

# FULLERTON HERITAGE

Spring ❁ Volume 7 ❁ Number 2  
May, 2001

## Ernie Chapman Recalls Past at Landmark #1 Ceremony

Ernie Chapman recently joined Fullerton Heritage, the City of Fullerton and friends and family to dedicate the installation of the Chapman Park plaque designating it as Fullerton Local Landmark #1. The Chapman family has been and continues to be a driving force in the continuing evolution of Fullerton and Orange County. Ernie Chapman, born in 1911, grew up in a Fullerton few of us could visualize today. At the time the area was not yet a city. Fullerton incorporated in 1904, after a failed attempt in 1902. During the 1902 election the proposed city encompassed only one square mile. This election was influenced by four saloons that opposed incorporation, fearing the increased regulation that would accompany the change. Charles Chapman, who was vehemently opposed to saloons in town, joined an effort to expand the city limits to eighteen square miles, including many farms whose owners also opposed the saloons. The next election, in 1904, was successful with the tally 185 for – 44 against, and Fullerton became a city. Charles Chapman was elected Fullerton's first mayor.

The Chapman family orchards grew citrus, walnuts and peaches on much of the land that is now Fullerton. The family's decision to plant ten acres of Valencia oranges was originally scoffed at by other area growers. However, the Chapman's ability to ship the fruit to other areas of the country in

the dead of winter established the variety as a viable business. This was the first time the "California sunshine" of the citrus industry was available at that time of year on the East Coast. Over 90% of the Chapman's citrus harvests went to New York and Ohio. At the peak of the citrus industry the county had over 200,000 acres of citrus, which were mostly Valencia oranges from those original ten acres. Ernie's father became known as the "Father of the Valencia Orange Industry."

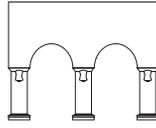
Charles Chapman remained active in managing the ranches and his other business ventures until he retired at age 80. When he passed away ten years later, the area that is now Chapman Park was still a citrus ranch, with the packinghouse located nearby. Ernie, who graduated from college in 1933, had worked summers on the ranch and in the packing house, and he took over the management of the ranches until they were sold in 1954. He had accompanied his father on business trips to San Francisco, and fondly remembers taking overnight train trips on the Lark and the Owl, arriving in San Francisco in time for breakfast.

As much as the Chapman businesses have affected the city, so have their charitable contributions. The entire family has made numerous gifts of land, buildings, time and money to groups such as the YMCA, of which Ernie is still an active proponent and member, the Boys and Girls Club, local

schools and Chapman University among others. In 1955, when the family sold the home ranch, Ernie and his brother Stanley gifted to the city the land that is Chapman Park, named after their father Charles Chapman. Soon after that gift Stanley wrote words to go on a plaque commemorating their father. Nothing happened with those words until 45 years later when Bob Linnell, city staffer and a member of Fullerton Heritage, encouraged the city staff to resurrect the paperwork as a part of Fullerton Heritage's project to commemorate local landmarks. The plaque was finally installed and dedicated on November 18, 2000.

These local landmarks are connections to the people and events that have shaped our community. Ernie Chapman is an amazing individual, whose memories of what our city was like in days gone by, creates a bridge to the past. So visit Chapman Park and imagine the Valencia orange orchards stretching across the landscape. Catch the scent of orange blossoms in the air, if only for a moment. From those humble beginnings, the City of Fullerton was born. Thanks to Ernie Chapman and the entire Chapman family for the park and the foundations of the city, upon which we now build the future for generations to come.

by Bliss Erlich



# Advocacy Issues

by *Katie Dalton*

**First Methodist Episcopal Church:** This stunning Gothic Revival brick church located at the corner of Pomona and Amerige is Fullerton's latest addition to the National Register of Historic Places. Owned by the Church of Religious Science, it has been lovingly preserved and restored including seismic repair completed after the Whittier earthquake. The extensive research and application process for National Register listing was completed by FH board member Debora Richey with help from the church's historian, Phylcia Bernstein. Watch for news of the plaquing ceremony in the near future.

**Morgan Group Project:** City Council recently approved a new residential multi-story project to be built near the intersection of Harbor and Chapman in Fullerton's historic downtown. The project will be built on the property that is now the city public parking lot between the Self-Realization Fellowship Church on the east and the former American Savings building on the west. In addition, approval included vacating a portion of Whiting Avenue (between Harbor and Pomona) to allow the building to continue onto the property south that borders on the new Downtown Plaza. Fullerton Heritage's concerns included design elements, size and scale, and compatibility with adjacent structures, especially the historic church to the east. In part, as a result of our efforts, the design was modified to include a step-back of the top story to decrease the impact on the church.

**Hillcrest Park Renovation:** The design review is complete for the next phase of the park's improvements. The historic American Legion Building will receive minor exterior modifications to correct drainage problems. A portion of the historic stonework wall will be exposed and restored to the west of the building and a new patio and picnic area will be added adjacent to the building to increase the potential use of the facility. A preservation sensitive architect was hired to work on this project, reinforcing the city's commitment to preservation of the park's historic elements.

**Plaza Tree Lot:** The City Council, after numerous public hearings and pressure from community groups, approved transfer of ownership of the lot at the southwest corner of Pomona and Wilshire from the Redevelopment Agency to the City to be used for public purposes.

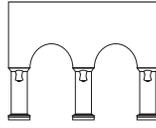
The only opposition to retaining the land for public use came from a private business owner who wanted to buy it to build his new office building and a couple of City Council members who seemed to think the price the city could get for the land was somehow of greater value than the collective good expressed by local citizens repeatedly for the past two years. If this latest Council decision holds (we are holding our breath) the immediate plan is to improve the parcel as a small public park as a softer greenscape complement to the Downtown Plaza across the street.

**FH Member Appointed To RDRC:** Bruce Hostetter, FH member and owner of a historic home in one of Fullerton's residential preservation zones, was recently appointed to the RDRC (Redevelopment Design Review Committee) by the City Council. Bruce's technical background as a landscape architect and a lighting designer, coupled with his sensitivity to preservation and Fullerton's architectural heritage, will make him a valuable and much welcome addition to the RDRC. The committee oversees design issues in the redevelopment project areas and the residential preservation zones, as well as issues related to local historic landmark buildings and significant properties covered by the Landmark Ordinance.

**Police Department Expansion Update:** Final site and architectural plans for the expansion were approved by RDRC recently including many positive changes that will make the new building more compatible with the original historic Commonwealth building. No further design review is planned and the next step will be the bid process for the project that should begin in the next couple of months. Seismic work on the Commonwealth building is nearly complete.

**Revival of Fullerton's Oldest Drinking Establishment:** Local business owners Sean Francis and Carlo Terranova (Hub Café) received approval from the Planning Commission and City Council to renovate Fullerton's oldest drinking establishment into their vision, the Continental Martini Lounge. The historic brick building at 115 W. Santa Fe Avenue opened in 1925 as J.L. Leon's Billiards and Tavern and operated throughout the next 67 years as a series of taverns until it closed for good in 1992. With renovation currently in full swing, Francis and Terranova hope to open sometime in June. Relics from the past uncovered during renovation include newspapers

*(continued on page 4)*



## President's Corner

by *Tom Dalton*

Why have Fullerton Heritage? What is so unique about our city that it merits having a group of people dedicated to preserving its historic architectural resources and environments? For many of us there are the usual reasons people feel a need to protect old things; once they are gone you can never get them back, new buildings and parks don't have the same character as vintage ones, newer (read Brea) is not necessarily better.

Recently I discovered another reason to want to preserve Fullerton's past for the future. I had the pleasure of spending a few hours with a member of one of Fullerton's most prominent pioneer families, former mayor Ernie Chapman. During our time together he spoke of what it was like to live in Fullerton in the early part of the twentieth century before there were paved roads and electricity.

His father's orange grove and ranch were in east Fullerton where tract houses and commercial buildings now stand. On the wall of his office are pictures of his family's beautiful home, the working ranch houses and the productive groves, all of which are now gone. At the corner of what is now State College Boulevard and Commonwealth Avenue the family home, having been vacant for a number of years, actually survived into the mid 1960s before it succumbed to a fire of suspicious origin. What a shame to lose this important part of our city's heritage through pure neglect. Fortunately, we still have the Chapman Building and the Fox Theatre as reminders of just how important this family is to the creation of Fullerton as a city. It's hard to imagine what our city would be like today if the Chapmans had not come to Fullerton. I think it is important that we are careful to not allow any more of our historic buildings to suffer the same fate as the Chapman family home. We owe it to our pioneer families, to ourselves and to future generations.

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## Plaque Committee Sets Priorities

by *Katie Dalton*

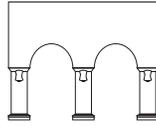
The members of the plaque committee of Fullerton Heritage have been meeting to discuss the next priorities for recognizing Fullerton's historic buildings. With the recent listing of First Methodist Episcopal Church on the National Register of Historic Places, design for the plaque and planning for an event have begun. The committee has also begun to prioritize our Local Landmark buildings for the next series of plaquings following the dedication of Chapman Park, Local Landmark #1. The preliminary list includes Amerige Brothers Real Estate Office, Police Station, Museum Center, Hotel California, Pacific Electric Depot, Dean Block, First Lutheran Church, Rutabagorz, Dewella Apartments, Methodist Parsonage, El Dorado Ranch House and the Hale House. Also, we are continuing with the research and application process on other potential National Register Buildings in Fullerton. Watch for future notice of plaquing events.

## Walking Tours of Historic Downtown Scheduled

We hazard a guess that members of Fullerton Heritage are interested in their city's history. For some years we have offered walking tours of the downtown area emphasizing the people, events, architecture and art of the Fullerton of the 1890s to today. The difference between your own self guided tour and the docent led walks is the personalization of the Fullerton of days gone by.

The next such walk is scheduled for Sat., June 2 at 9:30 am. The next scheduled tour will take place on September 22. We will meet at the Museum Center, Pomona and E. Wilshire. The walk will take about 1 1/4 hours. There are a few (optional) steps. This is an opportunity to gain some new insights into our city's lively past. The tour is free to members of Fullerton Heritage, with a \$5 per family charge for guests. Anyone may join Fullerton Heritage at the beginning of the tour.

Please call the hotline at 714-740-4051 to reserve spaces as the maximum number of participants is 15. Come and enjoy this event.



## Preservationists, Homeowners to Be Recognized

For the third year, Fullerton Heritage plans to announce winners of the "Preservationist of the Year" Award at its annual meeting in June. In addition, a "Golden Hammer" award is being planned to recognize homeowners who have restored their vintage homes. For the first time, we are soliciting the membership for nominees. Contact FH via the Hotline for your suggestions for individuals who qualify for this recognition.

## Welcome to New Members

New members to Fullerton Heritage include: Terry and Marilyn Galvin; Beth Dieckhoff; F.W. and Fl. Schremp; Nancy Spencer; Dr. and Mrs. Richard Hopping; and Joseph Fuller. Welcome to Fullerton Heritage!

## Advocacy

*continued from page 2*

from 1922 and whiskey bottles from the 1930's and 40's. The goal of the renovation is a 1960's vintage martini bar that preserves the building's original use and provides a creative example for revitalizing this blighted block in historic downtown Fullerton. Kudos to Sean and Carlo for their vision and creativity.



### Board of Directors 2000-2001

Warren Bowen / Tom Dalton / Katie Dalton  
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Cathy Thomas

Fullerton Heritage / P.O. Box 3356 Fullerton,  
California 92834-3356  
Hotline: (714) 740-3051  
www.fullertonheritage.org

## Good Contractor, Handyman or Supplier? Share Them!

We are working on a Restoration Resources Guide to aid owners of historic properties in their improvement projects. If you have any "tried and true" craftsmen, contractors, supply/hardware resources etc., please send their names, addresses, and phone numbers to Fullerton Heritage, P.O. BOX 3356 Fullerton, CA 92834, or call the Hotline to leave the information at (714) 740-3051.

### Join Fullerton Heritage

**Yes,** I want to support Fullerton Heritage in preserving Fullerton's historic cultural and architectural resources.

Please check one:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Student            | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Friend       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Senior (65 & over) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Corporate    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Individual         | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Patron       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Non-profit         | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Benefactor  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Family             | <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ Additional |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Small Business     | Contribution                                |

I would like to be active in Fullerton Heritage, and am interested in the following activities:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy/Issues      | <input type="checkbox"/> Restoration Resources          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Programs/Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic home tours            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter           | <input type="checkbox"/> Downtown walking tours         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publications         | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Survey Update         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landmark Nominations | <input type="checkbox"/> Other interests (please list): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising          |   |

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE (H): \_\_\_\_\_

(W): \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL/FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

- Renewal     New Member     Gift Membership

Send your check along with this form to:  
Fullerton Heritage / P.O. Box 3356 / Fullerton,  
California 92834-3356