member of Senior Citizens of Fullerton and

played a pivotal role in the construction of the city’s first senior center.

Herbert passed away at the age of 80 in the Fullerton Community Hospital on February 2, 1965 and is buried in Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale.



Newspaper article from the Fullerton News Tribune.



### Board of Directors 2020-2021

Maureen Burton / Jordan Byers / Terry Galvin / Ann Gread  
Jennifer Harris / Ernie Kelsey / Bob Linnell / Debora Richey  
Noelle Rossi / Raymond Sly / Joan Wolff

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

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

Newsletter  
Ann Gread, editor  
Jim Powell, layout & design