He named a river which subsequently inspired the name of our entire valley. As I am currently traveling in Spain and writing this article in a hotel room in Madrid, I thought it would be appropriate to explore the life of a Spanish priest who accompanied the first European ground expedition into Alta California in 1769.

His name was Father Juan Crespi. Born in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, in 1721, Crespi became a Franciscan priest at age 17. While living in Palma, he attended philosophy and theology classes taught by Father Junipero Serra at the 14th century monastery of the famous church of medieval Palma. At the time, the Franciscans had a major influence on the cultural life of Mallorca. Crespi and Serra would later leave an indelible mark on California history.

One of Serra's favorite pupils at the monastery, and an elementary school classmate of Crespi’s, was Francisco Palou. Serra and Palou became very close, and Serra at one point confided in Palou his desire to become a missionary in New Spain, stating: “The rumor is true. I am the one who intends to make this long journey, and I have been sorrowful because I would have no companion for so long a journey; but I would not on that account turn back from my purpose... In my heart I felt that inclination to speak to you, as I was led to believe you would be interested.” Serra, Palou, and Crespi all agreed to volunteer as missionaries and travel to the New World.

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President’s Message

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In April, 1749, Serra and Palou left the monastery at Palma and traveled to Cadiz, and Crespi followed them that September. From there, they embarked on a 99-day ocean voyage which took them across the Atlantic, arriving in Vera Cruz in New Spain in December, 1749.

Upon arrival at Vera Cruz, and after some additional training at the College of San Fernando in Mexico City, Serra and Palou were informed of the deaths of four priests who attended the Pame Indians at the missions in the rugged mountainous area of Sierra Gorda, northeast of Mexico City. The two men volunteered as replacements for the deceased missionaries, and spent the next eight years working at the mission of Santiago at Jalpan, the principal town of the Pames. Crespi was assigned to work in the town of San Francisco de Tilaco.

King Charles III of Spain issued a royal decree in 1767 to expel all Jesuit priests from Spain and Spain’s New World territories, along with confiscation of all their possessions. Over a period of seventy years, the Jesuits had been building a series of missions in Baja California. As part of the effort to expel the Jesuits from Baja California, Visitador-General Jose de Galvez commissioned a Catalan soldier, Gaspar de Portolá to lead a group of fifty soldiers to pay a surprise visit to the sixteen Jesuits on the Baja Peninsula, for the purpose of sending them into exile. It took Portolá and his troops several months to accomplish this task.

Crespi, Serra and Palou, along with thirteen other Franciscan Padres, arrived at Loreto in Baja California in April, 1768 to replace the exiled Jesuits. Father Crespi was sent to and placed in charge of the Misión La Purísima Concepción de Cadegomó.

Soon thereafter, the Spanish Ambassador to Russia began sending alarming messages to Madrid that the Russians were planning to push southward from their occupation of the Aleutian Islands to as far as San Francisco and Monterey, an area that had been claimed by Spain for almost 200 years, but never occupied. José de Galvez then persuaded Carlos Francisco de Croix, the Viceroy of New Spain, to authorize an expedition into Alta California. The original royal order was for an expedition only by sea to Monterey. However, Galvez, citing the difficulties of a sea expedition and his desire to explore the mysterious province of Alta California while establishing colonies at San Diego and Monterey, chose to send both a sea and land expedition. Father Serra was unanimously selected by the College of San Fernando de México to lead this endeavor as President of the California mission system, with Palou acting as his deputy.

Portolá, already stationed in Baja California, was chosen to command the troops who would accompany the Padres on the land expedition.

In 1769, the first of two land expeditions started off from Baja California under the command of Captain Rivera y Moncada. When receiving word that the troops had marched as far north as Velicata in Baja California, Father Serra asked Father Crespi to leave his mission and meet Rivera y Moncada at Velicata. Crespi arrived there in March, 1769. That same month, a second land expedition, led by Portolá, started off from Loreto and headed towards Velicata. After recuperating for a few weeks in Loreto from a leg infection, Father Serra rode on mule back to catch up with Portolá. They arrived in Velicata in May, 1769, where Serra established his first mission.

Meanwhile, the expedition led by Rivera y Moncada, with Father Crespi acting as one of two diarists, had arrived in San Diego, where they met the two ships of the sea expedition. Here they waited for the arrival of the party led by Portolá and Father Serra in late June, 1769. After some further planning, the land expedition left San Diego on July 14, 1769, with Portolá in command, accompanied by Captain Rivera y Moncada, Father Crespi as diarist, Miguel Costansó (who, like Crespi, kept a daily journal), Lieutenant Pedro Fages, and various other soldiers, muleteers, and Christianized Baja Indians. Father Serra was left behind in San Diego to establish his second mission (and first in Alta California), and to accompany the sea expedition to Monterey.

The expedition reached what is now Los Angeles on August 2nd. Here they first saw a river which would inspire the name of this modern day metropolis. In his diary, Crespi stated: “This river can be seen flowing down, its bed not deeply sunken below the surrounding ground, through a very green, lush, wide-spreading valley - an extent, north and south, of some leagues of level soil . . . so that it can truly be said to be a most handsome garden . . . and in time to come there may be a very large and rich mission of Our Lady of the Angels of the Porciúncula, this being the day upon which we came to it, when this well-known Indulgence is gained in our Seraphic order; and so we have proclaimed it El Río y Valle de Nuestra Señora de los Angeles de la Porciúncula.”

The Portolá expedition crossed the San Gabriel Mountains and arrived in the Santa Clarita Valley on August 8th. It turns out that most of the names which Crespi bestowed on various landmarks throughout the expedition did not survive. One of the few that did was the Santa Clara River. Crespi first applied the name Santa Clara to a band of
President’s Message

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Indians encountered along the river on August 12, on the eve of the feast day of the great Saint Claire of Assisi (1194-1253), the founder of an Order for women. The name was later extended to include the entire Santa Clara River.

The main objective of the Portolá expedition was to find the harbor of Monterey. They failed in this objective, although they actually did see Monterey twice, but did not recognize what they were seeing. They did manage to discover San Francisco Bay, after which they returned to San Diego.

In March, 1770, Portolá and Crespi, along with a smaller group of thirty men, set out on a second land expedition to find Monterey. They followed much of the same route as the first expedition. This time they recognized the bay of Monterey successfully. A week later, the ship “San Antonio” arrived with Serra, who established the Presidio and Mission of Monterey (his third mission) on June 3, 1770, with Father Crespi participating in the colorful ceremony. The next month Portolá, having accomplished his mission, left Alta California in the charge of his lieutenant, Pedro Fages, headed back to what is now Mexico, and never again set foot in California.

In 1771, Father Serra decided to move the Monterey mission to the more fertile Carmel Valley. Here he set up Father Crespi as the first resident priest of the mission, and established his official headquarters for the remainder of his life. Crespi left his friend Father Serra and Carmel only to participate in three further expeditions, which included a March, 1772 excursion led by Pedro Fages to explore the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay, an April, 1772 pack train to bring badly needed supplies to San Diego, and a sea expedition to Alaska in 1774. The Alaska expedition turned out to be his last; Father Crespi spent the last seven years of his life at the mission in Carmel.

Crespi, Serra, and Palou had one final happy reunion in San Francisco in 1781. Shortly after he returned to Carmel with Serra, Father Crespi developed a respiratory condition which eventually led to his death on New Year’s Day of 1782. Fathers Crespi and Serra are buried at Carmel, while their good friend Palou ended his days in Mexico City where he is now laid to rest.


Horseshoes Everywhere!

by Rachel Barnes

A walk through the Hart Museum’s Dining Room can reveal a curious sight: 8 horseshoes mounted on shaped, stepped, wooden blocks hanging on the room’s south wall. Tarnished brass nameplates affixed to each block reveal the once proud owners of these simple shoes: Fritz, Lisbeth, Cactus, …

We might chuckle inwardly at Bill Hart’s obvious love for his equine companions. But considering the importance of horseshoes in the health, safety, and longevity of horses themselves, it is no small wonder that Bill Hart took the time to create this “wall of shoes.”

History of the Horseshoe

Horseshoes in some form are almost as old as domesticated horses1, and since some sources report that horses were domesticated as early as 5,000 years ago2, these early horses were wearing “shoes” before their human companions! However, part of that stems from early man figuring out quickly that if he wanted to make the most of his new equine counterpart, he would need to protect their fragile hooves from the hazards of long work hours and countless miles of travel.

The earliest horseshoes appear to have been hide-woven “booties” that slipped over the hooves, and the Ancient Romans used a sandal they called “hipposandals,” that were attached to the hoof and leg with leather straps3. The colder, wetter, and thus more slippery ground of northern Europe, however, prompted new innovations in horseshoe-ry: By 600 AD, we’re seeing the proliferation of metal shoes affixed to horses’ hooves with nails, and by 1300 AD, iron horseshoes were manufactured en masse across Europe.

3 Cohen, Rachel (ibid).

Continued on Page 4
At the same time, horseshoes started to occupy a more prominent role in culture and society. Rachel Cohen writes, “The horseshoe was such a popular invention that it inspired European folktales …[in one tale,] St. Eligius, a real-life goldsmith, remedied a horse’s ails after removing its leg, shoeing the hoof, and replacing the limb. He later became the patron saint of farriers.” The Germans understood the crucial nature of the horseshoe, as evidenced in their saying: “A nail preserves a country,” for the nail keeps [the horseshoe in place], the shoe protects the foot of the horse, the horse carries the knight, the knight holds the castle, and the castle defends the land. Horseshoes were so valued, they even became an acceptable way to pay taxes – especially during the Crusades, when the shoes were then used on the fearless steeds that carried the armies into the Holy Land.

By the American Civil War, there were machines to manufacture horseshoes, and today, a formal profession – farriery – is dedicated to the shoeing of horses, complete with its own professional organization, the American Farrier’s Association.

The Hart Horseshoes

Bill Hart, the avid horse-lover he was, would have understood the importance of the horseshoe in horse health. Maybe that is why the Mansion’s Dining Room now has a wall of shoes, or maybe they are there simply as a tribute to horses he so loved. Either way, Fritz, the pinto horse co-star and favorite of the steeds, complete with its own professional organization, the American Farrier’s Association.

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Horseshoes

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Horseshoes

cowboy owner when he discovered that Fritz had formed a tight attachment to her during his initial “retirement” from the movies (between 1917 and 1920), and later brought her to film sets to keep the temperamental Fritz happy.

Lisbeth, whose shoe features extra knobs at the heels, was a giant mule Hart met while filming the 1919 flick, Wagon Tracks. She won our cowboy movie star’s heart when she decided to muscle her way into a scene in the movie … that she was not scripted to appear in! Hart couldn’t resist her spunk, and Lisbeth “came under the pinto pony regime.”

The “pinto pony regime” was Hart’s name for what the Museum staff and volunteers jokingly call “Fritz’s girlfriends” or “Fritz’s entourage.” Cactus Kate and Lisbeth both traveled with their famous companion to film locations, and, as previously mentioned, Kate was often brought out on set to calm a sometimes-harried Fritz down. One day, while filming the 1921 flick, Travelin’ On, the crew were shooting a particularly difficult scene that featured Fritz inside a barn with a monkey. Poor Fritz; he refused to perform. So Kate was brought out on set, and suddenly things went well. The scene was captured, and all were happy. All except poor Lisbeth, who had been left behind in the corral. Hart reports that while filming, the crew suddenly heard a terrible wailing and screaming, and a few moments later, a wild-eyed Lisbeth barreled onto the set, chest scratched and bleeding from where she had stormed through the corral fence. The giant mule had stampeded through a mile of traffic to reach her beloved companions, and from then on, both ladies were brought to set when Fritz needed some soothing influences.

All 3 horses lived long, healthy lives on the Horseshoe Ranch, as well as the other horses represented on the wall of shoes. So, if you have not yet had a chance to see Hart’s own monument to his beloved equine companions, be sure to stop by sometime soon for a visit!

4 Cohen, Rachel (ibid)
5 Ryan, Tom. (n.d.). “History of a Farrier.” Hony’s Web Stable
6 Visit the American Farrier’s Association website for more information: http://americanfarriers.org
8 Hart, William S. (ibid)
9 Hart, William S. (ibid)
Six years ago the Rancho Camulos Museum, a National Historic Landmark, forged an historical partnership with the Ramona Outdoor Play, which has been performed in Hemet since 1923. On September 7th, 2013, performances by the core cast and dancers from the play “Ramona” (the California Official Outdoor Play) will again highlight the annual “Ramona Days” from 1:00 PM until 6:00 PM at Rancho Camulos Museum in Piru. Helen Hunt Jackson’s 1884 classic California novel, Ramona, will come to life at the “Home of Ramona” in a festival celebrating all things Ramona.

In addition to watching vignettes from the play (2:00 and 4:00 PM), visitors can view the 1910 Mary Pickford movie which was filmed on location at Camulos, see unique memorabilia and historic displays, experience living history, and attend presentations by Ramona experts such as Ramona pageant historian Phil Brigandi and film maker Hugh Munro Neely.

Linda “La Matadora” Andrade of Saki Flamenco and her dancers will be back by popular demand to provide both thrilling flamenco performances and an opportunity to learn the art of flamenco.

Check the website www.ranchocamulos.org for details of this year’s program, which will include more presentations on general California History as well as participation by museums and historical groups from this area.

Food, music, a used book sale, art and craft sales and demonstrations, original artwork by local artists, museum and garden tours, free children’s activities and more will be available. Visitors are encouraged to come in costume for a fun experience of living history.

An excellent video of the 2009 event that was filmed for Roger Martin’s Out and About series can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UmGbXwCMao.

In order to encourage wide community participation, admission fees are reasonable with advance tickets for $7, and gate admission $10. Children aged 12 and under will be free. Advance tickets can now be purchased in person at the museum gift shop during regular tour hours, via email at info@ranchocamulos.org, phone at 805 521-1501, for pickup at will call. Additional details will be posted at www.ranchocamulos.org as available. Vendor, volunteer, and sponsorship opportunities are also available for this unique event. All proceeds benefit the historical preservation, restoration, and educational efforts of this 501(c) 3 museum. Rancho Camulos is located on HWY 126, 2 miles East of Piru / 10 miles west of the I-5 Newhall Ranch Road exit.

Rancho Camulos Museum supporters are also reminded they can help our preservation efforts by purchasing online advance tickets to the Citrus Classic Balloon Festival (citrusclassicballoons.com) to be held in Santa Paula the last weekend in July.

Rancho Camulos Museum Contact Information:
5164 East Telegraph Road / P.O. Box 308, Piru, CA 93040
Media and Marketing Liaison: Maria Christopher
661 645-3823 / cachristopher1@ATT.net

Several Quester members from the Santa Clarita Valley attended the International Convention in Rogers, Arkansas. Despite snow (in May!) and rain, they toured historical sites and learned interesting facts about this “Walmart” country.

Oak of the Golden Dream is in the process of restoring one of the original lamp posts at the bottom of the path leading up to the Hart Mansion. It will soon be lit for the first time in 50 years.

Roberta Harris
Oak of the Golden Dream Questers

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.
Nearly 40 years ago, two ambiguous figures were supposed to be in the Santa Clarita Valley. One reportedly was. The other was a no-show. If I had to vote for the most unusual year in our history, 1974 would at least be in the top 10.

It was the year the Rev. Sam Dixon would die after wounds suffered from a car accident. We had an Old Testament rainstorm - in July. There was the big snow of January that crippled and delighted the valley. Gov. Ronald Reagan dedicated the Bonelli Center at COC. We were in the clutches of the Arab Oil Embargo, when gasoline skyrocketed to 65 cents a gallon. A young CalArts male played a curvaceous mermaid in a student film. He’d later take the stage name of Pee Wee Herman. Patty Hearst, the heiress turned member of the Symbionese Liberation Army terrorist gang, was spotted by numerous people trying to hide in Placerita Canyon.

Then there was the Bigfoot.

Back in August of 1974, Saugus resident Bob Curasi made a plaster of Paris footprint model of a Bigfoot spotted locally. Curasi had been curious after a series of reported Sasquatch sightings in the SCV, including one by a pair of boys staying at a remote hog farm up Lost Creek Canyon. Of course, the teens were ridiculed after perfectly describing a 9-foot-tall Bigfoot, adding that he had been wearing a blue bell. But then, the boys’ story (save for the bell) was corroborated by a pair of young lovers who were parked up Plum Canyon and making out by the full moon. The young woman screamed when she opened her eyes in the front seat and saw a hairy face the shape of a bullet staring in through the windshield. The creature, she estimated, was between 9 and 10 feet tall. It ran away when she screamed. Curasi went out to where the couple had been parked and that’s where he found the bare footprint. However, it was only 10 inches long and six inches wide - unusually small for other reported tracks of creatures described as the same size.

The other legendary being who was scheduled to appear in that hot Santa Clarita August was Vice President Gerald Ford, our 38th president died in 2006 at the age of 93. Former senator and presidential candidate Bob Dole used just three words to best describe his friend: Ford was “a good man.”

Back in 1973, Valencia was brand new and ranching, oil and agriculture were still our economic mainstays. A telephone executive and local chamber president, firebrand Republican Dick Millar, tried to put the Santa Clarita Valley on the map by inviting notable politicians to visit us. For more than a year, he worked with the vice president’s office and the Secret Service to bring Ford here. The vice president finally agreed to speak at the new CalArts campus before a crowd of 10,000 people.

Special bandstands and bleachers were constructed. As the day grew nearer, Secret Servicemen worked with local security. Bomb-sniffing dogs and their handlers patrolled the campus. Horse-mounted lawmen scoured the neighboring hilltops, looking for snipers. Millar even had an agent sleeping over at his house for a week before Ford was to speak here in Santa Clarita on Aug. 9, 1974.

The day before was when Millar, and the agent, got the call: The disgraced Richard Milhous Nixon, embattled from the epic Watergate scandal, resigned as 37th president of the United States. The next day - that day he was supposed to speak at CalArts before thousands - Gerald Ford took the oath of office as our 38th president.

The impact locally was rather large. First, in a divided community, there was a clamor to remove all pictures of Nixon immediately from government offices.

Then, there was the bothersome detail of what to do when you’re throwing a party for 10,000 when no one will show up. The custom bleachers were dismantled. Bands, color guards, fireworks, armies of security and support staff were canceled. Local merchants, who had banked on the crowds, had thousands of dollars in merchandise, T-shirts, hot dogs and beverages. Back then, we had something called the Women’s Chamber of Commerce. Flo Chesebrough had to figure out what to do with all the porta-potties her organization had leased. The Chamber of Commerce incurred around $2,000 in debt for the visit and 2,000 bucks wasn’t small change back then.

The Signal’s then-Publisher Scott Newhall penned one of his trademark, above-the-masthead, swashbuckling editorials - a stinging rebuke of Nixon. In a front-page opinion piece, The Signal wrote:

“Richard Nixon deserves no pity - only justice. He is and always has been a tortured human being, whose craving for the cheers of the mob and whose hunger for the stroking of his White House courtiers was so unbearably intense that they destroyed him in the end, and poisoned everyone around him.”

This paper also not-so-delicately suggested that if Mr. Nixon had been head of a South American nation, he would have been long ago “…propped up against an adobe wall and shot.”

While Nixon and Ford were gobbling up all the headlines, most people that day of Aug. 9 failed to notice that ANOTHER...
**John Boston**

Continued from page 6

famous person was a no-show to the SCV that day. At the recent Boys & Girls Club auction, someone had the winning bid to play tennis with the controversial showman, Bobby Riggs.

Bobby never made it to the courts.

All the way up into Christmas of 1974, they were talking about now-President Ford being a no-show. At a December Chamber of Commerce meeting, it was pointed out that Mr. Ford already had been given a lifetime membership to the chamber. One chamber member yelled out during the meeting: “So who’s going to cough up his dues?”

In that odd, odd year of 1974, Gerald Ford would not visit the SCV. But, right after that, his predecessor - and the man he pardoned - Richard M. Nixon was sighted locally. After he resigned, the 37th president was spotted driving around the back canyons of the SCV with his Secret Service agent in a large, black Cadillac. According to reports in the *Signal*, the president had been witnessed walking along some back roads, taking in the scenery.

*(John Boston has earned 119 major writing awards, many of them for covering the Santa Clarita Valley.)*

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

**Weekend Docents:**
- Frank Adella
- Wendy Beynon
- Laurie Cartwright
- Linda Casebolt
- Sioux Coghlan
- Evan Decker
- Sarah Floyd
- Francesca Gastil
- Anna Kroll
- Ed Marg, Jr
- Theresa Marg
- Barbara Martinelli
- RuthAnne Murthy
- Gerry Sokolowicz
- Konrad Summers
- Gordon Uppman

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
- Ed Marg, Jr.
- Scott Sivley
- Roberto Torres

**Weekend Questers*:**
- Linda and Jim Hinz

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**Upcoming Hart Park Events**

*Free outdoor movies at sundown! (Movies subject to change.)*

- July 12 . . . . . . . . Ice Age 3
- July 26 . . . . . . . . Tangled
- August 8 . . . . . . . . How to Train Your Dragon
- August 16 . . . . . . . . The Iron Giant

**Student Film Workshop** – Ages 12 through 18; free. Every Saturday, starting July 13 and through August 31, students will be taught the basics of film making.

**Rattlesnake-Avoidance Dog Training:** Mountains Restoration Trust will train dogs to avoid rattlesnakes. Located back of Hart Hall on July 28, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM. $70.00 fee for this important training to keep your dog safe. Register online at www.mountainstrust.org

**Silents Under the Stars** – The Friends of Hart Park annual fund-raiser with dinner, auction, Museum and Barnyard tours, and one of William S. Hart’s silent films. It will be held August 17, 2013. Please check with the Museum at 661 254-4584 for ticket information.

*Don’t know who the Questers are? See www.questers1944.org*
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Solemint Junction (Sierra Highway and Soledad Canyon Road), September 8, 1968