

# WHITTIER GAZETTE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WHITTIER HISTORICAL SOCIETY, WHITTIER, CALIFORNIA

Vol. 6

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Number 2

**Red Dot On Your Address Label? This denotes you are afflicted with a fatal disease - Noblong Anymoreyou. Its most noticable symptom is dismembership and Intermittent lack of Gazette. The remedy is quite simple. Place a drain in your wallet until 5, 7, 25, 50 or 100 is syphoned off and nurse it to the post office box. Because of the miracle of your subsequent cure, your name will appear in the next roster.**

"It's getting so that I have to even pick up the paper any more - all that crime and violence all over the front page."

"Isn't it the truth - even our own Daily News!"

"It used to be just lovely reading the headlines of the old Whittier Daily News. I recall one . . . . ."

## ONCE UPON A TIME

THAT READ . . . . .

### DR. OSBORN FACES HOLD-UPS ON ROAD IN EVENING

Exchange of Shots Leaves All Concerned Apparently Uninjured Local Veterinarian Close to Death at Point of Pistol

Halted by two holdup men on the hill road between Palm and Magnolia Avenue early last evening, Dr. O.J. Osborn of East Philadelphia Street put up a fight, being armed, and a running gun fight followed in which the doctor took seven shots with a Colts automatic at the highwaymen and was fired at five times himself, one of the bullets from a bandit's gun passing through the rubber robe that the doctor had over his lap, grazing his knee, passing through his medicine case and lodging in the bed of the buggy.

The gunfight occurred about 8 o'clock last evening within the city limits of Whittier. The scene of the fight was less than a mile from the

gas plant. It is not known whether any of the seven shots fired by Dr. Osborn took effect, but the doctor is of the opinion that they did not, as he was shooting from the back of his buggy with his frightened horse on a mad gallop.

In telling of the fight last night, Dr. Osborn said: "I always go armed, as I have many lonely roads to drive over at all times of night and holdups have been too frequent for comfort around Whittier in the past few weeks. As I was driving home from the Rincon district last evening at about 8 o'clock and had rounded the point, I noticed two men on foot approaching.

"I drew my gun so as to be prepared if anything was started and was prepared to shoot on a second's notice. I drive with a light on the left side of my buggy and when I had nearly reached the pair they crossed the road and got on the dark side of my buggy. This added to my suspicions.

"As I drew alongside, the taller one of the two, a man about six feet in height, stepped close to the buggy and shoved a revolver in front of my face, ordering me in a gruff voice to 'halt'. His partner, a man under middle height, was ten or twelve feet from my buggy and standing in a ditch. I could not see whether he was armed or not.

"Quick as a flash I brought my heavy Colt down across the arm holding the revolver, which covered me, and the bandit fired. The bullet passed through the rubber robe which was across my lap, grazed my knee, passed through my

medicine chest and lodged in the bed of the buggy.

"Frightened by the report, my horse gave a lunge and was off on the dead run. Trying to control the frenzied animal with one hand and shooting from a swaying buggy, disconcerted my aim, but I pumped seven shots at the bandits, saving the last for an emergency.

"The two highwaymen started on the run for the point of the hill, firing four shots at me as they ran. None of them took effect, however."

As soon as Dr. Osborn reached his veterinary hospital he notified the police, and about an hour later a posse, including Deputy Sheriff Frank Oliver, Constable, R.B. Way, Henry Hawker and Dr. Osborn returned to the scene of the fight to see if they could find any track of the two men.

Owing to the mud, it was easy to pick up the men's trail. One wore a square toed boot, while the other tracks were of a man with unusually small feet. After running a short distance toward the point of the hills, evidently to get out of the doctor's range, the pair doubled back until they reached Pickering Avenue. Coming south on Pickering Avenue, they turned east on Luella (Beverly) until they reached Milton Avenue. Here the officers lost the tracks, because of the hard oiled street.

It is believed the pair who attempted the holdup were local men and the officers are working on clues which it is believed will lead to some remarkable developments and will be effective in stopping the burglaries and holdups which have become so common in Whittier. The bullet found in the doctor's buggy was a steel-jacket from a 32 caliber Colts automatic.

April 12, 1912

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

I ran across this old article in my Grandmother Hannah Osborn's Scrap Book. My uncle, Dr. Oliver Osborn, in partnership with Dr. T.L. Tyler, built a "sanatorium for horses" on a lot at the northeast corner of Comstock Avenue and College street in 1907. The building was 40 x 100 feet and "thoroughly modern and equipped with appliances necessary for business."

Virginia Schallenberger

## An Interview with Ruth Cole Lasse

"I was a redheaded, freckle-faced little kid who didn't want anybody to neglect me," recalls Ruth Cole Lasse, in describing herself as she was 79 years ago.

She uses that same enthusiasm and candor in describing turn-of-the-century Whittier, the city where she has resided for more than half of her 83 years.

During the first three decades of the 1900s, Mrs. Lasse watched Whittier mature from a rural hamlet with dirt roads ("cowtrails, I call them") to a modern city with paved streets and sidewalks ("Whittier began to install plank sidewalks when I was about ten"). In addition to this change, she witnessed Whittier change from being an agricultural town (with oranges, lemons, and walnuts as the staple crops) to being an industrial city.

As in the case of most towns established at the turn of the century, medical care was soon available to Whittier's citizens. Ruth, afflicted with the then-commonplace St. Vitus' Dance at age 11, underwent a new medical treatment -- electrical therapy -- at one of Whittier's first medical offices.

"We had some great experiences with that thing, the St. Vitus' Dance," she recalls smiling. "Mother took me to this Dr. Dunning, who put me in a wicker chair and put something down over my head."

That "something," a helmet-like device that was placed over her head, sent therapeutic electrical waves throughout her body. However, those waves also caused metal objects to react like conductors.

"I had metal hair-ribbon clips in my hair, and they stuck into me," she mentions. Mrs. Lasse also wore a Ferris waist -- a corset for pre-adolescent girls -- to the therapy session. "When the stays in the Ferris waist and the things on my hair (caught), all I could do was scream," she adds.

"So Mother had to undress me and take the ribbon-holders off my hair, and it worked out fine." This form of treatment, she explains, was the start of electrical therapy -- and the start of Dr. Dunning's fame because of his pioneer work in this field of medical research.

Mrs. Lasse still turns to electrical therapy to alleviate her arthritis, which has settled in her legs. "I often think about the trips I took up there

(to Dr. Dunning's office)," she adds.

The Lasse living room reflects Mrs. Lasse's life. Two sofas, softened by time and use, face each other on opposite sides of the room. A bentwood floor lamp stands in a far corner of the room, its cloth shade a delicate parchment color, its base, a rich, deep walnut hue.

In fact, the home itself is a vital part of her life. She tells about how her father was able, financially, to build this new house at California Ave. and Whittier Blvd. after she married New Yorker, Oscar Lasse in 1923, and he no longer had to keep his daughter in the conservatory in New York. Years later, after the death of her mother the Whittier Blvd. property had to be sold, so in 1958 the house was moved to its present location adjacent to the Candlewood Country Club. Here the Lasse's daughter, Judith, could have horses. Twenty-two years ago that area was zoned agricultural and was way out in the country and "was quite private at that time."

An ample, sturdy-looking piano stands near the front door, its Mahogany color matching the lamp base's. A "Sing Along" - type songbook rests on the keyboard. This gives a clue to Mrs. Lasse's musical background.

"I went to New York to study at the Institute of Musical Art, now called the Julliard School of Music," the 1914 graduate of Whittier High School explains. "I did enough (studies) that I got a certificate to teach.

"I taught voice and speech for a long time --about 15 years. I still have contacts from some of my old students. They call me on the phone from the East, from Florida, and from all over."

Mrs. Lasse settles into a medium-sized armchair, its velvet seat and backrest a mellow combination of rust and burgundy, its wooden arms smoothly curved.

As she speaks, she gestures energetically, but with poise and restraint. Her dark eyes sparkle with enthusiasm.

The advent of the automobile in Whittier was eventful, she recalls. That event affected her family, too -- enough for her father to buy one of those recently invented cars.

"The first automobile I saw was about 1910," she remembers. "And you know, it was a funny little automobile!"

Mrs. Lasse still relishes the memory of the sight of that car. "You know how the pony carts are, with the square basket in them (to hold and seat the passengers)?" she asks, smiling. "That's the way this car was. It was wide open. It looked just like a pony cart to me."

Motorcycles came to Whittier when Mrs. Lasse was 12. "They (Whittierites) had problems with their horses, because the horses were afraid of the motorcycles," she recalls.

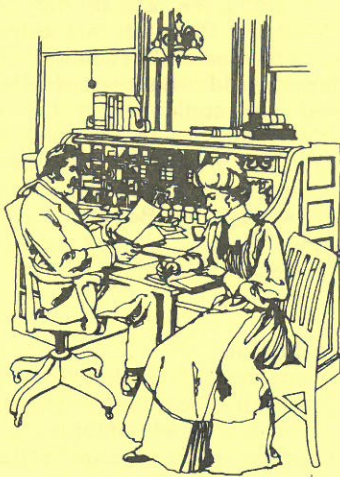
However, in spite of the new methods of transportation, Whittier remained relatively uncrowded until World War II, Mrs. Lasse says. "We didn't have any trouble parking until then," she explains. An overabundance of cars was the chief factor in the city's crowding and traffic congestion.

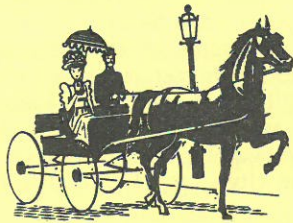
Perhaps because she knows its past so intimately, Mrs. Lasse is decidedly concerned about her city's future. She speaks deliberately and thoughtfully. Her eyes mist.

"Whittier has not developed as well as it could have. I do feel that we have failed the young people somewhere along the line, because they don't have the love or respect for their schools or their churches or their homes that they should have.

"There should be respect for the teachers and parents," Mrs. Lasse observes. "But they've got to **demand** respect too."

Jan Ewell  
Young Historian  
January 1980





## History is today . . .

Luckily the Pico Docents planned their boutique for late April before the crush of meetings and activities hit everyone. The format of the event was changed somewhat in that tours were given of the house all afternoon rather than having entertainment. At least 150 people went through as regular toured groups - not just walk-bys. Each year a few more interesting displays join the group on the front lawn to help vary the exhibits. The weather matched the whole occasion - it was a nice day.

The general meeting at Hinshaws on May 22 was well attended. Kathleen Symons from Rio Hondo gave us a good education in architecture in the 20s and 30s while entertaining us with her slides of L.A. buildings. Now we can better appreciate what we see.

And some members can now appreciate what we don't or didn't see. The brunch at the East Whittier Womans Club was a roaring success, especially by the end of the function. The speaker from Bakersfield, Delores Heller, really enlightened her audience on the history of undergarments along with affording them some belly laughs. The brunch, on the other hand was nothing to laugh at - it was very, very good and beautifully served by Bobbie Myer, Virginia Boles, Francine Rippey, Jean Arbuckle, Virginia Schallenberger and Marygene Wright.

### **By-laws Addition**

The average monthly Society Board meeting is a prolonged affair. The membership would be astounded at the vast variety of topics covered. The stated purposes of our organization are to discover, collect, identify and preserve historic material and to research and disseminate historical information and arouse interest in the past. Just read back that last sentence and consider what a broad spectrum our work covers. We

have had fine leaders and superb board members over our last nine years, but we are still really in our formative stages. At every board meeting decisions must be made on situations that have never arisen before - so they become precedent setting decisions. All actions, all ideas must be weighed with consideration of the financial condition of and capabilities within our group, not to mention the priority that the passage of time forces upon us.

Each board member is responsible for an area in which we are currently involved besides the ex-officio members who are working in special programs. Reports of these people frequently include recommendations and, therefore, need decisions. A sampling of the scope of a meeting can be found in a quick review of the May one.

After Maygene's minutes, Phyllis reported being contacted by the City for the criteria to establish the historic significance of a building since they can't seem to locate part of the survey we did a couple of years ago. She is also beginning negotiations to update the City contract with the Bailey Docents. Earl had a lengthy financial report since it covered the accounts for the entire year including the Docent groups.

Within Virginia Schallenberger's correspondence report came the final decisions on who would be doing the historic displays in the Village windows for the July 12 celebration. Also she reported the thanks of the City for the aid in picking the spots for the repositioning of the hitching rings on Greenleaf. This is just a portion of the invitations, announcements and requests. Virginia Boles needed reaction on how to set up the roster to recognize different categories of membership. Francine requested refreshment help with the report on the final arrangements for the Hinshaw's meeting. Sylvia announced the program speaker for the October meeting as Dr. Shumway and asked for an honorarium. She also

## May and June Are Red Queen Months (You have to run to keep up)

told for the offering of original copies of the first State bi-lingual constitution of 1850 and decision was made to contact Dave Sterling for a copy for our collections. Linda, being new to the group as well as Ways and Means, requested suggestions for fund raisers that have been asked for but never put into action.

Jean Arbuckle as Bailey liaison asked for the use of our resale number for selling cards with the Bailey House Christmas etchings for the holiday season. This brought up the discussion on the possibilities of printing etchings and/or stationery for the Society to sell at places like information tables and meetings with other societies. Various other announcements came out in new and old business about the picture files, the Harvey Apt. plaque, the Nixon room at Whittier College and the sites under investigation by that committee of the Museum Foundation for board reaction. Nadine also announced that help would be needed this summer to begin preparations for the Heritage Ball in November.

One part of the meeting was spent, as it has been for several months, making the necessary arrangements for the formation of the Museum Foundation. This meeting saw the inclusion of the by-laws of that group into the by-laws of the Society with a discussion and decision on how their monies will be held and reported. Briefly what has evolved during these months is a semi-autonomous group, similar to the Docent committees, that is responsible to the Society both legally and financially. Its board has 25 members, presently appointed but to be self elected in the future and is currently divided into three areas: site acquisition, fund raising and artifact collections. Their treasury will be held separately and reported regularly for approval of our board as will their activities. The membership will not be exclusive to Society members.

This report, as the board meetings, has not

been brief. But, perhaps from it, you can appreciate that our Society is working at fulfilling its purposes. To proceed with speed and caution is a tricky job as is trying to make up for nearly 100 years of lost time and keep one jump ahead of current events. The present and past boards deserve an E for effort and an A for achievement.

### Bob Who?

In the last issue of the Gazette was an article by a 4th generation Rasmussen here in town whose name is really Rob - not Bob. Some readers have noted that some of the newer people in our parts may not be aware that the Rasmussen Iron Works is one of the oldest businesses in Whittier and has evolved from the small blacksmith's shop on Philadelphia to its modern day counterpart of iron mongery, still on Philadelphia near the Country Road and the State School. Or is that Whittier Blvd. and Fred C. Nelles? Anyway, take your horse by some day and buy him a gas log.



### Bailey House Summer Schedule

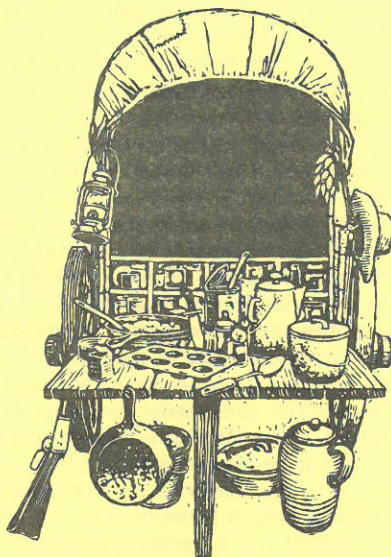
We will be closed on Wednesday through July and August and on both Wednesday and Sunday during September", is the word from the Bailey House docents. Do remember they are open from 1 - 4 on Sunday afternoons this summer so take your out of town visitors by to visit.

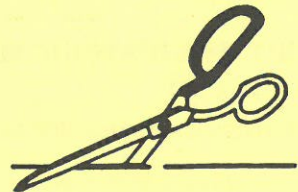
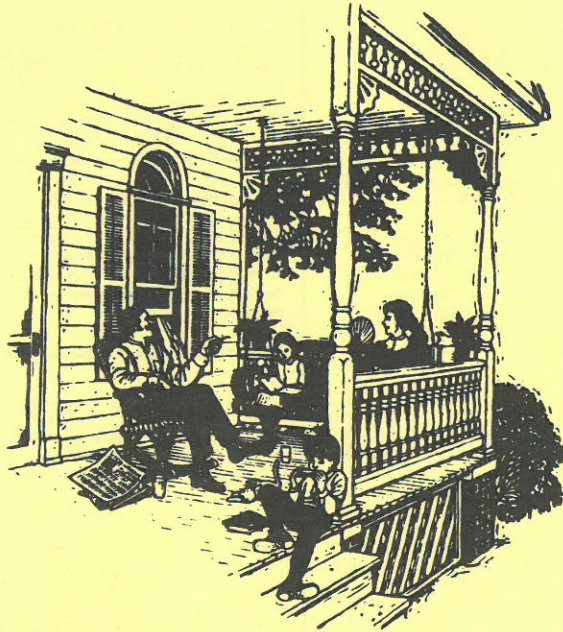
## WE ARE GIFTED

Mr. and Mrs. Kerns bought the Johnson-Harrison house a couple of years ago - at the corner of Friends and Bailey. Several months back a friend of theirs in Iowa was browsing through some antiques and ran onto a post card depicting Whittier back in the teens, and sent it on to them. Our small world never ceases to surprize us! The picture was taken from about the Methodist Church corner looking up Friends. That, of course, means that their house is in the picture. They have presented us with a lovely 5 x 7 copy of the post card.

And Virginia Schallenberger reports that the following items are catalogued from Mrs. Jeanie Lamb. (from estate of Nelle L. Starnes, her Mother).

- A. One pair of child's gloves (old)
- B. One pair of baby's shoes (old).
- C. Two ladies' shirtwaists. Embroidered white. Crocheted trim. (old).
- D. One hand-made quilt. Green, white and rose squares. Animal and fruit designs. Dated 1901. "Alya McLain".
- E. Two piece lavender gown. Lace and velvet detail. Velvet cumberbund. Turn of the century.
- F. Child's blue cape with braid detail. Very old.
- G. Scrap book filled with trading cards and colorful pictures of the Victorian era. "Merry Chirstmas" - 1901
- H. Scrap book (album). Pictures from nineties.
- I. Silver compact on chain. From twenties.
- J. Calling card case on chain. Sterling.
- K. Miniature coin purse on chain.
- L. Mesh bag. Variegated blues. 1920's.
- M. Two Mother of Pearl buckles. Old.
- N. Gold colored bar pin. 1890.
- O. Three daguerreotype pictures. Subjects unknown.
- P. One white crepe gown trimmed with lace. Old.
- Q. White sunbonnet. Child's size. Old.
- R. 2 Toddler's size white dresses. Old.
- S. Several odds and ends of embroidered and/or crocheted garments.
- T. Victorian type Bible. Lavender velour cover. Brass latch. 1860's.





**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.

1980-81

**WHITTIER HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

|                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Phyllis Pearce (79-82)       | President               |
| Sylvia Foltz (79-82)         | Vice President          |
| Marygene Wright (80-83)      | Recording Secretary     |
| Virginia Schallenger (78-81) | Corresponding Secretary |
| Earl Meyer (80-83)           | Treasurer               |
| Virginia Boles (78-81)       | Director                |
| Linda Chesnut (80-83)        | Director                |
| Ray O'Connor (80-83)         | Director                |
| Claire Radford (79-82)       | Director                |
| Francine Rippey (78-81)      | Director                |
| Nadine Wood (78-81)          | Director                |
| Walter Wood (79-82)          | Director                |

The WHITTIER GAZETTE is the official publication of the Whittier Historical Society. The name "Gazette" was chosen since this is one of the oldest names for official journals.

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.

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