



The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

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May-June 2020

Calendar

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, Heritage Junction is closed until further notice.

Monday, June 1

Deadline for the July-August Dispatch

Saturday, November 7

St Francis Dam tour rescheduled

Check www.scvhistory.org for other upcoming events when Heritage Junction reopens.

President's Message

by Alan Pollack



When you think about current events, they are literally history happening now. In the first half of the year 2020, we have been living through an event of such titanic proportions,

it is likely to be remembered centuries from now. As of this writing, the lethal coronavirus Covid-19 has infected over one million people and killed tens of thousands worldwide. And the worst is yet to come.

THE SPANISH FLU PANDEMIC

But this is not the first time Los Angeles and the world have faced a deadly virus of apocalyptic proportions. The last one to strike was the Spanish Flu of 1918-1919.

Although it was called the Spanish Flu, the real origin of the H1N1 virus, which ravaged the world, is not known for sure. Theories of origin include a British staging and hospital camp in Etaples, France; a possible North American presence as early as 1915; and mostly debunked claims of a Chinese origin. That same year, World War I was spreading across the globe. Soldiers passed on the influenza as they moved around in the war theaters. In fact, wartime censors squelched news of the virus in the United States, Germany, England, and France. This censorship allowed a neutral Spain to appear as the world's hot spot through newspaper reporting. Suppression of the news, as well as increasing travel capabilities, fueled the advance of the disease. Many soldiers perished as the virus attacked bodies already weakened from malnutrition
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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

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and chemical warfare. Those who survived infected their fellow soldiers, and then family and friends when they returned home. Published estimates have suggested between 50 and 100 million people died worldwide from the Spanish Flu, at a death rate of 2-3% of all those infected. Twenty-eight percent of the 105 million people in the United States became infected with the virus, of whom an estimated 675,000 perished.

Just like our Covid-19, the Spanish Flu was tricky in its initial presentation, which hindered efforts to quarantine people in time to prevent the spread to others. Presenting symptoms included bleeding from the ears and mucous membranes, and a petechial rash consisting of red dots. Doctors misdiagnosed many people with diseases such as cholera, dengue fever, or typhoid.

Most people who died suffered from pneumonia, or lung hemorrhage and edema. Unlike the Covid-19 virus, the Spanish Flu predominantly killed young adults below age 65, with 50 percent of deaths between 20 and 40 years old. It spared the very young and very old. The young may have been disadvantaged by a more robust immune system that overwhelmed and attacked the patient's own body organs while fighting the foreign organism. Deaths of the very young and old perhaps were lessened by their weaker but adequate immune system responses. The Covid-19 virus, by comparison, has its worst outcomes in the elderly. Their weakened immune systems still overreact to the virus, causing an antibody attack on the body's own organs, which we call Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS).

There were three major waves of the Spanish Flu pandemic. The first occurred in early 1918 and resembled a typical flu epidemic. By October 1918, the virus had mutated and caused its deadliest peak. After that peak, the incidence of the illness rapidly declined and was virtually over by the next month, with sporadic deaths extending into March 1919.

At its end, the virus infected over 500 million people, one-quarter of the world's population. The Spanish Flu was called the "forgotten pandemic." Its deadly spread was overshadowed by the coexistent news of World War I. Yet, in raw numbers, the Spanish Flu killed nearly as many people as the Black Death (bubonic plague pandemic) of 1347-1351, which obliterated an estimated one-quarter of the world's population.

THE SPANISH FLU IN AMERICA

The illness was seen in the United States as early as January, 1918, in Haskell County, Kansas. The first documented case was Haskell County native Albert Gitchell, an army cook at Fort Riley, Kansas, who presented with symptoms on March 4, 1918. The second wave reportedly started in the port of Boston in September, 1918, which was seeing many shipments of war machinery and supplies. The return of soldiers fanned the flames of the epidemic in America after World War I ended on November 11, 1918.

A shortage of physicians caused by the tolls of the war and the influenza exacerbated the epidemic. The shortfall was so acute that medical students still in training had to be recruited to care for the sick. Even President Woodrow Wilson caught the Flu while negotiating the Treaty of Versailles to end the war.

THE SPANISH FLU IN LOS ANGELES

The Spanish Flu pandemic reached Los Angeles in mid-September, 1918, when the first cases occurred on a naval vessel in Los Angeles Harbor. Sailors and soldiers were placed under precautionary quarantine. Despite those measures, the Flu spread to the civilian population on September 22, including dockworkers and other harbor employees. Some of the earliest cases appeared amongst the students of Polytechnic High School in downtown Los Angeles.

The city of Los Angeles was locked down on October 11, when Mayor Frederic Thomas Woodman declared a state of public emergency after 680 new cases of Flu had been reported. At-home quarantines were mandated for ill patients. Victims were advised to "stay in bed, keep the room well ventilated, eat enough plain food but not too much, and keep your bowels open." Group meetings were banned, including public funerals, and public transportation vehicles were to be disinfected daily. Schools and churches were to be closed. Violators of the new ordinance would be subject to fines of up to \$500 or imprisonment up to 6 months. All movie theaters, concert halls and other entertainment venues were ordered shut down. Ongoing movie productions had to be stopped, as actors became ill and infected each other. The Flu struck famous Hollywood figures such as Lillian Gish, Mary Pickford, and Walt Disney. In the early stages of the epidemic, hoarders proliferated at

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the stores, emptying the shelves of flu remedies known at the time. All public schools were closed down by the middle of October. Actors and non-actors alike fled from the city to pursue their interests in less crowded rural domains.

Despite the lockdown ordinance of October 11, the Los Angeles Times sought to prevent public panic, stating, "Don't get rattled. It is well to keep soberly in mind at this time the fact that fear kills almost as many people every year as disease. Because a few cases of Spanish influenza have been reported, it does not follow that every swollen tonsil or weeping nostril is caused by this new form or grip. Now is the time to sit tight and not rock the boat."

Advice to the public from the City Health Commissioner Dr. Luther Milton Powers included, "Avoid the person who coughs or sneezes without covering his mouth and nose with a handkerchief. Avoid the person who spits where it will spread disease. He is dangerous as well as indecent. When you cannot avoid crowded places, keep your mouth shut and breathe through your nose. Do not spit on sidewalks, floors, streetcars, or places where germs will spread. Boil your handkerchiefs after they are washed."

Dr. Powers was quoted in the Times the next day: "It is expected that there will be deaths while the epidemic lasts. Most of the cases, fortunately, are of a mild nature. The rapidity with which we bring this condition under absolute control depends upon the extent to which the public cooperates with the health department in preventing spread of contagion."

SPANISH FLU CONTROVERSIES

As with today's Covid-19, the issue of using masks by the public was controversial. On October 23, California Governor William D. Stephens called on California residents to voluntarily wear gauze masks when outside. Mayor Woodman agreed with the Governor's recommendation, but his city council did not. The Council did decide, however, to recommend but not mandate masks, except for those required by the state to wear them, including those with flu symptoms, their close contacts, and health care workers.

The City Council's mandate of business closures angered theater owners, represented by the Los Angeles Theater Owner's Association. They argued their venues had been unfairly forced to close while other businesses remained open. In their opinion, only essential businesses like grocery

and drug stores should be allowed to operate. They stated their goal was to speed up the resolution of the epidemic and to be treated more fairly as compared to other non-essential enterprises. The Council deferred that decision to City Health Commissioner Powers, who declined the request due to his perception of its impracticality. The conflict between the theater owners, Powers, and the City Council continued throughout late November, with one faction advocating the ongoing looser restrictions and another faction pushing the theater owner requests for aggressive and more extensive closures. Most of the Los Angeles public, however, willingly followed the ordinance restrictions. They were already used to restrictions place on them due to the World War.

DECLINE OF THE SPANISH FLU

By the end of World War I in November, flu cases were declining, and city residents became more lax in their flu avoidance. Thousands of people crowded into a park in downtown Los Angeles to celebrate the armistice ending the war. Flu restrictions were stopped by Los Angeles officials, including reopening movie theaters, on December 3, 1918.

The LA Times reported: "From the depression of closed theaters and other places of amusement, closed churches and assembly halls, presence of occasional face masks and frequent warning signs, the city reacted yesterday to the spirit of gladness. People who have been staying closely at home for weeks joined the throngs downtown; even the outside places sent in large numbers of folk to participate in the abolishment of the 'funless' season. Up and down Broadway, and on the other retail streets, the crowds surged each way. Stores were filled with shoppers, and the Christmas trading rush was fully on. Theaters attracted long lines of patrons, hungry for the divertissement of motion picture and vaudeville. Long lines of people reached out into the corridors at the Public Library. The cafes and cafeterias did a rushing business. Everywhere it was apparent that the ban was removed and that the people were eager to take advantage of this condition."

But a resurgence in cases one week later caused schools to close down again and selective quarantine restrictions put back in place. Public gatherings were allowed to continue, and businesses remained open unless they had employees with the Flu. Restrictions ended in January, 1919, with schools reopening by early February.

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Historians and health officials later gave credit to Los Angeles for instituting rapid and consistent measures to combat the Flu. Their diligent efforts resulted in a lower death rate than cities like San Francisco, which was slower to battle the virus. The City of the Angels ultimately survived the worst epidemic in its history to take on the roaring twenties, St. Francis Dam disaster, Great Depression, and World War II. Now just over a century later, we find ourselves in similar circumstances.

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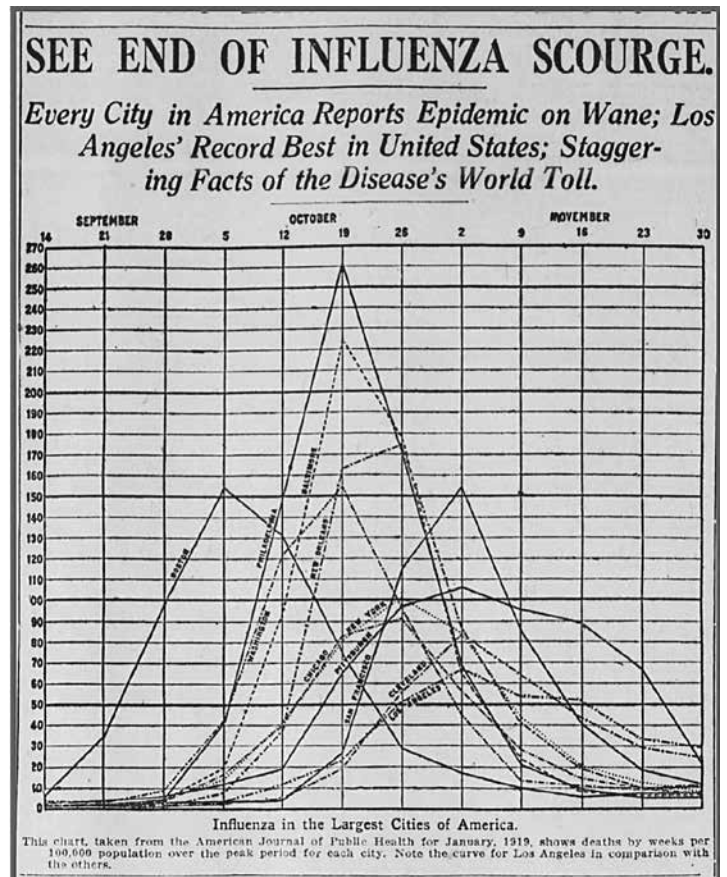
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The toll of the 1918 influenza epidemic on large American cities. The curves show deaths per week per 100,000 population. The highest peak is for Philadelphia, the lowest is for Los Angeles. Boston's peak came earliest, Los Angeles' came latest. From Los Angeles Times, Feb 1919.

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A 1918 War Bond parade in Philadelphia. Crowding at this parade subsequently led to Philadelphia's disastrous flu outbreak.

The Fillmore Monorail

by Martha Gentry

The year 1927 was the high point of the Roaring 20s. Lindbergh flew the Atlantic, Ford brought out its new Model A, and Fillmore was going to get a Monorail – well, maybe...

In May, 1927, Mr. P. S. Coombs came to town. He told city leaders he was formerly chief engineer for the city of Chicago and was now the vice-president of the Sespe Development Company, a Delaware corporation. The Sespe Development Company had determined that developing the Sespe Hot Springs area with a hotel and health spa would be a wonderful idea, and to facilitate people's travel to the hot springs, a monorail would be built. He even had a conceptual drawing of the monorail. The Chamber of Commerce agreed that this would be a wonderful idea. For many years local folks had enjoyed the hot springs and recently there had been people from Los Angeles traveling to the Sespe for "the cure." Wasn't there already the Hot Springs Hotel and a spa? This was a Fillmore joke, since the hotel was a shack without even an outhouse, and the spa was some tarps hung on poles around one of the hot springs.

Coombs was soon joined by Dr. Ernest Basher who said he represented a medical group from Los Angeles interested in developing the health spa, as well as Frank Buren, president of the Sespe Development Company and J. O. Groves, head engineer. A crew was brought in and a wagon road was blasted through to Grassy Flat where the main construction camp would be.

While this was going on, W. E. Campbell, a well-known Fillmore real estate agent, was appointed to sell shares in

the company to the public at \$100 per share (about \$1500 in today's money). The conceptual drawing now adorned the Chamber of Commerce's letterhead with the slogan "Home of the Monorail".

On July 16, 1927 a dedication ceremony was held, chaired by John McNab. McNab was the founder of the Sespe Land and Water Company, which had originally purchased the land Fillmore was on from the heirs of Thomas More. It was the Sespe Land and Water Company who had sold land to the Southern Pacific Railroad for its depot, thus creating the town of Fillmore. P. S. Coombs gave a rousing speech about the plans for the monorail – why it might go as far as Bakersfield, or even San Francisco. Those purchasing shares now would not regret it, think how much your shares in Ford would be if you had bought early! Eventually Mayor W. H. Price dug the first shovelful of dirt with a silver-plated shovel and the project was officially started.

Within a week, P. S. Coombs, Buren, Groves and Basher had all disappeared along with the silver-plated shovel. In September, the Chamber of Commerce was reported as "wanting an inquiry as to what has become of the monorail project." That was the last heard of the project. Fillmore had been suckered. When the old timers were subsequently asked about the project, they didn't seem to want to talk about it. If anyone finds some monorail stock certificates among their family papers, they have no value, but the Museum would love to have one for our collection.

Martha Gentry is the Director of the Fillmore Historical Museum. For more on Fillmore's history, visit fillmorehistoricalmuseum.org.

Monorail ground-breaking ceremony Saturday, July 16 - 1927

C. Arrasmith 'up



A Ton More SCV Babies, Post Virus?

by John Boston

"I don't know nothin' 'bout birthin' no babies, Miss Scarlett ..."
— Butterfly McQueen, from her Oscar-winning performance in
"Gone With the Wind"

Not that I'm expecting here in approaching middle age, but I do wonder. When we come out of this nasty virus/quarantine, will the SCV be overflowing with babies come 9 months from now? Will Henry "Hold The" Mayo Newhall Hospital have to add a few hundred more stories onto their already overwrought maternity wing?

Most importantly, how much will these babies weigh?

Have you noticed that? Women never ask: "Does he have a hairy forehead?" or "...does he resemble Raul, the pool boy?" No. Women want to know one thing and one thing only. "How much does it weigh?"

A baby gets born. The first thing to come out of a gushing feminine relative's mouth is the gender of said infant. The next is the weight. "It's a boy," beams a proud aunt, "Eight pounds, 12 ounces." Like it was a trout.

Like giant freshwater fish, giant babies are rare. You probably have about as much a chance as winning the lottery and getting mauled by an albino grizzly bear — in Canyon Country — while being struck by lightning than to give birth to an actual Guinness Book of World Records baby.

"Darn thing was Moby Infant," pants a grandmother who was pulling Nose Trouble Duty in HMNMH's delivery room. Her Long John Silver voice rises and falls like Castaic Lake during a violent winter storm. "Aaaargh. Fifty-two pounds, 6 ounces," she says, pausing to squint and drink warm ale. "Thar baby be an unholy beast, 3 cubits long. Strangled the delivering doctor and ate a candy striper, all the while with three harpoons in it. Aaargh."



It seems like everyone's going for take-out these days.

The grandmother solemnly limps down the hospital corridor, parrot on shoulder, her wooden peg leg pounding an eerie cadence.

You couples out there during this virus lockdown — you better think long and hard about things like this before the Winter of 2020.

Why do people immediately blurt out, of all things, the weight? I mean, if it's less than 7 pounds, do they have to throw it back?

"I'm sorry," says the attending bean-counter holding a clipboard over the grunting and sea-sailor cursing mother. "Your insurance only covers limited stays at the hospital — like, 10 minutes. I'm afraid you're going to have to put the baby back in there, get dressed and mosey out to the front lawn as we have the table booked."

"Could you just tell us the weight?" asks the perspiring mother, awkwardly trying to swing off the operating bench.

"No," says the HMOian. "Get out."

Tinkerbell. Now that must have been an easy childbirth. "It's a girl. She's an ounce."

Funny. We don't do weight and measure at funerals. "How much did he weigh before he went?" sobs the tearful widow. "Four hundred three pounds, 2 ounces," answers the mortician, "all of it complex carbohydrates, corn oil and regret."

Having penned more than 11,000 stories, John Boston is Earth's most prolific humorist and satirist and has been named Best Newspaper Columnist in America a whole bunch of times. More importantly, he weighed 8 lbs, 3 oz. both at birth and briefly in his frosh year at college when he was sick. Go to Amazon.com right now and buy his latest novel, "The Melancholy Samurai." The SCV's own is currently finishing the sequel to "Naked came the Sasquatch."

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SIMPLY PROJECTING

by Margi Bertram

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A special feature of the William S. Hart home is the Projection Booth. Tracing the history of motion picture projection is the subject for another article, but here I want to focus on the projector, a Simplex 35mm projector, and its origins. The Simplex became the industry standard during the 1920s and is still considered by some to be the best machine of its kind ever made.

One of the creators of the Simplex projector, Edward Stanton Porter was most famous as a filmmaker. Leaving school at the age of 14, he worked a number of odd jobs - newsboy, sign painter, plumber, telegrapher, tailor, stagehand, and machinist - a true jack-of-all-trades.

Porter later assisted with the first screening of projected motion pictures in New York City on April 23, 1896. In early 1898, Porter found work at the Eden Musée, a Manhattan wax museum and amusement hall, which had become a center for motion picture exhibition and production.

It was at the Eden Musée that Porter met Francis "Frank" Cannock, who was employed there as a projectionist. Having been trained as a mechanic in the Singer Sewing Machine factory in Scotland, he started building projectors while working at the Eden Musée.

Starting in 1899, Porter began to photograph news events, which he sold to the Edison Company, among others. He was hired to design and build cameras for Edison in 1900, which led to his work as a director-cameraman.

In 1902 Porter shot *Life of an American Fireman*. One of the earliest American narrative films, it depicts the rescue of a

woman and child from a burning building. Long considered significant for its unusual editing style, later research has suggested that the cross-cut version was re-edited at some time after the film's 1903 release, and in its original form used few, if any, of the pioneering edits claimed.

However Porter remains most well known for another film he directed that same year, *The Great Train Robbery*, starring Gilbert M. 'Bronco Billy' Anderson, considered the first Western film star. It is widely acknowledged to be the first film to piece together different shots into a narrative of different viewpoints and locations. Made up of 14 separate shots, it includes effects that would have been bold and exciting to the audiences. In the final shot of the film, one of the bandits faces the camera and fires his gun directly at it—startling audience members by placing them in the position of the train's passengers. The industry's first major box-office success, *The Great Train Robbery* is credited with establishing the realistic narrative, as opposed to Méliès-style fantasy, as commercial cinema's dominant form.

Starting in 1908, working together, Edwin Porter and Frank Cannock designed the first Simplex projector in the back room of O'Keefe's Saloon at 42nd Street and Vanderbilt Avenue in New York City, the first sketches being done on the back of menu cards.

The Precision Machine Company was founded in 1909 to manufacture the Simplex. The first models of the production Simplex appeared in 1909, with the first full year of production in 1910. On July 11, 1916 the Simplex was patented in New York.



FivePoint, City Thanked for Supporting Historic Restoration

A press conference on Friday, February 28, honored the public-private partnership of Valencia developer FivePoint and the City of Santa Clarita to cover the cost of a new, historic-looking metal roof for the Newhall Ranch House at Heritage Junction Historic Park.

It's the first step toward the full restoration of the building, which once served as the local headquarters of The Newhall Land and Farming Company. The event included the presentation of a \$25,000 check from FivePoint to the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society, matching the city's contribution to the project. See photo on page 8.



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Celebrating funding for the new roof for the Newhall Ranch House. From left: Barbara Martinelli*; Greg Wilzbach*; Laurene Weste (SCVHS board & City Council), Mayor Cameron Smyth, Don Kimball (FivePoint Community President), Don Cruikshank (Parks Commissioner), Marsha McLean (City Council), Leon Worden*; Pat Horanberg*; Philip Scorza*; Marcelo Cairo*
* - SCVHS board) See page 7.