

Fairview Register

Monthly publication of the Costa Mesa Historical Society, a non-profit 501(c)(3)

MEMBER: CONFERENCE OF CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETIES, NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION,
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Left: Rob Braun (left) and Steve Hughes install insulation sheets in west-facing window frame. Right: Bob Palazzola vacuums behind filing cabinets before installation of foam insulation.

Historical Society Construction Updates

BY ART GODDARD

Getting Ready for Summer Heat

The west side of the historical society's building at 1870 Anaheim Avenue is undergoing a major transformation from turf with shade trees to parking lot. With the removal of the shade trees, the society was faced with the prospect of an increased heating effect of the afternoon sun on our floor-to-ceiling plate glass windows. The solution? Insulation!

A call to our friends at Ganahl Lumber netted us a donation of 14 sheets of rigid foam insulation. On Friday, April 6, a team of volunteers installed the insulation in the west-facing window frames. Thanks to Steve and Estelle Hughes, Bob Palazzola, Rob Braun, Mary Ellen and Art Goddard, the insulation panels were cut and installed in about three hours.



Tanks a Lot!!!

Did you know there are stormwater exfiltration tanks buried underneath the yet-to-be-constructed parking lot? The pit to hold the exfiltration tank is more than 9 feet deep. After the tanks are in place they are surrounded with gravel. Finally, the tanks are covered over, ready for construction of the parking lot. Amazing, huh?

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Join us for Early California Days at the Diego Sepulveda Adobe in Estancia Park on Sunday, May 20, 2018, 1-3pm

We are pleased to present this year's Early California Days speaker, cultural anthropologist Stephen O'Neil. Stephen's talk on "Native Traditions of Orange County" will discuss:



- What the Portola Expedition of 1769-70 observed when it came through, both the natural setting (very different from today) and the villages where it stopped;
- Place names, both villages and topographic, the indigenous people gave to the landscape, showing this was a named cultural landscape and at the same time shows their knowledge of natural resources;
- The Orange County Library's "Indigenous Voices" project to remind everyone that the Acjachemen and Tongva are still here and a part of the modern community.

Stephen O'Neil has over thirty years of experience as a cultural anthropologist in California. He has researched and written on ethnography, archaeology and history, concentrating on the ethnohistory of Southern California tribal peoples. He has expertise in the use of mission records for the study of population and social networks, and is familiar with ethnobotany and rock art. O'Neil also has archaeological experience, mostly on Native American prehistoric sites, but also Spanish, Mexican and American period adobes.

Our own period adobe will be open for tours.

1:00pm: *Tours of the Adobe Begin*

1:30pm: *Speaker Presentation*

2:30pm: *Tours of the Adobe Continue*

Promoting and preserving Costa Mesa's history is our mission

FAIRVIEW REGISTER, FAIRVIEW, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, MARCH 2, 1889

Costa Mesa Rejects Annexation

May 22nd marks the 90th anniversary of what was called “one of the warmest elections ever held on the Mesa.” At issue was an attempt in 1928 to annex 6,000 acres of property to Santa Ana. The strip would have run due south from that city to the Upper Newport Bay, and would have included Delhi, part of Paularino, and most of Costa Mesa.

Pros and Antis

W. Carl Spencer, Costa Mesa property owner and booster, led the annexation efforts along with the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce and the *Santa Ana Register*. With annexation, Costa Mesa could share Santa Ana’s services — fire, police, trash, and street maintenance and improvement. Taxes may go up, the pros argued, but so would property values, and insurance rates would go down.

But much more important to Spencer, a fervent advocate of “commerce and progress,” was the harbor. When he saw harbor frontage being bought up by those who wished to turn the harbor to pleasure purposes, he looked on in horror, because meanwhile his fellow citizens were being forced to subsist, in his words, on “kitchen gardens, climate, and mockingbird music.” Santa Ana had both the capital and the motivation to immediately bring jobs and prosperity to the harbor area. Costa Mesa could become a kind of San Pedro of Orange County.

That the harbor should be developed was an issue both the pros and antis agreed upon. The antis only doubted Santa Ana’s commitment and lack of guarantees. They proposed instead a “Harbor Improvement District” for the purpose.

It wasn’t long, however, before an unbridgeable gap developed. Spencer argued Costa Mesa should unite behind a “program of progress” because farming had “passed its zenith.” Farmers, of course, didn’t exactly agree. The town split into urban and commercial interests on the one side (the pros) and rural and agricultural interests on the other (the antis).

Roy J. Wertz, for instance, a self-proclaimed “hay seed,” claimed Costa Mesa was doing very well, thank you, and bucked against what he viewed as meddling “by those whose interests are within a few hundred feet from the intersection of Fairview [today’s Harbor] and Newport Boulevards.”

“These ‘birds,’” he said, “having no particular business of their own, naturally have abundance of time to muss up the affairs of the community.”

The antis came to view the supposed collateral benefits of uniting with Santa Ana with suspicion and scorn. Led by apple farmer George Waterman, they rejected the idea that the rural community needed expensive police and fire protection, and viewed street paving services as a “pernicious and confiscatory plan” to extract fees. They feared higher taxes, urban zoning laws, and city inspectors. They chafed at the idea of being under the control of a city with only urban interests at heart, a city ten miles distant but with ten times the voting power.

Controversies

Controversy ignited almost as soon as the proposal was revealed. The annexationists were accused of conducting their meetings in secret so they could foist a *fait accompli* upon the people. The Chamber of Commerce, which initially leant pro,

had to move to a position of neutrality. Pro-annexation business owners were forced into silence, they claimed, by threats of boycotts. Insults flew in both directions, honor and integrity were impugned, charges were leveled. The *Santa Ana Register* printed a letter calling Costa Mesa “the dumping ground for the whole south end of the county.” And that wasn’t all.

Costa Mesa wanted to coordinate with Newport Beach to build a new high school, but this was an impossibility if the city became Santa Ana. According to Maxwell Burke (brother of the *Register’s* editor), this was just as well, since any school built by the harbor district would be, compared to Santa Ana Polytechnic, “mediocre.” [Newport Harbor opened in 1930.]

Waterman accused the *Santa Ana Register* of wielding “that most contemptible weapon of the press, namely to smother opposition under a blanket of silence.” The antis had submitted a letter outlining their position, but the paper refused to publish it, saying it had an obligation to print only the truth. The letter was finally printed 12 days later, interlaced with a point by point rebuttal inside the text itself, a tactic decried as unfair.

The Irvine Company eventually joined forces with the anti-annexationists. They claimed up to 1,200 acres of their land, mainly around Upper Newport Bay, had been included without their consent. The Irvines asserted the proposed annexation included uninhabited land which could not be annexed under the law. The pros countered that the uninhabited and inhabited land was mixed together. The suit went to court, with the Irvine Company asking that the election be nullified should annexation prevail.

To call the election, the pros needed to collect the signatures of 25% of the approximately 1,300 voters in the affected area. Despite early reports claiming a 95% to 100% signing rate, the pros struggled to obtain the needed 325 names. The controversial final tally — which appears to have



This “anti” pin comes from the society’s collection.

led to another court battle to stop the election, which the antis lost.

The most serious allegation, perhaps, was that signatures were collected under coercion. In a raucous meeting at the Women’s Clubhouse a week before the vote, one man alleged that W. C. Spencer, requesting his support, had ominously reminded him that he, Spencer, had gotten the man a job. Who was that man? None other than Roy J. Wertz, the hay seed.

A motion was called to exclude personalities from the meeting. But, even so, each time the *Santa Ana Register* was mentioned, the crowd hissed and jeered.

The Vote

The boisterous meeting, dominated by the antis, was just the latest indication of the people’s mood. Only a month before, a more modest attempt to annex a triangle of land south of 15th street to Newport Beach was defeated, too, 27-18. The election was held Tuesday, May 22nd, and, surprising no one, annexation was defeated 5 to 1, with 160 votes for and 770 against. ■



Volunteers receiving the U.S. President's Volunteer Service Awards at the Society's March 18 general meeting included, from left to right, Karl Von Herzen, Hope Von Herzen, Susan Weeks, Art Goddard, Terry Shaw, and Dave Rusher.

Society Volunteers Receive US President's Volunteer Service Awards

BY ART GODDARD

Our all-volunteer staff contributes more than 6,000 hours per year to fulfill the Costa Mesa Historical Society's mission to preserve and promote Costa Mesa history. At the March general meeting, President Dave Gardner presented the United States President's Volunteer Ser-

vice Awards to the following society volunteers: Kathy Bequette, Sharon Dearing, Art Goddard, Mary Ellen Goddard, Cindy Humphries, Bob Palazzola, Dave Rusher, Terry Shaw, Karl Von Herzen, Hope Von Herzen, Annette Watson, and Susan Weeks.

Visit Us

Diego Sepulveda Adobe

1900 Adams Ave. • Open 12-4 p.m. the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month or by appointment.

Costa Mesa's oldest building presents 200 years of OC history from its beautiful setting in Estancia Park, overlooking the Santa Ana River bed.

Costa Mesa Historical Society Museum

1870 Anaheim Ave. • Open 10am-3pm Thursdays and Fridays or by appointment.

The museum and society headquarters displays a mind-boggling array of artifacts from nearly 5,000 years of Costa Mesa history – from the first peoples to the City of the Arts.

Share Your Story

History is made by people like you. We'd love to hear your Costa Mesa stories. Many changes have taken place and we want to hear from those who lived through them. Write the memories yourself or come to the museum and we'll transcribe them for you. It's that simple!

Thank You, Copy 4 Less NB

Our printer discounts our costs throughout the year. Thank you so much for this, **Copy 4 Less NB** – we really appreciate it! Visit Copy 4 Less at 3930 Campus Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660 at the corner of Campus and Quail (near John Wayne Airport) or call (949) 252-8960.

Shop with us on Amazon

Every time you start your order with Amazon Smile, Amazon will donate to the Costa Mesa Historical Society. Visit smileamazon.com before making your next purchase, being sure to check "charitable organization" and selecting the Costa Mesa Historical Society when prompted. You can use your existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile.

New Business Membership Level

For the first time, memberships for the life of a business are available for \$1,000. If you care about local history, this is a great way to show your support. To join, please fill out the membership form on the back of this newsletter or call us at 949-631-5918. Together we can preserve the history of our community.

Dues Overdue?

Your dues provide **essential support** for the society's major programs and projects. Make sure you're up to date by looking at your **dues expiration date** on the address label to the right of your name. If your dues are due, send us a check, c/o Susan Weeks, Treasurer. Or drop it off on a Thursday or Friday from 10am to 3pm. Membership dues are listed on the back page.

Make a Difference – Volunteer

Help the society meet essential needs while meeting others who share your love of Costa Mesa history. We're looking for a volunteer to **set up refreshments** at our monthly programs as well as members to sit on two new committees: the **Newsletter Assembly Committee** prepares the newsletter for mailing, while the **Adobe Committee** recruits volunteers to plan an event, become a docent, or work on exhibits. Committees meet monthly and are chaired by board members. Interested? Call us at 949-631-5918. Isn't it more fun to work as a team?

Temporary Parking Instructions

For the next two months, please enter the parking lot serving our society, the Donald Dungan Library and the Recreation Center by entering from Park Avenue only, not Anaheim. The Anaheim entrance is completely blocked off.

ROBERTO'S AUTO TRIM

In Costa Mesa Since 1964

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— *Membership Form* —

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Membership Categories

Annual		Lifetime	
Individual	\$20.00	Individual Life Member	\$500.00
Individual Senior (60+)	\$15.00	Business Life Member	\$1,000.00
Family	\$25.00		
Student (under 16)	\$10.00		
Contributing	\$50.00	Special	
Business and Professional	\$100.00	SAAAB Wing Annual Member	\$10.00
Public Agency	\$100.00		
Benefactor	\$250.00		

Make your checks payable to the Costa Mesa Historical Society.
The Society, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, operates under the Corporation Laws of the State of California.