



# The Grapevine

Fall 2025

SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PROUDLY PRESENTS

## “PROJECTING THE PAST”

BY

NICK T. SPARK

Dear Members and Friends of the San Marino Historical Society,

We hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful summer! Thanks to your support, much has been accomplished in the archives over the past few months.

This summer, I had the pleasure of speaking with Maybelle Poole and her daughter Linda Poole, who shared stories about Maybelle’s late father, Herbert Powell. His architectural contributions continue to enrich us today, from our schools and churches to our city markers inscribed with his own handwriting.

Celebrating other San Marino architectural treasures, we are recognizing homes as they reach their centennial through our Centennial Home Project. You might already see some yard signs at homes built between 1902-1925.

Looking ahead, we have several exciting events on the calendar! We invite you to join us on September 27 for the Lacy Park Centennial, October 11 for a tour of the San Gabriel Cemetery, and October 27 for our speaker program featuring Nick Spark, documentary filmmaker of *The Legend of Pancho Barnes* and *the Happy Bottom Riding Club*.

Please help us continue this valuable work by returning your membership check in the blue envelope or by visiting our website [www.sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org](http://www.sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org).

With appreciation,  
Christa Lakon  
President



Nick Spark is the co-founder and curator of  
**PERISCOPE FILM,**

a leading historic film archive based in Los Angeles. He is also Vice President of the nonprofit **Humanus Documentary Films Foundation**. Nick holds an MFA in film production from the USC School of Cinematic Arts. He is an Emmy award-winning documentary filmmaker whose projects have appeared on PBS, History Channel and National Geographic.

Please join us on  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2025  
7:00 - 8:00 P.M. (doors open 6:30)  
SAN MARINO COMMUNITY CENTER  
1800 HUNTINGTON DR.

Kindly RSVP to [info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org)  
Public is welcome, admission is free

## 2025 SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Executive Officers

President - Christa Lakon

Vice President - Ed Tom

Treasurer - Isaac Hung

Secretary - Pat Salvaty

Immediate Past President - Isaac Hung

### Board Members

Judy Carter, Wayne Carter, John Morris, John Ryan, Michael Moran, Joyce Batnij, Aaron Gil, Michael Mancini, Gretchen Shepherd Romey

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Nicole Basseri, Shelley Boyle, John Dustin, Madeline Gutierrez, Katie Manning, Sylvia Uriarte

### Summer Interns

Caitlin Lennon, Coco Wilson, Sophia Papadopoulos, Nic Ashjian

### CENTENNIAL HOME PROJECT

Is your house 100 years old?

Historical Society members are invited to request a yard sign by emailing us at [info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org)



Please include a house photo, the year built and your address.

For more information, please email your inquiries to [info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org).

## 2025 HISTORICAL SOCIETY AWARD

Congratulations to:



**Davis Liang**

San Marino High School

**Kaden Yung**

Southwestern Academy

### *From the archives*

This summer, we were fortunate to have the invaluable help of several interns who made tremendous progress on our archival projects.

Thanks to **Joanna Chen Cham**, PCC Librarian and Coordinator of the PCC Library Certificate Programs, we were matched with **Caitlin Lennon**, a student in the Archives & Digital Collections and Digitization Skills Certificate Program. Caitlin completed her internship by digitizing material from the collection of our founder, **Midge Sherwood**. The Sherwood Collection is comprised of 12 boxes filled with her research, writings and photographs all related to San Marino's history, previously inventoried in 2016 by **Julie Fedde**. Thanks to Caitlin's efforts, more than half of the collection has now been successfully digitized. Caitlin came to us with both academic training and professional experience.

We were also joined by **Coco Wilson** (rising SMHS senior) and **Sophia Papadopoulos** (SMUSD grad and current student at Cal). Coco worked diligently to enter our extensive obituary collection into our digital inventory, making it easier to respond to research requests. Sophia focused on Lacy Park history, gathering photographs and serving as our Lacy Park Centennial Coordinator. Her work will be preserved in our archives and featured in the city's Lacy Park Centennial Celebration slideshow to be viewed on September 27, 2025.

Finally, **Nicolas Ashjian**, a rising senior at Polytechnic, took on our *San Marino People* file cabinet. He selected notable individuals, digitized and labeled their files, and even wrote an article on one that you can find in this newsletter.

We are grateful for our interns. Thank you!

**General George Stoneman:  
A Life of Triumph, A Life of Challenge  
By Nicolas Ashjian**



Long before San Marino became the community we know today, it was home to George Stoneman, a Civil War general who went on to serve as Governor of California and whose career as a military leader and politician was punctuated by successes and failures alike.

### **Early Life and Career**

George Stoneman was born in the small village of Busti, New York, in 1822 to lumberman George Stoneman, Sr., and Catherine Rebecca Cheney Aldrich. Stoneman graduated from the prestigious West Point Academy in 1846, where future Confederate general Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson was his roommate.

After graduating from West Point, Stoneman joined the army as a second lieutenant during the Mexican-American war. He served in the Mormon Battalion, a group that was among the very first to make the treacherous overland journey from Iowa to California. In doing so, Stoneman helped to blaze a trail to the West that many would later follow.

Stoneman was then appointed the leader of the San Francisco Presidio from 1848 to 1849. Beginning in 1850, he served in the Yuma War, a conflict between white American settlers of the newly acquired American territory from Mexico against the Quechan Native Americans, also known as the Yuma. From 1850 to 1853, Stoneman was in charge of the survey parties, which mapped out the Sierra Nevada Mountains for railroad routes. Stoneman remained on the Pacific Coast until 1855, when he was promoted to captain of the Second U.S. Cavalry and served at Camp Cooper, Texas, on the border of Mexico, campaigning against Mexican guerrilla fighters until 1861.

### **Civil War Union Leader**

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Stoneman was in charge of Fort Brown, Texas, serving under Major General David E. Twiggs, a Southern sympathizer. Twiggs ordered Stoneman to surrender Fort Brown to the Confederates, but Stoneman refused and instead led his troops to the North.

When Stoneman reached Washington, D.C., he was assigned to help defend the capital as a major of the First Cavalry unit. Subsequently, Stoneman’s superior and former West Point classmate General George B. McClellan selected Stoneman to serve as a brigadier-general in the U.S. Volunteer Army and the Chief of Cavalry in the Army of the Potomac. In November of 1861, Stoneman married Mary Oliver Hardisty in Baltimore, Maryland.

After McClellan's failed Peninsular Campaign, McClellan appointed Stoneman as the head of the 1st division of the 3rd Infantry Corps in September 1862. Soon after, the War Department made Stoneman a major general of volunteers. Stoneman’s first combat as commander of the 3rd Infantry Corps was the deadly Battle of Fredericksburg in December of 1862. Despite the Union defeat in Fredericksburg, he received a promotion to brevet colonel for his bravery in the battle.

### **Chancellorsville Defeat, Stoneman’s Raid Victory**

In the spring of 1863, Stoneman was sent to lead a major battle behind enemy lines which eventually led to a major Confederate win, albeit with heavy casualties on both sides. After this Union defeat, Stoneman was used as a scapegoat and demoted to a desk job in Washington, D.C.

In 1864, Stoneman secured another field position as commander of the cavalry of the Army of Ohio. Later that year, Stoneman was captured by Confederate soldiers during the Atlanta Campaign while trying to free captured Union soldiers from Andersonville Prison. Stoneman was the highest-ranking Union officer ever captured during the Civil War, but he was fortunate to be released in a prisoner exchange just three months later.

Stoneman's fortunes turned when he led 4,000 troops through western North Carolina and Virginia. This became known as Stoneman's Raid of 1865. Alongside his troops, Stoneman traveled over 2,000 miles in 38 days, destroying hundreds of miles of railroad tracks and sacking several Confederate towns to demoralize Southern sympathizers.

### Post-War Years

Following the Civil War, Stoneman commanded the First Military District from June 1868 to March 1869, in what is present-day Virginia and Tennessee. Despite, being a Democrat, Stoneman helped to implement the new racial laws proposed by the Republican government.

In 1869, Stoneman was sent back out West to command the District of Arizona. But just two years later, Stoneman was dismissed due to his controversial handling of a Native American uprising. Poised to retire as a brevetted colonel, U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant revoked his rank and forced him to retire as a regular colonel.

### Los Robles Rancho to California Governor

After his tenure in Arizona, Stoneman finally managed to fulfill his dream of living in California. He and his wife purchased the 400-acre Los Robles ranch, in what is now in the City of San Marino. Stoneman built his adobe home on the ranch in 1876, but it was later destroyed in a fire.

In yet another turn of fortune that seems to have characterized his career, Stoneman ventured into politics, initially as a California Transportation Commissioner in 1876, as a Federal Indian Commissioner in 1878, and a railroad commissioner in 1879. These positions paved the way to being elected governor of California in 1882 as a Democrat, serving a single four-year term. As governor, he sought to limit the power, influence, and ticket rates of the Southern Pacific Railroad company. Additionally, he supported prison reform and believed in the rehabilitation of prisoners through parole. Stoneman was not reelected in 1886 and subsequently retired from public service.

Stoneman passed away in 1894 while visiting his sister in Buffalo, New York, leaving behind his Los Robles Estate to his wife and four children.

Stoneman may be long gone, but his life characterized by resilience is certainly not forgotten in San Marino. A historical marker on Montroble Place, where his estate and adobe home was once located, notes the importance of both Stoneman and the land encompassed in his rancho: *This was the site of 'Los Robles,' the 400-acre estate of Governor George Stoneman. President Rutherford B. Hayes was entertained here in 1880. The first schoolhouse in the San Gabriel Valley, California's first tennis club, and the first municipal Christmas tree of San Marino were located here.*

### 2025 Calendar of Events

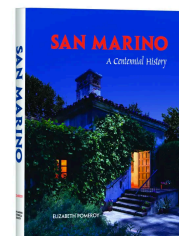
**September 17, 2025 (Sunday, 12-3 PM)** Thurnher House docent-led tours with John Morris and John Ryan

**September 27, 2025 (Saturday, 10 AM-1 PM)** Thurnher House open for docent-led tours during Lacy Park's Centennial Celebration

**October 1 and 15, 2025 (Sundays 12-3 PM)** Thurnher House docent-led tours with John Morris and John Ryan

**October 11, 2025** Tour at San Gabriel Cemetery with L.A. Sheriff Crime Analyst **Joe Walker**, email to follow

**October 27, 2025 (Monday 7-8 PM)** San Marino Historical Society Presentation, see page 1 for details  
**November 2 and 16, 2025 (Sundays, 12-3 PM)** Thurnher House docent-led tours with John Morris and John Ryan.



**Order the San Marino Centennial Book**  
online via PayPal at  
**[www.sanmarinohistoricalociety.org](http://www.sanmarinohistoricalociety.org)**  
Also available at  
**The Huntington Store**  
and **Vroman's Bookstore**.