



Las Angelitas del Pueblo *Newsletter— Spring 2015*

El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument
www.lasangelitas.org

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Las Angelitas Enjoy Excursions

Las Angelitas del Pueblo have enjoyed many recent outings arranged by our Director of Events, Terrence Butcher. January we were given a tour of Chinatown by our own expert, Suellen Cheng. (see page 3 for article & pictures) February we visited the nearby Victorian Grier-Musser House. (see page 2 for details)

Our Angelita Fred Robles does double duty as a docent at San Juan Capistrano Mission. In March he invited all of us to attend his tour of the mission founded in 1776 by Fr. Junipero Serra. This mission is also known as the Jewel of the Missions. The Native Americans in the area became known as Juanenos. By 1997 the population had grown enough to start construction of a great stone church under the guidance of a Mexican stonemason, Isidor Aguilar. The structure was completed in 1806. The building was used for only six years before it fell during the great earthquake of 1812 killing forty people. There was no attempt to rebuild it. After the takeover by the Mexican government in the 1820's the Juanenos were granted freedom from mission labor. The buildings fell into greater ruin. In 1865 Mission lands were returned to the Catholic Church but Capistrano only received full protection when Charles Lummis and the Landmarks Club initiated it in 1895. Many visitors ask about the legend of the Swallows returning to Capistrano each March. Sadly, because of the increase in population in the area very few swallows nest at the mission.



Valentine Visit to Grier-Musser House



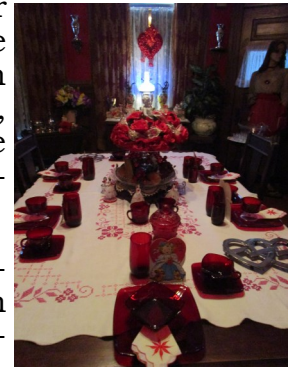
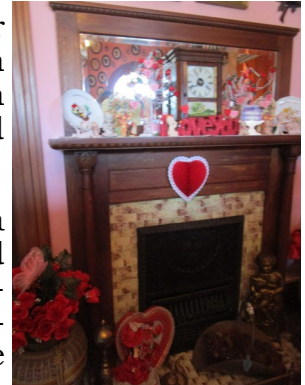
On Sunday, February 8, a group of our Angels visited the famous Grier-Musser Queen Anne Victorian House located in the Pico Union area. It was wonderful to see the dignified old home in such good condition.

We were welcomed in the front yard at a shady table filled with crafts where we could make valentines for the upcoming holiday. Susan Tejada, our tour guide, is the granddaughter of Anna Grier-Musser, who owned the home in the early 1900s. She talked to us about Jonathan Hill who had the 13-room house built for \$5,000 in 1898. She invited us into the entrance hall and said they redecorated the house each month to fit the season. Since it was February, Valentine's Day was the main theme, with some displays showing additional themes of President's Day and Chinese New Year.

She escorted us thru the Main Parlor, Second Parlor (family room), and Dining Room on the first floor. Dining table was set with Depression Glass Ruby Red Dinnerware for the Valentine Holiday. There are many sets of dinnerware and knick-knacks in storage that change with the seasons.

Upstairs we visited a study, main bedroom, bath, second bedroom, children's room (filled with antique dolls and toys) and a sun-room. The history and details of everything on display was astounding.

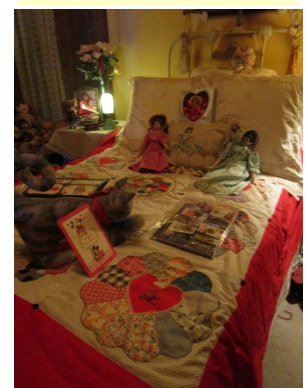
Back downstairs we were invited to the kitchen and offered lemonade and cookies. We sat and refreshed ourselves while Mrs. Tejada answered our additional questions.



Dining Room



Children's Room



Antique Organ



Main Parlor



Bath

Upstairs Study



Las Angelitas Visit Chinatown with Suellen Cheng Reported by Marlene Gordon-Pfeifer



UNDISCOVERED CHINATOWN TOUR January 12, 2015

The first field trip of the year for Las Angelitas del Pueblo led by Suellen Cheng on a clear, sunny Monday in January. As many Suellen fans know she retired in 2013 from her position as curator for El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument. (She was also the founding curator for the Chinese American Museum in 2003.) Suellen uncovered history and some of the secrets of our Chinatown district on a wonderful, colorful and historical tour.

The first Chinese settlement was in the area of today's Union Station in 1852. The community resettled some 86 years later a few streets over, and in 1938, with the dedication of the Central Plaza, it became the first modern American Chinatown, owned and planned from the ground up by Chinese. Suellen talked to us about so many things, including China City. We made many stops to learn about days gone by and what's happening now in Chinatown. We went into an ornately decorated and incense-filled Thien Hau Temple on Yale Street, and it felt like we entered another world. (Thien Hau Temple is known as Chua Ba Thien Hau in Vietnamese and as Tian Hou Gong in Chinese.) It is dedicated to Mazu, the Taoist goddess of the sea and other gods. Faithful believers come from all parts of the world to celebrate this day. Festivities include firecrackers, lion dances, and various entertainment such as opera, martial arts, and more. Dizang, a bodhisattva from the Buddhist faith is also worshipped at the Temple. (A favorite "god" for me is "Fu De," the god of the earth.) The temple serves the community and is especially festive before and after the Chinese New Year. About one month prior to the Chinese New Year, people come to the temple to give thanks for the past year by burning incense and offering items such as roast pig, fruit, and flowers. On Chinese New Year's Eve, many people gather to receive blessings and to burn incense and worship the deities. Lion dancers perform and firecrackers are popped to scare away evil spirits.



Las Angelitas Visit Chinatown (continued)



Many people come to the Temple the first few weeks after Chinese New Year to receive a blessing for the year. Not all the attendees are Chinese, as Chinatown has residents and visitors from Vietnam and from other countries including the USA.

We all enjoyed the fascinating history shared by Suellen on the tour, the colorful pagodas, and surroundings, the rich heritage and culture of L.A.'s Chinatown. We visited a revised

plaza which is now home to a new art community where avant-garde galleries are interspersed among the curio shops. Nearby are the herb shops, poultry, fruit and vegetable markets as well as fine Asian art, cooking supplies, clothing and "anything you can think of" stores with an Asian twist. So whether you need a colorful parasol, jewelry, fans, fine artworks, a picture frame, silk clothing, unique paper goods, Asian teas and remedies, lucky pyramid bamboo plants, charms to attract love, joy, and prosperity, or an herbalist or a doctor for acupuncture, you can find what you need by exploring Chinatown in Los Angeles. I particularly like being in Chinatown in the morning when people are shopping for fresh fruits and vegetables and are using colorful parasols and umbrellas to protect themselves from the California sunshine.

Our wonderful walking tour ended at the Golden Dragon Restaurant, as Suellen, invited us to be her guests and enjoy a dim sum lunch. Suellen took us to many popular and off-the-beaten path locations. She shared interesting history stories of "then and now" and left us with full tummies and a deeper appreciation for our next door neighbor, Chinatown. Las Angelitas presented Suellen with a gift certificate to Phoenix Bakery.

Many Thanks to Suellen Cheng!





ANGEL NEWS & NOTES

Yearly Election Of Officers

The Nominating Committee has confirmed that the current officeholders volunteered to run for a second term.

President: Bruce Phillips

Vice President: Elizabeth Fenner

Treasurer: Les Hanson

Secretary: Marina Busatto

These nominees will be announced at the General Meeting. Nominations will be accepted from the floor for any of these offices. You may nominate yourself or someone else with their permission. Voting will immediately follow, with installation at the June luncheon.



RECENT TOUR STATS

Total Touring Stats

	2015	2014
January		
Docent Hours	165	156
Persons Toured	744	754
February		
Docent Hours	132	141
Persons Toured	755	856
March		
Docent Hours	138	144
Persons Toured	1309	932

SPRING IS IN THE AIR!

GENERAL MEETING

Monday, April 13

Jim Dawson will talk about his book
Los Angeles's Bunker Hill

Location is Museum of Social Justice
Basement of Methodist Church
Entrance is on Olvera Street

This is one of our Old Fashioned Potlucks!
Please bring something tasty to share.

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Please welcome our new **Probationary Docents** from the February training class when you meet them on tour duty. They will be formally introduced to our members at the General Meeting Potluck on April 13, 2015.

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Library

Las Angelitas' library will obtain new shelving to accommodate our expanding collection. This should make browsing for interesting titles easier for our members. Our librarian, Carmela Funciello, asks for book donations or recommendations of titles (for purchase) of interesting California history books.

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The renovation of the **Avila House Patio** is complete. The wide open sunny space and new signage is attractive and inviting. Restrooms, Bookstore and Water Exhibit are also open. It is also available for special events.

Editor: Eileen Mendoza

Ideas for the Newsletter? Contact me with history tidbits, news or notes, and interesting articles written by you!
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