



# WHITTIER GAZETTE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WHITTIER HISTORICAL SOCIETY, WHITTIER, CALIFORNIA

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76-77

No. II

(X Rated Story  
For Those Under Eighteen Years)

## ONCE UPON A TIME

..... Hallowe'en fell on Saturday night, maybe about 1908 or so. In those days kids had to make their own fun on Hallowe'en. Well, Russell Barton and the Hazzard kids and Olive Milhous and the Jackson kids, you know, the ones who lived way out in the country around Painter and the County Road (Whittier Blvd.), went out to find what they could do. Mr. Sargent had his wagon out in front of his place up on Michigan and they thought it would be fun to move that wagon a little bit, but it started rolling downhill. That doesn't look like much of an incline, but it is. Well, that wagon got rolling and they couldn't stop it and it rolled down Michigan half-way to the boulevard. Of course, there was no way to get it back up.

But, that wasn't all those naughty kids did! They went back to the Wheatland place. Alan Wheatland's grandmother lived there all alone on a piece of property that Mr. Jackson had sold her. She was a good Christian woman who went to the Methodist Church every Sunday morning. Well, those kids took her horse and tied it to a tree way up at the other end of the orchard and they took her buggy some other direction. They took her washtub and hung it on the hitching post. Oh, they had her stuff scattered all over the place.

Then they got cold feet, they got a conscience. There was poor Mrs. Wheatland living all alone and she would want to go to church Sunday morning. Sooooo, they took her horse back. They took her buggy back.

But, that was the thing to do in those days. Children nowadays go to parades. They mind their business.

Exerpt from an oral history  
by Mildred Jackson Johns

## Neighborly Visit DOWN THE ROAD A PIECE

..... sits the Neff home in the center of the Neff Park compound in La Mirada. It is between Valley View and Biola Ave. and off of San Cristobol.

This house is owned by the Southeast Recreation and Park District, a citizen run group formed before the incorporation of the City of La Mirada and including Norwalk. The building serves the community as an activity center.

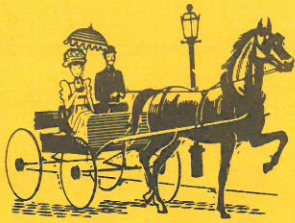
The main floor is furnished in items representing a period between 1893 and 1920. Many of the original pieces of furniture can be seen. The basement accommodates messier classes like pottery and ceramics and the upper floor the neater ones like guitar lessons sponsored by the recreation district. The living room can accommodate small group meetings.

William Neff, grandson of Andrew McNally the mapmaker, was the last owner. Some changes in the house were made over the years, but both the exterior and interior are being restored as funds allow. The bi-centennial gift of the City of La Mirada of \$5,500 is helping this effort and the latest building plans are to rebuild the gazebo.

The house is open from 2:30 to 6 Monday through Friday and from 10 to 5 on Saturday and Sunday. Park personnel are on duty at this time and you can see the house. For conducted or group tours, you may contact Bob Camp at 714-521-2380.

It's just down the road a piece. Why not drop by?





## HISTORY IS TODAY

### Bailey House Tea

The Bailey House docents held a "New Member" Tea on Sunday, September 26th. Guests were greeted at the door at 3 o'clock and shown through the house. In the garden, Mary Fae Pickering had the table set with a lovely and traditional old fashioned flower arrangement and tea, coffee and cookies as refreshments.

Nellie Counts, the chairman, spoke briefly about the duties and responsibilities of a docent and about this docent group. Everyone is delighted that seven names have been added to that membership list.

### Pico Mansion Fiesta

Sunday, September 19, 1976, is a day very close to the hearts of the Docents of the Pio Pico State Historical Monument. On that day approximately 350 friends and neighbors gathered for a fiesta at the rancho of Don Pio Pico, just as they did in the 1850's when Governor Pio Pico was the host.

The guest list read like a small reunion of the old families of the river area: Pico, Hartnell, Ramirez, Perkins, Padilla, Verdugo and Temple. Other names on the list were equally as gratifying. Not only did Mynatt Smith come, but Dick Singer and a photographer, too, from the **Daily News**. Delta Murphy, Whittier councilwoman; Ted Snyder, candidate for congress; Edward Perry; chairman of the Whittier Historical Commission; several members of the Whittier Historical Society; and Lillian Wiggins of El Monte who is regional vice president of the Conference of California Historical Societies. And many, many more.

Celestino Pico, age 92 years, came in time for the unveiling of a portrait of his grandfather, Governor Pio Pico, which had recently been painted by artist Beverly Girvigian. (Her husband is on the state Landmarks Commission.)

Mrs. Nora Zuniga Hartnell, age 96, also was present and was honored as the oldest person in attendance by receiving a beautiful flower arrangement donated by Malin's Florist.

The cloudy skies did not bother the guests who

seemed to be having a great time, eating Mexican food prepared by the Boosters of Pioneer High, viewing the paintings of Mr. Crumes and his art students and touring the adobe.

Las Adelitas were on hand and, although the wet grass kept them from performing as they had planned, they did ride and entertain the guests. Riding under the direction of Al Pico, it was a treat to see the young ladies in their beautiful costumes riding side saddle on the lawn where many a horse race had its beginning in the early days of California.

Los Hermanos Bernal, professional dancers from the area, kept the visitors entertained as they performed on the patio porch.

The afternoon ended with a drawing for approximately 20 door prizes donated by local merchants.

The 19 docents in attendance went home with tired feet and happy hearts and are already thinking about what they can do next year to bring the community together for another good "old fashioned" Sunday afternoon.

### Never Underestimate the Power of a Docent

For some time the Docents at the Pio Pico Mansion have wanted to build a brick oven in the kitchen, but we found it difficult to find a bricklayer to help us.

When we learned that our curator, Claire Radford, had had some experience in this field at the Rowland House, we encouraged her to supervise the project. Camille Goulet rounded up some of her teen-age friends and under Claire's guidance they went to work. They were Lisa Anderson, Chris Wahl and Brian Adams. In two sessions, the oven was completed and looks great. (We did have a man cut the plywood and place it on top and put up a shelf in the kitchen.)

The "bricklayers" were not union laborers, but they came prepared to work with hearty brown-bag lunches and plenty of soft drinks to see them through the ordeal. We are proud of these young historians. They did a great job.

# History Is Today (cont'd)

## Board Meeting

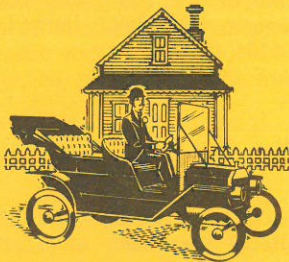
The September meeting of the Whittier Historical Society Board was a lengthy one with reports on summer progress of projects underway and plans for future happenings.

Virginia Mathony reported on membership progress. Nadine Wood told about the various sites that have been investigated for possible use as a museum.

Phyllis Pearce reported that the Historic Sites book committee is making headway and has set a date of October 30th for all research and photography to be completed so final decisions on sites and text writing can begin.

Claire Radford announced that the Society has been asked to sponsor a young historian affiliation and was asked to investigate the mechanics of this move through the State Society.

Plans were finalized for the General Meeting (just held) and were begun for the Annual Meeting and the hosting of the County societies in January at Rio Hondo College.



Remember when a family with a new car used to park it all day Saturday in front of Buckman's Store on South Greenleaf and not move it until everyone in town had seen it and gone home?

## General Meeting

Everyone who attended the General Meeting at Whittier College on September 30th left with a smiling face. Chatting with old friends and meeting new over coffee and cookies as the group gathered, helped set the mood. Phil Mautino, our president, spoke to us briefly and made some announcements, then introduced our speaker.

Mr. Kip Bogle, instructor at Valley College, though he had to give us some very unpleasant facts, inspired us to keep working at our desires for preservation of history. He spoke of the difficulties in getting the public to visit our historic sites when we must compete with the entertainment industry and the manufactured pleasure places like Disneyland. This is where the word "gimmick" applied. He suggested that a museum must have something about it that is unique and that this should be played up to draw the people in. Here he felt we were fortunate with an adobe, because codes make it nearly impossible to build any more, and a single frame bungalow, because they are fast disappearing to accommodate the trend to multiple dwellings. Museums must be living places where activities go on regularly.

Education of the public to appreciate the need to preserve is one of the challenges to historically minded people. Again the living museum is one answer to this apathy. Mr. Bogle expressed hope in this area because of the interest of many young people today in nostalgic things.

Another difficulty Mr. Bogle said we have to face is the great cost involved in preservation, to the point where it has become too great for local governments to justify to the majority of voters, who don't care. The cost of retaining our historic sites falls upon the private donors who do care.

Our speaker saddened us with stories of sites in the Greater Los Angeles Area that had fallen to "progress", then lifted us again by telling of places that have been kept. He said we must face the fact that for every step we take forward we take two steps backward.

Several people from the audience had questions which Kip Bogle answered at the conclusion of his talk.

Then . . . Virginia Mathony, chairman of the Pico Docents, and Pat Jackson of the Bailey House Docents, with the help of Phil Mautino, presented service award certificates to the docents present. Virginia and Pat each gave a short talk about some of the accomplishments and activities of the past year at their respective facility - and - to the delight of all present, made a personal remark about each recipient as the names were called. No one there could help but recognize the warm relationships that have developed between these people who "take care of old houses" and realize the hours they devote to their commitment.



# WHAT'S HA

The Whittier City Council Meeting of October 12th at 7:30 is the one you should attend. One of our council members will present two proposals for the city development which would include a MUSEUM. There cannot be a more vital topic to our society at present. Every member should be there. More information about these ideas before the meeting can be had by calling Nadine Wood, 696-0743. Find out and come.

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The Bailey House Docents now meet the 4th Wednesday of each month at 11 AM at the Bailey House. The Pio Pico Docents still hold their monthly meeting at 9:30 AM the 1st Saturday. You would be a most welcome guest at any of these meetings. You might have some ideas or answers to the problems these people are always solving.

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Set aside December 5th right now. That date is the Sunday chosen for Las Posadas at the Pio Pico Mansion and plans are under way. The docents will be expecting to see all the members. It is the whole Society that sponsors this annual party and the docent committee would appreciate your volunteering to help them in one of the many little jobs such a function entails.

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Tuesday, October 19th, is the date for the next meeting of the Docent League at the South Coast Botanical Gardens. The subject of this meeting will be "Docent Training" and those attending will meet in small groups according to their type of facility - museums, small houses, zoos, etc. The gardens will be toured after lunch. Representatives from both Bailey and Pico usually attend. If you would like to join the group going, contact Miriam Lillevang, 693-4859, (Bailey), or Louise Coulter, 698-5454, (Pico).

†††††

## WHITTIER HISTORICAL SOCIETY Membership Application 1976-77

Name ..... Home Telephone .....

Address ..... Business Telephone .....

If you would like to serve on a committee, please indicate in which area(s) .....

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ ..... Please circle type of membership you wish:

Single - \$3, Family - \$5, Institutional - \$25, Life - \$100.

.....  
Signature

Mail this application with your check to the Whittier Historical Society, PO Box 561, Whittier, CA 90607.

# PPENING

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Oct. 1976							1 2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Would you really like to make October 23rd a memorable day? Accept the invitation of the Associated Historical Societies of Los Angeles County and the San Fernando Valley Historical Society. The fall Mini-Conference of AHSLAC will start at the Andres Pico Adobe and proceed across the way to the San Fernando Mission. The theme in lectures and slides will be "Restoration and Renovation of Adobes". A bar-b-que at the Bear Pit and a visit to Los Encinos State Park will complete the day. Claire Radford, 691-0468, and Virginia Mathony, 693-1194, can give you more information about costs and reservations.

Claire Radford is president of what we refer to as "Associated" and Virginia Mathony is secretary of this organization this year and our Society is a member. The historical societies in Los Angeles County were first brought together in June, 1958, by L.H. O'Loughlin, then Region 14 vice president, Conference of California Historical Societies. As the Conference was formed to unite the societies of the State, so Associated was formed to unite

**Remember when all the kids got out of school at East Whittier in the teens to watch Thomas Edison and his wife and Henry Ford drive by on Whittier Blvd. and they stopped and said that that was the most beautiful school in the world and Sam Mendenhall had a sack of walnuts that he threw into the car as they drove away?**



the societies of the County. Bylaws were enacted and it was formally organized in June, 1959, as the Associated Historical Societies of Los Angeles County (AHSLAC). The primary object is to assist and encourage local historical societies. Since 1959 Associated has grown from 13 to 51 historical societies.

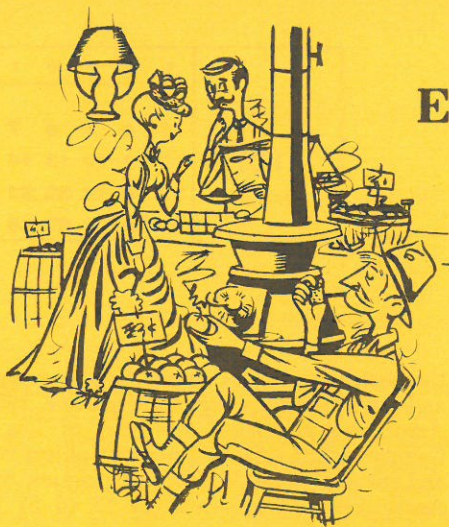
There are times when a group welcomes the experience of other: opening or maintaining museums, marking historical landmarks, new projects, and even program suggestions and speakers needed to help inspire additional interest. There is a constant effort to coordinate interests and accomplish more toward common goals. In addition to the exchange of ideas at meetings, Associated has lent its support to the local groups in their efforts to preserve their local historical buildings and landmarks.

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Our membership drive continues. As of September 30, we had a total of 167 memberships. These include several family memberships, so we have a total of 263 people. This is great and we appreciate the fact that we are growing since last year. However, we need your help so we can grow to a greater number. Won't you tell your friends about the Whittier Historical Society and ask them to join? Remember, ten new members by January 1st brought in by you and your dinner at the annual banquet is free.

Included in the above figures are five life members. We recently mailed about 200 letters to business people in Whittier soliciting Institutional Memberships. We hope to have a good report on the result of these letters for the next issue of the Gazette.

**Remember when in 1906 you could buy a house on Bailey for \$2,000.00.**



## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

**Remember when Whittier had a grain mill behind where the ice house is and they used to roll the barley from the extensive fields in East Whittier to help feed all the horses in Los Angeles and you could buy bran there for your chickens?**

Well, here is the first issue of the Gazette with a new editor. My pledge to my fellow members is that you will receive an issue right about the first of the month, every month. This means that your deadline to me will be the 15th of the month to get all those interesting items into print.

This month some regular features have been instituted. **"Once Upon a Time"** will be excerpts from oral histories related by our long-time residents. These may not be strictly factual, because they are what is remembered. They are the legends of our time and our community.

**"Neighborly Visit"** will suggest a place somewhere nearby that you might be interested in seeing. In our busy lives, perhaps we have not taken time to hear and see the history of neighboring communities. That is too bad, because their stories are as interesting as ours.

**"What's Happening"** will include reports on the current projects of the Society committees or members. It will be for calendar type items and reminders. **"Who Done It"**, on the other hand, would be those things that individual members are doing on their own. This is the one you can get started next issue. If you are writing a family history, doing a geneology, making a picture or memorabilia collection, taking or returning from a trip, planning a bank hold-up, we would like to hear about it. It is fair to inform on your friends. They may be shy.

**"Information Please"** is starting as an aid to the book committee to help in the research. I hope it continues and you all pose questions that some member can answer to satisfy your curiosity or help you in some way.

**"History Is Today"** is our answer to the Whittier Monthly News. These will be reports of occurrences that affect our Society and the history of our city. We can look forward to messages from our president, too.

Now - most of you are busy and just won't find time to write it down and send it. Call me, if you trust me to put your idea to words and music. Only you and what you know (or want to know) can make this an interesting publication.

Mary Ann Rummel  
696-7892

# INFORMATION PLEASE

Does anyone out there know the whereabouts of either of the sons of William Plotts?

Mary Ann Rummel - 696-7892

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Can anyone fill in information about the barnlike structure at Pierce and Pasadena? It was an orphanage, but where did it come from and what was its use before it was moved?

Phyllis Pearce - 695-2105

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The Pico Docents occassionally have need for a portable P.A. system. Do you know of one we could borrow or buy for our fiestas?

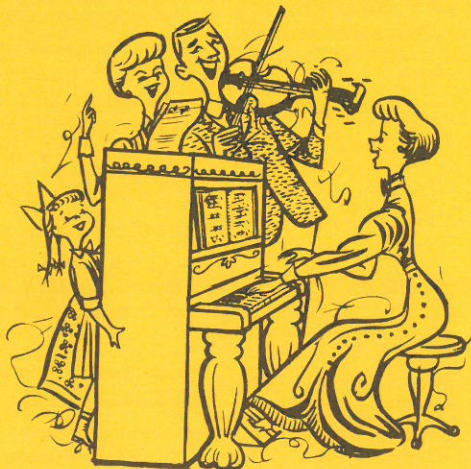
Virginia Mathony - 693-1194

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We have asked for and searched for a picture of the Worman Mill. Have you ever seen one and, if so, where?

Claire Radford - 691-0468

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**WHITTIER HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

1976 - 1977

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The WHITTIER GAZETTE is the official publication of the Whittier Historical Society. The name "Gazette" was chosen since this is one of the oldest names for official journals.

EDITOR: Mary Ann Rummel

Membership in the Whittier Historical Society is open to persons interested in the history and future of the Whittier area. Membership year is from March 1 - February 28. Dues are \$3.00 for individual membership - \$5.00 for family membership - \$25.00 for institutional membership - \$100.00 for life membership

**Mr. Philip K. Mautino**  
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