



# THE POPPY PAPER



Official Monthly Publication of the  
Boosters of Old Town San Diego State Historic Park  
A Non-Profit Organization

March 2020

## A Stitch in Time

By Frances McMeeken

Last summer, while my mother Cathy McMeekan was reuniting with her classmates from high school, one of her friends, Jan (Tank) Stearns, brought over some quilts that had been in her family for a very long time. Like many people today, she has family heirlooms with no family to pass on to when she is gone. She donated two quilt tops to the Old Town Historic Quilt Guild to quilt. The story behind these quilts is wonderful, and the members of the Quilt Guild love to share the details.



*The Raymond Sisters*

The quilt tops were made between 1890 and 1891 by teenage sisters, Mabel and Gertrude Raymond. The tops are simple scrap blocks sewn together. They are in top condition, as if they were made last week. The fabric colors are vibrant and interesting. Looking on the backsides, the squares were both hand and machine sewn. They were stored in a cedar chest and never used. Ginny Pence brought the tops home for layout and to add batting and backing. When she had the three layers of the quilts together, she noticed something very interesting. Despite the similar fabrics and design, as well as the closeness of the sisters, it appears that Gertrude could sew, but Mabel could not. In fact Mabel's top is so bad, it will never lay flat and cannot be quilted.

How many of us have started a new project and just could not get the hang of it? *The Quilt Guild* members are sympathetic to Mabel as we envision her frustration, struggling to make a nice top while sitting with her sister. Visitors to *Threads of the Past* also love to hear this story and tell us of their own struggles. Quilting on one quilt, and having the second top within easy reach to illustrate the story, has made for wonderful conversations with our visitors.

*Continued on page 2...*

## *Quilt Guild (continued from page 1)...*



*Jan Stearns (seated) and  
Cathy McMeekan (standing)*

Two weeks ago, Jan and Mom dropped by to see the progress of the quilt. There was jubilant excitement from the quilters, from Jan and Mom, and from our visitors! Jan was very happy to see her family heirlooms being loved and treasured. *The Quilt Guild* members were excited to connect to the descendant of the quilt makers. Visitors loved hearing the stories.

We also learned more about the quilts and the sisters. While Jan is adopted, she remembers visiting her Great Aunt Gertrude here in San Diego! Yes, they were San Diegans!

This made us feel even closer to the sisters. They were spinsters, who lived together and were teachers at the normal school in National City. They were active members in the local Methodist Church (now a parking lot) and are buried in National City.

With this information, *The Quilt Guild* members hope to do some genealogical research to learn as much as we can about these early San Diego quilters. We also plan to bring the top and finished quilt to their grave sites, and share a lunch with them.

So much has come out of this experience. Reflecting, it emphasizes to me the importance of labeling your quilts...or any project. Because we have a name and date, we have a story about these ladies and can continue to remember them. For example, the Juana Machado Quilt is another Old Town connection to the past. But, we have no details about why or for whom she made the quilt...and we are left wondering. Luckily, we have her name and the family who donated the original to the San Diego History Center. So many quilts go without labels and are forgotten as they are passed down to family members. Many people these days do not want to hold on to “old stuff” and donate or give away their quilts. How many quilts have you seen used for moving furniture, dog beds, or just being thrown out? A label on the quilt with the makers name and the date made is all it takes to make the quilt an object of value. One of my favorite quotes to add to a label is, “When this you see, Remember me...”

Please come to *Threads of the Past* quilt demonstrations to help remember two sisters, their connection to San Diego, and the very human connection of not being able to finish a project perfectly!

*Pictured here are members of the Historic Quilt Guild with Gertrude's quilt displayed in the foreground.*

*(l-r) Ginny Pence, Evette Weiss, Frances McMeeken, Patt Seitas, Shelley Brennan (seated), Leah Estrin, Susan Monroe, and Estelle Trzcinski.*





# Treasurer's Notes

By Deanna Turton

FY2020 started out pretty well, as BOOT took in \$4,684.61 more than we spent. With *The Park Store* earnings at \$6,389.00, and a daily average in the donation boxes of \$63.00, January started out very well. In addition, guild sales at the *Blacksmith Guild* totaled \$379.00, and at *Threads of the Past* was \$183.00. Other sources of income were:

- \$ 260.00 - Membership
- \$ 234.00 - Period Attire Bank (sales)
- \$ 127.00 - Park Aide Tour Tips
- \$ 43.32 - Fountain Coins

Expenses over \$300.00 were:

- \$1,589.23 - The Park Store (inventory replacement)
- \$1,369.96 - Period Attire (bank and subsidies)
- \$ 375.89 - Internet Service

So, now my task is the Federal and State Tax Forms, as well as the report to the Attorney General and the Annual Report to the Department of Parks and Recreation in Sacramento. But first, Gary and I are leaving tomorrow for a short vacation. Our destination is Tucson, where Gary plans to attend a gathering of folks interested in what the Vatican Observatory does, as he is a long time member. So, while he is attending the lectures and displays, I have volunteered to watch our German Shepherd, Vicki, and do some restful reading. If the weather is good, we will also revisit some of our favorite sites in the area.

## *From the Editor's Desk...*

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of one of our dedicated volunteers Zulema Franco (*page 6*). She has been a part of Old Town for many years, and we will dearly miss her and all she did for the Park.

We are also sad to see long-time Park Ranger Kirk Shea leave us once again. He was here before, about a decade ago. Now, it sounds like an opportunity arose closer to his home in Carlsbad. We wish Kirk the best of luck in his new assignment; and we welcome State Park Ranger Jessica Murany!

The BOOT Board of Directors continues to seek new members (*page 7*). BOOT's Annual Meeting will be held in the evening this month in order for more people to attend and hear about the great work that BOOT does. So, mark your calendars:

**BOOT's Annual Meeting**  
**March 18, 2020, 6:00-8:00 p.m.**  
**Seeley Stable**

With the winter months mostly behind us, it sounds like the Park Staff and Volunteers are gearing up for the summer special events. Since San Diego County funding was not approved to support events this year, there is an even greater need for volunteers. So, make sure to contact Volunteer Coordinator Tim Downing if you are interested in getting involved. There's no better place to spend the summer than in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park!

***Happy St. Patrick's Day...and Happy Reading!***  
***Ruth French, Editor, popypapereditor@gmail.com***

***(Deadline for submissions is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month for inclusion in the following month's issue.)***

# Why do you volunteer?

*By Tim Downing, Senior Park Aide/Volunteer Coordinator*

Why do you volunteer at Old Town San Diego State Historic Park? Or, why do you want to volunteer in Old Town State Historic Park? These are questions I ask many of our volunteers throughout the year, and it is the first question I ask all potential volunteers who want to be part of our volunteer family. And, as you might guess, the answers vary greatly. But, there is an overall theme to the answers – “We love the Park!”

Every one of us has a love for the Park. Our love shows mostly when we are doing our living history activities or working within our guilds. It is at these moments when our pride and passion for what we do for the Park shines brightest. However, as with all families, our pride and passion sometimes gets in the way, and we lose sight of what brought us all here in the first place. This is especially true in times of change like we are in right now.

Many of us find it easier to just toss our hands up and walk away. It’s simple to say, “In the past we did...” or “The Park was so much better when...” This is a simple and easy way to look to the past. The real challenge for all of us, me included, is to look ahead and realize it’s the love and passion we have for **OUR** Park that will truly bring amazing change.

You may be frustrated with some of the changes; but, please continue to come in on your guild days. Sure, you might be disappointed in the reduced summer events; but, please continue to volunteer for them. We are the backbone of the Park. It’s our programs that make the events special and help our guests remember their visit to Old Town. Continuing to come in for our guild days and the special events will help to make sure the changes are positive, and that our love and passion for our Park will continue well into the future.

Thank you for all you do for our Park!

## **An Easy Way to Support Old Town**

Do you and your family use Amazon or PayPal? If you do, it’s easy to support Old Town...just identify **Boosters of Old Town** as your charity to allocate donations when you buy things. *AmazonSmile* is a program developed by Amazon to match a percentage of your purchase as a donation to a nonprofit. It costs you nothing, the money comes from the company. *Paypal* allows you to make a donation, as small as \$1.00 (more would be great), to a nonprofit.

All the money **BOOT** raises goes to Park programs and activities. Please consider adding **Boosters of Old Town** as your charity when you make Amazon or Paypal purchases! I have, and it adds up!

Thank you!  
Susan Hector, **BOOT** Membership Chair  
and Old Town Volunteer

# Adobe: “Just Like Grandma Used To Make”

*By Austin Lane, Senior Park Aide*

Adobe bricks are simple mud bricks that are held together with binding agents like grass, straw, or manure. Due to the abundance of cattle in early San Diego, cow manure was likely the preferred binding agent for Old Town residents. Adobe bricks dissolve quickly if exposed to wet weather. To combat this, they are commonly coated with a hard waterproof coating called whitewash.

Adobe is the ideal building material for desert environments like San Diego. The thick walls absorb the sun’s heat and keep the interior of the building comfortable on even the hottest days. Conversely, the walls will radiate the stored heat back into the building when temperatures drop at night.

The process of creating an adobe structure is fairly simple. This article will provide a recipe for adobe walls “just like grandma used to make.”

## **INGREDIENTS:**

### **Bricks**

- soil (rich with clay)
- sand
- water
- cow manure

### **Whitewash**

- water
- sea shells

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **Bricks**

1. Thoroughly mix soil, sand, water, and cow manure.
2. Pour the mixture into wooden molds to form bricks.
3. Place the bricks in a sunny location and let them dry for many weeks. Rotate them occasionally for even drying.
4. Stack the dried bricks in desired layout while filling the gaps between bricks with fresh adobe mud.
5. Apply fresh adobe mud to the sides of the walls for a smooth finish.

### **Whitewash**

1. Heat crushed sea shells (calcium carbonate) in excess of 1800 degrees Fahrenheit. Heating the sea shells (calcium carbonate) converts them into lime (calcium oxide).
2. Mix with water. Adding water to the lime (calcium oxide) creates slaked lime (calcium hydroxide). This process is simply known as “slaking.”
3. Apply slaked lime (calcium hydroxide) to the interior and exterior walls of the adobe. When slaked lime (calcium hydroxide) is exposed to air it reverts back into limestone (calcium carbonate). Limestone (calcium carbonate) is insoluble, meaning it won’t dissolve in water. Because of this, the whitewash applied to the adobe walls effectively seals and weatherproofs the structure. Conveniently, the whitewash finish helps to naturally brighten the interior of adobe structures.

*\*The Adobe Making Guild in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park meets the third Saturday of every month to practice the art of creating adobe structures.*

# *Goodbye to a Dear Friend*

*By Deanna Turton, Craft Committee*

When she did not respond to our email reminders about craft committee days, we got worried that our dear friend, volunteer Zulema Franco, might be in the hospital. But, after trying to reach her in various ways, JoBeth Hull finally contacted some of Zulema's friends through Facebook. It was then that we learned that our wonderful friend had died shortly after our December craft committee meeting. We are all devastated!

Although we have no details on the cause of her death, Zulema suffered from severe COPD, and has needed oxygen for the better part of the day for quite some time. Despite this disability, she was a loyal craft committee member, who made all the labels for our handmade products, and who enjoyed stripping dried herbs off their stems. She would also take large bags of fresh dried herbs to strip on her patio at home. (*Pictured: Zulema, sitting on the Robinson-Rose back porch, stripping herbs.*)



Zulema also enjoyed bringing us sweet treats on holidays, or perhaps when she had tried a new recipe. At our last Christmas party, she gave us each a flavored bag of popcorn, which was wonderfully good. It was the last time we saw her, but we will always remember what a good time we all had together. In fact, both JoBeth and I had wondered what Zulema might be bringing us on Valentine's Day, which was our last craft day. When she did not come or call, we knew something was dreadfully wrong.

Before retirement and volunteering in the Park, Zulema was a teacher and a former principal of San Diego Unified School District's Off-Campus Integrated Learning Experience (OCILE Program) in Old Town. She also served as the Secretary of the BOOT Board of Directors for many years. We will miss Zulema's happy smile and the generous gift of her time and keen intelligence. We will also miss her creative spirit and wonderful dinners at her lakeside home.

Rest in peace, Dear Friend.

## **San Diego's "Garden of the Dead" Lecture & Historic Walk Presented by the House of Spain in Balboa Park**

### **Lecture**

Sunday, March 15, 5-6:30 p.m.

House of Spain, 2168 Pan American Road East in the Balboa Park Palisades area.  
Free parking is located across the street in the Spreckels Organ Pavilion Parking lot.

### **Historic Walk**

Saturday, March 21, 9-11 a.m.

The foot of Presidio Hill, at the corner of Taylor Street and Presidio Drive.

**Cost:** Free

RSVP to the House of Spain at [rsvp2hos@gmail.com](mailto:rsvp2hos@gmail.com).

# WANTED

## NEW BOOT BOARD MEMBERS

For several months, the BOOT Board of Directors has been actively looking for new members to replace currently serving Board members. BOOT activities and fundraising is critical to the Park's mission of serving the public. For many years BOOT has supplemented the Park budget with significant funding. The Park Store is a major contributor to these funds. The BOOT treasury is in good shape now.

The storekeeper, her assistant, webmaster, secretary and treasurer all have expressed that they wish to leave the BOOT Board in the next few months. None of the positions are overwhelming, but each is important to the smooth functioning of supporting the Park. Please consider serving. The satisfaction in knowing that you make a difference in the Park is certainly rewarding.

If interested, please send an email to [webmaster@boostersofoldtown.com](mailto:webmaster@boostersofoldtown.com); come to the next BOOT Board Meeting; or leave your name and phone number at the Robinson- Rose Visitor Center and a board member will contact you.

**BOOT ANNUAL MEETING**

**March 18, 2020, 6:00-8:00 p.m.**

**Seeley Stable**

# Park Updates

*By: Gregg Giacomuzzi, State Park Interpreter I*

- State Park Ranger, Jessica Murany will replace State Park Ranger Kirk Shea at Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. Jessica will start March 1, 2020.
- The park will host its first summer special event of the season on May 30. The event, Women of the West, will be held from 12:00-4:00 p.m. with a focus on two period fashion promenades, presented at La Casa de Estudillo at 12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. Living History highlighting Women of the West, including demonstrations and activities will be presented throughout the Park.
- Starting March 8, 2020, the Park museums will stay open until 5:00 p.m. daily.
- All park museum brochures are in the process of revision.
- On January 26, 2020, the Park hosted the Mormon Battalion special event. The event drew approximately 1,200 visitors and went off without a hitch.
- DMI Construction is slowly making headway toward the transformation of the old CalTrans property and soon will start building the new interpretative space slated for that parcel of land.
- The Old Town Maintenance Department will be contracting services to cut down a few palms in the Park due to an infestation of the South American Palm Weevil, currently killing certain species of palms throughout Southern California.
- The Museum Collections Department in Old Town has moved the archaeology exhibit, that was located on the second floor of the McCoy Interpretive Center, to the first floor where the “stage stop” once stood.
- There are plans for an exhibit in the Cosmopolitan Hotel about the archaeological discoveries during the rehabilitation of that building.
- There were several rain delays and redesigns during the rehabilitation of the courtyard and gardens of La Casa de Estudillo. The good news is the museum will open soon with new ADA improvements, including new walkways around the existing fountain and throughout the garden. New signs point out the newly graded, accessible pathway at all entrances to the museum. The Old Town Maintenance Department will be refurbishing the fountain, as well as the irrigation system, as soon as the contractor has completed the paving. Plans for a refurbished garden are also underway.
- The contractor that has been working in the Park for the last four months has finished and installed some great projects, including:
  1. Two new interior interpretative panels in the San Diego Union Museum, as well as a new exhibit-friendly door and view barrier.
  2. Two new exterior interpretative panels in the Machado and Stewart vicinity that discuss the former river and building adobes.
  3. Exterior directional signage around the entrances of La Casa de Estudillo that point out the accessible route.
  4. Two new doors and locking mechanisms for public restrooms adjacent to the Robinson-Rose Visitor Center.
  5. Accessible restrooms behind Toby’s Candle Shop.
  6. New walkway in front of the Machado y Silvas/Commercial Restaurant, and soon new view barriers inside the museum.

# THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS!

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*Please refer to the back cover page for more details.*



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BOOT Website: <http://boostersofoldtown.com/>

Park Website: [www.parks.ca.gov/oldtownsandiego](http://www.parks.ca.gov/oldtownsandiego)



**BOOSTERS OF OLD TOWN**

San Diego State Historic Park  
4002 Wallace Street  
San Diego, CA 92110

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**Membership Application or Renewal**

- \_\_\_\_\_ **\$20.00 Senior (62 yrs. or older)/Single Student**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **\$25.00 Single Supporting Member**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **\$30.00 Senior Couple (62 yrs. or older)**
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- \_\_\_\_\_ **\$155.00 Life Member (62 yrs. or older)**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **\$55.00 Corporate Basic Membership\***  
(includes window decal and 1 month business card sized ad in *The Poppy Paper*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **\$130.00 Corporate Enhanced Membership\***  
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- \_\_\_\_\_ **Donation Enclosed (Or Gift in Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_)**

*\*Corporate applicants only: Please enclose a business card or logo for inclusion in The Poppy Paper.*

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**Send to: BOOT Membership Committee, 4002 Wallace Street, San Diego, CA 92110**