

# HERITAGE

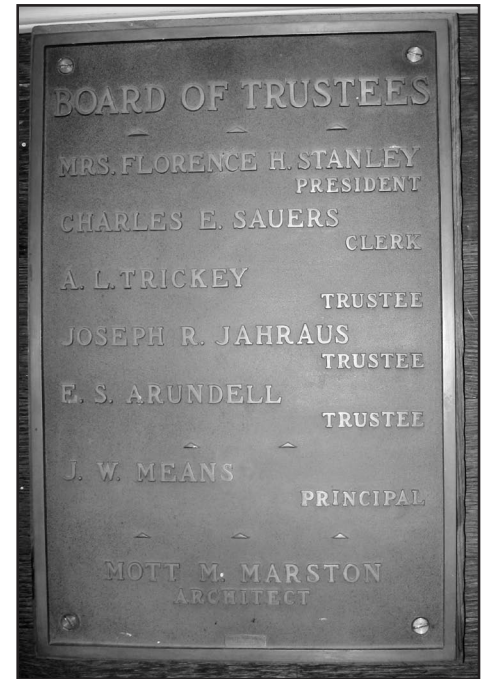
Volume 35 No 1

A Publication of the Tustin Area Historical Society

January/February 2010

## SERENDIPITY

Our Museum likes to think that we do a good job of preserving Tustin's history, and we treasure every artifact, so it thrills us when we get an opportunity to return one of them to its rightful home. We now find ourselves in the serendipitous position of being able to do that. As many of you are aware, the school district's plans to demolish Tustin High School in its present location have been cancelled. The quad area of the school is now undergoing major construction, to be followed by more exciting changes shortly. The goal is to make the school, rebuilt in 1969, reminiscent of the 1923 campus that many of us remember. As luck would have it, Bill Teter, one of our new Directors and a retired manager for the District, followed up on a hunch, and located the marble monument engraved "Tustin Union High School, 1923". We were excited. Still missing, though, was the original bronze plaque with names of the 1923 Board of Trustees (three from Tustin, one each from Laguna and Irvine) that had been bolted to it. Sharon Teter, Bill's wife, being less well-acquainted with the Museum than the rest of us, noticed a plaque that we knew was there but managed to ignore, leaning against a wall in the building. Apparently the two parts had been separated when the original school building was demolished in 1969 – the plaque going to the museum for safe keeping, the monument tucked away in the murky depths of a school storage shed. Jonathan Blackmore, principal of Tustin High and a history buff himself, was thrilled at the discovery and is eager to incorporate the monument and its plaque in a second quad planned for the campus. It will have a place of honor among other artifacts from the original campus that have been uprooted during construction. We're pleased the Museum could help make this happen.



## REINVENTING THE WHEEL

As you know, we've been in this building for many years and hope to continue here for many more. The full basement beneath the building is indispensable to us and over the years, our half of it has become packed with Tustin's history – everything from vintage issues of the Tustin News and McGuffey's Readers to furniture and farm implements. Few of us venture down there, a handful of us are aware of what treasures it holds, and one of us, Doug Manning, actually knows where everything is - or did. There has been a recent shift in our fellow building tenants, i. Initial now occupying the corner formerly used by the Chamber of Commerce. Because of i. Initial's printing needs, a shift in basement space was necessary, and our artifacts were all moved to the opposite end. Things were shoved hastily into our new space with no thought to, nor time for, a logical order. The move wasn't pretty, but it's been a blessing. Nothing helps the museum rediscover treasures like an enforced reorganization, and we're in the midst of that now. Shelves are being built, items grouped, broken and unused office equipment eliminated. When the dust finally settles, look for a photo of our new storage space in a future edition of the newsletter.

**NEXT MEETING**  
**Tuesday, February 16, 2010**  
**7:30 p.m.**  
**Tustin Senior Center**  
**COMMUNITY ROOM**  
**• PROGRAM •**  
**Speaker Maralys Wills**  
**Author of**  
***A Circus without Elephants***  
**Everyone is Welcome!**

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A Publication of  
The Tustin Area Historical Society  
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Tustin, CA 92781

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Newsletter Editor** Joyce Miller

**Newsletter Production** Anchor Printing

## Museum Hours

Every Tuesday and Thursday

9 am – 2 pm

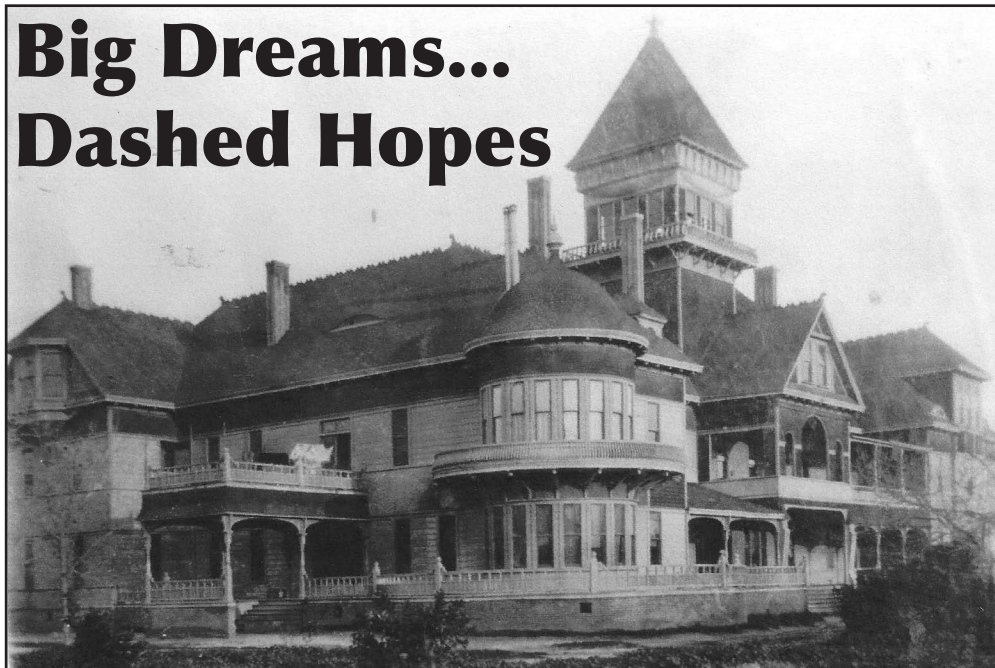
First and Third Saturday  
of each month

12 pm – 3 pm

**Open to Visitors  
Admission is Free**

# Historical HAPPENINGS

## Big Dreams... Dashed Hopes



*continued from November/December Heritage*

Tustin, Olive, Santa Ana, and El Modena were not alone in their quest for growth during the land boom of the 1880s. Orange, Anaheim, and Costa Mesa were equally intent on attracting speculators to their towns. Their early histories are written in their hotels.

Orange was an early entrant in the hotel race. The wooden, two-story Plaza Hotel, built as a sanitarium in 1875 and razed in 1905, occupied the west side of Glassell just south of the Plaza. When it ceased to operate as a hotel in 1888, the two-story Vineland Hotel, built in 1886 by Dr. W.F. Bailey on West Chapman, took its place and was still in use as a boarding house as late as 1931. The place to be seen, though, was at the Palmyra, an enormous, and slightly ginger-bready, two story hotel constructed in 1887 by C.V. Culver on the corner of Glassell and Palmyra. With the collapse of the local economy in 1889, followed by the precipitous departure of Mr. Culver, it began a long downhill slide, its remaining parts finally destroyed in 1970. Even more glamorous than the Palmyra would have been the three-story Hotel Rochester on West Chapman. Built of brick at about the same time as the Palmyra, it wasn't yet finished when the bottom dropped out of the economy, and although there were attempts to turn it to another purpose, it was finally demolished in 1931.

It's not surprising that Anaheim, with its thriving vineyards, was home to Los Angeles County's first hotel. An 1865 wood frame hotel, built by John Fischer as an adjunct to the town's grape and wine industry, unfortunately met the same fate as many of the early hotels, succumbing to fire in 1871. The following year, the three-story Anaheim Hotel rose on West Center (Lincoln) and Lemon Streets. Adequate and plain, it was overshadowed in 1888 by the Hotel

del Campo at the corner of Broadway and Olive. For sheer opulence and grandeur (see photo), it was second to none, with its third-story widows' walk and bell tower, its turreted corners, and its porte cochere to shelter arriving guests at its grand entryway. In 1905, as Anaheim's downtown area continued to expand, it was demolished to make room for other commercial ventures, a great loss to lovers of architecture.

Owing to a privately financed narrow gauge railway planned to run from Santa Ana to the coastal wharf, the towns of Harper, Paularino, and Fairview sprang up. Of these, Fairview, with its natural mineral hot springs, was the most successful, and the Victorian three-story Hotel Fairview was built in 1888. When land speculation waned in 1889, it was raised and rolled four blocks closer to the hot springs, but this didn't seem to improve the prospects of either the town or the hotel. Both have been gone for decades, the land they stood on absorbed by Costa Mesa and its many commercial buildings along Harbor Boulevard.

Coming out of a super-heated market ourselves, we can appreciate what drove these small towns to such heights of speculation and anticipation. They, as we, have discovered the good times don't last forever, though, and the many spectacular hotels that rose on this quiet agricultural plain are now lost to memory and museum archives...but what hotels they were, and what an exciting time to have lived in Orange County!

To see photos of some of the hotels mentioned in this article, the photo archives of the Historical Societies of both Orange and Anaheim can be viewed online.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year everyone. I am looking forward to having a good year for the Tustin Area Historical Society and Museum under the leadership of an enthusiastic Board of Directors. The 2010 Board was duly elected this past November. Newly elected Board members are Mark Adamson, Pete Beatty, Tony Coco, Sindi Corwin, Frank Sellers, Nancy Tschiderer and George Jeffries. Returning board members are Gregg Bunch, Joyce Miller and Erma Zwirner with Joe Sprekelmeyer as President; Bill Teter as Vice President, Gretchen Whisler as Recording Secretary and George Jeffries as Treasurer.

There are 13 members all together, and I appreciate and thank them for accepting their positions. Committees have been appointed and plans for future events are under way. The Promenade Home Tour date is Saturday, May 1st, and the date for the Chili Cook-Off is Sunday, June 6th. Volunteers would be appreciated.

Our Office Manager, Barbara Hannegan, recently had major surgery and is recovering at home. We wish her well and hope to see her back at the office in the near future.

I hope to see you all at our February 16th (Tuesday) General Meeting where we will have a guest speaker and the president of awards for the Third Grade Art Contest.

*Joe Sprekelmeyer, President*

## MEMBERSHIP COUPON

Join the Tustin Area Historical Society and keep your newsletter coming. Please send your dues or an additional gift today. All dues and contributions are tax deductible. Ask a friend to join!

ANNUAL DUES: (Please check one)

- \$20-\$34 Contributor
- \$35-\$59 Explorer
- \$60-\$99 Colonist
- \$100-\$249 Settler
- \$250-\$499 Frontier
- \$500-\$999 Pioneer
- \$1,000 Heritage
- Renew       New

Special Contribution as Friends  
of the Museum \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make your check payable to:  
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P.O. Box 185 • Tustin, CA 92781

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## GOING...GOING..... AND MAYBE GONE?

If you're a fan of military history – or just Tustin's history – you might want to check out the DVD "Tustin Hangars - Titans of History". It was shown last September by the City of Tustin in a presentation open to the public. If you missed that, it can be viewed at our museum or on-line at the City's website, and a copy of it can be purchased from the City. We would like to think that at least one blimp hangar will always be a part of our landscape, but its future is always a bit in doubt.

## In Memoriam

Audrey Pieper Forney  
John H. Lawder

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## MARALYS WILLS, REDUX

We are thrilled to welcome back local author Maralys Wills to our February 16th (Tuesday) meeting. A very entertaining speaker with a fascinating personal story of her own, she was a huge hit last year at one of our meetings and now has written a new book, the light-hearted *A Circus without Elephants*. She is joining us to share stories from that novel and also from its sequel, *A Clown in the Trunk*. Not only has Maralys written several books based on the lives of her family members, she also writes fictional romances and thrillers, holds writing seminars at numerous nearby universities and colleges, and makes frequent guest-speaking appearances. I hope you will make a real effort to be with us for this event. We promise you that it won't disappoint!

