



COUNTY COURIER

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Casa Romantica

We are traveling south pictorially for a program on Casa Romantica, the estate of San Clemente founder Ole Hanson. This will be the October 14, 2004 general meeting of OCHS, 7:30 p.m. at Bower's Kidseum in Santa Ana, northwest corner of 18th and Main Streets. Following on Saturday, October 16, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. with "an up close and personal" tour of Casa Romantica (see details on page 4)

Gregory B. Smith, Executive Director of Casa Romantica will present a powerpoint program on the estate, the current status of the property and its use as well as some history on Ole Hanson and San Clemente.

Gregory Smith has an extensive background in the performing and visual arts, and in arts management. He has been both Artistic Director and Executive Director of professional ballet companies in Oregon and Mississippi, directed art galleries in New Orleans, and has served as Executive Director of an annual music festival in Central California. His administrative background has included fundraising, marketing, personnel management, the design of educational programming, and theatrical production management.



Aerial view of Casa Romantica 1940s (First American title Collection)

BARBARA JEAN BLANKMAN

The photograph above is both a tribute and a poignant reminder of historian Barbara Blankman who passed away this September at the age of 79. Members who attended the OCHS January meeting 2001 will remember Barbara, our personal escort and guide as we toured First American Corporation. Of the 1900 photographs hanging throughout the company's buildings, Barbara knew every photograph from the city location, the

cross streets, to the names of the people pictured. Barbara, a longtime resident of Orange, had been with First American many years where she had catalogued and numbered thousands of newspaper articles, documents, artifacts and photographs about Orange County's history. The vast collection of photographs (9600 +), history books and Orange County memorabilia will continue to grow at First American's historical library but it won't be the same. Barbara will be greatly missed.

Ole Hanson's Dream

"I vision a place where people can live together more pleasantly than any other place in America. I am going to build a beautiful city on the ocean where the whole city will be a park; the architecture will be one type, and the homes will be located on sites where nearly everyone will have his view preserved forever.

The whole picture is very clear before me. I can see hundreds of white-walled homes bonneted with red tile, with trees, scrubs, hedges of hibiscus, palms and geraniums lining the drives and a profusion of flowers illuminating the patios and gardens. I can see sidewalks of red Spanish tile and streets curving picturesquely over the land. I want plazas, playgrounds, schools, clubs, swimming pools, a golf course, a fishing pier and a beach enlivened with people getting a healthy joy out of life.

Ole Hanson was already 47 years of age by the time he began building homes in Los Angeles. What were the experiences, training, education, circumstances and events that shaped this man and his dreams?

From a Norwegian immigrant family, at age 13 he taught in a rural school in Racine, Wisconsin; worked to pay expenses while studying law, he passed the bar exam at 17 but couldn't practice until age 21. So he then studied stenography, worked for a mining broker to earn capital to start his own business of manufacturing and sales of druggist supplies taking him traveling throughout the East, South and Midwest. A tragic event took place while traveling on business with his wife and young family. A train



San Clemente ca 1930s (writing added for emphasis)
(First American Corp)



aerial view in recent years (no date given)

from Casa Romantica's web site

wreck which killed one daughter and partially paralyzed Ole's legs caused him to take a new direction in his life. A cross-country trip in a covered wagon, 2800 miles in all with a brief stop in Montana to help organize a speaking campaign for a man opposing the local copper company's candidate. By the time they reached their destination in Seattle, Ole had regained the strength in his legs by

walking most of the way in a special harness he created. Having arrived in the West his desire for a home leads him to build his own. Next he looked into the insurance business. He concluded that selling insurance must not be so lucrative if none of the salesmen owned their own homes. So he turned to selling real estate and home construction.

A man of strong convictions, principles and beliefs are evident in the choices he made for his life and endeavors. In 1908 he campaigns against gambling and vice, winning a seat in the Washington State Legislature. According to Homer Banks in his 1930 biography on Hanson:

"From now on he traveled spectacularly towards his goal. He becomes mayor of Seattle, he 'breaks' the historic strike of 11918; he constructs the great Skagit Water Power Project for Seattle and persuades President Woodrow Wilson to champion the great municipal development; he becomes an international figure, defending Americanism against Bolshevism, and travels for fifteen months on a lecture tour during which time he is given another opportunity to survey America.

"In order to canvas Europe, he crosses the Atlantic, where he sees how people are living in England, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Russia, Belgium and France, and writes the story of home life in the old world, which is published in seventy-five dailies and eight thousand weeklies in the United States.

"Hanson's peculiar belief that he should not make money out of the war closed his real estate offices in Seattle, although he owned most of the land surrounding the Puget Sound Navy yard at Bremerton. He said, 'War-made money is stained with blood,' and he gave away more than his mayor's salary, as well as refusing to profit by war created activities.

"The war ended; thousands of ship workers left Seattle. All things slumped, and Hanson, heavily in debt, borrowed the last dollar on his life



Ole Hanson as Mayor of Seattle rides with Theodore Roosevelt, President-Elect, November 1904

from Robert Kutcher Collection

insurance and almost penniless, journeyed to southern Mexico to rebuild his fortune.

In Mexico as an arbitrator he received payment in interest in oilfields that were soon worthless as the oil market changed. He returned to the states opening a real estate office in Los Angeles. He began building, first 2000-home Slauson Avenue tract, Liberty Arces in Hawthorne and the Potter Hotel in Santa Barbara. The Hotel project ended abruptly with an earthquake.

And now his early dream of the Spanish Village by the Sea was about to be realized. He learned that his friend H.H. Cotton had purchased part of Rancho Desechos. It is here that our program will begin for those attending on October 14.

For further reading I suggest the following two books. Doris Walker's book tells the entire story with great illustrations and photographs. Banks, Homer. *The Story of San Clemente, The Spanish Village. 1930*

Walker, Doris. *The Heritage of San Clemente Celebrating The 75th Anniversary of the Village by the Sea 1925—2000. 2000*

Tour of CASA ROMANTICA CULTURAL CENTER on SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2004 10:00 a.m.

Directions from Bowers Museum in Santa Ana.

Thomas Bros. PAGE 992 J 4

Merge onto I-5 South

Take the AVE. PALIZADA exit. Turn

RIGHT onto E AVENIDA PALIZADA

Turn SIGNAL LIGHT **LEFT** onto
AVENIDA GRANADA

End at **CASA ROMANTICA**

415 Avenida Granada

Total Est. Distance: 31.29 miles

Total Est. Time: 32 minutes



Following the tour of Casa
Romantica we will gather for
Lunch Al Fresco
at Billy's Meat, Seafood and
Deli in downtown San Clemente
at
111 Del Mar

It is the old fashioned butcher shop in a modern age with a deli fashioned from the streets of New York. Family owned and operated, Billy's Meat, Seafood & Deli has been on Del Mar for 13 years satisfying the taste of young and old.

The people of San Clemente have dubbed it the "one stop shop" where you can come in for lunch of sandwiches, soups or salads. **Sandwiches are custom made with your choice of bread, condiments, vegetables, meat and cheese. There are homemade soups and salads come in small and large sizes. Prices are modest, a Poorboy Italian sub is \$5.49, a large chicken breast salad is \$4.99.**

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

By John Sorenson

This summer has been a very productive one for OCHS. As your treasurer, I wish to thank all who renewed their memberships during the summer. With renewals during the summer, it is far easier to determine an operating budget for the following year. Special thanks to those who could contribute at a higher level. This year's membership season was very successful.

Also, 66 of our Bibliographies were donated to the Orange County Public Library. This will enable more people to use this valuable research tool with each library in the system having two copies.

We received a giant order from Chapman University for at least one of almost our entire selection of books offered for sale. We extend many thanks to Chapman University for their support. Donations were also up over last year and we thank those who continue to support us.

STANTON HOUSE TOUR

On September 12, 2004, I had the pleasure of touring the Philip Stanton home. This 10,000 square foot Spanish Revival mansion built in 1928 for \$70,000. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and reveals a past long gone to urban Orange County. This mansion served a headquarters for an extensive farming operation as well as a private residence. A unique feature was the walk-in safe. In a time of cash payrolls and other cash transactions security was needed in the remote area of Brookhurst and La Palma. It was a good distance to any bank in Anaheim – even further to Santa Ana. One must note that the legal speed limit at the time was 45mph. The mansion and surrounding buildings and grounds are now part of Fairmont Preparatory School. About 650 students attend grades 7-12 at this site. Tuition runs \$10-12,000 per year. Signs of student achievement were everywhere. A variety of AP (advance placement) programs in science and math were evident. Signs announcing the AP test dates in Calculus

and Statistics in May 2005 were already posted.

Upon questioning, the schools administrator who was giving the tour, I learned that Mr. Sonnicksen has been teaching for over 50 years and had once taught for LA Unified. I remember a young P. E. teacher by that name at Dana Junior High nearly 50 years ago. Mr. Sonnicksen could climb the ropes in the gym while remaining in a sitting position - all the way up (15'?). He could out run the boys in the school yard when it came to getting to the scene of a fight – which happened on occasion. When he arrived on the scene, even the worst toughs knew that they were in an inferior position! But more important, he was a real person and a good role model whom I enjoyed talking with even though P. E. was not my strong suit.

FROM THE OFFICE

Finally, this summer Betsy Vigus, Jane Norgren and myself have been working nearly every Friday in the office to reduce our “in basket” – which had become quite large! This is very tedious work as we try to determine which materials are to be saved and which are to be weeded. The retention criterion is subjective and thought is given to all decisions. Once retention is decided, data must be entered into the computer and the documents filed. Some file cabinet drawers are only available by removing boxes stored in the aisles. Much progress has been made and more is required. Jane and I are learning the nature and extent of our holdings which are larger and more diverse than I imagined.

[The Society is indebted to Linda Herman, Special Collections Librarian, Cal State University Fullerton for the organization of the Society's holdings which consist of EPHEMERA (local history in the form of articles written for presentation/publication, maps, graphics, film, audio and video tapes, objects, information on organizations, cities and people), PAMPHLETS AND BOOKS, PHOTOGRAPHS, THE SOCIETY'S HISTORY, and SPECIAL COLLECTIONS (Chapman Collection, Haven Seed Company, Allen Goddard Collection, Schoefer Collection including John Birch

material, Society Minutes 1919- 1946 Index)) We are continuing to follow the guidelines and procedures for collection and processing already in place.

After retiring from CSUF, Linda returned to help the Society, meeting weekly for two years processing new materials and training Vince and Betsy Vigus. At that time we added a new computer and established databases for Ephemera, Books and Pamphlets, Photographs, and Membership. This gives us greater flexibility in searching and adding new materials. When asked what photographs we have on churches in Santa Ana it was possible to print out a list, searching on the subject category Religion and Santa Ana, giving the name of each church and any other pertinent information we have.

Still to be accomplished, databases for the Society's History and numerous indexes such as our newsletter *County Courier*. Linda has indexed speakers and illustrations up to 1986. It will speed up searches to have all the information in a database on the computer.] Editor

DONATION FROM LIGHT IMPRESSIONS

This is a company from which we have purchased materials for archiving photographs and other material. We received a light box for viewing slides (needs a \$15 lamp) 1500 archival sleeves for storing photographs, three notebooks for our scanned images and photographic paper for ink jet printing.

Looking for
Photographs
of the Herrington House at
232 N. Cleveland
in the city of Orange.

Call
Townes 714 997 4265
if you have any information
the Orange Public Library did not
have any images.

OCHS Calendar

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- Board Meeting
- Thursday Oct. 7, 2004 at **6:00 PM**
at the Richard's School
Oct. Meeting
- Thursday, Oct. 14, 2004
- Opening at 7:00 p.m.
- **Bower's Kidseum**
- **18th and Main Sts., Santa Ana**
- **7: 30 p.m. Program:**

CASA ROMANTICA
by Greg Smith, Executive
Director

- **November 11, Meeting**
**German Prisoners of War in
Orange County and How
They Got Here**
by Dennis Leslie



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

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		Proceedings of the Conference of Orange County History 1988 \$11.00
Cañada de la Brea by Virginia Carpenter	\$10.00		1989 \$11.00
Centennial Bibliography of Orange County	\$70.00		Fruit Box Labels An Illustrated Guide to Citrus Labels by Gordon McClelland & Jay Last \$35.00
House of Bernardo Yorba by Don Meadow	\$4.00		
José Antonio Yorba by Arnold Dominguez	\$4.00		
The Portolá Expedition 1769	\$3.00		
Orange Countiana II	\$12.00		
Orange Countiana III	\$12.00		
Orange Countiana IV Architecture: soft A Window on the Past hard cover	\$32.00 \$40.00		
Orange Countiana V Early Businesses soft In Orange County hard cover SOLD OUT	\$22.00 \$00.00		
Orange County Through Four Centuries By Dr. Leo J. Friis	\$15.95		
The Orange Blossom 50 Years of Growth in Orange County	\$40.00		
ORANGE COUNTY The Golden Promise by Pamela Hallan-Gibson 2002 edition	\$37.00		

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 _____

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Make checks payable to OCHS

^ **MAIL TO:** John Sorenson, 14932 Gainford Circle, Irvine CA 92604

