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The headquarters of the
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Serving the Future with the Past

By Patricia Adler-Ingram

This present year, 2014, may well be a year of decision for the Historical Society of Southern California. After more than a hundred thirty years on a sometimes perilous journey, the society has evolved and changed as mountain climbers do in gaining altitude, but still we have followed the precepts of our founding members.

We have extended a welcome to everyone who sought to join us along the way. We have published more than thirty books about the history of southern California and the West. We have published a scholarly journal continuously since 1884 and now make the entire archive available to colleges and universities world-wide as well as to our members.

Since 1965 HSSC has been headquartered in the landmark Lummis Home and worked to preserve it. Here we have met the visiting public every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, providing guided tours of the house in Spanish and in English.

One of our members, Dennis Harbach, has created a searchable data base for the Lummis guest book that reveals the way Lummis drew together the principal artists, writers, musicians and celebrities of his day. Even though he called them "Noises," it was through his dinner parties that Lummis rallied serious support for his favorite causes such as saving the missions and persuading the U.S. Indian Agency to humanize its policies. Here he invited his neighbors to sit down with John Muir to talk about the wild beauty of the Sierras and the majesty of the Sequoias.

Andrew Krastins, a member of our board, has brought outstanding musicians to the house to recreate the music performed at Lummis' parties. It is a rare and engaging way to enliven history and draws a crowd on the last Sunday of every month.

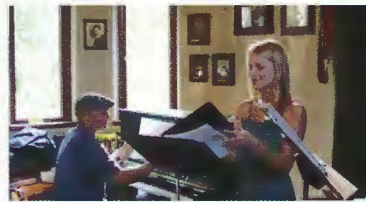
Why, then, is this year a possible turning point for HSSC? Because the long-standing lease for our headquarters in the Lummis House has not been renewed by the City of Los Angeles. We have tried very hard to reach common ground in our negotiations with Parks and Recreation, to no avail. We submitted a generous proposal for the renewal of our lease, which was rejected without comment. The City then issued a Request for Proposals, with requirements that are unrealistic for HSSC, or any other entity devoted to the preservation of history.



As historians we are saddened by the actions of the city in which we have centered decades of public service. We have not made a profit from the landmark Lummis Home. We consider the City's policy at present unsound, in that it emphasizes generating a profit from a landmark that needs care and preservation, not exploitation. Lummis' El Alisal should not be treated as a profit-making concession; its true value lies in its historical significance as a focal point for the thinkers and artists of Los Angeles, then and now.

Our only sources of money are the generosity of our members and such grants as may be available for publications, scholarships and historic preservation. Without a lease on the Lummis Home we are no longer eligible for the preservation grants. We have just finished work funded by the last of such grants to preserve the tall windows and construct replicas of the original lighting fixtures removed by the City in 1961.

In everything related to the Lummis Home we have sought to serve the future with the past, to honor the spirit of the place and to preserve the handwork of the builder. Going forward our course cannot be anything less.



March Hares Concert

By Julian van Zandweghe

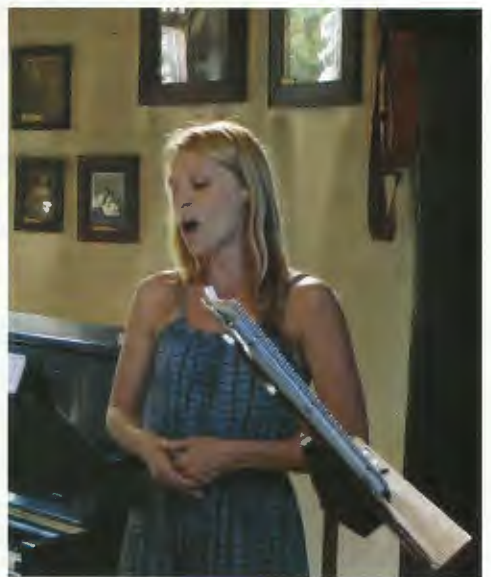
Our second March Hares Afternoon at El Alisal was a huge success, drawing a standing-room-only crowd. The evening featured a rare musical program put together by board member Andrew Krastins, as well as an impressive buffet of food contributed by guests, and of course, a birthday cake for Charlie.

The highlight of the evening was the musical program, which featured pieces originally enjoyed at Lummis' gatherings, pieces composed by friends of Lummis' such as Leopold Godowsky and Charles Wakefield Cadman, Old California songs collected by Lummis, and, in the spirit of the original 'Noises' at El Alisal, original compositions by the performers. The performers for the evening were pianist and composer Benjamin Salisbury, coloratura soprano Angie

Engelbart, guitarist Matt Engel, Puerto Rican pianist and composer Luis Rosalebron, percussionist Neel Agrawal, traditional Southwest fiddler Frank Fairfield, and poet Suzanne Lummis.

The program was split into two parts, with an intermission giving guests the chance to mingle with the performers and other members. Of course, the main purpose of the intermission was for everyone to feast on a wide assortment of food that included homemade contributions of roasted duck, hasenpfeffer (rabbit stew), and sauerkraut, to name a few.

We would like to thank the Steinway Company for generously allowing us the use of one of their beautiful upright pianos for the evening. We would also like to thank Andrew for all of his hard work and all of the performers for their amazing performances.



Museo Restoration

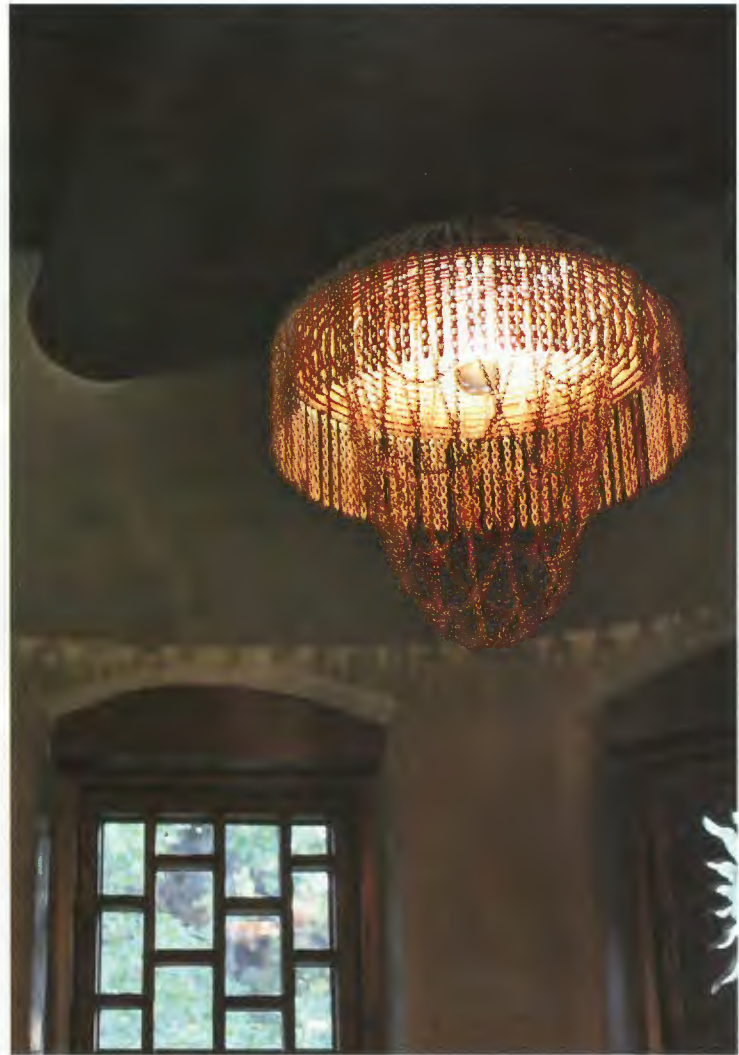
By Tada Ryvola

The Museo is a grand room occupying the heart of the historic Lummis House. It was here that Charles Lummis hosted his legendary parties, known as ‘Noises,’ which were attended by the Los Angeles bohemian set at the turn of the last century.

While much of the Museo is in remarkable condition, with soaring ceilings supported by repurposed electrical poles and remarkable hand-hewn carpentry details, several aspects of the room have required much-needed attention. The three large windows set in the curved wall of the tower at the room’s corner had deteriorated severely after enduring the elements for more than a hundred years, and the original hand-crafted lighting had long been replaced by factory-made fixtures.

A generous grant from the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council allowed the Historical Society of Southern California to commence rehabilitation of the Museo. United Environment Architecture provided restoration services for the three tower windows, and designed and built three unique lighting fixtures to complement the historic character of the house.

Lummis’ own photographs (below left) informed the design for the new lighting in the Museo. Reclaimed wood and patinated chain hung to create a catenary form were selected to evoke the basket form of the original fixtures. The appearance of the lamp shifts depending on the angle it is viewed from (below right), and the carved wooden shade generates a warm glowing light. The image at right shows one of the three new lamps superimposed against the restored tower windows.





All work performed to *Secretary of the Interior's Standard for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings*. a,b) Original condition of windows casements including deteriorated putty. c) Removal and preservation of original glass. d) Stabilization of carpentry joinery with restoration-grade epoxy and putty. e) Restoration architect, Tada Ryvola, painting windows reglazed with linseed-oil glazing putty to match original finish.



2:1 majority and passed in all but one of California's 58 counties. Not all whites who voted against the Rumford act were racists, according to Schiesl, but many were. Especially ominous, the measure carried despite concerted opposition from the State Federation of Labor, Catholic, Protestant & Jewish leaders, as well as the Mayors of LA and San Francisco, the LA City Council, and San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Especially outspoken against Prop.14 was Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, whom Professor Schiesl praises as a consistent and often effective champion of open housing.

While Professor Schiesl did not specifically blame Prop.14 for the Watts Riots, there is little doubt the resounding repeal of the Rumford Act fueled resentment which erupted in South Central LA the following summer. Fortunately but belatedly, as was often true in the ongoing struggle

for civil rights, the courts stepped in to overrule the tendency of the majority to trample on the rights of minorities. Specifically, the State Supreme Court in 1966, persuaded by Nathaniel Colley of the NAACP and three ACLU lawyers, overturned Prop. 14 and restored the Unruh and Rumford Acts on the grounds that the proposition violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. Finally, the US Supreme Court, linking the 1966 Civil Rights Act to the 13th Amendment, opened all housing to all races nationwide.

In his concluding remarks, Martin Schiesl emphasized that the open housing struggle was an interracial movement and also benefitted considerably from broad religious support.

2013 Dunning Lecture

By John O. Pohlmann

As per tradition, CSULA Emeritus Professor Martin Schiesl delivered the 16th annual George A. V. Dunning Lecture at the Mayme A. Clayton Museum & Library in Culver City. The address "City of Promise" focused on the largely successful African-American struggle for open housing in Southern California. Spearheading the fight was Lauren Miller, who in 1948, with Thurgood Marhsall of the NAACP, convinced the US Supreme Court to declare race-based housing restrictions unconstitutional. Unfortunately, this landmark decision had virtually no immediate impact on local suburban housing. Rampant discrimination by realtors continued into the early 1960's when 95% of LA blacks were still confined to South Central. Between 1940 and 1964 nearly a million new housing units were constructed in the County, but only 1% were purchased by ethnic and racial minorities. And between 1934 and 1962, the FHA and Veterans Administration provided \$120 billion in loans for new housing nationwide, of which only 2% went to non-whites.

Meanwhile, in 1959 State Assemblyman Augustus Hawkins introduced a fair housing bill which stalled in the State Senate. With Hawkins elected to Congress in 1962, Oakland Assemblyman Byron Rumford orchestrated passage of the historic bill that bears his name. Unfortunately, opposition from both parties forced a compromise which removed most enforcement penalties and exempted small units. Nonetheless, the Rumford Act made California the 5th state to have a fair housing law. Unfortunately, a well organized and financed campaign by the California Real Estate Association (CREA), Apartment Owners Association, and the National Association of Real Estate Boards aided by the California Republican Assembly, drafted an initiative to negate both the Rumford and Unruh Fair Housing Acts, which carried as Proposition 14 in 1964 by an overwhelming



From right to left: John Pohlmann, attendee, Sharon Schiesl, Martin Schiesl & Patricia Adler-Ingram

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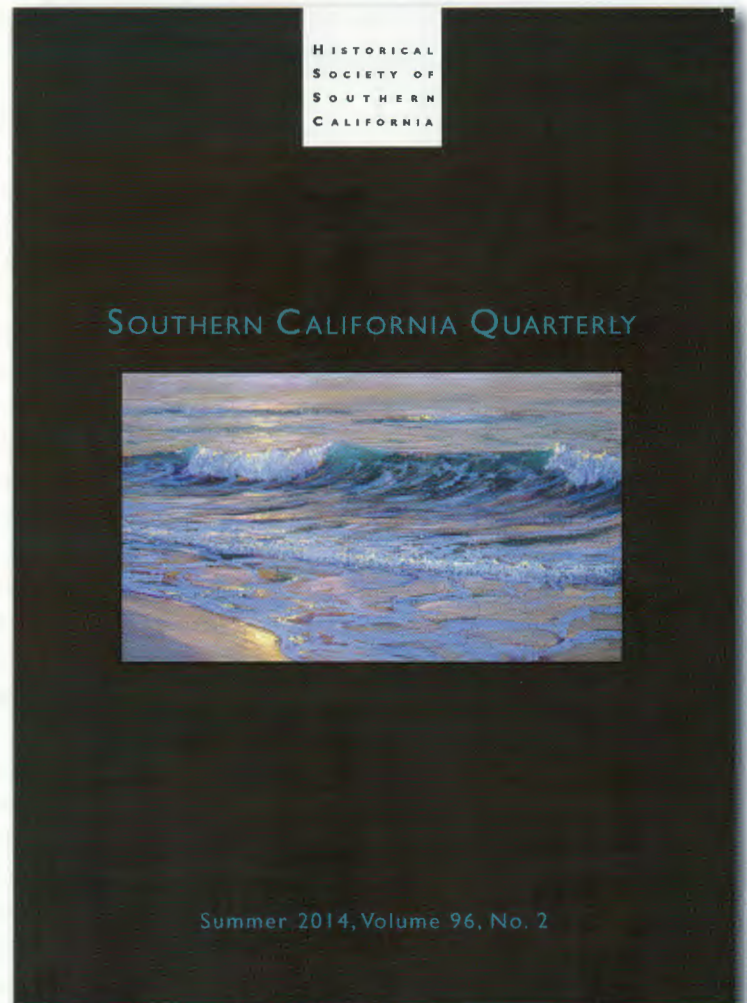
THE HISTORIAN'S EYE: WHAT DOES A HISTORIAN NOTICE IN A PHOTO FROM THE PAST?

CONTRIBUTORS

Travis Ross is a PhD Candidate in History at the University of Utah. His forthcoming dissertation is tentatively titled "History, Inc.: Hubert Howe Bancroft's History Company and the Problem of Selling the Past." In it, he examines the History Company as a network of knowledge production in which a wide range of people from across the North American West collaborated with disparate levels of power in order to write themselves into history, choosing to relinquish full control over their own stories in order to reach otherwise inaccessible audiences.

Valerie Sherer Mathes has been teaching American History and Native American History at City College of San Francisco since 1967. She is author of *Helen Hunt Jackson and Her Indian Reform Legacy*, *Divinely Guided: The California Work of the Women's National Indian Association*, co-author of *The Standing Bear Controversy: Prelude to Indian Reform*, editor of *The Indian Reform Letters of Helen Hunt Jackson*, and author of over forty articles. She is currently working on an anthology on various aspects of the Women's National Indian Association.

Jane Apostol, local historian extraordinaire and longtime volunteer at the Huntington Library, has written six books published by the Historical Society of Southern California. Of her many articles in the *Southern California Quarterly*, the most recent was "California and The Wide World," which appeared in the Fall 2013 issue.



BOOK REVIEWS

Igler, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush*, by Daniel McClure

Sitton, *The Courthouse Crowd: Los Angeles County and Its Government*, by Donna C. Schuele

Wilson, ed., *Jews in the Multiethnic Mosaic*, by Jeffrey C. Blutinger

Cadava, *Standing on Common Ground: The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland*, by Anthony Pratcher II

Wit and Alexander, eds., *Overdrive: L.A. Constructs the Future, 1940-1990*; Goldin and Lubell, eds., *Never Built Los Angeles*; Kun, *Songs in the Key of Los Angeles*, by Oliver Wang

Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*, by Sarah Jaquette Ray

Save The Date

June 29, 2014

Afternoons @ El Alisal

July 27, 2014

Afternoons @ El Alisal

August 31, 2014

Afternoons @ El Alisal

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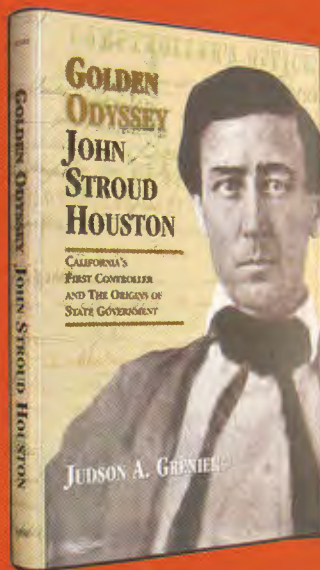
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Golden Odyssey: John Stroud Houston

California's First Controller and the Origins of the State Government
By Judson A. Grenier

In 1849, before it officially became a state, California installed a government that lacked precedent, authority, or money. To start the mechanism and keep it going was the responsibility of the state's first controller, John Stroud Houston. Having accomplished his task, Houston "vanished from the record books." Nothing was known or written about him and a blank spot stood in place of his portrait in the halls of the capital.

This book solves the mystery and restores Houston to his rightful position in the pantheon of California pioneers. A sergeant-major in the Mexican War, Houston traveled from Arkansas to California during the Gold Rush. Together with fellow war veterans, he helped to create the new state government. He served as sergeant-at-arms in the 1849 convention and then carried the Constitution into the goldfields in advance of the first state election.

Golden Odyssey can be purchased at the El Alisal Book Store or online for 21.95.