



# HERITAGE

Volume 32, Issue 3

[www.elcajonhistory.org](http://www.elcajonhistory.org)

July 2011

## *Our Mission Statement:*

*To gather, preserve, and protect historical records and personal publications about those living in and around the El Cajon Valley. As part of our stewardship we will promote the gathering, display and appreciation of the region's history.*

**It's that time again! Please enjoy the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Essays. Third Graders keeping our local history alive!**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Place and Perpetual Trophy: *The Knox House Museum***

Haley Kaloustian, Flying Hills School

Amaziah Lord Knox and his family moved to the Valley in 1869. Now known as El Cajon Valley Mr. Knox worked for a man named Isaac Lankershim that owned most of the Valley. He managed the planting of wheat and the building of ranch houses. He paid Mr. Knox a salary plus his choice of ten acres of land. The land he picked was between San Diego to Lakeside. He wanted to build a hotel, but it didn't happen 'til 6 years later.

In 1870 gold was discovered in Julian. Mr. Knox knew the small town of San Diego was a growing city. More people were traveling towards Julian for the gold rush. The distance between San Diego and Julian is about 61 miles. By horse, walking, or using a steam car that only went 2 ½ miles per hour would have taken over 24 hours to reach their destination in 1870.

Building a hotel half-way between the two spots would be his own gold mine.

In 1876 Knox hotel was built on the southwest corner of Main Street and Magnolia Avenue. Back then was known as the bend in the road, where the road turned north towards Julian. Originally a two-story, seven-room hotel that was also his residence. With all the miners, teamsters, and drovers that stopped to sleep over night, he had to add on a kitchen and a dining room to meet their needs.

In 1915 the hotel was sold. The new owners moved the building to the back of the lot.



L-R Mayor Mark Lewis, Faith Campbell, Hailey Kaloustian, Chynna Sengebusch, and Councilwoman Jillian Hanson

## **Dates to Remember:**

- **First Fridays** – 6pm to 7:30pm Free, Donations Welcome.
- **July 1** - El Cajon's Past – Dick Ruis
- **September 2** - Vocalist/harpist Mair Rathburn
- **July 13**, Book Club Knox House 2pm
- **July 28** - **Quarterly Meeting Marietta's**

If you'd like to have your Heritage Newsletter emailed to you, please call us or email us at:

[michelle@mainstreetus.com](mailto:michelle@mainstreetus.com)

We'll be happy to send it to you electronically saving postage and paper at the same time!



*Cont. from pg 1 The Knox House*

In 1940 the property was sold to S.H. Mathews who had it moved to the corner of Lexington and Magnolia Avenue, due to construction work on the south side of Main Street.

In 1972 the city of El Cajon purchased the hotel from the Mathews estate and once again moved it to its present location at 280 North Magnolia Ave-to become the historical focus of the city of El Cajon. The Knox House Museum reflects the years of 1895 to 1912.

Amaziah Lord Knox was the first businessman in El Cajon. He recognized the needs of the times. The location of his hotel was what made him so successful and the bend in the road became known as Knox corner. Two years later more than 25 families call the Valley their home. Once again Mr. Knox made his hotel part of history by making a portion of the hotel lobby in to the Valley post office, with Knox as El Cajon's first postmaster. If you would like to see part of El Cajon history, go see The Knox House Museum.



Photo by courtesy of Title Insurance & Trust Company of San Diego, Calif.

The Knox Hotel, Courtesy of Title Insurance and Trust Co.

### Welcome New Members!

Brenda Gibson  
Lynn B. Caruso  
Tom De Cuman

**Keep thinking about El Cajon's Centennial in 2012.** OK, 100 years in the grand scope of things isn't that old - heck, just ask Millard Fillmore. He comes in contact with enough centenarians to repopulate the whole area South of Main St. But, when one thinks of the changes and strides made in 100 years, it's enough to make your I phone spin. So, here are some of the things that have happened in the last 100 years in El Cajon:

#### **Some history highlights:**

1869 El Cajon Valley opened for settling. Isaac Lankershim had purchased valley from Miguel Pedorena family in Old Town. It had been known as Rancho El Cajon.

Nurseryman Josephus Asher established San Diego's first florist shop. In 1882 Josephus moved to "Castle Rock Ranch" where Sears is now at Parkway Plaza.

1876 Knox Hotel built by Amaziah Knox - also known as The Corners and Knox's Corners.

1878 First post office established and located in the lobby of the Knox Hotel. Amaziah Knox was postmaster to 25 families and served until 1888.

1880 Duncan McFadden began his blacksmith shop on north side of Main Street. Business included horseshoeing, carriage making, and selling of ranch equipment. He left for Alaska gold fields in 1898, but died enroute.

1882 Knox Hotel Addition built.

1883 John Rea built first grocery and hardware store on northwest corner of Main and Magnolia. Katella Blvd near Disneyland was named for Rea's two daughters: Kate and Ella

First Presbyterian Church of El Cajon was chartered by eight early residents.

1897 Hall and Kessler was the first lumber company in town. Became W.D. Hall Lumber Company in 1905.

### CHECK IT OUT!



Be sure to check some of the donated artwork and antiques on display at Silver Creek Fine Art and Custom Framing (120 E. Main St.). Owner, Lynn Endicott, has offered to display and sell some of our donated works, for the next six weeks.

## *July Quarterly Meeting:*

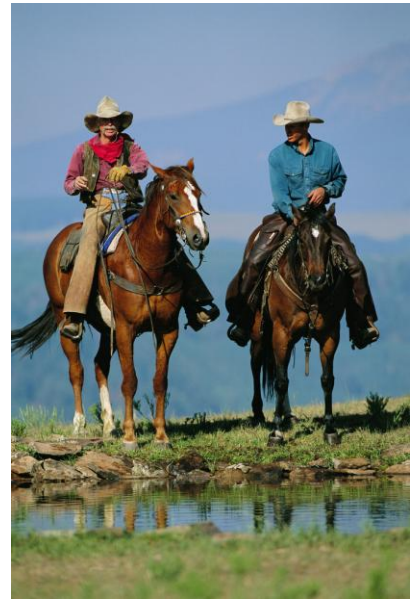
Will be on Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 am at:

Marietta's Mexican Restaurant  
1746 E. Main Street in El Cajon  
(next to the CHP Office, between Greenfield Drive and Pepper Drive)

Lunch: \$15.00 and reservations must be in by Monday July 25<sup>th</sup>.

Combination plates, includes rice & beans and one of the following).

1. Taco
2. Enchilada (cheese)
3. Tamale
4. Burrito
5. Chile Relleno
6. Quesadilla



Our guest speaker will be Bryon Harrington, Old West enthusiast and Western history buff and author of a new book, "Campo: The Forgotten Gunfight". The book tells of the 1875 shootout in Campo. Books will be available for purchase.

Bryon is a member of the "Gaskill Brothers Gunfighters" group that reenacts the shootout in Campo each year. He is also the skit director for the "Hole in the Wall Gang; a noted western actor, quick draw artist and gold prospector.

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Please Reserve My Seat (seats) at the Quarterly Meeting Luncheon, July 28 at 11:30am.  
Marietta's Mexican Restaurant, 1746 E. Main, El Cajon

Number Attending \_\_\_\_\_ X \$15.00                      Amt. Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please Renew my member ship: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Upgrade membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Reservation checks to: ECHS, P.O. Box 1973, El Cajon, Ca 92022 See you there!

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place:** *A Strange Day At the Fair*

Faith Campbell - Fuerte School

It was summer and I was at the Del Mar Fair. My name is Faith and I'm eight and a half years old. I was wearing a short sleeve top and shorts. I was on a big roller coaster when suddenly it disappeared and I dropped to the ground. I see a few old looking buildings, a dirt road, and horses. "What happened and where am I?" I say.

I see a flow of people dressed oddly going into a building. I follow them. Once inside I see a lot of people and a lot of produce.

Suddenly I see a girl about my age. I go up to her and I see that she is showing off crayon sketches. She is wearing a long sleeve dress past her knees. Boy, she looks warm. People don't dress like this where I'm from. "Excuse me," I say to her. "Where am I and what is this?" The girl tells me that this is El Cajon and we're at the first annual El Cajon Fair. "Cool! Where are the games and rides?" I ask. "Oh, by the way, who are you?" the girl tells me her name is Edith Worcester and she is ten years old. She asks me what rides are.

I say, "Never mind."

Edith then tells me it is August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1889. I freak out. Edith tells me that all the ranchers and farmers wanted to show the world all the wonderful produce grown in the Cajon Valley. She also explains about something she calls the vine disease. The vine disease is making the plants small and weak. The farmers were worried about the disease and the crops. To make themselves feel better they decided to hold a fair.

When Edith was done speaking I decide to look around with her. I see a hall that is decorated in many colors, with lots of palms, evergreens and flowers. Every inch of the hall is full.

There are fruits and vegetables everywhere. This is what I see: dates, grapes, tomatoes, figs, pears, apples, currants, candied fruits, peaches, watermelon, quinces, bananas, oranges, dried prunes (ew), nectarines, plums, lemons, limes, raisins, pickles, blood peaches, a 120 pound squash, mammoth beets, corn, onions, beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, cabbages (ew), persimmons, jams and jellies, peanuts, walnuts, cotton, tobacco, wheat, grape vines with one branch weighing 50 pounds, alfalfa, and lots of flowers. One man was even showing his dirt and telling about how fertile it was. I can't believe all of this was grown in the Cajon Valley. Edith corrects me and points out that the upper Sweetwater people contributed to the fair also.

"So, who is running the fair?" I ask. Edith tells me that the fair is run by the Horticultural Society and the Ladies of El Cajon and Sweetwater Valleys. She also points out the following important people: W.H. Somers, President of the Association, Mrs. Miller, Chairman of the Decorating committee, and George Swan, a man who seems to know everything. Edith then tells me the names of the people showing off their produce. Here are their names: T.J. Cox, J.T. Gordon, Uri Hill, Chris Johnson, E. Brayton, J.B. Rea (who is showing a mammoth beet), Judge Ogden, J.M. Asher (who is showing 27 kinds of grapes, that's awesome!), Major Levi Chase (who is showing 15 kinds of apples!), George Swan, D.B. Mcfadden, Mr. Peel, Mr. H.P.





### 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: *The El Cajon Fire Department's History*

Chynna Sengebusch, Flying Hills School

I chose to write about the history of the El Cajon Fire Department because fire fighting is an important job in a city. It can be dangerous, but they save lives every day. Another reason is because my dad is a Fire Captain for the Santee Fire Department and I know all firefighters work very hard.

On July 1, 1892 the first fire recorded in El Cajon happened in a saloon; it was started by a cigar. The townspeople used wet blankets and buckets of water to put it out. The city's first fire alarm was made in 1913 out of a broken locomotive wheel that hung from a wooden frame. Someone would use a hammer to bang on it so everyone who heard it would come to help put the fire out.

The El Cajon Valley Fire Department was officially formed on March 1, 1923. When it started, it was all volunteer and the first fire chief was Mr. Rex Hall. The city held fund raisers such as a Fire Fund Ball to help buy the fire truck called the "Reo Speed Wagon" that arrived on January 20, 1924. It cost \$5,350.00. There were only four incidents recorded in the first year, which is a lot less than the 12,000 calls they ran in 2010.

Ray Halgren was the first full time paid fire chief. He was voted in by the city council in January 1948. Two other men, Herbert Teeples and Thomas Owen were also paid firemen. Seven volunteer firemen were paid \$2.00 for each call. The whole department became fully paid by the late 1950's.

It was very interesting learning the history of the El Cajon Fire Department. I went to visit station #6 and interviewed firefighter John Nevin. He was very nice and told me about some significant events in the department's history. The first was a crash of an F-14 at Gillespie Field. One person died and six were hurt when the unmanned plane slammed to the ground and slid into a row of airplane hangers. The other events were the 2003 and 2007 wildfires that their firefighters helped fight. My favorite part was when he told me about Tank and Haddy, the two specially trained search and rescue dogs that the fire department has. The dogs went to New York to help find people trapped in the 9-11 tragedy.

I hope I showed you how the fire department is an important part of El Cajon's history.



## El Cajon Historical Society Board

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COME JOIN US!

MEMBERSHIP:

\$10- INDIVIDUAL

\$15 FAMILY

\$25 ORGANIZATION

\$35 BUSINESS

\$500 LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Your membership and donations are very much appreciated and help to preserve our Knox House and the artifacts within - pictures and documents for future generations to enjoy and learn.



Viejas Representative Charles Brown presents First Place Award to Halley Kaloustain



Guess What This Is? You Tell us – We don't know!

### Do You Listen, Nook, or Kindle?

Such a variety of ways to enjoy books now: Real paper books, audiobooks, Nooks, and Kindles!

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, July 13, 2 p.m. at the Knox House Museum – new members are welcome; we welcomed at our last meeting Cynthia Newell. Our subject is vast for July: World War I. Each reader selects a book of her own choosing and then sharing and recommending will be the focus. In May, the subject was the Civil War. Many different titles were shared along with descriptions, i.e. medical practices, women serving during wartime, journal reports, and Abraham Lincoln's leadership.

The books read:

*Savannah and Charleston* by John Jakes, *Team of Rivals, The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* by Doris Kearns Goodwin; *Journal of a Civil War Nurse* by Georgiann Baldino; *Fixin' Things: A Novel of Women at Gettysburg* by Peggy Ullman Bell; *A Collection of Civil War Short Stories* by R.J. Musto; *Fort Pillow: A Novel of the Civil War* by Harry Turtledove; *Journal of Lt. Daniel E. Shea* (Carol Cunningham's Great Grandfather).

Knox Readers meet every other month on 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays, at the Knox House Museum, 2 p.m.: July 13, September 14, and November 9.

## Business and Organization Members

As a member of the East County/San Diego Chamber of Commerce, we agree that all of us should support and shop locally to keep our community vibrant. Listed are businesses and organizations that see the value in keeping local history alive!

Ace Towing - Business  
Art World Gallery – Life Member  
Aztec & Baron Insurance Agency - Business  
Bank of the West - Business  
Barona Band of Mission Indians – Organization  
Blend Printers – Life Member  
Bordeaux Printers – Life Member  
Bostonia Woman’s Club - Organization  
California Bank & Trust – Life Member  
Carmel Business Systems – Life Member  
Crystal Drapery Masters – Life Member  
George Dall, CPA - Business  
E & M Auto Parts - Business  
El Cajon CDC – Life Member  
El Cajon Woman’s Club - Organization  
First United Church of El Cajon – Organization  
Greenfield Mobile Home Estates – Life Member

Heartland Lions Club – Life Member  
Heritage of the Americas Museum – Organization  
Inland Supply, Inc. – Life Member  
Kodiac Investment Corp. – Life Member  
McAlister Institute – Life Member  
McCarthy Transfer & Storage – Life Member  
Native Daughters of the Golden West, Parlor #208 – Organization  
Tucker’s Valley Furniture, Inc. - Business  
Safari Mobile Lodge – Life Member  
Save Our Heritage Foundation – Organization  
Tucker’s Valley Furniture, Inc. - Business  
Viejas Enterprises – Life Member – Underwriter of Essay Contest, 2010, 2011

**Docents Needed!** Please consider getting involved or re-involved by leading tours of the Museum. Training provided. Only about 3 hours a month is needed; we would like to be open every Saturday.

**Historical Photos are available for purchase** from the museum. Any photo owned by the San Diego Historical Society or Titor Title must be purchased from the San Diego Historical Society. Those funds go to preserve, catalogue and protect the photos.

Photo copy	\$20.00
Scan Fee	\$25.00
Research	\$38.00 per hour

### Using GoodSearch to help out the museum.

Good Search gives us a penny each time you use their site as your search engine. Simply go to [GoodSearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and put in ECHS in the space provided for your charity.

In addition, when you purchase anything when using the GoodShop button, we can receive a percentage of the purchase. The GoodShop button is on the GoodSearch website or on the tool bar which you can download.

**Many of us do quite a bit of shopping on the internet. This is a painless way to give to our museum.**

<http://www.goodsearch.com>

### Membership due dates are on your address label.

We appreciate your membership support, helping to preserve our El Cajon History.

Kindly mail your payment to ECHS, P.O. Box 1973, El Cajon, CA 92022

Knox House Museum  
280 N. Magnolia  
P.O. Box 1973  
El Cajon, CA 92022

Museum Hours:  
Currently Open  
1<sup>st</sup> Sat. 11:30 – 2:00  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sat. 11:30 – 2:00

Call first for specific hours  
619 444-3800

## FOOD FROM THE EARTH

### El Cajon Valley's Abundance – G. Carroll Rice

The Kumeyaay called it *Amut-Tar-Tum* (level-ground-center). These native people and their ancestors used every resource from the sea to the mountains for nearly 12,000 years, and were intimately familiar with the lush valley. The water table was high, springs were abundant, and streams crossed the valley to nourish the soil. Oak trees provided shade, wood and acorns while other plants offered seeds, roots and greens.

Nature was the gardener of the valley, but the Indians labored in it as well. They transplanted trees to shade trails, moved food and medicinal plants closer to camping areas, and burned off the underbrush at regular intervals. There is also evidence that they diverted streams to irrigate planted crops and conserve water for the dry seasons. Food gathering, preparation and storage required a full-time effort from every man, woman and child.

Life in the valley centered around the oak trees (there were several species and there were individual words for each) and running water. Acorns were gathered, dried and cracked open. The kernels were removed and pounded with stone pestles (*haapachaa*) on stone mortars (*pi* or *ehmuu*), and the resulting meal was placed in baskets in running water to wash away the bitter tannic acid. Cooked, the acorns became a 'mush' (*shawii*), the staple carbohydrate of the Kumeyaay diet.

While many of the Kumeyaay made an annual trip to the mountains, in the Fall to gather acorns, there is evidence everywhere in the valley of their harvesting and grinding them here. For example; when Johnson Avenue was built from Main to Bradley, dozens of grinding stones were revealed at a depth of three feet; there must have been a line of oak trees and perhaps a stream there long ago.

A pond near present-day Johnson Avenue and Madison persisted into the 1920's and contained small fish. Surely there were cattails (*epilly*) growing along the streams. Young cattail leaves are tender, and while the roots are tough, the 'tails' are usable as flour or made into a soup.

Around the edges of the valley, the women sought yuccas with their starchy roots and edible flowers. Samuel Brown ([howkasam@hotmail.com](mailto:howkasam@hotmail.com)) states that his mother gathered mushrooms (*matepan*) as well as yucca (*aakuull*). Canyons in the surrounding hills produced wild grapes, and cactus offered its fruit (*ihpaa chewuw*) and leaves for the careful gatherer. It's likely that families making the trek from mountains to the sea brought mountain pine nuts (*ehwiw*), gooseberries, currents, pine and manzanita berries with them.

Bow (*aatim*) and arrow (*epal* or *kupaal*) hunters harvested deer (*ekwak*); while others sailed the rabbit stick or boomerang (*hampuu*) close to the ground to kill rabbits, hares (*hallyaaw* and *kunyaaw*), squirrels (*ehmaall*), and other small game. Insects, such as grasshoppers (*tuumuw*), were frequently eaten. One very old Indian told my parents that while the white man brought many unhappy changes, he had to admit that he appreciated beef. "It tastes much better than grasshopper."

The Valley's agricultural revolution began when Spanish missionaries arrived in San Diego in 1769 and introduced livestock, grapes, olive trees, and European farming methods. By the mid-1890's, the lives and food resources of the Kumeyaay had changed forever. The replacement of native plants was rapid and dramatic. The oaks were cut down and Brazilian pepper, Australian eucalyptus, and a variety of fruit trees were planted. Yellow-flowered mustard, alfileria with its distinctive 'pins,' wild radish and other exotic plants replaced the local grasses. When commercial crops of wheat, barley and oats were planted and 'went wild', the Kumeyaay adapted quickly and harvested the introduced grains.

In the 1960's, anthropologist Dr. Florence Shipek interviewed Delfina Cuero, a Kumeyaay woman born in 1900 at Jamul, who said she couldn't find plants she had gathered in her youth. Hers was one more comment on a hunting and gathering paradise transformed into a bewildering blend of agriculture and commerce.

**Note:** A special thank you is due Anthropologist Cheryl Hinton, Director/Chief Curator at the Barona Cultural Center and Museum for her assistance in the preparation of this article.

#### REFERENCES

\*Cuero, Delfina. *The Autobiography of Delfina Cuero*. Edited by Florence Shipek. Translated by Rosalie Pinto Robertson. Pasadena: Dawson's Book Shop, 1968. Reprint, Banning, CA: Malki Museum Press, 1970.

Shipek, Florence C. *Pushed into the Rocks: Southern California Indian Land Tenure, 1769-1986*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.

Lee, Melicent Humison, *Indians of the Oaks*, Acoma Books 1978, Ramona, CA



We are so proud of all of the participants in the 2011 3<sup>rd</sup> Essay Contest, and we are so grateful to the teachers and parents who encouraged them to participate. Here is a list of the prize and certificate recipients. The Perpetual Trophy went to Flying Hills Elementary School.

## 2011 THIRD GRADE ESSAY CONTEST

PRIZE	STUDENT	TITLE	SCHOOL	TEACHER
1 <sup>st</sup>	Hailey Kaloustian	The Knox House Museum	Flying Hills	Ms Lindsay
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Faith Campbell	A Strange Day at the Fair	Fuerte	Ms Bush
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Chynna Sengebusch	The El Cajon Fire Department's History	Flying Hills	Ms. Lindsay
<b>Fred &amp; Nettie Kersten - Judges Award</b>	Ryan Stahl	The Kumeyaay	RSD	Ms Goe
<b>Virginia Stead</b>	Tamara Cruz	Kumeyaay Plants	Bostonia	Ms Johnson
<b>Heritage</b>	Sara Noriega	My Life Story	WD Hall	Ms Schultheis
<b>Olaf Wieghorst</b>	Colin Kenoyer	Olaf Wieghorst	Vista Grande	Ms Saltzstein
<b>Honorable Mention</b>	Spencer Dreher	My First Day of Training	Flying Hills	Ms Lindsay
<b>Honorable Mention</b>	Azren Carter	Taylor Guitars - Business	Vista Grande	Ms Pear
<b>Originality</b>	Juanito Diaz	The History of Chase Avenue School	Chase	Ms Caruso
<b>Neatness</b>	Mady Eastlick	Apolinaria Lorenzana	RSD	Ms Taylor

## BEST OF SCHOOL

<b>AVOCADO</b>	<b>Sarah Rhoades</b>	<b>Transportation Through the Ages</b>	<b>Ms Lieberknecht</b>
<b>BOSTONIA</b>	Jason Ochoa	Jesse Julian Ames and His Family	Ms Mitchell
<b>CHASE</b>	Jasmine Hawkins	I Am El Cajon	Ms Caruso
<b>FLYING HILLS</b>	Joshua Barnes	Grossmont High School	Ms Lindsay
<b>FUERTE</b>	Oliver Conklin	A Letter from Camp Gillespie	Ms Hill
<b>WD HALL</b>	Meghan Bostedt	Batter Up – The History of El Cajon Baseball	Ms Webb
<b>RANCHO SD</b>	Benjamin Dirksen	The Sweetwater Bridge	Ms Taylor
<b>RIOS</b>	Ariana Rodriguez	A New Beginning	Ms Dickman
<b>V. GRANDE</b>	Marques Wingo	W.D. Hall	Ms. Saltzstein

**Thank you to our 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Essay Contest underwriters, the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians. Also a Big Thank You to our volunteer readers and the Cajon Valley Union School District and parents for encouraging the students' participation.**

**Watch for more essays in future issues!**

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## Our Fun Cast of Characters at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Essay Presentation



L-R Josephine Asher (Fran Hill), Mayor Mark Lewis, Theodora Birdseye (Eldonna Lay), Minnie Harris (Alice Rodriguez), Illa Birseye (Jonna Waite), Amaziah Lord Knox (Bob Nowak).

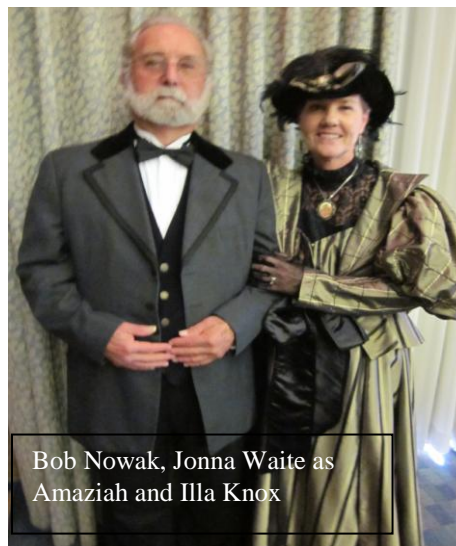
**Josephine Asher** - lived, as a young girl, on castle Rock Ranch, was a future gardener and well-known button collector.

**Theodora Birdseye** - an early teacher who opened Hillsdale School and married school board president, John Ballantyne.

**Minnie Harris** -first woman driver in El Cajon (and quite a wild one) and wife of first mayor, James Harris.

**Illa Birdseye Knox** – proprietress of Knox Hotel with husband Amaziah, mother of two doctors, a nurse and teacher.

**Amaziah Lord Knox** – Ranch Manager, first businessman as hotel proprietor, first postmaster, founder of Knox's Corners



Bob Nowak, Jonna Waite as Amaziah and Illa Knox



Bonnie Friedensborg  
– An Early Resident