



**Sierra Madre
Historical
Preservation Society
Newsletter**

Fall/Winter 2010

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The Oral History Project of the SMHPS

A cattle drive down Sierra Madre Boulevard during the dairy fire of 1942; a hostage taken by a bank robber in 1932; a purple powder-faced ghost exorcised from a Craftsman house; camellias in Descanso Gardens grown in the 7.5 acre Star Nursery by Francis Uyematsu, the Japanese owner, who lost his nursery after his internment during WWII, Those historical tidbits are all part of the storied past of Sierra Madre recollected by citizens in their oral history recordings.

The SMHPS is conducting an ongoing oral history project in partnership with the library's archival department in an effort to preserve fascinating facts about our village. So far, over 140 oral histories have captured stories that otherwise might have been lost to future generations.

Anyone wanting more information about the oral history project or would like to record recollections of an earlier Sierra Madre, contact the historical society at 355-8129 or info@smhps.org.

AASLH Convention in Oklahoma City, OK

The 2010 American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) convention, Winds of Opportunity, took place in Oklahoma City from September 22 – 25, 2010. AASLH Award of Merit winner, *Southern California Story: A Better Life in Sierra Madre*, was represented at the annual convention by Amy and Glenn Putnam, members of the Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society (who produced the winning book), author Michele Zack, and designer Jeff Lapidés, with wife Diane Sands. During the convention, several workshops were presented, covering a wide variety of topics from "Small Museums, Big Impact!" to "Mummies, Marketing, and Media Madness" and "Local History, State History, and Beyond!"

The Putnams, Zack, and Lapidés were able to attend several of these workshops, gleaned information and ideas to bring back to our local historical group. The convention, being based in Oklahoma this year, had a recurring theme paying homage to the various Native American groups, who were well represented and whose heritage was included as part of many of the workshops.

Those from other parts of the country and from our own state had the chance to view Sierra Madre's award winning book at a showcase on Friday afternoon. The response was overwhelmingly enthusiastic, and those representing our town were questioned by many as to the methods used by the SMHPS to raise funds and encourage participation in the project. It was a great opportunity for our local team to tell others how the entire community came together with the historical society to produce this hometown product.



Michele Zack receiving Merit Award with Jeff Lapidés, Amy and Glenn Putnam

The culmination of the convention was the awards banquet on Friday night, where the Sierra Madre contingency accepted the 2010 Award of Merit for our Centennial book, presented for excellence in history programs, projects, and people. As the award citation stated, *Southern California Story* is proof that big projects can be accomplished by small volunteer organizations, and that they can set the bar higher than they ever imagined." Other winners from California included Brian Bibby of Sloughhouse, who won for his lifetime of researching and documenting the Native people of California, and Rancho Los Alamitos Foundation, Long Beach, for their publication *O, My Ancestor: Recognition and Renewal for the Gabrielino-Tongva People of the Los Angeles Area*.

Southern California Story: Seeking the Better Life in Sierra Madre, in addition to winning the AASLH Award of Merit, has also won 2 design awards; a 3rd place award for book cover from the American Design Awards, and an overall book design award from Graphic Design USA.
by Diane Sands

President's Message

The year 2011 will be the 80th anniversary of the Historical Preservation Society. We are planning to celebrate with special events through out 2011.

Remember that our award winning book would make a very nice Christmas gift for friends and family. The Pasadena school system just purchased 75 copies for their libraries.

It is important to renew your membership now, the society needs your support.

The Society is undertaking much needed repairs on Richardson house and looking to support the needs of the archives and the oral history project.

Please do contact us if you want to help. Thank you to the Red Hats for their recent donation toward repairs at Richardson House
by Dane Lenton



Note from Michele Zack:

One of the teachers I visited the East Coast with earlier this month just sent this: We are at the Tsongas Center for Industrial History in Lowell, Massachusetts. I presented a copy of my Sierra Madre book to its library because Sierra Madre's founder, N.C. Carter, was from Lowell and a product of the industrial revolution. That made him want to establish the "un-Lowell" in Southern California a place where he could breathe clean air and recover from TB



Lizzie's Trail Inn - Historic Continuity

Trails are cultural artifacts. Their appearance tells us about their nature and history. Trailheads are usually marked with a sign. There is often a box with a sign-in list. Sometimes there is a place to park.

Occasionally there are restroom facilities. In the case of the Mount Wilson trailhead there is all this, and two museums. Lizzie's Trail Inn has been at the foot of Mount Wilson for 110 years. Lizzie's and the Richardson House provide a tangible connection to the history of the trail and the hiking tradition of the San Gabriels. The building today's hikers pass by is the same structure that trail walkers saw in 1890. Times and fashions have changed.

The numbers of hikers have fluctuated through the years. Equipment, footwear in particular, has gotten better. And Lizzie's remains a constant presence at the trailhead. Thanks to the on-going efforts of the City of Sierra Madre, the Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society, and numerous volunteers, Lizzie's and the Richardson house have been cared for and maintained for many years. In the coming year we will be fixing up and sprucing up the museum buildings and expanding the hours of operation to include Sundays as well as Saturdays.

You don't have to hike to the top of Mount Wilson to visit the museum. Stop by on a Saturday morning to look at the exhibits and visit with your neighbors. Open from 10:00 AM to 12 Noon at the corner of the Mt. Wilson Trail and E. Mira Monte.

The Museums and their place in Sierra Madre history will be the focus of the SMHPS Annual Meeting Feb. 27, 2011. Mark your calendar!



Sierra Madre servicemen aboard a train. They would serve in the Army's 40th Infantry Division. The young men were called into active federal service for the Korean War in September 1950. The division was deployed to Japan for training and then moved to Korea. Joe A. Hinojos photograph, Sierra Madre Historical Archives

Debbie Henderson to Present

Archivist Debbie Henderson will present "A History of Early Sierra Madre" at the Arcadia Historical Museum as part of the Adult Learning Series on Thursday November 18th. Bring a brown bag lunch and learn about Sierra Madre's first settlers, homes, businesses, organizations, and recreational activities. The presentation will take place at the Ruth and Charles Gilb Arcadia Historical Museum from noon until 12:30pm. The Museum is located at 380 W. Huntington Drive, Arcadia. Call 626.574.5440 for more information.