



Judson Grenier discusses the upcoming lecture and book signing at the Old Mill in San Marino with HSSC President Sig Demke and Margaret Dickerson, coordinator of the Sesquicentennial event. See more about the event on page 12.

## Ahmanson gift completes book publications endowment fund

**H**SSC received a check for \$100,000 from The Ahmanson Foundation in April. This gift, when combined with the earlier Ahmanson grant of \$200,000, completes the endowment campaign goal of \$300,000 for book publications.

"I am thrilled," states a very happy executive director Tom Andrews, "to have The Ahmanson Foundation value our book publications effort highly enough to underwrite the entire publications component of the endowment campaign."

Lee Walcott of The Ahmanson Foundation complimented the Society on its \$3 million endowment campaign effort to secure its financial

future, of which the book publications endowment is an important part.

Interest earned by the \$300,000 endowment will enable HSSC to publish between two and three books every two years.

The initial book to carry the Ahmanson endowment colophon will be *Golden Odyssey*, Judson Grenier's biography of John Stroud Houston, California's first state controller. Dr. Grenier's book is also number seven in HSSC's California Sesquicentennial Series.

In conclusion, Andrews notes that "The Ahmanson Foundation has been a valued partner in our publications efforts since 1991, but these last two gifts actually secure a publications future for HSSC!"

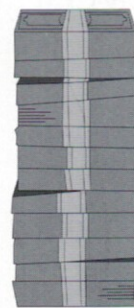
## Endowment closes in on \$1 million in cash

**A**t the halfway point in a five-year, \$3 million endowment campaign, HSSC is within \$150,000 of reaching \$1 million in cash in its endowment.

"We have built the endowment cash amount to this point by utilizing board and foundation contributions," said president Sig Demke. "Now we are ready to take the campaign to the membership."

Currently HSSC has cash and pledges totaling \$1.5 million, exactly one-half of our goal.

"The generous commitment of the board has been most impressive," Demke continued, "as has been the support of the



Ahmanson and Weingart foundations.

With this endowment, HSSC is taking the necessary steps to build a solid future for its programs, publications, awards and educational outreach. Watch for information this fall on how you can contribute to the endowment.



HSSC  
salutes  
Tom  
Andrews  
completing  
his  
13th year  
as  
executive  
director



George A. V. Dunning

## New lecture series to be held at the Getty in November

**H**SSC is pleased to announce the creation of an endowed lecture series on Los Angeles, the George A.V. Dunning Lectures, the first of which will be held at the Getty Center on Sunday afternoon, November 14 at 2 p.m.

### Nunis inaugurates series

Inaugurating the series will be USC professor emeritus and distinguished editor of the *Southern California Quarterly*, Doyce B. Nunis Jr. His topic will be "Los Angeles in the Eye of the 20th Century." The lecture will be held in the Harold M. Williams Auditorium.

### Series invites leaders

The goal of the lecture series, according to HSSC Executive Director Tom Andrews, is to bring together the academic historical community, the civic and cultural leadership of Los Angeles, and the general public to hear and discuss topics of importance relating to Los Angeles.

### HSSC thanks benefactors

HSSC is grateful to the generosity of board member and past president George Dunning for endowing the lectures, and to Robert F. Erburu for the selection of the Getty. The lectures are free but require a reservation. Watch for your invitation this fall.

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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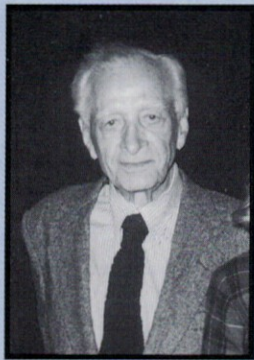
Office Hours Mon-Fri 9-5

The Lummis Home  
is open to the public  
Fri-Sun 12-4 pm

Group Tours  
Fridays by appointment

## \$50,000 from Weingart completes its pledge to HSSC Endowment

**T**he Weingart Foundation, one of the first to contribute to HSSC's \$3 million endowment campaign, has completed its \$150,000 pledge



John T. Gurash, Weingart Foundation board member

with a final payment of \$50,000.

"Weingart was there from the very beginning," noted Tom Andrews, "and their support and assistance was directly responsible for the successful launching of the campaign."

Over the years the Weingart Foundation has assisted the publications and educational outreach of the Society in addition to this generous endowment support.

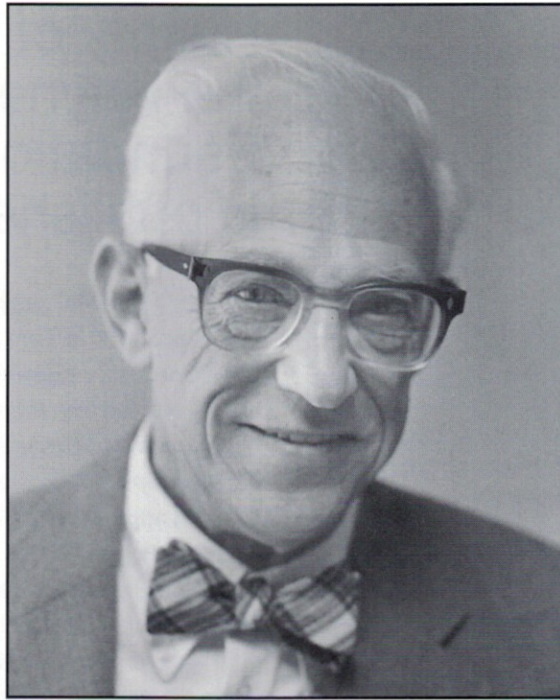


Photo: Suzanne Huddleson

Martin Ridge

## The Martin Ridge Retrospective Award created

**H**SSC's board of directors is pleased to announce the creation of a new award, named in recognition of the contributions Martin Ridge has made to the Historical Society and in acknowledgement of his stature within the historical profession.

### Eligible books

The MARTIN RIDGE RETROSPECTIVE AWARD will consider books published prior to the creation of HSSC's awards program, and books that extend beyond Los Angeles and Southern California in their subject matter to include California and the West.

### Reshaping history

The award will recognize books that at the time of publication made a significant contribution to shape and/or revise our thinking about a subject of importance to California history.

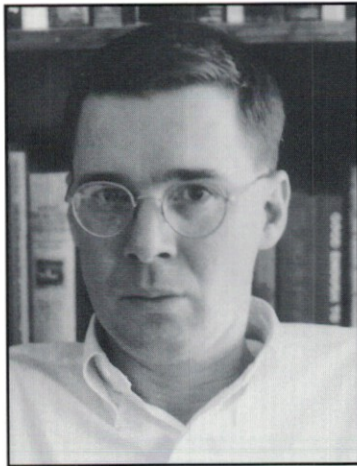
Books published by HSSC or previously honored by HSSC are not eligible.

### Honorarium provided

The award will carry a \$500 honorarium and include a specially bound copy of the winning author's book.

Watch for the announcement of the first winner in the next newsletter.





Blake Gumprecht

## Nunis Award winner publishes book on the Los Angeles River



Johns Hopkins University Press has published Blake Gumprecht's major study of the Los Angeles River, subtitled "Its Life, Death, and Possible Rebirth."

Gumprecht, who won last year's Nunis Award for the best article in the *Southern California Quarterly* by a younger scholar, entitled "51 Miles of Concrete," teaches in the Department of Geography at the University of Oklahoma.

His new book, containing 380 pages and 113 illustrations, is being hailed as "one of the finest books ever written about Los Angeles." It sells for \$39.95 and may be ordered from HSSC. Tax and shipping will be added.

## History of the Haynes Foundation is published

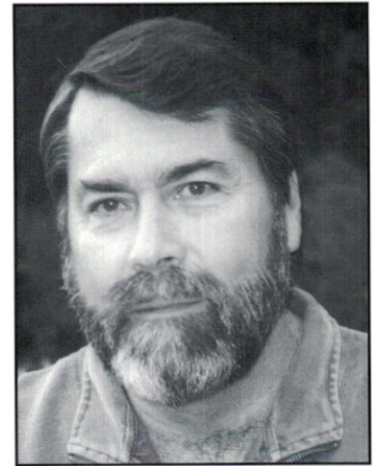
The 29th HSSC publication since 1990 is Tom Sitton's thoroughly-researched history entitled *The Haynes Foundation and Urban Reform Philanthropy in Los Angeles*.

As it approaches its 75th anniversary in 2002, the John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation has been a vital force in its efforts to improve the political and social culture of especially the Southern California community.

In this way, the Foundation has continued the commitment of involved citizenship of Dr. Haynes and his wife, both thoroughgoing California Progressives.

According to HSSC's past president, Martin Ridge, Tom Sitton "has written an honest, objective, and useful book for people seeking to know the past." HSSC is proud to publish such an important history.

To inquire about the availability of copies, please call the HSSC office.



Donald Rowland

## A dual biography of Rowland and Workman is published

Donald E. Rowland's comprehensive biography of two 1841 Southern California pioneers, John Rowland and William Workman, has arrived from the printer.

One thousand copies were jointly published by HSSC and the Arthur H. Clark Co. Less than 100 copies of HSSC's allotment remain after the pre-publication offer in May.

It is the story of two men who became fast friends, and of their high adventures as New Mexico fur trappers and traders, overland travelers to Southern California, and large land grant owners in the turbulent 1840s and 1850s.

Engagingly written, it is a book to enjoy as a story of dynamic change across the Southern California landscape unfolds. It sells for \$32 and copies may be ordered from HSSC.

a Southern California classic revisited

# Edwin Corle's *Fig Tree John*

**W**ith the publication of *Fig Tree John* in 1935, author Edwin Corle enjoyed critical praise for his highly readable, emotion-packed novel containing a hard message about culture clash and racial interaction.

## Fig Tree John's story

The title character, an Apache called "John" by white men, journeys with his wife from Arizona in 1906 to the area of the Salton Sea. He plants fig trees on a parcel of land which earns him the sobriquet "Fig Tree John." Corle's telling of the story develops a theme illustrating his belief that when white civilization clashes with Native American civilization, it is always the Indian "who breaks." The old order is destroyed and the next generation "goes white."

Dazzled by the beauty of the Salton Sea and the desert, Fig Tree John settles in self-contained isolation on "his" land. Soon a baby is born and life proceeds at a calm pace. Fig Tree John made tentative, re-

strained contact with white neighbors on nearby date ranches. One day two white criminals come upon Fig Tree's wife and son alone. They ransack the place, terrorize the woman and boy, and ultimately kill her as she defends herself and her home. After a futile chase, Fig Tree John, with a deeply-rooted sense of bitterness, hate, anger, and lost love becomes suspicious and expresses loathing for the white man's culture.

When his son "Johnny Mack" is hired to work at a nearby ranch, later marries Maria, one of the ranch employees, and acquires a car, Fig Tree John's despair and isolation is complete. As a victim of violence, the embittered man employs violence against Maria, smashes his son's car hood, and tragically engages in a heart-wrenching fight with his son. Corle ends the story with Johnny Mack driving to Banning to join Maria and to begin a new life—in the white man's world.

## Cultural conflicts

The present changes being

wrought upon reservation and non-reservation Native Americans through new economic initiatives enabled by gaming are addressing many tribal medical, educational, and social needs. This is a different picture from 1935 conditions. Imperatives inherent in the cultural conflicts over acculturation (cultural modification by adapting to or borrowing traits from one culture) and assimilation (absorption into the cultural tradition of a population) still confront today's Indian and non-Indian population.

Corle's novel may seem somewhat dated in attributing an ethnocentric stereotype of primitivism about Fig Tree John. When the novel appeared in 1935, it likely appeared to him that the settlement of the North American continent had in three centuries largely obliterated Indian culture, leaving only surviving fragments.

For research on his novel Corle travelled to New Mexico and Arizona where he talked with Apaches on reservations. At the Southwest Museum founded by Charles F. Lummis,



by Larry Burgess

*Larry Burgess is director of the A.K. Smiley Library in Redlands and co-author of The Search for Willy Boy*

*Continued on page 10*

Museums  
of the  
Arroyo Day  
Photo  
Highlights





**F**OURTH GRADE students from Arroyo Vista School in Los Angeles were among the nearly 1,200 visitors to the Lummis Home during Museums of the Arroyo Day on Sunday, May 16 (seen here drawing in the garden far left and bottom next to a detail of one of the prize-winning entries).

Professor Daniel Lewis presented his popular portrayal of Charles Lummis in the courtyard while standing in front of a display of more student drawings of El Alisal (top right).

This year visitors were pleased to find umbrellas and chairs, making the wait for shuttles more comfortable (center).

And (bottom right) two visitors added to the fun of the day by dressing in style.

HSSC thanks the students from the Key Club at Franklin High School in Highland Park who helped the day run smoothly by serving as volunteers.



Photos by Michele Clark



## IN MEMORIAM

# Francis F. Guest, O.F.M.

**F**ranciscan priest, renowned teacher, archivist, and a leading authority on the California missions, Fr. Guest died January 13, 1999, at Santa Barbara Mission, age 85.

He was born in Alameda, Calif. on August 29, 1914. When he was in the fourth grade, his family moved to Highland Park. Educated in his local parish school, he transferred to Saint Joseph's School, located on Los Angeles Street at 12th Street, a parish staffed by the Order of Friars Minor. In 1928 he entered St. Anthony's Preparatory Seminary, Santa Barbara, intent on becoming a priest. He was ordained on June 4, 1941.

After a variety of teaching and pastoral assignments, Fr. Guest earned a masters degree. in medieval history at St. Louis University and another in Latin

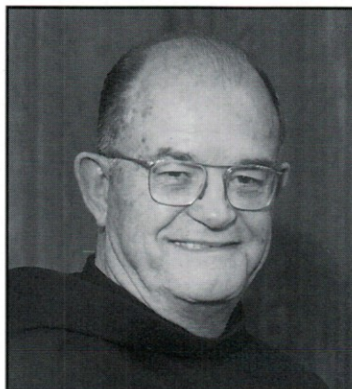


Photo: Santa Barbara Mission Archive-Library

Francis F. Guest, O.F.M.

American history from the Catholic University, Washington, D.C. In 1961 he received his Ph.D. in history from USC.

Although he carried a heavy teaching schedule and fulfilled his demanding clerical obligations, he found time to research and write. His biography of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén, the second *presidente* of the California missions, was published to critical acclaim in 1973. Beginning in 1962 he authored a num-

ber of important and significant articles which were published in scholarly journals, including five major studies which appeared in HSSC's *Southern California Quarterly*.

A brilliant and talented man, endowed with extraordinary linguistic skills, he was also very human, noted for his keen sense of humor. To honor his contributions to Alta California mission history, the Santa Barbara Archive-Library published an anthology of his scholarly articles in 1996 entitled *Hispanic California Revisited: Essays by Francis F. Guest, O.F.M.*, edited and introduced by Doyce B. Nunis Jr. That book stands as a testament to a superb scholar. It is a fitting epitaph for this distinguished and dedicated priest and historian. *by Doyce Nunis*

### FOR LOVE OF HISTORY TRIBUTES

***HSSC thanks the following  
who have made donations  
to the publication fund  
in honor of the  
Southern California  
Quarterly's  
editor extraordinaire  
DOYCE B. NUNIS JR.  
in celebration  
of his 75th birthday***

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Dee Ulrich  
Phyllis Vineyard  
Richard Wayne  
Msgr. Francis Weber  
Ron Woolsey  
Parker Young

HSSC  
mourns  
the  
sudden  
passing of  
garden  
volunteer  
Bruce  
Lloyd  
who died  
on  
June 11



## History by design: Meet Hortensia Chu

Working at first with Joseph Stoddard on book covers for HSSC that carried his art, Pasadena designer Hortensia Chu has stepped into the role of designer for the new look of the *Southern California Quarterly*.

The rave reviews HSSC has received about the quarterly is testimony to the success of this Art Center graduate's work.

This year, Hortensia has taken on the added assignment of designing the dust jackets for the Rowland/Workman and John Stroud Houston biographies.

HSSC looks forward to a long relationship with this talented designer.

## President's Circle tours Auto Club facilities in L.A. & Costa Mesa

The automobile has played such an important role in the development of Southern California that it was a treat for a select group of HSSC members to visit the old and new headquarters of the Automobile Club.

On the last Saturday in June, President and CEO, Tom McKernan welcomed the guests to the historic Auto Club headquarters on Adams and Figueroa. After a light breakfast and talk about the history of transportation in Los Angeles, the group toured the gracious and historic building. Following a peek at some beautifully restored antique vehicles, the group boarded a bus for Costa Mesa where they enjoyed lunch and a tour of the new and beautiful corporate offices.

Our thanks to board member Rich Suit for hosting an enjoyable and informative event.



Photo: Suzanne Huddleson

## Pasadena artist Joseph Stoddard receives award

On May 28, Joseph Stoddard received the Pasadena Arts Council's prestigious Gold Crown Award. Presented by California landscape artist Peter Adams, the award—a statuette evocative of the mountains surrounding Pasadena—has been given for the last 36 years to honor excellence in the visual, performing and literary arts.

Joseph's art has appeared on the covers of six HSSC books and on the covers of two of the newly designed quarterlies (summer 1998 and fall 1999). He also designed the Lummis garden educational panels and area signs.

Thank you  
to



members  
and friends  
who take  
part in  
Vroman's  
Gives Back



Guests of HSSC and the Automobile Club of Southern California pose before a beautifully restored 1924 Dodge Highway Patrol Service truck.

Photo: Jon Willkman

he mined the vast collection of books and artifacts.

### From New Jersey to Hollywood

Born in New Jersey in 1906, Corle while young moved with his family to California, graduating from high school in Hollywood. After receiving a B.A. from UCLA in 1928, he contin-

He also began writing short stories. To the writing of books Corle devoted the focus of his life. *Fig Tree John* is considered his masterpiece. *People on the Earth* (1937) and *In Winter Light* (1949) are sensitive studies of the Navajos immediately before and after World War II as they struggled to maintain

*Gila: River of the Southwest* (1951) are splendid accounts about the deserts. *Burro Alley* (1938), Corle's hilarious, biting satire of Santa Fe during the tourist season, still causes chuckles.

### The real Fig Tree John

The real Fig Tree John, a Cahuilla Indian, lived to the age of 100, dying in 1927. He knew many whites, enjoyed much esteem, served as chief of the Agua Dulce clan of the Cahuillas, and also spoke the Apache language. He had a successful business associated with his spring and fig orchard near the Salton Sea.

### The changing desert

Journeys to the Salton Sea area, to Mecca, Indio, on to Coachella and Banning gave grist and reality to Corle's setting for Fig Tree John's place of residence and his attitudes about the land. The Apache of his novel viewed the desert as a home, as a place of being, while society largely saw it as an area to be subdued and conquered. One wonders what both the fictional Fig Tree John, the actual Fig Tree John, and Edwin Corle would think of their desert today amidst its verdant golf courses, sea of tile roofs, and asphalt motor ways.

### Corle's legacy

Corle died in 1956 at the young age of fifty. His *Fig Tree John* deserves to be considered among the classics written by the southwest school of writers.

Corle's *Fig Tree John* deserves to be considered among the classics written by the southwest school of writers

Larry Burgess



Photo: Courtesy A.K. Smiley Library

The real Fig Tree John at his spring and fig orchard near Salton Sea.

ued at Yale as a graduate student in the College of Fine arts. In 1930 he began writing scripts for radio and motion pictures.

cultural identity. His final novel was *Billy the Kid* (1953).

His two non-fiction works *Desert Country* (1941) and *The*



Tom and Chris Carson enjoy a day at the Lummis Home.

# Meet Chris & Tom Carson

**I**t's a rare blind date story: Friends arrange a date and the couple actually like one another. One year passes and they become engaged. This is the Chris and Tom Carson story. They married three years later and today, celebrating their 31st anniversary, Tom and Chris Carson still share the interests and passions that first brought them together.

Among them is their love of history. Both received bachelors degrees in history, Chris from Immaculate Heart College and Tom from Loyola Marymount. While Chris went on to take a masters in history and teach at Cal State LA and Pepperdine, Tom decided to change course and earned an MBA degree from USC.

## Overflowing with books

Both are avid readers and lean toward histories, biographies and historical fiction. Chris especially enjoys novels by Ellis Peters set in medieval Shrewsbury, England where the chief character is a formidable detective and also a monk.

When the two remodeled

their home in the late 1980s, the contractor with all sincerity asked, "Are you sure you want so many book shelves?" Today those shelves are overflowing with books.

Although Chris says, "We're not book collectors in the sense of acquiring first editions and rare books," the Carsons do have a large collection of books on medieval and renaissance history, music, art and architecture as well as books for lighter reading. And the generous, light-filled library with cushioned window seats and comfortable chairs invites you to sit down, put up your feet and get lost in one of them.

## Community service

Until 1996 Tom was the chief financial officer for Spelling Entertainment Group. Now he provides financial consulting to private clients. He also serves on the advisory council for the School of Communications and Fine Arts at Loyola Marymount University and has served as chair of the American Institute of CPA's study of entertainment industry accounting practices. Both Chris and Tom serve on

the advisory council for the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at UCLA.

## Maestro Foundation

One of Tom's special pleasures is his work with the Maestro Foundation which fosters awareness of classical music among young people. In fact, one of the reasons the Carsons remodeled their home was to be able to accommodate chamber music concerts in the living room.

"Do you know that a good quality violin bow costs \$3,000?" asks Tom by way of explaining one of the foundation's commitments. The Maestro Foundation also raises funds to help young musicians get started. Sometimes that means providing money for a demonstration CD; sometimes it means providing money for instruments—like a good quality bow.

## HSSC salutes the Carsons

Besides their interest in medieval and renaissance history, art and music, the Carsons collect 18th century silver, antique ivories and oil still lifes by Loren Speck. HSSC salutes this multifaceted couple.



## SAVE THESE DATES

**September 9**  
Thursday  
6 pm

**Sesquicentennial Dinner**  
Lecture and book signing  
Judson Grenier  
The Old Mill  
San Marino

**October 2**  
Saturday

### **Asian Experience**

All day tour  
including

Korean Cultural Center  
Hsi Rai Buddhist Temple  
(in Hacienda Heights)  
Wat Thai of Los Angeles  
(Buddhist temple  
in North Hollywood)  
Japanese American National  
Museum  
Led by Nancy & Jon Wilkman

**November 14**  
Sunday  
2 pm

**Inauguration of  
George A.V. Dunning  
Los Angeles Lecture Series**  
Getty Center  
Harold Williams Auditorium  
Watch for more on this  
exciting series coming soon

**December 11**  
Saturday  
2 - 4 pm

**Holiday Open House**  
Lummis Home

## Outdoor Sesquicentennial evening planned for the Old Mill in San Marino

**O**n September 9, Admission Day, HSSC will unveil its newest publication, the 30th book since 1990, at a reception-dinner-lecture-book signing at historic El Molino Viejo in San Marino.

Grenier has solved the mystery, and the story of a real "flesh and blood" John Houston is now fully told for the first time.

The dinner will be catered by San Marino Caterers and



Photo: Suzanne Huddleson

The Old Mill in San Marino

Judson Grenier, author of the new book, *Golden Odyssey*, will present an illustrated lecture after dinner on the life of John Stroud Houston, the first state controller, whose life up to now had been lost to history.

the author will be available to sign copies of the book during the course of the evening.

Cost of the dinner and lecture is \$37.50 for HSSC members and \$45 for non-members. For more information please call the HSSC office.

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