

The Echo

News from the Pleasant Valley Historical Society

LAW AND ORDER IN CAMARILLO

The last time you were called for jury service, where did you go? To the Government Center in Ventura, of course. And when you had a traffic citation that you wanted to handle in person, where did you go? Ventura, naturally.

This was not always the case, you know, at least if you are a long time resident of our fair city. As long ago as 1914, a justice court was set up here with the election of John Henry Conrad as the justice of the peace and Maxwell Richardson as the constable to maintain law and order. The court dealt mainly with traffic cases. It is interesting to note that on February 1, 1917, Adolfo Camarillo was fined \$5 for driving in excess of 30 miles per hour near Newbury Park on January 3 of that year.

A building on the south side of Ventura Boulevard, west of the railroad tracks housed this first court. In 1941, after 27 years, the court was moved into the first Community Center, along with the library, the office of the County Supervisor and the fire station. (This building, at 2474 Ventura Blvd., is now empty, awaiting some as yet known destiny.) The first marriage license was issued there in 1944.

In 1956, the court moved again; this time across the street into the Fred Stein (Lewis) Building. There were problems in this location as the staff members were cramped for space and the judge's chamber was in what had been the vault for the Bank of America branch prior to its relocation to a new building on Palm Drive. The judge worked under a light bulb without a shade. To make the concrete vault look a little less drab, the judge himself painted the floor a warm light brown. (It helped but it was still a concrete vault.)

A movie theater was next door and the noise from the movies disturbed the juries as they deliberated late in the night. One jury was so distracted that it decided to go across the street to the community center to continue their work. Movie dialogue penetrating the wall used to get mixed up with the presentation of evidence. The Judge made the comment that "attorneys sometimes had to speculate whether they were going to make their arguments to the jury to the tune of hearts and flowers or to the accompaniment of the Indian attack on the wagon train."

Overcrowding was always a concern. If two court sessions were being held at the same time to cope with a heavy calendar of cases, one had to use a small back room. Anyone having business inside had to wait outside in the alley. With the population explosion after World War II, and with more misdemeanor and other serious complaints to be dealt with, it was necessary to bring in other judges to hold court in the community center, a condemned classroom at Pleasant Valley School and even the school auditorium.

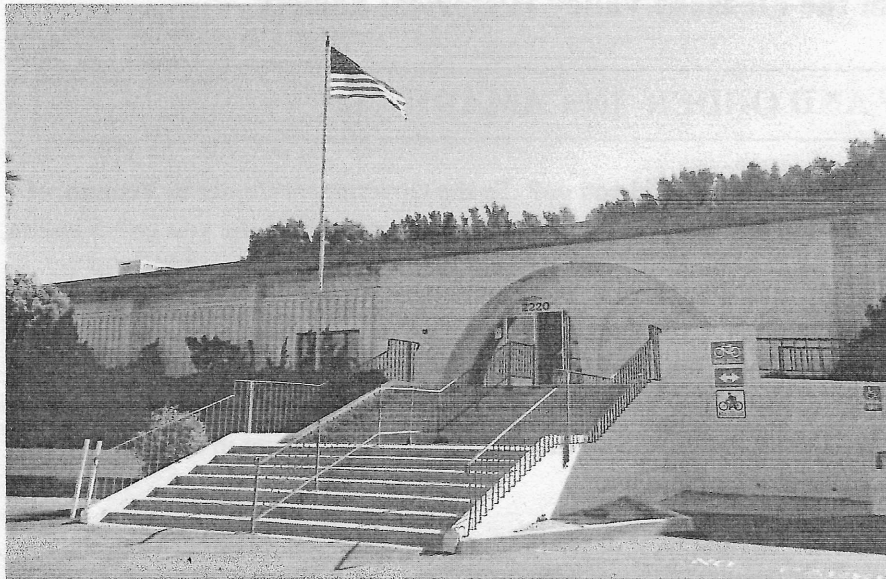
Finally, in 1965, a new municipal court building was erected on Ventura Blvd., west of the Pleasant Valley School. Businessmen and other citizens of Camarillo put up vigorous resistance to county proposals that would have taken the courthouse elsewhere. The County officials favored acceptance of an offer of a free piece of land in Ponderosa North shopping center, but gave in when the group supporting the boulevard site donated \$20,000 of the \$50,000 needed to buy the land from the school district.

Continued on Page 2

THE CAMARILLO COURTHOUSE, *Continued from Front Page*

The new Courthouse opened for business on October 6, 1965 and was dedicated with much fanfare during the Charter Days Fiesta that was celebrating Camarillo's first birthday later in the month. Invited guests included

county judges, members of the board of supervisors, legislators, city officials and other area dignitaries.



The residents of Camarillo were, by and large, a law abiding group. This might be due in small measure to the fact that the local paper, the Camarillo Daily News, faithfully reported all of our missteps in the daily paper. After all, how many of us want to see our name and our crimes in print for the whole world to see?

Then, in 1979, Proposition 13 became law in the state. The court system felt its heavy hand and the loss of funds meant that the cases normally heard in Camarillo would henceforth be heard at the Ventura County Government Center.

The courthouse stood empty until February 1980 when the Pruner Ambulance Service moved in to a portion of the building with the Public Social Service Agency using the rest as their headquarters. They added a kitchen and it was there that the Senior Meals on Wheels were prepared. The County wanted to sell their "white elephant" that year but there were no takers.

Over the next few years, the courthouse was home to a variety of businesses, even including racquetball courts, plus offices for various county supervisors. Supervisor Kathy Long has maintained a field office there since 1998.

In 2005, the City of Camarillo agreed to purchase the building, more for the 60 car parking lot than for the building itself. Parking on Ventura Blvd. is often a problem and, according to Jerry Bankston, then City Manager, "We could not build a public parking lot, especially in that area for the price that we were able to secure for all of the property."

In 2008, the city moved staff from City Hall there because of overcrowding. This was considered to be a temporary arrangement. Council members at that time wanted to renovate or tear down the courthouse and build a community theater there to complement the recently redeveloped strip of stores along Ventura Blvd. in Old Town.

To date, the courthouse building is still there and still houses city staff. Of course the staff that is there is no longer part of the city's redevelopment agency as these agencies have been disbanded statewide.

Editors note: Much of the early history of Camarillo's courts was taken from the booklet "Camarillo: Then and Now," published by the Camarillo Chamber of Commerce in 1978, and was used here with permission of Lara Shapiro-Snair, current Chamber director of marketing and communication.

PRESIDENT'S MESSEGE

A GREAT NIGHT OUT AT CHESTER'S ASIA RESTAURANT

Thanks to all members of our PVHS Society for showing up for lunch or dinner at Chester's Asia on Monday, February 6th for our quarterly fundraiser. We had a record turnout, with over of quarter of our membership coming out for the event. We netted \$500 dollars for our Museum by this one event. Again, thanks to all our participating members for your support. A special thanks is due to our Patron Member, Keith Kwan, owner of Chester's Asia for all he continues to do for us.

We are planning our next Dining-Out Event on Monday, May 7th at Yolanda's Restaurant in Camarillo. Be sure to save that date on your calendar today for our next quarterly dinner fundraiser, as you will enjoy seeing all of your "Historical Friends" there. (See the coupons in this issue. Please present it to the server for us to get credit.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION IN JUNE

If any member is interested in becoming a member of the Board of Directors of the PVHS & Museum, please let us know by a letter of application, (enclose a brief bio of yourself, and the reasons you wish to serve on our Board) and the Nominating Committee will be glad to consider your application. Each year, one third of the positions on the Board are to be elected or re-election to office. We are always appreciative of our members for offering to serve on our Board. The deadline for applications is May 1st, 2012. Please send all communications regarding this to Hon. Stanley J. Daily, President, Pleasant Valley Historical Society and Museum, P. O. Box 570, Camarillo, CA 93011.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

This notice also is just a quick "heads-up" that our Annual Membership Meeting will be on June 3rd, 2 p.m. to 4 p. m. at our Museum. We will be electing our Board of Directors at this meeting, as well as having a very interesting program. Please mark your calendars for a nice afternoon with your fellow members in our Gazebo and Garden area. Light refreshments are always served. See you there!

UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP

As of this writing, we have over 150 new members of our Society, an increase of over 75% of our previous membership. As I indicated in the last issue, we are so proud of all our continuing and new members.

AGAIN, MANY THANKS FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

Always,

Hon. Stanley J. Daily

Mayor Emeritus, City Camarillo

President, PVHS & Museum

Dear Members of the PVHS:

The PVHS Executive Committee and Board of Directors are happy to announce that we are expanding our volunteer opportunities to include more of our own members! What better way for our members to be involved with the inner workings of our beautiful Museum, Garden and our annual events. For many years, thanks to your help, our Society has been able to give back to our community by offering education and tours and to also hold events that are both informative and honor our community's residents. For example, by volunteering to be a Docent at the Museum, one will continue to develop their own understanding of our history while contributing to the longevity of keeping our history alive by facilitating the knowledge of the public as they wander through the museum. Please don't let the term: Docent, shy you away. The actual definition is a title used for educators trained to further the public's understanding of the cultural and historical collections of the institution; they are normally volunteers. One does not need to be an expert on our history, but one who is willing to assist in our museum in various ways. We will assist you every step of the way and we are sure you will have a rewarding experience.

There are many committees that our PVHS members are welcome to join, such as:

Garden Beautification – If you can use a rake or if you just like gardens...you're hired!

Accessions and Displays – use your design skills to set up and categorize our exhibits!

Don and Doña's BBQ – Help us to serve our historic honorees some lunch!

Living History Day – Can you use a spinning wheel? Pan for gold? Make a doll out of straw? If not, it is okay, come for the fun of it and help with the event.

Annual Meeting – This is a mandatory meeting for all members...Just kidding....but think about coming to see what we are up to these days and help with the program.

Grants/Endowments – Are there any grant writers out there?

Gazebo Usage - Assist us with weddings and special events held in our Gazebo.

Public Relations – Help us spread the word about our great organization!

Please contact us at the Society for information on more ways to be involved and to help in furthering our mission to keep our history alive.

Thank you,
Dr. Renee Higgins

Dear Members:

In order to preserve the sanity of our bulk mail team, we would like to have as many of you as possible receive our wonderful *Echo* newsletter *in color* on your computer via the Internet. If you are computer friendly and open to such an idea, could you "sign up" by sending an email to us at:

pvhs@pvhsonline.org.

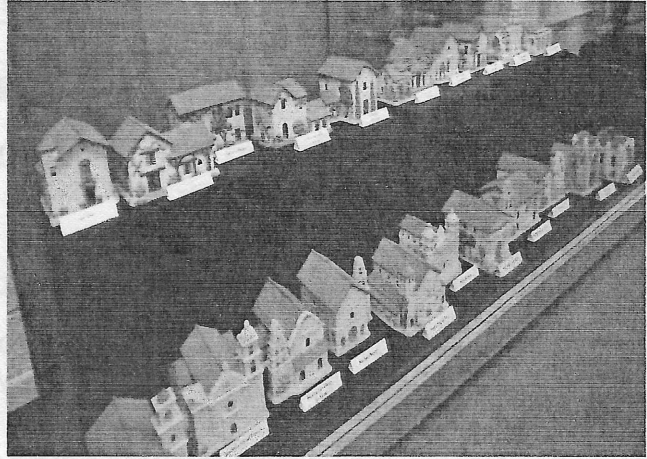
If we get enough enrollees, we'll switch the majority of the *Echo* distribution to email, and send all you more tactile people the same old wonderful paper copy you've always received.

PASSPORT 2 HISTORY PROGRAM

Our Society has joined with 50 other museums, historic sites and other points of interest in Los Angeles, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties in a program initiated by the Leonis Adobe Museum in Calabasas. An historic trail of sites will be created where one can visit and learn the history of California. Passports are free and available at each of the 23 Ventura County participating locations and the Leonis Adobe. Passport holders collect stamps at each site they visit and there are rewards for collecting 25 stamps or more. For more information, visit www.passport2history.org.

MISSIONS DISPLAY

Don and Raquel Latham have donated a collection of 20 Mission models. Raquel is a seventh generation Californian. Her g-g-g-g-grandfather, Jose Francisco Ortega, worked with Padre Serra in establishing many of the missions across our state and subsequent relatives have been baptized, married and buried in various missions. The 21st model, that of the Santa Barbara Mission, was donated by Tina Sanchez, another native Californian. Students in fourth grade studying early California history will find the display especially interesting.

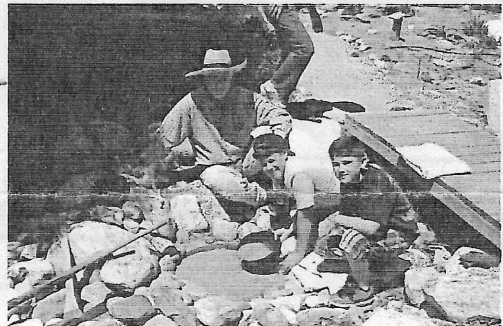


LIVING HISTORY DAY



Living History Day will be celebrated this year on Sunday, May 20, from 1 to 4 p.m. in the garden adjacent to the Museum.

Among the activities planned is gold mining (see below), tortilla making, butter making (see to the left), wheat and corn grinding, clothes pin dolls, wood working, fossils, spinning, clothes-pin butterfly toy making and more.



This is an opportunity to show children and grandchildren how life was lived in our city in the early days of its founding. There is no charge and refreshments will be served. Come one, come all for a fun afternoon.

DONS AND DOÑAS CELEBRATION

It is that time of year when the Society is seeking nominations for consideration by the Don and Doña selection committee. The nomination form is on Page 6. Please read carefully the qualifications and do not speak with the candidate regarding the application submission. We request that all information regarding submissions be kept CONFIDENTIAL. The deadline for submissions is June 1. If there are any further questions, please call Val Rains, Chair, Don/Doña Selection Committee, at 484-3777.

ANTIQUE CLUB

"Grandmother's Sewing Basket" will be the theme of the display that will open late in April. Members will be contributing such items for the display as patterns, magazines, books, darning eggs, needleholders, spools of thread, pin cushions, buttons, linens and old lace, scissors and other things grandmother might use. The current display is "Pitcher This," a collection of wonderful, one of a kind pitchers, old and new, that will dazzle your eyes.

MEMORIALS

Donations were made in memory of:

CARMELITA MARIE FITZGERALD NICHOLSON by Fred Phipps, Stan and Liz Daily

GERALD JOSEPH by Pat Wise

HELEN RADFORD by Mr. and Mrs. Ned Bartels

BETTY COOK by Fred Phipps

Pleasant Valley Historical Society

Nomination Form

Selection of 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 whose outstanding performance of community service and/or service to the Historical Society may be considered to satisfy the requirements for nomination as a Don or Dona only if services have been consistently provided by that person for 20 years or more.

The names submitted for consideration shall be kept **CONFIDENTIAL** and shall only be made known to the Don and Doñas Selection Committee.

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

History of Service:

Please attach additional page if more space is required.

Submitted by: _____

Please mail completed nomination forms to:

Don & Donas Selection Committee, PO Box 570, Camarillo CA 93011-0570

NO LATER THAN JUNE 1, 2012

July 2011 - 2012

Executive Committee and Board of Directors

Honorable Stanley J. Daily, *President*

Val Rains, *Vice President*

Bob Rust, *Treasurer*

Adele Walsh, *Recording Secretary*

Renee Higgins, *Corresponding Secretary*

Franklin Roth, *Parliamentarian*

Liz Daily, *Member at Large*

Ira Grooms, *Member at Large*

Directors:

Dale Ackerman

Liz Daily

Olivia Fulkerson

David Hibbits

Raquel Latham

Ron McCown

Albert Misevic

Val Rains

Tina Sanchez

Janet Ackerman

Honorable Stanley Daily

Ira Grooms

Dr. Renee Whitlock Higgins

Bill Manzer

Betty Jo McDonald

Carol Pinto

Franklin Roth

Betty Sullivan

Scott Baum

Ted Daniel

Bob Hernandez

John Kitchens

Raelene Manzer

Bill Milligan

Roger Putnam

Bob Rust

Adele Walsh

Committee Chairs of PVHS for 2011

Accessions, Cleaning, Display: *Liz Daily*; Annual Meeting, Facilities, Don and Doña BBQ, Grants: *David Hibbits*; Docents: *Adele Walsh*; Don and Doña Selection, Gazebo Events: *Val Rains*; Finance/Budget: *Bob Rust*; Policies: *Burt Misevic*; Garden: *Betty Jo McDonald*; Gift Shop: *Carol Pinto*; Living History Day, Sunshine: *Pat Roth*; Membership: *Olivia Fulkerson*; Newsletter: *Betty Sullivan*; Fundraising, Nominating and Site Committees: *Stan Daily*; Publicity: *Renee Higgins*; Supplies: *Tina Sanchez*.