

THE WRIGHT TIMES

Newsletter of the Wrightwood Historical Society December 2015

"Guardians of the Past"

"People of the Pines"



Santos Manuel

On November 6 a lively presentation was given at the museum by a spokesman for the San Manuel Reservation near Highland, California.

This personable young man, who said most people just call him "Shorty," is a direct descendent of Chief Santos Manuel, leader

of the Serrano people in the early 20th century.

Spaniards called them Serrano, meaning Mountaineers, because they spent so much of the year in the mountains. They called themselves "Yuhaviatam" - the "People of the Pines."

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The President's Letter



John Lenau

The Holiday Celebration for our WHS members was held on Friday December 4th at the Wrightwood Methodist Church. Delicious food and joyful serenading by the children of Wrightwood made for a memorable luncheon. Thanks to all who helped make it a special day.

In the past few months we have, with Board approval, installed four security cameras throughout the museum. This makes it much better for our docents to keep track of our visitors on Saturdays. They also record 24/7 when we are not there - just in case!

Our Commemorative Brick Wall in the Commemorative

Brick Courtyard of the museum is filling up quickly.

There have been three new copper plates installed on the wall recently. If you would like to have your family name on the wall, please contact one of our Board members. The cost has been reduced to \$150.00 each.

On Halloween we had over 300 kids plus parents come through the museum for Trick or Treat. We members that served the kids had a great time. This is the only day during the year that all the lights are on inside and outside the museum. It takes on a completely different feel, like back in the good old days.

The President's Letter...

I like to do construction work and enjoy working with tools. A year or so ago we received an "upright-self-feed-post-drill press" which has sat in our side yard in our mining display area without a plaque describing its use. I finally decided to take a look at it and discovered the company name and number and date of manufacture. It was built in 1906 and was probably belt driven with a steam engine. Nowadays we can use a battery drill motor. Stop by and take a

look at it.

We had another flood from the toilet again at the museum, and jumped on it right away, vacuumed and turned on heaters and fans.

Note that our January 2016 meeting will not be held on the first Friday, since that is New Year's Day. We will hold our January meeting on the second Friday, January 8th.

See you at the next meeting or at the museum.

John

Roundtable with Pat Krig

On Friday October 2nd a unique afternoon of oral history was provided by longtime resident Pat Krig, hosted by her friend and writing colleague Barbara Van Houton, who prepared questions to start the discussion. The audience participated, and shared their memories as well.

Pat moved to Wrightwood in 1937 and seems to remember everything she witnessed from the age of 8 to now. There were lots more trees, hardly any roads, 3 telephones, and no streetlights. Weather was a big topic. In 1941 a lot of snow fell, over 20 feet. They had to shovel it off the rooftops, and 13 cabins collapsed under the weight. Then the weather turned warm and a massive mudslide on

Heath Creek buried homes and cars completely. The flow ran for 2 or 3 weeks, and people could hear it roaring in town. "Wrightwood used to be a lot wetter," Pat concluded, noting that the dry creek bed along Route 2 was a running stream where kids sailed boats and watered their horses.

Another big topic was real estate. In 1937 Wrightwood had about 400 cabins, mostly occupied by weekenders..Pat's father bought and maintained many cabins that were rented short term. Pat and her brother worked on weekends keeping the tenants happy. During World War II lots of soldiers sought homes for their families before being deployed overseas.

LOOKING BACK: THE LOGGERS

Driving into San Bernadino County from Los Angeles today, there is no mistaking the starkly barren vision of the San Gabriel Mountains, which were subjected to intensive logging in the 19th century. Efforts to stop this abuse were led by Abbot Kinney, creator of Venice Beach south of Santa Monica, who enlisted the support of naturalist John Muir to lobby Congress to pass the Forest Reserve Act of 1891 granting authority to the President to set aside forested public lands for protection. In December 1892 President Benjamin Harrison signed the San

Gabriel Timberland Reserve into existence, almost at a point of no return.

In what is now Wrightwood, a sawmill for apple crates was located on land that is now behind Our Lady of Snows Church. There is also a cabin built by loggers on Irene Street in 1920. The logger carved his name "Schenkraut" on the main floor beam underneath the bedrooms, probably designed for multiple bunk beds. The logs forming the walls are massive, the stone foundation solid as a fortress. Other evidence of the loggers is no doubt hiding in plain sight around the town.

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

"People of the Pines"... cont. from p. 1

Once they were a thriving network of peoples occupying land from Baldwin Lake throughout the San Bernadino and San Gabriel mountains and adjacent desert lands, with an estimated population of 300,000. The surviving Serrano people today number only 200. The history of enslavement, disease, and extermination by white invaders from Spain and the United States is less well known than the plight of the Lakota and the Cherokee. With the efforts of the Serrano people and sympathetic historians, anthropologists and linguists this is starting to change.

The Serrano maintain their tribal sovereignty to this day. Elders trace their right to determine the course of action of their people to the time of creation, and transmit this gift through songs and stories. Shorty described their Bird Songs, used in ceremonies, and the Eagle Dance, whirling two staffs, one to the sky and the other to earth. He sang a song of the Big Horn Sheep and demonstrated several native instruments.

For millennia they had plenty to eat as hunter/gatherers. Shorty brought a fascinating display of their traditional foods, from pinon nuts, berries, mesquite, cactus and yucca.

They learned the skills of agriculture working in the Spanish Mission system, often captured and in effect enslaved, then forced to convert to Christianity.

Working with linguists, they are now transcribing the Serrano language into a writing system, and teaching Serrano to the children.

The Serrano want their story told. "We Are Still Here!" they say to the world.

For more information about the Serrano people contact Stuart Baker, the Native American historian for WHS.

**OUR NEXT WHS MEETING IS FRIDAY JANUARY 8, 2016
at the museum.**

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



WHS Dues due January 1, 2016

Suzanne Bauman
Editor-in-Chief
The Wright Times

\$20.00 Individual
\$30.00 Family
\$150.00 Lifetime
\$500 or more Benefactor

Our monthly programs have been recorded on DVD and CD by Stuart Baker.

Stop by any Saturday to review them on the computer.

WHS Board of Directors

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Please send all questions and concerns to John Lenau at

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Mission Statement Review:

We're on the Web!
See us at:
wwhistory.org

To Collect, Preserve, Display and Interpret the history of Wrightwood and the surrounding areas that have a direct impact on Wrightwood.

