As a boy, my father was greatly influenced by Wm. S. Hart movies. Dad then taught me “The Code of The West” as he interpreted his recollections of the films. So, I happily anticipated a visit to the Hart Museum for a Western Art show in 1994. Elizabeth and I were given a tour and actually bought an art piece from the artist, Larry Bees. In addition, I was subtly recruited by Volunteer Docents Ken Spencer, Andree Walper, & Jackie Cullen, and Administrator Carol Sandmeier. The next week, I signed on.

Looking back on 20 years as a Hart Volunteer, I was involved in many productive and fun activities. Perhaps my most memorable are: The Haunted Trail fundraisers; the research, editing and republication of Bill Hart’s biography; and the visit with Huell Howser.

Through the dedicated efforts of all the local membership, my original 1997 Haunted Trail netted several thousand dollars for support of the Mansion and Park. And the Community enjoyed a scary, happy Halloween event.

Bill’s biography, “My Life, East and West”, had been long out of print. While there had been a few private printings, none were available for the general public. In 2000, I negotiated a deal with an eastern printing house; they sent me their galley proofs and I proofread the entire book. We have sold hundreds of these books and continue to do so now.

The famous California Video-Logger, Huell Howser, came to our Park & Museum in 2007. I was invited to give him a tour of the Mansion segment of his production. He was an exceptionally fine gentleman. That video recording is still a big seller at our Gift Store.

During my time, I have had the opportunity to discover and elicit the special talents of my fellow Volunteers towards enhancing support of the Museum & Park, beyond County funding.

In the back of my mind, I have been thanking Mr. Hart for the entertainment and life lessons he provided to me, through the young, movie-going boy who became my dad.

Bill Crowl