

Livermore Heritage Guild

Saving Yesterday For Tomorrow



P.O. Box 961, Livermore, Calif. 94551

www.livermorehistory.com

Phone 925-449-9927

July/August 2009

Vol. XL, No. 5

Americans Hit The Road

Americans began to move across the country by automobile as early as 1919. A number of communities across the nation set aside pieces of woodland where a traveling family could stay over night. Most had no conveniences.

In the spring of 1919, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors considered establishing auto camps along county roads. But the State Board of Health got into the picture and insisted on minimum facilities. Auto parks were required to have a source of water, a caretaker and comfort stations.

The need for an auto campground near Livermore was evident when service station employees were asked where the auto camp was because the traveler's vehicle needed maintenance, and when he was told Livermore had none, he moved on to Pleasanton, or Dublin, or Tracy. A committee of local Chamber of Commerce members strongly supported the idea and recommended that the town create some accommodation for travelers.

In the spring of 1922, the Chamber reached an agreement with George Elliott to construct an auto park on his south Livermore Avenue property below the town limits. It was to be called Livermore Auto Park. Quickly, Elliott had built a community kitchen, concrete

fireplaces, toilets, and showers, and he hired a full-time caretaker. His overnight rate was fifty cents; the weekly rate was \$1.50.

By summer, 1922, Elliott reported that 271 visitors had over-nighted at the Livermore Auto Park in one month. They came from British Columbia, from Rochester, New York, Lewiston, Montana, and many other states. Elliott realized that he had a demand for cottages, especially in the wet season, so he had six small cottages built on the property.

Another auto park was established on east First Street called the Trevarno Auto Park in the early 1930s, but little is known about it.

Elliott and his wife continued to operate the Livermore Auto Park until they retired in 1946.

(Old-timers may remember the cottages Elliott built in 1923 on South Livermore, which were still standing in a eucalyptus grove below the new Library as late as the early 1960s.)

-By Gary Drummond

A Message from the President

June 25, 2009

Dear Members,

Local history is the raw material of our nation's history. The individual account of an explorer or area settler underlies the story of conquest and migration across the continent, local agronomy creates agricultural industries that can define a region. For example, Robert Livermore recognized the opportunities for growing grapes for wine in this valley around the same time George Yount made a similar observation in the area later to become Yountville. From those simple personal interests developed two significant areas of viticulture.

I had a chance to kick around some historical raw material last month during an open house at Hagemann Ranch (near the west end of Olivina Ave.), put on by Hoofprints on the Heart. Hoofprints conducts an adaptive riding program there and is working to maintain the historic feel and features of this heritage site. The ranch was accepted onto the National Register of Historic Places last year and the city is working to purchase it as a historic park. With luck and perseverance, your Guild will be able to place the Midway school on the adjacent park for a great historic pairing. Today, the property is owned by Steve Bosch and Hoofprints is the main occupant. Barbara Soules of Hoofprints asked if the Guild would be interested in talking at the event about the site's history and leading historic walking tours, so Loretta and I did some research and found ourselves at the ranch on a warm Livermore summer day with information posters and Guild membership forms (don't leave home without them!).

As with most histories, there are inconsistent details about the site's origin and operation, but we know that land originally in the former Mexican Rancho El Valle de San Jose was purchased around 1865 by Martin Mendenhall, brother of our town's founder, William.

By 1869 the land titles had settled, the area population was probably still under 100, and Martin had acquired 565 acres west of the area his brother was plating to be the town of Livermore. He ran livestock, raised grapes and grains, and bred racehorses. At that time he either added onto a house from 1836 built by Antonio Maria Pico or built himself a new home on the Pico site. In 1896 the property passed to August Hagemann, and remained in that family for 100 years, much of that time looking substantially as it does today.

The Mendenhall and Hagemann livelihoods on this land became part of the story of ranching in our valley. The business this brought attracted families and prosperity to Livermore and the surrounding region, influenced the placement of railroads and highways and shaped our fertile valley into a significant conduit so that today nearly anything moving on land between the bay area and the central valley travels along the northern edge of Livermore. It is slightly dizzying to stand on the ranch's central lane watching the Hoofprints horses, as the view is much the same as Hagemann or Mendenhall would have seen a century ago. This little piece of local history is a fundamental piece of what our area has become.

...

I suppose you read this newsletter to see notes about our region's history, almost certainly not to dissect the minutia of organizational structure, but I hope you will take a moment to look over the proposed bylaws changes. Past President Neal Cavanaugh chaired the bylaws committee and led a detail-oriented group (yours truly included), through each nuance of the existing bylaws to clear up inconsistencies and improve our structure based on past Guild experience. I think it is a significantly improved document and hope you will join us at the Annual General Meeting to vote for its passage.

On a lighter note, your president took his first driving lesson in the 1944 Mack Fire Truck last month, from patient instructor and driver extraordinaire Bill Junk. I thought, "how hard could it be?" Then I discovered the vagaries of a non-syncro-mesh transmission under a few tons of shiny red, but manually steered, antique. I had it easy though, as a few of our garage's Busted Knuckle Bunch were taking driving lessons in the restored Model T fire engine at the same time. That thing is truly a challenge, and when you stall it in traffic you get to jump out and hand crank it over as a reminder of your error. If you see us around town or in the Rodeo parade, please wave and know that your Guild is saving these and many other pieces of our local history for tomorrow. And today.

Jeff Kaskey
President

Many Deserve Thank Yous for the Auction

Years ago, Chet Fankhauser, as Ways and Means Chairman for the Guild, came up with the idea of having a fund raising auction. Chet's wife, Henri, and Chet showed Guild members how to put together lot boxes and present donated items. In addition to heading up teams to make spaghetti dinners for auction goers, Henri later served as Ways and Mean Chair as well. Due to the success of the auction over the years, there has been funding for many Guild projects, including keeping up the Duarte Garage and increasing exhibits there. And the auctions are great fun!

The auction crew takes this opportunity to say thanks, too, to Linda and Lynn Owens--Linda for being "yip-per" and Lynn for being auctioneer. They do a great job for the auction every year! As Henri so aptly put it, "We were most fortunate to find Lynn Owens with his ability and dedication." Linda and Lynn have contributed greatly to the success of the auction.

This year, we were happy to see Randy Griffith as a "yip-per" again after an absence of some years. Randy helped a lot in the past, and it was great to have him at the auction again this year. Thanks, Randy!

Thanks go as well to all who donate items for the auction, those who helped put the auction together, those who brought desserts for the dinner, those who worked the night of the auction selling tickets, handing out the paddles and working as clerks and cashiers. Every single person and every single hour donated helps make the auction!

Lynn Owens adds, "This year we tried something new with the food, and we got a lot of positive feedback. I remind Guild members and other supporters that we are already collecting donations for next year's auction. We can always use more people on the auction committee to help setup and sort things for the big night. It is the auction committee's intent that this be an event full of fun and excitement for everyone. I would also like to give a very special word of thanks to Stephanie Ball and Cindy Alvine who did the very hard job of clerking the sale."

Yes, we have already received some items for the next auction and we hope to hear that you found a treasure in the garage or your closet that is perfect for the auction.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2010 auction!



Henri and Chet Fankhauser, left, founding members of the Guild, began the annual auction as a fund raiser. Henri continues to help out each year with the auction.



Above: Dinner was catered by Tommie's Deli on 2nd Street in Livermore. Center: Bill Junk, Susan Junk, and Janet Von Tousseint pass out paddles to prospective bidders. Bottom: The 2009 Auction drew a full house. Photos by Bill Nale



Railroad Car Moved

The move started the morning of Thursday, June 11, at 8:00, but the train didn't get to the trailer until around 10:30. The railcar that was part of the old depot complex was on its way to a new home at the rail museum in Salinas.

Besides the usual details of moving a large boxcar onto a trailer, it turned out that the wheels had been welded to the tracks. Livermore city workers brought out a cutting torch and cut out most of the welds, the rest were freed up with a good tug from the tractor brought in to move the car.



Above: Workmen cut welds that hold the car to the tracks. Photo by Jeff Kaskey. Below: the car moves onto the trailer. Photo by Bill Nale.



This was a refrigerator car, a "reefer", and the Salinas Museum crew is anxious to have it; Salinas was one of the areas that supplied ice to these reefer cars, and probably also shipped a fair amount of produce in them.

The moving team laid down a short piece of track to transfer the car onto the trailer. As it was being pulled, workers followed with timbers behind the wheels to prevent a runaway railcar in case the chain broke. But all went well, and the train is on its way to Salinas.

-By Jeff Kaskey

Sale coming up at the History Center

In August, the History Center Gift Shop will hold a sale. Get special deals on old calendars, selected postcards, and other great items. Watch the Guild website for more details. www.livermorehistory.com.

Tribute to Belmeda C. "Bubbles" "Bea" Haera (1918-2009)

"Bea" "Bubbles" Haera, long time Guild member and supporter, passed away in June. I wish to pay tribute to Bea and take a moment to share something about her.

From the time I met "Bubbles" she was a role model for me. She was energetic, upbeat, full of the dickens, sparkly, a hard worker, a donor to the Guild auction, a solicitor of donations to the auction, a caring friend to many. Most of the time, one would only think her life was all rosy.

A mutual friend of ours was going through some very hard times. "Bubbles" shared the serious side of herself and her life with this friend, uplifting her and giving her strength to go on.

Why was this very put together, capable, smart, and witty woman called "Bubbles"? As I recall, "Bubbles" said that a priest called her that shortly after she came to Livermore and the name stayed with her. She did bubble and sparkle and shine – that is for sure.

Another big part of "old" Livermore is gone from us. I will miss Bea "Bubbles" Haera as I have missed seeing her out and about these past years. Take a moment and ask those who remember her to tell you about this lovely, remarkable person. And pay tribute to her spirit by choosing sunshine and smiles and optimism.

-By Anna Siig

Leadership Livermore Group at History Center

Jeff Kaskey hosted the Livermore Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Livermore group this month at the History Center. Leadership Livermore classes are made up of emerging leaders who are introduced to organizations and functions around the city to help improve their ability to contribute to the community. Jeff talked about the Guild's mission and how the Guild and the City collaborate on important heritage-related projects, including assessing the historic impact of planned development and contributing to historic preservation and recognition programs.

Bettencourt/Goularte/Avala Photo Collection

Some time ago, photographs connected to the Bettencourt family were left at the History Center. We have reason to believe the donor was Andy Avala.

Bernice Bettencourt White went through the collection, identifying some of the people in the photos. On May 28, Bernice, her daughter, Lynette White, her cousin's son, David Goularte of Olympia, Washington, and his sister, Carol Goularte of Sitka, Alaska, came to the Siig-Drummond home. They went through the photo collection again and were able to identify more of the people in the photos.

On David's first trip to meet with us, he contacted a cousin of his mother. She gave him many family photo-

graphs. David will make copies of these photos for the Heritage Guild. Bill Nale will scan the photos for the Guild archives and make a disc for the Goularte/White/Bettencourt family. We hope that in sharing the photos, more of the people will be identified.

Through the Guild email, a personal relationship has grown out of my responding to David's email message. This has also added to the Guild's archives and continues to do so. David has done extensive work on their family tree, and this information has been shared with Dick Finn for the valley family research project and with the Bettencourt family. This, too, adds to the interesting story of an immigrant family's connections here in Livermore and in other parts of California.

-By Anna Siig



Guild Fire Trucks Participate in the Livermore Rodeo Parade

The Guild's 1944 Mack fire truck, above, and Model-T fire car, right, drew waves from viewers at the Livermore Rodeo parade on Saturday, June 11. Driving the Mack is Bill Junk with Susan Junk riding shotgun. Waving from the back is Guild President Jeff Kaskey with Loretta Kaskey and Chris George.

Driving the Model T fire car, which was recently restored and put on the road, is Ken Nielsen with his wife Cindy. Marie Abbott and Irving Stowers rode on the back of the fire car.



In the News, 1900s

Interesting items found by Don Meeker as he works with the Guild's newspaper collections.

June 17, 1909

To Rebuild Tolliver Airship. The Oakland Times says: The immense Toliver airship, new at Mrs. Hearst's place, Verona, near Pleasanton, is being rebuilt and experts predict great success for the ship. ...

November 18, 1909

New Books at Free Library. Following is a list by authors and titles of some of the new books received at the public library: ... Rudyard Kipling - Kipling's Boy Stories, Stories and Poems Every Child Should Know. ...; Jack London - Martin Eden ...; Mark Twain - Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court ...; Work of George Eliot, 8 volumes; Works of Balzac, 30 volumes; Works of Wm. M. Thackeray, 10 volumes.

December 23, 1909

New Garage Co. to Build. Livermore is to have a new and up-to-date garage, to be housed in a fire-proof building, which will occupy a frontage of 50 feet on First street with a depth of 200 feet on M street. Architect J. L. Weilbye is now drawing the plans. A corporation has been formed and officers elected as follows: ... stock is being taken rapidly ...

Southern Alameda County News – 1st issue August 10, 1933

A merger of three local papers is described in this note from the first issue of the *Southern Alameda County News*. The *Livermore Journal* (in our collection and which is not yet micro-filmed) replaced the *Livermore Echo* as the alternate newspaper to the *Livermore Herald*.

August 10, 1933

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS AND READERS. With this issue the *Southern Alameda County News* makes its first appearance. In its pages are combined what formerly

was the *Livermore Journal*, the *Pleasanton News* and the *Recorder* of Washington Township, and in which section we are providing complete news and advertising service. Our front page, as the readers will note, is devoted to news from each township, while additional happenings in each locality will be found as follows: Livermore pages 2, 11; Pleasanton page 9; Washington township pages 4, 10.

August 10, 1933

Announcing New Shop Hours for Livermore - The following undersigned Barbers announce to their customers and the public that on and after Monday, August the 7th, the shopping hours will be from 9 o'clock A. M. until 6 o'clock in the evening including Saturdays. Manuel Mederios, M. J. Roderick, F. L. Raether, L. Selvaggi, D. J. Dutro, Joe Munos, K. O. Buck, M. Lijakis.

Letter to Members about Enclosed Bylaws

Dear LHG members:

Every several years, LHG is required to review its Bylaws and have them voted on by the general membership to ensure that the LHG administration is still on track. Included with this newsletter is a copy of the latest version of the Bylaws. The previous Bylaws were approved by you in September 2004. The revised Bylaws that are included here were developed by the 2009 Bylaws Revision Committee and approved by the LHG Executive Board at its June 3rd meeting. Now, you are asked to review these Bylaws, come to the Annual General Meeting and dinner in September, and vote on the Bylaws. I'm looking forward to seeing you in September.

Neal F. Cavanaugh, Chairperson
2008 LHG Bylaws Revision Committee

Calendar

LHG Board Meeting. Wednesday, July 1, 7 pm. Carnegie Building (Third and J Streets), downstairs. All welcome.

History Talk. Wednesday, July 15, 7:30 pm. (Doors open at 7) Remembering a Bygone Era, old time radio music and patter presented by Chris George. Livermore Civic Center Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave. Light refreshments.

Duarte Garage. Open House. Sunday, July 19, 10-2 pm. On the Old Lincoln Highway at the corner of Portola and L Streets, Livermore.

LHG Board Meeting. Wednesday, August 5, 7 pm. Carnegie Building (Third and J Streets), downstairs. All welcome.

Duarte Garage Open. Sunday, August 16, 10-2 pm. On the Old Lincoln Highway at the corner of Portola and L Streets, Livermore.

History Talk. Wednesday August 19, 7:30 pm. (Doors open at 7) *Making a Star*, historical film produced by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory describes the enormous machines build to produce fusion energy. Livermore Civic Center Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave. Light refreshments.

LHG Board Meeting. Wednesday, September 2, 7 pm. Carnegie Building (Third and J Streets), downstairs. All welcome.

Annual General Meeting and Dinner. Saturday, September 26. Save the date.

Notes

Thank You to Panama Red

A special thank you to Panama Red Coffee Shop, which donated the coffee, cups, and condiments for the Auction supper. They have provided the delicious brews for the auction for the last several years, and it is very much appreciated. Panama Red is located at 2115



First Street in downtown Livermore. Drop in and thank them in person and have a cup of coffee.

Volunteers Wanted

The Guild is always looking for help. Do any of these opportunities interest you?

Photos: More photos were found in the Harp Room and moved to the West Room for identification and filing. Sleeving the photos that are sitting in boxes in the West Room would be a great project for student volunteers.

Research/manuscript files: More documents and clippings were moved to the West Room from the Harp Room. The newspaper clippings in the research files need to be Xeroxed and removed. This would be a great project for students, either those looking for summer volunteer work or those needing to fulfill community service.

Research files: A student or adult volunteer is needed for the newspaper clipping project. A box of clippings is ready for filing.

Fluorescent lights: A volunteer is needed to install fluorescent light bulb covers. These are simple to install, so we just need a volunteer willing to climb a ladder, take off the light fixture covers, and slip on the covers.

Call 925-449-9927 for information.

Contact Us

President

Jeff Kaskey

jkaskey@yahoo.com

1st Vice President (Program Chair)

Marie Abbott

925-443-9740

2nd VP (Membership Chair)

Janet Von Toussaint

925-455-1426

planetjust4today@comcast.net

Secretary

Anna Siig

siig@comcast.net

Treasurer

Dick Lerche

925-447-9365

Curator Duarte Garage

Bill Junk

925-447-4561

Newsletter Editor

Maxine Trost

mtrost@netzero.net

Office Manager

Lydia Carpenter

lhg@lhg.org

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

Livermore Heritage Guild

P.O. Box 961

Livermore CA 94551

925-449-9927

www.livermorehistory.com

Front page photo: Highway Garage around 1918

William Mendenhall's Father's Gravestone Found

The gravestone of William Mendenhall, father of Livermore founder William Mendenhall, has been found in Southern California. The senior Mendenhall's burial in 1873 was the first interment in Oak Knoll Cemetery near Granada High School.

When Oak Knoll Cemetery was abandoned years ago and all remaining stones removed, it appears that Chester Langan, a great-grandson, retrieved the stone and took it to Southern California where he lived. Recently, a new owner of the Langan property found the stone and eventually contact was made with the City, who will be happy to have back the significant historical artifact.

