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Forward

Local historical societies are formed to delve into many aspects of local history. The Riverside Historical Society is such an organization. As John G. North stated at the very first annual meeting: “It (history) tells about much that happened and much that never did happen. The annals of this society may not be worthy to have been written by a Macauley, a Gibbon or a Bancroft, but it is worthy of us; it is, in fact, just our size.” (Riverside *Daily Press*, May 12, 1903). We are again presented with a journal that is “just our size” and fits our unique city of Riverside.

I truly believe that one of the most important and interesting aspects of local history is examining the people. The events surrounding their lives in many ways have shaped our city to what it is today. In this the nineteenth issue of our Journal every article in some way deals with people who lived here and had an impact on our city. Let us look at them in the chronological order that they lived.

Going back to the beginning of the settlement of Riverside and the area we meet Louis Robidoux, Riverside’s Pioneer, Settler & Community Builder. Those are the words on the tablet that the Daughters of the American Revolution recently replaced on the bridge tower at the base of Mount Rubidoux. Diane Stephens, the president of the society, gives us insight in the work they did in replacing the tablet that had disappeared.

Kim Johnson researched a pioneer in our local citrus industry, George W. Garcelon. We all realize how important the citrus industry was in the early history of our city and it is good to learn more about some of these pioneers. Kim has served us well in bringing to light more information on this early settler.

One of Riverside’s more famous citizens, at least at one time in Europe, was Marcella Craft, the great opera singer. Cindy Patton carefully and thoroughly researched this fine singer for her master’s thesis. We have in this journal a shortened version of Craft’s life. We will learn why Craft was so widely known and revered.

Ever since I began my research on Mount Rubidoux, I discovered Easter service photographs taken by E. N. Fairchild, and have been fascinated by this early Riverside photographer. In this Journal I am giving you a very brief glimpse through the lens of his camera of this prolific recorder of Riverside history.

Finally we have the story of a man who lived in our lifetime, was part of our historical society and touched the lives of many Riversiders: Judge John G. Gabbert. Jerry Gordon, who last year gave us a one-page tribute to Gabbert, has now recorded more of his life. Drawing on his own personal recollections, Jerry paints us a warm and insightful account of this great man from Riverside.

Glenn Wenzel, Editor

About the Authors

Jerry Gordon has been a resident of Riverside since moving here with his family in 1982 to assume the position of Director of Media Resources at the University of California, Riverside. His education, including bachelors from Ithaca College, a masters from Syracuse University, and a doctorate from the University of Buffalo, were completed while living in his home state of New York and are mostly in the field of education. However, local history has always been of interest to him as he is a docent with the Mission Inn Foundation and a member of the Riverside Historical Society. Interacting with Judge John G. Gabbert was a highlight of his local experiences, especially with the opportunity to learn about it from someone who lived through much of it.

Kim Jarrell Johnson has authored five books on local history including, most recently, *Wicked Jurupa Valley* (History Press 2012) and, with Loren Meissner, *A Brief History of Eastvale* (History Press, 2013). Kim writes a regular history column for the Riverside County *Record*, and her columns on Riverside County history appear twice a month in the Riverside *Press-Enterprise*. She is a graduate of the University of California, Riverside, and later received a master's degree in Public Administration at California State University, Fullerton. Kim, her husband, and two daughters, live in the city of Jurupa Valley.

Cindy Patton earned her Master's in Music History and Literature from California State University, Fullerton, in 2012. For her thesis, she researched the life and career of opera singer Marcella Craft. A long time resident of Riverside, and physical therapist by profession, Cindy enjoys both military and Riverside history, teaches flute lessons, and serves in the music ministry of her Riverside church.

Diane Stephens was born in San Diego, California, and has lived in Riverside for 27 years. Her love of history dates back to her school days, and it eventually led her to join the Aurantia Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She researched the chapter's history for its 100th anniversary in 2005, served as Regent of the chapter in 2006-2008, and on the committee to replace the Robidoux Marker. Diane has written several programs on Early American History, which she performs in period attire, including "Molly Morris Comments on the Constitution," and "Dolley Madison."

Glenn Wenzel has served as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church since 1988. As pastor of the church, he became acquainted with the descendants of E. N. Fairchild and is fascinated with the scope of Fairchild's photographs of Riverside. Interested in local history, he has authored the book *Anecdotes on Mount Rubidoux and Frank A. Miller*. He has also written several journal articles on Mount Rubidoux and the Salt Lake Route Railroad.

Marcella Craft

Riverside's International Opera Star

by Cindy Patton

Founded in 1870, Riverside, California has long identified itself as a musical community. In the earliest days of the city, as elsewhere in the United States, music education was regarded as an important part of an individual's upbringing. Riverside women's clubs established music programs and sponsored public concerts to stimulate the community's interest in music. Popular and nationally-known professional musicians performed in Riverside during their concert tours between major metropolitan areas. These touring musicians stayed in the historic Mission Inn, where musical performances were regularly produced. The popularity of community concerts prompted city officials to construct permanent sites for music, such as the Riverside Municipal Auditorium, Loring Theater/Opera House, and Fox Theater. Prominent Riverside citizens established local musical traditions, such as the annual Mount Rubidoux Easter Sunrise Service, during which local and professional musicians performed. Riverside audiences also supported opera from the city's earliest days. Visiting professional troupes and local musicians gave opera performances, often in English, and concert programs where singers and instrumentalists performed operatic excerpts were also popular.

Riverside also supported its own hometown opera star, Marcella Craft (1874-1959). She established a reputation as a fine singer before leaving Riverside to study music in Boston, and later when she sang opera in Europe professionally. When on hiatus from her European career, Craft returned often to the United States, performing in opera, recitals, and concerts throughout the country. After retiring from performance in the early 1930s, she returned to teaching, and also established community opera in Riverside. Her leadership, experience and the community support she received help create a nationally known program, the Riverside Opera Association, which played a major role in Riverside's musical life over a twenty-five year period.

This article will describe the life and career of Sarah Marcia Craft, more well-known by her professional name, Marcella Craft. Her importance to the musical life of Riverside will be emphasized, as she fulfilled her promise to those of her adopted hometown in gratitude for their support throughout her local and international career. Of special interest will be the retelling and proving the truths of a number of myths attributed to her. But most importantly, Craft will be introduced to many who are unacquainted with her career of a hundred years ago, with an attempt made to help the reader understand how opera played an important role in the musical life of Riverside's citizens in the days before television.

The Life and Career of Marcella Craft

The Early Years

Sarah Marcia Craft was born August 11, 1874 in Indianapolis, Indiana, the only child of Louise Margaret, née Caldwell (1848-1937), and Hiram J. Craft (1836-1920), a Civil War veteran.¹ Known then as Marcia, she showed musical talent at an early age. After she had established her career, her mother told the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in 1911 that “there were good voices in the family before Marcia, but none of us had our voices cultivated.”² In 1887, when Marcia was twelve, the Craft family moved to Riverside, California, which, like much of Southern California, was experiencing a great land boom and increasing economic prosperity. Her father, struck by land fever, purchased property in East Riverside, where he planted orange trees that were irrigated by the newly-built Gage Canal. Eventually he sold the ranch and bought a flour and feed store on



Marcia Craft, circa 1893.
(Riverside Metropolitan Museum)

Eighth Street in downtown Riverside.³ The store supported the family on a limited means, as the boom regressed into a depression also felt by the rest of the globe in the 1890s.

Marcia attended the local public schools from her last years of elementary school until her graduation from Riverside High School in 1893, one of eight graduates in the school's third graduating class.⁴ She began singing in public soon after arriving in Riverside. At age twelve she joined the choir at the new Calvary Presbyterian Church,⁵ where choir director W. John Gage (the younger brother of Mathew Gage, who expanded the irrigation canal system in Riverside) heard her sing. Gage's compliments motivated her to search for a local teacher. This was not an easy task, as the population of Riverside at that time numbered fewer than 5,000, and there were relatively few music teachers there then. However, Craft located a teacher in Riverside, Professor H. S. Sawvel, who said after her audition that she showed great promise as a singer. She studied five months with him at a rate of two dollars for two lessons a week.⁶ While still in high school, Craft found other opportunities to sing in public, including weekly performances at Calvary Presbyterian Church. She sang at her



*Marcia Craft as Buttercup in H. M. S. Pinafore. Riverside, California, 1894.
(Riverside Metropolitan Museum)*

high school graduation ceremony⁷ and for other local performances. In November 1894, she received good reviews for her "Buttercup" in Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *H. M. S. Pinafore* at the Loring Opera House.⁸

Two years after her high school graduation, Craft finalized her plans to leave Riverside for music study. But first she needed to raise funds. She found twelve Riverside businessmen who each loaned her \$100, for a total of \$1200, at 8% interest. This generous group of twelve men included Frank A. Miller of the

Mission Inn, and Riverside businessmen John Hewitt, L. C. Waite, W. A. Purrington, Gaylor Rouse, J. C. Hardman, William Collier, J. E. Cutter, William Irving, Judge J. S. Noyes, Fred Heath, and George N. Reynolds.⁹ Craft repaid this loan and interest within five years. (Traditionally, it was said Frank Miller forgave his loan, while other reports state Mr. Hardman returned his as a gift to Craft).¹⁰ Others in Riverside heard about this loan and her plans for her musical studies, and offered additional financial support in the form of a benefit concert in her honor, as announced in the *Riverside Press*:

Hearing that it is your plan to shortly leave home for Boston for the purpose of completing your musical education under conditions more favorable than this coast affords, and remembering the generous manner in which you have repeatedly contributed your services on many public occasions, and the fact that you are a Riverside girl whose talents are to us a source of local pride, it seems proper that we should testify our appreciation and interest by tendering you a farewell benefit.

Craft graciously accepted.¹¹ The September 27, 1895 concert at the Loring Opera House, which featured Craft and other local performers, received grand reviews, and raised \$200 for her travel and educational expenses.¹²

Musical Studies on the East Coast

Soon after her benefit concert, Craft left for Boston, where she received the formal voice training she needed, and established a favorable reputation as a professional singer. She studied for five years with Charles R. Adams (1834-1900), an American tenor who had enjoyed a considerable singing career in Europe.¹³ In addition to teaching, she also performed solo work in concerts and at churches in the Boston area and throughout New England, which provided her living expenses and supplemented her loan from the twelve Riverside businessmen. In late 1897 she auditioned successfully for the soprano soloist position at the Mother Church, First Church of Christ Scientist, in Boston, where founder Mary Baker Eddy officiated. Her salary, including a month's vacation during August, was



*Marcia Craft and her parents, Hiram and Louise Craft, circa 1895.
(Riverside Metropolitan Museum)*

\$1,000 dollars a year.¹⁴ In 1900, after singing at the Mother Church for two years, Craft wished to focus on opera. She needed to travel far from home a second time, for the best opportunities for an opera career required study in Europe, where many experienced teachers lived. Craft once again needed to raise funds for her future. She received a loan from Mrs. Annie Webb, a benefactor in the Boston area who encouraged young singers and supported them financially as they pursued their studies of the arts.¹⁵

Musical Study and Stage Performance in Italy

In November 1900, Craft sailed for Italy with her mother, while her father remained behind in the United States. They settled in Milan, where Marcia began her vocal studies with Alessandro Guagni Benvenuti

(1844-1927). Francesco Mottino (d. 1920) taught her stage technique, and required her to learn two hundred individual theatrical gestures.¹⁶ As she adapted to the Italian culture, Craft realized that her American-given name “Marcia” might need to be revised.¹⁷ She discovered that Marcella was actually “Marcia” in Italian; she therefore adopted Marcella as her professional name, and most people called her by that name from then on.¹⁸ Some programs from her early Italian performance career even listed her as “Marcella Cratti.”

Craft and her mother lived on a strict budget during their days in Italy, for the Italians meagerly compensated foreign opera singers. Foreign singers who appeared in starring roles on the Italian operatic stages were sometimes required to pay a token amount for the privilege. Craft paid 50 lira for the opportunity to make her Italian debut in the leading role of Leonora in Giuseppe Verdi’s *Il Trovatore* in May 1902, in the small provincial town of Morbegno, in northern Italy.¹⁹ In compensation, she received very positive reviews.²⁰ By her choice, she continued to sing in small provincial opera houses throughout Italy in order to gain performing experience of operas by composers such as Verdi, Charles Gounod, and Gaetano Donizetti.² After three years of study and performing in smaller opera houses for small salaries, she realized that, as a foreigner, she could not make a living singing in Italy. She decided to return to the United States. On the return trip she and her mother stopped in Munich.

Life and Opera in Germany

While in Munich, Craft sang for an agent who recommended she remain in Germany to pursue a singing career. However, she first needed to learn to speak and sing in German. She and her mother then moved to Berlin, where she studied German for a year and also relearned her operatic repertoire in German. Craft appeared as a guest singer in Elberfeld, where she made her debut as Margarete in Gounod’s *Faust*. A director from Mainz’ opera house offered her a position, but requested she be able to sing fifteen roles in German. After two months of hard work, she had learned the fifteen operas.²²

Maintaining a desire to return to the United States eventually, Craft accepted an initial one-year contract with the Mainz Stadttheater (City



La Traviata
Act IV
No. 6.

G. P. Ganzi
era NO.
V. U. 12

*Marcella Craft as Violetta in La Traviata, Italian publicity photo, circa 1904.
(Riverside Metropolitan Museum)*

Theater). Her monthly salary for the 1905-06 season paid 280 marks.²³ In September 1905, she made her Mainz debut as Elsa in Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin*. During her first year at Mainz she also performed as a guest singer in other cities. Reviews in European newspapers and journals gave Craft high praise for her singing, acting, and training, as well as for the number of curtain calls she received, and her promise as a new, young singer.²⁴ Craft accepted a second contract for the 1906-1907 season in Mainz and received a pay increase to 350 marks per month. She sang many of the roles from her first season in Mainz, and added new roles, including Aida in Verdi's *Aida*, and Mimi in Giacomo Puccini's *La bohème*. Craft signed a contract for the Kiel Stadttheater's 1907-08 season, and performed for the last time in Mainz in April, 1907.

Craft's first-year contract in Kiel for the 1907-08 season stipulated a monthly salary of 260 marks and a raise in the second year to 320 marks, an actual pay decrease from what she had received in Mainz.²⁵ However, Kiel, the home of a German naval base, was an important center of the performing arts. The Emperor Wilhelm's third son, Prince Adalbert, was stationed there in the Navy, and he and other members of the Royal family frequented the Kiel Stadttheater for its fine opera performances. Craft had many opportunities to meet with the Royal family, who bestowed on Craft the title Court Singer to the German Imperial household.²⁶ Moved by her singing, they invited her to sing privately for them. Prince Adalbert, devoted to opera and to Craft's singing, frequently invited her to his Royal Box to congratulate her after performances, and gave her gifts of jewelry and other fine articles, in appreciation of her stirring performances.²⁷

During her two years in Kiel, Craft received high praise, and was especially known for her interpretation of Cio-Cio San in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, a role she learned for the Kiel stage.²⁸ Craft's friends related instances where she interviewed travelers from Asia to learn of authentic Japanese customs; she also studied Japanese dancing to learn the proper movements and manners of a geisha.²⁹ She performed as guest singer at the Hoftheater (literally High Theater; meaning a more prestigious opera house than a Stadttheater) in Munich, where she made her debut as Mimi in *La bohème*, on January 28, 1909. Present in the audience was Felix Mottl, a director at the Munich Hoftheater. Impressed with her performance, he offered her a position beginning with the 1909-1910 season.



*Marcella Craft as Cio-Cio San in
Madama Butterfly, circa 1914.
(Riverside Metropolitan Museum)*

meet with Puccini to receive further coaching for her role as Cio-Cio San in *Madama Butterfly*.³⁰

Craft signed a contract for a five-year commitment in Munich, with a significant increase in pay. Her contract, October 1, 1909 to September 30, 1914, stipulated an increasing annual salary of 7,000, 7,500, 8,000, 9,000, and 10,000 marks.³¹ She became a crowd favorite, and was highly supported in her many roles, including Violetta in Verdi's *La Traviata* and Cio-Cio San in *Madama Butterfly*. She was chosen to sing the role of Mimi in *La bohème*, opposite the famous tenor Enrico Caruso, guest artist for the Munich Hoftheater, who sang as Rudolfo. Craft and Caruso

Before starting work in Munich that fall, Craft and her mother sailed back to the United States, and returned to Riverside, where she performed several concerts. During this time, she and her parents decided that her mother would remain behind in the States, as Craft had become well acquainted with life in Europe. In addition, her parents had been separated for all the time while she developed her career in Europe, and wanted to stay together. At this point her parents moved to Chicago, where they established their new residence. On the return trip to Germany, Craft returned to the East Coast to perform and to rekindle past friendships. She also stopped in Italy to

sang their roles in Italian (the original language written for the opera by Verdi), while the remaining cast members sang in German.³² It would be one of her most cherished memories on the Munich stage.

. . . . It was a touching moment when Caruso, on being called before the curtain, tore from a gigantic bouquet of violets that had been presented him, a handful of the dainty flowers, and pressed them into the hand of his partner Mimi!³³

Craft framed these flowers, and inscribed an attached note in her own handwriting: “Violets given me by Caruso when I sang Mimi in *Bohème* to his Rodolfo—Oct. 11, 1910.” (She kept the memento the rest of her life.)³⁴

Craft received great acclaim for her performance of the title role in Richard Strauss’s opera *Salome*, and worked with the composer in preparing the role to fit her individual talents and interpretations. She assisted in the designing of her costumes. She also insisted on performing the “Dance of the Seven Veils” herself, since she was small-framed and did not require a substitute dancer like many singers with larger frames, and thus could both sing and perform the dance.³⁵



*Marcella Craft as Salome, circa 1914.
(Riverside Metropolitan Museum)*

Craft performed this controversial and demanding role only in Europe, but did include arias from the opera in later concert tours in the United States. Alice Bryant, Craft's secretary and friend, wrote about a performance at the Augsburg Stadttheater in January 1914 in a letter to the *Riverside Daily Press*.

[Her performance] was brilliantly successful, holding a crowded house spellbound at the wonder of it. So completely did the spirit of the play possess her that she seemed another being, a stranger, and not the Marcia Craft that I knew. In truth, for those two hours, she was Salome.³⁶

Even after her transfer to the Munich Hoftheater, Prince Adalbert and other members of the Kaiser's family still heard Craft perform. She regularly sang as a guest in the Kiel and Berlin opera houses, with the Prince and his family in attendance. Through Prince Adalbert's influence, Kaiserin Augusta Viktoria invited Craft to sing a command performance at the royal palace in Berlin in March, 1914. Arriving at the palace, she discovered that the concert was to be an intimate one, performed in front of the Kaiserin and her family, Prince Adalbert, Prince August Wilhelm, Prince Oscar, and a few close friends. The honor to the American singer was made even more significant when Craft received a beautiful brooch from the Kaiserin, in the shape of a lyre embossed with the Imperial monogram.³⁷

Craft made plans to leave Munich near the end of her 1913-14 season contract to study in Paris, and then return to America for an extended concert tour. In a final tribute to Craft, the audience filled the Munich Hoftheater on June 26, 1914 for her farewell performance. The enthusiastic crowd wished her well and begged her to return. Craft then left for Paris and her upcoming American concert tour, intending to return to Germany the following spring.³⁸

Return to America

However, the outbreak of war in July 1914 radically changed Craft's plans. Americans living in Europe were encouraged to leave for home.

She sailed out of France in July, and, after arriving in New York, made arrangements for a concert tour with her American concert manager M. H. Hanson, who secured her release from the Munich Opera.³⁹ There was much speculation why Craft did not sign with a major American opera company upon her return to the United States in 1914. Some reports stated she avoided the opportunity to sign a contract on her trips home from Germany.⁴⁰ Others wondered about the possibility that she had remained in Germany too long and was identified as a German school-performer, and therefore was not approached by agents willing to sign her for American opera houses. Nevertheless Craft performed in concerts throughout the United States, thus enabling more people to hear her sing.⁴¹ I believe, however, that Craft may have intended to stay in Germany for the duration of her operatic career, a plan that was dashed when the war forced her to move back to America. (But after the war and when conditions had stabilized, she resumed her operatic career in Germany.)

Hanson arranged a busy concert tour for Craft, beginning in the fall of 1914. She first sang several concerts in Maine and in California, including Riverside. The *Riverside Daily Press* described her arrival in her hometown on November 14, which was celebrated by local populace.

With music sounding and friends cheering, Miss Marcia Craft returned today from her triumphal concerts in the southland, and her home folks welcomed her with that display of approving enthusiasm which could leave no doubt



*Marcella Craft, New York, 1914.
(Riverside Metropolitan Museum)*

in her mind or heart that Riverside loves her daughter, despite her years of work disappointments and self-sacrifice, has at least reached a position of undisputable power in the world of music . . . in the welcome afforded Riverside's daughter this afternoon the spontaneous and unbounded expression of pride was shown.

As the train from San Diego drew in, the Sherman Institute Band struck up a merry air, and Miss Craft stepped from the train to find many of her friends awaiting her, among them the men who in the early days formed the body of friends who aided her in the fight for success. School children, wearing white and carrying flowers, preceded the gaily decked automobile in which Miss Craft rode, and heading the party came Frank Miller, who carried a large banner on which was the inscription: "We welcome home our Marcia Craft." The parade was a long one, many machines filled with friends following the leading car.⁴²

After winter and early spring concerts in 1915 across the country, she returned to Riverside for her first appearance at the Mount Rubidoux Easter Sunrise Service on April 4. She performed *Anthem for the Easter Dawn*, written by the American composer Carrie Jacobs Bond for Craft and the chorus of the Methodist Church. The service that day was attended by 15,000 worshippers.⁴³

Craft continued to perform concerts and other obligations as dictated by her concert tour contract. In June of 1915 she sang the lead in *Fairyland*, a highly-publicized but otherwise unsuccessful American opera by Horatio Parker, the winner of a composition contest held in conjunction with the Los Angeles convention of the National Federation of Music Clubs.⁴⁴ She sang with major symphony orchestras, including those in New York and Chicago. In March 1917, Craft had the honor of singing for President Wilson at the White House.⁴⁵ During a break between concerts, she moved her parents from Chicago to Riverside in 1917 to a house on Prospect Street, later renamed and renumbered as 4539 Main Street.

Craft usually made sure her concert schedule allowed her to return to Riverside for the annual Mount Rubidoux Easter Sunrise Service. With

the exception of 1918, she performed annually from 1915 through 1922. A writer for the *Riverside Daily Press* described Craft's singing at the 1919 service.

A hush, more solemn than it had been before, if that could be, fell again and now it was broken by the sweet and clear voice of Riverside's songbird, Marcella Craft, singing to the distant hills and the valleys between, and the people she loves: *Hear Ye Israel*. The wondrous notes were thrown afar, and thrilled the multitude. It seemed that in the stillness of the morning they might have been heard upon the far mountain tops. The listeners remained as still as the rocks around them while she sang.⁴⁶

Concert and teaching obligations in Europe prevented Craft from performing at the service in 1923, but she canceled several concerts to sing for the 1924 service. However, due to an epidemic of hoof-and-mouth disease, Riverside canceled the service that year. Instead, a concert was held May 2 at the Mission Inn, where Craft sang a program for a large audience. In 1933, she performed for one final Mount Rubidoux Easter Sunrise Service, after she had returned to Riverside from Germany. She sang for a total of eight services on Mount Rubidoux.⁴⁷

Although Craft was not contracted with a large opera house, she continued to sing opera throughout the United States, singing as a guest performer with the San Carlo Opera Company for three seasons, from 1917 to 1920. This opera company performed in the opera houses and theaters of large and small cities, and was especially popular after the end of World War I, when people eagerly returned to the theaters for their entertainment.⁴⁸ Craft sang several of her most popular roles from her days in the Italian and German opera houses.⁴⁹ In February 1920, when she performed *Madama Butterfly* with the San Carlo Opera Company in Los Angeles, a group of seventy-five traveled from Riverside to see her perform.⁵⁰

Even though almost all the major opera singers of Craft's day in Europe and the United States made recordings, for now unknown



*Marcella Craft at the foot of the Cross on Mount Rubidoux,
1915 Easter Sunrise Service. (Riverside Metropolitan Museum)*

reasons, Craft apparently made only one (unreleased) recording. Some contemporary writers speculated that Craft did not like to hear her recorded voice. Craft made the one known recording of her voice for the Edison Company on June 5, 1918, in New York City, of the aria “Addio del passato” from *La Traviata*.⁵¹ A contemporary copy of Craft’s single recording can be found in the Marcella Craft Collection of the Riverside Metropolitan Museum.

After WWI ended, Craft waited for Europe to stabilize again, as she desired to return there to perform and teach. Prior to her return to Germany, Craft’s father, Hiram, died in December, 1920, and was buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Riverside. Finally, on August 8, 1922 she sailed to Europe. Craft scheduled concert tours throughout Germany and France, and set up her home and teaching studio in Munich. As guest singer, she returned to many of the same opera houses where she had performed before the war, singing her favorite roles for appreciative audiences; she also gave recital concerts. She returned home to Riverside periodically, and continued to perform locally. Her mother’s declining health required Craft to make special arrangements for her care, and Marcella was able to return to Germany again in 1931. However, within a year’s time, Adolph Hitler came to power, and conditions in Germany necessitated her return to America.⁵²

“Retirement” in Riverside

Craft returned to Riverside and made her permanent home there. She established teaching studios in her home in Riverside and in nearby Pasadena, mentoring students in the dramatic arts and in voice, in the traditions of her European training. But teaching did not completely fulfill her; she wanted to give something back to her hometown in return for the support, both financial and emotional, that its citizens had given her throughout her musical training and international singing career.⁵³ She believed that a community opera program offered young singers the performance experience they needed.⁵⁴ She promoted the establishment of community opera in Riverside, where a cultural life was already established. Most importantly, she believed that opera must be sung in English, to allow a greater understanding and appreciation by



Marcella Craft, Munich, circa 1928. (Riverside Metropolitan Museum)

audiences.⁵⁵ Craft devoted the next twenty-five years to establishing, developing, and directing the Riverside Opera Association, Riverside's community opera program. (The details of Craft's establishment and leadership of the Riverside Opera Association will be discussed in a future journal article.)

She also re-established her relationship with the Miller family, the owners of the Mission Inn, especially Frank Miller, his daughter and son-in-

law, Allis and DeWitt Hutchings, and granddaughter Isabella Hutchings, who all supported the Riverside Opera Association for much of its history. When Frank Miller died in June 1935, Craft sang for his funeral service in the St. Francis Chapel at the Mission Inn.⁵⁶ Craft's mother died in February 1937 and was buried next to her father in Evergreen Cemetery.

Craft had a personal goal for the benefit of Riverside of the use of thirty acres of land at the base of Mount Rubidoux that Miller had designated for an educational project. She believed that Allis and DeWitt Hutchings had earmarked the land for her, if she was able to raise the necessary funds. Craft desired to establish an endowment fund to construct a theater on the land, to hold a major music festival at the center, and to bring professional singers to Riverside. Her long-term plans included the use of the building as a University of Opera.⁵⁷ However, she was unable to raise the necessary funding. In 1955, the Miller family deeded Mount Rubidoux and the thirty acres of land at the base of the mountain to the city of Riverside.⁵⁸ Craft's dream of establishing a school for the performing arts thus failed to materialize.

After the ROA ceased regular production in 1948, Craft left for a fourteen-month stay in Europe, traveling to Italy, Germany, and Paris. She visited friends and former students, and attended musical performances across Europe. After arriving home in Riverside in November 1950, she resumed teaching. She also returned as general director for several ROA performances before it resumed regular performances in November 1954, with the production of Giochimo Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. Former ROA singers, who had gone on to successful musical careers of their own, returned to perform in the cast. The success and support of this production led to additional opera seasons, under the sponsorship of the Riverside Junior Chamber of Commerce. Ultimately, Craft announced that the 1956-57 season would be her final one as director, and she chose her favorite operas for the Riverside Opera Association's final productions. Riverside honored Craft for the 25 years she had directed the company, at the April 12-13, 1957 final performances, after which she officially retired.

After her retirement, Craft planned to return to Germany to reunite with friends and former students, and to live there the remainder of her life. However, she fractured her clavicle in a fall, and was no longer able

to travel. Her health continued to decline after a series of strokes and she was placed in a Riverside nursing facility, where she lived the last ten months of her life. She died on December 12, 1959. Her funeral was held on December 15, and she was buried the same day in Evergreen Cemetery next to her parents.⁵⁹

The Riverside Symphony Society paid tribute to Craft during the final concert of its season at the Riverside Memorial Auditorium on March 22, 1960 with a performance of Verdi's *Requiem*, a fitting choice, as she had sung and directed many operas by Verdi throughout her career. Soloists included Frank Tavaglione, Jacqueline Bear Ivanoff, and Winifred Saunderson. All three were Craft's former students and had appeared in Riverside Opera Association productions under her direction.⁶⁰

Conclusion

The success Marcella Craft achieved during her international opera career was balanced by her success in other musical fields, including concert work, teaching, and opera direction. Her musical repertoire was large and included art song, oratorio, solo work with orchestra, and operatic excerpts and complete operas. Part of the motivation for her establishment of the Riverside Opera Association in 1932 was to repay this debt of honor to her hometown for their support during her training and career, from her early days of performing in Riverside, to prominence as a concert singer in New England as a young woman, to her European operatic training and subsequent career as a mature artist in important houses in Germany with an interruption during World War I, to her concert and opera work in the United States in the 1920s, and with her final return to Riverside in 1932. Although timed at the height of the Great Depression, Craft would establish a successful, and nationally acclaimed, community opera program in Riverside, using her experiences as an opera performer and teacher, and support of Riverside and its surrounding communities.



Endnotes

1. The names of Craft's parents, as reported here, match the records at Evergreen Cemetery in Riverside, where she and her parents are buried. As with performers throughout the ages—especially women—Craft lied about her age. When she left Boston in 1900 to study opera in Europe, her passport listed her birth year as 1874. However, when renewing her passport in 1909, she declared her birth year as 1880, thereby subtracting six years from her actual age. She continued this deception for many years, as her 1926 and 1930 passports also list her birth year as 1880.
2. “‘My Ideal Salome Is Modest—and an American,’ Declares Richard Strauss,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 9, 1911, G1. The majority of the articles and reviews relating to Craft's life and career cited in these notes are found in newspaper clippings, often incompletely sourced, in the collections of Craft's personal papers at the Riverside Metropolitan Museum and University of California, Riverside. I cite all the publication information that appears in these clippings.
3. Marcella Craft, “Remembrances of Riverside: Famed Singer Tells What Made City Friendly, Homey Town in Early Days,” *Riverside Press*, November 18, 1953.
4. Carlyle Gill Patton, ed., *The Sibyl, Alumni Edition, Riverside High School* (Riverside, CA: Riverside High school, 1911), 48.
5. Source: Calvary Presbyterian Church materials located in Marcella Craft Collection, Riverside Metropolitan Museum.
6. Source: Undated letter written on Riverside Opera Association letterhead to an unidentified “lifelong” friend, Floy. Cecile Holtane, “Opera Singer Again at Helm of Opera Association” *Riverside Press*, September 1, 1947. This article reports that Craft also studied with O. Stewart Taylor, one of her two early teachers.
7. Clipping from unidentified Riverside newspaper, 1893.
8. *Riverside Daily Press*, November 15, 1894.
9. “Welcome Home Is Given to Marcia Craft, Prima Donna,” *Riverside Enterprise*, November 14, 1914.
10. Holtane, “Opera Singer Again at Helm of Opera Association.” This article reported Hardman as Craft's backer who returned his payment as a gift. The article “Riverside Looking Forward to Great Season in Music,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 12, 1939, C5, reported that it was Frank Miller who had returned his payment in the form of a gift.

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11. "Benefit Concert," *Riverside Press*, September 17, 1895.
12. "The Craft Concert: A Most Pronounced Musical and Artistic Success," (*Riverside*) *Press and Horticulturist*, October 5, 1895, 1.
13. Peter G. Davis, *The American Opera Singer: The Lives and Adventures of America's Great Singers in Opera and Concert, from 1825 to the Present* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 104-05.
14. Craft's contract is located in Marcella Craft Collection, Riverside Metropolitan Museum.
15. Letters from Mrs. Webb to Craft, dated 1913-25; receipts for interest payments to Mrs. Webb; announcements, dated October 1918 through January 1924, of loan monies totaling \$9,500 that Mrs. Webb gave to Craft. All sources located in Marcella Craft Collection, Riverside Metropolitan Museum.
16. Italian opera singer Francesco Mottino had a successful international career from the 1850s through the 1870s. After his retirement, he returned to Italy and worked as a voice teacher, drama teacher, librettist, and writer.
17. "Marcia" translated as "march," as in "marchtime,"
18. Marcella Craft, "Readers Open Forum: Remembrances of the Past," *Riverside Press and Enterprise*, article from 1953.
19. Receipt documenting payment for her Italian debut as Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, in Morbegno, Italy, located in Marcella Craft Collection, Riverside Metropolitan Museum.
20. *Boston Herald*, quoted in "Music and Musicians," unidentified newspaper, dated August 9, 1903, 2.
21. "Marcella Craft Is Chicago Prima Donna," *Chicago Daily News*, April 11, 1914.
22. "Marcella Craft Is Chicago Prima Donna."
23. European and Mainz contracts located in Marcella Craft Collection, Riverside Metropolitan Museum.
24. Clippings of reviews of Craft's performances from German newspapers are located in Marcella Craft Collection, Riverside Metropolitan Museum. English translations of these reviews are located in Marcella Craft Collection, University of California Library Special Collections.
25. Kiel contracts located in Marcella Craft Collection, Riverside Metropolitan Museum.
26. Charles D. Perlee, "World Famed Opera Star Marcella Craft Is Dead," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 13, 1959, B1.
27. "Marcella Craft Is Chicago Prima Donna."

28. Ibid.
29. *Christian Science Monitor*, September 1, 1909.
30. Ibid.
31. Munich contracts located in Marcella Craft Collection, Riverside Metropolitan Museum.
32. *Hamilton* (Ontario, Canada) *Spectator*, December 1, 1914.
33. English translation of review in *Munchener Post*, October 1910, located in Marcella Craft Collection, UCR Library Special Collections.
34. Frame with pressed violets and inscription located in Marcella Craft Collection, Riverside Metropolitan Museum.
35. "Salome," *San Antonio* (Texas) *Light*, January 28, 1916.
36. Alice Bryant, "Marcia Craft's Triumph Told," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 1914.
37. "Marcella Craft Is Chicago Prima Donna."
38. Lisle D. Belle, "Local Music Notes," *Columbus* (Ohio) *Journal*, February 1915.
39. Craft's U.S. contracts are located in Marcella Craft Collection, Riverside Metropolitan Museum.
40. "Marcella Craft is Chicago Prima Donna."
41. "Marcella Craft Preparing for Important Season," *Musical Leader* undated article (circa 1918), 126.
42. "Royal Welcome to Marcia Craft, Riverside's Famed Prima Donna," *Riverside Daily Press*, November 14, 1914.
43. Alice L. Bryant, "Marcella Craft Sings on Mt. Rubidoux," *Musical Monitor* 4, no. 9 (May 1915): 328.
44. Catherine Parsons Smith, *Making Music in Los Angeles: Transforming the Popular* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 124-125.
45. "Marcia Craft's Invitation to Sing at White House Is Signal Honor," *Riverside Enterprise*, September 28, 1916.
46. Winfield Hogaboom, "With Reverence, Pilgrims Watch Easter Dawn on Mt. Rubidoux," *Riverside Daily Press*, April 21, 1919, II 1.
47. Glenn Wenzel, *Anecdotes on Mount Rubidoux and Frank Miller, Her Promoter*, 197-216.
48. Cardell Bishop, *The San Carlo Opera Company: Grand Opera for Profit, 1913-1955*. Volume One to 1936. 2nd ed. (Santa Monica, CA: Cardell Bishop, 1980), 1.
49. *Riverside Daily Press*, March 29, 1943. This article reports that Herbert F. Peyser, music critic for *Musical America*, had written about Craft in a recent

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issue of that journal. He had attended Craft's performance in *La Traviata* in New York in September 1918 with the San Carlo Opera Company, and rated her Violetta as one of the "six supreme operatic characterizations" he had recalled in his forty years of reviewing opera.

50. *Riverside Daily Press*, February 26, 1920.
 51. Ward Marston, liner notes for the recording *The Edison Legacy Vol. 1: Hidden Treasures of the Edison Archive*, Marston CD 52042-2, released 2007.
 52. Letter from Craft to A. G. Paul, dated December 8, 1937.
 53. "Marcella Craft," *Pacific Coast Musician* 29, no. 4 (February 17, 1940): 5.
 54. Typed letter from Craft to Mrs. Mabee dated September 8, 1935.
 55. "Marcella Craft," 5.
 56. Esther Klotz, *The Mission Inn: Its History and Artifacts* (Riverside, CA: Rubidoux Printing, 1981), 91.
 57. Letters from Craft to Lawrence Tibbett, American baritone who had a long career at the Metropolitan Opera House, dated January 8, 1940 and September 6, 1940.
 58. Klotz, *The Mission Inn*, 123.
 59. Beth Teters, "World Famous Opera Star Marcella Craft Dies," *Riverside Press*, December 13, 1959.
 60. Beth Teters, "Riverside Symphony to Honor Culture Pioneer," *Riverside Press Enterprise*, March 13, 1960, C10.
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Postcards from Our Area



Market Street north toward 7th, early 1960s. (Photo courtesy of Steve Lech)

The Story of the Robidoux Marker

by Diane M. Stephens

On November 15, 1924, Anne Turner Barrett, Regent of Rubidoux Chapter DAR and wife of school board member James T. Barrett, called Alfred M. North. North was a High School and Riverside Junior College history teacher, and the husband of Rubidoux Chapter member Manta Love North. Barrett asked him to write a statement on the Robidoux Rancho. North's paper would be entered in a state contest for the chance to mark the spot where the Robidoux Rancho stood. Alfred's wife Manta North helped finish the paper. Mr. North's paper on the Rancho was read at the October 9, 1925, Rubidoux Chapter meeting,¹ and the Daily Press reported the paper would be "sent to the state organization to support the claim...for a memorial stone at the old landmark."²

Mrs. William H. Ellis announced at the January 8, 1926, meeting of Rubidoux Chapter that they would place a marker at the site of the Rancho on March 8. The regent asked Mrs. Ellis to invite Aurantia Chapter to join Rubidoux Chapter as hostesses earlier that day at the board meeting.³ After complications in securing the property to place the marker on the home site, the committee that planned the marker's unveiling received approval from the State Highway Commission to place the marker on one of the Rubidoux Bridge Towers, which had been built in 1923.⁴

The marker was created by well-known Stickley artist Harry St. John Dixon and his wife Margery, who happened to be the daughter of Aurantia Charter Member Kate Dudley Wheelock and her husband Arthur N. Wheelock, for whom Wheelock Field at RCC is named.⁵ The Dedication Ceremony on March 8, 1926, was held at the St. Francis Shrine on Mt Rubidoux. The marker was unveiled by Francis Estudillo, the eleven-year-old great grandson of Louis Robidoux. He was also the son of Aurantia member Minerva Cook Estudillo and State Senator Miguel Estudillo. American Legion Post 79 played a prominent role in the dedication, possibly because the Commander was the Nephew of

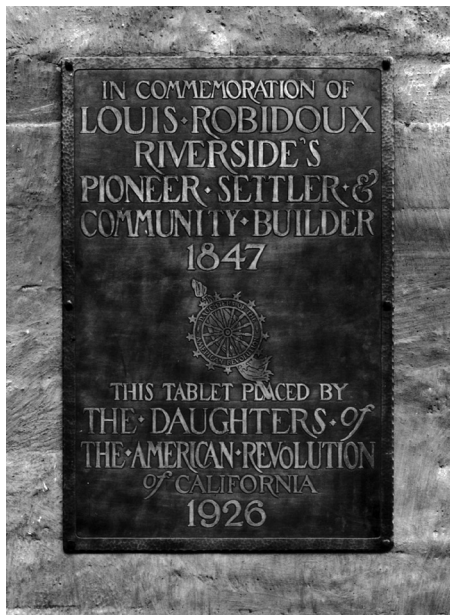


1926 Robidoux Marker Dedication. (Riverside Metropolitan Museum)

Aurantia Chapter Historian Mary Southworth Evans and her husband, former Mayor, Samuel Cary Evans.⁶

In 1958 a new bridge was built, and while the towers on the east end of the bridge remained, the rest of the picturesque bridge was demolished. The minutes of the August 13, 1958, Aurantia Board meeting noted the marker was “found in the debris of the wreckers.” The marker was cleaned and stored until 1962, when it was moved to West Riverside Memorial Hall, now Veterans Memorial Hall in Jurupa Valley. It was placed on a five ton granite boulder donated by Stringfellow Quarries and dedicated on Sunday, April 15th. It was unveiled again by Francis Estudillo.⁷ Aurantia Chapter learned the marker was missing, while researching the chapter’s history prior to the chapter’s centennial celebration in 2005. According to Jesse Sepulveda, senior maintenance worker, for the Jurupa Area Recreation and Parks District, he first noticed the marker was missing one Monday morning around 1996.

Approval was required from the National Society DAR to replace the marker. Clarification and documentation of the 1847 date was required before permission from NSDAR could be granted. A Riverside Daily Enterprise article dated March 7, 1926, titled “Rubidoux Rancho Tale wins D.A.R. Marker,” included the paper written by A.M. North as the contest entry, which stated “It seems most appropriate that the Rubidoux chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution be delegated to mark the spot where in



1847 the rancho home of Louis Robidoux was built.” In light of the fact that the original plan was to mark the Rancho site, the statement clarified why the year was placed on the marker, but documentation was needed to prove the claim.

1926 Robidoux Marker.

(Allmon Collection, Riverside Public Library)

North’s paper relied heavily on statements found in “Roubidoux’s Ranch in the 70’s,”⁸ and “History of Riverside County.”⁹ Both stated that Louis Robidoux purchased the property that would become known as the Roubidoux Rancho in 1847; however a deposition of Abel Stearns from Case 463 stated that the home was built by Benjamin Davis Wilson, and that Louis Robidoux occupied the house about 1847. The deposition of Benjamin D. Wilson from the same case stated that he lived in the house until 1847.¹⁰ Since the reason for the 1847 date was not substantiated by the depositions, and the Louis Robidoux marker text commemorated “Riverside’s Pioneer Settler and Community Builder” and not the Rancho site; the year 1847 was replaced with Robidoux’s year of birth and death, using Oscar W. Collet’s Index to St. Louis Ca-

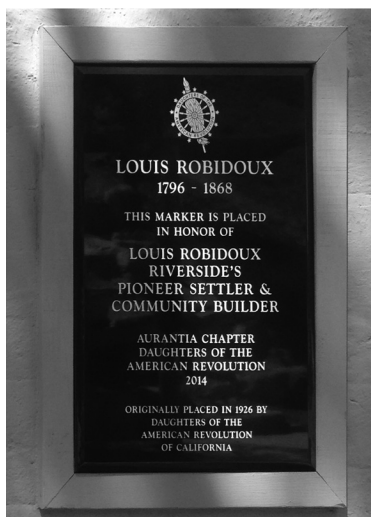
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thedral, 1765-1839 and Carondelet Church Baptisms 1823-1839, and an obituary as proof.¹¹

There was another item that needed clarification. The question of the location of the original marker arose while researching. The left tower on what was the east end of the bridge had holes where a marker had been mounted. There were no such holes on the right tower, though pictures of the bridge in the twenties showed a marker on the right tower. The July/August 2001 issue of *Westways* magazine showed a marker on the right tower on the west end of the bridge. All the markers appeared to be the same size as the Robidoux marker. Glenn Wenzel shared a *Frashers Foto* of the west end of the bridge with markers on both towers. An article entitled “Roubidoux Bridge is now Complete,” in the *Riverside Daily Press* on July 5, 1923, the day after the bridge was dedicated, explained that name plates were installed that morning on the right towers of the bridge. The plates included the dimensions of the bridge, which explains why those plates were removed after the bridge was widened in 1932, making the marker on left tower at the east end of the bridge the Robidoux Marker.



Frashers Foto showing two markers. (Collection of Steve Lech)



*2014 Robidoux Marker.
(David Husted)*

Design changes were required to meet current DAR standards and protect the marker from being stolen. The dedication ceremony took place on September 14, 2014, near St. Francis Shrine, at the foot of the mountain named for Louis Robidoux, and incorporated elements from earlier dedications. Descendants of Louis Robidoux, Marc Vargas, and ten-year-old Paris Waggoner, unveiled the marker. The DAR State Regent, Carol Jackson, and a representative from American Legion Post 79, Marcos Enriquez, participated in the program. The dedication was scheduled at 4 o'clock, just as it was in 1926, and on a Sunday, as it was for

the 1962 re-dedication. Riverside again has a marker commemorating its Pioneer Settler and Community Builder.

1. North, Alfred M.. Alfred M. North Diaries, 1918-1934, UCR Special Collection 085, dated November 15, 22, and 25 1924.
2. "First Meeting of Rubidoux Chapter" *Riverside Daily Press*, October 10, 1925, p 4.
3. Rubidoux Chapter Minutes, dated January 8, 1926.
4. Aurantia Chapter Minutes, dated February 5, 1926, p 112.
5. "DAR to Mark Historic Spot," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 11, 1926 p 13.
6. 1926 Unveiling Ceremony Program for Robidoux Marker.
7. "After 36 Years," *The Press*, April 16, 1962, Section B p1.
8. Hornbeck, Robert, *Roubidoux's Ranch in the 70's*, 1913, p 81.
9. Holmes, Elmer Wallace, *History of Riverside County*, 1912, p 29.
10. Translation of depositions from Case 463, Board of United States Land Commissioners filed in Los Angeles, 1855.
11. "Death of Don Louis Robidoux," *The Guardian*, Saturday October 10, 1868.

George W. Garcelon

The Overlooked Pioneer

By Kim Jarrell Johnson

Through the years, local history books have delved into the beginnings of Riverside and anyone who has read those histories is familiar with the names that appear in those stories - John North, Frank Miller, Eliza Tibbets, Mathew Gage, Albert White, and Samuel Evans, to name a few. But there was one early pioneer, George William Garcelon, who played a significant part in Riverside's early history but whose role has never previously been explored in any detail. It is certainly past time to correct the record concerning Mr. Garcelon.

George W. Garcelon was born in New Brunswick, Canada, in March, 1832. When he was in his early twenties he moved to Lewiston, Maine, where he became a druggist, a business he carried on for the next 24 years. He and his wife Mary married on Christmas Eve, 1857. It appears that George and Mary were not able to have any children. In 1869 they adopted a baby girl they named Gertrude.

Garcelon raised hot house plants as a hobby and this led him to consider a move to a more temperate climate. In 1872, Garcelon, his wife Mary, and their daughter Gertrude, then four years old, came to Riverside, just two years after the town was founded. Garcelon purchased a block of land bounded by 6th, 7th, Mulberry and Vine Streets and 20 acres at Brockton and Bandini Avenues. The family built a home on the 7thth Street property. The house stood in the middle of the 2 ½ acre block and it was the first house in Riverside to have plaster walls. It was considered the grandest house in the town at the time.

The Garcelon family was known for its hospitality. Early Riverside did not have any official hotels or boarding houses and so newcomers had to board with one of the families in town. According to an article in the Riverside Daily Press on June 15, 1932, the S.C. Evans family stayed with the Garcelons for several months when they moved to Riverside in 1876. According to a June 9, 1907 article in the Riverside Enterprise,

Albert White said when he came to Riverside for the first time in 1874, Judge John North introduced White to Garcelon. They were both from Maine and had much in common. White said he was taken into the Garcelon home and passed “two delightful winters in their family. The adobe house, afterwards known as the Glenwood hotel, was just completed but was not open as a hotel. “

Garcelon busied himself with the cultivation of many different types of bearing trees, vines and plants. At the 1879 Riverside citrus fair, he had the following fruits and nuts on display, according to the Riverside Daily Press: oranges from three different trees (type not mentioned), Tahiti limes, St. Michael oranges (budded on orange stock), Sicily lemons, Knobby lemons (budded on sweet orange stock), Pumelo, Bergamot, Blood oranges, St. Michael oranges (budded on lemon stock), Mexican limes, raisins, dried figs, almonds, dried peaches, nectarines, Konah oranges, and pears. The extent and variety of his display was exceeded by only one other entrant at the fair.

While Garcelon experimented with the growing of many different species, lemons became his area of expertise. He became a well-known expert on lemon cultivation. He grew different types, including the Sicily lemon mentioned above as well as the Lisbon lemon. It is likely that he grew other types of lemons, but no information could be found on the full extent of exactly what he grew.

Lemons were most in demand in the summer time when lemonade was popular, but the biggest harvest of lemons usually occurs in the fall. The lemon industry languished until Garcelon found that the fruit, picked at the proper time and handled correctly, could be kept in perfect condition until it could be marketed in the summer. In his experimentation with lemons, Garcelon discovered that lemons were more successful when budded to orange rootstock and that lemon trees needed year round care because they are continuous bearers.

The very first citrus fair* in Riverside was held in Garcelon's home on March 1, 1877. Some sources, including Tom Patterson in his history of Riverside, “A Colony for California,” say that the first citrus fair was held in 1878, also in Garcelon's home. However, the availability of online newspapers from the 1800s in a searchable format has brought forth new

information which indicates that the first fair was actually held a year earlier. The March 5, 1890 edition of the Riverside Daily Press, quoted the Los Angeles Times, saying "twelve years ago, on the first of March, 1877, the first citrus fair ever seen in California was held in Garcelon's home." According to W.N. Mann, in a letter he wrote to the Riverside Press & Horticulturalist (March 18, 1882) eight or so men gathered in the dining room of the Garcelon home. Oranges were brought from other areas, including San Gabriel and San Bernardino, and compared against the Riverside oranges in a blind judging. (These were not Navels but were other varieties. Navels were first introduced at Riverside's citrus fair the following year in 1878.) Surprisingly to these men, they judged the Riverside oranges best of all. They realized that oranges could be successfully grown in the Riverside area, thus setting the stage for the boom in Navel orange planting and production that would soon occur.

The Garcelons were members of the First Congregational Church and Mrs. Garcelon was active in the church. George Garcelon was active in many community activities. According to the "Diary of Two Decades" by Sarah Battles, which is in the local history collection of the Riverside Public Library, it was noted that in December 1875 he contributed articles to Los Angeles Herald. Garcelon was a founding member and first president of the Riverside Fruit Growers Association, which was organized in 1879. He remained a member and occasional president of that Association for the rest of his life. In October 1893 he was elected president of the Riverside Heights Orange Growers Association.

In November 1888 Garcelon was elected to the third district seat of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, Riverside's only representative on that board. He resigned on December 8th, 1891, along with Supervisor Glass of Redlands, because he was unhappy with the actions of three of his colleagues on the board. According to the Riverside Daily Press (December 9, 1891) three of the board members had long ignored Garcelon and Glass and "arranged their plans in private. "The final straw was that it was felt that they did not follow their own ordinances in arranging bids for a new county jail. There was further concern that this was being done to save money, which could then be put towards a new county courthouse. Voters in the Riverside area had been against

the courthouse because of the taxes they would have to pay to finance it.

Garcelon was selected to take charge of the Riverside County citrus exhibit at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago. This was a popular choice and called a "wise selection" by the Daily Press and an "excellent selection" by the Enterprise. The horticultural experts judging the citrus displays were so impressed with the lemons Garcelon grew and exhibited that he was awarded a medal and diploma. Garcelon was also selected to present a paper on "Citrus fruits of the Pacific Slope," which he did in the horticultural hall before a large audience.

Garcelon died March 9th, 1905. His funeral was held at his home and the officiate was Rev. Goff of the First Congregational Church. He was buried in Evergreen Cemetery. At the time he died he was president of the Riverside Fruit Exchange and, on the day of his burial, all of the big packing houses in Riverside were closed in his honor (Los Angeles Times, March 10, 1905). The Times also said, "For nearly thirty years, he has been identified with every advance that Riverside has made." In his obituary in the Riverside Enterprise of March 9, 1905, it was mentioned that "throughout California he is often alluded to as the "father of the lemon industry in this state."

Garcelon's wife Mary died November 17th, 1915, and was buried next to her husband. They were survived by their adopted daughter, Gertrude O'Brien, and granddaughter Ethel Arbuckle. The house they built was later moved to the corner of 7th and Mulberry Streets, where it burned down in 1949.

In January 1934, Dr. H.J. Webber of the Citrus Experiment Station gave a talk which was reported on in the Riverside Daily Press. In his talk Webber referred to the pioneering work of Garcelon in the cultural development of lemons as one of the much advancement in the citrus industry to come out of Riverside.

* These early gatherings were always referred to as "fairs" in the literature of the time. However, they were not fairs as we think of them today with rides, food, and lots of agricultural displays. Instead, the first two fairs in particular were informal gatherings of citrus growers comparing and tasting citrus in someone's home.

John G. Gabbert

A Personal Recollection

By Jerry A. Gordon

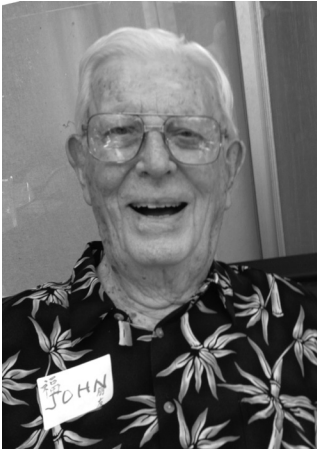
This is my “local” history. It tells the story of a man who impacted my life in a very special manner. However, in many ways my story about John G. Gabbert is not unique. Many can write a similar story, and should, because he interacted with everyone in a way that left you with the impression that he was your single best friend. Judge Gabbert had a multitude of “best” friends and everyone who was honored to be among that group felt extremely privileged. I’m proud to be one of them.

It has been a little more than a year since we lost this extraordinary man who lived to an impressive age of 104½. However, living that long is only part of this exceptional person. John grew up in Riverside after his family moved here in 1912 when he was merely three years old. During his long life he became a respected attorney, an effective judge, and much sought after public leader until he died in December, 2013.

Moving to California in 1982 with my family which included my wife of 20 years, our 12 and 14 year old daughters, and an aging dog was scary. Were we making the right decision to move so far away from our Western New York roots? I had no way of knowing that soon after I began working at the University of California as the Director of Media Resources I would meet John Gabbert and later how my roots factored into our relationship. I took an instant liking to him and although our encounter was brief, I was hoping that our paths would cross again, and they did more than 20 years later, and that is the rest of my story.

Breakfast Forum

Since the early 1930’s there has existed an organization in Riverside called the Riverside Men’s Breakfast Forum. It is a loosely organized group of men, most of whom have made a positive impact on Riverside during their careers. John Gabbert was a member of the Forum. Membership



John Gabbert at his 104th birthday, taken in 2013.

is by invitation only and I had been invited to join the group in 2004 and was pleased that John was also a member. This would undoubtedly give us a chance to know each other. Membership is limited to 35 men and each member is expected to give a presentation on any topic of their choosing about every 18 months. Several months after I joined, it was time for my first talk and I decided to tell the group who I am, where I came from, my educational background, and some of my interests. When I finished speaking and telling about hailing from Rochester, New York, John jumped out of his seat and swiftly headed in my direction with a wonderful and welcoming grin. He was excited because not only was my surname Gordon, but I came from Rochester. It seems that his mother's family name was Gordon and they also came from the Rochester area (although there is no relationship to me). Those coincidences formed the foundation for our close interaction that lasted until his death. During those intervening years I became friendly with his three children as if I was a long lost relative. My wife and I were often invited to family celebrations such as John's birthday parties. We were delighted.

John stopped attending the Breakfast Forum in 2013 due to his declining mobility. Because his health prevented him from being at my talk in August of that year, I offered to give him a private presentation in his home. Two of his children, Katie and Scott, were also there and when I was done John had questions as I had expected. My topic dealt with the Spanish Inquisition which he seemed to know a lot about demonstrating his vast knowledge of a variety of topics and his impressive memory for details. He was able to add some information to my subject beyond what I presented. I'm glad I made the extra effort to be there. His talks to the Forum over the years were not to be missed. He was one of the best story tellers around and rarely used notes or even visual support because his style was so compelling.

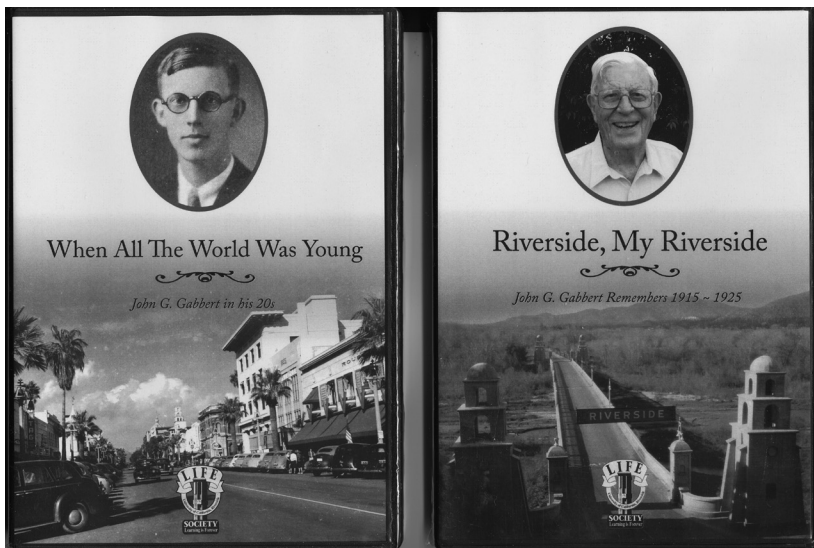
LIFE Lecture Series and the Gabbert Videos

For nearly 25 years UCR Extension has offered a course of study for senior citizens called the LIFE Society whose name was recently changed to The LIFE Lecture Series. The class meets weekly during the academic year providing interesting and often provocative lectures from faculty at the various universities and colleges in the area, public leaders, and others who have done interesting things in their life and who would like to share it with the class. John Gabbert had been a long-time member of the group, as I continue to be. I have served on the program selection committee for most of my years taking on the challenge of finding fascinating and provocative speakers for our often challenging and discriminating students. Many of these students are retired professionals in their own right.

At a planning meeting about seven years ago it was suggested to invite Judge Gabbert to speak on any topic he chose because he was known to be a compelling speaker on just about any topic. We invited him to attend a program planning meeting where he suggested talking about his childhood which was apparently a topic that he rarely spoke about. The committee thought it was a great idea but the judge made a special and unusual request. Because he was unable to stand before an audience for a long period of time he suggested that we videotape his talk and present it to the class that way.

Because I had worked in broadcast television, and had served as the Director of Media Resources at UCR, I immediately saw an opportunity. Rather than merely setting up a camera and letting him talk, I was convinced we had the making of a quality production. At a future LIFE Board Meeting and without Gabbert present, I presented the concept of creating a top quality production of John Gabbert telling the story of his early years and interspersing it with photos from his collection to enhance his stories. The Board was equally excited about the idea and set aside \$2,000 for the project's development. However, I was not convinced we had enough money to hire a professional videographer so we began a fundraising campaign. We were astonished at the response from the community. We raised adequate funds to hire a professional videographer and create a lasting video that we were convinced would be a hot seller.

Indeed, the first production titled “Riverside, My Riverside” was completed and shown at a special session of the LIFE Society. Not only was there a large audience of members present but we had so many guests attending that we had to find a larger space. Following the premier showing, sales were so brisk that we had the funds to make a second production which John called “When all the World Was Young.” It was also very successful. Again, sales were impressive. We generated so much money from the two productions that we never had to use the original \$2000 allocation and we were able to provide UCR Extension’s LIFE Society with a significant donation to their endowment fund.



Two LIFE Society DVDs of John Gabbert.

The making of the two 75 minute DVD’s is an interesting story, principally because we were working with John Gabbert. We hired Ignatius Fisher, a professional videographer from Hemet, and through the generosity of the UCR Alumni and Visitor Center we arranged to shoot in one of their rooms on the second floor. While all these logistics were taking place John began writing the script, and then rewriting the script, and then rewriting the script again. He was diligent until he got it the way he wanted it. We set a date and shot the entire first production

in one sitting and without a break. We knew he was tenacious but never to this degree. There was no need to reshoot anything.

The next phase was significantly more difficult. We needed to find photos that further tells John's story. Although Gabbert had many images in his collection, we needed lots more. One of the members of the committee, Molly Carpenter, agreed to help me and she proved to be one of the greatest



*Early view of the Box Springs grade.
(Collection of Miriam Bobb)*

researchers for photos I have ever encountered. When she set her sight on finding a particular image, she was successful. Although John's wonderful story telling technique was commanding, Molly's selection of photos truly made the difference in the quality of the final product. Members of the LIFE Society were aware of some of our photo needs and loaned us pictures for the production that we could not find elsewhere. One great find was the

Box Spring's grade during the 1920's which is now the multi-lane 215/60 freeway from UCR heading south. Our videographer was able to insert all the photos in exactly the place where we determined they should be. The result was the well-received final product.

This entire process was repeated for the second DVD. During that taping we insisted that we take a break rather than shooting John's portion at one sitting. In retrospect I think we should have done that the first time. He needed time to be off-camera and to collect his thoughts. During the first production, John had trouble following his script because it was not convenient for him to see it while keeping it out of camera range and maintaining eye contact with the camera. In the second production we created a homemade teleprompter using a laptop computer as seen in the accompanying photo. On the screen, which was close to him but out of camera range, he had a script outline with everything he wanted to say. Molly sat behind John but not seen on camera so that she could change the slide on the screen when he was ready to move on. This resulted in a smoother presentation, although with Gabbert's skill it was hard to tell

the difference. Perhaps the greatest benefit was that John was more at ease during the second taping.

There were many wonderful experiences Molly and I had while collecting the photos. Molly tells her story about the trip she and John made to the Hemet Library to research information about the night when the hotel in Hemet, where he was staying, caught fire. It is a story he tells on the second DVD. She conveys of how he kept the librarian jumping with questions and then ended by promising to send her some articles for her historical newsletter. He also regaled Molly with tales of Moreno Valley as they drove there and he led her to the Stock Farm site where the old sign was still hanging.

At one point Molly stopped the car to take a photo and John jumped out with her and proceeded to stand in the middle of the road while he shot his picture. Obviously this made Molly quite nervous. On more than one occasion John and I drove around Riverside so that I could take photos of the various homes where he lived, and locations that were important to him as he was growing up. Each place where we stopped was punctuated with stories that he told me as if they happened days before rather than decades before.

Once while we were in production, and after John's role was basically completed, he called me quite distressed. It seems he went to their beach home for the weekend and did not tell us he was going to be away, which was not a requirement. He was concerned that if we needed him he would not be available. When I convinced him that everything was fine he expressed his relief by telling me that he could return to his study of constitutional law and not be plagued with abandoning us. He never gave up studying.



*John Gabbert at recording session
with Molly Carpenter.*

Once the DVDs were completed, I was invited to show them to various groups and each time I asked John to join me. Having him there was a real treat for those in attendance. We spoke to a group at the Calvary Presbyterian Church in Riverside, a session of the Sage Society, and a former sister group to the LIFE Society in Hemet, as examples. Having him there made the question and answer period following the showing quite fascinating as I heard new stories.

The LIFE Society and UCR Extension handled the storage and sale of the disks as well as the reordering. People were buying them for their own collection and as presents. John was buying them and sending them across the country to friends and relatives. Copies are on file at the Riverside Public Library as well as the UCR and RCC Libraries and some are still available for purchase at local museum gift shops. John Gabbert was very pleased with the results, and my interaction with him became closer and remained that way until the end.

Some Riverside Historical Society Connections

John had spoken to the Riverside Historical Society (RHS) on several occasions. His understanding of California history was amazing and often he was able to relate personal family involvement to these events. One story went back to the gold rush in California.

He had not been attending RHS meetings as frequently due to his declining mobility, but when I called him about a session on Erle Stanley Gardner he wanted to be there and I arranged to take him. It was in December 2012. John and his father knew the famous mystery writer who lived in Temecula. It was where Gardner wrote most of his Perry Mason episodes. The speaker was Steve Williamson of the Temecula Museum. After he finished his presentation, John told about his personal experiences with Gardner including supplying him with story lines from actual court cases from John's court room in Riverside. Of course all identifying details were changed.

My talk to the Riverside Historical Society on the topic of Frank Miller and multiculturalism was scheduled for December 1, 2013. John was planning to attend but was at the beach with his family celebrating

the Thanksgiving weekend. There was talk of scheduling it for the next weekend which meant that he would have been in town and more likely able to attend although that change never happened. Therefore, I had planned to come to his house soon after he returned from the beach to present my talk to him privately. He died before that happened. However, the most important memory I have of that was his desire to hear my talk.

Other personal memories of the judge

John liked to ride in my 20 year old Honda Civic, although as he got older it became more and more difficult for him to get in and out of it because it was so low to the ground.

Once while visiting with him he showed me a foldout postcard from Caledonia, NY (near Rochester) from the beginning of the 20th century. It included the Gordon house, which was the home of his mother's family. John's middle initial was G which stood for Gordon. I asked to borrow the foldout and took it to a print shop where they carefully duplicated it and I had copies made for him and his children which looked better than the original. I also made a copy for the historical society in Caledonia which they appreciated greatly because they did not have a wide angle shot of their town like this one. I understand it is currently displayed at their museum. I have included a portion of that postcard with the Gordon house on the right. The house no longer exists and is the site of a service station.

Once John gave a short talk to the Mission Inn Foundation docents at a forum they were holding at the Boat House in Fairmount Park. He told about his recollections of living near there and how he used the park as a child. He had the complete attention of everyone in the room. They were mesmerized and many still talk about that session.

During the celebration year for his 100th Birthday in 2009, there was a great deal of local awareness including the installation of the commemorative arch on his behalf near the Riverside County Court House by 11th Street. Once while there with him our photo was taken together in front of the Court House. I cherish this photo.

Getting to know John was also an opportunity to know his family. His son Scott, who lived with John, does handiwork. I hired him on



Postcard view of Caldedonia, New York, circa 1900. On the right is John's mother's home. It is currently a service station site. (Gabbert family collection)

numerous occasions to help me around the house including painting its exterior. Katie, who lived next door to her father, was also a joy to be around. She was always available to assist. Sarah, John's oldest, who lives in Tucson, was very supportive of all we did and was happy to see me when she came to town.

It is hard for me to understand how my relationship with John developed in that we were so different in many ways. With the exception of his mother's maiden name which is the same as mine, and the Rochester, New York area connection, there is little else. That is what made this man so special. He was not only interested in everyone he met, but was interested in what they did, and what they had to say, even though it might not parallel his background or experiences.

During the years before his death he read several books each week, typically on his Kindle, along with the daily edition of the NY Times. With his marvelous memory he was able to retain most of what he read and thus was a fountain of information on just about any topic.

He was a wonderful person and respected by all. I am not alone by saying we miss him.



John Gabbert and Jerry Gordon in front of the Riverside County Courthouse 2009.

Riverside Through the Lens of E. N. Fairchild

by Glenn Wenzel

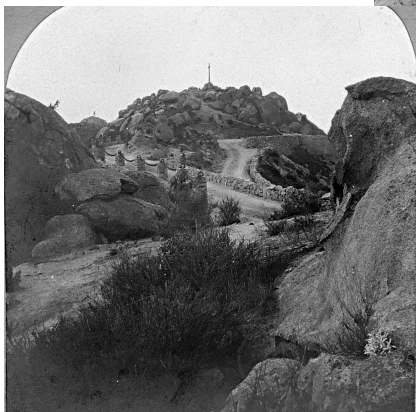
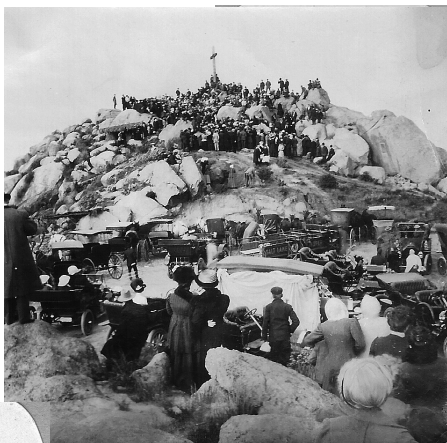
Many scenes and events in the first third of the 20th century in Riverside were recorded by the camera of Edward Noble Fairchild. Born on May 1, 1877 in Greeley, Colorado, Fairchild spent his early years in Colorado. Known as E. N. Fairchild, he first came to Riverside about 1910 and lived with his mother, Susan Carver. After awhile, he moved to Portland, Oregon, then and Santa Barbara. By 1921, Fairchild returned to Riverside and once more lived with his mother. The City Directories of that time listed his occupation as Photographer. On June 24, 1923, E. Noble Fairchild and Emma Buckley were married at a friend's cabin in Forest Home. Emma was also from Greeley, Colorado and had been in Riverside since 1907 teaching in Riverside elementary schools. The newly married couple made their home at 960 West 11th Street in Riverside. The couple had one child, son James, who was born on July 27, 1926. Initially E. N. had a studio in downtown Riverside at 727 6th Street, but in 1927, moved the studio into his home on 11th Street. Fairchild died on November 5, 1939 and was cremated at Evergreen Cemetery. Fairchild Photographs can be found in various collections in Riverside. Riverside Metropolitan Museum has over 1200 images in the E. N. Fairchild Collection, most of which are family photos. Other images are in the collection of the Mission Inn Museum, the Local History Collection at the Main Library, Gilman Ranch and Museum, and in private collections. In 1958, the family gave several hundred negatives to the *Press-Enterprise*. The article announcing the acceptance of this collection stated, "The collection conveys a distinct impression of the physical appearance and much of the activity of the Riverside community in the 1920s and 1930s. Many of the leading citizens of the day, including old timers who have long since passed on, were pictured." (*Press-Enterprise*, January 5, 1958). The following pages show a very small glimpse of Riverside through the lens of E. N. Fairchild. The hardest part was picking just a few.

*(Right) E. N. Fairchild in Darkroom
(Riverside Metropolitan Museum)*

*(Below) Fairchild home at
960 11th Street*



*1910 Easter Sunrise Service on
Mount Rubidoux*



*Summit of Mount Rubidoux
before seats*

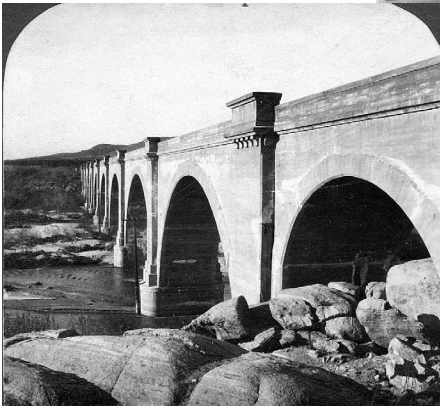
Old Grant School on Brockton





*Riverside County Courthouse with
Women's Club in foreground*

*Interior of Riverside
County Courthouse*



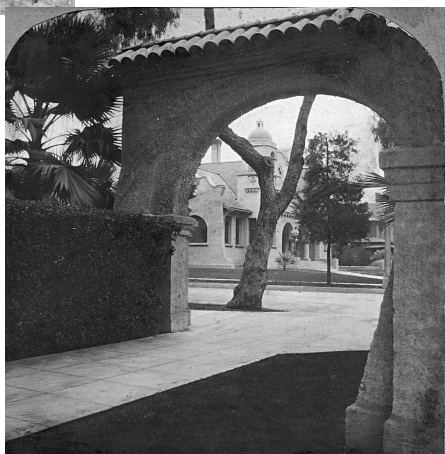
Salt Lake Route Railroad Bridge

Lower Canal in White Park



White Park Cactus Garden

*Carnegie Library seen through
arch at the Mission Inn*





(Top) Easter Sunrise Service on Mount Rubidoux on April 12, 1925

*(Bottom) Easter Service on Mount Rubidoux on April 4, 1926
(Riverside Metropolitan Museum)*





*(Top) Roman Warren flying under Santa Ana River Bridge on June 13, 1926
(Riverside Metropolitan Museum)*

*(Bottom) Crown Prince Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden honored in the
Spanish Patio at the Mission Inn on July 21, 1926 (Mission Inn Museum)*

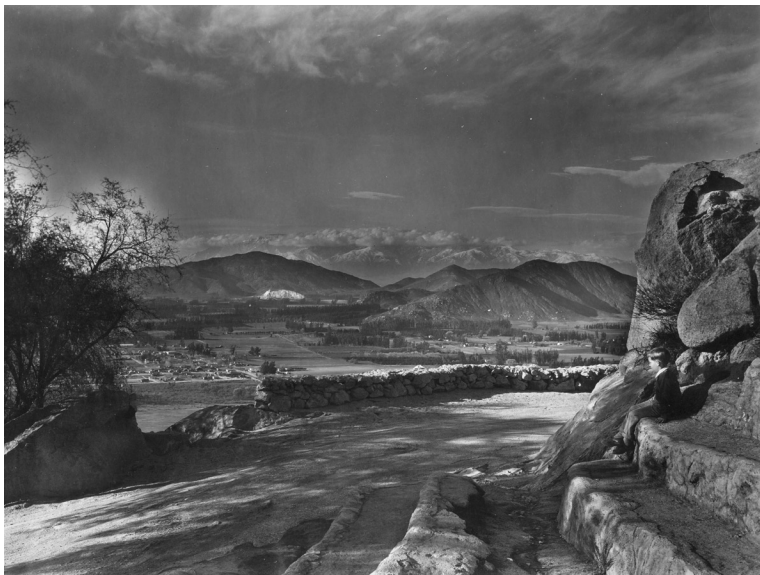




(Top) Dedication of Neighbors of Woodcraft Home on September 17, 1927

*(Bottom) Dedication of Municipal Auditorium on November 12, 1928
(Riverside Metropolitan Museum)*





(Top) Summit on Mount Rubidoux

*(Bottom) Gunnar and Francisca (Jensen) Kjellberg at home at
4411 Rubidoux Avenue in Riverside*





(Top) 54th School Squadron on April 30, 1931 at March Field

(Bottom) Aerial view of Old Poly High School







*(Left Top) Fireworks at Fairmont Park
(Left Bottom) Union Pacific train greet with oranges
(Riverside Metropolitan Museum)*

*(Top) Fairmont Park
(Bottom) Santa Fe Station (Riverside Metropolitan Museum)*



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