

Livermore Heritage Guild

“Help Save Yesterday For Tomorrow”



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May/June 2006

Vol. XXXVII, No. 4

Long-lost country school resurfaces on Midway ranch

A little country school that operated atop the Altamont for 72 years closed its doors in 1946 and was never heard from again—until this February when it was rediscovered on the Mulqueeney Ranch off Patterson Pass Road.

It seems that Elwyn “Mul” Mulqueeney had attended the Midway Public School and didn’t want to see it destroyed by vandals or arsonists after it was abandoned by the county. So he put it up on skids and hauled it a half mile down the road, then another half mile up his lane, safely placing it among the ranch outbuildings. It was reroofed in 1972 and used as a tack room and storage building.

His son Dave Mulqueeney, part of the family corporation that still owns the 4,800-acre ranch, showed it to Barry Schrader as he was preparing to write a column about it. The 22- by 35-foot schoolhouse seems solid, but years of rain, wind and scorching sun have taken their toll on the exterior siding and windows. The interior still looks like it did when the last class exited some 60 years ago. The blackboard is

still on the classroom wall, the coat hooks still in the cloak room, and the white paint still covers the inside walls. The pot belly stove, along with all the school’s furniture, is gone, and most of the windows are broken out. But the family saved it from water damage by replacing the roof.

The Livermore Heitage Guild is interested in helping the family preserve the building in place for now and hoping eventually it can be brought down the hill and placed in a community park where it can once again house students as a historic experience of what country schooling was like 100 years ago.

Guild president Larry Mauch along with Barry Schrader, met with the Mulqueeney family to start discussions about possible ways of preserving the old school. The Guild has allotted funds to start the process and has had preliminary discussions about forming a committee should the family agree to move forward with relocation and preservation.

Meanwhile, Schrader ended up devoting three of his history columns to the school and its former enrollees, finding some ten alumni still in the Tracy, Banta, Brentwood, and Livermore areas, as well as Modesto and even in Idaho, plus the last surviving teacher, Ann Freisman Schofield, who is now 88

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years old and wintering in Scottsdale, Arizona. Once she returns to her San Leandro home it is hoped that a reunion of sorts can be hosted by the Guild for her and former pupils from 65 to 75 years ago. She taught there from 1938 to 1944.

The Livermore Area Recreation and Park District has been contacted about possibly supplying a park setting for the old school if it is moved, and the Livermore School District Assistant Superintendent Bob Bronzan has taken an interest in documenting the school, its alumni, and teacher on videotape and film. A PowerPoint presentation, composed by Schrader and Mauch, will be shown to the Livermore Board of Education in May. This is the last surviving country school in the Livermore Valley, except for two that were moved into town and converted into housing many years ago.

Heritage Guild members having an interest in working on the project in any manner should contact Mauch at larrym49@comcast.net.

Midway School, with its student population of nine on the front porch, near the intersection of Patterson Pass and Midway roads in 1941. Students in the back row are Manuela Garcia, Mary Garcia, Hazel Derby, Elizabeth Derby, Marguerite Hernandez, Stella Stender, and Peter Stender. In the front row are Earl Derby and Angelina Garcia. Teacher Ann Freisman is not in the picture.



The Midway School building as it is today on the Mulqueeny Ranch. It is being used as a tack room with a metal horse stable attached. Standing in front of the school is Dave Mulqueeny, son of Mul Mulqueeny who graduated from Midway and moved the building onto his ranch.

Look for the "T"

You may soon see the Livermore Heritage Guild's Model T fire truck on the streets of Livermore. According to Garage curator, Bill Junk, "Tim Sage and Chuck McFann are checking, adjusting, tightening, and lubricating everything. And the 'T' now runs smoothly and is easy to start—if hand cranking is ever easy."

The "T" came to Livermore in the 1920s when "Skinny" Johnson, chief of the volunteer fire department, built it from a car chassis and spare parts that were lying around the Valley Garage (at the east end of Second Street), which he owned. Although Livermore had just bought a Seagrave fire truck, the Model T truck was useful for kitchen and other small fires because it could respond faster than the large solid-tired Seagrave. Painted red, the "T" carried about 50 feet of small hose.

The "T" was replaced by a Chevy hose and ladder truck in the early 1930s and was stored for many years until the firemen's auxiliary began using it in parades. Returning one day from a parade in Benicia (according to Bill Junk's memory) it came off its trailer and was badly damaged. Again it went into storage in various fire stations around Livermore.

The City of Livermore made a long-term loan of the truck to the LHG in 1982 through the efforts of then Livermore fire captain Lynn Owens. The "T" appeared in a Livermore Rodeo parade in the mid-1990s and ran roughly a couple of years ago, but for the most part sat in the Duarte Garage. That is, until a few months ago when retired LLNL engineer Chuck McFann volunteered to help get it running.

A long-time resident of Livermore, World War II veteran, and avid mechanic, McFann put the restoration of the "T" on the high priority list. According to Tim Sage, it is Chuck who calls to ask, "When are we

going back down to the Garage?" Chuck's enthusiasms, mechanical skills, and experience with old cars gave the project what it needed to move ahead.

The restoration crew, including Jim Boehmke, Bill Purcell, and Bill Junk, faced many challenges of finding parts and understanding the design. For example, the gas tank is not what you might find today. Removing a pin, allows the tank to rotate on its bearings, mixing the contents and building pressure to feed the liquid out the hose. "Kinda fun!" says Tim Sage.

As of April 1, the "T" is "running like a top." Drop in at the Garage to see for yourself.



Tim Sage and Bill Junk check out the Guild's Model T firetruck at the Duarte Garage.

Volunteer Chuck McFann standing next to the "T" firetruck now running like a "top".



Volunteer Corner



Volunteers are always needed. Have fun, meet other members of the Heritage Guild, and contribute to the preservation of Livermore history. Some immediate needs:

Work with collections

David Abrahams is in the process of inventorying our items that are in storage in the Harp Room. Helpers don't need to be computer literate to do this! David will be available to train anyone who wants to help. The work involves examining the contents of boxes, matching material to what has already been entered into the computer, and entering correct locations. Nothing difficult! But it is a lot of fun to open these boxes of wonderful Livermore memorabilia and see what treasures the Guild has. If you are interested in helping, please call David at 447-9386.

Help save Midway School

Are you handy with a hammer or good with negotiations? If you're interested in helping save Midway School in any manner please contact Larry Mauch at larrym49@comcast.net. See the story on Page 1 for more information.

Help with the newsletter

If you have limited time, a fun way to help out is to join fellow LHG members preparing the newsletter for mailing. We will meet at the Carnegie Library Saturday, June 24th at 11:30 to fold, collate, label, and chat. Call Maxine at 447-7401 to be sure there hasn't been a delay in printing or just drop in.

Still looking for historians...

An exhibit on agriculture in the valley is something we have wanted to do for some time. We need

someone to help with the research, planning, and mounting of the exhibit. Call Anna Siig at 447-5475.

and cleaners...

Want to help out but uncomfortable with your knowledge of Livermore history? You would be very valuable helping with the cleaning of the exhibit cases and the space. Come in at least every two weeks -- every week if you're so inclined -- to clean fingerprints off of cases, dust, tidy up, clean the front door glass and the desktop, or do general housekeeping. Contact Anna Siig at 447-5475 or Email: siig@comcast.net

and walkers!

Each spring Gary Drummond takes third-grade classes on a downtown history walk. He's looking for volunteers to help in this endeavor. If you would like to become a walk leader, please contact Gary at 447-5475

The walk route is from the Carnegie building to the railroad depot and back First Street to the flagpole before returning to the Carnegie building. This is an opportunity to help children learn some interesting facts about Livermore history and increase your own knowledge of our historic downtown, while you get some exercise.

Citizens Advisory Board

LHG has created a Citizens Advisory Board. The Board will be made up of major donors as well as friends with professional experience who are willing to volunteer their expertise to assist the Board of Directors. As an example we are looking for an individual with accounting experience for a non-profit organization using QuickBooks who could audit our processes. Anyone who might be interested or wants more information can contact Larry Mauch at larrym49@comcast.net.

Notices

Tour the Duarte Garage. Would you like to arrange a group tour of the Duarte Garage? Call Chief Mechanic and Curator, Bill Junk, at 447-4561.

Don't miss the Annual Auction

The LHG annual auction and dinner is coming up at the Duarte Garage Saturday, May 27th. Tickets for the dinner will be available at the History Center. As always, we appreciate contributions of desserts for the dinner.

We have received some excellent donations for the auction; our thanks to everyone who has contributed. We have a dining set, a davenport, lovely Christmas decorations, and attractive odds and ends.

To make the auction more fun, more donations are welcome! We will pick up your items if you call Bill Junk at 447-4561 or Anna Siig at 447-5475.

CALENDAR

Wednesday, May 3, 7 pm. LHG Board Meeting, Carnegie Library, downstairs.

Wednesday, May 10, 7:30 pm. History Talk. Kim Bonde and Don Podesta will present the "History of the Livermore Rodeo Stagecoaches." Community Meeting Room, Livermore Civic Center Library. \$2 suggested donation. Light refreshments provided.

Saturday, May 27. LHG annual auction and dinner at the Duarte Garage. Auction preview at 5 pm, dinner at 6, and the auction at 7.

Wednesday, June 7, 7 pm. LHG Board Meeting, Carnegie Library, downstairs.

Wednesday, June 14, 7:30 pm. History Talk. Lynn Owens will recite his own Cowboy Poetry. Lynn was the winner of Livermore's first cowboy poetry contest. Community Meeting Room, Livermore Civic Center Library. \$2 suggested donation. Light refreshments provided.

Wednesday, July 5, 7 pm. LHG Board Meeting, Carnegie Library, downstairs.

Wednesday, July 12, 7:30 pm. History Talk. Bob Taylor presents "The Great Flood of 1862." Livermore Civic Center Library. \$2 donation suggested.



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Baughman's Western Outfitters

Masthead photo: A family working their ranch near Patterson Pass and Cross Roads in the Altamont. Scanned image No. 1215.

Contact Us

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From the Livermore Echo, April 26, 1906

Comical Incident - The Chinaman who has been making daily visits to Livermore from the city with vegetables, fish, etc., for sale, was among those made homeless by the big fire, and as he was fishing at the time, he lost all except his working clothes. He came up from the city Tuesday to collect a few bills owing to him here, and he and two other Chinamen were fitted out in suits of America clothes by the relief committee and in their new-fangled clothes they looked comical indeed.

A Brief Word from the President

A lot of interest has been generated in the old one-room Midway School that operated from 1873 to 1946. We have received letters supporting its preservation and restoration. I want to thank everyone who took the time to write us asking that we do whatever we can to assist in its preservation; we would also like to see it preserved. We will keep you updated.

The book on Early Livermore, with nearly 200 photos, has gone to the publisher. It will be available sometime in July. Thanks to the efforts of Heritage Guild members Gary Drummond, Don Meeker, and Loretta Kaskey.

Auction time is near. **Help! We need more donations!** It is always a fun event, and we have many worthwhile activities in process that will be supported by the proceeds from the auction. If you have any donations or would like to help out with the auction, leave your name and number at the Carnegie Library. The phone number is 449-9927, or email Larry Mauch at larrym49@comcast.net. We can use food servers, clean up crew members (either before or after the auction), and runners during the auction. Hope to see you there!

Larry Mauch

