

The Heritage Society of Pacific Grove NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to Maintaining the Beauty and Individuality of Pacific Grove

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“Ghosts in the Flames” Lecture Will Explore Chinese Legacy



This photo of the Chinese village appears on a postcard. A message on the card, dated May 13, 1907, reads: “All that is left of old China Town. Only one Chinese man living there and he expects to move soon.” The photo was taken by William L. Morgan of Monterey in 1907.

On Friday, March 12, noted historian Sandy Lydon will present a lively, slide-illustrated talk on “The Ghosts in the Flames: The May 1906 Fire and Pacific Grove’s Search for Its Chinese Legacy.” This latest in the Heritage Society’s popular historical lecture series will explore the history of the Chinese village that once existed here, the fire that destroyed it, and the aftermath that lingers to this day. The lecture will be given at 7:00 p.m. in the Center for Performing Arts Auditorium at

Pacific Grove Middle School (see inset for details).

From 1853 to 1907, the largest Chinese fishing community in Northern California flourished on the eastern edge of Pacific Grove. It was a village of families; children were born there (American citizens all) and the elderly died and were buried in a cemetery overlooking the sea. Isolation and a powerful landlord protected the village from the anti-Chinese hysteria that swept across California in the late 1800s.

The neighboring community became accustomed to the Chinese fishing boats, and tourists “oohed” and “aahed” as they rode past.

The fire changed it all. On the evening of May 16, 1906, with the village filled with refugees from the earthquake and fire that had destroyed San Francisco’s Chinatown a month earlier, most of the village burned to the ground. A huge crowd of spectators laughed and shouted as they watched the terrified Chinese residents fleeing the flames. The

Calendar

FEBRUARY HERITAGE SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

Pacific Grove – Forest Hill Manor
February 21

MARCH “GHOSTS IN THE FLAMES” LECTURE

Pacific Grove – Center for
Performing Arts
March 12

APRIL GOOD OLD DAYS

Pacific Grove – Downtown
April 10-11

MAY CALIFORNIA PRESERVATION FOUNDATION CONFERENCE

Nevada City, California
May 12-15

ANNUAL HERITAGE HOUSE AWARDS

Pacific Grove – Museum of Natural
History May 28

**“The Ghosts in the
Flames,” a lecture by
Sandy Lydon
Friday, March 12
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
(doors open at 6:00)
Center for Performing Arts
Auditorium
Pacific Grove Middle
School
835 Forest Avenue
Admission free to
Heritage Society members;
\$10 for non-members
(includes membership
through 2010)**

following morning, many of Pacific Grove's white residents could be seen poking through the ashes looking for valuables left behind. The community demanded that the Chinese not be permitted to return. After a year of resistance, the Chinese reluctantly moved to a new site in Monterey, taking the memory and history of their village with them.

What happened? How did the relationship between the Chinese and their Pacific Grove neighbors turn so bitter? What has happened since 1907? And where does the Feast of Lanterns festival fit in all this?

For the answers to these and other intriguing questions about our Chinese legacy, be sure to attend this fascinating talk. Please note that due to the subject matter of this lecture, it may not be suitable for young children.

(Thanks to Sandy Lydon for the foregoing information about the Chinese village.)

Sandy Lydon — Asian History Expert

Sandy Lydon, the speaker at our March 12 "Ghosts in the Flames" lecture, grew up in Hollister and is a graduate of UC Davis, Sacramento State University and the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. He is currently Historian Emeritus at Cabrillo College in Aptos,



The site of the Chinese village was near the current location of the Hopkins Marine Station. Thanks to Heritage Society photo archivist Mary Fobian and board member Craig Riddell for the photographs of the Chinese village.

where he has taught Asian history, Asian-American history and local and regional history since 1968. Mr. Lydon is the author of several books about the immigration of Asians to California, including the award-winning "Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region" and "The Japanese in the Monterey Bay Region: A Brief History." He is currently completing "Valley of Hopes, Valley of Dreams: The Untold Story of the Japanese in the Salinas Valley."

Mr. Lydon has lectured several times for the Heritage Society on subjects as various as the history of the Hopkins Marine Station and the story of the Ku Klux Klan on the Monterey Peninsula. For the upcoming lecture, he returns to the subject of the 1906 fire with new insights and materials.

For additional information on the lecture content, please contact Professor Lydon at Salydon@aol.com

(Please note that lectures presented by the Heritage

Society reflect the opinions of the lecturers, and not necessarily those of the Society or its members.)

Popular Lecture Series Returns

The Heritage Society of Pacific Grove is proud to announce the resurrection of its popular historical lecture series. The lectures were a Society tradition for more than a decade, but have been on hiatus for the last couple of years. The new series will kick off on Friday, March 12 with a lecture by Professor Sandy Lydon, who will delve into the interesting and provocative history of the Chinese Village that was once located on the shoreline of Pacific Grove until it

mysteriously burned to the ground. (See story on page 1.)

Steve Honegger, President of the Heritage Society, comments, "The Society is excited to bring back the lecture series, as it had long been an integral part of the Society's programs. We are extremely honored to have Mr. Lydon as our first lecturer. He is one of the preeminent scholars in this field, and a dynamic speaker."

Plans are underway for a number of interesting lectures which are to be announced in the coming months.

The lectures are free for members of the Society and \$10 for non-members, \$15 for couples. Students and active military will pay \$5 with appropriate identification. Alternatively, the Society is offering attendees the chance to become members of the Society for the remainder of the year at \$10 for an individual membership or \$15 for a family membership; the membership will include free admission to the lectures.



Pacific Grove Mayor Carmelita Garcia (center) and mayors of other Monterey County cities embark on a walking tour of historic sites in downtown PG. (Photo courtesy of the Pacific Grove Hometown Bulletin.)

Upcoming Events Elsewhere

“Think California” Exhibition – Ongoing through February 5, 2011, California Historical Society, 678 Mission Street, San Francisco. This exhibition highlights the colorful history of California through its art, artifacts and ephemera. Open Wednesday through Saturday, noon to 4:30 p.m. Admission \$3; \$1 for students and seniors.

Southwest Oral History Association Conference – April 9-11, Boulder City Nevada. With emphasis on the southwestern states, the conference will focus on oral history methods and applications. For information visit www.southwestoralhistory.org

California Preservation 2010 Conference – May 12-15, Nevada City, California. Workshops, tours, sessions on issues facing California’s historic, cultural and natural resources. Registration fee \$255 for members, \$295 for non-members. For information visit www.californiapreservation.org

2010 National Preservation Conference – October 27-30, Austin, Texas. Program planning is still underway. Conference will include discussion and solution sessions focusing on a wide range of preservation issues. For information visit www.presentationnation.org

Heritage Society Takes Mayors for a Walk

Mayors of the cities of Monterey County recently enjoyed a walking tour of historic downtown Pacific Grove, led by Heritage Society board members Claudia Sawyer and Steve Honegger. The tour began in front of the Victorian Corners restaurant on Lighthouse Avenue and included sites of interest in the neighborhood.

The mayors get together monthly for lunch and discussion of issues concerning the county and its municipalities. Pacific Grove Mayor Carmelita Garcia hosted this meeting, which was attended by the mayors of Carmel, Seaside, Sand City,

Soledad, Monterey, King City and Salinas, as well as by several county officials.

Heritage House Award Nominations Due

The Heritage Society is still accepting nominations for the annual Heritage House Awards. Awards will be given in four categories:

Preservation Award – Houses aged 50 years or older that preserve the original form, integrity and materials;

Rehabilitation Award – Houses whose repairs, alterations or additions have preserved the original historical, cultural or architectural values;

Commercial Award – Commercial projects that preserve the town’s historic fabric and contribute to its historic setting; and

New Construction Award – New projects of exemplary design that contribute to and are compatible with the community.

Nominated buildings must be in Pacific Grove. Nominations must be received by March 28.

Winners will be announced and project-related stories told at our Annual Heritage House Awards Ceremony on Friday, May 28 at 7:00 p.m. at the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, in celebration of National Preservation Month.

For nomination forms and/or more information, contact Darlene Billstrom at db@weaverstock.net

All opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the Board of Directors, but are meant to stimulate interest in and discussion of preservation issues.

New Members

Norma Riggs
Tim Bonfield
Margot Provost
Suzanne Rivers
Katherine Stathopol
Madeleine Thomas
Suzi McElwee

Membership Count:
1163

Books Donated

The Heritage Society thanks author Russell C. Coile for his generous donation of two copies of his book, "Disaster Man: A Biographical Memoir." Mr. Coile was one of the country's first Certified Emergency Managers.

Here's to Saint Patrick's Day

The anniversary of Saint Patrick's death in the fifth century has been observed as a religious feast day by the Irish for over 1,000 years. As the March 17 date falls during Lent, Irish families would attend church in the morning. In the afternoon, the Lenten prohibition against eating meat was waived, and people would dance, drink and feast on the traditional meal of Irish bacon and cabbage.

The first Saint Patrick's Day parade was held not in Ireland, but in the United States, when Irish soldiers serving in the English military marched through New York City on March 17, 1762. For many years "Irish Aid Societies," such as the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick, held separate parades. Then, in 1848, they got together to create the New York City Saint Patrick's Day Parade, the oldest

and largest civilian parade in the country, with over 150,000 participants.

Other cities also have their Saint Patrick's Day parades, and Chicago dyes its river green for the occasion, using 40 pounds of vegetable dye. The holiday is celebrated mostly in English-speaking countries, but is also a favorite in such far-flung places as Japan, Singapore and Russia. Ironically, until the 1970s Irish law mandated that pubs be closed on Saint Patrick's Day. However, in 1995 the Irish government realized the holiday's potential for tourism, and now Dublin hosts a multi-day Saint Patrick's Festival that attracts more than a million people.

In Pacific Grove, the celebration of Saint Patrick's Day has been much quieter. This may be due to the fact that the sale and serving of liquor was against city law until 1969, when voters overturned the prohibition. (Beer could be sold legally in town as early as 1933, but no one applied for a license until 1938; the application was denied.) The first liquor license in Pacific Grove was obtained in 1970 by Mr. Sal Lucido, owner of

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Slats Roof Garden Restaurant at Lovers Point. On October 3 of that year, the first legal drink of hard liquor was served to then-mayor Earl Grafton.

(Information about the holiday is from History.com. Information about dry PG is from the Heritage Society's publication "Board and Batten.")

Return Service Requested

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OF
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