



HERITAGE

Volume 31, Issue 3

www.elcajonhistory.org

July 2010

Our Mission Statement:

To gather, preserve, and protect historical records and personal publications about those living in and around the El Cajon Valley. As part of our stewardship we will promote the gathering, display and appreciation of the region's history.

President's Message

During August the museum was closed and the hard-working Board members took a break to go on vacations, tend to personal business, enjoy families, and endure the heat. But, we are back on our regular schedule of tours on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month and members are always welcome at monthly board meetings: 3rd Saturdays, 9:30 a.m., at the museum.

The July quarterly meeting featured Anne Krueger, a writer for the Union-Tribune. She shared stories about reporting in East County. In October our special guest is Richard Crawford, special history writer for the Union-Tribune, and historian with special collections at the San Diego city library. His articles appear every Thursday in the newspaper. Did you know San Diego once considered a floating stadium in Mission Bay?

Join us for **A Knox House Christmas** - by donating handmade items and by attending the sale and open house on Saturday, December 4, from 2 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. Mark your calendar. Free cider with purchase of bakery items!

First Friday - September 3

Immediately upon opening, a couple entered the museum with delight and many questions about the Knox House. The downstairs was on display and five members were on hand to guide and provide history of El Cajon's oldest commercial building. Soon, a group of 7 came excitedly through the door - glad to find us open - the adults with 3 children found the kitchen and the back porch to be full of surprises, including the crank phone and old ice box. Others, as well, came to visit.

The museum was open from 6 pm until 8 pm in participation of First Friday events sponsored by Downtown El Cajon's Community Development Corp (CDC). Though most people would be attending the concert at the Promenade, those who ventured into Knox House promised to return the following day during normal hours when the upstairs would be open. Light refreshments were served - white wine, chocolate covered strawberries, crackers and dip, with olives.

During the lull when there were no visitors, docents listened to our own writer Carroll Rice read aloud two chapters of his mystery-in-progress. Very entertaining!

Docents Needed! Please consider getting involved or re-involved by leading tours of the Museum. Training provided. Only about 3 hours a month is needed; we would like to be open every Saturday.

Knox Readers Book Club is bursting at the seams - if we get much larger we'll need to meet at the library. Our next discussion is Nov. 10 at 2PM Fiction of an historical nature is our focus.

El Cajon's Centennial is approaching. The city is forming a committee to plan for a 100th anniversary in 2012. El Cajon was incorporated in 1912 - anyone remember that?

Tours of Knox House Museum - Saturday, October 2, 12:30 - 3:15 p.m.

Free admission. Information: 619.444.3800.
elcajonhistory.org

Tours of Knox House Museum - Saturday, October 16, 11 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Free admission. Information: 619.444.3800.
elcajonhistory.org

Dates to Remember:

October 22 - 5:30 - 7:00 Quarterly Meeting Richard Crawford, Historical Writer for the Union Tribune. Coco's at 1925 Fletcher Pkwy. at Jackman.

November 10 - Knox Readers 2PM

December 4 - A Knox House Christmas - Open Museum and heritage sale. 2 - 4:30

If you'd like to have your Heritage Newsletter emailed to you, please call us or email us at:
michelle@mainstreetus.com

We'll be happy to send it to you electronically saving postage and paper at the same time!

Third Grade Essays

The Knox Hotel Museum

Iliana Castilio, Bostonia Elementary

I'm writing about the Knox Hotel and what I saw and remember when I visited it in my school field trip. The Knox hotel was built in 1876 and 20 families lived in it at once. The house was as "Big As A Whale" that's what the man said at the museum. But now the Knox hotel is small. It is in the corner of Main Street and Magnolia Avenue.

Lankershim had hired Amaziah L. Knox, which I call Knox to take care of his ranch and build ranch houses. For all the job he did Lankershim gave him ten acres of land north and south of Main. He was a smart man he sold food for people staying at his hotel. He had rooms, beds to sleep in and stables for horses. The people would come in from Julian were they discovered gold. He was in the middle of the gold rush he was a lucky man with that land. In 1870 is when gold was discovered in Julian.

The Knox hotel was two-stories high and had seven rooms. Mr. Knox then married a woman named Birdseye. The girl at the museum said Mrs. Birdseye sewed a big blanket for her kids to keep warm in this old sewing room that we got to visit. The sewing room had needles and a secret box we couldn't see in which I thought was cool. Mrs. Birdseye would cook for the people that would stay in the hotel they also had maids. I wish I had a maid to clean up my room and cook anything I want.

One of my favorite rooms was the kid's room. The room had old toys they had old clothes they would wear back in the old days. The kitchen was old but not so different then what we have. The things we use now in days to cook are the same as back then they just had old stoves.

The Knox Hotel has a children's room, dining room, kitchen, living room, porch, and a sewing room which I got to see and touch some of the awesome things. If you were to visit you could tell that this place was used for travelers in the old days to rest. Okay now the Knox Hotel is called The Knox Museum and you can visit it to get a bit of El Cajon History.

Olaf Wieghorst – An El Cajon Legend

Erin Miller, Fuerte Elementary School

I'm writing my essay about Olaf Wieghorst, a western art legend. Olaf could draw and paint horses better than most people because he experienced what he drew or painted, according to Judy Moore of The Olaf Wieghorst Museum Foundation. We're fortunate in El Cajon to have had a legend among us.

On April 30, 1899 in the village of Viborg, Jutland, Denmark, Olaf Wieghorst was born. Olaf started riding horses when he was just a baby. At the age of three his dad started teaching him tricks on trapeze rings and basic handstands. When he was nine, his parents put him in a circus. He was a bareback rider and also a stunt rider for The Great American Film Company. When Olaf was young, his dream was to be an American cowboy.

Olaf's father soon wanted Olaf to start painting. At the age of twelve, Olaf sold his first painting for two Danish crowns (forty cents American). Later, Olaf worked on a cattle farm. Horses became a major focus of his life.

At 19, Olaf took a Danish ship to come to the United States. He arrived on December 31, 1918. He had to jump ship because he wasn't legal yet. He didn't speak English and he only had \$1.25. He had to stay at his Aunt Olga's and Uncle Alfred's house. The next day, his Uncle Alfred took him to Ellis Island to get legalized. After that, his Aunt introduced Olaf to Mabel Walters. She taught him English.

Olaf followed his dream of going West by serving in the U.S. Cavalry. He served on the Mexican Border in the days of Pancho Villa. After three years of service, he left the military in June of 1922. After the military, he pursued the life of a cowboy. He went southwest sketching everything he could.

In the fall of 1924, he married Mabel Walters. Olaf joined the police department of New York City. He trained and broke horses for the Mounted Division. Olaf retired in December, 1944. He then moved to El Cajon with his wife, Mabel, and his son, Roy. They moved into a house on Renette Avenue.

After settling in El Cajon, Olaf sat down to paint steadily, gaining recognition for his classic cowboy and Indian subjects. He became a master painter of the Western scene. Olaf was honored at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame on November 15, 1974 for his contribution to Western art.

In 1982, a collector purchased one of Olaf's paintings, "The Navajo Madonna", for \$450,000. The painting was resold for \$1 million

Third Grade Essays Cont.

Both prices were the most money at the time for the work of a living American painter. Later he sold his paintings for \$80,000 to \$90,000. Most are now on display in museums around the country.

Olaf visited President Reagan in the White House in 1984. President Reagan owned three of his paintings. Presidents Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford owned his paintings too.

Olaf died on April 27, 1988 at Grossmont Hospital at the age of 88. Olaf once said, "When the time comes to put away my palette and unsaddle my pony, I hope that my canvasses will in some small measure add to the historical recording of an era: the cowboy, the cow pony, and the Great American West."

Musical Instruments in the Past

Michael Holzer, Vista Grande

"I'm going to be outside," I yelled.

"OK Michael," said my mom.

"Hey, what's this?" I said outside. I had struck a rock with my shovel and a dark and light blue swirl appeared that was big enough for me to fit through. I'm going in to explore this, I said to myself. WRRRTTTTT!!!! "This place doesn't look like 2010, it looks like... like... 1878!" I exclaimed. I knew it was 1878, because I researched it on the computer for my third grade report. I was so amazed that I began to explore. I was a few buildings, most of them were smaller than the ones in 2010. After a few minutes, I found the Knox Hotel. I knew it was the Knox Hotel because I visited it in school. When I got there a lady, I knew it had to be Mrs. Knox, welcomed me in. The inside of the Hotel had a steep and narrow stairway. When I stepped in I saw a boy sitting in the lobby, though I guess in 1878 it might have been called a parlor. I walked over to him and saw he was sitting at a piano. I asked him "Do you know how to play this piano?"

"This isn't a piano, it's an organ!" he replied. He looked at me funny so I explained that I was from the year 2010. We met and started to talk about the organ. My grandparents have an organ at their house, so I compared what I knew about it to the one we saw in the parlor. Both of them are made of brown wood. This organ had to be pumped with your feet so air could fill the pipes to make a sound. What is also different is it had one row of keys. My grandparents don't need to pump because it ran off of electricity and it has two rows of keys. The boy again looked at me funny

Because he didn't know what electricity was. I would have to explain that to him some other time.

We talked about the other instruments. He asked if I played the violin which I didn't. We discovered that the violin didn't change over the years; it is still made out of dark wood and has four strings. Next year I would be playing the xylophone, but he never heard of it. I described what it looked like: it had two rows of metal keys; black on the bottom. I use mallets (a stick with a round rubber ball on each end) to hit the keys to make sound. The xylophone had a stand that it rested on while playing. The boy was confused but quickly realized that I was talking about a Glockenspiel. Boy, what a weird name, I thought.

In the year 2010, I play percussion on ladders, rubber trash cans, pots and pans. Boy, did his eyes get BIG! He would never touch pots and pans in the kitchen for anything besides cooking.

"Let's go out to the patio and I'll see what we can come up with to play on," I said. So we went out to the patio and found a metal wash tub, wash board, and a metal milk container. On the wall we found a wooden pole with a flat piece of wood on the top, which made the pole look like the letter T. We ran outside and got some tree branches and I showed him how I could make music with what we found. I took the metal wash tub, flipped it upside down and brought the wash board and milk container within reach. I showed him how I could make music by drumming on them. The boy was very impressed. After that I took the pole and showed him how I could make music by hitting the pole on the ground.

We learned a lot from each other but it was getting late. I said good-bye and left the Knox Hotel. I looked for the portal from where I last saw it, and luckily it was still there. It was hard for me to leave this cool place, but I had to get home for dinner. I walked through the portal and I was still in my backyard. The rock that I had struck had disappeared. I looked at my watch and only one hour had passed. Should I tell my mom about this? Would she believe me? I guess I'll keep it a secret.



Carroll's Corner . . .

By Carroll Rice

Airplanes over El Cajon, cont. (1909-1944)

1940's: The newer four-engine PBY2Y

"Coronado" designs began to take the place of the PBY in the 1940's, but their presence was overshadowed by the constant and growing presence of the Consolidated B-24 "Liberators."

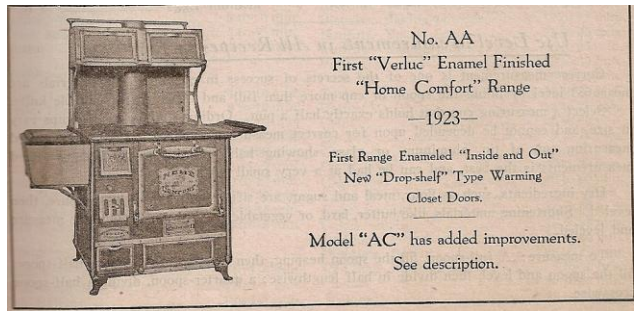
First flown in late 1939, the B-24 heavy bombers began to roll off the assembly lines in 1940 in San Diego and reached full production in 1941. El Cajon's skies roared with their four-engined power day and night for the next four years, as they were tested before entering the growing arsenal of the United States and its allies. Variants of the B-24 were produced for the Navy as well as the Army Air Corps; and many were destined for the British and Canadian Air Forces. An enduring airplane, the last military B24 was retired from the Indian Air Force in 1968.

More contenders for the air came from the United School of Aeronautics, headquartered at a field near the corner of Greenfield Drive and Mollison Ave.

Offering rudder-and-stick flight training to potential Air Corps officers, their bright yellow Piper Cubs were familiar sights over El Cajon. With Army parachutes manufactured nearby, the school contracted to test them, using 160-pound dummies for the dangerous first-time drops. There were those who complained about the presence of the flying school, of course; noise and frightened chicken flocks being the main grievances. The construction of Gillespie Field in 1942 and the hourly flights of transport aircraft dropping Marine parachute troops on the field apparently drove the complainants to other locations or occupations.



B-24 Bomber
Wikipedia.org



October Quarterly Meeting

We welcome as our October speaker San Diego historian, City Librarian and Union-Tribune historical columnist Richard Crawford. Mr. Crawford, Supervisor of the San Diego Library's Special Collections, has written more than 120 articles for San Diego's major newspaper. Among them are area events, places and people -- one of the most recent was the story of the Navy's use of John Spreckels' yacht during World War I. Crawford has chosen as his subject for our annual dinner, his manner of choosing subjects, and informational and entertaining stories of current and past droughts, the building of local dams and other water-related subjects. We know that those attending the 2010 Annual Dinner will be fascinated by his narration accompanying his collection of rare photos.

Write checks to ECHS for \$16 for each person, and mail to:
ECHS, PO Box 1973, El Cajon CA 92022.

Gift donations for the opportunity drawing
are always welcome.
No need to bring desserts this time.

We look forward to visiting with you.



Please see
tear-off on
page 8.

Airplanes Cont.

Entry into World War II brought more airplanes into the sky and a corps of Civilian Defense volunteers, who observed all aircraft and reported their positions to trackers in San Diego. Before the building of the observation tower and the installation of the air raid/blackout siren, the Boy Scout Hut on Lexington Street was the center of operations. Adult volunteers and Boy Scouts manned the station day and night, watching for any enemy airplanes that might sneak through.

February 27, 1942 was a special day in my personal recollection of airplanes over El Cajon. Expelled from class for talking, my fellow offenders and I were picking up papers and trash from the school grounds, and incidentally watching the low-winged monoplane trainers, probably Ryan PTs, practice formation flying. A sudden noise to the west turned our eyes to a collision between the propeller of one plane and the empennage of another. The tail-damaged plane dove directly toward the ground; two stick figures were thrown clear, parachutes opened, the ground shook and dust rose at its impact. A single figure jumped from the second aircraft and his parachute opened.

That airplane, flying uncontrolled over El Cajon, made an Immelman turn and crashed in a second cloud of dust. Amazingly, neither airplane caused any significant damage; the first, buried itself near the stock pens of the meat packing plant at Main and Marshall, and the second fell into a vacant lot near Magnolia and Park Avenues about 25 feet from a house. It was reported that the airmen were unhurt and were quaffing beer at Bill's Place, next to Hardin's Pharmacy on Main Street, when the emergency and retrieval trucks arrived.

Although the army had designated several squadrons of Lockheed P-38 fighters for the defense of the west coast, they were seldom seen over El Cajon, at least in my recollection. However, a memorable crash in 1943 involved a P-38 fighter that swooped low over the east side of the Valley with both engines at full throttle and drove directly into a hillside above Washington Street. The impact, exploding gasoline and ammunition killed the pilot and a detached propeller beheaded a calf that was grazing nearby. Being wartime, the newspapers were scanty in their coverage of the accident which it was believed to have been caused by jammed controls.

When the United States entered World War II, there was nothing in the air that could match the climbing and turning rates of the highly maneuverable Japanese Mitsubishi A6M "Zero" fighter. In 1942, a Japanese pilot returning from a raid on an American position in the Aleutian Islands died while attempting an emergency landing on Akutan Island. His barely damaged plane was spotted by a U.S. Navy patrol and sent to North Island for evaluation. It was quickly repaired, given American paint and 'star' markings, and subjected to flight tests around the San Diego area. I remember hearing the snarling engines and seeing the outlines of the Zero and an early Chance-Vaught F4U "Corsair" fighter circling above the then-new Gillespie Field in mock dogfights, testing combat characteristics and areas of vulnerability. The capture of that Zero is considered one of the most significant events of World War II. It led directly to the development of tactics that assured American air superiority in the Pacific Theatre.



Corsair fighter
Wikipedia.org

Not only did the El Cajon area provide housing for aircraft and other defense workers, it contributed of its wealth as well. Special programs, horse shows, bond sales and direct gifts to the Navy and War Departments raised more than enough money to buy a B-24 bomber. On May 21, 1943, *The Spirit of El Cajon* rolled off the production line to be commissioned and sent into service. Nothing more is known of this aircraft, but it would have been fitting if it had been manned by fliers from El Cajon, of which there were many.

The El Cajon Valley contributed more than its share of fliers and flight personnel to the Marines, Navy, Army Air Corps and even the WASP (Women's Airforce Service Pilots) throughout World War II and after. Surely, those earlier fliers, pioneers and military aviators, and their exciting airplanes, inspired that next generation to take flight in service to their country. Today, when we see the antique biplanes and WWII warbirds at fly-ins and air shows, we should remember how they fueled our imaginations and inspired the dreams, visions and service that established the United States as a major air power in war and peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks are due to The San Diego Historical Society, the archivists, restorers and docents of the San Diego Air and Space Museum, and Bill Allen of the Allen Airways Flying Museum at Gillespie Field for their help in locating data and verifying facts during the writing of this article.

Your comments, thoughts and suggestions generated by Carroll's Corner are welcome. Email me at gcrice2129@aol.com or leave a message at 619-447-7654.



Lockheed P-38,
Wikipedia.org

El Cajon Historical Society

The following Officers are proposed for one-year terms starting January 1, 2011

President: Jonna Waite
Vice President: Eldonna Lay- Rick Hall
Recording Secretary: Carla Nowak
Corresponding Secretary: Vacant
Treasurer: George Dall C.P.A.

The following persons are nominated for election to the Board of Directors for 3-year terms ending December 31, 2013:

Rick Hall
Fran Hill
Carroll Rice
Jonna Waite

The following Directors will continue to serve with terms ending December 31, 2011:

Christy Klock
Dick Lay
Carla Nowak
Michelle Regan

The following Directors will continue to serve with terms ending December 31, 2012:

George Dall
Bonnie Fredensborg
Eldonna Lay
Mary Saxton

The following persons are recommended to serve on the Nominating Committee for the year 2011:

Rick Hall
Fran Hill
Christy Klock
Joe Klock
Eldonna Lay

Respectfully Submitted by the 2010 Nominating Committee:

Rick Hall
Fran Hill
Christy Klock
Joe Klock
Eldonna Lay

Welcome New Members:

Todd Moore
John Berndes
Carol Shaffer
Diane and Peter
Palambo



We're grateful for recent donations:

Thank you to Jerry Mackey, former El Cajon Firefighter, for the donation of the first of a series of Helix Water District Bonds, which had been first sold on November 5, 1915.

Thank you to G. Carroll Rice for the donation of an extremely interesting and rare 1878 edition of *Pearls for Young Ladies: Their Work* by John Ruskin

On Facebook

Knox House Museum is listed on Facebook along with history details and photos of the museum's interior rooms. Check it out and make suggestions as well as pass it along to your friends so more people know about us. Virtual tours of the museum are available on our own website:

www.elcajonhistory.org - thanks to Tammy Goodwater.

El Cajon Historical Society Board

PRESIDENT: JONNA WAITE

VICE PRESIDENT: ELDONNA LAY

TREASURER: GEORGE DALL

RECORDING SECRETARY: CARLA NOWAK

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TELEPHONE AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE: CHRISTY AND JOE KLOCK

BUDGET COMMITTEE: JOE KLOCK

THIRD GRADE ESSAY CONTEST: ALICE RODRIGUEZ

HERITAGE EDITOR: MICHELLE REGAN

G. CARROLL RICE

MEMBERS AT LARGE:

KARNA WEBSTER, ELLEN ANDERSON, BONNIE FREDENSBORG, DICK LAY,

COME JOIN US!

MEMBERSHIP:

\$10-	INDIVIDUAL
\$15	FAMILY
\$25	ORGANIZATION
\$35	BUSINESS
\$500	LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Your membership and donations are very much appreciated and help to preserve our Knox House and the artifacts within - pictures and documents for future generations to enjoy and learn from.

Hurray for the Third Grade!

We Congratulate all of the Third Grade Essay Participants:

- **First Place and Perpetual Trophy**

Jordan Mani – *Dyer Egg Ranch*

Flying Hills – Watson

- **Second Place**

Siena Welch – *River of Tears*

Rancho San Diego – Taylor

- **Third Place**

Carter Boucek – *Major Levi Chase*

Vista Grande – Saltzman

- **Fred and Nettie Kersten Award, Judges Award**

Zach Pernicano - *My Family*

Rancho San Diego – Goe

- **Virginia Stead Award – Natural Life**

Dematteo Jasso – *The History of the Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation in El Cajon*

Fuerte Elementary – Hill

- **Heritage Award**

Yuma Santos – *Why My Parents Came to California*

Rios – Woods

- **Olaf Wieghorst Award**

Erin Miller – *Olaf Wieghorst – An El Cajon Legend*

Fuerte Elementary – Kern

- **Originality Award**

Michael Holzer – *Musical Instruments of the Past*

Vista Grande – Saltzstein

- **Neatness Award**

Illiana Castillo – *The Knox hotel Museum*

Bostonia – Cano

- **Honorable Mention**

Evan O'Neill – *The San Diego Flume*

Rancho San Diego – Taylor

Best of School Awards:

Avocado, Liberknecht – Christopher Schnalzer, *War Comes to El Cajon*

Bostonia, Cano – Breanna Robertson, *Racing at the Cajon Speedway*

Chase, Caruso – Micle Arambulo, *Dr. Charles M. Johnson*

Flying Hills – Cayden Hastings – *Third Grade Boy Then and Now*

Fuerte, Hill – Ashlee Ksiazek – *The Year 1877*

W. D. Hall – Rylie foster – *The First Datsun Dealership in El Cajon*

Rancho San Diego, Goe – Rachel Turner - *Olaf Wieghorst*

Rios, Woods - Cameron Jones – *My Family's History*

Vista Grande, Salzstein – Aramis Carson – *Mother Goose Parade*

St. Kieran's Catholic School, Eisele – Emily Machniak – *El*

Cajon's Farmer's Daughter



Knox Readers Book Club

In September the discussion was about *Giants in the Earth*, a prairie saga by O.E. Rolvaag, of Norwegian pioneers settling in South Dakota. A very readable and well-written novel. At the November 10 (2 p.m.) meeting the discussion will be about *City of Dreams: A Novel of Nieuw Amsterdam and Early Manhattan* by Beverly Swerling. This is highly recommended by book club member Joan Borrelli. Another recommended title is: *Nothing Like It In The World, The Men who Built the Transcontinental Railroad 1863-1869* by Stephen Ambrose. If you are looking for a group that enjoys historical fiction, come join us at the Knox House Museum

Cajon Historical Society
P.O. Box 1973
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*Return Service
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ANNUAL DINNER
Coco Restaurant's private room
1925 Fletcher Parkway
El Cajon, CA
5:30 Social
6:00 – 7:00 Program

MENU:
Choice of three dinners:
A chicken Sensation
Chopped Beef Dinner
Fish & Chips

Be sure to attend:

Quarterly Meeting: ***Coco's***
On Fletcher Parkway and Jackman in El Cajon
5:30 check in – *people with reservations will be seated first*
Thursday, October 21, 2010



Kindly cut off the form and mail to ECHS before 10/15/2010

Please Reserve My Seat (seats) at the Quarterly Meeting Luncheon, **Thurs. October 21, 2010 at 5:30pm.**
Coco's Fletcher Pkwy, El Cajon, CA (Fletcher Pkwy and Jackman)

Number Attending _____ X \$16.00 Amt. Enclosed _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address: _____ City _____

Email _____

Mail Reservation checks to: ECHS, P.O. Box 1973, El Cajon, Ca 92022 **See you there!**