

The Historian

A Quarterly Publication of the Fallbrook Historical Society *Summer 2024*

West Fallbrook Cornet Band



Late 1880s The West Fallbrook Cornet Band entertained the new town with weekly concerts on the Elder St. elementary school grounds. *Fallbrook Historical Society photo*

Brass bands were popular in the U.S. during the late 1800s, following the Civil War. The City of San Diego had its impressive City Guard Band. The Oceanside Silver Cornet Band once serenaded California Governor Waterman at an open air concert at the South Pacific Hotel in 1889. The Governor chatted with the boys and talked about his involvement with one of the first bands organized in the West.⁽¹⁾ Julian's newspaper told how their 5 piece band played for the mountain town on the Fourth of July, 1889.⁽²⁾

Pieces of the story behind Fallbrook's oldest known band, is handed down to us across time from Francis Fox, daughter of one of Fallbrook's earliest settlers, Fred Fox. Francis told her own children how she once enjoyed her father taking her to the weekly village concerts to hear the Cornet band on the West Fallbrook Elementary school grounds.



Fay and David White 1936

Francis' son David White, would decades later become one of the founding members of the Fallbrook Historical Society. (3) White identified the band photo above and told historian Maie Ellis of his mother's childhood memory. (4)

Maie Ellis wrote down the year as 1884, but that is perhaps one or two years early. The elementary school grounds were not officially laid out until the West Fallbrook town survey of 1885 when Francis Fox was 13. The first one room classroom was not constructed on the grounds until 1887. (5) However, the early residents of tiny West Fallbrook may have been congregating socially in the reserved open space before the school was finished.

The first West Fallbrook Cornet band apparently did not stay together long, as we do not have any further mention of them. However, in 1889 the *Fallbrook Review* reported on a smaller musical group calling themselves the Tromboharmonicaguitarviolin Band that was strolling and playing for whoever would listen. (6)

The 2nd Fallbrook Cornet Band came into local prominence in 1908 when the *San Diego Union* reported on the new band's enthusiasm. (7) The Fallbrook Cornet Band were mostly young men well known to the residents of West Fallbrook. We do not know if the newer band used 'West' in their name or not. The Census bureau continued to call the town West Fallbrook thru 1920, but locals began to drop the 'West' when the Post office did in 1889.

Their rehearsal hall was the lower floor of the historic Odd Fellows building, on Beech Street. (8) The Odd Fellows brick building is still there today, just half a block from the elementary school grounds.

Despite their reported enthusiasm, this 2nd Fallbrook band apparently does not continue after their maestro moves on. The band is not mentioned again in any news or social reports.

This Fallbrook band was organized and instructed by Bob Hargrave, the famous wandering "Cowboy Violinist" who in the 1880s had been prominent hand -organizing the prestigious San Diego City Guard Band. (9)

~Tom Frew

Footnotes:

- (1) Oceanside Herald, Oct 10, 1889
- (2) Julian Sentinel, July 5, 1889.
- (3) *The Historian*, Vol 1 No.1 Summer 1977 lists David White as a member of the initial organizing committee.
- (4) Maie Ellis *Pictorial History of Fallbrook 1880-1920*.
- (5) Early Grammer Schools by Don Rivers, *Fallbrook In Review* Vol 2 pg 85.
- (6) *Fallbrook Review*, Sept 6, 1889.
- (7) *Union Tribune* Dec 4, 1908
- (8) Ibid.
- (9) See the "Cowboy Violinist" article by Vincent Rossi, May 18, 2014.



Robert Hargrave 1914



CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

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*Assemblymember Marie Waldron
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Fallbrook Historical Society

On May, 16, 2024

Fallbrook Historical Society Vice President, Jeff Duhachek, and Historian Tom Frew visited Eastridge Community Center and gave a presentation “The History of Fallbrook” to the residents.

We love to talk about our history, even going back as far as the Ice Age.

*Historical Presentations to your Club or group can be arranged
by [contacting us](#).*





June 8, 2024 Heritage Center Open House

Nearly 100 people enjoyed an afternoon touring the Main Museum, The Historic Pittenger House, the agricultural displays inside and outside The Barn, as well as several classical cars brought by the Vintage Car Club.

Next time we hope to see YOU!

Docents at the Historical Society Museum on the corner of Rocky Crest & Hill Ave. can show and talk about our historical displays collected by our museum curators.

Private tours for groups (large and small) can be arranged by [contacting us.](#)

Visit our webpage at Fallbrookhistoricalsociety.org

*Welcome To the
New Board of Directors*

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Don Lahey

Upcoming Event

September 21, 2024

Reche Schoolhouse Open House

Annual Awards Presentations

Special Award of Appreciation

**Tours of the schoolhouse, the
Hindorff Adobe, the Indian Rocks and
tours along the new Don McLean, Jr.**

Interpretive Trail

Music and Refreshments



The Fallbrook Historical Society's mission is to bring history to life by educating the community and others about Fallbrook's rich heritage



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Fallbrook Historical Society

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