

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

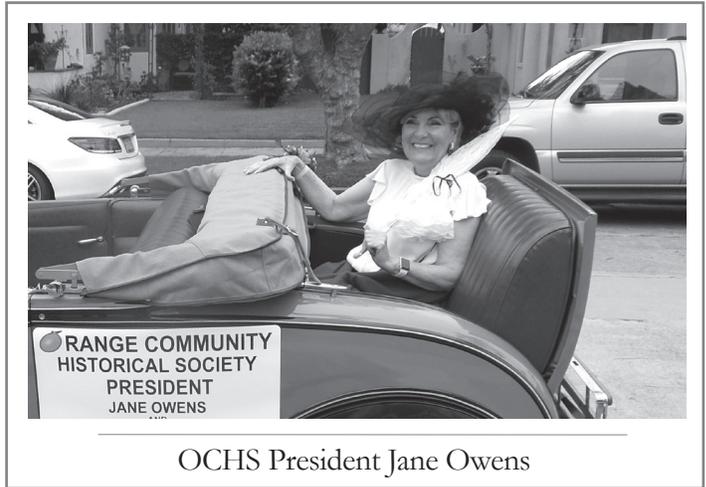
Even from the start, everything important happened around the Plaza.

It has always been at the geographical heart of Orange. It's no surprise that by 1930 downtown offered residents almost everything they needed including 6 drugs stores, shoe stores, banks, and even movie theaters. On Saturday nights the town was bustling with people shopping, visiting and seeking light entertainment.

*“We will always cherish the memories and embrace the efforts to keep our downtown alive and relevant.”*

stopover, located on South Glassell Street next door to Harms Drug store. As a young man, during the 1930's, Elmer Eggers worked at the theater and acquired over 130 hand-colored glass slides that were used long before Technicolor or Kodachrome. As audiences gathered in the darkened theater these slides flickered before them, advertising anything from lady's undergarments to farm equipment. Each slide in the series showed rare

At our May program Roger Fitschen introduced us to the Orange Colonial movie theater, a once popular



OCHS President Jane Owens

vintage history and character of Orange during early pre-war years. The slides usually preceded the showing of a silent movie like D.W. Griffith's "Birth of a Nation" or slapstick comedy from the likes of Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton. Some slides advertised the latest Hollywood flicks that promised thrills, chills, action, laughs, and censored romance. Nothing too risqué was allowed at the Colonial.

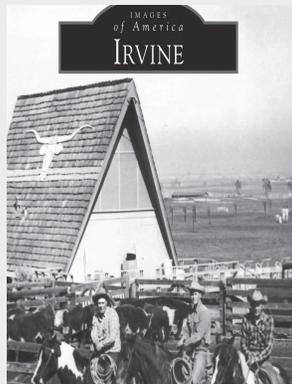
In 1923 a larger more luxurious theater boasting 1,100 seats was announced. After several construction delays it finally opened on May 22, 1929. The new Orange

*(Continued on Page 2)*

**THIS MONTH: FOUNDING OF THE ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**July 25  
6PM @  
PARK  
PLAZA**

The year 1919 was an historic one; both for the United States and for Orange County. Our speaker, Ellen Bell will take us on a trip back to that pivotal time, when the Orange County Historical Society was founded by some of the area's original pioneers. Chapman, McFadden, Ball and Irvine were



more than just street names. They were all members of the Orange County Historical Society, which was the first local organization created for historical preservation. The presentation is part of a year-long Centennial Celebration of the Orange County Historical Society. Ellen Bell is a board member and is author of the Arcadia book, "Irvine: Images of America"



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# Under the Orange Peel

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— Rev. Nathan Riley —

Oh, I know there were other cash crops, and there was some overlap, but generally speaking first came the grapes, then the walnuts, and then citrus in Orange County's agricultural past. Historians tell us that in the 1870's a growing number of farmers began to experiment with walnuts. And especially after Pierce's disease devastated the vineyards in the 1880's many dead vineyards in Anaheim and surrounding regions were being replaced by walnut groves until blight (1910's) and husk fly and navel orange worm (1920's) heavily impacted walnuts driving the industry north (where heartier varieties thrived and costs were reportedly 10 times cheaper).

Mom grew up in Olive and remembers after school in the 1930's walking down the railroad track by the Orange-Olive Road and then turning west on Fletcher St. to arrive at her Uncle George and Aunt Gertrude's place adjacent to Walter Liefer's grove, to pick walnuts. Mother's Uncle George had a long handled pole with a hook on the end by which he would shake loose the ripe walnuts from the tree. By the time she got to their place after school and before she went home for dinner she said she could fill a 5 gallon can of the fallen walnuts and



earn \$.25 which she dutifully turned over to her parents. She felt sad for her somewhat oversized aunt having to get down on her knees to pick up those walnuts and she does remember that the picking up of the walnuts would leave her fingers stained black. The picked walnuts were then placed, in her case, on elevated drying trays and moved around to get full exposure to the sun.



Next January Mom turns 100 and can still recall the hand-hullers she used to separate the walnut husks from the nut itself, another job she had back in the day. And, yes, she really does yet recall the walnut-blackened fingers!

I'm told that by the late 1950's only about 800 acres of walnuts remained in cultivation in Orange County and it was, perhaps, the remnants of these that gave me my own brief and very limited hulling, cracking with hammer on cement driveway, and harvesting of walnuts experience in my youth. Sophie Zech, generous neighbor, had a couple of rather large old English walnut trees in front of her double lot on East Washington and it was from these I learned to harvest walnuts for mom's cookies and such.

My uncle told me he recalled about 1960 the last walnut packing house right next to the railroad tracks burning down, and burning so hot the rails were bent and distorted after the fires were finally put out.

No, not just oranges, but walnuts, too, belong to Orange's agricultural past!

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*(President's Letter; Continued from Page 1)*

Theater, on North Glassell, had green plush curtains with gold braided rope and trimmings and featured the latest in sound equipment. Movie theaters used to be glamorous places, like opera houses or concert halls and people clamored to see feature-length films accompanied by sound. By the 1930's motion pictures moved from novelty shows to established large-scale entertainment industry productions.

The Colonial Theater officially closed in 1958 and the

Orange Theater folded in the spring of 1975 after several attempts at revitalization. The Son Light Christian Center was able to purchase the Orange Theater soon after and eventually reopened it as their new church. The demise of our theaters could be blamed on TV, demographics, lifestyles or the sparkling new megaplex at the shopping mall. Whatever the reason, we will always cherish the memories and embrace the efforts to keep our downtown alive and relevant.

## OLIVE HISTORICAL MARKER

The history of Orange began in July 1769 when a few dozen of Spanish soldiers traveled north on an exploratory expedition through California headed by Captain Gaspar de Portolá. The small party camped in two locations in Orange. One camp was on the south bank of the Santa Ana River near the town of Olive. On the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Orange-Olive Road, you will see State Historical Landmark No. 204 that



marks the approximate location of the soldiers' campsite. Jose Antonio Yorba, who first visited Olive with the Portolá expedition, decided to return in 1809 and seek a land grant for the area. The Yorba's settled in Olive and the rancho became known as the Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana.

Dan Graupensperger, a retired Orange Firefighter, approached the Historical Society Board asking permission to do some significant maintenance around the long-neglected marker. With help from Roger Fitschen, our fellow Board



member, the two removed a 1960's brick border and concrete footing surrounding the monument and backfilled the open trench. They also removed a decayed tree stump and returned the site to its original state. Thank you, Dan and Roger, for getting this project approved and for donating your time and expertise in restoring and preserving an important part of Orange history. And, thank you OCHS members for your dues and generous contributions that made this project possible.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**July 10 – August 21 7 to 8:30 PM**

**Summer Concerts in the Park**

Hart Park Band Shell

The City of Orange invites you to bring your family and friends for a free concert under the stars. Concerts in the Park take place each Wednesday. Enjoy free entertainment for all ages under the summer sky! Bring your blankets, picnic baskets, and chairs, and have a great time! Information: 714/744-2225

**July 25: 6-8PM**

**OCHS Monthly Meeting: Ellen Bell**

Park Plaza

Guest Ellen Bell will speak on the 100 year history of the Orange County Historical Society (See Page 1)

**July 27**

**250th Anniversary Portola Trek**

Guided bus tour along Portola route featuring stops along the trail with talks by local historians

Ticket information: 2019Portola@gmail.com

**August 24: 6-10PM**

**Orange Homegrown Farmer's Market to Table Dinner**

Hold the date so you don't miss out on the best outdoor community dinner of the year!

Ticket Info: <https://orangehomegrown.org/>

### OCHS 2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President - Jane Owens

towens46@aol.com

(714) 281-1336

Vice President, A/V, Programs - Lyle Drinkgern

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Website - John Russo

russo@johnrusso.org

Newsletter - Tom Heffernan

tomheff12@gmail.com

(949) 873-3779

# OCHS MEMBERSHIP

Application for Membership Year 2019 (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 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.

### LOCAL HISTORY QUESTIONS?

(714) 288-2465 | [history@cityoforange.org](mailto:history@cityoforange.org)

Check out the Orange Public Library's  
Local History and 24/7 Reference Service

[www.cityoforange.org/library](http://www.cityoforange.org/library)

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.

### ORANGE HISTORIC AFGHANS

Red & White or Green & White Afgans:  
\$45.00 with Membership, \$55 without

If undeliverable please return to:

**ORANGE TRIBUNE**  
Orange Community Historical Society  
P.O. Box 5484  
Orange, CA 92863-5484