

THE CARMEL VALLEY HISTORIAN

CARMEL VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Carmel Valley's Historic White Oak Plaza

By Elizabeth Barratt, CVHS Historian



After dairy operations ceased, the historic Del Monte Milk House served first as a residence and then by 1937, as seen in this photo, it became the Marion Meredith Inn. Photo: Carmel Valley Historical Society Archives

The nucleus of today's White Oak Plaza in Carmel Valley Village dates to 1890, when Del Monte Dairy manager William Hatton built a milk house with an unusual design. The narrow, windowed tower at the building's top was a modern invention, intended to rapidly draw off heat from the containers of fresh milk sitting inside. By 1893, in a cottage just to the west, ranch foreman Burritt Cahoon's front room became what is thought to be Carmel Valley's first post office. These buildings, along with a rear cluster of ranch worker cottages, bunkhouses and a barn were enhanced seventy years later by a strip of shops and a post office, stretching east along Carmel Valley Road. The new development was called White Oak Plaza.

Visually, the historic Del Monte Milk House remains the anchor of this attractive commercial strip. In time, after dairying operations ceased, the renovated building served as a tearoom, a leather crafts shop, an art gallery, a realty office, a succession of restaurants and more recently, a wine tasting room. The foreman's house next door, according to several oral interviews, became the 1920s residence of the Joseph Wolter family, followed until about 1935, by the Leo Vasquez family. At the time the parcel's landowner was Philip Wilson, Jr. (1897-1959), a Carmel realtor. The small cluster of buildings was one of only a handful of structures standing along that portion of Carmel Valley Road.

(See White Oak, page 4)

A Message from CVHS President Kim Williams

Who would have thought...

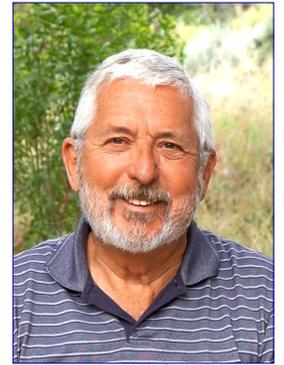
What distresses us most at the History Center is not being able to interact with the many members and visitors who come to the Museum each Saturday and Sunday. That's not surprising since it's in our DNA to listen to and share stories of earlier times, or just "catch up" with what's going on today, which just may become part of the Valley's history tomorrow!

While the Museum has been closed for a couple of months now, work continues on exhibits, general maintenance and keeping up with the business. You'll see that in the articles in this edition of the Historian. And the Board has learned a new skill and held its May meeting on Zoom, with each of us in our own homes.

At the May board meeting we noted that incoming revenues are down considerably, while ongoing expenses remain pretty constant. The little chart below tells the situation. Typically for the year our income covers current expenses. We do have enough in reserve to weather this downturn for several of months. So, no panic, just a careful monitoring of expenses and a hope that things get back to normal very soon. (Feel free to send in a donation!)

I'll keep you updated by email until the next Historian comes out in September. You can always contact me with any concerns, questions and suggestions at cvhsresident@gmail.com.

Stay safe and keep well.



Kim Williams

	January	February	March	April	Totals
Income	1,718	1,359	560	290	3,927
Expenses	2,561	1,716	2,360	2,204	8,841
Difference	(\$843)	(\$357)	(\$1,800)	(\$1,914)	(\$4,914)



Volunteers in Action

The Exhibit Committee meets monthly to coordinate exhibits work and to give feedback to the various curators. This was our last meeting, in March, before the social-distancing standards were mandated. (And before founding member Maxine Callinan moved to Oregon.) While work has continued at the History Center, we are careful to practice healthy distancing standards.

Pictured clockwise from the left: Jeff Ohlson, Kim Williams, Cherie Ohlson, Jane Chaney (new to the committee) and Maxine Callinan. Not pictured: Reggie Jones
Photo by Jeff Ohlson



News Around The Barn By Cherie Ohlson

The History Center Museum may be closed due to the pandemic but our volunteers have been busy.

- ◆ It's been a perfect time to deep clean all 14 display cases, a time-consuming activity. In addition, display case captions have either been improved for easier readability or rewritten for clarity. Jeff Ohlson accomplished the project.
- ◆ Dick & Elizabeth Barratt are the new co-chairs of the Collection Committee with Maxine Callinan's move to Oregon.
- ◆ All the vertical files in the workroom cataloguing Valley history have been completed after 4+ years of clipping, pasting and filing by Elizabeth. This, too, is a major accomplishment.
- ◆ A comprehensive new book about the proud history of the *Cachagua Fire Protection District and its Volunteer Firefighters: 1975 – 2020*, has been published by Jeff Ohlson and added to the bookstore. See page 8 for details.
- ◆ Kim Williams and new docent Jane Chaney, will be co-curating an exhibit about the vineyards & wineries of Carmel Valley. This long planned exhibit will focus on the people and land of this important story.
- ◆ The **Signs of Times Past** exhibit has been mounted by Jeff Ohlson. We missed the gala opening of this important exhibit because of the restrictions on large gatherings, but you are invited to stop by and enjoy this outdoor exhibit. The four windows on the building hold a brief explanation of each of each of the signs that are mounted nearby.
- ◆ Discussion is underway about how we can safely reopen once museums are allowed to do so. If required, our museum gallery can easily allow social distancing with minimal rearrangement. Details such as hand sanitizers, sanitizing doorknobs and cases, number of visitors at any one time, etc. are being worked on.



Photos by Jeff Ohlson



Photo Mural by Kim Williams

(White Oak, from page 1) By 1937 the historic milk house and its cottages and bunkhouses had been turned into guest accommodations, operated as the Marion Meredith Inn. It was run by recently arrived New York native Marion Robinson Bryant (1894-1971), who apparently adopted the middle name of her New York playwright stepfather, Clay Meredith Greene, for the inn. Before long, Marion married Philip Wilson, Jr. and by 1941 the pair had renamed the accommodations the White Oak Inn. The cottages and bunkhouses were renovated and became weekend and monthly rentals. As the hub, the former Del Monte Milk House became shared space, with a succession of crafts shops on the east end and Philip Wilson, Jr.'s Carmel Valley realty office on the west end. In 1949 Marion converted the space into the Carmel Valley Art Gallery, where she featured the works of numerous well-known Monterey Peninsula artists. She also welcomed the outdoor placement of Djey Owens' Madonna of the Oaks statue, where it remains today.

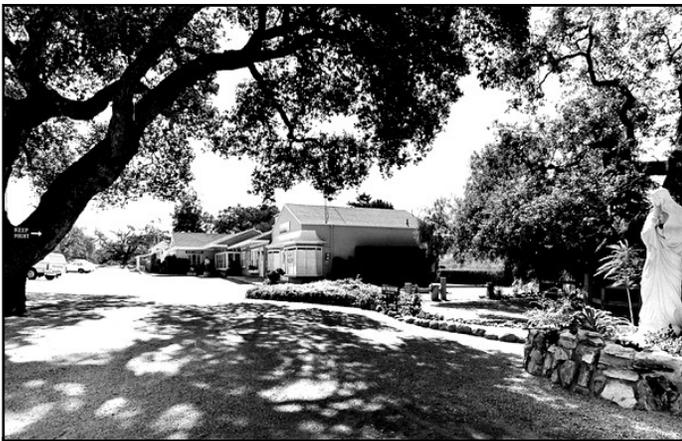
No one in Carmel Valley was more delighted when the plans for White Oak Plaza were announced than Carmel Valley old-timer Joe Hitchcock. In a 1953 column he observed that the opening of the postal facility was like seeing the old become new. "The White Oak Inn property will be again the site of a post office," he observed. "More than 50 years ago the post office was located at the site. The many beautiful oaks on the property will add a great deal of charm to the proposed shopping area."



In the early 1940s, Marion Wilson turned the Del Monte Milk House into an artist shop on the east end with her husband Philip Wilson Jr.'s realty office on the west end. Photo: CVHS Archives

The new Carmel Valley Post Office, the main anchor of the strip, was relocated from its former space at 1 W. Carmel Valley Road to the new White Oak space and opened on February 20, 1954. Now a wine tasting room, the facility served patrons until 1975 when the present

(See White Oak, page 7)



White Oak Plaza showing the Madonna of the Oaks statue that has sat in the same spot since 1949. Photo by Richard Barratt

Carmel Valley Village in 1949 was considered a remote drive for Peninsula residents, but that didn't stop the art lovers, who drove the 12 miles out to Marion's gallery. They came to admire and purchase works by such notables as Arthur Hill Gilbert, Abel Warshawsky, Thomas McGlynn, the Seidenecks, Frank Myers and William Ritshel.

In 1952, with the idea of expanding the acreage into a more commercial venture, the Wilsons planned to build a row of shops to the east of the old milk house, expanding the strip into the cluster that that now comprises White Oak Plaza, at 19 E. Carmel Valley Road. In the beginning, the shops featured an independent artist's co-op, a restaurant, and Marion Wilson's own gift and interior design enterprise called "The In and Outdoor Shop."



When she first opened the old milk house and its cluster of cottages as guest accommodations about 1937, Marion Robinson Bryant, shown here, called her business the Marion Meredith Inn.

Photo: CVHS Archives

Financial Contributions (February, March, April)

General Fund: Larry & Harriet Busick, Doug & Susan Gardner, Carolyn Gray, Melvin & Joy Pritchard, Judith Leavelle and William King, Keith Frank, Sally Swanson

Thank you all for your generous support!

Donations: Documents, Photos, Artifacts, Library Materials (Feb, Mar, Apr)

Anonymous: Packet of miscellaneous photos and clippings all relating to Holman Ranch and Dorothy McEwen.

Elizabeth Barratt: Fawn skull found off of Paso del Rio.

Bill Bradley: Vintage cream and gold telephone, circa 1960s, with #9544 in the center of the rotary dial (as in OLIve-9544), belonged to the donor's parents, the 544th residents to acquire a phone in Carmel Valley.

Maxine Callinan: Wood-framed print, 11"x13" of watercolor (#10 of 34) by local artist "Timmons", depicts aging barn, windmill and red buggy wagon.

Jane Chaney: (1) T-shirt from CV Fiesta 10K and 5K Runs - 1995, (2) Vintage white and blue with gold trim ceramic souvenir plate, 6.25" diameter, with map of CV Village area and cowboy on bucking bronco, manufactured at Carmel Valley Ceramic Studio with LM logo on back.

Peter & Diane Coakley: Two framed watercolors, 25"x31", by local artist Tom Nix depicting cabins at the upper valley Meyenberg Ranch, displayed in guest rooms at Carmel Valley Lodge.

Michael Collins: Framed canvas painting by CV artist Sunday Collins *Carmel River Running*, donated in the artist's memory with brass plaque: Sandra "Sunday" Collins - 1949-2020.

Greg Freeman: Original wooden sign, Georis Tasting Room.

Joe Hertlein: Mounted B&W 8x10 photo of Tracy Rushmer and Julie Zoellin participating in reining pony and cart event at CV Trail & Saddle Club, c. 1970.

Reggie & Anne Jones: Framed print, 35" x 20", by Jack Swanson: #362 of his *Vaquero Sport* (roping grizzly on Carmel Beach, 1830).

Marion Kessler: B&W postcard with view of CV, addressed to Miss Allura Nason, from Frances Shield postmarked 1954.

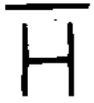
Charlene Randazzo: Redwood sign, 60" x 42", "Carmel Valley Market - Cheese & Meats", hung on north wall of Randazzo's CV Market building until recently.

Curtis & Katherine Wiese: (1) 5 copies of *Carmel Valley Newsletter*: May, June, July, August and Oct of 2001. (2) Envelope of 16 miscellaneous photos from the 1985 CV Santa Fly-In, some depicting Randy Randazzo on horseback, and Santa & Mrs. Claus in the airplane which brought them onto the airfield.

Estate of Dan Weiss: (1) Five 8x10 matted watercolor prints by local artist Bobbie Osterdock, depicting various CV scenes, (2) Rusted iron horse bridle bit and railroad tie, (3) 8.5x11 sketchbook containing 11 pen & ink drawings (two colored) of various CV scenes: two-story house, horse kicking (2 copies, one colored), tiger in Big Sur (colored), The Running Iron, two deer with holly tree, Hidden Valley Inn sign hanging from tree, Cowboy Show gun collection, horse biting/kicking, the Carmel Mission, a CV store, and the *Cosmic Cowboy* with the notation "Artwork for Hire by Georgene Louise Rugg" on the back, (4) miscellaneous CV Fire Department car placards and badges.

Kim & Christine Williams: Red and yellow metal tin, Kreko Reg. US Pat. Off. Typewriter Ribbon Kress Stores (Royal #10 - Black Record) c. 1920s.



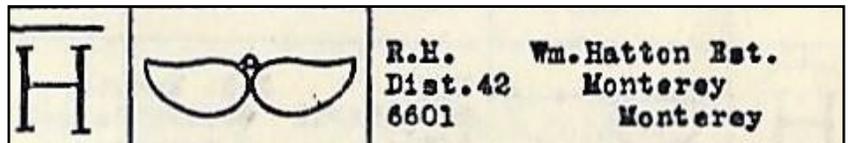


The Hatton Dairy Farm and Ranches

By Jeff Ohlson, CVHS Historian



When Carmel Valley pioneer William Hatton registered his “Bar H” cattle brand with Monterey County in 1875 during the heyday of California’s open-range cattle business. It was still active in 1919 in the California brand book listing shown here. Although he died at the young age of 45 in 1894, by all accounts Hatton’s accomplishments were very prosperous in areas of real estate, business and politics, cattle, and state of the art dairy operations.



An Irish immigrant, Hatton and his wife Kate settled in Carmel Valley in the early 1870s. At this time there were only a few hardy families living in the Valley with winding dirt roads between them. California, however, would soon abound with activity and the development of productive agriculture was vital to a growing urban population.



William Hatton
Photos: CVHS Archives

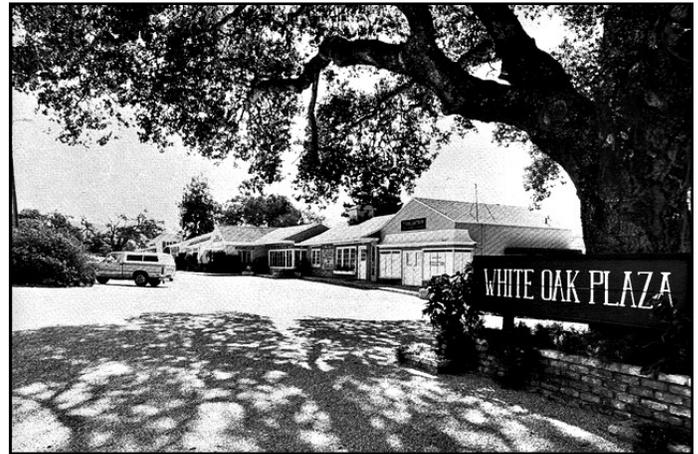
In the late 1880s Hatton was employed by the Pacific Improvement Company as superintendent of ranch and dairy operations at Rancho Los Laureles. The Hatton family lived on the Rancho for several years before building a home on their lower Valley property near their dairy. Hatton’s sprawling dairy farm at the mouth of Carmel Valley is pictured above with their elegant Victorian mansion shown on the knoll at the upper left of the photo.

The 4,366-acre Rancho Cañada de la Segunda land grant of 1839, located in northwest Carmel Valley, changed several times before Hatton eventually purchased its entirety, which became his sprawling dairy. The Hatton family holdings eventually grew to over 10,000 acres and up to 1,000 head of cattle. After William Hatton’s death, his Rancho Cañada holdings were partitioned to his surviving family and his wife Kate ran the over 4,000 acre ranch with the help of her brother John Harney. Another of the Hatton tracts was a 909-acre tract deeded to his son, Frank D. Hatton. Then known as the Hatton Upper Dairy, it is now the site of the September Ranch equestrian facility. By 1920 much of the Valley’s fertile land was cleared to grow fruit trees which returned a relatively higher profit. Apples and pears thrived while growing squash and pumpkins for feed was also lucrative. **(See Hatton, page 7)**

(White Oak, from page 4) Carmel Valley Post Office was completed.

In 1954, at the far eastern end of the strip, a somewhat taller older building was trundled by house movers and attached to the new row of shops. It had been one of the old frame ranch buildings that originally sat near the milk house, operated during the 1940s as an artists' crafts studio. Since the move, the historic building has served as the first Thunderbird Book Shop, a health food store, law offices, a day spa and a wine tasting room.

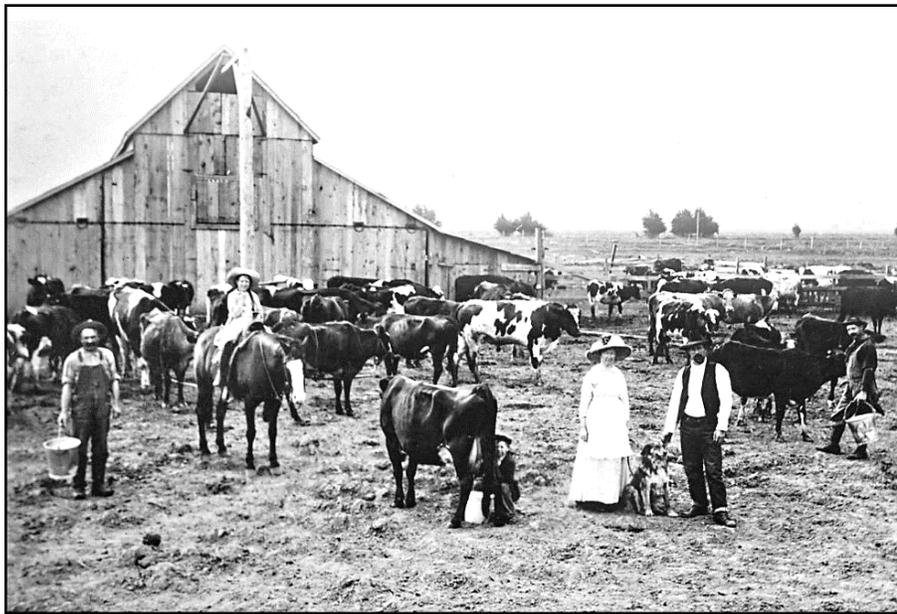
Additional creativity flourished on the White Oak premises in 1959 when the White Oaks Summer Theater opened with its first production. The musical was performed in a renovated redwood barn that once sat at the eastern end of White Oak Plaza behind the post office space. The theater functioned at the site until 1964 when operations were moved to Hidden Valley Music Seminars.



White Oak Plaza

Photo by Richard Barratt

Today, 130 years after he built it, William Hatton's Del Monte Milk House continues as the main attraction and hub of the upscale strip of tasting rooms and eateries which now draw visitors to this bustling and historic portion of Carmel Valley.



(Hatton, from page 6)

Hatton Dairy Holsteins are being milked by hand in this early 20th century photo. The original herd of about 600 cows was Holstein, but Hatton gradually replaced the herd with Durham cows, also known as milking shorthorns.

Cows would often be seen grazing on the hill near the Hatton mansion. Hatton also installed a lab on his farm which was used to improve the milk butterfat content to make better cheese.

William "Noony" Hatton Jr. is shown driving a 4-horse team pulling a grain planter in the fields of the Lower Hatton Ranch. Hatton family lore has it that Noony's sister Sarah learned to drive an 8-horse team on the Ranch.

Note: This short article is an excerpt from a soon to be republished "A History of Ranching in Carmel Valley." The author thanks Doug, Rick, and Tamsin (Hatton) McAulay for their passionate help with this history.



Carmel Valley Historical Society

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 77 West Carmel Valley Road

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Upcoming Events

Due to the directives from the Monterey County Health Director we have cancelled all events, including visits to the History Center Museum until further notice. We will endeavor to keep you informed through email of any events coming up prior to the next newsletter in September.

Please send an email to cvhspresident@gmail.com to make sure we have your correct email address.

Thanks, and stay well.

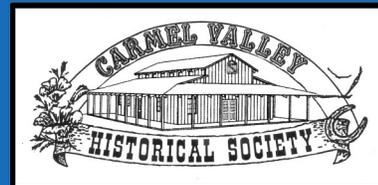
CVHS Board: Kim, Gary, Cherie, Elizabeth, Dave, Dick, Jeff and Ellsworth

**A History of the Cachagua
 Fire Department**

Carmel Valleyites will not soon forget the Soberanes Wildfire of 2016. It was then the most expensive wildfire in United States history and took fire departments from near and far to extinguish. Cachagua Fire Protection District volunteers and equipment were totally involved for the many weeks of this historic wildfire.

Cachagua Fire is an all-volunteer organization that has been serving the eastern Carmel Valley area of Cachagua ever since it was first established in 1975. Many of us, however, do not know much about its proud history. To remedy this, a comprehensive history of the department is now available through its CVHS website and at the History Center .

Readers will learn about Cachagua Fire’s early days and marvel at photos of volunteers in training or during actual emergencies. If you wish to support or donate to the Cachagua Volunteer Firefighters, please contact them at PO Box 404, Carmel Valley, CA 93924 or through their website at www.cachaguafireprotectiondistrict.com



**A History
 of the
 Cachagua Fire Protection District
 and its
 Volunteer Firefighters
 1975-2020**

