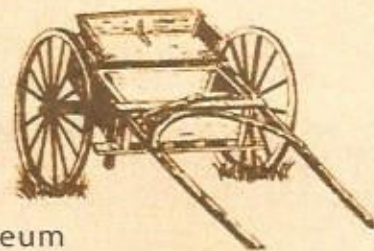


Fourth Issue 2015 ~ Oct. - Dec.
Next Issue January 2016

THE MAIL CART



Newsletter of the Simi Valley Historical Society and Museum

President's Message

Hello again. Hope everyone is ready for an exceptionally wet winter. We certainly need it. There are a few days we certainly don't need it and one of them is November 1st. For the first time ever at our park, and in Simi Valley at all, we are hosting a Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) festival. It's going to be a lot of fun, and should bring a bunch of new people to the park. Dia de Los Muertos is an ancient Mexican holiday where deceased loved ones are remembered and celebrated.

It is traditionally a three day

celebration running from October 31st to November 2nd. Families build altars in their homes commemorating lost loved ones, and celebrate their lives. Our festival will feature live music, dancing, authentic food, altars and many other activities typically associated with the holiday. We will also have traditional holiday crafts for all kids (young and old) to give a try. You've never seen Strathearn Park like this, so we hope everyone will join the celebration and come to the festival. It will run from 4-8pm on November 1st and there are so many things planned, we just hope everyone can squeeze

everything in. If you would like to build an altar, everyone is invited to participate, email simimuseum@sbcglobal.net for details. For information about how to build an altar, check out this web-site: www.art-is-fun.com/dia-de-los-muertos-altar

Hope to see you there!

Joe Wade - President,
Simi Valley Historical Society



DIA de los MUERTOS "Day of the Dead" Celebration

Fun for
All Ages!

SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 1ST, 2015
4PM-8PM

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



Strathearn Historical Park
137 STRATHEARN PLACE - SIMI VALLEY



Music by Mariachi Camarillo
Ballet Folklorico de Mexico Dancers
Live Performances
Storytelling
Taco & Churro vendors
Dia de Los Muertos craft vendors
Face Painting

Crafts for kids: skull masks, tissue flowers, papel picado



Altars created by local families will be on display.
There will also be altars for visitors to contribute to. Bring pictures or mementos.
Come in costume or get your face painted at the festival.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 805-526-6453

Bring this coupon for

\$1 off

Each Ticket
(one ticket per transaction)

WITH THIS COUPON...
\$6 ADULT
\$4 Kids (5-12)

Día de los Muertos

"Day of the Dead" Celebration
Sunday, November 1st, 2015
from 4pm-8pm

137 Strathearn Place, Simi Valley



← Don't miss our
Dia de los Muertos
celebration on
November 1st!

For more
information call
805 526-6453
or visit

Simihistory.com or
facebook.com/StrathearnPark

You are Cordially Invited to Our 51st Annual Dinner Meeting!

Friday, November 13th - 6:00 P.M.
at Rancho Santa Susana Community Center
5005 Los Angeles Avenue, Simi Valley, CA 93063

We will be celebrating the 220th Anniversary of 'San José de Nuestra Señora de Altagracia y Simi' with a Spanish flair!

Please bring serving utensils and a dish that generously serves 10 people. Please label your utensils and dishes, so you can be happily reunited if you get separated! The Historical Society will provide drinks and tableware. Please bring a dish as determined by your last name according to the following breakdown:

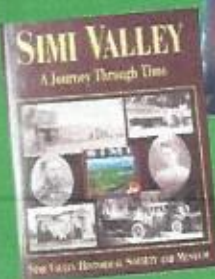
A-J: Main Dish
K-S: Salad
T-Z: Dessert

- ~ 2015 Highlights and Updates
- ~ Election of Officers and Board of Directors
- ~ Docent Awards

If you pay your 2016 dues the night of the dinner you will be eligible for door prizes! This is always a great evening of great food and wonderful people. We hope to see you there!

This year the entertainment will be provided by Sue McElvogue presenting Museum Theater!

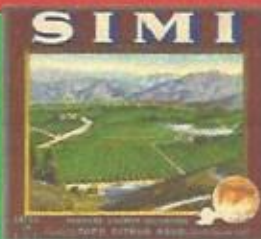
Holiday Gift Ideas!



Books!



Ornaments!



Reproduction
Citrus
Labels
\$5 plus Tax

New Junior Docent Program for Strathearn Historical Park & Museum

Announcing a New Junior Docent Program for the
Strathearn Historical Park & Museum!

We are pleased to announce that a new program is underway to reach out and encourage our young people in the community to get more involved with the park by becoming junior docents.

Co-heading the committee are Bruce Matzen (Historical Society Volunteer and Docent) and Bobby James (Historical Society Board Member). Joining these two gentlemen are Georgia Trumble, Sandi Patterson, Linda Lewis, and Nancy Kidd. At least two more willing volunteers are being sought to help reach out to the community.

Contacting the local high schools and Moorpark College, as well as the library, boy scouts and local career centers are just a few of the tasks that will be undertaken.

If you know of anyone who would be a good contact to reach out to, or if you would like to join in the effort, please feel free to contact:

Bobby James
Bobby.easyloan@gmail.com
818.408.9607

Mark Your Calendars:

November 1 - Dia de los Muertos Celebration

November 13 - Annual Dinner Meeting

February 20 & 21, 2016- Civil War Encampment

May 22, 2016 - 3rd Annual Tiara Garden Party



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. 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@sbeglobal.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 **Barry Stone**. Barry works with Board Member, Richard Johnson, on our mechanical restoration efforts. Barry has been a friend and supporter of the Simi Valley Historical Society for many years. He is fully engaged with our mechanical restoration projects and is a highly supportive member of Richard's Team. He has dedicated hundreds of volunteer hours at the park working on projects, bringing with him a wealth of knowledge and experience. When Richard is away, Barry takes the lead and drives the projects and efforts of the group. Thank you Barry, for your tireless commitment to the Historical Society and the important and challenging projects that you have helped ensure were successful. We couldn't do it without you!

Joe Wade
President, Simi Valley Historical Society





HISTORY POLICE



The Simi Adobe in the 1940s

In this exciting installment of **HISTORY POLICE** we will revisit the Spanish land grant era in Simi Valley. This is a timely topic as we celebrate the 220th anniversary of when Santiago de la Cruz Pico received permission to occupy San José de Nuestra Señora de Altagracia y Simi, as it was known. Here are just a few facts about El Rancho Simi:

- The spelling of Simi in the mission records from the time of the land grants places the emphasis on the second syllable of Simi, indicating that the proper way to pronounce Simi sounds more like "suh-MEE" rather than "SEE-me."

- In 1795 the Simi area was explored as a possible mission site between Ventura and San Gabriel. The logical place to build a mission between San Gabriel and Ventura (if you look at a map) would have been Simi Valley. However, a scouting expedition in 1795 didn't like the grass or the water supply here, so they built the mission in San Fernando instead.

- In 1795, Santiago de la Cruz Pico, a soldier in the Spanish expedition of De Anza in 1775, received permission to occupy El Rancho Simi by Spanish Governor Diego de Borica. He founded 'Simi Valley' by building a house here in about 1795-1800. He could not own it because it belonged to the king of Spain. This was the first land grant in Ventura/Santa Barbara County, which was all one county at that time. This land grant, approximately 113,000 acres in size, was one of the largest ever made. Earlier sources indicated that the land grant was initially given to three of Santiago Pico's sons, or even to José de la Guerra, but it was indeed first given to Santiago Pico, who is the grandfather of Pio Pico, last Mexican Governor before California's independence from Mexico.

- The first known Spanish structure built on El Rancho Simi was likely 'Casa Vieja,' c1795, it was located near the confluence of Tapo Creek with Arroyo Simi, this is near Royal and Erringer now. Next, the Simi Adobe (at Strathearn Park, c1810) was built, followed by the Tapo Adobe built between 1820-1830. The portion of the Simi Adobe still attached to the Strathearn house is the only Spanish structure from that era still in existence, and the oldest structure in Simi Valley.



The ruins of Tapo Adobe in the 1960s

- In 1821 El Rancho Simi was re-granted to Patricio, Francisco Javier and Miguel Pico, sons of Santiago Pico, who had died in 1815. In 1831 or 1832 the Pico family sold El Rancho Simi to José de la Guerra. José de la Guerra likely never lived in Simi personally. It was probably his sons who lived and planted here. It has been speculated that the de la Guerras didn't like the location of the Pico adobe, so they built another adobe in Tapo Canyon. It may also be the case the Tapo Adobe was built before the de la Guerras acquired the property. There are vague references which seem to indicate a succession of residences there.

- Grape vines were planted at the Tapo Adobe by the de la Guerras, and by the 1850s the wine and brandy, which was made on the rancho, were famous throughout Southern California.

- California was hard to get to from Mexico, due to adverse winds at sea and extensive deserts blocking the land routes. For this reason, it was very sparsely populated--according to one historian, not more than 7,000 non-natives lived here as late as 1846!

- So the towns were small and the ranchos few and far between. People had to help each other out--if your horse was worn out while crossing a huge rancho, it was considered polite to take whatever horse you could find, leaving your own horse in return!

- The same went for food--if you were hungry and saw a cow you were welcome to slaughter it--just please leave the cowhide staked out to dry so the ranchero could sell it later!

- Everyone ate what they could raise; in the absence of any factories, the only thing the rancheros had to trade was cowhides, which were in great demand in the factories of the East Coast. Because of this, money was rarely used in California...cowhides, which came to be known as 'California Banknotes,' replaced currency.

- Luxuries--clothing, household goods, even hardware--were only available from Yankee trading ships. This meant that nearly everyone lived close to the ocean, so they could trade.

- Due to the sparse population, there were few chances for the señoritas to find husbands--except on those romantic,

HISTORY POLICE CONTINUED.....THERE'S MORE!

luxury-goods-laden Yankee trading ships! So nearly every Spanish or Mexican family had a branch that had intermarried with someone from the ships, often with an English name.

- The sparse population had another effect: in early days the settlers had surprisingly little trouble with the Native American tribes, which were in general peaceful folk--there was plenty of land for everyone to share, so why fight over it?
- One exception were the tribes around San Diego, who were unhappy with the settlers, and showed it by burning their mission--twice! It is also believed that this same tribe came up and burned one room of the Pico adobe in Simi Valley, in 1820.
- In 1864 and 1865 the de la Guerras lost some of El Rancho Simi land due to non-payment of mortgage debt to American investors. In the mid 1880s, the de la Guerras finally lost the last of their holdings, the Tapo property, effectively ending the land grant era in El Rancho Simi.

Thank you to Bruce Matzen, land grant era enthusiast, for assisting with this very special episode of **HISTORY POLICE**.

Volunteer Update

We would like to welcome the newest additions to our volunteer docent family who have joined us in 2015! A big welcome to:

Marion Holt, Kalin Jones, Linda Lewis,
Brenda Lyum, Steve McHargue, Jeff Peterson,
Karen Schemm, and Gerald Smith!

Additionally, we welcome Gary Bippert and Pam Troumbly, who are helping in the Museum with special projects! We thank everyone who has joined in 2015 for their interest and readiness to help teach all about Simi Valley History and helping to preserve our heritage!

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?

Our next docent training classes will be in January 2016. 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 her at hubbell42@sbcglobal.net

Karla Hubbell

Mechanical Restoration



Being that this is my last report for 2015, a quick recap of our accomplishments is in order. First of all I want to thank all of our Volunteers who help at Strathearn Park in many different capacities, especially my TEAM of special people without whom we could not have completed our planned refurbishment projects. This year we completed the John Deere D Tractor (7 year effort) and Farmall B Tractor (6 Months). Caterpillar 22 Crawler Tractor is in refurbishment (est. 2 years) for completion. Repairs on the 1915 Model T Touring Car are finished except for a replacement battery.



Exciting News:



I have finally located a Metal Lathe that is being donated to our workshop. This will allow us to machine needed parts for our refurbishment efforts. A Milling

Machine has been located as a donation for later this year, and when combined with the Metal Lathe we then can handle most of our machining efforts.

If someone would donate a Gas Welding set-up it would be a terrific addition to our Workshop, as we only have an AC-DC Stick Welder. Quite often we need to heat up various pieces and a Gas Welding set-up would solve these challenges. Remember a Donation to Simi Valley Historical Society is Tax Deductible as we are a Non-Profit organization.

In closing I want to wish everyone a great Fall and Holiday Season. We meet every Monday morning at 8:30 AM at the Strathearn Park Workshop. Please stop by for a visit. You do not need to be a master mechanic just have a desire to volunteer and help out working on Museum refurbishment items.

Cheers,

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. If you want to avoid the busy time around the Holidays, send in your dues for 2016 now!

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. 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 _____

Signature _____

**Renew your membership
before January 2016!**

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

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President Joe Wade
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Directors at Large

Steve Hansen
 Joe Lansden
 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

Simi Valley Historical Society & Museum

P.O. Box 940461

Simi Valley, CA 93094-0461

www.simihistory.com

www.facebook.com/Strathearnpark

Strathearn Historical Park & Museum

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

**"History is not a burden on the memory but
an illumination of the soul."**

~Lord Acton