



The Grapevine

Published by the San Marino Historical Society

The San Marino Historical Society
Thurnher House at Lacy Park
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FALL, 2007

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members:

The Historical Society continues to be a highly active organization, however we would like to involve a greater number of our members in our activities.

Our effort in gathering, organizing and documenting historical items and artifacts from the San Marino area continues at the Thurnher House on Tuesday afternoons, under Judy Carter's direction.

Ave Bortz continues planning for the compiling of a History of San Marino for the Centennial of San Marino in 2013. She would welcome members who would be interested in being involved in that project.

The recording of oral histories of long term residents continues. We have completed some interviews and are planning additional ones with persons having recollections of life in this area in past years. We welcome those who would be willing to be trained in the interview process.

We are documenting the history of organizations and objects of the San Marino area in the Grapevine, and welcome input from those who would like to assist in this process.

We continue to work towards the maintenance of the Michael White adobe, and to make its historic features available to a wider number of residents of the area.

We present speakers having subjects of historic interest at our community meetings, the next one of which is described on this page. If you would like to be involved in this, or any of the other activities, please contact us at the email address or phone number, below.

Progress on the Memorial continues, with dedication planned for November 11 at 2pm. The concrete has been poured, and etching of the granite and of the concrete walks is in process. Landscaping is being performed.

Our email address is smhistorical@earthlink.net. An answering machine is also connected to the telephone number, 626-304-9375; please feel free to leave messages at that number, or to send email. Also, we will be posting information bulletins, as appropriate, on our web site. The Thurnher House is open most Tuesdays, from 10am to 3pm, and by appointment. Please call ahead, if possible.

We hope to see you at our October 29th meeting

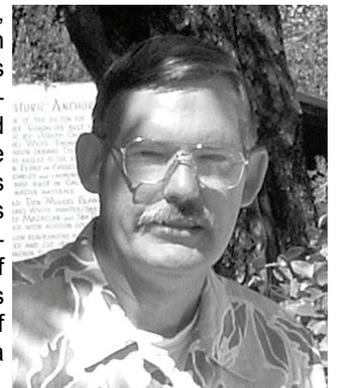
Gene Dryden, President

SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROUDLY PRESENTS THE MISSION IN YOUR BACK YARD Charles Lyons

How many of you know the intimate details of the history of the San Gabriel Mission? That structure and its surrounding villages and facilities formed the basis for society in the San Gabriel Valley 200 years ago, and that influence continues to this day.. Mr. Lyons is Director of Public Relations for the San Gabriel Mission. He will talk with the Historical Society about little known facets of the Mission and its peoples.

He will discuss the structures and features located at the San Gabriel Mission, their history and the community in which they resided. He will tell us of the natives and their history, including the Tonga Village, and its relation to the peoples who lived around the San Gabriel Mission 200 years ago. He will also touch on the interrelations between the Mission, the Chapman Mill and its relation to San Marino's Old Mill, and the dam at Sunny Slope and its associated mill.

Mr. Lyons was born here, and has been associated with the Mission for 5 years. His emphasis has been to interpret and spread religion and history, as it applies to the San Gabriel Mission and its place in the Community. His emphasis has been to disseminate the related history of these structures and peoples using the significant library of the San Gabriel Mission as a vehicle.



**The Meeting will be held at
Southwestern Academy
2800 Monterey Road, San Marino
Monday, October 29, 2007 at 7:30 PM.
Public Invited -- Admission is Free**

**San Marino Historical Society
Officers 2007-2008**

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*Vice President, Membership	Bill Ferry
*Vice President, Programs	Ben Salvaty
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	Gene Platz
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	Emile Ferry
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Stoneman Mural	Marilyn Peck

Historical Collections and Architectural Survey
Sander Peck, Marilyn Peck

Docent Chairmen
Mary Payne, Peggy Winkler

Docents
Graziella Almanza, Mary Payne, Dorothy Ohlson, Marilyn Peck, Peggy Winkler, Ave Maria Bortz, Jim Elliott, Carolyn Holmstrom

General Assistants
Gene Platz, Sander Peck, Marlene Elliott, James Elliott, Alan Weirick

Adobe Restoration and Preservation
Dennis Kneier, James Elliott, Paul Crowley

Website
Chris Datwyler, Gene Dryden

*Board Officers

Society Presidents (1974-2004)

Midge Sherwood.....	1974
Mary Smith.....	1976
Jack Sherwood.....	1978
Ed Ford.....	1980
Graziella Almanza1.....	1982
La Verne Smith.....	1985
Jeanne Imler.....	1989
Gary Fleming.....	1991
Lillian Campbell.....	1993
Marilyn Peck.....	1995
Paul Crowley.....	1999
Gene Dryden.....	2004

**From the Archives
by Judith Carter**

Recent Donations:

A copy of the map of Santa Anita Rancho (1871) donated by Mike Hart, Sunnyslope Water Company. The map shows Michael White's vineyard and house.

Two theater programs from the Raymond Theater in Pasadena dated 1922, donated by Friends of the San Marino Library.

Four black and white photographs of the interior of Huntington Pharmacy in 1960.

A mother-of pearl lacquer ware box donated by Taek Soo Shin, the Historical Society scholarship recipient from Southwestern Academy.

DVD of slides and printed presentation of Growing Up in Lacy Park donated by Oskar Thurnher, son of Armin and Erna Thurnher the original residents of the Thurnher House.

Research:

Jim Sill from San Diego used the San Marino Tribune on microfilm for research.

An independent historian assisting with the El Molino Viejo restroom update project requested information about the 1927 landscape plan for the Old Mill.

Arlene Kelly of San Marino Women's Club researched topics relating to history of the club in its collection of scrapbooks.

Software:

We continue to evaluate Present Perfect Software as a means for organizing and accessing the archives. Some simple modifications of our computer equipment will need to be made before we would be compatible with the latest version of this software.

Oral History:

Two oral histories have been recorded. A list of additional interviews is being compiled. This project will move ahead now that we have purchased transcribing equipment.

Tours:

Tours of the Thurnher House may be arranged by telephoning the San Marino Historical Society at 626-304-9375 or Judith Carter at 626-795-0357. The Thurnher House is open most Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Please call the above telephone numbers to confirm that the building is open.

Tours of the Stoneman School Mural

Tours of the famous Stoneman Mural can be arranged by calling Marilyn Peck at
626-449-4572

THE THREE MILLS

By Mike Hart and Gene Dryden

Once upon a time, between 1816 and 1823, there were three grist mills in the San Gabriel Valley. One was located at the exit from Mill Canyon-- El Molino Viejo--, one was adjacent to the San Gabriel Mission-- the Chapman Mill, and one was adjacent to the Sunny Slope Dam, near an Indian village and presently at the site of a condominium complex. The mills and the blacksmith shops all depended on flow of water down their adjacent zanjias, or water channels, for their operation.

It was a beautiful place of flowing water, abundant tules and a forest of native trees, nestled in a small canyon at the foot of a short, but steep rise. The Shoshonean-speaking Native American tribe who had lived there since at least 1200 AD called the place Acuragna from their word acura, meaning "wood". Translated into English, the name of their village was "Woodville", and the people who lived there were known as the "Wood Clan". It was the wood that the Native Americans respected and used in moderate amounts for their needs, but the wood existed because of water. Other families in the area were the Siba and Akura at the San Gabriel Mission, the Acuranga (Sheshiikuanun-gna) at La Presa, and the Sonanga at Michael White's adobe, all part of the Gabrielino tribe.

The area of Acuragna lay astride the Raymond fault, a geologic feature which threw up an underground barrier to southward-flowing subterranean water, causing springs to percolate to the surface forming marshy ponds. Even during the long dry season when the surrounding plain was brown and dusty, the pools at Acuragna remained full, supporting extensive plant and animal life. This area, today, is the home of the Sunny Slope Water Company. Excavation in this area for new home development is finding many artifacts of the prior Indian village.

Fertile though the lands in the area were, an uninterrupted water supply was essential to continuing prosperity of the community and to providing for the needs of significant numbers of both animals and people in the San Gabriel Mission region. Surviving records indicate that local wells around the region had water levels too deep to produce water in sufficient quantities for irrigation, but water flowed in abundance a short distance to the north, where the Raymond fault lay. The padres of the San Gabriel Mission directed their Indian neophytes to build a system of dams and irrigation zanjias (rock lined ditches)

to bring water from the vicinities of Los Robles or Mission Canyon and Wilson Lake down to the mission settlement to be used for domestic and irrigation purposes, as well as for powering of grist mills for the grinding of grain.

The first water systems were crude, consisting of brush and dirt dams and unlined ditches, but in the 1790s, as master masons and skilled potters arrived from Mexico, substantial structures were constructed of stone or fired tiles set in mortar. In 1816, Father Jose Maria Zalvidea directed construction of a water-powered grist mill in a canyon on the Raymond escarpment. Believed to have been the first water-powered mill built in California, this is the famous El Molino Viejo, or Old Mill, in San Marino, now a California historic landmark. Water collected from Mill and Los Robles Canyons was carried in tile-lined zanjias to the mill, where two stones ground the bumper crops of wheat and corn routinely grown at the Mission. The water then exited the mill and flowed into a large swampy area later known as Mission or Wilson Lake, today the site of Lacy Park. Zalvidea also dammed Wilson Lake and used the outflow to operate a sawmill, a wool-washing works and a tannery, all of which were located closer to the mission.

Dams were constructed at the outlet of Wilson Lake and at the junction of its zanjias with streams from Wilson, Mission and San Marino canyons. The 12 ft high Wilson Lake dam was located near the intersection of Old Mill road and Monterey Rd, had a 190 ft width and created a 1000 ft water backup. The second dam was located near the current Valentine School parking lot and provided sufficient "head", or water pressure, to send water to the San Gabriel mission.

Although the mission fathers used the Old Mill until 1823, it proved to be less than satisfactory because water splashing up from the mill wheel routinely dampened the

SAN GABRIEL MISSION ASSETS AT TIME OF CONFISCATION November 1834

- 1 weaving room with 4 looms for wool
- 1 room for making brandy with 4 stills
- 1 room for pressing grapes with 3 wine presses
- 1 forge for smithy
- 1 structure for making soap & tallow for candles.
- 2 Water Mills, 1 half a league distant, El Molino Viejo, the other in front of Mission, Chapman Mill
- 163,578 vines in 4 vineyards
- 2,333 fruit trees in 9 orchards
- 12,980 head of cattle, 6,548 sheep, 2,938 horses, cattle on loan, 4,443 head
- 227 volumes in Library of Franciscans
- Indian population of Mission comprises 1,323 souls within Mission District & Rancho San Bernardino
- Assets of Mission: 11,154.12 reales
- Debt of Mission: 8,271.75 reales
- Artillery belonging to Mission:
 - 2 canones de a 4 mortales en medias
 - 1 canon de fierro de a 2
 - 3 pedreros de fierro de a 2
 - 1 canon de a 4 (prestado al ayuntamiento de Los Angeles)



CHAPMAN'S MILL, built 1821, in front of San Gabriel Mission—Mike Hart

(Continued on page 4)

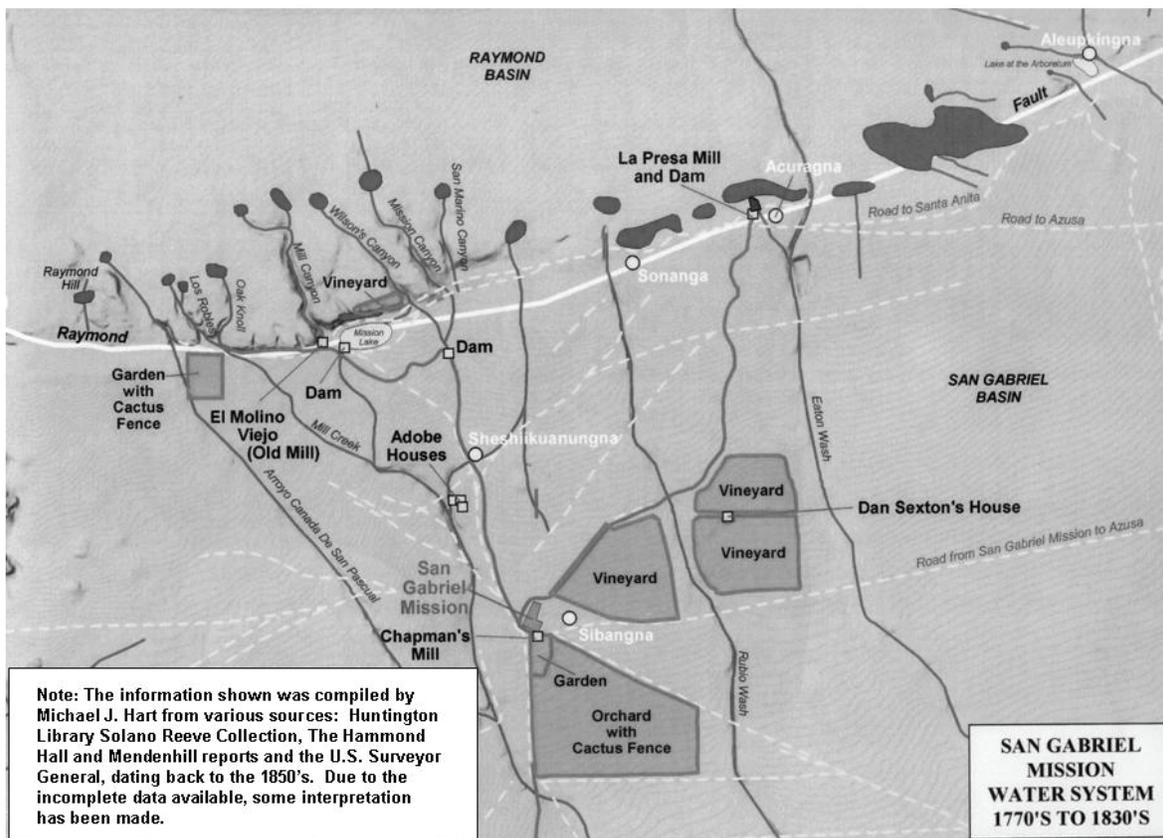
The Three Mills

flower on the grind stones. Father Zalvidea resolved to build a new mill closer to the mission, and, in 1821, he requested Joseph Chapman to come to San Gabriel to design the new mill and its water system, and to superintend its construction. This mill was to be located just south of the Mission, and its remains can be seen to this day, adjacent to the railroad tracks.

Although substantially built of native materials, Chapman's mill employed technical improvements reflecting contemporary New England practice. Notably, the water wheel was of the efficient, vertically-aligned "breast" design to make best use of the low "head" or fall of water available at the site. Beveled gears would have been the only way to transfer energy to the grinding stones. During Edith Webb's excavation of the mill in 1934, none of the working mechanism was found. To obtain the greater flow of water needed to power this mill, Chapman surveyed the ground around the old Gabrielino rancheria at Acuragna and determined that the flow of water would be sufficient for the new mill.

Surveyors of the period determined a dam height such that water outflow from the dam had full flow to the Mission through the 6 foot wide by 2.5 foot deep rock and tile lined them in place on the growing structure. Into the mortar, the Gabrielino pressed their hands, and the paws of their dogs, leaving palm print "signatures" for posterity – where they can be seen to this day on the South side of the dam. Subsequent Sunny Slope Ranch workers, around 1890, applied a coating of lime mortar to the North and top side of the dam to seal it.

Concurrent with the construction of the dam, other crews excavated and lined a zanja to carry the impounded water to the new mill. Clay tiles made and fired at the mission workshops were set in mortar to make the ditch watertight. Although no trace of this irrigation canal, known in the later nineteenth century as the "La Presa ditch", is known to exist, it followed a path roughly parallel to, but south of the alignment of today's Rose Avenue, crossed Rubio Wash, and ran southerly to the mission. Mission records indicate that the dam and canal were finished, and the new mill was in operation, by late 1823.



Please Sign Up!!!

If you want to receive these quarterly "Grapevines", see the old photos, learn of our programs and help to perpetuate the history of our wonderful town, then return the blue envelope quickly. A membership card will follow. Chances are your name will appear somewhere in our 2013 Centennial book!

Thank you.

WEBSITE

Visit our web page to learn more about your Society's programs and activities: www.smnet.org
(Click on "Community Resources" and then on "San Marino Historical Society") or go directly to:
www.smnet.org/comm_group/historical/