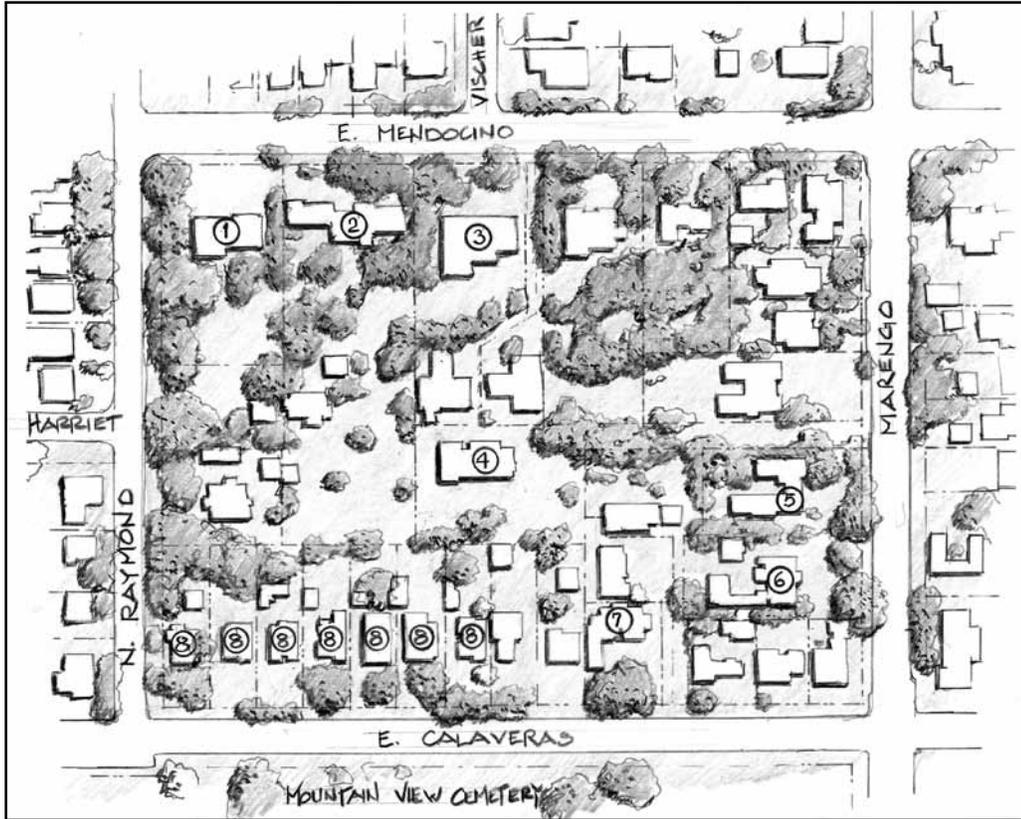




ALTADENA HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

MAY 2014



MAP LEGEND

1. Rosewall (William Webster, architect)
2. Robert Welles residence (Roland Coate, architect)
3. Villa Carlotta (Myron Hunt, architect)
4. Anna Welles Brown retirement house
5. Ahuacatlan, Paul Popenoe residence
6. Frank Brown residence
7. Tambo
8. Janes cottages

ONE BLOCK IN ALTADENA: A MICRO-HISTORY

By Mark Goldschmidt

Last year, Michele Zack and I, who live on Marengo in a 1922 Mediterranean style house designed by artist Frank Brown, had an opportunity to walk around our block with David Popenoe. David was born in 1932, the son of “Human Relations Expert” Paul Popenoe, and grew up at what is today 2503 Marengo Avenue. Now a retired sociology professor from Rutgers University, he made a comment that inspired this newsletter’s feature article.

“I don’t think there is a more diverse block in America, and it has always been this way.” We, of course, had noticed the mix of house styles, from modest to grand, on the block bounded east and west by Marengo and Raymond, and north and south by Mendocino and Calaveras (across from Mountain View Cemetery). David’s comment provided the spark for a few neighbors, old and new, to compile stories from our block, a micro-history we hope contributes to an understanding of why things are the way they are around here. Many Altadena

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

UPCOMING EVENTS

GOLDEN POPPY AWARDS AND GARDEN PARTY Sunday May 18, 4-7 p.m.

425 East Las Flores Drive
Please RSVP to altadenaheritage@earthlink.net or (626) 296-6983.
\$10 for members; \$20 for non-members.
To be eligible for the member rate, renew or join online or at the door.
Bring a check or cash, or purchase tickets online at altadenaheritage.com
The gift of an Altadena Heritage membership is the gift of community!



SUSTAINABILITY SERIES CONTINUES

June 19, 7 p.m., Altadena Community Center
Explore Altadena and La Canada Trails with Altadena Crest Trail Restoration Working Group and filmmaker John Newcombe. Free admission & popcorn

OPEN STUDIOS OF ALTADENA AND PASADENA ARTISTS

Sunday, June 1, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Altadena Heritage is a sponsor of this event. For more information, visit the web page at altadenaarts.wix.com/openstudios or email queries to ginko.garfield@gmail.com

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

I am thrilled to be writing my first letter to members as Chair of Altadena Heritage. It is an honor to serve this organization, unique in Altadena for its civic activism, community building, and programs.

We rolled out 2014 by carrying on with our Sustainability Series in February, March, and April at the Community Center. We continue to educate ourselves on the diverse aspects of water—a highly complex, important, and often confusing issue—by watching excellent films together, and talking about them afterwards with expert guidance.

Participation of local water purveyors, including Rubio Canyon, Lincoln Avenue, Las Flores, Foothill, Kinneloa, and Pasadena, has given our series a big boost. They've sent representatives and brought goodies, info on lawn removal rebates (soon to be \$2 per square foot) and other conservation programs. Thanks also to board members Marietta Kruells for organizing the series and bringing popcorn, and to event chair Matt-dell Tufkenian. We move from water to local trails in the next of the series, at 7 p.m. on June 19. Watch for email invite, or check altadenaheritage.com for more details soon.

Next fall, we'll offer a major event: *What About That Lawn? Design Guidance on Removal or Reduction* will present practical suggestions from local expert to help us embark on this daunting task—probably the single most important thing we can do to be part of the solution to the water crisis.



One of the films shown at our Sustainability Series focusing on water

The Golden Poppy Awards are coming up May 18. Be sure to reserve a spot at our famous celebration of all Altadena gardeners, where a few will receive the honor of the Golden Poppy plaque to display in their gardens. This year's event will be held on the two-acre grounds of a bucolic Altadena estate. Winning gardeners will speak briefly, and our hostess will share stories of her home—all of this, along with our traditional groaning board of treats and libations. Just \$10—an excellent opportunity to rejoin if your membership has lapsed. Non-members pay \$20, so please encourage friends to come, join at the door, and become part Altadena Heritage's community-based mission. Tickets are also available online at altadenaheritage.com.

I am happy to report that board member Alyssa Ribiero has taken on the task of Archives Manager. A recent PhD in modern American History, she is highly qualified, and delightful to boot! Alyssa is at our office in the Community Center most Friday mornings. Call (626) 296-6983 or email altadenaheritage@earthlink.net to make sure she will be there if you wish to research your home. You are likely to also run into new board member Linda World, who has taken on the task of managing the migration of our digital database to a more stable platform, with help from programmer volunteers Tom Wolfe and Dick Rubin. If you would like to become involved with this important project or archives work, please email or call us.

See you May 18.

Michele Zack, Chair

LONG-TIME ALTADENA HERITAGE CHAIR NAMED CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Mark Goldschmidt, Altadena Heritage's longtime leader (12 years on the Board, eight of them as Chair) was honored as Altadena's 2013 Citizen of the Year at a February 7 "Taste of Altadena" celebration hosted by the Chamber of Commerce at the Altadena Country Club. Goldschmidt was selected by a group of local nonprofits for his work with Altadena Heritage, years on the Land Use Committee, current committee work updating Altadena's Community Standards District, pro bono design of Old Marengo Park, and other civic work. He has stepped down as Altadena Heritage Chair, but continues on the Board and is the new editor of this newsletter.



We thank Altadena Historical Society, Pasadena Museum of History, Paul Popenoe, Bettina Martin, and Mark Goldschmidt & Michele Zack for use of images used in this newsletter.

THE BLOCK

by David Popenoe

The youngest of four boys, I was born (1932) and raised at what is today 2503 Marengo, leaving in 1950 to go East to college. I had what I think of as an idyllic childhood. We were the traditional family with a stay-at-home, ever-available mother and workaholic father who commuted to his job in downtown Los Angeles via the “Big Red” streetcars leaving from Mariposa St. In the 1930s, the milkman came every day to leave milk on our doorstep (on cold mornings the frozen milk would bust through the cap), a man came every few days with new ice for our ice box (on warm days we would seek chips of ice from his truck), and when my father was traveling we would get special delivery letters brought to the door by a postman riding a motorcycle. Occasionally we had a big bonfire in the back yard to burn our garden refuse, the smoke filling the sky.

We brothers played together in the yard and neighborhood, almost entirely “self-created” play because organized activities were rare. The play involved digging caves, pretend armies, science experiments, stamp collecting, natural history activities, and home-grown sports. We all walked to Altadena and then Eliot schools (which look today from the outside almost identical to what they looked like then). We also spent a lot of time joyfully hiking in the mountains, an activity which was far less popular then than now.

Pearl Harbor was a defining event. A few years later my two older brothers went into the Army, one to Europe and the other to the Pacific, and we proudly hung a plaque with two blue stars on our front door, anxiously awaiting their return. Rationing became a fact of life (you couldn't get a new tube



of toothpaste without turning in a used one—the tube metal was important to the war effort), we had regular blackouts, and my brother's Japanese friend was taken away to an internment camp. During the War the smog came, among other things making hiking in the mountains less desirable.

Following the War, our end of the block became filled with newcomers in smaller houses as the original large lots were, with few zoning restrictions, further subdivided. Our block was one of the most economically diverse in suburban America, combining rich mansions and welfare families side by side with the working and middle classes. What made this socially possible was the heavy vegetation and fencing, assuring maximum privacy. Of course, neighbor relations plummeted. We never knew anybody on the west and southwest sides of the block and, although we neighbored a little next door (hunting pollywogs in their pond) and across Marengo, almost all of our friends lived in other parts of Altadena and Pasadena. We boys would sometime sneak over the intimidating back fences to steal (liberate?) fruit from our neighbors' trees, something we regarded as a scary venture into foreign territory.

I was drafted into the Army after college and served near Fairbanks, Alaska. One Christmas, when the temperature at the Army base was 30 degrees below zero, I came home for a visit. It was then that I realized how special my childhood had been. Sitting on our back patio on a warm day with bright sunshine and a deep blue sky, looking out on our luxuriant garden with the birds singing, I quietly thought to myself: “This is paradise.”



In front of *Ahuacatlan* on Marengo Avenue

THE POLYMATH POPENOES

by Michelle Huneven

Our lovely, diverse block is a fertile one. The southeast corner alone—where I live—is responsible for at least two impressive contributions to civilized life.

The first is botanical and culinary: the Fuerte avocado. Around 1906, Frederick O. Popenoe moved with his family to Altadena. They moved into *Greenacre*, the Greene & Greene house at the northwest corner of Santa Anita and Calaveras, and in 1911 opened the West India Gardens, a nursery specializing in sub-tropical fruit trees. F.O.P. sent out scouts—sometimes his own two sons, Paul and Wilson—to the Middle East, Mexico, and Central America to collect specimen trees and plants.

The family was also responsible for bringing date cultivation to the Coachella Valley, but here, on our block, F.O.P. planted some avocado root-stock one of his scouts brought back from Puebla, Mexico. One particular tree, Tree #19, survived a brutal frost in 1913 and thereby earned its name: Fuerte, meaning strong. More than 95 percent of all Fuerte avocados on the market today are descended from Tree #19, which has long since ceased to exist.

A second contribution our block made to civilization as we now know it can also be credited to a Popenoe: F.O.P.'s firstborn, Paul. A tall, intelligent, Shakespeare-quoting polymath, he studied at Occidental and Stanford until he was called home to help his ailing father (F.O.P. had tuberculosis). With a head full of biology and progressive ideas, Paul became active in the eugenics movement, which at that time was a progressive cause embraced by such luminaries as David Starr Jordan (the chancellor of Stanford), Theodore Roosevelt, and Margaret Sanger. (It wasn't until World War II, Hitler and the Final Solution that eugenics was denounced and most American eugenicists, including Popenoe, distanced themselves from the pseudo-science). But as a young man in the early '20s, Paul Popenoe edited the *Journal of Heredity*, then co-authored a widely read college textbook, *Applied Eugenics*. Living



Frederick O. Popenoe with Tree #19

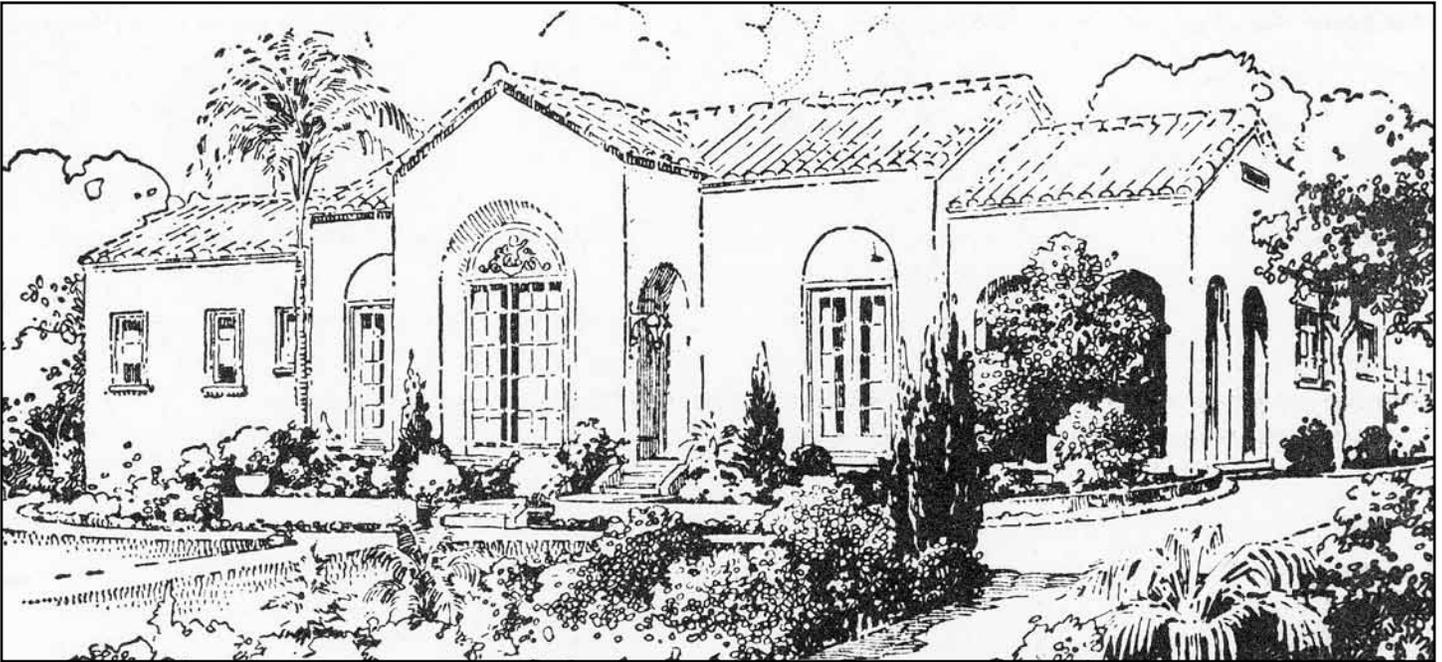
in Altadena, he was active in the Human Betterment Foundation, a eugenics organization in Pasadena founded in 1928 by E.S. Gosney “to foster and aid constructive and educational forces for the protection and betterment of the human family in body, mind, character, and citizenship.”

Eugenics was NOT Paul Popenoe's contribution to civilization, although what he did contribute had its somewhat dubious beginnings in that movement. With high hopes of bettering the human family, and funds supplied by Gosney (and, presumably, his foundation), Paul Popenoe opened the American

Institute of Family Relations in Los Angeles in 1930 and thus became the first practitioner in the brand new field of marriage counseling, which he is credited with inventing.

For many decades, up until his death in 1979, Paul Popenoe was a leading expert on marriage, supplying all the cases for Doris Disney's column in the *Ladies Home Journal*, “Can This Marriage Be Saved?” and appearing regularly on the Art Linkletter show to resolve marital disputes.

Marriage counseling and the buttery Fuerte. Not bad for our small corner of the world.



Frank Brown's new home was considered news in 1923. (*Star News*, 1923)

AHUACATLAN AND THE ARTISTS NEXT DOOR

by Michele Zack

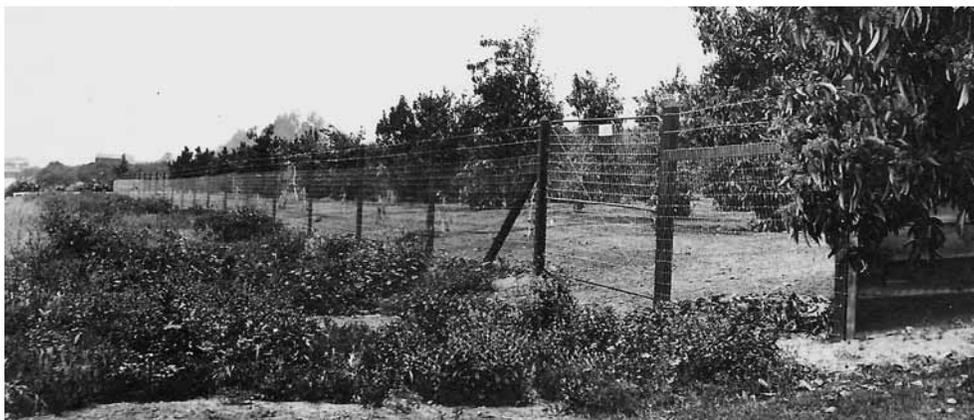
Years ago in these pages I shared the pleasure of learning secrets of our 1922 Mediterranean revival home. Former owners Junius and Bettina Martin walked up the driveway one morning in 2003 just as I was finishing *Altadena: Between Wilderness and City*. They'd bought the house in the 1960s from the home's designer and original owner, artist Frank Brown, whose widely published work included the covers of many Tournament of Roses Programs in the 1920s.

The Martins followed up their surprise visit with a fat envelope in the mail a week later, full of photos and drawings of our house and garden by Frank Brown, and color copies of ink and watercolor portrayals of all our home's interiors and gardens by Junius. I thought of the Martins' visit and this graphic historical bonanza as a reward for completing a new history

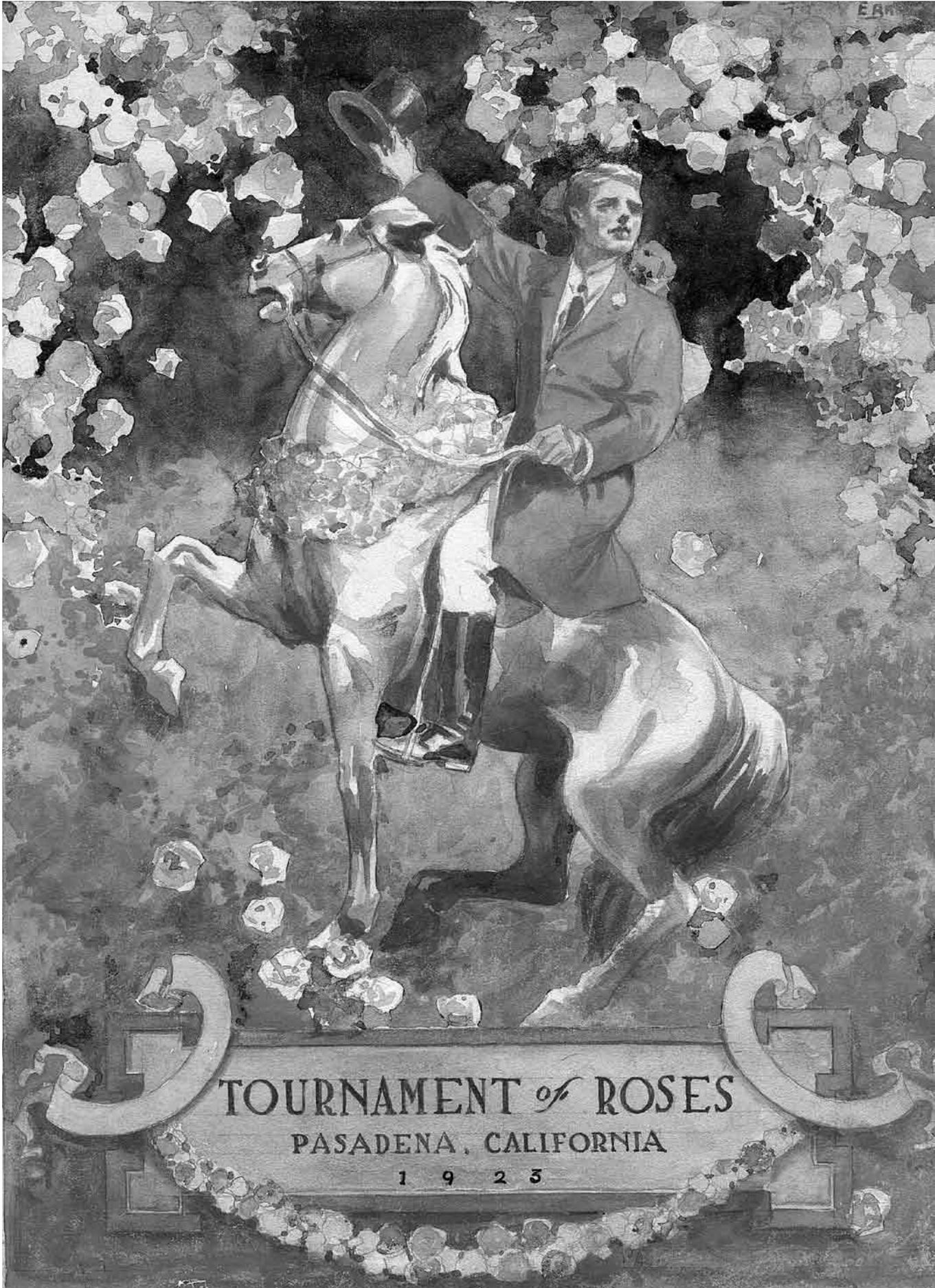
of Altadena, payback from the universe. We displayed these images when we hosted Altadena Heritage's 2004 Christmas party, and Bettina honored us that rainy afternoon by traveling down from Northern California to participate; sadly, Junius had passed away by then.

Our home, and five acres of our block, sit on land that was once the West India Gardens (WIG), a nursery specializing in sub-tropical fruits founded in 1911 by Frederick O. Popenoe. It was most famous for the introduction of the Fuerte avocado, the variety that launched the commercial avocado industry in California. F.O.P., as he was known, also founded the California Avocado Association. The family's first Altadena home was a Greene and Greene, and still stands on the northwest corner of Calaveras and Santa Anita. It had a name: *Greenacre*.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



West India Gardens on Marengo Avenue



A few years after the Martins' visit, we heard from neighbors immediately north on Marengo, Chris and Pilar Haydel, that an unidentified Popenoe had come to call but they'd not been home to receive him. Their house, at 2503 Marengo, is a gracious brown shingle bungalow featuring a pergola courtyard with a Batchelder fountain. It was built when the West India Gardens was subdivided in 1920 by F.O.P., and was the second family home. He'd sold the nursery and *Greenacre* after his three sons were grown and had moved away, and built this house. Alas, his wife, Marion Bowman Popenoe, died just as it was finished, and he couldn't bear to move in alone. He rented it out for a few years, and moved west down the block to a little house on property he still owned called *Tambo*, which means "inn" in South American Spanish, at 257 Calaveras. When F.O.P.'s son Paul returned to the area with a young family in 1924, he moved into the Marengo house and named it *Abuacatlan* – Avocado Land. Paul, who had four sons, lived there until his wife's death in 1978. He had a varied and successful career (see "Polymath Popenoes" in this newsletter).

The mystery visitor that rainy night was Paul's son David, visiting from Princeton, New Jersey. Paul "Can This Marriage Be Saved" Popenoe had lived in the house next to ours — *and we'd missed his descendant's visit*. How disappointing! Only our neighbors' visiting parents were home that rainy night and they did not get a name or address, nor did they know to direct him next door to us. Fortunately, David had purchased a copy of *Altadena: Between Wilderness and City*, and by coincidence, later saw a copy of *LA Weekly* containing the story "Sweet Home Altadena" by novelist Michelle Huneven, who lives on property that was also once formerly part of West Indian Gardens. He discussed his discoveries with his brother John, who now lives in Virginia, and we've been in contact numerous times since then.

John Popenoe followed in his grandfather's horticultural footsteps and eventually became curator of the Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden in Florida. He and David, a sociologist, have been enormously helpful in piecing together our block's history, and providing such intriguing documents as a 1921 bill of sale for \$10 from F.O. Popenoe to artist Frank Brown for the half-acre lot our house occupies. We've ascertained that the two men were not personal friends; whatever other consideration was involved in this exchange is unknown.

John Popenoe's recall for botanical detail is extraordinary; he seems to remember every tree and bush. When he read in the *LA Weekly* article about the *Hachia* persimmon tree under which Huneven was married, he was able to inform us that the driveway used to be lined with six such trees. He was amazed that any still lived, as he used to climb them in the 1930s! The giant eucalyptus trees described in the *Weekly* article at the back of Huneven's property were already tall in his childhood, as was the *Cedrela toona* at 259 Calaveras.

John also recalls people: "My memories of your house," he wrote to me, "include sitting in the living room about 70 years

ago and hearing Mrs. Kimmel, Frank Brown's mother-in-law, tell stories about her childhood during the Civil War. I think she lived in Iowa." Frank Brown's darkroom studio served as our garage before my husband Mark converted it back to a studio/workshop. We now know this structure predates our house and had been one of the nursery's outbuildings. Brown preserved it, practiced art and photography there, and also held drawing classes for local children. John Popenoe sent us a hand-drawn map of the neighborhood he remembers from childhood (not the map shown on page 1, however).

For more stories on earlier Popenoe generations, check the *Altadena* book or Google the name along with key words "Eugenics," "Agricultural Explorer," "California Avocado Association." or "United Fruit Company."

Altadena is the font of many things; it overflows with stories that lead one far afield, both physically and in the realm of ideas.

What tales can you tell about your family, your house, or your neighborhood? At the very least, try to come up with a romantic name for your house. On some dark and rainy night, when grown children circle the fire and relate family stories, it will certainly add interest if the old homestead has a moniker such as *Abuacatlan*, *Greenacre*, *Tambo*, *Rosewall*, *Villa Carlotta* or _____.(fill in the blank).



David Popenoe hunted pollywogs here.

Opposite: Original art for program cover illustration by Frank Brown



Frances Welles built *Villa Carlotta* in 1917.

THE VILLA CARLOTTA END OF THE BLOCK

by Judie O'Neill

The *Villa Carlotta*, at 234 E Mendocino Street (where Altadena Heritage held its 2013 Holiday Celebration), and Rosewall, next-door neighbor to the west, were members of an elite club of Altadena's "finest residences." The two homes were built by brothers Arthur T. and Francis Raymond Welles, who purchased several acres on the northwest corner of the block in the early years of the 20th century.

First Arthur built *Rosewall*, a grand Craftsman-style home, at the corner of Mendocino and Raymond in 1912. Its designer, George J. Webster, remains somewhat mysterious; he arrived in California in 1904 from Uruguay, was first a rancher and then worked for the Greene brothers architectural firm for a few years. He designed about 30 residences in Pasadena and Altadena around World War I before disappearing from local records. He died in San Juan Capistrano in 1945.

In February 1911, Arthur joined with neighbor Frederick O. Popenoe and his son Wilson to form a corporation, the West India Gardens (WIG), for the propagation of subtropical fruits. Arthur helped to finance it, and incorporation papers specify that he was secretary and treasurer of the venture, capitalized at \$25,000. Frederick managed it and had the horticultural knowledge. How the men met and decided on this project remains unknown; Arthur generally goes unmentioned in accounts of WIG history.

Meanwhile, Arthur's brother F.R. and his wife Anna hired

prominent architect Myron Hunt to design the *Villa Carlotta* as their retirement home next door. The 7,000 square foot Mission Revival-style home was completed in 1917, one of the first homes in Altadena with electricity in its original plans. F.R. had lived and directed Bell Telephone Manufacturing in Europe for over 30 years, and asked Hunt to incorporate many details of his family's estate in France into the new home. The library paneling, high ceilings, and very tall windows are among the common features of the two. The Welleses proceeded to enjoy an urbane existence for the next several years, mainly in Altadena, with frequent visits to Europe.

But with the Depression, one of the Welles's daughters (like her mother, named Anna) and husband Wylie Brown lost everything, and moved from Texas with their four children to live with her parents in Altadena. Their youngest child, Robert, was born at the Huntington Hospital in 1932 soon after this move. The same year, another of Frederick Popenoe's grandsons, David, was born around the corner at Ahuacatlan on Marengo. The two boys attended different schools, however, and had limited contact. David remembers visiting the *Villa Carlotta* only once, for Bobby's birthday.

Perhaps sharing their home with a lively family of seven did not fully accord with F.R. and Anna's retirement plans. What is known is that in 1934 they returned to live full-time at their home in France, where they both died. In 1937 Wylie Brown acquired a cattle ranch and decamped back to Texas.

Anna Welles Brown, however, remained in Altadena, involved in family and civic affairs. Her brother Robert and his family had moved in one door east, to the elegant Roland E. Coate-designed Mediterranean home their father had built in 1926.

A third Welles sibling, Carlotta Welles Briggs, returned with her family from France during World War II, and purchased a home a few doors away at 2725 Vischer Place. Including Aunt Emma Welles Barton, who lived on the northeast corner of Mendocino and Santa Anita, there were five Welles households in the neighborhood at this time.

After her children had grown up and moved away Anna Welles Brown befriended a young mother, Dorothy Hall, on nearby Mariposa Street. With her financial backing, she arranged for the Hall family to buy *Villa Carlotta* in 1956. Anna moved to a 4-bedroom 3-bathroom “back house” on the property in the block’s interior, accessed via an old rail right of way off Marengo Ave. She lived the rest of her life there, in relationship with her former home and its new family — Dorothy and Sherwood Hall and their two children. In 1965 the Halls demolished the Welles’s beautiful three car garage with adjacent workshop and apartment above, subdivided the back of their property, and built two spec houses. These, today 238 and 240 Mendocino Street, are accessed down a long driveway next to *Villa Carlotta*.

By 1995, Dorothy Hall was widowed, living much of her time

back East with her son Sherwood. The real estate market was down, and, in a woeful state of disrepair, *Villa Carlotta* had been for sale for over a year. Altadena Heritage held an event there around this time; former board members recall frantic cleanup efforts to ready a few rooms for their first public viewing in years.

Judie and J.P. O’Neill bought the house as their new project, having decided to move from their Craftsman home on South Grand Avenue in Pasadena. They’d been looking for a fixer-upper in Altadena with more property. This purchase, which had a long escrow, began a relationship between the O’Neill and Hall families. Both wanted to enjoy Christmas in their old homes, so the O’Neills joined the Halls at a last annual holiday “soup” party where Sherwood talked about growing up in the house. Dorothy welcomed the O’Neills, and shared details of her first cup of tea with Anna, and of feeling “chosen” by her to take over its stewardship. She chose Judie the same way Anna had chosen her.

Several Welles descendants also come to call when they are in the area. Bob Brown in particular, who grew up entirely at *Villa Carlotta*, and moved next door to the Roland Coate house, continues to provide family and house history. He is in contact with Judie, and supportive of her current effort to have her property placed on the National Historic Registry.



Arthur Welles built *Rosewall* in 1911.

FROM PAGE 1

neighborhoods, especially old ones, have much in common with ours.

As we ambled around with David on a chilly, clear afternoon in 2013, he recalled names of childhood friends and the houses where they lived, as well as neighborhood trees and outbuildings. We discovered some old concrete bins, remnants of the West India Gardens, a propagating nursery founded by David's grandfather Frederick O. Popenoe. The nursery occupied much of the block from 1911 until 1920, when it was sold and subdivided.

This one block in central Altadena holds a lot of history, as do many others. Its residential epoch started in the teens and twenties, when grand architect-designed "residences" and aspiring mid-size homes were built alongside modest bungalows and Janes Cottages. In the mid-1920s, Elisha P. Janes began construction on 300 of these cottages from Marengo Avenue west in several Altadena neighborhoods. He completed perhaps 100 before the real estate bubble of 1927 popped in Southern California. These cottages were among the country's first mass-produced homes for which the builder acted as architect, banker, marketer, real estate agent, and landscaper.

Janes left Altadena abruptly, fleeing creditors and leaving 200 houses in states of semi-construction. Our block was "completed" with post-war infill homes, some secreted on

deep flag lots, and Janes cottages finished off with greater variety than their creator had in mind.

David told us the neighborhood was uncommonly diverse in terms of income and house size when he was a boy. The fact that Altadena never incorporated, or had a local government engaged in city planning, probably explains the unusual mix of lot sizes, which even today range from 6,200 sq. ft. up to two acres. Layer in more years, and our neighborhood, like most of Altadena and Southern California, has become racially diverse as well.

In this edition of the Newsletter, look for David Popenoe's memories of growing up in Altadena in the 1930s and 40s, along with early photos he sent.

Local novelist Michelle Huneven has contributed a piece about F.O. Popenoe, the famous nurseryman and horticulturalist, and his son Paul, who lived here most of his life. Huneven lives in one of the flag lots carved out of Popenoe property. Judie O'Neill writes about the lovely 1917 Myron Hunt-designed *Villa Carlotta* on Mendocino that she and husband J.P. purchased in 1995 (members may remember it as the site of the AH 2013 Holiday Celebration). She focuses on the life and times of the original owners, the Welles family, who put down stakes here in 1911 and joined Altadena's aristocracy. Historian Michele Zack writes about the early days of our 1922 Mediterranean house designed by artist Frank Brown, and its subsequent artist owners, Junius and Bettina Martin.



Aspiring homeowners thronged to the opening of Elisha P. Janes' new cottages.

HAHAMONGNA'S FUTURE?

by Mark Goldschmidt

Members of Altadena Heritage who attended our annual holiday meeting at the Villa Carlotta last December voted to send a letter to Los Angeles County Department of Public Works commenting on the draft EIR for planned sediment removal from Hahamongna Watershed Park, a.k.a. the Devil's Gate Reservoir. No one doubts the need to remove sediment from the basin, but in our letter, we listed nine questions about how the design and implementation of this project have been proposed. Hahamongna may belong to Pasadena, but it is also Altadena's back yard, a place thousands go to recreate each year—to hike, walk dogs, ride horses, and to get in touch with nature—and it supports a lot of non-human wildlife as well.

Current plans calls for moving 4.2 million cubic yards of soil, gravel and rock via the 210 freeway to Irwindale in a concentrated operation, each truck and trailer loaded and dispatched every two minutes, eight hours a day, six days a week for nine or 10 months a year for three to six years. The basin would be transformed into a huge depression ready for the coming half century of alluvium.

Will this save downstream property from flooding? Altadena hydrologist Dr. Norman Brooks, Cal Tech emeritus, who has done extensive studies of water and sediment transport in the front range of the San Gabriels, did some calculations. He says that the Devil's Gate dam is a debris basin designed not for flood control but to retain sediment. Dr Brooks believes that in a major series of storms the amount of water it can hold will probably be insufficient to mitigate down-stream flooding, and suggests that safety strategies other than massive sediment removal are likely to be less expensive and more effective.

Instead of the proposed, huge, one-time engineering project, we join others who support a slower, more sensitive approach:

- Remove a significant amount of sediment each year over the next 10 years or so; after that, remove more as needed—it is certain that there will always be more.
- Schedule excavation and run trucks at times when impact on traffic is reduced, as when school is out of session.
- Phase operations such that large areas in the basin will be available for recreation and wildlife even as debris is being carted off.

Single-goal civil engineering projects belong to the past; today, multiple beneficial uses are the goal, especially in congested urban areas.

One more thing we wonder about is a five-mile-long 30- to 36-inch pressurized pipeline is proposed for installation under Woodbury Road and New York Drive to pump water retained during large storm events from Hahamongna to the Eaton Canyon Spreading Grounds. The idea is to take the water that would flow out to sea via the Arroyo Seco to a place where it could infiltrate into the ground. However, we have doubts. Flows are erratic, large pumps used only occasionally are problematic, and excavation for this huge pipe will be almost entirely across Altadena. The project will be highly disruptive, yet the water saved will be credited to Pasadena rather than to our local companies. This project is still in preliminary planning stages, and we at Altadena Heritage will do our best to keep you apprised of developments.

See our letter regarding the Devil's Gate DEIR on our website at <http://altadenaheritage.com/devils-gate-deadline>.

SUSTAINABILITY SERIES FOCUSES ON WATER

Last winter, we kicked off the latest edition of our Altadena: Heritage of Abundance Sustainability Series with a focus on water.

Helping to educate us in the first program was a panel of national-level experts that drew 80 people to the Community Center. Tim Brick, Director of the Arroyo Seco Foundation and former Chair of the Metropolitan Water District, shared thoughts on our water crisis. Rich Atwater, recently named to the National Committee on Water Resources, talked about how smaller projects that better manage local resources are gaining ground. Top County officials in charge of practices and projects in Altadena, Chris Stone and Angela George, rounded out the panel moderated by Michele Zack.

All water companies serving Altadena, including Pasadena Water and Power, attended, and their representatives helped field questions. The response to this event convinced us of the need for more information, and a desire of members and the public to grapple with complex issues surrounding water.

To that end, new Board member Marietta Kruells, assisted by Events Chair Matt-Dell Tufkenian, have since organized

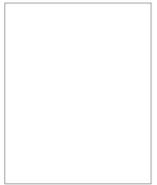
three film/discussion evenings in February, March, and April. Beginning with Liquid Assets, which covered water infrastructure, we moved on in March to award-winning Last Call at the Oasis, a hard-hitting documentary examining national and international water quality problems and solutions. In April, we zeroed in on local history and local water with two short films, Eaton's Water and Rancho La Canada. Local historian Michele Zack and filmmaker John Newcombe led a lively discussion afterwards.

In June, the Sustainability Series will continue with a film and discussion on our local trail system. The Altadena Crest Trail Restoration Working Group (ACTRWG) and filmmaker John Newcombe will present a multi-media program on work under way to connect the valuable network of non-vehicular pathways within our communities.

Next fall, Altadena Heritage will present a workshop: What To Do About That Lawn? Design experts will offer ideas for creating beautiful landscapes that reduce outdoor watering, which currently represents about half of Southern California's total water usage. Stay tuned; date to be announced.



Altadena Heritage
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Altadena, CA 91001
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ADVOCACY AND
PRESERVATION

May 2014



PDF version of this newsletter available on our website: altadenaheritage.com

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