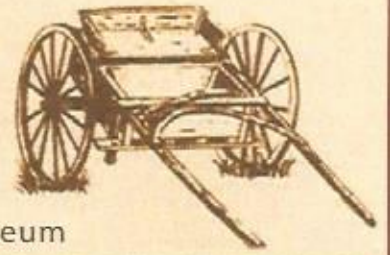


Second Issue 2017 ~ April- June
Next Issue July 2017

THE MAIL CART

Newsletter of the Simi Valley Historical Society and Museum



Simi Valley - A Journey Through Time Twentieth Anniversary!

Museum Director and City Historian Pat Havens spent her teenage years in Simi Valley. She became acquainted with pioneer families, and always enjoyed the stories they recounted about what Simi Valley was like when they first arrived. The memories and tales that she heard from the long time residents triggered a passion for local history.

Her desire to share and preserve local Simi History led her to become a founding member of the Simi Valley Historical Society in 1964, and to teach a class called "History of Simi Valley" from 1974-2005 for the Simi Valley Adult School. As part of her class she asked pioneer family members to share their memories. Listening to the recollections of these speakers, and especially hearing the stories that her father-in-law Charlie Havens and her aunt Lou told, she was inspired to compile a book that would record these oral histories, and preserve them for future generations.

In 1991, collaborating with Bill Appleton, Pat started the process of writing Simi Valley, A Journey Through Time. Questionnaires were sent out to every pioneer family that they could locate, asking them to send their memories of Simi. Bill contributed wonderful photos from his grandfather's collection. Scientific contributors penned chapters dealing with local paleontology, anthropology and plants and animals. Pat wrote extensive histories of the Spanish and Pioneer periods.

The result was a five-hundred page composite history book called Simi Valley, A Journey Through Time. This book, which successfully interweaves historical text, a wealth of photos, and personal accounts from Simi's pioneer families was published in 1997, and has become the definitive Simi History book.

This year we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the publication of Simi Valley, A Journey Through Time!

The Simi Valley Public Library has several copies of Simi Valley, A Journey Through Time that you can check out, and the book is available for purchase at Strathearn Historical Park and Museum.



**"History teaches you not to look at the world from a myopic lens
but in a broader perspective."**

~ David Livingstone, Simi Valley's Chief of Police



Volunteer Update

We at Strathearn Historical Park and Museum are looking for docents.

What is a docent you ask? If you have been to a museum you probably had a tour guide. They walked you around the museum giving you information and telling you stories. That is a small portion of what a docent does. Our docents also participate in events held at our Park. They help cleaning areas that need cleaning or rearranging, lead specially requested tours, and are a big part of our School Tours. They are a part of a team of 3 or 4 docents and lead tours on Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 4. Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday one docent will lead one tour promptly at 1pm.



Photos taken at our Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast in March!



Strathearn Historical Park is unique. The buildings are authentic. Many were located in old Simi. When a building was no longer needed, and in some cases scheduled to be torn down, we moved it to our Park to be preserved. The Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District and the Simi Valley Historical Society as partners moved the buildings. There are six historic structures which have been relocated to Strathearn Historical Park.

Our Docents and Volunteers are the backbone of Strathearn Historical Park and Museum. Docent anniversaries range from 1 year to 42 years. Without our docents and

volunteers, we would be just a park.

Now for the first quarter of 2017 we are recognizing and thanking the following Docents/Volunteers: **Nita Tande** (January) for 5 years of service, **Marilyn Cameron** (February) 10 years of service, and **Mert Lapeyre-Montrose** (February) 10 years of service.

Thank you from the Historical Society Board to all our docents and volunteers for your support and dedication!



My name is Georgia Trumble. I am one of two Docent Coordinators.

If you are interested in being a part of Strathearn Historical Park and our Docent Family, please give me a call at (805) 279-0290. I would love to discuss the program, training, and requirements with you. You can also call Strathearn Historical Park at (805) 526-6453 and leave a message for me or email the museum at simimuseum@sbcglobal.net.

Georgia Trumble, Docent Coordinator

Strathearn Historical Park & Museum

(805) 526-6444 (Home) (805) 526-6453 (Park – leave message)



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, I would like to recognize Historical Society Volunteer and Docent Gloria Bosman.

Gloria is a retired teacher and enjoys sharing local history with others, particularly children.



Gloria teaching kids about the Chumash Culture!

She has been a docent for exactly one year, and from day one enthusiastically became involved with many activities. She has taken a very active role in our park's events. Gloria helped tremendously at last year's History Day, Dia de los Muertos and Holiday Open House events.

Most recently she was asked to step in as organizer, scheduler and presenter for our third grade school tour program when the coordinators needed assistance. She did so without hesitation, even though she was new to the program.

Thank you Gloria, for your commitment to the Historical Society, and your willingness to assist in so many ways. We appreciate your dedication immensely!

Joe Wade-
President, Simi Valley Historical Society

A warm welcome to our new Docents;

**Shannon Levin,
Chris Ryan,
and Rosemary McAnany!**

Welcome to our volunteer family!

Mark Your Calendars:

June 24, 2017 - History Day

October 29, 2017 - Dia de los Muertos Celebration

November 3, 2017 -

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

**November 18, 2017 - Rocket Day: The Fires of
Creation**

December 3, 2017 - Holiday Open House

SIMI VALLEY:

OUR

Journey Through Time

AT STRATHEARN HISTORICAL
PARK & MUSEUM

137 Strathearn Place Simi Valley, California 93065 (805) 526-6453

SATURDAY
JUNE 24TH
10AM TO 4PM
\$5 ADULTS
\$3 KIDS 5-12

Living History Performances:

Ramon Becerra Vaquero Dressage: 10:30am & 1:30pm

Corsets and Crinolines ~ 1860s clothing

demonstration from outside in: 11am

Simi Valley Cults and Culprits Presentation ~ 2pm

Entertainment:

Happy Squares Dancers ~ participation encouraged!

12:15pm-1:30pm

Exhibits & Displays:

Vintage apparel displays, blacksmith horseshoeing

"YES! you CAN Touch!" Hands-on vintage gadgets

Memory Lane ~ Exhibit of vintage Simi photos

including photos from the collection of Al Shack

Antique cars, tractors, farm equipment

with voting for People's Choice Car Award

Simi Settlers Radio Club

Kids Activities:

Feed the goats - Face painting

Fairy Garden Quest

Old time kid's games

Vendors:

Handcrafted pottery, jewelry
gourd makers...and more!

Food for purchase:

Kiwanis Club of Simi Valley

Tea Parlor Porch

Presale tickets
online!

For tickets or info
go to
simihistory.com

Simi Valley Historical
Society & Museum



at Strathearn Park



HISTORY POLICE

In this issue of **HISTORY POLICE** we'll talk about the **SCINTILLATING STORY OF SEVERAL SIMI AND SANTA SUSANA SCHOOLS.**

The first school in **SIMI** was built in the Colony, at Third and California Streets. A bond issue was passed and the school called the Simi School was built in 1890.



First Simi School - 1890

The railroad soon came to Simi, and the Santa Susana Station was completed in July 1900 (**NOT THE DEPOT - THAT WAS BUILT IN 1903**). This caused the little village that would be known as Santa Susana to spring up. This was a long journey to the Simi School for children, walking or riding horseback from some parts of the valley. So the Santa Susana School District was formed. They held classes for a while in a warehouse. Beehives made sturdy desks and they sat upon sacks of barley.

The **SANTA SUSANA SCHOOL** was built around 1902 on Tapo St. about a block and a half south of Los Angeles Ave. The new school had a bell tower and was nicely designed, but only one room. It eventually became too small to accommodate the number of students. It ceased to be used as a school and was used as a private residence, a pool hall and a variety of other things. In 1915, another Santa Susana School was built, facing Los Angeles Ave. to replace the small 1902 building. It was built of brick, which became a concern after the Santa Barbara earthquake (1925) caused so much damage. The use of that building was discontinued. The Simi district and the Santa Susana district unified and built Simi Elementary (1926) and Simi High School (1924) in newly created Community Center. All students from both Simi and Santa Susana traveled to Community Center after that.



First Santa Susana School in SIMI 1902

In 1957, still another Santa Susana School was built in Simi on Apricot Street, backing up to Cochran St. It is still in use today.

'OVER THE HILL' IN CHATSWORTH they also had a Santa Susana School, related to the same Santa Susana mountains. The Santa Susana School District of Los Angeles was formed in 1880. School was first held in a one room building on the northeast corner of Topanga and Chatsworth St. The first school building was built in 1890 and was called Santa Susana School. It was built on the northwest corner of Devonshire and Topanga. In 1902 the name of the school was changed to Chatsworth Park School to avoid confusion with the new 1902 Santa Susana School built in Simi Valley. **THIS SCHOOL WAS NOT IN SIMI VALLEY.**



First Santa Susana School in CHATSWORTH 1890

In 1917, a new two-story building which faced east was built on the original site for use as a school. The first school building constructed in 1890 was sold and moved across the street to the southwest corner of Devonshire and Topanga, moved again to another site on Devonshire, and eventually torn down.

In 1933, the school building built in 1917 was damaged by the earthquake and was torn down. Children went to school in tents while a new building was built. On October 25, 1935, a new school was dedicated. This is Chatsworth Park Elementary school, which is still in use today. It is in the

original location of the first 'Santa Susana School' built in 1890. **IN CHATSWORTH.**

To see more photos of these schools and learn more info, go to **OUR FACEBOOK PAGE** at www.facebook.com/Strathearnpark and look for the album titled **THE STORY OF SEVERAL SIMI AND SANTA SUSANA SCHOOLS**. Thanks to our friends at the **CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY** for their assistance with this issue of **HISTORY POLICE**. Visit www.chatsworthhistory.com for more info on Chatsworth history.

SIMI POSTAL HISTORY



Haigh Talley House being moved in 1970

There is a curious coincidence in the remaining two Colony Houses. The first was brought to Strathearn Historical Park in 1970, the first historic building to be salvaged. Today we are on the brink of bringing the Printz Colony House, which has been owned and occupied by Larry Powell since 1983.

Okay, so what's a Colony House? Think of the first American owners of El Rancho Simí, following a long Spanish-Mexican period that belonged to the Picos and the De la Guerras.

(Time out to advise you that the word Simí should be pronounced Suh-MEE, as it always was, passed along from the Chumash to the Spanish.)

Eastern investors began looking for opportunities in the west. In the 1860s, Pennsylvania Railroad assets and the discovery of the first oil well in Titusville, PA made it feasible for Thomas A. Scott to buy up as much California land as possible. This included El Rancho Simí.

Coincidentally, southern California was having a real estate boom in the 1880s. Not much was known yet about developing oil property, so Simi Land and Water Company was formed in 1887-1888 to take advantage of this opportunity. They needed to dispose of all this land. We know that they advertised in places like Massachusetts, Indiana and Illinois, because those were some of the home states of the newly minted pioneers. Potential buyers were led to expect a flowing river, among other attributes.

In the Chicago region, an investment group called the California Mutual Benefit Colony of Chicago was formed, made up largely



At Strathearn Park after the move

of doctors. Charles G. Austin and his nephew Charles Albert Havens were among the buyers. (Mr. Havens had recently sold his farm land and taken a job as bill collector for some of those doctors, making him privy to the information about the Colony.)

The most memorable fact about the Colony was their unique houses. The Colony itself did not last long, but these two remaining houses still have a place in our history 129 years later. T.W. Harvey Lumber Co. in Chicago had invented the first pre-fab houses! These pre-date the Sears houses by decades.



Haigh Talley House now!

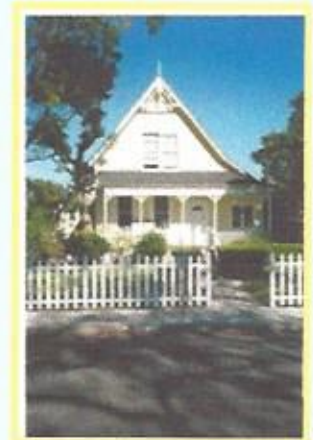


Rosa Printz in front of Printz Colony House

The twelve houses were identical, pre-fabricated, partially assembled, and sent west to Saticoy via the railroad. They were then hauled to Simi by the Bither Transfer Company. Ten were assembled in the five-block square called Simiopolis, and two of them were built on the land bought by the colonists. Being frame houses, most have succumbed to fire.

Only a few of the doctors actually came (Dr. W.G. Cochran, Dr. Maynard, Dr. Uttley, Dr. G.A. Wood, Dr. George Cutler). A few street names reflect those early investors: Erringer and Cochran for instance. Dr. Cutler took a leading role for several years. He was the first postmaster of Simiopolis as shown on a document, dated January 2, 1889. The name was shortened to Simi six short months later!

During these early years, the post office was in more than one Colony House, the first belonging to Dr. Cutler. Eventually Rosa Arabella Printz became postmistress, in the Colony House that still stands on Pacific Avenue at Second Street. The Printz family moved to this house after the first Colony House caught fire. She held forth in her little office, often lecturing ne'er-do-wells on the benefits of temperance, standing first on one foot, then the other; sending each one out "a thinking man," according to Charles R. Havens, the one-and-only rural carrier for many, many years. (Some were said to nearly crawl up the steps to put his letter in the slot on the front door, to avoid the lecture!)



The Printz Colony House

Eventually the Printz house was expanded a little on the east side, to accommodate the post office and the carrier. And then in 1941, the post office was moved to the Murphy Store (formerly the W.S. Keir store in photos) at Fourth Street and Los Angeles Avenue.

During 18 ½ years of this postal history, Mary Talley along with her father and other family members, served as Mail Messengers. The John and Mary Talley family lived in the Colony House, once located at Second and Ashland. They made daily trips to the small train station at First Street to send outgoing mail, via a hook that held the sturdy mail pouch situated in such a way that a mechanism on the train could unhook it without stopping. A canvas pouch with incoming mail was thrown off the train. Mary Talley's writing in the *Enterprise* described the trials and tribulations of being sure that the mail went through, no matter the hardships of weather and movie companies! Her unsung loyalty to Uncle Sam—and to the citizens of Simi Valley—were quite remarkable but probably very few paid much attention to it.

Odd indeed that these two remaining Colony Houses were so involved in our postal history, in a day when most communication was written, stamped and sent in whatever manner our local postal service was able to provide!

Pat Havens

We Got Mail!

Did YOU know that the Simi Valley Historical Society at Strathearn Park invites all third graders in Simi Valley for a School Tour that is free of charge? Sometimes after our school tours, students from the third grade class who visits us send us thank you notes. We ALWAYS enjoy reading them! We thought we'd share the one below which we received this month, and some excerpts of others that we found extraordinarily enjoyable :) Thank you to Mrs. Landy's class from Knolls Elem. for making us smile!



April 4, 2017

Dear Strathearn,

Thank you for every thing.
I liked every thing. I had fun
doing the games. I thought the
learning was cool. Learning about
history and looking at all the
houses. Thank you so much taking
your own time to tell us
about the history even though
you don't get money. Thank you!

From,
Zachary

"My favorite part was
the hunting were you
get to do the ring toss
game and try to stab
the goat with a spere."



Editor's Note: No goats were harmed
during this School Tour

"Thank you for host-
ing a field trip when
you have free time."

"I had a great time, did you?"

"Thank you for volunteering to
show us Chumash Indian culture.
I think I learned a lot, and I
know you don't get paid so I am
so grateful that you guys taught
us so much. My favorite part was
when we through the spears at
the fake deer."

"I like how I got to see the
type writers. I also liked the
desks. I liked trying to type
numbers into the phone. It was
fun trying to call people. I had
fun, I hope you did, too!"



"Also the fake high school students were scary! But thank you for your time!"

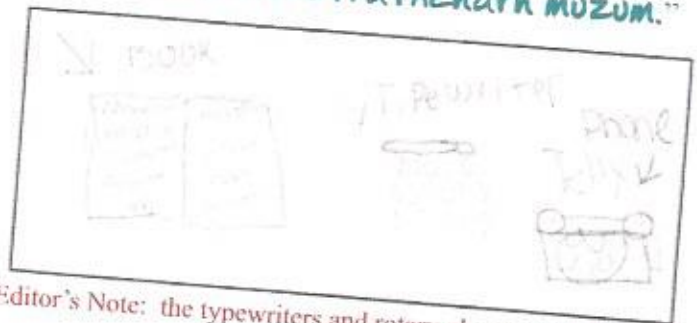


Editor's Note: The kid has a point.

"Thank you for volunteering for our field trip it was so much fun. My favorite part was when we went into the house that was white I liked the kitchen. It was very romantic and my favorite second part was the ring toss game."

"Thank you for showing group 1 around my favorite place it was fun we were learning about how to Ranch and telling us how hard it is to Ranch. So thank you for giving your spare time and because you're not getting paid for it. I think I will be coming back. Thank you for all you have done. Bye"

"My favorite part of the tour was the library because the typewriters and the rotary phones even the books too. I really like how you guys volunteered at the Strathern Museum."



Editor's Note: the typewriters and rotary phones are a favorite!

Mechanical Restoration



Thanks to the efforts and ideas from our Mechanical Restoration team, the reconfiguration and reorganization of Our Workshop is nearly finished. The new layout of equipment, work areas, parts storage, and floor space will provide a more productive, and safer, working environment for our team to tackle upcoming projects.

Progress continues on our 1934 Cat 22 tractor and the Gordon Smith air compressor, along with other projects in line for repairs and maintenance. Our farm implement area will be rearranged by eliminating some of the pieces that are beyond repair or refurbishment, leaving only viable items for preservation. This will give us more open area for display and tour and learning purposes.

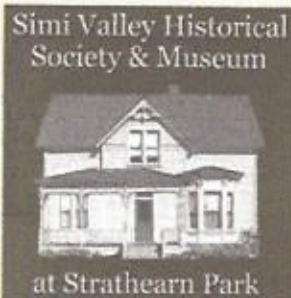
We've recently received a donation of a wire feed welder which will be used as needed in our workshop.

The workshop building and extension is a valuable component of our Museum and Park allowing us to maintain our collection of equipment and artifacts, and can be used by all who have an interest in this work. Please volunteer. We have projects for everyone. You do not need to be a skilled mechanic, just have a desire to lend a hand.

Our next event will be Saturday June 24, 2017. We will be operating tractors, have vintage cars on display, the historic buildings will be open for tours, and many other things will be going on at the 'Our Journey Through Time' event!

Have a great Summer,

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



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 Caryl Barefoot at 527-2769 or email at carylretired2@sbcglobal.net

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Credit/Debit Card: MC VISA Discover Card

_____ Exp _____ CVV# _____

Signature _____

(Payment Mailing Address) PO Box 940461, Simi Valley, CA 93094-0461

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

- | | |
|--|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$15.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Sustaining | \$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$500.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$1,000.00 |

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Strathearn Historical Park & Museum

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Park Coordinator	Carolyn Valdez
Admin. Asst.	Louise Kaul

Docent Led Tours: Saturdays & Sundays: Between the hours of 1 & 4 pm

Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays: One tour at 1 pm

Donation: \$3 for Adults, Simi Valley Historical Society Members are Free

We are a Blue Star Museum - Active Duty Military Personnel and Families are Free

Weekday Park Hours: Monday - Friday

9 am - 3 pm

For information please call (805) 526-6453

Email: Simimuseum@sbcglobal.net

Simi Valley Historical Society & Museum

P.O. Box 940461

Simi Valley, CA 93094-0461

www.Simihistory.com

www.facebook.com/Strathearnpark