



COUNTY COURIER

Official Publication of the Orange County Historical Society

www.orangecountyhistory.org

Orange County Remembered



This post card from the Tom Pulley Collection appears on the back cover of the book. The card is postmarked 1910. We do not know who the people are, only that the photograph was taken in Santa Ana.

As promised this is the title of our presentation on **POSTCARDS** from the new *Orange County* book of postcards. (For the name of the winner in the postcard book naming contest see page 4)

The program for the November meeting will consist of a panel from the postcard committee discussing their favorite postcard and what was learned from their research. Information was abundant and readily available for some postcards. For other postcards, there was little or nothing. In a few instances the postcards were identified incorrectly. As related by the committee, the postcards requiring extensive research became all the more interesting and the most satisfying to process. All of the information that was found would not fit in the captions of the book. Consequently, we have subject matter for a very interesting and informative program.

The cards, as they are being discussed, will be shown in a powerpoint presentation. We will conclude the

presentation with some great postcards that were not included in the book.

The panel will be Jane Norgren, La Vida Hot Springs, Brea card; Judy Moore, Corona del Mar or Seal Beach card; JJ and Harriet Friis, postcards of the Palmyra Hotel and William Murray Blacksmith shop in the city of Orange and El Modena; John Sorenson, a card with Dr. Clark and his nurse Miss White making their rounds in a buggy in a Huntington Beach; Richard Vining, Camp Bonita card, on the Irvine Ranch; and Tracy Falk will talk about the factors contributing to a successful completion of the project.

We will gather Thursday, November 10, 2005 at 7:00 at the Kidseum, northwest corner of Main and 18th Streets in Santa Ana. Our program on *Orange County*

Remembered — Postcards from the Past will begin at 7:30 p.m. Bring a guest, the public is welcome. Parking is free at the back of the building and across 18th Street. Entrance to the building is in the back.

The State Highway System *continued from last month*

By John Sorensen.

The year 1923 also saw a change in how bridge construction was funded. Before 1923, the Highway Commission required that counties provide most of the rights-of-way, designs, and construction funding for most new state highway bridges. (There were a few exceptions such as the small concrete girder bridge with pipe railings that crosses Shotgun Creek, which was built in 1915 and designed by state highway engineers). This arrangement proved unsatisfactory. As a result, in 1923 State Highway Engineer, R. M. Morton directed that all state highway bridges be designed and their construction overseen by state engineers. This resulted in the creation of the Bridge Department in the Department of Public Works.

California's first gasoline tax in 1923 also provided funding relief for the needs of the State highways. Revenue from the two cent per gallon tax was divided between the State and the counties for highway construction and improvement. Actually, the gasoline tax had been recommended by the Auto Club beginning in 1921, and the State Board of Equalization and the Highway Commission added their support in 1922. The Motor Vehicle Act of 1923, strengthened the state's highway finances and gave important additional resources to the counties. While the new tax law prohibited use of funds for new road construction, this restriction was removed in 1927.

In November 1924, the American Association of State Highway Officials ("AASHO") proposed the Federal Highway System, to coordinate the naming and marking of interstate highways. They prepared a resolution requesting the Secretary of Agriculture to select a system of highways and appointed a



The date of construction was often embedded in the old bridges. Starting in the late 1950s, the date was just stenciled on in paint. This is the Oso Creek overcrossing on old US 101 (Camino Capistrano) in Mission Viejo.

board to perform a study and make recommendations in March 1925. Initial routes were selected from the Federal Aid Road System, and it was decided that routes be marked by means of a standard highway marking sign. Basically, the goal was to have the Federal US highway mileage bear a ratio of no more than 3% to the total of all rural highway miles in the State. Federal mileage in California, eventually was 2220 miles or 3.1%.

In 1925, the Legislature passed the Melville Act, which provided that the State take over all traversable highways, abolish toll roads, and build highways through the small cities which could not afford them. This extended the responsibility of the Division of Highways beyond rural road



Paving of East Chapman Avenue in the city of Orange in 1913

Tom Pulley Postcard Collection

construction. The act also permitted the Highway commission to relinquish roads with the consent of the local governing board. In 1925, AASHO adopted the numbering system for the Federal Highway system.

The Federal Highways Shield insignia, which now marks all federal highways, was designed in 1926. These signs were not seen in California until 1928. In 1927 California's legislature passed the Breed Bill, adding one cent per gallon to the gasoline tax. The additional tax was to be used exclusively for highway construction. The Act also required that 51% of construction moneys be allocated to Northern California and the remainder (49%) be allocated to Southern California. This allocation was redressed in 1947.

1927 also saw the Department of Public Works reorganized into four divisions. The Division of Highways was placed in charge of the State Highway Engineer. The State Highway Commission was expanded to five members and was given the power to alter state highway routes, abandon unneeded sections, and condemn rights-of-way. In addition, the State Highway Classification Act was passed that year.

In 1928, the California State Automobile Association and the Automobile Club of Southern California began erecting Federal Highway Shields and other highway signs in California.

In 1929, the Legislature created the California Toll Bridge Authority, which was authorized to acquire or construct and operate toll bridges within the state and to issue bonds for this purpose. Construction on the Bay Bridge began in 1931 and was completed in November 1936 at a cost of approximately \$70 million.

In a 1930 report from the California highway commission, specific criteria were established for the designation of the route as a state highway. These required that the potential state highway carry a large volume of state traffic, afford relief to heavy traffic on present state roads, and serve as important interstate links. At this point in State history, California's population was about 5.6 million -- a little over half the population of present-day Los Angeles County.

Phase III: A Significant System Is Created (1933-1946)

In 1933, the Legislature amended the State Highway Classification Act of 1927 adding 6700 miles of

county roads to the state highway system. Highway construction funds were allocated equally between primary and secondary highways. The legislative barriers that prevented state highway funds from being used in urban areas was removed. 1933 also saw the creation of an eleventh District, with headquarters in San Diego.

In 1934, the State began numbering nonfederal highways with a "Bear Shield." The Bear Shield was shaped like a miner's spade and displayed a Grizzly Bear above the number of the highway. This signage was erected by the California State Automobile Association and the Automobile Club of Southern California.

In 1937 the Golden Gate Bridge was completed. This bridge was never part of the state highway system. It was designed, constructed, maintained and is still owned by the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District.

In 1939 the Freeway Law, sponsored by state Senator Arthur H. Breed, Jr. was passed by the State Legislature. This Act denied adjacent property owners private rights of access along state highways and gave the State broad powers of land acquisition for the construction of freeways. It also required the state to reach an agreement with local governments before streets could be closed for the construction of

a freeway. This clause gives cities and counties considerable leverage regarding freeway design and location. Within two weeks of the passage of the Freeway Law, the California Highway Commission approved the first group of Freeway declarations involving 34 miles of highways. Among these was the Arroyo Seco Parkway, for which construction started in 1936.

1939 also saw the completion of a statewide highway planning survey. The focus of this survey was on the rural state highway system. It inventoried the system and presented traffic data to justify the contention that much of the system was deficient in meeting current traffic needs. Notably, the report stated that 47% of the system was still not surfaced, many roads were becoming worn out, and hundreds of bridges suffered from structural deficiencies.

This concludes the first part of John's edited history of the various highway agencies to 1939. The next part will be to look at Federal and State Routes in Orange County as they existed when initial signage occurred in 1934.

[While all this information is available at www.cahighways.org, John has waded through a myriad of material (some 65 pages) to compose this condensed version.]





ONE OF THE INTERESTING ASPECTS OF RESEARCHING POSTCARDS is learning about the photographers whose works appears on many cards. The above card used in the book presents more questions than it answers. Taken in Orange County Park in 1927, a group of women and children. Who are the women and why were they posing for a picture? Did they belong to an organization or were they family? All these questions came to Richard who had taken the cards for Irvine and Irvine Park to research.

Clearly the photographer's name was Nielen, maybe if we knew more about him we would have a clue about these young women. At the Orange County Archives, Chris Jepsen tapped into ProQuest Historical Newspapers Los Angeles Times (1881-1982). There were several articles, the most interesting one was written in 1936. It told of his huge photo collection numbering 100,000 taken of the scenic wonders in practically every county on earth. The article was titled, "Tribute Paid California." Andries Nielen, retired business man from Ohio gives his views on the most beautiful places he has photographed.

"California is the most beautiful State in the Union and the most charming domain of its dimensions in all the world. Next to California, I probably would class Hawaii on the beauty list, with Switzerland coming third."

Further research, with the help of Deb Richie at CSUF, from the *Encyclopedia of American Biography*, we learned more about his business and what happened to his photographs. Mr. Nielen (1850-1940) owned a Cincinnati firm which distributed teas, spices and a variety of household products established in the 1880s. He headed the company until his death but essentially retired in 1905 to travel and pursue other interests. He was quite a philosopher, writing a publication, "Friendly Cheer" with his views on life as well as quoting wisdom from others. "The value of all things, even of our own life and time, depends on the use we make of them, and a man's worth to society should be measured largely by what he does when he doesn't need to do anything."



This postcard is Nielen's Christmas card for 1933. The picture is Nielen at his Los Angeles home from vintage postcards.com

His photographs often appeared on postcard format with a message reflecting his philosophy. At his death his collection of photographs and slides were given to the Cincinnati Public Library. Richard didn't learn any more about the Orange County Park card except why the card had the saying "Buds and Blossoms. A promise of fruit. The harvest will be the answer."

And the winner is
Beryl Viebeck

Beryl and her husband George are long time members of the Orange County Historical Society.

Both are Orange County natives. She is one of those Waffle babies. Dr. Willella Howe-Waffle came to the house on French Street to delivery Beryl. George was born in Fullerton. They owned a bakery, the B. Viebeck Bakery, at 312 S. Main Street, Santa Ana for 38 years. They still own the buildings but are retired from the business, now living in Lake Forest.



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- Board Meeting
- Thursday Nov. 3, 2005 at 7:00 PM
at Kidseum

November Meeting

- **Thursday, Nov. 10, 2005**
- Opening at 7:00 p.m.
- **Kidseum**
- Corner of 18th and Main Streets, Santa Ana
- **7:30 Program**
- **November Program**
Orange County Postcard Book
*My favorite card and what I learned
that wouldn't fit in the book and some
great cards we had to leave out.*
BY THE AUTHORS

BOOK SALE



All publications with an *
below **will be sold at 40 %
OFF** during October and
November 2005.

Books listed below in **BOLD** are pictured and described on our
website: 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.

December Program

Christmas at the Howe-Waffle
House and Medical Museum

**CIRCLE THE DISCOUNTED PRICE TO
INDICATE YOUR ORDER**

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Cañada de la Brea by Virginia Carpenter	\$10.00	* 6.50
Centennial Bibliography of Orange County	\$70.00	* 45.25
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Orange Countiana V Early Businesses soft In Orange County hard cover SOLD OUT	\$22.00 \$00.00	* 14.20
Orange County Through Four Centuries By Dr. Leo J. Friis	\$15.95	
The Orange Blossom 50 Years of Growth in Orange County	\$40.00	* 25.85
ORANGE COUNTY The Golden Promise by Pamela Hallan-Gibson 2002 edition	\$37.00	

3 NEW Images of America Series cities of Fullerton, Buena Park and Huntington Beach	\$21.50 each
Fruit Box Labels An Illustrated Guide to Citrus Labels by Gordon McClelland & Jay Last	\$35.00

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Postage and Handling (\$3.00 first item, \$1 each additional)
Bibliography of OC is **\$5** per book, \$1 each additional
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~ **MAIL TO:** John Sorenson, 14932 Gainford Circle, Irvine CA 92604
Call him (949) 559-5668 and he will bring your book/s to the next
meeting.

