



## ***Origins of California's Planning Commissions and the CCPCA***

*Compiled in 1953, with notes from 1965*

Compiled by the members of the San Joaquin County Planning Commission from old records and reprinted for the 1955 conference at the Ahwanee, Yosemite Valley.

Sometime in the mid-1920's, several public-spirited men began to realize that the growing pains being felt in California indicated a need for statewide organization for coordinating information and generally promoting statewide developments. Mr. Norman Sloan was one of these men, and out of his enthusiasm was born the California Redevelopment Association, of which he was the first manager. One of the first and most active projects of this organization was the promoting of statewide planning laws, particularly at the County level.

The year 1929 marked several important milestones. The State Legislature enacted a City and County Planning Act, providing specifically for the appointment of County Planning Commissioners and a May Filing Act. This gave county planning commissioners a large measure of control over the subdivisions of the land. The California Redevelopment Organization appointed a special sub-committee of the Highway Committee composed of men familiar with County government and with City and Regional Planning, to study the new laws and prepare a report for general circulation to those persons who might be officially or unofficially interested in County planning in the State. This Committee included:

This Committee filed its report with the California State Chamber of Commerce Highway Committee on January 27, 1930, a report that was a concise analysis of the new planning laws, and a comprehensive recommendation of the County Planning procedure from forming a Planning Commission to approving a Master Plan.

A fortunate circumstance in the forming of this Committee was the inclusion of Mr. H.H. Jacqueth, who was doing the planning work for the City of Sacramento and was also doing some consulting work with Placer and Shasta Counties.

Mr. Jacqueth had been one of the prime movers in the late 1929 planning enactment's, having helped with the writing of the proposed laws, and then helped fight the good fight, steering them through the Legislature.

Another committee member who was also preaching the work of good planning and with whom 25 added years has brought no dimming of enthusiasm, is Gordon Whitenhall.

In discussing the publication and circulation of their report, the subcommittee members impressed on Mr. Frank McKee, Chairman of the State Chamber of Commerce Highways Committee, the desirability of a State organization

of County planners. It was pointed out the California was the birthplace of County planning' in 1922, the Board of Supervisors of Los Angeles County formed the Los Angeles Regional Planning Commission. . San Francisco City and County also formed a planning commission soon after Los Angeles. Both these commissions were under charter provisions. Later, Santa Barbara County, operating under general laws; established a planning commission in 1927, under permissive legislation of that year. There were a total of three (3) County planning commissions when the 1929 law became effective. By December of 1929 six (6) more counties had established planning commissions.

Mr. McKee enthusiastically endorsed the idea of a statewide organization, and by his efforts, the facilities of the State Chamber of Commerce were made available to promote the project. A meeting was called for the last week of June 1930, to assemble in Santa Barbara, and on the 28<sup>th</sup> of the month, the California Counties Planning Commissioners Association was born. Bylaws were adopted, officers elected and quarterly meeting called. Mr. John R. Wright, Chairman of the Santa Barbara County Planning Commissions, was elect President. Mr. George A. Posey, County Surveyor of Alameda County, was elected Secretary Treasurer. Mr. Frank McGee became Assistant Secretary Treasurer, a post he filled most ably until he resigned in September 1940. At the 1941 convention held in Sacramento, Frank Shrimpton became Secretary Treasurer, and the post of assistant was never again filled.

*The above is from the 1953 Proceedings – 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting.*

*And the following from the 1965 Proceedings – 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting: An interesting sidelight on the growth of County Planning is that by December 1931, 19 Counties had Planning Commissions. By December of 1941, 33 Counties had Planning Commissions. By 1945, 50 Counties had Commissions, and as of January 1964, every County in California had a Planning Commission.*