

HART MEMORIAL PARK

Markers and Memorials

by Teresa King



KRPF Nature Center Library Copy

Hart Memorial Park

“Human history in essence is the history of ideas.”
—*H. G. Wells*

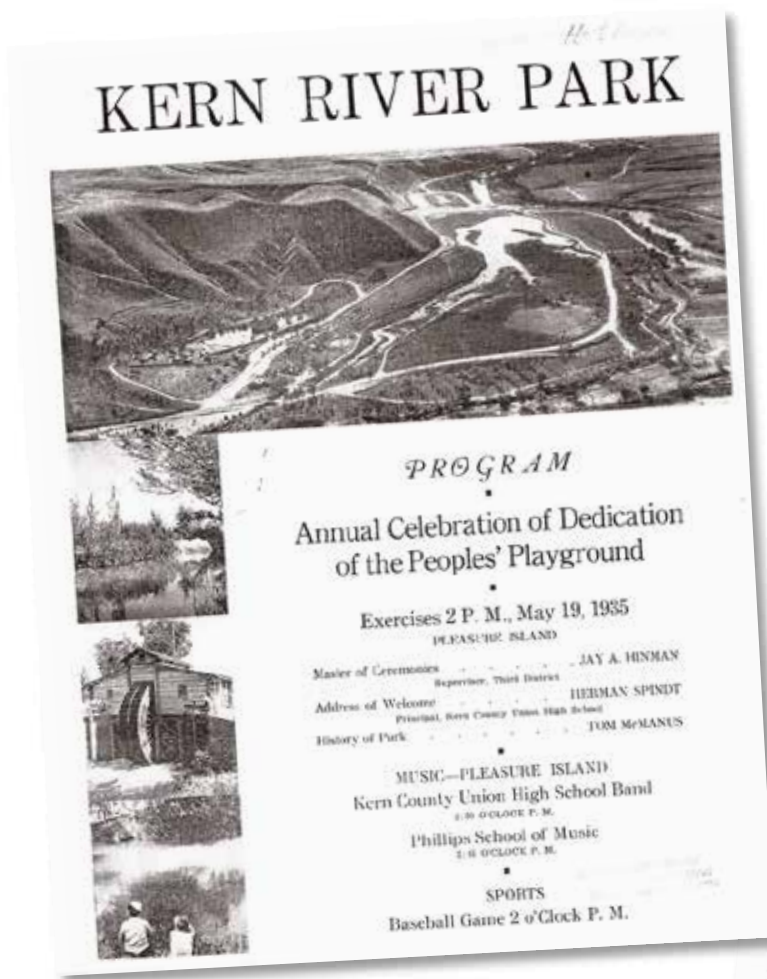
Beautiful Hart Memorial Park was once just an idea. Now it is a place for families and friends to gather under the shade of several different types of large, beautiful trees.

This book is an attempt to share the last few remaining tree grove markers and remember the organizations that helped make the park beautiful!

Also, included are memorial plaques that honor loved ones.



Markers and Memorials

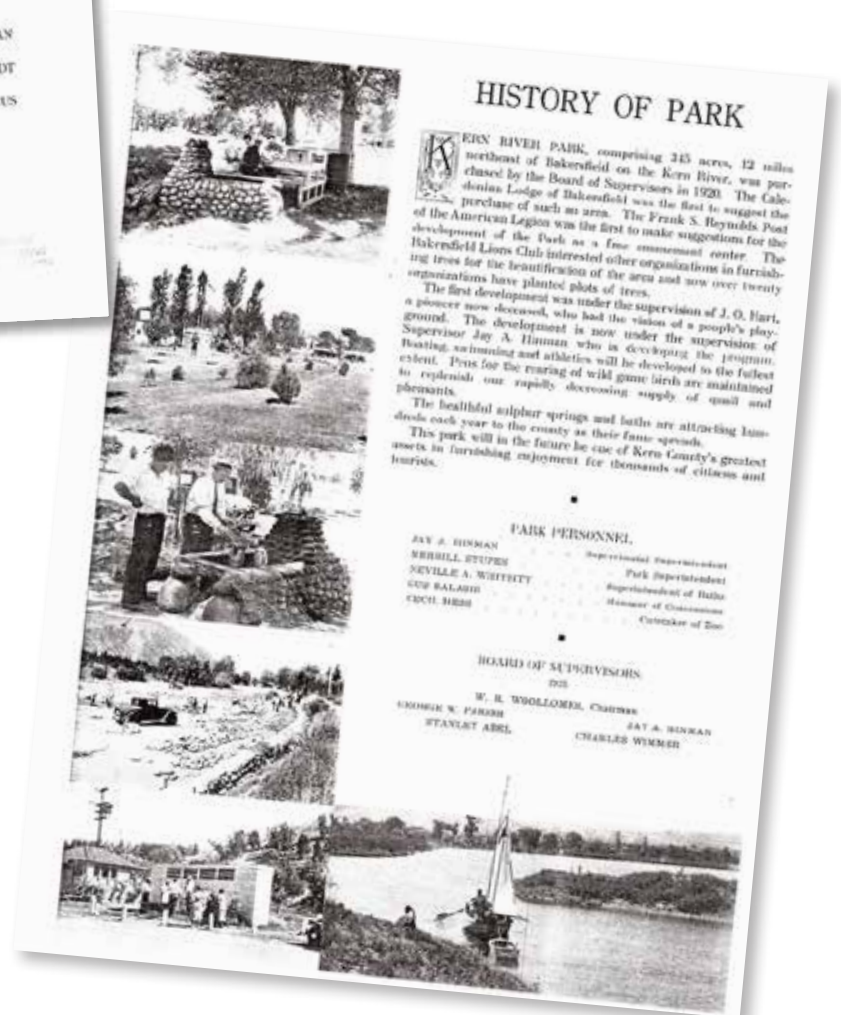


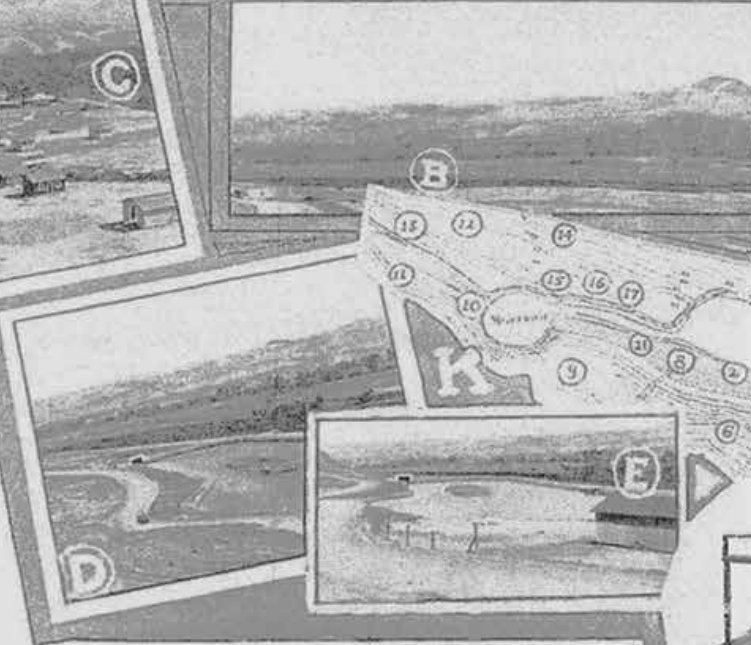
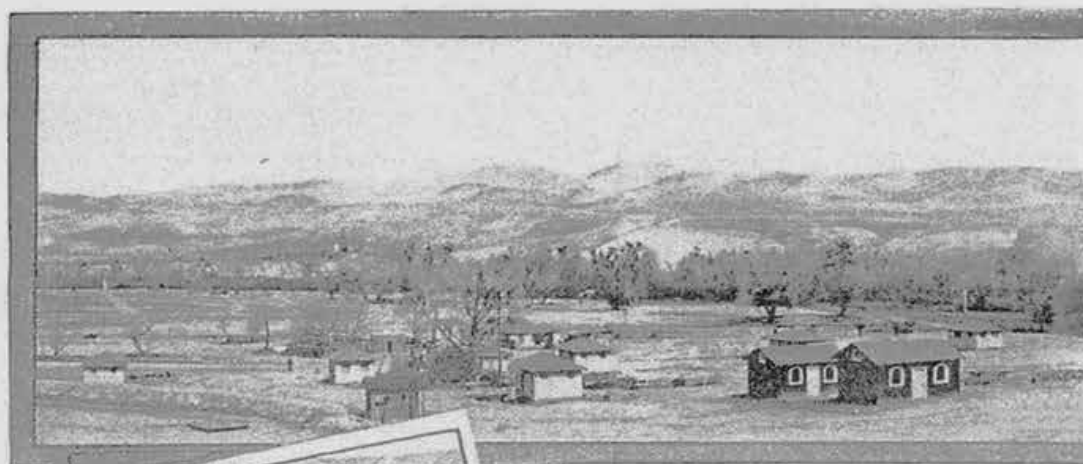
The program for the “Annual Celebration of Dedication of the People’s Playground” May 19, 1935.

— *The Bakersfield Californian*

The Bakersfield Lions Club interested other organizations in furnishing trees for the beautification of the area and now over twenty organizations have planted plots of trees.

The following is a list of organizations and a rough diagram of the plots of trees in the program.



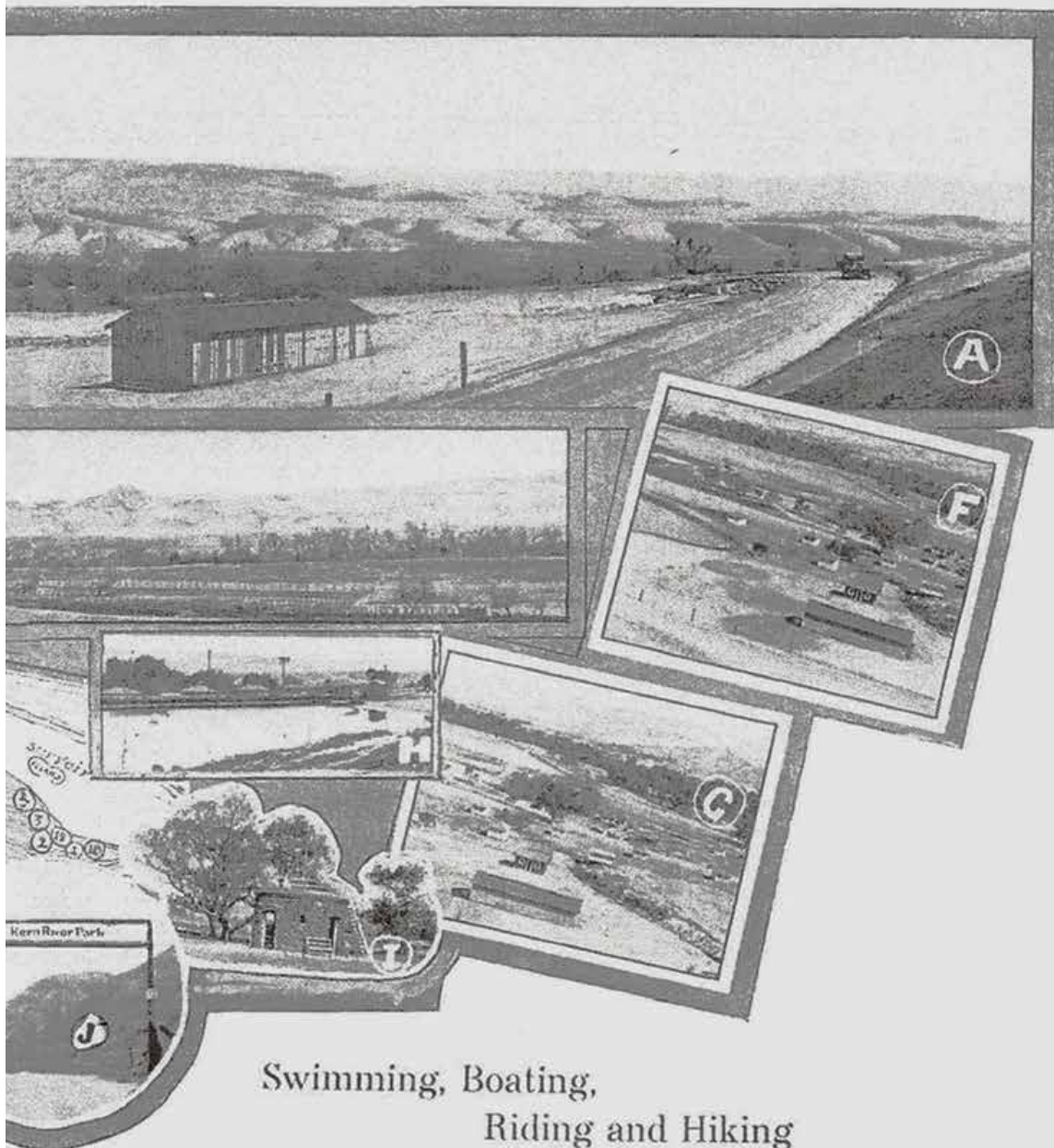


- 1—Grand Army of the Republic, 9 Cork Oak.
- 2—Loyal Order of Moose, 12 Camphors.
- 3—Fraternal Order of Eagles, 16 Magnolias.
- 4—Druids, 12 Live Oaks.
- 5—United Spanish War Veterans, 20 Redwoods.
- 6—Women's Christian Temperance Union, 12 Casurina.
- 7—Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, Western Red Cedar.
- 8—Independent Order of Odd Fellows, 16 Monterey Cypress.
- 9—Lions Club of Bakersfield, 14 Atlantic Cedar.
- 10—Woodmen of the World, 12 Monterey Pines.
- 11—Building Trades Council, Arborvitae.
- 12—Kern County Labor Council, Australian Bottle Trees.
- 13—Bakersfield Realty Board, California Laurel.
- 14—Frank S. Reynolds Post, American Legion, 30 Cedrus Deodara.
- 15—Native Daughters of the Golden West, Sequoia Sempervirens.
- 16—Veterans of Foreign Wars, 14 Lawson Cypress.

A Playground Free for Kern County People

VIEWS OF PARK IN EARLY

- 17—Water Service Club, Arizona Cypress.
- 18—F. & A. M. (Caledonia), Acacia Baileyana.
- 19—Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Purple Locust.
- 20—Degree of Honor, Acacia Millulueca.
- 21—Federation of Woman's Clubs, Silver Maple.
- 22—Kern County Farm Bureau, Carobs.
- 23—K. of P., Arizona Cypress.



Swimming, Boating, Riding and Hiking

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT, 1929

A—Birdseye view of the Park looking northeast toward Kern River.

B—Looking northwest over Lake and Zoo toward Kern River.

C—Showing small Hot Water Bath Houses.

D and E—Showing road around Lake, Boat House and Dressing Rooms.

F and G—Another view of Park showing Drive to Goat Island.

H—East end of Lake at Kern River Park.

I—Drinking Fountain in the Cobblestone Building, presented by Bakersfield Chapter of San Joaquin Power Club, and dedicated today.

J—View showing Entrance to Park.

K—Sketch showing general location of groves of various organizations.

Tree Grove Sponsors:

This is a list of organizations which developed the various tree groves throughout the park.
Each grove was originally marked with a bronze plaque.

– George Lynch *“Hart Park – In the Beginning”*

Farm Bureau
Grand Army of the Republic
Masons
Elks
Moose
Security Benefit Association
Eagles
Santa Fe RR Firemen
Druids
United Spanish War Veterans
Knights of Pythias
Degree Of Honor
Women’s Christian Temperance Union
Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Lions
Women’s Club
Woodmen of the World
Union Labor Council

Building Trades Council
Business and Professional Womens Club
American Legion
Native Daughters of the Golden West
Native Sons of the Golden West
Veterans of Foreign Wars
North Of The River Club
Red Men
Pocahontas
KC Community Club
Japanese Club
Realty Board
Kern Archers Club
20-30 Club
Soroptimists
Water Service Club
Bakersfield Chapter Daughters of the
American Revolution

Hill Road

There are several stone markers along this road.

“A few bronze markers survive from the 1920s and 1930s. There are many marker stones that have disappeared or are missing their plaques. More than 40 community organizations planted groves of memorial trees.”

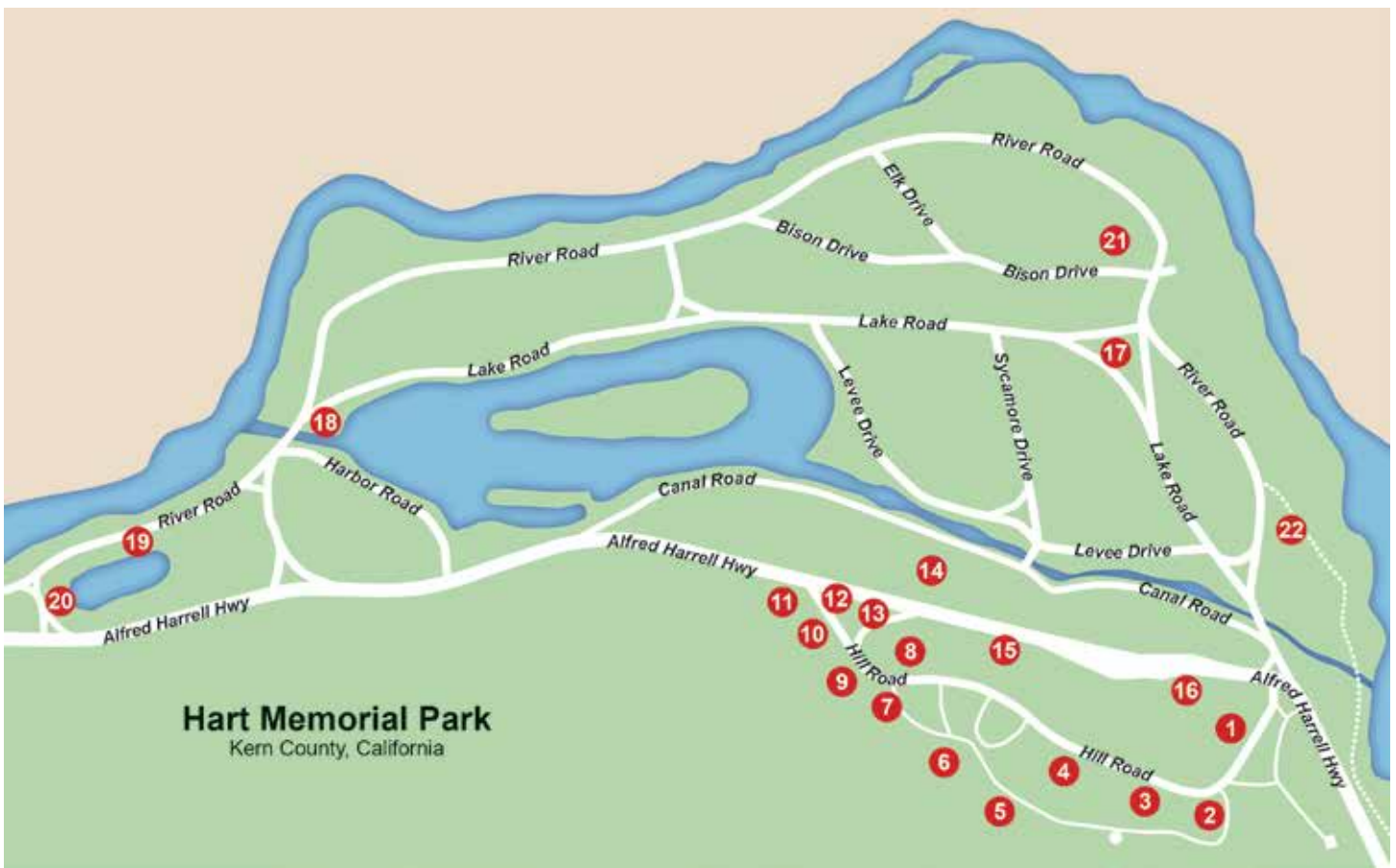
– Gilbert P. Gia *“100 Years at Old Hart Park”*

Monuments & Markers

Walking Tour

Starting on Hill Road, near the old barn, you can see the remaining stones.

The map is numbered for each stone. If known, the type of tree that was planted is included. Also included are memorial and recognition plaques for friends and loved ones.



1

Kern County Farm Bureau – *Carobs*



“The mission of the Farm Bureau of Kern County is to represent Kern County’s agriculture interest through public relations, education, and public policy advocacy in order to promote the economic viability of agriculture balanced with appropriate management of natural resources.”

– www.kerncfb.com



35.443931, – 118.905088
35°26'38.2"N 118°54'18.3"W

2

N. S. G. W. Bakersfield Parlor No. 42 Native Sons of the Golden West



“Old-timers shook their heads and worried that, with the nature of the population changing so rapidly, that it was only a matter of time before the colorful history of the Gold Rush and early-day statehood soon would be forgotten and neglected. So they hit upon an idea.

Why not form an organization of men who had been BORN in California. Whose mission it would be to preserve the state’s history. And that’s exactly what happened, causing the Native Sons of the Golden West to be formed on July 11, 1875.”

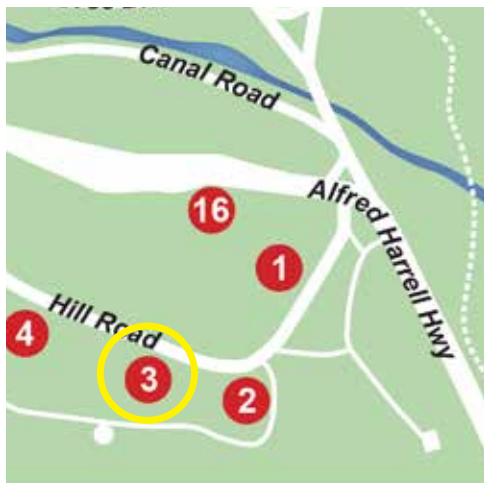
– Excerpted from the N.S.G.W. website



35.443488, – 118.905421
35°26'36.6"N 118°54'19.5"W

3

Unknown – Plaque is missing



No information available.



35.443571, - 118.905659
35°26'36.9"N 118°54'20.4"W

4

Fraternal Order of Eagles Bakersfield Aerie No. 93 –16 Magnolias



“The Fraternal Order of Eagles is an international non-profit organization uniting fraternally in the spirit of liberty, truth, justice, and equality, to make human life more desirable by lessening its ills and promoting peace, prosperity, gladness and hope.”

– From the F.O.E. website



35.444273, – 118.907764
35°26'39.4"N 118°54'28.0"W

5 Jr. O. U. A. M.



“The Junior Order of United American Mechanics is an American fraternal order. It began as a youth affiliation of the Order of United American Mechanics, but seceded to become its own organization and eventually absorbed its parent order.”

– Wikipedia

In the 1930s the Junior Order of the United American Mechanics had more than a million members nationally, but today the anti-immigration, super-patriot Jr O.U.A.M is almost forgotten in Kern County.

– Gilbert P. Gia “100 Years at Old Hart Park”

35.443829, – 118.908209
35°26'37.8"N 118°54'29.6"W



6

Degree of Honor Protective Valentine Lodge No. 78 – *Acacia Millulucca*



“Degree of Honor Protective Valentine Lodge No. 78 is part of a fraternal benefit society known as Degree of Honor.

For 144 years, Degree of Honor has upheld the belief that protection is best found in community.”

– www.degreeofhonor.com



34.444262, – 118.908571
34°26'39.3"N 118°54'30.9"W

7

Independent Order of Odd Fellows – 16 Monterey Cypress



“As an organization, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows aims to provide a framework that promotes personal and social development.

Lodge degrees and activities aim to improve and elevate every person to a higher, nobler plane; to extend sympathy and aid to those in need, making their burdens lighter, relieving the darkness of despair; to war against vice in every form, and to be a great moral power and influence for the good of humanity.

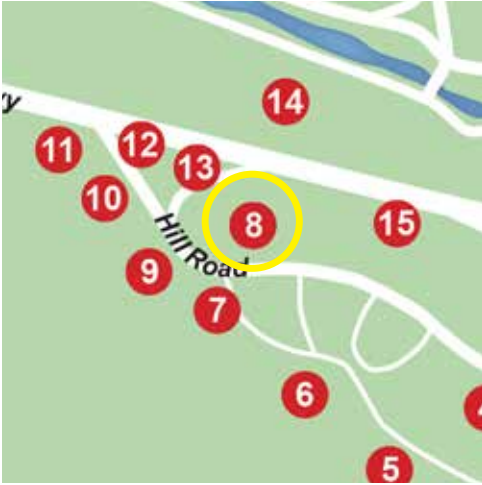
– www.odd-fellows.org



35.444718, – 118.908934
35°26'41.0"N 118°54'32.2"W



Federated Womens Club of Kern County – *Silver Maple*



The Federated Womens Clubs of Kern County is a collective of women's clubs in Kern County, California.

These clubs play an active role in shaping history and contributing to their community through various initiatives, advocacy, and philanthropy. Their collective efforts make a difference in Kern County, and they continue to shape history through their projects.



35.445076, - 118.909017
35°26'42.3"N 118°54'32.5"W



Bakersfield Lions Club – 14 Atlantic Cedar



“Lions serve. It’s that simple, and it has been since we first began in 1917.

Our clubs are places where individuals join together to give their valuable time and effort to improving their communities, and the world.”

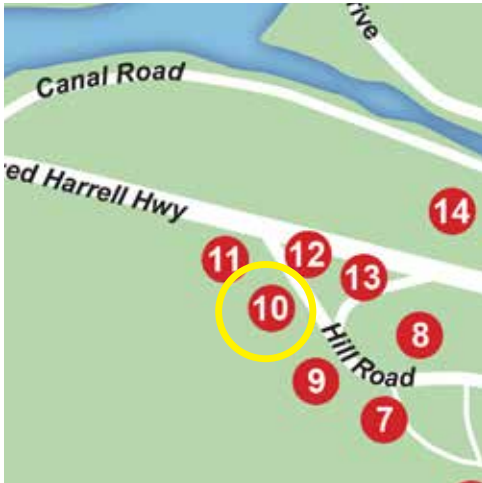
– www.bblions.com



35.444573, – 118.909451
35°26'40.5"N 118°54'34.0"W

10

Unknown – Plaque is missing



This may possibly be the W.O.W. 460 marker if one follows the description from an old trail guide.

WoodmenLife (officially Woodmen of the World Life Insurance Society) is a not-for-profit fraternal benefit society founded in 1890, based in Omaha, Nebraska, that operates a large privately held insurance company for its members.

The history of the organization includes numerous philanthropic efforts and community outreach projects.

The Woodmen of the World used tree-related symbolism in their rituals and ceremonies. The woodman's axe, mallet, and wedge were prominent symbols, representing strength, unity, and progress. Rituals included tree plantings, memorial services, and other community-building



35.443488, - 118.905421
35°26'36.6"N 118°54'19.5"W

activities. In Bakersfield, California, there was a specific camp associated with the Woodmen of the World called Camp 460. This camp likely served as a local chapter or branch of the larger organization.

– Wikipedia

11 Granges of Kern County



Granges serve as community organizations and play an essential role in promoting agriculture, education, and social activities.



35.445766, - 118.911094
35°26'44.8"N 118°54'39.9"W

12

Kern County Labor Council – *Australian Bottle Trees*



The Kern County Labor Council plays a significant role in advocating for the rights and interests of working people in Kern.

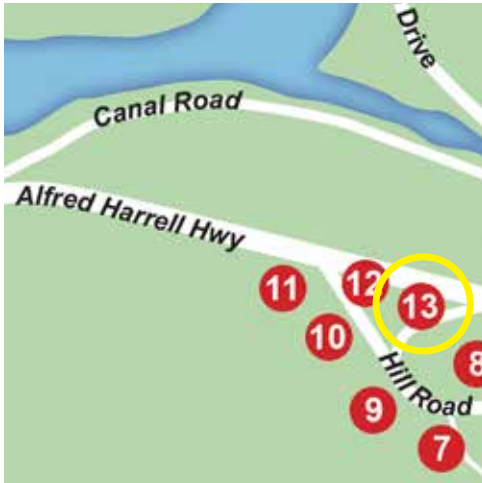


35.445645, - 118.910307
35°26'44.3"N 118°54'37.1"W



13

N. D. G. W. El Tejon Parlor No. 238 Native Daughters of the Golden West – *Sequoia Sempervirens*



“Native Daughters of the Golden West is an American non-profit organization for women born in California.

The organization focuses on the care and preservation of California history. It is the sister organization to the Native Sons of the Golden West.”

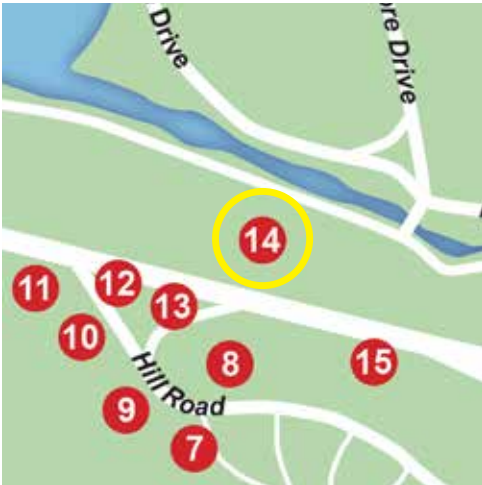
– Wikipedia



35.445382, – 118.909707
35°26'43.4"N 118°54'35.0"W

14

North of the River Association – *Cedrus Deodora* (Living Christmas Tree)



During the August 1985 meeting of “North of the River Association”, it was recommended the name be changed to North of the River Chamber of Commerce.

The North of the River Chamber of Commerce is organized to advance the general welfare and prosperity of the North of the River citizens and business community.

– www.norchamber.org



35.445536, – 118.907729
35°26'43.9"N 118°54'27.8"W

15

John O. Hart Memorial Stone



35.445148, - 118.907326
35°26'42.5"N 118°54'26.4"W

When traveling through the Kern River Canyon, Hart discovered an unusually shaped rock. A six-foot, water-worn granite rock “marked and hollowed by the eroding forces of nature.” He commented that it would make a nice addition to the Kern River Park. After his death in 1934 someone remembered that because it was brought to the park in 1937, three years after Hart’s death. That person was Y.B. Stokes, formerly a road foreman for the late supervisor. Stokes told the story of Hart’s stone to Gus Vercammen, who was a member of the East Bakersfield Progressive Club.

Vercammen got permission from the Board of Supervisors to move the stone. The East Bakersfield Progressive Club, Percy Branson, and Sam Myers of the State Division of Highways got help from a local, heavy-equipment operator named Jack Shields, and Shields moved the 4.5-ton monolith to the park. On September 6, 1937 it was formally dedicated on Labor Day, with a public gala to honor Hart and his efforts in the creation of



the park. The Hart family were honored guests at its unveiling. Ten years later, on June 15, 1947, the Kern River Park was renamed Hart Memorial Park.

– Gilbert P. Gia “100 Years at Old Hart Park”

16 Kern County Veterans “Grove of Honor”



The Kern County Veterans “Grove of Honor” Memorial Stone is a poignant tribute to our veterans. This living memorial honors the service and sacrifice of those who served in all wars.

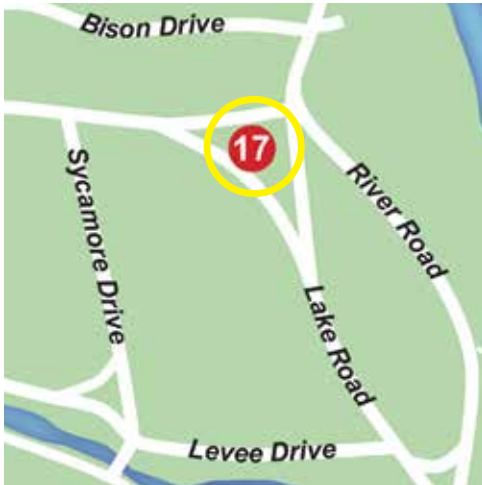
The memorial features a plaque mounted on a low rectangular base within a semicircle terrace, surrounded by three benches. Let us continue to honor and remember our nation’s war heroes.



35.444674, - 118.905700
35°26'40.8"N 118°54'20.5"W

17

Jerry D. Shearer – Groundskeeper (Lake Road and River Road)



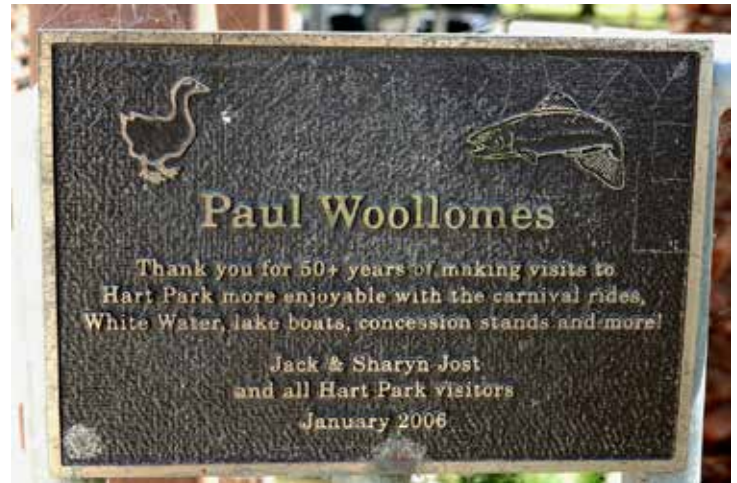
No information available



35.448592, - 118.906704
35°26'54.9"N 118°54'24.1"W

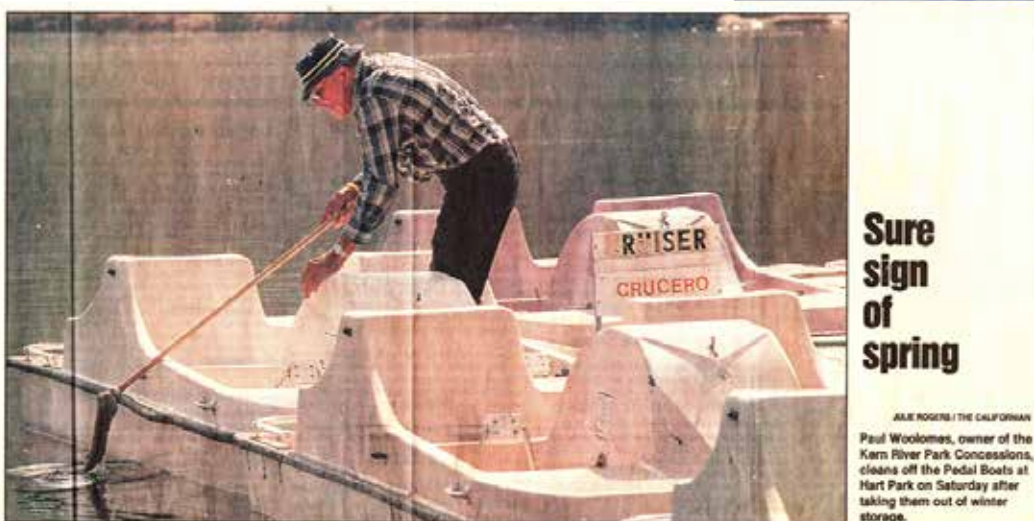
18

Paul Woollomes (Bridge Crossing at Hart Park Lake)



In approximately 1946, when he returned from WWII, Paul Woollomes became a partner in Kern River Park Concessions, and enjoyed the next 50+ years developing the boats, rides and snack bars at the park.

35.447641, - 118.917335
35°26'51.5"N 118°55'02.4"W



19

Search and Rescue Team – Kern County Sheriffs (River Road by Mirror Lake)



On August 16, 1986, a Kern County Sheriff's Office Search & Rescue aircraft crashed in Hart Park while on a training mission.

Killed were Douglas Moonen, Sgt. Marvin Kline, Ray Bockman, and Bockman's dog, a 3-year-old German Shepherd named Kelly.



35.446264, - 118.920333
35°26'46.6"N 118°55'13.2"W



KLINE



BOCKMAN



MOONEN

20

Joel Boyd Memorial Bench



No information available.



35.445628, - 118.921436
35°26'44.3"N 118°55'17.2"W

21

Robert “Bob” Rutledge – *Live Oak*



Family and friends planted a Live Oak celebrating the life of Bob Rutledge. Bob was a local business owner and a friend of the Kern River.

He could often be found along the river improving the area.

– Photos and comments by Bill Cooper



35.4498236, - 118.9066685
35°26'59.3"N 118°54'24.004"W



N. S. G. W. Bakersfield Parlor No. 42

Native Sons of the Golden West



Bill Cooper and Rich O'Neil, founders of the Kern River Parkway Foundation. The KRPF, established in 1985, is a non-profit that works to protect, preserve, and restore the natural riparian and wildlife habitat of the Kern River.

The KRPF develops and maintains public open spaces, structures, monuments, and parks that preserve and beautify the Kern River. The Foundation also supports projects that advance educational and scientific knowledge of the Kern River.

– www.kernriverparkway.org



35.446659, – 118.904453
35°26'47.9508"N 118°54'16.0308"W



Bill Cooper played a crucial role in preserving the Hart Park Adobe House. The house was built in 1939 as part of a Works Progress Administration project. Affectionately known as the "peacock house", this historic adobe building has been restored and now serves the community as the Kern River Parkway Nature Center.

Kern County Parks & Recreation



Legend

- Restrooms
- ▲ Group Picnic Areas
- ◆ Playground
- Ⓢ Site Reservations
- Roads
- Equestrian Trail

Welcome to Hart Memorial Park

- ALL FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL LAWS APPLY AND ARE STRICTLY ENFORCED -
AS A PARK PATRON IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW AND ABIDE BY SUCH LAWS ACCORDINGLY.**
- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. CO 13.04.091 - ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN THE
KERN RIVER COUNTY PARK BY PERMIT ONLY | 5. CO 9.20.010 - NO DISCHARGE OF WEAPONS ALLOWED |
| 2. CO 13.04.090 - CONDUCT OF BUSINESS AND SALE OF
MERCHANDISE IN PUBLIC PARKS PROHIBITED | 6. CO 7.08.150 - DOGS AT LARGE PROHIBITED - LEASH LAW |
| 3. CO 13.04.065 - RESTRICTION IN USE OF SOUND AMPLIFICATION
EQUIPMENT - BY PERMIT ONLY | 7. CO 13.04.063 - NO OFF ROAD VEHICLE USE IN PARKS - PROHIBITED |
| 4. CO 13.04.100 - PARK HOURS - OPEN 5AM TO 10PM | 8. CVC 21113(A) - NO PARKING ON GRASS OR LAWN |
| | 9. HORSES MUST REMAIN ON DESIGNATED TRAIL |
| | 10. PC 374.4 - NO LITTERING |

PLEASE HELP KEEP YOUR PARK CLEAN!



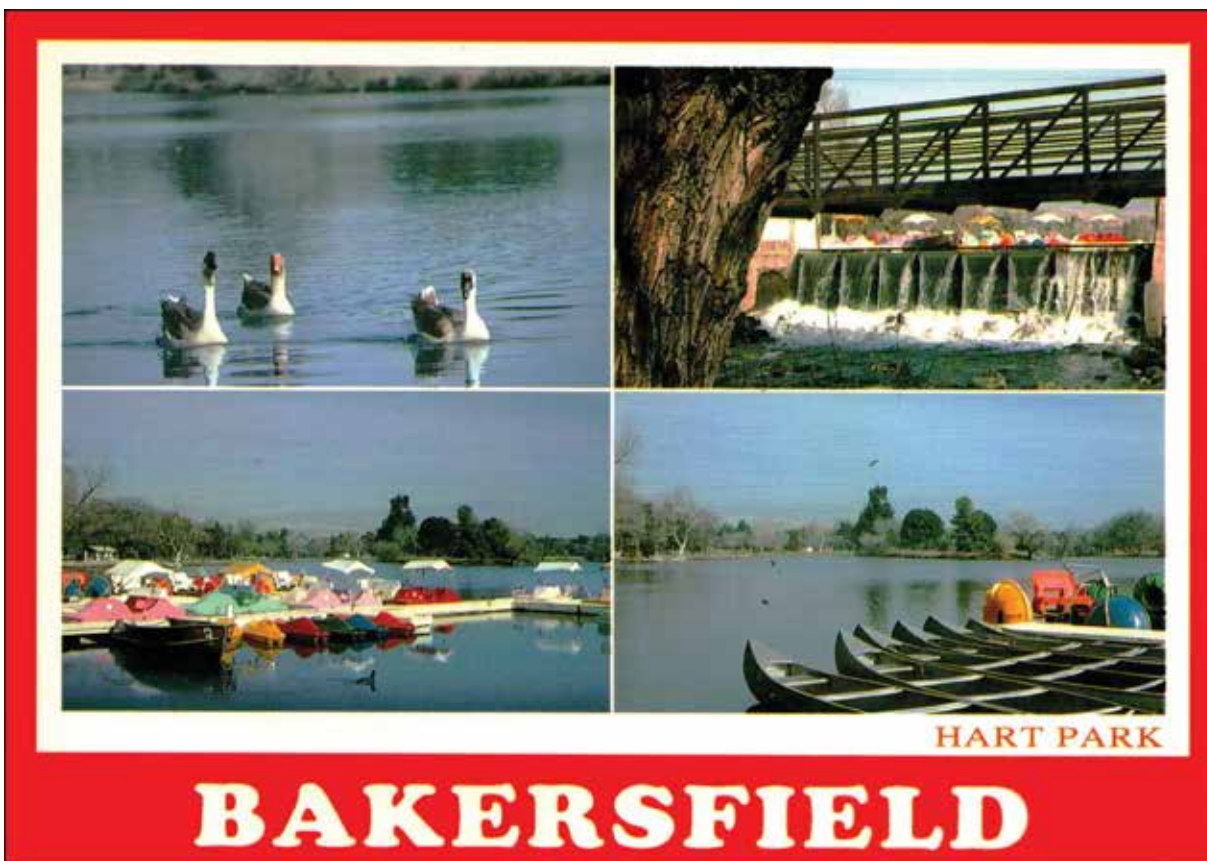
I have been visiting and enjoying Hart Memorial Park since I was a child and my parents would bring us here for bar-b-ques and swimming. As an adult I enjoy the natural beauty and wildlife at the park. I have also enjoyed learning about the history of the park.

I have photographed and tried to document a little of the history of the remaining tree grove markers and memorials that still exist in the park as of July 2024. My hope is that by learning about these markers they can be protected and preserved. This is by no means a scholarly work of research. Any misidentification is purely unintentional.

Marker photographs by Teresa King, unless otherwise noted. Photos of individuals pulled from the Kern County Sheriff's Office Memorial and from mortuary photographs. The Bakersfield Californian 1995 photo of Paul Woollomes and back cover post card provided by his daughters Lisa Tabassi and Robin Woollomes. Photo of Bill Cooper and Rich O'Neil from KRP Foundation. Thanks to Diane Mitchell for historical information. Thanks also to the very thorough writing of Gilbert P. Gia's "100 Years at Old Hart Park." Many Thanks to Laura Turner for her beautiful map of the marker locations and the amazing video. And last but not least, a big thank you to my husband, Richard Pruitt, for his patience and encouragement as I worked on this book.

While enjoying Hart Memorial Park, please abide by the rules and laws of the park, help us keep Hart Memorial Park a clean and beautiful place to enjoy with your family and please DO NOT feed bread to the ducks!!

– Teresa King



HART PARK
Bakersfield, California
– Photos @ Susan Woodhams



KERN RIVER PARKWAY 
NATURE CENTER
HART MEMORIAL PARK • BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA