

The Branding Iron

DUARTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OCT.-DEC. 2012

President's Message

Claudia Heller

FROM the Native Americans to the ranchers who settled in and around the land we now call Duarte, the life-sustaining resource which beckoned was water. Our San Gabriel River flows from the mountains, through our area into the East Los Angeles basin before arriving at the Pacific Ocean. Once a river of great natural beauty, today many areas are lined in concrete and often appear to be waterless.

"When in the year 1841, Andres Duarte received his grant to some 6500 acres of land in Duarte, he also received the rights to one-half the water in the San Gabriel River as it passed by his rancho," according to the book *On the Duarte*. It is doubtful that he made much use of the river water because there was a spring at the mouth of a canyon near his homestead. In those days, water was free. The catch? You had to fetch it. That meant digging a ditch from the river to your homestead, a project that was labor intensive and fraught with problems

As more people settled in the area, the many ditches crossing the land became problematical, and in time residents could see that the "water problem" was out of hand. That was when the idea of a water company blossomed.

In the late 1860s the problems escalated and eventually landowners south of

Curator's Message

Irwin Margiloff

ONE of the pleasures of being the Curator is that I have opportunity to interact not only with the public but also with members of the families that have made Duarte history.

Recently I heard from Gary Maxwell, a relative of the Maxwells whose adobe stood just across the street from the present Maxwell School. The school was built in 1950 with a donation of land by Jennie Maxwell, who continued to live in the adobe until her death in 1956. Gary visited Duarte from his home in Illinois just to get better acquainted with what his family had done and meant in Duarte. As a result, we have acquired more information and photographs that have become part of our archives.

Samuel Maxwell bought that adobe from Nehemiah Beardslee. And we have heard from and been visited by a lineal descendant of Nehemiah who lives in southern California.

When we were setting up the Glenn Miller exhibit, and later when we were creating our Duarte photo book, we were visited and helped by Steve Miller, son of Glenn. Steve sent us additional photographs of the Glenn Miller house that was built on what later became Bettyhill. The house, built entirely of redwood, was lost in the 1980 wild fire.

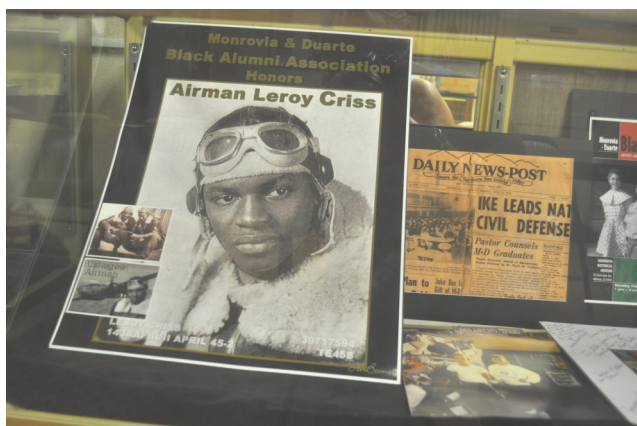
(See Water on Page 3)

(See Margiloff on Page 2)

BLACK HISTORY DISPLAY RECEPTION HELD



Everett Adams and George Mency



Airman Leroy Criss

The Monrovia-Duarte Black Alumni Association and the Duarte Historical Museum pulled resources to create a joint exhibit honoring the contributions of black residents over the years. A reception was held on September 15 and was well attended.

A few of the honored guests included Everett Adams, George Mency, Lois Gaston, T.K. Carter, Jacqueline Hasty, Lisha Singleton and David Williams as well as Mayor John Fasana and Councilmember Liz Reilly.

(See Black History Exhibit on Page 3)

Margiloff (Continued from Page 1)



After we published our Duarte book, a grandson of Joe Fowler called to say that he saw his grandfather on the cover!

And of the many descendants of Andres Duarte some live very close by. Vicki Cordova, who many of us remember well, contributed a great deal of time, photos and documents. So have Phyllis Ramos and Edgar Perez; both helped us with photographs and information.

Our Museum is a rich repository. It has benefited from donations of all kinds from our historical families and a great many others. It's great to see how much we already have, and to enjoy adding even more discoveries.

We all make history every day. Even if your name isn't found on street signs or City maps, what you can contribute to our collection may in a few years' time be just what some other visitor or inquirer wants to know or see. So look at your photographs and documents, your family histories and other materials, and be sure to give us a chance to assess them and maybe add them to our Museum's rich and growing collection.

AS A MATTER OF FACT:

- Don Watson was the first black mayor of Duarte and in the San Gabriel Valley while Lois Gaston was the first black female mayor in Duarte.
- Duarte received some of the most prestigious awards for citrus in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Water (Continued from Page 1)

the Santa Fe railroad organized a “Water Ditch Company” which became incorporated in 1881. In 1884, a northern group also formed a water company which they named the Duarte Mutual Water Company.

“In the formation of both companies, water rights of landowners were traded to the water companies for shares, one per acre, allowing directors to levy assessments on the stock and make loans to secure finances. The money paid for the construction of pipe lines, reservoirs and the furnishing of water to the users.”

Except for drought years, the water companies reportedly functioned well. Eventually the “Upper Company” sought underground water through wells. The “Lower Company” dug their first well in 1918. There grew more and more demands for pressured domestic water. This was delivered through pipe lines from the wells. About that time landowners questioned why two companies were needed and after a series of negotiations the companies merged, forming the Duarte Mutual Water Company. About this time, citrus ranches were waning, the ranches selling off into parcels, and more and more homes requiring pressured water being built.

Circa 1950 the Public Utilities Commission was formed. Duarte’s population had exploded and the demand for irrigation water waned. New reservoirs were constructed and miles of new pipe laid. After several changes, the California-American Water Company took over, and remains in charge today.

The water we enjoy in Duarte today flows from ground water sources from the main San Gabriel basin.



DISABLED VISITORS TOUR MUSEUM FROM MONTE VISTA

With an abundance of enthusiasm and stories to tell, a group of residents from Country Villa Monte Vista Healthcare Center visited the museum in August. Pauline and Mark Montgomery and Claudia Heller met with the residents and conducted personalized tours for them. Although wheel-chair bound, the visitors scoured the exhibits throughout the museum and then relaxed while feasting on a brown bag lunch.

Black History Exhibit

(Continued from Page 2)

The original exhibit was compiled by Eloise Hart and Beverly Hanes and for the Duarte exhibit it was extended to include Duarteans, past and present. The exhibit will remain through October and then will appear in other venues.

Thanks also to all the dedicated Society members who donated refreshments.

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE
MUSEUM BY PAYING YOUR
2012 DUES. THANK YOU.**

→MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

9/22/12: Duarte's Annual Salute to Route 66 parade, starts at 10 a.m. from Cotter to Mt. Olive along Route 66 (Huntington Drive).

9/22/12 Annual City of Duarte Picnic held at Royal Oaks Park following the parade.

10/06/12 10th Annual Duarte Festival of Authors, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Westminster Gardens, 1420 Santo Domingo Ave., Duarte. Admission is free.

Duarte Historical Society & Museum

P.O. Box 263, Duarte, CA 91009-0263

777 Encanto Parkway, Duarte

(626) 357-9419

Open: Saturdays: 1-4 p.m.

1st & 3rd Wednesdays: 1-3 p.m.

Web page: www.duartehistory.org

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