

## Spring Arrives at the Lummis Home



Pink evening primroses thriving in the water wise garden

This spring the dancing pink flowers of the Mexican evening primrose (*Oenothera speciosa* *chilensis*) are opening farther into the yarrow meadow and closer to the path than before. “Wildness” in the Lummis garden means that the flowers respond to variations in winter rains by shifting their time of blooming and, in the case of these lovely blossoms, it may be a response to a loss of sunshine because of the widening shadow cast by the big oak tree.

The oak is one of several that have appeared as “volunteers” in front of the house since Lummis made his famous 1905 photo, “Twelve million flowers to the acre.” His front yard then was one vast open meadow. The oaks have grown almost unnoticed and, being native to the Arroyo Seco, stand with the sycamore trees as a reminder of the ancient woodland that once bordered the streams above Los Angeles.

Last November we planted a flat of Santa Barbara daisies in an attempt to bring back a corner of the flower carpet Lummis once loved. He wrote,

“The flower-temper of my own land has shifted visibly in the ten years since I began to live on what I have tried seriously to keep wild. A very beautiful tiny white daisy, of which there were once millions, has become almost extinct.” [The Carpet of God’s Country, *Out West Magazine*, Vol. 22, May 1905, 306-317.] Next time you visit the Lummis House look for the returning daisies on the warm, dry slope to the right as you enter the big gate on Carlota.

The wildflowers of spring will be setting seed as the days grow warmer. We count on the summer breeze to re-plant the garden for next year. The lacy blossoms of the yarrow will turn from white to brown before we clip them back to scatter the seed for next year’s meadow. The lavender and pink spikes of the Chinese Houses will become a dry mat on the ground while the hardy bouquets of the orange and yellow lantana will flourish in the summer afternoons.

by Pat Adler-Ingram

PHOTO: ARIEL VAN ZANDWEGHE

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# MOTA Day 2012

HSSC welcomed hundreds of visitors to the Lummis Home for the 23rd annual Museums of the Arroyo Day. Every year, the Lummis Home joins with Heritage Square Museum, The Gamble House, The Pasadena Museum of History, and the Los Angeles Police Museum to provide shuttle service, extended hours, and docent-led tours so guests can visit all the museums, free of charge. If you missed this year's MOTA Day, be sure to join us next year!

1. Docent at Lummis Home points out charred telegraph poles used as beams by Lummis
2. Visitors eagerly awaiting to enter the Lummis Home
3. Through a generous donation by Council District 1 all attendees of MOTA Day had buses waiting to transport them to various museums

PHOTOS: ARIEL VAN ZANDWEGHE



Taran Schindler (left) and Elizabeth Johnson (right) by the small door soon to be restored through their donation

PHOTO: ROMUALDO VALENZUELA

## Preservation Gift

One of our visitors, Elizabeth H. Johnson, spent some time after her tour of the Lummis House looking closely at a few of the spots in need of emergency repairs. We told her about our long-term preservation plan. She noticed the paint scales on the walls and the plaster going to dust and said it looked to her like we had an emergency and that she'd like to help right now. The plaster work is a big job requiring testing and analysis and special handling for any hazardous waste created. She turned her attention to the smaller jobs in the dining room and settled on the restoration of the small door that Lummis built for access to the garden. It has come through the years remarkably straight but no longer snug in its frame. She decided it would be the perfect spot for her to adopt. With her generous donation, restoration of the little door will begin in July.



# Lummis Day 2012

We had ideal weather this year for Lummis Day, sunshine and a light breeze along the arroyo. Beginning with a native American blessing by Ted Garcia and a musical welcome, Suzanne Lummis took her place before the great doors of the Lummis House to open the morning program with a lyric poem of her own. She then presented to an enthusiastic audience the poets Mary Fitzpatrick, Judith Pacht, Katie Ferris and Ilya Kaminsky along with Hector Tobar, the Los Angeles Times columnist turned novelist. He read a passage from his book, *The Barbarian Nurseries*, showing his flair for the poetry of everyday life. Jeremy Radin transformed the morning into a world of primitive images, reading from his book, *Slow Dance with Sasquatch*. At noon the crowd, overflowing the hundred or so chairs set up in the entry courtyard of the Lummis House, followed the drum corps of the Franklin High School ROTC across the bridge to the lively afternoon festival at Heritage Square.

1. Highland Park area poet Suzanne Lummis, granddaughter of Charles F. Lummis, reading poetry at the Lummis Home

2. Jeremy Radin reading from *Slow Dance with Sasquatch*

3. Mary Fitzpatrick reading her award winning poetry

4. (From Left to Right) HSSC Accountant Anahi, former L.A. Times columnist and HSSC board member Cecilia Rasmussen, Lummis Home curator Ariel van Zandweghe, HSSC Executive Director Patricia Adler-Ingram and Lummis Day coordinator Michelle Clark

5. Hector Tobar signing his book *The Barbarian Nurseries*

PHOTOS: AL C. STRANGE







## HSSC At The Autry National Center

by John O. Pohlmann

Saturday, April 21, marked the occasion of HSSC's annual all day LA History Conference at the Autry National Center of the American West with the theme this year of "Latino Los Angeles." The day began with USC Professor George Sánchez's timely and insightful Keynote Address on "Latinos and the Los Angeles Dream," followed by four panels focusing on Community, Music, Art, and Education. Special thanks to Steve Aron of UCLA and the Autry Center for once again allowing HSSC to use their splendid facility, and to HSSC Board Member and La Verne historian Kenneth Marcus, who organized the conference and presided over the day's proceedings. Ken deserves special congratulations for keeping us on schedule.

To demonstrate how the Latino understanding of the American Dream has shifted dramatically over time, Professor Sánchez showed us film clips from Gregory Nava's now classic 1983 *El Norte*. In the film, a Latina villager dreams of living in a land where everyone has "toilets made for a king." According to Sánchez, the dream dates at least as far back as the 1910s and 1920s, with earlier migrants expecting their sojourn would be temporary. Over time, despite "profound disappointment," more and more remained. Their music sings of returning, but as Sánchez tells us, "they listen but don't go back." The lure was partly economic, but the American or Los Angeles Dream was and remains a huge factor. Of the six million Braceros who came

between 1942 and 1964, many violated their contract and stayed. Labor organizing shaped the Latino version of the American Dream, and military service helped many escape barrio poverty and attain respect and dignity. However, the latest scholarship reveals a general shift in focus to their children and their future in the USA, in contrast to the earlier belief that immigrants themselves would benefit. Last year's movie *A Better Life* shows a gardener whose focus is almost entirely on his son. The film exemplifies the classic immigrant experience of parental sacrifice.

Sánchez concluded by noting that retiring baby boomer seniors are and will increasingly continue to be dependent upon an immigrant work force. The outcome is uncertain but critical. In the lively 20-minute Q & A following the keynote address, Sánchez made the hugely significant but not widely understood point that the American Dream has never been just to be legal.

Fittingly, HSSC Board Member and Cal Poly Pomona History Professor Linda Mollno presented George Sánchez with the prestigious Martin Ridge Award, for his 1993 classic *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*. Professor Mollno convincingly and succinctly explained why this book is both the starting point and a must read for anyone seriously interested in Latino Los Angeles.

Next on the busy agenda was the Community Panel moderated by Bill Deverell of USC. Sánchez's and Deverell's former student Jerry González, now an assistant professor at



U. Texas San Antonio, explained how uprooting local agriculture and freeways through East LA in the 1940s and 1950s caused Latino movement eastward into the San Gabriel Valley and Inland Empire. Earlier immigrants had traditionally arrived in major cities, but now they were settling in places like Cerritos, Baldwin Park and Norwalk. Newly organized anti-immigrant groups sometimes included earlier generations of Latinos, but eventually immigrants began organizing in their defense. Following up on this theme, panelist and documentary filmmaker Antonio Gonzales Vasquez spoke about his interviews with the Mexican American community in Redlands. He also showed clips from his latest film, *Living on the Dime: A View of the World From Along I-10*, about the impact of the I-10 Corridor on adjacent communities. Among its effects was to kill small businesses by Anglo and Latino owners alike.

The last and perhaps most sensational topic addressed by the panel was by and about two intrepid newspaper reporters, Jeff Gottlieb and Ruben Vives, whose 200 stories in the LA Times exposing financial skullduggery in the now infamous city of Bell won them the Pulitzer Prize in 2011. What gives this story its special Latino flavor has nothing to do with the scandal itself—Bell’s city manager’s salary was almost \$800,000 and the police chief’s nearly \$500,000, and pensions for other municipal employees were the highest in the state—but rather that one of the two reporters first learned from his mom when he was seventeen that he was an “illegal immigrant” and had been brought to this country from Guatemala when he was too young to remember. Good fortune and hard work allowed him to complete his college education and become a citizen, but for several years he could in fact have been deported back to Guatemala. His American or Los Angeles Dream could easily have become a tragic nightmare.

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PHOTOS: ROMUALDO VALENZUELA





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Following a fine buffet lunch, with the renowned Gene Corral Trio performing Mexican folk music and jazz, attendees could take a brief stroll through the Autry's spectacular galleries before reassembling for a session on Latino Music moderated by Josh Kun of USC. From Anthony Macias of UC Riverside we learned of the rich artistic and cultural curriculum once available in LA public schools. As early as the 1930s and 1940s music classes were popular in Boyle Heights and Watts. Samuel Browne, an especially versatile and energetic teacher at Jefferson High School, taught music, dance, drama, the visual arts, and even mariachi and opera! Sad to say, programs such as these are now on the chopping block as LA Unified projects cuts in the arts as well as virtually all after-school programs.

Mexican American music has its own history and tradition, as we learned from noted filmmaker Jon Wilkman, producer of the brilliant 2008 documentary *Chicano Rock! The Sounds of East Los Angeles*, a third of which we were able to view. Most of us will instantly recognize La Bamba, which made Ritchie Valens (born Richard Valenzuela) an instant celebrity, and many also know of his death in a 1959 plane crash while only seventeen that also ended the lives of Buddy Holly and the Big Bopper. That a distinctive local sound developed much earlier and continues with variations to the present is less well known. From film narrator Edward James Olmos and numerous interviews conducted by Wilkman, we learned about Lalo Guerrero, the "Father of Chicano Rock," who arrived from Mexico in the late 1930s. Valens' tragic death by no means stifled Chicano music. The Midneters' 1965 hit "Whittier Boulevard" generated such wild enthusiasm that the musicians were compared to The Beatles. The first local group to fully embrace Mexican traditions was Los Lobos in the 1970s, who later recorded for the 1987

film *La Bamba*, after which they toured the whole country. From Wilkman's informative Q & A we learned that for decades local stations wouldn't play Latino music; today the top two local radio stations feature Chicano/Latino sounds. Interestingly enough, we also learned the majority of musicians for the original *La Bamba* were black.

The ubiquitous Ken Marcus moderated the panel on Latino Art. José Luis Valdez of UCLA discussed the problems of the changing stereotype and the on-going debate over whether terms such as Mexican or Chicano are appropriate. LA artist/curator Yolanda González displayed and discussed her paintings and murals, all of which feature friends and family. Theater actor and director Denise Blasor, who arrived in LA from Puerto Rico in 1980, shared with us how new technology is facilitating the integration of different kinds of art. She was currently directing a bilingual play with supertitles featuring three generations, each with their own music and distinct traditions. Another rewarding Q & A addressed the age-old question of "what is art?" Among the best responses were that it's a "spiritual dialogue" (González), is "about healing" (Blasor), and that it "enlivens the human experience" (Valdez). And to top off another terrific session, we learned from Valdez that the first opera house in North America was in Mexico City.

The final session, which many of the teachers and students in the audience had been waiting for, was the Education panel with Enrique Murillo of Cal State San Bernardino as Moderator. The first of three panelists, Gilda Ochoa of Pomona College, filled with energy and enthusiasm, addressed the complicated issue of why Latino schoolchildren often struggle

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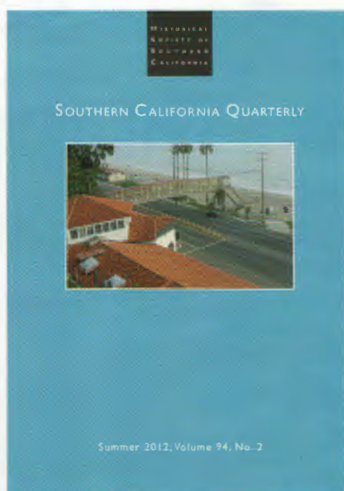
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# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY

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## A Preview



“THE MEN WERE LEFT ASTONISHED”: MEXICAN WOMEN  
IN LAS JUNTAS PATRIÓTICAS DE SEÑORAS, 1863–1866

BY PAUL BRYAN GRAY, DAVID E. HAYES-BAUTISTA AND  
CYNTHIA L. CHAMBERLIN

JOHN BALLARD AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN  
LOS ANGELES, 1850–1905

BY PATTY R. COLMAN

HOLDING THE CENTER: IMAGES OF URBANITY ON TELEVISION  
IN LOS ANGELES, 1950–1970

BY MICHAN ANDREW CONNOR

THE HISTORIAN’S EYE

Paul Bryan Gray is a practicing attorney and independent scholar. He is the author of the award-winning book *Forster vs. Pico: The Struggle for the Rancho Santa Margarita*. His next book, a biography of Francisco P. Ramirez, will appear in Fall 2012.

David E. Hayes-Bautista is Professor of Medicine and Director of the Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture (CESLAC), David Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA. His most recent book is *El Cinco de Mayo: An American Tradition* (2012). He last appeared in the Southern California Quarterly in Fall 2009.

Cynthia L. Chamberlin is a historian, researcher, and translator of early Spanish and Latin texts for the Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture at UCLA. With David E. Hayes-Bautista and Nancy Zuniga, she co-authored *A Gold Rush Salvadoran in California’s Latino World, 1857* in the Fall 2009 issue of the Southern California Quarterly.

Patty R. Colman earned an M.A. in America Indian Studies from UCLA and an M.A. in History from California State University, Northridge. She worked as a contract historian for the National Park Service, specializing in homestead patterns in the Santa Monica Mountains, and served as the editor of the Journal of Ventura County History. She is an Associate Professor of History at Moorpark College and spent her recent sabbatical researching the nineteenth-century African American community of Los Angeles.

Michan Andrew Connor is assistant professor of Interdisciplinary Studies in the School of Urban and Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Arlington. He earned his PhD from the University of Southern California in 2008. He is currently researching and writing *Metropolitan Trenches: Race, Place and Boundaries in Los Angeles County*, a manuscript that addresses the relationships between political boundaries, power, and identity in a transforming metropolitan region. Another of his articles on metropolitan development and political culture in Los Angeles County is forthcoming in the Journal of Urban History.

Morgan P. Yates is corporate archivist for the Automobile Club of Southern California, and is a regular contributor to *Westways*, the Auto Club’s member magazine.



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in the classroom. Common causes range from racial and ethnic profiling, to low expectations, to lack of family support to inadequate counseling and tutoring, to simply not having a proper place to study at home. Lilia Monzó of Chapman focused our attention on the special problems confronting English-learner families, ranging from laws targeting the undocumented and terminating bi-lingual teaching to bans on ethnic studies and books addressing racism or Latino identity. Sadly lacking is content addressing historical and current Latino lives. "Sink or swim" English-only classes ignore that on average it takes seven years to learn a language proficiently and at least two simply to get by. Negative media portrayals, scapegoating during economic crises, persistence of segregated "minority" schools, increased attention to testing at the expense of academic learning, and an accountability system that punishes both teachers and students compound the problem. Finally, children of immigrants commonly think their parents "don't know anything." While this may often be unfair, there is frequently a lack of "instrumental knowledge" (knowing how the system works).

Notwithstanding these formidable challenges, we managed to end the afternoon on a positive and optimistic note. Panelist Adonay Antonio Montes, who arrived from El Salvador at the age of fourteen and is now an assistant professor of education at the University of La Verne, is helping poor kids in the Imperial Valley to make education a positive experience. He closely examined student feelings before and after taking tests, and because of his inspired and effective coaching, their apprehension and apathy have given way to confidence and a celebration of learning. Montes' imaginative focus on improving student attitude ranges from field trips to breathing exercises before instruction to taking photos of students in their caps and gowns to help them realize that the Latino corollary of the American Dream is within their grasp.

It was a fitting end to this wonderful and highly informative conference, which gave us much to think and talk about over cookies and sangria before making our way back home.

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## September 9, 2012

Admission Day at the Old Mill

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## October 21, 2012

Afternoons at El Alisal  
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