



**McHENRY  
MUSEUM**  
& HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# MM&HS Museum Monthly

A publication of the McHenry Museum & Historical Society

March 2024

In this issue . . .

- Docent in Memoriam: Barbara Grundy (page 1)
- 'Stories of Stanislaus' set scene of county 100 years ago (page 1)
- Mary Stuart Rogers founded fund from Carnation contributions (page 2)
- MM&HS News (page 9)
- How to Correctly Pronounce a Street Name (page 9)



## Docent in Memoriam: Barbara Grundy



Arloa & Barbara

We are saddened to share news of the death of long-time docent at the McHenry Museum, Barbara Jean Grundy (Aug 28, 1937 - Feb 2, 2024). The Modesto native was a descendant of the local Vivian and Brush pioneer families.

An avid reader and lover of local history, Barbara purchased a copy of every new book produced by the McHenry Museum & Historical Society as they were published. Even as her later health struggles made it difficult to volunteer at the museum for a full four hour shift, she would split her time here with her dear friend and fellow docent, Arloa Ramsdell.

Given Barbara's love for reading, local history, and her enduring connecting with the MM&HS, her family has requested that donations in her memory be made to support our organization's newest work, *StaniStory*.

## 'Stories of Stanislaus' set scene of county 100 years ago

In February and March of 1924, local newspapers were printing articles about the release of then-Modesto mayor Sol Elias' (1868-1940) history of the county, *Stories of Stanislaus*. Based on interviews with living pioneers and early county residents, the book stands as one of the earliest accounts of the history of Stanislaus County.

The MM&HS later re-printed the book. Copies of it are sold at '*Stanislaus Selections*', the gift shop bookstore located within the McHenry Museum!



Sol Elias





# Mary Stuart Rogers founded fund from Carnation contributions

by David Seymour

Since the mid-1950s, an unassuming housewife and mother of four living at 819 High Street in Modesto called Stanislaus County home for the final four decades of her life. Her name, however, is synonymous with philanthropy locally today. Mary Stuart Stibbs Rogers (1918-1993) personally used her private fortune to found the eponymous Mary Stuart Rogers Foundation in 1985. While her name – through her foundation of giving – now graces the walls of numerous buildings and venues throughout the area – her personal story has remained somewhat of a public mystery in the thirty-one years since her passing. Modesty and privacy were hallmark traits of Mrs. Rogers, and her children and grandchildren continue to carry forward those values today. In order to give a greater appreciation to the name which has done so much for the community locally, Mary's son, John Stuart Rogers, and his wife, June, agreed to share more of her story at the request of the McHenry Museum & Historical Society (MM&HS).

Mary Stuart Rogers' opportunity to give so generously originates from the work 125 years ago of her grandfather, Elbridge Amos "E.A." Stuart (1856-1944). Born in 1856 to a Quaker family in Guildford, North Carolina, he moved to El Paso, Texas at the age of twenty-three to work at a general store. In 1884, he married Vermont native, Mary Jane Horner (1860-1939). They had two children, Elbridge Hadley "E.H." Stuart (1887-1972) and Katherine Moore Stuart (1893-1936).

Stemming his work as a general grocer, E.A. steered into the evaporated milk trade by selling the product to miners during the Klondike Gold Rush of Yukon, Canada, and Alaska during the late 1890s. Evaporated milk is made by removing sixty percent of the milk's water content, which gives it a longer shelf-life. Evaporated milk is unsweetened while condensed milk is sweetened.



Mary  
Stuart  
Stibbs  
Rogers



Elbridge Amos  
Stuart



Mary Jane  
Stuart



Carnation factory in Kent, Washington



The E.A. Stuart family was living in Los Angeles when in 1899 E.A. made a business decision which would ultimately land him into the halls of American enterprising history: he and a business partner founded the Pacific Coast Condensed Milk Company in Kent, Washington. The product sold by their company was evaporated milk. His partner sold out in 1901 and E.A. sought a new name for the company.

While passing a tobacconist's window, he saw a display for cigars with the name 'Carnation' on it. Representative of the namesake flower, he liked the name so much that his company then became the Carnation Evaporated Milk Company. The company would adopt the catchy promotional phrase "Carnation Condensed Milk, the milk from contented cows."

Carnation became a part of the national American identity in the 20th century. Carnation-branded products became widely used across the country for baking, especially in custards and for fudge-making. Other products for Carnation started under the Stuart stewardship of the company were Carnation Malted Milk in 1927 and Carnation Instant Breakfast in 1964. The Carnation Café has been a staple at Disneyland on Main Street, USA since the park's opening in 1955. The iconic cans remain the go-to item for shoppers who follow the label's instructions to make pumpkin pies at Thanksgiving.

Elbridge and Mary's daughter, Katherine, married Harry Glenn Stibbs (1885-1949) who worked as the advertising manager for Carnation in 1915. The match did not please Katherine's parents. Nonetheless, the couple started a family. Their first daughter, Mary Stuart Stibbs, was born in Seattle on January 10, 1918. *Note: some records show her date of birth as 1917, which was the year she listed on her driver's license in order to drive at an earlier age.* Three years later, Mary was joined by younger sister Ethelmae (1921-2013). The Stibbs Family relocated to San Mateo, California in 1925. Harry worked for the Carnation Company in San Francisco and dabbled in mining and later real estate.



**Above:  
Carnation's  
entry in  
Pasadena's  
Jan 1, 1933  
Tournament  
of Roses  
Parade**



**Carnation's  
former  
headquarters  
in Los  
Angeles, and  
the Carnation  
Café on Main  
Street, USA  
at Disneyland  
in Anaheim  
(above and  
above left)**





Mary fondly remembered having to take an escort to shop in San Francisco as her and her sister were not allowed to venture out alone. Both Mary and Ethelmae attended Mrs. Shinn's School for Girls. Sadly, Katherine Stuart Stibbs died at home suddenly from a cerebral hemorrhage in September of 1936, predeceasing both her parents. Mary and Ethelmae, both teenagers, suddenly became the sole heirs of their mother's portion of Carnation. Katherine's brother, Eldridge Jr., and his sons would continue to work for the company, but the Stibbs girls did not.

While attending the Peninsula Art School, Mary met Red Bluff, California native Roger William Rogers (1913-1976). They married in her father's home on June 26, 1939. Their first son, John Stuart Rogers, was born in San Francisco just over nine months later. John was followed by James "Jim" (1942-1994), Katherine (b. 1944), and Frieda (b. 1946). The Rogers family settled in Santa Cruz. In 1946, Roger purchased Santa Cruz Feed & Fuel Company, located at the corner of Soquel Avenue and Ocean Street, part of the Carnation-owned Albers Milling Company.

In the summer of 1953, the family left Santa Cruz and moved to Modesto to the house on High Street. The move was prompted by Roger's desire to become a cattle rancher. Roger bought and sold cattle which he kept in nearby McCulloch Ranch in Denair. In 1960, Roger purchased Roen's Hitchin' Post in Oakdale. He renamed the western wear and saddle shop as Rogers' Hitchin' Post.



**Harry, Ethelmae, Mary, and Katherine Stibbs**



**Mr. and Mrs. Roger and Mary Rogers**

To the right is a newspaper ad for Rogers' Hitchin' Post of Oakdale.

Mary on her honeymoon, far right.





Mary liked to keep to herself at home and did not venture far regularly other than to go to the beauty parlor. She maintained a family tradition of weekly Sunday dinners, and Mary and Roger had a once-a-week date night. She was known for being a good cook and homemaker as well having an introverted personality. She enjoyed traveling, but never liked being in crowds. Her son, John, recalls her being both strict and reserved, and says one was not allowed to enter her home without washing their hands! Her world was forever changed in 1976 when her husband, Roger, died of a heart attack. Following his death, she became involved in her favorite cause: her love of animals. She was an active member of the Humane Society of the United States, Defenders of Wildlife, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Animal Protection Institute of America, and the International Fund for American Welfare.

In November of 1983, Mary's first cousin Dwight Stuart (1924-1998) resigned as president of Carnation. With no family members to run the company, Dwight helped negotiate the sale of the company to the Swiss-based Nestlé Corporation the following year in a \$3 billion acquisition. At the time, it was the largest non-petroleum merger in American history. Mary was displeased by the sale but she and Ethelmae quietly inherited their late mother's portion of the company.

Unbeknownst to the rest of her family, Mary utilized her newfound wealth to found the Mary Stuart Rogers Foundation in 1985. She essentially used her home on High Street as her decision-making center. Her attorney Cleveland "Cleve" Stockton Jr. (1920-2001) managed the foundation for Mary. Her first given scholarship was started at California State University, Stanislaus (CSUS) in 1991. She significantly donated to Guide Dogs of the Desert, Stanford Medical Center, and the Ronald McDonald House.

Mary Stuart Rogers died on February 5, 1993, at the age of seventy-five. Her son, John, had no idea she had such a vast wealth until the day she died. John and his brother Jim were then placed in charge of managing the foundation. Jim died the following year, and so it was now up to John to continue his mother's legacy of giving in the best way possible.



**Mary, Roger, John, Jim,  
Katherine & Frieda Rogers**



**Mary Stuart Stibbs Rogers**





Initially, the foundation carried forward in funding scholarships which it had initiated at College of the Desert, a public community college in Palm Desert, California and at California State University - San Bernardino's Coachella Campus. These early projects were overseen by Jim, who had resided in Southern California prior to his death. Another major project Jim spearheaded in 1993 was the Mary Stuart Rogers Shelter From the Storm in Palm Desert, which helped and housed victims of domestic violence. The foundation provided eight scholarships in total, including at the University of the Pacific in Stockton; Franciscan School of Theology at the University of San Diego in San Diego; California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo; Willamette University in Salem, Oregon (John's alma mater); Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon (Jim's alma mater); and Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.



**Jeff, Janet, June & John Rogers**

Locally, the Mary Stuart Rogers Foundation's impact continues to be no less than profound:

- The foundation has launched several scholarships at Central Catholic High School and has made other donations to the school as well as other Catholic organizations in town.

- The foundation has made further funding available to many local Catholic elementary schools as Mary maintained ardent support for good education during her lifetime.

- In 1999, the foundation contributed to the endowment fund set up by Marie Damrell Gallo (1935-2021) in aiding her forthright effort to build a first-class performing arts center in Modesto. The main theatre at the Gallo Center was subsequently named for Mary Stuart Rogers when it opened in 2007, and the center's private donor lounge is named the Carnation Room. June Rogers remains active still today on center's Board of Directors

- In 2000, the Mary Stuart Rogers Scout Service Center at Kiernan and Stoddard Road was dedicated as the headquarters for the Greater Yosemite Council branch of the Boy Scouts of America.

- In 2001, the foundation gave a significant amount to help Emanuel Hospital in Turlock open the Mary Stuart Rogers Birthing Center.



**Mary Stuart Rogers  
Educational Gateway Building  
at CSU Stanislaus**

---

**Mary Stuart Rogers Theater at  
the Gallo Center for the Arts**





- In 2002, the foundation gave a large amount to CSU Stanislaus, which opened the Mary Stuart Rogers Educational Services Gateway Building.
- In 2003, CSU Stanislaus dedicated the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center, honoring John's contributions.
- In 2005, the Mary Stuart Rogers Student Learning Center opened to students at Modesto Junior College's West Campus.

Along with these highlights of philanthropic work, the Mary Stuart Rogers Foundation has contributed to numerous other charitable groups locally in its forty years of service. The foundation is overseen by John, June, their daughter Janet and son Jeffrey, as well as other members of the family. The work of E.A. Stuart 125 years ago in founding and successfully operating the Carnation Company continues to impact the local community today through the legacy of Mary Stuart Rogers.

*Edited by Keith Highiet*



**John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center, CSU Stanislaus**



**Mary Stuart Rogers Student Learning Center at Modesto Junior College**

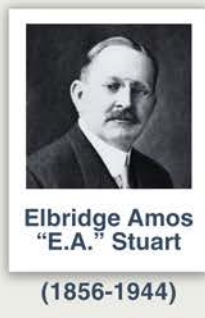


**Jeff, June, John & Janet Rogers**

Information for this article came from interviews with John and June Rogers (February 2024), an oral history of the late Ethelmae Stibbs Haldan and various *Modesto Bee* articles. Photographs courtesy of the Rogers Family. Photos of Mary Stuart Rogers buildings come from school websites and the Gallo Center for the Arts.

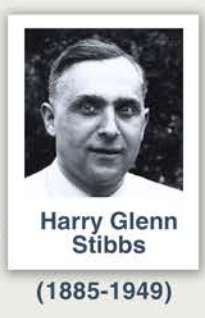
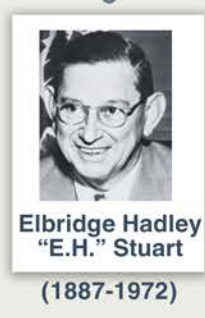


*Mary's grandfather, Elbridge Amos "E.A." Stuart, co-founded a company in 1899 which he soon took 100% control over, renaming it as the Carnation Company.*



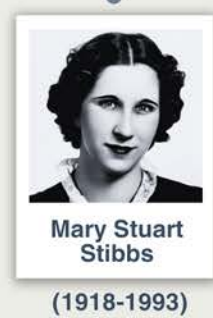
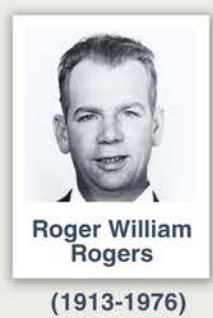
# MARY STUART ROGERS FAMILY TREE

*Mary's uncle, Elbridge Hadley "E.H." Stuart, followed in his father's footsteps and ran the company next.*



*Mary's cousin, Dwight Stuart (E.H.'s son), was the third generation to run the company and oversaw the sale to Nestlé in 1984.*

*Mary's sister, Ethelmae, was married twice. Her first husband was killed in action during WWII. She had four children.*



*Mary's son, John, and his wife, June, run the Mary Stuart Rogers Foundation today along with their children, Janet and Jeffrey.*

*The families of John's siblings (James, Katherine, and Frieda) all live out of the local area.*

June Anita Welch

John Stuart Rogers

James William Rogers  
(1942-1994)

Katherine Elizabeth Rogers

Frieda Mae Rogers

Christina Dawn Bell

Janet Marie Rogers

Bev LaBelle

Sharna Paddock

Jeffrey Stuart Rogers

Brenda Lee Weldon

Taylor John Bell-Rogers

Trevor John Bell-Rogers

Austin Stuart Rogers

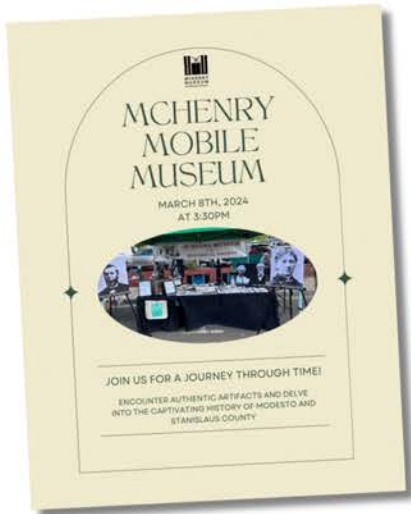
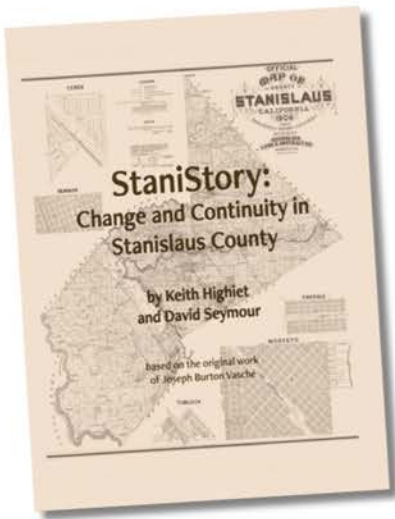
Alexander Stuart Rogers





# MM&HS News • March 2024

- The MM&HS thanks the Mary Stuart Rogers Foundation for granting a \$15,000 contribution to aid in the initial printing of our latest publication, *StaniStory: Change and Continuity in Stanislaus County*.
- Thank you to Dr. Samuel and Alyne Oppenheim for their generous donation toward the printing of *StaniStory*.
- Can you help us in further printing of our latest publication, *StaniStory*? We are seeking donations to help offset printing costs. Contribute today at [McHenryMuseum.org](http://McHenryMuseum.org) by clicking on on the 'support' icon.
- On March 8th the McHenry McMobile Museum will launch its 2024 season with a pop up visit at the Bethel Retirement Community of Modesto. The latest incarnation of the McMobile is the brainchild of MM&HS secretary, Christopher Nunes. Stanislaus County artifacts will be shared with seniors and guests there at 3:30 p.m. that day.
- The board of directors of the MM&HS will meet on March 5th.
- The MM&HS welcomes its newest volunteer, Elisha Akard, who is now helping at *Stanislaus Selections*, the gift shop bookstore located within the McHenry Museum. Open when the museum is open (Mon - Fri, 12pm - 4pm), the store carries extraordinary volumes of local history books along with locally-themed gift items.
- We regret to share that the March 11th Mixer which was mentioned in the previous newsletter has been canceled.
- This month, the MM&HS launches **CemeTours**, a periodic historic touring of local cemeteries. The first visit will be **Lakewood Memorial Park**. Nancy Aguilar and Debbie Motty of Lakewood Memorial will present on the history of the cemetery and the MM&HS will give a historic tour there to examine the final resting places of some local notable people. Light refreshments will be served. **Join us for this free tour beginning at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 24th at Lakewood Memorial Park, 900 Santa Fe Ave, Hughson.**



Clara  
Moore

Nancy  
'Tina'  
Smith



## How to Correctly Pronounce a Street Name

In Modesto, Pelandale Avenue changes names heading east from McHenry Avenue to Oakdale Road, where it becomes **Claratina** Avenue. Often pronounced “Clara-Teen-ah”, the actual correct pronunciation should be “Clara-Tyne-ah”. The name is a combination of two women’s names who once lived on the street: **Clara** Balding Moore (1867-1952), whose husband Jesse (1854-1937) settled in the area in 1909; and Nancy Eglentine Meyers Smith (1876-1964), wife of rancher Armour Borland Smith (1871-1953). The Smith’s settled in Modesto in 1902 from Mexico, Missouri, about bought the Curtis Ranch, which they leveled; they then became among the first to plant alfalfa in Stanislaus County. It is retold that Nancy was nicknamed “Tina” as she stood 5'2" inches, and **Tina** (pronounced with a long-i →ī← as in ‘tiny’) was a play on the end of her middle name and her shorter height. In 2001, Tina’s grandson Modesto City Councilman Armour Clay Smith (1931-2004) fought to retain the name of the street when it was suggested Pelandale Ave be extended to Oakdale Rd. Now that we know how the street was named, we can pronounce it correctly.





## Get Involved Today!

The McHenry Museum & Historical Society (MM&HS) is the support organization of the McHenry Museum, your community museum. We bring Stanislaus County history to life!

### • Volunteer!

Our docents volunteer in four-hour increments to greet and guide guests and visitors during the museum's open hours. Our acquisitions committee explores and evaluates items for the museum to obtain and retain. Volunteer staff runs our in-museum gift shop book store, *Stanislaus Selections*, and help at the intra-County destinations where our *McMobile Museum* visits. There are more behind-the-scenes opportunities to help as well! Email [info@mchenrymuseum.org](mailto:info@mchenrymuseum.org) or send a message at [McHenryMuseum.org/contact](http://McHenryMuseum.org/contact)

### • Become a Sustaining Member!

MM&HS members are invited to our annual Summer Social annual meeting, and our December Soup & Sandwich supper. Donors who give \$150 or more are recognized on our website for their contributions. Join now: [McHenryMuseum.org/support](http://McHenryMuseum.org/support)

### • Get the Newsletter!

Discover more ways to connect to local history regularly with our free, monthly newsletter, featuring fresh articles on local history: the *MM&HS Museum Monthly*. It's the one email you'll look forward to opening each month! And its free! [McHenryMuseum.org/contact](http://McHenryMuseum.org/contact)

**Your participation helps bring local history to life.  
Get involved. Today!**