



Photo courtesy of Paula Hinkel

Savannah Update

El Monte Cemetery Association

Volume 3, Number 4

June 2009

Letter from Your President

Dear Family and Friends of Savannah,

We need to have a general meeting including all that care about the preservation of the Savannah Cemetery. The meeting will be held on July 25th, 2009 beginning at 10:00 a.m. at El Monte Historical Museum located at 3150 N Tyler Avenue El Monte. This meeting is extremely important. Several issues need to be voted on by the membership. We will also discuss the stability of Savannah as we weather this economic downturn.



M. C. Gill Corporation is a proud sponsor of Savannah. Mr. Stephen Gill, Chairman of the Board was the first major supporter of the Savannah when the new board was installed in 2006. The M. C. Gill Corporation donated the north boundary fence along Mission Drive. It was completed late in 2006 at a cost of nearly \$19,000. There have been several large gifts to Savannah since that time by the M. C. Gill Corporation. On March 20th, 2009 Mr. Gill presented Savannah with a check for \$11,706. This wonderful gift provided Savannah with funds necessary to continue our preservation efforts. Please view the picture of the presentation ceremony in this newsletter. Thank you Mr. Gill and the entire M. C. Gill corporate family.

Our annual clean up and grave decoration day was a great success. The El Monte Police Community Service workers painted the two west walls and accomplished numerous tasks which made the Savannah look exceptional for the Memorial Day Ceremony. Those that decorated graves with flowers continue a great tradition.

The Memorial Day Ceremony was a beautiful honor to all the brave men and women who have sacrificed so much to keep

our nation free. My appreciation to the American Legion Post 261 El Monte, Post 748 San Gabriel, and VFW Post 10218. Thanks to the mayors of both El Monte and Rosemead for supporting the ceremony and all council members who attended. Assemblyman Mike Eng, 49th District attended and spoke well to the veterans and their service. I especially want to thank Janice Wiggins White, Treasurer of Savannah for her hard work in making this event a great tribute to our Veterans.

I am going to have extensive back surgery in August and will need the support of you all to volunteer your services and help the Board of Directors continue our mission at Savannah. Please attend the meeting on the 25th of July . . . it is imperative.

Sincerely,
E. Randy Wiggins
President

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Saturday, July 25, 2009 – 10:00 a.m.

*El Monte Historical Museum
3150 Tyler Avenue, El Monte, CA*

EVERYONE PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND!

Inside

Notable Quotable	2
An Early Pioneer . . .	2
Calendar of Upcoming Events	2
Our Generous Supporters	3
El Monte Proclamation	3
Memorial Day Ceremony	3
M. C. Gill Corporation Donation	4

NOTABLE QUOTABLE

Iron rusts from disuse; stagnant water loses its purity and in cold weather becomes frozen; even so does inaction sap the vigor of the mind.
 Leonardo da Vinci, *The Notebooks*



An Early Pioneer . . .

James R. Durfee

James R. Durfee, successful rancher and realtor, and a native son of El Monte, was born January 22, 1874. He is the son of James D. and Diantha (Cleminson) Durfee, well known early pioneers of this district a sketch of whom is to be found elsewhere in this work.

James R. Durfee, was educated in the La Puente district school, now known as the Temple School situated near the old family homestead. He remained at home until he was twenty years of age, when he married and engaged in farming for himself on about one hundred acres comprising a portion of his father's ranch. Here on the site of his present home on South Lexington Road, he built a residence and otherwise improved the property. General farming was followed for a



time including the raising of vegetables, grain, and fruit. Later, the place was set to walnuts, in which undertaking he was very successful, the Durfee grove being widely recognized as one of the finest in the state. Mr. Durfee later added to the attractiveness of

his property by erecting a beautiful two-story home. Unfortunately, however, this building was in 1918, destroyed by fire. Following this loss, the present excellent residence was erected.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Saturday, July 25, 2009 General Membership Meeting**
10:00 a.m. at El Monte Historical Museum
(3150 Tyler Avenue, El Monte)
- Saturday, October 24, 2009** **Oktoberfest**
(details to follow)
- Wednesday, November 11, 2009** **Veterans Day**
(details to follow)

On September 11, 1894, Mr. Durfee was married to Miss Estella Lucella Cain, a native of Iowa who at the age of eleven, was left an orphan and shortly afterward came to California with her elder brother (James) and family. Her parents Morris and Mary Cain both of whom were also natives of Iowa.

To Mr. and Mrs. Durfee were born nine children, namely; Ruth D. (Mrs. E.M. Wyne) of El Monte, residing on the old original homestead of her grandfather, James D. Durfee, on Durfee Road; Miles R., of El Monte; Eva, (Mrs. K McIntire) of Sacramento; and the remaining children, Hillard, James, Olen, Glenn, Mildred and Allamay, are all members of the Durfee household.

Politically, Mr. Durfee is a Republican and is greatly interested in the welfare of his party. He has contributed much to the betterment of the community and his courage and far-sighted initiative have given him a place among the most progressive and successful men in the community. For several years he served as a trustee of the Temple School, and is at present, Vice-president and director of the First National Bank of El Monte.

Following the death of his father in 1920, Mr. Durfee extended his interests beyond the promotion of his ranch activities, engaging extensively in the real estate business in and adjacent to Los Angeles.

Successful in this work he continues busily engaged in the promotion of his varied interests, maintaining his residence (as he and Mrs. Durfee have through the years) on the old ranch south of El Monte.

Source:
http://www.cagenweb.com/re/losangeles/EIMonteBios/DURFEE_JamesR.htm

OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS



Don & Mary Alley
 Meredith Bobbott
 Jerry Case
 Betty Cook
 Ken Corley
 Nancy Goldbloom
 Francis Guess
 Jim Hardwick

Edith Harrington
 M. Last
 M. C. Gill Corporation
 Barbara Meyers
 Anna Pick
 Ken Pike
 Patricia & Hanns Ruth
 Jeanne Schiado



City of El Monte Issues Proclamation in Support of Historic Savannah Cemetery

The City of El Monte issued a Proclamation in support of Savannah's efforts to secure Historic Landmark status from the State of California.

A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND HONOR Memorial Day – May 25, 2009

Our sincere appreciation to the San Gabriel Valley American Legion Post 748, American Legion Post 261, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10218, El Monte High School Band, Tina Flores, Detective Dan Glass and Reserve Sergeant Matthew Weintraub of El Monte Police Department, the cities of El Monte and Rosemead officials for their participation in this wonderful day's events and our thanks to everyone who attended.





*Randy Wiggins (left) and Stephen Gill (right) C.E.O. of
M. C. Gill Corporation of El Monte*

M. C. Gill Corporation Steps Up . . . Again

Mr. Stephen Gill, C.E.O. of M. C. Gill Corporation of El Monte has once again stepped up in support of Savannah with a sizable donation.

At a presentation held at Savannah on March 20, 2009, Mr. Gill presented a check to President Randy Wiggins, who expressed our sincere appreciation for Gill Corporation's continued support in the preservation of the historic cemetery.

Also present at the ceremony were several local dignitaries including Rosemead Mayor, Margaret Clark; Council Members Sandra Armenta and Stephen Ly; Donna Crippen, Curator of the El Monte Historical Museum; and El Monte Chamber of Commerce President, Donna Duncan.

El Monte Cemetery Association
P. O. Box 4247
El Monte, California 91734