



# Historic Rancho Bernardo

A ROUND-UP OF STORIES AND NEWS FROM THE RB HISTORY MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

Fall 2016

## News from our Archives

Items donated to our collection since the last newsletter:

- Multiple Bernardo Gardeners Presidents' Books, photo albums and yearbooks;
- Lake Hodges Bowls Club albums, records, miscellaneous papers on lawn bowling, multiple plaques and framed items;
- Bert Ball Collection consisting of hundreds of photographs, many albums and documents from his real estate collection including advertisements, brochures, his Hall of Fame plaque and newspaper items.
- *Gateway to Alta California: the Expedition to San Diego 1769* by Harry W. Crosby;
- *Beef Stew for 2500* by Rudolph Shappee.

We also facilitated the donation of a historic collection of "Dolls for Democracy" (a B'nai B'rith project) to the Jewish Historical Society of San Diego. The dolls had belonged to an RB resident who left them with Jane Radatz when she moved. Jane then contacted us. The dolls are wooden figures of men and women dressed in historically accurate clothing, representing such persons as Helen Keller, Golda Meier, Jim Thorpe, Abraham Lincoln, and Simon Bolivar. They found a perfect home at the Jewish Historical Society.

## National Archives Month

We have a lot of special months and days (National Hot Dog Day, anyone?), but did you know that October is important in two ways for people in the history business? One is Family History Month, which RBHS celebrated with its special speakers' presentation. It's also National Archives Month. RBHS gathers in its archives letters, notes, memos, documents, photographs, albums, scrapbooks, audio and video recordings — all the items that record the history of our community, big and small. We preserve it all in a way that keeps it safe and available for future generations. We thank you, the community, for your support, both in donating items for our archive collection and for your financial support. Happy National Archives Month!

## Photographs from the Bert Ball Collection

Bert Ball, long-time realtor in RB, recently moved from RB to be closer to his family but before he left, he generously shared his large collection of RB material. Bert was a realtor in RB almost from the beginning and his collection adds greatly to the story of RB's growth and development.



*If these doors look familiar to you, maybe it's because you've seen them at the museum. They now serve as our museum's front doors. From a note written by Bert in 2014, he said "The bevel glass doors . . . were commissioned by me in 1983. [They] were used as the main door at the Info Center [corner Rancho Bernardo Rd. and Bernardo Center Drive] Rancho Bernardo Realty. My good friend Jack Sweeney . . . built the doors for me."*



*The photo on the right is undated. It's uncertain how the elephant tied in to real estate sales but it probably did draw a crowd.*



These Excellent Services  
Are Yours at the

### Rancho Bernardo Shopping Center

- Gragg's Unique Gift Shop  
*Goodies from \$1*
- RB Variety Store  
*Everything under the RB sun*
- Robinson's Pipe Shop  
*Gifts for Papa & puffies*
- RB Bakery & Delicatessen  
*Catering a specialty*
- The Chocolate Tree  
*Fine candies & ice cream*
- The Spirit Shop  
*Something for the inner you*
- Rancho Barber Shop  
*Best clip in town*
- Rancho Coiffures  
*For a more stylish you*
- Bernardo Carpet and Drapery  
*And furniture, too*
- RB Garden Center  
*The most blooming spot around*
- Safeway Supermarket
- RB Travel Service  
*Anyone for Rome?*
- RB Insurance  
*John Grey at your service*
- Jones, Hatfield & Norman  
*Attorneys*
- Winston L. Bowen, O.D.  
*Ophthalmist*
- RB Home Resales Office  
*Raise Grades at your service*
- Southern Contractors Co.
- United California Bank  
*UCB does a little more for you*

## RB's First Shopping Center

In 1963, it was the only place to shop. Starting with the Spirit Shop in October, then followed by a Safeway in December, the center rapidly filled out with nine shops by February 1964 and a United California Bank in March of 1964. The Spirit Shop even sold RB branded liquor. The photo to the left shows how the center looked at that time and the list of stores is from the Bernardo Brandings dated September 1966. The center was called Pomerado Village Shopping Center, Rancho Bernardo Village Shopping Center or as you see on the left, just Rancho Bernardo Shopping Center.

We still shop there today but it's undergone many changes. Where is the shopping center located? At the corner of Rancho Bernardo and Pomerado Roads.

## Men's Voices Brought Music to RB

"The Rejects?" Yes, that was the name of a long-running musical group in Rancho Bernardo. A group of men who liked to sing got together to form a group. "What should we call ourselves?" "How about the rejects," joked one man — and the name stuck. They began performing in the mid-1960s and continued for many years under the direction of Dr. Merle Francis, growing to 55-60 members with accompanying musicians. They appeared not just in RB but throughout the county. We have many photographs of this group at the museum.

The Troubadours were a popular barbershop group. Thanks to the late Ralph Parris, an RBHS member, who was a part of the group, we have a number of photographs in addition to programs, music books and information about barbershop singing.

There was a Ladies Choral Group in RB but we have no information about them. If you were part of that group, we'd love to hear from you.



Above, the Rejects in 1975 with director Merle Francis in the white jacket. To the right are the Troubadours, performing in competition in 1982.



Division Prelims—SoCal East  
Ontario, California  
May 22, 1982

"Historic Rancho Bernardo" is produced by Peggy Rossi for the Rancho Bernardo Historical Society.