

# Fairview Register

Monthly publication of the Costa Mesa Historical Society, a non-profit 501(c)(3)

MEMBER: CONFERENCE OF CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETIES, NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION,  
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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We have had a good year! When we were children, the saying was, "Will Christmas ever get here?" Now we say, "Is Christmas here already?" We had many good things happen in 2017. Our accomplishments include:

- Contributing SAAAB photo displays and volunteer hours for the grand opening of Heroes Hall at the Orange County Fair & Event Center in February.
- Hosting successful meetings which attracted new members to the society including January's installation dinner with speaker Michele Richards and *From SAAAB Barracks to Heroes Hall*; February's Bring A Friend event; presenter Bob Minty and *Whaling Along the Orange County Coast* in March; historian Richard Duvall and *Early California Days* in May; historian Craig MacDonald and *Old West WOW!* in September; editors Lisa Alvarez & Andrew Tonkovich and *Orange County: A Literary Field Guide* in October; and author David K. Heyward and *A Young Man in the Wild Blue Yonder* in November.
- Participating in community events and setting up booths at 70th Annual Fish Fry, Concerts in the Park and Uncovering Hidden Histories in OC held at Irvine Ranch Historic Park.

All in all Society volunteers gave more than 6,000 hours of service to the organization and to the community in 2017. Thank you to our dedicated members:

Lead volunteer **Art Goddard** for all the amazing things he does from producing high-quality prints of old photographs to managing our technology needs. Head archivist **Mary Ellen Goddard** for everything, including handling the many requests from the public for historical information to organizing the acquisition and preservation of our collections. **Tess Bernstein** for taking on the role of 2nd VP of Membership, cataloging items, and overseeing Scarecrow Festival in the past. **Nancy Pedersen** in her role as Secretary while she devotes hours to the upcoming boat building exhibit The Hull Story. **Kathy Bequette** for managing the newspaper files, scheduling tours of the museums, helping out with refreshments, and overseeing the adobe. **Susan Weeks** in her role as treasurer – many thanks for an excellent job. **Annette Watson** who gave us four years of engaging newsletters – we will miss you.

## Special Event: Historical Society Installation Dinner

Join us **January 26 at 6 p.m.** at our new location, **Newport Rib Company**. This year's speaker is **David Whiting**, award-winning Metro columnist from the *OC Register*, whose talk, "Faith and Hope: Our American Land," will celebrate volunteers from across the country who stand up and make a difference. Dinner includes chicken and tri-tip, garlic mashed potatoes, roasted veggies, garden salad, corn bread and honey butter, brownies and cookies, and non-alcoholic drinks for only **\$25. Reservations and payments are due by Friday, January 19th.** See flier for payment form.

Thanks to 1st VP **Terry Shaw** for his persistence in organizing our speaker events and excellent programs. **Bob Palazzola**, past president, SAAAB newsletter editor, and our representative to Heroes Hall – your efforts are appreciated. **Dave Rusher** for taking on projects involving hours at the computer. **Cynthia Humphreys** for chairing the adobe event in May and helping out where needed. **Karl and Hope Von Herzen** for their dedication to helping build a database of local newspaper articles. **Sid Hallburn** for coming in each week and cleaning up the building.

Thanks to docents **Vickie Alcala Kelley** and **Lynn Alcala** who captivate visitors with stories of growing up in the adobe. **Sharon Dearing** for the many projects you take on. **Jean Nomura** for cataloging our collection. **Jan Rován, Dolores Minerich** and **Ursula Hartunian** for helping whenever needed. **Estelle Hughes** for cataloging the clothing and other textiles. **Beth Refakes** for setting up at the refreshment table during our programs. **Alex Golson** in your new role as adobe docent and more – thanks for joining us. Editor **D. Colon** – we are looking forward to reading your stories.

And lastly thank you to **Gladys Refakes** and your many years of service to the society. You are our ROCK!

Enjoy the holidays and we'll see you next year!

*Dave Gardner*

*President, Costa Mesa Historical Society*

## IN THIS ISSUE

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Celebrating 55 Years of Lil' Pickle

Promoting and preserving Costa Mesa's history is our mission

FAIRVIEW REGISTER, FAIRVIEW, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, MARCH 2, 1889

# Lost Landmark

The grandest home of boom-era Costa Mesa burned to the ground on Christmas Day, 1953

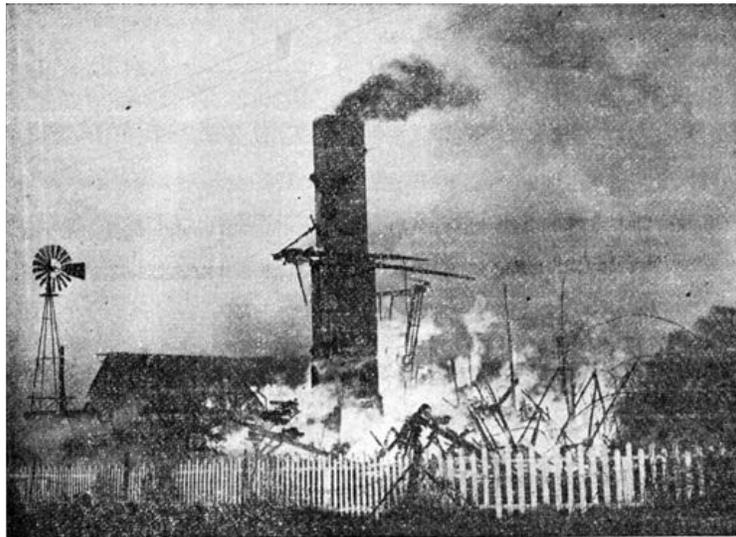
When George H. Clark visited the boomtown of Fairview in the spring of 1889, he declared the area “the prettiest place I have ever seen.” In a matter of weeks he sold his business interests in Chicago and purchased over 100 acres in what would later become Costa Mesa. He then set about building a house that would rival the beauty of the landscape.

The result was a grand three-story mansion boasting airy arched verandas, striking decorative shingles, intricate scroll work, ridge poles, a bay window, and stained glass. The interior overflowed with rooms, including a large reception hall, parlor, dining room, library, butler’s pantry, kitchen, four bedrooms, a bathroom, and servants’ quarters. Two features stood out: the massive fireplaces heating the parlor and dining room and the luxurious polished redwood running throughout.

The house quickly became a local landmark, with area pioneer Harvey Holden remembering it as “the most beautiful of all the houses in Fairview.”

The ranch stretched northwest from modern-day Baker and Fairview to roughly Harbor on the west and Gisler to the north, and sat across from the McClintocks and Yales. The ranch was home to the Bingham Creamery, a dairy, tennis courts, and a small cottage for the grandparents. The former executive exchanged the silk and tea trades for a new kind of stock, cultivating English walnuts and French prunes, white Adriatic figs and lusty-looking grapes, and goats and cattle. In 1891, Mr. Clark registered a newly calved Holstein-Friesian cow, “The Duchess of Fairview.”

Life on the mesa had its setbacks. The Fairview boom went bust. George’s father died and his wife left for Chicago to give birth to their second son, never to return. He lost \$2,000 when the Fairview general store, which he owned, burned down,



uninsured. And his plans to run an electric train from Santa Ana to Newport Beach never materialized. He left the area in 1902 in search of better education for his sons, eventually settling in Los Angeles after marrying his second wife, Elysabeth Clarke, his sons’ former schoolteacher, prominent educational activist, and daughter of Fairview founder A.L. Clarke.

Over the years the old house saw a variety of tenants, including Vernie Graser, Charles Borchard, and even the famous McClintocks, who spent a year in the house while they awaited the construction of their new Spanish-style home.

By the 1950s the property was owned by another local magnate: merchant, rancher, and real estate broker Ernest A. Watson of Tustin. His son Don moved into the house with his wife and children.

On Christmas Day 1953, we are told, the Watson family went out, leaving the tree illuminated. The lights shorted and sparked a fire that flared through the wooden house. Neighbors noticed dense smoke billowing from the chimneys around 3 p.m. One witness, the young nephew of Maureen McClintock Rischard, ran to his mother to alert her. As she called the fire department, the

boy and his father rushed across the street, rescuing three palomino horses locked in a corral next to the growing inferno.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Rischard was herself driving to the ranch. Approaching Baker from Newport Avenue, the fire loomed over the landscape some two miles away. She and her husband arrived to find the mansion — where she had passed a year of her childhood, playing dress-up in fancy clothes — engulfed in flames. They stood and watched, powerless. They took one last photograph before the former icon collapsed in front of them.

It took firefighters from Costa Mesa and Santa Ana Gardens two-and-a-half hours to extinguish the blaze. Only a nearby barn and garage were saved. As for the house, it was a total loss. “Mrs. Watson’s sterling silver was just a clump,” Mrs. Rischard recalled. “It was that hot a fire, with all that wood.”

Fittingly, perhaps, the loss of the boom-era landmark occurred during the frenzy of another boom. “New Subdivision Maps Swamp Planners” reads one 1954 headline. Within 18 months of the fire, ground was broken on one of the first modern planned developments in Costa Mesa, the Halecrest tract, and the Clark ranch welcomed a new kind of pioneer. ■

*“Mrs. Watson’s sterling silver was just a clump, it was that hot a fire, with all that wood.”*

# Celebrating Lil' Pickle

The popular sub shop has been serving Costa Mesa for over five decades

Even though Pete Bower has owned Lil' Pickle almost 13 years, people still come in and ask, "Are you the new owner?" But that's what happens when you own a 55 year old institution.

Every week, he says, he'll get a customer who will say, "My mom used to bring me in here when I was a kid. Now I'm bringing my kids in." Or, looking at the team photos lining the walls, one will say, "That's my sister, that's my brother, that's me, 20 years ago."

James DiCamilli first opened Lil' Pickle on 17th Street in 1962, moving to Fairview and Baker in the early 1970s — where it's been ever since.

Mr. Bower, who previously ran Pizza Pete's and Balboa Beach Treats near the Balboa Pavilion, was introduced to Mr. DiCamilli through a friend. When the latter decided to retire in 2005, he handed the keys to Mr. Bower.

Since then, Lil' Pickle added a 14" sub. And, for a personal touch, Mr. Bower — an avid golfer — added golf gear to the sports-themed decor.

But other than that, the sub shop remains much as Mr. DiCamilli left it, including the sandwiches, the layout, the



photographs, and the popular avocado spread. And it's still family run.

Sticking to tradition has helped make Lil' Pickle what it is today: a buzzing neighborhood spot reflecting the diverse community around it, where plumbers, lawyers, electricians, students, coaches, and professors alike rub shoulders.

In gratitude for its continued support, Lil' Pickle gives back to the community every year, sponsoring a wide variety of causes, with a focus on youth and college athletics and other local organizations. Mr. Bower is proud to make Mr. DiCamilli's devotion to the community a central part of Lil' Pickle's mission.

Popular subs include "The Lil' Pickle," made with salami, capicola, and cheese, and "The Natural," a healthier choice with turkey, cheese, and avocado spread on a wheat roll. The pastrami is popular, too.

No matter what you order, you'll get a taste of history when you come to this long-standing local institution.

Lil' Pickle is located at 2985 Fairview Rd. and is open 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. daily. ■

## Shop with us on Amazon

Every time you start your order with Amazon Smile, Amazon will donate to the Costa Mesa Historical Society. Visit [smileamazon.com](http://smileamazon.com) before making your next purchase, being sure to check "charitable organization" and selecting the Costa Mesa Historical Society when prompted. You can use your existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile.

## Support us – Donate!

As the year comes to a close, please consider making a donation to the Costa Mesa Historical Society. Either call 949-631-5918 during museum hours or send a check, c/o Susan Weeks, Treasurer, to PO Box 1764, Costa Mesa, CA 92628. PayPal users can also donate online at [www.paypal.me/costamesahistory](http://www.paypal.me/costamesahistory). The Costa Mesa Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization. **All donations are fully tax deductible.**

## Dues Overdue?

Your dues provide **essential support** for the society's major programs and projects. Make sure you're up to date by looking at your **dues expiration date** on the address label to the right of your name. If your dues are due, send us a check, c/o Susan Weeks, Treasurer. Or drop it off on a Thursday or Friday from 10am to 3pm. Membership dues are listed on the back page.

## Make a Difference – Volunteer

Help the society meet essential needs while meeting others who share your love of Costa Mesa history. We're looking for a volunteer to **set up refreshments** at our monthly programs as well as members to sit on two new committees: the **Newspaper Assembly Committee** prepares the newsletter for mailing, while the **Adobe Committee** recruits volunteers to plan an event, become a docent, or work on exhibits. Committees meet monthly and are chaired by board members. Interested? Call us at 949-631-5918. Isn't it more fun to work as a team?

## Temporary Parking Instructions

For the next year and a half, please enter the parking lot serving our society, the Donald Dungan Library and the Recreation Center by entering from Anaheim only, not Park. The Park entrance is completely blocked off.

## Visit Us

### Diego Sepulveda Adobe

1900 Adams Ave. • Open 12-4 p.m. the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month or by appointment.  
Costa Mesa's oldest building presents 200 years of OC history from its beautiful setting in Estancia Park, overlooking the Santa Ana River bed.

### Costa Mesa Historical Society Museum

1870 Anaheim Ave. • Open 10am-3pm Thursdays and Fridays or by appointment.

The museum and society headquarters displays a mind-boggling array of artifacts from nearly 5,000 years of Costa Mesa history – from the first peoples to the City of the Arts.

## Share Your Story

History is made by people like you. We'd love to hear your Costa Mesa stories from the 1960s to today. Many changes have taken place and we want to hear from those who lived through them. Write the memories yourself or come to the museum and we'll transcribe them for you. It's that simple!

## Thank You, Copy 4 Less NB

Our printer discounts our costs throughout the year. Thank you so much for this, **Copy 4 Less NB** – we really appreciate it! Visit Copy 4 Less at 4360 Campus Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660 near the John Wayne Airport or call (949) 252-8960.

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**— Membership Form —**

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Categories**

<b>Annual</b>		<b>Special</b>	
Individual	\$ 20.00	Historical Society Life Member	\$ 500.00
Individual Senior (60+)	\$ 15.00	SAAAB Wing Annual Member	\$ 10.00
Family	\$ 25.00		
Student (under 16)	\$ 10.00		
Contributing	\$ 50.00		
Business & Professional	\$100.00		
Public Agency	\$100.00		
Benefactor	\$250.00		

Make your checks payable to the Costa Mesa Historical Society.  
The Society, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, operates under the Corporation Laws of the State of California.