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Photograph of Eve Lummis in a bedroom, Isleta, NM, Circa 1890

Braun Research Library Collection, Autry National Center

Native American Elements In The Lummis Home

We have been conjecturing for years that the design of the house that Charles Lummis built owed a great deal to his experience of life in the southwest amid the ruined monuments and living villages of the pueblo Indians. Now, we have clear evidence of the influence thanks to one of the photographs just donated to HSSC by Gilberto Chavez of the New Mexico family that played a key role in the life of Lummis.

It is a remarkably clear picture of the interior of the Chaves home with Eve, the lively young teacher whom Lummis met there, wearing a long summer dress and seated gracefully in a Great Room that was clearly the prototype of the Great Room or Museo of the Lummis Home. There are the same telegraph pole beams, the same dimensions with Lummis' ceiling perhaps a little higher.

We had earlier discovered, in a collection of photographs made by Lummis during his 1888 archaeological observations, a window depicted with a wooden head-piece cut into a shallow arch. Although the design was not typical of pueblo windows, which were usually straight across the top, it had caught his eye some ten years before he started building and became

the pattern he used throughout his own home. It appears to be a stone mason's way of creating an opening in the wall. Lummis even used it for the large three part picture window and for the monumental entry doors.

Lummis took care that every beam he used in the building was treated by fire to seal out insects and decay. His diary notes many hours spent firing and then removing the charred surface fibers by hand. His tool of choice for this work was the adze with which the sharp blade is drawn toward the user. The process was used commonly throughout rural America in the 19th century and did not necessarily come to his notice in the pueblos but it can be seen there today.

Another element of the house we have been seeing and not seeing ever since we created our headquarters here in 1965 is the amazing cellar. The Indians of the pueblos were skilled in the building of granaries and had a working knowledge of the techniques for ventilating their stone or adobe constructions. Mold and mildew were prevented from spoiling the grain as the cool evening air, being heavier, sank into the storage space moving the warmer air upward and outside the structure.

Continued on Page 2

Native American Elements In The Lummis Home (cont.)

Lummis used the same principle to ventilate his food and wine storage shelves and most importantly from his view, his darkroom.

Cool air is taken down through the large screened opening beside the kitchen door. After moving back past the shelves and through the darkroom it rises into the vented closet between the kitchen and the pantry where hams could be hung, milk and butter kept cool and pies set out from the oven. This gravity flow cooling arrangement functions unchanged from the days when the women of the household worked at the great cast iron cook stove in the kitchen to prepare meals.

The kitchen itself reflects a design feature familiar to native American builders with the central vent majestically contoured to draw out the heat. Turbesé, Lummis' daughter, described the kitchen when the family was preparing a banquet for the founding ceremony of the Archaeological Institute of America in November 1903.

"The mission-style kitchen at El Alisal, with its maroon-colored walls that rose to a broad venthole, was redolent with roasting peppers, onions, cheese, olives, marjoram, masa, and other ingredients of a Spanish California feast. Guests found it hard to believe that there could be such a place as the gray stone castle and such a man presiding. Yet Lummis knew how to make them feel at home in this storybook world of dons and troubadours."

-Patricia Adler-Ingram, Executive Director



Young Isleta Girl in window

Reyes Farewell

Members of the community gathered to pay tribute and bid farewell to Councilmember Ed P. Reyes, who served on the Los Angeles City Council from July 1, 2001, to July 1, 2013. Monica Alcaraz, president of the Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council, coordinated the event and brought together local organizations to present Reyes with a plaque honoring his service. He spoke to the crowd, reflecting on his time as councilmember, during which he opened four libraries and added 80 acres of new park space in his district, and promised to continue to serve the community.



From left to right: Natalie Seaman, Monica Alcaraz, Anthony Castillo, Roy Payan, Ed P. Reyes, Patricia Adler-Ingram and Carmela Gomes



Jose Gardea introduces Reyes to the crowd



Photos by Martha Benedict

Gilbert Chavez Visits

On a quiet Sunday afternoon in May one of the visitors to the Lummis House told us he would like to see our photos of his family. His name was Gilberto Antonio Chavez and he was from New Mexico. He was sure Charles Lummis would have included his third cousin (three generations removed), Amado Chaves, in his gallery of friends and famous visitors. (Note: Spelling of Chaves family name has varied over the decades.)

We did know how important to Lummis the hospitality of the Chaves family had been on his tramp across the continent and how pivotal their friendship had been later in his recovery from paralysis. We could of course show the hauntingly beautiful portrait of the son Lummis named for Amado Chaves, but we have no other photos and had to tell him that the photos on our walls were only the remnants of the great collection that Lummis bequeathed to his beloved Southwest Museum.

The next day we received from Mr. Chavez a fine group of photos including portraits of his third cousin Amado, and second cousin (four generations removed) Manuel Antonio Chaves, a pioneer statesman in the history of New Mexico. Mr. Chavez also gave us copies of his family tree beginning with an entry for Pedro Gomez Duran y Chaves, born in Spain March 17, 1562, died in Bernalillo, New Mexico 1627.

The report that Lummis wrote describing his stay with the Chaves clan was the longest during his the trip across the country, more than five thousand words as described by historian Mark Thompson in *American Character: The Curious Life of Charles Fletcher Lummis and the Rediscovery of the Southwest*.

Mark Thompson, quoting Lummis, characterized Don Manuel Antonio Chaves as “a courtly Spanish gentleman, brave as a lion, tender as a woman, spotless of honor, as modest as heroic.”

HSSC is proud to accept Mr. Chavez’ gift of family photos and the family tree.



Portrait of Amado Chaves circa 1900

Ramona Days

Helen Hunt Jackson’s 1884 classic California novel, *Ramona*, comes to life at the “Home of Ramona.” Celebrate all things Ramona. Experience cast members of the world famous Hemet Ramona Pageant perform vignettes, watch the 1910 Mary Pickford movie filmed on location, view unique memorabilia, historic displays and presentations, and watch living history. Enjoy barbeque dinners, other food, music, traditional and Flamenco dance, original art and craft sales and demonstrations, used book sale, museum and garden tours, free children’s activities and more.

September 7, 1-6 p.m. Rancho Camulos Museum and National Historic Landmark, Piru, California

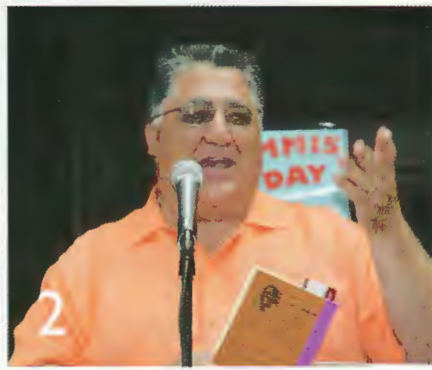
Advance Tickets: \$7 / at Gate: \$10; Age 12 and under free. Details at www.ranchocamulos.org / 805-521-1501



Lummis Day 2013

The 8th Annual Lummis Day Festival took place on a beautiful Sunday in June. Festivities kicked off in front of the Lummis Home entry doors with a poetry reading led by Suzanne Lummis. Festival-goers then headed over to Heritage Square, to enjoy a broad program of games and entertainment, including live music and traditional dance performances. Local artists and artisans also set up exhibits in the El Alisal garden, displaying and selling beautiful works, from sculpture and paintings to clothing and jewelry.

1. Poet Suzanne Lummis is first to read to crowd
2. Anthony Portantino, poet and former assemblyman for California's 44th district
3. Erika Ayon, 2009 Rosenthal Emerging Voices Fellow
4. Luis J. Rodriguez, founder & editor of Tia Chucha Press





Photos by AL C. Strange

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Your membership supports the care and preservation of Southern California history. In an effort to better personalize your experience, we've restructured our membership levels. Please check out the new options to find the one that's best for you!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CALIFORNIA AND THE WIDE WORLD

By Jane Apostol

RETHINKING ANTI-IMMIGRANT RACISM: LESSONS FROM THE LOS ANGELES VOTE ON THE 1920 ALIEN LAND LAW

By Lon Kurashige

FAITH AND FAIR HOUSING: AN EPISCOPAL PARISH CHURCH IN THE 1964 DEBATE OVER PROPOSITION 14

By Bruce G. Merritt

THE HISTORIAN'S EYE: WHAT DOES A HISTORIAN NOTICE IN A PHOTO FROM THE PAST?

CONTRIBUTORS

Jane Apostol was feted by the Historical Society of Southern California in April 2013 as the most prolific contributor to the Society's publications in anyone's memory. She has produced six books for the society and fourteen articles in the *Southern California Quarterly*. She also surely holds an all-time record for her years of service as a volunteer at the Huntington Library, the site of her research for her books and articles.

Lon Kurashige is associate professor of history and American studies and ethnicity at the University of Southern California. He is the author of the award-winning *Japanese American Celebration and Conflict* (2002) and other published writings. The Dunning talk is part of his current book project that re-thinks the history of anti-Asian racism in the United States.

Bruce G. Merritt is a retired lawyer and law professor with degrees from Occidental College (history) and Harvard Law School. Since his retirement from the law, he has worked on a variety of historical and genealogical projects, including a history of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Glendale, California, 1889–1989, from which his article derives. Mr. Merritt lives in Glendale and attends St. Mark's Church.

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CALIFORNIA

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BOOK REVIEWS

Bottoms, *An Aristocracy of Color: Race and Reconstruction in California and the West, 1850–1890*

by Daniel Lynch, 320

Osborne, *Pacific Eldorado: A History of Greater California*
by Brett Garcia Myhren, 322

Brook, *Land of Smoke and Mirrors: A Cultural History of Los Angeles*

by Sean Smith, 324

Sweeney and Sheine, *Schindler, King's Road, and Southern California Modernism*

by Merry Ovnick, 327

Mohr, *Hold-Outs: The Los Angeles Poetry Renaissance, 1948–1992*

by Mike Sonksen, 329

Wells, *Car Country: An Environmental History*

by Theodore Strathman, 331

Save The Date

September 9, 2013

Admission Day Dinner
@ The Old Mill

November 2, 2013

Dunning Lecture
@ The Mayme A. Clayton Museum

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The Courthouse Crowd

LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND
ITS GOVERNMENT
1850-1950

The Courthouse Crowd: Los Angeles County And Its Government 1850 - 1950

by Tom Sitton

Available at the El Alisal Book store for 29.95

HSSC is proud to announce the publication of Tom Sitton's new book which brings together major themes in urban history as they were exemplified in the development of Los Angeles county government. The story is based on meticulous research and a remarkable clarity of presentation. Future generations of historians can build on the solid documentation of this work.

The unique role of the county structure as it extends across municipal and unincorporated areas is shown as the reflection of evolving social needs. From the time of the ranchos, the leadership of the county has been assailed by the notion of politics-as-warfare, but has managed to function by building a tradition of compromise. It was ultimately through compromise that the "courthouse crowd" created a workable county government for Los Angeles.