

Taft, California
Greetings from Pete Gianopulos, Class of 1942
The Taft Newsletter

Boom Town Taft, California

By

Edward F. "Eddie" Coffee

(Eighth in the series)

The series will continue of some of the writings of Eddie Coffee. Eddie came to Taft in 1920 and died several years ago. He was a great source of knowledge about Taft and the area. . . These article are from an unpublished typewritten account of his memories as one who grew up and was educated in the Taft schools and lived here as an adult until his death.

Old Timers

Kirkpatrick's -- Lee Kirkpatrick, my favorite brother-in-law, his family came to Fellows back in 1914. Lee was born in Fairplay, Colorado. That's why he gives me such a square deal at Kirkpatrick Bros. store on Center Street (422 Center Street). He was fortunate to marry my sister Jane. That's one of the highlights of my life. From the time that he met Jane right up to today he has progressed right along.

He and Phil Kirkpatrick are the famous Kirkpatrick brothers that owned the stationary store. They came to Taft in about 1929. Of course Lee doesn't remember it as well as I do, but he forgets about as many things as I do too.

Mrs. Kirkpatrick opened a boarding house on North Street, just two doors from our house. She served some wonderful meals there. Everybody in town ate there. You could get a niece breakfast for 25 cents or 30 cents, you could have her pack your lunches to go to work and she served a fine dinner. She was open 7 days a week and her most expensive meal was probably on Sunday for 75 cents. It was family style all you could eat.

The Kirkpatrick family had been very active in civic affairs and great people to be remembered on the Westside!

Ethel Hash Faulkner, Red Faulkner's wife (no relation to Todd Faulkner the prize fighter). I can remember when she was a soda jerk, but she wasn't a jerk, so I'll say a soda jerk. Ethel is still a fine lady still living in Taft. She visits Opal Snyder in our apartment complex from time to time and I see her quite frequently. Her son, Tommy, is running the business that Red left when he passed on.

Reader's Responses

From Lyle Smith, Class of 1965, from Corona, California

My grandpa Gurnice Smith was the driver of Jim Jeffries, the famous boxer, He drove a "buggy" through the orange groves and vacant fields in what is now Glendale. They used to chase down coyotes with the buggy. They had a great time in the buggy. I'll try to get some additional information from my Dad, Leonard, and find out some other adventures Jim and Grandpa had way back then.

Regards, Lyle Smith,

From Dick Snyder, Class of 1955, of Bakersfield

Pete, Recently, Linda and I had the good fortune to meet up with Kent and Lynn Estabrook in Sydney. I took a couple of photos which I will share with and your readers. From 25 Hill to Circular Quay. :-) Next stop: Hall of Fame Banquet. See you there, Pete.

Dick

(NOTE: I was unable to show the picture the picture that Dick had sent me.)

From Linda Talbert, Class of 1957, from Princeville, Kauai, Hawaii

Yesterday after the ship arrived in Lisbon, I got off at nine and went on a two hour bus ride all through the city. Lisbon is actually quite beautiful and I enjoyed seeing it. When I was in Portugal last year, I avoided Lisbon because I thought it was just another sea port and would be industrial. There are many old beautiful buildings and lots of the apartment houses are completely tiled all over the front of the buildings! After I checked into the Sherraton and got my room unpacked, I took a five mile walk all around the city, ate lunch in a small cafe and bought some things in their handicraft market and walked two miles back to the hotel. I was exhausted and went to bed

without dinner. I still feel like I am rocking on the ship and I hear the noise in my brain. It is better this morning, but all night, I was still in my washing machine! I'll be on the road for a few days to Barcelona, so won't get my email until I get there! Hope all is great with you! Love, Linda

From Lloyd Van Epps, Class of 1945, from Sacramento, California

Pete.....Greetings from Sacto.....i noticed that a couple of times you misspelled the name of the Hawaiian island of Kauai (not Kunai).....People have a hard time with that one. I will be in Hawaii for two weeks in April.....If I run into any West Kern County people I'll send you a post card.....Lloyd Van Epps ('45)

From Larry Peahl, Class of 1953, from Bakersfield, California

Hi Pete, The Bonillas that Eddie Coffee mentioned coming to Taft was Dan Bonillas who played football in 1965 and 1966. He was from Los Banos. He since has become one of the world's best skeet shooters.

You mentioned funerals at the Masonic Temple. That was where my father Lawrence Harman Peahl's funeral was held in November 1950. I also recall as a DeMolay member doing a funeral there for Dale Steinberg who was killed in a gun accident, around 1951.

Larry Peahl

From Elizabeth Clark, Class of 1957

Pete, My father's funeral was at the Masonic Temple, second floor in April 1948. I remember his casket being there (with him in it, unfortunately). Floyd Edward Clark was a Mason.

From Eddie Brannan Class of 1965, from Coarse Gold, California

Regarding the mention of a Billy Bonillas in this weeks segment of Eddie Coffee's memoirs, saying that his son may have attended Taft College. There was a Dan Bonillas in the class of 1967 at Taft College. Don't know where his home town was but, he was the quarterback of the Cougars football team that won the "Wool Bowl" in Roswell, New Mexico that year and he went on to be a very successful professional "Trap Shooter". I remember seeing him on television, I think ESPN some years ago.

Best Regards, Eddie Brannan

From Hugh Silcox, Class of 1949

You have been writing about Churchill Campbell. After the war he returned to Taft and was living in Ford City. I was a member of Boy Scout Troop 30 (Sponsored by the Standard of California Company). I remember going to his house and getting practice with First Aid in preparation for a scout jamboree. Churchill did a good job of training me. I got first place in the First Aid competition. Hugh Silcox TUHS Class of 1949.

From Ken Witte, Class of 1969, from Signal Hill, California

Pete I didn't know you were a Scottish Rite. Second, my mom stated that Frank Candee's funeral was held upstairs. Frank was the Superintendent of Whittier Starr and a member of the Temblor Lodge. My dad officiated and arranged for the Funeral. The next residents of the house on the Whittier Starr in Fellows

were the Jordans. The husband use to be the the head of transportation at TUHS.

Dr. Witte

The death of Lt. Gen. Gordon Graham (Ret.) as reported by his daughter, Eloise Brooks

Gordon Graham was inducted into the Taft Union High School Hall of Fame in 2007.

This is the notice that is being published in the Richmond Times-Dispatch today:

Gordon M. Graham

GRAHAM, Gordon M., Lt. Gen. (USAF Ret.), 90, of Irvington, Va., died March 22, 2008. Gen. Graham had a distinguished 34-year military career, serving in WWII, Korea and Vietnam. From 1968 to 1970, he was Vice Commander of the Tactical Air Command at Langley AFB. He retired in 1973, after tours as Commander of the 5th Air Force and U.S. Forces in Japan and Commander of 6th Allied Tactical Forces in Izmir, Turkey. After his military retirement, he served McDonnell Douglas Corporation as President of their Tokyo office and later as Corporate Vice President of the Washington, D.C. office. He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Vivian Fox Graham; two daughters, Eloise Graham Brooks of McLean and Helen Huntingdon Stubbs of Merritt Island, Fla.; one son, Gordon Alexander Elting Graham of Gig Harbor, Wash.; two stepsons, Robert Earl Fairbairn of

Williamsburg and Donald Boyce Fairbairn of Darnestown, Md.; 10 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on April 4 at Campbell Memorial Presbyterian Church in Weems. Interment will be 1 p.m. Tuesday, July 8, at Arlington National Cemetery with Full Military Honors. Memorial donations may be made to Rappahannock Westminster Canterbury Foundation, 132 Lancaster Dr., Irvington, Va. 22480, Campbell Memorial Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 18, Weems, Va. 22576 or charity of choice.