

# THE Orange Community Historical Society

March 2023      HISTORICALORANGE.ORG      VOL. L ISSUE I

## Orange Community Historical Society 1973 - 2023

### 50 Years of Memories



## President's Message



Orange Community Historical Society is celebrating 50 years of bringing to residents and guests information about Orange history. We want to remember and honor the people who founded our Society in 1973. Our original

founder, Florence Flippen Smiley, started the Society by encouraging people to collect and preserve artifacts and make them available to document our past history. If you have not visited the Orange Public Library History Center to see for yourself the amazing collection of Orange History, please go for a visit! If you have something that you would like to donate to the History Center that relates to Orange History, please contact Aida Cuevas at the Library. She would love to speak with you.

We kicked off this year of celebration on January 26 at our annual gala dinner at The Villa. We had over 85 members and guests attend this fun filled evening. We gathered together to be with friends, meet new friends and also to elect our 2023 Board of Directors. Our silent auction was very well received. We had several donations of Orange history items that included, books, photos and ceramic plates from Dittmer Pharmacy and Orange Savings and Loan. Thank you to everyone who donated something for our silent auction.

At the dinner we saw a video created by Larry Hockensmith of old downtown Orange buildings. He showed the buildings as they were many years ago and then he showed what the buildings look like now. It was a great video historical evolution of Old Town Orange. You can find this video on our website. [www.historicorange.org](http://www.historicorange.org)

Our speaker, Andrew Carroll is a New York Times bestselling author and founding Director

of the Center of American War Letters at Chapman University. Andy spoke about writing his book Letters of a Nation: A Collection of Extraordinary American Letters which was published in 1997 and while doing his research for this book he was so inspired that he created the Legacy project which is an all-volunteer initiative to honor veterans, active duty troops and family members by preserving wartime correspondence. He has collected over 100,000 letters and emails from every war in U.S. History. Andy shared with us and showed us several of the letters that he has collected over the years. He talked about the letters that contain vivid accounts of battles, declarations of love, and expressions of fear, loneliness, humor, patriotism and anger during a time of war.

If you were not able to join us for this amazing recount of his collection of letters you can see these letters that are archived at the Center for American War Letters at the Leatherby Libraries at Chapman University. Should you have any letters or e-mail correspondence that you would like to share with Andy for his collection please reach out to him at: [warletterproject@aol.com](mailto:warletterproject@aol.com).

Our Board is working hard on creating a lineup of Orange history programs that will appeal to people who are interested and curious about Orange.

I would like to acknowledge and give a huge thank you to Jane Owens who has been our President for the past 8 years has done an amazing job as President. I have very big shoes to fill. Your continued support of the Orange Community Historical Society is very much appreciated. We look forward to seeing you soon at one of our community meetings.

Carol Summo  
President





# Under the Orange Peel

Rev. Nathan Riley

## My first experience with school...



My first grade teacher here in Orange was Lena Danner. She was the first one to teach me that you could eat roasted rattlesnake. I was always impressed later in life when I received one of her homemade Christmas cards constructed from pressed flowers covered with translucent paper. She was

a true lover of the great outdoors. She was first to show me how wind scattered seeds from a flower seed pod as she walked her class around the block for exercise and education. She taught me to read with phonics sticks—"A" says a, a, a; "B" says buh, buh, buh...She brought in a wheelbarrow full of change so that we could play store and thereby learn to add and subtract. She told compelling flannel graph Bible stories. She taught me the California poppy

song. I still remember it. *"Poppies, golden Poppies, gleaming in the sun,*

*Closing up at evening, when the day is done.*

*Pride of California, flower of our state*

*Growing from the mountains, to the Golden Gate."*

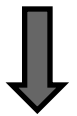


As I grew up, I learned that she was a short lady— but just right for a first grader! Turns out she was also my sixth grade Sunday school teacher. She once took

her class to Jenks Lake and let us swim fully clothed! Can you imagine that? It was in her class I learned that no matter how your mind wrestled with fat robins and baby ducks a robin is not bigger than a duck on any standardized test. :-)

**Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at 5:30 - Main Library - OCHS**

**Celebrates Fifty Years of Orange History - See Below**



## "50 Years Of Imparting History"

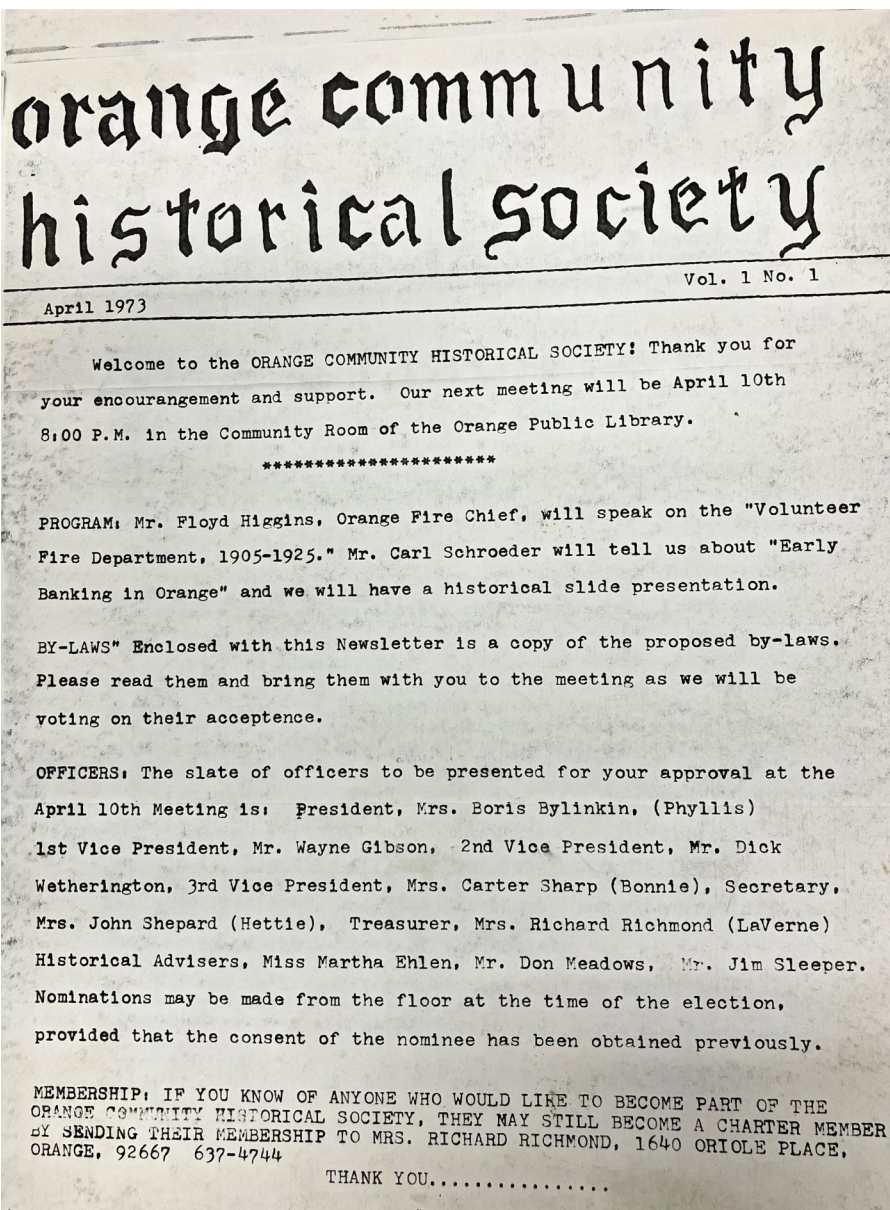
In 1973, Billy Jean King and Bobby Riggs had a battle of the sexes over a tennis net, the Vietnam War ended, Nixon was still President and American Graffiti premiered. It was also the year that some of our neighbors decided it was high time we take a step to record, preserve and share the story of Orange's past.

Who were some of the early organizers and members of our fair Society? What were some

of the significant projects and impacts we have had on Orange today? Where is your place in our history and future? Please join us **Tuesday March 21st at 5:30 pm in the Community Room** of the Orange Public Library, (where it all began in March of 1973) as we take a look back. Several members will share their memories of how we got to now, and of course refreshments and conversation will be enjoyed afterwards.

## The First Newsletter – April 1973

The new historical society was up and running, with Orange Fire Chief Floyd Higgins discussing the “Orange Volunteer Fire Department 1905-1925” and Carl Schroeder speaking about “Early Banking in Orange” scheduled for an 8 P.M. meeting. This edition listed the new board members and a stellar group of historical advisors, including well published historians, Don Meadows and Jim Sleeper. A single-page newsletter, this first edition had the proposed by-laws of our organization stapled on the back. This copy resides in the O.C.H.S archives of the Orange Public Library.



## The Orange Tribune - May 1974

The historical society's newsletter took the name of the 1885-1889 Orange Newspaper with the May 1974 issue. Phyllis Bylinken was elected president, having already served from the organization's inception in March 1973. Wayne D. Gibson - 1st vice-president, Dick Weatherington - 2nd V.P., Bonny Sharp - 3rd V.P., Hettie Lee Shephard - secretary, LaVerne Richmond, treasurer. Historical advisors were Martha Ehlen, Jim Sleeper and Don Meadows.

**ANOTHER ORANGE FIRST**—While some may remember the old Plaza Hotel in Orange, few recall that it was originally built for a sanitarium by Dr. Emma Larkin in 1874. It stood where the Ehlen and Grote building is now. The name of the hospital was "The Hygeian House." Business was slim, however, and this "home of cleanliness" saw more action as a boarding house. Reported Mrs. Albert Clark (of the "Yale Grove") who arrived in 1875: "The building was miserably furnished with poor beds, indifferent food and only ditch water to drink."

"Light poles are being erected around the Plaza. Standing twenty-two feet high, each lamp will weigh over 1,000 pounds."

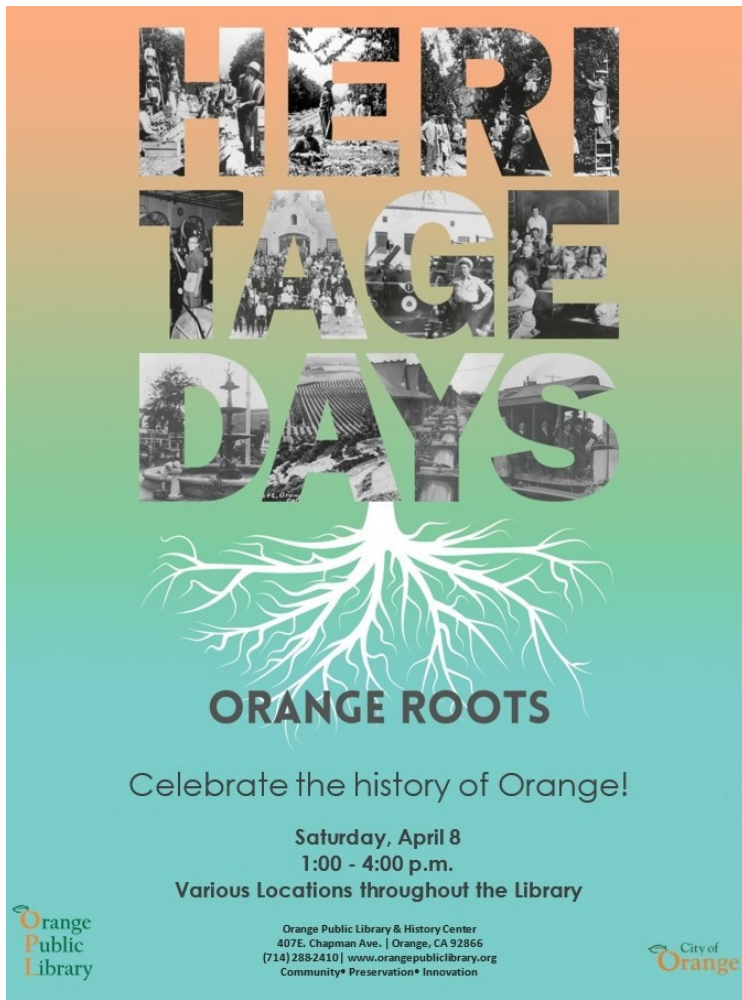
*Orange Daily News* April 15, 1912)

**OLD TIMERS' PICNIC**—Convening at high noon in even higher spirits, the 48th annual Old Timers' Picnic will be held June 30th (the last Sunday in June) at Santiago Park, Jim Sleeper, 14th vice-president and head bugler, revealed this week. Long staged at Irvine Park, the venerable reunion of Orange County's pioneer families shifted in 1973 to Santiago Park (just south of Weber's Baker on North Main) where the more compatible setting attracted over 250 vintage countians. "With buggies coming in from as far away as Tomato Springs, Gospel Swamp, Fairview and McFaddens' Wharf," Sleeper predicted, "the '74 get-together will be even bigger." However, he conceded, traditionally the best turn-outs are from El Modena, Orange and McPherson. "Folks up that way live longer," he speculated, then added, "Their stories are also bigger than anybody else's, too!"



"Construction has begun on the new \$5,000 Lutheran church at Olive. The cornerstone will be laid next Sunday. Rev. George Meiger will be pastor."

*Orange Daily News* November 1, 1912)



HERITAGE DAYS - ORANGE ROOTS

**SATURDAY, APRIL 8**

**FROM 1 - 4 P.M AT THE MAIN**

**LIBRARY IN ORANGE**

**O.C.H.S. - Regular Meeting Dates:**

5:30 pm Orange Public Library Community Room

Tuesday, March 21

Tuesday, May 16

Tuesday, July 11 (note change of date)

Tuesday, September 19

Tuesday, November 21

**2023 OCHS Board Members**

President – Carol Summo  
 Vice-President/Web - John Russo  
 Treasurer – Bill Utter  
 Secretary – Barbara Whittaker  
 Membership – Jerrica Knight  
 Audio-Visual -- Lee Cornett  
 Hospitality – Jane Owens  
 Newsletter – Roger Fitschen  
 Programs -- Lisa Baldwin  
 Member at Large - Aaron Alduenda

Leave a Message (714) 202-7514  
 OCHS Website - [www.HistoricalOrange.org](http://www.HistoricalOrange.org)

History Room at the Main Library  
 Contact - (714) 288-2465, Hours,  
 Digital History Collection Online,  
 a virtual tour of Old Towne at  
[www.OrangePublicLibrary.org/home-library](http://www.OrangePublicLibrary.org/home-library)


**Trailblazers: Women and the History of Orange**


- On exhibit **currently** at the Orange Public Library: Women who have shaped the city of Orange.
- Coming **in March** at the Main Library, an exhibit in the **History Center** to celebrate OCHS's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

**Upcoming Events:**

**Thursday, April 13 - Women's Club of Orange Garden Show Noon - 4 pm**

**Saturday, May 6 @ 10 A.M.- City of Orange May Parade**

**The 2023 parade theme is a throwback to the 1970s - "Peace, Love and Orange"**

# OCHS MEMBERSHIP

Application for Membership Year 2023 (Membership Year covers January-December)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_



Please return application and check to:  
**Orange Community Historical Society**  
P.O. Box 5484, Orange, CA 92863-5484

OCHS is a 501(c)(3) organization, ID #33-0416234.  
Contributions are tax deductible to  
the fullest extent permitted by law.

## TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP

(check one)

NEW

RENEWAL

(See the mailing label for when  
your membership expires)

Individual - \$20.00

Family - \$25.00

Life - \$300.00

Business/Organization - \$100.00

Donation - \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Orange Community Historical Society Members enjoy: programs and newsletters, opportunities to support and contribute to the preservation of Orange history, contact with members of the community knowledgeable about Orange history, and discounts on OCHS merchandise.

## Our Mission

The mission of the OCHS is to commemorate the rich heritage of our community. Our purpose is to collect photographs, written materials and related ephemera, promote research, events activities and programs celebrating Orange history, and sponsor local history endeavors. We remain self-supporting through memberships, donation bequests and special projects.

- We welcome everyone -

The City of Orange website provides a brief history of Orange, as well as demographics and contact information for schools, businesses and organizations in the area.

*[www.OrangePublicLibrary.org/home-library](http://www.OrangePublicLibrary.org/home-library)*

If undeliverable please return to:  
**Orange Community Historical Society**  
P.O. Box 5484  
Orange, CA 92863-5484