**Maggi Perkins**

Hello Friends of Hart Park,

I think Bill West has hit on a great idea to let some of the local crazies introduce (and possibly justify) themselves to you all!

I’m Maggi Perkins, granddaughter of Arthur B. Perkins, the first historian of Newhall. He came to Newhall in 1919 and was surprised to discover that the town (then less than 40 years old) was already starting to forget its history. So he taught himself how to be an historian in between running the Newhall Water Company, raising a family, and being involved with many local civic organizations, along with his wife, Marguerite (I was named after her). Only after retiring did he become a full-time historian and popular speaker.

Fast forward several decades to when I inherited his library and archives, preserved by my father until I could do something with them. Maybe my degrees in History and Museum Studies were a clue that I’d inherited my grandfather’s love of history? I started with the photographs, several hundred of them. About a quarter of the way through organizing and cataloging the collection, I decided to do an Arcadia Publishing book, focusing on Newhall, to share at least some of the treasures I was finding, both pictures and words.\*

I feel fortunate that the book (Newhall) was well received and so I was able to join the ranks of local historians, with the Perkins twist of trying to combine humor and humanity with history. My grandfather strongly believed that history should be lively, that the best stories were the human stories. I’ve tried to follow that, admiring our forebears, but not being afraid to tell the slightly ridiculous aspects of the stories. For example, I’m sure many of you have seen the (locally) famous photo of the 1955 4th of July Parade with its 14 participants. But how many of you knew that my grandfather’s wheelbarrow won best entry and that the prize was a box of soap flakes? Or that Bill Hart was an investor in the Newhall Water Company? He was so surprised when the company paid a dividend that he had to admit to my grandfather that he’d lost the share certificates. Fortunately, the company files were better kept and he got his money.

More recently, most of my history efforts have been towards researching and writing a book about Rancho Camulos. It’s been an amazing journey, encompassing such diverse elements as the Napoleonic Wars, Mexican political history, and the early history of Hollywood. I’ve nearly beaten it into shape and hope to complete and publish it next year. Probably late in the year. Possibly the year after. Research is fun.

\*And yes, I’m still cleaning and cataloging the photographs, slides, and negatives he left. I’m up to just under a thousand images (over two thousand pieces with duplicates) with three boxes to go. Then I hope to recreate the slide lectures he used to give.