



# The Branding Iron

DUARTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

APR-JUN 2026



## President's Message



April 30, 1975

I just returned from a month long vacation in Viet Nam. It's a beautiful country - tropical jungle, limestone karsts, mountains, caves, waterfalls, and the waterways of the Mekong Delta.

Viet Nam is slightly larger than New Mexico with over 102 million people - roughly one-third the population of the US. It is over 1,000 miles long and is 31 miles across at its narrowest part.

One of the guides told me that their government is communist, but their economy is capitalist. That is an unusual combination.

Coincidentally, April 30, marks the anniversary of the Fall of Saigon. Vietnam has not forgotten the War with America. Every tour we went on in Ho Chi Ming city (Saigon) and Ha Noi mentions the devastation caused by the war, and the birth defects caused by Agent Orange.

I love to travel. Not only is it a vacation, but it is also an education. Visiting other countries makes me appreciate America more. There are many things that I take for granted here that others can only dream about.

I am grateful to be living in a country where I have choices.



## Lydia's Paper Dolls & Quilts

Until May 30, the Duarte Historical Museum has a very unusual collection in its Rotating Exhibit - Paper Dolls and Quilts.

As an only child at 6 or 7, in Wichita, Kansas, Lydia Jarboe loved playing with her paper dolls. She was fussy about how they were cut out, and she started making her own doll clothes using crayons on paper.

Each week, she would buy the latest paper doll book costing 10 cents. The dolls were printed on

flimsy cardboard. She played and drew fashions for her paper dolls into her teens.

When Lydia was about 60 years of age, she found paper dolls in the Doll Store in Monrovia. Then she discovered paper dolls on the internet, including the Paper Doll Review Magazine. The magazine had dolls, clothes, and articles. The Magazine's editor was a fashion illustrator. Lydia loved fashion!

She learned about paper doll conventions that were held yearly in different cities in the U.S. and England. Conventions included: dinners and socials, a paper doll souvenir book, and How-To and history workshops. Participants brought a special paper doll project to display.

Lydia was born on February 28 1933, in Winfield, KS; passed away February 01, 2026 at the age of 92,



She came out west after art school and worked for Disney as an illustrator. Her paper dolls are beautifully illustrated. They are works of art. Her collection shows the steps needed to prepare them.

Lydia Jarboe lived in Duarte. It was her home for 62 years. In 1964, she and her husband James, purchased their home on Crestfield Drive, where they both lived out their lives.

Along with her paper doll collection, Lydia made quilts. Her collection includes both antique quilts and quilts made by her own hands.

Quilting is an ancient craft that dates back to 3400 BC Egypt. It has provided physical protection when worn under armor by medieval soldiers and insulation when used as wall hangings, curtains, or carpeting.

Quilts were used as storytelling tools, a creative way to share stories and cultural traditions.

Quilts have evolved from functional uses as bed warmers, utilizing recycled textiles, and cherished keepsakes that mark life's milestones, such as marriage, deaths, or the birth of children, to a decorative art form.

## Lots Happening at Duarte Museum

### RUBEL CASTLE ROAD TRIP

Did you know that there is a castle in the San Gabriel Valley?

The Rubel Castle is located in Glendora and is listed with the National Register of Historic Places.

Huell Howser did two episodes about the castle on his *California's Gold* television series.

There is even a sign on the 210 Freeway indicating which off ramp to use to visit.

At the age of 19, Michael Rubel purchased two acres with a packing house and reservoir. A compulsive builder since childhood, Rubel decided to build a castle, complete with 5-story towers, in the middle of the empty reservoir located on his property.

Over the next two decades, Michael Rubel and his friends used river rock, scrounged cement, and recycled materials - anything they could find or were given for free - such as empty wine, beer, and champagne bottles, old motorcycle parts, scrap metal, salvaged wood, and junk to complete the castle.

It helped that Michael had grown up next to the city scrapyard and had access to its treasure of free building materials.

Castle construction ended after the completion of the clock tower in 1986.

In 2005, Michael gave the Rubel Castle to the Glendora Historical Society, which operates the tours.

Michael Rubel died in 2007.



L-R: Judy Ann Blake, Evette Arcaro, Liz Reilly, Ellen Worley, Ann Valleroy, Alan Heller, Jeannie Valleroy, Ann's daughter

## FREE MUSEUM SPEAKER SERIES

In the 1850's, as an experiment, camels were brought to the Wild West by the US Army from the Middle East. The army intended to use them as pack animals in the desert terrain of California.

The experiment failed! The camels stayed! Please join us for an entertaining afternoon.

Sunday, April 19, 2026, 3:00 PM

Camels!

By Alan Heller

Author, Traveler, Photographer



**Admission is FREE.**  
**Light refreshments will be served.**



Rubel Castle Kitchen

## Route 66: The Road That Shaped America

Below is PART 2 of an article by Coco Heller aka Alan Heller about the history of Route 66.



During the Great Depression of the 1930s, Route 66 became a lifeline for struggling families. As drought and dust storms ravaged farms in the Midwest, thousands of families packed their belongings and traveled west along the highway in search of work and a better life.

This migration was famously captured in John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, where he referred to Route 66 as the "Mother Road." Small towns along the route benefited from the flow of travelers, as roadside diners, gas stations, and motels sprang up to serve weary drivers.

The highway played a key role during World War II. Troops, supplies, and equipment moved along Route 66 to reach military bases and manufacturing centers in the Southwest.

After the war, veterans and their families used the road to explore new opportunities, fueling the postwar boom in tourism and suburban growth.

By the 1950s and 1960s, Route 66 had become more than just a highway—it was a symbol of freedom and adventure. Families piled into station wagons for road trips to the Grand Canyon or Disneyland; while young travelers cruised the open road in search of excitement. Roadside attractions, neon signs, and quirky landmarks became part of the Route 66 experience. From Cadillac Ranch in Texas to the Wigwam Motel in Arizona, these unique stops gave the highway its colorful character.

Popular culture cemented Route 66's iconic status. The song "(Get Your Kicks on) Route 66", celebrated the romance of the road; while the 1960s television series *Route 66* introduced the highway to an even wider audience. Route 66 became a place where dreams of the open road and the American spirit of independence came alive.

### Decline and Preservation

The golden era of Route 66 began to fade in the late 1950s with the creation of the Interstate Highway System. New, faster freeways bypassed many of the small towns that had thrived along

Route 66. Businesses closed, and entire communities were left struggling as traffic moved elsewhere.

In 1985, the highway was officially decommissioned, its number and status erased from federal maps.

Yet, Route 66 refused to disappear. Preservation groups, historians, and travelers fought to save its legacy. Sections of the old highway were designated as Historic Route 66, and many landmarks have been restored.

Today, the Route attracts millions of tourists from around the world who want to experience a piece of authentic Americana. Festivals, museums, and guided tours celebrate the nostalgia and history of the Mother Road.

### Lasting Legacy

More than just a road, Route 66 represents the story of 20th-century America. It carried families escaping hardship, soldiers heading to war, and tourists chasing adventure. It gave birth to roadside culture, shaped small-town economies, and inspired music, literature, and film. Though its practical role as a highway has ended, its symbolic power continues to thrive.

Driving along the surviving stretches of Route 66 today is like stepping back in time. Old diners still serve classic cheeseburgers and milkshakes, neon motel signs glow at night, and travelers share the same sense of possibility that inspired generations before them.

Route 66 remains not only a piece of American history but also a living reminder of the freedom and optimism that define the American spirit.



### DIDYOU KNOW?

The last town to decommission Route 66 was Williams, Arizona in 1984.

Route 66 passes through eight states and is 2,448 miles long.

Bobby Troup wrote Route 66 in 1946.

Nat King Cole recorded the first version.

Route 66's first gas station was opened by Phillips Petroleum in 1927 in McLean, Texas.

The very first McDonalds was opened in 1948 on Route 66 in San Bernardino.

There were 7 motels in the Wigwam Motel chain.

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Individual: \$20    Family: \$30  
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**OR MAIL A CHECK TO**  
Duarte Historical Society  
P.O. Box 263, Duarte, CA 91009-0263

In 2026. The Duarte  
Historical Museum will  
be closed: 1/1-6, 4/4,  
5/23, 7/1-7, 9/5,  
11/21-30, 12/19-31



Duarte Historical Society & Museum  
c/o Liz Reilly  
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Duarte, CA 91010  
[RanchoDeDuarte.org](http://RanchoDeDuarte.org)



Duarte Historical Society & Museum  
777 Encanto Parkway, Duarte, CA, 91010

**Open: Wednesdays: 1-3 p.m.**  
**Saturdays: 1-4 p.m.**

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