



NEWSLETTER of the Carpinteria Valley Historical Society

www.carpinteriahistoricalmuseum.org

Editor/Publisher/Design: David W. Griggs

July/August 2015

Associate Editor: Roxie Grant Lapidus

CALENDAR

July 25 – Saturday
MUSEUM MARKETPLACE
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 P.M.



July 29 – Wednesday
Board of Trustees Meeting
6:00 P.M.



August 19 – Wednesday
Volunteer Appreciation
Luncheon at Clementine's
12:00 Noon



August 26 – Wednesday
Board of Trustees Meeting
6:00 P.M.



August 29 – Saturday
MUSEUM MARKETPLACE
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 P.M.



September 17 – Thursday
Train Trip to Union Station,
Olvera Street and El Pueblo
de Los Angeles
7:00 a.m. - 5:20 P.M.



VALLEY HISTORY

School Days: Part III

Carpinteria High School 1929-1965

by Jon Washington '59 & Roxie Grant Lapidus '62

We had a great response to our last installment, describing Main School and the "tent classrooms" that preceded Main's opening in 1938. Lila Anne Hebel (Bartz) CUHS '45 sent recollections of the tent schools, which existed from 1935-38: "I remember the beautiful scale model of the Golden Gate Bridge that Kasue ("Katchi") Mitsukami and his father built for our 4th or 5th grade mud map of California. It was almost the length of the side of the tent, and was complete with mountains, valleys, oceans, rivers and lakes. And then there was the year it rained and rained. Even the duckboard walkways got swamped, or floated." Lila Anne's grandmother, Minnie Hebel, lived nearby at the corner of 8th and Oak streets. When Minnie was baking sugar cookies, you could smell them from the tent school!

So now, it's on to high school, known through the 1960s as "Carpinteria Union High School." There was a huge response to Jon's original question, "What teacher, coach, or other school personnel influenced you most?" Some names echo down the decades, like the legendary Miss Marjorie Holmes, and teacher/coach Joe Fraga, who taught from 1919-1956. Others, like human dynamo Marvin Goux, streaked like a meteor across our sky for a single year (1956-57), leaving an indelible impact. Certain teachers were recalled as intimidating, but several former students revised their opinions as they grew to adulthood. Read on!

Carp High, 1929-1945

Our earliest accounts of Carpinteria High (current Middle School) come from Roscoe Masonheimer, '33, whose lively reminiscences were published by his daughter Patricia in 1991. (Extracts appeared in *The Grapevine* with her permission in 2005, under the title "Roscoe Remembers.") Here's what Roscoe tells us:

"Carpinteria High was a brand-new school when I started there in 1929. The old high school had been on the second floor of the Grammar School building. The new school had a nice gymnasium with locker rooms, all new to me, and wonderful. There were 26-28 students in my class, and about 125 in the whole school. Every teacher I had in high school had a strong influence on my life, and made me the person I am today.

"Miss Maude Merrihew, my algebra teacher, was a strong disciplinarian. She always stood by the door as her students entered her class, and when the second bell rang, everyone had better be inside, or she closed the door on them. Miss Merrihew wore a wig. We all knew it. You could tell it was a wig just by looking at it. Somebody got the bright idea of lifting that wig off Miss Merrihew's head. After 3-4 days of discussion, Bob Opple, D.O. McIntyre, several others and I decided, 'Let's do it!' It took us another 3-4 days to figure out just how to do it. We realized that when she stood in the doorway looking up and down the hall, Miss Merrihew wasn't looking into the room. We fastened a hook on a string and hung it down from the door casing. It took several days to get the hook at just the right level. Finally, everything was set.

When the second bell rang, Miss Merrihew turned around, pulled the door closed, and walked into the room, leaving her hair hanging in the air on the string! She was very upset! Needless to say, that was one of the cruelest things we could have done to her. She was a beautiful, wonderful person, and didn't deserve that kind of treatment."

Miss Merrihew was still going strong a dozen years later, for Lila Anne Hebel '45 describes her as a *"teacher extraordinaire of Math and Latin...I carry a mental picture of her upright posture, her lace-up shoes, her wigs (reddish brown one week, chestnut brown the next) and cameo broach pinning together a lace-trimmed collar. We Hebel grandchildren were always told of the time early in her career when our Uncle Fritz (Francis Frederick Hebel) saved her job when the State Superintendent of Schools paid an unannounced visit to evaluate the new 'probationary teacher.'"* Fritz Hebel was apparently a stellar student, who reflected well on his mentor. *"Miss Merrihew never held it against us if we did not measure up to his skills,"* Lila Anne adds. *"Somewhere I still have a discarded Latin text book from her class."*

Back to Roscoe and the early 1930s:

"Sports were an important part of my high school life. Mr. Fraga coached baseball, as well as being the shop teacher, and Irving "Dimmy" Mather coached football. Mr. Mather was also my biology teacher, and he never made you feel that you couldn't learn. He was a good teacher and well-loved. He later became the school vice principal, and then went on to coach college football.

"Dale Schuyler was the kicker on our football team. When he kicked, he took time out, removed his shoe, and kicked the ball. He could hit between the goal posts 98% of the time. I once tried to kick the football with a bare foot, and it really hurt!" A photo of the 1932 Warrior Varsity Football teams shows Coach Irving Mather, Assistant Coach Fred Greenough, and the following players: Kenji Ota, Taka & Toma Hirishima, Phil Bates, James Hendy, Joe Jimenez, Fred Lopez, Duke Petit, Roscoe & Tom Masonheimer, Fernando Ramirez, Bud White, Ralph & Frank Smith, Walton Kendrick, Ed & Bob Maxfield, Jack

Schweitzer, Robert Johnson, Bob & Ken Opple, Bufford Maddox, Martin Bowler, Elmer Martin, Nat Hales, John Bowen, Ray McPherson, Dale Schuyler, Ed Sechrist, Ralph Woods, and Eul Husted.

Roscoe should have graduated with the class of 1933, but scarlet fever kept him out of school a whole semester. *"I graduated from Carp High in February of 1934. Bob Opple, Violet Reed, Pauline Capp and I made up the graduating class. We had all lost a semester of school, and should have graduated with the class of 1933. Later most of the boys in the class of 1933 went off to war, because we were just the right age. More than half of them did not come back."*

Lescher Dowling, '43, takes up the tale. He was a Freshman at Carp High exactly 10 years after Roscoe.

Little had changed: the total enrollment was 150 students. *"Pearl Harbor came my Junior year. Sunny McKnight, the custodian and night watchman, resigned and joined the Navy. Mr. Greenough, the principal, asked me if I wanted the job, since I was the only kid in school who was 18. I scheduled my free period and PE class the last two periods of the day, and started sweeping classrooms with fellow student Paul Armstrong. I would open and close the school for evening classes, sleep over on a day bed in the 'Health Room,' and make my breakfast in the Homemaking Room.*

"In January of 1943, halfway through my senior year, I received greetings from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, informing me that I had been selected for training and service in the Army. I had been caught in the '19-year-old draft.' Mr. Greenough joined the

Navy, and Mr. Roney became principal. He checked my grades and said I had enough units to graduate, and that if my Commanding Officer sent him a letter of good conduct, he would make sure I received my diploma. After 6 months in the Army, I got furlough to come home to graduate. My classmate, Johnny Romero also got furlough, after 3 months in the Army. On graduation night, all the other students wore caps and gowns, but Johnny and I led the procession in uniform."

Remembering Joe Fraga

Joe Fraga's career in many ways paralleled that of his student, Lescher Dowling. Joe was 19 when World War

I broke out, and joined up when the US entered the war in 1917. As soon as he returned from the war, Joe was hired to teach wood shop at Carp High, in the fall of 1919. He was still managing the print shop there in 1954 when Lescher was hired to teach wood shop. Lescher recently wrote, *"In late August 1956 principal Denny Baylor called and told me that Joe had died, and asked if I would take over the print shop. It had just been moved into the old homemaking rooms. I had had Joe as a teacher and took drafting and print shop from him when a student back in the '40s, so was familiar with it. I told Denny I would take over the print shop for one year, since I knew he would*



Miss Merrihew, from the 1929 Chismahook yearbook.

have a hard time finding a new teacher one week before school started. I stayed for 10 years."

Fred Lemere was at Carp High from 1947-1950. Like Roscoe and Lescher, he had Joe Fraga as a teacher. Fred writes, "Joe Fraga will always be remembered by many of us as a man of many talents. He possessed the ability to convey his teaching in such a manner that learning became not only challenging, but fun. He afforded his students opportunities to learn crafts, hobbies and trades that I am sure many of us still use today. His gentle, kind and gentlemanly manner were characteristics we could all respect and admire. After his passing, a flagpole in his honor was placed behind the track at the end of Memorial Field, near Palm Avenue. A plaque at the base of the pole



Joe Fraga (1895-1956) The 1957 Chismahoo yearbook was dedicated to his memory.

honored Joe Fraga and his service to the youth of Carpinteria. For many years our nation's flag would fly from this flagpole at events held on Memorial Field, from football games and the Russell Cup track meet to graduations. Unfortunately, when Memorial Field was relocated to the present day high school on Foothill Road, the facilities which constituted Memorial Field were removed. The flagpole and plaque were never replaced there or at any other location. This always seemed to me to be a terrible injustice to the memory of a wonderful man and educator."

About 6 weeks after writing the above, Fred wrote with good news: "The plaque has been located. With the help of Lou Panizzon and the school district, it is to be installed on a large rock in the vicinity of its original location. There is now one plaque in place, and 2 additional plaques will be installed, including, I am happy to say, the one that was first dedicated in memory of that fine gentleman and gracious teacher, Joe Fraga." Good job, CUHS alumni!

The Early 1950s

Jimmie Rosebro '52 writes, "For teachers, Miss Holmes took the cake. She took such pride in her students. There was the 'brain trust' class of '49, I believe, all off to Stanford and beyond. That distinction didn't apply to our class of '52, be she loved us also. She loved us poor Okies and Arkies and the Mexican kids from Old Town. She also loved Don Nichols, our class 'brain,' but gave him a B one semester when he got the big head, and he was OK after that. She did have her weak spot though—certain goof-off athletes such as Peter Reagan Corkery, Grant McIntyre, and Tony Rodriguez. They never did a lick of work, but could wrap her around their fingers and keep us all in stitches!

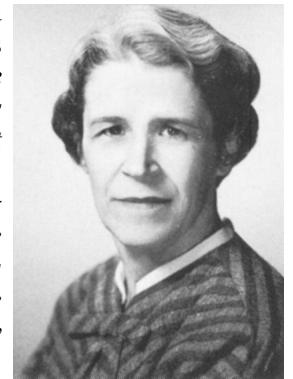
"Once, on the morning of a bad rainstorm, a classmate called the radio program 'Revelry with Beverly' and asked Beverly to announce that there was no school that day. 'Bad boy' Danny Hodgins took the fall for this, and didn't graduate. The real culprit felt guilty, but

reasoned that he was going on to college after graduation and Danny wasn't. What a guy!

"The student's nickname for Mr. Greenough, the principal, was 'Blinky,' and he was the butt of many jokes. But in a skit at a pep rally, he gamely played the role of 'Blinky.' I got to know him after high school, and he even found a nice teaching job for me which I probably should have pursued. As for Miss Holmes, in the last few years of her career she switched from College Prep English to teaching low achievers, and was proud of every achievement of those kids."

The Legendary Miss Holmes

John McCafferty, a class behind Jimmy Rosebro, also remembers "the legendary Marjorie Holmes." "Her discipline was steely," he recalls. "She would sit on her high stool, legs crossed, grinning wickedly, and cracking wry jokes. I liked her more the longer I knew her, including years later when I visited her at Valle Verde retirement home. Surely she's one of Carp's all-time greats. I thought of her often during my own 20 years teaching English in high school and junior college."



Marjorie Holmes, Chismahoo yearbook photo, 1959.

Ripley Bliss '59 writes from Alaska: "Marjorie Holmes. Now there was a teacher. It always intrigued me how that diminutive little lady, sitting astride that rickety wooden stool, could maintain such absolute, complete control over a flock of unruly teenagers. A single word. A cold stare. Even just plain silence. It was a profound lesson for me, not in English Literature, but in human psychology, that has served me well, not only as CO of a platoon of unruly teenagers in Vietnam, but throughout my life. Thank you, Miss Holmes. You were the greatest!" Ripley adds a P.S.: "I'm reminded of an incident in 1966. The U.S. Navy wanted a recommendation from a high school teacher for entry in Naval Aviation School. Naturally I chose Miss Holmes. I remember sitting in her car under that big pine tree on Carp Ave. in front of the library. She said, 'Ripley Bliss, I'm signing this letter with great trepidation, because I hate to see America's young men used as cannon fodder.' In retrospect, after 58,000 dead Americans, it looks like Miss Holmes was right."



Ripley Bliss '59

Classmate Donna Peterson writes, "At the time, I thought Miss Holmes was very strict, and she wasn't one of my favorites. But in my first year of college, while some of the freshmen failed their entry English test, I sailed right through and got an A in English composition the first year. I knew then what a great teacher she had been, and went back that summer to see and thank her."

Tony Perez, '59 gratefully acknowledges Miss Holmes as one of the teachers who helped him get into college: *"In high school, Miss Holmes succeeded Mrs. Carmichael. Influentially, easily the two most (along with my 5th Grade Franklin School teacher, Ms. Bear/Behr) responsible for prepping me for college and more mature thinking—athletic (football) scholarship to get me through college. That knuckle-down kind of thinking. While in high school I spread my wings and made better friends—college bound ones—from the influence of those 3 wonderful ladies. The play we performed in high school with Mr. Wells directing was a great experience, too! Then, Miss Mace prepping me and pushing me to get me academically eligible through the Jr./Sr. summer was another very thankful time for me. Mr. Greenough and Mr. Baylor talked with me as though I had potential and not to waste my opportunities."*

Tom Groves '60 wrote, *"I enjoyed English classes with Miss Marjorie Holmes, as she was from the 'old school' and demanded your attention and participation, but in a positive way. I thank all of my teachers for their contributions to my formative years in school."*

John Franklin '62 has this to say: *"I managed to avoid Miss Holmes' English class until my senior year—not by accident. Senior year, we were reading David Copperfield. To me, where something could be said in one sentence, Dickens would elect to devote a few chapters. I hated the book, and fell way behind, and Miss Holmes knew it. I had a part-time job stocking shelves at Mills Drug Store, and discovered in their magazine section that Classic Comics had an edition of David Copperfield! I ordered it, and the day it came, I read it cover to cover. The next day in class, I was an all-star! Miss Holmes glared at me the whole hour. After class, I went to my locker, just outside her door. As I opened the locker, a short, boney arm suddenly reached from behind me and snatched my comic. I'll never forget the smirk on her face as she walked away!"*

Ginny Sturmer '68 recalled, *"I was finishing my freshman year and my sister Gail was graduating. Gail handed me her yearbook and asked me to take it to Miss Holmes for her to sign. I had never had Miss Holmes, and my knees were shaking at the thought. I gave it to her and she said to pick it up after class. When I did, I mentioned that our family was moving to northern California. She looked at me and said, 'This valley can't survive without a Sturmer in it! There have always been Sturmers in Carpinteria!' She had taught my father, Mike and his brother Warren in the late 1930s and 1940s. I'll never forget her saying that."*

Others who cited Miss Holmes as a great influence are Joanne Klug, '56, Joanne McCubrey '57, Anne Kuizenga '58 and Buttons Tobey, '61. And in her recently published a book of poetry entitled *Mother, May I*, Charlotte Prince '58 acknowledges *"Gratitude all the way back to my high school English teacher, Marjorie Holmes."* Charlotte captures the legendary teacher in a poem written especially for this issue of *The Grapevine*:

A Teacher Remembered

Terror, fear and eagerness
thread together.
College prep freshman English.
She stands erect,
severe of countenance,
the tip of her right pinky finger
stained red,
a concession to her feminine side.

Miss Holmes also commanded the library,
the place where my lifelong addiction
to books was born.

So engrossed—or covetous—
I inevitably forgot the due date.
Provoked after several years
of my inability to return
an overdue book on time,
she pursed her lips
tight as a seam.



Charlotte Prince '58

"There will be consequences."
I forgot the offending book
the following day.
It was a five mile walk home
to retrieve the book.
I wish her lesson had taught me
better library manners.
Still I find it easier to buy a book
than expect to return it.

Every sentence of my lifetime
holds gratitude
to Miss Marjorie Holmes.

Journalism with Miss Mace

Those who worked on publications (*Chismahoo* yearbook, *El Rincon* newspaper) have high praise for Miss Roberta Mace, a key faculty member from 1947-58. The 1958 *Chismahoo* dedication describes her as

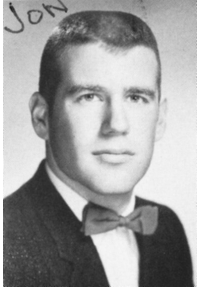


Roberta Mace, *Chismahoo*, 1959.

"versatile teacher: journalism, publications, senior problems, modern history and U.S. History ... booster for Warrior sports, key to Russell Cup, a friend and counselor to all who know her...." This is reflected in the responses we received. Gerri Bauhaus (Williams) '56 writes, *"Roberta [Mace] and Marjorie [Holmes] were top-notch teachers. I couldn't spell very well, and Marjorie was a stickler for spelling. I'm still hopeless, but thankfully, spell check saves me!"* Ann Kuizenga (Emery) '58 adds, *"I learned so*

much from Roberta Mace. It sure made Journalism in college much easier." And Jerrie Tripp (Castro) '59 says, *"My two cents about people who impacted me in high school and later in life is our dear Marjorie, but most of all, Roberta Mace. It was not so much the essays that have carried me, but how to write NEWS and reports, although*

the grammar drills were critical too.” Julie Hirsch (Wedekind) ’56, who continued in the field of journalism, writes that she was most influenced by “Marjorie Holmes, Roberta Mace, campus publications, and what I learned from cheerleading four years (seriously). I feel sorry for the poor souls in giant high schools who are forced to be anonymous. None of us could be anonymous, even if we wanted to.”



Jon Washington '59.

Another who was influenced by Miss Mace is our own Jon Washington, who went on to become a sports journalist. Jon describes how, in his junior year, he began doing work for the yearbook and *El Rincon*. “That’s when Roberta Mace, the hard-working journalism teacher, got me into sports reporting. Before long, she passed my name to Ralph Alexander, director of the Los Angeles Examiner’s Scholastic Sports Assn. One day I was summoned to Miss Mace’s cluttered journalism room to meet the man himself. ‘He wants you to go with him to interview prep All American basketball player John Rudometkin, at Santa Maria High,’ she said. Off we went, and by the next year I was an area associate editor for the Examiner, writing a monthly Sunday column. After I graduated from Pepperdine with a degree in journalism, I was hired by Ralph Alexander at the Examiner. Thanks to Margaret Carmichael in 8th grade and Marjorie Holmes in high school, my spelling and grammar skills were good!”

Miss Mace was succeeded by Hal Fry. Susan Berry ’61 writes, “I was with Mr. Fry for publications (yearbook and newspaper) and loved it. He was quiet and fair and comfortable. To this day, I remember how he emphasized being honest with headings on articles, and taught us about headings being objective vs. subjective. When I read the newspapers today I get so annoyed with how the news is being published!”

Art Teacher Dorothy Tripp

Joanne McCubrey, ’57 writes, “I took art from Dorothy Tripp and still have a clay figure I made. I went on to take art in college, and in midlife became a photojournalist for 20 years. Now I’m painting and still doing photography. So those high school art classes were a great beginning!”

Gerri Bauhaus writes, “My favorite teacher, because I loved art so much, was Dorothy Tripp. She had just come back from a seminar at the Chicago Art Institute the summer before my freshman year. She’d learned some drawing techniques that were revolutionary: Gesture, Bulk, and Contour. She passed this on to her students, and it was an eye-opener for me. Dorothy also



Dorothy Tripp, 1959 Chismahoo

knew when to leave me alone to explore. When my parents came to one of the first open houses and wondered why I wasn’t doing what the other students were doing, Dorothy said essentially, ‘Shh, she’s learning how to mix color. I’m letting her do her own thing.’ Wise teacher.

“It was at Carp High that I learned what my last name meant. In the library was a book with ‘BAUHAUS’ on the spine. I check it out, and learned that although ‘Bauhaus’ means ‘building house’ in German, the ‘Bauhaus’ school of design in Germany was centered around the idea that ‘Form follows Function.’ This made sense to me, since my father and grandfather were beautiful craftsmen, shaping wood into cabinets and more. My dad (Hugo) once carved a miniature violin. I eventually became a teacher, thanks to Dorothy, and continue to teach watercolor and drawing to this day. I sign all my work ‘BAUHAUS.’”

Chuck Kelsey, ’60 writes, “My late cousin, Jim Lundberg, became a world famous glass artist, and he told me many times how he was influenced at CHS by his art teacher, Dorothy Tripp. Mrs. Tripp had a wonderful way of assessing talent and inspiring her students to reach for higher goals. These qualities are what make teachers and coaches truly valuable to our society.”

Susan Berry recalls, “Dorothy Tripp loved her students and really encouraged and helped them create and reach their potential. Her room was very fun and safe and comfortable. A true place for the arts and creativity.” Dorothy’s daughter Jerrie Tripp Castro ’59 adds, “I have to say my mom influenced me the most. She was a GREAT lady and awesome mom, who loved all the students just like they were her own.”

Tune in next time for more memorable teachers, coaches, and staff at Carp High in the 1950s & ‘60s!



Gerri Bauhaus '56.

MUSEUM NEWS

ANNUAL BENEFIT BLOOMS

The Memorial Weekend Museum Marketplace and Annual Plant & Flower Sale was a great success, with flower & plant sales (\$1,870) combined with vendor space fees (\$1,945), used treasures sale (\$800-a new record!), and the refreshment booth (\$407) raising over \$5,000 for museum operating expenses.

Special thanks to the MANY volunteers who helped to organize, set-up, pick-up donations, and work all the booths on the day of the sale.

We truly appreciate the annual support of the growers to this museum benefit, and wish to acknowledge and thank the following donors:

Abe Nursery

Hollandia Produce

B & G Color Nursery

King Growers

<i>B & H Flowers</i>	<i>Kitagawa Nursery</i>
<i>Cervani Farms</i>	<i>Kono & Sons</i>
<i>Colorama Nursery</i>	<i>Los Padres Nursery</i>
<i>Everbloom Nursery</i>	<i>Maximum Nursery</i>
<i>Foothill Nursery</i>	<i>Ocean Breeze</i>
<i>Gallup & Stribling</i>	<i>Pianta Bella Nursery</i>
<i>Giovanni's Nursery</i>	<i>Toro Canyon Nursery</i>
<i>Hilltop Flowers</i>	<i>Valley Flowers</i>
<i>Johannes Flowers</i>	<i>Westerlay Orchids</i>
<i>Westland Floral</i>	

Our next **Museum Marketplace** benefit will be held **Saturday, July 25, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** on the museum grounds. New vendors participate every month, so there are always new treasures to discover! **Future dates are August 29 and September 26.** Tax-deductible donations of used items for the museum's rummage tables are always needed and appreciated, and will be accepted any time prior to the day of the market; but please, no large furniture or old computers and electronics. Thank you! 🍀

TRAIN TRIP TO UNION STATION, OLVERA STREET & LOS ANGELES EL PUEBLO HISTORIC DISTRICT

We have planned an exciting excursion to explore the heart of old Los Angeles, Olvera Street, and the beautifully restored Union Station, aboard the Amtrak Surfliner train departing Carpinteria on **Thursday, September 17, at 7:00 am and returning at 5:20 pm.** This trip promises something for everyone, including train travel, a guided walking tour of the historic district, available additional house and museum tours, shopping, and dining opportunities from myriad restaurants and street vendors; plus, the opportunity to explore the recently restored Union Station—the last grand train station built in America and completed in 1939. Its sleek, art-deco interpretation of Mission-Spanish Colonial-style architecture is truly unique to Southern California. The following photos and edited descriptive highlights of the trip have been excerpted from Wikipedia and the City of Los Angeles websites:

El Pueblo de Los Ángeles Historical Monument, also known as Los Angeles Plaza Historic District, is located at the oldest section of Los Angeles, centered on the old plaza that served as the city's center under Spanish, Mexican and American rule from 1781 through the late 19th century. The 44-acre park area was designated a state historic monument in 1953 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.

Founding of the Pueblo occurred on September 4, 1781 when eleven families (44 persons including children) arrived from the Gulf of California to establish a pueblo which was to become the City of Los Angeles. This colonization, ordered by King Carlos III, was carried out under the

direction of California Governor Felipe de Neve. It received the name *El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora Reina de los Ángeles sobre El Río Porciúncula*, Spanish for The Town of Our Lady Queen of the Angels on the Porciuncula River.

The original pueblo was built to the southeast of the current plaza along the Los Angeles River. In 1815, a flood washed away the original pueblo, and it was rebuilt farther from the river at the location of the current plaza.

Growth of the Pueblo During its first 70 years, the Pueblo grew slowly from 44 in 1781 to 1,615 in 1850—an average of about 25 persons per year. During this period, the Plaza Historic District was the Pueblo's commercial and social center. In 1850, shortly after California statehood, Los Angeles was incorporated as a city. It experienced a major boom in the 1880s and 1890s, as its population grew from 11,200 (1880) to 50,400 (1890) and 102,500 in 1900. As the city grew, the commercial and cultural center began to move south away from the Plaza, along Spring Street and Main Street.

Preservation in 1953 as a historic park of the 44 acres surrounding the plaza includes the city's oldest historic buildings, and include Nuestra Señora La Reina de Los Ángeles Church (1822), Avila Adobe (1818), Olvera Street market (1930), Pico House (1870), and the Old Plaza Fire Station (1884). Four of the buildings have been restored as museums. These steps, however, did not prevent the demolition, in the decades to come, of numerous historic buildings, particularly those that once formed the eastern edge of the Plaza.

Historic Attractions

The Plaza was built in the 1820s and served as the city's commercial and social center. It remains the site of many festivals and celebrations. The plaza has large statues of three important figures in the city's history: King Carlos III of Spain; Felipe de Neve, the Spanish Governor of the Californias; and Father Junípero Serra, founder of the Alta California missions. In addition to this, the plaza itself has been made a monument to the original forty-four settlers and the four soldiers who accompanied them.

La Placita Church, known as *La Iglesia de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Ángeles* (The Church of Our Lady the Queen of the Angels), was founded in 1814, though the structure was not completed and dedicated until 1822. The present church dates from 1861.



La Placita Church today.

Olvera Street, known for its Mexican marketplace, was originally known as Wine Street, reference to the surrounding vineyards and winery. In 1877, it was extended and renamed in honor of Augustin Olvera, a prominent local judge. Many historic buildings, including the Avila Adobe and Sepulveda House, are located on Olvera Street. In 1930, it was converted by local merchants from a run-down neglected neighborhood into the colorful marketplace that remains today.

The Avila Adobe was built in 1818 and is the oldest surviving residence in Los Angeles. It is located in the *paseo* of Olvera Street and was built by Francisco Avila, a wealthy cattle rancher with adobe walls 2½ to 3 feet thick. U. S. Navy Commodore Robert Stockton took it over as his temporary headquarters when the United States first occupied the city in 1846. Slated for demolition in 1926, it was saved and restored and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is California State Landmark No. 145.



Avila Adobe, c.1956.

The Plaza Substation was part of the electric streetcar system operated by the Los Angeles Railway. Completed in 1904, the substation provided electricity to power the yellow streetcars. When the streetcar system closed, the building was converted to other uses.

Old Plaza Firehouse is the oldest firehouse in Los Angeles. Built in 1884, it operated as a firehouse until 1897. The building was thereafter used as a saloon, cigar store, poolroom, brothel, Chinese market, "flop house," and drugstore. The building was restored in the 1950s and opened as a firefighting museum in 1960.

The Pico House was a luxury hotel built in 1870 by Pio Pico, a successful businessman who was the last Mexican Governor of Alta California. With indoor plumbing, gas-lit chandeliers, a grand double staircase, lace curtains and a French restaurant, the Italianate three-story, 33-room hotel was the most elegant hotel in Southern California. It had a total of nearly eighty rooms. The Pico House is currently listed as a California Historical Landmark (No. 159).



Pico House & Masonic Hall.

The Merced Theater, completed in 1870, was built in an Italianate style and operated as a live theater from 1871 to 1876. When the Woods Opera House opened nearby in 1876, the Merced ceased being the city's leading theater. Eventually, it gained an "unenviable reputation" because of "the disreputable dances" staged there, and was finally closed by the authorities.

The Masonic Hall was built in 1858 as Lodge 42 of the Free and Accepted Masons. The building was a painted brick structure with a symbolic "Masonic eye" below the parapet. In 1868, the Masons moved to larger quarters further south. Afterward, the building was used for many purposes, including a pawn shop and boarding house. It is the oldest building in Los Angeles south of the Plaza.

The Garnier Building was built in 1890 and was part of the city's original Chinatown. The southern portion of the building was demolished in the 1950s to make way for the

Hollywood Freeway. The Chinese American Museum is now located in the Garnier Building.



Sepulveda House today.

Sepulveda House is a 22-room Victorian house built in 1887 in the Eastlake style. The original structure included two commercial businesses and three residences.

Pelanconi House, built in the 1850s, is the oldest surviving brick house in Los Angeles. In 1924, it was converted into a restaurant called La Golondrina, which is the oldest restaurant on Olvera Street.

Plaza Methodist Church was built in 1926 on the site of the adobe once owned by Augustin Olvera, the man for whom Olvera Street was named.

Union Station, completed in 1939, was the last grand train station built in America and recalls a bygone era of luxury train travel. It has recently undergone a complete restoration.



Union Station, c.1940s.

We will depart the Carpinteria train platform aboard the Amtrak Surfliner on **Thursday, September 17 at 7:00 a.m. and return by 5:15 p.m.** Your cost as a **Historical Society member is just \$45;** (\$55 for non-members) this includes train fare, docent-led historic district walking-tour, and snacks aboard the train. A no-host lunch is available in a restaurant of your choosing along the Plaza, Olvera Street, or back at the Traxx Restaurant at Union Station. Please join us for this exciting opportunity to explore the history of Old Los Angeles, with nearly five full hours to take it all in. For reservations or more information, call David at 684-3112, or simply enclose a check with the reservation coupon on the back of this newsletter, and mail. 🐶

MEMORIALS

MATTHEW HALES CLIFFORD: Ray & Irene Stoyanoff; Andrew & Denise Powell & Family; Robert & Melissa Clifford.

PAULINE DE ALBA: Curtis & Diane Lopez; Roberta Germanetti; Anita Lewis; David & Annie Goodfield.

JOHN A. RODRIGUEZ, II: Allen & Carol Cox; Bonnie Milne.

JOAN "COACH'S DAUGHTER" ERHARD STEWART: Anne Tarman Dowd; Ward Small, III.

ANNIE VAN EYCK: Anita Lewis.



CARPINTERIA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic District, Olvera Street, and Union Station by Train

Trip Date: Thursday, September 17, 2015

Depart Carpinteria 7:00 a.m. Return 5:20 P.M.

FIELD TRIP RESERVATION FORM

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

Number of reservations:

Members @ \$45 _____ Non-members @ \$55 _____ TOTAL: _____

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