

Bennett Family

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The Bennett House & Ranch In El Toro, CA.

When CF Bennett returned from his two year term in the California State Legislature, he continued to operate his ten acre citrus ranch in Tustin, CA. However, he also became interested in property in the El Toro, CA. area, about fifteen miles east of Tustin. Oranges, grown at the San Gabriel Mission near Los Angeles for many years, became a boom crop in Southern California following the introduction of the Navel Orange in 1880. Oranges were found to grow particularly well in the mild coastal climate and soil of Orange County, CA. The cities of Orange, Tustin and Villa Park in California early became the centers of citrus agriculture in the region. CF Bennett was to become a pioneer in introducing citrus farming to the Tustin & El Toro areas.

In the El Toro area, CF first aquired and planted a nearly ten acre parcel in the St. Michaels tract. He continued to enlarge his El Toro holdings, buying another 15 acres from Cook in 1901, five acres from J. H. Butler in 1902, another 20 acres from Cook, Victor & Gardner in 1902 and an additional 5 town lots from the Whitings in 1903. On these properties, Mr. Bennett planted, in addition to oranges, prunes and ten acres of apricots.

CF commuted to his El Toro properties and probably camped a good deal to be around to supervise and manage his operations in El Toro. Then, in 1908, CF hired Mr. White and Mr. Pope to build a structure for his use when staying in the El Toro area. He also could use the building to house a caretaker and hired help on his properties. CF's original plans for the stucture just "grew" as construction progressed. The final two bedroom house was built in the American craftman bungalow style popular at that time. The house was completed in 1909 and consisted of a living room, dining room, kitchen and two bedrooms connected by a small hallway and an attic with three small bedrooms.

In 1910, CF contracted pneumonia and was unable to continue to properly supervise his El Toro ranch properties. CF reluctantly asked his youngest son Harvey Franklin to leave Santa Ana High School to help him supervise the El Toro holdings. Harvey originally intended to attend the University of California at Berkeley after graduating from high school. However, he could see how desperate the situation was for his father, so he left high school and became the foreman on the El Toro property. Harvey was to spend the rest of his life on this property, later making it his own ranch property.

Fortunately for CF and his family, Harvey Franklin Bennett turned out to be a fine manager of CF's properties. Harvey gradually took over from CF most of the responsibilities of running the El Toro properties and even added some properties of his own to his father's holdings. Then, on Jan. 7, 1921, at the age of 78, Charles Franklin Bennett passed away and was buried at the family burial plot in Fairhaven Cemetery near the city of Orange, CA.

After CF's passing in 1921, Helen M. Bennett continued to live on the Tustin ranch property. She became the sole owner of most of CF's Bennett's properties through a dissolution of joint tenancy decree on May 31, 1921. Helen transferred ownership of some of the Tustin property and a few lots of the El Toro ranch to Charles A. Bennett, Harvey Bennett's brother. In 1928, she transferred ownership of most of the El Toro ranch to Harvey.

"Mother" Bennett, as Helen was affectionately called by many who knew her, had a very active mind. She was greatly interested in religion, geneologies, and scholarship. She has left the Bennett family with many of her writings and a wealth of information regarding the Bennett ancestry and her own Beach & Sturdevant geneologies. In 1933 she had commissioned "The Sturdevant Ancestry and Line of Descent". In this work, among many other quotes, she says "I live in the midst of a ten acre orange orchard and I supervise the care of it myself. It entertains me and I enjoy trying what I can do raising oranges. My orange trees are like friends, always doing something different. Now they have yellow, golden fruit on them, and green fruit for next year. They are also covered with Fall growth of new green twigs and new fresh bright green leaves, preparing themselves for next Spring's beautiful white blossoms. An orange tree is always a thing of beauty. I love them".

Nov. '10 Sent To Dawn by Juanita Lovvick

After a long, eventful 96 year life, Helen Mary Elizabeth (Beach) Bennett died on her Tustin ranch in 1947. She was buried in the family burial site in Fairhaven Cemetery next to her departed husband Charles Franklin Bennett.

The Children of Charles Franklin & Helen M. Bennett.

- (1) BENNETT, Frederick Willford "Fred" b. 18 June 1877, in Vermillionville, IL.
d. 30 May 1932, at Norwalk, CA.

Fred was born in Illinois just before his parents moved from Illinois to Arapahoe, Nebraska. He no doubt attended school first in Nebraska, then in Oceanside, CA., where the family moved from Nebraska. Then, he completed his early schooling in Tustin & Santa Ana, CA. schools. Our family has several "papers" produced by Fred during his schooling that indicate he was something of a scholar. Also, he attended the University of California at Berkeley for some amount of time, so this would indicate he had some academic ability.

There is, at this time, no indication that Fred graduated from UC Berkeley. Then, from documents in our families possession, we learn that Fred applied for, on Jan. 26 & 27, 1901, with a partner named James Boyd, for ownership in several mining claims near Oatman, Arizona. Fred was about 24 years of age at this time.

These mining claims were recorded in March 1901. Other deeds, claims & records also indicate that Fred, for \$300.00, on May 13, 1902, filed to assume James Boyd's shares in the properties. Then, on Dec. 28, 1905, Fred bought property for \$300.00 from M. L. Schackelford, a local Arizona man. Fred is pictured, in an undated photograph, as a shop keeper. It is thought that Fred owned a retail store in Chloride, AZ., a town about 35 miles from Oatman.

Although the information about Fred is scanty, it is possible to get a hazy outline of him as an academic and then, after leaving college, going out to the Oatman, AZ. area to be a part of a "gold rush" that the Oatman area was having at that time. However, there is no indication whether his father or mother approved or not of his activities in Arizona. My guess is that they probably did and may have even funded Fred in his endeavors.

Now we come to one of the greatest mysteries in our Bennett family history. We have a document that indicates that on April 11, 1908, CF Bennett, Fred's father, filed a Notice of Application For U.S. Patent as "Guardian of Fred W. Bennett, An Incompetent". There has been, of course, much speculation of what happened to Fred at this time to make him "An Incompetent" after his scholarly career and what seems to have been a promising activities in the gold mining areas around Oatman, AZ. Was it some medical problem or possibly a heat stroke? Both of these are reasonable possibilities. We need more research to try to solve this mystery.

Fred was just a little over thirty years of age at this time. It must have been another crushing blow to CF Bennett & Helen, Fred's parents to have their eldest son now incapacitated. Fred was made a ward of a mental hospital in Norwalk, CA. about forty miles from Tustin, CA. Fred's father now took over operation of Fred's mining properties near Oatman, AZ. and owned them until his death in 1921. Fred's mother, Helen M. Bennett then took possession of the properties.

Fred W. Bennett died in the Norwalk institution in 1932. Then, on August 31, 1936, Mrs. Helen M. Bennett, together with C.A. Bennett (Charles Arthur) and H. F. Bennett (Harvey Franklin) attended a probate hearing in the Superior Court of the State of Arizona at Kingman, AZ. in and for the County of Mojave. After this hearing, Helen M. Bennett, Fred's mother was assigned title to Fred's property. Helen then, in turn, assigned her rights to Fred's Oatman properties to her remaining sons Charles Arthur & Harvey Franklin Bennett. In 1967, Harvey Franklin acquired the properties after the death of his brother Charles Arthur. The properties are currently owned by Harvey Francis & Richard Beach Bennett, heirs of Harvey Franklin Bennett.

(2) BENNETT, Pearl Edna

b. 25 Dec. 1878, in Arapahoe, NB.
d. 17 Nov. 1890, at Tustin, CA.

Pearl died tragically at about age twelve from a fall from a horse she was riding on the Tustin ranch property. I have found nothing written about her but we can surmise that she might have attended school for a short time in both Arapahoe, Nebraska and in Oceanside, CA. It is likely that she was attending school locally in the Tustin area at her untimely death.

(3) BENNETT, Charles Arthur "Charlie"

b. 24 Dec. 1888, Tustin, CA.
d. 5 July 1967, ca. Santa Ana, CA.

Charlie Bennett attended local schools in the Tustin & Santa Ana, CA. area. After graduating from Santa Ana High School, Charlie owned one of the first automobiles in the Tustin/Santa Ana area. The auto was a Chandler Motor Car and Charlie had it "For Hire" at the corner of Fourth & Broadway in Santa Ana for some time. Charlie was also a nurseryman during his lifetime. He operated nurseries, mainly dealing with citrus tree stock, for many years in Santa Ana, CA., Vista, CA. in San Diego County, and in El Toro, CA. He also acquired properties in Oatman, AZ. and in Garden Grove and Corona Del Mar, CA.

Charlie married at some time during his life but the marriage lasted only for a brief time. It is possible that this marriage took place after Charlies father, CF Bennett, died in 1921. Charlie was close to his mother until she passed away in 1947. Then, Charlie found it increasingly difficult to care for himself during the latter part of his life. He passed away in 1967.

(4) BENNETT, Harvey Franklin "Harv", "HF"

b. 31 Oct. 1890, Tustin, CA.
d. 27 June 1971, at Santa Ana, CA.

See "THE 1890 TO 1985 ERA, A SKETCH OF THE LIVES OF HARVEY FRANKLIN & FRANCES LILLIAN (McDONNELL) BENNETT OF EL TORO, ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA", Page 1 . . .

HARVEY F. BENNETT — The son of one of Orange County's best known pioneer citizens who contributed much to the advancement of the vital interests of the county, especially in the early days, Harvey F. Bennett is himself a native son of the Golden State. The Bennett family traces its ancestry back to the earliest colonial days, some of that name being among the first groups of those brave souls who risked the dangers of the deep and the barren conditions of a new land. They were identified with the early agricultural upbuilding of this country and fought valiantly in its wars and were always prominent in its public affairs.

Charles F. Bennett, the father of the subject of this sketch, was born at Kent, Litchfield County, Conn., April 23, 1842, his parents being William and Sarah (Brunsen) Bennett. William Bennett was engaged in various manufacturing enterprises at Litchfield, but in 1851 he removed with his family to the then sparsely settled regions of LaSalle County, Ill., settling near Deerpark, where he took up a tract of virgin land, which he brought under cultivation, at the same time devoting some attention to manufacturing various articles. Charles F. Bennett received his early education at the old Connecticut home, where as a small boy he had the great fortune to come under the personal influence of Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison, so that he was from a child inculcated with the principles of abolition, and in later years this was increased by a personal acquaintance with Abraham Lincoln and John C. Fremont. Coming with his parents to Illinois, his boyhood was spent on the home farm in LaSalle County, and even then he was identified with many stirring scenes in aiding slaves in their flight toward liberty. When the Civil War broke out he was taking a preparatory course in the Chicago University, and he soon enlisted. In August, 1862, he was assigned to the Douglas Brigade, participating in thirty-two engagements with this organization, among them the battles of Shiloh and Vicksburg.

He had charge of the guard at General Sherman's headquarters during the famous march to the sea and vividly recalls the consultation between Sherman, Grant and Logan regarding the decision to take this line of action, which proved to be the turning point of the war. Mr. Bennett was slightly wounded several times and had many narrow escapes, being grazed with bullets on a number of occasions. When he received his honorable discharge, with the rank of first lieutenant, at the close of the war, the hardships and privations had greatly impaired his health, but after two years he was again sufficiently restored in strength to take up active work. For a number of years he engaged in teaching school in various parts of Illinois, and was also interested in stock raising near the old Bennett homestead.

In 1872 C. F. Bennett was united in marriage with Miss Helen Beach, who was also a native of Connecticut, and in 1878 they decided to seek their fortune on the great plains of the West and so removed to Nebraska, making the long journey from Illinois in a prairie schooner. Mr. Bennett engaged in cattle raising until the range became too limited through the settling up of the country. He then settled at Arapahoe, Nebr., where he conducted a hotel as well as a large merchandise business. Coming to California in 1885, they settled first at San Diego, a small town at that time, as the railroad to that point had not yet been built. They remained there but a short time, coming up the coast to Oceanside, where they purchased a forty-acre hillside farm. During the boom, they disposed of their holdings at a profit and came to Tustin, where he purchased ten acres, subsequently developing it and making it one of the choice properties of that locality; he now has twenty-two acres in Tustin and Santa Ana; also owns a sixty-acre ranch at El Toro. One of the authorities on irrigation in the country, Mr. Bennett installed one of the few private irrigation systems at El Toro taking water from Aliso Creek, also put in a well and pumping plant, and his active interest in promoting irrigation movements had much to do with the advancement of land values. He and his wife still reside on their home place at Tustin.

Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Bennett are the parents of three living children —

Frederick W., Charles A., and Harvey F.. their only daughter. Pearl Edna, having passed away some years ago. Harvey F. Bennett was born at Tustin on October 31, 1892, and was reared on the Bennett homestead there. He received a good education in the grammar school at Tustin and at the Santa Ana high school, but being ambitious and anxious to get a start for himself he began farming while he was in his senior year at high school. He located at El Toro in 1911, and as a reward for the thrift and industry of his early years he is now the owner of a choice ranch of twenty acres half a mile southeast of El Toro, ten acres of which is in budded walnuts, now twelve years old, the other half of his acreage being set to three-year-old Valencia oranges. In addition to this Mr. Bennett manages the sixty-acre ranch belonging to his father, thirty acres of which is in walnuts, the remaining thirty being planted to apricots, interspersed with walnuts. The management of both holdings, comprising eighty acres, naturally brings with it much responsibility and hard work, but Mr. Bennett is making a splendid success, which is richly deserved.

Mr. Bennett's marriage, which occurred in 1914, united him with Miss Frances Lillian McDonald, a daughter of T. F. McDonald, the well-known carpenter and builder of Santa Ana. Two little girls have been born to Mr. and Mrs. Bennett — Helen Marie and Beverly Ellen. Mrs. Bennett is a social leader in the community and in the circles of the Episcopal Church at El Toro, where she teaches in the Sunday School and is prominent in the work of the ladies' aid. While Mr. Bennett is inclined to the political policies of the Democratic party, he is broad minded and nonpartisan in local affairs, believing the interests of the community are best conserved by voting for the best men and measures.

BENNETT—On January 7, 1921, at his home on Tustin avenue. C.F. Bennett, aged 78. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Monday, Jan. 10, from Smith and Tuthill's chapel. Services at the grave will be under the auspices of the Sedgwick Post, G.A.R. Mr. Bennett is survived by his wife, Mrs. Helen M. Bennett, and three sons, Charles A., Frederick W., and Harvey F. Bennett.
Originally constructed at the corner of 2nd Street and Cherry Avenue in

1908, the Bennett Ranch House is the only remaining turn-of-the-century ranch house in El Toro. Charles F. Bennett purchased land in El Toro to pioneer the growing of navel oranges and built this one and one-half story structure for a live-in caretaker. When Charles Bennett became ill, his son Harvey moved into the ranch house to oversee his father's El Toro holdings. Harvey took up citrus farming and became interested in improving various strains of oranges and lemons. Harvey's wife, Frances, lead a busy life raising six children, cooking, washing, and sewing for the family and ranch lands, teaching Sunday School at St. George's Episcopal Mission, and doing community work with the Ladies Aid Society (now the El Toro Woman's Club). Now part of Heritage Hill Historic Park in El Toro

Feb. 11, 2010

Bennett family put down roots in 1880s

Like many of the men who came to Tustin in its early years, Charles F. Bennett had fought in the Civil War, serving in the Union Army.

Bennett was attending the Chicago University when the Civil War broke out and soon enlisted. He was assigned to the Douglas Brigade



JUANITA LOVRET

and later participated in 32 engagements including the battles of Shiloh and Vicksburg. He was in charge of the guard at General Sherman's headquarters during the famous march to the sea. He was slightly wounded several times and had

many narrow escapes. Bennett was discharged with the rank of first lieutenant, but his health was greatly impaired by the hardships and privations he had suffered. After two years his strength was restored and



Charles F. Bennett and his wife, Helen, enjoy the garden at their lovely two-story home on Tustin Avenue in the late 1800s. > PHOTO COURTESY OF TUSTIN AREA HISTORIC SOCIETY

he taught school in various parts of Illinois in addition to raising stock near the family farm in LaSalle County for a

number of years. He married Miss Helen Beach, another Connecticut native, in 1872. After six years in Illinois, they moved to Nebraska, making the long journey in a prairie schooner. Bennett raised cattle for a time, then settled at Arapahoe where he ran a hotel as well as a large merchandising business.

The couple came to California in 1885. They settled at San Diego for a short time before moving up the coast to Oceanside, where they purchased a 40-acre hillside farm. During the boom of the 1880s they disposed of their holdings at a profit and came to Tustin.

Bennett purchased 10 acres on the east side of Tustin Avenue north of First Street. They built a beautiful home and developed the land into a citrus orchard. Later he acquired an additional 22 acres in Tustin and Santa Ana as well as a 60-acre ranch at El Toro.

The Bennetts had three sons, Frederick W., Charles A., and Harvey F., and a

daughter, Pearl Edna, who passed away as a young girl. Harvey, who was born after the family came to Tustin, attended Tustin Grammar School and Santa Ana High School. He moved to El Toro in 1911 to take over his father's holdings there. The house from this ranch is now part of El Toro's Heritage Hill Historic Park.

Becoming an authority on irrigation, the elder Bennett installed one of the few private irrigation systems at El Toro, taking water from Aliso Creek in addition to putting in a well and pumping plant.

Both Bennett and his wife were active in the Tustin community. She served two terms on the Tustin Elementary School District board, 1895-97 and 1901-03. Bennett represented Tustin area in the California Legislature from 1892 to 1894.

Bennett died at home on Jan. 7, 1921, at age 78.

REMEMBER WHEN

Bennett

Settlers' daughters developed Tustin's culture

Life in Tustin in its earliest years was bleak, but as the 1870s advanced, conditions began to improve. Elegant Victorian homes were built during the 1880s and 1890s. Churches were chartered. Wealthier, more cultured settlers arrived, bringing with them a refined lifestyle plus an interest in music and the arts.



JUANITA LOVRET

By 1890, daughters of the early settlers formed a second generation of young women who enjoyed these amenities.

These ladies found more time to do church work, socialize, enjoy tea with one another and participate in the Ebell Society - activities that had not been enjoyed by their mothers.

Soon they were marrying, often selecting husbands from the same occupational field as their fathers, raising or work-

ing with citrus. The two Snow sisters, daughters of Horace C. Snow, were typical of this generation. Martha married Sherman Stevens, a wealthy Tustin orange grower who was her father's partner in a Santa Ana lumberyard. Their marriage at the Tustin Presbyterian Church in 1887 was followed by a lavish reception at their new home across Main Street. This celebration was a foretaste of the gracious life of travel and collecting they would enjoy.

Martha's sister, Grace Snow, was less fortunate. She married Frank Frees and became a widow with two sons, Ben and Norman, when her husband was killed in a windmill tower accident in 1898.

Anne Adams was the daughter of P.T. Adams, an orange grower who came to Tustin in 1877. She married John E. Gowen, part owner of the Gowen and Willard Fruit Packers, and soon became a popular member of the young married set. Rachtje Vandermuellen, whose fa-



624-70
A group of young matrons, daughters of early Tustin settlers, pose at a gathering in the garden of the Snow home sometime during the 1890s. > PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TUSTIN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ther Peter Vandermuellen owned citrus acreage on First Street west of Tustin Avenue, married another citrus rancher. Her husband, Arthur E. Bennett, was also a fumigator. They made their home on Second Street between Pacific and A.

A few young women, such as Fannie and Mattie Tustin, daughters of Columbus Tustin, held jobs before they were married. Both sisters served a term as postmistress of Tustin. Mattie's husband, John E. Curry, was president of the Tustin Protective Association, which was formed to combat crime in the citrus orchards. Fannie, the youngest daughter, lived at home even after she married Clayton Park after her father's death.

Mamie Sheldon, daughter of Dr. James Sheldon, Tustin's first doctor, also worked. She was the bookkeeper at the

L. Utt Pioneer Store when she attracted the attention of C. E. Utt, Lysander's son. They married and had five children before her death in 1918.

Jeanette and Nellie Wilcox, daughters of Charles Wheaton Wilcox, were popular young socialites before and after their weddings. Nellie married A. J. Padgham while Jeanette wed Adolph A. Kraft. Stella Preble, daughter of S.W. Preble, became known for her lavish and unusual parties as well as for joining with Madame Modjeska and Coralinn Rice in presenting benefit musical programs, often at French's Opera House in Santa Ana. She remained unmarried for many years, finally marrying Sam Nau after her parents died.

These young women were the forerunners of life as it is lived in Tustin today.