

# Legacy Links



**PRESERVING OLD LA VERNE'S ENVIRONMENT:  
MAKING HISTORY FOR THE FUTURE**

**LA VERNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
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## Every Picture Tells a Story

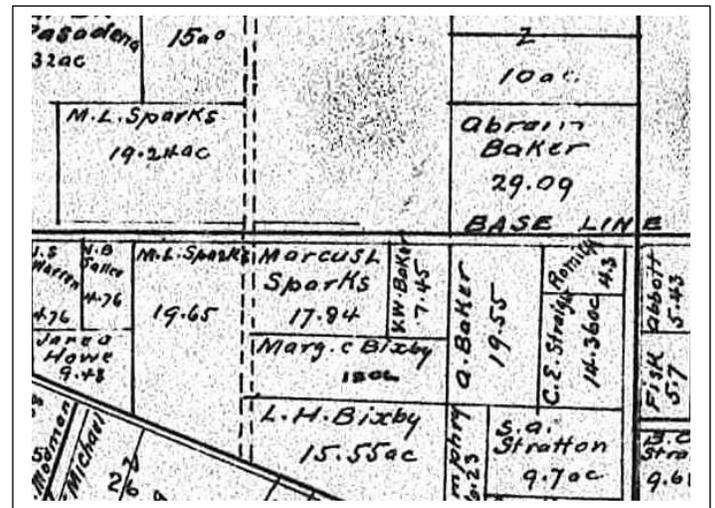
In the March 2021 edition of *Legacy Links*, Walter Gates recalled his early days in La Verne at his father's ranch at the mouth of San Dimas Canyon. In the September 2020 edition of *Legacy Links*, we heard about Gates' first day as a student at La Verne Heights School. Walter passed by the property of Marcus L. Sparks and walked the rest of the way to school with the Sparks girls, Nellie, Elsie, and Eva. This article recounts some history of the Sparks family, early citrus growers.



Born in Wilkes County, N. C. in 1853, Marcus Sparks moved with his family to Kansas in 1867. With \$8.50 in his pocket, Marcus traveled to Sacramento in 1875 for adventure and opportunity. He worked in the Sacramento area and married Nancy Michael in

Butte County on June 27, 1880. The following month they moved to the Pomona Valley and bought five acres of land. In addition, Marcus worked for wages, bought a wagon and team, and set out trees and vines.

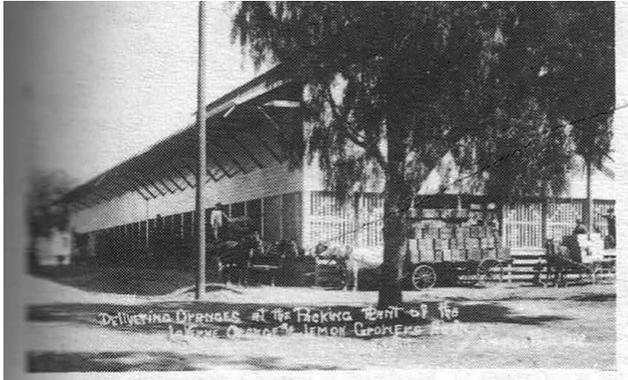
He bought an additional 22 acres of land in Pomona, which he improved with artesian wells. This land he sold for \$25,000, with which he bought property for a home in Pomona and 20 acres in La Verne in 1889. This was the start of Sparks' citrus ranch operation. By adding to his holdings, Sparks eventually owned 152 acres of productive citrus orchards.



1903 map of the Sparks holdings in La Verne, with land above and below Baseline Road.

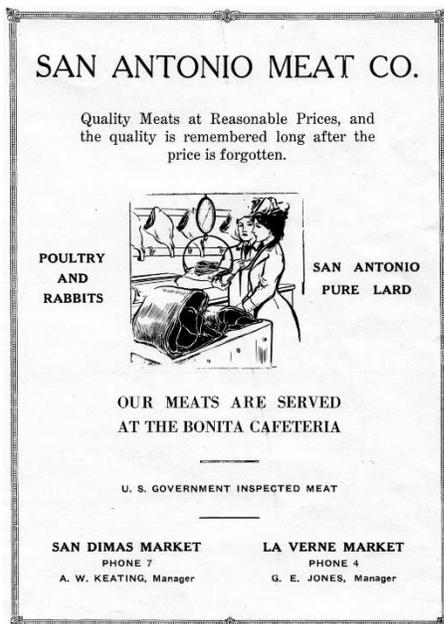
In 1894, Sparks sent his first shipment of oranges from La Verne to New York. The oranges arrived covered in mold and unusable. Sparks learned more about preserving the fruit and his own packing plant on the

southwest corner of “D” and First Streets, along the railroad tracks.



*Marcus Sparks Packing House.  
—Frasher Collection, Pomona Public Library*

Marcus Sparks sold his ranch holdings in 1908 and moved to Pomona, where he became President of the San Antonio Meat Company, dealers in retail and wholesale meats. He owned and operated a 20-acre meat packing plant on East Holt Avenue as well as the Palace Meat Market on Second Street. Both were very successful. The advertisement below is for branches of the meat market, located in San Dimas and La Verne and managed by two of Sparks’ sons-in-law.



Sparks was very civic-minded, serving as a trustee of the La Verne Grammar School and president of the board of trustees of Bonita High School. He was also a trustee of the First Baptist Church of Pomona,

president of the La Verne Citrus Association and the San Dimas Land and Water Company. Marcus Sparks died in 1933 at the age of 80.

### The Sparks Girls

Marcus and Nancy Sparks had four daughters, three of whom lived to adulthood. One daughter, Minnie, died at nineteen months. Their first daughter Nellie M., married Levi Ehresman in 1900. Daughter Elsie married A. W. Keating in 1903. She died at age 51, the same year as her father. The third daughter to marry was Eva, who wed George E. Jones in 1907. The daughters settled in Pomona, San Dimas, and La Verne, respectively.

We were first introduced to the Sparks girls by Walter Gates, whose memoir relates how he walked with them on his first day of school. Gates recalled that their grove was one of the best in the valley and that Eva, the youngest Sparks girl, would be in Walter’s first grade class. Perhaps we’ll read more of Walter Gates’ memoirs in future issues of *Legacy Links*.

Materials for this history was extracted from many sources, including F. Brackett’s Biography of Marcus Sparks in his book, *History of Pomona Valley* (reference 1920) and the recollections of Evelyn Hollinger in her 1989 publication *La Verne: The story of the people who made a difference*. Additional resources include the *Pomona Progress Bulletin*, the 1922 Bonita Union High School *Echoes* yearbook, FamilySearch.org, and Ancestry.com. La Verne City Historian **Bill Lemon** compiled the materials for this article.

### President’s Message

The LVHS is waking up to the possibilities of expanded program opportunities. As more people receive COVID-19 vaccinations, we will move closer to reinstating face-to-face events. In the meantime, we will stick with Zoom and more frequent newsletters.

Moving Along. On March 31<sup>st</sup> the 109-year-old Marsh House was moved to 2321 First Street, just two blocks west of its original location. With the help of a crew of professional house movers and their equipment, the

house and a detached bungalow traveled to reside on a double lot with the Colonel Heath House. Owned by Linda Lockhart Wilkinson, the two houses will form part of what she is calling “Lordsburg Heritage Square,” which she envisions using for residential use and a “Holiday Open House” for the community. About 75 community members turned out for the event.

The house was cut into four sections for the move. The first image shows a smaller house section being hoisted with a forklift. The next image depicts the main portion of the house traveling down First Street with a mover holding up a wire with a long pole. The final image shows the bungalow joining the main house in its new location. What an accomplishment!



Virtual Home Tour. On March 24, 2021, a virtual home tour of the Mishler House was conducted with Ms. Kathryn Booth-Butler at 2513 Third Street. In a Q&A interview with LVHS President Sherry Best, Ms. Booth-Butler provided details about her home’s architecture, restoration, and other features. Steve Moran was the contractor who did much of her work after she moved into the house. City Historian Bill Lemon supplied a video “time capsule.”



This photo appeared in the 3/2/42 *Pomona Progress Bulletin* to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of Moses J. and Mary Mishler. Mishler, a skilled carpenter, built

the Mishler House and several others in the city. This photo was taken after they moved from the house.

Ms. Booth-Butler supplied images of the house prior to its restoration by Bill and Kate Shelley, who owned the home from 2010 until she bought it in 2017. The virtual tour provides an opportunity to appreciate the enormous amount of work that has been done to restore the Mishler House to its present glory. When face-to-face programming is once again available to LVHS members, Ms. Booth-Butler will host a bronze marker installation ceremony and her home will join notable residences already identified in this program.

The home tour video is available on the LVHS website. Click on “Event Videos” and scroll through the options. Checking our events on video provides an excellent overview of LVHS activities through the years.



**The Mishler House as it looks today**

Redwood Grove Update. April 6<sup>th</sup> was the date for another discussion of the Evelyn Hollinger Redwood Grove at Las Flores Park, located at 3175 Boling Avenue. The City's Community Services Department conducted the meeting and will give input to members of the City Council, who will make the final decision to accept recommendations on the revised proposal. The LVHS supported the recommendation of the department, which will spare the redwood grove by locating the proposed 8,000 square foot Teen Center building approximately 50 feet southwest of the original location. The revised proposal would also relocate the basketball court and reduce the size of the outdoor patio that would service the center. The access road and 49 parking spaces were part of the proposal. The proposal will eventually come before the City Council for its final decision. Funding for the Teen Center would depend on grants; results will be forthcoming in 6-8 months. Operation and general maintenance expenses would come from La Verne's general fund. The LVHS hopes to hold its Old Timer's Potluck Picnic in August 2021 in the redwood grove.

Thank you to all those who renewed their Society memberships. We will be able to move forward with restoring the 1938 International truck and provide images of our progress on Facebook and our website.

**Sherry Best, LVHS President**



**Just Ask Bill**

There was one question for Bill in this edition of *Legacy Links*. Sherry Best, LVHS President, passed along a question that arose during a telephone conversation about La Verne's past.

She thought it would be of interest to readers. A special edition of *Legacy Links* will be devoted to the Haynes Family of Programs in the near future.

Earl asked:

Whatever happened to the LeRoy Boy's Home? Is it still operating?

Hello Earl: LeRoy Haynes, a chaplain for the California Youth Authority, purchased land along Baseline Road in La Verne and opened the LeRoy Boy's Home in 1946. The name changed to LeRoy Haynes Center in 1994 and changed again to Haynes Family of Programs in 2014. Specializing in serving children through four programs of non-public school, residential treatment, mental health services, and community outreach, the Haynes Family of Programs has retained the main campus in the original La Verne location and operates a high school campus in Pomona.

On October 30, 2020, Haynes signed documents with David and Margaret Youth and Family Services stating their intent to merge. Merging of these two organizations will expand the breadth and depth of services provided to foster youth, students with disabilities, and families in need of therapeutic support. Although each agency will operate independently for a period, there will be one governing body and a common leadership team to provide oversight and assure integration.



**This photo and narrative material were captured from the current website of the Haynes Family of Programs**

David and Margaret Youth and Family Services and Haynes Family of Programs both originated in La Verne and continue to provide services to children and youth who need support for successful adult outcomes.

## In our Backyard... La Verne's Public Art

The first in a series of collaborative videos by La Verne TV and the LVHS was completed on March 17<sup>th</sup> with a presentation by Eric Davis, the artist who created the mural on the east and south walls of the Fourth Street Mill restaurant. Mr. Davis described his creative process to filmmakers Ken Pucci and Claudia Gonzalez, in front of an audience consisting of Bill Lemon, Sherry Best, Marv Weston, and onlookers waiting to take their pets into the La Verne Animal Hospital next door.



Claudia Gonzalez of La Verne TV filmed Eric's presentation about his mural creations (above). The completed video will be shown on La Verne TV and posted on its website by the LVHS.



Eric started with a pencil sketch and then used watercolor for color references (above). The sketches and color studies were submitted to the city for approval. Next, Eric transferred his design to the wall face and then brought the mural to life. The mural was done completely in freehand, using no photography or projection. The mural on the south

wall received similar treatment until both surfaces came together as an integrated scene.

As the artist's story unfolded, listeners learned that the lettering on the east-facing mural was originally "Fourth Street Mill," but was changed to "Fourth Street Old Town" in the event the business was renamed at a future date. The south wall proudly states "La Verne: Heart of the Orange Empire."



To add to the building's history, Bill Lemon presented a "time capsule." In 1933 the building served as an office for Drs. John Stroud and J. E. Hubble. The following year Dr. Robert G. Wirth of northern California joined Dr. Hubble's practice.

**Dr. John Stroud of Pomona, associate of Dr. J. E. Hubble, has announced the opening of a La Verne office at 2122 4th street. His hours here are from 7 to 8 o'clock every evening, except Saturday and Sunday.**

It is not known whether both doctors were simultaneously associates of Dr. Hubble or if one succeeded the other. However, by 1936 Dr. Hubble had passed away and the building housed the La Verne Finance and Building Company. The building had other assorted tenants throughout its history and the community is especially fortunate that history of local businesses is a passion of Bill's.

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Us If You Are  
Planning A Home**

**La Verne Finance & Building Co.**  
● CONTRACTORS and BUILDERS ●

We Are Cooperating with F.H.A. and Veterans' Loans  
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2122 Fourth St. — LA VERNE — Phone 1276

Look for the video link for Eric's mural presentation at <https://youtu.be/NOSF03mvRhs> and Bill Lemon's time capsule at <https://youtu.be/EdPxylcNWa4>.

The LVHS is helping to support virtual education and entertainment in partnership with local TV stations in La Verne and San Dimas. PLEASE – If you have an idea about where we could film or are willing to host a garden or home tour, contact Sherry Best at [sbest@lavernehistoricalsociety.org](mailto:sbest@lavernehistoricalsociety.org) or Ken Pucci at [kpucci@laverne.edu](mailto:kpucci@laverne.edu) with your ideas. We want to showcase places and people of interest to residents.

## Trouble Sharing the Road: When Horses Met Vehicles in La Verne

As America switched from animal-powered to mechanical conveyances, there was a period of adjustment when both forms of transportation shared the road. Animal vs. mechanical encounters were sometimes challenging and occasionally perilous. Two articles in the 1918 and 1919 *La Verne Leader* describe how the city adjusted its ordinance to create better "parking" in downtown as well as a frightening and close encounter between horses and automobiles.

The January 1, 1918 edition of the *La Verne Leader* stated:

*There has been considerable comment on the new signs which has been placed on the streets prohibiting hitching teams in the business district. The city authorities desire the public to use the public hitch rack in the rear of the fire hall. There is room to hitch, provided not more than four or five rigs come into town at one time.*



Taken in Los Angeles, circa 1900, one can see the congestion of animal and machine-powered vehicles on city streets

More horse trouble ensued in 1919, described in a December 25<sup>th</sup> article in the *La Verne Leader*. The event, which took place earlier in the week, involved a team engaged in hauling gravel for a sidewalk to be built on the north side of Third Street between "B" and "C" Streets. The horses became frightened and bolted across the street and in the direction of the La Verne College ladies' dormitory. When their reins became entangled, the horses were jerked back in the direction of the Motor Inn Garage. In their path was a

Buick occupied by Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Lillard of San Dimas and Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Mitchell visiting from Monta Vista, Colorado. The horses struck the car, became entangled in their harness, and damaged the right wheel of the car when they scrambled up. The car had a smashed windshield and torn front seat. The wagon sustained little damage and fortunately there was no serious human or equine injury. Dr. Hubble treated the injured humans for cuts, bruises, and shock. Onlookers reported that the presence of the automobile prevented the team from crashing through the plate glass front of the Motor Inn Garage.

## **A Blast from Our Past**

### **Herb and Ruth Hogan were Wonderful Mentors**

by Jeff Allred

In the mid-1970's I had the good fortune of interacting with Dr. Herb Hogan, a popular and renowned Professor of History at La Verne College. I was also privileged to work under the tutelage of Ruth S. Hogan, La Verne's hardworking and dedicated City Clerk. These associations ultimately had far reaching positive impacts on my career path, competencies and job performance. My first encounter with Dr. Hogan was in his U.S. History class where I was an underclassman in awe of his insights. I remember one day in class, as Dr. Hogan was speaking about the Constitution created by the Founding Fathers, he stated, "Never before in the history of the world had so many great minds been assembled in one place." That made a strong, lasting impression on my young mind regarding the birth and destiny of America. Most importantly, Dr. Hogan had the rare ability to connect with each of his students on a personal level. As a political science major, I jumped at the opportunity to enroll in Dr. Hogan's history classes whenever possible. He was a captivating lecturer and a demanding task master who instilled confidence in his students by providing constructive criticisms and comments on our essays and exams. On a few occasions Dr. Hogan complimented me on the persuasive arguments and style of my written work. On one of my papers, he scribbled that I could, perhaps one

day, write on a professional level. Of course, that comment did wonders for my self-image and confidence. Years later as I worked as La Verne's Assistant City Manager from 1987 through 2000, I occasionally ran into Dr. Hogan around town. He always remembered my name and greeted me with kind words. In 1991 Dr. Hogan wrote the following note in my copy of his epic book, *The University of La Verne--A Centennial History; 1891-1991*, which again did wonders for my self-image and confidence "Jeff, Warmest regards to a loyal ULV alumnus and one who is making a significant contribution to the City of La Verne. I wish all my history students were as sharp as you. Herb Hogan"

For more than a year during my studies at La Verne College, I was fortunate to work part-time as an administrative intern in the old La Verne City Hall at 2061 Third Street. There I worked alongside of my close friend Marty Lomeli in administering federally-funded programs under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (C.E.T.A). I also worked on special projects for City Manager George Caswell and his chief assistant, City Clerk Ruth Hogan. I was not surprised to learn that Ruth had previously been married to my favorite professor Herb Hogan as they seemed to be cut from the same cloth. Marty Lomeli and I worked side-by-side at tables situated between the desks of administrative specialists, Kathy Hamm and Bonnie Lanham, just outside of the doorways to the offices of George Caswell and Ruth Hogan. Marty and I were both wide-eyed "sponges" who soaked up the conversations and dynamics of the inner-workings at city hall. (At that time, the movie "All the President's Men" starring Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman was the rage, and Marty and I jokingly referred to ourselves as 'Woodward and Bernstein'--the chief characters in the movie who worked as a tandem.) In addition to her official duties as City Clerk, Ruth Hogan also served as the City's personnel director and the general day-to-day supervisor of administrative staff members in city hall. Ruth delegated various human resources tasks to me, so I had regular opportunities for interaction with her.

In my estimation, she was the consummate administrative professional who had earned the respect of the City Manager, the City Council, and all city employees. Ruth carried a no-nonsense business demeanor at the workplace but she was always kind and respectful of others. She was a bit intimidating, especially to young inexperienced employees such as myself and my girlfriend, Karen Dow, who was the secretary at the old La Verne Fire Department administrative office at the corner of Third and "C" Streets. Yet I greatly admired Ruth for her vast knowledge, polished style, and unparalleled work ethic.

One day near the end of my internship with the City, Ruth asked me to step into her office where she thanked me for my efforts. She also counseled that after graduation I should consider a career in public sector human resources. I thanked her for the opportunity to work with her and for the advice. Later, I was greatly saddened to learn of Ruth's passing due to an extended battle with a chronic disease that she had bravely endured over the years.

After graduation from the University of La Verne in 1978, I had opportunity to utilize the insights and skills I had learned from Herb and Ruth Hogan. I soon embarked on a career in public sector human resources and risk management, first as an analyst for the City of West Covina and then as a human resources director and assistant to the city manager at the cities of Downey and El Monte. A decade after my last conversation with Ruth Hogan, I was appointed as La Verne's Assistant City manager where I performed many duties she had previously administered so well. In fact, I was once honored to be the recipient of the "Ruth Hogan Pride of La Verne" award presented annually to La Verne's outstanding administrative staff member. Ultimately, both Marty Lomeli and I were honored to serve as city managers ourselves, Marty at La Verne and me at Norco and Rosemead.

Oh yeah; to close the loop on this story, my girlfriend Karen Dow and I were married in 1978 and have made

our home in La Verne. Over my 40 plus-year career and beyond, I have always held fond remembrances of my Hogan mentors.

### Ride in Your Own Wagon

This edition of *Legacy Links* closes with a writing from 1913. Entitled *The Biography of Elder James M. Neff and his writings*, it conveys timeless wise words...

The little girl was pushing me along the sidewalk in a wheelchair through Lordsburg, a few days ago, when we met a man riding up the street on a bicycle, another on a motorcycle, several others in an automobile, one driving an old grey mare to a rickety old phaeton, another driving a fine matched team to a bright, new, modern carriage, and still another driving a team of heavy draft horses to a ranch wagon. And, so fast as I could observe, each one seemed satisfied with his own vehicle, and under the circumstances I was very well satisfied with mine. I thought what a fine thing it was that each man was content to ride in his own wagon, and what a fine thing it would be if everyone could be thus content with his lot. How is it with you, reader? Can you sit with perfect composure in your own wagon without regarding with envy him who has a better one? He who can is worth so much more to the world than he who cannot, that the difference can hardly be estimated. He who can, knows it when the sun shines; he has the time to listen when the birds sing and to smile and cheer and help somebody else. Yes, it will pay you in a thousand ways to acquire the grace of riding contentedly in your own wagon.

  
**NEW LVHS Members**  
Kevin & Carly Knowles  
Robin Purcell  
Kristen Bohlka  
Jeff Allred