

April 2018

Volume 10 Issue 1
Oroville, California

The Southside Chronicle



President's Message

by Dr. John Rivers

Greetings;

I hope the year has been good to you, your family, and friends. One hopes that it remains possible for each of us to set goals and create wishes that can be realized. Perhaps these desires will not be realized exactly as we want, but what would life be like if it was not for the anticipation of the possible.

It is in this sense that our Board began examining our current ideas and methods for obtaining enough funds to construct a Historic Center and Park. This was the dream our elders left to other true believers. When the Board took up the "dream", we did so with a plan which included writing funding proposals to government agencies, public and private foundations. Fundraising activities were also a part of the original plans.

We have been blessed by continual support from our members who renew their paid membership fees each year. We recognize the trust that each of these members extend to us. Our gratitude and thanks is extended to supporters from Oroville and Chico who donate to our various fundraisers, namely the annual Fish Fry and Bar B Q. The local businesses who help fund the expenses for our newsletters are very appreciated. Collaborations, sponsorships, and partnerships with Community organizations has provided essential support to our work. They include: Briggs Firestone Car Center, Discount Books, Connelly's Roofing, Tong Fong Low, Marcozzi's Jewelry and Steve The Barber.

We have certainly benefited over the past 10 years for the help of so many people who believe in the importance of inclusion in local historical records and events. Our quest of pursuing two dimension of our mission has produced uneven results. We have collected a small number of artifacts but need more. This we believe will happen when we have a center to safely store and display the artifacts.

We have experienced a greater challenge to our plan for obtaining enough funds to build our Center and Park. Sensing that this part of our mission will take longer than we had assume, we started a building fund in which we would grow over the coming years through donations, small grants, and fundraisers. We are also assuming a smaller center and park.

Our first step is to get an estimate of the value of the property on Greenville Ave. The board will then determine the next steps which could include other options that have not been considered. As we move in this new direction, we would appreciate your ideas on building a Center and Park "that we own". Please call our office at 530-533-7388 and leave your ideas and suggestions on the answering machine. We will return all calls. Remember, this will be our place and our Center and Park. All will be welcome and all members of the community will certainly benefit.

Take good care of yourself.

John.

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Upcoming Events

Saturday

May 26, 2018 1 pm

Board of Directors
Meeting
Hooker Oak Elks Lodge
2453 V-7 Rd.
Oroville, CA 95966.
Members and public are
invited to attend

Saturday

November 3, 2018
4:30pm to 8:30pm

10th Annual Legacy
Awards Ceremony
Feather Falls Casino
and Lodge
3 Alverda Dr.
Oroville, CA 95966

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE'S CORNER

By Van Bilbo

March was membership renewal month and many of our members have renewed for another year. For those who have renewed, we thank you very much. Membership dues account for a major part of our funding each year. Without the income from membership dues SOAAHS would not be in operation.

For those members who have not renewed please do so at your earliest convenience. We use income from dues to fund our Fundraisers during the year, to buy supplies and equipment for research, and for normal day to day operation. The support that your dues provide is vital to the success of the Society.

Also during the month of March, letters were sent out to people who were not members of the Society asking them to become members of SOAAHS and we got back 5 positive responses from folks who decided to become members. I would like to thank the new members for their support and **Welcome to SOAAHS.**

In Memoriam

We have decided to once again start publishing the names of folks from the Southside Community who have passed away. This section of the newsletter was discontinued back in August of 2014. There have been quite a few folks who have passed on since then. We have many of the names of those who have passed but not all of them. If there is someone who is not on the list below who has passed since August 2014 please let us know and we will publish their names in future issues of the Newsletter. You can phone in the information by calling 530 533-7388 or mail the information to: SOAAHS, 936 18th St., Oroville, CA 95965.

	Sunrise	Sunset
Christine Gabriel Campbell	10-6-1943	2-18-2015
Joseph Lee Person	12-18-1929	5-13-2015
Juanita O'Quinn	10-5-1925	8-11-2015
Lewis Ray Clark	10-21-1944	10-14-2015
Nathaniel Sykes	2-21-1929	2-28-2016
Bertha Mae Clark Lewis	5-22-1939	6-13-2016
Eddie Stovall	12-22-1946	6-21-2016
Mable Serlina Jones Stiger	3-26-1942	12-12-2016
Barbara Ann Stovall Johnson	5-17-1945	3-16-2017
Rev. Bill Parish	9-22-1932	6-30-2017
Mayola Stovall	5-22-1924	7-19-2017
Deborah Bunny Thompson	4-1-1951	8-30-2017
Curry Thomas Sr.	7-18-1929	9-1-2017
Rose Mary Brown Hill	4-8-1940	10-4-2017
Elvis Gregory Brown	3-17-1950	10-4-2017
Bob Harris Jr.	11-28-1927	12-31-2017

INSPIRATION, TOWARD JUSTICE

by Dr. John Rivers

Inspiration, hope, prayer, and will; are the foundations on which our path toward social justice is made clear and supported. These foundations are not made by individuals. They are spiritual gifts that must be used, as Dr. King once said, “to overcome barriers that stand in our way to real equality”. Human beings are given the necessary human essentials to dream and achieve. The first elders who settled in and build Southside understood this truism well. This important understanding has been demonstrated and passed on to their children. One wonders if these lessons have been understood by their descendants.

Our elders experienced a softer version of segregation when they arrived in Oroville during the 1930 – 1970s. The exception were schools and work place. Social engagement between racial and ethnic groups was limited because of segregated housing, religious institutions, and closed memberships in social clubs and organizations. The elders were not small thinkers. They began quickly to construct churches and small houses. They established small low financed businesses and social organizations for youth and adults. Fraternal groups were established which included two Masonic Lodges and one Elks Lodge.

Because of social and cultural isolation, the Black residents in Southside were able to live and express the culture they brought with them from the South. Their music, dances, food, and behavioral patterns were rooted in the South, brought to Oroville, and then planted in a tight community.

Work opportunities for Black Men and Woman were available in low skills jobs. Families were functional with primarily two parent households.



Johnson's Grocery Store (was located at 3217 Fallbrook Ave)

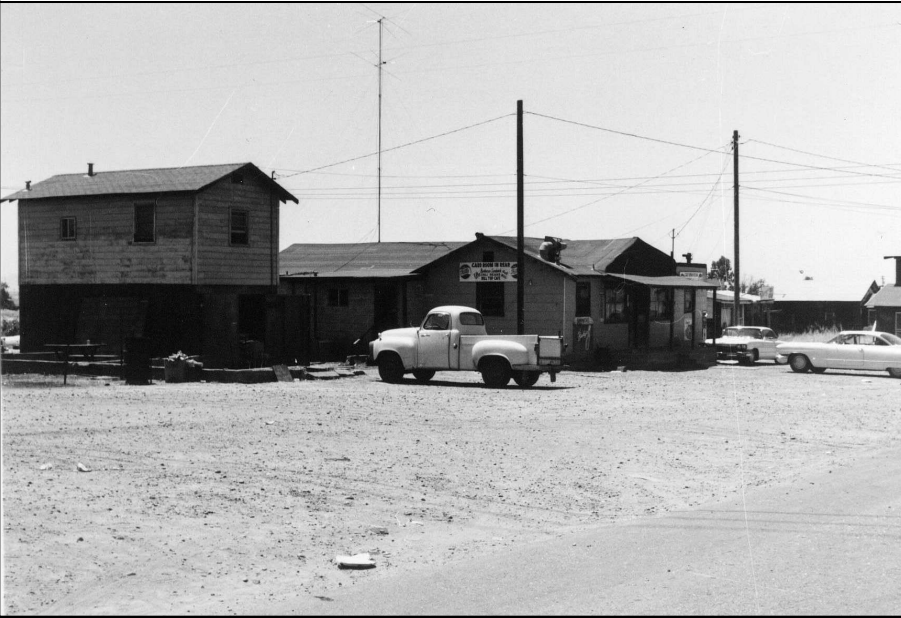


The Front (Café and Pool Hall) (2785 Wyandotte Ave.)

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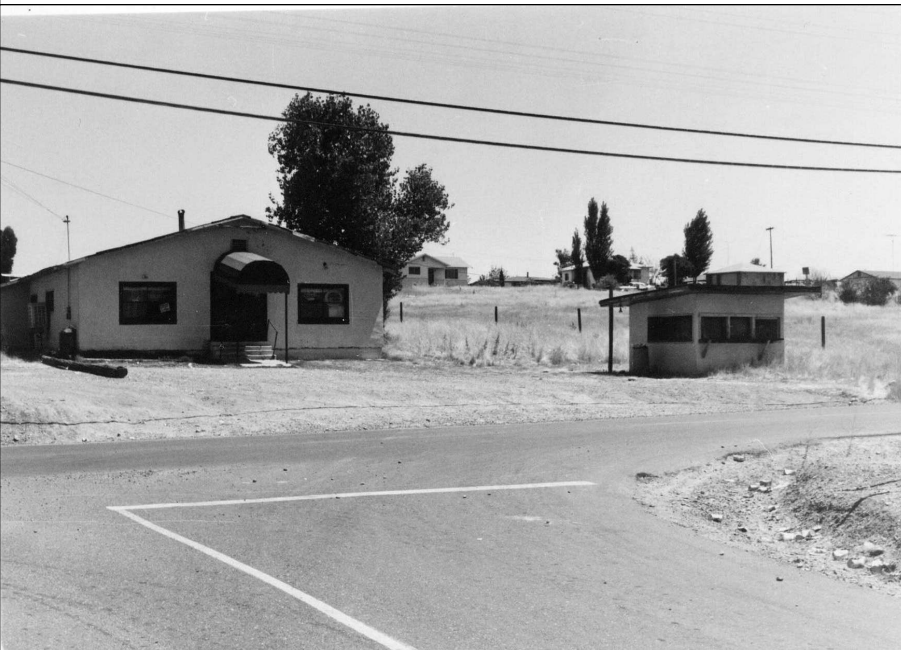
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Children were watched over by adults in the community. There was a sense of place in Southside where residents could live and behave with those who shared their values and beliefs.



Harry and Thelma's Café (V-7 Rd.)

Southside business establishments ran on small amounts of operating funds. They also competed against each other for the small Southside market. There were few, if any white customers. The businesses ranged from Cafes, two small Grocery Stores, a Cleaner, Food Catering Service, Barber Shops, Bars and Night Clubs, Bakery/Sweet Shop, Soda Fountain, Restaurant, Juke Joints, and Beauty Salon. Residents supported Southside businesses, but spent most of their money on consumer items in white owned Oroville businesses.



The Cotton Club (Lower Wyandottte Rd. & V-7 Rd.)

The black population did have businesses and social organizations which catered to their entertainment needs and southern diet. Norvel Engaser's, Southside Market (Connor of Fallbrook and Greenville Ave.), was closer to a full range grocery market with fresh meats and vegetables. Mr. Johnson's Store (Fallbrook and A street) did not sell fresh meat or vegetables.

Both stores allowed residents to charge their groceries each week and pay for them when they received their pay checks. Families were able to have food during times when their cash was limited. This pattern of behavior was familiar to many early

settlers because it represented a consumer/trust pattern that many of the families experienced in the South. Norval was always paid on time and the arrangement worked for the families and his business.

It is highly possible that had local banks loaned money to these small business enterprises, Southside would have established an economic base. Without access to funds from banks and other lending institutions, business owners had to provide their own capital which was raised from their wages and money saved. The other barriers to business success was the lack of customers from

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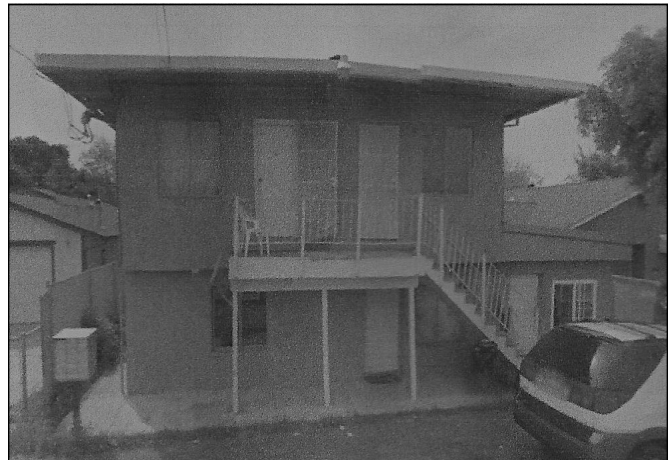
outside Southside and the small market and low volume of sells required the owners to charge high prices for their products or services.

Mr. Johnson's Store was not a well-stocked store, but was a favorite for children with a wide range of candy, and mothers who need a few items to complete their various meals. Flour, oil, milk, spices, and can goods would usually be in stock. Just like Norvel, Mr. Johnson got his money each time and on time.

Labor intense jobs were plentiful during these times. This social condition enabled stability in families and strong extended families. Though marriage and new arrivals' from the south, the Southside population grew creating a sense of place and community. The pace of life was slow and filled with southern traditional patterns like Sunday church services, Saturday evening parties, and visits to the "Hill" where the Grown Folks gathered and socialized. Yes, one can only wonder about the possibilities of Southside if jobs could have been created in Southside and young people could have found jobs here instead of leaving to find work. There was one exception to the success record for Black owned businesses in Southside. The Yellow Cab Company owned by Barney and Katherine Gabriel was highly successful. Starting with one cab and operating from their home on El Noble Ave., the Gabriels grew their business through hard work and sacrifice. A more detail description of their achievements will be covered in the next newsletter.



Myles Royal Dry Cleaners (2656 Ft. Wayne St.)



**Building that was Ally's Soda Fountain and Café
(3472 Burlington Ave.)**



Mr. Green's Dance Hall and Bar (2478 V-7 Rd.)

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