THE STRENGTH OF NCL IS ITS MEMBERS

Ernie Schlobohm, NCL Board President

Napa County Landmarks, Inc. was established and incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1974 to advocate for the preservation of historic structures and heritage sites throughout the county of Napa. The personnel support to execute our advocacy driven mission from 1974 through 2019 continues to be mostly provided by dedicated volunteers and members.

Forty-five years is a long tenure for a volunteer organization. Milestones and goals are achieved, issues can change or members move away. So why is NCL still going strong? What is it that sustains its purpose and its members? In large part the answer is that protecting and honoring our architectural heritage does not go away with time. It’s a constant challenge and without careful due diligence, Napa county can lose a landmark in the blink of an eye.

Over the decades our membership fees have helped provide the financial assistance to sustain NCL. Members provide leadership when they fill roles as a committee member or Director of Boards. Our recent Member Appreciation Day event conducted on the historic ranch estate of Larry & Linda Wolfe was a tremendous success, enjoyed by all.

This fall edition of the Newsletter focuses on five NCL members. One has recently joined while the others’ involvement span a period of five to forty-five years. As a feature of this Newsletter, they were asked for their comments on why they are members and why they renew their membership year after year.

We hope you appreciate their responses and find them encouraging to support our mission.

Napa County Landmarks

“Window to the past, foundation of the future”
Established by John Whitridge in 1974 we are celebrating 45 years of preserving and protecting the past for future generations.
**What Napa County Landmarks affords our County and why we all need to support its mission.**

By Scott Sedgley, Member Since 2011

I remember when I first began to take notice of older buildings. I was a teenager in the 1960s. My grandfather was a builder of single-family homes, one at a time. He arrived in California in 1906 following the San Francisco Earthquake hoping to find work. We would drive around Auburn CA where he eventually settled and he would point out the homes he had built and their uniqueness and challenges. Most were modest wooden clad vernacular style, many Craftsmen and a few glorious Queen Annes. Thankfully most stand to this day.

My appreciation of the craftsmanship addressing the need of function and durability grew during my career with the Napa Fire Department as I got to know these buildings intimately. I was inside, outside and on top of most for some reason or another. Sadly, many still burned.

I was here for the Napa’s Redevelopment District carnage. In those years I was a bystander, indifferent. Thank goodness for John Whitridge, founder of NCL. Many years have passed and I find myself unable to standby. I was elected to Napa City Council in 2012 and am currently the Vice Mayor. I’ve listened, debated and taken positions on dozens of proposals that come before Council. During these sometime emotional hearings I’ve learned to take heed to NCL. Their positions are researched, balanced and are true to their mission. I don’t always side with NCL as each proposal presented is unique.

Napa County Landmark members serve on councils, boards and commissions throughout our County providing a prospective that may otherwise be overlooked. Napa County Landmarks is as relevant today as it was 45 years ago and can stand proud of their accomplishments, likewise to my grandfather’s legacy.

**Becoming a ‘Napa Native’**

By Vincent Traverso (New Member)

I may not be a ‘Napa Native’ but supporting Napa County Landmarks roots me in the history of this Valley more than a birth certificate ever could. And, I do have one of those… a birth certificate from the Queen of the Valley. But that does not make me a ‘native’ to Napa any more than erecting a statue of myself would make me a war hero. Connection to any place is born of contribution, not coincidence.

I became a member of Napa County Landmarks because it does just that: it contributes. It protects our collective heritage as the watchdog of threatened treasures. It preserves our connection to physical pasts that guide to more meaningful futures. It promotes our community to itself – on walking tours, with merit awards, at PorchFest – reminding us not only how special our Valley is but also how warm and welcoming our neighbors are.

In a Valley flocked to by visitors, filled with new residents, and fought over by old-guard ‘natives’ Napa County Landmarks simply invites you in, welcomes your contribution. It teaches of our past so that any of us, no matter when our individual Napa stories began, can find our place in and add to the collective history. That old guard may see NCL as a bulwark against change, but really it is a catalyst for change… for informing and shaping new contributions to Napa’s story.

May we all look forward to the day when we’ve contributed enough to this Valley to be considered a credit to its history, to be considered a ‘Napa Native.’

- Vincent Traverso is the winemaker for Migliavacca Wine Company, a recent revival of one of 19th century Napa’s most prolific wine enterprises.
My 45 year long association began with an appeal from the fledgling NCL organization for volunteers to help take measurements of the then neglected and deteriorating 1800s Churchill Manor on Brown Street in Napa. NCL found that no architectural plans existed of the residence. NCL approached both public high school architectural drafting and design instructors to recruit student volunteers. The only two volunteers came from Vintage High School, one being myself.

Within two weekends, we had measured every inch - inside and out, top to bottom. The second phase was translating those measurements into a set of architectural drawings. Eventually NCL's efforts to save Churchill Manor became an exceptional example of volunteer driven historic preservation.

Since then, NCL rescued the languishing Migliavacca Mansion from its riverside desertion by recruiting a like-minded buyer to move the elegant Queen Anne to its current site. That incredible feat was at his expense. It was amazing to watch that move.

Another significant NCL preservation action was in the early 1990s, when it successfully challenged Napa County's plans to demolish the 1916 Hall of Records building. Their plans also called for encasing the 1870s Court-house within an aesthetically void monolith.

As with anything worthwhile, volunteering can demand a considerable amount of one's time and energy, but knowing you are making a positive difference makes it worth the effort. For me, while it began with taking measurements of the iconic Churchill Manor, the experiences of being an NCL member have been immeasurable.

When my family and I moved to Napa in 1980, I had trouble feeling like it was my home town. That changed, when I went on my first Napa Valley Landmarks walking tour. I had always been fascinated by history and the architectural styles of the past. These people spoke my language.

So I joined the group and discovered that Napa's architecture was rich and varied, from the designs of older homes to civic and business styles. I volunteered in a number of different ways for the organization. I was the Public Relations Chairman for the very first CandleLight Tour, and over the years often was a docent at one of the featured houses. Along the way I made a lot of friends, many of whom are still close.

In 1990 I was asked to write a history of Napa's Tulocay Cemetery by the Cemetery Board. In 1994, friends at Napa County Landmarks, who knew about my research, asked me to lead a tour of the cemetery at Halloween time. These tours, moved to early summer, continued to be a yearly event through June of 2016.

To me, cemeteries are history carved in stone. Each tour was different; I tried to create a memorable experience for the attendees. The benefits of these tours were many, while familiarizing yourself with Napa Valley and its history through the stories of Napa's former residents at rest, a participant also got a nice walk in a beautifully maintained park-like setting.

Each tour was different; I tried to create a memorable experience for the attendees.

Editor's note: Nancy retired giving these tours after 22 years in 2016.
Dan Cutright
Member for 35 Years

I first became aware of NCL with the first Holiday Candlelight Tour, the signature event of NCL. In the early 1980s. My family and I have attended or volunteered for all of them. My interest in local historic preservation really began with the demolition of John L. Shearer and Lincoln Elementary schools, both stunning 2 story brick buildings. I attended Shearer school from kindergarten through 6th grade, have fond memories of the building’s beauty, and was heartbroken when they were torn down for seismic reasons. Were it today with current retrofit technology, demolition could have been avoided especially had NCL been involved. This was the 1970s when historic architecture was not highly valued and when up to 60 historic structures downtown, including residences were razed for something more “modern”. NCL was born of the 1970s experience.

Today, thoughtful developers are viewing historic architecture as a plus to new growth not simply something to tear down, e.g. Stone Brewery and Food City Center. With the help of NCL and thoughtful decisionmakers opportunities like HHS campus on Old Sonoma Rd. can accommodate both adaptive reuse and new housing construction for the benefit of all. The Franklin Street Post Office is another critical opportunity facing us all. I encourage all interested parties to become involved and participate in the forthcoming decision process. Please make your opinion heard.

Your membership is critical to NCL’s success and survival. Please consider becoming a member. Also consider volunteering your time, either at one of our many events or even as a member of one of our committees. I can state first hand that the work is gratifying. We have great fun in the pursuit of the mission and know that we are making a positive impact on the community. Even if you don’t think of yourself as a “Preservationist” but are interested in protecting the historic feel of the town, your varied skills and social/business connections could be highly valuable to our efforts. I hope you’ll join NCL today!

Join Napa County Landmarks

Support Napa County Landmarks by becoming a member, making a donation, or by becoming a volunteer. As a non-profit organization, we rely on donations and annual membership dues to fulfill our mission. Join today and start enjoying the benefits of membership, including our quarterly newsletter, invitations to member-only events and discounted advance tickets to public events and tours.

Select a tax-deductible annual membership at one of the following levels:

- $36 Individual
- $50 Family
- $100 Supporter
- $250 Sponsor
- $500 Corporate
- $1,000 Benefactor
- Renewal
- New Member

Name______________________________
Address____________________________
City________________ State________ Zip________________
Phone________________ Email________________

Please make checks payable to Napa County Landmarks and mail to:
Napa County Landmarks, 1754 Second Street, Suite E, Napa, California 94559

Your membership is vital in preserving our architectural heritage. Thank you for your support.

For more information contact us at info@napacountylandmarks.org, call 707-255-1836 or go to www.napacountylandmarks.org
Connections of a Judge, JUSTICE and a Lady

CPF Award Winners Tour - October 19, 2019

By Rebecca Yerger

Connections of a Judge, Justice and a Lady tour on Sat., Oct. 19th, 10 AM - 2 PM, will showcase the three local California Preservation Foundation (CPF) Award winners in the category of “restoration.” These three Napa historical properties are: the Judge Johnson and Sarah Horrell House, a circa 1856 Gothic Revival House and 1907 Hayman Cottage; the 1878 Italianate-style Napa County Courthouse and the 1889 Queen Anne style Ackerman Heritage House.

CPF, a statewide historic preservation non-profit organization, grants their annual top award to only the most exceptional of California’s historic preservation projects. For 2019, CPF selected 21 award recipients from a large pool of candidates qualifying in various preservation categories. In the field of “restoration,” CPF selected only five award winners. Three of the winners were all located in the same California community—Napa! This is a truly rare occurrence!

The October 19th tour of these winners is a celebration of this auspicious event and the property owners’ commitment to preservation. In addition to the self-guided tour, light refreshments will be available at the residential properties.

On what promises to be a memorable Autumn day, see first-hand examples of top honored historic restoration projects and discover their shared historical connections.

Advanced Purchased Tickets, per person, are: $25 for NCL members; $15 for Students (17 years & under) and $30 for Non-members. All Day of the Event purchased tickets are $30 per person. For more details, and tickets, please visit napacountylandmarks.org or call 707-255-1836.
An Historical Overview of the Franklin Station Post Office

By Rebecca Yerger

The Franklin Station Post Office possesses an impressive, yet frequently overlooked, edifice. The National Register of Historic Places listed property was constructed during the Great Depression of the early 20th Century. It is a rare, local example of the WPA Moderne architectural style, as well as, a national economic stimulus program that embodies America’s determination and commitment to overcoming the hardships of the 1930s.

The $100,000 Franklin Station building was designed by William H. Corlett, a prolific local architect. The post office was completed and opened by late 1933. The downtown Napa architectural icon was the sixth known Napa City post office since the U.S. Postal Service was established locally on April 9, 1850. It was also a vast improvement over the prior facilities.

The significance of this fact did not elude the local populace. In reply, they organized, and carried out, an elaborate commemorative ceremony on May 27, 1933. The event included a grand parade, patriotic music and speeches, at which time, the cornerstone and its time capsule, were set in place at the building’s future northeast corner.

Regarding its design and style, the property’s Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) form said, “The Franklin Station Post Office is of a style familiar throughout the country in Post Offices’ constructed during the 1930s. In the Art Deco style, often called WPA Moderne, the Post Office is the most prominent example of its style in Napa...”

As for the ornate exterior lanterns, while not confirmed, the common belief is that they were originally part of the 1939 Worlds Fair Treasure Island exhibit and added to the Napa site years later.

In 1967, Franklin Station Post Office was remodeled to increase office space in the basement and add an exterior ramp. The historic interior and exterior details sustained minimal alterations.

But, on August 24, 2014, the 1933 building sustained considerable earthquake damage. Ultimately, the United States Postal Service sold the property instead of restoring the locally unique National Register property.

The Franklin Station is currently in the process of repurpose/redevelopment.

This historical overview is a summary of a May 2012 Napa Valley Marketplace magazine article written by Rebecca Yerger.)

“...the Post Office is the most prominent example of its style in Napa...”

Historic Resources Inventory
Masonic Hall

The history of the Masonic fraternity has deep roots. In the Middle Ages free agent stonemasons built castles and cathedrals. These freemasons formed organizations to take care of their families and soon others, known as accepted masons, joined the fraternity. The concept spread worldwide with the first American lodge forming in Boston in 1733. The Gold Rush of 1849 brought thousands of settlers to California, many of whom were Masons. George C. Yount was one of them and together with his fellow Masons in 1851 established a local lodge in Napa.

In 1888, a cornerstone was laid for a three story imposing brick 50’ x 110’ Masonic Hall in downtown Napa on Second Street between Brown and Coombs Streets. W.P. Corlett & Sons were the contractors and a San Francisco firm was hired for the brick work. The front façade had custom pressed brick trimmed with decorative carvings of granite and sandstone. The ground floor had two store entrances, the second floor had eight offices and the entire third floor was reserved for the Masonic fraternity. At a cost of $37,500 when completed, it was considered the finest business building in Napa County. On August 29, 1889 the Masonic Hall was dedicated.

In 1972 the Masonic Hall was considered by the City of Napa to be in the way of progress. Parking was promised for the new retail stores, Carithers and Mervyn’s. The city went to court to acquire the Masonic Hall through eminent domain, paying $267,500 for the site to provide 17 parking spaces. Demolition of the building to make way for Urban Renewal was scheduled for March of 1973. Several extensions were granted and there was also a community movement to try and save the building. The Napa Community Redevelopment Agency was concerned further delays could jeopardize federal funding regarding the redevelopment program. Despite all efforts to save the building, in June of 1974 demolition began on the building. The historic Behlow Building next door also met the same fate. On October 11, 1974 the new 35 space parking facility was proudly opened.

Note: Napa County Landmarks was formed in 1974 by local citizens who were distraught by the demolition of many of downtown Napa’s historic buildings.
Events Calendar

California Preservation Foundation Winners
Tour of “A Judge, Justice and a Lady”
Saturday, October 19th, 2019
10:00am - 2:00pm
Visit NCL web site for tickets and details

Legacies of Long-Ago Napans:
Treasures from the Past (Lecture Series)
5 weeks, Mondays, September 23rd–October 21st

A Haunting We Will Go! (Walking Tours)
Saturday, October 13th, Calistoga
Saturday, October 26th, Napa

The Art & Architecture of Tulocay Cemetery (Walking Tour)
Saturday, November 2nd

Holiday Candlelight Tour
Saturday, December 14th

Stay tuned as our calendar updates throughout the year!

Be A Volunteer

Napa County Landmarks (NCL), a non-profit organization, greatly depends on it’s volunteers to support our mission. This is done in a wide variety of ways – from researching historic properties and assistance in preparing landmark nominations, to publishing educational materials and reviewing new development projects that impact neighborhoods. Other volunteer opportunities include: docents for our annual Holiday Candlelight Tours, check in/ticket sales for all our walking tours, as well as, a few hours in our downtown Napa office assisting with preparation for mailings and general filing of resources. What talents are you interested in sharing with us? Please reach out to us at: info@napacountylandmarks.org or call 707-255-1836. Office hours are 11 AM to 3 PM.

Let us know if you would be interested in contributing more directly by joining our Preservation Action Committee (PAC), which is the advocacy arm of NCL. The committee’s role is to provide specific education on issues and properties, as well as, foster liaisons with other organizations both within the County and the larger world of preservation (e.g. The National Trust, the California Preservation Foundation). The committee seeks to increase understanding of the importance of Historic Preservation to the health of Napa County.

Volunteers are the backbone of our organization—we welcome your energy and ideas!