

A Message From Our President Wes Speake

Dear Members,

The truly historic time in our lives continues, hopefully with an end in sight. We can look forward to the transition from toasty and lately, humid days and cool evenings to our incredible fall weather temperatures (hopefully). September is a big month for Corona history as September 9th is the 108th anniversary of the first and most successful Road Race held in the city. Something that still brings a smile to Coronans’ faces, imagining the race cars of the day speeding around Grand Boulevard at speeds exceeding 80 MPH as a crowd of 100,000 watched the rock stars of the day fly around the Boulevard!

I frequently say just having the title President of the CHPS is an honor, not just because I’m part of this great organization that has given back so much to the community consistently for over 38 years, but because great Coronans continue to reach out to share memories and tangible items from Corona’s past.

This week, I was visiting the new Starbucks, located at 8th and Main, the original site of Corona’s third City Hall built in 1912-13 and active until 1962. I spoke to the Starbucks Manager, Brandon Rohrer about working at Corona’s most historic corner (City Hall, First Baptist Church, Carnegie Library and Corona’s first hospital once were found there.) As a lifelong Coronan, he was happy to be working there and talked about bringing Corona history inside the building as well. The CHPS worked very closely with the developer to incorporate some historic features in the design as detailed in the last issue.

Later in the day I met with the developers, Woody Harpole and Congressman Ken Calvert. At this meeting I was told that the foundation of the original city hall was completely left intact when the asphalt was peeled back to build the Starbucks, when it was demolished in 1962. Apparently, it took quite a bit of time and money to break up the foundation laid in 1912 to prep the land for construction. While inspecting the area, Congressman Calvert, being

born and raised in Corona and a having a keen eye, recognized two items in the rubble. An almost perfect, crème colored brick used in the construction of the 1912 City Hall and a silver dollar sized piece of green flecked glass once ensconced as part of basement windows.

Congressman Calvert said, *“I recognized it immediately, my dad would walk me by there and I wondered what was behind the green glass.”* The Congressman collected these two treasures and has since donated them to the CHPS. These items will be made a part of our portable display, so we can allow others to enjoy them. Thank you Woody Harpole and Congressman Calvert, of Calvert Real Properties, for collecting these unique artifacts from Corona’s history and allowing them to be preserved.



Corona City Hall under demolition in 1962.
Courtesy Corona Public Library



Cream colored brick recovered from demolition of old Corona City Hall

Segment of old City Hall’s basement window



President's Message Continued

A chronology of Corona City Hall locations:

- 1.) Corona 1st City Hall (1896-1905) was in a rented hall on the west side of Main Street between 5th and 6th Streets, as noted in a newspaper article.
- 2.) Corona's 2nd city hall was built on land the city owned on the east side of Main, between 7th and 8th Streets (717 Main), that also housed Hose Company #1 and had a free standing Calaboose" (early 1900s terminology for jail) at the rear of the property. Structure was built in 1905 and was sold in 1913.
- 3.) The 3rd City Hall, at the NE corner of 8th and



Courtesy Corona Public Library

Blueprint of west elevation of City Hall at 719 So. Main St.

City Marshal Robinson has moved his wagon shop from 6th street to the rear of O. A. Arborn's blacksmith shop on Main street. Mr. Robinson made the move principally to be near the city hall room across the street from his new location.

Notice on page 5 of the October 25, 1896 *Corona Courier*

The city hall, City Clerk Wood and the regular meeting place of the board of trustees are now legally located on the city's property on Main street, above Seventh, an ordinance to that end having been adopted last Friday night. The new hall is light, airy and comfortable, almost as convenient for the business public as the former location, and the change means a saving of several dollars a year to the city.

New location identified for new City Hall in *Corona Courier*, December 3, 1904, page 9

Main at 719 Main, was the Neoclassical masterpiece designed and constructed by Leo Kroonen, Sr. to compliment the already existing Carnegie Public Library, across the street at the SE corner of Main and 8th (805 Main). This City Hall opened in 1913 and was torn down in 1962.

4.) 4th City Hall was originally the Corona High School campus (1923-1960) at 815 W. 6th Street. It was repurposed to serve as City Hall from 1962 to 2005.

5.) The 5th and current City Hall at 400 Vicentia Avenue was dedicated on May 21, 2005.

Looking forward, I hope you will join us on Saturday, September 18 for a very entertaining lecture from author Larry Burns focusing on his book "SECRET Inland Empire: A Guide to the Weird, Wild and Obscure". Meanwhile, stay cool!

WES



NOTICE OF SALE OF OLD CITY HALL BUILDING.

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Trustees of the City of Corona will receive bids for the purchase of the old City Hall building situated on Main street, between 7th and 8th streets, in the City of Corona, at the office of the City Clerk on the first day of April, 1913, at the hour of 7:30 P. M., at which time all bids will be closed. The terms of sale will be for cash and at least ten per cent of the purchase price shall accompany the bid. The city reserves the right to use said building to the time it removes its offices into the new city hall, and as soon as the offices are moved, said building shall be removed within five days after such removal. The Board of Trustees reserve the right to reject any and all bids received.

Dated this 5th day of March, 1913.

M. TERPENING,

M6-4

City Clerk.

From *Corona Courier* of March 6, 1913, page 1

CHPS Third Quarterly Meeting

Lecture / slide show by Author Larry Burns Based on his book

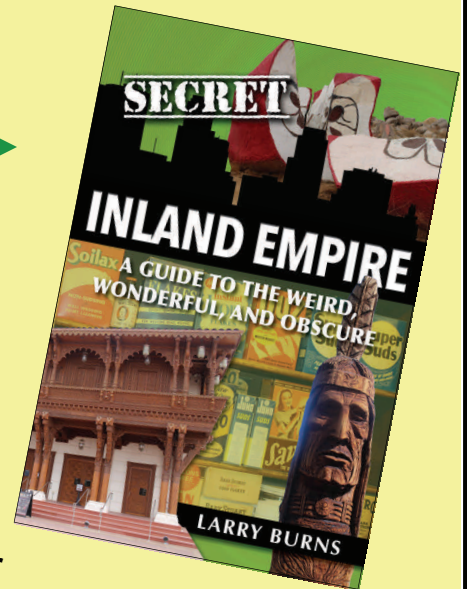
This entertaining and educational presentation will take place on **Saturday, September 18, 2021**, beginning at **10:00 A.M. sharp** in the **Community Room** of the Historic Civic Center
815 West Sixth Street, Corona.

It is **free** and open to the public.

Face masks will be required due to COVID issues.

There will be time to meet Larry, greet other attendees and purchase books

Seating will be limited - You **must REGISTER** to Eric at 951.310.9076 or email him: shawshankbg@gmail.com



What's in a Name? Corona's Unique Circular Roadway Compiled by Mary Winn

There's a Circle in the Town But What Is It to Be Called?

What shall be the name of Corona's Circle, famed since the racing days of Auto Speed Demon Barney Oldfield? This topic seemed to be an issue in the mid to late 1940s.

Despite the naming of the street in 1886 by H. Clay Kellogg as Grand Boulevard and common usage of that name thereafter, there appeared to be a difference of opinion. From the early days of the colony, the circular roadway was most often referred to as Grand Boulevard or just "The Boulevard." Should it be Grand Circle, Grand Boulevard, Corona's Circle, Corona Circle -- or what?

For a number of years, during this period, the local Chamber of Commerce lobbied unsuccessfully for changing the name of the roadway, but the vote of the Chamber Board was pretty much evenly split on every vote.

The Corona Daily Independent reported in its May 29, 1946 issue: "James B. Harker appeared before the council last night.

"The City of Corona has awakened to the realization that it has a unique street -- a Circle boulevard," he said. "Consequently we are changing the street name. The numbering system is being revised on the Circle and in the immediate vicinity."

A letter to the city council signed by Irma and James B. Harker read: "The name CIRCLE BOULEVARD actually describes what we have, while Grand Boulevard is just another name. A combination of the two names is long and cumbersome. Please give the name 'Circle Boulevard' two votes for us. It is descriptive, simple, and is unique, as is the street itself. We urge the Council to



Postcard of Corona's "Circle Drive" c. 1920s

adopt it." I guess the fact that the Boulevard's one hundred foot right-of-way, the widest in the county, didn't make it "grand."

"Councilman Charles T. Verity asked that some wide publicity be given the proposition. The *Daily Independent* is considering doing that emphatically.

There were cards or letters from George and Marion Snedcor, Mabel H. Johnson, L.C. Lillibridge, Harris Klaser and Nellie M. Gibbs urging that the present Grand Boulevard name be retained.

There has been considerable "discussion and election-eering" going on (with) the proposed change in the name.

The City Council unanimously referred the matter to the City planning commission to make a study of the name and report back to the City Council.

During the street renumbering process in 1948, the city engineer identified the street as **Grand Boulevard!**

A UFO in Corona? By Eric Bergreen

"I'm not given to making silly phone calls," Dr. Norman Mellor said when my phone rang about 6:50 last night, "but we're seeing something strange up in the sky. Why don't you go take a look – it's in the southwestern part of the sky, over Pleasant Peak." [Local physician Norman Mellor was well respected and was a distinguished Boy Scout leader. He was a member of CHPS and was very supportive of our mission.]

So starts an article by Justin Hammond found in the *Corona Daily Independent* from Thursday November 7, 1957, who received a call from a well-known and very well respected Corona family doctor.

"I'll go right out and phone you back," I said, banging down the receiver. Louisa and the kids streaked out in the backyard after me. Louisa dashed over to our neighbors to borrow their high-powered binoculars. We craned our necks at the sky but there are many trees around our neighborhood and the elevation at our house on West Tenth Street is not nearly as high as it is at Mellor's on Garretson Avenue. We could see nothing.

Clear Sky

We ran up to the Jefferson school playground for a less obstructed view. Still we could see nothing, except a few stars and the full moon in the clear early evening sky. Feeling a little deflated – if there's something in the sky, we want to see it, too – we trudged back to the house and I called Norman. The line was busy. I tried it again and the line was still busy. But in a few minutes Norm called me. "Did you see it?" "We didn't see a thing. What did it look like?" "Well it looked like a plate – or a silver dollar - slightly tipped to give it an elliptical shape. It appeared to be revolving, counterclockwise, and there seemed to be five bright spots on it."

At this point I could hear Dr. Mellor's wife, Maggie, in the background saying, "And it was brilliant, brighter than the moon." "Could it have been Venus?" I ventured. "No," Norm said, "Venus was up there too, and this object was bigger than Venus."

Dr. Mellor then went on to explain that he had called his neighbor, Norman Shamel, who has a powerful telescope, about the



Norman Hoyt Mellor

February 8, 1916 - September 17, 2004

Courtesy Corona Public Library

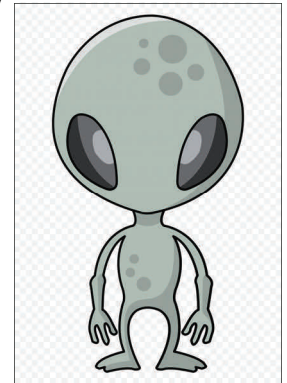
thing in the sky and then drove up to Shamel's house where they all saw the brilliant mystery in the sky. It was visible to the naked eye as well as through two telescopes, one a 20-power job. The other over 100 power. The Mellor and Shamel children also saw the phenomenon.

They watched the object for 20-minutes before it disappeared behind the Santa Ana Mountains "faster than the sun sets," said Mrs. Mellor.

Dr. Mellor has no explanation to put forth as to what the object might have been.

There have been reports from all over Southern California in the past few nights of strange objects in the sky. The Los Angeles Times today called them "thingniks." But Dr. Mellor, as a bird watcher, did remark that he believed his eye was somewhat trained for observing things in the sky and whatever it was, he, his family and their friends saw – they saw it.

After talking with Norman, I called the police station to see if the police had received any other reports of "thingniks" and Abner Alton, who was on the desk, said that he had answered about a dozen phone inquiries about something in the sky around 7 p.m. but he had no information about it and from the police headquarters in the basement of the city hall. [City Hall #3 mentioned in President Speake's message this month] He hadn't seen a thing. It is unlikely that the object could have been Sputnik II – or Mutnik – as it was not expected to be seen over California last night. Dr. Mellor says he'll be on the lookout again tonight. So, Perhaps, will most of you who have read this."



Caricature of an alien



Recreated image of a common description of a UFO as it has been reported by many.

So, did these well respected and reputable Coronans actually see an unidentified flying object back in 1957? Was it just Jupiter or Sputnik? We may never really know, but I do believe 'the truth is out there.'

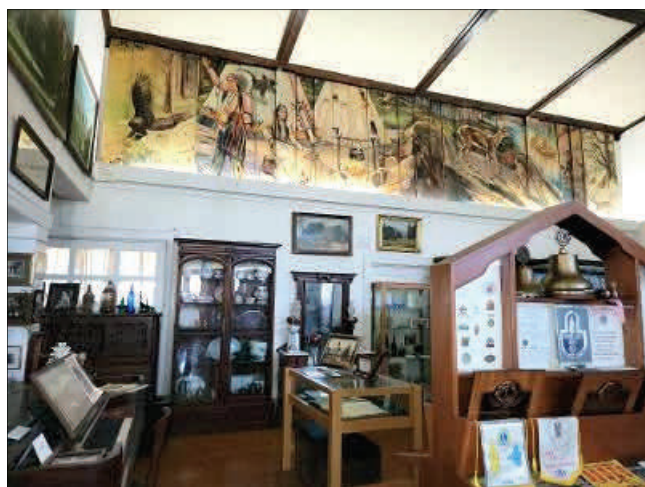
A Visit to the Ebell Museum By Shaylene Cortez

As a history nerd, I love visiting museums. So, on August 8th, the Historical Society of Pomona Valley (HSPV) provided tours of their Ebell Museum at 585 E. Holt Avenue, Pomona. My grandmother, Vi Brooks, was born and raised in Pomona before settling in Corona in 1944 so I often keep up on Pomona history as well to fill in the gaps of my genealogy database.

The Ebell Museum was built in the craftsman style in 1910 by prominent Lincoln Park architect Ferdinand Davis. It was moved to its current location in 1919. The goal of the Pomona Ebell Club was to interest women in the study of all branches of literature, art and science, and the advancement of women in every branch of culture. It operated until 2004. Not only was it an important social center, but it was an important political center as well. It was here that Richard Nixon announced his candidacy for political office.



The Ebell Museum has a very interesting collection, including furnishings, paintings, china, and photos. One exhibit features Dr. Wing who was a well-known chiropractor in LA and Pomona. I was taken in by the story of his success as an Asian man in the area. Not only did he break through many barriers of racism and discrimination, but he had an extensive ham radio collection and he was a pioneer of the pager. Another exhibit displayed various objects from The Washington family. Iona Washington was a former slave and settled in Pomona. I think my favorite exhibit displayed the various posters from over the years from the Pomona Fair, as well as trophies and ribbons.



The HSPV operates other locations as well including the Adobe de Palomares, the Casa Primera de Palomares, the Barbara Greenwood Kindergarten, the Phillips Mansion, the Currier Mansion, and the Spadra Cemetery. They will be moving some of the collection from the Ebell Museum to the other locations to make room for a 20th Century exhibit.

All in all, it was lovely visit and I enjoyed having the opportunity to view their collection. I encourage you to tour one of their locations in the future.

Heritage Museum Update By Noella Benvenuti

Heritage Park Museum Curator Noella Benvenuti has provided the following narrative about the upcoming exhibit:

The installation we are currently working on is entitled, "Fun & Games." The focus of the exhibit is the way children spent their free time indoors and out before they were so engrossed in video games and the internet. Many types of toys and games will be on view ranging from the turn of the century to the end of the 1990s. Hands-on activities for visiting children will be available. We expect the exhibit to be ready to open mid to late September.



Corona . . . Fifty Years Ago

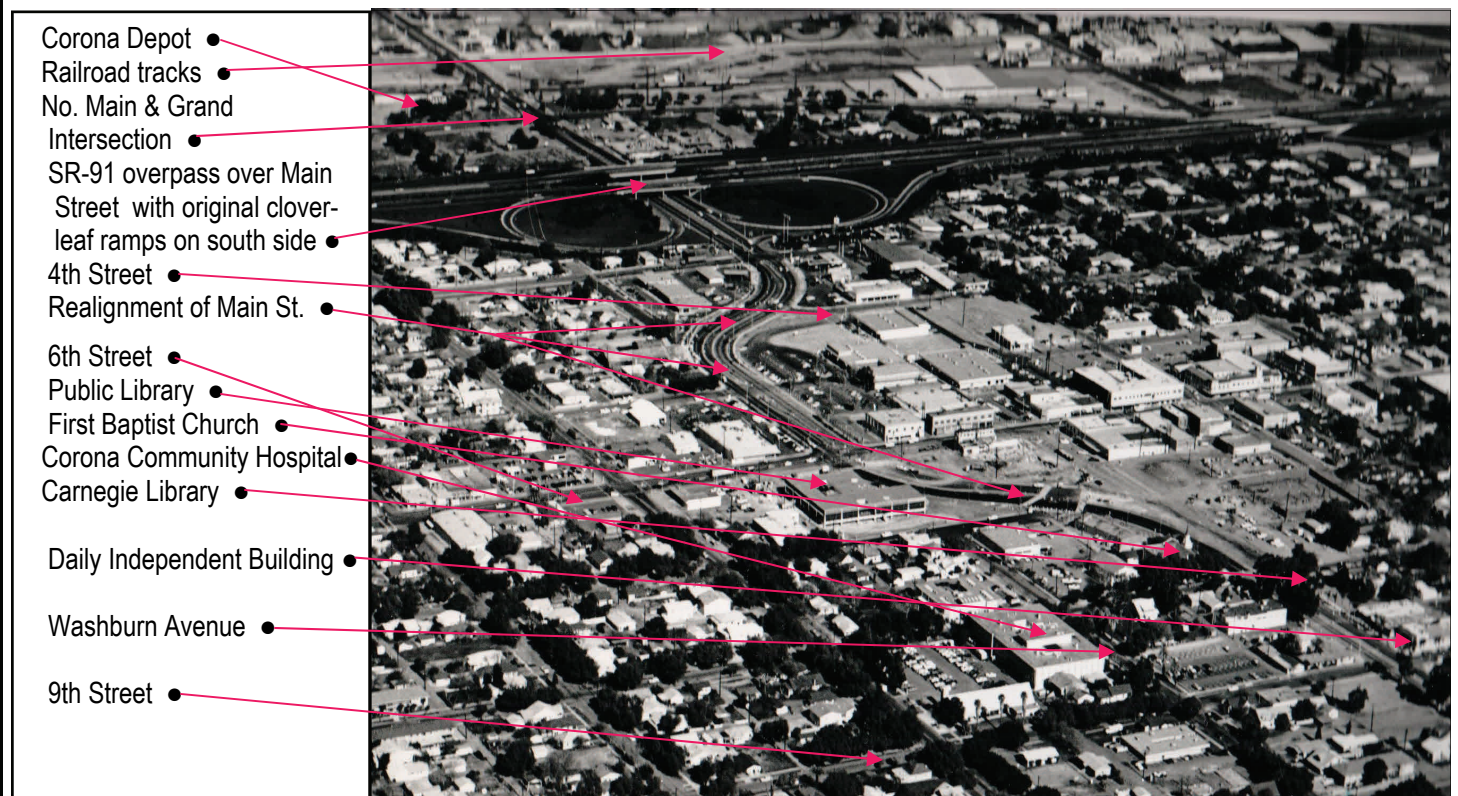
The following two images were purchased from former Corona Mayor Andrea Puga's estate. They were taken in January 1971 by Foster Air Photo. The first incredible aerial photo shows the city's second step away from its roots as Main Street is shown realigned and downtown starts to fall under the wrecking ball. The 91 freeway cutting through the circle at First and Second streets was almost 10 years old. Urban sprawl started to stretch southward toward Ontario Avenue. Also, Vicentia Elementary School is visible among the groves.



Identifiable Points

- San Gabriel Mountains are seen in the background.
- Norco
- Corona Depot
- Intersection of N. Main Street and Grand Blvd.
- Sunkist Growers
- 6th Street & Main
- Cresta Verde Golf Course
- Historic Civic Center
- Intersection of S. Main Street and Grand Blvd.
- Vicentia Elementary School
- Scoville House (Main Street at Ontario Avenue)

This second photo from January 1971 shows the death of Downtown in progress. You can see the south side of 6th street almost completely cleared away from the realigned Main Street as the north side still shows dense downtown building placement awaiting their demise.



- Corona Depot
- Railroad tracks
- No. Main & Grand Intersection
- SR-91 overpass over Main Street with original clover-leaf ramps on south side
- 4th Street
- Realignment of Main St.
- 6th Street
- Public Library
- First Baptist Church
- Corona Community Hospital
- Carnegie Library
- Daily Independent Building
- Washburn Avenue
- 9th Street

Membership Information

When joining or renewing your membership, please make your tax deductible check payable to "CHPS"

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Individual Member | \$30.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I'd like to volunteer! | |
| Family | \$40.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hospitality refreshments | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student | \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Newsletter writing articles | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Business | \$60.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Vintage Home Tour | |
| Patron | \$125.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | docent / volunteer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Life | \$600.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Directors | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Gift from _____

Membership Status: Renewal New

Please complete and mail to:

CHPS

P.O. Box 2904

Corona, CA 92878



We Welcome Our New & Continuing Members

Carol Ackerman
 JaNell Acosta
 Thomas & Cathy Alton
 David & Sylvia Barnett
 Janice Coleman & Deborah Pearce
 Patron Membership
 Shaylene Cortez

David & Connie Duffy
 Geannie Parks-Friskey
 Steve & Tracy Lech
 Christopher McCoy
 Mary Paulson
 Richard & Karen Schmidt
 Vivian Smith

Stephen & Karen Tompkins Shultz
 Patron Membership
 Dean Stamp
 Juergen & Gerlinde Stens
 Jane Szabo
 Clyde R. Tracy
 Harold & Beryl Williams

Home Preservation Grant Program

The CHPS Grant Committee along with the Board of Directors of the Corona Historic Preservation Society would love to assist local homeowners in making exterior improvements to their historic homes.

We will process any application within 60 days after submittal. Once a grant has been approved and reimbursement limits established, funds will be made available upon completion, inspection and onsite final approval.

Take this opportunity to do some fixing up and have part of the material cost covered by CHPS. Remember we are interested in helping people beautify their homes for others to see, so applications are primarily for curb appeal projects. If you have a place that you feel needs help, either your own



or a neighbor's, please contact CHPS Home Preservation Grant Program Coordinator Rich Winn at rwinn141@gmail.com/714.328.0010. We will assist you in any way possible to provide the information you need to complete the application process.

Grant applications are available at the Community Development Department at Corona City Hall at 400 South Vicentia, and at the Heritage Room of the Corona Public Library.

More information and grant applications may also be downloaded from our website:
[<http://corona-history.org/grants.html>](http://corona-history.org/grants.html)

Please share this information with others!



Corona
Historic
Preservation
Society

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Amelia Nieves
Mary Winn

Advisors

Marla Benson
Ted Taylor



To contact us call
951.898.2044

Please leave a message



Our Mission Statement

The Corona Historic Preservation Society (CHPS) is an active nonprofit tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization dedicated to the PRESERVATION, PROTECTION and PERPETUATION of Corona's historic sites, buildings, neighborhoods and resources. We do this through education, community events, preservation projects and tireless advocacy for the benefit of present and future generations.

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:

Tuesday, September 28, at 6:30 p.m. at CHPS office

Tuesday October 26, at 6:30 p.m. at CHPS office



www.Corona-History.org

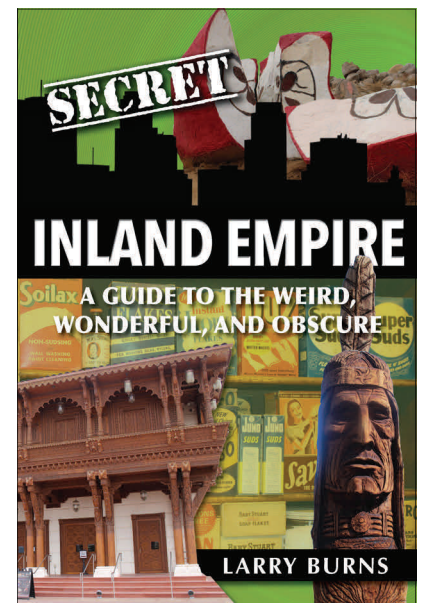


Corona
Historic
Preservation
Society

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



See page 3



You are invited to our 3rd Quarterly Meeting See page 3