

Livermore Heritage Guild

"Help Save Yesterday For Tomorrow"



P.O. Box 961, Livermore, Calif. 94551 www.livermorehistory.com

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May/June 2007

Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4

The Automobile Comes to Livermore

Little did the people in Murray Township realize what the future would bring when in July 1899 the Herald reported, "It is rumored that the valley is soon to have an automobile. Mrs. [Phoebe] Hearst is said to have purchased one; if true, ours will be the first rural community in the state to have one of the marvelous vehicles." In September of that same year, a local doctor ordered an automobile from the Best Works in San Leandro, which previously had primarily manufactured threshing machines. It was the beginning of a social revolution.

In early 1901 a salesman for Locomobile Autos came through Livermore on his way to delivering a machine to a Bakersfield customer. It was a magnificent machine – steam-powered, gas-fueled at the cost of one and a quarter cents a mile, with a double cylinder reversing engine. The salesman "favored a number of local citizens with a spin over the model roads of the valley, and all were delighted by the experience." By the time the salesman departed, H. R. Crane, a local bicycle dealer, had been named Locomobile agent.

But there was a downside to this new innovation. Automobiles never failed to produce panic among wagon and buggy teams. As a remedy, the Automobile Club of California offered a "horse familiarization" course where, by locating one or two automobiles at some convenient place in the community, horse owners could bring their animals close to a vehicle with its motor running.

Local farmers constantly railed at inconsiderate drivers who failed to slow down when passing a team on the road. A petition addressed to the County Board of Supervisors asked that automobiles be banned in Livermore Valley, insisting that "most drivers are of an irresponsible class who have only recently joined the ranks, as they appear to have little knowledge of their machines except to drive them at their full speed." The Board pointed out that automobiles have an equal right to the roadway. The Murray Township Supervisor argued that "automobiles of San Francisco do thousands of dollars of damage to our roads and do not contribute one cent to their support. This problem will never be settled until the State takes over the main highways."

Early day automobile manufacturers multiplied like today's dot.com companies. It was reported that a company had been formed in San Francisco to take over the old Bilz Buggy and Wagon Works in Pleasanton for the manufacture of automobiles. "...the company already has orders for several large machines and [the principals] are confident that the industry will assume large proportions." Nothing more was ever reported about this venture.

Meantime, locals were becoming comfortable with the automobile. In July 1904, Dr. J. K. Warner purchased a 10-horsepower Cadillac automobile. It

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April 28, 2007

Dear Members of the Livermore Heritage Guild,

Your Heritage Guild is alive with activity, and **WE NEED YOU!** The Livermore Heritage Guild is entering into a bold and exciting era. The City of Livermore is finalizing its ArtsAlive! proposal, which will bring much more attention and activity to the cultural arts, including history, to Livermore's downtown. The proposal will designate the downtown area and various buildings, including the Carnegie Building, as points of interest in the cultural arts. Consequently, the Guild is stepping up to meet this challenge.

Within the Guild there are also changes. We have hired an Office Manager, we are working hard to make our collections more available to the public, and we will become an even greater presence in our community. And, I was appointed President of the Guild just a couple of weeks ago.

"Why do you need me?" you ask. With all the excitement and progress, we need more volunteers to get involved in the activities of the Guild. We need greeters to staff the Carnegie Building, workers to sort, identify, and catalog our collections, volunteers to help at various activities (e.g. history talks, student tours, receptions, etc.), and craftsmen to help in the Duarte Garage with woodworking, electrical and mechanical systems, and displays.

We will accommodate your skills, interests, and time limits. We just need you! If you are willing to lend a hand, please call the Guild at 449-9927 and leave your name and phone number. We'll get back to you soon. Please get involved in **YOUR GUILD.**

Neal F. Cavanaugh
President
Livermore Heritage Guild

Decorator Wanted!

The Carnegie Library Building needs a face-lift inside. This landmark building, now the home of the Livermore Heritage Guild and the Livermore Art Association, needs to be made more inviting to visitors.

We are looking for a decorator to advise us on how to make the interior of the building more attractive. This effort will include primarily the layout of the displays and the flow of traffic.

If you're willing to donate, *pro bono*, advice to help us become more inviting to the public and

display our historical artifacts and art more attractively, please email the Livermore Heritage Guild at lhg@lhg.org or call 449-9927.

Volunteer Exhibit Curators Wanted!

Historical researchers, designers, and anyone good at arts and crafts are needed to help with History Center displays. We need volunteers who will take an exhibit idea, research the subject, and locate display items. Like to write? Help draft exhibit text. Into technology? Scan and print the photographs and documents to be

displayed. Have a good eye and a steady hand? Volunteer to mount the photos and documents or install the exhibit. We also need someone to purchase (the Guild will pay) room darkening drapery liner material and hem it to be used to cover our display cabinets while the History Center is closed.

Artists take note! We can use renderings of scenes appropriate to the exhibits that can be used as the background for the display or on flats above the cases.

Please call Lydia Carpenter (449-9927) or Marie Abbott (443-9740) for information or to volunteer your time and effort.

Auction Update

Auction staff members have been checking out the items donated to the annual Heritage Guild Auction, which this year will take



place on May 26th. We have some good and interesting pieces of furniture, some locks of various ages, home decorating items, including a modern crystal bowl, and much more. As always, it is a happy surprise to see what the auction receives from its supporters! Thank you!

Keep up the good work—sorting and cleaning and downsizing in your homes. When you've finished, call Bill Junk (447-4561) or Anna Siig (447-5475) who will pickup your donations.

The auction committee has some great staff already on board. And



Auction volunteers Anna Siig and Bill Junk sort the many treasures donated to the Guild for the annual Auction. With Lynn Owens on the podium, bidding will be fast and exciting for these and many other great items.



there are some volunteer positions yet to be filled for the night of the auction. Runner, server, and ticket seller positions are still open. Also wanted are volunteers to help and spell the clerk. Please call Anna Siig at 447-5475 if you wish to donate your time and energy that evening.

What: Annual Auction and Dinner
When: May 26th, Preview at 5 pm,
Dinner at 6, Auction at 7
Where: Duarte Garage

National Recognition for the Hagemann Ranch

Heritage Guild members have been actively assisting the City of Livermore's consultants in creating a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Hagemann Ranch on Olivina. The Guild has strongly supported the nomination of the Hagemann home and outbuildings because the property represents one of the last historic farmsteads in the immediate area.

Martin Mendenhall, brother of town founder William Mendenhall, bought the property from the Bernal family in 1870. In 1896, Maas Luders purchased the land from Mendenhall, and over time, it was passed down through his stepson to the recent family owners. The five-acre parcel is all that remains of a once-large farm.

National Register nomination as a historic site is recognition that the community does indeed care about its history. The addition of the Hagemann Ranch will be the fourth National Register property in our city. The other three are Ravenswood on Arroyo Road, the D. J. Murphy home at 291 McLeod Street, and the Bank of America (now the Independent building) at First Street and South Livermore Avenue.

- By Gary Drummond

was said to have been fitted with the latest improvements, "including a powerful searchlight which will be valuable for use on mountain roads at night. The machine is a heavy runabout, but the tonneau cover is so arranged that a second seat and canopy top can be used where needed." Three months later, Dr. Warner traded the Cadillac in for an Oldsmobile, as "he found it too heavy a machine for his purpose." H. R. Crane bought Warner's Cadillac and rented it out for excursions complete with chauffeur.

Crane, the Locomobile agent, took on sales of other automobiles. In 1903, it was the Oldsmobile line; in 1905, the Autocar, Rambler, and Pope-Hartford lines; and in 1907 he became the local Ford agent.

Law enforcement was another issue brought about by the automobile. Pleasanton citizens were outraged when the town fathers raised the speed limit from 10 to 20 miles per hour within the town limits. The Town Marshal was, however, instructed to see that the ordinance was strictly enforced.

A new state law became a source of some confusion when three local citizens were cited one evening when they left their automobiles standing in front of the Bell Theatre on Livermore's First Street without their lights on. The confusion: the law used the term "in use". The law stipulated that automobiles will have two lights in front and one red in back burning from a half hour after sunset until a half hour before dawn when a vehicle was "in use". Some drivers interpreted this term to mean only that time when they were actually traveling from place to place. The County District Attorney, however, interpreted the law differently and ruled that a vehicle standing on the street "awaiting the owner's pleasure was in use. It cannot be said to be out of use unless housed in a shed or

garage." The Legislature clarified the language shortly thereafter.

Automobiles had become a common sight on local streets by 1905, and horses no longer shied at them. That same year the first taxi service started up when John Lassen purchased a 10-horsepower Pope-Hartford touring car and proposed to do a general passenger business around Livermore and throughout the valley.

And so it went. Horses became accustomed to passing automobiles; drivers became more or less conscious of traffic regulations; and pedestrians became more adept at avoiding aggressive drivers. The situation hasn't changed in a hundred years.

- By *Gary Drummond*

New Officers Appointed

The LHG Board has appointed two new officers to fill Guild leadership vacancies. Neal Cavanaugh has been appointed president. Neal retired as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction at the Castro Valley Unified School District and presently directs the Twin Valley Learning Center, a Livermore non-profit tutoring agency serving students pre-K through adult. Neal is full of energy and enthusiasm for the Guild and its work to make Livermore history available to the community. He will continue to act as Second Vice President for Membership but will drop his chairmanship of the Oral History Committee.

The Board also appointed Marie Abbott First Vice President for Programs. Marie has been excep-

tionally effective as the Guild's publicity chair, and we expect her energy and good ideas will produce great programs. Marie retired from TWA as a flight attendant, and now that she is no longer pursuing her love of travel, she's putting her time and energy into serving the community. She's a long-time member of the Heritage Guild and served on the Livermore Historic Preservation Commission for eight years in the 1980s and 1990s. Marie is also a member of the "Duarte Garage Crew," providing tours for visitors during the Garage Sunday open houses.

Welcome Marie and Neal and thank you!

Livermore Reads

The Library's "Livermore Reads Together" program is well underway. The Friends of the Livermore Library have been extremely generous in underwriting the events related to *Zorro* by Isabel Allende. The Livermore Heritage Guild, Cask and Mask, Unique Evening, Shakespeare's Associates, Tiffany's Dance Academy, and Cinema West are also involved. Several book clubs have let the Library know that they have chosen to read *Zorro* as well.

On May 14, at 7 pm Gary Drummond will talk about "The Legend of Zorro" at the Civic Center Library. For a complete schedule of events, go to www.ci.livermore.ca.us/Library/Zorrocalendar.html.

Calendar

LHG Board Meeting, Wednesday, May 2, 7 pm. Carnegie Building (Third and J streets), downstairs.

History Talk, Monday, May 14, 7 pm: Gary Drummond will talk about "The Legend of Zorro" as part of the Library's "Livermore Reads Together" program. Civic Center Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore. For more information call the Library at 925-373-5500.

Duarte Garage no open house in May.

LHG Auction, Saturday, May 26, 5 pm. Old-fashioned fun, food, and bidding. Lynn Owens is the auctioneer. Duarte Garage, Corner of Portola and L Streets. Preview at 5; dinner at 6; auction at 7. Call 925-449-9927 for information.

LHG Board Meeting, Wednesday, June 6, 7 pm. Carnegie Building (Third and J streets), downstairs.

Duarte Garage Open, Sunday, June 17, 10-2 pm. Corner of Portola and L Streets.

History Talk, Wednesday, June 20, 7 pm. Barry Schrader will be the guest speaker. Doors open at 7 pm, the talk begins at 7:30. Civic Center Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore. Come early for cookies and chat. For more information call LGH at 925-449-9927 or check the website for updates.

Newsletter mailing, Saturday, June 30, 11:30 am, Carnegie Building (Third and J streets). Help get the newsletter ready for mailing and meet LHG friends. Call Maxine at 447-7401 or just drop in.

LHG Board Meeting, Wednesday, July 11, 7 pm. Carnegie Building (Third and J streets), downstairs.

Duarte Garage Open, Sunday, July 15, 10-2 pm. Corner of Portola and L Streets.

History Talk, Wednesday, July 18, 7 pm. Anne Homan will introduce her new book, *Historic Livermore, California, A-Z*. Doors open at 7 pm, the talk

begins at 7:30. Civic Center Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore. Come early for cookies and chat. For more information call LGH at 925-449-9927.

LHG Annual General Meeting and Dinner, Saturday, September 29, Duarte Garage. See article on Page 6 for more information.

History Center News

New exhibits are going into the cases at the History Center. The Guild has many fascinating items in its collections and is preparing exhibits to bring them out for visitors to view. One new exhibit will explore early residents of this beautiful valley.

Robert Livermore came to California in 1822. Just 15 years later he was the owner of the 40,000-acre Las Positas land grant. He and his wife, Josefa Higuera Molina, will lead the first exhibit with their pictures. The exhibit includes the official 1845 application for his cattle brand, signed by R. Livermore and California's last Mexican governor, Pio Pico, several pictures of the Livermores' "around the horn house", interior photos of the house as well as a picture of the cross section of the timbers that were used to build it. In addition, a photo of Robert Livermore's gravesite at Mission San Jose is in the exhibit.

Other early pioneer families that settled in the Valley will also be featured in the exhibit. The 1889 Livermore Valley map has been enlarged to make the names more readable.

In May, the Livermore Rodeo Association will mount an exhibit with rodeo memorabilia and photographs.

Be sure to drop by the History Center in the Carnegie Building at 3rd and J Streets. Open Wednesday through Sunday, 11:30 to 4.

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The Livermore Heritage Guild newsletter is published six times per year. Contact the newsletter editor with comments or suggestions for articles.

Livermore Heritage Guild

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New LHG web exhibit — Visit a new exhibit at livermorehistory.com. Web master Bob Bronzan recently visited Camp Parks History Center, on Dublin Boulevard across from the BART station, and took a few photos. See them on the LGH site. Also check out the website for LHG events, history stories, and historical photos.

Masthead photo: First Street in Livermore around 1900 with what appears to be an automobile parked on the right.

Mark Your Calendar for the LHG Annual General Meeting and Dinner

All members of the Livermore Heritage Guild are invited to the Guild's Annual General Meeting and Dinner. We will get reacquainted, elect new officers, and have a good time. The 2007 Annual Dinner will be on Saturday, September 29th, at the Duarte Lincoln Highway Garage. There will be delicious food catered by The Riata, entertainment, and a featured speaker.

Speaking this year is Dick Finn, who will talk about the Civil War Veterans of the Livermore Valley. Come find out who they were, why they lived here, what they did for a living, and other interesting information. More than 70 Civil War Veterans lived in the Tri-Valley area at one time. Many were fascinating people, and Dick would like to share something of their lives with you.

We're all looking forward to seeing you at the Annual General Meeting and Dinner. More information and reservation forms will be in future newsletters. For now, just reserve the date.

Volunteers Needed for Upcoming House Tour

We need you, yes you! The Livermore Heritage Guild is planning an exciting new fund-raising event and needs your help! We are bringing back the Livermore historic house tour in 2008 and need volunteers to help make the event a success.

Volunteer jobs can be as minimal as a half-day hosting in a house or as involved as team lead on one of the major event-tracks. All skills are welcome, but we are especially looking for marketing, project coordination, logistics, and communication skills.

This is a great opportunity not only to learn more about the community you live in but also to make new friends along the way! The success of this event directly depends on the dedication of its volunteers. For more information or to volunteer please contact Deborah Fields at deborah@deborahvalentine.com, or call 925-858-2085.

