



The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 37, Issue 3

May-June 2011

Calendar

Saturday, May 14

Lecture on inventor Milton J Trumble 2:00 PM Saugus Station
See page 5

Monday, May 23

Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

Wednesday, June 1

Deadline for the May - June
Dispatch

Saturday, June 25

Talk and film on "The Great Desert
Railroad Race"
2:00 PM Saugus Station

Monday, June 27

Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

Check www.scvhhistory.org for
other upcoming events.

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

President's Message

by Alan Pollack



A caravan of camels in the American Southwest? It happened as part of a government military experiment which began in the spring of 1856. Before his days as President of the Confederate States of America, Jefferson

Davis had been appointed Secretary of War of the United States by President Franklin Pierce. Davis had previously been introduced to the notion of using camels to carry military supplies through the arid regions of the great Southwest Basin. Camels were thought to be possibly superior to mules and horses in the American desert since they could go for long periods of time without water and carry heavier loads than the other animals. Davis brought the novel idea to Congress and convinced them to pass an appropriation bill

in March, 1855 which allowed for the use of \$30,000 to purchase camels to be used for military purposes.

The task of finding and purchasing these Saharan beasts was assigned to Major Henry C. Wayne in May, 1855. Assisting Major Wayne in his quest would be Lt. David D. Porter, commander of the naval storeship "Supply". The "Supply" traveled from New York to Tunis in June, 1855. The search for camels finally wound up in Egypt where 33 camels were purchased through surreptitious means in spite of an Egyptian law forbidding the export of camels. The 33 camels, along with three Arabs and two Turks hired as camel drivers, were unloaded at Indianola, Texas on May 13, 1856. The next month, the camels were taken from Indianola to Victoria, Texas and then on to Camp Verde, Texas where they were quartered and tested for their ability to carry loads and travel in the desert. Later a second shipment of 41 camels also arrived at Camp Verde.

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LISA REHBERGER, LINDA'S DAUGHTER, PAINTING IN THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE SAUGUS STATION (ALSO SEE PAGE 7)

WE CAN ALWAYS USE HELP. DON'T LIKE PAINTING? HOW ABOUT BEING A DOCENT? CONTACT PAT SALETORE AT 661 254-1275 OR WWW.SCVHS.ORG

President's Message

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Edward F. Beale

Some would describe Edward F. Beale as an opportunist. He had a habit of misappropriating funds on government jobs, getting fired, and then reinventing himself. Abraham Lincoln once called him "the monarch of all he has surveyed" after appointing him as Surveyor General of California and Nevada in 1861. He was a hero of the Mexican War, having infiltrated through enemy lines with Kit Carson at the Battle of San Pasqual in San Diego County to get troop reinforcements from San Diego and avert a massacre of Stephen Watts Kearney's American troops at the hands of the Mexican forces under Andres Pico. Beale was appointed as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California and Nevada by President Millard Fillmore in 1853. He was removed from office in 1855 due to shady use of funding which occurred under his watch. But Beale also was well connected with friends in high places. Being a family friend of President Buchanan, Beale was awarded a consolation prize in April, 1857, when he was appointed as Superintendent of a wagon road to be built from Fort Defiance in Arizona to the mouth of the Mojave River, then thought to be near the Colorado River on the border of California and Arizona. This was to be one of three roads approved by Congress to connect the Eastern states through the Southwest with California. In more modern times, the route along which this wagon road was built became Route 66 and then Interstate 40 through Arizona.

Fort Defiance to the Mojave River

As part of the expedition, Beale was to take 25 of the camels at Camp Verde to California to "test their usefulness, endurance, and economy". He was also given funding to hire the Arabs and Turks accompanying the camels from Egypt as camel drivers. The drivers included "Greek George" Caralambos (at whose home outlaw Tiburcio Vasquez was captured on the Rancho La Brea in 1874), and a Syrian man, Hadji Ali. The Americans on the expedition could not pronounce his real name, so he became known as Hi Jolly. Beale left Indianola, Texas, with a train of ten wagons in June, 1857. He picked up the "Camel Corps" at Camp Verde and then headed through West Texas to New Mexico. Although the camels proved scary to horses and mules, Beale was impressed with their ability to eat mesquite bushes and other thorny plants common to the desert, and found them to be more surefooted than mules without the need to be shod. Word of the camel caravan reached remote villages along the trail and drew crowds of curious villagers as they passed through. The caravan reached Fort Defiance in August, 1857 with Beale riding his favorite camel "Seid".

Beyond Fort Defiance, the expedition followed along the thirty-fifth parallel across Northern Arizona. As they forded the Colorado River on October 20, the camels proved to be great swimmers across the wide river. On November 9, Beale rode his camel into Los Angeles, where he was greeted by a large, curious crowd of Mexicans. In a note to his wife, Beale hailed his trip as a "perfect and brilliant success from beginning to end."

Fort Smith to the Colorado River

In January, 1858, Beale (with an escort of dragoons from Fort Tejon), retraced his route accompanied by his camels back to New Mexico. The War Department was impressed with his work, and in August Beale was assigned to lead another expedition to improve a road running from Fort Smith, Arkansas, through Albuquerque to California. Under military escort (due to warfare between the Comanches and U.S. Army along the route), Beale's second expedition left Fort Smith and followed the course of the Canadian River, accompanied by his camels, in October, 1858. The party spent a rough winter in New Mexico, but eventually again crossed the Colorado River and arrived back in Los Angeles in May, 1859. Of the camels, Beale wrote from Fort Tejon that his "admiration for them so far from diminishing increases every day".

End of the Road

In spite of Beale's enthusiasm, the great camel experiment was ultimately doomed to failure. With the outbreak of the Civil War, the U.S. Government completely lost interest in the camels. According to the Texas State Historical Association, "The failure of the camel in the United States was not due to its capability; every test showed it to be a superior transport animal. It was instead the nature of the beasts which led to their demise—they smelled horrible, frightened horses, and were detested by handlers accustomed to the more docile mules." Beale continued to use the camels to haul supplies between Los Angeles and Fort Tejon until the Fort was abandoned and the camels sold by the Army in 1864. Beale took some of the camels to live out their final days on his recently acquired Tejon Ranch. Others were sold to zoos, circuses, and mining companies or turned loose in the local mountains. The late local historian Jerry Reynolds wrote "For years afterward, there were rumors of camels wandering the Tehachapis or drinking deeply from the banks of the Santa Clara."

Research source for this article: "Edward Beale & The American West" by Gerald Thompson.

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President's Message

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HAPPENINGS AT THE JUNCTION

With Spring in the SCV comes a special event to kick off our 2011 Capital Campaign to raise funds for our planned new museum of local history in the Pardee House. On Saturday, May 14, Anne Mauer, author of the historical fiction book "The Magic Eye" will present the life of local inventor Milton J. Trumble, on whose life her book is based. Trumble, the inventor of the first continuous oil refining process, even had a "showdown" with silent Western movie star and local Newhall resident William S. Hart. To find out more about this rumble in Newhall, please plan to attend this entertaining talk. Admission to the event will be \$5.00 per person, with proceeds going to the Historical Society's Capital Campaign.

Also upcoming on Saturday, June 25, Ted Faye, President of Gold Creek Films, will be returning to the Saugus Train Station to tell the story, and show his documentary film, of the "Great Desert Railroad Race", one of the most dramatic events in Death Valley's colorful history. Ted's previous event on the Twenty Mule Teams of Death Valley was well received by our audience at the Train Station. We look forward to his encore performance!

Our popular "Newhallywood" film class led by local film historian E.J. Stephens will be returning for new 3-class sessions starting May 21 and on July 16. Each class will take place on three consecutive Saturdays. Lucky participants will be taken on location to various local sites which were used to film a multitude of famous movies and television shows right here in the SCV. Further details on all these programs will appear on our website www.scvhs.org.

I can't say enough about our newest volunteers who have taken on important projects at the Junction. Major kudos to Linda Rehberger and Brenda Schaecher for their efforts in restoring the upstairs rooms at the Train Station! These rooms look better than they have in many years! Our newest Board Member Paul Duryea also continues to do a fantastic job in organizing the archives which have been housed in the upper echelons of the Station. We also want to thank Mike at AV Rentals for all his assistance and generosity.

A very special thanks to our partners at The Questers organization for their donations, which helped us complete the flooring restoration in the Pardee House in preparation for our new museum. We would also like

to thank an anonymous donor for their kind donation to help bring new shelving to the library and archive areas of the new museum. Anna Kroll, the chairman of our Library Committee, is anxious to start using the new shelving for an amazing archive of books on local history now owned by the Historical Society.

We thank the City of Santa Clarita for a wonderful grant which will allow us to purchase acid-free newspaper boxes to house an extensive collection of old Newhall Signal newspapers. In addition, with this grant, we will be purchasing special drawers to hold our historical map collection. These purchases will be a great asset for Paul Duryea's work on the archives.

More details should be available soon on www.scvhs.org on our Capital Campaign and how you can contribute to help us create a new museum in the Pardee House. We know these are hard economic times, but please give what you can to help turn a long time Society dream into reality. Many honors will be available for our donors. Thanks so much for your continued support of the Historical Society! See you at the Train Station.

Alan Pollack

Oak of the Golden Dream Questers #38 I by Roberta Harris

Quester members from all over California converged in Santa Clarita in March, for their semi-annual Council Meeting. Among the highlights of this meeting was a tour of the Edison and Kingsbury houses led by Quester docents, and lunch at the Saugus Train Station.

Oak of the Golden Dream was awarded a grant from the California State Questers to enable them to complete the installation of wood flooring in the Pardee House. They had previously completed the library and the main room.

Check out our exciting new website for the California Questers: www.CalQuest.org or contact roberta@myquesters.com for membership information.

How Many Volunteers. . ? by Pat Saletore

When Mike and Manny came over and after lunch the other day they decided to change the lightbulb in the exterior upper floor light fixture. Which begs the question... how many people does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

Usually it only takes a few minutes, but with M&M--not so fast:

- First, we *didn't* have the right kind of fluorescent bulb... incandescent doesn't cut it.
- Then Manny remembered he has some at the Jail; they went to the Jail to get one.
- The one at the Jail was too big to fit into the fixture, so they went to Lowes to get another
- When they screwed it in, it broke. Hint...when you shake a compact fluorescent light bulb, it should not make that ching-ching noise.
- So they went back for another
- After much careful tinkering...it finally worked.

Total time elapsed: 3 hours.

Unbelievable. But it also illustrates how frustrating it can be to do anything, no matter how simple, at Heritage Junction. Things that should be standard, aren't. Stuff that works everywhere else...might not work at Heritage Junction. But where else could you have that much fun over changing a light bulb??



Undergraduate Internships at the Hart Museum by Ayesha Saletore



Every year the William S. Hart Museum applies for one intern position through the J. Paul Getty Multicultural Undergraduate Internship. For each of the last dozen years, the Museum has been awarded one to two interns who work with the Hart Museum staff

on a particular project over the course of a summer. The internship is intended specifically for outstanding students who are members of groups currently underrepresented in museum professions. It is a great opportunity for students to not only learn about William S. Hart and his historic relevancy on local, national, and international levels, but also about museum pedagogy and small-museum management.

This year, Hart Museum's intern will work under the direction of the Museum Administrator to plan and develop two highlight tours of the Museum that will be offered to the public free of charge. Currently, the Hart Museum offers free general tours of the famed silent film star's retirement mansion that includes various aspects of William S. Hart's life and legacy. The intern's project will include the research and organization of two new tours, of which one will focus on William S. Hart's acting career (theater and film), while the second tour will highlight the museum building's historic architecture. All qualified students are welcome to visit www.nhm.org/jobs for more information.

Stay tuned for the new highlight tour dates!

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>.

The Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Presents

REFINING THE TRUMBLE MYSTERY

Saturday
May 14, 2011
at 2 PM

Author
Ann Mauer

*Some people whisper that
the ghost of Milon Trumble
still haunts the Santa Clarita Valley*



A collection of rare material saved by
an inventor's family reveals the life of
MJ Trumble

*Trumble Refineries
were built all over
the world. He was
reported to be the
first American to
register patents in
every country.
Inventor of the
first continuous
oil refining process,
Trumble was a
32nd degree Mason
urged by the US
government to
design and build
secret submarines.
His gentleman's
showdown with
William S. Hart
in Newhall was
a walk in the park
compared to what
happened when he
successfully
refined shale rock
into gasoline.*



Slide show & vintage exhibits

See behind the scenes of
Mauer's fiction suspense novel
based on the true story of
an elusive Los Angeles tycoon
who left his mark in Santa Clarita.

24101 Newhall Ave., Newhall, CA 91322
Saugus Train Station at Heritage Junction



\$5 Admission per person

Tickets can be purchased in advance by calling
(661) 254-1275

A unit of the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation System

Too-Quick Draw

by John Boston

Many are the things for which the Santa Clarita Valley is famous for, cinema graphically.

We've been home to world-famous movie stars and films beyond number have been made within our valley walls for going on nearly a century. This month marks our annual Cowboy Festival, which celebrates things poetic, musical and, most of all - Western.

But we also have to thank, in a slightly "gee, thanks..." sarcastic sort of way, the Western for being the inspiration for yet another category. This one is more infamous than famous.

Many years back, as valley historian, I started coming across an odd and reoccurring phenomenon here during the end of the 1950s to the very early 1960s: The Self-Inflicted Gunshot Wound.

Perhaps during no time in our history has America been so enthralled with one particular type of entertainment venue. That would be the Western. Hundreds of 'oaters' were being cranked out yearly. There were the bigger budget wide screen classics like "The Magnificent 7," John Wayne's "Rio Bravo," and Randolph Scott's "Ride Lonesome" just to name a few.

But the staggering statistic of the popularity of this American artform comes from TV. In the late 1950's, nine out of the top 10 television shows were Westerns. There was "The Lone Ranger." There was Clint Eastwood's early offerings in "Rawhide." Don't forget "Gunsmoke" (where Matt Dillon opens up every episode by shooting the poor same bad guy at the beginning of the show on the main drag of our own Melody Ranch.

"Bonanza" was, and still is, one of the most popular shows today in syndication. My friend and Hall of Fame stuntman, rancher and all-around good medicine cowboy, Jack Williams from Agua Dulce, noted that there still is a Bonanza fan club so rabid, some members know the episode names, plot lines and much of the dialogue from every one of these episodes.

Many of the storylines shared a common ending. That's where the Bad Guy would meet the Good Guy, usually in the center of town, at high noon, to square off in a man-on-man test of speed and nerves. You know: The Showdown.

The only problem with The Showdown is that it rarely ever happened in the real West. History tells us that most duels were spur-of-the-moment and frequently ended up with one party sneaking up on the other and ambushing their enemy. Still, the Showdown carries a more artistic and knightly ambiance to it, even though it's not true.

In real life, this spawned an epidemic of copycats across America. The quick draw craze nearly bordered on today's popularity of Texas Hold-em poker. Organizations were founded and tournaments were held. With filed-down hair triggers and well-oiled holsters, shootists would look for that perfect place to practice their fast draw.

Perhaps no where in the country was there a more perfect place than the SCV. First off, back in the '50s & '60s, there were only a few thousand people living throughout the entire greater valley. Today, you have almost as many people living in one condo complex.

Next, the SCV had just a custom geography for those wanting to shoot up things. With our countless lonely canyons acting as thick targets, men could practice their speedy pistol prowess without much fear of accidentally hitting anyone in the distance.

The problem was, many of the shootists ended up shooting themselves: In the foot. In the ankle. In the knee. In the thigh. In the butt.

For several years, on a staggering average of nearly once a week, someone was admitted to the tiny Newhall Community Hospital at the corner of present-day San Fernando Road and 6th Streets to be treated for the self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Steely-eyed men of all ages frequently got the proper order of quick draw incorrect. Standing in some lonely barranca or facing a pitted canyon wall, the gunmen would stare at their target (usually, a bottle or steel can). They'd yank their revolver from their slick holster, fire then aim. It didn't take long for the searing pain to arrive, along about the same time as the realization they had just done something Wile E. Coyote stupid.

Week after week, the doctors treated a generation of men, some of whom today have curious craters in the bottom half of their abdomen. To the credit of the trained SCV medical staff, no one ever killed themselves while practicing the Western-inspired fast draw.

But for the all-time anecdote of self-perforation, we have Hugh O'Brien to thank. Hugh was star of another popular TV prairie opera of the day: "Tombstone." The lanky actor starred as Wyatt Earp and sported a matching set of Buntline Specials - the infamous peacemakers with the overly long barrels.

One Los Angeles role-player came out to one of our canyons nearly a half-century back, decked out just like the TV star. He set up a target. He ground his boots into the dust, wiggled his hands and glowered. With lightning speed, the wannabe pistol fighter yanked out both Buntline Specials.

And yes. He fired a split second before he was supposed to.

In great pain, and spurting blood, he was able to drive himself to the little Newhall hospital. He was treated for identical matching gunshot wounds that went through the back of both calves and through his feet. Now there goes a perfectly good pair of boots...

With over 100 writing awards, SCV Historian John Boston has been named one of the top writers in America for the past 30 years. Look for more of his prose on thebostonreport.net. Also, look for another exciting SCV history book coming Christmas of 2011.

Upstairs ... by Pat Saletore

One of our current projects has been developing the four rooms upstairs in the Saugus Train Station into work spaces and offices. This is far from an easy, as anyone who has been up there knows what kind of mess we had. The nasty carpeting is history. The linoleum that was under it is gone! Two of the rooms are painted and as I write, we are preparing to paint the third. This project is happening under the direction of Linda Rehberger, pictured here cleaning a window along with Maggi Perkins and Greg Logian. Also shown, scraping up linoleum are Brenda Schecher, and Pete and Paul Tandoc. We also appreciate Mike, William, and Ian, all youth volunteers. This is a really exciting, but challenging project.

These four rooms started out as "Tolefree's Depot Hotel," and later it was converted into a residence for the Station Agent. The last agent, Robert James Guthry, lived there in the 1960s and 70s. He and wife Arminta slept in the first room to the right. The next room served as a bedroom for four of their daughters. One daughter had already moved out on her own, and son Ed's room was our current kitchen. The first room on the left was their kitchen and the next room was their living room. The laundry room, and bathroom were attached to the side of the building. The pictures of the "addition" make one really wonder about the safety of the plan, but you know there was no indoor plumbing, and no electrical wiring, either. We are looking forward to getting the electricity restored upstairs by new board member Ed Marg and his father, Ed Marg, Sr.



Library by Anna Kroll

The Library Committee met a second time to discuss the organization of the SCVHS library and consider ideas for how we would let scholars and the public view our growing collection. The new flooring is in, and the walls are painted in anticipation of the completion of custom, floor to ceiling bookshelves, which are being constructed even as I write. They should be completed and installed soon.

Once the shelves are installed, we will be able to arrange the books by author, making them roughly accessible while we work on entering records of them into a searchable database, that will allow scholars to easily find them for their research.



Recent Docents

Thank you to the following members who served as docents during March and April

Frank Adella	Barbara Martinelli
Phyllis Berman	Barbara Milteer
Jeff Boultinghouse	RuthAnne Murthy
Laurie Cartwright	Alan Pollack
Sioux Coghlan	The Questers *
Evan Decker	Konrad Summers
Sarah Floyd	Gordon & Marlene Uppman
Francesca Gastil	Michelle Veasman
Harold Hicks	

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



OIL INDUSTRY IN THE SCV: SEE PAGE 5



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

Historical Society Board of Directors

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

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