



# The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 34, Issue 4

July-August 2008

## Calendar

### Monday, July 21

Board of Directors Meeting  
6:30 PM Saugus Station

### Saturday, July 26

Lecture on Native Americans of  
the Santa Clarita Valley. 2:00 PM  
Mentry Hall, Room 318, College  
of the Canyons See page 5.

### Friday, August 1

Deadline for the September-  
October *Dispatch*

*Friday Night Flickers*, comedies with  
Laurel & Hardy, and Buster Keaton,  
plus Sci-Fi, 7:30 PM Saugus Station.  
See page 4.

### Monday, August 25

Board of Directors Meeting  
6:30 PM Saugus Station

### Also...

### First Thursday of Every Month

Genealogy Club Meeting  
7:00 PM Saugus Station

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

## President's Message

by Alan Pollack



He was born on the 1st of July, 1808 in Jalisco, Mexico. Ignacio Del Valle was destined to become one of the first landowners in the Santa Clarita Valley and a prominent citizen of early Los Angeles. His father Antonio Del Valle was a Lieutenant in the Spanish military who accompanied an infantry unit called the San Blas Company to save Monterey, California from Argentine pirates in 1819. Jerry Reynolds described Del Valle's Company as "a rag-tag bunch of thieves and convicts who caused so much trouble that the citizens petitioned for their ouster". Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821. Having been booted out of Monterey, Antonio led his now Mexican troops into the San Joaquin Valley in 1824 to capture a

group of rebellious Indians at Santa Ynez. He returned to great acclaim in Monterey but got himself into trouble yet again with some shady political dealings and various affairs with local ladies, and was sent to prison in 1825 for insubordination. Ignacio Del Valle arrived in Monterey at the behest of his father in July of that year. Although at first they were happy to see each other, it was not in the cards for them to get along. The father and son would take opposite sides in 1832 when a power play blew up into warfare between then Governor Manuel Victoria and Mexican Comandante General Don Jose Echeandía. Ignacio had served under Echeandía as a second Lieutenant before becoming commander of the presidio at San Diego. Echeandía's troops would be victorious, and it is said that Antonio and Ignacio never spoke to each other again.

Since the first California mission was established in San Diego in 1769 by Father

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**FRIDAY NIGHT FLICKERS:  
MORE COMEDIES + SCI-FI!  
LAUREL & HARDY, BUSTER KEATON**

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 1  
OUTDOORS AT THE SAUGUS STATION**

**7:30 PM**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**DETAILS ON PAGE 4**

## President's Message

*Continued from page 1*

Junipero Serra, the Padres of the missions owned and controlled huge swaths of land in Alta California. But that was all to change, when Mexico ratified laws to secularize the missions in 1834. Mission lands were given to Native Americans, who were inexperienced in the concept of land ownership, and were easily tricked into giving away their land rights to speculators. That same year, Antonio Del Valle would be assigned as the administrator of the San Fernando Mission. At the time, he counted 541 Indians still residing at the Mission. He held this post until 1837, when he was succeeded by Pedro Lopez, whose daughter Jacoba Feliz became his second wife. (Lopez' brother Francisco was the man who discovered gold in Placerita Canyon in 1842). The next year Antonio petitioned Governor Juan Alvarado for a grant of 48,829 acres of land in a valley north of the Mission called the Rancho San Francisco. Alvarado signed off on the land grant on January 22, 1839, thus making Antonio Del Valle the first owner of the Santa Clarita Valley. Ignacio himself administered the secularization of the Missions at Santa Cruz and San Francisco. He was granted the Rancho Tejon in 1843 as a reward for his services to the government.

Antonio Del Valle did not have very long to enjoy his new property: He died in 1841, just over two years later. Prior to his death, he tried to make amends with his son Ignacio, sending a messenger to offer him a portion of the Rancho San Francisco if he would settle down and get married. Unfortunately, before Ignacio could respond, the elder Del Valle passed on without leaving a will. Jacoba Feliz married her ranch foreman Jose Salazar and filed suit to claim the Rancho. Eventually a judge awarded the western 13,599 acres (later to be called Rancho Camulos) to Ignacio, and the remainder of the Rancho went to Jacoba.

Ignacio did not initially move to his Rancho Camulos. He resided instead in the Pueblo de Los Angeles (now the Olvera Street area) where he became heavily involved in politics. He was to serve on the city council, was a treasurer in the civil government under Governor Pio Pico, and in 1850 was elected alcalde (mayor) of Los Angeles. The Pueblo was a wild and lawless place when Ignacio took over as alcalde. He decided to clean up the town and formed the California Rangers, headed by Major Horace Bell (later author of "Reminiscences of a Ranger", the first book published in Los Angeles). Bell was assisted by, among others, William W. Jenkins, who later became involved in the fledgling oil industry in Pico Canyon and a decades-long range war in Castaic, and Cyrus Lyon, a gunslinger who in 1855, with his twin brother Sanford, purchased a stagecoach stop on the Rancho San Francisco which became known as Lyon Station (the brothers are immortalized today as the namesakes of Lyons Avenue

in Newhall). The Rangers blasted their way through the Pueblo, guns blazing first, questions asked later, and meted out frontier justice so efficiently that the outlaw element in Los Angeles was essentially neutralized within 2 years. Ignacio also served in the California State Assembly. He married 15-year-old Ysabel Varela in 1852.

Ignacio began building an adobe hacienda at Rancho Camulos in 1853; the first wing would become the South veranda, seen on multitudes of postcards in the early 1900's after the Rancho was made famous by Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 novel "Ramona". He and Ysabel moved permanently to the Rancho in 1861. The 1860's were a difficult period of both severe flooding and droughts, resulting in many of the old Spanish Ranchos losing livestock and going bankrupt. The Rancho San Francisco was no exception. Jacoba Feliz was heavily in debt until finally her principle creditor William Wolfskill had to foreclose. Wolfskill worked out a deal with Ignacio allowing him to maintain ownership of Rancho Camulos. The remainder of the Rancho San Francisco was purchased in 1865 by Thomas Bard, an agent for Pennsylvania Railroad President Thomas Scott and the Philadelphia and California Petroleum Company. Bard and Scott's primary interest was finding oil on the Rancho. They were not successful and eventually gave up on the property, which was purchased in an 1872 sheriff's sale by Charles Fernald and J.T. Richards, and subsequently in 1875 the Rancho San Francisco was purchased by none other than Henry Mayo Newhall. Ironically, Pico Canyon, which was just outside the Rancho property, became the site of the first successful oil well in the West when Alexander Mentry drilled the famous Pico Number 4 in 1876.

Ignacio and Ysabel had a total of 12 children, only 5 of which lived to adulthood. One of them, Reginaldo Del Valle, followed in his father's political footsteps, becoming at age 28, the youngest member ever elected as president of the State Senate. Ignacio Del Valle died in 1880 at the age of 72. He was buried at Camulos until his still mourning and ailing wife had him exhumed and brought to Los Angeles in 1905. She died shortly thereafter and they were buried in Los Angeles in the same coffin.

Ignacio did not live to see his Rancho Camulos gain worldwide fame as the "Home of Ramona" described in Helen Hunt Jackson's novel. Jackson, who was trying to use the novel to illustrate the plight of the Mission Indians of California, instead created a nationwide firestorm of interest in the romantic and tragic story of Ramona and her Indian lover Alessandro. Jackson had visited Rancho Camulos in 1882

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## President's Message

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while doing research for the novel. Her purported use of Camulos as a backdrop in the book painted a romantic vision of the mission and rancho period of Old Spanish California. Camulos became a major tourist attraction in the 1880's and beyond, as people all over the country became obsessed with seeing for themselves the home where Ramona "lived". "Ramona" is widely credited with being a major factor in the large migration of new residents to Los Angeles starting in the 1880's, a time when a sleepy pueblo of some 5000 souls grew into a city of over 100,000 people by the turn of the century.

Del Valle's Rancho San Francisco is now the bustling City of Santa Clarita as we enter the summer of 2008. Ed Marg and his Haunt crew are busy at work designing the next Haunt event to take place in October at the Newhall Ranch House. We look forward to an even more exciting and scary haunted house this year and would like to thank all involved for their continued hard work and dedication toward making this event a success.

A special thank you and congratulations are in store for docent Gerry Sokolowicz. Gerry has spent many years helping out the Society both as a skillful and knowledgeable docent in the museum and volunteering his time on an almost daily basis with the maintenance of Heritage Junction. In recognition of his special contributions to the Society, the Board of Directors recently voted to present Gerry with an honorary lifetime membership. Gerry, you have always gone above and beyond for us. You have played a significant role in the success of the Society over the years.

Board member Laurene Weste is working on obtaining funding for a large marquee sign that we propose to place at the entrance to Hart Park to be used to advertise Historical Society and Hart Park events to motorists on San Fernando Road (or the newly named Newhall Avenue). Laurene and I recently met with City Manager Ken Pulskamp, who was quite enthusiastic about the idea and gave the City's backing to proceed with the project. A marquee would provide us with much needed visibility at the entryway to the Park. We hope to have more news on this concept in the next few months.

The Board of Directors recently sent a letter to the City Manager and City Council urging the establishment of a Historic Preservation ordinance to protect the remaining historic structures and sites in the Santa Clarita Valley. As the guardians of the history of the Valley, the Historical Society takes very seriously its responsibility to protect our historic buildings to be enjoyed by future generations. A follow up letter is currently being drafted to propose that the city hire a special consultant to survey the entire valley to determine all

of the potentially historic buildings and sites remaining in Santa Clarita that should be protected by a Preservation ordinance.

Thanks again go to E.J. Stephens for his ongoing "Friday Night Flickers" series. On June 6, another entertaining evening took place, featuring short silent comedies starring Buster Keaton, Fatty Arbuckle, and the Keystone Kops. A great time was had by all in attendance. Once again we were dazzled by the musical accompaniment of 95 year old Bob Mitchell, who played on an old organ recently donated to us by Dr. Gene Toon. Many thanks to Dr. Toon for this amazing instrument.

Our lecture series will be coming to College of the Canyons on Saturday, July 26. Be prepared to escape the heat of the summer in an air conditioned venue where the Historical Society and College of the Canyons will be co-sponsoring a lecture to be given by Dr. John Johnson, curator of Anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, on the Native Americans of the Santa Clarita Valley. This will include the Tataviam and neighboring tribes such as the Chumash. The lecture will begin at 2:00 PM in Mentry Hall, room 318, on the Valencia campus of College of the Canyons. A link to a map of the campus can be found on the COC website <http://www2.canyons.edu>, and parking will be provided in the South parking lot. Those arriving early will be treated to the music of classical acoustic guitarist Manak Khamvongsa. Examples of his music can be found at <http://www.myspace.com/manakguitar>.

Also coming to the Saugus Train Station, on September 6, is Harrison Scott, Executive Director of the Ridge Route Preservation Organization, and author of a newly-released book "Lost Hotels on California's Historic Ridge Route." He will be delivering a talk on the history of the Ridge Route, the famous road that connected Southern California with the rest of the state between 1915 and 1933. The old route still exists today, running parallel with Interstate 5 between Castaic and the Grapevine. It was heavily damaged by rainstorms a few years ago, but restoration of the road is almost completed and Mr. Scott is hoping to see the road reopened to tours, possibly later this year.

Thanks again to all those who have volunteered their time to the Society this year. We couldn't do it without you. And we could always use more help at Heritage Junction. If you have some time on your hands to spend with us, please contact our Executive Director Pat Saletore at 661-254-1275. She is sure to find activities for you that will be interesting and rewarding. See you all at the Train Station.

Alan Pollack

## A Message From the Hart... by Ayesha Saletore

Heritage Junction and Hart Museum definitely have one thing in common: "The Hollywood Factor." Famed stars have graced both of our venues. The Saugus Train Station had the likes of Charlie Chaplin film in its facilities, the Hart Museum had William S. Hart living inside the mansion.

Many people may know of the Hollywood facet of both our institutes, but do they really know the history behind it? Perhaps. For the movie lovers at heart or the film novice, Hollywood at Hart is your chance to learn more about Hart's film career and his famous circle of friends!

We begin the series with Hollywood at Hart: William S. Hart and the Western. This is sure to be an exciting talk with Beth Werling, Collections Manager of History at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. This FREE event will begin at 3:00 PM with a tour of the Hart Museum and will continue with the presentation in Hart Hall. Reservations are preferred and can be made by calling the Hart Museum at 661-254-4584. You are also welcome to visit the Museum's website for further updates on upcoming events such as Silents Under the Stars, Music in the Mansion, and Native American Pow Wow.

As always, you are invited to visit the Hart Museum for a free tour. Come see Hart's collection of Western artwork, Native American artifacts, and film paraphernalia during the Museum's extended summer hours: Wednesday through Sunday, 11:00 AM to 3:30 PM.

## Recent Docents

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

Frank Adella	Barbara Martinelli
Phyllis Berman	Barbara Milteer
Jeff Boultinghouse	Sandra Neill
Laurie Cartwright	Alan Pollack
Sioux Coghlan	Pat Saletore
Sarah Floyd	Konrad Summers
Francesca Gastil	Gordon Uppman
Harold Hicks	Kristyn VanWy
Bill and Karen Limbaugh	Michelle Veasman

## "Friday Night Flickers" Show on June 6: Overwhelming Success: August 1<sup>st</sup> Show to be Outdoors

By E.J. Stephens

A standing-room-only crowd roared to the madcap antics of Fatty Arbuckle, Mabel Normand, and Buster Keaton during our latest bi-monthly presentation of "Friday Night Flickers" on Friday, June 6.

The large crowd crammed every available seat inside the baggage room of the Saugus Train Station, as well as outside on the loading dock, to watch three classic short comedies from Hollywood's silent era. The films were accompanied on the organ by 95-year-old Hollywood legend Bob Mitchell, who first played for silent films in 1924 at the age of twelve!

The evening began with a short lecture on the background of the films. Afterwards, Dr. Gene Toon was honored with a membership in the Historical Society to commemorate his donation of a Yamaha organ to the museum. Bob was able to play the donated instrument that evening, and it sounded wonderful, never more so than when he played "Take Me Out To The Ballgame" during intermission. (Bob was the first organist at Dodger Stadium when it opened in 1962!)

The next "Friday Night Flickers" presentation will take place on Friday, August 1 at 7:30 PM, and will feature the award-winning 1929 Laurel & Hardy comedy "Big Business," the hilarious 1920 Buster Keaton short "One Week," and a rare showing of the 1902 iconic science fiction film "A Trip To The Moon." Bob Mitchell is again scheduled to accompany the films. (The program is subject to change.)

To better accommodate our large crowds, this show will take place outdoors near the train station at Heritage Junction (weather permitting). The attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and blankets. The suggested donation for the evening is \$5, which includes free popcorn. For more information, contact Pat Saletore at 661.254.1275, or check the Historical Society website at [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org).

## Executive Director's Report by Pat Saletore

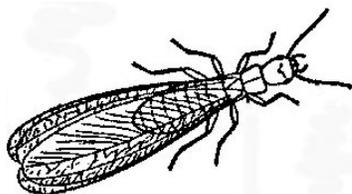


June marked a farewell to William S. Hart Park Superintendent David Jallo. To mark the occasion, we had a "Happy Trails" at Hart Hall. Many of the volunteers for both the Historical Society and Friends of Hart came and celebrated his time at the park. Now we have an old friend as Superintendent, Norm Phillips, who held the position for many years before David. Feel free to come by and welcome him back. The Park office has again been moved into the Frew House.



David Jallo

Oh, no! It turns out that we have TERMITES! It's a good thing that Heritage Haunt volunteer Tony Monton is a professional exterminator! While working in the Newhall Ranch House, he noticed signs of an infestation. He called in Joe Nichols, who is a termite inspector to confirm his assessment. Warren Muran and Jesse New came to spray the affected buildings. This could have been a really bad problem, and we were lucky things were so easily arranged. We would like to thank Matt Torricelli and Our Town Pest Control for the discount on their services, and their help and understanding.



## Expert on Local Native Americans To Speak on the First Inhabitants of the SCV by Alan Pollack

On Saturday, July 26, 2008 the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society and College of the Canyons will jointly host a talk by one of the leading experts on the Native Americans of Southern California. Dr. John Johnson, Curator of Anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, will discuss the history of the Native Americans of the SCV beginning at 2:00 PM at Mentry Hall, room 318, on the College of the Canyons campus in Valencia.

They came sweeping across the Great Plains to the Santa Clarita Valley sometime around 450 A.D., a band of Shoshone Indians called the Tataviam. Evidence of the first inhabitants of the Santa Clarita Valley dates back about 13,000 years, but little is known about them. Just over 1500 years ago, these previous inhabitants of the Valley were displaced by a people who migrated westward from the Great Plains. For many years modern historians called them the "Alliklik," but this turned out to be a derogatory name given to them by their neighbors to the west, the Chumash. More recently they have been known as the Tataviam or "people of the sunny slopes", so named by the Kitanemuk Indians of the Antelope Valley, due to their habit of building villages on southern facing slopes of mountains to maximize sun exposure.

College of the Canyons is located in Valencia off the Valencia Blvd. exit of Interstate 5. Visitors to the lecture should park in the South Parking lot along Rockwell Canyon Road, then proceed to Mentry Hall. The general public is welcome. Admission will be free. For more information on this and other upcoming programs from the SCVHS, please call Pat Saletore or Alan Pollack at 661 254-1275. Website: [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org).

### 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>.

# Uncle Sam Wants You...Back!

by Patty Robinson

The SCV Historical Society, in collaboration with the Santa Clarita Valley Senior Center and College of the Canyons is planning a trip back to World War II on July 5<sup>th</sup>. The Veterans' History Project Party will be held at the Senior Center, located at 22900 Market Street in Newhall, from 5:00 to 8:00 PM on Saturday, July 5, and will include hotdogs, hamburgers, root beer floats, and apple pie. The celebration will begin with an honor guard procession, which will walk to the Senior Center from the Veterans' Memorial located in Newhall; partygoers are encouraged to join the honor guard.

The Senior Center will replicate a WWII canteen complete with music and dance. All veterans, as well as their friends and families are invited to enjoy the festivities. Because space is limited, please RSVP by July 1st to Pat Saletore (254.1275), Robin Clough (259.9444) or Patty Robinson (362.3992).

Faculty and students of COC have been working in conjunction with local veterans to record their "war stories" as part of the nationwide Veterans History Project. The Library of Congress began this project in 2,000, and has since enlisted the services of thousands of students across the nation who are conducting oral histories of U.S. veterans and military service providers. Thousands of veterans reside in the Santa Clarita Valley, and this project provides one way to recognize and honor their contributions to our country. The Historical Society along with the Senior Center is especially interested in obtaining the histories of those men and women who served during WWII. Our goal is to raise awareness of the project, as well as to encourage participants to share their stories with students next semester.



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The Heritage Junction Dispatch  
P.O. Box 221925  
Newhall, CA 91322-1925  
info@scvhistory.com

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  
Kingsberry House open the first Sunday  
of each month from 1:00 to 4:00 PM

### Historical Society Board of Directors

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- Jeff Boultinghouse ----- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President
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*"Preserving the best of the past for the good of the future"*

**Society Info: [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org)  
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