



South County Historical Society

Heritage Press

Volume 10, No. 4

April 2006

Jane Line - President



LOOKING FORWARD

by Celebrating our Land Grant History!

Our Program Chairman **Charles Porter** is a very interesting guy. And certainly no one can deny his commitment to the South County Historical Society. He has served in almost every office on the Board of Directors and currently serves not only as Program Chair but Property Manager as well! And he does all of this while running the family's cattle ranch in the Huasna as his ancestors before him have done.

Serendipitously perhaps, Charles is responsible for creating a *theme* for our last three meetings of the year - a theme which informs our members of various aspects of the Central Coast's "land grant" history. I offer the following proof of my point.

APRIL 22, 2006 (Yesterday) - April's meeting was a Field Trip to **Rancho Nipomo's Dana Adobe**. The D.A.N.A. docents took us back to the mid 1800s, allowing us to visualize the surrounding land as it was in Captain Dana's day, imagine the lifestyle of the Indians, vaqueros, and visitors - even tell us a murder story which hints at the character of William Dana as he developed his



1837 Mexican land grant rancho to self-sufficiency by ranching cattle and sheep. In their two-story adobe, now on the National Historical Register, William Dana and Josefa Carrillo raised a large family, making California history in the process. To further demonstrate the hospitality of Rancho Nipomo in its early days, and using cooking techniques from that era, the D.A.N.A. docents fed our members a meal of posole, grilled vegetables and tortillas which we rolled ourselves - everything cooked in an outdoor oven called *el horno*.



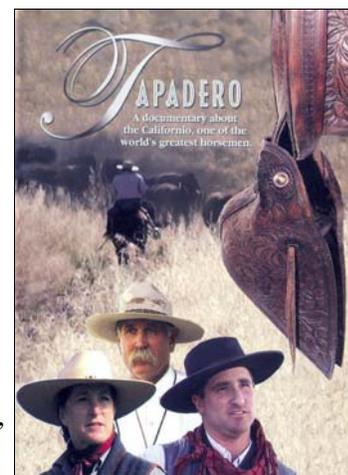
May 9, 2006 (Tuesday, 6:30 PM) - Our program will be the documentary film *Tapadero* which tells the 300 year history of the **Californio vaquero**, with his slick-fork saddle and silver spade bits, beginning with the Spanish missions to the present day ranches. Filmed on local Central Coast land grant ranchos, from Santa Margarita to Ronald Reagan's Santa Barbara Ranch, the **Californio vaquero** is *still* trailing cattle through the local hills, *still* roping and branding in the old ways, *still* training spade bit horses over long periods of time and *still* braiding rawhide riatas in preparation for the next Round-up! (See our March newsletter showing the photos of the Porter Ranch Round-up.) The film's locations are lush and recognizable while the story is grand and sweeping, told by the Californios of today - legends in their own time.

You won't want to miss this meeting which will be held at the Hiawatha Lodge, 3065 Temple St., behind the Temple of the People, in Halcyon. Bring a friend, enjoy a potluck meal, and enjoy the movie!

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of **John Brewster Loomis** today April 23, 2006.

John was born February 17, 1926, son of Ivan and Christine Loomis, grandson of E.C. and Clara Jatta Loomis. He is survived by wife Lindy and their children Polly Loomis Fitzgerald, Joe Loomis, Kate Loomis Wels, Mary Loomis-Genthner, Sarah Loomis Matthews, Michael Johnson, Patrick Johnson, and Marc Johnson. Two siblings survive John - sister Patricia Loomis and brother Richard.

John and cousin Gordon Bennett wrote one of our Society's favorite books, *The Old Days*, which tells of their adventures growing up in Arroyo Grande a few houses apart on Crown Hill. John was well known throughout the community, a Life member, and a good friend to our Society. He will be missed.



2006 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
Directors and Committees

President	Jane Line ...	481-6510
Programs.....	Charles Porter	
Ways & Means— First VP	Jim Bergman ...	473-9757
Books & Publishing.....	Linda Shephard	
Tour Bus Coordinator.....	Barbara Freel	
Antique Show & Sale	Jim Bergman	
Annual Rummage Sale	Jan Scott	
Wedding/Social Coordinator.....	Doug LeSage	
Membership—Second VP	Michael & Colleen Drees ...	489-0295
Volunteer Coordinator		
Recording Secretary		
Corresponding Secretary	Edie Juck ...	773-4689
Historian & Sunshine.....	Ethel Gilliland	
Treasurer	Gary Hoving ...	929-3106
Publicity	Vivian Krug ...	458-3321
Community Relations		
Webmaster		
Paulding History House Curator	Chuck Fellows ...	481-3464
Paulding Committee	Jean Hubbard	
Museums Curator	Jan Scott ...	481-4435
Assistant Curator	Joe Swigert	
Heritage House	Joe Swigert	
Santa Manuela Schoolhouse	Kathleen Sullivan	
The Barn	Jim Bergman	
Property Management	Charles Porter ...	929-1014
IOOF Building Committee.....	Howard Mankins	
Vehicles.....	Edward Diable & Chet Thomas	
Gardening—Heritage House	Barbara LeSage	
Gardening—Santa Manuela Schoolhouse	Jane Line	
Gardening Paulding History House	Jean Bryant	
Docent Leader		
Docent Supervisor	Joe Swigert	
Heritage House Coordinator	Jeanne Frederick	
Paulding House Coordinator	Dee Trybom	
Santa Manuela School Coordinator.....	Kathleen Sullivan	
Barn.....	Joe Swigert	
Student Tours.....	Norma Harloe	
Information Systems	Ross Kongable ...	489-2885
Heritage Press Newsletter		
Computer Systems and Software		
Parliamentarian	Kathleen Sullivan ...	489-8195
Society Information	473-5077	
Heritage House	481-4126	
Paulding History House	473-3231	
Santa Manuela School	489-8745	
The Barn	489-8745	

Website— www.SouthCountyHistory.Org

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Gerry Fesler—
Arroyo Grande 93420

Paul & Sheila Mangione—
Nipomo 93444

Patron
Osty Insurance—
Arroyo Grande 93420

A MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE

From the desk of Mike and Colleen Drees
Co-Directors, Membership

These are exciting times in the South County Historical Society! Let's use this time to invite new prospective members to one of our various events. Just by doing this, our Membership Challenge 2006 would be very successful. By each of us bringing one new member in, our Society would continue to grow and we will be assured of maintaining a vibrant organization for years to come!

All we need to do is share our museums and the varied programs and activities of the South County Historical Society with our friends and neighbors, just as our Docents share the rich and varied history of the area and its pioneer families each week through tours of Paulding House, Heritage House Museum, Santa Manuela School and the Barn.

The Board is working hard to provide new, fun activities such as the trip to the Dana Adobe and the Porter Ranch for our Charter Day Annual BBQ.

Join with us as we strive to make the Society not only a "working" organization but also a "social" one. See you at the General Membership meeting in May and

bring a guest or two!

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

2006

508

264 in Couple Memberships
212 in Individual Memberships
14 in Family Memberships
9 in Patron Memberships
9 in Sustaining Memberships
of those
179 are Life Members



Director of Museums

Jan Scott

Curator's
Corner

One of the best volunteer offers I've had in a long time happened this year at the Antique Show. **Barbara Bowles** said that she would really like to help out by cleaning Heritage House. No, it wasn't a one time offer; she was willing to take on the responsibility on a steady basis. My excitement was matched only by Joe Swigert's, the manager of Heritage House. She has been as good as her word and is doing a fabulous job.

Heritage House was also the scene of a near disaster recently. Joe discovered that the frame on the Queen Victoria quilt had split open on one corner and the Plexiglas seemed dangerously near to popping out. It is a large piece, and one of our important artifacts (Christine Brown, mother of Pat Loomis, received the quilt from one of Queen Victoria's dressmakers, a woman who saved scraps from the royal gowns, stitched the quilt and sent it to her friend on the Central Coast). Village Framing to the rescue. Our good friend Bob brought an assistant and, with Joe's help, managed to get it off the wall before it came down on its own. Bob has promised a complete repair at no charge to us, with apologies that such a thing had happened at all. Many thanks to Joe for handling the whole episode.

Speaking of framing, our second schoolhouse map has been restored and framed and is ready to be hung in the schoolhouse. We just need our tall ladder and maybe a couple of extra arms to hoist it up. It's a California map of Highways from 1915. There are also population figures too small to read when the map is hanging high up on the wall. We have copied the area statistics and will try to find a place to display them near the map.

The Schoolhouse has also gained a new desk. It's a real one, an oak teacher's desk, to replace our replica. The matching chair will arrive as soon as I can get it out of storage. The story on that one is simply that I love that desk and got depressed when I realized I couldn't take it with me when we move. I've used it since 1977, but it won't fit into our new house off Stagecoach. Then I thought of the Schoolhouse. Bingo. I can still go visit my old friend, while the School gets a period piece it deserves. My only sorrow is that I long ago removed the "modesty panel" or "privacy panel" that school districts put on the fronts of open desks. The question of the day: do teachers still wear skirts?

We have a couple of new items gifted to us—currently classified as "Whatsits".. If anyone recognizes these items as to their usage call Jan the Curator.



Porcelain lined pot inside a heavy metal pot. 6" high and 6" wide.



Possible use—melting wax?



Metal label reads "Clev-Dent" or Bent
Made in USA
Cleveland, Ohio
With a Serial No.
Wheel lifts a solid plate; lever closes the gap in



the two metal plates below.

Publicity

Vivian Krug



Our website continues to be very popular. We have recently been linked to a "One-Room Schoolhouse web page of the Cornell School in Johnstown-Monroe Local School District in Ohio.

Our newest addition to our site's Pismo Beach pages is a story, *El Pizmo Beach and the Captive Airship* by *Effie McDermott*. Visit it by clicking on Pismo Beach in our Logo.

See our entry in the Tribune's Annual Publication *Living Here*.

While updating the Historical Hall donations listing, I learned about a very interesting family, Parsons. Their roots include that of the Gold Rush era, with Sanchez and the lost treasure, to Jose Ortega, a scout credited with discovering San Francisco Bay. The family has been linked back to 1769 (Portola) and the list goes on. Gerald Parsons, a Life member of the Society, was the port master at Avila Pier, and his father was the Secretary of the Arroyo Grande Odd Fellows Hall when it was built in 1904. AF Parsons was a teacher at the Avila School, and one of the first teachers in Arroyo Grande. Tom was a county surveyor for over 30 years and worked on surveying the Tar Springs Ranch area with the Loomis's. We look forward to including them in our Living History series.

The third annual *Strawberry Festival Cookbook* is ready for sale at the upcoming Strawberry Festival at the end of May.

Thank You from Gary Scherquist,
Architect and Project Coordinator for the Ruby's House restoration.



To those working so hard on **Ruby's House**, I want to say how much I appreciate all the work you are doing stripping woodwork, repairing and cleaning hardware, etc. This will make Ruby's House a real show place and something to be proud of.

For me, the work you are doing has brought a joy to the job. It is the difference between an OK project and a really good project...and that makes a big difference to me.

So thank you again to all of you who are working so hard. You have made my participation a pleasure.

Gary

Ed. note: Our "strippers" are Sandy Arnold, Jane Line, (shown at left removing 6 coats of paint from the redwood fireplace mantle), Gerry Fesler, Ross Kongable, Jan Scott, Edie Juck, Carolyn Huffine, Paulette McCann, and Anne and Olaf Shipstead. Jim Dickens planed all of the wainscoting so that it may be re-installed. Martin Line helped out and Mike Drees transported all the materials in the rain! Ken Huffine has promised to do some finish sanding and Ed Arnold is helping plane the baseboards.

Two very skilled helpers are John Bryant who restored all the hardware and Mike Fairbrother who will create or rework Ruby's windows, doors, and trim!



Pat Loomis visited the future home of the "Pat Loomis Reference Library" in Ruby's House.

Jane Line gives Pat Loomis, Manetta and Gordon Bennet a tour of Ruby's interior;

Chuck Fellows, Jane Line, Pat Loomis, Camay Arad, Gary Scherquist, Orville and Beulah Schultz show off the new Sponsor sign at Ruby's.



June 11, 2006 (Sunday, 12 Noon) -

Our annual **Charter Day BBQ** will be held this year on the **Porter Ranch in Huasna**. **Charles Porter and his family** have been ranching this land in an unbroken chain since 1843 when the land was granted to Charles' great-great grandfather **Isaac Sparks**. And graciously, the **Porter Family** is once again opening their 100+ year-old home and barns to our members for SCHS' anniversary event. There will be a short program on the Porter Ranch's early history and an opportunity to tour the family home.

If you participate in these three monthly programs, you will have been as close to our area's land grant history as is possible in our time and you will have our wonderful Program Director, **Charles Porter**, to thank for the opportunity!

Mark your calendars for June 11, 2006



Land Grants as a Second Language

Effie McDermott, April 2006

As a reader of this newsletter and a person obviously interested in local history, you have heard a great deal about the Mexican land grants in the South County area. You probably already know the names: Arroyo Grande, Nipomo, Pismo, San Miguelito, Santa Manuela, Bolsa de Chamisal, Corral de Piedra, Rancho Suey. You probably already know that this is how the mission lands were divided up and settled. And, you probably already know that Pismo is where the Pismo land grant was, that Nipomo is where the Nipomo land grant was, that Avila was on the San Miguelito land grant, et cetera.

But what you might find interesting is what those actual land grants looked like on paper. In researching Pismo, I traveled to the National Archives at Laguna Niguel. There I found the local land grants on microfilm and got copies.

Hello!? They are in Spanish! Very old Spanish. But they are a wealth of information when translated!

When the prospective rancher applied for the land grant, he or she, submitted a statement of facts and accompanied it with a hand drawn map showing the topographical features of the requested land, as well as nearby mountains, valleys, hills, roads, rivers, etc, that delineated the location of the land. If two copies were needed, two original sets of papers and maps were hand made, as nearly duplicated as hand work allowed.

The file for each land grant is called the *espediente*. Within the *espediente* is the *diseño*, the map. I relied on several Spanish-speaking friends to help me out on this and came up with a translation log on the common terms used on the *diseños*. After a while I got pretty good at reading them.

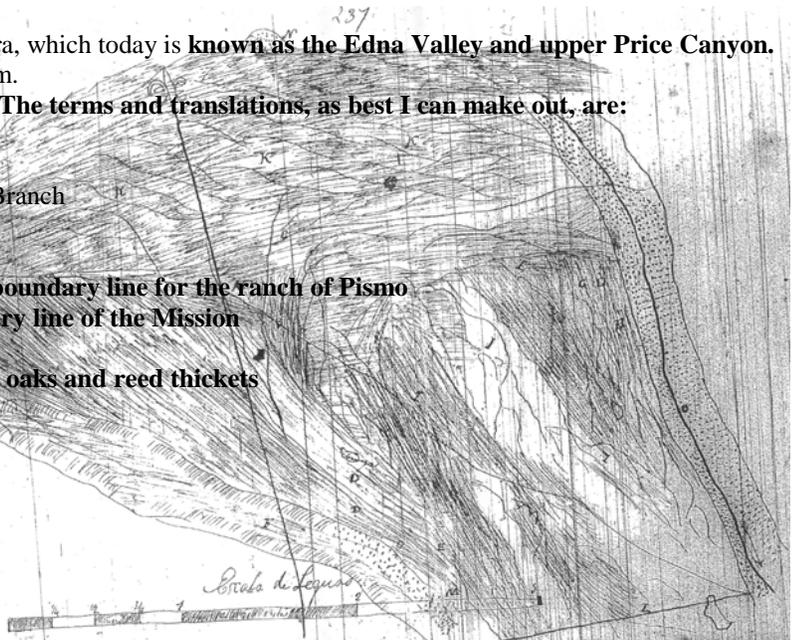
Pictured here is the 1840 *diseño* of Rancho Corral de Piedra, which today is known as the **Edna Valley and upper Price Canyon**. I apologize for the poor quality, but this is how it looks on microfilm.

The features are identified with the letters A through O. **The terms and translations, as best I can make out, are:**

- A: Corral de Piedra, corral of stone
- B: Camino de Nipoma, road to Nipomo
- C: Camino del rancho del Sr Branch, road to the ranch of Mr. Branch
- D: Tierra de Regadio, irrigated land
- E: Arroyo del Pismo, seasonal stream bed to Pismo
- F: Cuchillo y linde el sitio por el rancho del **Pismo**, **edge and boundary line for the ranch of Pismo**
- G: Rancho y Casa Linia de la Mision, ranch and house **boundary line of the Mission**
- H: Tierras de Recurso, lands of resource
- I or J: Lomas cubierta de encinas y chamisa, hills covered **with oaks and reed thickets**
- K: Lomas muertas, barren hills
- L: Lindero de sitio Pismo, boundary line of Pismo
- M: Manantiales de Brea, springs of tar
- N: Pinal, area of pines
- O: Arroyo Grande, large seasonal stream bed

Escala de Leques, Scale in Leagues

Ed Note: Even enlarged, this is not a very legible drawing. Thank you Effie for your patience and fortitude.



Oh What a Wonderful Morning! Oh What a Wonderful Day!

Despite a fussy sky which miraculously cleared over the **Dana Adobe**, our April 22 Field Trip to the adobe was a great success! The work being done by **Helen Daurio** and her docents is remarkable as they research and disseminate the history of Rancho Nipomo and the Dana family. The D.A.N.A has made great strides over the last few years with big plans for this year's **Heritage Days on May 20.**



All was not well, however, with the **Adobe's South Wall.** The winter rains have weakened the already weakened wall - creating a bit



of a crisis and a requirement of over \$200, 000 to rebuild the wall. On



SCHS JANE LINE & SAVE THE MESA MARIANNE BUCKMEYER PRESENTING DONATIONS TO D.A.N.A. HERB KANDEL FOR THE SOUTH WALL RESTORATION

behalf of its membership, the SCHS Board of Directors voted to donate \$2,500 to the South Wall restoration. By participating in a Save the Mesa matching fund challenge, we were able to ensure the D.A.N.A. received twice that amount!

Another highlight was the gift of an 1878 Rancho Nipomo map scanned from a glass plate negative from the **Bennett-Loomis Archives.** The map was presented to **Herb Kandel**, D.A.N.A president, by **Gordon and Manetta Bennett** representing the Bennett-Loomis family. A copy will be given to the South County Historical Society also.



The cabinet maker working at the Historical Hall, **Lynn Collett**, has been working on the renovation of the first floor for the past few months. His work at the Hall was interrupted when he took a week and a half off to go back to Mississippi to help restore 5 homes damaged by Katrina. This was a project coordinated by the Church of the Nazarene – and each paid their own expenses. He has nearly completed the “reception desk” which is going to be very impressive to all visitors to the Hall. He has finished the doors, floor and ceiling moldings in record time, and completed the framing of the inside of the front wall.



Following close behind is **John Bryant**, our resident paint expert, putting the finishing touches on all this beautiful woodwork.



A Tisket, A Tasket! A Green and Yellow Basket!

*"I'll bet no one remembers how important May Day used to be in Arroyo Grande," said **Billie Records Swigert** one day last year. "And it was very important!"*

Not too long ago **May Day** was eagerly anticipated and Billie was willing to share photos from her scrapbook to prove the point! From these delightful photos, there can be no doubt that it was celebrated in a very big way at the **Arroyo Grande Grammar School** (located where Mullahey Ford is today).

In the larger photo, the children are dressed in beautiful costumes with their parents standing in the background awaiting their children's special May Day program. In the smaller photo, **Billie** is costumed for another May Day program as a Black-eyed Susan! Remember that lovely flower?



On the first day of May another tradition was

enjoyed by all. Small delicate baskets were pleated, twisted and folded from old wallpaper samples, tissue paper, or any paper your mother might offer for the occasion. If paste was needed, it was probably made with flour and water. Sometimes colorful ribbons completed the masterpiece. These May Day baskets were actually tiny paper "containers" with a handle. They were filled with spring flowers picked from the yard, but occasionally someone would receive a basket with candy!

Little girls especially loved to make these baskets. The handle was tightly twisted so that it stood upright after it was carefully placed on a special someone's porch or door knob. **Jeanne Wilkinson Fredericks**, who grew up along the Arroyo Grande Creek, remembers making her basket to hang on her grandparents' door knob and then running away before she was spotted! Her grandparents' Nelson Street home remains today, painted green and white, well kept and home to an insurance office.

How special it was to celebrate the rites of Spring! With the wonderful weather and fertile soils in the Arroyo Grande Valley, coupled with traditions from a seemingly gentler time, it's no wonder May Day is a favorite memory of those who were lucky enough to have it mark their years gone by.

Ed. Note: Remembrances are by Billie Records Swigert and Jeanne Wilkinson Fredericks as shared with Jane Line. Photos provided by Billie's wonderful scrapbooks.

Dues Schedule—2006

Individual.....\$15	Family w/children under 18.....\$40	Patron (business/individual)...\$200+
Couple.....\$30	Sustaining (individual)\$100+	Life (individual).....\$500+

MEMBERSHIP SOUTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

RENEWAL

NEW

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Home Tel: _____ Work Tel: _____ Email: _____

Type of Membership _____ Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ Check No. _____

Please make check or money order payable to SOUTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PO Box 633
Arroyo Grande
CA 93421

SOCIETY MEETINGS

The board meets on the **3rd Wednesday**
Members are Welcome

GENERAL MEETING

Held on the **2nd Tuesday at 6:30 pm**
at the Hiawatha Lodge, 3065 Temple, Halcyon
Bring your table settings and a dish to share

May 9, 2006

TAPADERO

Documentary of the Californios

Patrons of the South County Historical Society

OSTY INSURANCE

PATRICIA LOOMIS

CAROL HIZEY

SUSAN BRANCH 'A TASTE OF HOME'

DOC BURNSTEIN'S ICE CREAM LAB

HOWARD & AILEEN MANKINS

BILL & CHERYL MILLER

SOUTH COUNTY REALTY