Ever wonder how the towns of Newhall and Saugus got their names? Or about the man for whom our main local hospital is named? A great opportunity to learn about the life of town founder Henry Mayo Newhall is coming on Saturday, January 27, at 2:00 PM when Newhall’s great-great grandson Tony Newhall will deliver a talk on his famous ancestor at the Saugus Train Station.

The town of Saugus, California is named after Saugus, Massachusetts, where Henry Mayo was born on May 23, 1825. He was an adventurous soul and left Saugus at the age of 13 to become a cabin boy on a ship headed for the Far East. Adventure turned to danger on the high seas of the Pacific, when he fell off the high rigging of the vessel and broke both of his legs.

Newhall returned to Saugus, MA, to heal, but eventually he wound up in the City of Brotherly Love - Philadelphia. Here he learned the trade that would make him a wealthy man, when he was hired by the auction house of Myers, Claghorn, and Co. Henry became a talented auctioneer, and after a mere two years he was offered a partnership and job as an auctioneer in Nashville, TN. The partnership offer failed to materialize so he started his own auction house (Newhall and Baker) in Pulaski, Georgia, and moved it back to Nashville, where he became a smashing success at age 24. He met his future first wife Sarah Ann White while in Nashville.

Newhall married Sarah Ann in 1849, but a few weeks later he joined the California Gold Rush by boarding a ship to Panama, crossing the Panamanian jungle, then taking another ship to San Francisco to seek his fortune along with thousands of other 49ers. In common with many of them, Newhall was not successful in...
Once again, on Saturday, March 10, the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society will present a lecture on the collapse of the St. Francis Dam in March, 1928, to be followed by a bus tour to inspect the dam site.

The resulting flood rushed down San Francisquito Canyon and the Santa Clara River, and killed about 450 people. The disaster ended the career of William Mulholland as head of Los Angeles’ water system.

Details of the lecture and tour are to be announced. Contact 254-1275 or info@scvhistory.com to be put on the interest list.

Living History: The Mexican War in California
by Alan Pollack

On October 29 at the Saugus Train Station in Heritage Junction, historian Cap Cresap presented a living history event about the Mexican War in California. Between the years 1846 and 1848, the United States and Mexico fought a war that began as a territorial dispute over Texas but ultimately resulted in the cession to the United States of the area including the future states of California, Nevada, Utah, and portions of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming. Southern California had a small but important part in the War.

The highlights of the afternoon were representative military uniforms and the firing of cannons from the period 1760-1850.

Recent Docents

Thank you to the following members who served as docents during October-December:

Frank Adella  Barbara Milteer
Jeff Boultinghouse Sandra Neil
Laurie Cartright Alan Pollack
Sioux Coghlan Pat Saleto re
Francesca Gastil E. J. Stephens
Marla Khayat Konrad Summers
Karen Limbaugh Gordon Uppman
Bill Limbaugh Kristyn VanWy
Barbara Martinelli Michelle Veasman
the diggings. He arrived back in Stockton almost penniless but fell back on his previous profession and auctioned off all his remaining clothes. He eventually joined the auction house of Hall and Martin in San Francisco, where he was again enormously successful. By the end of 1851, Newhall took over the company, which he renamed H.M. Newhall & Company.

Newhall next turned to real estate and bought up lucrative land parcels in San Francisco and surrounding towns. His timing couldn’t be better as San Francisco boomed in the 1860’s and made him very rich. Newhall next became a railroad entrepreneur; he helped finance and became the President of the San Francisco & San Jose Railroad, which was completed in 1863.

Newhall wanted to secure the government contract to build the western end of the planned transcontinental railroad, but he could not compete against the the “Big Four”, the shrewd managers of the Central Pacific Railroad. Collis P. Huntington, Charles Crocker, Leland Stanford, and Mark Hopkins outmaneuvered Newhall and gained the rights to build the western half of the transcontinental railroad, completing it in 1869 by joining Union Pacific’s tracks at Promontory, Utah. The Big Four then turned to California and bought up small railroads. Newhall’s railroad became a target of a hostile takeover as they bought up its stock. Newhall eventually gave up the fight and wisely sold out to the Big Four’s Southern Pacific Railroad in 1870. As consolation, Newhall was permitted to sit on the Board of Directors of the Southern Pacific.

Now our story gets closer to the Santa Clarita Valley. Newhall began buying up old Spanish ranchos in Central and Southern California. Most significant was the Rancho San Francisco, which he purchased for $90,000 in 1875. This was the future SCV!! He knew that the Southern Pacific planned to extend a line through this valley, so the same year he granted a right-of-way through the valley to the Southern Pacific for $1. He also deeded land to the railroad to establish the town of Newhall, which in 1876 saw its first inhabitants; this was the year that Southern Pacific’s line was completed at Lang Station in Soledad Canyon, with Charles Crocker presiding over a golden spike ceremony.

While Henry Mayo still kept his primary residence in San Francisco, he did spend significant time in his town and built the elegant Southern Hotel in 1878 (it burned down 10 years later.) In March, 1882, Newhall decided to ride his horse through his Rancho San Francisco, a bad decision as the horse stumbled and threw him to the ground. He was taken back to San Francisco and died a few days later at the age of 56. The next year his widow and sons started the Newhall Land and Farming Company…..but that’s a whole other story!!!

The Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society is honored to have Henry Mayo descendant Tony Newhall at the Saugus Train Station to talk about the life of our town’s founder. The general public is welcome to attend this important event. Admission will be free. For more information on this and other upcoming programs from the SCVHS, please call 661-254-1275. Website: www.scvhs.org.

On October 28, as part of the activities on Make a Difference Day, the masts for a train-order board (a manually-operated semaphore signal to show if orders were ready to be picked up,) a train order stand, and a “wig-wag” grade crossing signal were installed next to the Saugus Station. These signals help recreate the appearance of the station as an active railroad office.

**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.
The Signal Project on Make a Difference Day, October 28, Was Made Possible by... 

THE FOLLOWING LOCAL BUSINESSES-

AV Equipment Rentals
{Mike Redmond (661) 259-2155}
Provided heavy equipment AND operators

White Cap Industries
{Julio LaGuardia (661) 294-7737}
Provided anchor bolts and fittings

Lowe’s Home Improvement
{Jessica (661) 297-1400}
Provided rebar, ties and dry concrete for finishing

National Ready Mix Concrete
{Mike Randolph and Helen (661) 252-8181}
Provided concrete for the footings

Dunn Edwards Paints
{Ron Schaffer (800) 735-0337}
Provided Aluminum Paint for poles

Metrolink
Flagged their trains during our equipment moves

...AND THE VOLUNTEER HELP PROVIDED BY-

The students of Sierra School of Santa Clarita
{Channette Ingram (661) 702-9996}
Clearing weeds, digging footings, scraping and painting of the poles

Rancho Simi Foundation
{Tom Bergh (805) 581-3462} Plans for foundations

Mike Jarel
Jim Escalante
John Lesperance
Railroad expertise, experience and being there

Stephen Mitchell
Designed, planned and created foundations

Make a Difference Day Volunteers
{Rodney Geist (661) 250-3720}
Support and completion

The original Train Order Board in Saugus
Photo by Gordon Glattenberg

Dated Material: Please Do Not Delay

The Heritage Junction Dispatch
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Newhall, CA  91322-1925
info@scvhistory.com

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Headquarters: Saugus Train Station
24101 San Fernando Road, Newhall
Open to the public each Saturday and Sunday
1:00 to 4:00 PM
Kingsberry House open the first Sunday
of each month from 1:00 to 4:00 PM

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“Preserving the best of the past for the good of the future”

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