

Newbury Park namesake returns

Pioneer's grandson honored

By NETTIE BREDSTRAND

The grandson of the man who gave his name to Newbury Park was honored Tuesday night at a reception at the Stagecoach Inn museum and, in turn, shared a few family stories with local history buffs.

Egbert Starr Newbury III, a Concord, Mass., attorney, has been a regular visitor to the Conejo Valley since 1975, when he attended the 100th anniversary of the Newbury Park post office.

He was accompanied last night by his wife, Anne Bixby Chamberlin Newbury; his daughter, Nancy Newbury-Andresen of Norwich, Vt.; and his son and daughter-in-law, William and Priscilla Newbury, New York City residents.

The group toured the Inn with museum docents and spent a couple of hours sharing stories about his grandfather's brief stay in the Conejo Valley in the 1870s.

The first stagecoach stop in The Conejo was on Newbury land, and Newbury told members of the Conejo Valley Historical Society that he's "absolutely fascinated with the work that has gone into this inn," which is a reproduction of the most prominent of the old stage stops.

His grandfather, Egbert Newbury, was born in Allegan, Mich., in 1843 and moved to

California after serving in the Union Army during the Civil War. He was ill — probably with tuberculosis — and he came West in search of a better climate.

He found it in the Conejo Valley and in Santa Barbara. Letters written to his sister in the early 1870s tell of his recuperation in Santa Barbara, where he lived before moving to The Conejo. He said that his cough and lungs no longer troubled him but that his voice was still feeble, and that he was still barely able to speak above a whisper.

His health continued to improve after he moved to the drier climate of The Conejo, where he purchased 2,259 acres of land. He also regained the full use of his voice.

Conejo Valley land was generally selling for about \$2.30 an acre. His land reached generally from Hodencamp Road on the west, to Duesenberg Drive on the east, to La Jolla Drive on the north, and into the foothills of Westlake Village on the south.

In 1874, Newbury and his wife, Frances Kellogg, built a modest little house on what was once the Jungleland property on what is now Thousand Oaks Boulevard. The house was surrounded by a forest of gigantic oak trees and was near a spring named Barrel Spring.

Other than adobes, the Newbury house

was probably the first cottage built in the Conejo Valley. Today, a replica of the Newbury House is part of the Stagecoach Inn heritage museum and the barn's original foundation, built soon after the family moved in, still stands on land now owned by the family of Jungleland founder Louis Goebel, according to Conejo Valley historian Pat Allen.

A son, Egbert Starr Newbury II, was born to the couple in a Santa Barbara hospital in 1874. Two years later, another son, George Kellogg Newbury, was born on the Conejo Ranch.

"Roads were bad in those days, and you had to wait for low tide before you could drive to Ventura or Santa Barbara," Newbury said. "They probably waited too long," he added "and the baby was born on the ranch."

Although he stayed less than a decade, Egbert Newbury left his imprint on the young valley. Besides playing host to the first stagecoach stop, it was at his urging that the area got its first post office.

Newbury was a writer, of sorts. His letters to relatives in the Midwest were long, descriptive and involved. He wrote newspaper columns for the Ventura Signal,

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A family portrait: from left, Egbert Newbury, Nancy Newbury-Andresen, Priscilla Newbury, Bill Newbury and, seated, Reba Hays Jeffries and Anne Newbury. (News Chronicle photo by Roger Hardy)