



SANTA MARIA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY NEWS

Issue 2 Number 2 pg. 1

Spring 2024

Where is it?



WANTED:

Volunteers: Help us preserve and share the history of our valley.

Members: Invite your friends and family to join us, even if they live out of the area!

Donations: 2 Surge 4' protectors, forever stamps, stories & photos.

Contact Shelley: 805-922-3130

Board

Brooke Bradley, President
Dave Cross, Vice President
Tami Jo Halliburton, Secretary
Sharon Frizzell, Treasurer
Jason Blanco, Member
Norm Hays, Member
Ed Hazard, Member
Bob Nelson, Member
Pam Paxton, Member
Roy Reed, Member
Manny Semiatin, Member
Shelley Klein, Curator

Hours of Operation

Sunday and Monday —Closed
Tuesday—Saturday
11:00 am to 4:00 pm
Closed major holidays.

Address

616 S. Broadway,
Santa Maria, CA 93455

Contact

Phone: 805-922-3130
email: smvhsmuseum@outlook.com
Curator: smvhsmuseum@gmail.com

Website:

<https://santamariahistory.com>

Volunteers: JOIN US

Charla Jerry Lana Norm
Jason Mike Manny

EVENTS

April 21: Earth Day at Natural History Museum, 12 – 3 pm

April 24: SMV Historical Society Board Meeting 4 pm

May 18: Pioneer Association 100 years: *Making History and Preserving History Presentation* 11:30 at the museum.

May 18: SMV Railroad Dinner (RSVP required)

May 23: SMV Historical Society Board Meeting 4 pm

June 28 – July 4: Fireworks Fundraiser – please support our booth near Verizon & Panera on East Betteravia

SMV History Presents: The Pioneer Association – Making History and Preserving History.

Early settlers loved picnics. Popular dates included May Day, Admission Day, 4th of July, Remembrance Day, Oil Wells secured, visitors, and many other times. Many groups planned picnics such as: Iowans, Swiss Italians, Japanese Families, Union Sugar, IOOF, Ladies Auxiliary, churches, sewing clubs and others. Many places were available including: Oil fields, Laguna (Betteravia) Lake, Casmalia Beach, Santa Maria River Bed, Zaca Lake, Sisquoc River, Buena Vista Park, Conner Grove (Fairlawn School), Pt Sal, Suey Ranch, Mussel Rock, Oso Flaco, Foxen Canyon, Tepesquet and more. In the spring of 1923, a BBQ (killed a beef) picnic was planned by Will and Ace Oakley and Ben Stowell to celebrate the completion of the Huasna Creek Bridge on the road to Cuyama. Most in attendance were pioneer friends and family who felt this gathering should be repeated. It was no wonder, then, that on July 14, 1923, about 15 "Old Timers of Santa Maria Valley" met at Hotel Bradley. Dr. W.T. Lucas presided over the meeting to form the "Pioneer's Association of the Santa Maria Valley." F.C. Twitchell was elected chairman, and Harry Saulsbury, who promoted this organization, was secretary with W.H. Rice, Wm. Tunnell and C.W. Smith appointed to the executive committee. Anyone who came to this valley (Casmalia, Garey, Guadalupe, Orcutt, Santa Maria and Sisquoc), prior to 1890, was eligible for membership. There were no dues or fees. The Pioneer's goal was to plan an annual (or more often) reunion of pioneers with their families. May 1st, 1924, was suggested by W.H. Rice, and W.C. Oakley suggested a basket picnic on the Alamo Creek just beyond the bridge on the road to Cuyama. The name changed to "Santa Maria Pioneer Association" in 1924 with \$8 collected to send out cards and pay expenses. Picnic in 1898 at Laguna Lake.



PLEASE join us on May 18th at 11:30 at the museum to hear the Pioneer Association: Making History and Preserving History.

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Membership Thank You! Thank you to everyone who has sent in his membership dues. We appreciate your support of our society and museum. Membership cards are in the works as we try to recreate the original 1955 cards. We are looking for more local stories and histories. If you have **personal stories or stories from your parents or grandparents** about living here in the Santa Maria Valley, please write them down and share with us – so we can preserve our histories.

Guest Exhibit

For the months of February and March, we had our Japanese Community Special Exhibit. We were able to share how the Japanese Community brought many of the packing sheds, along with growing lettuce, celery, cauliflower and broccoli to our valley



Please share any stories and photos about your family with our museum. Thank you to Dawn, Judy, Eddie and Ernie for helping with the displays. Next Exhibit – Santa Maria Pioneer Association!

Interesting Find

Norm Hays, one of our volunteers, found that there was a fictional book, *The Drowning Room*, written with information about his 10th gg grandmother. It seems if you got in trouble with the law, your antics were preserved! Grietje Reyniers was born in Amsterdam in 1602, married in 1626 and then widowed. She then married Anthony Jansen Van Salee in 1629, and they sailed on the “De Zoutberg” to Fort Amsterdam. While on the trip, the fellow



passengers said she worked her trade. In New Amsterdam, she continued walking the ‘Ladies Mile’ along the East River known as the Strand that is now Pearl Street, NYC. Eventually, the righteous members of the Reformed Dutch Church claimed to be deeply offended by

Griete’s lewd behavior. She was banished all the way to Breukelen (Brooklyn) and had to pay the cost of the trial. In 1647, she was back in the city with four daughters. She passed away in 1669, and her records are preserved in the law books! **If you would like to share an interesting story you found about one of your ancestors, please contact the museum.**

100 Block W. Main around 1900



Future Plans, want to help?

1. **RESEARCHERS**, we have several projects to work on. If you can give 2 – 3 hours a week, we can get these projects done.
2. **Pictures and stories** about local pioneer schools for a future book.
3. **Korean War Veteran** pictures, stories, speakers and artifacts for our future exhibit.
4. **Names of childhood sweethearts** for another book.
5. **Like Maps?** We need help with sorting and organizing our maps.

Pioneer Spotlight: Ellen M. McMillan

Have you heard of McMillan’s Hall? Or McMillan’s photography? Ellen and John McMillan married in 1883. They came to Santa Maria where they opened the McMillan Hall, McMillan Photo Studio, McMillan



Variety Store and McMillan Millinery in 1885. Ellen was born in 1864 in London. Her father, John Robertson, a jeweler, came to San Francisco in 1880. Ellen often traveled to San Francisco to visit her family and purchase fine materials for making her hats. Her home skill talents were exhibited in the first Fair Exhibition in 1889. She had made two tidies in silk and lace, one hand painted apron, one hand painted satchel, and one embroidered and one tatted handkerchief. She was known to have a lively social life including being an original Ladies Literary Society member, and Eastern Star member, and holding masquerade balls, parties, Euchre card games and amateur

theatricals where she was very humorous. She was widowed in 1910 and in 1917 sold the Hall and built apartments that she managed until her death in 1935. **Read more about the “Ladies of Our Valley” in our book sold at the museum for \$25 for members.**