

VISALIA HERITAGE, INC.
MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER

February, 1992

1992 ought to see the alterations of the historic room in the Tulare County Library, Visalia Branch, completed. Larry Lewis has drawn the plans for the construction and he will take them to the City for approval. Brian Lewis, Tulare County Librarian, (no relation) has had a chance to look at them and he is anxious to get started. We are all anxious — after two years planning we want to complete the job. As you have probably read in the Valley Voice this project will expand the historic rooms for acquisitions from local historians. The public will have a little more elbow room for perusal and study. Best of all Annie Mitchell's precious collection will stay here in Visalia, well protected and accessible. Come to the March 18th meeting 7:30 p.m. at the library and see for yourself. Call (209) 734-6679 for details, we would welcome you all.

Slowly but surely the Visalia Cemetery Chapel is being used more and more. The guild under the direction of Frenchy Stafford meets four times a year at 10:00 a.m. the third Tuesday of January, March, May and October, in the chapel. A troop of Girl Scouts recently toured the chapel and cemetery as part of their study of the history of Visalia.

The family of John Otto donated to the Visalia Heritage some of the memorabilia he collected during his lifetime. The boxes will be opened at the February 19th meeting — call (209) 734-6679 for information.

During late 1991 and early 1992 the residents of the historic district, along with a few V.H.I. board members, presented their viewpoints before the Visalia City Council. This was in regard to the application of New Visions to convert the Ben Maddox House to an alcoholic recovery center for women. They represented their case well and as it developed, New Visions found a more suitable property at another location. Property owners in the historic district are working hard to maintain a residential neighborhood and VHI wants to support them.

Le Roy Sandri has become a member of the board because of an unusual project which interested him. Le Roy is a retired fireman and he remembered the bell that used to hang in the old firehouse downtown where the Convention Center is located. This bell is now hanging in St. Mary's bell tower. He is in the process of consulting with all concerned to propose locating this bell in a decorative tower by the Convention Center. Properly identified this would be a visible reminder of our history.

V.H.I. has replicated some old photographs and slides. We have 2 sets, one to be protected and saved and one set to be available to schools and organizations for education and entertainment. As you can imagine there are a few that defy identification. At our April meeting — date and time flexible — we thought of having a brain storming detective session. We would like to have a vocal group of "old timers" to help us. We'll let you know more details and we would ask you to pass the word along and bring a friend.

California Preservation Foundation is a statewide non-profit organization that aids communities in historic preservation work. From time to time they hold workshops. One scheduled for February is how to make restoration/reconstruction economically feasible and deal with all the public entities at the same time. V.H.I. has encouraged and consequently paid the registration fee for Wayne Virag. Wayne is the City liaison to the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee. H.P.A.C. reviews and recommends action by the City in the Historic District. H.P.A.C. members are selected by the City Council to serve, any resident of the Historic District or other interested parties may apply through the City Manager's office.

Visalia's Heritage is now in its second printing and is available through V.H.I. (call (209) 734-6953, Sheila), or from Nostalgia, Sweet Memories, and Kindred Spirit Bookshop.

The Board has been meeting and working right along, but we have not had a public program in a while. If you are interested please come to the March and/or April meetings, we would enjoy new input and new faces. Call the following numbers for information.

| | |
|--------|----------|
| Jane | 732-0668 |
| Sheila | 734-6953 |
| Pat | 734-3136 |
| Nan | 627-4287 |
| D'Anne | 734-6679 |
| Jo Ann | 732-9751 |