

## Napa Valley 1979-03-17

Clipped By:



**johnwalshderby**  
Wed, Jul 29, 2020





1910  
PRESENTED BY  
THE  
NATIONAL  
HUMANE  
ALLIANCE  
HERMON LEE  
ENSIGN  
FOUNDER



# HISTORY OF FULLER PARK

Parks and Recreation Services  
1850 Soscol Ave. Suite 201, Napa, CA 94559  
707-257-9529



## History of Fuller Park

For almost a century, Fuller Park has been a haven for Napans escaping the heat, getting into shape, walking Fido, hosting family reunions and just plain kicking back, drinking in the sunshine and daydreaming the hours away. The city of Napa purchased the 10 acres in 1905 for \$12,000. At that time, the land, known as Campbell's Grove, was orchards and open space. It was the home of the local football and baseball teams. Members of the city council at the time of the purchase were E.G. Manasse, C.B. Seeley, J.B. Newman, J.F. Even and C.H. Lavensaler. The city clerk was H.H. Thompson. After clearing the land, the next year, the design of the park was in the hands of J.H. Chalmers, who envisioned a plant conservatory and a small lake, which, unfortunately, never materialized. The park was known as Oak Street Park until 1919 when it was named after C.H. Fuller, who was Napa's mayor at the time of its purchase. Over the years, the types of trees have run in the hundreds, including sycamore, elm, maple and mammoth redwoods. At one time, the stateliest stand of pin oak trees in California was in Fuller Park. Sadly, as of the early 1970s, only four of them remained standing. The park once boasted a botanical garden and a wading pool. One by one the plants died off, primarily due to vandalism and lack of funds to maintain the gardens. Several flower beds scattered throughout the park met with the same demise. Memorials, cannons and teeter-totters

Military cannon that once graced the park is still a bone of contention among the old-timers. In 1942, the city returned the cannon, which had been mounted on a warship in Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War. The huge piece of artillery was shipped from Napa to the U.S. Army National Tuesday, July 15, 2003. Metal Salvage to be melted down and used during World War II. The Army promised the residents of Napa it would replace the relic but failed to keep good on its promise. In 1929, the American Legion erected a heart-shaped memorial dedicated to the men and women who gave their lives for freedom during the "great war." Not to be outdone, the Veterans of Foreign Wars dedicated its own memorial in 1933 -- a small rock marker -- paying tribute to those who died in all wars. The playground in the middle of the park has been a magnet, drawing enthusiastic youngsters since 1948.

A former flag pole in the middle of the playground sported a plaque which read: "This playground equipment donated by the Napa Rotary Club 1948-49." Kids, old and young, spent many a day frolicking on the slides, swings, merry-go-round and teeter-totters. The gathering place for the youngsters gave way last March when city public works crews undertook a \$440,000 renovation. The new-fangled play area includes two play structures, swings, a rubberized safety surface, a sand box, fencing, benches, a water fountain and lighting. The new playground is scheduled to open this month.

Many long-time Napans may remember the rocker-rider animals in the playground. He various concrete animals were mounted on huge springs, allowing the buckaroos to rock back and forth and bounce to their heart's content. City park superintendent Bob Carlsen said the rock-and-rolling creatures are long gone, but he's not certain of their fate. The California Playground Safety Committee determined the springs could pinch a child, so they had to go, Carlsen said. However, the dolphin statue that was removed just last March to make way for the new playground is still around. "The dolphin didn't fit with the new playground structure," Carlsen said. But we are doing our best to find it a home within our city park system."

The now-silent water fountain in the northwest corner of the park once was the center of the busy intersection of Pearl, Polk and Franklin streets in downtown Napa. The fountain was donated in 1910 by the Human Alliance. The marble fountain featured a higher trough for horses and small basins near the ground for dogs and cats.

As automobiles replaced horse-drawn vehicles, the fountain became a traffic hazard and was boxed up and stored at the city waterworks. In 1967, the boxes were dusted off and carted to Fuller Park, where the stately fountain once again dazzled, spouting water from the top dome as goldfish swam in the bottom troughs. The restoration of the fountain was mainly brought about by the determination and push of then park superintendent Robert Pelusi. Today, the fountain is dry, dusty and just a reminder of days gone by.

The Napa Junior Women's New Century Club also played a part in the park's rich history. In 1961, the club erected a museum at the corner of Seminary and Laurel streets. The small structure featured the handiworks of Campfire Girls, Cub Scouts and other children's organizations. In 1967, the women's club closed the museum. The building was used as a polling place, and now it houses the Head Start preschool.

Scattered throughout the park are several stone monuments at tree bases, noting the names of the donors. In the 1970s, the park was bustling with classes in botany, horticulture and plant care as well as guided tours of the park. In September, residents gathered in the park for the annual art festival sponsored by the Napa Valley Art Fun started in 1905 at Fuller Park.

In 1985, the park underwent a massive renovation at the cost of \$300,000. New playground equipment was installed, the rose garden was given new life, walkways were installed, utility lines were placed underground and picnic tables were replaced. The four corner entrances to the park are paved with bricks engraved with the donors' names. In the early 1990s, the city agreed to let the Community Resources for Children, a non-profit organization, sell the bricks as a fundraiser.

In 1997, the park was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In partnership with the UC Master Gardeners of Napa County, the addition of the Fuller Park Tree Walk occurred in 2017. Then in 2018 the rose garden was added to the Tree. Walk.

It was decided to secure an Ensign fountain for the triangle at the intersection of Pearl, Franklin and Polk streets. The Civics Section was requested to consult with the City Trustees regarding the matter.

## Napa New Century Club to seek fountain 1910-01-26

Clipped By:



derbyct

Wed, Nov 13, 2019

be secured for the reasons.

The Civic Secretary, Mrs. R. M. Kyser Chairman, reported that the "Ensign Fountain," which the club has worked for so long, is at last on the way to Napa and will be placed on Second street as previously arranged.

## Napa street location 1911

Clipped By:



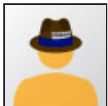
derbyct

Sun, Nov 10, 2019

## A New Fountain.

Mrs. R. M. Kyser, on behalf of the New Century Club, stated that the Ensign fountain, for horses and dogs, had arrived. The Council granted permission to locate it at the foot of Second street, but later in the meeting decided to confer with the ladies of the Club about having it placed at the intersection of Franklin and Polk streets.

Clipped By:



derbyct

Sun, Nov 10, 2019



**Most memorials do very little to draw attention to themselves. They just sit there, appreciative of occasional notice.**

**Not so with the donation by the National Humane Alliance, an organization about which modern Napans know little. Back in 1910 the alliance donated a fountain which is in more or less working order to this day.**

**It doesn't seem to matter that the collecting pool is usually trash and algae clogged. The fountain delights kids caught in its windwept spray as well as their parents. An identical fountain — similarly donated by the National Humane Alliance — sits in St. Helena's Lyman Park.**

## **Napa fountain location**

Clipped By:



**johnwalshderby**  
Wed, Jul 29, 2020