



The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 40, Issue 1

January-February 2014

Calendar

Monday, January 27

Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

Monday, February 3

Deadline for the March-April
Dispatch

Monday, February 24

Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

Check www.scvhistory.org for other upcoming events.

President's Message

by Alan Pollack



The Melrose family of Acton had some wild times in the Santa Clarita Valley's Wild West days. Most notable was the 1903 gunfight in Acton during which Norman Melrose shot down William

Broome in front of the Acton Hotel after a long running feud between the two gentlemen. But violent episodes in the Melrose family did not start with Norman. In fact, his sister Harriet Farmer was brutally murdered, allegedly by an Indian, in November of 1890.

Norman's mother Nancy Michels from Kennebec County, Maine, met and married William Melrose in Edwards County, Illinois, on October 6, 1836. They eventually had eight children and moved out to Los Angeles, where

William died in 1888. The former Harriet Melrose, one of Norman's older siblings, lived in Mint Canyon with her husband William Farmer.

MOJAVE MURDERERS

On the morning of November 14, 1890, Mrs. Farmer was alone in her house with two or three children. As was common in those days, there were differing reports as to exactly what happened, but apparently she was approached by three unidentified Mojave Indians who asked for a drink of water. After obtaining the water, one of the men grabbed Mrs. Farmer and began pulling her away from the house. She screamed and managed to break free of his hold, but as she scrambled to get back in her house, the man pulled out his Winchester rifle and shot her in the back, piercing her heart and killing her instantly. Yet another report stated that she had been shot in the head. The murderers then demanded money from her children, and proceeded to ransack the house and took everything that

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Union Pacific 4014, the World's largest steam locomotive, has been on display at the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds for over 50 years. It is now on its way to Cheyenne, WY, for restoration and eventual operation on passenger excursions.

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

President's Message

Continued from page 1

they could carry away. Before departing, they took a shot at the children and missed, after which the Indians ran off into the canyon.

Later that afternoon, John or George W. Clark (his name differed in various reports) was returning to Lang Station in Soledad Canyon after a trip over to Mint Canyon. When he was about a mile away from Lang, Clark was ambushed and two shots were fired at him. The second shot hit him in the wrist, causing a minor injury. Clark was not able to see who shot at him, as he made his way quickly to open ground. The shooter was later presumed to be the same Indian who had murdered Mrs. Farmer. It was thought that the murderer mistook Clark for a posse member searching for him, and therefore shot at him.

THE POSSES' SEARCH BEGINS

It was not until the next day that Acton Postmaster Rudolph E. Nickel was able to send out a telegram to report the murder to United States Marshal George E. Gard and Los Angeles County Sheriff Martin Aguirre. Nickel immediately formed a posse of a dozen men who were able to follow tracks left by the suspects leading southwards towards Humphreys. Another well-armed posse consisting of Marshal Gard, Sheriff Aguirre, Deputy Marshal Jenkins (perhaps William Jenkins?), Deputies Hammel, Brady, and Avila, and accompanied by Coroner Weldon took the 12:45 train to Mint Canyon to search for the perpetrators. The newspapers reported several parties out looking for the suspects, who were likely to escape since they had an 18 hour head start.

Of note, Gard had been appointed by the Senate as United States District Marshal of the Southern District of California on February 6, 1890. He served in that office until his term expired in 1894. Aguirre, a one-eyed lawman who carried a knife instead of a gun, had the distinction of being the first Latino sheriff of Los Angeles County, serving from 1888 to 1890. He was best known for his heroism in saving the lives of 19 people from the churning waters of the Los Angeles River during the flood of 1886. The San Francisco Call newspaper reported on November 16, 1890, "Mr. Aguirre is of the opinion that the murderers are half breeds, and that they will endeavor to cross the mountains in to Arizona. The officer has outlined his plans and will leave no stone unturned to capture the gang."

DESCRIPTION OF THE SUSPECT

The Los Angeles Herald of November 17 reported the Indian to still be at large; they were now only reporting one suspect rather than three. He was described as a "Chimahuia Indian from Fort Tejon, 25 years old, 5 foot 8 inches in height, medium build, face smooth, not full nor exactly thin, complexion medium light for an Indian, cheek bones not very prominent, wears dark-colored sack coat and vest, buttons on vest of different colors, pants mixed grey, badly frayed at the bottom and much worn on inside nearly to the knee, black slouch hat, sharp pointed lace shoes, about number 9, with three nails on outside of the sole of the left shoe. He is well acquainted with the country near Calico; speaks good English; carries a 44-calibre Ballard rifle."

Two days later, the posses continued to chase the suspect throughout the region. Sheriff Aguirre was accompanied by two Melrose boys (brothers of Mrs. Farmer), Deputies Hammel, Villiejos, and Brady, Thomas F. Mitchell, and Weston. They had searched all over within a five mile radius of Placeritos and Capitan Canyons without success. They then left from Mitchell's ranch to scour the area around Mint Canyon, Dead Man's Canyon, Elizabeth Lake and Castaic Canyon.

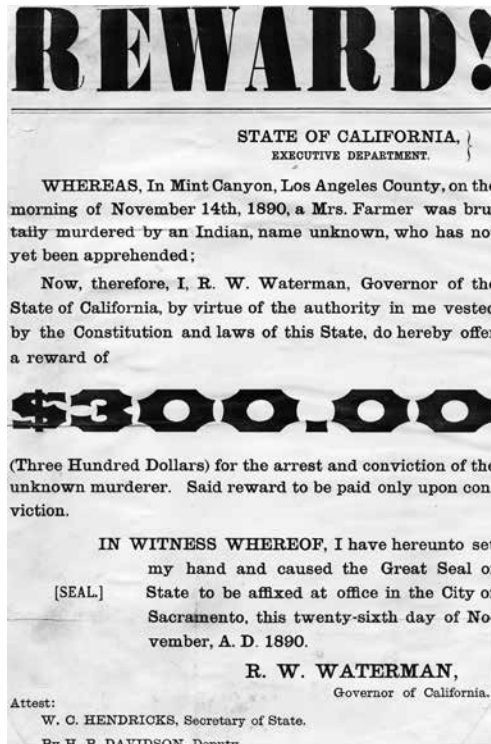
THE LAST SIGHTING

The last known sighting of the Indian occurred on November 20, when a Mexican boy reported meeting a man fitting the suspect's description about 18 miles from San Fernando heading in the direction of Big Rock Creek in the Mojave Desert. The Indian inquired as to whether the boy had seen any white

men or Mexicans armed with guns hunting in the area. He also appeared to be starving and begged the boy for food. The Indian was thought to be headed towards his father's home located 16 miles east of Big Rock Creek.

That same day Postmaster Nickel obtained signatures on a telegram asking California Governor Robert Waterman (1887-1891) to offer a reward for the capture of the Indian. Waterman responded on November 26, offering a reward of \$300 for the arrest and conviction of the murderer.

The end of this story unfortunately remains unknown, as we are thus far unable to locate any subsequent news reports relating to the capture or conviction of the suspect. Stay tuned for the sequel, if and when we find it!



Before the Oscars by Rachel Barnes



In January, 1927, a studio executive named Louis B. Mayer had an idea that he pitched to a few of his professional colleagues: Form a non-profit membership organization that supports

the advancement of the relatively new film industry. By May of the same year, Mayer's idea was an incorporated organization with elected officers - silent film great, Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., was the first president. In early 1928, one of the first committees, the Awards of Merit Committee, proposed the organization present awards for extraordinary achievement in film on an annual basis.

The organization's Board approved, and the first awards ceremony was a gala black-tie affair at the Blossom Room of the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel on May 16, 1929. There were 270 guests, and it cost a whopping \$5 for each of them to attend. The organization's president, Douglas Fairbanks, hosted the evening's festivities, which lasted 15 minutes, and he presented 12 awards in categories we have all come to know and love: Best Actor went to Emil Jannings for his work in *The Last Command* and *The Way of All Flesh*. Best Actress went to Janet Gaynor for her performance in three different films, and Best Picture went to the Paramount production, *Wings*. Surprisingly, the most historically significant movie – *The Jazz Singer*, the first talkie – received only one nomination, to Alfred A. Cohn for Best Writing, Adaptation; he did not win. The movie did, however, receive a special award for its achievement.

Yes, ladies and gentleman, that fateful May evening in 1929, which featured black ties, a catered dinner, and gold statuettes in the shape of an Art Deco-inspired knight with a sword, was the first Academy Awards ceremony. Not only did that fancy affair kick off a tradition that will see its 86th iteration on March 2, 2014, but it also, interestingly enough, was the only ceremony in this 86-year history that was not broadcast by radio. The ceremonies have been telecast since 1953, and in color since 1966.

Why bring all this up?

Well, what about the films, and actors, and directors before 1927? Was there any kind of award system in place for these early stars? Broncho Billy Anderson, William S. Hart, and other silent film stars may have received lifetime achievement awards from the Academy in later years, but what about at the height of their careers?

That question is answered if you come by the William S. Hart Museum, the former home of the silent film megastar, because on display you will see two sterling silver examples of early movie-star awards. They were called Silver Loving Cups, and come hear all about them when you take a guided tour of Hart's hilltop mansion. It's a worthwhile visit because you will not only see the Silver Loving Cup trophies, but costumes, props, and other memorabilia associated with early Hollywood, too!

Can you imagine a 15-minute Oscar ceremony nowadays?



The 1929 Ceremony

Support the SCVHS through Ralphs purchases.

The Historical Society recently received this letter from Ralphs Grocery Stores:

Dear Community Contributions Organization-

Thank you so much for your ongoing support of Ralphs. With your help and the support of your supporters and friends, Ralphs is proud to report that we contributed almost \$2.5 million this past year through our Community Contributions Program to valued community organizations such as yours. We are equally pleased to tell you that Ralphs is committed to giving another \$2.5 million during the next 12 months.

To reach that goal, we will need to count on your continuing participation and partnership. On our end, we pledge to make the Community Contributions Program as easy to use and as effective as possible. We truly believe it is an unmatched opportunity for your supporters to strengthen their favorite non-profit community organization.

Our new program year begins on September 1, 2013. Your organization is still active and will remain active in the program. Your supporters, however, will continue donating only through August 31, 2013.

Participants can start registering for the new term on September 1, 2013. To ensure your organization continues to receive the benefits of the program, your supporters will need to register and/or re-register as quickly as possible on or after that date.

Please pass the following information on to all your supporters, family and friends who would like to participate:

Participants are required to register for the new term at www.ralphs.com or by using a scan bar letter (see instructions below in order to obtain a scan bar letter) at the register starting September 1, 2013. Even if your participants registered as recently as June, July or August 2013, they are required to register again beginning September 1st.

For your convenience, step-by-step website registration instructions can be found at www.ralphs.com; click on Community, click on Community Contributions, click on 'For participant questions, click here'. If you would like to receive your customized scan bar letter, which is our alternative form of registration, please email your request to community.programs@ralphs.com

Hart Park News by Frank Hoffman

Hart Park has been very busy lately, with several new arrivals in our barnyard, several annual events that have come and gone, and a couple of great existing programs that are year-round and going strong.

To begin with, we have recently received a new mule deer fawn (named *Abby*), several new chickens, and two new wild boar. The fawn was a rescue that was brought to us by our new Animal Keeper, Rachael Komulainen, via the California Wildlife Center - a wild animal rescue facility housed in the Santa Monica Mountains. The wild boar were also donated to the barnyard; their names are *Luke* and *Leia*, and they are growing fast. They're being housed next to our older boar (a female named *Gracie*), and they seem to be having a great time in their new home.

We're having another great year's end, having recently supported or co-sponsored these events here...

The 20th Annual Native American Powwow

The 13th Annual Bow Wows and Meows Pet Fair

The Santa Clarita Valley Rose Society's 25th Annual Rose Show and Art Exhibit

The 3rd Annual Holiday Christmas Boutique and Craft Fair
"Cowboys and Carols" at the Hart Mansion (another sell-out this year)

Looking forward, Hart Park will continue to offer our every-Friday *Walking Club*, which visits many locations throughout the Santa Clarita Valley (as well as Hart Park) and supports a healthy lifestyle by encouraging physical fitness and exercise. These are walks of between 3 and 5 miles, which start here at 8:00 AM near our park entrance. Locations vary weekly, so please call the park office at 661 259-1750 or 259-0855 for information about that week's walk, and come out and have some fun with a great bunch of folks.

In addition to the Walking Club, every Wednesday in Hart Hall we are now offering a *Hula and Tahitian Island Dance Class* for ages 5 years old and up. Every level of experience (or lack of) is welcome, and sign-ups are in the Hall on those days, beginning at 4:00 PM. These classes are also offered year-round and are an exciting way for students to develop grace and confidence, understand a new culture, and develop physical fitness by practicing dance routines to rhythmic island music and drumbeats while learning the basic movements that express the enchanting mood and beauty of the islands.

Election Time

Nominations were taken at the last meeting for the Board of Directors of the Society, for the next election to the board. Because 5 candidates were nominated for the 5 available positions, they will be approved by acclamation under the following section of the bylaws at the annual meeting on January 27 at 6:30 PM in the Saugus Station:

Article II, Section 4-Nomination and Election of Directors

A. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of names equal to the number of vacancies on the Board, and will present the slate at the November membership meeting. At the November meeting only other nominations may be made from the floor, or received in writing. If the nominee is present at the meeting, has given written permission for the name to be submitted into nomination, and has at least one sponsor, his name may be added to the list of nominees to be presented to the general membership at the election the following January. If the proposed nominee is not present at the November meeting, his name may also be added to the list of nominees only if the nomination is in writing, signed by five sponsors, and contains his written permission for his name to be submitted into nomination. The nomination must include a biographical sketch and the written permission of the nominee.

B. The members will be notified of the names in nomination not later than 30 days prior to the annual membership meeting.

C. If, at the annual meeting, the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies to be filled, they shall be elected by resolution of the members present. If there are more candidates than vacancies, election will be by secret ballot.

D. There will be no cumulative or proxy voting; those candidates receiving the largest number of votes will be declared elected.

Board members up for re-election are:

Sioux Coghlan

Our current secretary, she has served on the board for four years. She works full time at Highlands Elementary School teaching 5th grade. She enjoys her hobbies, one as docent for the SCVHS where she continues to learn about the history of the SCV and meet people on a monthly basis.

Duane Harte

SCV Historical Society board member since 2001. Treasurer since 2004.

Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commissioner for the City of Santa Clarita 1999-2002, 2007-present. Past Chairman 2002 and 2010.

Newhall Redevelopment Committee 1998-2012, past Chairman.

President, SCV Veterans Memorial

President, American Legion Riders Post 507

SCV Chamber of Commerce member 1995-present. Chairman of the Board 2004.

Santa Clarita Man of the Year 2003.

Past president, Friends of Mentryville

Past president, Friends of the Santa Clarita Libraries

Founding president, Senior Center Foundation

Board Member, Committee on Aging 2002-2009

Business owner 1981-2013, retired

Member of various other boards and committees

I am running for another term on the board of the SCV Historical Society because there is still a lot of work to be done to preserve the history of the Santa Clarita Valley. I believe I have been an asset to the board for the past 12 years and would continue to be an asset to the Society as a whole.

Alan Pollack

It has been my pleasure and privilege to serve as Historical Society President over the past six years. In addition to running Board meetings, I have continued to serve as a docent and program chairman, bringing many interesting historical lectures to the Saugus Train Station, and doing publicity for the Society to the media and community. I also spoke before the Santa Clarita City Council to help win passage of Santa Clarita's Historical Preservation Ordinance. I have been the webmaster for the scvhs.org website and have been co-webmaster of the scvhistory.com website. As a local historian, I have written numerous articles on Santa Clarita History, which have been published in the Heritage Junction Dispatch, Santa Clarita Signal, and scvhistory.com. I have co-authored a book on Santa Clarita history for Arcadia Publishing and have another book coming out in the spring.

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Elections

Alan Pollack, Continued from page 5

On television, I have appeared on interview programs on SCVTV, and also nationally did a segment on the St. Francis Dam disaster for the Travel Channel's "Mysteries at the Museum" program. I have also been interviewed on the Historical Society and SCV history on local radio station KHST. I am currently working on getting historical signage in Old Town Newhall, and obtaining national recognition for the St. Francis dam site. My other career has been as an Internal Medicine physician for Kaiser Permanente for the past 27 years. It would be an honor to continue my service to the Historical Society and to promote the amazing history of the Santa Clarita Valley.

Laurene Weste

Serving as a board member for the Santa Clarita Historical Society has been rewarding in assisting to preserve our local history, unique in the State of California. Laurene is a lifetime member and has worked diligently to bring about the adoption by the City of an historical preservation ordinance. Continuing to work on our historic resources is a wonderful opportunity to save our history for future generations.

Councilmember Laurene Weste was elected to the Santa Clarita City Council in 1998, re-elected 2002, in 2006, and in 2010. She has served as Mayor for the City of Santa Clarita three times. As a former Commissioner for the City Parks and Recreation Commission, Councilmember Weste has overseen the establishment of numerous parks, the preservation of thousands of acres of open space, and the construction of a cross-town trail system that is widely heralded as a crowning achievement of our young City. She is also a lifetime member of the Santa Clarita Historical Society. As a Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Advisory Board Member, she spearheaded the drive to save historic 800-acre Mentryville, which is the first oil town in California, for future generations. She has served as a former Director of the Santa Clarita Valley Committee on Aging and as a volunteer for the Senior Center, helping safeguard the programs that assist our most experienced citizens and give them the dignity they deserve. Councilmember Weste is very proud of her work that led to the funding and construction of the City's

Veterans Historical Plaza in Old Town Newhall. The Plaza features story stations for every U.S. conflict, as well as commemorative bricks, flags for the five branches of the military, a donor wall, a grassy area, drinking fountain and benches. She helped bring about the City's Open Space Preservation District, which has successfully preserved thousands of acres of open space in and around our community, serving as a buffer from outside development.

In the future, she would like to see the continued revitalization of Old Town Newhall, an open space green belt completely surrounding the City and continued preservation of the last unchannelized river in Southern California, the Santa Clara River.

Roberto Torres-Azpeitia

Formal education at Guadalajara University's School of Plastic Arts

Graduated 1985, Graphic Design and Marketing.

Actually running a home based business as Graphic Designer Freelance

Working in the community for Barnes and Noble Bookseller Store

Volunteering for the Historical Society since 2008

Board Member since 2012

Serve the office for 6 months (2012 to 2013)

In addition, participated in several fund raising events for the organization such as...

- Heritage Haunt 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2013

- Wild West Days 2012

- Fiesta Mexicana 2012

- Day of the Dead 2012

- Christmas Celebration 2012

I'm proud of volunteering my time and talent to this organization for all what it represents as the rescuer of the History and Heritage of the Santa Clarita Valley, and I am proud to be the representative of the Mexican/Latino Heritage side of the Santa Clarita Valley within the organization.

Quester News by Roberta Harris

Oak of the Golden Dream Chapter recently held their annual luncheon and boutique, attended by about 100 people. The proceeds from this very successful fundraiser will be dedicated toward completing the restoration of the Pardee House, which is to house The Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society's Museum.

The Questers

An International non-profit organization founded in 1944 that supports preservation and restoration of artifacts, historic buildings and sites, and promotes the study and research of antiques.

Our chapter is currently looking for new members. For more information about The Questers check us out at:

www.calquest.org or contact Roberta Harris at 661 257-0890 or roberta@myquesters.com

Join the SCV Historical Society Today!

Life Member	\$350.00
Life Member with spouse	\$500.00
Corporate	\$200.00
Non-profit	\$50.00
Family Member	\$50.00
Regular member	\$25.00
Senior Member (60+)	\$15.00
Junior (18 & under)	\$9.00

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

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

Weekend Docents and Open-House Volunteers:

Wendy Beynon	Anna Kroll
Linda Casebolt	Darryl Manzer
Sioux Coghlan	Debra Martin
Laurie Cotten	Barbara Martinelli
Brett Cotton	RuthAnne Murthy
Sarah Floyd	Alan Pollack
Francesca Gastil	Gordon Uppman
Harold Hicks	

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

Those who open and close for the docents:

Linda Casebolt	Barbara Martinelli
Duane Harte	Cathy Martin
Ed Marg, Jr.	Alan Pollack

Weekend Questers and Open-House Volunteers*

Cathy Altuvilla	Linda Hinz
Joanie Colette	Sandra Knopf
Nancy Cordova	Dee Roche
Cynthia Harris	Jane Rogers
Roberta Harris	Sue Yurosek
Judy Holland	

School Tour Docents:

Bob Feder	Debra Martin
Harold Hicks	Barbara Martinelli
Francesca Gastil	RuthAnne Murthy

School Tour Questers:

Linda Hinz	Sandra Knopf
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Grounds:

Kathleen Lucan	Glen Terry
Ed Marg, Sr	

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

Missed Satan by Just 5 Numbers. . .

by John Boston

"If The Phone Doesn't Ring, It's Me."-
song title by Jimmy Buffet

We have paradox built in to all of us when it comes to newness. New clothes? New baby? New love of our life? That's all fine and hunky dory. But new neighbors who happen to be Hell's Angels? New parking ticket? New telephone area code? No. No thank you very much, please.

On a mid-December Saturday in 1999, we switched our phone IDs in the Santa Clarita Valley. The 805 was dead, long live the 661. I would have preferred 666 as a new area code. That way, I could smile a toothy smile when out-of-district friends inquire and sardonically reply: "Yes, I live in hell."

But alas, no 666 as even a crumb of negotiation. From that day almost exactly 14 years ago, I became a 661 Man. Interestingly, I might not be a 661 Man for long. The phone-people thinkers predicted back then that come the year 2012, we'd be changing to yet another area code.

Which I hope would be 666.

"Hello," says the telephone answering machine, "you've reached 666-666-6666 - the offices of the Santa Clarita Valley Office of Tourism. We have a light-to-medium industrial base, several hundred annoying amusement parks and a base population of 42 million people. And, we're evil. Speak clearly and slowly at the beep or your soul belongs to us."

That would be a sight. All us Santa Claritians walking around with cell phones, red capes and serpentine tails. As if the yuppies don't do that already.

Technology once again forced me to expand my puny little cranium, made me memorize one more thing. Cell phones. Separate Internet lines. Faxes. Pagers. ATM connections. They are the small gods who require not the live, beating human heart for sacrifice, but their own number. Finally, poor old 805 could hold only so many sequences before it would pop and 661 was invented.

The very first telephone in the SCV was installed in 1900 at Campton's General Store. I'd just kill to find out what that telephone number was back then. One, probably. The second phone in the Santa Clarita wasn't added until 1913, and I would have loved to have been there, sheepishly grinning in the background as the owner walks toward the shrill ringing and before picking it up predicts: "Must be somebody over at Campton's."

With the flick of a switch in January of 1960, we became the first rural community in California to go direct dial.

The very first phone call was from my old office partner, A.B. Perkins, to our sister city, Saugus, Massachusetts. Before that, a small battery of phone operators - most of whom recognized your voice - would physically connect one thick wire plug to one copper inlet. Phone numbers prior to 1960 had letters in them, too. The old hospital's phone was 90W. Insurance man Freeman Beal's number was 272J. Dr. Ralph Witten, our dentist? You wouldn't sprain a finger phoning him. His number was 3.

That all changed in 1960. Ma Bell, with the justice of Solomon, raised a great sword and divided the valley in half. Saugus and Canyon Country were given the prefix of 252 and Newhall got 259. That's when the SCV's powers of concentration were stretched to include this newfangled concept called an area code. Ours was 805.

Locals had to be educated over something called a "dial tone." The phone company chuckled affably and told us not to panic. The telephone wouldn't blow up. Actually, because of the fear of nuclear war with Russia or China, this dial tone was a legitimate concern. Having never heard one before, some thought it was radiation.

What if they change the area code again?

I'm going to have to tell all manner of friends and family that I have a new area code. Most will ask, "Why?" and I will inhale a very deep breath and say: "Just because" because I don't want to have this same conversation over and over, eating up valuable remaining minutes of my life. I'm going to have to change letterhead and alert everyone with whom I have even the teeniest of business relations. Bank accounts. Credit cards. IRAs. Insurance.

Wouldn't it be nice to slip back to simpler times, when you swung your feet up on the desk, holding the satisfyingly heavy speaker part of the phone in one hand and the earpiece in the other. I still own one of those old-fashioned rotary dial phones that hangs on the wall. It has better reception than any wireless or remote device I've ever owned. Dropped calls? Never. I remember years ago, this little next-door neighbor girl with three older sisters was a frequent visitor to our cozy home in Placerita. She'd slow-waltz in, all forlorn. It seems her siblings were always on the phone, and being the smallest, she could never get chat time. I still sport a giant grin recalling the first time she

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HELEN HUNT JACKSON VISIT

by Maria Christopher

Noted author Helen Hunt Jackson is visiting Southern California. Mrs. Jackson, of Denver, Colorado, is well known for her poetry and travel writings in such publications as *Century Magazine*. Her most recent book, *Century of Dishonor*, has raised some controversy, as it details allegations of mistreatment of the Indians in what Jackson terms the government's "shameful record of broken treaties and unfulfilled promises".

Mrs. Jackson came here to conduct research for articles about the old Missions and Mexican ranchos for *Century magazine*. She is also collecting information about the local Indian tribes for a supplement to *Century of Dishonor*. During her visit, Don Antonio and Doña Mariana Coronel of Los Angeles have been providing guidance, to ensure that she gets an understanding of our history and the current situation. Don Antonio has arranged that later this month she will travel to the mission in Santa Barbara and visit the principal Indian tribes. In route, she will be visiting Camulos, one of the last remaining great ranchos, home of the late Don Ignacio del Valle, father of Senator Reginaldo del Valle.

Imagine if you will the above article appearing in the local paper in January, 1882. Seemingly insignificant, Helen Hunt Jackson's visit **would** have an impact on the history of California, as it provided the foundation for her best known work, the 1884 novel *Ramona*, which she wrote to call public attention to the mistreatment of Native Americans. However, it also resulted in the first tourism boom to California and the popularization of a view of early California culture.

Mrs. Jackson visited Rancho Camulos for only a few hours on January 25, 1882. The widow Isabel del Valle was not at home. Mrs. Jackson toured the rancho and met with several women of the household, including a couple of talkative teenagers who regaled her with stories of Indian orphans and treasures, which would later find themselves woven into the tapestry of *Ramona*. The book, which is still in print today, spawned several plays, including the Hemet *Ramona Outdoor Play*, and four movies, including the 1910 D.W. Griffith production starring Mary Pickford, which was filmed on location at Rancho Camulos.

On January 26, 2014 at 1:00 PM, experience Helen Hunt Jackson's January, 1882, visit to Rancho Camulos, now the Rancho Camulos Museum and National Historic Landmark, which inspired her to include this vestige of the

John Boston

Continued from page 8

asked to use the phone. Her childhood tech experiences were of push-button units. She picked up the receiver and for nearly a full minute, just stared at the rotary dial. When I showed her how to use it, she thought it was pretty cool. I do, too.

My absolute favorite old-time telephone anecdote?

It was from the early 20th century, when there was just the one phone at Campton's and it was limited to store hours. Cowboys would ride in from across the valley to place a long distance call to a loved one. It was expensive. The ranchers and homesteaders would sometimes have a two-hour horse ride into town in which to compose their thoughts to someone they might only see once or twice a decade, if that. And today? We get all knotted up if some slowpoke is doing 70 in front of us or we drop a call to Timbuktu for a few seconds.

{John Boston has been named Best Serious and Best Humorous newspaper columnist in California, Los Angeles, and America, several times, to go with 119 major writing awards, including The Will Rogers Humanitarian Lifetime Achievement Award. Every week look for his John Boston Report - <http://scvbeacon.com/category.php?catg=5>) and Time Ranger/SCV History column - <http://scvbeacon.com/weekly-column.php?id=1296> . And don't forget to read his Mr. Santa Clarita Valley essays every Sunday on <http://www.santaclarita.com/johnboston>.

© 2013 by John Boston

Californio lifestyle as one of the settings for *Ramona*. Re-enactors will engage and delight you as they portray this event, which forever changed the peaceful life at Rancho Camulos. Reservations are suggested but not required (info@ranchocamulos.org or 805 521-1501). Professor Dydia De Lyser's book, *Ramona Memories*, is a good source for additional information about Helen Hunt Jackson and *Ramona*.

Throughout January, Rancho Camulos Museum is open for tours by appointment. Check our website, www.ranchocamulos.org for more information



The Heritage Junction Dispatch
P.O. Box 221925
Newhall, CA 91322-1925
info@scvhistory.com

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Santa Clarita, CA

Telephone (661)254-1275
Headquarters: Saugus Train Station
24101 Newhall Avenue, Newhall 91321
Open to the public each Saturday and Sunday
1:00 to 4:00 PM
Kingsbury House is open the first Sunday
of each month from 1:00 to 4:00 PM

Historical Society Board of Directors

Alan Pollack ----- President
Ed Marg, Jr.----- 1st Vice President
Scott Sivley ----- 2nd Vice President
Sioux Coghlan ----- Recording Secretary
Barbara Martinelli ----- Corresponding Secretary
Duane Harte ----- Treasurer

Gordon Glattenberg----- Dispatch Layout

"Preserving the best of the past for the good of the future"

Society Info: www.scvhs.org
Photo, Text Archives: www.scvhistory.com

Dated Material: Please Do Not Delay



*Our last snowfall: January 2, 2011.
What will 2014 bring?*