



# HERITAGE

Volume 32, Issue 4

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

October 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.*

## **President's Message:**

This is my last message as President--my term is up; it has been an honor and privilege serving for the past two years.

Many thanks to our members for moral and financial support every year.

Some successes the past two years are the continued planning and program for the Third Grade Essay Contest with chairperson, Alice Rodriguez. This year many of us dressed in period costumes and it was a hit with parents and children alike.

There will be a repeat of this for the 2012 Centennial Contest. The Salon Series has brought different programs to the Museum: Musicians, Writers, a Currency Expert, Members with special perspectives, a Vocalist, etc. Folks new to our museum have discovered us through these "evening Salons." The program continues longer into the year than I expected. Updating the website has been an ongoing learning experience; many articles have been uploaded with anticipation of the Centennial. Eventually, it is our desire to charge for research access and produce funds for the Society. The Society has partnered with the City of El Cajon in sharing historical information and photos from its collection to enhance Centennial planning.

## Kudos to the Board -

Many thanks are owed to those who have for the past 20 or 30 years kept the Society running: Rick Hall, Eldonna Lay, Fran Hill, Christy Klock, Joe Klock, Carla Nowak, Karna Webster, Ellen Anderson.

Thanks to those who serve, as well, with their insight, knowledge, and special talent: Mary Saxton, George Dall, Dick Lay, G. Carroll Rice, Bonnie Fredensborg, and Michelle Regan.

A very special thank you to our Angel behind the scenes, Sharon Hall.



L – R Eldonna Lay, Bob Nowak, Jonna Waite, Alice Rodriguez, Fran Hill – Dressed in period costumes for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Essay Award Presentation June 2011.

## **Dates to Remember:**

- 10/7 Salon Series 6 – 7:30– Del Hood
- 10/27 Quarterly Dinner El Cajon Brewery 5:30
- 11/9 Knox Readers 2pm at Museum.
- 12/3 Knox House Christmas 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

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!



**We continue to publish some of the essays from our contest winners:**

Nettie Kersten Award - "The Kumeyaay"  
By Ryan Stahl - Rancho San Diego School

The Kumeyaay are the first Native Americans who lived in the Southwest. They've lived in the area for over 12,000 years. The Kumeyaay is made of two groups, the Ipai and the Tipai. The Ipai lived in the North and the Tipai lived in the South of California and Mexico.

The Kumeyaay hunted small animals like rabbits and birds, big animals too, like antelope and deer. The Kumeyaay used bows and arrows to hunt big and small animals. They used a weapon called a Rabbit Stick to kill rabbits and small rodents. Kumeyaay were hunting and food gathering people. They gathered acorns, prickly pear, agave plants, and pinon nuts. Acorns are a staple of the Kumeyaay's diet. They gathered acorns and crushed it into a powder and cooked it into a cake. They fished fresh and salt water fish.

The Kumeyaay built their homes from willow trees. They used the branch with the leaves still attached. Their houses were circular domed shaped. The home had a small door opening. At night they would cover the door with a large basket or woven mat to keep the cold air out. They used rabbit fur on the ground or built a small fire inside to keep them warm on a cold night.

Work activities were a part of the Kumeyaay's way of life. They made baskets out of juncus and deer grass. They used them for carrying water or to give as a gift. Pottery was also made. It was used to store food, water and ashes. Pottery was made from clay. Obsidian was carved to make arrow heads and tools. They didn't just work. The Kumeyaay played games too. They played a game of chance called Peon. They danced and played music to tell stories about their past. They used the flute and rattle to make their music.

Today the Kumeyaay live in many different reservations. Kumeyaay are well known for their casinos. The money they make from the casinos helps their tribe.



Kumeyaay woman in front of traditional choza at Campo, by Edward S. Curtis (1926) - Credit: [Library of Congress](#)

### **Welcome New Members!**

**Alice Keyser  
Theodore Kagan  
Mike Kaszuba  
Becky Dick  
Beth Marx  
Connie and Lynn Baer**



If you know of some fun El Cajon facts from the last 100 that years - not that you're that old - please share them with us!

We'd love to put them in the newsletter.



**The following Officers are proposed for one-year terms starting January 1, 2012**

President: Fran Parsons Hill  
Vice President: Jonna Waite – Joe Klock  
Recording Secretary: Carla Nowak  
Corresponding Secretary: Vacant  
Treasurer: George Dall C.P.A.

The following persons are nominated for election to the Board of Directors for 3-year terms ending December 31, 2014:

Christy Klock  
Joe Klock  
Dick Lay  
Carla Nowak

The following Directors will continue to serve with terms ending December 31, 2012:

George Dall  
Bonnie Fredensborg  
Eldonna Lay  
Mary Saxton

The following Directors will continue to serve with terms ending December 31, 2013:

Rick Hall  
Fran Hill  
Carroll Rice  
Jonna Waite

The following persons are recommended to serve on the Nominating Committee for the year 2012:

Rick Hall  
Fran Hill  
Christy Klock  
Joe Klock  
Eldonna Lay

Respectfully Submitted by the 2011 Nominating Committee:

Rick Hall  
Fran Hill  
Christy Klock  
Joe Klock  
Eldonna Lay

**ACT NOW!**

If you renew your membership now, the rates remain the same. However, in anticipation of the 2012 Centennial, dues will go up by \$2 for individuals.

The last increase was 1996 but our expenses continue, i.e., insurance on the Knox House Museum, storage for old, bound newspapers, costs for internet/website, virtual tour, newsletter printing, postage, security system and telephone. The budget will show the costs of these items.

Beginning January 2012, dues will be:

\$12 - Individual  
\$20 - Family  
\$30 - Organization  
\$40 - Business (used to be \$50 in 1987)  
\$500 - Lifetime Member

So, **Act Now** to lock in the lower rate for next year. Mail your check to: ECHS, PO Box 1973, El Cajon CA 92022-1973

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

(Reprinted - please enjoy the full story)

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. McKoon (who is showing off his dirt), W. H. Somers and Mrs. Somers, Mr. G.M. Hawley, Mr. A.L. Holt (who is showing a large tobacco plant), Mr. J.P.R. Hall, Mr. H. Culbertson, Mr. G.H. Bower, and finally Mr. T.F. Miller (who is showing 15 kinds of jelly), "Oh, there's some lemonade," I say. Edith tells me it is for sale. We buy some. I'm amazed how cheap it is. The lemonade is delicious!

Edith tells me that almost all the people of El Cajon are at this fair. I look around and see a few hundred people. "This is all the people? In 2010 there are a little more than 94,000 people living in El Cajon!" Edith doesn't believe me. In the meantime, people are staring at me probably because, to them, I'm dressed oddly. In the afternoon, there are speeches by: Mr. Somers, Mr. R.H. Young of The Great Southwest, and by Mr. Berry, Editor of The San Diego Union and The Daily Bee. Mr. Berry says that the fair is "the most forcible and eloquent proofs possible of the great horticultural and agricultural resources of the valley." I think the speeches are boring. Somebody tells us to taste the produce. I do. I try the fruit but not the vegetables because I don't like vegetables. The fruit is sweet and yummy. I tell Edith I need to leave and she points to a horse and carriage outside. I hop in the carriage and fall asleep. I suddenly wake up on the rollercoaster at the Del Mar Fair. "Was it all a dream?" After the ride ends I go home and research the El Cajon Fair of 1889.

## A Strange Day at the Fair cont.

Here's what I find out: Edith was real and the fair really happened. The fair was held for 2 days on August 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of 1889 and 1890. It was also held on August 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> in 1891. I couldn't find any more information on this fair after 1891. In 1890 and 1891 the fair was held at the Cajon Vineyard Company Packing House near the railroad station. The building was bigger than the original hall and the location made it easy for city people to come to the fair.

In August 1892 the vineyards of El Cajon were examined and were found healthy. The vine disease was no more. The fair brought all the people of El Cajon together in a tough time. I thought the whole fair was interesting, except for the speeches, but there is no place like home.

### Guess Who, Guess what –



Ans. On pg 6

### Salon Series continues...

On October 7, long-time member Del Hood will share stories of his newspaper days at the *Daily Californian*. Del was Associate and Executive Editor of the newspaper before his retirement. In August a profile about him appeared in the current *East County Californian*. He's been asked to share "scandals of the city". Should be Verry Interesting!

## An Exciting New Collection!

Long-time member of the Society and son of two of the earliest settler families in the Valley, Eugene de bac Vacher has left us boxfuls of his mother, Josephine's, nee' Asher, collection of the family's personal letters, diaries, correspondence, travel and store receipts. Each is immeasurably valuable for what it reveals about everyday life in El Cajon and San Diego in the late 1800s and early 1900s. From romances to goods purchased in New Town San Diego and train tickets to and from San Francisco to family letters about career-ruining health complications, each gives us a glimpse into the everyday lives of early settlers of El Cajon.

Among them are graduation papers from Chautauqua College, letters from some family members teaching at Berkeley and others who were attending classes there in the school's earliest years. There is political memorabilia along with stamps, visiting cards and other ephemera; each sorted by board member volunteers by year, then sorted and filed in decades between the mid-1800s to the 1950s by Sharon and Rick Hall. Members helping were Fran Hill, Carroll Rice, Bonnie Fredensborg, Carla Nowak, Christy and Joe Klock, Dick, Meghan and Eldonna Lay, and president, Jonna Waite – a project that has, so far, taken several months and dozens of hours by the Halls to ready the collection for an in-depth project to follow.

Eventually, these papers will be digitized for on-line and museum use by researchers – thanks to Mary Saxton, Rick Hall and Joe Klock.

There is an additional collection left to us by Eugene Vacher – one sequestered for over a hundred years by his mother, to whom it was entrusted by her brother (and Gene's uncle), Robert Asher. Robert is known in history circles as "the hermit of Mount Palomar." His personal diaries, paintings, sketches, notes and books record the mountain's vegetation and seasons as they were before the settlers began to arrive. Work will begin soon on reading and digitizing every one of Robert's skilled observations and those of other early mountain dwellers. More on that as work begins and continues.

## El Cajon Historical Society Board

PRESIDENT : JONNA WAITE

VICE PRESIDENT: ELDONNA LAY

TREASURER: GEORGE DALL

RECORDING SECRETARY: CARLA NOWAK

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY: ELLEN ANDERSON

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TELEPHONE AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE: CHRISTY AND JOE KLOCK

BUDGET COMMITTEE: JOE KLOCK

THIRD GRADE ESSAY CONTEST: ALICE RODRIGUEZ

HERITAGE EDITOR: MICHELLE REGAN

MEMBERS AT LARGE:

KARNA WEBSTER, ELLEN ANDERSON, BONNIE FREDENSBORG, DICK LAY

### 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.

### Collection, cont.

Already we know that the mountain information and that of Robert's seasonal visits to Gene's childhood home on Fuerte Drive (near Fuerte Elementary School) will be of exceptional value to historians, academics and researchers eager to learn all they can about Palomar.

We know not just those in San Diego County, although local scholars will want to read them too. But, it is your Society board's joint opinion that the information collected and saved by Robert and Josie Asher will be of great interest and value to not only Palomar Mountain archives and resources, but to those in libraries, universities and colleges throughout San Diego County and the State of California.

El Cajon Society members and residents can be extremely proud of having these two historical collections entrusted to us, made available through the generosity of Eugene's extended family members Jennifer Wassel of Texas, and her father (Eugene's stepson) George Lavas of Torrance. It will also be reassuring to our members and researchers that we now have the donated services of a highly qualified professional librarian and the former executive director of San Diego's Gaslamp Historical Society to lead the examination, protection and dissemination of these collections. Melissa Fazio is already preparing to gather a small group of other library professionals who will begin reading and organizing each of these beautifully literate pieces of information, so that we may better learn about the lives of those who gave up everything civilization had to offer to be among those opening the nation's last frontier.

Ans. To Guess Who, Guess What –

Sausage Maker from the Old Country – Glogowatz, Hungary, now Romania. This belonged to the editor's grandfather.

### Knox Readers Book Club

A dedicated group of readers continues to meet every other month. The last novel tackled was "And Ladies of the Club" an 1,100 page tome written by Helen Hooven Santmyer about life in a small Ohio town. The story moves from days of horse and buggies to belching, smoking, noisy cars careening on the streets. The ladies' literary club reminds us of the beginning of the El Cajon Woman's Club, formed 97 years ago - see info on our website. Our website always lists the most current novel and the date of our discussion. Recently, members read separate novels about World War I, World War II, and the Civil War.

## Historical Research

Tuesdays have become quite active at the Museum, especially through July, August, and September. Several people have been making great use of the Society's archives for personal research projects. New member Mike Kasuba has spent countless hours researching early Lakeside schools. Member Del Hood has been going through bound books of old newspapers looking for topics that catch his eye and his wife Sandy Hood has searched for early photos of her girl scout days. Others have been in checking sports details and a young intern with the El Cajon library checked on the history of the El Cajon Cemetery for the library's youth section.

Our microfilm reader bit the proverbial dust and as we get images on disk, they are loaded onto a research computer in the Museum office. Until more progress is made, bound newspapers are shuffled back and forth from storage to keep the information flowing.

Available now on our research computer: El Cajon Valley News: 1899, 1909-1916; Once a Week: 1899; San Diego Advertiser: 1898; Semi Tropic Culturist: 1898.

## Special Project

During his research Mike Kasuba has gotten more comfortable with our office and archives. He has volunteered to inventory our library. This project would give us a list of titles and make it possible to post the titles online

## 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

## Additions to Website: [elcajonhistory.org](http://elcajonhistory.org)

The summer has been spent uploading old articles on our history to the History page on our website. Believing that Hazel Sperry was the first and only historian in the 1960s it was with surprise that articles were found written in 1952 by W.S. Head, a sports and feature writer for the El Cajon Valley News. In preparation of El Cajon's Centennial, many articles of interest have been made available in hope that the festivities pique the interest of the community.

Check out the articles by: W.S. Head, Hazel Sperry, Chloris Scott, Del Hood, James Graves, and current research by G. Carroll Rice.

### 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

Saturdays from 11 – 2pm  
Call first for specific hours  
619 444-3800

## **Dr. Knox Was My Physician** by Keith G. Simpson

I'm Keith G. Simpson born Dec. 10, 1943 and was raised in El Cajon, Ca. at 551 South Johnson Street next to where the Church of Christ stands. My grandfather Lorn H. Robertson built the house about the time I was born. I grew up with my grandparents and my mom and dad. At the age of approximately eight years old I came down with a new disease to San Diego County called "Scarlet Fever". The nurses from all the neighboring schools came to our home to take notes firsthand about this new disease and kept a follow up on my condition. Doctor Charles Knox (son of Amaziah Knox) was my physician.

I owe my life to Doctor Knox, not only was he my doctor but he was also my friend. Back then the Doctors took time to get to know their patients, age didn't matter. I'm very glad I had a doctor that kept up to date with all the new technology and science that was available at that time. There was a new vaccine that had just come out and He decided to try this vaccine on me. This vaccine was called "Penicillin".

Doctor Knox after my inoculation told me I would be out of school for three months. The following was the treatment prescribed:

First month, complete rest (I was bed ridden).

Second month, getting out of bed only to eat, then back to bed again.

Third month I could be up and around doing nothing strenuous and if I got the least bit tired I was to lie down and rest.

All during this time Doctor Knox came to my home quite often to check on my condition. I got to know the nurses from the neighboring schools very well for they too came to see me often.

The Penicillin, since then, has become very useful for treating so many other illnesses.

I praise Doctor Knox, and other doctors like him who have taken such an interest in their patients, for it means so much. Their good deeds will never be forgotten. They have left us a true legacy

## **EL CAJON: FROM EXPLORATION TO RANCHO**

**By G. Carroll Rice**

The arrival of Spanish Catholic missionaries at San Diego Bay in 1769 marked the beginning of recorded history in Southern California. In 1868, Isaac Lankershim purchased the El Cajón Rancho from the Pedroarena family and by 1869 the 'settler' era in the El Cajon Valley began. Records of agricultural activities and settlement in the Valley during the one hundred year period between these two events are often conflicting or totally absent. The Mission records for the first fifty years which have survived fire and neglect are particularly intriguing but usually brief and often vague. It was not laziness that caused the missionaries to neglect their journals; they were men who exhausted themselves working in the fields as well as fulfilling their perceived roles as pastors and 'fathers' to a people they thought uncivilized and in danger of hellfire.

Surely the local Kumeyaay Indians continued hunting, gathering and cultivating their traditional ground allotments until driven out by the encroachment of the white man's cattle and crops. These times are amply recorded by anthropologist Florence Shippek and discussed in the writings of Viejas Reservation Chairman Anthony Pico.

Within a month of their arrival in May 1769, Spanish soldiers were dispatched up the San Diego River valley looking for a reliable source of water. Franciscan historian, Fr. Zephyrin Englehardt, in his history of the San Diego Mission includes a letter by Fr. Juan Crespi describing the exploration of the San Diego River as 'far as the sierra' (in the vicinity of present-day Lakeside) and finding that it was largely dry. However, along the way, Fr. Crespi found 'much land and good pasture,' which he speculates would be suitable for cereal crops. The missionaries found the area so suitable, that when they decided to move the mission church from the presidio in 1774, they considered establishing it in the Lakeside area. Their suggestions were overruled by the Royal authorities, who pointed out that such a distance from the fort would preclude any hope of defense in the event of an Indian attack.

It's uncertain when the missionaries established the Rancho Santa Monica, also known as El Cajón, and what they did there. It is generally accepted that they moved livestock into the Valley and may have planted some crops. The actual location of these activities is unknown. It has been suggested that it was in the Santee area, taking advantage of the river water.



## El Cajon from Exploration to Rancho cont.

In 1821, during the transition from Spanish to Mexican rule, an inspection party conducted by a Franciscan official spent the night at the Rancho Santa Mónica. Although seeking a site for another mission “in the interior where pagans were said to be very numerous,” there was no suggestion of establishing one in the El Cajón Valley. The party continued north to visit the Asistencia at Santa Ysabel where a large cattle ranch had been in operation since 1818. It appears that ranching and agricultural work in the Valley also continued with some success until 1845. In 1826, Fr. Fernando Martin suggested that ‘gentiles,’ that is unbaptized Indians be given food if they will join the Christians who work at Santa Mónica and Santa Ysabel. The following year, the Mexican government requested that the missionaries state the extent of Mission lands. Their reply in December 1827 reported:

“On the way to Santa Mónica or El Cajón are the territories called San Jacome de la Marcha and San Capistrano de Motamo. In these districts pasture the horses and mules and the sheep of this Mission. Adjoining them are the Rancherias of said gentiles.

“In the territory of Santa Mónica or El Cajón, wheat, barley, corn and beans are raised, the greater part depending on rains and the rest on irrigation from the dam. The water comes from a grove called El Chocolate, which lies below the sierra of Cuyamat. The whole tract lies five leagues from the Mission. Contiguous to it are the Rancherias of the said gentiles.”

Agricultural activities certainly continued, for in 1839 Mexican Governor Juan Batista Alvarado appointed his friend and teacher William Hartnell to make a survey of mission properties. Alvarado strongly favored secularization of the mission lands, and was probably gathering data to support a move in that direction. Hartnell stated:

“The Rancho of Santa Mónica has a vineyard with 8,000 vines two years old and well kept. In addition it has a field planted with two and one fourth fanegas of corn and two fanegas of beans.” (A fanega equals about 1 ½ bushel.)

This description, of course, is more tantalizing than informative. The location of the twenty acre vineyard and the fields of corn and beans are unknown, and, more importantly there is no mention of the people, probably neophytes, who tended them. There is, however, an undated scrap of paper of the period, signed by Fr. Martin, giving the population of Santa Mónica as “116 souls.” The missionaries generally referred to baptized Indians as ‘souls;’ there is no mention here of “gentiles” or “pagans.”

The break-up of the mission system was inevitable; it had been established as a *temporary* ‘civilizing,’ educating and settling instrument of the Spanish government. Both Spanish and Mexican laws decreed that when the missions were discontinued that the Indians they served would be given lands to farm, the Indians would become colonial citizens and the ‘regular’ clergy would be replaced by parish priests. There was no money, no stated plan, and no clear-cut incentive for anyone to follow those ideals.

The process of secularization, begun in 1834, quickly degenerated into chaos driven by the near-bankruptcy of the province of Alta California and the social vacuum caused by the sudden reduction in the authority and guidance of the missionaries. Many Indians who were given lands were quickly cheated out of them or lacked the skills to manage them successfully.

In an attempt to rectify the growing confusion and mollify the increasing pressure from potential land owners, the provincial assembly passed legislation authorizing the rental or sale of all mission property. Only a house for a parish priest, a church, and a few buildings were to be retained by the Catholic Church; the rest of the mission holdings were available for distribution.

Sensing the growing threat of war with the United States, Pio Pico, the last Civil Governor of Alta California, settled debts, bolstered loyalties and the supplemented the treasury by a series of sales and land grants. In 1845, he granted the nearly 49,000 acre Rancho El Cajón to Antonia Maria Estudillo de Pedroarena in payment of a stated \$500 debt owed her husband by the Mexican government.

The ranch (alternately called ‘Santa Mónica’ and ‘El Cajón’) was managed from the Pedroarena home, a large adobe house in what is now the center of Lakeside. There were other smaller buildings, too; one in the area of western Santee, and at least one north of the present El Cajon Civic Center. There were corrals for the livestock and provisions made for flocks of sheep, herds of horses and cattle and the men who tended them. As with the other ranchos, cattle provided the ‘money crop;’ hides and tallow supplied to the ‘Boston’ traders in San Diego Bay.

There are several references to large crops and the rich soil, such as found in the report of Lt. Ariel W. Whipple, the topographical engineer who surveyed the newly established international border between Mexico and the United States. Lt. Whipple, accompanied by a company of soldiers under the command of Lt. Cave J. Coats, traveled

from the San Diego Mission to the ‘Rancho Santa Mónica’ on September 11, 1849. His observations and spelling are retained in his description of the journey and the ranch.

“Our route leads over steep hills, uncultivated and barren excepting a few fields of wild oats. No trees, no water in sight from the time of leaving the mission until we again strike the valley of the river of San Diego, half a mile from Santa Mónica, the Rancheria of Don Miguel de Pederina, now occupied by his father-in-law, the prefect of San Diego, Don Jose Antonio Estudillo. The hill-tops are white with coarse quartzose granite, but as we approached the rancho of Don Miguel the foliage of the trees that fringe the Rio San Diego formed an agreeable relief to the landscape. Here the river contains a little running water; but before it reaches the mission it disappears from the surface, and at San Diego is two feet below the bed of micaceous sand. Maize, wheat, barley, vegetables, melons, grapes, and other fruits, are now produced upon this ranch in abundance. With irrigation the soil and climate are suitable for the cultivation of most of the productions of the globe. But the mansion houses of such great estates in California are wretched dwellings, with mud walls and thatched roofs. The well-trodden earth forms the floor; and, although wealth abounds with many luxuries, few of the conveniences and comforts of life seem known. From fifty to one hundred Indians are employed on this ranch in cultivating the soil, doing the menial household service, attending the flocks and herds. Their pay is a mere trifle, and Sundays are allowed to them for holiday amusements – attending mass, riding, gaming, drinking.”

Miguel Pedroarena died in 1850 and his wife died in 1851, but their heirs continued to operate the Rancho El Cajon until after the American Civil War. When the Pedroarenas offered the Rancho for sale in the late 1860’s, the ultimate purchaser was Isaac Lankershim, a San Francisco businessman and entrepreneur looking to expand a huge wheat-growing and shipping consortium operating out of Los Angeles. With this purchase, settlement began; and the astute men Mr. Lankershim hired to manage his purchase set the course for the El Cajon Valley’s next 100 years and beyond.

**Remember: El Cajon's Centennial is in 2012.**

OK, 100 years in the grand scope of things isn't that old - heck, just ask Willard Scott (not 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 iPhone lose bars. So, here are some more things that have happened in the last 100 years in El Cajon:

**Some more historical highlights:**

- 1907 Cuyamaca State Bank opened its doors and remained only bank for 40 years.
- 1908 First mail delivery service began in the El Cajon area.
- 1909 First powered airplane in El Cajon was flown by Donald Gordon. It had an engine taken from a racing cycle and was named “The Whistling Rufus”.
- 1912 El Cajon incorporated on November 12. James A. Harris was elected as a trustee on November 18 and chosen as President of the Board of Trustees (Mayor).  
Five trustees established committees and developed the administration as well as adopting ordinances and resolutions to provide for the grading and sprinkling of streets, contract for bridge construction and mapping the city, banning cattle and hogs from the central city, and outlawing horseracing down Main Street.
- 1923 Rexford Hall volunteered as Fire Chief; appointed in 1924 and served until 1933.
- 1939 W.D. Hall “rescues” a saw mill and puts it to work in his yard. Way to Recycle!
- 1950 The office of City Manager was instituted in time to meet El Cajon’s most explosive decade of growth.
- 1960 The incorporated area was to increase five-fold to 9.8 square miles and population six-fold to 37,618.
- 1971 City of El Cajon purchases W.D. Hall property and it later becomes City Hall and East County Performing Arts Center.
- 2000 Population according to Census is 94,869.

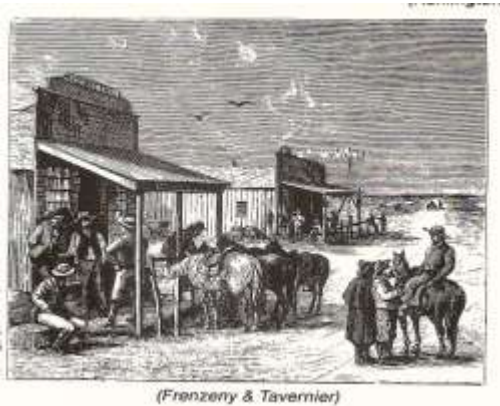
## QUARTERLY DINNER ON OCTOBER 27<sup>th</sup>

What a treat it is going to be to eat at El Cajon's new restaurant/brewery. You'll love the interior walls, covered as they are with mural-like enlarged photographs from your Society's archives. Other scenes come from the Helix Water District, along with photos, magazine covers and early San Diego bonds from your fellow members' private collections. Be ready to feel tinges of nostalgia when seeing some of them, and find yourself laughing at others.

Also be prepared for our speaker; the loquacious Lakeside storyteller Regis Rosner will regale you with tales of post-World War II tree-planting experiences with explosives, rodeo barrel-racing, chicken-wire covered bandstands in local watering holes, and tales of Bill Casper, Olaf Wieghorst and the Casper Rancho Riders at the Pinnacle Peak restaurant.

We begin at 5:30 with a social half-hour in the Brewery's private room, with wine and a wide-range of Brewery-made and commercial beers available for purchase. Dinner will be served at 6:00, and is a taster's delight, starting with the Chef's own roasted-pumpkin soup, salad, then hefty "tastes" of three of the restaurant's most popular sliders and hot sandwiches. The board salutes Halloween with a dessert collection of seasonable candies and nuts. **And, yes, we do want prizes contributed for the raffle.**

The price of dinner remains \$15.00. As space is limited to 50, to reserve a seat mail in your check and the form below right away because people will be coming from El Cajon and Lakeside.



Please Reserve My Seat (seats) at the Quarterly Meeting Dinner – Thursday, October 27 at 5:30 PM  
**El Cajon Brewery – Magnolia at Main.** Be sure and send in your reservation early. Seating is limited to 50.

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

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

I'll bring a prize for the raffle \_\_\_\_\_

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

El Cajon Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1973  
El Cajon, CA 92022

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### **An Extended Centennial Edition of *Valley of Opportunity***

The City of El Cajon has again commissioned author – and our Society’s Curator and outgoing vice president, Eldonna Lay – to create a 50-page extension to the city’s first official history book, *Valley of Opportunity*. That extension will cover the 25 years between 1987 and 2012, involving changes chosen by community and/or elected leaders – or forced upon us in response to turbulent times in the nation and state. As in the first book, the geographic area includes contiguous areas bearing El Cajon addresses, including Mt. Helix, Rancho San Diego and other “rim” areas. The book will end with photographs of civic events and celebrations occurring throughout the upcoming Centennial year, which is under the leadership of City Councilwoman Jillian Hanson-Cox and begins on November 11, 1911 and continues for twelve months in 2012.

The original book published in 1987 for the City’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, consists of 157 pages. Adding 50 pages brings the new total to 207 pages of text, photos and an occasional map or graph. Since many of the original photographs from the first edition could not be located, the reprinting of the first edition will be a fine-quality copy. The price of the Centennial edition has not yet been determined, but will be announced prior to its publication near the end of the Centennial year.

**Our autumn Quarterly Lunch meeting** will begin at the new El Cajon Brewery on Magnolia at Main streets with a social half-hour at 5:30 on Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup> (full information follows this column).

**November brings a second small-window exhibit** featuring our historical society in the entry hallway next to Jasmine Creek restaurant in Westfield Plaza on Fletcher Parkway. The first three-month tableau showed tea time in an early El Cajon home. Currently, in the same space, the Olaf Wieghorst Museum is providing a peek inside a cowboys’ bunkhouse. In November, the window will again feature the Historical Society with an “El Cajon Settler’s Thanksgiving.” The Westfield window is shared by the two museums because the leadership in each believes strongly that what benefits one of us promotes the other, too. In December, the Wieghorst exhibit will be “A Cowboy Christmas.”

Design and installation of each exhibit is the work of museum volunteer, Meghan M. Lay. Space is available through the generosity of Westgate Plaza manager Karyn Houde.