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THE CLARK AND PITCHER FAMILIES

Alice C. Pitcher

BY

ALICE (CLARK) PITCHER

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COVER

Alice (Clark) Pitcher and "Angel"

THE CLARK - PITCHER STORY

Alice (Clark) Pitcher made headlines recently, 27 Apr 1989, in the "Accent Section" of the Orange County Register newspaper:

WOMAN GIVES PARK TO ORANGE

Old Towne Site Holds Her Former Family Home

ORANGE - Residents in the Old Towne district soon will have a new half-acre park, thanks to longtime resident Alice Pitcher.

Pitcher, 85, donated the site of her family's former home to the city on March 28 in memory of Laurence Pitcher, her husband of 56 years and his family. Laurence Pitcher died in March 1988 at age 84.

The house, a one-story white bungalow built in the late 1800's, is at the southwest corner of Cambridge Street and Almond Avenue.

A barn and honey house, a bee-keeping building equipped with a honey-extracting machine, also sit on the land. They are surrounded by a variety of fruit trees.

A seven-member citizens committee is overseeing the park's development. It has yet to finalize a timetable for construction of the park and to decide whether any of the buildings will be demolished, said Al Ravera, director of the city's Community Development Office.

Pitcher said she hopes the city will keep the fruit trees but said the house should be razed.

Your editor would like to include a copy of the letter Alice wrote to the mayor and councilmen of Orange as it contains a brief history of the Pitcher Family:

Your Honor, Mayor Don Smith and Council Members,

Laurence Pitcher, an only child, was my husband of almost 56 years.

On October 13, 1912 he and his folks, Henry and Grace Pitcher, came to Orange from Kansas. They stayed at the Old Rochester Hotel, a brick, two-story 1884 building, for a few days and settled at 204 So. Cambridge for a lifetime (s.w.corner of Cambridge and Almond which is in Old Towne).

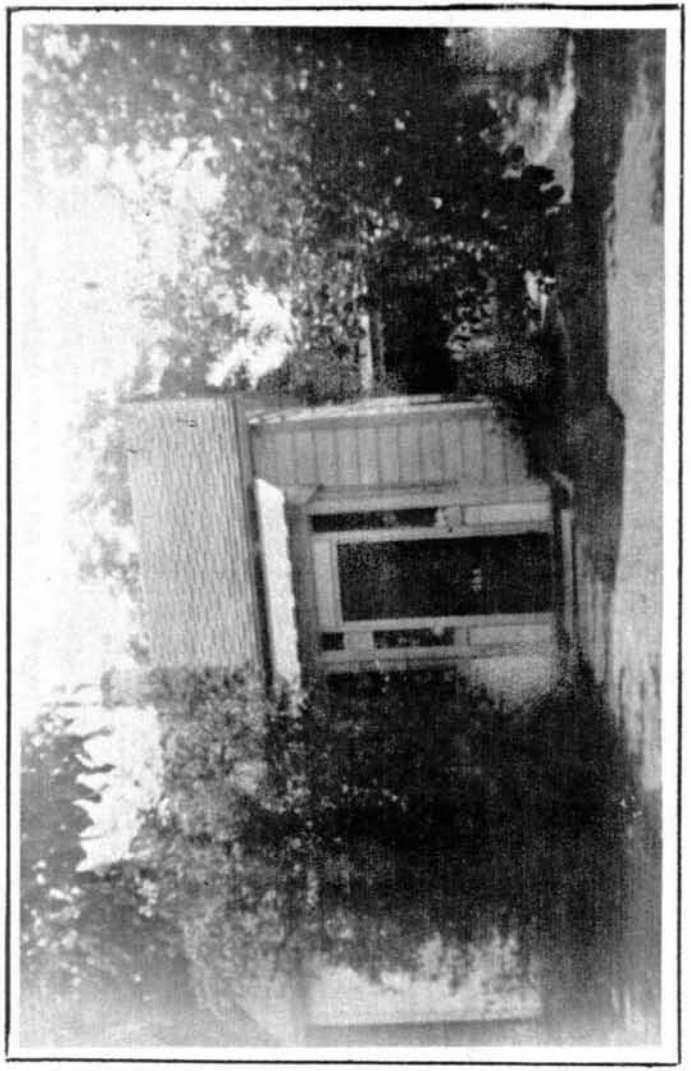
Orange's population at that time was 2900. They decided that Orange was a beauty spot and the place to locate. They had a horse, chickens, rabbits and a goat. They raised walnuts which had been planted by Charles F. Schubert in 1898. There were also a-ricots there.

Henry Pitcher had been a farmer and business man before coming to California; he had been in the hardware business. In Orange he became a real estate salesman and broker. He had an office on So. Glassell at the Plaza until the 40's when he moved his office to his home, enclosing the front porch for his office.

Laurence and I were married in 1932 and had a very happy, congenial and compatible marriage. My own parents were both gone and no one could have accepted me better than they did.

Henry Pitcher was one of the kindest, most dependable, most honest, sincerest and dearest persons. His wife, Grace, was a devoted wife with a pleasant personality and a great homemaker. She spoiled all of us. They were both faithful and active members of the First Christian Church. They were wonderful people.

Laurence was an Insustrial Arts teacher in the high school for 36 years. He began his career in San Juan Capistrano in 1929 when there were 75 students and six teachers including the Principal.



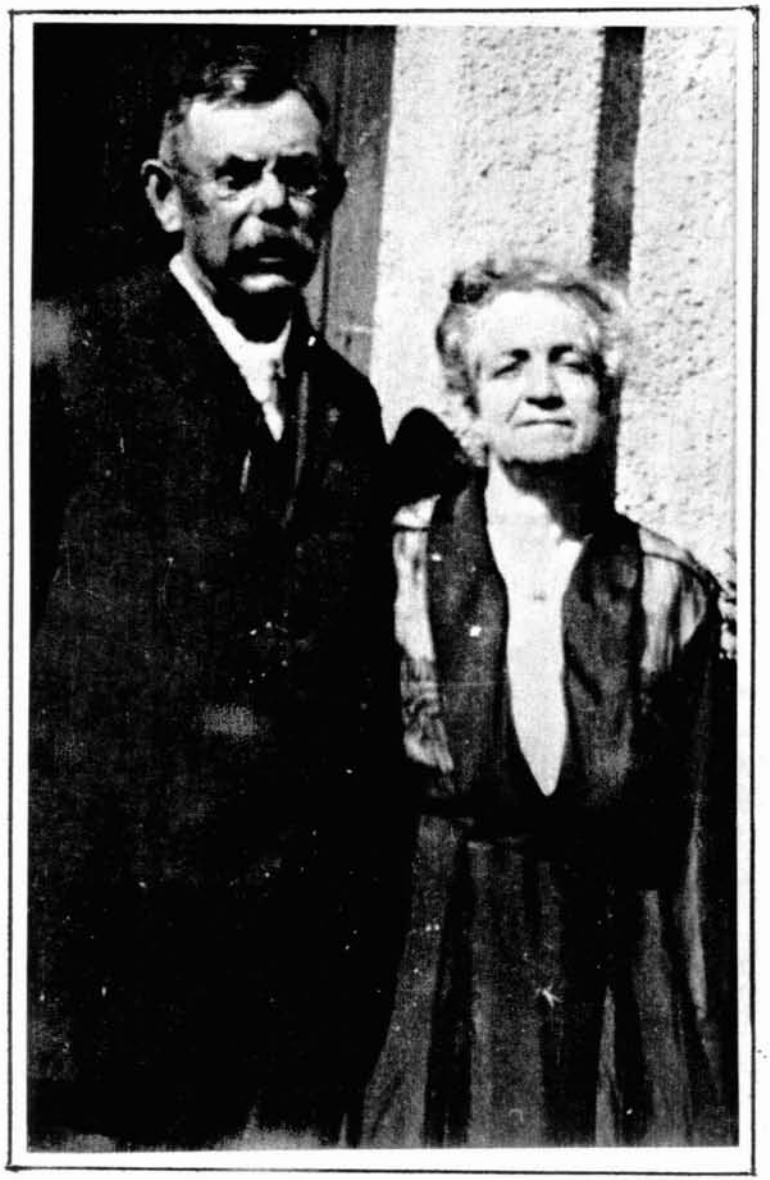
204 Cambridge, Orange

LAURENCE PITCHER WITH HIS PLOW

GRACE PITCHER tending her geese

FOUR CLARK SISTERS - about 1913
ANNA, DOROTHY, JUNE & ALICE

Alice & Laurence Pitcher with his
parents, Henry & Grace Pitcher



FRED L. & ALICE (JUDKINS) ~~PITCHER~~ Clark
about 1920 in Whittier

He was genius in his field, making many tools and pieces of eqipment in his lifetime. (He could figure anything out and make it), a "Fix It" man. Laurence's mother lived to be 85 and his father 92. Laurence passed away at the age of 84 in March, 1988.

Several years ago Larry and I discussed what we would do with the Cambridge St. property (1/2 acre). We both thought it would be nice to give the property to the City of Orange as a memorial to his parents for a small park to be called, "Pitcher Park."

We felt that many of the old and rare trees should be preserved. Laurence had a special interest in growing things.

Due to the fact that the old home doesn't have real historical significance I strongly recommend that it be demolished. It would almost be impossible to bring it up to code. It would require re-wiring. re-roofing, new plumbing and painting. It would be very costly.

It was not our idea to donate this property to the City of Orange which would incur costly taxpayers expense.

Some old homes can be restored with excellent results, but this is not that kind of a house. This doesn't have historical value. This is a "boxy" type house and over many years rooms were added. Even the plumbing was added.

I asked Larry many times what we could do to bring it up to standard. His answer was always the same - "We can't - we'll have to tear it down and start over." That never happened. The house was a temporary arrangement even for his folks, but it became permanent.

Some artifacts from an agricultural era gone by were gathered several weeks ago by a group of historically-minded citizens. They sifted through

the barn and other buildings and these articles were donated to the City and are now in storage at the City Corporation Yard. We are hoping that there is some way they can be displayed, later on.

I thought it would be a good idea to give the property to the City now so I could see it develop into a park.

I am very happy to present this gift,"Deed" to you!

I hope the park will be an asset to the "City of Orange."

Our desire was to have a small park on the property for people to enjoy with the hope that many of the trees could be retained.

We feel that our property would be an "unique" contribution to the City of Orange.

Gift Deed presented to the City Council on March 28, 1989.

REALTOR, 91 FEARS VALUES FADING

The following newspaper article appeared in THE REGISTER, 6 November 1961:

"Since Henry Pitcher was a young man helping his father run a ranch back in western Kansas, he has been interested in land.

'Land should work for you,' he says. 'I find it hard to adjust to the new set of values people have today. The young folks never expect to pay it off. Everyone seems indifferent to this precious gift of ownership.'

He ry Pitcher, who has been living in the same house at 204 S. Cambridge St., Orange, for the past 54 years is now 91 years of age. Near the front door of his house is a small office where he still conducts business. His card reads, 'Licensed Brok er; City Property, Groves, Exchanges.'

The veteran realtor, who acquired his first license in 1922, has been buying, working and selling land for more than 61 years, in Kansas, in Idaho, Oregon and California. He's been a broker since 1928 when he completed a course in real estate from UCLA. For years he operated an office on Glassell St. on the Plaza in Orange.

'Taxes today are making it almost impossible to operate a land holding. The taxes have eliminated any chance of making a profit. The assessments on agricultural land are putting many people out of business, and this shouldn't be,' Pitcher commented. 'It seems to me a man has a right to work his property for a fair profit.'

Pitcher has been a farmer and a businessman besides a real estate salesman and broker most of his life. He was in the hardware business in several locations many years before coming to Califronia with his wife, Grace, and son, Laurance, in 1912. In the years prior to the 1920's he operated orange and walnut groves in the Los Angeles-Orange County area. For decades he owned and leased out a section of ranch land near Silverado Canyon.

'It hurts me to see the way people today are turning toward government for everything. They seem to have lost a lot of gumption and initiative.' Pitcher said.

Pitcher thinks people should try to stay solvent. 'Certainly credit is good, and it is necessary but since the 1930's we've gone to excesses with it,' he says. The no down payment and 30-year loans for homes is a dangerous thing, he believes, because 'it is costly and it contributes to inflation.'

'The young folks who come to me today just don't stop to figure things out. They want to buy right away, without much thought as to how they're going to pay for the property. They're interested in starting at the top, not building from the ground up.'

The Orange Realtor has been a Christian man all his life, raised in the tradition of his American heritage and a belief in God, with a reverance for the bounty placed on earth for man. In the heart of the depression period in the early 30's Henry Pitcher saved scores of families from losing their homes by securing private loans to refinance the houses. He never charged a fee for his services. Many old timers around Orange say he helped more than a hundred persons this way.

Pitcher today talks frequently of his father and mother, who came west to Kansas in 1864 in a covered wagon. They raised hogs, horses and cattle and the fodder to feed stock. It was there he learned an appreciation for hard work, the value of a dollar and a reverance for land.

'I can't understand what the government is trying to do sometimes. Take the land where I was raised. . . why now they pay you not to raise crops, and maybe you never owned or worked the land before. It's crazy,' he says.

Pitcher thinks that Americans must return to the basic values 'given to us by our forefathers' . . . the values of honesty, hard work, belief in God and integrity of the dollar if America is to remain strong.

'You can't disregard these simple truths without getting into a lot of trouble,' Pitcher says. 'We've been going the wrong way too long now.'"

INTERESTING SOUVENIRS

Among her husband's momentos Alice found a church bulletin dated 21 Oct 1900 for Dedication Sunday for the New Christian Church Building, Havensville, Kansas. The church is pictured on the cover.

Anothere interesting souvenir was a commencement program dated 21 Apr 1899 of the Havensville Public School. Among the graduates was Henry Pitcher who also was listed as a speaker on "Perserverance."

THE CLARK FAMILY

The father of Alice Pitcher was Frederick Longworth Clark, born 16 Sep 1857 in Davenport, Iowa. He died 3 May 1924 when he was killed in an automobile accident in Santa Ana on Parton St. He was killed on an "S" curve when he was hit by a teenage driver who'd crossed the center line. He never regained consciousness.

Frederick married Alice Maria Judkins who was born 15 Sep 1865 in Lowell, Massachusettes. She died in April, 1926. They were married 29 Jun 1892 in Sonoma, California. She had met him in the east when he performed with the "Knight Templar's Band." Supposedly, it was "love at first sight."

The family consisted of four daughters: Ann, Dorothy, June and Alice. Ann became a great pianist and when Dot joined in with her violin, June with her trumpet and the father with his clarinet they became the Clark Orchestra.

Frederick L. Clark operated a furniture store and undertaking business in Azusa for many years. When Alice was fourteen the family removed to the San Joaquin Valley where Fred went into farming. This venture didn't pan out for Fred nor for his son-in-law, Thomas Jones so the family returned to Southern California. Alice attended six different high schools! Among them were Corcoran, Tulare and Chauchilla. She became a graduate of Santa Ana High School in 1921. Since one only needed two years of college to earn a teaching credential, Alice began teaching in 1923. She attended U.S.C. and UCLA.

Fred Clark's youngest, Alice, was born 23 Oct 1903 in Azusa, married Laurence Pitcher in June 1932.

Alice's first teaching assignment was in Santa Ana for three years, followed by two years in Fullerton where she became principal for fifteen years. Next she taught three years in Gardena before becoming principal of Amestoy School for 23 years.

Alice now resides at Park Plaza Retirement Residence with her dog, "Angel."