

News Summary



ATTENTION:

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YWCA San Diego

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A history of women in California

By Linda Meckler

FOR THE ALPINE SUN

ALPINE - At the quarterly meeting of the Alpine Historical Society was held and featured presentations about famous women in California's history.

During the board meeting it was announced by Bill Waterworth that Alpine's Dr. Sophronia Nichols, the first woman doctor in East County and the 26th person to be licensed in the state of California, will be honored by the Daughters of the Revolution, at a special event on Oct. 8, at 10:30 a.m. at the Historical Society Museum.

At the meeting, speaker Dr. Sue Gonda gave a PowerPoint presentation titled, "Not just a pretty face: A history of women in California." The presentation was very educational and very informative. Some of the information she told her attentive audience was taken from journals of private citizens.

Dr. Gonda is a Professor of History at Grossmont College and is the president of the Women's History Museum and Education Center. In 1983 the museum in San Diego was established, it is one of the five women museums in the country. It concentrates on the achievements of women.

Dr. Gonda started off her talk with the Mission System in 1769. The Spanish wanted to convert the Native Americans to Christianity. The Native Americans were put together with the Spaniards and came down with diseases the Europeans brought with them. The Native Americans were dying by the hundreds. The first mission was

relocated to Los Angeles.

The Native American women were responsible for seafood, caught along the shore. They ate grains, nuts roots, and acorns. They really had a very healthy diet.

In East County the women ran the towns and ranches. Traditional women's and men's roles were crossed over. The women were the best on horseback. Mexican women were responsible for passing down the family history, religion, ranch work, and were great traders.

Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton in 1872 was a co-owner of Rancho Jamul, a huge ranch. The Californio's lost their land to squatters because there wasn't any documentation about what land was owned by whom. Maria lost her land. She published two novels the first was about women's roles, the different classes of people. The second book published in 1995 a novel, *The Squatter and the Don*. She was the first Spanish woman to publish a novel in the United States.

Dr. Charlotte Baker 1855-1936. She was the only woman in the San Diego Medical Society, also the president. She was in the suffrage movement. Baker was also the founder of the YWCA in 1907. California gave the women the right to vote 1911 and the women in the United States in 1920.

Madam Katherine Augusta Tingley 1847-1929. Tingley joined the Theosophical Society in 1894. She traveled worldwide, establishing schools in several countries, emphasizing practical humanitarianism, education, prison reform, and world peace.

In 1900, she moved the international headquarters to Point Loma where she established the Raja-Yoga School and College, Theosophical University, and the School for the Revival of the Lost Mysteries of Antiquity.

Belle Jennings Benchley 1882-1973, Benchley put the San Diego Zoo on the map. In 2007 she was the only female director. She was the manager, organizer, and the chair of the International Zoo Directors Association.

Kate Sessions is in the Hall of Fame she helped build Balboa Park. Sessions was an American botanist, horticulturalist, and landscape architect closely associated with San Diego and known as the "Mother of Balboa Park."

Rulette Armstead 2004 Retired Chief of Police. San Diego Police became famous for her domestic violence program.

Jane Dumas is a Kumeyaay Indian. She is a cancer survivor. She is the descendent of Chief Manuel Hatam, leader of the Kumeyaay village once located near Balboa Park. Kumeyaay is her first language. She is a leader, and teacher in San Diego's Native American Community.

In 2002, Dumas was inducted into The San Diego's Women Hall of Fame. Jane has a vast knowledge of plants, herbs and ancient remedies. Her knowledge was taught to her by her mother, Isabel Thing, a great cha'ak kuseyaay, or medicine woman in southern California.

Since 1986 she has been a board member of the Indian Human

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Resource Center, Jane has been their anchor, leader, peacemaker, and bridge between Indian and non-Indians in the areas of medicine and education.

“I learned so much about the women of San Diego that I never knew about. We don't have them in the history text books,” said Carlette Anderson.

“We need to keep the education going, to keep inspiring not only women but men and children about the role women have carved out of the history of San Diego. Women were not behind the scenes they were in the front of all activities. They helped build San Diego. We need to get the stories and history out to everyone.”

Call the Women's History Museum (619) 233-7963. Or visit their web site at www.whmec.org.