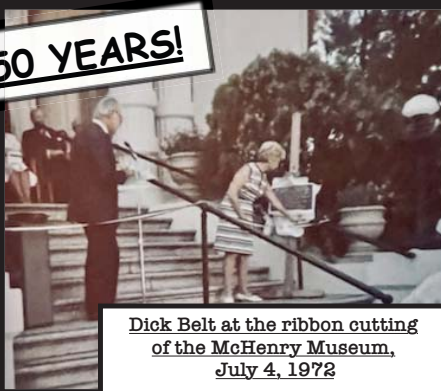




50 YEARS!



Dick Belt at the ribbon cutting of the McHenry Museum, July 4, 1972

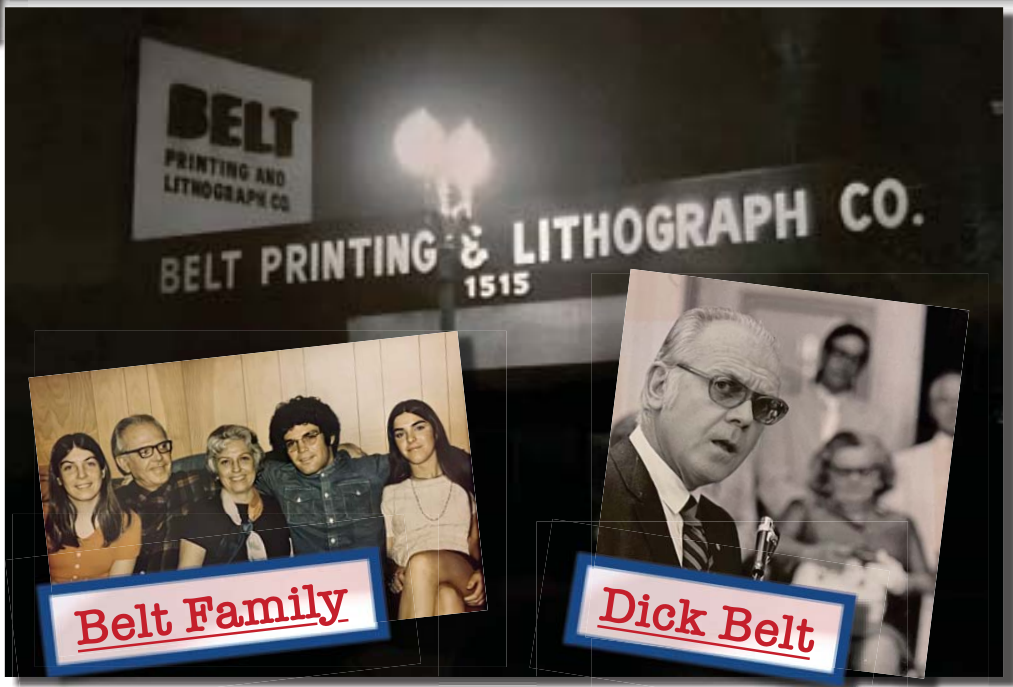


History Lesson

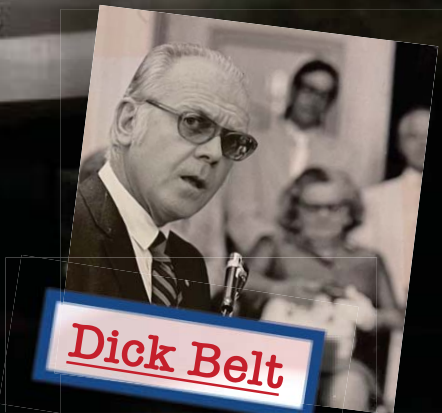
Newsletter

July 2022

If any generation does not celebrate history, the past and present may as well not exist. It seems almost commonplace, when one ages and regrets not asking their elders the questions about the past when they were living. If an individual has a passion for history and documents the past, they have created a remarkable legacy. On July 4, 1972, The McHenry Library building was dedicated as the McHenry Museum. On the steps that very day was the immediate Past-President of the Stanislaus County Historical Society, Richard "Dick" Belt. Dick Belt spent most of his life documenting and printing our local history. For this edition of the MM&HS Newsletter and for the fiftieth anniversary of the McHenry Museum, we would like to print his story. We sat down with Dick's daughters, who have worked for many years with the MM&HS, Lois Belt and Susan Belt-Highiet to learn more about their remarkable father.



Belt Family



Dick Belt

Dick Belt's historical journey began in Springfield, Ohio on August 3, 1920. He was the first-born to Marion Belt (1901-1980) and Mabel Chapin Belt (1901-1925). Marion Belt was the youngest of four children, and Marion's Father, Dick's Grandfather, Jacob (1859-1926) was the eleventh of thirteen children. What was commonplace in this era were yearly family reunions, a very East Coast and Mid-Western tradition. It was at those reunions where Richard would hear the stories of his father and grandfather's many siblings. For example, Jacob's brother Alexander Belt (1844-1924) fought in the American Civil War (1861-1865) and would love to tell stories at the reunions. Alexander Belt was the local historian of Springfield, Ohio. Dick's love and interest in these stories and memories he heard, guided him toward his love of history. After one year of attending The Ohio State University, Richard was drafted into the army following the Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. Dick Belt arrived in California the following year to be shipped out to New Guinea. He vowed he would return to the Golden State. He loved the history of the Gold Rush, which made California very desirable. After the war, he returned to Ohio to finish college.

**Please Call us at:
(209) 618-5387**

Continued on next page---



Dick & Marion



Dick & Mabel



Dick & Peggy's Wedding



Dick, Peggy, with Baby Robert, and Peggy's Mother Rosa Eberle

There, he married Margaret "Peggy" Eberle (1920-2012), January 5, 1946. After finishing college, Dick and Peggy moved to Los Angeles, California. At the same time, his father, Marion arrived in California, and settled in Modesto. Marion found a job at Rose Printing. Marion Belt had learned the printing business in World War I as a pressman and had come to know the skills of printing.

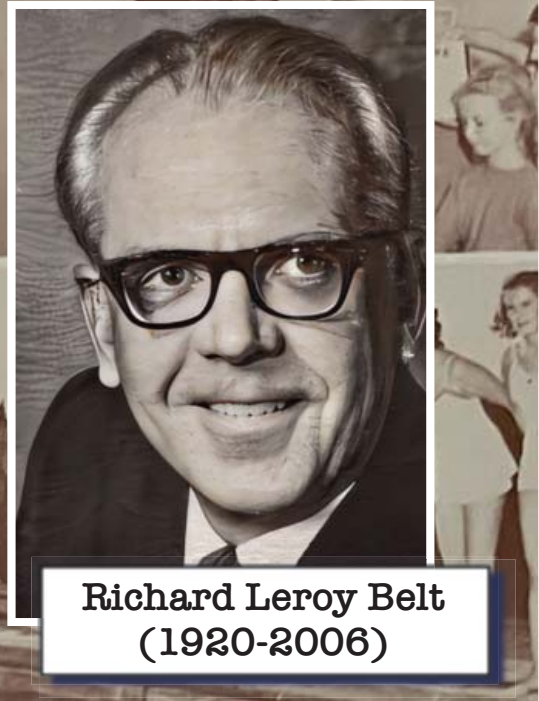
Dick and Peggy settled in Hollywood, where Dick found work for the Shell Oil Company. It was Southern California where they welcomed their first child, son Robert (1950-2017). In 1950, they joined Marion in Modesto. By this time, Marion Belt was married to his third wife, Virginia Garrison (1908-1975) an educator from a pioneering Modesto family. In 1951, Marion got the opportunity to purchase Rose Printing, and asked his son, Dick, to join him in business. Belt Printing & Lithograph Company opened at 1524 J Street, eventually moving to 1515 Tenth Street. Marion was the printer and managed the production end of the business, Richard focused on sales and bookkeeping. It was in Modesto where daughters Lois and Susan were born.

Lois Belt recalls how her family would take trips to Knight's Ferry, and how Dick had a passion for the foothills, especially gold panning. It was in 1965 when Richard found the niche for his passion. That year he joined E. Clampus Vitus with the help of Al Menshew (1931-2020). He would rise to title of Noble Grand Humbug. In early 1970s, Dick began Southern Mines Press where he focused solely on historical publications, maps, post cards, posters, and calendars. He began publishing the works of local historian Franklin Beard (1910-1989). Dick and his stepmother Virginia worked on Modesto's Centennial Committee in 1970. Belt Printing & Lithograph published the now iconic One Hundred Years... book, an accomplishment with which Dick took great pride. A fan of collages and of course his family, images of Robert, Lois, and Susan could be found inside the back cover. Dick was more than a historian, he was very civic minded, and joined the Jaycees of the Junior Modesto Chamber of Commerce when he first arrived in the city, it was with them where Dick was part of Mayor Lee Davies' Centennial Committee. He joined the Stanislaus County Historical Society and lead the organization as President in the years leading up to the formation of the McHenry Museum. In addition, Dick was the president of the Stanislaus County Bicentennial Committee. He was also a member of the California State Historical Society, National Historical Society, and the Friends of the Bancroft Library. Dick oversaw the publishing and printing of the first decade of Stanislaus Stepping Stones. It is sufficed to say, Dick Belt lived for history, and we at MMH&S are great beneficiaries of his efforts.



Dick & Peggy
Robert, Lois, & Susan

Following their civic-minded attitude, Dick and Peggy also belonged to numerous other Modesto organizations. Dick was a member of the Modesto Downtown Rotary Club and a charter member of the S.O.S Club. They both were charter members of the Spring Creek Golf Course, and Dick also belonged to the Shriners. Belt Printing & Lithograph sold their building to Village Instant Printers, now Parks Printing in February 1985. The family continued to independently broker printing, and Susan Belt-Highiet today maintains both Belt Printing and Southern Mines Press. After retiring, Dick dedicated his final years to cataloging his life in photo albums. The day before he passed was spent reminiscing with his friend Al Menshew on the things they had done together. He finished cataloging his life and his contribution to history, passing in his sleep on June 15, 2006. Peggy joined her husband five years later. Dick lived a life preserving and printing history, so there is only one thing we can do to finish telling his story, and that is to say, "hit the press!"



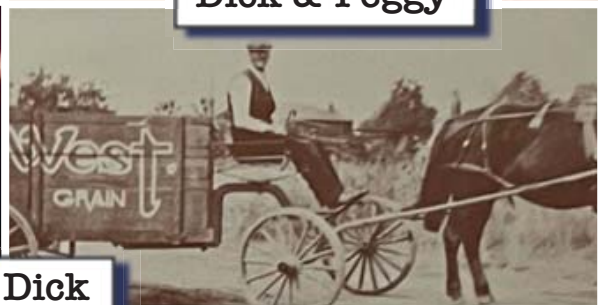
**Richard Leroy Belt
(1920-2006)**



Dick & Peggy



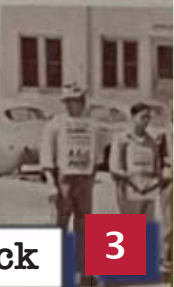
Franklin Beard & Dick



Belt Printing



Al Menshew & Dick



*Information from this Article was taken from Interviews with Lois Belt & Susan Belt-Highiet, June 2022. Pictures are courtesy of the Belt Family & the McHenry Museum & Historical Society.

BELT

PRINTING &
LITHOGRAPH CO.

Since 1950

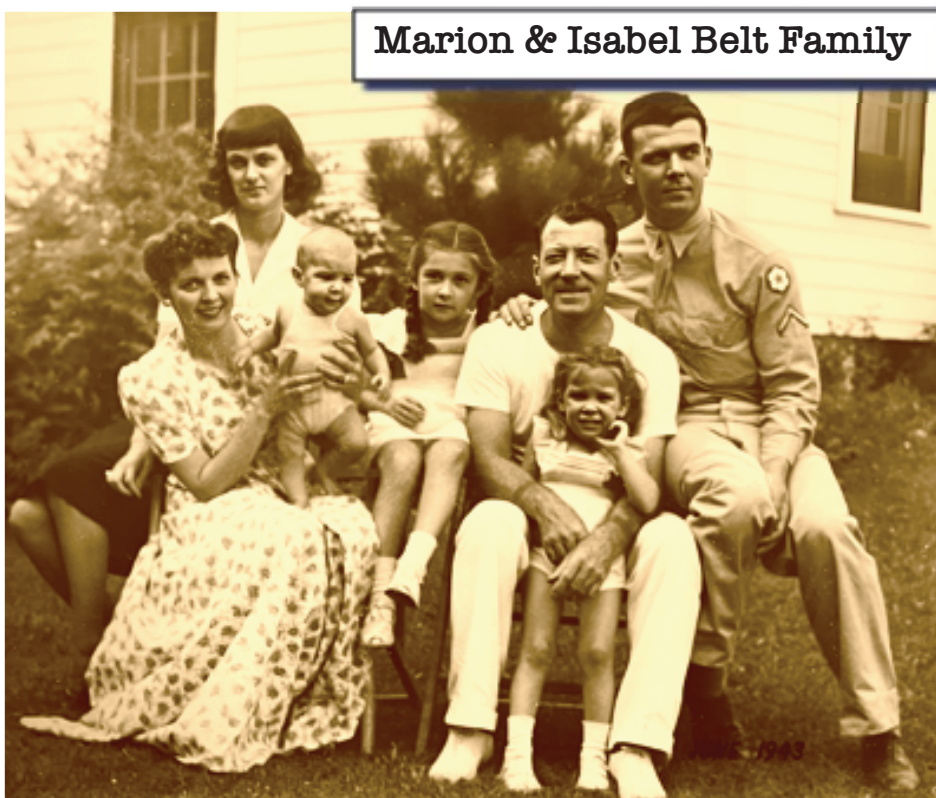
Family Album

MARION and DICK BELT

Phone 523-8384

1515 - 10th St.

Modesto



Susan, Lois, Robert



Virginia & Marion



A Scrapbook

McHENRY MUSEUM OF ART AND HISTORY



The McHenry Library building, shown as it might have been half a century ago, today begins a new career as an art and history center.

DEDICATION JULY 4th, 1972

9:00 A.M.

14th and I Streets, Modesto, California

CITIZEN'S CULTURAL CENTER COMMITTEE

Invocation _____ Former Mayor Peter Johansen

Introduction of Special Guests _____ Peggy Mensinger

Presentation by Stanislaus County
Historical Society _____ Richard Belt

Remarks for Citizen's Cultural
Center Committee _____ Heidi Warner

Acceptance for City of Modesto _____ Mayor Lee Davis

Cutting of Ribbon _____ Bobbe Jean McHenry Pauley
Ora Louise McHenry Condrey



Ora Louise McHenry Condrey
(1912-1994)
Bobbe Jean McHenry Pauley
(1914-2002)
Cut the Ribbon!



Heidi Warner (1925-2008), Edwin Pauley
(1903-1981), Barbara Jean "Bobbe" McHenry
Pauley (1914-2002).
July 3, 1972

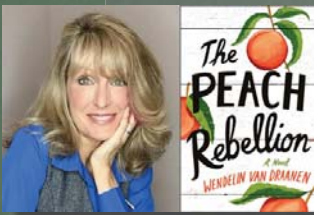
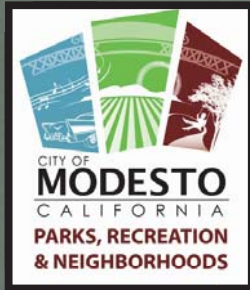


Peggy Mensinger
(1923-2002)
Introduction of
Special Guests.



July 4, 1972

**50
YEARS!**



Join us July 6, 2022, to Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the McHenry Museum

Ribbon Cutting at 4:30pm

Chamber of Commerce Mixer to follow

5:00-6:30pm

Enjoy the Art of Jonathan Troxler

Special appearance and book signing

by celebrated Author Wendelin Van

Draanen

And

Local Children's Author Maureen Lemos

Historical Note

Celebrating Modesto's rich history is our number one mission. As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of the McHenry Museum, we are delighted to work with the Modesto Chamber of Commerce. Fifty-two years ago, Dick Belt was part of Mayor Lee Davies Centennial Committee for the Modesto. He chose as the head of this committee a group of Jaycees from the Modesto Junior Chamber of Commerce. The head of that committee was Terry McGrath (1939-2021). Terry McGrath passed away December 9, 2021, and a float at the Fourth of July Parade will be dedicated in his honor. On the float will be his former wife, Eva. Eva Johnston McGrath was also on the Centennial Committee and one of two people still living from that committee, and along with florist Gary Taylor. Eva's family has deep roots in Modesto. Her family operated Johnston-Wherry Furniture Co. on Eleventh Street in Modesto. Eva was part of the publication of One Hundred Years... Eva did not have a copy of the Belt Printing & Lithograph Co. publication. On June 29, 2022, the MM&HS presented her with a first edition of the book and invited her to join us for our celebration of the Museum July 6, 2022.

ONE
HUNDRED
YEARS...

Modesto, California
1870-1970



Updates



**MM&HS
President
Benjamin Sivils**

Vice President Benjamin Sivils has been acting President of the McHenry Museum & Historical Society following the resignation of Donald Scott on June 15, 2022. As of June 28, 2022, he is now officially President. Born and raised in Turlock, Ben began his funeral service career at Allen Mortuary in 1994 and trained alongside our founder William Allen. He received his degree in mortuary science at Mt. Hood College in Gresham, OR and is a licensed funeral director and embalmer with over 25 years of experience. Ben is past president of the Valley Lode Funeral Director's Association and has served on the board of the California Funeral Director's Association. Ben is a longtime member of Turlock First United Methodist Church, Masonic Lodge, Order of the Eastern Star, Order of the Amaranth and Shriners. Locally, Ben serves on the board for Denair Cemetery Association, Denair Gaslight Theatre, and joined the Board of Directors of the McHenry Museum & Historical Society in 2019. He has served as our secretary, and recently as Vice President. Ben is looking forward to leading the board to re-build membership and bring the organization to a pre-pandemic time.

Troxler Art



**Annual Meeting
June 28, 2022**



- The changing exhibit room currently has the artwork of Jonathan Troxler, which highlights Modesto Buildings past and present as well as other notable California locations. All paintings are available for purchase, prints and tote bags are for sale in the Museum Store.
- On June 28, 2022, the MM&HS held its first annual meeting in three years at the McHenry Museum with over forty people in attendance.
- We would like to thank outgoing board member Suzanne Love and current board member Carole Dovichi for all their work putting the annual meeting together.
- Cece Hudelson was elected Vice President and Bob Barzan, Richard Cato, Marisol Marin, Paul Medlin, and Christopher Nunes were elected to the Board of Directors of the MM&HS.
- Memberships have been mailed out, but if you decide to renew online or in the store, you will receive a free book from select titles. We would like to thank Janice Lane for being our diligent membership director.
- We would like to thank Janice Lane, Christopher Nunes, Sergio Chevalier, Leslie Thompson, and Nancy Norton for all their hard work in the store.
- We would also like to thank all our docents and Laura Mesa for continuing to make our beloved Museum run, we would be lost without them.
- We hope to see you all July 6, 2022 for our fiftieth celebration.

