

Camino's

Arcadia Historical Society Newsletter

Winter 2015



Arcadia Historical Society
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Prince Erik Hall Office
2607 N. Santa Anita Ave.



President's Message:

Open House at Prince Erik Hall was a hit at the Fall Festival & Yard Sale on October 10. Beverly Street and Carol Libby led tours and pointed out unique features of the historic building. Prince Erik of Denmark and his wife, Lois Booth of Canada came to Arcadia to raise poultry and built their home in 1924. Over and over again, participants remarked, "We didn't know this place was here!"

The Arcadia Civic Youth Council assisted with numerous activities and crafts occupying children as their parents shopped at the Arcadia Congregational Church's Yard Sale. I observed three children at one of the craft tables. The older sibling left as the two younger siblings continued making their peacock fans. Later, the older sibling returned and said they needed to leave. The younger sister exclaimed, "I want to stay and have more

fun." The older sister replied, "You've already had too much fun. Let's go." I was left with a chuckle and a thought – *Can anyone have too much fun?*

Well, AHS's fun continued at Prince Erik Hall with the "Halloween is Here" program and dinner on October 29. Costumes were surprising, the skit and acting were superb, and the food catered by Santa Anita Gardens was scrumptious. AHS proved that even adults *can never have too much fun.*



Back row, left to right: Mickey Ball, Betty Hettrick, Char Wong and Carol Howard. Front row, left to right: Karen Hou, Joyce Saunders, Edie Slemmon, Carol Libby, Beverly Street, Julie French, Mary Hansen and Connie Russell.

Mayor Gary Kovacic honored the Arcadia Historical Society with a Proclamation on November 3 for efforts made in showcasing the historic Prince Erik Hall and sharing it with the community. AHS is privileged to have its office at PEH and pleased to display our exhibits to the public in this historic venue.

Another year is wrapping up for the Arcadia Historical Society as we extend, to our membership and the community, good wishes, many blessings and fun that never ends.

Be joyous, even in the smallest of things – Karen Hou



Step out on Saturdays - Arcadia Historical Society is appearing weekly along with the Arcadia Civic Youth Council at the Downtown Arcadia Street Market, 5 to 9 pm at Huntington and First Ave. Be sure to stop by and "Take the Penny" Arcadia History Challenge featuring historic photos. ACYC is assisting children with holiday craft activities.

When Money Grew on Trees! by Carol Libby

The idyllic scene of oranges ripening against a backdrop of snow-capped mountains appealed to tourists and land promoters in the 1870s and continued to do so for three generations. The Southern California climate was touted as good for both health and wealth and the orange tree was the living symbol of luxury, richness and elegance.

In the 1870s tourists came to Southern California induced by the promise of a healthy climate. In the 1880s, they came to stay, invest in land and develop the lucrative citrus industry. The orange tree became the symbol of Southern California's affluence in the 1890s, and to own an orange grove in Southern California was to live on the real gold coast of American agriculture. No other crop in America achieved a comparable level of technological sophistication as early as the California Citrus Industry.

By 1891, citrus was the biggest industry in the region. And, within ten years, 5.5 million trees were thriving in the Los Angeles area. In 1908 to 1909, 15 million boxes of citrus were shipped by rail. In 1924 to 1925, it was 24 million boxes and in 1939, 75 million boxes of oranges were shipped from the Los Angeles citrus groves. After 1946, trees were razed to make room for the tract homes, and no new groves were planted in the Los Angeles area after 1950.

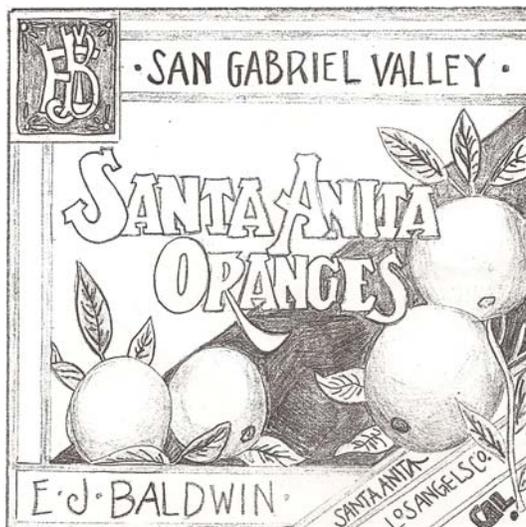
William Wolfskill is considered the founder of the California Citrus Industry. Mr. Wolfskill planted the first commercial grove of 70 acres in Los Angeles in 1841; some of his seedlings came from the San Gabriel Mission orchards. In 1862, he owned two-thirds of all the citrus trees in California. His first load of oranges was shipped to the gold miners in 1868. They went by boat to San Francisco, then to Sacramento and on by cart to the mines. They sold for \$1 each. (Wolfskill purchased over 11,000 acres of the Santa Anita Rancho in 1865 and lived there for a year before he died in 1866.)



It was soon realized that citrus could thrive in the Los Angeles region and that a "Citrus Belt" stretched 70 miles along upland San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountain range from Pasadena to Redlands. Riverside took over the citrus industry. (In 1895, Riverside was the richest city per capita in the United States, according to the Bradstreet Index.)

In the middle 1860s every orchard in California was burdened with fruit it could not market. The market materialized with the opening of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, and it was then that the citrus industry began to thrive.

Lack of rapid and low-cost transportation was one reason for the slow development of orange culture, the need for expensive irrigation facilities was another, and the third was the late introduction of two key species, the Navel orange in 1873 and the Valencia in 1876.



The high charges by the railroads, inexperience with the then primitive art of refrigeration, inexperience with marketing arrangements overland to the Atlantic coast cities, all caused losses on many shipments and scant profits to the growers. In the 1880s the idea of cooperatives was conceived, and this idea when implemented, became the success that the industry needed for marketing the product. The name, "Sunkist" should come to mind, here. "Sunkist" is the largest cooperative in the world's fruit and vegetable industry, founded in 1893 at Claremont, California.

E. J. "Lucky" Baldwin purchased Santa Anita Rancho in 1875 and he would soon put 500 acres of orange trees under cultivation. He knew citrus was considered a safe investment with a very good return, and he had 1,000,000 seedlings in nursery stock. Large tracts of unimproved Baldwin ranch land were offered for sale in 1886. The sale stipulated planting of citrus and in the advertising brochure, seedling stock from Baldwin's wholesale nursery was touted as available at "good" prices.

In 1885, Baldwin transported his racehorses in special railroad cars to eastern racetracks in seven different states and was knowledgeable in the use of railroads. When he began shipping his citrus to the east in the 1890s, he did so independently and under his own label, without joining any associations or co-ops. Unruh, his ranch manager, stated in 1891 that a seventy-five acre Baldwin orchard had yielded 80,000 boxes of oranges and netted a \$102,895 return.

Did You Know?

- More settlers were lured to California by the citrus industry than by the Gold Rush.
- The first shipment of oranges was made in 1877 to St. Louis. It took a month, cost \$500 and the fruit arrived in satisfactory condition.
- Southern California oranges won prizes at International Expositions in 1884.
- The primary labor force in the citrus industry in the late 19th century were the Chinese from Guangdong Province in South China.
- Lucky Baldwin engineered the extensive irrigation systems in place on his properties. He was solely responsible for their designs.
- Today, Brazil is the leader in the citrus industry, the United States is second and Mexico is third.
- Florida leads California in the production of orange juice.
- You can be successful in growing your own orange tree in Arcadia. The climate is still ideal for its cultivation.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

2016 Calendar of Events

January 28 Meeting and Program: Historic Restoration of the Constance Hotel in Pasadena

May 14 Friends' Garden Party

June Membership Meeting TBA

AHS Office is Now Open at the Historic Prince Erik Hall

Exhibits are now available for public viewing: Baldwin memorabilia, Balloon School, Pony Express Museum, Santa Anita Race Track and Historic Markers. Research can also be conducted. Call (626) 446-8512 to set up an appointment.

The Chamber - Standing Strong for 50 years

Congratulations to the Arcadia Chamber of Commerce in the celebration of their iconic 1965 building and time capsule opening on November 12, 2015. Looking forward to our relationship for the next 50 years.



Photos of the Arcadia Chamber of Commerce Building in 1965

Business Icons honored by the Arcadia Chamber of Commerce & the Arcadia Historical Society

September Business Icon
Santa Anita Park



Left to right: Elizabeth Booth, events, Mike Willman, publicity, Carol Libby and Scott Hettrick

October Business Icon
Bowman of Arcadia



Left to right: Carol Libby, Andreas Koeper, owner, and Scott Hettrick

October Business Icon
Moffett's Family Restaurant



Left to right: Stan Burton, owner, Carol Libby and Scott Hettrick

November Business Icon
Arcadia Gardens Retirement Hotel



Left to right: Scott Hettrick, Beverly Street, Carol Libby, Julie and Dave Chirikian, owners



From Your Board:

Karen Hou, President
Carol Libby, 1st Vice President
Beverly Street, 2nd Vice President
Gil Stromsoe, Treasurer
Char Wong, Recording Secretary
Gene Glasco, Past President

Directors: Jolene Cadenbach
Beth Costanza
Scott Hettrick
Gail Marshall
Lee Shimmin

Student Liaisons: Diana Lam
Emily Zheng


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