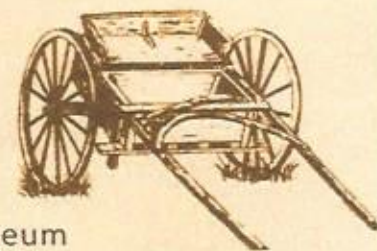


Fourth Issue 2016 ~ Oct. - Dec.
Next Issue January 2017

THE MAIL CART



Newsletter of the Simi Valley Historical Society and Museum

President's Message

As the Holiday Season begins, it is a crazy and stressful time for all of us. Travel, visitors, family, debt, weight gain, and packed calendars. We all find ourselves with not enough money, not enough time, and not enough energy. Top that off with a very stressful Presidential election and escalating global tensions... it almost makes you want to stay in bed and just pretend none of this is happening. Luckily, we have a dedicated group of volunteers that somehow stay focused on the tasks-at-hand and continue to "make it happen."

Dia de Los Muertos is our biggest event of the year. It takes 70+ volunteers, 15+ food service folks, 40+ entertainers, 20+ vendors, 12 or so sponsors, thousands of dollars of expenses and hundreds of hours of planning & leg-work to pull together this five hour event. A special THANK YOU to all of those involved, including those that are members (and guests) that attend our events to experience the magic.

Following Dia de Los Muertos: the Annual Dinner and Holiday Open House. More effort, more time, more energy. THANKS again!!

We are constantly on the search for new board members, new docents, new members, and new volunteers of any kind who are crazy enough to jump on board. Every couple of months or so, we stumble across a person or two who joins the team and dives in to become a part of preserving our history and sharing the amazing collection of history we have accumulated over the 50+ years the Historical Society has been active in Simi Valley.

Why is it so hard and so rare to find these people? Because it takes exceptional people with exceptional talents, exceptional skills and exceptional passion. They are few and far between. We are thankful for them. Thank you to everyone who is a member, docent, board member, and volunteer. Thanks for the support and the passion. Thank you for the ideas and the endless hours. Thank you for a very successful 2016.

And please remember, no matter how stressful things are.... no matter how crazy things get, and they will get crazier; love each other, support each other, respect each other. We are all in this together. We are looking forward to an exciting and successful 2017, get ready!!

Please don't text and drive.

Joe Wade - President, Simi Valley Historical Society

AVOID LONG LINES...BUY ADVANCE TICKETS ONLINE!!

svhs.ticketleap.com



← Don't miss our
Dia de los Muertos
celebration on
October 30th!

For more information call 805 526-6453 or visit
Simihistory.com or [facebook.com/StrathearnPark](https://www.facebook.com/StrathearnPark)

Membership has its
BENEFITS!
Present your
Historical Society
Membership Card
for a 10% discount
in the GIFT SHOP





**YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO
OUR 52ND ANNUAL DINNER MEETING!**

*Friday, November 11th - 6:00 P.M.
at Rancho Santa Susana Community Center
5005 Los Angeles Avenue, Simi Valley, CA 93063*

Please bring serving utensils and a dish that generously serves 10 people. Please label your utensils and dishes, so you can be happily reunited if you get separated! The Historical Society will provide drinks and tableware. Please bring a dish as determined by your last name according to the following breakdown:

A-J: DESSERT

K-S: MAIN DISH

T-Z: SALAD

2016 Highlights and Updates * Election of Officers and Board of Directors * Docent Awards

***If you pay your 2017 dues the night
of the dinner you will be eligible for door prizes!
This is always a great evening of great food and
wonderful people. We hope to see you there!***



Volunteer Update

We would like to welcome the newest additions to our volunteer docent family who have joined us in 2016! A big welcome to:

**Gloria Bosman
Joe Lampich
Dana Rock**

We thank everyone who has joined in 2015 for their interest and readiness to help teach all about Simi Valley History and helping to preserve our heritage!

Get Involved at Strathearn Historical Park and Museum and with the Simi Valley Historical Society! Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity that will allow you to learn about Simi Valley's history? At Strathearn Historical Park & Museum volunteer hours are flexible, and there are various activities and programs available to satisfy a broad spectrum of interests. Come and join a wonderful group of people who are dedicated to preserving as well as sharing Simi Valley's history.

If this sounds like something you would like to be a part of please give me a call.

Georgia Trumble, Docent Chair Strathearn Historical Park & Museum
(805) 526-6444 (Home) (805) 526-6453 (Park – leave message)

Thank You to our Dia de los Muertos
SPONSORS!



Elaine Freeman, Director,
Rancho Simi Recreation & Park District
The Erdman Family
Geoworks Engineering Group
Havens Family
KC Industries
Kiwanis Club of Simi Valley
Landphases Inc.
Project Walk-Paralysis Recovery Centers
Mid Valley Properties
Ruby's Rustic Weddings & Events
Pam and Larry Silverman
Supercuts
U.S. Storage Center
Waste Management

We very much appreciate your generosity!

Mark Your Calendars:

October 30, 2016 - Dia de los Muertos Celebration

**November 11, 2016 -
Annual Membership Dinner Meeting at Rancho
Santa Susana Community Center**

**December 4, 2016 -
Heritage Holiday Open House**

**February 11 & 12, 2017 - Civil War Days
at Strathearn Park**

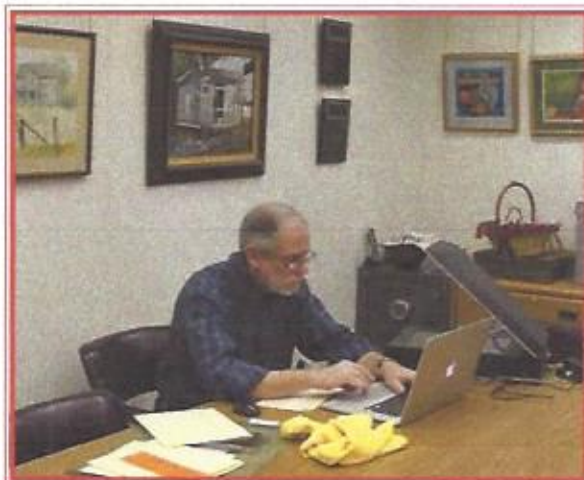
PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The Simi Valley Historical Society President will recognize one individual quarterly with the "Simi Valley Historical Society President's Award" for outstanding service and commitment to the Community, the Historical Society, Strathearn Park, or local history in general. This award will be given 4 times per year. It will be accompanied with a certificate and special recognition at our Annual Dinner. Individuals can be nominated for the award simply by sending an email to simimuseum@sbcglobal.net with the subject line President's Award Nomination; include who is being nominated and why. The award can be granted to anyone in the community regardless of any affiliation with the Historical Society.

This quarter, I would like to recognize **Gary Bippert**. For over a year now Gary has come in on Mondays to scan and digitize the photos and documents in our archive collection. He stays all day and patiently works his way through file after file, scanning photos in high resolution, using a scanner and laptop he brings with him.

He has scanned thousands of our historical photos and documents. In addition to scanning the Historical Society collection, he has also been volunteering at Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, scanning photos in their archives. In addition to his volunteer activities in Simi, he is an active volunteer at the Santa Ynez Historical Museum. Thank you Gary, for your commitment to the Historical Society, and all that you have done to improve the accessibility and cataloging of our photos. We appreciate your dedication and time immensely!

Joe Wade
President, Simi Valley Historical Society





HISTORY POLICE

In this riveting issue of **HISTORY POLICE** we'll delve into the entry of the railroad into the Valley of Simi, and the origins of the township of Santa Susana.

FIRST...A little background on the railroad. In the mid-1890s, the Southern Pacific Railroad had already decided that the Coastline Route should come through Simi Valley. By early 1900 the Southern Pacific Railroad entered Simi Valley over Robert P. Strathearn's property in Simi. The Strathearn siding was where the Madera Road overpass is currently located. Next, just east of First Street the tiny Simi Station was built. It was very small, only enclosed on three sides. In 1916 a more complete station was built after the public voiced their dissatisfaction with the tiny station.



The Depot in its original location at 4495 Los Angeles Ave.



The Depot is a standard 22R design with offices on the right, freight shed on the left, and living quarters above.

NOW... Eastward to Santa Susana. It was decided that a station would be built in the east end of Simi Valley on the north side of Los Angeles Avenue, 550 feet east of Tapo Street. The station was given the name Santa Susanna (note the spelling with three 'N's) after the Santa Susana Mountains. Inexplicably, there was a sign on the west end of the depot that read 'Santa Susanna,' and a sign on the east end that read 'Santa Susana.' The station (NOT) the depot was completed in July 1900. It was called a 'station' and not a 'depot' because it was used for company business and selling passenger tickets only, not the handling of freight. Regularly scheduled passenger trains were running by July 1, 1900. The fare from Montalvo to Santa Susana was set at \$1.90. The Santa Susana Station was established almost 4 years before 'The Great Tunnel' was completed through the Santa Susana mountains.

SO...before that tunnel was complete, **HOW** did you get to Los Angeles from Santa Susana? You would board the train in Santa Susana you would then back up onto a WYE. This was an arrangement of tracks with three switches formed like a 'Y' with the main line track across the forks. Trains that were facing eastbound would back through the east leg of the Y onto the tail track then go forward through the west track and head westward through Simi Station, Moorpark, Oxnard, then north to Montalvo. The train cars were then transferred to the trains coming down from Santa Barbara, across the original coast line through Santa Paula and Fillmore, to Saugus junction, then down the valley line through Newhall tunnel, San Fernando, Burbank, and FINALLY into Los Angeles.

Now...**BACK** to Santa Susana. An article in the July 1904 Sunset magazine article titled 'The Great Tunnel' lists the starting date for the digging of the big tunnel through the Santa Susana mountains as July 16, 1900. The first revenue train ran through it on March 20, 1904. The new route soon became a main line of the coast route. It was decided that a permanent first class station building should be built at the location of the Santa Susana station. This building included living quarters on the second story over the station agent's office space. A large freight handling room on the east end of this structure this made it a true depot rather than a station. This building was completed in March 1903. The Santa Susana Depot served passengers and farmers in the Simi Valley for more than 60 years. The depot became a center for activity because of the convenience of shipping, receiving, passenger service, mail, and access to Western Union.



The building at 4385 Valley Fair St. built in 1924 still exists



This Crinklaw building was built in 1912 across from the Depot. It was destroyed in the 1971 earthquake

The train depot prospered, and the **COMMUNITY OF SANTA SUSANA** sprung up. Soon the first Santa Susana school was built in 1902. In 1909 H.J. Crinklaw opened his first general store, and several other businesses followed. The Santa Susanna garage was built at 4456 Los Angeles Ave. around 1919, and the Riave business block at 4385 Valley Fair (then called First St.) in 1924. Both of these buildings are still in existence. The depot continued to be a hub of activity into the 1950s, but then other forms of transportation became more popular and prevalent than train travel. The agency was closed in 1964, and only the warehouse which was leased, continued to operate. In 1974 Southern Pacific announced plans to demolish the Santa Susana Train Depot building. Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District purchased the depot for \$1.00 and .06 tax.



The Depot in its new location at Santa Susana Park

In May 1975 the building was divided into three parts and moved by truck two miles east of the site it was built on. The building was moved to Santa Susana Park on Katherine Road. The current location is next to the same railroad right of way it once served. The building sat abandoned for several years suffering vandalism, and sustained fire damage. A nonprofit organization, the Rancho Simi Foundation, was formed to restore the building and make it available for public use together with the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. A long restoration process in the 1980s and 1990s gradually restored the Depot.



The museum was opened to the public in 2000. The depot building now houses a railroad museum, an HO scale model railroad layout, and a meeting room. The museum focuses on railroad history and has many artifacts and historic photos on display. Along with the railroad related features, the museum also has a collection of materials related to the nearby Corriganville Movie Ranch.

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Speaking of the Depot...

For the first time Simi Valley residents will be able to see how railroad agents and their families lived more than seventy five years ago in the historic Santa Susana Railroad Depot. The newest section of the museum – the railroad agent residence located on the second floor, will open to the public in the first half of November.



Santa Susana Railroad Depot Museum Director Tom Bergh submitted a proposal to transform the upstairs area of the Depot to the Park District on September 4, 2015. His proposal was to transform the existing caretaker's residence, which was not available for viewing by the public, into an addition to the downstairs museum and display areas.



“As we have shown and explained the Depot to patrons over the years many have asked to see how the railroad agents lived with their families in the upstairs residence area. The recent retirement of the Park District’s resident caretaker created an opportunity for us to propose the museum expansion to the Park District.” said Bergh.

The proposal to convert the upstairs area into a museum included furniture and decorations with a mid-1930s theme to coincide with the most appropriate time period that the Depot was in operation. Museum Docents will now be able to escort a few visitors at a time upstairs for viewing. The newly decorated upstairs area will provide Docents an opportunity to feature former railroad agents and their families, and share stories about their experiences.

The Park District Board of Directors agreed with the museum addition and approved the Rancho Simi Foundation to proceed on April 7, 2016. “This new addition to the museum will further enhance the public’s visit to the Depot and provide an even better understanding to museum visitors of what railroad life was like seventy five plus years ago.” said Bergh.



Park District Board Chair Gene Hostetler said “the Rancho Simi Foundation has done a great job of improving and showing the Depot. It’s now a first class operation in my opinion. The members of the Foundation have a love for the railroad and its history, and their willingness to volunteer their time and effort to the Depot has resulted in a great partnership between them and the Park District. That partnership has resulted in a great amenity for the residents of Simi Valley.”



The Santa Susana Train Depot is open Saturday and Sunday from 1:00pm to 4:00pm

Mechanical Restoration



Our team of volunteers has been quite busy in the workshop since the last Mail Cart issue. We were fortunate to receive a donation of commercial grade shelving that has been installed in the workshop areas by our volunteers, thus allowing for much needed additional storage at our Park.

We recently received a donation of a small metal lathe to complement our larger lathe received earlier this year.



Our Gordon Smith air compressor and the Cat 22 tractor projects are moving along the path to completion in the near future.



Reconfiguration of the main workshop is our current goal, which will provide a better use of space and placement of tools and equipment. The second half of the workshop will have storage for engines/equipment and tour displays along with an area for any projects needing a work area.

We are always looking for interested people who want to get involved in restoration, and help us bring back pieces of history that everyone can enjoy and learn from.

Volunteering is a great way to support our community and Museum. You do not need to be an expert mechanic or repair person. We have all levels of projects. We meet in our workshop Monday mornings from 9 AM until noon, except on holidays, so come on down and meet our volunteers, have a cup of coffee, make new friends, and have some fun.

I wish everyone a great upcoming Holiday Season, and I know we are going to do great things in 2017 at Strathearn Park.

Cheers,

Richard A. Johnson - Simi Valley Historical Society Mechanical Restorations Director

Holiday Open House



Join us for a festive day at the Park! On Sunday, Dec. 4th we will host a relaxing afternoon that will include holiday music in the Park's Visitors Center. Listeners will be treated to beautiful music from Mary Predmore and Rhondda Dayton of Pipe Dream Flutes, Methodist Church Bell Ringers, and vocal and instrumental music from the Santa Susana HS Instrumental Music Jazz Combo.

Two local authors will be on hand to sign their books. P.W. Conway, award winning Cowboy Poet, will be signing his book

Buckaroo Poetry. Pat Havens will be on hand to sign Strathearn Letters-Windows on the Past and Simi Valley-Journey Through Time. Simi Valley Journey-Through Time will be on sale!

Ready to do some holiday shopping? Visit our gift shop and 'Pat's Attic' for unique gifts.

Santa AND Mrs. Claus will be here for a perfect photo op! Come on by and take your photos for your holiday cards...you won't find a more beautiful back drop!

Happy 48th Birthday, City of Simi Valley!

It seems like a long time ago, this cityhood business. Some of our local leaders, headed by Glen Schmidt, worked very hard not only to get the idea going, but to drum up support.

The first vote on incorporation occurred in 1966, but it failed. So they went back to work, deliberately leaving out areas that had voted against it. Some of those areas within our city boundaries are still officially in Ventura County, not our city. Notable are Hacienda Sinaloa and some locations in the northern part of the city. Also, none of the five council members elected the first time, ran again for election. I have often wondered how differently the city might have developed under that first council!

On October 10, 1969, the vote for incorporation was successful. The name City of Simi Valley got about 2000 more votes than City of Santa Susana. This caused some to be disappointed. Please remember that this area was always just plain Simi' with an accent on the second "i". Along with the growing population, we were given two zip codes, 93065 and 93063. Those first newcomers were pretty disappointed for Santa Susana not to win. Somehow they had become very fond of 93063. However, Simi' was its traditional name, familiar to the Chumash, the Spanish and the incoming pioneers, over several centuries.

We have had a long succession of city council members, city managers and mayors who have worked hard to keep us purposeful and making progress on many fronts.

We have outlived a few bumps in the road such as the Rodney King case, which we had to host because we had a nice new county courthouse and a change of venue was needed from Los Angeles. Only two of the jurors were from Simi, but we had a black eye for years. Neil Havens went on a Rotary trip to Brazil a year or two after the trial, and in the far reaches of the Amazon River, when he was introduced (to non-English speaking people) as coming from Simi Valley, California, a small boy said "Rodney King!"

Pat Havens



Great Things Happening at Strathearn!

Mexican American Baseball in Ventura County book sale

MEXICAN AMERICAN BASEBALL IN VENTURA COUNTY

IMAGES OF BASEBALL

Book cost \$15.00

Sunday October 30th, 10am-3pm
During the Dia de las Muertas Celebration
at Strathearn Historical Park and Museum

CIVIL WAR DAYS
at Strathearn Historical Park & Museum

February 11 & 12, 2017
Saturday 10am-4pm + Sunday 10am-3pm

Join Us For:

- President Abraham Lincoln Will Deliver His Gettysburg Address
- General U.S. Grant & General Robert E. Lee Will Reenact the Surrender at Appomattox
- Kids: Recruits Wanted! Come Early and Enlist + Interview a Soldier
- Shop: Civil War Era Boutique on Subers Row + Unique Treasures for All
- Experience: Authentic Artillery, Infantry and Cavalry Demonstrations
- Visit: Soldier and Cavalry Camps
- Eat: Food for sale from Kwanis and more
- Tour: Historic Simi Houses beginning at 12pm each day
- Dance: Old fashioned Dance Lessons Provided by Simi Valley Vintage Dance Society
- New: Civil War Wedding + Civil War Era Music + Civil War Era Women's Clothes Demonstration
- Victorian Photography Demonstrations

Blue Star Museum
Daily Admission at Gate:
\$6: 13 & up + \$3: kids 5-12 + Free: 4 & under

Information:
137 Strathearn Place, Simi Valley
(805) 526-8453 + SimiMuseum@abcglobal.net
www.simihistory.com + facebook.com/CivilWarSimi
#CivilWarSimi

Not Affiliated with Simi Valley Unified School District



Simi Valley Historical Society & Museum
 Located at Strathearn Historical Park & Museum
 137 Strathearn Place, Simi Valley, CA 93065



The Mail Cart is sent quarterly to all current members. The Simi Valley Historical Society & Museum's membership year runs from January 1 through December 31. If you want to avoid the busy time around the Holidays, send in your dues for 2017 now!

The Mail Cart is electronically being sent to all members with an email address on file. If you are receiving a 'paper copy' of the Mail Cart and would like to receive it via email (*there are extra articles in the electronic version!*) please send us your email address. Any changes to your email address should be included to continue receiving the electronic Mail Cart! If you do not have an email address, or have requested a printed copy of the Mail Cart, the postal service will continue to deliver your copy. Questions regarding your membership? Call Caryl Barefoot at 527-2769 or email at carylretired2@sbcglobal.net

**Renew your membership
 before January 2017!**

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Credit/Debit Card: MC VISA Discover Card

_____ Exp _____

Signature _____

(Payment Mailing Address) PO Box 940461, Simi Valley, CA 93094-0461

Please select desired membership.
 Make checks payable to SVHS&M

- Individual \$15.00
- Family \$25.00
- Business/Sustaining \$100.00
- Patron \$500.00
- Benefactor \$1,000.00

2016 Board of Directors

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 Past President Georgia Trumble
 Vice President Larry Silverman
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 Alan Shack

Docent Led Tours: Saturdays & Sundays: Between the hours of 1 & 4 pm

Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays: One tour at 1 pm

Donation: \$3 for Adults, Simi Valley Historical Society Members are Free

We are a Blue Star Museum - Active Duty Military Personnel and Families are Free

Weekday Park Hours: Monday - Friday

9 am - 3 pm

For information please call (805) 526-6453

Email: simimuseum@sbcglobal.net

Simi Valley Historical Society & Museum

P.O. Box 940461

Simi Valley, CA 93094-0461

www.simihistory.com

www.facebook.com/Strathearnpark

Strathearn Historical Park & Museum

Historian Pat Havens
 Park Coordinator Carolyn Valdez
 Admin. Asst. Louise Kaul

**"History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be
 unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be
 lived again." ~ Maya Angelou**