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FUN FOR KIDS

A COOPERATIVE PROJECT OF THE SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS AND THE EDUCATORS' ROUNDTABLE, PUBLISHED MONTHLY TO PROMOTE LEARNING AMONG YOUNG READERS IN NATURAL SCIENCE, HISTORY, TECHNOLOGY AND ART

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This Month's Theme: "Viva La Fiesta"

Fiestas Long Ago

The little festival or "Fiesta Pequeña" on the steps of Mission Santa Barbara starts our citywide celebration of "Old Spanish Days" each year. You can see lots of dancing there. This Fiesta tradition started with the dances of Native Americans long before the Spanish came.

After the Spanish came, fiestas were celebrated in

front of the Mission by the **Chumash** Indians who worked building the Mission starting in 1786. In those days traditional Chumash dances were often done on Spanish holidays. **Bear**, Swordfish, Seaweed, Blackbird and Wi'ma (Santa Cruz Island) dances are some that were performed. Bear dancers used **wansak** (split stick clappers) when they imitated the bears. Sometimes they even had trained bears at a fiesta!



Chumash dancers tossed corn, beans, chia (sage seed), islay (cherry) and acorns on the crowds. At their rondas (dances) at the ranchos and in town, the Spanish threw eggs filled with gold paper or perfume. Today we use confetti. They also threw money at good

dancers. Eventually Indian, Spanish and Mexican traditions blended together and local fiestas had some things from each tradition.

Lively celebrations featuring music and dancing continued even after Spanish times. For the Mission's 100th birthday in 1886 there was a parade of flower-covered carriages, a rodeo and dancing. Besides the Indian dances by several Chumash elders, there were Spanish and Mexican dances, too (waltz, la jota, la bamba, etc.). Traditional old songs like the Alabado were sung. We see some of these performed at our Old Spanish Days Fiestas today.

As you enjoy Fiesta Pequeña this year, remember the Chumash dancers who first danced at the **Mission** steps. You can see some of their tools and arts at Santa Barbara Mission Museum and at the Museum of Natural History. During Fiesta you can see the Spanish and Mexican dances at the Mission's Fiesta Pequeña and Noches de Ronda at the Courthouse. Celebrate the many cultures that created our town. Have fun at Fiesta celebrating with the dances and music of the early days. **Viva La Fiesta!**

The city celebrated the 100th birthday of Mission Santa Barbara in 1886 with a parade on State Street. It was followed by Chumash and Hispanic dance performances. *Collection of the Santa Barbara Historical Society.*

Fiesta Posters

Fiestas have been a part of Santa Barbara life for over two hundred years. The city's modern-day Fiesta tradition started eighty years ago, in 1924. In that year the new **Lobero** Theatre opened and people wanted to celebrate with a huge party.

José Lobero had founded his original theatre in 1872 bringing opera, plays, and concerts to the city. As the years went by the theatre slowly fell into ruin. It was decided to tear down the old theatre and build a new one in its place.

A number of people got together to plan a party with a historical theme. The idea was to hold a festival that would harken back to the way Santa Barbara was when Spain ruled California. They called this festival Old Spanish Days Fiesta.

Many events which are part of Fiesta today got started in 1924. These include the rodeo, music and dance performances, and the big parade. This parade has more horses in it than almost any other parade in the country.

In order to get the word out about Fiesta in 1924, a local artist was asked to draw a **poster**. Ever since then each Fiesta has had its own poster. Over the

years the different artists have tried to capture the excitement and fun of Fiesta in their posters.

Some of these artists have used well-known buildings in their posters, such as the Santa Barbara Mission or the Courthouse. Some have taken old black and white photographs of past Fiestas to use as subjects for their posters. Others have taken paintings that show how Santa Barbara looked long ago. For instance, this year's poster is based on a painting by Alexander **Harmer**, one of the most famous artists to ever live in Santa Barbara.

There are a lot of traditions connected with the Old Spanish Days Fiesta. One of these has been the colorful posters which have announced the approach of Fiesta each year. A collection of these posters is now on display at the Santa Barbara Historical Museum. You can visit the museum and see how different **artists** have drawn their visions of Santa Barbara's largest annual celebration.

Local artist Roy Lawhorne's poster was put in Seaside gas stations all over California to announce the 1941 Fiesta. *Collection of the Santa Barbara Historical Society.*



Fiesta Word Search

The **bold** words from the stories on this page are listed below in the word search. They are hidden in the puzzle in several ways: forward, backwards, horizontally, vertically and diagonally. See how many you can find!

H S A M U H C I N H R V
S T S I T R A O A E I L
L P U Y I Y I R T V H O
E X U I D S M S A L Q B
I L P A S E O L T O F E
L W H I R P A Y V L S R
P K M B I F N D F Y S O
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T A K E A W A I L K D V
R M S V N C R G C I U R
D T K E A X Z X I M X N
A W A N S A K U U L X Y

ARTISTS
LOBERO
WANSAK


BEAR
MISSION
HARMER

CHUMASH
POSTER
VIVALAFIESTA

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