



Artesia Historical Society Newsletter

August 2023

Volume 19 Issue 3

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Message from the President----

Summer is waning with the last offerings of outdoor activities and movie nights. Join us for "The Adam Project" movie, with Ryan Reynolds, on the lawn at Old Fire Station #30 on Saturday, August 19th at 7:30 pm. Admission is free!

We also slowly turn our attention to the beginning of a new school year with student tours of both museums resuming soon. Fall also is right around the corner and time for our exciting Fall Fundraising Gala on Saturday, September 30, 2023, focusing on "Hidden Treasures".

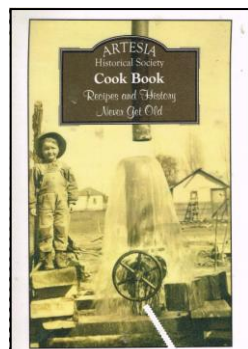
The Artesia Historical Society generally has only one main fundraising event annually. A fun community focused evening which includes dinner, opportunity drawings and silent auction, is always an enjoyable experience with win-win results. The program this year provides our guests a chance to sign up to have one (portable) personal "treasure" appraised as to its condition and value by an Estate Valuation specialist. (Note that there will no certificates of value issued). The purpose is to have a fun evening viewing older items of possible historical significance and value. Participation in the article appraisals is optional to gala guests, but is not a requirement to attend the gala.

Instructions for signing up items for appraisals ahead of the event will be included in the Hidden Treasures gala invitation packet. If you do not receive an invitation packet in the mail by August 25th, please email us at artesiahistoricalsociety@yahoo.com, or contact either Barbara Applebury at 562-865-3107 or Maria Dantema at 714-349-8722 to have a packet sent to you.

Check out that heirloom that is hidden in the attic, basement, or back of the closet to see if it might be an actual "Hidden Treasure" or just an item begging for the next garage sale. Show us your stuff! We look forward to seeing you all at this fun filled event.

Maria Dantema and Barbara Applebury Co-presidents

A few copies are still available of the **Artesia Historical Society Cook Book**. Place your order today by mailing your check or money order for \$20.00 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling per book to:



Artesia Historical Society
P.O. Box 83
Artesia, CA 90702

Also available

Images of America
Artesia 1875 - 1975

a pictorial history of old Artesia.

To order your copy call
Barbara Applebury
at (562) 865-3107



Congratulations



Excelsior Union High School recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Alondra Blvd. campus. Excelsior's uniqueness began as far back as 1902 when a class of 23 students and three faculty members met at the old Norwalk Grammar School on Walnut Street. The class chose green and white as their school colors, and were called "Excelsiorites." They moved to the new Alondra plant in 1923.

Excelsior's World Famous Alumni U. S. First Lady Thelma "Patricia" (Ryan) Nixon

1928



Throughout her time as First Lady, Pat Nixon prioritized people. She was a confident player on the world stage, traveling to over 80 countries during her years of public service. Wherever she traveled, she opted to keep luncheons, banquets and formal reception to a minimum so she could visit schools, hospitals, orphanages, old people's homes, and even a leper colony in Panama.

In 1969 when it came time for the Nixons to visit South Vietnam, an open combat zone, Mrs. Nixon didn't falter. She became the first First Lady to visit a combat zone and arrived there in an open helicopter.

When Peru was hit by an incredibly destructive earthquake in May 1970, Mrs. Nixon flew supplies gathered by volunteers to Peru to offer aid.



Do You Remember these structures?

WW II Quonset Huts -

Pictured here in Canarsie, Brooklyn, New York. Quonset Huts were developed in 1941 to be lightweight, easily assembled and shipped anywhere for a quick setup.

Between 150,000 and 170,000 huts were built during WWII. Many of these buildings still remain today.

Do you know of any in Artesia or the general area?



Number 5 in a Series: "Who was the school named for.....?" **Do you remember this school?**



Pharis Fedde Middle School
formerly M. T. Killingsworth Middle School

Pharis Fedde Middle School, located in Hawaiian Gardens, has the unusual history of having had two names. The school was originally part of the Bloomfield School District, opening in September 1952 and was named for **Mosia True Killingsworth**, who was a former member of the Bloomfield School District Board of Trustees from 1933 to 1948.

Mr. Killingsworth was born February 28, 1894 in St. Clair, Missouri, the son of Abel and Anna Killingsworth. He served in the 186th Aero Squadron, Aviation Section of the Signal Corp. in World War I. In 1919 he married Ivy May Culbertson in Missouri. Mr. and Mrs. Killingsworth followed the oil boom and moved to Taft, California. His interest in that industry found he and his family in Long Beach in 1923 where he, along with his brother W. M. Killingsworth, started an oil drilling company. By 1938 the M. T. Killingsworth family, which included daughter Jacquelyn and son Earle, had relocated to the small country town of Artesia where they became active members of the Brethren Church. In the 1940 US Census the Killingsworth family is found living at 3461 (later 21827) Violetta St., in Artesia (later Hawaiian Gardens). In 1944 Mr. Killingsworth became a Trustee at Large of the La Verne College and in 1945 he was re-elected to the Excelsior Union High School Board of Trustees. On July 9, 1952 Mr. Killingsworth, while driving near Dodge City, Kansas, suffered a heart attack resulting in his car skidding on wet pavement and ending up in a ditch. Mr. Killingsworth was 58 years old at the time of his death.



M. T. and Ivy May Killingsworth

After many negative social issues in 1995 in the neighborhood of Killingsworth Middle School, the school was renamed the **Pharis Fedde Middle School** after the beloved former teacher and counselor.

CHANGING CLOTHES, CHANGING NAMES: First a line of "sportswear" and now a school. Whenever students at Killingsworth Junior High in **Hawaiian Gardens** wore banned clothing to class—such as the white T-shirts and baggy pants preferred by gang members—they would be called to the office of counselor Pharis Fedde and given something else to wear. Something decidedly less cool, such as short pants.

The only way an offending student could save face with his peers, fashion-wise, was to announce he was clothed in "Fedde-wear."

Now, the ABC School District has named the entire school after the retired counselor. Last week, the school was officially dubbed Pharis Fedde Junior High School.

An additional benefit: There will be no more references to "Killing's-worth-it Junior High," officials said.

Fedde Middle School name change
LA Times June 27, 1995

Pharis Fedde was born in 1936 to Cedric and Naomi Fedde in Burke, South Dakota. He was a 1960 graduate of South Dakota State Teacher's College, earning a Bachelor of Science Degree. In 1960 he graduated from the Naval Training Center in San Diego as an apprentice petty officer. In 1962 he was teaching Shop, Mechanical Drawing and Biology at Dell Rapids High School, Dell Rapids, South Dakota. He was in Bellflower in 1963, where he met Janice Den Beste. They applied for a marriage license in September 1963 in Des Moines, Iowa.



Killingsworth Junior High in Hawaiian Gardens will be renamed after longtime teacher Pharis Fedde, who will retire in June. Press-Telegram photo / Leo Hetzel

They made their home in Lakewood and became the parents of two daughters, Amber and April. Mr. Fedde became a teacher, then a counselor at Killingsworth Middle School. He retired after 33 years service in 1995. The school was renamed in his honor that same year.

Membership Application
(Renewals mailed in January; membership runs January through December)

Circle One Please: New Renewal

Name (Please Print): _____

Address: _____

(street, city, state, zip code)

Phone (including area code): _____ Email: _____

Membership Level:

Annual Individual \$20.00
 Annual Business \$50.00
 Annual Student/Senior \$15.00
 Annual Family \$25.00
 Annual Nonprofit Organization \$30.00
 Lifetime Individual \$500.00
 Lifetime Business \$1,000.00

Volunteer Opportunities:

Educational Outreach Docent
 Museum Open House Docent
 Programs & Events
 Oral Histories
 Archival Data Entry
 Other _____

Please circle membership level you are applying for and volunteer opportunity that interest you! Volunteer hours can be applied to school community service requirements. Please note the day(s) of the week and the times you are available to volunteer _____

Return completed application and payment to:
 Artesia Historical Society, P.O. Box 83, Artesia, CA 90702

**Are You A Member of
 AHS?**

Anyone who is a current or former resident of Artesia, or just has an interest in our community, will enjoy membership in the **Artesia Historical Society**.

We also welcome genealogist and other researchers. We have many resources that could provide valuable information about the area and/or former residents of the area. We have many back issues of the Artesia News and can provide assistance in researching them.

**Join Now and
 Volunteer to help!!**

Number 6 in a Series: "Who was the school named for.....?" Do you remember this school?

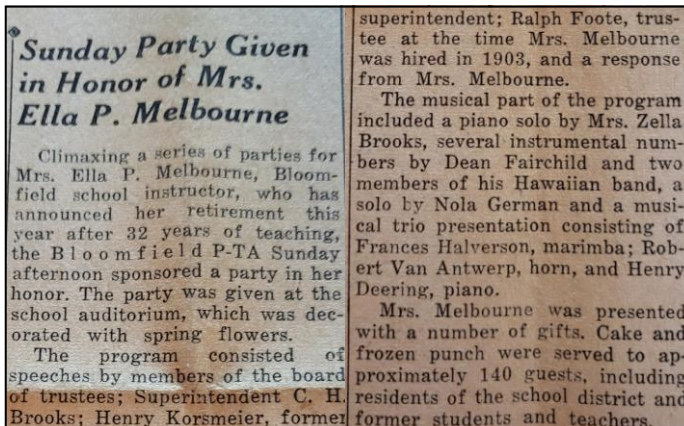


Ella P. Melbourne Elementary School

Melbourne Elementary located at 21314 Claretta Ave., Lakewood, opened in September 1956 as part of the former Bloomfield School District. It was named for long time District teacher, Ella Pendleton Melbourne.

Mrs. Melbourne was the daughter of George W. and Elma A. Pendleton and was born December 30, 1881 in Downey, California. She married James Melbourne in 1908 and they became the parents of Beth in about 1910 and Thomas W. in about 1919.

Mrs. Melbourne retired after 25 years of teaching and died in 1955 in Orange Co., California. She is buried in the Melbourne/Pendleton family plot in the Downey District Cemetery.





Weather Events and How They Impacted Your Ancestors

In addition to dealing with the pandemic for a couple of years, we have also experienced strange weather this past Spring and current Summer, which caused this editor to wonder how past weather events impacted our ancestors.

This obsession with the weather is nothing new. Seafaring merchants, farmers and laborers lived (and sometimes died) by temperature and climatic conditions. While a little rain was an inconvenience, extreme weather could be disastrous — and even change the course of history. A windy squall blew the Mayflower off track, sending its passengers to the coast of New England rather than their intended destination in temperate Virginia. Unprepared for the harsher northern conditions, half the passengers perished that winter.

In your ancestors' lives, weather events may have led to property loss, migration, occupational change, illness or the death of a loved one. Of course, some disasters still affect us today, having caused genealogical record loss.

The Year Without a Summer (1816)



In 1815, Mount Tambora erupted in Indonesia, spewing tons of volcanic dust into the air. It floated around Earth's upper atmosphere, causing a dramatic climate shift worldwide. Crops failed as frosts struck even during the summer of 1816 in New England. Delaware farmers complained about the price of corn for their hogs. Masses of people left the Northeast, seeking better prospects in the Midwest.

American religious revivalists held meetings and formed new sects. Sporadic Sunday worshipers renewed their faith. In the November election, dissatisfied voters replaced 70 percent of the House of Representatives. France and England experienced political unrest, too. Typhoid broke out in Ireland, and starving families fled to America, making 1816 and 1817 the leading edge of famine-related migrations. Poor nutrition contributed to the first worldwide cholera epidemic. On the bright side, English artist J.W. Turner's paintings featured the spectacular sunsets caused by the volcanic ash in the air.

Great Lakes Storms (1868-1869)



North America's five connected "inland seas" are prone to sudden, severe storms, especially during late autumn, when still-warm water fuels "November gale" fronts. In 1868 and 1869, Great Lakes storms sank or ran aground more than 3,000 ships and killed in excess of 500 people.

After one of the worst — a four-day storm beginning November 16, 1869 — Americans realized the need to notify merchants and residents of future weather events. In those few days, 97 vessels suffered damage; 35 were total losses that by some accounts exceeded \$420,000. Newspapers reported heavy snow. High winds broke telegraph poles in Chicago and made rescuing sailors difficult. November 20, 1869 six men drowned near Chicago trying to reach a schooner.

The economic impact and loss of life during the two years prompted President Ulysses S. Grant to sign into law the "storm signal service," predecessor of the US Weather Service, February 9, 1870. The Army would record the weather at sites across the country and telegraph warnings when surface air pressure began to drop.



Locust Plagues (1873-1877)

The timing of easterners' migration into the Great Plains coincided with devastating swarms of locusts. The insects, really a species of grasshopper in swarming phase, mainly stayed in the Rocky Mountains until a jet stream facilitated movement to the Plains, where heat helped them breed.

The hungry scavengers devoured all crops in their path and sometimes, fences, blankets and wool. When the food was gone, the swarms moved on in a flying cloud. Insects caused an estimated \$200 million in crop damage in Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska and elsewhere. In Minnesota, where author Laura Ingalls Wilder witnessed the plague as described in *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, locusts destroyed more than 13 million bushels of wheat and 7 million bushels of oats. "The rasping whirring of their wings filled the whole air," wrote Wilder, "and they hit the ground and the house with the noise of a hailstorm."

The largest swarm, recorded in 1874, covered 198,000 square miles. A report that year showed only one family in 10 had enough food for the winter. The government relaxed Homestead Act residency rules so settlers could seek temporary work elsewhere. In 1875, Uncle Sam spent \$30,000 on seeds for farmers. Less than 30 years later, locusts mysteriously died out.



Fierce Blizzards (1888)

In mid-January, with temperatures above freezing in the Plains states, people worked outside in shirt sleeves and schoolchildren left their coats home. Then a surprise blizzard struck Montana, Dakota Territory and Nebraska on January 12th and 13th. The temperature suddenly dropped to minus 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Known as the Children's Blizzard, the storm caught students in classrooms and farmers in fields. Hundreds lost their lives trying to get home, and thousands of cattle froze to death.

An unusual cold snap in the Pacific Northwest and California preceded that blizzard, and later in the season, extreme weather also paralyzed the East Coast. There, it had been a warm winter with below-normal precipitation — then March 12th and 13th, the Great Blizzard dropped 40 to 50 inches of snow on New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts. About 400 people died, railroads shut down, ships were grounded and imports stopped.

(Continued on page 6)



Galveston Hurricane (1900)

Galveston's location on a low-lying barrier island off the Texas coast leaves it vulnerable to storms, particularly the 1900 hurricane. On September 8th, the day it struck, Galveston was the wealthiest city in Texas and the third richest in the country. When it was over, few buildings remained and a fifth of its population was dead.

Weather bureau forecasters thought the hurricane was headed for the Atlantic Coast. By the time it hit Galveston, the destruction of bridges to the mainland prevented islanders' escape. Weather Service instruments had blown away, but estimated 135-mph winds at landfall make it the equivalent of a Category 4 storm. Water swept away buildings as far as six blocks inland and splintered the rest of the town. Between 6,000 and 10,000 people died. Rescuers dumped bodies at sea; when many washed back, they built funeral pyres.

Property losses totaled \$28 to \$30 million (\$700 million today), and Houston replaced Galveston as a major commercial center. The 1900 hurricane remains the country's deadliest weather disaster.



Tri-State Tornado (1925)

Over three and a half hours March 18th, a tornado averaging a quarter-mile wide, but at times growing to a mile, left a 219-mile path of destruction in Missouri, Illinois and Indiana. It's the farthest-traveling and deadliest tornado in US history, killing at least 689 people and injuring more than 2,000. From Ellington, Missouri, the twister sped across the southern tip of Illinois almost to Petersburg, Indiana. Fooled by the low, "rolling cloud" appearance, many didn't sense the danger in time. Among the 234 who died in Murphysboro, Illinois, were 17 children at the Longfellow School. Four towns were demolished. In total, 13 counties and 19 communities felt the effects. In addition to the \$16.5 million in damage from the tornados, fire and theft increased the magnitude of economic disaster. The same weather system spawned deadly twisters in Kentucky, Tennessee and other states.

Mississippi River Flood (1927)



Weeks of rain created the one of most destructive river floods in US history when the Mississippi River topped levee systems the Army Corps of Engineers had just proclaimed would withstand rising waters. The worst breach happened April 21st at Mounds Ferry, Mississippi, just upriver from Greenville. Armed guards forced African American laborers to fill sandbags, though everyone could feel the levee was about to collapse. Trees, buildings and railroad embankments washed away. The entire Mississippi Delta was flooded.

More than 10,000 refugees, mostly black, crowded onto the 8-foot-wide Greenville levee. Fearing loss of their labor force, planters allowed only 33 white women and children to board evacuation barges. Red Cross provisions were distributed disproportionately. Town leadership conscripted black cleanup workers at gunpoint. Relief director and presidential hopeful Herbert Hoover suppressed his own investigators' reports of refugee camp abuses. The floods killed 1,000 and left a million homeless. African Americans moved north in droves. Within a year, half the Delta's black population had gone.

Dust Bowl (1933-1939)

As the Great Depression intensified, drought and decades of over farming in the Southern Plains dried out the topsoil and a series of storms from 1933 to 1939 blew it eastward. May 11, 1934, in one of the worst events, dirt fell like snow on Chicago. On Black Sunday, April 14, 1935, 20 "Black Blizzards" darkened skies. According to *The Yearbook of Agriculture* for 1934, "Approximately 35 million acres of formerly cultivated land have essentially been destroyed for crop production & 100 million acres now in crops have lost all or most of the topsoil; 125 million acres of land now in crops are rapidly losing topsoil." By 1940, about 2.5 million "Okies" had left Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas and other states. Many went to California, where they moved from farm to farm seeking work. In 1937, California made it illegal to bring indigent persons into the state. John Steinbeck captured the migrants' plight in his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Ohio River Flood (1937)



Ohio's wettest month on record raised Ohio River levels in January, flooding cities along its course. As happened 10 years before on the Mississippi, levees broke and muddy water deposited silt in houses and streets. Ten percent of Cincinnati, where the river peaked at 79.9 feet, was submerged for up to 19 days. Gas tanks exploded, power was shut off and taps ran dry. Six counties in Indiana saw damages costing upward of \$13 million. There, 4,000 WPA workers helped relief efforts. Evansville Courier reporter John A. Ellert wrote, "Braving cold winds, rain, snow and sleet, WPA crews worked through the flood at jobs hazardous and unpleasant, mostly in cold and water." In all, the flood wrought around \$500 million in damage.

These events demonstrate the part Mother Nature could play in our ancestors' lives. My father came to California in 1936 from Arkansas and worked on the vast farms in the Salinas Valley. His move was absolutely as a result of the depressed economy in the Midwest. All his brothers and sisters, and their families, also made the move. Their families had been in Arkansas for generations, since before the Civil War.

Save the Date, Saturday, September 30, 2023

Join the Artesia Historical Society
for a fun evening, including dinner, raffle prizes,
silent auction and have your treasures appraised.

Reserve your spot for an appraisal,
email: artesiahistoricalsociety@yahoo.com.

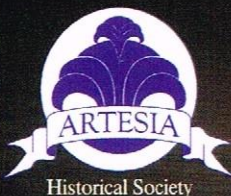
Do you have hidden treasures in your garage or attic?

Saturday, September 30, 2023

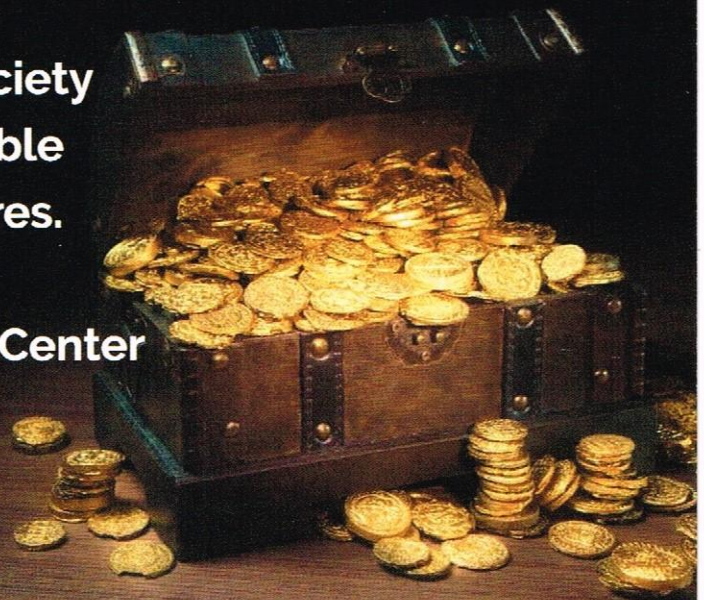
at 6:00 PM

**The Artesia Historical Society
will have experts available
to appraise your treasures.**

**Albert O. Little Community Center
at Artesia Park.**



Mailing Address: PO Box 83 • Artesia, CA 90702-0083



Mark your Calendar:

- August 12, 2023 Museums are open 1 to 3 pm **FREE ADMISSION**
- August 19, 2023 "Night at the Movies" in the yard of Old Fire Station #30 - "The Adam Project"
- September 4, 2023 Labor Day 
- September 9, 2023 Museums are open 1 to 3 pm **FREE ADMISSION**
- September 15, 2023 First Day of Hispanic Heritage 
- September 30, 2023 Annual Historical Society Dinner - Antique Appraisals **SAVE THE DATE**
- October 9, 2023 Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day  
- October 14, 2023 Museums are open 1 to 3 pm **FREE ADMISSION**
- October 31, 2023 Halloween 

SAVE THE DATE

December 2, 2023 Holiday Open House



Everybody Welcome!

The publishing dates for the Artesia Historical Society Newsletter are (usually) April, August, and December of each year. Articles are contributed by various historical society members. Any comments or questions may be directed to the Newsletter Editor at artesiahistoricalsociety@yahoo.com.



**Artesia Historical Museum/
Frampton-Dantema House**
18644 Alburdis Avenue
Artesia, CA 90701



Old Fire Station #30
18641 Corby Avenue
Artesia, CA 90701
Email: artesiahistoricalsociety@yahoo.com
Website: ****coming soon**** now in beta test

Artesia Historical Society
P. O. Box 83
Artesia, CA 90702-0083



**See You
at the Movies!
Saturday,
August 19th
Old Fire Station #30
Gates open 7:00 pm
Movie starts
at 7:30 pm
"The Adam Project"
Free! Free!
Free!**



"Artesia Historical Society"