



The Grapevine

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SPRING 2017

**SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PROUDLY PRESENTS**

**El Molino Viejo
1817 - 2017
by
Cathy Brown**



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

May 2017

I hope that all of our members are well and enjoying the spring season. The San Marino Historical Society has had an eventful past two months. There have been many visitors to the Thurnher House in Lacy Park. On Easter Sunday, the park was very full and many dropped by to visit. The San Marino Historical Society participated in San Marino Day at The Huntington on April 4th. Our society along with many other civic groups had a booth open with several photographs and displays where residents could learn more about San Marino history and our organization. The event was a great success and we look forward to participating again next year. For our February program, there was another "full house" when Jeff Arnett presented a fascinating account of his own experiences as an Army Air Corps pilot during World War II in Asia. We are very grateful and appreciative to Jeff for presenting such a great program.

For our spring calendar, our society will provide you with another program on Monday, May 22nd at 7:00 PM. The speaker will be Cathy Brown, Executive Director of El Molino Viejo. The Old Mill is the oldest commercial building in southern California having been completed in about 1816. The Old Mill has served in many capacities over the years. It was built to be the first grist mill for the San Gabriel Mission. It also was a home to Colonel Edward Kewen, California's first Attorney General, club house for the Huntington Hotel Golf Course and a home again after having been restored in in the 1920's. It currently serves as home to the California Art Club. Come to learn about the rich history of the Old Mill and the people who influenced its past in what promises to be an very interesting program.

The Thurnher House at Lacy Park is open to visitors for tours from noon until 3:00 PM on the first and third Sunday of every month and by appointment on Tuesdays. This is the former Park Superintendent's home and

El Molino Viejo, the oldest commercial building in Los Angeles County, is celebrating its bicentennial year this year. The mill has had many uses and occupants over its 200 year life and we are pleased to have the Executive Director share some of those stories with us.

Catherine (Cathy) Brown graduated from UCLA with a BA in History. In 2002 she began work at the Old Mill as the Assistant Director and today, she is the Executive Director.

Cathy will talk about the history of El Molino Viejo and the people who have made the Mill a home and those that have influenced its history. She and John Quinn, President of the Old Mill Foundation, will conclude with a review of the Mill's 200th anniversary year and the Old Mill Foundation's plans for this year.

Monday, May 22, 2017, 7:00pm
Crowell Public Library
Barth Community Room
1890 Huntington Drive, San Marino
Public is Welcome, Admission is Free

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**San Marino Historical Society
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2017**

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

President' s Message

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the docents look forward to and are happy to have visitors.

If any member is interested in volunteering with our organization, please contact me at 626-287-3734 or jvryan@pacbell.net.

I hope to see many of you at our next program or at the Thurnher House.

John V. Ryan, President

From the Archives

April, 2017, by Judith Carter

The focus this quarter has been on continuing to uncover the treasures found in the Sherwood collection. Photographs, letters and postcards are just a few of the items we have documented. The twelve original boxes donated by the Sherwood family will be consolidated to allow for comfortable storage of this valuable collection and ease of access for those wishing to do research.

Materials in the general collection recently provided information to several people researching the historical significance of particular homes. We open our archives on Tuesdays to anyone who calls in advance. Among those who request permission to access our materials are San Marino Tribune staff, San Marino city staff, San Marino City Club officers and former residents. Architectural historians from two firms visited as well.

A new project is being launched to increase the number of photographs on the San Marino Historical Society website. (<http://sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org>). Dan Clarke and Matt Morris are cooperating on this effort. The goal is to make our broad collection of photographs easily available to the public.

We continue to accept contributions to the collection that would enhance our knowledge of the unique history of San Marino.

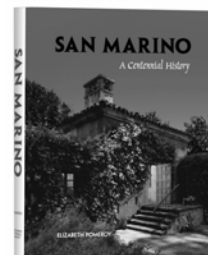
Email us at info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org. or call 626-304-9375.

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, Vromans, Sweet and Savory, Fedde Furniture and the Pasadena Museum of History



Callahan House and Historic Preservation

By Linda Mollno, PhD.

The history of housing in California reveals periods of construction booms and plateaus of stagnant growth. Booms often reflect peacetime desires for expansion while economic depressions tend to stall the building industry. Following World War II the southland experienced staggering growth in both population and housing construction. Many of the postwar homeowners were young families and by the 1970s their children, the baby-boomers, had come of house-buying age. Their substantial numbers in this demographic created a housing boom of their own.

More subdivisions and suburbs, many in outlying areas were the result – Riverside and San Bernardino counties, as well as San Diego and southern Orange County. Urban growth radiated out from the central core of Los Angeles at a staggering rate. Not everyone wanted a new home. Some of these new homebuyers wished to raise their families in the childhood neighborhoods they knew so well. Rather than buy a new home in a new subdivision they chose to purchase an older home with the intention of remodeling or replacing.

The subsequent remodels and teardowns sparked an interest in historic preservation on a local level. This was a relatively new idea for southern California. Angelinos and Californians in general had a reputation for actively tearing down the past to build the future. Pasadena embraced the banner of preservation when Pasadena Heritage was established in 1977, but other cities were not so eager.

In 1972 a preservation issue emerged in San Marino and it was the San Gabriel Historical Society that tried to help save the Callahan house. San Marino did not have a preservation plan in place and the San Marino Historical Society only came into existence in 1976. The structure in question was a small caretaker's residence that some saw as expendable. It was the history behind the structure that caught the eye of early preservationists. Built in the first decade of the twentieth century as a caretaker's home, built of material from a historic property.

Benjamin D. Wilson arrived in Alta California in 1841, settled in the pueblo of Los Angeles, became a successful landowner and a decade later moved his family to the San Gabriel Valley. He established Lake Vineyard Estate in 1854 and built a two-story home. The stately Victorian mansion overlooked the lake and was surrounded by vineyards and citrus orchards. The cost was quite handsome for the time – a sum of \$20,000.

Wilson died in 1878 and six years later his daughter Ruth made Lake Vineyard her home. Ruth Wilson Patton and her husband, attorney George Smith Patton II raised their children here. Their daughter Anne and son George (the future general) grew up at Lake Vineyard, their mother's childhood home. They played with Ignacio, son of the family caretaker John Callahan. George and Ignacio loved to ride horses and swim in the lake. For a time they and other local children attended Washington School together.

Ignacio Callahan, in a 1967 Los Angeles Times interview, reminisced of days spent at Lake Vineyard. Young Patton, he claimed, would purposely release the ranch's many horses and mules. "Then Mr. Patton would order us to round them up and we would spend the whole night out" having great fun herding the livestock.



John V. Callahan sits outside the adobe almost completely constructed from parts of the main house. It was dismantled in 1909.

In the early twentieth century, after George Patton III left for West Point, the old Victorian house was torn down. A grand 8,000 square foot, three-story, 20-room mansion was constructed on a knoll across from Henry Huntington's estate. The young soldier returned to San Marino to find the new family home that can be seen today on Patton Court.

It was in a comfortable basement room of this house the Patton met with Huntington and other local ranchers to secretly plan the incorporation and government structure for San Marino. These men, our founding fathers, moved to prevent surrounding cities from annexing their affluent homes and ranches. On April 12, 1913 San Marino officially became a city and the City Council held its first meeting at the Patton house.

Not only did Patton build a new home for his family, he also constructed a simple structure on the grounds for their caretaker, John Callahan. Whether it was for practical reasons or in an effort to retain some of the lands past history, the builders used wood and other materials from Benjamin Wilson's 1850's Victorian estate to construct the Callahan home.

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Callahan House and Historic Preservation

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George Patton senior subdivided and sold much of the original estate prior to death in 1927. He kept 13 acres and the mansion where his unmarried daughter Anne lived until her death in 1971. With no family member prepared to take on care of the estate a developer was brought in and all but 1.5 acres surrounding the mansion was sold to build the newer homes now surrounding the Patton home. The Callahan house sat on one of the new lots and it was to be torn down.

The efforts in 1972 to save this historic structure were unsuccessful. In recent years the question of preservation has resulted in heated campaigns to save or not to save. Not all old buildings should be preserved simply because they are old. It is in a community's best interest to establish preservation guidelines in advance of their need. Not all preservation efforts in San Marino have failed however; the Michael White Adobe is a stellar example of our community efforts to preserve the past.



Old Mill, 2017



Old Mill when it was a golf course club house.

Membership Update

The board of the San Marino Historical Society sincerely appreciates all our new and renewing members. Our numbers have increased since last year. Many new families have chosen to support us. We have seen an increase in the number of people who have been members in the past and have decided to rejoin after a lapse of a year or two. However the majority of our members renew annually. Our fiscal year ends September 30. If you have not yet acted, it is not too late to put a check in the blue membership envelope or to visit the website and contribute via PayPal. We look forward to continuing to provide the community with programs and resources that inform our members on the history of San Marino



Pierre's Restaurant Advertisement in the San Marino Tribune. Pierre's closed in 1957.

2017 Calendar of Events

October 23 Monday 7 p.m., San Marino Historical Society Presentation, Crowell Public Library, Barth Community Room, 1890 Huntington Drive, San Marino

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.

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/>