

August 2011

Volume 3 Issue 2
Oroville, California

The Southside Chronicle



Inside this issue:

Membership	2
Historical Photos	2
Early Settler to Southside Mr. Mose Fields	3
The Historical Function and Development of the Black Church in Oroville featuring Oro Vista	4
The Historical Function and Development of the Black Church in Oroville continued	5
Advertisements	6

Upcoming Events

August 27, 2011 1pm Board of Directors meeting at New Home Missionary Baptist Church, 4380 Lower Wyandotte Rd., Oroville, CA. Society members and the public are invited to attend.

September 17, 2011 Bar-Ba-Que fundraiser at the VFW Hall 1901 Elgin St, Oroville, CA. Dinners with generous portions of meat for \$15.00.

September 30, 2011 Cut off date for discounted tickets to the Third Annual Reunion. \$35 per person, \$240 for table of 8 or October 1st thru October 31st \$40 per person, 280.00 for table of 8.

November 5, 2011 Third Annual Reunion **Honoring Our Heritage.**

President's Message

By Dr. John H. Rivers

Greeting Friends and Supporters,

I must apologize for the delay in completing this news letter. We have been very busy completing our second prop 84 grant proposal. We believe that this proposal is stronger and more competitive than our first one which, itself warranted a site visit by State Parks Officials.

Currently, we are continuing work and research on African American History in Oroville and the surrounding areas. While work on one component of our mission awaits a decision by the State, the second part of our mission, (research, preservation and presentation), will be aggressively pursued.

Last month the SOAAHS Board of Directors assessed the amount and quality of progress achieved toward fulfilling the intent of our mission. The Board observed that SOAAHS has made significant progress over the past three years, but more must be achieved. There are three primary reasons why we remain on the case. We are a membership organization where like minded individuals have a stake in the mission and have demonstrated that they can handle the responsibility inherent in the mission. The third reason is the informed commitment of some individuals who realize how common it is to let an entire community become invisible. As W.E.B Du Bois stated in his book "Souls of Black Folk".

"It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others... One feels his two-ness- an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder".

In this newsletter, we focus on continuing to report our findings on the development of the Black Church in Oroville. There is also an historical account of one of the first Black Elders to build and settle in Southside. Patricia Studevan, who is Mr. Mose Fields granddaughter researched and wrote this informative article.



Pit Master Bob Harris will be serving up dinner at our BBQ fundraiser on September 17th.

(continued on page 2 President's Message)

(continued from page 1 President's Message)

Plans for the third annual reunion are completed. I strongly encourage you and members of your family to get your registration in early and take advantage of the discounted donation request. We have reduced the donation request this year to make it easier to participate in this historic gathering, which will be held on November 4-6. Please visit our web site and/or contact LaJuana Jordan(530-591-9708 or the SOAAHS office(530-533-7388) for information and tickets.

Brother Bob Harris, our Vice President, will be preparing his outstanding down-home BBQ dinners at the annual fundraiser on Sept 17th at the VFW Hall, 1901 Elgin St. Oroville, CA, from 12-6pm. There will be plenty of food and the quality and taste of the BBQ WILL BE HISTORIC, because Brother Bob was the owner and cook at the old Cotton Club. He has not missed a beat and the taste will make you feel like you want to slap somebody. The funds raised at the event will help us continue our work and achieve our mission.

Be Blessed

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE'S CORNER

By Van Bilbo

There is great value in having a Historical Society such as ours. We are doing research, conducting oral interviews and collecting artifacts about African Americans of South Oroville. These activities will help restore community pride, set an example for our youth and inform the general public about our rich and diverse heritage.

Our newsletter is a great source for sharing historical information about African Americans of South Oroville. We have received numerous comments about articles published in the newsletter, such as "It's about time someone is doing something like this." or like one former resident stated "keep doing what you are doing, I like reading about events and people of South Oroville it helps me stay connected to the community."

Every bit of historical information gathered by SOAAHS is important. No person or group has every done this before. In order to continue adding pieces to the puzzle we need the support of our current members by renewing their membership at the appropriate time, and as SOAAHS grows and becomes more involved in the community activities and the collection of history, we need to add new members. New members will help with the funding that we need to continue on our historical journey. So if you haven't yet joined please consider do so today.

Historical Photos



Masonic Lodge members early 1960's



Mrs. Faye Steele 2011 Legacy Award winner and secretary at Oro Vista Baptist Church for 40 years

Mose Fields

May 12, 1873-March 20, 1967

By Patricia Studevan

Mose Fields embraced life and change readily. He is best remembered for his contribution to the growth of South Oroville from 1930 through 1960. Fields is also known for his ease with firearms, which speaks volumes about his early life.

The Native American Cherokee settled land in Georgia, the Carolinas and East Tennessee. After the Civil War The U.S. Government and the Cherokee Nation Signed the 1866 Treaty, which had a clause that stated all Cherokee Freedmen and all free African Americans living within tribal land "shall have all the rights of native Cherokees. But by the end of the 19th century the Dawes Act of 1887 dismantled tribal land holdings and opened it for sale to non Cherokees. Fields was born May 12, 1873 on Cherokee land in the State of Georgia. There is no record of his parents names, only that they both were born in Georgia, as well.

During that period Whites, Blacks, and Indians in the territory shared the surname Fields. It is not hard to imagine the relationships between them during slavery and the aftermath. Fields' name appears on a U. S. Native American Enrollment or census card for the Five Civilized Tribes, 1898-1914, Group 75, Bureau of Indian Affairs 1793-1999, as a 9-year old Cherokee Freedman. After the Georgia Cherokee tribal land was dismantled Fields' Family like many other Freedmen migrated to other States.

In the state of Arkansas sometime during 1893, 20 year old Fields and his 15 year old sweetheart, Addie Mae Brown, were married and had six children; Ora Mae, Rosie, Marcus, Theodore, Louis, and Irma. The Fields' remained married until Addie's death 1966.



Mose Fields

Fields did not discuss his schooling or upbringing but the 1920 census record noted that he could read and write. In the 1920 census his occupation is listed as a laborer, and from the 1930 census his occupation is listed as a log cutter. Later documents list him as working in a lumber mill. Fields' work in lumber may have accounted for the family's moves from Arkansas to Missouri, Arizona, and finally to California.

Fields may have come to work in Oroville at the La Port Lumber Mill prior to his wife and children's arrival in 1931. The stories shared by Oroville "old timers" with their descendants is that Fields was the only African American they saw when they arrived in Oroville. Other African Americans were living in areas surrounding Oroville at the time but few if any in South Oroville. In March 1948, Fields and his wife purchased the trust deed for a parcel of land at what is now 3485 Burlington Avenue. They built the home that still stands on that property today. By 1950 Fields' oldest daughter, Ora Mae, purchased three parcels on the Bowers subdivision, two of which adjoined her parent's land. The Fields' used the entire parcel next to their home for a garden. To the delight of the grandchildren there was also a chicken coop and a pig pen in their back yard which disappeared with the popularity of the refrigerator and freezer. Many improvements were made on the property over the years by the Fields' who were very industrious all of their lives. Both had received their Social Security Cards prior to 1951. They were constantly doing something to improve their lives and encouraging their children and grandchildren to do the same. In addition to his occupation as a lumber grader, which two of his sons also worked as for a time, Fields was active in the community. He was a long time member of Feather River Lodge, # 11 of the Ancient and Accepted Most Worshipful Sons of Light, Grand Lodge, A. F. and A. M., in Oroville serving as the Worshipful Master during the 1950s.

Fields was a quiet, no-nonsense man who did not let hardship or trials of life prevent him from securing and enjoying a good life with his family. He led by example, praising and encouraging all who managed to make a place for themselves in the community.

The Historical Function and Development of the Black Church in Oroville Continued

Featuring Oro Vista Baptist Church

By Dr. John H. Rivers

In the late eighteenth century, African Americans began to attend Christian churches in large numbers and, although they were permitted to attend their master's church, they were not welcomed by White worshippers. Early African American Christian worshippers were restricted to the back rows or gallery spaces, and in the South, many worshippers gathered in the churchyards to hear the singing and sermons. It was from these conditions that Black churches emerged.

The first physical Black Baptist Church -- the Silver Bluff Baptist Church -- existed on a plantation owned by a man named George Galphin in Beech Island, South Carolina. Though the original structure from 1773 is no longer standing, a second structure was built in 1883 and has been altered throughout the years. At Silver Bluff Baptist Church, Wait Palmer, a White Baptist Pastor, baptized slaves and freed Blacks. David George, a free Black man and member of the Silver Bluff Baptist Church, later went on to establish a Baptist church in Sierra Leone.

In 1788, George Liele formed a Black Baptist Church and was instrumental in establishing the nucleus of what became known as the African Baptist Church in Savannah, Georgia. While there, he became the first ordained Black minister in the Baptist denomination in the United States, and later became minister for the Silver Bluff Baptist Church when Wait Palmer was called to service in the Revolutionary War. After ordaining another Black minister as his replacement, Liele returned to Savannah to form a subsidiary church of the town's original African Baptist Church.



Oro Vista Baptist Church

From the church's eighteenth century beginnings, we return to the development and important role of black churches in Oroville. In the first installment of "The Historical Function and Development of the Black Church" in the March 2011 issue of The Southside Chronicle (Volume 3, Issue 1), we reviewed the history of Number One Church of God in Christ, which was the first Black Church established in Oroville in 1911. In this second installment, we will explore Oroville's second Black Church: Oro Vista Baptist Church, formally organized in 1921.

The first church services of Oro Vista Baptist Church were held in the home of the church's founder and first pastor, Elder D.E. Roberts. Services were held 1918 in a small building on the property of the late Brother Rufus O'Quinn, Sr., who remained a Deacon in the church until his death in 1931.

In November 1923, members of the Oro Vista Baptist Church congregation purchased the presently-existing institution's property at 2725 Florence Ave. in Oroville, CA. This address, Lot 56 of the Lee-Bromley Subdivision, was divided into lots 5-9, and was purchased from the Northern California Conference Association of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church for \$825.

From these beginnings, a small 40' by 60' one-room building with a tiny vestibule was used for services. As the Oro Vista congregation increased, a parsonage was built on the property, and a sewer line was connected to the church in 1935. The increased migration of African Americans to Southside during the 1930s and 40s brought with it a rise in the church's membership, and its leadership structure was also enlarged with the appointment of additional deacons and ministers. In 1945, during Elder Frank King's tenure as pastor, the church's structure was enlarged and remodeled.

In the development of Oro Vista Baptist Church from the 1920s through 2011, the following individuals provided service and leadership: Founding Pastor Elder D.E. Roberts; Pastor Green, Pastor White, Pastor James Brown, Pastor S.W. Watkins, Pastor Shelly Williams, Pastor J.H. Wilson, Pastor W. Epperson, Pastor Frank King, Pastor T.L. Lewis, Pastor A. Paul Jones, Pastor P.C. Harrison, Pastor R.L. Simpson, and Pastor Lemuel Blackshire.

Deacons who served from the 1920s through the early 1940s were Deacon Rufus O'Quinn, Deacon Arthur King, Deacon Joe Cooper, Deacon William Shannon, Deacon Roy Moss, Deacon Perry Moss, Deacon William Gabriel, Sr., Deacon Shaw Winter (later ordained Minister), Deacon James Warren, and Deacon Thomas Cotton.

Deacons serving from the 1950s through the early 1970s were Deacon Arthur Williams, Deacon E. Christopher, Deacon R. Thomas, Deacon John Parson, and Deacon L. Gonzales.

(continued on page 5 Oro Vista Baptist Church)

(continued from page 4 Oro Vista Baptist Church)

Church Trustees who served the church during the 1920s through the 1950s include Brothers Perry, Moss, Randolph Edison, Vest Houston, and Sister Ella Jackson, as well as Theodore Osby, Oza Warren, B.M. Collier, and Mrs. Mary Christopher. Other Elders who served the church in non-pastor roles include Elder Shaw Winters, Elder J.D. Wright, and Elder Jesse Mimms.

The essential, and in some cases, dominant role of women in the development of Oro Vista Baptist Church was exemplified by Mother Banks (Brother Warren's mother), who was the first mother of the church during the 1920s and 30s. Her service was followed by Mother Molly Whitfield and Mother Ella Bennett.

Oro Vista Baptist Church has also benefitted from the hard work and dedication of Sisters including Ella Pyo Jackson, the first Church Clerk; Gertrude Hamilton, Sunday School Teacher and Program Chair for all special events during the 1920s-40s; Julia Moore, one of the church's first members who worked dutifully until her passing; Susie Anna Gabriel, teacher and missionary; Nettie G. Brown, who served on the Usher Board from the 1940s until 1964; Mamie Smith, who served as a Sunday school teacher and in various other offices within the church leadership structure; and Fay Steele, who served as the Church Secretary for over forty years.

There have been a number of benchmark achievements since the first church services in Elder Roberts' home in 1918. Besides the enduring faith, sacrifice and hard work of church members, some past and present accomplishments serve as foundational parts of the church's strength, longevity, and service to the community.

In July 1961, Elder P.C. Harrison was called and served as Pastor at Oro Vista Baptist Church, and relocated his family to Southside from East Chicago, Illinois in September of 1951. During his tenure, a lobby and finance office were constructed at the front of the church, as well as a new social hall and kitchen at the rear of the church. He also established a financial budget system with an annual quota to be paid by each church auxiliary. As the membership continued to grow, Pastor Harrison established an annual Women's and Men's Day, and organized a Youth and Junior Choir, and Usher Board. He also organized a Junior Church, with the youth in charge of the entire service every third Sunday.

On May 25, 1969, ground was broken for a new edifice, but a shortage of parking space initially prohibited the building plans from meeting code requirements. In response, new plans were drawn up to build around the old edifice, which allotted enough space to design and build a multi-purpose room, 3 classrooms, 2 restrooms, a cloak room, a front vestibule, and a long hallway that separated the two classrooms from the auditorium.

Four years and six months from the initial groundbreaking date, the new edifice was completed, thanks to many prayers and many sacrifices. Most of the labor for its construction was donated by faithful church members, as well as friends and well-wishers in the Southside community, many of whom did not profess to be Christians. During the Great Mortgage Burning Celebration on Sunday, November 25, 1973, representatives from local and district churches, both black and white, gathered together to rejoice at the new facility.

Under Pastor Harrison's shepherding, two children were called into the ministry, and are now Pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in Sacramento, CA (Pastor E.L. Vernrdo) and Past Pastor of New Home Missionary Baptist Church, also in Sacramento (Jasper Ruffin). On December 8, 1975, Pastor P.C. Harrison departed this life.

Elder James Matthews, III became Oro Vista Baptist Church's sixteenth pastor in its 70 years of existence. He was recommended for his post by the late Pastor of the New Home Missionary Baptist Church in Oroville, Pastor Carl Fowler, and was also recommended by the late Pastor Oliver Calloway of Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist Church in Marysville, CA.

At the direction of Pastors Fowler and Calloway, Pastor Matthews wrote the church's constitution and by-laws, and also designed and implemented a church institute offering two classes focused on church covenant and Christian doctrine. Beginning on April 6, 1991, the institute offered classes in Bible analysis, church history, management, evangelism training, chemical addiction and abuse, as well as drug and violence seminars. A deacon's class began in October 1992.

Under Pastor Matthew's leadership, the church has served its members and the Southside community in the Black Church traditions -- traditions which historically began with the purpose of gathering West African Slaves together into spiritual communities where human beings could be immersed into faith, strength, love, and salvation. These virtues, along with determination and will are a compelling explanation for why and how a once oppressed people achieve and believe in progress.

SOAAHS

936 18th St

Oroville, CA 95965

CONNELLY'S ROOFING

25 Years Experience

Insured

Cool Roof Certified

Free Estimates

C-39 & General B

CA. Lic. #601524 Email: connellysroof@att.net

Adam Connelly—Manager

Bill Connelly—Owner

530-693-0381 CELL

530-533-1516 PHONE

530-534-3350 FAX



Charlie's Chop Suey

2051 Robinson Street

Oroville, Ca 95965

hungry? 530.533.1488

Tuesday-Sunday 11-9

2072 E 20th St. Ste 100

Chico, Ca 95928

hungry? 530.898.1388

7 days a week 11-9

www.tongfonglow.com

DISCOUNT BOOKS
1515 MYERS ST. OROVILLE, CA 95965
**WE GUARANTEE THE LOWEST
PRICES IN BUTTE COUNTY**

NEW & USED • ALL CATEGORIES
WE SPECIAL ORDER BOOKS

530-534-9720

*BOOKSTORE'S PRICES

