



S Y L V A N

*Citrus Heights Historical Society*

PLACER CO.  
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*A Historical Overview of the  
Evolution of Citrus Heights*

S A N J U A N



Citrus Heights

An Illustrated History

1850 - 1997

by Leonard M. Davis

A Citrus Heights Historical Society Publication

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of those intrepid pioneers who turned rolling plains into a public spirited community called Citrus Heights.



## INTRODUCTION

Fifteen miles northeast of Sacramento's Capitol dome lies the vast sprawling area of Sacramento County known as Citrus Heights. Bordered by Madison and Garfield Avenues on the south, Kenneth and Wachtel Avenues on the east, I-80 Highway on the west and the Placer county line on the north, this 18-square mile region is one of the fastest growing areas in Northern California.

But, such was not always the case. It was only 150 years ago that portions of Citrus Heights, along with neighboring Orangevale, Fair Oaks and Carmichael, were part of a vast Mexican land grant known as the Rancho Del San Juan or San Juan Grant. Here, lush grass covered fields, over which stately valley oak groves towered, remained undisturbed by human hands as they had for hundreds of years.

The peaceful, pastoral make-up of the region remained largely unchanged well into the 20th Century, except for a small handful of ranchers who had followed the American conquest of 1846-1848, which brought California under the American flag.

A few pretenses of urbanization, to be sure, had cropped up within the limits of the original San Juan Grant over the years, which took names they still bear — Fair Oaks, Orangevale, Carmichael and Citrus Heights. But for the most part, the area remained largely rural until the post-World War II years. Since then, the population has mushroomed from a modest 2,000 in 1940 to over 100,000 in 1998.

To cope with ever-increasing demands for municipal services (fire and police protection, modern sanitation and water distribution systems, expanded park and recreation facilities, etc.) the residents of the vast sprawling area of disjointed neighborhoods voted to incorporate as the City of Citrus Heights in November 1996.

Of major concern to many residents — old timers and new timers alike — is the fact that in the explosive growth of recent years (which has seen modern shopping and commercial centers, vast housing tracts replacing waving fields of grain and peaceful herds of grazing cattle), much of the physical signs of pre-World War II Citrus Heights have been swallowed up by developers' bulldozers. In the process, much of its early history, largely unwritten, has been forgotten except by a handful of third and fourth generation old-timers.

It was to preserve and perpetuate the fast disappearing history of the area that the Citrus Heights Historical Society was organized in 1991. Toward that end, the Society has undertaken publication of this history. It is their hope that by being made aware of the early history and development of Citrus Heights, it will instill in the present generation the same sense of community pride and citizen participation that has characterized past generations. ~



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In compiling this history of Citrus Heights, I am indebted to the following who have shared their collective storehouse of knowledge to me and whose contributions have been a major factor in whatever success it may enjoy.

For the early years of the area we now call Citrus Heights, I have leaned heavily on the writings of the late Lillian Cross (1883-1954), whose 1933 privately published *Recollections of Sylvan* provided an excellent account of life in rural 19th Century Center Township.

Of no less importance is the privately published history of the Van Maren family, compiled from the researches of the late Guy Van Maren and other members of that pioneer family. The story of the Van Marens, whose association with Citrus Heights dates from the 1850s to the present is, in itself, a history of the community.

For later years, particularly the period after 1940, I have turned to the writings of Citrus Heights' unofficial historian, Roeley Giusti, whose *Walking from Sylvan to Citrus Heights, 1960-1960* (1973) and *A Century of History* (1994) have recorded that period of rapid growth and development which saw the emergence of Citrus Heights from a small village to the bustling city of today.

I also am most appreciative for the assistance of Margrethe (Myklebost) Law, daughter of Citrus Heights' beloved Constable, Byron Myklebost, who served his community in that capacity from 1928 to 1960. Mrs. Law has spent hundreds of hours in compiling information about her family and her community from old newspaper files, county records and the vast storehouse of information in the California Room of the California State Library, which she graciously has shared with me.

For projecting the future of Citrus Heights, I am obligated to Mayor Bill Hughes who provided an insightful overview of the problems the new city faces and how these problems are to be addressed.

A very special acknowledgment is directed to Jim Van Maren Sr., a fourth generation member of that pioneer family, who has served as my mentor during my researches. It was Jim who introduced me to Margrethe (Myklebost) Law, Roeley Giusti and others who have made my task so much easier; it was Jim who drove me around and about Citrus Heights in his trusty pickup, pointing out sites of pioneer farms and buildings, most of which have long since disappeared before the relentless onslaught of the developers' bulldozers.

For technical assistance, I am indebted to Betty Elaine Williby for typing the final draft of the manuscript; to Eleanor Owens for proofreading it; and to Jim and Shirley Van Maren and Roeley Giusti for checking its historical accuracy.

And, finally, and most important, I am indebted to the Citrus Heights Historical Society for undertaking publication of this history as a community service project and to the individual sponsors whose generous financial assistance has made its publication possible at this time.

Again, to all those who have assisted me in this undertaking, my heartfelt thanks.

Leonard M. Davis 

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. Setting the Stage</b>	
<b>The Mexican Period</b>	
Rancho De Los Americanos .....	1
Rancho Del Paso .....	1
Rancho Del San Juan .....	2
<b>II. Statehood and Its Aftermath</b>	
<b>Statehood</b>	
A 31st Star .....	4
Sacramento County .....	4
Center Township .....	4
The Sacramento-Auburn Road .....	4
Way Stations .....	5
<b>III. Early Day Settlers of Center Township</b>	
<b>Enter the Settlers</b>	
Pre-Emption .....	6
The Homestead Act .....	6
Early Settlers .....	6
<b>IV. Life on a Center Township Ranch</b>	
Taming the Land .....	8
The Farmers .....	8
Their Wives .....	9
<b>V. Sylvan — 1862 to 1910</b>	
<b>A New Name</b>	
Sylvan .....	11
Sylvan School .....	11
Sylvan Cemetery .....	12
Greenback Lane .....	12
<b>Coming of the Railroad</b>	
Central Pacific Railroad .....	13
Roseville .....	13
Antelope .....	13
Newcomers in the '60s and '70s .....	14
The Fair Oaks Colony .....	16
<b>VI. Citrus Heights — 1910 to 1941</b>	
<b>A New Century</b>	
Citrus Heights Colony .....	17
Citrus Heights Water District .....	18
The State Highway .....	18
Arrival of the Automobile .....	19
San Juan High School .....	20
Adolph Van Maren .....	20
A New Century .....	21
Citrus Heights Community Club .....	22
Road Days .....	23
Sylvan Branch Library .....	24
The Bubble Bursts .....	25
<b>VII. World War II and Post-War Growth —</b>	
<b>1941 to 1946 World War II</b>	
Post-War Growth .....	26
<b>VIII. Growing Pains — 1946 to 1977</b>	
New Growth .....	27
Auburn Boulevard .....	27
Mariposa Avenue .....	27
Greenback Lane .....	27
Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce .....	28
A Post Office for Citrus Heights .....	28
School Growth .....	28
Ladies in White .....	29
End of an Era .....	29
1960s and 1970s .....	29
Sunrise Mall .....	30
Birdcage Centre .....	30
Fountain Square .....	31
Sunrise Village .....	31
Auburn Boulevard Revitalization .....	31
<b>IX. Journey to Cityhood — 1974 to 1997</b>	
<b>Community Advisory Council</b>	
Updating the Community Plan .....	32
Steps to Incorporation .....	32
Down But Not Out .....	33
New Efforts .....	33
Community Council Actions .....	33
Block Grants .....	34
Citrus Heights Historical Society .....	34
New Problems .....	34
At Last! Incorporation .....	35
Launching the New Government .....	35
Financing the New Government .....	36
<b>X. Citrus Heights — City on Trial</b>	
<b>At the Crossroads</b>	
Success or Failure? .....	37
A Bright Tomorrow .....	38
<b>Epilogue</b>	39
<b>Appendix A</b>	
Representative Citizens of Citrus Heights	
From its Earliest Days to the Present. ....	40
<b>Contributions</b>	50
<b>Board of Directors</b>	50

## SETTING THE STAGE

### THE MEXICAN PERIOD

Throughout most of the Spanish-Mexican period of California (1542-1848), settlement was limited for the most part to a narrow coastal strip along “El Camino Real” with only a few pretenses of civilization extending into the interior.

One of these isolated frontier outposts of civilization was the vast semi-feudal estate of John Augustus Sutter, a German-Swiss immigrant, who was granted 11 square leagues of land in the Sacramento Valley by Governor Alvarado to serve as a buffer against marauding Indians and infiltrating foreigners.

A condition of Sutter’s vast “New Helvetia” grant which, along with later grants, extended roughly from the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers northerly along Sacramento to near present day Marysville, was that he settle 12 other families on the land.

Three of these sub-grants — the Rancho De Los Americanos, the Rancho Del Paso and the Rancho Del San Juan — were situated in or around the area we know today as Citrus Heights.

#### Rancho De Los Americanos

The Rancho De Los Americanos, which extended on the south side of the American River from today’s Bradshaw Road along that waterway to the present city of Folsom and consisting of 35,000 acres (8 leagues), was granted to William Leidesdorff in 1844.

Leidesdorff died in 1848 at the age of 38. His estate at the time of his death was burdened by heavy debts and the Rancho was subsequently sold for \$75,000 to Captain Joseph Folsom, who had tracked down his mother and other heirs at St. Crois Island. After much litigation, the title was found to be valid and ownership was granted to Folsom.

Folsom, who had come to California with the United States Army’s First Dragoons during the Mexican War of 1846-1848 and a shrewd New Hampshire Yankee trader to boot, hired Theodore D. Judah in 1855 to lay out a new town site on the bluffs above Negro Bar on the American River at what was to become the terminus of California’s first railroad, the Sacramento Valley Railroad. Before the lots could be marked off and the new town established, Captain Joseph Folsom died. The date was July 19, 1855. It would be left to his heirs to complete the building of the town and conferring to it the name Folsom after its founder.

#### Rancho Del Paso

In the meantime, John Sinclair, who had gone to work for Sutter in 1840, was sent to Honolulu to make arrangements for consignments of goods. While there, he met Eliah Grimes who persuaded him to occupy the Rancho Del Paso (previously granted to him) until such time as he (Grimes) could take legal title to it. This was done in 1844. Grimes, who subsequently became an important trader and political figure in San Francisco, died in October 1848 and title to the vast 4,400-acre tract passed into the hands of his nephew, Hiram. In 1852, Samuel Norris, a pioneer of 1844 or 1845, acquired title to the grant which he held until 1862 when it became the property of James Ben Ali Haggin and Lloyd Tevis.

The Rancho Del Paso became nationally prominent during the 1880s for its extensive horse breeding facilities. At one time, there were 24 horse barns, some having more than 60 box stalls. Haggin’s race horses were entered at leading tracks throughout the United States and Europe. In one year alone, his horses won purses totaling \$125,000, a princely sum for that day and time.

The halcyon days of horse breeding at the Rancho Del Paso lasted until shortly after the turn of the century at which time the land was subdivided into what is now North Sacramento, Del Paso Heights and Carmichael.

### Rancho Del San Juan

The third of the three great Mexican land grants which encircled and included the area today known as Citrus Heights was the Rancho Del San Juan, a 19,982-acre tract of rich farm land situated east of the Rancho Del Paso and across the river in a westerly direction from the Rancho De Los Americanos. Today's Greenback Lane runs almost exactly through the center of the original grant.

The Rancho Del San Juan originally was granted by Governor Alverado to Joel P. Dedmond in 1844. Dedmond, an American carpenter, first arrived in California in 1838 on his way to Honolulu in the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands. On his return from the islands in 1839, he obtained Mexican citizenship and shortly thereafter title to the San Juan Grant.

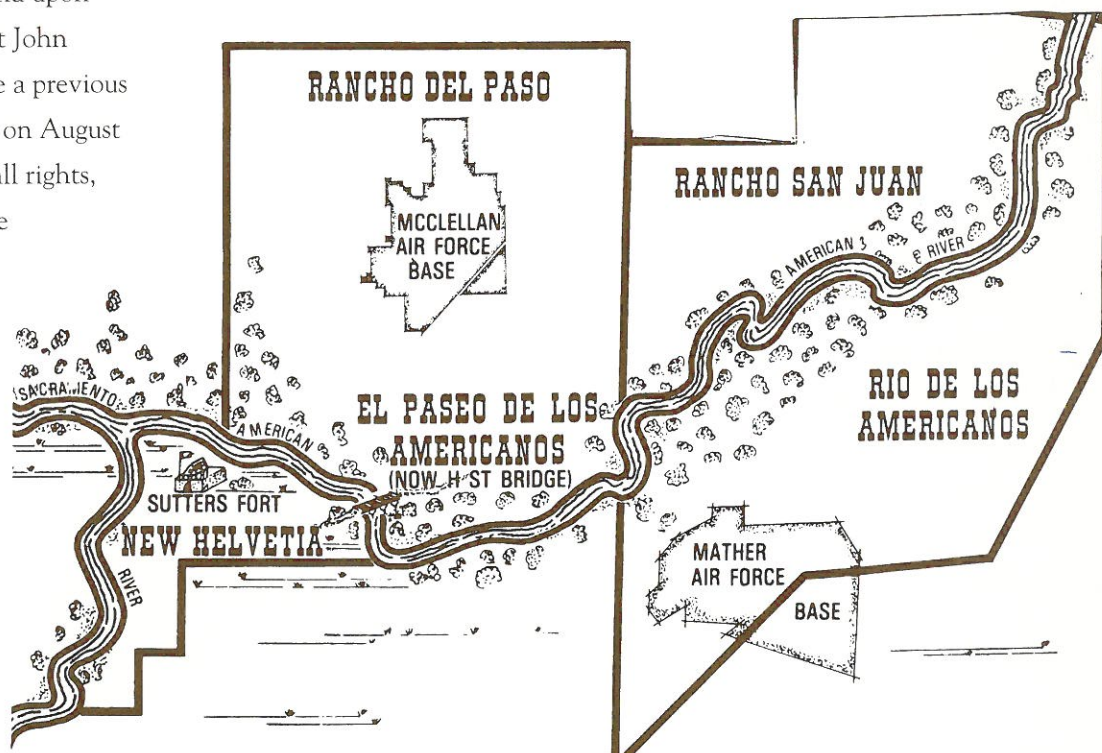
Dedmond apparently did nothing in the way of developing the land and upon being made aware that John Sinclair also had made a previous claim to the tract, he, on August 31, 1845, transferred all rights, titles and claims to the grant to Sinclair.

Dedmond then went to San Francisco where he was employed as a surveyor by Thomas Larkin.

John and Mary Sinclair then decided (February

27, 1849) to Hiram Grimes, nephew of Eliah Grimes, all their rights to both the Rancho Del Paso and the Rancho Del San Juan in consideration of the sum of \$5,000. The patent officially granting the San Juan Grant to Grimes was officially conferred, after seemingly endless litigation, on July 9, 1860.

Over the ensuing years, the Rancho, largely empty and undeveloped except for a small handful of grain and stock ranchers, was repeatedly sold for overdue taxes until 1873 when it was finally taken over by the real estate firm of Cox & Clarke. In 1881, J.T. Cardwell bought 4,400 acres in the northeast section of the grant, part of which was sold to a group of Sacramento businessmen, including V. McClatchy and H. Weinstock, who established the 3,000-acre Cardwell Colony later (1888) changed to the Orange Vale (sic) Colony. This left the major unsold portions of the old San Juan Grant still in control of the realtors who retained it for seven more years before selling some 4,000 acres to a group of Chicago developers who established the Fair Oaks Colony.



Map of Rancho San Juan Grant

In 1896, Daniel W. Carmichael, along with partners Curtis & Brand, organized a firm for the purpose of acquiring and developing Sacramento lands. In 1900, Mr. Carmichael bought out his partners in "The Carmichael Company" and in 1913 began developing a 4,000-acre tract into 10-acre parcels known as the "Carmichael Colony." About the same time that Daniel Carmichael was developing the area today known as Carmichael, Walter Trainor Sr. began to buy up and subdivide the extreme northeast portion of the San Juan Grant then known as the Sylvan District to which he gave the name "Citrus Heights."

It is with Citrus Heights that our narrative will concentrate. In the following pages, its development will be traced from the 1850s when the first sprinkling of settlers began to take up government land in the northern part of the San Juan Grant through years of slow but sure development until the present when Citrus Heights has emerged as the second largest city in Sacramento County, surpassed only by the State Capital 13 miles down the road. ↪

—◆—  
*Example of historic barn  
 formerly used by Cornelius  
 Donahue located on the  
 Cornelius Van Maren  
 Ranch off of  
 Van Maren Lane.*





# STATEHOOD AND ITS AFTERMATH

## STATEHOOD

By the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of February 1848, which officially ended the Mexican War (1846-1848), California was ceded to the United States.

The discovery of gold the preceding month and the rush of '49 which followed it saw the population zoom from roughly 10,000 in 1848 to about 50,000 by the end of 1849.

The military government under which California operated during the war and its aftermath was no longer able to cope with the rough and rowdy mining population. As a result, a convention convened at Monterey in December 1849 to decide what course of action to take.

### A 31st Star

By overwhelming consensus of the delegates, it was decided to press the United States government for immediate admittance into the Union, bypassing the traditional territorial approach to statehood. The request was approved by Congress, and on September 9, 1850, California became the 31st state in the Union.

Statehood, which brought many immediate advantages to California, also presented many challenges, one of which was replacement of the large, cumbersome and poorly defined Mexican land grant system with the smaller, more manageable American county-township system with its well-defined land divisions.

### Sacramento County

Towards that end, California was divided into counties in 1850 with Sacramento County being one of the original 27 counties. In 1851, the County was divided into townships. The American township land system had come into existence with the Land Ordinance of 1785 which provided means for large tracts of land to be divided into smaller parcels which could then be offered settlers at reasonable prices.

Under the provisions of the land ordinance, lands could be divided into six-square-mile townships. Each township, in turn, would be subdivided into 36 one-square-mile sections or 640 acres. Sections could then be offered for sale in total or in parts (320 acres, 160 acres, 80 acres, etc.).

### Center Township

Center Township, in which today's Citrus Heights is located, was established by the Court of Sessions in 1851 and initially comprised part of the present township as well as parts of Brighton, Granite and Lee Townships. In 1853, the County Board of Supervisors changed the boundaries of Brighton and Center Townships, making portions of both lying north of the American River part of Center Township. In 1856, further boundary changes were made whereby the revised Township would include about 30,000 acres of the Norris Grant (former Rancho Del Paso) and about 8,000 acres of the old San Juan Grant.

While large in size, the newly created Center Township was almost totally lacking in any signs of civilization.

There were no settlements; there were few inhabitants;<sup>1</sup> and there were no roads. The vast empty area, only a short distance from Sacramento, was largely ignored by early gold seekers whose goal was the American River mining region via James Marshall's original route to Coloma. At the junction of the North and South Forks of the American (site of today's Folsom Dam), new roads followed along both the Placer and El Dorado sides of the North Fork and to the mining camps beyond.

### Sacramento-Auburn Road<sup>2</sup>

Center Township's isolation would end abruptly in 1850 when a new shortened road to Auburn knifed its way diagonally through the Township following along present-day Auburn Boulevard to Sylvan Corners, where

it veered off in a northeasterly direction along today's Old Auburn Road, until finally joining the original Sacramento-Auburn Road at today's Joe Rogers Road. From early spring to late fall, heavily loaded freight wagons jolted over this dusty, uneven road bound for Auburn, Dutch Flat or Virginia City (Nevada).

Teaming was a profitable occupation and many early settlers worked off and on hauling freight. J.F. Cross, we know, did some hauling of freight for several years from Sacramento to Carson City, but finally gave it up as he would be gone from home for three weeks at a time. It is quite likely that Peter Van Maren, a well-known figure at the 12 Mile House, also augmented his income by hauling freight on a part-time basis.

### Way Stations


The Auburn shortcut became quite popular with teamsters hauling supplies to country mining camps. A number of teamster stops sprang up along the way, including the Oak Grove House (site of today's Del Paso Park), the 12 Mile House, the 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 Mile or Halfway House, located at the Placer County line midway between Sacramento and Auburn.

These early day road houses were all pretty much alike in appearance. Most were two-story frame and clapboard buildings built lengthwise to the road and close to it. The large barns for teamsters' animals were usually located directly across the road. Each house featured a long porch across the front. Two doors opened off the porch, one leading into the ladies parlor, the other to the men's domain — the bar room. Behind the bar room was situated a large dining room and behind that the kitchen. Upstairs was devoted to sleeping rooms. Many teamsters, however, preferred to sleep in the open near their teams and their valuable loads.

Some teamsters hauled their goods in light spring wagons drawn by two horses, mules and oxen. Others used the heavy covered wagons that had brought settlers across the plains. These heavy, cumbersome prairie schooners, 4 feet deep, 7 to 8 feet wide and 16 to 20 feet long, could carry between 5,000 and 9,500 pounds of cargo which called for teams of 12, 16 or even 20 horses or mules.

One of the more popular way stations along the Sacramento-Auburn Road, and one that is still in use today, was the 12 Mile House<sup>3</sup> which was acquired by Emily Hurtzig Wilson in 1856. It was at the 12 Mile House that young Constantina Hurtzig (later Mrs. Peter Van Maren), would join her sister as a dining room employee. Constantina's work day would begin before dawn and would not end until nearly midnight. Her duties included having breakfast ready before sunrise for early rising teamsters and doing whatever else was necessary to keep the dining room operating for between five and 25 guests. For her services, Constantina received \$30 per month, \$10 to \$25 below the going rate for what most public houses paid for the same work.

Sometime later, after she had married Peter Van Maren, Constantina Hurtzig Van Maren sued her sister, Emily, and her then husband Levi Johnson for \$1,215 for 27 months of back wages. The case made its way all the way to the state Supreme Court. By an April 1865 decision, the Court ruled that both husband and wife were to be held responsible for acts of either partner in a lawsuit. This ruling helped establish precedence regarding community property rights and responsibilities.

With the coming of the railroad in the mid 1860s, the once popular teamster trade began to lose out to the faster, more economical train service. One by one they closed their doors to the trading public and reverted to private farm residence. 

1. The Census of 1850 reveals that the entire population of Sacramento County at that time was 11,086, most of whom lived in what would become the capital city and nearby mineral regions. By 1870, the population had increased to 26,830 and in 1880 to 34,391.
2. For a more complete description of the Sacramento to Auburn Road, the reader is directed to the authors publication entitled *The Historic Sacramento Auburn Road, From Miners Trail to Interstate Freeway*, available at The Roseville Carnegie Museum, Roseville, California and the Placer County Museum Foundation Bookstore located in Auburn's historic court house building.
3. The original 12 Mile House was situated about half a mile west of the present site. According to tradition, it was moved to its Auburn Boulevard location in the 1870s or '80s where it reopened in a new building.

## EARLY DAY SETTLERS OF CENTER TOWNSHIP

### ENTER THE SETTLERS

With completion of the new Sacramento-Auburn cutoff through Center Township in the early 1850s, interest in this potentially rich agricultural region began to pick up. Teamsters, miners and other segments of the traveling public making their way to and from the mineral regions beyond, began to spread the word about the availability of government land that could be pre-empted at very reasonable prices.

#### Pre-Emption

Pre-emption was a unique means originally devised by the U.S. government to allow settlers to locate or pre-empt on land not yet surveyed and laid out in township grid patterns. When lands were properly surveyed and land offices set up, the pre-emptors could file claims to lands they had been occupying for which they would then pay the going rate.

Lillian Cross told of her father, J.F. Cross, purchasing "rights" to a 160-acre claim which had been previously pre-empted by W.A. Thomas. Cross then had to purchase the land again from its legal owners, the United States Government.

Pre-emption laws, popular with the earliest settlers of Center Township were largely replaced by the Homestead Act of 1862.

#### The Homestead Act

The Homestead Act entitled each male adult to obtain free and clear 160 acres of government land, providing the following conditions were met: (1) the claimant must stake out and file a claim with the nearest land office which, for settlers of Center Township, was Marysville; (2) the claimant must then reside continuously for five years on the land and make permanent improvements such as a house, barn, fencing, etc. After

these conditions had been verified, the homesteader would be issued a land patent, signed by the President of the United States, conveying ownership of the land to him and his heirs, free and clear. Many, however, found it more convenient to simply purchase land in smaller parcels ranging from 10 acres or more at whatever prices they could negotiate with land developers who had previously acquired large tracts of land.

#### Early Settlers

One of the first settlers to take up land in Center Township was Joseph Gray, a pioneer of '49, who established a ranch along the busy Auburn road in 1853. Here, he occupied a residence known



*Mr. & Mrs. Gray built and operated the 14 Mile House in 1851. Later, Mr. Gray established the town of Truckee, CA*

locally as the 14 Mile House. Mr. Gray was said to have grown the first grapes and first grain in the area. Two years later, in 1855, J.F. Cross started a ranch along the Auburn Road where today's Crosswoods Estates is located. By 1880, Mr. Cross had acquired 320 acres which with improvements was valued at \$8,000.

A short distance east of the Cross place was the 15 Mile House, owned and operated by W.A. Thomas. Most authorities credit Mr. Thomas for conferring the name SYLVAN upon the immediate area.

Sometime after Thomas moved to the new town of Roseville in 1865, the 15 Mile House property passed into the hands of Daniel and Ella Coleman, and after

their death, to their son, George and wife, Emma. George and Emma Coleman continued to live and work on the "Coleman Ranch," as it was then called, until November 1938 when George was hit by a car at Sylvan Corners while returning home from taking care of his turkeys and stock. He was 74 years of age and had lived his entire life in the area. He was survived by his wife, Emma, and daughter, Mrs. C.A. Arters, and two granddaughters.

Just beyond the Thomas place on the opposite side of the road was the ranch of John and Mary Aiston, who settled there in 1855. The Aiston properties eventually reached 440 acres and extended from today's Old Auburn Road to Greenback Lane. San Juan High School is



*John & Mary Aiston*

located on part of the original Aiston ranch properties. The old home, although extensively modified over the years, still

stands at what early day residents called "Aiston Corners."

Other pioneer settlers of the 1850s whose names are stamped indelibly upon the history of the region include Frederick Volle (1858), part of whose ranch is now occupied by Rusch Park; Edward Coyle (1859) for whom Coyle Avenue is named; Elisha Daly (1859) who served as justice of the peace for Center Township from 1865 to 1880; and R.H. Lee and Theodore Wheadon, both of whom pre-empted acreage along the Auburn Road in 1859.

No name, however, stands out more among these intrepid pioneer settlers than does that of Van Maren, whose name is synonymous with the growth and development of Citrus Heights from 1856 when Peter Van Maren, late of Holland, took up a pre-emptory claim of 160 acres, to this very day. When Mr. Van Maren died in 1878, he had accumulated nearly 1,000 acres which were divided among his children who continued to farm parts of the family properties until the mid 1950s. Much of today's fast growing Citrus Heights between busy Greenback Lane, Dewey Drive, Van Maren Lane and Auburn Boulevard, is located on former Van Maren properties.<sup>4</sup>

—◆—  
*John and Mary Aiston's  
 house located in the north  
 east corner of the  
 intersection of Old  
 Auburn Road and  
 Auburn Blvd.*



4. For a biographical sketch of the Van Maren and others associated with the growth and development of Citrus Heights from the 1850s to the present, see Appendix A.

## LIFE ON A CENTER TOWNSHIP FARM

### Taming the Land

Most of the early settlers of Center Township were young; most of them were married; and a few even had small families. As a rule, each family settled on a quarter section (160 acres) of land, built a house and a barn, dug a well and set out about clearing the land.

These pioneer families usually lived out of their wagons or in hurriedly built one-room cabins while working on more substantial residences.

Such was the case with J.F. Cross, who built a rough one-room cabin for his family, replaced in 1869 with a still larger showplace two-story home built of rustic, painted white with green shutters.

Wells, dug by hand, were about four feet across. The depth varied according to the water tables. Fred Rusch recalled that on the Volle ranch, the well had to be dug to a depth of 110 feet before water was reached. In 1958, Guy Van Maren, who resided at the former 14 Mile House, filled in the old hand dug well that had been in continuous use from the early 1850s.

In the early days, water was drawn by hand. Two small wooden buckets would be attached to a long rope and pulley. In time, windmills came into being which, in later years, were replaced by more modern water distribution systems.

Farming was, for the most part, on a small scale during the 1860s and '70s. Land had to be cleared before anything could be planted, and it was no easy chore to hire help. But, as the children grew, a built-in labor supply was assured.

In clearing the land, Center Township pioneers found themselves with plentiful supplies of wood not only for fencing but for sale to nearby Sacramento, which provided an eager market for firewood. Chopping and selling

wood at \$3 a cord, therefore, became one of the first sources of cash money for these early day farmers. Later, when the railroad came through the area (1863-64), area farmers supplied oak for ties and for fuel for wood-burning locomotives.

Once the land had been cleared, the farms had to be fenced. The earliest fences were primitive brush affairs. Later, split rails from the plentiful supply of native oak trees replaced them, followed by board fences, which later still gave way to barbed wire. When rails or boards were used, a ditch had to be dug along each side to keep the livestock from running against fences and breaking them. With the introduction of barbed wire, this tiring practice was no longer used.<sup>5</sup>

### The Farmers

Early farmers walked up and down the length of their fields behind a single plow, working long ten- and 12-hour days. Sacramento flouring mills, such as the Phoenix Flouring Mill, became ready markets for all the wheat that was grown. Hay and barley were grown mostly for use as food for their livestock.

It was an all-day trip to Sacramento to sell wood or farm produce and to buy the necessary items for home consumption that could not be grown or made at the farm. A popular capital city trading center for area families was F. Volle's store at the corner of K and 12th Streets. Later (after 1864) when the town of Roseville was developed at the junction of the California Central and Central Pacific Railroads, area farmers found it more convenient to sell and buy goods from Roseville merchants W.A. Thomas, J.D. Pratt and W.J. Branstetter.



—◆—  
*Pioneer women of the  
 Rancho San Juan - 1892  
 Top Row: E. Daly, M.M.  
 Thomas, B. Cavitt, and E.  
 Gardner. Bottom Row: L.  
 Johnson, M. Mertes, M.  
 Aiston, S.J. Cross.*

rose bushes. The pleasant aroma given off by the mixture of all these flowers was something that Lillian Cross remembered fondly to the end of her life.

### Their Wives

The life of pioneer housewives like Constantina Van Maren, Julia Volle, Mary Aiston and Sarah Jane Cross was no less demanding than that of the menfolk.

Before the children were old enough to be helpful, the pioneer mother had to do everything — cooking and cleaning, washing and ironing and sewing. In her ‘spare time,’ she raised chickens and tended her vegetable and flower gardens. Butter and egg money proved very useful in paying Sacramento or Roseville grocery bills. The Van Marens regularly delivered eggs to the W.A. Thomas store in Roseville for which credit was given (12 dozen eggs, \$3.91; 8 dozen eggs, \$2.50; 6 dozen eggs, \$1.95).

Gardens were the pride of these early farm wives and the garden of Sarah Jane Cross was no exception. There were roses and lilac bushes, oleander, china trees and pomegranates around the house. On each side was a brick walk that extended to the front gate. There were long flower beds, planted with marigolds, stocks, verbenas, sweet alyssums, iris and narcissus, as well as others such as hollyhocks, pin cushions and bachelor buttons. Climbing over the long porches until the house was almost hidden were honeysuckle vines and jasmine and several friendly

Cooking in those long ago days before modern conveniences was done on cast iron stoves fueled by native oak wood. Besides preparing three hearty meals each day, the lady of the house did all the canning for the family, as well as butter making and fruit preserving.

These hardy pioneer housewives baked all their own bread as well as doughnuts and coffee cakes. A plentiful supply of grease to fry doughnuts was always available as district farmers butchered their own hogs and salted them down in barrels and crocks. They also cured their own hams and bacons in family smokehouses.

Meals were gargantuan. Breakfast might include heaping platters of eggs and bacon or ham (home-cured) and coffee, purchased in the form of green beans which were browned in the oven and then kept in a container with a tight-fitting cover with just enough on hand for one meal. The family coffee mill was a necessary part of every kitchen's equipment. Dinner at 12 noon and supper at the end of the day's work were equally hearty meals designed to appease appetites of hard-working farmers.

Monday was washday. In the early days, all water had to be carried from the well to the house in large pails. There were no washing machines and no washing

powders. Common home-made yellow soap of the period, aided materially by liberal supplies of elbow grease, got the job done. When the clothes had been soaped and rubbed, boiled and rinsed, blued and starched and wrung by hand, they were hung out to dry on the backyard clothesline.


Most clothes were made at home and had to be sturdy to survive the Monday washings. Men's work pants and shirts, however, usually were bought in area stores. But, almost without exception, the calico house dresses of the women, high of neck, long sleeves and modest in color, were made at home from large bolts of cloth purchased in town. One of Constantina Van Maren's prized possessions was her trusty sewing machine.

Tuesdays were routinely reserved for ironing. No matter how warm the weather, there had to be a hot wood fire going on the stove on which to heat the several flat irons used. The ruffled petticoats and the long full dresses had to be well ironed. No "lick and promise" was tolerated by any self-respecting farm wife.

After the washing and ironing had been done and clothes put away, there were many other chores to fill the

hours. Bread had to be made several times a week and butter had to be churned and always there was the big work basket filled with articles of clothing to be sewed or mended.

During these early years, there was little time for visiting. As time passed, however, and as the children were old enough to help with the chores, there was time to visit with neighbors on Sunday afternoons.

Sunday mornings, however, were usually reserved for Bible reading or repairing farm equipment. Occasionally, informal church services were held in the homes of area farmers with ministers sometimes coming from Sacramento and, on occasion, Marysville. When a school house was built in 1862, services were held there. Later (after 1882) when the Methodists and Presbyterians erected churches in Roseville, many Center Township folk availed themselves of more formal services there. It would not be until 1921 before a church (Friends Church) would be established in Citrus Heights. 

—◆—  
*Pioneer men of the Rancho  
 San Juan Grant - 1892*  
*Top Row: Glisha Daley,  
 Malcon Johnson, John  
 McClune, W.A. Thomas,  
 and V.M. Leonard.*  
*Bottom Row: John Aiston,  
 J.F. Cross, Joel Gardner,  
 J.N. Brown, G.M. Cavitt,  
 N. Mertes.*



## SYLVAN (1862 - 1910)

### A NEW NAME

Three miles beyond the 12 Mile House was W.A. Thomas' 15 Mile House, situated just below the junction of today's Auburn Boulevard, Old Auburn Road and Sylvan Road. It was Mr. Thomas who began the movement for a school for the district. Convinced that there were enough children to justify a school district (seven were needed), he began a subscription to that effect. Original plans called for a Miss Stevens to teach at a salary of \$40 a month, but when Miss Stevens backed out, Mrs. Sara Jane Cross, formerly a teacher in her native Maine, agreed to take over.



W.A. Thomas

#### Sylvan

Mr. Thomas, according to Lillian Cross in her *Recollections of Sylvan*, donated five acres of land for a school, and it was he who conferred the name "Sylvan" for it because of the stately grove of oak trees that covered the site. Soon, the name Sylvan would be applied to the entire district between the 14 Mile House on the south, today's Sunrise Boulevard on the east, I-80 Freeway on the west and the Placer County line on the north.

*Sylvan School as it was located on the north-west corner of Sylvan corners.*

While the school house was being built by John Cross, assisted by John Aiston, Peter Van Maren and other area farmers, some 15 to 20 pupils met with Mrs. Cross in a one-room building hastily erected on the Cross property.

#### Sylvan School

Before the end of 1862, the permanent school was completed. The building was made of clapboard, painted white with green shutters covering the eight windows, three on each side and two on the north end. Two doors were situated on the south side of the building.

The interior consisted of a single classroom and two broom or hat halls. The original seats were double, homemade affairs painted blue gray.

Between the doors on the south side of the room was a raised platform on which was located the teacher's desk with a long recitation bench in front. Between the teacher's desk and the recitation bench was the pot bellied stove used to heat the school.





Blackboards covered the walls of the room above which were large maps. A small bookcase dominated the southwest corner of the room while high on the north wall was a large pendulum clock.

Alfred Spooner, the first to teach in the new Sylvan School, was paid \$50 a month to watch over some 40 students. Part of his duties was to supply candles and brooms for the school.

The first function of the new school house which was to soon become the social center as well as the educational center of the district was a dancing party to raise money for the cast iron stove box.

A large wooden platform was later built in front of the school in the midst of a grove of oaks. The annual May Day fete and picnic was held here each year with dancing taking place on the outdoor platform.



*From L to R: The Cross Family: Lillian, Charles, Herbert, Sarah Jane (Mother), Nettie, John Francis (Father) and Alice Cross.*

Lillian Cross (1883-1954), daughter of Sylvan's first teacher, described the importance of "our school" to the community:

"Sylvan children liked the school. Not because we were all so ambitious to learn but here was most of our social life. As was usual in farming districts, the school house was the civic, social and religious center.

"Here was the voting place, and where the men of the community met to talk over matters of the neighborhood. Dancing parties were held. Some winters there was a lyceum and debating society.



*Old section of Sylvan Cemetery.*

"You must know that was a long time before moving pictures or radio, and people had to furnish their own entertainment."

### Sylvan Cemetery

About the time that work was beginning on Sylvan School (1862), Daniel Lewis donated land adjacent to the school for a cemetery. The deed for one-tenth of an acre was recorded by Elisha Daly and Frederick Volle.

Little is known of Lewis except that he was one of the earliest settlers in the area. His lands lay between the J.F. Cross place and W.A. Thomas 15 Mile House in what today is known as The Stock Ranch Property.<sup>6</sup>

The first grave was that of James Horton, a young man who had gone to California to seek his fortune in the gold country. Horton, it was said, suffered from an eye ailment and fearing that he would go blind, took poison and died. Since 1862, the cemetery has been enlarged many times and now encompasses 18 acres.

### Greenback Lane

In 1864, the year the railroad reached the new town of Roseville, the County Board of Supervisors approved a petition by district farmers to provide an access road from the Auburn Road to the eastern part of the district. The result was completion of what has since been known as "Greenback Lane" extending from today's Auburn Boulevard to the town of Folsom. Land purchased from

Peter Van Maren and others was paid for in greenbacks, redeemable in gold as the county often did not have money enough to cover their warrants.

## Coming of the Railroad ↪ Central Pacific Railroad

In January 1863, ground was broken for the Central Pacific, the railroad destined to become the nation's first transcontinental railroad. A year later, the railroad passed through Center Township and beyond which would have a profound effect upon the area.

Completion of the Central Pacific Railroad through the area spurred new interest in Center Township and brought about an influx of new settlers, including Alfred N. Moore, who purchased 160 acres from the railroad in June 1867 for \$400. The following year, J.F. Cross purchased the land from Moore at a price of \$1,100.

The railroad also made shipping of goods to market easier and cheaper which, in turn, led to more extensive farming by locals.

## Roseville

When the Central Pacific intersected with the California Central in 1864, a new railroad shipping point called Roseville developed at the "Junction." Proprietors of once popular teamster stops, seeing the writing on the wall as far as the future of teaming was concerned, moved their businesses to the new railroad town or converted their inns to private residences. W.A. Thomas, popular host of the 15 Mile House and the person responsible for conferring the name Sylvan upon the district, moved to Roseville in 1865 where he opened that fledgling community's first store. Daniel Neff, proprietor of the 17 Mile House also moved to Roseville where he built the original Roseville Hotel.

One by one, the once ubiquitous road houses closed their doors to the traveling public. Today, only two remain, the 12 Mile House, that remained in use until January 1, 1998 when its doors were closed for the last time, and the nearby 14 Mile House which continues in

use as a private residence by members of the pioneer Van Maren family who purchased it from the Lauppes in 1919.

Sylvan farmers now found it more convenient to trade and do business at Roseville instead of Sacramento as they had formerly done. W.A. Thomas, former Sylvan resident and now Roseville's leading merchant, was a particular favorite of Center Township farmers. Between January and August 1885, Peter Van Maren purchased the following: beans for \$6.25; \$6.50 worth of tobacco for his farm hands; 60 pounds of potatoes for \$1.20; cotton thread for 25 cents; coal oil at 50 cents a gallon and soap at 10 cents a bar.

## Antelope

Even more convenient was the development of the small village of Antelope along the Central Pacific Railroad in 1876. A 40x100 foot brick warehouse, the first building to be "thrown up" there was built for J.F. Cross at a cost of \$3,000. Other buildings followed and by 1880, Antelope could boast of having two blacksmith shops, two stores and four dwelling houses. A post office was established in 1877 with Joel Gardner serving as first postmaster. He was succeeded by John Berry in 1878.

Antelope soon developed as a convenient shipping point for large quantities of grain produced by Center Township farmers. Initially passenger trains made no scheduled stops here, but later, with the advent of the "Colfax Local," Antelope was listed as a flag stop. Most travelers desirous of using passenger trains, however, found it more convenient to catch trains at nearby Roseville.

By the 1870s, area farmers had organized the Antelope Grange which became both a social and economic center. By this time, Sylvan farmers had a bit more leisure time and could afford to take time off to meet with their fellow farmers at Grange meetings and Odd Fellows functions, both in Sacramento and after 1876 at Roseville.<sup>7</sup>

Particularly popular were the big picnics organized by the Sacramento order of the I.O.O.F., including one in late April 1874, when a trainload of 30 to 40 coaches

brought picnickers to Leet's Grove, a little north of Roseville and six or seven miles from Sylvan which was reported as being "well attended" by Sylvan area residents. Attendees could dance on a wooden dancing platform to the music of a several piece orchestra, frequent concession stands which offered everything from ice cream, lemonade, popcorn to coveted prizes for winners of various games of chance.

Other highlights of the Sylvan summer season included the annual Sylvan picnic at the school yard and, of course, the State Fair held in Sacramento in late summer.

The trip to the capital city over dusty dirt roads in summer, which turned into quagmires of mud during the rainy season, took about 2 1/2 to 3 hours by fast horse and buggy, longer by slower farm wagons.

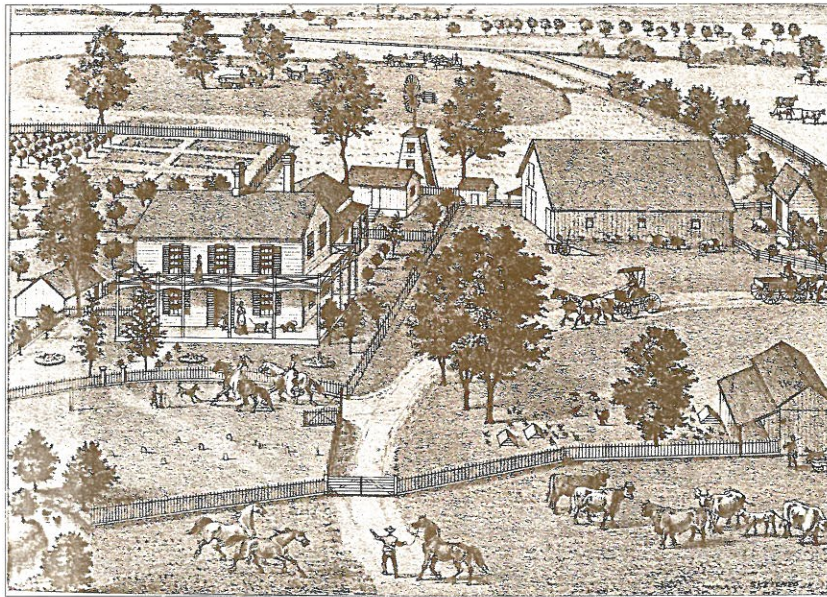
Travelers often wore linen dusters and draped dust robes over their laps to ward off the stifling dust.

During winter seasons, when the rivers overflowed their banks, overland communication with the capital city was completely cut off. Lillian Cross told of the terrible winter of 1861-1862 when her father made a crude flat bottomed boat in which he and neighbor Elisha Daly journeyed the entire 14 miles to Sacramento to conduct their business.

As the area continued to grow after the coming of the railroad, Sylvan School found itself terribly overcrowded by children of newcomers who had purchased land in remaining unsold portions of the old San Juan Grant. As

a result, a second grammar school, the San Juan School, was established south of Winding Way. Classes initially were held in the home of Mrs. T.F. Kelly, whose ranch adjoined that of Harry Dewey. Mrs. Nettie Ives taught the first eight pupils there.

When it was decided to establish a second school, there were not enough children to justify its support by the County. Resourceful residents, however, solved the problem by "borrowing" children from Sacramento orphanages for the school year for whom they would provide food, clothing and comfortable homes. Some children returned to the orphanages during the winter, but many remained and became part of the families that had adopted them for the school year.



*Ranch of Cornelious O'Donahue, 482 acres, 1-1/2 miles south east of Antelope, Sacramento County, CA.*

### Newcomers in the '60s and '70s

Among the newcomers who took up land in the district in the 1860s and '70s, several bear special attention.

A name associated with the Sylvan District since 1863 was Cornelius Donahue, who located on 160 acres about a mile and a half south of Antelope that year. In

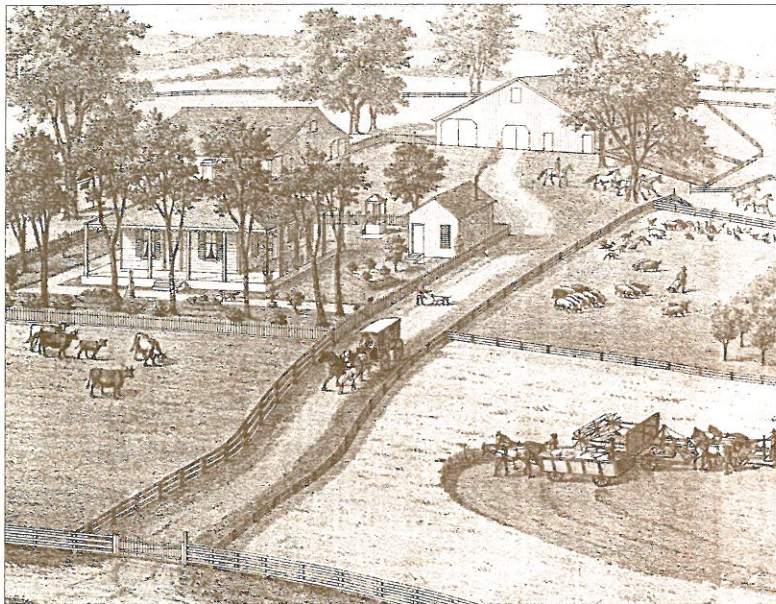
1872, Mr. Donahue acquired an additional 322 acres of land on the south side of today's Greenback Lane which today includes the vast Sunrise Mall and Birdcage Centre shopping centers.

About the same time, Rudolph Lauppe, a native of Switzerland, took up acreage in Center Township. From that time to the present, the name Lauppe has been closely intertwined in the development of Citrus

Heights, Antelope and Roseville.

Shortly thereafter, another pioneer family, the Wachtels, for whom Wachtel Way at the eastern boundary of Citrus Heights is named, commenced farming in the district.

Then in 1868, the widow Jane Pitcher, along with her seven children and one adopted son, took up 650 acres east of Sylvan and near the Placer County line which she



—◆—  
*Above: Bird's eye view on  
 the ranch of W.M Carrick,  
 320 acres, Sacramento  
 County, CA, 3 miles south  
 east of Roseville,  
 Placer County*

named the "Sunrise Ranch." Today's Sunrise Boulevard is named after this early day ranch. The Pitcher home, remains in use today by the Kniesel family.

In 1873, William Carrick purchased a 320-acre ranch (C Bar C) which, after his death, came under the control of his son,

Charles, and nephew, Lester Carrick. After the death of Lester in 1977, his widow, Pansy Carrick, donated a portion of the old ranch to the county which is today's C Bar C Park.

Meanwhile, Peter Van Maren, the leading agriculturist in the region, had been busy expanding his original holdings. By 1875, the ranch covered 947 acres, including lands purchased from Rudolph Lauppe for \$1,100 and 322 72/100 acres bought from Francis J. Locher for \$3,277.

Although Peter Van Maren was still listed as the official owner of the vast estate, declining health led to his turning over active management of the properties to his young 17-year-old son, Phillip, in May 1874.

—◆—  
*Below: Home of Adolph  
 and Catherine G. Van  
 Maren located at the end of  
 Woodside Dr. west of  
 Sylvan Road in Citrus  
 Heights.*



—◆—  
 A. Van Maren grain  
 harvester with 14' header  
 pulled by 20 mule team.  
 July 4, 1917. Note:  
 American flag atop of  
 harvester. Location: East  
 field off Van Maren Lane.



Two years later, on May 27, 1876, the patriarch of the family, Peter Van Maren, died and young Phillip, now 19, was left with the task of managing the estate for his younger siblings, Johanna, aged 18; Nicolaus, 16; Mary, 15; Adolph, 11; and Willian, 8, until they were old enough to assume responsibility for their portions of the estate.

Phillip's burden was made even more difficult when Constantina Van Maren died of cancer in 1879, but somehow, some way, this youth who overnight took on a man's job, managed to hold the family together. By 1910, all members of Peter and Constantina Van Maren's family held title to their shares of the vast estate.

### The Fair Oaks Colony

On October 30, 1895, the first group of settlers moved into the area east of Sylvan recently organized under the name "Fair Oaks" by a group of Chicago investors who had purchased the land from realtors Clarke & Cox.

Others followed and by 1896, the nucleus of a community was beginning to take shape. A store was opened in the colony by L. M. Shelton on Christmas Day, 1895;

then on January 1, 1896, Mr. Shelton established a local post office with himself as postmaster. By the end of the year, planting of the first orange groves had been completed and the first importation of water via pipe was delivered to the colony.

Fair Oaks Colony continued to grow and flourish during the opening years of the 20th century and soon eclipsed neighboring Orangevale and Sylvan in importance. Many Sylvan settlers in the early part of the century even went so far as to list more prestigious Fair Oaks as their mailing address. Byron Myklebost, long-time Center Township constable, often recalled the difficult he had in locating his parents' residence when he left Oregon to join them in 1921. They too, had listed Fair Oaks as their mailing address so when Myklebost arrived, he quite naturally headed for Fair Oaks. It was not until late in the following day before he finally located Sylvan.

Residents of the eastern part of the Sylvan District now found it more convenient to shop and do business in Fair Oaks rather than Roseville or Antelope.<sup>8</sup> ↪

5. Many pioneer ranchers of Center Township found the demands put upon them just too much, including R.H. Lee, who had pre-empted 200 acres along the Auburn road some 12 miles from Sacramento. In December 1859, he decided that he had had enough and offered to sell his entire acreage along with all improvements made for \$1,600 so he could return home to the District of Columbia.
6. The Stock Ranch property was acquired by Adolph and Catherine Van Maren in 1891, and it was here that they maintained their fine home. Daughter May Van Maren Stock inherited what has since been known as the Stock Ranch. Her son, John Stock, is its current owner.
7. The Antelope Grange is still active today. Meetings currently are held in the historic Citrus Heights Community Club building on Sylvan Road.
8. For a pictorial account of Fair Oaks, the reader is directed to *Fair Oaks, The Early Years*, published by the Fair Oaks Historical Society, 1995.

## CITRUS HEIGHTS (1910 - 1941)

### A NEW CENTURY

By the opening years of the 20th century, large parts of the original Rancho Del San Juan (San Juan Grant) had been subdivided, with one notable exception, into affordable ten-acre parcels (such as the Orangevale, Fair Oaks and Carmichael agricultural colonies) by large land development companies. The exception, the northeast corner of Center Township, known as the "Sylvan District," remained as it had for the past 50 years — an area of broad vistas of open land occupied by a small handful of second generation families bearing such familiar names as Van Maren, Donahue, Rusch (Volle), Pitcher-DeKay and Coyle.

Wheat<sup>9</sup> and other grains continued to be the major crops for Sylvan ranchers with some fruits and vegetables grown on seasonal creek bottom lands. Chickens and other poultry along with dairy cows continued to be welcome sources for "butter and egg" money as they had from the early days.

Life still moved slowly and continued to center around family homes and at the Sylvan school house. The Adolph Van Maren home served as the focal point for that pioneer family from the late 1890s until it burned in 1969.

This family tradition was resurrected in 1996 when a reunion of the Van Maren-Hurtzig families was held at the historic Community Clubhouse. About 170 were in attendance.

#### Citrus Heights Colony

The quite pastoral life of rural Sylvan would undergo marked change commencing in 1910 when Alfred Trainor, partner in the real estate firm of Trainor & Desmond, began to buy up large tracts of idle land in the Sylvan District. He then subdivided the land into 10-acre lots. One of his major acquisitions was from long-time

settler, William Berry, from whom he purchased the better part of 1,000 acres east of today's Auburn Boulevard and south of Twin Oaks Avenue for a reported \$40,000.

**WHEN YOU ARRIVE CALIFORNIA?**  
IN  
 One of the first things you will want to do, no doubt, will be to select  
**Your TEN ACRES in**  
**Citrus Heights**  
 On the Rancho del Paso in the Valley of Sacramento

**IN** all the world there is no fairer land than this, it is the land of  
**The Orange, the Orchard and the Farm**

In all the West none other offers so much to seek after homes and opportunities, where the sun shines 300 days in the year, where you may work in the open fields any day in the year—in the very heart of California, enclosed by mountain ranges and traversed by noble rivers; where every ten acres is supplied with Free Water Rights, Electric Lights, Telephone and Free Mail Service.

**Terms of Payment That Will Suit You**  
 The terms are very easy. You may pay one-fifth cash and the balance in five yearly payments. The rate of interest is but 4 percent per annum, and you have the privilege of paying all or part of the purchase price at any time. The title is perfect. Upon fulfillment of the terms of purchase, the land will be conveyed by a guaranteed deed. We wish to present these properties for your close inspection; and to afford every opportunity for same, we have arranged Free Excursions so that you may go over the property and see for yourself. You'll find conditions exactly as represented.

**Write Us for Handsomely Illustrated Booklet, or Let Us Show You the Property**

**Trainor-Desmond Co.**  
 Sacramento, Cal.  
Please mail me a booklet, and description on my part, information concerning same. FREE EXCURSION TO THE PROPERTY

OWNERS, NOT AGENTS  
 813 J Street, Sacramento, California  
 R. M. MILLS, 1003 Sweiter Bldg., W. H. STEWART,  
 WICHITA, KANSAS ENID, OKLAHOMA

Other lands were subsequently acquired and as a promotional ploy to attract buyers, the name Sylvan was replaced with what Trainor hoped would be the more "euphonious" sounding name of Citrus Heights, and Citrus Heights it has remained to this day.

An article in the *Roseville Register* for June 9, 1910 announced that 10-acre tracts in "Citrous (sic) Heights," 13 miles from Sacramento and 5 from Roseville could be purchased at \$125 per acre with a 10 percent down payment required and monthly payments of \$1 per month per acre until the mortgage was paid off.

## The Citrus Heights Water System

Irrigation water, the vital life of farmsteads brought to the colony in 1911, transformed grain fields to the present active community.

A generation ago water was supplied to the colony through a 6-inch pipeline which ran north from the American Canon & Water Company. Increases in population and demands for water fostered community efforts for increased supply and pressure. Under the leadership of Rudolph Lauppe, Chris J. Dundee, John W. Odgers, Benjamin J. Fertig and William T. Cobb, the predecessor to the Citrus Heights Irrigation District was organized under the name "Citrus Heights Water Takers Association". The installation of the pipe system was directed by Joseph W. Cross, Civil Engineer.

The name of the Association changed to the "Citrus Heights Water District" on October 25, 1920 when it was organized under the State Water Code Irrigation District Act. The district encompassed slightly more than 4.7 square miles in the beginning and has since grown to over 12.0 square miles today in providing service to over 63,000 residents in portions of Citrus Heights, Fair Oaks, Orangevale, Carmichael and Roseville.

In the beginning, Citrus Heights received its water for irrigation, domestic and industrial purposes from the North Fork Ditch Company. Water was diverted by a dam about 40 feet high and carried in a concrete-lined canal to a distributing reservoir about five miles east of the district boundaries. Water was then delivered to Citrus Heights via a 24-inch pipeline along Oak Avenue.

In the late 1940s the district began discussions regarding securing a water supply from the proposed Folsom Dam Project to allow for growth of the district as many land owners had been denied annexation to the district due to a lack of water supply. In 1951, the Directors of the Citrus Heights Water District, the Fair Oaks Water District, and the Orangevale Water Company formed the San Juan Water District Association which ultimately led to the 1954 creation of the San Juan



*The water district began in 1920 as an irrigation district. Water was delivered to ten acre plots in Citrus Heights via the North Fork Ditch Company, shown being dug here. Hand shovels and "two horsepower" excavators such as the one on the right were the latest in equipment.*

Suburban Water District as the first Community Services District in the State of California.

Our surface water supply is now provided by the San Juan Water District resultant from its acquisition of the North Fork Ditch Company rights and facilities and additional contracts with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

In their 78th year, the water delivery system is about to come full circle with a new main supply line. The Cooperative Transmissions Pipeline Project, a joint effort among six local water supply agencies, will construct and provide increased service and reliability to their customers.

## The State Highway

Further impetus to settlement of Citrus Heights occurred in 1912 with organization of the state highway system. What would become Highway 40, the predecessor to today's Interstate 80 Freeway, originated at San Francisco from which point it followed a northeasterly course to Sacramento about 100 miles distant. From the capital city, Highway 40 meandered through North Sacramento, across the railroad at the Ben Ali crossing, and on along today's Auburn Boulevard through Citrus Heights and on to Roseville and beyond. At Sylvan



—◆—  
*Old Highway 40 — 1912.  
 Bridge in background  
 original bridge across Dry  
 Creek. Auto entering  
 Roseville from  
 Citrus Heights.*

Corners, the new state highway left the Sacramento-Auburn Road (Old Auburn Road) in favor of a more direct route to Roseville. Part of the Sylvan school playground area had to be acquired to make way for this new routing as did lands from the Astill family near Roseville so as to provide a direct entry into that community via a new bridge crossing at Dry Creek. The highway then proceeded along today's Riverside Avenue and Vernon Street through town and on eastward.

Before completion of the state highway through Citrus Heights in 1913, that portion of today's Auburn Boulevard between Sylvan Corners and the Placer County line was a narrow dirt lane used mainly by area farmers. Those doing business in Roseville had to turn sharply west along today's Whyte Avenue to Lower Vernon Street where an early wooden bridge afforded safe passage across Dry Creek via the Antelope-Roseville road. The new highway now offered a more direct route into Roseville.

Later, state Highway 99 (today's Highway 65) shared the Auburn Boulevard routing with Highway 40 to Roseville where it branched off in a northwesterly direction to Lincoln, Marysville and points beyond.

The road (it was not yet ready to be called a highway) remained largely unimproved until 1929 when nearly \$500,000 was spent on permanent improvements between Roseville and Sacramento, a distance of 16 miles.

At that time, the principal work being done was in leveling and paving the "highway" from Sylvan Corners to Roseville. Fred Starring, son of Mrs. J. [Van Maren] Cochrane, a pioneer resident of the Sylvan District, was given the grading contract and had a number of tractors and other machinery on the ground cutting down hills and widening and straightening the right-of-way.

Pete Bender of North Sacramento also had been awarded a contract to construct three concrete bridges across ravines between Del Paso Park and Sylvan.

With completion of these improvements, it was anticipated that this roadway would finally become an important link in California's highway system.

### **Arrival of the Automobile**

By 1925, the automobile had become more than just a curiosity and motor traffic was increasing daily. For many though, the horseless carriage was a luxury they could not afford. Passenger bus service, however, was well within the reach of everyone's pocketbook. As early as 1914, the Golden Eagle-Barker Stage Line offered service between Roseville and Sacramento via Citrus Heights in an open touring car for 50 cents per person.

Later, the Golden Eagle-Barker line would be replaced by the California-Nevada Stages, Inc., which offered regularly scheduled service between the two cities with buses leaving daily from Roseville at 8 am; 9 am, 12:30



p.m.; 2 p.m.; 3:30 p.m.; 5:15 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.. On weekends, two additional trips (8 and 11 p.m.) were scheduled on this busy run.

In 1925, Beverly Gibson and others acquired the business which was renamed the "Gibson Bus Line." The Gibson Bus Line continued to operate daily service between Roseville and the capital City until the 1950s when it was absorbed into the Continental Trailways systems.

While no bus station was located in the Heights, travelers could flag down the buses as they passed along Auburn Boulevard, a practice that continued until recent years.

### San Juan High School

Increased population growth, which accompanied Alfred Trainor and associates founding of Citrus Heights Colony in 1910 and the routing of the new state highway through the area two years later, while modest in numbers (1,000 between 1930 and 1940), did revive the ongoing question of establishing a high school for the area. Previously, those wishing a secondary education had to board out in Sacramento or, after 1912, attend classes at the newly organized Roseville High School. Guy Van Maren recalled attending classes in an old dilapidated hotel building in Roseville which served as that community's first high school.

The problems of consolidation and cooperation among the various entities concerned were considerable but at length, during the winter of 1913-1914, petitions were circulated to residents of Orangevale, Fair Oaks, Roberts, Sylvan and San Juan grammar school districts for the creation of a high school district.

When approval for a district was obtained, it was suggested that it be named San Juan since the district included most of the lands in the original San Juan grant.

The first board of trustees included a name long synonymous with the San Juan District, Adolph Van Maren, who would serve continuously on the school board from 1913 to his death in 1939.



*Golden Eagle — Barker State Line*

### Adolph Van Maren (1864-1939)

Adolph Van Maren, successor to his father, Peter Van Maren (d. 1878) and his older brother, Phillip (d. 1918) as head of the pioneer Van Maren family, would play a leading role in community development for many years.

Like his father before him, Adolph Van Maren still managed to find time to play an active role in his community. As well as being clerk of the San Juan High School, he also served as a trustee on the Sylvan School Board. When he retired from that position some 30 years later, his son, Guy, was appointed to replace him.

Mr. Van Maren also served on the board of the local telephone exchange, which was later taken over by Roseville Telephone Company, and was a member of the Sylvan Cemetery District.

In 1908, Adolph Van Maren was appointed by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors to help make a study of road needs in the county and for the permanent improvement of main highways.

The present site of the Citrus Heights Community Club House on Sylvan Road is on land donated by Van Maren who was a leading participant in that organization for many years.

But, it was in the area of education that Adolph Van Maren will long be remembered. A sun dial placed in

the patio area of the San Juan School library in 1977 honors his many years of dedicated service to the district.

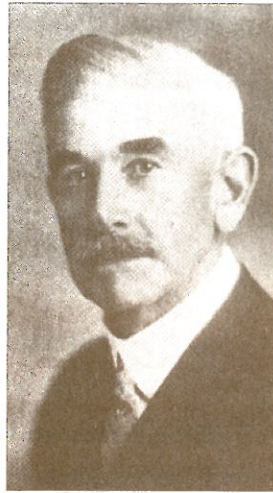
When Adolph Van Maren died on November 1, 1939, all the stores in Citrus Heights closed in tribute to this much loved community leader. His funeral was described in the *Sacramento Bee* as being one of the largest ever held in Sacramento County, so large in fact that it took several California State Highway Patrol officers to control the funeral procession to Sylvan Cemetery.

The new San Juan High School began its first year of operations in the fall of 1913. It was housed on the second story of the Fair Oaks grammar school. Mr. E. C. Overhostzer

served as its first principal, assisted by teachers Helen Muir and Edna Schroeder. Forty-six students from the various elementary districts made up the enrollment.

By its second year, enrollment had increased to 63 with a staff now numbering five. This added enrollment necessitated moving the grammar school to a temporary building erected during the previous summer.

Unable to decide where to locate a permanent high school, the Board, at length, submitted the issue to the voters who selected a 10-acre site on Greenback Lane, purchased by residents of Sylvan and the real estate firm



*Adolph Van Maren*

of Trainor & Desmond. Classes of the new facility, located on lands once part of the John Aiston ranch, first took up during the 1915-1916 school year.

### A New Century

The enthusiasm generated by the creation of the Citrus Heights Colony (1910) and routing of the new state highway through Center Township (1912-1913) created a demand for what had been almost totally lacking in the past, namely local business and commercial development. Heretofore, Citrus Heights residents, a collection of isolated grain or stock farmers, had to go to Roseville and Sacramento for their "big shopping" with the little general store at nearby Antelope serving immediate needs.

Now, with an increased and more compact population and the funneling of through-traffic through the township, prospects for successful business opportunities seemed favorable.

Among the first to take advantage of these new opportunities was William Cobb, formerly of Georgia, who arrived in the Heights in 1919 and who shortly thereafter purchased 10 acres of land from the Coleman family at the intersection of Sylvan Road and Auburn Boulevard. Mr. Cobb then established a store and service station opposite the school (corner of Auburn Boulevard and Sylvan Road), which became a popular spot for both

locals and the traveling public for many years.

About the same time, Mr. Alexandra established the Cripple Creek Service Station and Auto Camp further up on Auburn Boule-



*San Juan High School — 1937*

—◆—  
*William Cobb Service  
 Station located at the  
 south west intersection of  
 Auburn Boulevard and  
 Sylvan Road — 1920.*



ward where groceries, quick lunches, gas, oil and accessories could be purchased by the traveling public. Modern tent (later cabin) sites, with sanitation facilities and showers were also available for travelers using this branch of the state highway system. In 1925, Alexandra sold the business to E.A. and L.A. Driver.

The Cripple Creek has undergone numerous remodeling and changes of owners over the years, but still remains in use today as a Auburn Boulevard tavern.

Other businesses followed, including the Sylvan Service Station and Garage, operated by the Spurgeon brothers, at Sylvan Corners and the landmark Florida Inn, established at the corner of Auburn Boulevard and Greenback Lane in the fall of 1926 by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Coldani. A special feature of the inn was Sunday chicken dinners at 40 cents each. By 1929, as many as 200 chicken dinners were served each Sunday, with chickens being supplied by area ranchers.

As the population of Citrus Heights continued to grow, increased demands were put before the County Board of Supervisors for better roads, improved water and sanitation systems and the like.

A short-lived movement to incorporate was bandied about by residents frustrated by seemingly indifference of the Board of Supervisors to meet their demands for better services, but it never really got off the ground.

### **Citrus Heights Community Club**

To help meet these demands, citizens in 1923 organized the Citrus Heights Community Club, the forerunner of the later-day Chamber of Commerce.

Through the efforts of the Community Club, the Sylvan Telephone Company, organized in 1901 by local farmers, including Nicolaus and Adolph Van Maren, Luther McAdams, Guy DeKay and the Zeh brothers, merged with the Roseville Telephone Company on January 5, 1926 as a co-partnership



—◆—  
*The Citrus Heights  
 Community Club House  
 located at 6921 Sylvan  
 Road. This was the former  
 Sylvan School moved from  
 Sylvan Corners in 1927.*

under the name Sylvan-Roseville Rural Telephone Company. H.C. Lauppe was its first president with Mr. Hayworth as secretary. Hayworth was soon replaced by Adolph Van Maren who would serve as secretary of the company until his death in 1939.

In 1927, through the joint efforts of the Mothers' Club (organized in 1920) and the Citrus Heights Community Club, a \$18,000 school bond election for expanded school facilities was held. School enrollments had increased 500 percent in the preceding five or six years and 114 children were currently enrolled at Sylvan School with its two rooms and three teachers. It was predicted that 150 students would be crowded into the already overcrowded school for the fall term.

The bond election, as announced by clerk of the board, Guy Van Maren, passed by a vote of 142 to 49. Funds in the amount of \$15,000 were to be used to provide three much needed classrooms at the grammar school plus remodeling of the entire school into a single structure. An additional teacher was also provided, bringing the total to four.

When the fine new brick school opened in the fall of 1927, the old school, dating from 1862, was moved to a one-half acre site on Sylvan Road (donated by Adolph Van Maren in perpetuity) for use as a permanent meeting place for the Community Club, which had been organized in 1923 with William Cobb serving as its first president. The historic old building remains in use today as a community meeting hall.

Another area of concern to the Community Club was the need for adequate fire protection. Before 1935, burlap bags and water buckets were the principal means of fire control.

A fire committee had been created as early as 1928 with Adolph Van Maren as its chairman, but it was not until December 31, 1933, when onlookers watched helplessly as an area barn burned to the ground, that action was taken. A volunteer fire fighting group was organized in 1934, and by January 1935, the group,

including Guy Van Maren, Clarence Champion, William T. Mooney, Virgil Mulch, Byron Myklebost and Eugene Desimone, was meeting regularly. Later in that year, the "Citrus Heights Fire District, Inc." was born.<sup>10</sup>

## Road Days

One of the most fondly remembered of the many Community Club activities was its sponsorship of annual community "Road Days" at which time residents would get together to patch up holes in county roads, clean drainage ditches and improve school and cemetery grounds.

The fifth annual Road Days held in 1928, is of particular note. Twenty-four trees and 100 shrubs are planted at the school grounds and 4,000 square feet of lawn and curbing and sidewalks laid. Over 300 area residents participated in the big day after which a dinner and dance were held at the Community Club House.

## Vote FOR the School Bonds



HOW THE SYLVAN GRAMMAR SCHOOL WILL LOOK WHEN THE ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS ARE COMPLETED. COPPIN, SIEBERG, STAFFORD ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS SACRAMENTO, CALIF.

Our present buildings are overcrowded and we require additional class rooms, and if we make the much needed alterations and additions our School will become an immense asset to our district and a lasting blessing to our children as,

### VOTE FOR THE BONDS ON SATURDAY, MAY 21<sup>st</sup>, 1927

The \$15,000 called for in the Bond Election is intended to cover the cost of three additional class rooms, a new heating plant to take care of all the rooms, and alterations to our present building to bring our school up to date in all respects.

The plans are so drawn that additional rooms may be added from time to time without tearing out anything or destroying the original plan.

It isn't economy to employ first-class teachers and expect them to produce results under present conditions.

Let's Put SYLVAN on the Map by Voting These Bonds.

### Election Saturday, May 21, 1927

POLLS OPEN: 8:00 a. m. to 8:00 p. m.  
POLLING PLACE: Sylvan School Building

## VOTE FOR THE BONDS

Just about everyone in the township contributed to the success of that year's Road Days activities. The Lauppe brothers provided a tractor and road grader for use by the workers; W.E. Trainor donated "smokes" with Supervisor Rossi providing the meat for the dinner. Lindley Coffee Company, the Coca Cola Company and the Buffalo Brewery furnished the drinks.



*A group of volunteers ready to work on Road Day — 1928*

By 1932, the annual Road Days activities had become widely known and admired throughout the greater Sacramento area, so much in fact that the *Sacramento Bee* sent a correspondent to cover that year's events which included erection of 40 road signs, repainting of the library and improving the cemetery. The *Bee* correspondent reminded readers that it was the Community Club that had been largely responsible for bringing electricity to the community as well as extending phone service from Roseville. He concluded his article by saying, "This event is just another expression of the unusual community spirit and community pride that exists in the district." The district had grown from a small handful of farmers cultivating some 2,000 acres to 250 families in 1932 with an additional 1,000 acres under cultivation. The 1930 election showed 213 registered voters of whom 143 were Republicans, 8 Prohibitionists, 2 Socialists and 64 Democrats.

### **Sylvan Branch Library**

It is reported that the first library in Citrus Heights was a small one room in a private home. It was established in 1908 with an inventory of approximately 50 books through a contract with the City of Sacramento. The county established the Sacramento County Library

system on September 18, 1919, and two years later, in 1921. The library was moved to the Sylvan School.

In 1930 the Sylvan Mother's Club spearheaded a drive which resulted in the development of a new library building at the corner of Auburn Boulevard and Sylvan Road. This was at the same location of Mr. Cobb's Service Station. Soon the library was open with Mrs. George Gilliam as Librarian and the books being furnished by the Sacramento County Library system.

As the community grew the library became too small, and the county purchased a small acreage at the corner of Sylvan Road and Community Drive. The library was moved from the Cobb Service Station in February 1941 to the new location. After the move in 1941, Mrs. Maude Blount became the Librarian.

In 1964 the library was moved again to the Grand Oaks Shopping Center, and there it remained at this location until 1975.

In November of 1975 the Citrus Heights and Foothill Farms branch libraries merged to form the Sylvan Oaks Community Library. The new site was located at the corner of Van Maren Lane and Auburn Boulevard. The name "Sylvan Oaks" reflects the historical background of both communities. Citrus Heights was originally known

as "Sylvan" and Foothill Farms was once referred to as "Thousand Oaks."

When it opened in 1975, Sylvan Oaks Library was heralded as a new intellectual resource for Citrus Heights and Foothill Farms. The new library was open 60 hours per week including four evenings until 9:00 p.m. It offered over 65,000. Books, 125 periodicals and newspapers, expanded reference collection, community meeting room, state of the art equipment such as a microfilm reader and record players with headphones. A variety of adult and children's programs and film shows were offered throughout the year.

In 1978, Sylvan Oaks and the rest of the county libraries felt the impact of county revenue cut backs caused the passage of Proposition 13. The hours and staff were cut as were books and periodicals. In 1992 funding was cut again, which impacted hours and staff.

Through the efforts of the Sylvan Oaks Friends of the Library affiliate, formed in 1993, many new books, periodicals, etc. were acquired. Their funding support came from various fund raisers with proceeds going to the enrichment of the library.

### The Bubble Bursts

The year 1932 also saw the bubble burst as far as future expectations for the success of the Citrus Heights Colony was concerned. A statewide agricultural depression in 1925-1926 followed by the Great Depression of

1929 was now capped by the "Big Freeze" of December 1932 which played havoc with much of the citrus and other orchard crops.

The freeze hit during the darkest period of the depression. For a number of days, the temperature dropped to 18 degrees. As a result, most of the fruit trees died. Those growers who replanted suffered a similar freeze two years later. These two disastrous freezes, for all practical purposes, ended Citrus Heights' experiment in fruit growing.

During those troublesome times, economic activity remained stagnant and few new land sales were reported. One exception was the acquisition of 12 acres along today's Twin Oaks Avenue in 1931 by Pietro Giusti, an Italian immigrant then employed by the S.P. Railroad at Roseville. Hearing that improved land could be purchased cheaply from local developer Ben Fertig, he approached Mr. Fertig who sold him 12 acres for \$2,000 with only a small down payment and even smaller monthly payments required. Members of the Giusti family still live on part of the original purchase.

For the most part, however, land sales were at an all-time low and economic problems were compounded by growing war clouds over Europe, which would erupt into a terrible global conflict in 1939. ↪

<sup>9</sup>. Adolph Van Maren reported getting 14 sacks of wheat to the acre in 1918. With his new Hoit harvester recently acquired, he anticipated cutting 130 acres that season.

<sup>10</sup>. For a detailed history of the Citrus Heights Fire Department, the reader is directed to the *Citrus Heights Fire District Fiftieth Annual Commemorative Edition, 1933-1983*, a copy of which is located in the Sylvan Oaks Library.

# WORLD WAR II AND POST-WAR GROWTH (1941-1946)

## WORLD WAR II

On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, the imperial forces of Japan bombed Pearl Harbor with devastating swiftness and just as fast, isolationist American found itself thrust into a global conflict known as World War II.

SEE!—

**SUNRISE ACRES**

Located on Sunrise Ave.

**ONE - TWO - THREE OR  
FIVE-ACRE TRACTS**

Will Build to Suit Buyer

**TOM J. PUGH**Real Estate and General Insurance  
512 Vernon Street

Phone 495 Roseville, Calif.

That same afternoon, a group of concerned citizens met at the home of C. McDevitt on Twin Oaks Avenue to organize a Ground Observer Corps to alert the community

in case of air attacks. Mr. McDevitt was appointed Chief Observer and served in that capacity until April 1, 1942 when he moved from the district. William Cobb was then appointed to fill the position which he held until the Corps was disbanded.

Between December 1941 and October 1942, 24-hour surveillance was maintained against anticipated enemy air attacks which, thank God, never came. By the end of 1942, progress of radar detection had become so sophisticated as to render manned observation stations no longer necessary, and observers were given certificates of discharge.

During December 1941 and October 16, 1943, the "line of watches" maintained 24 hours a day was never broken. Volunteer shifts during this period totaled 17,520 hours.

War bond issues and war chest subscriptions were attacked with equal zeal and were, without exception, quickly completed.

While the Home Front was doing its share to ensure victory, Citrus Heights also contributed about 96 of its youth to various branches of the armed forces. A memorial plaque honoring their contributions was dedicated at war's end.

### Post-War Growth

A substantial influx of newcomers following war's end put a severe strain on Citrus Heights' limited water supply. Water needs were adequately taken care of until about 1946. At that time, there were some 1,209 homes within the limits of Citrus Heights, which some disgruntled residents had started to call "Cesspool Heights."

Tom J. Pugh, a Roseville Realtor, was quick to take advantage of the interest in post-war Citrus Heights by handling sales of 1, 2 or 5-acre parcels at reasonable prices in "Sunrise Acres." "Plan your post-war home now" was his advertising slogan.

Along with water and sanitation problems, law and order presented an ever-growing problem for the ever-growing community. One constable served the entire district. Byron Myklebost served as constable from 1928 to 1961. His day began at 10 a.m., after which he was kept busy engaged in serving warrants, checking disturbances, settling disputes and providing advice on questions like, "What shall I do about a dead dog in front of my house?" He also served as an unofficial information bureau because people had no one else to turn to. Around 6 p.m. he would grab a bite to eat and then be on call to respond to complaints about barking dogs, noisy neighbors, fights, etc. Finally, after midnight, providing things were quiet, he would snatch a few hours sleep before starting the process all over again. His problems were compounded by the fact that there were only three street lights in the entire area, one in front of the library, another by the Boy Scout lodge and a third at Rusch Park. Later, as population increased, a sheriff's deputy would be assigned to the Citrus Heights area. ↪



Byron Myklebost, Community  
Constable 1926 - 1960

## GROWING PAINS (1946-1977)

By 1946, the estimated population of Citrus Heights was 3,000, reflecting a modest increase of 1,000 from 1930 when the population numbered 2,000. But, by 1950, the growth of nearby industry and government projects had begun to make their presence felt.

Families wanting to raise chickens, own a cow or horse, have land for large gardens or just to have a place for their children to grow, now began to move into the Heights in increasing numbers. Between 1950 and 1959, population increased from 3,000 to 21,685.

### New Growth

A smattering of new businesses began to spring up to accommodate the growing population, much of which centered along the Placer-Sacramento County line near Roseville. A glance through the Directory of Residents of Citrus Heights for 1945 showed the Stop-and-Save Market, the County Line Barber Shop and Betty's Beauty Shop (both in the Whyte building), McBride's Feed Store and the popular Hy-De-Ho Club, all clustered here.

### Auburn Boulevard

Auburn Boulevard continued to expand its small commercial offerings. In addition to long-established businesses like the Cripple Creek complex, the Van Maren Brothers Hay, Grain and Produce business, the Sylvan Curve Store, the Harris Welding Works, the Florida Inn, Juanita's Chateau and G. Devecchi's 12 Mile House, new advertisers included the Mer-I-Hill Motel (corner of Auburn Boulevard and Manzanita Avenue), the Blue Gum Trailer Camp, one mile south of Roseville, the Rosehouse Nursery (a mile and a half beyond the Blue Gum), the Oaks Service Station at 1582 Auburn Boulevard.

Perhaps the most important additions at this time was Citrus Heights' first supermarket and adjacent shopping center built by developer Lee Kam in 1952 on former Aiston properties located at the corner of Auburn Boulevard and Old Auburn Road; the former market building now houses a carpet outlet store.



*Although the store front has changed, Hall's Furniture is still located on Mariposa Avenue as shown in this picture taken in 1949.*

### Mariposa Avenue

On nearby Mariposa Avenue, J.D. Hall's general merchandise and furniture store and the Woods variety store, where the post office was located, tended to the needs of that area, while farther east on Sunrise Avenue, Filter's Market (Sunrise and Watson Way) served the eastern part of the Heights.

### Greenback Lane

Greenback Lane was also starting to show signs of developing into a neighborhood business center. Businesses advertising at that time included Earl's Greenback Grocery (corner of Greenback and Sylvan Road), the San Juan Gardens nursery on Greenback between Mariposa and Sunrise Avenues. Nearby on Sylvan Road, near Baird Way, was Baird's Grocery and Feed Store.



Population continued to increase throughout the 1950s. In 1954 alone, 120 subdivisions had been filed in the county with Citrus Heights accounting for the lion's share. This led the *Sacramento Bee* to comment that the "rich agricultural lands are being taken over by subdivisions."

### Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce

To cope with ever-increasing demands for improved services and proper zoning, the Citrus Heights Business Association was organized, which remained in existence until 1958 when it was replaced by the Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce

During this period, the Citrus Heights Business Association and its successor, the Chamber of Commerce, dealt with a wide range of problems ranging from overcharging for cleaning septic tanks by those handling that unpleasant task to meeting adequate zoning for the growing district as well as spearheading the move for incorporation.

Area newspapers kept the public apprised of the situation with glaring headlines like "Heights Residents in Water Dilemma," and "Citrus Heights District Wants Own Post Office."

### A Post Office for Citrus Heights

Some progress was made in resolving the problems associated with this growth. In 1947, a post office was established in the rear portion of Wood's Variety on Mariposa Avenue with Mrs. Marjorie Woods serving as postmistress, a position she would hold until 1971. Before that time, rural postal service was provided by Roseville. In 1948, the post office was moved two doors down to a new building leased to the government. In 1964, the post office was moved to a new site in a new building at the corner of Old Auburn and Sylvan roads. Here it remained until a larger facility was built at 6330 Fountain Square Drive off Greenback Lane.

### School Growth

No more was this phenomenal growth reflected than in the growth of the Sylvan School District. At the beginning of the decade, there were 24 teachers employed in Sylvan and Mariposa school. By decade's end, there were eight schools (Sylvan, Mariposa, Oak Avenue, Leighton Littlejohn, Grand Oaks, Citrus Heights, Arlington Heights and Skycrest)( with 132 teachers and 3,975 students. San Juan High School, at this time, employed 80 teachers with an enrollment of 2,000 students.

As a result of this rapid and continuing growth, voters went to the polls in December 1959 and voted to unify the eight elementary schools and one high school into the "San Juan Unified District." The district, at that time, encompassed much of the present day Carmichael-Arden-Arcade area, extending south to Arden Way and Fulton Avenue and east to the American River and Folsom Boulevard. The San Juan Unified District merged five elementary districts: Sylvan, Orangevale, Fair Oaks, Arcade and Arden/Carmichael.

Other problems that cried out for attention during this period of rapid growth included sewage disposal, streets and traffic, police and fire protection.

Of these, perhaps the one single problem calling for immediate attention was "sewers!" A 10-year fight to obtain a waste disposal system for the area was finally won in November 1959 when voters approved a \$12.5 million bond issue for a master sanitation district in the northeast area of Citrus Heights.

Just as the residents of Citrus Heights rallied to address the needs of their community in 1923 with the formation of the Community Club, so did the residents of the 1940s and '50s who came up with a wide array of civic organizations ranging from scouting groups and little leagues for the small fry to Lions, Rotary, Veterans groups and others, all of which are well documented in Roeley Giusti's booklets, *Walking from Sylvan to Citrus Heights* and *A Century of History*.

## The Ladies in White

One of these groups, the Citrus Heights Ladies in White, bears special mention. During this period of unprecedented growth, lack of adequate medical facilities became increasingly evident. The closest hospital was in Sacramento, which presented all sorts of problems for those needing medical attention. Finally, after a disastrous bus-automobile accident in the early 1950s which left four injured teenagers scattered amidst the wreckage, eight ladies met at the home of Mrs. Eugene Desimone to organize the "Citrus Heights Ladies in White," the only female rescue unit in the United States.

By 1983, the Ladies in White had grown from the original four members to 50. All members were required to hold advanced first-aid cards and to be able to handle resuscitators. Members were equipped with short wave radios and were required to be on call 24 hours a day for any emergencies in their 64-square mile area.

During their first year of operations, the Ladies responded to 50 calls. By 1964, the number had increased to over 600.

With the advent of ambulance service, paramedics and paid professional firemen trained in use of the latest sophisticated

procedures and equipment, the need for the Ladies in White diminished. By 1983, their number had dwindled to four. Shortly thereafter, the group disbanded.

Their service to their community will long be remembered by those who benefited from that service.



*Catherine Donahue Van Maren - 1936*

## End of an Era

On June 23, 1953, Catherine Donahue Van Maren died at the age of 87. Known affectionately throughout the district by family and non-family members alike as simply "Ma," Catherine Donahue Van Maren's death truly marked the end of an era.

During her life, she had seen the area known as Sylvan evolve from a small handful of large landowners into a rapidly growing urbanized suburb of Sacramento called Citrus Heights.

By the time of her death, large tracts of rolling, tree-studded land had been replaced by neat checkerboard housing tracts. Long-time farming and ranching families, faced with ever-increasing property taxes and diminishing returns, had begun to sell out one by one and retire from the arduous life of a farmer or rancher.

Such was the case in 1955 when Guy Van Maren, third generation member of one of the earliest families in the district, sold one-half of his holdings for residential development. Others followed suit, and within a decade or two, most large-scale farming and ranching operations had ceased to exist.<sup>11</sup>

## The 1960s - 1970s

By 1960, Citrus Heights' population had increased from 5,600 to 22,600 in less than a decade, and there were no signs of a let-up. Auburn Boulevard continued to serve as the community's "main street," spurred by the Grand Oaks Plaza (1960), one of the first enclosed malls in the country. The growth of St. Mark's Lutheran Church grew from a small membership of 50 in 1965, mushroomed to 650 adults and 200 children by 1996.

Commencing in the early 1960s, however, business and commercial development began to shift eastward toward the corner of Greenback Lane and San Juan Avenue where Payless, Mervyns and other business houses were springing up.

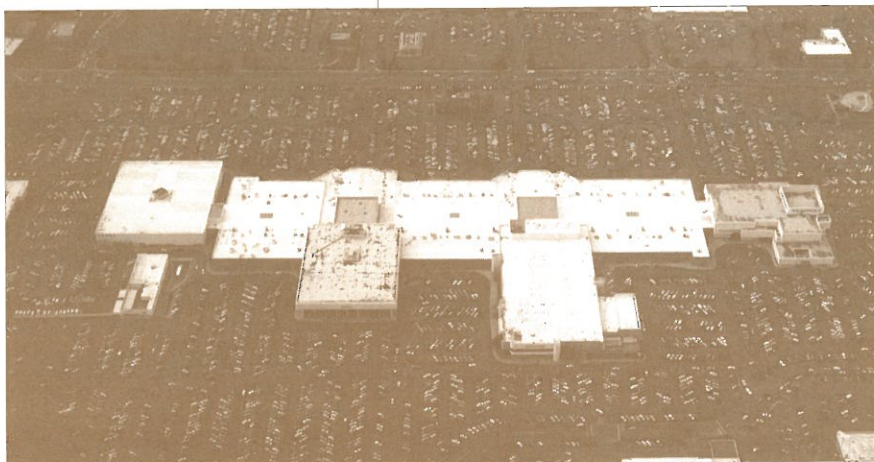
This was the period when Aerojet General was booming and which brought a surge of new growth in Citrus Heights. The rocket motor manufacturing plant giant employed over 19,000 people at its peak during the early 1960s, after which it went into a steady decline to under 4,000 by 1977.



*Left: Fields and orchards surrounded Sunrise Mall as it first broke ground in 1970.*

*Below: Present day Sunrise Mall displays the growth and prosperity of Citrus Heights.*

During its heyday, Aerojet introduced new types of persons to the community — scientists, engineers and corporation executives, many of whom lived in Citrus Heights and who stayed on after job cutbacks.



By 1975, there were 101 shops, including four large department stores within the parameters of Sunrise Mall. That year alone, some

17 million customers were clocked passing through its doors, served by 2,500 employees. These, plus several thousand others employed in adjacent businesses that had sprung up around the mall, brought the total employment of that one small area to well above Aerojet-General, the previous largest north area employer.

## Sunrise Mall

The catalyst around which much of new growth and development in the Sunrise Boulevard-Greenback Lane region took place occurred in 1970 when ground was broken for the giant Sunrise shopping mall at the intersection of Sunrise Boulevard and Greenback Lane.

In November 1970, this intersection was still a bleak, arid field occupied by a few jackrabbits and covered with brush and a scattering of oak trees.

Sunrise Mall would change all of this, becoming the commercial and cultural whirlpool that swept up the residents of Citrus Heights, Fair Oaks, Orangevale, Roseville and North Highlands and brought them together in one huge community that diffused and blurred old boundaries and old identities.

## Birdcage Walk

Then, in 1976, on the opposite side of Sunrise, rose Birdcage Walk, an open style shopping center more like a park than a collection of shops and businesses. Designed to accommodate 100 stores and shops, Birdcage was anchored on the north by Ward's and later on the south by Macy's.



—◆—  
 Left: Grand Oaks  
 Shopping Center on  
 Auburn Blvd. north of  
 Antelope Road. Below:  
 Birdcage Centre  
 (formerly known as  
 Birdcage Walk) located  
 across from Sunrise Mall.

ward-Greenback Lane area would henceforth be identified as the business and commercial center of Citrus Heights.

### Fountain Square

In 1978, the prestigious Fountain Square Center opened to the public, which attracted still additional businesses to now busy Greenback Lane.

### Sunrise Village

About the time that the Birdcage Walk project was getting underway, work was begun on "Sunrise Village" near the intersection of Sunrise and Madison. An additional 40,000 square feet of retail space was added in the 1980s. Today, Sunrise Village, along with Sunrise Mall and Birdcage Walk, is one of Citrus Heights' "Big Three" retail centers.

Radiating outward from the Sunrise and Greenback retail commercial centers were large office buildings and behind them, row upon row of new apartment house complexes and housing tracts. The Sunrise Boule-

### Auburn Boulevard Revitalization

Meanwhile, Auburn Boulevard, which had experienced a decline after completion of Sunrise and Birdcage Malls, shook off its lethargy and began a period of revitalization. Grand Oaks Plaza was updated and new specialty shops began to spring up all up and down the boulevard from the county line to Sylvan Corners. The *coup de grace* came in the early 1970s with development of the large K-Mart center at the county line. ↪



11. Land prices, which had increased from \$2.50 an acre in 1866 to a still modest \$10 an acre in 1873, brought as much as \$3,450 an acre in 1959, which provided still another incentive for long-time farming families to sell out to large scale developers.

## JOURNEY TO CITYHOOD (1974-1997)

### COMMUNITY PLANNING ADVISORY COUNCIL

Citrus Heights residents, well aware of the growth potential and the demands it would make on their future welfare, had organized a community Planning Advisory Council as early as 1974 to bring the existing and somewhat obsolete community plan up-to-date and to provide for orderly growth through the year 1990.

#### Updating the Community Plan

The parameters of Citrus Heights were set at approximately 18 miles, bounded by Placer County on the north, Kenneth Avenue-Wachtel Avenue on the east, Madison Avenue on the south, Garfield-Spruce-Diablo on the west and Roseville Road on the northwest, which often did not correspond to existing fire, park and irrigation district boundaries or to post office designations.

The objective of the plan was to provide a balance of land uses which were to be “mutually compatible, functional, healthful and aesthetically pleasing.” It also was designed to provide for a variety of residential developments to fulfill different needs and to provide open space and a wide range of recreational activities. Finally, it was meant to provide a balanced circulation system of highways, bicycle, horse and pedestrian traffic.

In order to achieve these objectives, it was at length decided that the solution lay in incorporation rather than annexation or consolidation with Sacramento.

Incorporation had been brought up several times previously over the years, most recently in the 1950s, '60s and now the '70s.

As early as 1955, long-time District 4 Supervisor Ancil Hoffman had warned that something must be done to bring order out of the chaotic growth which was threatening to undermine the quiet, pastoral lifestyle of Citrus Heights residents. Two options that residents might want to consider, he suggested, were consolidation

with Sacramento or to incorporate as a self-governing municipality.

Most residents were adamantly opposed to consolidation or annexation and spoke out in favor of incorporation. One group, the “Citizens for Citrus Heights Incorporation,” filed a notice of intention to circulate petitions for incorporation on May 24, 1961. Several other plans also were suggested, one even calling for the merging of Carmichael, Fair Oaks, Orangevale and Citrus Heights into one large city to be called “San Juan.”

The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), however, discouraged incorporation efforts throughout the county during the '60s and early '70s, supporting annexation to Sacramento instead. An alternate plan suggested by LAFCO was a city-county form of government similar to that of the city of San Francisco and San Francisco County.

Overwhelming defeat to consolidate with the capital city by voters in 1974, however, softened LAFCO's attitude toward incorporation as a means of increasing badly needed services for the Heights, especially police protection, while at the same time, gaining a larger measure of local control over local government.

#### Steps to Incorporation

A first step toward incorporation was a survey taken by the Chamber of Commerce in late 1974 and early 1975, which revealed that at that time only 4,587 acres remained of the area once covered with lush grasslands and towering forests of valley oak trees.

No less shocking was the revelation that even this limited open space would soon be swallowed up if current plans, then on the drawing board for 5,173 single-family lots and 1,252 duplex lots, plus numerous multi-family

and commercial developments, were approved.

Moreover, it was feared Citrus Heights was rapidly losing its identity. It now was part of the Sacramento County Fire Protection District, headquartered in Rancho Cordova. Even the former Citrus Heights Recreation and Park District had been replaced by the Sunrise Recreation and Park District.

A well-researched 137 page feasibility study prepared by the Chamber in 1977 spelled out loud and clear how incorporation would not only be beneficial to the community but economically feasible as well.

Remaining LAFCO opposition to incorporation disappeared with the Chamber's feasibility study.

Finally (1978), permission was granted by the county for the residents of Citrus Heights to decide for themselves whether they wished to incorporate.

Existing state law, however, required that before an election could be held, 25 percent of the registered voters in the district requesting incorporation must sign petitions to that effect, which for Citrus Heights, would require 6,700 signatures.

Petition forms were circulated at Sunrise Mall and every other major shopping center in Citrus Heights and volunteer workers canvassed residential neighborhoods to solicit support.

More than 8,000 signatures were obtained, more than enough to put the issue on the November ballot. A check by county officials, however, showed that many of those who had signed the petitions were ineligible. Some were not registered voters, others lived outside the district.

A two-week extension to obtain the required number of signatures was granted, but fell short by about 200 and incorporation which had seem so near went down to defeat.

### Down But Not Out

Failure of the 1978 incorporation movement left its proponents downhearted, but not defeated. Almost immediately (1980), a new and even more aggressive

incorporation drive headed by John Green, chairperson of the Community Council, was initiated and support was elicited throughout the community.

Their efforts continued to be opposed by the Board of Supervisors who insisted that Citrus Heights tax monies were essential to maintaining countywide services.

### New Efforts

Finally, after prolonged, often heated debate over several years, the committee presented a petition to the Board of Supervisors in 1986 requesting cityhood. Their request was denied by the Board in 1987 after which a lawsuit was filed demanding the right to call an election for cityhood in 1988. "Incorporate in '88" was their campaign slogan. They lost their suit as well as a follow-up appeal to the state Supreme Court in 1992. Undismayed, they next took their appeal to the United States Supreme Court, which refused to hear it.

### Community Council Actions

While the Citrus Heights Community Council committee was fighting its court battles through a seemingly endless sea of litigation, the main body was simultaneously carrying out its function as advisory body to the County Board of Supervisors. It continued to lobby the county on a wide range of issues important to the community, ranging from increased police protection to resolving congested traffic conditions on major neighborhood thoroughfares.

Doug Howard, chairperson of the Council in 1984, restated the role of that body:

—◆—

*“ The concept is that residents can come before a group of citizens (Citrus Heights Community Council) that truly represents their community ... ”*

The Council's number one function, he emphasized, was to weigh the pros and cons of specific land use matters during the current era of rapid, unchecked growth as well as long-range planning. "Today's decisions," stated Howard, "will affect the community for years to come."

### Block Grants

A major priority item on the Council's agenda was to see that Citrus Heights got its fair share of federal funds funneled through the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency created for that purpose in 1978. A Block Grant Committee for the "Citrus Heights Target Area" program are appointed by the Board of Supervisors that same year. Charter members included James Hamilton (chairman), John Harwell, Louis Glud, Roeley Giusti, Alice Amantea, Betty Simms, John Reynolds, George Anderson, Clyde Thomas, Eldon Brown and Terriann Ball.

Of particular note was the role played by Louis Glud who, according to fellow member Roeley Giusti, spent hundreds of hours attending various county board and commission meetings, keeping an ever watchful eye on matters affecting Citrus Heights. The Louis Glud low income housing project on Sunrise Avenue was named for the efforts of this public spirited citizen.

Through the efforts of the committee, funds from various grants were obtained to establish a bike trail for student use on Mariposa Avenue from Twin Oaks Avenue to Old Auburn Road; a veterans plot at Sylvan Cemetery; a community park at Mariposa School; a community center at Rusch Park and corner street lights on heavily traveled thoroughfares. Block grant funds also were utilized to assist older and low income families to receive assistance for needed home repairs.

Meanwhile, the population of Citrus Heights continued to spiral upward through the 1980s and '90s. Growth projected by a 1978 study, when the population was about 78,000, was expected to approximate 100,000 by the year 1990.

Typically, Citrus Heights residents, according to a 1984 survey, were young, married and well-educated. Their median age was 30; 80 percent were high school graduates with 20 percent having some college experience. About a quarter of them held professional or managerial positions with most others engaged in blue collar, clerical, sales or service jobs.

Many neighborhoods in the fast growing community consisted of neat subdivisions with well maintained houses in the \$110,000 to \$130,000 price range.

Others, however, were a curious blend of new, often upscale homes, interspersed with fast disappearing rural properties whose occupants often included chickens, horses and even an occasional goat. "I live in a nice subdivision of about 50 to 60 homes," reported Jeannie Brown, then executive director of the local chamber of commerce, "and right across from me is a field of sheep."

### Citrus Heights Historical Society

It was concern over the fast disappearing relics of its past that led another group of public spirited citizens to organize the Citrus Heights Historical Society in 1991. Their stated purpose was to "discover, collect and preserve historical facts pertaining to Citrus Heights and its surroundings, as well as to identifying and preserving places of historical interest."

This growing loss of identity had been noted as early as September 9, 1962, by the *Sacramento Bee*:

"As the Sylvan area continues to grow, the newcomers will outnumber the old residents and the community will tend to lose its identity except in the Sylvan Cemetery where the names of the pioneer families are cut in stone."

### New Problems

While the "willy nilly," seemingly careless, even unplanned, growth pattern continued to bother concerned residents as before, attention was now directed more and more to growing crime in the area.

Increasing frustration with what many Citrus Heights residents considered downright neglect by the county to cope with minor but pesky crime problems led citizens to turn to their traditional “help thyself and thy neighbors” solution, reminiscent of pre-World War II Citrus Heights.

When “cruising” brought about traffic problems and occasional acts of violence in the late 1980s and early ’90s, citizens banded together to work with the county to place anti-cruising measures in place.

Then, when petty thefts, graffiti, vandalism and burglaries began cropping up in neighborhoods, citizen crime watch groups were formed.

“It was crime that brought us together,” said Denise Resner, secretary of the Woodmore Oaks Neighborhood Watch. “But our group is much more than that now. It has helped to bring the neighborhood together.”

Many old-time residents, however, were quick to point out that this latest show of cooperation was just a continuation of the spirit of neighbor helping neighbor that had characterized the community from its earliest days.

### **A Renewed Effort**

Increased disappointment over the county’s inability to resolve growing problems arising from ongoing explosive growth and increased feelings of being isolated from and neglected by the downtown-based Sacramento County government led to a renewed push for incorporation in the mid 1990s. Increasing crime, for many, was the catalyst around which the drive focused.

Supporters of this latest cityhood movement emphasized what they had long been saying — Citrus Heights needs more police patrols and more investigative units than Sacramento County’s Sheriff’s Department can provide.

Our area, they maintained, is plagued by car thefts, residential burglaries, garage break-ins and vandalism. Victims, they pointed out, were “outraged” by sheriff’s

deputies who consistently gave higher priority to more serious crimes elsewhere in the county.

Moreover, they argued, Citrus Heights was plagued with a wide array of other civic issues ranging from recycling garbage, dealing with a growing homeless population, to controlling “slumlords” whose negligence was turning some neighborhoods into unsightly blights on the community.

### **AT LAST! ↪** **Incorporation**

Petitions were once again circulated and this time extra care was taken to make sure that all who signed were legally registered voters. Finally, on November 5, 1996, voters went to the polls where a resounding 62.5 percent of them voted to incorporate effective January 1, 1997. The community of Citrus Heights was now the City of Citrus Heights, the first new California community to incorporate since Truckee and Shasta Lake City in 1963.<sup>12</sup>

### **Launching the New Government**

A diverse group of leaders reflecting the diversity of the community also was elected at this time to head up the new government. Bill Hughes, a police lieutenant with the Roseville Police Department, was chosen as mayor with Roberta MacGlashan, a planning consultant, serving as vice-mayor. Alma Kenyon, a retired business woman, James Shelby, president and CEO of the Sacramento Urban League and Tim Raney, a planning consultant, rounded out the five-person council.

Other city officials at this time included Mike Oliver, city manager; Ruthann Ziegler, city attorney; Carol Cawley, city clerk and Gene Albaugh, finance director.

In addition, the following professionals were engaged as consultants to the new, inexperienced council: Shannon Davis & Associates, law enforcement; Lloyd DeLiamas, sales and property tax analysis; and Charles A. Long, mitigation payments.



City offices were maintained in the Chamber of Commerce building on Sunrise Boulevard with public council meetings held at the community center building in Rusch Park. In May 1997, a more permanent centrally located facility was leased in a building at the rear of Fountain Square off Greenback Lane.

### Financing the New Government

When Citrus Heights voted to incorporate on November 5, 1996, its supporters were confident that they had the wherewithal to support their government. A feasibility study taken prior to incorporation had optimistically estimated that the new city could bring in upwards of \$27 million from sales and property taxes, the principal sources of revenue in the largely residential-commercial area. From this sum, \$5.6 million would be paid annually to the county for providing certain services until such time as the city could provide them on their own. This would still leave a \$21.4 million cushion on which to operate.



*New City Hall located at Fountain Square with business on 2nd floor soon to follow.*

One of the first major problems to be addressed by the council was increased police protection. This had been a key issue in the incorporation movement and one which the council looked upon as a mandate from the electorate to resolve. At the time of incorporation, only 36 officers

were provided by the county Sheriff's Department to patrol all of Citrus Heights, Orangevale and North Highlands.

Lacking the means to provide additional manpower themselves, the council negotiated a \$10.8 million contract with the county to provide 92 sworn and non-sworn officers and a new sub-station effective July 1. While the officers were to be furnished by the county, they would be stationed in

Citrus Heights and their uniforms and patrol cars would bear Citrus Heights logos.

The new city was on its way ... *~*

12. Many Citrus Heights residents contributed to the incorporation movement over the years, including Jean and Jack Duncan, Bill Van Duker, Roeley Giusti, Almean Kenyon, Jean Laurin and Doug Ose.

## CITRUS HEIGHTS, CITY ON TRIAL

### AT THE CROSSROADS

At the conclusion of the Battle of Britain during that critical state of World War II, Prime Minister Winston Churchill summed up the situation with the prophetic words, "This is not the beginning of the end but the end of the beginning."

These words may very well be applied to the new city of Citrus Heights, now standing at the crossroads of a new more formidable challenge. The long struggle for cityhood had indeed been won, but a mind-boggling question remains — *"Can the new city survive or will it collapse through its own inherent weaknesses?"*

#### Success or Failure?

Supporters of incorporation are extremely optimistic about the future of their city just barely a year old. They point with pride to the fact that Citrus Heights is well on the way to success. In the first six months of its existence, much had been accomplished, they say. A city charter was completed, a city council elected, an interim city manager and key department heads appointed, professional consultants hired, a city facility leased and work is rapidly progressing on putting together a fiscally sound master plan which, when completed, will provide essential municipal services, including what the public has long demanded, increased police protection.

While the new government is being put in order, the county and private sources will continue to provide many of these services under lease arrangements, thus ensuring continued, uninterrupted service to the community.

Even the most ardent supporters of cityhood, however, will acknowledge that while much has been accomplished, much remains to be done, and that perhaps six months was too short a time to expect a complete separation from Sacramento County. "You can't move mountains overnight," said Councilwoman Alma

Kenyon, who was involved in the incorporation movement for 12 years. "We have to do what's right," added Councilman Tim Raney, "and if it takes us six months, 12 months or 18 months, it's got to be right."

Cautious optimism therefore characterized the official celebration of cityhood during a five-day program of activities which commenced July 3, 1997. At that time, termed by many as Citrus Heights' "official declaration of independence," official swearing in of council and staff members took place. To many, this was a sign that the city of Citrus Heights was here to stay.

While supporters of incorporation remain ever optimistic, critics who have long argued that the residents of Citrus Heights had been sold a bill of goods, still remain skeptical and arguably with some justification.

Estimates for revenues from sales and property taxes, the principal sources of income for the city for the first year of operations, they point out, will approximate a modest \$19 million, far below the rosy \$27 million figure projected by the Local Agency Formation Commission, the agency that determines whether an unincorporated area can afford to become a city.

This projection appears even more gloomy when one examines a recent report prepared for Citrus Heights by a Bay Area firm. Their study revealed that retail sales had dropped from a high of \$9,591 per person in 1989 to \$7,870 per person in 1995 and that Citrus Heights which had garnered 9.4 percent of Sacramento and Placer counties retail sales in 1989 could only account for 8.2 percent in 1996.

This unanticipated decrease in revenues has forced Citrus Heights to request restructuring of their lease arrangements with the county for providing vital municipal services and for extending these services for an additional 90 days beyond the July 1, 1997 deadline when

Citrus Heights was supposed to provide them on their own.


With declining revenues from Sunrise Mall and other major shopping complexes and the possibility of additional drains on money sources when new state-of-the-art shopping malls are completed in nearby Roseville and Folsom, a bad situation can only get worse predict the prophets of doom.

### **A Bright Tomorrow**

As of this moment, Citrus Heights is a "city on trial." The jury is still out and the verdict as yet unreached regarding its future. But to Mayor Bill Hughes, "the prospects for a bright tomorrow look brighter every day."

"There is a growing sense of community pride," he says, "and a willingness of our citizens to take charge of their own affairs, which was not possible when Citrus Heights was under county dominance."

Mayor Hughes envisions development of the various neighborhoods that comprise Citrus Heights into "broad-based" economic units, each focusing on its particular problems and means to resolve them. "With their cooperation and expertise, we can make Citrus Heights a progressive, self-sustaining city which we can all be proud to call home."

On this optimistic note, we end our little history of Citrus Heights. 

 *The End* 

## EPILOGUE

When I first began delving into the history of Citrus Heights, even before there was a Citrus Heights, even before there was a Sylvan District, and even before there was a Center Township, I became increasingly aware of a sense of community spirit, of “neighbor helping neighbor” which bonded the area together into a closely knit unit.

From the time of the earliest settlers who took up land here in the 1850s, right up to the public spirited citizens of today, this working together for the benefit of the community has enabled it to meet and overcome each problem as it occurred.

Now, as Citrus Heights begins its second year of cityhood, its residents face its most serious problem to date — making incorporation work. But, as Mayor Bill Hughes continually stresses, it will take the combined efforts of every man, woman and child who calls Citrus Heights home.

City Manager Mike Oliver further emphasized the importance of each individual in meeting this challenge when he said, “Government cannot do everything. The entire community must pitch in to make it work.”

It will undoubtedly take some belt tightening and self-sacrifice to develop a self-sustaining, independent city government, but if history is any indicator, Citrus Heights residents will meet these demands as they have so many others in their 150 year history.

Leonard M. Davis 



↳ REPRESENTATIVE CITIZENS OF CITRUS HEIGHTS ↳  
FROM ITS EARLIEST DAYS TO THE PRESENT

*Following are brief sketches of some of the men and women  
who helped transform Citrus Heights from rolling plains  
into the fast growing city of today.*


**Aiston, John**, pioneer rancher of Sylvan, born in England in 1825. He migrated to America in 1853 and resided in Utah until 1857. It was in Utah that his wife (Mary) gave birth to their only child, John (b. June 17, 1855). In 1857, the family moved to Lake Tahoe where they remained until December when they pre-empted a tract of land extending from today's Old Auburn Road to Greenback Lane. San Juan High School is situated on what once was Aiston property. The family home, although modified greatly over the years, still stands at what locals once called "Aiston Corners." Upon the death of the senior Aistons (John, 1907; Mary 1914), John Jr. continued to operate the family farm which had grown to 440 acres. It was there that his two children, Charles A. and Lottie (Aiston) Rogers grew up. Much of the original Aiston lands were sold to Trainor & Desmond for inclusion in their Citrus Heights colony.


**Berry, William**, a French Canadian, came around the Horn to San Francisco in 1859 and on to present day Citrus Heights sometime thereafter. Over the years, he acquired large acreage in the Auburn Boulevard-Twin Oaks Avenue area. In 1910, Mr. Berry sold much of his holdings to Trainor & Desmond for \$49,000, retaining only a 20-acre homesite. This early day pioneer died in 1939 at the age of 90. He is buried in Sylvan Cemetery.


**Blount, Maude**, a resident of Sacramento County for more than 60 years, and Citrus Heights' beloved librarian for 26 years, was born in Missouri in 1889. In 1906, she accompanied her parents to Napa and later to Citrus Heights. In 1936, seven years after the death of her


husband, she took on the position of librarian, a position she would hold to her retirement in 1962. The popular Citrus Heights librarian died on October 10, 1981 at the age of 75. She is survived by a sister, Lulu Thorton, and four nephews.


**Carrick, William**, a native of Ireland, migrated to the United States c. 1850. He conducted a small dairy near Albany, New York, where he met and married Bridget McCann who would bear him six children. The Carricks later moved to Iowa where Mr. Carrick engaged in farming and stock raising. In 1873, the family moved to California where they purchased a 320-acre farm in the Sylvan District on which Mr. Carrick farmed until his death in 1899, aged 72. His widow continued to live on the family property until her death in 1920 at the age of 84. Charles W. Carrick, son of William and Bridget Carrick and Lester Carrick, the only son of John Thomas Carrick, deceased brother of William Carrick, then assumed joint ownership of the ranch. For many years, Lester and wife, Pansy, operated a popular hay ride and barbecue business on the C-Bar-C property. Twenty-one acres were later sold to the Sunrise Recreation and Park District. The price of \$1,500 per acre was far below the going rate of \$4,000 an acre. This enabled the park district to establish a park there, which fulfilled a life-long dream of the Carricks to preserve a bit of the early history of the area. Today's C-Bar-C Park perpetuates the memory of the pioneer Carrick family.

 **Cavitt, G.W.**, a pioneer orchardist of the Center Township, was born in Rock County, Indiana in 1832. At age 13, he accompanied his parents to Iowa where the family farmed. On February 28, 1856, Mr. Cavitt married Rebecca Perkins, a native of Virginia by whom he had four children. In 1864, Cavitt brought his family to California by ox team. He acquired a 280-acre ranch along the Auburn Road where he engaged in farming and teaming. Mr. Cavitt remained active until his death on January 24, 1907. His widow continued to operate the family ranch until her death in May 1911. Both are buried in Sylvan Cemetery.

 **Cobb, William**, a native of Georgia, located in that part of Citrus Heights known as Sylvan Corners in 1919. He purchased 10 acres of land from the George Coleman family, and established a store and service station across the road from the Sylvan School, which under Cobb and his successors became a familiar landmark business for many years. In addition to being one of the pioneer businessmen at Sylvan Corners, Mr. Cobb was noted for his community endeavors. He was a charter member of the Citrus Heights Community Club and served as its first president. The popular Citrus Heights businessman and community leader died on June 29, 1949 at the age of 76.

 **Coyle, Edward and Bridget.** Mrs. Coyle was born in Ireland in 1833 and lived in the Emerald Isle until 1847 when she emigrated with her parents to the United States. She lived for a time in Brooklyn, then Boston and then back to Brooklyn, where in 1852 she married Edward Coyle, like her a native of Ireland. The Coyles came to California via the Nicaragua route and resided in Sacramento until 1859 when they took up land in Center Township. They commenced raising sheep on what would eventually become a 1,040-acre ranch valued at about \$30,000. Edward Coyle died in 1872 leaving his wife, three sons and one daughter to survive. Their second son, W.M. Coyle, assumed active management of the home place after the death of his father. Today's Coyle Avenue and Mercy San Juan Hospital are on part of what was one of the largest ranches in Center Township.

 **Cross, John A.**, a native of Morrill, Waldo County, Maine, and a carpenter by trade, first came to California in 1852 where he worked on building the State Capitol building in Benicia. In 1859, he returned to his native Maine where he married his childhood sweetheart, Sarah Jane Meservey. Returning to California, the Crosses acquired a tract of land along the Auburn Road in 1862, an additional tract was acquired in 1869. Mr. Cross built a fine new home in 1869 which remained a familiar Auburn Boulevard landmark until the 1970s. While Mr. Cross was building the original Sylvan School in 1862, his wife taught the first class at her home. To Samuel J. Pullen, who roomed at the Cross place, however, goes the distinction of being one of the first teachers at the "new school." Pullen would later marry Alice Cross, daughter of John and Sarah Jane Cross. A second daughter, Lillian, did teach at the school built by her father in 1888. Much of the early history of the area was recaptured in a small volume privately published by Lillian Cross entitled **Sylvan Recollections**. A copy of this rare book is available for research in the California Room of the California State Library in Sacramento. In 1971, ground was broken for a \$25 million "Crosswoods" planned community by the firm of Taylor-Mazza, Inc., which occupies most of the Cross properties.

 **Daly, Elisha**, a pioneer of 1859, was born in Pennsylvania in 1832 and lived in that state until 1845 when he moved to Illinois. There he worked at the carpentry trade until 1854 when he left California. In 1859, he located in Center Township on a ranch which evidently totaled 366 acres, and it was here that he and his wife, Elizabeth, raised their 13 children — 5 boys and 8 girls. Mr. Daly was the first justice of the peace for Center Township, serving in that capacity from 1865 to after 1880. This pioneer resident of today's Citrus Heights died in 1891; his wife, Elizabeth, survived him by 14 years, passing from this worldly scene in 1905. Both are buried in Sylvan Cemetery.

**Desimone, Gene**, associated with the Citrus Heights Fire Department from its beginnings in 1932 to his death in 1963, was born in San Jose and lived in Oakland and Woodland before moving to Sacramento, where he worked as a reporter for the *Sacramento Bee* and the *Sacramento Union*. He also had a regular radio program specializing on Capital comments, news views and interviews. Mr. Desimone was one of the first volunteers on the Citrus Heights Fire District which was organized in 1932. He served as its chief from 1932 to his death in 1963. It was only after 1951 that he was granted a modest salary for his efforts. His son, Warren, who had worked as a volunteer fire fighter since he was a small boy, succeeded his father as chief in 1963.

**Dewey, Harry**, for whom Dewey Drive is named, was born in Grass Valley, Nevada County, California on August 6, 1864, the eldest of three sons. His parents both died shortly after his birth and Harry's early childhood was spent at the Protestant Orphans Home in Sacramento. When still a very young lad, he was taken in by a pioneer of Placer County who worked him far beyond his strength. In this environment, he grew to manhood after which he worked at whatever kind of work he could find. In 1889, he returned to Sacramento County where he worked on the ranch of Jacob Heintz. Dewey also engaged in farming on his own in the old San Juan Grant, cultivating at times as many as 4,000 acres, much of it leased land, on which he grew wheat, barley and hay. He also leased land in the nearby Haggin Grant. As the development of various land colonizing projects took place, large scale ranchers like Harry Dewey gradually sold off portions of their lands. By 1923, only 180 acres remained from Dewey's original 385-acre ranch. The 200 plus acres he sold became part of the Citrus Heights Colony on which seven smaller irrigation ranches were developed for planting fruit trees. Mr. Dewey's home ["Oaklawn"] ranch was situated 12 miles northeast of Sacramento. In 1912, he began development work there, setting out 25 acres in almond trees which by 1923 had been expanded to 80

acres. Commencing in 1917, he became associated with the Fair Oaks and Orangevale Almond Association, serving two terms as president. Because of his strict childhood upbringing, Mr. Dewey worked untiringly during his adult life for the welfare of children and served several terms on the Sylvan School District board of directors. In 1888, Mr. Dewey married Bertha Heintz, daughter of Jacob Heintz, who would bear him four children — Letha, who died in infancy; Harold J. who later became manager of his orchard ranch at Oaklawn; Alta W.; and Joseph H. The memory of this pioneer rancher and orchardist is perpetuated in today's busy Dewey Drive in the heart of Citrus Heights.

**Donahue, Cornelius**, a native of County Kerry, Ireland, located in the Sylvan District in 1862. The following year, he purchased 160 acres west of present day Citrus Heights. His holdings eventually totaled 482 acres and bordered on what is now Van Maren Lane, a half mile north of Auburn Boulevard and 1.5 miles southeast of Antelope Road. Before his arrival in Sacramento County, "Connie," as he was called, and his wife, Margarette Culhane Donahue, settled in the Grass Valley-Nevada City area, where Connie engaged in mining. Margarette died on July 13, 1864, leaving Connie with three children: John, aged 8; Mary, 7; and baby Clar Ellen, 3. A little less than a year later, Connie married Mary O'Hea who would present him with a daughter, Catherine "Katie" Genevieve Donahue, who would later marry Adolph Van Maren. In 1872, Cornelius Donahue purchased 322 acres on the south side of Sunrise Boulevard, including the property occupied today by Sunrise Mall and Birdcage Walk. Cornelius Donahue died in 1881, aged 51, at which time his sons John and Dan assumed control of the family properties.

**Fertig, Benjamin D.** The Fertig family located in the Sylvan District in the latter part of the 19th Century where they accumulated "all" lands bordering what is today Twin Oaks Avenue. Ben Fertig later subdivided the family lands into 10-acre lots which contributed to the building up of what was to become Citrus Heights. Mr. Fertig died in June 1954 at the age of 84. He was survived by three sons, Cliff of Sacramento; Benjamin and Paul of Arizona and two daughters, Mrs. Ruth Bage and Mrs. Lois Perry of Sacramento. Mrs. Fertig (Carrie) preceded her husband in death some years prior to his demise.

**Gardner, Joel**, an early day rancher of Center Township dating from c. 1859, was born in Wilbraham, Massachusetts on March 13, 1831. His early life was spent working as a mechanic at the Springfield Agricultural Works and at Chicopee Falls. On January 1, 1857, he embarked for California via the Isthmus of Panama route. For two years following his arrival, he followed dairying. He then took up turkey raising, raising "great flocks" which proved quite profitable, with his annual sales totaling as much as \$2,000. The Gardner ranch, located 12 miles northeast of Sacramento near present day Antelope, consisted of 305 acres. Joel Gardner, who would become Antelope's first postmaster, died in 1906. He is buried in the Sylvan Cemetery.

**Gray, Joseph.** One of the earliest settlers of today's Citrus Heights area was Joseph Gray, a Sacramento arrival of 1849, who settled along the Auburn Road in 1853 where he conducted a stopping place for teamsters known as the "14 Mile House." It is believed that he grew the first grain and first grapes produced in the area. A few years after the birth of his daughter, Nellie, Mr. Gray sold his Center Township properties and moved his family to what is now Truckee where he built that community's first hotel. He also built the first sawmill and first ice plant on the Truckee River. Gray later returned to Sacramento where he purchased property at 7th and M Streets, which later passed into the hands of his children and which eventually was subdivided.

**Giusti, Roeley and Joe.** No name in the history of Citrus Heights typifies the spirit of community participation more than does that of Giusti. Roeley Giusti, Citrus Heights' unofficial historian, was born Roeley Sargentini in Fort Bragg, California. She grew up on her parents' 50-acre prune and grape ranch in Ukiah. In 1947, she married Joe Giusti and has lived in Citrus Heights ever since, first residing in a house situated on the 12-acre Giusti family ranch purchased by Joe's father, Pietro, in 1931. When the Giustis married, there were only 2,000 people living in Citrus Heights. Today, there are over 90,000. From the onset, Roeley and Joe Giusti have worked actively for the betterment of their community, particularly for incorporation. During the years preceding incorporation, Mrs. Giusti became increasingly concerned with the fact that in this period of rapid growth, much of the early history of the Citrus Heights area had been destroyed or forgotten. As a result, she took it upon herself to research and publish at her own expense two short volumes, *Walking from Sylvan, 1860-1960* (1973) and *A Century of History* (1994) which recount highlights of Citrus Heights' growth and development over the years. Joe, a 1939 graduate of San Juan High School and a resident of Citrus Heights since the age of 9 also has been active in community affairs for nearly half a century. His include life membership in Mariposa PTA, founder of C.H. Little League in 1959, San Juan Alumni Assn., C.H. Post No. 637 American Legion, and the Holy Family Catholic Church. Both have been active Scouters more than 40 years, and continue to play active roles in the betterment of their community. The Giustis have lived in their Citrus Heights home for 48 years and have two sons.





**Hall, John D.**, a native of Weatherford, Texas, and a resident of California for more than 70 years. Hall spent his early years in a wide variety of jobs before hiring on at Roseville Pacific Fruit Express where he worked for 18 years. In 1937, Mr. Hall purchased land in Citrus Heights. Nine years later (1946), he opened a general store on Mariposa Avenue, one of the first in the area. The following year, a furniture line was added, and eventually the grocery business was discontinued. "Hall's Furniture," however, has since remained a Citrus Heights landmark to this day. For 46 years, Mr. Hall and son, Ralph, operated the family business, which is today supervised by a grandson. John D. Hall, a highly respected member of the Citrus Heights business for half a century, died on January 3, 1998, aged 86. He is survived by nine grandchildren, 12 great grandchildren and one great great grandchild. He is buried in the family plot in Sacramento's East Lawn Cemetery.

**Hoffman, Ancil.** While never a resident of Citrus Heights (he lived in nearby Fair Oaks), Ancil Hoffman, nevertheless, played an important role in the fortunes of Citrus Heights and Center Township as its supervisor between 1950 and 1965. Mr. Hoffman was a native of Illinois but was raised and educated in Oklahoma and Sacramento. After the death of his mother, he made his home with his father in the capital city. Here, he became interested in boxing at an early age and spent many of his leisure hours at The Athletic Club at 6th and M Streets where he engaged in amateur boxing for a time. In 1906, he opened a saloon at 1801 M Street, the first of five bars he would open before the advent of Prohibition. He also engaged in the operation of two nightclub-restaurants and operated a 40-acre avocado and orange ranch in what is now Fair Oaks. Forced to close his bars and liquor distributorship because of Prohibition, he turned his attention to becoming a boxing manager and promoter. During the 1920s and '30s, he gained international


prominence in this field. In 1931, he took over management of heavyweight boxer, Max Bear, whom he guided to the world's championship in 1934. He later managed Max's younger brother, Buddy, who fought two title fights with Joe Louis. In 1950, Hoffman was appointed to a vacancy in the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors caused by the death of Clarence Champion. For the next 15 years, he would be well known for his efforts to enact highway and general improvement programs for his district which, in addition to Citrus Heights, included Carmichael, Fair Oaks and Orangevale. The popular champion of the north area died in January 1976 at the age of 91.


**Hughes, William,** Citrus Heights' first mayor, is a native of Colorado, but moved to Orangevale with his parents while a young teenager. He graduated from Bella Vista High School after which he attended California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) where he attained a degree in criminal justice. He was hired by Roseville Police Department in 1975 and currently serves as lieutenant in charge of the Neighborhood Policing Unit. Hughes, a resident of Citrus Heights for the past 23 years, is married to the former Sarah Silva, a native of California, and is the father of five children. From the 1970s, he has taken a keen interest in the incorporation movement and like many of his fellow citizens attended various committee and board meetings debating the subject. When the incorporation issue was placed on the ballot in November 1996, he was urged to run for the council. He was subsequently elected as one of Citrus Heights' first council members and shortly thereafter was chosen to be the new city's first mayor, a position he still holds at this time.


 **Hurtzig, Emily** (1821-1863), identified with the Center Township from the 1850s, was born Ernestine Johana E. "Emilie" Friederike Hurtzig on January 22, 1815. She was one of seven children born to Ernestine Wilemine and Cristopher Christian Phillip Hurtzig. Her father, a pastor in Friedrichdorf near Gutersloh, near where Emily was born and later at Veltheim, near Vlotho where he served until his retirement in 1832. Little is known of the early life of Emily Hurtzig prior to the early 1850s when she was proprietess of the popular 12 Mile House on the Sacramento Auburn Road. It is possible she joined family members on the Foresthill Divide during the Gold Rush period. It is known that she married twice. Her first husband was a man named Wilson about whom no information has been uncovered. She later (1859) married Levi Johnson (1829-1906), an area cattleman. It was during her years at the 12 Mile House that a younger sister, Constantina, joined her, and it was here that Constantina met and married Peter Van Maren. Emily Hurtzig continued to operate the 12 Mile House until her death in 1863.

 **Lauppe, Rudolph**, a name long associated with Center Township is that of Lauppe dating from the early 1860s when Rudolph Lauppe, Sr., a native of Switzerland, arrived in Center Township and commenced farming. From that time to the present, the Lauppes have played prominent roles in the development of Center Township. Mr. Lauppe married Regina Schafer, a native of Germany in 1855. To them were born five children, John, Rudolph, Edward, Louise and Anna. Mr. Lauppe died in 1898 at which time son John continued to operate part of the family farm for four years, at which time he opened a general store in Antelope, as well as serving as railroad express agent and postmaster. In 1910, he started a prosperous automobile dealership in Sacramento and reportedly owned the first automobile in Antelope-Citrus Heights area. Son Edward, who had acquired the 14 Mile

House properties (in the hands of the Lauppe family since 1881), sold that property to Adolph and Catherine Van Maren in 1919. Rudolph and Regina Lauppe are buried in the Sylvan cemetery. Members of this pioneer family still reside in the area.

 **Lee, R.H.**, pre-empted 200 acres of open government land along the Auburn Road some 12 miles from Sacramento in 1859. By December of that year, he had made "substantial improvements" including encircling the entire property with a brush fence. In addition, he had 39 head of cattle (31 cows, 2 bulls and 6 steers) and two wagons valued at \$400. Desiring to return to his home in the District of Columbia, he sold the entire property with improvements for \$1,600, plus \$50 each for each head of cattle and left the area.

 **Locher, Francis** arrived in Sacramento in 1865 via the overland route. From the capital city he proceeded to Bath (Placer County) where he mined for \$3 a day. He also hauled logs at Truckee during the summer months. During winter months, he located in the Sylvan District where he acquired 160 acres of government land. In 1875, he sold a large portion of his holdings of 322.71 acres to Peter Van Maren and moved to Auburn where he became a successful businessman.

 **McAdams, Luther**, a native of Illinois and resident of California since the age of 12, married Mary Van Maren, daughter of Peter and Constantina Van Maren, in 1889. The McAdams took up residence at the old Peter Van Maren home place on the corner of present day Dewey Drive and Green Leaf Drive, which over the years, became known as the "McAdams Place." Luther McAdams, who served as justice of the peace of Center Township for more than 24 years, died in 1938. He is buried in Sylvan Cemetery.


**Mistretta, Father Vito**, founder of the Holy Family Church in Citrus Heights in 1949, is a native of Brooklyn, New York. He was ordained into the priesthood at Camden, New Jersey on November 21, 1942, after which he completed his studies at St. Francis Seminary, Loretto, Pennsylvania. His first assignment was as assistant pastor at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacramento from 1942 to 1946. He was then assigned to Roseville's St. Rose of Lima Church as assistant pastor. He was the founding pastor of the Holy Family Church in 1949. At that time, the parish consisted of 30 families. Their church was a surplus barracks building from Camp Kohler. Work was begun on more permanent facilities in 1953. Completion of three classrooms and a parish home occurred shortly thereafter. It would not be until 1959, however, before the first teachers arrived. A fine new church building was complete and dedicated in 1965, at which time the old army barracks building was removed to the rear portion of the church properties where, after remodeling, it serves as the parish social hall. On October 21, 1979, Father Mistretta was bestowed with the title "Monsignor."


**Mooney, William T.**, a name synonymous with San Juan High School, joined that district in 1921 shortly after graduating from the University of California. His entire educational career between that year and his retirement in 1957 would be spent at San Juan. During his 39 years of service, he served as a classroom teacher and part-time bus driver, vice principal, principal and in 1950 as the district's first superintendent. "Mr. Mooney," as he was respectfully known to generations of San Juan graduates, retired in 1957 but continued on as a consultant for another three years. The highly respected educational leader of San Juan for nearly four decades died in January 1978 at his Citrus Heights home at the age of 79. He was survived by a daughter, Becky, and a son, William T. Jr., and five grandchildren.


**Muldrow, James D.** came to California at age 16 via ox team. The year was 1852. He worked as a toll take for

Sam Morris on the first bridge built across the American River in the early 1850s. He held that position until the toll bridge washed out in the big flood of 1862. For a time, he assisted at the ferry impressed into service until a new bridge, Lisle's Bridge, was built. Then (1865), he moved with his wife, Hannah and two sons to the old San Juan Grant. In 1874, after the unsold portions of the San Juan Grant were sold to Cox & Clarke, he purchased a farm site from them, which he operated until his death in 1912 at the age of 76. He was survived by one son, Edwin. Both are buried in Sylvan Cemetery as was his wife who died in 1907.


**Myklebost, Byron**, popular Center Township constable for 33 years, was born in the state of Washington to Margrethe and Anders Myklebost, both natives of Norway. At the age of 17, he joined the United States Army then engaged in World War I. Following his discharge in 1919, he worked for a time in a grocery store and on various ranches before joining his parents who had moved to California in 1913. Byron or "Myke" as he was called, worked for the Van Marens and other area farmers until 1928 when he was appointed constable by Supervisor Rossi. He would hold this position continuously until his retirement in 1961, during which time he had seen Sylvan grow from a small community of friends and neighbors to a sprawling collection of neighborhoods collectively called Citrus Heights. For most of his years as constable, law enforcement was relatively easy, consisting of seeing that drunks got home safely after dances at Sweet's Ballroom, breaking up minor neighborhood disturbances, serving papers and keeping area kids out of trouble. Myklebost, an avid baseball player, played on several area teams over the years and later was actively engaged in the formation of several Citrus Heights youth teams. The charismatic figure also was an active member in the Lions Club, American Legion and other organizations. For many years, he served as the community Santa Claus. The widely known, highly respected Byron Myklebost died on December 11, 1968 at the age of 73. He is buried in Sylvan Cemetery.

 **Pitcher, Georgiana "Jane" Haigh** was born in London, England. While on a six-month trip around the world in 1846, she met 21-year-old Edward Pitcher (b. May 3, 1824) of Sandy Hill, New York. At age 21, in 1846, he set sail for California. While aboard ship, he met Jane Haigh, whom he married when the ship docked in San Francisco. Young Ed Pitcher obtained a 3,000-acre land grant from John Sutter in 1847 on the site of present day Rio Linda, alongside the Sacramento-Nevada Road. Here he established the Star House Hotel and Store, a popular stopping place for miners heading for the gold fields. While returning from a trip East in 1860, Pitcher contracted fever in Panama and died shortly after returning home. In 1868, Jane Pitcher and her seven children and one adopted son homesteaded 650 acres near the Placer-Sacramento County line, which she named the "Sunrise Ranch." In 1869, she married Seeley DeKay by whom she had one son, Guy. Jane Pitcher lived out her life at Sunrise Ranch until her death on December 20, 1898. The property remained in the Pitcher-DeKay family until the early 1940s. Today's busy Sunrise Boulevard is named after the Sunrise Ranch.

 **Porter, Robert.** A name long associated with the Sylvan area was the Porter family, whose roots in Sacramento County go back to 1859 when Henry and Amelian (Brown) Porter took up land near Folsom, where they lived for over half a century. To them were born eight children, including son Robert who later operated the 20-acre Point Lookout Ranch near Roseville, some 18 miles northeast of Sacramento. Robert Porter died on May 18, 1941, aged 70. He is buried in Roseville Cemetery.

 **Rohland, R. "Duke,"** a community-oriented resident of Citrus Heights for nearly a quarter of a century, served 22 years as manager and part owner of Sylvan Lumber Company. Rohland, a native of Washington, operated lumber yards in east Oregon and south Idaho before moving to Roseville where he was manager for the Diamond National Corporation. In 1946, Sylvan Lumber

was founded and on May 1, 1950, Rohland joined the firm as manager and one-third owner. During his years with Sylvan Lumber, Rohland was active in the American Legion, serving as its first commander, and also serving as president of Citrus Heights Lions Club and the Chamber of Commerce. Duke was closely identified with financial support of innumerable community social projects, big and small, from the time of his arrival in Citrus Heights to his death on January 10, 1996. He is buried in Sylvan Cemetery.


 **Thomas, William Alexander,** who conferred the name Sylvan upon the school and the district, was born in Jefferson County, Ohio in 1820. As a young man, he moved to Illinois, then to Pennsylvania and finally Indiana. In 1854, Mr. Thomas married Sarah Ann Campbell after which they left for California by ox team. Mrs. Thomas died at South Pass in the Rockies on July 3, 1854; the rest of the party arrived safely at Illinoistown (Colfax) where Mr. Thomas worked as a grocery clerk for Mr. Mendenhall. He later moved to Bloomer Ranch near Auburn (c. 1856). About two years after his arrival in California, Mr. Thomas moved to Center Township in Sacramento County where he operated the 15 Mile House on the Sacramento-Auburn Road. He was instrumental in establishing a school for the district and donated five acres for that purpose. It was Thomas who conferred the name Sylvan upon the school and the surrounding area. In 1860, Mr. Thomas married Ursula Blakely Stephenson, formerly of Pennsylvania. When the coming of the railroad (1864-65) curtailed the once profitable business offered by the teamster and stagecoach trade, Thomas moved to Roseville Junction and opened that town's first store. Mr. Thomas died on March 26, 1886 at the age of 75. He is buried in the Roseville cemetery.


**Trainor, Alfred, Sr.**, the person who subdivided and named Citrus Heights in 1910, was born in Sacramento on July 31, 1874 to Charles and Rose (Toland) Trainor. His father was a pioneer of 1852 who engaged in butchering and farming. Alfred, the fourth of five children born to Charles and Rose Trainor, graduated from grammar and high school after which he studied surveying for a year. He then entered the real estate business and for some 60 years was a partner in the Trainor-Desmond Company located at 813 J Street before selling out to Artz, Cook and Drew. It was Mr. Trainor, who was responsible for purchasing large tracts of idle land in the Sylvan District in 1910, which he subdivided into 10-acre lots and renamed "Citrus Heights." Mr. Trainor, who conferred the name Citrus Heights upon the Sylvan District, died in 1960 at the age of 83.


**VanDuker, William.** Among the many leaders in the final push towards the incorporation of Citrus Heights, no name stands out more than does that of William "Bill" VanDuker. VanDuker, a native of Klamath Falls, Oregon, moved to Berkeley in 1961 following a two-year stint in the United States Army. Here he met and married his wife, Jane, who would subsequently present him with two sons. The VanDukers remained in the East Bay city until 1969 at which time they moved to Sacramento, where Mr. VanDuker engaged in various business pursuits. In November 1977, Bill and Jane VanDuker moved to Citrus Heights where they opened their "All Star Printing" business. From the time of his arrival in Citrus Heights in 1977, Bill VanDuker became involved in the Citrus Heights incorporation movement and after 1985, became one of its leaders. Between 1985 and 1996, he served a total of five years as president of CHIP (Citrus Heights Incorporation Project). Since incorporation, Bill VanDuker has continued to play an important role in the development of his adopted community.


**Van Maren, Peter and Constantina.** A name closely identified with Citrus Heights from its earliest days to the present is that of Van Maren. The progenitor of this

pioneer family was Peter Van Maren, a native of Holland where he was born on February 8, 1821. Little is known of the early life of Peter. It is believed that he came from a farming background, the profession he was to follow for most of his adult life in the Citrus Heights region of Sacramento County, California. While still a young man, Peter left the security of his native land to seek his fortune in far off California where the famed gold rush period was still producing a few instant millionaires and even more instant paupers. Peter Van Maren arrived in California some time before 1854 when it was recorded that he was involved in a failed real estate deal in Sacramento. Shortly after this, he left the unfriendly atmosphere of Sacramento City for the more peaceful climate of the countryside where he took up residence at the popular 12 Mile House. Here he met his wife-to-be, Constantina Hurtzig, a native of Germany, who was working for her sister, Emily, proprietress of the popular teamster stops. It was about this time that Peter began to pre-empt open land then available for the taking on sparsely populated Center Township. In January 1859, Peter Van Maren took Constantina Hurtzig for his wife, after which the newlyweds moved into a fine home he had built for her at the location of today's Dewey Drive and Woodcreek Drive, along the banks of Arcade Creek. It was here that Peter and Constantina raised their six children and it was from this initial 160-acre parcel that a vast ranch of approximately 1,000 acres would evolve, extending from today's Greenback Lane to Dewey Drive-Van Maren Lane. Peter Van Maren died at the family home on May 27, 1876, aged 55 years, 9 months and 4 days. Constantina survived him by three years, passing away on July 21, 1879. Both are buried in the family plot in the Sylvan cemetery. Six children survived this pioneer couple (Phillip, Johanna, Nicolaus, Mary, Adolph and Willian), all of whom would continue as prominent members of the agricultural area today known as Citrus Heights.

 **Volle, Fred**, whose ranch of 480 acres, part of which is today's Rusch Park, was a native of Prussia where he was born in 1825. He remained there, engaged in the milling business, until 1846 when he migrated to the United States. He followed farming in Indiana until 1853 when he moved to Sacramento where he engaged in a mill and general grocery business. In 1859, he took up farming on what subsequently became a 480-acre farm 1.5 miles from Antelope and 15 miles from Sacramento, which he operated until his death in 1880. At that time, operation of the family ranch passed into the hands of Fred Rusch, grandson of Mr. Volle, who along with his sister, Julia Rusch, was raised by the Volles. Julia and Fred Rusch, neither of whom married, lived out their lives on the family ranch until their deaths in 1973 and 1977 respectively. Today's Rusch Park occupies part of the historic Volle-Rusch ranch.

 **Ward, Robert**, a native of England, came to California via the Isthmus of Panama at the age of 17. His wife, Mary (Slater) Ward crossed the plains by covered wagon as a child of 8. Mr. Ward mined several years, then to take up the more reliable occupation of farming in c. 1890, he purchased the former 16 Mile House property from Jeremiah "Jerry" Givens, who had acquired it from a Mr. Locher in the 1860s. To the Wards were born eight children. Members of this pioneer family continued to live on the old 16 Mile House ranch until recent times.

 **Wachtel**. Wachtel Way, which for all practical purposes, marks the eastern boundary of Citrus Heights, is named for the pioneer Wachtel family who took up land here in the 1860s. Part of their holdings were later sold to Al Cabral, an employee on a Natomas area gold dredger. The land has been operated as a sheep ranch (K Bar K) until recent years,, by E. Keith Barnes, (d. 1984) grandson of Mr. Cabral, and great grandson of the pioneer Wachtel family.

 **Wheadon, Theodore**. One of the earliest settlers of Center Township was Theodore Wheadon, who pre-empted on a ranch 16 miles from Sacramento on the Auburn Road, sometime before 1859. By that date, he had claimed 480 acres of government land, 300 of which were enclosed with a brush fence. When his house was completed in 1859, he estimated the value of his property would be approximately \$1,600. While building up his ranch, Mr. Wheadon engaged in the teaming business, hauling freight with his two teams. He also had on hand 150 cords of wood cut on his place, valued at \$3 per cord. Mr. Wheadon married Isabel Johnson in 1859 by whom he had three children, G.T., Mary Jane and Mathew. Theodore Wheadon died in 1871 after which his widow managed the family farm, which in 1880, totaled 320 acres and with improvements was valued at \$2,100. ↪

## CONTRIBUTIONS

## BENEFACTORS

Citrus Heights Water District  
 City of Citrus Heights  
 Richard and Lilo Kniesel  
   Heidi Kniesel  
   Robert and Patti Kniesel (Justin, Ashler and Shelby)  
   Richard and Tracy Kniesel (Jennifer)  
   Wendi Kniesel  
   Tom and Shelby Kniesel (Kyle)  
*Special Dedication In Memory Of:*  
   *Peter and Constantina (Hurtzig) Van Maren and*  
   *Cornelius and Mary (O'Hea) Donahue*  
 John P. Stock  
   John Van Maren Stock  
   Virginia Stock-Johannessen  
*In Memory Of:*  
   *Adolph and Catherine (Donahue) Van Maren and*  
   *May Van Maren Stock Corlett*

Jack and Nadine Van Maren  
   Mary Van Maren Foley and Kelvin Foley  
   Sharon Van Maren  
   Victoria and Vern Ladd (Catherine & John)  
   John Van Maren (Kristina, Karli & Jennifer)  
*In Memory Of:*  
   *Cornelius Van Maren*  
 James and Shirley Van Maren  
   Catherine Anderson  
   Constantina Todd  
   James Van Maren, Jr.  
*In Memory Of:*  
   *Guy and Iva Van Maren*

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   Steven and Connie Law  
   Glenda Law  
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   *Bryon and Hazel Myklebost*  
 Citrus Heights Lions Club  
 Roger and Linda Poulson  
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   Russ T. Purvis  
   Ron L. Purvis  
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 Mary E. (Tat) Van Maren-Robinson  
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# S. B. B. C.

Second Annual Entertainment

## Sylvan Base Ball Club,

AT  
SYLVAN GROVE, AUBURN ROAD,

*On Wednesday, May 1st, 1878.*

**COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS:**

J. H. COYLE, ASA LINDLEY,  
P. VAN MAREN, DAN DONAHUE,  
WM. DARLING.

**RECEPTION COMMITTEE:**

J. T. CARRICK, FRANK CAVITT,  
W. N. COYLE, THOS. SLATER, P. BRENNAN.

**CHAIRMAN LITERARY EXERCISES:**

J. H. COYLE.

Music by Sylvan Band.

### MEMBERS OF

## *Sylvan Base Ball Club.*

JOHN DONAHUE.....PRESIDENT  
ASA LINDLEY.....SECRETARY  
PHILIP VAN MAREN.....TREASURER  
WM. N. COYLE.....CAPTAIN FIRST NINE

J. H. Coyie,	W. D. Kelly,
J. T. Carrick,	Thos. Ward,
Wm. Cavitt,	J. A. Dyer,
A. Aiston,	Geo. Wheadon,
L. Daly,	L. D. Robb,
Frank Cavitt,	Wm. Darling,
Dan Donahue,	Geo. Robb,
Elisha Daley	P. Brennan,
N. Van Maren,	F. T. Miller,
Thomas Slater,	Fred Volle.





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For the memory of  
~ Janet (Jan) Carrick ~  
1939 - 1996  
for her loyal dedication to the  
Citrus Heights Historical Society