It’s been about four years now since that visit to Johnstown. As I sit here on United Flight 2046 from San Francisco to Washington DC, I’m feeling a burst of pride in what Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel and I have been able to accomplish in just two short years since we met on Facebook, where I was floating the idea of creating a National Memorial at the St Francis Dam site. Yes, it started in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. There, on a side trip from a medical conference in Pittsburgh with a long-time doctor friend of mine, I visited the site of the South Fork Dam, 14 miles above Johnstown in the Allegheny Mountains of Western Pennsylvania. It was this dam that broke in 1889, sending a furious wall of water hurtling down a steep canyon, which smashed into the industrial town of 30,000 mostly Welsh and German immigrants and created a watery purgatory as it took the lives of over 2000 people. It would become known as the infamous Johnstown Flood, the worst dam disaster in American history. And, rightly so, when congress reviewed and considered the site of this catastrophe in 1964, they designated it a National Memorial. Today, on the site of the South Fork Dam there sits a National Park Service visitor center, a shining tribute to the hundreds of souls lost in that epic 1889 maelstrom.

**Why Not?**

That’s when it hit me, why not do this for the site of the St Francis Dam, which caused the deaths of over 400 people on that cold, dark night of March 12-13, 1928. Why not? What were we waiting for? In the eight decades since the dam failure, these people had been...
President's Message

Continued from page 1

forgotten, not only victims of that inland tsunami, but also of
the politics of Los Angeles of the late 1920s. A Los Angeles
that was growing by leaps and bounds, that couldn’t afford
to be embarrassed by this colossal faux pas by their hero
Mulholland. A Los Angeles that took full responsibility for
the disaster, made quick reparations to its victims, and then forgot.
Forgetting was the easy way out, the way to move forward as a
major metropolis without the disaster hanging as an albatross
on its neck. So over the next 88 years, everyone forgot about
the St Francis Dam disaster and its victims. Everyone except
for historians like Charles Outland and Frank Rock, who took
an interest in the disaster and in keeping its memory alive.

The Dream and the Destiny

And so I had this idea, this dream that maybe we in Santa
Clarita could right this wrong and launch a campaign to bring
a National Memorial to the St Francis. Perhaps it was luck,
perhaps destiny, that my call to action was answered by Dianne
Erskine-Hellrigel. Dianne had the legislative expertise and
connections that I lacked. She had been working for years on
Wilderness legislation, and in fact had successfully worked
behind the scenes to get hundreds of thousands of acres in
California designated as Wilderness.

So Dianne and I set out on this quest together. Dianne had a
good working relationship with Congressman Buck McKeon.
She met with McKeon and piqued his interest in the idea of a
National Memorial. She, myself, and her colleague Linda Castro
later traveled to Washington DC and met with McKeon’s
senior staff to pitch the idea. The trip was a success. Just before
his retirement from Congress, McKeon introduced the first bill
to propose a St Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial.

HR 5244

When McKeon’s successor Steve Knight took office as our
next Congressman, Dianne developed a relationship with him
and his staff and convinced them of the merits of our National
Memorial proposal. Knight eventually introduced a similar bill
to McKeon’s, what has now become the Saint Francis Dam
Disaster National Memorial Act, HR 5244.

And now I am here. My plane has landed in DC, and I am
going over my notes in a hotel room at the Hyatt Regency on
Capitol Hill, as tomorrow I am scheduled to testify before the
Subcommittee on Public Lands of the House Natural Resources
Committee in favor of Knight’s bill for the St Francis. The time
has come to put our plan into action.

The Hearing

The next morning is a nice day for Washington DC. The
humidity is only moderately irritating, as opposed to the
stagnating stickiness the last time I was here. After a ten-
minute walk from the hotel, and past the Capitol building, I
wade through a sea of tourists on my way to the Longworth
building, home to Representative Knight and the House Natural
Resources Committee. I enter the hearing chamber in room
1324, and in front of me is an imposing semicircular bank of
seats perched high above the witness area and set aside for the
Congressmen on the Committee. At the apex of the semicircle
sits committee chairman Tom McClintock (R-CA, 4th District).
The first panel of speakers includes Congressman Knight. He
gives a brief speech explaining our bill before the committee.

And then it’s my turn. I swig on some water to calm a dry
mouth, much as Mulholland must have done when he brought
water to a semi-arid Los Angeles. In front of me is a timer
which starts counting down the five minutes which I have to
complete my speech. And then I launch into it, the passion of
two years of hard work and political maneuvering coming out
as I educate the committee members on the disaster and seek
their approval of our bill. My speech ends just as the timer
hits five minutes: “The over 400 people who perished in the
St Francis Dam disaster deserve to be remembered in this
fashion!” McClintock and the other committee members ask
some follow-up questions. They seem impressed with what I
had to say. Hey Mikey, they liked it!

Knight and his chief of staff Brandon thank me for a job well
done. And I walk out of the hearing room thinking, whoa I just
testified before Congress! What an amazing experience, one
of those bucket list items we can only hope to accomplish. As
I walk out of the Longworth building back into the daytime
crowds of tourists, this time around I’m not one of them. This
time I came to Washington on a mission. It’s a most satisfying
walk back to the hotel. But the battle for the St Francis Dam
National Memorial has only just begun.

If passed, HR 5244 will not be providing government funding
for the new National Memorial. It will be administered by the
site’s current owner, the US Forest Service. In order to raise
funds for the construction of a visitor’s center, museum, and
memorial wall to all the victims, we will be starting a nonprofit
group called the St Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial
Foundation. We will be raising funds from the community,
private donors, and the private business sector. Dianne and I
can’t do this alone. We will need the help of all of you to make
this Memorial into something we all can be proud of to honor
the disaster victims. We urge everyone in the community
to start thinking about what you can do to help with this
noble cause, either through the donation of money to the
Foundation or volunteering to help raise money from other
individuals, organizations or businesses. Together we can create
a tremendous legacy to present to our nation and to pass on
to our children and grandchildren.

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President's Message

TEXT OF MY SPEECH BEFORE THE HOUSE
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE, MAY 24, 2016

Continued from page 2

Alan M. Pollack, M.D.
Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society, Santa Clarita, California, President
Santa Clarita Community Hiking Club, Board Director and Historian

Subcommittee on Federal Lands Legislative Hearing
Statement of Testimony

At three minutes before midnight on March 12, 1928, the majestic St. Francis Dam ruptured, sending a 140 foot wall of water down San Francisquito Canyon and into the Santa Clara River Valley. The water traveled some 54 miles, decimating everything in its path through the towns of Saugus, Castaic Junction, Piru, Fillmore, Bardsdale, Santa Paula, and Saticoy, leaving in its wake massive destruction of property and the loss of some 431 lives, including many women and children, before emptying into the Pacific Ocean.

The story of the St. Francis Dam is the story of Los Angeles itself, how the acquisition of water allowed a sleepy pueblo to grow into the major metropolitan city it is today. It is also the story of the tragic rise and fall of one of the most important historical figures in California history, William Mulholland. Mulholland had become a hero to the citizens of Los Angeles when he completed an engineering marvel, the Los Angeles Aqueduct, in 1913, which brought a badly needed water supply to a thirsty Los Angeles. Without Mulholland’s feat, Los Angeles would not have been able to grow much larger than 100,000 people for lack of enough water.

After completing the aqueduct, Mulholland felt he had to do more to assure an adequate supply of water closer to the city. He therefore built a series of dams in Los Angeles, the last of which was the St. Francis Dam. Mulholland, a brilliant but self-educated man, was so trusted by his peers, that he was allowed to make decisions on his own, without any oversight by outside experts, which resulted in tragic errors in the construction and location of the dam. The resultant dam failure is now considered to be the worst civil engineering disaster of 20th century America. The aftermath of the catastrophe resulted in multiple government inquests which made recommendations for dam construction that to this day make the lives of millions of Americans much safer. Following the dam break, a coroner’s jury in Los Angeles made national headlines stating: “The construction of a municipal dam should never be left to the sole judgment of one man, no matter how eminent.”

The terrible disaster generated huge banner headlines in newspapers all across the country, yet today few people have even heard of this catastrophe.

Because of the politics of those times, as the years and decades rolled on, this 2nd worst disaster in California history and one of the worst disasters in all of American history has mostly been forgotten, along with the hundreds of victims of the dam break.

A few years ago, I traveled to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to attend a medical convention. During that trip I visited the site of another dam failure in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, which occurred in 1889. In that disaster, over 2000 lives were lost in the Johnstown Flood. When I got back home I did some further reading on the Johnstown event. I was struck by the many similarities between the disaster at Johnstown and the St. Francis. Both events were preceded by stories of intrigue and controversy. Both dams suffered from faulty construction. Both dam breaks resulted in epic floods resulting in massive devastation and loss of life.

But there was one major difference I saw in the two sites. The site of the Johnstown dam break is now designated a National Memorial, run by the National Park Service with rangers, a visitor center, museum, documentary film, and tours. At the St. Francis Dam site, after 88 years there is, sadly, nothing but the ruins. It was on that trip that I became determined to honor and remember the victims of the St. Francis Dam disaster by establishing a National Memorial at the dam site, that would include a visitor center, museum, and a memorial wall with the names of all the victims.

This bill has the support of over 8000 citizens, businesses, and organizations in the Santa Clarita area. Our quest for the National Memorial has been featured in numerous newspaper articles, local radio and television stations, and most recently in Newsweek Magazine.

In order to assist the Forest Service in this endeavor, and to fulfill our dream of the St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial and Monument, we are establishing a nonprofit foundation with the mission of raising funds to help with the construction, maintenance and staffing of the Memorial. We will work hand in hand with the Forest Service to make this Memorial a reality.

We would like to thank this Committee for your consideration of this important bill. The over 400 people who perished in the St. Francis Dam disaster deserve to be remembered in this fashion.
Bit by a Rattler Times Eight
by John Boston

Unseen, in the background, Fate was quietly slipping the lead into the boxing glove.”
— P.G. Wodehouse, 1930

Things Western are oft romanticized. Ranching is really yard work on a grand scale, although you get to wear a better hat and the limp you develop somehow seems more valiant.

Then, unlike watering your solitary yuppie concentration camp townhouse air fern, there are the rattlesnakes with which to contend. I don’t scream and lift up my pantaloons when I see a rattlesnake. But, I give the snake a respectable space. This being a family publication, I cannot allow myself to be too graphic, but one nearly bit me once on that male region which is sometimes surrounded by a jock strap.

Many years ago, I was involved in some Sisyphean chore of watering something that was dry, or drying out something that had gotten wet. It really doesn’t matter.

“Rattlesnake in the woodpile!” my then brother-in-law Mark yelled, as if he were on deck of a World War II destroyer and had just spotted a Nazi U-boat. The snake-sighting was maybe 100 yards from where I was leaning on my shovel, and it was hot. He yelled if I wanted to help him corral the monster rattler. I gave him a toodle-loo wave and cupped my chin on the shovel handle.

I watched Mark run into the house and come back with a Colt .44 the size of surfboard. Shots were fired. There were more sounds, of hissing, swearing, rattling, ricocheting bullets, and the familiar sound of a hoe hitting the hard dirt followed by more swearing. In my quiet part of the ranch, I added my own imaginary effects of machine gun noises and diving biplanes.

I had no desire to get close to a rattler again. My brother-in-law ran back in the house to retrieve more ammo, came back, reloaded, and emptied the revolver into the side of the barn.

The snake got away. Blessedly, no livestock, migrant farm workers, pets, trespassing Anabaptists, or family members took one for the team. I sighed and went back to lazily rearranging dirt and moisturizing it.

I’ve never shot a snake. They leave me alone and I return the favor. There’s karma to consider.

When I was more than little, just up the canyon from us, I remember a story about a couple who went to bed on a Saturday night in 1956. Being married, they hugged the opposite ends of the bed. In the middle of the night, the wife became rather miffed when her spouse seemingly attempted to inflict his matrimonial obligation. The woman muttered wife-like curses, wiggled toward the abyss and slapped at her mate’s — ohem — advancement. Sleepily, the husband barked back in the dark, demanding what she was mumbling about. They fell back asleep.

The next morning, the unsuccessful advance was forgotten. The husband went into town on an errand and the wife stayed behind to tend chores, which included making the bed. She noticed there was an unfamiliar lump under the blanket and when she pulled it off, there was a 6-foot-long rattlesnake. They only grow to 7. It was coiled, head up with its tail shaking the familiar warning.

I imagine her husband would have been blushingly proud that his wife would have mistaken a two-yard-long reptile for his plumbing the night before. Alas, he wasn’t home.

The woman ran and retrieved a neighbor. I have a strong suspicion he might be related to my ex-brother-in-law, because the farmer from next door brought over a shotgun that nearly required wheels to move it. He was about to blow the serpent into kibble when the lady screamed, oh so spoil sport fun-killing woman-like: “NOT ON THE BED!”

I can just see him draw back for a long moment, considering that, gee, maybe he didn’t need to blow a hole the size of an extra-large mushroom pizza through the snake, mattress, box spring and hat boxes underneath. He took the long barrel and pushed the protesting snake onto the floor. THEN he blew it to smithereens. I’d like to point out that our rural Elmer Fudd waited for the snake to GET INTO THE CORNER so that he could not only howitzer out a side of the bedroom, but also blow out part of the floor and two sides of the house.

I once had a run-in with Señor Crotalus atrox, aka, the Western Diamondback rattlesnake. It was a late spring eve, almost 40 years ago, back on the old San Fernando Road ranch. The place is a butt-ugly yuppie concentration camp condo complex now, and to this day, I can’t turn my head to look at it as I drive by.

More out of boredom or just for an excuse to take an evening ride, I was checking the fence line up in the hills. It had to have been boredom or maybe Spring Fever, because I remember I didn’t bring any tools or wire, barbed or otherwise. I had dismantled. I remember standing atop a hill, just looking at all the flowers in riotous bloom and pristine hills, so blessedly void of Taco Bell-like houses. I had my hands on my hips and was feeling quite wonderful when I happened to glance down.

Almost exactly centered between my feet was a rattlesnake. I froze for what seemed an entire Catholic high mass. The ones in Latin. I slowly turned my head to see where the rest of the snake was and that maybe I had just made an error in fauna identification.

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John Boston Article

Continued from page 4

Nope. Not a gopher snake. My eyes traced the snake's body, all the way to the tail sporting eight rattles. Simple math is one year per rattle. Rattlers can live to be up to 25 years old. This one was only 8 and at just 5 feet long, was too small to eat me after I had been poisoned.

All manner of scenarios raced through my mind. If I moved one boot, he'd bite the other. If he bit me, I'm a mile away from the house, and no one knows I'm up here. I considered just jumping to safety — as they used to call it on the radio adventures — "...in one mighty leap!"

I was young then and in racehorse shape. Bonus, I could jump out of the gym. Unfortunately, this was not a gym. I measured whether I should jump forward or try a backward somersault, the latter plan being axed because I had never attempted such a circus maneuver. Then it hit me that, in order to jump in any direction, I'm going to have to bend my knees, which means that, forget my rear end, my manly manhood would then be that much closer to those venomous jaws.

That's a pretty picture: Admitting yourself to the emergency room with a snake still dangling from between your two back pockets.

I might as well just die from the bite, because who wants to live a life where you have to wear adult diapers the size of a truck tire because your hm-hmms are swollen black and blue to the size of beach balls?

Then there's the bother of addressing those grinning faces while answering, over and over until I was an old man: "Yup. I'm that guy on the news who was bit in the privates by a rattlesnake."

"Can we see?"

"No."

They take a breath. "And no..."

There I stood, a Western still-life, for at least three minutes. Something was wrong. I kept waiting for that telltale rattle. The snake seemed a bit dull. We hadn't hit those punishing Newhall summers yet. It was still cool and actually rather early for rattlers, so I thought. In dude ranch oblivion, had I just walked right over the snake and straddled it, or had Satan's pet from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good & Evil crawled between my boots to admire the scenery with me?

I know they don't have a standing long jump in the Olympics, but on that evening in the late 1970s, I would have won it. Finally, in one fluid motion, I vaulted myself forward for some serious first-down yardage, balled myself up and rolled a few more yards for good measure. Fortunately, I did not land smack dab into another rattlesnake, or, worse, a convention of rattlesnakes.

If I were smart, I would have just headed home after dusting myself off. Alas, I was, and am, a guy. The horse watched me with intense curiosity. Talk about babes in the woods, he was completely nonplused about the serpent. I found an old branch and gingerly headed back to the snake — who hadn't moved. I poked it. Still life. I gingerly picked up part of it. The poor thing was dead.

Oddest thing was that it couldn't have been dead for long. There was no discernible decay and other than being, well, deceased, it looked in perfect health. Good old trail-savvy me, I just literally was so struck with the scenery, I just wasn't watching where I was trekking and straddled myself over a 5-foot-long rattlesnake. Blessedly, a dead 5-foot-long rattlesnake. I still scrunch up my face and make a small, sympathetic adjustment whenever I see a rattler or recall that spring evening.

Of course, I'm a piker when it comes to rattlesnake encounters.

There used to be a guy who worked at Vasquez Rocks years ago. He had the unpleasant task of cleaning the public Andy Gumps. Not exactly a job you bounce out of bed in the morning and can't wait to start. Seems especially in the warmer days, these latrines, being damp and shady, were the perfect resting place for rattlesnakes.

The guy got bit eight separate times. Eight.

There's a job. Cleaning tourist presents AND getting bit by rattlers.

(With some 10,000 essays and opinion pieces, SCV author John Boston is one of America's most prolific writers. He also writes his regular Mr. SCV column for the new SCV Reader. Weekly, he pens The Time Ranger & SCV History for the SCV Beacon. 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— thejohnbostonchronicles.com. You'll be smiling for a week...)
Why Green-Wood?
by Margi Bertram

Often our visitors to the William S. Hart Museum are surprised to learn that Hart is buried in Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, NY. What is the history of this place, and how is it that Hart, along with his parents and some siblings, chose this for their final resting place?

Before there was Central Park (1853), Green-Wood was created in 1838, inspired by the design of Pére Lachaise Cemetery in Paris and Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. These were cemeteries established in natural, park-like settings, with varied landscapes. At the time, Green-Wood was considered one of the first rural cemeteries in America.

Green-Wood soon became widely known for its magnificent beauty, attracting 500,000 visitors yearly, then second only to Niagara Falls as the nation’s greatest tourist attraction! These visitors enjoyed carriage rides, picnics, and a large collection of inspirational statuary dotting the nearly 500 acres. It is said that this popularity helped encourage the creation of public parks. It soon became “the” place to be buried for some of the most famous New Yorkers during the second half of the nineteenth century. There are some 560,000 individuals buried at Green-Wood, including Leonard Bernstein (composer and conductor), George Catlin (painter), Elias Howe (inventor), Samuel F. B. Morse (inventor), Duncan Phyfe (cabinetmaker), Henry Steinway (piano manufacturer), Louis Comfort Tiffany (artist), and numerous baseball legends, politicians, and Civil War generals.

Popular among history buffs and bird watchers, Green-Wood is a Revolutionary War historic site, and a registered member of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System. In 2006 Green-Wood was designated a National Historic Landmark, for its national significance in art, architecture, landscaping and history.

In 2002, a project began to identify, honor, and tell the stories of Civil War veterans buried at Green-Wood. At its onset, it was believed there were about 500 such veterans interred there. As of today, nearly 3,300 Civil War veterans have been identified at Green-Wood. Once identification is made, project volunteers write a biography from soldier histories, obituaries, pension records, official records and other sources. This project, after more than three times the length of the Civil War itself, is far from complete, so the work continues, thanks to help from hundreds of volunteers.

As someone who felt a significant connection to New York City, it is not surprising that William S. Hart is buried at Green-Wood Cemetery. In 1866, Paul Goldberger in The New York Times wrote that it was said “It is the ambition of the New Yorker to live upon the Fifth Avenue, to take his airings in the [Central] Park, and to sleep with his fathers in Green-Wood.”

The cemetery became a National Historic Landmark in 2006.

The North Entrance to Green-Wood Cemetery.
It was built 1861-1865, and became a New York city landmark in 1966.
Reginaldo del Valle was the eldest son of Ignacio and Isabel del Valle of Rancho Camulos. Rancho Camulos was the 1,800 acre westernmost portion of Rancho San Francisco, which was the 48,000 acre 1839 Mexican land grant of the San Fernando Mission lands to Ignacio’s father, Antonio del Valle, that included most of what is now Santa Clarita.

Reginaldo was about 6 in 1861 when the family moved permanently from the Olvera Plaza in the city of Los Angeles to the rural land of the vaquero. Reginaldo would grow up to make major contributions to the politics and history of California. However, today we want to share with you a letter written in 1865 by then-10 year old Reginaldo to his maternal grandmother, who had moved with the family to the rancho but was back in Los Angeles for an extended visit.

The letter came to our attention and was translated by Teresa Diaz, from the Ramona Museum in San Gabriel. She is also a member of the Native Sons of the Golden West, Ramona Chapter, which was founded by Reginaldo; that connection sparked her interest in all things del Valle, including researching the del Valle family papers now housed at the Seaver Center.

This simple letter of a 10 year old offers some interesting insights into life on the rancho in 1865.

TRANSLATION:

Camulos October 15, 1865.

Señora Doña Ascension Avila,

My dear mamá (grandmother),

I ask you to buy me a pair of gloves, and a wool tie, because I have to wake up very early to study, and I am very cold.

Little Juventino (Juventincito) sends a cake to nana Rosa (great-grandmother). Give much love to everyone, I am rushing to be a recording secretary for my uncle.

Send a good pair of small shoes for Mary, size 4. Little Ygnacio (Ygnacito) has had seizures, Antonio has been ill with rheumatism, Little Ulpiano (Ulpiancito) can say “papa,” little Josefa (Josefita) is ready to go to Los Angeles as soon as you arrive. And my mom is so fed up with the kids that she says she is going to Piru. Your son (grandson) who appreciates you.

Reginaldo del Valle

Continued on Page 8
Weekend Docents:
Sandra Cattell
Sioux Coghlan
Evans Decker
Sara Floyd
Dani Gardner
Anna Kroll
Barbara Martinelli
RuthAnne Murthy
Alan Pollack
Jeff Prange
Brent Roberts
Anna Schindler
Gordon Uppman

Interested in becoming a docent? Visit our website at www.scvhs.org

Those who open and close for the docents:
Evan Decker
Cathy Martin
RuthAnne Murthy
Alan Pollack

The Questers have really stepped in during the last two months. Between the Cowboy Festival, School Tours, and Last Sundays, the following Questers gave tours of Quester Court:

Cathy Altuvilla
Helen Barlow
Heather Carrasco
Suzanne Ceglia
Carol Dalrymple
Libby Forcum
David and Valerie Friedman
Ann and Fritz Grayson
Cynthia Harris
Roberta Harris
Linda Hinz
Bill and Libby Hinz
Judy Holland
Jessie and Lisa Hoover
Pat Horanberg
Katie Issa
Denise and Mark Jensen
Evie Leslie
Carol McFadden
June Myers
Laura Peskay
Kathy Powell
Virginia Prager-Elford
Louise Schultz
Laura Stotler
Jenewyn VanWie
Kate Waterson

School Tour Docents:
Evan Decker
Bob Feder
Barbara Martinelli
RuthAnne Murthy
Anna Schindler

Gounds:
Mike Jarel
Cathy Martin

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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.
Planning an Event?
by Cathy Martin

Have you ever thought about renting the Freight room for an Event? Have you ever thought holding an event at a place that comes with a ton of personality?

Look no further than Heritage Junction! We have a few locations available that could fit most every type of event; for example, weddings, birthdays, graduations and business meetings.

The Freight room holds 75 people, and it includes tables and chairs. Quester Court has a newly-laid brick courtyard that is perfect for weddings or an outside party.

Nestled in between oak trees and the draw of the mountain is the Ramona Chapel. If a rustic wedding is your thing, we have your spot.

No need to commute to a far-off location. We are close by in Old Town Newhall, practically right next door. Please contact me if you would like details on prices and available dates at cthymrtn@gmail.com.
Demolition of Los Angeles' 6th Street Bridge over the Los Angeles River.
Demolition was proceeding from the left (east) on May 27, 2016.
The 1932 bridge with its two steel arches will be replaced by a bridge with a series of concrete arches.