

# The Southern CALIFORNIAN

PUBLISHED BY THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

SUMMER 1994 VOL. 6 NO. 2

## Doyce B. Nunis Jr. to be Honored at October 1st Luncheon

Doyce Nunis is history's gifted servant to the Los Angeles-southern California region. His commitment to using one's scholarship and academic position in the service of the community-at-large is an example to all of us.

For his many accomplishments, especially his 33 years of service as editor of the *Southern California Quarterly*, Doyce is being honored on October 1st with a 70th Birthday Tribute Luncheon at the Doubletree Hotel in Pasadena.

Special speakers, a keepsake and a few surprises are in store on this festive occasion which also marks the creation of a fund for the endowment of the *Quarterly*, named the "Doyce B. Nunis Quarterly Publication Fund."

In 132 issues of the *Quarterly*, Doyce has steered away from antiquarianism, treated historical ideas seriously, defended the integrity of scholarship, and served as mentor to a generation of young, eager scholars who were seeking their first scholarly publication.

Without the past 33 years of the *Quarterly*, our collective vision for history would be considerably less clear and less bright. If you agree, join with us in this gala luncheon tribute to our new septuagenarian! Call the office for information (213) 222-0546.



Doyce B. Nunis Jr.



PHOTO: Henk Friezer

*Dixieland Band performs for visitors at last year's History Fair.*

## Two-Day History Fair Includes Saturday Conference for Teachers

On Saturday, October 15, over 200 teachers and members of historical societies and museums will gather at Heritage Square for a one-day conference on southern California history. This will be followed on Sunday with an exciting array of activities for the general public.

HSSC is working together with Heritage Square Museum, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Southwest Museum and Pasadena Historical Museum—to develop a dialogue between schools, museums and historical societies on Saturday, and to provide a festive atmosphere for family fun and celebration on Sunday.

Saturday's conference, partially underwritten with a grant from Associated Foundations Inc., presents a number of dynamic speakers whose subjects are indicated in the insert of this newsletter. We invite you to look it over carefully and sense the excitement that will be generated by both morning and afternoon sessions.

Sunday's History Fair is from 11 a.m.

to 5 p.m. and will celebrate the richness of our local history through exhibits, speakers, demonstrations, children's games and crafts and live performances. This year visitors to the Fair are invited to bring family artifacts or photocopies of documents to learn how to research family history.

Among the things to see are antique cycles, 100 years of southern California postcards, turn-of-the-century steamer and bandwagon, vintage police uniforms, mechanical music machines and an exhibit of 60 years of fine-printed books from the collection of master printer Ward Ritchie.

Admission Sunday is \$8 for adults, \$7 for teens and seniors, with children 12 and under admitted free. Tickets purchased before October 1 are \$7 and \$6 respectively. Members of the Museums of the Arroyo (HSSC, Heritage Square Museum, Southwest Museum and Pasadena Historical Museum) receive a \$2 discount. Parking is free. For more information call the History Fair Hotline at (818) 449-0193.





## GENTLE READER

Why should I join a historical society? I don't want to "live in the past," I want to live for today and tomorrow!

Have you ever heard these comments? If you have, you should know that the person making them has just provided the best reasons for joining an historical society—at least one such as HSSC!

First, today's news will be tomorrow's history. As a member of HSSC you can put the rapid pace of change in southern California into historical perspective with books, reviews, journals, events, lectures and tours that uncover the magic of our rich heritage and shed light on the challenges we face today.

Second, with invitations to outstanding events, you rub shoulders with the people who are making history. You'll have special opportunities to meet some of the most innovative and effective leaders in southern California at the awards luncheons and dinners that we host throughout the year.

Third, shaping the history of tomorrow is also our business. As a member of HSSC you can actually make a difference in the lives of youngsters and their teachers through the educational outreach and special programs sponsored for them by HSSC.

Fourth, the Lummis Water-Conserving Garden—the official, model drought-tolerant garden for Los Angeles—and the events we host there, is your resource for creative landscaping and water conservation for your home or business.

So, you see, belonging to this historical society, at least, is anything but "ho hum," "nostalgia" and "cobwebs." Now, let's go out and convert the others!

*Tom Andrews*

Executive Director

## EL ALISAL WHERE HISTORY LINGERS



BY JANE APOSTOL

Historical Society of Southern California  
Los Angeles

*El Alisal: Where History Lingers*

## HSSC Publishes 16th Book Since 1990

Copies of the Society's newest book, *El Alisal: Where History Lingers*, have arrived at the Lummis Home. Written by Jane Apostol and designed by Ward Ritchie, *El Alisal* is a delightfully engaging addition to southern California's local history.

Printed by Premier Printing Corporation in Brea, and underwritten with a grant from The Ahmanson Foundation, *El Alisal* is published in both a limited collector's edition of 250 copies and in paperback. The handsome collector's edition is a signed- and slipcased-volume printed on 80# Mohawk Superfine paper. It sells for \$50. The paperback copies are priced at \$12.95.

The Society is grateful to The Ahmanson Foundation for believing in this project and to Dana Cordrey of Premier Printing Corporation for his generous donation as well. *El Alisal* is number 16 in the renewed publication program of the Historical Society.

With this book we hope you will gain a new appreciation for Lummis—the man, for *El Alisal*—his monument, as well as for the wide range of his many contributions. If you have ordered your copy, it will soon be shipped; if not, give us a call and order yours by phone. (213) 222-0546.

## Southern California Quarterly

SPRING 1994

The W.P. Whitsett  
Distinguished California Lectures

California State University, Northridge

The Whitsett issue of the *Quarterly*

## Whitsett Lectures Published in Special Issue of the *Quarterly*

The Spring 1994 issue of the *Southern California Quarterly* provided yet another pleasant surprise for HSSC members. It contained five of the first seven W.P. Whitsett Lectures plus a biographical sketch of Whitsett by John Baur.

The Whitsett Distinguished California Lecture Series began in 1987. The lectures are held annually in the spring on the campus of California State University, Northridge (CSUN). The lectures are made possible by a grant from the Whitsett Foundation.

All three had a part in making this special issue possible—HSSC, CSUN and the Whitsett Foundation. The reprinted lectures are by Glenn Dumke, Andrew Rolle, Doyce Nunis, Martin Ridge and Gloria Lothrop. They range from "Medicine in Hispanic California" to "California: The Imagined Country." An *In Memoriam* tribute to CSUN professor of history John Baur, who died on September 23, 1993, introduces the issue.

HSSC is pleased to work with CSUN and the Whitsett Foundation to insure that these important lectures reach as wide an audience as possible.



# ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY 1 – DECEMBER 31, 1992

To The Members of the Historical Society of Southern California

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CASH FLOW ANALYSIS JULY 1, 1989 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 1992

In 1992 the Society (HSSC) celebrated 109 years of continuous existence with a vigorous program of publishing and promoting the history of southern California. The year was extremely successful. The following is a report on the Society's affairs.

Financial results for 3 1/2 years (July 1, 1989-December 31, 1992) are summarized in the columns immediately to the right. (Note: In 1991 HSSC changed to a calendar year/fiscal year ending December 31 instead of June 30.)

The financial numbers represent expanding programs and show a cash balance for 1992 which is 52% larger than for 1991. In particular, HSSC has benefited from increased revenue from membership, book sales, programs, and grants for specific projects.

Although we are pleased with our fundraising efforts, especially during these economically trying times—and, although the balance sheet and cash flow analysis demonstrate a high regard for our fiscal responsibilities—unlike the world of business, the success of our year-end cannot be measured solely by the bottom line of a financial report.

Our success must be judged by how well we have used these funds to advance the purposes for which the Historical Society was founded. The health of our Society today is a true reflection of our commitment to those founding principles.

Powell M. Greenland  
HSSC President

July 26, 1993

	January 1, 1992 through December 31, 1992	January 1, 1991 through December 31, 1991	July 1, 1990 through December 31, 1990	July 1, 1989 through June 30, 1990
Beginning cash	\$80,863	\$66,907	\$110,374	\$52,460
Membership dues	58,766	55,335	25,390	44,125
Investment income	12,359	11,906	5,873	12,757
Donations	57,506	116,645	23,435	58,979
Book sales	57,044	48,363	14,632	15,307
Quarterly Publication donations	6,500	474	9,078	17,249
Events and programs	22,249	20,420	2,785	20,245
Administrative fees	15,044	26,097	6,605	39,144
Increase in reserve and fund accounts	11,786	(30,111)	13,947	53,306
Stock sale proceeds	41,155	26,478	1,000	45,219
Receivables collected	0	0	0	0
<b>CASH RECEIPTS</b>	<b>282,409</b>	<b>275,607</b>	<b>102,745</b>	<b>306,331</b>
Cash available	363,272	342,514	213,119	358,791
Operating expenses	(232,736)	(210,232)	(123,828)	(213,261)
Securities purchased	(6,263)	(51,482)	(22,383)	(35,156)
Payment of accounts payable	(1,140)	63	0	0
<b>CASH EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>(240,138)</b>	<b>(261,651)</b>	<b>(148,212)</b>	<b>(248,417)</b>
Ending cash balance	<b>\$123,134</b>	<b>\$80,863</b>	<b>\$66,907</b>	<b>\$110,374</b>

The above information has been compiled from the tax returns as filed by the Historical Society of Southern California, for the year ended June 30, 1990, for the six months ended December 31, 1990 and for the years ended December 31, 1991 and December 31, 1992.

## CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET (unaudited)

	December 31, 1992
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Cash, checking & money market	\$ 81,446
Other current assets	47,533
Marketable securities	128,510*
Restricted assets	41,687
	<b>\$299,176</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Current liabilities	\$ 2,398
Long-term liabilities, fund accounts	41,687
Board reserved moneys accounts	151,183
Ending account balance	103,908
	<b>\$299,176</b>

\* Market value as of December 31, 1992: \$176,919

# MAJOR DONORS 1992



## HISTORIC ONE HUNDRED: CORPORATIONS, FOUNDATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Historic 100 members have contributed over \$117,000 collectively during 1992. These donors, many over 50 years old, support the publications, general operations and special projects of the Society.

### BENEFACTORS - \$20,000 - \$50,000

The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation  
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### PATRONS - \$10,000 - \$20,000

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## Century II Founders

Century II Founders are corporations and foundations who contribute \$10,000 or more in support of the programs, publications and special projects of the Society. Launched in celebration of the Centennial of Incorporation, gifts and grants from CENTURY II FOUNDERS may be paid over two years.

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Corrections welcome.

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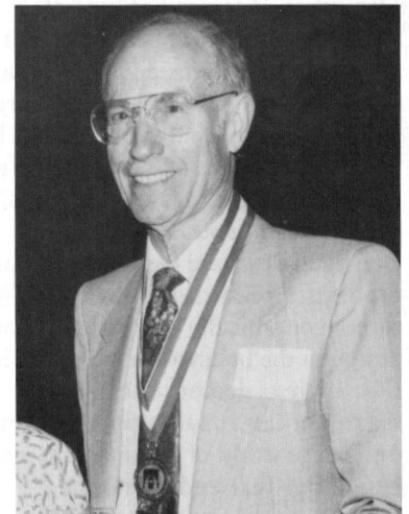
The Historical Society thanks the following Major Donors whose generous support in 1992 has enhanced programs, publications and operations in the amount of \$47,000.

### PATRONS

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## HSSC BOARD SUPPORT

For the year 1992, the Board of Directors has proudly reported 100% participation in its annual Board Giving Campaign.

The following members of the Board have collectively given over \$33,000 to the operations and special projects of the Society.

- \* Larry E. Burgess
- \* Sandra J. Burton
- \* Michael H. Dougherty
- \* George A.V. Dunning
- \* Robert F. Ebinger
- \* Powell M. Greenland
- \* F. Kirk Helm
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- \* Henry F. Lippitt, 2nd
- \* Denver Markwith Jr.
- \* Joseph S. O'Flaherty
- \* John E. Osborne
- \* Donald H. Pflueger
- \* Martin Ridge

\* Current Board Members

# Las Lomas Blancas: The White Hills of Lompoc

by V.L. Comer

The history of Lompoc's White Hills began millions of years ago, geologically the upper Miocene era. Much of California's coastal land was covered by the Pacific Ocean whose ancient shoreline ranged inland as far as Fresno. Those prehistoric coastal waters were rich with a non-flowering aquatic plant, the single-celled diatom.

When the diatoms died and sank to the ocean floor, a deposit of great thickness was accumulated. The sea gradually subsided from the land and the continental rise brought the ocean floor with its great diatomite deposit above sea level. Mountain ranges appeared, then in time were eroded to form hills and canyons. Deep in the foothills of Lompoc's Sierra Santa Ynez lay a treasure of diatomaceous earth, considered to be the largest, purest and most uniform deposit in the world.

Before recorded history the Chumash Indians tapped into this treasure of diatomaceous earth for artistic purposes. The white powder was part of a palette of natural coloring to create some of the finest rock paintings in the North American continent in addition to ceremonial body painting, particularly facial decoration. Diatomaceous sediment in the altered form of siliceous rock, known as chert, was fashioned into arrowheads and used as cutting tools.

Exactly who was the first local to have recognized the importance of diatomaceous earth is a matter of conjecture. Arthur G. Balaam, son of the farmer whose land the Celite Corporation now owns, was the first to extract crude rock in blocks or chunks. Just over 100 years ago in 1893, the first shipment of diatomaceous earth was made from

Balaam's ranch to San Francisco for heat insulating compositions.

Twelve years later (1905), Arthur's father sold the nearly 600-acre ranch to the Magne Silica Company, who owned it for seven years before selling to Kieselguhr Company of America. In 1917 (WWI) they diplomatically changed their name to Celite. By 1926 the world's largest and purest deposit of diatomaceous earth was sold to Johns Manville who remained in control for 63 years. The Manville era ended with the sale to Celite Corporation.

Over one hundred years of mining has produced a list of diatomaceous products in at least ten major categories of uses, including filters, mineral filler, fine abrasives, paint flattener, absorbents and anti-caking agents. Diatomite customers included sugar refineries and food processors, along with sewage treatment plants, domestic water works and swimming pools. Absorbing over six times its own weight, diatomite is used as a cleaning agent for radioactive waste.

There are few products in today's world which are not touched somewhere in their manufacturing process by this unique, flowerless fossil plant, the diatom of Lompoc's White Hills—Las Lomas Blancas.

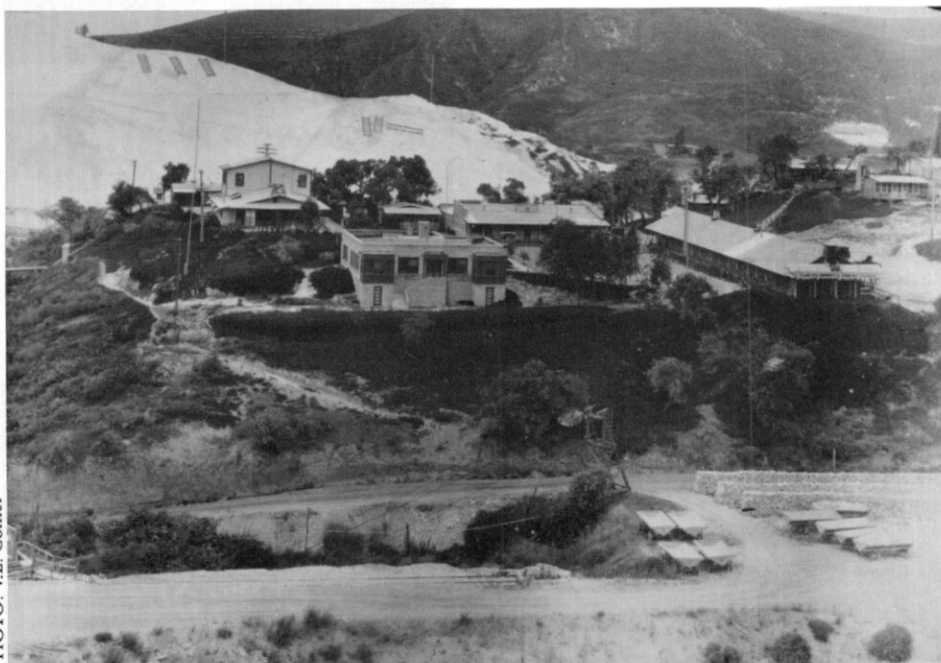


PHOTO: V.L. Comer

*A portion of the White Hills with buildings of the Celite Corporation, photo Circa 1930.*

*V.L. Comer is the author of two histories of the Crown Hill area in Los Angeles. The second book, In Victorian Los Angeles: The Witmers of Crown Hill, won the Society's DONALD H. PFLUEGER LOCAL HISTORY AWARD in 1993.*

# STUDENTS AS HISTORIANS

## Taking History out of the Classroom: The Madera Method

by John E. Osborne

One sunny fall afternoon in 1984 Bill Coate, sixth grade teacher at the Howard School in Madera, walked with some of his students along the bank of the Chowchilla River.

His friend and fellow teacher, Ed Gwartney, had told Bill there were tombstones near the river. From past experience, Bill knew there was history to be learned from the inscriptions on tombstones.

During the walk, the students found Abby West Minturn's tombstone. On it was this inscription: "Her children shall arise and call her blessed." The inscription stimulated both teacher and students to begin a search for the story of this early Madera County pioneer.

This was the beginning of the sixth graders' research in the Madera County archives. By the end of the school term, the students were able to write a book about the pioneer Minturns.

Tom Andrews, a friend and mentor of Bill Coate, and a friend of Irving and Jean Stone, learned what was happening in Madera. When the book, *The Minturn Chronicles*, was ready to be published, Tom and Mr. and Mrs. Stone journeyed north from Los Angeles.

Irving Stone was impressed by what the students had accomplished. "This way of writing a biographical novel should be called the Madera Method," Stone said. And so the method acquired a name.

Since the first book, seventeen books



*Teacher and student retracing the route of '49er William P. Huff in one of the mule-drawn covered wagons.*

have been researched, written and published by the students of the Madera School System. Each of the books has an introduction or preface by Irving Stone. After Irving's death in 1989, Jean Stone has continued working closely with the students in the Madera Method.

In 1992, the students were permitted to borrow the Civil War diary of Samuel James Corbett from the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. Collaborating with other California students from Kentfield and Modesto, Coate's students transcribed and published it. In June, the students presented a copy to Chancellor Tien for the Bancroft Library.

Last year, the students published the

diary of William P. Huff which he kept during his gold rush trip from Texas to California in 1849-1850. Huff's saga inspired Bill Coate and 12 students to retrace his trip from Nogales, Arizona to California in mule-drawn covered wagons. They were welcomed at Mission San Gabriel by HSSC.

Bill Coate, Ed Gwartney and their students have come a long way from that fall day in 1984. In the process an entire community has awakened to the richness of its historical heritage.

*John E. Osborne lives in Madera and has involved the Madera Historical Society in working closely with Bill Coate on these research projects. John is Vice President of HSSC.*



## What's Your Opinion . . .

"By an accident of geography," it is said, "migration has been, and will always be, the central feature of the California identity."

Do you agree or disagree? Why? Write us your brief response in 150 words or less, and the winning response(s) will be published in *The Southern Californian*. Winners also will receive a gift certificate good for any HSSC publication or merchandise in our El Alisal Book Shop.

Mail your response to:

The Historical Society of  
Southern California  
"In My Opinion"  
200 East Avenue 43  
Los Angeles, CA 90031

## SAVE THESE DATES:

- Sept. 11 4th Annual HSSC Book,  
Photo and Art Auction  
Lummis Home  
1 p.m. Preview  
2 p.m. - 4 p.m. Auction
- Oct. 1 70th Birthday Luncheon  
honoring Doyce Nunis  
Doubletree Hotel  
Pasadena  
12 Noon
- Oct. 16 2nd Annual Southern  
California History Fair  
Heritage Square  
11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Nov. 12 President's Circle  
Members Event  
Hale Solar Lab
- Dec. 10 Holiday Open House  
for all Members and  
their guests  
Lummis Home  
2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIAN  
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Thomas F. Andrews  
*Executive Director*

Denise J. Martin  
*Consultant*

*Contributors:*  
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*Printing & Mailing*  
Licher Direct Mail

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Society of Southern California  
are located in the Lummis Home,  
200 East Avenue 43, Los Angeles,  
CA 90031. (213) 222-0546

HSSC Office Hours  
9-5 Monday - Friday

Lummis Home  
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Group Tours  
Friday morning by appointment

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FOUNDED 1883

### ALL MEMBERS RECEIVE . . .

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Annual subscription *The Southern Californian*  
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Free Lummis Garden Fair and December  
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☐ \$35 Individual Members  
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Discounted program and  
event tickets for  
Member

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and receptions for President's  
Circle members featuring noted  
southern California historians.

Please enroll me as a member in the *Historical Society of Southern California*  
in the category checked above.

☐ Check enclosed, payable to the *Historical Society of Southern California*.  
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For further information call HSSC at (213) 222-0546.*