



The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 41, Issue 3

May-June 2015

Calendar

Monday, May 25

Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

Saturday, May 30

Photo presentation by Tom Gildersleeve on the Rio Grande narrow gauge railroad in the snow in Colorado and New Mexico, over 50 years ago
1:00 PM Newhall Library

Monday, June 1

Deadline for the July-August *Dispatch*

Monday, June 22

Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

OutWest Concert Series at The Repertory East, 24266 Main St in Newhall. 8:00 PM

Thursday, May 28; Susie Glaze and the Hilonesome Band; \$17.00 for SCVHS members

Thursday, Thursday, June 25: Miss Devon & The Outlaw, with Kristyn Harris and Brook Wallace; \$22.00 for SCVHS members

Check www.scvhistory.org for other upcoming events.

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

President's Message

by Alan Pollack



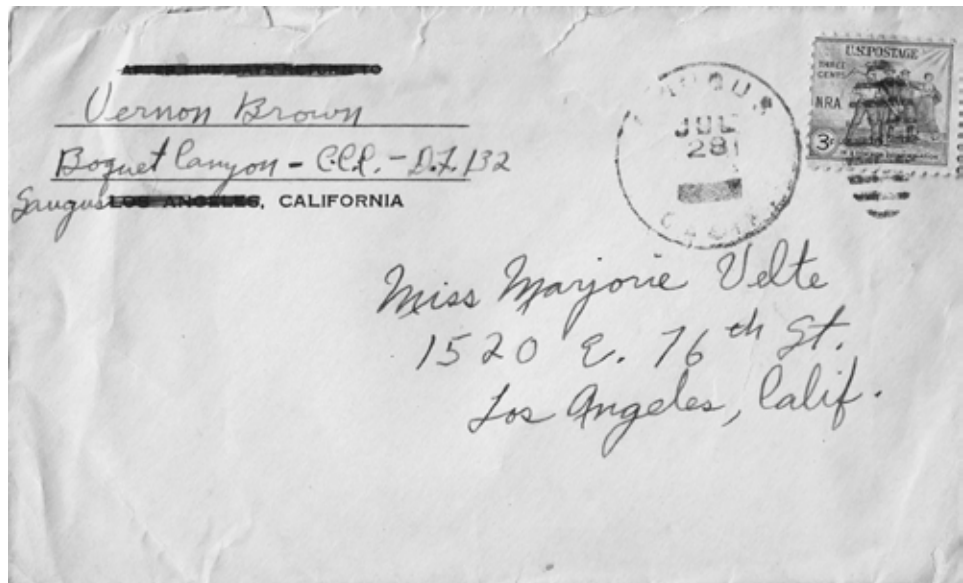
Harrison Scott called it "The Road That United California". The famous Ridge Route was the first road to serve as a direct connection between the Santa Clarita and San Joaquin Valleys. It was thought that California was in jeopardy of being divided into two states, due to the difficulty in navigating the mountains north of Santa Clarita prior to the road's construction, but the initial proposal for the Ridge Route was not without controversy.

THE PROPOSED STATE HIGHWAY DIRECT TO BAKERSFIELD

On November 3, 1912, the Los Angeles Times reported on "The Proposed State

Highway Direct to Bakersfield..." The final hearing on the proposed road was to be held later that month by the State Highway Commission. The article stated "when completed, which will probably be in about a year, the State highway from here to Bakersfield will be unique and admirable among mountain roads of the country". A competing proposal would take the road through Soledad Canyon, out to Lancaster and Mojave, and then through the Tehachapi Pass into the San Joaquin Valley and on to Bakersfield. This route would essentially follow the Southern Pacific Railroad line. But the Ridge Route was favored over the Tehachapi Route by the State Highway Commission and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, since it would save fifty to sixty miles of driving and avoid shifting sands and creek crossings. The Times article pointed out further: "Notwithstanding the

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A letter from the CCC in Saugus - See pages 5-7

President's Message

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wild nature of the country, the highway will be as level as a city street. The maximum grade will be only 6 percent, and in few places will it be necessary to establish a grade as high as that. It will be possible for the automobile driver to go from here to Bakersfield on the high gear over a paved road with the friction reduced to a minimum – all the advantages of a mountain ride without any of its discomforts". As things were to turn out, this statement about the comforts of the road would turn out to be overly optimistic.

The proposed road would be twenty-one feet wide in the cuts, twenty-four feet wide at the fills, and would be paved to a width of fifteen feet throughout. In reality, the road was not completed until 1915, and not paved until 1919.

THE COMPETING TEHACHAPI ROUTE

At the time of the proposal, there were many cities and localities requesting and demanding that the new road be routed through them, but to meet all these demands would have added many miles to the route and greatly increased the cost. The Commission therefore chose to follow the edict of the Highway Act of 1909, "to build by the most direct and practicable route, depending upon its tributary roads from each side to complete the highway connection". The Tehachapi Route was said to impose a "tax" of \$5 on every automobile, since it was estimated that the cost of driving would be about 10 cents per extra mile.

Ultimately, and as expected, the Commission chose the Ridge Route over the Tehachapi Route. But there were those along the Tehachapi route who attempted to reverse the decision of the Commission. The Automobile Club of Southern California, in April, 1913, denounced those who opposed the Ridge Route. In a series of nine signed resolutions, the Auto Club stated "With thousands of other interested residents of Southern California, they resent

the effort of a few owners of property along the Tehachapi to waste State money and disregard the interests of the many for the enrichment of the few". In favor of the Ridge Route, they further stated that the Tehachapi Route would be 57 miles longer than the Ridge Route, that the extent of mountain grade on the Tehachapi would be double the 6 percent grade of the Ridge Route, and that, unlike the Ridge Route, the Tehachapi route would be subjected to the excessive summer temperatures and high winds of the

Mojave Desert. Also mentioned were the bad drainage conditions and multiple stream crossings along the Tehachapi Route, the increased maintenance cost of the Tehachapi due to its location in canyons as opposed to mountain ridges, and the increased cost of \$500,000 more to build the Tehachapi as opposed to the Ridge Route.

Later in April, the Motor Truck Club

of California also followed the lead of the Auto Club and passed a series of resolutions favoring the Ridge Route over the Tehachapi Route. By June, 1913, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors had come up with a "compromise route" which would add an additional thirty miles to the proposed Ridge Route. The compromise road would go through Mint or Bouquet Canyon to the Antelope Valley and then proceed to the Tejon Pass and on to Bakersfield. The Auto Club was vigorously opposed to this plan, stating that "it will cost a quarter of a million dollars more to build the longer route and will impose the additional run of thirty miles upon every automobilist making the trip".

GREAT RIDGE ROUTE IS SOON TO BE PASSABLE

In the end, the proponents of the Ridge Route won out over those favoring the Tehachapi Route. The Times reported on August 22, 1915 "Great Ridge Route Is Soon To Be Passable". Hailed as "one of the greatest engineering

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Near Sandberg

President's Message

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achievements ever brought to a conclusion in Southern California”, the last grading of the new route was to take place by the following week. The new route was to cut the travel time between Los Angeles and Bakersfield from well over six hours to just four hours. It was also destined to be a new tourist attraction, climbing for thirty miles “through some of the most wild and rugged mountain country to be found in Southern California”. The road was due to be opened to travel within about 45 days of the last grading, as the Highway Commission planned to oil the road to preserve the surface. It was not to be paved for at least two years “owing to the great number of fills that must be allowed to thoroughly settle...” N.D. Darlington of the State Highway Commission proudly told a Times reporter “For the most part our work of highway building has been merely to improve existing roads. In the Ridge Route, however, we had an opportunity to so vastly improve one of the main trunk line roads between two important points, that I regard it as the most striking single piece of work that we have been able to accomplish”.

On September 9, 1915, Darlington led the first trek of automobiles over the Ridge Route, consisting of members of the Board of Supervisors, and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Auto Club. Carl McStay of the Auto Club noted “A saving of twenty-four miles. That means a saving of from \$1 to \$3.50 in gasoline and maintenance for every automobilist that goes over this road from now until eternity.” Describing the new road, the newspaper reported “It is the Ridge route in fact, for the road leaps from ridge to ridge over connecting causeways. It is a highway hung up against the sky, with the dark canyon of Castaic Creek yawning at one turn, and a smiling ensemble of chaparral-clad and creased hills at another... It is a road that traverses a new country of great possibilities, runs close by historic Fort Tejon, and finally merges in the mountains with the concrete road system of Kern County.”

OPENING OF THE RIDGE ROUTE

Commissioner Darlington and the Auto Club announced in the November 14, 1915 edition of the Los Angeles Times that the Ridge Route would officially open to traffic on November 16. Auto Club signs were already in place along the route, and construction crews were working feverishly day and night to get the road oiled before the onset of the winter rains. It was estimated that 80,000 autos would traverse the route in its first year of service. The Times advised motorists “To reach the beginning of the ridge route, motor cars will travel out through the San Fernando

Valley over the San Fernando boulevard, passing through the fertile fields at the base of the foothills, and on to Saugus, where the turn is made into the Castaic country.”

On November 16, 1915, the Los Angeles Times reported from Bakersfield, “The ‘Ridge Route’ on the State highway between this city and Los Angeles was formally opened for traffic today, reducing the distance between here and the southern metropolis to 126 miles... Travelers are requested to keep to the side at the present time as there is some oil on the highway, which is best left unmolested.” It was noted that the Auto Club had placed direction and warning signs along the new highway in world record time. What should have taken two weeks, was accomplished in one evening. Each sign was made of metal, affixed to a metal post which was sunk three feet into the ground. The Auto Club had only been given twenty four hours’ notice by the Highway Commission to get the job done before the road was to open. The majority of the signs were to warn motorists to keep to the right side of the roadway, and to sound horns at all curves. At the two summits and ends of the road, large signs were placed which stated “Caution! 29 Miles Mountain Road. Grades. Curves. Drive Slowly—Keep Right. Sound Your Horn!”

Today, the old Ridge Route still hugs the ridges of the San Gabriel and Tehachapi Mountains as it did back in 1915. Most of it has been closed to vehicular traffic for several years by the Forest Service due to extensive damage from heavy rains during the last El Niño. In the valleys below runs the modern Interstate 5, which now serves as the main artery between Northern and Southern California, much as the Ridge Route did in its heyday. And time marches on, with more on the Ridge Route in the July-August issue.



Tumble Inn 2006

Free Ramona on June 14 by Maria Christopher

Free tickets are available for a screening of the recovered and recently restored 1928 *Ramona* starring Dolores del Rio. The movie will be shown at the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse on Sunday, June 14, at 2:00 PM. This event is the result of a unique historical partnership between the Ramona Parlor of the Native Sons of the Golden West, the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse, the Los Angeles Theatre Organ Society, and the Rancho Camulos Museum and National Historic Landmark.

What IS the connection among these groups? It's all about Ramona.

Helen Hunt Jackson's epic California novel "Ramona" was published in 1884. It quickly captured the nation's interest in the golden west. The Ramona Parlor of the Native Sons of the Golden West, a benevolent preservationist organization, was chartered in 1887. San Gabriel, its current location, is known as the birthplace of Ramona. The first president of the Ramona Parlor was Reginaldo del Valle. The del Valle's were the owners of Rancho Camulos, which became famous as the "Home of Ramona"; thus they share the Ramona legacy.

There were four known American movie versions of Ramona. The first was D.W. Griffith's 1910 version starring Mary Pickford, which was filmed on location at Rancho Camulos, and it is shown regularly to visitors. The second was Donald Crisp's 1915 version starring Adda Gleason, which was filmed at Rancho Camulos and other areas in Ventura County. It is considered a lost film, as only portions of one reel exist in the Library of Congress. The third was Edwin Carew's 1928 version starring Dolores Del Rio. It

was filmed in Utah and for many years was considered to be lost. The fourth was Henry King's 1936 version starring Loretta Young. It was filmed in Monterey California and is readily available.

Director Edwin Carew's thought-to-be-lost 80 minute silent film classic, which will be shown on June 14, was discovered in the Czech Republic, having found its way there by way of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Republic. It was restored by the Library of Congress and re-premiered in 2014 at the Billy Wilder Theatre of the UCLA Hammer Museum. A panel discussion including experts involved in finding and restoring the film will follow the screening.

The showing of the film at the historic 1927 San Gabriel Mission Playhouse, with accompaniment by renowned organist Robert Salisbury on the playhouse's 1924 Wurlitzer pipe organ, will make this a memorable event.

Although admission is free, tickets must be obtained in advance at www.missionplayhouse.org.

In addition, after the panel discussion, at 4:00 PM there will be a \$25 VIP reception at the Native Sons of the Golden West Ramona Museum, to benefit the Rancho Camulos Museum and National Historic Landmark. The Rancho Camulos Museum is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit dedicated to the preservation of the Rancho Camulos National Historic Landmark (www.ranchocamulos.org) and educating the public about the historical impact of the 1884 novel "Ramona".

Attendees will have an opportunity to interact with the panelists and other VIPs, view artifacts, and enjoy light refreshments. Contact cachristopher1@att.net by June 8 for reservations.



San Gabriel Mission Playhouse

Cowboy Festival Wrapup by Cathy Martin

As I wait for the dust to settle on the first Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival to be held at Heritage Junction. I'm breathing a sigh of relief that we had a very successful event.

The Art Director's Guild, the local Jaycees, Wolf Creek Brewery, Go Fusion food truck and all of our western gear vendors had a wonderful time and want to come back next year!

The loading dock on the Saugus train station became the Heritage Junction Stage, where 10 western musical acts took place. Saturday evening we hosted our main event dinner and concert, with Marie Wise Hawkins and her band taking the stage. What a fantastic concert! She sang all different types of Country songs from old ballads from Patsy Cline and Johnny Cash to current country songs from Lady Antebellum. All in all, a wonderful performance.

A very big thank you to Gency Brown, the president of the Western Music Assn, who rounded up the talent for our daytime stage events. She even preformed the last set of music. Thanks to David Veal, our sound guy, for the use of all of your sound equipment and helping with the concert.

All of the loud gun shots and cannon fire you heard were not your imagination. The Civil War broke out two times a day in Quester Court, with large crowds filling up the spectator area.

All of this wonderful event didn't just happen on its own; there are many people to thank. Please see page 11.

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	\$55.00
Regular member	\$30.00
Senior Member (60+)	\$20.00
Junior (18 & under)	\$10.00

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

A Letter From the CCC by Charles Epting

While at a recent stamp convention, I came across something I had never seen before—a handwritten letter from a Civilian Conservation Corps boy to his girlfriend. While such a letter would be of interest to me regardless of the location, the fact that it was sent from Saugus to Los Angeles made it particularly special.

The CCC was one of President Franklin Roosevelt's numerous relief agencies created in the midst of the Great Depression. Unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 25 were sent to work camps across the country and tasked with the protection, restoration, and development of natural resources.

Out of all of Roosevelt's New Deal programs, the CCC was one of the most popular and most successful. Many of the county's national, state, and local parks were enhanced with infrastructure that is still intact today.

The letter I found was sent by a young man named Vernon Brown, originally from the Florence-Graham neighborhood of Los Angeles. Both he and the letter's recipient—Marjorie Velte—had attended John C. Fremont High School before Brown enlisted in the CCC.

Although many boys involved in the program were shipped across the country to work, Vernon Brown moved only 40 miles north to Saugus. CCC Camp DF-132 (home of Company 1947) was established on July 10, 1934, only a few weeks before the letter was written. The "DF" designation in the name means that the camp was located on Department of Forestry land.

Further information about the camp at Saugus is scant, and Vernon's letter to Marjorie gives a tantalizing glimpse into what it was like to be stationed there. The excruciating heat mentioned certainly seems like a hyperbole, but his vivid descriptions of the bare-bones living conditions ring true for many camps across the country.

Hopefully the discovery of this letter will bring forth more information about the CCC camp located in Saugus. If you have any further information please feel free to contact the author at epting@usc.edu.

The letter is on the following two pages.

The Letter from Saugus

Page I

July 27, 1934
Boquet Canyon
C.C.C. - P. 7, 132
Saugus, Calif

Dear Marjorie:

I am sorry that I didn't write sooner but I thought that I could come in to L.A. and see you Friday night, until a forest fire started in Groves Deco. One hundred C.C.C. fellows left last night to fight it and we 100 that are here half to stay in and patrol the camp. If it spreads any more they will send us there to fight it too.

See, honey, it is so hot here in the camp that I'm sweating in sweat. It's 129 degrees here in the shade. We only stayed in Ft. Mac Arthur one night, they came here, I don't like it here a bit. The clothes they give us here are all one size and nothing fits me but the shoes. The food is the only thing I like.

There are a lot of fellows in my camp here that I know from Fremont, Joe Rustan, John Metz, John Breslin, Chester Miller, Billy Loucks, Kenneth Brown and a few others. Last night at 1:30 in the morning they woke us and asked for volunteers to fight the fire but I was too sleepy to fight them.

(over)

The Letter from Saugus

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Gosh, Darling I sure miss you, and I hope you miss me as much. I get ~~lonesome~~^{so} lonesome here at night and during the day time. Do you still love me honey, I sure love you sweetheart.

I have to stop writing every once in a while and wipe the sweat from my hands and forehead ~~and~~ don't think I'm this bum of a writer, because I have to lay down and write ~~on~~ an old piece of board. We haven't any hay for our beds so we just sleep on wooden bunks. There are 200 fellows in this camp. All I've been doing all day is taking shower baths and laying in my bunk with just my shorts on. All of us from Fremont are sleeping in the same barracks. There are 25 bunks in this barracks and they are a lower and upper berth. I have a lower berth to sleep in. I've got good news honey, my old friend, you know who I mean, I can't write his name here because so many guys are passing by reading here and then, well he was sent to March Field in Riverside. This camp is just 15 miles from Saugus, and 50 miles from L. A. Honey, you had better write me soon so I won't fall so bad. Address the letter like I have it on ~~the~~ top of the letter. Gee I got to get this letter mailed or I won't get it to the post office in time to ~~take~~ have it taken out tonight. So honey I'm sending you my love, kisses, and hugs the first time in a letter. I hope you like them too.

X O O O X — I'll see you one week from tonight, Fri. Aug. 3. I can come in every other Fri. eve, honey so please be home when I come, about 7:30. Goodbye sweetheart, till later. Vernon

The Hart Family

by Rachel Barnes



Have you ever been in a situation where you are meeting a whole slew of relatives, and you're trying to keep everyone straight? *Honey, I want you to meet Carol. She's my cousin. Well, actually, she's my third cousin eight*

times removed on my mother's side, and... oh, here's Charlie, another cousin. He's my second cousin's husband on my dad's side... After about 200 of these complicated relationships in less time than it takes to down a single cocktail, whose head isn't spinning??

Well, it might seem ludicrous, but that spinning head hits the Hart Museum staff each time we try to untangle the mess that is William S. Hart's family. And forget cousins; we're just trying to figure out how many brothers and sisters the movie star had. A much more difficult undertaking than it might seem at first, but records from the 1800s are scattered and incomplete, and information we can access – like Hart's 1929 autobiography, *My Life East and West* – isn't as detailed as we would hope.

Yet, with the dawn of online genealogical databases, and more federal records becoming accessible electronically, a fully formed picture of Bill Hart and his siblings is starting to come into sharper focus.

According to Federal Censuses taken in 1870 and 1880, the oldest of the Hart children was Nettie. She appears to have been born to Nicholas and Rosanna Hart in 1860 or 1861 in New York, making her between 4- and 5-years-old when her brother William arrived in 1864. This ties in perfectly with Hart's somewhat ambiguous autobiography, which references "my elder sister," (p. 8) and "two foolish children," (p. 2) relatively early in his reminisces of life on the western frontier.



Bill Hart age 3

That also connects with the Census data, which lists Hart himself as the second child and oldest son born to Nicholas and Roseanna.

Using these sources, we can piece together the birth order of the Hart children:

- Nettie - Born in 1860 or 1861
- Bill - Born in 1864
- Frances - Born in 1869
- Mary Ellen - Born in 1872
- Unnamed Baby Brother - Born around 1873 - 1874
- Nicholas Jr. - Born in 1875
- Unnamed Baby Brother - Born around 1880
- Lotta - Born in 1882

Bill is mum on any further siblings, and the Census records we have accessed don't mention Lotta (although she is mentioned in the death records), so it is probably safe to assume that Lotta was the youngest child born to the couple. An interesting note, however, is Hart's recollection of his father's death in 1895, and the knowledge that Nicholas would soon "see [Lotta's] little brothers and sisters [in heaven]," (p. 124). Although, we can glean that Nicholas and Roseanna lost three baby boys in infancy and childhood, there is no mention or record of a lost baby girl...

As the Hart family was growing, they did not stay anchored in New York state, but moved to Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Dakotas before they returned to New York, where Bill launched his stage career.

What happened to the surviving siblings? We'll cover that in the next issue of the Dispatch.

New / Renewing Members

We welcome to membership in our historical society:

NEW

Richard Strother: *Life Member*
 Sarah Brewer Tommy Gelinas
 Grant & Laura Bruemmer Bob Palmer
 Sherry Culver Deborah Phillipson
 Michael Devlin Jeff Prange

RENEWING

Marianne Alegrete James Krause
 Charles & Annick Allen Ken & Diane Kreyenhagen
 Mrs Arlene Brooks Carol Lagasse
 Bronnie Barry Bob Lewis
 Robert Barton Ray Lorme
 Roger & Becki Basham David Lyerla
 John Bergstrom Ann Marie Whalley
 Alan Bofenkamp Beverly Masalonis
 Olly Bruins Martin Meeden
 Alvreta Buck Maryann Mendez
 Ann Carawan Gordon Messick
 Sandra Cattell Sheila Miller
 Agnes Chaney Donald Moore
 Sioux Coghlan Kim Mulhausen
 James Collins June & Ken Myers
 Kevin Corcoran Ruthanne Murthy
 Laurie Cotton Oak o/t Golden Dream Questers
 Teri Crane Roger Palmer
 Paul Dentzel Lynn Plambeck
 Sharon Devol James Quinn
 James Didrickson Susan Rinker
 Bob & Debbie DiPrimio Rose Romeka
 Dr & Mrs Richard Doyle Harrison Scott
 Scott Franklin Yvonne Searcy
 Al & Sue Frisch Janet Squires
 Thomas Gildersleeve Bobbi & John Stephens
 Gordon Glattenberg Ted Sykes
 Joanne Grosh Linda Tarnoff
 Chuck Hall Kenneth Tratner
 Cathy Hammers Gordon Uppman
 Roberta Harris David Veal
 Russell & Linda Herrington Stan Walker
 Ellen Hon David Warburton
 Robert Hornberger Janet Werrin
 Faye Johnson William West
 Joanne Kennedy Rob Wlodarski
 Jim & Sylvia Kirschner Jean Woods
 Leslie Kleinman Charles Wright

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

Weekend Docents:

Sioux Coghlan	Anna Kroll
Evan Decker	Barbara Martinelli
Rick Ferrante	RuthAnne Murthy
Sara Floyd	Alan Pollack
Francesca Gastil	Jeff Prange
Harold Hicks	Gordon Uppman

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

Those who open and close for the docents:

Darryl Manzer	RuthAnne Murthy
Cathy Martin	Alan Pollack
Barbara Martinelli	Roberto Torres

Questers - Weekend and School Tour*

Joanie Colette	Pat Horenberg
Ann Grayson	Summer O'Brien
Fritz Grayson	Bill Tozzi
Cynthia Harris	Nancy Tozzi
Linda Hinz	Jenewyn Van Wie

School Tour Docents:

Sandra Cattell	Barbara Martinelli
Bob Feder	RuthAnne Murthy
Harold Hicks	Brent Roberts

Grounds, Cowboy Festival Prep:

Jill Brown	Darryl Manzer
Randy Brown	Gerry Sokolowitz
Sandra Cattell	Loren Vallin-Flores
Duane Harte	Sue Yurosek
Cathy Martin	LDS Young Adults
Steve Martin	

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

James Dean's last meal in the SCV...

by John Boston

There isn't an old-timer in the Santa Clarita who doesn't recall Tip's. It was the nomad of coffee shops, showing up here and there over the valley floor. For years, it sat atop Hamburger Hill, where the International House of Pancakes rests today on Pico Canyon next to Interstate 5. It was home to one the world's most famous bartenders — Bobby Batugo.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the amiable mixologist from the Philippines attracted patrons from all over Southern and Central California. He was renowned for his brightly-colored and epic drinks made from countless rums.

Since the 1920s, Tip's moved around. There was even one on Sierra Highway for a short time.

For thousands of years, Castaic Junction has been a significant trade center. The Tataviam hosted dozens of Indian cultures from all points of the compass. When Highway 99 was the main north-south artery of California in the 1930s, the old Beacon Restaurant was a mecca for tired tourists and red-eyed teamsters. Tip's took over, then moved again in the 1950s to where Marie Callender's rests today.

That old restaurant is infamous as anchors for two historical facts: It was the site of the murder of four CHP officers in the April 1970 parking lot shoot-out, and it was the place where actor James Dean ate his last meal. September 30th, 1955, was the date of Dean's death.

His was a star that burned bright but passed ever so quickly. He made only three movies — all of them in the same year. He was nominated for two Academy Awards ("East of Eden" and "Giant") and was one of only five actors to ever be nominated as Best Actor in their first performance.

And then he died.

He was born James Byron Dean on Feb. 8th, 1931. Perhaps the signature of his bottomless angst was losing his mother at such an early age. "I didn't know what to do. How do you tell an eight-year-old boy his mother's going to die? I tried. In my own stumbling way I tried to prepare Jim for it," his father, Winton Dean, told a reporter from Modern Screen Magazines. "Nowadays, he lives in a world we don't understand too well, the actor's world. We don't see too much of him. But he's a good boy, my Jim. A good boy, and I'm very proud of him. Not easy to understand, no sir. He's not easy to understand. But he's all man, and he'll make his mark. Mind you, my boy will make his mark."

The odd, cruel timing of it: The article appeared just a month before his boy was killed in a fiery car accident outside Paso Robles.

Dean attended high school in his birthplace of Marion, Indiana, and then attended classes at the James Whitmore School, where Whitmore urged him to go to New York to study.

Another odd Santa Clarita tie-in: Whitmore's son, Steve, would later become a reporter and City Editor of The Signal newspaper during the 1990s.

Taking the famed actor's advice, Dean would apply to the prestigious Actors' Studio in New York.

From his own hand, a letter to his family written in 1952: "I have made great strides in my craft. After months of auditioning, I am very proud to announce that I am a member of the Actors Studio. The greatest school of the theater. It houses great people like Marlon Brando, Julie Harris, Arthur Kennedy, Mildred Dunnock... Very few get into it, and it is absolutely free. It is the best thing that can happen to an actor. I am one of the youngest to belong. If I can keep this up and nothing interferes with my progress, one of these days I might be able to contribute something to the world."

A half-century later, Dean is still worshipped as a god. Every mall in the country hawks giant posters of his likeness. Without a doubt, one of his three films was the mantra for Dean and the young generation he represented as the alienated Jim Stark in "Rebel Without A Cause."

Dean had moved back and forth from Los Angeles to New York, doing television and stage. He played the Howard Hughes-like character in "Giant" opposite two other tormented stars, Rock Hudson and Elizabeth Taylor, but started the year with Steinbeck's "East of Eden."

The world seemed to be his.

"[Dean's] death caused a loss in the movie world that our industry could ill afford," said actor Gary Cooper. "Had he lived long enough, I feel he would have made some incredible films. He had sensitivity and a capacity to express emotion."

Though romanticized today, there was an even darker side to the troubled youth. Stories are still around today about a pornographic nature and excesses to the actor.

Life seemed to imitate film for the tragedian. In March of 1955, he celebrated his wild success and rave reviews by buying a Porsche Spyder. Soon, he was racing on and off the street and on tracks across Southern California.

But Dean was not happy. Dean reportedly told his close friend, actor Dennis Hopper, that he was going to quit his white-hot acting career. Dean confided that he couldn't stand being "treated like a puppet" as an actor and said he wanted to direct.

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John Boston

Continued from page 10

He was en route to a race in Salinas when he died. For years, the rumor circulated that he had been speeding when he hit a farmer's truck that had rumbled onto the main highway in the flatlands of the San Joaquin Valley. Subsequent investigations noted he was only driving about 55 mph when his Porsche collided.

Interestingly, the engine from that car was sold to a Beverly Hills doctor. Dr. Troy McHenry would die in a car accident on Oct. 22, 1956. The car reportedly was propelled by Dean's engine.

There are other stories about the Porsche. Supposedly, after the crash it rolled onto a mechanic at customizer George Barris' garage and broke the man's leg.

There are urban legends involving the death of another doctor who bought the Porsche's transmission, plus injuries of two other men who had reportedly used parts from Dean's wreckage.

Today, the body of the car is still missing. An Indiana museum has offered a \$1 million reward for the racer.

Sixty years later, James Dean is still with us, strong as, well - Elvis.

Why? Biographer Joe Hyams summed it up best in "Little Boy Lost": "There is no simple explanation for why he has come to mean so much to so many people today. Perhaps it is because, in his acting, he had the intuitive talent for expressing the hopes and fears that are a part of all young people... In some movie-magic way, he managed to dramatize brilliantly the questions every young person in every generation must resolve."

Years ago, I spoke with the waitress who had served James Dean's last meal, at Tip's in what was called Saugus back then.

It was simply apple pie and milk.

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John Boston has been named Best Serious and Best Humorous newspaper columnist in California, Los Angeles, and America, several times, to go with 100-plus major writing awards, including The Will Rogers Humanitarian Lifetime Achievement Award. Over at the scvbeacon.com, every week do look for his John Boston Report

<http://scvbeacon.com/category.php?catg=5>

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Cowboy Festival Thank-yous by Cathy Martin

These people helped make the Festival a success:

The group that helped with the grounds was the L.D.S. kids, who worked the last 3 months pulling weeds and clearing out all the "extra" stuff we'd accumulated.

Randy Brown, Duane Harte and my wonderful husband Steve Martin helped rebuild the handicap ramp to the Pardee House and the Newhall Ranch House stairs, add new flooring in the NRH dining room, fix the front door to the Saugus Train Station, and add the fence around the Mitchell Adobe.

A newer member, Loren Vallin-Flores, was my right hand through all of this event. She rounded up the western-gear vendors and food trucks and took care of their contracts. She kept me moving forward. Thank you Loren!

Event volunteers deserving extra kudos are Rick and Alison Ferrente, Sandra Catell, Laurie and Bret Cotten, Jerry Sokolowicz, Sioux Coghlan, and Evan Decker. You all did our Historical Society proud, and I hope I can count on you next year. Darryl Manzer waded through a river of red tape for permits to allow the Pardee and Newhall Ranch Houses to be open to the public. We thank you.

Norm Philips and Eric Reifman from William S. Hart park kept me informed when paperwork needed to be filed, and reminded us of the County Park rules. I promise it will be easier next year!

Roberto Torres from ART CreActive Marketing Solutions made all of the signs directing everyone to the craft beer and food trucks.

Thank you Barbara Martinelli and RuthAnne Murthy, who put together the successful Historical Santa Clarita bus tour.

New faces this year were the Santa Clarita Valley Jaycees. They took over the gold panning troughs and showed first-time prospectors how to pan for gold. I'm sure there are going to be some fun stories about the huge gold nuggets the kids found in their gold pans. Thank you Chris Kahan.

Thanks to the local Sheriffs, both horse-mounted and on ATVs, for keeping us safe.

And lastly thanks to David Knutison, Mike Fleming and Phil Lantis from the City of Santa Clarita for taking a chance on us, answering all of our questions, donating some of the tables, chairs, and trash cans, and moving all of those bricks in front of the Kingsbury House. You were terrific partners. See you all next year!!!



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*Performers at the Cowboy Festival;
see pages 5 and 11*