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## GRASS VALLEY

### Historical Commission Meeting

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Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at 4:00 PM  
Council Chambers, Grass Valley City Hall | 125 East Main Street, Grass Valley, California  
Telephone: (530) 274-4310 - Fax: (530) 274-4399  
E-Mail: [info@cityofgrassvalley.com](mailto:info@cityofgrassvalley.com) Web Site: [www.cityofgrassvalley.com](http://www.cityofgrassvalley.com)

### AGENDA

Any person with a disability who requires accommodations to participate in this meeting should telephone the City Clerk's office at (530)274-4390, at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to make a request for a disability related modification or accommodation.

### MEETING NOTICE

Historical Commission welcomes you to attend the meetings electronically or in person at the City Hall Council Chambers, located at 125 E. Main St., Grass Valley, CA 95945. Regular Meetings are scheduled at 4:00 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Your interest is encouraged and appreciated.

Members of the public are encouraged to submit public comments via voicemail at (530) 274-4390 and email to [public@cityofgrassvalley.com](mailto:public@cityofgrassvalley.com). Comments will be reviewed and distributed before the meeting if received by 9 am. Comments received after that will be addressed during the item and/or at the end of the meeting. The commission will have the option to modify their action on items based on comments received. Action may be taken on any agenda item.

Agenda materials, staff reports, and background information related to regular agenda items are available on the City's website: [www.cityofgrassvalley.com](http://www.cityofgrassvalley.com). Materials related to an item on this agenda submitted to the Commission after distribution of the agenda packet will be made available on the City of Grass Valley website at [www.cityofgrassvalley.com](http://www.cityofgrassvalley.com), subject to City staff's ability to post the documents before the meeting.

**Council Chambers are wheelchair accessible and listening devices are available. Other special accommodations may be requested to the City Clerk 72 hours in advance of the meeting by calling (530) 274-4390, we are happy to accommodate.**

### REGISTRATION FOR VIRTUAL MEETING

Registration Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6sqTkpE9bpbWicESOrYdb8c6-hL8IN>

Please note that to register for the virtual meeting you will be required to provide an email address. If you wish to participate in the meeting without providing an email address, you may attend the meeting in person at 125 East Main Street, Grass Valley, CA 95945 in the

Council Chambers.

**CALL TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - *Members of the public are encouraged to submit public comments via voicemail at (530) 274-4390 and email to public@cityofgrassvalley.com. Comments will be reviewed and distributed before the meeting if received by 5pm. Comments received after 5pm will be addressed during the item and/or at the end of the meeting. Historical Commission will have the option to modify their action on items based on comments received. Action may be taken on any agenda item. There is a time limitation of three minutes per person for all emailed, voicemail, or in person comments, and only one type of public comment per person. For any items not on the agenda, and within the jurisdiction or interest of the City, please come to the podium at this time. If you wish to speak regarding a scheduled agenda item, please come to the podium when the item is announced. When recognized, please begin by providing your name and address for the record (optional).*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

1. **Memorial Park Centennial Courtyard Project Update:** The Historic Commission will discuss signage design, content details, and scope of work for the Memorial Park Centennial Courtyard Project approved by the City Council on May 25, 2021.
2. **Certified Local Government Program:** The Historic Commission will discuss the Certified Local Government Program offered by the California Office of Historic Preservation.
3. **Historic Commission Role & Duties Overview.**

**ADJOURN**

**POSTING NOTICE**

This is to certify that the above notice of a meeting of a Historical Commission, scheduled for Tuesday, April 11th 2023 at 4:00 PM was posted at city hall, easily accessible to the public, as of 5:00 p.m. Thursday, April 6th, 2023.

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Taylor Day, Deputy City Clerk

# Memorial Park: In the Beginning

In 1907, Grass Valley Mayor Charles E. Clinch had suggested a park and The Union newspaper took up the cause. But nothing got done until women got involved. In 1910, more than 100 women organized the Grass Valley Women's Improvement Club as the Chamber's auxiliary.

These women were the wives of merchants, mining engineers, or other professionals, and a few were professionals themselves, including teachers and a nurse. Initially, they worked to clean up unsightly lots and plant trees and flowers, using funds raised at card parties. Soon they focused on the need for a public park.

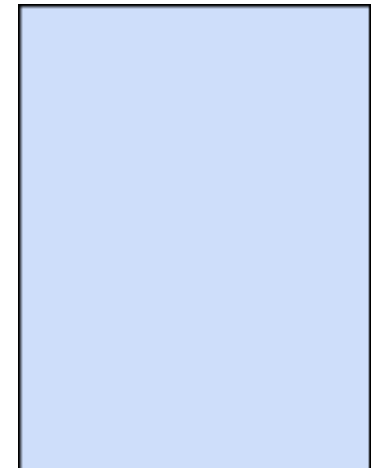
A driving force in the club was Sara Kidder, a widow who became president of the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad, which she managed with distinction. She offered the club a half-acre lot at Bennett and Bank streets. She eventually piped water from a spring on her adjacent property and donated a six-foot iron fountain with water spewing from lions' mouths.

The women tirelessly raised funds for the park, hosting card parties, raffles, and a variety show with an all-women orchestra. In 1911 the women's efforts resulted in the creation of City Square, Grass Valley's first public park. Set between the rail depot and the shopping district, it became the gateway to the town.

City Square was only a start.

The Chamber's long-time secretary, James C. "Jim" Tyrrell, traveled throughout the state, promoting the town's interests and seeking ideas for the town's improvement.

Tyrrell returned home thinking his town could also accomplish something grand. He conceived of a large park that could provide recreation for children and adults as it also memorialized the spirit of sacrifice which citizens had shown during the war.



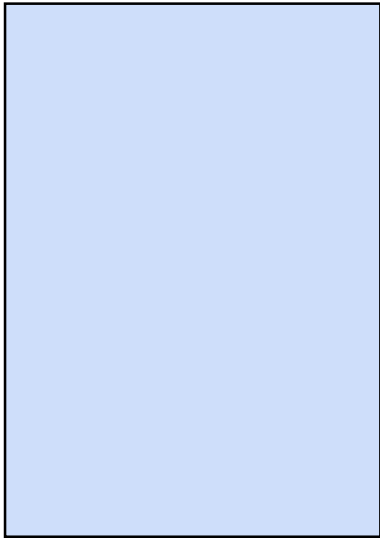
The Chamber asked for contributions with the slogan, "Give a Shift for the Park." Through the early months of 1921, hundreds of local families contributed as much as \$5 each (about a day's wages) to the campaign.

## "Give a Shift for the Park"

A decade after the dedication of City Square Park and following World War I, Jim Tyrrell saw other communities planning memorials for those who died in the war. Tyrrell remembered that Sara Kidder and the Women's Club had approached William Bourn, the Empire gold mine owner, a decade earlier. The women had asked Bourn to donate land for the first park, and Bourn had offered a roughly seven-acre site the mine owned on Colfax Avenue.

Tyrrell thought the property on Colfax Avenue would make a splendid park, and he knew it still belonged to the Empire mine. He approached his friend and Elk Lodge brother George Starr, managing director of the mine. Perhaps on the back of a napkin in the club lounge, Tyrrell and Starr drew preliminary plans for a park. William Bourn embraced their ideas and gave the land.

# “Grass Valley’s Greatest Asset”



The Chamber of Commerce raised and spent \$8,156 to build the park. Citizens contributed an even greater value of donated materials and volunteer labor. Mining engineer Ben Penhall donated a stone bridge. The Idaho Maryland Mine built a community building. Libby Starr, the wife of George, donated the swimming pool and the Empire mine built the pool house. The Farm Bureau provided landscaping and raised a flagpole. GV women planted the gardens. Tyrrell, Starr, and the community built a park that became a model for other towns and cities without using taxpayers' money.

The dividends were great because Memorial Park was an immediate hit, well used, and treasured from the start. Editor Kinyon reported "kids playing from morning until night" in the park.

He called it "Grass Valley's greatest asset."



# A Centennial Park

**Jim Tyrrell presided as master of ceremonies when Grass Valley dedicated its Memorial Park-with its tennis courts, ball field, pool, and memorial grove-on Armistice Day, November 11, 1921. Near the podium hung a scroll listing 457 sailors and soldiers from the Grass Valley district who served in the Great War. Tyrrell dedicated the cornerstone for a monument to 16 men and one woman who didn't return.**

**A veteran proclaimed: "Grass Valley is one of the few cities ... to let veterans know they are not forgotten:" A well-illustrated feature article in a San Francisco newspaper said the park represented what a remarkable town could accomplish.**

**"Loving work means lasting work," Tyrrell told a luncheon of the Women's Improvement Club. He gave Chartres Cathedral in France as an example of what he meant. "No man knows its architect, and no one knows its builders." he said. It was erected by artisans "who cared nothing for their own glory ... who gave their services without price and even without record, as a matter of worship."**

**Tyrrell felt he and Grass Valley had done the same at Memorial Park. Now adults and children alike have enjoyed the park for a century.**



# Memorial Park: In the Beginning

Item # 1.

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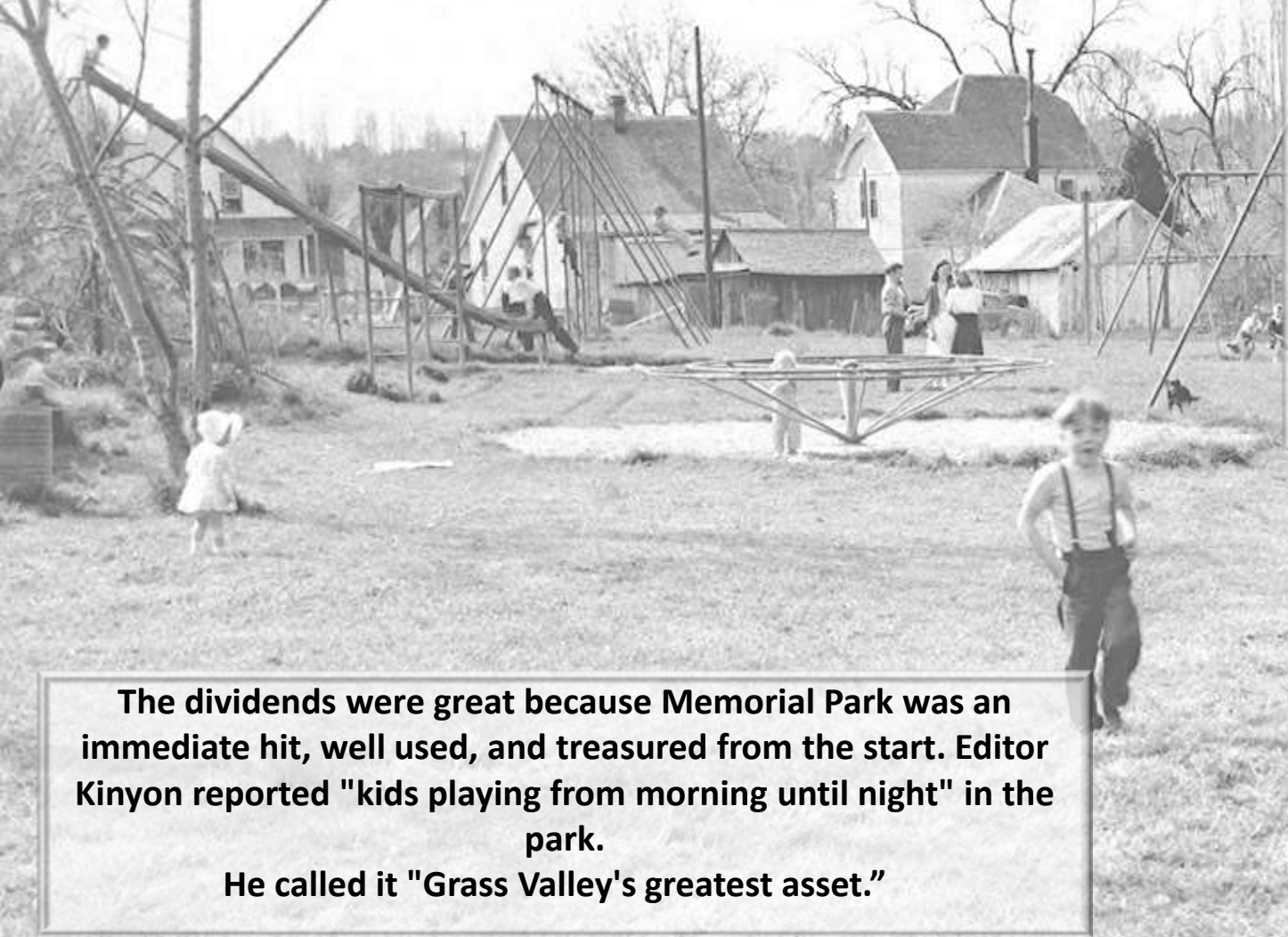
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Grass Valley-17



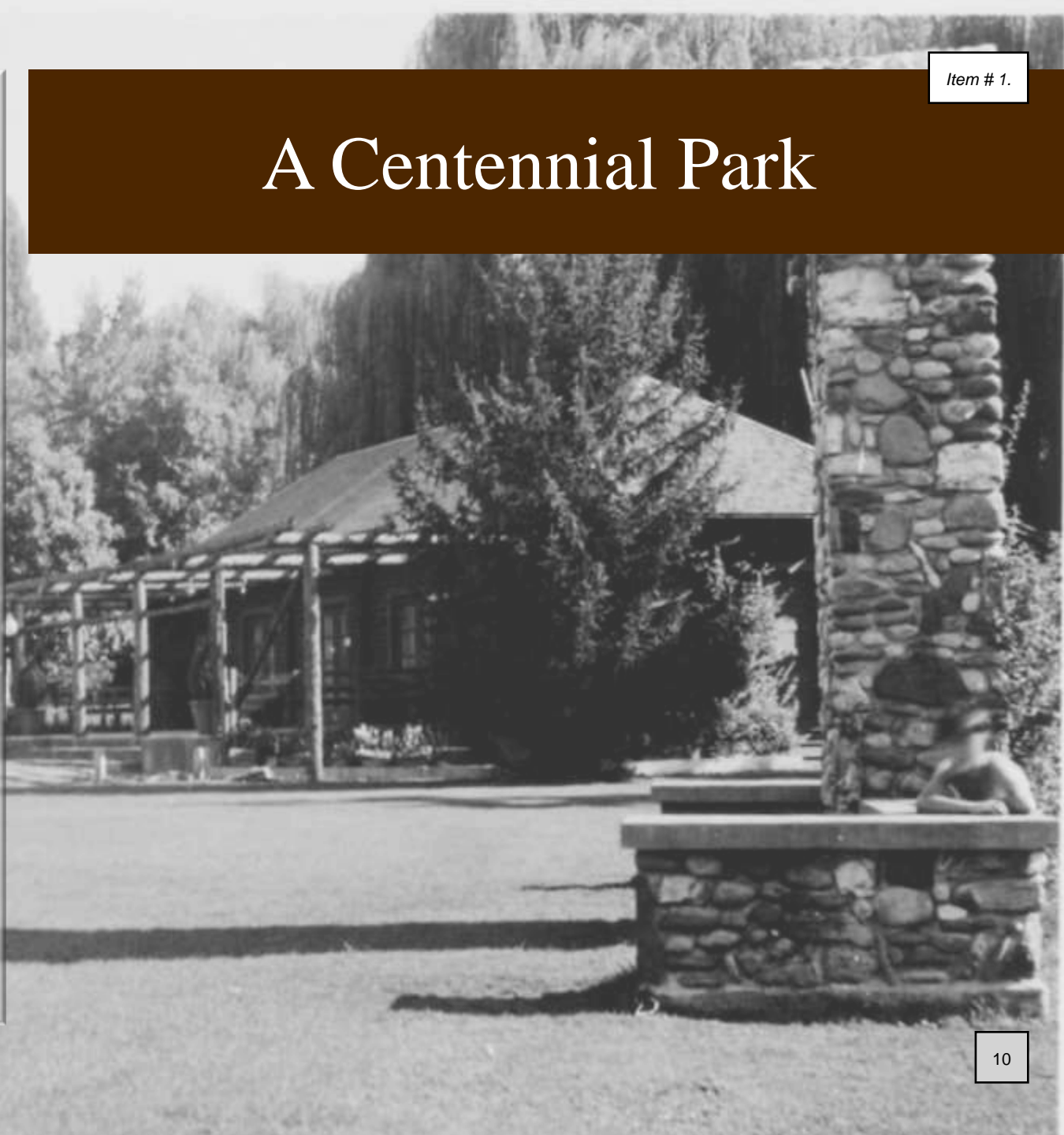
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MEMORIAL PARK  
Grass Valley, Calif.



PLAYGROUND, MEMORIAL PARK, GRASS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA



MEMORIAL PARK GRASS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

Nov. 1924



MEMORIAL PARK GRASS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

Nov. 1924



6484 STARR POOL, MEMORIAL PARK, GRASS VALLEY, CAL.



STARR POOL, MEMORIAL PARK, GRASS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA.



MEMORIAL PARK SWIMMING POOL, GRASS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

K-372





6484  
STARR POOL, MEMORIAL PARK, GRASS VALLEY, CAL.



VIEW FROM PORCH OF COMMUNITY HOUSE, MEMORIAL PARK, GRASS VALLEY, CAL.



MEMORIAL PARK, GRASS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA.



PICNIC GROUNDS,  
MEMORIAL PARK  
GRASS VALLEY, CAL.