



# SAINT JOSEPH'S CULTURAL CENTER

## Grass Valley Museum

### NEWSLETTER

July 2023



Saint Joseph's Cultural Center  
GRASS VALLEY MUSEUM

Event Space for Weddings, Family Events, Private Parties, Concerts, Plays, Banquets, Classes and Artists' Studios

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Help us preserve history:



### PEOPLE FROM THE PAST

#### Sister Mary Mercy Taylor Shares Her Experiences at Mt. St. Mary's Convent and Orphanage

By Rose Murphy

The Grass Valley Museum embraces stories of the past. Stories of Sisters and children are revealed through photos and relics that are displayed on the second floor of the museum's historical building. Some accounts are chronicled in the form of correspondence and news articles. Fortunately, a recorded interview with Sister Mary Mercy Taylor, one of the last surviving Sisters of Mercy, was documented in 1992. Her interview, along with a dozen letters written to museum docent, Donna Jordan, bring to light some experiences Sister Mary Mercy had while teaching and caring for the orphans.

Sister Mary Mercy writes to Donna Jordan in 1992:

*"From 1928 to 1977, off and on, Mt. St. Mary's was my home, along with all of Grass Valley. We loved the place and the people. Of all the Sisters who entered the novitiate there, only Sister Mary Cecilia Murray and I are still living."*

In Sister Mercy's recorded interview, she explains how she came to be a Sister at Mt. St. Mary's Convent and Orphanage:

Sister Mercy's mother passed when she was young. Her father, who was a Protestant, worked tirelessly as a mason, so he was unable to care for his daughter. He sent her to Holy Cross, a boarding school in Fresno, as he knew it would be a strict school and she, after graduation, she craved a place where she would have "family". So, she went to a public library and looked in a Catholic directory, to see what orders she could locate. Since she was a half-orphan herself, she yearned to teach other orphans. At that time there were



two orphanages in Grass Valley. She wrote to Mother Superior, who encouraged her to come up right away. She did not tell her father, as she knew he'd come right after her come up right away. She did not tell her father, as she knew he'd come right after her. For seven years her father didn't know where she was. When he finally located her and came to visit, he was "happy as pie" to see her. In a letter dated August 31, 1992, Sister Mercy writes of being the 2nd-grade teacher for the orphans. She taught in the space that today holds a replica display of a classroom. A JC Penney's manikin wearing a habit stands in the space where Sister Mercy taught. "The manikin could be representing her!" she wrote in parenthesis.

Sister Mercy also tells of a memory she had while teaching in late January in the 1930s. She describes a very deep, heavy snow, that made all of the water ditches fail. The convent and orphanage had no water and no school for two weeks. Each day the Sisters took clothes baskets to collect snow to melt. She recalls the fire department sent a truck to pipe water into the boarders' bathtubs by running hoses through the upstairs window. You are welcome to come to the Grass Valley Museum and see the letters from Sister Mary Mercy as well as many other reminders of the days when St. Joseph's Cultural Center was creating stories of the many people who passed through or made a home in Grass Valley.

410 South Church Street, Grass Valley, CA 95945 - 530.272.4725



## GO BACK TO SCHOOL...WAY BACK

"Throughout history teachers have been at the forefront of all civilizations, educating and inspiring the next generation and keeping societies moving forward. Frontier Teachers artfully captures that pioneering, resilient, and enduring spirit of teachers that lives on today."

**David A. Sanchez, Former President, California Teachers Association**

If countless books and movies are to be believed, America's Wild West was, at heart, a world of cowboys and Indians, sheriffs and gunslingers, scruffy settlers, and mountain men—a man's world. In the new book *Frontier Teachers: Stories of Heroic Women of the Old West*, New York Times bestselling author Chris Enss, takes on this stereotype, telling the stories of seventeen courageous women who faced down schoolrooms full of children on the open prairies and in the cattle and mining towns of the Old West.

Between 1847 and 1858, more than six hundred women teachers traveled across the untamed frontier to provide youngsters with an education, and the numbers grew rapidly in the decades to come, as women took advantage of one of the few career opportunities for respectable work for ladies of the era. Enduring hardship, the dozen women whose stories are movingly told in the pages of *Frontier Teachers* demonstrated the utmost dedication and sacrifice necessary to bring formal education to the Wild West. As immortalized in works of art and literature, for many students their women teachers were heroic figures who introduced them to a world of possibilities—and changed America forever.

The national launch of *Frontier Teachers* will take place at Mount St. Mary's Academy in Grass Valley, California, on Saturday, July 29, 2023, from 10:30 A.M. to 2 P.M. Five nuns from the Sisters of Mercy Convent arrived in Grass Valley in 1863 to help care for and teach school to orphans who lost their families traveling West. They were the first women to take on such a task in the Gold Country. Their story is one of more than a dozen tales of resolute educators included in Enss's book *Frontier Teachers*.

***Frontier Teachers: Stories of Heroic Women of the Old West* is available at fine bookstores everywhere, Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble.com, and nbnbooks.com. Visit [www.chris-enss.com](http://www.chris-enss.com) for more information.**

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!



**JULY 29, 2023**

**The Book Launch at the Historic building, Covenant Orphanage, 410 South Church St. Follow the signs to the museum!!**

**OCTOBER 7, 2023**

**Grass Valley Museum is hosting a Walking Tour. The tour Starts at 10 am at the Museum on 410 S. Church St. Over 20 sites will be visited! More details to follow.**



Visit our website at [saintjosephsculturalcenter.org](http://saintjosephsculturalcenter.org)



**1948 Recipe From Hamilton Beach Food Mixer.booklet:**

**Lemon Loaf Cake**

Preliminary: Preheat oven to baking temperature. Select a 9X9X2 inch square pan, a tube cake pan, or a loaf pan 8X6 inches. Grease the bottom (sides need not be greased) and line with waxed paper cut to fit the pan. Have all ingredients at room temperature.

**Sift into large bowl of Hamilton Beach Mixer:**

- 2 cups sifted all purpose flour
- 1 1/3 cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 teaspoon sode\*
- 1/4 teaspoon mace

**Add:**

- 1/2 cup shortening, soft
- 2 eggs, unbeaten
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 teaspoon orange extract
- Grated rind of 1 lemon

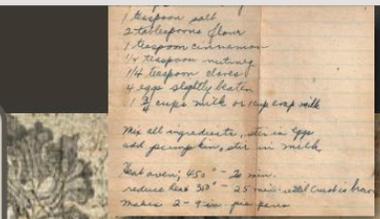
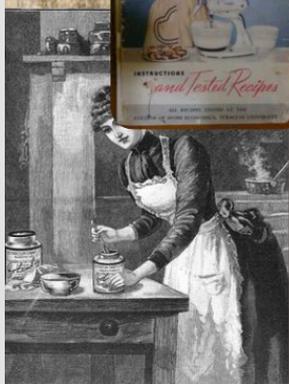
Move the Bowl Control so that beater is close to side of bowl. Mix at speed 1 for two (2) minutes. While mixing move Bowl Control back and forth several times to blend thoroughly all ingredients. Stop beater.

Add: 1/3 cup lemon juice.

Mix at speed 1 for one (1) minute. Pour into pan.

Baking: at 350 degrees F, for 40 to 45 minutes.

\*Sode is short for Sodium bicarbonate commonly known as baking soda or bicarbonate of soda.



**Some Historic "Bites" about the Recipe.**

In the Grass Valley Museum collection there is a small booklet with this recipe. Only 50 pages long, it would have been in the box with your new Hamilton Beach Mixer. The Hamilton Beach Mixer's aerodynamic design was the hallmark of postwar style. The recipes highlight the mixer rather than the food. Not from the farmhouse kitchen, these recipes were developed with the help of the college of Home Economics at Syracuse University.



**ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHT**

**Fine Doll from the Past**

This 16" doll has a china head made by Kestner in Germany. The body is cloth, and the arms are leather, and may be newer. Made in the 1860's, she was a new doll at the time of the building of the Museum. Her dress is original. Over time, the lovely silk has shattered, making her very fragile. Bequest from the Vernon estate.



**PLEASE MAKE A DONATION HERE**

**You may also mail a check made out to:**

**Saint Joseph's Cultural Center  
410 South Church Street  
Grass Valley, CA 95945**

*Thank You!*