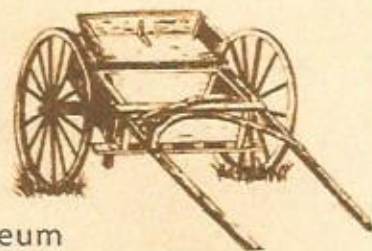


First Issue 2017 ~ Jan. - March.  
Next Issue April 2017

# THE MAIL CART



Newsletter of the Simi Valley Historical Society and Museum

## *President's Message*

Welcome to a new year!! It's going to be a great one. For the past couple of years we have focused on improving our technology and on-line presence. We now have park-wide WiFi, on-line ticket sales, electronic credit card processing for events and the Gift Shop, a really great portable sound system, a significant and growing social media presence and soon we will have "screaming fast" internet. We have also replaced some of our events with new fresh ones and have seen significant growth in our event attendance. We are reaching more people and more people are reaching us. This should be our continued focus for the next couple of years. By the end of 2017, I would like to strengthen our relationship with the Simi Valley Unified School District, become more involved with the Chamber of Commerce and become a more active player in our community in general. We need to extend our reach far beyond the fence that surrounds our beautiful six acre park. I would like to see the Historical Society providing weekly historical content to our school newsletters and local papers. I would like to see the Historical Society present scholarships and grants to a couple of students and teachers who are leaders and champions of history at our annual dinner and meeting in November. I would like to see the Historical Society develop a solid School Assembly program and be providing rich content to most of the campuses in our valley by the end of the 2017-2018 school year. By the end of 2020, I would love to stop hearing, "Oh, I didn't even know you were here." We have an amazing group of dedicated volunteers and members so I know we can accomplish the impossible. It is time for us to acknowledge the greater level of influence we could be having in our community and begin working together toward making it happen.

## *Mark Your Calendars:*

**February 11 & 12, 2017 - Civil War Days  
at Strathearn Park**

**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**

**December 3, 2017 -  
Holiday Open House**

*Joe Wade -*  
President, Simi Valley Historical Society

Simi Valley Historical  
Society & Museum



at Strathearn Park



# Civil War Days at Strathearn Park Coming SOON!

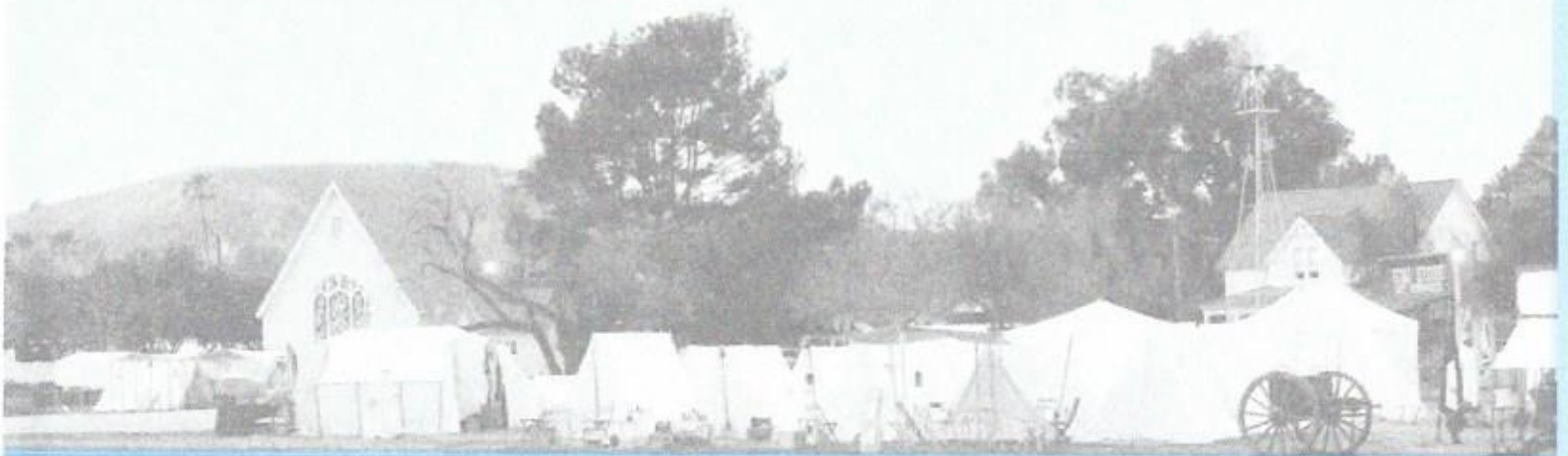
February 11 & 12, 2017 Saturday 10 to 4 & Sunday 10 to 3

Step back with us to another place and time, when President Lincoln could take a break from his Washington duties to give a speech on the steps of our Strathearn House! Here, costumed civilians, as well as soldiers from the north and south stand ready in their camps, eager to tell their stories to the passing visitor; sutlers offer for sale civil war era clothing and souvenirs and sergeants drill groups of local boys and girls curious to experience military life. Skirmishes, as well as artillery, infantry and cavalry demonstrations will take place throughout the weekend. A civil war era clothing demonstration will reveal what a Victorian lady had to go through just to get dressed! Food for purchase will be available from Kiwanis Club of Simi Valley.

Entrance fees are as follows; \$6 for adults, \$3 for children from 5 to 12, 4 and under free.

**\$5 advance tickets available online at: [svhs.ticketleap.com/civilwardays17/](http://svhs.ticketleap.com/civilwardays17/)**

For more information please visit <http://www.simihistory.com/> and [facebook.com/civilwarsimi/](https://www.facebook.com/civilwarsimi/)



## *Volunteer Update*

Strathearn Historical Park and Museum is unique. Several historic buildings were moved to this 6 acre park that was once a small part of the Strathearn Home Ranch. The Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District in partnership with the Simi Valley Historical Society keeps the Park a place where visitors can take a step back in time. We have docent led tours of historic buildings. This helps visitors learn what life was like years ago, learn about the Strathearn family and those who came before them. A critical part of all this fun is our Docents. Without them the Park would not be what it is today. Currently, we are looking for those who like antiques and history, enjoy talking to people, like to be involved in public events, like to organize and teach, or take walks in the park.

Potential docents will attend four evenings of training over two weeks (two nights each week from 7pm to 9pm), and one Saturday morning from 9:30am to approximately 10:30am.

If I have piqued your interest, please give me a call. If you call the Park they will take a message.

*Georgia Trumble*, Docent Coordinator

Strathearn Historical Park & Museum

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



## Holiday Open House

On December 4 we welcomed many visitors to our beautifully decorated Park for our Holiday Open House. They were entertained by choral and instrumental groups from Valley View Middle School, Santa Susana High School, the Methodist Church, Channel Islands Harmony Chorus and Mary Predmore. And, of course, Santa Robert and Mrs. Claus delighted young and old with their Christmas cheer! Thank you docents, volunteers and board members who decorated our Park, baked delicious goodies and informed our guests about our Simi history. We couldn't do it without you!

*Terri Malkinson-Event Chair*



## 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](mailto: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 Todd Huber. Todd owns and operates SkateLab and the Skateboarding Hall of Fame and Museum, both located in Simi Valley. The Skateboarding Hall of Fame and Museum was created to honor the passion, dedication and contributions to skateboarding history and culture by skateboarders and cultural icons throughout the decades. Todd is not only passionate about skateboarding, he is passionate about preserving and sharing its history with the world. Over the past 27 years, Todd has amassed an impressive collection of over 5,000 historical skateboards and skate-culture related memorabilia and artifacts, dating back to the 1940s. In 1997, he opened the museum to house this collection (the world's largest collection of skateboard memorabilia) and honor the history of skate-culture. He also hosts a growing weekly webcast where he discusses the historical and cultural impacts of skating and often shows off parts of the museum collection as a way of educating people around the world about skating's fascinating history. Todd's dedication and passion to preserving and sharing this history is inspiring and honorable. Thank you Todd for all you do! Happy 20th Anniversary to the Skateboard Hall of Fame and Museum. The museum is located at 4226 Valley Fair Street in Simi Valley.

*Joe Wade-*  
President, Simi Valley Historical Society







# HISTORY POLICE

In this exhilarating issue of **HISTORY POLICE** we'll talk about the **AMERICAN CIVIL WAR**...among other things.

Our Civil War Days event is coming up quickly. So...is that what this Valley looked like during the time of the Civil War? Battlefields? Cannons firing across the valley? Hoop skirts? **NO. NOT AT ALL.**

So, what was this Valley like during those years? What was going on in California? You may not think of California when you think of the Civil War, but there were pro-union and pro-secessionist forces that deeply divided the state.

Here is a very general time line partially excerpted from a much more extensive one titled **"THE CIVIL WAR IN CALIFORNIA"** compiled by the California State Department and Recreation. Local information in this time line is from Pat Havens' Time Line-Simi Valley (in red). This includes events before the Civil War, and events after which shaped Simi.

1795: El Rancho Simi Land Grant--The rancho was called San José de Altagracia y Simi, Santiago de la Cruz Pico received permission to occupy El Rancho Simi and use it as his own.

c1810: The Simi Adobe was built. This still stands at Strathearn Park. It is the oldest structure in Simi.

1820-1830: El Rancho Tapo came to be noted as a separate site, though it was part of El Rancho Simi. The Tapo Adobe was built during that decade.

1821: El Rancho Simi was re-granted to Patricio, Francisco Javier and Miguel Pico, sons of Santiago Pico, who had died in 1815. [They did not receive the original 1795 grant, as stated in some early history accounts].

1822: Mexican Independence from Spain had little effect on El Rancho Simi.

1827: Population at el Rancho Simi was 19 people. Eight were adults.

1831-1832: Rafael Pico sold Simi Rancho to José de la Guerra.

1849: California Gold Rush – Thousands rushed to California and many rapid changes began. The gold rush caused a great demand for cattle. José de la Guerra's ranches flourished.

September 9, 1850: California joined the Union and became a state.

1850: There was a high production of cattle on Rancho Simi earning \$50,000 to \$100,000 annually.

December 1856: The U.S. 1st Cavalry moved its headquarters to Ft. Tejon.

1858: José de la Guerra died.

1858–1860: Francisco de la Guerra lived at the Simi Adobe, still headquarters for El Rancho Simi.

June 1860: Construction began on the Santa Susana Pass Stagecoach Road.

November 6, 1860: United States: Abraham Lincoln was elected the 16th President of the United States. California's four electoral votes went to Lincoln, even though he only received 32% of the total popular vote.



José de la Guerra



Santa Susana Pass Road



## [1861-1865: U.S. CIVIL WAR]

April 6, 1861: In the Santa Susana Pass, the first overland mail stagecoach traveled along the Santa Susana Stagecoach Road, establishing the new route between Los Angeles and San Francisco. News of the Civil War took 20 to 30 days to reach Simi Valley by the Coastal Stage, the main line of which went through Simi Valley.

1861: The coastal stage route passed through Simi Valley until 1875. The local stations and stops were Larry's Station at the foot of the Santa Susana Pass, Simi Adobe and the "Simi Station which was at the junction of Moorpark and Tierra Rejada Roads" as per historian Charles Outland.

1862-1864: Extreme drought years in Simi and many cattle died.

December 19 1862: General Wright requested authority to raise four companies of 'native' (Californio) cavalry in the Los Angeles District. January 20, 1863 Secretary of War gave authority. Officers could not speak the language of the country they were prepared to defend. Like many other California units did, the native cavalry acted in the absence of the Regular Army. Simi Valley Connection: Two of the four companies had a Simi connection. Company A was commanded by José Ramon Pico, a nephew of Andres Pico, grandson of Santiago Pico, original recipient of the Simi Rancho land grant. Capt. Antonio Maria de la Guerra, son of Don José de la Guerra, the second owner of El Rancho Simi commanded Company C.



Antonio Maria de la Guerra

November 19, 1863: Gettysburg, PA: At the dedication of the new Soldier's National Cemetery at Gettysburg, President Lincoln delivered his famous Gettysburg Address.

1864: Isaac Cook was given deed to El Rancho Simi as a result of the sale of El Rancho Simi land due to non-payment of mortgage debt to him by de la Guerras. Some deceptive practices were undertaken by American investors to wrest control of land from Spanish landholders.

1865: A land patent confirmed the de la Guerra claim to Rancho Simi under the Land Act of 1851. José de la Guerra had already died. The sons soon lost the remainder of their Rancho Simi land because of mortgages during the bad years of drought and poor management of finances.

1865: The Rancho Simi was purchased by eastern land investors headed by Thomas A. Scott of Pennsylvania. Thomas R. Bard, a man in his twenties, was hired to manage Scott's affairs.

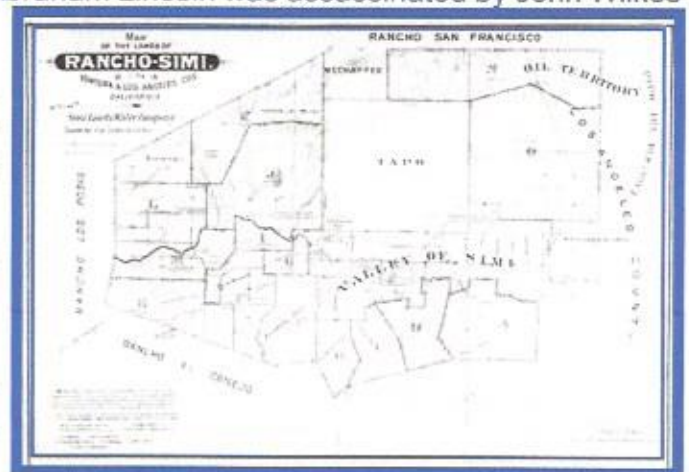
April 9 1865: Appomattox, VA: General Robert E. Lee surrenders his Army of Northern Virginia to General Ulysses S. Grant at the home of Wilmer McLean in Appomattox. Soon, other Confederate Generals followed suit, making the Southern defeat complete.

April 14 1865: Washington, D.C.: United States President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth in Ford's Theatre, Washington, D. C.

August 31 1865: Washington, D.C.: The US Federal government estimated that the American Civil War had cost about \$8 billion. Human costs have been estimated at more than one-million killed or wounded.

1880s: In the mid 1880s, the de la Guerras finally lost their hold on the Tapo property. In 1885 The Tapo Ranch was offered for sale in Ventura County newspapers.

1887-1888: The formation of the Simi Land and Water Company, headed by Thomas Bard; they started the first land division and offered the Rancho Simi land for sale.



Land offered for sale after the formation of Simi Land and Water Company



## Mechanical Restoration



What happened to 2016? Amazing- so much to reflect on and inspire us for the new goals in 2017. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and that we all are looking forward to the great year planned for our Park workshop and museum.

Last year we focused on reconfiguring our Workshop and storage areas by adding shelving, different work tables, areas for specific tasks, welding, machining, and cleaning, and so on. Tool storage was enhanced with a roll away tool box, and additional drawers for hand tools and related items. Several donated items were incorporated into the Workshop.

Work continued on the 1934 Cat 22 Tractor and the Gordon Smith air compressor. Our 1926 Model T received much needed front wheel bearings, replacement fuel shutoff valve, and a spark advance control rod. We moved the 1926 back into one of the garages under its own power and it runs and drives great.

For 2017 we expect to complete our Workshop reconfiguration in the first few weeks and then concentrate on the Cat 22 and Smith compressor projects. Our hope is to operate these two projects at this years History Day coming up June 24, 2017, along with our stationary gasoline farm engines. The 1946 Chevy pick up will be evaluated and considered for refurbishment some time later this year.

Our Workshop is open Mondays 9-12 Noon, or sometimes longer as needed. So please come on down and volunteer, or just have a cup of coffee and meet everyone. You do not need to be a master mechanic; only have a desire to lend a hand and work with others in support of our Park and Museum. Without our volunteers nothing could be accomplished.

Thank you all and I hope to see everyone returning for 2017, it will be a great year.

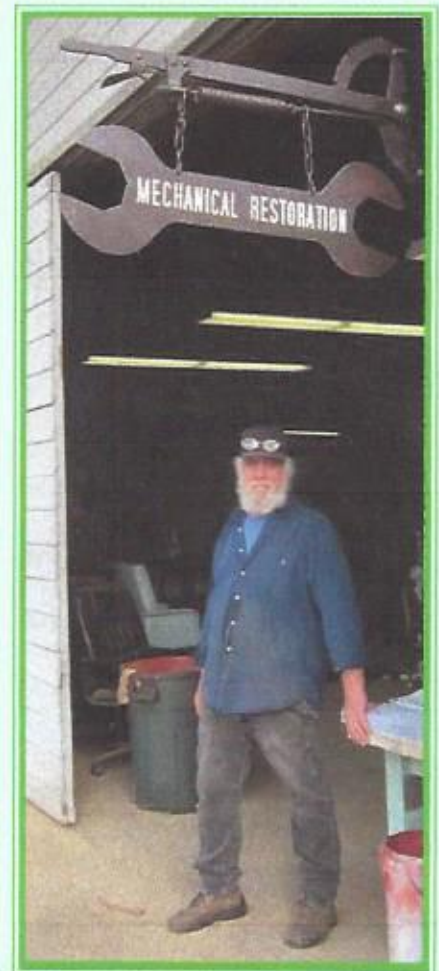
P.S.

Our first day back to the Workshop on Monday January 8, 2017, Steve Foster, who has given us many hours and wonderful support over the years, brought in a custom sign for our Workshop. It is amazing. He used surplus and scrapped parts from previous projects welded together into a piece of ART, his wife Gayle did the lettering. We need more Volunteers like Steve and his wife. Thank you so very much! When we are working our sign will be displayed.



Cheers,

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







## New Book Coming Soon!



Want to help with our new book on the Tapo District? We need a name for the book that would entice our current folks to learn what was on their land before they bought their houses. See if you can Identify these photos from the 1960s on. Think you know? Go on our facebook page: [www.facebook.com/StrathearnPark](http://www.facebook.com/StrathearnPark) and look for the album 'Tapo District' and write your comments... and your suggestions for a name for the book!

*Pat Havens*







**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](mailto:carylretired2@sbcglobal.net)

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

**Have YOU renewed 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 |

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**Directors at Large**

Steve Hansen	Karla Hubbell
Joe Lansden	Dewey Runkle
Alan Shack	

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](mailto:Simimuseum@sbcglobal.net)

**Simi Valley Historical Society & Museum**

P.O. Box 940461

Simi Valley, CA 93094-0461

[www.Simihistory.com](http://www.Simihistory.com)

[www.facebook.com/Strathearnpark](https://www.facebook.com/Strathearnpark)

**Strathearn Historical Park & Museum**

Historian	Pat Havens
Park Coordinator	Carolyn Valdez
Admin. Asst.	Louise Kaul

**"It is an act of patriotism to understand where we've been."** ~ Barack Obama at the Dedication of the  
 National Museum of African  
 American History and Culture