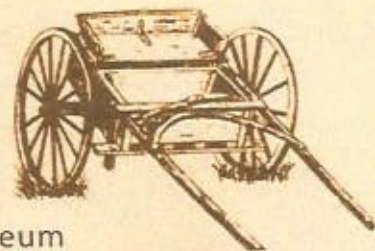


Third Issue 2015 ~ July - September
Next Issue October 2015

THE MAIL CART

Newsletter of the Simi Valley Historical Society and Museum



President's Message

I hope everyone is having a wonderful summer so far, roasting in the heat and conserving water. Water...our most basic resource... and it is running low. It is getting more and more difficult to get a hold of, and to maintain an adequate supply. Our leaders are scrambling to come up with solutions to resolve the problem. They have asked us for our help with the conservation effort. Only if we all work together, will we find a solution.



↑
Dedicated volunteers
'Posey and Rosey'
organize field trips
for third graders!

The Simi Valley Historical Society is in a very similar situation. We are running out of water. We have water; really really good water, we just need more. Our "water" is our volunteers. The most basic thing that keeps our organization alive is running low. We have a wonderful group of dedicated volunteers that consistently go above and beyond, we just need more. We need ideas on how to find more volunteers and we need people to help manage whatever programs we come up with. We need board members, docents, physical labor, help with displays, mechanical restoration, and so much more.

We want to continue to grow our organization, we want to be more active and influential in the community, get living history into the schools, move a house, build a barn, and continue to have awesome events. We cannot do all of this with our current "water supply."

As you talk to your neighbors, your friends, and your family about our water shortage, bring up the SVHS&M "water shortage" and see if we can find some new people and some new ideas to help us fill our reservoirs and ensure a sustainable future for our organization.

Joe Wade - President, Simi Valley Historical Society

Wonderful
volunteers John
Clarke and Wayne
Ferber preparing to
give a presentation
about military
history in Simi!



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 September 8th, 10th, 15th and 17th 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. 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



A fabulous time had by all at the Tiara Garden Party!

On May 31st Strathearn Park was filled with ladies having all the fun of a childhood dress up party as we hosted our 2nd Annual Tiara Garden Party for grown-ups.

Tiaras of all sorts were the focus of a fun game where every guest could participate in choosing the 2015 Princess. The 2014 Princess, Mary Patch, was on hand to crown the new winner, Marilyn Van Dyke, who won with her handcrafted tiara that even sported a solar butterfly spinning above her head!

An amazing array of scrumptious appetizers, snacks and desserts was catered by Lost Canyons Restaurant and complimented by cocktails ranging from wine to martini choices. A fully equipped photo booth seemed to call out to all the party goers!

This event is bringing new people to our park, so docents were in the buildings to add information as the guests strolled from place to place. Our well stocked gift shop offered fun shopping along the way and everyone enjoyed some special attractions: A vintage wedding dress in the church, vintage purses, and a lingerie display in the Strathearn House. If you attended, you know why a trip to the ladies restroom was another highlight of the day.

Raffle and auction items helped with both fundraising as well as FUNraising. Every guest received parting gifts which included products from ZaZa Beauty Center, plus a delicious tiara cookie to enjoy later.

A big thank you to Debbie Thomas and all the volunteers for helping raise money for our Historical Society.

Mark Your Calendars:

November 13 - Annual Dinner Meeting

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



Mark your calendar now and put together a group for the 3rd Annual Tiara Garden Party on May 22, 2016!



A Great Loss for Our Community

Last month we lost a wonderful friend. With the loss of Bill Appleton, we lose a significant link to our past.

Bill's great-grandfather, J. S. Appleton came to Simi Valley in 1887 from Newburyport, Massachusetts. Appleton Road in Simi is named for the wagon road that ran south from Royal Avenue to the J.S. and Laura Appleton Ranch, which was a 160 acre ranch they purchased in the late 1800s. J. S. Appleton is considered a pioneer, and was an amateur photographer who lived and farmed in Simi Valley for most of his life.



After J. S. Appleton's death, some 200 glass plate negatives of photographs he took in Simi during the early 1900s were found. Bill Appleton acquired these glass plate negatives, and worked to clean, preserve, research, print, and catalogue the images which are an invaluable glimpse into what it was like living in Simi Valley when it was a farming community.

Many of these photographs were used to illustrate Simi Valley - Journey Through Time, on which he also collaborated.

He was always working in some way to preserve the History of Simi, following in the footsteps of his mother, Hildie Appleton, who was a founding member of the Historical Society.

Bill will be missed for the wonderful person he was, and the many contributions he has made.



Simi High Reunion for attendees of the 'OLD' Simi High!

Don Cameron and committee are planning a reunion for everyone who attended the old Simi Valley High School in the Community Center. It will be Oct., 3, 2015 at the Grand

Vista Hotel from 5 p.m. to midnight.

They are trying to locate everyone who attended the school from 1927-1966 so no one will be left out. Contact Don at campinetree@aol.com or cell phone (805) 218-2528 if you can help!



PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Starting with this issue, 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. It will be accompanied with a certificate presentation at a board meeting and special recognition at our Annual Dinner. 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 **Bruce Matzen**. Bruce is a stellar volunteer and docent at Strathearn Park. Bruce "knocked it out of the park" as the Chair for the Civil War Days Event. The event was amazing, and the guests had a spectacular time. It was well planned and well attended. People often mention how much they enjoyed it. The day before that event, Bruce visited Arroyo Elementary school with Edward Headington (as Ulysses S. Grant) for a brief assembly promoting the event. The kids loved it (and most of them showed up for the event). On June 1st, Bruce, Edward Headington and Robert Broski went to Valley View Middle School and did a whole Civil War Day for the 8th grade students! It was a big success and the kids learned so much while having a great time. Bruce's leadership, enthusiasm, passion, tenacity, his proven track record, and his willingness to take on outreach in the form of living history are just a few of Bruce's strengths. We are lucky to have Bruce on our team. *Thank you Bruce and keep up the amazing work!*



Joe Wade - President, Simi Valley Historical Society

Mechanical Restoration

Here we are in the summer months with uncomfortable weather and sunshine everywhere. These conditions require some adjustments with our work habits and safety concerns while working in the Strathearn workshop. These include hydration, rest periods, slower pace, and wearing hats when outside. Common sense goes a long way during the warm summer months.



Projects completed in 2015 include our 1929 John Deere Model D Farm Tractor, our 1942 Farmall Farm Tractor.



Next in line is our 1934 Cat 22 Crawler Tractor that has been moved into our workshop and is up on blocks. This project is expected to take 24 months, if all goes well.



Our 1915 Ford Model T Touring Car needed some repairs to the fuel system and other minor corrections. Some work remains to complete these tasks. We are hoping to use the 1915 in this year's Simi Valley Days Parade.

We are planning to expand our workshop capabilities with upcoming donations of a Logan Metal lathe, and a small milling machine. This equipment will enable us to repair, replace, modify, and fabricate any special needed items for our refurbishment projects. We have a 220V AC/DC Welder, and could use a MIG Welder, and gas welding set up, maybe some one will donate these to our shop.

Future projects include a Model A Ford Engine/Air compressor combo, 1946 Chevy PU, 1926 Ford Model T, International Harvester T6 Crawler Tractor.

These projects need volunteers, so please join us on Monday mornings 8:30 AM to 12:00 Noon, and have some fun working on vintage equipment that is part of Strathearn Historical Park, and our Museum Collection of artifacts. You do not need to be a mechanic, just have a desire to help out and volunteer.

Have a safe and rewarding summer,

Richard A. Johnson
Simi Valley Historical Society
Mechanical Restorations Director

Moments in History at Strathearn Historical Park

On June 20th we had a great time at "Moments in History!" The temperature was high, but so was our attendance! With nearly 400 people visiting Strathearn Park for the day, kids and adults alike got to experience some fun and interactive activities such as butter making on the Strathearn House porch, pie making in the Adobe, pottery painting in front of the old St Rose of Lima Church, and clothes pin dolls were made in the Gazebo.



Charityville Jail added a fun addition to our day with their famous jail, two shoot out performances, a farrier, and for those who wanted to try their luck, a faro table.



We had a face painter on the porch of the Colony house, handcraft vendors in our Garden area, music by "Still in Tune," and Cowboy Poetry by Peter Conway in the Barn, Wendy Dager's Vintage Purse Gallery in the Strathearn House parlor, and the Simi Settlers Radio Club near our workshop. Lunch was available to purchase from Metro-Dogs and sweet treats from Tutu's Shave Ice and Funnel Cakes. Another favorite of the day was our good friend Ralph Kelley who brought his horse to demonstrate some horse shoeing, goats to feed, and some rope for lessons in lassoing. The Topa Topa Flywheelers brought their antique tractors, and the Model A and Model T clubs came in their historic vehicles. Every inch of the park was full of activity and fun!

The Simi Valley Historical Society wants to thank everyone who volunteered their time at our event. Without you, we couldn't make it happen!

If you missed "Moments in History" this year, join us next year! Bring a friend and experience Strathearn Park together!

~ Angela Willson-Vice President Simi Valley Historical Society





HISTORY POLICE

In this exciting issue of **HISTORY POLICE** we will look at the four distinct communities that fused together to form what is now **SIMI VALLEY**.

When the valley was inhabited by the Chumash people there were three villages; *Ta'apu*, *Shimi* or *Shimiji*, and *Quimisac*.

When the Spanish land grant era began in the late 1700s, Simi was a part of the land grant given to Santiago Pico in 1795 known as "San José de Nuestra Señora de Altagracia y Simi."

The pioneers arrived in the late 1870s...and ever since, this has been 'The Valley of Simi.' BUT not all the communities in the valley were known as 'Simi.' There WAS the township of Simi (known as 'Simiopolis' for an unfortunate six month period in 1888, but then the name reverted to Simi Township). In the valley there were also the communities of Santa Susana, Community Center and the Susana Knolls (known first as Mortimer Park) at different points in time.



SIMI TOWNSHIP In the late 1800s the incorporation of Simi Land and Water Company came about. El Rancho Simi was divided into ranches and farms by that corporation, and advertised for sale to midwestern and New England states. An investor group, the California Mutual Benefit Colony of Chicago, purchased land and laid out a townsite (located between First and Fifth Streets and from Los Angeles south to Ventura Ave), named it 'Simiopolis' and shipped twelve pre-cut, partially assembled houses from a lumberyard in Chicago via rail to Saticoy, then brought by wagon to Simi. These are known as 'colony houses.' This was the first 'neighborhood' in Simi. Stores sprung up on Los Angeles Ave, and the first Simi School was built in 1890 on Third and California Streets.

SANTA SUSANA In 1903 the Santa Susana Train Depot was built, and the railroad was complete through Simi Valley, except for the tunnel, which was completed in 1904. A small business community grew up near the Santa Susana Train Depot, which was located on the north side of Los Angeles Ave, just east of Tapo Street. Over time residential developments followed and the town of Santa Susana was born. The Depot was moved in 1975 by Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District to its current location off of Kuehner.



COMMUNITY CENTER In 1922 L.F. Roussey laid out the small development which became known as Community Center. The driving force behind this development was the need for a High School in Simi, as well as a place to bring the elementary schools to one central location. The FIRST graduating class from the very first Simi High School was 1924, Simi Elementary was completed in 1926, The Methodist Church (which is now the Cultural Arts Center) was built in 1924. Numerous houses were built in Community Center in the 1920s and 1930s. The Simi Valley Women's Club was located there as well. It truly was a 'community center.'

MORTIMER PARK (THE SUSANA KNOLLS) The area that is now the Knolls was a nearly 1,800 acre parcel of land that was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Lewis T. Mortimer in the early 1920s. They planned on selling the lots for cabins, or vacation homes. The lots, however, were very small (30 x 50 feet), and the Mortimers did not take the mountainous nature of the land into account, so quite often the lots were not buildable. Often-times several lots were needed to build structures. In 1944 the Garden Club, an active community organization in the area petitioned the county supervisors to change the name of Mortimer Park to the Susana Knolls.



The first attempt to incorporate the towns of Simi, the area known as Community Center (93065) and Santa Susana (93063) in 1966 was unsuccessful. The second attempt in 1969 was successful, with residents voting 6,454 to 3,685 in favor of incorporation. 59% of eligible voters turned out for this vote. Susana Knolls is an unincorporated area of the Valley. Voters also voted whether to call this newly incorporated city 'Santa Susana' or 'Simi Valley.' The name Simi Valley garnered 2,000 more votes than Santa Susana.... **AND HERE WE ARE.**

So much more can be said about EACH of these areas...this is just scratching the proverbial surface! Learn more about **SIMI VALLEY!** Simi Valley - A Journey Through Time has a plethora of information! **PICK UP YOUR COPY TODAY!**



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 current membership year is January 1 through December 31, 2015.

The Mail Cart is electronically being sent 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. And...please update your email if it has changed!

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 _____

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

2015 Board of Directors

Officers

President	Joe Wade
Past President	Georgia Trumble
Vice President	Angela Willson
Treasurer	Don Novell

Board Members

Caryl Barefoot	Carlotta Barnes
Pat Havens	Karla Hubbell
Ruth Jacob	Bobby James
Richard Johnson	Sylvia Moya
Karen Olson	Judy Pepiot
Alan Shack	Larry Silverman
Vicki Spilka	
Shawn Willson	

Directors at Large

Steve Hansen
 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

"Those who do not remember the past are
 condemned to repeat it."

~ George Santayana