



# The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 44, Issue 2

February - April 2018

## Calendar

### Monday, February 26

Board of Directors Meeting  
6:30 PM Saugus Station

### Saturday, March 10

St Francis Dam site lecture and bus tour; Lecture 11:00 AM,  
Tour 12:00 PM Saugus Station  
See Page 11

### Sunday, March 25

All-day tour of the St Francis Dam floodplain. 9:00 AM Saugus Station  
See page 10.

### Monday, March 26

Board of Directors Meeting  
6:30 PM Saugus Station

### Monday, April 2

Deadline for the May-June *Dispatch*

### Thursday-Sunday, April 19-22

Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival

### Sunday, April 22

Tour of SCV Historic Sites  
See page 8

### Monday, April 23

Board of Directors Meeting  
6:30 PM Saugus Station

Check [www.scvhistory.org](http://www.scvhistory.org) for other upcoming events.



Articles and inquiries regarding *The Dispatch* may be made to 661 254-1275

To arrange for filming at Heritage Junction, contact Cathy Martin at 661 645-0107

## President's Message

by Alan Pollack



Everyone's life has its ups and downs. McCoy Pyle's life was no exception. Back in 1884, Pyle was living with his mother Mandy and brother Everett on the Mud Springs

Ranch near Fillmore. On May 2<sup>nd</sup> of that year, McCoy made the fateful decision to go deer hunting. He ended up on a ledge overlooking what is now the Chiquita Canyon Landfill near Val Verde in the Santa Clara River Valley. As he made his way along the ridge, Pyle noticed a mysterious cave about 50 feet below him. He had to check it out. After climbing down the face of the cliff, Pyle peered into the cave and made one of the greatest discoveries of Native American artifacts in US history. The

artifacts were later determined to belong to the Tataviam, a local tribe of the Santa Clarita Valley. The Tataviam were a Shoshone tribe who had migrated to the Valley from somewhere on the Great Plains around the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD. They had been in the Valley to greet the first Spanish explorers of the Portola Expedition of 1769, only in subsequent years to be taken into bondage at the San Fernando Mission. For some unknown reason, the tribe had stashed a huge cache of its sacred artifacts in this cave now being explored by McCoy Pyle. Some speculate that they may have been hiding the artifacts from the padres of the Mission. Historian Jerry Reynolds, in a *Newhall Signal* article on December 14, 1984, described what Pyle stumbled upon in what was to become known as Bowers Cave: "He gasped in wonder as he beheld woven baskets as

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## President's Message

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large as washtubs, stone ax heads, obsidian knife blades, crystals, and four ceremonial scepters. Inside the baskets were headdresses and capes made of woven condor and flicker feathers, strings of beads, and pottery imported from faraway Mesa Verde."

### **Bowers' Cave**

After making his discovery, McCoy returned to the Mud Springs Ranch, gathered up his brother Everett and some mules, and returned to the cave to pick up all the artifacts and bring them back to the Ranch. The brothers' main interest was in the potential value of McCoy's fortuitous find. They were soon to find out when contacted by the Methodist Minister Rev. Stephen Bowers, who at the time was the editor of the Ventura Free Press. Among other endeavors, Bowers happened to also be a renowned geologist, archeologist, and collector of artifacts, antiquities, fossils, and geologic specimens. After hearing of the Pyle brothers' discovery, he was determined to see these artifacts for himself and obtain them from the Pyles. He ended up offering them \$1500 for the whole collection. Everett Pyle later stated: "That seemed like all of the money in the world. It was like finding a gold mine." Bowers visited the cave himself, did some further excavations, and found even more artifacts. Unfortunately for Santa Clarita historians, Bowers later decided to sell the Tataviam treasures to museums around the world. The vast majority of the collection ended up at the Peabody Museum of American Ethnology at Harvard University, where it resides to this day.

### **The Murder of McCoy Pyle**

This discovery was truly the highlight of McCoy Pyle's young life. But as mentioned previously, everyone's life has its ups and downs. In the ensuing years, McCoy became a deputy constable in Ventura County. Described as one of the bravest and most popular officers in the County, Pyle was shot in the head and killed while in the line of duty at Castaic Switch at 4:00 am on the morning of April 24, 1897. Initial reports had Pyle killed by one of two men who had robbed a store in Fillmore the night before, and who were in the custody of Pyle and his brother-in-law, Deputy Constable Dallison S. Lineburger. It was later determined that the real murderer was Deputy Constable Edwin McCamish, who had been residing at the time in a room at the Pyle ranch. McCamish initially claimed that the two robbers had entered his room in Fillmore, beaten

him severely, chloroformed him, and robbed him of money and valuables. He said that he had been unconscious for several hours, and when he woke up, he notified Pyle and Lineburger who, along with McCamish, began a pursuit of the robbers. On what was described as a dark night, the lawmen purportedly caught up with and apprehended the suspects at Castaic Switch. While Pyle covered them with a pistol, Lineburger handcuffed one of the prisoners, and was about to search the second one, when a shot rang out and Pyle fell dead with a bullet wound to the head. In the darkness, Lineburger was said to assume that the prisoner whose hands were still free had committed the murder. In the ensuing commotion, the prisoners escaped, and several posses were sent out to pursue them. Pyle died at the age of 29, leaving behind a widow and three young children. Unbeknownst to Lineburger, the real culprit McCamish had taken advantage of the darkness to ambush Pyle and shoot him while Lineburger was busy with the prisoners. The motive appeared to be McCamish's infatuation with Pyle's wife.

### **The Preliminary Hearing**

After McCamish became the prime suspect in Pyle's murder, a preliminary hearing was held on May 12, 1897 in a blacksmith shop in Newhall, with Justice of the Peace Clayton presiding over the Court. McCamish was placed under heavy guard due to numerous threats of lynching and Everett Pyle's known thirst for revenge. The story of Pyle's murder had changed somewhat from the preliminary reports noted above. Prosecution witnesses now stated that McCamish had claimed that a pair of tramps had accosted him in his room at the Pyle house, robbing him of clothing and other articles. Later, he and McCoy Pyle had gone to Castaic Switch in search of the two tramps. The two officers made a bed of sacks taken from the train station and went to sleep. They were awakened at 4:00 am by two men walking on the railroad tracks. Pyle ordered the men to throw up their hands, and gave McCamish a revolver to cover them while he placed them in handcuffs. McCamish claimed that as Pyle handcuffed one of the men, he was shot by the other and both fled. After Pyle fell, the shooter purportedly shot him again while he lay on the ground. McCamish further claimed to have fired at the two fleeing men, hitting one of them. Everett Pyle challenged McCamish's testimony, stating that the only footprints found at the site were a day old and belonged to two honest laborers who camped nearby. Other witnesses testified that

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## President's Message

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they had found Pyle dead with his eyes closed, suggesting he had been shot dead while asleep. Sheriff Charlebois of the Ventura County Jail, where McCamish was being held, testified that McCamish had confided in another prisoner, admitting that he had killed Pyle while he was asleep.

### The Trial of Edwin McCamish

McCamish finally went on trial for the murder of McCoy Pyle in September, 1897. Evidence was presented by the prosecution that only two shots had been fired that night, contradicting McCamish's claim that the robbers fired three shots and he four. One witness described meeting up with McCamish a day or two before the murder, with McCamish stating that Pyle was in poor health and didn't think he had much longer to live. He remarked about Pyle's wife's good looks and wondered how she would do if Pyle were to die. He further stated that Mrs. Pyle had treated him very well during an illness he had, and that he liked her very much. Several different witnesses testified to the fact that McCamish told several conflicting stories of how Pyle was shot. There was testimony that Pyle's body was found lying on undisturbed gunnysacks, suggesting he had been asleep when shot. No blood was found anywhere except directly under Pyle's head and shoulders. The prosecution further attempted to prove that McCamish's relationship with Pyle's wife was a motive for the killing.

After the prosecution rested its case, the defense case began on September 13, 1897. A slew of character witnesses were brought in to defend the reputations of McCamish and Mrs. Pyle. McCamish was called to the witness stand to testify on his own behalf. The defense rested its case the next day. The prosecution had to rely on circumstantial evidence in presenting its closing arguments to the jury. According to the Los Angeles Times: "Assistant District Attorney Williams resumed his address to the jury and with painstaking care continued...going through the entire testimony of the case, and link by link forging a chain of circumstances which seemed to indicate the unmistakable guilt of the accused."

### The Verdict

The case of Edwin McCamish went to the jury on September 20, 1897. In their deliberations, they discounted the motive of an illicit relationship between McCamish and Mrs. Pyle as manufactured. What was important to their final verdict was the idea that "they could not believe that a clever officer like McCoy Pyle, armed with two pistols, would have let any robber get the drop on him." In addition,

two or three of the jurors were army veterans, and they stated that in all their experience on a battlefield, they had never seen a soldier lying dead on the ground with their eyes closed after meeting death by the bullet. Likewise, they had never seen a man fall backward after being shot, as had been claimed by McCamish's defense team. Ironically, the expert opinions of the old soldiers on the jury, opinions that had not been introduced by either the prosecution or defense, clinched the case. Edwin McCamish was found guilty of murder in the first degree. On September 28, Judge Smith passed sentence on McCamish: "It is the judgment of the Court that in order to carry into effect the verdict returned that you be confined in the state's prison at Folsom during your natural life."

McCoy and Everett Pyle are buried in the Bardsdale Cemetery, across the river from Fillmore.

Alan Pollack

## John Boston Article

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Powell worked hard nearly every day of his life. He had just celebrated his 86<sup>th</sup> birthday and died a few days later at his home in Newhall, on December 29th, 1925.

On his deathbed, he looked over his rich life, smiled and recalled that the best thing he had ever accomplished was freeing those 705 slaves in Africa some 50 years earlier.

*(With more than 10,000 essays and opinion pieces, SCV author John Boston is America's most prolific humor writer. Weekly, he pens The Time Ranger & SCV History for the SCVBeacon.com. Every two weeks, he writes the SCV History for your SCV Gazette. Don't forget to check out his national humor, entertainment & swashbuckling commentary website, [THEjohnboston.com](http://THEjohnboston.com). You'll be smiling for a week...)* © 2017 by John Boston

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## St Francis Dam's Camulos Connection

by Maria Christopher

**O**n March 13, 1928, Camulos Ranch owners, August Rubel, 28, and his wife Mary, 23, were awakened by a ranch foreman. "There's a lot of water in the river," he reported. Quite an understatement, as they had just slept through what, to this day, is acknowledged as the event having the second largest loss of life in California history, the St. Francis Dam Disaster.

Although there was extensive damage to the agricultural operations, miraculously, there was no loss of life or injury at Camulos. This was not the case a few miles east at the Edison work camp, the "Blue Cut" at the Santa Clara River, where many perished. The Rubels provided assistance to the survivors and, in the weeks that followed, there were many accounts of the lanky, fair-skinned August Rubel assisting in the recovery operations. In the "fake news" equivalent of the day, rumors spread that the historic "Home of Ramona" had been destroyed.

In a front page article in the April 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Los Angeles Evening News, Mr. Rubel reassured readers that the historic buildings had been spared. He also took the opportunity to dispel earlier rumors that "the Rubels, New York millionaire-vandals, were razing the old ranch house", and shared his vision to preserve the historic property that they had purchased only about four years earlier from the descendants of the original land grant owners, the del Valles.

In a strange twist of fate, the del Valles, ALSO shared a connection to the St. Francis Dam Disaster - Reginaldo del Valle. First a California Senator and a lawyer, Reginaldo del Valle, was later on Los Angeles' Public Services Commission for 21 years. Reginaldo, the grandson of the recipient of the 1839 Mexican land grant of 48,000 acre Rancho San Francisco (of which Camulos was the westernmost part), had been raised on the rancho. In his later career, he directed his skills to the development of water resources for the growing population of the Los Angeles basin. A friend and associate of William Mulholland, he played a key role in the building of the Los Angeles aqueduct, negotiating the California Water Wars, and the construction of the ill-fated St. Francis Dam — all significant connections.

The exhibit, "The St. Francis Dam Disaster - Camulos Connections" will open in March, 2018, at the Rancho Camulos Museum, as part of the flood-path-wide Commemoration of the 90th Anniversary of the dam's failure. Visitors can find out more details of the fascinating Camulos Connections and view related materials. The exhibit will be open Sundays from 1-4 and by appointment. A detailed list of all activities related to the 90th Commemoration of the St. Francis Dam Disaster will be found at [Saintfrancisdam.com](http://Saintfrancisdam.com).

## Thanks to those who volunteered since the last issue of the *Dispatch*:

**W**eekend Docents

Sandra Cattell	RuthAnne Murthy
Sioux Coghlan	Alan Pollack
Evan Decker	Anna Schindler
Anna Kroll	Gordon Uppman
Barbara Martinelli	

**I**nterested in becoming a docent? Visit our website at [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org)

**T**hose who open and close for the docents

Sioux Coghlan	Cathy Martin
Evan Decker	RuthAnne Murthy
Barbara Martinelli	Alan Pollack

**O**pen House Questers\*

Shirley Fuller	Libby Hinze
Cynthia Harris	Evie Leslie
Roberta Harris	Jenewyn Van Wie
Linda Hinz	Sue Yurosek

**A**rchiving

Sarah Brewer Thompson	Ann Stansell
Ariel Ludwig	

**G**rounds

Sherry Arnold	Cathy Martin
Sarah Brewer Thompson	Steve Martin
Laurie Cotten	Alan Pollack
Diane Erskine-Hellrigel	Phil Scorza
Howard Kwasman	Laurene West
Jim McCarthy	

\*Don't know who the Questers are? See [www.questers1944.org](http://www.questers1944.org)

## The Curious Tale of the Mysterious Masterpiece

by Margi Bertram



In February of 1902, William S. Hart was travelling the country performing in a stage production of *The Christian*, and the cast played Great Falls, Montana. After a performance, he along with other cast members, met Charlie Russell, the cowboy

artist. In his autobiography, Hart recalls not saying much during the after-theater meeting. Charlie Russell was heard to say, "The feller who doesn't talk none in the daytime is the star of the show at night." Hart followed up this introduction with a letter to Charlie, and the Hart Museum is fortunate to have the return letter from Russell on display. These two men shared a desire to record a disappearing frontier way of life they each had lived first-hand and valued so much. Hart and Russell developed a lifelong friendship, and Hart was among others who were able to get Charlie to New York and introduce him to other artists. This certainly helped expand Russell's career and success.

Years later, on a road show production of *The Virginian*, Hart found himself again playing Great Falls. By this time Charlie Russell had married Nancy Cooper, and they both met the troupe at the train, and invited Hart and his leading lady to their home for dinner. After dinner, Charlie unveiled his latest work, a watercolor of Hart riding a horse through the sagebrush. Hart was bursting with pride, and it became not only one of his most prized possessions, but it later was featured on the cover of Hart's autobiography, *My Life East and West*. This highly personal watercolor is on display at the Hart Museum.

In the final chapter of his autobiography, Hart writes about his last visit with Charlie and Nancy Russell in 1926. "Although they generally did not talk of the old days, on this day they did. And they talked a lot. How Charlie, Nancy, and I, we three, twenty-four years before, had taken strange and unusual trips. One was at the deserted beach beyond Far Rockaway, on a cold, cloudy January day....It was Charlie's first view of the ocean. Nancy and I were stomping our feet and blowing on our fingers to keep warm, but Charlie – with head uncovered, his tousled blond mane blowing in the wind – was actually wading through the edge of the breakers. 'Come out of there, you doggone sagebrush cow-waddy,' I called. 'You'll get pneumonia.' 'I may never see this crick again, Bill,' his voice trailed back through the wind. He put on his hat, as would a scolded kid complying with a reprimand; his feet were in the water, his boots were soaked, but he kept on walking just the same."

Clearly, Bill Hart and Charlie Russell had a special, enduring friendship. And Bill remained dedicated to Nancy Russell after Charlie died. Toward the end of her life, Hart paid weekly

visits until her death on May 23, 1940.

While researching more about Charlie Russell, I stumbled across a charming story that I thought worth sharing. It starts with a book titled *The Oregon Trail* by Francis Parkman, a first-person account of a two-month tour of Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, and Kansas. Originally published in twenty-one installments in *Knickerbocker Magazine* starting in February, 1847, a revised edition by Little, Brown and Company was published in 1872. The publisher then commissioned an illustrated version, using Frederic Remington illustrations and sketches released in 1892. After Parkman's death the next year, to honor his contribution to American history and literature, the publisher produced a twenty-volume edition of Parkman's complete works, with *The Oregon Trail* as volumes 19 and 20. A deluxe edition of only eight copies, bound in Moroccan leather embossed in gold leaf was offered.

The number three copy of this special edition came into the possession of a Southern Californian oilman, William Armstrong, also an art collector and friend of Charlie Russell. At a dinner party in 1921, the collector, understandably thrilled, showed the volumes to Russell. Fascinated, Russell asked to borrow them. Armstrong was happy to let his friend borrow the books for further enjoyment.

Becoming a bit nervous after the books had not been returned, Armstrong called Russell asking about his valuable books. Russell stopped by the next day and placed the books in front of Armstrong and said, "I thought you might like to see how they *should* have been illustrated." As he leafed through the books, Armstrong discovered Russell had added fifty watercolor sketches, clearly making these valuable books unique.

This would be a great story if it stopped here. However there is another episode that makes this tale even more fun.

The location of these volumes became a bit of a mystery over the years. Even Armstrong's widow did not know what had happened to them. Then sometime in the 1950s, a dedicated Russell collector, Fred Renner, received a call from one of the country's premier rare book dealers, Walter Latendorf. He announced that he was in possession of the Armstrong edition of the Parkman books, and invited Renner to visit his shop in New York City to view them. His plan was to publish them, feeling they were too important not to share.

Only a week later, Renner entered the shop, and was met by a nervous Latendorf. Admitting he did not have the books, he recounted this story:

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## The Californianos Are Coming!

By Lynn Adams

**L**os Californianos, a group of descendants from the Early Hispanic settlers of California, will be visiting the Rancho Camulos National Historic Landmark on the afternoon of January 27<sup>th</sup> for a tour of this historic museum. Rancho Camulos is what remains of the 1839 Mexican land grant to Antonio del Valle of the 48,000 acre Rancho San Francisco. Some of the members have a connection to the original Rancho San Francisco through their ancestors.

The Los Californianos organization was founded in 1968 as a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the Spanish-Mexican heritage of early California. They strive to ensure that there is an accurate interpretation of that history to the public. To that end, they support research of genealogy, civil, religious, military, and cultural activities in California. They support the preservation of infrastructure from adobes to missions, and they help other descendants compile their genealogy.

Los Californianos hosts conferences three times a year. The January meeting is from January 26-28 at the Hampton Inn and Residence Inn in Santa Clarita. Besides the Rancho Camulos tour, Los Californianos will be hosting Dr. Alan Pollack, President of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society, as the speaker for their dinner meeting on Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup>. His presentation will be about the discovery of gold in Placerita Canyon.

The Traveling Genealogy Library will also be available to the public for research from Friday afternoon to Saturday afternoon in the Conference Room for a small fee, and members will be available to assist with research.

The conference concludes with a Sunday morning meeting, held in the Conference Room with a breakfast buffet catered by the Residence Inn. Throughout the weekend a lot of socializing and sharing of research takes place among attendees, and a good time is had by all.

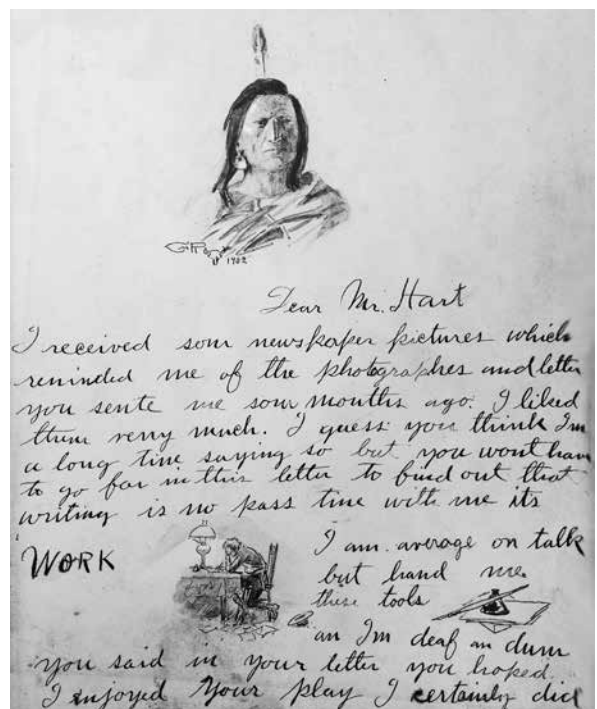
If you are interested in the conference activities, please visit the website at: [www.localifornianos.org](http://www.localifornianos.org) for more details and registration forms.

## . . Mysterious Masterpiece

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“Last Saturday, a rainy, miserable day, I was here by myself. In came a little old lady in a nondescript raincoat and carrying a dripping umbrella. She wandered around for a while and then, coming over to my desk, she asked, ‘Don’t you have anything really special?’ Well, Fred, you know I didn’t intend to sell those books; I wanted to publish them so lots of people could enjoy those beautiful watercolor sketches. But I was so very proud of them, and I got them out and handed them over to her. She took them over in a corner and carefully went through them page by page. Half an hour later, she came to my desk and asked, ‘How much do you want for them? Not intending to sell them, I thought I’d quote a price so high that she couldn’t possibly pay it... after all, Fred, she didn’t look like she could come up with two hundred dollars. So I took a deep breath and said, ‘They’re twelve thousand dollars, Ma’am.’ And what did she do? Just took out her checkbook and wrote out the amount!”

This is how Miss Clara Peck became the owner of these incredible books, which became part of a thoughtfully curated library of rare books. The obvious next question became who was this woman? She had been left a wealthy woman at a young age by her father, who had benefited from his association with Frank W. Woolworth. At the time of her death in 1982, she left these two special books to the Rockwell Museum in Corning, New York, where they reside today.



Russell Letter to Bill Hart

## O Rare Judge John Powell

by John Boston

Most of us drive around in the course of a day, passing dozens of avenues and boulevards, giving little if any thought to how the streets got their names. Just two blocks south of Lyons Avenue and parallel is Powell Drive in the sleepy little community of Happy Valley. It's one of the SCV's oldest neighborhoods. Powell Drive is named after one of the most fascinating souls in SCV history.

It's hard to believe our community was once a shoot-em-up wild frontier outpost. Back in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, we had far more saloons than churches. This was the home of America's most deadly range war. Shootings, knifings, and stagecoach hold-ups were commonplace. The valley was filled with thieves, rustlers, murderers, and an entire passel of various scoundrels and characters.

Off and on, for 26 total years, one man stood as the beacon for law and order. Judge John Powell led simply an amazing life. In 1859, he and the famed Dr. David Livingston freed 705 men, women, and children from an African camp bound for slavery. He led troops in seven major Civil War battles. Prior to that, Powell was a famed big game hunter and still holds the record for bagging the largest mountain lion in California. The creature stretched 12-feet, 6 inches from nose to tip of tail. He also shot a rare white wolf in Bouquet Canyon.

Powell rode through the old Newhall Pass on June 24, 1869. He homesteaded in Dry Canyon, which would later be called Ratsburg (due to the miners' jumping into their claims "like rats" to avoid paying monthly squatters' fees to Newhall Land & Farming Co.) which would become, today, Seco Canyon. He ran sheep with his brother and had a very good relationship with the Paiutes, Tataviam, and Chumash Indians. This level-headed ability of Powell caught the attention of L.A. County officials. On May 8th, 1875, he was appointed Justice of the Peace for the Soledad Township, an area which then covered 1,200 square miles.

Up to that point, he had never set foot in a courtroom. And for years as a judge, he kept that streak alive.

Powell had his home where Walnut, Ninth, Chestnut and Eight Streets are today (the home was torn down in 1960). There used to be a giant oak. Under its peaceful shade, he held outdoor court most of the year. Sometimes, some of the more rancorous plaintiffs would be chained to

the tree. Powell was given \$70 a month from the county and paid for court expenses out of his own pocket. His brother, Mike, ran Newhall's Palace (it wasn't) Saloon, and his wife ran a boarding house.

As Justice of the Peace, Powell was one of two judges in the SCV. Lawyers were so scarce, that one would act as prosecution. In all his years, he only had one case overturned by a higher court — his first.

According to Blanche Brown, local newspaper editor in the early 1920s, Powell presided over a case involving cattle grazing on a neighbor's barley crop. Powell was upset because of the frivolous nature of the trial and ended up awarding ten cents — yup, a dime — to the landowner, A.J. Krazyński, in damages. A higher court later bumped that up to \$140. Seems Powell, a Catholic Irishman, was prejudiced against the plaintiff because he was a Polish Jew.

Interestingly, Powell was not afraid to level huge fines, for, of all things, hunting and moonshining violations. A brand new house on a large lot sold for about \$500 — total — in the 20th-century teens and 1920s. Powell would fine violators as much as \$1,000 — or the cost of TWO houses. Imagine, today, a drunken driving fine costing you \$1 million.

In one case, Powell went to the scene of the crime. He convicted 40 mine workers of gambling and held the trial at the mine, up the Ridge Route. They were so incensed at the picayune charges, they pelted the mine's warehouse with rocks while court was in session AND slashed the judge's tires.

One of Powell's last cases involved a bank robbery in Lancaster. A gang of eight was racing toward the SCV. A hastily-formed posse cornered them at a Canyon Country ranch. Three were killed in the shoot-out, another two wounded. The case was presided over by Powell. One of the posse members was local forest ranger Thornton Doelle. During the opening statement, the gang's defense attorney noticed Doelle was sitting on the jury and protested: "Your honor, that man shot one of my clients!"

Powell calmly noted "Who else would better be able to judge than someone who was there?"

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The Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society presents,  
in partnership with the City of Santa Clarita  
and the 2018 Cowboy Festival:

## **A Narrated Bus Tour of Historic Sites in the Santa Clarita Valley**

**Sunday, April 22, 2016      9:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

**The day will begin with an introduction to Heritage Junction in the Freight Room of the historic 1887 Saugus Train Depot. Heritage Junction is home to restored, furnished historic homes, an adobe, a chapel, schoolhouse, the train depot, and a steam locomotive.**

### **Some of the sites we will visit:**

**Los Angeles County's longest continuously-operating restaurant.  
The Oak of the Golden Dream - first gold Discovery in California.  
Mentryville - site of the first commercially successful oil well in the west, and  
the longest continuously producing well in the world.  
An 1898 Trestle Bridge -  
replacement for one swept away by St. Francis Dam floodwaters.  
The first jailhouse in Newhall.  
The American Theatre – gift of William S. Hart.**

**Cost - \$50 per person, includes lunch.  
(Vegetarian and Vegan choices are available)  
We will be walking short distances over uneven terrain.  
Please, no children under six years of age.**

**For tickets call 661 250-3735,  
or go to [cowboyleftival.org/tickets](http://cowboyleftival.org/tickets)**



## Christmas Open House Recap

by Cathy Martin

Another fun-filled Christmas Open House at Heritage Junction has passed, and I hope you had an opportunity to visit. If you did drop by, you saw that the Saugus Train Station went old school this year with new vintage-style LED lights. All of the nostalgia, without the cost of keeping them on!

Meanwhile, inside the Freight room, the space was a buzz of happy kids constructing three different types of crafts: Graham cracker candy houses, foam wreaths, and sponge painted Christmas socks. For refreshments, there were Christmas cookies, brownies, and rice crispy treats to nibble on. The adults could sip on some hot coffee provided by Starbucks in Granary Square and the kids could wash down all of the sweets with melted snowmen, a.k.a. bottled water.

Not to be outdone, the steam engine served as Christmas card central, posing for plenty of annual family photos.

Quester Court hosted the Animal Blessing again this year. With the Ramona Chapel in the background, Father Craig of Our Lady of Perpetual Help blessed an audience of four cute dogs and lots of onlookers. The Edison and Kingbury houses were decorated with vintage Christmas decorations.

At the other end of the Junction, Santa Claus was holding court in the Newhall Ranch House. The joy on the children's faces asking for their favorite toy is truly priceless.

This event couldn't happen without the tireless work of our volunteers. Every year with one of my best friends, Laurie Cotten, at my side, we drag out and sort through the boxes of decorations, but we have it down to a science now. Thank you, Laurie; you're a true Christmas Pro.

Our list of volunteers has been growing every year, just like the attendance. As always we had our Santa Claus, Harold Hicks; Animal Blessing by Father Craig of OLPH; and Vanessa Vanderslade of Copper Hill Animal Clinic. Questers came from all three Chapters in S.C.V.: Canyon, Heritage Reflections, and Oak of the Golden Dream. Our faithful docents who have given us more of their time than just for this event included Anna Schindler, Anna Kroll, and new docent Amanda Surette.

These SCVHS board members were on hand to answer questions: Alan Pollack, President; Barbara Martinelli, Membership & Correspondence; Sue Yurosek, Restoration chair; and Evan Decker and Phil Scorza. Bret Cotten kept the steam engine and train yard in order. While all of this was going on, David Veal filled the air with Christmas Carol Music from his speakers outside the Depot. Thank you one and all; Happy New Year!

## Oak of the Golden Dream Questers # 381

by Roberta Harris

Despite wind and fires raging around them, members of the Oak of the Golden Dream Questers managed to conduct their "World Famous" luncheon and auction at Hart Hall on December 5, 2017. Items auctioned included antique furniture, delicious baked goods in collectible containers, jewelry, quilts, plant gardens in unusual containers, Christmas decorations, and many other unique items.

Thank you to all our guests who braved the adverse conditions, which included traffic snarls and road closures, to help make this a successful fund raiser. All funds raised will be used to continue our preservation and restoration projects. Oak of the Golden Dream is a chapter of a non-profit international organization called "The Questers", with chapters throughout the United States and Canada. Their goals are preservation and restoration of artifacts, existing memorials, historic buildings, landmarks, as well as education about how our past influences our future.

To find out what other chapters are doing in California, visit [www.CalQuest.org](http://www.CalQuest.org). To learn more about International Questers, see [www.questers1944.org](http://www.questers1944.org). Interested in joining a chapter? Contact [roberta@myquesters.com](mailto:roberta@myquesters.com)



### Join the SCV Historical Society Today!

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Memberships make great gifts for your historically-minded friends and family! To join or renew online, visit <http://www.scvhs.org>.

## St Francis Dam Full-Day Floodplain Tour

### March 25

**O**n Sunday, March 25, there will be an all-day narrated bus tour of properties that suffered deaths and destruction in the flood plain of the St Francis Dam disaster, from Santa Clarita to Santa Paula.

The itinerary will include:

**Powerhouse 1-** A view of the powerhouse and village, with a quick walk around the small park to view equipment used in the building of the aqueduct and the St. Francis Dam.

**St. Francis Dam-** Short hike to the dam foundation overlook for photos.

**Powerhouse 2 Village-** View from bus; Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel will tell you about the Lyman Curtis Family and the Ray Rising Family.

**Powerhouse 2-** Brief walk to the 2 plaques at the powerhouse and the forest fire station.

**Harry Carey Ranch site (Tesoro Del Valle)-** Walk around the grounds of Harry Carey's ranch.

**Edison substation-** A brief stop for photos.

**Magic Mountain Ridge Route Bridge washout-** A brief walk to see where the flood took out the bridge. (Subject to permission of Magic Mountain.)

**Santa Paula Oil Museum-** 30 minutes allotted for viewing the museum exhibits.

**Ed Thornton Statue in Santa Paula-** Brief stop for photos.

**Santa Paula Cemetery and Bardsdale Cemetery-** Ann Stansell will talk to you about the St. Francis Dam victims buried on these sites, known and unknown.

**Rancho Camulos-Mini Tour of the Rancho** by a docent.

**Gottardi Ranch-** The loss of 5 members of the Gottardi family is one example of the many tragedies that occurred as a result of the breach of the St. Francis Dam. You will hear their stories.

**Edison Kemp Camp/Blue Cut-** This is the site of the single largest loss of life in the flood plain.

**Speakers:** Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel, Dr. Alan Pollack, Ann Stansell, DWP Representative, and a docent at Rancho Camulos.

Walking shoes and comfortable/casual attire are recommended. Sunscreen and a hat are optional, but also recommended. You will be doing some minimal walking on this trip. You may bring snacks and lunch to eat on the bus.

The bus leaves Heritage Junction at 9:00 AM:  
24101 Newhall Avenue, Newhall, CA 91321.

Cost: \$55.00 per person, prepaid only.

For reservations, please contact 661 254-1275, or visit the SCVHS web site at [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org) to pay via PayPal.



## St Francis Dam Lecture and Tour by Alan Pollack

The SCV Historical Society will be presenting its annual lecture and tour to the site of the second-worst disaster in California history.

Guest Lecturers and Tour Guides This Year to the St. Francis Dam disaster site will be Dr. Alan Pollack, President of the SCV Historical Society, and Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel, Board Director of the SCV Historical Society and Executive Director of the Santa Clarita Community Hiking Club.

Just before midnight on the evening of March 12, 1928, William Mulholland's majestic St. Francis Dam suffered a catastrophic collapse, causing a wall of water to travel some 55 miles to the Pacific Ocean and killing up to 431 people in the second-worst disaster in California history, after the San Francisco earthquake and fire 22 years earlier. The St. Francis Dam had been completed in 1926. Legendary Los Angeles water chief William Mulholland was greatly responsible for designing the dam, which turned out to be flawed both in its design and in geologic location. Soon after the reservoir reached full capacity in March, 1928, it collapsed and sent massive flood waters cascading down San Francisquito Canyon and into the Santa Clara River Valley. Mulholland took full responsibility for the disaster and was never the same after that; he died in 1935 a broken man.

This event will be held on Saturday, March 10, 2018, just before the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dam disaster. The tour will begin with a presentation about the disaster at 11:00 AM in the freight room of the Saugus Train Station in Heritage Junction. At noon, ticketed passengers will board a motor coach for a trip up to the dam site in San Francisquito Canyon and a hike to the dam ruins.

Tickets are \$40 per person for all ages, and include the lecture, snacks, and bus transportation. A \$5 discount is available to those who sign up as new Historical Society members. Funds raised will benefit programs of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society.

Tickets may be reserved by calling 661 254-1275 with credit card and contact information. Or, purchase online via PayPal at [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org)

The tour includes an approximately one-mile walk and a steep uphill hike at the dam site. Participants should wear long pants and comfortable hiking shoes. Water will be provided. Because this tour is a very popular fund-raiser, it is impossible to guarantee that seats will be available for purchase on the day of the tour. Order your tickets now!

For more information on this and other upcoming programs from the SCVHS, please call 661 254-1275 or visit the Website at [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org).

## Fundraising Help from Ralphs and Amazon

Our fundraising efforts this year provide two ways to earn money for much-needed renovations at Heritage Junction. Two well-known companies can help our organization prosper and grow: Ralphs Grocery Co. and Amazon.

Register your club card with Ralphs and your Amazon account number with the Amazon Smile rewards. They will automatically send a portion of your sale to us. **YOU WILL NOT BE CHARGED ANYTHING.**

### RALPHS SHOPPERS:

First, if you shop at Ralphs and have a registered club card, you are half-way there. If you're not a Ralphs Club card member, just stop by any Ralphs and ask to sign up for a club card, then register the card online.

With computer access, go to [www.ralphs.com](http://www.ralphs.com) and sign in to your account; under Community click on Ralphs Community Contribution Program. Follow the directions, using 92017 for the SCVHS.

If you don't have computer access or have problems with the Web page interface, with your Club card and our ID #92017 in hand, call **800 443-4438**. They will do the registering over the phone. Ralphs will donate up to 4% of your purchases to SCVHS.

### AMAZON SHOPPERS:

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support the SCV Historical Society every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to the Historical Society.

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) from your web browser, and sign in using your e-mail address and the password for your existing Amazon account. You may also want to bookmark [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com).

On your first visit to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), under "Or pick your own charitable organization", enter Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society and click on Search. On the next screen, click on the Select button next to "Newhall, CA". On the following screen, click on the check box for Yes, then on Start Shopping. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) will result in a donation of 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases.

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Kingsbury House is open the first Sunday  
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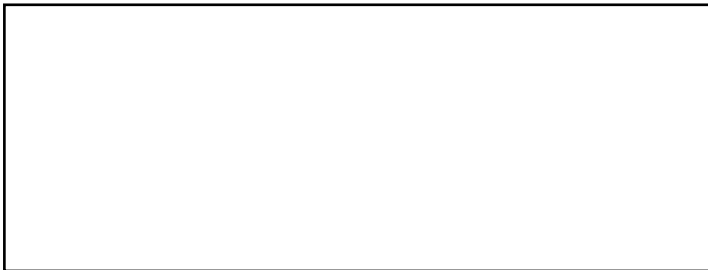
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**Society Info: [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org)**  
**Photo, Text Archives: [www.scvhistory.com](http://www.scvhistory.com)**

**Dated Material: Please Do Not Delay**



*The St Francis Dam collapsed 90 years ago.  
See pages 10 and 11*