

A Message From Our President Wes Speake

Dear Members:

2020 is off to a great start! Spring is in the air, flowers are starting to bloom as we look forward to another picture perfect Corona Spring. I want to thank the standing room only crowd of over 120 that came out to hear the panel discussion “Corona Citrus Ranches: Stories of Hope, Family and Community.” The Corona Historic Preservation Society has done seven of these panel discussions since 2014 to chronicle slices of Life in Corona to preserve our history for generations to come. We have featured topics such as “Growing up in Corona in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, History of the Corona Fire Department and History of the Corona Police Department. You may now view them all at the CHPS YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwK2-MLYxw0&feature=youtu.be>. See page 3 for the list of 19 videos on the CHPS YouTube channel.

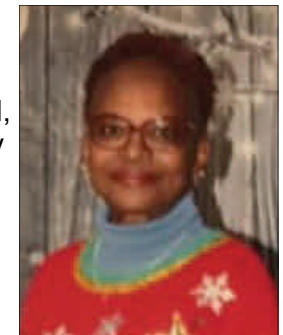
The idea from this recent panel discussion was born a year ago, when I sat down with my friend, Marta Cortez, and learned of her family’s story of coming to Corona, working, living and playing at “the Wash” aka Sage Camp. I grew up in Corona and knew of the ranches but had no idea what it was like to live there. Those of you that couldn’t make it, can watch a video of the discussion when it is posted on the CHPS YouTube channel. The event was presented on February 8, 2019 by CHPS in the Community Room at the Historic Civic Center. I want to thank our panel members: Marta Cortez and Ruben Barriga for sharing their stories and prompting others to share their own accounts of living on the ranches. It was fascinating to hear the memories shared first hand. I hope that others will be inspired to share their stories in the Heritage Room at the Library. These memories can be shared and preserved for generations to come via the Heritage Room’s Oral History Kit. With a valid Corona Public Library Card, the kit can be checked out for six weeks. Included in the kit are a digital voice recorder, microphones, guidelines for interviews, sample questions and more. For more information please contact the Heritage Room at 951.279.3593.

I am happy to report that we have added a new Board member. Please join me in welcoming Shaylene Cortez as our Board Secretary. Shaylene is a lifelong Corona resident with a love for History. She has Corona his-

tory in her blood: her father, Captain Stukey of the Corona Fire Department, her mother Darlene Brooks whose family owned All American Cleaners on 3rd at Main. Her husband Mike Cortez’s family came to Corona in the 1920s working in the citrus industry. Shaylene works as a paralegal for the City of Riverside, is president of the Riverside Legal Professionals Association and is a member of LSI (California Legal professionals and ICAP (Inland Counties Association of Paralegals.) She is not a stranger to CHPS and as a longtime member has participated in countless CHPS events over the years.



I want to take a moment to highlight a recent addition to our board, Amelia Nieves. Amelia has quickly become an invaluable member of the Society. She tirelessly volunteers for various events with a quick smile and a warm heart. She’s truly an asset to the organization. Amelia moved to Corona in 1999 from Lake Forest. She is a retired Research Scientist from Allergan Pharmaceuticals, has over 25 published articles in various scientific journals and holds a patent for an ocular anti-itch medication. She volunteers for various non-profits in Corona; Woman’s Improvement Club of Corona, Day of the Child, 100 Women who Care, Friends of the Library, Inspire Life Skills and, of course, as a board member for the Corona Historic Preservation Society. She is a member of the Elks, Corona 2045 and helps with Corona Senior Center food distributions. Whew!!



Once again the CHPS is helping sponsor the Riverside County History Symposium created by the Riverside County Heritage Association. The 2020 Riverside County History Symposium will be held at the historic Camp Anza Officers' Club in Riverside on Saturday March 7, 2020. I will be attending and will provide a report in the next *CHPS Newsletter*.

Sincerely,

WES



Recap of Panel Discussion on Citrus Ranches By Eric Bergreen

On Saturday February 8th, the Corona Historic Preservation Society held its first quarterly meeting of the year in the Community Room at the Civic Center. The topic of discussion was *Life in the Citrus Ranches: Stories of Hope, Family and Community*. Our meeting opened with President Wes Speake thanking the board members who made the meeting possible and introducing panelists Marta Cortez and Ruben Barriga.



Wes Started off by giving a brief history of immigration. In 1877, as the Mexican government constructed railroads throughout Central Mexico, it forced migrant workers to move north and find jobs on thriving farms in Southern California. Then, during WWI, labor surges brought farmers out of the field and into the workforce where some families were given housing with modern features. Parks and community centers were available to them though their groups remained segregated. By the 1920s, with the help of those migrants working in the citrus orchards, Corona became known as the Lemon Capital of the World.

Our first panelist, Marta Cortez, told our members about growing up on the Sage Ranch, located off of Chase Drive, with other migrant families, many from her own home community in Michoacán. Marta's family moved to Southern California in the early 70s. At the insistence of her mother Corona was chosen over Riverside largely because Marta's grandparents lived here. She started school at El Cerrito Elementary and then later Garretson while her father worked for Foothill Ranch until 1981. She recalled her father's employers as being very good to their workers. During Christmas, gifts were given to all the families children and they were treated to movies at the Corona Theater on Sixth Street. Some of Marta's fondest memories of her Sage Ranch days are enjoying huge BBQ's within her community and going to Del Taco with friends and hanging out at City Park. Her family owns Eduardo's Mexican Restaurant on West Sixth Street.

Ruben Barriga then gave testimony of his own time growing up in a similar migrant community off Cajalco Road, called the Orange Growers Trailers with about a hundred other families. Communities like these were the backbone of the citrus industry. His family moved there from Michoacán in the late 1970s looking for better living conditions. although a couple of his uncles had been here since the 60s. They started in the strawberry fields and moved on to orange groves. Ruben spoke of a very happy childhood in the trailers filled with lots of friends, days spent playing in the creek by his home and hours getting lost in the orchards. His

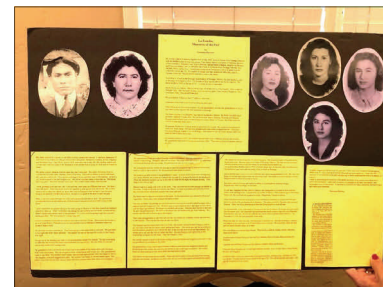
family worked at Orange Heights Fruit Company behind the packing house by the railroad tracks. And though working conditions were segregated and rough at times, medical clinics for workers and their families were provided by third parties. Ruben went to school at Raney Jr. and then Corona High before receiving a scholarship to USC. He is now Supervisor of Community Education at Orange Coast College.



CHPS was honored to host this respectful and dignified narrative, that until now had not been told from an inside perspective. We ended the panel with a Question & Answer for Marta and Ruben where we learned more about their community life and upbringing. Some in the audience stood up and regaled the audience with their own memories of ranches, groves and Corona itself. Quite a few of our members were moved to tears to hear and tell those stories.



There were more than 120 members in attendance for this first meeting of the year. It was another great turnout and another example of what growing up in such a wonderful community really is



Attendees brought family histories and individual photos to share with others.



Save the Dates for Upcoming Events

2020 Vintage Home Tour Saturday, May 9, 2020 1 - 4 p.m.



All properties are not shown here



- The tour is self-guided so you may start at any of the properties at 1:00 p.m.
- Pre-sale tickets for \$20 will be sold by late March at: 1) Heritage Park & Museum at 510 W. Foothill Parkway, Corona, and 2) Allegra Image 360 Printing at 127 Radio Road, Corona
- Pre-sale tickets for \$20 are available online. Go to www.eventbrite.com and do a search for 'Corona Vintage Home Tour'
- Tickets on day of event are \$25 on sale only at 1052 E. Grand Boulevard
- For information: call 951.371.5291 or send an email to VintageHomeTour@aol.com

Tool Show at Heritage Park March 14, 2020 6:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. 510 West Foothill Parkway, Corona



- The 5th bi-annual treasure trove of antique tools and great old stuff for your perusing and buying pleasure.
- **Buyers:** Free Parking and Admission.
- **Sellers:** Vendor spaces still available.

Antiques & Collectibles Faire:

Heritage Park, 510 East Foothill Parkway
June 6, 2020 8 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



Be sure to visit our CHPS Lemonade Stand for **FREE LEMONADE!**

It's icy cold and is made from Corona lemons.

There will be tons of classy antiques and collectibles for you to enjoy and purchase.

Have You Checked out the CHPS YouTube Channel?

The following 19 videos may be viewed on our CHPS YouTube Channel:

- Corona Beautiful Events 1998-2003,
- Corona, California - Then and Now,
- Vibrant Corona Citrus Labels & More
- Beautiful Corona - photos from the Lens of Barbara Becker

Volumes 1-6

- Panel Discussions:
 - Growing up in Corona in the 1940s,
 - Growing up in Corona in the 1950s,
 - Growing up in Corona in the 1960s,
 - Growing up in Corona in the 1970s,
- History of the Corona Fire Department,

- History of the Police Department,
- Life on the Citrus Ranches in Corona,
- Jefferson Elementary School - State Historic Resources Commission,
 - "War of the Worlds" (1953) - film historian discussion

Tales from the Citrus Ranches By Nita Grantham

Founders of our city traveled from Iowa in search of opportunities. They planted a town around a Circle they engineered called Grand Boulevard. Next, like the spokes of a wagon wheel, they planted citrus trees as far as the eye could see. Once the necessary water to grow the newly planted trees was found and huge water pipes built to deliver it, the city of Corona prospered. Ranches such as Foothill, Jameson, Chase, Call, El Cerrito, and others were formed. Corona had found its purpose and that purpose was Citrus.

Establishing the groves and managing them created a need for workers to plant, maintain, fertilize, fight freezing cold weather and bug infestation, pick, load, and pack the bountiful fruit yielded. Many of these laborers came from southern Italy, but primarily from all over Mexico. They brought their families, creating the need for the larger Ranches to build on-site family housing communities or neighborhoods in which they would live. These permanent residential communities were called "ranches." Rent was charged and often a company store was added. Some growers joined together through a farm labor firm, such as American Fruit Growers Association, to house laborers for other ranches. Bunkhouses were added for single laborers and scattered throughout the ranches. Citrus grew more important as did the need for citrus laborers.

As WWII loomed on the horizon, many men were called to duty to fill the need for soldiers and left many ranches and farms without the workers they needed to tend the crops and groves. The U.S. and Mexico enacted a bilateral labor agreement, "Labor Importation Program", better known as the Bracero Program (1942-1964). It provided badly needed laborers for U.S. Farmers and California Citrus Growers. The Mexican- American workers in Corona grew in numbers and in influence.

Marta Cortez, a community leader in Corona, mentioned that her father came to work in the Santa Barbara area with the Bracero Program. He came to Corona in 1971 and she and her family lived at the Sage Ranch, often referred to as "El Wash" in Spanish, on the Corona Foothill Lemon Ranch.

Efren Maldonado's father also came to Corona through the Program in 1944. He stayed until 1948 and then returned to Mexico where he became mayor of a small town, met the girl of his dreams, married and began raising a family. In 1955, he came back to the States and took a job shearing sheep. This work required him to move to many, many states before his return journey to El Paso. He passed through Corona on his way there and decided to stay. A friend told him Foothill was hiring new laborers. He determined this is where he wanted to live and work. He sent for his family. Since he

had already worked at Foothill Ranch when he came to California in the 1940s, he was able to get housing right away at the same Sage Ranch as Marta's family. The family grew and soon there were 11 children. They moved into a larger house with more bedrooms.

The houses at the Ranches, created as a village complex, were frame houses built in the 1920s and 1930s. According to those who lived at Foothill residential ranches, the houses were well taken care of. Yearly inspections were made to determine what repairs were needed. Mr. Hampton took the time to listen to the occupants when they had concerns or requests. The repair work was done well and in a timely manner.

Most of the houses had a garden for flowers and vegetables. Company store credit was given. At the end of the month, the monthly income was reduced by the amount owed. The remainder due was paid in cash and later by check. Company stores went by the wayside by the late 1960s, ending anecdotal complaints of abuse, as Alpha Beta and other markets came to Corona offering a greater variety of stock at lower prices.



Buena Vista Ranch family houses, late 1930s

Renty was paid monthly. During the time the Maldonado's lived at Sage Ranch, the amount went from \$14, then \$34. But at Christmas, the families received 1/2 of what they paid back as a Christmas bonus. There were play areas, ball fields, and Church services on Sundays.

According to Marta and Efren, the Hamptons were "fair, just and honorable to the families." Marta talked about how good the Hamptons were to the children. There were field trips, Christmas gifts, barbeques, movies at the theater. The 5th of May was Mrs. Hampton's birthday as well as Cinco de Mayo. There would always be a barbeque or party and music.

Efren's memories of growing up in the houses at Sage/Wash Ranch begin with these words, "It was like a paradise. At night you looked up and



Tales from the Citrus Ranches CONT'D By Nita Grantham

you saw a million stars. There were pomegranate, peaches, oranges, lemons, and avocados to eat. I could go out the back door in the mornings and would see a clear, bright blue sky, the mountains beyond the fields of of groves that seem to be non-ending." And, he added, "there was never a shortage of friends."

Living in the cottages, as they were also called, in these self-contained communities, provided a plethora of



Building at Sage Ranch community served as a meeting hall and school room, grades K-2

friends for boys and girls alike. The boys came up with the simplest things to entertain themselves. Imagination was not a problem. They always used what they had at hand to create fun. Soapbox races were popular. But where did they get soapbox cars? The answer is a packing crate, a rod available at the camp office, some nails, a hammer, and tires from a dump area where people would throw away "things" from refrigerators, old shoes, tires, wheel barrows and almost anything you could think of. One never really knew what would be there on any given day. These races probably made the Indy 500 look like child's play. Or is that the reverse? Nonetheless, fun was to be had and there were lots of crashes.

Gathering lemons that had fallen off the trees provided ammunition for "war" from the top of the wind machine or propeller machine, as the boys called it, with those on the ground who also had lemons. Games of Tag, dodge ball, playing on top of the stumps of Eucalyptus Trees (these were the safe places in games of tag) provided fun for many afternoons. Another game "Hide the Belt" would be played on Sundays after church. Whoever found the belt was like the king of the hill and had all the power.

According to Efren, there was always something to do, the boys were never bored and there was no traffic. They had clubhouses made from topped grapefruit trees. The name given the one at Wash Ranch was "10

Tree Club". Gilbert Maldonado mentioned this one where many good memories were made.

Ben Rivera talked about making slingshots from a pruning branch with a "V" taken from a tree. From the "dump" they would gather the tongues from shoes, and inner tubes from discarded tires. Then cut the inner tube into strips, for the "sling" and use shoe tongue for a "rock" holder. They would shoot quails and take them home for their mother to cook for dinner.

Ruben Barriga lived at the Orange Groves Trailer Park on Temescal Canyon Road (old California Highway 71) in El Cerrito. He offered similar stories of how they would make up games and play them until dark. He remarked, "It is sad our children and grandchildren won't even understand how much fun we had."

The parents of these young people taught their children the values they brought with them and are to be admired. Efren, who looked up to his mother and father with great respect, talked of their work ethic, their kindness as neighbors, never wanting to accept handouts. He told stories about how hard his dad worked in the groves and how proud he was of what he accomplished each day. His Dad valued education for his children. He even made them go to summer school because that meant they would learn more. His mom always took care of everyone. It was a busy house with so many children, but all were loved and valued.

The residential ranch communities are all gone now, but the memories live on.

All photos courtesy of Corona Heritage Park & Museum



Children from Sage Ranch circa 1938

Many thanks to Noella Benvenuti, Corona Heritage Museum, Curator and Jennifer Marlatt, Corona Public Library, Heritage Room Librarian

Update: Historic Site Markers

By Rich Winn

CHPS Historic Site Marker No. 3, marks the area where City Marshal Grant C. Alexander was murdered in 1913. It is located in the south end of the 500 block of Howard Street. It was constructed by Boy Scout Blaine Winn, as his Eagle Scout project, and dedicated on July 10, 1996 as an official event during Corona's centennial celebration.

When it was discovered that the description of Marshal Alexander's murder was incorrect on the bronze plaque, After 20+ years, another Scout proposed correcting the marker text on a more visible granite plaque on an elongated podium styled monument.

In December 2019, Life Scout Logan Ferrick, removed the incorrect bronze plaque



and rebuilt the monument to a more vertically oriented podium style. A granite marker plaque was placed with corrected text on January 22, 2020. An image of the restored marker can be seen immediately below. A QR coded tile has been placed on the new marker which will allow visitors to scan their smart phones over it and see a more detailed history of the

event. This QR system is likely to be activated by the end of the year.

A second monument has been constructed by Life Scout Elias Packer to commemorate the significance of the engineering, design and longevity of Corona's 3-mile circular Grand Boulevard roadway as an Historic Dis-



trict on the National Register of Historic Places. This recognition took place on July 14, 2011. The monument is found in the "pocket park" facing East Grand Boulevard between Joy Street and Tenth Street .

The new monument used the base of the earlier monument as its foundation and was constructed in December 2019 and the Marker will be placed in February 2020 when it is delivered from the fabricator.

In early November 2019, two historic markers were placed by the Corona History Association. Due to fabrication/installation delays, they were not able to be

placed during the centennial celebration of the third Corona Road Race in 2016. The first marker identifies the location of the Start-Finish Line for the 1916 race, which was different from the earlier two races in 1913 and 1914.

The site of the Start-Finish Line of the third Corona Road Race on April 8, 1916 was located on West Grand Boulevard near Third Street. The commemorative monument, with descriptive images and narrative text, is located north of Fourth Street In the parkway in front of 319 West. Grand Boulevard. It can be seen at the right.



The second monument identifies the site of the fatal accident in the third Corona Road Race on April 8, 1916,

where driver Bob Burman, his mechanic, Erick Shraeder and local race course guard William Speer were killed. This commemorative monument and marker contains images taken at the scene and a detailed narrative of the incident. It is located north of Sixth Street In the parkway in front of 423 East Grand Boulevard as seen to the left.



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

Karen Alexander
Tom & Cathy Alton
Ruben Barriga
Marta Cortez
Richard & Martha DeBlois
Ed & Joy Dillon
Ada J. Hand

Lee Hansen
Richard & Rachel Hernandez
Helen Hughes
Bret & Lennie Keesler
Life Membership
Marianne Nguyen
Mary Paulson

Jim Pixley
Nathan & Roberta Reed
George & Joan Thacker
Marcelle Turk & Evelina Zadeh
Andrew & Donna Vermette
John Wiles

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>>

Please share this information with others!



Corona
Historic
Preservation
Society

Board of Directors

President - Wes Speake
Vice President - Eric Bergreen
Secretary - Shaylene Cortez
Treasurer - Richard Winn

Directors

Trisha Henson-Cabrera
Chris McCoy
Paula Muñoz
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.

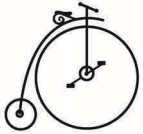
The next meetings will be:

Thursday, March 19, 6:30 at CHPS office

Thursday, April 16, 6:30 at CHPS office



www.Corona-History.org



Corona
Historic
Preservation
Society

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

MAY
is
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
MONTH



**Tour this home & others on Saturday, May 9th
at the Vintage Home Tour**