

The Salvation Army in Salinas

By Genevieve Simunovich with Josephine Morris and Lois Epp

Genevieve Simunovich was born and raised in Watsonville, California. When she was eleven she attended a girls' program at the Watsonville Salvation Army Church. Later she joined the church and after high school took the nine-month course at the College for Officer's Training, then in San Francisco.

As a Salvation Army Minister she served in California, Idaho, Oregon, Texas and Washington. She retired in 1985 and moved back to the area to be near her remaining family and close to the community of Watsonville.

Retired Salvation Army Major Genevieve Simunovich is still active in her Church, and she has been a tutor with the Salinas Public Library Literacy Program for many years. In 2009 Genevieve Simunovich with Josephine Morris and Louis Epp provided this material about the Salinas Salvation Army for the Salinas Public Library.

SALINAS SALVATION ARMY TIMELINE

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| 1894 - 1910 | Salinas Corps (church) opened in October 1894. It closed July 1910. The first location was at the corner of Lincoln and Gabilan. |
| 1897-1910 | Fort Romie colony near Soledad. Charles Romie sold the Salvation Army 520 acres of land on which they started this venture. |

When the Salvation Army concluded oversight of Fort Romie, Grange 358 took it over and continued Social Services.

- 1930 The Salinas Salvation Army Corps reopened in February of 1930.
- 1941 or 1942 The Salinas Corps moved to South Main near the old Theaters.
- 1953 or 1954 The Salinas Corps moved to 230 E. Market Street.
- 1979 The Salinas Corps moved to E. Alisal and Williams Road.
- 1994 The Salvation Army Salinas Corps celebrated its 100 Years Anniversary. There was a parade from downtown Main Street, followed by a program at Sherwood Center.
- 2001 Moved to 2460 N. Main Street at Russell Road. The Corps remodeled the Old Pacific Bell Telephone Building. The building was dedicated April 8, 2001.

The following Keynote Speech given at the Centennial Celebration of the Salvation Army in Salinas by Southern Western Territorial Commissioner Peter Chang at Sherwood Hall in Salinas, California on November 19, 1994.

SALVATION ARMY 100 YEARS IN SALINAS

For 100 years the Salvation Army has been part of the Salinas Community. In October of 1894, the first Salvation Army Officers came up from Monterey to Salinas and set up camp near Alisal and Lincoln Street.

Many things have changed since 1894: our roads are paved; we have running hot water and electricity; but some things remain the same. The Salvation Army continues to be a large part of the Salinas community. Many of you know what we are doing now in Salinas to help people in need; but today I would like to share some of our history with you.

In 1894 the first Salvation Army officer, Captain Annie B. Fields, came to Salinas from Monterey. They brought tents and set up camp near the north side of Alisal Street and the old courthouse.

In 1897 Mr. Booth-Tucker established Fort Romie, a Salvation Army farm colony near Soledad. With 519 acres of land, the Salvation Army set up a learning environment for 80 families. The Salvation Army provided farm equipment, horses, schooling, cottages and meals. Wagon trains came to the new Fort Romie from Oakland bringing supplies and newcomers. Salvationists continued to hold meetings regularly, bringing much more than soup, soap and salvation to the Salinas area.

By the 1930's The Salvation Army had opened a formalized corps and was ready to provide relief when the depression hit. Every Sunday The Salvation Army took truckloads of food and clothing to the tent towns set up near Sherwood Park. "Many families would have starved to death if it had not been for The Salvation Army." The Salvation Army provided a boarding house and Sunday Sessions, as well as a band bringing fellowship and with ministry.

In the 1940s most people remember the Salvation Army's service during the war. Soldiers were given comfort, aid, and compassion from the Salinas Corps.

In the 1950s The Salvation Army began a juvenile hall ministry with delinquent youth and temporarily housed children.

In the 1960s fire raged through the Salinas Valley and The Salvation Army was there to help those affected by the disaster.

In the 1970s the youth choral group "Brothers and Sisters" flourished as it toured throughout Northern and Central California. This group composed of white, African American and Mexican youth reflected the spirit of brotherhood.

In the 1980s the federal government gave The Salvation Army 5,000 pounds of surplus cheese which was dispersed over a three day period. The Salvation Army sponsored and operated The Harmony House Shelter which was the first housing effort for homeless families and single men in the Salinas Valley.

Today The Salvation Army is as busy as ever coming up with new ways to help local citizens build for tomorrow. Presently in the works is a comprehensive youth program targeted to attract

those ages 10-17 who are in need of alternative after school activities. The Salvation Army already offers youth programs such as summer camps, recreation, visitation to juvenile delinquents.

The new program would be composed of three components. It will include a Kid's Café nutrition program, the Confident Kid's support group, and after school activities. Kid's café will offer a menu for the mind, body and spirit. Youth will receive tutoring, and companionship. The Confident Kid's support group includes group discussions in a moderated environment. The after school program will include activities such as music instruction, athletic games and homework assistance.

In Salinas over 6,000 individuals were beneficiaries of Salvation Army Christmas programs last year and this year The Salvation Army prepares to meet an even larger need. With the addition of three new programs, such as the Angel Tree, celebrity kettle days and the Fireman Toy Drive, the 1993 holiday season looks to be memorable for all.

Be an angel this Christmas, stop by the Northridge Mall and select an angel off The Salvation Army Angel Tree. Each angel represents a particular gift which would make a child's Christmas extra special this year. You can make their wish come true.

Today The Salvation Army prepares for tomorrow as it constantly employs new ways of lending a hand where it is needed. To celebrate our birthday The Salvation Army invites you to "Purchase a year of our past and create memories that will last." The Salvation Army has arranged for 100 commemorative plaques to be made, one for each year that the Salvation Army has been in Salinas. For 1,000 dollars you can buy one of these decorative

pieces and at the same time donate funds which will go towards building a better tomorrow for the people of Salinas.

At The Salvation Army it is our goal to see that others receive what they need and a little more, an extra blanket, a few toys at Christmas, a hot meal and smile. We give gladly to the Salinas Valley because we care. As the Salvation Army celebrates 100 years of Service to Salinas it is our hope that you will too. Purchase a year of our past and create moments that will last.

So this is The Salvation Army of Salinas, after 100 years still pioneering for the future.

SALVATION ARMY JUVENILE HALL MINISTRY

By Josephine Morris

The Salvation Army began the Juvenile Hall Volunteer Ministry in the 1950s. In the late 50s Major and Mrs. Irby began a special service at the Juvenile Hall. The Salvation Army ladies visited Juvenile Hall once a month and mended clothes for the kids. Mrs. Gertrude Mills and other ladies volunteered in the early 60s. Mrs. Schweppe and others volunteered.

Mrs. Mattie Hicks (Little) was a Juvenile Hall volunteer for 9 years. It was under her mentoring in May of 1969 that I became a regular volunteer. I was not a soldier in the Salvation Army at the time. I had recently finished a course in Juvenile Delinquency at a Utah University. Mrs. Hicks said that was enough to qualify me to volunteer at Juvenile Hall. I told her I felt a calling and a commitment to the Juvenile Hall Youth. So it was my beginning.

When I first started, we met in a little room with the kids by ourselves. Our services were always ecumenical. Most kids back then were runaways and minor offenses. Many changes have come about since that first beginning. We had fun parties, played out in the yard, etc. Now we have parties but it is all under very strict supervisions and the youth are divided into various groups.

Juvenile Hall now reflects our violent society, but we still try to help the youth to consider making better choices and we try to bring hope into their brokenness and confusion. Each week we also have volunteers from various backgrounds and religious convictions. Some of those faithful volunteers were once in Juvenile Hall. I was a volunteer when they were in Juvenile Hall.

It is a joy and a blessing to now share this ministry with them. People do change...presently Sal Melchor, Mrs. Irene Preston, Cornell Carwell, Bard Sherman, David King, Phil Vanderkraats, and other community volunteers share at Juvenile Hall.

There are good kids who have done bad things—but we believe there is hope for most of them to turn their lives around. They have a theme song:

Something beautiful, something good
All my confusion He understood
All I had to offer him was brokenness and strife—
But he made something beautiful of my life.

And

I can do all things through Him who gives me the strength.

