

President's Message

Our March meeting at The Hilbert Museum was very well attended and everyone that attended enjoyed the evening starting with delicious appetizers in the Courtyard and then moving into the community room to hear Mr. Mark Hilbert and Mary Platt talk about the Museum expansion and all the collections. We then broke into two groups lead by Mr. Hilbert and Mary for a tour of the various collections. If you have not experienced the Hilbert you really do want to go and see all the beautiful and interesting California artwork. It was an evening that everyone enjoyed. Congratulations to all the winners of the silent auction items. We had some very nice baskets, old Orange Photographs and more. Thank you to everyone that donated to our Silent Auction.

Our next event will be on Tuesday, May 21 at 5:30 pm at the Library's Community Room. The topic will be the history of the Orange Friendly Center. Please join us for this meeting and bring a friend with you.

Check your mailing label, if it is highlighted in yellow you will want to renew right away. You can do this online or mail in the membership form. You do not want to miss out on learning about our upcoming events and supporting the Orange Community Historical Society. For those members that renewed we appreciate your continued support of the rich history of Orange.

We look forward to seeing you at the Orange May Parade on Saturday, May 4. We will have an entry in the parade!

Carol Summo - President

Next Meeting: At the Orange Public Library - Tuesday May 21st at 5:30 P.M. - A 100 Year Salute to the Orange Friendly Center! -

We will welcome Retired Director, Cathy Seelig who will explain the origins of the good work begun as a missionary church in 1924, through service opportunities and their place in the community. In fact, The Orange Friendly Center is the oldest non-profit in Orange County! Still going strong, she will inform us

of not only the history, but bring us up to date with programs still going strong.



April 8, 1924 - Dedication of the Orange Friendly Center at 424 North Cypress St.

“Cathy moved to Orange 46 years ago, and has been active in the Orange Chamber of



Under the Orange Peel

Rev. Nathan Riley

CALIFORNIA COOLER

Grandma had one and used it regularly. We had one when we were first married and living in an older house here in Orange, but never quite understood what it was all about. Why all these slats and not solid boards? Did the owner run out of money? Was he trying to get by on the cheap? And what do you do with shelving paper when you come across a cabinet with slats for shelves? Why does having an opening to beneath the house make any sense? Turns out we were puzzled by “California coolers“. Ever heard of these antiques?

In speaking with my now deceased uncle about life in the early days in Orange, he once shed a little light on the subject as I interviewed him. I remember asking him to explain –
Nathan: “What I'm more interested in is how you preserved food before 1940.” (the year grandma got her first Westinghouse refrigerator)

And so began our back-and-forth:

Uncle Alvin: Well it (their early home.) had a cooler.

Nathan: Okay, tell me what a cooler is.

Uncle Alvin: Okay, a cooler is a wooden cabinet built into the corner of the kitchen.

Nathan: Did it have slats?

Uncle Alvin: Yeah, slats with spaces in between, so the air could circulate up through a hole cut into the floor so that the cool air from beneath the house--it would filter up through there and through the cooler and out the top.

Nathan: Was there a vent on the top?

Uncle Alvin: It went into the attic as far as I know.

Nathan: Did it really seem much cooler there?

Uncle Alvin: Oh, I don't know.

Nathan: And what did you put in there? What exactly went in there?

Uncle Alvin: Well, we made our own butter, then, and our butter wouldn't melt when it was in that cooler. The butter was better, really, and under that any items that you put in a refrigerator.”

So, prompted by his revealing comments, I did a little further research on my own and this is what I discovered:

“If your home was built sometime between 1890 and 1930, you likely have (or had) what's called a
"California cooler.”



Also known as a pie safe, this pantry/cabinet is built into an exterior wall of a home, usually in the kitchen, with venting built into that wall to let the cool, foggy air (author was writing about San Francisco) keep your produce cold. Fine mesh usually covers the vent from the inside to

Continued on Page 3

California Cooler - Continued

prevent flies or any other pesky pests from getting through, and the shelves are made of small wood slats or wire so air can circulate through the shelving. Some have vents above and below the cabinet as well, allowing the hot air to rise through the openings. Most of the year, a California cooler in SF likely maintains a temperature of 50-65 degrees, depending on the day and time of year.”



An example of a California cooler in Berkeley.

A 1923 issue of Popular Mechanics includes a diagram of how the cooler works, in addition to a commentary from author W. Draper Brinkloe on the advantages of the appliance. "Fresh air enters the closet through the lower opening, and passes out of the upper one; the constant current of air is supposed to keep the food fresh, and as a matter of fact, does so quite successfully," he said.

While most homes may have had a small icebox for items they needed to keep at a colder temperature like meat, residents stored other perishables like vegetables and spices in the California cooler. Today, it's still a great place to store these items, Spindler said.” [The story behind that odd pantry in the wall in old SF homes by Tessa McLean]

So now what puzzled us and kept uncle’s butter solid should now be a bit clearer, I should hope. And should you be one of the privileged ones who is living in an older home with a mysterious wall or corner cabinet, and you’ve been wondering what it is there for, well, now you know.



O.C.H.S Gala Event at the Hilbert Museum on March 21, 2024



Jerrica Knight and Aida Cuevas - Welcoming Guests



Top: Appetizer Buffet Line

Middle: Courtyard drinks and appetizers

Bottom: Silent Auction in the South Wing of the Hilbert Art Museum



Mark Hilbert leads a tour of the North Wing of the Hilbert Art Museum. Here he discusses a painting of women packing oranges in one of the City of Orange's packing houses.

President Carol Summo introduces the museum's director Mary Platt to the standing-room-only hall of guests at this year's gala event.



O.C.H.S. President, Carol Summo and the City of Orange Mayor, Dan Slater at this year's gala at the Hilbert Museum of Art.



(Friendly Center - Continued from page 1)

Commerce, was a Girl Scout Leader and was active in Toastmasters. Her start with the Friendly Center began with her work as Coordinator of Christian Education at First United Methodist Church of Orange. She retired from The Friendly Center last year after 25 years of service.”

History Room Acquisitions: Archivist, Aida Cuevas, recently received archive donations of deeds to former Eckhoff family properties in Orange. These were gifted by Dave Eckhoff. A scale model of “Twin Lakes” fishing ponds. This was located on East Chapman Ave., at the top of the El Modena Grade. A small business run by the Reynolds family. An orchard heater (smudge pot) and lighting torch, once used on a local ranch, were also recently donated.



May Parade
May 4th, 2024
at 10:00 a.m.
in Old Towne
Orange,
California

2024 - Upcoming Meetings :
Tuesday, May 21 at the Orange Public Library - 5:30 P.M.
Monday, July 22 at the Orange Public Library - 5:30 P.M.
Tuesday, September 24 at the Orange Public Library - 5:30 P.M.
Tuesday, November 19 at the Orange Public Library - 5:30 P.M.



Hosted by: Terrain Integration
The Potting Shed
Enter Here: www.OrangeGardenTour.com
Partners Include: Hello@OrangeGardenTour.com
Orange Home Grown
And more! Jerrica @ 831-540-7578

Orange is known for its historically unique architecture and its sense of community. Radiating from the heart of Plaza Park, charming neighborhoods extend in all directions with stunning gardens that exude the care and devotion of their residents **ENTER NOW** if you are one of these caring homeowners and would like to have your garden selected for the Orange Garden Tour

2024 OCHS Board Members

- President – Carol Summo
- Vice-President, - John Russo
- Treasurer – Susan Paulsen
- Secretary – Barbara Whittaker
- Audio-Visual - Lee Cornett
- Membership – Jerrica Knight
- Website – John Russo
- Hospitality – Jane Owens
- Newsletter – Roger Fitschen
- Programs --- Lisa Baldwin
- Member-at-Large - Open
- Archivist - Aida Cuevas

Contact Us at (714) 202-7570 or info@historicalorange.org

History Room at the Main Library
Contact: Aida Cuevas (714) 288-2465

Digital History Collection Online,
a virtual tour of Old Towne at www.OrangePublicLibrary.org/home-library

OCHS MEMBERSHIP

Application for Membership Year 2024 (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 - \$25.00

Family - \$30.00

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

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