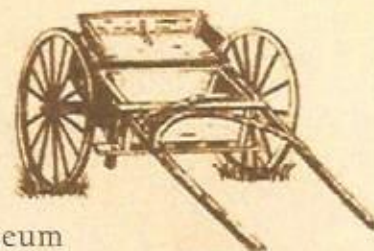


First Issue 2015 ~ Jan.-Mar.
Next Issue April 2015

THE MAIL CART

Newsletter of the Simi Valley Historical Society and Museum



President's Message

Welcome to 2015, thanks for joining us. It's going to be an exciting year.

As our vehicle restoration projects continue, and as additional vehicles are donated to the museum, we need to start thinking about where to house all of these amazing vehicles. Currently, they are scattered about the park and hidden away in various places. We dream of someday building a vehicle barn to house our collection. There is a lot to do in order for this project to come to fruition, but funding such a project may be our biggest challenge.

But... I have "jumped the gun," because we have a more pressing project that will need more immediate attention. We have one more historic building that needs to be moved to the park. Twelve pre-fabricated 'Colony' houses were shipped to Saticoy via rail and then brought to Simi by horse and buggy in 1888. They formed Simi's first neighborhood. In 1970 one of these historic houses was carefully moved from its original location to Strathearn Park. The Simi Valley Historical Society and the Park District watched as this building was brought to Strathearn Park and became one of the first buildings to reside at a park which now, in 2015, is proud to house many of the community's significant historic structures. We will be moving a second Colony House to the park. This will complete our collection of historic buildings which we plan to acquire. We are so close, yet so far away! In order to move this building we need to raise \$60,000 to cover the costs. Our Mayor, Mr. Huber, will be helping us raise the money for this project, but we will need everyone to pitch in to make this happen!

The first time we moved a Colony House to the park, the moving expenses totaled about \$5,000. Oh, how times changed! If there is anything you can do to help us out with getting donations for this project, it would be greatly appreciated. We will need people to help us put the lists of individuals and businesses together. We will need people to help us make the calls asking for donations. We will need people to stuff envelopes, write letters, etc.... It's going to be exciting, and extremely challenging. And everyone that helps can join us as we walk along side the house as it moves through town on the night we move it. It will be a "midnight house parade" of sorts.

We are looking forward to the challenges ahead of us and are grateful for the wonderful folks that support our organization in anyway they can. Thank you for everything you do for us already, and thanks in advance for the future.

Joe - President, Simi Valley Historical Society



Mr. Huber in front of the Colony House before the move to Strathearn



The Colony House on the move in 1970!



The Colony House at Strathearn in 1971. One down...one more to go!

Save the Date!



for the fabulous 2nd annual

TIARA GARDEN PARTY



Join us for a fun ladies social to benefit the Simi Valley Historical Society & Museum!

Host:

Friends of Simi Valley
Historical Society
Debbie Thomas
woodranch@aol.com
805-581-2927

When:

Sunday, May 31 from
2:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Where:

Robert P Strathearn
Historical Park
137 Strathearn Place
Simi Valley, CA 93065

Come and enjoy:

live music ~ appetizer station ~ wine & martini bar
iced tea/lemonade bar ~ ice cream sundae station ~ silent auction
four beautiful historic buildings ~ tiara contest ~ photo booth
50/50 raffle tickets available for purchase ~ shopping

*Please wear a tiara, either homemade or purchased...
fun, extravagant, or as simple as you like!*

No tickets will be sold at the door. Garden party attire. Adults only, please.



Volunteer Opportunities at Strathearn Park!

Get Involved at Strathearn Historical Park and Museum and with the Simi Valley Historical Society! Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity that will allow you to learn about Simi Valley's history at the same time?

Registration is now open for docent training classes scheduled for January 20th, 22nd, 27th and 29th from 7 pm to 9 pm. The training covers the Chumash Indian, Spanish Rancho, and Pioneer periods of Simi Valley's history. All four classes must be attended for accreditation.

At Strathearn Historical Park & Museum volunteer hours are flexible, and there are various activities and programs available to satisfy a broad spectrum of interests. The basic commitment is one day a month, but most of our volunteers sign up to do much more as needed. Come and join a wonderful group of people who are dedicated to preserving as well as sharing Simi Valley's history.

If you are interested please call Karla at 818-388-3301 or email at hubbell42@sbcglobal.net

Karla Hubbell

Civil War Days at Strathearn Park Coming SOON!

February 21 & 22, 2015
Saturday 10 to 4 & Sunday 10 to 3

Admission :
\$5 over age 12
\$3 ages 5 to 12
Under 5 Free

Step with us back to another place and time, when General Ulysses S. Grant and his wife could still stroll the streets of our little town, and President Lincoln could take a break from his Washington duties to give a speech on the steps of our Strathearn House!

Join us on an early Spring day when the two armies, North and South, are camped across a small field from each other in uneasy truce, where sergeants of both sides drill groups of local boys and girls curious to experience military life; where other youths armed with questionnaires seek out the best soldiers to interview for their classes at school; where older visitors admire cavalymen and their horses, or anticipate the demonstration of the heavy guns...

Here, costumed civilians stand ready in their own camps, eager to tell their stories to the passing visitor; sutlers offer for sale civil war era clothing and souvenirs; the gracious ladies of Fort Tejon take tea in the shade of our old-time gazebo; visitors of all ages try their hand at creating simple items with vintage hand-cranked sewing machines; while in the barn across the way, the plunk of a banjo invites the curious to take a lesson in Victorian era dance...drums announce a break in the truce...columns of troops are drawn up for battle...the rattle of musketry momentarily fills the air...

As daylight begins to fade over the scene, the guns are once again silent as our visitors make their way home, having glimpsed and perhaps even partaken of the sorrows and joys of a long-ago time.

Keep an eye on our website www.simihistory.com and our facebook page www.facebook.com/StrathearnPark for more details.



Mechanical Restoration



I hope everyone had a great Holiday Season and I wish you all the best for a Healthy and Happy 2015.

To our Monday morning volunteers- thank you everyone, for your continuing efforts in support of the Simi Valley Historical Society! 2014 was a busy year in our shop. The 1929 John Deere D Tractor was driven at the 2014 History Day event, it is mechanically complete, however, it needs a bit more work. Painting and assembly of sheet metal on the Model D is expected to be complete early this year.



Our 1939 Farmall B Tractor refurbishment is almost finished. To date we've added a starter motor, a battery, and a radiator (repaired by Ken at Commercial Radiator). The sheet metal and chassis have been primed and painted, carburetor has been rebuilt, and the valves were adjusted.

We've fitted the correct rear wheels and tires that came from our donor Farmall A. We expect to complete this project by February 2015, in time for future events this summer.

The next projects in line for refurbishment are our Cat 22 Tractor and our 1915 Model T Touring Car!

If you are interested in volunteering please contact the Strathearn Park office at 805 526-6453. We have several upcoming projects in our workshop that need your help, so come on down and take a look. You do not need to be an expert mechanic. A keen interest, and desire to get involved is all that it takes. We meet each Monday around 9am -12 noon; our workshop is located at Strathearn Park.

Richard A. Johnson
Simi Valley Historical Society
Mechanical Restorations Director

Mark Your Calendars:

February 21 & 22, 2015 - Civil War Encampment

May 31, 2015 - Tiara Garden Party

June 20, 2015 - History Day

And...something NEW this year: a Holiday Gala in December 2015! Stay tuned for more details!

Holiday Open House

What a wonderful day at the Park! On Sunday, Dec. 7th we hosted a relaxing afternoon that included holiday music in the Park's Visitors Center. Listeners were treated to beautiful music from Mary Predmore and Rhondda Dayton of Pipe Dream Flutes, Harpist Elaine Litster, and the Royal High School Vocal Jazz Group. Outside in the Park, Girl Scout Troop 60344 and Cub Scout Pack 3643 sang wonderful Christmas Carols! Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment. Thank you!

Two local authors were on hand to sign their books. P.W. Conway, award winning Cowboy Poet, signed his book Buckaroo Poetry and Wendy Varble her two books The Summer of 1934 and The Pisgah Grande-1936.

Santa was here to the delight of all the visitors! Thanks Santa Robert Tatan-gelo! The smiles on the kids' faces when they visited with you were one of the highlights of the day!

Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who provided delicious goodies, and those who volunteered their time to be at the park during the event, showing our guests around and sharing your knowledge of Simi History and the Park! Terri Malkinson-a big thank you for organizing the event! A festive time was had by all!



Check this out!

<<<

A Ripley's Believe it or NOT from around 1966

about the Colony House currently at Stathearn Park!

Don't Forget!

We have books!



Looking for a good read?



HISTORY POLICE

In this exciting installment of **HISTORY POLICE** we will explore the Postal History in Simi Valley! This seems like a perfect **HISTORY POLICE** topic as the Simi Valley post office at 2551 Galena Avenue is renamed for longtime postmaster Neil Havens. It designates the facility as the "Neil Havens Post Office." Neil Havens was with the post office for 30 years. During his tenure at the post office, he saw it grow from having one carrier to 130 employees (in 1988). Before him his father,

Charles R. Havens was Post Master...and before that his grandfather Charles A. Havens worked the first rural route in Simi in 1912. Here are just a few tidbits of Simi Postal History from Mr. Neil Havens himself, which he used for a Rotary Club presentation in April 1985:

---The first pioneers began to arrive in Simi Valley in the late 1860s. At that time the main line of the coastal stage still passed through here, so mail could arrive that way. The stage stopped at the foot of the grade at "Larry's" stage stop. By 1875, however, the stage line was re-routed through the Conejo. For a while then, someone rode over to the old Stagecoach Inn to pick up the mail on Saturdays.

---In the late 1880s, the first subdivision was made. Advertising in the mid-west and in the eastern states lured many settlers. The literature described our wonderful climate (excluding any mention of our east winds!) My grand-dad, and his Uncle Charlie Austin, decided to sell out their interests in the Chicago area and head west. The "colony" of investors were mostly doctors--my grand-dad heard about the opportunity, because he was a bill collector for that group of doctors at the time!

---Twelve pre-fab (pre-cut and partially assembled) houses were sent out by rail to Saticoy, where they were hauled by wagon to Simi. In one of those colony houses, at the corner of First and Ashland Streets, the first U.S. Post Office was established, and it was named Simiopolis! That grand name lasted only six months, and it was shortened to plain old Simi again. Dr. George Cutler was the first postmaster. Your address previous to that time was simply: "San Fernando, California, c/o Simi Hotel"!!

---A man named Art Fuller brought the mail from San Fernando over the hill to the hotel, and from there it was carried to the post office in the town or colony of Simi. We still have the little mail cart at the historical park, and that is the reason we call our newsletter "The Mail Cart."

---Rose Printz was postmistress from 1903 until 1941, and the post office was in the colony house which her family lived in, first in a house which burned, and then next door in another colony house.

---In 1912 a rural route was established. My grandfather, Charles A. Havens, was the first carrier. The first rural route was 11 miles long, and had 45 patrons. His salary was \$48.50 per month.

---In 1913 my Uncle Lester took over the route from his dad, and held it until 1917 when he went to France during WWI. Grandpa took the route until my Dad returned from the war. (He was appointed carrier on Nov. 26, 1917, a post which he held until he too went into the army--during which Grand-dad again filled in.)



---A Model-T pick-up replaced the horse and buggy in 1919.

---The route kept growing. First the Tapo district then the Fig Farm. That year it rained four inches in May!. Crossing at Tapo Creek at Avenida Simi and Township with no bridge was quite a challenge in a Model-T.

---By the time Susana Knolls was added, the route was 53 miles long. There was one old lady who always timed her trips to Liles' Grocery so that Dad could carry her groceries for her, because she had a bad heart! He thought for a little while he was saving her life! (This was Gertrude Black, who eventually out-lived Charlie, living to be 109 years old!)

---In 1940, Mrs. Printz retired as postmistress after many years of service to the community. For instance she initiated the very first Pioneer Day (the precursor to Simi Valley Days), which brought a couple of thousand people to the celebration in the early 1930s!

Mr. Neil Havens was postmaster from 1958 - 1988





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



Our membership year is January 1 through December 31, 2015, therefore it is time to send in your dues for 2015 if you haven't already done so! The Mail Card is sent to all current members. The Mail Card is electronically being sent to all members with an email address on file. If you are receiving a 'paper copy' of the Mail Card and would like to receive it via email (*there are extra articles in the electronic version!*) please include your current email address with your membership renewal. Please update your email if it has changed.

If you do not have an email address on file or have requested a printed copy of the Mail Card, 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 _____

Signature _____

IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

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 |

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

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 Joe Lansden

Strathearn Historical Park & Museum

Historian	Pat Havens
Park Coordinator	Carolyn Valdez Phillips
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

"I desire no future that will break the ties with the past."
 ~ George Eliot