



The Grapevine

Published by the San Marino Historical Society

SPRING 2015

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

April, 2015

The San Marino Historical Society celebrated the one hundred and second anniversary of the founding of the City of San Marino with two events in April. On April 9, the society co-hosted a San Marino Chamber of Commerce Mixer at the Thurnher House with ServePro and sang happy birthday to the city. Food, flowers, balloons, prizes and birthday cake marked the birthday of the city. Then on Sunday, April 19, the docents who held Thurnher Open added a special touch by serving refreshments to people who came to tour the house.

We look forward the latest in our series "Before the Colors Fade" on May 18, at 7 p.m. in the Barth Room of the Crowell Library. The speaker will be Lyle Umenhoffer who is a survivor of the USS Indianapolis which was sunk in the Pacific.

San Marino: A Centennial History and author Elizabeth Pomeroy continue to receive awards. The most recent of these was awarded to the author by the Historical Society of Southern California.

In this issue, Historical Society Historian Linda Mollno traces the history of the local wine industry and how it established the foundation of today's wine production.

The draft of a historical preservation ordinance will be presented at an upcoming City Council Study Session. This follows the Council's decision to place a moratorium on demolition permits until action can be taken on the ordinance.

I had two opportunities to speak on the history of San Marino in March. A group from ORT America gathered at the Thurnher House to learn of the history of San Marino, Lacy Park and the house itself. This local chapter of an international organization that promotes education was enlightened by a glimpse of local history.

A presentation to the Rotary Club of San Marino on March 26, served two purposes. The first was to thank that organization for their support of the Historical Society over many years. The second was to trace the close relationship between the two organizations by illustrating the presentation with a selection of items and photographs from the archives.

Judith Carter

SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROUDLY PRESENTS

Lyle Umenhoffer

Sailor, Survivor, American Hero



Presenting another in our "Before the Colors Fade" series of talks by women and men around San Marino who served in our armed forces or who supported them back home through our nation's recent wars. Our spring program comes from a gentle man with an extraordinary tale.

Meet Lyle Umenhoffer, U. S. Navy. Some 300 of twelve hundred crew members on his USS Indianapolis survived its sinking in July, 1945, and the nearly five days afloat in shark-infested South Pacific waters.

The ship had finished delivering a large crate from San Francisco, not knowing it contained parts of the first atomic bomb to be dropped in war on Hiroshima a few

(Continued on page 2)

Monday, May 18, 2015, 7:00pm
Crowell Public Library
Barth Community Room
1890 Huntington Drive, San Marino
Public is Welcome, Admission is Free

**San Marino Historical Society
Executive Officers and Members of the Board
2015**

Officers

President.....	Judith Carter
Secretary	Pat Salvaty
Treasurer	Wayne Carter
Parliamentarian.....	Lee Mothershead
Immediate Past President.....	John Morris

Committee Chairs

Archives	Judith Carter
Historian.....	Linda Molino
Membership	Bill Ferry
Newsletter	Chris Datwyler
Oral Histories	Ave Bortz Carolyn Chapman
Programs	Ken Veronda
Publicity	Ed Tom
Thurnher House Docents.....	John Ryan
Legal Consultant	Shahen Hairapetian
Community Liaison	Jennifer Goldman Isaac Hung
Accountant.....	Robert Houston
San Marino High School Student Rep	Skylar Kaufeldt-Lira
Southwestern Academy Student Rep	Deborah Kaufeldt- Boardman

Emeritus Board Members

Robert and Graziella Almanza
Jim Elliott
Marilyn Peck
Peggy Winkler

Society Presidents (1974-2013)

Midge Sherwood	1974
Mary Smith.....	1976
Jack Sherwood	1978
Ed Ford.....	1980
Graziella Almanza.....	1982
Laverne Smith.....	1985
Jeanne Imler	1989
Gary Fleming	1991
Lillian Campbell.....	1993
Marilyn Peck	1995
Paul Crowley.....	1999
Gene Dryden.....	2004
Benjamin Salvaty	2008
Ave Maria Bortz	2008
John Morris	2010

THE SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 80222
SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA 91118-8222
(626) 304-9375
info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org

Thurnher House Hours

The Thurnher House is open on the first and third Sunday afternoon of each month from noon to 3:00pm. It is also open for tours by appointment. If you would like to visit the house on Tuesdays, please call 626-304-9375 or info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org for an appointment.

**Lyle Umenhoffer
Sailor, Survivor, American Hero**

(Continued from page 1)

days later, when two torpedoes from a Japanese submarine found their mark and took down the Indianapolis.

Lyle Umenhoffer joined the Navy after graduating from Mark Keppel High, a natural choice for a young man from Alhambra who enjoyed surfing. He was aboard the Indianapolis when the ship was damaged during the fight for Okinawa, traveled with it back to San Francisco for repairs, and helped hoist that crate of unknown materials aboard for its delivery to Tinian before his ship continued toward the Philippines and its encounter with the torpedoes and sharks.



Sailor Umenhoffer will say he's not a hero, though he is credited with keeping himself and two shipmates afloat before they were rescued from the school of sharks that had taken many others in the water. Come meet him, hear his story, and judge for yourself.

Mid-Century Modern Home Demolished



This home at 730 Chester was demolished in March. Designed by renowned Mid-Century architect Harold B. Zook, this classic 1955-built Modern was sold by the family of the original owner. The new owners chose not to preserve it. Featuring walls of glass, interior and exterior terrazzo flooring, teak built-ins and much more, the home was an unspoiled example of the classic Mid-Century style.

WEBSITE

Visit our website to learn more about your Society's programs and activities as well as viewing current and past issues of our newsletter – the "Grapevine":
<http://sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org/>

Viña Madre: Was the Mother Vineyard at Mission San Gabriel?

By
Linda Mollino, Ph.D..

Wine, a staple of Mediterranean diets, economy and religion, found its way to Alta California with the introduction of the mission system. Located on the fringes of settlement, grapevines offered a step towards self-sufficiency. Grapes grew wild in many parts of the Americas; however, native vines proved comparatively worthless for viticulture. *Vitis Vinifera*, or the "Mission Grape" originated in Europe and although no comparable vine exists today in Spain, its origin and transport is not disputed. It produced a thin, harsh wine, unacceptable as table wine today, but it did make decent sweet wine for sacraments.

San Diego de Alcalá, established in 1769, was long proclaimed California's first vineyard and 1969 was used by California's wine industry to celebrate their bicentennial. General Mariano Vallejo, whose father arrived with the 1769 Serra-Portola expedition, wrote that Serra planted the first vines in San Diego. Father Serra's writings contradict those dates. In 1783 he claimed Mission San Gabriel had no wine at all and expressed dismay when a barrel sent from the coast fell off the mule and broke.

Mission San Gabriel eventually supported the largest and most productive mission vineyard in Alta California, named by the padres "Viña Madre," or "mother vineyard." Many assumed, mistakenly, this moniker identified San Gabriel as the birthplace of California wines. Early twentieth century postcards of a very old and very large vine in San Gabriel contributed to this myth.

The first vine planted however was not in San Diego or San Gabriel, but at Mission San Juan Capistrano. Padre Palóu wrote at the time of wild grapevines in the area that encouraged the fathers to plant grafted vines they brought from Baja California. Church records indicate between 1779 and 1781, Padre Mugártegui supervised six campesinos in planting 2000 grapevines at Mission San Juan Capistrano. The first crop ripened in 1783 and wine-making began.

Viñaderos eventually established 170-acres of vineyard with 50,000 vines at San Gabriel, achieving a great reputation among contemporaries that contributed to the Viña Madre myth. Padres' trained field hands to plant, prune and tend vines, to harvest and transport grapes to the mission's winery for production. San Gabriel's location, climate, and soil composition contributed significantly to their wine's quality, as did the dedication of Father Zalvidea who personally supervised production. An early manual found in the mission archives prescribed cleanliness throughout a process where near-naked Indians stomped the grapes. Did viñaderos understand the potential presence of bacteria in relation to damaged wine during fermentation? They did know that following the guidelines resulted in good wine.

All missions worked hard to produce good wine, but not all did. Soil conditions and climate varied from mission to mission and techniques of growing and harvesting were archaic. Decades passed before self-sufficiency was established and southern missions, especially San Gabriel, San Fernando, and San Buenaventura, experienced the most success. Northern missions struggled



The smaller building in the foreground is the winery at San Gabriel Mission. (c. 1886) Courtesy Wine Institute of California.

with early vineyard production, though to be fair the success of Mission Sonoma, founded in 1823, occurred after statehood.

In the early 1800s, Mission San Gabriel visitors, such as mountain man Jedediah Smith, Massachusetts trader Alfred Robinson, expressed varied opinions of the wine and whiskey produced. Father Duran of Mission Santa Barbara, wrote to Governor Figueroa, "There are two kinds of red wine. One is dry but very good for the table; the other is sweet, resembling the juice pressed from the blackberries and so rather unpleasant. There are also two kinds of white wine ... [that] make a most delicious drink for the dessert. The wine from the pure grape juice is for the altar."

Secularization in the 1830s brought an end to the mission system. Gradual abandonment of vineyards coincided with the arrival of American migrants and European immigrants who observed the economic importance of viticulture in mission economy, its potential for successful commercialization. Although San Gabriel was not the Viña Madre, its success with viticulture encouraged early pioneers to expand and improve on production, laying the foundation of today's industry.

San Marino: A Centennial History Earns Another Award



Author Elizabeth Pomeroy

Since its publication for San Marino's centennial in 2013, *San Marino: A Centennial History* has received a number of awards. The excellence of this well researched and attractively presented book on San Marino's first hundred years has been recognized outside the boundaries of San Marino. Published by the San Marino Historical Society, written by Elizabeth Pomeroy, designed by Jeff Lapidés and produced by Charles Allen Imaging Experts, the book celebrates the unique history of this San Gabriel Valley community.

On April 4, Pomeroy was presented the The Donald H. Pflueger Local History Award which honors outstanding publications on Los Angeles and Southern California local history. The ceremony took place at the Society's recent conference at Occidental College.

Earlier awards include Award of merit to Elizabeth Pomeroy from the Conference of California Historical Societies and the American Association of for State and Local History. In 2013, the International Book Awards sponsored by USA Book News honored Jeff Lapidés for Best Cover Design. The book was also a finalist for Lapidés' design of the book's interior.

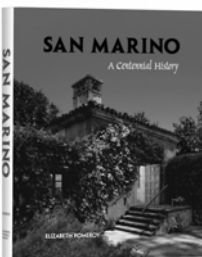
PubWest, the leading association of small and medium-sized book publishers, awarded Lapidés a gold award for Jacket/Cover Design and a bronze award for Historical/Biographical Design.

Order San Marino Centennial Book Now

\$55 per copy + 4.95 tax = \$59.95. Add \$7.50 if you wish the book to be mailed to you for a total of \$67.45.

Order on-line via paypal at www.sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org or by stopping by the Thurnher House on the first and third Sunday from 12-3 or on Tuesdays from 9:30-3.

Books are also currently available for sale at San Marino Toy and Books, Julienne, A Stitch in Time, Diana D's, The Old Mill, The Huntington Store, Sweet and Savory, Fedde Furniture and the Pasadena Museum of History



From the Archives

April 2015
Judith Carter

The Thurnher House continues to hum on Tuesdays. Volunteers have been working for nine years to protect and preserve materials in the collection. This past month we received a donation of real estate records from Doan Harbison Realty from the 1980s. Dudley Doan was kind enough to save the index cards which preserved information on on sales of San Marino homes before multiple listing books and years before computers. This donation will be added to our extensive real estate collections.

Many members have commented on the number of houses that have been torn down around the city recently. The archives attempts to preserve a record of those homes in cooperation with the city staff. Each home slated for demolition is photographed by a city staff member. A copy of the photograph is e-mailed to us so that we have a record of the structure for our files.

The archives contain a wealth of photographs, maps, and other images. Our plan for the next several months is to begin a project which will include scanning of a selection of key items from the collection and add them to the website allowing a greater number of people to view them.

Two Must See Exhibits at The Pasadena Museum of History

When Johnny Came Marching West: How the Civil War Shaped Pasadena and Thaddeus Lowe: Chief Aeronaut of the Union Army will be on view from April 22 through September 20. These outstanding exhibits should not be missed. Quilts, garments, guns, letters and photographs lend a richness to the displays. Look for the corner devoted to George Stoneman.

2015 Calendar of Events

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| April 19 | 12-3 p.m. Docent led tours of the Thurnher House |
| April 22-Sept 20 | Civil War Shaped Pasadena, Pasadena Museum of History |
| May 3 | 12-3 p.m. Docent led tours of the Thurnher House |
| May 17 | 12-3 p.m. Docent led tours of the Thurnher House |
| May 18 | 7 p.m. Crowell Public Library, San Marino Historical Society Program featuring Lyle Umehoffer |
| June 7 | 12-3 p.m. Docent led tours of the Thurnher House |
| June 21 | 12-3 p.m. Docent led tours of the Thurnher House |
| July 4 | Celebration at Lacy Park |
| October 27 | 7 p.m. Crowell Public Library, San Marino Historical Society Program, TBA |