

THE AMADORIAN

A Publication of the Amador County Historical Society

"Preserving the past and present for tomorrow"

Winter 2020 – Vol. 13, No. 1

President's Corner

Dear Fellow ACHS Members:

As we enter our new year of 2020 there is much to report. It will be a challenging year as we continue with our efforts to build a new livery building.

Phase 1 to enclose where the train once sat is almost completed with the huge, huge efforts of **Leonard Williams** and his crew who are donating their time, gratis. A big thanks must go out to him and his work force. Thank you also to **Keith Sweet** and **Wayne Garibaldi** for the painting of this structure which will temporarily house the artifacts from the old livery that are now deteriorating from exposure to the elements.

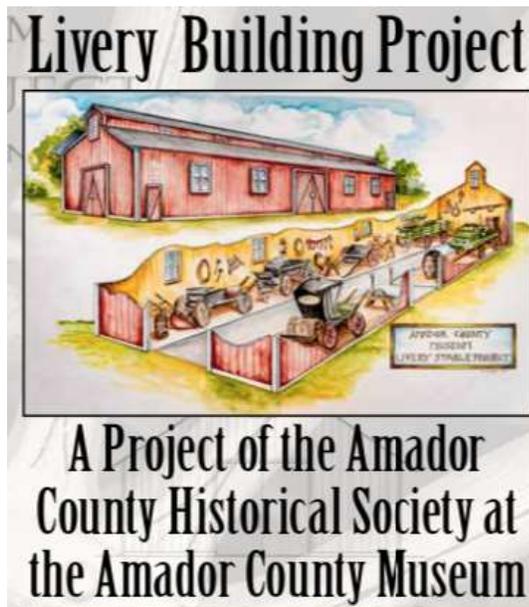
Phase 2 will be putting the artifacts from the old livery into the new storage, almost complete by Leonard, and then demolishing the old livery to make room for the new. That saying, we are almost at the beginning of **phase 3**, the building of the new livery. Once completed, we are hoping to have more educational events about Amador County available to our school children and the general public.

A fundraising committee has been formed, and we have the backing of the **Amador County Board of Supervisors** and **Stan Luckowicz**. We thank Stan for his generous donation and heading up our fundraising committee.

As the new President of the Amador County Historical Society I also want to tell you that I volunteer here for the love I have for the area and its history. My family first came to Amador County over 150 years ago. I also volunteer at the museum one day a week where I talk about our area and its role in the formation of California. I want to help preserve its history, spread interest and education about the county to others and leave a legacy for future generations.

Best regards,

Cathy McGowen, President



Livery Stable Fundraising Report

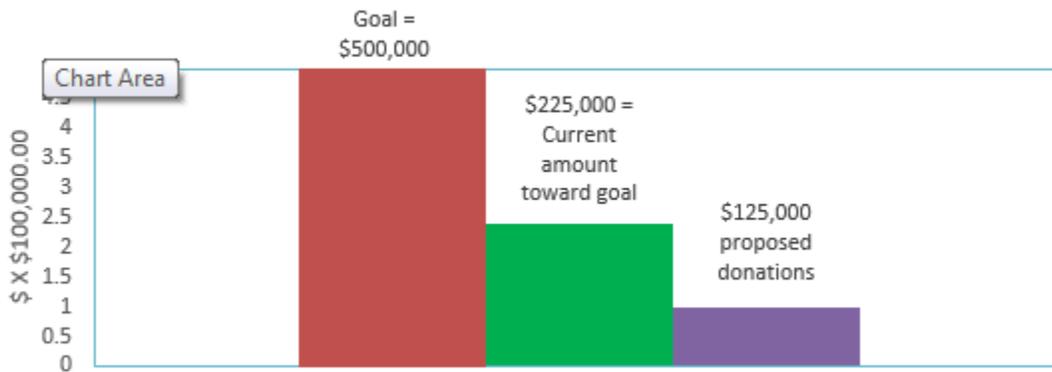
Amador County Historical Society Livery Stable Fundraising Event

*February 20 - Cocktails and Appetizers at Stanley's Steak House in the National Hotel
5 pm*

Hosted by Stan Lukowicz

- Due to the support of donor and friend of the Amador County Historical Society, **Stan Lukowicz**, the Livery Stable Project phase 1 is well on its way to completion. Stan has given \$10,000 and promises an additional donation. ACHS owes a BIG THANKS to Stan for his generosity and support. Thank you, Stan!
- A visit to the **Amador County Board of Supervisors** by **Leonard Williams** and **Cathy McGowen** led to a grant of \$100,000 for the project.

Livery Barn Funding January 2020



Your generous donation will help build the New Livery Building which will replicate the California-style of rural agricultural buildings. Learn more at www.amadorcountyhistoricalsociety.org



Heritage Rose Garden Project Dedicated in Jackson Gate

The Master Gardeners of Amador County dedicated its Heritage Rose Garden on the property of the Chichizola Ranch on October 17, 2019. The property is on Jackson Gate Road, just down from the Chichizola Store. The property, which had been in the Chichizola/Cuneo family since the 1850s, was donated to the Mother Lode Land Trust (MLLT) in 2011 by descendants of the Chichizola family.

In partnership with the MLLT, The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Master Gardeners of Amador County created The Heritage Rose Garden on a 40 by 50 feet corner of the Chichizola Ranch.



Above is the “before” photo of the UCCE Heritage Rose Garden.

The MLLT’s primary goal is to preserve the foothill landscape and promote agricultural and historic values. Protecting and preserving the living history of heritage roses is a nice fit.

The mission of the UCCE Master Gardeners of Amador County is to create a heritage garden to showcase historic roses, California natives, and pollinator plants to be used in educating the public on sustainable gardening practices. Heritage roses, classified as roses which appeared before 1867, may also be referred to as “Old Garden,” “Antique,” or “Heirloom.” These roses were rescued from old

homesteads, cemeteries, and mining camps. With this garden, Master Gardeners who share horticultural and botanical information with the community, can increase public knowledge about forgotten beauties, while taking the opportunity to promote sustainability and best gardening practices.

The garden includes a dry creek bed for drainage, meandering paths, and several benches. To provide year-round interest, a selection of other plants is included. Those chosen will expand on the historic/native plant palette and create further learning opportunities. Ten UCCE Master Gardener volunteers are involved in propagating the roses. **Dennis Miller** spent hours cutting, splitting, and

shaping cedars to make the wooden fence and benches. As the garden matures and the roses bloom, the Heritage Garden will be a destination of note in Amador County.



The Heritage Rose Garden on Jackson Gate Road is ready for planting.

**The public is invited to
AN OPEN GARDEN DAY**
at the UCCE Heritage Rose Garden on
Saturday, May 16, 2020
Tours offered 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Master Gardeners weigh in on their commitment to the Heritage Rose Garden:

We are doing this project to: Collect and preserve old roses from oblivion; propagate and nurture pieces of local history; showcase these almost forgotten beauties; enjoy distinctive roses with wonderful fragrance; honor the homesteaders of our pioneer past; share our love of growing things with our community; encourage good gardening and rose-growing practices.

What is a Heritage Rose? An old garden rose discovered or hybridized 100 years or more ago...or as some people say, “any rose that isn’t modern.”

Why are they special? Many have been collected, identified, and lovingly preserved for future generations to enjoy. But they are a piece of history in danger of becoming extinct.

What do they offer us? Intense fragrance, cold hardiness; disease resistance and pest resistance; grow on their own rootstocks; easy care; low water requirements

Where did they come from? They have been collected along roadsides, from old homesteads, ranches and local cemeteries in Calaveras, Amador and many other California counties.



Donations made by the generosity of the UCCE Amador County Master Gardener supporters were acknowledged at the dedication on October 17, 2019

Contributing to this article are **Judy Wood** from the Heritage Garden Project and **Hazel Powell**

A Blast from the Past:

A History of the Plasse Family in Amador County

A Tribute to Maurice John Plasse, Jr.

1928-2020

The early history of Silver Lake has its beginnings and revolves around the family and descendants of Ramon Pierre Plasse, later known as Raymond Peter Plasse after he emigrated to the United States.



In 1847 Ramon Pierre Plasse (Raymond Peter), father of Maurice (1869), Charles (1864), Peter (1866), Alice (1874) and Louis (1878), sailed from his homeland in Lyons, France, around Cape Horn through the Golden Gate. He then traveled to Volcano where he mined for one year near Aqueduct and Volcano. With his \$900 in earnings as a prospector he then decided to establish a trading post in 1852 on the old Emigrant Trail near Squaw Ridge (south ridge above Silver Lake). His business was largely to supply fresh cattle and horses and replenish supplies to emigrants who had come this far on the road to the mines. Raymond traded for their worn-out animals and

turned them out to pasture in the lush meadows in the Silver Lake basin. The animals were nourished back to health and traded back to succeeding parties. In 1853, Raymond Peter homesteaded 160 acres at the south end of Silver Lake and built his first log cabin on the property.

One day Charles Grasso, former schoolmate of Raymond Peter in France, came by in an emigrant wagon train and stopped at the trading post. The former schoolmates were overjoyed to meet again so far from their childhood home. The Grasso oxen were worn out. Raymond Peter offered to buy the remaining cows in the train, and this was the first Plasse's start in the cattle business. The Grasso family remained behind to become partners in the trading post. Raymond Peter Plasse was well educated. It is told that he spoke and wrote English, French and German. He kept diaries in French, and his records were later used many times to settle arguments. Important papers, stamps, records and diaries were kept in a large hog's hide trunk which was later burned in a fire at the ranch near Jackson.

One time when Raymond Peter sold cattle in Virginia City and received \$1,700 for the sale, he was followed home by three desperadoes. He very carefully buried his gold in the dirt floor of his cabin and sat down to his supper of ham and beans. Soon the strangers appeared, said they were hungry and were taken in. After eating their supper, they drew their guns and wanted to know where the money was buried. When it was not produced, they hoisted Raymond Peter with a rope to the rafters of his cabin three times. Finally, they became exasperated and took him up the canyon. A fire was started at his feet without success, and the trio departed. Tied there for forty-eight hours, Mr. Plasse was in a desperate position. He managed to stomp out the fire and finally one of the party returned and offered to untie him if he would not follow for twenty-four hours. The three men were later caught on an island near Stockton. One was killed and two were sentenced to prison.

Louise Battilda Retrou came with her mother from Paris, France, in 1861. They came across the Isthmus of Panama on mule back and then by boat to San Francisco and then Sacramento. They then transferred to stagecoach to get to Jackson. Raymond Peter Plasse and Louise Battilda Retrou were married in the Catholic Church in Butte City in 1862. Five children were born on the Jackson ranch, and all grew to adulthood except Charles who died at the age of two when he drowned in the creek at Silver Lake. He had taken a little bucket down to the creek to get some water.

In 1853 in the Silver Lake region you could have as much land as you could fence. In 1874 more land was made available so family members each homesteaded another 160 acres of land. Maurice Plasse was the only one in the family who received his final papers. The other homesteads were put back into government land before they could be proved up.

Of the four adult children of Raymond and Louise, only Maurice Plasse, Sr. wed. Maurice Plasse, Sr. married his first wife, Mary Ferrari, in 1890. For years, Maurice and his children, Raymond and Hazel, along with his brother Peter and sister Alice lived on the Jackson ranch. In 1917 their mother, Louise Retrou Plasse (eighty-one years old at the time), gave the deed to the Silver Lake homestead and the Jackson ranch to her children, Maurice, Alice, Peter and Louis.

Maurice and Mary along with his siblings began a resort at the Silver Lake property in the early 1900's where they welcomed guests from as far away as San Francisco. They had their own dairy, grocery, butcher shop restaurant and laundry service. Alice Plasse was the first postmistress at Silver Lake. The resort operated until the early 1950's when Ray Plasse, Maurice's oldest son, decided he was more interested in the ranching business than he was in the resort.

In 1925, several years after Maurice's wife, Mary Ferrari, passed away, Maurice married Miss Marian Flagg. From this union a son, Maurice John Plasse, Jr., was born. Maurice Jr. graduated from Jackson High School in 1946 and worked for Winton Lumber before joining the U.S. Air Force in 1952. During a leave in 1954, Maurice Jr. and Caraleta Gesdahl were married in St. Patrick's Catholic Church before he left to serve as a diesel mechanic for the remainder of his service in Japan. After returning home in 1956, the couple moved to the family homestead on French Bar Road to begin their family and operate the family cattle ranch.

In 1968 Maurice and family decided to re-open Plasse's Resort. He balanced his time between resort operation and cattle ranching until 1976 when he devoted his time to the expansion of the resort. Upon his retirement from resort ownership in 2000, Maurice enjoyed spending time chatting with friends on the front porch of the family cabin, sharing stories with grandchildren and great grandchildren and even took a trip to France where he visited his grandmother's family home. He will be greatly missed by all who had the pleasure to know him.

Excerpts taken from *"One Hundred Years at Silver Lake"* by Stella Swenson and the *Amador Ledger*. Edited by Doreen Plasse

www.amadorcountyhistoricalsociety.org

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*Board Meetings are held on the 3rd
 Wednesday of each month at 3:00 p.m.
 225 Church St., Jackson (Amador County
 Museum)*

Members and friends are invited to attend.

www.amadorcountvhistoricalsocietv.org

ACHS Life Members

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 Sutter Creek Promotions Committee ~ Volcano
 Community Services District *Benefactor

**Welcome to our new members as of
 January 2020:**

George and JoAnn Aiello
 Cathy O'Brien
 Gerri Cassinelli
 Marilyn Priel

About the Amador County Historical Society

The Amador County Historical Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the research and preservation of Amador County heritage and history.

The organization brings together people from diverse backgrounds to work towards these goals. We invite all interested persons to attend our monthly meetings and encourage your suggestions and active participation in Society events and endeavors.

We also welcome guest articles for our newsletter. Unfortunately, due to limited space we can accept only those pertaining to local history. If you have any questions regarding ACHS please contact the office at (209) 257-1485.

If you would like to become a member of the Society, please fill in the membership form below and mail along with the appropriate dues to the Amador County Historical Society, P.O. Box 761, Jackson, Calif.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please check one of the following Memberships:

ANNUAL **Individual \$25.00** **Family (2 or more) \$40.00** **Students \$15.00**

LIFETIME **Family (2 or more) \$400.00** **SPONSOR** **Benefactor (\$1,000 up)**
 Patron (\$500 to \$999)
 Associate (\$250 to \$499)
 Other _____

www.amadorcountyhistoricalsociety.org

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