

## 224 S. Heliotrope Avenue



The Pacific View Tract was placed on the market in August of 1887 by the consortium of Cyrus W. Campbell, Joseph F. Sartori, and Frank N. Myers, who purchased some eighty acres of what had been the westernmost portion of the Rancho Azusa de Duarte from Lewis L. Bradbury. This was in response to the demand for additional lots adjacent to the highly successful new Town of Monrovia. The new tract

featured broad streets and large lots, and carried on the tradition of naming streets after trees and flowers. Daffodil, Jasmine, Heliotrope, Shamrock, and Wild Rose joined White Oak, Lime, and Lemon as street names in the Pacific View Tract.

Both Cyrus Campbell and Joseph Sartori built homes for their families in the Pacific View Tract, and it is possible that the wonderful Folk Victorian now located at 224 S. Heliotrope was built for F. N. Myers as well. In its original location, the house was aligned with the houses of Campbell and Sartori on double corner lots bordered by Wild Rose Avenue on the north.

The first individual owner to appear in the tax records for the City of Monrovia is R. D. Summers, who was the owner of record when the 1889 assessment roll was compiled. By this time Myers had moved to Angeleno Heights in Los Angeles, and later became involved with Sartori in the founding of the Security Savings Bank and Trust Company, a banking entity that evolved into Security Pacific National Bank and enjoyed a long and distinguished history.

Richard Duncan Summers was a native of England and a photographer by profession. We find him in Ontario, Canada in 1871, living in the village of Port Hope with his first wife and their children. He immigrated to the United States in 1872, and was widowed shortly afterwards. In 1874, Summers married a fellow Canadian, Elizabeth A. Mitchell, who had immigrated to the United States in 1873. They were the parents of four children, Isabella, Laura Anna, Albert, and Ada. The family was living in Rochester, New York when the 1880 United States Federal Census was enumerated.

By 1886, Richard Summers had relocated his family to Los Angeles, where he continued working as a photographer. The family was still in Los Angeles two years later, but Summers moved his wife and four children to Monrovia in 1888. They lived in their Monrovia home until 1893, and then returned to Los Angeles. No doubt the economic stagnation after the collapse of the Great Land Boom of the 1880's was an inducement to return to the much larger city. Richard Summers died in Los Angeles on

June 21, 1909 at the age of 76 years. Elizabeth survived him by many years, and was still living with her married daughter, Ada Mahn, in 1930.

Richard Summers found a purchaser for his Monrovia house, John Phillip Brubaker, who brought his second family to Monrovia in 1893. Brubaker was born in Preble County, Ohio on July 30, 1826. His first wife was Hannah Wright, whom he married in 1848 in Preble County. They were the parents of four children. Hannah Brubaker died in 1865 from the strain of nursing her invalid son, an underage enlistee in the Union Army during the Civil War. On January 31, 1867 Brubaker married Anna Sunday in Lee County, Illinois. She was born September 28, 1838 in Adams County, Pennsylvania. John and Anna Brubaker had a daughter, Minnie May Brubaker, and a son, Jay Ozro Brubaker, who accompanied their parents to Monrovia, lured by the promise of good jobs and a comfortable life among the orange groves. The orange groves were a reality, but the jobs, unfortunately, were not. Minnie was married to William Barber at the time of the move and had two small sons, Lester and Harold. The entire family may have lived together initially; by 1900 William and Minnie Barber had their own home on Palm Avenue in Monrovia.

The family circle was broken with the death of Minnie Barber on December 14, 1908 at the young age of 39. She was buried at Live Oak Cemetery in Monrovia. Less than three years later, John P. Brubaker died on July 22, just short of his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was also buried at Live Oak Cemetery.

Monrovia had begun to grow once again in 1903 after the arrival of the Pacific Electric Railway, and the school population had outgrown the capacity of the existing buildings. The passage of a bond measure in 1910 meant that a new elementary school could be constructed and a major addition made to the high school plant. For the site of the new elementary school, the school board selected the north end of Block D in the Pacific View Tract. The owners of property in that section were contacted and offers made to purchase their property. Anna Brubaker, recently widowed, decided to sell and move to 3317 Baldwin Avenue in Los Angeles. Anna S. Brubaker died on January 3, 1923 at the age of 84, and is buried next to her husband and daughter at Live Oak Cemetery.

John and Anna Brubaker's son, Jay Ozro Brubaker, went on to a distinguished career as a painter, poster maker, and illustrator. He lived for many years in Manhattan, where he died on February 22, 1953. His two posters advertising Lionel model trains are especially admired by collectors.

Two of the existing houses on the new school site were moved to Heliotrope Avenue; the fate of the third is a mystery. Thomas Glenney, a pioneer of Duarte, acquired the Brubaker house and had it moved to Lot 11 in Block E of the Pacific View Tract. Glenney continued to live in Duarte and the house served as rental property from 1912 to 1920. During that time a widow, Mary P. Gibson, lived in the house with her daughter, Lois, and her son, Theo. Other residents of the house were James H and Adelma Collins and their daughter, Carrie.

The house then became the property of Margaret Jane Latey, a retired school teacher from Omaha, Nebraska, who came to Monrovia circa 1920. Miss Latey moved to Monrovia because her sister, Mabel Latey Nye, had lived here since 1903. Margaret Latey owned the house for only a few years. She is listed as a resident in the 1923 Monrovia City Directory, but not in the 1924 directory. That directory lists the family of Francis M. Church as residents. And members of the family lived in the house for over forty years.

Francis M. Church was born in Afton, New York on February 29, 1856. His wife, the former Mary Ellen Munger, was born in Waterloo, Iowa on June 26, 1862. They were married circa 1895 and brought their family to California from Albert Lea, Minnesota in 1909. They lived in Cucamonga for a brief time, and were living in Monrovia at 601 E. Huntington Drive by January of 1911. Francis and Mary E. Church were the parents of six children: Grace, Carlton, Francis, Richard, Helen, and Charles. Grace died as a young girl, but four of the surviving five siblings lived in the house as young adults. Francis, Richard, Helen, and Charles married; Carlton appears to have remained unmarried and lived with his mother until her death.

Francis M. Church died November 14, 1938. He is buried at Live Oak Cemetery in Monrovia. Mary E. Church died January 7, 1967 at the incredible age of 104 years. She is also buried at Live Oak Cemetery. Carl Church survived his mother by only a few months. He died in December of 1967, and the house was then vacant until it was sold to Robert and Madelon Wakeman in 1970. Five years later Charles and Janet Manning purchased the house and began its loving restoration. The Mannings deserve recognition as the co-founders of the Monrovia Historic Preservation Group. The current owners purchased their Folk Victorian in 2012 and are continuing its restoration.