



Juan Matias Sanchez

# THE ADOBE DUST

Montebello Historical Society

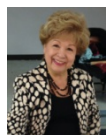
SANCHEZ ADOBE HISTORIC SITE & MUSEUM

www.montebellohistoricalsociety.org

March

NEWSLETTER

2015



## Message from the President

We had a wonderful meeting in February. Guest speakers Jon Reed and Kathleen Rabago were very informative. Their presentations were a big hit and enjoyed by all.

We are making progress as we continue to refurbish the museum. We encourage everyone to come and visit and see how lovely things are coming around.

The board is looking for fundraising ideas from the membership. We ask anyone with ideas on how we can raise additional funds to please call, or share your ideas in person at the next meeting. I wish to thank you all for the support you give to the Juan Matias Sanchez Museum.

In April, we are looking forward to a visit from Mesrobian school elementary students as we host a history day event. If you are interested in touring the museum, let us know.

We are also planning on hosting a day trip tour of the Workman-Temple Homestead Museum in the City of Industry. The tour will be for members and reservations will be needed. We are looking for a chairperson to spearhead this event. Details to follow.

Mark your calendars! Our next **general meeting** is Thursday, March 12, 2015 at 7 pm downstairs at the Senior Citizen Center. Refreshments will be served at 6:30 pm as we enjoy a half hour of camaraderie and friendship prior to the business part of our meeting. Our next **board meeting** is April 1, 2015 at the Adobe museum at 7 pm. See you there!!

Beginning this June, we are going to have general membership meetings at the museum during the summer months only. This is something new and I'm really looking forward to it. More information to come.

Please note membership dues are now due and should be sent to PO Box 2404, Montebello, CA 90640.

I want to thank our new curator, along with the board of directors, for doing a fantastic job. Also, our members at large that have been so helpful. We are all volunteers and I thank you for donating so much of your personal time to the organization.

I want to close by wishing our members born in March a wonderful birthday and congratulations to all those that will celebrate other milestones.

As we enter spring - Enjoy! It's a beautiful time of year. See you at the March meeting.

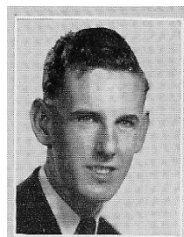
All the best,

**Rosie Vasquez, President**



## The Story of Grant Rea

by Jon Reed - Curator, Juan Matias Sanchez Adobe Museum



Anyone who has lived in Montebello has been to or driven past Grant Rea Park with its Barnyard Zoo, baseball diamonds, batting cages, shelter areas, playgrounds, water play area, horse and bike trails. It is one of the city's largest parks and yet very few know who Grant Rea was.

With the recent Angelina Jolie film, "Unbroken," about the remarkable life of Louis Zamperini, Grant Rea's short life parallels the story and ends with the ultimate sacrifice.

Born in New Mexico on December 23, 1921, Rea moved to 18th Street in Montebello in 1924 with his parents Casper and Mildred and brother Casper F. He attended Fremont Elementary School and graduated from Montebello High School in 1939. He lettered in football and was on the varsity track team.

After one year in college as a student master mechanic, Rea enlisted in the U. S.

Army on January 26, 1942 as an aviation cadet and was sent to Blackland Army Air Field in Waco, Texas for training. Rea was commissioned as a second lieutenant on June 26, 1943 as a Army Air Force advanced two-engine pilot. He took advanced courses and flew four-engine bombers.

Rea ended up flying the B-24 Liberator and was assigned to the 72nd Bombardment Squadron, 5th Bombardment Group (Heavy), "The Bomber Barons" of the 13th Air Force in the South Pacific. His plane was a B-24J, serial #44-40596, named "Sky Tramp." With 50 missions painted on her side, "Sky Tramp's" luck ran out.



Rea and his crew of ten were shot down on August 25, 1944 on a mission to Koror Town, Palau Islands. Withdrawing from the target, the B-24's were attacked by six Zekes (Japanese Mitsubishi A6M Zero fighter plane) and a Hamp (Japanese Mitsubishi A6M3 Zero fighter plane). In a 20-minute engagement, two enemy planes were shot down, but Rea's B-24 caught fire and began to go out of control.

To avoid a collision with others in his flight, Rea feathered his propellers and dropped out of the formation. Two Zekes strafed the five crewmen parachuting from the stricken bomber and the others are believed to have gone down with the plane. Two men survived, Rea and his gunner Earl R. Curry. They were captured by the Japanese and believed to have been executed shortly after capture. War Crimes Tribunal testimony from the Japanese on Palau after WWII, indicate that POWs were executed by IJA Kempeitai (military police) at their headquarters in Ngatpang.

There is a Grant Rea exhibit in the Sanchez Adobe museum in the 20th century room. A model of Rea's B-24 bomber is currently being built and should be on display soon.

## Club Fundraising

Examples of fundraising ideas from the last board meeting include Rancho Days, Noche Mexicana, Evening in Spain, a capital fundraiser, wine tasting and the Workman-Temple trip. Additional ideas can be submitted to Nataliee.

## Club Membership

We added three new members in February 2015. Please welcome Lillian Aldapa, Larry Holter and Anne Donofrio-Holter, who will serve as our newsletter editor. Time is running out to renew your membership. If you haven't already done so, the deadline is March 31, 2015. We are encouraging all members to bring a guest to our next general meeting. Hope to see you all attend.

Arlene Sandoval - Membership Chairperson

## Battle of Rio San Gabriel



Kathleen Rabago, Jon Reed, Rosie Vasquez

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

- 03/12/15** General Meeting/7 pm/Senior Center Downstairs/ Refreshments 6:30 pm 115 S Taylor Ave, Montebello
- 03/31/15** Membership Renewal Deadline
- 04/01/15** Board Meeting/7 pm/Adobe Museum 946 Adobe Ave, Montebello

Newsletter Editor - Anne Donofrio-Holter