

Corona  
Historic  
Preservation  
Society

# Newsletter

August - September 2006

**"Preserving the Best of Corona"**

Editor: Mary Winn E-mail: Toothlady2@juno.com

## A Message from Our President Jim Bryant

At any given time, the Corona Historic Preservation Society is working on several historic preservation issues. Currently, CHPS projects involve preserving the Santa Fe Depot, advocating for an historic flavor into architectural design elements for the City of Corona's "Grand Vision" for the Inner Circle and redevelopment of Main and Sixth Streets, saving the Carnegie Library Oak Tree at Main and Eighth Streets, and relocating an historic home to a safe location. This message will focus on only one, the Santa Fe Rail Depot.



Our main concern with the Santa Fe Rail Depot is its continued preservation at its current site. To keep this structure from being demolished, a responsible party first must gain control over its future. To that end, the city has stepped up to the plate and smacked a beauty of a hit by purchasing the depot and the land upon which it sits. Given that any rail depot is probably one of the most important structures in a city's history, we are eternally grateful to the City for answering the call to preserve one of Corona's few remaining historic commercial structures. The mayor, city council, and city staff are to be congratulated on saving one of Corona's most precious treasures.



The next step for the City is to determine what should, or could, be done with the depot. Unlike other historic structures, a city's rail depot is unique. Almost always, there is only one, at any given time. I say "at any given time", because Corona's depot is actually our second facility. The first Victorian style depot was built of redwood in 1887 and served the city for 50 years. The second depot was built in 1937, partially with redwood from the original structure. What makes this, and any, depot unique is its historic function. No other building or site has any-

where near the social, economical, and cultural impact on a city as does its rail depot. For Corona, it brought future residents and distinguished visitors to the city, allowed the citrus packinghouses to ship thousands of tons of lemons and oranges to the world and acted as the transportation hub for the community. Decade after decade, it brought the world to Corona and infused her with life in a way like no other. Yet, while the depot has long since handed over its duties to other

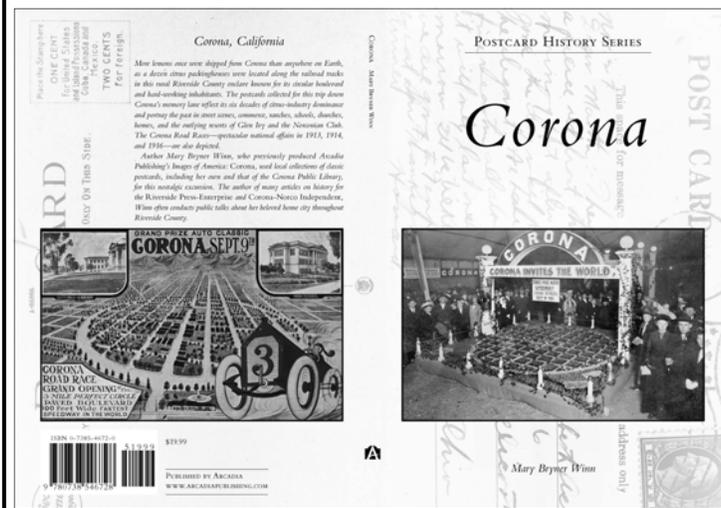
venues and sat quietly by as a little town has grown up, it still remains a symbol of a time when life was simpler, harder, and full of so many new things. The Corona Historic Preservation Society believes this small building deserves our respect, because, without it, where would Corona be today?

Everyone who has thoughts about how this structure might be adaptively reused to benefit the city while perpetuating its value as the City's key remaining historic commercial structure, should contact members of the City Council. This will ensure that each Councilmember will be aware of constituent opinions and feelings. It will also help preserve this historic facility for future generations and help serve the community better. We know that Fullerton, Orange and Santa Ana have made their historic depots into treasured icons. Why not Corona? The Society leadership feels that it is essential that the depot remain in Corona and near the railroad tracks. We feel it needs to be reused where it is now or in close proximity to its present location. We solicit and welcome constructive comments and suggestions.

*Jim Bryant*



## Another Corona Book is Coming by Mary Bryner Winn



Here's a sneak peek at the cover (both front and back) of my second book focusing on the remarkable history of our fair city. The cover has been in production for about a month now. This volume will feature a total of 223 vintage postcard images of Corona and nearby resorts. The publisher is Arcadia Publishing and the book is part of their Postcard History Series. I used local collections of classic postcards including my own as well as those of other collectors, including those of the Corona Public Library. I'll keep you posted on further developments and when the book will be available for purchase.

## Upcoming Historic Marker Dedication by Doris Osko



It rolls where the feet of many have trod.  
Adventurer, explorer, servant of God -  
Seekers of gold and seekers of land,  
Blazers of trails in their last brave stand,

Foot by foot the passage was won  
And a path was made for the Overland Mail."

Janet Williams Gould, *Corona Daily Independent*

The year was 1934. Picture Miss Evelyn Jameson astride a prancing pony reciting the above passage from "The Song of the Overland Mail" written by Janet Gould, Chairman of the History and Landmarks Committee of the Woman's Improvement Club of Corona. The occasion was the dedication of a bronze plaque to commemorate the old Butterfield stage station in Temescal Canyon where mail and passengers were delivered and horses changed in 1858. The last stage coach to run through this area reached San Francisco on November 21, 1861. The Civil War forced the federal government to cancel its contract with the Overland Mail and the transcontinental stage route was shifted to the north.

Somehow the aforementioned bronze plaque, which was mounted on a large boulder, disappeared in the process of extensive change and development that has affected the Temescal area. However, plans are continuing for the creation and dedication of a new plaque which will be commemorated at approximately the same time as the grand opening of the huge Dos Lagos Project. Developer Ali Sahabi and his wife Aida continue to be interested in preserving the rich history of the area and are sponsoring the replacement of the bronze plaque. He has invited participation both by representatives of the Woman's Improvement Club and our own historian/ author/ editor Mary Winn as well as others. In the article in the *Corona Independent* which described the first dedication of the plaque on May 25, 1934, the journalist noted that even though the adobe walls of the Butterfield Station still left standing at that time might soon crumble, "it is now commemorated in bronze and stone for all time." Hopefully, this prediction will again be true in 2006.

**Save the Date: Saturday, October 7, 2006**  
**At Dos Lagos**

# Olde Tyme Community Picnic

Text and photos by Lennie Keesler

Not even intense heat could keep our CHPS members from attending the City of Corona's Olde Tyme Community Picnic. The annual event was held on Sunday, June 4, 2006 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at our Corona City Park on east Sixth Street. It was presented by the City of Corona Parks & Community Services Department and the Olde Tyme Community Picnic Committee.

The event, formally known as the Founder's Day Picnic and Old Timer's Picnic, is a tradition in Corona. The first picnic was held on May 19, 1927. The event was held at Hotel Kinney and was by invitation only. It was to celebrate the 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the founding of Corona. The second picnic was held on May 2, 1931 at Mary Tucker's home. A few years later it was moved to the City Park. Since 1990, other organizations have sponsored and organized the picnic at City Park. The event is open to the public of all ages!



Our president Jim Bryant and secretary Bret Keesler worked hard to set up our Society's information and lemonade booth. They also answered questions about historical efforts being made by the Society. A special thank you to dedicated members, Helen and Akio Yoshikawa for working our booth. Not only did they sell icy lemonade and chocolate chip cookies but they also sold some *Images of America - Corona* books by author Mary Bryner Winn. Akio also set up his telescope

for the public to enjoy!

While music played in the background and raffle prizes were being given, other CHPS members like Louie Esparza enjoyed sitting under the park's precious old oak trees, catching up with old time childhood friends and discussing the future of our beautiful City of Corona.



If you would like to feel the spirit of Corona, mark your calendar for next year. This event is always held on the

first Sunday in June. Hope to see you there!

## Upcoming Events

### Salvage Sale

Saturday, August 12  
9 am - 1 pm

DOORS - SHUTTERS - WINDOWS  
MOLDING - HARDWARE

### Vintage Home Restoration Salvage

Heritage Park  
510 West Foothill Parkway  
951.898.2044

### Save the Date

Aug 12 Salvage Sale

Aug 26 "Isle of Corona" Lobsterfest

Oct 1 Lemon Festival

Oct 7 Dedication of Butterfield Stage  
Historic Marker

Oct 29 Annual Cemetery Walk

# The Ballard Home & the Kroonen Cottage by Kathleen Dever

In the year 1887, Mary E. Mathes bought Lot 3 of Block 59 of the lands of the South Riverside Land and Water Co. for \$1.00. This lot was bordered by SW Grand Blvd. on the east, Vicentia Ave. on the west, West 8th St. on the north and West 9th St. on the south. Mary Mathes' brother was none other than Founding Father Robert B. Taylor. Mathes, her husband J.P. and other members of the Taylor family lived in the Bank Block in the fledgling town of South Riverside, as Corona was called for the first ten years of its existence.



**Ballard Home**

Although ownership of the Ballard Home changed many times since 1955, it has continued to serve as a comfortable home to many families. The George and Elizabeth Burke family lived there for 15 years, from 1957 to 1973. Burke was a general operator for Sun-kist Growers Inc. and the Lemon Products Division.

The next person to own the property, also a woman, was related to one of Corona's founders. Ella S. Joy, wife of George L. Joy, purchased the property in 1895 and subsequently sold it to A.H. Cross in 1901.

A.H. Cross was well known locally as a real estate and insurance agent. He held the office of city councilman starting in 1910 and served in this capacity on and off until 1926. In the early 1900s, the Cross home was located in a citrus grove just a few doors down from where 802 SW Grand Blvd. would soon stand. His daughter Pearl lived with him. She was a bookkeeper for the Queen Colony Fruit Exchange in 1908.

Pearl's future husband, Otis Ballard, worked in the citrus industry as well. Ballard worked as a pressman for Corona Lemon Company in 1909 and 1910. It was in April 1910 that he purchased the property from his future in-laws. A stipulation was placed on the property that any house built there should cost at least \$1,200. The couple's stylish bungalow was most likely built between April and September of 1910. They married in their new home in September 1910. Afterward, Otis operated both a confectionary and a tobacco store in town. He is best remembered for his long service as a Corona High School janitor.

In 1912, Otis Ballard, A.H. Cross and Harvey Cross (son of A.H.) subdivided the property and Ballard's lot was then known as Lot 7 of the West 8th Street Tract.

Otis Ballard lived in the house for almost 40 years. Pearl died in 1927. Otis remarried after her death and he and his second wife Edith resided there until the late 1940s. When the couple moved to 817 Victoria Ave., 802 SW Grand Blvd. became a rental home.

Corona's Supt. of Schools, S.E. Waldrip and his wife Guinola rented the home from 1949 to 1953.

Otis Ballard died in 1951. In 1955, his widow Edith sold the home to Hubert E. and Grace Bynum. Hubert taught typing and bookkeeping at Corona High School and was also a real estate agent. The Bynums did not reside in the home but lived a block away at 902 SW Grand Blvd.



**Kroonen Cottage**

This charming cottage located on the same lot as the home above, was most likely built for, and probably always used as a rental property. Its small size is perfect for singles, young couples and retirees.

The Figgins family, Charles, Pauline and Charles, Jr., were the first documented occupants and lived there from 1924 to 1930. Charles worked as a telegrapher at the Santa Fe Depot.

Other residents include: Rayforth (Buck) Suthard (Southard) in the late 1930s, Ralph (public school teacher) and Nell Ambrose in the early 1940s, and Emmett and Gertrude England (who owned England's Jewelry Store on Main Street) in the mid-1940s.

Mary Kroonen lived in this quaint house from 1950 to 1962. She was Leo Kroonen's widow at this time. Leo was the designer and/or builder of some of Corona's finest structures: Corona's first High School on So. Main., Corona's first City Hall (erected 1912), and the N.C. Hudson residence on SE Grand Blvd. Mary was born in 1869 in the Eastvale area. Her parents were early pioneers in the area, arriving before South Riverside (Corona) was founded. They owned a dairy farm. Mary taught at the first school in Auburndale before she married Leo. In 1891, she and Leo moved to South Riverside when the town of Auburndale failed to materialize after the railroad reportedly chose another route. Their Auburndale home (designed and built by Leo) was moved to Corona via horses. They raised three children on a citrus ranch located on Buena Vista and Olive. Mary purchased the first ladies hat ever sold in Corona for \$2.50. She also voted in all elections once women had secured the right to vote. She died in 1970 at the age of 100.

# I Remember When ... Phil Newhouse

Phil is truly a "local boy." He was born in Corona in a 2-story house on Kellogg Ave. and graduated from Corona High in 1940. He attended Chaffey Jr. College then served in the Army Air Corps during WWII as a pilot. Phil was shot down over Northern Italy and spent five months with Italian partisans. Phil married Irene Gillette and they raised three daughters. He is a regular volunteer at the Corona Public Library in the Heritage Room and for the Friends of the Library.



In the Heritage Room

groves to prevent crops from freezing) saturated the air .

- Oily black soot from smudge smoke covered everything and windows had to be kept tightly closed.
- Everyone congregated downtown at 6th and Main on Saturday nights. Men sat on car fenders and chatted with each other while women shopped and children went to the movies at the Corona Theater.

## I Remember When ...

- Corona was small enough that everyone knew everyone in town or at least knew their names.
- The Corona Police Department was made up of five officers and the Chief of Police.
- I wanted to go to school barefoot because others did. My mom only allowed me to do this on the last day of school.
- "Smudge smoke" (a smog-like condition in winter caused by the use of smudge pots in the citrus

- The city "closed up" on Sundays.
- I learned to drive (in a Model-T pickup) in the groves at age 13 because Dad needed help with his fumigation and pest control business.
- I drove through the Santa Ana Canyon late at night and didn't see a single car on my way home from a dance hall called Rendezvous in Balboa.
- There were no stop signs anywhere in town.
- I lived close enough to Corona Jr. High to walk home each day for lunch. Mom served me soup.

**2ND ANNUAL**  
**"ISLE OF CORONA"**  
**LOBSTERFEST**

THIS YEAR'S THEME:  
**PIRATES IN THE PARK**

PRESENTED BY THE **CORONA HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

First 100 reserved guests get their **GROG** in a special souvenir mug!

Pirate buffet and beverages!  
 Live Caribbean music and entertainment!  
 Cool island breezes! Washing ashore August 26th at  
**CORONA HERITAGE PARK**  
 510 W. Foothill Pkwy at 6:00 p.m. - Dinner \$50 adults, \$35 kids - Info: (951) 898-0687  
**Swashbuckling Games and Prize Booty!**  
 All proceeds to go to the reconstruction of the historic 1904 Hotel Del Rey at Corona Heritage Park & Museum

## In the Bad Old Summertime . . . by John Wiles

As a child growing up in Corona during the '50s, I was never particularly fond of summer. An inveterate nonconformist from an early age, I thoroughly enjoyed school and did not look forward to June's release from academia with the eagerness and sense of impending relief that imbued most of my classmates. I remember approaching summer as a vast wasteland of time stretching endlessly toward a distant return to the classroom in September. What was I to do to fill the void of that interminable interval?



Interestingly enough, I can recall a wealth of summertime activities that I relished with genuine enthusiasm during those years. As a youngster, I attended Vacation Bible School at the First Methodist Church — and, from the fourth grade on, I spent a week each summer as an extremely happy camper at Pilgrim Pines, a Yucaipa retreat owned and operated by the Congregational Church (UCC).

I took band and crafts classes at Lincoln Elementary School — learning to play the cornet, as well as how to make potholders (lots of them!) on a small, square metal loom. Mothers organized multi-brood beach trips and group play-dates that usually featured wading pools, boisterous games, and frosty pitchers of Kool-Aid.

My family occasionally picnicked, pedal-boated, and fed the ducks in Riverside's Fairmount Park, and sometimes we packed our hamper and motored down the canyon to Green River Park (my younger brother and I loved to ride the miniature railroad there). For years, we lived within easy walking distance of what is now Husted Park, where we spent many evenings as spectators of Little League baseball. I was hopelessly uncoordinated athletically, and thus not even slightly inclined to try out for a team — but I acquired an enduring passion for the game, and loyally rooted for the Stars or the Seals or whoever happened to be our "home team" for the night.

Sunkist, where my father worked as a research chemist, hosted its employees and their families to annual gatherings at City Park — with barbecued hamburgers and hot dogs, horseshoes and bingo, and, of course, plenty of tartly tasty lemonade. On the Fourth of July, my brother and I were invariably recruited to take turns sitting atop the

freezer as Dad hand-cranked Mom's heavenly homemade vanilla or fresh peach ice cream.

The climax of each summer was our family vacation, which typically found the four of us embarked on a carefully-planned excursion to one or more of the great National Parks. I remember the wordless wonder I felt gazing up the towering trunk of a sequoia or

down into the colorfully-striated depths of the Grand Canyon — more thrilling to me than any rollercoaster, fireworks extravaganza, or even the most fantastic day at Disneyland!

Two long-gone Corona landmarks figure among my most prominent summer memories. My parents were determined that my brother and I would learn to swim at an early age — so we were enrolled in early-morning swimming classes at the Municipal Plunge. I remember changing into my swim trunks, treading gingerly through the disinfecting footbath, and bracing myself for that first shocking immersion in the clear, chilly water. At the end of the summer, there was always a swim meet — and I was proud to wind up the winner of a ribbon of any color.

By far my favorite escape from the summer heat and doldrums was the children's room in the basement of the old Carnegie library. After a baking bike ride from home, I would scamper down the steps to the right of the main entrance and into a cool and refreshing haven of books. There was always a welcoming smile from the children's librarian (Mrs. Wertzel?), who was authoritatively dignified, but far from intimidating — and who quickly got to know her young visitors on a friendly, first-name basis.

While hopelessly inept on a baseball diamond, I was extremely competitive as a participant in the children's summer reading program. I couldn't wait to get that specially-themed sheet to which one affixed stickers (states, planets, fish, etc.) which were earned for books read and returned. Although speed was not the point, there was always an unofficial contest to become the first to finish "stickering" one's sheet. I remember secretly vying with a boy in my age group named Brad Ritter — whom I didn't know at the time, but who later became one of my best friends during my senior year at Corona High. *Continued on next page*

## Membership Information

**When joining or renewing your membership, please make out your tax deductible check to CHPS.**

Individual Member	\$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>I'd like to volunteer for:</b>	
Family	\$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Programs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student	\$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Membership Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business	\$50.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Relations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patron	\$100.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Board of Directors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life	\$500.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____	

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Gift from \_\_\_\_\_



Membership Status: Renewal  New

**Please complete and mail to:  
CHPS**

**P.O. Box 2904  
Corona, CA 92878**



## We Welcome Our New and Continuing Members

Lydia Avila  
Tacy Bensiek  
Dr. Robert Brandt Benson  
Beverly Bloch  
Anita Boillin  
Richard & Mary Jo Boller  
Susanna B. Branch  
Mary Elizabeth Bylin  
Roy & Kathleen Dever  
Aaron Hake  
Joan H. Hall

John Kane  
Ray & Cheryl Monteon  
Katharine Nichols  
Scott & Nancy Richardson  
Dottie Reichard  
Ali Sahabi  
Ted Taylor  
Peggy Temple  
Terry & Nancy Wilkeson  
Kurt Wochholt  
David & Diane Wright

## In the Bad Old Summertime . . . continued

I probably perplexed my parents, given my propensity for whiling away my summer afternoons engrossed in books rather than romping outdoors as other children did. After all, not every kid would rather spend "free" time with Clara Barton and Luther Burbank, Robin Hood and Doctor Dolittle, the boxcar family and the Hardy boys, and, of course, the endlessly fascinating characters who populate L.

Frank Baum's series of Oz adventures. I considered myself in great company, however, and those former "playmates" remain good friends today.

So summer wasn't my favorite season as a child? After this modest meander down Memory Lane, I must admit that those old summertimes were pretty good, after all!



## Board of Directors

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Janette Neumann  
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**To contact us call  
951.898.2044**  
*And leave a message*



## Our Mission Statement

The Corona Historic Preservation Society (CHPS) is a nonprofit tax-exempt organization dedicated to preservation and revitalization of Corona's historic buildings, neighborhoods and sites.

Through education, legislation and organization, CHPS acts as an advocate for the preservation of Corona's historic resources.

## Monthly Meetings

CHPS Board meetings are held each month to transact Society business, discuss issues affecting the Society and preservation of local historic resources.

**All members are invited to attend.**

The next meetings will be

**Thursday, August 17, 6:30 at CHPS office**  
**Thursday, September 21, 6:30 at CHPS office**



P.O. Box 2904  
Corona, California 92878-2904



**Butterfield Stage Marker Dedication October 7**  
*See page 2 for details*