

# COUNTY COURIER

Official Publication of the Orange County

[www.orangecountyhistory.org](http://www.orangecountyhistory.org)

## I Remember . . . . Do You ?

I remember . . . . The Balboa Fun Zone, Bal week, Arnold's Farmhouse, the Rendevous, Japanese Deer Park, Lion County Safari and others.

Some of our memories are tied to a place or establishment. Some memories are from a single event, or time period such as WWII. Other recollections are about the way life has changed here in Orange County.

The last three issues of the *Courier* have had articles written of times past by persons no longer living. The response of our readers has been, "How interesting and different their experiences were."

At our meeting on January 8, you will have the opportunity to tell about your experiences in the past. Several board members have recollections they are planning on sharing such as, WWII years at Laguna Beach, the Stage Line, old Anaheim and Fog. If you would like to participate please call Richard Vining at (714) 245-9988 leave a message with his secretary if he isn't available. This will give our chairman an opportunity to prepare the program so all can take part in a "timely" fashion. Translate that as everyone will have a turn if no one talks too long. Give Richard some idea as to how much time you will need. If



Balboa Fun Zone

Postcard from Elinor Schmidt collection

needed we will schedule a second meeting for sharing.

In the past, particularly in the early years of OCHS, members prepared papers to be presented at the meetings. (e.g.. Mrs. Burns on Santa Ana in the November. *Courier*) It is suggested that those participating in January write down their recollections so we may add to the Orange County Historical Society archives. If, as Dr. Phil of TV would say, this is "a deal breaker" then please, do not feel you must. We want your sharing first and the other is an added plus. In fifty

years, new OCHS members will look back and comment, "I didn't know it was like that, how interesting!"

Come Thursday, January 8 to Bower's Kidseum at 7:30 prepared to share your recollections and memories of how it used to be.

The Kidseum is on the northwest corner of Main Street and 18th in Santa Ana, one block south of Bower's main parking lot. Parking is free at the back of the building and across 18th Street. Entrance is on 18th Street. The public is invited.

## DONATIONS continued

This article is inspired by a donation of the **Register of Inmates County Hospital**, from Mr. Lasandro now of Ferndale California to OCHS. This Register came into Mr. Lasandro's possession many years ago while he was employed at the County Hospital. They were cleaning house and getting rid of old and useless records, Mr. Lasandro saved it from the trash bin.

## ORANGE COUNTY HOSPITAL

By John Sorenson

To meet the requirements of a new state law, the Register of Inmates County Hospital was purchased with the approval of the Orange County Board of Supervisors on September 23, 1913. This 14" x 17" volume was the responsibility of hospital steward, J. R. Mc Murdo. With this new responsibility came a salary increase from \$60 to \$75 per month.

This article would not have been possible without the County Archives being open and the staff now employed to assist the public in doing research.

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The need for a county hospital in Orange County was very apparent in 1912. The county had operated a hospital for some years in a number of locations in Santa Ana. However, the only true hospital in the area was the Santa Ana Hospital on East Washington Street established about 1902. About 1903, a "County Hospital" was established in a residence on the south east corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Spurgeon. Its capacity was gradually increased from 2 to 6 – used mainly as a poor-house. Real medical cases were subcontracted to the Santa Ana Hospital. Care for major injury and trauma cases was only available at the Los Angeles County Hospital. Imagine being transported via wagon to Los Angeles for care, that critical first hour would have long expired before care could even be started!



Above: Photo taken before 1926.  
Railroad tracks in foreground  
Insert: Enlarged image of entrance to Orange County Farm

From Don Dobmeier Postcard Collection



In 1912, the county had a population of about 35,000 and in need of a full service county hospital. The Board of Supervisor's took up the issue on June 4, 1912 and approved a special bond election for July 20, 1912. Election Day was a Saturday to enable more people to vote. Along with a \$60,000 hospital issue was a bond issue for \$100,000 for roads and bridges. Another major concern of the Board of Supervisors in 1912 was a bridge over the Santa Ana River at 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Board of Supervisors exercised direct control over the administration of the County's funds. Today, a project manager would be hired and a team of consultants would be retained. Schedules for acquisition of land, construction, and procurement of equipment would be developed and promulgated in mass for all to comment and concur on. Pricing items lists and long lead-time items lists and critical paths would be developed and reviewed in detail.

In 1912, the Board of Supervisors, the County Physician and Health Officer, John Wehrly, and the

architect Frederick Ely was the team. On October 22, 1912, \$24,250 was approved for the procurement of the 72 acre parcel from the Dawn Land Company situated 1.5 miles west of Orange on Chapman Ave. The first building started was the Superintendent's residence on Nov. 19, 1912. In December 1912, Anderson and Bollard was awarded a contract for \$5,998 to build the foreman's bungalow, 4 cottages and a barn. These were completed by May 20, 1913. Arrangements and approval was made to have Edison supply the electric power, Southern Pacific RR to have a switch and siding at the hospital site. Well water was tapped for use with the aid of a Bulldozerhead pump costing \$ 700 and an 8,000 gallon tank on a 30 foot tower. A Sunset telephone line was approved for the superintendent's residence. On March 5, 1913, Frederick Ely's plans were adopted. On September 16, 1913, Chris McNeil was awarded the contract to build the hospital building at a cost of \$ 45,551. In November 1913, contracts were let for 3 more cottages, a laundry and a club house and chapel.



Orange County Hospital and Farm taken sometime after 1926.

Photo from *History of Orange County California, Vol. 1 1931* by Mrs. J. E. Pleasants

These were completed by March 17, 1914. Also in February 1914, purchase of 1000 Valencia orange trees was approved.

The Board of Supervisor's was also active in the purchase of equipment for the hospital site. An elevator was provided for the hospital, Munger and Munger installed the heating system which included thermostatic controls at a cost of \$5,115. A vacuum cleaner system was installed by Tuec Co. for \$422.17. A 20 HP steam boiler, manufactured by Fairbanks, Morse & Company, provided power to the laundry. Robertson & Packard provided 412 electrical fixtures for the hospital. A refrigerator from H. W. Johns Manville Company was provided at \$494.40. C H Kenworthy provided window shades for \$266. Finally, on April 14, 1914, John Wehrly, County Physician, was given the authority to purchase medical instruments for the hospital's use. Supervisor Leck personally took on the task of purchasing chairs for the hospital. The last major hurdle was the sewer

system. Charles G. Hyde was ordered to prepare plans on March 24, 1914 which were completed on May 5, 1914. Chris McNeil was awarded the \$5,545 on May 18, 1914. On June 3, 1914, the Board accepted the hospital; however, it was far from ready to receive patients. On July 8, 1914 bids for furniture were opened as a result of a June 16<sup>th</sup> action. At the same time, Walter Rodgers painted the signs needed for \$182.

With World War I just thirty days old, the front page of the *Register* was covered with war news. Photos of Kaiser Wilhelm, Admiral Jellicoe, his flagship (H. M. S. Iron Duke) adorned the front pages. Stories of the French at the Marne and the rout of the Russian's in the Tannenberg swamps were the big stories of the month. The opening of the County Hospital without a photograph was placed on the last page of the *Register* for Saturday, August 29, 1914. It stated the hospital will open September, 1, 1914. Miss Hazel Swall of Garden Grove is head nurse and J. R. McMurdo was the steward living on site. Thirty-six were

at the poor farm, 28 men, 4 women, and 4 children. Six medical patients have been transferred from Santa Ana. It was not clear whether Santa Ana was the Hospital or the old facility on 5<sup>th</sup> and Spurgeon.

The only real description of the interior came from an article printed later that week in the *Register*. In the basement were: kitchen and dining facilities, and storage. First floor was: wards for men and women. 2 barred rooms for criminals and the insane, an operating room. Near the main entrance were located offices for the matron (head nurse), the superintendent and other offices for doctors.

Second floor: no mention made.

Well over the \$60,000 bond issue amount was spent by opening day. Even after the opening of the hospital, construction continued. On November 17, 1914 Frederic Sieford was awarded a contract for \$ 10,925 for construction of a cottage, pump house, and dormitory (almshouse) building.

## The Human Story

On the site, of the County Hospital were two operations, a medical facility and a poor farm or a home for the indigent and the senile – many of whom were elderly. It is my opinion, the images of the county poor farms across the nation was one of the driving forces behind the Social Security Act of 1935.

Here is a summary of some of the people who made the institution a reality:

### County Supervisors:

T. B. Talbert, Chairman, 2nd District

H. E. Smith, 1st District

D. S. Linebarger, 3rd District

Fred W. Struck, 4th District

Jasper Leck, 5th District

### County Physician and Health Officers:

John Wehrly 1911-1915

A.H. Dorman 1915-1923

### Hospital Superintendent:

H. E. Zaiser Dec 17, 1914 - @ 1946

### Hospital Steward:

J. R. McMurdo Jan 8, 1913 - ?

### Superintendent of County Farm:

E. A. Chaffes ? – Feb 17, 1914

G. W. Clememt Feb 17, 1914 - ?

### Boiler Attendant:

J. W. Cade July 7, 1914 - ?

### Head Nurse:

Hazel Swall Aug 18, 1914- ?

It should be noted that the head nurse's salary was \$75 per month; equal that of the laundryman and wife (laundress); but, without the free board.

The medical staff on September 1, 1914 consisted: Dr. Wehrly, Nurse Swall, 4 nurses and 2 orderlies.

The Register of Inmates contains 7,599 entries from 1911 to September 30, 1924. Data elements on the Register included: a sequential control number, name, date of admission, age, sex, race, place of birth, residence, occupation, ailment, pay or charity case, handicaps, date of release, disposition, (discharged, runaway, or

died), sent to, nearest relative, and remarks.

Up until the end of 1914, the name of the cognizant Supervisor was entered into the remarks column. With the appointment of Dr. Zaiser, this was no longer necessary.

All were accepted including hobos. A look at the patients admitted at the County Hospital from September to December 1914 was as follows:

Total admissions: 110

36 Mexican and 74 Whites.

All charity cases except 2

Total deaths of those admitted: 26

Forwarded on to Jail: 4

Forwarded to Patton State Hospital (Mental): 2

### Leading Causes of Death:

tuberculosis, typhoid fever, pneumonia

### Other common ailments:

feeble minded, sanity, bullet wounds, alcoholic, morphine habit.

Other notable Register events were:

First Entry: Admitted 1911, Hiram Jett, age 65, feeble minded, dead Oct 29, 1918. First Admission: (to new facility) Sept 1, 1914, John Cross, age 66, died Dec 2, 1918

First Birth: Nov. 18, 1914, Villalobos

First Infant Death: November 20, 1914, Villalobos (baby)

Going through the Register, one can envision the human tragedies which occurred between the written lines:

A 19 year old Mexican woman dies from complications of pregnancy.

Langford family of five from Fullerton, battle spinal meningitis with the mother and one son died; the father and two young sons survive.

Twenty year old Mexican domestic dies from tuberculosis.

In 1915, 437 patients are admitted and admissions continue to grow as the county grows.

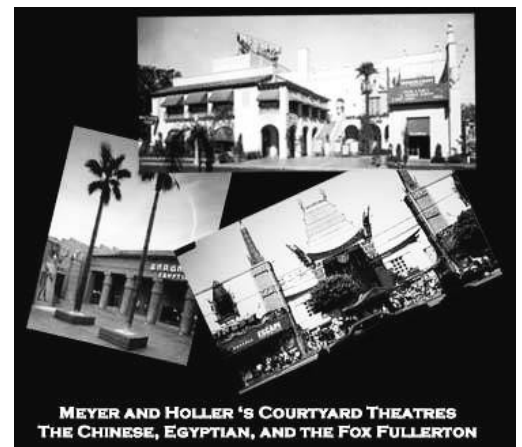
**Orange County Hospital To be continued next month with maps and identification of structures**



### Jeanne Hennessy

**July 6, 1929 - November 9, 2003**

Jeanne's primary interest in history was three-fold; her own family heritage, born Carmen Jeanne Pryor in San Juan Capistrano, she was a fifth-generation Californian. Next came her home community of Garden Grove where she volunteered for the Garden Grove Historical Society. Then she and Jack were loyal members of the Orange County Historical Society for many years.



## The Fullerton Historic

**Theatre Foundation**, a nonprofit dedicated to saving the endangered Fox Fullerton Theatre, presents noted architectural historian Alfred Willis, speaking on "Sid Grauman and the Courtyard Theatres of California" at 7 pm, Tuesday, **January 13, 2004, at the Egyptian Theatre, 6712 Hollywood Blvd. in Hollywood.**

Free admission; for more information call (714) 607-0884 or visit

[www.FoxFullerton.org](http://www.FoxFullerton.org)

OCHS Calendar

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- Board Meeting
- **Tuesday Jan. 6, 2004 at 7:00 PM**  
Board meetings are open to the membership
- at the Kidseum

January Meeting

- Thursday, January 8, 2004
- Meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- At the Kidseum
- PROGRAM
- **I REMEMBER. . . DO YOU?**
- By Society members
- February 12, Meeting

**The History of Saving Laguna Canyon** by Jerry Burchfield and Mark Chamberlain



Where will you find books on local history? Your best source is your Orange County Historical Society.

Books listed below in BOLD are pictured and described on our website: [www.orangecountyhistory.org](http://www.orangecountyhistory.org)

Don't see the book you are looking for? ASK US. If we don't have it we will help you find it.

WEBSITE ADDITIONS:

A Timeline of Orange County History from *The Golden Promise* by Pamela Hallan-Gibson.

A list of current home and walking tours in areas of Orange and Los Angeles Counties.

PLACE A DOLLAR AMT. OPPOSITE EACH ITEM YOU WISH TO ORDER		
Bawdy Balboa by Judge Robert Gardner	\$25.00	
Cañada de la Brea by Virginia Carpenter	\$10.00	
<b>Centennial Bibliography of Orange County</b>	\$70.00	
House of Bernardo Yorba by Don Meadow	\$4.00	
<b>José Antonio Yorba by Arnold Dominguez</b>	\$4.00	
<b>The Portolá Expedition 1769</b>	\$3.00	
Orange Countiana II	\$12.00	
Orange Countiana III	\$12.00	
<b>Orange Countiana IV Architecture: soft cover</b>	\$32.00	
<b>A Window on the Past hard cover</b>	\$40.00	
Orange Countiana V Early Businesses soft cover	\$22.00	
In Orange County hard cover	\$30.00	
<b>Orange County Through Four Centuries By Dr. Leo J. Friis</b>	\$15.95	
<b>The Orange Blossom 50 Years of Growth in Orange County</b>	\$40.00	
<b>ORANGE COUNTY The Golden Promise by Pamela Hallan-Gibson 2002 edition</b>	\$37.00	

Proceedings of the Conference of Orange County History	1988	\$11.00	
	1989	\$11.00	

*All prices include sales tax*

MERCHANDISE TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

**Postage and Handling** (\$3.00 first item, \$1 each additional)

**Orange Blossoms** is \$5 per book, \$1 each additional

**Orange County The Golden Promise** is \$5 per book, \$1 each additional

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^ **MAIL TO:** John Sorenson, 14932 Gainford Circle, Irvine CA 92604

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January 2004

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