

**General  
Membership Notice**

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the  
month

At the

Senior Citizen's  
Center

6:30pm start time

**September  
25th**

**5pm to  
8:30pm**

**An Evening in  
Italy**

**Annual  
Spaghetti  
dinner**

# Adobe Dust

JUAN MATIAS SANCHEZ  
ADOBE MUSEUM



SEPTEMBER 2016

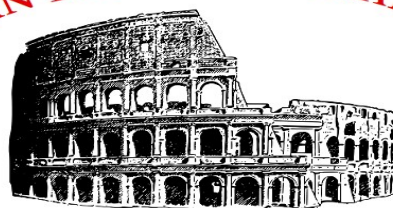
## Message From the President—Chris Vargas

Summer has come to an end once again. We had a few hot days, but the temperature this summer was fairly moderate and bearable as we, docents, sat on the veranda at the Juan Matias Sanchez adobe waiting for visitors. As we head towards the end of the year, the Montebello Historical Society has many accomplishments and endeavors to be proud of this year. Additionally, we are planning for our last fundraiser of the year – *An Evening in Italy* -- a long-time tradition with the Montebello Historical Society, and an opportunity to sit down with friends and our community and share an Italian meal. This year *An Evening in Italy* will be held at the Juan Matias Sanchez adobe and the food will be provided by Salvatore Italian Restaurant, family owned and operated since 1975. Staging our fundraiser at the adobe will allow our organization to show case the adobe and some of our new exhibits. It is also an opportunity to raise funds to support our ongoing efforts and the upkeep of the adobe.

I want to encourage (PLEASE) all of our members to attend our fundraiser on September 25, 2016 starting at 5:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at the Juan Matias Sanchez adobe located at 946 N. Adobe Ave., Montebello, CA 90640. If you can, please invite your friends. Tickets will be available at the adobe. There will be music, artisans selling their artwork, a silent auction and tours of the adobe. Please Join Us! Thank you.

—Chris Vargas

**AN EVENING IN ITALY**



**\* ANNUAL SPAGHETTI DINNER \***

**Sunday, September 25, 2016  
5:00P.M. – 8:30P.M.**



• Juan Matias Sanchez •  
Adobe Museum & Historic Site  
946 N. Adobe Ave, Montebello, CA 90640



\$25.00 FOR ADULTS

\$10.00 FOR CHILDREN



MONTEBELLO HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
A Non Profit 501 (c)(3) Organization

Chris Vargas, President; (323) 819 - 5103  
[www.MontebelloHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.MontebelloHistoricalSociety.org)

## John Matias Sanchez and Wool Production

An article from the Los Angeles Star dated Sept. 27, 1862 reveals to us the disgruntled words of a lesser known fact regarding the wool trade of the 1800s. The author laments that “there is no interest in this portion of the country which has made such vast strides in improvement and progress as sheep farming.” He goes on to state that “Wool growing is now one of the most important interests in the county. A large number of capitalists have engaged in the business, besides a great number of small farmers, and the business is destined to attain proportions which none now can even approximate.” According to the records of wool manufacturers Corbitt and Barker, Juan Matias Sanchez was a supplier to one of the most successful wool producers in America during the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The capitalists referred to above were a group of English immigrants who ran a mill in Philadelphia in the Mill Creek Valley in the early 1800s. J. Abraham Nippes had originally owned this property where he manufactured guns. As recorded in the essay, *Changing Landscapes*, published by Villanova University. By the 1860s, the function of the mill had been converted to producing cotton and also woolen yarn.” The Barker family gained possession of the mill and produced “enough cotton and woolen yarn to become one of the leading manufacturers in the region.” Juan Matias Sanchez is listed as a supplier to the Barkers as were several other sheep farmers in southern California. The capitalists in Philadelphia were all families who hailed from England: Daniel Nippes, William Booth and Thomas Barker (half brothers), Joseph Schofield, and James Dobson. Thomas Barker’s father was himself a cotton spinner and had a long history in England as wool producers. England has always been expert in the manufacture of wool due to the cold climate so these industrious families had no problem cornering production in America. It was not uncommon that a mill could produce 29,400 pounds of yarn a week by 1884 with the introduction of new spinning machines.

As recorded in *Changing Landscapes*, “Thomas H. Barker was a staunch Republican and was a delegate in both county and state Republican Party conventions. “ He was also a member of the Episcopal church, Merion Lodge No. 260, Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge No. 219, Knights of Pythias, and thirty second degree Scottish Rite Mason, as well as the “secret organizations” of the State Grand Lodge of the Odd Fellows and of Pythian Knighthood.” The Masons were extremely powerful and wealthy. Many of the founding fathers were associated with the Masons so it can be said that Juan Matias Sanchez was doing business with very influential people and was able to profit from the growing need for wool in America. “There was always a steady demand throughout the United States for cotton goods in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. By the late nineteenth century, the U.S. had surpassed England in cotton consumption, and England experienced a decline in cotton consumption overall from the late nineteenth into early twentieth century.” Wool and cotton blend materials were highly sought in America for several years. While these English families remained in the wealthy areas of Philadelphia, they utilized the expanding railroad system to acquire wool from the farmers in the less developed agricultural regions such as southern California. It would be fair to say that not only did the sheep farmers supply the needs of the locals but they also played a role in the economic expansion of the wool industry as a whole.

Barbara Garcia

# Local Fauna of Southern California

Since Montebello and the surrounding hillsides of Whittier are still populated with wildlife it is fitting that we should address the topic of local fauna. Again recently we have experienced the coyote warnings that summer brings. We are warned to keep our pets inside and many see wildlife as predators endangering the welfare of domesticated pets. It should be noted that wildlife does not understand domestication and factors such as hunger, thirst and being pushed out of one's habitat are all reasons why we see these menaces. In the animal kingdom it is all a matter of self preservation but survival of the fittest doesn't lessen the pain of a killed dog or cat.

Deer were the most abundant of animals in early California history as recorded in 1792. The arrival of the Anglo population after 1849 caused a great decline in their population due to hunting for hides as well as meat. Also, the introduction of cattle and sheep cut down on food supplies due to overgrazing. A very important fact to remember is how profitable the hides of local animals were to the emerging opportunists of the 1800s. The local beaver population was so greatly hunted by the mountain men and fur trappers that by 1900 they were nearly extinct and legislative action was taken to prohibit hunting for thirty-five years. California was seen as the land of opportunity and with the gold rush every business venture was exploited fully. The introduction of some non-native species which were destructive also brought a series of problems to the local areas. One such example is the European wild boar which was introduced from North Carolina to Monterey County in 1925. They ate just about anything from bulbs to grass roots and insects. They damaged every ground crop and if wounded, they became vicious. Another scavenger introduced from Europe was the opossum, which most of us consider hideous. Being nocturnal animals they are highly adaptable but they are not very aggressive. This animal was also kept as a pet in Britain so they must have been easily domesticated. They do not do well in the cities because of their ability to "freeze up" or "play dead" when they sense predators. That is why they are found dead on so many streets in California, where cars run them over while they are roaming at night.

Bighorn sheep were once a part of the lowland terrain and very adaptable to desert climates due to the fact that they can go for long periods without water. Sheep were highly profitable but were not always the strongest and often fell to disease and death from sudden climate changes. The Basque from highland regions were a great help to farmers in California as they were excellent sheep herders and to this day they are depended upon by farmers in many states with an ailing sheep population. Of most interest is the California bear which is on our state flag. Our two varieties of bears stem from the Northwestern areas and the Sierra Nevada. The black bear should not be confused with the grizzly, which is now extinct. The black bear is mostly vegetarian and seldom kills livestock. We still find it in mountainous areas. The grizzly in contrast had a far more violent nature and a very bad reputation. They were recorded in Native American legends as deities that were to be feared and there were many instances of brutal attacks upon the population. As such, they were greatly feared for their aggression and subsequently killed in large numbers. The last recorded killing of a grizzly was in 1922 in Tulare County. The California terrain being so diverse made it possible for almost all forms of animal life to survive. The greatest threats to their lives were the rapid exterminations brought on by the hunters and poachers and the introductions of some non-native species which preyed upon the native fauna. A testament to our local soils, our varied populations thrived in abundance, both in the animal kingdom as well as the human species.

Barbara Garcia

## **Now on Exhibit: Language of the Fan--Fans from the Private Collection of Kathleen Rabago**

Welcome MHS members and friends. A selection of my private collection of fans is now on display in the “family room” of the Sanchez adobe.

Please come and see—this display will only be on display a short time only. So don’t miss it.

I started to collect fans when my friend Crocetta Consolida went to Sicily in 1982 and she brought back a fan. Several friends, thereafter, started to bring me souvenir fans from many countries, including Paris, Italy, the Middle East and Greece. On display are three types of modern fans: The top row has fans from China and Thailand. The second row has the souvenir fans from around the world. The bottom row (except for one) are all from Spain and made in Spain. Modern fans are almost always made in China.

Enjoy and learn about the “language of the fan” when you come to visit.

The fan was an important fashion accessory in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries

