



On My Mind These Days

By Glenn Lambdin

Saving a Part of Our Forgotten History: Part 1

Today, I sent a certified letter to the City Clerk giving notice that I am nominating the City owned property at 186 W. Highland to the State of California's list of historical properties.

One of the things that I've grown to learn about myself is that I don't do well not getting the things that I want. Having taken the word "can't" out of my dictionary as a young man, and just being plain "thick-headed," I don't easily take "no" for an answer. Such is the case with my attempts to get the City Council to list the old Christian Science Church in our local register of historical properties.

Last October, I went before the City Council with a nomination application in hopes of adding the City owned property at 186 W. Highland to our register of local historical landmarks. Built in 1921, this property originally was a Christian Science Church but has sat vacant for many years, with the exception of a few years when the City used the old church as a temporary Youth Activity Center (YAC). The City bought the property about 12 years ago and now intends on turning the property into multiple affording housing units.

This was not my first attempt to preserve the property. In 1999, I submitted an application for the same but was told that the City needs to wait before making a commitment. In my mind, I guessed 9 years was a reasonable and adequate amount of time to wait. Was I ever wrong. This time, I was again told that the City needs to wait. Of course, I am not really sure what it is we are waiting for, but then again this is government and government doesn't always make sense.

So instead of venting my disappointment and frustrations in this newspaper against members of the City Council that claim they want "conservation not construction" and claim to be pro-preservation yet voted against preserving this property, I decided that I'll share the history and significance of the property with the public. Since the City appears more interested in the development than preservation of this property, I decided to nominate the property to the State Register of Historical Properties. If the State declines, I'll try the National Registry. Like I said, I don't take "no" very well. The bottom-line is that I don't really care how it's preserved or who preserves the property, I just want it preserved.

In my research, I stumbled on an incredible forgotten history of Sierra Madre and how local events from the late 1800's tie into California and national histories and persons considered pioneers in these events. Over the next few weeks, I'll be sharing some of the actual historical data that went into the State application. I welcome any comments and can be reached by email at g.lambdin@mobserver.com.

PS. On a side note. I just went and checked today's mail and found a Christmas card from Mrs. Manley, my second grade school teacher from Sierra Madre Elementary School. Forty five years later and she still remembers. I ask ya, where else but Sierra Madre would this happen?

Happy Holidays to all.