



Photo courtesy of Paula Hinkel

Savannah Update

El Monte Cemetery Association

Volume 2, Number 4

June 2008

Letter from Your President

Family and Friends of the Savannah,

I want to start this message with a thank you to those people that made our Savannah Memorial Day clean up and ceremonies a success. Michael Shively of the El Monte Historical Society and Detective Larry Fry arranged for a group of El Monte community service workers to help us on our clean up day. We also thank all the family and friends that helped in so many ways. Victor Haddox and I spent some time with Michael Imlay, a professional writer / consultant. We were privileged to show Michael around and share some of the Savannah's history. Mr. Imlay is a true friend of the Savannah. You may view Michael's work on Weblog: www.mimlay.com. Michael does articles on historic locals and events.



A special thanks to Janice Wiggins White, Sue Redding and Sylvia Villanueva for coordinating the Memorial Day Ceremony at the Savannah Memorial Park. These wonderful ladies worked extremely hard to bring the El Monte and Rosemead/San Gabriel American Legion Posts together to do the program. These ladies through their leadership and initiative have insured that the ceremonies will continue into the future. Many dignitaries from El Monte and Rosemead attended the ceremony including Mayor John Tran of Rosemead and Mayor Pro Tem Juventino "J" Gomez from El Monte. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who have served their country and the fallen who gave their lives for freedom.

I need to speak to all of you on a matter of great importance. The Historic Savannah Pioneer Cemetery belongs to all of us. Your current Board of Directors has worked extremely hard to care for the grounds and move toward securing the cemetery's future. There has been a marked lack of participation by the membership. Attendance at our January general membership meeting was marginal as compared to 2007. We published and performed two fund raising events soliciting items for rummage sales with proceeds going to the Savannah. Response by the membership to help and contribute was nearly nonexistent. I cannot let these issues of nonparticipation go without pointing them out. Your Board, their families, and friends are doing the majority of work with little effort coming from the membership. To those who pledge their funds and give on a regular basis I say you are the angels of the Savannah. The Board of Directors needs your support and help. Since the new board was elected in

July of 2006 we have lost six talented individuals due to personal and family needs. Jim McCarthy recently resigned from the Board of Directors creating a vacancy. Jim will be sorely missed and contributed greatly to our Association. Vacancies on the Board are becoming difficult to fill which puts a strain on those still serving.

It has taken two years of hard work by your Board to stabilize this Association. We need people to step forward for service at events and on the Board of Directors. This message has been a difficult one for me to deliver but I cannot shrink from my duty to inform you that participation is necessary!

Sincerely,
Edwin (Randy) Wiggins
President



Rifles at Ease

Photo Courtesy of Michael Imlay (www.mimlay.com)

Inside

Notable Quotable	2
An Early Pioneer . . .	2
Calendar of Upcoming Events	2
Memorial Day Ceremony	3
Financial News	3
Our Generous Supporters	4

NOTABLE QUOTABLE

"Perseverance and spirit have done wonders in all ages."

~ General George Washington



An Early Pioneer . . .

Archie N. Wiggins

Born in El Monte, August 19, 1863, Archie N. Wiggins spent his entire life in the community and contributed generously in time and means to its advancement.

He was the son of Thomas J. and Ellen (Vise) Wiggins who were natives of Kentucky and Missouri respectively, both being of Scotch ancestry. In 1849, Thomas J., then a resident of Texas, joined a covered wagon train born for California. The captain of this train was Nathan Vise, one of El Monte's early settlers, who was destined to become the father-in-law of Thomas J. Wiggins, father of the subject of this sketch. The party composed of this train first settled at San Diego. One year later, they came on to El Monte. Thomas J. Wiggins was eighteen years of age upon his arrival in El Monte. The remainder of his life spent here, during which time he engaged in farming. He had much to do with the early development of the district. Earlier, he was a Government contractor in the hauling of freight to Fort Yuma and Fort Tejon. His death occurred in 1914, his wife preceding him in death five years.

Archie N. Wiggins was educated in the Old Mission School, now known as Temple School, he being one of only seven American pupils in the school at that time. Between school terms he tilled the soil on his father's farm which occupation he continued to follow after attaining his majority. He was quite successful in this work specializing in the raising of hay, grain and live stock. Perhaps his maximum fame as an agriculturalist was attained in the production of watermelons. In this line he made a record both in quality and quantity of his products, and as a result, he earned the worthy title of the "Watermelon King of Southern California". He also raised potatoes extensively, and for a time, engaged



Archie N. Wiggins
1863 - 1927

Calendar of Upcoming Events

July 4, 2008

Rosemead Parade

*4th of July Parade presented by the City of Rosemead
10:00 a.m. on Valley Boulevard
(between Bartlett and Mission,
ending at Rosemead Park)*

in selling wood at the old market on Spring Street in Los Angeles.

Mr. Wiggins often spoke of the times when he had driven down Main Street in Los Angeles when the mud was a foot deep. He also spoke of seeing the first automobile in Los Angeles.

In matters of education, Mr. Wiggins was an enthusiastic booster favoring a \$25,000 high school when the issue was for only \$16,000 expenditure. He also advocated other movements for the moral uplift of the community, being influential in the original closing of saloons in El Monte. He was appointed a deputy constable by County Constable Benjamin Davidson, and courageously fought to enforce the Sunday closing of the saloons, which, while a city ordinance, was ignored and unobserved until Mr. Wiggins became constable.

In 1891, Mr. Wiggins was married to Miss Mary Ellen Kleinsorge, a native of Sacramento, and daughter of Louis and Annie (Schewgrew) Kleinsorge, who were natives of Germany and Ireland respectively, coming to California in the late forties or early fifties. They became the parents of four children; Louis J.; Lavelle B.; Edwin McKinley; and Charles.

Mr. Wiggins was affiliated with the orders of Modern Woodmen, Odd Fellows, and Ancient Order of United Workmen. Politically he was a Republican.

He remained active in the management of his affairs, until death closed his useful and valuable career in 1927. In his death the community lost a conscientious citizen who believed that "right made might" and dared "to do his duty as he understood it".

*(Excerpted from:
http://www.cagenweb.com/re/losangeles/ElMonteBios/WIGGINS_ArchieN.htm)*

MEMORIAL DAY AT SAVANNAH

A beautiful ceremony was presented and we gratefully appreciate the participation of the following:

- American Legion Post #748 – San Gabriel
- American Legion Post #261 – El Monte
- American Legion Auxiliary Unit #261 – El Monte
- Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #10218 – El Monte
- Sgt. Doraliza Velez-Collazo, U. S. Army
- Ms. Tina Flores, El Monte
- Detective Dan Glass, El Monte Police Department
- Boy Scout Troop #551 – El Monte



Sgt. Doraliza Velez-Collazo,
U. S. Army (Nurse) – Iraq Veteran

21-Gun Salute,
American Legion Post #261 – El Monte



SPECIAL PLEA

Savannah experienced two unusual and unexpected expenses in the last few months. First, someone ran into the fence along Mission Drive and destroyed three sections. Second, a tree along the Mission Drive boundary splintered, falling onto Mission Drive. It was found to be diseased and had to be removed.

Insurance covered the replacement of the fence, but the deductible of \$500 had to be paid. The tree removal resulted in an expense of \$850. In addition, we continue dealing with a 30-year old sprinkler system which has required maintenance costs of approximately \$400 just this year so far.

Our finances are still in need of bolstering and we are trying to build a cash surplus to better carry Savannah into the future. If you are not already doing so, we ask that you consider a regular donation commitment. A monthly or quarterly donation of \$10, \$20, \$50 or more would help keep us on track.

We deeply appreciate your continued support and devotion to Savannah.

Financial News

	03/01/08- 05/31/08	To Date*
Donations	\$1,002	\$24,205
Memorial Donations		\$1,111
Oktoberfest		\$28,218
Plot Sales/Services	\$1,900	\$7,550
Yard Sales	\$917	\$917

* "To Date" is from September 2006.

Help these funds grow!! Send a donation:
El Monte Cemetery Association
P. O. Box 4247
El Monte, California 91734

OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS



Don & Mary Alley
Harold & Sally Baquet
El Monte Historical Society
Nancy Goldbloom
Don & Edith Harrington
Marlene Hudson

Jeanne Nesbitt
Marcia & Fred Roberts
Joan Skaggs
James & Diane Tollesfson
Bob & Joanne Wilbur
Bob & Janet Wilson



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