

Lummis Masonry: Craft into Art

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THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIAN

is published quarterly by the
Historical Society
of Southern California,
a California non-profit
organization (501)(c)(3)

Romualdo Valenzuela
NEWSLETTER LAYOUT

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CONTRIBUTORS

The headquarters of the
Historical Society of
Southern California
is located at the historic
Lummis Home (El Alisal)
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Amado Lummis at El Alisal during construction, cyanotype print by C.F. Lummis.

P.32494, Braun Research Library Collection

by Patricia Adler-Ingram, Ph.D

The Lummis House is a good place to think about geology. The smooth granite rocks and boulders that Lummis selected one by one for the walls of his house are fresh, geologically speaking, from the water mill of the Arroyo Seco at flood tide. They were carried by the floods from the steep flanks of the San Gabriel Mountains that are rising, in their state of tectonic youth, as rapidly as any range on earth. Their loose slopes flout the tolerance of the angle of repose. Rising straight up out of the megalopolis, they stand ten thousand feet above the nearby sea, and, in the words of geologist John McPhee, "they are not kidding with this city."¹

Lummis was never impressed. As his construction

photo shows, the mountains' loss was his gain. He anchored the corners of his house and the entry door with enormous blocks of tumbled granite. He defied the common sense of masonry construction, that calls for stones of diminishing size as walls go up, to stud his tower and frame his window openings with huge boulders, each one costing dearly in manpower to raise and secure.

His walls were, and continue to be, testimonials to the physical strength and determination of the builder. They also demonstrate Lummis' respect for the random size and shape of the granite delivered to his site by nature and brought into alignment and repose by his own, learned craftsmanship. He never modified the stone or attempted to cut or break a stone to fit. He simply chose another stone. The rejected materials still wait beneath the oak trees and the olives in a formless drift for the next great builder to appear or the next great flood to roll them downstream to the sea.

1 John McPhee, "Los Angeles Against The Mountains," in *Land of Sunshine an Environmental History of Metropolitan Los Angeles*, Ed. William Deverell and Greg Hise (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2005), 179.

Restoration Update

Before the winter rains began, we were able to gather enough money to waterproof the dining room and finally prevent moisture from soaking the northwest wall. United Environment Architects again donated their time and expertise to diagnose the problem. They found that the concrete cap of the parapet had deteriorated and the flashing materials at the edge of the roof had failed. The entire fabric of the masonry around the mission bell showed cracks and was deteriorating.

They removed the old flashings, modeled a new concrete parapet cap, and re-pointed the entire masonry wall.

While the new concrete cap replaces the work of Lummis, it has the proper dimensions and line. All the other corrective measures match the original work perfectly. It's a real celebration to be able to admire the photographs and commendations on the dining room wall that have for years been darkened with moisture every time it rained.



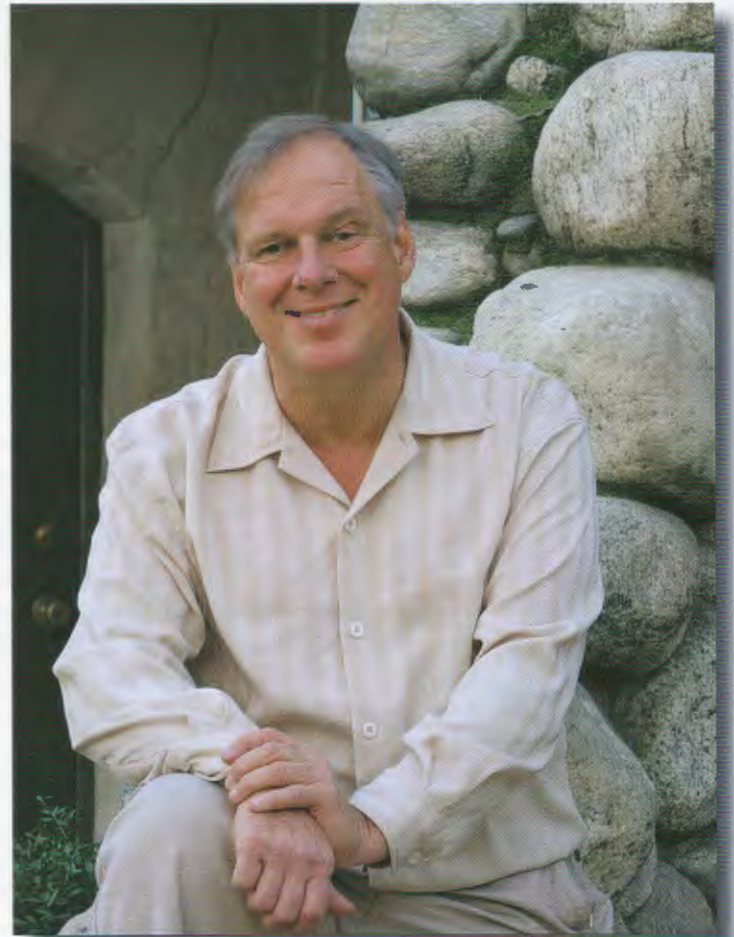
Lummis Home Comedor parapet treated with new sealant.

New Board Member: Andrew Krastins

Andrew Krastins is an attorney in private practice in Long Beach, California. Mr. Krastins also is a violinist and a student of American cultural history, with an emphasis on American music from the early 19th through the early 20th centuries. Mr. Krastins earned his Master of Arts degree in United States History at UCLA in 1985.

An avid collector of historical musical scores, documents, books, and early sound recordings, Mr. Krastins created and sponsors the annual Krastins Prize through the UCLA Library's Campbell Student Book Collection Competition for the most thoughtful and intellectually compelling collection of printed, manuscript, and recorded materials generated before 1930. The prize is intended to encourage tangible contact with the raw materials of history and a sensitivity to the presence of historical artifacts in daily life. Mr. Krastins hopes to reanimate the tradition of informal music-making and freewheeling conversation at El Alisal in the spirit of Charles Fletcher Lummis.

He presently is preparing for performance the unpublished and unrecorded 1927 Sonata for Violin and Piano by Arthur Farwell, the composer who painstakingly notated and arranged many of Lummis' celebrated early field recordings of Native American and Spanish/Mexican music, and who was an important participant in the cultural gatherings, or "Noises" for which Lummis was famous.



APHA Visit

HSSC proudly welcomed the Southern California Chapter of the American Printing History Association and Occidental College to the Lummis Home as part of the special exhibition, *Where Bohemians Gathered: Print Culture on the Arroyo Seco, 1895-1947*.

Guests received a special keepsake from the Historical Society to commemorate their tour of El Alisal, in which they learned about Lummis' rich printing history, starting with poems he wrote and printed onto birch bark as a teenager, to his time as city editor of the *Los Angeles Times* and editor of *Land of Sunshine* (renamed *Out West*).

The Lummis Home was one stop in the exhibition curated by Jessica Holada, which also included tours of Abbey San Encino and the special collections of the Occidental College Library.



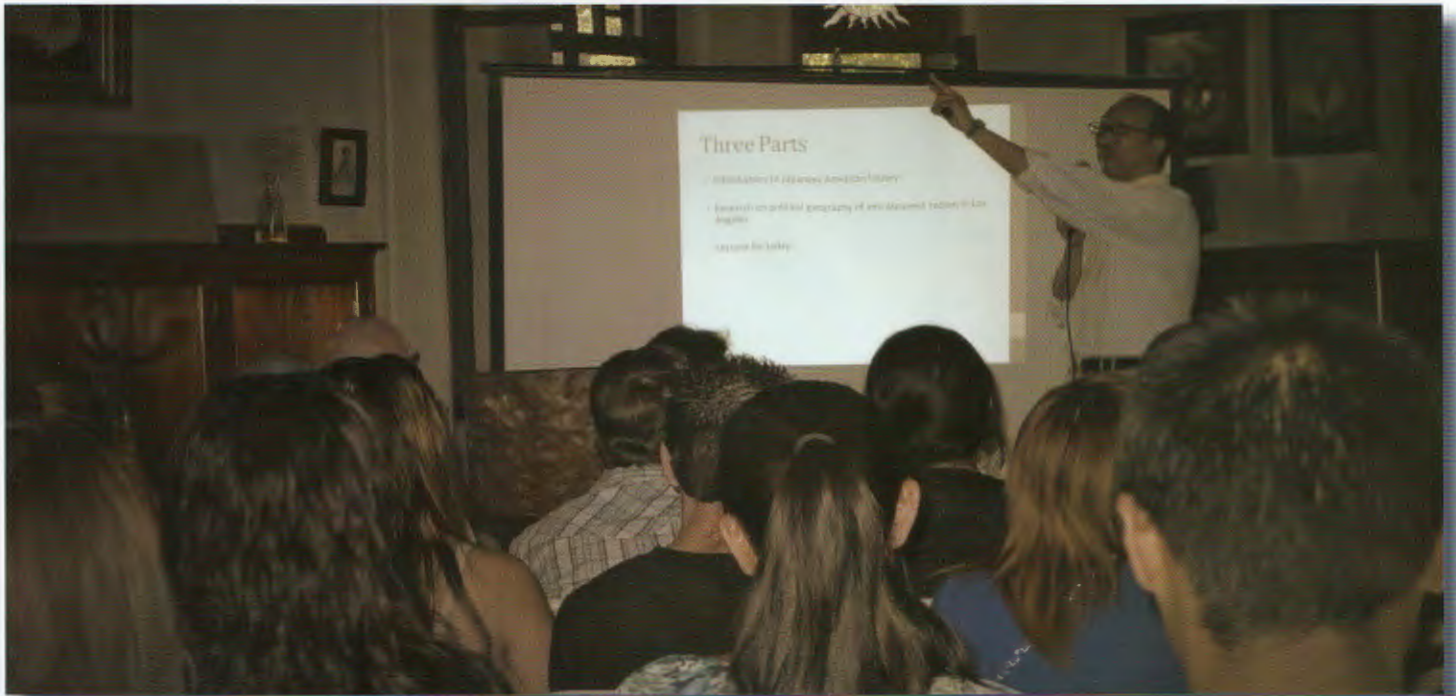
Members of Occidental College and the Southern California Chapter of APHA pose outside the Lummis Home.

20th Annual Arroyo Arts Collective Discovery Tour



The Lummis Home served as a hub for the Arroyo Arts Collective's 20th Annual Discovery Tour, one of the oldest and most eclectic art tours in Los Angeles. Attendees started the tour with registration, and then used maps to plan their routes, selecting from a variety of studios and homes throughout northeast Los Angeles displaying the work of over 100 artists.

Though many participants choose to drive to get to the different sites, a free shuttle service was provided for those who enjoy walking tours. Attendees had the opportunity to view and purchase works ranging from remarkable paintings to hand-hewn musical instruments to one-of-a-kind pieces of jewelry.



George A.V. Dunning Lecture

by John O. Pohlmann, Ph.D

On the first Sunday in November, an overflow crowd somehow squeezed into the Lummis Home for the annual George A.V. Dunning Lecture. Meeting inside the venerable structure was necessary as USC historian Lon Kurashige needed to show slides with detailed graphs and maps illustrating how different neighborhoods in Los Angeles voted on Proposition 1, a 1920 ballot initiative further limiting the rights of “aliens ineligible for citizenship” to own, rent, or lease farmland in California. The unnamed targets of this measure were Japanese immigrants, whose rights had previously been restricted by the 1913 Alien Land Act.

The proposition carried by almost 3:1, which was not surprising, especially as it had the unanimous support of the state’s newspapers and the huge majority of non-Japanese farmers, whereas California’s Japanese had remained conspicuously silent. Soon after the election, however, immigrant farmer George Shima, a recognized leader among the state’s Japanese, broke the silence in a public letter expressing gratitude to Stanford President David Starr Jordan for leading a concerted opposition to Proposition 1. Shima also thanked the many others who had not joined the racist and xenophobic stampede, and it is to this sizeable but previously overlooked minority of voters that Professor Kurashige has devoted his research.

Using a sampling of voting patterns from Los Angeles’s 723 precincts—there are even more today—Kurashige discovered a fascinating and complex split, depending largely upon class, race, ethnicity, occupation and location of residence. African Americans, many then dwelling along or near Central Avenue, were most likely to vote against further restriction of Japanese rights, no doubt because they too had been long subjected to racist discrimination. Interestingly enough, blacks opposed Proposition 1 in greater

Speaker Lon Kurashige brings to light Anti-Immigrant Racism from Early Twentieth Century Los Angeles.

numbers than they supported Republican presidential candidate Warren Harding, although most at the time were registered Republicans. Additional opposition to the proposition, somewhat surprisingly, came from upper class whites living on larger house lots on the Westside, although that vote was far from unanimous. Jews living on the Eastside were also inclined to side with the Japanese community. Many pro-Japanese votes also came from white collar whites and managers, whereas the proposition was often favored by the working classes, including skilled tradesmen. Compared to Democrats and Socialists, Republicans were less inclined to vote against the Japanese.

In contrast to previous historians, who almost unanimously seem to have looked exclusively at the racist and xenophobic aspects of anti-Japanese activity, Professor Kurashige’s research reveals new insights as well as lessons relevant for today. Racial generalizations, whether in the past or in our own era, convey a distorted picture. As positive-thinking George Shima noted shortly after the 1920 election, over a third of voters had expressed support for Japanese American rights

While the proverbial glass might not have been quite half full, it was far from empty. Well intentioned historians who paint actors in our past as overwhelmingly racist tell only a part of the story; those who stood up for our rights also deserve to have their story told, regardless of whether or not they emerged victorious. As Kurashige concluded, the danger of painting others with large brush strokes as racists is by no means limited to the past. Much of today’s widespread and divisive self-righteous sense of moral superiority might be mitigated if we demanded more nuanced explanations, whether of history or of today. As the Professor said, to do otherwise is to overlook our common humanity.

The Historical Society of Southern California welcomed friends and members to the Lummis Home for our annual Holiday Open House. Guests enjoyed a delicious buffet provided by Los Tacos, as well as hot cider and desserts. We enjoyed the opportunity to share food and conversation with our members, and look forward to another year together.



Pepper tree commemorating original tree used by the Lummis family during their first Christmas in El Alisal in 1898.

Louise O'Flaherty: In Memoriam

Louise O'Flaherty, wife of Joseph S. O'Flaherty, passed away on December 12, 2012. She is survived by her son Joseph, her ten grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Louise grew up in Indiana, and later graduated from Wellesley College in 1942 with degrees in English and German. Immediately following graduation, she became one of the first women in the U.S. Navy as a member of the WAVES who decoded German submarine messages during WWII. Louise wrote and published eight historical fiction and gothic novels.

She and her husband were major benefactors of HSSC, establishing an endowment to recognize excellence in teaching history in grades K-12. She graciously presided at the presentation of the O'Flaherty award in 2010.



Louise O'Flaherty, Lieutenant, U.S. Navy (WAVES).

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Mark your calendars

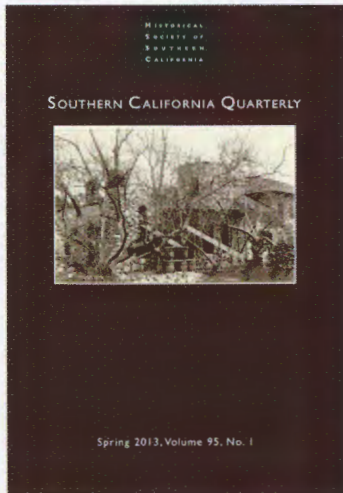
	<p>JAN 27 Sunday (4:30pm-6:00pm)</p> <p>Members' Afternoon at El Alisal</p>	<p>FEB 24 Sunday (4:30am-6:00pm)</p> <p>Members' Afternoon at El Alisal</p>	<p>MAR 24 Sunday (4:30pm-6:00pm)</p> <p>Members' Afternoon at El Alisal March Hares celebrate the birthday of C. F. Lummis</p>
<p>APR 28 Sunday (4:30pm-6:00pm)</p> <p>Members' afternoon at El Alisal</p>	<p>MAY 11 Saturday Evening</p> <p>Lummis Day Fundraiser</p>	<p>MAY 18 Sunday (9:00am-5:00pm)</p> <p>History Conference Autry National Center</p>	<p>MAY 19 Sunday (10:00am-5:00pm)</p> <p>M.O.T.A. Day</p>
<p>MAY 26 Sunday (4:30pm-6:00pm)</p> <p>Members' Afternoon at El Alisal</p>	<p>JUNE 1 Saturday (10:00am-4:00pm)</p> <p>LUMMIS DAY</p>	<p>JUNE 30 Sunday (4:30pm-6:00pm)</p> <p>Members' Afternoon at El Alisal</p>	<p>JULY 28 Sunday (4:30pm-6:30pm)</p> <p>Members' Afternoon at El Alisal</p>
<p>AUG 25 Sunday (4:30pm-6:30pm)</p> <p>Members' Afternoon at El Alisal</p>	<p>SEPT 9 Monday (6:00pm)</p> <p>Admission Day, joint celebration, HSSC and Old Mill Foundation Dinner at the Old Mill</p>	<p>SEPT 29 Sunday (4:30pm-6:30pm)</p> <p>Members' Afternoon at El Alisal</p>	<p>October 27 Sunday (4:30Pm-6:30Pm)</p> <p>Members' Afternoon At El Alisal Tom Sitton Book Signing</p>
<p>NOV 3 Sunday (2:00pm)</p> <p>Dunning Lecture Martin Schiesl, The Mamie Clayton Museum of Negro History</p>	<p>NOV 16-17 Saturday-Sunday (9:30am-5:00pm)</p> <p>Arroyo Arts Collective Discovery Tour</p>	<p>NOV 24 Sunday (4:30pm-6:30pm)</p> <p>Members' Afternoon at El Alisal</p>	<p>DEC 15 Sunday (2:00pm)</p> <p>HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE</p>

Please note all event dates and programs are subject to change. Special events will be announced with fixed dates in our newsletter and invitations sent via mail, and e-mail reminders will be sent for all events. If you have questions about events, do not hesitate to call the HSSC office at (323) 460-5632.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY

SPRING 2013 (vol. 95, no. 1)

A Preview



HOW NOT TO ARM A STATE: AMERICAN GUNS AND THE CRISIS OF GOVERNANCE IN MEXICO, NINETEENTH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

BY BRIAN DELAY

ADVENTURES AT SEA: A. M. EBBETS' S VOYAGE TO CALIFORNIA IN 1849

BY JANE APOSTOL

SAN DIEGO, GUARDIAN OF THE AMERICAN PACIFIC

BY JOHN S. HARREL

THE HISTORIAN'S EYE

CONTRIBUTORS

Brian DeLay is the author of the award-winning *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (Yale 2009) and is now at work on a book about the arms trade in the Americas during the nineteenth century. He is an Associate Professor of History at the University of California Berkeley.

Jane Apostol is a long-time volunteer at the Huntington Library and the prolific author of many articles in the Southern California Quarterly and other journals on historical figures in California. She was recently honored by a retrospective of her work, *Jane Apostol: Collected Works* (2012).

John S. Harrel is a retired US Army major general whose flag commands include Multinational Brigade East-Kosovo Force, Army Force Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia, 40th Infantry Division, and California Army National Guard. He is a former United States Army War College Fellow at the Mershon Center for International Policy and Peace Keeping, Ohio State University, and a retired California Deputy Attorney General. He is currently completing his M.A. in History at California State University, Northridge.

BOOK REVIEWS

Lindsay, *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873*
by **David Miller**

Zesch, *The Chinatown War: Chinese Los Angeles and the Massacre of 1871*
by **Hellen Lee**

Hayes-Bautista, *El Cinco de Mayo: An American Tradition*
by **Amy Jin Johnson**

Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*
by **Kevin Whalen**

Bell, *California Crucible: The Forging of Modern American Liberalism*
by **Leonard J. Moore**



Save The Date

January 27, 2013

Afternoons at El Alisal
4:30pm - 7:30pm, Members Only

February 24, 2013

Afternoons at El Alisal
4:30pm - 7:30pm, Members Only

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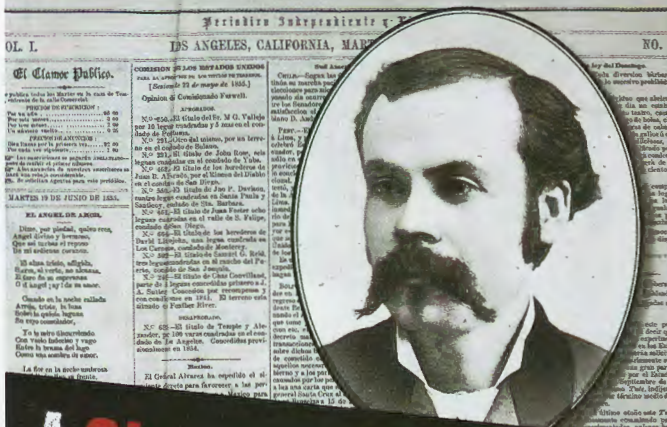
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EL CLAMOR PUBLICO.



A Clamor for EQUALITY
Emergence and Exile of Californio Activist Francisco P. Ramirez

A Clamor for Equality: Emergence and Exile of Californio Activist Francisco P. Ramirez by Paul Bryan Gray (\$39.95)

A dramatic response to American racism occurred in Los Angeles during 1855 when a brilliant eighteen-year-old Mexican-American, Francisco P. Ramirez, published the Spanish-language newspaper, *El Clamor Público*. Ramirez called upon a Mexican-American majority to rebel and seize power by electing themselves to public office. Ramirez was a radical liberal in a town controlled by white conservative Southerners with antebellum values. Nevertheless, from 1855 to 1859, he railed against slavery and ridiculed those in Los Angeles who supported it. His demands for Mexican equality, the abolition of slavery, free elections, and education for women were well ahead of his time. He was the first civil rights activist in Los Angeles. In December 1859, *El Clamor Público* went bankrupt for lack of popular support. For three decades afterward, Ramirez was involved in every major political and social movement of his day. He continued to militate for equality and civil rights as a San Francisco newspaper editor and the only Mexican-American lawyer in Los Angeles.