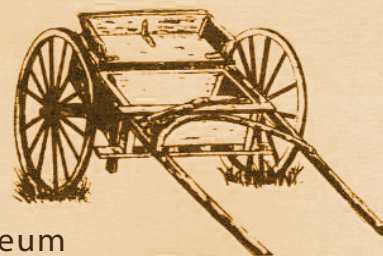


Third Issue 2018 ~ July-September
Next Issue October 2018

THE MAIL CART



Newsletter of the Simi Valley Historical Society and Museum

President's Message

It is a very exciting time for the Historical Society and Strathearn Park right now. We have the Printz/Powell Colony House sitting on the front lawn and all the planning is underway to prepare its new site. The paperwork and permitting will take longer than the work. But...if there are no major archeological findings, the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District plans to complete the initial construction and move the house to its permanent location in the January/February 2019 time frame. This is a much more aggressive time line than most of the other buildings we have moved. It's very exciting that it can be completed so quickly. We have been collecting furniture and other items to be used in furnishing the house. The RSRPD is currently working with an architect, the City, the county and the Cultural Heritage Board to bring all the pieces together.

Mark Your Calendars:

**October 28, 2018 - Dia de los Muertos
Celebration**

November 2, 2018 -

**Annual Membership Dinner Meeting at
Rancho Santa Susana Community Center**

December 9, 2018 -Heritage Holiday Open House

While the Printz/Powell Colony house project is still very much in the foreground, in the background we are in the process of building programs that will increase the partnership between the Historical Society and the Simi Valley Unified School District. This will enable us to get more involved in the classrooms by providing programs and material that support the SVUSD curriculum, and promote knowledge of local history. We are also working on initiatives that will improve the communication, education, and the overall experience within our own volunteer community.

As always, thanks to all the docents and volunteers who work hard to make Strathearn Park the magical place that it continues to be.

Joe Wade-
President, Simi Valley Historical Society



Mechanical Restoration



Amazing things have been going on in our workshop. Our volunteers have been busy with many projects.

This year's major project has been the repair and reinstallation of the Park's c1920s Dempster windmill.



Many Simi residents believe that the windmill at Strathearn Park is one that once stood in the Wood Ranch development, but in fact it came from Strathearn ranch land. It once was located in the Strathearn 'Middle Ranch' that was in Moorpark or a bit north of Moorpark. It was donated by Bruce Strathearn in 1996 and put up at Strathearn Historical Park in 1997.

In October 2017 a wind storm almost nearly blew the windmill off of its tower. After being battered about, two of the three bolts that held it in place either sheared off, or fell out, and it was being held in place with only one. Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District leapt into action. They secured the area immediately, and then brought in a crane to bring it down before it came tumbling down. If it would

have fallen off and hit the ground it would have most likely been damaged beyond repair.

Now after many hours of work and dedication by volunteers Steve Foster, Barry Stone, Steve Demski and Danny Greenstreet, the windmill was put back up on Monday, July 16th. A special thank you to R&M Precision Thousand Oaks. They donated materials and machine time to fabricate needed replacement parts. Local Artist David Sgambellone touched up the paint on the windmill and added some eye-catching lettering.

Thanks also to Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District staff Robert Mendez and Bill Moritsky who played an important part in getting the windmill back on the tower.

In other news; our Gordon Smith Model A compressor project is progressing nicely with volunteers Ed Weigand and Steve Demski taking the lead on the project. A trailer for the compressor has been donated by Bill Milligan.

Our Caterpillar tractor is being worked on as well. Most of the mechanical work on the tractor has been completed, leaving metal work, painting, and assembly. We're hoping to complete this project by the end of 2018.

I wish everyone a great summer.

Richard A. Johnson - Simi Valley Historical Society Mechanical Restorations Director



PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The Simi Valley Historical Society President will recognize one individual quarterly with the "Simi Valley Historical Society President's Award" for outstanding service and commitment to the Community, the Historical Society, Strathearn Park, or local history in general. This award will be given 4 times per year. Individuals can be nominated for the award simply by sending an email to Simimuseum@sbcglobal.net with the subject line President's Award Nomination; include who is being nominated and why. The award can be granted to anyone in the community regardless of any affiliation with the Historical Society.



This quarter we would like to recognize **Steve Demski**. He has always had an interest in history, and now that Steve is retired from his career as a quality assurance professional in a wide variety of settings, he is volunteering his time at Strathearn Park. Steve is a new addition to our volunteer family, having graduated with the last group of docents...but he has taken the Park by storm! Not only is he a docent, giving tours and teaching our visitors about the Park and local history, but he is also a member of the mechanical restoration team. As part of the restoration team he took an active role in repairing the windmill and is now taking lead on a project working on the Gordon Smith Model A compressor.

In addition, he has taken on the role of mentor to a young man who is very interested in Simi History, and becoming a Jr. docent.

Steve, we appreciate your enthusiasm and your willingness to take on so many roles that benefit our organization and our Park. Thank you, Steve!!

Joe Wade-
President, Simi Valley Historical Society

New at Strathearn Park ~ Chumash 101!

1st Nations Chumash 101 Presentations
for the public at Strathearn Park Monthly
on the 4th Sundays of the month
from Noon to 1 pm in the Visitors Center

A familiarization with the details of the new Colony House excavations at the Park in preparation for its installation on site.

Video Presentations, Ethnographical Maps, Subject books to peruse,
Hands-on crafting, Clapper Sticks, Game-play, Ring toss, Activities,
Acorn grinding, Trained Archaeologist, Guest speakers





HISTORY POLICE

In this special issue of **HISTORY POLICE** City Historian Pat Havens will discuss the history of Pioneer Day and why **PIONEER DAY** changed to **SIMI VALLEY DAYS**

Rosa Arabella Printz was the longest serving postmaster here from 1904 till 1941.

Even before the Revolutionary War, the Second Continental Congress established a post office, with Benjamin Franklin as first Postmaster General. That was in 1775.

When Rose Printz received a notice from Washington that all post offices more than fifty years old should hold a celebration, that was just the thing for us to do. Now, Rose Printz was always a community booster extraordinaire, so she figured that meant us! It was spring, 1932. Simi's very first official post office was established in 1889, so Mrs. Printz fudged a little on that fifty-year part. In 1932 the Simi Post office would have been forty-four years old.

She asked Tom Robertson to be general chairman, and he organized a parade down Los Angeles Avenue, which then turned into the Simi Colony at Fourth Street. They even went to Hollywood to rent costumes, for portrayers of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Franklin and another revolutionary couple. The parade featured the story of mail delivery in Simi Valley. First came the Indians, though they were unaware of the Chumash at that time. Then a stage coach, then Art Fuller driving the Mail Cart (which we still have on display in the Wood Ranch barn at Strathearn Park). Charlie Havens, who was the one and only rural mail carrier, was the obvious choice to portray current mail delivery.

By the way, the Gillibrands staged a fracas of some kind involving the wash and gun shots, which frightened Art Fuller's little white mule, who took off for home!

The parade was followed by a ball game and a barbecue.

The next year, they arranged for a panoramic photo (see photo above), showing the whole shebang, all lined up. In the center was Irene Runkle, who was named the first Miss Simi Valley.

For the next fifty years, every spring saw a Pioneer Day gathering. Many came in costume, some trying to look like "pioneers" in sunbonnets and overalls. Actually, they dressed up in whatever "costume" they might be able to concoct. One year high school teacher Ernest Vaniman was wearing a Chinese robe!

Then in the early 1980s, when the annual barn dance put on by Simi Valley Historical Society (first one was in 1982) was such a success for the community, Nancy Bender of the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce asked if we would cooperate in changing to a September celebration called Simi Valley Days. 1985 was the first year that the name of the event was called Simi Valley Days. Our Barn Dance was the opening event of Simi Valley Days for several years after that.

So, now you know the background of our annual community celebration, and also why we call our brochure The Mail Cart!

Pat Havens - Simi Valley City Historian



Photos: Above, Mamie and Mary Romero in costume for Pioneer Day, unknown date. Left, spectators in costume at first Pioneer Day parade in 1932. Bottom left, Pioneer Day parade, unknown date. Bottom right, First Pioneer Day Parade rounding the corner at LA and fourth, Printz photo.

Pioneer Perspective

Taken from A Pioneer speaks, written by R.E. Harrington
20 March 1966 and 6 April 1968 Enterprise Sun & News
Background History of the Cross on Mt. McCoy



Photo taken by R.E. Harrington at the first Easter Sunrise Service held at the cross on Mt. McCoy in 1921

R.E. Harrington was a pioneer who came to Simi Valley in 1907 and lived here the remainder of his life. He wrote one of the early history books about Simi Valley; Early Days in Simi Valley. He also wrote a column in the Enterprise Sun & News in the 1960s into 1970 called 'A Pioneer Speaks' that touched on many topics of interest regarding early Simi history. The article below summarizes two articles he wrote about the Cross on Mt. McCoy.

R.E. Harrington conceived the idea of having his Sunday school class erect a cross on the top of Mt. McCoy to replace an old one that had fallen some time before and was shown on an old map made from surveys taken in 1858. He wrote to the Old Mission in Santa Barbara to see if they had any record of the old fallen cross but they didn't. They did say however

that there was a record of a short cut between the San Fernando Mission and the Ventura mission via "Santa Susana y Simi" and that it was quite likely that the old cross was erected by one of the mission Fathers passing through the Simi Valley on this short cut.

The Cross was built and erected in 1921 by Mr. Harrington's Sunday school class of about a dozen twelve year old boys. Mr. Harrington hauled the planks up the mountain on a bean sled pulled by his team of horses. The cross was built on the ground out of 2x12x20 foot planks nailed together on the edges. This made the cross hollow. Placed inside the cross was a metal box containing many decision cards signed by Sunday school members. The hardest part was digging the hole in the rocks and raising the cross.

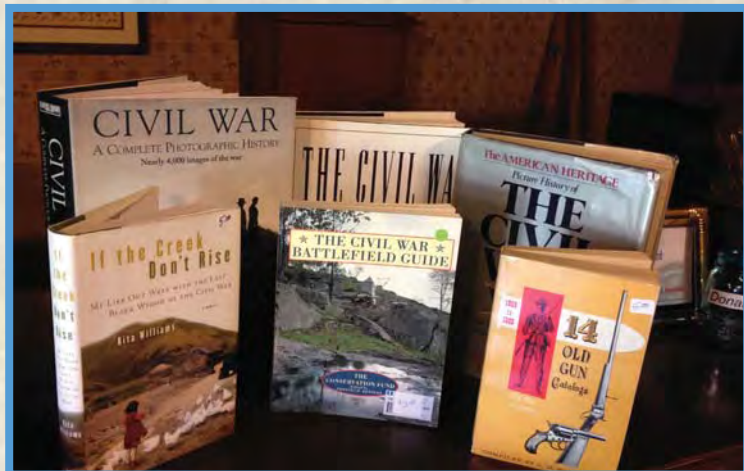
Mrs. C.B. McCoy gave permission to erect the cross. She wrote, "I am glad to give the Simi Church permission to erect a cross on the hill top in the lower end of the valley, and I hope they may have a grand Easter Service there." The attendance at the first service was exceptionally large, considering there was no road or trail up the mountain. All the people had to climb up the steep mountain through the brush, which was often wet with dew or fog in the early morning. A few years after the cross was erected the Strathearn brothers built the present road to the cross.

About 10 years later the Lions Club took over the Easter Service, and some time after that replaced the wooden cross with a concrete one and installed lights on it. An electric generator ran by a small gasoline engine was used to light the bulbs. For decades, they were lit every evening for a week prior to the Easter sunrise service.

Although the cross has been occasionally vandalized since the late 1960s, it has remained a symbol of the early pioneers' dedication and determination to preserve the city's early history.



R.E. Harrington in foreground
1921 - putting up the cross



Simi Store Book Sale!

All Civil War and Native American books will be on sale for 40% off at the Dia de los Muertos event on October 28th, 2018.

A wide selection of over 60 books available. Native American books include picture and coloring books for children and the classroom.

Contact store manager - Linda Bosley at lindabosley66@gmail.com with questions.

Día de los Muertos

Strathearn Historical Park
137 Strathearn Place, Simi Valley

Day of the Dead Celebration
Sunday
October 28th, 2018
2pm-7pm

\$ 7 ADULTS
\$ 5 Kids (5-12)

Music = Dancers = Live Performances =
Face Painting = Food vendors
Día de los Muertos craft vendors
Crafts for kids

Altars created by local families will be on display.

Buy tickets online!!!
Go to the event page on
www.simihistory.com

For more information:
(805) 526-6453 + SimiMuseum@sbcglobal.net
www.simihistory.com + [facebook.com/StrathearnPark](https://www.facebook.com/StrathearnPark)



YES...you CAN touch!

We have a popular exhibit in our museum at Strathearn Park.

We have several items that, while don't seem to be 'old' by our standards, seem to be antiquated relics to the youngsters.

Grab your kids or grand kids and come check it out.

Be entertained as you ask them to type something with the number 1, and then watch them try.

Hand them a rotary phone and then ask them to 'dial' their number and watch hilarity ensue!



We have been offered a donation of an 8-track player, but it needs a 'tune-up.' Can anyone help us with this ? If so..please call 805 526 6453 or email simimuseum@sbcglobal.net

If anyone remembers how to program in basic...that would also be helpful :)

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Strathearn Historical Park & Museum

Historian	Pat Havens
Park Coordinator	Carolyn Valdez
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Simi Valley Historical Society & Museum

P.O. Box 940461

Simi Valley, CA 93094-0461

www.Simihistory.com

www.facebook.com/Strathearnpark



Simi Valley Historical Society & Museum
Located at Strathearn Historical Park & Museum
137 Strathearn Place, Simi Valley, CA 93065



The Mail Cart is sent quarterly to all current members. The Simi Valley Historical Society & Museum's membership year runs from January 1 through December 31.

The Mail Cart is being sent electronically to all members with an email address on file. If you are receiving a 'paper copy' of the Mail Cart and would like to receive it via email (*there are extra articles in the electronic version!*) please send us your email address. Any changes to your email address should be included to continue receiving the electronic Mail Cart! If you do not have an email address, or have requested a printed copy of the Mail Cart, the postal service will continue to deliver your copy. Questions regarding your membership? Call our business office at 805 526 6453 or email simimuseum@sbcglobal.net

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Please select desired membership.
Make checks payable to SVHS&M

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