Docent Training Manual

2006

1. Introduction

DOCENT PROCEDURES AND REMINDERS

Turn on the lights, including the Placer Mining Diorama.

On Saturday, remove the sheets from the artifacts in the Station Agent's office, on Sunday, at the end of the day, drape them back over the artifacts.

Get the cash box from the Tin Room, turn on the cash register to "R2", move the cash to the cash register and complete the "Gift Shop Balance Sheet".

Have a pen ready at the Guest Register.

Check the restrooms for paper supplies.

Turn the Open/Closed placard in the window.

If you have a question or need assistance, call Executive Director Pat Saletore at 296-2517.

In a dire emergency, call 911.

Try not to leave the Gift Shop unattended for extended lengths of time.

If someone comes in with a donation of what is in your opinion obvious local historical value, accept it, filling out the "Contract of Collection Transfer" form. If it is of questionable value, tell the donor that you are not able to accept it and you will have an appropriate representative contact him or her regarding the donation. Follow up by contacting Pat Saletore, Carol Rock, Jeff Boultinghouse or another Board member.

If an exceptionally interesting person comes in that may be a valuable prospect for an Oral History project, get their name and phone or e-mail, some details of the person, and forward this to Jeff.

If anything eerie or paranormal happens, contact Pat Saletore.

Don't hesitate to point out that we are not funded by the County or City, but are largely operated on what we collect in donations.

Answer the phone if you can. . . it might be for you. . . but don't get flustered if you are too busy. It is on an answering machine.

And, above all, enjoy your time in the Station!!

Contract of Collection Transfer

1. We, the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society (SCVHS)

2. Accepts from:

Name_____Signature_____

Address_____City, State, Zip_____

Phone: Home_____Work_____

3. The following items: (General Categories, Check boxes as needed)

[ ]	Kitchen items	[ ]	Livery/Horse drawn vehicle items
[ ]	Household items	[ ]	Munitions/Firearms
[ ]	Garments/clothing	[ ]	Coins/Tokens
[ ]	Personal	[ ]	Architecture/Building materials
[ ]	Furniture parts	[ ]	Machinery or parts
[ ]	Hardware	[ ]	Agricultural implements/Farm machinery
[ ]	Tools	[ ]	Unidentified

Local Historical Significance:_____

4. As the following Transfer: (Check One Box Only)

[ ] Deed of Gift: Donation of unrestricted gift to SCVHS ownership and title transferred to SCVHS

[ ] Extended Loan for Curation: Caretaker without ownership; SCVHS responsible for security, maintenance and curation. Ownership retained by loaner. Insurance supplied by loaner.
Curation Fee $_____
Length of loan/Date of Renewal._____

[ ] Temporary Loan for Special Exhibition: Specific Exhibit Use Only; SCVHS responsible for exhibit insurance for length of loan.

Insurance Value Appraisal: $ _____(Include Copy of Certified Appraisal)
Length of Contract: From_____To: _____

5. Authorized SCVHS Representative (2 signatures required)

a) Collection Transfer accepted by_____Date_____

b) Collection Transfer confirmed by_____Date_____

6. Collection Transfer subject to the conditions listed below:

Note: The attributions shown are those of the owner and have not necessarily been verified by the Society. Please preserve this receipt for surrender when withdrawing objects.

Conditions of acceptance for articles lent or donated.

1. The SCVHS will give objects deposited with it the same care and concern accorded its own property but it assumes no responsibility in the case of loss or damage by theft, fire or otherwise.
2. It rests with the discretion of the Society as to whether, where, how, or how long, objects lent or donated to it shall be exhibited to the public.
3. The Society will make all responsible efforts to give due credit to the lender or donor for those objects exhibited
4. Upon surrender of this receipt or upon written order of the depositor or his duly authorized and accredited agent or successor in interest any object on loan with the Society may be withdrawn upon reasonable notice.
5. In the case of the death of the depositor, the legal representative of the deceased is requested to notify the Society giving his full name and address and enclosing a certified copy of his authority.
6. The Society retains the right to photograph these objects and to use those photographs or their reproductions as it deems fitting.
7. Permission for others to photograph objects deposited with the Society shall be granted only with the consent of the owner.
8. The donor is responsible for the appraisal of objects it this is to be used for tax purposes, a copy of which will be filed with the Society.

Santa Clarita Valley HISTORICAL Society

Gift Shop Balance Sheet for

_____

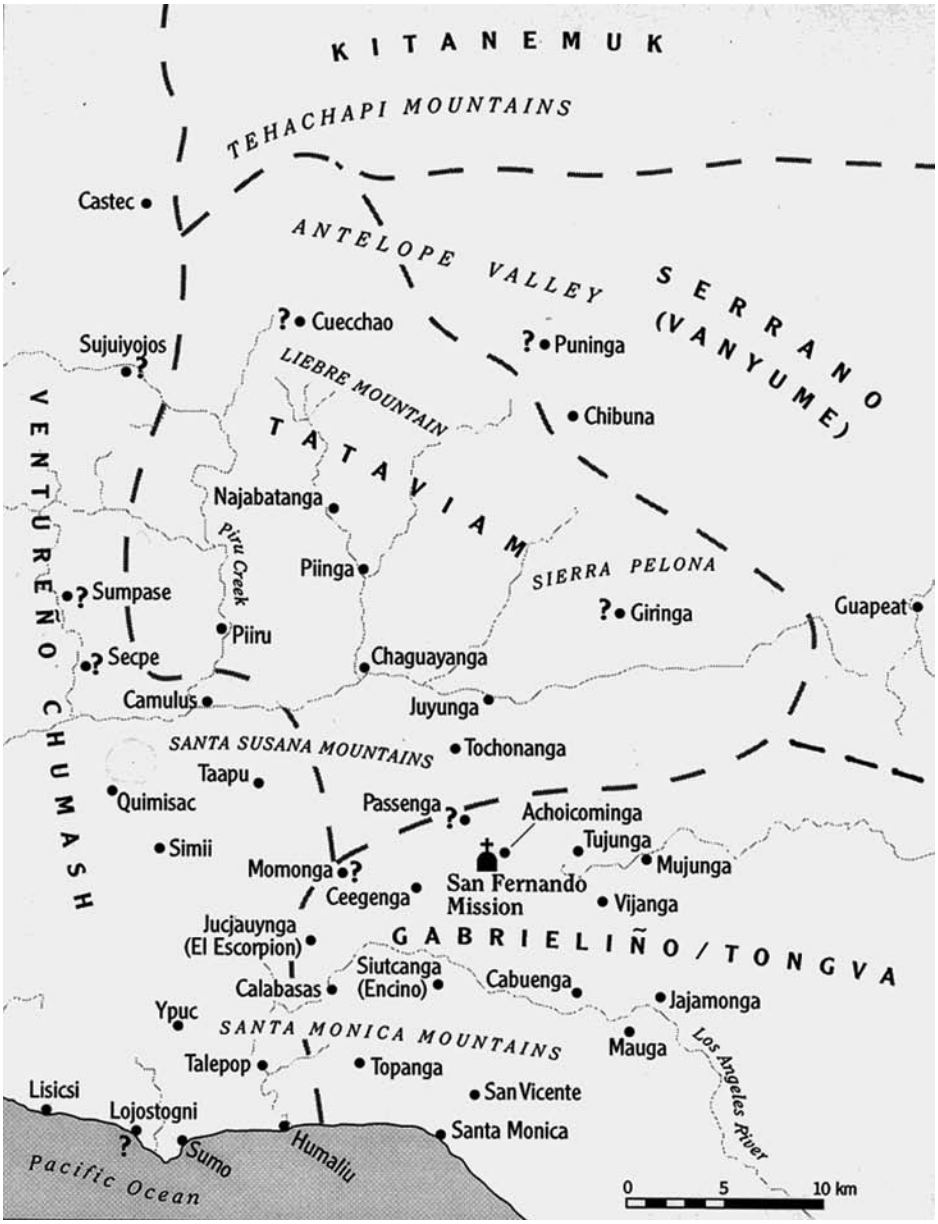
Date

Opening Balance		Closing Balance		Items Sold
Pennies	_____	Pennies	_____	_____
Nickels	_____	Nickels	_____	_____
Dimes	_____	Dimes	_____	_____
Quarters	_____	Quarters	_____	_____
Ones	_____	Ones	_____	_____
Fives	_____	Fives	_____	_____
Tens	_____	Tens	_____	_____
Twenties	_____	Twenties	_____	_____
				_____
Total	_____	Subotal	_____	_____
				_____
				_____
Opening Total	_____	Checks	_____	_____
+ Total Sold	_____	Charge	_____	_____
= Closing Total	_____			_____
		Total	_____	_____
				_____
Opening Docent	_____			_____
				_____
Closing Docent	_____			_____
			Total Sales	_____

2. Tataviam Indians

Indian Village Map

Santa Clarita & Environs



Approximation of Indian villages in the Santa Clarita Valley and vicinity. Tataviam villages in the SCV shown here include Tochonanga (in Newhall), Chaguayanga (at Castaic Junction), Piiru (Piru), Camulus (Camulos), Piinga (Elderberry Canyon, under the Castaic Lake Reservoir), and a couple of others whose identity is cloudy.

Tataviam Villages in the Santa Clarita Valley

Known and presumed locations of Tataviam Indian villages in the Santa Clarita Valley and vicinity. Few sites have been confirmed through archaeological evidence (for instance, some of the major villages such as Tochananga and Chaguayabit [here, Tsavayu] have not been discovered). However, village names and locations are given in the records of Mission San Fernando.

Tataviam Indians, a small group of speakers of a Takik dialect (Uto-Aztecan language family) were present in the Santa Clarita Valley by AD 500, around the time of the introduction of the bow and arrow.

“PEOPLE WHO FACE THE SUN”

By Paul Higgins

The Tataviam Indians arrived in the Santa Clarita Valley about 450 AD. They were Shoshone speaking people that originally lived in the Northern Great Plain of America. Why they left their homeland, why they traveled so far and why they decided to make this area their new home is unknown. Certainly the abundant natural resources and climate of the valley made it a very attractive and desirable place to live. The area was also a crossroads of two important trade routes used by the Indians living in the area prior to the arrival of the Tataviam. One of these routes linked the California Coast with Nevada, Arizona and other points East. The other connected the San Joaquin Valley with the Los Angeles basin. Perhaps the Tataviams, who were very skillful traders, had a desire to control these trade routes.

The Takic or Shoshone translation of the name Tataviam means “People Who Face the Sun.” This name was applied because the majority of the Tataviam villages were built on the South facing slopes of the Valley. The neighboring Chumash Indians referred to the Tataviam as the “Alliklik” people. The Chumash word Alliklik, thought by some to be a derogatory term, means people who stammer or do not speak clearly.
This prehistoric society numbering no more than two thousand people at anyone time lived in about twenty various sized semi-permanent village sites. They occupied areas where the present communities of Newhall, Castaic, Piru, Aqua Dulce and Lake Elizabeth are located today. Homes were made of a cone shaped framework of willow poles covered with grass or other type of brush that was tied in place. The structure, commonly referred to as a wikiup, resembled a large upside-down basket. Houses were always built for optimum solar gain and usually near a source of water.

The Tataviam people performed no heavy labor and therefore were not large in size or extremely strong. They were primarily seed gatherers, hunters of small game and fishermen. The world around them was their source of food and clothing as well as the materials for their homes and tools. They lived without agriculture and domestic animals. They learned to use every available source of food without exhausting any. Rabbit was a daily meat as was deer, birds, squirrel, fish and insects. Bear and coyote, thought to have a direct connection with the spiritual world, were never hunted or used for food. Plants were used for food, seasoning, medicine, soap, ceremonial drugs and material for clothing and baskets. Acorns and yucca were the most available and were therefore frequently used.

Clothing for men consisted of a tool pouch tied around the waist with a string or a loincloth made of deerskin or yucca fiber. Women wore a short skirt in the front and occasionally one in the back made from animal skins, grass or yucca. These skirts, later referred to as California aprons, sometimes had tar balls on the bottoms to hold them down and may have been decorated with shells, pine seeds and abalone buttons. Children under the age of ten years usually wore nothing. During cold weather blankets made from rabbit skins were worn as a robe in the daytime and used for bedding at night. Tataviam ceremonies reflected everything that affected their lives; the weather, the amount and availability of food, the sun, the moon, birth, puberty, marriage and especially death. What was referred to as music was not a tune but more of a chant or hum in time to stamping feet. Flutes of bone and elderberry wood, rattles of shells or deer hooves and rhythm sticks that were hit against the hand completed the music.

The Indians worked very hard everyday but also had sufficient time to play games, tell stories and enjoy the wonderful world in which they lived. Games played on a regular basis were Kick the Stick, Hoop and Pole, Stickball and the very popular and quite competitive Walnut Shell Dice game.

The arrival of the Spanish in 1797 decimated the Indian population. Hundreds died from Smallpox, the common cold and stress associated with the changing lifestyle. By 1810 nearly all the Tataviams had been baptized at the San Fernando Mission and many had intermarried with other local Indian groups. The last full-blooded Tataviam, Juan Jose Fustero, died in 1916.

The Tataviam people occupied this valley when rivers lined with huge sycamore trees ran year around and great oak woodlands stretched from one end of the valley to the other. They had the privilege of sharing this environment with grizzly bears, bald eagles and other animals that will never live here again. They had no large cities and no great stone temples or pyramids. Their world was a very simple one of good intentions and true integrity. They lived, laughed, loved and raised their families in harmony with the earth for over 1300 years. In less than two hundred years we have successfully conquered the landscape and converted the valley into a modem urban area. However, in the quiet comers and hidden canyons of the Santa Clarita Valley, the peaceful energy of the Tataviam people still exists.

The Tataviam: Early Newhall Residents.

By PAUL HIGGINS,
Environmental Educator.

IN A.D. 405, A SMALL GROUP of Shoshone-speaking people migrated to the Santa Clarita Valley. The Kitanemuk Indians, who lived in the Antelope Valley, called these people the Tataviam.

The name derived from their words *taviyik*, or "sunny hillside," and *atavihukwa*, or "he is sunning himself." Thus the word *tataviam* might be roughly translated as "people facing the sun" or "people of the south-facing slopes."

The Tataviam were more aggressive than the Chumash, who lived here at the time and encouraged them to move west down the Santa Clara River beyond Piru Creek. The Chumash referred to the Tataviam as "Allikliks." The Chumash word *alliklik*, thought by some to be a derogatory term, means people who stammer or do not speak clearly.

The Tataviam lived in approximately twenty various-sized villages within the upper reaches of the Santa Clara River drainage east of Piru Creek. Their territory extended over the Sawmill Mountains to the north and included the southwestern fringes of the Antelope Valley.

Some areas they occupied were Nuhubit (Newhall), Piru-U-Bit (Piru), Tochonanga — believed to have been located at the confluence of Wiley and Towsley Canyons — and the very large village of Chaguibit, the center of which is buried under the Rye Canyon exit of I-5.

The Tataviam also lived where Saugus, Agua Dulce and Lake Elizabeth are located today.

The typical Tataviam home consisted of a cone-shaped framework of willow poles covered with grass or other brush that was tied in place. The larger villages also contained gaming and dancing areas, cemeteries, granaries, work areas and sauna-like sweat houses used for cleaning and relaxation.

Southern California offered the Tataviam the most abundant natural food supply in North America. They lived without agriculture or domestic animals and developed a highly sophisticated system for exploiting the ecosystem.

Deer, rabbits, squirrels, birds, lizards, snakes, grasshoppers and caterpillars were hunted and trapped for food. Acorns, yucca, toyon berries, chia seeds and buckwheat were eaten regularly. Few if any nonagricultural peoples in the world were able to draw on so many food sources.

Life was good for the Tataviam. They were among the most ingenious, industrious and peaceful Indians of North America. They lived an honest life without laws, money, jails or a welfare system. They had no bad spirits, and before the missionaries came in 1769, they had no concept of hell or the devil. They did not change the land, but rather adapted themselves to it.

Any opportunity for collecting firsthand information about this obscure group of people vanished forever when the last full-blooded Tataviam, Juan Jose Fustero, died in 1916. Although much of the Tataviam culture has been washed away by floods or covered over by concrete, some still remains.

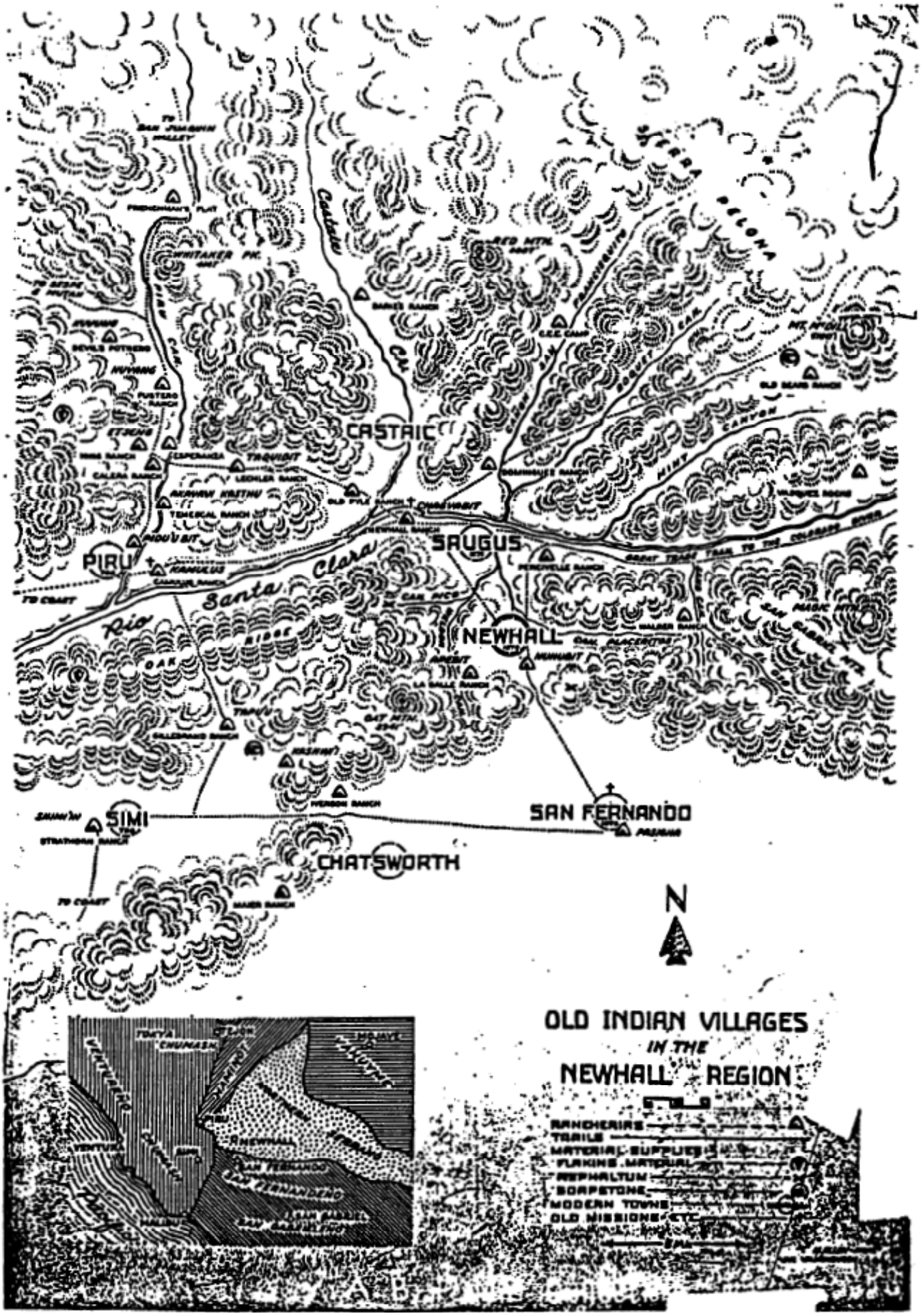
On May 2, 1884 a young man named McCoy Pyle discovered a cave in the hills above the present Chiquita Canyon Landfill, north of Highway 126. Inside he found many large woven baskets containing stone axe heads, obsidian knife blades, crystals, whistles made from deer bones, headdresses and capes made of iridescent condor and flicker feathers, and four ceremonial scepters consisting of painted stone discs attached to wooden handles.

Stephen Bowers purchased the entire collection for $1,500. Bowers sold the items to private collectors all over the world. Some of the "Bowers Cave" collection was sold to the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, where it remains today. The fate of the rest is unknown.

Some small displays of Tataviam artifacts can be seen at the Placerita Canyon Nature Center, at the Saugus Station at Heritage Junction in downtown Newhall, at the Vista Del Lago visitors center at Pyramid Lake, and at the small museum at Ed Davis Park in Towsley Canyon.

Bedrock mortar areas, pictographs and middens can still be found in undeveloped areas of the valley. It is still common to discover stone points after rainstorms.

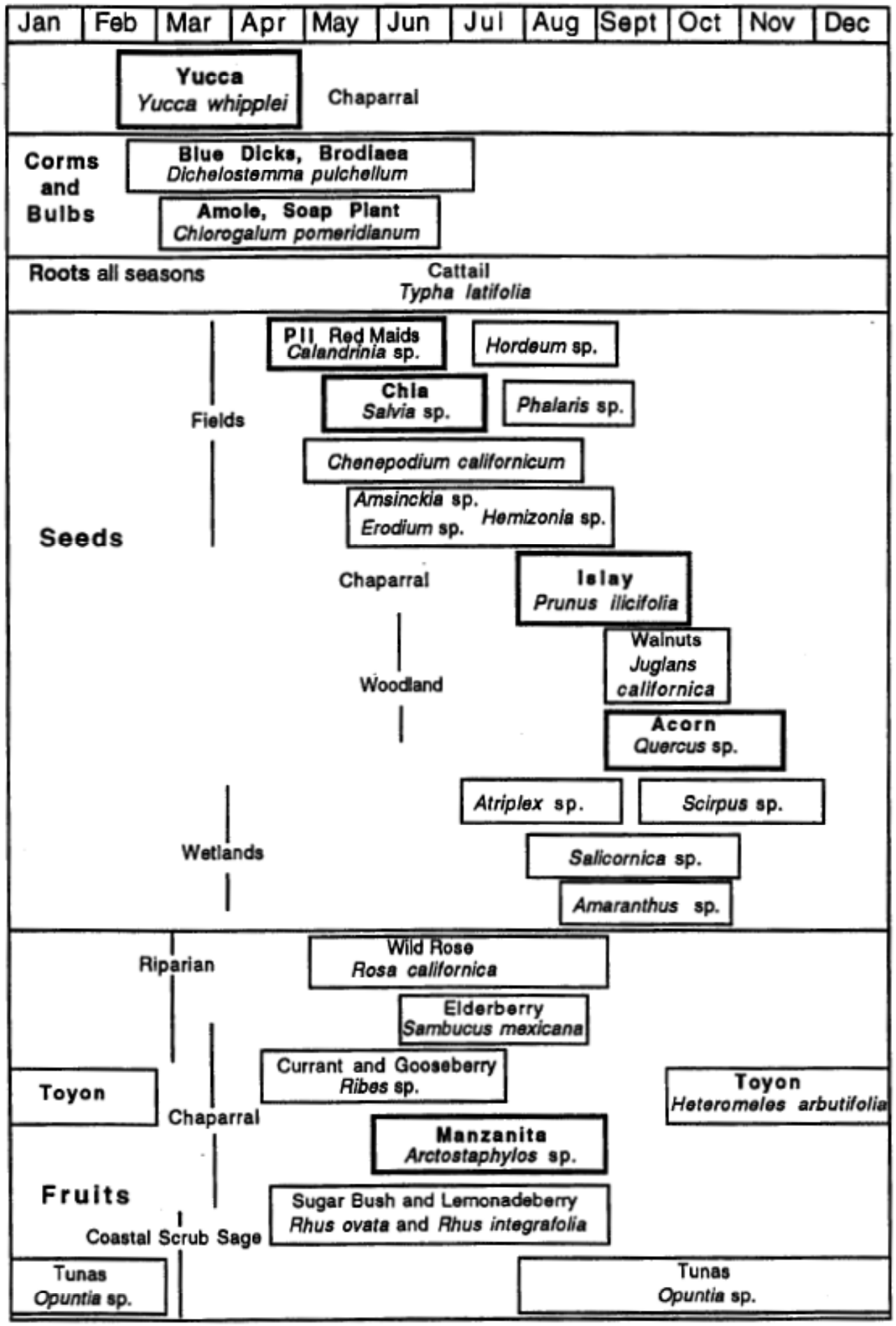
Who knows? Perhaps there is another large stash of Tataviam treasure still hidden in a cave somewhere in the Santa Clarita Valley, just waiting to be found!


CASTAIC
SAUGUS
NEWHALL
PIRU
SIMI
SAN FERNANDO
CHATSWORTH
Santa Clara
Rio
OLD INDIAN VILLAGES
IN THE
NEWHALL REGION
RANCHERIAS
TRAILS
MATERIAL SUPPLIES
FLAKING MATERIAL
ASPHALTUM
SOAPSTONE
MODERN TOWNS
OLD MISSIONS
N

PLANTS

PLANT	PART USED	USES
Walnut	Nuts	Food
	Nutshells	Gambling Dice
Elderberry	Berries	Food
	Flowers	Tea for coughs, colds, fever
	Wood	Bows for hunting small games, musical instruments (flute, clapper stick, bullroarer
Oak	Acorns	Staple Food: ground, leached and cooked into mush
	Bark	Dye for hides and fishnets
	Twigs	Used to singe hair
	Branches	Mush-stirrers, bows, cradleboards
Pine	Nuts	Food
	Pitch	Glue
	Wood	Canoes, bows
Sage	Seeds	Toasted for food
	Leaves	Tea for flu remedy; hunter put leaves in his mouth so deer couldn't smell him
Mugwort	Leaves	Put in nose for headaches; tea made for colds, colic & fever; juice of leaves used for poison oak
Tule	Stems	Thatching for houses; mats for sleeping; sacred enclosure; padding for cradleboard; skirts; sandals; waterbottles
Wild Rose	Fruit	Food
	Petals	Dried, crushed for baby powder; tea used as eyewash
Willow	Wood	Poles for house framework, cradleboard
	Shoots	Baskets, seed beaters
	Bark	Lashing; skirts; chewed as a tooth ache remedy; tea for fever
Yucca	Leaves	Fiber for sewing and cordage
	Rosette	Roasted and eaten

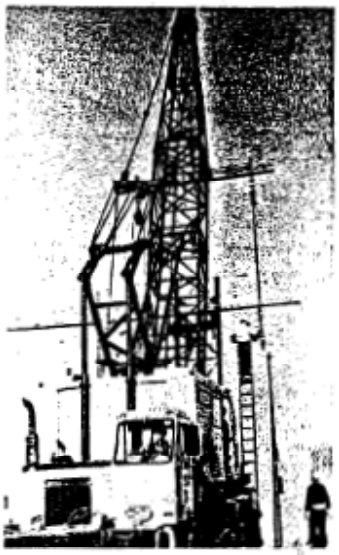
Yerba Santa	Leaves	Used in teas for stomach aches, headaches; small dry leaves smoked
Buck-wheat	Seeds	Gathered for food
Cotton-wood Tree	Bark & Sap	Used for emergency food; bark also used to make skirts
Tree Tobacco	Leaves	Dried and smoked; used as a sacred plant by the Shaman; highly poisonous
California Everlasting	Leaves	Used for bruises
Black Mustard	Leaves	Eaten raw or boiled

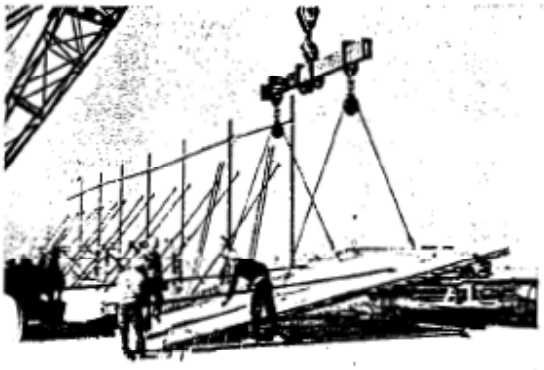

Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sept
Oct
Nov
Dec
Yucca
Yucca whipplei
Chaparral
Corms and Bulbs
Blue Dicks, Brodiaea
Dichelostemma pulchellum
Amole, Soap Plant
Chlorogalum pomeridianum
Roots all seasons
Cattail
Typha latifolia
Seeds
Fields
PII Red Maids
Calandrinia sp.
Hordeum sp.
Chia
Salvia sp.
Phalaris sp.
Chenepodium californicum
Amsinckia sp.
Erodium sp.
Hemizonia sp.
Chaparral
Islay
Prunus ilicifolia
Woodland
Walnuts
Juglans californica
Acorn
Quercus sp.
Atriplex sp.
Scirpus sp.
Wetlands
Salicornica sp.
Amaranthus sp.
Fruits
Riparian
Wild Rose
Rosa californica
Elderberry
Sambucus mexicana
Toyon
Currant and Gooseberry
Ribes sp.
Toyon
Heteromeles arbutifolia
Chaparral
Manzanita
Arctostaphylos sp.
Sugar Bush and Lemonadeberry
Rhus ovata and Rhus integrafolia
Coastal Scrub Sage
Tunas
Opuntia sp.
Tunas
Opuntia sp.

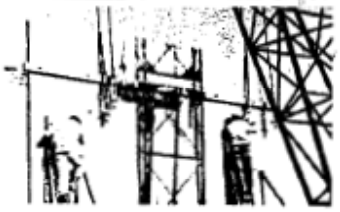
INDIAN BURIAL GROUNDS THOUGHT TO BE UNDER HR & M VALENCIA SITE

HYDRAULIC RESEARCH
HR NEWS
NOV. 1968

EARLY CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS.....Workmen digging a ten foot deep trench at HR&M's Valencia site were startled to find two human skeletons in the sandy earth. The skulls on the left were taken to the Homicide Department of the County Sheriffs partment but were determined to be Indian and quite old. On the right, Bill Summers amines the bones and artifacts of the third skeleton unearthed the next day. Later seven more skeletons were discovered.







WORKMEN + CRANE + KNOW HOW and the walls start going up. These photos (by Bob Shapiro) show the first wall sections of HR's Valencia plant being pulled into position November 5th. The walls are poured into steel braced forms right on top of the main slab. When "cured" they are raised into position. *More construction photos on Pages 10 and 11.*

TEN SKELETONS, BOWLS FOUND

by BILL SUMMERS

On October the 11th, workmen at the Hydraulic Research construction site in Valencia discovered two human skeletons. They were found about ten feet underground near the future HR cafeteria building. Careful digging the following morning resulted in locating additional remains and Indian artifacts of carved animal bone. Two days later, and approximately 150 yards from the first discovery, seven more skeletons and miscellaneous artifacts were unearthed. Included among the artifacts are two cooking pots, possible bone tools, beads, and other items not yet identified.

The Sheriff's Department was notified and the first two skeletons were taken to the Homicide Department. It was determined that the skeletons were anywhere from 60 to 100 years old. The bones were released to HR&M. The UCLA Archaeology Department has shown an interest in the find and it is undecided at this time what will be done with them.

GREAT CHANGES OCCUR

California is able to boast of having the largest population in the United States of America. To many people, this may not seem quite extraordinary. However, in view of the fact that, ethnologists believe the area now comprising the State of California once supported the largest aboriginal population in North America, present statistics would indicate that population problems are "par for the course" of California history.

Favorable geography, climate and abundant nature, made living conditions in what is now Southern California, as attractive to prehistoric

(Continued on Page 6)

STANDARD VALVE DIVISION

by June Malone
and
Polly Szafka

Ron Smith is our new supervisor n Standard Valves, but we still see *Clyde Owes* in our midst helping with procedures.

Besides a new supervisor, we have new faces too numerous to list. Sorry to report that *Donnie Ball* from our Test Department was quite seriously hurt when his car overturned. A speedy recovery for Donnie we hope. Both *Joe Plomer* and *Bob Jackson* are back to work after a hospital stay, Joe with his hand and Bob with a throat operation. Bob came back in a new Camaro. We are all looking forward to having *Clyde Malone* back after six months off with a broken leg. *Howard Thompson* has done a good job during Clyde's absence but he is growing a mustache and heading for Berkeley for a short vacation?? *Doris Smith* transferred to QA and is our shipping inspector. *Charlie Alexander* sold his home, and bought a sixty foot trailer which is now parked in Valencia. *Larry Rowlett* was back in town for a few days. Nice to see his smiling face. *Gerald Scott* is our new leadman in the rough room. Congrats Scottie. *Pete Peterson* is back on days while *Bob Bettis* took over as night leadman. During Ron Smith's vacation, *Kirk Grabham* took over – what a nice choice. We want to wish *Jesse Ayers* good luck in Las Vegas.

Bob Williams, Fabrication Department Supervisor, inspects birthday cake FABRICATED by Betty (Crocker?) Dilger for Bob's birthday celebration last month. BOB SAYS HE IS NOW OLD ENOUGH TO VOTE.

(Continued from Page 1)

Americans as it is to today's inhabitants. Anthropologists may not be able to prove that ancient Indians were drawn to Southern California, as peoples have been in recent times, but they do know there were movements and migrations of peoples in California's primitive past. Not that shifts in population are as "old as the California hills," but you can realize that primitive man was as much a searcher after a better life, or the better things of life, as his modern counterpart. Along the same shores now dotted with highly developed harbors and cities, over the same trails now transformed into freeways, in the same valleys, and on the same mountains, modern man has followed and built on an ancient life. The nearness of California's primitive past – the quick pace of history here – dramatize the great change that has taken place on the shores of the Pacific in little more than a hundred years. Few areas in the world have witnessed such a miracle of growth.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIND

It is because of this continuing growth that when bulldozer, back hoe, and paving machines are busily changing the face of the once Gabrielino earth, occasionally a broken metate, a mortar, a cooking bowl, or even a rare skeleton, is unearthed by a mechanical ditch digger. As the work at HR Valencia moved toward the raising of its walls, back hoe operator Jerry LeFors, and Bob Barillier, Construction Superintendent for the Donald F. Shaw Construction Company, were surprised by the presence of several skeletal remains in the trenches being prepared for sewer lines.

Speculation ran high as to who they might have been. Along with some apparent Indian artifacts, after consultation with A.B. Perkins, local Newhall Historian, and Dr. Carl S. Dentzel, Director of the Southwest Museum, it was soon concluded that we have uncovered an ancient burial ground or village of the now extinct Alliklik Indians.

In the Tejon Pass country, through which highway 99, known as the Ridge Route, emerges from the mountain barriers between Los Angeles and Bakersfield, there lived in olden times a tribe of Indians who were fierce *wizards* and *sorcerers*. These Tejon Indians called the Kitanemuck, as well as the Alliklik tribe of the upper Santa Clara River Valley, were classified under the general heading of Serranos Indians. The Serranos and their neighbors, the Chumas and Gabrielinos, were all of the Shoshonean line. The Allikliks had a preference for cooking pots made of Catalina soapstone known as *steatite*. Gabrielinos had the same preferences and many of the Gabrielino ways of life and rituals were woven into the reciprocal ceremonial life of the Serranos clans. This would account for the two beautifully preserved steatite cooking pots that were uncovered at the HR Valencia site.

It is supposed that the channel island Chumas Indians who lived on Catalina were probably the richest tribe of the area, since the only source of steatite was on Catalina.

In May of 1769, Captains Gaspar de Portola and Fernando Rivera y Moncada were appointed by the Spanish Government to lead the first land expedition into California. During the 200 years following the appearance of the white man in the San Fernando Valley and Castaic area, the Alliklik, Chumash and Gabrielino Indians became extinct.

ARTIFACTS ON DISPLAY

Arrangements will be made for HR employees to view these items of interest first hand in the near future.

For those who would like additional information regarding th Gabrielino Indians, an interesting well written book by Bernice Eastman Johnston on "California's Gabrielino Indians" may be obtained from the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles.

And now folks....

Photos by Paul Brown

.....Says Dan Rowan "Goodnight Dick" to Dick Martin (center). Answering on the right is another Dick, president elect Richard M. Nixon. The occasion was candidate Nixon's visit to Beautiful Downtown Burbank (Burbank High) in October. Part of Mr. Nixon's security force was former HR employee (Accounting) E.J. Eluere now with the Burbank Police Department.

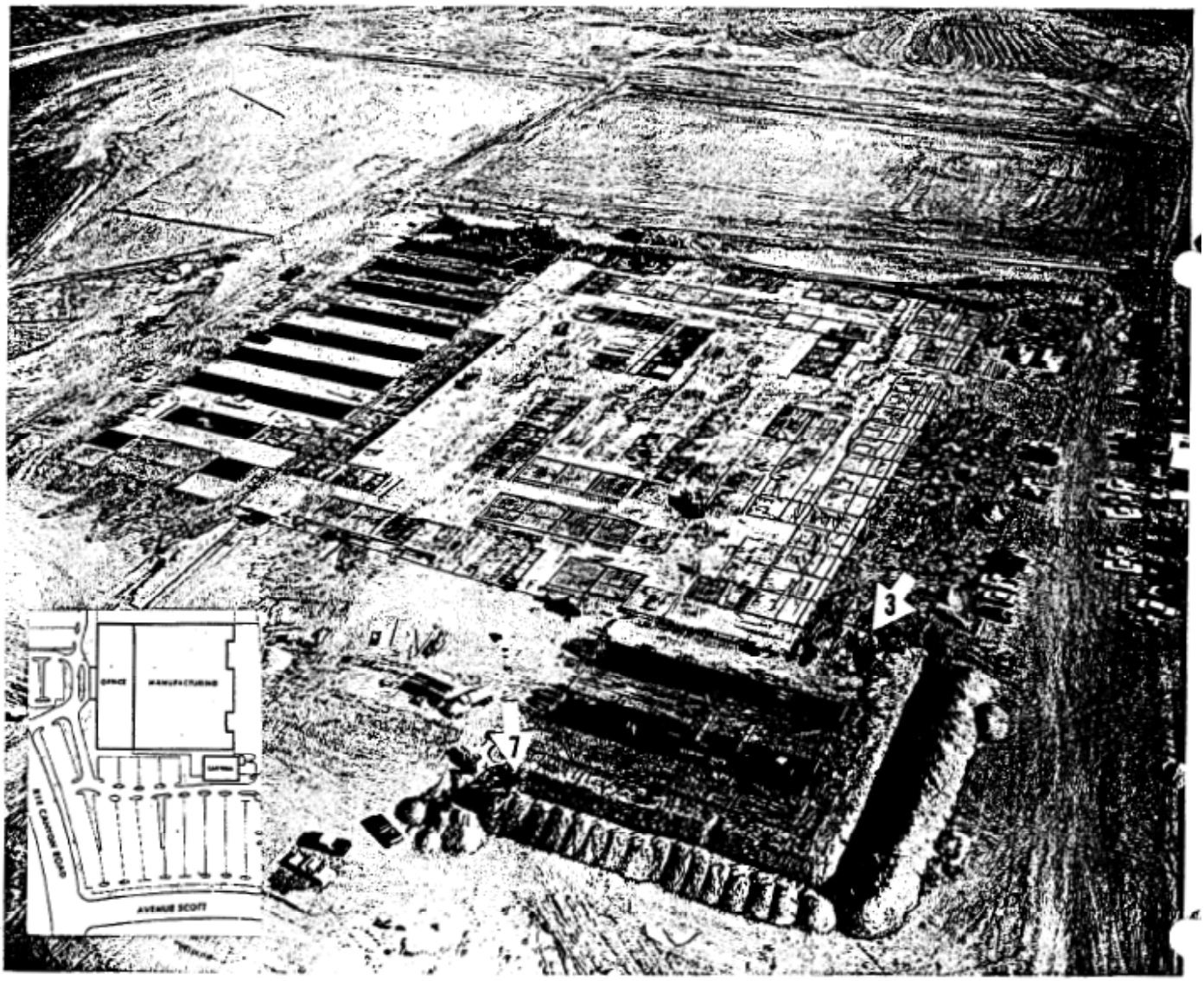


Photo by Tom Swoltek

THE SIZE OF IIR's NEW VALENCIA SITE is readily seen in this aerial photo taken 10–18–68. The white arrows indicate the drainage ditch where the Indian skeletons were found and the number found. The inset map shows the areas of the building. NOTE: The wall sections "curing" above and to the left of the "3" arrow.

Tataviam

CHESTER KING AND THOMAS C. BLACKBURN

Language

On the basis of a short word list collected in 1917 by John P. Harrington of the Smithsonian Institution, Bright (1975a) has concluded that the Tataviam (tə¹tävēyəm) language may be "the remnant, influenced by Takic, of a language family otherwise unknown in Southern California," or, more likely, that it is Takic (but not, apparently, Serran or Cupan). The second hypothesis receives support from ancillary comments made by some of Harrington's Kitanemuk informants as well as from ethnohistoric and archeological data. In 1776 Francisco Garcés followed the usage of his Mohave guides and referred to all the people living along the Mohave River, in the San Gabriel and San Fernando valleys, along the upper reaches of the Santa Clara River, and in the Elizabeth Lake region—thus the Tataviam and their Takic neighbors—as the Beñeme. The Kawaiisu called the Kitanemuk, the Vanyume, the Tataviam, and presumably the Serrano and Gabrielino *pitadi* 'southerners' (Zigmond); the Chemehuevi name Pitanteme(we) 'Vanyume' (Carobeth Laird, personal communication 1975) may have had a similar range of application. Garcés (1965) and Fages (1937) both considered the Tataviam similar to their southern Takic neighbors in dress, political organization, and language. Archeological evidence, such as the types of artifacts used in social interaction and the internal organization of cemeteries and villages, also indicates that the Tataviam resembled neighboring Takic groups. Archeological data suggest that the Tataviam began to differentiate from other southern California Takic speakers around 1000 B.C. It is at this time that cremation as a mortuary practice begins to predominate in those areas occupied ethnographically by Takic-speaking peoples. By historic times the Tataviam language was so distinct that one of Harrington's Kitanemuk informants expressed the opinion that it was as foreign to him as English and certainly less easily understood than the San Fernando Valley dialect of Gabrielino.

Territory and Environment

The Tataviam lived primarily on the upper reaches of the Santa Clara River drainage east of Piru Creek, although their territory extended over the Sawmill Mountains to the north to include at least the southwestern fringes of Antelope Valley (fig. 1). The major portion of the Antelope Valley itself was probably held by Kitanemuk and Vanyume speakers. The Tataviam were bounded on the west by various Chumashan groups: to the northwest, at Castac Lake, lived the Castac Chumash; to the west, on Sespe Creek, were the *seRspe* Chumash; and to the southwest, at *kamulus* (a village recorded at San Fernando Mission under its Chumash name), lived a mixed Chumash-Tataviam population. The Tataviam were bounded on the south by various Gabrielino-speaking groups.

Most of the Tataviam region lies between 1,500 and 3,000 feet above sea level, with a minimum elevation of about 600 feet on the Santa Clara River near Piru and a maximum elevation of 6,503 feet at Gleason Mountain. The core of this area, and indeed of the Tataviam territory itself, is comprised of the south-facing slopes of the Liebre and Sawmill mountains. In southern California generally, the degree of exposure to sunlight present on a slope and the corresponding rate of evapotranspiration are important determinants of various types of vegetation. The nature of the slope-exposure in the Tataviam region is such that the Tataviam themselves probably relied more heavily on yucca as a major staple than did neighboring groups. However, the plant and

Fig. 1. Tribal territory and villages.

animal associations in the territory of the Tataviam were otherwise generally similar to those exploited by neighboring Takic speakers.

External Relations

Little is known about the social and political interaction that occurred between the Tataviam and other groups, although the presence of north-south enmity and east-west amity relationships similar to those found throughout southern California in protohistoric times seems likely. In 1776, for example, Garcés asked the chief of the Cuabajay (apparently the Castac Chumash) with whom he was staying to cease waging war against the people living on the upper Santa Clara River. Archeological data indicate that the Tataviam participated in economic transactions similar to those engaged in by both adjacent Takic groups and Yokuts groups farther north. During the postmission period, the few surviving Tataviam often intermarried with the Kitanemuk, with whom they seem to have interacted most intensively at that time. They also participated in and attended Chumash fiestas and ceremonies on occasion. Future analyses of mission record data will undoubtedly clarify and perhaps modify what little information is available on Tataviam external relations and internal organization.

Settlement Pattern

Until the mission registers are thoroughly analyzed, it will not be possible to make a definitive list of all Tataviam villages inhabited in early historic times nor to estimate population size with any degree of accuracy. Known Tataviam village names (given in their Kitanemuk forms) and their locations are as follows:

tsavayu(ʔuŋ, San Francisquito (probably equivalent to Chumash *takuyamaʔmi*).

piʔirukuŋ, Piru (called piˈβúkʰùŋ in Tataviam).

piʔiŋ, near Castaic reservoir.

ʔakavávya, probably the site of the main village in the area prior to founding of historic Piru (called *kaštu* in Ventureño Chumash and *El Temescal* in Spanish).

Etseng, on Piru Creek, above *ʔakavávya* (Kroeber 1915a:774); probably the same as the Zegueyne of the mission records.

Huyung, on Piru Creek, above Etseng (Kroeber 1915a:774); probably the same as the Juyubit of the mission records (for which other spellings are in Merriam 1968:97).

Tochonanga, near Newhall, mentioned in mission records (e.g., in Merriam 1968:101).

kwaruŋ, perhaps the Tataviam name for Elizabeth Lake, whose occupants apparently were called *mimiyam* by the Kitanemuk. The village of Quariniga mentioned in a Spanish diary of about 1808 (Cook 1960:256) may be the same place.

During the Mexican period, the Tataviam also lived at Küvung above Huyung (Kroeber 1915a:774), at La Liebre ranch or *hwiʔtahevya*, and at *tikkattsiŋ* (w[illegible] may be a Tataviam name) on upper Castaic Creek. T[illegible] also evidently lived with Chumash at Pastoria Creek during the American period.

On the basis of archeological and ethnohistoric information, Tataviam villages appear to have varied in size from large centers with perhaps 200 people to small settlements containing 10-15 people. The two or three large villages were maximally dispersed in relationship to one another; very small villages were adjacent to these larger villages, while intermediate-size villages of 20 to 60 people were dispersed in between the major centers. At the time of historic contact the total Tataviam population was probably less than 1,000, even if the Elizabeth Lake area is included in the estimates.

Culture

Archeological data indicate that foodstuffs were obtained and prepared in much the same way as neighboring groups. The primary vegetable foods in order of importance were the buds of *Yucca whipplei* (which were baked in earth ovens), acorns, sage seeds, juniper berries, and berries of islay (*Prunus ilicifolia*). Small mammals, deer, and perhaps antelope comprised the major animal foods.

There are no data on Tataviam social organization that might serve to differentiate them from Kitanemuk Gabrielino. However, some interesting information that tends to suggest major similarities among Tataviam, Chumash, and Gabrielino ritual organization was recovered from Bowers's Cave between Newhall and Piru (Elsasser and Heizer 1963). This site contained ritual paraphernalia identical to that described ethnographically by Ventureño Chumash as being used by secret-society members (*ʔantap*) in the performance of ceremonies. Like their southern neighbors, the Tataviam also apparently held their annual mourning ceremony in the late summer or early fall and used open circular structures at the site. The Gaspar de Portolá expedition of 1769 recorded the presence of a number of people associated with a brush enclosure when they passed through the area in August (Palóu 1926). Pictographs in Tataviam territory also have strong similarities to those found in adjacent areas.

History

By 1810, virtually all the Tataviam had been baptized at San Fernando Mission. By the time secularization occurred in 1834, the descendants of most of the missionized Tataviam had married members of other groups, either at the mission or in the Tejon region. By 1916 the last speaker of the Tataviam language was dead, and [illegible] real opportunity for collecting firsthand information [illegible] this obscure group had vanished forever.

[S]ynonymy

[Whi]le the term the Tataviam applied to themselves is [u]nknown, their Kitanemuk neighbors called them *táta·viam*, related to their words *ta·viyik* 'sunny hillside' and *ata·vihukwa?* 'he is sunning himself'. The upper Santa Clara River drains an area in which south-facing slopes are a dominant characteristic of the terrain. Thus *táta·viam* might be roughly translated as 'people facing the sun' or 'people of the south-facing slope'. The Vanyume name for them may have been the same, for Kroeber (1907b:140) recorded the term Tatavi-yam from a Vanyume woman long resident among the Mohaves as the equivalent for the Mohave name Gwalinyuokosmachi 'tule sleepers' who lived in tule houses on a large lake. These people Kroeber (1907b:136) suggested were "no doubt the Yokuts on Kern, Buena Vista, and possibly Tulare lakes." The Mohave word was recorded by Pamela Munro (personal communication 1975) as *kʷalʸaʔinʸoḷkʷasmač* 'they sleep in the high tules', applied to the "Tehachapi Indians." Tehachapi is just north of the Kitanemuk area. However, given the near-identity of the Vanyume equivalent to the Kitanemuk term for the Tataviam, this may in fact have been the Mohave name for the same group. The San Fernando Valley Gabrielino called the Tataviam *tumunkavet*.

When Kroeber (1915a) first recognized this group as a [d]istinct entity, he applied what he said was their name in [th]e neighboring (Ventureño) Chumash: Atapliliʼish. This term was recorded by Harrington as *ʔataplili ʔiš*, a name for the Gabrielino (Bright 1975a). Kroeber (1925:556, 621) later reported that Atapliliʼish was the Ventureño Chumash name for the Gabrielino and perhaps other Takic groups. Probably because he now believed his earlier name to have too broad an application, Kroeber (1925:577, 614) then called the Tataviam by what he reported to be the specific Ventureño Chumash name for them, Alliklik. Harrington (1915, 1917, 1935:84) recorded *ʔalliKliKini* in Ynezeño Chumash as equivalent to Yawelmani Yokuts *ʔeʔewiyič* and Spanish *Pujadores*, all three meaning 'grunters, stammerers' and being synonyms for Tataviam.

A vocabulary of "Alliklik Chumash" was recorded by Merriam without a date or location; Beeler and Klar (1974) have identified this as Ventureño Chumash with borrowings from Kitanemuk and suggested that it represents the speech of at least the northernmost extension of the region Kroeber (1925:pls. 1, 48) labeled Alliklik. To avoid further confusion it seems preferable to apply the name Castac Chumash to this region, about which almost nothing else is known. Merriam (Beeler and Klar 1974) used the name "Kas-tak (Chumash)," Harrington recorded *kaštik* as a village name in Ventureño Chumash (Bright 1975a), and Spanish sources referred to the group as Cuabajai (Beeler and Klar 1974) and Castequeños. The coastal Ventureño Chumash name for the dialect of the Castac region was *ʔalkuʔli*, and for the inhabitants, *ʔiʔalkuʔli* (Harrington 1915).

Sources

Ethnographic notes collected by Harrington (1913, 1916a, 1917) from his Kitanemuk, Chumash, Gabrielino, and San Bernardino Mountains Serrano informants regarding the Tataviam are the basic source for this chapter.

The San Fernando Mission registers remain one of the most important sources of data yet to be investigated in regard to village size, distribution, and intermarriage patterns. The early observations of Garcés and the members of the Portolá expedition provide further important information on the Tataviam. Other data are probably present in archival materials.

Archeological data for much of the area were systematically gathered by Richard Van Valkenberg in the early 1930s; his notes are on file at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. Important data were also obtained during salvage excavations at Castaic reservoir from January 1970 to June 1971. Under the auspices of the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, data from archeological research carried out in the Vasquez Rocks area have been synthesized with the results of previous work done on the upper Santa Clara River (King, Smith, and King 1974).

Trip of the Week

Bowers Cave

by Jerry Reynolds

By Jerry Reynolds
For *The Signal*

Friday, December 14, 1984

Motorists roaring along Highway 126 between Castaic Junction and Piru probably never realize that they are passing under one of the most significant archaeological sites on the North American continent. There are no monuments to mark the spot, no brass plaques — only a dump.

If one pauses a moment at the entry to the Chiquita Canyon Landfill and looks up at the mountain rising some 800 feet above, he will see a dark, irregular slit near the crest and slightly to the right. This is Bowers' Cave, which was a treasure house of Native American artifacts, the likes of which have never been seen before or since.

The tale begins 100 years ago, on May 2, 1884, when young McCoy Pyle set out on a deer hunt from his Mud Springs Ranch, where he lived with his brother Everett and mother, Mandy Pyle. As he picked his way along a crumbly sandstone ridge, McCoy noticed a back opening some 50 feet below. Cautiously he crawled down the cliff face, then peered into the gloomy cave. He gasped in wonder as he beheld woven baskets as large as washtubs, stone ax heads, obsidian knife blades, crystals, and four ceremonial scepters. Inside the baskets were headdresses and capes made of woven condor and flicker feathers, strings of beads, and pottery imported from faraway Mesa Verde.

Pyle wasted no time in rushing back to the ranch, gathering up brother Everett and some mules, hauling everything to be stored in the family milk house. Out of the blue, so to speak, appeared the Rev. Stephen Bowers, who had somehow heard about the remarkable discovery, with an offer of $1,500 for the whole collection.

"That seemed like all of the money in the world," Everett later reminisced. "It was like finding a gold mine."

Rev. Bowers was then 52 years old, editor of the Ventura Free Press, and had a thriving antiquities business. The fiery and flamboyant Indiana-born editor, antiquarian, astronomer and preacher was even involved in a street brawl with a Ventura under-sheriff who objected to an editorial.

Bowers did some more excavating, then began to peddle the treasures to museums around the world. Most of the material was purchased by Prof. F.W. Putnam of the Peabody Museum of American Ethnology at Harvard, where it can still be seen.[1]

Everett Pyle lived to a ripe old age. However, McCoy, who was a deputy constable under Ed Pardee, was killed in a shootout at Castaic Junction a dozen years after his monumental discovery.

The real mystery of Bowers' Cave is why all of the tribal wealth of the local Tataviam Indians was secreted away in a remote hilltop cave. Were the shamans determined to preserve the symbols of the faith in a sacred spot? Were they hiding then from Spanish-Catholic padres, who in 1804 built a small sub-mission within sight of the cleft and only two miles away? No one will ever know.

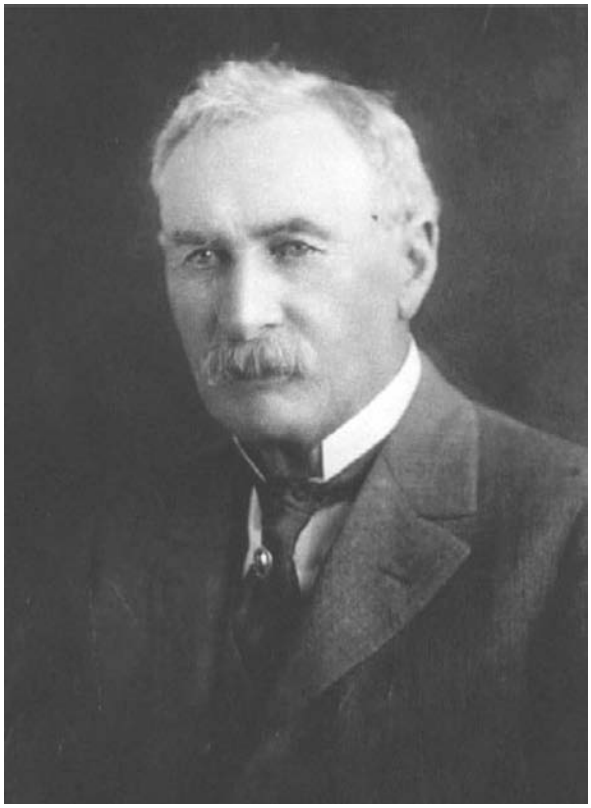
One mystery was cleared up, only to lead to another. For years archaeologists had found deteriorated, donut-shaped rocks known as "perforated stones" and wondered what they were used for. From the cave came four of them — not lying loosely around, but mounted on wooden handles. Speculation still ranges from them being the property of medicine men used in rituals, to "sun sticks" thrust in the ground to determine seasons. At any rate, they are the only originally mounted, perforated stones ever found in the U.S.

To visit the cave today one has to have permission of the owners of the landfill and also of The Newhall Land and Farming Co. Be prepared for a grueling climb straight up the side of a loosely formed mountain, not to mention several falls before getting there.

Notes: 1. The Peabody traded one of the ceremonial scepters (sun sticks) to a museum in Australia in the 1950s.

A treasure trove of artifacts, probably belonging to Tataviam Indians and used, in part, in religious ceremony, was discovered in 1884 in "Bowers Cave" in Hasley Canyon (now on the Chiquita Canyon Landfill's northeastern border).

3. The St. Francis Dam



William Mulholland

Civil Engineer, St. Francis Dam Builder

It can be fairly said that William Mulholland engineered the growth of Los Angeles, for he brought to it the one commodity this dusty, thirsty pueblo would need to support the influx of millions of new residents — water.

Chief engineer for the city of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Mulholland was a key player in the construction of the Panama Canal, the Colorado Aqueduct, Hoover Dam and the Los Angeles Aqueduct — the latter taking water from the farmland of the Owens Valley and piping it to the growing metropolis.

As part of the project, Mulholland designed and oversaw construction of the St. Francis Dam, a 600-foot-long, 185-foot-high curved, concrete gravity dam capable of holding 38,000 acre-feet (12.5 billion gallons) of water high above Saugus in San Francisquito Canyon. The reservoir would meet the needs of Los Angeles for about a year, should the Owens Valley farmers, who often sabotaged the project — or the Elizabeth Tunnel, which crossed the San Andreas fault to the north of the dam and "Powerhouse No. 1" — threaten the flow of water to the City.

Dam construction started in August 1924; water began to fill the reservoir on March 1, 1926. Two months later the dam was completed.

Mulholland's empire came crashing down at three minutes before midnight on March 12, 1928. Half of the dam suddenly collapsed. An immense wall of water rushed down the canyon at 18 miles per hour, totally decimating the concete-and-steel "Powerhouse No. 2" pumping station as well as the Frank LeBrun Ranch, the Harry Carey Ranch and Trading Post, and everything else that stood in the way. Floodwaters met the Santa Clara River at Castaic Junction and headed west toward the Pacific Ocean. The communities of Piru, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Saticoy and much of Ventura lay in waste by the time the water, mud and debris completed a 54-mile journey to the ocean at 5:25 a.m. on March 13th.

At dawn's early light, approximately 470 people lay dead. The exact count may never be known. Some bodies were buried under several feet of earth and were still being discovered in the 1950s. In fact, remains believed to belong to a dam victim were found in 1994.

Several investigations followed, including a hastily prepared government study released five days after the disaster, which attributed the failure to the construction of the west abutment on top of the fault contact between the Sespe conglomerate and the Pelona Shist. Later study discounted the theory and revealed that the east abutment was situated on top of an ancient paleo mega-landslide — something Mulholland did not know. (Perhaps he should have known; a report by geologist Dr. Bailey Willis, published June 25, 1928, three months after the dam failure, mentioned the ancient landslide.)

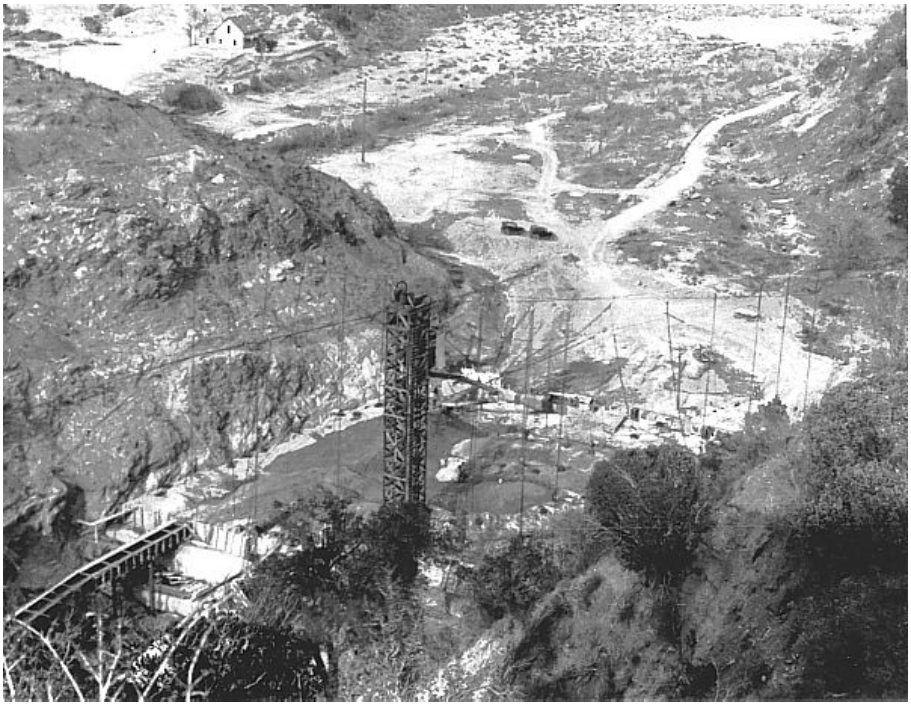
Contributing factors may have been the base of the dam, which may not have been as thick as thought, and the top of the dam, where 15 feet of concrete were added that apparently were not in the engineering plans.

The disaster that ended the career of the famous engineer was the second-worst in California history, behind only the great San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906 in terms of lives lost.

Photo, looking north, shows what was left of the St. Francis Dam shortly after it failed on March 12, 1928.

Construction on the 600-foot-long, 185-foot-high St. Francis Dam started in August 1924. With a 12.5 billion-gallon capacity, the reservoir began to fill with water on March 1, 1926. It was completed two months later.

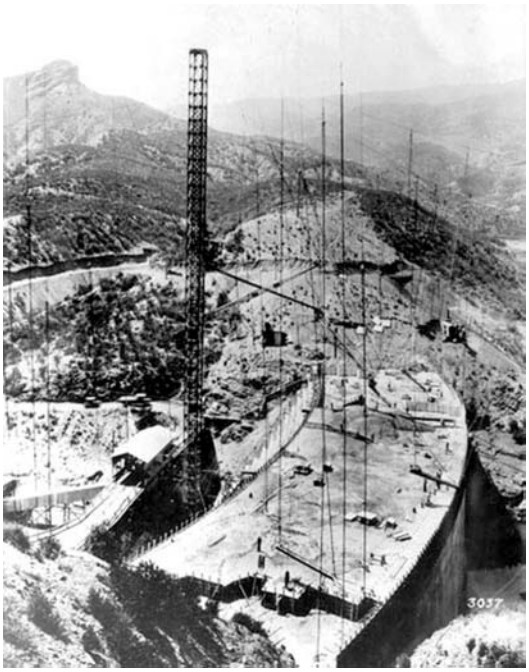
At 11:57:30 p.m. on March 12, 1928, the dam failed, sending a 180-foot-high wall of water crashing down San Francisquito Canyon. An estimated 470 people lay dead by the time the floodwaters reached the Pacific Ocean south of Ventura 5 1/2 hours later.

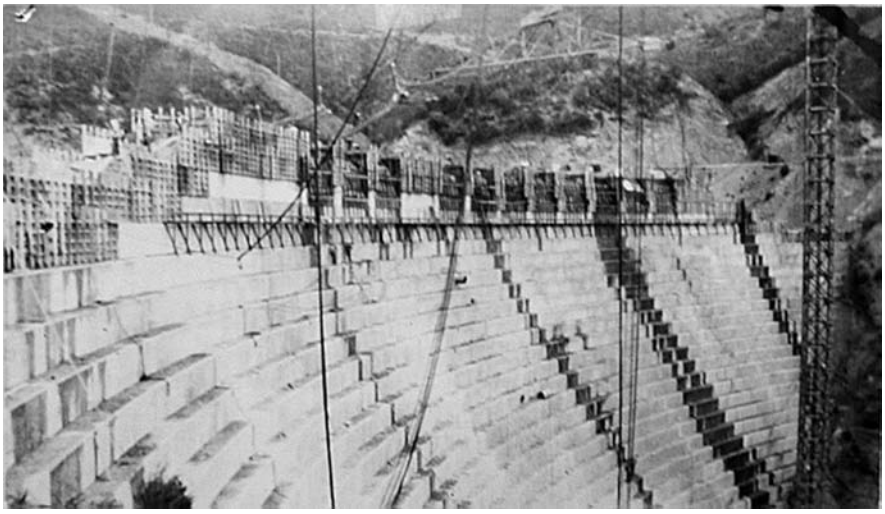


Construction on the 600-foot-long, 185-foot-high St. Francis Dam started in August 1924. With a 12.5 billion-gallon capacity, the reservoir began to fill with water on March 1, 1926. It was completed two months later.

The St. Francis Dam was a concrete gravity arch structure that held back the reservoir by its sheer weight.

Several doughts during construction prompted city water officials to raise the height of the dam twice.

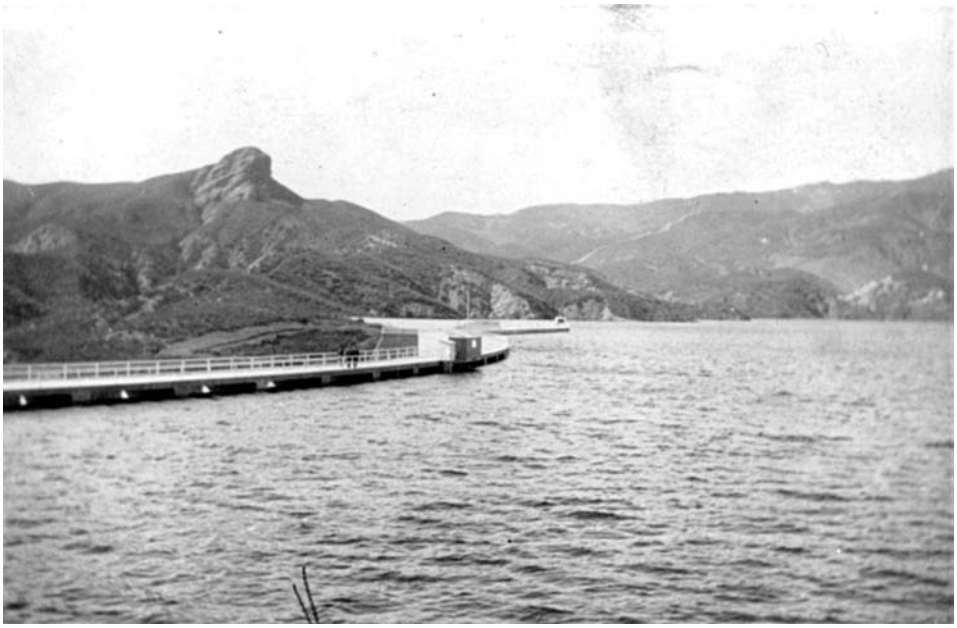




The face of the dam was characterized by its unique, stepped structure.

St. Francis Dam (looking north), with water in the reservoir, sometime between the dam's completion in May 1926 and its failure on March 12, 1928.

Walking across the top of the St. Francis Dam, looking west, sometime between 1926 and 1928.

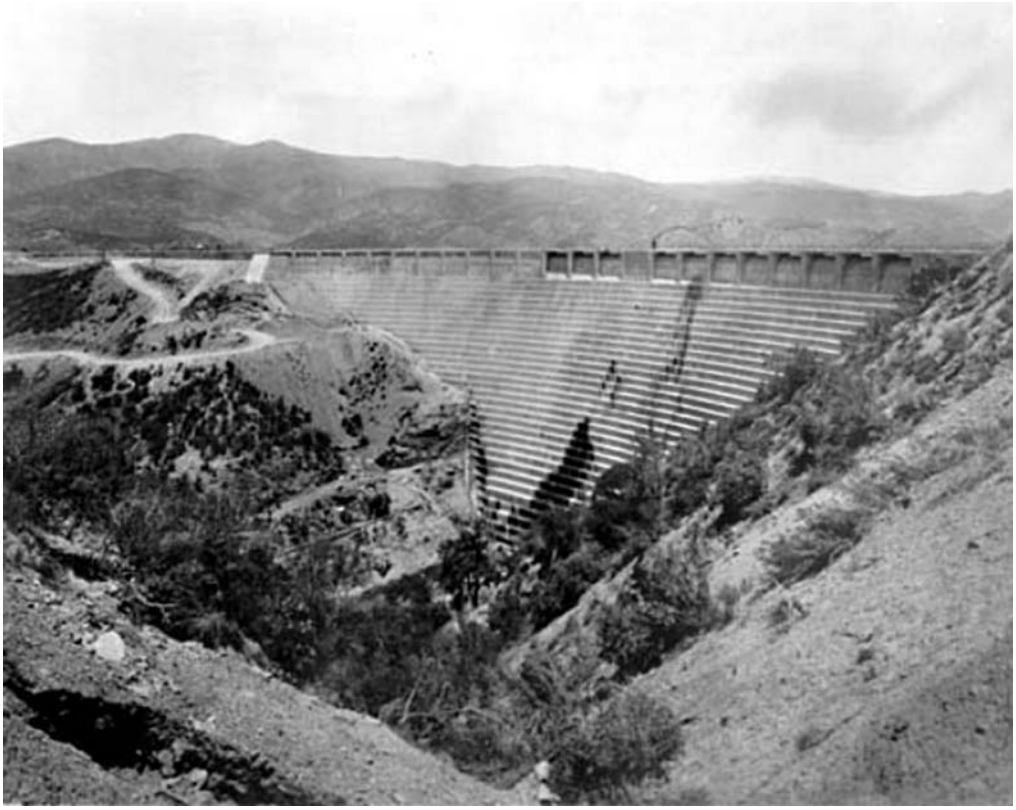


It is said that this photograph was taken at noon on March 12, 1928. However, the caption on the back of the original photo reads: "Taken March 9, 1928, by E.B. (Al) Louden."

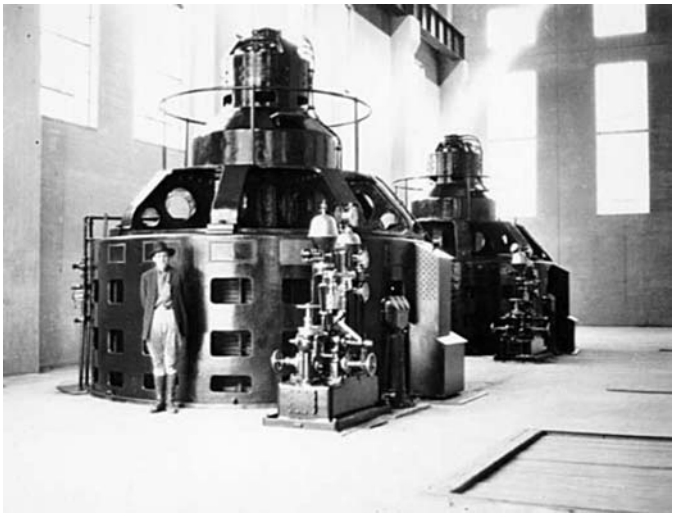
In any case it is believed to be the last photograph of the St. Francis Dam before it broke at 3 1/2 minutes before midnight on March 12.

The St. Francis Dam in Pictures

Security Pacific National Bank, later aquired by Bank of America, donated copies from its extensive photograph collection to the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society in the 1970s.



South face of the St. Francis Dam as it appeared just before the disaster on March 12-13, 1928.

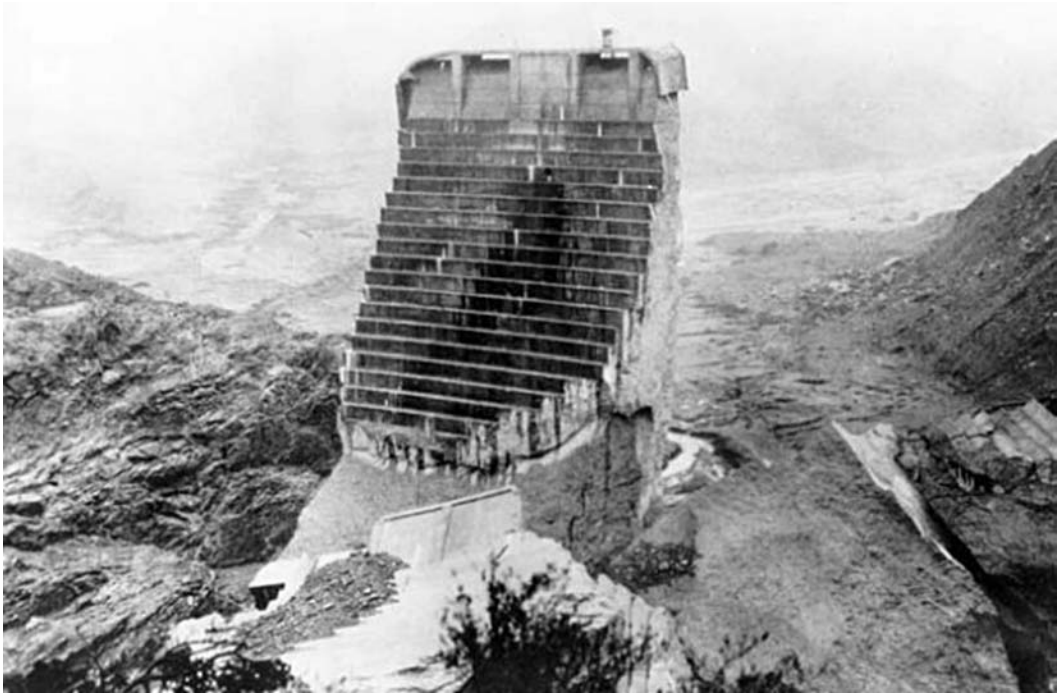


Unidentified man stands next to the two hydro-electric generators in Power House No. 2, below the doomed St. Francis Dam in San Francisquito Canyon, c. 1926.

Power House No. 2, just below the dam, as it appeared in January 1928, two months before the disaster. The 41,800-hp power plant was located six miles below Power House No. 1 (which survived, since it was above the dam).

The aftermath...

South face of the “tomb-stone,” left standing after the March 12-13, 1928 disaster that claimed more than 470 lives.



The torrent has slowed to a trickle following the March 12-13, 1928 failure of the St. Francis Dam in San Francisquito Canyon.

Inside of the destroyed St. Francis Dam looking southward.

Onlookers are dwarfed by the “tombstone,” left behind after the disaster.

Giant pieces of the destroyed St. Francis Dam dwarf a woman standing at lower right in this photograph.

The force of the water forced this large concrete block downriver

Large concrete blocks have been washed downriver from their original location at the right of this photograph following the collapse. Some of the “specks” in this photo are people examining the wreckage.

The Eastern abutment...

The “tombstone” and the hillside to the east behind it, showing the landslide area with the old road at top.

The empty reservoir...

View from the top of the St. Francis Dam, looking north where the reservior was located. The point between light and dark in the photo was the water line of the reservoir just before the dam failed on March 12-13, 1928.

A lone oak tree stands in the wake of the floodwaters.

The cleanup...

Workers start to clear debris left in the wake of the St. Francis Dam disaster of March 12-13, 1928. The difference between light and dark in the top third of the photograph shows the water line, with vegetation remaining above it.

Wreckage caused by floodwaters that cascaded downriver from the St. Francis Dam when it broke on March 12, 1928. Location unknown.

The Present...

The site of the St. Francis Dam as it appears today

PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY

William Mulholland and the St. Francis Dam Disaster

By Donald C. Jackson and Norris Hundley, jr.

A few minutes before midnight on March 12, 1928, the St. Francis Dam gave way under the hydrostatic pressure of a full reservoir. During the early morning hours of March 13, some 38,000 acre-feet of water surged down from an elevation of 1,834 feet above the sea. Roiling through San Francisquito Canyon and the Santa Clara Valley in southern California, the flood wreaked havoc on the town of Santa Paula and dozens of farms and rural communities. By the time it washed into the Pacific Ocean near Ventura at daybreak some fifty-five miles downriver, more than four hundred people lay dead. Damage to property was in the millions of dollars. Considered the greatest civil-engineering disaster in modern U.S. history, it was the nation's deadliest dam failure ever save for the 1889 Johnstown Flood in Pennsylvania, which took nearly 2,200 lives. The St. Francis Dam tragedy engendered great public interest not only because of the deaths and destruction, but also because it involved the failure of a curved-gravity concrete dam, the design type then planned for the massive Hoover (Boulder Canyon) Dam on the Colorado River. The disaster prompted critics to urge reconsideration of that project—which was being vigorously promoted by Los Angeles civic authorities—as well as to call for renewed scrutiny of efforts by the city of Los Angeles (builder/owner of St. Francis Dam) to expand its municipal water-supply system. And it focused attention on William Mulholland, longtime head of the city's Bureau of Water Works and Supply and the official in charge of the failed dam's design and construction.[1]

Despite the absence of a prominent roadside marker located amidst the concrete remains at the dam site, the failure of the St. Francis Dam remains an enduring—almost mythic—story within the history of California and the nation.[2] Part of this tale's fascination derives from the sheer horror of the event. But much of it relates to the disaster's effect upon the reputation of William Mulholland, the engineer credited with building the 233-mile-long Los Angeles Aqueduct that delivered prodigious quantities of Owens River water from the Sierra Nevada into the southland starting in 1913. For good reason, the aqueduct is viewed as an essential component of the region's hydraulic infrastructure responsible for much of the growth and economic development associated with modern Los Angeles. In addition, the aqueduct is now (and was at the time of its construction) considered by many to comprise an audacious "water grab" allowing control over the Owens River to pass from Inyo County settlers into the hands of Los Angeles.[3]

Not surprisingly, the potent image of an engineer responsible for the city's controversial—yet incredibly important—water supply system being also responsible for a key storage dam that collapsed in horrible tragedy has etched itself into the historical consciousness of Californians and countless others. Those memories have attracted scholars, with two in particular shaping the public's current knowledge of the disaster and influencing its attitudes toward William Mulholland. Drawn first to the subject was Charles F. Outland, author of *Man-Made Disaster: The Story of St. Francis Dam*, a carefully crafted book. As a teenager living in Santa Paula at the time of the disaster, he witnessed firsthand the tragic aftermath of the flood. This experience later energized him to convey the impact of the disaster on Santa Clara Valley residents with moving, yet tempered eloquence. Though first published over four decades

Considered the greatest civil engineering disaster in California's history, the collapse of the St. Francis Dam took more than 400 lives in the Santa Clara River Valley during the early morning hours of March 13, 1928. Designed and built under the authority of William Mulholland, a legendary engineer in the history of Los Angeles, the dam incorporated more than 100,000 cubic yards of concrete into its massive structure. Left: A huge piece of concrete that toppled from the center/east section of the dam dwarfs human investigators.

Henry E. Huntington Library, Courtney Collection

NEAR RIGHT: *Salvage efforts underway near the remains of the Southern California Edison Company camp near Kemp, about fifteen miles downstream from the dam. Eighty-four men sleeping at the camp died when the flood from St. Francis Reservoir smashed through at 1:20 am on March 13.*
DC JACKSON/DAMHISTORY.COM

CENTER: *Effect of the flood on a Santa Paula residence over thirty-five miles downstream from the dam site. The exact number of victims killed during the flood remains unknown but, according to Charles Outland, "any death figure over 450 or under 400 is unrealistic."*
DC JACKSON/DAMHISTORY.COM

FAR RIGHT: *Remains of the Willard Bridge that crossed the Santa Clara River at Santa Paula. While the surge of water receded dramatically after about twenty minutes, at peak flow it extended for a distance of more than a half mile across the valley floor.*
DC JACKSON/DAMHISTORY.COM

ago in 1963 and then briefly revised and expanded in 1977, Outland's account remains the essential overall history of the tragedy. Arriving later to the topic was J. David Rogers, a geologist whose particular interest was in the mechanics of the dam failure and the physical causes of the collapse. His findings were set out in two articles, one published in 1992 and the other in 1995, and expanded upon in an interview published in 1997 and another longer interview published on the Internet in 2000 and also circulated in a CD format.[4]

Though the purposes and emphases of Outland and Rogers differed, their works generally reinforced one another's findings. The views of the two were not always in harmony, however, and that was nowhere more clear than in their attitudes toward Mulholland's role in the St. Francis disaster. On this point, Outland was straightforward and adamant: "In the final analysis, . . . the responsibility was his alone." Rogers was neither so unequivocal nor direct in his judgment, but he nonetheless believed that blame was misdirected. In the matter of the dam's collapse, the culprit was not Mulholland, he insisted, but excusable ignorance. Put another way, the problem lay not with Mulholland but with a "civil engineering community" allegedly lacking the geological and technical knowledge—specifically, lacking "a modern appreciation of uplift theory"—to build a safe dam in San Francisquito Canyon.[5] In adopting this perspective, Rogers pointedly defends Mulholland as a "rugged individualist" and avers that "we should be so lucky as to have any men with just half his character, integrity, imagination and leadership today."[6] In the last several years, Rogers's view of Mulholland's responsibility (or lack thereof) for the disaster has found its way into press coverage and public consciousness.

The *Los Angeles Times* greeted the publication of Rogers's first article in 1992 with the headline: "The Night the Dam Broke: Geological Look 64 Years Later Clears Mulholland and His Engineering Marvel in Tragedy That Killed 450." A year later Margaret Leslie Davis's *Rivers in the*

Desert: William Mulholland and the Inventing of Los Angeles described Rogers's "assessment" as an "exoneration" of Mulholland. So, too, did Ruth Pitman's *Roadside History of California* (1995): "Geological knowledge at the time the dam site was selected simply wasn't sophisticated enough. . . . Thus, more than fifty years after his death, Mulholland was exonerated." In essential agreement was Kim Weir's *Southern California Handbook* (1998): "The general condemnation of William Mulholland for the St. Francis Dam disaster went unchallenged until 1992" when Rogers "largely exonerated him." Also picking up on the seeming significance of Rogers's pronouncements was Catherine Mulholland—granddaughter of William Mulholland—whose biography, *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles* (2000), heralded Rogers as "masterfully" analyzing the disaster and credits him for "the apparent vindication of Mulholland."[7]

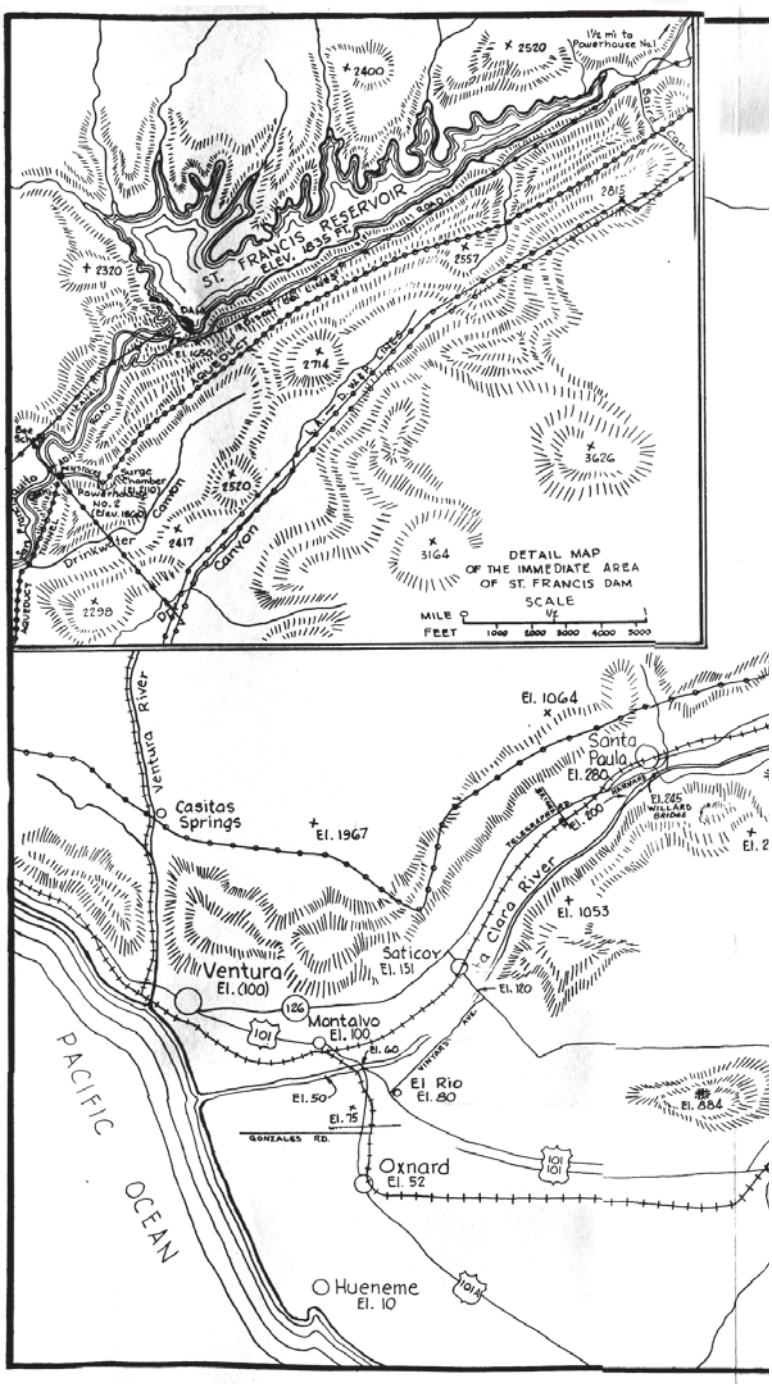
In this article, we do not offer a conventional recounting of the origins and aftermath of the disaster. Rather, we analyze key investigations into the cause of the collapse and relate these inquiries to those of Charles Outland in the 1960s and J. David Rogers in the 1990s, especially as they concern Mulholland's ostensible responsibility for the tragedy. In seeking to discern where such responsibility most reasonably resides, we also consider Mulholland's dambuilding practices in light of California's 1917 dam-safety law and within the context of professional civil engineering knowledge and norms of his day. For reasons suggested by Outland and because of additional evidence set out in this essay, we arrive at the judgment that William Mulholland was responsible for the St. Francis Dam failure.

PRELUDE TO DISASTER

The Los Angeles Aqueduct descends more than 2,500 feet from the intake dam near Independence to its entry into the San Fernando Valley at Sylmar. The biggest part of that drop comes when the aqueduct leaves Fairmount Reservoir and pierces the Sierra Madre escarpment separating the western Mojave Desert (or Antelope Valley) from coastal southern California. The five-mile-long

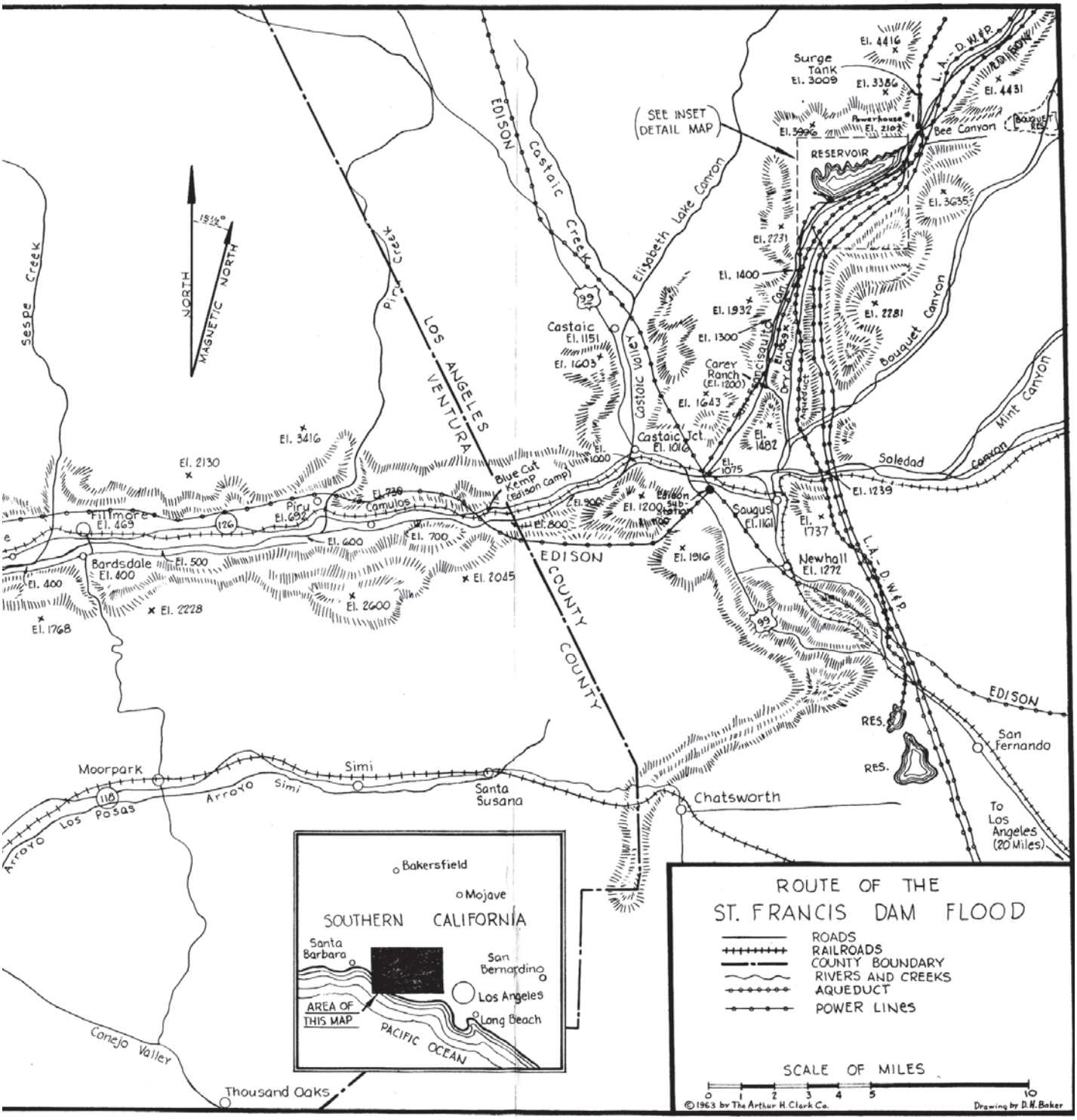
The St. Francis Dam lay in remote northwestern Los Angeles County (at upper right), but much of the land inundated by the flood was in Ventura County (center, lower left). Floodwaters surged southward down San Francisquito Creek for about ten miles before joining the Santa Clara River near Saugus. The torrent then churned west for over forty miles, passing through the heart of the Santa Clara Valley before reaching the Pacific Ocean just south of Ventura. Today, motorists on Interstate 5 (Golden State Freeway) cross the flood path just a short distance northeast of Magic Mountain theme park. By driving west from I-5 on State Route 126 it is possible to parallel the flood path that ravaged the farming community of Bardsdale and inundated low-lying areas of Fillmore and Santa Paula. Today, the Santa Clara Valley citrus groves that were laid to waste have long since been restored, but memories of "The Flood" remain strong among valley residents.

Reprinted with permission from Charles Outland, *Man-Made Disaster: The Story of St. Francis Dam* (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark Col, 1977).



Above: *More than 75 years after the St. Francis flood swept through the Santa Clara Valley, the effects of the disaster on the landscape are not always easy to discern. As shown in this recent photograph, however, sharp-eyed observers traveling along San Francisquito Canyon Road can still see large concrete chunks that broke off the dam during the collapse.*

DC Jackson


ROUTE OF THE
ST. FRANCIS DAM FLOOD
ROADS
RAILROADS
COUNTY BOUNDARY
RIVERS AND CREEKS
AQUEDUCT
POWER LINES
SCALE OF MILES
0 1 2 3 4 5 10
© 1963 by The Arthur H. Clark Co.
Drawing by D.N. Baker
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Bakersfield
Mojave
Santa Barbara
San Bernardino
Los Angeles
Long Beach
AREA OF THIS MAP
PACIFIC OCEAN
SEE INSET DETAIL MAP
Surge Tank El. 3009
Powerhouse El. 2103
Bee Canyon
RESERVOIR
Bouquet Canyon
Elizabeth Lake Canyon
Castaic Creek
Castaic Valley
Castaic El. 1151
Castaic Jct. El. 1016
Carey Ranch (El. 1200)
Blue Cut Kemp (Edison Camp)
Edison Sub-station
Saugus El. 1161
Newhall El. 1272
Soledad Canyon
Mint Canyon
LOS ANGELES VENTURA COUNTY
EDISON
Sespe Creek
Piru Creek
Fillmore El. 469
Piru El. 692
Camulos
Bardsdale El. 600
Moorpark
Simi
Arroyo Simi
Arroyo Los Posas
Santa Susana
Chatsworth
San Fernando
To Los Angeles (20 Miles)
Conejo Valley
Thousand Oaks
RES.
NORTH
MAGNETIC NORTH

Elizabeth Tunnel draws water from Fairmount Reservoir and feeds into San Francisquito Power Plant No. 1. From there, water flows south through a six-mile-long tunnel in the east canyon wall before dropping down to Power Plant No. 2 along the banks of San Francisquito Creek (from there, other tunnels extend the aqueduct to Sylmar about twenty miles farther south). About one and a half miles upstream from Power Plant No. 2 lies a broad, open area bounded by a narrow gorge at the southern end. This gorge and the flat expanse of land above it—which had been used by Mulholland for an aqueduct construction camp between 1908 and 1913—comprised the site of the St. Francis Dam and Reservoir.

Mulholland's original plan for the aqueduct system did not include a reservoir at the St. Francis site.[8] But by 1922, with the city population three times larger than when the aqueduct was proposed and expected to be four times greater within a year, Mulholland decided that prudence called for additional water storage facilities. In the following year he developed plans for a reservoir and dam in San Francisquito Canyon. He selected the locale because of its proximity to the aqueduct right-of-way and because it would "provide emergency water supply against low years and against failure of the Owens River Aqueduct." He also claimed the proposed reservoir would enable the capture of "surplus water of the aqueduct used for power during the winter months" that was then "wasted into the Santa Clara and Los Angeles Rivers."[9] The St. Francis site was certainly suitable for storing a large quantity of water but, in other ways, the location was less than ideal. Specifically, water released into the reservoir from the aqueduct below Power Plant No. 1 could not subsequently be used to generate electricity at San Francisquito Power Plant No. 2. Another shortcoming was evidenced in the city's 1911 annual report on the aqueduct's construction, which described the rock along the eastern side of San Francisquito Canyon as "exceedingly rough, and the dip and strike of the slate [schist] such as to threaten slips."[10] Joseph B. Lippincott, Mulholland's chief assistant engineer during aqueduct construction,

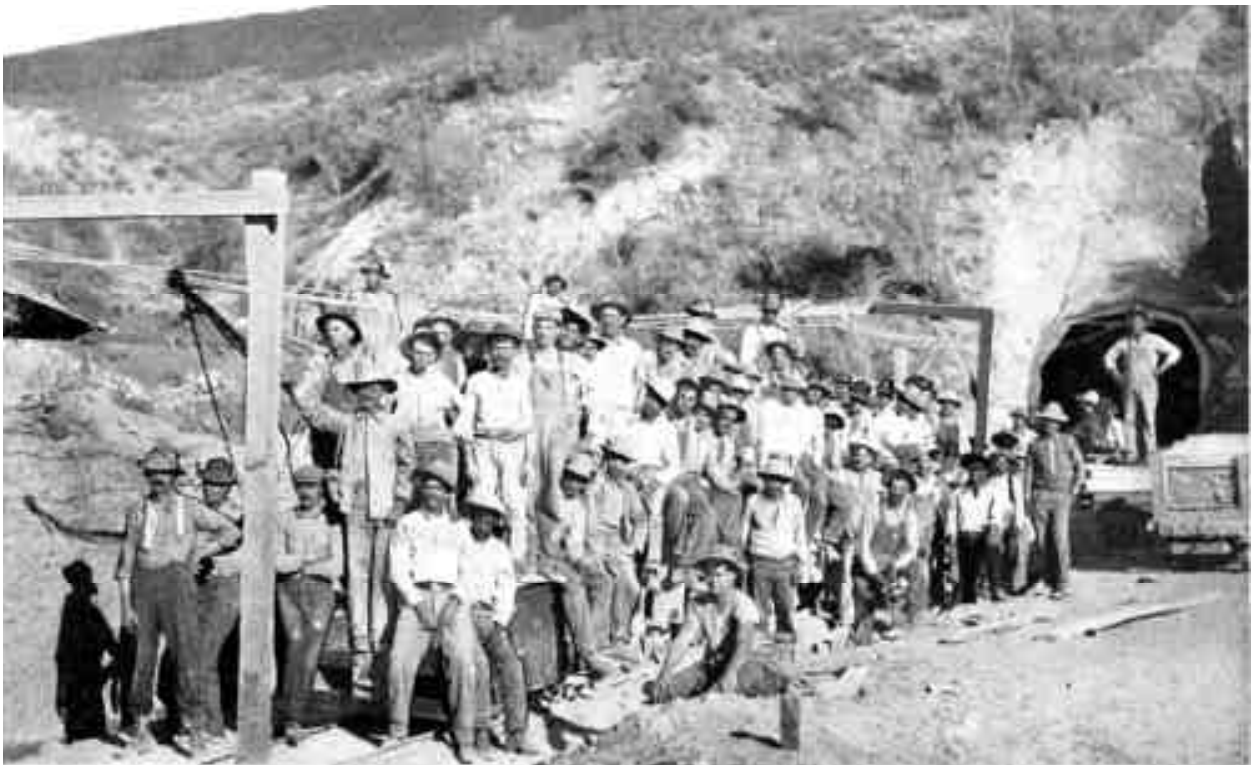
LEFT: *Extending across the barren expanse of the western Mojave Desert, the aqueduct carries water over 200 miles from the Owens River Valley to the city. This section is the Soledad siphon near Saugus, about ten miles south of San Francisquito Canyon.* JOSEPH B. LIPPINCOTT COLLECTION, WATER RESOURCES CENTER ARCHIVES

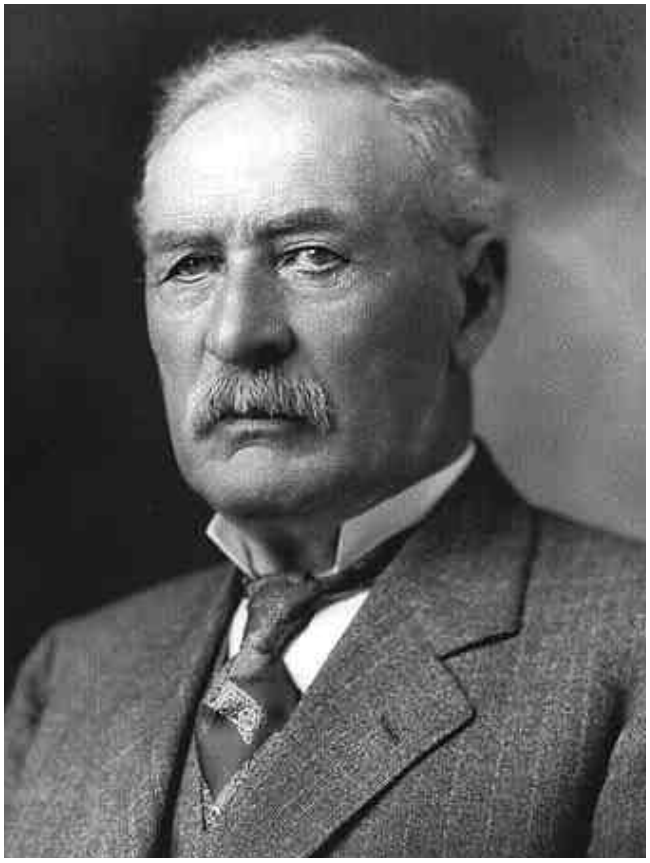
RIGHT: *Workers posed in front of an adit, the entrance to the Los Angeles Aqueduct tunnel, being excavated deep within the east side of San Francisquito Canyon, circa 1911. Mulholland resorted to such expensive tunnel work in the canyon because of fear that the exposed rock on the canyon wall (fractured schist) would "slip" or give way if a "side-hill excavation" were made to accommodate an open cut canal.* JULIAN HINDS COLLECTION, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY

long remembered the difficult geological character of the east canyon ridge and, after acknowledging he had been "intimately connected with the driving of a series of tunnels for our aqueduct through the range of mountains on which the left or east abutment of the dam rested," later declared: "The rock that we encountered was a broken schist and a good deal of it expanded when it came in contact with the air and was what the tunnel men called 'heavy ground.' We had great difficulty in holding this ground [for the aqueduct tunnel] before it was lined with concrete."[11]

While the east abutment's faulty schist would later reverberate through the story of St. Francis Dam, it was the reduction in hydroelectric power capacity that prompted E. F. Scattergood, the city's chief electrical engineer, to criticize use of the St. Francis site for a major reservoir.[12] Scattergood's objections, however, held no sway over the authority allowed Mulholland by city political leaders to build the dam where and how he saw fit. Reinforcing Mulholland's control over the project was California's 1917 dam-safety law, which exempted municipalities from supervision by the State Engineer when building dams. Thus, when Mulholland chose to build, and subsequently enlarge, a concrete gravity dam at the St. Francis site, he could do so without substantive review by anyone outside his immediate control.[13]

Mulholland attained this authority after inauspicious beginnings. He arrived in Los Angeles as a twenty-two-year-old poor Irish immigrant in 1877. After a failed venture to find gold in Arizona, he returned to Los Angeles the following year and worked as a laborer tending ditches for the Los Angeles City Water Company. The president of the company rode by Mulholland's work site one day, noticed his single-minded attention to his job, and asked him his name and what he was doing. "It's none of your damned business!" growled Mulholland. Instead of responding with anger, the president rewarded him for his dedication by promoting him to foreman—an advancement that led to many others, including eventually superintendent and chief engineer. Unlike many of his peers such as Arthur Powell





Photograph of William Mulholland, circa 1920, a few years after completion of the Los Angeles Aqueduct, which brought him international fame as chief engineer in charge of design and construction.
Los Angeles Public Library

Davis, John Freeman, and Charles E. Grunsky, who also attained prominence as civil and hydraulic engineers, Mulholland possessed no university training and was essentially self-taught, deriving the core of his hydraulic-engineering knowledge from on-the-job experience. He had a quick mind, a remarkable memory, and, apparently for much of his early career, an appetite to supplement his extensive practical work with knowledge gleaned from technical books and articles covering engineering and geology.[14]

Mulholland had the respect of his superiors from the outset of his tenure as superintendent of the Los Angeles water system. Over the years he reported to a series of supervisory groups whose names and responsibilities changed but whose managerial authority was embedded in the city charter. Following Los Angeles's acquisition in 1902 of the privately owned distribution system and the hiring of Mulholland to continue as superintendent, the Board of Water Commissioners became his boss; then in 1911 the Board of Public Service Commissioners, created in anticipation of there being both a water and power system, succeeded to that role; fourteen years later—while construction of St. Francis Dam was underway—authority passed to the newly formed Board of Water and Power Commissioners.[15]

Mulholland's multiple superiors notwithstanding, he was in control. Practical considerations played a role, and paramount among them was the knowledge he brought to his job. When the city bought out the privately owned Los Angeles Water Company, little about the system and its operation existed on paper. Mulholland compensated for the omission by committing to memory the complex distribution system of pumps, ditches, hydrants, pipes, and valves. When challenged during the purchase negotiations, Mulholland called for a map and proceeded to identify details about the pipes in every city street. Those details were then corroborated by excavations. This impressive show of knowledge and bravado insured his continuation as superintendent—a superintendent whose knowledge automatically translated into power.[16]

Reinforcing Mulholland's control was the absence among the commissioners of engineers with training and practical expertise in the building of water-supply systems. The commissioners tended to be lawyers, businessmen, doctors, investors in real estate, and the like—"citizens [with] . . . part-time responsibilities," as Vincent Ostrom has noted, and unable to "undertake . . . [or] even assume the initiative in the formulation of policies."[17] Put simply, none of the commissioners possessed the credentials or knowledge to challenge Mulholland even if one of them had sought to do so—which none ever did. Their attitudes were epitomized by R. F. Del Valle, an attorney who served on the Board of Public Service Commissioners and later chaired the Board of Water and Power Commissioners. "Mr. Mulholland," observed Del Valle shortly after the St. Francis failure, "has had charge of the department ever since its inception. . . . During that time he conceived the construction of the aqueduct, built it, has built nineteen dams for the department, and during that whole time, the board has found that he has used the proper judgment, has been competent, efficient in every manner, and therefore the matter . . . as to whom he should consult or what he should do in detail has been left entirely to his judgment, because the board has had the utmost confidence, and has now, in his ability as an engineer."[18]

Members of his staff also ardently admired Mulholland. "The Chief was always resourceful, fearless, and never flustered in a pinch," recalled George Read, head of the water meter division and a member of the city water department's "old guard." Read further gushed, "I know that in being associated with him I learned to think more deeply, to appreciate more fully the wonders of nature, and to see the humorous side of life." Such admiration extended beyond his immediate coterie to the local citizenry. A reporter captured the public's infatuation and faith in Mulholland's judgment with an exaggerated boast: "If Bill Mulholland should say that he is lining the [Owens Valley] aqueduct with green cheese because green cheese is better than concrete, this town would not only believe the guff but take the oath that it was so."[19]

Mulholland had his critics, of course, with Owens Valley residents at the head of any list, but most people of Los Angeles likely agreed with engineer W. W. Hurlbut when he declared that "the public at large realizes . . . his untiring efforts in providing the city with the most essential element of its growth—nay, its very life blood." Among his staff, Mulholland's stature was such that, contemporaneously with completion of the St. Francis Dam, Hurlbut could avow in *Western Construction News*: "Since time immemorial every profession, every line of human pursuit, has had its outstanding character, its shining light, its great leader. In the profession of water works engineering there is an outstanding figure, a leader who . . . has proved to be a builder of an empire—an empire of unsurpassed progress in municipal development—William Mulholland." Heady praise, indeed, and praise reflective of a staff little prone to question the wisdom and directives of a larger-than-life (almost super-human) leader.[20]

GRAVITY DAM DESIGN

Still, in choosing the basic design for St. Francis in 1922–1923, the sixty-seven-year-old Mulholland did not prove particularly innovative or technologically adventuresome in opting for a concrete gravity dam. The modern form of such structures originated with French engineers in the 1850s and 1860s who (knowing both the weight of water and the weight of masonry) used mathematical analysis to proportion the dimensions of masonry gravity dams featuring vertical upstream faces. In simplest terms, these designs embodied a basic guiding principle: Place enough material (either stone masonry or concrete) in the dam so that the horizontal water pressure exerted by the reservoir would be insufficient to tip the structure over or push it downstream. This design technique resulted in the development of cross-sectional "profiles" for gravity dams that were triangular in shape and gradually widened in thickness from top to bottom (Note: because the cross-section of masonry gravity dams seemingly mimicked the shape of a

Completed St. Francis Dam and reservoir looking upstream (the east side of the canyon is on the right with the west side on the left). The curved gravity design is similar to that previously used for the Hollywood/Mulholland Dam, but the St. Francis design was built along a longer arc radius than its predecessor. In addition, the St. Francis design featured a long, shallow wing dyke running atop the west abutment ridge that was not required at the Hollywood site. Although the two dams were not identical, Mulholland's staff developed the St. Francis design as a direct outgrowth of the Hollywood/Mulholland design

Henry E. Huntington Library, Courtney Collection

human foot, the profile's "toe" was considered to be at the bottom of the downstream face, while the "heel" was at the bottom of the upstream face.) In terms of stability, it is important to appreciate that the amount of material necessary for safety in a gravity dam is directly proportional to the height of water impounded in the reservoir. Specifically, if a gravity dam is increased in height, its thickness must also be increased in order to maintain stability. To raise the height without widening the base is to court disaster.[21]

By at least the 1890s, engineers began to appreciate that water from a reservoir could also seep under a dam and exert pressure upward. This phenomenon of "uplift" (so-called because it tends to lift the dam upward) destabilizes gravity dams by reducing the structure's "effective weight," thereby lessening its ability to resist horizontal water pressure. Uplift can act through bedrock foundations that, in the abstract, are strong enough to bear the weight of the dam, but are fractured or fissured and thus susceptible to seepage and water saturation.[22] The deleterious effect of uplift upon a gravity dam can be countered in various ways: 1) excavating foundation "cut-off" trenches that reduce the ability of water to seep under the structure; 2) grouting the foundation (which involves pressurized injection of wet mortar into drilled holes), thereby filling underground fissures and impeding subsurface water flow; 3) draining the foundation and the interior of the dam through use of porous pipes, relief wells, and tunnels to remove seepage; 4) increasing the thickness of the dam's profile (and hence its weight) in order to counter the destabilizing effect of water pushing upward.[23]

Although generally amenable to mathematical analysis, concrete gravity dams require enormous quantities of material to insure stability. As a result, they can be quite expensive.[24] Nonetheless, many engineers consider such dams—if built properly—to be reliable structures. Additionally, they present imposing downstream facades, an attribute that engineers and politicians can value because of belief that it symbolically conveys a sense of both safety and civic achievement.[25]

While material suitable for an earth-fill embankment dam—a type which Mulholland had built numerous times before—was not readily available in San Francisquito Canyon, the precise reasoning that led him to choose a concrete curved-gravity structure for the St. Francis Dam remains uncertain.[26] In the period 1922–1923 Mulholland called for designs for two concrete gravity dams, the first for a site in the Hollywood Hills, about four miles from downtown Los Angeles (initially known as Weid Canyon Dam, then Hollywood Dam, and, finally, Mulholland Dam and Hollywood Reservoir), and the second for San Francisquito Canyon (the St. Francis Dam). The plans were similar, since Mullholland instructed that the Hollywood design be adapted to the St. Francis site. Still, no detailed descriptions of these designs were published in the technical press; in particular, our knowledge of the St. Francis Dam is fragmentary.[27]

In accord with protocol established during construction of the Los Angeles aqueduct, it appears that the initial design for the two dams was delegated to an assistant engineer/draftsman or an "office engineer" who reported to Mulholland.[28] At the Los Angeles County Coroner's Inquest that was convened to investigate the collapse of St. Francis Dam, Edgar Bayley, the assistant engineer for Hollywood Dam, described his role in developing a preliminary design ("the cross sectional transfer profile") for that structure.[29] But Bayley explicitly denied having any experience with concrete gravity dams and emphasized Mulholland's commanding role:

> Q. [By the coroner]: How many of this type [concrete gravity] dams have you designed and constructed?
>
> A. [Bayley] I have constructed none, have had nothing to do with the construction of any, except being that the Hollywood Dam complied with the profile we had to work by.
>
> Q. Didn't I understand that you are the man that designed the thing, the Hollywood Dam?
>
> A. No, I just testified that I had to do with

Mulholland Dam in the Hollywood Hills, a few miles west of downtown Los Angeles. Completed in 1924, Mulholland Dam (also identified at times as Weid Canyon Dam or Hollywood Dam) was the first concrete gravity structure built by Los Angeles under William Mulholland's authority. Work on St. Francis Dam commenced soon after completion of Mulholland Dam. Testimony at the coroner's inquest revealed that the design of the latter, with its stepped downstream face, served as a model for St. Francis Dam.

DC Jackson/damhistory.com

the design of the cross section profile of the design, with certain limitations.[30] The dam was designed between Mr. Mulholland and myself. Mr. Mulholland set the radius, picked the site, he picked the abutments. We made one or two little changes upstream to get a radial bond.

Q. Mr. Mulholland visited the site?

A. Picked it, considered it suitable for a dam.

Q. And that would be the place to put a dam, said, "I want you to draw me the plans and specifications for a gravity dam."?

A. No, no specifications were written, it was to be done by the department itself, certain dimensions to follow.[31]

Further underscoring Mulholland's overall authority was William Hurlburt, the office engineer involved with the design of St. Francis Dam.

Q. [By the coroner]: Now who designed the St. Francis Dam? Did you [Hurlbut] design it?

A. I did not.

Q. Did Mr. Mulholland design it?

A. It was designed under his instructions.

Q. Then, am I to understand that Mr. Mulholland designed the St. Francis Dam?

A. It was designed under his instructions.[32]

Not content with Hurlbut's responses, a deputy district attorney took over the questioning and doggedly pursued the nature of the design process, Mulholland's role in it, and the relationship between the designs for the Hollywood and St. Francis dams:

Q. [The deputy district attorney]: Do I get this correct: Is this the information you are trying to give the Coroner: that Mr. Mulholland designed the Hollywood Dam, that is, he said that he wanted a dam over there?

A. [Hurlburt]: He [Mulholland] gave instructions for a [Hollywood] dam to be designed with a gravity type section, according to the best engineering practice and it was assigned to Mr. Bayley to do that.

Q. And Mr. Bayley had prepared the blue prints in accordance with Mr. Mulholland's request for a dam?

A. He prepared studies in connection with that, and, as a result the drawings were made.

Q. And, then, when they wanted the St. Francis Dam, they got out the old drawings of the Hollywood and revamped them under your [Hurlbut's] instructions and sent them up there?

A. They got out the computations and the studies on the Hollywood Dam, and the matter was gone into with Mr. Mulholland and others at that time.[33]

Apparently satisfied, the deputy district attorney and other questioners turned to different issues. But despite a seeming desire to uncover the origins of the St. Francis design, participants in the coroner's inquest failed to investigate a critically important aspect of the dam's history: In what way did the design change during the construction process?

The exact dimensions of the dam built at St. Francis are now difficult to ascertain because of changes made during construction and because the precise nature of these changes was never reliably documented. In the wake of the collapse,

FACING PAGE: *Looking west across partially completed St. Francis Dam in July 1925. Buckets of wet concrete were hoisted up the wooden tower (center left) and then dumped into the tops of lengthy chutes. The chutes carried the concrete down to the specific part of the dam where construction was underway. This view illustrates that the structure was built as a monolith rather than —as was done with many other large gravity dams of the era—in discrete vertical sections separated by "expansion joints" spaced approximately fifty feet apart. The view documents the absence of drainage pipes along the length of the upstream face. And it reveals that only minimal excavation of the abutment foundations was carried out prior to the pouring of concrete.*

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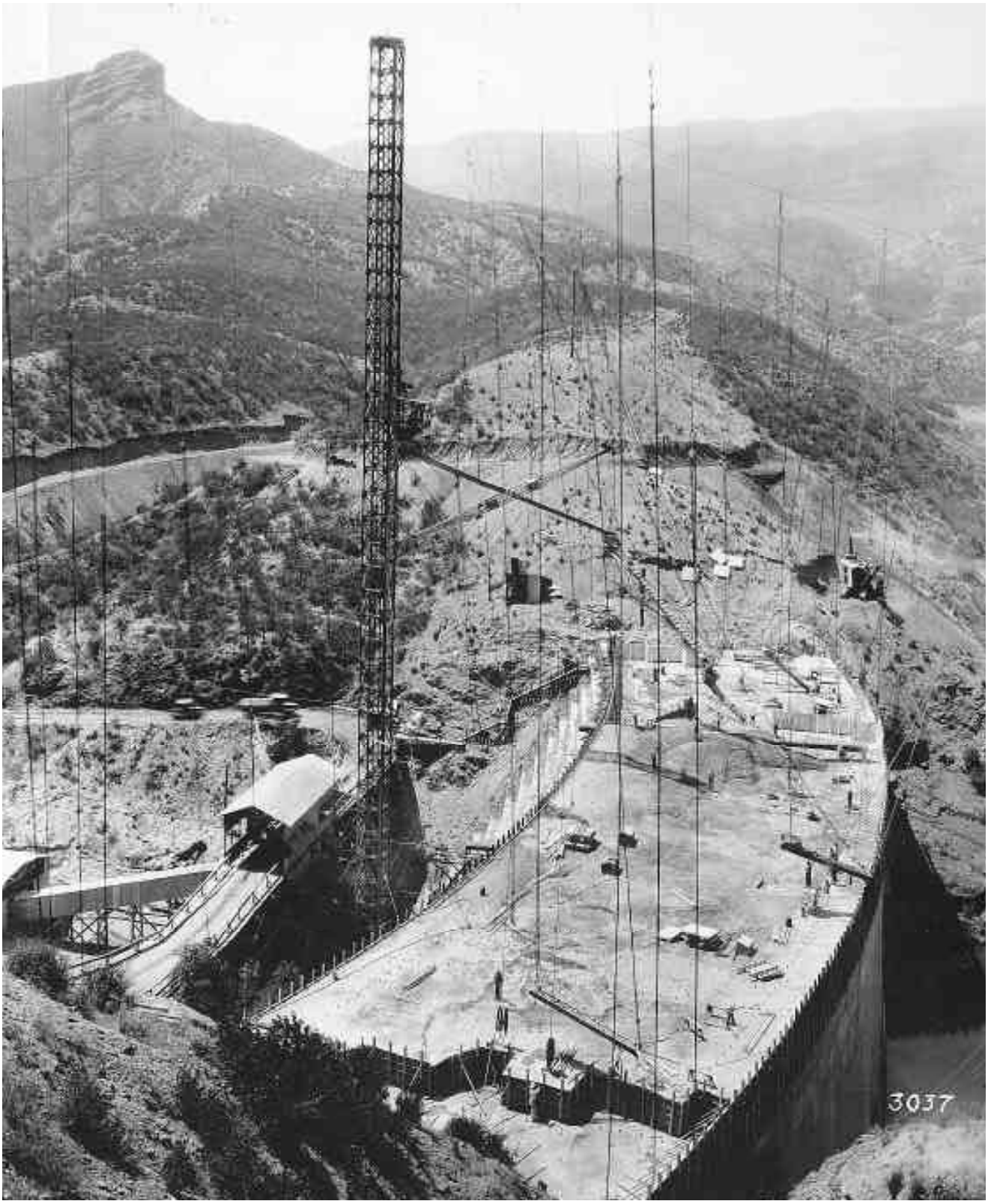
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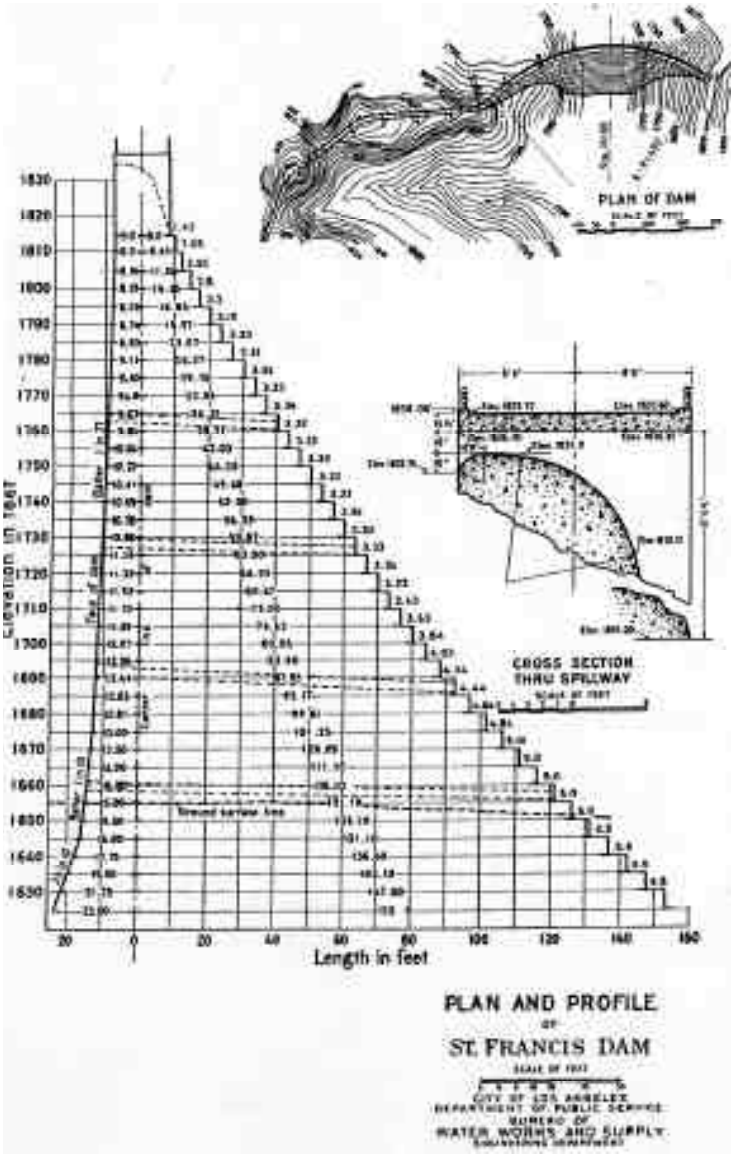

ABOVE: *The "official" cross-sectional profile of St. Francis Dam as publicized by the Los Angeles Bureau of Water Works and Supply after the failure. Charles Outland's later comparison of this drawing with construction photos revealed that a significant portion of the dam's downstream "toe" had been omitted during construction, thus exacerbating the instability of the structure.*
REPORT, GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION, PLATE 4

Mulholland and his staff distributed a drawing indicating a maximum height of 205 feet (extending from the deepest foundations at 1,630 feet above sea level to 1,835 feet at the spillway crest) and a maximum base width of 175 feet (this contrasted with a published report in 1926 indicating a maximum thickness of 169 feet).[34] A commission appointed by the California governor to investigate the disaster published this drawing in its report. For many years it was accepted as accurately documenting what would have been a very amply proportioned cross-section for the design. However, Charles Outland's subsequent research in the early 1960s revealed that the dam was significantly thinner at the base than the official drawing indicated.

In studying construction photographs, Outland discovered that the dam's base was about twenty feet less thick than indicated in the supposed "as-built" drawings. Moreover, in analyzing a series of pronouncements made by the city describing the size of the reservoir during the years 1923–1925, he discerned that the city had gradually increased the reservoir size. Specifically, in July 1923 the city publicized the size at 30,000 acre-feet, and a year later—shortly before concrete was poured—at 32,000 acre-feet. Then in March 1925 the reservoir capacity was reported

FACING PAGE, TOP: *Looking toward the east abutment, summer 1925. In the left-center background, note the shallow excavation extending into the abutment and the lack of a cutoff trench near the upstream face.*
HENRY E. HUNTINGTON LIBRARY, COURTNEY COLLECTION

FACING PAGE, BOTTOM: *Spring 1927 view looking north across the almost-filled St. Francis Reservoir. This is a rare surviving image that focuses on the immense body of water impounded behind the dam. While the high-heeled model brought to the dam to pose for the Automobile Club of Southern California's photographer may appear out of place in such a prosaic setting, the photograph does help highlight how water stored in the reservoir was destined not to irrigate lemon groves in the Santa Clara Valley but, rather, to nourish the burgeoning municipality of Los Angeles.*
AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

as 38,000 acre-feet (equivalent to about 11 billion gallons). In the abstract, raising the dam's height was not necessarily dangerous, but to fully assure safety, the base width would also need to be increased. The photographic evidence revealed that such a compensating increase had not occurred and that, in Outland's words, "the dam had been born with a stub toe."[35] Exactly what transpired on-site during construction of the dam will never be known, but little doubt exists that Mulholland chose to increase the reservoir capacity in a way that did not retain the dam's original height-to-width ratio. In so doing, he reduced the dam's stability and made it more vulnerable to the effect of uplift.

During construction, Mulholland incorporated few features into the design that would mitigate the effect of uplift. Across a distance of about 120 feet in the center of the dam site, he placed ten drainage wells. But for the remainder of the 600-foot long main section of the dam he did not grout the foundation, excavate a cut-off trench, or install a drainage system up the sides of the canyon walls. In concert with the raised height of the design, these omissions would prove to be fatal flaws.

Clearing of the dam site began in the fall of 1923, but the first concrete was not poured until August 1924. Construction proceeded for close to two years until the dam topped out in May 1926. After completion, the reservoir was not immediately filled, although it did come to within three feet of the spillway in May 1927. Nine months later, in February 1928, the water level came to within a foot of the spillway and, on March 7, 1928, the reservoir reached three inches below the spillway crest. It stayed at that elevation until late in the evening of March 12.[36] Then disaster struck.

THE INVESTIGATORS

The collapse of St. Francis Dam prompted the creation of several panels of engineers and geologists (sponsored by the California governor, the Los Angeles County district attorney, the Los Angeles County coroner, and the Los Angeles City Council, among others) to investigate the

cause of the disaster.[37] Although the panels were not in unanimous agreement on all points, most quickly—perhaps hastily would be a better term—concluded that the collapse began in the red sandstone conglomerate beneath the western abutment. A new leak on the west abutment (others had been noted earlier) had been discovered on the morning of the day when the dam collapsed. As a result, Mulholland visited the dam less than eighteen hours before the collapse, but pronounced the leak not dangerous and felt no need to warn communities downstream of possible problems.[38]

Following the disaster, the governor's commission—responsible for a widely distributed report—and most other investigators perceived this new leak as comprising the key to understanding the collapse. The commission, it should be noted, believed that "the foundation under the entire dam left very much to be desired," but the west end emerged as the culprit. "The west end," stated the governor's commission, "was founded upon a reddish conglomerate which, even when dry, was of decidedly inferior strength and which, when wet[,] became so soft that most of it lost almost all rock characteristics." The softening of this "reddish conglomerate" undermined the west side. "The rush of water released by failure of the west end caused a heavy scour against the easterly canyon wall . . . and caused the failure of that part of the structure." There then "quickly followed . . . the collapse of large sections of the dam." The committee engaged by the city council concurred in ascribing the cause of the collapse to "defective foundations," with the failure "apparently" beginning in the "red conglomerate," but nonetheless acknowledged that "the sequence of failure is uncertain."[39]

The governor's commission and the City Council committee reached their conclusions within a week after initiating study of the failure (and less than two weeks after the collapse). Such haste produced no doubts. "With such a formation [the red conglomerate]," concluded the governor's commission, "the ultimate failure of this dam was inevitable, unless water could have been kept from reaching the foundation. Inspection galleries, pressure grouting, drainage wells and deep cut-off walls are commonly used to prevent or remove percolation, but it is improbable that any or all of these devices would have been adequately effective, though they would have ameliorated the conditions and postponed the final failure." As far as the commission was concerned, the poor quality of the foundation material on the west side of the canyon (and "defective foundations" generally) rendered all other issues—including uplift—irrelevant.[40]

On March 21, 1928, Los Angeles County convened a public coroner's inquest into the tragedy in which sixty-six people testified. Most appeared only once but some (including Mulholland) were recalled several times. On April 12 the coroner's jury issued its judgment on the dam's collapse.[41]

"After carefully weighing all the evidence," concluded the jurors, the dam failed for two fundamental reasons: "an error in engineering judgment" and "an error in regard to fundamental policy relating to public safety." The first error consisted of building the dam on defective "rock formations." Compounding these foundation problems was a dam "design . . . not suited to [the] inferior foundation conditions"—a design that, among other flaws, did not carry the dam "far enough into the bedrock" and that lacked precautions against uplift, such as "cutoff walls," "pressure grouting of the bedrock," and "inspection tunnels with drainage pipes" (except for "the center section"). The "responsibility" for these lapses in engineering judgment, stated the jurors, "rests upon the Bureau of Water Works and Supply, and the Chief Engineer thereof."[42] As for the error in public policy, the jurors laid that at the feet of "those to whom the Chief Engineer is subservient"—"the Department of Water and Power Commissioners, the legislative bodies of city and state, and to the public at large." If these groups had insisted on "proper safeguards . . . making it impossible for excessive responsibility to be delegated to or assumed by any one individual in matters involving great menaces to

public safety, it is unlikely that the engineering error would have escaped detection and produced a great disaster."[43]

In their verdict, the jurors opined that the dam likely collapsed first on the red conglomerate/west side because a "preponderance of expert opinion favors the conclusion." Nonetheless, they expressed ambivalence about this judgment—they had heard testimony that the schist forming the east abutment was "a weak material, badly shattered, very susceptible to seepage of water, and to slippage along the planes of cleavage"—and hesitated to conclude that they fully understood "the exact sequence" of when and how the collapse occurred.[44]

A key reason for the jurors' ambivalence can be traced to the testimony of one of the last witnesses called before them. Halbert P. Gillette, president and editor of the journal *Water Works*, was decidedly unimpressed with reasoning that blamed the dam's failure on the softened red conglomerate at the western abutment—and he forcefully testified at the coroner's inquest on that point.[45] Soon after the inquest's conclusion he publicly aired his critique of the three seemingly official investigating committees—the governor's commission, the Los Angeles City Council committee, and the Los Angeles district attorney's committee. Declining to criticize Mulholland or the dam design, Gillette lambasted the investigating teams for hasty and faulty research and for concluding that the dam failed first on the west side. He also found no evidence to support the rumor of an explosion bringing the dam down (growing out of earlier dynamitings of the Los Angeles Aqueduct), but he did not discount the possibility of an earthquake playing a role.[46] Based upon his own field work and research (which convinced him that the red conglomerate was hardly as weak as publicly portrayed), he analyzed how the dam's fragments were distributed downstream and also analyzed data from triangulation surveys. Averring that "the schist on the east bank dips into the canyon in such a way that a slide could occur; and no one denies that slides of the schist did occur on such a scale as to destroy the east side of the dam," he convincingly demonstrated that the mechanics of an east abutment/first collapse sequence were the only ones to make sense of post-failure conditions at the site.[47]

Support for Gillette's contention that the schist on the east side failed first came from Charles H. Lee, a San Francisco hydraulic engineer retained as a consultant by the Los Angeles Bureau of Power and Light. In public lectures and an article published in June 1928 in *Western Construction News*, Lee concluded that "the immediate cause of failure" was "a slide at the east abutment." Unlike Gillette, however, he claimed that the subsequent collapse of the west abutment was "quite possibl[y] . . . a contributing . . . cause of failure." He also noted the possibility that these actions were accompanied by "uplift beneath the dam . . . being sufficient to produce cracking and failure." Lee dismissed with no comment the likelihood of an explosion or earthquake bringing down the dam.[48]

The most insightful and persuasive investigative reports on the mechanics of the St. Francis Dam collapse came from civil engineers Carl E. Grunsky and his son E. L. Grunsky and Stanford University geologist Bailey Willis. The elder Grunsky had gained prominence serving as the first San Francisco city engineer, a member of the Panama Canal Commission, a consulting engineer for the U.S. Reclamation Service, and in 1922 as president of the American Society of Civil Engineers. He also studied water-supply issues on behalf of farmers along the Santa Clara River (the major conduit for floodwaters coursing from the collapsed St. Francis Dam). His son, E. L. Grunsky, after acquiring an engineering education, worked with his father as a consulting engineer. Bailey Willis, with degrees in mining and civil engineering as well as "geological studies . . . directed primarily to the mechanical problems of rock structures," had accumulated a half century of engineering and geological experience in the United States and South America, including service as a geologist with the U.S.

Geological Survey and, most recently, as a professor of geology at Stanford University. Such qualifications (bolstered by the Santa Clara Water Conservancy District's existing professional relationship with Carl Grunsky) prompted the district to hire the Grunskys and Willis to investigate the dam collapse.[49]

Their investigations culminated in two reports (one by the Grunskys and the other by Willis) completed in April 1928. Willis's "conclusions and our own," observed Carl Grunsky, "were reached independently" and "are in substantial agreement." Both reports were subsequently published in *Western Construction News*, the Grunskys' in May 1928 and Willis's a month later.[50] In retrospect, the Grunskys and Willis

TOP: *Construction view published by the Governor's Commission highlighting the fractured "schist" forming the east canyon wall. The dam's up-stream face is to the left, and the lack of a cut-off trench to help "key" the structure into the foundation is clearly evident. Moreover, no drainage pipes or wells were placed in this part of the structure. The wooden panels on the left comprise the "formwork" that held the wet concrete in place as it hardened.*
REPORT GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION, P. 47

LEFT: *Looking east across the dam site toward the east canyon wall, location of a huge landslide. The piece of the dam shown on page 8 appears in the foreground. Engineer Carl Grunsky and his son quickly perceived that the collapse was initiated at the east end of the dam and published their findings in May 1928 in* Western Construction News. *Halbert P. Gillette also recognized the logical impossibilities of the "west side first" failure theory and wrote a compelling critique published in* Water Works *in May 1928.*
DC JACKSON/DAMHISTORY.COM

demonstrated greater technical knowledge of the dam site and possessed keener analytical skills than any of the other investigators. Their efforts led to the identification of four major factors that, in combination, led to the disaster:

1) ***Unsuitability of the Foundation***: Foundations on both sides of the dam were deemed unsuitable, "but the critical situation developed more rapidly in the east abutment" where "the schist is . . . traversed by innumerable minute fissures, into which water would intrude under pressure and by capillary action."

2) ***Old Landslide***: The "east abutment was located on . . . the end of an old landslide."

3) ***Uplift and Collapse***: "When it [the old landslide] had become soaked by the water standing in the reservoir against its lower portion, it became active and moved." That movement resulted from "a great hydrostatic force under its [the dam's] foundation surface from end to end," which triggered the collapse of the east abutment.

4) ***Inadequate Design***: "The old slide against which the dam rested at the east . . . offered only insecure support to the dam, and this was rendered more precarious by the [dam builders'] adoption of a design which did not include adequate foundation drainage."[51]

Willis, as the geologist on this investigative team, most likely discovered the "old slide" (his report discussed it at the greater length and the Grunskys

In the aftermath of the disaster, geologist Bailey Willis recognized the existence of an "old slide" of schist that was reactivated by water seeping into the east canyon wall. In text superimposed over this photograph published in Western Construction News, *Willis called specific attention to the "outline of the old slide."*

Western Construction News, June 25, 1928

drew liberally on that discussion as well as on his analysis of the schist in their report). On the other hand, the Grunskys, as civil engineers, took the lead in describing the role played by "uplift," a condition of great concern to prudent dam builders of the era.

The Grunskys expressed surprise that "no measures . . . have been noted, which would have reduced percolation into the hillside material under the dam." They also emphasized precautions that could have been implemented to combat uplift, such as "thorough hillside and foundation drainage . . . fortified with deep cut-off walls along or near the up-stream face." As a result, "at a full reservoir there was a great hydrostatic force under its [the dam's] foundation surface from end to end, relieved but slightly by a few weep-holes [located in the center of the canyon]. This hydrostatic pressure, the uplifting force of the swelling red sandstone at the west, and the horizontal and uplifting pressure of the slide at the east, lifted the dam . . . [and] broke it from its foundation."[52]

In early June 1928, the reports of the Grunskys and Willis were synopsized in the nationally dis-

The Hoover (Boulder) Dam shortly after completion in the mid-1930s. Built under the authority of the federal Boulder Canyon Project Act (aka "The Swing-Johnson Bill"). A key benefactor of the proposed dam would be the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, a regional authority subordinate at the time to the political will of Los Angeles. Mulholland played an essential role in designing the district's Colorado River Aqueduct that would depend upon the Hoover (Boulder) Dam for water storage and for hydroelectric power (necessary to operate the system's huge pumps). After a long struggle, proponents of the Boulder Canyon Project Bill anticipated that it would be enacted by Congress in the spring of 1928. The collapse of St. Francis Dam came at a very inopportune time for these proponents and congressional approval of the project did not come until December 1928, a month after Mulholland resigned from the city's Bureau of Water Works and Supply.

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tributed *Engineering News-Record* under the headline "Sixth Report on St. Francis Dam Offers New Theories." This synopsis noted how the Grunksys had tied the failure of the east abutment to uplift and included Willis's description of the "old slide" on the "lower portion" of that abutment which "became active and moved." Except for an editorial article accompanying the synopsis that attempted unsuccessfully to reconcile the Grunskys/Willis reports with the investigative teams that posited a "red conglomerate/west side" failure mode, little public discussion or debate about the Grunskys/Willis findings subsequently appeared in the engineering press. Instead, the views of the governor's commission and others that ascribed the failure to the western abutment's conglomerate—and more generally to "defective foundations"—largely predominated prior to publication of Outland's book.[53] All of which raises the intriguing question: "Why?"

Given the explanatory power of the east side/uplift failure hypothesis, why did the investigating committees that quickly posited a "west side first" collapse theory decline to reconcile such findings with the analysis of the Grunskys, Willis, Gillette, and Lee? Outland insightfully answered such a question when he linked the St. Francis failure to the Boulder Canyon Project (or Swing-Johnson) Bill that was due for a vote in Congress in the spring of 1928. As Outland observed: "A worried, water-short southern California looked askance upon a proposed dam that would store seven hundred times more water than the late reservoir in San Francisquito Canyon. If Boulder Dam was to become a reality, this fear would have to be eased and quickly." Congressman Phil Swing, the principal advocate of the dam in Washington, D.C., felt the political heat and counseled the Boulder Dam Association to find ways of advocating the efficacy of high dams "without tying [St. Francis] too closely to [the] Boulder Dam project." And Arizona Governor George W.P. Hunt—a tenacious opponent of Boulder Dam—publicly connected that project with the St. Francis failure. "Governor Hunt knew a good thing when he saw it," observed Outland. "The truth of the matter was that the engineering world had been shaken, far more than it cared to admit, by the sudden catastrophe."[54]

Because of Mulholland's public association with the Boulder Canyon Project—he had testified before Congress in support of Boulder Dam in 1924, had taken a well-publicized trip down the Colorado River in 1925, and had traveled to Washington, D.C., in January 1928 to lobby for the bill—the Bureau of Reclamation had good reason to ease public disquiet concerning the curved gravity dam technology used at St. Francis.[55] Because of its precarious financial situation in the 1920s, the agency had much (besides prestige) riding on congressional approval for the proposed Boulder Dam.[56] Perhaps not coincidently, many engineers in the agency's employ, or closely associated with it as consultants, agreed to help investigate the St. Francis disaster. There was, in particular, A. J. Wiley, chairman of the bureau's Boulder Dam Board of consulting engineers, who served as chairman of the governor's commission and Elwood Mead, bureau commissioner and hence the agency's highest ranking official, who served as chairman of the City Council committee.[57]

The uncertain fate of the Boulder Canyon Project (not resolved until December 1928) most plausibly explains why these engineers—and other proponents of gravity-dam technology—evinced no interest in keeping the St. Francis Dam disaster in the public eye any longer than absolutely necessary. It also explains why they had no interest in modifying their conclusions after the Grunskys, Willis, Gillette, and Lee presented compelling critiques of the "west abutment failed first" theory. Finally, it helps explain why the governor's commission, a mere two weeks after the disaster, took pains to assure the public that "there is nothing in the failure . . . to indicate that the accepted theory of gravity dam design is in error . . . [or that] such a dam may [not] properly be deemed to be among the most durable of all man-made structures."[58]

Newspaper illustration depicting Mulholland's testimony at the Coroner's Inquest.
Henry E. Huntington Library, California Scrapbook No. 8

MULHOLLAND AND THE CORONER'S INQUEST

Though none of the investigative reports exonerated Mulholland, he was publicly hailed in the engineering press as a "big man" for his seeming forthrightness in accepting responsibility at the Los Angeles County coroner's inquest: "Don't blame anybody else, you just fasten it on me. If there is an error of human judgment, I was the human."[59] That acknowledgement did not come without reservations.

"We overlooked something here," Mulholland testified at the coroner's inquest in March 1928, but he never indicated what it might have been. Twice he seemed on the verge of offering an explanation—"I have a very strong opinion myself as to what was the approximate cause of that failure"; "I have a suspicion, and I don't want to divulge it"—but he backed off when invited by the coroner "to tell us." He may have believed that sabotage—similar to the dynamite attacks carried out against the Los Angeles Aqueduct by Owens Valley vigilantes in 1924, 1926, and 1927—caused the collapse. But, aside from a vague reference to the site being "vulnerable against human ag[g]ression" in his coroner's inquest testimony, there is no evidence to directly support such a supposition.[60] Regardless of what Mulholland may have thought to be the cause of the collapse, his granddaughter later insisted that, "in accepting responsibility, he did not thereby consider himself to blame for something that had occurred beyond his power."[61] But "blame," of course, was precisely the word that he applied to himself. A telling commentary on Mulholland's conception of "blame" emerges from the transcript of the coroner's inquest.

Acknowledging no engineering or geological reason for the St. Francis Dam collapse, Mulholland did conjure the possibility of psychic or supernatural forces. He would not build another dam "in the same place," he told the coroner, because it was haunted by a spirit opposed to human violation of the area. "There is a hoodoo on it." "A hoodoo?" asked the surprised coroner. "Yes," replied Mulholland, "it is vulnerable against human ag[g]ression, and I would not build it there." "You don't mean [to say] that because it [the dam] went out on the morning of the 13th?"

"Perhaps that," answered Mulholland, "but that is an additional hazard. I had not thought of that."[62] The coroner's jury quickly dropped the subject, leaving only conjecture as to what Mulholland meant by "a hoodoo" (and "human aggression," for that matter). But clearly the exchange did little to bolster confidence in his scientific or technical judgments.

No less disconcerting was Mulholland's assertion at the inquest that he had secured an outside inspection of the St. Francis Dam project similar to the state supervision mandated by the 1917 dam-safety law. "You had no inspection of the site by any state authority?" asked the coroner. "Yes sir," countered Mulholland, "the State Engineer [Wilbur F. McClure] examined the site, examined it carefully." This prompted a quizzical response from the coroner: "You are not required to have state inspection?" "No sir," replied Mulholland, "not with us, we are not required to." "Why did you call for state inspection when you didn't require it?" asked the coroner. "I am not a strict caviler about the law," responded Mulholland. "I like to comply as far as I can and go over the mark in conformity to the law, recognize there ought to be state inspection of such things, whether it is a municipality or not."[63]

At this point a member of the coroner's jury interrupted with a question that elicited a response which, even on its face, questioned Mulholland's claim that McClure's inspection had gone "over the mark in conformity to the law": "How much time did Mr. McClure spend?" asked the juror. "Didn't spend but half a day," answered Mulholland, "and he saw all there was to see in half a day, because there wasn't much to see." Moreover, in McClure's company "my men went around there, stumbled around there over the country."[64] The coroner intervened: "He didn't make any geological test?" "Don't know what you call it," replied Mulholland, "[he] looked [at the site] as I did, exposed rock . . . . I don't really know if he is a geologist or not." "Did he come at your request," asked the coroner, whose question immediately prompted a juror's follow-up question before Mulholland could respond: "With the specific object of examining the dam?" "Precisely," said Mulholland. "I don't like to be stubborn about things, I wouldn't think of telling him it was none of his business, I did insist it was his business." "Did Mr. McClure see the finished work?" asked the juror. "I think he has," answered Mulholland, "pretty sure he has been down here several times while they were working on it." In the midst of these questions and responses, Mulholland made an admission about his policy on consultants that came closer to the mark. "In general, for the last ten or twelve years, I haven't consulted with anybody, or but very few."[65]

Though Mulholland and his questioners speak as if McClure is alive, he had, in fact, been dead almost two years, having passed away in June 1926. Moreover, Mulholland's remarks leave unclear whether he was actually at the dam site during McClure's visit. His reference to the occasion is remarkably vague: "I think there was some little excavation, and my men went around there, stumbled around there over the country, and never had a word to say about it." Nor does the testimony reveal whether Mulholland ever talked with McClure about his visit.[66] Most importantly, Mulholland's description of McClure's actions offers scant support for any assertion that he had called for a "state inspection" going "over the mark in conformity to the law." Particularly untenable is the notion that the State Engineer's half day visit might constitute a substantive review comparable with those undertaken under formal authority of the 1917 dam-safety law.

For example, consider the review given to Littlerock Dam located only thirty-five miles east of the St. Francis site. This reinforced-concrete multiple-arch dam was built by the Littlerock Creek and Palmdale Irrigation Districts in 1922–1924 and—in stark contrast to the privilege afforded the city of Los Angeles—the farmers in these districts could not build their dam until obtaining explicit approval from the State Engineer. The approval process for the Littlerock Dam stretched over four years, beginning in 1918.

Aerial view looking down on Littlerock Dam in the San Gabriel Mountains of northern Los Angeles County, circa 1930. St. Francis Dam was located only about thirty-five miles to the west, but it was a world away in terms of the scrutiny given to its design and construction by the California State Engineer. Built jointly by the Littlerock Creek Irrigation District and the Palmdale Irrigation District in 1922-1924, the Littlerock Dam received no privilege of exemption from the 1917 dam-safety law. Instead, the design-approval process went on for more than four years before State Engineer Wilbur F. McClure allowed construction to begin.

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During that time State Engineer McClure engaged three outside engineers to review plans with his staff. He also called upon the advice of Joseph B. Lippincott, consulting engineer for the bond house that was to finance construction.[67]

McClure approved the plans for Littlerock Dam in May 1922. The following August his representative visited the site and noted that slight adjustments were being made by the contractor. He quickly reported to McClure that the contractor had been told to "suspend operations . . . until the changed plans were submitted to the State Department of Engineering and Irrigation for approval and action thereon." In addition, the contractor was informed "that the foundation would have to be cleared, viewed, and passed as satisfactory by a representative of the State Engineer before the actual construction of the dam could commence.[68] Two more site visits took place before McClure granted final design approval on November 4, 1922. Thereafter, a representative of the State Engineer visited the site regularly and reported on construction progress. Formal acceptance of the completed Littlerock Dam was made in a letter from McClure to the Littlerock Creek Irrigation District on June 5, 1924.[69]

Clearly, it would be specious to equate a half day's "stumbling around" at the St. Francis site with the authority exercised by the State Engineer over the Littlerock Dam. Mulholland's venture in obfuscation also contrasts sharply with the more forthright testimony given to the coroner by his chief assistant, Harvey Van Norman. "Do you know of any independent geologists or engineers who were called in consultation with regard to the selection of that site?" asked the coroner. "No, I don't," replied Van Norman."[70]

Instead of targeting Mulholland, post-collapse criticism generally focused on a legal system—specifically, the 1917 dam-safety statute—that allowed him to build St. Francis Dam without substantive outside review. Compounding that loophole was Mulholland's heroic stature among Los Angeles authorities who viewed him, in the words of the coroner's jury, as possessing "infallibility in matters of engineering judgment." With enactment of a new California dam-safety law in 1929 that eliminated the municipal exemption and with Mulholland's seeming willingness to accept responsibility for the disaster, the causes of and responsibility for the St. Francis collapse soon passed beyond the realm of overt debate or thoughtful reflection.[71] Things would not change until publication of Outland's book.

OUTLAND AND MULHOLLAND

In 1963 Charles F. Outland's *Man-Made Disaster* brought the tragedy back into the public eye.[72] Neither wild-eyed conspiracy fanatic nor Mulholland-hater, Outland resisted temptation to moralize or render judgment on emotional grounds. Interviewing as many witnesses as he could locate and examining many volumes of published and unpublished materials, he described how the dam came to be built, carefully documented the effect of the flood as it passed through the Santa Clara Valley in the pre-dawn hours of March 13, and analyzed the inquests and investigations that sought to discern the cause of the collapse. While evidence amassed by others, especially Willis and the Grunskys, informed his views, he did not simply parrot their findings.[73] Moreover, unlike the public pronouncements of earlier investigators, he assigned responsibility for its occurrence to more than weak foundations or to a legal system that allowed an individual to design and build a dam without outside review.

Like the Grunskys, Willis, Gillette, and Lee, Outland concluded that the dam collapsed first on the east side. "Ever since completion of the dam," observed Outland, "suspicious eyes had watched a leak on the western abutment, while all the time the real villain lurked seven hundred feet away in the mountain of schist." This was not to say that Outland believed the western abutment was a pillar of stability, for he considered it an "admittedly wet conglomerate" and unsuitable as a dam foundation. The east abutment, however, consisted of faulty schist at the point of contact with the dam and was vulnerable to saturation and the destabilizing effect of uplift.[74] Outland fixated on this schist—the "mountain of schist"—and insisted it was the "real villain."[75]

In actuality, Outland identified two villains—the schist and William Mulholland. Unlike the early investigators who focused on detailing the causes, mechanics, and sequence of the St. Francis Dam failure and said nothing about personal blame, Outland unhesitatingly named Mulholland the key figure in the tragedy: "In the final analysis, . . . the responsibility was his alone."[76] That appraisal in part derived from Outland's discovery of a report sent by Mulholland in 1911 to the Los Angeles Board of Public Works. While seeking a route for the Los Angeles Aqueduct, Mulholland and Lippincott (as noted earlier in this essay) encountered unstable, fractured schist within the east canyon wall of what would become the future site of St. Francis Dam. That discovery prompted a decision to avoid the faulty rock by locating "the [aqueduct] line . . . well back under the mountain" in a tunnel. "No one," stated Outland in *Man-Made Disaster*, "had seriously questioned the stability of the east abutment except the Chief, himself, at the time the aqueduct was being built many years before."[77] While Mulholland took precautions in 1911 to protect the long-term integrity of the aqueduct as it ran the length of San Francisquito Canyon, no comparable caution was evident when he later built the dam. Outland did not speculate on Mulholland's reason for this—and in later years the "Chief" offered no explanation of his own—but there was no doubt in Outland's mind that Mulholland should have been aware of the danger posed by the faulty schist forming the east canyon wall. "Construction photographs," noted Outland, "clearly record the fractural nature of the schist. . . . Unfortunately, it was so badly laminated that when stress was applied parallel to these lines of cleavage, it had little resistance to slippage. The east abutment of the dam possessed the strength of a deck of cards that is pushed obliquely on the table."[78]

An examination of construction photographs also played a critical role in Outland's discovery that "the dam had been born with a stub toe" and featured a base thickness about twenty feet less than indicated in design drawings. However, Outland downplayed this discovery by claiming that "Changes in plans after construction has started are nothing new or unique to the engineering profession [and] unforeseen contingencies often require modifications of the original designs."[79] Had the thickness of the base been properly proportioned in relation to the increased

height, Outland's sanguinity would have been appropriate. A "stub toe" profile for an enlarged gravity dam, however, represented a far different —and much more dangerous—state of affairs. Although Outland did not appreciate the safety implications of the "stub toe" profile, his perceptive comparison of design drawings and construction photographs comprised a very significant finding that speaks directly to the cause of the St. Francis Dam collapse.

ROGERS AND MULHOLLAND

Matters largely rested with Outland's book until 1992 when geologist J. David Rogers published an article in *Engineering Geology Practice in Southern California*. Three years later he reached a wider audience by republishing that paper in the *Southern California Quarterly* in an expanded format but one essentially unchanged in its major arguments. Rogers's findings about the dam's collapse—the unsuitability of the site, the destabilizing effect of uplift acting on the structure, and a failure sequence initiated when water saturation reactivated an "ancient" (Willis had termed it an "old") landslide within the schist of the east abutment—echoed those already documented by the Grunskys and Willis. Given his background as a geologist it is not surprising that Rogers drew special attention to the ancient landslide comprising the site's east abutment. And general readers confronting his analysis might easily infer that such a slide would necessarily render any dam at the site to be unstable. But Rogers actually makes no claim supporting this inference. Instead, his contention—which is essentially what Willis had already reported in 1928—is simply that "the dam failure sequence was brought about by the partial reactivation of the paleomegaslide, within the schist comprising the east abutment."[80]

In a 1997 interview published by the Bureau of Reclamation, Rogers explained: "when ground or rock has slid in a landslide, it dilates or increases in volume [and] that increase in volume sets up a whole bunch of cracks, and water can go through those cracks quite easily." Thus, while the broken schist in the east abutment at St. Francis certainly made Mulholland's gravity dam more susceptible to the effect of uplift, it did not automatically or inevitably precipitate failure. Rogers specifically notes that "we know now there's over 100 major dams in the United States that have also been built against [ancient landslides]" and acknowledges that "they haven't failed yet . . . [because] the thing keeping those dams in place is the inherent redundancies of their design[s]."[81] In essence, Rogers affirms that if gravity dams erected atop ancient landslides are conservatively designed—that is, with "inherent redundancies," such as properly proportioned profiles, extensive drainage systems, cut-off walls, grouting, and similar measures—failure is hardly a foregone conclusion. Unfortunately, this affirmation is not something that is widely appreciated in the public arena where, instead, notions of Mulholland's supposed "exoneration" have gained far greater currency.

While Rogers praised *Man-Made Disaster* as a "definitive work," he differs with his predecessor in three important particulars, two of which consisted of criticisms of Mulholland not made by Outland.[82] The first instance was Rogers's censure of Mulholland for his "omission of any outside consultants to review the dam's design," a lapse that Rogers considered a "weak link in Mulholland's design process."[83] Rogers's second criticism of Mulholland dealt with raising the dam's height—accompanied by no compensating change in thickness—after construction commenced. Outland had discovered this while studying construction photographs, but he did not relate such alterations to structural safety. Rogers picked up on this omission, correctly pointing out that, in accord with standard gravity-dam theory dating to the mid-nineteenth century, raising the height was "potentially dangerous . . . in a gravity dam . . . that derives its stability through simple dead weight to resist the force imposed by the reservoir water. . . . Simply put," stated Rogers, "it is dangerous to attempt the heightening of a concrete gravity dam simply by increasing the crest height without a corresponding enlargement of the dam's base." Rogers's

diagnosis was on target and he acknowledged that the maximum base width was only about 148 feet and not the 169 feet or 175 feet reported by the city in the 1920s.[84] Nonetheless, he neglected to stress how this egregious lapse in engineering judgment helped to explain the dam's collapse.

While Rogers acknowledged shortcomings of Mulholland that Outland had not perceived, he failed to consider fully: (1) how the St. Francis design compared with gravity-dam design as practiced in the teens and 1920s, especially in regard to measures taken to counter uplift; and (2) Mulholland's experience as a dam builder and the significance of his decision to proceed without outside review. These lacunae are of more than passing interest in the context of Rogers's third difference with Outland: Who, if anyone, was responsible? Outland had unhesitatingly concluded that the "responsibility" was Mulholland's "alone." Rogers not only made no such pronouncement but also roundly criticized the governor's commission—though, strangely, not Outland—for "assigning blame to an individual (Mulholland) in lieu of an organization or profession." To Rogers, fault lay in the ignorance of a profession, not with particular members of that profession. "Mulholland and his Bureau's engineers," stated Rogers, belonged to a "civil engineering community" that "did not completely appreciate or understand the concepts of effective stress and uplift, precepts just then beginning to gain recognition and acceptance." In short, the evidence that had proved compelling to Outland was, according to Rogers, trumped by "larger culprits": the absence of "a proper appreciation of uplift theory" and the need for "incorporation of solid engineering geologic input."[85]

Rogers's criticisms of Mulholland seem altogether appropriate, even if lacking in conviction and a clear appreciation of their larger significance. But Rogers's failure to address Mulholland's knowledge of the scientific civil-engineering practices and literature of his day and his neglect of Mulholland's dam-building record represent serious omissions. They become all the more

Top: *Aftermath of the dam failure at Austin, Pennsylvania, on September 30, 1911. After visiting the Austin site in October 1911, John R. Freeman and Arthur Powell Davis—two of Mulholland's engineering colleagues who had recently served with him on a consulting board for the Great Western Power Company—recognized the role of uplift in the Austin collapse.*

Bottom: *Homes destroyed by the collapsed Austin Dam. More than seventy people died (some early estimates were higher) when the wall of water surged through much of the town only about a mile below the reservoir site. As this photo shows, there was enormous property damage.*

DC Jackson/damhistory.com

weighty in light of evidence that Rogers's assertions about uplift are not supported by the historical record.

UPLIFT AND EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY DAM DESIGN

At St. Francis, Mulholland placed ten drainage wells in the dam's foundation at the center of the canyon. In testimony offered at the coroner's inquest, Mulholland indicated that these drainage wells had been located in the streambed of San Francisquito Creek where "the rock was fissured."

> Q. [By a Juror]: Was this dam [St. Francis] under-drained practically for its entire distance?
>
> A. [Mulholland]: No, it was only where the rock was fissured, that is, those igneous rocks are always more or less jointed a little bit, and we find it usually and always expedient to drain them out so there will not be any up-pressure, taking that much pressure of the dam away. So we lead them out. Those drains are provided in every dam I have ever built.
>
> Q. At what intervals were these bleeders put in?
>
> A. About every fifteen or twenty or twenty-five feet.
>
> Q. Practically almost to the top of the dam, as you went along?
>
> A. No, the west end was a homogenous ground. There was no drain necessary in those. It was much tighter. It was about as hard as the other but tighter and more compact. The rocks—the fractured rocks, all the hard rocks in this country are more or less fractured and you can go to the mountains here and look at the granites on every hill side and you will see them fissured and fractured more or less, but they will carry water without doubt, but the prudent thing is to drain them out.
>
> Q. But the points of under drainage was [sic] put in where the rock was seen to be fractured?
>
> A. Yes.[86]

In essence, Mulholland acknowledged the possibility of uplift acting through the fractured schist. But—while professing that "the prudent thing is to drain them out" and that it is "always expedient to drain them out so there will not be any up-pressure"—he confined his attention only to the dam's center section. He ignored the possibility that, as the level of the reservoir rose, water would extend up the east canyon wall and then seep into the fractured schist foundation. Beyond placing drainage wells in the center section, Mulholland did little to counter the possibility of uplift acting on the St. Francis Dam. As essentially all engineers who investigated the disaster acknowledged, the canyon walls had not been drained, no inspection/drainage tunnel had been placed in the dam's interior, there had been no grouting, and the structure lacked a cut-off trench extending across the site.[87] Moreover, as Outland discerned, Mulholland had raised the dam's height but without widening the base. With this latter action, he exacerbated the destabilizing effect of uplift and necessarily increased the potential for disaster.

Rogers avers that "many engineers were just beginning to appreciate the destabilizing effects of uplift pressures in the late 1920s" and promotes the impression that uplift represented an esoteric, little-appreciated phenomenon when St. Francis Dam was built.[88] If the date given by Rogers had been 1910, such a perspective could be defended. However, for a decade prior to construction of St. Francis Dam, uplift had engendered widespread concern. The extent of this concern—and action taken in actual construction—warrants close attention because the effect of uplift on the stability of St. Francis Dam speaks directly to why more than 400 people perished in the early hours of March 13, 1928.

In the mid-nineteenth century uplift was not accommodated into gravity-dam design protocols.[89] Nonetheless, dam builders soon began to recognize the dangers posed by uplift and to

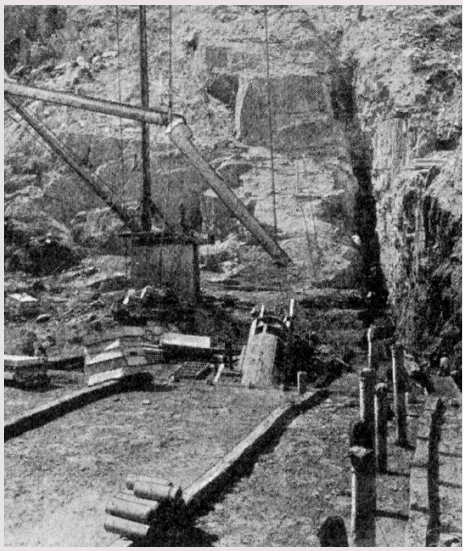
develop measures to counter its effect. Most notably, concern about uplift prompted British engineers building Liverpool's Vrynwy Dam (a gravity structure completed in 1892) to incorporate drainage wells into its design, an action publicized in British engineering journals.[90] Not all civil engineers in the late nineteenth century—most prominently, Edward Wegmann, U.S. author of *The Design and Construction of Dams* (1888 and several subsequent editions)—paid heed to uplift. Thus, in 1904 Edward Godfrey could complain in *Engineering News* that "I find nothing in [books] on dams mentioning this floating tendency of the water which percolates under dams."[91] Four years later Godfrey reiterated his complaint, a critique obviated in 1910 when Charles E. Morrison and Orrin L. Brodie's *High Masonry Dam Design* directly criticized Wegmann for failing to account for uplift in gravity dam designs. As part of this, they asserted that "Present practice requires [that uplift]. . . be considered where a structure of great responsibility is proposed . . . ."[92]

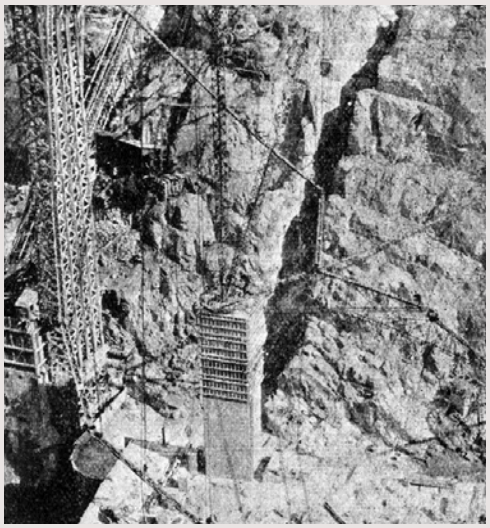
Apprehension about uplift intensified following the collapse of a concrete gravity dam in Austin, Pennsylvania, on September 30, 1911. Located about two miles upstream from town, the Austin Dam failed catastrophically, taking at least seventy-eight lives.[93] The calamity attracted great public attention and galvanized the American dam-building community to take action against the potentially disastrous effects of uplift. A leader in this effort was John R. Freeman, a prominent New England-based engineer who, in 1906, had served on the board of consulting engineers who reviewed Mulholland's plans for the Los Angeles Aqueduct.[94] A prominent advocate of gravity-dam technology, Freeman rushed to the site of the Austin tragedy and reported in *Engineering News*: "the cause that probably led to the failure of the Austin PA dam," he declared, was "the penetration of water-pressure into and underneath the mass of the dam, together with the secondary effect of lessening the stability of the dam against sliding." Freeman implored engineers to understand that "uplift pressures may possibly occur under or within any masonry dam and should always be accounted for."[95] At the time, Freeman was helping oversee construction of New York City's Ashokan (also known as Olive Bridge) and Kensico dams, two projects that—as *Engineering News* described Kensico Dam in April 1912—countered "upward water pressure" with foundation pressure-grouting and an extensive drainage system.[96]

Also taking the Austin failure very seriously was Arthur Powell Davis, chief engineer (later director) of the U.S. Reclamation Service, who believed that the failure of Austin Dam "was caused by an upward pressure on the base of the dam." After visiting the disaster site, Davis expressed concern about the possible effect of uplift on the service's Elephant Butte Dam, a concrete gravity structure more than two hundred-feet high to be built across the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico.[97] The agency soon approved a design for Elephant Butte that included extensive grouting, placement of a drainage system along the length of the dam, and a deep cut-off trench. The service's close attention to the Elephant Butte foundation was documented in engineering journals and Davis's 1917 book, *Irrigation Works Constructed by the United States Government*, which described a "variety of precautions . . . adopted to prevent percolation under the [Elephant Butte] dam, and to relieve any upward pressure that might develop there."[98] For the service's 354-foot high concrete gravity Arrowrock Dam built in 1913–1915 near Boise, Idaho, Davis could similarly report: "In order to prevent leakage in the foundation of the [Arrowrock] dam, a line of holes was drilled into the foundation just below the upstream face of the dam to depths of 30 to 40 feet. They were grouted under pressure . . . [and] another line of holes was drilled to serve as drainage holes to relieve any leakage under the dam. These were continued upward into the masonry and emerged into a large tunnel running the entire length of the dam. The success of the Arrowrock drainage system was described in 1930 by C. E. Grunsky, who pointedly related it to the St. Francis collapse: "My visit to this dam [Arrowrock] was made at a time when the reservoir was filled. The func-

OTHER CURVED GRAVITY DAMS: IN CONTRAST TO ST. FRANCIS . . .

The Arrowrock, Exchequer, and O'Shaughnessy (Hetch Hetchy) dams were concrete curved-gravity dams built prior to or contemporaneously with the St. Francis Dam. Significantly, all of them incorporated features to alleviate the effect of uplift that extended far beyond Mulholland's efforts at St. Francis. These photos, including views published in the nationally prominent *Engineering News-Record*, graphically testify to construction practices absent from the St. Francis Dam.





Arrowrock Dam

Top, Left: *Downstream side of Arrowrock Dam, built in 1913–1915 by the U. S. Reclamation Service across the Boise River in southern Idaho. Constructed under the general authority of Arthur Powell Davis, the design featured grouting and drainage of the foundation along the full length of the structure.*

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Top, Center: *Construction view at Arrowrock showing drainage pipes running along the upstream face.*

Joseph B. Lippincott Collection, Water Resources Center Archives

Top, Right: *Interior view of Arrowrock Dam showing the interior inspection/drainage gallery. The St. Francis design lacked any comparable drainage tunnel.*

DC Jackson/damhistory.com

Exchequer Dam

Middle, Left: *Circa 1926 construction view of Exchequer Dam in the Sierra Nevada foothills near Merced, California. This photo shows how "expansion joints," spaced fifty feet apart, divided the dam's concrete into a series of vertical components. No expansion joints were incorporated into the St. Francis design, and major cracks in the upstream face exacerbated the effect of uplift on Mulholland's dam.*

Charles Derleth Collection, Water Resources Center Archive

Middle, Center: *1925 construction view showing the cut-off trench and drainage pipes (left foreground) at Exchequer. Compare this to photos on pages 21, 23, and 26 and it is evident that, in terms of abutment drainage up the canyon walls, the Exchequer design significantly exceeded what was done at the St. Francis site.*

Engineering News-Record, May 28, 1925

Middle, Right: *Detail view showing (along the left edge of the dam) the row of drainage pipes extending the length of Exchequer Dam's upstream face.*

Charles Derleth Collection, Water Resources Center Archives

O'Shaughnessy (Hetch Hetchy) Dam

Bottom, Far Left: *Circa 1925 "before and after" photos of Hetch Hetchy Valley and O'Shaughnessy Dam in Yosemite National Park. Like Los Angeles, San Francisco was exempt from California's 1917 dam-safety law and chief engineer M. M. O'Shaughnessy built the dam without the approval or scrutiny of the state engineer. On his own initiative, O'Shaughnessy incorporated into his design measures to counter uplift that far exceeded what Mulholland did at St. Francis.*

DC Jackson/damhistory.com

Bottom, Left Center: *1922 construction view of O'Shaughnessy Dam showing cutoff trench extending up the canyon wall.*

Engineering News-Record, June 8, 1922

Bottom, Right Center: *Two of the 1,600 porous concrete drainage blocks placed in O'Shaughnessy Dam. The photo appeared in* Engineering News-Record *in September 1922 and would have been easily accessible to Mulholland and his staff as they prepared the St. Francis design.*

Engineering News-Record, September 21, 1922

Bottom, Far Right: *1922 photograph showing how the porous drainage blocks were placed in the cutoff trenches extending up the canyon walls at O'Shanghnessy Dam. Chief engineer M.M. O'Shaughnessy is shown at left in front of the blocks.*

M. M. O'Shaughnessy Collection, Bancroft Library

tioning of the weepholes was noticeable. In some cases the flow from the gooseneck outlet pipes amounted to several thousand gallons per day. If there were no drainage of the foundation there would be great likelihood of a large uplifting force such as that which, at the St. Francis Dam, contributed to its failure."[99]

After the agency became the Bureau of Reclamation in 1923, concern about uplift continued. For example, Black Canyon Dam in southern Idaho, a 184-foot high concrete gravity structure completed in 1924, featured two rows of grout holes "drilled into the bedrock along the upstream edge of the dam along its entire length. . . . [A] row of drainage holes was drilled 8 feet downstream from the second row of grout holes. . . . The water from them is carried to a tile drain embedded in the concrete parallel with the axis of the dam." In case anyone missed the point, *Engineering News-Record* declared: "The purpose of this drainage system is to collect and lead off any water that might accumulate and to prevent an upward pressure under the dam."[100] After leaving the Reclamation Service in 1923, Davis became chief engineer of Oakland's East Bay Municipal Utility District where his concern about uplift became manifest in the Llana Plancha (later Pardee) Dam. This concrete curved-gravity structure featured foundation grouting and an extensive drainage system running up both canyon walls. Construction started in 1927 and the design was illustrated in *Engineering News-Record* the same week that the St. Francis Dam collapsed.[101]

Freeman, Davis, and the Reclamation Service were hardly alone in drawing attention to the perils of uplift in the aftermath of the Austin Dam failure. In 1912, C. L. Harrison brought together the views of twenty engineers on the subject in a *Transactions of the American Society of Civil Engineers* article where, as Harrison summarized: "Each of the twenty discussions presented on the subject recognizes the existence of uplift."[102] The next year, *Engineering News* described field tests in Germany that confirmed the existence of uplift pressures. This prompted Edward Godfrey to proclaim: "the results of these experiments further emphasizes [sic] what the author has said before: It is a crime to design a dam without considering upward pressure."[103]

Authors of technical books also addressed the perils of uplift and Chester W. Smith's *The Construction of Masonry Dams* (1915) included a ten-page section describing how cut-off trenches, foundation grouting, and drainage systems could ameliorate the effects of uplift.[104] The 1916 edition of Morrison and Brodie's *High Masonry Dam Design* (retitled *Masonry Dam Design Including High Masonry Dams*) began with a fifteen-page discussion of uplift that described "several ways in which upward pressure may be cared for," including use of a foundation cut-off trench, "adding a sufficient section to the dam to offset the upward pressure, and . . . providing drainage wells and galleries to intercept all entering water."[105] A year later, William Creager's *Masonry Dams* (1917) emphasized the need to counter uplift in the aptly titled chapter, "Requirements for Stability of Gravity Dams." In addition, references to uplift appeared throughout the book.[106] "The methods of design described [in *Masonry Dams*] and the assumptions recommended," Creager advised readers, "represent present conservative practice, and correspond to a proper degree of safety for the average enterprise, and where considerable damage to property and loss of human life would result if failure occurred."[107]

By 1916–1917, serious concern about uplift on the part of American dam engineers was neither obscure nor unusual. Equally to the point, in the early 1920s, Mulholland's placement of drainage wells only in the center section of St. Francis Dam did not reflect standard practice in California for large concrete gravity dams. Earlier, in 1916, when Hiram Savage developed plans for two municipally owned concrete gravity dams near San Diego, he followed the lead set by the Reclamation Service. His designs for Lower Otay Dam (completed in 1917) and Barrett Dam (1922) called for

grouting and drainage wells along the length of the structures and for a cut-off trench (containing a "continuous 12-[inch] sub drain") to run the length of both dams.[108] In northern California, the Scott Dam (also known as Snow Mountain Dam), built by the Snow Mountain Power Company across the Eel River in 1922, featured "grouting below the cut-off wall" as well as a network of under-drains to "carry off seepage water. . . . The drains under the dam consist of porous concrete tile . . . . Lines were laid parallel with the axis of the dam and on 15-ft. centers under the entire structure."[109] In California's Central Valley in the mid-1920s, the Merced Irrigation District constructed Exchequer Dam, a large concrete-curved gravity structure that featured a cut-off wall and an extensive drainage system running up both canyon walls.[110]

San Francisco, the only municipality in California that compared in size and wealth with Los Angeles (and a city that also benefited from the dam safety law's "municipal exemption"), began construction in 1919 on a large water supply dam in the Sierra Nevada. The concrete curved-gravity Hetch Hetchy Dam (later renamed O'Shaughnessy Dam after the project's chief engineer) featured an extensive drainage system consisting of 1,600 porous concrete blocks and a cut-off trench running up both canyon walls. The dam reached an initial height of about 330 feet in 1923 (it was extended to 430 feet in 1938) and, as detailed by *Engineering News-Record* in 1922, "the porous concrete blocks are placed in the bottom of the cut-off trench for its full length, and also in vertical tiers."[111] The Hetch Hetchy Dam's extensive drainage system—designed and implemented *before* 1924—clearly bore scant resemblance to Mulholland's minimal effort to counter uplift at St. Francis Dam.

Contemporary measures, like those taken at Hetch Hetchy/O'Shaughnessy and at other gravity dams in California to provide for drainage up the canyon walls of a dam site, did not escape attention at the coroner's inquest. The issue prompted frank comments in the testimony of M. H. Slocum, the construction supervisor at Exchequer and Scott dams and a participant in the foundation preparation and early concrete placement at Hetch Hetchy.

> Q. [By the Coroner]: In your opinion, how could undermining of the foundation [of St. Francis Dam] have been prevented?
>
> A. [Slocum]: On other work of such a character with which I have been connected, it has been done by putting in drainage holes, connected up to a drainage gallery which intercepts the water practically at the upstream base, taking away the uplift and letting it run off downstream without any pressure.
>
> Q. [By a Juror]: Is it common practice to run the drainage lines you are speaking of pretty well up the sides of the hills?
>
> A. Drainage galleries in Exchequer, Hetch-Hetchy, [and] Snow Mountain run to all intents and purposes to the top of the dams, clear to the top.
>
> Q. Have you ever seen or heard of a dam which you considered to be a safe and properly designed dam, which didn't provide some means of draining up the sides?
>
> A. I have been to a great many dams, and to my memory I can't remember of any that haven't had drainage, drainage galleries in them of the gravity type, not of strict arch type, this [St. Francis] was a gravity type.[112]

Additional evidence could be cited to demonstrate the awareness of America's dam-building engineering community, prior to the St. Francis disaster, of the threat posed by uplift and of the extensive measures taken to offset its effect.[113] But the material presented here justifies the observation in 1927 of noted engineer Fred Noetzli: "conservative engineering requires that gravity dams be designed for uplift." It also underscores that such conservatism was hardly an anomaly by the 1920s.[114] Why Mulholland ignored the tocsin sounded by numerous engineers—both in print and in practice—over the dangers of uplift remains a mystery. After all, he was supposedly a voracious, self-schooled devotee of technical

information.[115] But labeling the rationale for his actions as somehow mysterious does not excuse them. Many American dam builders of the teens and 1920s understood the importance of countering uplift with measures that went far beyond the meager steps taken at St. Francis Dam. Mulholland stood apart from his contemporaries on this crucial issue of safety and the results proved tragic.

MULHOLLAND: PRIVILEGE AND HUBRIS

William Mulholland was often admired for his ability to meet complex challenges, but he was not inclined to seek the counsel of his peers. His go-it-alone approach at St. Francis did not accord with the common practice of dam builders and the organizations financing construction to consult with outside experts. When, for example, John Freeman set out in 1909 to design Big Bend Dam in northern California for the Great Western Power Company, he secured the services of Arthur Powell Davis and Mulholland as consultants on the project. Two years later, the same company engaged the highly respected engineers James Schuyler and Alfred Noble to review John Eastwood's design for the nearby Big Meadows Dam.[116] Similarly, in 1916–1917, while planning construction of the municipally owned Lower Otay and Barrett dams in San Diego County, Hiram Savage sought the advice of well-known dam engineer A. J. Wiley.[117]

Outside of California between 1907 and 1916, New York City relied upon a panel of engineering consultants to help design the Catskill water supply system (including the Ashokan/Olive Bridge Dam); the Miami Conservancy District (a model for the Tennessee Valley Authority) engaged a group of consulting engineers in 1913 to review designs for flood-control dams in central Ohio;[118] and the Reclamation Service (later Bureau) initiated a policy in 1903 requiring dam designs and other projects to be reviewed by "engineering boards."[119] In April 1928, the bureau rushed to remind the public and fellow engineers of this policy: "The recent unfortunate failure of the St. Francis Dam in California," announced the bureau in *Engineering News-Record*, justifies "special mention of the extensive geological and engineering investigations that preceded the approval of the site and designs for the Owyhee Dam" that included three geologists and three engineers not on the bureau staff.[120]

Significantly, Mulholland himself had on at least one occasion recognized the value of outside review. In 1912 he requested Arthur P. Davis to visit the Lower San Fernando Dam site. His reason for doing so is telling, because the explanation could apply with equal force to later dams for which he sought no outside review. "I requested or rather suggested to the Board of Public Service Commissioners," Mulholland told Davis, "that an engineer be employed to examine the proposed San Fernando Dam [site] when it is stripped in order to clear them of any charge that might be brought in the future of having proceeded with the work without competent advice." Here, Mulholland advocated a principle that he thereafter largely ignored.[121]

There were other reasons for Mulholland to have recognized the desirability for seeking outside review of his dam projects. In 1918 his work had attracted public scrutiny after the partial collapse of the earthfill Calaveras Dam. That incident involved a major section of hydraulic fill that "slipped" upstream into the reservoir and required a major reconstruction effort to rectify. Mulholland had supervised the dam's construction starting in 1913 as a consulting engineer for San Francisco's privately owned Spring Valley Water Company. The failure was especially embarrassing since Calaveras was an earthen-hydraulic fill dam, a type that Mulholland had significant experience in building. Indeed, Rogers—apparently unaware of the Calaveras fiasco—places Mulholland among the "founding fathers" of this construction technique.[122] Michael M. O'Shaughnessy, the engineer responsible for San Francisco's Hetch Hetchy project, visited the Calaveras site in 1913, soon complaining to John Freeman about Mulholland's "sloppy" and "slipshod and crude" construction methods. Even more point-

edly, O'Shaughnessy opined that Mulholland and his assistant were "so intensely conceited that they imagine all they might do should be immune from criticism."[123]

Prior to the St. Francis failure, Mulholland also ignored sharp professional criticism from Frederick Finkle, an engineer who, a few years before, had publicly rebuked him for using faulty cement in the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Even discounting the fact that it emanated from an earlier detractor of his work, this critique should have given Mulholland pause. In 1924, Finkle visited the St. Francis site at the request of the Santa Monica Anti-Annexation Committee and soon criticized "defects of design and foundation materials" as well as "unfavorable" geological conditions. The latter was supported by tests revealing the propensity of the red conglomerate to dissolve when submerged in water. Finkle also described the structure's base as "insufficient" and "not in accordance with sound engineering practice." His eerily prescient apprehensions—"I would hesitate to recommend a concrete dam on such a foundation"— found their way into the local press along with his prediction: "This dam, if kept full for any length of time, . . . will unquestionably fail."[124] Finkle's warning came prior to the dam's construction but, perhaps because Mulholland dismissed Finkle as some kind of biased naysayer, he ignored it and made no effort to seek significant, independent review of the St. Francis project.

Rogers acknowledges that Mulholland's "omission of any outside consultants to review the [St. Francis] dam's design" was a "weak link in [his] design process." But he fails to see any connection between the dam's collapse and that "weak link." Moreover, he neglects Mulholland's inexperience in building concrete dams. O'Shaughnessy did not miss the connection and seven months after the St. Francis failure, he bluntly told California State Engineer Edward Hyatt: "Los Angeles made an error in committing its policies of high concrete dam construction to one man, whose previous experience had been confined to building low head, hydraulic filled dams. . . . This was no justification for entrusting him with the design and construction of a high head masonry dam, hence they [Los Angeles] are now paying the bill."[125]

Rogers, in a published interview, also confounds his own judgments about Mulholland's competence by reversing course and indicting "the Chief" for flaws that he (Rogers) had previously rejected or ignored. Mulholland's "Achilles heel," states Rogers in the 2000 interview, was "his thriftiness," his ability "to build enormous projects at a fraction of the cost [that] any other public agency was able to achieve," a practice that explains "why his services were sought by so many." His parsimony, explains Rogers, "led to many aspects of dam design that were omitted from St. Francis, which might have saved the dam from failing. These included items such as seepage cut-offs, foundation keyways, grout curtains, additional uplift relief, expansion joints, inspection gallery, geologic evaluations, and any manner of external consulting, outside his own BWWS [Bureau of Water Works and Supply] staff."[126]

Such criticism stands in contrast to Rogers's contentions in his two articles that Mulholland and the dam-building profession "did not completely appreciate or understand the concepts of effective stress and uplift, precepts just then beginning to gain recognition and acceptance."[127] Which way would Rogers have it—that the St. Francis Dam disaster was due to Mulholland's parsimony, which led him to omit technologies for countering uplift; or that it was due to his ignorance of those technologies and their value as "inherent redundancies" (to borrow Rogers's phrasing) in countering uplift?[128] While we appreciate Rogers's descriptions of the mechanics of the dam's collapse—as we do the analyses of the Grunskys, Willis, Outland, and others whose earlier findings he affirmed—his ventures into the historical interpretation of Mulholland and the St. Francis Dam disaster possess far less cogency.

REQUIEM FOR MULHOLLAND?

Unlike Outland's dispassionate, yet moving, account in *Man-Made Disaster*, Rogers specifically sought to rescue Mulholland's reputation and correct what he perceived as injustices done to the "Chief" in the wake of the dam's collapse. He expressed that goal candidly in his *Southern California Quarterly* article under the heading "Requiem for Mulholland":

> we should be so lucky as to have any men with just half his character, integrity, imagination and leadership today. Big Bill Mulholland was the kind of rugged individualist that [sic] made great things happen, but his style of standing on principle would never be seen as "politically correct" in the style of today's committee-sitting, bean counting, lawyer-consulting, image-conscious compromisers. Mulholland would sooner "give birth to a porcupine backwards" than to have to work inside air conditioned buildings sitting in padded chairs with people of compromising principle.[129]

In this article we offer a distinct counterpoint to Rogers's perspective. We also take issue with any notion that Mulholland's conduct in raising the height of St. Francis Dam without increasing the base's thickness—or his failure to design the dam in accord with the same appreciation for uplift as practiced by his contemporaries—can in any way be countenanced as somehow "standing on principle."

Significantly, evidence suggests that Mulholland actually was treated rather gently following the dam's collapse. Not kindly disposed toward him, of course, were residents of the Santa Clara Valley as dramatically reflected in the sign erected by one woman in her front yard: "KILL MULHOLLAND!" Moreover, his granddaughter has recalled that "threats were made against his life, and he lived with an armed guard around his home." But his professional colleagues did not publicly pillory him. The Los Angeles Board of Water and Power Commissioners rejected demands for his immediate dismissal and he stayed on as Chief Engineer for several months until resigning in November 1928. Even then, the city retained him as a consultant at a salary of $500 a month, a post he held till his death seven years later.[130]

Public honors continued to come his way and city officials in April 1928 invited him as a guest of honor at a luncheon celebrating the new Los Angeles City Hall. He declined, but invitations continued to arrive, including one (not accepted) to the White House ceremony in December 1928 where President Calvin Coolidge signed the Boulder Canyon Project Act into law. An invitation that he did accept came in 1933 from the Los Angeles Water and Power Commission, which honored him "for producing a supply of water in the City of Los Angeles adequate for the uses of a population calculated on an unprecedentedly rapid basis of increase." There were also tributes, like that in 1933 from *Western Construction News*, which honored him "as a man of history and the maker of Los Angeles." They continued even after his death in praise-filled obituaries and other accolades, some making no mention of the St. Francis Dam collapse. Despite the honors coming during the years prior to his death in 1935, Mulholland withdrew from the public and fell into melancholy. He apparently anguished over the devastation wrought by the St. Francis flood and took little solace from those who remembered him as a "big man" and a person of "sterling quality" for accepting responsibility for the disaster.[131]

Many prominent engineers avoided public comments that might cast aspersions on or disturb the "Chief," but their private thoughts could be less than supportive. Consider what Arthur P. Davis wrote to John Freeman following a visit to the dam site on March 19, 1928. Emphasizing that his comments were to be held in confidence, Davis observed that conditions "all pointed to the vital necessity of preventing any percolation into the foundation" and he bemoaned the lack of a "deep cut-off trench," "deep grouting," and "adequate drainage wells." Making specific reference to the Elephant Butte, Ashokan/Olive

Prior to March 1928, "The Chief" was a dominant figure in western water development. For example, in this circa 1924 publicity photograph Mulholland (on the left) leads a group of engineers on a visit to the future site of Hoover (Boulder) Dam. Following the St. Francis Dam disaster, his colleagues largely refrained from direct public criticism and, after he resigned from the city's Bureau of Water Works and Supply in November 1928, they treated him with great personal respect. But his professional reputation was shattered and never again would he play a significant role in the planning or execution of any major hydraulic engineering projects.

DC Jackson/damhistory.com

Bridge, and Arrowrock dams, he went so far as to say that, "had provisions existed [at St. Francis], as established by recent practice . . . [at] many other existing dams, the accident might have been avoided."[132]

J. B. Lippincott wrote to Freeman in March 1928 about the disaster, prefacing his remarks with the admission: "I have been very careful to avoid discussing this in any public way because of my old friendship and respect for Mr. Mulholland." But this public reticence did not prevent him from acknowledging the problematic character of the "broken schist" encountered in San Francisquito Canyon during construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. "The foundations on which the dam was built were not good," he admitted, adding: "It is my understanding that the dam had little of anything under it in the way of a drainage system."[133] In reply, Freeman confessed that he, too, was avoiding public discussion of the disaster: "I have been careful . . . to say nothing [to newspaper reporters] regarding the Los Angeles dam which could come back to hurt Mulholland." He followed this disclosure with candid criticism of Mulholland for his habit of not consulting independent experts: "[he] does not appreciate the benefit of calling in men from outside to get their better prospective [sic]

For more than a year after floodwaters laid waste to the Santa Clara Valley, the center section of the St. Francis Dam remained in place, an imposing (if unintentional) monument to the tragedy. In 1929, a curiosity seeker at the site fell to his death, prompting the city to dynamite the concrete monolith into a less visually provocative mass of rubble. While the dam itself seemingly could be erased from the landscape of San Francisquito Canyon, the horror of the flood in the collective memory of the Santa Clara Valley—and California as a whole—has proved far more enduring.

Henry E. Huntington Library, Courtney Collection

and their independent point of view."[134] To another colleague, Freeman reinforced the point: "This [St. Francis Dam] site plainly required many precautions that were ignored, and while I have the highest personal regard for my good old friend William Mulholland, I can but feel that he trusted too much to his own individual knowledge, particularly for a man who had no scientific education."[135]

RETROSPECT

The St. Francis disaster quickly spawned a new California dam-safety law that eliminated the municipal exemption. After 1929, all the state's non-federal dams came under the authority of the Department of Public Works and the administrative oversight of the State Engineer (later assumed by the Division of Safety of Dams).[136] Many people believe that the 1929 law created regulatory mechanisms responsible for saving thousands of lives. A case in point was the near-collapse of Mulholland's Lower San Fernando Dam during the 1971 San Fernando Valley earthquake. "If it had not been for the [storage] restrictions imposed by the Division of Safety of Dams," states engineer Irving Sherman, "the water level in the reservoir might have been ten feet higher than what it actually was—in which case the [hydraulic-fill earthen] dam would have been overtopped and at least partially washed away." Instead, "the 80,000 people downstream . . . were temporarily evacuated until after the danger had passed."[137]

But regulation is a double-edged sword, and the development of innovative dam technologies was not necessarily advanced by the 1929 law. While gravity-dam design may have escaped stagnation, the new law proved enormously burdensome to hoped-for advances in multiple-arch dam technology and, in California, did much to eliminate the technology from the realm of acceptable design.[138] Of course, the sad truth is that the St. Francis Dam design did not draw upon any innovative advances in dam technology that might somehow have unwittingly fostered failure. Far from it, for in terms of large-scale concrete gravity dams of the 1920s, Mulholland's St. Francis design was, to borrow a phrase from architectural history, a *retardaire* structure. It suffered not from creative innovation but from an egregious lack thereof.

More than any other person, Mulholland shaped Los Angeles's water policy and laid the foundation for the modern city. When he resigned in 1928 the city's oil, motion picture, real estate, and tourist industries were booming; the Department of Water and Power had become the most powerful municipal agency in the United States; and Los Angeles was in the vanguard of a host of southern California cities embarking on a new phase of water-seeking that would reach to the Colorado River. But such achievement had not come without great human, psychic, and economic costs—among them the collapse of a dam in the remote reaches of the upper Santa Clara Valley that took more than 400 lives.

Despite equivocations, denial of dangers that he knew—or reasonably should have known—existed, pretense to scientific knowledge regarding gravity-dam technology that he possessed neither through experience nor education, and invocations of "hoodoos," William Mulholland understood the great privilege that had been afforded him to build the St. Francis Dam where and how he chose. Because of this privilege—and the decisions that he made—William Mulholland bears responsibility for the St. Francis Dam disaster.[139]

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4. Filming in the Santa Clarita Valley

Film History of the Santa Clarita Valley

Big Screen, Big Valley

First used for filming in 1903, the SCV continues to thrive as a movie-making mecca.

By Carol Rock
Signal Staff Writer
"Vigilance Forever" 75th Anniversary Edition
Monday, February 7, 1994

"Douglas Fairbanks and his company of about 200 came up from L.A. Tuesday by special train and autos and pulled off a moving picture stunt. We did not learn the name of the future film, but judging from what we saw, 'Douglas at the County Fair' might be considered appropriate. Market Street from the drug store to the railroad track was decorated with yards and yards of bunting, signs, flags, etc., not omitting the ice cream stands along the way. There were about 40 horses in the performance and these did their part by going through the antics which people pay to see at a country fair. Newhall was called 'Fair Point' for the day.

So began The Signal's coverage of an industry that would contribute significantly to the development of the Santa Clarita Valley. It has influenced architecture in downtown Newhall, brought multi-level sound stages to the industrial center and caused thousands of cowboys — rhinestone and rough-riding — to thunder through our canyons.

Hollywood began using the canyons and streets of Newhall for Western movies in 1903. The first feature produced in the valley was "Bronco Billy's Christmas Dinner" in 1912, starring Newhall resident Gilbert Anderson. Newhall soon became the stomping grounds for stars like Charlie Chaplin, who filmed parts of "The Champion" in Newhall, and Tom Mix, who used many downtown Newhall façades as one of his early "Mixvilles," where he and his crews staged brawls and horse races.

Mix built his own studio near the corner of Walnut and Market streets, from which he released his film "Western Blood" in 1918. He favored daring stunts and even "jumped" his steed, Tony the Wonder Horse, across the 90-foot-deep Beale's Cut. No actors — equestrian or human — were ever in danger, as cinematic magicians "painted out" a supporting bridge under the running horse.

In 1919, the nearest movies were shown in San Fernando at Cody's New Theatre. When the American Theater, the first in the valley, opened in 1941, adults got in for 30 cents and kids for a dime.

The valley also made its mark in the drive-in era, sporting two car-friendly theaters: the Mustang Drive-In in Canyon Country and the Corrall Drive-In on San Francisquito Road. Both are now memories.

Motion picture viewers were a discerning breed even in the early days of silent films. Movies were brought to Newhall by road crews who were criticized by their audiences on the front pages. The films were deemed to be "of ancient vintage and poorly projected." To quote one activist of the day, "The people of Newhall want up-to-date pictures or none at all."

In 1921, "The Half Breed" was being filmed in and around Newhall. And, although its real purpose was to provide shelter for silent film star William S. Hart's pintos, Elizabeth and Cactus Jake, the cabin on his Newhall property was a location for "The Testing Block." Hart went on to use his 300-acre ranch as a location for many more films, including "Tumbleweeds," his last film.

In 1924, Ben Wilson Productions Corp. planned to build a studio on the Frank LaSalle Ranch in Wiley Canyon (near Elsmere Canyon). Accessories, machinery and electrical light plants were planned by Wilson, who hoped to use them exclusively for cowboy films.

The same year, Bob Anderson built a Western façade on Walnut Street that included two old-time saloons (which, The Signal noted, were "for picture purposes only"), grocery store, blacksmith shop, bank, dry goods emporium and restaurant. Fox, Goldwyn, Thomas Ince and Wilson Studios were already in line to use the locations as soon as they were built.

Hart's hilltop mansion was seen in print ads across the country, as it served as a backdrop for a promotion of the 10 millionth Ford Model T automobile to roll off the line.

In 1940, Hart donated a lot in downtown Newhall as a site for a motion picture theater and lodge for American Legion Post 507. The entire town of Newhall went wild for their benefactor. Copies of The Signal sold out, people were so eager for the good news.

A year later, the American Theater opened with all seats reserved for opening night. It cost $25,000 to build, had 400 seats and the screen was framed by tan valances and drapery. Special prices for that event were 50 cents plus 5 cents tax. On the bill were "The Earl of Puddingstone" and "Here Comes Happiness," a newsreel and a cartoon. Hart, decked out in Western garb, made a grand entrance, which got a standing ovation. The event generated three pages of ads and copy.

Hart and his ailing sister, Mary Ellen, lived on "La Loma de los Veintos" or "Hill of the Winds" estate until his death in 1946. He left his mansion and the surrounding parkland to the people of Los Angeles County "so that the people who spent their nickels and dimes to watch my pictures could enjoy my home."

Hart still made headlines even after his death, as his son, William S. Hart Jr., who was left out of the will, filed a petition with the court objecting to "strangers as guardians" of his father's estate. After a long, drawn-out court battle, the court ruled against young Hart and the property became William S. Hart County Regional Park.

Just south of the "wild and wooly" downtown, another boomtown was growing. Trem Carr of Monogram Pictures built Western-style sets for some "B-grade shoot-'em'up" pictures. The sets were bought by Ernie Hickson and moved to a 100-acre parcel in Placerita Canyon. Soon the likes of John Wayne, Gene Autry, Bob Steele, Ken Maynard, Hopalong Cassidy, Charlie Starrett, Johnny Mack Brown, Roy Rogers, Mae West, Harry Carey Jr., Jock Mahoney, Clayton Moore and Glenn Ford would bring the legend of the West to life for the movie cameras. Following Hickson's death in 1952 the Monogram Ranch, as it was called, was purchased by Autry, who renamed it "Melody Ranch" after his radio show of the same name.

The ranch earned notoriety of a different kind in September 1955 when Signal publisher Fred Trueblood, on an errand to get more paper, heard the cries of a young boy in the "death trap pool" at Melody Ranch. Little Johnny Landis owed his life to Trueblood, who jumped in and held him above the surface until rescuers could assist the pair. The pool was part of a movie shoot and, as Placerita Canyon youngsters did so often, the youth had snuck into the ranch while it was vacant.

In 1962 a raging fire destroyed 17,200 acres of Placerita Canyon, taking with it most of the buildings of Melody Ranch. Billed as the worst fire disaster in Newhall's history, it leveled almost all the wooden structures and incinerated countless items of Western memorabilia. "There won't be any more Dodge Cities here," the caretaker said as flames engulfed the ranch. In 1991, the Veluzat family purchased what was left of Melody Ranch — now a 10-acre parcel — and have painstakingly restored the main street, christening it with the production of Disney's "Tall Tales."

A few years before the inferno and a few miles up the canyon, Walt Disney purchased the Golden Oak Ranch for use in his family-oriented films. A home for Walt was built (but never used) along with a handful of old-fashioned towns and a lake with a covered bridge. Soon shows like "Spin and Marty" were filmed there and shown nationwide, along with many nature and Western movies made by Disney. Since then, the location has been used for "Bonanza," "Roots" and "Little House on the Prairie."

Disney extended his good will to Hart Park in 1962 when Walt himself presided over a donation of a herd of buffalo to the park grounds, the descendants of which still graze the hillsides.

Other productions that delighted townsfolk with a glimpse of their favorite stars were "The Dukes of Hazzard," which made Warner Bros. Valencia Oaks Ranch in Pico Canyon their home; "Greatest American Hero," which used Hart High School as a base of operations; and the hundreds of commercials and movies that used spectacular Vasquez Rocks as a backdrop. It wasn't unusual to see a stagecoach waiting for a spaceship to finish a shot at the unique rock formations. Needless to say, it provided the perfect town of Bedrock for the modern stone-age family, "The Flintstones."

Even director Stephen Spielberg made his first feature film, "Duel," on Sierra Highway and Vasquez Canyon Road.

The local film business is not without its tragedies. Dick Kerwoo, 32, father of two, was wing-walking as a movie stunt for the Franklin Farnum Co. in 1924 when he plunged to his death from 500 feet in the air. The most notorious accident was the "Twilight Zone" filming at Indian Dunes, where a downed helicopter killed actor Vic Morrow and two child actors. Wrongful death and criminal negligence charges were filmed, and later dismissed, against director John Landis and his production company. Filming at Indian Dunes is no longer permitted.

Today the valley is home to several sound stages and businesses that support the industry, including Santa Clarita Studios, Lindsey Studios, Magic Movie Studios of Valencia, Studio K, Shotmaker, Technicolor, Creative Presentations and AVG Productions.

In 1925, The Signal recognized the benefits of the fledgling movie industry, pointing out on April 2, “We Should Encourage the Motion Picture People.” The editorial emphasized the value of the valley’s “atmosphere” and “location.”

“We venture to say that for every courtesy we have ever extended them they have reciprocated eventually with dollars and cents. ... We should not extend an ‘icy paw’ to an industry that brings so much added wealth and prestige to the community, without doing it any harm.”

However, one of The Signal’s own editors, A.B. Thatcher, didn’t like movie folk or the people they attracted, writing in 1932, “It seems to me that those New York newspapers and picture men just about furnish the climax of damphoolishness when they chase an actress all over town to try to get her picture. But I suppose they think they have to do it so other damphools can see what she looks like.”

It would be more than 50 years later before the SCV Chamber of Commerce would form a Film Development Committee specifically to attract the film industry. Now, nearly half of all permitted location activity in Los Angeles County occurs in the Santa Clarita Valley.

Studios that have set foot in the valley have nicknamed it “Newhallywood.” The rest of the entertainment industry agrees. Would William S. Hart ever have dreamed the valley would become the site for “The Terminator” or a landing stop for the Starship Enterprise?

The Santa Clarita Valley has helped make the film and television industries the art form of the century.

And that’s a wrap.

Photo described as “Newhall Movie Set, 1920s.” Looks like Tom Mix in the car, but that’s not known. Mix, whose popularity as a silent Western actor was on the rise as William S. Hart was entering retirement, ran one of his early Mixvilles in Newhall, in the “triangle” formed by present-day San Fernando Road, Newhall Avenue and Market Street.

In and around Newhall --

Beale's Cut

Located a few miles south of Newhall off of Sierra Highway, this stagecoach pass was dug by hand in 1854 to a depth of 30 feet. Troops under the command of Gen. Edward Fitzgerald Beale deepened the cut to 90 feet in 1863. It's unique form and close proximity to the movie ranches in the Santa Clarita Valley made it an ideal location for many action scenes.

Movie men Storm Boyd (left) and Phil Lang at Beale's Cut, looking south, 1907.

According to contributor Tanner Manceaux, Boyd, Lang and Paul Hurst ("The Ox-Bow Incident," 1943) "traveled from New York, California and Jacksonville, (writing) screenplays, acting, directing and staring in Kalem's films in the very early 1900s."

Kalem Co. was a pioneer film company that turned out 420 titles from about 1907-17. According to Manceaux, its biggest money maker was comedian Lloyd Hamilton of "Ham & Bud."

Boyd, born in Watertown, New York (date unk.) was the assistant director on 28 of those titles in 1912-13 and acted in one, "The Grim Tale of War" (1913). Lang, born c. 1886 in Xenia, Ohio, wrote four screenplays from 1914-19. Both Boyd and Lang died in 1919 — Lang on Jan. 24 in New York City; Boyd on Oct. 13 in Syracuse, New York.

Cutaway from the John Ford film, "Stagecoach" (United Artists, 1939) — the movie that "made" John Wayne. Ford evidently liked Beale's Cut, because he used it at least twice before: in "Straight Shooting" (1917, with Harry Carey) and "The Iron Horse" (1924, with George O'Brien).

“Suddenly”
Starring Frank Sinatra

These photos are from a series taken by Bill Rice (Hart High class of 1959, became an outdoor writer and photographer for Western magazines, moved to Costa Mesa). Rice was 12 years old at the time and shot the photos with his Brownie camera. He writes, “I went down there every day and watched the filming and visited and even had box lunches with the actors. ... Sterling Hayden and Johnny Beradino were great with the kids watching; Sinatra was kind of a jerk.” Rice said the actors staged a gunfight behind Tom Frew’s blacksmith shop on San Fernando Road (west side, between 8th and Market) and filmed inside the Bill Ross home.

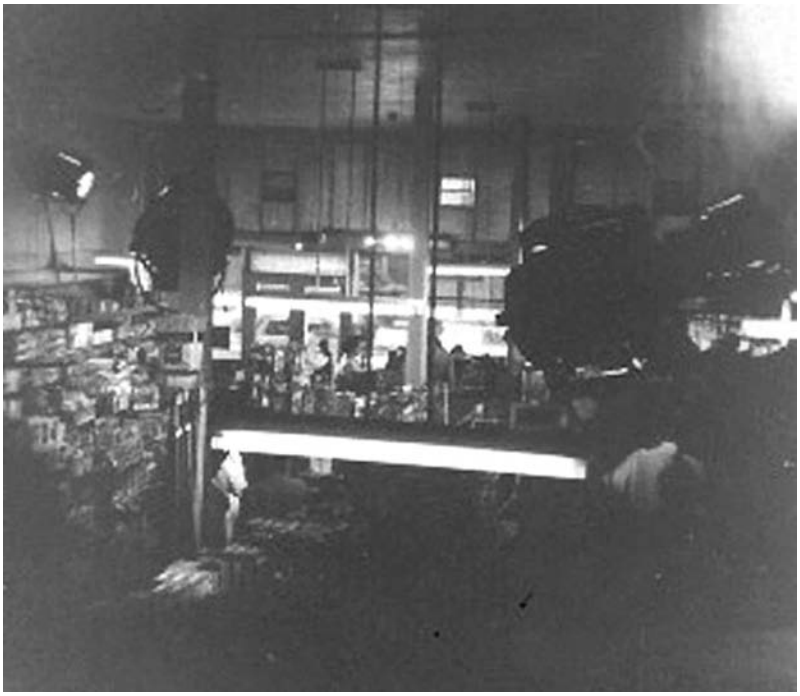
Famous scenes from the film were shot with Frank Sinatra at the Saugus Train Station when it was still in its original location on the east side of Bouquet Canyon (San Fernando) Road, about 2 miles north of downtown Newhall. The station was moved to SCV Historical Society headquarters at Heritage Junction Historic Park (inside Wm. S. Hart Park) on June 24, 1980.

Written by Richard Sale and directed by Lewis Allen, “Suddenly” is a thriller that sees the tranquility of a small town marred by Sheriff Tod Shaw’s unsuccessful courtship of widow Ellen Benson, a pacifist who can’t abide guns or those who use them. But violence descends on Ellen’s household willy-nilly when the U.S. President passes through town. Hired assassin John Baron finds the Bensonhome ideal for an ambush. (Summary from the Internet Movie Database.)

The 1954 United Artists picture was produced by Robert Bassler and stars Sinatra as Baron, Sterling Hayden as Shaw, James Gleason as Pop Benson, Nancy Gates as Ellen Benson, Kim Charney as Peter “Pidge” Benson III, Willis Bouchey as Dan Charney, Paul Frees as Benny Conklin, Christopher Dark as Bart Wheeler, James Lilburn as Jud Kelly, Kem Dibbs as Wilson, Clark Howat as Haggerty, Charles Smith as Bebop and Paul Wexler as Slim Adams. Also appearing are John Beradino, Richard Collier, Roy Engel, Ted Stanhope, Charles Wagenheim and Dan White.

Frank Sinatra at the gas station on the northwest corner of Newhall Avenue and San Fernando Road, across from William S. Hart Park.

The gas station, built by Mr. Penhorwood (known as “Penny”), was the first Standard Oil station in the Santa Clarita Valley. Penhorwood also built the home on Arcadia Street that Municipal Court Judge C.M. MacDougall lived in.



Inside the M&N Market during the filming of the movie "Suddenly" on April 15, 1954. Visible are the klieg lights and the faint image of a crew member at lower right. The store was located mid-block on the east side of San Fernando Road between 8th and Market streets, just north of Newhall Hardware.

Actor Dan White outside the M&N Market on San Fernando Road, mid-way between 8th and Market streets.

Visible on the west side of San Fernando Road are the Newhall Refining Co.'s business office and Lozier's Men's Store. The Newhall Refining Co. ran the former Newhall oil refinery, which was located along Sierra Highway southeast of San Fernando Road, adjacent to Beale's Cut. Lozier's was started by Percy Lozier and taken over by his son Bud in 1953 when Bud Lozier came home from the Merchant Marines.

Actor Sterling Hayden outside the M&N Market.

Vasquez Rocks

Vasquez Rocks (now a Los Angeles County Park) is a familiar sight to moviegoers. It has been used as an exterior location for many, many Western films and television series.

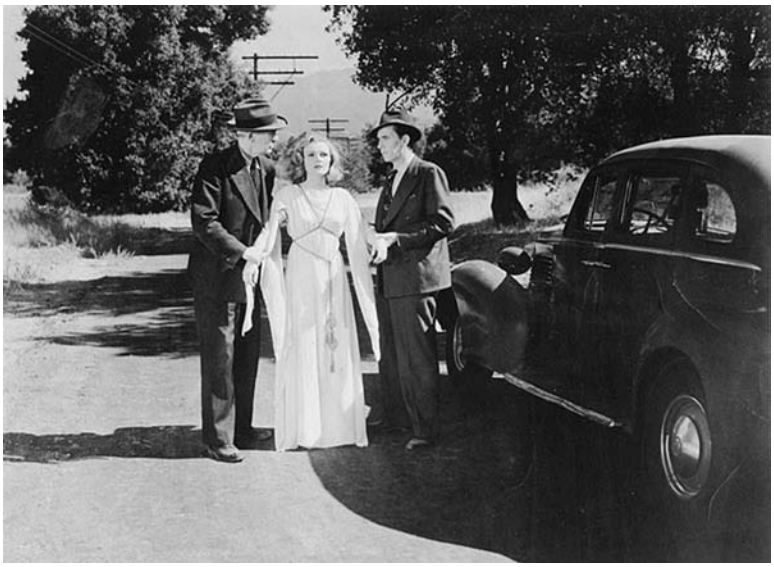
Starting at front, second from left: Bob Steele, Hoot Gibson and Ken Maynard at Vasquez Rocks, c. 1930s.

James Arness (as Marshal Matt Dillon) and Amanda Blake (as Kitty Russell) from the long-running television Western, "Gunsmoke" (1955-75), on location at Vasquez Rocks in Agua Dulce.

Note the cigarette in Arness' hand, something that is not common today. In the 1950's, actors in "family" series were often seen smoking on screen, a practice discouraged after smoking was linked to lung cancer.

Placerita Canyon

Many location shoots were conducted in Placerita Canyon, the original home of the Monogram Movie Ranch which later became Gene Autry's Melody Ranch. Also the home of Disney's Golden Oak Ranch, the canyon is frequently seen in movies and on television.



Henry Hall (as the sheriff), Louise Currie (as Stella Saunders) and Dan White (as Deputy Elmer) in Placerita Canyon, in a scene from the Bela Lugosi picture, "Voodoo Man" (Monogram, 1944).

Lugosi never topped his 1931 classic "Dracula" and was on the outs by 1941 when Monogram decided to try to capitalize on his name. Monogram, king of the "B" Western, put Lugosi under contract and churned out nine cultish horror flicks during the war years. (Lugosi actually made 10 pictures for Monogram, including the earlier "Mysterious Mr. Wong" in 1935.)

Directed by William Beaudine and written by Robert Charles, "Voodoo Man" features Lugosi as the twisted Dr. Richard Marlowe, who uses voodoo in an effort to revive his long-dead wife — using the life-essence of beautiful girls he traps in his dungeon beneath his mansion.

Johnny Mack Brown is "Gunning for Justice" through Placerita Canyon in this 1948 Monogram picture.

The Monogram movie ranch covered more than 100 acres in Placerita Canyon. In 1952 it was purchased by Gene Autry and renamed "Melody Ranch."

A contemporary of Autry, Bob Steele, Harry Carey, Hoot Gibson, Ken Maynard and Tom Tyler, Brown was one of the top ten "B" Western stars at the box office during the 1940s. Born Sept. 1, 1904 in Dothan, Ala., he appeared in 160 films from 1927 to 1953 — of which more than 60 were for Monogram, starting in 1943. He died Nov. 14, 1974 in Woodland Hills from a cardiac condition.

Released Nov. 7, 1948, "Gunning for Justice" was a 55-minute, black-and-white Western directed by Ray Taylor and written by J. Benton Cheney. Brown and Raymond Hatton starred; also appearing were Ted Adams, Dee Cooper, Evelyn Finley, Carol Henry, I. Stanford Jolley, Artie Ortego, Bud Osborne, House Peters Jr., Bill Potter, Boyd Stockman, Max Terhune, Dan White and Bob Woodward.

Melody Ranch: Movie Magic in Placerita Canyon

By Leon Worden
Signal City Editor

Saturday, March 29, 2003

Cowboy Poetry Festival-goers who are accustomed to seeing the main street at Melody Ranch in faded brown hues are in for a pleasant surprise this weekend. HBO has repainted the buildings in bright colors to give them that brand-new, 1890s look for its upcoming series, "Deadwood."

Locals came close to seeing a "different" Melody Ranch several years ago when the street was gray-washed for Bruce Willis in "Last Man Standing," but the owners quickly resurrected the normal appearance in time for the crowds.

Color didn't much matter when movie makers were using the Placerita Canyon ranch to feed America's insatiable lust for "B" Westerns in the black-and-white 1930s, '40s and '50s. They'd rename a few buildings and swap out the signs at city limits so that at one moment in 1955 you'd be in "Wichita" with Joel McCrea, and the next you'd be in Dodge City for an episode of "Gunsmoke."

"Put a sign up and that's where you're at," says Renaud Veluzat, who with his brother Andre bought the ranch in 1990 and, since the inception of the city of Santa Clarita's poetry festival in 1994, have opened their doors to the public once a year. The rest of the calendar is consumed with the latest feature film or television series or Pepsi commercial or Jennifer Lopez music video.

But the Melody Ranch story isn't simply a tale of changing a few signs or painting a few buildings. It's a story with roots that run nearly as deep as the origins of cinema in California. It's a story of Hollywood legends cutting their teeth. It's a story of pioneer movie makers — their aspirations and creativity, their rivalries and business deals. And it's a story of a canyon in Newhall that has been seen across the country and around the globe in millions upon millions of feet of film.

Genesis

Newhall grew up with the movies as though it were the most natural small-town thing in the world. Scattered among The Newhall Signal's weekly front-page church notices and amazingly routine automotive fatalities were items such as this, from 1926: "A company of 125 movie folks was here one day this week taking a railroad picture, using the depot as the scene. The cowboy sections of Tom (Mix's) company has also been busy in this section for the past several weeks." Sports reporting amounted to baseball results between the local batsmen and Mix's Wildcats or Harry Carey's Saugus Indians. Society watchers of the '20s and '30s could keep tabs on the area's prominent citizens — businessmen and church elders, but also Carey and William S. Hart and the blackface vaudevillian Charles E. Mack.

Some of the biggest names in "moving pictures" at the time, Hart, Mix and Carey were thoroughly familiar with the canyons around Newhall even in the 1910s, and they would have been aware when some Midwesterners arrived on the scene.

One of those was Trem Carr, a native of Trenton, Ill., who left the construction trade in 1922 when it became clear there was a future in celluloid. By 1926 he was producing films in Placerita Canyon under his own name, Trem Carr Productions Ltd., and he partnered with another Midwesterner who would become a lasting ally — W. Ray Johnston, whose Rayart Pictures Corp. distributed Carr's early films.

Another man who would prove important to Carr was Ernie Hickson, who likewise came out West in 1922 and garnered his first known movie credit in 1924 as a writer. But it was as a set designer and artistic director that Hickson would demonstrate his worth.

Hickson had grown up in Columbus, Ohio, and gravitated toward the stage as a high schooler — initially as an actor but developing an early knack for set design. After school he created sets for a theater troupe that traveled throughout the United States. A historian and collector of old Western memorabilia, Hickson had both the artistry and knowledge to add a good measure of authenticity to Carr's films.

Carr and Johnston cemented their relationship when they formed Syndicate Pictures in 1928. Johnston was president and Carr was vice president, and together they churned out low-budget oaters with Tom Tyler, when they were lucky, in the leading role.

In 1931 they reorganized Syndicate into Monogram Pictures, with Johnston as president and Carr in charge of production, and Carr took out a five-year lease on land in Placerita Canyon.

They weren't alone in the neighborhood. According to The Newhall Signal of June 4, 1931, "Placerita Canyon has become quite a movie center. At the Jones ranch, a village street has been built for the use of companies making 'Westerns' which are much in vogue right now. The Trem Carr company has also obtained a lease on a ranch, and is planning a 'five year program' ... This is next to the Jones tract."

Hickson built Johnston and Carr their own Western movie street, with aged lumber Hickson picked up in Nevada. The location was just east of the modern junction of Placerita Canyon Road and state Route 14, at today's Golden Oak Ranch — where, in a bizarre twist of history, the Walt Disney Co. would later build a Western movie street. But that's another story.

Everyone was working together in the early '30s. There was Paul Malvern, a young Oregon native who learned the ropes from Carr and soon formed his own company, Lone Star Productions. Carr produced, and Hickson designed sets, for several Lone Star films, which Malvern released through Carr and Johnston's Monogram.

Most of the early Monogram and Lone Star pictures owed their appeal to writer-director Robert N. Bradbury, who frequently cast his son, stage name Bob Steele, in the leading role. Curiously, Bradbury often had Steele's character avenge his father's death.

Steele would become one of the big names in the genre, but he wasn't the only budding luminary to traipse through a Lone Star production in Placerita Canyon. Steele got a job for one of his Glendale High School buddies in his dad's films — a youngster Steele had known as Marion Morrison. Yes, that Marion Morrison — stage name John Wayne — starred in several pictures at the Placerita movie ranch from 1933 to 1935.

Wayne was usually an undercover good guy whom the townsfolk mistook for a bad guy until the end of the 50-plus-minute film. Another local, the talented stuntman Yakima Canutt, was repeatedly cast as the gang leader; George "Gabby" Hayes honed his gruff persona; and Steele's twin brother, Bill Bradbury, occasionally did the off-screen warbling while Wayne — as "Singing Sandy," the original singing movie cowboy — lip-synched to his leading lady or ambled on horseback through Vasquez Rocks.

Growing pains

There was money to be made in this business, but it was a business, with cast and crew and creditors to pay. All of the local upstarts were processing their film at Herbert J. Yates' Consolidated Film Laboratories, and they were getting deeper and deeper into debt to him.

Yates, a Columbia University-educated Midwesterner 10 years their senior, knew that Carr and Johnston and another poverty-row producer named Nat Levine wanted to expand. Yates came up with a plan to square their debts and build an empire. In 1935 Yates masterminded a merger — combining his own Consolidated with Carr and Johnston's Monogram, Malvern's Lone Star, Levine's Mascot Pictures and M.H. Hoffman's Liberty Films — to create a new enterprise called Republic Pictures Corp.

With all of this talent it's little wonder Republic was wildly successful. Then again, with all of these strong personalities, it's a wonder Republic didn't self-destruct. To some extent it did, in the studio offices, anyway.

Yates appointed Johnston as Republic's first president, but there was bad blood between them and Yates quickly replaced him with someone better suited to do his bidding — Levine.

Levine was a high school dropout with gumption. In the 1920s he'd distribute films no one else would touch, and take chances on no-name actors and zany ideas. Singing cowboys like John Wayne — dubbed or not — were adding a new dimension to Western talkies, and Levine was on the lookout in 1934 when he happened upon a promising crooner named Orvon Gene Autry.

Here was an Oakie who couldn't rope or ride, but Levine had Yakima Canutt take care of that with a few lessons. Levine broke Autry in by having him compose a few songs for a pair of Ken Maynard pictures, then vaulted him into the leading role in "The Phantom Empire," a 13-part Western/sci-fi serial set in an underground kingdom, at a rate of $150 a week.

In 1935 Levine, now head of Republic, gave Autry his next lead in a feature — "Tumbling Tumbleweeds," shot primarily on Carr and Johnston's lot in Placerita Canyon. Within three years Autry was a big enough star to renegotiate his contract with Yates, going on strike before Yates relented to Autry's demand for $6,000 for the first two pictures every year and $10,000 for each one thereafter.

Johnston and Carr had broken from Yates by then. According to published interview much later with an elderly Levine, Carr and Johnston walked away voluntarily, while Yates eventually bought out Levine for $1 million — which Levine promptly squandered at the racetrack.

Meanwhile, Carr's five-year lease was up on his Placerita property and he would have to move.

Hickson evidently had amassed a bit of cash, because he was able to purchase some land to the west of Carr's expired leasehold. In 1936 he literally picked up sticks, using a team of horses to skid the Western buildings down the dirt road to the current location at Oak Creek and Placerita Canyon roads.

A lone paragraph in The Newhall Signal of Oct. 15, 1936, doesn't quite tell the whole story: "The Trem Carr Studio is being moved this week to a 10-acre tract of land near the Glen Farnsworth Ranch, about half a mile from its former location. The nearness of oil wells compelled the move."

Monogram again

Hickson's buildings weren't just facades. They were complete structures, with interiors. And more than just a movie set, Hickson erected a self-contained town at the new location, complete with nine permanent residences, corrals for cowboys who stabled their horses there, a restaurant and a bunkhouse for cast and crew who were, in those days, a "fer piece" from Hollywood. Over time Hickson added property to his ranch, which eventually spanned 110 acres.

Free from Yates' leash, Johnston restarted Monogram Productions Inc. in 1937. Carr and Malvern spent the late 1930s producing for Universal, but by 1940 Carr was back at Monogram, relishing the independence it gave him.

Hickson's ranch, as Monogram's "home" studio, was called the Monogram Ranch, and just like today, production companies small and large — Paramount, RKO, Republic — were renting it out for the variety of scenes it offered. Sets, according to a list by resident ranch manager Charles Hays, included the main Western street, a log cabin and pioneer settlement, a Mexican street and hacienda, an Indian compound, a country schoolhouse and playground, a relay post, barns and corrals, and a trading post.

Hickson provided all the power, lights and cable the producers needed and, from his collections, period furniture and fixtures to dress the sets, as well as merchandise to fit out an old-time grocery, drug, hardware or general store.

Hickson reported that 30 films were made at the ranch in 91 working days during 1940, up from 20 films in 1939. Labor in 1940 included 7,000 movie company employees; 14 Newhall residents on Hickson's payroll; 14,400 hours of set preparation at $1.10 an hour; seven restaurant workers; and various maintenance men, maids, cowboys and extras.

There were also 5,000 sight-seers in 1940. Visitors were permitted on Sundays by request. Among the 7,000 movie company people were William Boyd (as Hopalong Cassidy), crooner Tex Ritter, Ray "Crash" Corrigan and Jack Randall. John Wayne and Claire Trevor reprised their 1939 "Stagecoach" matchup, which wasn't filmed at Monogram, with 1940's "Dark Command," which was. Fourth billing, behind Walter Pidgeon, went to Roy Rogers.

While their paths still crossed more often than not, Hickson and Carr started going their separate ways. Hickson, as the property owner, officially renamed his ranch the "Placeritos" on June 21, 1941, and did so in a big celebration with Newhall residents and Hollywood people that included archery and horseshoe pitching, burro rides for kids and a bucking horse contest.

Carr, now a 50-year-old studio executive, tested the waters in other genres. Monogram signed Boris Karloff to a half-dozen films in 1939 and 1940 — including "The Ape," shot at Hickson's ranch. From 1941-44 a washed-up Bela Lugosi signed on for what cultists call the "Monogram 9," with locations in Placerita Canyon and indoor work in East Hollywood, where Monogram opened a studio in 1943. Charlie Chan and the Bowery Boys were Monogram's, too.

Westerns were still king, and Monogram targeted the Saturday matinee crowd with "trio" series — low-budget films with three recurring stars who were past their prime but could still draw an audience.

In 1941 Carr, actor Charles "Buck" Jones and Monogram production boss Scott R. Dunlap each invested $3,300 to create Monogram's "Rough Riders," featuring Jones, Tim McCoy and Ray Hatton. They made eight pictures before Buck died in the Cocoanut Grove fire. Years later, Dunlap bought out Carr and Buck's interest on the cheap, and pocketed $250,000 when he sold the series to television.

Monogram came back with the multi-hero "Range Busters" series in 1942-43 and in 1943-44 produced eight pictures with Ken Maynard, Hoot Gibson and Bob Steele as the "Trail Blazers."

Perhaps no single actor epitomizes Monogram's output at Hickson's movie ranch during the 1940s quite like Johnny Mack Brown.

A veteran of MGM, Universal and other big houses, Brown was cut in 1943 when Universal decided to polish its image and dump low-budget Westerns. Brown found a home at Monogram, where he churned out more than 60 pictures over the next decade and was one of the top 10 money-makers in the Western film business.

But the sun was setting on “B” Westerns.

Trem Carr died in 1946 and Steve Broidy took over at Monogram. That year Broidy formed Allied Artists as a subsidiary to distribute Monogram’s meatier productions. Television was taking a bigger and bigger bite out of the Saturday matinee. Broidy shut down the low-budget side in 1952 and put Johnny Mack Brown to pasture. In 1953 he erased the Monogram name altogether in favor of Allied Artists, and in 1964 Allied moved to New York.

Television

Rather than die with the “B” Western, Hickson’s Placeritos Ranch made the transition to the small screen. But Ernie Hickson, himself, didn’t.

Gene Autry had been interested in Hickson’s movie town ever since he first laid eyes on it in “Tumbling Tumbleweeds.” By now a millionaire star of film and radio with a traveling road show, rodeo, and top-10 recordings that ran the gamut from “Mexicali Rose” to “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,” Autry was in a position to buy the Placeritos from Hickson’s widow, Bess, following Hickson’s death on Jan. 22, 1952.

The sale was reported in The Newhall Signal a year later, on Jan. 22, 1953, which acknowledged that Autry “will continue the ranch as a movie-making location” but heralded the news as “the end of an era for some folks.”

“(The ranch) has come to be an institution in this area and was the site of the colorful Old West (July 4) Celebrations in 1949, ‘50 and ‘51,” Signal Publisher Fred W. Trueblood writes. “The most outstanding feature of the ranch was the remarkable old museum that Mr. Hickson had collected over the years. ... One of the most interesting items perhaps was a number of very old-fashioned slot machines that were found in the old west saloon. These old-time, one-armed bandits not only snatched your quarter but gave you a colorful spinning of assorted wheels and played a tune to boot.”

The ranch known as the Placeritos, nicknamed “Slippery Gulch” when it hosted Newhall’s July 4th festivities, was now called Melody Ranch — a name Autry had coined in song and celluloid more than a decade earlier.

Trueblood was correct in predicting that the ranch wouldn’t be quite as “public” as it had been under Hickson’s ownership, but there was no slowdown in production.

Autry leased the ranch to feature film producers — Allied, Columbia and United Artists were big users — but it was most often seen in living rooms from coast to coast when “The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp” with Hugh O’Brian went into production in 1955. CBS countered the same year with a Western series of its own at Melody Ranch — “Gunsmoke,” starring James Arness and Amanda Blake.

Autry’s own production company, Flying A Pictures, used Melody Ranch for some of its own productions in the mid-1950s — not “The Gene Autry Show,” but rather “Annie Oakley” with Gail Davis and “Buffalo Bill Jr.” with Dickie Jones.

Autry himself went before the cameras at Melody Ranch for the last time in 1958 when he appeared alongside John Wayne in a network retrospective on Western movies. In 1961 Autry quit his road shows and bought the California Angels baseball team.

Then came Aug. 28, 1962.

The first blaze broke out just after noon in Hasley Canyon, north of Castaic Junction. The second broke out an hour later on a ranch between Newhall and Saugus. High winds whipped the flames into the most intense inferno anyone had ever seen.

When the smoke cleared three days later 17,200 acres had been scorched and 15 structures and numerous out-buildings were lost. No one was killed, but the Western street at Melody Ranch, the setting for “High Noon’s” immortal face-down, was gone.

“I had always planned to erect a Western museum there,” Autry remembered in 1995, “but priceless Indian relics and a collection of rare guns, including a set used by Billy the Kid, went up in smoke. Thank God, the ranch hands and all 14 of our horses were uninjured.”

Of course, Autry did go on to build a museum, but not in Placerita Canyon. The Gene Autry Museum of Western Heritage opened in 1988 in Griffith Park.

The fire spared little. Elvis Presley was on location for a (still) photo shoot when the flames swept through, and he helped save one of the structures by dousing it with buckets of water when it caught fire. The house, still there, had reportedly been used in the 1940 picture “My Little Chickadee” with Mae West and W.C. Fields.

Also spared were two turn-of-the-century locomotives that Autry purchased as derelicts in the mid-1950s for use as props in series like “The Virginian.” In 1972 Autry gave one of the train engines back to he Denver & Rio Grande Railroad for use on a tourist line, and the other he donated in 1982 to the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society. It’s parked in front of the Saugus Train Station in downtown Newhall today.

Production didn’t grind to a halt altogether. “The terrain (was) so battle-scarred,” Autry said, “that it was used two months later for an episode of television’s war series, ‘Combat.’”

But primarily Melody Ranch was where Autry pastured his famous movie horse, Champion.

Autry’s first wife, Ina, handled the business affairs, and after the fire she hired one of his road-show performers, Henry Crowell, to run the ranch. Autry would visit only a few more times.

“I cared for Champion and the other horses at Melody Ranch and managed the ranch for over 30 years,” Crowell recalled in 1997. “One of the hardest things I ever had to do was to put Champion to sleep.

“The date was May 9, 1990. I’ll never forget it. Champ was a lot more than just a horse. Champion was my special friend. I could make Champ smile just by raising one hand.”

Ina Autry died in 1980. In 1981 Gene married Jackie Ellam, who sold off the 110-acre ranch piece by piece, and who is ungraciously remembered by locals as the reason Autry’s museum ended up in Los Angeles instead of Newhall.

“I kept (Melody Ranch) until the last living Champion died,” Autry remembered.

With Champion’s death, the final remaining 10 acres, where Ernie Hickson had moved his Western movie street in 1936, went on the market.

Today

Paul T. Veluzat arrived in 1939 and bought a ranch in the Haskell Canyon area of Saugus. Like many ranchers of the period, he leased it out for location filming. Veluzat’s three sons, Rene, Renaud and Andre, all found their way into the movie business, initially by renting jeeps and tanks to film makers.

Andre and Renaud still run their motion picture vehicle rental business in Newhall, as well as their late father’s movie ranch in Saugus. In December 1990 they jumped at the chance to buy the historic Melody Ranch property and rebuild the Western street.

Andre and Renaud had no blueprints to work from when they started work in 1991. But Autry had thousands of fans, and many had old photographs of themselves in front of the buildings. Old films helped, too.

“We knew how tall John Wayne was,” says Andre, “so we’d scale that wood according to his height.”

Keen on accuracy, they’d analyze the images of Wayne to determine whether a particular building called for 1-by-6’s or 1-by-8’s.

Autry would pay an infrequent visit to check on their progress, and within 15 months they were ready to go.

Today the Melody Ranch Motion Picture Studio is a 22-acre complex — the Veluzats acquired a second parcel — with two large sound stages, more than 65 storefronts, and several complete interiors including hotels, a bank, a church and a jail. Construction continues on a remake of the hacienda Hickson built in the 1930s, with antique doors the Veluzats found in a Warner Bros. warehouse. Future plans call for the reconstruction of the Mexican street, and like Hickson, they have a prop house for dressing sets in authentic, old-West style.

Already they’ve built the museum Newhall residents had hoped for. Open by appointment, it houses a beautiful collection of 1930s cars the Veluzat brothers amassed over the years as well as the tank Renaud drove in “Rambo III,” a stagecoach from the “Maverick” remake, one of the “General Lee” cars that the brothers provided for “The Dukes of Hazzard,” lobby cards from old films shot at the ranch, and more.

One thing that has changed since the old days is the amount of use Melody Ranch sees. It's rented to producers all year 'round except for one weekend, when the Veluzats host the city's annual Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival. It's something they've done ever since the first festival 10 years ago, when the earthquake of Jan. 17, 1994, scuttled the city's plans to hold it in the Hart High School auditorium.

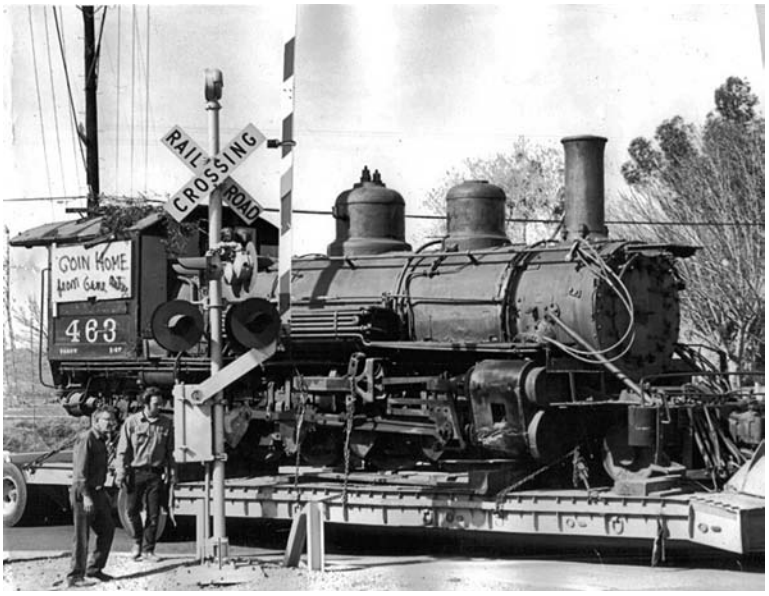
"The Veluzat family so graciously and wonderfully said, 'How would you like to do this at Melody Ranch?'" said modern-day Western singer Don Edwards. "What better place to do a festival than Melody Ranch?"

Indeed.

Main street at Melody Ranch before the 1962 fire (probably 1950s). Perhaps one of the most familiar Western Main Streets in the movies.

Mexican chapel at Melody Ranch

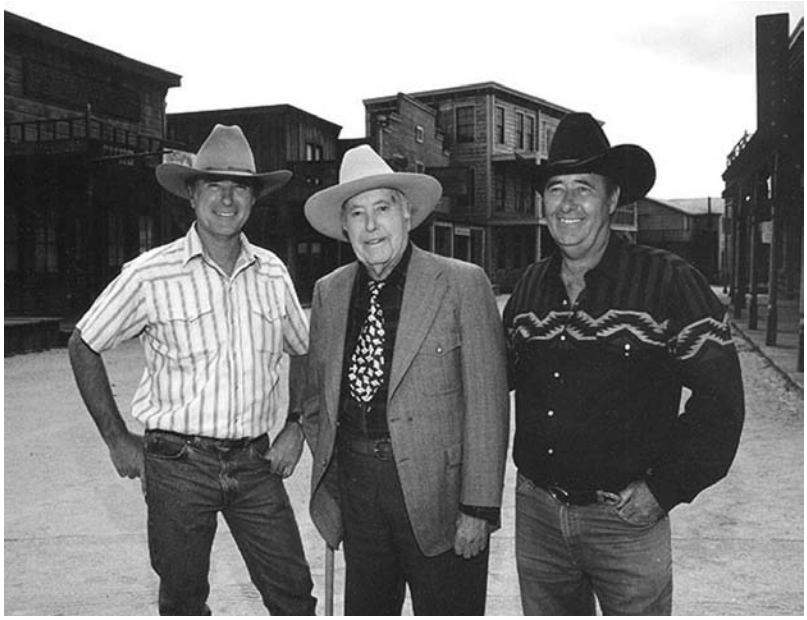
The Hacienda at Monogram (Melody) Ranch. Perished in the fire of August 28, 1962, along with most of the rest of the buildings at the Western movie town in Placerita Canyon. Photo probably 1962, just before the fire.



Gene Autry's Engine 463, which he acquired and kept at Melody Ranch as a prop, is trucked through Newhall on its way back to the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad.

Gene Autry purchased the locomotive after it was retired from service, and stored it in the 1960s at his Melody Ranch in Placerita Canyon, where it was used as a movie prop (as were other retired locomotives, including the Mogul Engine No. 1629, which Autry later gave to the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society). The 463 was a derelict when, in March 1972, Autry "returned" it to the Rio Grande. There, it was restored and put to work hauling tourists on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad beginning in 1994.

Aug. 26, 1962: Gene Autry's Melody Ranch movie town burns to the ground as flames engulf most of the hills surrounding the Santa Clarita Valley.
Photo believed to have been shot by Fred Trueblood, owner of The Newhall Signal newspaper.



Paul T. Veluzat (center), flanked by two of his three sons, Renaud (left) and Andre (right) at their Melody Ranch Motion Picture Studio in 1997.

Following the devastating August 28, 1962 fire that burned down most of the buildings at Melody Ranch, Gene Autry and his wife, Jackie, began selling off pieces of the 110-acre property in Placerita Canyon. The last 10 acres, where the buildings had stood, went on the market in November 1990. Paul, Renaud and Andre Veluzat, who owned other Santa Clarita Valley movie properties including a large movie ranch in Haskell Canyon and a motion picture vehicle rental business, bought the property and began rebuilding Melody Ranch to its former glory. Today the ranch is once again alive with feature, television, commercial and video filming, and since 1994 has been the main venue for the city of Santa Clarita's annual Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival.

FILMING IN THE SANTA CLARITA VALLEY - A PRIMER FOR DOCENTS

The following is some basic information for your reference and sharing; it explains the influence of the film industry on the area and why it's important we reinforce that influence.

Note: For your questions only, feel free to call Carol Rock at 251-9457.
For the public's questions, please refer them to the Santa Clarita Valley Film and Entertainment Bureau at 1-800-4FILMSC.

Filming is one of the key elements to this area's heritage, going back to 1903, when the canyons and streets of Newhall were teeming with cowboys and cameras.

Remember that filming isn't significant just because of our current fascination with celebrity, but because the advent of movies changed the face of America. When the first movies were shown, women fainted at the sight of a face ten feet tall and cowboys drawing down on the screen often prompted men to unholster their sidearms and shoot back. It was the first time that the rest of the world came to many people, a glimpse at life outside the homestead limits. And, for some, it was an introduction to fantasy on a grand scale.

* The first feature produced in the valley was "Bronco Billy's Christmas Dinner" in 1911, starring Newhall resident Gilbert "Billy" Anderson.

* Tom Mix used street of downtown Newhall as "Mixville," staging brawls and horse races. He built his own studio near the corner of Market and Walnut streets, from which he released "Western Blood" in 1918. Today, there are more than a dozen studios and ranches that cater to the industry, including Santa Clarita Studios, the Warren Entertainment Complex (Lindsey, Emily, Christopher, Swackhammer, Jim Pop studios and related industries, such as A.J. Construction) and Valencia Studios West.

* Soon after Mix started using "Mixville" as a location, Bob Anderson built a Western facade on Walnut St. that included two old-time saloons, grocery store, blacksmith shop, bank, dry goods emporium and restaurant. Studios using the town included Fox, Goldwyn, Thomas Ince and Wilson Studios.

* Movie ranches were also starting to attract attention, the oldest being Sable Ranch/ Rancho Santa Maria in Sand Canyon, where a hacienda surrounded by acres of open space gave producers the opportunity to move freely without disturbing the civilization that had begun to encroach on studios in the San Fernando Valley. Today, that ranch is still in operation as a film location, sporting two separate entrances with two totally different looks; a lake and babbling brook and rugged scenery.

* What attracted filmmakers to this area was its closeness to Hollywood and unspoiled vistas. Even before the freeways, it only took a couple of hours to get stars and equipment out here to shoot - as opposed to traveling for days or trying to create a look on a sound stage, which, in those days, were not air-conditioned and quite primitive by today's standards.

* This desirability led to the unions' "30-mile zone" which draws a circle roughly within a 30-mile radius from the corner of La Cienega and Hollywood Boulevards. Within that radius, production companies are not required to pay extra for travel amenities, such as hotels or extra transportation, because of the short travel time.

* Movie magic was alive and well long before special effects and pyrotechnics, staring in the teens, with stunts such as Tom Mix "jumping" Tony the Wonder Horse over the 90-foot gorge at Beale's Cut. Production photos reveal the bridge over which the horse ran. The magic of editing, or "painting out" the bridge made the horse seemed to fly.

* William S. Hart's used the area as a location, most notably for "The Testing Block," and of course, "Tumbleweeds." Ironically, when he left the ranch to the county as a park, he specified the property could not be used for any filming except documentaries about Hart.

* Movie disasters have been a routine part of filming in the SCV, from 1924, when stuntman Dick Kerwoo, father of two, plunged 500 feet to his death during a wingwalking attempt in Newhall to the "Twilight Zone" disaster that forced the industry to examine the liability involved in filming dangerous stunts such as the helicopter crash at Indian Dunes that killed Vic Morrow and two child actors. .

* Harry Carey's ranch in San Francisquito Canyon was the site of many productions in the 1920s, including the Trading Post that was washed away when the St. Francis Dam broke in 1928. Since then, its film activity has decreased significantly.

* Probably the most well-known movie ranch in the area is Melody Ranch, which started when Trem Carter of Monogram Pictures built some Western-style sets for some "B-grade shoot-em-up" pictures (what we would probably call today, "Straight to Video" releases). The sets were bought by Ernie Hickson in the 1930s, who moved them to a 100-acre parcel in Placerita Canyon.

Singing cowboy Gene Autry bought the ranch in 1953, christened it "Melody" and commenced to filling its streets with gunfire and hoofbeats, attracting stars like John Wayne, Hopalong Cassidy, Charlie Starrett, May West, Jock Mahoney, Roy Rogers, Clayton Moore and Glenn Ford. It's most famous visage: the main street of Dodge City, where Marshall Dillon welcomed millions of viewers every week to "Gunsmoke, " the longest-running Western in television history.

In 1962, a raging fire destroyed 17,200 acres of Placerita Canyon, taking with it most of the wooden buildings and priceless memorabilia Autry had collected. Another irony - it became the perfect set for the 60's show "Combat," which depended on burned-out buildings for sets. In 1991, the Veluzat family purchased the ranch and painstakingly restored it to its heyday, using photos and recollections from the thousands of movie cowboys and cowgirls who had lensed there in the past.

* Just before the inferno, Walt Disney bought a parcel of land up the canyon that became the Golden Oak Ranch, for his family-oriented movies and TV shows. A home for Walt was built onsite (but was never used) along with a handful of old-fashioned towns and a lake with a covered bridge. It is the only movie ranch that is fully irrigated and can be lush and green just about any time of the year. It is <u>not</u> open to the public. Disney's "Spin and Marty" was filmed there, as were parts of "Bonanza," "Roots," "little House on the Prairie," and "PeeWee's Big Adventure."

* FYI, Disney himself presided over the gift of a herd of buffalo at Hart Park in 1962. And it is rumored that The Oak of the Golden Dream really lies on the Golden Oak Ranch (hence the name), not within the county park. But that's another class....

* The Veluzats were probably the most active film family in the SCV in the lat 50 years; they have run a picture vehicle and equipment rental company as well as their Saugus ranch, which is at the end of Haskell Canyon Road and includes sets from the defunct Indian Dunes as well as complete small town USA and Mexican/European villages.

* Of course, the location that has served as heaven and earth to filmmakers is Vasquez Rocks County Park in Agua Dulce, where the Starship Enterprise has landed and Fred and Wilma Flintstone had that single-level starter home next to Betty and Barney Rubble. Used for everything from outer space to the Wild West, it has been the site of virtual cliff-hangers and thousands of car commercials, fast food spots, and posed as Vietnam for the film "For the Boys." So many tourists wanted to see the set of The Flintstones that the producers allowed the county to charge a minimal fee to walk through the make-believe town, with the proceeds going toward park improvements.

* The SCV didn't have a moving picture theater until 1941, when the American Theater on Spruce Street in Newhall opened, thanks to a donation of a lot by William S. Hart, who donated it for a theater and lodge for the American legion. When it opened, movies cost 30 cents for adults and kids go in for a dime - and that was for a cartoon, newsreel and usually two movies. Before that, Hart's films were screened at the Newhall Elementary School auditorium or at the closest moviehouse, Cody's New Theatre in San Fernando. The valley used to have two drive-in movies; the Mustang Drive-In on Soledad Canyon Road in Canyon Country (near Gold's Gym) and the Corral Drive-In on San Francisquito Road (near the Circle K). Both are now memories.

5. Mining and Oil

GOLD MINING IN EARLY CALIFORNIA

WITH EMPHASIS ON SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By Don Woelke

The name California first used as the name for a fictional Island Nation, born in the mind of an early, (1500s,) Spanish author, Senor Garcia Ordones Montalvo, has, since its conception been associated with the most sought after metal in the world, GOLD. Senor Montalvo described, his fictiona1 Island Nation as, - "as an Island on the right hand side of the Indies called California, very close to Terrestrial Paradise (Heaven on Earth) inhabited by a race of Giant Black Women. They lived in the fashion of the Amazons, for they had no men among them. They were of strong and hardy bodies, of ardent courage, and great force (strength.) Their Island was the strongest in the world with its steep cliffs, and rocky shores. Their arms were all of GOLD, -- . as was the harnesses for the wild beasts they tamed, to ride; FOR IN THE WHOLE ISLAND THERE WAS NO OTHER METAL BUT GOLD!! . . Oh, yes the Queen Rulers' name (?) What else but CALIFIA.

For a hundred or so years, Golden California lived only in the minds of Senor Montalvo and his readers, until the early Spanish explorers came to the Western World.

Now that we know "California" was considered to be GOLDEN long before James Marshall and Sutter's Mill, let's look into some of the special properties of GOLD, and the men who harvested it.

GOLD

The most sought after metal in the world because of its great value, everlasting beauty, and mans ongoing desire to find more and more of it. It stimulated exploration and migration of many cultures throughout the world, especially in the time of the early Spanish explorers.

Physical Characteristics:

Weight: (Nearly twice as heavy as lead, remember this!)
Specific Gravity: 19.32
(Nearly twice as heavy as lead) (Demonstrate with. water bottles.)

Malleable: (Is it ever!!)
One ounce, (a cube 15/32" square.) can be hammered or rolled into a sheet, Three One millionths of an inch thick, large enough to cover an area of ten thousand square feet. (so thin, that you can see through it.) Foil of this thickness is used in many of our space satellites to protect them from the devastating effects of solar energy in outer space.

Stability:
Gold is without question, one of the most stable metals on earth. This is confirmed by the fact that GOLD that was mined or refined thousands of years ago still looks the same as it did when it was dug out of the ground. Gold artifacts that were made tens of centuries ago, still looks as it did when first discovered.

The Prospectors

To begin with, they were not a "herd" of wandering recluses towing donkeys across vast deserts, hills, and valleys.

For the most part they were family men, who, after hearing the cry, "they've found GOLD in California!" headed West to better the financial condition of their families. Most were very much aware of the fact that the

harvesting of this treasure was going to require 'hard work, diligence, and tenacity. I am sure that a few of them thought that "Lady Luck" would at least give them a bit of a "Mona Lisa" smile. Then too; I am sure that there were those who thought that all they were going to have to do, was to find a nice creek or river bottom, scratch around a bit, scoop up their fortune and return home to live a life of luxury and comfort. THIS DIDN'T HAPPEN TOO OFTEN.

PROSPECTING EQUIPMENT

What the well-dressed Prospector wore:

Sail Cloth Britches, or Overalls
Loose fitting shirt: Cotton in the Summer, and Wool in the winter
Boots, Leather, durable, and comfortable
Vest, lightweight leather in Summer to protect upper clothing from the elements and wear. Cloth vest with satin lining and those pockets necessary to best display his family heirloom pocket watch, on his trips to town.
Overcoat, and/or a bearskin robe to protect him from the rigors of winter storms.
Long woolen "drop seat," union suit underwear; usually worn summer, and winter.

Personal Equipment;

Utensils, plates, and cookware, (skillet, Dutch oven, coffee pot.)
Razor, soap, wash basin, towel
Tent*, bed clothes, i.e. sheets, blankets, and buffalo hides. (Also used as a cape in Winter.)

*The prospectors followed the example of the first Americans, the Indians, in using solar energy, by setting up their tents on South facing hillsides in the Winter and North facing hillsides in the summer.

Mining Equipment;

Gold pan: a must for any Gold Prospector, to be used to harvest the gold from riverside placers, and through a process of "prospecting," searching and following creeks, rivers and their estuaries, locating the "Mother Lode". Early day prospectors sometimes used large flat baskets to separate the Gold from the Placer gravel by a "winnowing" process.

Gold Cradle, a "batch" gold washer, with which a prospector could process five times as much ore as he could with a gold pan. Most usually used where there was a limited supply of water. It is believed that the Gold Cradle was introduced to the California Gold fields in 1849, by one of two miners, a Mister Isaac Humphrey, from Georgia or a Mr. Ruelle, a Frenchman who worked for Mr. Sutter.

Sluice Box, a continuous gold washing device, placed in the bed of a river or creek were there was a large volume of water available to continually wash the Gold ore shoveled into the upstream end of the device. Three men could process ten times as much ore as one man could with a Gold pan.

Pack Saddle, a saddle type device used to stabi1ize the Prospectors equipment, and supplies as they were being carried on the back of his donkey.

Important Dates in California Gold History

1579

Sir Francis Drake makes reference to California's Gold in his ship's log. Some historians believe that this reference was really the work of an overzealous report written for the Queen by Drake's Chaplain, Sir Francis Fletcher which states, "there is no part of earth here to be taken up wherein there is not a reasonable amount of Gold, or Silver, some of the ore being constantly found on digging." Since Drake's land explorations appear to have been confined to a small area in what is today called Marin, and Sonoma Counties, (the only two counties in California in which there are no Gold deposits) it could be that Chaplain Fletcher's imagination led him to base his report on the Gold in California on hope, rather than fact.

1775

There are records of Gold being mined in Frazier Park, and Needles.

1826-27

Jedediah Smith was said to have bartered for Gold with the Indians in Owens Valley.

1833

Antonio Mendoza mined Gold in the Soledad Canyon.
The de Chelis family located a Gold deposit m San Francisquito creek known as the Gold Bowl.

1842

Our own Don Francisco Lopez, a member of the Del Valle Family, discovered the **First Major Gold Strike** m California m San Feleciano Canyon, also known as Cañada de Los Encinos, now known as Placerita Canyon. Lopez, oddly enough, was one of the early day discoverers of California Gold, that were educated in mining; his family had sent him to Mexico City, to study at the University of Mining.

1848

Some fellow named James Marshall stumbled upon some Gold in the "tail race" at Sutter's Mill, while making an inspection of the water wheel that drove the saw.

California's First Gold Rush

History books present James Marshall's discovery of Gold at Sutter's Mill as the first major Gold "strike" in California. However, we here in Santa Clarita Valley say this is not correct; THE FIRST MAJOR GQLD STRIKE IN CALIFORNIA was right here in Placerita Canyon, near the "Oak of The Golden Dream." To give you some idea of the size of the Placerita Canyon "find," during the late 1800s, there were as many as six hundred mining clamps in the area.

Francisco Lopez, discovered Gold in Placerita Canyon when he pulled up a wild onion to go with the lunch his wife had fixed him for his fortieth birthday on March 9, 1842. He found a good sized "nugget" hanging in the onion's roots, but he wasn't just lucky. He was very highly qualified as a Mining Engineer, having gone to the Mexico College of Mining, and in fact quite often would prospect for Gold in the canyons, and Valleys here in the Santa Clarita Valley whenever he could take time away from his obligations as El Segundo (the "second" or foreman), for Don Antonio del Valle on his 49,00 acre Rancho San Francisco.

On July 8, 1843, a sample of the Gold was sent to Washington, DC and assayed at a purity (or "fineness") of 22 to 23 carats, almost pure Gold. .

No one really knows why this first of the great Gold discoveries in California, was not widely, known, but the general feeling is that the Mexican Government kept it quiet and shielded it from the general public, because they were not able to protect it due to a shortage of troop strength in Alta California.

Another theory is that without the Transcontinental Railroad, information did not travel as quickly as it did when James Marshall made his discovery at Sutters' Mill.

Mining in the Santa Clarita Valley

Following the discovery of Gold in Placerita Canyon by Francisco Lopez, mining in the eastern part of our valley increased, with several old Spanish mines being reopened and prospecting going on in nearly every canyon, creek, and river.

One of the individuals that greatly influenced the mining industry in Santa Clarita Valley was Mr. Henry T. Gage.

An attorney, he began to get involved in politics shortly after his arrival here from the East in 1880. He was elected City Attorney for Los Angeles in the middle 1880s and was a delegate to the Republican National Convention, where he seconded the nomination of L.P. Morton as Vice President. Gage was elected Governor of California in 1899. Through this office, he became a friend to a young politician named Theodore Roosevelt.

Being an enterprising young fellow, (and with an eye for a good deal when he saw one) he formed the Cedar Mining District with a group of friends, and soon owned several of the high production Gold mines in the Acton area. The mines were, The New York Mine, The Emma Mine, The Red Rover Mine, and The Puritan Mine.

The New York Mine, one of the richest, produced one and a half million dollars worth of gold during 1895-97. A short time later, the mine was closed until 1932, when it was reopened by Mr. Gages' sons, and again produced a fair amount of gold until the vein started to "give out" in 1942, and it was closed a second time. I understand the mine experienced a tragedy in the middle 1950s when two fellows opened it again and were suffocated while working the mine without proper ventilation. At present, the mine has been opened again, although I don't believe its production is anywhere near what it was in its "heyday".

As a point of interest, the Mine is about one thousand feet deep, and has three lateral tunnels at different levels.

As an aside, the Superintendent of Mr. Gage's Puritan Mine had a daughter named Lou Henry, who was the first woman to graduate from the newly established Stanford University. While attending the University, she fell in love with and married a young Geology student from Iowa. His name? Herbert C. Hoover. The couple often visited Lou Henrys' parents in Acton.

Often during their visits to Acton, Mr. Hoover could be found out on the Santa Clara River, fishing for trout, a native species during the early days.

CALIFORNIA'S FIRST GOLD RUSH

By Don Woelke

History Books have, for the most part, overlooked California's first gold rush. Those that do make reference to it present our hero Don Francisco Lopez, the man who discovered the first rich "placer", as a peon type individual who "stumbled" onto some gold bearing gravel in a remote and insignificant canyon which the local residents called "La Cañada de los Encinos".

Nothing could be farther from the truth. José Francisco De Garcia Lopez was from well educated, and highly respected stock. His father, Juan Bautista, was so well versed in Latin that he was often sought out by the priests in the area for help at the San Gabriel, and San Fernando Missions. Francisco himself had studied language, history, and literature at the University of Mexico City, and mining at Colegio de Mineria in Mexico City.

Oftentimes when his obligations at home were fulfilled, he would go into the canyons, and valleys on prospecting expeditions.

Many of the mining experts from Baja California were sure that the gold bearing strata in Mexico followed up the coast into Alta California, and in fact most of the prospecting was taking place nearer the coast in the Frazier Park, Piru, and Santa Barbara areas.

On the Morning of March 9, 1842, his fortieth birthday, Francisco, two of his friends, Domingo Bermudez, and Manuel Cota, and an Indian house boy, rode into Cañada de Los Encinos to inspect the cattle. About mid-day, while waiting for the Indian lad to warm up their burritos for the lunch that was soon to be spread beneath a gnarled oak tree, Don Francisco, decided that some of the wild onions growing in a small clearing nearby would be an ideal compliment to their lunch. Strolling a few yards from the tree he began to pull the onions, and while shaking some of the soil from the onions saw what he immediately recognized as a Gold nugget clinging to their roots.

Lopez took the first of the gold to Los Angeles, to Mr. Abel Steams, a local merchant who in turn sent a sample of the gold to Governor Alvarado who had some jewelry made for his wife. The remainder of the gold was sent to Mexico City.

On July 8, 1843, Stearns sent a sample of the gold to Washington D.C. which assayed at a purity or "fineness" of 926-1000 (between 22, and 23 carats).

At this point the Placerita Gold rush was in full swing, with several hundred claims being worked by Mexican placer miners, "panning" with huge flat baskets, that were used to toss the placer gravel into the air, in much the same fashion as winnowing wheat. As time passed, mining procedures were improved, and $6,000 to $8,000 worth of gold per year was produced through 1847. Noone knows exactly how much gold came out of Placerita Canyon during those early years between 1842, and 1847, however production probably averaged somewhere near 270 pounds per year, which at today's price would equal about $70,000,000.00.

There are several opinions on why this, our first "Gold Rush" never received a great amount of publicity.

One is that official Spanish, and later Mexican policy, was not to inform foreign interests of such discoveries because of the isolated, and poorly protected outposts of the Empire.

Another is that most of the Gold from the mines in Placerita was slated for use to help finance the military efforts of the Union Army during the Civil War, and was shipped in secrecy to the Mint in Philadelphia.

Still another is that because of the slow communications, and slow transportation, the "news" just didn't get to the East coast as well as it did at the time of James Marshall's discovery at Sutter's Mill in 1848.

(This document is a brief summary of information from various sources used as a Docent Training guide, during the training sessions of 1997.)

The Sterling Mine

By Don Woelke

The next mining operations I want to share with you was a little unique in light of the fact that at first it was a Spanish Gold Mine, but later achieved fame as mine that produced a mineral very familiar to us all, Borax. Most of us associate this mineral with laundry, and cleaning, However, it's main use is in the processing of glass, refining of gold, iron, steel, and the colored metal, copper.

Before the Civil War most, if not all of the Borax used in this country was imported from Europe.

In 1856, a Borax deposit was discovered north of San Francisco, and then in 1881, Mr. Francis J. "Borax" Smith, found huge deposits of the stuff in Nevada. A picture of the Borax Wagons, pulled by a "twenty mule" team, used to transport the mineral from the mine to the railhead, soon became the logo for Pacific Coast Borax Company, which produced some 20 million pounds of Borax between 1833, and 1889.

A fellow named Thomas Thorkildson, who worked as a clerk for Pacific Borax, decided he could do better on his own, and did locate a Borax deposit near Frazier Park. Sometime in 1887, he hired his former boss from Pacific Borax, Mr. Steven Mather, to run his claim and was doing quite well.

In 1905, two gold prospectors, Henry Shepherd, and Louis Ebbinger, scrambling around in Tick Canyon downstream from an old abandoned Spanish gold mine, discovered a rich deposit of Borax, and subsequently file a claim. A short time later, these two paid a visit to Messrs. Thorkildson and Mather, and quickly sold them their Borax claim in Tick Canyon for $30,000.

Thorkildson and Mather named their new company "The Sterling Borax Company," and started production in 1908. After some processing at the mine site, the Borax was hauled down Tick Canyon, by a narrow gauge railroad to Lang Station, and then to Ryan, Nevada, where the refining was completed. The final product then went to glass factories, steel mills, and soap factories, throughout the country.

In 1911, Mr. Francis "Borax" Smith bought the Sterling Borax Works from Thorkildson, and Mather, who stayed on to run the plant until 1921, when the mine petered out, and Sterling went broke.

The Sterling Borax Mine

I. Borax.

A. What is it.

1. Water soluble Mineral (One of the Halides [Colemanite, calcium borate, and Kernite, sodium borate])

2. Most commonly known member of the Halides is Sodium Chloride (Table Salt.)

B. What is it used for?

1. Iron and Steel production. (used very extensively in this area.)

2. Chemical Processing.

3. Glass Production.

4. Medicine.

a. Antiseptic.

b. Cleanser

5. Household

a. Laundry

b. Cleaning

C. Where does it come from? (Natural concentrations are created by Mother Nature, through a leaching process i.e. subsurface water flowing through volcanic soil into basins where they are deposited.)

1. Pre-Civil War (Most was imported.)

a. Stassfurt East Germany (Largest Natural Deposits at the time.)

b. Deposits were found North of San Francisco, (1856.) Borax Co. of California founded 1864.

c. “Borax” Smith found deposits near Ryan, Nevada, (Teels Marsh.) (Searles Lake Calif.) Pacific Coast Borax Co. founded by Smith in 1890. From these early beginnings the U.S. Borax Co. was founded. The famous “Twenty Mule Team.” outfit.

Sterling Mine

I. Discovery.

A. Who?

1. Henry Shepard & Louis Ebbenger

    a. Gold prospectors

B. Where?

1. Tick Canyon

C. Why?

1. Early Spanish Settlers were said to have had a Gold mine in the area in the 1700s.

D. When?

1. Spring of 1905

II Operation

A. Claim sold, late 1905, to Thorkildson & Mathers (These two had been working a mine of their own near Frazier Park.)

1. Selling price was $30,000 dollars.

    a. Rumors said the price was $80 to $85,000.00. U.S. Borax records show the lesser amount.

B. In 1908, The Sterling Borax Works went into production.

1. The Mill, was built near the head of the canyon, near the mine.

    a. The ore was “reduced” in the Mill.

        (1) Crushed.

        (2) Roasted. (oil fired ovens)

        (3) Grizzled. (Separated from some of the earth and stone in the ore. The end product being reduced by about 40%.)

        (4) Screened.

        (5) Bagged.

2. The mine.

    a. Overall depth 300 ft.

    b. Horizontal tunnels for mining ore, at 100,200, and 250 feet.

    c. Drain water pumps were located at the bottom of the main shaft.

III. TRANSPORTATION.

A. Narrow gauge railroad

1. One of only two or three in Southern California.

    a. The Sterling Borax Works, the Ryan, Nevada System, and possibly a third in the Quayamaca Gold Mining operations in the mountains northeast of San Diego.

2. Route; from the mine shaft, down the canyon to Lang Station.

    a. A switch back at the top of the canyon allowed the delivery of materials to the mine located on the east flank of the Canyon.

3. Engine.

    a. First engine could only haul three cars.

    b. The second engine; “Sterling #2” was built in 1905, by the Vulcan Company and sold to Sterling Borax Works in 1910

    c. Steamed “forward” down the grade to Lang, and then since there was no way to turn it around, the engine was reversed and “backed” up the hill to the mine site

    d. ,After serving the Sterling for eleven years, “Sterling #2” was moved to the Ryan, Nevada U.S. Borax Company’s works and worked there until the late 1960s.

IV. The Mining Camp.

A. Sterling (the camp.)

1. Typical to Mining Communities of the time

    a. Main street ran through the middle of town from one end to the other.

    b. The boarding house, residences, shops, offices, and warehouses, were all located either side of the street.

    c. In this case, the “Sterling Narrow Gauge Line,” ran down the middle of Main Street.

V. Operations Continued

A. Thorkildson & Mathers prosper.

1. Production at The Sterling grows.

    a. Annual income reaches $500,000 dollars.

    b. Business hums along at a good clip for the next three years.

B. Enter Francis M. "Borax" Smith.

1. In 1911 Smith buys the Sterling Works for $1.8 million.

2. Sterling becomes a division of Smith's Consolidated Borax Company.

3. Thorkildson and Mathers stay on as President, and Vice President.

C. Smith and Consolidated Borax file Bankruptcy in 1914.

1. The Sterling operation is taken over by U.S. Borax Company

2. Operations at the Sterling Mine continue for another seven years.

3. In 1921, when the vein runs out, the Sterling shuts down, and her equipment is moved to U.S. Borax operations in Ryan, Nevada.

VI. Camp Sterling.

A. The Beginning.

1. Boom Town.

    a. Around 1907, like the "fox tails" in Spring, Sterling (the town) "popped" into being.

    b. During the good times it's population of some 160-plus souls, there were 160 workers on the mine payroll, was the largest in old Soledad Township.

B. The End

1. The Boom Quiets

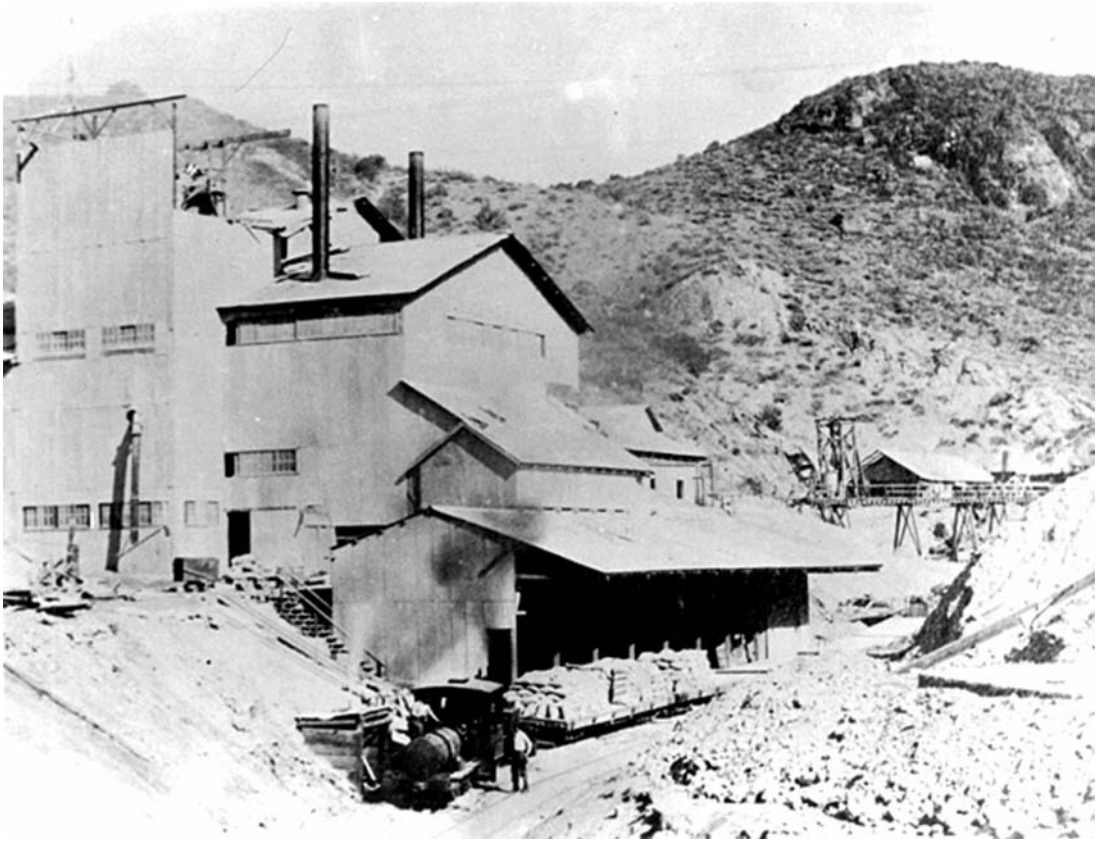
    a. Sterling Mine begins to fail in 1920.

    b. Operations at the mine cease in 1921.

    c. 1922, Sterling (the town) struggles to survive.d. 1923, Sterling (the town) is abandoned and turns to a ghost town.

    e. 1923, through 1939 weather, nature, and vandalism "busts" the ghost.

The Sterling Borax Mine



Sterling Borax Works in Tick Canyon (near Davenport Road), c. 1910s. At bottom is the “dinky” locomotive that hauled the borates down to the railhead at Lang.

Sterling Borax Works in Tick Canyon (near Davenport Road), c. 1910s, with the "dinky" locomotive that hauled the borates down to the railhead at Lang.

The Mines of Soledad Canyon

I. 1700s to Middle 1800s

A. Spanish Settlers.

1. Believing that the Gold bearing Strata of Mexico, source of Inca treasure extended up the coast, the early Spanish Explorers were said to have prospected for gold, and developed quite a number of mines in California.

a. Antonio Mendoza mined gold in the Acton area in the 1830s.

b. The deCelis Family mined for Gold In San Francisquito Canyon in the late 1830s, the area was called "the Gold Bowl".

c. The Sterling Borax Mine started as an early "Spanish Gold Mine".

d. And of course, we cannot forget Don Francisco Lopez and his "Strike" at the Oak of the Golden Dream in Placerita Canyon.

II Middle 1800s to Middle 1900s

A. Cedar Mining District. (Established in late 1860s)

1. Established a number of claims and Mines in the Acton area.

a. Mined for Gold, Silver, and Mercury.

2. Mines in operation.

a. Emma Mine.

b. Puritan Mine.

c. Red Rover Mine.

d. New York Mine.

B. Henry T. Gage (Lawyer.)

1. Came to L.A. in 1881 from New York:

2. Elected as L.A. City Attorney in 1888.

3. Elected Governor of California in 1899.

4. In his career owned the above listed mines.

C. New York Mine

1. Most productive Gold Mine in the Los Angeles County.

a. 1895 to 1897 Produced $500,000 per year.

2. Closed in 1898

3. Gages' sons reopened the mine in 1932, changing the name to Governors Mine.

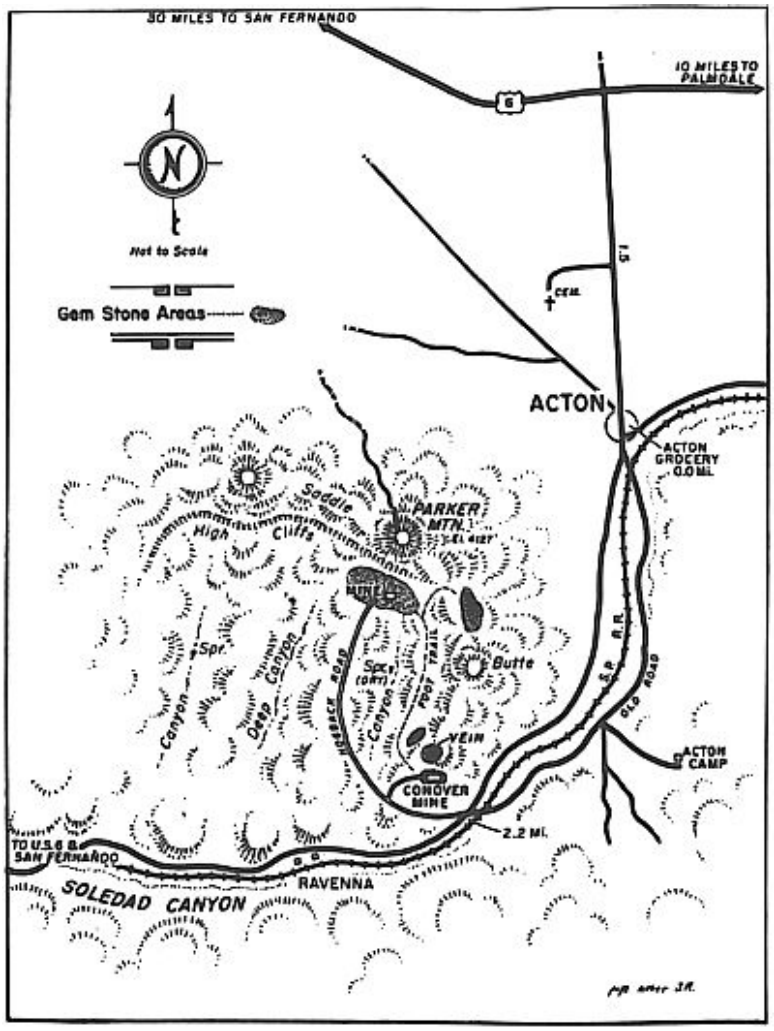
4. Closed again in 1942

5. Reopened again in the late 40s, and was closed when two men lost their lives while working the mine.

6. A drive by indicates, by the appearance of new piping and activity, that someone may be looking to another reopening.

D. The Puritan Mine

1. This mines' claim to fame is that the daughter of the Superintendent became Mrs. Lou Henry Hoover, "First Lady" and wife of President Herbert C. Hoover.



This map from the February, 1957 edition of Desert Magazine shows the gemstone quarries above the tiny mining town of Ravenna, which once sat four miles southwest of Acton in Soledad Canyon.

A number of miners, most notably Colonel Thomas Finley Mitchell, arrived in Soledad Canyon in 1860 and set up various mining camps near the canyon's rich veins of gold, silver and copper, which came into great demand when the Civil War broke out only a year later. Local historian Jerry Reynolds writes:

A conglomeration of log cabins and tents moved up and down the canyon with each new strike. Called "Soledad City" wherever it was plunked down, it provided such basic needs as faro tables, rye whiskey, and ladies of the evening. A portable grocery was operated by James O'Reilly, a flaming-haired Irishman of medium build, pug nose, and happy-go-lucky air about him.

It wasn't long before a post office was needed, and as one might expect, the U.S. Postal Service rejected the name "Soledad City" out of fear that it would be confused with the city of Soledad in Monterey County. O'Reilly suggested the name "Ravenna," in honor of the local merchant and saloon keeper, Manuel Ravenna. The name became official on June 12, 1868.

Ravenna became a shipping point from which the canyon's gold, silver and copper ores were hauled off to San Pedro. The area was also rich in a variety of gemstones, particularly moss agate and green waxy quartz, as evidenced by this map of several old gemstone mines. Strip mining is still a big industry in the Soledad and in parts of the neighboring Mojave Desert, but the little mining camp that was named for its long-forgotten barkeep is nothing more than a faded memory. Information from the February, 1957 Desert Magazine and from "Santa Clarita: Valley of the Golden Dream" by Jerry Reynolds.

Oil in the Santa Clarita Valley

By Don Woelke

PRIOR TO 1885

ANCIENT PEOPLES

In the first part of my presentation, I told you about ancient use of gold, and about the 10,000 year old fish hook archaeologists had found. Well, I can tell you that the use of petroleum (petra = rock, oleum = oil) products is nearly as old as the use of gold, at least so far as history can determine. Petroleum products were made available to our Ancestors, through natural "Oil Seeps," and archaeologists have discovered 6,000 yr. old mosaics set in asphalt.

Asphalt from "seeps" was used in Mesopotamia 3,000 yrs B.C. in the building of boats, buildings, (as mortar) and roads.

Egyptian Morticians used asphalt soaked linen to wrap mummies.

INDIANS

For Centuries, the Indians "harvested" (skimmed) OIL and ASPHALTUM from pools and basins in the various canyons along the south edge of the Santa Clarita Valley, (Pico, Towsley, Wiley, Elsmere, and Placerita Canyons) The asphaltum, (naturally thickened crude oil) was used as a sealant for their woven baskets and containers in which they stored food. The Indians used some of the "harvested" petroleum products for medicinal purposes. There is evidence, that our local Tataviam Indians, used the asphalt they collected from the petroleum "seeps" in Pico Canyon as a trade item in bartering with other tribes in. the Southwestern United States.

"HOT GLUE"

As an aside: What may have been the Worlds first "hot glue" was a mixture of equal parts of pitch, and asphaltum, that had been "simmered" over a low fire until it was reduced to 1/2 its' original volume, that the Indians used not only as a sealant, but also as an adhesive to secure the lashings on implements, and arrows.

1855

GENERAL PICO

General Andres Pico "harvested" asphalt from a canyon now known as Pico Canyon west of downtown Newhall, hauling it to San Fernando. The first harvests were hauled by mule train in bags.

1858

FIRST OIL COMPANY (In the U.S.)

The Pennsylvania Rock Oil Company was established in the Titusville Pa. area but went bankrupt shortly after its beginning.

1859

SECOND OIL COMPANY AND FIRST OIL WELL (in the U.S.)

Mr. Edwin L. Drake leased the property previously owned by the Pennsylvania Rock Oil Company, and using a “Brine Well Drilling Rig” (Spring Pole) “put down” the first oil well in Titusville Pennsylvania.

1860s

FIRST OIL COMPANY (In the Santa Clarita Valley)

Believing that this oil may develop into something big, and after sampling various seepages, a chemist in Los Angeles named Dr. Vincent Gelcich gathered a group of friends, and started the Santa Clara Oil Company with main operations centering in Pico Canyon.

1865

SECOND OIL CO

General Edward Fitzgerald Beale, in turn saw a future in this budding industry, and with another group, including Dr. Gelcich and of all people, General Pico, set up the Asphaltum and Petroleum Mining District, which after some shifting and shaking, gained control of all oil operations between the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valley. Oil Tankers? How about leather bags on a mules back? This first petroleum was used mainly as a lubricant for wagon wheels etc.

STAR OIL CO.

Late in the year The “first” Star Oil Company was born to build a refinery which worked through a distillation process developed by Dr. Gelcich.

To this point, the harvesting of the crude oil was by a separating process, applied to the oil and water flowing from the many seeps in Pico Canyon. The flow of water, and oil was diverted into a “separator”, (a large vat in which the water/oil flow rate was reduced to a very slow pace, allowing the oil to rise to the surface, where it was drawn off, and stored, the water being drawn off at the bottom of the vat was allowed to continue down the stream.)

SPRING POLE

In January of 1869 using a “Spring Pole” drilling rig (we have a working replica of such a rig up on the hill West of the Station) the four of our early oil pioneers, Wiley, Sanford, Lyon, and Jenkins, sunk a well to 50 feet, after some 18 or 20 days of hard labor, and struck oil that flowed at a rate of 9 barrels per day.

Soon there were Spring Pole Rigs in nearly all the canyons between San Fernando and Santa Clarita.

1874 FIRST REFINERY

A new Refinery was built, and everyone was ready for a boom. However, despite all their efforts they could not produce a smokeless lamp oil (kerosene), and the project went bust.

1876 OIL DRILLERS & MANAGERS MOVE WEST

Oil production in Pennsylvania began to drop, which started a movement of experienced oil people to the West. One of these men was Mr. Demetrius G. Scofield who recognized the possibilities of great profit in a more efficient method of harvesting the shallow oil deposits of the area and called a number of his former associates in Titusville to the West.

CSO BORN

The result was that this new talent formed a new California Star Oil Works (CSO) based in San Francisco on July 8, 1876.

WHITE OIL IN PLACERITA CANYON

Mr. John Scott, an experienced refiner from Titusville, found a deposit of "white oil" in Placerita Canyon. A sample of this oil was a great attraction at the Philadelphia Centennial Celebration in July of 1876. This oil because of it's purity, was near the perfect lamp, and lantern fuel, burning with a very bright flame, and very little smoke.

KEROSENE CREEK IN PLACERITA

If you have a little extra time on your hands in the late spring, you may want to take a hike up the canyon from Placerita Nature Center and Park. After you've hiked about a mile up the canyon, keep an eye out for a spring feeding into Placerita Creek from the right, as you approach this spring, test the air, and if conditions are right, you win be able to detect a slight odor of kerosene. A careful trip up this creek can bring you to a pool or two that may have a film of natural kerosene floating on it's surface.

WALKER FAMILY

I have heard that the Walker Family who lived and farmed in this area used this natural "white oil" to fuel the lamps used in their home (sample in our museum) this oil was so clear, and "bright," it was called "Pearl Oil" and was in great demand as fuel for lamps. Chevron Oil Company still uses the name Pearl Oil for its' kerosene on the market today.

MENTRY

Later in the year, Mr. Scofield in his search for experienced drillers found one in a gentleman named Charles A. Menetrier (later changed to Mentry). Alex, as he liked to be called, settled with his family on 180 acres of land in Pico Canyon, and started his search for additional oil in the area.

INCREASED PRODUCTION (WELL # 1)

First, with improved drilling equipment, most of which he had developed on his own, he increased the depth of the Star Oil Company Well # 1, first dug by Lyon-Jenkins-Wiley to 120 feet, increasing production to 12 barrels per Day.

CSO#4

Mentry drilled two more wells, and then on the fourth drilling, brought in CSO # 4, producing at the unheard of rate of 50 barrels per day. This well produced oil over a period of 114 years, (lacking a few days) from September 1876 to September 1990.

The very Cradle of Califomia's Oil Industry is right here in our "back yard."

LINEAGE OF CALIF. OIL INDUSTRY

California Star Oil Company was the Father of The Standard Oil Company of California, which was the Grandfather of The Chevron Oil Company.

Alexander Mentry

Born Charles Alexander Mentrier in France in 1846, "Alex" Mentry came to the Newhall area in in 1873 to find his fortune. Already an experienced oil driller who had punched 42 successful wells near Titusville, Pennsylvania, Mentry soon landed a job digging wells in Grapevine Canyon, at the southern end of the Santa Clarita Valley. In 1875 he formed a partnership to purchase a claim in nearby Pico Canyon, which had been explored in the late 1860s by Newhall entrepreneurs Sanford Lyon, Henry Clay Wiley and Los Angeles lawman William Jenkins. The claim had produced only moderate results, but it held great potential if only someone with sufficient technical and engineering skills would come along to work on it.

That man was Alex Mentry. Mentry deepened the old Lyon-Wiley-Jenkins hole and drilled two others in Pico Canyon. It wasn't long before a San Francisco fiancier by the name of Demetrius Scofield -- himself an old Pennsylvania oil man -- caught wind of what was going on outside the sleepy burgh of Newhall. Scofield purchased Mentry's claim in 1876 and convinced the oil driller to come into his employ.

Mentry used what may have been California's first steam-powered oil rig to drill a fourth well, which consistenly produced 30 barrels of oil per day. Mentry kept digging. Finally, on September 26, 1876, from a depth of 617 feet, a mighty geyser of oil shot through the 5 5/8-inch casing. It was the first commercially successful oil well in the western United States, and Demetrius Scofield was a rich man.

Teams of oil workers flocked to Pico Canyon, which was soon being called Mentryville. Alex Mentry married Flora May Lake of New York, who gave him three sons and a daughter. In 1900, just two years after he moved the family into a 13-room Victorian mansion at the base of the canyon, Mentry was stung by a bee -- a common nuisance in Mentryville, even today. He developed an allergic reaction and was taken to a hospital in Los Angeles, where he died on October 4, 1900. He was laid to rest in the Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights, where other family members are also interred. Information from Chevron/Standard Oil records; published works of A.B. Perkins; and "Pico Canyon Chronicles: The Story of California's Pioneer Oil Field" by Jerry Reynolds. Cemetery information from Jack and Joan Beitzel. For more information read The Story of Mentryville by Leon Worden.

CSO #4
The First Well

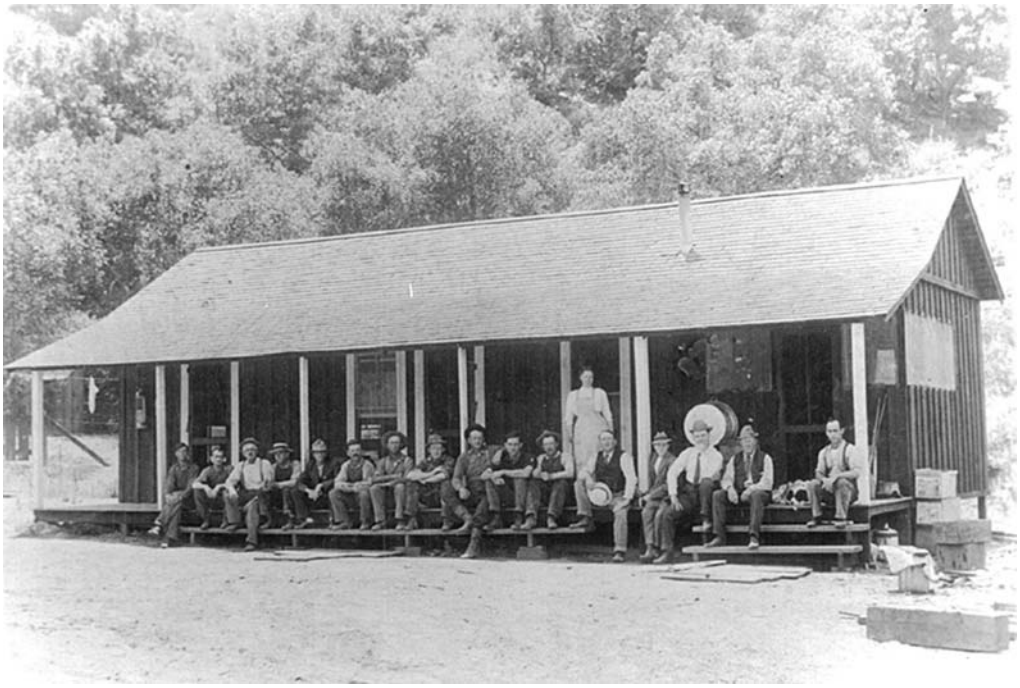
Fifty barrels of oil shot out of a newly-deepened California Star Oil well on September 26, 1876. Known alternately as “Pico No. 4” or “CSO No. 4,” it was the first commercially successful oil well in the western United States.

This photograph of Pico No. 4 was taken in 1883. The well was tucked away in the Santa Susana Mountains formation of Pico Canyon, approximately four miles west of the present-day Lyons Avenue exit off of California Interstate 5 in the Santa Clarita Valley. It had been punched to a depth of 617 feet by a French immigrant named Charles Alexander Mentry, just 30 years old but nonetheless a veteran of the world’s first commercial oil fields in Titusville, Pennsylvania.

Transient oil workers migrated to Pico Camp to harvest the bounty, and by 1880, as many as 100 families lived in what was now being called Mentryville. Not only did Pico No. 4 give birth to an industry in California; it was also the longest-running oil well in the world when it was finally capped off in September of 1970.

Mentryville c. 1900

Mentryville was a booming little oil town in Pico Canyon from about the time of the success of "Pico No. 4" in 1876 until the early 1930s. In this photo, the "Big House" (1898) is clearly visible at lower right; the dance hall that no longer exists is behind it; and the Felton School (1885) is behind that in the trees. The barn is at lower left. Other structures are visible in the photo that no longer exist today. Notice that the school and barn are cream-colored, and the water tower has not yet been installed (had it been, it would appear at left in this photo).



Boarding houses provided meals and temporary shelter for oil workers in Pico Canyon at the turn of the 20th Century.

“SPRING POLE” WELL DRILLING RIG

The “Spring Pole” Well Drilling Rig is believed to have been invented by the Chinese, a couple of thousand years ago, and has since been used to drill wells, (water, oil and gas) in countries throughout the world.

The “Spring Pole”, rather primitive in nature, and simple in design, began as a water well drilling device; using a long, (thirty feet, plus or minus five or six feet) tapered, sapling, anchored at the root (large) end, either by burying with earth and stones, or by mechanical means, i.e. cables, chains, or concrete.

At a point approximately one third the total length of the pole, from the large end, the pole is supported with a “forked tree” post, at a height necessary to raise the small end ten, or twelve, feet above the “well head.”

A pulley is fastened to the small end of the pole, at a point directly above the well casing, so that a rope passing over the pulley, drops directly into the end of the well pipe. The drilling tools, all of which were equipped with an “eye” for fastening to the rope, were then, each in it’s turn was lowered into the well to accomplish the desired drilling action.

In order to provide power to the rig, there are two stirrups, or a platform device suspended from the pole at a point adjacent to the pulley, so as to hang some two feet or more above ground level.

In operation, the drilling bit is lowered into the well, by rope and windlass, and suspended at a point two to two and a half feet above the bottom. Next, one or two men mount the stirrup or platform assembly, and commence to shift their weight vertically up and down, (bounce) causing the pole to flex up and down, and thus the drilling bit rises and falls within the well pipe, during the fall cycle, the drilling bit impacts heavily into the earth/gravel below the end of the casing, crushing and pulverizing it. During this pulverizing process, several buckets of water were introduced into the well, creating a slurry of mud, bits of stone, and gravel at the bottom of the hole. After a number of these impact cycles, the bit is extracted from the well pipe, and set aside at the work site. Next, the “bailer” (a long slender bucket like, device) was lowered into the hole, and through a series of lowering, filling, lifting, and emptying actions, the accumulated slurry was removed from the well, and dumped into the waste pit.

Should the drillers encounter a rock shelf, or layer on their way down, they would remove the bit, and in it’s place, used a very heavy pointed chisel device on the end of the lift rope, to, by using the same hammering technique, break through the hardpan, and then, go back to the “pulverize, liquefy, and bail” drilling procedure.

As you can understand, this was a very slow and laborious task, with progress, even on a good day being measured in feet per day, and, since work shifts were measured by sunrise to sunset, not by hours, and it was understandable that Dad could be a little cranky at the supper table.

To round out our understanding of early day oil drilling rigs, there was a modification of the spring pole used to drill wells known as the “Mormon Well Rig.” This rig used a “teeter totter” type action, with the pole being slung beneath a support fulcrum, and counter balanced at the large end with a basket of stones. This device, too, was manually operated, with the drillers pounding the tools up and down by “teeter tottering” the pole with leg power. The first oil wells sunk in Pico Canyon, (Mentryville) and Placerita Canyon, were drilled with spring pole drilling rigs.

Since by nature, each well site was different from any other, so too were the spring pole rigs; being adapted to the needs of each well site, each rig was different in some way. Considering the above, our display rig is very authentic, and is truly representative of what was used here in the area in the early days of our Southern California oil industry.

During the years after 1865, the oil well drilling rigs, through technological advancements, and the ingenuity of people like Mentry, Gelcich, Towsley, Lyon, and others, the oil well drilling equipment, and methods changed dramatically.

The man powered spring pole was replaced with a derrick and steam driven “free capstan” used to lift and drop the bit, bailer, and rock breaker. Next, the “walking beam”, driven by a steam engine coupled to a flywheel and crank shaft, hammered wells into the earth to depths of 1,000 feet or more. *

Finally, a fellow named Howard Hughes Sr. developed the rotary drill bit, and wells are now reaching depths of several thousands of feet, from anchored floating platforms in the ocean.

The Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society “Spring Pole Well Drilling exhibit at Heritage Junction, was researched, engineered, and designed by Don A. Woelke, (a member of the Society.)

**Note: An operating exhibit of these two Drilling methods is on display at the Fillmore Union Oil Museum.*

Pioneer Oil Refinery
Newhall

The Pioneer Oil Refinery on Pine Street in Newhall dates to mid-1876, when oil driller Alex Mentry was breaking new ground in Pico Canyon and Chinese track layers were hammering rails through Henry Newhall's recently-purchased rancho. The little 15-barrel still that had been erected in 1874 at Lyon's Station (now Eternal Valley Cemetery) just wasn't working out. It couldn't produce a smoke-free kerosene -- oil's major use in those days -- and in 1875 it was shut. Besides, it was almost a mile away from the coming railroad.

Andrew Kazinski's brand-new stagecoach stop at the mouth of Railroad Canyon made the ideal location for a new refinery. Not only did it have a bountiful supply of water for refining operations, but it sat right next to the train tracks.

John A. Scott, an experienced refiner from Pennsylvania, supervised construction. Scott moved the little 15-barrel still and another 20-barrel still from Lyon's to Andrew's and added a large, 120-barrel cheesebox still. Completed in August, 1876, the refinery was an instant success.

Meanwhile, up at Pico, Alex Mentry had resumed his well-deepening campaign, which had stalled out after a water shortage. Mentry laid a pipe from a water source in a neighboring canyon for his steam drilling machinery. Within two months he was producing more oil than the Pioneer refinery could handle, so a fourth and even larger 150-barrel cheesebox still was added.

Oil itself was used in the distillation process. Heavy residual oil from earlier refining runs fueled the brick ovens beneath the stills. Tall brick chimneys vented what must have been massive amounts of smoke. Petroleum gasses passed into a condenser consisting of a wooden box with 1,400 feet of layered iron pipe submerged in water. The condensed oils flowed into a lead-lined agitator, where they were treated with chemicals and mixed with air to improve their burning quality.

The Pioneer Oil Refinery at Andrew's Station added benzene and illuminating oil for ships, railroads, factories and mines to California Star Oil's list of products. The breadwinner, though, was clean-burning kerosene in two grades.

Within a few years, oil was flowing all along the California coast. A huge refinery was set up at Alameda, directly across the bay from San Francisco -- a much more practical location than the little burgh of Newhall. In 1888, the refining operation at Andrew's Station ceased for all time.

For twelve years, the Pioneer Oil Refinery off of Pine Street served to light up the western frontier. Today its idle smokestacks and empty stills cast long shadows on the dawning of California's oil industry -- an industry whose roots are intertwined with those of the Santa Clarita Valley.

By Leon Worden

Pioneer Oil Refinery

Display Model

Presented to the

Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

by Miss Christine Watson

and her Father Walter

Produced to scale, this model was built using data, pictures, prints, maps, and drawings from the archives of the Chevron U.S.A. Oil Museum in San Francisco, California.

The stills used in this, the first successful oil refinery on the West Coast, were designed and engineered by Dr. Vincent Gelcich, a chemist from Los Angeles. The two smaller stills were erected early in 1874 behind Lyons Station, (the site of what is today, Eternal Valley Cemetery.) These small stills were moved to the new location, on Pine Street, in the Spring of 1876. In 1877, the #3 Still was installed, and finally, in 1879, #4 Still was completed. This Pioneer Oil Refinery continued to serve the local oil operations until mid 1884 when it was shut down. The property and equipment were neglected, and after a time fell into a state of disrepair. In 1906, Standard Oil Company of New Jersey took over the California Star Oil Company's operations in this area. In 1930, Mr. Charles Sitzman, Superintendent of Standard Oil's Pico Canyon Operations, attended to the rebuilding of the old refinery as a memorial to honor the first President of The Standard Oil Company of California

Mr. D. G. Scofield

At the time of the reconstruction, the #1 Still was dismantled, and shipped to the Chevron U.S.A. Oil Museum in Richmond, California. The Pioneer Oil Refinery is now listed as California State Historical Landmark Number 172

Historical Timeline

1860s.

Dr. Vincent Gelcich, a Los Angeles chemist, could have been the" silent mover" behind the early oil industry here in Southern California. We don't see any streets named after him but in these early days he, through an oil prospecting effort which involved taking samples from seeps, pits, and bogs, determined that the Santa Susana Mountains would some day be a rich source of oil. After encouraging friends and acquaintances to stake claims in the area, he was instrumental in starting one of the first (if not *the* first) oil companies in the area, The Santa Clara Oil Company.

Dr. Gelcich was working on a refining process as early as mid 1865.

1870s

Teaming with many of the "Early Oil Greats" Dr. Gelcich continued to pursue his fortune in the early oil industry working with such as Lyon, Towsley, Beale, Baker, and others. His persistence paid offm and finally in early 1874, he was called on to design a refinery to process the oil that was flowing (sometimes on muleback and eventually by pipeline) out of all the nearby canyons, Pico, Towsley, Placerita, and others. This Refinery was located on the property that is now Eternal Valley Cemetery. This effort failed in late 1875, and the stills sat idle until they were moved to the present site of the Pioneer Refinery on Pine Street, across the railroad tracks from Heritage Junction.

In the mid 1870s oil started to boom in our fair community, and the Pioneer Oil Refinery capacity was increased by adding two more stills, one of 120 barrels capacity, and later one of 150 barrels capacity. This refinery served our budding oil industry well, providing oil for the lamps of Los Angeles, Ventura, and parts of Orange County, plus solvents, lubricating oil, and grease.

1880s

Mr. Gelcich's child, now known as the Pioneer Oil Refinery, served our Southern California oil industry well until early in 1884, when it was shut down and over a number of years as the result of scavenging, vandalism, and the effects the elements, fell into a state of disrepair, crumbling fireboxes, rusting pipes and falling chimneys.

1900s

The Standard Oil of California had taken over the operations of what was once the California Star Oil Company in 1906, and as a memorial to their first President (Mr. D.G. Scofield), Charles Sitzman, Pico Canyon Operations Superintendent, had the old refinery rebuilt in 1930. The smallest of the stills was taken to Richmond, CA to become part of what is now the Chevron U.S.A. Oil Museum.

BLACK GOLD AND THE IRON HORSE

1860s-1870s

RIVERS OF OIL

Along the southern rim of the Santa Clarita, in canyons called Placerita, Elsmere, Wiley, Towsley, and Pico, petroleum has oozed from rocky fissures for eons. Indians and Spaniards skimmed these pools, using the black, gooey substance for medicinal purposes and for waterproofing baskets. Other than that, oil did not seem much good for anything.

In 1855 General Andrés Pico began hauling "asphaltum" down from the canyon that now bears his name to Rancho San Fernando. Four years later the world's first oil well, in Titusville, Pennsylvania, gave birth to what would one day become the world's gigantic oil industry.

A Los Angeles chemist by the name of Dr. Vincent Gelcich began sampling the seepages in the canyons of the Santa Clarita, recommending that his friends invest in the area. Henry Clay Wiley, expressman and merchant, skimmed the pools in Wiley Canyon. Sanford Lyon invaded what is now Lyons Canyon, while other draws were named for a Dr. Rice, Christopher Leaming, and Darius Towsley. Dr. Gelcich became the biggest investor with his Santa Clara Oil Company, centered in Pico Canyon.

With the help of a Harvard University professor, General Edward Fitzgerald Beale inventoried 100 claims in Pico Canyon and then decided to gobble them up.

Beale quickly joined forces with his old foe from the Battle of San Pasquale, General Andrés Pico, to form the countywide Los Angeles Asphaltum and Petroleum Mining District, along with Dr. Gelcich and others. On June 24, 1865, three months after the creation of this district, the group set up the San Fernando Mining District. In essence, the first board was created to sort out often-conflicting claims, while the second existed to buy up those patents that the first board ruled invalid.

The first thing that was done was to grant to Andrés Pico the naphtha springs claim in Pico Canyon. This was done by back dating the claim to January 24, 1865, three months before the formation of the Los Angeles Asphaltum and Petroleum Mining District. Then the claim of Wiley was approved. (Wiley was, by the way, General Pico's son-in-law.)

Through the agency of Christopher Leaming, Beale, and his partners—Colonel Robert S. "Bobby" Baker, Wiley, Pico, and others—moved in on what was called the Mammoth Claim, which was held by 91 grantors. On August 7 the ink was blotted on a deed in exchange for $300. Beale and his associates now controlled everything between the Santa Clarita and San Fernando valleys.

Crude oil was skimmed from the pools, poured into leather sacks, slung on the backs of mules, and then hauled downstream to the port of

FAR RIGHT: General Andrés Pico, who had fought against General Edward F. Beale in the Battle of San Pasquale, went into partnership with Beale and others to form the Los Angeles Asphaltum and Petroleum Mining District and, in 1865, the first Star Oil Company. Ten years before, Pico had begun hauling "asphaltum" to Rancho San Fernando from the canyon that now bears his name. Courtesy, Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Ventura. There coastal steamers picked up the cargo and sailed north to San Francisco, also carrying cattle, grain, passengers, or whatever else could be crammed on board. Since the Industrial Revolution had not yet made its appearance in California, oil was used to grease wagon wheels and for other lubrication chores, but was mainly refined into kerosene, the really big seller.

Late in the year the first Star Oil Company was founded by Beale, Baker, Pico, Lyon, and Juan and Francisco Forester in order to build a refinery that used a process developed by Dr. Gelcich.

RIGHT: Dr. Vincent Gelcich, a Los Angeles chemist, was one of the first promoters of California oil. After collecting petroleum samples from various locations in the Los Angeles area, including from Pico Canyon, Gelcich encouraged his friends— Sanford Lyon, Henry Clay Wiley, Christopher Leaming, and Darius Towsley—to stake claims in the Santa Susana Mountains. Gelcich's Santa Clara Oil Company in Pico Canyon made him the largest operator. Courtesy, Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Peaceful Pico Canyon Erupts

On January 8, 1869, Henry Clay Wiley, Sanford Lyon, and William W. Jenkins began drilling a hole in Pico Canyon by the primitive spring-pole method. By physically jerking a long beam up and down they averaged some three feet per day. At a depth of 50 feet, 9 barrels of green oil rushed up the casing.

Before long, spring-poles were growing like weeds in the canyons between San Fernando and the Santa Clarita. Smelling a profit, that oily triumvirate of Edward Beale, Colonel Baker, and Andrés Pico formed the Los Angeles Petroleum Refining Co. as a subsidiary of Star Oil and began construction of a small, two-still refinery at Lyon's Station. It was built by Captain W.S. Smith to the specifications of Dr. Vincent Gelcich and completed in April 1874. Unable to produce smoke-free kerosene, the refinery folded up, as did Star Oil, beset by financial troubles.

During this same year the Pennsylvania oil fields began to fall off in production, causing experienced drillers and managers to drift toward the west. One of the first arrivals was Demetrius G. Scofield, tall, slender and just 30 years old. Scofield was amazed at production obtained by skimming and spring-poles, realizing that a

modern operation would result in a bonanza. Sending back to Titusville for some eastern expertise, Scofield helped to form California Star Oil Works (CSO) on July 8, 1876, with headquarters in San Francisco. CSO then began buying up property owned by the nearly bankrupt original California Star.

John A. Scott, who owned a profitable Pennsylvania refinery, discovered "white oil" in Placerita Canyon so clear that a newspaper could be read through it. Bottles of the stuff were displayed at the great Centennial exhibit in Philadelphia in July.

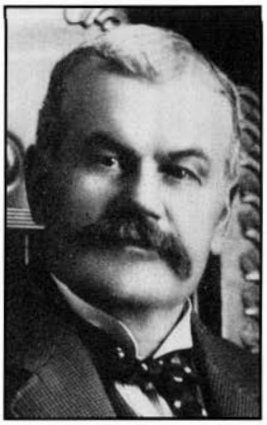
Meanwhile Scofield was in desperate need of an experienced driller, whom he found right under his nose, so to speak. This driller was a Frenchman named Charles Alexander Menetrier. He was born in 1846, and at the age of 7 he was brought to America by his parents. Here he developed a fascination for things mechanical. He became a driller, sinking 42 successful wells at Titusville before landing in San Francisco during November 1873. The family name had been changed to Mentry, and Alex, as he liked to be called, settled on 180 acres in Placerita, exploring the surrounding hills for oil.

Demetrius Scofield was well aware of Mentry's formidable reputation when he employed him as superintendent of the Pico lease. Alex Mentry rigged up a three-pole derrick, making a drill from an old railroad axle, and kicked the Lyon-Jenkins-Wiley hole down to 120 feet. The flow was increased to 12 barrels per day—not exactly a bonanza, but promising. Two more wells were bored, yielding meager results. Then it happened!

On September 26, 1876, Mentry brought in CSO Number 4—a gusher of 50 barrels a day rushing up and out of a casing a bit less than six inches in diameter, literally exploding into the clear blue sky above the canyon.

Thus was born the oil industry of California. More wells were sunk. The little town of Pico Springs changed its name to Mentryville, sustaining a hundred families. General Beale was not entirely out of the picture as he still collected a toll on all of those wagons creaking through his cut. D.G. Scofield did all right, later becoming the first president of Standard Oil of California.

CSO 4 was, until recently, producing that emerald green petroleum deep in the canyon. Surrounded now by plaques proclaiming it a landmark, it was the oldest-operating oil well in the world until it was shut down in September of 1990.



ABOVE: Alex Mentry, came to California from Titusville, Pennsylvania, in November 1873. In 1876 he became superintendent of California Star Oil Works (CSO) and that summer brought in the first commercially successful oil well west of Pennsylvania— CSO Number 4. Mentry radically changed the methods of oil production and drilling and revolutionized the entire oil industry in the West for the next quarter century. From the collection of F.J. Legasse. Courtesy, Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

LEFT: This 1877 photograph by pioneer photographer Carleton Watkins shows California Star Oil's Number 4 well. The well, which once produced between 30 and 50 barrels of oil a day, not only signalled the birth of the California oil industry, but also was the world's oldest operating oil well until it was shut down in September of 1990 after 114 years of production. Courtesy, Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

6. Transportation

The San Fernando (Newhall) Pass
And the Pioneer Traffic That Went Over It.

By VERNETTE SNYDER RIPLEY

The Quarterly of the Historical Society of Southern California, 1947-48.

1862, January 25. Los Angeles Star.

"On Saturday last, torrents of water were precipitated on the earth it seemed as if the clouds had broken through, and the waters over the earth and the waters under the earth were coming into conjunction. The result was, that rivers were formed in every gulch and arroyo, and streams poured down the hillsides. The Los Angeles river, already brimful, overflowed its banks and became a fierce destructive flood. ...

"The road from Tejon, we hear, has been washed away. The San Fernando Mountain cannot be crossed except by the old Trail which winds round and crosses over the top of the mountain. The plain[1] has been cut up into gulches, and arroyos, and streams are rushing down every declivity. ...

"Another week has passed without a mail, making five consecutive weeks during which we had no communication with the outer world except by steamer express."[2]

1862, March 15. Los Angeles Star.

"We stated sometime ago, that Colonel Carlton had detailed a party of soldiers under Major Coult to repair the road over San Fernando Hill. The work was finished and from the report of the officer in charge, we take the following extract:

"'On Friday, the 14th of February, I sent Lieutenant Hanover with a party of ten men to repair the road for three miles which we had with difficulty passed over the 12th, and put the balance of the company under Captain Hines, on the hill in advance of us. On the 17th, having completed the road behind us, I sent the whole force to the hill. On Tuesday the 18th I finished up on the south and crossed to the north side of the summit where the heaviest work lay.

"'Here I found the rains had washed the road entirely away to the wall of cement on the right hand side, (descending) forming a gulch from twelve to fifteen feet in depth. It was necessary to cut away this wall in order to get a solid rock bed and to brace it well on the outside. The heavy timbers which had strengthened the former road lay in the bottom of the gulch. These the men dragged up by main strength and placed again in position.

"'By staying these timbers with braces equally as heavy, upon a solid footing, and cutting of ten feet of the cement wall, I think we have a better road bed than before. Some hundred feet below this point, it was necessary to repeat this work although not as formidable. This work was completed and the road thoroughly repaired over a distance of six miles on Monday the 24th.'"

That winter of 1861-62 then, the whole of southern California had been in a bad way. Both those roaring rivers, the Kern and the Los Angeles, had plunged out of their channels and cutting new ones, sprawled over the country. With the San Fernando Pass blocked, the Star newspaper had announced any traffic to the north out of Los Angeles, once more had to slowly make its way over the precipitous Cuesta Vieja, which had again become nothing more than a trail. That was something the stages carrying the United States mail had not even attempted.

Only a year before, in March 1861, the last stage of the Butterfield Overland Mail had crossed over the new pass. All the work the energetic Mr. Kinyon and the county itself had put into the road those three years since 1858, when the mail route had started, in order to make it a less dangerous grade for the Butterfield stages, was now torn out by torrential rains.

It is interesting to try and visualize that old road; the cement wall of stone masonry, held together with mortar, so high that when the road was gouged out making a twelve to fifteen foot gulch of itself, the wall could still be cut down ten feet. It had been put in to support the right hand side of the road as it went turning sharply[3] down the canyon from the cut through the rock on the always dangerous north slope. There were the heavy timbers the rains had torn out and washed down to the bottom of the twelve to fifteen foot gulch in the road. The soldiers had struggled hard to drag them up again "by main strength" and then brace them with equally heavy timbers on a solid footing in order once more, to strengthen the road.

Still descending the canyon for a hundred feet, there had been the same work to do over again, though not quite so hard a job; the wall of stone masonry to cut lower, the heavy timbers to drag back out of the gulch the road had become and brace with others just as heavy. So we have a brief glimpse of the construction used on the old San Fernando grade almost ninety years ago. After the 24th of May, 1862, the stages and the heavy trains of freight were again going up the mountain and through the high cut on the San Fernando Pass.

It is quite evident Messrs. Brinley, Pico and Vineyard had not even made a start on the turnpike road over the San Fernando Mountain for the building of which the state had granted them a franchise. The rains, however, seem to have given them time to mull over their franchise and in so doing, petition changes to be made.

There were three points they seemed to be anxious about. Because of their inability to start work on the road, they desired the time limit for its completion extended ten months from May 7th, 1862, the date previously set, to March 7th, 1863. They were worried about the return from their money and asked that the rates of toll fixed by the Board of Supervisors be such as to enable them "to realize from their investment in said road, the sum of twelve per cent per annum upon the amount of capital stock actually paid in."

The third point about which they were concerned was evidently the fact that the nearby Cuesta Vieja was still usable when heavy rains closed the San Fernando Pass. Without doubt it would have to be the alternate road while work was being done on the new one. There was a danger someone else in the near future might apply for a franchise to either improve the old road or cut through another canyon and open a second turnpike road across the mountain, in competition.

The Cuesta Vieja was not more than a half mile on its summit, from the new San Fernando road. Therefore, Messrs. Brinley, Pico and Vineyard petitioned the inclusion of the first two points in an amendment to the Act passed and also the following:

"That no other person or persons shall, within the period of this franchise, build any other toll road across said mountain within two miles on either side of said road." This would also preclude the use of Elsmere and Grapevine canyons on the east and Weldon canyon on the west.[4]

1862, April 18. Amendment was passed and approved at the 13th Session of the Legislature.[5] Colonel Vineyard himself was sitting in at this session as State Senator representing Los Angeles County.[6]

1862, April 21, addressed San Pedro.

"Abel Stearns Esq., Los Angeles.

"Being legal owner of one mining claim duly recorded in the Soledad Mining canon[7] (copper) ... in the 'Lady Washington lead' and now under charge of Major Strobel, you will be so kind as to take charge of same in my name and manage it for my best interest. ... I trust that it will turn out well.

"Major Strobel will place in your hands certain mining interests on my account, and I beg that you will preserve all my interests as far as possible.

Yours truly,
C.H. Brinley."[8]

1862, November 1. Los Angeles Star.

"Road to San Francisco Cañon[9]

"The numerous mining districts lately being opened in the northern part of this and adjoining counties and the increased amount of travel in consequence thereof, has rendered the enlargement of the road in San Francisco Canon an absolute necessity if the citizens of Los Angeles would retain the trade in those sections. The road was damaged last summer by an unprecedented storm and needs repairing, many points of rock need removing to render it traversable by the large teams it is necessary to use on the road. An amount of $2,500 it is said, will put the road in good order. Should this be neglected, Visalia, which is making strenuous exertions, will succeed in getting the trade of the rich localities of Slate Range, Caso and Owens River; this is important to Los Angeles."

1862, November 19. Los Angeles Star.

"On Saturday last, at a meeting of the Board of Supervisors,[10] especially called for the purpose, the report of Messrs. Bowers and Robbins[11] was received, those gentlemen having been appointed commissioners to inspect the road from this city to Fort Tejon and report as to its condition and the repairs required. The report was adopted, suggesting extensive repairs on that portion known as the San Francisquito Cañon.[12]

"The repairs on this road will be very extensive making it easy of transit for the heaviest wagons. Culverts will be built, the roadway widened, rocks blasted out and the line straightened and shortened. This contract was given to Mr. Robbins on his giving sufficient bonds for the performance of the contract."

1862. "Following the opening of the Owen's [sic] River Mines this year, Los Angeles merchants soon established a considerable trade with that territory. Banning inaugurated a system of wagon-trains, each guarded by a detachment of soldiers."[13]

The trade with the country to the north was increasing. The heavy work necessary to improve the Los Angeles-Fort Tejon road was on its way.

1862. It must have been sometime in the year 1862 that E.F. Beale, Surveyor-General of California and Nevada, took over the franchise given to Messrs. Brinley, Pico and Vineyard to put in the new San Fernando Road. General Beale, as he was often called, could see from his large holdings bordering the Fort Tejon Pass, the new development coming into the country around him.

To the north, the great Tulare Valley stretching endlessly below the Cañada de las Uvas was awakening with settlers. That year a man by the name of Colonel Baker[14] together with one Harvey Brown, had purchased the franchise granted to the Montgomery brothers. It called for the reclaiming of 400,000 acres of the great valley, soggy and rush-covered near the Kern river, from the Canada

as far north as Fresno.[15] It foretold the future settlement of the desolate land.

The following year Beale was to hear that Colonel Baker with his family had come down from Visalia and had himself settled on Kern Island with the new, roaring channels of the Kern river watering the land about him. He had planted an alfalfa field, a green oasis in the hot desolate valley, and emigrants, tired and worn, driving in over steep mountain roads, had been told that if they could only hold out until they reached Baker's field,[16] rest for themselves and fodder for their horses would be given them generously.

General Beale could look towards the mountains on the south of his vast ranchos and visualize over them, the small town of Los Angeles with its growing trains of freight wagons for the mining country, and its increasing ships sailing up the coast from around the Horn, loaded with eastern goods for the merchants.

The new road over San Fernando Hill and its monetary return in toll for every sort of beast or vehicle taking it, must have seemed a good investment to General Beale. Perhaps the wreck of the old road in the torrential downpour of rain that winter of '61 and '62 proved the new road might be too costly a venture for the original holders of the right. Whatever the reasons, there was General Beale, a man of wealth and the former head of the expedition that had surveyed the Great Wagon Road, taking over the re-building of the wagon road across the San Fernando Mountain.

1863, April 4. Los Angeles Star.

"San Fernando Road.

"In compliance with the franchise granted by the last Legislature for the construction of a turnpike road over the San Fernando Mountain, a good deal of work has been done by the present holder of the right, Mr. E. F. Beale. The terms of the law have been complied with, but the Board of Supervisors were not willing to ratify the franchise as the work done was not sufficient in their opinion to afford the required facilities for travel.

"In consequence another agreement has been made between the Board and Mr. Beale, by which the latter binds himself to further grade the road from a point ninety feet from the Northwestern extremity of the present cut to a point fifteen feet deep at the angle of the southeastern extremity of the same cut. This additional work will involve an outlay, it is stated, of from $16,000 to $18,000. The Board appointed commissioners to assess toll for same, which will last twenty years. The commissioners are Messrs. W.J.[17] B. Sanford, J.J. Gibbons, Francis Mellus and W.A. Tucker.

"The following is their recommendation: Team of 12 animals, $2; team of 10 animals, $2; team of 8 animals, $1.75; team of 6 animals, $1.50; team of 4 animals, $1.25; team of 2 animals, $1; 1 animal, 50 cents; loose animals or cattle ten cents each; horse and man, 25 cents; sheep, 3 cents; pack animals, 25 cents."

After that Board meeting in March, General Beale must have realized the Supervisors were demanding a much lower grade over the mountain than he himself had considered necessary. He was faced with the problem of tackling the steep road again. The cut through the rock that had first been made in 1854 and then lowered in 1858 for the Butterfield Stage Route,[18] had evidently been deepened by Beale but not enough to suit the Board. The road in the cut, between the towering shoulders of sandstone was still to be deepened further and its grade lowered fifteen feet at the south entrance to the cut.

The cost of the additional work was high, between sixteen and eighteen thousand dollars, showing how difficult the job was that still had to be done. But Beale had signed the contract and his metal must have been up. The town fathers were evidently going to hold out for the kind of road they themselves had in mind. After all the years of bitter reviling the Pass had received, this time, the road leading to it and over the top, was to be without reproach from the whip-cracking stage drivers, or the teamsters of heavy wagon trains, or the cattlemen herding their thousand of more crowding cattle through the mountain. The faithful Board of Supervisors seem to have settled on that.

As General Beale again worked vigorously to deepen the cut on the San Fernando Hill, three men who had been closely identified with the road, passed out of the picture.

1863, April 27. A terrible tragedy took place in the harbor at San Pedro. It was the explosion of the Ada Hancock, a lighter owned by Phineas Banning. Banning himself was on board but blown clear of the water, landing on a sand bar.[19] Among many prominent citizens injured or killed, it took the life of W.T.B. Sanford, Banning's brother-in-law. He had been the contractor who, with his partner George Carson, had made the first cut through the high rocks for the new San Fernando Pass nine years before. At the previous meeting of the Board of Supervisors, just a month earlier, he had been appointed with Francis Mellus, one of the commissioners to assess the toll for the new road. Now he would not see its completion.

In 1863 C.H. Brinley was no longer in the county. He had become deeply involved in his mining ventures. The fabulous tales of gold, silver and copper being found at La Paz on the Colorado river some hundred miles north of Fort Yuma, were awakening the interest not only of mining men but of cattle men like Don Abel Stearns. Some of them were driving down their own herds along the coast, cutting across from San Juan Capistrano, or by way of the hot, grueling route through Fort Yuma, and taking up land for their grazing.[20]

1863, May. Don Abel Stearns received a letter from C.H. Brinley, his friend and business associate, dated May 2nd and headed La Paz. He told him quite fully, of "the progress of events" and said "the matter of most interest to you, I presume, is live stock." He informed Don Abel he "had located 2,500 acres of land on this side and up the river, in your name jointly with others, for the purpose of having

a place in case the business should become of sufficient importance."

He told him of the "country of wild Apaches where, as tradition has it, each blade of grass bears a pearl, and meat is cooked in cauldrons of boiling gold and silver"; and "the Indians say, that the Apache wigwam is filled with gold and silver and his plains with fat horses." He closed the letter by hoping it would reach Don Abel "in the enjoyment of good health as also Doña Arcadia[21] to whom present my kindest regards."[22]

At that distance Mr. Brinley must have been quite willing to let General Beale assume the responsibility of making a lower turnpike road over the San Fernando Hill.

1863, August 30. Los Angeles. Published in the September 11th issue of the Daily Alta California, San Francisco.[23]

"Editors Alta: ... I have now to chronicle the demise of the Hon. J.R. Vineyard sitting member of the State Senate from this county. ... His death occurred on the 30th ult."

August 31. Los Angeles Tri-Weekly.

"The flags throughout the city were dropped to half-mast in token of respect."

1863, December 26. Los Angeles Star.

"Wednesday, December 23, 1863. The Board met pursuant to adjournment, present J. L. Morris chairman, and Supervisors Wilson and Aguilar.

"In the matter of the San Fernando Hill. Matthew Keller Esq. the commissioner appointed by the Board to examine the work done on San Fernando hill by E.F. Beale and associates,[24] according to an agreement entered into with said Beale in May last, filed his report, viz; that the said contract here-to-fore made by said Board with said Beale has been complied with, but the committee makes further report for the improvement of said hill which was adopted and it was agreed and stipulated with said Beale and his associates, that said San Fernando hill be further cut don according to the diagram furnished by the surveyor employed by the Board, the grade to be one foot to every five, and after the compliance of said contract, the said Beale be allowed to receive additional tolls than those allowed him by committee appointed by said Board in the matter of the repairs of the road between Los Angeles and San Fernando hill.

"Ordered that J.J. Robins,[25] roadmaster, be required to examine said road and report the necessary work to be done at the next regular meeting, 2d Monday in January."

Jacob L. Morris was not only chairman of the County Board of Supervisors but city treasurer as well. He presided over that Board meeting of December 23d in a small room on the second floor of Don Juan Temple's new Court House with its imposing clock tower and market place beneath.[26] He had chosen wisely when he appointed Matthew Keller Esq. as the commissioner to report on the work done on San Fernando hill. He had come to the pueblo in 1850[27] and interested himself in almost every important undertaking that would further the development of the country.

Don Mateo,[28] as he was friendily called, owned a general merchandise store on the north side of Commercial Street near Los Angeles Street, and as he was a wine producer he also sold his wines there.[29] He owned the large Rancho Topango Malibu[30] that had twenty thousand acres edging the seacoast for twenty-one miles.[31]

The two Board members listening to Don Mateo's report on the work General Beale and his associates had had done on the San Fernando hill, were Don Benito Wilson and Cristobal Aguilar. Don Benito, in 1853-54, had been Indian agent for southern California under General Beale who was a lieutenant then. He had helped him choose the site for the Indian Reservation on the Tejon Rancho. Since then Don Benito had increased his own land holdings and was owner of the Rancho San Pasqual,[32] the Huerta de Cuati,[33] and six years before, had bought from W.T.B. Sanford his half share of the Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres on whose wide acres they had raised cattle together."[34]

Cristobal Aguilar,[35] sitting in at the Board meeting, was a member of one of the oldest California families. He had been born in California when it was a Mexican province and several times was an alcalde of the early pueblo. He was a supervisor in 1854 when, with the Board, he voted $1,000 for the county towards the cost of changing the San Fernando Pass from the Cuesta Vieja on the Camino Viejo over to the present canyon on the west.

Don Mateo Keller, Don Benito Wilson and Cristobal Aguilar then, had all known the San Fernando Pass when it was the perilous Cuesta Vieja. They were all equally familiar with the eight long years of struggle over the steep grade of the second San Fernando Pass. Don Benito and Cristobal Aguilar would listen intently to Don Mateo's report on the road over San Fernando hill which, for the second time was being presented to the Board of Supervisors by General Beale as a finished job.

It must have been a disappointment to Beale that the town fathers, represented by these four hard-headed pioneers, should again consider the grade too steep; that they had even found it necessary to have a diagram drawn by a surveyor of their own choice to show him just how much further down the cut should be made and that the road should be no steeper than one foot to every five or a twenty per cent grade.

There was one redeeming fact however; General Beale must have sensed that the Board of Supervisors had perfect confidence in his ability, and that no matter how tough a job they were presenting him with, they knew the renowned road builder would accomplish it. The Board evidently had no qualms over insisting that the road be built their way.

1864, March 5. Los Angeles Star.

"The San Fernando Hill having been completed according to the survey ordered by the Board of Supervisors, the following rates of toll have been established: For a team of twelve animals, $2.75; for a team of ten animals, $2.75; one of eight, $2.50; six, $2; four, $1.75; two, $1.37 1/2; one, 75 cents. Loose animals, cattle etc., 10 cts. each; one man and horse, 25 cents; sheep 4 cts. each; pack animals, 25 cts. each; Mr. Beale has appointed A.P. Robbins as Collector of Tolls."

The members of the Board of Supervisors finally accepting General Beale's road over the San Fernando hill were, "B.D. Wilson, C. Aguilar, J.A. Morris, A. Ellis, P. Sichel (M. Keller.)"[36]

1864, March 5. Los Angeles Star.

"The improvement made is one of great importance to the county. A large amount of money has been expended by Mr. Beale in cutting down the hill."

This then is the deep cut through the towering sides of sandstone on the old San Fernando Pass.[37] General Beale and those who had worked on the cut before him, had nothing for their workmen but the crudest implements, the pick and shovel. It was with these that Beale laboriously and stubbornly had his men carry out the final orders of the Board of Supervisors. It took him almost two years to accomplish the job, but for over eighty years, straight as a die, those great walls of the Cut have stood a monument in themselves to pioneer road building.

There is no better proof that the new turn-pike road was received with gratitude by the citizens of Los Angeles, than the fact the Star newspaper was silent about its grade. There was no further mention of the road that year, after the announcement in its March 5th issue of the completion of the work on San Fernando hill; no vituperation concerning the Pass, no hair-raising tales to blacken it.

There was the small adobe toll house near the foot of the south grade on the west bank of the creek bed.[38] There was O.P. Robbins, the collector of tolls, who lived in it, ready to lift the wooden pole[39] across the road as the herds of cattle or sheep pushed by and the stages and freight wagons came slowly lumbering up the grade or down it from the other side of the mountain.

The pull up to the top was still hard and the turns still quite sharp; the ruts from the heavy wagons were deep. The mud from the winter rains sloshed high to the hubs of the great iron-rimmed wheels. But there were no hair-raising deep gulches to fear on the side of a steep, cement-walled road. There was a short, heavy pull into the deep cut itself, but the road between the high, narrow walls of sandstone was level. The San Fernando Pass was a tough but no longer a dangerous grade.

Traffic over the new road was heavy. The mines were booming in the mountains along the Kern river, and the Owens river mines over the Sierras. More settlers were entering the desolate Tulare Valley. Emigrants were stopping at Baker's field and not going on. A small settlement was beginning to appear around it.

In 1863 because of trouble with the Indians in the Owens Valley, a thousand or more of them, men, women and children had been moved under the protection of the Second California Volunteer Cavalry, to the Sebastian Reserve. Fort Tejon was re-established for them and a large Indian camp was made below the adobe buildings of the Fort.[40] But by 1864 most of them had been removed and early in September Fort Tejon was again abandoned for the last time.[41]

General Beale had resigned from his position as General-Surveyor of California and Nevada, at the close of the Civil War that year of 1864.[42]

The Indian Reservation had been given up as a government project in 1862,[43] and General Beale now returned to his Ranchos Tejon."[44] From his own vast acres of grazing land,[45] dotted here and there with great oaks that bordered the Cañada de las Uvas, he could watch the increasing traffic go through. Coming or going, it would all drive over the new turnpike road on the San Fernando Pass and the return in toll from his investment and his hard work was beginning to come in.

NOTES.

1. San Fernando Valley from ex-Mission San Fernando.
2. The Cattle on a Thousand Hills. Robert Glass Cleland, p. 170.
3. "The road takes some pretty sharp turns in the canyon." W.L. Ormsby on first Butterfield stage to San Francisco. The Overland Mail. Walter Lang.
4. It is interesting that, according to the old maps, there was no other important road until 1910, forty-eight years later, when the old road with the cut was side-stepped and the tunnel put in.
5. Statutes of California 1862, p. 282.
6. Los Angeles Triweekly. Aug. 31, 1863. Sacramento State Library, contributed by Miss Gillis, Librarian.
7. Soledad Canyon, about 35 miles due north of Los Angeles, used by the Southern Pacific between Saugus and Mojave. In early sixties it developed a mining boom.
8. Gaffey MSS. Used through the courtesy of the Huntington Library.
9. San Francisquito Canyon.
10. l862-63 — County Supervisors: B.D. Wilson. C. Aguilar. J.L. Morris, Vincente, Lugo. F.W. Gibson. History of Los Angeles County.
11. J.J. Robbins, roadmaster.
12. The franchise for the improvement of the San Fernando Pass had already been given and work was being done on the road.
13. Sixty Years in Southern California. Harris Newmark, p. 322.
14. Colonel Thomas Baker was one of the founders of Visalia. He was at the time (1861-62) State Senator from Tulare County.
15. History of Kern County. Morgan.
16. The present Bakersfield.
17. Error. W.T.B. Sanford.
18. Los Angeles Daily Eveing Bulletin. July 12, 1858.
19. Reminiscences of a Ranger. Major Horace Bell, p. 328.

20. Gaffey MSS. through the courtesy of Henry S. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
21. Doña Arcadia Bandini Stearns, later Baker.
22. Gaffey MSS. through the courtesy of the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
23. Miss Gillis, Librarian State Library, Sacramento, California.
24. Original investment in road by C.H. Brinley, Don Andres Pico and James R. Vineyard, probably still held. Further investment may have been made by others.
25. A misprint, J.J. Robbins.
26. Ana Begue de Packman. Picture in the files of the Historical Society of Southern California.
27. The First Census of Los Angeles. J. Gregg Layne.
28. Mateo Street named for Don Mateo Keller.
29. "Landmarks and Pioneers of Los Angeles in 1853." Ana Begue de Packman. The Quarterly Historical Society of Southern California, June-September, 1944, p. 88.
30. Bought from Leon Victor Prudhomme, in 1857 for $1,400 or seven cents an acre. Romance of the Ranchos, p. 18, Ralph Conner.
31. The City That Grew. Boyle Workman, p. 23.
32. Where now are Altadena, Pasadena, South Pasadena and parts of San Marino. Romance of the Ranchos. Ralph Conner, p. 21.
33. His heirs still live on part of the tract adjoining the Huntington Library and Art Gallery in San Marino. Ibid. p. 4.
34. Ibid. p. 17. Westwood, Westwood Village and Holmby Hills.
35. Cristobal Aguilar later was several times Mayor. Sixty Years in Southern California. Harris Newmark, p. 100.
36. History of Los Angeles County. Supervisors for 1864-65.
37. The Cut was still lowered a few feet about 1904 for early automobiles attempting the grade. This shows on the 1946 picture.
38. See "toll ho," marked on old map 1853-1875.
39. Mrs. Luisa de Lopez Dunne McAlonan. Charles Prudhomme MSS.
40. The Story of El Tejon. Part Two. Arthur Woodward, p. 128.
41. Ibid. p. 133.
42. Edward Fitzgerald Beale. Stephen Bonsall.
43. Story of El Tejon. Part One. Helen S. Giffen, p. 43.
44. Edward Fitzgerald Beale. Stephen Bonsall, p. 272.
45. "Beale adobe on the La Liebre Rancho, Canon de los Osas." Photo by Guy J. Giffen, 1937. A frontispiece. The Story of El Tejon. Helen S. Giffen and Arthur Woodward.

GETTING AROUND AND SETTLING DOWN

1850s-1860s

WILEY'S WINDLASS

As the Couts brothers were busily driving cattle northward to feed the hordes of hungry gold seekers, a constitutional convention was called at Monterey on September 1, 1849. Among the 48 delegates, 11 were Californios or property-owning Spanish-Mexicans. Their views were so radically different from those of the Yankees that splitting the territory into two separate states was seriously considered. A compromise was finally hammered out and sent to the U.S. Congress.

The application for admission to the Union dropped like a bombshell into the collective laps of senators and representatives, for California submitted an anti-slave constitution that would upset the carefully planned balance of power between Northern and Southern states.

A great debate was set off among towering giants of the U.S. Senate—men such as Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and Daniel Webster. At last the historical Compromise of 1850 allowed "The Golden State" into the Union in exchange for a strong fugitive-slave law. On September 9, President Millard Fillmore signed the bill making California the 31st star in the U.S. flag. The South was placated and Civil War delayed for a decade.

Meanwhile, Hispanic dons were cashing in on their newfound wealth extracted from frenzied gold diggers. They thought nothing of laying out $2,000 for a hand-tooled saddle trimmed with silver or electrum bridles. Golden spurs of immense proportions jangled from boot heels. Caballeros spent $500 to $1,000 for a suit of clothes and wrapped their women in yards of silks and satins.

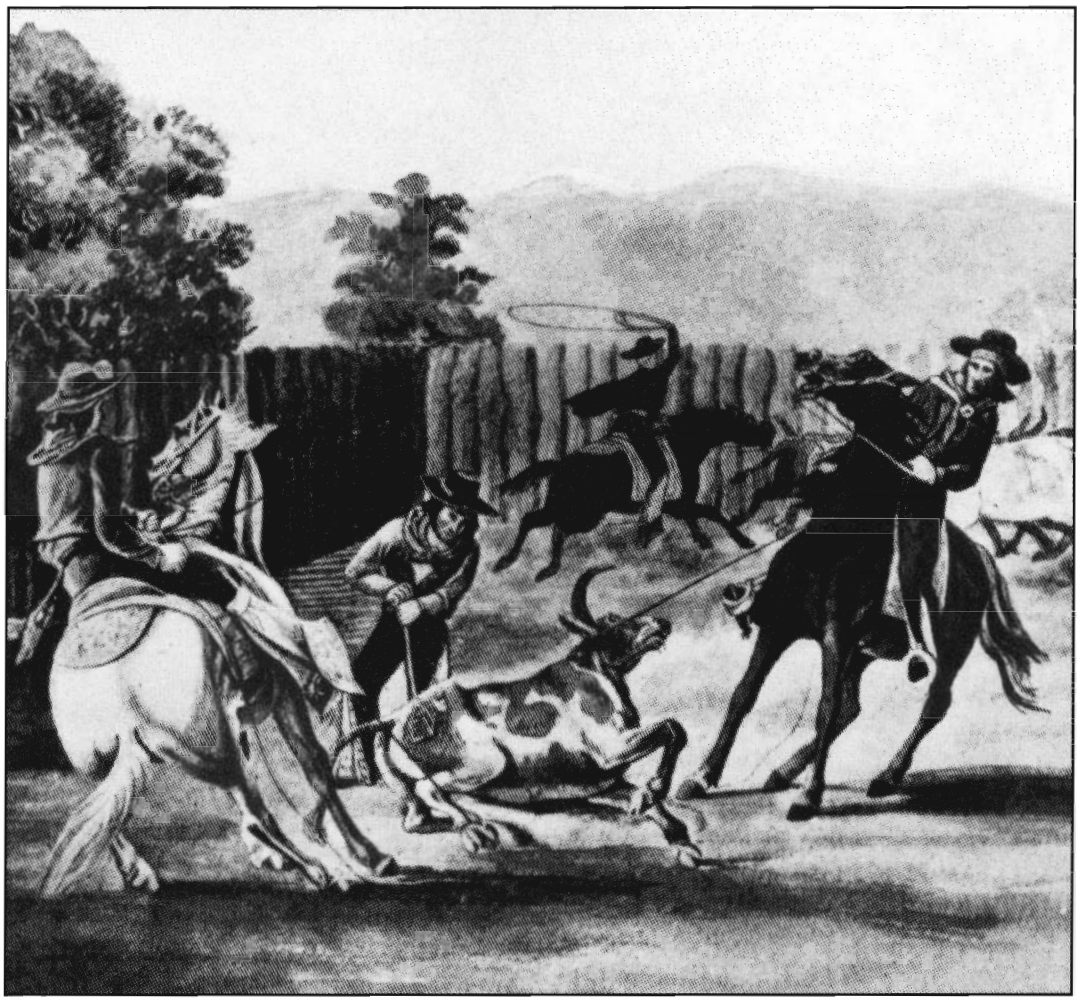
Adobe homes were expanded to include Brussels tapestries and massive Victorian furnishings, and Persian carpets lay on packed-earth floors that later might be tiled with baked clay.

The long cattle drives that brought all of this wealth to the southland were not without their problems. In the spring of 1852 Cave Couts wrote to Abel Stearns:

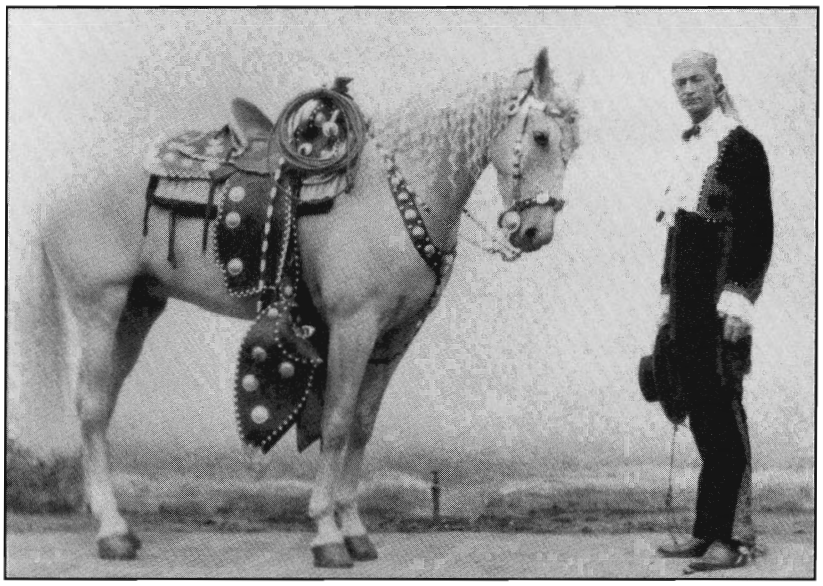
The nest of thieves in the Santa Clara did all they knew how to make me loose [sic] a lot, but not all. By believing all they told me to be false and threatening a couple pretty closely, I escaped . . . I learned that they got about 100 head of Forester, 50 from Jose Antonio Arguello, 70 of Machados, all of Castros, and others in proportion.

On July 12 the Couts brothers arrived at San Jose to find 15,000 cattle milling around, the grass burned, and, to make life more unpleasant, vast swarms of mosquitoes. Rustlers, flooded streams, withered grass, and clouds of choking dust were forgotten when the animals were sold. Expenses would run about five dollars per head, including paying off the vaqueros, leaving a net profit of $70

RIGHT: To indicate ownership, calves were marked on the hip with a red-hot branding iron. Each iron was registered with the proper officials and no two rancheros were permitted to use similar brands. Sketch by E. Vischer/The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley



BELOW: *With the price of cattle up tremendously during the Gold Rush, rancheros thought nothing of spending $2,000 for a hand-tooled, silver-trimmed saddle or buying gold spurs for their boots. This richly adorned ranchero displays his expensively outfitted steed. Courtesy, California Historical Society, San Francisco*



for each steer. Not bad for a month's work and a 400-mile-long journey.

The most arduous part of the trip was getting over the mountain pass between the San Fernando and Santa Clarita valleys. Along with the cattle came an increase in freighting out of Los Angeles and problems with the pass. Late in 1852 Henry Clay Wiley arrived on the scene, setting up a substantial wood frame hotel-restaurant-saloon in partnership with Ignacio del Valle. At the top of the hill Wiley installed a massive windlass that could actually lower animals and wagons down the precipitous declivity—for a fee, of course. After swinging between heaven and earth for several minutes at the end of a length of rope, even the most dedicated teetotaler probably ordered up a dose of "nerve tonic" at Wiley Station.

Over the Pass

During the summer of 1854 two events occurred that had a tremendous impact on the development of the Santa Clarita.

In July gold was discovered on the Kern River; men were taking $10 to $25 a day out of the ground. One miner wrote to the *Los Angeles Star,* "There is no doubt of there being plenty of gold here, the only difficulty is that we have no provisions."

Provisions? This key word was not lost on Angeleno businessmen, who had visions of El Pueblo becoming as great a supply center as San Francisco was for the northern mines. In the mad scramble and corporate back stabbing that followed, the merchants found suddenly that the only road north was neatly tied up by a beardless youth of 24 who went around town in shirtsleeves, bright suspenders, clodhopper shoes, and pants five or six inches too short. In spite of his country-yokel appearance, Phineas Banning had the largest freighting operation in Southern California, with 500 mules, 40 wagons, and 15 stagecoaches. When Fort Tejon (Badger) was established on Grapevine Pass on August 10, it was found that Banning already had an Army contract to provide the forwarding business neatly folded in his vault. In fact, a flinty-eyed gunman by the name of Gabriel Allen was bossing a crew of Banning's at work improving the road over Fremont Pass, up San Francisquito Canyon to Lake Elizabeth, through Pine Canyon—where a sawmill was being set up—then around Quail Lake to the cavalry outpost. Gabe, as he was generally known, was a veteran of the war with Mexico and later a county supervisor, who had a reputation as a shootist. Gabe Allen frequently used Indians for target practice and was arrested once by Sheriff Getman for picking off a roofer from the top of a building in order to test his marksmanship.

In December of 1854 Phineas Banning mounted the box of a towering red and yellow Concord coach to make the first run over the new route, although his foreman, Allen, insisted that the trail was not ready yet. Among the nine passengers who made that epic journey was Major Horace Bell, who left this wonderfully graphic description in *Reminiscences of a Ranger:*

The horses could not put the grade with all of the riders, so they were forced to get out and walk to the top. The question among his (Banning's) nine wondering passengers who had toiled up the mountain on foot was how the stage could descend . . . He cracks his whip, tightens his lines, whistles to his trembling mustangs, urges them to the brink of the precipice and they are going down!!! Rackety, clatter, bang. Sometimes the horses ahead of the stage and sometimes the stage ahead of the horses—all, however, going down, down, with a CRASH.

Finally the conglomeration of chains, harness, coach, mustangs and Banning were found in an inextricable mass of confusion—contusions, cracks and breaks . . . piled in a thicket of chaparral at the foot of the mountain. "Didn't I tell you?" said Banning, "A beautiful descent, far less difficult than I anticipated."

However, Banning sent a courier in hot haste, urging Don David Alexander to send 50 men immediately to repair parts of the road which he had, in his descent, knocked out of joint.

Gabe Allen and David Alexander did a little rerouting, cutting a 30-foot-deep cleft through what is now called Newhall Pass, effectively bypassing Henry C. Wiley's windlass and depot. Wagons rolled generally up the route of present-day Interstate 5 to San Francisquito Canyon, where an adobe station known as Moore's awaited thirsty and hungry travelers. It was later called Hollandsville, when Moore took off to pan for gold further up the arroyo. The next stop was at Elizabeth Lake, then on to Fort Tejon.

Camel Caravans

On the tenth day of August in 1854, Company "A," First United States Dragoons, arrived high up on Grapevine Pass under the command of First Lieutenant Thomas F. Castor. Tired, dusty, and bedraggled after a two-month march across the searing desert, they were, however, invigorated by the cool breezes at the refreshing altitude of 4,500 feet above sea level.

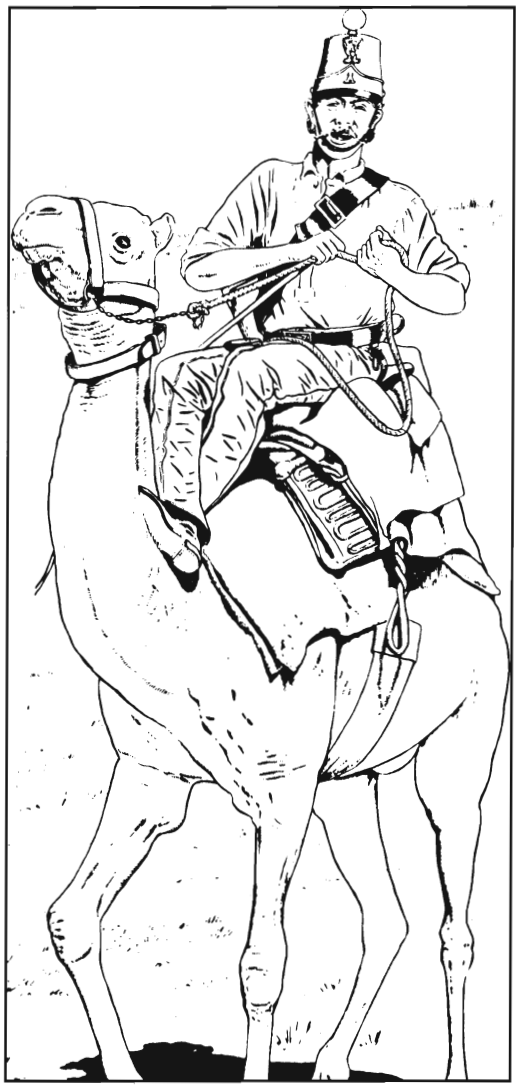
Lieutenant Castor wasted no time in laying out

Cave Johnson Couts, the son-in-law of wealthy cattleman and landowner Juan Bandini, went into the cattle business with his brother, William, in the spring of 1849. The Couts brothers reaped astronomical profits due to the enormous demand for fresh meat from the hundreds of thousands of gold miners who had streamed into California. Courtesy, Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

barracks, officer's quarters, storehouses, and parade grounds for Fort Tejon.

The post, which was established to stop cattle rustling and protect the Indians, became the western terminus of supply trains composed of camels. The saga of the quixotic camel corps is an interesting one.

While exploring Death Valley with Kit Carson, Lieutenant Edward F. Beale got the idea of using dromedaries in the trackless Southwest. He suggested it to Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, who, at the time, was toying with the notion of a relay line of balloons across the desert. (So camels did not sound so farfetched.)



Camel Corp officers atop their animals must have been an incongruous sight in Southern California. The camel experiment, which began in the mid-1850s, was conducted to test the usefulness of camels as pack-train animals. Though the Civil War effectively ended the Camel Corps by causing the cutting of supply lines across the Southwest, locally the camels were used until September of 1864, when Fort Tejon was abandoned. Courtesy, Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Colonel David D. Porter was dispatched to Egypt and Arabia with $30,000 in his pocket to buy the beasts. On May 13, 1856, Colonel Porter landed at Indianola, Texas, with the first contingent of 33; another 44 followed later. Some of them were sent to San Antonio, while 25 others made the trip to Fort Tejon under the command of Beale, now a colonel. A couple of experienced camel drivers came from Arabia—Hadji Ali (his name was quickly changed by the soldiers to Hi Jolly) and Greek George Allen.

The *Los Angeles Star* reported on January 27, 1858, that "Colonel Beale and about fourteen camels stalked into town last Friday week and gave our streets quite an Oriental aspect."

In a letter sent to the Secretary of War, Beale was lavish with his praise:

At times I thought it impossible they could stand the test to which they have been put, but they seem to have risen equal to every trial . . . With heavy packs, they have crossed mountains, ascended and descended precipitous places, (and) have traversed nearly double the distance passed over by our mules and wagons.

While Beale was enthusiastic, no one else seemed to be. The troopers found out, to their sorrow, that camels could inflict nasty bites, spit with deadly accuracy, and be far more cantankerous than a Missouri mule. Horses and cows panicked at the sight and smell of the ungainly beasts, while their roar, which was likened to that of a Bengal tiger, kept man and animal awake half the night.

With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, supply lines across the Southwest were cut by Confederates and the camel corps was put out of business. They were used locally between Tejon and Los Angeles until the fort was abandoned on September 11, 1864. Some were sold to zoos, others turned loose in the mountains. The last auction of camels was held at Camp Verde in 1866. For years afterwards there were rumors of camels wandering the Tehachapis or drinking deeply from the banks of the Santa Clara.

Lyon's Station

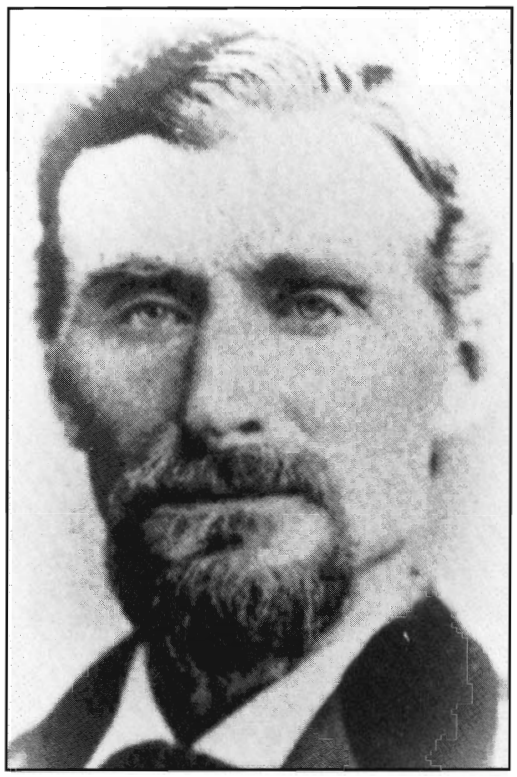
In September of 1855 the ink was blotted on a deed signing Wiley's Station over to twin brothers who hailed from Machias, Maine—Sanford and Cyrus Lyon.

Born on November 20, 1831, the boys had shipped out "around the Horn," and arrived in Los Angeles during the Gold Rush of 1849. Sanford took a job as clerk for Alexander and Mellus, living in David W. Alexander's home, while brother Cyrus, being of a more adventurous spirit, became something of a gunman.

Los Angeles at that time was a collection of squat adobe huts with a few substantial homes on the Plaza. Curs lay on the dusty streets, while giant rats prowled the back alleys, providing target practice for the citizens. When they got tired of shooting strays, they blew each other away. Killings were so common that the papers stopped reporting them. There was a day in 1853, however, when no one was murdered; that made banner headlines.

Don Ignacio del Valle, mayor of the town, was fed up with the lawlessness, so he formed the California Rangers. Headed by a Major Horace Bell and three captains, W.W. Jenkins, William Reader, and Cyrus Lyon, the Rangers and various vigilantes soon bludgeoned or shot every "low element" with total disregard for constitutional rights or "due process." Within two years the force was abandoned since the reasons for its existence were either dead, incarcerated, or had moved to a more favorable environment.

Meanwhile, far away in New York, John Butterfield resigned from the board of directors of Wells Fargo and Co., formed American Express as a rival concern, and established his famed Butterfield Overland Stage, which set a land speed record of only 21 days from St. Louis to San Francisco. The Los Angeles Board of Supervisors appropriated $8,000 to improve the road between San Fernando and Fort Tejon as a part of the Great Southern or Ox-Bow route pioneered by Texas cattlemen. At 1 p.m. on October 7, 1858, the first of Butterfield's coaches rolled into the town. It was greeted by a 100-gun salute.



Sanford Lyon and his twin brother Cyrus, who had both come to Los Angeles in 1849 from Maine, bought Wiley's Station in 1855. Lyon's Station, as it was subsequently named, grew from a small eating establishment and rest stop that catered to Butterfield Overland stages to a large, frame building that housed a store, post office, stage depot, and tavern. After marrying a woman named Annie and settling down at the station, Sanford became involved in gold mines, oil, farming, and other ventures. Courtesy, Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

The next day the stage struggled over Fremont Pass, stopped at Lyon's Station to change horses and get a warm meal for the passengers, and rolled up San Francisquito Canyon bound for the "City by the Bay."

By 1868 Lyon's Station consisted of a large, frame building housing a store, post office, stage depot, and tavern. Behind that was the family cottage, hidden among stately oaks, while up the hill were some board-and-batten residences for 20 folks who worked for Lyon. A cemetery was established there, where names such as Rivera, Whitney, and even Lyon were eventually inscribed on the headstones. Across the road that would one day be known as Sierra Highway loomed a red New England-style barn surrounded by corrals and sheep pens with cattle roaming over the steep hills. Today the place goes by the name of Eternal Valley.

Sanford married a lady 12 years younger than he, Anna T., always known simply as Annie. They settled down at the station. Later Sanford was involved in gold mines, oil, farming, and other ventures, while brother Cyrus remained, for the most part, in Los Angeles.

Igacio del Valle's children—(from left) Josépha, Ignacio, Jr., Ysabel, Reginaldo, and Ulpiano—retained ownership of Rancho Camulos until financial reversals forced them to sell the property in 1924. Courtesy, Ventura County Museum of History and Art

Nature Strikes Back

A drought in 1856 resulted in the death of at least 10,000 head of cattle in Los Angeles County alone, forcing the rancheros to take out mortgages on their vast estates. An interest rate of 4 percent per month was considered reasonable in those days. However, before the rains finally came, some of the dons were forced to sell their holdings at ruinous prices.

The next year brought bountiful precipitation, tall, luscious, green grass on the range, and the birth of many calves. The crisis passed, so the Californios carried on with their old ways of expensive clothing, roundups, and rodeos.

At 8:13 in the morning of January 9, 1857, the San Andreas fault snapped, sending shockwaves through the southland. Centered at Fort Tejon, the quake was probably every bit as strong as the one felt at San Francisco 49 years later (8.3 on the Richter scale).

Throughout the previous night, beginning at 11:30, there had been tremblings and an unusual occurrence of four foreshocks in which the ground opened up in places and hills seemed to explode in massive clouds of dust.

At Tejon barracks were tossed around like childrens' toys during the main event. On the adjoining Rancho La Liebre, Edward F. Beale had placed a round sheep corral right across the unknown rift zone. On the morning of the 9th it had shifted into an "S" shape to the amazement of the owner and the terror of the woollies, who ran for days.

The old Asistencia at Castaic Junction was severely damaged. Curved roof tiles fell through wooden beams to the floor. Adobe walls separated, some bricks smashing furniture as they hurled downward, sending the panicked family outside for safety.

When at last the earth settled down, José Salazar at the Asistencia surveyed the damage and decided that it would be best to move into the sturdy little milk house below the crest of the hill. This living arrangement was thought, originally, to be only temporary until the Hacienda (old Asistencia) could be repaired. Rancho San Francisco was already mortgaged to the hilt, however, so no funds would be made available for restoration. At last the principal creditor, William Wolfskill, was forced to foreclose. Wolfskill generously worked out a plan with Don Ignacio del Valle in which all debts owed by the Salazars were paid off, while Ignacio was deeded 5/11ths of the rancho or that section known as Camulos. By 1861 the Salazars were out of the picture, while Don Ignacio was free of the burden of their debts. He had already sold Rancho Tejon to General Beale in order to satisfy creditors of his in-laws.

The final, crushing blow came to the California rancheros just as the *Monitor* and *Merrimac* were engaged in the first sea battle between ironclad warships in the Civil War.

A three-year drought began in 1862, drying up streams and springs, while causing the grass to wilt under an incessant sun. Cattle died by the thousands, filling the air with the stench of death while littering the countryside with rotting carcasses. Statewide loss was estimated at 41 percent, but in Los Angeles, the "Queen of the Cow Counties," grim statistics chronicled a staggering decline. By the time Lee met Grant at Appomattox in 1865, the Los Angeles herds had been reduced from 70,000 head to fewer than 20,000 bony beasts—a loss of more than 71 percent.

It was the death knell of a way of life. Prime beef was worth only two dollars, harking back to the days of the hide-and-tallow trade. "California banknotes" started a way of life and ended it. The drama had gone full circle.

End of Solitude

Soledad Canyon in 1860 was a grim and forbidding place of sulfurous pools of foul-smelling water, stark, crumpled hills, and deep, twisting arroyos. Through this bleak landscape skulked outlaws, renegade Indians, buzzards, and grizzly bears. Even the name, which means homesick or lonely, would not attract someone wishing to settle down and raise a family.

Yet, for some reason, Colonel Thomas Finley Mitchell staked a claim to 160 acres near present-day Sand Canyon and Lost Canyon roads, then hauled a wood-frame miner's shack in from Paper Mill Canyon near Acton as headquarters of a cattle ranch that grew to a thousand acres.

The colonel apparently pacified the fearsome Piute Indians, who used to come raiding down the Soledad, by hanging a side of beef in a tree for them. He even offered a bed and breakfast to desperadoes such as Tiburcio Vásquez, and reportedly purchased a few trinkets from Tiburcio just to keep on his good side.

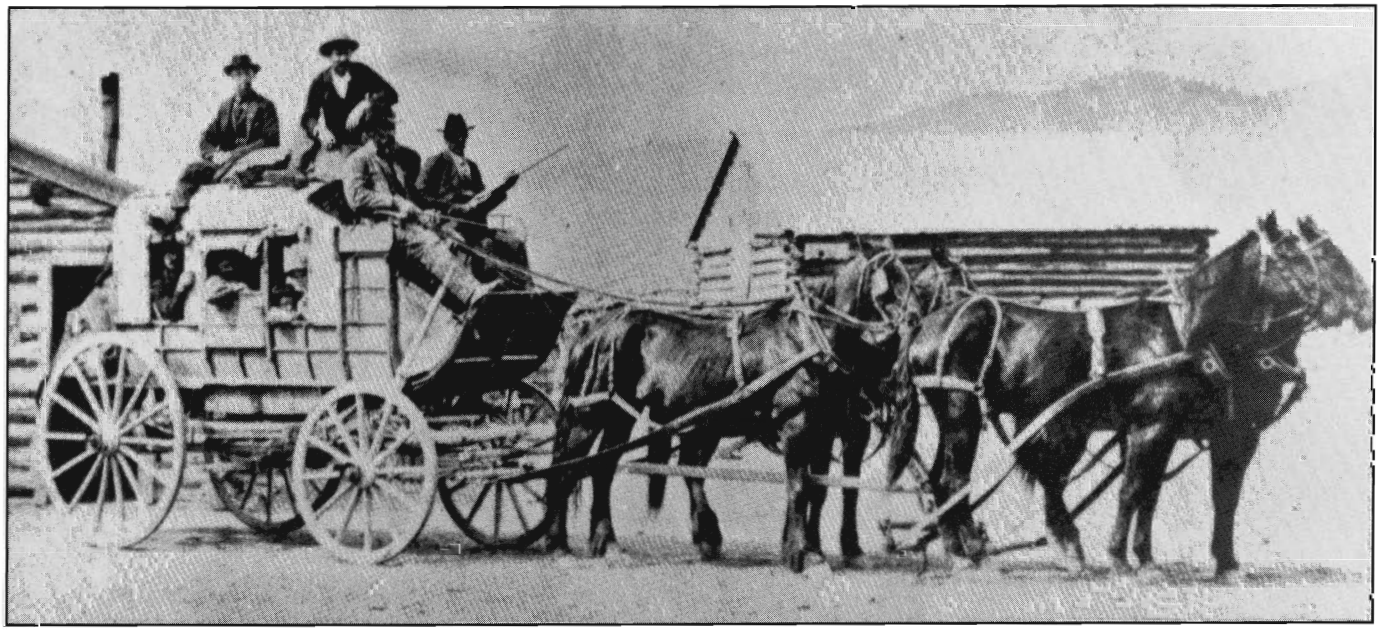
Only a year later, in 1861, the Civil War broke out with increased demands for gold, silver, copper, and lead to aid the Union cause. All of these minerals and more were found deep in Soledad Canyon, causing a rush to riches and, naturally, an increase of traffic past the Mitchell cabin.

A conglomeration of log cabins and tents moved up and down the canyon with each new strike. Called Soledad City wherever it was plunked down, it provided such basic needs as faro tables, rye whiskey, and ladies of the evening. A portable grocery was operated by James O'Reilly, a flaming-haired Irishman of medium build, pug nose, and happy-go-lucky air about him.

O'Reilly's black felt hat was clamped to the back of his head, and as he shuffled from place to place he was always slovenly looking. Luckily his clientele was none too fastidious, for his merchandise could not be considered improved by age or hard usage. Jim developed the New York and Parnell mines.

The post office in those days was a barrel into which outgoing mail was shoved and then carried to Los Angeles by anyone going that way. Travelers returning dropped incoming mail into the same barrel. Miners sorted through it from time to time, checking on word from the outside world. Located on the edge of the Thompson Smith Ranch facing Mint Canyon, the mail barrel was called Thompsons Corner.

Postal authorities rejected the name Soledad City for a formal post office, feeling it would be confused with the Soledad in Monterey County. O'Reilly proposed the name Ravenna for merchant and saloon keeper Manuel Ravenna,



The Telegraph Stage, partially owned by Henry Mayo Newhall, made regular mail delivery possible and provided transportation for those residing in Ravenna and Soledad City. Lightweight coaches such as this one were called "mud wagons" because they could travel over the worst of roads. Courtesy, Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

who also made a tidy profit by bringing the city ice, which was wrapped in blankets and placed atop Wells-Fargo coaches. Everyone agreed on Ravenna, so it became official on June 12, 1868.

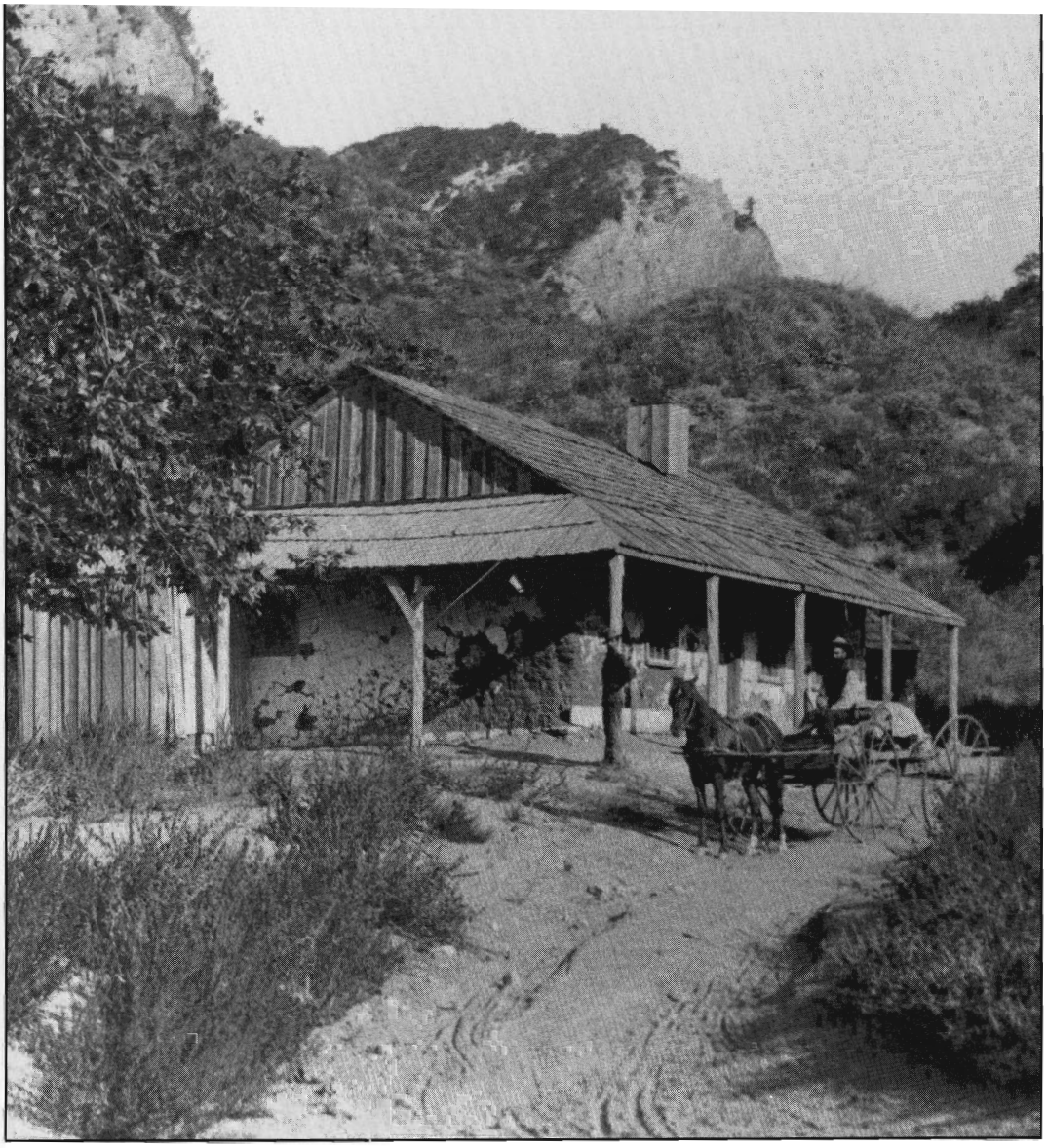
Ore from the mines was crushed by a massive stone wheel known as an *arrastra*, which was a slow, laborious process. Later a two-stamp mill powered by steam was set up close to the claims of James Gleason. Ravenna was the shipping point from which minerals were hauled in tall-sided freight wagons drawn by teams of oxen or as many as 20 mules down to San Pedro. The Telegraph Stage, owned partly by a fellow named Henry M. Newhall, pushed its way out to Ravenna and wherever Soledad City happened to be located at the moment, bringing passengers and a regular mail run.

Meanwhile, Thomas F. Mitchell hied himself back down to San Bernardino, marrying 17-year-old Martha Catherine Taylor on January 19, 1865. For his bride, who could not be expected to live in a clapboard shanty, he erected an adobe home, 45 by 60 feet, roofed with redwood shingles. Here were born six children, Mary, Thomas F., Jr., Frank A., Francis Ann, John Wesley, and Minnie Ivey.

Meanwhile, things had not been going too well for Jim O'Reilly. He lost his mines, his wife, and, finally, his mind. This man, who had been instrumental in forming the Cedar Mining District (one of the first in Southern California), was found dead in a squalid cabin.

Soledad City and Ravenna are now long gone, and, sadly, nothing of Jim O'Reilly's remains to remind the valley's residents of the man.

On June 12, 1868, Soledad City was officially renamed Ravenna after merchant and saloon keeper Manuel Ravenna. This view of the Ravenna Depot dates from about 1900. Unfortunately the town has long since disappeared. Courtesy, Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

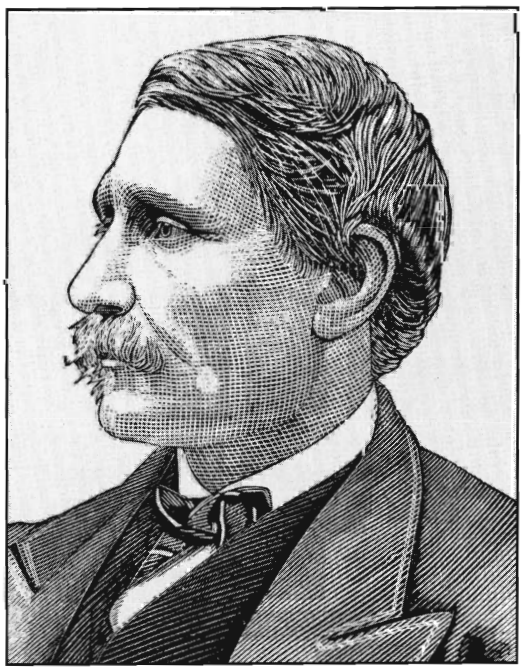


In September of 1863 A.A. Hudson and Oliver P. Robbins built the toll house that stood at the end of Beale's Cut. Tolls ranged from 25 cents for a horse and rider to $2 for teams of 12 or more horses. Courtesy, Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

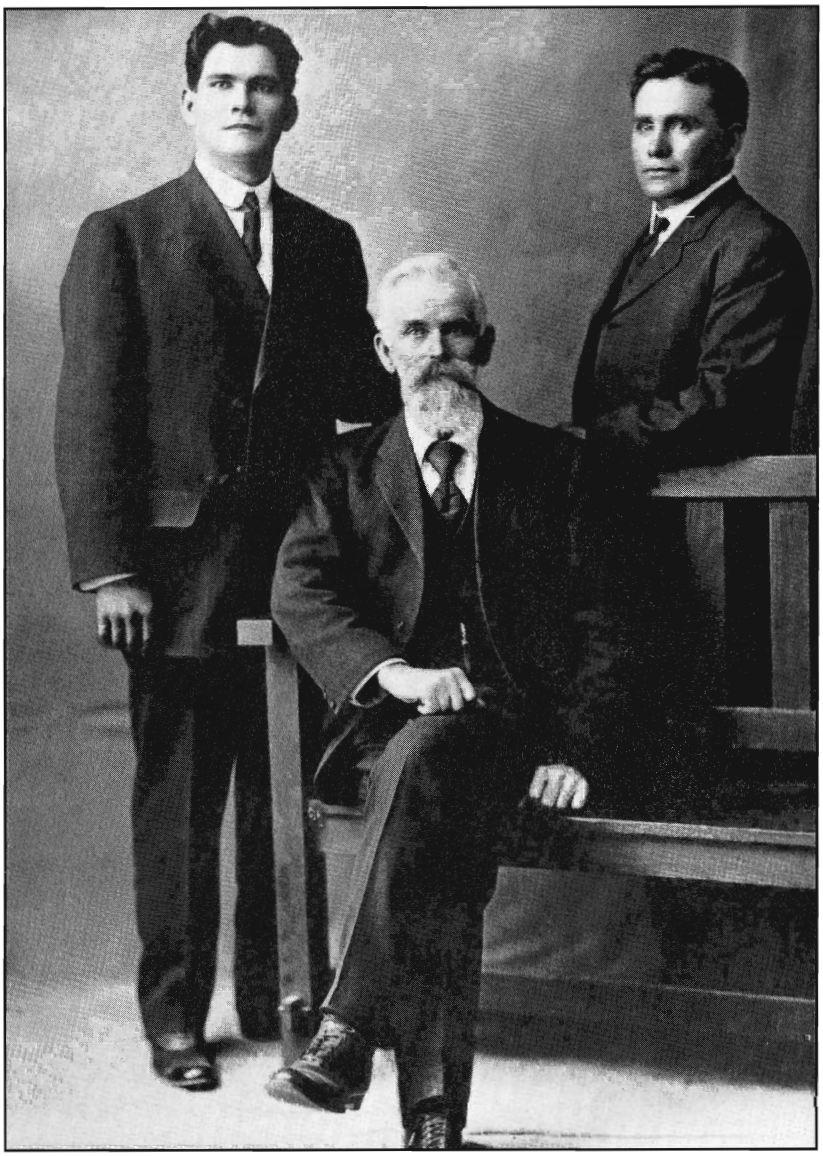
Beale's Bonanza

Probably the most famous landmark in the Santa Clarita Valley is a narrow slit through Fremont Pass called Beale's Cut. From 1863 to 1910 it was the only way to get out of Los Angeles and up to the San Joaquin Valley.

During the winter of 1862-1863, road improvements over the pass had been started by General Andrés Pico but washed out by flooding. General Edward Fitzgerald Beale, former scout for General Kearny, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and Surveyor-General of California and Nevada, dashed down to the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, took over Pico's franchise, and got $5,000 to do the work. He then called out the troops from Fort Tejon to actually dig a 90-foot-deep slash through the mountain barrier with picks and shovels. Then, on September 19, 1863, Beale advanced



Edward Fitzgerald Beale, who served as courier for Commodore Robert F. Stockton, Indian agent for all of California and Nevada, promoter of the 38th parallel route as the best and shortest railroad route to California, and instigator of the Camel Corps experiment, has also left his mark on the Santa Clarita Valley in the form of Beale's Cut. In addition, General Beale owned nearly 300,000 acres in the valley, including ranchos La Liebre, Tejon, Los Alamos y Agua Caliente, and Castac. From Cirker, Dictionary of American Portraits, *Dover, 1967*



Juan Bautista Suraco (center), a native of Genoa, Italy, married Dominga Garla, a Californio, and settled in Bouquet Canyon. On the left is Charles Suraco and on the right is Joseph Antonio Suraco. From the Collection of Charles "Sonny" Suraco. Courtesy, Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

$2,000 to A.A. Hudson and Oliver P. Robbins to build a toll house, the loan to be repaid at 2 percent interest from gate receipts, of which they got to keep one third of the total, with the lion's share going to the general.

For the next 21 years, until it reverted to the county, in order to pass through Beale's Cut, a horse and rider anted up a quarter, while teams of 12 or more paid two dollars. A horse and wagon forfeited 50 cents, teams of six or seven horses, $1.50, loose animals were charged a dime each, while at the bottom of the scale were sheep, at only three cents each. General Beale, by the way, had 100,000 head of woollies at the time.

Back in 1855, in order to settle a boundary dispute, General Beale had purchased Rancho La Liebre for three cents an acre. In time he acquired ranchos Tejon, Los Alamos y Agua Caliente, and Castac, a total of 297,000 acres.

The general married Mary Edwards, who was the financial genius behind his empire, built her an adobe hacienda that still stands at the west end of the Antelope Valley, and had one son, Truxtun.

In 1866 Beale bought Rancho Castac, (named Kashtuk, meaning "eyes," by the Indians) from José Covarrubias. The general changed the spelling to Castaic, and from his pond drained a creek teaming with native trout down to the junction with the Rio Santa Clara.

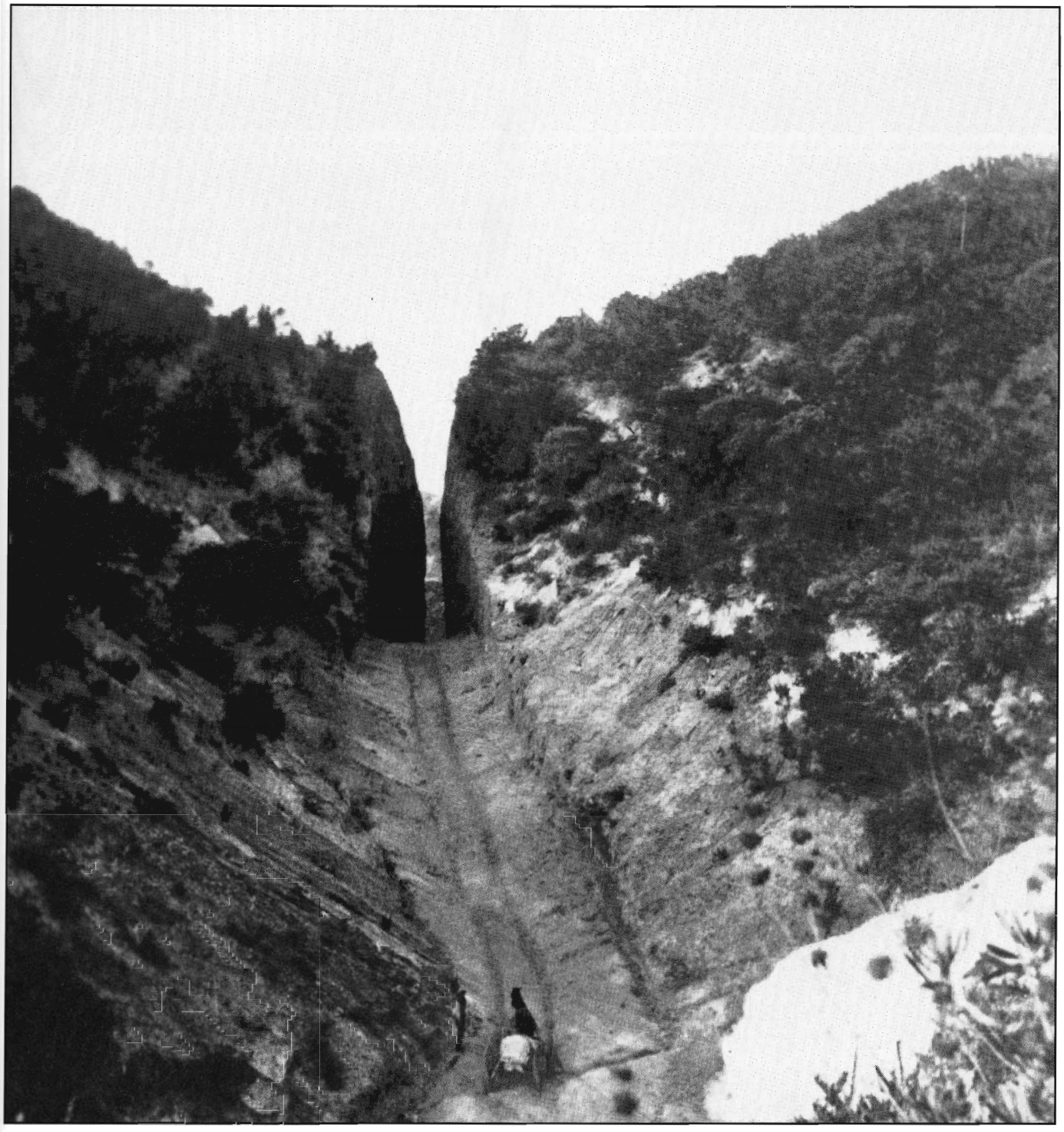
Juan Cordova married an Indian woman, settling Castaic Canyon in 1835. He was later a scout for Frémont. In May of 1867, Juan José Lopez settled on 120 acres, building an adobe house on the site of the now abandoned Trueblood Rest Stop.

In 1864 Private James Gorman was mustered out of the army at Fort Tejon and promptly homesteaded several hundred acres that became a regular stage stop. The town of Gorman still serves tourists, and it is owned by the Ralphs family, which has an interest in a large chain of grocery stores.

At the present time five generations of the Ruiz family have lived in San Francisquito Canyon. Farther up resided the Arujos. Their son Pablo became a renowned mule skinner, delivering supplies for the old Los Angeles aqueduct system.

Bautista Suraco, a native of Genoa, Italy, married a Californio and settled down in Bouquet Canyon. L. Ruiz enlarged the old F. Chari adobe home in 1872, where the Suracos lived. Members of the family are buried near the property.

Out in Sand Canyon a Captain Cunio staked a claim to a couple of thousand acres, becoming the first non-Indian resident of that hunk of now very high-priced real estate. Not far away lived Remi Nadeau, who made a fortune with his freight wagons supplying the miners of the Soledad. Nadeau's home was enclosed by a deer park that, in later years, became something of a tourist attraction. Now it is called North Oaks.



A lone wagon makes the approach to Beale's Cut in 1872. Upon orders from General Edward F. Beale, troops from Fort Tejon dug this 90-foot-deep slash through the mountain with picks and shovels and, thus, opened up a new transportation route for those entering or leaving the Santa Clarita Valley. Courtesy, Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Western film trivia from Beale's Cut

Leon Worden

SEIZE THE DAY!

Readers of John Boston's Time Ranger" column know that John Wayne and company take a rather circuitous stagecoach ride from Bisbee, Ariz., to Lordsburg, N.M., by way of Newhall in the 1939 John Ford classic, "Stagecoach." One minute they're being chased through Monument Valley by Geronimo and the Apaches. The next minute they're under fire as they barrel through Beale's Cut.

Of course, the Apaches were actually played by Navajo. The city of Tonto (near Bisbee) was actually Republic's movie town in Studio City. And Lordsburg was the Monogram Ranch, later known as Melody.

You might have known that but I'll bet you didn't know John Ford used exactly the same shot of Beale's Cut 22 years earlier - same camera angle and everything - in his 1917 film, "Straight Shooting," and again in 1924 in The Iron Horse."

There were some interesting factoids among the Western volumes assembled by local bookseller Jan Heidt (One for the Books, 259-5595) for the city's huge poetry gathering at Melody Ranch last weekend.

Ford is either a very consistent or a very lazy film maker," author Edward Buscombe says about Ford's reuse of Beale's Cut. "But who, shooting a Western in Hollywood (at that time) would suppose that 50 years later every shot would be put under the microscope?"

Even in his own time, however, Ford had his critics. Big Bill Hart took a crack at the famous director in his autobiography, saying Ford should have made the chase scene more realistic by having the Indians shoot the lead horses pulling the stagecoach. You see, that's just what the Indians are doing in a 1907 Frederic Remington painting that hangs on one of Hart's mansion walls.

Ford's response? "In actual fact that's probably what did happen, (but) if they had, it would have been the end of the picture, wouldn't it?"

John Wayne pulled down a whopping $3,700 for his co-leading role opposite Claire Trevor in "Stagecoach," one of the biggest Western pictures of all time. It was better than Duke's rock-bottom $2,500-per-picture contract with Monogram in the early 1930s but still less than Trevor and seven other actors were paid for the half-million-dollar film, which was shot in 47 days and released two months later. "In those days post-production work was speedy," Buscombe notes.

Ford wasn't the only one to use Beale's Cut in those early Westerns.

(We interrupt this story for the obligatory historical aside: Beale's Cut, alternately known as Fremont Pass and Newhall Pass, is the 90-foot-deep, hand-cut gash through the mountain southeast of Sierra Highway and San Fernando Road. General Phineas Banning drove the first stage through the pass in 1854 when it was only 30 feet deep. Troops under the command of General Edward F. Beale, a veteran of the Mexican-American War, deepened it in 1863 to ease travel between Newhall and the pueblo of Los Angeles. In 1910 the roadway was replaced by the nearby Newhall Tunnel, which gave way to modern day Sierra Highway In 1938.)

If you've been around town awhile you've probably seen the photo of silent Western star Tom Mix and his wonder horse Tony supposedly jumping over Beale's Cut. For years, folks have speculated whether it was Mix or a stunt double who made the jump, and whether the jump was actually made at all or if the photo was a composite.

Robert S. Birchard answers the question in a book called "King Cowboy," an exhaustive anthology of all the old Tom Mix movies.

The jump sequence appears in the 1923 film, "Three Jumps Ahead." Birchard says yes, the still photo was doctored - if you look carefully, you'll see that the horse and rider are twice as small as they should be in proper perspective - but also yes, the jump was really made - not by Mix or his horse Tony, but by their stunt doubles. Earl Simpson, a horse trainer and stunt man with a ranch in Searchlight, Nev., made the jump on his stunt horse with the help of a wooden ramp they used to gain altitude.

Although the footage of the jump survives in a promotional trailer made by Mix in the 1930s, the film itself is lost, as are many of the old Tom Mix movies that were filmed in and around Newhall in the 'Teens and '20s.

Letter writer Bob Van Koningsveld had an interesting theory on the turn of the century in yesterday's Signal. The way I'd heard it is that Jan. 1, 2001 is the true dawn of the millennium because there was no year Zero.

Anyone?

History of the Santa Clarita Valley, its roads, and railroads
A timeline

450 - Tataviam Indians settle in the upper Santa Clara River Valley.

1769 - Portola discovers Newhall Pass.

1800 - El Camino Viejo extended to San Fernando Pass (Newhall Pass).

1842 - Gold rush in Placerita Canyon, first discovery near the Oak of the Golden Dream.

1847 - John C. Fremont marches through Newhall Pass on the way to Cahuenga Pass. Pass renamed Fremont Pass.

September 9, 1850 - California becomes the 31st state.

1852 - Henry C. Wiley builds a windlass system over Newhall Pass.

1854 - Phineas Banning makes a thirty foot deep cut into Newhall Pass.

August 10, 1854 - Fort Tejon established.

December 5, 1854 - General Phineas Banning drives first stage through his 30-foot-deep-cut at Fremont Pass.

1855 - Kern Canyon Gold Rush. Traffic brought to almost a standstill in Newhall Pass.

1857 - General Beale leads caravan of US Government camels through Newhall Pass.

January 9, 1857 - Parkfield/Fort Tejon/Wrightwood earthquake. San Andreas Fault M8.4.

October 21, 1858 - Butterfield-Overland Stage Route is started through Banning Cut and San Francisquito Canyon.

1863 - General Edward F. Beale deepens Banning's Cut to 90 feet.

1864 - Los Angeles and Fort Tejon Road completed. Runs through San Francisquito Canyon. Fort Tejon abandoned.

June 24, 1865 - San Fernando Mining District founded.

1868 - Surveys looking for a better route over the Liebre Mountains find future Ridge Route alignment to be the best way.

May 12, 1868 - Soledad Post Office established.

June 12, 1868 - Soledad City is officially renamed Ravenna.

1870 - Cedar Mining District founded near Acton.

1871 - Elizabeth Lake School District established.

September 1872 - Sulphur Springs School District founded.

1875 - Soledad Judicial District set up.

January 15, 1875 - Henry Mayo Newhall buys Rancho San Francisco.

1876 - Mentryville founded in Pico Canyon.

July 14, 1876 - San Fernando Railroad Tunnel is completed.

August 12, 1876 - First engine through San Fernando Tunnel.

September 5, 1876 - Golden spike driven at Lang Station.

September 6, 1876 - Newhall Depot opens near Bouquet Junction.

October 1876 - Acton Depot opens.

October 13, 1876 - Newhall is founded at site of present-day Saugus.

February 16, 1878 - Newhall is moved from Bouquet Junction to 6th and Railroad Ave.

Mid 1870's - First asphalt paving put down in Newhall Pass.

September 1, 1887 - Santa Paula Branch of SP railroad completed and Saugus Station opens.

1887 - Castaic Depot opens at Castaic Junction. Saugus founded.

1888 - Acton Post Office established. Southern Hotel in Newhall burns to the ground.

1889 - Castaic School founded.

1891 - Surrey Post Office established in Saugus. Acton Rooster newspaper established.

1892 - San Gabriel Forest Reserve Established.

1893 - Pico Canyon/Newhall earthquake. Santa Susana Thrust Zone?

1903 - Santa Paula Branch of Southern Pacific Railroad is relegated to a branch line after Coast Route is completed through the San Fernando Valley.

April 18, 1906 - San Francisco earthquake.

1908 - Sterling Borax works begins production. San Gabriel Forest Reserve combined with San Bernardino National Forest to become Angeles National Forest.

1909 - First car travels through Beale's Cut.

1878 to 1910 - Railroad Avenue is the main street in Newhall.

1910 - Ridge Route is completed through Newhall. Spruce St. becomes the main street. Newhall Highway Tunnel is built to avoid the 29% grade at Beale's Cut.

1911 - California Highway Commission formed.

1912 - Surveys begin for Ridge Route alignment.

November 5, 1913 - Los Angeles Aqueduct is completed and opened.

July 15, 1915 - Castaic founded.

Late November 1915 - Ridge Route is completed over Tejon Pass.

1916 - Original Santa Clara River Bridge built. Original South Fork Bridge built. State takes over highway through Newhall Pass.

1917 - Castaic Post Office established.

1919 - Newhall Signal newspaper established.

1919-1920 - Ridge Route paved with a 20' slab of reinforced concrete.

1921 - Mint Canyon Road Completed (Sierra Highway).

1922 - Bonelli Stadium opens.

1925 - San Bernardino National Forest split from Angeles National Forest - Angeles becomes the western section as it is today.

1926 - US 99 commissioned using the Ridge Route and San Fernando Road. Newhall Community Hospital founded on San Fernando Road.

1927 - Original Placerita Creek and La Placerita Creek Bridges built on San Fernando Road.

1928 - US 99 first signed in California by Auto Clubs.

March 12-13, 1928 - St. Francis Dam collapses washing out original US 99 Santa Clara River Bridge and parts of Piru, Fillmore, Bardsdale, Santa Paula, Montalvo, Saticoy, and Ventura. Kills over 500 people.

February 1929 - Current Santa Clara River Bridge (US 99 (The Old Road)) completed.

Pre-1930 - Ridge Route and Sierra Highway (Mint Canyon Road) are the only way to Newhall.

1930 - US 99 completed through Weldon Canyon (Newhall Alternate). Three lanes wide. Newhall Depot closes.

1933 - Ridge Route bypassed by the Ridge Route Alternate (Ridge Route Alternate). Three lanes wide. Bouquet Dam completed.

1934 - Mint Canyon Road (Sierra Highway) straightened through Mint Canyon. State Highways in California first signed. SR-7 is signed on Sierra Highway, San Fernando Road, and Soledad Canyon Road.

1935 - San Fernando Road widened to four lanes through downtown Newhall.

1936 - US 99 full three lanes from Newhall Pass to Grapevine. Saugus Elementary School built.

1937 - US 6 extended to Long Beach, California from Denver, Colorado. SR-7 resigned as US 6 on Sierra Highway, Soledad Canyon Road, and San Fernando Road.

1938 - New Sierra Highway (US 6) bypasses Newhall and Saugus. Newhall Highway Tunnel is eliminated. Sierra Highway from Canyon Country to Newhall built with three lanes. Bridge built over Placerita Canyon Road on Sierra Highway.

1940 - First movie theater in the valley opens as “The American” at Spruce St. and 11th St.

1943 - Grapevine Grade (US 99) widened to four lanes.

1946 - First concrete barrier installed on Grapevine Grade (US 99).

1947 - First tract homes built in Seco Canyon. Bonelli Stadium reopens as Saugus Speedway.

1948-1951 - US 99 widened to a four lane expressway from Weldon Summit to Tejon Pass.

1952 - Arvin/Bakersfield earthquake. White Wolf Fault M7.4.

1954 - First segment of the Golden State Freeway built. Begins at the SR-7, US 6, US 99 (Sepulveda Boulevard and San Fernando Road) junction and goes on the present-day truck routes of Interstate 5 to Weldon Canyon.

1957 - Piru Dam is completed.

1960 - Placerita Canyon Road paved from Sierra Highway to Sand Canyon Road. Interstate 5 is signed along freeway sections of US 99.

Pre-1963 - Soledad Canyon Road runs on Valley Canyon Road near Lang Station Road. Rerouted when SR-14 was completed in 1963.Canyon Country area referred to as Solemint.

1963 - New SR-14 Antelope Valley Freeway is completed from Red Rover Mine Road to near Solemint Junction. End of freeway was near present-day Canyon Country Park. US 6 decommissioned from Long Beach to Bishop. Old SR-14 (Artesia Blvd.) renumbered as SR-91. US 91 decommissioned in California. Canyon Country founded.

1964 - US 99 is decommissioned. Signing is not taken down until 1968. First segment of I-5 built in the Santa Clarita Valley. Runs from Saugus Junction north to Castaic Junction.

1967 - Interstate 5 is completed through the Santa Clarita Valley. Construction begins on Castaic Dam. Construction started on Valencia.

1968 - Sierra Highway widened to a four lane divided highway from Soledad Canyon Road to I-5. US 99 signage taken down along I-5 and older alignments. Newhall Depot is destroyed in a fire. Bridge over Placerita Canyon Road removed on Sierra Highway.

1969 - Lang Station is demolished by the Southern Pacific Railroad.

Pre-1970 - Newhall Avenue goes to Magic Mtn. Pkwy (then Saugus and Ventura Road).

February 9, 1971 - Sylmar/San Fernando earthquake. Delay in opening 5/14 interchange due to quake damage.

May 29, 1971 - Magic Mountain opens.

December 15, 1971 - Castaic Dam is completed.

1972 - US 99 is fully decommissioned in WA and OR. SR-14 (Antelope Valley Freeway) is completed from Solemint Junction to Interstate 5. “Santa Clarita Valley” becomes official name for valley.

1975 - Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society founded.

1978 - Soledad Canyon Road is widened from Sierra Highway to Sand Canyon Road.

Winter 1983 - Sand Canyon Road Bridge washed out by El Nino floods.

December 15, 1987 - Santa Clarita becomes an incorporated city.

1989 - San Fernando Road widened from Sierra Highway to Newhall. Santa Clarita Post Office dedicated.

1992 - San Fernando Road widened from Magic Mountain Parkway to Hi Chic Curve.

October 26, 1992 - Metrolink Commuter Rail service begins.

1994 - Metrolink service extended to Lancaster after the Reseda/Northridge earthquake. Princessa Station opens in eastern Santa Clarita.

January 17, 1994 - Reseda/Northridge earthquake. 5/14 interchange rebuilt due to quake damage. Santa Susana Thrust Zone M6.8.

1995 - Magic Mountain Parkway is widened at Edison Curve. 5/14 interchange reopens as the Clarence Wayne Dean Memorial Interchange. 1916 bridge over the South Fork replaced.

1996 - San Fernando Road is widened from Newhall to Hi Chic Curve.

May 11, 1996 - Mentryville reopened to the public as a park.

November 1996 - Barn at Saugus Speedway burns.

1998 - Carpool lanes open on SR-14 from San Fernando Road to Sand Canyon Road.

Spring, 1998 - Heavy rains and weak rock caused the partial collapse of Beale’s Cut

March, 2000 - Newhall Metrolink station opens.

September 2002 - State Highway 126 from Highway 14 to I-5 is finally relinquished from Caltrans to the City of Santa Clarita.

History of the Railroads in the Santa Clarita Valley Area

May 12, 1868 - Soledad Post Office established.

June 12, 1868 - Soledad City is officially renamed Ravenna.

July 14, 1876 - San Fernando Railroad Tunnel is completed.

August 12, 1876 - First engine through San Fernando Tunnel.

September 5, 1876 - Golden spike driven at Lang Station.

September 6, 1876 - Newhall Depot opens near Bouquet Junction.

October 1876 - Acton Depot opens.

October 13, 1876 - Newhall is founded at site of present-day Saugus.

February 16, 1878 - Newhall is moved from Bouquet Junction to 6th and Railroad Ave.

September 1, 1887 - Santa Paula Branch of SP railroad completed and Saugus Station opens.

1887 - Castaic Depot opens near Castaic Junction. Saugus founded.

1888 - Acton Post Office established. Southern Hotel in Newhall burns to the ground.

1898 - Bridge over the Santa Clara River near Saugus is built. Bridge used is a steel truss bridge.

1903 - Santa Paula Branch of Southern Pacific Railroad is relegated to a branch line after Coast Route is completed through the San Fernando Valley.

1908 - Sterling Borax works begins production. Narrow gauge line built in Tick Canyon from mine to the Lang Depot.

1878 to 1910 - Railroad Avenue is the main street in Newhall.

March 12-13, 1928 - St. Francis Dam collapses washing out original US 99 Santa Clara River Bridge and parts of Piru, Fillmore, Bardsdale, Santa Paula, Montalvo, Saticoy, and Ventura. Kills over 500 people. Railroad bridge over the Santa Clara near Saugus holds up.

1930 - US 99 completed through Weldon Canyon (Newhall Alternate). Three lanes wide. Newhall Depot closes.

1968 - Sierra Highway widened to a four lane divided highway from Soledad Canyon Road to I-5. US 99 signage taken down along I-5 and older alignments. Newhall Depot is destroyed in a fire.

1969 - Lang Station is demolished by the Southern Pacific Railroad.

February 9, 1971 - Sylmar/San Fernando earthquake. Delay in opening 5/14 interchange due to quake damage. Rails in San Fernando damaged.

April 1971 - Last San Joaquin Daylight stops at the Saugus Depot.

November 15, 1978 - Saugus Depot closed by last agent, James Guthrie.

1979 - Last freight train at Saugus Depot.

June 24, 1980 - Saugus Depot moved to its present Newhall location by the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society.

October 26, 1992 - Metrolink commuter rail opens in Los Angeles. Santa Clarita Line terminates at Santa Clarita Station at the Saugus Speedway.

January 1994 - Northridge earthquake causes the collapse of the 5/14 interchange. Metrolink becomes heavily used and service is extended to Lancaster. Princessa Station opens in eastern Santa Clarita.

March 2000 - Newhall Metrolink Station opens.

History of the Santa Paula Branch

By Russell B. Sperry,
(Based in part on the writings of David F. Myrick)

From the 1850's until the 1920's and 30's, railroads were America's lifeline. Whether located on a main trunk line or a secondary branch, communities depended on railroads for their connection to the outside world. Towns bypassed by railroads often withered and died as their residents moved a few miles to be closer to these vital transportation links. It was not unusual for citizens in promising areas to band together to build short line railroads to connect to the nearest main track, or to lobby the ma jor railroads into building a branch to their communities. It was just such an effort in the mid 1880's, begun by Thomas R. Bard, which led to construction of the railroad from Saugus through Santa Paula and Ventura to Santa Barbara. (In 1890, Bard became the first president of the Union Oil Company, first headquartered in what is now the Santa Paula Oil Museum.) Eventually, Bard and other major landowners in the Santa Paula and Port Hueneme area convinced the Southern Pacific RR that sufficient traffic would be generated to warrant constructing a branch. While the right of way was being secured, Chinese grading crews and Irish track gangs began arriving in Saugus around mid April, 1886. After several interuptions, work on the line was begun in earnest by the end of the summer.

As construction proceeded westward, new towns sprang up at Piru, Fillmore and Sespe. Although promoted by the 'Big Four' owners of the Southern Pacific, Sespe never developed as expected. The depot was open only a few years, and the Post Office closed in 1932; by that time most of the residents had long since moved to nearby Fillmore or west to Santa Paula. Piru and Fillmore survived, however, and grew in importance as the citrus industry made possible by rail transportation thrived in the valley. Santa Paula, already a major agricultural center, received a big boost from the arrival of the rails early in 1887. Train service got off to a shaky start however, as unusually heavy rains disrupted traffic several times during the next few weeks. The Santa Paula depot, shipped in sections from Sacramento, was ready for occupancy by its first agent, Fred Corey, at the end of March. Water towers for the thirsty locomotives were located in Piru, Fillmore and Santa Paula; the latter also boasted a small turntable and basic engine service facilities.

The first locomotive arrived in Ventura by the end of April, 1887. Construction continued northward, with service established to Carpenteria on July 1st and the first train to Santa Barbara arriving on August 19th. The tracks were extended north to Ellwood, a ranching and oil center just south of Gaviota, by December. For the next fourteen years, Ellwood was the end of the line, as difficult terrain and the depression of the 1890's put a halt to further construction for a time. Rails had been extended south from San Francisco through Salinas to Templeton and Santa Margarita by 1889, but it was not until early May of 1894 that trains reached San Luis Obispo from the north. This line was extended to Surf, where a branch heads off to Lompoc, in 1896. Another four years were needed to complete construction along the rugged seaside cliffs south of Surf; connection of SP's Coast Line from Los Angeles through to San Francisco was finally celebrated near Gaviota, with the driving of the last spike on the final day of December in the year 1900.

Traffic on the line through the Santa Clara River Valley increased greatly in 1901, as it was now part of a main north-south link between two of California's largest cities. Local traffic continued to grow as well, since the trains made it profitable to ship the region's agricultural products to markets in the east. Meanwhile, T. R. Bard had continued in his efforts to persuade the Southern Pacific to build a line to serve his extensive holdings to the south of the original route. Completion of the 7, 369 foot Santa Susana tunnel in 1904 allowed a more direct route from Santa Barbara to Los Angeles to be established. This new line split off at Montalvo in southeast Ventura, and headed south to Oxnard (where the Ventura County Railway branches off to Port Hueneme). It

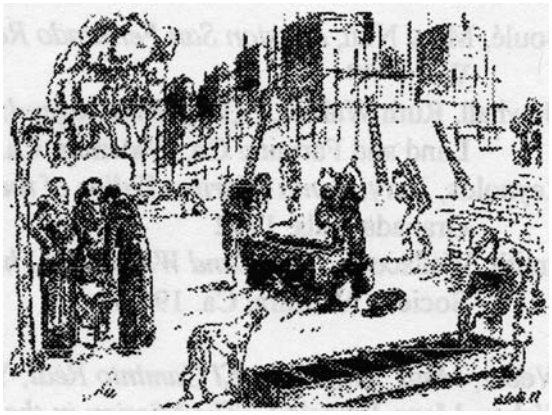
then turned east through Camarillo and Moorpark, then through Santa Susana and its tunnels to the San Fernando Valley, and connected to the original line at Burbank Junction. The old route via Fillmore and Santa Paula was soon relegated to branch line status, with most through traffic now diverted to Oxnard and Santa Susana. Two passenger trains from L.A. to Santa Barbara via Fillmore and Santa Paula remained on the schedule until mid 1934, however, and the branch continued to originate hundreds of carloads of citrus each year, well into the 1950's.

By the 1960's, much of the citrus grown in the Santa Clara River Valley was being shipped by trucks on the tax supported Interstate highway system. As the costs of doing business increased, the railroad's service to smaller shippers declined, and the frequency of trains on the branch dropped even further. In 1979, heavy rains washed out sections of the line east of Piru and west of Saugus. Permission was granted in 1984 for abandonment of the railway line east of Piru; the right of way between Rancho Camulos and Saugus was purchased by the Newhall Land & Farming Company. Most of the rails were torn out, except for a short stretch near Castaic leased to Short Line Enterprises for their use in running trains for movie work. With traffic declining on the remainder of the branch, it seemed just a matter of time until the entire line would be gone.

In 1990, Newhall Land & Farming terminated their leases with Short Line and other movie set providers near Castaic. In the course of looking for a new home, Short Line had approached the cities of Fillmore and Santa Paula. Fillmore was looking for a way to boost its economy, and assisted Short Line in moving there and setting up for movie, tourist and dinner train operations. Meanwhile, the Ventura County Transportation Commission had been considering the future mass transit needs of the County, and recognized the potential value of a rail corridor through the Valley. With the help of a letter writing campaign by the Santa Clara River Valley RR Historical Society, VCTC's application for a share of Federal ISTEA transportation funding was approved, and efforts are now well under way for the purchase of the branch. Long term plans call for the eventual rebuilding of the railroad through to Santa Clarita for use by MetroLink. Meanwhile, the income generated by Short Line's movie operations and tourist trains is already having a very positive effect on the local economy. Both Fillmore and Santa Paula are planning to renovate their downtowns and railroad yards to maximize their appeal to visitors. Fillmore has approved development of a railroad interpretive center focused on a turntable and roundhouse, while in Santa Paula the historic depot is expected to house a small museum (featuring several artifacts from the 1994 RR Heritage exhibit at the Oil Museum) and to become the centerpiece of a railroad oriented park and shopping complex.

7. The Rancho Period

The Spanish Period



The first Europeans to visit the Santa Clarita Valley were the Spanish. In 1769 Don Gaspar de Portola let a party to scout out the vast lands of Alta California. Father Juan Crespi was the chief diarist of the expedition. He described the valley in some detail and chose the site of a possible mission. Crespi painted a picture of what is now the Santa Clarita Valley. It had water, potential for pastureland and six small villages of Native Americans. The original idea of the mission system was to convert the natives to Christianity and prepare them for the Western Culture that would inevitably come to Alta California. They were met and welcomed by the resident Tataviam Indians. Because they entered the valley on the feast day of St. Claire, Crespi named it Santa Clara. The problem with that was, that there was already a Santa Clara Valley in California. Two centuries later, the name would be modified to Santa Clarita, although the river running through it is still known as the Santa Clara River.

The site chosen for the mission, finally, was not along the Santa Clara River, but in what is now San Fernando. Father Fermin Lasuen, who was Father-presidente of the mission chain, founded the Mission San Fernando Rey de España on September 8, 1797. The mission's possessions were vast. To cope with the problem of non-Mission Indians' raids, and to make sure control was maintained, the Mission San Fernando created a remote outpost on the very site that Father Crespi had originally suggested, called an Asistencia in 1804.

Little is known about the Asistencia. It started as a granary, but was raised to the status of Asistencia or submission. The picture at left is Jerry Reynolds's concept of what it would have looked like based on the remains and contemporary descriptions that have survived. There were three buildings, all constructed of sun-dried adobe bricks one foot thick, one foot wide and two feet long. The main building was 105 feet long and 17 feet wide. The interior walls were whitewashed. Parts of the building used for living. quarters were floored with crude tiles. Storage areas had dirt floors. The roof consisted of tiles fired in a kiln in one of the smaller buildings. A small milk house was just below the other two buildings.

They built the Asistencia buildings on a mesa above the Santa Clara River near Castaic Junction. The Franciscan priests who maintained it and the surrounding valley named it the Rancho San Francisco. Native American neophytes, converts to the Catholic Faith were taught to work the land and tend the livestock.

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Rancho San Francisco

The Mexican government in the early 1800s was something less than stable. Allegiance to Spain was dissolved. Power drifted ITom one faction to another. The congress in Mexico City gave in to public pressure to distribute the lands held by the Catholic Church. In 1833 they issued a general secularization law, which would strip the missions of their property and reduce them to parish churches. Much of this land was then granted to deserving citizens of Mexico. The Mexican Army was constantly in a state of flux. Rebellion was a way of life. The soldiers were often not paid for long periods of time. In the end, many of them were paid in land through land grants.

Antonio Del Valle was the MajorDomo of the Mission San Fernando. In that capacity, he inventoried the vast holdings of the Mission, including the Asistencia and its property. He requested that he be granted the Rancho San Francisco. In 1839, Governor Juan B. Alvarado granted the rancho to Del Valle, making him the virtual lord of the upper Santa Clara Valley.

Del Valle accepted the rancho under certain conditions. No grant could exceed 48,000 acres, which was the size of the Rancho San Francisco. No grant could be less than one square league or 4,439 acres. The land itself had to meet certain stipulations. It had to contain one league of irrigable land, four leagues of arable and six leagues fit for grazing of livestock. The parcel had to contain water to maintain the operation of a ranch. The grantee had to comply with certain rules, as well. Stock had to be maintained and a house had to be erected. The latter was easy for Don Antonio. He had the Asistencia buildings. He had the buildings readied for occupancy, but it was some time before he could move his family to their new home. The Native Americans of the area were not pleased with the granting of the entire valley to Del Valle. They practiced regular raids on the livestock at the rancho. It was a rough and dangerous place.

Antonio Del Valle had left his native Compostela, Mexico shortly after his first wife, Maria de la Pena died in 1808. She left him with his only son Ygnacio. Del Valle left his son in the care of his wife's parents and followed the army to Alta California. By the time he had acquired Rancho San Francisco, he had remarried and started another family with his new wife, Jacoba Feliz, who was much younger than Del Valle. Unfortunately for Antonio, he was destined to enjoy his rancho for only a short time. He died in 1841, only two years after acquiring the Rancho San Francisco.

His son Ygnacio Del Valle, pictured at left, and his widow Jacoba inherited most of the land. But they also inherited some inherent problems. The nature of land grants was unfortunately very vague. AS can be seen in the above map, surveys were considered an unnecessary detail. Records were casually kept. Everyone knew where the grants were given. This practice was to create problems for Ygnacio for almost the rest of his life. He and his wife Ysabel, pictured at right, spent a great deal of time and resources defending his title to the Rancho San Francisco.

Ygnacio was a highly respected man in Southern California. He served as alcalde (mayor) of Los Angeles and Recorder. His father, Antonio, was a man of little humor and not well read. Antonio was once described as a "nothing but a dried up little piece of vanity." Ygnacio was very different. He was well educated, had, a sense of humor and was generally well liked. He first married Maria Carrillo de Los Angeles, Pio Pico's niece. She was to live only to the age of 21. He later married Ysabel Varela.

It was Ygnacio who began the development of Camulos in the1840s.

His neighbor to the west, Pedro Carrillo, of the Rancho Sespe initiated proceedings to prove that the area of Camulos was actually part of his land. To protect his interests, Ygnacio had corrals built at Camulos. By 1850, he had begun construction on the adobe house pictured at right. Even after his dispute with Carrillo was over, he was still plagued with the burden of proving his title. When the American government acquired Alta California, he was again forced to demonstrate his ownership. This was an expensive process because it required the use of lawyers and travel. This, along with an economic depression and a serious drought condition, forced many rancheros out of their homes.

The owners of the Rancho San Francisco, which included Antonio's widow Jacoba and her husband Jose Salazar, were in serious debt. The Rancho was deeply mortgaged. Because the property had never been partitioned, all the mortgages were against all of the family members. To avoid losing his home, Ygnacio arranged with his friend William Wolfskill to sell part of the great rancho to settle the debts. When all the arrangements were finished, Camulos and the surrounding land belonged to Ygnacio. The Del Valles' lifestyle was representative of the Californio culture.

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Life of a Ranchero

From

This Land Was Ours: The Del Valles & Camulos by Wallace E. Smith

Except for the weeks devoted to branding or slaughtering the cattle, the landed gentry of what is now Ventura County rose to the crisp, clear air of early morning after a leisurely cup of coffee or hot chocolate, served in bed by an Indian servant. The lord of the hacienda would order one of his vaqueros to saddle a favorite horse and ride with him about the ranch until eight or nine o'clock, then a hearty breakfast of meat broiled on an outdoor spit with tortillas, frijoles and two or three hen's eggs. On a different horse he would then ride forth to check on his herds or visit for an hour or two with a neighbor, usually several miles away, returning in mid-afternoon for a dinner hardly distinguishable from breakfast. When a third horse had been saddled, off he would go again, returning at dusk for supper. Food had little variety, to be sure. But it was always relished because the women of a ranchero's household were almost invariably excellent cooks. . The ranchero was an early riser and would be in bed by eight or nine in the evening, unless the neighbors were invited to an impromptu gathering with games and refreshments lasting until midnight or later.

Although smoking was a universal habit among the men and small cigars were sometimes seen dangling from the lips of a Mexican woman of the household; a rancher's wife smoked only to be sociable, usually at the insistence of her husband at one of these intimate house parties. It was considered a sign of respect to retrain from smoking in the presence of an older man and particularly one's parents. Wines and brandies were frequent refreshment, usually from domestic grapes. On occasion there would be a bottle or two from the hold of the *Alert,* the *Brookline,* the *California,* or one of the other vessels that plied the coast under the aegis of Bryant, Sturgis and Company, the Boston firm represented by Alfred Robinson in Santa Barbara. While the rancher and his vaqueros devoted most of their time and attention to livestock, farming would be an integral and necessary factor at Rancho San Francisco. The soil was rich and easily broken. It was plowed with a forked pole, one prong for the tongue and the other sharpened for a plowshare, dragged by a pair of oxen with a crude yoke lashed to their horns. Where rocks were plentiful, a small strip of iron would be fastened to the plowshare. Ground was plowed twice before seeding.

Horses were never stabled, but were kept in a band of two dozen with a calico bell mare to keep them together. Bands were never mixed. On a ranch of 8,000 cattle, It bands were needed. Mounts used by the rancher and his immediate family were kept apart in one or two bands, and these animals were never worked. Most of the horses in use here were cut from the wild herds which roamed the San Joaquin Valley. Fifty or 60 were brought back at one time by a rancher's sons who made this a summertime sport, both for pleasure and for the dodging of army recruiters. Mares were kept in packs of two dozen with a stallion as their leader. Like the horses, they were never mixed. It would have been a humiliation for Antonio to be caught riding a mare, and they were used only for breeding or threshing grain. Their tails and manes were close-cropped, but not those of the stallions for the mares might lose respect and refuse to follow them.

Grain was of course needed to maintain the herds. After harvesting, it was strewn in a circular area about an acre and a half in size. Vaqueros would then drive 75 to 100 mares first in one direction, then in the other, shouting and cracking their whips. With a large wooden shovel, the grain was then winnowed by tossing it high into the wind.

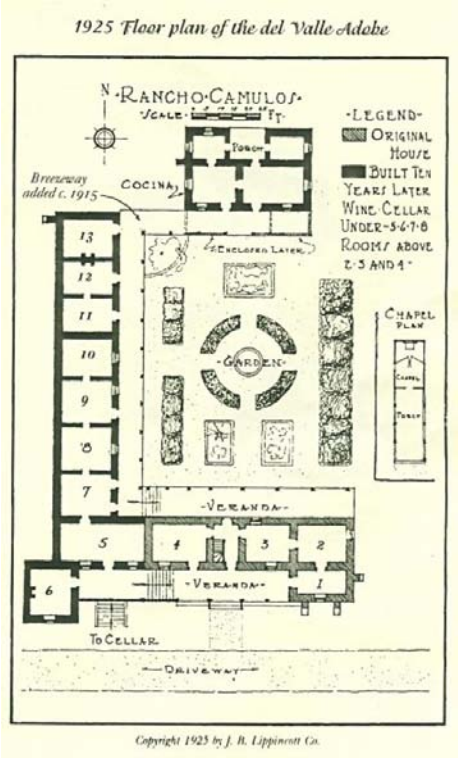
The gaunt and horned cattle were kept in bands of two dozen, earmarked and castrated. At first the animals would be rounded up frequently, corralled and turned loose. But after a while they would answer a vaquero's call to the rodeo grounds. At marking or slaughtering time the strays would be cut out by neighboring rancheros and penned up some distance off, to be driven home by their own vaqueros. Cattle were branded from February to May. At butchering time in the summer, the meat of 50 to 100 three-year -olds would be cured, the hides stretched and the all-important tallow tried in a bubbling pot. Choice cuts were saved, but the bears and coyotes often fared better than some in the rancher's household. Milk was not always used. In the spring it would be turned into cheese and usually eaten the same day, to prevent spoilage.

A ranchero paid his debts with hides and tallow, and sometimes with the animals themselves. The first storekeeper to appear on the scene received the choice items, the others awaiting their turn regardless of the date the debt was incurred or the amount of money owed for supplies. Ranchers were forever in debt. But with a true mañana philosophy, they seldom worried about it. It was a life to be envied.

Camulos

Rancho San Francisco was granted to Don Antonio Del Valle, in January of 1839 by Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado. Del Valle was not immediately able to move his family to the rancho due to the problems with raiding Native Americans. To further worsen the Native American problem, the "Indians" of the neighboring Rancho Sespe were Chumash and those of the Rancho San Francisco area were Tataviam or Alliklik. The ranch passed to his widow, Jacoba (his second wife) arid to his oldest son, Ygnacio Del Valle (from his first wife).

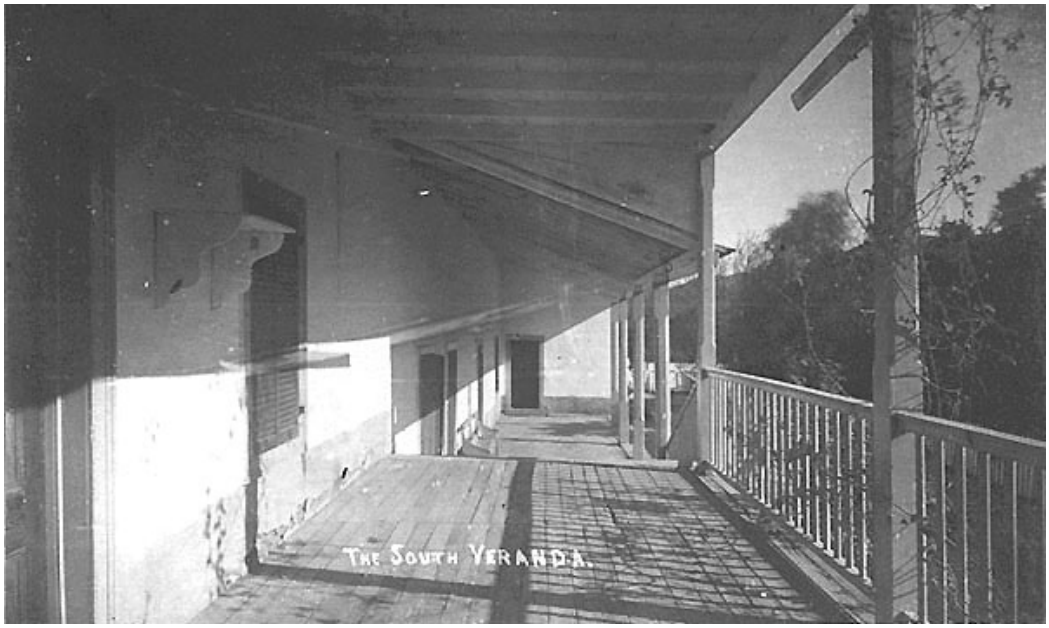
Ygnacio was doomed to spend much of his time defending his claim to the property. The first of many challenges came from his neighbor of the Rancho Sespe, Pedro Carrillo, who laid claim to the area where Camulos now stands. To protect his interests, Ygnacio Quilt a corral at the site and stocked it with cattle. Camulos was named after a Tataviam village that was in the area, Kamulus. Its meaning is disputed. Some say it means "juniper" but the Del Valle tradition is that it means "House of Refuge". They were using the beginning of the adobe in the 1850s. It was eventually to include at least 13 rooms in the shape of an L, a cellar and a large verandah. There was a kitchen attached by the veranda that formed the U. Opposite the bottom of the U was the chapel, which was used by Helen Hunt Jackson as a focal point in the book *"Ramona"*. In the center of the courtyard formed by these buildings was a garden with a fountain.

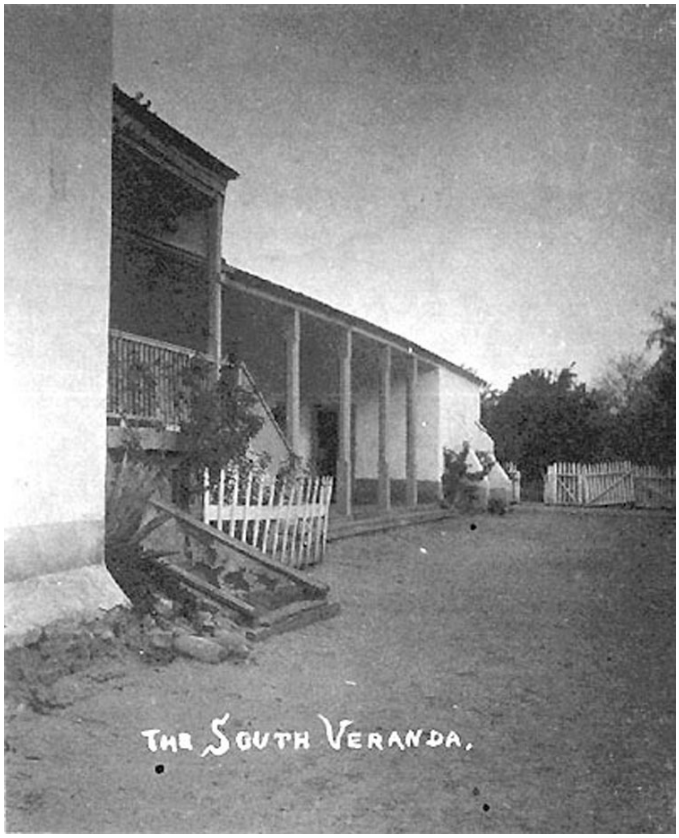


Later a huge barn, and the building that housed a winery that produced fine brandy were added and are still standing. Ygnacio was the first to plant citrus trees in the Santa Clara Valley and also maintained a vineyard to supply grapes for the production of wines and brandy.

Ygnacio was active in the politics of Los Angeles, serving as Alcalde (mayor) and also as Recorder. His son, Reginaldo, continued the family interest in politics, serving in the California State Senate. While it is interesting to note the similarities between Camulos and the ranch described in *"Ramona"*, it is important to remember that the nasty character of the lady of the house, the Senora Morena bore no resemblance to Ysabel Del Valle. Senora Del Valle was well known for her loving nature and her acts of charity. The purpose of the book *"Ramona"* was to highlight the abuse that was heaped on the Native Americans during the 19th Century and to gain public sympathy for improving the way the U.S. government dealt with them. The story is fiction, but based on the kind of abuse that was often endured by native peoples all over the United States.

The Rancho San Francisco took in almost all of the Santa Clarita Valley and remained in the hands of the Del Valle family until the 1860s, when Ygnacio went through some complex arrangements with his mend William Wolfskill to basically refinance and sell off parts of the ranch. Wolfskill in turn sold much of the land to Thomas Bard, representing Thomas Scott for the purpose of oil exploitation. But the area around the adobe at Camulos remained in family hands well into the 20th Century. Bard and Scott sold the land to various buyers, but most of the land was eventually acquired by Henry Mayo Newhall in 1875.





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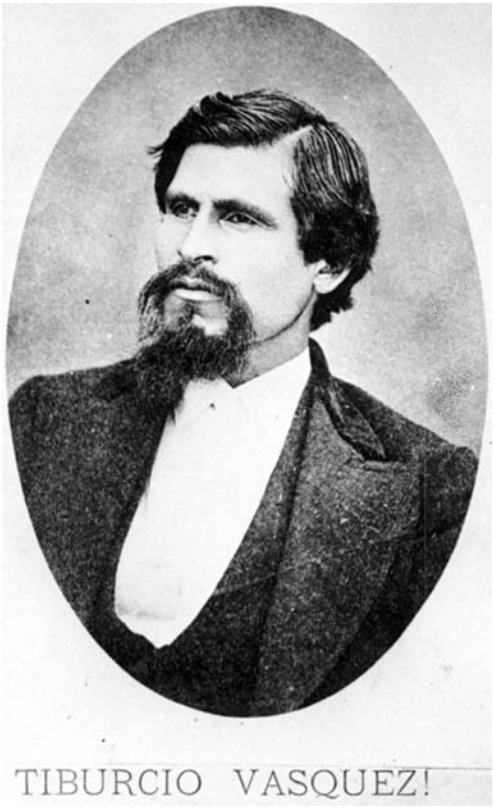
8. Personalities

Tiburcio Vasquez, The Scourge of California

Tiburcio Vasquez was born August 11, 1835. The Vasquez family was wealthy, and honorable. In fact, Tiburcio's grandfather was the first mayor of the new settlement of San Jose, California in 1802. They lived in a home in Monterey that still stands. Today. Tiburcio was educated, as one would expect in a respected family. But the times were against him.



When the American government took over Alta California, there were many changes for the Californio population. The Americans that began invading their communities had little respect for the Californios. They treated them all as inferiors, irrespective of their position or education. They felt that the "Mexicans" should return to Mexico, and leave the land for Americans. This attitude caused much friction between the historical residents and the new ones. The conflict between the two cultures created an environment of resentment on both sides. The Californios had been residents of this land for generations and no longer considered themselves Mexicans. In fact, many of them would have had nowhere to go in Mexico. Their homes were in California.

When Tiburcio was eighteen, he was involved with a altercation at a *fandango* over a young girl's honor. The result was the death of an American constable. Tiburcio was blamed for the incident, although even in later years he maintained his innocence of that crime. He had little faith in the new American legal system, especially for Californios. He decided that his best course was to go on the run. He fell in with Anastacio Garcia, who trained him in the finer points of being an outlaw. Garcia had been with the Joaquin Murietta gang. Tiburcio's reputation was later to rival Murietta's.

He started out by rustling cattle, then 'expanded into robbing freight wagons. He lifted some horses from Ignacio Del Valle at Camulos in 1855 and attempted to sell them back to another Del Valle family member. Ignacio was also the judge that sentenced him in this crime. He escaped, but continued stealing and was again caught. After his release, he learned from his mistakes and improved his technique. His abilities at theft would earn him the title "Scourge of California."

Vasquez would put a gang together, rob up and down the length of California, then disband the gang entirely until the forces of law and order gave up looking for them. Then, he would again gather a gang and repeat the cycle. Faces changed. Tactics changed. He was impossible to trace. He had hideouts all over the state with friends and relatives. Vasquez Rocks was one of his favorite haunts, locally. His legend grew, particularly with the more or less displaced Californio population.

As a major annoyance to the hated Americans, he gained their favor. Many of the residents of the Santa Clarita related stories of visits made by the famous *bandito* to their homes. He would ask for dinner, use fastidious manners, thank his host and leave a $20 gold piece under the plate. Vasquez was always courteous and avoided violence, if possible. He enjoyed the notoriety that he achieved. The members of his gang called him *"Capitan."* Because he was somewhat romanticized, he became especially attractive to women. This was fine with him. He had a fatal weakness for women.

The legal authorities of the State of California were not taken in by the mystique. They set a reward on his head at $8.000. He became the object of a great man hunt. Not only were local officers looking for him, but Governor Newton Booth formed an eight man "Super Posse" led by renowned Sheriff Harry Morse. There was much competition to find the wily desperado. He was finally located and captured at the home of "Greek" George Allen near Los Angeles. Excitement was high as Vasquez was brought into town and jailed.

After entering his cell, someone brought him a bottle of whiskey which he accepted and with the first drink toasted the President of the United States. The ladies of Los Angeles brought him flowers and other gifts. Before long his cell was decorated with curtains and furniture. His picture was taken and sold for a quarter apiece. There was even a play in the Merced Theatre entitled "The Life of Vasquez." Originally the producers of the play wanted Tiburcio himself to play the lead! But Sheriff Billy Rowland drew the line. Vasquez could only coach the actor from jail. The actor was even loaned Vasquez's clothing!

The remains of Vasquez's gang, led by Cleovaro Chavez, threatened to "unleash a reign of terror the likes of which have not been seen since the days of Murietta" if he was hanged. But Californians were vigilant and the threat was defused.

Tiburcio Vasquez was transferred to San Jose. He was convicted of murdering a hotel keeper at Tres Piños, where his gang had bungled a robbery. He was hanged at 1:35 p.m. March 19, 1875. His last word was "Pronto."

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Tiburcio Vasquez
Early Civil Rights Fighter, Lover and California's Most Renowned Outlaw

By Jo Ellen Rismanchi

Tiburcio Vasquez was a man of many different faces. He was the baby who proved to be a constant source of worry for his mother, waiting by his side outside the walls of San Quentin. Indeed, during the course of his life, it was ultimately women that he pursued, loved and trusted most. It was women who provided him safety, romance love, and a couple of children-even at the expense of the men they mutually betrayed. While men provided the labor that made up the sum of Tiburcio Vasquez' various banditti's, women were the ones who provided him with safe haven and escape from the law. It was the network of women with whom Tiburcio Vasquez formed friendships with that enabled him to know where the law was at-and aid him if he needed a quick escape. If you were a woman he felt attracted to, Tiburcio Vasquez would have stolen your heart. If you were a man, he would have commanded your friendship, enlisted your aid to rob the *yanquis* and then he would have stolen your wife. Conversely, if you were a man, you might also have been one of his victims.

He was the son of Hermengildo and Guadalupe Cantua Vasquez married February 26, 1821. Tiburcio Vasquez was the progeny of two prominent and very wealthy Californio families-the Vasquez' and the Cantua's. Both families had much wealth and prominence in early California.

Tiburcio's grandfather, Don Jose Tiburcio Vasquez, had been a member of the DeAnza Expedition that was the first in-land expedition traveling from Mission San Gabriel to Monterey in 1774. Don Jose Tiburcio Vasquez was the founder of the pueblo San Jose, and the Californio pueblo's first sheriff. His mother's family, the Cantua's had such extensive land holdings in northern California that even today the Cantua-Lillis Ranch extends more than 41,000 acres extending itself between San Benito and Fresno County.

Tiburcio's uncle, with the same name was Major Domo (or Manager) of Mission Santa Clara. Not only did he run the mission, but also Tiburcio Vasquez II had extensive land holdings of his own that he rented out to tenants. To say he was an astute businessman, does not give enough credit to the business accomplishments of Tiburcio Vasquez II. This uncle with the same name was assassinated in a "Ride By" shooting. That is, he was coaxed into joining a poker game in a saloon. He was seated at the poker table with his back to a window. A rider came through the alley behind the saloon and shot Tiburcio Vasquez II in the head. It was an attempt by corrupt *yanquis* to steal his land holdings. Fortunately, for his family, he also had money that enabled them to hire lawyers to fend off the fraudulent attempt to steal Tiburcio Vasquez II's land. It is doubtful that the men who perpetrated the assassination ever faced any legal consequences for their action. The Vasquez family children were all privately schooled-so although he did not attend public school, Tiburcio Vasquez was educated and well acquainted with the prejudices of the day from incoming settlers.

Tiburcio Vasquez earned his first mention in California history books when he fought as an II-year old at the Battle of Natividad on November 16, 1846 defeating John C. Fremont. According to Pat McAnaney, Tiburcio as an II-year old served as a Flag Bearer at the Battle of Natividad because he was so good on a horse. The pikes that held up the flags were so tall that they knocked Fremont's men out of the trees where they had planned to snipe at Castro's army. Fremont lost six men that day, the Californios none. It was a Napoleonic sort of battle. Fremont's only reward from the skirmish with Castro were some stolen horses. The battle with Fremont was sparked over his ill-mannered
dealings with Castro's 80 year old uncle. In 1948, Tujunga historian Will Thrall wrote an article published by the California Historical Society in its Quarterly, transforming Tiburcio Vasquez' image from bandit to civil rights fighter. And, although he has been dead since March 19, 1875, his name remains a source of controversy.

Tiburcio's father, Hermengildo Vasquez died January 18, 1856. Less than nineteen months later Tiburcio

found himself checking into San Quentin for his first visit on August 26, 1857 with a 5-year sentence for grand larceny hanging over his head for a crime committed in Los Angeles County. Tiburcio's mother, Guadalupe Vasquez de Cantua ran a food stand selling tasty tamales outside the gates of San Quentin to prison guards and visitors while her son was incarcerated, according to the Greenwood book. She wanted to take care of her son and make sure he was fairly treated while in prison. When Tiburcio was released he took her back to Cantua Canyon, where her family lived. According to Tiburcio, while in prison he was "roughly handled" but he commanded the respect of his fellow prisoners. He was her worry child--that is the family was always trying to rescue him from predicaments of his own making.

Tiburcio had three brothers and two sisters: "Francisco Vasquez of Soledad Mines, Antonio Maria Vasquez of Monterey, and Claudio Vasquez of San Benito; his two sisters, Mrs. Maria Antonia Lara, and the name and whereabouts of the other sister unknown" according to the *San Jose Mercury News,* Saturday Morning March 20, 1875 edition. His brother Francisco also known as "Chico" who served as a Justice of the Peace at Lake Elizabeth gave Tiburcio money for his journey to Mexico in an attempt to save him from the law where it was hoped he could get a fresh start. He promised to stay in Mexico. His promised arrangement lasted only a short time expiring when Maximillian drafted Tiburcio into the Mexican Army offering to make him an Officer. To extricate himself from the Mexican draft, Tiburcio sought the refuge and assistance of the U.S. Consul in Mexico. He was advised by the U.S. Consul to leave Mexico and never return.

In what turned out to be an ironic twist, officials in Southern California feared Tiburcio was going to raise an army to revolutionize Southern California. The Mexican and Native American population vastly outnumbered the white *Yanquis* population in Southern California.

"May 8th, 1874,
To
His Excellency
Newton Booth
Governor State of California

The perilous condition of this city in consequence of its being surrounded by notorious thieves and murders commanded by the infamous Vasques, induces me as an officer of this State, to call your attention to the following facts:

For weeks... many of our new citizens have in broad day light been robbed of their property and their lives threatened. No one is safe, and the authorities are unable to give any protection.

There is not a regular soldier within two hundred and fifty miles and not an army of any description belonging to the State so far as I am aware of, that could be use ful [sic] in case of an attack; an application for arms made during the past year having been disapproved by Your Excellency.

Our Banks and merchants are unprotected and liable to be attacked any moment.

If the State will furnish proper arms I will see that this city at least is protected and if Your Excellency has any public money that can be used in capturing Vasques [sic] and will authorize me to employ persons for this purpose I have one whom I am sure would make desperate exertions to kill or capture the desperado Vasques [sic].

I can opine you that this City is in very great danger and I shall await with much anxiety any orders Your Excellency may think proper to give me on the subject. (Emphasis added.)

I have the honor to remain with profound Respect

Your obedient Servant Phineas Banning Brig. Gen 1st

Combine the numbers with the treatment of people who were not white, and the *yanquis* had legitimate self-imposed reasons for their fear. From his jail cell in Los Angeles after his capture on May 11, 1874 before being transported to San Benito County on the *Senator* by ship, Tiburcio informed a reporter that if he had $60,000 (which was a *lot* of money in those days), he would have raised an army to revolutionize Southern California. Senator Charles H. Bush expressed his and the City's grave fears regarding Tiburcio in his May 10, 1874 letter to Governor Newton Booth-just one day before Tiburcio Vasquez' capture:

"Dear Gov:

I answered your telegram yesterday, but as it was necessarily brief, I thought it best to write and give you a fuller account of the condition of affairs in this place and Surrounding Country. I presume your dispatch had reference to Vasquez and his band. A great many of our people fear he will attempt a raid on this place, and I confess there is some cause for such fear.

A large proportion of our people, all Spanish, who are, nearly all in Sympathy with him. They furnish all the information he requires, and they have such confidence in him as a leader, because of his daring and successful operations, that he could raise a body of two or three hundred men regementize in this part of the State. He has boasted that he intended to make a big hand on this place. The evening of the Same day on which he robed [sic] three of our citizens, almost in sight of this place, he was in this City. The upper part of the City is nearly all Spanish; who harbor him, and consider it an honor to do so. He could send his hand, by detachments, into this part of the city and by a bould [sic] dash rob all of our banks and get away before a sufficient force of citizens could be gathered together, to prevent it. I have no idea he will ever be caught by any of the organized parties now out, but will be killed by some parties who are in the mountains in wait for him. Unless he leaves this part of the country, I think he will be killed, before the end of the summer.

Mr. J.J. Warner wishes me to ask you to reappoint him notary public for this place. I believe his term expires about the 19th. Also please appoint Mr. Clark F. Anaheim, whose term soon expires. Should a Robery [sic] occur at this place please appoint A.J. Henig. All Are good and true men.

For any information you may require, upon any Subject, I will cheerfully give if in my power to do So.

Hoping to See you down this way Some time during this Season,

I remain as ever your friend.

C.H. Bush"

Had the public or his pursuers been aware that Tiburcio Vasquez fled the Mexican draft in Mexico the same way he fled the State of California, they might not have been so fearful of Tiburcio Vasquez or his power to raise an army in support of an uprising.

His first prison record entitled, "Register and Descriptive List of Convicts under Sentence of Imprisonment in the State Prison of California, p. 87," makes the following entries, in columns that follow across the page. The column titles are listed in brackets below next to the actual entry:

"1217 Tiburcio Basquez [name of convict],
Californio [nativity],
Grand Larceny [crime],
August 26, 1857,5 [When Received, Term of Sentence], Los Angeles [County

From],
19 [Age],
Laborer [occupation],
5’5-1/2” [height],
dark [complexion],
black [color of eyes],
Escaped June 25, 1859 [remarks].

Beneath Tiburcio Vasquez’ misspelled surname are written the following descriptions of his scars:

“Scar on left breast, scars on left forefinger, 3 small scars on left thumb.”

While Tiburcio Vasquez carried prejudices against white, wealthy *yanquis,* he was not selective about the ethnicity or color of the men who made up his banditti’s. Private Charles W. Weeks (formerly a sergeant), convicted for desertion from the U.S. Army and participation in the Kingston Firebaugh’s Ferry robbery on December 23, 1873, stated in his handwritten confession on February 5,1874:

> “I committed a murder in Peach Tree Valley Monterey County California. The murdered mans name was Fisher. The murder was committed sometime in the late of 1869. Five hundred dollars reward was offered for the apprehension of the murders. The reward was offered in Monterey County California, I fell in with Tobasques Vasquez. I joined him, and stayed with his Band until about 2 months ago. I was not with him at the Tresapenys [sp: Tres Pinos] murder. I was not with him when he went towards Sonora California. I was with him when he took Manera’s wife with him. Was with Vasquez in the robbery of Fire Ball’s Ferry in the summer of 1873. I had Mrs. Hoffman’s jewelry, the time she was robbed. Then I belonged to the Vasquez’s Band. At that time ($2,000) two thousand dollars was offered as a reward for the capture of anyone of the band, or the entire band. I went by the name of William Day, while I belonged to Vasquez’s Band. I am 26 years of age. Was born 4 miles from the Golden Gate San Francisco Harbor California.”

Charles Weeks was a white man. It is interesting to note from Weeks’ same confession the ethnicities of the men who carried out the daring robbery. Tiburcio carried no prejudices regarding race when it came to recruiting men for his banditti’s. Also note the women who are mentioned with Tiburcio Vasquez:

> “Arthur Lee, colored, another member of Tobasquez Band, is about five feet 6 inches in height, complexion is very black, very short curly hair, very large eyes; he has a deep scar on his right cheek, also a great many cuts on his back sustained in the State prison of California. He has gone towards New Mexico, having received a letter from him to that effect, a week ago. I tore up the letter after reading it. I think the only way to catch him is to telegraph along the Railroad his full and exact description. He might have changed his mind and gone to the Raff river country in the Goose Creek mountains. Some of the cattle dealers there might see or hear of him, as he is interested in cattle himself.
>
> Poncho Centour (?), another member of Tobasquez gang, is 5 feet 10 inches in with Tobasquez, as he is one of Tobasquez right hand men. Poncho Centour (?) is the man who hight [sic], very stout, light complexion, dark eyes, black hair, deep scar on his right breast, caused by a knife. He is likely to be with Tobasquez, as he is one of Tobasquez right hand men. Poncho Centour (?) is the man who killed those two sheep herders in the Viasitas Valley. He can probably be caught in the Penoche Valley at a place called Trinidad Salvantes, as he is struck after one of Sa Iv antes daughters. He is generally there at Fandangas every Saturday night. Don’t let any Spaniards see any armed body of men in the vicinity of Salvantes ranch, for the Spaniards are friends of T obasquez. Not even a child of four years of age should be seen by them. Those children there are almost as bad as men to give information.
>
> Siboon, another member of Tobasquez band, he is 6 feet tall, stoutly built, very unsightly, has

a right angular scar on his right upper cheek bond, pocmarked in his face. He is a two faced man. Whenever he sees or hears anything that is
good, he goes at once and informs T obasquez his chief. He helps the band in nearly all their depredations and is less suspected in his actions than any other man of the band. He keeps himself a great deal as Trinidad Salvantes. The Civil authorities know him, however, but they can't prove his tricks. He lives in Panoce (sp Panoche) Valley about forty five (45) miles east of Hollister, Monterey County, Cal.

(Panoche is in Fresno County)

Chequito Tedra
Another member of Tobasquez's band.

He is about five feet four inches in height, light complexion, sharp nose, could pass for an American, small blue eyes.

He also stays with Tobasquez [sic] a great deal.

He has a woman in Centour Canon, about thirty (30) years of age. She is very fleshy. She has a little daughter. He visits his woman about once a week. In order to catch him, a party of armed men should go and take possession of her and the house which she is in.

Ramon Jesus, another member of the band of Tobasquez. He is a slim man; slow and easy going; nothing appears to trouble him; takes everything very easy, no scars on him that I know of. He might be caught selling Jewellry [sic] in San Francisco. He goes to see an old prostitute in Broadway opposite the County Jail in a cezzano basement. She is a queer woman, perhaps he might be caught there.

Moreno, an ex-member of Tobasguez band. He is in prison for life.

Antonio, Another member of Tobasquez band. He is a dark Mersican; grey hair; he can be caught in the Gavoland mountains with Tobasquez.

George Russell, Giotie, another member of Tobasguez band. He is young yet, about 5 ft-9 in; high, very good looking; black hair and moustache, light-blue eyes. I think he is the most desperate man of the band. He served 10 years in the State Prison of California for stage robbery. He visits Gilroy a great deal in Santa Clara Co; He also keeps a woman at Frenchmans ranch - her name is either Hettie or Hattie."

Betrayal of those who served and trusted him most is a puzzle still not clear. Whatever event in his life caused this fatal flaw, it has not yet come to light. The true voice of Tiburcio Vasquez still speaks in conflicting tones. At his trial, Tiburcio testified under oath that he did not kill any of the three men he was accused of killing at Tres Penos. Tiburcio never denied his involvement nor his presence at the robbery, only that he was not responsible for these deaths. Although the trial documents contain Tiburcio Vasquez' affidavit, unfortunately, for the neatness of all of the other documents combined, the affidavit is virtually unreadable because of Tiburcio's lawyer's handwriting, P.B. Tully. This continues to add mystery and questions surrounding Tiburcio Vasquez and the fairness of his trial. With an unreadable affidavit and few other personally written documents, the voice of Tiburcio Vasquez is as much a mystery today as he was back in 1875.

Tiburcio Vaquez' trial began January 5, 1875, after final judgment was read and sentence entered January 23, 1875, three people signed what was known as a "Bill of Exception" appealing the final judgment. These three people were P.J. Malone, a San Francisco reporter; Rosaria Leiva, Tiburcio's lover and mother of one of his two acknowledged children; and J. A. Moultrie, one of three defense attorneys representing Tiburcio at his

trial. At the time of his capture, Tiburcio wore a small locket bearing photographs of his two children.

It is interesting to note some of the trial subpoenas issued for the trial. For example, Rosaria Leiva was subpoenaed by both the defense and the prosecution. The subpoena issued by Tiburcio Vasquez for Rosaria, gives her complete name as "Rosaria Felix de Leiva." It is a sign ofthe affection and intimacy shared by Vasquez and Leiva that he used her full and complete name. However, an even greater clue about the relationship between Vasquez and Leiva is contained on the prosecution's subpoena to Leiva. Her subpoena from the prosecution states, "Rosario Leiva and the babe." Not only did the prosecution misspell Rosaria's first name, but how damming would it have been during those times for the woman he loved to be testifying in court-still married to her husband but bringing the love child into court for the judge, jury and public to view? If that child bore a striking resemblance to Tiburcio Vasquez that only further corroborated the moral case the prosecution was building again him. Tiburcio Vasquez's doom was sealed more for his morals, than for any murder he actually committed. There were witnesses who testified that Tiburcio was responsible for shooting the three men killed in the Tres Penos Robbery, but the chief witness testifying again him was Rosaria Leiva's husband, Abdon Leiva.

If Abdon Leiva's testimony wasn't damning enough, Tiburcio's attorney, Judge Collins in his address to the jury, like a Baptist minister exhorting his congregation, continually compared Tiburcio to Cain in the biblical parable of Cain and Abel-where Cain murders his brother and God finds forgiveness for this sin. Between biblical exhortations, Collins also attempted to plea that Tiburcio was indeed an innocent man. He claimed that it was Gonzalez-that shot Davidson through the door. During the same speech, he requested that the jury should give Tiburcio life in prison for his participation in the robbery. He never claimed or attempted to claim that Tiburcio was innocent, merely that he was being unjustly prosecuted for past deeds attributed to Tiburcio-mentioning that although these deeds were attributed to him, that there were many claims falsely laid to Tiburcio with no convictions, *i.e.,* that Tiburcio was accused but never tried relating to any of these claims. He also attempted to impeach Abdon Leiba claiming him to be a husband scorned by a bad woman and a "professional paid witness." Leiva at the conclusion of the trial walked away with his life and his freedom-the only member of the ill-fated banditti to do so.

This is not to say that Tiburcio Vasquez was an innocent man. There were plenty of other robberies and instances where Tiburcio escaped the law but for a fluke-like his first run-in with the law and the death of Constable Hardmount. Tiburcio Vasquez escaped and then when someone was arrested, he served as the translator--Only after his escape was complete was it figured out that he had actually translated and cleared himself of involvement. And if, he was never actually convicted of murder, there were numerous instances where robberies occurred, people were killed and Tiburcio was involved-yet he himself claimed never to have murdered anyone. Indeed, one of the most intriguing trademarks of a Tiburcio Vasquez robbery was the extent he labored to ensure the comfort of his victims-providing them with pillows and blankets while their hands were tied so they would not be too uncomfortable while they were being robbed. Although he was stealing their money and valuables, he had great empathy for his victims-especially if they were of the female persuasion.

He was a robber who sometimes proved himself to be sympathetic to the plight of his victims. In one robbery, Fresno Cattle barren Henry Miller complained that if Tiburcio took all of his money, he would have none. Miller asked Tiburcio for a loan of $20. Tiburcio, understanding what it's like for a man to have no money in his pocket; and, having empathy for his victim, gave him $20. When Tiburcio was arrested and taken to San Jose for trial, Miller visited him in jail to return the $20 he "owed" Tiburcio. Miller asked Tiburcio to promise in jail, that if he ever got free of his predicament, that "Tiburcio never darken his doorstep again." Tiburcio with cavalier confidence, gave his word that he would never again bother Miller should he be freed.

In yet another instance, Tiburcio was robbing a couple-about to take a watch that had been an anniversary present, the woman complained, "oh that was an anniversary present from my husband." Tiburcio dutifully returned the watch. The couple so grateful that Tiburcio would return the watch immediately offered to replace it with another watch belonging to the husband. They told Tiburcio where find the watch which was not being worn at the time by the woman's husband. In yet another stage coach robbery, Tiburcio Vasquez came across a beautiful young woman. The gallant bandit rather than robbing her of the proceeds carried in her purse, requested

“merely a lock of her hair.” What woman would not have been flattered by such a request. Sweet words fell from his lips like syrup over pancakes. While languishing in jail, Tiburcio whiled away his time writing poetry. One ofthese poems originally written in Spanish has been translated into English with all of the Spanish nuances. Both the Spanish and English translation are listed below. The poem was written to a young woman simply described as “Miss E.G.”

Con un sincero amor te idolatraba
Cuando, hermosa, a mi lado te tenia
Con un sincero amor, prenda adorada
Te idólatra te adora el alma mia.

Separado de ti, solo, perdido,
Triste y meditalbundo paso el tiempo.
Solo recuerdo al idolo querido
Al que en mi soledad solo contemplo.

Te llamo y te suplico que me apoyes,
Te recuerdo mis pesares y amargura,
Y creo firmemente que me oyes
En aquellos momentos que locura!

Aunque lejos los dos no encontramos
Siempre mi corazon por ti palpita,
Y un apreton te mando aunque de manos
Al angel de mi am or que es, fulanita;

Tiburcio Vasquez y Basquez

With a sincere love, I worship you
When, beauty at my side, I had you
With a sincere love, I pledge my adoration
I worship, I adore you, with my soul

Separated from you, alone, lost
Sad and meditating, I pass the time
Alone, remembering an idolized love
In my solitude, alone contemplate

I call to you and ask that you help me
I remember my grief and bitterness
I know heaven hears me
In those moments; what madness!

Although the two of us find ourselves far apart
Always my heart beats for you
And I send you my outstretched hand
Angel of my heart that is, fulonita

Tiburcio Vasquez y Basquez

He was a master of escape and deception. In Monterey, he was able to hide directly behind the Sheriff s j ail in the home of his sister Maria Antonia Lara, who was also the wife of Manuel Lara. When there was a Tiburcio Vasquez citing nearby and his sister's home searched- Tiburcio would vanish. In a column penned by Dick Barrett of the San Jose Mercury News in 1967, Barrett writes about Elizabeth Paul, a resident of South Fifth Street in San Jose. "She [Paul] paid a visit in early 1899 to the home of Mrs. Porter T. Peabody, about 8 miles from Gilroy. Mrs. Peabody told her that the property had once belonged to an aunt and uncle of Vasquez, and when officers pursued the bandit in that vicinity he always disappeared without a trace. One day Mrs. Peabody noticed that one of the walls in the house was extremely thick A loose adobe brick was found, and when it was removed there was just room for a man to wiggle through. Inside the wall was a stairway leading to the attic, and in the attic were found a dirty old quilt and some dishes."

However, my favorite Tiburcio quotes came out of the December 1951 article written by James Walton Mosher, whose father was a minister in the Indiana Colony (Pasadena today) in 1874:

> "Local ranchers were getting together to build a reservoir in the Arroyo. They would take their plows and scrapers in their lumber wagons and work several hours every day.
>
> One morning Mr. Turner came by early and asked my mother to put me up a lunch as they were planning to stay and work on in the afternoon. She put my food in a small lard bucket and I was proud when I saw that all the men had exactly the same kind of lunch pail. It made me very proud to feel grown up.
>
> About 10 o'clock five men suddenly rode up on horseback and what happened then puzzled me. My good friends, the reservoir builders, all lined up and raised their hands high above their heads. At first I thought it was some kind of game and started to laugh. Then I saw that the leader, who gave the orders, sat on his horse and pointed a gun at them. That worried me for I had often heard my father say that one must never point a gun at another person, even in fun. Then I saw with a sort of terror that these strange men were turning my friends' pockets inside-out and taking their money and even their pocket knives. The loss of those precious jack-knives hurt me more than seeing the beautiful round silver dollars stuffed into grimy pockets.
>
> Then, horror heaped upon horror, they started to take the lunch pails! When they got to Mr. Turner's wagon and were about to pick up his and MINE, it was too much. I let out a loud yelp and rushed to grab mine. The leader showed some very white teeth in a very dirty face, leaned down, poked me with his gun and said, Keed, shut up!" just as Mr. Turner said sharply but in a queer muffled voice, "Jimmy, keep still." The outlaws hung the lunch pails over the pommels of their saddles whirled their horses and galloped off in a cloud of dust, leaving me bawling. Mr. Turner picked me up, put me on the high seat of his lumber wagon and said, "Never mind, Jimmy, not many people can brag that they were poked in the ribs with a gun by Vasquez and lived to tell the tale!"
>
> Tiburcio Vasquez and his men did not have a lucrative day. Their holdup at the reservoir netted them $8.50. "

After they robbed at the reservoir that day they went on to Coyote Hills where they robbed sheepherder, Alessando Repetto. The Repetto robbery is pretty well documented so I won't recount it from the article. Can you hear Tiburcio's voice resonating through it that quote? "Keed, shut up!"

Tiburcio Sightings in Soledad Canyon

Monsieur Joseph Renier settled in Placerita Canyon in about 1874. The remains of his family cabin still remain visible from the road, a lone standing rock chimney in front of the remains of the original Placerita Canyon Road-the one Tiburcio once traveled on horseback. Renier was a twin who traveled from France in search of gold. When gold mining did not yield great riches, Renier purchased a small flock of sheep which he herded from Northern California to Placerita Canyon down the route that now closely follows highways 395 and 14 to Placerita Canyon. It took Monsieur Renier more than a year to reach Placerita with his sheep but settled he was in 1874 when Tiburcio Vasquez showed up at his doorstep with a gun and ordered him to make breakfast. According to George Starbuck, Renier's great-grandson, Renier spoke no English--only French. Tiburcio spoke little English so Renier conversed in French while Tiburcio conversed in Spanish. The two ate a hearty meal together. Monsier Renier was a good cook. Thereafter, whenever Tiburcio showed up--Monsieur Renier knew it was time for breakfast. And Tiburcio did not require a weapon for Monsieur Renier to understand. The two shared multiple meals together.

Another of Tiburcio's stops during his infamous horse pursuits was Tom Mitchell's ranch in Soledad. Mitchell came to California in 1854 and settled in Soledad with a 160 acre homestead in 1860. Mitchell was widely known for his ranching activities which included producing honey and cattle ranching. As part of his cattle ranching activities, Mitchell maintained a large herd of horses which were corralled near his home. Tiburcio and his men would come over the Newhall Pass, come up Mint Canyon as they were being chased. Tiburcio and his men would exchange their tired, winded horses for Mitchell's rested, fresh horses.

At the time of his capture, Mitchell would claim that he did not know the man living nearby under the alias of Ricardo Cantua was really Tiburcio Vasquez. However, Leon Boyer, one of Mitchell's relatives today admits that Mitchell did indeed know who Tiburcio Vasquez was. Mitchell had good reason to deny knowing who Tiburcio was. Tiburcio Vasquez had excellent knowledge of horses, and always rode a white horse. He always chose very strong horses to steal in carrying out his daring robberies. Thus, when Tiburcio would come over the pass and exchange his horses for Mitchell' s-the horses Tiburcio left behind although tired, were always of a better quality than those taken from Mitchell. Mitchell was a paragon, an icon if you will, of the community-he was responsible for establishing the second oldest school in the County of Los Angeles, and a founding member of the Sulphur Springs School Board. To admit that he knew who Tiburcio Vasquez was during his lifetime, would have turned Mitchell from victim to an accomplice. Mitchell himself might have been guilty of horse thieving if it had ever been admitted during his lifetime that he knew of Tiburcio Vasquez's identity. During Mitchell's and Tiburcio's day, horse stealing was an offense punishable by hanging.

Another Tiburcio Vasquez local sighting story comes from Richard Mitchell. Buried in the pioneer Mitchell-Dyer cemetery is a man named Tex Crisco. Although Tex was not even Crisco's real name (it was Noah). He was a character of such proportions that the Mitchell family still reverberates with laughter at the mention of Tex Crisco stories. Maybe the Mitchell family just has story telling running through their veins-practice from all of those roundup barbeques from the Spring branding of cattle-or maybe this particular story about Tex Crisco might actually be true. No one in the Mitchell family can recall where Tex Crisco earned his nickname, Tex-because he was originally from Tennessee. One fact they do agree upon, however, is that Crisco died in 1876 after six months of nursing a bullet wound gone rancid with infection and gangrene. How Crisco received that wound is one of the things the Mitchell's like to debate. Richard Mitchell will tell you a story about Tex spotting Tiburcio Vasquez and trailing up after him through the Santa Clara Riverbed up towards Aqua Dulce. The story goes that Tex surprised Tiburcio trying to take him captive-and in the process was shot. Tiburcio shot Crisco in the leg and took his gun. Supposedly, Tiburcio Vasquez did not want to kill Crisco, merely send him on his way.

Tex was known to be somewhat awkward and not too smart. Crisco and Thomas Mitchell were business partners in producing honey. Tex Crisco maintained Thomas Mitchell's hives in the Aqua Fria (what is now upper

Sierra Highway going towards Aqua Dulce-about where the Tony Alamo church is located). Upon surprising Tiburcio, Crisco was shot by Tiburcio Vasquez. Having no wife or children to care for Crisco, he was taken in nursed by Martha Mitchell. Upon his death, Crisco willed all of his land, the Aqua Fria to Thomas Mitchell.

The second story about Tex Crisco untimely death is not so colorful. It seems Crisco and Mitchell would go out on clearing missions from time to time-to clear the land of people they believed did not belong on the land. Although Mitchell during his lifetime referred to these activities as "clearing," they were evicting squatters off the land. It is equally rumored that the squatters Crisco and Mitchell were clearing from the land were actually on their own land. The politically correct word for Crisco's and Mitchell's activities was "reclamation." Crisco, the second rumor goes, was allegedly shot by some squatters putting up a fight for their land. The law in those days seemed to favor men based upon the color of their skin and their language,

Another Soledad memory of Tiburcio Vasquez is recalled by Mary Warmuth Sathre who knew Remi Nadeau as an old man when she was a child. Sathre recalls that Tiburcio Vasquez and his men left Remi Nadeau and his wagon trains alone. This was done as reparation by Tiburcio because Nadeau had once nursed him back to health after a bullet wound. As repayment for bringing him back to health, Tiburcio warned his men never to bother Nadeau or his wagons. Tiburcio's arrangements with mine owners in Northern California are well-known. He was frequently hidden by the mine owners and workers in New Idria. That Tiburcio had an arrangement with Nadeau should come as no surprise. Nadeau because of his extensive holdings traveled frequently through the state-and spent a lot of time alone. One reason Nadeau may have felt so secure was his arrangement with the famous Californio.

Henry Mayo Newhall

Henry Mayo Newhall was born to Jonathan and Hannah (Oatman) Newhall on May 23, 1825, their fifth child, in Saugus, Massachusetts. The Newhall family had already been in America for almost a century. His formal education ended at the age of thirteen. His father was a shoemaker, but young Henry showed no interest in following in his father's footsteps. His first attempt at a career yielded somewhat less than stellar results. He signed onto a sailing vessel at the age of thirteen bound for the exotic Far East. His seafaring career almost ended when he fell from a rigging and broke both of his legs. When the captain decided to beach him in the Philippines, Henry used what was to be one of his greatest tools, his power of persuasion. He convinced the captain to take him back to New England.

When he was fifteen, he found a job in New York working with a surveying team that was laying out Philadelphia. He had an uncle there, who gave him a job, as a grocery clerk. He then met John Myers, who gave him a job at his auction house. . After a couple of years working at more menial tasks, Henry was given the opportunity to be an auctioneer in an auction house in Nashville, Tennessee. It was there his talent started to bloom. By the time he was twenty-four, he was a successful businessman with his own auction house, Newhall and Baker. He met Sarah Anne White, the daughter of an Irish immigrant, William White and they married on October 15, 1849. That year was dangerous for ambitious young men allover America. Gold Fever had taken hold and Newhall couldn't resist the call. So he left his new wife to seek his fortune in the California goldfields.

Like most of the gold rush miners, he all but lost his shirt. He came back to San Francisco, having spent his "poke" looking for gold, but not finding it. He had stored a trunk at San Francisco and with that as his only possession, he fell back on his old skill as an auctioneer. After selling the clothes and other articles, he had $125, enough to buy passage back to Nashville. But instead, he found the action house of Hall and Martin. In those days, many goods were acquired not by order, but by entrepreneurs who shipped goods and then sold them at auction. Henry Newhall had seen enough of the California of the time to realize that the people who were striking it rich were not the gold miners, but the people who were selling supplies to the gold miners. He talked himself into a job at the auction house and later, when the owners returned to the east, he bought them out. By 1852, he was a prosperous San Francisco businessman with a beautiful new home. That year, he left to bring his wife, Sarah, to their new home in California. After Sarah died, he was to marry her sister, Margaret Jane White.

San Francisco grew and flourished. As it did, so did Newhall's business. He saw the opportunity in the growth and began buying up land. This proved to also be a lucrative business. Henry started seeing how the opportunities were falling and branched out into the railroad business with the San Francisco & San Jose Railroad. His timing continued to improve and the line did well. But there was major competition brewing from what was ultimately called the "Big Four" in the railroad business: Collis P. Huntington, Mark Hopkins, Leland Stanford and Charles Crocker. In the end Newhall, like all the other small railroad owners were forced to sell their interests to the Big Four and their "Southern Pacific" venture.

This put Newhall on the board of directors of the Southern Pacific Railroad for the rest of his life and gave him insight into the further development of much more than San Francisco, but that of all of California. With the business acumen that marked Newhall's career, he used that knowledge to launch into his next big venture.

He began buying up Mexican land grant ranchos. This was possible because there was an economic slump and the American Government had made it very difficult for these original land owners to keep their land. The government required that they demonstrate their claim to the land. Because Mexican land records had been kept in a very different and much more relaxed manner than the precise American standards, many rancheros had a great deal of trouble proving their ownership. Even those who could prove it were forced to travel great distances and pay lawyers to represent them. Newhall acquired many of these ranchos between San Francisco and Los Angeles along the proposed path of the Southern Pacific Railroad alignment.

One of these ranchos was the Rancho San Francisquito, originally owned by the Del Valle family, but by 1875, it's ownership was varied. Henry Mayo Newhall systematically bought up the parcels until the property was almost all his. He liked staying at the Newhall Ranch, as it was named and stayed at the ranch house, now located in Heritage Junction Historical Park in Santa Clarita. He began the promotion of the town of Newhall by giving land to the Southern Pacific for a station. The town finally began to take hold, but not until after Newhall had passed away. He was visiting the Newhall Ranch, in March 1882, when his horse stumbled, fatally injuring him. He was taken back to San Francisco, but died within a few days.

His empire was divided among his five sons and his widow, Margaret, who restructured the family business. They divided up the responsibilities between themselves. One of the resulting companies was the Newhall Land & Farming Company, whose corporate offices are in Valencia, California. When Henry Mayo Newhall was eulogized after his death, he was universally praised for his honesty, generosity and imagination.

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Ed Pardee
Newhall Lawman

Ed Pardee, a Pennsylvanian, joined his brother Charles in Pico Canyon (Mentryville) in 1883. Ed's wife and baby daughter, Pearl (later Russell), came out the following year. Charles had experience working the oil fields in Titusville, Penn.; Ed evidently was not as passionate about the industry for, by 1887, he had moved to Newhall and opened a livery stable (facing east on what is now Railroad Avenue, between 9th and Market).

That career seems not to have satisfied him either; by 1893 Ed had been elected constable (peace officer), hauling in the crooks to face Justice of the Peace for the Soledad Judicial District. In 1913, when Los Angeles became a chartered county and the Sheriff's Department took on the job of policing the unincorporated county territories, constables became ex-officio Deputy Sheriffs.

The Pardee House was initially a Good Templars Hall, built in 1890 by noted prohibitionist Henry Clay Needham. Located on Pine Street in Newhall, it was sold to Pardee, who moved it in 1893 to the "triangle" formed by Newhall Avenue, Market and Walnut streets. Pardee converted it into the family home.

In later years the Pardee House would come into play during film shoots by Tom Mix, who set up several "Mixvilles" early in his career including one in Newhall, between Spruce Street (now San Fernando Road) and Newhall Avenue. The Pardee House was used as a dressing room and, probably, as a place for Mix to cavort with the ladies. In 1946 Pearl (Pardee) Russell sold the building to the Pacific Telephone Co., which used it as a telephone exchange.

The Santa Clarita Valley Boys Club (later Boys & Girls Club) occupied the building from 1969- 1977, after which it was leased by the Newhall-Saugus-Valencia Chamber of Commerce. In 1987, when the city of Santa Clarita was formed, the chamber, later named the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce, moved out, and the house reverted to Pacific Bell.

The house was given to the SCV Historical Society which, through a grant from the city, relocated it to Heritage Junction Historic Park in August 1992.

Pearl Russell, incidentally, was one of the founders of the first Newhall PTA on Nov. 17, 1916. Strikingly beautiful, she was named "Queen of the Ball" at many high-society functions around town.

Santa Clarita Valley
HISTORICAL
Society

Arthur B. Perkins
Santa Clarita Valley Historian

Perkins' Perseverance:
Part of SCV's Water History.

By NANCY JORDAN.
Newhall County Water Disrict, June 2001.

The Santa Clarita Valley is extremely rich in history, dating as far back as 450 A.D. when the Tataviam Indians first arrived. Several years and many monumental events have taken place since then, and combined; have ultimately provided the wonderful existence of our valley.

As the first local water purveyor here in the Santa Clarita Valley, NCWD naturally plays an important role in our history. Upon the acceptance of the General Manager position for the "Newhall Water System" in 1919 by Arthur B. "Perk" Perkins, records indicate that Mr. Perkins actually purchased the rookie water company shortly following his arrival from Mr. Henry Clay Needham in 1920 with approximately 125 services. Prior to Perk's move out west, he and his brothers formed a very lucrative marble company and owned a hotel in the Nevada desert. A.B. Perkins fell in love and married the daughter of the most respected mining assayer in the region. Marble competition from another state eventually lead to the demise of their company, and ultimately the entire town. Prior to "Perk's" acquisition of the Newhall Water System, Mr. H. Clay Needham and Mr. M.W. Atwood shared "partnership" of the then mostly agricultural water system. According to documents, the Newhall Water System was actually established in 1913, although according to Mr. Perkins, "no intelligible records existed at the time of acquisition."

Mr. Needham's involvement in the Newhall Water System continued for many years following the change in ownership clear up until his death in 1936. Mr. Needham was also the only primary source of financial support, being the only documented contributor in 1920, when he invested/loaned $20,000 at 8% interest payable over 5 years. It wasn't until the end of 1924 that Mr. Perkins received additional financial support when he enlisted his mother and father-in-law, Mr. & Mrs. J.D. O'Brien of Nevada, to purchase half of his vested interest. Included in this partnership was their daughter and Perk's lovely wife, Marguerite. It was obvious that Mr. Needham's continued support went hand-in-hand with Mr. & Mrs. Perkins involvement in the community. In fact, in 1923, when the Newhall Chamber of Commerce was created, Mr. Perkins was nominated, along with Mr. Albert C. Swall, for President of the newly created organization. He was also nominated for Treasurer-Secretary, but Mr. Perkins withdrew both of his nominations. Marguerite was equally as involved, as Mr. Swall appointed her along with 4 other community members to serve on a committee to identify and outline a six-month "system of action" for the organization. Obviously pleased with the positive influence that Mr. & Mrs. Perkins had on local community members, he continued to financially support the Newhall Water System.

1930 was an important year for Mr. & Mrs. Perkins and the Newhall Water System! On June 1, 1930, the small company became an official "corporation" when Mr. & Mrs. Perkins and Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien sold their entire interest to the newly created "Newhall Water Company," complete with 17 stockholders, a President,

According to the Newhall County Water District (1999), this photograph probably shows Perkins at Well No. 5, located at Market and Arch streets. The well was abandoned by the water district in 1954 and dismantled.

Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Attorney and an assigned General Superintendent — all with around 300 services.

The first group of stockholders was a colorful one. It was clear that Perk continued to be supported by the most influential people in this valley with the help of William S. Hart, Charles E. Mack, Mr. & Mrs. Albert Swall, The Frew's and many others. In 1931 Perk's hard work was beginning to pay off with a hefty salary increase to approximately $150 per month! Finally, after nearly 30 years, Perk stepped down as General Manager in 1948 when Mr. H.W. Dreher assumed the position, but continued his position as a Principal Officer.

By the early 1950s it became apparent that the creation of a community water district was necessary to continue to support the growing population. After a formal voting process, A.B. Perkins signed the documents in September 1953 finalizing the sale of the Newhall Water Company to Newhall County Water District for $130,000.

It is obvious that Mr. A.B. Perkins not only documented the Santa Clarita Valley's history by acting as the first-known historian in our valley, but also actually created much of the history ... having tremendous impact on our future by devoting most of his life to "Newhall Water"! All of us at NCWD are honored that an incredibly bright man relentlessly contributed to the ever-changing needs of our community ... and we're proud to be associated with the name A.B. Perkins.

An SCV Legend: Ruth Newhall

One man's 90th-birthday tribute to the sometimes fearsome, ever vigilant 'grande dame' of the Santa Clarita Valley

By John Boston
July 2, 2000

Writers ask me to read their prose. They ask what I think. Really, they mean, "I've written this. I'm betting the farm it's great. Please confirm my giddy delight in myself."

I used to do that with Ruth.

She's 90 Monday. She is cute. She is fearsome. She is one epic woman to whom I owe more than one can repay.

The Mighty Signal has been more than a rock to me. It is a continental land mass, this central orientation in my life, outlasting marriages, pets, cars, ranches, homes and the lifespans of friends. The hair and waistline go. The byline is eternal. Done correctly, journalism is adventure.

I learned that from Ruth.

You take these 26 little ink insects, place spaces in between and arrange them just so. They can start revolutions. They can win them.

Vowels. Consonants. Pick a few, line them up and you have somebody's name. Somehow, lives and souls get attached to a name printed in 10,000 newspapers. Follow with more alphabetics and you can ruin someone. Send them to jail. Make somebody laugh or weep or make them mad enough to kill you or, worse, place a death grip on your phone ear during deadline.

"Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. I see. Yes. Uh-huh. Sorry. But..."

How many reporters and editors have had lopsided conversations like that?

In the early 1970s, I had already been working a couple of years as a stringer, helping my best pal and Signal Sports Editor (capitalized back then) Phil Lanier cover the local prep beat.

Which consisted of one school.

When Lanier quit, I thought I'd be the automatic shoe-in for his job. I was cocky. I was also young, which meant I was essentially illiterate, spiritually bankrupt and embarrassingly unfunny.

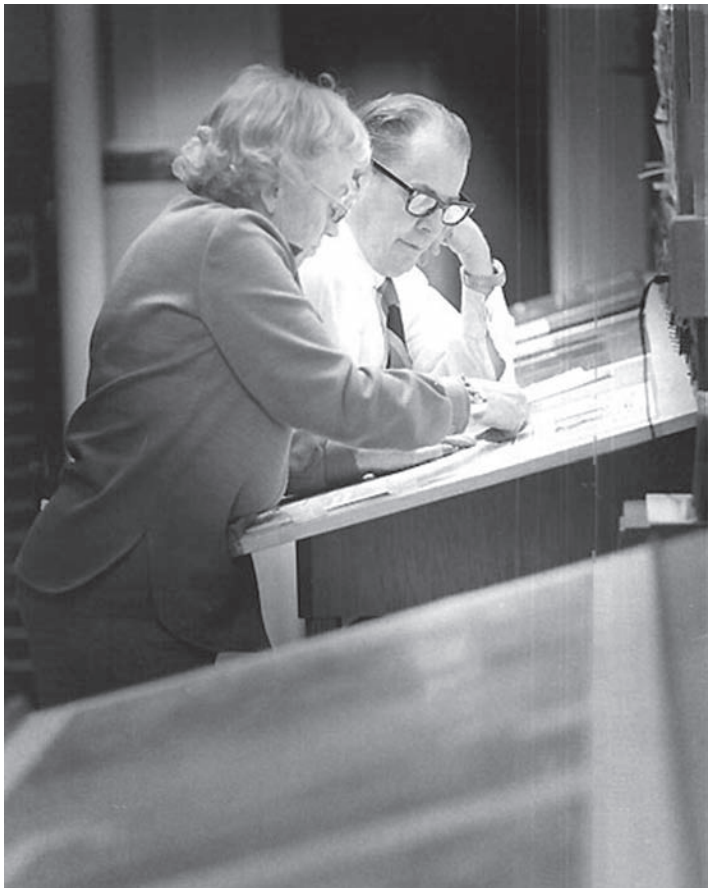
I've told the story before, that although I was the only English-speaking applicant for the sports editor job in 1974, I sensed Ruth had her doubts about hiring me. It's not that I'm any great reader of moods or people. Ruth just said, rather darkly, during the interview:

"You know. I've never liked you."

It's nice to know where you stand.

She hired me.

The sports editor was required then to write a weekly column, cleverly titled, "Sports Editor's Corner." The Signal used to be housed in these pitiful little maroon bungalows that looked more like a nooner motel than home to the savior of the First Amendment. I spent years sitting a few feet away from Ruth Newhall and it was a creepy-crawly hell, like she was the principal and I was the token juvenile delinquent. I had spent my early life charming elementary school teachers and the local high school into granting me an Official Reluctant Diploma Out Of Pity. But Ruth I could not fool. She had my number. She knew what I was thinking. She knew what I had been thinking. She knew what I was going to be thinking.



Ruth and Scott Newhall in The Signal's composing room, when it was located at the corner of Sixth Street and San Fernando Road in Newhall. The newspaper moved to Creekside Road in Valencia in 1986.

I would drop my column in her wire basket, which was frequently inhabited by the office black feline, Momma Cat. I'd return to my desk, sit down and pretend to be busy. Head down, I'd steal glances at Ruth while she read my work. She was everything I wasn't. Educated. Worldly. Formidable. Mature. I just ached for her to pat me on the head and fawn over my mediocrity. I am so glad she didn't.

Ruth ran a gladiator school for writers and I survived it.

Ruth taught me toughness. Which is different than harshness. She taught me speed and accuracy. I was blessed and didn't know it.

After 16 months of probation, she read one of my pieces and said, flatly, "Not bad."

Not bad.

After nearly a year and a half and hundreds of stories, "Not bad." That was a step in the right direction.

I quietly went outside and jumped in the air. Houston, we have Verbal Contact.

I was part of that swashbuckling enterprise back in 1975 where we produced much monkey business and a lot of good journalism. Agriculture was still the number one industry here and in that cramped, dusty little sidestreet office, Ruth shared with me the following:

"Satire is best written with a feather. Not an anvil."

She said it with the disinterest of a zen master. To this day, I still wrestle with that truism. One writing tip. One lousy how-to of practicing decent English composition. Today, I am proficient as a writer. I am light years away from mastery.

And that is fine. Process.

Ruth Newhall is about excellence. She is about perfection. I think the first 10 years I knew her, I used to flee from those qualities, cut corners. Now, well. How right was she? How much of a better man am I for knowing her?

Her husband, Scott, was the pirate prince of journalism, famous and larger than life. A friend of mine once talked about leadership and noted that it's all about answering the question: "Would you follow this guy into battle?" With Scott, there'd be 10 of us and 10,000 of them and we'd stand down in the valley, looking up at the surrounding hordes, thump our chests and confidently announce, "We're going to kick your butts."

And we would.

I loved Scottie. But he could be a stinker and I often thought someone from the archdiocese should motor up to Newhall and give Ruth whatever you give when you make someone a saint for the way she handled her rapscallion and hot-tempered newspaper partner/husband.

She was grace under pressure.

There is a part of Ruth that is just plain sweet and, if you went looking for it, she'd punch you in the nose. She is relentlessly wicked, a quality I admire in people. She is funny. At the tail end of the All Man's World, she was a force of nature.

Ruth used to write a column called, "The Gossip, by Mimi." Mimi was her mother's name and it could be heaven and it could be a pure, serial-killer extended torture if those 26 letters of the alphabet were arranged to spell out your particular name, address and deed. Scottie wrote spectacular, death-to-traitors editorials appearing where editorials should be — above the fold on the front page. It was looking over someone's shoulder while the Old Testament was first being written.

But you didn't want to get written up on page A2 in "Mimi." A few deft and disemboweling strokes from Ruth's pen and you could watch the entrails of your career fall limply about your shoes.

You know why I am so ever grateful to Ruth?

She is one of the few persons in the world who actively encouraged me to grow up to be me.

I was allowed to take chances. Make mistakes. Grow. Learn. Attack. Write in the three basic styles — small, medium and large — and apologize to no one for it. I still have lumps on my skull for all the whacks from her zen pica pole. I have authority issues. I am lucky to be alive for the lines I have crossed.

When Fred Newhall Woods, Scott's cousin, was arrested for that infamous Chowchilla bus kidnapping episode in Central California years ago, I engineered a practical joke. I forged a memo, on an actual typewriter, stating that the Newhalls would be asking all Signal employees to kindly donate 25 percent of their paychecks for FNW's legal defense.

Everyone, including Ruth, thought it was funny.

Scott went — well. It's what happens when anti-matter and matter collide. He turned inside out. He turned into 3,011 little Scott Newhalls limping around (Scott had a wooden leg) he was so mad. Ruth warned me in time and I hid out from my own job for two weeks, literally crawling in on my hands and knees to sneak past Scottie's office to deliver my stories.

We had a sweet little teen-age typesetter who was frightened to death of the Newhalls. Again, The Signal was situated in a series of buildings, with the composing room across the street. The girl panicked one afternoon when Ruth called her to pick up some stories. To whom did she turn for help? Me. Mwa-ha-ha-ha-ha.

I told her that Ruth was completely deaf in her right ear and partially deaf in her left. Further instruction followed that the girl had to walk up behind Ruth, bend over and scream into Ruth's partially good ear: "I'VE COME TO PICK UP THE COPY!"

The girl's shout nearly knocked the then-editor of this paper onto the floor. Ruth came up verbally swinging. That poor little underpaid and terrified typesetter. I imagine her huddling in therapy somewhere today, still crimson and stuttering from the bout.

I have so many stories. Ruth frequently quit. Justifiably. Being editor of this rag is a 20-ton load. One of Mrs. N's replacements we drove out by chanting in the newsroom: "Baby Ruth! Baby Ruth! Baby Ruth!"

What can I say. It's sometimes a biker bar around here.

Another editor, in Mrs. Newhall's honor, made a large sign and hung it on the side of her desk — "EDIT RUTHLESSLY."

Ruth used to let me drink beer in the office.

Those old 6th Street bungalows could get like a sauna in the Newhall summers. Saturdays, I was frequently the only person in the office. As the tradition had been handed down to me, the sipping from a lone, tall can of Olympia in a tastefully unmarked brown paper bag was not frowned upon behind locked doors.

We had a Shakespearean cliché of a reporter who worked for us back then, 3 parts water, 97 parts slime, 40 parts mincing, 12 parts fawning and no discernible spinal column. Come Monday morning, the little cheese weenie (and worse, an out-of-towner) snitched to Ruth about me drinking beer the previous Saturday.

In front of me.

Ruth didn't even look at him. She said, "As long as he makes deadline and there are no mistakes and he doesn't throw the empties at the editor, he can jolly well drink what he likes and I suggest you mind your own damn business and quit being a tattletale."

Ruth, my hero.

I would follow you into battle.

Uphill.

The Mighty Signal has mostly lived in odd locations. In an old wooden hotel. Now, in this office building amidst 100,000 car lots. It costs a quarter instead of a dime. It's a daily, not thrice-weekly. All the desks in the editorial department today are metal and plastic except for one. It's Ruth's old desk from 6th Street.

I sit at it now and write things.

There is this long line of editors, dating back to Ed Brown in 1919 when the valley had 500 souls. There was A.B. "Dad" Thatcher, a pair of Truebloods and a baker's dozen more of lead dog wordsmiths, many I still claim as friends. More than maybe anyone, I know all their work intimately. Much of it is heroic. But I can confidently tell you Ruth Waldo Newhall is the best damn editor to work for this paper.

Ever.

Period.

Ruth was the vigilant one. She rooted out crooks and charlatans. She patted community backs. She helped move a train station and start the local historical society. She threatened to murder the previous historian, Jerry Reynolds, for bad spelling. She arranged for quietly-donated bags of groceries and frequently pointed out the emperor had no clothes and, gracious lady she was, would loan the fallen man a bathrobe. She played the piano, was a really darn good cook and opened her Addams family mansion to thousands. She found an error in the dictionary and made them correct it.

I would write about what miracle has come into this world to bless a Santa Clarita family or what body has departed this hokey little drama. Ruth would see through it as balogna and chop it down to the more succinct: "Births and Deaths." She would give the honorable opposition free space to share their views.

Ruth Newhall was the golden link in this newspaper's chain of simple stewardship. She stood tall and guarded this valley.

What is so immensely fun about this is that my dear wicked friend, tormentor, fencing partner and conspirator Ruth Waldo Newhall positively despises these long-winded Bacchanalian praises. I think she suspects when someone points out how wonderful she is or hands her Yet Another Valuable Trophy, right around the corner someone is going to ask her to cut a check.

Ruth turns 90 tomorrow. She was born 15 minutes short of the Fourth of July.

Odd, though. It's her birthday and she is the one who has given me the gifts, presents I can't even begin to count. Career. Calling. Adventure. Sweet nostalgia. Sanctuary. Office supplies. Speed and patience. When to pick your mischief and how to administer it kindly, with a feather, not an anvil.

I'm sure she's going to read this. I can see the twinkle in the eyes before the blow. "John. The story in The Sunday paper. It was nice but so frightfully long." I fall to my knees in The Reporters Who Know Ruth Prayer, beseeching all deities real, jungle and imagined — let there not be a single typo.

And it is — R-u-t-h — isn't it?

Ruth in 1941 with newborn twin sons Tony (left) and Jon. Tony would become publisher of The Signal; Jon, editor.

March 24, 1993: Ruth Newhall, former co-owner (with late husband Scott) of The Signal newspaper, at home at the Piru Mansion.

9. Heritage Junction

Saugus Station

Two miles north of Newhall, a trainload of dignitaries chugged to a stop to dedicate the Saugus Train Station. The date was Sept. 1, 1887, and theirs was the first run over a spur line that would eventually stretch beyond Ventura up the coast to Santa Barbara and San Francisco.

On board were David D. Colton, president of Southern Pacific, several mayors and the governor of California, Washington Bartlett. They were welcomed by John T. Gifford, Southern Pacific's agent in Newhall, since no one had yet been appointed to that post in Saugus.

The name of the new depot was chosen by Henry Gregory Newhall for the little town in Massachusetts where his father, Henry Mayo Newhall, had been born. "Saugus" is the Narraganset tribal word for a sandy spit of land.

Henry G. Newhall, then 34, was president of The Newhall Land and Farming Co., which had given the railroad the right-of-way for its westward spur line.

The depot - which now rests in Heritage Junction inside William S. Hart Park in Newhall - was completed early in 1888 with pre-fabricated redwood hauled down from the north. Alexander Isaac Frazier was assigned as agent and served two years. Joseph H. Tolfree started the Saugus Eating House (alternately know as Tolfree's Eating House) in baggage room; the enterprise would later be known as the Saugus Cafe.

On Aug. 5, 1891, the Soledad Post Office was moved down out of the canyon to the Saugus Station. Earlier that same year, on April 25; a special train draped with American flags rolled up to the Saugus Station to take on water. President Benjamin Harrison was passing through on a whist1e-stop campaign for reelection. The president sported a bandaged hand, injured while moving from one car to another. A delegation from Santa Barbara met the president at Saugus, then steamed down to Ventura, making brief stops at Fillmore and Santa Paula.

In 1898 a Southern Pacific employee named Richard R. Wood took an option on Tolfree's Eating House and a chunk of land to the west of the railroad tracks. On Jan. 18, 1899, his brother Martin Wood joined him from Terminal Island; Martin co-signed the deed; took active management of the eatery, and gave it its present name.

President Theodore Roosevelt came through in May 1903 and dined on a special New York steak, declaring it “splendid,” legend says. The following year the indomitable chief of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, William Mulholland, and former Mayor Fred Eaton stopped by for breakfast on their way to inspect the liquid assets of the Owens Valley. Driving a rickety buckboard, they had spent a hard night of drinking in a Newhall saloon before heading northward on a mission that would have far-reaching consequences for Los Angeles County.

In 1905 Martin Wood moved the Saugus Cafe to roughly its current location, west of present Bouquet Canyon Road. Next door his brother, Richard, ran a blacksmith shop that would become a garage and gas station. The pair built homes for their families, a small rooming house, and a general store.

Ora W. Bercaw became Saugus station master in 1906 and, for reasons long forgotten, changed the name of the post office to Surrey - a name that would last until Oct. 12, 1915. In rapid succession Bercaw built an ice house (1909), the Surrey Inn (1911), a garage and the, Bercaw Store, south of the Woods’ holdings.

As the families established themselves they needed a school. Charles and Anita Kellogg - she, the daughter of Bill Jenkins of Castaic - farmed the tract from present-day Magic Mountain Parkway up to Bouquet Junction and donated land for a school in 1907. The Bercaws, Woods and Osbornes put up $100 each and built a wooden, New England-style structure with belfry. Margaret O’Connell came from San Jose to be the first teacher.

Marlin Seltzer recalled that ringing the school bell was a great honor. He would get there first thing in the morning to tug on the long rope.

On the other hand, George Shaffner remembered the pot-bellied, wood-burning stove in the middle of the classroom. When some of the boys decided they needed an afternoon off, they would gather around during lunch and urinate on the coals. The stench was’ intolerable, and everyone was sent home.

The children obviously took after their elders. Helen Wood Cone recalled the cowboys at the turn of the century who would thunder into town on the backs of half-wild horses and raise all sorts of commotion. One day in 1899 they took potshots at the Saugus Station; it was their way of greeting a northbound train.

Helen and her husband, Bryon Cone, ran the Saugus Cafe in the 1920s and 1930s. Today, it is the oldest existing restaurant in Los Angeles County.

The Station was moved to its present location in 1980, where it serves as the headquarters of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society. The Station also houses a museum and gift shop.

The rear of the Station

Santa Clarita Valley HISTORICAL Society

The Pardee House

by Jerry Reynolds

The Pardee House is a combination of many different structures that were joined together since the 1890s, parts of which served as a lodge, residence, movie set and telephone exchange. The begin-nings are tied to two men who loomed large in the saga of the Santa Clarita Valley, Henry Clay Needham and William Edward Pardee.

Henry Clay Needham was a powerful public speaker compa-rable to William Jennings Bryan, making him a leader of the National Prohibition Party. Born June 8, 1851 at Percival Mills, Kentucky, Needham eventually became a teacher. He moved to Kansas where he joined the Prohibitionists and helped Governor John St. John draft the "Kansas Dry Laws". ln 1888, he arrived in Newhall to oversee the St. John Subdivision, a "dry colony" of 10,000 acres purchased from Newhall Land. Among his first actions was to build a Good Templar's Hall facing present day San Fernando Rd., just north of Lyon's Ave. Needham also opened a lumber yard and hardware store and was active in ranching, farming, oil and mining. Had he not been stricken with heat prostration in 1920, he might have been candidate for president.

William Edward Pardee was born in Titusville, Pennsylvania on March 4, 1851, becoming a driller in those pioneer oil fields. Married in 1876, Ed and his wife Kathy had a daughter, Pearle, six years later. An old friend, Alexander Mentry finally lured Pardee to the Pico Canyon oil boomtown of Mentryville in 1883. Ed lived in the boarding house for a year until his family could join him. He built a board and batten cottage nestled among the derricks and managed to save enough money to start a livery stable in Newhall during 1887. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed a constable of the sprawling Soledad Judicial District, generally overpowering badmen with feats of sheer strength rather than gunplay.

Ed Pardee

In October of the following year (1888) the Southern Hotel, (built a decade before at Market and Walnut St. by town founder Henry M. Newhall) burned down. The carriage house, which survived the spectacular blaze, was bought by Frank Louden. He added a second story, calling it Second Southern Hotel and nearly went broke in the process. Louden borrowed money from Pardee, but defaulted on the loan. This forced Ed to foreclose; thus he acquired all of Block 31 along Market Street, from Railroad Ave. to San Fernando Rd. (1889).

At that time, Pardee moved a structure from the north side of Market St. to the south amd converted it into a residence. He then acquired the Good Templar's Lodge from Needham, moved it to the Newhall-Market-Walnut triangle and attached it to his home in about 1894. The building looked substantially as it does today.

The business district of Newhall was along Railroad Ave. and the only enterprises facing San Fernando Rd. (then called Spruce St.) were Pardee's Livery (now a grocery store), Tom Frew's Black-smith (presently a glass shop) and the Second Southern Hotel, south of Market. A curious chain of events occurred that would change the complexion of the whole community.

In 1907, Albert Swall was running a general store at Market and Railroad when the owner, William Mayhue, raised the rent. Swall struck a deal with Ed Pardee to lease the Second Southern, moving his shop and the post office onto the ground floor. Three years later the Newhall Tunnel was bored through the mountains south of town. With a major highway planned up Railroad Ave., the merchants asked exorbitant prices for the right-of-way. Pardee, Swall and Frew banded together to donate San Fernando Rd., which brought a lot of traffic and prosperity to the new business district, while Railroad Ave. practically became a ghost town. Ed Pardee died a wealthy man in 1913.

Pardee's daughter, Pearle, married Harry B. "Burt" Russell, occupying the home which became sort of a social center and, curiously, a movie set.

Pearle Pardee

About 1917, Western star Tom Mix converted Newhall Ave. into one of several "Mixvilles", making movies and holding some wild parties in a cottage behind the main house.

On May 23, 1946, Mrs. Russell sold her holdings to the Pacific Telephone Co., which installed a switchboard and exchange in the former living room. By 1970, Newhall was one of only three remaining manually operated exchanges in the country. New automated equipment was installed on Peachland Ave. and the old building was leased to The Boys Club for one dollar a year. In March of 1977, the SCV Chamber of Commerce moved in, its executive secretary, JoAnne Darcy, raising $9,000 for renovations and landscaping. Mrs. Darcy later became the area representative for Los Angeles County Supervisor Mike Antonovich and sat on the first Santa Clarita City Council when the city was founded on December 15, 1987.

The new Executive Secretary, Vikki Rudolph, moved the Chamber to The Valencia Bank building, which also housed the City Hall. The Pardee House was used to assemble Yellow Pages until it was donated to the Historical Society in 1992. Together with Mrs. Darcy, the Council voted $25,000 to move the Pardee House to Heritage Junction. When restoration is completed, it will be used as a visitor center and museum, thus extending its long service to the community.

3/93
Reprinted 1/06

The Kingsburry House

by Jerry Reynolds

It is often difficult to trace the history of the older houses in the Santa Clarita Valley, as it seems that every time they were sold they were moved. Some buildings were relocated from as far away as Pico Canyon (Mentryville) and Lyon's Station to downtown Newhall, while others skipped around to three or four different lots. Luckily, the structure now known as The Kingsburry House was moved only once before ending up at Heritage Junction.

Apparently, the house was constructed in 1878 for Mr. J.O. Newhall at the corner of 8th and Spruce Street, where the Newhall Saugus Glass Co. is now situated. Across the street was an almost exact duplicate built for the pioneer merchant, George Campton.

The Campton House (1890's)

Mr. Newhall was a cousin of Henry Mayo Newhall, who bought the old Mexican land grant ranch covering most of this valley. He founded the community of Newhall as a railroad depot and built a spacious Victorian hotel. J.O. was brought out from Saugus, Massachusetts, to manage the Southern Hotel for his cousin.

About 1880, J.O. Newhall hauled a building from Lyon's Station to 13th Street and moved there. The next occupant of his original house seems to have been Lyman Stewart, who, with his partner, Wallace Hardison, drilled for oil in Pico Canyon and built a warehouse facing Railroad Avenue. Stewart and Hardison nearly went broke, so they relocated to Ventura County in 1890 where they did much better, starting Union Oil Co.

Constable Ed Pardee, who also owned the town livery stable, acquired the house in 1890 and rented it to Dr. John McLeod. A kitchen and bath were added in the 1890's. August Ferrier purchased the house in 1911, moved it to 24318 Walnut Street and rented it to Will Young, brother of Walton Young, superintendent of the Pico Canyon Oil Field (Mentryville).

The house was sold to Theodore H. Kornelissen, a mailman, in 1924. He separated from his wife, Belle, in 1944 and put the place up for sale. A year later it was purshased by the Kingsburrys.

Charles H. Kingsburry certainly led an interesting and colorful life, which began in St. Louis, MO, on August 19, 1879. As a teenager, he moved to Trinidad, CO, became a Wells Fargo agent, then volunteered for the Spanish-American War in 1898. He participated in several battles, including the Santiago campaign. Kingsburry was honorably discharged and returned to Trinidad, where he became a fireman. When the Philippine insurrection broke out in 1901, Charlie again volunteered and was packed off to Manila to serve under General Bowls. After surviving jungle ambushes, sweltering heat and a bout with the fever, he was transferred to the peace and quiet of The Presidio at San Francisco, arriving just in time for the great 1906 earthquake and fire.

Again discharged from the army, Kingsburry married Ruth Carnahan on September 12, 1912. He was a jockey for a while, and then went to work for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power on August 9, 1919 and helped build Powerhouse No.1 in San Francisquito Canyon. When the motion picture industry began using the Santa Clarita area extensively, Kingsburry's love of horses landed him a number of jobs as a movie wrangler and stunt man.

Charlie (on the left) In the Philippines

Charlie's wife Ruth was born in Kansas City, Kansas, on March 2, 1890. She graduated from the Trinidad Business College and worked as a bookkeeper, which was a remarkable accomplishment in those far off days before anyone ever heard of "Women's Lib". In Newhall, she was employed for many years at Hillburn's Funeral Chapel, where her grace and tact helped many grieving families through trying times.

In 1927, the Kingsburry's built a house that is presently located at 24252 Walnut Street in Newhall, living there while he ran the meat department of People's Market. With the outbreak of World War II, he became a guard at Bermite and also the local air raid warden, because he was too old for active service.

Charlie at Market St. and San Fernando Road (1932)

In 1944, they sold their house, moved to Oregon for a year, then returned and lived on Newhall Avenue for a while until they purchased the Kornelissen place. Ruth and Charles were active in many civic affairs. They were members of the Presbyterian Church, School Board, Masons and Eastern Star. He had a small addition put onto the house by Roy Kissinger so that he could coach budding masons. Charlie was also member of the Sheriffs Posse, and usually led them in parades, carrying a large American flag.

Devoted animal lovers, the Kingsburry's were always' taking in strays; Ruth once fed 13 cats at her back door. Charlie's pride and joy was Sunny-Boy, a beautiful horse, on which he delighted in taking neighborhood kids for rides. He also developed a routine of stopping by the homes of the elderly, especially those who lived alone, running errands for them and making sure that they were all right.

Charles Kingsburry died on August 10, 1963. Ruth continued to live in the house and worked at Hillburn's until she finally retired at age 87. She was gradually going blind and developing breast cancer, so she went to live with long time friends, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Bruton, at Lake Elsinore. When Ruth Kingsburry passed away on October 24, 1982, the L.A. Board of Supervisors adjourned in her honor. Five years later, the old house made its final journey, after it was donated to the Historical Society by Realtor James Droz and Dr. Allan Fine.

Most of the early history of the house was researched by Ruth Kingsburry, who passed it on to Helen Bruton; she was kind enough to share it with us. Gladys Laney and Tom Frew were especially helpful in "putting together the picture".

Santa Clarita Valley HISTORICAL Society

10/91
Reprinted 6/06

The Newhall Ranch House

By Jerry Reynolds

The old Newhall Ranch House, now resting next to the Saugus Train Station in William S. Hart County Park, has undergone many alterations over the years. This is obvious from changes in the way the wood was worked, use of square nails in some parts and round nails in others, dropped ceilings, double walls, closed off doorways and remodeled windows. In fact, with so many changes, it is remarkable that the building remains as attractive as it does.

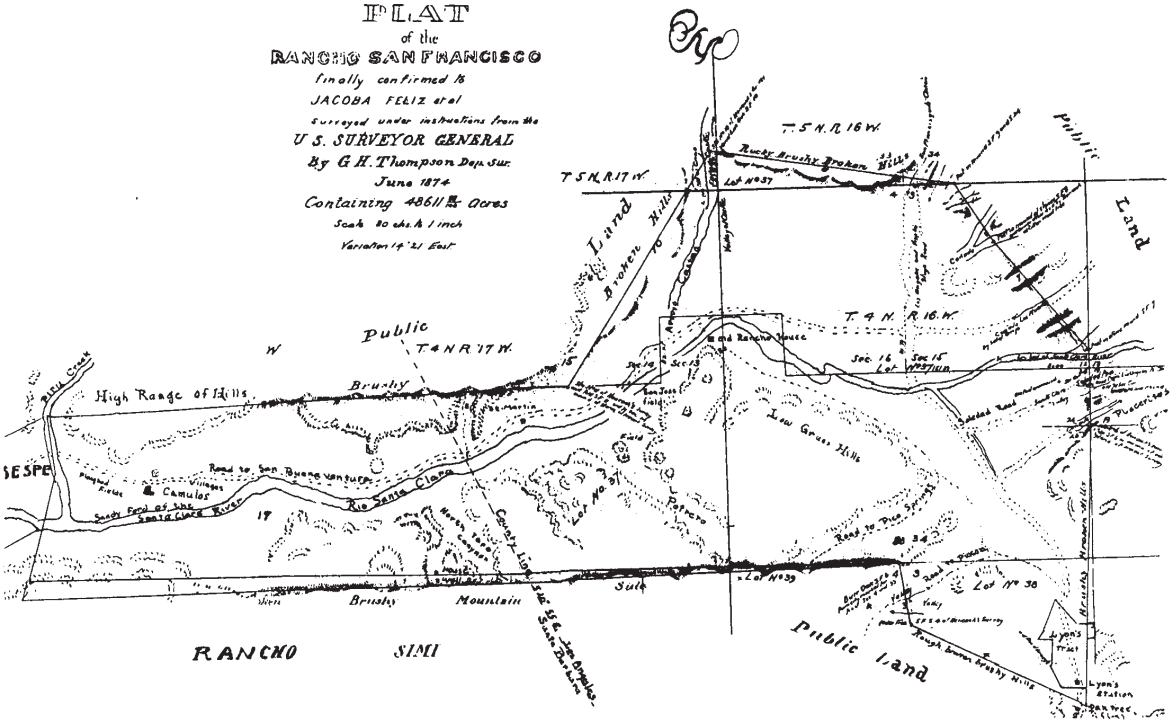
No one knows when the home was originally constructed or by whom. Evidence suggests that part of the building may date to 1860; however, it certainly was in place before 1870.

With the founding of Mission San Fernando in 1797, the whole Santa Clarita Valley became a vast cattle grazing area known as Rancho San Francisco. In 1802, a sub-mission was constructed on the low hill west of the present Magic Mountain parking lot. When Don Antonio Del Valle was granted the rancho in 1839, he moved his family into the 35 year old adobe assistencia where , they lived until it was destroyed during the 1857 earthquake. The Don had since passed away, and the famly was squabbling over the inheritance. . While trying to prove ownership in the courts, they moved into a milk house down the side of the mesa.

William Wolfskill was a prosperous vintner and orange grower who picked up the rancho at a Sheriff's sale in 1860. For the staggering sum of $16,350 he acquired a total of 48,612 acres running from Piru Creek to Placerita Canyon. Obviously, the impoverished Del Valles, living in a milk house, could not afford to build a new wooden home; but did William Wolfskill?

Some bricks from the small basement under the rear of the house bear the stamp "J. Mullally - Los Angeles". According to Harris Newmark in his book *Sixty Years in Southern California*, Joseph Mullally and his associates, Porter and Ayers, erected some of the first brick buildings in Los Angeles in 1853. By October of 1869, he had a brickyard by the Jewish Cemetery with two kilns and a capacity of 225,000 bricks.

The bricks are only found under the back portion - which is the oldest part of the home (present kitchen area). This area also exhibits the rough-hewn lumber and square nails. Since Wolfskill spent so little time at the ranch, perhaps a small structure suited his needs.



On March 18, 1865, acting as agent for his uncle, Col. Thomas A. Scott, Thomas R. Bard bought the property for $62,839. They were mainly interested in the oil potential, Bard spending months at a time on the ranch. If he did not build the first structure, he must have added on to it."

The first solid evidence for a building at the site comes from a map drawn by L.P. Cooper, C.E., entitled "Rancho San Francisco As Partitioned January A.D. 1870". The old assistencia, the milk house and a third structure are shown. Another map drawn four years later by G.H. Thompson (reproduced here) marks the three buildings calling one "Old Ranch House" on the hill, implying that the other edifice is the New Ranch House.

Henry Mayo Newhall paid $90,000 for the rancho on January 15, 1875. In her book, The Newhall Ranch (1958), Ruth W. Newhall writes, "In the autumn of 1878 ranch work began in earnest when (H.M.) Newhall and his son (Henry Gregory) set up their headquarters in a frame house that had been built to replace the old Del Valle Ranch House. Unfortunately, she does not say who built it or when. However she does mention a unique five-sided outhouse used by ranch hands in the morning, so they would not be late to work. It is a shame that this curious structure did not survive.

Mr. Newhall died in 1882, his widow and 5 sons banding together to incorporate Newhall Land and Farming Co. a year later, with Henry Gregory Newhall as president. Gregory spent considerable time here, as it was the favorite of his father's holdings.

On April 4, 1893, a massive earthquake rumbled through the area causing widespread damage. H. Gregory got the directors of Newhall Land to expend $3,500 to repair or rebuild the house. He died later in the year, and a younger brother, Walter Scott Newhall, became president. With homes in San Francisco and Los Angeles, Walter Scott spent little time at the big house. He passed away in 1906.

Family visits became fewer and fewer. The structure was finally partitioned off as a bunkhouse for 4 or 5 ranch hands. Dean Gallion of Castaic recalls an outside staircase at the back and several more doors. When Henry G. Poole became cattle foreman in the mid 1930s, he, his wife, Charlotte, and their children moved in, closing off some of the doors and removing the back steps. The house then sat in the middle of a huge feedlot where 10,000 to 17,000 head of cattle would be fattened for market. Metal troughs snaked across the landscape, supplying both water from tanks on the hill and grain shoveled out of barns near the present Colossus at Six Flags Magic Mountain. The "beeves" would be corralled at Castaic Junction then driven up long loading ramps, about where the fire station now stands, to be driven onto waiting trains.

Mr. Poole retired about 1956. Dean's brother, J.D. Gallion, became cattle foreman and moved into the big house, which he would occupy for 17 years.

At that time there were 4 bedrooms upstairs, three of which J.D. tore out to create a large room, which he paneled and installed his pool table.

Right after the February 1971 earthquake, Newhall Land again did extensive reinforcements of the building, which continued to be the foreman's home until Magic Mountain created an overflow parking area in 1973, moving J.D. Gallion to the management of Travel Village.

Under the ownership of Six Flags and then Bally's, the grand old building fell onto hard times, being used as a storage shed, a stable for various exotic animals and for employee Halloween parties. Finally, it was donated to the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society, which moved the Newhall Ranch House to its present location during the nights of August 14 and 15, 1990.

The Society is grateful to many people who donated funds toward moving The Newhall Ranch House and to the volunteers who have spent thousands of man-hours in restoration work. We appreciate those who have shared their knowledge of this historic structure, especially Ruth Newhall and Dean Gallion. Finally, a very special thank you to Six Flags Magic Mountain for their appreciation of history, and to the City of Santa Clarita, who made funds available for the move.

The adobe in 1963

The Mitchell Adobe

by Jerry Reynolds

As it stands today, The Mitchell Schoolhouse Adobe is actually a combination of several different buildings that have been moved, tom down, built and rebuilt over the years, and bearing little resemblance to any of the original structures.

The story of the Adobe begins on December 24, 1827, with the birth of Thomas Finley Mitchell in Tennessee. His parents, John and Martha Carter Mitchell, came from Virginia along with an older brother, James. Shortly thereafter, the family moved to Texas, where Thomas grew up, joining Company C, Texas Mounted Volunteers. During the Mexican-American War he earned a battlefield commission of Colonel from General Sam Houston, himself.

Initially arriving in California during the gold rush of 1849, Colonel Mitchell finally settled near San Bernardino four years later. There he met the Taylor's, newly arrived from Arkansas, and took an interest in young Martha Catherine, then only 6 years old (born December 24, 1847). paying for her education.

While prospecting for gold near the Acton area, Colonel Mitchell took over an abandoned miner's shack up Paper Mill Canyon about 1858. Finding some "color" in the stream, he purchased 160 acres from the railroad at present day Sand and Lost Canyon Roads in 1860. The Colonel then moved the cabin down from Paper Mill Canyon and used it as his ranch headquarters until he married 17 year old Martha Catherine on January 19, 1865.

Obviously, he couldn't expect his bride to live in a shack, so Mitchell erected a large adobe hacienda from clay dug from a well on the ranch. It was some 60 feet long, 45 feet wide and roofed with long slender redwood shingles. Visitors included stagecoach drivers on the Telegraph Line, Remi Nadeau and his freighters on their way to and from the Soledad mines, and marauding bands of Paiute Indians. Mitchell would slaughter a cow and hang a side of beef in a tree for the Native Americans. who showed their appreciation by not bothering his horses or cattle.

The original adobe about 1904

The feared outlaw, Tiburcio Vasquez, showed up from time' to time, usually in time for dinner, leaving a "tip" under his plate which ranged from a silver dollar to a 5 dollar gold piece. The 1870 Tax Assessment Rolls show that the Mitchell's owned 52 horses, 5 cows, 20 stock cattle, 4 hogs, 4 hives of bees, 1 jackass, 2 wagons, 160 acres and a house valued at $1,361.

The growing family eventually included six children: Mary Elizabeth, Thomas Jr., Frank, Frances Ann, John W. and Minnie Ivy, who each needed an education. Banding together with neighboring Lang's and Stewart's, the Mitchells formed the Sulphur Springs School District in 1872, Martha Mitchell teaching the first classes in the kitchen of her spacious home. Thus, this is the second oldest district in Los Angeles County.

By 1879, the student population stood at 10, so the makeshift school moved to John Lang's hotel-spa-depot, Miss Bowers being hired as teacher. Seventeen scholars showed up for the class of '86, so Colonel Mitchell donated a site for a schoolhouse, which was constructed by Lang and Sanford Lyon on the spot where the present Sulphur Springs Elementary School is located.

During the 1930's a family friend, Dr. Taylor, stayed in the small adobe house, adding a kitchen next to the present fireplace. Curiously, there was no direct access, the doctor having to go outside to get from the house to the kitchen area.

Sulphur Springs School (1915)

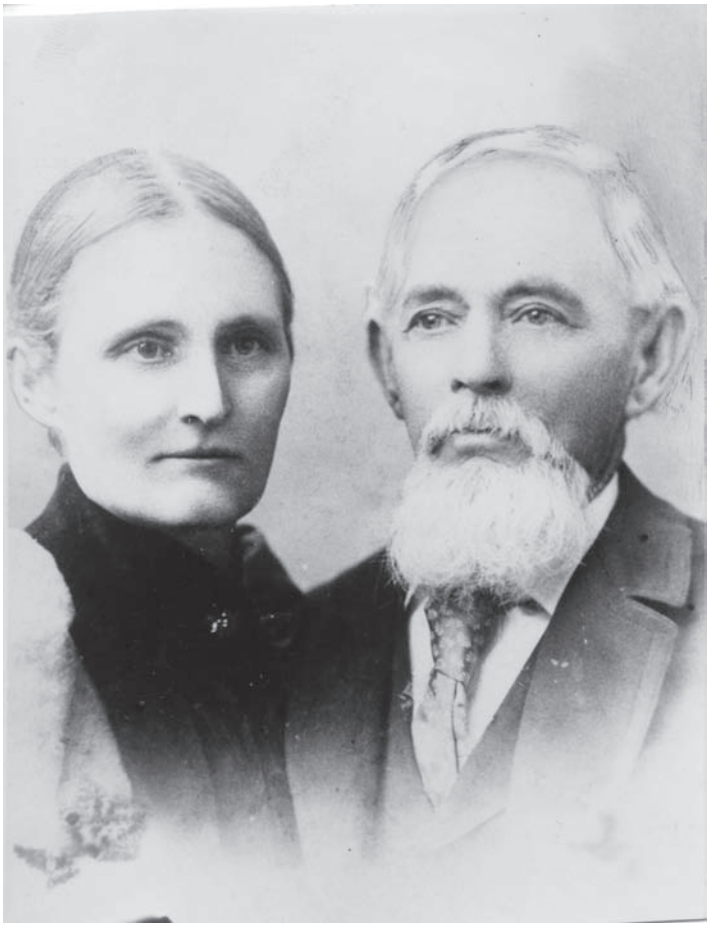
North of the Mitchell Ranch House, across the Santa Clara River, rose a knoll, which, according to an elderly Indian retainer, was the final resting place for several members of his tribe. When he passed away in 1870, the Colonel buried him there with his ancestors, then used it as a family graveyard. His eldest son was interred on the hill in 1875, then a teenage daughter and relatives such as the Manning's, Heitte's, Dyer's and Helvey's.

A two story, redwood, "Midwestern style" ranch house was built in 1888, the hacienda subsequently becoming a guest house, honey house, tack room and residence for married children, such as Frances Ann and Samuel Heitte, who moved in and did some remodeling in 1893. By this time the ranch totaled 1,000 acres.

Martha Mitchell died on August 10, 1905, followed by her husband, the Colonel, on December 24, 1907. They still lie side by side in the ancient Mitchell Cemetery on the hill. Active management of the ranch was taken over by Walter Murphy, who had married the Mitchell's youngest daughter, Minnie. In 1919, Murphy salvaged what was left of the miner's shack and the remaining adobe blocks from the hacienda, which had pretty much melted into the earth from which it was created. He built a residence for the ranch foreman, Henry Thomas. This was of the same size as the present adobe.

By the 1960's, the adobe was being used as a storage shed, then a honey house, and finally, a tack room at the time it was sold to the Shaffer family, about 1970. After the death of Mrs. Shaffer, her son, Kenneth, formed Shaffer Land Co. He finally ordered the demolition of the wooden ranch house and the "Murphy Adobe" on August 14, 1986. The Historical Society managed to save three walls of the adobe, moving them to Heritage Junction, where additional new bricks were hand-made to match the older parts.

The building today reflects the whole story of Canyon Country, with some wood dating back to the 1850's miner's cabin, some bricks made by Colonel Mitchell in the '60's, work done by Walter Murphy in 1919, and some 1980's adobe brick.



Martha Catherine Taylor Mitchell
and
Colonel Thomas Finley Mitchell

Santa Clarita Valley HISTORICAL Society

10/91
Reprinted 1/06

The Edison House

In the early part of the 20th Century, the entire Santa Clarita Valley was considered to be quite remote from the rest of Los Angeles. Although movie companies were using the area for location shooting as early as 1916 and ranching was a big part of the local economy, the region was still sparsely populated.

As all of Southern California became electrified, utility companies needed to build power lines and substations in order to distribute electricity to the rapidly growing City of Los Angeles. Power lines and substations required constant maintenance and upkeep, but it was impractical for workers to commute every day from Los Angeles. The Southern California Edison Company began building cottages for some of its employees close to the lines, power plants and substations they were maintaining.

The Edison House was one of a group of cottages built by the Southern California Edison Company to house employees when the Newhall substation was opened in 1919. It was moved west of Saugus in 1925 when the new Saugus Substation was completed where five additional homes were built of identical design. Assistant Edison Patrolman Raymond Starbard was living there on March 12, 1928, when the Edison transmission line to Lancaster (Borel) suddenly shorted out and blew up an oil switch, bringing all of the substation personnel to emergency duty. That short indicated that the Borel line had failed where it passed through San Francisquito Canyon. He quickly passed the word to Los Angeles and was credited as being among the first to spread the alarm of the St. Francis Dam disaster.

Many Edison employees occupied the cottages. A typical family might live in a cottage for a year or so, until promotion or reassignment took them to another location. In the 1950's, the rent for a two-bedroom cottage was $25 a month, a real bargain. The low rent made it possible for Edison employees to save enough

The Edison House in its original location on Magic Mountain Parkway

Typical kitchen

money for homes of their own. When they moved to another camp, they went to the end of the waiting list for camp housing. The small cottages varied in size, but always had the same basic floor plan. Most of the families had children, which sometimes made for tight quarters. As the areas around the camps became more developed and more housing became available, many of the cottages went vacant, often for years at a time.

As the Santa Clarita Valley grew and housing became more available, the camp at the Saugus Substation was no longer needed. The cottages were sold to Newhall Land and Farming Company on January 17, 1972. The Edison House was donated to the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society and moved to Heritage Junction on January 18, 1989. The remaining houses were burned down by the Los Angeles County Fire Department in a training exercise.

The house is architecturally significant, not only for its Swiss-Germanic Style, but also because it is unmodified from its original construction. This single-family residence has a shingled, gabled roof, clapboard siding, and hardwood floors.

The cottages had unique sashes that lowered the window down into the wall

The Edison House arrives at Heritage Junction Historic Park - January 1989

The last cottage succumbs in a LA County Fire Department training exercise

All that remains

Santa Clarita Valley HISTORICAL Society

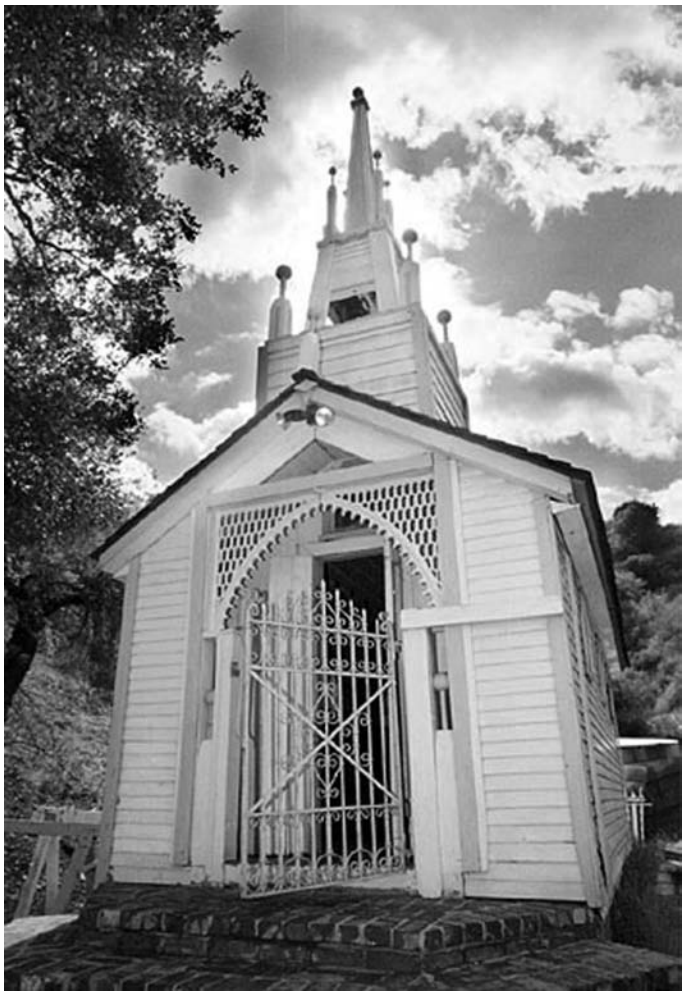
The Callahan Schoolhouse

Constructed in 1927 by Robert E. Callahan for his Mission Village in Culver City, this building was used as a tourist attraction and movie set. In 1963 the area of the Mission Village was paved to form the Santa Monica Freeway, forcing Mr. Callahan to move the structure to Mint Canyon, where it was converted into a school house to hold desks, a blackboard, and a lectern which came from Vallejo, California, and dating back to 1858.

The Callahan School House was donated to the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society by Mrs. Marion Callahan (Kitty Kelley) and moved to its present location in April, 1987.

This building is clapboard with a wood shingle roof and an overhanging, triangular- shaped porch. Not architecturally significant, it does however represent small schools used in mining camps and frontier settlements during the late 19th Century in the American West. Restoration was completed under the direction of Cathe Daley as a Girl Scout project in 1992.

The Ramona Chapel



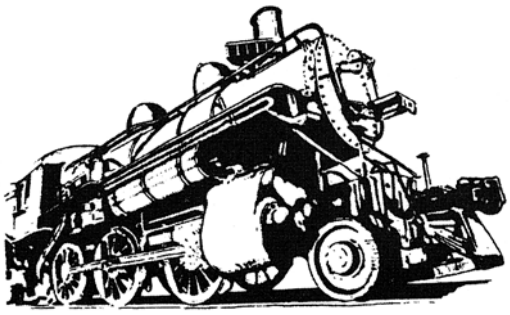
Designed by Carrie Jacobs Bond, composer of "The End of a Perfect Day," "I Love You Truly," and other songs, this chapel was based on the one at Rancho Camulos made famous in Helen Hunt Jackson's novel, *Ramona.* From 1926 until 1962, it was the centerpiece of Robert E. Callahan's Mission Village in Culver City.

Mrs. Marion Callahan (Kitty Kelley) states that her late husband assembled bits and pieces of old churches, some as old as 200 years. However, the guide book for the Village describes the ". . . altar made from ruins of 200-year-o1d mission." The 48 cup brass candelabra was donated by Bond. Here Gary Cooper was inducted into the Sioux Nation. John Wayne used it as a movie set, and the chapel was visited by Wyatt Earp, Will Rogers, Joan Crawford and many other stars.

In 1963, the area of the Mission Village was paved to form the Santa Monica Freeway, forcing Mr. Callahan to move to Mint Canyon. Callahan donated the chapel to the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society, and it was moved to its present location at Heritage Junction in 1987.

The Ramona Chapel is architectura1ly and historically significant because of its unique "doll house" design and long association with Hollywood filmmakers. It is blue and white c1apboard, with eight small, stained g1ass windows. The bell tower was been completely rebuilt, and the bell re-hung. The Chapel contains eight pews, the altar and gate. Artwork by noted painter Frank Tinney Johnson was discovered on the chapel walls. With the help of the Getty Museum, the panels have been removed and the artwork stabilized in preparation for restoration.

Engine 1629



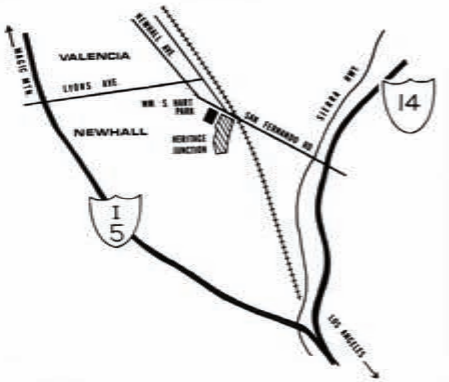
This Mogul Engine 1629 is a class M4 engine weighing 75 tons, with wheels 2-6-0. It was built in Schenectady, New York, in 1900. It was purchased by Southern Pacific Railroad for use on the line that ran from Yuma, Arizona to Portland, Oregon, passing through the Santa Clarita Valley.

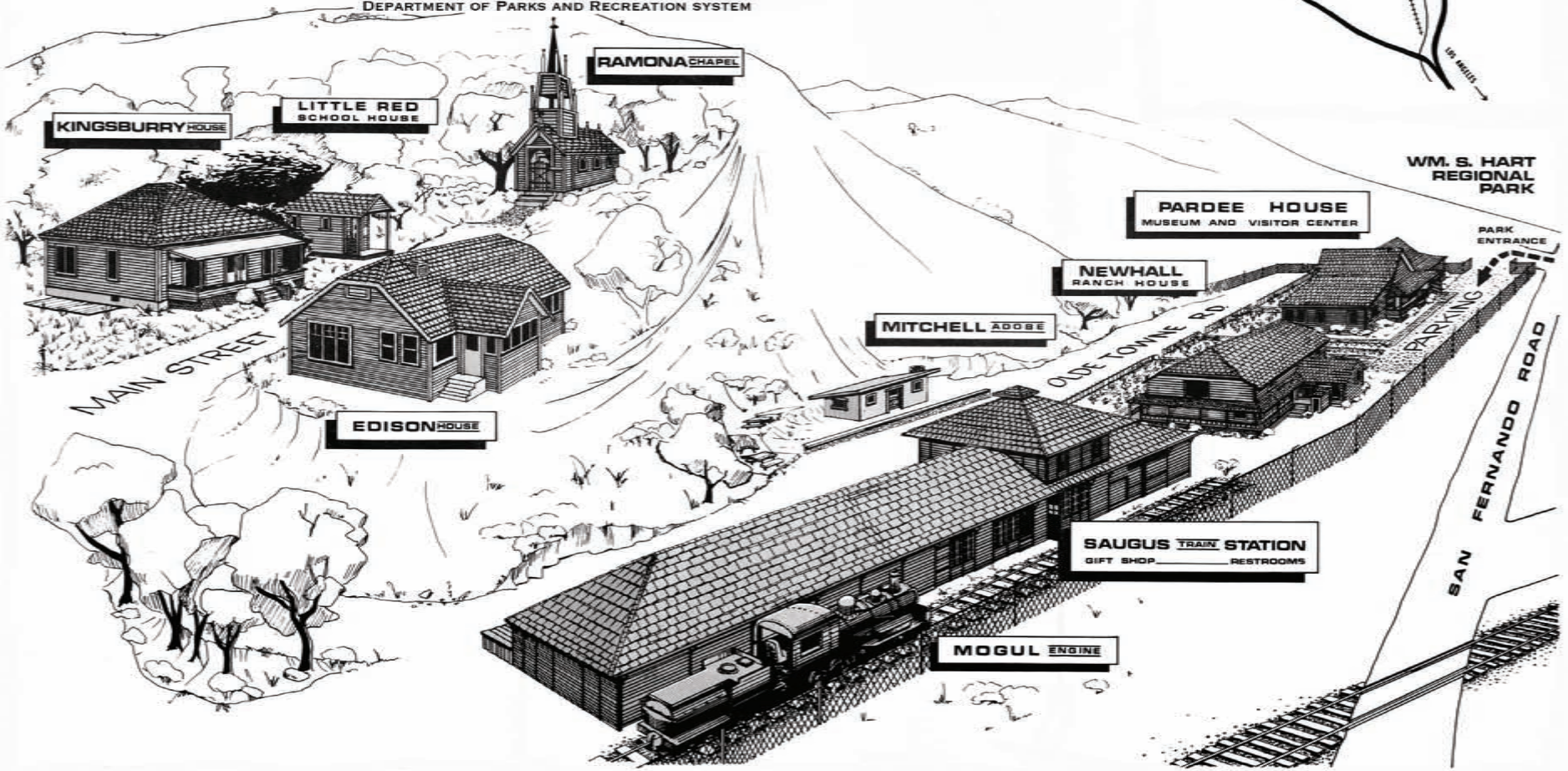
In 1957, it was retired and sold to Western actor, Gene Autry, who used it in f1lms at his Melody Ranch in Placerita Canyon. It appeared in such television series as “Gunsmoke” and “Wyatt Earp.” Autry donated the locomotive in 1981 to the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society, and it was moved to its present location next to the Saugus Station using donated funds in 1982.

Heritage Junction
HISTORIC PARK

Operated by: The Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society
Located in the historic Santa Clarita Valley adjacent to William S. Hart Regional Park
HOURS: Saturday and Sunday 1:00 - 4:00 PM or tours by appointment

WILLIAM S. HART REGIONAL PARK IS A UNIT OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM





Proposed Copy for Recordings in the Saugus Station Museum

Agent's Office

This is the Agent's Office. The station agent's job was all about communication. If you look around the room, you see all sorts of things relating to communication. You see the telegraph, (sounds of the telegraph key), old telephones, (sounds of telephone ringing), and more. Even the bell from the train outside is a form of communication, (sound of the bell ringing).

If you look on the walls, you will see hanging there some lanterns. Different colored lanterns meant different things. Even the way you moved the lanterns had meaning to the engineer or conductor on the train. One very interesting means of communication is on the desk. It is an order hoop. A note could be tied to the string on the order hoop and raised up to the engineer in the cab of the engine or fastened to a pole near the track and snatched as the train went by, (sound of train passing). Some forms of older order hoops did not have string, but literally released from the pole and was taken by the engineer. In this case, after the note was removed, the engineer threw the hoop from the train. Any local child who returned an order hoop was compensated with a nickel.

Anything new that came into town would come first to the station; whether it was news, passengers or freight, the station agent saw it first. Even the mail came to the train station for some time. Please continue on into the Baggage Room to visit our museum.

Museum

Welcome to the museum of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society. Please remember that if you have any questions about Santa Clarita Valley History, or the items displayed here at Heritage Junction Historic Park, you can ask a docent questions. This room was the baggage room of the station. It is set of as sort of a time line beginning at the door as you come and continuing counter clockwise around the room in more or less chronological order.

The first thing you pass is the tin room. It is a small room lined with tin where the Station Agent kept his valuable papers, relatively safe from fire-a common hazard in old, wood framed buildings in a dry climate such as this. The next thing you come across is a large painting of the valley with the Santa Clara River running through it, dotted with oaks and scrub brush, much as it was before any people settled here permanently.

Continuing around the room, you find a case containing artifacts from the early people who were here. Some of these artifacts are from very early people, but some are representative of the first people to really settle here, the Tataviam. In the center of the display is a wooden bowl made of local oak, waterproofed with local asphaltum. It was found near Vasquez Rocks. If you will notice, the top of the bowl has filaments. These are there to filter out any small debris that might be in the water inside as you pour it out. Most of what the Tataviam people made and used was biodegradable, so not very much is left of their culture. The last Tataviam speaking person, died in 1916. His name was Juan Fustero, and he is the older man in the photograph on the wall above the case.

Moving on to the North Wall, there is a display of artifacts from the Mission and Californio Periods. The first Europeans to come through the Santa Clarita Valley were with Gaspar de Portola and Father Jan Crespi, exploring for Spain to find sites for settlement in the form of Missions to solidify their control over the land. A depiction of this event is on the Wall to the right, by our first curator, Jerry Reynolds. Travel between the Mission San Fernando and here was difficult due to the San Gabriel and the Santa Susana Mountains. In 1806 while our area was under the governance of the San Fernando Mission, An Assistencia was created near what is now Magic Mountain to help govern the remaining Native Americans living in this area. Another painting of

Jerry Reynolds is found on the wall behind the case showing what this building might have looked like, based on the ruins and descriptions from the time.

In 1832 the Mission System was broken up by the Mexican government, which had won its independence from Spain through many bloody battles. Cash poor, the Army paid its officers in land confiscated from the Missions. In 1838 the entire Santa Clarita Valley was granted to Antonio del Valle for his service in the Mexican Army. A significant part of this land was kept in the del Valle family even after the American Occupation and though much of it was sold in the 1870s to payoff debts, the home ranch at Camulos was not sold until 1926. For a taste of what that Rancho was like, ask the docent to see the Camulos photos in the Waiting Room.

Francisco Lopez found the first documented gold in California here at Placerita Canyon under the "Oak of the Golden Dream" in 1842. This sparked the first California gold rush. This site of this event can be visited at Placerita Canyon Natural Area Park, on Placerita Canyon Rd. Most of the participants in that gold rush were from Sonora Mexico, called "gambusinos." This gold rush is largely left unrecognized and not discussed, in part, because the people involved were not Americans.

In 1847 Mexico and the United States signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ceding Alta California to the U.S. They sent their "Pathfinder" John C. Fremont to explore the new territory, like Portola before him, to find an appropriate site to secure control over the land. They developed a military base in Tejon Pass. Fort Tejon can be visited by traveling north on I-5 and taking the Fort Tejon exit, just past Fraiser Park. In 1855 Phineas Banning, who had won the contract to supply the fort, began creating what we now know as Beale's Cut, pictured on the vertical divider between the Californio Case and the mining display, in the corner. For an amusing anecdote about Banning and the Cut, ask the docent to tell the story of Phineas Banning's wild ride. Beale's Cut made it possible for his wagons to cross the mountains south of the Santa Clarita Valley to go north to Fort Tejon. In 1863, Edward Beale, commandant of Fort Tejon, applied to the U.S. Government to make it deeper and to create toll gates at either end to charge for people, vehicles and even livestock to pass through. This was the easiest and safest way to travel to the Santa Clarita Valley until 1876 when the railroad was developed.

On the West Wall is a diorama of different methods used to extract gold from the earth. This piece is itself historic, as it was created by a WPA worker during the Great Depression-putting people to work. Further along the wall you see a display on the oil industry in the Santa Clarita Valley. The Tataviam had always used the oil that bubbled up to the surface of the earth for a variety of purposes. But the Americans needed it in greater quantities and much faster. They designed a clever means to get to the oil faster. Pictured on the wall you see a line drawing of a spring pole, which is a primitive apparatus for drilling for oil. We have a full scale model for you to see on the hill opposite the station, behind the Mitchell Adobe. In 1877, Alexander Mentry, the gentleman pictured seated next to the oil well photo, came from the Pennsylvania Oil fields, bringing what was then high technology with him. He soon brought in CSO 4, the oil well pictured, which was the first commercially successful oil well in California History. Not only was it the first, but it was also the longest operating, producing oil from 1877 to 1984. You see on the table a model of the Pioneer Oil Refinery, still located on Pine St. not far from here, which refined oil taken from Mentryville. Mentryville can also be visited. It is located on Pico Canyon Road.

In the southwest corner of the room, you see the table and chairs at which Wild Bill Hickock was sitting when he met his end. The story goes that he never sat with his back to the door, but on that fateful night, he did and was shot in the back. And this was the hand he was holding. . . aces and eights, full house-the "Dead Man's Hand". The organ was once owned by Carrie Jacobs Bond, who composed "1 Love You Truly," "The End of a Perfect Day" and other hits of the 19th Century. Both of these were donated by the owners of Callahan's Old West, a wild west theme park that was once located on Sierra Highway.

As you continue around the room, you see artifacts that remind us that the area did ultimately become more civilized. We were not without our share of desperados, though. The painting of that dangerous looking man hanging on the wooden doors is of Tiburcio Vasquez. Known as the "Scourge of California," he frequently passed through and often holed up from the law in our area--especially Vasquez Rocks. Vasquez Rocks is now a County Park near Agua Dulce and can be visited by taking the marked exit off of the Antelope Valley Freeway and following the signs. He was so feared by the Americans that the governor of California created a "superposse" with no other job but to find this dreaded bandito. Tiburcio is more of an enigma when you consider that one of the reasons that he evaded justice so long was that he had very strong support from the Californio residents of the state who greatly resented the Americans occupying the land they had owned for generations. They resented the fact that Americans assumed they would all "go back" to Mexico, when most of them considered themselves Californios, not Mexicans. To them, Tiburcio was a champion. You must decide if he was a dangerous desperado, the hero of an oppressed people, or a product of a difficult clash of cultures in a violent and confused time.

Continuing along the South Wall, you see some memorabilia of the movies made here in the Santa Clarita Valley. There is still much movie magic made in our valley.

In the corner, in the sink is a piece of concrete that was once part of the fated St. Francis Dam. Completed in 1928 by William Mulholland it was part of the Los Angeles Aqueduct project, bringing water from Northern California to Los Angeles. Within 24 hours of being filled to capacity for the first time, however, it burst, sending a wall of water over 150 feet high down San Francisquito Canyon about midnight on March 28. By the time the wall of water had gone down the Santa Clara River to Santa Paula, it was still 35 feet high. The Water Department was forced to pay damages on over 400 deaths. That was only the people they found, could identify and for whom they could find a next of kin. We will never know how many migrant workers were camped along the river that night. It is considered the second largest disaster in California History, after the San Francisco Earthquake and fire in 1906.

We hope you have enjoyed your visit to our museum. To continue your tour go to the Freight Room, which is located on the opposite side of the building. As you pass through the hallway, look up and notice the cut in the ceiling. When we moved this building in 1980, we had to cut it so the strain of moving didn't break the station in half. If you have questions about any of the items in our museum, or any aspect of Santa Clarita Valley History, please feel free to ask a docent.

The Freight Room

The Freight Room may look like a big, mostly empty room to you. But it is much more. Now we use this room to have meetings and give tours, but it was once an important part of the function of this train station, housing freight in transit for a place that needed lots of things to make life possible here.

Today it is hard for us to conceive how important the railroad was to people over 100 years ago. Travel was dangerous, hard and only undertaken if really necessary. People who were traveling were very welcome, as long as they could tell you what was happening outside their small sphere. In 1876 the Southern Pacific Railway built the first trans California route by starting teams of workers laying track south from San Francisco and north from Los Angeles. They met here in Canyon Country at Lang Station. You might wonder why the meeting place was so far south. The crew that laid track from Los Angeles had a massive challenge. The Chinese Laborers in that gang dug the San Fernando Tunnel using picks and shovels. It was over a mile long, a great engineering feat at the time. An amazing commentary on their work is that during the 1994 earthquake, the modern roadways fell. All routes into Los Angeles were impassable. The only way to get to Los Angeles was on the Metrolink, through the 120 year old tunnel! A great celebration was held at Lang Station celebrating the completion of the line and a golden spike was driven on September 5, 1876. A model of Lang Station is located

at the far end of the room on a table.

A few years before this station was saved to be preserved as a historical monument, Lang Station was pushed over into the Santa Clara Riverbed.

Consider the loss. Historic Preservation is more than the job of a few. The whole community of Santa Clarita pulled together to preserve the Saugus Train Station in 1980. It takes more than silently agreeing with the concept. Ask a docent how you can get involved.

Thank you for visiting the Saugus Train Station.