



The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 36, Issue 4

July August 2010

Calendar

Monday, July 26

Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

Saturday, August 1

Deadline for the March-April
Dispatch

Monday, August 23

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



Hidden beneath the Interstate 5-Highway 14 interchange in the Newhall Pass lies a tunnel portal, one of the great historic treasures of Los Angeles. On September 5, 1876, Charles Crocker

drove in a golden spike at Lang Station in Soledad Canyon to celebrate the completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad in California. This monumental day would not have been possible were it not for the completion of the San Fernando Railroad Tunnel by a crew of about 1000 Chinese workers (and 500 others) in the summer of 1876.

After the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, linking California with the eastern half of the United States on May 10, 1869,

the "Big Four" entrepreneurs of the Central Pacific Railroad (Crocker, Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, and Collis Huntington) set their sights on connecting Northern and Southern California via the Southern Pacific Railroad. They began buying out smaller railroads in California, including the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad, run by the future founder of Newhall, California, Henry Mayo Newhall. The railroad builders decided on a route stretching from San Francisco south through California's Central Valley, then penetrating the Tehachapi mountains through the Tehachapi Pass (in which they built the famous Tehachapi Loop), then south through the Mojave Desert passing through what are now the town of Mojave and the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale, and then threading through Soledad Canyon into the Santa Clarita Valley. To the south of Santa Clarita, the plan was to build a line from Yuma, Arizona on the Colorado

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Sept 8, 1968:
Pre-Freeway

Sylmar End of the Railroad Tunnel
(See President's Report above)



June 20, 1970:
First Construction
Photos by Gordon Glattenberg

President's Message

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River through the desert and into the San Geronio Pass, then passing along the southern edge of the San Gabriel mountains into Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley. Another branch line was to be built connecting to Anaheim and San Diego.

HATCHING THE PLAN

But one great challenge remained. There was no way to build the railroad over the San Gabriel Mountains, which formed a formidable barrier between the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys. Hence was hatched a plan to bore a tunnel through the mountains under the San Fernando (or Fremont) Pass, where the mountain range dipped to its lowest point before joining with the Santa Susana Mountains to the west. Prior to this time, the only way to get across these mountains was at Beale's Cut, constructed by Edward F. Beale in 1863.

The Big Four had originally planned to bypass Los Angeles altogether. The city had a small railroad built by Phineas Banning in 1869 connecting Los Angeles with the harbor at San Pedro. The citizens of Los Angeles had higher aspirations and desired to connect their 21 mile railroad with the rest of the country. In July, 1872, former California Governor John G. Downey sat down with Stanford and Crocker and worked out a deal to bring the Southern Pacific into Los Angeles. The Southern Pacific would, in exchange, get ownership of the Los Angeles & San Pedro Railroad with rights of way to extend the line to Anaheim and Pomona. By 1874, that railroad was extended to the new town of San Fernando.

BUILDING THE TUNNEL

Work began on the San Fernando Railroad Tunnel on March 22, 1875. Former Central Pacific Railroad worker Frank Frates was chosen to supervise some 1000 Chinese and 500 White laborers in constructing the tunnel. Frates and his workers faced a sandstone mountain saturated with water and oil, causing frequent cave-ins and loss of life. According to Marie Harrington in her 1976 pamphlet titled "A Golden Spike": "Frates' excavation was 22 feet high, 16½ feet wide at the bottom and over 18 feet at the shoulders, an angular arch being formed overhead. The Chinese worked as teams of two, one man holding the wedge in place against the rock while his partner swung the heavy sledge. The upper half of the tunnel was dug in advance of

the bottom half for a distance of about 20 feet. Temporary timbers were placed as soon as the excavations were made; permanent timbers of Oregon cedar would be placed later. The lower half of the tunnel was dug by another crew of workers, the dirt being carried away by two-horse cars running on laid track. Day and night the work went on in 8-hour shifts, the Chinese being paid \$1.00 per day and the white carpenters and mechanics receiving \$2.60 a day for a 12-hour shift. A city of tents was located near the south end of the tunnel mouth for the workers". Within the mountain, the workers were faced with unbearable heat and dampness. Emma Louie of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (who wrote about the Chinese contribution to the railroad in the 1976 Golden Spike Centennial Souvenir Program) quoted Remi Nadeau stating "Oriental toilers fell at their work in regular succession and had to be carried to the sunshine burning with fever."

Originally estimated to take two years to complete, work was begun at both the north and south ends of the tunnel. To help expedite the enormous task, surveyors determined a spot at the summit of the mountain from which a vertical shaft was dug to meet with the center of the tunnel. This allowed waste rock to be hauled out of the tunnel by means of a large cable drum and hoisting engine built in Sacramento. The tunnel actually took just over a year to complete. Harrington states that there were two possible dates for the completion of the tunnel. The first version has Chinese diggers coming face to face on July 14, 1876 with the opening of the tunnel just one half inch out of line. Another version has Frates himself completing the tunnel in August, 1876, removing the last cart of earth with his own hands. At any rate, the first train passed through this miraculous 6966½ foot tunnel on August 12, 1876. At the time of completion, it was the third longest tunnel in the United States and fourth longest in the world.

THE GOLDEN SPIKE CEREMONY AT LANG

The courageous work done on the San Fernando Tunnel culminated in the completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad at Lang Station on September 5, 1876. A Golden Spike ceremony took place that day as the last tracks were laid. Unlike the ceremony for the Transcontinental Railroad at Promontory Summit in Utah, there were thousands of Chinese in attendance at Lang Station. Remi Nadeau described the scene: "...clad in basket hats, blue denim jackets and trousers, and cotton sandals, stood along either side of

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the mounded right-of-way. Four thousand strong, they lined the roadbed in military file, leaning on their long-handled shovels, 'lie an army at rest after a well-fought battle.'"

The "Sacramento Daily Record-Union" of September 6, 1876 reported the laying of the final tracks: "Greetings have been interchanged between the delegations from the two cities; the General Manager of the Atlantic and Pacific Telegraph line has established an office and has wires connected to Los Angeles and San Francisco. At last all is readiness and the signal is given. Amid loud cheers the track-layers pursue their labors. Frank Frates, a well known Central Pacific workman, has charge of the Southern gang of workmen, and when his men won the race, laying the road in five minutes, the cheers are loud and prolonged; the last rail is laid; the spike is of gold, beautifully inscribed; the hammer of silver..."

HAPPENINGS AT THE JUNCTION

Summer has come to Heritage Junction, and with it, our natural chaparral landscape is sprouting weeds everywhere! We thank Paul Duryea for battling the weeds in the train yard, and Norm Phillips and his County Camp workers who have done some major weed abatement around the Junction. Pat Saletore, our Executive Director, is asking for more volunteers to help with eliminating weeds, which she states are "taller than I am". If you would like to help, call Pat at 661-254-1275.

Visitors to the Train Station will notice a new block indicator and other new signs which have been put up by Mike Jarel and Manny Santana. Thanks guys for adding to our railroad ambiance.

Scott Sivley and his crew continue to work hard on the 2010 version of Heritage Haunt, which will center around a Haunted Hayride. We thank the Haunters for their continued dedication in constructing this popular event.

And then there is my good friend John Lesperance. We can't thank John enough for his almost daily presence at the Junction, helping with opening the Train Station and many other chores which are needed to maintain our historic buildings.

We credit Ed Marg, Sr. for placing the lights on the side of the Train Station on a light sensor. You should cruise by at night to see them.

Also thanks to Russ Herrington and John Gee for keeping our vegetable gardens looking spiffy!

The Newhall County Water district has given us an old safe to be used at the Junction. We thank them for this generous donation.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we announce the passing of life member Glenn Hymer. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to his family.

Yes, summer has come to Heritage Junction! If your kids and grand kids are looking for something to do during their summer vacation, why not point them in the direction of Heritage Junction for some fulfilling volunteer work. Pat would be glad to put them to work and teach them lots of local history along the way. Call her at 661 254-1275. And bring the kids to the Junction weekends from 1:00-4:00 PM to tour our museum and learn about our rich history from expert volunteer docents. See you all at the train station!

Alan Pollack

School Tours 2009/2010

By Barbara Martinelli

It's been an interesting season for school tours. We started the year with 23 classes scheduled. We were concerned since that was half the number from last year - but happily we ended up providing tours for 43 classes.

Laurie Cartwright has been assisting me this year. Her enthusiasm and ever-present support have been invaluable.

The Questers have become very involved in the school tour program. They opened the Kingsbury House and the Pardee House for the majority of our tours. The third graders just love having the Questers explain about these houses that they so lovingly restored, furnished, and decorated. When time permitted they even opened the Little Red Schoolhouse and the Ramona Chapel. All three chapters (Canyon, Heritage Reflections, and Oak of the Golden Dream) participated. Many thanks to June Myers for coordinating it all, and to all the Quester volunteers. Many helped out numerous times, and on occasion gave ten tours in one morning. Fabulous job!

Riding to Town to Make a Call

by John Boston

"All phone calls are obscene."

- Karen Elizabeth Gordon

I am blessed with wonderful friends and years ago, one of them, the opera singer, noted the two of us shared a character trait. "We are more suited to the 19th century life," mi *amiga* lamented in her melodious voice.

I'm not so sure vacation is a good thing, although I sure could use one. When you go some place special, it's hard to return. I remember spending a couple of weeks in Yosemite in a cozy cabin. The days were passed mountain biking, hiking, swimming in refreshing Sierra rivers and dining with dear friends under a billion stars. Deer grazed outside my window.

My cell phone did not work in Yosemite. You literally start morphing into a different person without telecommunications. No e-mail. No regular phone. No cell. No office correspondence. No mail. No TV and certainly none of my poison of choice: news.

Life was temporarily blissful without the daily tonnage of unasked-for information.

Of course, when I came back to the former riparian Santa Clarita, everything was amplified by a series of changes. Adding insult to sensory override, I had moved from Placerita Canyon to a Shangri-la in Iron Canyon.

Moving in had been a pie-thrower and the veins in my temples were visibly throbbing, like some creature from a bad 1950s sci-fi picture.

It's quite different being out of the information loop when you're home, or, worse, between homes.

I couldn't switch over my long-time home number from Newhall over to Canyon Country. Worse, the then-SBC had some problem getting me service. Their records show I'm connected. But no phones worked. I'd be sitting in a chair and My T-Mobile cell phone would nose dive from 25 bars to none (I have a powerful cell phone). Strange. Or, I'd get a weak signal in my daughter's bedroom and whenever I take calls, I have to sprint down a long hallway to make it to her room to answer the phone.

Through the static, I can barely make out people asking: "Why are you shouting?"

When I tried calling SBC, the humans I reached were cheery, polite and helpful. I sensed they were trained to be because by the time someone finally reaches someone in the phone company, they're weepy and suicidal.

After much eye-rolling and wading through ice ages of hold time, my automated voice menu guide suddenly switched from a male speaking English to a female speaking Spanish - in mid-sentence. I'm not making that up. For some odd reason, the recorded voice wires got crossed and I was being addressed in jolly old Español.

The operator must have been a practical joker or she hit the wrong button. I was connected to what I believe was an international repair tech line for in-house staff.

"If you're calling about a 1047pi R-squared wiring issue, please press one. If you're calling about a 1020A wiring connection, please press two, followed by the infinity sign on your phone."

Eventually, I spoke to a human.

Mind you, I hadn't moved one inch. But, somehow, like Cameron Smyth on prom night, my cell phone signal ran fresh out of energy. The message flashed on my little screen: "NO SERVICE."

I inhaled deeply through my nose and exhaled slowly. "Yes. I can see that," I said to the cell. Maybe if I drove to Mojave, where the topography was flat, I could get a good signal. I settled for Honby, by the Home Depot.

Three days without a home phone, the 19th person I talked to at SBC apologized and said a repair person would be out the next day — between the hours of 8 and 8. Which month would that be? I thought. You'd never dare say that aloud.

Meanwhile, I couldn't get hooked up to the Internet because there's an electrical wiring problem from the main pole to my hacienda and the Time/Warner technician, a true peach of a guy, noted the main Edison line to my house was held together by rope and electrical tape.

For you Yuppies who live the carefree life in Valencia — that's not a good thing.

So, no e-mail, which doesn't matter because my old e-mail address is now in limbo.

In my job, I live and die by e-mail. How did that happen?

At 60 now, I still haven't reached middle age, yet I can remember working for the local paper when we used typewriters. Manual typewriters. Books and newspapers got out, I didn't sigh as much.

Back in 1900, the Santa Clarita's first phone was plugged in at Campton's General Store. (The second one didn't arrive until

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Hart Happenings by Ayesha Saletore



Silents Under the Stars
Saturday, August 14, 2010,
6:00 PM:

Experience the “Reel West” with an evening at the William S. Hart Park and Museum. Enjoy a western-style dinner and Bill Hart silent film with a backdrop of the scenic hills

of Hart Park. Ticket reservations are required and include dinner, movie, tour of the Hart Collection, and a unique old time silent auction! Please call 661-254-4584 or visit www.friendsofhartpark.org for ticket purchases. Ticket Price: \$50 per person.

Native American Powwow September 25th and 26th:
Experience culture through art, dance, and cuisine. Visit the Hart Park and Museum on September 25th and 26th for a truly unique weekend for all ages!

Riding to Town ..

Continued from page 4

1911. It took us until 1927 to get 100 phones in the valley.) Campton’s used to post hours that people could come down and use the payphone, and at first there was a special schedule for folks wanting to make a truly long distance call. People would literally ride in a horseback from distant ranches to use the phone.

Can you imagine that kind of life without the technological edges?

I am a silly man, unaware of blessings.

I remember reading one of the most charming items from 1924. Here it is in its entirety: “The Bouquet telephone line, being built by the Forest Service, has been completed to within a mile of the goat ranch.”

Ah, simpler times...

A century earlier, I wonder if an SCV reincarnation of me moseyed along a dirt road on horseback, rehearsing the lines of a planned conversation for when I finally got to the pay phone at the Campton General Store.

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Hart Park News by Cheryl Hazama

June 22: Summer begins, Hart Park open until 6:00 PM
Hart Park Walk Club meets every Wednesday and Friday 9:15 -10:30AM to walk for fitness; free program!

Tesoro Park, also run by Hart Park Superintendent Norm Phillips, has a new Supervisor, Jared Didier. Jared transferred from the Antelope Valley area, where he has had considerable experience as a supervisor and is very keen to add new programs to Tesoro. Call 661 702-8953 to get more information about this historic Park, tours, and programs.

We have new fees for rental of Hart Hall; please check with the office at 661 259-1750 for more information.

Recent Docents

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

Laurie Cartwright	RuthAnne Murthy
Sioux Coghlan	Sandy Neill
Sarah Floyd	Gordon Uppman
Francesca Gastil	Kristyn Van Wy
Karen and Bill Limbaugh	Michelle Veasman
Barbara Martinelli	

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 ****

**** "NEWHALLYWOOD ON LOCATION" FILM CLASS ****

With SCV Film Expert

E.J. STEPHENS

To Be Held At

Various Locales Throughout the SCV

Four Saturdays From July 10 to July 31, 2010

1:00 to 4:00 PM

Registration Fee \$50

To Register Call 661 254-1275



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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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Gordon Glattenberg----- *Dispatch* Layout

"Preserving the best of the past for the good of the future"

**Society Info: www.scvhs.org
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