



The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 44, Issue 3

May - June 2018

Calendar

Monday, May 28

Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

Friday, June 1

Deadline for the July-August
Dispatch

Monday, June 25

Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

Check www.scvhistory.org for other upcoming events.

President's Message

by Alan Pollack



In the last edition of the Dispatch, we discussed the life and untimely death of McCoy Pyle, one of two brothers who in 1884 discovered a magnificent cache of Tataviam Native

American artifacts in a cave above the present-day Chiquita Canyon Landfill along Highway 126.

The namesake of that famous cave was Dr. Stephen Bowers, a renowned preacher, author, reformer, geologist, archeologist, collector, and, at the time, editor of the Ventura Free Press. Bowers found out about the Pyle discovery and offered the brothers \$1500 to purchase the contents of what became known as Bowers Cave. He subsequently sold off the collection,

the majority of which resides today at the Peabody Museum of American Ethnology at Harvard University.

Early Life of Bowers

Stephen Bowers was born near Wilmington, Indiana, in 1832. In 1856, he was ordained as a Methodist minister. A few years later, the Civil War began, and in 1862, Bowers enlisted as a private soldier in an Indiana infantry regiment. He eventually became a first lieutenant and chaplain of the regiment. After a year in the military, Bower's health declined, and he resigned to enter the ministry. He furthered his education, gaining an M.A. degree from Indiana State University, and a Ph.D. from Willamette University of Oregon. He spent the next nine years after leaving the army preaching the Methodist faith at various locations in Indiana.

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

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President's Message

Continued from page 1

Bowers headed West in 1872 and continued his preaching at Salem, Oregon, before moving on to Napa, and then Santa Barbara, California. While in Santa Barbara, Bowers became involved with the United States Geological Survey, and with the Mineralogical and Geological Survey of California. He took a short break in Indianapolis before returning to California to become publisher of the *Ventura Free Press*, and later the *Observer* in Fallbrook, and the *California Voice* in Los Angeles. In politics, Bowers became a member of the Prohibition Party, for which he was a Presidential elector in 1892. He was listed in the *Encyclopedia of American Biography* as a reformer, and under Governor Henry Gage was appointed State Mine Examiner of California in 1899. He had become well known for his great scientific knowledge of the geology of California.

Honors for Bowers

Among other honors, he was a Fellow of the Geological Society of America, corresponding member of the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences, and member of the American Conchological Society, Academy of Political and Social Science, American Institute of Civics, National Geographical Society, and Philosophical Society of Great Britain. Dr. Bowers was credited with a number of significant fossil finds in California. In honor of his discoveries, six new forms of fossils were named for him including *ammonites bowersi* found in the Santa Ana Mountains, a 100-pound petrified sea shell around one half million years old.

Bowers the Archeologist

As an archeologist and geologist in California, Bowers would dig up thousands of California and Midwestern fossils and native American artifacts, which were subsequently acquired by the Smithsonian Institution. He was the first archeologist to visit and examine the remains of Native American burial grounds on San Nicolas and Santa Rosa Islands, from which he removed skulls, implements, and artifacts of the Chumash tribe and shipped them to the Smithsonian, other museums, and private collectors. As an untrained archeologist, Bowers was widely criticized for destroying many artifacts and archeological sites.

Bowers the Collector

Bowers was a renowned and avid collector of books, fossils, and antiquities, including the Tataviam treasures found in Bowers Cave. In 1895, he donated to the University of Southern California a valuable collection of books and specimens, including minerals, fossils; marine, land, and freshwater shells; and ethnological and archeological forms. Nearly every land on the globe was represented, as well as nearly every geological formation. The collection included rare archeological specimens from Egypt, Italy, the Sandwich Islands, the Aztecs, and the United States, especially Southern California. There were gems, ores, metals, and crystals from around the world, as well as an extensive and valuable book collection, particularly centered on science and geology.

Bowers the Theologian

His most sensational theological revelation came in 1902, when Bowers announced at a meeting of the Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles that he had located heaven. According to the *Los Angeles Times* "a sensational scene followed. By many the doctor's dictum was hailed as the greatest revelation made since the new era dawned ... The effect of the lecture upon the audience was 'electrical,' and stirring scenes were witnessed." Based on 14 years of study, Bowers concluded that heaven had to be a concave hollow sphere surrounding the universe of stars. He claimed that the sphere was a counteracting force to gravity, preventing the aggregation of suns, planets, and systems. Using various words and quotes from the Bible, especially the Book of Revelation, Bowers concluded that "in this concave abutting sphere the Christian will find his ultimate abode."

In his later years, Bowers engaged in some mining enterprises and gave numerous lectures, while continuing to preach every Sunday. He wrote several books on theology, sociology, and geology. Bowers died at age 74 at his home on Dewey Avenue in Los Angeles on January 5, 1907. A few days before his death, he had gone to a prayer meeting, where he developed a severe chest pain. Three days later he was said to have developed a slight stroke. On the day before his death, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, "he became delirious and as he lay on his bed, preached to those who surrounded his couch, with all the fervor that he exhibited in the pulpit."

Henry Mayo & the Man With the Flapping . . .

by John Boston

"I told my psychiatrist that everyone hates me. He said I was being ridiculous — everyone hasn't met me yet."

— the late, great Rodney Dangerfield

Unfairly, history is too often fixated on celebrating generals and dictators, wars and disasters, scoundrels and celebrities. Alas. How soon we forget the insane.

Back in the glory days of working at Earth's Most Unique & Eclectic Newspaper, the formerly Mighty Signal, I tallied lifetimes somnambulistically slouching in a newsroom and listening to the A.S.P.S. That's Newspaper Talk; A.S.P.S. is code for: Annoying Scratchy Police Scanner.

Odd. Science has given us a cellphone powerful enough to launch missiles and the garage door opener, but they can't seem to build a non-drag-your-fingernails-down-a-chalkboard police-band radio.

I'll never forget the day that call came through. The radio blurted out a "5150." That's Copspeak for "Psychological Rescue." It's a polite euphemism for Crazy Person. We in Santa Clarita are more than blessed with our fair share of 5150s, many of whom sit on the city council or the planning commission.

"SSSSHHHKKKKRRREEEEE!!!" squawked the radio. The dispatcher's voice seemed as if it had flapped in on black wings from a disinterested galaxy. "All available units... Fifty-one fifty... just... outside... SCCREEEEEEpppp... Sshhkrreeeeepppp..." The alert was followed by 20 minutes of vexatious beeping, squeaks and interrupting voices that sounded like someone had comedian Kevin Hart's unmentionables in a pair of vice grips and was squeezing them. All in the newsroom bent forward, waiting for more details:

"... man running away from Henry "Hold The" Mayo Newhall Mammarian Hospital..." My hearing wasn't very good back then, nor now. Perhaps they just said, "Henry Mayo Hospital."

Details followed. The 5150 was a white male, late 50s. A little tubby. Balding. Obviously, angst-filled. Describes half the men in the valley. He was on a dead run, headed north on McBean Parkway.

Such a cry for help offered a vast canvas of unanswered questions. I envisioned a daft fellow in a flowered and ill-fitting hospital gown, high-stepping it down the emergency driveway to the boulevard named after the august and often completely dressed Atholl McBean, butt cheeks flapping in the wind.

That would be the 5150; not the late and dour Newhall family member and tile mogul after whom McBean Parkway was named.

It was a haunting message: "Butt cheeks flapping in the wind." If memory serves, wasn't that a sorrowful lyric from an old Reba McEntire song?

Flapping Butt Cheeks. It paints an interesting picture. You'd have to be the absolute lowest Native American on the totem pole to get stuck with a handle like that one.

What happened that caused this distraught individual to flee, barefooted and pale derriere exposed to the world from Valencia's bastion of wellness? Did the guy get his bill? Was a divorcee/nurse with low self-esteem attempting to give our 5150 an unasked-for hemorrhoid search with rubber gloves that had been stored in the freezer?

I must be in a country/western kind of mood this morning because that reminds of the old Hank Williams Jr. lyric:

"...that little gal from the Dairy Queen gave me a search from above. Daneen used her gloves of rubber, she had stored in the freeeee-zzzerrr of our love..."

Ka-twang... Ka-twang...

Ka-twang twang twang.

Man Running From Henry Mayo Hospital.

As if we hadn't all considered it at some point in our lives.

Why was he running?

Vampires in the blood bank?

(Shoo-fly-shoo...)

One, solitary, out-of-date *Golf Digest Magazine* from 1979 in the waiting room?

Lost a bet and the escapee was facing circumcision at 45?

There are many unfinished stories in the Naked Santa Clarita. Never did find out if they caught the guy. I hope they didn't.

Alas, we've become so spectacularly vanilla since Valencia opened a half-century back. It would be comforting if we had a living myth of some wide-eyed ghost-like chap and his fluttering heiniecheeks popping out of the bushes decades later to terrorize the in-line skaters, skunks and soccer moms along the shaded paseos.

I'm no medical expert. But... (*No pun intended.*) I've a question:

You're able to run a 10.1-hundred-meter-dash out of Lourdes Valencia and evade capture by an armada of Santa Clarita's finest. Doesn't that indicate that just maybe you're healthy enough to *not* be in Henry "Hold The" Mayo Hospital in the first place?

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It Was One Dam Thing After Another . . .

By Maria Christopher

The March, 2018, Saint Francis Dam Disaster Commemoration Month included activities and events throughout the Santa Clara River Valley. The collapse of the St. Francis Dam and resulting flood on March 12-13, 1928, had a major impact on the area, resulting in the second highest death toll in California history due to a disaster. In addition to the loss of life, there was extensive property loss.

To mark this major event in local history, numerous activities throughout the month honored the dead, commemorated the survivors, and reflected on the response and resiliency of the people living in the Santa Clara River Valley when the flood swept through the area. This commemoration was also to help understand the causes of the disaster and put it into historical context, as well as to consider its present-day relevance.

Over a year ago, representatives of organizations in communities throughout the flood path, including the Santa Clara Valley Historical Society, Rancho Camulos Museum, the Piru Cemetery Association, the Fillmore Historical Society, the Santa Paula Historical Society, and the Heritage Valley Tourism Bureau, began meeting to plan and coordinate activities. The result was over twenty events.

Among them were dedications of permanent memorials in Fillmore and Piru, prayer and memorial services at the Santa Paula and Piru Cemeteries, several presentations by author Jon Wilkman and archeologist Anne Stansell, special exhibits at the Santa Paula Oil Museum, Ventura Agriculture Museum, Fillmore Historical Museum, and Rancho Camulos (all still ongoing), stewardship events, dam site tours, a riverbed hike, Fillmore student poster and essay contests, as well as a documentary video and film presentations. The Santa Paula candlelight memorial on March 12, featuring a river of over 400 candles, each representing a victim, was particularly moving. Another special gathering was the flood-path-wide community picnic for storytelling and sharing at Rancho Camulos. It featured historian Don Ray, who shared his extraordinary audio collection of survivors' stories.

One of the highlights of the commemoration month was the first ever, day-long St. Francis Dam Disaster Flood Path bus tour, hereafter known as "Dianne and Alan's Magical History Tour". The eight-hour pilgrimage covered over 51 miles from Power House One to downtown Santa Paula. It included walks, stops, and drive-bys at key points, including

Power House One, the reconstructed Power House Two and its village, the Ruiz Family Cemetery, the former Harry Carey Ranch, the Edison Substation and Castaic Junction, the Kemp Encampment at the Blue Cut (where there was a high loss of life), Rancho Camulos (where historic buildings were spared), and the Bardsdale and Santa Paula cemeteries, where many victims were buried in marked and unmarked graves as well as where cenotaphs were erected to many of those whose bodies were never recovered.

In Santa Paula, there was a stop at "The Warning" statue, honoring the heroes who saved many lives, and another at the Oil Museum to view "When Dams Fail" and a remembrance display about locals who died in the disaster. More pictures from the tour are on pages 5, 6, and 8.

So, what's next?

The level of participation and positive feedback for the St. Francis Dam Disaster Commemoration Month activities have many folks talking about making this an annual event. It has proven to be a forum to learn more from one another and preserve the legacy of the St. Francis Dam Disaster experience. It has the potential to bring many more visitors to the dam site in San Francisquito Canyon, and throughout the Santa Clara River Valley.

" Dammies" (as those who have developed an interest in the St. Francis Dam Disaster are referred to), please let us know your thoughts and suggestions on this. How should we properly recognize this significant historical event and preserve the legacy?



Blue Cut area along the Santa Clara River near Piru; this was the site of the largest loss of life in 1928.

St Francis Dam Floodplain Tour March 25, 2018 Photos by Gordon Glattenberg



Entrance to L.A. Aqueduct Power Plant No. 1, located in San Francisquito Canyon above the dam site.



Power Plant No. 1. Inside is a chart on display showing the voltage transient when Power Plant No. 2 was destroyed.



Marker near Power Plant No. 1.



The tour group at the St Francis Dam site.



The L.A. County Sheriffs were conducting search and rescue training at the dam site.



The Harry Carey adobe, built in 1933, in Tesoro del Valle Park in Santa Clarita. This area flooded in 1928.

St Francis Dam Floodplain Tour



A bedroom in the Harry Carey house.



Anne Stansell describing flood victims' graves at the Bardsdale Cemetery



The Santa Paula Oil Museum's building was the original headquarters of Union Oil Co. of California.



The Oil Museum's replica of an early 20th Century Oil Well

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

Weekend Docents

Sioux Coghlan	RuthAnne Murthy
Evan Decker	Alan Pollack
Anna Kroll	Anna Schindler
Barbara Martinelli	Gordon Uppman

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

Those who open and close for the docents

Sioux Coghlan	Cathy Martin
Evan Decker	RuthAnne Murthy
Barbara Martinelli	Alan Pollack

First Sunday Questers*

Becki Basham	Judy Holland
Roberta Harris	Sue Yurosek

Archiving

Sarah Brewer Thompson	Ann Stansell
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Grounds

Mike Jarel	Cathy Martin
Howard Kwasman	

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

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*Bardsdale Cemetery near Fillmore;
see pages 4 - 6*