



The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 42, Issue 3

May - June 2016

Calendar

Saturday, May 14

Artists' Day
8:00 AM-4:00 PM Rancho Camulos
See page 7

Saturday, May 21

Lecture by Donald C. Jackson on William Mulholland and the Saint Francis Dam disaster
2:00 PM Newhall Library
See page 9

Monday, May 23

Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

Wednesday, June 1

Deadline for the July-August Dispatch

Monday, June 27

Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

OutWest Concert Series at The Repertory East, 24266 Main St in Newhall. 8:00 PM

Thursday, May 26: An evening with Jennifer Lind. \$20 for SCVHS members

Thursday, June 23: An evening with Cowboy Balladeer Tom Hiatt. \$20 for SCVHS members

Check 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



He owned the first general store in the new town of Newhall. Hailing from the West Indies, where he was born in 1839, George Campton moved with his father

Thomas to Toronto, Canada, when he was two years old. Thomas Campton had been stationed in the West Indies as an officer in the British army. After his father had opened a mercantile business in Toronto, George Campton started his entrepreneurial career at age 16, when he opened a successful butcher shop in Toronto. Five years later, in 1861, he emigrated by steamer to San Francisco, where he continued in the butcher business. As did many California emigrants before him, Campton had to

take a shot at mining in 1868, but by then the "easy" gold was long gone. He drifted back to Monterey County, by way of San Francisco, and there he had his first experience in merchandising, becoming a clerk in a general store. One year later, he was made the general manager of a large ranch dealing in stock and agriculture.

CAMPTON'S GENERAL STORE

In 1875, a wealthy San Francisco businessman, Henry Mayo Newhall, purchased the Rancho San Francisco in a valley just north of the pueblo of Los Angeles. This valley has been known more recently as the Santa Clarita Valley. Newhall hired Campton as superintendent of the Rancho in May, 1875. The next year, the Western Development Company, a real estate subsidiary of the Southern Pacific

Continued on Page 2

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President's Message

Continued from page 1

Railroad, founded the town of Newhall at the current location of Saugus. Campton left Newhall's employ to open up his own general store in the new community, at the junction of modern-day Bouquet Canyon Road and Magic Mountain Parkway in September, 1876. Two years later, the entire town, including Campton's General Store, was picked up and moved down to its present location centered around Railroad Avenue and Market Street. Campton continued a flourishing business, which included dry goods, general merchandise, lumber and farm implements, groceries, clothing, boots and shoes, and crockery. This second version of Campton's store was located at 8th Street and Railroad Avenue.

But Campton's commitment to the community did not stop with his store. He served as the first postmaster of Newhall for nine years, and he also served a number of times on the school board of Newhall. In his spare time, he was also an insurance agent. A photo of Campton's store from the 1880s identifies the store as an agency for the German-American Insurance Co. of New York and the American Central Insurance Co. of St. Louis.

CAMPTON AND FORKER: BROTHERS IN LAW

While living in Newhall, Campton met and married Gregoria de Soto, a member of a pioneer Spanish family from San Francisco. They, along with their three sons and a daughter, had a home at the northeast corner of 8th Street and Spruce Street (now Main Street) in downtown Newhall.

Gregoria's sister Docliciana Fermina Soto married Pennsylvania emigrant William Nelson Forker in 1886. They had four children, Alma Lenora, Wilfred Milton, Benjamin Leslie, and Ysabel Hermina, the last three of which were born in Newhall. The Forkers lived at the northeast corner of 9th and Chestnut streets in Newhall. Forker had been the first oil commissioner of Kern County. He later served as a notary public in his brother-in-law Campton's store after moving to Newhall. Campton, as an insurance agent for The Fireman's Fund Insurance Company of San Francisco, actually issued a fire insurance policy in June, 1899, to Forker to protect his home in Newhall. The policy covered Forker for fire damage to his home up to a maximum of \$500, which included \$400 on the structure itself and \$100 for a piano in the house. The insurance policy cost Forker \$7.50. Forker got a payout from the policy for a fire in his home which occurred on April 7, 1902. He received \$17.50 from the insurance company for fire damage to the building.

THE STORE BURNS DOWN

Life had its ups and downs for Campton and his family. An arsonist set his store on fire in the evening of March 3, 1882. As reported in the next day's edition of the Los Angeles Herald: "About one o'clock yesterday morning the family of George Compton [sic], storekeeper and Postmaster at Newhall, was awakened by an explosion and found the house on fire, which had made such headway that they barely escaped with their lives. A few minutes afterwards the entire building was in ashes. The fire, which is supposed to have been the work of an incendiary, started in the rear of the store and soon reached some powder which was stored there. The explosion of this roused the inmates and scattered the fire in every direction. But for this they would undoubtedly have been burned to death, for in less than five minutes after they got out the whole building was a mass of flames. There was no water at hand and nothing whatever could be done to save the property, which was a total loss, amounting to \$10,000. The house was insured for \$4,000."

Also on March 4, the Los Angeles Times reported "Night before last there was quite a fire at Newhall about one o'clock. It is supposed that some enemy to George Campton set fire to his store. Mr. Campton's dwelling house was adjoining the store and was also completely destroyed. The family were aroused by the explosion of gunpowder in the store, and came near getting caught by the flames before they got out of the house. The post office was in the store and everything was lost. The property was valued at ten thousand dollars and insured for four thousand."

Campton was determined to rebuild. On April 30, 1882, an article in the Los Angeles Times stated: "Mr. Campton, whose heavy loss by the burning of his large store with all its contents, which was reported in the Times at the time of its occurrence in February [sic], has just completed and taken possession of a better built and more commodious store building on the site of the old one."

In June, 1882, Campton purchased more land from the Western Development Company — Lots 1 and 2 in Block 25 (southwest corner of 8th and Railroad), and Lots 2 and 3 in Block 24 (one parcel distant from the northwest corner of 8th and Spruce). It remains to be determined what he did with this land.

Continued on Page 3

President's Message

Continued from page 2

Campton was also appointed as the representative from Newhall to the general committee to receive President Benjamin Harrison when he passed through Los Angeles, including Newhall and Saugus, on his whistle stop railway Presidential campaign tour in 1891. The tour was of no help to Harrison as he ended up losing his re-election bid to Grover Cleveland in 1892.

THE STORE BURNS AGAIN...AND LATER INCARNATIONS

Campton's new store exploded yet again in 1891 when a fire reached ammunition in the building. He rebuilt a fourth version of the store which he eventually sold to his bookkeeper Frank Landell around the turn of the century. Landell succeeded Campton as Newhall's postmaster and took over the operation of the store, in partnership with Nick Lindenfeld. The store was renamed to Lindenfeld & Landell General Merchandise. By February, 1912, Landell's store had been purchased by Edgar B. Lewman and renamed Lewman & Co. General Merchandise. Lewman also took over as postmaster. Up until 1914, the front of the store pointed towards Railroad Avenue. After 1914, the store was purchased by H.W. Bricker, becoming H.W. Bricker General Merchandise and facing Spruce Street (now Main Street). Spruce street was widened in 1935, after which the old Campton store site became People's Market. Subsequent incarnations of the building included Chitwood's Furniture Store No. 2 and Hilburn Funeral Home. The circa 1914 building burned down in 1961. The site of Campton's old store on Spruce Street is now Abe's Pawn Shop at 24336 Main Street in Newhall.

George Campton died in March, 1923. An obituary in the Newhall Signal of March 9, 1923: "George Campton, one of the pioneer citizens of Newhall, passed away recently in Los Angeles at the age of 83. Mr. Campton located at Saugus the former site of Newhall about 50 years ago and ran a store which was moved here when the town moved. This was the first store in Newhall. Later he was appointed postmaster, an office which he held for many years. Mrs. Campton was Miss De Soto of San Francisco and came from an old Spanish family. The Camptons were very generous and thru them many needy persons received assistance. Mr. Campton is survived by a daughter and three sons."

Alan Pollack

alanpoll@twc.com

Wine Heisted by Cathy Martin

A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL who attended the SCV Historical Society's inaugural wine tasting event on March 19th. It was a wonderful day and a great success! This was the start of a fun annual event that I know will get larger with each passing year.

A special thank you to the wineries whose wine was "heisted" by a group of eager attendees: Melville Winery, Pence Ranch and Winery, Rabbit Ridge Winery, Golden Star Vineyards, San Antonio Winery, Ken Brown Wines, Four Brix Winery, Gainey Vineyard, and Pomar Junction Vineyard and Winery. Estancia Estates Winery's chardonnay was donated by Roger Neipris.

A super special thank you to Mystic Hills Vineyard, Pulchella Winery, and Nuggucciet Cellars for being the first wineries to step up and help our cause, building a new modern museum inside the Pardee House. Thank you also to Trader Joe's for your donation of nuts and dried fruit.

Thanks also to my volunteers and friends who helped with the event: Ed and Marijo Clark, my Wine Heisting partners and procurers of some fine wines; I couldn't have pulled this off without your support. To my colleagues at the SCV Historical Society who offered a hand without a question, other than what can I do to help? Evan and Tina Decker, Barbara Martinelli, Roberto Torres (creator of the Wine Heist logo), Laurie Cotten, David Spinella, and Jeff Prange. Thank you to the Jaycees, Adrienne and Nathan, and to my husband Steve, for helping get all of those pesky last minute details taken care of, and pouring wine like a pro.

Thank you all!



A Not-So-Abbreviated History of Rodeos in the SCV

by John Boston

“Cowboys are special, with their own brand of misery...”

—Willie Nelson

We just had our 23rd annual Cowboy Fest. I've always been a fan of Santa Clarita's Cowboy Festival. What I love about this event is that it attempts to keep our old local Western traditions alive. Since the days of the dons and vaqueros, this valley has had more than its fair share of round-ups, fiestas, barn dances and that spine-fusing, I.Q.-depleting event, The Rodeo.

We've had rodeos on the Rancho San Francisco here (Ignacio del Valle's spread that made up most of the SCV) going back to the 19th century. Back then, EVERY day was a rodeo, with herding, roping, and breaking horses.

In 1921, we had our first modern rodeo here. Around where Newhall Elementary sits today, between 7,000 and 8,000 fans jammed into the ranch there to watch cowboys and cowgirls from all over America compete. There was no fence, no grandstands. Six local residents who came up with the idea stood in a field with satchels of change and collected the entrance fee.

Included in the price of admission was a “free” barbecue for the first 5,000 attendees. The Rodeo of '21 lasted all day and had everything from thoroughbred handicapping to chuck wagon racing, and all the other events in between.

At the end of the event, “Cowboy” Bob Anderson, a local movie producer, and his five entrepreneur friends went to the local Bank of Italy (the old Bank of America at Main & 8th), sat on the floor and spent all night counting mostly coins. But when it was all over, each had made a profit of about \$1,000.

The next year, the five (minus Bob) expanded the rodeo, moving it to where Circle J is today and changed the date to the Fourth of July. The rodeo went bust and all five lost money, despite an attendance of over 10,000 people.

A newspaper reporter noted: “The SPCA has taken most of the joy out of steer wrestling.” The old form was invented by famed black cowboy Bill Pickett, easily one of the toughest hombres of the old West. Bill invented this style of vaulting from his horse, grabbing the steer by the horns, twisting them 180°, then biting the steer on the lips to pull it down. Talk about liking your steak rare...

In 1923, the rodeo moved to the future home of the Baker Arena (now Saugus Speedway) and moved the date back to the end of April. They made money.

The Newhall Rodeo of 1923 was absolutely epic. More than 8,000 folks who enjoyed things cowboy showed up for the

third annual Newhall Rodeo. The festivities started with a parade through town, followed by a huge barbecue. A couple of local cowpokes took top money: Leonard Cesena (whose family still hails from these parts) was first in steer riding, and Hank Wertz Jr. was top man in the calf roping.

Local rancher Fat Jones supplied much of the rodeo stock. Fat, you might recall, had the ranch over by Calgrove, and it was on that acreage where he would discover a complete sabretooth tiger skeleton, perfectly preserved. Many of the eyes were on the celebrities. Three of the biggest movie stars on the planet were here: Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and Tom Mix.

We arrested a rather large gang of ticket counterfeiters at the rodeo, too. Our cops caught up with them early. About 25 con men had sold \$264 worth of the bogus entry passes.

Over the years, the local rodeo would become world-famous, attracting tens of thousands of people per day and turning the sleepy little Santa Clarita Valley into a parking lot. Here's a little time line to help you picture things:

- In 1923, shoe baron C.H. Baker came up with the idea for a big Southern California rodeo. (His brother, Roy, was involved in western sports.) C.H. built the original wooden stadium and a grand home on the property, owning them until 1931.
- That year, Baker sold his ranch to one of Hollywood's biggest stars, Hoot Gibson, and a business partner, Salle Eilers. They owned it until 1935.
- Then, Paul Hill took over operation of the ranch. Paul was done in by the weather. In the late 1930s, we had floods of Old Testament proportions. The Santa Clara River changed course and wiped out Soledad Canyon Road, along with the ranch and stadium. There was no rodeoing there until 1940.
- In 1940, young Art Perkins, son of valley historian A.B., got the idea to bring back the rodeo, albeit on a smaller level. However, with the help of a local lawyer, Arthur Miller (Nope, not Marilyn Monroe's hubby) they took over the Jauregui Ranch in Placerita and thousands attended.
- Same year, 1940, multi-millionaire rancher “Big” Bill Bonelli bought The Baker/Gibson Ranch and repaired the flood damages, and next year the first Newhall-Saugus Rodeo returned with a vengeance.

In the 1930s and 1940s, a Who's Who of Hollywood came out to sit in the stands: Gary Cooper, Clark Gable (who used to take roping lessons from Placerita's Andy Jauregui), Carol Lombard, W.C. Fields, Errol Flynn — the list is almost endless.

Continued on Page 5

John Boston Article

Continued from page 4

The 1940 rodeo featured a chariot race between Hoot Gibson and Tom Mix through the streets of downtown Newhall. Mix won. (Mix, by the way, named his daughter, Thomasina. At least it wasn't Thomasina Mix Jr.)

The next year, more than 75,000 people would attend the event on Soledad Canyon Road.

Hauntingly similar to events of today, during World War II they held the number of fans down to just 5,000. Authorities worried that terrorists or spies would bomb Newhall's typically larger gatherings.

While they weren't household names, over the years we have been home to many Hall of Fame and otherwise famous cowboys, too, who competed in the events. A few of the prize winners even had other jobs.

Slim Pickens? The big, gangly western character actor of a hundred or so films? The cowboy who rode the A-bomb while yelling "Yee-HAAAH!!!" in "Dr. Strangelove"? He competed in several Newhall-Saugus rodeos in the 1940s and '50s. If memory serves me well, he took a second one year in the wild-cow milking contest. That's where you have to corner a range girl cow and fill up a quart milk bottle for time. Good way to lose a hat and the head in it.

In 1953, a young handsome cowpoke named Ben Johnson, who sometimes lived in Placerita Canyon, took top money in the calf roping event. Johnson would later co-star in many westerns, including "Shane," and would later win a little bigger prize than the '53 calf-roping belt buckle: Ben won an Oscar for best supporting actor in "The Last Picture Show."

Andy Devine was a frequent visitor to the big rodeos of his day. He was the sidekick on the "Wild Bill Hickcock" TV show of the 1950s who always creaked at the beginning: "Hey Wild Bill! Wait for me!" Andy had reason to be in the area; he had owned the little Newhall International Airport.

There was some Hollywood actor type who wasn't allowed to risk his neck in the hard-core end of rodeoing. He did take a first in the preliminary parade event. I seem to recall his name was John Wayne, or something like that. The Duke was also one of the directors of the Newhall Rodeo Association in the 1940s.

The area was rich with so many characters, too. Hutch Blunts of the Triple Bull Ranch up Soledad was a rodeo performer who had a little more smarts than most. In the off season, he invited a friend — Cid Cequella — to stay with him. Cid was a world-renowned circus performer and acrobat famous for being able to land on his feet from any position. Hutch had Cid teach him how to land boots first from any angle off a bronco.

There was a bronc rider who lived up Sand Canyon in the 1940s and made the national circuit. His name was Belter Tuler and he was bowlegged. Tuler was his own PR agent, circulating fliers billing himself as "The Cowboy Who Is Curved To Fit The Horse." Belter said he got the idea from a wristwatch ad.

Sam Garrett, owner of the Circle G Ranch in Sand Canyon in the 1950s, was a seven-time world champion calf roper.

Roxie McIntosh was one of the world's top women bronc riders. She had to take medical leave for a while during the 1973 circuit. Pregnant.

Alas, progress reared its ugly head and the great crowds of the Newhall-Saugus rodeos were now a distant roar. A few times, we've tried to revive the tradition. We used to have rodeos from time to time at the old Frontier Days celebrations in the 1960s into the 1990s. (A Canyon Country Chamber exec one year ran out of town with all the box office receipts!)

In 1982, I remember, they held a smallish rodeo at the short-lived Rivendale complex where Towsley Canyon Park is today on The Old Road.

Right after Merle Haggard sang "The Star Spangled Banner," an amazingly knock-down, knuckle-bitingly, eye-wateringly gorgeous buxom and unfettered cowgirl stood. She offered a rebel yell and lifted her blouse, exposing some serious anatomy the size of the world globes from my 6th-grade class.

Now *THAT* was a good rodeo. I think that topless lass got a bigger applause than Mix, Wayne and Bill Hart put together. And no, don't go there: She wasn't an ex-wife, either.

I've got another 10,000 stories about our western heritage here in the Santa Clarita. But, if I go on, I'm going to have to buy ad space.

(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](http://www.johnbostonchronicles.com). You'll be smiling for a week...)

Order Boston's new gripping international thriller, ADAM HENRY:

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Six Simple Dots

by Margi Bertram



When we give tours of the Hart Museum, we sometimes talk about a Braille book that is on display in the Guest Bedroom. It is one of the novels written by William S. Hart in 1933, titled "Hoofbeats." This book is a Western thriller set in the 1870s. According to the book's dust jacket, "Indians, cowboys, hidden treasure, troopers, mustangs, guns, love, and life and death make up as fast-moving and enthralling a tale as one could wish." As with others of Hart's books, an animal is the voice of the story. In this case it's a horse named Middie.

The Museum's collection also has a three-volume Braille version of Hart's autobiography, "My Life East and West." We know that when he was young, Bill's father almost lost his eyesight when he got a small metal shaving in his eye. Fortunately the doctor was able to save Nicholas Hart's vision, but we believe the lasting effect was that Bill was forever sympathetic to those not as fortunate as his father. We believe this was the motivation behind the production of these Braille books, as well as Hart's support of the Braille Institute.

This got me thinking about Braille. I knew it as a tactile writing system for use by those who are blind or visually impaired, composed of embossed raised dots. But what were its origins?

Braille is named after its creator, a Frenchman named Louis Braille, who had lost his sight as a child in an accident. He developed his code at the age of 15 in 1824. It was a replacement for something called night writing that dated back to the early 1800s. This earlier system was designed by Charles Barbier at the request of Napoleon, who was eager for a code that soldiers could use to communicate silently and without light at night. Barbier's system consisted of a 6x6 grid, which meant as many as 12 dots might be needed to represent one symbol. This was soon rejected by the military as it was found to be too difficult to learn.

Louis Braille identified the problem with the earlier system, which was that the grid was too

large for the human finger. It could not sense the whole symbol without moving! Braille realized that by creating a 6-dot cell, a user could move quickly from one symbol to another. This transformed written communication for the visually impaired. His system was published in 1829, and included musical notation. If you've ever wondered why we didn't just use raised print letters, it appears that this was tried way back in the early 1800s, but reading by touch was found to be very difficult, and writing was even more problematic.

- Since braille is not a language itself, but a code by which many languages may be written and read, did you realize there is a different braille code for every language?
- Did you know that back when Louis Braille was creating his code, there was no "W" in the French alphabet, so it was not included? That is why today, the letter does not follow the established pattern of dots.
- Did you know there are also braille codes for mathematics, music, and computing?
- Did you know that in English Braille there are three levels of encoding?
 - Grade 1 – a letter-by-letter transcription used for basic literacy
 - Grade 2 – an addition of abbreviations and contractions
 - Grade 3 – various non-standardized personal shorthand

Braille text can also include illustrations or graphs, with lines appearing as solid or as a series of dots, arrows, or bullets that are larger than braille dots.



In this day of advances in technology, the computer industry continues to expand avenues of literacy for braille users. Software programs and portable devices have greatly enhanced the possibilities for the visually impaired. Since its development, braille continues to be an effective and essential means of enhancing lives. Braille is here to stay.

Time to Smell the Roses

By Maria Christopher

This is the perfect time of year to visit the gardens at Rancho Camulos National Historic Landmark. The museum is open for docent-led tours Sundays at 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00 PM. It will also be open on Saturday, May 14, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM for our annual Artists' Day, a favorite of plein air painters, photographers, and anyone looking for a peaceful, creative retreat. \$25 admission includes morning breakfast treats and a salad buffet luncheon. Docent-led tours of the house museum are also included. See www.ranchocamulos.org or call 805 521-1501 for details about these activities.

This year the rose bloom at Camulos is particularly bountiful, so I thought I would share with you the history of the roses at Rancho Camulos.

There is no record of when roses were first planted at Camulos, but we do know that by the late 1800s they were plentiful and included one variety that was particularly aromatic. So aromatic, that there was an ongoing commercial operation. Everyone living on the Rancho was expected to contribute to the economic activities. Thus, the young women of the del Valle family were tasked with the harvesting of these aromatic roses. They would then take the harvested roses and dry them in large heaps on their bedroom floor, much as today someone would dry smaller amounts of flowers for making potpourri.

It is said that, according to a designated schedule, an entrepreneur would traverse the valley in his wagon, purchasing the crop of dried roses. He would then take them to the Port of Los Angeles to be shipped overseas to countries like Bulgaria and France. There, they would be used in the manufacture of fine perfumes; the attar of the rose, or rose oil extract, was considered then to be more valuable than gold. Even today, it is a very valuable commodity. It is said that once, while traveling to Europe, August Rubel, who had purchased Rancho Camulos from the del Valle family in 1923, came upon a vial of rose oil labeled as from Camulos. It is uncertain if that is history or myth. However, even today in the girls' bedroom, which was located in the northwest corner of the old adobe, on a damp day, some say they can still smell the roses in the "Rose Room".

Alas, today the roses that were once exported to Europe for the manufacture of perfume no longer grow at Camulos. However, there are several old roses, that still

thrive there. Even today, rosarians from far away come to see our old roses. Both the del Valles and the Rubels who resided there were very fond of roses. Over the years an abundance of rose bushes were planted that fill the gardens with a variety of color and a sweet aroma, a pleasure to the senses. So this year, plan on coming out to see the roses of Rancho Camulos ...Where the history, myth, and romance of old California still linger.



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>.

Questers News by Roberta Harris

Nancy Cordova, President of Oak of the Golden Dream Chapter, #381 of the Questers, shows off two Certificates of Recognition, presented to our chapter by Mrs. Vanessa (Scott) Wilk at our December boutique fundraiser:

"It is our honor to recognize Oak of the Golden Dream for your service to the community. Your work helps to insure the preservation and restoration of existing memorials, historical buildings and landmarks." Signed:

Scott Wilk, Member of the Assembly
38th Assembly District, California State Legislature

"It is my honor to recognize you for all you do. Your purpose to educate by research and study of antiques, to donate funds to the preservation and restoration of existing memorials, historical buildings and landmarks is greatly appreciated." Signed:

California Senator Sharon Runner
21st Senate District



Oak of the Golden Dream is currently planning, and seeking funding, for the completion of their project, the Pardee House. When completed, the Pardee House will become the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Museum.

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

Weekend Docents:

Sandra Cattell	RuthAnne Murthy
Sioux Coghlan	Alan Pollack
Evan Decker	Jeff Prange
Sara Floyd	Brent Roberts
Dani Gardner	Anna Schindler
Anna Kroll	Gordon Uppman
Barbara Martinelli	

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

Those who open and close for the docents:

Evan Decker	RuthAnne Murthy
Cathy Martin	Alan Pollack
Barbara Martinelli	

Weekend Questers*

Linda Hinz	Virginia Prager-Elford
Judy Holland	Linda Shellabarger
Pat Horanberg	Paul Shellabarger
Vicki Minelli	Jenewyn VanWie

School Tour Docents:

Evan Decker	RuthAnne Murthy
Bob Feder	Anna Schindler
Barbara Martinelli	

Grounds:

Sandra Cattell	Cathy Martin
Mike Jarel	Steve Martin

*Don't know who the Questers are? See www.questers1944.org

Talk by Dr. Donald Jackson About a New Book on the St Francis Dam Disaster is Scheduled

by Alan Pollack

The Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society will host Dr. Donald C. Jackson, who will give a talk on his new book about the St. Francis Dam collapse: "Heavy Ground: William Mulholland and the St. Francis Dam Disaster". The talk will be given at 2:00 PM on Saturday, May 21, at the Old Town Newhall Library, 24500 Main Street, in Newhall. The general public is welcome, and admission will be free.

Minutes before midnight on March 12, 1928, the St. Francis Dam collapsed, sending more than 12 billion gallons of water surging through California's Santa Clara River Valley and killing some 400 people, causing the greatest civil engineering disaster in twentieth-century American history. This extensively illustrated volume gives an account of how the St. Francis Dam came to be built, the reasons for its collapse, the terror and heartbreak brought by the flood, the efforts to restore the Santa Clara Valley, the political factors influencing investigations of the failure, and the effect of the disaster on dam safety regulation. Underlying all is a consideration of how the dam—and the disaster—were inextricably intertwined with the life and career of William Mulholland.

"[Heavy Ground] does something unexpected. It opens a new perspective onto William Mulholland... [bringing him] to life in all his sharp-elbowed, stubborn glory, saddened and perplexed by the St. Francis Dam debacle yet prideful until the end."—Wall Street Journal

"Heavy Ground offers a penetrating analysis of the 1928 St. Francis Dam disaster. William Mulholland had designed the dam—so critical to Los Angeles' hydraulic ambitions—and his reputation was destroyed when the dam's late-night collapse killed more than 400 people living downstream along the Santa Clara River. But historians Hundley and Jackson do more than pick through the wreckage: theirs is an engrossing narrative, thoroughly researched, extensively illustrated, and deeply satisfying—the single best study of a very dark time."—Char Miller, Pomona College

About the Presenter: Dr. Donald C. Jackson is Cornelia F. Hugel Professor of History at Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania and co-author of *Privilege and Responsibility: William Mulholland and the St. Francis Dam Disaster* (2004) <http://dspace.lafayette.edu/bitstream/handle/10385/1563/Jackson-CaliforniaHistory-vol82-2004.pdf?sequence=1>

A member of the Lafayette College history department for over 25 years, Dr. Jackson holds a B.S. degree in Engineering from Swarthmore College (he also passed the Engineer-in-Training exam administered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania). After working for several years with the Historic American Engineering Record in the National Park Service, he received a M.A. and Ph.D in American Civilization from the University of Pennsylvania.

He is co-author with the late Norris Hundley, Jr. of *Heavy Ground: William Mulholland and the St. Francis Dam Disaster* (Huntington Library Press and University of California Press, 2015), author of *Pastoral and Monumental: Dams, Postcards and the American Landscape* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), co-author with David Billington of *Big Dams of the New Deal Era: a Confluence of Engineering and Politics* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), *Great American Bridges and Dams* (John Wiley, 1988) now in its third printing, and the award-winning *Building the Ultimate Dam: John S. Eastwood and the Control of Water in the American West* (University Press of Kansas, 1995). His international stature as a dam historian is reflected in his editorship of the book *Dams: Studies in the History of Civil Engineering* published by the British-based publishers Ashgate/Variorum in 1998.

With Norris Hundley Jr. he also co-authored "Privilege and Responsibility: William Mulholland and the St. Francis Dam disaster" published in *California History* in 2004. His article "Structural Art: John S. Eastwood and the Multiple Arch Dam" was published in 2009 in *Engineering History and Heritage*, published by the Institution of Civil Engineers; it was awarded the 2010 Overseas Prize by the ICE. His scholarly article in *Technology and Culture* on Roosevelt Dam and the early history of the U.S. Reclamation Service was honored by the Western History Association's Ray Billington Prize for the best article on Western history. He has also authored essays on "Dams" and "Water Policy in the American West." for Microsoft's Encarta Encyclopedia.

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P.O. Box 221925
Newhall, CA 91322-1925
info@scvhistory.com

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Headquarters: Saugus Train Station
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