

The Lorenzo Anderson House in Otay



The Anderson house on Main Street in Otay is Chula Vista Historic Site #68

[Anderson house historic site application May 24, 2005](#)

[NBC7 news story on 1916 flood and Anderson house Feb. 26, 2016](#)

1891/07/21 The 3487 Main Street House is of the Victorian period on 6 acres south of Main Street Otay. It is of a style commonly known as an Orchard House. On early plat maps there is a dairy barn and packing shed with indications of an orchard at the front of the property and possibly field crops and animal pens at the rear. An early photograph July 21, 1891 identifies the house as Mr. Isaac Smith's residence. There is a horse and buggy in the yard and Main Street is shown as a narrow path. Owners in the 1920s included a German family George and Lisbeth Schurig who operated a dairy. (Agenda Packet 2005/05/24, City of Chula Vista Historic Designation Application, Anderson House, 3487 Main Street.)

1920 - The Schurig dairy was operated in the 1920s by a German family George and Lisbeth Schurig on the Anderson house property. The 3487 Main Street House is of the Victorian period on 6 acres south of Main Street Otay. It is of a style commonly known as an Orchard House. On early plat maps there is a dairy barn and packing shed with indications of an orchard at the front of the property and possibly field crops and animal pens at the rear. An early photograph July 21, 1891 identifies the house as Mr. Isaac Smith's residence. There is a horse and buggy in the yard and Main Street is shown as a narrow path. (Agenda Packet 2005/05/24, City of Chula Vista Historic Designation Application, Anderson House, 3487 Main Street.)



In this 1928 aerial photo of Otay, #1 is the Schurig dairy, later the site of the 6-acre Anderson house property; #2 is the small brick Clark house and post office at 3148 Main St. that was destroyed in the 1916 flood and is Chula Vista Historic Site #75; #3 is the Otay school built 1925 on the site of the 1889 school and is the site of today's John J. Montgomery school; #4 is the 3-story brick building that was built in 1889 as the Otay Watch Factory; #5 is the Otay Baptist Church built in 1890 on the southwest corner of Third and Zenith, then moved after the 1916 flood to the northeast corner of Third and Zenith.

1936/05/22 - "Andrew White, 104, Civil War Vet, Dies Unexpectedly On Otay Ranch. On Jan. 1. 1832, a Negro boy was born in Cuba. They christened him Andrew White. Last Saturday, on a neat little ranch near Otay, a friendly old Negro, known throughout the South Bay district as Andrew Jackson, expired. He was 104 years old. For 10 years, Andrew White or Andrew Jackson had resided near here. Time and again, his pictures had appeared in metropolitan newspapers. For Andrew Jackson, especially in November of last year. That was when he decided to retire, to take things easy in his declining years. So he turned over the care of his ranch to the responsibility of raising 30 head of hogs to Robert Armstrong and A. G. Stephenson. He was in the best of health then. Carefully he made out the lease. It was to run for three years. And at the expiration of that period, he commented when he signed the instrument, he hoped to be able to renew the lease. But death struck him swiftly, unexpectedly. It was 1:30 a. m. Dr. Parker Hollingsworth attended him. And on the death certificate the cause was listed as cerebral hemorrhage. Ninety years ago, Andrew White came to the United States. He was 14 years old. Gold hadn't been discovered in California. The Civil war still was 16 years distant. When the hostilities did start, Andrew White enlisted. He served with the confederate forces, a colorful figure in his tattered clothes, a friendly Negro who became known as Andrew Jackson. Forty years ago, he came to California. About 10 years ago, he said a short time before his death, he got what he described as his second eye. And until the time he expired the finest newspaper print was not too small for Andrew White to read without the aid of glasses. His body was taken to Tate's home, 3109 Ocean View blvd., San Diego. Wednesday, he was buried at Holy Cross cemetery. A Catholic priest officiated." (Chula Vista Star, May 22, 1936)

1938 - Mr. Lorenzo Anderson interviewed by Young Historians: "When I came to Otay [in 1938] there were no paved roads. [and no sidewalks] There were all dirt roads. Otay was mostly lemon orchards and celery fields. They grew tomatoes on Otay Mesa. I met an especially interesting fellow on my way to California. When I was fifteen, I told my mother, "There is no work in Louisiana. I can't make it here. I'm going to California," I had \$5, and my mother gave me \$1.75. I rode the trains. Along the way, I was lucky to meet a white fellow who was about sixty years old. He was a very Christian-hearted man. He took care of me on the trip west and taught me a lot of verses. this is my favorite one: "Many may wish you happiness while passing through this life, But none will ever love you as dear as she who calls you wife." We parted company in Yuma, and I never saw him again. "I saw the house and property at 3487 Main Street 45 years ago and fell in love with it. It was selling for \$3,250. That was more money than I had ever seen. I paid the \$250 down payment faster than I thought I could. The house stayed in escrow for about two years. I went to the real estate man and asked him what was wrong. He sold there were some people who didn't want any Negroes moving into the valley. He sold he'd help me get the house because I looked like the kind of man who would take care of a place. Mr. Campbell, a highway patrolman, loaned me a tractor to clear the rocks from the 1916 flood that were on the property. Mr. Gallahad, who owned a nursery in Chula Vista, told me he'd sell me all the trees I needed. I could work off the cost of the trees by helping him when I had time. I planted 265 lemon trees. Mr. Corrie, another neighbor, said to me, "You've tried so hard to make it, I'll come by and help you pick the lemons." He didn't want any money. Tears came to my eyes. It seemed people were so good to me. That's how I got started. I have loved living in this old house, it was built in 1887. The builders used redwood and square nails in constructing it. You don't see many houses nowadays with ten-foot-high ceilings. We have four bedrooms and two fireplaces. Every morning if you look up you'll see smoke coming from the chimney. That's part of my life. Each day, I get up at 6 o'clock, start a fire, play music, and read a little bit. I kind of enjoy that. ("The Young Historians Student Booklet Otay and Otay Mesa," Montgomery School [1983])



Lorenzo Anderson ca. 1930

1939 - Lorenzo Anderson was a young African American road worker for the county in the 1930s. He decided to move from Logan Heights to Otay Valley, to the old orchard house at 3487 Main Street that had been built in 1888. The house is Chula Vista Historic Site #68. (Agenda Packet 2005/05/25, City Council)

1939 - Lorenzo Anderson worked for the county road dept, saw many rural parts of the area. He decided to move from inner-city Logan Heights to the rural Otay Valley where he bought a farm and lived with his wife Louise Anderson and raised 3 children: daughter Barbara Anderson attended SDSU and receive degree in 1954, then to Kansas State Teachers College for MS in library science. (Wilkin, Binnie Tate, ed. African American Librarians in the Far West: pio trailblazers. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006.)



The Woodlawn Park Church of God in Christ at 124 Spruce Road was built in 1940 by Will and Menzie Wallace who moved to Woodlawn Park in 1932 and lived at 1655 Sycamore on hog ranch. Woodlawn Park was founded in 1910 by the Broderick-West Land Co. as "the most artistic laid out tract in the state, in a park having over four miles of beautiful drives, all trees, nine small and highly improved parks, eight cobblestone entrances and a small lake, and located where you get the balmiest climate San Diego affords" (San Diego Union, June But after the 1916 flood, the subdivision failed and during the Great Depression offered seclusion and cheap land for Black Americans such as the Wallaces.

1964/08/06 - Will Wallace of Woodlawn Park in Otay, is the local fire district that protects the rural community of 25, the fire station is a building that was t his wife Menzie ran. The fire truck was built by La Mesa Fire Capt England T. Robeson. Will's assistant is Hayes White of 173 Lotus Drive. Other voluntee Mack Robson, Amos Lee Hall, Jr., Daniel Powell, Otis Galberth, John Whiting, Darphelia Robson. The fire district was organized Jan. 17, 1953. Percy H. S head of Urban League in SD was honorary member. Will operates a 6-acre hog ranch with 40 swine, picks of garbage everyday in SD to feed the hogs. But t hills nearby indicated CV city limits "closing in around." Menzie is the founder of the Woodlawn Park Chuch in Christ, a small white building. They were n 1928 in Texas, came to San Diego 1929, did many kinds of jobs, got land in Woodlawn park in 1932. "We were the 12th family to move into Woodlawn Par have moved out but two. But we pioneered it on through." Menzie Wallace had heart attack in 1956 just about the time they dedicated the church. (Chula V News, Aug. 6, 1964.)

1977/08/25 - Woodlawn Park. Squeezed in between San Diego and southeast Chula Vista, this tiny black community has managed to retain its "lived-in" rur despite urban encroachment. Cattle and horses graze next to rusted-out automobile shells. Chicken wire encloses real chickens. About the only thing missing infamous pig ranch. Life is slow, unorganized. Black and brown faces closely watch strange cars. They know who lives in Woodlawn Park and those who do community began in 1910 as a planned wealthy agricultural development. When the Lower Otay Dam broke in 1916, flooding rendered the land unproducti land and open space drew many blacks from the South. One old-timer is Mack Robson, deacon in the Woodlawn Park Church of God in Christ, former fire (self-proclaimed keeper-of-the-peace. Robson says he's a former deputy sheriff who came to the area in 1941 from Oklahoma. He "kind of liked the place," s stayed put. "It looked much better then," Robson says, pointing to the decaying frame building which was home for 16 years for the Woodlawn volunteer fir department. "I'd say the place has changed," Robson said, leaning out his truck window, "just about 85%. There wasn't nothing here except that white house there." Woodlawn Park was good rabbit-hunting grounds, he said, adding, "just over there" he let some 3,000 head of hogs have a run of it in 1945. (Chula V News, Aug 25, 1977)

2005/10/01 - Historic Designation Application Form for Lorenzo Anderson house, 3487 Main Street, Chula Vista, Ca, built 1888, six acres in size, a Queen Anne Orchard House, submitted by William Anderson in San Diego, Jacqueline Perkins in Descanso, Barbara Anderson in Lake Elsinore. The house survived the 1916 flood, was twisted on its foundation but remained on its present location, sits on redwood and cement pilings, was built with modern indoor plumbing. An early photo of July 21, 1891, identifies the house as Mr. Isaac Smith's residence. Owners in the 1920s were George and Lisbeth Schurig who operated a dairy. A young Lorenzo Anderson who worked for the County Road Dept decided to relocate from Logan Heights to Otay Valley, and after a delay due to opposition of neighbors to a black family moving in, the house was occupied in 1939 and an orchard of 250 lemon trees was planted. The 3 children attended Otay School and Otay Baptist Church where Mr. Anderson was a deacon and where his youngest child Jaqueline was baptized. The farm prospered during the WWII years, he became an area air warden at a time when a Japanese sub was reported off Imperial Beach. He registered voters and was a poll inspector and was active in the Woodlawn Park Community Association. There was an Army base at Albany and Main during the war, and he

put out a bench in front of the orchard for soldiers, and invited soldiers to family holiday dinners. The lemons were processed at the Sunkist plant at 3rd and K, but cold winters killed the trees at war's end, and were replaced with vegetables and flowers. In the 1950s part of the old orchard was leased out to small businesses, the old Schurig dairy barn and packing shed demolished, and the neighboring poultry ranch became a housing development. The Andersons became semi-retired and established the Anderson Trust for income and tax purposes. Mrs. Anderson died in 1971 and Lorenzo Anderson remarried. He died in 1986. A scholarship was established at Bethel Baptist church in San Diego where the family had been members. His second wife died in 2004. The 3 children Barbara, William and Jacqueline restored the house in 2004, and is kept up by William who lives nearby. The house sits down a palm-lined driveway and is known by long-time Otay residents. The City Council in Resolution No. 2005-171 approved the application May 24, 2005, and it has been placed on the CV List of Historic Sites and Historic Site #68. (Agenda Packet 2005/05/25, Attachment 5, City Council Minutes, Office of the Clerk, Chula Vista, CA..)



Lorenzo Anderson ca. 19

[Home](#) • [About Us](#) • [Next Meeting](#) • [Latest News](#) • [Resources](#) • [Organizations](#) • [Exhibits](#) • [Bulletins](#) [Contact](#)

This web page was created April 15, 2017, and revised April 20, 2016, by Steve Schoenherr for the [South Bay Historical Society](#) | Copyright © 2017
