

The Echo

News from the Pleasant Valley Historical Society

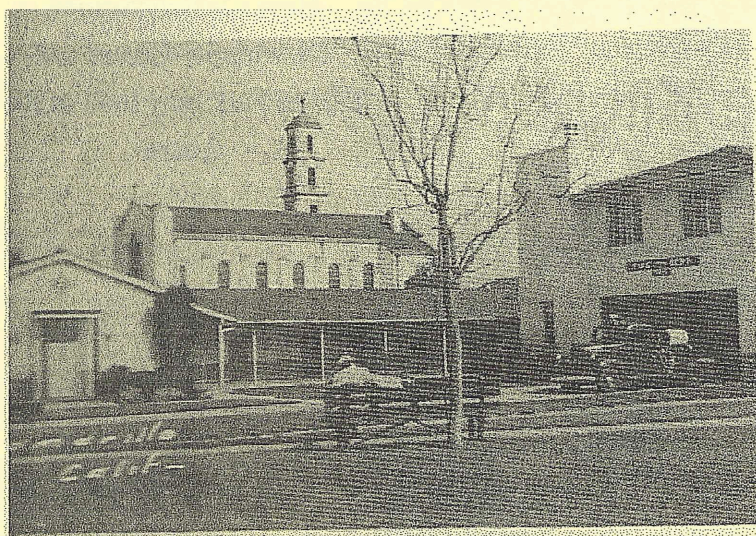
AROUND OUR TOWN

THE "NEW" COMMUNITY CENTER

Ask any resident of Camarillo where the Community Center is and they will tell you it is the complex of buildings on the corner of Carmen and Burnley Avenues. If you had posed that question to a resident 67 years ago, they would have pointed proudly to the complex of buildings at 2474 Ventura Blvd.

It was on Tuesday, March 18, 1941 that the Ventura County Board of Supervisors took official possession of these buildings. In addition to a Community Center, the complex housed the fire station, offices of the Camarillo Justice Court, the constable's office, the county agricultural inspector's office, the county supervisor representing Camarillo's office and the library. The newspaper reports of the day said "This community may justly be proud of this new and beautiful structure."

The newspaper report continued to say, "The Camarillo Community Center and Fire Station was made possible through the combined efforts of the County Board of Supervisors, the estate of the late Juan Camarillo, and County Fire Warden L. R. Orton. A donation of approximately \$15,000 by the Camarillo estate was augmented by an equal sum granted by the Supervisors. The property was purchased from Adolfo Camarillo."



The Community Center boasted a meeting room that seated 100 with a stage at one end and a small kitchen with modern electric appliances at the other end. Adele Walsh, daughter of librarian Adele Flynn, remembers attending 4-H meetings there, card parties and wedding receptions. The Red Cross used the room for bandage rolling during World War II. Stan Daily took dancing lessons in that hall. According to Roger Putnam, the Fire Chief's son, reservations to use the hall were made with his father. It was in use until the mid 60s when Camarillo's Recreation and Park District was formed.

The Community Center/Fire Department in 1941

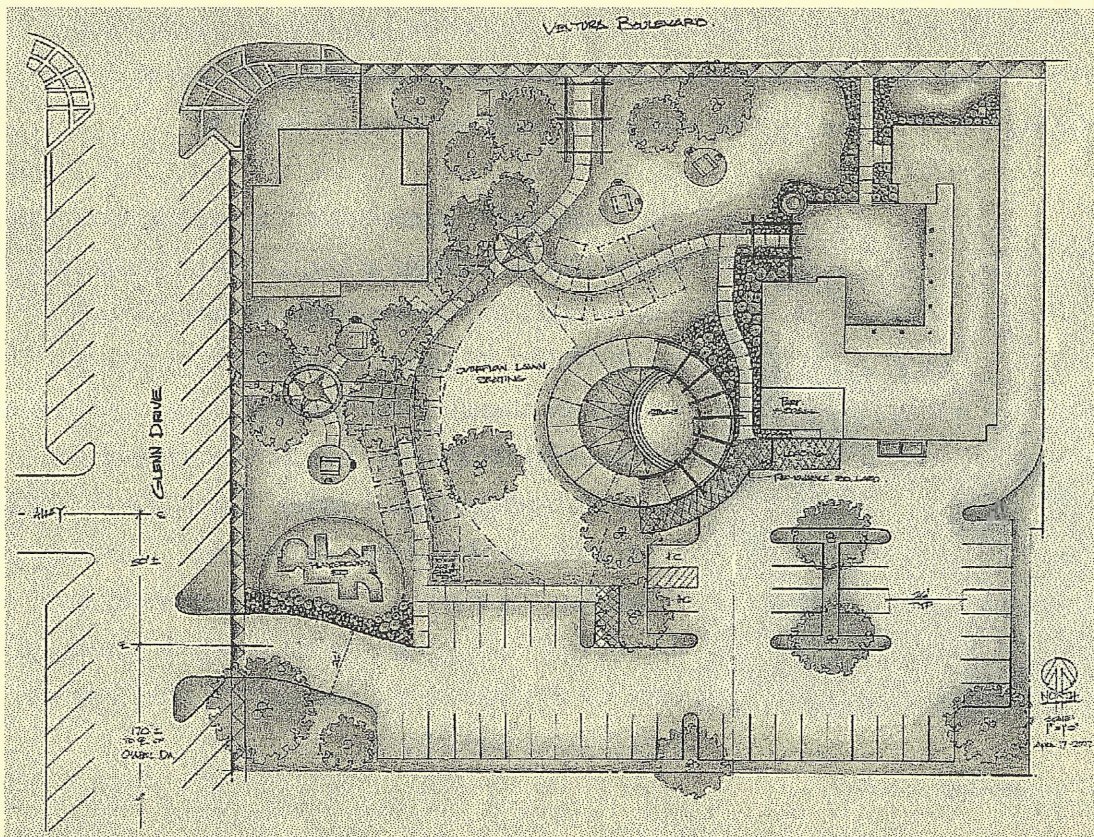
Continued on Page 2

THE "NEW" COMMUNITY CENTER *(Continued from Front Page)*

The library closed in 1962, moving to a building constructed to house it in Dizdar Park next door. The Municipal Court met there from 1941 to 1956, when it moved across Ventura Blvd. into the Lewis Building. Judge David Flynn was the presiding judge and often called upon Mrs. Flynn, to come to the courtroom to interpret for Spanish-speaking citizens. Constable "Cam" Ellis, Supervisor Robert Lefever and Agriculture Commission Deputy Paul Travis maintained their offices there until the early 50s.

The Fire Station was the two story annex at the back. The first floor housed the single fire engine which had a 1,100 foot hose with the capacity to provide 350 gallons of water per minute. It was county owned and maintained. The second floor was home to Chief Gene Putnam and his family. Chief Putnam was Camarillo's first full-time fire chief and its only paid fire fighter. In those early days, he was assisted by volunteers but as the city grew, another fire engine was added and the volunteer staff was augmented with a second paid fireman. As the other tenants left the building, the fire station expanded. The offices became dorms and a shower room for the firemen, the library space was used as storage. In its second reincarnation, the community center became the mess hall for the men stationed there.

Today, the building is still there but it has been empty since the Fire Station closed in 1995, reopening at the new station on Pickwick Drive the same year. The City of Camarillo acquired the property in 1997 and has plans on file to completely redesign the area, including Dizdar Park, in cooperation with the Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District. The plans call for a restaurant to occupy the vacated fire station with ample off street parking plus a children's play area, a bandstand and new plantings to provide a family friendly park



How the transformed
Community Center and
Dizdar Park may look in the
future

From the Desk of the President

Dear PVHS Members:

We are heading into our busiest time of the year with the following events coming up.

On Sunday, May 3, we will have our annual Living History Day from 1 - 4 p.m.. There will be panning for gold, tortilla making, wheat grinding, clothes washing on a washboard (always a favorite with the children) and grinding of corn on a Metata. Crafts such as clothes-pin dolls, making bonnets and paper hats, pinwheels and others will be offered. We hope you will invite your children, grandchildren, neighbors and friends to attend.

Then on Sunday, June 7, from 1 - 3 p.m. is our Annual Meeting. There will be a short business meeting followed by a speaker and refreshments.

August as usual, is the Don and Dona Barbeque. It will be held on Sunday, August 23, at Oak Grove Park so save that date. Right now we hope you will be thinking of someone in the community who would be a good candidate for this honor. In this newsletter you will find a form to fill out and return. Your candidate must be someone who has lived in Camarillo for at least 20 years, has served the community in many ways or is from an old time family. The names of this years honorees will be in our next newsletter.

If you haven't paid your dues, it's never too late to send them in.

Liz Daily, President



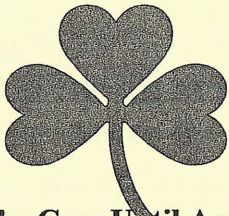
Larry and Ceci Schulman demonstrate panning for gold, just one of the activities that you and your children or grandchildren will participate in during Living History Day, Saturday, May 3, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Pleasant Valley Historical Museum.

Camarillo Historical Trivia

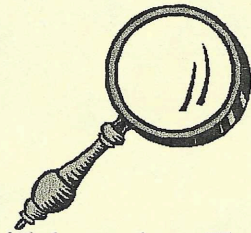
by Val Rains

1. In 1890, how many cemeteries were there in what we now know as Camarillo?
2. To whom did these cemeteries belong?
3. How much did a cemetery plot cost in the Pleasant Valley Baptist Church Cemetery?
4. When were the first church buildings of these two congregations built?
5. Who was Hazen (Mike) Dizdar?
6. What contribution did he offer to Camarillo?
7. Was Mr. Dizdar's plan accepted and when?
8. When were the last remains exhumed?
9. Were any remains left in the cemetery?
10. What happened to those whose next of kin could not be located?
11. What happened to the property?

See answers on Page 7



Antique Club Display



In the Case Until April 28 - The case is now filled with a collection of Irish keepsakes. These include old post cards, Belleek, leprechauns, pixies, shamrock covered items, green glass, a painting of an Irishman, Irish cottages and, of course, St. Patrick.

Coming April 28 - Optical items. There will be a collection of opera glasses, old binoculars, cameras, eyeglasses, magnifying glasses, stereoscopes and other items pertaining to vision. Both displays are worth a visit.

Charles Honn Botanical Garden

Spring! The best time of the year in any garden! We have exciting plans for the renovation of the Charles Honn Botanic Garden. The trees were trimmed this winter, introducing more light into the understory of the garden so that plants, which were shaded out by the trees, can be replanted. The irrigation system will be renovated by the end of the first week in April. New plant signs are on their way, a series of new plants is scheduled to be planted and the vegetable garden soil is warming and ready for plants.

Our garden needs you! Can you stick a sign stake in the ground? Plant a petunia? Fertilize the roses? Dust the Gazebo? Bake cookies for volunteers? Enlist a Scout troop to help? Organize some of your "Garden Fool" neighbors to help? Swing a paint brush? Beg free paint from B&B Hardware or some other paint store for the shed? Re-black a wood burning stove? Go through your garage and tool shed and donate any unused tools, garden hoses, brooms or power nozzles to the garden (useable items only please).

Do you know about and love the history of farming in our county? You can educate others by contributing to labeling and description of farm tools contained in the garden shed. Could you recondition a tool? Could you set up the wonderful scale with items to be weighed so children could use it? Are you interested in the Native American history of our county? Could you set up a display of the use of the various grinders we have? Do you like photography? Could you create pictures for a brochure of the garden? To add garden pictures to our web site? Join the volunteers named below in creating a garden which Camarillans want their visitors to see.

I would like to acknowledge people who have helped out in the last two years: David Hibbits has been tirelessly (well I won't say he doesn't get tired but he keeps on working) raking the garden and pruning the dead growth from the hedge. Bob Rust arranged for the city of Camarillo to trim trees and the hedge. Green Heart Gardens provides a gardening service which goes beyond what ordinary gardeners provide. Bob at Fulkerson Hardware is always willing to donate items. Marie, of Green Heart Gardens, provides personal volunteer time to help out when needed. Val Rains has spent countless hours organizing tours and events and filling in as tour guide, David has been researching plants and re-working the map of the garden. Raquel Latham came to help dig in the vegetable garden. Bill Doctorman, Bill Milligan and Betty Jo have donated money for specific tasks in the garden. All those who help organize and work at our wonderful Living History Day and put the garden to good use. For all of you who have helped over the years and to the board for setting aside money for the garden--many thanks and let's keep it up.

Please call Betty Jo at 805-657-2904 or e-mail me at bjo@qty.com. Please help, even if it is only to bring cookies for the workers. If you want to help financially, \$30 would pay for Juan to come in 2 hours after work or on a Saturday. He can accomplish a lot in that time.

Financial Donations to the Garden in 2008 have come from:

Richard and Ann Honn, The Meadowlarks Service League, Bill Milligan, and Betty Jo McDonald.

HISTORIC STREET NAMES

ARNEILL ROAD - Named for JOHN ARNEILL

By Naomi Fisher

John M.' father, John Arneill, was born in Glasgow, Scotland, and immigrated at the age of 9 in 1853. He was apprenticed to the printers trade, then to the grocery business. Elizabeth Rae came to the U.S. from Scotland in 1866, to marry him. John began selling supplies to lumber camps, first as retail then wholesale. In 1886 he traveled to California, moving here 1888 and settling in Ventura. He came to this area originally because the health of his oldest son, William.

He bought 200 acres, quickly increasing it to 400 acres. He bought a lemon grove in El Rio (now Oxnard) and an orange grove farm near Ojai. He continued to buy property and invest. He became a city trustee of Ventura. John, Senior was killed at the age of 48, in 1894, when horses bolted and he was run over by the wagon.

JOHN MATHER ARNEILL was the second son of John and Elizabeth Rae. He was born June 8, 1888, in Appleton WI. John was just six years old when his father died. The oldest son, William, took over the Camarillo property in 1894 and ran it until his death in 1914. During that time, John went to St. Matthe's Military Academy at San Mateo, then graduated from USC with a B.S. in Botany. He bought a farm of 136 acres near El Rio. Four years later he traded it for 475 acres in Santa Barbara and rented 400 more acres.

In 1915, after William's death, he took over the running of the Camarillo homestead on Ventura Road. He rented 400 more adjoining acres, including an orange grove of 100 acres, walnut trees in 160 acres, with the rest of the land in crops. He bred blooded Percheron horses. His home, built in 1925 ranked as one of the finest in the County. On July 11, 1912, he married Mary Baker from Ventura. They had two children, Anna and John. John M Arniell became influential in California politics and served for three years on the State Central Committee for the Republican Party.

One of the historical books of that era said John "was a scientific agriculturist who was dedicated to raising the standards of farming." He was "one of the most successful ranchers in the Camarillo District;" the "...machinery was operated by electrical power. It was large, a model farm property." The Arneill Ranch bordered on the west side of Arneill from Las Posas, south to Pleasant Valley Road and the railroad tracks at 5th street.

Sources/Biblio: Ventura County California Vol. II, Camarillo and Other Remembrances by Stanley J. Daily, Santa Barbara, San Louis Obispo & Ventura Counties Vol. II 979.49 GID

MEMORIALS

Doris Phipps

Fred Phipps

Liz and Stan Daily

June 2008 - July 2009

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Betty Sullivan

Eric Daily

Ted Daniel

Barbara Fulkerson

David Hibbits

Suzanne Makuch

Raelene Manzer

Betty Jo McDonald

Carol Pinto

Bob Rust

Adele Walsh

Answers to Trivia Quiz on Page 4

1. There were two cemeteries - one in Springville and one in Pleasant Valley.
2. One cemetery belonged to the Little Flock of Regular Baptist Church in Springville and one to the Pleasant Valley Baptist Church on Ventura Blvd.
3. If you donated \$20 to the building fund of the church you were given a cemetery plot.
4. The Little Flock of Regular Baptists Church was built in 1881; Pleasant Valley Baptist Church in 1891.
5. Mike Dizdar ran the local water system as well as running a restaurant.
6. He was quite interested and concerned with the Pleasant Valley Baptist Church cemetery, and met with church trustees often to develop a plan for contacting families of those buried there, obtaining permission to move remains to Ivy Lawn, and have families deed the plot back to the church.
7. The Church approved Mr. Dizdar's plan on September 3, 1941.
8. The last remains were exhumed in 1945.
9. Some families felt that since it would become a perpetual park, they were comfortable with their loved ones remaining there.
10. When next of kin could not be located, they remained interred.
11. The church deeded the property to the County of Ventura with a Reversionary clause included. The park was named for Mr. Dizdar who left provisions in his will to complete the plan of converting the cemetery to a perpetual park.