

Legacy Links



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

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Every Picture Tells a Story



Enjoy another installment of the memoirs of Walter Gates, furnished by his grandson Alan Jackson. Today, you'll experience a lesson in tolerance.

According to Mr. Jackson, Walter Gates is third from the left in the back row in the photo above of children at La Verne Heights School. Walter's brother Ralph is peeking out from behind Walter's left shoulder.

Interlude

The year 1887 was a good one for my parents. Pa's nursery business commenced to grow by leaps and bounds. Settlers were coming from the East in great

numbers and building homes in the Pomona Valley. Artesian and, later, drilled wells were furnishing water for the development of these small ranches and homes that were springing up. People from the rapidly growing community of Pomona gave Pa large orders for the many ornamental bushes and trees that he raised in his nursery. The many varieties of rose bushes that Pa propagated were eagerly sought after by these arrivals who were landscaping their new, plain but well-built homes.

Each year Pa also propagated many thousands of vegetable plants that he sold to the Chinese gardeners and to neighboring ranchers. The ranchers used these starter plants to grow their own vegetables. The Chinese gardeners, down in the valley, near Pomona or Chino, the little village that lay south and east of Pomona, furnished vegetables for the community.

Pa spent his daytime hours caring for the plants that he propagated in the hothouse. My parents called this structure the greenhouse. This hothouse or greenhouse, which cost Pa quite a sum to build, was a long, rather narrow building with roof and sides of glass. In the west end of this building was a steam

boiler fueled by coal. From this boiler water pipes went out and circled around the glass covered building. On each side of this narrow structure, several feet from the floor, was a continuous row of wooden benches. The water pipes ran just underneath these benches.

A narrow concrete aisle or passageway in the greenhouse allowed Pa to move about and care for the hundreds of flats – square, earth-filled wooden boxes – that were planted with seeds or small seedlings which had been planted previously in the soil-filled propagation boxes. The soil in these flats consisted of rich garden soil, sharp sand and well-decomposed cow or horse manure. And for certain types of plants other mixtures, such as bone meal, ashes, and other ingredients, were used. There were also many wooden boxes that were filled with fine sand in which were planted thousands of cuttings. These were slips or roots from other plants that would grow and mature under favorable conditions.

During the late fall and in the winter, the steam furnace in the greenhouse was kept fired during many of the chilly nights, thereby circulating the heated water through the water pipes under the hundreds of boxes of plants or planted seeds. This warmed everything and prevented the delicate, tender little plants from freezing overnight.

Pa also had what he called a lath house, located just south of the greenhouse. The lath house was a low, open-air building, two to three thousand square feet in size, covered by wooden lath spaced about 2½ inches apart. This design kept the hot rays of the sun from destroying the delicate, young plants that he propagated in his greenhouse and later transferred to this lath house. After the small plants that had been raised in the greenhouse were strong and large enough, they were transferred to the large lath house where they could grow and harden for the customer.

Pa quickly earned the reputation of raising the finest, hardiest, and cleanest plants, flowers, rose bushes and

trees. Ranchers and others came each day to purchase products from his nursery. Pa subscribed to and read many plant magazines, seed catalogs, scientific literature, and all available books on horticulture that he was able to get. His goal was to learn all he could about the work that he loved, thereby producing the best for his customers.

Pa did little newspaper advertising and simply relied on satisfied customers to spread the word about his fine nursery. He never worried about his competitors in Pomona and elsewhere, whose products did sell, but not as well as those sold by the Solomon Gates Nursery.

Meanwhile, Ma's prayers for a baby continued to go unanswered. Repeated visits to Dr. Henderson in Pomona availed her nothing. He advised her about her diet, and not to work too hard, and that nature, in its own way, would in time fulfill her wishes.

Ma made friends with some of the newcomers in the community. Frequently she would call on the couples who had been her Christmas guests the year before. They were always glad to see her and talked about her wonderful dinner and the romances that blossomed from that Christmas Day party. Ma never told any of them the reason she had brought them together that day because she did not want to jinx their romances.

Sing Lee, Pa's loyal and faithful Chinese employee, was certainly a wonderful helper. He not only assisted Ma around the house when she was not feeling well, but he also helped Pa in the nursery. He, like Pa, loved the soil and its products.

Sing grew up on a small farm in China where his father tilled the soil that produced the food for his family. He often good-naturedly scolded Pa for throwing away soil that had been used in the greenhouse. Sing said that in China nothing was wasted, not even the night soil, feces that was collected at night from the cesspools or other places of deposit. When Sing started

talking about what seemed to be his favorite subject, waste, Ma would quickly move out of hearing distance. Ma, who agreed with Sing about the sin of waste, did not always enjoy his descriptions of the conservation methods of his family or their honorable ancestors.

Sing lived in a small house on our ranch. That house where Sing slept and did all his own cooking was always clean and immaculate. Sing, a great follower of Confucius, often quoted passages from that great Chinese philosopher to bolster the arguments that he had with my parents.

To refute Sing's beliefs, if she disagreed with him, Ma would quote passages of Scripture. These she would try to explain to Sing who always respectfully listened to her. Then he would reply, "Missy Gates, Confucius say...." Then would follow one or more platitudes that he would accredit to the sage old Chinese philosopher.

Ma told me that she greatly enjoyed one of Sing's quotations by Confucius. One evening, after his return from Los Angeles where he had helped his cousins and friends celebrate the Chinese New Year, he had walked up from Lordsburg, where he had been left by one of the valley Chinese gardeners who had driven his horse and buggy from Los Angeles.

They must have made an early start from Chinatown in Los Angeles as it was a few minutes after 5:00 in the afternoon. Sing came to the back door of the Gates home, gave a short, quick rap on the door, and was soon greeted by Ma who asked him in. He did not answer but handed Ma a large woven sack that she later found was filled with Chinese delicacies.

Sing made a low bow as he handed Ma the sack. After she had thanked him, Sing turned to the west and the beautiful setting sun, and, with another low bow, exclaimed, "Very beautiful sun go down!"

"A beautiful picture, Sing!" Ma replied, as the red sun dropped deeper into the horizon.

"A picture is a poem without words! Missy Gates, so say great man, Confucius," Sing Lee corrected, bowed and returned to the little house where he lived.

That evening, after Ma had related to Pa Sing's conversation, she pointed out, "If Sing only knew half as much about the Bible as he does about Confucius, he would sure be a great Christian."

"Sing may not be a great Bible student, but he's honest and more dependable than some of those people who do a lot of pretending and say a lot of prayers out loud and the next day cheat their neighbors and foreclose mortgagees on widows' homes," Pa retorted, as he picked up a booklet on pansy propagation.

"Don't forget, Maggie, that a person's religion isn't much good unless he lives by and practices it. To you, Sing is nothing more than a heathen, but he has ancestors who were inventing various devices and propagating plants and trees, while our ancestors were living on weeds, nuts, and wild game, when they weren't clubbing each other to death." Pa looked kindly at Ma who must have been a little surprised by his burst of eloquence on behalf of his trusted employee.

"Sing Lee, although not a believer in the Christian religion, has a belief, a creed, or a set of principles, all basically good from your moral viewpoint, that seems to serve him quite well in this country of ours that is strange, new and foreign to him. In our free nation, Maggie, our Constitution guarantees that all people, even if they don't conform to our particular beliefs, have a right to believe and practice their own creeds and beliefs unmolested by those who disagree with him."

This side of Pa's character was at that moment exposed to Ma for the first time. Despite her disagreement with him, she, nevertheless, started to think more about other people's ideas and beliefs many of which were contrary to her own fundamental,

Calvinist views that were deeply implanted into her spiritual and mental makeup.

"I forgot to say, Maggie," Pa went on, "that Sing came over to the greenhouse where I was watering some plants. He said that he was quite worried and, while down in Los Angeles on this last trip, had consulted a famous Chinese herb doctor. This Chinese physician, he explained, not only ministers to people's physical needs, but also possesses an ancient knowledge that enables him to work miracles for people in fields that medicine cannot reach."

"What's the matter with Sing?" Ma asked.

"Sing is alright. He's greatly worried and distressed about us, you and me. He's sure there's something wrong with us and wants us to accompany him to Los Angeles on his next trip there and consult this famous Chinese doctor."

"There's nothing wrong with either of us, so far as I can see," Ma sighed, as she got up and put the cat out.

"I have a big day's work planned for tomorrow," Pa suddenly said. "We had better go to bed. I don't want to worry you about poor Sing's concern for us. I'll tell you all about it in the morning when we eat our breakfast," he promised as they prepared to retire for the night.

Pa, no doubt tired from his day's toil, was soon asleep. Ma, a little upset about Sing's concern for them, about which she would learn more in the morning, almost forgot to say her customary silent prayer before sleep overpowered her.

Her nightly prayer, "Dear Lord, send us a child, a boy preferably, but a girl, if it is Thy will. Amen," had not yet been answered. "Why?" she asked herself, as she listened to the sounds of pattering rain on their bedroom roof that soon lulled her to sleep.

Walter Gates: A Judge for Social Justice

Walter Gates, whose family was featured in the previous article, was a successful judge in the Los Angeles County Superior Court in Pomona. Gates was a champion in the arena of social justice. On February 20, 1931, the *California Eagle* published an article on Gates' ruling that declared invalid a policy by the City Playground Commission of the city of Los Angeles that limited participation of Black children at public swimming pools by restricting their hours of attendance and even the pools they could frequent.

The case was fought for two years. Mrs. Ethel Prioleau filed to overturn the Commission's policy when her children were forbidden use of the Exposition pool in Los Angeles. The suit finally reached the Superior Court in 1931.

Walter Gates added to his civil rights stature when he found a "loophole" in a 1930 California anti-miscegenation law that forbid a Filipino man from marrying a white woman. The California Supreme Court declined to review the appeal of Gates' ruling and in 1933, the state legislature voted to amend Civil Code Section 60 to ensure that the law against interracial marriage also covered "members of the Malay race." In 1967 the United State Supreme Court ruled that race-based restrictions on marriage violated the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution, and all states were required to strike down their laws supporting race-based marriage restrictions.

Judge Walter Gates retired on January 20, 1955, after 30 distinguished years serving the Superior Court of California. Gates was admitted to the bar in 1911 and elected six times to his judge's position. He was the first judge to try criminal cases in Pomona.

Judge Walter Gates did not believe that people should be negatively identified by race. Read more about his decision on the following link:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roldan_v._Los_Angeles_County

LVHS Joins the National Night Out

On Tuesday, August 3, the LVHS participated in La Verne's National Night Out. It was a treat to connect in person with community members. Our organization netted over \$100 in t-shirt, book, and jelly sales toward restoration of the 1938 International truck. Best of all, it was re-assuring to see people enjoying themselves after a long stretch of social isolation. Unfortunately, the coronavirus is not done with us, so be careful and stay safe. Soon enough we'll be back in business.



The LVHS unfurls its new table banner on the August 3 National Night Out in Las Flores park

President's Message

Summer is upon us and with it come memories of the Fourth of July parade and plans for our first face-to-face event in more than a year. The last page of this edition of Legacy Links is dedicated to parade participants, past and present. Coming up next is the **2021 Old Timer's Potluck Picnic, which will be held in the Evelyn Hollinger Memorial Redwood Grove on Saturday, August 28th at 5pm.** Sherry and John Best will furnish tables, folding chairs, utensils, cups, bottled water, and paper goods. Bring your favorite picnic dish, your appetite, and a story to share as we get re-acquainted with our neighbors. Park in the Las Flores Park lot or on an adjacent street and look for the grove located behind the aquatic center. Las Flores Park is located at 3175 Bolling Avenue. Click the link below for directions:

[Driving directions to Las Flores Park, 3175 Bolling Ave, La Verne - Waze](#)

LVHS board members have been busy planning a more active calendar for 2021-2022. Following Los Angeles County guidelines, we hope for an in-person member/community meeting on Monday, October 11th. At the meeting, we'll showcase highlights of "The Story of La Verne", a collaboration among members of the Hillcrest community, BUSD staff, and the LVHS. All third graders in the BUSD can learn about La Verne's history through the stories told by culture-bearers and a narration accompanied by images of our city, past and present. This meeting may turn "virtual" so watch your email for a flyer and be ready for a change of plans if necessary.

The LVHS By-Laws require a vote for officers at the fall membership meeting. Positions for President, Vice-President, and Curator of Collections are all open. In 2020, it was decided to keep these positions in place with the current officers. Sherry Best is willing to stay on as President and Bill Lemon is willing to stay on as Vice President. Ben Jenkins has stepped down from the LVHS board, so we are looking for a Curator of Collections. In 2020, Clark Palmer stepped down as our Treasurer and Marv Weston agreed to take his position. Marv is willing to continue to serve as our Treasurer. Although we are all willing to continue to serve, LVHS officer positions are certainly not "life appointments." If you are interested in putting your name in nomination for President, Vice President, Curator of Collections, or Treasurer, please send an email or letter of intent to Sherry Best at sbest@lavernehistoricalociety.org naming the position that interests you and a brief statement of your qualifications. Only LVHS members are eligible to run for office. The officer descriptions are as follows:

The President shall:

- Be the general manager and chief executive officer of the Society and has general supervision, direction, and control of the affairs of the Society;
- Preside at the meetings of the Society and the Board;

- Have general powers and duties of management usually vested in the office of president and general manager and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board.

The Vice President shall:

- Perform the functions of the President in the absence or incapacity of the President and otherwise has such powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board.

The Secretary shall:

- Be responsible for keeping minutes of Society and Board meetings, distributing notice of such meetings thereof as are appropriate;
- Be responsible for sending correspondence on behalf of the Society;
- Perform such other duties as prescribed by the Board.

The Treasurer shall:

- Keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct books and records of accounts of the properties and business transactions of the Society;
- Cause all monies to be deposited in the name and to the credit of the Society with such depositories as may be designated by the Board;
- Render to the President and to the Board upon request an account of transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the Society;
- Prepare and file, or cause to be prepared and filed, any and all tax returns and other reports required on behalf of the Society;
- Provide a yearly financial report to the Society at the annual meeting;
- Maintain a general fund and other funds using Fund Basis Accounting;
- Perform or cause to be performed such other duties as prescribed by the Board

The /Curator of Collections shall:

- Safely keep all the public records, historical documents, paintings, pictures, photographs, maps and other archives and personal property of the Society;
- Take charge of any displays put on by the Society;
- Provide opportunities for inspection or examination of all collections mentioned by the members under such rules as the Board shall prescribe.

The LVHS also has space for service on its Education/Program, Local and Oral History/Archives, Membership, Nominating, and Promotion/Publicity Committees. We need folks to research and write articles, serve as tour docents, help with restoring our International truck, and help out at events. There is always room for your talents!

Sherry Best, LVHS President

A Treasured Portrait is Gifted to the LVHS

In 1864, the daughter of Joseph Beydler and Elizabeth Gochenour Beydler married 19-year-old John Fredrick Neher at the age of 18. Marguerite Beydler Neher bore 10 children and died at age 41 in 1887 in Barber County, Kansas. Two of her sons, Bartimeus “Bartie” Ashley Neher and William Henry Neher, were profiled in the 2019 LVHS-sponsored tour of La Verne Cemetery.

Martha Hughes Behrens, daughter of Forrest and Bernice Neher Findley, donated a beautiful portrait of Marguerite Beydler Neher to the LVHS in May, 2021. The portrait arrived from Issaquah, Washington, and is being carefully stored until it can be displayed and enjoyed as a part of La Verne’s history. Thank you, Martha, for thinking of the LVHS and making the effort to preserve this bit of history.

Fourteen souls who share the Neher name lie in La Verne Cemetery. The complete history of the Neher

family is being sent to the LVHS and will be a welcome addition to our archives. Look for family history in future editions of *Legacy Links*.



John Fredrick Neher, age 19 when he married Marguerite Beydler. They had 10 children together until her death in 1887.

Marguerite Beydler Neher, first wife of John Fredrick Neher. She was 18 at the time of this 1864 portrait.



Mary See

Happy Birthday See's Candies

Most of us recognize the iconic image of Mary See, who created the See's Candies company with her son Charles in 1921. Born in Canada in 1854, Mary and her husband Alexander See ran a hotel until his death in 1919. Lured by California's

warm weather, Mary moved with Charles and his wife to Pasadena, and opened their first candy shop in Los Angeles in 1921. The black-and-white checkerboard theme featured in See's stores was inspired by the Pasadena kitchen where Mary perfected her recipes.

Business grew steadily with marketing innovations such as door-to-door delivery, volume discount pricing, and an exhibit in the 1939 San Francisco World's Fair. See's Candies became part of the

Berkshire Hathaway family in January 1972, when Warren Buffett and Charlie Munger purchased the company from Mary See's grandson. See's has won awards for best customer service, best places to work, and greatest list of brands.

The following are a few See's Candies "fun facts":

- 8,000 people attended the grand opening of See's 15,000 square foot candy kitchen in San Francisco in 1940.
- Mary See's original candies still made today include Peanut Brittle, Chocolate Walnut Fudge, Victoria Toffee, hand-dipped Bon Bons, and Maple Walnut Creams.
- On July 18th, Guinness World Records declared See's chocolate lollypop the World's Largest. The giant confection, weighing over 7,000 pounds, was equal to 145,000 normal See's lollypops!
- Lucille Ball (Lucy) and Vivian Vance (Ethel) visited the See's candy kitchen on La Cienega Boulevard to learn all about dipping and packing chocolates to make their famous assembly line episode.

Why is the LVHS profiling See's? 2021 is the year that See's Candies celebrates its 100th birthday! If you have a relative or friend who will celebrate a 100th birthday this year, visit your nearest See's store or send a note to See's Customer Service, 20600 S. Alameda Street, Carson, CA, 90810. The birthday celebrant will receive a four-pound gold-box gift assortment, enough to share at a birthday party. Spread the sweetness!

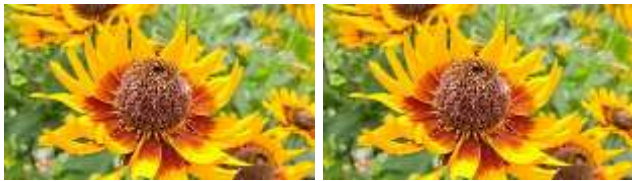
Garden Glory In La Verne



Karla and Bill Stahlman graciously hosted a visit by La Verne TV for a video tour of their garden on Fifth Street in La Verne. They live in the 1912 Calkins-Perrin Home, which was the focus of a in-person tour in 2018.

Karla, a professional hardscape and garden designer, talked about the genesis and evolution of their garden. From the more formal front area, planted with natural grasses and drought-tolerant trees and shrubs, to the multi-level garden “rooms” or spaces in back, the garden bursts with color and texture. Plants and hardscaping perfectly compliment the house’s bungalow design. Visit the Stahlman garden on a virtual tour by clicking on:

<https://youtu.be/YCeCZY2vbdc>



Re-Purposing Preserves History

In 2021, the property that housed the church, social hall, and pastor’s residence buildings of the Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren was sold to make way for family homes.



Because the buildings were not deemed to be historical, they were scheduled for demolition after removal of salvage coordinated by the Historical Society of Pomona Valley. Windows, doors, and other artifacts will find new life in the homes of persons

dedicated to restoration and re-purposing. In La Verne, salvaged cabinets from the parsonage are being restored for use in the kitchen of a historical



home on Bonita Avenue. The cabinets, constructed of old growth Douglas fir, will be stripped, stained, and re-painted inside to showcase the homeowners’ dishes and other kitchenware. Cabinetry that is more than 70 years old will be saved from the

dump and become a treasured part of a vintage home.

There is no reason to be concerned about the fate of the Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren. After careful searching, a connection was made with St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Pomona. Members of the congregations now share space and have planned to collaborate on several service-oriented projects to benefit people living in Pomona. This dynamic exemplifies the spirit of collaboration among all its participants.



The last page of this edition of *Legacy Links* captures images of La Verne Fourth of July parades in 1974, 1987, 2013, 2017, and 2021. A longer article about parades in La Verne is planned for the October issue of *Legacy Links*.