NEWSLETTER

SONOMA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 51 NO. 3 JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER 2020

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I would like to start my report by thanking all community members for their support during the COVID-19 pandemic and the social upheaval that has dominated 2020.

Please view our website to watch the fun and inspiring videos of "Baseball Part One." A huge thanks to Russell Johnson for producing these videos and narrating Video One. Thank you also to Boardmember Kate Schertz for narrating Video Two.

The date for reopening the Depot Park Museum to the public is still unknown and is dependent on direction from the Sonoma County Health Officer. Watch for an e-blast announcing the re-opening date. All docents will have PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and meet all Sonoma County Health department guidelines.

With the help of a California State Library Grant we are working to nominate newspaper archives for digitization from our collection of unique Sonoma Valley newspapers including the Boyes Hot Springs Moonbeam, The Schellville Sun, and the Sonoma Valley Expositor. Some are already online at the California Revealed website http://www.californiarevealed.org.

We are also formalizing plans for an exhibit about the Sonoma Valley Woman's Club utilizing the club minutes that describe their valuable contribution to civic improvements in Sonoma.

While "sheltering in place" your Board of Directors has been working on updating our website to provide better access to our archives and more digital exhibits about Sonoma Valley.

The Marcy House Archives and Research Center is open by appointment only. Please call Lorrie Fulton for information at (707) 343-1335.

Patricia Cullinan

NEW AND IMPROVED WEBSITE!

James Marshall Berry is assisting us in the design of our new website. We intend to include photos of all of Sonoma Valley illustrating the diverse communities from Los Guilicos to San Pablo Bay. Experts are writing concise histories of these communities. Also included will be easier access to information contained in our archives. Exhibits like Baseball Part One will be online.

Please visit:
http://www.depotparkmuseum.org
for updates.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Donn Blake
Philip Glander
Thomas Martin
Marilyn Nasi
Jane Marie Wiley

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Sonoma Valley Historical Society is to provide a forum and a resource for the study and dissemination of Sonoma Valley history for present and future generations by identifying, collecting, preserving and sharing artifacts, documents and images.

SONOMA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OFFICERS

Patricia Cullinan, President
Carol Page, Vice President
Cynthia Thomssen, Treasurer
Shelley Hoffman, Secretary

DIRECTORS

Michael Acker
Dr. Susan Crutchfield
Kathleen Hill
Dr. Peter Meyerhof
Sharon O'Neil
Ron Price
Charlotte Ruffner
Kate Schertz
Kate Todd

BOARD MEETINGS
First Wednesday of the Month
12:00 pm
Depot Park Museum

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

The Sonoma Valley Historical Society was formed in January 1937 and has served the Valley as a nonprofit organization ever since. It is dedicated to the colllection, preservation and dissemination of the historic heritage of the "Valley of the Moon."

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION
"Sonoma Valley Notes" is the official publication of the Sonoma Valley Historical Society and is published quarterly.

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Assistant Editor: Pat Pulvirenti
ppulvirenti@sbcglobal.net

"SECOND SATURDAY" LECTURE SERIES

Sonoma Community Center, Rm. 110
276 East Napa St., Sonoma
2:00 pm
Unless Otherwise Noted

September 12, 2020

Phoebe Apperson Hearst:
A Life in Power and Politics
Presented by Alexandra Nickliss

Alexandra Nickliss will present a lecture about her book published May 2019. This is the first biography of one of the Gilded Age's most powerful women.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this lecture may be a Zoom presentation. Watch for e-blasts, check our website or call (707) 343-1335 to confirm.

October 10, 2020

EL NORTE
The Epic and Forgotten Story of Hispanic North America
Presented by Carrie Gibson

New York Times best seller "El Norte" takes on the task of accounting for the relevant and telling cases of our modern process of national formation and regional negotiations. Check out https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/06/books/review/carrie-gibson-el-norte.html for a review.

This lecture will be delivered via "Zoom." Watch for e-blasts, check our website and/or call (707) 343-1335 for more information.

November 14, 2020

Trains of Sonoma
presented by Charlie Siebanthal

Charlie is the president of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Historical Society and an expert on Sonoma Valley train history. This lecture was rescheduled from May 9, 2020.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY PICKERS

Dr. Peter G. Meyerhof

A recent memorable event for me was the opportunity to pick through a barn belonging to Michael Shainsky, in search of local history. Michael Shainsky comes from a prominent Sonoma family with roots in the poultry business, but also with a deep interest in local and Jewish history. Michael studied history at Sonoma State University in the late 1970's and pursued several historical research projects during the following decade.

He recently offered the Sonoma Valley Historical Society the opportunity to take whatever historical materials we wanted from the hot, dusty, and dimly lit loft of his barn in Sonoma. And there they were – piles of cardboard boxes that had been undisturbed for decades except by silverfish, spiders and mice.

After sorting through each box to see what it contained, a total of 12 heavy cartons were removed by Patricia Cullinan and myself. Each box was decontaminated and over the past two months, I've spent many hours at the Marcy House going through hundreds of manila files and reports to categorize what we had retrieved.

The highlights of the collection include Michael Shainsky's thesis with thousands of additional pages of notes, oral histories and other primary documents all relating to the early Sonoma entrepreneur Solomon Schocken. There is nearly as much information on the history of Preston, a community north of Cloverdale. Then there are many folders of research notes and reports on Russian California and their expeditions, a well-researched history of the Beltane ranch, details on an archeological investigation of the Sonoma Barracks, the Watmaugh bridge historical landmark research, history of the Schlake Ranch in Petaluma, Lewis Adler, Colonel Haraszthy, copies of countless business directories, census reports, land grant information, as well as journals and books on California history and much more. There is a huge amount of material to keep us researchers content for a very long time.

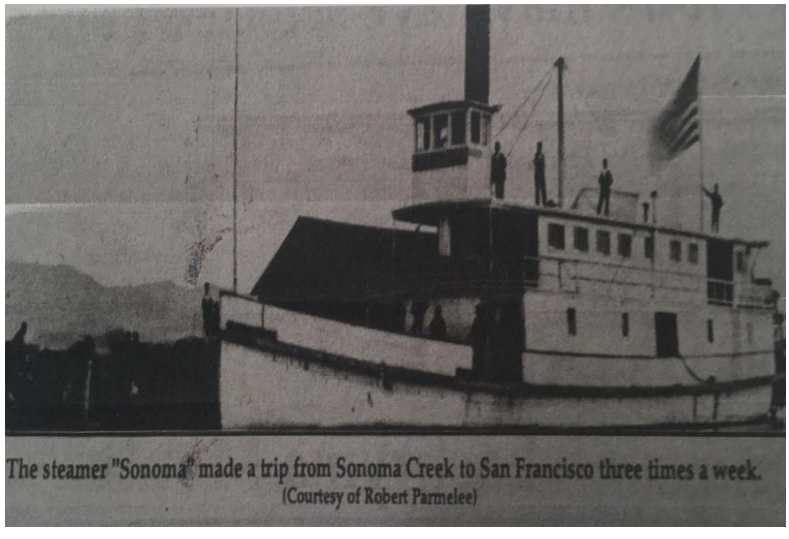
HISTORICAL TOUR OF WINGO POSTPONED

Susan R. Crutchfield, Ph.D.

The Society's Historic Bus Tour with narrators Wally Lourdeaux and David Viviani at the microphone and featuring Sonoma locales; Wingo, Tolay Lake, Embarcadero and Captain Stofer's home, has been postponed until 2021 due to COVID-19 concerns.

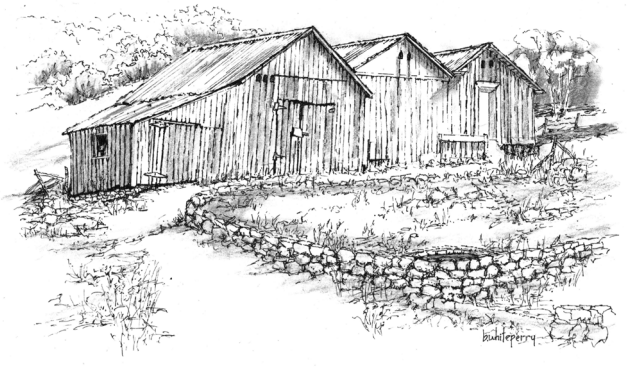
While "sheltering in place" consider reading: "Richard 'Fresh Air Dick' Janson" by Wally Lourdeaux, "Pioneer Sonoma" by Robert D. Parmelee and "Schools and Scows in Early Sonoma" by George and Roger Emanuels. The latter two were published by the Sonoma Valley Historical Society and are available for purchase at the Depot Park Museum when it re-opens.

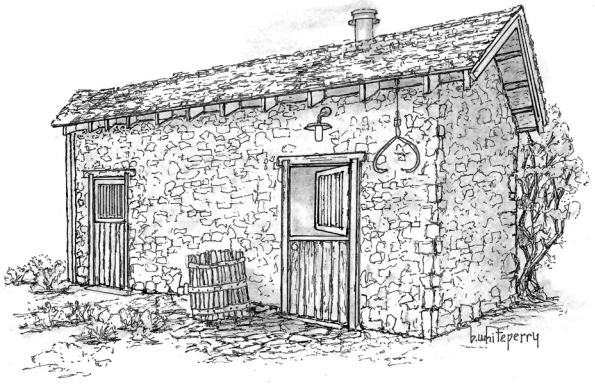
The information in these publications will provide for lively conversation with our narrators when we tour in 2021.



The steamer "Sonoma" made a trip from Sonoma Creek to San Francisco three times a week.
(Courtesy of Robert Parmelee)

DRAWING AND TEXT BY BARBARA WHITE PERRY





THREE BARNS and ICE HOUSE at LAWRENCE VILLA

230 Second Street East, Sonoma

I first saw the barns during a walk up Second Street East. Sitting on a hill covered in high grasses, the "Three Barns" became a curiosity to me. By chance, in 2010, I learned that Ron and Audrey Chapman had acquired the property.

Little is known about the exact dates of ownership or construction on this property. There have been several owners over the years. Dr. Peter Campbell, an immigrant from Ireland and physician in Sonoma, was the first. He died in 1863 without a will and the property was purchased at auction by Frederick Keller.

Dr. Lorenzo Lawrence purchased the property in approximately 1880. He practiced in Sonoma for 13 years and was interested in providing another water supply for Sonoma. Dr. Lawrence tunneled into the hillside tapping into a hot water spring. Local stone was readily available so he used it liberally for foundations, terracing, walls and a 27-foot circular stone swimming pool. Another stone project was a small building known as the "Ice House" that measures 20-feet by 11-feet with 16-inch walls. Years later the Ice House became a B&B unit equipped with a potbelly stove and bathroom.

On the northern portion of the property there were two barns for Dr. Lawrence's carriage and later the Villa's "Omnibus". The barns were side by side with an equal space between. Years later a third, identical barn, was built between the original barns and used as a stable and chicken ranch. This is what I call the "Three Barns at Lawrence Villa". A structure on the East side of the property at 2nd Street East that measured 80-feet by 36-feet, was a dance hall for the Lawrence Villa. It was later used as a warehouse, artist studios and a B&B with a restaurant.

Dr. Lawrence died at his home at the age of 52 in 1892 and by 1901 Mr. and Mrs. Pellissier owned the property and operated it as Lawrence Villa until 1910 when San Francisco caterers Gere and Bruchon leased the resort.
In November 1931, a group of buildings on the property, still owned by the Pellissiers, were destroyed by fire. Several cottages, the Three Barns, Ice House and swimming pool survived.

Ron and Audrey Chapman purchased the property in 2009. Stone remnants of the old resort still remain. The barns were in poor condition and removed from the property in 2010. However, lumber, windows, and hardware were saved for a new life and can be seen throughout the Chapman's home built in 2011. The Ice House was restored and furnished with period antiques and is used for dinners and fund raising events.

Information for this article came from Ron Chapman, the 1908 Index Tribune and from railroad tourist books in 1903-09.

The Barns of Lawrence Villa is part of *Drawing Sonoma 2nd Edition* featuring historic and unique properties. The Ice House is a new ink and vine-charcoal illustration. Barbara is a Sonoma Treasure Artist. Barbara@BarbaraWhitePerry.com

HELEN SHAINSKY
Sonoma Valley Home Chef Supreme

Kathleen Hill

A member of the Sonoma Valley Historical Society for more than 50 years, Helen Shainsky and husband Sam Shainsky lived on their chicken ranch on Shainsky Road, just off what used to be called "Dead Man's Curve" on lower Broadway.

Known as the "Sonoma Poultry & Egg Dealer," according to his Bank of Italy checks, Sam's business grew into what son Alan ran as Petaluma Poultry Company, home of Rosie and Rocky.

Helen invited all of the Jewish community, which she last told me totaled 27 or 28 people 25 years ago, for all Jewish holidays and cooked for days in preparation while others brought important traditional dishes as well.

A Sonoma Index-Tribune story about the 50th anniversary of the Sonoma Valley Historical Society thanked Helen who "was noted for her tasty refreshments she prepares and serves at the organization's gatherings."

N.B. Helen typed many of her recipes on stationery from Canyon Ranch in Tucson, Arizona.

Helen Shainsky's Tomato Leek Salad

Ingredients for the Salad
2 cups julienned leeks
8 cups quartered tomatoes
For the vinaigrette
1 cup diced onions
1/4 cup chopped chives
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 cup Balsamic vinegar
1 cup vegetable stock
1/4 cup lemon juice
2 tablespoons capers

Preparation
1. Blanch leeks in boiling water for 20 seconds. Drain and combine with tomatoes
2. Combine all ingredients for vinaigrette in a small saucepan. Cook over medium heat until reduced by half, about 20 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool.
3. Mix cooled dressing with tomato-leek mixture. Place 1 1/4 cup salad on each plate.
4. Makes 8 servings.

THANK YOU TO THE CHAMBER

Thank you to the Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce for their grant of supplies to facilitate the safe opening of both the Marcy House Archives and Research Center and the Depot Park Museum. Because of their generosity we received the necessary items for sanitizing and safely welcoming our docents and visitors. We appreciate their support and look forward to seeing everyone soon!

THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN

The coronavirus pandemic has changed so many of our summer plans-vacations zapped, music and film festivals cancelled, and sports events obliterated. But, never fear -- the Sonoma Valley Historical Society has come to your rescue with two new videos of the very successful baseball exhibit that opened during last fall's fire shutdown. Thanks to the incredible talents of Russell Johnson who created these videos they are now available to the public on the SVHS's webpage.

Check it out for a delightful journey into Sonoma baseball, www.depotparkmuseum.org/videos and PLAY BALL!!!

THE SPRINGS

by Michael Acker

A Building Through Time
18340 Sonoma Highway-The Greengrass Building

In February 1956, Frank Greengrass moved his real estate firm into the newly remodeled building at 18340 Sonoma Highway. The Index Tribune also announced the grand re-opening of the remodeled Woodleaf Market, and the relocation of Attorney Jack Coffey's practice from San Francisco to Boyes Hot springs, with offices in the Greengrass Building.

Thursday, February 23, 1956

Frank Greengrass
cordially invites you to attend an

Open House

celebrating the opening of his

New Offices

at

18340 Sonoma Highway - Boyes Hot Springs

on

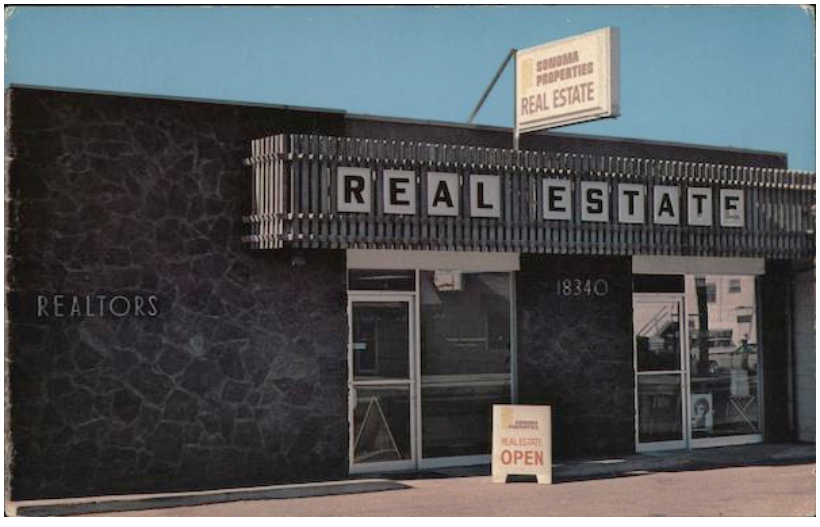
Sunday, February 26 -- 1 to 5 p.m.

- Refreshments

GREENGRASS

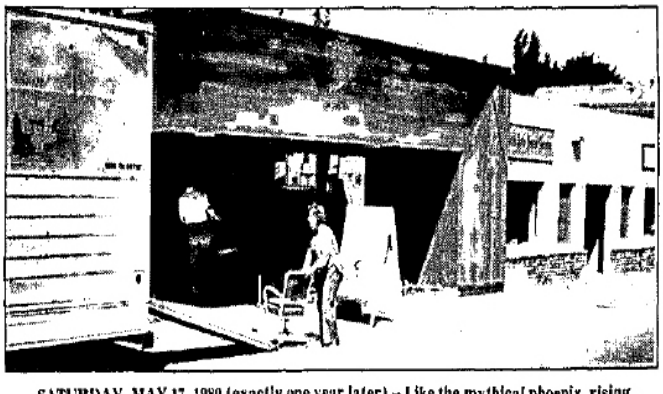
(Successor to Sol D. Becker)

Greengrass's, firm, renamed Sonoma Properties, prospered but on May 17, 1979, the building burned to the ground. Amazingly, a new building was built at the site in one year and opened in May, 1980. The architect was Victor Conforti and the builder was Lely Construction.



There are gaps in it's history but importantly, 18340 Sonoma Highway was the first home for the La Luz Center, which opened there in 1990.

. . . we're moving in



SATURDAY, MAY 17, 1980 (exactly one year later) -- Like the mythical phoenix, rising, out of its own ashes, Sonoma Properties has rebuilt its office in Boyes Hot Springs and is moving in. The beautiful new building is the result of hard work by many local businesses including architect Victor Conforti and contractors Chris and Robin Lely. The 2,000 sq. ft. structure includes 10 offices, a conference room, and a reception room, plus the added comforts of natural lighting from skylights and other unique features.

Friday, December 14, 1990 Sonoma Valley, California 50¢

The Sonoma Index-Tribune

La Luz shines for Hispanic community

Resource center to help 'break that barrier'

By Teri Shore
INDEX-TRIBUNE LIFESTYLES EDITOR

Lights flashed on, Spanish music played and 50 proud people gathered together to dedicate the new La Luz Bilingual Center Wednesday night.

The new center for the Spanish-speaking community officially opens Monday, but La Luz founder Ligia "Lee" Booker and her supporters filled the empty office with words of praise and hope Wednesday evening.

Located at 18340 Sonoma Highway in Boyes Hot Springs, the center's hours will be 2 to 7 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"Opening the doors to La Luz is the end of a pilgrimage started eight years ago as a group of people with problems and a desire to solve them. It is also the beginning of another one, where we are going to work together and break that language barrier by helping people adapt to this community, and meet their needs as much as possible from one location," Booker said after the meeting.

Booker and other La Luz volunteers worked from their homes until now, assisting Spanish-speakers with a range of services from translating to finding shelter.

WHEN THE DOORS are unlocked Monday, Booker expects a wave of residents needing immigration advice to pour in.

"We expect a lot of those who are ready for their final application," Booker said.

She and her team will be making referrals and also helping FISH with the Christmas Basket drive, to make sure Hispanics in need get on the list for the holiday food giveaway.

Booker said they were still looking for donations of basic supplies for the office. The center needs a filing cabinet, file folders, paper, pencil sharpeners and all sorts of other things.

"We are also hoping to get a lot of pennies," she added. Volunteers have

Continued on back page

GUITARISTS JOIN THE Amigos de Jesus singers in song during the La Luz Bilingual Center dedication Wednesday night. (Index-Tribune photo by Tom Nicholas)

DAM THOSE BEAVERS!

Charlotte Ruffner

The North American beaver (Castor canadensis) is native to the watersheds of Sonoma. The benefits of beavers are crucial to our ecosystem: their dams recharge groundwater, repair and restore wetlands, increase late season water flow and reduce the impact of flooding. Beaver dams also provide protective habitats for native and endangered species. Beavers work around the clock and don't demand wages or benefits.

In the 1830's, well before the Gold Rush, fur trappers flocked to Northern California to capture beavers. Beaver pelts in the 19th century were in high demand for caps and top hats.

California transplants beaver into El Dorado National Forest via parachute in 1950 (Source: CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife)[18]

After beaver pelts fell out of fashion, beavers were viewed as destructive rodents that damaged crops and levees. In fact in the 1950's, beavers were trapped and relocated to wildlife areas via parachute!

Now these critters are back in downtown Sonoma. A few blocks from the Sonoma Plaza along the Sonoma Creek. Here is a photo of their handy work. Photo from Sonoma Ecology Center's Facebook Page, posted May 29, 2019.

To read more about the benefits of the beaver visit the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center. https://oaec.org/projects/bring-back-the-beaver-campaign/

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TELEGRAPH

Carol Page

The telegraph in the Depot Park Museum train room is a good example of the enhanced communications of 160 years ago.

The telegraph was established across the country in 1861 to Sacramento by Western Union. The Pony Express disbanded shortly afterwards, in fact two days later!

The telegraph revolutionized long-distance communication. It had taken 110 days to send the news of the death of President Harrison to Los Angeles via Pony Express. Samuel Morse (thus Morse Code) knew his invention would improve and expedite communication and perhaps war could be prevented. Instead, Civil War era generals used the telegraph to request soldiers, horses and supplies at the battlefield. An observation balloon ascended near the Potomac with a telegraph wire attached to the ground. A soldier gave troop emplacements info to officers below. Lincoln used the telegraph similarly to emails, offering his insights and requesting battle status. His communications sent expeditiously via telegraph may have helped to manage the battle plans more efficiently from afar.

The combination of the railroads and the telegraph dramatically impacted the speed of communication across the country. Previously, a message would travel by horse or ship. Now business, government and personal communications were moving much faster across the country impacting society in a life-changing manner communicating across vast distances.

Sonoma Valley Historical Society
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