



EL CAJON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HERITAGE

Volume 34, Issue 1

www.elcajonhistory.org

January 2013

President's Message

Looking back while moving ahead

Happy New Year Members and Friends,

The El Cajon Historical Society will begin another year with 2013. We had a grand time celebrating the first 100 years of cityhood for El Cajon during 2012. We have lots of memories and stories to share but first a reminder that, if you are not a life member, your yearly membership dues for 2013 can be paid anytime now.

We had great 2012 programs at the quarterly meetings and we ventured into candlelight as we lit up the Knox.

Special evenings were held at the Knox House as part of El Cajon's monthly Art Walks. Several local artists displayed their art for the tours. October featured our author and Board Member, Carroll Rice, telling haunting stories. We finished the evening programs with the museum decorated in the holiday family style of the past. Cookies and cider were served in the favorite place in the home both then and now – the kitchen. Your Board and members enjoyed presenting these programs for you. *(See page 5 for photos of these events.)*

Being a docent is not just giving a tour at the museum. We also have the pleasure of listening to what our guests are sharing. So many times furnishings like the iron range in the kitchen triggers memories of early childhood and we share each others gifts. I shared about the jar of pickled Fiddlehead Fern in the Hoosier Cabinet in the kitchen and



Fran Parsons Hill portrayed Josephine Asher Vacher for El Cajon's Centennial Celebration.

learned it was dangerous for horses if they were to eat it as it grew in the fields.

We look forward to continuing to celebrate the "Centennial Year" through 2013 along with the City of El Cajon. You can expect more of the successful Historical Programs at the El Cajon Library starting in January. *(See page 7.)* We're also planning a home tour soon featuring houses that are 100 years old or more.

Thank you to all our members and especially to our great Board of Directors for all the support you share to keep our El Cajon history alive.

Fran

15,000 celebrate centennial

What a proud day it was for the citizens of El Cajon, City employees and volunteers! Reminiscent of mid-1800 celebrations in cities and towns all over the U.S., the parades, bands, formal introductions of and speeches from local, county, and state politicians enthralled the audience.

ECHS's 3rd Grade Essay Contest winners were honored at the celebration. 1st place champion Alexis Haynes read her essay about her grandma's diary and 2nd place winner Calista Dicker read hers about the contributions of Amaziah Lord Knox.

The fair-like atmosphere drew a City-estimated 15,000 people – mostly families – who wandered from activities and presentations throughout Prescott Park, past the library exhibit and other tents and along both sides of Main Street to Magnolia, stopping along the way to purchase snacks and lunch from food trucks before moving on to peer inside booths to get their fair passports stamped.

Children fanned out to participate in Cowboy Boot Camp and to make highly creative paper bag hats while adults without children wandered amid the lines of exhibit tents filled with displays on everything from organizational doings to old photos

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Celebration

(continued from page 1)

and information on the San Diego-Arizona Railroad run. Many wandered through the patio/garden at the Wieghorst Museum, vocally amazed at the size and breath of the stunning cacti standing tall in the sunshine-filled courtyard before strolling through the gallery to admire the western paintings and sculptures.

Also among the tents on Rea Street was ECHS's exhibit. (Rea is a one-block street named for Main Street's first storekeeper before John Rea purchased vast acres of land and planted groves of oranges – now the site of Disneyland).

Inside ECHS's booth was board member/professional spinner and weaver Mary Saxton, who's practiced fingers spun strands from balls of wool for seven hours. Also

inside was a huge framed, aerial photo of the city taken just before the freeway was built, courtesy of Rick and Sharon Hall.

Through it all, newly retired Cajon Valley elementary teacher Becky Taylor spent the entire day helping youngsters paper-weave placemats in strips of orange, purple, brown, and yellow – colors that she patiently explained to each participant represented the original grapes, citrus, and wheat crops grown in the valley.

Meanwhile, Joe and Christy Klock stamped passports, while Bonnie Fredensborg stepped in to relieve workers in both our tent and the one run by Friends of East County Arts. As did our president Fran Hill – balancing her time between our tent and activities in the one operated by East County Art Association.

A common link in conversation was the success of Bonnie's six-week-long history series of speeches in cooperation with the County library by a host of knowledgeable local speakers – among them, our own Carol Clark Cunningham voice-overing her video of her family's arrival in El Cajon's early years, G. Carroll Rice speaking on the "Lively Arts in El Cajon", and Lynn Caruso with an often amusing presentation on teaching during the frontier years.

It was a great day for the City of El Cajon!



After an early morning setup coordinated by Rick Hall (at right), ECHS's booth was ready when the crowds arrived.

Younger Amaziah Knox adorns Magnolia side of Knox House

Although already shown as an older man on the sign standards supporting the City's El Cajon sign that spans Main at Magnolia Streets, Amaziah Lord Knox is now also a suitably larger presence as a younger man on the Knox House Museum exterior.

The graphic was made possible by the members of the Friends of East County Arts, a local organization that provides funds for the growth and development of the live performing arts and the fine arts and artists in our schools and East County community.

In years past, the "Friends" have also paid for ECHS's printing of a series of slim history books featuring the experiences of real children on our El Cajon frontier including Josephine Asher of Old Town and Horton's "New" Town San Diego; her son, Eugene Vacher; and artist George Paul – each from a different era – and all near today's Fuerte School.

Because of their backing, these booklets have been available to private and public 3rd grade elementary school teachers for more than 15 years. "Friends" also paid for 5,000 copies of our Knox House Museum

brochure and for the scenes painted on the museum's window shades.

Thus, ECHS would like to publicly thank the Friends of East County Arts for their continuing interest and far-sighted financial support.



After 136 years, Amaziah Knox finally assumes his rightful size and position as the Founder of the City of El Cajon on the Magnolia Avenue side of the Knox House (originally a small hotel at the corner of Main Street and Magnolia) now resting a block south at the corner of Magnolia and Park Streets.



El Cajon celebrates 100 years as a city

The California Notecatchers, right, performed old favorites while ECHS's Christy Klock, left, and Bonnie Fredensborg chime in. Funds to cover the cost of the barbershop quartet were donated by Inland Supply Company.



An old-fashioned parade, featuring local residents, was part of the festivities.



An El Cajon resident tries to locate his house on this aerial view of the city taken before the freeway was built.



"Tools of the Trade" from the late 1800s to early 1900s were displayed including doctors' instruments, carpentry tools, children's toys, and bottles from the Corona Hotel archaeological dig.



Mary Saxton spun strands from balls of wool.

Six-week docent training begins January 29

Docents are the public faces of museums, historic buildings and galleries of fine arts. As our historical society's public representatives, the Knox's new docents will represent us well by knowing the history of the city and people of El Cajon.

Frequently people ask why people would leave cities, towns and farms "back East," Europe and Asia to come specifically to El Cajon. "Particularly," they say, "when travel was so difficult and limited."

Our docents will be able to provide background information on everything from a comparison of the national spirit of adventure before and after the Civil War, to the lack of attention writers, historians, and filmmakers have given to the settlement of San Diego County than to the rest of the West. They'll know of the local importance of expanded southern railroad routes at war's end, as well as the level of knowledge El Cajon settlers brought with them on the explosion of scientific, agricultural, mineral, and geographical discoveries and developments.

Docents-in-training receive informational notebooks beginning with the blend of sophisticated social and cultural movements and expectations brought to the area by early settlers to Old Town and Horton's New San Diego before moving inland to El Cajon.

The series is being led by El Cajon historian, author and Knox House Museum Curator Eldonna Lay, who will provide overviews of national, regional, and local history in concert with local speakers whose families settled the area and/or who are experts in specific subjects – such as the San Diego & Arizona Railroad.

Among the locals is our own Carol Clark Cunningham with her

presentation on her family's reasons for emigration and musical and theatrical researcher G. Carroll Rice on the elevated cultural talents brought to the valley by world and nationally famous professional singers, musicians and writers. Rice will also recall his own experiences with the theatrical arts and musical culture provided by talented and committed teachers at Grossmont High School.

Docent training will be held at 1:20 p.m. Tuesdays starting January 29 in the new El Cajon Police Station, located across Magnolia Avenue from the Knox House Museum. The six-part series runs through March 5, with the last class being a hands-on practical method(s) of conducting public tours of the museum.

Docent classes will start promptly at 1:20 p.m. and end at 2:50 p.m.

Those completing the instruction and comply with museum standards will receive certificates allowing them to serve, when needed, as a docent at the Knox House.

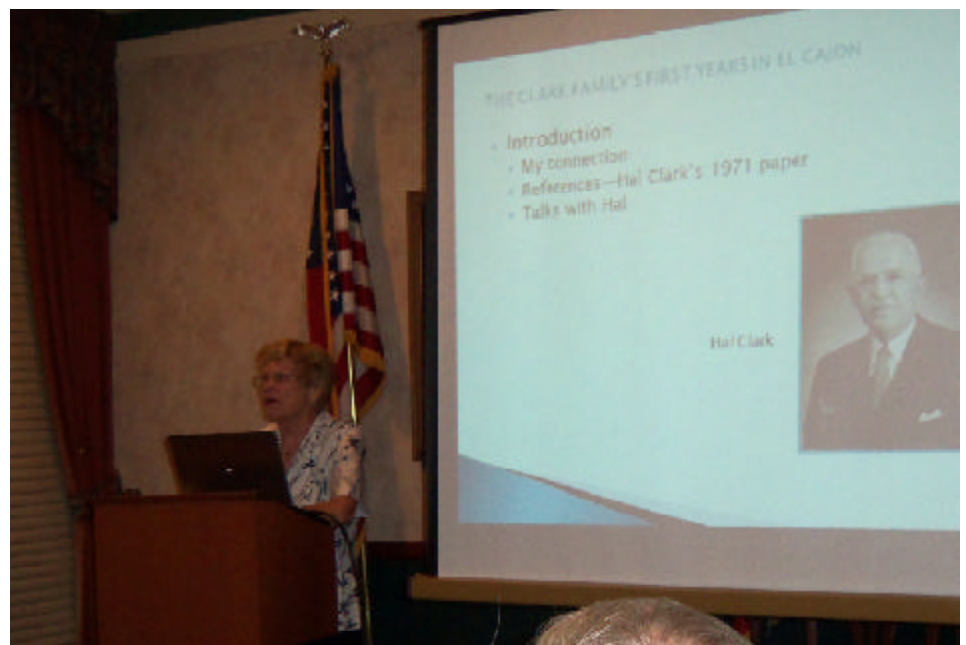
The newly appointed Docent-Coordinator Becky Taylor will also be present at all training classes.

Pre-registration is required, with attendance restricted to those intending to be regularly scheduled docents. Fee for the series is \$38, which includes classes and training, a year-long membership in the El Cajon Historical Society, and a collection of background materials/publications.

Participants are expected to participate in at least two of the four local Quarterly Luncheons in 2013 for continuing education on local history. Each luncheon will require a reservation and a check for \$15.

The number of non-Board member participants is limited to 28.

Those wishing to take the history-based training can mail checks for \$38 payable to ECHS. Please mark your envelope "Attention: Docent-Training/Membership" and send your check to the El Cajon Historical Society, P.O. Box 1973, El Cajon, CA 92022.



Carol Clark Cunningham gave her unique perspective on El Cajon at the El Cajon Historical Society's 2012 Annual Dinner held October 17 at the El Cajon Sizzler Restaurant.

Events at the Knox House



Carroll Rice's spooky tales captivate a young museum visitor during El Cajon's HauntFest.



El Cajon residents Jan and Tom Sticht check out the Christmas decorations at the Knox House.



Visitors during November's Art Walk were amazed at the intricate designs in pine needle baskets created by Joyce Lane of La Mesa as ECHS President Fran Hill, left, looks on.



During Halloween festivities downtown, Mounted Patrol Officers Dean Deaton (left on horse) and Keith Anderson visited the Knox. Greeting them were Dick Lay (left to right), Mary Saxton, Joe Klock, Gayle Culbertson, and Becky Taylor.

Excerpts from

Mrs. Owens' Cookbook and Useful Hints for the Household-1883

Courtesy of Helen Nelson

DEVILLED KIDNEYS

Three tablespoons of oil, one of vinegar, salt spoon of salt, pinch of pepper, and a teaspoon of mustard. Dip the sliced kidneys in the above mixture and broil them. After they are broiled, sprinkle a little cayenne pepper on. Serve when plenty of water can be afforded.

ECHS seeks help for school tours

The El Cajon Historical Society is looking for members who are interested in helping lead school tours during the week. "Expert" knowledge of the Knox House is not required – a "user-friendly" docent guide gives information about each room and the history of the house. It *does* require a love for El Cajon's history and an eagerness to share that love with children.

If you are interested in learning more about leading school tours, or just helping monitor a room during a school tour, please contact Becky Taylor by e-mail at cruzbecky@cox.net or by phone at 619-440-3069.

Lost Treasures of the Corona Hotel

by Mike Kaszuba

The Hotel Corona del Cajon was El Cajon's grandest hotel, situated at the northwest corner of Main and Magnolia. It stood there from 1887 through 1920, when it tragically burned to the ground. This three-story community edifice had offered 31 rooms for rent and numerous essential public service accommodations like a ballroom, barbershop with hot baths, livery stable, apothecary, billiard hall, and doctor's office, as well as a most vital commercial service, a well-stocked saloon.

Crowning the Corona was its celebrated cupola, with accompanying promenade, that provided a 360 degree panorama of the El Cajon Valley, encompassing the entirety of its bountiful agricultural splendor. (For a historical account of the Corona Hotel, the July 2012 *Heritage* contains an excellent article by G. Carroll Rice.)

The December 1920 conflagration of this El Cajon showpiece was all-consuming and total. However, the hotel cellar and two outdoor privy vaults that had served hotel patrons during most of the Corona's 34-year existence were well-protected by earthen surroundings and remained untouched.

Interspersed amongst the expected privy contents could be found the discards of circa 1900 El Cajon society including kitchen throwaways, emptied bottles of all description, various personal accoutrements, and almost anything else which, either intentionally or accidentally, found its way down a privy hole.

And so they had lain, undisturbed and forgotten by most over the next three generations succeeding the fire. That is, until the early 1990's, when many of you may recall the corner of

Main and Magnolia was subjected to extensive modification during the Main Street Redevelopment Project. What you may not be aware of is the archaeological study related to this project.

After having become acquainted with the scope of planned activity associated with this major city project, and being keenly aware that any buried items of historical interest were soon to become lost to us for generations, if not forever, local history nut, bottle collector, and long-time ECHS member Rurik Kallis secured permission from the City of El Cajon to perform a salvage excavation on the site in May 1992.

Rurik, with help from an archaeologist-in-training friend, had originally intended to map out what objects were found where, at what depth, and in association with what other artifacts, and to then donate most of the intact historically significant material to the El Cajon Historical Society, of which Fran Hill was then president. (Funny how some things never change!).

However, shortly after their work had commenced and the first investigatory trench was dug, local archaeologists became alarmed that "non-professionals" were disturbing the site. They informed City officials that by allowing private excavation on public land containing archaeological resources of substantial stratigraphic integrity, they were in violation of the 1970 California Environmental Quality Act. City officials then had little choice but to renege on their recently-granted dig permit. What followed was the long (and expensive) process of conducting an Environmental Impact Report and bidding out the project to a professional archaeological recovery work crew.



Mike Kaszuba holds up some bottles found in the storage vaults.

(*Side note:* While salvage work was on-going, the professionally-hired and professionally-salaried workers, when posed with a stickler, ended up consulting with ... guess who? Yup ... you got it ... Rurik!)

A very extensive final report on the project was issued in 1994, and soon thereafter, the artifacts recovered were turned over to the properly designated caretaker, the City of El Cajon.

So what happened to all of this material, which newspaper accounts at the time placed at approximately 25,000 pieces inside some 200 odd storage boxes? Many have inquired over the years, with all being informed that it was just "gone", that it was not in City storage, that no one knew of its whereabouts. (Those of you who aren't acquainted with me should know that as an ex-government employee of 31 years, having worked within the "system" for 31 years, I am hard-pressed to accept an official response of "no" or "don't know" as an answer.)

The word was that the salvaged artifacts had originally been offered to Russ Stockwell, an old-time ECHS founder and Knox House curator in 1995. But where to store such a volume of material, the bulk of which would be of little interest to most folk? So Russ declined. And at that point, the material vanished and the story pretty much ends.

That is, until early this year, when I became interested in what became of our “lost treasure”. I began to actively contact all of the people associated with the project, from Rurik to the team archaeologists, from archaeologist friends of mine to those ECHS members with any memory of the project and still with us, from the San Diego County archaeological storage facility to early 1990s’ newspaper archives, and finally back to the destination where all indications still seemed to point:— the City of El Cajon.

After another round of inquiries, I focused my attention on two people: Deputy City Manager Nancy Palm, a proven friend of ECHS, and Tony Shute, a Senior Planner who, unfortunately for him, responded to my persistent cage-rattling. These people were just wonderful to work with, and between the two of them, they contacted anybody and everybody they could imagine who might be aware of the whereabouts of the artifact collection, including a whole lot of people I had already contacted, and many more I would never have considered, and still they came up empty. They literally had searched high and low at City Hall, at Public Works storage areas, etc.

Welcome New Members

Terry Dickinson
Jack Dickens
Anthony Audette
Jeanette L. Way

At this point, Tony and I were running short on ideas, and the only other sources we could think of contacting were a couple of university archaeology departments, and failing that, retired former employees of the Planning Department. Tony agreed to begin with the latter, and it paid off big time! He successfully located the person who had assigned the collection to storage off-site at McCarthy Transfer & Storage, where it has sat for all these years at no cost to the City, thanks to the magnanimity of Tim McCarthy, the storage facility’s owner.

Only problem was, said City official must have forgotten to notify anyone else in the department about this arrangement when he stopped working for the City, and with no storage bills coming due ... you know the rest.

At any rate, the Lost Treasure of the Corona Hotel, as I have decided to refer to it, has been found! Not only that, it now belongs to us.

The El Cajon Planning Department decided that the El Cajon Historical Society would be the proper stewards for this collection. And talk about icing on the cake ... lifetime ECHS member McCarthy Transfer & Storage has agreed to continue to store the material for us, free of charge! The moral to all this is that if you are on an information quest, especially where government entities are involved, a polite yet dogged

persistence will quite often yield positive results.

So ... what now? I began this search to determine what actually became of the substantial artifact-rich collection described in newspaper accounts of 1994 with hope that some artifacts of a bygone era might be obtained for display in the Knox House Museum and to show some old bottle specimens and perhaps other artifacts of interest in our display booth at the centennial celebration.

Four bottles were displayed at the 100-year festivities. Now plans are underway to set up a permanent rotating display at the Knox House. It appears that what remains in storage is around 25% shy of the 200 boxes recounted in old newspaper articles, but after an initial examination of the three storage vaults’ contents, I’m optimistic that most of the better items detailed in the final archaeological report might still be there.

Since no inventory sheets have been found, I have begun the daunting task of documenting/photographing the collection. Ultimately, I would like to contact the archaeology departments of our local universities to make them aware that this great historical resource has been located and is now available for research. Hopefully, the not-too-distant future will present us with a sparkling new thesis or dissertation project expanding our knowledge of El Cajon’s glory days.

Historical speaker series continues

The “Journey to our Historical Past” speaker series continues at the El Cajon Library:

January 17	Del Hood, long time Editor of the Daily Californian.
February 7	Kate Breece from the Helix Water District on “The Flume”.
February 21	Steve Varner on Olde Highway 80
March 7	Tom McGrath, long-time announcer at the Cajon Speedway.
March 21	Ed Jarrell of the El Cajon Fire Department.

Presentations will be held from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the El Cajon Library Community Room, 201 East Douglas Avenue, El Cajon. Admission is free.

A Look at the Lively Arts in El Cajon

1892 – 1952

by G. Carroll Rice

FOR EL CAJON ACTORS, THE PLAY BECAME EVERYTHING

Local actors presented a play called *The Breakers* in the Town Hall in 1894. The names are unfamiliar and nothing is known of the play itself, but their pioneering performance signaled the way for budding thespians for all the years to come.

In the earliest years, El Cajon's citizens had little access to professional theatre, but as train and bus trans-



FREDERICK B. WARDE

portation became available, trips to San Diego for entertainment became popular.

Dr. Charles Knox, son of El Cajon's founder Amaziah Knox, told me how he had seen players such as Frederick B. Warde and Lawrence Barrett in San Diego. Eugene Vacher also told of going to San Diego on the train for his weekly music lessons, and going to vaudeville performances with his father

afterwards to hear different kinds of music. Incidentally, his father took him to a few shows, presumably burlesque, that he was not to mention to his mother, El Cajon's beloved first-grade teacher, Josephine Vacher.

As in the case of music, enthusiastic teachers led the way to theatrical experiences in local schools. Beth Masterson was foremost in direction of grammar school plays, developing such talented students as Jack Thompson as actors; and directing pageant-like spectacles such as *A Mother Goose Picnic* – I played *Old King Cole* - for the younger set. Grossmont High was known for the quality of its theatrical presentations due to the demanding direction of teachers such as Eva Quicksall, Beulah Schriver, and Raymond Kniss.

From 1926 to 1988, Grossmont's annual Christmas Pageant dominated the holiday season. The 1½ hour-long performance was a grand spectacle of drama and tableaux, accompanied by a full orchestra and the glorious voices of the Red Robe Choir directed by Merle Donohue. The performances were free, but the attendance from around San Diego County was so great that tickets had to be

issued to avoid overcrowding the school's 1200-seat capacity gymnasium/auditorium for each of four presentations. It was truly a gift to the community from the faculty and students of Grossmont High School, all giving freely of their time and talents. A complete history of the pageant written by Richard Dunlop may be found on the Internet, under the subject of Red Robe Choir. The full and proper credits for the production of the Pageant at that site are far beyond the limits of this article.

Spurred by the great 'Little Theatre Movement' of the 1920's and 1930's, a group of teachers and interested people from El Cajon and La Mesa met in 1937 to form The La Mesa Little Theatre. With the enthusiastic support of a corporate sponsor, The Cordtz Outdoor Advertising Company, the group began producing plays immediately. Attracting actors from La Mesa, El Cajon, and the back country, the theatre welcomed older players who had been part of the early motion picture community. What an exciting opportunity for newcomers like me to be exposed to their theatrical knowledge and overhear tales of legendary players recalled by those gray-haired old timers! Bill Cordtz donated the complete records and scrapbooks of the La Mesa Little Theatre to the La Mesa Historical Society when the group reorganized as the Lamplighters in 1976. *(continued on page 9)*



Grossmont High School's Red Robe Choir continues to this day, shown here sometime during the 1970s-80s conducted by Robert Boucher.

(continued from page 8)

El Cajon had no amateur theatre in 1947, and a group of friends from Grossmont High School joined me to create The Spotlighters. Our original intent was to produce children's plays during the summer. We soon arranged with Principal John Montgomery to present our plays in the grammar school auditorium. Our first play was adapted from the old story of Rumpelstiltskin; and the second was The Ugly Duckling by A. A. Milne. The Spotlighters lasted for two more summers, but school commitments and other priorities absorbed the lives of active students and El Cajon's experiment in 'little theatre' came to an end. The full story of our theatrical adventure appears as "The Spotlighters: El Cajon's Home-Grown Theatre" on the Historical Society's web site at www.elcajonhistory.org under the subheading History. Today there are many opportunities for young actors to develop their skills in and around El Cajon. Then, we were pioneers.



The 1949 collaboration between San Diego State College (it wasn't a university then) and San Diego's Community Theatre led to the founding of the annual San Diego Shakespeare Festival. By their agreement, the City of San Diego provided the Globe Theatre in Balboa Park and its facilities; and San Diego State College hired internationally famous Shakespearean director B. Iden Payne to teach one class and direct one play during the summer session. The State also paid the expenses of faculty production personnel and materials. With many students from the greater San Diego area, including El Cajon, attending the college, it opened a door to a world-class theatre adventure. It should be noted that many of the students seeking this adventure were teachers, actors from the 1935 Shakespeare productions, full-time students and a full array of business and professional people.

The first play, Twelfth Night, was double cast, changing players every other night, thus, Feste, the Jester, was played alternatively by El Cajon actors Jack Thompson and Freeman Meskimen. In my own case, I played Sebastian one night and the Sea Captain who rescued Viola the next. That Festival was truly a labor of love by people from all over the county including El Cajon musicians Ben Cloud and David Barker who played for the dancing on the green and Mrs. Catherine Knox, wife of Dr. Charles Knox, who was among the volunteers working on costumes. I know that there were other East County residents involved in this and later productions whose faces have faded into the depths of time. Much has been written about the Shakespeare Festivals, their artistic

excellence and how many of the actors and staff, like Marion Ross, who played the Lady Olivia in that production, made them stepping stones to stellar careers. But, they also demonstrated how El Cajon and East County people could enter into San Diego activities through improved transportation, even when the freeway system was still on paper.

... AND THERE WERE DANCE CLASSES AND PERFORMANCES

The Depression brought many pastimes into prominence such as the assembling of jigsaw puzzles and a widespread popularity of tap dancing. In El Cajon, the very talented Harvey family contributed to and encouraged the development of dance programs. Through an arrangement with the grammar school, former vaudevillian Dixie Harvey taught dance classes after school and produced programs with the assistance of her husband Milton who was highly skilled at building scenery and adapting vaudeville skits for student performances. The Kittlesons, another of El Cajon's 'born-in-a-trunk' performing families also helped promote the lively arts in the valley. Their particular contribution in the late 1930's was using local students, mostly friends of Patty Kittleson in a radio program advertising Dr. Pepper. Actor, author, and teacher Ole Kittleson continues that family tradition.

OTHER ENTERTAINMENTS CAME OUR WAY, TOO!

The west side of El Cajon was an army 'tent city' during the World War II years, and army bands scheduled Sunday afternoon concerts in the park in front of the library. There may have been more than one, but I recall a memorable Sunday morning when the Army bands played Onward Christian Soldiers while thousands of men marched down Main Street to enter the churches of their chosen denominations.

In the late 1930's some variety performers including a young Charlie Cannon, later of Starlight Opera fame, gave two evening vaudeville-type shows at the school auditorium. There were also occasional assemblies at schools featuring professional lecturers and performers such as Tommy Tucker, the original Hollywood Sound Man. (He created Tarzan's famous yell and was the original voice of Popeye.)

Circuses and carnivals came our way, too, adding an exotic touch to the pageant of 'lively arts' in El Cajon.

A Look at the Lively Arts will continue in the next issue of the Heritage when movie glamour brightens El Cajon.

The Winning Essays

The 31st Annual Third Grade Essay Contest celebrated El Cajon's 100th Anniversary. Students from ten elementary schools submitted essays covering various aspects of El Cajon's history. The winning essays are being included in this newsletter as space permits. They are also posted at <http://elcajonhistory.org> (under Education).

Judges Award *Kumeyaay Indians*

Cole McDonough, Bostonia School

This report is going to tell you some facts about the history of the east county Indians, the Kumeyaay, and how they lived.

The Kumeyaay referred to as the diesuno by the Spanish were the original natives of San Diego. They lived in San Diego County for more than ten thousand years, before any other humans.

The Kumeyaay were hunters and gatherers. They hunted deer (kwak) and rabbits for food and used their fur for shelter and clothes. They used their hoofs for glue for their arrows. They also gathered acorns from the lack oak trees and made acorn mush (shawii). They also gathered berries (neyrr) to eat.

The Kumeyaays made baskets out of straw, pottery out of clay out of the ground, and talking sticks out of a thick stick, leather, and feathers.

The Indians would take straw and stain it with mashed berries and vegetables to make it colored. Then weave it to make a basket.

An Indian woman once made shawii (mashed acorns) and placed it in a basket. She had made it and left it outside. When she came back for it in the morning she saw that her shawii was gone and believe it was a mouse who ate it. That same day she did it again to



try to catch the mouse. When she went out to see if the shawii was gone she saw a mouse and behind it was a snake that ate the mouse and saved the shawii. So, now today when they make a basket a snake design is on it.

They used the talking stick when they sat down around the fire with the tribal leaders to discuss new laws and ways,

and when you had the stick it was your turn to speak. The Kumeyaays made teas for healing. They ground sage for tea to cure colds. They used willow tree bark to cure headaches (like aspirin is used today).

The Kumeyaays were the people who greeted the Spaniards when they first sailed into San Diego Harbor in 1542. The boundaries of the Kumeyaay's land changed after that day. Today the Kumeyaay's tribal members are divided into 12 separate bands. Out of the total acreage of more than fifteen thousand acres, the Kumeyaays own about fifty five thousand acres of it in the east county.

Virginia Stead Award *Geology of El Cajon*

Aubrie Sobczak, Bostonia School

I am going to tell you about the Geology of El Cajon that started 2,000,000 years ago. Geology is the study of the history of land. This was my favorite thing to learn about El Cajon. In the rest of this report I will also talk about before the valley was made, how the valley was made, and what is in the rich soil.

Many years ago El Cajon Valley was under water. The ocean was so high it reached Alpine. There were earthquakes and the land shifted up and down. People believe that granite rocks came from Colorado to El Cajon. When the mountains were done moving, the valley was a salt water lagoon. The four mountains were in the shape of a square.

Several years later the square overfilled and then it made a path to open sea. After the water left the area was about 5 miles long and 3 to 4 miles wide. When settlers came they realized it was in the shape of a box. They named it El Cajon Valley which means "the box" in Spanish. The rain washed the soil of the mountains around the valley.

When the settlers found that the rich soil was good for growing crops, they decided to make farms. The floor of the Valley is made up of granite rock, a layer of clay and a layer of soil. In 1887, a farmer said the soil was bright red and chocolate colored. This means the soil had oxide and iron which helps crops grow. Another great thing about farming is the farmers found water 5 feet below the soil. The farmers grew corn, avocados, barley, oats, grapes for wine and grapes to make raisins.

I told you about before the valley was made, how the valley was made and what is in the soil. I think it is amazing that here we live is where it began 2,000,000 years ago. I hope you enjoyed my geological essay of El Cajon

Disclaimer: ECHS makes every effort to make available accurate information for historical research. Students use a variety of sources. Third grade essays should not be used for research.

Cattle, Cowboys, and Cambo

San Diego's Wild West Frontier



**Presented by Gabe Selak
of the San Diego History Center**

San Diego's Rancho Period was full of shoot-outs, saloons, sporting ladies, and fandangos -- all derived from the regions first industry-the hide and tallow trade. Explore life on the frontier and learn the history of some recognizable ranchos today.

Thursday, January 17, 2013

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Doors open at 11 a.m.

Lunch 11:45 a.m.

(includes salad, Steerburger Plate, apple cobbler, ice tea or soda)

Featured Presentation 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Cost: \$15/person (includes presentation, meal, tax and tip)

Junction Steakhouse

777 Jamacha Road, El Cajon, CA 92019

Advance Reservations Only - Limited to 40 People

January Meeting Reservation Form

Number Attending _____ (\$15 each) Amount Enclosed _____

Name _____

Address _____ City, Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Deadline January 14

Mail reservations & checks to: ECHS, P.O. Box 1973, El Cajon, CA 92022-1973

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

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Return Service Requested

Don't forget your dues

2013 promises to be an exciting year for ECHS! As we start the new year, it would be greatly appreciated if every member would check their address label on the "Heritage" and send in their dues on or before the date indicated. This would eliminate the costly expense of sending out special envelopes and thus enable ECHS to make better use of its resources.

Membership dues for 2013 remain \$12 for Individual, \$20 Family, \$30 Organization, \$40 Business, and \$500 Enhances Life.

Thank you for your support of ECHS.

ECHS thanks three donors and neighbor

A heartfelt "thank you" to the following for their recent donations:

■ Hilda Erreca has donated a covered Haviland serving dish that now resides in the Knox's dining room cabinet. She also brought in a lovely watercolor collage of scenes around downtown El Cajon painted by artist Beth

Sambrono. It, and the winning oil painting by Gloria Chadwick for the color scheme chosen for the exterior of Knox House Museum, is being hung by the city in a public place yet to be assigned.

■ Pat Durbin Potter donated some of her teacher aunts' and mother's 1900-era clothing and an 1850s hat worn by her Boston-bred great grandmother. The hat became a focal point in the parlor during the Christmas exhibit of 2012. Some 120+-year-old baby clothing was included in the gift, and it is now worn by a doll "slumbering" in the graceful, old wicker buggy on the back porch.

■ Jane Stokes, another donor, gave ECHS a collection of stylishly designed and impeccably sewn 1880-90 women's lingerie and dress clothing. One, a purple and black plaid taffeta suit with an extravagantly beaded collar, glistens with all of its original glamour in the upstairs master bedroom. There are also two intricately beaded purses, lovely blouses, and a delicately embroidered wedding night nightgown.

And thanks also go to a neighbor, Steve Haber, who regularly crisscrosses the Knox lawn in his wheelchair to gather up the leavings of his two small dogs – and everyone else's, as well. We are very grateful.

El Cajon Historical Society Board

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