



President's Message

Richard B. Rothwell



Our 2011 fundraising event, "An Afternoon at the Ranch House," was a great success for those who attended and for our treasury. After expenses, we made over \$6,100 that will help us support the preservation of Camp Pendleton history. My thanks to our sponsors, guests, auction contributors, and volunteers who contributed to our success. Howard Blair's excellent article in this edition provides additional information.

During the last year CPHS donated \$28,000 to the Marine Corps to help fund the restoration of the Las Flores adobe. You may recall that faculty and students from the University of Vermont Graduate School of Engineering are doing much of the work. Faculty member, Mr. Doug Porter, heads the restoration team. Doug will meet with CPHS members and guests at the Las Flores adobe at 10:00 AM on Saturday, September 17, 2011. It will be an excellent opportunity for you to see what has been accomplished and learn more about remains to be done. A reminder will follow, but mark your calendars now. I hope to see many of you there.

I am pleased to announce that we have a new member on our Board of Directors, Col. Len Hayes, USMC (Ret). In addition to having a distinguished career as a Marine Corps officer, Len most recently has been the executive director of the 1st Marine Division Association. His experience, enthusiasm, and drive will be a valuable addition to our team.

Again I express my appreciation to our members for their continued support. Because of you we are able to make meaningful contributions to Camp Pendleton historical programs.

Richard B. Rothwell

THE LOST MISSION OF LAS FLORES CANYON

by Don Tryon

Many of the old Missions had a little satellite mission in their area of influence which were called "Asistencias". Sometimes they were just a spot where the padres would meet local Indian tribes and later would build a small adobe. San Antonio de Pala is the most well-known as it had a small Mission complex and was part of Mission San Luis Rey near Oceanside. Others like San Bernardino and Santa Ysabel are lesser known. However, the Mission church in Los Angeles was never called an asistencia but could have as it was part of Mission San Gabriel. An interesting fact about Los Angeles is that when it was created, all of the trouble makers from San Gabriel were deliberately moved there.

Mission San Capistrano, which was established in 1776, was not well-known for having asistencias, but there was an old adobe near the San Juan Hot Springs that the Padres used as a retreat for rest and therapy. When there, they served the Indians that used to gather around these springs from both sides of the mountain range. Remnants of that adobe still exist and it's called the Seivers Adobe after one of its owners. Before Mission San Luis Rey was established our Mission served two Indian tribes in the Las Flores Canyon area near the ocean which is where the Marines now have their Las Pulgas entrance gate near the 1-5 Freeway, south of San Clemente. This was the beginning of the asistencia for that locale.

It all began when Don Caspar de Portola led Spain's land exploratory expedition in 1769. When they traveled through what is now Camp Pendleton, they came to rest in a canyon that was covered with wild roses, flowers, and wild grape vines and a stream. It was named "Canada de Las Resales, but the soldiers called it Las Flores for the flowers.

After Mission San Luis Rey was founded in 1798, they took responsibility for this locale. Father Peyri of Mission San Luis Rey named it San Pedro, but the name Las Flores stuck. A sketch made in 1849 of Las Flores shows a long building in three sections, the middle has two stories, and one end was the chapel with a large tower. It was also reported that a large courtyard was adjacent.

After Mexico became a Republic, they secularized all the mission properties and out of consideration for the Indians in this area, created a large grant around Las Flores and called it a Pueblo Libre, or Free City. This was the beginning of the little mission's decline.

Governor Alvarado in 1841 granted all of Santa Margarita Valley which was once part of Mission San Luis Rey to his brother-in-law Pio Pico and his brother Andres. The adjacent land of Las Flores was an irritant to the Picos and by legal and political means the Indians were disposed and the land was

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Trinidad: Oceanside's Treasure Ship - Fact or Fiction

by William Parsons

From the late 1940s until his death in 1985 Dr. Joseph James Markey, an Oceanside ophthalmologist, made an attempt to rewrite regional history. He had a theory that the first European to set foot on present day California was not Spanish Conquistador Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in 1542, as is the general consensus, but Spanish explorer Francisco de Ulloa in 1540. Dr. Markey bases his theory on skeletal remains and artifacts found in a local cave and a diary he found in Seville, Spain. Not surprisingly the theory was not well received by local and nationally recognized historians who spent some time debunking Dr. Markey's thesis.

The story begins in Acapulco, Mexico in 1539. Hernan Cortes, the former Governor of New Spain (Mexico), sent a small flotilla of three ships on a poorly defined mission of exploration. The ships were the Santo Tomas, the Santa Aqueda and the Trinidad. Trinidad was the flag ship; Francisco de Ulloa was the ship's captain and commander of the flotilla. The mission is believed to have been the mapping of coastlines and finding an inland passage to Cibola and the seven cities of gold. Shortly after they set sail on their journey, the Santo Tomas began taking on water and returned to Acapulco for repairs. After leaving the flotilla, the ship was never seen again.

Events of the trip are well documented until sometime about mid-1540. The Trinidad and Santa Aqueda had been at Isla de Cedros (Cedar Island) off the west coast of present day Baja California. When it came time to leave the island Ulloa manned the Trinidad with a crew, supplies and between \$2 million and \$12 million in gold coin. He put the sick or injured on the Santa Aqueda along with records and documents of the trip; then ordered its return to Acapulco. Ulloa wrote a final note to be delivered to Cortes stating his intention to sail the Trinidad as far north as the weather would allow. On April 5, 1540, Ulloa headed north; the Santa Aqueda turned south.

It was during this northern exploration that Dr. Markey contends Ulloa became the first European to set foot on California soil. His theory is that the Trinidad sailed north as far as present day Santa Barbara looking for the inland waterway to Cibola. Believing the San Luis Rey River, near Oceanside, was the most promising inlet, Ulloa returned and anchored off shore. The crew travelled inland where they mingled with the native Indians, caught dysentery by drinking bad water from a nearby lake and died in a cave.

Dr. Markey maintained he located the cave with the help of three diagrams he had found while on a European trip. By chance, Dr. Markey met a direct descendant of Ulloa who encouraged him to go to the Archivo General de Indias ("General Archive of the Indies") in Seville, Spain to look for information about Ulloa and the voyage. This is where he found the diagrams and had them sent to him in the United States.

Dr. Markey reported he also found the diary of Pablo Salvador Hernandez, a surviving member of the Ulloa expedition, which contained a detailed account of the voyage; including, a location of the cave, the date Ulloa died - August 21, 1540 - and how Hernandez survived.

In the cave, Dr. Markey found the remains of 21 skeletons which he concluded were Ulloa and his crew. During his search a Spanish conquistador's breast plate, consistent with the era, and 2,000 gold coins were also found. From Hernandez' diary, Dr. Markey also learned the Trinidad had broken free of its anchorage off the coast of Oceanside and began drifting south. At some point, the ship sank with most of the gold coins still onboard. The ship has never been found.

Dr. Markey has a small problem with his theory. There isn't a bit of evidence to support his version of events. Let's start with the crewman's diary. It gave a detailed account of events, even where and when Ulloa died in 1540, but no one has ever seen that diary except Dr. Markey. Also, renowned national historian Henry Raup Wagner located official Spanish court records involving a civil suit between Cortes and Juan de Castellon, Captain of the Santa Aqueda, over a breach of contract. The records state Ulloa testified in the trial in Valladolid, Spain in May 1542; nearly two years after Dr. Markey claims he died in the cave. The cave itself is a problem; no one, other than Dr. Markey has ever located it. It was not properly excavated for its archeological value, assuming it existed at all. As for the skeletal remains, here again, they weren't seen by anyone except Dr. Markey. According to local historian Richard Crawford, it wasn't determined whether the skeletons, if they existed, were even human. The gold coins were deposited with the Mission San Luis Rey and haven't been seen since. As late as 1974, the Mission refused to allow anyone to examine the coins, but did state they were not gold. The theory goes the Trinidad may have sunk off the coast of Oceanside. There have been two attempts to salvage it and the gold; both have failed without finding any trace of the ship. Finally, Dr. Markey promised to publish a book that would verify his theory; it was never written.

In the end, the story of the Trinidad comes down to what you, the reader, want to believe. It's a simple question; does the evidence favor Dr. Markey's theory of Francisco de Ulloa as the first European to set foot on California or not? To be honest, there is no credible evidence in support of Dr. Markey but, there is also no evidence to support dissenters who say Ulloa did not come ashore. Many questions remain unanswered, probably for all time, and until there are answers the debate will continue. Oh well, it's the kind of stuff that makes a legend a legend . . . isn't it?

Camp Pendleton and WWII Remembered

by CPHS Member Robert Carrick

It was a beautiful San Clemente morning, sunny and warm. The tide was out leaving packed sand on the beach. Between 10 and 11 a.m., four boys on horseback raced down the beach near the pier, pacing a Santa Fe freight train. In the cab of the steam locomotive, the engine crew fired imaginary pistols as the boys returned imaginary fire. The game of cowboys and Indians was a regular pastime for the teens and their horses. At that very hour, events in far off Pearl Harbor, Hawaii would thrust 15 year-old San Clemente resident Bob Carrick and his three friends from make believe warfare into the real thing. Life for Carrick and his buddies would never be the same nor as innocent.

“Childhood growing up here was wonderful,” Carrick said recently. The war changed that. Teenage boys became grown men almost over night. “The day after Pearl Harbor, we were all called in to the high school and listen to President Roosevelt give his famous Day of Infamy speech on the radio,” remembers Carrick. “We were a little bit frightened” that the war would come to the shores of Southern California. The Coast Guard patrolled the beaches. Street lights and lights on the pier were turned off. Local residents volunteered to be aircraft spotters. Carrick’s mother, Mary and her friend Thelma Hoople, took turns driving the spotters to their posts above the golf course.

Still a high school junior, Carrick was too young to enlist, but he did work the summer before his junior year helping to build barracks on Camp Pendleton in Areas 12 and 14. Carrick remembers, “An officer came up to him and thanked him for the hard work.” He didn’t think much of it until someone nudged me and said it was Lt Col. Jimmy Roosevelt, son of the President.”

Upon high school graduation, Carrick and some of his friends enlisted in the Marine Corps. He became an aircraft mechanic and was sent to the South Pacific. Stationed in Peleliu, Carrick took part in bombing runs on Japanese troops entrenched in caves. “I believe they were the shortest bombing runs by propeller-driven aircraft in history, just 1,400 feet from the runway to the bombing site,” said Carrick.

At war’s end, Carrick returned to San Clemente where he opened Shore Gardens Nursery which is now run by his son (Bob). Bob still stops by the Community Center to read the plaque containing the names of all San Clemente men and women who proudly served during WW II.

Bob has been an active and contributing member of the Camp Pendleton Historical Society since its establishment. The majority of this article was taken from the San Clemente Times and written by Tom Marshall and with the permission of Robert Carrick.

We invite our readers to contribute stories of their experiences aboard Camp Pendleton for publication in future issues. Humorous pieces would be particularly welcome. Please e-mail your 300 words or less to marinedag@sbcglobal.net, subject line “CPHS.” Submissions may be subject to editing.



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Another Successful Fundraiser

by Howard Blair

CPHS held its annual fundraiser at the Ranch House on the base on Saturday, June 15, 2011. It was a beautiful day as more than 60 members and guests gathered to enjoy the food (heavy hors d'oeuvres by the Buckboard Catering Company), the music (jazz ensemble from the First Division Marine Corps Band shown on the bottom right), and the company of other members.

The event was scheduled from 2:00 pm until 5:00 pm which gave the attendees ample time to sample the food, and to peruse the many donated gifts that were available by taking a chance by purchasing an opportunity ticket.

Although the number of attendees was somewhat less than last year, the feeling was that CPHS will make as much money as 2010 due to the fact that many more members donated to the fundraiser.

One can see in the picture to the upper right that people were lining up to sample the food. Also one can see one of the Ranch House Docents, who was ready to lead a tour of the Ranch House, in which many guests participated.

Overall it was a successful day and once again CPHS thanks you for your continued support.



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made part of their vast rancho. It was named Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores and is today the Camp Pendleton Marine Base. In 1864, Don Juan Forster acquired the rancho from the Picos. When his son, Marcos, married, he gave him the land around the old asistencia as a wedding present. Marcos set about building a two story adobe mansion and his ranch house soon became famous for its hospitality and also served as a stage stop on the Sealy & Wright Stage Line that ran from Los Angeles to San Diego.

After Forster passed away in 1881, his family sold the Santa Margarita y Las Flores Rancho to James L. Flood, who formed a partnership with Richard O'Neill. O'Neill operated the ranch and ultimately gained half interest in the vast ranch. Later their descendants sold the ranch in 1941 to the U.S. Navy for a Marine base. Marco Forster's two-story adobe still exists. All that remains to remind anyone about the once flourishing mission asistencia is California Historical Landmark #616 and a bit of the melted down adobe from the weather. The little mission is now lost and a memory to only a few. The two Indian tribes of this area known as Chumella and Questnille disappeared and are as feathers in the wind.

Preserving a Rich and Colorful History



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