HISTORY
OCEANSIDE
Historical Society

NEWSLETTER FALL 2019

OCEANSIDE HISTORY PROGRAM

Join Us on Saturday, February 29 at 10:00 am at the Oceanside Public Library Community Room

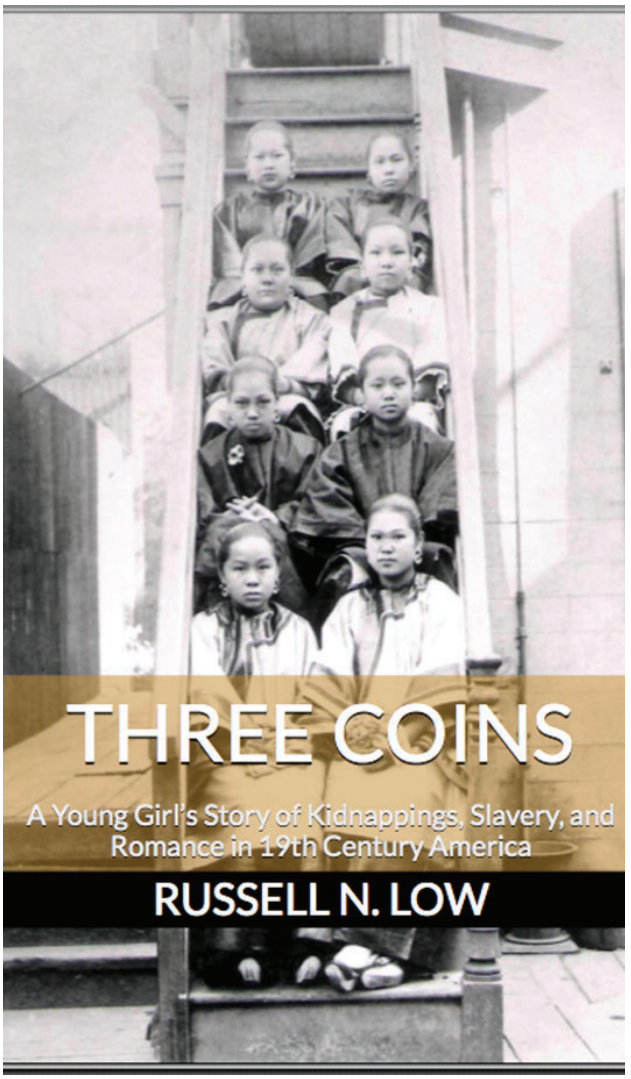
Three Coins by Russell N. Low

Low is a local author and California-born 4th generation Chinese American physician and the great grandson of Hung Lai Wah, a Transcontinental Railroad worker and Tom Ying, a rescued child salve. The story of his great grandparents and their descendants has been featured on the History Channel, BBC Radio, National Public Radio, the Voice of America, and is included in the California State Railroad Museum, and the Smithsonian Museum of American History. His passion for research, family history, and story telling come together in a recently published novel entitled "Three Coins."

Join us as he describes the inspirational story of how his family came to America. The program is hosted by the Oceanside Public Library and will be held in the Oceanside Library Community Room at 330 North Coast Highway. This is a free program and open to our friends, members and the general public.

As a prelude, Historian Kristi Hawthorne will provide a brief history of Sam Wing, a local Chinese immigrant who settled in Oceanside in the 1880s.

NOTE: This program will also be shown at the Mission Branch Library on Saturday, January 18th at 2 pm.



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Visit our website: OceansideHistoricalSociety.org

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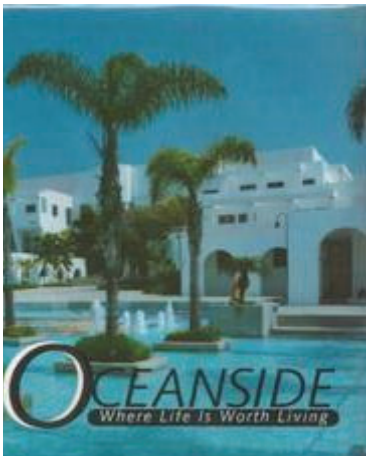
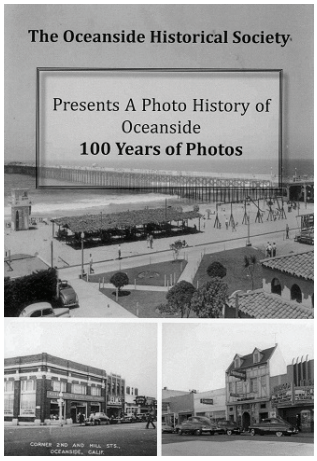
Facebook.com/OceansideHistoricalSociety
(you do not need a Facebook account to see the historical photos we post)

Do you have history questions?
Email us at info@OceansideHistoricalSociety.org

With the holidays quickly approaching, consider giving the gift of history! Purchase a gift membership for a friend or family member. You can use the form on the back of this newsletter or visit our website and purchase online. Another great gift idea is one of our history books which can also be purchased on our website or at our office.





Many of our friends and members likely shop on Amazon.com but did you know that you can join "Amazon Smile" and designate the Oceanside Historical Society to benefit? AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. Please consider designating us the next time you shop and thank you in advance!

Oceanside pier 1947
Portion of large format photo donated by Peter and Linda Weseloh

We are located at 305 North Nevada Street in Downtown Oceanside.

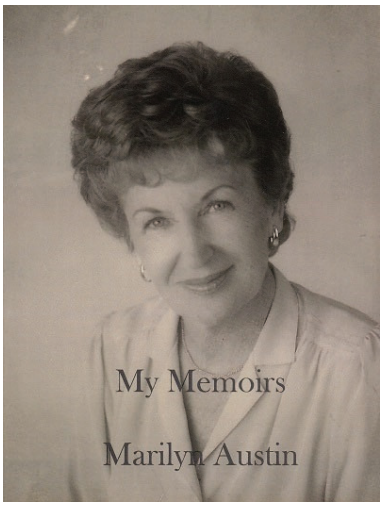
We are open most Thursdays and Fridays from 10 am to 2 pm

NEWEST MEMBERS

Lisa Stavinoha

Betty Ronayne

WELCOME AND THANK YOU



Excerpt from Marilyn Austin's Memoirs

Marilyn Austin is a long time resident of Oceanside. Her husband Dale Austin was Oceanside City Attorney for many years. They moved to Oceanside with their young children Kay and Dana in 1954. In 2018, at the age of 95 she wrote her memoirs and she has allowed us to share some of her story, one of which was a harrowing experience.

In making the move to Oceanside, we decided to rent a year and get the feel of the town before buying property. After much looking, we ultimately agreed on an area in which to live, taking into consideration the best schools district for our kids. Our new address was 1026 California Street. The back half of the property was covered with grape vines and to Dana's great enjoyment, a very nice producing fig tree that was perfect for climbing. On the front half was a sturdy home and an unattached large garage, front lawn and huge area that was covered with asphalt in the rear. This, we thought, would be a perfect place for the kids to ride bikes and skate - all in our own yard.

On the entire west side of our property was a large housing development, occupied mostly by Marine families. The homes were small but nicely kept. Directly to the side of our home was a home owned by Marine Master Sargent Webster. My kids called him "Mr. Webster," and took a great liking to him. It seemed that Mr. Webster could do almost anything. When we decided to build a play house for the kids, Mr. Webster was the one to do it. It was quite a house, fairly large and tall enough for the kids to stand in. Both my little kids and the neighborhood kids had a great time playing there.

Also living in the housing development was another Marine family, Mr. and Mrs. Leo Garcia and their two boys, Jerry, age 10, and his brother Rudy, age 9. Although Dana was only 7 years old, he had become acquainted with the boys and learned that they liked to play "War." Dana asked his Dad to get him a helmet so he would look like a Marine. The next day on his way home from work, Dale stopped at the Military Surplus store and bought a liner for a helmet. Liners were lighter in weight than the helmet itself but were strong and very protective of the head. A few days later, with my permission, Dana went to the Garcia boys' yard to play.

It was about 5 p.m. in the afternoon and I was in the kitchen fixing dinner when I heard an earth-shaking boom. The sound was terrifying and I knew it was close by. Incredibly, I knew in one instant what had happened. I just knew that a terrible bomb had exploded and that Dana might be there. My first reaction was to grab the phone and call Dale, but there no answer. I realized it was after 5 p.m. and he was probably already on his way home.

In panic I ran out of the house and to the neighbor's yard as quickly as possible, all the while imagining myself picking Dana up in pieces. It seemed forever before I reached the Garcia's place. Never in my entire life have I had such a feeling of gratitude and relief as when I saw Mr. Webster was already there and caring for Dana. He had Dana wrapped in a blanket to protect him from further shock. When I knelt down I could see that he was alive and in one piece. Thank God. There was a huge hole in the cement patio, with 20 feet of fence blown away, and all the windows and doors of the house were knocked out - the destruction and devastation went on and on. The cause: the oldest boy had pulled the pin on a live anti-tank grenade that he had found in their toy box.

An amublance had been called and it arrived quickly. I held Dana in my arms praying that somehow I could get word to Dale. I needed him badly. Still struggling with how to contact him, we arrrived at the hospital and the paramedics opened the door of the ambulance. I stepped out, looked up and couldn't believe my eyes. There was Dale, getting out of his car and walking over towards us. My only thought was "Thank God he is here."

Dana was rushed into surgery. The two ex-Navy doctors who worked on him said his little body had more shrapnel in it than any combat Marine they had ever seen. The helmet liner saved his head, eyes and ears, except for one ear lobe, which was gone. The doctors spent nearly four hours digging shrapnel from almost every part of his body. Even years later some shrapnel worked out on its own.

At the first opportunity, I asked Dale, "How did you know this had happened and you were able to arrive at the hospital at the same time that we did?" His answer was, "As I was driving home along Hill Street, I heard a siren and saw an ambulance go by. At that moment I had a very strong and impelling feeling that I should turn around and follow the ambulance. I did this, and thank God I did."

How did that live anti-tank grenade get into that toy box? It seems that an uncle of the Garcia boys was walking through Camp Pendleton and found what he thought to be a "dud" anti-tank grenade. He took it home and tossed it into the toy box for his nephews. This action was shocking but no lawsuits were filed. We had our little boy and we also had good medical coverage. We were truly grateful.

Oceanside Historical Society
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Fall 2019 Newsletter

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Membership Application

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