



La Verne Historical Society
S.O.L.V.E.
Save Old La Verne's Environment



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March 14 Meeting:

The Purpose and Value of Appraising Family Treasures

The La Verne Historical Society will conduct its spring member meeting at 7:00pm on March 14, 2016 at the Citrus Meeting Room at Hillcrest, located at 2705 Mountain View Drive in La Verne. Members and non-members are invited to attend. A highlight of the meeting will be a presentation by Zoe TeBeau, a member of the International Society of Appraisers. Ms. TeBeau will make a brief presentation entitled "The Purpose and Value of Appraising Family Treasures", in which she'll explain the appraisal process, discuss the importance of maintaining an archive of personal possessions, and bring examples of items that will surprise us with their value. In the 2016-2017 calendar year, Ms. TeBeau will be back to conduct a "Roadshow" in which La Verne Historical Society members can bring their own family treasures for appraisal.

At the March membership meeting, please be prepared to sign up to help at the home tour. We need docents, help to check people in, or help with set up or clean up at the end. Volunteers are also needed to bring refreshments and raffle items.

Richard S. and Mabel Brydon Ranch House Slated for Historical Society Tour

The large home of one of La Verne's early citrus ranch families will be open to the public for the first time on Saturday, April 9, 11 am to 4 pm.

From Foothill, drive north on Wheeler Avenue: turn right on Golden Hills Road, continue to Brydon Road and turn left. The home is on the left, at 7475 Brydon.

The history of the Brydon Ranch House begins in July, 1878, with the birth of Richard Slater Brydon in Galt, Waterloo County, in Ontario Province, Canada.

At the age of 21 he migrated west and in December of 1899 entered the US at Seattle, Washington. From here he headed south to the sunnier climes of southern California.

Here he met and wooed Mabel Grace Paddison, who was born in Norwalk, Los Angeles Co., in 1882. The



*Mabel Paddisonas she appeared before her wedding to
Richard Brydon in 1904*

couple wed in Whittier on Nov 23, 1904. Richard was 26, Mabel, 22. Mabel wore a lavish white wedding dress. Around 1902 Brydon and his brothers, Robert and Andrew began a business manufacturing saddles, harness and related products at 239 South Main Street in Los Angeles. Los Angeles papers carried advertisements for Brydon Brothers Harness and Saddlery Company. Branches opened in Santa Ana and Pomona.

Richard and Mabel's first child, Robert John Brydon, was born Nov. 17, 1905. Then came Janet Annie Brydon on Feb. 23, 1908, and Edith Leona Brydon on Feb. 6, 1911. A fourth and last child, Mabel Christina Brydon, was born Sept. 9, 1921.

The 1910 US Census shows the Brydon family living at 5922 Echo Street in Los Angeles: Brydon's occupation was given as a "retail harness merchant."

Brydon, a Canadian, on Jan. 20, 1909 officially declared his intention to become an American citizen. In November, 1911, when he petitioned for naturalization, he gave his address as Ramona Acres, Los Angeles. He became a naturalized citizen in February, 1912.

The United States entered the “Great War” in Europe in 1917 and Brydon, as required by law, registered for the draft on Sept. 12, 1918. He was never called up, as the war was ending. He was also practically blind in his right eye.

By this time Brydon had secured a tract of land far north of Base Line, the address given as RFD 1, Box 87, La Verne. This was not the town we know today, but an unincorporated area known as La Verne which stretched from north of Bonita Union High School - now Damien - into the foothills and to the east.

Lordsburg became La Verne in 1917: the area of the Brydon home was still unincorporated until later when it became part of today’s La Verne.

The Los Angeles County Assessor’s office, dates the Brydon home as built in 1924. A block-like monolithic mansion, it features porches and eaves on each side. Photographs show flat tanks which held water to be heated by the sun above one porch roof.

The Brydons did well raising citrus, both navel oranges and Valencias, and lemons. Richard was a member of the Bonita Union High School Board of Trustees from 1924 to 1929, and in 1929 served as President. He was one of the directors of the First National Bank for some years.

Son Robert Brydon married Alberta Lucile Lawrence at Pasadena, California on April 26, 1926. His sisters Janet and Edith attended Bonita Union High School and graduated in 1927 and 1929 respectively.

The April, 1930 census shows the home on Wheeler, which ran north, then turned east.

Daughter Janet, aged 22, married Manly Harold Reitz at the Voorhis School for Boys, San Dimas in August, 1931.

Edith wed Frank Maurice Shirk at the Brydon home on Jan. 7, 1933.

Maurice - he was known by his second name - and Edith’s wedding in 1933 was performed by Edgar Rothrock, former minister of the La Verne Church of the Brethren.

The Society page of the weekly *La Verne Leader* noted on Jan. 12 that “Quiet Home Wedding Unites Edith Brydon to Maurice Shirk”

“A quiet home wedding took place Saturday evening at 8 o’clock at the home of Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Brydon in La Verne Heights when their daughter, Edith L. Brydon, became the bride of F. Maurice Shirk, son of Dr. F. M. Shirk. Rev. Edgar Rothrock performed the wedding ceremony in the presence of seventy relatives and a few intimate friends.

The bride was charming in a gown of white satin crepe with a flowing lace veil. She carried a shower bouquet of gardenias and lilies of the valley. Mrs. Manly Reitz, sister of the bride and matron of honor, was also gowned in white and carried a bouquet of white carnations and sweet peas. Mae Brydon, young sister of the bride, played Mendelssohn’s wedding march as the bridal party was entering.

Little Patricia and Lois Brydon, nieces of the bride, were dainty flower girls. They were dressed in white and carried baskets of white rose petals. Chester Shirk, brother of the groom, acted as best man.

Entering from the front door, the bridal party came down an aisle formed of tulle and white flowers, which led to a white lattice work covered with greenery, with two wedding bells making an attractive setting for the event. Russell Frantz sang “Because” (D’Hardelot), accompanied at the piano by Prof. Ralph Travis.

A buffet supper was served after which the bride and groom left on a honeymoon trip to Yosemite Valley. They will make their home on their orange grove at Anaheim. Both young people are graduates of Bonita high school and are well known in the community.

Mae Brydon, the youngest daughter, graduated from Bonita Union High School in June, 1939, and that September wed Robert Eugene Haines in La Verne. Their wedding was also performed by Rev. Edgar Rothrock.”

The citrus ranch flourished through the 1930’s. Around 1936, Harold A. Gehre was hired as foreman of the ranch and continued under new owners, Charles and Ethel Elder. The property was now known as the Elder Ranch.

Gehre lived at the same address, and in 1968 when interviewed for a newspaper article, said he had been foreman for 32 years.

R.S. and Mabel Brydon had done well. In April, 1940, the Census valued their citrus ranch at \$125,000.

The road past their home had been named for the family, the address of 6025 later changed to 7475 Brydon Road.

By 1942 the Brydons were living in San Dimas.

R.S. Brydon passed away in 1944; Mabel in 1966. Their ashes rest at Pomona Cemetery.

The venerable citrus ranch home has been well maintained and after most of a century is in excellent condition. It is now owned by Robert Kress, City Attorney for La Verne.

--By Galen Beery and Bill Lemon

UPCOMING EVENTS – March, April and May, 2016

March 12 (Saturday) – Join Sherry and John Best from noon until 2 pm at the Ontario Museum of History & Art for “Behind the Scenes of the Circus Big Top, 1890-1965” Afterwards join them for lunch at the Maple House Chicken & Waffles at 1520 N. Mountain Ave., Ste. A-101 in Ontario.

April 9, 11 am to 4 pm (Saturday) – Brydon Ranch Home Tour -- (Members free, non-members \$15)

May 20 (Saturday) – Sam Maloof House and Garden tour with bus transportation (Members only)

Your Historical Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the history of Lordsburg/La Verne. An annual “Old Timer’s Picnic” is held each summer.

We are interested in writings, photos and memorabilia of days gone by.

To provide tidbits from La Verne history or just ask questions, contact us. And of course, we have opportunities for volunteers.

