

HERITAGE

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HALLOWEENS OF YESTERYEAR

By Dennis D. Hayden

Several factors in combination often led to the Halloween fun of Tustin's early years. Proximity of props (along with a scarcity of street lights) was one of the most important ones. These are a couple of memories Denny has from his childhood growing up in Tustin.

In the early years of FDR's administration, Sam Long secured an appointment as postmaster of the Tustin Post Office which was located on Main Street in the block between the drug store and the Utt Juice Company. Next to it on one side was the Justice Court, with Ike Harper's Shoe Repair shop on the other. Sam had labored long and was eventually successful in obtaining a federal appropriation (in those post-Depression years) for a new tongue and groove oak floor which was completed shortly before Halloween.

At the northwest corner of Third and D Streets, a block away, Mr. Taylor had a small nursery complete with a horse which he used to cultivate it.

On the morning after Halloween, post office patrons were greeted by Mr. Taylor's horse looking out of the P.O.'s swinging doors. Fortunately, the horse was not shod and no appreciable damage was done to the new oak floor. There remained, however, some substantial scoop shovel work, cleaning and refinishing.

Most of the town folk viewed the episode with humor, a notable exception being Sam Long, who was furious. While

the beauty of the new oak floor was quickly restored, the olfactory memory of the incident remained for many months. Comments by patrons such as "Is this the Pony Express office?" or "Sam, who do you have in the fifth race?" would reignite Sam's anger for many months following the incident.

Another factor contributing to Halloween hijinks was a buckboard in Mr. McCharles' barn, which was located between the rear of the McCharles residence and Harry Peiper's feed store. The morning after Halloween the buckboard would appear at unexpected locations, including on one occasion, the roof of the Gilmore gasoline station located at the southwest corner of Main and D Streets, and on another, the front porch of Mr. Bergen's residence on Sixth Street. Mr. Bergen was a portly, stern German band teacher at the grammar school who was stout of stature but short of temper. If you hit a sour note, he was prone to beating you on the head with his baton while angrily shouting, "NO, NO, NO" in your face, striking fear in the hearts of the timid who might otherwise have pursued a musical career.

The miscreants of the McCharles buckboard incidents usually took responsibility and saw to the return of the buckboard to its rightful place in the barn. Mr. McCharles apparently accepted the pranks in the spirit with which they had been committed.

Conversely as to the horse and because chief of police "Big John" Stanton, whose office was next door, was not aggressively

pursuing an investigation (in fact, seemed amused by it), Sam brought in federal investigators, and a thorough investigation ensued, but the culprit was never identified. Possibly because of the uncertainty regarding the running of the statute of limitations for putting a horse in the post office, the incident remains one of Tustin's unsolved mysteries.

TILLERS' DAY PARADE

Hope you made it to the parade as we were a real presence this year, with five beautifully restored vintage automobiles. That's Randy Ema in his 1932 Auburn 12 convertible sedan, and museum stalwarts Bill Finken and Bob Gray in the 1907 Reo, one



of only four movie prop cars made for John Wayne's movie, "Big Jake". Speaking of things old, the parade boasted some great vintage tractors as well, and there were many feet tapping to the beat of our local high schools' very talented marching bands. There were a number of first-time visitors to the Museum when the parade ended, and we attracted a few new members, so it was an entertaining morning well-spent.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, Nov. 16, 2009

7:30 p.m.

**Tustin Senior Center
COMMUNITY ROOM**

• PROGRAM •
Traditional Music by Legacy

Everyone is Welcome!

Historical HAPPENINGS



Big Dreams... Dashed Hopes

During the land boom of the mid-1880s, every town, village, and swamp did everything possible to promote their economic prospects, bountiful lands, and accessibility, competing for rail lines that would connect them with speculators arriving daily from the East Coast. In a time when roads were rutted dirt, and towns often lay inconveniently on the far side of rivers and flood plains, a number of imposing hotels were built in an effort to convince the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads to lay spurs to these far-flung Edens, and also to convince potential investors of the town's stability. This southern section of (then) Los Angeles County was soon thickly dotted with hotels to rival any in the country.

With the arrival of the Southern Pacific tracks in 1888, Tustin was positive it was on the verge of greatness. Surely it, not Santa Ana, would become the town of record in the immediate area. A grand wood-framed, Eastlake-style hotel was erected at El Camino Real and Third Streets, connected to the depot by trolley. Tustin was ready and waiting for the hordes of future residents to arrive, and arrive they did.....for a while. Unfortunately, the Irvine Ranch denied the SP a right-of-way across its land, so the hoped-for investors never fully materialized, and The Hotel Tustin failed, taking the original 1888 Bank of Tustin down with it. The bank closed in 1902 and, after serving another four decades as a boarding house, the hotel was finally razed.

Santa Ana, Tustin's arch rival, fared better, as the Santa Fe Railway leaving the depot there had already gained a right-of-way across Irvine's ranch lands in 1887. Since 1873, the Santa Ana Hotel, a two-story wooden structure reminiscent of every 'B' western ever filmed, had dominated the northwest corner of Fourth and Main Streets. With the extension of the rail line to the south, the city fathers felt it wasn't quite imposing enough for the rich speculators they were anticipating, so the hotel was moved closer to the depot in hopes that a second commercial area might develop there. Then the city went on a spending and building spree. The new two-story Richelieu Hotel dominated the west end of Fourth Street, and the elegant three-story Brunswick, "containing 75 elegantly appointed rooms (Santa Ana's 100 Years, Century I Historians)" replaced a livery stable in the same area. Santa Ana was on its way to stardom, but this didn't dampen the hopes of surrounding towns for a piece of the real estate boom.

El Modena was so far out in the sticks – not to mention across the oft-flooding Santa Ana River – its dreams of prospering from the boom times of the 1880s seems unlikely, but that didn't discourage it. On the north side of Chapman Avenue, just where the El Modena grade now begins its rise into the Orange foothills, the two-story Blount Hotel rose in 1888. It was hoped, of course, that this symbol of stability and promise would entice the railroad to build a spur to the area. It didn't, and the wooden structure

Continued on page 3

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Museum Hours

Every Tuesday and Thursday

9 am – 2 pm

First and Third Saturday
of each month

12 pm – 3 pm

**Open to Visitors
Admission is Free**

MUSIC FOR THE HOLIDAYS

In a departure from our regular speaking program on historical subjects, we're offering some holiday cheer in the form of traditional music at our November General Meeting. We are excited to welcome Barbara Gershman and Patty McCollom of the performing group Legacy. Patty and Barbara have been traditional musicians for many years, delighting their audiences with the ancient sounds of the dulcimer, fiddle, and banjo. Their specialties are Old Time American and Celtic music which they have performed at many venues, including The Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts and the Tall Ships Festival at Dana Point. We're sure this program will put a little kick in your step as the holidays approach. Please join us in the Community Room (note change from the usual Lounge) of the Senior Center on Monday, November 16th.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It has been a good year for the TAHS and Museum. The economy has slowed us down a little but with the many different events and outstanding volunteers, we have maintained a high level of spirit and enthusiasm.

The selection of homes for the Promenade was well received. We had many compliments on the variety and size. The JoAnn Bollesen Art Poster contest had a good turnout with some of the grandparents coming from out of state to see their grandkids win prizes. We had a booth in the Chili Cook Off this year for the first time, and not only did we make money, the volunteers had a good time. In terms of attendance, our General Meetings are reaching a new high with more interesting programs on the way. As of this writing, we are working with the Tustin Preservation conservancy to promote a successful event for the Art Walk. Our History-in-a-Box program and school tours, historic displays at the Tustin Library, Santiago College and here at the museum are underway. Our project for digitizing and organizing our photos and negatives is about half finished.

All in all, I am very pleased with the progress the TAHS and Museum have made this past year in helping to preserve the rich history of Tustin.

Joe Sprekelmeyer

Docent "Thank You" Brunch



We wouldn't be successful without 'em – our docents, that is. They cheerfully volunteer to lead our third-grade museum tours, learn all the histories for our annual home tours, man the museum when we're open, catalog our files, stuff our envelopes, and perform a host of other duties. About the only thing we haven't asked them to do is

dust, and a few can't stop themselves from doing even that! David and Barbara Bryant have hosted our annual salute to the docents for many years, but this year we brought the event back to the museum. It was a bit crowded but cozy, and everyone seemed to enjoy just getting together. The food is always good, thanks to Barbara Hannegan, our office manager, and embarrassingly, some of us were still 'grazing' when the museum opened at noon!

MEMBERSHIP COUPON

Join the Tustin Area Historical Society and keep your newsletter coming. Please send your dues or an additional gift today. All dues and contributions are tax deductible. Ask a friend to join!

ANNUAL DUES: (Please check one)

- \$20-\$34 Contributor
- \$35-\$59 Explorer
- \$60-\$99 Colonist
- \$100-\$249 Settler
- \$250-\$499 Frontier
- \$500-\$999 Pioneer
- \$1,000 Heritage
- Renew New

Special Contribution as Friends
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Historical HAPPENINGS

Continued from page 2

burned to the ground in 1889, taking dreams of a thriving metropolis with it.

Another town with high hopes was Olive Heights. Known chiefly for its flour mill, plans were made to subdivide the surrounding land for ranching, thereby increasing the population sufficiently to construct a street railroad to connect with the main railway. To entice potential land owners, a hotel was necessary, and Louis Schorn built the 2-story Olive Heights Hotel in 1887 at the corner of Hope (now Lincoln Ave) and Main, the street climbing the hill to the Heights. By 1889, the land boom was over, but the hotel survived for another fifty years.

If this history of the county's early hotels surprised you, come back for more fabulous and surprising ones in our January issue of *The Heritage*.

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Accessions

Tustin Sr Center	Ephemera from 1985 Chili Cookoff; Copy of Carol Jordan's book autographed by City Leaders
B & L Johnson	Book – "A Different Shade of Orange" by Bob Johnson High School circa mid 1960's; and City Hall circa 1960's
M Pottenger	Book – "California Girl" by T. Jefferson Parker
Unknown	Postcard of Tustin Motor Lodge circa 1940's
Juanita Lovret	School books from Tustin Grammar School circa 1900
Lee Laney	Photo of Orrin Fairbanks home circa unknown
Dorothy Stewart	Book "Two Cents Revisited" by George Stewart
Tustin News	Photos of tennis and little league players dated 1976
Jill Leach	Book "The Open Skies" by Wayne L. Youngblood that includes LTA Base
City of Tustin	DVD – "The Tustin Hangars: Titans of History"
Unknown	Photos and brochures from Tustin Police Dept
N. Tschiderer	Books on Orange County History Photos too numerous to list separately as a result of the scanning taking place of our archives

MYSTERY PHOTO



As our photo archives are being scanned onto CDs for safe keeping, an occasional picture turns up with no name and/or date. If you can identify any of these boys in the Little League photo, we'd really appreciate it. Please call the museum and let us know (714) 731-5701.

In Memoriam

Doug Prescott

Welcome New Members

Janet and J. Parker Hart