



EL CAJON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HERITAGE

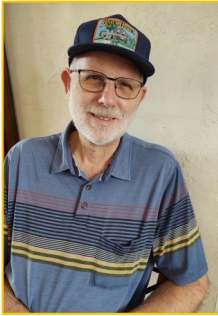


Volume 43 Issue 1

www.elcajonhistory.org

January 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



First let me introduce or reintroduce myself. I have been volunteering with the El Cajon Historical Society for over 30 years and this will be my fourth time serving as President.

I cannot overstate the importance of thanking your board of directors for their dedication to the Historical Society in both time and treasure.

In this unprecedented time we have been meeting virtually and regularly.

No one director deserves more thanks than another but with that being said I personally want thank your current Past President who has done an exceptional job for 4 years of guiding, directing and keeping us all on course. Carla Nowak is an irreplaceable asset to the Historical Society and we are thankful she will continue to remain active with her behind the scenes work in the office and in particular sorting through the many boxes of Mother Goose Parade archival material we inherited.

In addition to Carla's commitment to the society, one other person needs to be acknowledge for her ongoing efforts to digitize our archives. This is a mammoth job that is a work in progress and will be for the foreseeable future. Our current past Vice President Linda Garrity has committed herself to this project and the dedication it takes to see a project like this through is commendable. After a slow start due the equipment she was having to use, things seem to be moving at a faster pace thanks to a donation of a new scanner by 2 of our Board Members Joe and Christy Klock. This seems to be a significant improvement in not only speed but with the OCR capabilities the scanned documents should be searchable. Our vision for this project when completed is to make this information available to the internet and hopefully make it another means of supporting our mission to save and share the history of our area by charging a small access fee to view the information. The details of this are still to be determined.

It is regrettable but it appears for the foreseeable future the Knox House will remain closed. Because of the size of the building it does not lend itself to distancing. Under the current requirements we might only be allowed possibly 1 or 2 visitors with a docent and even then in some of the areas in the building that would not be possible. We hope to get our website back up and running and if we are successful with that there should be a virtual tour of the museum available.

I wish you all a safe, healthy, and enjoyable year!!

Rick Hall, President

Editor's Note:

On the following page is a reprint of the story submitted by G. Carroll Rice in the last issue. Due to a poor cut and paste job by the editor (me!), I neglected to include the full story in the last issue, so have included it in its entirety here. My sincere apologies to Carroll—and to the readers. And, with perfect timing, there is another article that Jack Dickens happened across on his computer this month, written some time back by Wm. Jerry Anderson that we are able to include in this issue as well. Hope you enjoy both!

Linda Foltz

REMEMBERING THE COWS AND ALL THAT MILK

By G. Carroll Rice

The El Cajon Valley was still somewhat rural until after World War II, and farm animals were not uncommon. (I, myself, was milking goats for friends when the car horns began to blow, celebrating the announcement that Japan had surrendered.) While many families had pleasure horses, probably just as many kept a milk cow. There were at least three dairies in El Cajon, but the family cow was a firmly entrenched tradition – particularly for families with children.

I was probably about five years old when my father bought our first cow. She was a brown Jersey-Guernsey mixed breed (known to produce rich and tasty milk) named Daisy.

Morning and evening, my father milked Daisy and carried the foaming bucket to the kitchen. The milk was strained into white milk pans, covered with a cloth to cool and allow the cream to rise. A childhood memory recalls whole milk being poured into a plump teal-blue pitcher and put in the refrigerator – for our table, of course. Skimmed milk went to the cats, dogs, chickens and, later, pigs,

With an abundance of milk and cream over the years, my mother produced an array of desserts, yeasty-smelling bread and flavorful baked goods. Frequently, there was a cloth sugar sack of curds and whey draining on the clothes line transforming into cottage cheese.

The golden cream not only flavored coffee and enriched recipes but was churned into sweet butter. Our churn consisted of a large square glass jar fitted with a metal lid supporting a crank mechanism to turn the paddles that stirred the cream. As I became a little older, I was allowed to help and proudly turned the crank, often singing a churning song my grandmother taught me:

Come, butter, come! Come, butter, come!
Peter's waiting at the gate, Waiting for a butter cake.
Come, butter, come!

In a couple of years, I was trusted with carrying a half-gallon glass jar of milk over to 'Uncle Elmer's house' on a regular basis. Our house was in the center of a ten-acre orange grove on the southeast corner of Third and Lexington Streets in El Cajon; and my mother's uncle, aunt and widowed mother lived in the house now 525 S. Third Street (currently owned by Tom and Linda Garity). Over half of the path led through the orange groves and along a line of irrigation standpipes. Sometimes, when the trees were watered, the soil around the pipes was wet, and passing shoes got muddy. When I wrote this verse for *Inside Grandma's Notebook* I remembered a day when I delivered the milk. This is Grandma's view:

UNDERSTANDING

I love to see my grandson come
From just across the way.
Sometimes the path is muddy though,
Just like it is today.

It's hard, you know, for me to keep
These floors and carpets neat,
So I remind the little man
To always scrape his feet.

He came to see me just at noon,
He'd walked through mud and ooze.
"Young man," I said, as my face turned red,
"You didn't clean those shoes."

"Now go back out and scrape them well.
Those shoes are a disgrace."
"I really scraped 'em, Grandma, good,"
As a smile grew on his face.

With open-mouthed amazement, folks,
I watched him start to hop.
"You see, Grandma, I told the truth,
The mud is just on top!"

For another 15 years or so my father, and occasionally I, milked Daisy and her successors. Memories of this period include my father bringing a newborn calf in the house for my mother to see and he being stung on the face by a bee while milking.

Lest I paint too pretty a picture, there were the 'down' sides to the keeping of livestock and small farming operations.

Flies, mosquitoes, wasps, and a host of other insects find animals and people attractive, and the bees needed to the pollinate plants come with stingers. Plants, people and animals all require individual attention to thrive, and that can add up to work, time and worry. We had all of these, but an abundance of milk products added to our feeling of prosperity during the 1930s and after. My memories of El Cajon in those days are of a land of milk and honey . . . and I like it that way.

My Ode to Carroll Rice

As we go through life we all have heroes. They can be sports stars, movie stars, or politicians. Mine were those people too, that is until I met some real heroes. These were people who, for one reason or another, care for the sick and infirm, or those that go beyond the call of duty to save lives. Sometimes it's intentional, accidental, or being in the right place at the right time.

Just such a man was Carroll Rice. Carroll didn't set out to be a hero, but he was, because he happened to be in the right place at the right time. He's my hero because of something that happened in El Cajon in the early 1940s. At that time, Carroll and I were members of the El Cajon Boy Scouts.

After winning a softball game on a summer day, a few of the boys suggested we go for a swim. They knew a quarry east of town had filled with water; it was close to the softball field, so the quarry became our next destination.

Now when I say swim, I'm referring to the other boys. I couldn't swim a lick. I couldn't flail my arms or call for help. Sinking was my style of swimming. When I was about 5 years old, Mother, my older brother Richard by 4 years, and I were down by the river having a picnic. My brother Richard could swim so he was allowed to play by the water. After he returned, I really wanted to swim just like him. Jumping up I ran to the water's edge and flung myself in as far as I could. I have no idea why, but my natural buoyancy held me 18 inches below the surface. There I remained unable to move a muscle, just my arms stretched out. Thankfully Mother said, "Richard, go pull that fool kid out before he drowns."

As we all climbed out of the quarry, one of the boys suggested we form a club. To be a member, a person had to dive to the bottom of the quarry, pick up a handful of stones, surface, and show the boys your "catch." I remained on the shore, as the other boys dove in, brought up their rocks, and became members of the club.

As the other boys continued swimming, still terrified of the water, I was the only one left on shore although I desperately wanted to join the club. Finally getting up the nerve to wade into the water up to my neck then holding my nose, I reached down, grabbed some stones, held my hand up high and proclaimed myself a member of the club. The chorus rang out, "No, your feet are touching the ground, so it doesn't count." I went back to shore, sat down and watched the other boys swimming and laughing. The boys forgot about me and swam away to deeper water 75 to 100 feet farther from the shore.

I mustered my courage, got up, ran as fast as I could, and dove head first into the water. Well, I don't have to tell you what happened next. I sunk to my 18 inches, arms stretched out, frozen in place. As sure as the sun rises, I was sure that I was going to drown. As the seconds ticked by, I found myself slipping into a euphoric state. I gave myself the last rights and resigned myself to my fate.

I was just about to gulp my first lung full of water, when I felt something brush my left arm. Without thinking, I grabbed hold of whatever it was and started to climb for all I was worth. When I broke out of the water, I found myself sitting on someone's back with my arms wrapped around their face. I'm sure Carroll was as surprised at rescuing me as I was about being rescued. One minute he was swimming along, minding his own business, and the next, he has a small, terrified, 10-year-old on his back. Carroll handled it with style and grace. He took me back to shore and never said a word to the other boys.

The years have passed. I served 20 years in the Air Force. I've traveled all over the world and have told this story in Japan, France, Korea, Germany, England and any other place I've lived. The only person that has never heard me tell the story is Carroll.

One evening I was watching Ken Kramer's TV show on San Diego. One of the features was the El Cajon Historical Society. To my surprise Carroll Rice was president!

The next Saturday, July 15, 2017, I went to the Historical Society Knox House Museum and met my old friend Carroll Rice. I told Carroll my story, and to my amusement, he remembered it too. I was able to check an item off of my bucket list, when I thanked my hero, Carroll, for saving me.

Wm. Jerry Anderson (submitted by Jack Dickens for this issue)

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

To:

No Quarterly Meeting In January. Happy New Year!

Our friendly reminder to please pay your dues promptly in January, and as a special kindness to do it before the usual "overdue" letter that comes out in March. Just write 'Dues 2021' on the check memo line. Sending dues in before the 'overdue' letter goes out in March saves the society some postage expense.

The categories are: Individual \$15, Family \$25.

Organization \$45., Business \$45 and Life \$500.

Please make checks payable to ECHS and send to:

P.O. Box 1973, El Cajon, CA 92022-1973.

Telephone Messages: 619-444-3800.

Thank you.

