

La Campana

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Cultural Activities and Summer Adventures Camp

*by John Stark,
Education Assistant*

The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation's Education Department recently completed the fourth annual Cultural Activities and Summer Adventures (CASA) day camp. CASA is a free day camp program based out of El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park. Day camps are expensive and not an option for many of Santa Barbara's low income families. In conjunction with the Santa Barbara Housing Authority, the Trust recruits approximately thirty children from the ages of six to twelve to participate in a two week camp session. The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation is proud to offer a fun and informative day camp at no cost to qualified families.



The purpose of CASA is to educate campers about their unique local history. Day campers learn about Santa Barbara's distinct heritage, including Chumash, Spanish, and Mexican history, as well as natural history. Historical themes often overlap during visits to various local museums and state parks, allowing campers to build upon what they already know and absorb new information.



Henry Almengor and Adan Gastelum ringing the bell at La Purisima State Historic Park. (Photo by Karen S. Anderson)

Field trips and activities are specifically chosen to inform campers about a particular facet of Santa Barbara's heritage. Campers learn about Spanish history and lifeways at El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park by focusing on its role as a Spanish fortress and through hands-on activities like adobe brick making, ceramics, archaeology, and early Californian food preparation. Field trips to La Purisima State Historic Park and the Huerta project at the Santa Barbara Mission provide other narratives of the Spanish period. Campers

visit La Casa de la Guerra to learn what life was like in Santa Barbara during the Mexican period. Visits to the Chumash Interpretive Center and Museum in Oakbrook Regional Park and to the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History emphasize Chumash culture. Santa Barbara's coastal environments are the primary focus for learning about natural history. They explore the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, the Ty Warner Sea Center, UCSB's Marine Science Institute, Carpinteria State Beach, and the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum to learn about Santa Barbara's unique natural history.

The goal of CASA is to expose the children to local history in an enjoyable and informative way. Campers have so much fun getting muddy making adobe bricks, kissing sea cucumbers, and ringing mission bells, they do not realize how much local history they are absorbing! Through these various activities and field trips, the Trust hopes to instill in the campers an understanding of local history and heritage.



The campers from Session 1: Javier Gomez(l), Henry Almengor, Laura Almengor, Adan Gastelum, David Gastelum, Uriel Gastelum, Abner Reyez, Isaiah C. Macias, Sammy Gomez, and Jacqueline Mendez gathered around the Presidio's horno. (Photo by Karen S. Anderson)

El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park and the Old Mission Huerta Project

*by Michael H. Imwalle,
Archaeologist*

The Presidio Heritage Plant Project informally began with the planting of a grape vine behind the Northeast Corner of the Presidio in 2001. Initially, I grew the vine at my home from a cutting taken from mission-era grape stock at Mission San Gabriel in 2000. John Forsyth and his Organic Gardening class at Anacapa School planted the vine at its permanent location at the El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park in 2001. Later that year Trust Board member Dr. Robert Hoover contributed five additional specimens to the Project including a pomegranate tree from Mission San Antonio, an apricot tree from Mission San Jose, an olive tree from Mission La Purísima, an *Opuntia sp.* cactus (prickly pear) from the Pala Asistencia of Mission San Luis Rey, and a grapevine from Mission San Gabriel. All five of the small specimens arrived at the Presidio Archaeology Lab in one-gallon containers. Trust Maintenance Supervisor Eduardo Garcia used his green thumb to eventually transplant them into 15-gallon planters until a permanent location can be established.



*Original Heritage Plant Stock donated to the Presidio by Trust Board member Dr. Robert Hoover including a Pomegranate from Mission San Antonio, an Apricot from Mission San José, an Olive tree from Mission La Purísima, an *Opuntia sp.* (Prickly Pear) cactus from San Antonio, and a grapevine from Mission San Gabriel.*

Five heritage plants were obtained from Jerry Sortomme. Jerry was founder and director of the Environmental Horticulture Department at Santa Barbara City College until his retirement in June 2002. In 1999, he began working with Tina Foss, curator of the Mission Santa Barbara Museum, to explore the possibility of finding and propagating the few remaining heritage plants that still exist from the time of the padres. Through chronicles, drawings, later period photos, and narrative accounts, Michael Hardwick has summarized what plants were introduced by the mission padres in *Changes in Landscape: The Beginnings of Horticulture in the California Missions*. This team formed the nucleus of the Old Mission Huerta Project at Old Mission Santa Barbara in 2003. The Old Mission Huerta Project is a living repository of mission-era plant stock and other mission-era plantings.

In March of 2003 the Trust commissioned Historic Landscape Architect Thomas Brown to research the early landscape of the Presidio and develop a preliminary landscape plan. The plan was developed as part of the construction drawings for the Northwest Corner Reconstruction project. The plan is loosely based on the idea that introduced presidio-era plants, trees, and shrubs would be used for limited plantings within the quadrangle and native species would be used for landscaping the areas outside the defense walls. The preliminary plan developed by Brown will be supplemented by plantings of species identified by archaeological and archival research. Species identified during excavations behind the *comandancia* include peaches, apricots, olive, beans, corn, and watermelon. The circa 1820 Vischer Plan shows a small orchard in this location.

Since August 2005 I have volunteered for the Old Mission Huerta Project in various capacities including but not limited to planter, weeder, picker, mulcher, mower, sprayer, excavator, cataloger, photographer, and equipment operator. I have come to appreciate the comradery of the other volunteers and constantly learn from their collective experiences. As a result of joining the Huerta project as a volunteer I have had the opportunity to collaborate with Jerry Sortomme in an attempt to acquire additional heritage plant specimens for the Presidio. In May of this year a shipment of seventy-seven rare heirloom citrus seedling trees arrived at the Huerta. The trees were seed-propagated and grown for two and a half years especially for the Huerta Project by Dr. Toots Bier of the USDA National Clonal Germplasm Repository for Citrus and Dates at U.C. Riverside. The shipment included fifty Agua Tibia Sweet Oranges, twenty Willowleaf Mandarins, six Mediterranean Sweet Oranges, and one Bidwell's Bar Orange. The Trust was fortunate to receive twelve trees including eight Agua Tibia Sweet Oranges and four Willowleaf Mandarins.