



Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society

September 2016 Newsletter

Sierra Madre Pioneer Cemetery

*Story by Stan Hutchinson, Photo by Darlene Traxler
Reprinted by permission of the Sierra Madre Pioneer Cemetery Association
(edited for brevity)*

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The history of the Sierra Madre Pioneer Cemetery begins like that of the community. Sierra Madre founder Nathaniel C. Carter (1840-1904) was a native of Lowell, Massachusetts, and came to California in 1870 to improve his health.

In 1881, Carter was living with his family in San Gabriel when he began extensive land purchases in the foothill area that would become Sierra Madre. In 1882, Carter built a small hotel, the "Ocean View House" and his residence, "Carterhia," both of which overlooked his Sierra Madre Tract. The death of J. E. Richardson, a Carter family servant, on July 3, 1882, was probably instrumental in Carter's designation of some two and one-third acres in the southeastern portion of his property as a community burying ground. This parcel on the north side of Central Avenue, now Sierra Madre Boulevard, lay atop an east-facing bluff overlooking the flood plain of Little Santa Anita Wash.

J. E. Richardson was born October 19, 1844, in Lowell, Massachusetts and probably came west with the Carter family in the early 1870s. He was 38 at the time of his death and the first to be interred in the newly created cemetery. The top of his weathered granite tombstone features a carved open book appropriately inscribed. Prior to about 1925 all tombstone and monument inscriptions were hand-cut.

The second burial of record was that of Charles F. Ferry born 1850, died 1883, aged 33 years. Third was John Wesley Patterson, born March 1, 1854, in Greene County, Pennsylvania, who died

May 6, 1884. Patterson's marble tablet had been missing from its granite base for several decades and mysteriously reappeared recently outside the cemetery gate.

The John Richardson from whom Carter purchased a portion of his tract was born May 9, 1811, in Londonderry, Vermont, and arrived in California with his wife Betsy and son, Levi, prior to the birth of their daughter, Charlotte, born in Los Angeles, July 20, 1855. John Richardson homesteaded 160 acres of land that is today the northeastern portion of Sierra Madre, including the Canyon. Until recently it was believed that John Richardson was a Civil War veteran, but research by the family indicates it was his son-in-law, James Monroe Smith, who served in that war under the command of General George Armstrong Custer. Only the bottom third of Richardson's vertical marble tablet remains, but the granite base has recently been engraved with his name and dates by Randy Montgomery of the Valley Monument Company in San Gabriel, who donated his work. Richardson died August 9, 1884, and was the fourth burial in the cemetery. Members of twelve of the first seventeen families to inhabit Sierra Madre by 1884 are also interred in Pioneer Cemetery.

N.C. Carter transferred 20 feet by 20 feet family-sized cemetery plots to those who wanted them for a nominal fee. After Carter's death in 1904 his widow, Anneta M. Carter, continued to sell family plots but not as a commercial venture.

President's Message

The Historical Society attracts remarkable people as members. When I first joined, I thought I should attend an event just to see what the Historical Society was all about, so off my husband and I went to the holiday party one December. That evening we sat at a table with a lively and interesting group of people, and afterwards I thought to myself, "Lucky!" The next time I attended an event, a home tour, I again happened to meet truly fascinating folks. Lucky again! After several events it dawned on me that all this wasn't luck – that is what our membership is like: bright and curious - readers and thinkers.

And we all love Sierra Madre and its history! Among our membership we have people who take a deep scholarly interest in our history at one end of the continuum, and others who just think our history is plain old fun at the other, with every-

one else sprinkled at various points in between along that spectrum.

Of course it's endlessly fascinating. You learn one little fact, you see one old photograph, and that leads to a fun story, which leads to another story and so on, all delightful discoveries. So whether you like to sit on the edge of the pool of history and dangle your feet in, or cannonball into the deep end, our Historical Society has it all for you.

So, remarkable people, you've found your tribe. Do come to our tours and events, and, even more fun, join in our projects and help with our programs. Help at our booth at community festivals. You will meet the most delightful and fascinating people.

Maggie Ellis, *President*

Membership Report

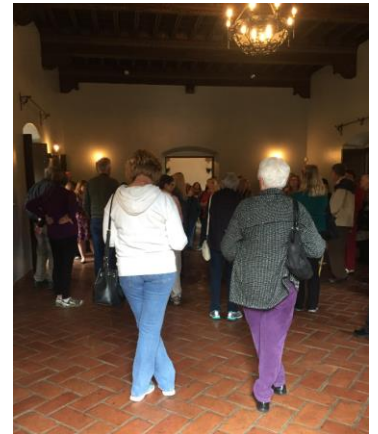
A big welcome to our new members: Barry & Judith Gold, Hunt Salembier & Lynn Beecher, Brent & Susan Broyles, Mary Beth Finnerty, Art Krieger, Jeff Plaut & Ellen O'Leary, Peter & Chris Weiss, and your newest Lifetime member, Pamela Clark.

A special welcome to Jan Wiles, who joined and immediately signed up to be on our board!

Maggie Ellis, *Membership Chair*

April Tour of Alverno High School and Mater Dolorosa

Our April tour of Alverno High School's Villa del Sol d'Oro and the Passionist Retreat & Mater Dolorosa Monastery was a tremendous hit. At Alverno, Sara McCarthy, their Director of Admissions and Public Relations, led us throughout, giving us a fascinating, detailed history. Seeing the rooms empty of the Wine Tasting crowds, we became aware of many architectural flourishes we'd never noticed before, particularly the rooms' lovely ceilings and floors. At the monastery, with the help of volunteer docents, we followed the Stations of the Cross, wandered the stunning grounds, exclaimed over the sweeping view, and toured the retreat buildings with their chapel.



Sara McCarthy entertains our visitors at Alverno, while everyone enjoys the many empty rooms.



Beautiful vistas at Mater Dolorosa Monastery.



Board Report

As we're starting up our new year, the board held a seven hour, pastry-fueled planning meeting in which we examined the status of all our projects, set new goals for the coming year, and dreamed dreams about the future. This year we plan to inventory everything in our sheds and other storage (bear in mind that our photos and historic documents are safely in the archives at the library) and secure climate-controlled storage for sensitive items. For our Oral History project, we will be purchasing new recording equipment, and implementing the use of free transcription software to type up a backlog of oral histories. Our new board member Jan Wiles will be reactivating our Facebook page, and doing Instagram too. Our Education committee will be giving slide presentations at local organizations, and will be adding six new teen docents, all in addition to the museum tours we always offer to local elementary school students.

We will broaden our search for appropriate historic photos for our Annals of Sierra Madre republication, and will be adding more home histories to our website. The museums are a vast topic, and are covered in the Up at the Museums column, but highlights include doing repairs, improving displays and moving forward with the restoration of the back of the Richardson House. We will also be recruiting greeters to help out on Saturdays. The final part of the meeting was dedicated to ideas for programs – talks, tours, etc. – and we generated some terrific ideas. Watch upcoming newsletters for program information. One very exciting program for this year will be our October cemetery event. Our first trial of the event last year received such a wildly enthusiastic response that this year we're expanding it and including a dinner!

Maggie Ellis, *President*

2015-2016 Board of Directors



Board Development Chair Judy Webb-Martin presenting flowers to outgoing President Leslie Ziff.

Left to right: Pat Karamitos, Recording Secretary; Louse Neiby, Oral History Chair; Amy Putnam, Vice President; Judy Webb-Martin; Leslie Ziff, outgoing President, Education Chair; Christel Chang, Ways & Means Chair; Diane Sands, Newsletter; Richard Mays, Treasurer; Jan Wiles, Director-at-Large; Joe Catalano, Director-at-Large; Teresa Chaure, Director-at-Large. Not pictured: Maggie Ellis, President; Matt Malley, Director-at-Large; Mike Manning, Director-at-Large; Joan Spears, Director-at-Large.



Maggie Ellis, President, and Amy Putnam, Vice President, at the check in desk.

Officers:

President	Maggie Ellis
Vice President	Amy Putnam
Secretary	Pat Karamitos
Treasurer	Richard Mays

Committee Chairs:

Education	Leslie Ziff
Membership	Maggie Ellis
Museums Curators	Norma Bachwansky
	Mike Manning
Newsletter	Diane Sands
Oral History	Louise Neiby
Ways & Means	Christel Chang
Website	Maggie Ellis

Directors at Large:

Joe Catalano
Teresa Chaure
Matt Malley
Joan Spears
Jan Wiles

Non-Board Members:

Library Board of Trustees Liaison	Rod Spears
Board Development Chair	Judy Webb-Martin

www.smhps.org
SMHPS@outlook.com



Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society

A Great Event with Friends!

By Leslie Ziff

Our Lizzie's Chicken and Ravioli Dinner brought together many of our SMHPS members, community folks, and several visitors to our town. Our docents and teen docents gave tours and answered questions about our museums to many who had not visited the museums before. Joe Tortomasi and Corey Brendel provided wonderful ukulele music that helped to set the mood. Our silent auction was a great success thanks to the hard work of Maggie and Michael Ellis, and many people were able to take home some beautiful items. Lizzie would like to thank the Peacock Café's owner Nicole Olivas for helping with all that great food! Special thanks go out to all our wonderful volunteers – without them this type of event could not be done. We hope you will join us again next June for our Annual Meeting and of course, Lizzie's Chicken and Ravioli Dinner!



Photo by Michael Ellis



Thank You, Silent Auction Donors!

The silent auction at our Lizzie's Famous Chicken & Ravioli event in late June was a huge success, thanks to everyone who donated the fabulous items that we set out to be bid on. And special thanks to our own Peggy Matchin and Civic Club's Nancy Beckham for their expert advice on how to set up a successful silent auction. Peggy also has a nose for high-quality items, and helped us with some great finds. And thanks go too to everyone who helped set the auction up!

Calendar of Upcoming Events

2016

- September 15** Board Meeting at Hart Park House, 7:15 pm
- October 20** Board Meeting at Hart Park House, 7:15 pm
- October 29** Cemetery event
- November 6** Pack Station Event
- November 17** Board Meeting at Hart Park House, 7:15 pm
- November 26** Winterfest booth
- December 15** Holiday Party & old Sierra Madre postcards slide show

2017

- January 18** TB and its history in Sierra Madre – talk by Michelle Zack
- February 16** Board Meeting at Hart Park House, 7:15 pm
- March 16** Board Meeting at Hart Park House, 7:15 pm
- March TBD** Wistaria Festival booth
- April 20** Board Meeting at Hart Park House, 7:15 pm
- May 6-7** Art Fair booth
- May 18** Board Meeting at Hart Park House, 7:15 pm
- May 27** Mt. Wilson Trail Race booth
- June 15** Board Meeting at Hart Park House, 7:15 pm
- June 17** Lizzie's Chicken & Ravioli Dinner and Annual Meeting
- June 30** End of SMHPS year

Up at the Museums

Story by Norma Bachwansky

We have lost two of our beloved docents this year; Maurice Orme and John Pigott. We will miss them!

The scarecrow contest will be here before we know it! Be thinking of a theme that ties in with our history. Help design and build another prize winner! All supplies will be furnished, and it's a lot of fun!

Your museum is seeking volunteers to join our team. Do any of the following areas appeal to you?

Heading up our adult greeters; recruit, prepare training materials, train, and schedule coverage for our open hours on Saturdays and other events. (You don't need to know a lot of our history to do this; lots of help will be provided.)

Love the historic artifacts and interesting things we have up at the museums? We have more treasures than we have room to display all at the same time, and we need someone to set up and rotate our exhibits when appropriate, take in donated items, and generally keep things looking good.

We do a few special events throughout the year like the Wistaria Festival, the Art Fair, the Mt. Wilson Trail Race and our Historic Graveyard Tour in October. A special event coordinator will keep track of supplies, and make sure the tables and supplies get from our storage shed to the event and back. This is a huge need, and volunteer help with this is so important.

In addition to these ongoing volunteer opportunities, we always love help with our smaller projects. Let us know your interests and skills with minor repair, carpentry, light painting, etc. and sometimes just advice!

The Sierra Madre Garden Club will begin meeting once a month to spruce up our garden. The water problem, animals, and termite work have taken their toll. We will persevere! We're setting up a schedule to do light gardening, planting and, in general, make our garden bloom! Watch for our garden dates in the next issue. Volunteers are always welcome.

And we want to give our thanks to the City for the continued repairs to the museum buildings. Both grounds and buildings have been recently treated for termites and other minor repairs have been taken care of.

For more information on any topics above, please e-mail Norma at ymbach@live.com or call 626-355-7991. Have a great summer and GET INVOLVED!

Late last month the City contracted for termite treatment of both our museum buildings. Here, board member and museum curator Norma Bachwansky (in blue) and Chris Cimino, the Deputy Director of Public Works for the City, watch as Lizzie's and Richardson House are being tented for fumigation. Treatment for ground termites was also performed.

Standing to Norma's left is board member Leslie Ziff and her husband Barry.



Donations for Richardson House Reconstruction

In May, the Sierra Madre Civic Club awarded SMHPS \$2,500 towards the Richardson House reconstruction. Here are the happy recipients of Civic Club's many donations gathered outside City Hall. In the back row, purple top, is SMHPS past President Leslie Ziff, check in hand. In the front row (aqua jacket) is our museums curator Norma Bachwansky. In addition, The Community Foundation donated \$2,500 to the City, earmarked for the Richardson House.



Remembering Maurice Orme 1930-2016

By Norma Bachwansky

Maurice Orme, 85, passed away April 29, 2016, at his home in Arcadia, after a brief illness. He was born in Hopkins, Missouri, a farming community, in 1930. His family, along with several uncles, aunts and cousins, arrived in Sierra Madre in the spring of 1935.

He and his mother, Elsie Orme, moved into Richardson House in 1936 when Lizzie became too ill to run the restaurant. His family took over the operation of Lizzie's Trail Inn and ran it until 1947 when it closed permanently due to food shortages after the war.

Maurice's job as a young boy was to sweep up the floors at the restaurant before he went to school. He was allowed to keep any loose change he found on the floor; and there was always a coin or two under the slot machine, the pinball machine or near the juke box. He was fond of saying that he was one of the richest kids in town during the depression, because he always had a coin or two in his pocket.

As a boy, Maurice loved to roam the undeveloped land around Sierra Madre and would often go shooting in what is now the Hastings Ranch area or upper Arcadia east of Santa Anita Ave. His love of the outdoors was life-long, and he shared this love with his family and friends. He loved to go camping throughout the western U. S.

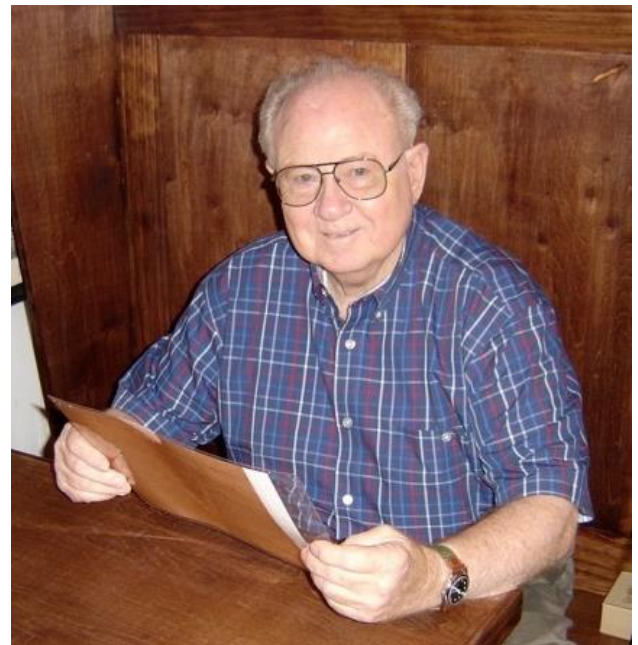
Maurice attended Sierra Madre elementary school, Wilson Junior High School, and PCC High School before enlisting in the army in 1947 at the age of 17. He served in Korea and Japan before earning an honorable discharge.

He returned to the area, living in Arcadia until his recent passing. He was an active real estate professional in the foothill cities for many years, and his love of Sierra Madre was evident by his dedication to the Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society and his work up at Lizzie's Trail Inn and Richardson House museums.

Every Saturday would find him at the museums, speaking with visitors about life and times in Sierra Madre in the '30s and beyond. He was considered a living treasure by his peers, and a source of first-hand information about Lizzie's and Richardson House.

Friends, family and volunteers at the museum met at Lizzie's on May 14 to remember Maurice and share their stories.

He is survived by his wife, Sue, and his daughters; Lauren Jensen, Kathy Swann, Margie La Fia, his five grandchildren, two great grandchildren, and his cousin Norma Bachwansky.

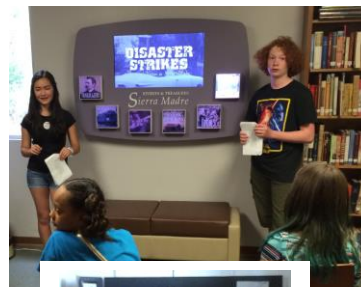


Teen Docents Complete Their Training

By Leslie Ziff

This summer we had six Teen Docents complete a six-week training at the Library, Richardson House and Lizzie's Trail Inn. Mrs. Caroline Coward represented the Library and Leslie Ziff, Education Chair for SMHPS, conducted the trainings. The teens learned a variety of public speaking techniques, managing small and large groups for tours and discussions, and learned the scripts for the Library and Richardson House storyboards. As part of the practice, they gave tours each week to the YMCA youth.

These docents will now be able to conduct tours and give slide presentations about the history of our city. They will participate in several activities put on by our historical society as well as will lead tours at our museums on the first Saturday of each month.



Sierra Madre Pioneer Cemetery (continued from front page)

At the time of the widening of Central Avenue by the newly incorporated city, Mrs. Carter transferred the unsold portion of the cemetery to F. R. Yerxa, who in turn transferred it to A. S. Mead, May 22, 1911. Mr. Mead and others incorporated the association. Families continued to care for their own plots, or hire this done, through World War I.

This first cemetery association's duties included selling the nearly 1000 available graves as well as stock in the cemetery, which generated funds for cemetery maintenance. Official interment records began at this time and the completion of those records continues to be an ongoing project. The association disbanded in the late 1930s after most of the graves had been sold, and plot records were turned over to a local mortuary. The cemetery was subsequently neglected for many years except for the continuing efforts of volunteers.

After World War I, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion Auxiliary and public-spirited volunteers assumed responsibility for an annual cemetery clean-up. Burials include sixteen veterans of the Civil War, nine from the Spanish American War, thirty-two from WW I, and veterans from WW II, the Korean War and Vietnam War.

Since maintenance continued to be an ongoing problem, a non-profit corporation was formed under California laws. Revenue would be raised by subdividing the north-south park-

ways into grave plots with two thirds of the sales revenues going into a perpetual care fund. The remainder, augmented by annual contributions, would be utilized for fencing, paving and general care of the grounds.

The new cemetery corporation received its charter on July 3, 1961, and was led by Sam Simpson, supported by other Sierra Madre volunteers. In 1985 a small portion of the eastern edge of the "old" upper cemetery was expanded creating additional ash and burial plots.

In 1995, a new board of directors was formed under the guidance and leadership of George Enyedi and took over the existing records and responsibilities. From that time forward great progress has been achieved. Improvements include new perimeter wrought iron fencing, an automatic sprinkler system, improved driveways and, in 1997, a perpetual memorial garden for ash burials. Located in the northeast corner of the "old" cemetery, it is available to Sierra Madre residents and non-residents.

In 1998/99 a new terraced addition was created along the entire east side of the cemetery providing an additional 250 full-sized plots and 650 ash plots. An Interfaith Memorial Information Center was built in 2000 in remembrance of Monsignor Robert Gara and all other Sierra Madre clergy.

For additional information visit: www.sierramadrepioneer cemetery.org

The Passing of "Destroyer Man"

By Leslie Ziff

We have lost another dear member of our Historical Society this year. John Pigott, our 96-year-old Senior Docent, passed away. He had greeted our museum visitors and always had a little toy to give out to any of the children that came into Lizzie's Trail Inn.

He grew up in San Francisco, California, along with two older sisters, Elizabeth Pigott Yost (deceased) and Virginia Pigott Coleman. John went to Yale University to receive his Bachelor's degree in English Literature and Bachelor of Laws degree, both with honors. In 1950 John began the practice of law with Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher, in Los Angeles, where he had a long and distinguished career. He married Joan Alice Krieger in 1953 with whom he shared many diverse interests, and who passed away in 2014. They raised horses, racing a thoroughbred at Santa Anita. They bought a ranch in San Francisco Canyon for training their championship cutting horse. They owned three boats over the years and spent many weekends sailing to and anchoring at Catalina Island. They have lived in Northern and Southern California.

During World War II John joined the Navy as an ensign. Over the course of four years he served as an officer in charge of the guns on two destroyers, the *USS Lansdowne* and the *USS Barton*. He saw action in the Atlantic, the Caribbean and the Pacific

against the naval and air forces of both Germany and Japan. He has many amazing stories from these experiences that he compiled into a book: *Destroyer Man*.

He is survived by his daughter, Alison Allen, and his two granddaughters, Ashton and Lily.

Several of the Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society members attended a beautiful "Memorial Gathering" at the home of Dr. William and Pattie White on May 7. He had many friends and work associates who spoke of his wonderful work ethic. John was an outstanding lawyer who would go out of his way to help others, whether it was a young lawyer, client or friend. You will be remembered and missed, John Pigott.





Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society
 P.O. Box 202, Sierra Madre, CA 91025-0202
 (626) 836-6709
 www.smhps.org

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, October 29, 2016

5:00pm to 9:00pm



Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society

Presents

**Historical Cemetery Tour
 And Dinner!**

Listen and talk to some of the historical people buried in our Pioneer Cemetery, as well as other notables from Sierra Madre history!

**Dinner at Sierra Madre Recreation Center
 Tour at Pioneer Cemetery**

601 E. Sierra Madre Blvd.

Tickets go on sale the first week of October at locations throughout Sierra Madre
 Cost is \$40 per person

SIERRA MADRE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY
 P.O. Box 202, Sierra Madre, CA 91025-0202
 Membership / Donation Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Membership Level

- ___ \$20 Individual
- ___ \$25 Family
- ___ \$5 Student
- ___ \$30 Contributing
- ___ \$60 Patron
- ___ \$100 Supporting
- ___ \$500 Lifetime

Specific Donations

- \$ _____ Sierra Madre Historical Archives
- \$ _____ Oral History Program
- \$ _____ Museums
- \$ _____ Richardson House
- \$ _____ Lizzie's Trail Inn

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Please make check payable to SMHPS.

The Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society is a 501(c)(3).
 Your contributions are deductible within the limits of the law.
 Thank You.

Yes, I would like to be a volunteer for the SMHPS. _____