



**PRESERVING OLD LA VERNE'S
ENVIRONMENT:
MAKING HISTORY FOR THE FUTURE**

LA VERNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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**Who Was Inman Conety and What Was He Doing
with that Truck?**



**Inman Conety driving his 1938 International on the I-10
freeway, hauling products for Swift Chemical Company**

Wesley Inman Conety, President Emeritus of the LVHS and long-time resident of La Verne, owned the 1938 International truck that is represented in the new LVHS logo. Mr. Conety was an active participant in many La Verne activities and was named a Citizen of the Year in 1985. Born in 1898 in Glen Summit Springs, Pennsylvania, Mr. Conety died at age 93 in 1992 and is buried in Pomona Valley Memorial Park. Here is brief profile of a true "La Verne Original."

Mr. Conety began his driving career as a 14-year-old, guiding his horse "Dick" who pulled a spring wagon filled with Conety's siblings and neighbor children to school. He worked around the train station in Glen Summit Springs where his father was the station agent. He attended Harry Hillman Academy in Wilkes-Barre and Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and was later employed in Bethlehem Steel's machine shop.

Lured by the warm California weather, Conety traveled by train to La Verne and accepted a job spraying orange groves.

In La Verne, he met schoolteacher Ruby Louise Sheldon at the Methodist Church and a courtship began. They were engaged in 1925 and married in 1926, settling in Mountain Top Pennsylvania, where he worked delivering ice and coal in a horse-drawn wagon until a truck was purchased in 1920.

In 1937, Mr. Conety was offered a job managing an orange grove in La Verne, much to Ruby's pleasure as she had never acclimated to cold weather. He purchased a new 1938 International D-35 truck, packed up his household goods (including a 1934 Buick sedan), and the couple headed for a permanent home in California. His plan was to sell the truck once he arrived, but there were no buyers.

Conety worked for 38 years for the Swift Chemical Company in Vernon as a contract hauler of fertilizer. His territory took him from East Los Angeles to Hemet delivering "Vigoro" fertilizer and other agricultural supplies in his International. He said of his truck, "She's a little temperamental, but we understand each other."

Conety always made time for community service activities. He was a member of the La Verne Beautiful and Bicentennial Committee, a member of the Methodist Church choir and Toastmasters, and received a 50-year pin from the Masonic Order.



Conety's contribution to the LVHS came from 12 years as its President and continued support in the form of recycling. After collecting paper, glass, and aluminum, he hauled his loads to a recycling center in Baldwin Park.



Members of the "move crew" check out the International at La Verne Heritage. The LVHS plans to bring the International back to Heritage Park for periodic visits, especially when school children come as part of "Hands On History." The International will be used as a parade vehicle and become part of the landscape at community events such as the city beer/wine walks and concerts in the park.

Over 400 tons of newspapers were recycled in this manner. Driving the freeways at the top speed of 45 mph, Conety once received a traffic ticket for driving too slowly. Proceeds from his recycling efforts went to the Historical Society and were used to fund its projects, including bronze markers and fees for speaker programs.

Where is the 1938 International Today?

The 1938 International had almost a million miles logged when it was retired from active service. Long a fixture at La Verne Heritage, the International was recently moved to the home of La Verne residents John and Sherry Best to undergo extensive renovation. It will retain its original look while receiving a mechanical restoration (new engine, tires, brakes, drive train, bed, and interior refurbishing) to make it street worthy.



The International takes a ride on a Sanders Towing flatbed truck (top), and arrives at its temporary home, the driveway of John and Sherry Best (bottom).



Upon arrival at its temporary home, the International was evaluated and cleaned during a "beautification" event. The wooden bed was not salvageable. After it was removed, the International received a much-needed power wash, courtesy of Crew Chief Erik Chaputa. Next, the remainder of the

wood and metal cab protector was removed from behind by Adam Moro using a sawzall.



Of course, life happens to all plans. The rainy season descended on La Verne in March, followed by shelter-in-place orders brought about by the novel coronavirus. Protected by a tarp, the International remains in the driveway at 3949 Bradford Street, waiting the next step in its transformation.

All this beautification comes at a cost. A GoFundMe account was opened for donations to support restoration work, and t-shirts are available for \$20. Please call Sherry Best at 909/5964679 or email her at sbest@lavernehistoricalsociety.org for details.

Many thanks for these folks for their contributions:

Alan Wadham, Marv Weston, Ed & Susan Hume, Betty & Brian Tracy, Merrill Helms, Peter Kopriva, Art & Jeanette Rey, John Best, Linda Patrick, Clark Palmer, Donna Dye, Don & Gaynel Kendrick, Chris Gendreau, Marga Loncar, Mary Duggan, Robin & Robert Carder, Cindy Sorbel, Barbara Smythe, Ralphie Giles, Mark Bianco, Bonnie Moro, Tim & Carol Hite, Greg Ryman, Park & Janna Southworth

President's Message:

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.

These opening lines from T. S. Elliot's famous poem "*The Waste Land*" seem especially meaningful as the world is gripped by an invisible, insidious, and deadly virus. Maybe it represents the glimmer of hope for emergence from the frozen grip of inactivity in the not-too-distant future. Lilacs may be coming from a dead land and spring rain may stir our memory and desires.

However, the last three lines tell a different story in which we were lulled by "forgetful snow." When we emerge from our winter warmth to meet the reality of spring awakening, it will be to face a completely new reality. Forgetful snow may have been our old habits of social interaction and belief that we were invincible. These habits covered us like a warm blanket. Now we are told that face masks might become as ubiquitous to our sense of wellbeing as wearing seat belts, that the handshake will disappear as a social greeting, that dining out will mean ordering from disposable menus and sitting widely spaced apart from other tables.

Spring may not be the safe, soft, and predictable end to winter. We must work to face the challenge of "the cruellest month." The very nature of new beginnings is uncertainty that demands adaptation and flexibility as we leave the winter warmth of our past.

History recalls events that are noble and embody positive attributes like justice and character. History is also played out in cruel and uncomfortable forms. Humanity will need to rise to the occasion, as it has done in the past, when flexibility and cooperation are of the utmost necessity.

Stay safe and stay well. The LVHS is waiting for you and we are planning for future adventures.

"Social distancing will be with us through the summer."
-Dr. Bix



Sherry Best,
LVHS President

Images of America, La Verne

Bill Lemon and Sherry Best sent their book, "*Images of America: La Verne*" to Arcadia Publishing earlier this week, and expect a fall publication date. To all who pre-ordered books, take heart! Your book will be along soon. If you'd like to order a copy (or two), the cost is \$20. Contact Sherry Best at 909/596-4679 or sbest@lavernehistoricalsociety.org for details.

A Step Back in Time: Lordsburg in 1887

Bill Lemon came across a delightful article in the *Los Angeles Times* about the birth of Lordsburg. Meant to entice readers and promote land sales, the article is a masterwork of hyperbole and deserves a reprinting here. Do you recognize La Verne in the following paragraphs?

Much has already been said about the town of Lordsburg, which is to be established on the line of the San Bernardino and Los Angeles Railroad, three miles northwest of Pomona. There has been a deal of speculation about the place, but no speculation in it, because the subdividers have not yet sold a foot of the land. In the development of the project it was determined that the property was not to be placed upon the market until the railroad should be in operation of it, and then a grand excursion would

be arranged, culminating in an auction sale. I. W. Lord, the projector and godfather of the town, has thus far held to the agreement, resisting all the blandishments of would-be buyers and the soft seductiveness of their coin.

A reporter of *The Times* yesterday took an early run by the California Southern out to Pomona, and thence accompanied Mr. Lord in a buggy over the new townsite and its surroundings. Its present aspect is that of a field of grain, standing sturdy and bright, with here and there little white flags waving the signals of future street corners. A year hence the area will doubtless be bearing as full a crop of houses, and the song of the reaper (or mowing machine) will be heard then no more forever.

The townsite of Lordsburg is about a mile square, comprising something over 600 acres, and it lies, as stated, about three miles from Pomona, west of north. It forms a part of a large plateau, rising gently toward the mountains, from which it is distant only a few miles. The mountain view is especially charming, with snow-capped Old Baldy peeping over the intervening chain, like a hoary-headed grandfather playing hide-and-go-seek with his grandchildren, and the other white-haired old gentlemen of the Cucamonga range looking on and enjoying the sport.

There's more, but don't these words entice you and make you a proud La Verne resident? Check the LVHS website for the full article.

We Are Thankful

These folks joined since the January newsletter was published. Thank you for supporting the LVHS!



NEW LVHS Members

Barbara Chamberlin
Valerie Mayer