

The Echo

News from the Pleasant Valley Historical Society

Our Early Settlers - Wendell Phillips Daily

By Hon. Stanley J. Daily

Mayor Emeritus, City of Camarillo

My Grandfather, Wendell Phillips Daily, comes from a lineage of "Pioneers." His Great-Grandfather, Thomas Daily, immigrated to America from Ireland in 1773, and fought in the Revolutionary War under General George Washington. True to that adventuresome spirit, Wendell also became a pioneer in his own right. He became one of the early "Settlers" or "Pioneers," if you will, of the Camarillo area.

Wendell (sometimes known as W. P.) was born in on March 25, 1874 in Keelerville in Van Buren County, Michigan. He spent his childhood almost exclusively in New York State, except for the short time he spent on the farms as a baby and young boy in Keelerville. Young Wendell received his education from the common and high schools of Monroe County, in New York.

At the age of 16, Wendell finally followed his brothers Erastus and Charles to California, leaving New York on May 16, 1890. The trip by rail of some 3,000 miles had taken him approximately 10 days to complete. His father, Charles Wesley Daily, had preceded him by a year, and was waiting for him at the train station in Montalvo, which was nothing more than a boxcar side-tracked and turned into a depot.

The population of all Ventura County at that time was about two thousand people. What a sight it must have been for Wendell, his first view of his new County. After his father met him at the train depot, if that was what you could call it, they proceeded to the Santa Clara River. When they got to the river, it was near horse-belly high. W. P. wasn't too sure about that, but others were fording the river, so he decided he could do it also. After crossing they proceeded to the 6,000 acre Patterson Ranch (near today's city of Port Hueneme) to meet the Ranch Superintendent, his brother, Charles J. Daily.

Wendell worked with his brother for about six years and, through his successes in working for and leasing land from the Patterson Ranch, he hoped to be able to purchase his own ranch as soon as possible. Wendell turned out to be one fine farmer. He was purely all business when it came to farming. As a side note, it seemed that he did not especially have any hobbies, such as fishing or hunting. Nor did he especially care for



socializing. He felt social life was frivolous. Other wise he had his "nose to the grindstone." Later he would write about himself, "As for girls, they were lovely creatures, yes. . . . but to possess one never entered my mind."

He met Lenora Deutsch at the Hueneme dock, where he saw a young lass trying to land a fish. He went

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over to help her and the fish was not caught, but he was. He states in his memoirs, "She was probably sixteen or seventeen years old, rather chubby with round face, rose cheeks, and beautiful brown glossy hair, eyes brown, bright and sharp; fair complexion. She had a charming expression, pleasing voice and approach. I know that this description is very meager for such a lovely girl." Was there any doubt that he was smitten?

On April 29, 1899, he bought a ranch, (located along the current Daily Drive) which initially consisted of 160 acres (later to be expanded) in Camarillo. W. P. borrowed about \$7,000 from Achille Levy, the owner of Bank of A. Levy, to pay for the ranch. He had already saved some four thousand for this purpose. This was not a bad deal, considering that the same land many years later was selling for nearly \$100,000.00 an acre for commercial development. Many years later, he asked Achille Levy why he had loaned \$7,000 to a young man of 25 whom he barely knew. Achille answered that he and his brother would get up at 3:00 a.m., hitch up the buggy and horses, and then travel out to the homes of those desiring loans. If their lights were on in the house by 4:30 in the morning, they knew that individual was a "self starter" and that he would be a success. And Wendell was definitely in that category. How lending practices have changed over the years!!

Initially Wendell grew barley and lima beans, these two commodities forming his entire crop that first year. It was said that he was averaging from 15 to 20 sacks of beans to the acre, which was exceptional at that time for "dry farming."

That same year Wendell married Lenora Deutsch. Thus in 1899 Lenora Deutsch became Mrs. Wendell P. Daily. 1899 became a stellar year for W. P. as he was a proud landowner in what is now Camarillo and he had married the love of his life. (He and his wife went on to have seven children, Ralph, Amelia, Frank, Emma, Roscoe, Imogene, and Paul.) You must remember that this was before the township of Camarillo had even come into being and as yet had no name identification. His ranch was known as being "just East" of the small settlement of "Springville."



W. P. was also an early planter and farmer of sugar beets in the area. It took from 250 to 300 days for a field of beets to mature. So it was basically one crop a year for the farmer for whatever acreage was planted in the beets.

In 1912, Wendell Daily decided not to rely only on the water "from Heaven" which was the rainfall, the only water used by farmers at the time to "dry farm." He decided instead to attempt to drill a water well on his ranch. He did so, and it was a "gusher." Thus the first water well had been drilled in the greater Pleasant Valley Area.

In 1913, the year after his "gusher," he planted twenty acres of lemons on his ranch, soon to be followed by 30 more acres, starting the citrus industry in the Pleasant Valley. In March of 1917, the first load of lemons from the Pleasant Valley District was taken from W. P. Daily's 50 acre grove. He also was instrumental in the development of the Oxnard Citrus Association, being a founding member of the Board and its President. He also served on numerous other boards and associations of an agricultural nature.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends:

Pat and I hope that all of you have had a wonderful and happy Holiday Season. Although some of us have had various types of hardships and illnesses in recent months, we still have an awful lot to be thankful for in our lives. We have the privilege of living in God's favorite area in the world, we have family and friends to be thankful for and have a roof over our heads and our stomachs are full. What more can we ask for? We pray that someday soon all of our brothers and sisters throughout the world will be so fortunate.

I personally want to thank all of you for all of the support that you have provided to me and the Society and Museum. I am looking good as your President because of all of your dedication to our mission. I always am fearful of missing someone, but I want to thank the following who have worked hard in the last few months in changing the décor of our Museum. We had a display depicting "At Home in Camarillo in 1919" and more recently a change to reflect the "Holiday Season." This group not only changed many of the displays but rearranged some of the display cases and put a coat of fresh paint in the building as well as our sign in front. Thanks to Liz Daily, David Hibbits, Bill and Joy Todd, Barbara Wagner and Janet Whitlock. My apologies to anyone else that I have missed, who may have worked with them in these efforts. I am so proud to be a small part of our organization. THANKS!

I just want to mention that some of your Board members have been meeting with the Camarillo Ranch House Board members to discuss how we can work more closely together and help one another in various ways. In addition, some of us have also met informally with the City regarding extension to our lease so that we may soon initiate activity regarding the possibility of enlarging our facility. In both cases I am pleased to say that our discussions have been very positive. More on these items in the future.

Last year we had a very successful "Living History Day" and that Committee is asking once again for your support for their next event, which is scheduled for May 18, 2014. We hope that if you didn't have the opportunity to visit the event last year that you put next year's date on your calendar and see what you have missed and why we had so many compliments on last year's event. This event is open to all, children, grandchildren and even adults enjoy it.

Doesn't our Garden look wonderful? I see a few more butterflies than we have had in the past so they must like it also.

Our next "dine out" event is set for Tuesday, February 4 at Yolanda's Mexican Restaurant from 4 to 9 p.m. I hope to see many of you there for good food and a fun evening (and it helps the Museum with day to day expenses.)

Your support is so appreciated and important to the Historical Society and all that we do. Just a reminder: it is time to renew your membership for 2014. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Keep it up and we will press forward for bigger and better things in the future.

Frank

THINGS ARE HAPPENING AT THE MUSEUM

“At Home in Camarillo, c.1919”



During the October 19 – 20 weekend, over one hundred visitors enjoyed being in a typical early American parlor and kitchen, participating in a discussion of the happenings of the time. Dressed for the period, docents talked about the end of the Great War, the League of Nations, women's suffrage, and prohibition. In the garden, children of all ages had the opportunity to have a fresh apple, peeled and cored using vintage equipment. They were also able to press fresh tomatoes and prepare fabric strips for a braided rug.

WENDELL PHILLIPS DAILY *Continued from Page 2*

By 1916, the Daily Brothers' (Charles, Erastus and Wendell) land ownership had grown to thousands of acres. The Daily's were here to stay! Over the years, the Daily Brothers introduced, to name a few, such crops as beets, peas, lettuce, avocados, walnuts, and lima beans, not to mention the innovation of the new citrus industry.

During his retirement years, Wendell also became quite an “artist” in his own right. He was known for his carving of figures out of large pieces of wood, such as President Abraham Lincoln and General of the Armies Douglas MacArthur. He also was quite a “rug maker.” He hand wove 9'x 12' hooked rugs with scenes on them, such as one that hangs in the Pleasant Valley Historical Society Museum on Las Posas Road depicting the original Pleasant Valley Baptist Church at the end of Arneill and Ventura Blvd built in 1931. Most of these items were passed down to his children and grandchildren.

Needless to say, Camarillo would not be what it is today had it not been for such forward thinking men as Wendell P. Daily, who had the drive and innovation to make a difference in the community. I salute him and all the early Pioneers for the innovation and foresight which they brought to our area.

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Do you know about the Camarillo Hospice Oral History Program? Using a small DVR (digital voice recorder), your life story is recorded and then, after some basic editing, the MP3 files are put on a CD, giving you a valuable keepsake to share with your family. Of course, the Museum also would love to have a copy for our historical archives. If you are interested in doing this, call Laurie Davis, Director of Volunteer Services, at 805-389-6870, ext. 12 to schedule an interview.

Dear Friends,

It's that exciting time of the New Year when you have the opportunity to renew the tax deductible support of your PVHS & Museum! The funds generated from membership renewals are the main source of revenue for museum operations.

To offer transparency, our largest expenditures are building utilities and supplies, insurance, printing expenses, and garden maintenance. With the exception of paid gardeners, we have no paid staff. Office work, finance, docents, cleaning, building and grounds improvements, accessions, displays and events, and garden chair are all done by volunteers. Our beautiful gazebo will also require major costly work this year.

In *the Echo* is a return envelope for you to indicate the level of support for the 2014 calendar year. Share your enthusiasm by raising your membership level, and especially by inviting a new friend to join us!

Thank you so much,

Bill Todd, Membership Chair



NEW ACQUISITIONS

The Museum has recently received a donation of two outdoor rocking chairs from the old Lewis Ranch. They are handmade and probably date from about 1900. In spite of their age, they are still sturdy for the most part. The seats and backs were of cane originally. When the cane was worn out, it was replaced with waxed clothesline as shown.

The donation was made by Terrence Talley, great-grandson of Joseph Lewis.

MEMORIALS

Donations in memory of **Phillip Daily** were made by Fred Phipps, Doug Graham, Stan and Liz Daily, Pat Wise

Donations in memory of **Byron Fulkerson** were made by Ruth Maulhardt, Adele Walsh, Fred Phipps

A donation in memory of **Helen Noble Muldoon** was made by Pat Wise.

DONATIONS

We would like to thank Dr. Neil Kuns who repaired our Sessions Regulator Clock for his donation of his time and expertise.

CHARLES HONN GARDEN

By Betty Jo MacDonald, Garden Chair

BUTTERFLY HABITAT

Why butterflies in a Historic Garden you ask? The Garden attempts to represent the historic landscape which the Spanish saw when they arrived in the Pleasant Valley area. One important thing in Ventura county which the Spanish probably saw was groves of trees covered with clusters of migrating Monarch Butterflies. There would have been hundreds of thousands of these beautiful insects. Today their numbers are greatly reduced.

In an effort to represent the rapidly disappearing native wildlife and plants of the area, our small garden is on a path to be a Monarch Way Station.. As mentioned before in these pages, we received a \$500 grant from the Meadow Larks Service League to start our butterfly garden. So far we have purchased plants, seeds and signage. The caterpillars eat so fast and so much--they are tiny eating machines! Your garden gurus have a plan to grow more milkweed this year so we can keep a steady supply.

While it seems against nature, the butterflies are mating and reproducing very fast this time of year. This is the last generation to breed this year. They lay eggs and die, leaving their young to migrate to the overwintering grounds. The great mystery of these magnificent creatures is how they know where to go to a place they have never been.

It is the goal of the garden to create a certified Monarch Way Station which protects the butterflies and their young by providing nectar plants for adults, shelter and various milkweeds as food for caterpillars. Way stations are certified by National Monarch Watch.

We would like to establish a small greenhouse for growing butterfly plants and to shelter caterpillars from predators and from extreme cold. We can have a release day where the public is invited to set free the butterflies.

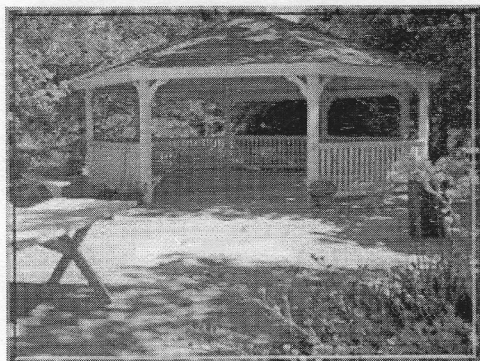
We will need extra volunteers to do this so, if you would like to participate, call Betty Jo at 805-657-2904. It is an especially good project for children ages 12 and through teens.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Heteromeles arbutifolia Toyon

This is the month to enjoy the beautiful Toyon bush in the garden. It is covered with red berries which birds love and we love for Christmas wreaths. In our garden, we leave it for the birds.

Toyon is a native shrub which becomes very drought tolerant after it is established in the garden. It can achieve a large size --the garden had one at the entry which was 10 feet tall and as wide when I first came to the garden. It died a few years ago, probably from old age. It can make a great hedge for a large property or a beautiful specimen plant for a smaller garden. In the spring it is covered with small white flowers. And surprise! It is a member of the Rose Family.



PLANNING A SPRING OR SUMMER EVENT?

Our gazebo makes a perfect setting for a wedding, a garden party, a tea or any other festive event. It will accommodate parties of up to 100.

If interested, contact Valerie Tackett for rental information and availability of dates. Call her at 981-0708 or email her at valerietackett@rocketmail.com.

Executive Committee 2013-2014

Frank Roth, *President*

Max Copenhagen, *Vice President*

Bob Rust, *Treasurer*

Bill Todd, *Recording Secretary*

Barbara Wagner, *Corresponding Secretary*

Hon. Stan Daily, *Parliamentarian*

David Hibbits, *Member at Large*

Ira Grooms, *Member at Large*

Board of Directors: New members were elected at the June 2 Annual Meeting.

Jeanne Adams

Liz Daily

Ira Grooms

David Hibbits

Bill Manzer

Betty Jo McDonald

Carol Pinto

Patricia Roth

Bill Todd

Valerie Tackett

Bob Burrow

Honorable Stanley Daily

Paul Hawblitzel

Dr. Renee Whitlock Higgins

Raelene Manzer

Bill Milligan

Roger Putnam

Bob Rust

Joy Todd

Barbara Wagner

Max Copenhagen

Ted Daniel

Bob Hernandez

John Kitchens

Ron McCown

Albert Misevic

Franklin Roth

Valerie Tackett

Betty Sullivan

Committee Chairs of PVHS for 2013-2014

Accessions, Display, Cleaning: *Liz Daily*; Annual Meeting, Facilities, Supplies, Grants, Don and Doña Barbeque: *David Hibbits*; Docents: *Joy Todd*; Don and Doña Selection Committee: *Bill and Raelene Manzer*; Gazebo Events: *Valerie Tackett*; Finance/Budget: *Bob Rust*; Policies: *Burt Misevic*; Garden: *Betty Jo MacDonald*; Fundraising: *Stan Daily*; Gift Shop: *Carol Pinto*; Newsletter: *Betty Sullivan*; Publicity: *Barbara Wagner*; Sunshine, Living History Day: *Pat Roth*; Site: *Bill Manzer*; Nominations, IT: *Max Copenhagen*; Signage: *Ira Grooms*.

THE PLEASANT VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM



Invites you to

DINE OUT

On

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

FROM 4 TO 9 P.M.

At

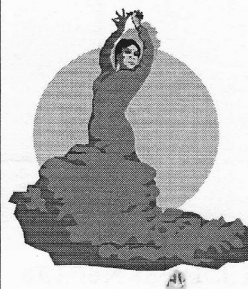
YOLANDA'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT

86 DAILY DRIVE

You must present this flyer to your server in order for the Society to be given credit.

Use this coupon for yourself.

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