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NEWSLETTER LAYOUT

The headquarters of the  
Historical Society of  
Southern California  
is located at the historic  
Lummis Home (El Alisal)  
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## Watching Trees Grow

By Patricia Adler-Ingram

The beauty of the garden at the Lummis House does not depend on flower beds or hedges or a lawn. It is a gathering of native shrubs from the foothills, cacti from the deserts, herbs and olive trees and citrus from the Mediterranean lands, and weeds from the vacant lots along the arroyo. It is as close as we can come to the way Charles Lummis meant for it to be.

Of course we can never hope to see the garden Lummis knew because now there is the freeway in the old bed of the arroyo, flowing with cars, generating a steady, sullen noise and the exhaust plumes that settle everywhere as dust. The dust is black as soot and as soft, rising from an ever-burning fire and falling on the new leaves even as they open.

We look at Lummis' diary entry for November 5, 1895, when he was just beginning to build his house, and find that he planted 75 Eucalyptus cuttings on that day alone. That would make the two great Eucalyptus trees surviving along our fence line 119 years old. They have long outlasted the Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railway that used to run on its right-of-way on the far side of the fence.

Lummis' dream of selling Eucalyptus ties to the railways and Eucalyptus logs to lumber companies collapsed with the discovery that the wood was not suited to any commercial purpose whatsoever, not even as kindling for the stove. Today our two trees form a majestic frame for the garden and commemorate the brief California craze for the miracle tree from Australia.

The great four-branched sycamore that Lummis called "El Alcalde Mayor" is no longer sheltering the house as it did originally. Despite the efforts made by Lummis to "doctor" the tree, it was a dangerous derelict for years. On September 15, 1898, he notes in his diary that he played dentist to the tree, putting 16 fillings into cavities in the great trunk. Today we have scions of the old patriarch, four saplings springing from the deep roots and waving bright green leaves above the house. Behind the kitchen wall is another notable sycamore grown to magnificent girth since Lummis' day.



Photograph of Charles Lummis sitting on tree trunk, 1928. P.32735 (Braun Research Library Collection, Autry National Center)

The cacti and palmettos brought from the desert by Lummis a hundred years ago now form a massive wall along the Carlota Boulevard fence while a cloud of yellow-flowered mesquite guards the entry on Avenue 43.

The olive trees planted by Lummis to show that Southern California was truly "Our Italy" and the citrus trees and pepper trees that he planted and photographed to illustrate his magazine stories about our kinship with the Mediterranean lands reached maturity long ago and now bear fruit high above our reach.

Oak tree saplings must have been invading the garden almost as soon as Lummis cleared them out to mark the foundation of his house. Where they were left in place the volunteer oak trees now have built a fine canopy. A family of hummingbirds has a nest there, possibly descendents of the hummingbirds that Lummis lured to his camera a hundred years ago.

A few pine trees have also grown to a great height. Peregrine falcons have been nesting there and raising their chicks undisturbed. It takes a quiet mind to watch trees grow. Historians are pretty good at it, and poets, but anyone can learn.



## New Board Member: Dennis Harbach

Dennis Harbach was born in Los Angeles and raised in North Hollywood, California. After serving in the U.S. Navy, Dennis returned to California State University, Northridge (then known as San Fernando Valley State College) to complete the requirements for a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology with a minor in History in 1970.

Following graduation, Dennis began working for the Personnel Department of the City of Los Angeles. He later worked in the City's Information Services Department, Harbor Department, and the Department of Public Works. He retired from the City in 1999 as the Human Resources Director of Public Works.

Following retirement, Dennis started volunteering for the Autry National Center of the American West. From 2006 through 2013, he worked mostly at the Southwest Museum of the American Indian, where he became particularly interested in southwestern United States history and Charles Lummis. In 2012, he started working on developing a record of the many notable individuals who visited Mr. Lummis at his home, El Alisal. This year, he published a two-volume book about El Alisal's visitors and a database of Lummis' visitors that holds almost 7,000 names. A copy of the book is available for public viewing at El Alisal.

Dennis spent many years traveling in the Southwest and has visited virtually all of the sites that Charles Lummis visited. He has also visited sites in Peru and Bolivia that were visited by Lummis and famed archeologist Adolph Bandelier, including Lake Titicaca and the ruins of Tiwanaku.

Dennis and his wife, Susan, currently live in Sherman Oaks. Their son, Kevin, is in the Navy and due to be discharged in December 2014.



Dennis Harbach spent two years researching and creating a database of visitors to El Alisal. His ongoing project has yielded this two-volume publication with photos and information about many of the notable visitors.

We invite you to come to the Lummis Home and look through the books. Learn about the many interesting people who visited El Alisal.

# MOTA Day 2014

Each year, thousands of guests experience the diverse mix of art, architecture and history of the Arroyo Seco area found in five unique museums that preserve early Los Angeles life.



# Lummis Day 2014

By Julian van Zandweghe

The 9th Annual Lummis Day Festival kicked off with a poetry event in front of the grand entry doors of El Alisal. Following a musical performance by Navjot Sandhu and Neel Agrawal, Poet and granddaughter of Charles Lummis, Suzanne Lummis, spoke briefly and shared some of her poetry. She then introduced the other poets, Christopher Buckley, Mary Fitzpatrick, and Liz Gonzalez, who performed readings of their work.



1. Suzanne Lummis kicks off the 9th annual Lummis Day Festivities.
2. Liz Gonzalez reads poems to be included in the *Pacific Coast Poetry Series Anthology of Los Angeles Poets*.
3. Local school children brought a Lummi Quote to life. It reads "I am bigger than anything that can happen to me."
4. Mary Fitzpatrick, a native Angelena poet who has been published in local and national literary journals, addresses the crowd.
5. Christopher Buckley, editor of Poetry journal *Miramar*, reads from his new poetry book *Back Room at the Philosophers' Club*.
6. North Indian tabla drum musicians Navjot Sandhu and Neel Agrawal perform a musical interlude prior to the poetry readings.





# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY

FALL 2014 (vol. 96, no. 3)

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## CONTRIBUTORS

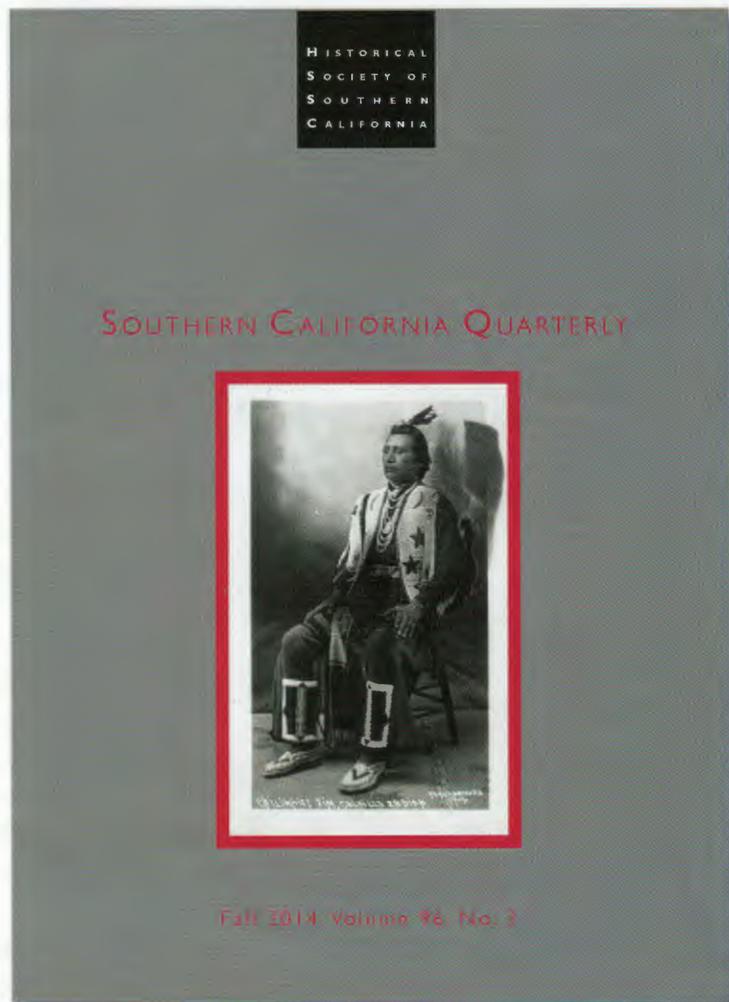
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Andrea Geiger is an Associate Professor of History at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, B.C., and the author of *Subverting Exclusion: Transpacific Encounters with Race, Caste, and Borders, 1885–1928* (Yale, 2011), which was awarded the 2011 Theodore Saloutos Book Award (Immigration and Ethnic History Society) and the 2013 Association of Asian American Studies History Book Award. Her current research examines historical encounters between Japanese migrants and indigenous people in the North American West.

Jane Apostol has published 36 articles on local history, 16 of them in the *Southern California Quarterly*. She has also written 16 books, including 6 for the Historical Society of Southern California. The Society awarded her a Donald H. Pflueger Award for Local History in 1991, elected her as a Fellow of the HSSC in 1996, and presented her a Carl I. Wheat Award in 1997. In April 2013 she was feted by the Society as the most prolific contributor to the Society's publications in anyone's memory. She has also served for nearly 50 years as a volunteer at the Huntington Library.

Tom Apostol is Professor of Mathematics, Emeritus, at Caltech, having joined the faculty in 1950. He is internationally known for his mathematics texts (translated into 7 languages), and for creating Project MATHEMATICS!—a video series that brings mathematics to life with computer animation, live action, music, and special effects. He has published 102 research papers, 40 of them since he became Emeritus in 1992. In 2001 he was elected as a corresponding member of the Academy of Athens, and in 2012 was selected to be a Fellow of the American Mathematical Society. His latest book, *New Horizons in Geometry*, written jointly with Mamikon Mnatsakanian, was selected by *Choice Magazine* as the outstanding academic title of 2013. The current essay is the first joint publication of Jane and Tom Apostol. It has special personal significance for the authors because it includes part of the story of how they were brought together during the Adlai Stevenson Presidential Campaign of 1956.

Frank P. Barajas is a professor of History at California State University Channel Islands. He is the author of *Curious Unions: Mexican American Workers and Resistance in Oxnard, California, 1898–1961* (Nebraska, 2012). He is currently writing a history of the Chicana/o Movement in Ventura County.



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## BOOK REVIEWS

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Gibson, ed., *California Through Russian Eyes, 1806–1848*  
by Sergei Kan

Moore, *Empire on Display: San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915*  
by John Putman

Hallett, *Go West, Young Women!: The Rise of Early Hollywood*  
by Justin Gautreau

Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart: The Making of the Filipina/American Community in Stockton, California*  
by Eric J. Pido

Rice, *California State of Mind: The Legacy of Pat Brown*,  
by Bill Issel

Stevenson, *The Contested Murder of Latasha Harlins: Justice, Gender, and the Origins of the LA Riots*  
by Regina Freer

# Save The Date

## October 26, 2014

Afternoons @ El Alisal

## November 23, 2014

Afternoons @ El Alisal

## December 14, 2014

Holiday Open House @ El Alisal

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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

Tom Sitton's new book 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.

Courthouse Crowd can be purchased at the El Alisal Book Store or online for \$29.95.