

As you can see the
GFWC California Federation
of Women's Clubs



has gone through many changes
including our name. We added
the GFWC in front of our name
not so long ago. We have changed
the departments we work in to
service programs added a signature
program, Domestic Violence.

We have changed the names
of the areas we work in many
times but the one thing we can
not change is the hearts of our
many volunteers and the many
thousands of dollars and hours
of hard work done by these same
women. It is something we all should
continue to be proud of, Job Well Done!



California Federation of Women's Clubs



The history -
A few facts you may not
know

The California Federation of Women's Clubs Early Years

The California Women's Clubs started forming shortly after the Sorosis Club of New York was started by Mrs. Herbert Croly better known to all of us as Jennie June Croly. This is important because this club is credited with the beginning the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the beginning of the women's club movement. GFWC was actually chartered on April 24, 1890 with our own Phoebe Hearst as the first Treasurer.

The Oakland Ebell Club, the first California Club was started in 1876. Followed by the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena, The Ruskin Art Club of Los Angeles chartered in 1888. The in San Francisco, the Sorosis Club was formed in in 1891.



Phoebe Hearst on the left and Mrs. J W Orr on the right.

Cora Woodbridge

Cora was a Club Woman. An Assembly Women for the for the 9th District starting 1922. She was the first women elected to the 9th District for the California Assembly. She served 3 terms in that position.



She is considered the founding member of the Women's Improvement Club of Roseville which began in 1910 and served as the President of the Club for 6 years.

She was the Placer County Women's Club President and the Northern District President. The Northern District is now Shasta & Sutter Districts. It was split sometime in the 50's during a reorganization of the California Districts. She held many other volunteer positions in her lifetime.

State Conventions

The First State Convention was held in 1902. This was something new for most women, they had never attended anything like a Convention. Consider the expense of attending a Convention, rail tickets, steamer tickets or teams which could mean stage coach or by a team of horses or mules. Then the hotel bill & clothes plus luggage. Who would pay for this as most clubs did not have this kind of money in their budgets.

500 guests were at the Golden Gate Hall with 137 delegates representing 95 clubs with 7,014 members.

The first program had only reports on Federation matters.



In 1892 a loose federation of churches, clubs, fraternal and temperance societies had a meeting in Los Angeles with 700 women in attendance.

In 1893 at the Columbia Exposition in Chicago three California women were delegates. They were Mrs. Carolina M Severance, Mrs. Sarah B Cooper, Mrs. Kate Tupper Galvin and also attending was Mrs. J W Orr. Mrs. Orr pushed hard for a group development.

Carolina Severance to the left & Kate Tupper Galvin to the right



One of the direct result of the suffrage campaign and Mrs. Orr's hard work is the founding of the California Club as a civic Club in San Francisco which preceded the founding of the California Federation of Women's Clubs. This club had 500 charter members.

In 1897 the a number of Clubs in the San Joaquin Valley united under the of the San Joaquin Valley Federation. In 1898 San Diego formed a County Federation

The following a request made by the California's director to the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Mrs. Francis A. Eastman along with the State Correspondence chairman, Mrs. Ella M Sexton & Mrs. Robert J Burette, Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements at a meeting in Los Angeles; the California Federation of Women Clubs was formed on Jan 17, 1900 with Mrs. Burdette as President.

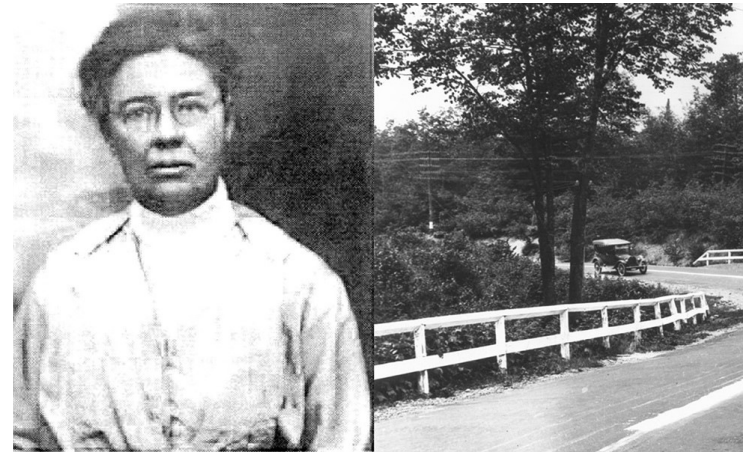
One of the biggest issue was transportation, "The horse was the only Motive power in 1900" & Eureka women had "to put to Sea".



Mrs. Robert J Burdette, Clara

Doctor June McCarroll & The White Line Down the Center of the Road

In 1932 the California State Chamber of Commerce began a search for the MAN who had suggested the white line down the road because it had saved lives, money & millions in property.



Dr. McCarroll convinced Harvey C Toy, Chairman of the Highway Commission to try it. Dr McCarroll was a member of the Indio Women's Club. It proved a success and around 3,500 miles of roads were striped for a cost of \$163,000.

California Mission Bells

Efforts to mark the old highway were first started in 1892. Remember that at this time the El Camino Real is nothing but a dirt road. Mrs. A.S.C. Forbes and Mrs. Caroline Olney, California Federation Club Women along with members of the Native Daughters of the Golden West got this project off the ground. Mrs. Forbes with help from Mrs. C.F. Gates designed the mission bells. The cast iron bells hung from twelve-foot poles that could be easily seen. The first bell was placed in 1906 in front of the Old Plaza Church in Los Angeles. The bells were refurnished in the 1990's by the California Federation of Women's Clubs.



The First Two Committees: Education & Forestry

Both books used were thrilled "That the first Club bill to become a law was one that exempted the Meadow Lark as a Game Bird". It was signed by Governor Henry T. Gage in 1901.



The California Federation began trying to save the Redwoods in early 1900. The San Jose Club & the Sempervirens Club appealed to the State Legislature to save the Redwoods. "Wildest enthusiasm prevailed" when the Governor signed a bill "to park" the "Big Basin" & "Fulton Big Trees"



April 1906

April 18, 1906 was what has been called the great Earthquake of San Francisco shook the Bay Area. The CFWC President, Mrs. Robert Potter Hill of Eldridge, in the San Francisco District who served from June 1 1906 to June 1, 1907 only says in her yearbook that "the state report was made under the most trying of circumstances."

We now know that the California Club of San Francisco allowed the State Executive Board to use it's Club House as headquarters. All the CFWC books and Yearbooks for the 1905-07 which were waiting to be mailed were lost to fire the after the great quake. The only records not burned were the records with the State's Secretary & Treasurer. The records were reconstructed & republished & the new Officers were given all that could be assembled. GFWC issued a new charter to the State to replace the one lost in the fire.



The California Federation of Women's Clubs Grove was purchased in 1931 for \$45,000 by the CFWC. References in 1924 that the CFWC had at that time saved \$36,901.47 & the CFWC believed that was wonderful and they would get to the \$45,00 mark needed to buy the 89 acres of trees. The California Parks Department would match the funds to get to the \$90,000 needed to complete the sale. The park contains one of the 10 tallest trees in the world, Laurelin with 4 trees over 350 feet tall. The Hearthstone of sometimes called the 4 fireplaces was designed by Julia Morgan designer of Hearst Castle.

