



WHITTIER GAZETTE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WHITTIER HISTORICAL SOCIETY, WHITTIER, CALIFORNIA

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Number 5

ONCE UPON A TIME . .

. . . . a baby was born in Whittier. The date was January 10, 1888, which made our town less than a year old and this was the first birth recorded. The son born to Louis and Sadie Cook Williams was named Whittier. In 1978, at the age of 90, Whittier Williams did a taped interview and from his sharp memories we can see some of the people and places of the early days.

"My dad and mother came to Whittier in September, 1887 and I was born 5 months after they came. There were 28 families in Whittier at the time. About seven or eight months later Emma Lawhead, the first girl, was born. Mr. Lawhead was a carpenter who worked quite a bit with my dad. Harry Strawbridge was the third child born in town.

My mother's sisters came at the same time. One was Drusill Davis and another Mary Dell Coryell. Mary was one of the first ones to die in Whittier. They were dickering about getting a cemetery and they bought clear out on the end of West Broadway St. She and her husband, my mother and my mother's father and Drusill Davis's husband were all buried up there in that old cemetery. They moved all the graves out to Rose Hills when they opened it up. My father bought one of those first plots out there with 12 graves in it. My sister who died 2 years ago was the last one - filled up the spaces.

My dad was a carpenter-contractor and helped build the old Bailey Street Grammar School. About the first thing they built was a church. It was just a little one room building, down on the corner of Comstock and College (Wardman) St.

When they first came, my dad bought an old barn that was next to Dr. Holton's house on Ocean View Lane (Mar Vista). He remodeled that old barn and they moved into it. I was born upstairs in that barn. The night after, it was very windy and he went out

and took 2 x 4s and stuck them up against things to keep it from blowing over.

Later we moved onto Pierce Street on a part where the high school field is now. We played baseball a lot. Walter Butler played with us - he was a neighbor. When he was five years old he had polio and it settled in his left leg so it wasn't any good to him. He couldn't walk on it, but he could wind it around his crutch; he made his own crutches - just a stick with a curved piece at the top. He'd play baseball with us and he'd run with his crutches and if he couldn't get running fast enough with his crutches he'd throw them down and crawl. And he could cover ground crawling. Just about as fast as he could run.

I went to Bailey Street School and graduated in 1905. Then I went up to Whittier College because they had high school up there and it was a church school, the Friends Church started it. They had high school first and then after about three or four years they began to graduate one grade at a time until they got to be a college and then they cut out the high school. It's been a college ever since. I think when they first started the high school there were something like 30 students. It seemed to be a pretty good school and quite a few of them came in from outside until they had enough to kind of make it worthwhile to pay expenses. I know a lot of Whittier people donated money to keep it running for a while.

I didn't graduate. I went the full eight years but I was budding trees and I was making quite a little money - too much money for a kid my age. I thought I couldn't afford to go to school. So I went to college in the forenoon and worked in the afternoon. I needed a couple more credits to graduate. But there were things I didn't care a whole lot about and at that time I didn't care a whole lot so I didn't graduate. I've been with the bunch and celebrated yearly - I had been

with the bunch the whole time.

I grew up in the budding business helping my dad. I helped him when I was 10 years old. Tying, and then later I got started budding on my own. I had quite an advantage. The horticulture inspector of Los Angeles lived just a few doors from us. My dad used to go over to Riverside and get these little seedlings. He'd bring them over and we'd plant them. Then the next year we'd cut them and the next year we'd dig them for sale. So I grew up that way. This old inspector knew my dad was very particular about it; going out to cut buds he would choose the choicest trees with the choicest fruit and all that to get buds from.

William Wood, the inspector, and another man, John King, leased 10 acres just up the street from where we lived at the time around Pickering and Floral right against the hill. It had been a cattle or sheep pasture for thirty years that we knew of. An old Frenchman, French family, lived there. The ground was very rich. He planted trees on there and they just grew beautifully. Whenever we sold trees we had to call this Mr. Wood to inspect them, see there was no scale on them. So, he knew we were raising trees. He and this fellow leased this piece of ground up there and he came and asked me if I would kind of take charge of it and get a bunch of kids and plant those seedlings out. We planted about 30,000 trees in there. Planted in rows so you could cultivate down between them, you know, irrigate.

At the end of a year they were up, oh, as big around as my finger, and big enough to bud; maybe about twelve inches from the ground. He wanted to know if I could get two or three other budders and some fellows to tie buds for us, and start budding that bunch. A lot of them, and we did. Before they were ready to bud, though, he took me one day - out to a nice orchard - and asked me to show him how to cut buds from the tree he pointed out. I told him that, in the first place, I wouldn't cut buds from that tree because it didn't look very healthy. That kind of pleased him because he saw that I had had some training. He told his partner that they had found their budder - that I was very particular about how I picked trees, what kind of fruit they had on and foliage and all. I got the job right then for budding them next spring. We budded trees there for, I guess, two months straight.

This old inspector, he used to send people to me, people from out of town. Especially avocados when they came in. You know the Rideout home up there?

He had a great big tree in his yard and he put an 18 foot fence around it because people were coming and cutting budwood off of it. One year he asked the inspector what the matter was because he didn't have any fruit on it and was told that he let young budders come in and they had cut off all his fruit wood. He recommended that he let me cut some off because I knew what I should cut off and what shouldn't be cut off to have some fruit wood. I was the only one that could get inside that fence for a long time.

About 1915 I left Whittier and went over to North Whittier Heights. I bought some land over there. I got started with the man who had the tract there, Edwin G. Hart. He was manager of that tract and he had money in it himself. He came over one day and asked me if I'd ever budded any avocados and I told him I had done a few. He said he had 7,000 trees over there. He'd brought the seeds from Mexico and they were getting pretty big and he said they ought to be budded. They'd grown over there on that pasture land and they were doing just real well. I went over and budded trees for him for quite a while and then he wanted to know if I wanted to buy some land. We made a deal and I paid for it in trees with three payments over five years. But I never made the last payment because I had sold it by then.

The trees were growing nicely, getting along pretty well. I built a house out there and I built it quite a ways back from the street, made a little walkway out to the street. I planted rose trees on each side of the walk, then I budded those rose trees in different colored roses, on the same bush. On some of them I had four or five different colored roses. People would come along after I'd had the place four years - a man and his wife came up and I saw them. They stopped - had a horse and buggy - and they stopped back a ways and just sat there looking at those roses. They were in full bloom at the time and it was quite a picture. I came out into the yard and he called to me and wanted to know if it was for sale and I said it wasn't. Then he asked if I would sell it and I said I would. I thought if he wanted it bad enough he'd pay a price for it, so I put the price up pretty high. He said that if I would take a house and two lots in Whittier he would pay the difference in cash, but wanted it in 30 days. That put me in kind of a bind and I didn't know what to do because I had to have a place to live.

I went over to Huntington Park and there was a place over there where they were building ready-made houses. They'd build them a whole wall at a time, you know - stack them up. So I ordered a house there to be brought over as soon as they could

get it built. They had some of the walls built. I ordered this house with some changes. I wanted a fireplace and I wanted a porch - some things they didn't have. They drew up the plans and said that within four days they'd have a crew go over there and put in the foundation and the next day they sent a crew to lay the floor and floor joists. The next day after that they came over and started the walls. In

less than two weeks I had it all built. It gave me a chance to get away in 30 days. That was about 1924 or 25."

There were so many other people, places and events that Whittier Williams clearly recalled during this taping session. In a future issue of the Gazette we will relate his answers to the questions, "Do you remember _____?"



WHAT'S HAPPENING

Membership Mumbo-Jumbo

Are you concentrating? OK! The alphabetical membership list enclosed acknowledges those people who joined in 1980 after the roster went to the printer. The other list of names those people, new to the society, who have joined this year. If your name is on that second list and you never recall joining our group, it could be because you contributed \$1000 or more to the Museum Fund. At the February board meeting it was passed that such people be granted a years' membership.

If you have no roster and would like to be able to contact someone before the 1981-82 roster is published, please call 696-7850 and we'll ship one out to you.

Still paying attention? Well . . . there is a membership envelope enclosed. This is for the convenience of those who need to renew membership for the 81-82 year. Our year begins March 1. Some members are already one year ahead in their dues and might want to pass the envelope along to a friend. You may want to check the date on your membership card or call Virginia Boles - 691-4227 -if you are not sure how you stand.

We are just about at the 400 mark in memberships, so let's koop this enrollment going and aim for 500 this year.

What is the 5th of May

The Pico Docents are planning a birthday celebration honoring the ex-governor of Mexican California. Pio Pico was born on the 5th day of May so the

date chosen is Sunday, May 3rd. Currently activities are being planned for from 12 to 4, but may expand if participation increases.

This fiesta is to have an international flavor to represent the varied backgrounds of the settlers of this area. Various national groups are being invited to show their customs through performances or wares. Crafts, arts and exhibits of all periods are welcome for display or sale. If you or any friends have something to add to the day, please call Varlie Gordon - 693-2867.

This is also the time for some of you to step forward and offer a hand to the 12 people who are active in keeping that program going 5 days a week, 50 weeks a year. It will be a long day for them and they could use a break from their hosting duties. Announce yourself at the office and ask what you can do for an hour.

Circle June 13

"Magic Town A-Poppin" sounds like just the fund raising program we have been needing. There are probably no more than two of you out there who are not fascinated by a magic show - and that would apply to our whole community - and the children. Trent and Mari Bessent and Don Stewart of the Magic Castle will be the stars of the show to be presented Saturday from 7:30 to 9:30 at the Community Center Auditorium on June 13. And the cost??? Only a \$3 donation per person!

Tickets will be on sale at the March general meeting or you may make out your check to the Whittier Historical Society. Sent it with a self addressed stamped envelope to Linda Chesnut, 13620 E. Camilla St., Whittier, 90601. The proceeds will go to the Museum Fund.

Founders' Day

The annual Founders' Day Picnic will be held at noon Saturday, May 9 at the Community Center.

The speaker this year will be Frances King telling us about both the King and Savage sides of her family along with other tales reflecting her many years in Whittier.

Everyone is invited to this traditional function. All you need is your picnic basket and the family and any friends. Usually you will find the different kinds of food being passed around and shared with the neighbors seated around you. Beverages are provided.

This event was started by Jonathan Bailey in the 90s to celebrate the May 11 founding of the town of Whittier. Although it was moved inside several years ago instead of being held in Central Park, it still retains the relaxed, friendly atmosphere of a picnic.

Los Angeles Doings

The February issue of **Newsletter**, the publication of the Los Angeles City Historical Society edited by Tom Hattem had some intriguing information, so the **Gazette** has no qualms about blatantly stealing to keep our membership up to date.

At 12 noon on Saturday, June 6, the fourth of the original four corners of El Pueblo de la Reyna de Los Angeles will receive its plaque in dedication ceremonies. The area is near the corner of Exposi-

tion and Figueroa and the event will be concluded with a picnic in Exposition Park.

A group to be honored at this dedication will be the descendants of the 1781 pobladores who came to establish the pueblo of Los Angeles. To date there are heirs of JOSE FERNANDO DE VALASCO Y LARA, JOSEF MORENO, JOSE ANTONIO NOVARRO, LUIS QUINTERO, PABLO RODRIQUEZ, JOSE ALEJANDRO ROSAS, JOSE ANTONIO BASILIO ROSAS, JOSE VANEGAS AND MARIA ANTONIA JOSEFA PINUELAS, the adopted daughter of ANTONIO CLEMENTE FELIZ VILLAVICENCIO. This group is also scheduled to receive recognition on June 20 from the Conference of California Historical Societies at their annual meeting and on July 25 at the Avila Adobe by Los Californios and July 26 by the greater Los Angeles Press Club and, finally, on Sept. 1 at the L.A. City Hall.

Many of you belong to groups that 'do something', so this notice may be of interest. There are now docents giving tours of the Los Angeles Library's Central Library at 10 and 11:30 on Tues., Wed., Thurs., and Sat., and by special request at 5 and 6:30 on Thurs. The tour is about an hour and appeals to all age groups. Call 626-7555 Ext. 309 for reservations.



DO YOU KNOW WHERE THIS HOUSE WAS
LOCATED AND TO WHOM IT BELONGED?
696-7850



COMPLETED LIST OF 1980-81 MEMBERSHIPS

BATEMAN, M/M John	P.O. Box 282	Whittier 90608	
BERG, Jeane	7713 S. Bright Ave., Apt. 2	Whittier 90602	
BRANG, M/M Michael	11122 Dorland St.	Whittier 90606	695-5024
BROWN, John (Jr.)	11818 Circle Drive	Whittier 90601	
BUTLER, M/M Chester J.	15173 La Forge Ave.	Whittier 90603	
CATT, M/M Charles	12554 Carinthea Dr.	Whittier 90601	696-3233
COVEY, Mrs. Patricia	15425 E. Hornell	Whittier 90604	
DU LAC, Xavier & Eleanor	13740 Franklin St.	Whittier 90602	693-0585
GIBBS, Mrs. Edmund	10534 Portada Dr.	Whittier 90603	943-9876
HASKINS, Sally Wegner	9546 S. Bright Ave.	Whittier 90605	944-7368
JENSEN, James D.	15124 Carnell St.	Whittier 90603	693-7896
JOHNSON, M/M Steve	10414 E. Kimbark Ave.	Whittier 90601	699-8571
KERNS, M/M Barry	6554 S. Friends Ave.	Whittier 90601	693-0501
KINNAMAN, Beulah	13602 Ramona Dr.	Whittier 90605	698-6756
KORTE, Beatrice	14036 High St.	Whittier 90605	693-4385
MAPLE, Mrs. Myne	5839 Washington Ave.	Whittier 90601	696-3064
MARGOL, Tom	11818 Circle Dr.	Whittier 90601	
MONCK, M/M Joe	10128 S. Larrylyn Dr.	Whittier	947-6520
NELSON, M/M Carl	15208 Carnell St.	Whittier 90603	698-4607
PARKEY, M/M William	12329 E. Beverly Dr.	Whittier 90601	695-3609
SCHRAMM, M/M William	8037 S. Vale Dr.	Whittier 90602	696-4528
SMITH, Donna	11015 El Rey	Whittier 90601	698-9771
SMITH, M/M Jack M.	8219 Elden Ave.	Whittier 90605	
SMITH, Mrs. Lois E.	6026 S. Washington Ave.	Whittier 90601	693-6634
TAPPEY, Diane E.	6056 Friends Ave.	Whittier 90601	693-8670
TAYLOR, M/M Howard	13412 Sunset Dr.	Whittier 90602	
ZELMANSKI, Janice Mitchell	9458 Guilford Ave.	Whittier 90605	693-5088



WELCOME TO THESE NEW MEMBERS

Dr. & Mrs. M. Singelyn	14144 Bronte Dr.	Whittier, 90602
Mr. Robert Ball	11730 E. Whittier Bv. #47	Whittier, 90601
Mr. & Mrs. G. Burgess	6512 Friends	Whittier, 90601
Mildred A. Perrotta	12007 E. Broadway	Whittier, 90601
Dr. & Mrs. Geo. Buehler	6226 Stanford Way	Whittier, 90601
Joseph H. Fairbanks Jr.	9462 Canfield Dr.	LaHabra, 90601
Mr. & Mrs. A. Cifaldi	12126 Friends Ave.	Whittier, 90601
Almeda M. Chrisman	15343 E. La Salos Dr.	Whittier, 90603
Mrs. Virginia Ball	8254 La Sierra	Whittier, 90605
Mr. & Mrs. Frank C. Hill III	5344 Magnolia Ter.	Whittier, 90601
Hannah Tjarks	14032 E. Tedemory	Whittier, 90605
Mrs. Delphine Smith	1528 La Riata Dr.	Whittier, 90603
Mr. & Mrs. R.H. Holton	13902 Valna Dr.	Whittier, 90605
Robert C. Chapman		
Great Plains Western Corp.	11148 E. Whittier Blvd.	Whittier, 90607
Mr. & Mrs. C.T. Kolb	14056 Mar Vista	Whittier, 90602
Mr. & Mrs. W.J.B. Jessup	11527 E. Scenic Dr.	Whittier, 90601
Dr. & Mrs. John Fusco	15916 La Lindura	Whittier, 90603
Bonnie Jean Newsom	336 S. Occidental Bv. #904	Los Angeles, 90057
Dr. & Mrs. Wm. F. Kroener, Jr.	14004 Eastridge Dr.	Whittier, 90602
Dr. & Mrs. Wm. House	11854 E. Floral Dr.	Whittier, 90604
Mrs. Robert Maple	105 Bayside Pl.	Corona Del Mar, 92625
Mr. & Mrs. Dee Essley	5844 S. Greenleaf	Whittier, 90601
Mrs. George Neslen	6048 Friends Ave.	Whittier, 90601
John G. Rippy	5912 El Rancho Dr.	Whittier, 90606
Mrs. Marion M. Keasby	Lark Ellen Towers #810	
	1350 E. San Bernardino Rd.	West Covina, 91790
Mr. & Mrs. Schuyler Slager	1021 Hornet Way	Fullerton, 92631
Mr. & Mrs. R.S. McCarthy	12826 Rose Dr.	Whittier, 90601



Minnie Eiseneers

..... is hard at work, dear friends, in tracking down the facts involved in the greatest fraud ever committed in this community. In the past issue of the **Gazette** the request was made for eye witness information about the Annual Avocado Show. Time passed and nary a word came in - and Minnie became suspicious. Could it be that there never was such an event? Could the honored Rex Kennedy have been printing editorial perjury in the **Whittier Daily News** by reporting such a fete?

Presently she is researching the possibility of there having been a master hypnotist who conned a whole town into thinking there was a celebration going on when there really wasn't. Surely, if her investigation is successful, this journal will report the greatest piece of gossip in the 1st 100 years. Sig 'em, Minnie!

Can't Wave a Flag

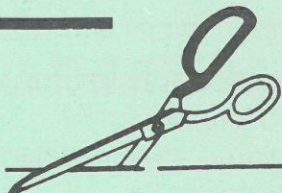
A request has been received from Henry Morse of

the Montebello Historical Society. He is trying to locate a 4' 6' hand made flag given by Grace Morse to some history oriented organization in Whittier about 25 years ago. If you have any information, please contact him at 402 W. Washington Blvd., Montebello, 90640.

Filling the Houses

Roy Johnson picked up on the idea of little collection boxes for the Museum Fund. He designed and made those little houses you have seen in the various places of business throughout the area. And a sneaky way has been found to help get them filled. When you see one, make sure some people are watching as you deposit a coin - and maybe pick it up and rattle it. You'd be surprised how often someone will follow you, take a look and dig out some money to add into the house-bank.

Thank-you, Roy, and we will be waiting to get a report from you and your collectors on this project.



**WHITTIER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Membership Application**

Name Home Telephone

Address Business Telephone

If you would like to serve on a committee, please indicate in which area(s)

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ Please circle type of membership you wish:

- Single - \$5, Family - \$7.50, Institutional - \$25,
- Sustaining - \$50, Individual Life - \$100, Husband &
- Husband & Wife Life - \$175

.....
Signature

Mail this application with your check to the Whittier Historical Society, PO Box 561, Whittier, CA 90607.

**WHITTIER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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EDITOR: Mary Ann Rummel 696-7850

Membership in the Whittier Historical Society is open to persons interested in history and future of the Whittier area. Membership year is from March 1 - February 28. Dues are \$5 for individual membership - \$7.50 for family membership - \$25 for institutional membership - \$50 for sustaining membership - \$100 for individual life membership - \$175 for husband and wife life membership.

Phyllis M. Pearce
President - Whittier Hist. Soc.
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Whittier, California 90601
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