

Fairview Register

Monthly publication of the Costa Mesa Historical Society, a non-profit 501(c)(3)

MEMBER: CONFERENCE OF CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETIES, NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION,
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY



VOL. 48 NO. 1 • JANUARY 2018

Phone: 949-631-5918 Mail: P.O. Box 1764, Costa Mesa, CA 92628 Web: costamesahistory.org Email: cmhistory@sbcglobal.net

In Memory of Brad Long

Brad Long passed away from complications of a blood disorder on Nov 26, 2017.

It's hard to imagine a more widely-known, outgoing city staff member than Brad Long. As the city's senior videographer, you could find Brad at almost any city or community event, not only filming the event, but also, with his warmth and smile, serving as a City Hall ambassador.

Brad always said his favorite project was *Echoes From the Fields*, a one-hour video (available on YouTube) chronicling Costa Mesa's history from the Lukup Indians to the emergence of South Coast Metro in the 1990s. One of the themes of *Echoes From the Fields* is the value of local history — a theme every reader of this newsletter can appreciate. During his career, Brad covered nearly every City Council meeting, every Lions Club Fish Fry, Concerts in the Park, Mayor's Dinners and Breakfasts, or just about any other city or community event.

Then, too, there were the special videos to recognize prominent citizens such as Hank Panian and Jack Hammett. Oh, and let's not forget the video *Costa Mesa My Sweet Home* (available on YouTube) filmed as part of the City's 60th anniversary. Then, too was the oral history series filmed for the City's 50th anniversary in 2003. In fact, almost every one of Brad's videos has a historical element, giving the Historical Society's mission a big boost. Brad, for your warmth, friendship, and support of local history, we will all miss you — but you will live on in our memories and hearts.

Art Goddard, on behalf of the entire Costa Mesa Historical Society



THIS MONTH

Reminder: Historical Society Installation Dinner

Please join us **January 26 at 6 p.m.** at our new location, **Newport Rib Company** for the society's annual installation dinner. This year's speaker is **David Whiting**, an award-winning Metro columnist from the *OC Register*. In his talk, "Faith and Hope: Our American Land," "we will travel across this great country and visit the towns where volunteering still matters. We will meet people who make a difference and we will do it on motorcycles with thousands of veterans as they make their way to the war memorials in Washington, DC."



Dinner includes chicken **and** tri-tip, garlic mashed potatoes, roasted veggies, garden salad, corn bread and honey butter, brownies and cookies, and non-alcoholic drinks **for only \$25. Reservations and payments must be finalized by Friday, January 19.**

There's still time to sign up. Call 949-631-5918 to reserve your place now.

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Bring a Friend Event February 18, 2018, 1-4 p.m.

Our annual Bring a Friend event turns the spotlight on you! Everyone is invited to share his or her stories of Costa Mesa. Were you there when the Mesa Verde Library opened? Have you performed at the Costa Mesa Civic Playhouse? Do you remember the Gisler farm when it was still a farm? If so, we'd love to hear these stories and whatever else you have to tell us.

There will be light refreshments, items for sale, and door prizes. More details will be in February newsletter.

IN THIS ISSUE

How Do You Pronounce "Gisler"?

Tragedy at the Riverside

In Search Of

Promoting and preserving Costa Mesa's history is our mission

FAIRVIEW REGISTER, FAIRVIEW, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, MARCH 2, 1889

HOW DO YOU PRONOUNCE "GISLER"?

Gisler Avenue in the north side of Costa Mesa sees more traffic, perhaps, than any other street of its size in the city. The 1.7 mile road is lined with several subdivisions, two schools, a city park, a car dealership, a cemetery, a car dealership, gas stations, motels, and of course, hugely popular restaurant chains like In N' Out, Raising Cane's, Denny's, and Chik-Fil-A.

The busy street is named after Samuel Gisler (1860-1947). Sam, as he was called, was just one of a wave of Gislers who left the Canton of Uri in Switzerland for California in the 1870s and 80s. The extended family, led by Sam's father Max, first settled near Oxnard, where they were important pioneers, acquiring farmland and winning fame for their prized sugar beets. In the early 1900s, at least two of the Gisler family decided to trade Ventura for Orange County. Robert Gisler (1861-1945) settled in Gospel Swamp (now Fountain Valley) while Sam focused on what is now Costa Mesa.

Tom Talbert sold Sam his first piece of land, about 60 acres worth, in about 1903. But Sam didn't stop with one purchase. He kept on buying. His family did, too, until there were Gislers on both sides of the Santa Ana River, spread over hundreds of acres. Whatever Sam didn't farm himself, he rented out. He raised not only his famous beets, but also alfalfa, beans, and barley, and ran a small dairy of 11 cows. The Gislers supplemented their income in 1909 with a \$1,500 prize for largest family (11 children at the time). Whatever success the farms had, the real money came when the family began selling off the land — becoming millionaires, says Talbert, in the process.

Today, several cities claim the Gislers. Besides the street and park in Costa Mesa, there is a Gisler Elementary in Fountain Valley and a former Gisler Intermediate in Huntington Beach (now Huntington Christian School). According to Talbert, the Gislers were good farmers, good ranchers, and good citizens: "Some of the best we got," he said.

That's all well and good, but how, exactly, are you supposed to pronounce Gisler? There are almost as many ways to pronounce it as there are letters in the name. We've heard it called "Gizz-ler", "Guys-ler", "Geese-ler", and, from a particularly exasperated GPS, "JEEZ-ler".

One could ask his descendants, but the intervening generations may have chipped away at the original pronunciation. How would Samuel Gisler have introduced himself?

We could find no recording in which Gisler left us a definitive pronunciation guide. We do, however, have audio recordings with neighbors, friends, and business associates who knew the intrepid beet farmer, including such authorities as Tom Talbert, Lester Platt, Goldie TeWinkle, and the Colombini sisters, Rose and Nellie. To a person, they all pronounced



Harbor and Gisler as seen from the air in the early 1960s.

the name the same way. They even corrected the interviewer's pronunciation when he got it wrong.

For comparison, we wanted to see how the name is pronounced by the Swiss of today. We combed YouTube for interviews with famous or less-than-famous German-speaking Gislers. We found, that, without deviation, today's pronunciation matched the one found in the audio recordings.

But before we solve one mystery, how about another? Is it, in fact, spelled "Giesler"? No. Despite the occasional road sign to the contrary, virtually every newspaper article, biography, relative, and official marker, not to mention Sam's tombstone in Holy Selpucher Cemetery, spells it "Gisler". Funnily enough, though, the maiden name of Sam's first wife was indeed ... Annie Giesler.

The spelling with an E offers a clue to its pronunciation. Both Costa Mesa old-timers and today's Swiss agree: it's pronounced "Geese-ler". So, how do *you* pronounce Gisler? ■

Tragedy at the Riverside

During a heatwave on August 5, 1917, two cousins, Robert Gisler's daughter Elizabeth, 11, and Sam Gisler's daughter Mabel, 10, went to the Santa Ana River with Elizabeth's sister Lucile, 6, to play in the water. The two older girls were wading in the shallows of the channel, laughing and playing, when they suddenly lost their footing and stepped into a large hole. They struggled to find a foothold in the deep drop-off, while their cries for help went unanswered. Young Lucile thought they were only playing. When they disappeared under the water, she ran for help, eventually finding a surf-fisherman on the beach 3/4 mile away. He and a 13-year-old boy managed to recover the girls, who by that point had been in the water between 45 minutes and an hour. Every effort was made to revive them. An electric car was flagged down, and a Pulmotor resuscitator was sent from Santa Ana. But it was too late. At the time of the accident, Sam and Robert were in Seal Beach, where they received the sad news.

In Search Of

Can you help tell Costa Mesa's story?

By Bob Palazzola

As the bottom of our newsletter states:

"Promoting and preserving Costa Mesa history is our mission"

The whole purpose of preserving any history is to inform and educate future generations on things as they were at that point in time.

This is accomplished through such things as photos, stories, records and materials.

We welcome any one of those items to add to our collection to preserve. However, it is said that a picture is worth a thousand words and our search for photos of Costa Mesa is endless. Photos capture a moment in time. Some of those moments represent a slice of history. An example of this was in our December newsletter showing the fire that destroyed the Clark house.

You may have a photo that was taken in Costa Mesa showing a parade,



Have you gone to the Globe Deli?

2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the Globe Delicatessen – or the 54th if one counts its previous incarnation, Vienna Gourmet. Now under new management, owners Carmen Gaebelt and Jason Savisaar are interested in learning more about the deli's history. Do you have any photographs, menus, or other memorabilia of the deli's early days, or any stories about interesting experiences, favorite recipes, or other bits of nostalgia? Both they and the historical society would love to hear about them. Let us know at 949-631-5918! And be sure to pick up a Reuben and say hello to the history-minded owners. *The Globe Delicatessen is located at 1928 Harbor Blvd and is open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Saturday.*

the Fish Fry, the construction of a shopping center or the destruction of an historic building or an important event and so on.

If you have any such photos, but don't want to part with them, we would be happy to scan them into our system and you can keep the original. Any photos of early Costa Mesa are most desirable, but bring in what you have. Your participation would assist us with our very important mission. ■

Visit Us

Diego Sepulveda Adobe

1900 Adams Ave. • Open 12-4 p.m. the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month or by appointment.

Costa Mesa's oldest building presents 200 years of OC history from its beautiful setting in Estancia Park, overlooking the Santa Ana River bed.

Costa Mesa Historical Society Museum

1870 Anaheim Ave. • Open 10am-3pm Thursdays and Fridays or by appointment.

The museum and society headquarters displays a mind-boggling array of artifacts from nearly 5,000 years of Costa Mesa history – from the first peoples to the City of the Arts.

Share Your Story

History is made by people like you. We'd love to hear your Costa Mesa stories from the 1960s to today. Many changes have taken place and we want to hear from those who lived through them. Write the memories yourself or come to the museum and we'll transcribe them for you. It's that simple!

Thank You, Copy 4 Less NB

Our printer discounts our costs throughout the year. Thank you so much for this, **Copy 4 Less NB** – we really appreciate it! Visit Copy 4 Less at 4360 Campus Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660 near the John Wayne Airport or call (949) 252-8960.

Shop with us on Amazon

Every time you start your order with Amazon Smile, Amazon will donate to the Costa Mesa Historical Society. Visit smileamazon.com before making your next purchase, being sure to check "charitable organization" and selecting the Costa Mesa Historical Society when prompted. You can use your existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile.

Support us – Donate!

As the year opens, please consider making a donation to the Costa Mesa Historical Society. Either call 949-631-5918 during museum hours or send a check, c/o Susan Weeks, Treasurer, to PO Box 1764, Costa Mesa, CA 92628. PayPal users can also donate online at www-paypal.me/costamesahistory. The Costa Mesa Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization. **All donations are fully tax deductible.**

Dues Overdue?

Your dues provide **essential support** for the society's major programs and projects. Make sure you're up to date by looking at your **dues expiration date** on the address label to the right of your name. If your dues are due, send us a check, c/o Susan Weeks, Treasurer. Or drop it off on a Thursday or Friday from 10am to 3pm. Membership dues are listed on the back page.

Make a Difference – Volunteer

Help the society meet essential needs while meeting others who share your love of Costa Mesa history. We're looking for a volunteer to **set up refreshments** at our monthly programs as well as members to sit on two new committees: the **Newspaper Assembly Committee** prepares the newsletter for mailing, while the **Adobe Committee** recruits volunteers to plan an event, become a docent, or work on exhibits. Committees meet monthly and are chaired by board members. Interested? Call us at 949-631-5918. Isn't it more fun to work as a team?

Temporary Parking Instructions

For the next year and a half, please enter the parking lot serving our society, the Donald Dungan Library and the Recreation Center by entering from Anaheim only, not Park. The Park entrance is completely blocked off.

ROBERTO'S AUTO TRIM

In Costa Mesa Since 1964

Raul Jara

ralndb@earthlink.net

2033 Harbor Blvd. Costa Mesa, CA 92627

949.642.8113

Fax 949.642.7150

Alan Kumura

Independent Owner/Operator

Grocery Outlet • Bargain Market

COSTA MESA GROCERY OUTLET

1835 Newport Blvd, #C140 Costa Mesa, CA 92627 (949)

642-5800 Office • (949) 642-5803 Fax

costamesa@groceryoutlet.com • groceryoutlet.com

facebook.com/CostaMesaGroceryOutlet

COSTA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O BOX 1764
COSTA MESA, CA. 92628
Phone (949) 631-5918

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SANTA ANA, CA
PERMIT NO. 4352

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

DATED MATERIAL

**Costa Mesa Historical Society
P.O. Box 1764
Costa Mesa CA 92628**

— *Membership Form* —

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Membership Categories

| Annual | | Special | |
|-------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Individual | \$ 20.00 | Historical Society Life Member | \$ 500.00 |
| Individual Senior (60+) | \$ 15.00 | SAAAB Wing Annual Member | \$ 10.00 |
| Family | \$ 25.00 | | |
| Student (under 16) | \$ 10.00 | | |
| Contributing | \$ 50.00 | | |
| Business & Professional | \$100.00 | | |
| Public Agency | \$100.00 | | |
| Benefactor | \$250.00 | | |

Make your checks payable to the Costa Mesa Historical Society.
The Society, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, operates under the Corporation Laws of the State of California.