



# NEWSLETTER of the Carpinteria Valley Historical Society

Editor/Publisher: David W. Griggs

March/April 2008

## CALENDAR

**March 19 —Wednesday**  
**Field Trip**

**Griffith Observatory &  
Planetarium Show**  
**10:00 a.m. - 6:00 P.M.**



**March 23—Sunday**  
**HAPPY EASTER!!**



**March 26—Wednesday**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Meeting—6 P.M.**



**March 29—Saturday**  
**FLEA MARKET**  
**8 a.m. - 3 P.M.**



**April 23—Wednesday**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Meeting—6 P.M.**



**April 26—Saturday**  
**FLEA MARKET**  
**8 a.m. - 3 P.M.**



## 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 II. We continue with the second installment of 12 year old Ada Lescher's schoolgirl diary which was discovered in an old trunk by her granddaughter, Betty Shannon, who 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 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

### Ada's Diary 1893

Feb. 1 Wed. Sun shone all day a little cloudy in the morning. The wind was in the east this afternoon & is now. I had an easy grammar lesson today. I tried to make a rounder in playing prisoner's base. Papa & Mama went up to Mr. W & got some oranges.

Feb. 3 Fri. Harry Carden came to school. Mr. Giles came & got Delos & Frank back. He said that Delos was pretty sick. I went to a fan drill tonight & it was good only you had to wait so long between hand. They had lots of tableaux & they were good. I saw Grace Carden & WB & lots of other girls that I knew. The fan drill was good. Emma Grubb went with us. Edith Shepard & Lottie Shepard was down there.

Feb. 4 Sat. Today was Saturday & I staid home. Mama & I swept all the rooms upstairs. Papa & Royal went to the depot & Royal got some licorice. I don't like it. I worked some letters on my handkerchief. A boy & a man came in here that was peddling some books. We did not get any.

Feb. 5 Sun. I did not go to Sunday school today. The ditch run this morning & this afternoon I went out to see it. Papa fixed the handle on the tea kettle. I pasted some poetry in a book of mine & then Mama got one that used to be hers & I pasted a good deal in that. We did not go anywhere nor nobody came here. Mama wrote 2 letters.

Feb. 6 Mon. At school I sat with Grace Carden most all day. Emma Grubb was so stingy that she would not show Grace & I an example. I took some licorice to school & got rid of it. Alice Walker came to school. Royal gave me an English stamp. We got some papers today. Mama told Royal & I about what she done & got when she was a little girl.

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*Dear Ada,  
When we are old and gray,  
We'll smile and say,  
We had no care on Childhood's day.  
But it will be fake, will not be true,  
I had one care, I cared for you.  
From your friend and schoolmate,  
Grace Carden Jan. 1892*

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*From Ada's autograph book signed by her friends.*

Feb. 7 Tues. Royal took his album to school & Lute C. wrote in it in Japanese letters. Alice Walker did not come to school today. She went to Town. Mr. Gammill would not let some of the scholars get out of our seats without permission. Went & seen a foot bridge that the Bailard boys made for W.B. to go across in high water.

Feb. 8 Wed. It rained. Papa took Royal & I to school. There were 12 scholars. We got the Youth's Companion and there are good stories in it. The creek did not rise much. We had a jolly time tonight around the fire. Papa got 12 oranges & they were good.

Feb. 9 Thurs. It rained all day & was disagreeable. Papa took Royal & I to school but no teacher came so we staid home all day. Royal went with Papa down to the post office. I worked a letter A on one of my handkerchiefs. Royal & I played Authors. He beat & I got mad. I went upstairs & read 3 stories. Mama wanted to get up a society & the one that quarreled or scolded first had to pay a forfeit but we haven't agreed yet.

Feb. 10 Fri Papa took us to school this morning cause the roads were muddy. Mr. Gammill gave me a box full of chalk short pieces. E.W. gave Royal a water wheel & he run it in the ditch. Mama is making one of Royal's waists.

Feb. 11 Sat. Quite clear sun shone all day. Mama & I got some mustard greens on top of the Rincon hill. We stopped at Mrs. C. [Cadwell?]& we seen the baby. I saw 2 big ponds on Mr. C's place. Papa went uptown and got a good many things. He got me a ball, some candy, some popcorn & some valentines. We got a letter from Uncle Theodore & Aunt Josie & it said that they were going to start for Cal. on 21<sup>st</sup>.

Feb. 12 Sun. The sun shone all day & the wind blew. Papa took some flowers down to Miss Heath. She played in S.B. last night. He went down early so as to mail a letter before the train came in. We had blackberry pie, ginger cake, and macaroni for dinner.

[“Miss Heath” was actually Mrs. James Heath (Clara), a talented pianist, and daughter-in-law of Col. Russell Heath. She and her husband lived on the Heath Ranch, reportedly the largest walnut ranch in the country. The former home site is now Eucalyptus Park, formally Heath Ranch Adobe Park, a city historic landmark.]



*The Russell Heath home in the 1890s was a showplace designed in “Italianate” style by renowned Santa Barbara architect P. J. Barber. Carpinteria Valley Museum of History photo.*

Feb. 13 Papa went around today with a partition to get Mr. Reede out of jail. Royal & I took our balls to school. Frank Wride has an awful black eye from his hit Friday.

Feb. 14 Tues. It was a beautiful day. I got a valentine, a comical one with a lady riding horseback. Royal got a valentine from Mama. Mama got a letter from Mrs. Thacher. They are all coming down here on George Washington's birthday. Edith Shepard went to town. She has an awful pretty hat. Emma Grubb gave me a big apple. Papa got some oranges. I watched him milk. Read some stories out of the Youth's Companion.

Feb. 16 Thurs. At school Harry Carden & his brothers wanted to stand us girls & 2 or 3 other boys. The big boys spin their tops mostly now. Royal is making a peg for mine. Mrs. Grubb sold her beans for 3 cents (a pound) yesterday & so did Mr. Franklin. Grace Carden painted on a bottle of mine. She gave it to me today.

Feb. 18 Sat. Very clear & warm. All the Franklin children were up here this afternoon. We played lots of games. Mama went to town & bought me a comb, Royal a top, all of us some candy & bananas. The train was late both ways. I went down two times & Papa once. Papa & I had to get supper. A milk pan leaked & spilt some milk.



*Home to Ada's friends Austin, Jimmy, and Helen, the James Franklin home on Casitas Pass Road was later known as the W. C. Catlin home.*  
Carpinteria Valley Museum of History photo.

Feb. 20. Mon. At school, Grace Carden, Emma Grubb & I got mad at Alice Walker & Edith Shepard, but we are good friends now. I wore my round comb to school. Papa hauled his beans. J.D. [John Doerr?] helped him. He got \$712.50 for his beans. He is going up Thursday to get the money.

Feb. 21 Tues. Mama is making candy for tomorrow & lots of other goodies. I drove Dan to the P.O. for the mail.

Feb. 22 Wed. Clear, and warm wind blowing now. We had a holiday today, it was G. Washington's birthday. All the Thachers came down for dinner. Annie came down on the train with her mother & Aunt Maud.

Annie & I drove down to Mrs. H's for some lettuce. Royal got a lot of stamps that Papa sent for. Mama, Papa, Mrs. Thacher & Miss Gould all drove up the Lillingston canyon. Annie & I went upstairs and dressed up in ladies' clothes.

Feb. 23 Thur. Very clear & warm. Papa & Mama went to town. They got Royal a top, me a pin with an A on the end of it. Mama eat dinner at Mr. Thacher's. She had ice cream. Mrs. Barnard is going to stay all night at our house.

Feb. 24 Fri. Mrs. Barnard staid with us all day & is going to tonight. Her & Mama went over to Mr.

Ellery's & to the post office. Mrs. Franklin & her children came to visit the school. Royal & I each wrote a letter to a stamp firm for 55 stamps. Mr. Ellery is not well. Thinks they will go camping. That will be good.

["Mrs. Franklin" was probably Mrs. James H. Franklin, mother of Ada & Royal's friends Austin, Jimmy & Helen. She had 3 younger children: Hardinia, Mason & Howard. The James H. Franklins lived to the east on the south

side of Casitas Pass Road, in a house described as having "high ceilings characteristic of southern homes, and a graceful, curving staircase." Mrs. Franklin had an older son, Oscar Stewart, by her first marriage, who also lived with the family. James H. Franklin was a cousin of Bern and Gideon Franklin, and had followed them to Carpinteria. The house built by James Franklin was later owned by Clark Catlin.]

Feb. 25 Sat. I took Mrs. Barnard down to Mrs. Reed's. Got some mucilage [glue]. Mama went down & sent the butter up by Mr. W. I chopped some sunflower stalks. We had a big bonfire tonight. Charlie Wride came over to see Royal. We played football. A tramp came & wanted something to eat.

Feb. 26 Tues. Mr. Fish came in here to tell us to come down to the church tonight. We got a letter from Aunt Josie. They are coming Tuesday.

Feb. 27 Mon. At school, Mr. Gammill has brought the cabinet to put bugs in. Royal has one to take. We kind of think Aunt Josie & Uncle Theodore will come tonight. I wish they would, don't you?

Feb. 28 Tues. Today it was Edith Shepard's birthday. She didn't get any present this morning. She was 12 years old. Lena Grubb was 7 years old yesterday. Mr. Gammill got a good many insects to put in his cabinet. Papa & Mama are going down to the train.



*Ada and her mother, Rose Lescher. Photograph taken on a trip to Galesburg, Illinois in October, 1893.*

*Photo courtesy of Betty Shannon.*

### **A Visit from Aunt Josie & Uncle Theodore**

March 1 Wed. Cold & windy. Uncle Theodore & Aunt Josie came at one o'clock. They brought some candy & other things. We built a fire in the parlor. We sat around that & talked of by-gone days. They have some stamps for us. Papa got a load of sand.

[Aunt Josie & Uncle Theodore were apparently related to Ada's mother, for after staying a few weeks with the Leschers, they then stayed with Grandpa Royal Wiswell over on Cravens Lane. They ultimately settled in Santa Barbara.]

March 2 Thur. Windy & cold. Today was Dora Grubb's birthday. She did not get any present as I know of. We played ball and black-man at school. We had an awful hard grammar lesson. Uncle Theodore's trunks came last night. They unpacked them. Aunt Josie gave us a whole lot of stamps. Aunt J. helps Mama a good deal. She gave her some lace. Mama burnt 3 of her fingers.

March 3 Fri. Papa & Mama & Aunt Josie & Uncle Theodore all went up town. Mama got my waist. Papa

got Mama's birthday present for me to give her. I went to school. Helen Franklin found her ball & we played.

We organized the Round Table Society at school. Lottie Shepard is the president, Myrtle Bailard is vice president, W.M. secretary, Grace Carden treasurer, Alice Walker monitor. Mr. Gammill came here tonight.

March 4 Sat. It rained like 60 this morning. The sun tried to shine in the p.m. & it thundered. The ditch broke over & liked to wash us out. Aunt Josie started to crochet my slippers. She darned some stockings & worked a tidy for Mama. A tramp came in here to get something to eat. Grandpa came over here this

afternoon & wants Aunt Josie & Uncle Theodore to come over there Wed.

March 5 Sun. We saw snow on the mountains & it was cold. Mama & Papa made some candy. I took my bath in the kitchen. Royal is reading Swiss Family Robinson. I filled my lamp & darned my stockings.

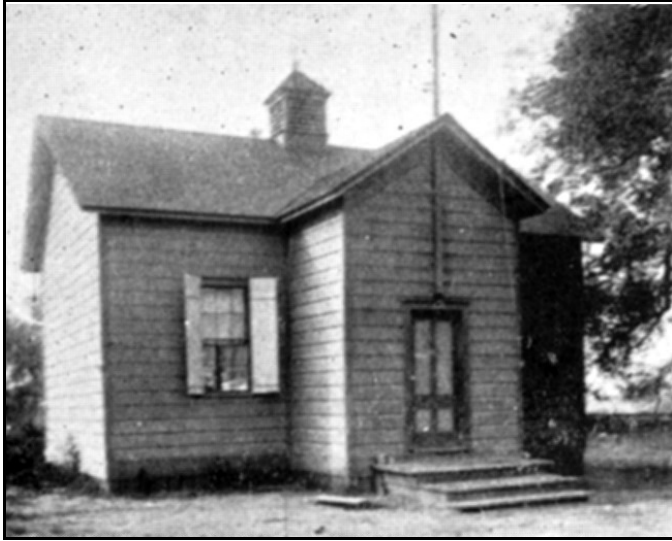
March 6 Mon. Today was Aunt Josie's birthday. She got a book & picture. Uncle Theodore has a sore throat & does not feel well all through. I played ball. I knocked a fly & so did some others. I wore my new waist. The ball hit me an awful whack on the leg & it hurt.

March 7 Tues. Today was my birthday [13<sup>th</sup>] & I got 5 presents. A silver spoon & a knife from Mama. A pearl (illegible) from Aunt Josie & Uncle Theodore. A picture card & a little scent bag from Helen Franklin. Uncle T. is still sick. Mama made some medicine for him. I have the stiff neck.

March 8 Wed. It rained & hailed in the night. Papa took us to school. There was 22 scholars at school. The Cardens came at noon. Papa came after us. He set me behind & I drove. Uncle Theodore is getting better.

Papa saw Grandpa & Grandma. Mama popped corn. Had some Boston baked beans.

March 9 Thurs. Snow on the mountains all day. I had a ride to school with Del Rodriguez. He is getting wood at the school-house. Mama made an apron & finished her wrapper. Aunt Josie helped her a lot.



*The one-room Rincon School was east of the Lescher home on Casitas Pass Road. The old school grounds are now Lions' Park. Museum archives photo from the Summerland Advance Courier, Feb.1900.*

March 10 Fri. I got a ride to school but there was no school. The teacher was sick. Edith Shepard brought me home. She brought my violets & I gave her some flowers. Royal went up on the mountain with 3 other boys. Mama, Papa, Aunt Josie & I all went for a ride. We went up to Mr. Knapp's & saw Sam. We went over & saw the big lemon orchard. [Probably the Fithian Ranch, north of Foothill at Santa Monica Road, known today as Rancho Monte Alegre.]

March 11 Sat. Rain in the morning, sun this p.m. Staid in the house & made my garters & made stamp book for Royal. Uncle T. is most well. He likes the sunshine, was out most all afternoon. Mama finished up her dress & apron.

March 12 Sun. I took my bath upstairs in my room. Mama, Papa, Royal, Aunt Josie & Uncle Theodore all went out driving. We all walked around the place this morning. Mama is making some candy tonight, glazed walnuts and molasses candy.

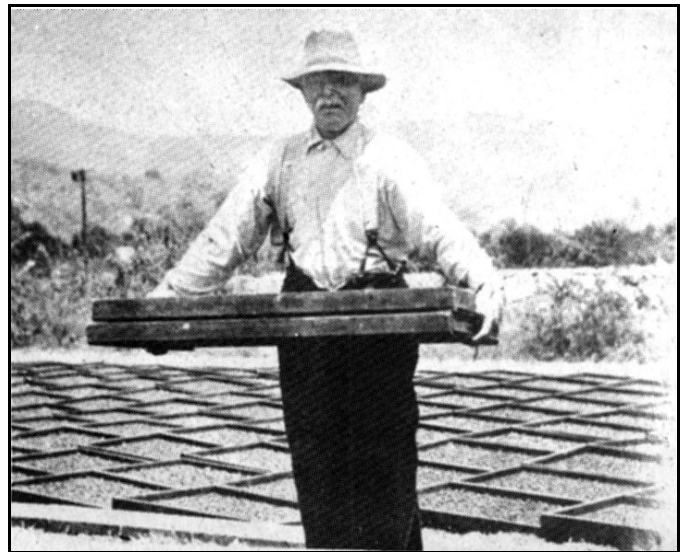
March 14 Tues. Today was Mama's birthday. She got

6 presents. I gave her a tile to set coffee & teapot on. Papa came after us at school cause it rained so. Royal & Papa went down to the P.O. & Royal got some licorice.

March 15 Wed. Papa & Uncle Theodore came after me at school. We took Emma Grubb in with us. Then Papa & Uncle T. went down to the P.O. & my stamps came. There was a lot of them & I pasted some in my album that came with the stamps. Alice Walker & MG went & took their music lessons of Miss Spurlock.

March 16 Thurs. Sunny & warm. I went to school & played ball all day. The rest of them went up to Mr. Blood's & they thought it was a fine place. Mama got some white violets & mint. I spaded up my flower garden.

[The 117-acre James Blood ranch was an impressive place. Originally the family had lived in the Cota adobe that stood on the place when they bought it in 1867. Later they built a frame house, which burned down. By 1893 they were living in a 2-storey wooden house approached by a palm-lined drive, rivaled only by the Russell Heath mansion down near Old Town.



*Apricots were dried in the sun on large wooden trays. Carpinteria Valley Museum of History photo.*

James Blood had 600 apricot trees on the lower section of his property, near Blood Creek (Arroyo del Paredon). He was mechanically inclined, having invented a plow in his youth that was sold as the "Blood & Moshier plow." He had later worked for John Deere, before coming west to the gold mines. In

the 1880s, he had set up a canning operation on his Carpinteria property, shipping the canned apricots from Smith's wharf at Serena. This operation lasted only a few years, after which they reverted to drying the fruit. In 1893 James Blood was 75 years old. He eventually moved to Santa Barbara, and the house in Carpinteria was standing empty when it was destroyed in the great wildfire of 1917.]

March 17 Fri. Papa, Mama, Aunt Josie & Uncle Theodore all went up town & they brought home lots of things. They got some things for Mr. Ellery. Alice Walker & Edith Shepard went on the mesa for wild poppies & they got a lot. I went over to Emma Grubb's & we had lots of fun.

March 18 Sat. Sunny & warm. We all went on a picnic up to the Ostrich farm. Five other persons went up there too. It was funny to see those ostriches walk & there was 12 of them. Two black ones. They would strut around & act just like dudes. I never saw such proud birds before. When we came home from the farm we went to the beach & got some shells. Royal went up to Mr. Moore's. He said he had lots of fun.

millinery." Carrie Phelps herself recalled that "Mr. Lillingston had an ostrich farm on the present Cate's Mesa, and young men came over from England to learn farming. I remember that they used to come down and visit my cousins, the Treloar girls Carrie, Stella and Myrtle."]

March 19 Sun. I went to Sunday school There was 30 pupils. Papa & Royal got their hair cut. Aunt Josie walked down to Sprague's corner. We all went to the P.O. and got some papers.

March 20 Mon. Drizzled & rained all day. Papa spoke to Mr. Wride when they were [fixing] up the ditch so that the water would not break over, but it did anyway. Papa's feet got all wet. Mama & Aunt Josie is making my supper.



*To be continued in the next issue of "The Grapevine."*

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## *MUSEUM NEWS*

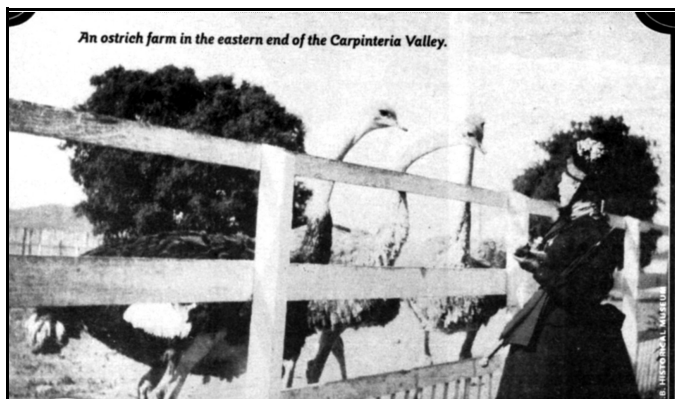
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### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!**

With the director/curator as the only paid staff, it would be impossible to maintain the museum and its programs without the skill and talents of its large family of volunteers. The historical society is especially seeking volunteers to serve as museum docents. This dedicated group opens the museum to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 1:00 to 4:00 PM., answering visitors' questions, giving tours, and making gift shop sales.

Volunteers may choose to work once a month or as often as once a week, your time commitment remains totally flexible. The museum will provide individual training, as well as a docent handbook for personal study of local history.

Come help maintain our beautiful museum while discovering the personal rewards that come with contributing to your community's well-being, as well as the camaraderie of our fun museum family!. To learn more about volunteer opportunities call David Griggs at 684-3112 or Mary Alice Coffman at 684-3708.



*This old postcard shows a Victorian lady being greeted by some rather curious ostriches at the Lillingston/Perry ostrich farm on Lillingston Mesa (now known as Cate Mesa).*

Santa Barbara Historical Museum photo.

[The ostrich farm was at the site of the present Cate School. Two Londoners, Claude Lillingston and Harold Perry, had established it 5 years earlier. The birds were raised mainly for their plumes, for women's hats. Georgia Stockton tells us that "The Treloar children & [their cousin] Carrie Phelps often stood outside the fence until the big birds stalked away, and they could reach some of the smaller feathers for doll

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We wish to extend a warm welcome to our newest members of the Carpinteria Valley Historical Society & Museum of History:

*Robin H. Cederlof  
Judith & Mike Modugno  
Ed & Mary Weston*

*and welcome back:*

*Chet Ogan*



## SPRING FLEA MARKETS

Don't miss the next Flea Market **Saturday, March 29 from 8 a.m. until 3 P.M.** Bargains and treasures abound from our nearly 70 vendors of antiques, collectibles, gifts, and used goods — there's always something for everyone, with many new vendors every month!

Our popular flea markets will continue on the last Saturday of each month, except the big Memorial Day weekend show which includes our annual plant and flower sale. Upcoming dates are **April 26** and **May 24** (Memorial Day weekend, NOT the last Saturday of the month!).

As always, we appreciate your tax-deductible donations of used items for the museum's rummage tables. Donations may be left on the museum's back patio outside the office at any time, or you may call to arrange to have the items picked up from your home if necessary.



## MUSEUM GIFT SHOP OFFERS EASTER GIFTS

Our gift shop offers whimsical Easter cards and booklets with beautiful old-fashioned graphics and verse, as well as old-fashioned papier-mâché egg candy containers and beautiful, naturally colored, sturdy Easter baskets and a variety of basket stuffers. We also carry a line of wind-up lithographed tin toys, including cute little pecking

chicks, cats rolling over, ducks on trikes, clowns on scooters, vintage truck and motorcycle & sidecar, and robots! (Not recommended for children under 5.) **Easter is early this year, March 23**, so hurry in and pick-up something for those special young ones in your life (or young-at-heart)!

## MEMORIALS

**LENA CASELLO:** Betty & Herman Zittel.

**DOROTHY GARY:** Walter & Janet Johnson; Jenifer McCurry.

**FRED HEIDENRICH:** Phil Rastatter & Megan Shannon.

**GEORGE HOLSTEN:** Mary Alice Coffman; Nan Henderson Deal; Gwen & Kristopher Kallman; Bill Holsten; Ralph & Kathy Irvin.

**ED MACIAS:** Walter & Janet Johnson.

**JUANITA SCHILLING:** Steve & Ann Garcia; Michele Neely.

**EVANGELINE VAN DER KAR:** Timothy K. Bliss.

Donations to the Memorial Fund in memory of friends and loved ones are an important contribution to the museum's operating fund and are greatly appreciated.

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

*Please place the enclosed amount to the credit of the*

### MEMORIAL FUND

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

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*Please make checks payable to: Carpinteria Valley Historical Society or C.V.H.S.  
Contributions are tax deductible.*