

# HISTORY CENTER

## SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

### Spotlight on Edna



Edna Store

### The Rise and Fall and Rise of Edna

**In 1988, Peggy and Arnold Teague put on a program about the history of Edna. The content of their lecture is lost (so far as we know) but we thought we'd share this write-up from our May 1988 Newsletter**

Edna, a little town that is no longer on the map, is very much alive. Located near the junction of Highway 227 and Price Canyon Road, the area is now home to an ever-expanding Los Ranchos School population, a golf course and the Country Club area.

Not so long ago, in 1958, three rural schools, including the Corral de Piedra School, with thirteen students, joined together, with a new building, a new name, Los Ranchos School, and, for the first time, three classrooms for grades one through six.

Peggy Wall Teague was the last teacher at Corral de Piedra as well as the first principal at Los Ranchos. In more recent years Peggy and her husband, Arnold, have uncovered lots of colorful stories of what they like to call "the rise and fall and rise of Edna."

The Teagues will take us back to the time before "Edna," when the area was home to Indians, then grazing land for Mission San Luis Obispo, through the 1840s, when the Corral de Piedra was the home of Jose Maria Villavicencio, who had received a Mexican land grant of 31,000 acres in 1841.



Today a music box that belonged to the Villavicencio family - and that brought much enjoyment to travelers in the days when there were no motels and the Dons were known for their hospitality - continues to delight visitors to the County Historical Museum. Arnold Teague, who is something of a mechanical wizard, restored it for the museum.

*{ed note: This music box, also called a barrel piano (pictured above) can still be seen at the History Center Museum today.}*

Come to Peggy and Arnold's lively forty-five minute slide presentation and find out how Edna became a vast dairy/cheese making area under the leadership of the four Steele brothers, giving initial employment to a number of vaqueros and cheese makers from the Portuguese Azore Islands. There were eventually three saloons in the little town of Edna, as well as a grocery store housed in an adobe



The saloons would go out with Prohibition, there would be a decrease in the need for cattle as the dairy industry largely moved out of the county, and Edna would go into a decline, only to begin to rise again as an elegant back yard to the ever widening outskirts of San Luis Obispo.

*{ed note: This lecture, which took place on May 26, 1988, was accompanied by a Portuguese dinner, with caldo verde, uma salada Portuguesa, Arroz de pollo de Bragu, Batatas a Portuguesa, and Bolo de amendon a Algarvia: soup with potatoes, kale, and linguica; mixed green salad; chicken with rice; fried new potatoes; and almond cake}*

## **Where did the name come from?**

*Originally published July 25, 1956 in The Telegram-Tribune  
by Louisiana Clayton Dart*

An interested visitor at the San Luis Obispo county historical society museum last week was Mrs. Edna Laurel Calhan (nee Clark) of San Francisco, who called in quest of information on the old town of Edna.

And why was Mrs. Calhan so interested in Edna? It just so happens that it was named for her.

Mrs. Calhan claimed no special distinction because of the naming but related the story as it has been handed in her family. It seems that her father, Charles Haskell Clark, was present when the town was organized. In casting about for a name, the other men were in a quandary, whereupon Clark said, "I have a little girl at home named Edna - why not name it after her?" And so they did.

*{ed. note: Mrs Dart was the original curator and director of the County Historical Society (later renamed the History Center), serving from its foundation in 1953 until the 1970s.}*



## **Carnegie Lecture: California and World War II**

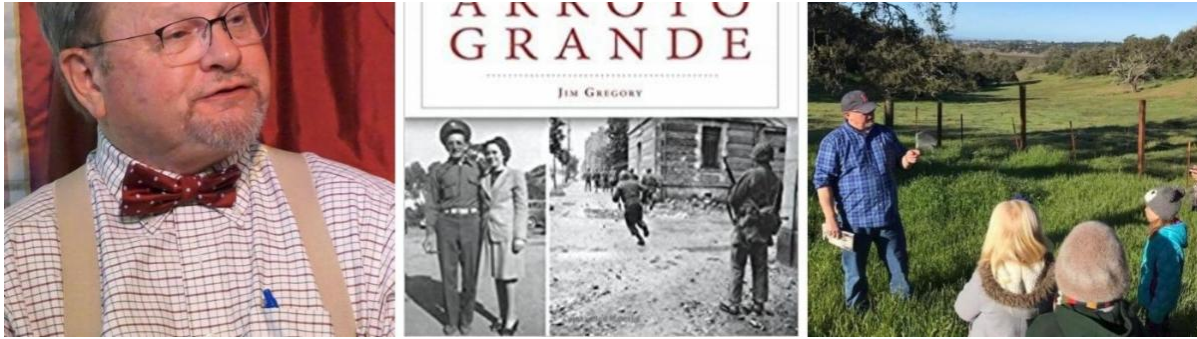
Join the History Center of SLO County for our next Carnegie Lecture! We'll hear from Sergeant Major Dan Sebby, Chief Curator in the Museum Support Unit with the California Military Department – the National Guard.

He'll highlight the role of Camp San Luis Obispo, the original home of the California National Guard, during World War II.

Friday, March 4, 2022  
5:30 pm - Online via Zoom

[Click here to learn more and to register](#)





## Arroyo Grande's Place in American History

In 1869, Arroyo Grande consisted of one school, one store and one smithy. As late as 1940, the town's population was only 1080. But every American town, including Arroyo Grande, has ties to the great themes of American history.

Author, teacher, and historian extraordinaire Jim Gregory will be teaching a six-week course through Cuesta College - planned for in-person at Arroyo Grande High School - on Thursday evenings from March 3 through April 7.

[Click here to learn more or to register.](#)



**Sun., Mar. 20th, 2-3:30 p.m. Historic Walk of Old Templeton** Guided stroll past century-old storefronts, former saloons, Victorian houses, and two churches built in the 1880s to learn stories of the early pioneers. No reservations, free. Meet at Main and 1st in downtown Templeton. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

## Ways You Can Help History

There's no limit to the ways you can help your History Center.

- Do you shop on Amazon? Use [Amazon Smile](#) to generate donations for the History Center without costing you anything extra.
- Do you have time and want to get involved? You can join a committee - from education to fundraising, you can make a difference. [Email us](#) to find out more.
- Do you own a truck? Want to use your hands? We have projects for you too! [Email us](#) to find out more.







Thomas Kessler  
Executive Director



History Center of San Luis Obispo County | 696 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

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