

Livermore Heritage Guild

Saving Yesterday For Tomorrow



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The Home Front: Livermore in World War II

By 1940 the war in Europe became more intense. After the fall of France, the U. S. Government began action to identify non-citizens by requiring them to be registered and fingerprinted. All local aliens over age 14 were subject to registration with the government by December 30, 1940.

In January 1942 more stringent rules were enforced, affecting 104 Livermore non-citizens (85 Italians; 14 Germans, and 5 Japanese). All short-wave radios, cameras and firearms owned by aliens were impounded. Non-citizens were also asked about relatives, both in this country and abroad, and whether any relative was in the armed forces of enemy nations.

The next month a curfew was imposed on the aliens: they were forbidden to leave their homes between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. the next morning. They were also limited to a five-mile perimeter from their residence. The penalty for violation was internment for the duration of the war. With the establishment of the Livermore Naval Air Training Station (now the site of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory), there was the possibility that some non-citizens under the age of 70 could be relocated.

Several violations of the curfew occurred. The local police found an Italian alien on Railroad Avenue after 10:15 one evening. Apparently he had been warned on several occasions, but this time he was

taken into custody by the FBI.

The non-citizen Italians in Livermore were no longer considered enemy aliens after October 1942. Their short-wave radios, cameras, and firearms were returned to them. The local paper does not mention the return of German non-citizens' property; Japanese were relocated away from the Bay Area.

The Heritage Guild would like to speak with any local family whose members were affected by the 1942 government restrictions. Please call us at 449-9927.

-By Gary Drummond

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A Message from the President

October 30, 2008

Dear Members,

Saving Yesterday for Tomorrow often means that we want to be able to make the stories and lives of previous generations seem tangible so we can repeat these stories for ourselves and future generations. Thus we collect photos, logbooks, clothing, and other objects that help us put those stories together. Recently the Heritage Guild was the recipient of a particularly interesting collection that will help us tell many stories of Livermore in the early 20th century.

Through an email dialog that stuttered along between summer vacations and other distractions, the Guild was offered a collection of papers from the architect Henry Meyers (1867-1943). Henry lived in Livermore with his family, and later would design a house for his sister Lilly as a wedding gift, the W. H. Taylor home (585 South L). Meyers designed many notable buildings in the Livermore area, including the Foresters' Hall, Veterans Memorial, Fifth Street School, Dr. Wallace Meyers home (529 South L), Tuberculosis Sanitarium, and other homes and buildings. He built a successful practice in San Francisco, and his work can be found all around the Bay Area, with examples such as the Posey Tube to Alameda. For those interested in more about Meyers' professional work, the U.C. Berkeley Environmental Design Archives contains a lot of information, including some available on-line. A good place to start is <http://www.ced.berkeley.edu/cedarchives/profiles/meyers.htm>

This is all very interesting, and gives us a picture of a successful, talented architect who made a lasting mark on our area. But the new papers we have received give a glimpse of the kind of person he was and some of the detailed attention he paid to his projects. As an example, we have a stack of correspondence regarding a 1937 remodel to the Fifth Street School, including frustrations of dealing with project delays and the ensuing miscommunication and finger pointing. He sent the superintendent on the job, our locally well-known Sam Bothwell, a exasperated note saying: "So, after all the hullabaloo, I do not now know why Mr. Lawless should have criticized the architect and his representative. I reached the conclusion that your delays were entirely due to handling the job through the WPA and no one should have been more aware of that than Mr. Lawless. ... WELL, now that that is 'off my chest', let's forget it."

Beyond the business letters were a few other simple drawings and building specifications and a May 1885 edition of *The Oracle*, the monthly publication of "The Senior Class of The Livermore Public School." Turning it open, we can see that it was saved because Henry H. Meyers is listed as a member of the editorial staff and wrote an article on "The Lake Poets." The more literate among you may already know that this refers to writers such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, (I didn't) but young Henry's article is well written and an entertaining read. Elsewhere in the edition is a story about the founding of the school, some senior humor, and a listing of the students and staff. Advertisers include D. A. Mendenhall & Co. Dry Goods and the Washington Hotel ("Terms always reasonable"). An excellent addition to our collections.

I am telling you about this partly to share my excitement over these papers, but also perhaps to entice you to come in and help house and catalog this and other interesting collections. Terry Berry's note in this newsletter gives some great opportunities to get involved in these archives, and by the time you read this we will hopefully have yet another collection of papers that date to the turn of the last century.

Drop in and let's talk about getting you involved in our discoveries!

Jeff Kaskey
President

Grace Evans Devnich, 1907-2008

Imagine for a minute a world without radio, movies, television, or cell phones, with telephones having human operators; with more horses than automobiles. Russia still has a czar. Theodore Roosevelt is president, and the Wright brothers had their memorable flight just six years ago. Only two years earlier, Einstein had announced his theory of relativity. Into this world Grace Evans was born in 1907.

Her father was a doctor, and he encouraged his daughter's independence. "My father took me and my little sister when he went down to vote for woman's suffrage. He told us we could do anything we wanted to. I never thought anything different."

Grace met Henry Devnich in January 1929 while they were taking classes at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. They married in September and continued their studies at the University of North Dakota. After receiving their undergraduate degrees, they were awarded teaching fellowships at Colorado College, where they earned master's degrees. After graduation, they taught school for five years.

They saved their money and managed to enroll in medical school at the University of Nebraska, graduating in 1945. One of only two women in a class of 76, Dr. Grace had to overcome many prejudices, both at school and in her practice of medicine. They came to Santa Clara Hospital in San Jose for their years of internship and residency. Eventually, they arrived in Livermore and opened their office on South L Street; an office visit cost \$12.50, and they made house calls if needed. Their personal interest in their patients made them many friends. When they retired in 1981 after 33 years of team doctoring, Dr. Grace estimated that she had delivered nearly 800 babies. Dr. Henry died in 1992, but Dr. Grace continued to charm us with her wit and humor.

After I had written my book on Livermore, I created a slide show, "Some Unique Livermore Women." Dr. Grace was one of the women, of course. I needed another photograph, and Dr. Grace let me come to her house with my camera last year. I wanted to take a photograph of her with her father's black leather

doctor bag. She was looking in it, and I snapped a few shots. Then she turned her face and glanced up at me with that little devil smile she had. I managed to capture that on film, and I will always cherish it. She was a model for the community in how to grow old gracefully.

-By Ann Homan

Wanted! School Yearbooks

In preparation for a class reunion, Tilli Holm Calhoun found that the Guild's collection of school yearbooks has some "holes" in it!

We'd like to complete the collection of local yearbooks if possible; they're a valuable research tool for genealogists and local historians.

The Guild is missing the following books from Livermore High School: 1926, 1934 to 1947, 1960, 1963, 1967, and 1969. The latest Livermore High School yearbook in the collection is 1978, so any books after that will help with the collection.

If you want to donate a yearbook for any of the missing years, it will be appreciated. We also need yearbooks for Granada High School. We're working now on a list of missing issues and will publish it in an upcoming issue of the newsletter.

Please call 925-449-9927 if you wish to have someone pick up a yearbook or simply bring it to the History Center in the Carnegie Building. The History Center is open 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.



Guild Celebrates Its 35th Anniversary

This October we again had our Annual General Meeting (AGM) – a wonderful opportunity for Guild members to come together and talk about the organization, our accomplishments and goals, and the events going on that interest us. About 80 members attended, enjoying dinner catered by Blue Sage. We were serenaded by music from member Bill O’Neal and his Valley Banjo Band, back for a second year by popular request.

We don’t always recognize how much work the Guild does throughout the year, so during the business part of the meeting I talked about some of the notable events of the past year. Volunteers, instead of saying “I think the Guild should clean and organize the Harp room,” say instead “I would like to take on cleaning and organizing the Harp room” (as our treasurer Dick Lerche did), and miracles happen.

What are some of the things that went on this year in our Guild? Well, we: Presented a large print of the 1889 Bartlett Map of Livermore to the Livermore City Council as part of our 35th-year celebration; completed the restoration of the 1917 Model T fire car with the help of Chuck McFann, Fred Deadrick, and Irv Stowers; the Mack fire truck made local parade appearances, ably maintained and attended to by Susan and Bill Junk.

We had a very successful Legacy Home Tour with more than 700 participants, thanks to Deborah Fields and



The Valley Banjo Band entertained before dinner. Band members from left are: Mary O’Neal (drum), Charlie Bennett (accordion) Libby Wood (guitar), Phil Landon (banjo), Bill O’Neal (banjo and band leader), Alice Velencia (bass), Ron White (banjo), and Jim Bottorf (banjo).

her amazing crew; Joe Adams put on our annual auction, with auctioneering performed again by Lynn Owens and lots of assistance from Marie Abbott, Anna Siig, Bill Junk and his crew, continued the monthly open-house at the Lincoln Highway Museum and Duarte Garage, as well as opening for special events such as the antique race cars and the Diablo Valley Mustang Club. In June the Antique Race Car Rally stopped in

for lunch.

Marie’s History Talks were well attended each month, with a great range of interesting topics from family genealogies to bomb shelters. Gary Drummond led school children and adults alike on History Walks; we have new committees for Oral History, Cottage

Maintenance, and the new History Mobile. Tilli Calhoun and Bill Junk took our existing History Mobile to schools and public events, spreading the story of Livermore history.

Don Meeker received an award from the city for his work transcribing the historical City Council minutes so they can be accessed and searched on the web; Maxine Trost took our newsletter to the next level this year, with color and a more professional look; Likewise, Bob Bronsan gave our website a facelift; Bill Nale and Marie will again produce our annual calendar, after last year’s colorful success.

We continue to be a force in public advocacy and outreach. Guild



LHG President Jeff Kaskey called the Guild’s Annual General Meeting to order. Jeff described the accomplishments of the past year and thanked the many volunteers for their hard work.

at the Annual General Meeting

members are on the Livermore Historic Preservation Commission, and many others have dual citizenship with LAA, SIRS, Rotary, L-AGS, LCAC, CIFF, TVHC, Chamber of Commerce, etc. Our activism helped save the Dutro house from demolition and we continue to talk publicly and privately about rehabilitation and preservation.



Above: Irv Stowers, Patty Stowers, and Margaret Sorensen; Right above: Loretta Kaskey and Susan Junk; right below: the Guild's 35th birthday cake.



of president and first vice president were up for vote. Marie Abbott agreed to run again for the first vice president seat, and I ran for president, having been appointed last year to fill an uncompleted term. With no nominations from the floor, both candidates were elected by acclamation. Both Marie and I wish to thank each of you for your vote, trust and good wishes!

And finally, with the business done and cake

The History Center in the Old Carnegie Library, ably managed by Lydia Carpenter, was the focus of many projects. Dick Lerche worked to organize our collections in the Harp Room and compile the historical record of the Guild itself; Terry Berry brought in interns to do proper archival storage for our photos, textiles, and prints, and spent time explaining our computerized cataloging system to me; many volunteers researched answers to questions from the public, including work by Gary Drummond, Jean Lerche, two new volunteers Mary Rasmussen and Eric Miller, Dick Finn, and Anne Homan.

There! When you look at it that way, it is hard to believe we accomplished all this and more. We have some new areas to work on in the next year, and we'll be talking to you more about outreach, research, exhibits, etc. Please let us know if we have an opportunity to bring you in for an interesting project!

Of course, the main business of our Annual General Meeting is our election of officers. All five executive officers stand for two year terms, and this year the positions



served, John Sarboraria gave a great slide presentation of many photos of historic Livermore. His deep knowledge of the context for each shot and the story

it told about Livermore made the presentation very compelling.

-By Jeff Kaskey



John Sarboraria (above) presented a slide show of historical Livermore photographs selected from photos he collected for the City of Livermore's 1969 Centennial. Marie Abbott (left) First Vice President, helps clean up after the meal.

Garage Sale at the Garage

On Saturday, October 11, the Livermore Heritage Guild held a garage sale at the Duarte Garage featuring items not sold at the Auction in May.

This garage sale was unusual in that there were no price tags on any of the items. We let the buyers offer what they thought the item was worth. It went a little slowly at first, but most visitors offered what they could afford.

It turned out to be a fun time, and everyone was happy! We moved 80 percent of the inventory out of the Garage and made a delightful profit of \$700!

Thanks to a great group of Guild “helpers”. Walter and Joan De-tjens, Rena Leibovitch, Bev Ales, Nancy and Willie Cooper, Anna Siig, Jean Lerche, Neal Cavanaugh, Tim Sage, Ron McConnell, Lynn Owens, Jeff Kaskey, Bill Junk, Susan Junk, and Marie Abbott.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Guild has many opportunities for volunteers to help with projects. We can find a job that matches the skills of anyone interested in preserving Livermore’s history and heritage. Among the many jobs needing your help:

Textile collections: A volunteer is needed take responsibility for our textiles. Tasks include re-housing and cataloging objects into PastPerfect. Sample entries are already in PastPerfect, and I can teach the basics in about four to eight hours.

Framed artwork: A volunteer is needed to finish cataloging the framed artwork into PastPerfect. Samples are already in the database, and I can train you in four hours.

Maps: A volunteer is needed to finish cataloging our maps into PastPerfect. Training will take four hours.

Photographs: Volunteers are needed for cataloging our photo collection. One volunteer could be assigned to each drawer of the photo cabinet and would catalog into PastPerfect. Another volunteer could finish re-housing and cataloging the photos still in boxes in the East Room.

Documents: A volunteer is needed to make copies of our newspaper clippings.

Since each database entry takes about 20 to 30 minutes, finding volunteers to assist with these projects is critical to their completion. I estimated that just entering the photo catalog would take me, working alone, about four years! The work is not hard, and, as long as you have some basic computer skills, you will quickly be comfortable entering catalog records. Also, after a short training session, you can work independently and choose your own hours.

If you’re interested in helping with these or many other projects, contact me directly for information and

training. My home phone is 925-461-1238 and my email is terry@berry.org. I look forward to hearing from you.

-By Terry Berry

What is this?

Stop in at the History Center and have a look at an exhibit of artifacts from the Duarte Garage. And tell us what this tool is.



From the Livermore *Herald*,
August 10, 1901

Chicken Thief

Judge Taylor sent Chris Powers, a typical hobo, to the county jail for thirty days last Friday for stealing some chickens from John Twisselman. Powers is an old man. He admits that he has spent the greater part of his life in jail, and was indignant because the judge did not give him a longer sentence.

Calendar

LHG Board Meeting, Wednesday, November 5, 7 p.m. Carnegie Building (Third and J Streets), downstairs. All welcome.

History Talk. Wednesday. November 19, 7:30 pm. Tilli Holm Calhoun and her daughters will present *The Holm Family Cookbook: The Story of a Danish Pioneer Family in the Livermore Valley Told through Remembrances and Recipes*. Livermore Civic Center Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave. Light refreshments.

Duarte Garage Open. Sunday, November 16, 10-2 p.m. On the Old Lincoln Highway at the corner of Portola and L Streets.

LHG Board Meeting, Wednesday, December 3, 7 p.m. Carnegie Building (Third and J Streets), downstairs. All welcome.

History Talk. There will be no lecture in December.

Duarte Garage Open. The Garage will not be open in December. The Garage crew wishes you happy holidays.

Newsletter Mailing. Saturday, December 27, 11:30. Carnegie Building, Third and J Streets. Help get the newsletter ready for mailing. Call Maxine at 925-447-7401 or just drop in.

LHG Board Meeting, Wednesday January 7, 7 p.m. Carnegie Building (Third and J Streets), downstairs. All welcome.

News Notes

Who Was Vida?

The previous issue of the Guild newsletter told the story of a photo found in materials for the auction. (See *Stories from the Auction*, September/October 2008) The Fabiola Hospital picture went to the perfect home, and a copy of it was sent to someone whose mother trained at the facility.

“This photo belongs to Vida,” was written on the back of the picture. We asked, “Who was Vida?” Happily, we have the answer. Her family is looking for a photo of Vida, and her story will be told in a future issue of the newsletter. The story goes on and it gets more and more interesting!

Watch for the rest of the story in an upcoming issue of the Newsletter!

Do Your Holiday Shopping Early at the LHG Gift Shop!



You will find many items just perfect for that special someone for Christmas. We have wonderful books about Livermore history, the annual LHG calendar, t-shirts, and great stocking stuffers including note cards, mugs, and more. The History Center is located in the Carnegie Building at the corner of Third and J Streets. We're open 11:30 to 4 Wednesday through Sunday.

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The Livermore Heritage Guild newsletter is published six times per year. Contact the newsletter editor with comments or suggestions for articles.

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Masthead Photo: First Street, Livermore, in the 1940s. From Guild Collections



Work Begins on Seagrave Fire Truck

Restoration work has begun on the Guild's 1920 Seagrave fire truck. A crew of volunteers, including Chuck McFann, Fred Deadrick, and Irv Stowers have turned their considerable skills to restoring the truck. The crew got some unexpected help recently while a local Mustang Club was visiting the Garage. The Seagrave has been sitting idle for some 40 years and the engine is frozen. Chief Mechanic Chuck McFann had a special nine-foot-long bar made to break loose the frozen threaded engine parts. As some of the Mustang group were checking out the Seagrave, they put a little muscle on the nine-foot bar and managed to break loose the frozen engine parts.



The work is done by an all-volunteer crew. Garage curator, Bill Junk, would be happy to have visitors stop by during Garage open Sundays (third Sunday of the month) to see the progress, offer help, or just hang out.

Above: 1920 Seagrave fire truck in the Duarte Garage. (Bill Nale photo) Below: Chuck Mcfann working on the exhaust valves of the engine. (Irv Stowers photo)

