Journal of the Riverside Historical Society

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Forward

Welcome to the 12th edition of the Journal of the Riverside Historical Society. Through this journal, it is the hope of the Society to bring to the public the latest in research/writing about the history of Riverside. I believe we've continued this tradition with the articles contained herein, and I hope you'll agree.

During 2007, members of the Society were saddened to hear of the passing of Bob Fitch, an ardent supporter of the Society and long-time board member. Laura Klure has penned a fitting memorial to Bob, which leads off this issue of the journal.

In her article Remembering Riverside, author Margaret Green (nee Mitzi Koppert), a member of the first graduating class of John W. North High School, reminisces about Riverside in the 1950s and 1960s.

Susie Champney Clark, a Boston matron of the latter 19th century, gives us a glimpse of her perceptions of Riverside in the late 1880s, reprinted from her book *The Round Trip From The Hub To The Golden Gate*, published in 1890.

As part of the Mission Inn's celebration of 30 years as a National Historic Landmark in 2007, Maurice Hodgen was asked to lecture on the Inn becoming a landmark. His research, put into article form here, is a fascinating look at the Inn as a landmark, with the author arguing that it has always been a landmark.

Finally, I have included a small article I wrote regarding an all-but-forgotten locale in town - Riverside's Bicentennial Grove, meant to celebrate the bicentennial of George Washington's birth. Located on the grounds of Central Middle School, most of it can still be seen today.

I hope you enjoy this latest incarnation of the journal, and will look forward to many others.

Steve Lech
Editor

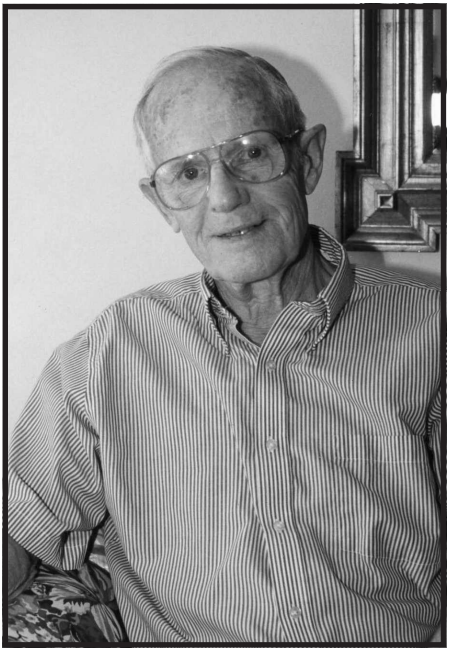
About the Authors

Susie Champney Clark was a Boston matron who visited California as a member of an organized rail tour forty years after the Gold Rush. Her book *The Round Trip from the Hub to the Golden Gate* (1890) describes that rail trip, with special attention to stops at Chicago, Pasadena, Santa Barbara, Riverside, San Diego, San Francisco, Oakland, Sonoma County, the Lick Observatory, Santa Cruz, Monterey, Yosemite, and Salt Lake City.

Margaret Griffin grew up and lived in Riverside from the mid- 1950s until the late 1960s. Her name was Mitzi Koppert in those days. She was in the first graduating class of North High School. She writes family and local history in the hopes of linking generations, and has been published in *Writing Austin Lives,* an anthology of Austin (TX) history.

Maurice Hodgen came to Riverside in 1958 after military service and study at Columbia University. He taught, wrote, and lectured on topics related to his academic training in the history and sociology of education before becoming the executive director of the Community Foundation in Riverside. He has accomplished much research into local history, and has published two books, *More Than Decoration - Asian Objects at the Mission Inn*, and *The Organ at the Mission Inn*. He also published "The Romance of the Raincross" in Issue #9 of this journal. He is currently working on a biography of Frank Miller.

Steve Lech is the current President of the Riverside Historical Society and editor of the Journal. He is interested in all aspects of the history of Riverside County, and has published 5 books and numerous articles about it. In addition to his own research, he publishes The Inland Chronicler, a journal of the history of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and is a member of the Board of the Old Riverside Foundation.



IN MEMORIAM: Robert J. Fitch

by Laura Klure

At his memorial service on June 6, 2007, people remarked about how cheerful and positive Bob Fitch habitually was. He seemed to believe that much could be accomplished if good people worked together. He was a tireless supporter of the Riverside Historical Society; he served on the society's board for more than a decade, including two terms as president. Bob's second wife, Kathryn, also served on the Historical Society board before she passed away in January 2007.

Some of the best words that could be written about Bob were already written by Bob Fitch himself in his 1993 book, *Profile of a Century: Riverside County, California, 1893-1993.* The following text is slightly abbreviated and adapted from the profile he wrote:

"Robert J. Fitch was born March 2, 1923, on the family homestead in Frontier County, Nebraska, the youngest of eight children. After selling the homestead, the family moved to California in 1929, returning to Gothenburg, Nebraska, a few years later. Bob graduated from Gothenburg High School in 1940.

Bob came to Riverside in 1941 to attend Riverside Junior College (now Riverside Community College). Immediately upon graduation he entered the military service and was commissioned an Officer in the Army Air Corps upon graduation from pilot training. During his pilot training, Bob was married in Riverside to Lois Kriege. He served in Europe with the 326th Fighter Ferry Squadron. He was a Life Member of the P-38 National Association.

Following his release from active duty, Bob attended the University of Redlands, graduating in 1948. He was employed by the County of Riverside in 1950 as a Deputy Probation Officer, and he served as the County's first Juvenile Court Referee. He attended night classes at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and received a Masters degree in Public Administration in 1955.

Bob was appointed as Riverside County's first Assistant Administrative Officer in 1963, and upon the retirement of Robert T. Anderson, Bob became Chief Administrative Officer in 1977. He served in that capacity until he retired in 1984.

Bob was active in many community organizations, boards, and commissions. He served as president of the United Way of Riverside, the Uptown Kiwanis Club, the Riverside County March of Dimes, Riverside County American Cancer Society, Riverside Community Foundation, and the Council on Finance and Administration of the California-Pacific Conference of the United Methodist Church. He was a member of the boards of the Riverside YMCA, the Janet Goeske Community Center Foundation, and the March Field Museum. He chaired the

Riverside County Commission for the celebration of the US Constitution's bicentennial, and chaired the Advisory Board for Riverside County's 100th Birthday celebration in 1993. He also served as the public member of the Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission.

He was active in the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, and he sang for many years in his Methodist church choir and in the John T. Hamilton Chorale. He played trumpet in the Calvary Brass Ensemble and tuba in his German band, "The Wisenheimers."

Among the awards he received were the Good Government Award from the Riverside Junior Chamber of Commerce and a commission as an Admiral in the "Nebraska Navy." In 1985 Bob was selected as Riverside Community College's Alumnus of the Year. In 1991 he was honored by the American Cancer Society of the Inland Empire. He received the Service Above Self Award from the Riverside Rotary Club, and his name was inscribed in the Book of Golden Deeds of the Riverside Exchange Club."

Bob was joined in many of his good activities by Lois, who was a secretary at Central Middle School. Lois passed away in 1990. Kathryn shared and volunteered graciously with him in his later years. Bob is remembered fondly by two daughters, many family members, and countless Riverside friends. His memorial gathering was attended by more than 200 people, and it was an occasion for much laughter, as well as sadness. Bob was noted for telling wry, clean jokes and stories, some of which were recounted or distributed in print at the service.

Those who are interested in Riverside history welcome his books on their shelves. In addition to *Profile of a Century*, he wrote a foreword and organized the reprinting of Bynon's *History and Directory of Riverside County 1893-4*. Those two volumes and his 1998 book, *Roman Warren - Cowboy Aviator*, were published by the Riverside County Historical Commission Press.

Postcards From Around Riverside

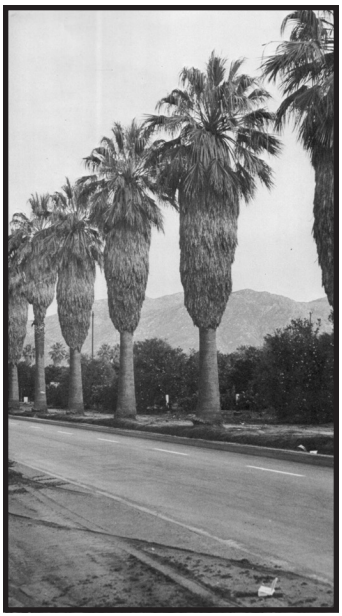
These two views should be recognizable to most who were here in the 1960s and 1970s. The above view is of Marie Callenders, which opened in 1962 at the northwest corner of Merrill and Riverside Avenues. This building has been greatly modified recently. Below is a view of The Railroader Restaurant, which was located at the southeast corner of Magnolia Avenue and Tibbets Street. Guests could dine in old railroad dining cars, and wait in the caboose! This view is from the early 1970s.

Remembering Riverside

By Margaret Griffin (Mitzi Koppert)

I recently attended the 40th Class of 1966 reunion for John W. North High and Poly High Schools. This was a joint reunion because as seniors we were split into two new schools but our high school memories are of both Poly & North.

I had not been back to Riverside in 34 years, after growing up there, and I wanted to see the changes in this special place that helped to shape me into the person I am today. I spent several days after the reunion driving around town remembering my youth and taking pictures. Wonderful memories of yesterday washed over me with every turn. I have put some of those memories on these few pages.



Blaine Street west of the 60 Freeway prior to North High.

When my family moved to Riverside, I was in the second grade and began attending Fremont Elementary. It was located on North Main Street with the campus filling the space between Main and Orange Streets just south of Strong Street. It is still there, but when I visited Riverside recently, I discovered they have built a new office that faces Orange Street. The address is now shown to be on Orange Street. The original classrooms, where I remember learning all the basics, are still there, but they have built a number of new buildings, including a cafeteria.

When I attended Fremont in the late 50s there was no cafeteria. All the students brought lunch from home and ate on the picnic tables, which are still on the playground. When we finished our

lunch, we would play hopscotch or jump rope until lunch period was over. When it rained, which never has been often in Riverside, we would all eat in the classroom and then play board games when we finished eating. Students who lived close enough sometimes went home for lunch and I don't remember any special sign-out requirements. When I was in the sixth grade, I was chosen to be "Office Monitor" at lunchtime. There was just the school secretary and the principal in the office and they went to lunch when the students did. They assigned sixth graders to answer the phones while they were gone and take messages. No one called at lunch because they knew the secretary was gone, but as a sixth grader I sure thought I was special!

During the 50s and early 60s we lived in a house in far north Riverside on Columbia Avenue. (When we first moved there the street was named Santa Ana but it was soon after changed to Columbia). Our house was almost in the country and across the street from a chicken ranch.

Mom would usually wait until my brothers, sister, and I got home from school to do her errands and shopping. Some days we went to the dairy, which was a couple of blocks west on Columbia Avenue. We would drive up in front of the barn and there was a shop where they sold milk and other dairy products to the public. The milk was pasteurized, but it was sold in glass bottles and was definitely fresh. While mom was buying what we needed, we would watch the cows being brought in from the fields to be milked and then complain about the smell of the cows. Riverside has grown a lot since then and I was not surprised to see, on my recent return to town, that houses have replaced the dairy.

If we needed eggs, we would stop at the egg ranch next. There was a small farm that sold fresh eggs on Main just north of Columbia. Mom would check with the Japanese lady who sold the eggs to see if she had any "Pee Wees." They were very small, and of course cheaper, and Mom was always on the lookout for a bargain. While Mom checked for the availability of the eggs she wanted, we would look at the chickens in their chicken wire pens. It was fun to see which ones had laid eggs that day and to try to figure out what size they were. With "progress" the egg farm is gone too. My grandchildren have to learn in school where the milk

and eggs they eat come from. I learned by helping Mom buy them at the source. Call me old-fashioned but I am glad I grew up when I did and also happy to have known Riverside in "the good old days!!"

If we needed a few things to finish dinner, Mom might send one of us to "The Market House" on our bike. It was located on La Cadena Avenue. On my recent trip to Riverside, I discovered that there is an industrial center where the shopping center used to be. Back in the late 50s there was a grocery store in part of a building with assorted merchandise sold in a small store next to it. We usually took our bikes right in the store. There were several other stores in the shopping center. I remember a beauty shop and Simmons Drug Store. Mr. Simmons was called in the middle of the night, instead of the doctor, on more than one occasion. Once, when my sister and brother took a large bottle of baby aspirin because they tasted so good, it was Mr. Simmons who looked them in the eye and told them, in no uncertain terms, that they would take some medicine to make them throw up even if they didn't like the way it tasted!! Mr. Simmons was not always popular after that, but they took the medicine.

During the summers of those elementary school years, Riverside offered excellent activities to occupy children. One of my favorites was the PTA summer film series. Every Thursday afternoon the PTA presented a different movie. We saw The Little Rascals, The Three Stooges, Shirley Temple and *Heidi*. At the start of every show there was a cartoon. We didn't appreciate how fortunate we were to see all of these great movies at the Fox Theatre.

Mom would drop us off in front of the theatre and I would enter with my brothers and sister and any neighborhood kids who came with us that week. I walked through the lobby to the concession stand without even being aware of the magnificent surroundings. I just wanted to purchase a Charms sucker. For a dime I could buy a sucker big enough to last the whole movie. Others might buy popcorn, but I always bought a red lollipop and sucked it, never chewing, until the sucker and the movie both were done.

Later when I was in high school, and for a few years after that, I went to the Fox and sat in the balcony so I could smoke. I think smoking was

allowed in the balcony, but I am not sure. I only know I smoked there and if I was with a boy I liked . . . well let's just say that was one more reason to sit in the balcony! I have lots of great memories of the Fox Theatre and I applaud the group trying to restore it.

Another thing I looked forward to ever summer was the day camp that was put on by the City. It was held in Fairmount Park and we had a ball! We did arts and crafts, put on skits, sang camp songs, and ate our sack lunches on picnic tables next to eucalyptus trees. On Fridays, as the culmination to our week of fun, we got to ride a horse and maybe ride the carousel at the amusement park.

Lovely summer evenings also were spent at Fairmount Park. Mom would pack a picnic and we would take chairs or a blanket and head for the park. We spread out our gear in front of the bandshell and listened to music while we played and looked at the stars.

On my recent trip to Riverside, I spent a Sunday afternoon at Fairmount Park and found it much the same as I remembered it. Young children played on the playground and fed the ducks. Older kids caught guppies in cups. Men were fishing in the lake. The lake looked somewhat polluted, but the water was grungy looking in the 50s. I know my mom told us that if we ever managed to catch a fish we should throw it back because she wouldn't cook a fish that had been caught there. The bandshell

is still there. I didn't see the amusement park and the boathouse was closed. It is a treasure that Riverside needs to appreciate. Take a stroll through Fairmount Park the next time you get a chance.

On Sundays we attended church. In fact, we were usually at the church several times during the week. We had moved to Riverside, instead of another Southern California town, because it was the home of a United Presbyterian Church. The Sunday after we arrived in Riverside, my family sat in the pews of the First United Presbyterian Church of Riverside. The church was chartered on April 27th, 1905, and they worshiped for more than a year at the YMCA and the Odd Fellow's Hall on 9th Street. Their first building was located on 11th and Orange and that is where I can remember sleeping on my dad's lap on hot summer Sundays. I also remember church suppers, Sunday school, and Bible drills.

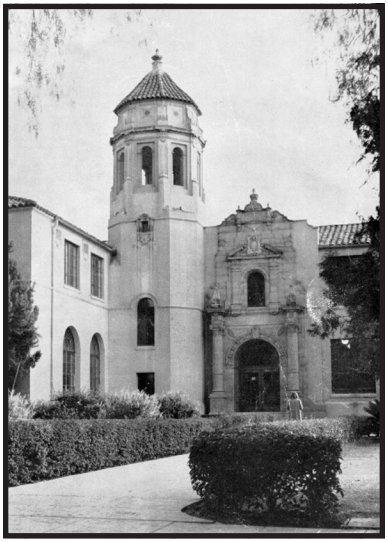
A couple of years after we arrived in Riverside, the church moved to its present location on Victoria Avenue, and became Victoria Presbyterian Church. Riverside County needed the land for new civic buildings, and when they made the church an offer for enough to buy land on Victoria Avenue, the congregation left downtown. The dedication service was held on May 31, 1959. I remember how impressed I was, as a child, that my picture was being put in the time capsule that was put in the cornerstone. The cornerstone was still in its place when I checked during my recent visit.

I visited the church on Saturday morning and as I was taking pictures, Reverend Flag, the current pastor, found me. During our conversation he gave me a copy of the booklet put out on the occasion of the congregation's 100th anniversary in 2005. More information about the history of the church is available there.

Memories of church activities are some of my favorites. The youth group often put on spaghetti suppers and ice cream socials so that we could earn our way to camp. We worked hard and the church always turned out to support us. Going to church camp at Big Bear Lake was a wonderful reward for all the hard work. We climbed Mt. Rubidoux early on Easter mornings for the sunrise service and traveled, as a group, to Pasadena to

see the Rose Parade on New Year's Day. I was happy to see some of the kids with whom I shared those good times at the Poly-North reunion.

My junior high years were spent at University Heights Junior High School (UHJH) on what is now University Avenue. As I found out when I returned, it no longer is there. The buildings are still standing, however, and they are being used as a community center. Across the street from those buildings, and still in business, stands D'Elia's Grinders. When I stopped in they were selling T-shirts commemorating their 50th anniversary They still make and sell the best grinders anyplace. I didn't see the A&W that was once down the street. They had carhops who brought frosty glass mugs of delicious root beer to your car and served them on a tray that attached to your front window.



University Heights Junior High School, 1963

One of my favorite memories of my junior high years was the sock hops that were held at the YWCA for several junior highs in Riverside. At that time, the Y was located on 7th Street (now named Mission Inn Avenue), in a building that has become the home of the Riverside Art Museum. We went on Friday nights and learned to Twist and do the Mashed Potato and the Soupy Shuffle. We tried to act like the older high school kids we knew. The girls would all sit in chairs against the wall and wait, hoping to get asked to dance by a cute guy. If he didn't show up, we danced with each other.

By the time I was in high school we had moved to a house on Spruce Street and I walked home almost three miles every day. I really didn't mind because I usually walked with friends and the walk took us through

downtown. That is downtown before the stores left and before everyone shopped at the Plaza. It was downtown when Woolworth's was on 9th and Main, and Kress' was still there. If I had enough money I would stop at Woolworth's for a Coke. A small one was a nickel and the large size was a dime. We would sit at the lunch counter and forget how hot it was outside and how far we still had to walk as we sipped our Cokes, making the project last as long as we could.

Another of my favorite downtown stores was Pringle's Drug Store. They sold ice cream cones at the back of the store. Sometimes Dad would take us there for ice cream on a hot summer night. There was also Imperial Hardware with hardware on one side and crystal, china, and glassware on the other. Mom would take us there for a special treat and we would "ooh" and "ah" as we looked at the crystal glasses. The Bank of America, where I opened my first bank account, was there too and so were many other stores. Even if we had no money or needed to hurry, looking in all the windows made the walk home bearable.

The Mission Inn was downtown also. It was not being used to its potential even in the late 50s and early 60s. At one time I went to a pediatrician who was located at the Mission Inn. We would admire the way it was built and wonder where all the stairs went when we went to see the doctor. The doctor moved to a clinic on Arlington and lots of the stores moved to the Plaza.

The Plaza has made more amazing changes than any shopping center I have ever known! When it opened the concept of a "shopping center" or outdoor mall was quite new. The downtown stores were afraid of the transition it would bring. It was "the" place to shop for a long time. When an enclosed mall was built between Riverside and San Bernardino, the Plaza fell out of favor. During my 34-year absence the Plaza was somehow reincarnated as an enclosed mall and recently they "unenclosed" it! What a history!

The Main Street that I loved as a child and teenager was neglected for years, but now restaurants and gift shops are opening. Woolworth's is long gone, however, and no one is selling Cokes for a nickel. Time marches on!

Attending Poly ensured that you got enough exercise even if you didn't have to walk home. The campus, which is now a part of Riverside Community College, is hilly and I often climbed up and down those hills between classes. Good and bad memories were made on that hilly campus. I remember passing notes in classes and learning to drive in driver's ed. I heard that Kennedy had been shot in World Cultures class and watched Bobby Bonds, and other members of our team, play football on Friday nights.

During my high school years my passion became drama. The year I was a junior, Poly's class play was "The Crucible." We were so good we were held over, which as far as I know had never been done before. While I was in town recently, I went back to visit the "old Poly" campus and saw Landis Auditorium, now called Landis Performing Arts Center. The stage was being set up for a current production. In my memory I could see my classmates and me in colonial costumes and makeup getting ready for a second weekend of performances and looking foward to the cast party where we would celebrate being part of the best junior class play ever.

In addition to school plays and drama club activities, I acted in a number of Community Players productions. I especially remember two plays we put on for Riverside youth. I was in an edited-for-kids version of "A Midsummer's Night's Dream" and "Aladdin." It was great fun acting in the theater-in-the-round, especially for children. They thought that if we were actors we were stars, and asked for autographs! I was pleased to see, on my recent visit that the theater looks very much the same as it did in the late 60s. I wish I could have stayed long enough to see a play and see what changes have taken place inside.

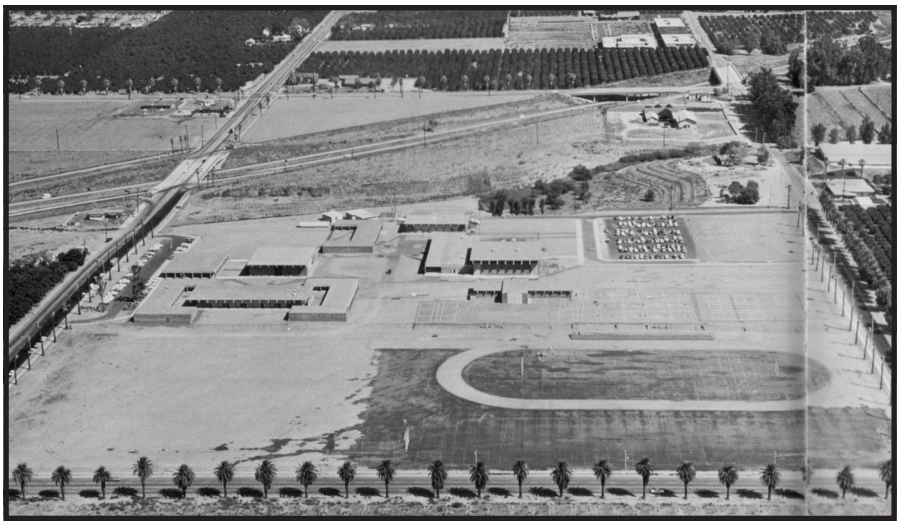
After rehearsals, or after a movie, we sometimes went to Denny's in the Brockton Arcade. There is a small Mexican restaurant there now. As I ate breakfast, during my recent visit, I remembered how I always tried to sneak in barefoot when I was in high school. I usually succeeded.

I graduated from the new North High School in June 1966, after being a part of its first year. I was on the committee that helped to name the school yearbook the *Aurora* and I attended all our football games even if we lost most of them. We produced "I Remember Mama" as our first

North High under construction. The view is to the northwest, with the 60 Freeway is the upper right, Blaine Street across the top, and Chicago Avenue in the upper left.

school play and I did make-up for that. We traveled to Disneyland for our senior "ditch day." Senator John Tunney spoke at our graduation.

So many random memories came back to me during those few days that I spent in town recently. I remember smelling orange blossoms in the springtime and seeing the smudge in the sky in the winter. I watched the first freeway in town being built. It is now Interstate 215. I remember fondly, my first kiss with my first love. So many important parts of my life happened in Riverside. The good and the bad of my childhood and youth are all part of the Riverside I remember so fondly. I will come back, and I doubt if it will be 34 years before I do.



The new John W. North High School, September 1965. This view is to the east, with Blaine Street on the left, Linden Street on the right, the 60 Freeway running diagonally across the top, and Chicago Avenue on the bottom.

Riverside

by Susie Champney Clark

Editor's Note - This essay is the author's description of Riverside as told in her book The Round Trip From The Hub To The Golden Gate, *published in 1890.*

PASADENA has a twin, and her name is Riverside. They are both "in verdure clad" right royally, and possess many attributes in common, resembling each other more closely perhaps in age, in rapid growth, and many minor characteristics than any other two cities of California. Pasadena is much the larger place; and while conceding to it a superior situation, a beauty of adornment, and a home-like charm found nowhere else, we must grant to Riverside the palm of fruit-culture. The acme of orange-fruitage is certainly attained here, both in extent and in quality. The orchards are indeed "groves," the trees being so large and full as to completely overshadow and hide the residences, which we know exist somewhere in their green depths.

Riverside is situated in San Bernardino County, seven miles from Colton. This county, by the way, is the largest in the United States. Within its borders fifteen States the size of "little Rhody" could be placed without crowding. The Santa Ana river runs through the neighborhood, hence the name—Riverside—chosen for the settlement in 1871, when the gigantic scheme for irrigation was begun. The soil of Riverside is a red clay mixed with sand—washed probably from the mountain, —a most unpromising, sterile-looking soil, but needing evidently only a little scratching and a plentiful supply of water to prove itself especially adapted to fruits of all kinds. Energetic labor was not lacking in the early settlers of this happily chosen locality, and their canal system of irrigation challenges the admiration of every visitor. The river above the town was tapped, and two cemented canals constructed, twelve and fourteen miles long, ten to twenty feet wide, from which sub-canals (100 miles of them) surround every block, with gateways through which the water can be admitted to the grounds from the main artery, at pleasure.

Water is never allowed at the immediate base of an orange tree. Furrows are ploughed five or six feet from the trunk of each tree, and two or three feet apart, making perhaps three furrows between each row of trees, these furrows all connecting with each other throughout the grove, for miles in length, so that when the water is admitted from the outer surrounding channel, as it is once in thirty days during the summer, it flows gently round in little rills, where it can be best appropriated by the young rootlets. The system is perfect, and the results correspondingly rich. Over 900 car-loads of golden fruit were shipped from Riverside last year, and it is expected the crop will reach 1,200 car-loads this season.

Lemons, olives, apricots, and pomegranates are also extensively grown, and raisin culture is an important feature of Riverside industry, a quarter of a million dollars accruing last year from this product alone, which is of a quality to compete most favorably with foreign importations. The White Muscat grape is cultivated for this purpose, and if the printer renders the word Mascot, the mistake would not be a bad one, for such it has proved to many a lucky owner. The vines are planted about three feet apart, giving 660 vines to the acre, they are trimmed back to the dry stump each fall, and require comparatively little care. After the grapes are picked they are spread, while still in the field, in so-called sweat-boxes, though they do not really sweat. The moisture of the grape permeates the mass, softening the stems, and after two or three days they are sorted into three different grades of excellence, dried, winnowed, and packed; and most interesting is it to watch one or two hundred girls, with deft fingers arranging the layers in boxes ready for shipment.

Riverside is some seven miles long and two or three miles wide. It abounds in enticing walks and shady drives, the perennially green pepper trees drooping in graceful arches everywhere. Each block contains two and a half acres, near the centre of which the resident rears his home, and sitting there on his pleasant veranda allows the sun to do his work for him, or waits for its golden beams to be absorbed by the numberless trees around him, until they hang with golden balls and his good fortune is assured. Less attention is given here to floral embellishment than at Pasadena, although pretty gardens are very numerous, and masses of

verbenas often border the curbstones. We notice another peculiarity of this California atmosphere. It not only fails to retain the briny odor of the sea, but does not readily transmit the fragrance of flowers. A certain gauge of humidity, or density of the air seems necessary to encourage this subtle floral charm. How intoxicating in our New England gardens is the sweet breath of even one heliotrope, or one stalk of tuberose! Here one has to approach the lusty growth and mammoth petals closely to invite their familiar fragrance. Tuberoses grow on and on, at their own sweet will; as soon as the flowers of one bulb have passed, another stalk springs up to take its place.

The show-card of Riverside is of course Magnolia Avenue, the finest drive it is claimed in the world. To reach it, however, a drive of three miles from our pleasant quarters at the Glenwood is necessary. Back of Riverside as at Pasadena is an arroyo, or valley, 40 feet deep and a quarter of a mile wide. Crossing this, we reach a portion of the town known as

MAGNOLIA AVENUE, RIVERSIDE, CAL.

Brockton square, because its residents are all natives of that thriving city of Mass. Next comes a strip of Government land, a mile wide, and then the tract named by some New York investors, Arlington, through which the beautiful avenue runs. Its width of 132 feet is divided into a double drive by a magnificent continuous row of pepper-trees through its centre. On either side, and between the drives and the 20 feet wide promenades, is a varied growth of trees and palms, evergreens, the eucalyptus, which unless trimmed grows 8 to 15 feet in height every year, the beautiful gravilia, and at the four corners of each intersecting avenue, a magnolia tree. Extend this vista, flecked with its enchanting lights and shades, its sunbeams crossed by waving branches, for ten miles. Imagine on its outer borders a thick green hedge which encloses residences that here find frontage, or orange groves that are simply endless in every direction, their glossy green boughs weighed down with their wealth of ripened fruit, and one can readily believe it all seems too lovely to be true, like an illusion of some magician's wand.

Yet a few miles away, overlooking this valley, rise the San Bernardino mountains which mark the boundary line between fertility and sterility. Janus-like they stand, looking down on one side upon all this verdure and wonderful productiveness, on the other side upon 23,000 square miles of desert waste stretching eastward and northward in alkaline plains, sulphur deposits, and arid barren sands.

The Beginning Of A Landmark

by Maurice Hodgen

Light-hearted festivities at Riverside's Mission Inn filled the evening and echoed into the night of October 30, 1977 as local residents rejoiced at designation earlier that year of the Inn as a National Historic Landmark.[1] The glow of both events still lingers in memory, fondly recalled at the Inn and in Riverside some thirty years later.

For all those rejoicing into that October night, and for others learning of the honor, the National Historic Landmark imprimatur appropriately endorsed what they had long known of the Inn's intimate ties to local business, culture, and the past. Many also knew about distinguished visitors to the Inn, including presidents of the United States and leaders in commerce and culture. Landmark recognition, they thought, was long overdue, and to them its coming brought a slim added ray of hope amid what looked like an uncertain future for the decaying hotel.[2]

But local sentiment, no matter how potent, does not assure National Historic Landmark designation. Federal criteria guide, and those that guided the 1977 certification demanded exceptional cultural, architectural and historical significance far beyond local appreciation to affirm national importance.

National Landmark status was and is relatively rare: there are fewer than twenty-five hundred such Landmarks in 2007, though many more have been nominated over the years. By being named a National Historic Landmark (NHL), the Inn joined an elite company including Mount Vernon, Monticello, the Empire State Building, and, in California, the Hearst San Simeon Estate, several Franciscan Missions, and San Diego's resort Hotel del Coronado. The May 1977 announcement made only six national certifications among some ninety nominees considered that year, adding the Inn at the time to the seventy-seven other Landmarks in California.[3]

By 1977, the Mission Inn's seventy-four-year narrative included evidence consistent with the several Federal criteria of qualification - direct

connection with significant social and cultural events in the city, the county, and the state. But the hotel's outstanding design and construction, however varied its architectural motifs, proved especially persuasive.

The May designation, followed by the October celebrations, spoke also of something long and widely believed locally about a then sadly deteriorating Inn. That something is the focus of this essay, which explores landmark beginnings. The Federal process of evaluation based on NHL program criteria was crucial, of course, and indeed determinative. The perspective here, however, looks behind that, focused on Mission Inn characteristics of form and content, the program for guests and influence in the wider community that from the first years combined to allow early and repeated imputation of landmark status, a perspective confirmed in the 1977 NHL certification.

Two questions frame what follows about the beginning of landmark status for the historic Mission Inn in Riverside California. The first: What changed, architecturally, socially and culturally at the Inn itself and for its community of guests and local residents with each physical expansion between the opening of the New Glenwood in February 1903 and the completion of the Rotunda Wing in 1931? And the second: What part of a landmark definition was affirmed at the Mission Inn with these changes?

The Inn was constructed over almost three decades, replacing the original twelve-room Miller home, the Old Adobe as it was called, and a congeries of hotel buildings known together as The Glenwood or the Glenwood Cottages. These all had occupied part of a two-and-a-half acre city block in Riverside bounded by Main, Sixth, Orange and Seventh Streets, now Mission Inn Avenue. The first new construction, called the New Glenwood, was occupied in 1903. There followed the Cloister Wing on Orange Street, occupied in 1911. Next came the Spanish Wing on Sixth Street, 1913 - 1928, and last of all the Rotunda Wing, completed in 1931, filling in the corner of Sixth Street and Main Street.[4]

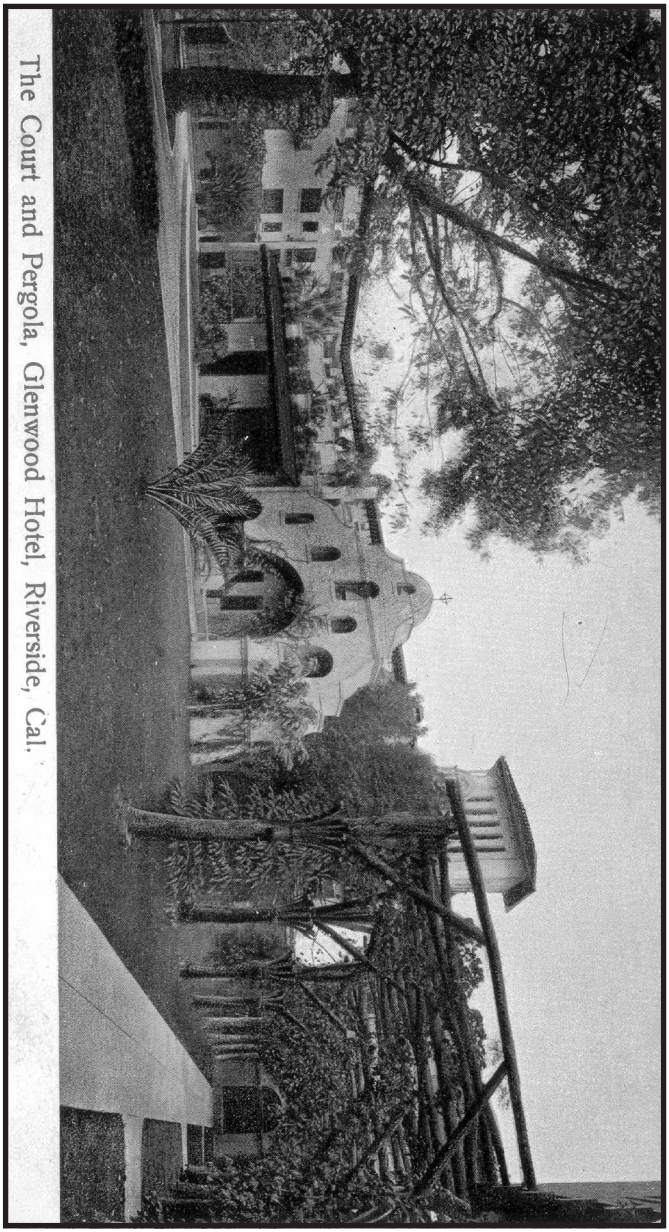
Even though hotel owner Frank A. Miller (1857-1935) lightly explained this irregular progression as his lack of having the money to do it otherwise - "I guess the main reason was I lacked fifteen cents of having

enough to build it any other way"[5] - there appear to be deeper explanations that can illuminate the succession of additions, each affirming something of landmark proportions.

The New Glenwood

The Miller family's 1876 adobe home of a dozen rooms early became a boarding house.[6] Frank Miller became the owner early in 1880, married in June, and promptly began improving guest facilities. But neither the original home, the Old Adobe, nor these additions over the next ten years offered much at all in design or construction to hold the eye. Tourists came to Riverside largely to see the expansive citrus groves, a phenomenon of irrigation and investment. The highly competitive edge Miller achieved among Riverside's hotels catering to these visitors came from the warm family hospitality and a celebrated table. These attracted and retained loyalty and praise from distinguished patrons, including David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford University in Palo Alto, John D. Rockefeller Sr., who came in 1884 and again in 1903, and William and Mrs. McKinley, among others.[7] When Henry E. Huntington assured Miller of financing for a new hotel in 1902, plans prepared by influential Los Angeles architect Arthur B. Benton (1858-1927) guided construction, and with it the removal of most older structures.[8]

Benton's use of Mission Revival architecture assured the New Glenwood Hotel of widely acknowledged landmark status from its opening in 1903. No other hotel in Riverside was similar. Others, inside and out, were much alike and similar to a thousand others built of board or brick, found in all but the largest cities and close to a thousand railroad depots across the country. It wasn't the first public building in Mission revival style architecture in town; that distinction belonged to the 1901 First Church of Christ Scientist just a block away and also designed by Arthur B. Benton. But the prominent adoption of that style of architecture for the New Glenwood, its placement in the middle of a two-and-a-half acre block central to the town, and its rectangular "C" shaped footprint - other hotels were rectangular - made it the distinctive building in Riverside.



The Court and Pergola, Glenwood Hotel, Riverside, Cal.

Mission Revival style was launched nationally in 1893 in the California State Building at the Columbia Exposition in Chicago. By the time he was ready to build, Frank A. Miller was heralding far and wide the virtues of his chosen style: ". . . the brains and the money of our land have decided that this is the style of architecture for this section. . . ." And again, "Those who absolutely know what is good form say this [style] is what we should do."[9]

What did this style look like at the New Glenwood? Observers on Seventh Street saw a long, three storey central building, placed almost centrally and extending the full length of the block, a hundred yards between Main and Orange Streets. The building footprint resembled a rectangular "C", the main entrance placed slightly off center. On either side were two broad residential wings, each with an interior central hallway, extending like two arms to the Seventh Street sidewalks. The plastered outer walls impressed visitors with their plainness and simplicity. Tiled roofs topped the façade; many windows large and small were multi-paned. Balconies hid behind black iron railings, and three or more bells hung within the characteristic Mission arches fronting each residential wing, curving upward from their lower shoulders to a high central curve.

Guests arriving by carriage or stagecoach rode into a curving driveway off Seventh Street, passed under shade trees and a bell laden arch, the Campanario, catching sight on alighting of an entry door below another higher belled arch with a rectangular chime tower beyond. The double entry doors gave onto a lobby that was unusual for a hotel because of the low ceiling, heavy, dark stained beams, and hefty square supporting pillars. A carpeted haven with reception lay just a few steps beyond comfortable Mission-style chairs.

Elsewhere in Riverside, and across the country, most guests entered hotels across a boardwalk, thrust directly into a high-ceilinged lobby that strove for the grandness of big city hotels, often a cavernous room where the guest approached the desk walking on sanded boards or linoleum.

The New Glenwood interior was "a not pretentious but homelike style," said the owner in writing to a friend.[10] The dark interior, the large, cozy fireplace and Mission-style chairs offered an enclosing retreat, an

opportunity for peace and rest intended by Miller and his creative architect, Arthur B. Benton. It was an actual and symbolic retreat from what many saw as the hustling, threatening commercial and industrial world.[11] Floors were carpeted even in what were called the "poorer rooms."[12] Mission style furniture in light fumed oak and window cushions of brown and green burlap echoed presumed Mission feelings; the house colors were green and yellow.[13] Even the least expensive rooms appear in photographs to be spacious, open to sunshine and fresh air. Guest rooms received fresh flowers and baskets of fruit, especially citrus. Bells in the tower rang out an evensong, and citrus trees in their multitudes were in view from almost every window.[14]

Miller and Benton had no wish to imitate the architecture of Franciscan Missions established in California in the 18th and 19th centuries. The intention rather was to use a regional style evocative of what was thought to be the Spanish heritage of California. From Benton's creative mind, plans emerged for a friendly, welcoming structure supportive of the Miller hospitality from the moment a guest came between the welcoming arms of the residential wings that framed the entrance court. In spirit, the new hotel spoke of quietness, rest and hospitality, and in appearance was emphatically Mission Revival.

The building evoked a response from David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford University:

> It is has been left to you Frank Miller, a genuine Californian, to dream of the hotel that ought to be. To turn your ideal into plaster and stone and build us in mountain-belted Riverside the one hotel which a Californian can recognize as his own. I congratulate you on your success not as a hotel proprietor but as a poet and an artist, as one who has done well for California and is deserving of California's gratitude. For no one can leave the hospitable Glenwood without a resolve to come back again to the region where such things are possible, to the region where in time all things noble are possible.[15]

Similar endorsements of Jordan's sentiment about the hotel as regional landmark multiplied over the years. A guest in 1907 wrote his appraisal of the place in the title for his booklet about the Inn: *Days of Peace and Rest, by Those Who Know*.[16] Frank Pollock, railroader and businessman, praised the New Glenwood as "a spot without seeing which no self-respecting tourist can look himself in the face."[17]

Buildings that break with the narratives of their genus can become candidates for landmark status. Certainly the design and decoration of the New Glenwood abandoned the cliches of other Riverside and most California hostelries and thereby became by definition a recognized landmark. In that and other ways the hotel initiated a definition for Riverside, allowing the familiar quip, as inadequate as are most aphorisms: "People didn't come to Riverside, they came to the Mission Inn." In 1985, the genial California state historian, Kevin Starr, concluded that in the Mission Inn, the Mission style had been pushed about as far as it would go, and in so doing put both Miller and Riverside on the map.[18]

Frank A. Miller wrote reflectively to a friend a day after the big opening banquet of April 18, 1903. He had followed the local newspaper reports closely. He had relived his own agonies of delay and expense, of slovenly workmen and the need to do work over, but weighing the whole found that satisfactions tipped the balance:

> In thinking the situation over today as I sit in my room writing . . . [I] believe the venture is going to be a great success. Certainly the architectural effects are worth all we paid for them, everyone is delighted with the simplicity and genuine appearance of the Mission style. Mr. Ripley, of the Santa Fe [railroad] said, 'Miller, you have certainly worked out the most complete and artistic Mission effects of any of the hotel men. . . .'[19]

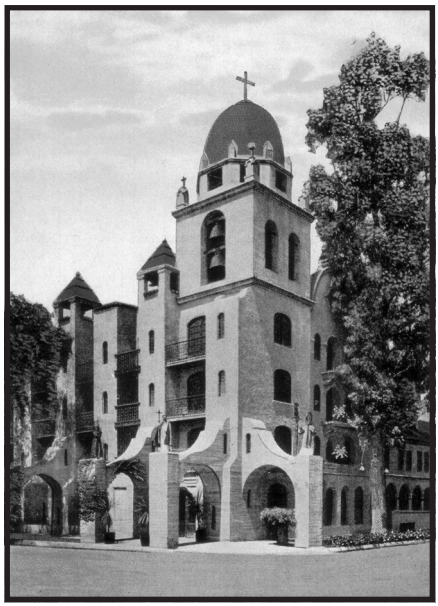
At that date in Riverside and in California the Inn was the only place to have done so.

The Cloister Wing

In 1911, the Cloister Wing was completed, the first major addition to what was by then known as Mission Inn. Its completion brought significant changes in the definition of the Inn and launched new activities that embraced guests and local residents, in these ways adding to landmark status.

The addition, extending the Mission Wing along the whole of the Orange Street block, comprised a large public Music Room, guest rooms above, and a roof garden area used at first for recreation. Excavations soon extended the areas below sidewalk level, making a dining room known as the Refectorio, and the Cloister Walk (now referred to as the Catacombs), an ambulatory with niches for display of artifacts, frequently religious. Outside, and along the length of Orange Street, structurally unnecessary flying buttresses added to the monastic appearance, prompting occasional newspaper reference to "the Monastery" addition.

The Music Room, over a hundred feet long, as the principal public room contained the St. Cecelia Chapel (since moved), the 2,500 pipe Kilgen Organ, and the stained glass triptych memorializing Isabella Hardenberg Miller as Saint Cecelia among Franciscans and Poor Clares. She was Miller's first wife who had died in 1908. Few entered this Spanish baronial hall without noticing the religious motifs of pipe organ, religious banners and stained glass; none would have been surprised to know that weddings, even a funeral, were conducted there.



Many hotels, though none in Riverside, provided musical performances or quiet parlors. But in the Music Room the extent and kind of distinctive religious decoration, symbolism, and programs of religious music redefined the hotel for Riverside and California. These features continued daily for many years, though somewhat shortened until at least World War II.

These frequent religious services, daily for many years, were called "Song Services," a well-known aspect of Protestant worship. Sunday evening gospel hymn singing in the hotel lobby antedated the building of the Music Room, but what was launched in 1911 was more extensive and formal. The services lasted about an hour, open to guests and local residents. All remained seated while the Inn soloist performed, usually a religious song; they heard an uplifting reading, and together sang religious, patriotic or folk songs from the Inn's own publication *Songs of the Glenwood Mission Inn*,[20] musically led by the large pipe organ and a harp. A clearly visible sign, "Please Do Not Applaud" further confirmed the religious nature of the gathering, and, by inference, of the Music Room itself, even of the Wing, called as it was the "Cloister Wing."


Cloister Music Room, Glenwood Mission Inn, Riverside, California.

These Song Services were not performances or entertainments, although concerts and recitals of various kinds were presented from the three-level stages of the Music Room, and for many years on Tuesday evenings guests and community friends glided over the parquet floor, dancing to music from the three- or four-piece Inn orchestra. The Song Services, however, as programmed in form and content for the guests, were religious assemblies, often presided over by the distinguished-appearing Miller son-in-law, DeWitt Hutchings (1879-1953), himself briefly an aspiring cleric.[21]

Elbert Hubbard (1856-1915), skeptical of religion or religious ceremony, lectured in Riverside's Loring Opera house in 1909. Later in the year, he shared his impressions with thousands of readers of his publication *The Fra:* "The most recent addition [at the Mission Inn] is a Chapel quaint and curious, where every morning a simple service of song and praise is heard. Even the Philistines [subscribers in their thousands to his other magazine by that name] enjoy this."[22]

Seasonal religious dramas were staged in the Music Room, especially the in-house produced Nativity Pageant, popular enough some years to require two performances, the first for hotel staff and guests, and another the following day for the community. Easter Sunrise observance on nearby Mount Rubidoux began in 1909, annually gathering an attendance of several thousand. This dawn event continued long after any connection with the Mission Inn was forgotten. This initiation by Miller of a community religious Easter service, however, so soon after completion of the Cloister Wing and its Music Room, was scarcely coincidental.

Even the Mission Inn float in the Pasadena Rose Parade on New Year's Day, 1917, offered specific religious motifs. Spectators might have expected a Riverside entry to flaunt its fame and fortunes taken from irrigation and citrus. What drove slowly by, however, were three Franciscan friars (Miller's son-in-law, the Inn organist, and the long-serving hotel doorman) with other costumed figures surrounding a model of the Inn, an ensemble impressive enough to receive the judge's silver trophy.[23] This public face paraded an Inn identity unmistakably religious (though fanciful) to thousands viewing the parade.

What was launched at the hotel with the Cloister Wing through its name, symbolism, and ceremony, was an explicit religious definition for Riverside's already defining hotel, one admired widely for its hospitality, superb table, and the courteous discipline of its staff. With the Cloister Wing's explicitly religious appearance, decoration, and deeds, the Wing also artfully extended what was thought to be the Spanish and early Californian ethos. Landmark features indeed.

A visiting journalist echoed what many may have thought when he wrote: "What is it that we have come to? Is this a house of worship? Yes. Is it an art gallery? An antiquary [sic] shop? A museum? Is it a hotel? Yes, all of these and more."[24] Not without significance were his only direct answers to his own questions, both affirmative, to the questions about a "house of worship" and a "hotel."

The religious emphasis formalized in symbol and service attracted community members and guests. For their part, Inn guests began to record in letters of appreciation not only the usual thanks for hospitality and restfulness, but their delight in the Music Room religious services, so strongly Protestant among Spanish and Roman Catholic decorations, with the opportunities provided to sing favorite hymns, hear devotional music, and listen to a reader's resonant tones in readings and scripture.

The Spanish Wing

The Spanish Wing emerged piecemeal between 1913 and 1928. From the start there were landmark features, even though there is no evidence, yet, that Miller had planned or even envisioned all the previous construction or what was to emerge by 1932. The wing, when complete, comprised the ground level Spanish Art Gallery, new guest rooms above it, and, if viewed from the interior courtyard restaurant, a topmost row of guest rooms added in 1928 as Author's Row. These rooms opened off a balcony fronted by a parade of towering finials - the topmost fixtures above each balcony column - bleached against the terra cotta brick walls. At one end the new wing made a complex conjunction with the Cloister Wing, at the corner of Orange and Sixth Streets. The other end extended

along Sixth Street toward Main Street, but not to the corner. The Rotunda Wing would later fill that space.

The impulse to this construction came in large part from Miller's awareness that Spanish nobility included art galleries in their mansions, something he observed on a trip to Spain in 1911. He confessed to Archer Huntington, stepbrother of Henry E. Huntington and founder and financial pillar of the Spanish Art Society of New York, that his Music Room in the Cloister Wing was "a mistake as far as it being regarded as a Spanish thing. Everybody who has anything in Spain has an art gallery or some effort of that kind," said Miller, "I want your help." Huntington obliged with measurements, and other information.

Miller still felt his anguish some twenty years later, recalling that he had failed to evoke the Spanish spirit in 1911, and that in doing so he gave no evidence of "having something." He had missed his mark in the Music Room, in spite of any other success realized there or elsewhere. But it prompted him to make amends in a new Wing, to compensate for the earlier failure.[25]

When completed, the Spanish Art Gallery satisfied the Spanish feeling, providing a home for much of a growing collection of paintings, many with religious themes, and a site for temporary exhibits. The 1920 installation in the Spanish Art Gallery of a spectacular 18th century Baroque Spanish altarpiece from Guanajuato, Mexico might have been the final atonement for the earlier omission. This gilded and polychrome masterpiece of saints gathered around the Holy Family, lacking only the Virgin, adorned the Gallery for twelve years before becoming the focal point of St. Francis Chapel. Installation in the Spanish Art Gallery high overhead, behind a narrow balcony, perhaps added to the Spanish emphasis an aura of mystery and remoteness.

This emphatically religious acquisition reinforced the earlier religious emphasis of the Cloister Wing. Added to that, a new interest and provision appeared, confirming an expanding presence of writers and painters at the Inn. Frank Miller and his sister Alice Richardson offered abundant hospitality to writers and fine artists, particularly painters. The Authors' Row and the Spanish Art Gallery affirmed these creative artists while also offering opportunities for guests and local residents.

Among the authors who came to the Inn, Carrie Jacobs Bond, known best for her song *A Perfect Day* (1910), was just one of many. Harold Bell Wright (1872-1944), author of *Shepherd of the Hills* (1907), came in 1919 and in three months at the Inn wrote his *Recreation of Brian Kent.* Owen Wister (1860-1938) visited; his book *The Virginian* (1902) providing the seedbed for the whole genre of western novels. Both sustained the pleasure of their visits with warm correspondence. Wright thought the Inn provided an atmosphere for him better than any other he knew. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), India's notable literary and philosophic oracle, effused over Riverside's poetic beauty, inspired by the charm of the Inn to write some verses.[26] Other literary notables included Charles Fletcher Lummis (1859-1928), and Pulitzer Prize winner Zona Gale (1874 -1938) who visited first in 1903. Hamlin Garland (1860-1940), Edwin Markham (1852-1940), John Steven McGroarty (1862-1944), and Edna Ferber (1885-1968) all came; most wrote during their stays, and on leaving penned their regrets. Jacob Riis (1849-1914), a journalist best

known for *How the Other Half Lives* (1901) and his autobiography *The Making of an American* (1901; 1912) wrote following an early visit, "You good people certainly make it extremely hard for a man to get away from 'the happy valley.'" He repeated this after later visits, saying something echoed by many other writers and artists. Interestingly enough, although the gathering of paintings grew, the Inn had no large collection of books, whether written by its author guests or otherwise.[27]

Painter guests and visitors at the Inn included several California *plein aire* artists such as William Wendt (1838-1911), known to Miller from his frequent vacationing in Laguna Beach and from Miller's advisory board membership at the Laguna Art Association.[28] Both Chris Jorgensen (1860-1935), long-time painter of Yosemite, and Armenian-American artist Hovsep Pushman (1877-1966), stayed and painted at the Inn, adding to their own renown and that of the hospitable Inn.

The gallery of named rooms that became the Authors' Row announced to all an elite cultural emphasis in the hotel, one that drew likeminded local people devoted to art and literature, and signaled hospitality to other creative artists. Certainly the Spanish Art Gallery redressed the earlier omission in the Cloister Wing and in doing so added a cultural dimension in painting and writing to the definition of the landmark hotel. A Riverside Spanish Art Society of 1916 gave wide-reaching focus to exhibitions and sociability and generated income for the Gallery.[29]

Other hotels displayed photographs of distinguished patrons, even named rooms for famous guests, but none of record had a whole tier for authors, and certainly not in the 1920s. Similarly, there were hotels exhibiting artworks as the Mission Inn did in the original Adobe (converted from home to recreational uses in 1903) and in the Spanish Art Gallery. But relationships with artists at the Inn appeared to involve a personal hospitality and public involvement different enough in kind and degree to redefine the hotel, already a place of local and wider distinction in a town lacking a fine arts gallery of its own or a literary focus.

In sum, the landmark definition present in the Spanish Wing arose from the inclusion of formal indicators of art patronage - the author's

rooms, a gallery and the Spanish Art Society - new and different for the Inn and for the community, with particular appeal to high culture and elite society.

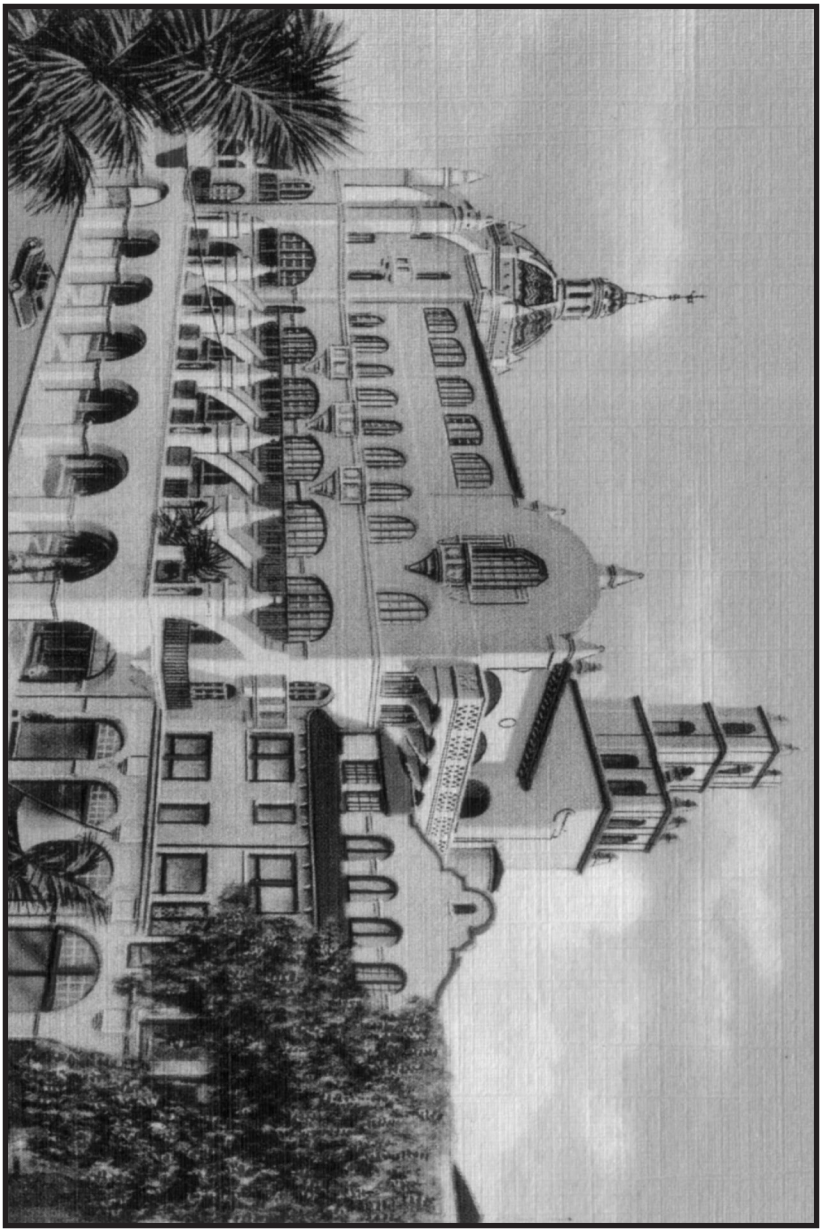
The newly initiated aspect of landmark was this explicit affiliation of the hotel with the works of art and literature, visible not only in construction, but also in the reported arrival and departure of the authors. The Inn was not their only identity, but all found particular welcome and honor at the Mission Inn. Some fortunate few had their names above the door on Authors' Row, a provision unique to this hostelry.

The Rotunda Wing

Just a short time passed between the completion in 1928 of the Authors Row, topmost on the Spanish Wing, and the beginning of construction of the Rotunda Wing, completed for use by the end of 1931. More correctly called Rotunda Internationale, it comprised contiguous areas called the Rotunda; the St. Francis Chapel and its atrio with a small St. Joseph's Arcade; the Galeria; the Ho O Kan and the Court of the Orient; guest rooms around the Garden in the Sky; and street-level retail space. Those were the essential elements, each significant in ways new to the hotel.

Architectural ingenuity and perhaps necessity of design throughout the whole interior space in this wing allowed interesting alternative entrances that invited access by circuitous or more direct routes from unexpected places. Such hidden routes are standard items in hotels providing inconspicuous service, and perhaps that was their justification in the Rotunda Wing. Galleria, Rotunda and Chapel, all inter-connected principal elements; a passage from the Chapel, for example, gave access through the sacristy to the Rotunda and the Galleria; the Ho O Kan opened into the Rotunda and formerly into the Chapel. Some passages were smaller than usual; decorative touches partially disguised others; most were where not expected - combinations of utility and whimsy.

The innovations provided in this final addition to the hotel, and the justification of enhanced landmark status, even at the time, came from the



combination in the wing of functional and symbolic elements that were explicit summations of values central to the hotel, from the owner and his architect. In these ways the Rotunda Wing was unlike other wings of the hotel and unlike any other hotel, at least in the region. These areas of the hotel still convey something special to visitors, most of whom remember clearly the scintillating Chapel, the unexpectedness of Asian areas, and the spiraling Rotunda itself.

Aspects of utility abounded. Office space in the Rotunda assured income to the hotel and service to the business community. The upscale guest rooms on the roof, which included the domed Amistad Room and others around the open court called the Garden in the Sky, extended guest accommodations with activities beyond those available elsewhere, providing sequestered places for relaxation, sunbathing, lounging, elegant leisure, or other semi-private indulgence. Street level shops and meeting rooms, including the Galleria, generated income and provided convenience to social, business and professional organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, and service clubs. The St. Francis Chapel effectively attracted weddings in practical and hugely aesthetic ways. The special architecture of the Court of the Orient and the Ho O Kan attracted meetings of Asian groups, such as the Southern California Japanese Association, as well as providing sales and display space for the continually growing gatherings of Asian objects.

But none of these places was simply utilitarian; each by intention and immediate recognition took on symbolic importance; individually doing much more than merely to extend the facilities of a resort hotel, or as a whole merely providing architectural completion to fill a city block, though the Rotunda Wing did this with distinction. They augmented symbolism elsewhere at the Inn and added a cluster of meanings not found in other hotels. Others coordinated wedding ceremonies and celebrations. None had a wedding chapel so richly embellished as this, with religious text and symbolism. None could match the St. Francis Chapel's medieval choir stalls, gilded eighteenth-century Spanish retablo reaching from specious altar to ceiling, lifesize facial profile medallions of twenty-six saints, paintings of St. Francis of Assisi along the walls, Tiffany windows

celebrating the sacred and secular, and a facade of angular Baroque Estipite columns in grandiose proportions. The Inn's long sympathy for things and people of the Roman Catholic faith permeated the Chapel, the atrio and the Galleria.

In like manner, the symbolism of the Rotunda combined international and peace interests with an expressed religious intention for this office component. G. Stanley Wilson (1879-1958) was the architect throughout. Miller's thoughtful planning of the Rotunda Wing had followed frequent and prolonged contemplation of a painting in the Spanish Art Gallery, a monastic courtyard interior with a spiral staircase, monks pursuing their assigned tasks, all painted in somber tones. Miller had told his architect "I want this picture embodied in steel and concrete. I want the romance, the charm of that painting put into a modern office building." It was to be a realization in concrete of goodwill and the monastic spirit, especially expressed toward Mexico, (and however broad the leap) toward Japan and the Orient generally. In the Rotunda, Franciscan Mission names and the initials of their padres were encoded; international escutcheons affirmed worldwide interests. Elsewhere, the glittering retablo in the Spanish Art Gallery, eight Tiffany windows, and the St. Joseph Arcade contributed to the successful expression of the concept recognizable quite apart from its roots in Miller's personal values.

A similar empathetic combination of use and symbol suffused the Court of the Orient with its Asian style architecture. The adjoining Ho O Kan, a room emphatically Asian in appearance and decorated with Asian artifacts, was used frequently, though not only, by Japanese groups until about 1939. In form, decoration, and use, the Court and the Ho O Kan endorsed esteem for the local Japanese community and for Japan, and testified to a yearning for better U. S. - Japan relations. The artifacts and Asian-like architecture went far beyond decoration or even the life-long values that Miller had expressed, sometimes in the face of local antipathy, to engage a wider internationalism and cultural appreciation.[30]

In this, the final construction of the Mission Inn, utility and symbolism blended, provoking a public accolade for this imaginative project extraordinarily well-realized.[31]

This concentrated display of utilitarian, international, and religious symbols in the Rotunda Wing exceeded that elsewhere in the hotel. It was thus not merely innovative in emphasis, but offered a brilliant and summative restatement - a new facet for the landmark definition.

Visiting architectural writer M. Urmy Sears lauded in 1931 the successful combination of use and ideals following her inspection of the Rotunda Wing. Significantly for its landmark indications, Sears identified the Inn as not merely Riverside's. Her conclusion:

> The location of the marriage chapel between the Galleria and the Oriental Hall, is again symbolic of Mr. Miller's thought of the marriage of art and spirit of East and West at the Mission Inn. Thus again fundamental chords are struck, worldwide in their significance, proclaiming the Inn a truly international institution.[32]

In these ways the Rotunda Wing was in fact landmark in its time, because it restated an almost grandiose definition for the Mission Inn through a combination of the utilitarian and the symbolic, innovative in its intensity for hotels generally. And given Miller's short life expectancy - he died in 1935 - this Wing became a summative expression and defining statement by the owner from his architect, G. Stanley Wilson.

* * *

The official record in Washington D.C. of May 25, 1977 confirmed Riverside's first National Historic Landmark, an event endorsed jubilantly in the city five months later. That recognized status, the result of inspection and research by the National Park Service, gathered up threads of a fabric woven over seventy-four years as each new Wing of the hotel introduced not only physical extensions of architectural interest, but also added new patterns of opportunity for the human spirit. The Mission Wing of 1903 brought a new and enduring regional architectural style among hotels, like little else in Riverside. The Cloister Wing, named in the monastic

tradition, housed emphatically religious decoration and the public worship-like Song Services, among other things. The Spanish Wing sequentially endorsed for the Inn and the community a cultural invitation in an art gallery for temporary and permanent displays, an art society, and homage to popular writers, some fortunate enough to have named rooms. The final addition, the Rotunda Internationale, presented a memorable, even flamboyant combination of the useful and the symbolic, a summative statement of religious and international values expressed in income-generating surroundings.

From the opening in 1903, and with each new construction, the Inn enriched its definition, extending its reach among hotels, into its community and far beyond. Many local residents over the years had enjoyed their new landmark for what they had always believed it to be. They, and hundreds of others, some say thousands, coming to the Inn for the first time that October night in 1977, all reveled in their landmark heritage.

Notes

[1.] This essay is based on a presentation by the author marking the 30th anniversary of National Historic Landmark Status of the Mission Inn, Riverside California, given at the Inn April 19, 2007.

[2.] Chronology and physical descriptions of the Inn are largely from Esther Klotz, *The Mission Inn: its History and Artifacts,* Corona California UBS Group, 1993, and from Zona Gale, *Frank Miller of Mission Inn,* New York: Appleton, 1936.

[3.] Barry Macintosh. *Historic Site Survey and National Historic Landmarks Program,* Washington DC: National Park Service, Dept. of the Interior, 1985. Pages 41, 45, 46, 61, 62, et passim.

[4.] See Klotz. Completion of each Wing was reported in the local papers, the *Riverside (California) Press* and the *Riverside (California) Enterprise,* and often in the *Los Angeles Times.*

[5.] Frank A. Miller, "Notes for an Autobiography dictated at Laguna Beach, March, 1935." typescript.

[6.] Frank A. Miller Diary, November 22, 28, December 9,1876.

[7.] See Joan Hall, *Through the Doors of the Mission Inn.* Riverside, California: Highgrove Press, 1996, 2000. Two volumes.

[8.] Klotz, p. 10,11.

[9.] Frank A. Miller to Riverside (California) County Board of Supervisors, September 10, 1902; Frank A. Miller to E. P. Clarke, September 11, 1902.

[10.] Frank A. Miller to S. Garvetson, October 6, 1902.

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Riverside's Bicentennial Grove

by Steve Lech

When those of us living today think of the Bicentennial, we think of 1976 and the many festivities that took place honoring the nation's 200th anniversary. However, the Bicentennial Grove celebrated a different anniversary - the birth of America's first president.

February 22, 1932 marked the 200th birthday of George Washington. To celebrate this event, in late 1931, a nationwide movement was begun to plant bicentennial groves of varying trees to mark the occasion. Patriotic Riversiders heeded the call, and chose the northeast corner of Central Junior High School (at the corner of Magnolia Avenue and Terracina Drive, now Central Middle School), as the location of Riverside's Bicentennial Grove.

The object of the grove was to allow several different community groups to donate and/or plant trees to beautify a certain section of the town. Plantings were to take place between February 22 and Thanksgiving, and would be done under the guidance of the Washington Bicentennial Tree Planting Committee. In Riverside, this committee was chaired by Ira Landis, superintendent of schools and for whom Landis Auditorium at Riverside Community College is named.

When February 22 arrived, hundreds of people convened on the grounds of Central Junior High. Riverside Mayor Joseph Long helped to plant three Cedar trees, one given by the American Legion Post 79, and the other two by the Aurantia Chapter of the D.A.R. "I am proud to accept these trees in the name of the citizens of Riverside and of their children and their children to come," said Mayor Long in his address. According to Mrs. Leslie Ferris of the Aurantia Chapter, the Cedar trees represented "our patriotism and the patriotism that we hope to display through our children." In addition to the tree planting, a program of prayer and patriotic music was held in the Municipal Auditorium that afternoon (Riverside *Daily Press*, February 23, 1932).

In March 1932, the Rubidoux Chapter of the D.A.R. dedicated eight trees farther back from Magnolia. This addition to the grove was

highlighted by a plaque which is still visible on the school grounds. It indicates that the trees were planted in recognition of George Washington in his bicentennial year, and was a major addition to the grove. In looking at the site today, there are some trees that appear to have been planted in two rows, and seem to be of the correct age. Undoubtedly some of them are the trees planted in 1932, and by the looks of things, others are of more recent vintage.

Why was Central Junior High chosen as Riverside's grove site? Unfortunately, the newspapers of the time don't say, but a clue may come from the other grove that sits on Central's campus. At the corner of Magnolia and Ramona Avenues, there is a metal plaque indicating that the trees there were planted on July 1, 1929 as a memorial to the veterans of the Union Army. This planting was done in the waning days of the GAR, as Civil War veterans reached their 80s.

With two different sets of community trees on its campus, Central Middle School was definitely a source of pride to Riversiders of 75 years ago.

Riverside's Bicentennial Grove, on the grounds of Central Middle School. View is looking west from Magnolia Avenue.

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