



ORO VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May, 2025



Current Board Members

Sue Chambasian, Director; Devon Sloan, Secretary; Bob Kellar, President; Twink Monrad, Director; Paul Loomis, Treasurer

FIRST OF ALL, WE SAY THANKS

The Oro Valley Historical Society could not keep Oro Valley history alive without you, and we give big thanks to all of you who have donated to us throughout the year. Whether it was through the annual Arizona Gives platform, donations at the Pusch House Museum on Saturdays, Fry's Community Rewards Program, private tours, or just because you know we need your support and you send us a check! We are grateful to you for that support and look forward to continuing our mission of sharing our area's history with you.

LOOK WHO VISITED THE RANCH

We are especially grateful for the donation given by the Institute of Learning in Retirement, a group from Sun City who visited the Steam Pump Ranch in March. Most of the group had not been to the Ranch before, and some had only been to the Heirloom Farmers' Market, held each Saturday. They were delighted to learn about the history of our area that is so close to where they currently live.

And on April 4, another private tour of the Ranch was given as a birthday present (a great idea!) to Thom Mansur by his wife Kathy. Thom is a native Tucsonan and loves the history of our area. He said he learned "tons of stuff he never knew" and it was one of his favorite gifts in recent years. They were joined by friends of theirs from Oracle who are involved with the Historical Society there, so it was a lot of history talk for the whole tour as we all learned how our two communities worked together "back in the day." It is said that people are giving experiences instead of gifts these days, so think about the Ranch the next time you are unsure what to gift a friend or family member. Thanks, Kathy for thinking of us and for your donation!

On April 13 we were fortunate to participate in the Rotary's Taste of Oro Valley event at Steam Pump Ranch. Food, beer, wine, music, silent auction, kid zone, tours of the Pusch House Museum were enjoyed by all. What a great way to spend a Saturday evening and support four local charities. It was a fun event, and we were glad we could be involved by providing tours through the Pusch House Museum.

As you know, we usually close the Pusch House Museum at the end of April to get ready for our new season, beginning in September. However, when the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation asked for our help in being the jumping off point for their annual tour of homes, we were ecstatic! This year's tour included historic ranches in Northern Pima County, and the tour started at Steam Pump Ranch. We welcomed over 400 people to the Pusch House Museum and many more than that strolled through the property, visiting the 5 other buildings, the chicken coops, and the Heritage Garden to learn more about Oro Valley's history before heading north on Oracle to visit 5 historic homes and 2 churches.

And did you know that the Society is also offering nature walking tours of the Ranch neighborhood? This year we have a naturalist volunteer who has introduced information about the flora, fauna, and geography of our area during hour long walking tours on selected Saturday mornings. Stay tuned, as we will expand those tours in our new season.

Remember that you can request a tour of the Ranch at any time by going to our website at www.ovhistory.org and completing the request form on line.

Speaking of tours, at our annual meeting we shared that we had we had over 1,800 visitors to Steam Pump Ranch in 2024 and total volunteer hours for the year were almost 3,000 (including tours, exhibits, research for those exhibits, marketing and administration). It takes a village to share information about our village!

Not everything we do is at the Ranch, however. Since our last newsletter, we promoted the Oro Valley Historical Society to our local community at the SAACA Spring Festival of the Arts at the Oro Valley Marketplace in March (see picture in Outreach Section) and the Celebrate Oro Valley event at James D. Kriegh Park in April. Also, that month, we had the opportunity to host Dave Perry at the Oro Valley Public Library as he shared the history, the present, and the future of the Huckleberry Bike Path/The Tucson Loop with his talk "The Scoop on the Loop." What an incredible story as to how it began!

THANKS TO DENZIL WALKER

As you know, Denzil was our Past President, but he also loves to do hands-on projects. Currently volunteering in the Heritage Garden, Denzil has had time to work on several items for the Pusch House Museum. Left to right you will see a stand he made to showcase a beautiful hanging wall scone that graced the patio at the Proctor-Leiber House. Next is a replica of what the Steam Pump Building looked like when the Pusch family owned the Ranch. The next two are the back and front of a saddle tree with the Pusch/Zellweger brand, and finally you see a stand built to hold a replica of the branding iron with the hanging PZ brand. President, Gardener, and Craftsman – we are grateful to Denzil for his many skills!



UPDATE ON SIGN PROJECT

Last fall, thanks to the generosity of the Oro Valley Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the Oro Valley Historical Society was awarded a grant to help fund the design and production of eight signs intended for the Steam Pump Ranch campus. The permanently placed signs would be informational, with photos and text, and provide a narrative to the history of the various buildings at the ranch, their significance, and their present-day use. The visitor would also learn about the Pusch and Proctor and Leiber families who once made this ranch their respective homes. The idea behind the signage is that it will encourage visitors to take a self-guided tour and learn more about Steam Pump Ranch, at any time and any day.

The Sign Committee commenced on December 10 and continued to meet monthly. After much, much effort and countless revisions, eight signs were created and sent to RockArt Sign in Mesa in early April. Proofs came back a week later, and after a few minor revisions, we approved and sent payment to RockArt Sign on April 22. After payment was received, the signs went immediately into production. Completion time was estimated at 3-6 weeks, possibly sooner since this is their slow time of year. This means the signs could be done any time between now and first week of June! President Bob Kellar will be responsible for picking up and delivering the signs back to the ranch when they become available.

Jon Schumacher of Oro Valley Parks and Recreation, will coordinate timely installation of these signs. Sidewalks going in at Steam Pump Ranch are near completion which will be very helpful in determining where these signs are ultimately placed. These are exciting times at the Ranch!

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Bob, Lynn, Pat, and Denzil for the hours they spent working on the design and layout issues involved in a project like this. Thank you!

And, on behalf of Oro Valley Historical Society, we want to thank the Chamber of Commerce Foundation again for helping us make this wish become a reality. Thank you for caring about our community!

OUTREACH TO OUR COMMUNITY

Our Intel Fellow, Lynn Zoyiopoulos has been working tirelessly on several projects. Look at all that has happened so far this year....

Our [new website](#) launched on April 1, 2025 - and it's looking great! We're continuing to add content about local history, notable residents, Oro Valley Historical Society, Steam Pump Ranch, the Pusch House Museum, upcoming events, and ways to get involved.

Do you have stories, photos, or ideas to help our website shine like **ORO**? We'd love to hear from you – [contact us](#) and be part of preserving Oro Valley's history!

A tremendous thank you to Michael Burns of [Red Coyote Services](#) who helped make all of this possible; we couldn't have done this without you!!

Our [new brochures](#) are now available - featuring who we are, how to visit, and how to get involved. If you'd like to display brochures at your business or event, [let us know](#)!

How Can You Help? It's easy! [Donate](#), [Volunteer](#), or Request a [Private Tour](#) of Steam Pump Ranch and the Pusch House Museum.

We created a new booth table cover—complete with QR codes to make it easier to donate or volunteer—while supporting community events at the *SAACA Spring Festival of the Arts* in March, and *Celebrate Oro Valley* and *Taste of Oro Valley* in April.



Call to Action – QR Code for Donation.

Help Keep Oro Valley History Alive!

Every contribution helps us preserve and disseminate the rich history of Oro Valley through:

- Engaging exhibits
- Educational events
- Community activities



TECH TIME

ILOVEOV founder, Michael Burns, has provided us a website as a donation and support of our non-profit, and our new website is up and running! We would love to have some help in the following areas:

Help with updating and publishing the website in WordPress (even if someone wants to learn, we can learn together.)

1. Google Analytics - need help with tags, keywords, AI, website optimization - how can we better present our content so that it is more findable?
2. Social media - looking for anyone who is into social media like Facebook (we have a page, but it hasn't been updated in years). We don't have Instagram or any other social media presence and we really need it.

If anyone is interested in helping (a little or a lot — we need it all!), please contact Lynn Zoyiopoulos at (480) 388-2006 or email lynnzoy@gmail.com or ovhistory.org

BORROW A BOOK, LOOK AT ART

Beginning on June 2 and through July 15, Oro Valley Historical Society supporter, Dan Hofbauer, will have a one-man exhibit at the Oro Valley Public Library. Dan, a local real estate agent and recent Oro Valley resident has been using his artistic talents to capture amazing scenes of his new home. Stop by the library for a great read and a feast for your eyes.

WHAT WILL WE BE DOING THIS SUMMER?

Audiovisual Collections

Our Society has a collection of audiovisual materials dating back to the founding of the Society in 2005. Recently we have decided to have some of the materials converted to a digital format for preservation purposes and to have a hard copy to use in research, to enhance our lecture presentations, and to share on our website. Tina Zogott, Pat Spoerl and Sue Chambasian have reviewed and finalized a listing of those CD's and DVD's that are relevant to the history of the society, including informative interviews, important photos, special events, and contributions by affiliated organizations.

Educational Retractable Banner

With the help of Teri Colmar, Sue Chambasian, Pat Spoerl and Jim Williams, a retractable education banner describing the life of George Pusch (1847 - 1921) who influenced the early development of Oro Valley and Tucson is presently being created for the Pusch House Museum. The banner will describe George's life and family, his rise as a pioneer establishing Oro Valley's Steam Pump Ranch, as a cattle baron in the Tucson area, an influential Tucson businessman, a public servant and an Arizona politician. **A special thanks** to Teri and Craig Colmar for funding this very important project - George's history related to Oro Valley, Tucson, and Arizona.

Research Activity

Devon Sloan, Teri Colmar, Sue Chambasian, Twink Monrad, Anne Keeler and Lynn Zoyiopoulos visited Tucson's Evergreen Cemetery to learn more about the Pusch, Proctor and Leiber family members laid to rest there. In finding their gravestones, some additional information was discovered to add to their previous findings which will be documented for future research purposes.

JUST A REMINDER

The Oro Valley Historical Society is a non-profit organization funded solely by donations, grants, and gifts with no assistance from local, federal, or state governments. Your financial help will assist us in keeping Oro Valley history alive!

AND FINALLY, A THANKS AND FAREWELL

Good-bye Mike and Barbara Marriott, lifetime supporters of the Oro Valley Historical Society. Twenty-eight-year residents of the Oro Valley area, they leave at the end of May to move to Florida where Barbara went to undergraduate school and to be close to relatives. An award-winning author, with a Doctorate in Cultural Anthropology, Barbara has written over 20 books, mostly about the Southwest. As the final act of benefitting the Society, Barbara donated some of her "Images of America/Oro Valley" books to the Society which we accepted with much thanks to sell in our gift shop at the Pusch House Museum. Come buy a book when the Pusch House Museum is open again in September, and join with us as we wish Mike and Barbara a safe journey and a very happy life in the Sunshine State (although Arizona really does have more sunshine!)



