

FULLERTON HERITAGE

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El Camino Real: Does It Ring A Bell?

by Warren Bowen

A bit of California history will be honored at the Fullerton Arboretum on May 12. The 1 p.m. ceremony will mark the placement of a El Camino Real bell, and the rededication of Heritage House as it enters its fortieth year at the Arboretum.

The El Camino Real bell has a place in California and Fullerton history.

In the sixteenth century, more than 300 years ago, Spanish explorers moved up the Gulf of California to colonize Baja and brought with them the idea of building a well kept road system that became known as the King's Highway, or El Camino Real.

The roads were to promote military and commercial uses, as well as to provide a means of travel for the Catholic missionaries who set up missions to convert the Native American populations.

As the Spaniards moved into Alta California, they first established a mission in San Diego and then expanded northward up the coast, establishing missions as far north as what is now Sonoma. Transportation was difficult over a mixed terrain of deserts, mountain passes and river crossings, but the trail over the years became a workable, albeit challenging, travel route. It is a simplification to state that that route is now the U.S. Highway

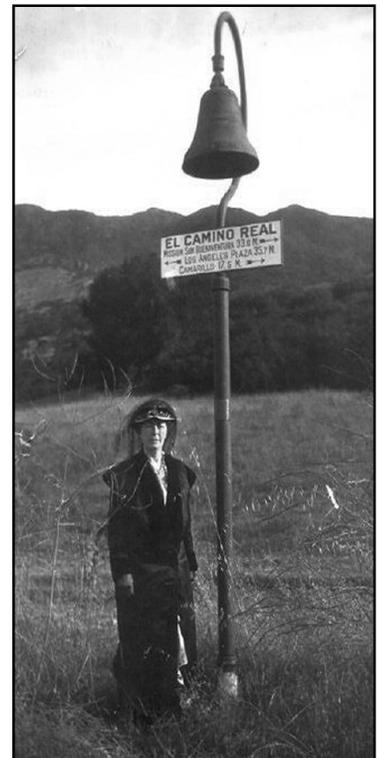


101 we know, but 101 is known as El Camino Real, the title given to the original Spanish routes traveled by Portola and Fray Junipero Serra in 1769—years before the American Revolution on the east coast.

In 1902 the California Federation of Women's Clubs started a movement to denote El Camino Real as an historic road, a project which they kept active until well into the 1900s, gaining support from county governments, the Native Sons and Daughters of California, the AAA auto clubs, and various business firms.

Part of El Camino Real ran through Fullerton. Harbor Boulevard, first called Spadra Road, is what is now accepted as that route. Mrs. A.S.C. Forbes seized on the idea of marking the route with a symbol: it was to be a bell, denoting the early connection with the Franciscan friars' California missions—a bell mounted on a tall crook set in concrete and placed along the King's Highway. The bells were first erected and paid for by the Camino Real Association in the early 1900s. The Association

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Mrs. A.S.C. Forbes
and one of her bells

Advocacy Issues

by Katie Dalton

Preservation Zone Update

It is sometimes amazing how slowly the wheels of government turn. If you will remember from our last newsletter, we were in the process of pursuing a Residential Preservation Zone Overlay for the 300 and 400 blocks of W. Brookdale Pl. at the request of a group of residents. The necessary neighborhood meeting/workshop was held last July. Following the workshop, there was majority support to move forward with the request. It took from August 2006 until March 2007 for the City to do the staff work, formally survey the homeowners, issue the Resolution of Intent and secure a date for the public hearing before the Planning Commission. WHEW!!!

Finally on Wednesday March 28, 2007 the issue was considered by the Planning Commission, giving these patient neighbors their chance to be heard. Because the majority of the property owners supported the zoning change we anticipated a smooth process before the Planning Commission as well as City Council. However, to prove that Murphy's Law is alive and well in the preservation community, the Planning Commission chose to continue the Public Hearing on April 25 to provide yet one more opportunity to survey the property owners about whether or not they are in support of the proposed action. Had there not been overwhelming support presented to the Commission, this continuance might be understandable, indeed mandatory, to ensure fair and appropriate action. However, data indicated that 55% supported and 15% opposed with the remaining owners voicing no opinion, a neutral position or no response when formally surveyed (only 2 mailings were undeliverable). It was a particularly frustrating evening when one Commissioner stated early on before the majority of the information and testimony was presented, that he would never vote to apply the preservation zone restrictions to any property in Fullerton regardless. That unfortunately set the tone for a less than civil and productive hearing that resulted in two other Commissioners requesting the continuance and demanding that staff resurvey the property owners that did not state a firm opinion initially. This would not have been such a disappointing outcome if the meeting had not been such a poor display of civility on the part of one appointed Commissioner and if it had not been preceded by a full two years of education, open dialogue and public

meetings. Although it is unbelievable to have to say this again, "We will keep you posted".

Design Review News

The Redevelopment Design Review Committee (RDRC) approved new second units at 216 W. Malvern in the Jacaranda/Malvern Preservation Zone and at 135 N. Yale in the College Park Preservation Zone. In addition they approved the demolition of a very dilapidated structure at the corner of Lincoln and Wilshire, and the building of two new homes on the property (College Park Zone).

Advocacy for strict adherence to the Preservation Zone Ordinance and Design Guidelines was instrumental in ensuring that these homes will be positive additions to the historic neighborhoods. Somewhat more problematic (but a great story nonetheless) is the case of the "historic Laguna Beach cottage" moved over the Easter weekend onto a property at 224 N. Yale without proper permits or staff and RDRC review. The house blocked the public alleyway for four days due to poor planning and measurements on the part of the house movers and neither the Police Department nor Edison Co. knew about the move until the house lingered in the public right of way and the electric lines were threatened with damage. Guess that is why we have permits and review processes. They were finally able to get the house onto the property with only minor damage to surrounding structures and there it will sit until the issue can be resolved.

Our thanks to the Acting Director of Community Development, Joel Rosen, for issuing a demolition permit for the house and giving the owner 60 days to either present appropriate site and architectural plans that meet all of the requirements of the Preservation Zone Ordinance and accompanying Design Guidelines, or tear the structure down and restore the property. It seems like it would have been lot easier and more fruitful for the owner to ask for the proper permits and oversight in the first place than to hope for a positive resolution without them (the ole asking permission -vs.-forgiveness issue). We will be working with staff and RDRC to ensure the proper review.

Last, but not least, RDRC approved an expansion plan for Rockin' Taco Restaurant downtown on Harbor Blvd. They will be expanding into the adjacent Stedman Jewelers building, opening two interior doorways and adding a patio area in the rear. Because their current restaurant is in the historic Dean Block, which is a Local Landmark,

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President's Corner

by Tom Dalton

So far 2007 has been a very good year for Fullerton Heritage. One of the highlights for me was a walking tour of our historic downtown that Warren Bowen, Bob Linnell and I conducted for about 30 faculty members from Fullerton College. They were a very inquisitive and knowledgeable group of educators and their enthusiasm made the experience most enjoyable for us. Another bright spot this year was the program put on by the Fullerton Library and Fullerton Heritage a few weeks ago which featured famed architect and architectural historian Dick Dodd. Cathy Thomas and Deb Richey arranged for Mr. Dodd to come to Fullerton and speak to us about architectural styles in Orange County. His program was outstanding and we were very pleased with the huge turnout. Also, the Rotary Club of Fullerton graciously invited us to do another program for their members last month and we once again chose to present a slide show of Fullerton's National Register and Local Landmark Properties. The Rotary has been very helpful to

Fullerton Heritage during the past 10 or 12 years, donating over \$6,000 to help us in our efforts to place National Register and Local Landmark plaques on our historic buildings. To date we have placed 36 plaques around town thanks in part to their generosity.

Save the Date:
June 24
Annual Meeting
&
Tour of the Fox
Fullerton Theatre
(tour is for members only)
Watch for Details Coming Soon!

We hope you will mark your calendars for two more events we will be presenting over the next few months. First is the rededication of the Heritage House at the Fullerton Arboretum scheduled for May 12th. Along with that event, Fullerton Heritage board member Warren Bowen will be giving a talk on the historic El Camino Real and the bells that were placed along it. The Phillips family is donating a historic bell to the arboretum and Fullerton Heritage is providing the bronze plaque commemorating the event. Secondly, we have scheduled June 24th for our annual meeting. This year we will meet

at the Spring Field Conference Center (the historic Masonic Temple) and Jon Wagner at the Historic Theatre Foundation has been kind enough to offer our members a guided tour of the Fox as part of our program. If you haven't had the opportunity to see the interior during the restoration you really must be there. Watch your mailbox for the flyer.

Bell

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installed the guidepost bells to mark the road and many of these bells are still standing today. The first bells were designed and produced by Mrs. Forbes, who became known as America's First Woman Bell Maker. Her first El Camino Real Bell was erected in front of the Plaza Church in Los Angeles in 1906. The bells continued to be largely produced in the 1920's. Originally there were about 370 bells along El Camino Real, but theft and vandalism caused the number to dwindle to about 75. Several bell designs have been used over the years. A drive up U.S. 101 now reveals a smaller bell of reddish color on a green staff, but the original bells were cast iron and, later, some were concrete. Many of the original bells have been lost, stolen, or simply cast aside as the highway developed over the years. Fullerton has had several bells. One remains on North Harbor Boulevard in the 200 block and we are soon to have another, a gift from the William Phillips family, given to Bill Philips

when he served as an Orange County supervisor. The bell, refinished and looking historic indeed, is of the design by Justin Kramer in 1963. The bell is being placed at the Fullerton Arboretum, which is also the historic repository of Heritage House, the home and office of Dr. George Clark, a physician who practiced in Fullerton at the turn of the last century. The Fullerton Arboretum is also home to the new Nikkei museum which marks the agricultural history of 1920-40 Japanese immigrant farmers. The Arboretum's original purpose is on track—to display trees and plants from various regions of the world. Specimens include citrus, avocados and other crops which made Orange County an agricultural landmark from the 1880s until the post-WWII building booms. The dedication of the El Camino Real bell and rededication of the Heritage House is jointly sponsored by the Friends of the Fullerton Arboretum and Fullerton Heritage. The free event begins at 1 p.m. and the public is invited to come and celebrate the growth of the Arboretum and its historic contents. The Fullerton Arboretum is located at the north edge of the Cal State Fullerton campus, near the 57 Freeway, at the intersection of Yorba Linda Boulevard and Associated Road.

Architectural Styles Program

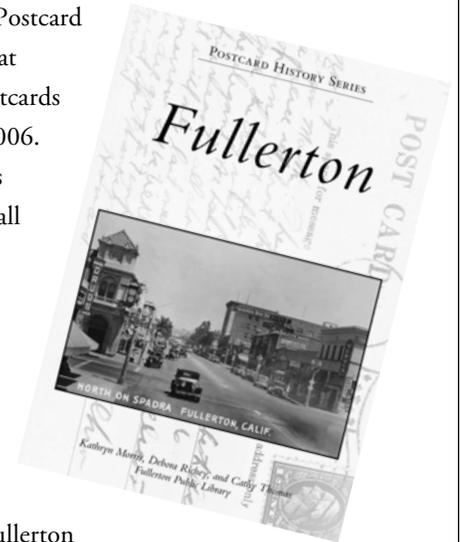
On the evening of April 5th, Fullerton Heritage members and local residents were treated to a lively lecture and slide show on the history of architectural styles in Orange County by residential architect Richard H. Dodd. The program ("Evolution of Architectural Styles, Orange County, 1776—Present") was co-sponsored by Fullerton Heritage and the Fullerton Public Library. During the presentation, Dodd traced the history of Orange County architecture, starting with the adobe style of the Mission San Juan Capistrano, founded November 1, 1776, and ending with unusual postmodern buildings of today. An architectural historian as well as an architect, Dodd runs the oldest on-going architectural firm in Orange County. He attended Fullerton College, then graduated from UC Berkeley in 1953. For the past five years, Dodd has been writing informative and well-illustrated articles on local architecture for the monthly Orange County Home Magazine. All of these articles are available on his website at <http://www.richardhdodd.com>.



*Richard H.
Dodd*

Fullerton Postcard Book Due in November

Later this year, Arcadia Publishing will be issuing a new book—Postcard History Series: Fullerton—that features over 200 vintage postcards of Fullerton from 1891 to 2006. The pictorial history contains unique and rare postcards of all types—advertising, greeting, historical, photographic, and novelty—that show how Fullerton quickly developed over the decades. The featured postcards were taken from those housed in the Launer Room of the Fullerton Public Library and the extraordinary private collection owned by Tom Pulley, who over the years has acquired the most extensive personal collection of Fullerton postcards. The book will be sold at the Fullerton Public Library and stores around town, with all proceeds going to support the Launer Local History Room.



Advocacy

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they will be following the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, including saving the bricks removed to form the doorways, so that they could be restored in the future if needed.

Restoration of Muckenthaler

The city has located a qualified craftsman to make necessary repairs to some elements of the Muckenthaler Cultural Center, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is also a Local Landmark. The repairs will be quite expensive and we want to acknowledge the City's commitment to our historic cultural resources by finding the proper craftsman to complete the restoration. The beautiful Spanish Colonial Revival home and surrounding grounds were given to the City by the Muckenthaler family with the stipulation that it be used as a cultural center for public enjoyment.



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