



6101 Main Street

Clayton Chronicles

A Publication of the Clayton Historical Society

PO BOX 94 • CLAYTON, CALIFORNIA • 94517

(925) 672-0240

Website: claytonhistory.org

January 2010

Issue 134

Welcome New Members

Frank Snyder of Clayton

Nancy Glenn of Clayton

John and Candace Bass of Clayton

Camellia Tea

February 14th

1:00 p.m. ~ 4:00 p.m.

Dear Members and Friends,

Happy New Year! As we ramp into 2010, I am pleased to be the President of the Board of Directors for the Clayton Historical Society. Being an organization that appreciates history, I am compelled to share a bit about myself before I discuss our plans for the New Year.

My family moved to Clayton in 1988 when I was a small boy and I have been honored to serve the Clayton community for most of my life. Clayton was an exceptional place to grow up, with a deep rooted and cherished history; time honored characteristics that still exist from the days of our founding fathers. We preserve and promote this legacy via the Clayton Historical Society and Museum in everything we do. I am excited to bring my experiences from the Microsoft Corporation, Clayton Planning Commission, and the Clayton Business & Community Association to further the mission of the Society in 2010. I am joined by a team of dedicated Directors and volunteers who are the lifeline of our organization. This year we will focus on three strategic initiatives: growing membership, building fundraising opportunities, and driving operational maturity. To learn more about these 2010 plans, please visit our website at www.claytonhistory.org in the "About" section.

In the coming months you will see improvements, including changes to our membership categories, announcement of new events, and increased communication to our supporters. I hope you will find value in this new experience with the Society; we certainly value your support and involvement. In closing, I would like to thank out-going president Dick Ellis for his support this past year, as well as express gratitude to my Board of Directors in advance for their service this year. As we can learn greatly from the past, please contact me at any time to share ideas or concerns about our organization. My best,

Ted Meriam, President

(925) 690-8600

www.tedmeriam.com



A Message from The Membership Department:

Our membership dues have remained unchanged for quite a long time. Preliminary research comparing our dues schedule to similar historical societies indicate that our dues are at the very bottom of the bunch. It is quite likely that our dues will increase in 2010.

Whether or not it is time to renew, (check your mailing label for the date) you may want to pay your dues now to take advantage of our current low rates. Even if you renew early, you will get a full year's credit added on to your current renewal date. 2009 (current) dues rates are on the form located below.

Less than 1% of the population of Clayton belongs to the Clayton Historical Society. For those members who live in Clayton, please encourage a friend or neighbor to join. As always, many thanks for your support of our museum. Feel free to call me at 672-7947 or email sheiladewy@juno.com

Sheila Driscoll, Membership Chairman

Join the Clayton Historical Society!

Membership dues are a major source of revenue. They provide support for the operation of the museum, preservation and display of artifacts, and help defray the cost of our newsletter. *Check the date on your mailing label for the month and year through which you are paid.* "L"-Life Member, "S"-Sustaining Member, "H"-Honorary, "C"-Charter member and "V"-Volunteer

Society Yearly Dues Membership Categories in 2009: Student-\$5 Senior-\$5

Individual-\$15 Couple-\$25 Sustaining-\$30*

Volunteer-25 hours/year in the previous calendar year for one year membership free

Society One-Time Payment Membership Categories in 2009:

Life-Individual-\$200 1857 League-Individual-\$1,857

Please Print all information:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Zip: _____ Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Make checks payable to the Clayton Historical Society

Clayton Historical Society P.O. Box 94, 6101 Main Street, Clayton, CA 94517 Phone: 925-672-0240

MEMORIAL FUNDS

A gift of any amount to our Memorial Fund is a lasting way to honor someone special. Their name will be placed in the "Book of Memory" that is permanently displayed at the museum.

I would like to make this contribution of \$ _____ In Honor of In Memory of

Name of person to be honored/memorialized: _____

Please Send Acknowledgement to: _____

Address _____

Mary Spryer and Carmen Frank Honored

— November 2009 Annual Meeting, Endeavor Hall, Clayton

The Clayton Historical Society has two categories for outstanding service: The Joel Clayton Award and the Special Recognition Award. The plaques, with names engraved, are on permanent display in the museum. Outgoing President, Dick Ellis, honored two volunteers at the meeting, one in each category.

The Joel Clayton Award is "Bestowed to individuals or groups whose action(s) have had a major impact on the society." These words describe Mary Heck Spryer perfectly. Mary has been the museum's curator for the past six years. In addition to her "curating" duties she has pitched in wherever necessary to keep the society humming. She represents the Clayton Historical Society and museum with other similar organizations (other "house" museums in the East Bay) and participates on behalf of our organization with the Clayton Business and Community Association (CBCA), the Contra Costa Historical Society and the Clayton Library Foundation. She hosts all of the local third grade classes annually with an interactive tour of the museum and the town. The words "fresh" and "museum" are usually contradictive but Mary has defied that theory with the ever changing displays in the museum that keep it interesting. The museum now has a popular feature, the Kids' Corner, where children can "touch things from way back in the olden days." Seldom in the history of the society and museum has an individual been so universally respected and genuinely liked.

Carmen Dobbel Frank was granted the "Special Recognition Award." The plaque is inscribed with this definition: "Bestowed annually to individuals or groups whose support, contributions and exemplary service have been vital to the mission of the organization." Carmen was on the original board of directors when the society was formed in 1974, attended the first "old timers" lunch gathering shortly thereafter and has remained very involved. Although having been born in "Haywards" and not technically a Clayton "native," she married one (George) and when she moved to Clayton in the 1930s she paid attention to what her new passel of relatives and other Clayton old timers had to say. Carmen has been a great historical resource to the museum. Before her health precluded her from doing so, she was never afraid to roll up her sleeves or get her hands dirty for the benefit of the museum. Carmen has always been a community-minded woman and the Historical Society has been fortunate that she is willing to share her knowledge of the community. It is our good fortune that Carmen has been a collector of "all things Clayton" since her arrival and has been a willing lender of items for special exhibits and donator of artifacts to the museum.

Stop and look at the award plaques, on the wall in the meeting room, commemorating the contributions of Mary and Carmen... and those who were recognized before them.

Curators' Corner, January 2010

There's been a lot of activity down at the museum since the October *Chronicles*. **Janet Easton** and I were fortunate to be asked to attend a "cultural resource evaluation" meeting in mid-October regarding the Yolanda/Alexander/Hurd house as representatives of the Clayton Historical Society. You'll recall that this historic house at the bottom of Lydia Lane near the creek burned this past August. Although we were saddened to see the burned house; we were able to help with some of the questions that came up using the research materials at the museum. In addition, the preservation architect on the project inquired as to whether we knew anyone who recalled the floor plan of the house. We were able to help out with that information as well when **Elaine Evans** recalled that the **Duncans** (a Clayton Pioneering family) were associated with the property. After a call to **Earl and Helene Duncan** we found out that his brother and sister-in-law, **Lloyd and Alfreida Duncan**, were caretakers of the property and lived there with their children from 1970 until 1977. After contacting them, Lloyd and Alfreida graciously wrote down many of their memories of that time including descriptions of the gardens and house. In addition, Lloyd drew a floor plan of the house which helped with the project a great deal.

Arrowheads and Acorns: *A Journey Back In Time*

In honor of California Archaeology Month, the Clayton Historical Society and Museum hosted *Arrowheads and Acorns: a Journey Back in Time*, a workshop for kids to learn about the Native Miwok people who once called Clayton home. Local Archaeologists, **Christine McCollum** and **Joe Griffin** volunteered to run the workshop at the museum in October and November with **Renée Wing** and **Adela Oldford** available to help out. Sixteen first through sixth graders along with ten parents/grandparents learned about the Miwok Tribe and local archaeology, including what life may have been like in Clayton thousands of years ago. The children were encouraged to participate and help solve some of the problems real-life archaeologists encounter.

Christine volunteered to plan the entire workshop while **Renée** and I attended to the logistics at the museum and the advertising in the Clayton Pioneer. We enjoyed working with **Christine** on this new museum program and look forward to continuing it in the fall of 2010.

Thanks to Volunteers

Thanks to all the volunteers who decorated for Christmas the day after Thanksgiving. **Barbara Allen, JoAnn Caspar**, her sons **Nick** and **Jeff** and granddaughters **Colett** and **Juliet** worked so quickly that we finished earlier than ever before! The work day was also made shorter for us because of great help from middle schoolers **Logan** and **Austin** who lugged out the bins and boxes, tested lights and put up all of the outside lights. I hope you were able to drive by in the evening and enjoy the museum's decorations this year.

Volunteer Appreciation Cocktail Party

Over fifty guests gathered at the second annual volunteer appreciation party given in honor of the volunteers who had donated their time during this past year. Thanks to **Ted Meriam, JoAnn Caspar** and **Renée Wing** for planning the evening and to those members of the board who provided refreshments. Our new society president, **Ted Meriam**, hosted the party at his beautiful Clayton home. It's great to have our volunteers get together "off campus", some meeting for the first time. It goes without saying that without volunteers, the museum would not be open to the public, and so they are much appreciated by me. In fact, I consider them the museum and society's most valuable assets!

Special Visitors

In October Clayton's **Cub Scout Pack 262** came for a museum visit. They were working on a badge having to do with life at the turn of the century. This visit was arranged by their Assistant Cub Scout Master, **Kevin Barry**. It was fun showing them around the museum which, at the turn of the century was a ranch house used by the Keller family. Later in November, **Pack 262** returned to learn about the Native Miwok people living in our area by attending our Arrowheads and Acorns event, what a great group of scouts—oh, and they earned a second badge in November!

In late November, **Dick Ellis** and I represented the Clayton Historical Society and Museum at the local Arcadia book signing event at **Joel Harris'** Clayton Books in the Clayton Station. **Janet Easton, Dick** and I were collaborators on Clayton's Arcadia Book, but **Janet** had to stay back this time and hold down the fort at the museum. **Joel** has been sponsoring this event for several years; get on his mailing list and you'll know when his numerous book signing events occur.

In early December, a group from **Diamond Terrace** came downtown for a tour of local Christmas lights and displays and we were their first stop. In spite of the cold, four lovely ladies (plus their driver) paid me a visit. The museum looked wonderful that night.

In mid-December I received a visit from **Steve and Dee Israel**. They hail from Black Diamond, WA and stopped by for a museum tour on their way south. **Dee** is a board member and the secretary of their society and **Steve** is the editor of their society's newsletter (and very knowledgeable about mining equipment). Thanks to **Elaine Evans** for investigating the town of Black Diamond. During tours of the museum, I always mention that our local coal miners dropped everything and moved to Washington State where a better quality coal was discovered. Well, the miners from our area founded the town of Black Diamond Washington—yes, they named it after the Mt. Diablo coalfields mining company. Although they have a smaller population, it turns out our two cities have more in common than mining and an all volunteer-run museum. Here are a few of our commonalities.

Clayton

Founded 1857, not incorporated until 1964
Nestled in Mt. Diablo's foothills
3.9 square miles
Clayton Historical Society formed 1974
1979 Museum opened
1976 began restoration of museum

Black Diamond

Founded in the 1880s, not incorporated until 1959
Nestled in Mt. Rainier's foothills
5.37 square miles
Black Diamond Historical Society formed 1975
1982 Museum opened
1976 began restoration of museum

From the Black Diamond Museum's website:

The Black Diamond Coal Company was organized and started work in 1864, in Nortonville, Contra Costa County, California. In 1873 four men took up claim in the Green River area and formed the Green River Coal Company. About the same time California speculators, aware of the fact that the abundant Mt. Diablo mine at Nortonville, California would soon be depleted, began their investigations in the Pacific Northwest. One of them bought out the Green River Coal Company, but because of the low quality of exposed coal, the fields were not developed. In the spring of 1880, P.B. Cornwall, President of the Black Diamond Coal Mining Company, sent Victor Tull to explore possibilities on Puget Sound. He discovered an abundance of higher quality coal a few miles north in the future Black Diamond-Franklin-Ravensdale district.

<http://www.blackdiamondmuseum.org/history.htm>

Greeter/Docent News

I'd like to welcome **Linda Pinder** to our ranks. **Linda** started as a greeter in November and will be working with **Adela** on the first Wednesday of the month and as a substitute docent when needed. Linda is no stranger to the museum. She has helped out with the Annual Gardens Tour for the past several years as well as donating quilts as raffle prizes for that fundraiser. I know she'll be an asset to our museum.

Our newest student docent is **NingNing**, a Clayton Valley student who works with **Kay Lane** on the third Wednesday of the month. It's nice to have an enthusiastic replacement for our older student docents who have recently graduated.

Additional Thanks

I'd like to thank the Board of Directors for honoring me with the Joel Clayton Award, presented to me at the November Annual Meeting. I've come a long way from volunteering as editor of the society newsletter in 1996. I remember enjoying the fact that I did all that work from my home office, just four times a year and not really coming into the museum much. When I began helping with special exhibits, I realized how enjoyable it was working with other museum volunteers. Since becoming the museum curator over five years ago, I realized that I'm the fortunate one having been given the opportunity to interact with such a group of dedicated volunteers. Thank you again.

By the time you receive this newsletter we'll have taken down all the Christmas decorations and will be in the process of readying the museum for the next Special Exhibit "**Dressing Up For Going Out**" and the Camellia Tea on February 14th.

I hope to see you there...

Mary Spryer
Curator

More from the Curators' Corner

The holiday season has passed. Gone are the thrilling snowstorms, the 30-degree weather, and the dazzling downtown decorations. A fresh exhibit in the main exhibit room has transformed the museum. Please come by soon to talk with our docents and enjoy the new displays.

During the past two months, we have received two new/old items for our collections. The new accessions will be in our library and available to the general public for research purposes.

1. A set of Arcadia books from our ex-President, Dick Ellis. The titles are Daly City, Martinez, Pittsburg, Byron Hot Springs, Sonoma Valley, and Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve.

2. Crusaders and Crinolines, by Ishbel Ross, a book of fashions from Pre-Civil War to the Golden Nineties. Anne Van Arsdale of El Cerrito donated this volume.

Mary and I wish to thank Mr. Ellis and Ms. Van Arsdale for their contributions, and to thank you all for your support of our local history museum. We hope you have enjoyed your holidays. Have a rewarding and fulfilling New Year!

Sincerely,

Renee Wing
Assistant Curator

CHS Calendar

Through March	Special Exhibit: "Dressing Up for Going Out"
February 1	Old Timers' 11:30 a.m. – Museum
February 11	Board Meeting 3:30 –5:00
February 14 Sunday	Camellia Tea 1:00 – 4:00 pm – Museum
March 1	Old Timers' 11:30 a.m. – Museum
April 5	Old Timers' 11:30 a.m. – Museum
April 15	Board Meeting 3:30–5:00 – Museum
May 3	Old Timers' 11:30 a.m. – Museum
May 7 and 8	Gardens Tour – Museum (Friday and Saturday)
May 9	Mother's Day

The 2010 Gardens Tour To Be Held on Mother's Day Weekend

The 18th annual Clayton Gardens Tour will be held this year on the **Friday** and **Saturday** of Mothers' Day weekend. The dates are **May 7 and 8**.

Notice there is a change from recent years when the tour has been held on Saturday and Sunday. This will be an opportunity to gift your mother with a day viewing five beautiful gardens and attending a tea in another garden after.

Please mark it on your calendars and attend as it is not only an enjoyable day but is what keeps the museum operating during the year.



Memorials

Eddy Gomez

From Enroy R. Gomez

Margueritte Gomez Day

From Enroy R. Gomez

Joyce Murdock

From Jerry and Roxie Enneking

Jeanne Mitolo

From Donald Mitolo



Dressing Up For Going Out



*Hats & Gloves from the 1930s & 40s
From the Collection of Sue Fletcher*

*Opens January 13, 2010
Through the end of March*

Officers and Directors Elected 2009 for 2010

President

Ted Meriam

Treasurer

JoAnn Caspar

1st VP

John Rubiales

2nd VP

Dick Ellis

Recording Sec'ys

Sheila Driscoll

Barbara Fogerson

Directors

Barbara Allen

Peggy Arundell

Jeff Crady

Janet Easton

Sue Kelson

Charmetta

Sally Turner

Renée Wing

Curator

Mary Spryer

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