

A Message From Your President Wes Speake

Dear Members,

As winter winds down and springtime in Corona starts to bring the sounds and smells of new life all around us, it's a fervent reminder that life is all around us, just like history.

From Grand Boulevard's shape, once used for auto racing in 1913, 1914, and 1916, the Corona Theater where you can almost still hear a movie playing; to the beautiful vintage homes in and near the Grand Blvd. Circle that hearken to thoughts of years gone by. One place you probably haven't looked would be the hillside mines to the east and south of Corona. These mines have been a part of Corona for over a 100 years. Not too many people know that Corona hosted what was dubbed as "The World's Greatest Explosion," the largest ever intentional detonation of TNT up until that time.

First, a little history of the mine: the Temescal Rock Quarry was founded in 1888 and provided rock base for streets in Los Angeles and the surrounding area. Yes, rock from Corona helped pave Los Angeles. Other quarries provided granite used in monuments to our neighbors to the west as well. The rock quarried at this Corona mine is an extremely hard rock which is blue-black in color and flecked with white. It has the toughness and durability to withstand maximum weathering effects. The Temescal Rock Company purchased the mine in 1914, producing ballast rock for building railroads. It was then purchased by Blue Diamond Company in 1920 which operated a quarry that produced concrete aggregate until the plant was destroyed by fire in 1927. 3M acquired the site in 1941 and began operations to produce roofing granules in 1948, which they do to this day.

By 1924, the mine had been worked for 36 years. According to the April 11, 1924 article, "Steam shovels have eaten their way into the face of the mountain creating a nearly vertical ledge at a height of 350 ft, which created a major safety hazard for miners." Therefore, it was decided by company official that a blast had to

World's Greatest Explosion at Corona Plant of the Blue Diamond Co., Was Eminently Successful

By H. R. HORTON.

About 15,000 spectators witnessed the epochal explosion at the Blue Diamond stone quarry Sunday afternoon, according to careful estimates voiced by several persons on hand who lean toward statistics.

Over 2,000 automobiles dotted adjacent knolls, hillcrests and points of vantage. Some of the throng were parked as much as a mile and one-half away from the scene of operations.

take place. However, because of the hardness of the rock and to get a proper yield, 3 ft by 300 ft long "coyote tunnels" were dug into the mountain. This task alone took three months!! Blasting experts recommended using 168 tons (newspaper articles listed TNT used as 168, 172 and nearly 200 tons), an unheard-of amount of explosive for that era. At the time, it was the largest amount ever detonated

intentionally. The explosion was dubbed "The Big Blast" by the newspapers. After being postponed from April 20th the blast finally took place on Sunday April 24th, 1924 at 2:30 PM, with foreman Earl Mack winning an employee drawing to have the honor of triggering the massive explosion. Over 15,000 people lined the perimeter of the mine and watched over 2,000,000 - 2,500,000 tons of rock be shattered in seconds. Great parties were held before and following, with many people retreating to Glen Ivy after a long Sunday afternoon of waiting for the explosion and two plus hours for traffic to dissipate.

I have been asked in the past; why do mining companies apply and get; 50 and 100 year permits for mining operations? Simply put, the planning and expense that goes into a mine is extensive. I was told by a local geologist that 3M is still extracting rock that was dislodged during this explosion that occurred almost 94 years ago.

Lastly, the CHPS is planning several activities all over Corona over the next few months: Heritage Park in March and June, the CNUSD Festival of the Arts, Antiques and Collectibles Faire. Our wonderful 2018 Vintage Home Tour will be back in May, and I am pleased to announce our first ever Vintage Home Tour Kick-off Reception will be held at Heritage Park Friday evening, May 11th, details to follow. I hope to see you all! Please say hello!

Sincerely,

WES



“History of the Corona Fire Department” Panel Discussion

By Eric Bergreen

The Corona Historic Preservation Society (CHPS) held its first 2018 Quarterly Meeting in the Community Room at the Historic Civic Center on February 10th. The meeting, to which the public was also invited, started with a look back at the history of the Corona Fire Department (CFD) starting from the very beginning in January of

1898. It was over 120 years ago that the CFD began as a bucket brigade of volunteers doing their best to extinguish fires in the fledgling town. Many details of the early years of the department were expertly provided by retired CFD Captain, Fred Parr, who is the CFD Historian and at one time served as president of CHPS. Loving history as he does, Fred did a masterful job of planning the meeting, sharing his knowledge, and acting as moderator of the panel discussion made up of four retired CFD firefighters.



At 10:00 AM, CHPS President Wes Speake welcomed all attendees that had filled the Community Room almost to capacity. Wes then introduced moderator Fred Parr. A panel discussion ensued focusing on the 1960s through the 1980s with Fred serving up the questions.

Corona’s city trustees formed the Corona Fire Department in January of 1898. Corona’s first fire station was located at 717 South Main, across from where the First Baptist Church stands today. A year later in early 1899, the department’s first hose cart was purchased for \$99.17. Later in 1899, the Hotel Temescal caught fire, and the cart was used to fight it with much success until a hay cart with metal-rimmed wheels ran over the hose, severing it. Six fire hydrants were placed around town shortly thereafter by the Water Department although extinguishing fires with buckets continued as well. Note: The CFD’s Station No. 1 is now located near the corner of Magnolia and Ontario Avenues.

Our distinguished panel was made up of former Corona firefighters: Captains Steve Vansant, Richard Hernandez, Ralph Davis and Deputy Chief Bob German. Fred asked these dedicated men a series of questions about their pasts such as:

- When did they arrive in Corona?
- How and why did they decide to become firefighters?
- What did they remember about their rookie years?
- What kind of camaraderie did they share with others at their stations? and
- What was the most memorable



L-R: Ralph Davis, Bob German, Richard Hernandez and Steve Vansant

incident of their careers? Some of the stories told by the men ended in joy, but also, some were tragic. The stories these men shared made it clear that the highs and lows are all part of their courageous duty. Fred then introduced the secret guest speaker, Ray Russell, who served as Assistant Chief in the California

Department of Forestry and Fire Protection/State Fire Marshal Division – now known as CAL FIRE. Ray enlightened us further and praised not only the members of the panel but all firefighters with whom he worked in the past.

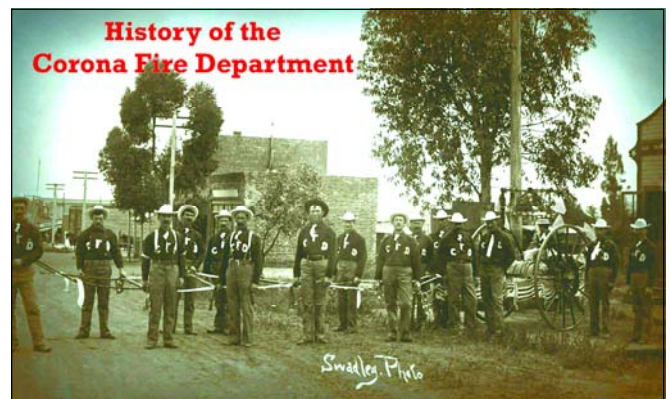


Memorabilia and artifacts were displayed on tables for all attendees to examine and admire. They included a replica model of an early fire engine bought by the city in 1927, and various types of CFD helmets from decades past made from leather, fiberglass and plastic. What was especially exciting to see was an original fire bucket used in 1889, one of only two left today, and the first means of firefighting in Corona.

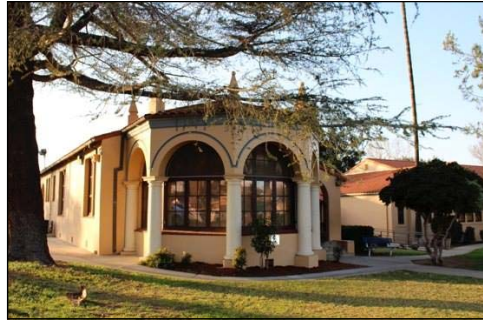
It turned out to be another amazing Quarterly Meeting enjoyed by true Coronans. The CHPS would like to thank those that came out to the event and especially the panel of men who shared their stories with us all. We owe a great deal of gratitude to all who have served and continue to serve in the Corona Fire Department of our wonderful and historic city.

WATCH THE VIDEO RECORDING ON YOUTUBE:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGUS3AxtB_c&feature=youtu.be



2018 Corona Vintage Home Tour



Co-sponsored by



Corona
Historic
Preservation
Society



Save the Date

Saturday, May 12, 2018

1:00 - 4:00 P.M.



Three homes on our tour appear on the DIY Network's TV show **Restored**. "In each hour episode, preservationist Brett Waterman transforms one character filled house for a couple or family who owns it. Brett focuses on homes with fascinating stories and unrealized potential hidden beneath neglect, bad renovations and ugly additions."

- Pre-sale tickets \$20, \$22 on day of event available at 1052 East Grand Blvd.
- For information call Mary at 951.371.5291 or email: VintageHomeTour@aol.com
- Pre-sale tickets available online at www.Corona-History.org via PayPal
- Pre-sale deadline is 11 P.M. on May 11
- Will-call day of event is at 1052 East Grand Blvd.

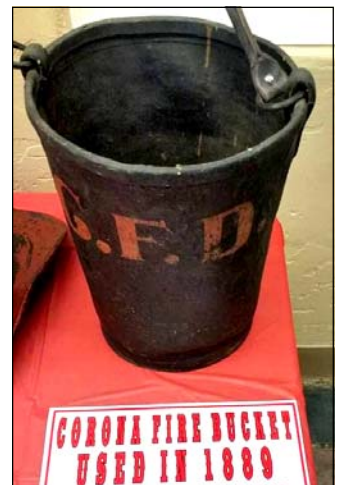
Pre-sale tickets available after March 13 at:

- **Corona Heritage Park at 510 W. Foothill Parkway**
- **Allegra Printing at 127 Radio Road**

Corona Fire Department artifacts on display



Model of 1927 Ahrens-Fox fire engine



**CORONA FIRE BUCKET
USED IN 1889**

“Look Alike” Houses in Corona? By Tom Richins

It is hard to believe that the picture below is of a house standing off Fullerton near Magnolia Avenue. What is more fascinating is that the house is still standing, albeit with multiple modifications, having gone from being the only structure around to one buried behind two homes on Fullerton. Originally, this Carpenter’s Gothic styled Victorian house faced Fullerton with more than 100 feet of setback. Now the house is sited at 1441 Beechnut Lane and the original rear of the house has become the front.

Although we haven’t been able to identify the original owner(s) of this house, we do know that it was designed by Corona’s first licensed Architect, Leo Kroonen, Sr.

An early view of the home off of Fullerton Avenue, courtesy of Corona Public Library



What is most interesting is that Mr. Kroonen designed a second house in Corona using the same plan. This “sister house”, built in 1892-3 for Jacob Stoner can be found at 1939 S. Main Street and has been lovingly



This image, with the address of 1441 Beechnut Lane, shows what was once the rear elevation of the home.



Courtesy of Corona Public Library

An early view of the Stoner House on Main Street



A current view of what was once the front of this historic home as seen from Fullerton Avenue.

Victorian architectural elements are still visible.



A current view of the Stoner House. This home was featured in the 2011 CHPS Vintage Home Tour.

I Remember When - Ralph Davis

By Richard Winn

Ralph Davis is a hometown boy who was born in North Corona (the name given to the Norco area before the 1950s) and lived and worked in this area his entire life.

His parents moved to California from Oklahoma in 1928, and his father worked at Sunkist. In 1933 they moved to Home Gardens. Later his father ran a service station in Arlington. He was born in 1940 while they lived in a house on Hamner Avenue.

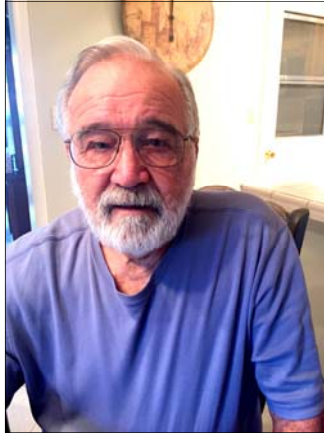
He began school at the original Norco School, on the west side of Hamner Avenue north of Sixth Street, with famed local educator and administrator Mildred Fluetch as his teacher. He remembers starting first grade at Norco and then after the family moved to Corona in 1946 started first grade again at Jefferson School with Mrs. Biggers as his teacher. He spent grades 4-6 at Gladys Kimbell Elementary School on Buena Vista Street, Junior High School at Corona Junior High on South Main at Grand Boulevard, and high school at Corona High School's second campus on West Sixth Street. He later attended classes at Chaffee College.

He commented on his recollection of the high quality of the Corona Junior High School marching band under the direction of Harold (Pete) Becker and how their performances outshined many of the area high schools.

At 16 he was bagging potatoes and carrots, before school, at Alpha Beta, on the corner of Sixth Street and Washburn Avenue where Hunny's Café used to be located.

He remembers very well the only stop sign in town located at Sixth Street and Main Street since he ran a paper route on his bicycle for the *Corona Daily Independent* and it covered the area between Howard Street (3 blocks east of Main Street) to the Waqon Wheel Café at Smith Street (15 blocks west of Main Street.)

He remembers well his first visit to the dentist (Dr. Munn) when he was in the sixth grade, and spending most of his time outside the high school classroom working to buy a car, running track and



cross country.

In Corona, he lived on Ford Street and then, after his father built and began operating a service station on West Sixth Street (now Jerry's Brake and Wheel) in 1945, with the family home behind the service station. He specifically recalled walking from home to the Municipal Plunge during the summer at least 3 times a week.

He must have been mechanically minded as a youth as he spent time

working in his father's gas station in Corona, ran another service station in Norco where he worked the 3 PM - 11 PM shift. He later sold this station to his brother.

He worked in the aerospace industry at Wyle Labs in Norco and was proud of his service in support of rocket, missile and space shuttle missions. When asked what significant historical events that took place in his lifetime he remembers best, he responded "the assassination of President Kennedy and the success of the Saturn rocket program."

Ralph (or Elwin to his friends) served many years in the Corona Fire Department (CFD). He went to the Fire Academy in 1969 and then served first as a volunteer firefighter, later as a professional firefighter, EMT and 17 years as an Engineer and finished his career as a Captain.

He fondly remembers his initial interview with CFD Fire Chief Harvey Simpson which took place in the Chief's living room to determine if he was "worthy" to be a volunteer.

Years later, when he was working off duty constructing a wrought iron fence, he recalls getting the call, leaving the project in place and going into his home to dress in his turnout clothes and found his boots full of tinker-toys.

He attributes much of his success in the fire service to highly competent trainers, specifically, Captain Bill Lucas, who challenged him to "know every street in the city." He did so and became familiar with every street, the "hundred" block, and on which sides of the streets were odd numbers and which were even numbers.

Donations are Greatly Appreciated!

The Board of Directors of Corona Historic Preservation Society would like to express our appreciation for significant anonymous donations recently received out-of-the-blue. Apparently, Facebook through the <DONATIONS.FB.COM> site directs donations to deserving non-profits.

One of the organizations through which this occurs is *Network for Good*. In the last month we have been grateful recipients of several donations. We are allocating these funds to our project involving the preservation and restoration of the Veterans Memorial Wall at Butterfield Park.

Thank you so much for locating CHPS and finding our Society worthy of your donations.

Do You Remember When?

All the girls had ugly gym uniforms?

It took five minutes for the TV warm up?

Nearly everyone's mom was at home when the kids got home from school?

Nobody owned a purebred dog?

When a quarter was a decent allowance?

You'd reach into a muddy gutter for a penny?

Your mom wore nylons that came in two pieces?

All your male teachers wore neckties and female teachers had their hair done every day and wore high heels?

You got your windshield cleaned, oil checked, and gas pumped, without asking, all for free, every time? And you didn't pay for air? And, you got trading stamps to boot?

Laundry detergent had free glasses, dishes or towels hidden inside the box?

It was considered a great privilege to be taken out to dinner at a real restaurant with your parents?

They threatened to keep kids back a grade if they failed. . .and they did?



When a '57 Chevy was everyone's dream car... to cruise, peel out, lay rubber or watch submarine races, and people went steady?

No one ever asked where the car keys were because they were always in the car, in the ignition, and the doors were never locked?

Lying on your back in the grass with your friends and saying things like, "That cloud looks like a" and playing baseball with no adults to help kids with the rules of the game?

Stuff from the store came without safety caps and hermetic seals because no one had yet tried to poison a perfect stranger?

And with all our progress, don't you just wish, just once,



you could slip back in time and savor the slower pace, and share it with the children of today?

When being sent to the principal's office was nothing compared to the fate that awaited the student at home? Basically we were in fear for our lives, but it wasn't because of drive-by shootings, drugs, gangs, etc. Our parents and grandparents were a much bigger threat! But we survived because their love was greater than the threat?

Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, Laurel and Hardy, Howdy Doody and the Peanut Gallery, the Lone Ranger, The Shadow Knows, Nellie Bell, Roy and Dale, Trigger and Buttermilk were known by everyone?



Summers filled with bike rides, baseball games, Hula Hoops, bowling and visits to the pool, and eating Kool-aid powder with sugar?

How many of these do you remember?

Candy cigarettes , Peashooters, 45 RPM records, Green Stamps, Hi-Fis,, Mimeographic Paper, Beanie & Cecil, Roller-skate keys, Cork pop guns, drive-ins, Studebakers, washtub wringers, wax Coke-shaped bottles with colored sugar water inside , metal Ice cube trays with levers, the Fuller Brush Man, P.F. Fliers, soda pop machines that dispensed glass bottles , Tinker Toys, coffee shops with tableside jukeboxes , Erector Sets, Lincoln Logs, Penny candy, Jiffypop popcorn, Blackjack, Clove and Teaberry chewing gum , 5-cent packs of baseball cards - with that awful pink slab of bubble gum, reel-to-reel tape recorders, the Fort Apache Play Set, Hopalong Cassidy, home milk delivery in glass bottles with cardboard stoppers.



Newsreels before the movie , 35 cent a gallon gasoline, 15 cent McDonalds hamburgers, telephone numbers with a word prefix...(RAYmond 4-, EDgewood 7-, CHURchill 7-, DOuglas 6-, ZENith 9-, etc.), and, the worst thing you could catch from the opposite sex was "cooties".



Now, didn't that feel good, just to go back and say, "Yeah, I remember that"?

Membership Information

**When joining or renewing your membership, please make your
tax deductible check payable to "CHPS"**

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Individual Member | \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I'd like to volunteer! | |
| Family | \$30.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hospitality refreshments | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student | \$10.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Newsletter writing articles | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Business | \$50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Vintage Home Tour | |
| Patron | \$100.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | docent / volunteer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Life | \$500.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Directors | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Gift from _____



Membership Status: Renewal New

Please complete form and mail to:

CHPS

**P.O. Box 2904
Corona, CA 92878**



We Welcome Our New & Continuing Members

Barbara Bucher
Ralph Davis
Sophie Dawson
Nancy Fay
Bob German
Richard Hernandez
Sean Kelley

J. D. & Debbie McBriety
Karen Parker
Nathan & Roberta Reed
James Steiner
Ted & Cindy Taylor
Steve Vansant
G. Carlton & Patricia Wallace

Our Home Preservation Grant Program

The CHPS Grant Committee along with the Board of Directors of the Corona Historic Preservation Society would love to assist local homeowners in making exterior improvements to their historic homes.



have a place that you feel needs help, either your own or a neighbor's, please contact CHPS Home Preservation Grant Program Coordinator Rich Winn at rwinn141@gmail.com/714.328.0010. We will assist you in any way possible to provide the information you need to complete the application process.

We will process any application within 60 days after submittal. Once a grant has been approved and reimbursement limits established, funds will be made available upon completion, inspection and onsite final approval.

Grant applications are available at the Community Development Department at Corona City Hall at 400 South Vicentia, and at the Heritage Room of the Corona Public Library.

Take this opportunity to do some fixing up and have part of the material cost covered by CHPS. Remember we are interested in helping people beautify their homes for others to see, so applications are primarily for curb appeal projects. If you

More information and grant applications may also be downloaded from our website:
<<http://corona-history.org/grants.html>>

Please share this information with others!



Corona
Historic
Preservation
& Society

Board of Directors

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Amanda Kalkanis
Mary Winn

Advisors

Marla Benson
Tom Richins
Ted Taylor



To contact us call
951.898.2044

*Please leave a brief
message*



Our Mission Statement

The Corona Historic Preservation Society (CHPS) is an active nonprofit tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization dedicated to the PRESERVATION, PROTECTION and PERPETUATION of Corona's historic sites, buildings, neighborhoods and resources. We do this through education, community events, preservation projects and tireless advocacy for the benefit of present and future generations.

Monthly Meetings

CHPS Board meetings are held each month to transact Society business, discuss issues affecting the Society and preservation of local historic resources.

All members are invited to attend.

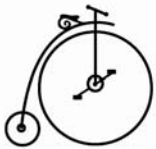
The next meetings will be:

Thursday, Mar. 15, 6:30 P.M. at CHPS office

Thursday, Apr. 26, 6:30 P.M. at CHPS office



Visit our Website at www.Corona-History.org



Corona
Historic
Preservation
& Society

P.O. Box 2904
Corona, California 92878-2904



Vintage Home Tour will be on May 12th