

September 2009

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The Southside Chronicle

President's Report *By Dr. John H. Rivers*

Greetings,

The Society has taken additional steps toward achieving our noble and challenging mission. The Board approved a building plan for the proposed Historic Community Center and Museum. Now our architect will prepare a scale drawing which will be reviewed and approved by the Board.

The oral history project is moving forward with important stories of families and individuals. One of these families is featured in this newsletter. We are continuing to collect and record local history of African Americans with the able assistance of members of the Butte County Historical Society and Students from Chico State.

The Board also approved the plans for the first annual Southside Reunion which is titled **A FAMILY AFFAIR**. The event will be held during the weekend of November 6th, 7th and 8th. We hope to have as many as 250 people at the weekend event. A detailed description of the weekend event is

presented on page 4. We strongly encourage local and former residents to make their reservations by the deadline date of October 24, 2009. The Society is a pay as you go self determination organization. Our members and donors are stakeholders in the achievements of the society. Your early response will help us to establish a tradition of excellence and to put on a first rate event.

The Society now has a web site, which came on line last month. We invite you to visit the site at www.soaahs.org.

Finally, I must share a recent uplifting experience. I had the rare opportunity to meet and eat with a number of former Southsiders at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ron Charles in Sacramento, CA. Billie Bell Spencer coordinated the outreach efforts to contact and invite those former residents to this informal gathering. The purpose of the event was to establish more direct lines of communications with a significant number of our



Dr. Rivers at the Community Center and Museum building site.

members who live in the Sacramento area. Mrs. Charles and Ron made us all feel welcome which brought back memories of experiences in Southside. The fellowship and validation was rich and deep. Lots of hugs, old stories, and updates filled the Charles's back yard. I'm sure similar experiences will occur at The Family Affair Reunion. Please pass the word about the reunion to others so that no one will be left out and everyone present will matter. It was good to experience our community again.

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MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE'S CORNER

By Van Bilbo

On Saturday June 20, 2009 at Martin Luther King Park in South Oroville, the NAACP put on its annual Juneteenth celebration. This event marked the first time that SOAAHS has made a public appearance. SOAAHS took part in the event to spread the news about our efforts in the community to collect, preserve, and present history of South Oroville. At our booth we handed out our newsletter and information about the society. We also sold t-shirts. We got enthusiastic responses from those who visited the booth. Visitors made comments like "I have never heard of SOAAHS before, it's great that the organization is doing this", or "What's taken you

guys so long, we really need an organization like this in the community." It was a fun filled day with good food and an opportunity spread the news about SOAAHS.

SOAAHS has picked up 14 new members since our last newsletter bringing the total membership up to 63. At the beginning of the year our goal was to have 125 members by year's end. We are about half-way to fulfilling that goal, so if you are not yet a member please take the time to become a member by filling out the application on page 5 and sending it in.

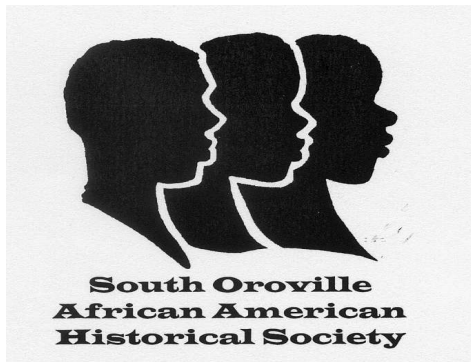
Oral History Project the McCarter Family ***By Deacon Virgil Scott and Dr. John H. Rivers***

M.C. McCarter was born in 1919 in Louisiana. He moved to Mississippi at the age of three. He married his wife, Isnell in Macomb, Mississippi in 1938, 71 years ago. Mr. McCarter moved to Oroville in 1946 to find work while living with his uncle in a house on C Street in Southside. Like many other African American men who settled in the segregated black community in Southside, M.C. came here first and prepared a way for his family to join him. With a third grade education and the inability to read Mr. McCarter started at the High Sierra Lumber mill in 1946 and moved into the construction field sometime there after, which did not require him to have reading skills, "just a strong back and a willingness to work".

M.C. and Isnell raised eight children who graduated from high school, two attended college and one (Charlie) graduated from Chico State University. Mr. McCarter is proud of the fact that he learned to read in his early eighties because the demands of daily living required him to do so. As he continually expressed to his children and others who would listen, "It is better to have an education and not need it, than to need an education and not have it". Many of us are grateful and better off because the McCarter Family operated a business THE FRONT that catered to youth and adults by providing a social and culturally rich setting. They continue to engage in a small business by providing housing for men on the corner of Burlington and Wyandotte Ave in South Oroville.



Mr. and Mrs. McCarter at the Oral Interview



Special Thanks

SOAAHS would like to thank board member and artist Sauda Arraf for her help in developing the SOAAHS logo. The logo image is an excellent example of the fine quality work that Sauda does. We are fortunate to have such a talented member to donate her time and efforts to the society.

SOAAHS IS ON THE WEB

"We invite you to visit our new website, www.soaahs.org, where you can access event information, link to an e-copy of newsletters and get information on oral histories. We were fortunate to secure the largely donated services of **Jill Townsend** to develop the website. Jill is a professional author, copywriter, and marketing consultant who resides in Paradise."

First Organizational Member

Mr. Vic Briggs, owner of Briggs Firestone Car Care Center in Oroville has become the Society's first organizational member. Mr. Briggs is a strong supporter of historical research, preservation and he has a vast numbers of historical publications of early Northern California. history. A casual review of some of these materials will reveal a clear insight into the personal experiences of some of the early families who migrated to and established communities and towns in Northern California counties.

We are pleased that Mr. Briggs has joined the Society and supports our mission. Recently he received a special recognition award from the local Salvation Army for his concern about the well being of others in need. We congratulate Mr. Briggs and his family for their support of community charities.

SOAAHS Legacy Awards

A special committee of the board will recognize current and former Southside Residents whose life deeds, values and accomplishments serve as a model for others and whose hard work and sacrifice have made it possible for succeeding generations to benefit through more opportunities. Their strength of will and determination to improve the quality of life experiences for others will be a highlight of the evening during the first annual reunion dinner on November 7, 2009 at the Southside Community Center.

The legacy committee is chaired by Captain Leroy Gill, and include board members Mrs. Patsy Thomas Tobias, Deacon Virgil Scott, and Mr. Dick Bjork.

November Reunion Promises To Be An Affair to Remember ***By Sandy Jensen***

November 6th, 7th and 8th, 2009 will be an exciting and event-filled weekend. A "Meet and Greet" at the Western Pacific Brewery (formerly The Depot) on Friday evening from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. will provide an opportunity for old friends to chat and reminisce. Appetizers will be provided; cocktails will be no-host. Tours of local landmarks will take place on Saturday morning. Foremost will be a visit to the SOAAHS property, site of the future SOAAHS cultural center and museum, followed by stops at other places of interest, such as River Bend Park, a casino, and the Fish Hatchery.

Delicious barbequed tri-tip will be catered (and donated) by Neal Mitchell and son Joe (a Bay Area chef) at the Southside Community Center on Saturday evening at 5:30, following a no-host social hour that will begin at 4:30. Highlights of the evening will be an Over-40 Fashion Show (for both men and women) and presentation of the first annual Legacy Awards.

Southside churches will welcome former members and newcomers on Sunday morning, providing weekend participants with an additional opportunity to renew acquaintances and revisit the community before departing for home

Notes from African American History

William Leidesdorff was born in 1810 to a white father from Denmark and black mother from the Virgin Islands. His family moved from the Virgin Islands to New Orleans when William was a small boy. He relocated to California in 1839 and like many others who came west during this time, he became a naturalized Mexican citizen. The Mexican government gave Leidesdorff a land grant of 35,000 acres nestled on a bay on the California coast which include the current city of San Francisco. Eventually he lost the title to the land. At 29 years of age, he became the first black diplomat of the Mexican territory of Yerba Buena, a name still borne by an Island in the San Francisco Bay. Leidesdorff became a financial adventurer and builder after the United States annexed the California territory from Mexico. In 1847, he launched the first steamboat on the San Francisco Bay. Later, he built the first and largest hotel in Yerba Buena, known as the City Hotel.

Leidesdorff was one of the town's most prominent citizens, served as the city's treasurer, established its first public school, and organized the first horse races in the state. He died in San Francisco at the age of 38 and left no will or heirs to his estate. Joseph Libby Folsom, an army captain living in the Bay Area located Leidesdorff's uneducated mother in the Virgin Islands and bought his entire estate which was valued at \$500,000, for \$8,000. The purchase was a windfall for Folsom and clearly unethical. After his death in 1847, Leidesdorff's body laid beneath the stone floor of downtown San Francisco. He became the first black man to have a street in downtown San Francisco named after him. The street runs through the heart of the financial district, and pays tribute to this black pioneer.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Date _____
 Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ E-mail _____

Type of Membership	
_____ Individual _____	\$50.00
_____ Student (K-12) _____	\$20.00
_____ Student (College) _____	\$30.00
_____ Senior (62 or Older) _____	\$35.00
_____ Sustaining _____	\$100.00
_____ Family _____	\$150.00
_____ Organizational _____	\$150.00
_____ Life _____	\$4000.00

Make checks payable to: SOAAHS

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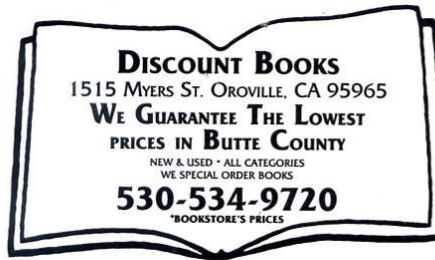
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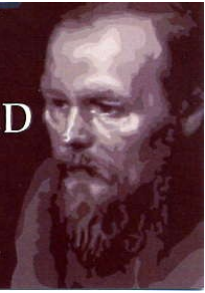
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