

The Shaffer Fountain - Then and Now

by
Brian Saul

Now that the old "Brea Welcomes You" sign and Charlie's Clock have returned to the downtown area and been placed on the Birch Street Promenade, I thought this might be a good time to tell you about the third Birch St. landmark., the new Shaffer Fountain — how it came to placed there and why it was given that name.

In the late 80's, when I was first bitten by that Brea history bug, one of the first things I learned about was the story of City Hall Park, its buildings and other features, some of which were no longer there. The original American Legion Building, sitting on the corner of Elm and Pomona Ave (Brea Blvd.) had been sold in 1929 to the Anaheim School District and, according to the Brea Progress, was moved there to be used as a "Mexican school". In the 1940's there was a pond at the southwest corner of the park that became a constant sore point to neighbors who complained about the nightly croaking of the pond's frog population.

The "feature" though that really interested me, one that had also disappeared, was the Shaffer Fountain. Sitting right where the present Memorial Rose Garden is located, it was a huge, octagon-shaped, 3-tiered thing that must have been really something during the 21 years it dominated the park.

And why was it built? Well, it's name partially gives that away. It was placed there to honor a very special man in our history—William D. Shaffer, or, as he was commonly known, "W. D."

The next questions naturally are, who was he and what makes him so special that he was honored in such a way?

Born in Springtown, N.Y. in 1877, Shaffer first came

to this area in 1903 when he became superintendent of a tool shop in the little oil town of Olinda. After some years there, he left for Santa Paula but returned to Brea in 1922, becoming a partner in the Brea Tool Works Co.

When the company was sold, he bought it back himself, giving it the name Shaffer Tool Works.

That first plant was located on the southwest corner of Birch St. and Redwood Ave., and it produced a wide variety of oil tools which led to the success of the company. Over the next 24 years that success continued and enabled the firm to expand around the country.

According to everyone I've talked to who knew Mr. Shaffer, and likewise from the articles I've read, he was a well-loved boss who went out of his way to care for his employees, including during that bad times of the Depression.



Fulfillment of a promise - The new Shaffer Fountain on the Birch Street Promenade.

In a 1981 newspaper article, his one-time secretary Lois Muzzall Smith recalls that during the company's heyday, workers were more than just employees, they were family. "Mr. Shaffer was a man with a heart who would always smile and say hello to everyone. He would also throw big company picnics," she recalls, "and only a broken leg could stop anyone from coming."

He was so respected by his many employees, especially those here in Brea, that when he died in 1946 they wanted to do something very special in his memory. What they finally decided upon was a fountain, a really big fountain to be located in City Hall Park. Plans were developed and many local firms and citizens contributed their materials and skills at little or no cost.

On the evening of Sunday, Sept. 12, 1948 a big dedi-

continued on page 6



Mr. W.D. Shaffer



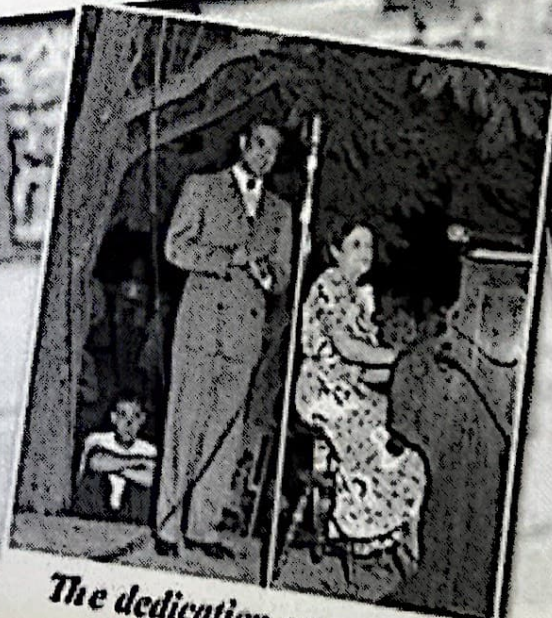
The original Shaffer Tool Works plant, located at Birch St. and Redwood Ave.



A wind machine rises next to the Shaffer Tool Works plant on Pomona Ave. (Brea Blvd.)



When everything was working perfectly, the fountain was a beautiful sight along Brea Blvd.



The dedication ceremony took place in 1948.



Built in an octagon shape, the fountain graced City Hall Park for 21 years.

The Shaffer Fountain - Then and Now

continued from page 4

cation ceremony was held in the park with music, crowds of people and a speech by then Mayor McCart. All this was then followed by the big event of the night — the ceremonial turning on of the fountain. Jets of water rose high into the air "to the surprise and amazement of the crowd." They were even more impressed shortly thereafter when the changing colored lights were illuminated, making the fountain "a thing of beauty and a restful picture to watch."

All went well for several years, but then by the early 60's the fountain wasn't working more than it was. The piping had deteriorated, and work was constantly being done to keep the water flowing. With all the problems, there was even talk in 1963 of turning the whole thing into one big planter!

Finally, in 1969 the City decided that it was time for the fountain to be removed, but a promise was made to the Shaffer Family that one day another fountain would take its place.

Eleven years later it looked as if that promise was going to be fulfilled when plans and a fountain model were shown to the public. Nothing ever happened though. Why not?

I became curious and contacted former Mayor Weddle who had been in office during that time. According to him, it was a period of drought and water conservation so building a fountain at that moment just wasn't the best thing to do.

Unfortunately, it looked like the idea of a fountain had died, but six years ago when I heard the City had plans to place fountains in the downtown area, I had meetings and wrote letters asking that one of those be dedicated to Mr. Shaffer. No promises were made, but I began to hear positive comments by the City that it just might happen. A couple years later I moved away from Brea. Still nothing had been done fountainwise, but, as I learned later, Don Schweitzer whose father had worked for Mr. Shaffer, had picked up the ball and was trying to make the fountain a reality.

Finally last year, with the sound of falling water in the background, that long ago promise to the family was fulfilled. In a ceremony on the Birch Street Promenade, reminiscent of the one 53 years ago and attended by several members of the Shaffer Family, City officials and the public, Don, serving as emcee, spoke of Mr. Shaffer, his

accomplishments and his caring for his employees.

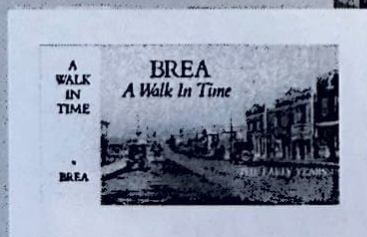
Sure, the new fountain with its oranges and green stems doesn't look anything like the original one in the park, but that's okay. I think Mr. Shaffer would have been pleased with it because after WWII one of the things he produced here in Brea at a plant on Pomona Ave. was a large wind machine on a high tower that was used to prevent freezing of citrus groves during periods of frost.

So, next time you're down on Birch St. stop and take a look at the fountain, think of the original one, and, oh yeah, one last thing — don't forget to glance down at the plaque.

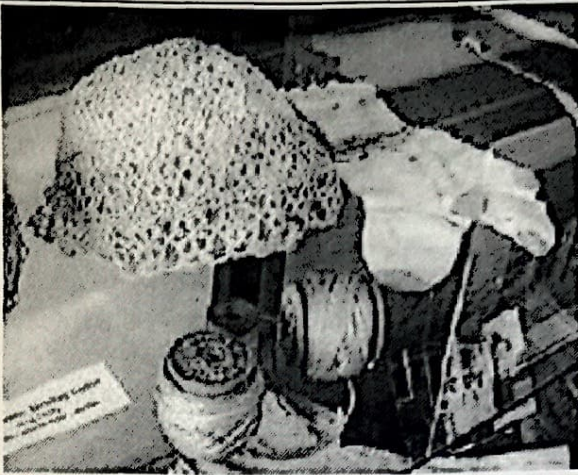
On Sale Now at the Brea History Museum

Brea: Celebrating 75 Years. Written by Teresa Hampson, the book is 246 pages of photographs and recounts Brea from its early days as a major oil-production and agricultural center. \$28.00, incl. tax

Brea: A Walk in Time. An entertaining 2-hour video, hosted by Brea Historical Society Vice President, Brian Saul. Join Brian as he takes you on a tour of Brea's historical landmarks and visits areas of the city that you didn't know were there. \$14.95, incl. tax.



All proceeds from sales of the book and video go to assist the Society's preservation efforts in Brea.



Do YOU Know What This Stuff Is???

Several new and very interesting displays have just been added at the Brea History Museum. This is just one small glimpse of what you can enjoy and learn about while visiting. When was the last time you were here, anyway?

Downtown and Home Tour Info

You've been asking and now we have more information regarding the upcoming *Downtown and Home Tour*.

The "walking" tours will begin in early November, with the tentative date scheduled for the weekend of November 3th/4th, taking place in the late afternoons and lasting approximately 2 hours. The route will take us from Redwood Avenue to Brea Blvd. and then to Birch St. and the "New Downtown". We are very excited that two homes on Redwood have agreed to allow us inside for a "peek". Plus, we have tons of interesting facts and information to share with you about the buildings and architecture on Brea Blvd. and Birch St. Now that we know when, its time for you to sign up! We want to keep the groups small, so make your reservations early by calling Brian or Kathy at 714-256-2283. The cost per person is \$5.00 with proceeds going to the proposed Brea Museum and Heritage Center fund.

Re-emergence of a Landmark - The Brea Clock

continued from page 1

the housing for the mechanism was rusted and the mechanism itself was frozen and didn't work at all.

World-class craftsmen created an "exact reproduction" of many of the clock's components. The unique handpainted calligraphy of the original numbers and lettering was painstakingly recreated. The original hands were carefully removed and outlined exactly to use as patterns to punch new hands out of the same metal as the original. The clock mechanism was carefully taken apart, molded and recast, then put back together by master clock makers. The mechanism now runs perfectly.

The exterior casing is the original, repaired and repainted in its original color. The clock face is the original, refurbished and repainted. The "Good Old Brea" placard on top of the clock has been remade to the exact specifications as the original, made from the same metal in the same thickness.

The glass on the face is now frosted and surrounded by soft lighting to provide night-time luminescence.

With the re-placement of the Brea Sign and now, the Brea Clock, the landmarks of "Good Old Brea" are back where they belong. Brand new, to be enjoyed now and by future generations in Brea's new Downtown.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge Brian Saul's assistance in researching and providing background in-

formation on the history of the Brea Clock.



The newly refurbished Brea Clock at its new, permanent location at the corner of Madrona and Birch St.

Charlie's Clock, a Brea landmark, 790 to get new home

By Tom Lyden
DSP Correspondent

BREA — Charlie's Clock, a landmark on Brea Boulevard for many years, may get a new, safer home.

Damaged a month ago by a thrown beer bottle, the clock has gracefully withstood the test of time and vandals.

Councilman Carrey Nelson recently suggested a new home be found for the clock and instructed city staff to look for a location.

"The clock is nice to have and we will fix it, regardless," said Pat McCarron, Maintenance Services director for the city.

"We will need more feedback from City Council as to where they would like to see the clock. There are a lot of possible locations," McCarron said.

Constructed in 1921, Charlie's

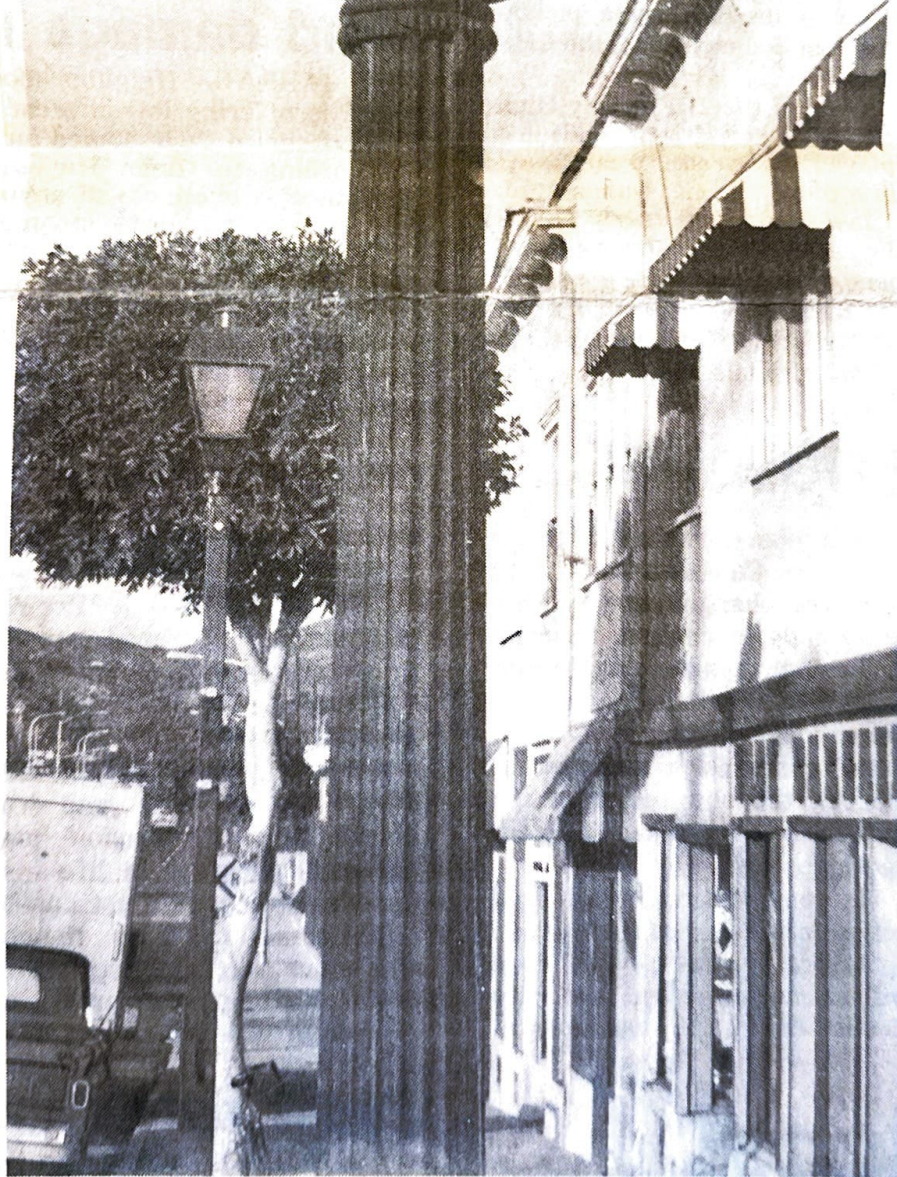
Clock originally served as the old Station Masters Clock at the Santa Fe Railroad yard in Riverside.

Station masters used to set their watch to the clock.

The clock was brought to its location by the Jarvis family, who purchased the clock from the railroad when it went out of business. The Jarvises were former owners of Charlie's Clock Shop.

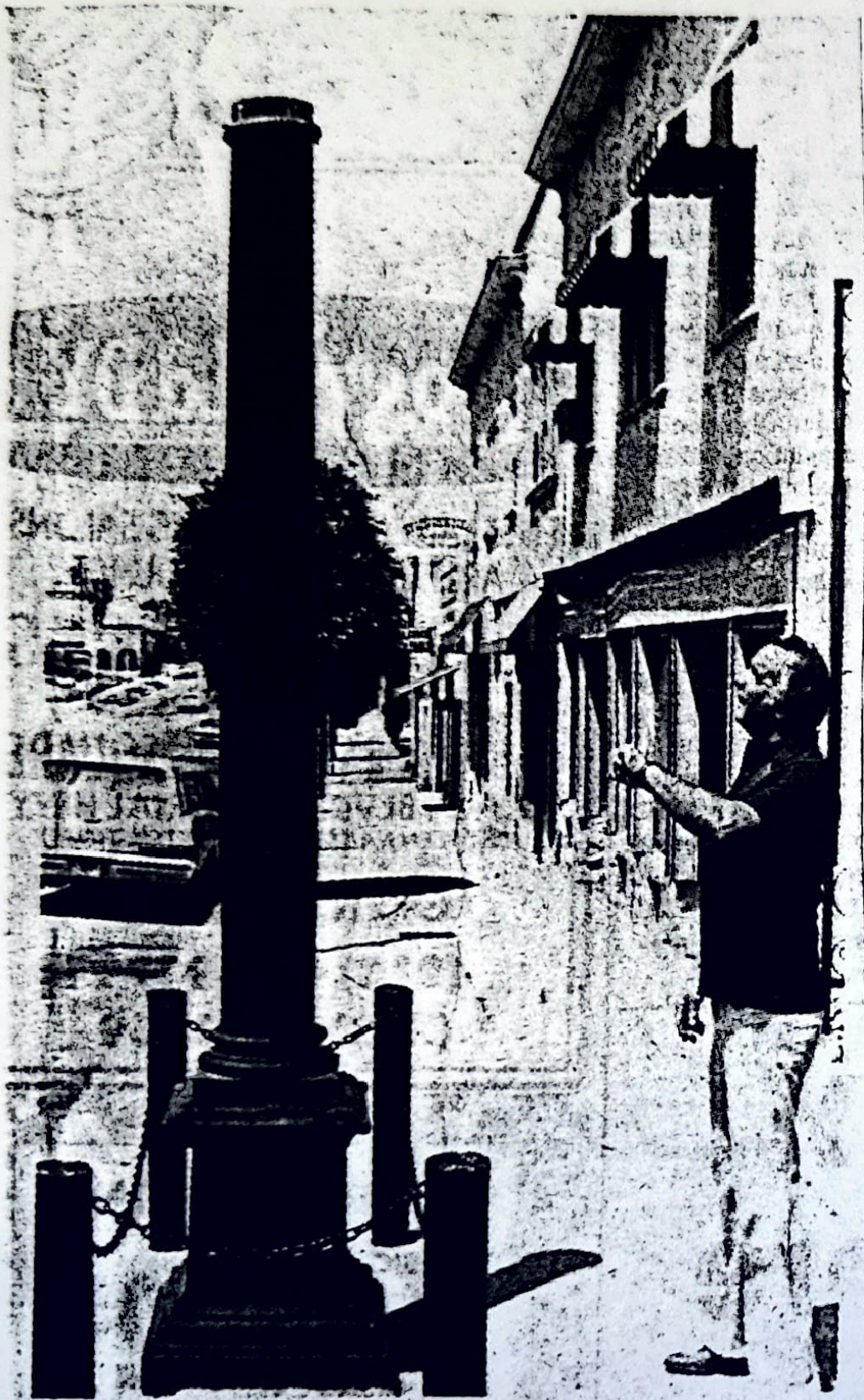
In 1979 the clock was damaged by a reckless motorist. The clock was recast and a new movement was installed for \$2,500.

McCarron said rehabilitation of the clock this time is a tricky proposition. Two plates of glass were damaged by the beer bottle. The second plate of milk glass had the impression of an old Santa Fe engine car, which will need to be sandblasted on new glass, she explained.



(Star-Progress photo by Sheldon Craig)

IT KEEPS ON TICKING — Despite taking a licking from a beer bottle, Charlie's Clock on Brea Boulevard still manages to withstand the test of time. Originally constructed in 1921, Charlie is the old Station Masters Clock from the Santa Fe Railroad Yard in Riverside. City staff is considering a safer site for the Brea landmark. (See story on Page 2.)



(Star-Progress Photo by Dave Cheuvront)

SOMEWHERE IN TIME — Faced with the removal of Brea's landmark clock on Brea Boulevard, dubbed "Charlie's Clock," the owner of the Royal Coach, Del Fry, checks his wrist-watch for the time as he winds his way back to the shop.

City Cuckoo Over 'Charlie's Clock'

By Rebecca Chevront

DSP Staff Writer

BREA — Time may be marching onward for the rest of the city, but for the old antique clock on Brea Boulevard, it's standing still once again.

Dubbed "Charlie's Clock" after the owner of a clock shop, Charlie Jarvis, who donated it to the city six years ago, the 80-year-old railroad clock has been a source of much pride — and pain — to city officials and personnel.

The old clock was installed in 1975 as part of the revitalization project of the downtown area, and for years kept time as well as adding to the overall effect of "Good Old Brea."

But in January 1979, the antique clock was knocked over by a drunk driver and shattered into "a thousand pieces," and has never worked right since according to Bill Gilman, purchasing agent for Brea.

Gilman was one of the first people in Brea to be touched by the first of many attempts to refabricate the clock and make it work.

"That thing was a thorn in my side," he said with a laugh, recalling how the clock was first brought to him in tiny pieces in a bunch of boxes and then being asked to find someone to fix it.

It wasn't until the following October that the old clock was restored and put up for the public to admire once again, albeit absent its original face with a white milk-glass Santa Fe railroad train adorning it.

That's when the trouble began. Since that day almost two years ago, the clock has been in and out of the shop so many times it's come to be something of a joke to an auto body repair and paint shop located nearby.

"It's up again," the owner of the Royal Coach, Del Fry, comments to his partner every so often. Within a few days, the two chuckle as Fry says, "It's down again."

And so it goes.

But the clock is no joking matter for members of Brea's maintenance staff, who have found it to be something of a challenge according to the director of maintenance services, Pat McCarron.

"It's not funny to us because we're the ones out there every other morning taking it down to fix it again," he said.

McCarron explained that the city is having trouble finding someone to work on the clock, which is worn both from age and the accident it suffered and loses a minute every hour.

In the end, he said the city may wind up getting a new custom movement for the inside of the clock, which is where the problem lies.

On Cable Channel 3

You probably wonder what Brian Saul does with his free time....well, wonder no more! You can see him this month, Monday thru Thursday at 10a.m. and Thursday evenings at 7:30p.m. on Video Brea Line on Channel 3, talking about the history of the Shaffer Fountain. In early October, his new segment will give you facts, history and information about the Brea Sign and the Brea Clock. We all know how much Brian loves Brea history...and he always has some "tidbit" that makes his "Did You Know" segment fun and interesting. Be sure and watch!

Special Thanks to our Corporate Sponsors

Pacific Western National Bank

located at
275 N. Brea Blvd

Taps Fish House & Brewery

located at
101 E. Imperial Hwy

Brea Historical Society

Jim Schweitzer, President
(714) 529-0635

Brian Saul, Vice President
(562) 698-5339

P.J. Mansur, Secretary/Treasurer
(714) 528-4240

Jim Crow, Board Member
(714) 529-3295

Marie Domenico, Board Member
(714) 529-6641

Lloyd Dudding, Board Member
(714) 256-4324

Edna Makins, Board Member
(714) 529-1755

During this time of National Mourning...

*The Brea Historical Society wishes to express
its prayers for the victims,
sorrow for their families,
and
gratitude to those that help and continue to
give.*

God Bless America

October Board Meeting:
Monday, Oct. 1, 2001, 7p.m.
at the Brea History Museum,
652 S. Brea Blvd.

Museum/Office Location:
652 S. Brea Blvd (at the Brea
Heights Shopping Center)
(714) 256-2283

Museum Hours:
Thursdays: 11a.m. until 1p.m.
Saturdays: 11a.m. until 2p.m.
Or call to arrange a special tour!



Brea Historical Society

P.O. Box 9764

Brea, CA 92822-9764

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 117
Brea, California

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Copy Deadline: 1st Friday of the month
Mailing Deadline: 2nd Friday of the month

VOL. XVIII, No. 9
September, 2001

Whatever happened to the Brea Clock?

by
Kathy Canon

The Brea Clock is back!...finally returned to the Downtown and placed at its new home in early August, 2001. But, just where did they put the clock, anyway?

In researching and interviewing people about this Brea landmark, its history and renovation, I found out many things I didn't know before. As a Brean who's lived in the city since 1981, the most surprising of those things is...it hadn't been a fixture in the Downtown area until 1975!

The Brea Clock was originally the stationmaster's clock at the Santa Fe Railyards in Riverside, CA. In 1975, it was placed on Brea Blvd. by Charlie, the owner of a clock shop located in the old Brea Hotel building, as an advertising gimmick. Nicknamed "Charlie's Clock", it was purchased by the City when the shop was closed up and Charlie left town. It had become a landmark in Brea and fit right into the "Good Old Brea" concept for redevelopment of the Downtown.

Over the years, because of vandalism and just plain



City workers replace "Charlie's Clock" near the old Brea Hotel after it was removed and repaired due to damage from a car accident in 1979.

not working, the clock was continually being taken down and repaired. In 1979, a car actually ran into the post, causing major damage to the clock. Subsequently, it didn't reappear again for a very long time.

Continued vandalism, age, and a failing mechanism plagued the clock, and finally, in 1994, it was carefully disassembled and placed in storage to await its restoration and re-emergence at the corner of Birch Street and Madrona Ave.

According to Nate Cherry, project architect for downtown redevelopment, who oversaw each step of the process, the renovation of the Brea Clock was "an amazing

and difficult job" that took 6 months to complete. When the job was turned over to Ampersand, Inc. (a company specializing in historic renovations), it received a clock that was "beaten up" and in general disrepair. The glass facing was broken, the numbers and lettering were faded,

continued on page 3

President's Message

THE CALL GOES OUT FAR AND WIDE

WANTED

I have taken up the project of gathering a copy of every newsletter that has ever been published for the Society, which dates back to September of 1983. Thus far, I have been fortunate enough to locate quite a few, but there remains scattered issues missing as well as a few big holes, such as every issue from the 1990's.

Jane O'Brien, fortunately, had the foresight to save several years worth and place them in the museum files. Also, Catherine Seiler made a great contribution by donating a tremendous amount and nearly supplying a complete set.

As opposed to printing either a list of what I do or don't have, I will ask that if anyone "out there" has any issues that they would like to donate, or at least allow me to photocopy. Please give me a call and I will check my list to determine if I do, indeed, need them. *My home phone number is (714) 529-0635.*

Also, it would be nice to collect a complete set of the football "charms" that the Brea-Olinda High School varsity football teams were awarded for winning the CIF title in 1959, 1961, 1962 and 1963. Bill Preston of Fullerton has already donated his from 1959 and that is a start! If anyone would like to donate any of the remaining years, please be so kind as to give me a call.

Thirdly, if you have an opinion, whether it be pro or con, regarding my letter to the editor that appeared in the August 23 issue of the Star-Progress, feel free to give me a call. I would be interested in hearing what you have to say.

Finally, if you haven't yet sent in your American Legion building survey form, please do so! We greatly appreciate those that have already responded and look forward to hearing from the rest of you.



Jim recently met with Sherry Farley at the Portola Monument to discuss plans to repair and refurbish the it and beautify the surrounding area. Sherry is current President of the Grace Parlor #242 of the Native Daughters of the Golden West. It was the Native Daughters who erected the monument in June of 1932. Recently, Jim was initiated into the Santa Ana parlor of the Native Sons of the Golden West and hopes to gain his club's support and participation in this project.

Jim

An early Brean remembers...

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I always enjoy the articles in your "Historical Happenings" publication. The August article, "The Stewart Tank Farm Fire of 1926" by Brian Saul really got my attention, especially the paragraph "The fire-induced cyclone that ripped off the roof of the Sutphen family home at the corner of Madrona and Cedar St." You may be interested in my experience during that fire and that particular incident.

My parents, Elwood and Isabella Moore, were early (1913) residents of Brea. I was nine-years-old. My sister, Caroline, was thirteen. We lived at 201 Sievers Ave., on the west side of Brea. There was a walnut grove between us and the Tank Farm site.

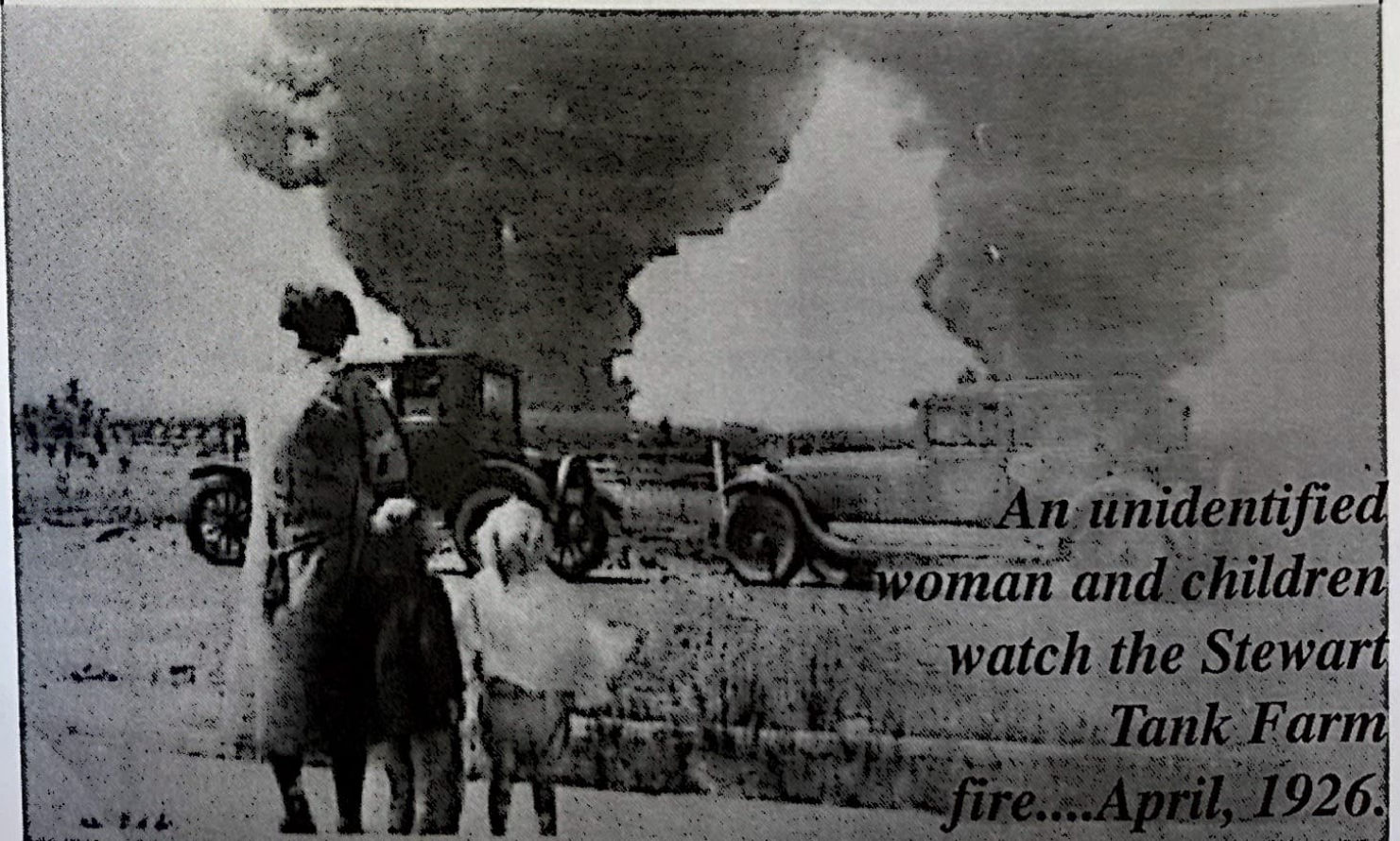
That morning, when the fire started, I was outside playing and saw the lightning strike the two tanks. The following days were hectic with horror stories of how the hot, burning oil would boil over the tank walls and run through the grove towards our home.

One day, it was so bad my mother, sister and I were really frightened. Dad put us in our 1925 Maxwell, drove about two blocks and parked us on Cedar St. He then returned home to protect our property from those crazy people going through the yard to get closer to the fire. We stayed where Dad parked us, for a short time, then the wind started to blow. Things began falling on the car roof. It was scary.

A few minutes later, the wind really blew and howled. That is when the fire-induced cyclone ripped the roof off Sutphen's home. That cyclone picked the roof up then set it down right on top of our first parking space. We were fortunate and our home was safe from the fire. Years later, "Redevelopment" moved ahead.

Signed,

Paul Moore



An unidentified woman and children watch the Stewart Tank Farm fire....April, 1926.

The Brea Clock

July
~~June~~ 2001

1. The Brea Clock has been completely renovated. The job took 6 months to complete.
2. Renovation was an "amazing and difficult job." The glass was broken, the numbers and lettering had faded, the mechanism no longer worked. The clock was in general disrepair. It was exposed to the elements and in "beaten up" condition.
3. Ampersand - a company specializing in historical renovations - was contracted to renovate and refurbish the Brea Clock.
4. World-class craftsmen recreated an "exact reproduction" - the unique calligraphy of the original numbers and lettering was recreated. The original hands of the clock were recreated by outlining them exactly and then using patterns to punch new hands out of metal. The clock mechanism was carefully disassembled, recast and put back together by master craftsmen. The mechanism now runs perfectly.
5. The outside casing (exterior) of the clock is the original, repainted. The clock face is the original, repainted. The "Good Old Brea" placard at the top of the clock has been remade to exact specifications - the old was "beaten up and in bad shape." The placard is the same thickness as the original and is made from the same metal.
6. The glass on the face is frosted, lights from around the face will provide luminescence.
7. Nate Cherry oversaw all steps of the process of restoring the Brea Clock.