

The Echo

News from the Pleasant Valley Historical Society

Our Early Settlers—Don Adolfo Camarillo (1864—1958)

By Gerry Olsen, author of "Don Adolfo Camarillo – A Living Legend," a biography (2014), and a long time Pleasant Valley Historical Society member

Don Adolfo is well known to many of you in the Pleasant Valley. He is called the father of the City of Camarillo. A high school, five miles of Highway 101, streets, and even a restaurant are named after him.

I would like to share some of the little-known facts about Adolfo. He is considered to be one of the outstanding citizens in the history of Ventura County in many different ways – longevity, ranching/agriculture, community involvement, influence, traditions, caring, and the introduction of the White Horses.

We know Adolfo managed the Camarillo Ranch for 78 years (from age 16 until he died at 94), turning the nearly 10,000 acres from a cattle ranch into a model of agriculture with lima beans, walnuts, citrus, and other crops, using techniques more unusual then, such as diverting water from Calleguas Creek and digging and drilling wells to produce water for his crops. He founded a new breed of horses – The Camarillo White Horse.

In 1880, the Camarillo Ranch stretched from the center of Santa Rosa Valley in the east, to Somis on the north, to the center of Camarillo on the west, and nearly to Cal State University, Channel Islands on the south – 9998.32 acres.

Adolfo was much more – a deeply religious man who attend mass at St. Mary Magdalene Chapel once or twice almost every day and a man who gave back much to the community – serving in 38 organizations, many of them as President.

He served 56 years as a member of the Pleasant Valley School District Board of Trustees – more than half of a century. Other examples of long service were (all more than 50 years) - Native Sons of the Golden West, Knights of Columbus (Santa Barbara and Oxnard), Bank of A. Levy Board of Directors, and Peoples Lumber Company Board of Directors.

Here some of the little-known facts and stories about Adolfo –

Middle Name – Adolfo's middle name was "Narsizo" as shown on his baptismal record at Mission San Buenaventura where he was baptized on the day he was born (Oct. 29, 1864) in Ventura. He never used his middle name in the records I have reviewed. Adolfo always signed his name, "A. Camarillo."

Pan - For recreation, Adolfo liked to play the card game, Panquinque ("Pan"), with friends in the evening, playing up to 50 times in one year. He kept careful records in his diaries - by the end of 1947, he was ahead by \$1.05.

Lunch – Marina Lopez Austin, granddaughter of Mike Lopez, who founded and operated El Tecolote Restaurant for years, tells the story of how Adolfo would ride one of his Camarillo White Horses across his

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walnut orchard into Camarillo and up to the restaurant on Lewis road. Adolfo would hitch up the horse out front, take a seat at an outdoor table, and enjoy a lunch, served by Mike. They were good friends.

Oil Discovered – The Union Oil Company was looking for oil on the Oxnard Plain and leased part of the Camarillo Ranch. They selected a site at foot of the Conejo Grade, and started drilling. Union Oil struck oil in 1898 - initial production was 12 barrels per hour. BUT, by 1906, production was so meager that pumping was stopped and never resumed. The tanks used for that production can still be seen at the foot of the grade, just northwest of what is now Camarillo Springs Road.

Falling on Steps – Adolfo had used the back steps of the Camarillo House for 58 years when, in 1950 (at the age of 86), he fell on the steps and ended up with 14 stitches in his forehead and three in his nose. In his 1950 diary, he relates, “my eyes and cheeks are still black and blue.” Adolfo quickly recovered.

Friends – Achille Levy, founder of Bank of A. Levy, and Adolfo were good friends. Adolfo was one of Achille’s first bank investors and served on the banks’ Board of Directors for 55 years (1903-1958). Using a carriage, they would ride in the early-morning hours to a ranch to see if the interior house lights were on – a sign, to them, that the rancher was a hard worker and a good financial risk for a loan.

Breakfast – After attending Mass and returning home, Adolfo liked two eggs (sunny side up), really crisp bacon, thin tortillas (made on a wood stove), and fresh-squeezed orange juice for breakfast, all prepared by his long-time cook, Natividad “Nati” Servin.

Workers – Adolfo had many dedicated workers on his Ranch and in the Camarillo House. Many lived on the ranch and Adolfo took good care of them and their families - remembering birthdays and anniversaries and presenting each family with special Christmas gifts. They called Adolfo, “El Patron,” The Boss.

How do you evaluate the life of Don Adolfo Camarillo? His life had so many aspects – his image, his ethics, his life style, his caring, his commitment, his involvement, his charities, his ideas, and his innovations.

Changes – Adolfo changed Camarillo, Ventura County, and California in a number of ways – 1) Showing how caring for others can change the world around you; 2) Showing how new ideas and innovation can completely change a vast ranch and the community around you; and 3) Showing how, by setting historic examples, service to others can and should be a key part of one’s life. Throughout his life, Adolfo led by example.

I ended my book with my thoughts about how Don Adolfo Camarillo will be remembered – “Adolfo will be remembered as a man to whom we can point with pride – someone who helped build our past and whose achievements point the way to our future.”

MEMORIALS , HONORARIUMS AND DONATIONS

Cathy Trainer and Fred Phipps made donations in memory of William Loft, M.D., Pamela Sue Nuñez, Trent Taylor, Reverend John Hughes, Harry Glass, Jr., Robert Littell

Mr. and Mrs. Bob Lutz contributed in memory of George Knoll.

James Thomas donated in memory of Henry Schill

Val and Ted Rains gave in memory of Dick Burton and in special tribute to Tina Sanchez on her 90th birthday.

Pat Wise made a donation in honor of Stan Daily’s 80th birthday.

Doris Fournier donated 2 benches for the garden

It will soon be spring and summer won't be far behind. The Museum displays have been changed and the Garden is beginning to show some growth with buds getting ready to burst into bloom. A computer has been installed in the Museum to display our photographs for viewing by our visitors. I hope that you will take the time to visit and see what some of our volunteers have been doing to make your visit more enjoyable.

There are a number of items that will be taking place in the next few months and many need your attention and /or be put on your schedule.

Pat Roth and Liz Daily are excited about this year's "Living History Day" event scheduled on May 17th. Children and grown-ups alike will enjoy the many activities that are available for them to see and for their "hands on" participation. If you have never attended before, plan to bring your children and friends for a fun and educational Sunday afternoon.

The Nominating Committee is currently working hard to create a list of nominees for Board Members and Officers of the Society for next year starting July 1st. Each year one-third of the positions are to be filled. If you are interested in serving, please contact us at 482-3660.

The Society's Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, June 7th, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Gazebo. It is a time for us to meet, enjoy an interesting program, elect new Board members, eat and drink (light refreshments), and enjoy our Museum and Garden.

It is time for all of you to be thinking about outstanding people who should be nominated as a "Don or Dona". See the Nominating Form included in this ECHO. The Installation Bar-B-Que will be at the Ranch House Barn on August 30th.

LIVING HISTORY DAY

Planning is well underway for our next "Living History Day" that is set for Sunday, May 17 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Museum's Botanical Garden area. Our goal is to have fun with the children of the community and give them the opportunity to see how toys, food, and other things were made in the early days in Camarillo and all across America.

We are still looking for additional volunteers to help us set-up, tear-down and participate in some of the activities that are planned for our visitors, especially children, to enjoy with "hands on" participation. Many that were provided last year and perhaps a few more will be available. Some of those that are presently being considered are:

Making Butter	Wood Working Skills	Clothes Pin Butterfly Toy
Making Tortillas	Rock Work	Bull Rush / Button String Toy
Grinding grain	Panning for Gold	Rag Doll Toy
First Aid	Weaving & Spinning	Catching Cup - Ball on String
Wash Tub & Scrub Board	Quilting	Marble Game
Whisky Still Process	Civil War Soldiers & War Items	Music

If you have a new suggestion and / or would like to help with any of our activities, please call Pat Roth (482-3382) or Liz Daily (482-1036).

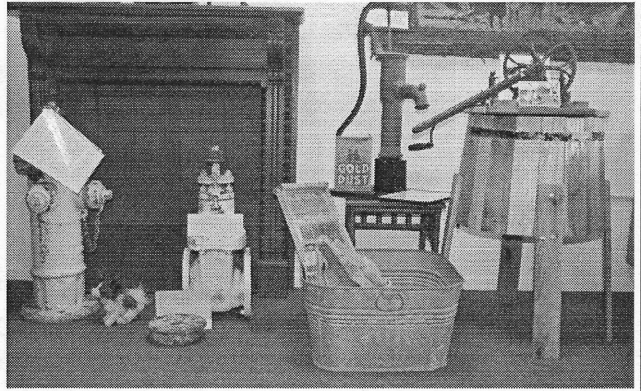
COME ONE, COME ALL. Refreshments will be served. We will have fun and maybe learn a ³ thing or two about how our Grandparents and Great Grandparents lived. ADMISSION is FREE!

WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THE MUSEUM

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE!

What is an aquifer? From where does your neighborhood tap water come? What are those large tanks on the Camarillo Heights hills doing there? What is a dry-barrel hydrant? What is Calleguas Water District? What was previously on our museum site?

"Working Water" is the theme of current displays at PVHS Museum. A history of four main water districts in the Camarillo area is presented in one display. Information about the Fox Canyon Aquifer is featured in another, along with pictures and answers to questions you didn't even know to ask!



The City of Camarillo Water District and *Pleasant Valley Mutual Water Company* have contributed older water related equipment. We have 2 fire hydrants from the 1960s. A display of water meters through time is capped by the loan of a new wireless read meter.

Crestview Mutual Water Company gave us a copy of the minutes of the meeting that established their Company, March 16, 1950. *PVMWC* and the City of Camarillo loaned us some wonderful photograph albums of the building of water storage tanks and inspection visits. Come visit your museum to learn about water past and present.

Also, our Collections Cabinet features historic miniature tractors from Bill Milligan's extensive collection, and a non-stinky collection of Dale Ackerman's skunks!

Membership Renewal Reminder

PVHS membership support runs on a calendar year basis, from January through December. Your continued tax-deductible membership allows us to pursue our mission of preserving, protecting, and disseminating the history of our area for and to future generations. Plus, you will have saved us \$0.98 if you mail in your renewal before a personal reminder is sent!! Thanks!

Don and Doña Selection Committee

Raelene and Bill Manzer

Since the Pleasant Valley Historical Society's inception, 51 years ago, Don and Doña honors have been awarded to 449 individuals over the course of time. The PVHS Museum displays two scrapbooks filled with information about previous honorees beginning with 1965. The museum, located at 720 Las Posas Road, is open on Saturdays and Sundays from noon to four p.m.

We invite you to submit nominations for the 2015 Dons and Doñas. Nominations are accepted until May 26. Following that date, the Don and Doña Selection Committee will meet to consider all nominations. As stated in the Nomination Form, included in this ECHO, all nominations are confidential and only known by this committee. The Committee determines who will be selected and those selected are notified. The PVHS Board hosts a get acquainted reception for the honorees and the Board in July. The Annual Don and Doña event to honor the recipients is August 30. We look forward to receiving your nominations. For information, please send an email to manzerw@msn.com.

Pleasant Valley Historical Society & Museum

Serving Camarillo, Somis, and Santa Rosa Valley since 1964

720 N. Las Posas Road, PO Box 570, Camarillo, CA 93011

Phone: (805) 482-3660

email: pvhs@pvhsonline.org

website: www.pvhsonline.org



NOMINATION FORM Selection of 2015 Dons and Doñas

Persons being nominated for a Don or Doña should be:

1. An individual whose family and/or personal history is significant in the root history of the Pleasant Valley.
2. An individual who has lived in the area at least 20 years, and has provided outstanding community service and/or service to the Historical Society during that time.

The names submitted for consideration shall be kept CONFIDENTIAL and shall only be made known to the Don and Doña Committee

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

History of Service:

Please attach additional page if more space is required.

Submitted by: _____ Phone _____

Please mail completed nomination forms to: Don and Doña Selection Committee,
P. O. Box 570, Camarillo, CA 93011, No later than: May 26, 2015.

Trees of the Charles Honn Botanic Garden by Mary Jo McDonald, Garden Chair

The Museum Garden displays specimens of several trees unique to California.

Begin your tour of the garden at the gazebo. It is framed by two huge sycamores, but they are not our native trees. These are commonly called "London Planetree." There are small native sycamores planted behind the Gazebo. A quick way to tell the difference is checking out the seed pods. The native tree holds its round seed pods on a central stem—think of a string of pearls.

The three oak trees with rounded shapes are *Quercus agrifolia* or California Live Oak. These trees are around 27 years old. They keep their leaves all year. The leaves are small, thick and slightly curled to hold moisture during dry seasons. There is usually a thick layer of fallen leaves under these trees which helps to keep the soil moisture in and to provide nutrients as they decay. The next tree you pass is *Quercus douglasii* or Blue Oak. This oak loses its leaves in the fall.

The Catalina Ironwood tree, which is on the right just before the curve in the path, is unique to the Channel Islands so it is not a tree you will see in ordinary home gardens.

On the left of the path are three large *Alnus rhombifolia*, California white Alder. These are water loving trees which grow along water courses. Our trees have to be content with irrigation as the Creekside, where they are planted, is a dry stream bed which serves as a drain to the garden in heavy rain.

If you turn to look back, you will get a full view of the beautiful, lush hedge which has been in the background of the trees on your walk. This is *Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *Lyonii*, Catalina Cherry. While native to the Channel Islands, it is often grown along the coast and makes a great drought tolerant hedge.

As you follow the path around the curve you will notice two massive trees which dominate the landscape on the right side of the path. The first you encounter is *Pinus radiata*, Monterey pine, native to the central coast and a protected tree in Carmel. The second huge tree is the *Pinus coulteri*, Coulter pine. It is native to California foothills from Mt. Diablo all the way to Mexico.

As you arrive again at the gazebo you will notice the three giants, the *Sequoia sempervirens*, Coast Redwood trees. These trees, like the oaks, are around 27 years old. They have suffered from our long dry winters and we have watered them generously to keep them alive. We hope they live another 27 years.

We want to thank all who help us in the garden starting with those who keep the garden in shape all year, Marie and the gang, Juan, Rogellio, Raffa and Manny. Thanks to the many volunteers who put in time working and assisting in the garden: David, Marie, Ron, Bill, Frank, Janet and Doris. Thanks to the Meadowlarks and to the PVHS Board for funding and to Dr. Gordon Frankie for donated plants, knowledge and inspiration.

The native bee count is up from 2 to 12! Hooray for bee plants!

Photo Opportunities

The museum now offers to its members and visitors the opportunity to view over 2,000 indexed historic photos of people and places in the Pleasant Valley. Policies are being developed for sharing them.

Board of Directors 2014-2015

Frank Roth, *President*

Max Copenhagen, *Vice President*

Bob Rust, *Treasurer*

Bill Todd, *Recording Secretary*

Barbara Wagner, *Corresponding Secretary*

Hon. Stan Daily, *Parliamentarian*

Bob Burrow, *Member at Large*

Bill Manzer, *Member at Large*

Jeanne Adams

Max Copenhagen

Ted Daniel

Paul Hawblitzel

Dale Jacobs

Ron McCown

Albert Misevic

Patricia Roth

Valerie Tackett

David Bratz

Liz Daily

Ken Eastman

David Hibbits

Bill Manzer

Betty Jo McDonald

Roger Putnam

Bob Rust

Bill Todd

Bob Burrow

Honorable Stanley Daily

Ira Grooms

Dr. Renee Whitlock Higgins

Raelene Manzer

Bill Milligan

Franklin Roth

Betty Sullivan

Joy Todd

Committee Chairs for 2014-2015

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: *Doris Fournier*; Membership: *Bill Todd*; Newsletter: *Betty Sullivan*; Publicity: *Barbara Wagner*; Sunshine, Living History Day: *Pat Roth*; Site: *Bill Manzer*; Nominations, IT: *Max Copenhagen*; Signage: *Ira Grooms*.

DINING OUT IN MAY

Join us at Chester's Asia for good food and good company. These coupons are for your use.

**THE PLEASANT VALLEY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY AND MUSEUM**

Invites you to

DINE OUT

At CHESTER'S ASIA RESTAURANT

2216 Pickwick Dr., Camarillo

On Tuesday, May 5,

from 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

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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