

# Adobe Dust

JUAN MATIAS SANCHEZ  
ADOBE MUSEUM



AUGUST 2016

## General Membership Notice

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

At the

Sanchez Picnic Table  
Area from  
June-August

6:30pm start time

**August meeting will  
be dark**

## Upcoming Events

August 27th

12pm to 4pm

Meet the Beatles

Memorabilia  
appraisal

September 25th

5pm to 8:30pm

An Evening in Italy

Annual Spaghetti  
dinner

## Message From the President—Chris Vargas

History can be viewed through many lenses and the Juan Matias Sanchez Adobe (“Adobe”) given its rich and unique history is no different. I am proud to announce that the MHS is in the early stages of taking a lens that will allow us to view the *Adobe* through a new exhibit that we are calling the *Women of the Adobe*. Who were these women of the adobe? (i) The first resident of the Adobe was Dona Maria Casilda Soto de Lobo (ii) Dona Maria Luisa Archuleta, a native of New Mexico and wife of Juan Sanchez (iii) Dona Maria de la Luz Epifania Sanchez, daughter of Juan and Archuleta Sanchez (iv) Matilda Bojorquez de Sanchez, second wife of Juan Sanchez and (v) Mrs. Josephine Scott Crocker, the woman who donated the Adobe to the City of Montebello in the early 1970s. There are other women, but these are the five women that we will focus on for this exhibit. The MHS has set-up a committee to develop and spearhead the *Women of the Adobe exhibit*. Our chairwoman is Carolina Ibarra-Mendoza with strong academic support from Kathleen Rabago and Barbara Garcia.

The role of woman in the 19th century was socially important as pointed in Barbara Garcia’s article entitled: *The Domestic Responsibilities and Roles of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Women* where Barbara points out that “They [women] provided stability for men through the institution of the home. The home was not just a physical place but a moral permanent foundation of the family structure, something viable and safe and non-aggressive.” Moreover, women were tasked with the protection of “...morality, to build churches and schools, to see that sons and daughters grew up morally straight, these were important goals.”

This exhibit will step away from the standard narrative of 19th Century California. We all look forward to the completion of the *Women of the Adobe exhibit* and project the unveiling of this exhibit towards the end of September 2016. Thank you and enjoy the remainder of the Summer.

- Chris Vargas, President



Lucinda Temple de Zuniga

Lucinda Temple

Luisa Archuleta 1820-1873  
First wife of Juan Matias SanchezLuisa Archuleta  
Sanchez

Matilda

Bojorquez Sanchez

Dona Maria de  
la Luz Epifania  
Sanchez

## Matriarchal Societies among Native Americans

Shirley Hill Witt, in an article from Civil Rights Digest, writes “As many as 280 distinct aboriginal societies existed in North America prior to Columbus. In several, the roles of Native women stand in stark contrast to those of Europeans.” To further clarify, these societies were matriarchal, matrilineal and matrilineal meaning that the women controlled family matters, they controlled inheritances, and the bride brought her husband to live in her family’s house. This pattern was most often seen in agricultural societies where women were responsible for farming. “In matrilineal, matrilineal society, a woman forever remained part of her original household, her family of orientation. All the women she grew up with stayed nearby, although she lost her brothers to other households. All the husbands were outsiders brought into the family at the time of marriage.” Blood ties among the females ensured a certain amount of stability and power.

Aside from the power women exhibited among the agricultural society, their influences spread into politics and religion, “The strong and influential position of women in Navajo society extended beyond social and economic life. Navajo women also controlled a large share of the political and religious life of the people, called the Dine.” Among the religious rituals of the Dine was the female puberty ceremony which can be translated into our modern Quinceanera or Sweet Sixteen Party. In patriarchal societies a boy’s rite of passage was much more associated with demonstrations of physical power or the endurance of pain but the celebration of womanhood in matriarchal societies was just as important.

Certainly, the introduction of European culture brought about certain misgivings among the population and the gradual shift from matriarchal structure to patriarchal. It would be more reasonable to say that there was a new social structure which was a result of a new socio-economical cultural expansion. It is fitting to reflect upon the final words of Shirley Hill Witt, “Although the lives of Native American women differed greatly from tribe to tribe, their life-styles exhibited a great deal more independence and security than those of the European women who came to these shores. Indian women had individual freedom within tribal life that women in more “advanced” societies were not to experience for several generations. Furthermore—and in contrast—Native women increased in value in the estimation of their society as they grew older. Their cumulative wisdom was considered one of society’s most valuable resources.”

- Barbara Garcia-Guzman

# Juan Matias Sanchez Adobe—Short History

The Juan Matias Sanchez Adobe (“adobe”) represents a unique history in present day Montebello. Although the namesake of the adobe is named after Don Sanchez, the first resident was a woman, Maria Casilda Soto de Lobo. It was unusual for a woman in the mid-19th century to receive a Mexican land grant. Dona Lobo received the land grant in 1844 from the Mexican governor, Manuel Micheltoarena. Dona Lobo with her sons built the adobe in 1845.

The Sanchez Adobe was originally part of a Mexican land grant, titled Rancho La Merced (Mercy of God Ranch). It occupied what was once 2,363 acres of fertile ranch land. In the 1850’s, *Don Sanchez* built two additional rooms at the adobe for his young family.

The adobe was built about 200 yards from the original San Gabriel Mission which was constructed on or about 1771. The local area is referred to as *mision vieja*.



The adobe flourished from 1845 to the late 19th century with Dona Lobo and Don Sanchez raising livestock; primarily cattle, sheep and horses. Don Sanchez had close connections with some of the Anglo-American pioneers of Los Angeles - e.g., Temple, Workman and Newmark families. He also transacted business with Andres Pico. *Don Pico* is notable for being the leader and victor of the 1846 Battle of San Pasqual against the Americans military forces. He was also brother of the last Mexican governor, *Don Pio Pico*, of Alta California. Moreover, Santiago Lobo (son of *Dona Lobo*) was part of Andres Pico’s *Alta California* force at the Battle of San Pasqual.

The adobe time-line covers (i) the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) (ii) the Treaty of Guadalupe de Hidalgo (1848) (iii) the California Gold Rush (1849) (iv) the admission of California to the Union (1851) and (v) the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865). The adobe has endured shifts in government, war, floods and drought where it stands today, 171 years later.

- Chris Vargas

## Historical Landmark Letter—sent July 13, 2016

Re: Sanchez Adobe's proposal for California Historical Landmark Status

Dear Mayor Barajas and City Council:

The Montebello Historical Society ("MHS") has served as the steward of the Juan Matias Sanchez Adobe/Museum ("Adobe") for over 40 years. The Adobe has stood the test of time and represents Montebello's rich and unique history of Tongva-Gabrieleno, Spanish, Californios and American heritage. The Adobe was built in 1845 when our state was referred to as Alta California and was a department of Mexico, a fledgling nation of 25 years at the time. Oak tree groves reigned and the San Gabriel River flowed and meandered through Montebello. Once home to a prosperous Rancho, the Adobe has been restored to its original splendor. Complete with a growing museum commemorating its past. In recent years, it has transformed into a place for the Montebello community to gather, learn, and take pride in Montebello's rich history.

Accordingly, the MHS strongly believes that the time has come to start the process of acquiring California Historical Landmark status. This historical landmark status will provide our Adobe with prestige in the community and statewide. The MHS will be responsible for preparing the application and necessary paperwork with the National Park Service. We are a self-sufficient organization composed of volunteers and have raised over \$5,000 for the Adobe and its continued maintenance. The Adobe is open every Saturday from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm without fail (excluding major holidays) by our volunteer docents. We thrive on the goodwill of our visitors and supporters and would like the opportunity to elevate the Adobe's stature.

We respectfully request that the City of Montebello support and approve the MHS and its legal counsel to move forward in the process of acquiring historical landmark status. We kindly ask that you please respond to this letter by Friday, August 5, 2016. If you have any questions and/or comments, please contact the undersigned at 323.819.5103. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,, Chris Vargas, MHS President

## Upcoming Event



**MEET THE BEATLES**  
At the Juan Matias Sanchez Adobe Museum & Historic Site  
• 946 Adobe Ave. Montebello Ca. 90640 •

Saturday August 27th 12:00P.M. to 4:00P.M.  
Come see some original memorabilia!

**Bring your Beatles memorabilia for a free appraisal!**