



REDLANDS

CHRONICLES

January 2014

Growing Up in Redlands in the 1950s

Monday, January 27, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.
Assembly Room at A.K. Smiley Public Library
125 W. Vine Street

The decade of the 1950s was an exciting time for the citizens of Redlands. The post World War II period saw unprecedented growth and development of the City. It also ushered in the start the decline of the citrus industry for the region.

The program for January will allow us to look back at the decade that had the greatest cars and music of all time! We have assembled a panel of experts that experienced this decade first hand. Our panel will be headed by Donna Wright Hunter ('58), Tim Farmer ('59) and Dodie Hodson Farmer ('60) and several others.

Join us for an evening of reminiscing and viewing photos for this remarkable period. You are encouraged to dress as you would in the 1950s.

Old House Group Meeting

Wednesday, January 22, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.
1228 S. Center Street

Throughout 1891, the *Citrograph* followed the building progress of the residence of A. E. Sterling, complimenting it as a “handsome....fine-looking dwelling, and a credit to the city”. The newspaper even named the brand of the “gas machine to be used in lighting the residence”. Alfred Elisha Sterling came to Redlands in 1887. An orange grower, he was also the president of the Redlands Heights Water Company. His wife, Lena, was one of the founding members of the Contemporary Club.

The original property extended from Crescent to Highland, on Center Street, but is not to be confused with the Sterling Mansion, also on Crescent, and built by Alfred's brother in 1897.

After the purchase of land for \$2,500 from Edward Wilmot, the construction began and the reported cost was \$4,500. While it was being built, a flash flood struck and many of the materials and tools were swept from the project site down to Highland Avenue.

According to an 1891 building roster in *The Facts*, the home had eleven rooms. It featured a speaking pipe which connected the third floor with the kitchen -once the domain of the Sterling's Chinese cook, Ah Gong.

The Sterlings left by 1920 and subsequent owners include the Schall, Cromas, and Spelman families. Dr. Spelman was director of the University of Redlands school of music. In 1960 Alvin & Mary Faragher

purchased the house. Their son David, who grew up here, is an accomplished musician who has worked with John Hiatt and Elvis Costello.

Current owners Don and Arlene Benson love to collect all the family stories they can find about the house they have occupied since 1995.

They even have on display some artifacts of

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A Letter from your President...

I am hopeful that each member had a wonderful Holiday Season and that the New Year will bring happiness to you and your entire family.

On December 10th the Society held its Annual Holiday Party at the home of Frank and Rosemary Herendeen. Their beautifully restored Victorian home is located on Olive Avenue and was first named the "Cinderella House" by "Redlands, Our Town" Author Frank Moore. The 1900 Victorian home was a perfect venue for the annual festive event. On behalf of the Society, I would like to thank the Herendeens for making this year's Holiday Party a great success.

Each year at the Holiday Season it is a family tradition to drive through the many historic neighborhoods of Redlands to see the Christmas light displays. The lighted historic homes, many of which have received a Heritage Award from the Historical Society gives one a different perspective of the great architecture and is especially fun to see how each homeowner publically demonstrates their celebration of the season. To further make this annual tradition more interesting was being able to use the newly published book by the Society. The Book is titled "*A Celebration of 125 Years of Redlands Historic Homes*" and is currently on sale at A.K. Smiley Public Library's Heritage Room for \$15.00 for a spiral bound version, which is perfect for walking and driving tours. There is also a hard bound version for \$20.00 which will look great on your book shelf with your treasured collection of historical Redlands books. As you celebrate the season next year, I urge you all to spend an evening touring the historic neighborhoods with your copy of "*A Celebration of 125 Years of Redlands Historic Homes*" to not only enjoy the Christmas lights but the beautiful homes in our town.

In 2014 we will have a full schedule of Old House Group meetings that are held each month at a Redlands home. On the fourth Monday of each month the Society will hold our monthly General Membership meetings at A.K. Smiley Public Library's Lyon Assembly Room. January's special program will be titled "*Growing up in Redlands in the 1950s*". This program is a continuation of a successful program that we held in 2013. For additional information about our upcoming events please look for the specific write-ups in each of our monthly newsletters and I will look forward to seeing you at one of our events that we plan each month.

At the beginning of each year the Society asks our members to renew their annual dues and we are hopeful that many of our members will decide to take the next step and choose a level of sponsorship. Our annual dues and sponsorships insure that the Society is the dominant voice of historic preservation in the Redlands Area. To assist you with a contribution and the renewal of your dues we have provided an envelope located on the inside of your January 2014 Newsletter.

I hope you all have a happy and prosperous 2014 and I look forward to seeing you all at one of the many events that we have planned for our members in the coming months.

Bill Blankenship

ORDER YOUR DVD/VIDEO

All of our monthly programs and Heritage Awards ceremonies are dutifully recorded by Gerry and Linda Brassfield of Blue Eagle Video. Videos are \$20 each.

To order a video contact Blue Eagle Video at:
(909) 882-2003 or email: blueeaglevideo@aol.com.

Do you have a favorite local roofer, plumber, electrician, handyman, painter, etc. who likes to work *gently* with old houses?

Kathy Behrens is compiling a list of your recommendations.

Contact kathybehrens@verizon.net

Want to Improve Our City's Curb Appeal?

- by Kathy Behrens

The term "curb appeal" has special significance for Redlands residents who live between Center Street, Redlands Boulevard, Brookside Avenue and Highland Avenue. This central core area of the city, along with other scattered sections, is blessed with historic and distinctive cutstone curbing. Because cutstone curbs are important elements of the City's streetscape and represent the craftsmanship of an age gone by as well as an interesting aspect of the City's heritage, the Redlands Conservancy initiated a special campaign to preserve them.

As you no doubt are aware from your own walks about town, condition of the curbing varies from excellent to badly in need of repair. Three reasons account for the poor condition of some curbing:

- First, the curbs are over one hundred years old. Turn-of-the-century masons used stones from Mill Creek and the Santa Ana Canyons to construct the curbs. The stones are still in good condition, but time, weather, and traffic have taken a toll on the cement used to hold the stones in place.
- Second, many Redlands property owners think the city should restore the curbs because the curbs are in the public right-of-way adjacent to their property. However, the city has consistently ruled that the adjacent property owner shall maintain cutstone curbs in the public right-of-way. Moreover, the city does not have the money to restore the curbs even if it wanted to.
- Third, the process an individual property owner must follow to restore a small section of cutstone curbing is daunting. The city requires a permit (along with a hefty permit fee), and both pre-and post-restoration inspections. Since the work must be accomplished by a licensed, insured contractor, the property owner must also find a curb restoration contractor and negotiate a price.

To address these deficiencies, the Redlands Conservancy, with support from the City and in partnership with qualified curb restoration contractors, launched a curb restoration campaign several years ago with the goal of restoring a significant quantity of cutstone curbing. Over the past several years, you may have seen the contractor working to remove, reposition and cement stones in a friend or neighbor's curb. The campaign is on-going and has four parts: 1) a public awareness program to explain the importance of cutstone curbs to the city's heritage; 2) a streamlined process for obtaining permits and inspections; 3) a pre-negotiated contractor agreement with a set price; and 4) a Redlands Conservancy coordinator to keep things on track.

Robert Dawes is the program coordinator, and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have. Here are the basics:

- The program is open to any Redlands home or business owner that wants to restore his or her cutstone curbs.
- The program has a great contractor who will restore the curbs for \$30 per foot. Most people have about 50 feet of curb, so \$1,500 is an average price, though some big or corner lots can be much more. If you just have a small portion that is damaged, you can do a partial repair.
- So far, the program has restored around 60 curbs - about 1/2 mile in total. Because so many have been done, it is easy to find a nearby example to show you how they come out.
- Robert is eager to help people get their curbs restored. The Conservancy set a goal of one full mile of restored curbs, so there's still plenty to do! Contact Robert at 894-3519 or rdawes@roadrunner.com

If your curbs are in great shape, pass this information along to others who may need some help with their "curb appeal." With all the street and sidewalk work the city will be doing this next year, some curbs should be fixed as well!

On a related note, Robert reports that he was talking with some realtors the other day and learned there is tremendous demand right now for historic homes; specifically, people are asking for homes with the RAHS historic designation. Certainly the care and love that we give our beautiful old homes adds to their value and appeal. If your curbs need a little tender loving care to really shine, give Robert a call.

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previous owners they have found on the grounds and in the house. Don's passion for books and Arlene's many "house jewelry" finds have created a warm and inviting space that will inspire others who appreciate Victorian architecture. The Queen Anne exterior also appealed to the filmmakers of "How to Make an American Quilt". Unfortunately, this footage didn't make it to the final movie. You'll want to hear more of their stories while you tour the 14 rooms. Please join us for this special evening.