

May 2015

Volume 7 Issue 1
Oroville, California

The Southside Chronicle

“There is something about these people”

Dr. John Rivers

Yes, there is something about these people. Freed from legal slavery, but not from social oppression and discrimination, these people have remain loyal to America’s grand purpose and ideals. Their inventions, discoveries and creations are woven into American culture. They have fought in every war to defend and sustain the nation. They have worked in the hardest and most risky jobs which help build the nation’s economy and social institutions. After being emancipated from slavery, these people join other groups in expanding and dispersing the county’s population by migrating from the south to the northern and western parts of the United States.

Unlike other groups, these people carried the image and stigma of “the slave”. These people have been moving from this true but negative beginning in America to experience their full civic and human potential.

The decedents of “the slave” have been on a long walk from the plantations, sawmills, railroad tracks, ship yards, factories, war grounds, and construction sites. Their walk continues now from different places of origin. These places don’t have symbols of legal limits. They offer an illusion suggesting that the walk is no longer needed. Yet the voice of “the slave” and their de-scends tells us that we must keep walking until America’s purpose and ideals are “self-evident”.

“The Slave” was present in Butte County prior to and during the 1850s according to George Campbell Mansfield’s book, “1918 History of Butte County”, p226. Mansfield observes that “the existence of slavery was a miner concern” during the 1850s. This view on the significance of slavery in the County was also expressed by D.F. Crowder in his memoirs published in the Chico Enterprise in January, 1918.

The social and psychological condition of “the slave” was invisible during these times. Many argue that similar neglect and indifference are experienced by some of “the slave’s” descen-dents today.

Perhaps one of the lingering under regarded effects of slavery is the invisible human character-istics and virtues of these people. Their strong spiritual beliefs, emotional balance and depth, and consistent regard for community, family and place is not recognized. (continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1) Along with inheriting the sigma of “the slave” their descendants have been making their walk supported by functional human characteristics and will.

An example of this inheritance is the story of a group of Southside Black Elders who had and pursued a vision in 1967. They saw the need to directly confront and reduce major emerging community problems in Southside.

Their idea was to purchase land and build a center and park for the community. The center and park would provide a sense of place where the entire Southside community could meet to plan, communicate, unify, create, and support strategies that could reduce the negative effects of poverty, crime, unemployment, education, and physical health.

The structural support for this effort was provided through President Lyndon B. Johnson’s war on poverty program. Funds were made available to counties throughout the nation to stop and reduce the spread of poverty and all its negative consequences.

True to their heritage, the elders saw an opportunity and asked the community grandparents, parents, pastors, appointed and self-appointed leaders to join together and take self-directed action.

This was not an uncommon request. The elder’s migration experience from the south was saturated with mutual support from individuals to individuals,

and families to families. The well knitted fabric of solid connections was not an exception, but the rules in black communities in the south. Those learned habits and expectations were brought to Oroville during 1920-1970.

Mother Versie Bilbo recorded the meetings of the elected Board of Directors for the Oroville Action Council which lead the fund raising efforts to buy land and build the community owed center and park. In addition to money donated by a majority of the Southside community, the Board conducted rummage sales, food drives to feed hungry families, and (continued on page 3)

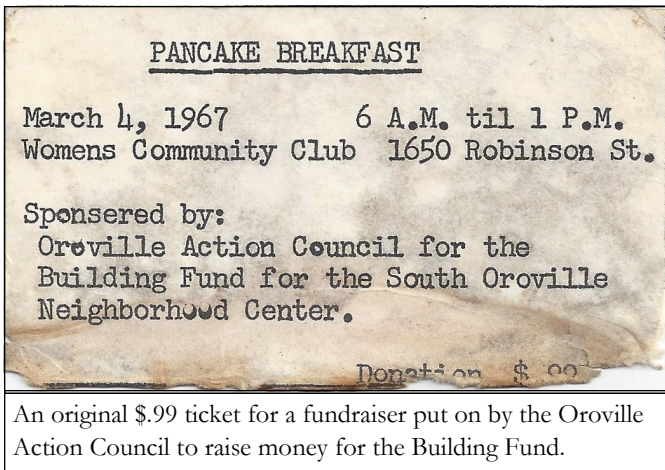


ACCESS TO CENTER—Prime movers in the projected Oroville Community Center grasp a shovel handle to symbolize start of construction of an access road approved by the Butte County Board of Supervisors. On the scene yesterday as heavy equipment opened up the extension of V-8 Road were (left to right)

Public Works Director Clay Castleberry; James Toni, a director of the Oroville Action Council; James Harris, co-chairman of the council's building committee; Oroville Supervisor Jack McKillop; and Mr. and Mrs. Isaiah Rogers, who donated an acre of ground for the right-of-way. (E-R Photo by Nick Ellena)

Article from The Chico Enterprise-Record July 9, 1969.

(continued from page 2) voter registration to get the community more involved in the local political process. Mother Bilbo's minutes of the Board meetings is currently in the SOAAHS archives.



The community achieved their land purchase goal, but was derailed in their efforts to build the center and park. It is unclear what the actual cause for the derailment. There are several theories but no documented cause can be verified by current Southside residents or local City or County Officials, and almost all of the original Elders have gone home.

An original \$.99 ticket for a fundraiser put on by the Oroville Action Council to raise money for the Building Fund.

The land remains in the hands of the Southside Community, and the Trustees for the land act in the capacity given them by the Oroville Action Council. They are responsible to ensure that the land is used for the purpose and intent agreed to by those who donated their own financial resources.

This story will continue to be told in subsequent publications.

President Message by Dr John Rivers

I am pleased to inform our members and friends that the Board have started a building fund to finish the job started by our Elders. The torch has been handed to us, and we are running to the finish line. The earlier fund raising effort pursued by the Elders did not reach the finish line. We are following their example of self-directed action. "If you really want and need something badly, stop wishing and make it happen".

This is exactly what we are doing by starting the building fund. We ask that you help us in this important effort. An historic center and park that is owned and operated like a real community facility can have positive impacts on the quality of life and training and educational opportunities for current residents in Southside and those in the surrounding communities.

Please send financial donations to the North Valley Community Foundations, at 240 Main Street, Suite 260, Chico, CA 95928. All your donations are tax deductible. Make sure you indicate the intent of your donation by stating that it is for The SOAAHS Building Fund. We can reach the finish line with small monthly donations by all of us who realize the significance of a community owned facility for children, grandparents, and families in Southside. Run with us in this race to finish what the Elders started.

Thank you and be well,

John

SOAAHS

936 18th St.

Oroville, CA 95965

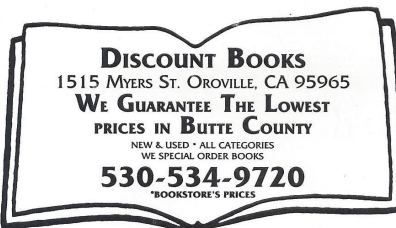


Charlie's Chop Suey

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

530-534-9720
*BOOKSTORE'S PRICES

CONNELLY'S ROOFING

25 Years Experience
Insured
Cool Roof Certified •
Free Estimates

Adam Connelly — Manager
Bill Connelly — Owner
530-693-0381 CELL
530-533-1516 PHONE
530-534-3350 FAX

C-39 & General B
C.A. Lic. #601524 Email: connellyroof@att.net



Rudy J. Marcozzi
Graduate Gemologist
Gemological Institute of America
Stephanie A. Marcozzi

R.F. Marcozzi
Manufacturing Jeweler

Diamond Settings • Re-Mounting

Jewelry Repairing • Watch Repairing • Appraising

1511 Myers Street
Oroville, CA 95965
marcozzijewelers.com



Phone: (530) 533-3811
Fax: (530) 533-2988
rmarcozz@sbcglobal.net

Katie's Corner II

At Chico Mall

Katie Vaclavik-Manager
Women's Fine Clothing *Jewelry & Accessories
Unique Furnishings for your home

Phone: 530-892-2228
Cell: 530-828-9569
E-mail: katiescornerllc@yahoo.com

1950 E. 20th Street
Chico Ca 95928

Oroville Motors Inc.

Raymond Carpenter
Service Manager



2700 Lincoln Blvd Oroville CA 95966
Ph. 530-533-2535 Fax 530-533-1472



Comer's PRINT SHOP

Over
80 years
of Quality
Service

2008 Lincoln Street
Oroville, CA 95966
Fax: 530-533-9146
www.comersprintshop.com

Keri Church

530-533-5717 • comerprint@sbcglobal.net