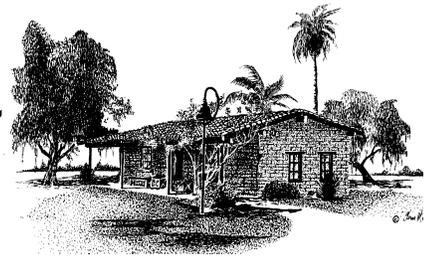


# Fairview Register

Monthly Publication of the Costa Mesa Historical Society  
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Website address: [www.costamesahistory.org](http://www.costamesahistory.org)

949-631-5918 DATE: February 2013  
E-mail address: [cmhistory@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cmhistory@sbcglobal.net)

## President's Message

### It Happened Here

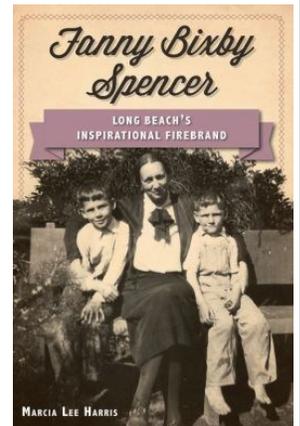


It has always been a pleasure to talk to visitors about the city's history. It makes no difference whether they are residents or from out of town because they are driven by curiosity. On occasion, I have found it amusing to see the surprise or astonishment on a person's face when he learns certain historical events took place "here." Most people will take a different view of where they are when they learn of its history. A place is just a place to us until something gives it meaning, a sense of value, importance, or uniqueness. When we learn about the history of where we live, more times than not, we feel a sense of pride. That's because we can't help but say to ourselves "Wow! That happened here." At our museum, there is a wide variety of information, which can appeal to almost any visitor. Those that take the time to look into the history of Costa Mesa find that the city has a long and interesting past. If you're into Archaeology, you might be interested to learn of the early Indian settlements here dating from 1500 B.C., or the archaeological digs of 1935 and 1962. You can visit the Diego Sepulveda Adobe in Estancia Park, originally built (1820-1823) during the Spanish-Mexican period, and learn about its almost two hundred year interesting history. You can learn about the early communities which would become the town of Costa Mesa. There are little known facts like how we were represented in the 1913 Los Angeles-to-Phoenix Road Race, or that Rochester Street is named for a soldier killed while fighting with the "Lost Battalion" of World War I. Learn about the damage to the downtown area resulting from the 1933 earthquake or the effects of the 1938 flood. Become informed about the Santa Ana Army Air Base (1942-1946), the largest of its kind, and its important contribution in WWII. Yes, there is so much to learn about Costa Mesa. Come tour the Historical Society Museum in Lions Park. Not only is it free, but you'll discover that it's not just a place, but that historical events took place here. Then you'll be able to say "It Happened Here."

Bob Palazzola

## Costa Mesa Historical Society Presents

**Marcia Lee Harris  
as Fanny Bixby  
Spencer,  
Long Beach's  
Inspirational  
Firebrand**



**Sunday, February 17, 2013  
Doors open 2pm  
Program at 2:30pm**

**Free Admission,  
Refreshments for All**

*Costa Mesa Historical Society Museum*  
1870 Anaheim Avenue  
Northwest Corner  
Lions Park Complex

Join us for an afternoon with author Marcia Lee Harris in her portrayal of Early Costa Mesan Fanny Bixby Spencer who, along with her husband W. Carl Spencer, sponsored the contest that gave Costa Mesa its name.

Marcia Harris became interested in Fanny Bixby Spencer when she started volunteering as a Living History Docent at the Rancho Los Cerritos historic site in Long Beach, CA. She began researching everything she could find about Fanny, obtaining copies of the poetry book Fanny wrote in 1916 as well as Fanny's unpublished manuscript from 1929.

Fanny Bixby Spencer (1879-1930) carved her own singular and eccentric path across California history. Born to wealth and power, she chose a boldly independent, egalitarian lifestyle in an age when women's lives were largely confined to domesticity.

So grab a friend and come on down to learn more about this fascinating woman!

Promoting and preserving Costa Mesa's history is our mission.

## Fairview Farms Association & Life in the 1930's

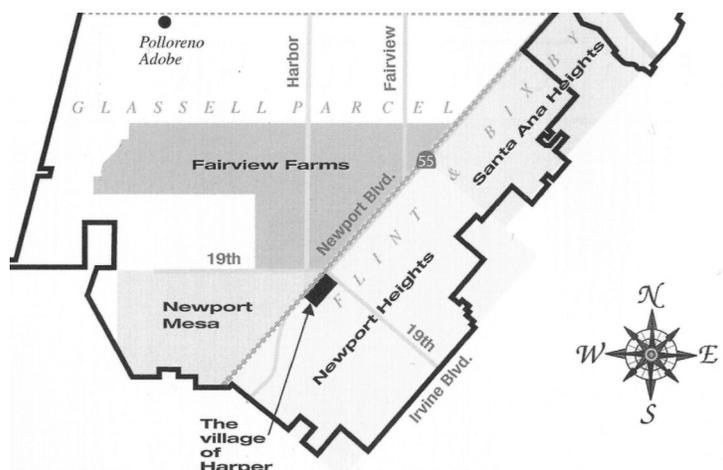
*Mrs. Donald (Edna) Gibson arrived in town in 1919 and lived here until 1943, and this is Part 2 of her story of life in Early Costa Mesa. For ease of reading, Mary Ellen Goddard's interview questions have been incorporated into Mrs. Gibson's responses.*

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Some of the areas on Mr. Schick's rural mail delivery route covered the Fairview Farms Association. Our side of the boulevard was Fairview Farms. Some of the farms, most of them, had apples. Some had oranges and a few had lemons and some them had truck gardens.

Fairview Farmers Association had meetings once a month. We most always met in a home. Ours was too small, so we went to some of the bigger homes, the Middletons and the Saltzberrys and the Smiths. Oh, I can't think of the others where we'd meet, but we had lots of fun. I was the only one who was native born.

There were bigger farms around than those in our association. There were wheat farms out around Fairview – some cattle and mostly grain and they had beans, too. They didn't belong to Fairview Farms Association. I've forgotten the names of the other associations. We had separate water districts, too. We paid so much for irrigation and that included our household use. We all just shared the expenses of the association. And anything else that came up. Sometimes there were other expenses like legal expenses or various things that we had to take care of. And we all helped



each other. We were grateful for that because we needed the advice and the help of other folks. We just sort of pooled the advice of a lawyer.

We had not known any of these people before we came to Harper, except Karl Knauff. Karl Knauff was a minister, and he was a teacher at USC. It was through him that we came to know about Costa Mesa. He had a group which was meeting in a church in Santa Maria. We attended the meeting and met him there. And he told us about this place. He had been in Fullerton but I think they moved to Los Angeles, while his parents moved to Costa Mesa, to an area known back then as Harper. His parents had a cottage in Harper, and he would visit them. There was Dr. Wherry too. He was a retired doctor and a great help to us. He was a great friend who was on the water board, as well.

I recall that shopping in the area was limited. There was a little store - at first I believe it was Long's. Fred Long had the store. And we got all our groceries from him and whatever else we could. If apples were in season in Costa Mesa, we got apples from the growers. We tried to get anything we could from the growers.

They had a few dry goods in this little store but just smaller items. For anything else in the way of clothing or anything extra we needed, we had to go to Santa Ana. We had an old Ford and it took quite a while to go to Santa Ana. We were so busy, and we didn't have time to go often.

In addition to apples the farmers grew lima beans. And sometimes after the lima beans had been threshed in a big field, we would go out and glean lima beans. We picked up enough lima beans to last us for the whole year. They had a machine to thresh them, so there were always some scattered around. I think that most people back then got along very well, as well as we did.

We raised vegetables. We raised quite a lot of garden stuff. I canned fruit whenever I could get fruit. But we didn't get a lot. We had some fruit. I had five orange trees, and I made orange marmalade. Of course we had orange juice all the time, as long as the oranges lasted. And lemon juice; we had a few lemons. After we took out the other trees we saved a few for our own use. But I would buy fruit and then can it. Oh, I was busy canning 150 quarts of fruit a year. Our family ate them all!

When we first came to Harper, LeRoy Bostwick was the first minister there at the Methodist Church on the corner of Center and Harbor. I can't remember all of the ministers after that. We had a minister, David Reid, who passed away. Grow Brown was a missionary from China who had retired, and he filled the pulpit for a while 'til we could get another minister. And then we had Lyman Bayard and Mr. Hasse and Mr. Lowe. We had a number of pastors.

The Methodist Church later built a parsonage. The first parsonage was across in Newport Heights, and then they built a new parsonage on the other corner of Center. They built the new church over by the grammar school. Well, the grammar school at first was over in the Heights. By the time my children went to school, it was close to us. We loved being across the lots just a short distance from the school and the new church.

I am trying to remember... I think Mrs. Kennedy was the first principal of the school when my children started. My daughter Doris never went to kindergarten. We didn't have kindergarten at first. Then Mildred Tummons came. Her father had a chicken ranch right close to us. And she taught kindergarten. So my boys went to her kindergarten class. She was real fine. Then Maude Davis came to the school. And later, Edith Curry joined the school. Then Mr. Abrams came, and I think when Mrs. Kennedy retired he became principal. Mr. Abrams was principal during the time my husband was driving the school bus. He was such a help; he was so good. And then Mildred Dack, who is Mrs. Fisher, came to the school and she was one of my kids' teachers. My sons Marvin and Arthur both had her in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

I remember how the town grew. My husband helped put in the new subdivisions. People welcomed others coming in. There was new business coming all the time. And, of course, they had to have a place to live. It was getting to where the farms didn't pay as well as they had. I think the apples got some kind of a disease [nematode, a parasitic worm]. It was hard to control. So that had to be given up, finally.

People worked away from here but lived here, too. Many of them worked in the oil fields in Huntington Beach. Some even worked in Long Beach and lived here. And they drove back and forth. And some of them commuted on the electric train to Los Angeles, which took about an hour.

In those days, I never worried about fire protection. At first we

didn't have any fire department. Then later we got a voluntary fire department and it was real good. Frank Vaughn was our first cop. Some people got to speeding after a while, and they had to be taken care of. They, especially the young people, resented that, of course, but it had to be done. All those years we had no official leadership in the town. All the association presidents got together and talked things over. They kind of worked things out. I don't remember just how they did it.



Frank Vaughn

I remember the earthquake of 1933. My husband was out milking a cow. He didn't have her fixed in the stanchion and she got up and left him. My oldest boy was in the kitchen with me. I was cooking supper, and the water splashed over onto the stove. The gas flamed up, and I had to hurry to turn off the gas to keep the flame from catching the curtains on fire. My son was frightened to death and went screaming out to his dad. My daughter Doris was up at the church. The Queen Esther girls, a missionary group, were having a dinner at the church, and she had brought a chocolate cake. Pretty soon she came running home carrying that cake; they hadn't even cut it. I can remember the telephone pole going back and forth – it was frightening. The piano was up against the wall and it came catty cornered out into the middle of the room.

Some of the houses weren't too well built, and they really crumbled but not too many of them. Our house was well built, I was thankful for that. But the school was a terrible mess. There was a program to be put on at 7:30 p.m. in the school. The earthquake happened about an hour before the program was to start. How thankful we were that it hadn't started yet. Just think how many people would have been in that collapsed building.

Only five years later, came the 1938 flood. It didn't do us any harm, but when we would go up on the Bluff and look out over the Santa Ana River Valley between Huntington Beach and Costa Mesa, it was all one big sheet of water. People who lived there on farms had to get out in boats.

In spite of the misfortunes of the earthquake and the flood, Costa Mesa had several sort of carnival-type events. They had the scarecrow carnival and probably several other festivals. The first year we didn't do anything about this (scarecrow) carnival, we just went and inspected it and enjoyed it. The second year, 1939, we entered a scarecrow. I made a woman that looked like a Dutch

dairy girl; it was cute, we thought. The festival queen was our neighbor, Martha Berry, and our son Marvin drove the car that she rode in. Her mother wasn't going to let her be the queen because they wanted her to dress in a bathing suit – just almost nothing – so they relented and let her wear a dress. She wore a beautiful dress her mother made. And she looked really pretty. We were proud of her. Marvin was proud to drive the car she rode in. And I got a third prize on my scarecrow!

*Next month: Costa Mesa in War Time & Life in the 1940's*

### Recent Museum Visitors

Thursday, January 24, 2013 was a red letter day for the volunteers at the Costa Mesa Historical Society when a cast member for South Coast Repertory's production "War Horse" stopped by. Jon Riddleberger introduced himself as the puppeteer for the head of the horse controlling the head, neck, and ears. Two others control the heart and the hind of the animal. The group started their preparations two weeks before the rest of the cast. The initial idea of the saga of the horse came from a children's novel by Michael Morpurgo about an English horse in World War I. Steven Spielberg made a movie from the play. The horse is seen as an innocent in war moving from the English to the German side responding to the kindness of men according to the fortunes of war. Jon portrayed the play as an anthem for peace. Summing up his impressions of SCR, our visitor called it "a cool theater with great audiences. Being in SoCal feels like being on vacation." The troupe had just come from Denver and will be touring the country until the end of May completing their year's tour.



Jon's background includes studying at New York University in its Experimental Theater program which includes acting, physical training, and offers an opportunity for the actor to create his own work. He feels fortunate to be in SCR's "War Horse" which utilizes theater in an exciting way encapsulating a particular moment in history.

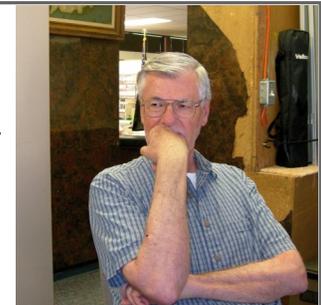
Jon's home base in New York City is with the Theater Reconstruction Ensemble [reconstructionensemble.org] Kathleen Stone, Jon's mother, has recently moved to Bloomfield, New Jersey. After touring our museum with Mary Ellen Goddard, Kathleen left promising to join the historical society in her new hometown.

*Kathy Bequette*

### In The Spotlight—

Art Goddard is an asset to the Historical Society. He not only provides technical support to our computer operations, but serves the Historical Society in many other ways. He has represented us at meetings with the City involving social and security issues. He has also been a spokesperson for us at various public events. He puts in more volunteer hours per week than anyone else. We are fortunate to have him on our team.

Art brings a wealth of experience to the Society including project management skills from his years in the aerospace industry. He is heading up our digitization projects focused on preserving our newspaper clipping files as well as the photo and film archives. Art is the liaison for our building engineering needs for both the Downtown Museum and the Estancia Adobe. When the Society receives out-of-area artifacts, Art interacts with historical societies near and far to find homes for the items. Ask his fellow volunteers and they will say that Art is a tremendous technical resource, always funny and sarcastic, and keeps things lively in the lunch-hour discussions. He is our person of the month In The Spotlight.



Art Goddard

*Bob Palazzola*

COSTA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O BOX 1764  
COSTA MESA, CA. 92628  
Phone (949) 631-5918

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## What's Happening

- ◆ **Sunday Speaker Series:** Sun. March 17—Richard Parks and “Hot Rods, Drag Strips, and Beyond.” Richard is the son of Wally Parks, Founder of the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) in 1951. Doors open 2pm; Program at 2:30pm. Costa Mesa Historical Society Museum, 1870 Anaheim Ave., Northwest Corner of Lions Park. Free admission/refreshments.
- ◆ **SAAAB Celebration 2013:** Sat. April 13—At Orange Coast College. Speaker: Jonna Doolittle Hoppes, granddaughter of General Jimmy Doolittle and the author of “Calculated Risk” and “Just Doing My Job.”
- ◆ **Like us on Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/costa\\_mesa\\_historical\\_society](http://www.facebook.com/costa_mesa_historical_society) 

Costa Mesa Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1764  
Costa Mesa CA 92628

### — Membership Form —

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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#### Membership Categories

Annual		Special	
Individual	\$ 15.00	Historical Society Life Member	\$ 1000.00
Family	\$ 20.00	SAAAB Wing Annual Member	\$ 10.00
Student (under 16)	\$ 5.00	SAAAB Wing Life Member	\$ 50.00
Contributing	\$ 50.00		
Business & Professional	\$ 100.00		
Public Agency	\$ 100.00		
Benefactor	\$ 250.00		

Make your checks payable to the Costa Mesa Historical Society.  
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