

# THE WRIGHT TIMES

Newsletter of the Wrightwood Historical Society February 2016

*"Guardians of the Past"*

## "Found: A Soldier's Diary"

On February 5th author Roberta Smith presented the story of her great-great grandfather's Civil War experience to our members and guests at the monthly meeting. Corporal Frank Steinbaugh served in the United States military, 124<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Infantry Regiment, and kept a small pocket diary during 1864. Roberta discovered the diary at a relative's home, researched its references to significant battles including the Siege of Vicksburg, and wrote "A Year in the Life of a Civil War Soldier: the 1864 Diary of Frank Steinbaugh" (cont. on page 3)

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Frank Steinbaugh

## The President's Letter

### *HAPPY 2016*

Our Society enjoyed a very busy and successful 2015. We accomplished a great many projects and survived another museum flood. We are now poised to have a busy 2016, and we will work together to make it enjoyable for our Society members and for the community.

At our February Board meeting we discussed a Vision Plan - a plan for tomorrow and beyond. What displays can we change for the better, what new displays can we add, what programs can we offer to our membership at our monthly meetings, what information would our members like to see

in our newsletters, what would you the members like to see in the future for the WHS and Museum? Our Board will work on all of these issues during this year. If you have some ideas please send them along to me.

For the first time that I can remember we had to cancel a monthly meeting. Our January meeting was canceled due to weather conditions including a lot of snow and slippery streets. We were concerned for our program speakers' and members' safety.

Looking toward our program on Friday April 1st, again we will have "History in a Suitcase."

The fifth grade class of the  
(cont. on page 2)



John Lenau

## The President's Letter...

Wrightwood Elementary School will bring their family histories and memorabilia to show to our members and parents. This program will take place in the school auditorium, probably at 1:30 pm instead of our normal 1:00 pm. Bring a friend. February 25-27 is our next Conference of California Historical Societies (CCHS) symposium, being held in San Juan Capistrano. If you have never attended a CCHS symposium, go online to see

firsthand what this organization does for history-minded individuals of California. Go to [www.californiahistorian.com](http://www.californiahistorian.com) (events-Spring Conference) to review the outstanding schedule of events. These conferences are always a great way to learn new discoveries and new perspectives about California history. See you at the next meeting or at the museum.

John

## Fun with Fundraising 2016

Many items in the Museum are available for sale on a continuing basis, including:

COMMEMORATIVE BRICKS  
Three more purchased in January - there's still a lot of room in the display

T-SHIRTS, short sleeved, long sleeved for kids and adults.

POSTCARDS

BOOKS and PAMPHLETS about Wrightwood, Big Pines, Lake Arrowhead, Big Bear Lake

DVD RECORDINGS of monthly meeting presentations

Watch for new fundraising activities this spring, including

A ROCKING CHAIR RAFFLE and WREATHS

We welcome your suggestions.

## In Memoriam

Marcia Myers Life Member  
Fred Moulton

Our sincerest condolences to your families

## LOOKING BACK: THE ANGELES CREST HIGHWAY

The highway winding 55 miles from Big Pines Recreation Area to La Canada and Glendale is an amazing feat of engineering. Dedication ceremonies were held in November 1956. The way through the mountains was first surveyed in 1913 by an engineer and a lawyer from Pasadena, who hiked and camped, taking notes and measurements, reporting that a passage for cars was feasible to build. Interruptions in the schedule included two World Wars and struggles to raise funding. Much of the hard and dangerous work of blasting rock and leveling a 30 ft wide roadway was done by prison labor working at "honor camps." These were men who were usually within two years of parole. They got to leave Alcatraz, San Quentin and Folsom, and stayed in camps without locked doors or armed guards. There was enough dynamite on site to rip open the walls of any prison, but the Highway Department Engineer in charge was not apprehensive. "We're too busy building a highway to worry about such things." The prisoners did not try to escape, and many returned to society with job skills and hope of rehabilitation.

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decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

## "A Soldier's Diary"... cont. from p. 1

Roberta, who lives in Apple Valley, is a novelist specializing in paranormal mystery stories as well as a couple of children's plays. "I like ghosts," she said - she grew up watching "Twilight Zone" and "Alfred Hitchcock Presents." Taking her great-great grandfather's Civil War diary and writing a new contribution to Civil War history became her first venture into non-fiction. Frank Steinbaugh made an entry every day, succinct and unemotional. As Roberta explained, "Had a sharp skirmish" actually meant a battle with many casualties. "Burnt the town" or "Burnt the railroad" remained mysterious comments until she put his diary alongside Chaplain R.L.Howard's "History of the 124<sup>th</sup> Illinois Regiment." Tracking the dates, maps and photographs she found of their deployment, it became possible to match Frank's diary entries with events. The book gives a view of the war from the point of view of a Union soldier, not only the commentary of generals, political leaders, and historians. Learning about the history of our ancestors becomes a way to learn about the lineage of families. Roberta concluded that she felt compelled to make sure that her great-great grandfather's story was told, once she found that diary.

Marja Anderson has put in her resignation as Treasurer of WHS. George Ashworth volunteered to finish up Marja's term. We thank you, Marja for your work during the last two years, and welcome George as our Treasurer.

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**OUR NEXT WHS MEETING is Friday March 4, 2016 at 1 P.M. in the museum. Jim Wood is presenting "An Overview of Spanish Exploration in Mexico, the Southwest, and California."**

**"HISTORY IN A SUITCASE" will be presented by the students of Wrightwood Elementary School on Friday April 1.**

**Angeles Crest Highway tunnel under construction:**

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decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

## WHS Dues Reminder

Suzanne Bauman  
Editor-in-Chief  
The Wright Times

\$ 20.00 Individual  
\$ 30.00 Family \$150.00 Lifetime  
\$500 or more Benefactor  
We appreciate your support.

Our monthly programs have been recorded on DVD and CD .  
Stop by any Saturday to review them on the computer. Most can be purchased for a \$5 donation.

## WHS Board of Directors

John Lenau, President  
Jonathan Hermann, Vice President  
Margaret Ashworth, Secretary  
George Ashworth, Treasurer  
Kathleen Flanagan, Corresp. Secretary  
Stuart Baker, Board Member at Large  
Lee Parde, Board Member at Large

Please send all questions and concerns to John Lenau at

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760-249-4650, or

Box 486, Wrightwood  
CA 92397-0486.

## Mission Statement Review:

*We're on the Web!*  
See us at:  
[wwhistory.org](http://wwhistory.org)

To Collect, Preserve, Display and Interpret the history of Wrightwood and the surrounding areas that have a direct impact on Wrightwood.

WHS is affiliated with the Conference of California Historical Societies

