

The Echo

News from the Pleasant Valley Historical Society

LIFE AS IT WAS IN THE LATE 1880'S AND 90'S

Adolfo Camarillo began keeping a daily diary during the 1880's and maintained it until his death in 1958. His granddaughter, Geraldine FitzGerald, provided these excerpts which let us look at the contrasts of early Ventura County with the present. It was originally published in July, 1969.

January 31, 1888: Abe Hobson and Juan Tico arrived about 10 o'clock. Abe contracted for 10 steers at \$27.50 per head.

April 6, 1889: At about 8 p.m. Peter Lorenzana brought me a telegram which stated that Mother wanted to see me. At 9 p.m. left on my way to Santa Barbara. Arrived at Santa Barbara at 5 a.m. on the 7th.

May 12, 1889: I went to Ventura today to meet Mr. Vincent to grant him right of way for a railroad enterprise.

December 3, 1889: A French woman returned with me as cook, getting \$13 per month in coin.

June 25, 1889: Sold barley to A. Levy at 87 1/2 cents at Montalvo.

March 31, 1890: I went to Montalvo after some trees and got stuck in the quick sand.

May 12, 1890: We sold to Tom Chrisman 1,000 ewes at \$23.25 and 15 rams at \$10.

April 14, 1891: Brought a Chinaman to cook for awhile at \$1 per day.

February 25, 1891: The boys picked beans all day. In the evening, Isabel and myself went to Hueneme. The steamer was one day behind time and we stopped there all night.

February 26, 1891: About 7:20 a.m., we left Hueneme for Ventura. Crossed the river - very high. Arrived at Ventura about 10 a.m.

March 30, 1891: I bought a lot on corner of Poli and California St. for \$1,500. On March 1905, the above amount at 4 per cent would amount to \$2,694.

June 9, 1891: I bought a buggy from Santa Paula Hardware Co. for \$75 to be delivered at Montalvo.

August 29, 1891: Today, I went to J.L. Rose auction sale and bought 4 mares and 3 colts for \$298.

November 21, 1897: I bought 32 calves at \$10 per head.

April 21, 1897: In the morning about 1:30 a.m., started for Los Angeles. The road seemed long on account of not sleeping enough before we left. Got there at 11 a.m.

April 24, 1897: We left Los Angeles about 10 a.m. Got to Encino at 12:30 and started from there at 2 p.m. Got home at 7:30 p.m.

July 3, 1897: At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of P. Valley, Miss Hessi Owen was elected to teach the primary grades at a salary of \$55. Miss Myra Henre was elected to the grammar grades at a salary of \$70.

October 11, 1897: The Supervisors fixed the tax rate. State and County 2.15; Pleasant Valley special tax .08; County School fund .37.

December 27, 1897: The surveying parties of the Southern P.R. started to survey through the ranch for the railroad.

October 20, 1898: We all went to El Rio to the celebration of the Santa Clara river bridge.

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July 15, 1899: The Southern Pacific Railroad Company arrived with their track on the ranch. The construction train entered the ranch for the first time.

September 5, 1899: Tuesday. Maria Lucia, the servant girl, went away today on the morning

train. The first to go away from here by rail.

April 22, 1906: The first time I filled the new gas machine with carbide was December 18, '05. The second time January 16, '06, third time was February 24, fourth time April 7, '06.

THE TRAIN'S A'COMING

One hundred years ago, there was a pleasant valley, more or less cut off from its neighbors to the north and south by mountains on three sides and the ocean on the fourth. This valley slept peacefully in its isolation for many years. One could travel beyond the mountains by stagecoach but the roads were so poor that the trip was arduous and dirty, a white knuckle experience. If one was going south, one might even be expected to walk up the grade along side the coach to relieve the burden on the horses.

The land within this valley was farmed by people with large ranchos and small farms. Getting their produce to consumers was difficult as it all had to be hauled by wagon over rough terrain to one of the larger towns for trans-shipment to markets beyond Ventura County. The railroad had come to the city of Ventura in the 1880s and people were petitioning for the building of a valley route. The Oxnard Brothers were building a sugar beet factory and refinery in 1898 and it was this that encouraged the Southern Pacific Railroad Company to build a branch line from Saticoy and Montalvo to Oxnard and finally extending it to Somis.

At this time, the largest settlement in the area was Springville, complete with a school, church, various businesses and home to about 200 residents. This was all to change when Adolfo Camarillo donated an easement through his property to the rail company. The final configuration saw the rail line by-passing Springville. Businesses began moving from there to resettle in the newly christened hamlet of Camarillo.

The rail line was finished in March of 1904 and Camarillo flourished while Springville faded. This was typical as the rails conquered the West. Some towns were created; some towns disappeared. If Mr. Camarillo had not come to terms with the railroad, the tracks might have been built a few miles to the west. If this had happened, we could all be living now in Springville instead.

The Depot was built in 1906 and served passengers and freight traffic until 1958. It was given to the Society with much fanfare but burned down in 1968, before it could be moved.



The Camarillo Depot

From the Desk of the President

Dear Members,

Welcome to Spring! Our garden is waking up and the colors are stunning. If you have not visited lately, please find the time to stroll through and enjoy nature's gift to us. We are blessed with volunteers that have contributed their time and energy to our spectacular garden.

Living History Day is May 1st this year and we are expecting an outstanding number of participants. Our volunteers have special events planned and we always need more hands. If you have the time and inclination to help for a few hours on that Sunday, please call Liz Daily at 482-1036. We need help in demonstrations for making butter and corn tortillas.

Ira Grooms has been doing an incredible job organizing our popular Flea Markets the third Saturday of each month, March through November. If you have some items you want to sell or contribute to us for sale, please call the museum and we will get right back to you.

We are seriously in need of volunteers in all areas including board members. We have created our Nominating Committee for the year beginning July 1 and welcome your input and commitment to our museum. Please call Stan Daily at 482-1036 if you are interested in serving.

Sunday, June 5 is our Annual Meeting and we hope you will save the date to join us for information about your museum. We enjoy our garden, meet new members, sign up for volunteering, eat, drink and be merry. This year our speaker is a surprise so don't miss out...be there or be square!

Best regards,

Paige Jones Hibbits PhD

MEMORIALS AND DONATIONS

Fred Phipps made donations in memory of these people:

Art Kitchens

Jill Cooley

Mary Eileen Marshall

Robert Fowler

Robert Sprague

The Camarillo Lions Club made a donation to defray the cost of mailing this newsletter.

The Camarillo Rotary Club donated money to purchase a new computer for the Museum. We are currently putting all of our historical photographs on the computer and needed one that could handle this job.

Charles Honn Garden

Betty Jo McDonald, Master Gardener

Early spring in the Botanic Garden is its most glorious time. The rains have done wonders for the plant life. All plants love rainwater in place of our purified, chlorinated water which we usually serve them. The dry stream bed in our garden serves to collect the rain water and deliver it underground so that the soil stays moist longer. The rocks also serve as mulch to keep weeds down and to secure the moisture in the soil.

For new comers to the garden, it is a surprise to learn that the garden sits atop an old storage basin for the Pleasant Valley Water District. The original tank is intact, with the basin perforated for drainage. The soil which makes up the garden is dumped soil, with much of it containing asphalt from sources unknown to me. Some technical aspects of delivering water still remain on site, but I do not understand what they are.

When the Pleasant Valley Historical Society began the museum in the old water district building (our current site), the area we know as the garden was a mass of weeds. Several of our former members, Betty Rutherford and Charles Honn, had the idea of creating a garden on the waste land. The group did a magnificent job in planting trees, building the gazebo and pouring the walk around the center of the garden. This walk remains in great condition some 25 years later, a monument to good concrete work.

The soil remains poor in many areas of the garden. There is no way of knowing what could be in that soil that inhibits the plant growth. The area across the stream bed and to the left as you walk through the garden is an area where plants do not grow well. I am starting a regime of applying gypsum and compost to attempt to create living soil in this area.

I do not know much about the History of the water district: how the decision was made to move the water storage, how many homes the water in the original tank served and what is the purpose of the equipment in the left corner of our current parking lot. If anyone reading this has any information—and certainly more accurate than what I have presented, please e-mail me at hjo@gty.com and give me your input or let me know where I could research this. The Museum has an arial photograph of the area if anyone would like to see it. Thanks in advance for your input.

Please note: If you or someone you know are looking for the perfect setting for a summer wedding, consider our Gazebo. By late June, it will be surrounded by beautiful blossoms and lovely shade trees, ready to welcome the bridal pair and their guests. Call Val at 484-3777 to arrange for a tour.



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, 2011

Coming Events - Mark Your Calendars

April's Happenings

The Antique Guild



These beautiful teapots, coffee pots and chocolate pots are in the case now and they are even more beautiful in color.

Flea Market, April 16

These popular events have resumed on the third Saturday of each month. Why have your own garage sale when you can join us and see more buyers? Spaces are approximately 10' by 10' and rent for \$25 each. Applications are available at the Museum on Thursday mornings from 9 to 11 a.m., Saturday and Sunday afternoons from noon to 4 p.m. or on line at pvhsonline.org. Call 386-3584 or 482-5344 for more information.

Things Going on in May

Living History Day, Sunday, May 1,

1 to 4 p.m.

Give your children and grandchildren a look at how their ancestors lived when Camarillo was just a wide place in the road. There will be demonstrations of quilting, spinning and weaving and hands-on activities where everyone may participate. These include wood drilling, tortilla making and crafts like corn husk dolls making, fossil making and button toys and more. The admission is free and refreshments will be available.

Dine Out, Monday, May 2, all day

Johnny Rockets in the Promenade (the new section of the Outlet Mall) will welcome us all day from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and 15% of your purchase will benefit the Society. They feature a great menu and are known for their hamburgers, fries and shakes. There are coupons on the opposite page, one for you and one for a friend. The coupon is a must; don't leave home without it.

Flea Market

May 21 is the date. Will we see you there?

Join us for These Events in June

Annual Meeting, June 5, 1 - 3 p.m.

The programs at the annual meeting have been outstanding for the last few years. We have been treated to a Victorian strip-tease and visits from Teddy Roosevelt and Molly Brown. Come to the meeting this year and see what fun we have in store for you. Refreshments will be served.

Throughout June

Enclosed in this edition of the Echo is the nomination form for this year's Dons and Doñas celebration. You know people who are worthy of this honor. Submit their names so our committee can weight the merits and make a selection. Their names will be announced in the next edition of the Echo and the barbeque will be in the Red Barn at the Camarillo House on Sunday, August 28. Save this date.

The Flea Market is July 18.

July 2010 - June 2011

Executive Committee and Board of Directors

Paige Jones Hibbits, *President*

Val Rains, *Vice President*

Bob Rust, *Treasurer*

Adele Walsh, *Recording Secretary*

Liz Daily, *Corresponding Secretary*

Honorable Stan Daily, *Parliamentarian*

Dave Hibbits, *Member at Large*

Ira Grooms, *Member at Large*

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Liz Daily

Vicky Daniel

Ira Grooms

Paige Jones Hibbits

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Bill Doctorman

Bob Hernandez

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