

# COUNTY COURIER

Official Publication of the Orange County Historical Society

## ORANGE COUNTY—THE GOLDEN PROMISE The “most California county”

Our program year always begins with a choice program selection and this year is no exception. Our speaker, Pamela Hallan-Gibson will talk about Orange County history and her latest book, *Orange County—The Golden Promise an Illustrated History*.

Author of three books about her home town, San Juan Capistrano, *Dos Cientos Años en San Juan Capistrano*, *Ghosts and Legends of San Juan Capistrano*, and *Two Hundred Years in San Juan Capistrano*, she is also the author of *A Century of Service: A History of the Orange County Sheriff's Department* and *The Bench and the Bar: A Centennial View of Orange County Legal History*. This makes Pamela so well versed in our local history that there will be few questions you can ask that she cannot answer. Take advantage of this opportunity.

*Orange County—The Golden Promise an Illustrated History* was first published in 1986 and was so popular it is now out of print. Pamela says of this re-release of the book, “I went back and rewrote a couple of chapters and added a whole new chapter. There were a couple of things that absolutely were dominating the whole county theme, including the bankruptcy and El Toro airport issue.” At a book signing she had this to say about *Orange County—The Golden Promise*—“I tried to attach the faces



and the personalities to the events and the places, not just as historical figures, but as people responding to their own set of circumstances. I wanted readers to measure the actions of these people by the standards of their own time, not ours.”

When you read Pamela’s biography notes you see why she is uniquely qualified to write about all aspects of Orange County history.

Pamela Hallan-Gibson, a fourth generation Orange Countian, became interested in local history while growing up in San Juan Capistrano. She obtained her bachelor's degree in history from the University of California, Riverside, and a master's

degree in public administration from California State University, Long Beach.

Her first career was that of journalist, working for the *Ventura*, *Star-Free Press*, *Riverside Press-Enterprise* and *Orange Coast Daily Pilot*. She later became involved in city government and served as Assistant to the City Manager in San Juan Capistrano and City Manager in La Palma. She recently retired as City Manager of Sonoma after twenty-six years of public service.

An active preservationist, Hallan-Gibson served for four years on the Orange County Historical

Commission, is a life member of the San Juan Capistrano Historical Society and is past chairman of San Juan Capistrano Walking Tours. She was a charter member of the City's Cultural Heritage Commission and conducted its first historic sites inventory.

Believing that the key to preservation is education she has presented slide programs for various age groups for the past twenty years.

In addition, Hallan-Gibson has served as president of the Saddleback College Friends of the Library, was active in many state and national city management organizations and is active in the community of Sonoma where she is a member of the Sonoma Valley Historical Society Sonoma Plaza Kiwanis, Sonoma State Park Docents and Sonoma Valley Friends of the Library.

She has also contributed to five other books, a documentary film, and several magazines. Now retired to a vineyard in Sonoma Valley, she still visits Orange County often.

Our September 11 potluck dessert meeting will be held at **Sherman Library and Gardens** as has been our tradition for many years. Come at **6:00 p.m.** to view the gardens, **dessert at 7:00 p.m.** At **7:30 p.m.** the program will begin.

Please bring a desert for eight, ready to serve. Bring guests for this special evening and enjoy.

#### DIRECTIONS:

Sherman Library and Gardens is on Pacific Coast Highway, two blocks East of MacArthur Blvd. (page 919, E2, Thomas Bros. Guide.) Parking entrance is either from Dahlia Ave. or Fernleaf at the rear of the property.

#### More about the book

8 ½ X 11, Hardcover, 440 pages  
Over 500 black and white and color photos

#### Table of Contents

##### PART ONE: THE PROMISE EXPLORED

1. The Mission Period
2. Rancho Halcyon days
3. American Conquest and Social Change
4. The Decline of the Old Order

##### PART TWO: THE PROMISE CHALLENGED

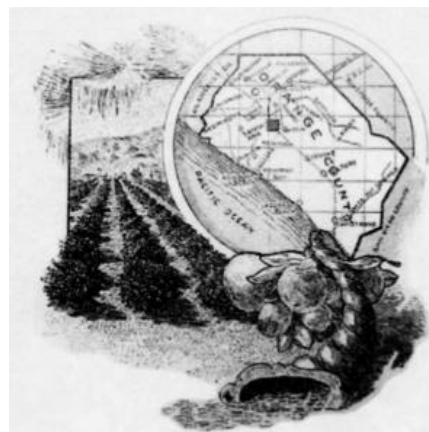
5. New Towns
6. The Formation of a County
7. The Emergence of a New Century
8. War, Boom, and Depression

##### PART THREE: THE PROMISE FULFILLED

9. World War II and the Stirrings of Change
10. The 1950s Boom and the Impact of Growth
11. New Immigrants, New Opportunities
12. A Challenged Spirit
13. The Promise Prevails
14. Chronicles of Leadership

A Timeline of Orange County's History  
A Bibliography and Index

Books will be available at the meeting or you may use mail order (see our book list on page 5)



## ORANGE COUNTY

### ARCHIVES

- ⇒ OPEN
- ⇒ Monday - Friday
- ⇒ 9 - 12 and 1 - 4:30

## In the Old Orange County Courthouse - Room 101

211 W. Santa Ana Blvd.  
Santa Ana, CA 92701  
(714) 834-2536

Phil Brigandi, Archivist  
Shawna Pierce, Assistant

A unique collection of government records and other material documenting the rich history of Orange County, California.

#### *Including ...*

- Orange County Board of Supervisors minutes (1889-1965)
- Great Register of Voters (1890-1968)
- Deeds, Mortgages & other property records (1889-1927)
- Early Assessment Rolls (1889-1962)
- Index to Marriage Licenses (1889-1953)
- Orange County Progress Reports (1954-1994)
- Orange County Transit District records
- Flood Control District minutes and records
- Planning Commission minutes
- Mining Claim notices (1889-1926)
- Road Department records
- County Park records
- Environmental Impact Reports
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Orange County
- Justice Court records from Huntington Beach and Seal Beach
- Reports and other records from various county departments and agencies
- Early Subdivision Maps
- Santa Ana *Journal* newspaper (1935-38)
- *Plus historic photographs, maps, and much more ...*

#### Questions?

email

phil.brigandi@rec.ocgov.com

We have been most fortunate to receive a wealth of donations over the summer. Between our presence in the phone book and our Web site people have been able reach us. This has resulted in donations of valuable materials and information on Orange County of historical significance.

Our historian, Ken Leavens lists his e-mail address on our website and received the materials he describes in this article.

### Four Items Donated to OCHS Archives

A hospital register and three pictures of historical interest were recently donated to the OCHS. . The register comes from Jerry Lesandro of Ferndale, California. After graduating from high school in the late 1960s, Jerry worked for a time at the old Orange County Hospital. One day someone cleaned out the hospital library and threw out hundreds of books, including the register. Jerry and a friend climbed into the dumpster and

rescued several of the books along with the register. He has held on to it for all these years and is pleased to know that it will now be in a safe place. The register includes the names, dates, diagnosis and dispositions of patients (they were then called “inmates”) from 1912 through 1924.

Three pictures dating back to the early 1890’s, were donated by Sally Bedley of Rancho Santa Margarita. They include a picture, taken in 1892, of the first kindergarten class in Santa Ana. Sally’s grandmother, Coralyn Harris Thompson, was a member of that first kindergarten class. She is in the back row, right in the middle – the 4<sup>th</sup> from the left. Also in the picture is Grace Parker Soest, Coralyn’s first cousin. She is shown 2<sup>nd</sup> from the left in the middle row. On the back of the picture Carolyn wrote that this first class was held “in a little white house on 4<sup>th</sup> street, about the second lot west of Birch.” Among her classmates were Genevieve Waffle Lacy, Roy Spangler and Mark Menges. The picture is signed, Coralynn Harris Thompson, 715 Bush St. This is the

house where both Sally’s grandmother and great aunt Grace were raised. Also included in this donation are a picture of Sally’s grandmother as a young woman and a picture of her great great grandmother, Mary Victoria Lyon. Sally writes that she has been told that Lyon Street in Santa Ana is named after her great great grandfather’s family.

The OCHS is most appreciative to be chosen as the recipient of these gifts and thanks Jerry Lesandro and Sally Bedley for donating items that will enhance and expand our growing collection.

### Another Donation

From a phone call we obtained the following through generous help from Mickey Scholte, former South County representative of the Conference of California Historical Societies, now an OCHS member. He went to the home of Tom Frees of Mission Viejo to talk to him about the donation and receive the materials donated by Tom Frees.

Tom’s father was Benjamin Frees III, his grandfather was Benjamin Frees II., and his grandmother was Grace Snow, sister of Martha Snow (Mrs. Sherman Stevens) of Tustin.

1.) A journal- daily record of farming operations in Tustin from January 1, 1890 to December 31, 1891, possibly written by Horace Snow.

2.) A family album of photos, including a Frees Tustin home, a photograph of Sherman Stevens and two of Martha, one in her wedding dress. We will share some of this donation in future *Couriers*.





### Ruth Ristow Postcard Collection

Ruth Ristow lent OCHS a marvelous album of postcards which was given to her husband's grandmother by a neighbor, Helen Gray.

As many were not of Orange County but such interesting images I am sharing them in the *Courier*. The top two are of Santa Catalina Island at Avalon, the bottom is Arrowhead Hot Springs Hotel near San Bernardino.

### The Postcard Book and Naming Contest

The book is progressing with over 500 cards scanned to date from which to choose. We still are planning on scanning more to get a balance of the entire county. Areas needed are South County, El Toro (Lake Forest), Mission Viejo, Laguna Woods excluding beach communities. West County, Stanton, Westminster, Cypress (Dairyland) and some north areas such as La Habra and Placentia.

The naming contest so far has sixteen entries from seven people. The focus would be Orange County, early years to present and including all subject matter such as cities, tourist attractions, businesses, etc. First prize would be the historical sum of \$25 and recognition in the book. Second and third place winners would receive a copy of the book. Mail your suggestions to our PO Box or e-mail any board member (listed on page 5). Duplications will be judged on a first come basis.

The most recent responses are:

A Postcard Tour of Orange County  
19xx to 19xx.

Postcards from the Past: Orange  
County 19xx to 19xx

Greetings from Orange County:  
Postcards from the Past

Historical Views of Orange  
County on Postal Cards



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**OCHS Calendar**

- Board Meeting
- Thursday, Sept. 4, 2003 at 7:00 PM
- Board meetings are open to the membership
- at the Kidseum
- Sept. Meeting
- Thursday Sept. 11, 2003
- Meeting at 7:30 pm.
- **Sherman Library and Gardens**
- View the gardens 6:00 p.m.
- Potluck dessert 7:00 p.m.
- Book signing after the meeting

**Program on Orange County History  
by  
Pamela Hallan-Gibson**

Next Meeting

Thursday, October 9, 2003  
Bower's Kidseum  
To be announced



Where will you find books on local history? Your best source is your Orange County Historical Society. Books listed below in **BOLD** are pictured and described on our website: [www.orangecountyhistory.org](http://www.orangecountyhistory.org) Don't see the book you are looking for? **ASK US**. If we don't have it we will help you find it.

| PLACE A DOLLAR AMT. OPPOSITE EACH ITEM YOU WISH TO ORDER                     |         |  |
|--|---------|--|
| Bawdy Balboa by Judge Robert Gardner   | \$25.00 |  |
| Cañada de la Brea by Virginia Carpenter                                      | \$10.00 |  |
| <b>Centennial Bibliography of Orange County</b>                              | \$70.00 |  |
| House of Bernardo Yorba by Don Meadow  | \$4.00  |  |
| <b>José Antonio Yorba by Arnold Dominguez</b>                                | \$4.00  |  |
| <b>The Portolá Expedition 1769</b>   | \$3.00  |  |
| Orange Countiana II  | \$12.00 |  |
| Orange Countiana III   | \$12.00 |  |
| <b>Orange Countiana IV Architecture: soft cover</b>                          | \$32.00 |  |
| <b>A Window on the Past hard cover</b>                                       | \$40.00 |  |
| Orange Countiana V Early Businesses soft cover                               | \$22.00 |  |
| In Orange County hard cover  | \$30.00 |  |
| <b>Orange County Through Four Centuries By Dr. Leo J. Friis</b>              | \$15.95 |  |
| <b>The Orange Blossom 50 Years of Growth in Orange County</b>                | \$40.00 |  |
| <b>ORANGE COUNTY The Golden Promise by Pamela Hallan-Gibson 2002 edition</b> | \$37.00 |  |

|  |      |         |  |
|--|------|---------|--|
| Proceedings of the Conference of Orange County History | 1988 | \$11.00 |  |
|  | 1989 | \$11.00 |  |

*All prices include sales tax*

MERCHANDISE TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_  
**Postage and Handling** (\$3.00 first item, \$1 each additional)  
**Orange Blossoms** is \$5 per book, \$1 each additional  
**Orange County The Golden Promise** is \$5 per book, \$1 each additional  
**TOTAL DUE** \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
 NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to OCHS  
 ~ **MAIL TO:** John Sorenson, 14932 Gainford Circle, Irvine CA 92604  
 Call him (949) 559-5668 and he will bring your book/s to the next meeting.

