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Presidio guard David Martinez greets descendants of Santa Barbara's founding families during a barbecue at the Presidio Sunday.

# A gathering of descendants

## More than 100 locals attend event celebrating a common heritage

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The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation welcomed members of some of Santa Barbara's founding families with a barbecue Sunday afternoon at the Presidio.

Descendants of the soldiers who were stationed at the Presidio in the 18th and 19th centuries, many of whom are related to one another, gathered in the courtyard to share stories and memories from years past.

More than 30 families were represented Sunday, with the legacy of José Francisco Ortega, lieutenant and early Spanish settler, drawing several descendants.

As the pork tenderloin and tri-tip seared to perfection, Gladys Rios-Chadsey, a sixth-generation family member, recalled her noteworthy ancestors.

"It's pretty startling to know just

how far (back) it's gone," she said, speaking of her rich and illustrious family history.

Admitting she has seen a lot in her day, Ms. Rios Chadsey could not dismiss the enjoyment these events bring to her and the relationships they build.

After celebrating her 98th birthday in May, she was looking forward to the next chance to mingle and share memories with the other friends and relatives.

More than 100 members of the founding families were in attendance, according to Mary Louise Days, board member and chairwoman for the Genealogy and Descendants Committee.

Dr. Jarrell Jackman, executive director for the Trust, was elated to see the turnout and encouraged to see family and friends coming together.

"These are just a small percentage of thousands who have ties to the founding families," Dr. Jack-

man said. "It's terrific they all gather here to connect and honor their heritage. They love coming together."

For some of those in attendance, Sunday marked another opportunity to not only connect with one another but to meet others for the first time.

"This is the first time we've caught up since last year's event," said Tim Aguliar, who used to live right across the street from Ms. Days while growing up.

Georgia (Larsen) Martin, who was attending for the first time, brought a copy of her family tree that included both William Benjamin Fixen and Daniel Hill.

"It's great to see such a great turnout and so many people involved," she said, as she was joined by her brother Stan Larsen.

The three connected over stories since their last meeting, childhood memories and experiences shared at Ott Hardware, when it used to be the exclusive hardware supply store on State Street.

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