



The Grapevine

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The San Marino Historical Society
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SPRING 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

March, 2011

San Marino Centennial Time to Join in on the Fun

Planning for the City of San Marino Centennial in 2013 really geared up on February 7th with a City Wide meeting at the San Marino Center under the leadership of Liz Kneier, Chair of the San Marino Centennial Oversight Committee. Every community organization was asked to designate one or two individuals to represent them in the planning effort and this particular meeting was open for all San Marino residents to contribute to the effort. It was a fun and lively evening with over 100 people from all aspects of San Marino involved. Each table of eight went through a series of brainstorming sessions to generate ideas for various aspects of the Centennial Celebration. The facilitators moved from table to table while the rest of us waited for the next topic to be brought to us.

The San Marino Historical Society was well represented with both Past Presidents Gene Dryden and Ave Bortz on the Centennial Steering Committee and Past President Marilyn Peck and yours truly participating in the brainstorming sessions. The City of San Marino has been setting aside \$10,000 per year since the City's 75th anniversary to help with the Centennial celebration. The Historical Society has already benefitted from a \$50,000 grant from that fund as seed money for a commemorative book celebrating the families of San Marino which should be available for purchase in the fall of 2012 in time to be given as a Christmas present.

The Centennial celebration will officially start on July 4, 2012 and continue with different types of celebrations and events throughout 2013. Many of the ideas for these events and activities may have arisen from the brainstorming sessions. The selection and detailed planning for these many activities will provide opportunities for many of you to help which is where the fun really comes in. The Historical Society will be involved with many of these efforts and we need all of your help and participation to ensure the success of our City's Centennial. I look forward to working and celebrating with all of you over the next three years.

John T. Morris,
President
San Marino Historical Society

SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROUDLY PRESENTS THE NATIVE AMERICANS AMONG US

Long before our forefathers set foot in the San Gabriel Valley, there were native people living in this area. These were simple, peaceful people who lived by hunting and fishing, in groups we call tribes or villages. The San Gabriel natives were the Tonga Indians, later named Gabrielinos by the Franciscans. One of their villages was at the current location of Huntington School. Another was located at the intersection of La-Presa and Huntington Drive, where recent excavation for a new subdivision has unearthed many of their implements and tools.



Two of the members of the Tonga tribe, Andrew Moralis and Matthew Lovio, will be with us, tonight, to tell us of life in their tribe and of their history and customs. Andrew's father is the Chief of their tribe. This meeting provides a rare opportunity to hear about the Indian lifestyle and the customs of these people who preceded us in living in Southern California.

**Monday, March 21, 2011, 7:30pm
Southwestern Academy, Lincoln Hall
2800 Monterey Rd
San Marino
Public is Welcome**

**San Marino Historical Society
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2010**

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Society Presidents (1974-2008)

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Benjamin Salvaty 2008
Ave Maria Bortz 2008

THE SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Thurnher House Hours

The Thurnher House is open on the first and third Sunday afternoon of each month. It is also open for tours by appointment. If you would like to visit the house on Tuesdays, please call 626-304-9375 or smhistorical@earthlink.net for an appointment.

Colorfully decorated San Marino sweatshirts are now available at San Marino Stationery, 2140 Huntington Dr., San Marino, CA 91108. Call owner Katie Bolton at 626-289-9661 to check availability. These limited editions shirts were a hot item during the holidays and the Historical Society treasury benefited from their sales.

Request for E-Mail Addresses—For those of you who are interested in receiving e-mail reminders of San Marino Historical Society programs or nearby events of local historical interest, please send an e-mail to us at smhistorical@earthlink.net. We promise we will not share your e-mail with any other organization or business. It will be for our own use only.

From the Archives

Judith Carter

There is a lot of activity at the Archives as we begin to prepare for the 100th anniversary of the incorporation of the City of San Marino in 1913. On Tuesday mornings, the small conference room is always occupied. Author Elizabeth Pomeroy is focussing her research on early history of the area. Michael Moran, an authority on the history of Sts. Felicitas and Perpetua, shares his knowledge with Bill Ellinger, who is researching the Michael White land title. Bill is an architectural historian and a member of the Save the Michael White Adobe Task Force. They are joined by Gary Coles whose interest is on chain of title of the land before incorporation.

Volunteers Julie Fedde, Judy Newell and Judy Shih have completed the Obituary File and it is ready for use by anyone in search of obituary records. The next two projects are now underway. The first is a reorganization of the extensive real estate files that were gathered in the 1970s-1990s. Records are arranged alphabetically by street name and then by specific address. At this time there are three separate files. In the next few months these three will be integrated for ease of use by anyone wanting information on a specific home. Julie Fedde has begun an inventory of the San Marino Garden Club collection. She is cleaning, measuring and arranging the scrapbooks, rosters, financial records and other materials for permanent storage. The Garden Club has funded shelving for the collection and we are grateful to them for that.

We are pleased to have helped San Marino Patch, the new local electronic newsletter, with photos and bits of information that they have requested.

We have received two significant donations recently. Dorothy Ross, a long time member of the Historical Society and member of the board donated two boxes of her papers including the draft copy of a book on Michael White. In addition there are working notes, photographs and correspondence relating to her research. We are grateful to Dorothy and to her son Ron Ross of La Canada for making the donation.

In February, Oskar Thurnher gave us the completed story of the lives of his parents, Armin and Erna Thurnher. This collection is meticulously researched and includes coats of arms, genealogical material and photographs pertaining to their lives as well as to the development of Lacy Park. We are grateful to Oskar for sharing an important part of San Marino's history.

The Archives are open to the public from 9-3 on Tuesdays. Please call 626-304-9375 for an appointment.

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
then click on San Marino Historical Society

THE GABRIELINO INDIANS AMONG US

This year marks the 235th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. But what was happening here in the Pasadena area in 1776?

The oak and chaparral wooded plain which later became Pasadena was sparsely populated. On the west side of town in the Arroyo Seco, the Hahamog-na Indian tribe had at least five villages. The Arroyo Seco was the source of water, and abundant food.

After the arrival of the missionaries, the tribe's Chief, Hahamovic, was baptized and re-named "Pascual". These Indians were called the Pascuals. The Pascuals, along with numerous other small tribes, were later called the Mission Indians. Soon this name was changed to the Gabrielino Indians, after the San Gabriel Valley mission, to distinguish them from Indians of other Missions.

The Hahamog-na Indians practiced little agriculture and domesticated no animals. Yet, they lived well on the abundant animal life and plant life from the Arroyo Seco and the nearby plains. Trout and probably catfish and blue gills were taken from the Arroyo Seco. Although these local tribes wore sandals, nets and other cordage from the abundant yucca and agave plants, fish lines were not their primary means of catching fish. There were at least two common fish stupefying plants available to the Indians of the Arroyo Seco. These were the nuts of the California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) and the leaves of the turkey mullein plant (*Ere-mocarpus setigerus*), known to the Spanish as yerba del pescado, meaning herb of the fish.

The buckeye nuts of the turkey mullein leaves were thrown into a pool or a section of the stream where the water was slow. Within minutes, the fish (and even the frogs) would float to the top. Then the fish would be scooped out by hand or with nets.

The Hahamog-na tribe's animal food included deer meat, young coyotes, squirrels, badgers, raccoons, rabbit, black birds and hawks. Rats, skunks and wildcats, as unappealing as they might sound, were also eaten.

The weapons of choice were the non-returning throwing stick for small game such as the rabbits and squirrels; the bow was used for all-sized game; and the spear, with a point made of obsidian or other stones able to take a keen edge. The obsidian was not found locally, and had to be traded.

Snakes were eaten, with the exception of the rattlesnake, even though they were abundant and nutritious. Bears were common but were not killed for food. The Hahamog-na believed that the soul of wizards entered animals after death, especially bears. They had similar beliefs about eagles, owls, and crows.

A favorite insect food was a large grasshopper, roasted on a stick over a fire. Bird eggs—quail in particular—were also a part of the Hahamog-na's diet. Quail were once abundant in the Pasadena area, and a healthy quail laid about two dozen eggs a season.

The acorns, which fell from the oak trees in large numbers every fall were the main plant staple. These were col-



A group of early Gabrielino Indian Women, members of a Shoshonean tribe, who once lived in the area of San Marino, then known as Sonanga

lected, shelled, and processed to remove the bitter tannic acid. A family would store up to 500 pounds of acorns to last through the year.

In July of 1769, Father Junipero Serra, writing of the Pasadena area, said that "We found vines (wild) of a large size and, in some cases, quite loaded with grapes. We have seen Indians in immense numbers. They continued to make a good subsistence from various seeds and by fishing".

Wild oats and various other grasses were harvested for their grain. The Hahamog-na also used the wild fruits and berries, such as the wild cherries, prickly pear fruit, currants, gooseberries, manzanita berries, and elderberries.

A good pair of moccasins could be woven within from yucca fibre. These would last from two weeks to two months with these Indians. Many of the local Indians would travel seasonally up and down the Arroyo Seco, depending on where food was abundant.

In memory of our geographic ancestors, a trail leading up the Arroyo Seco has been named Gabrielino National Recreation Trail. This is a 28 mile trail which begins in northwest Altadena and ends in Sierra Madre, following a route that was widely used by these Indians.

Of traditional names for many Indian settlements we have but a few. Hugo Reid listed four Aleupkingna on his

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THE GABRIELINO INDIANS AMONG US

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own Rancho Santa Anita, Aleupkingna on his own Ranch Santa Anita, Acurag-na by "La Presa", Sisitcanongna at "Pear Orchard", and Sonangna on "Mr. White's Farm".

Careless research has credited the last of these, Sonangna, with a location at Sierra Madre, because a Mr. Irving White developed a community there. However, this occurred long after the death of Hugo Reid and the "Mr. White" of Reid's list was none other than Miguel Blanco who had arrived from England or Ireland in 1829, and who owned for a time the Rancho Muscupiabe, named for a Serrano village in the Cajon Pass where the ranch was situated.

Writing of this early pioneer, H. D. Barrows said, "Mr. White obtained a concession of five hundred veras (about 1370 ft) square, just north of the Mission, which contained inexhaustible springs of living water. On these 77 acres of one-time Mission land, which White later sold, he established a vineyard, an orchard, and an adobe home. The building still stands at the edge of the athletic field of San Marino High School, and anyone who goes there can visualize the setting of Sonangna, though it takes a feat of the imagination to erase from the scene the concrete boulevards, the clipped lawns and modern buildings, and substitute the natural pools and cienegas, the native grasses and shrubs, and the great oak groves which must have supported the Sonautam in the best Gabrielino style. A two story wood frame addition, originally adjacent to White's adobe building, was moved to San Gabriel in the 1950 time period, and still provides rental housing for two families.

One can find the term "La Presa" still in use as the name of a street which bisects Huntington Drive in a strip of Los Angeles count land lying between San Marino and Arcadia. Between this street and San Gabriel Boulevard on the North side of Huntington Drive, there still exists a remnant of the stone dam, or "presa" which was built there in Mission times to impound water to irrigate the fields and vineyards of the region. Handprints of the builders of this dam are still visible in the dam face.

No doubt there had been a natural marsh and pool at this place, since this was the neighborhood which supported the image of Acurag-na. It is known that Indians clung to this old site, or perhaps returned to it after secularization of the Missions, since from a little settlement here came the workers hired by L.J. Rose after he purchased in 1861 the portion of Rancho Santa Anita which became his famous Sunny Slope Ranch. The name of the ancient village had been based on the Gabrielino word akura, mean-

ing wood, and it was remembered by an old indian as a place "where there was plenty of firewood". Mr. Rose, himself, sold many a cord of it from his vast acreage, yet even in our time, one gets an impression of a veritable forest of the great Engelmann oaks, leading to the modern homes beneath their shade a look of unusual charm and permanence.

It has been said that the waters from "La Presa" flowed southwest to turn the wheels of the second of the Mission mills, the one build by Joseph Chapman in 1823. This mill stood a little way to the south of the church building, below the present railway tracks. Remnants of the foundation of this mill are still visible under the palm trees. To divert water to it from "La Presa" would have been quite impossible since a ditch leading in that direction would have had to make a diagonal crossing of the deep channel of the Rubio Wash, which is still to be seen where it crosses Huntington Drive and again where it slashes down through the greens of the present San Gabriel Country Club.

Mr. Dan Mulock, of San Gabriel, whose father bought the Domingo and Salas tracts north of the Mission in 1865, could recall the course of the ditch which actually brought the water to this second mill. It can now be observed by driving southward from the campus of the California Institute of Technology, beginning on Arden Road. The stream which ran here through Wild Grape Canyon was joined by one from San Marino Canyon, now within the grounds of the Huntington Library.

Contains excerpts from a Star News article by Christopher Verges Tues, Sept 15, 1987, Page D-6, and excerpts from a reprint by the Southwest Museum in 1964 of an article by Bernice Eastman Johnston titled "California's Gabrielino Indians".



Early Gabrielino reed house



Oskar Thurnher Comes "Home"

February 8, Oskar Thurnher visited his family home and shared lunch with some friends from the Historical Society.

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.