



The Historian

Preserving Today for Tomorrow

Volume 2 Number 3

May - June 2008

A Dream Fulfilled

Hi there, my name is Ray Holloway and I am a cowboy.

I was born and raised in Porterville, California. I was born in my grandmother's large home on the banks of the Tule River and that's where I stayed most of my life.

I think that I wanted to be a cowboy from about the time I was three years old. I think the first introduction I had to it was with my uncle and aunt who had this pack station up in the mountains. They packed people into the back country on horseback and packed their things in on mules. Every year I got to spend a week that was promised to me. I think that it was over Labor Day.

I was there with my cousin Jack who taught me to fish, and taught me to ride, and taught me to play. Every night when we would sit around the campfire, he taught me how to coax the coyotes to howl at night. That was our recreation for the day.



Cowboy Ray Holloway

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The Great Adventure — Laguna Woods Women in World War II

by Gloria Moldow, Ph. D.

These may sound like the reminiscences of World War II veterans, members of the so-called "Greatest Generation," that Band of Brothers. Well, they are...sort of. The difference is that these reminiscences reflect the experiences of some *female* GIs, a few of the more than 250,000 women who served in the armed forces during WWII as WACs, WAVES, SPARS, WASPs and WRENS. These women are your neighbors and friends in Laguna Woods, a "Band of Sisters," as it were, living amongst us.

Between 1999 and 2008, the Historical Society of Laguna Woods and the Laguna Woods Video Club have interviewed numerous WWII veterans as part of the Veterans' History Project of the Library of Congress. Numerous women who served in the armed forces between 1941 and 1945 were amongst those interviewed. Twenty-four of the women filled out questionnaires and consented to be videotaped. Their reminiscences provide us with valuable insights into the lives and

contributions of all of the extraordinary service-women who contributed to a vast change in the role of women in the second half of the 20th century and beyond.

The government set the minimum enlistment age for women at 21, although they could enlist at 20 with their parent's consent. Some of these younger women came from families where parents "expected" their daughters to sign up just as they did their sons, according to Mary Pratt. When the Navy rejected her because of her eyesight, Pratt joined the Army's nurses' corps. Her brother served in the Navy as did several of her cousins.

Some parents gave their willing consent to underage daughters for a different reason. These young women were a strong-willed handful and their parents may have been glad to be rid of them, at least so their daughters believed. Beverly L. Beesmeyer's family "pushed her out the door," she good humoredly re-

See Women - Page 5

MUSINGS

Honoree of the Month

Our congratulations to **Craig Charlton**, our Laguna Woods Honoree for the Month of April and **Beth O'Brien**, our Honoree for June.

We are grateful to The Regency and Las Palmas for funding this program as well as the Video Club, whose members video tape the ceremony.



Bob Ring

This Month's Stories

I hope that you enjoy this month's "people" articles that were written by **Terry Baker** and **Gloria Moldow**. I have modified and abridged their original documents in order to meet focus and space requirements of this newsletter. If you visit the Society, you can read the original articles at the Society as well as view **Ray Holloway's** California of the Past video.

Justine Ratner

Justine Ratner, chair of our V.I.P. Tours and immediate past chair of the Society's Docent Tours, retired this month. In the mid-nineties, Justine planned, implemented and conducted our first tours. *Justine, thank you for all that you have done for all of us.*

Veronica Doyle

Vonnie Doyle, 82, passed away suddenly on Sunday, April 6th. Born in Toledo, Ohio, Vonnie graduated from Oklahoma City University.

Vonnie moved to Leisure World 9 years ago to be close to her family. She quickly developed a new circle of friends.

Vonnie was one of our valued volunteers who worked in our Archives for many years. She also volunteered for the Hearing and Vision Club. She enjoyed playing bridge with her friends every week. Vonnie was an accomplished Scrabble player and could knock out a crossword puzzle in a few minutes.

We will miss Vonnie's gracious personality, her love and her loyalty.



Membership

Our 2008 Membership Drive has ended. In about 60 days you should be receiving your copy of the Society's Directory.

New Affiliates

I am pleased to welcome three new Affiliates to the Historical Society:

Draper Wealth Management Group

Wachovia Securities, LLC

24431 Calle de La Louisa, Suite 100
Laguna Hills — Telephone 768-9688

Keli McCall, Broker Associate

Laguna Woods Properties

24361 El Toro Road, Suite 100
Laguna Woods — Telephone 290-2349

Precision Auto Repair

Auto Repair since 1980 - Auto Club Approved

22701 Granite Way - B
Laguna Hills — Telephone 855-9981

Cowboy (from Page 1)

From age 12 to age 16 I trained a horse. By the time I was 16 I had the horse trained quite well. In the summertime I would borrow my father's truck. I would jump the horse into the back of the truck and haul him up to the mountains and pack my supplies and have my own pack station.

When I first got into the movies the first picture that I worked on was one with Red Skeleton which was called, "Excuse My Dust." I worked on a submarine picture with John Wayne. I shook hands with both Roy Rogers and Gene Autry.

I got to be a professional auctioneer. Then I got back into the cattle business. A couple of friends and I had 10 or 15,000 acres of grassland between Fresno and the Oregon border. We ran cattle all over Northern California. It was just like being in "Bonanza."

I really achieved what I wanted to be when I was 3 years old. I fulfilled my desire. My life was complete. I was a cowboy. It was like living in "Bonanza." We just drove from one ranch to the other.

Whoopee!

Note: This is a transcript of Laguna Woods resident Ray Holloway's video for the California of the Past Project.

MANIFEST DESTINIES

By Terry Baker

Manifest Destiny – the proposition that the principles upon which a nation is organized fixes its destiny, became the catch phrase for our “civilized” American society in the 19th century.

It conveniently justified our relentless campaign to remove the indigenous aboriginal tribes of North America from their ancestral homelands. In its wake, the European culture of the United States expanded from coast to coast, promising *new opportunities for all* in a vast, virgin territory.

Edward Sheriff Curtis

Out of that chaos, some people created their own destinies. Edward Sheriff Curtis was one of those. He ensured that the details of those Native American cultures would live on in the annals of history. Their images survive to this day through his photography.

Curtis was born in Wisconsin on February 16, 1868. As an adolescent Edward constructed his own camera with the help of the *Wilson's Photographics Manual*. His family moved west and in 1892 he married Clara Phillips. Although his income was meager he was able to buy a camera and open a portrait studio in Seattle in partnership with Thomas Gupstill. While their business was very successful, they parted ways in 1897.

Edward and Clara had four children; Harold, Elizabeth (Beth), Florence and Katherine. He and Clara were divorced in 1919, and she was awarded most of his assets. Curtis and his daughter Beth moved to Los Angeles and opened a studio.

Florence Curtis Graybill

His daughter, Florence, tirelessly devoted many years of her adult life to making sure that the memory of her father's contributions also lived on. In the twilight of her life, much of that pursuit took place in Leisure World. The book Mrs. Graybill co-authored in 1977, from her Leisure World manor, is titled, “Edward Sheriff Curtis – Visions of a Vanishing Race”.

In her book, she recalls her family's travels with Curtis in the early 20th century and chronicles his work. This was a task that her tireless yet modest father never took the time to do.

Trips with Dad

In the summer of 1906, seven year-old Florence traveled with her mother, sister and brother on a train from Seattle. They met her father in Arizona and accompanied him to Indian reservations there.

She told the story of their arrival at the Navajo Reserva-



Florence Curtis Graybill shown in 1977 with her just published book.

Courtesy Laguna Woods Globe

tion. A tribal medicine man blamed the difficult labor of one of the tribe's women on the close proximity of the white man's campsite. As a result, the family faced dangerous reprisal if the birth failed– but the baby survived.

“After that trip, dad vowed he would never take the whole family again,” Mrs. Graybill said.

She did travel with him 16 years later, but her father always insisted she remember one rule– “Never try to impose the white person's way of life upon the Indian.”

She said that she usually stayed in camp when her father conducted his interviews and took his pictures. “He thought they might not confide in him with someone else around.” She added that she learned a real regard for the people for whom her father had such true affection.

Curtis and President Roosevelt

In 1904, encouraged by the popularity of his Indian images, Curtis began in earnest to document all of the tribes west of the Mississippi that still maintained most of their native ways and customs. Curtis' goal was to create a scholarly artistic work that would catalog the lifestyle, beliefs and landscapes of this vanishing race.

Destinies (from Page 3)

During this time Curtis made another very fortunate connection. Curtis was invited to photograph the “Cowboy President” Teddy Roosevelt and the first family at Sagamore Hill. The invitation gave him the opportunity to show Roosevelt some of his Indian photographs. The President was impressed.

“Roosevelt was his greatest friend and was of inestimable help in his work,” Mrs. Graybill said in her 1977 interview.

Curtis’ Receives Funding

In 1906, with Roosevelt’s assistance, Curtis approached railroad tycoon J.P. Morgan to request financial assistance for his project. Morgan agreed to pay him a total of \$75,000 over five years. They decided that Curtis’ masterwork, “The North American Indian”, would be a set of 20 volumes of a descriptive anthology illustrated with high quality photo-engravings taken from Curtis’ glass plate negatives.

To fund publication, Curtis was to sell 500 subscriptions at approximately \$3,000 per set. It soon became evident that the completion date for the project would far extend the original estimate of five years

Curtis documented *the old time Indian, his dress, his ceremonies, his life and manners* with more than 2,000 photogravure plates and narrative. He portrayed the traditional customs and lifestyles of eighty Indian tribes. President Roosevelt wrote the forward to Florence’s father’s epic work, *The North American Indian*. Only 286 complete sets of his works were printed. Mrs. Graybill owned four volumes.

Life at a Slower Pace

Meanwhile, the Seattle studio was doing quite well. While the studio had an excellent reputation and a loyal clientele, the cost of printing Curtis’ Indian images consumed much of the studio’s profits. After wages were paid, very little money was left for the Curtis family’s living expenses.

In the years that followed the completion of the North American Indian project Curtis involved himself in mining ventures and continued to do occasional work in Hollywood. Around 1947 he settled



Edward Sheriff Curtis, self-portrait, 1899

on a farm in Whittier, California that belonged to Beth and her husband Manford Magnuson. At this time Curtis was very close to all of his children, including Katherine, who had moved to California when her mother died in 1932. Curtis died of a heart attack on October 19, 1952 at Beth’s home in Los Angeles.

Proof that Curtis and his life’s work had all but faded into obscurity was the brief obituary that appeared in the New York Times calling him an expert in Native American history and mentioning that he was also known as a photographer. Many consider Curtis’ work to be one of the finest examples of visual anthro-

pology ever done. (See pictures to the right.)

Florence’s Book

Florence Curtis, after studying journalism, became a newspaper reporter, and later worked in publicity and advertising. After her marriage and the birth of her two sons, the Graybill family moved around throughout the Western states, finally settling in Leisure World. In her interview in ‘77, Florence said that her writing had “fallen to the wayside” until she began the book. She succeeded with the experienced assistance of museum curator Victor Boeson. “*Edward Sheriff Curtis—Visions of a Vanishing Race*” was published in 1976. It took five years to complete. Florence credited her writing class in Leisure World for giving her the original motivation.

Curtis’ surviving sets now reside mainly in the hands of collectors and universities, and many of the world’s most prestigious museums, including the British Museum in London, Harvard’s Peabody Museum, the archives of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. and the Library of Congress. J. P. Morgan donated the collection at Northwestern University.

Thanks to the contribution by Florence Curtis Graybill, copies of her father’s “The North American Indian” and her own “Edward Sheriff Curtis—Visions of a Vanishing Race” are available from the Laguna Woods Village Library and the Orange County Public Library..



Geronimo–Apache (above). Curtis' portrait of the historical old Apache was made in 1905 when he was 76 years old. It was taken at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the day before the inauguration of President Theodore Roosevelt.

Chief Joseph–Nez Percé (below). This Curtis portrait is typical of many taken by Curtis. Popular opinion has given Chief Joseph the credit of conducting a remarkable strategic movement from Idaho to northern Montana in the flight of the Nez Percés in 1877.



Women (from Page 1)

ported. She and Verona Cassano were both "tomboys" and "cutups" who constantly challenged authority and traditional expectations.

Some younger women falsified their birth certificates and forged their parents' signatures in order to enlist. Shirley Gloger Abrams was "bursting to get into the service," she said. Although she admitted that her "parents couldn't wait to get rid of me," Abrams, herself, couldn't wait until she was 20 to



Shirlee Gloger Abrams

enlist with their consent. A native of Cleveland, she made her way to Detroit right after high school graduation. From there she bicycled into Canada to enlist in the RAF. Abrams returned to Detroit that same day, crestfallen since the RAF no longer accepted American recruits. On the way home, she passed a SPARS recruiting office and went in. She picked up the necessary documents, falsified her birth date and forged her mother's signature. "They didn't even look!" she recalled, still amazed. Ten days later Abrams was on a troop train headed to boot camp.

A few women in this group were motivated by the example of the men with whom they were romantically connected. Muriel Friedman Tuteur and her husband tried to enlist at the same time. The army rejected him because of injuries he sustained when imprisoned by the Nazis as a German civilian.

Tuteur operated milling machines on the night shift in a Chicago steel mill, and then became a ship fitter and welder in the Kaiser Shipyards in Vancouver before joining the WACs. After basic training, she enrolled in parachute school in Fort Benning, Georgia. Her husband later joined the merchant marines.

The armed forces attracted some women who wanted something other than the traditional job opportunities then available to women as farm, factory and office workers or as teachers. Cassano left the "hard childhood" she had experienced as one of nine children on an Ohio farm to study nursing and become an Army nurse. She served in Batango, 70 miles from Manila.

Beverly Beesmeyer, a WASP, had worked for McDonnell Douglas in California. She took time off from work to take flying lessons in distant Bishop,

Women (from Page 5)**Beverly L. Beesmeyer**

California, when the government prohibited small planes flying near the coast where she worked. With her private pilot's license and sufficient hours under her belt to qualify, she quit her factory job and joined Jacqueline Cochran's newly formed WASPs. She reported that 25,000 women applied and a little over 1,000 made the grade.

The glamour of service as well as the adventure attracted many women. When Adalyn Bonin, a German refugee, visited Tel Aviv after living on a kibbutz, she saw a poster of a woman in uniform, "her hands resting on a steering wheel," advertising His Majesty's Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS). "I knew immediately," Bonin wrote, "that here was my chance to participate in the war...in the battle against the evil forces of the Third Reich." Bonin there and then made up her mind to become a driver "just like the girl pictured on the billboards. I saw myself behind the wheel of a staff car, in some foreign country," she wrote. Bonin quit her job, spent all her savings on driving lessons and, in a country where few people knew how to drive, learned how to "double clutch and handle a three-ton lorry." Her strategy paid off. Bonin was the only one of several hundred recruits who could drive a truck and she landed the assignment she coveted. When her lorry was delivered, a "two-ton very second-class Fordson," Bonin wrote in her diary, "I'm overjoyed...Everyone in camp stares at me as if I were the eighth wonder of the world." Soon Bonin was posted as an ambulance driver to the Egyptian front line near Rommel's advancing German army.

Despite the glamour of the uniform and the job, Bonin had a more compelling reason to engage in the war effort: She was Jewish. In January 1933, when Hitler was named Chancellor of Germany, Bonin, who was then twelve years old, learned to her astonishment that she was Jewish. Her parents, wealthy assimilated Jews, considered themselves loyal Germans and above the fray. With her father stripped of all his wealth, her mother cleaning homes, the family living in one room and their circumstances growing more hazardous daily, Bonin joined the youthful Zionist movement and received her parents' grudging

permission to emigrate to Israel. There she found relative safety on a kibbutz until she joined the British service. All during her time in North Africa and Europe with the ATS she continued to hope that her parents would survive. But at the end of the war, she learned they had perished in a transport to Auschwitz.

**Dr. Adalyn Bonin**

Like Bonin, Anne Gilbert grew up in Berlin where restrictions against Jews grew tighter each day. Her father, a highly respected surgeon, was warned by one of his patients, Marlene Dietrich, to flee Germany immediately. He escaped just hours before the Gestapo raided his home at 2 a.m. Eleven-year old Gilbert and her sister got out of Berlin shortly thereafter. Gilbert finished her schooling in Sussex and entered medical school in Edinburgh, Scotland, but quit midway to join the Women's Auxiliary Air Force "to do her bit," she said. She ended up in England's secret service and made a vital contribution to the D-Day effort.

Whatever these women did in the sixty years following the end of WWII, they recalled their service years with a fresh immediacy as the greatest adventure of their lives. They were role models when few existed for their daughters and sons and nieces and nephews – the "baby boomers" born just after the war who fueled the cultural changes resulting in the civil rights and women's movements. Because of the energy, competence, and enthusiasm of the sisterhood of the Great War, it was possible for the next generation of women to explore wider horizons unavailable to generations of their predecessors. In paving the way for future generations, the women who served in WWII perhaps made the greatest contribution of all.

This article was excerpted from "The Great Adventure" written by Gloria Moldow. Additional excerpts will appear in future issues.

Gloria Moldow received her M. A. and Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Maryland. She has published numerous articles and a book, Women Doctors in Gilded Age Washington: Race, Gender and Professionalization, and taught American history and women's history. She retired from Iona College, New Rochelle, N.Y. as Dean of the Columba School.

BITS AND PIECES OF LEISURE WORLD HISTORY

(Selected from the *Leisure World News*) Evelyn Shopp

40 Years Ago — May - June 1968

The Laguna Hills Chapter of the Military Order of the World Wars, elected Rear Adm. William J. Juvel, USN (ret.) as its Commander.

GRF revised fee schedules included: a \$3 charge for guests on the 9 hole golf course; \$1.00 an hour to ride a GRF horse; and a 25¢ per person fee to attend community round, square and/or ballroom dances.

American Legion Auxiliary members sold poppies, hand-made by hospitalized veterans on May 24-25. The poppies, replicas of the Flanders Poppy, are the memorial flower of the Legion and Auxiliary.

Episcopalians raised \$350,000 to build a new St. George Episcopal Church. This California parish, dating back to the 1880's, is currently located at El Toro and Whistler roads.

The giant Sycamore, located at Aliso Creek, was dedicated in a ceremony conducted by the local chapter of the D.A.R.. A plaque states: Age - over 400 years; Canopy - 128 feet wide; Height - 54 feet; and Trunk Diameter - 13 feet.

Taj Mahal had 25 tenants, seven of them dentists.

Security was viewed as being extremely important to residents. Budgeted cost for security in 1968 was increased by \$0.86 a month to \$3.17 per manor.

Residents were invited to attend the ground breaking ceremony for the Laguna Hills Motel.

The Saddle Club sponsored the 3rd Annual Grandparents Day at the El Rancho Courts Stables. The stables also hosted the 1st annual Pets Day. Anna, a baby elephant, was the featured attraction.

Leisure World condominiums were listed at \$15,000 to \$30,000, with association fees of \$42 a month.

Advertised specials: Folgers coffee - 69¢ pound; Heinz Catsup - 22¢ a bottle; large cantaloupe - 25¢ each; and ice cream - 59¢ half gallon.

25 Years Ago — May - June 1983

El Toro Water District purchased the Laguna Hills Utility Company Water and Sanitation plants for \$10 million. This was one of the last "operating remnants of the Rossmoor business empire that developed Leisure World."

Should the Golden Rain Foundation board be elected by direct vote got an "eloquent going-over" at the Community Association meeting.

Rabbit control was done only at a resident's request. Rabbits, pro and con, were the subject of many "Letters to the Editor."

A 30 foot luxury motor home in the vehicle storage yard was destroyed by fire when the owner attempted to jump start a dead battery. Two adjoining trailers were also completely destroyed.

Three Investment Seminars entitled "The 1980's, a Decade of Opportunity for Investors" were scheduled.

Lake Hills Community Church was granted a variance to exceed the County's maximum allowable building height in order to accommodate their very tall pipe organ.

W.W. I Barracks #116 held their annual fund raiser for disabled veterans, a luncheon at Mercury Savings.

A local savings and loan was offering a 30 month CD with an APY of 10.54% . Money market accounts were earning 8.5%

Advertised specials: Milk - \$1.87 gallon; russet potatoes - 69¢ 10# bag; strawberries - 43¢ pint.

10 Years Ago — May - June 1998

Newly organized Leisure World Foundation received a \$10,000 donation from 9 year residents, Fred and Mary Ledorf.

The Towers Board outlined a \$41,000 renovation for its rear entrance.

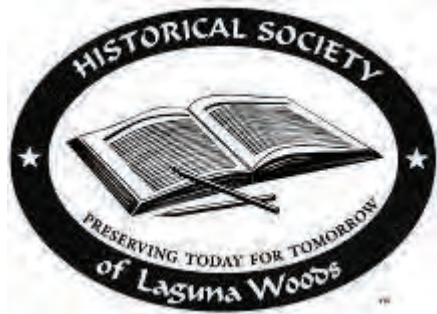
A proposal for Gate 12 West, which included an administration building, extra tennis courts and a centralized bus transfer station, was presented at a GRF facilities/land use workshop by Milt Johns, PCM Director of Operations.

Cityhood was still an issue with flyers from opposed residents being widely circulated. LAFCO Staff concluded that a city would be financially sound. An approved LAFCO County plan would give the new city \$700,000 a year for 7 years.

Project 21 members presented its proposals on governance, housing and recreation to the Housing Corporations with mixed responses. The President of United objected to any joint effort to move forward.

County planned a fly-over to check noise levels of commercial jet flyers that would land at the proposed commercial airport at the Marine Station at El Toro..

Car wash - \$3.00. Four banks offered CD's with an APY of 6%.



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Bob Ring, Editor

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