Browsing through the archives of ancestry.com can reveal a wealth of information about the early days of Newhall. Each document captures a moment in time and paints a vivid picture of the rough and tumble pioneer era of the Santa Clarita Valley.

First, we travel back in time with the United States Federal Census of 1850. In June of 1850, we find brothers Sanford and Cyrus Lyon working as clerks and living at the mercantile store of Alexander and Mellus in Los Angeles. Although they were twins, the census lists Sanford as age 21 and Cyrus age 20. The Lyon brothers had just sailed around Cape Horn from their home in Maine as, like many others, they had caught the gold fever of the California Gold Rush in 1849. But instead of staking a claim in the gold fields of Northern California, they chose to cast their lot in the small pueblo of Los Angeles, where their cousin Francis Mellus co-owned a store with David W. Alexander.

Alexander, listed in the census as age 55 and from Ireland, had immigrated to the United States in 1832. Arriving by wagon train in Southern California in 1841, Alexander eventually ended up in San Pedro, where, along with his partnership with Mellus in Los Angeles, he also partnered with famed freight king Phineas Banning until 1855. In addition, he served as Sheriff of Los Angeles County and was a member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. When Mellus died in 1864, Alexander took up with his widow Adelaida Mellus.

Alexander and Banning drove stagecoaches and freight wagons over the San Fernando

Continued on Page 2

ANNUAL LECTURE BY FRANK ROCK ON THE ST FRANCIS DAM DISASTER, FOLLOWED BY A TOUR OF THE DAM SITE SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2013 - SAUGUS STATION

FREE LECTURE 11:00 AM

TOUR 12:00 PM, $35

CONTACT 661 254-1275 FOR INFO OR RESERVATIONS ALSO - SEE WWW.SCVHHS.ORG
President's Message

Continued from page 1

(or Fremont's) Pass on a regular basis in the 1850's to service Fort Tejon. After hiring Gabe Allen to improve the route over Fremont's Pass in 1854, Banning took his wild first stagecoach ride over the pass, as described in Major Horace Bell's book "Reminiscences of a Ranger". As Bell relates, after ending up in a jumble of chains, harness, coach, and mustangs at the bottom of the hill and proclaiming how "easy" the descent was, Banning "sent a courier in hot haste, urging Don David Alexander to send fifty men immediately to repair parts of the road which he had, in his descent, knocked out of joint." Allen and Alexander eventually produced a 30 foot cut in the pass which Edward F. Beale deepened to 90 feet in 1864 to create Beale's Cut. The Lyon brothers went on to purchase a building on the Rancho San Francisco which became known as Lyons Station.

The U.S. Federal Census of 1870 finds Sanford Lyon at Lyons Station with 60 acres of improved and 320 acres of unimproved agricultural land. The farm was worth $3000 with "five horses, one milch cow, two 'other cattle', 900 sheep, and 3 swine". In contrast, the much wealthier Andres Pico had in his San Fernando Valley abode 300 improved and 11,700 unimproved acres worth $100,000. Thomas F. Mitchell, the pioneer of Soledad Canyon, was farming at his ranch along the Santa Clara River, with 250 acres of land worth $800. He had 120 horses and 28 cattle, along with oxen and pigs.

The 1870 census also lists the inhabitants of Los Angeles Township living in the vicinity of the Petrópolis post office. Also called Petroleopolis, this post office was set up in Lyons Station in 1867 and operated until 1871. The name paid homage to the burgeoning oil industry in the nearby hills. Sanford Lyon was postmaster in the final three years of the period of Newhall. Occupations included merchants, clerks, saloon keepers, laborers, railroad agents, blacksmiths, farmers, petroleum refiners, justice of the peace, and physician.

In 1880, George Campton, owner of Newhall's first general store, was living with his wife, a native Californio, Gregoria, and son Romulo. Also at his residence was his employee and store clerk Oscar M. Porter. Campton is listed as born in the West Indies. In a passport application from 1919, Romulo states his name as R. Frank Campton and writes that his father was "born in Jamaica, and is now residing at 1663 Echo Park Ave., Los Angeles, California, that he emigrated to the United States from the port of Toronto, Canada, on May 12, 1864, that he resided 52 years in the United States from 1865 to 1919 at various points in California and Nevada." George Campton became a citizen of the United States in October, 1876, the same year he opened his general store in the new town of Newhall.

Also in the 1880 census we find 32 year old saloon keeper Michael Powell and his 18 year old wife Corrine. Powell, of Irish descent and born in Massachusetts, ran Mike Powell's Palace Saloon on Railroad Avenue in Newhall. This later became the Oil Exchange Saloon. Although we are not certain, he may have been the brother of John F. Powell, one of the earliest Judges in Newhall. Another saloon keeper in town was 55 year old Prussian-born Charles Moore. Chinese immigrant Hop Lee, 29, ran the town's washhouse. John T. Gifford, 33, lived with his wife Sarah, a native of England, and was the town's first Southern Pacific Railroad agent and
Real Outlaws and Lawmen, and Reel Ones
by Rachel Barnes

The Old West: Fade in on a ramshackle main street, with broken down store fronts and saddled horses tied to hitching posts. Cut to a dashing lawman, lounging lazily on a creaky porch, sheriff’s badge gleaming in the bright sun, wide-brimmed hat pulled down to shade the eyes - eyes you can’t see but you can feel. You know that despite his noncommittal demeanor (he coolly and casually lights a cigarette while you watch), he is alert and poised, ready to defend his beaten town from even the slightest whiff of trouble.

Enter a cocky, arrogant outlaw, strolling assuredly down the main street, gun hanging loosely on his hip, hat cocked to one side, with a gang of drooling followers trailing eagerly behind, hootin’ and hollerin’ and shooting their guns at the sky.

Yeah, you know what happens next, because this sounds just like a scene from a classic Bill Hart western film. Actually it sounds like a scene from many a classic western film. The dashing lawman may have a famous name attached, like Wyatt Earp or Wild Bill Hickok. The cocky outlaw too - he could be somebody like Billy the Kid or Jesse James. But we still know how the story ends: A big shootout, running and ducking and shooting, and they all know, truth is far stranger than fiction. That’s why we explore this very concept at the Hart Museum’s next Open House on Thursday, April 24, 2014. If you’re visiting for the annual Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival, then you definitely won’t want to miss the chance to learn more about the lives and legacies of the Old West’s notorious outlaws and lawmen. Who were these guys, really? Why did they do what they did? And is the line between “outlaw” and “lawman” really that well defined?

Continued on Page 5

President’s Message

Continued from page 2

President’s Message

telegraph operator. Gifford hailed from Cincinnati, Ohio. The Giffords had two small children: Mabel and Edward.

The census reflects a number of Chinese immigrants in town, who may have stayed around after working on construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad (completed in 1876). Four were hotel workers and waiters, Ah Po, Ah John, Ah Soo, and Ah Jim. Nine others were farm workers, all with the name Ah preceding their given name. “Ah” may have been a diminutive or pet name which was affectionately prefixed to a given name by friends or relatives.

Joel M. Turner, a 57 year old native of Kentucky, was Justice of the Peace in 1880. There has been some historical controversy as to which of Turner, John F. Powell, or a J.D. LaRue was the first Justice of the Peace of Soledad Township.

Outside of Newhall, in the Soledad Township of 1880 (which covered much of Santa Clarita Valley), there were four Chinese immigrants in their 20’s listed as “works on RR section”. New Yorker John Lang, the founder of Lang Station, where the Southern Pacific was completed in 1876, is documented as a 52 year old dairyman, married to Irish immigrant Mary, with children John, William, Mary, James, and Maggie living at home and ranging in age from 7 to 16. They also had a boarder, Lang’s niece, 22 year old Mary Ray. Of note, Sanford Lyon and family are listed on the census for San Fernando Township in 1880. Apparently they moved away from Newhall after Lyon’s Station became obsolete with the completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

Most interestingly, we see Soledad pioneer Thomas F. Mitchell, a 54 year old farmer from Tennessee, whose household consisted of wife Martha from Arkansas, and children Mary, Frank, Frances, and John. Also in the house was a 68 year old servant, James Hankirson from New Jersey. Right next to the Mitchell family is Frances O. Moore, a single 37 year old farm laborer from New York. Newspaper reports from the Los Angeles Times and Los Angeles Herald in June, 1883, show that Mitchell apparently shot and killed Moore after a long-standing feud related to some trespassing livestock, and a land dispute between the neighbors. Although a coroner’s jury concluded that Mitchell had indeed killed Moore with a shotgun, there is no evidence that Mitchell was ever convicted of any crime.

With these documents, we gain valuable insight into how life really was like in the old days of the SCV. It is a fascinating journey of exploration and detective work to see what may still lie beneath the surface of our knowledge of local history. Stay tuned!
On April 25th, when Dave Stamey steps onto the Rancho Camulos Museum schoolhouse stage as part of the Californio Fiesta de Rancho Camulos, he will be paying homage to the rich tradition of the California vaquero. This event, which in addition to the concert includes a vaquero buffet, docent-led tours, and historic exhibits, has been a Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival partnership activity since 2008.

It is held at the Rancho Camulos National Historical Landmark, because this is the last vestige of the vaquero lifestyle in the Santa Clara River Valley. Rancho Camulos is what remains of the original roughly 48,000-acre 1839 Mexican Land grant to Antonio del Valle. Called Rancho San Francisco, and part of the San Fernando Mission lands, it included all of what is now Santa Clarita. This WAS the land of the vaquero. The vaquero tradition, of a horse-mounted livestock herder, actually originated in Spain, migrated to Mexico, and then came to California as early as the 1680’s. The vaqueros came to this area with the 1769 Portolá expedition, and in 1774 as part of the De Anza expedition. Thus, when the San Fernando Mission was established in 1797, vaqueros who by then included many Native Americans, were part of the social structure, and horse and cattle raising was an integral part of the economic structure. This was the situation when Antonio del Valle received the 1839 Mexican land grant in return for his role in the secularization of the San Fernando Mission from 1824 until 1837. He built his estancia roughly where Six Flags Magic Mountain stands today. After Antonio’s death in 1841, the property was divided among his heirs. His eldest son, Ignacio, received the approximately 1,800-acre, western-most portion of the property, which he called Camulos, after Kamulos, the Tataviam Indian village that was there. In 1842, Ignacio had a cattle corral built there, and a vaquero ranch manger oversaw the livestock operations.

Initially, cattle were valued most for their hide and tallow. With the growing population, they became more important for their meat. However the drought of the 1860’s took its toll on cattle operations throughout Southern California, including Rancho Camulos. Subsequently, the del Valle’s branched into diverse agricultural operations such as vineyards, olives, citrus, almonds, walnuts, grains, and vegetables. Gradually, the role of the vaquero faded into history.

However, vaquero history remains alive today at Rancho Camulos Museum, which is only open for docent-led tours, and special events such as the April 25th Californio Fiesta de Rancho Camulos. Tours are usually Saturdays at 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00 PM, and by appointment. It is always best to check for the latest tour schedule (www.ranchocamulos.org or call 805 521-1501), as tours may be closed for bad weather and special events.

When you visit Rancho Camulos Museum, you will step back in time to the days of the vaquero. Among the related artifacts you will see is the 1853 adobe fireplace with the del Valle brand, (the slightly askew “y” for Ygnacio) and a replica branding iron. Also on display are copies of three paintings by James Walker, a prominent artist of the 1800’s, who captured the vaquero lifestyle. Two of the paintings reportedly are scenes of Rancho San Francisco, while the third is called The Vaquero, and is of Rancho Santa Margarita (which was roughly where Camp Pendleton is today) (see article picture). Curiously, the horse bears the del Valle brand. You’ll have to visit to find out the theories about this mystery, and the other tales of the vaquero. Hope to see you soon at Rancho Camulos … where the history, myth, and romance of Old California still linger. Drop by to visit us at our Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival Booth at Melody Ranch on April 26th and 27th to learn about volunteer and visiting opportunities.
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.

Quester News by Roberta Harris

Oak of the Golden Dream has committed to providing funds toward the completion of a working bathroom in the Pardee House. Additional projects for the Pardee House are still under consideration.

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of long time member, Dorothy Boyer. Her friendly enthusiasm and willingness to participate in Quester projects will be missed. Dorothy contributed several items toward the furnishing of the Edison House and the Kingsbury House.

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

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

Weekend Docents and Open-House Volunteers:
- Wendy Beynon
- Laurie Cartwright
- Linda Casebolt
- Sioux Coghlan
- Sarah Floyd
- Francesca Gastil
- Harold Hicks
- Anna Kroll
- Theresa Marg
- Debra Martin
- Barbara Martinelli
- Ruth Anne Murthy
- Alan Pollack
- Brent Roberts
- Gordon Uppman

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

Those who open and close for the docents:
- Linda Casebolt
- Duane Harte
- Ed Marg, Jr.
- Barbara Martinelli
- Cathy Martin
- Alan Pollack

Weekend Questers and Open-House Volunteers*:
- Linda Hinz
- Louise Schultz
- Genewyn Van Wie
- Dee Ann Wood

School Tour Docents:
- Barbara Martinelli
- Brent Roberts

Grounds:
- Kathleen Lucan
- Glen Terry
- Ed Marg, Sr

* Don’t know who the Questers are? See at left, and www.questers1944.org

Hart Museum

Continued from page 3

So be sure to come on by and check it out! You will also have the chance to wander through Bill Hart’s hilltop mansion at your own pace, enjoying his renowned collection of western artwork and Native American artifacts, while you learn more about the men behind the names Wyatt Earp, Jesse James, Butch Cassidy, and so many others. Open House: Outlaws and Marshals runs from 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM on Thursday, April 24, 2014, and the cost is completely free.

You can also check out the Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival website at www.cowboyfestival.org for information and tickets for evening events being hosted inside the Hart Mansion!
Those Dastardly Pirates of the Saugus Speedway
by John Boston

For some - especially the unwashed masses who recently moved here - it can be a mystery as to how their particular town earned its handle.

Saugus, for example, was taken from the ancient city of Saugus, Mass., birthplace of 19th-century force of nature and millionaire, Henry Mayo Newhall. The word, "Saugus," comes from the Narragasut Indian word, meaning: "Sandy spit of land." I'll lay off the "spit" straightlines.

A smidge back, I got a call from the editor of the Saugus Advertiser, the daily newspaper in our sister city in New England. They were compiling a special edition featuring Saugus, California, and the editor asked if I could donate something that linked the two cities.

For about 20 years, I taught a class on the history of the Santa Clarita Valley. The very first lesson I gave is one from kindergarten. It's a game called Telephone. I always take the first person in the first row, pull them aside and whisper - several times - the same, exact sentence: "Ten Wolves - was the war chief - who first discovered - the Santa Clara river valley - in 1066 B.C."

It's a nonsensical statement, completely made up and relating to nothing. It's just a test to show the students how something simple can get lost in translation after translation, telling after re-telling. You know: Like history? Or journalism?

I used to let the silly little ditty get all the way around class. Over the years, I started stopping it first half-way, then when it got to the end of the first row. A few times, out of wickedness, I'd ask the second person to repeat the sentence. It's always, always wrong. People hear things incorrectly.

So it was with the fable of the bloodthirsty pirates of Saugus, California, back in the early 1700's.

Our valley historian emeritus was this tall, scholarly fellow named Arthur Buckingham Perkins. Ol' A.B. passed along this story scanning 60 years about how a band of cutthroat brigands had been raiding the foggy coastline along Ventura and Santa Barbara.

This always struck me as odd. In the early 1700's, there were maybe eight white people from Mexico to Washington state. That number may have actually been closer to zero. Still, Mr. Perkins was a creature as close to an intellectual god as you can get in Southern California, and his word was never questioned.

These pirates caused such a reign of terror that Spanish sailors were sent to bring them to justice. A posse of musket-wielding navy men finally found the band of buccaneers, engaged in a brief scrimmage, then chased them up our mighty Santa Clara River.

That's another part of the tale that made me wince. Our valley is bisected by the Santa Clara. It runs about 70 miles to the sea. It's one of those peculiar California desert rivers. In a severe flash flood, you could float a nuclear aircraft carrier on it. Most of the time, you'd pretty much have to carry your canoe. Sailing upstream? That would require a mighty wind.

Still, the story comes from A.B. Perkins. One would be safer questioning the New Testament.

The sailors finally caught up with the pirates near a present-day monument called The Saugus Speedway. It was a world-famous rodeo ground in its day. Later, it was used for Figure-8 stock car racing, and now it's a weekend swap meet.

Firing single musket shot and engaging in hand-to-hand saber duels, the Spanish sailors backed the faltering but fierce coastal raiders into a nearby cave. Another wince. I grew up out here. There are no caves in that area.

On the other hand, the sailors supposedly sailed up the dry riverbed with a large cache of dynamite (which, I don't believe, had been invented yet). They blew up the entrance to the cave with the pirates still in it.

Bonus: The pirates had a fabulous (and extremely heavy) treasure they had brought with them. Note again: Sailing. Upstream. In a dry river.

One thing about the Saugus, California, area. We supposedly have more misplaced buried treasures from forgotten gold mines, outlaws, Indians, crooked politicians, and pirates than the late King Solomon. In my class, I always offer extra credit should any of my students actually bring in a cache of gold, emeralds or someone's unsigned platinum Visa card.

As lower-case rural historians do, I was rummaging through some dusty archives a few years back. There, I came upon a story that made me smile, followed by a good jag of

Continued on Page 7
solitary laughter. It seems that in the mid-1940’s, an odd happenstance occurred here. A teacher from Saugus, Massachusetts, retired here - to Saugus, California. He recalled his hometown’s rich history and shared a fable. Yes. It was about pirates terrorizing the Massachusetts coast. British soldiers chased the brigands inland. Big battle. Bad guys retreated into a cave with their loot. The redcoats sealed the cave tighter than Tupperware, burying the pirates alive.

I don't know how many retellings it took before the sharp edges of fact were filed off. But, soon, the bothersome detail of location was lost. East coast. West coast. Whatever.

Today, Saugus, Mass., is an ancient treasure trove of American history. There are two graveyards. The “new” one starts with people buried there from 1776, I believe, while the “old” cemetery goes back to early American history to the 1500’s. Not only is Saugus the birthplace of Newhall’s founder (Henry Mayo Newhall), it’s also the home town of: Nathan Miles (inventor of the elevator); Stephen Bachiler (the remarkable 16th-century Saugusian, minister, gunpowder maker and creator of a movement to separate church and state); Wade Boggs (the baseball guy?); Michael Cresta (Scrabble genius); Deborah Moody (the only woman to found a colony in America); Josiah Warren (America’s first anarchist); and William Moulton Marston (feminist, psychologist and the comic book writer who created “Wonder Woman” (Aren’t they all?).

But, who knows and who am I to say? Perhaps today, there are the skeletons of pirates in a Saugus, Kansas or Saugus, Argentina, clutching a fabulous fortune to their bony chests. While I don’t teach my class any more, I’d be happy to assign valuable extra credit points to you if you bring in the treasure. Heck. Any treasure. No questions asked.


© 2014 by John Boston
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

Bridge to Nowhere?
The Paseo bridge over Valencia Blvd being lifted into place; December 3, 1993