

# The Hathaway Ranch Museum & Rancho Santa Gertrudes Historical Society

- NEWSLETTER -

11901 E. Florence Avenue • Santa Fe Springs, California 90670

Volume 1, Number 4

WINTER 1991

## PRESIDENTS' DAY PROGRAM

**SLATED FOR FEBRUARY 23rd**

"PRESIDENTS AND FIRST LADIES IN WHITTIER... AND OTHER FOREIGN PLACES" will be the first RSGHS members program of the new year, 1992.

RSGHS members Joe Da Rold and Bernard Hardy have merged their creative talents to develop an entertaining musical package. The 45-minute program is a light-hearted, yet moving, look back at the personal and international lives of the two First Ladies who lived briefly in Whittier, showing the impact that each had on her husband and her country.

Featured in the program is Georgia Gumper, singing songs from two of Irving Berlin's musicals. "Mr. President" and "Call Me Madam." Georgia takes on the role of a "singing First Lady", providing a musical counterpoint to Joe's historical narrative. Bernard accompanies at the piano.

The program, written by Joe, has garnered rave notices each time the talented trio has performed it. The Woman's Club of Whittier called it "the most entertaining program we've had all year!" It is scheduled for Sunday, February 23, 1992 at 2:00 p.m. at the Hathaway Ranch Museum. Reservations are requested by calling 310/944-6563 or 310/944-7372.

## ANNUAL AWARDS PICNIC

Seventy-five people gathered at Heritage Park on Sunday, September 22nd, to honor fellow volunteers with awards, place favors, and entertainment at the annual Hathaway Ranch Museum picnic. Jean Hathaway, President of Rancho Santa Gertrudes Historical Society, welcomed the group, then turned the program over to Caroline Long, chairman of the Hathaway "Ranch Hands."

In recognition of their volunteer service hours over the

last twelve months, 30 volunteers were presented with straw cowboy hats, which will become part of their tour uniforms. Museum Director Nadine Hathaway presented special awards to Marvin Carlzen, Caroline Long, Jack Johnson, and Henry Lynn, each of whom logged from 260 to 560 hours. The total number of volunteer hours contributed this year by all docents was over 3350.

Acting Director, Joe Da Rold, announced that Nadine had recently been selected to receive the 1991 Lifetime Achievement Award from the California Council for the Promotion of History.

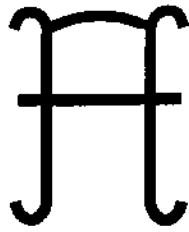
The 1991 "GERTIE" Award, presented each year to a resident of the Rancho Santa Gertrudes area who has contributed substantially to the preservation of history, went to Virginia Mathony for ten years of volunteer commitment with a variety of area-wide historical groups, and for authoring a new book on the history of Whittier entitled, "WHITTIER REVISITED."

The 1991 Awards for the RSGHS Annual Historical Photograph Contest were swept by former RSGHS President, Joe Da Rold, who won First, Second, and Third prizes, and one Honorable Mention. Two Honorable Mentions were also won by Nadine Hathaway.

This year's judges were John Nairn (Matern Family descendant and member of SFS Historical Committee), Melvina McLaughlin (Norwalk artist), and Regina Phelan (La Habra Heights resident and descendent of early Pioneer family of the area).

The contest adds about 40 photographs annually to the Museum's growing collection of over 5000 historical photographs of the SFS area.

Following the presentation of awards, a special harp-decorated birthday cake and giant birthday card were given to Ruth Grams on the occasion of her 85th birthday. Ruth is currently a member of the RSGHS Board of Directors. Entertainment was provided throughout the afternoon by singer Tom Di Ponzio, the hot-and-cold buffet prepared by Silvius Catering, and the cake baked by Catering by Linda.



Manuel Nieto was granted this brand, shown at left, for his Rancho Santa Gertrudes in the year of 1784 — California's third Rancho. A portion was granted in 1834 to Josefa Cota de Nieto, and is now the site of Los Nietos, Downey, and the majority of Santa Fe Springs.

### Rancho Santa Gertrudes Historical Society

#### Membership Categories

Youth (high school or younger)	\$1.50
Individual	\$3.00
Family (2 adults & minor children)	\$5.00
Business:	\$10.00
Supporting:	\$50.00
Sustaining:	\$100.00
Lifetime:	\$500.00

Make checks payable to **Rancho Santa Gertrudes Historical Society**, or you can simply abbreviate the name as **RSGHS**. Annual membership dues and contributions should be mailed to: RSGHS 11901 E. Florence Ave. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670

Notice of membership dues are sent on a yearly calendar basis. Contributions are tax-deductible in the amount allowed by law.

The RANCHO SANTA GERTRUDES HISTORICAL SOCIETY is a non-profit corporation which promotes and develops historical activities of all types within land bounded by, but not limited to, the Rancho Santa Gertrudes as shown on early maps of Spanish and Mexican land grants.

### Combined Hathaway Ranch Museum and Rancho Santa Gertrudes Historical Society Newsletter

<b>Published by</b>	The Hathaway Ranch Museum and Rancho Santa Gertrudes Historical Society
<b>Mailing Address</b>	11901 E. Florence Ave. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
<b>Telephone</b>	(310) 944-6563 or (310) 944-7372
<b>RSGHS Board of Directors</b>	
<b>President</b>	Jean E. Hathaway
<b>Vice President</b>	Faye Smetanka
<b>Corres. Secretary</b>	Nadine Hathaway
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	Joyce Virnala
<b>Treasurer</b>	Felce Cutrone
<b>Membership</b>	Ray Stenson
<b>Liaison-Museum</b>	Jean Hathaway
<b>Liaison-Pico Rivera</b>	Martha Russell
<b>President of the Docents</b>	Caroline Long
<b>Board Members</b>	Evelyn Grembla Ruth Grams James Hogan Jack Johnson Henry Lynn Betty Putnam Francine Rippy Gloria Saldano

**Typesetting & Composition** Terry Hathaway

This Newsletter is a general news journal and solicits articles regarding the general interest, and the technical aspects of historical maintenance or restoration. Submissions must be sent to the Hathaway Ranch Museum or RSGHS, 11901 E. Florence Ave., Santa Fe Springs, California 90670.

## Calendar Section

December 1, 1991	Sunday	12:30 pm
RSGHS Board Meeting - Ranch Museum Designated Members		
December 1, 1991	Sunday	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Tours—Hathaway Ranch Museum Free Christmas Boutique Free		
January 5, 1992	Sunday	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Tours—Hathaway Ranch Museum Free		
February 2, 1992	Sunday	12:30 pm
RSGHS Board Meeting - Ranch Museum Designated Members		
February 2, 1992	Sunday	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Tours—Hathaway Ranch Museum Free		
February 23, 1992	Sunday	2:00 pm
Special Program: "Presidents & First Ladies in Whittier... and other foreign places" Members Only - Reservations Required		
March 1, 1992	Sunday	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Tours—Hathaway Ranch Museum Free		
April 5, 1992	Sunday	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Tours—Hathaway Ranch Museum Free		
May 3, 1992	Sunday	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Tours—Hathaway Ranch Museum Free		
June 7, 1992	Sunday	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Tours—Hathaway Ranch Museum Free		

### NEW BENEFIT FOR MEMBERS

RSGHS members may receive updates and reminders about upcoming programs and events by calling the Museum Office at 310/944-7372. After the regular recorded message starts playing, press "99" on your touch-tone phone for your special "Member Memo."

### NEW AREA CODE

Note to out-of-town members: the 213 Area Code has been split, and the Hathaway Ranch Museum is now in the new 310 area code.

## MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

At the annual meeting of the California Council for the Promotion of History, Nadine Hathaway was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was a beautiful framed watercolor painting of the Heritage Park Carriage Barn, recognizing the role Nadine played in the effort to have the City of Santa Fe Springs preserve the Slusher Estate as an historic property.

The presentation was made in tandem by Joe Da Rold, who gave an overview of Nadine's life and historical interests, and Will Hathaway, who made a uniquely personal tribute to Nadine. Under the heading "Terms of Endearment," Will shared a handful of phrases that had become signposts in his life. Here are the "Terms of Endearment," along with Will's commentary:

"UNDER THE TABLE" - "Some things you need to know about this woman: From very early on, I found that my mother allowed things to take place under the table. However, this did not come without some restrictions. I and my younger siblings were instructed to play quietly under the table during community meetings she hosted. She may have had a trickle-down theory that our own sense of community would grow from this practice."

"GO CHASE YOURSELF" - "When she was not conducting community meetings, feeding and tending a minimum of seven others, she often sought a few moments, even at the sink, clothesline, or while skimming milk, to contemplate her world, and if one of us complained of insufficient activities, we were advised that we might go chase ourselves. In that statement, she hoped we might pursue our own sense of wonder that did not require her attendance."

"I'M SAVING THAT" - An expression of my father's was "I'm saving that!" My father went to heaven while saving some timbers he might have had some plans for at a later date. My father saved everything. His 76 years of saving was a perfect starting point for my mother to establish a hands-on Ranch Museum, concentrating on the early history of Santa Fe Springs."

"DO SOMETHING WITH THESE" - My father was also persistent in bringing my mother great quantities of perishables-fruits, nuts, kids- with the command: "Here, Nadine do something with these." She did, and continues to do so. But what has she done with these? Well, for the community, she is keeping its hands on history. For my father, she has figured out what to do with all the five acres of stuff. And for myself and my siblings, she has helped to keep alive that sense of wonder."

And finally,

"BEFORE YOUR MOTHER" - "When I was young and my grandfather Jesse had finally approved of something I had done, he would use the expression, 'If you keep that up, you will be a man before your mother.' Well, Jesse, it's a hard act to follow."

## EXCELSIOR!

Two items related to Excelsior Union High School in Norwalk have come to light in the Museum Archives. The first is Dick Hathaway's 1930 diploma from EUHS. Of particular interest is the diploma presentation cover, made of sheepskin. Many of us have heard the word "sheepskin" used synonymously with "diploma." Now we know the connection. These items have been placed on exhibit in the "School" Room of the Museum.

The second EUHS item, shown below, is somewhat more exotic—a flyer for the Girls' Glee Club performance of "Zurika, The Captive Gypsy Princess". If we have any readers who can share memories of this event, be sure to let us know.

# "Z-U-R-I-K-A"

THE CAPTIVE GYPSY PRINCESS

--PRESENTED BY THE--

GIRLS' GLEE CLUB

-OF-

# E. U. H. S.

Performances:

2 P. M.

8 P. M.

Prices:

15 and 25c.

35 and 50c.

FRIDAY Feb. 27th, 1920

C-O-M-E-I

# NORWALK.

## Delivering The Mail

### From Fulton Wells to Santa Fe Springs

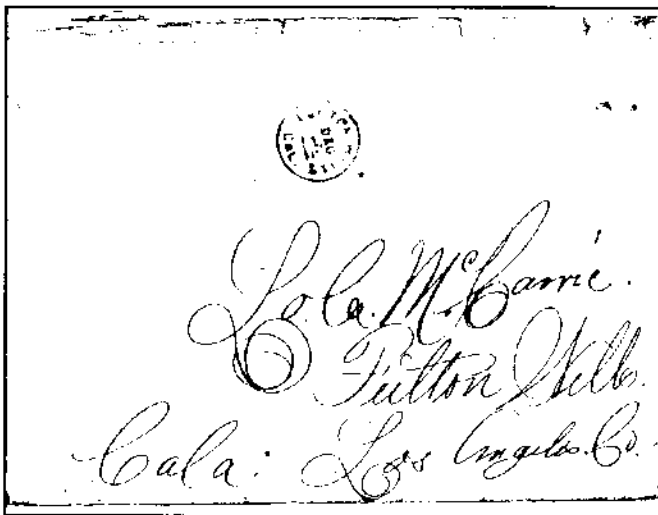
by Joe Da Rold

Although mail service was available as early as 1867 from the Los Nietos Post Office, it was not until eleven years later that the first local post office was established: the Sulphur Wells Post Office (October 11, 1878)

One suspects that Dr. Fulton may have been the most active proponent for the new service, for his new commercial enterprise was to be heavily dependent on revenue from out-of-state tourists.

It is not known if Sulphur Wells was a name already in common use, or whether it might have been the suggestion of Dr. Fulton. In any event, it was short-lived, and Fulton came up with a better name. The post office operated from a livery barn for six months, until it was moved in April of 1879 to the newly-built Fulton Hotel and re-named the Fulton Wells Post Office.

Until the recent discovery of an envelope with a Fulton Wells postmark, history had obscured the existence of the Fulton Wells Post Office. (The date on the postmark is illegible, but it was probably about 1885.) The United States Postal Service Archives has now confirmed that it operated for nine years, from 1879 to 1888.



*This early envelope with a Fulton Wells postmark is addressed to Lola McCarric. Lola's mother, Sarah Koontz, had died in Idaho from Scarlet Fever during the treacherous trip west from their home in Pennsylvania, so Lola lived with The Koontz family in Santa Fe Springs. In 1902 Lola married Jesse E. Hathaway, and thus began the Hathaway Ranch.*

Historical notes of R. F. Hathaway indicate that at some point this post office operated from the home of Eve Porter, who with her husband, owned a store on Telegraph Road, East of Four Corners. The change of location probably occurred during the renovation of the Fulton Hotel after its sale to Pacific Land Improvement Co.

On February 23, 1888, the post office was moved into the Koontz General Store, located at Four Corners, where it was established as the Santa Fe Springs Post Office. The store, run by brother and sister, William and Emma Koontz, was a regular stop for the Banning Stagecoach. Another sister, Jennie, carried the mail from the Santa Fe Railway station to the store for sorting.

William and Emma eventually gave up the store when a gusher came in from a well on their property, spraying their house with mud, sand, and oil.

Although a letter written to Emma Koontz in 1889 was addressed to her at Fulton Wells, within a few years letters were being addressed to the family at Santa Fe Springs. By the 1920's "Norwalk" was being given as the mailing address for the the homes, but this was to ensure home delivery. The little post office at Four Corners had been officially established as a "4th Class" post office and provided no carrier service.

It continued in business until the end of 1955, whereupon it was reduced to the status of a station, under the Norwalk Post Office. By dint of its existence, however, the United States Post Office continued the Santa Fe Springs postmark, making it one of the oldest continually used cancellation marks in California.

After the incorporation of the City of Santa Fe Springs in 1957, the post office moved to a storefront in the Santa Fe Springs Shopping Center at 10016 Orr & Day Road. It was re-established as the Santa Fe Springs Post Office on September 1, 1958, with Nancy Barranger recorded as the new Postmaster. Julian Grembla became Postmaster in 1961, overseeing the move of postal operations into the existing modern facility at the SFS Town Center on Telegraph Road, in July of 1969.

#### Summing Up

Despite the variety of names associated in one way or another with the mineral springs resort, the United States Post Office has recognized only three: Sulphur Wells, Fulton Wells and Santa Fe Springs.

© 1991 Hathaway Ranch Museum.

*(Excerpted from an article entitled "From Fulton Wells to Santa Fe Springs." Available upon request from the Hathaway Ranch Museum 310/944-7372)*

# Letters & Other Stuff

Letter of August 22, 1991:

Dear Nadine Hathaway:

I want to thank you so much for the copy of "Settlers of Southern California"... How very much I and my family enjoyed it! You have a great project going. (I am a little late in sending the enclosed photos - I have been in Holland all summer (taking with me my two little grandsons). Vacation is over now, here - school started yesterday (Aug. 21st) so now I am having time to catch up.)

[Pictures include: Front yard of the Nordstrom home on Telegraph Road, ca. 1911; Family grouping, ca. 1916; and Family group on a picnic in the hills, ca. 1918.]

I have many more photos that might be of interest. Does your project include other than Santa Fe Springs? Whittier, North Whittier Heights (Hacienda Heights), Puente, etc. Or is it just the one part of So. Calif.?

Again thank you for the copy of Early Settlers. I love it.

Yours sincerely,

Eleanor Mekeel Massey

P.S. Did you ever read my mother's article on early North Whittier Heights? (I believe it appeared in the Whittier News - or Historical Society's publication?) The time period is about 1913 to ca. 1921. Even though I helped Mother write it, it (I must say!) is a charming record of days gone by.

E.M.M.

## HISTORICAL UPDATES...

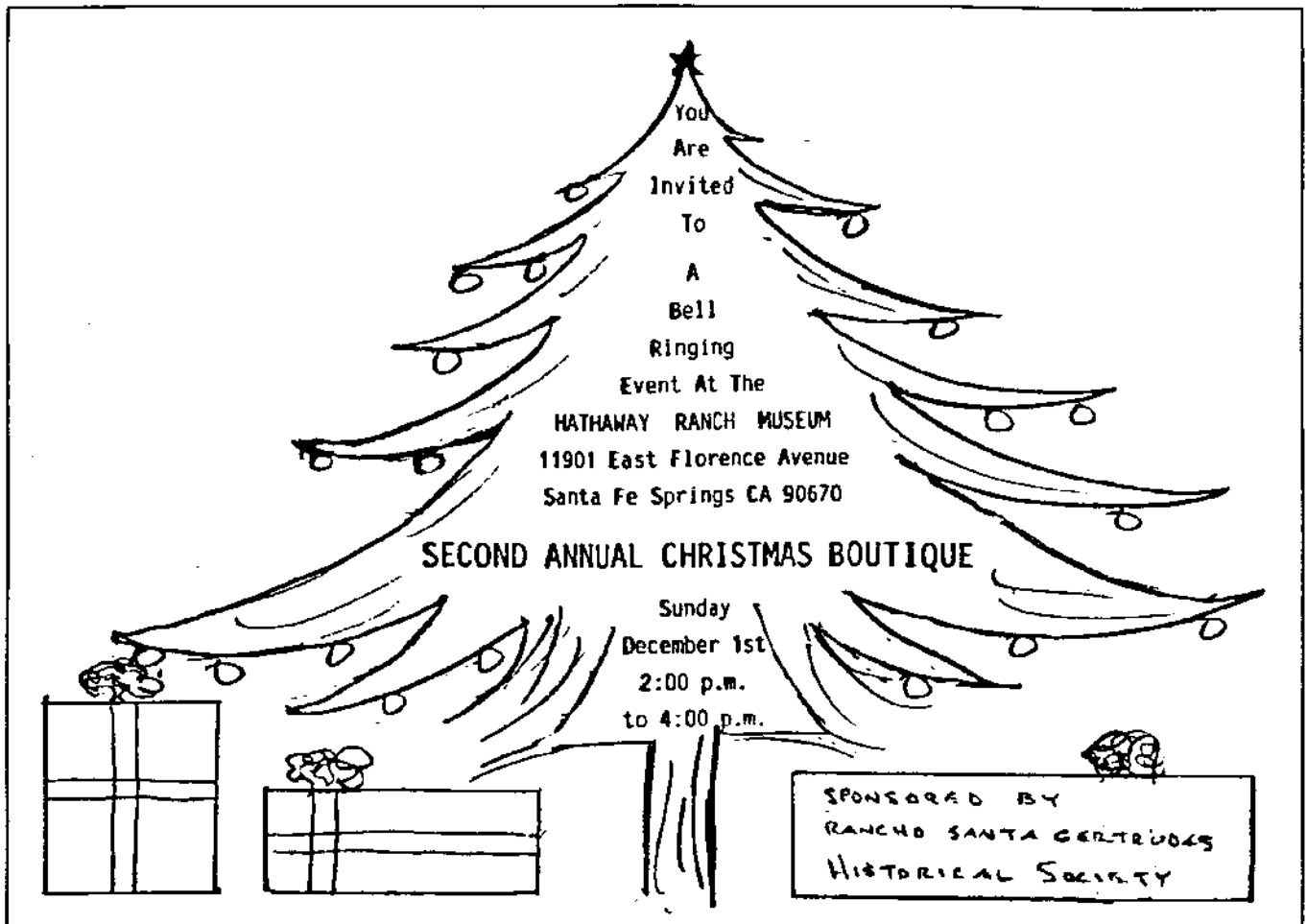
Eleanor Mekeel Massey sent a second letter from Sweden to clarify some textual errors in Marie Pike's article in "Settlers. Volume II." On page 47, the "grandpa" and "grandma" referred to are John and Christena Nordstrom. Esther was their daughter (and mother of Eleanor), not John's sister, as mentioned on page 51. "Uncle Carl" was John's older brother. The two brothers married sisters, so Christena's sister was Carl's wife, Anna.

Joe Da Rold points out that the "Mr. and Mrs. Koontz", referred to in Esther Mekeel's article as the proprietors of the grocery store, were in fact William and Emma, who were brother and sister. Recent research he has done on the Koontz family indicates that the 1869 date of the Koontz General Store (p.40) is about ten years too early.

Despite the fact that two copies of that photo in the museum's collection are dated 1868 and 1869. Martin and Mary Ann Koontz had their 12th child in 1871 up in Oregon and did not migrate to Southern California until 1875. Since they lived briefly in Independence, California, and in La Canada, they likely did not arrive in Fulton Wells until April of 1879.



In 1919 this huge "Estampes" pumpkin weighed in at 273 lbs. setting a World record for size and weight. Standing (from rear to front) are J. Elwood Hathaway, Richard F. Hathaway and Julian I. Hathaway. This image later became the logo for the Los Angeles County Fair held in Pomona. Eventually the three boys were dropped from the Fair's emblem, but the pumpkin still remains.



**ATTENTION!** If this newsletter reaches you too late for you to attend the Christmas Boutique, you're welcome to drop by the Museum during December to see what's left of the boutique items. For more detailed information, call Carrie Long at 213/868-7186.

### GENEROUS MEMBERS

Vincent Ruh  
Teta Smart  
Tom and Virginia Boles  
John Vincent  
Al Fuentes  
Larry and Lynda Short

Dr. Yolanda Venegas  
William and Lucille Fields  
Howard Roy and Charlotte C. Taylor  
Clinton & Elizabeth Meche

### NEW MEMBERS

Clinton & Elizabeth Meche Gloria Duran  
Tristina E. Meche (youth) Varlie J. and Elva Gordon  
Clinton W. Meche (youth) Regina Phelan

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Willa Enloe  
11410 S. Santa Gertrudes Ave. #112  
Whittier, CA 90604

### MARK YOUR PLACE IN HISTORY

Now that volumes I and II of Settlers of Southern California have been published by the Rancho Santa Gertrudes Historical Society, we are collecting biographical or autobiographical sketches for Volume III. What should you write about? The story that Joyce Virnala wrote which appears in the last newsletter is a good example of what we are looking for: something about the writer's background, where he or she came from, and how he or she happened to come to this area. History is not just about the good old days. History is going on all the time. Why not share your personal history with others? Send your memories and short stories to the Rancho Santa Gertrudes Historical Society.

### Copies are on sale now!

Copies of Settlers of Southern California are on sale for \$5 each at the Hathaway Ranch Museum.