



NEWSLETTER of the Carpinteria Valley Historical Society

Editor/Publisher: David W. Griggs

September/October 2008

CALENDAR



September 24--Wednesday
Board of Trustees
Meeting—6:00 PM



September 27—Saturday
FLEA MARKET
8:00 am - 3:00 PM



October 18—Saturday
49th Annual Meeting
Potluck luncheon 12:30PM
Meeting 2:00 PM



October 25—Saturday
FLEA MARKET
8:00 am - 3:00PM



November 29—Saturday
28th Annual
HOLIDAY FAIRE
10:00 am - 3:00 PM



VALLEY HISTORY

Ada Lescher's Diary 1893-1896

edited by her granddaughter, Betty Shannon
excerpted and annotated for *The Grapevine*
by Roxie Grant Lapidus

Part V. We continue with the fifth installment of 13 year old Ada Lescher's schoolgirl diary, discovered in an old trunk by her granddaughter, Betty Shannon. Betty then painstakingly transcribed and edited this lost treasure. Roxie Lapidus has further edited, excerpted and annotated this wonderful view of life as seen through the eyes of a young girl coming of age on a Carpinteria ranch in the late 19th century.

Off to the Chicago World's Fair

Sept. 3 Sun. We all went up to Mr. Blood's for dinner & staid all day. Mrs. Blood gave us some sweet cookies for our lunch. On the way home we stopped at Mr. & Mrs. Woods'. Mama is going to pack the trunk all over tonight.

[The "sweet cookies for our lunch" were for the Leschers' picnic on the train, which they would take 2 days later, headed back to Illinois & the Chicago World's Fair. "Papa" Zach Lescher would stay behind to care for the farm, but Rose, Ada & Royal would be gone for nearly 3 months, visiting family and friends in Galesburg.]

Sept. 4 Mon. Mama cooked lots of things for our lunch on the cars. Mrs. Blood & Aunt Hat came over this afternoon, & when they had gone Mr. & Mrs. Woods came over here. Mrs. Knapp came & brought us some ginger cookies. Mama ironed & packed up the lunch.

Sept. 5. Tues. Mama, Royal & I got on the train at half past nine & rode as far as Saugus, & there had a sweet time waiting 4 hours until our sleeping car came from Los Angeles. Then we went a-spinning through tunnels & over bridges. We are bound for the great World's Fair. Hurrah, won't I be glad when I get there!

[Ada made no more entries in the diary in 1893, but later wrote a school composition describing the trip. The following are excerpts from her essay, which she entitled "A Trip to the Sucker State."]



Ada Lescher portrait taken while visiting family in Galesburg, Illinois, 1893.
Photo courtesy of Betty Shannon.

I boarded the train at Carpinteria, Sept. 5, 1893, for my eastern journey with my brother and mother. The scenery is very pretty from here to Saugus, although the track follows the ocean only as far as Ventura. We waited for 4 hours for the train from Los Angeles, headed to Kansas City. We went over the Denver & Rio Grande R.R., and the scenery is prettier than on any other road except the Northern Pacific. We crossed the

Mohave Desert at night, but no one was sorry about that. We got to Sacramento the next morning, and I saw the dome of the State Capitol Building.

After we left Sacramento the train went into the mountains, where the pine trees grow 300 feet above you, or are on a level with the track, when they grow out of some deep canyon. That afternoon we went around the Horn, which is a very sharp curve around a mountain, while below you is a very steep incline.

About half way up the mountain there was a little town called Colfax, and there had been a circus train wrecked there. But it wasn't a very large circus, so we didn't have to worry about lions, elephants, and boa constrictors catching us.

We reached the top of the mountain that night, after passing through lots of snow sheds. But one thing that we did miss was the Royal Gorge, in the Rocky Mt, where the track is suspended between 2 walls of rock.

We got to Kansas City Sept. 9, but were too late to catch the train to Chicago. We were late because our train was so long that we lost time coming up the mountains. On Sunday, Sept. 10, we boarded a train that stopped at all the small stations. We crossed the Mississippi River at Quincy, and there was an excursion train of darkies waiting there till our train crossed the bridge. We at last got to our journey's end about midnight, Sept. 10.

We staid in Ill. 3 months and were in Chicago 2 weeks, which was long enough to get an idea of

Chicago life and a glimpse of the Word's Fair. The buildings were all white, and looked very much like the adobe houses here after they have been white washed.

The Midway Pleasance [sic] was a street with 2 or 3 buildings from all of the foreign countries. They sold all manner of trinkets and there were some glass makers from Italy. The Ferris wheel was quite a curiosity, but I didn't take a ride on it.



The first Ferris Wheel operated at the Chicago World's Fair. The wheel was 264 feet high and had 36 cars, each of which could accommodate 60 people. Wikipedia photo.

I think the California State building was as pretty as any of the others, although it was built different. Orange County represented a Liberty Bell made of oranges, and Ventura County had a small house made of 82 kinds of beans.

[Note that officials from the World's Fair had offered \$1,000 for Carpinteria's famous grapevine, reportedly the world's largest, for display at the Fair, but had been turned down by owner Jake Wilson. He had bought the property near Foothill and Santa Monica Roads from the Ayala family, whose forbears had planted the vine in 1842. Georgia Stockton tells us that "a similar offer was made prior to the 1915 San Francisco Pan-American Exposition, which was turned down by John Peterson, who then owned the place."]

We started home the latter part of November on the Santa Fe, as that is a shorter route than the way we went. There wasn't anything of much interest coming home, except the Indians, and they were so dirty that no one cared to get very close to them. I was very glad to get back to the "Golden West" again, even if I had seen the Eighth Wonder of the U.S.



Editor's note: For those of you who, like me, know very little of the World's Columbian Exposition, also known as the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, I present the following facts, figures, and fascinating information and photographs excerpted from *Wikipedia* online encyclopedia and other internet sources:

The World's Columbian Exposition

The World's Columbian Exposition (also called The Chicago World's Fair) was held in 1893 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the New World. Chicago bested New York City, Washington, D.C. and St. Louis, Missouri, for the honor of hosting the fair. The fair had a profound effect on architecture, the arts, Chicago's self-image, and American industrial optimism. The Chicago Columbian Exposition was, in large part, designed by Daniel Burnham and Frederick Law Olmsted [American landscape designer and father of American landscape architecture, famous for designing many well-known urban parks, including Central Park and Prospect Park in New York City]. It was the prototype of what Burnham and his colleagues thought a city should be. It was designed to follow Beaux Arts principles of design, namely, European Classical Architecture principles based on symmetry and balance.

The Exposition covered more than 600 acres, featuring nearly 200 new buildings of classical architecture, canals and lagoons, and people and cultures from around the world. Over 27 million people (equivalent to about half the U.S. population) attended the Exposition during its six-month run. Its scale and grandeur far exceeded the other world fairs, and it became a symbol of then-emerging American

Exceptionalism, much in the same way that the Great Exhibition became a symbol of the Victorian era United Kingdom.

The layout of the fairgrounds was created by Frederick Law Olmsted, and the Beaux-Arts architecture of the buildings was under the direction of Daniel Burnham, Director of Works for the fair. Renowned local architect Henry Ives Cobb designed several buildings for the exposition.

Most of the buildings were based on classical architecture, and the area taken up by the fair around the Court of Honor was known as "The White City". It became known as the White City for two reasons. The buildings were made of a white stucco, which, in comparison to the tenements of Chicago (and the rest

of the United States for that matter) at that time, seemed illuminated. It was also called the White City because of the extensive use of street lights, which made the boulevards and buildings walkable at night.

Louis Sullivan's polychrome proto-Modern Transportation Building was an

outstanding exception, as Sullivan was of the opinion that the classical style of the White City had set back modern American architecture by forty years.

It required an extraordinary effort to accomplish the exposition, and indeed much of it was unfinished when its opening day arrived. The famous Ferris Wheel, which proved to be a major attendance draw and helped save the fair from bankruptcy, was not finished until June, because of waffling by the board of directors of the fair the previous year on whether to build the structure. Frequent debates and disagreements among the developers of the fair added many delays. The spurning of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show proved a serious financial mistake, as Buffalo Bill set up his highly popular show next door to the fair, and brought in a great deal of revenue that



The one-third scale replica of statue "Republic" rises above the Court of Honor of the Great White City at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Wikipedia photo.

he was not obligated to share with the developers of the fair. Ultimately, though, construction and operation of the fair proved to be a windfall for Chicago workers during the serious economic recession that was sweeping the country at the time.

Early in July, a Wellesley College English teacher named Katharine Lee Bates was a visitor at the fair, and was rather more impressed by it than was Sullivan. In her poem (later a song) *America the Beautiful*, the phrase, "Thine alabaster cities gleam" was inspired by the White City.

Some famous visitors to the fair included Thomas Edison, Susan B. Anthony, Jane Addams, Scott Joplin, Annie Oakley, Eadweard Muybridge, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Frederick Douglass, Henry Blake Fuller, J.P. Morgan, Henry Adams, Andrew Carnegie, W.D. Howells, Hamlin Garland, Swami Vivekananda, Helen Keller, Octave Chanute, John J. Montgomery, Nikola Tesla, and President Grover Cleveland

Of the more than 200 buildings erected for the fair, the only two which still stand in place are the Palace of Fine Arts and the World's Congress Auxiliary Building. The full scale replica of Columbus' flagship, the Santa Maria, rotted in the Jackson Park lagoon and is now an island. The other buildings at the fair were all intended to be temporary. Their facades were made not of stone, but of a mixture of plaster, cement and jute fiber called "staff," which was painted white, giving the buildings their "gleam."

Architecture critics derided the structures as "decorated sheds". The White City, however, so impressed everyone who saw it (at least before air pollution began to darken the facades) that plans were considered to refinish the exteriors in marble or some other material. The financial condition of the country, still suffering from the Panic of 1893, would have

made this difficult. In any case, these plans had to be abandoned in July 1894 when much of the fair grounds was destroyed in a fire [thought to have been arson set by disgruntled striking Pullman workers who had set numerous other fires throughout the city that same week].

Jackson Park was eventually returned to its status as a public park, albeit in much better shape than its original swampy form, and the lagoon was reshaped to give it a more natural appearance, except for the straight-line northern end where it still laps up against

the steps on the south side of the Palace of Fine Arts/Museum of Science & Industry building.

The International Exposition was held in a building which for the first time was devoted to electrical exhibits. General Electric Company (backed by Thomas Edison and J.P. Morgan) had proposed to power the electric exhibits with direct current at the cost of one million dollars. However, George Westinghouse, armed with Nikola Tesla's alternating current system, proposed to illuminate the Columbian

Exposition in Chicago for half that price, and Westinghouse won the bid.

It was a historical moment and the beginning of a revolution, as Tesla and Westinghouse introduced the public to electrical power by providing alternating current to illuminate the Exposition.

All the exhibits were from commercial enterprises. Thomas Edison, Brush, Western Electric, and Westinghouse had exhibits, and the general public observed firsthand the qualities and abilities of alternating current power.

The World's Columbian Exposition was the first world's fair with an area for amusements that was strictly separated from the exhibition halls. This area, developed by a young music promoter Sol Bloom, concentrated on Midway Plaisance, included carnival



Another view of some of the 200 buildings erected for the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. Wikipedia photo.

rides, among them the first Ferris Wheel built by George Ferris. This wheel was 264 feet (80 m) high and had 36 cars, each of which could accommodate 60 people. One of the cars carried a band that played whenever the wheel was in motion. The concert band of John Phillip Sousa played there daily.

Eadweard Muybridge gave a series of lectures on the Science of Animal Locomotion in the Zoopraxographical Hall, built specially for that purpose on Midway Plaisance. He used his zoopraxiscope to show his moving pictures to a paying public, making the Hall the very first commercial movie theater.



The Chicago World's Fair Midway Plaisance, which was lined with many unusual attractions and amusements, carnival rides, and cafes and food courts. Wikipedia photo.

Another popular Midway attraction was the "Street in Cairo" which included the popular exotic dancer known as Little Egypt, who introduced America to the suggestive version of the belly dance known as the "hootchy-kootchy," to a tune improvised by Bloom (and now more commonly associated with snake charmers). The Midway Plaisance introduced the term "midway" to American English, to describe a sideshow or to define an area where park rides, entertainment and fast food booths are concentrated at parks and fairs.

The *John Bull*, the steam locomotive that would become the oldest surviving operable steam locomotive in the world when it ran under its own power again in 1981, was also displayed. At the time of the exposition, the locomotive was only 62 years old, having been built in 1831. However, it had already by this time become notable as the first locomotive acquisition by the Smithsonian Institution. The locomotive ran under its own power from

Washington, D.C. to Chicago to participate, and returned to Washington under its own power again when the exposition closed.

Notable firsts at the fair

An amazing number of products familiar to us today made their debut at the fair, and included Aunt Jemima pancake mix; Cracker Jack; Cream of Wheat; Quaker Oats; Souvenir elongated coins; the Ferris Wheel; Juicy Fruit gum; and Shredded Wheat. The hamburger was introduced to the United States (others say it was invented at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis). Milton Hershey bought a European exhibitor's chocolate manufacturing equipment and added chocolate products to his caramel manufacturing business. The United States Post Office Department produced its first picture postcards and commemorative stamp set. United States Mint offered its first commemorative coins: a quarter and half dollar.

A considerable amount of memorabilia was saved by visitors and is readily available today. Numerous books, tokens, published photographs, and well-printed admission tickets can be found. While the higher value commemorative stamps are expensive, the lower ones are quite common. So too are the commemorative half dollars, many of which went into circulation.



Most of the Chicago World's Fair buildings were destroyed in a catastrophic fire in July 1894. Wikipedia photo.



We will continue with Ada Lescher's diary in the next issue of "The Grapevine."

MUSEUM NEWS

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The Carpinteria Valley Historical Society and Museum of History extend a warm welcome to our newest members:

*Don Benedict
Margaret Casey
Jefferson Fong
Kathleen Keith
Bonnie G. Kelm
Hillary Lapidus
Marilyn Scheerer
Joseph Schlitt
Gene E. Siemon
Mary Lou Wetter
Glenn & Jackie Williams*

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

We sincerely appreciate the many ways in which the membership supports the work of the Society and Museum throughout the year by attending fund-raising events, contributing items to these benefits, and generously donating to the Memorial Fund.

Now is the time to reaffirm your commitment to the preservation of Carpinteria Valley's cultural heritage by renewing your membership in the Society. You should have received your renewal notice recently by mail. Those of you who have joined the Society and Museum within the last five months will not receive a notice as your membership is good through the 2008-2009 year, which runs from October 1 through September 30 (as does our fiscal year).

You can be proud of your association with the Society and the creation of our beautiful museum. Each increase in the level of your membership will further assist us in providing educational and cultural opportunities for you, your family, and the community.

A prompt response to our request to renew your commitment to historical preservation will also save us the expense of mailing reminder notices, allowing those funds to work for their intended purpose.

We truly value your membership and thank you for your loyal support. ☺

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

The appreciation luncheon held August 6th at Clementine's Restaurant honored the contributions of our large family of museum volunteers. This annual affair was once again a well-attended, delicious, and delightful gathering. The afternoon began with the

introduction of new volunteers **Bill Horton** and **Don Benedict** (also, unable to attend the luncheon, we welcomed **Jaine & Don Toth** as new docents). This was followed by the recognition of schedulers **Becky Dugan, Phyllis Fenger, Ollie Nellis, and Danel Trevor**, who were presented with flowers in gratitude for their significant contributions organizing volunteer staff to open the museum each day. Danel also schedules workers for the many shifts involved with the monthly flea markets, the annual plant sale, and the Holiday Faire. A bountiful home-style buffet lunch followed, culminating in a decadent dessert of Clementine's famous home-made pies!



Honored for outstanding volunteer service are Phyllis Fenger, Becky Dugan, Danel Trevor, and Ollie Nellis, from left.

We are always in need of more help here at the museum. If you could spare just a few hours per month, won't you *please* give us a call to discuss the many opportunities available, we would love to have you join our happy, hard-working family of volunteers. It is only through their support that we are able to continue our important work of historical preservation and education.

FALL FLEA MARKET

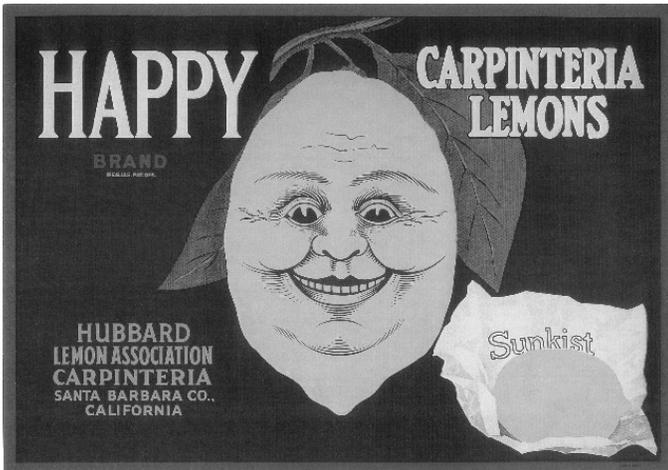
Our Fall Flea Market will be held **Saturday, September 27 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** on the museum grounds. All 75 spaces have been reserved by the eclectic mix of vendors that make this event such a treasure hunter's paradise.

Tax-deductible donations of your used items for the museum's rummage tables increase the revenue generated by this monthly benefit. The markets consistently raise well over \$2,000 per month to help with museum operating costs. Donations are accepted any time prior to the day of the market and are greatly appreciated. *Thank you* to our many donors. Admission to the flea market is always free! The last market of the year will be held October 25. ☺

49TH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING & POTLUCK LUNCHEON

The Annual Meeting of the Historical Society membership will take place **Saturday, October 18.** We will begin with a **potluck luncheon at 12:30 p.m.** Next we will recognize an "Outstanding Volunteer of the Year." A brief business meeting will begin at 2:00 P.M. The Annual Report of the Society and Museum will be available at this time.

Also on the agenda is the dedication of recent additions to the Donor and Memorial tile wall. Tiles memorializing loved ones or recognizing the gifts of donors may be requested anytime during the year, with installation and dedication taking place at the annual meeting. The \$500 per tile donation benefits museum programs.



One of Carpinteria's early shipping crate labels featured this "Happy" premium quality lemon. The "Smile" brand of other labels denoted a lesser grade of fruit. Museum archives photo.

This year's meeting program will feature Dr. S. Jim Campos speaking on Carpinteria lemon history and crate label art. The rise of the lemon as Carpinteria's dominant cash crop resulted in the development of rival packing houses and an interesting array of label art to promote the Valley's products. A foremost authority and collector of these beautiful works of advertising art, with their colorful, romantic images or whimsical characters, Dr. Campos will share with us the fascinating history of this marketing tool that has become such a sought after collectible. Some citrus crate labels now fetch thousands of dollars on the open market!

We ask members attending the luncheon to bring either a main dish or a salad. The Society will provide table service, beverages, and dessert. Look for your invitations in the mail and please plan to attend this special event! 🍋

IN MEMORIUM

We lost a dear museum friend and benefactor last month when, two weeks after celebrating her 100th birthday, Martha Joos slipped peacefully from this life. Born in Los Angeles to Italian immigrant parents, Martha and her husband Carl moved to the top of Shepard Mesa in 1961. There they grew avocados and were among the first in Carpinteria to put in an orchard of an exotic fruit known as Cherimoya. Martha also planted many other fruit trees, citrus, and even kiwi fruit, and we were all the beneficiaries of her generosity in sharing the bounty of her garden.

Martha joined the historical society and became a museum docent during a volunteer recruitment I held shortly after beginning my position here in 1986. She served over 16 years until her retirement in 2003 at the age of 95! Martha also involved herself in many more volunteer activities, chairing the baked goods booth at the Holiday Faire, and organizing the annual plant & flower sale where she personally contacted all of the growers to arrange for donations and scheduled the pick-up drivers and booth workers. As a skilled flower arranger, she contributed to the beautiful table decor at the annual meetings, and yet often lamented, "Oh, I only wish I could do more!"

Martha was also an extremely generous benefactor to the museum's operating fund and remained a strong advocate for the historical society's work. In recognition of all of her many contributions, Martha was awarded the Society's "Volunteer of the Year" in 2004 (see photo on back). Her dedication and commitment to this organization provided inspiration to us all. I was privileged to be considered her friend, and I loved and admired this intelligent, strong, and creative woman, telling her often that "she was one of my favorite antiques!" —David Griggs

MEMORIALS

CHARLES & BARBARA CURTIS: Gloria & Al Frederick.

MARGARET B. HERR: Herman & Betty Zittel.

MARTHA JOOS: Mary Alice Coffman; Nan Deal; Peter & Gina Zanella; Grace Young; Walter & Janet Johnson; Hilda Seibert; Steve & Ann Garcia; Tom & Anita Lewis; Bonnie Milne; Elizabeth & Peter Mann; Phyllis Hansen; Gene Estelle Siemon.

MINORU OTA: Gloria & Al Frederick.

PATRICIA CURTIS ROWE: Mary Alice Coffman.



CARPINTERIA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Martha Joos, left, shown here with her dear friend, Trudi Waltrip, was honored as the "Volunteer of the Year" at the Annual Meeting of the Society's membership in 2004. Our dear friend Martha passed away this August at the age of 100.

CARPINTERIA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
956 Maple Ave., Carpinteria, California 93013

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