



**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 Needed:** 2 Surge 4' protectors, forevers 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  
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 Street  
Santa Maria, CA 93455

**Contact**

Phone: 805-922-3130  
smvhsmuseum@outlook.com

**Website:**

<https://santamariahistory.com>

**Volunteers: JOIN US**

Charla Jerry Lana Judy  
Jason Mike Manny  
Anthony Julie

**EVENTS**

**Sept 27 – 29:** Los Alamos Old Days, for information [www.lavmc.org](http://www.lavmc.org)

**Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>:** Isaac Miller Jr. Open House on Mill & Pine, 3 – 6:30 pm

**Oct 8<sup>th</sup>:** Volunteer luncheon, 12 noon, TBA

**Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>:** Presentation: Santa Maria Cemetery and sign-up for walk and talk tours. 11:30 a.m. at the museum.

**Oct 24<sup>th</sup>:** Board Meeting, determine slate of officers 4 p. m.

**Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>:** Presentation: Santa Maria Korean War Veterans, 11:30 a.m. at the museum.

**SMV History Presents: Santa Maria during the Korean War**

Camp Cooke, now our Vandenburg Space Force Base, was the West Coasts first armored and infantry training installation. It was built in 1941 and trained more than 400 military units during WWII. Camp Cooke was placed on inactive status in 1946. The property was leased for agriculture and grazing. In 1950, the camp reopened and was again used as an armored and infantry training site. In 1951, it would receive Korean War veterans in its 1,000-bed hospital with expansion to 1,750 beds. In August of 1950, Santa Maria had nine young men in active service: Army – Edwin Dalla Costa, Rudy Moreno, Joe Gallardo, Marine- Curtis Youngs Jr., Air Force – Frank Buono Jr., David Turek, Julein Martinez and Navy – Bill Watters and Eugene McCutcheon. In September of 1950, Joe Torres was our first casualty of the Korean War. He was 20 years old. His brothers Jesse and Mike are members of the National Guard stationed at Camp Cooke. Please join us on **Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>**, for our presentation:



**Korean War Vets** and join us on **Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:30**, at the museum for the presentation: **A Walk in the Santa Maria Cemetery and sign-up for an actual tour.**

1950 Photo of Korean War Soldiers digging fox holes at Camp Cook.

Our faithful volunteer and board member, Norman Hays, passed away in July of 2024. As per his wishes, there were no services. The Santa Maria Valley Historical Society Museum Board has voted to name our Volunteer of the year award, the **Norm Hays Volunteer of the Year Award**. Norm, in his last wish, asked that if you want to pay tribute to his memory, make a donation to the Santa Maria Valley Historical Society Museum.

# SANTA MARIA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY NEWS

Issue 4 Number 2 pg. 2

Fall 2024

## Drag Strip Marker News

The Dragon's Car Club, in 1953 under President Jerry Gaskill and club V. P. and Police Officer Gale Brady, were given a lease by the City Officials to use the abandoned airstrip that once served as a taxiway for P-38 aircraft at the Santa Maria Army Air Base. The city is working on a dedication plaque near the site. Past members include Don Deockler (first flagman), Leon Permasse, Jim Agawa Vic Diamond, Jack Mendenhall and Jack Childers. Pictured above is the 'clock tower.'



## Interesting Find

Our Samuel Jefferson Jones, Jeff Jones, won for his beautiful apples in 1904 at the World's Fair. L. E. Blochman, local fair commissioner, packed and shipped these apples. "He stated that for firmness and quality Mr. Jones apples could not be excelled anywhere."



## Guest Exhibit – School History



For August – October, we have our School Display. TEACHERS, we have goodie bags for you with information about school curriculum. We are looking for photos of school buildings in our valley. If you have any photos or informational items from schools, please bring them by so we can scan, archive and return them to you. Jason is here on Wed and Saturdays.

## News

**Grant:** We received a grant from Altrusa and will have our 1886 Grand Ball Newspaper restored. Thank you all.

**HELP!** We need more pictures and stories about WW2 and Korean Veterans so that we can include them in our Military Exhibit. We are planning a presentation about local Korean War Veterans. Please share, and let us know if you can help present. 805 922-3130

## Future Plans, want to help?

1. **Docents**, we have a dedicated Tuesday Docent. Would you like to learn more about our history and share it?
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 (Mid Century): William "Bill" Ellis Sr.

Although Bill was born in Oklahoma, he came to Santa Maria in 1931. He was in the Marine Corps during WW 2. Bill was also involved with the American Legion Post 56, International Odd Fellows No. 302, Encampment of Santa Maria No 31, the SM Senior Citizens Club, Boy Scouts and baseball. What he is mostly remembered for is his efforts to bring Little League Baseball to Santa Maria and his founding of Middle League Baseball. Through the efforts of Bill and his committee of Butch Simas, Larry Lavagnino Sr., Harry 'Rabbit' Goodchild and Carl Barbettini, they petitioned the Little League headquarters in 1949 for a charter.



They were successful and, in 1950, Santa Maria Little League was chartered to play. In April of 1950, over 300 boys, ages 8 – 12, came for try-outs. With sponsors and coaches, six teams, along with a reserve team, were formed. That first year, the top players were Don Gatewood, first baseman for Melby's, and Ralph McBride, pitcher for Orcutt 'Casey' Tigers. Middle League, was founded by Bill in 1951 when they noticed there was no place for 13 to 15-year-olds to play ball. At the same time, in New Jersey, the Babe Ruth League was being formed to also include 13 to 15-year-old ball players using regulation size baselines. In 1952, the Santa Maria Middle League started playing ball near the Elk's field (entrance on McClelland) on a field measuring 75' (Little League fields are 50' and professional fields are 90' baselines). Bill donated not only his time, but also helped fund the Little and Middle Leagues. Ball fields needed to be built, equipment needed to be bought and sponsors needed to be secured. In 1967, the baseball field being built at Waller County Park was named Ellis Field in William "Bill" Ellis Sr.'s honor. For the record, in 1948 through the donations of the Santa Maria Elk's, Elk's field, home of the Santa Maria Indians (1944) semi-pro team, was named. In 1995. Southside Little League Field in Simas Park was dedicated.