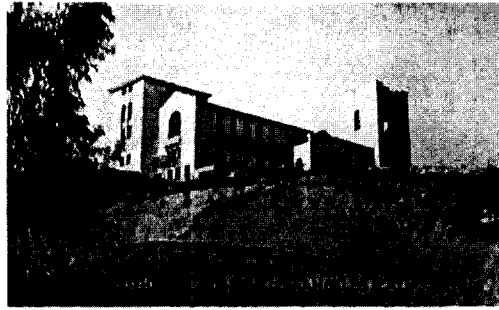


Chapter 4: Raiders of the Southwest Museum

A Report from the Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition

Fourth in a series of flyers to Los Angeles Conservancy Members and Friends



The 1914 Southwest Museum founded by Charles Lummis is under attack by the Gene Autry Museum in Griffith Park. Los Angeles Conservancy members can help save Los Angeles's First and Most Historic Museum by writing the City.

And now, the latest Chapter of "Charles Lummis and the Raiders of the Southwest Museum"

Roll Opening Credits and Recap: In the first three episodes of our fictional "film" called **Charles Lummis and the Raiders of the Southwest Museum**, we learned that Jackie Autry, the Widow of Singing Cowboy Gene Autry, and her band of Board Members, have obtained control of the graceful 13-acre Southwest Museum campus and priceless 220,000 piece Southwest Museum Collection through the signing of a Merger Agreement. Mrs. Autry's museum paid ZERO (\$0) dollars to merge with the Southwest Museum. The Merger Agreement she signed said that BOTH the Southwest Museum and Gene Autry Museum would be operated *as separate museum locations* under the umbrella of something called the "Autry National Center."

In the Southwest Museum Merger Agreement, Mrs. Autry and her Board Members promised the People of the State of California (through the Attorney General) that she would assume the "trust obligations" of the former Southwest Museum Board and that means she promised the Southwest Museum would continue to be operated at the expense of the Autry National Center unless a Master Plan showed otherwise. **THAT PROMISE** was what Autry "paid" to get title to the Southwest Museum and its contents, once estimated by Southwest Museum Director Duane King to be worth close to a Billion (\$1,000,000,000) Dollars.

In last week's episode, Historic Architect Brenda Levin delivered the news to Autry management that the Southwest Museum can be successfully operated within museum industry norms (and therefore the Merger Agreement promise to continue operating the Southwest Museum remained binding). However, CEO John Gray placed a letter at the front of Levin's Report claiming that expense to operate the Southwest Museum made it "not feasible" to operate as a museum. In response, the Friends of the Southwest Museum hired a national museum expert to review Levin's Report. He concluded the Southwest's performance numbers had been suppressed and the museum could perform well in this location. The claim in Gray's letter was not supported by Levin's report or his independent analysis! In the climatic final "scene" of Chapter 3 lightning strikes the Autry Museum and Charles Lummis descends from the clouds to deliver a booming message.

Opening Chapter 4: "The Adaptive Reuse Follies"

SCENE ONE: Office of Autry CEO John Gray. The Morning After The Lightning Storm. Sunrise out the window. Gray is asleep on his desk. He awakens: "Wow, I guess I just had a bad dream about Charles Lummis descending from the clouds and bellowing about a breach of the Autry's promises in the Merger Agreement. Whew!" **The phone rings. It's KPPC and Larry Mantle calling. Time for a Radio Interview**

(over for more of *Charles Lummis and Raiders of the Southwest Museum*)

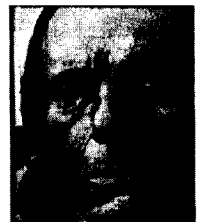
about the controversy over Autry's plan to move the Southwest Museum to Griffith Park. Gray: "Well, Larry, I just want to say how gratified the Autry is that the preservation community is supportive of our plan for the Southwest Museum because it will be adaptively reused." Listen to Air Talk with Larry Mantle on the Southwest Museum: http://www.scpr.org/programs/airtalk/listings/2006/06/airtalk_20060605.shtml

SCENE TWO: A Coffee Shop Near the Southwest Museum. Meeting of Friends of the Southwest Museum Steering Committee: Chair: How is it that the Autry turns things so upside down? Gray claims on Public Radio that the quote: "preservation community" supports the adaptive reuse of the Southwest Museum as some undefined cultural center and not the continued use as the building was historically used – a museum. **Other Member:** Who's the "preservation community"? The Los Angeles Conservancy and the Highland Park Heritage Trust are founding members of the Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition!" **Chair:** "As well as many other important preservation organizations that joined the Coalition out of concern over the future of this *national architectural treasure successfully operated as a museum*. The only evidence of best use was expertly documented by Brenda Levin's Team and concluded the historic museum use is feasible. That makes the strongest case for the preservation standard of Historic Use. Let's all remember, Autry has not presented an actual project – it is still just floating ideas. When Autry presents a real project, the "preservation community" will assess and debate the nuances of using the Southwest Museum building 'as it was historically used' and/or using the building in another way, called 'adaptive reuse,' which allows a building to be used in a compatible different way." **Member Looking At The Merger Agreement:** "But the Autry does not have Adaptive Reuse legally available as an option. Right here in the Merger Contract, Autry promised to continue to operate both the Autry and Southwest Museums, and to continue to pay for the operation of both Museums unless a Master Plan study showed otherwise. They never did a public Master Plan and Brenda Levin's Report said the museum was feasible. So, they remain bound to their promise. The Autry cannot choose Adaptive Reuse without violating the Merger Agreement!" **Chair, dryly:** "Breaching the Merger Agreement does not seem to bother the Autry." **Member:** "But would the preservation community support Adaptive Reuse if it knew to do so means they would support Autry breaking its Merger promises to continue the Historic Museum Use?"

SCENE THREE: Flash Ahead to the Future. The year is 2009. The Autry got a permit from the City to expand its Griffith Park museum in order to move in the Collection, Exhibits and Name of the Southwest Museum. Loading dock at the Southwest Museum as the last crate of the Collection is rolled onto the moving truck. Museum Employee to Truck Driver: "OK, that's the last of it. We are out of here with the Southwest Museum Collection!" **Driver:** "Where to?" **Employee:** "To Griffith Park, forever!"

SCENE FOUR: Later that same year. Front of the Southwest Museum Tunnel. A press conference is underway. Camera cranes down from the historic tunnel entrance to the speaker. John Gray: "And so, after further reflection, it was the reluctant determination of the Autry Board that it is just not possible for us to continue the operation of our beautiful new underground bunker Southwest Museum Wing AND a new cultural center here. Accordingly, the Autry will never re-open at this location and instead has decided instead to sell the empty and abandoned historic Southwest Museum and surrounding 13 acres of land to the highest bidder – a real estate developer.

Iron Eye Cody from the Ad Council American Beautiful Campaign, with tear in eye, steps from behind the Southwest Museum sign and speaks into the camera: "We all knew that if we did not demand that Autry make an enforceable commitment to continue operations of the museum *as a condition* of getting to build anything in Griffith Park, that this would be the ending. We should have known that the "Adaptive Reuse as a Cultural Center" was a Folly when Autry refused to commit to either a museum or a cultural center in *an enforceable written agreement*." **Go to the online Petition to demand Autry sign an enforceable contract! (Next page)**



Next Week's Episode: A Fiddler on the Roof and A Bug's Life in the Basement!

YOU CAN WRITE THE NEXT CHAPTER OF “CHARLES LUMMIS AND RAIDERS OF THE SOUTHWEST MUSEUM”

The Mayor of Los Angeles, under the guidance of the Human Relations Commission, is now conducting a **public input process** to find out what people think about Autry’s proposal to use City parkland to expand its building in Griffith Park in order to **ENABLE** the movement of the Southwest Museum’s Collection, Exhibits, and Name into a wing of Autry’s museum building. **All comments must be submitted by July 5, 2006.**

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. **TELL THE MAYOR WHAT YOU THINK** - Write to the Mayor and other Elected Officials to express your support of the Southwest Museum’s rehabilitation and creation of a vibrant and modern museum displaying the Southwest’s vast collection. Over 7,000 people have signed the Coalition’s petitions demanding that Autry sign a new agreement with the California Attorney General confirming its Merger Agreement responsibility to raise funds for and continue to operate the Southwest Museum in the Arroyo Seco AS A CONDITION of any City of Los Angeles permission to use more City parkland to expand the building in Griffith Park. The Mayor appoints the Recreation and Park Commission that will make this decision. Send your e-mail or letter to ALL of the following:

Mayor Villaraigosa:

mayor@lacity.org or 200 N Spring St., Room 303 LA, CA 90012

Councilmember Jose Huizar (Southwest Museum in his district):

councilmember.huizar@lacity.org or 200 N. Spring St., Room 425 LA, CA 90012

Councilmember Ed Reyes (Casa de Adobe portion of SW Museum in his district):

councilmember.reyes@lacity.org or 200 N. Spring St., Room 410, LA, CA 90012

Councilmember Tom LaBonge (Autry Museum in his district):

tom.labonge@lacity.org or 200 N. Spring St., Room 480, LA, CA 90012

Human Relations Commission, Gary de la Rosa (compiling comments for Autry):

gary.delarosa@lacity.org or 200 N. Spring St., Room 1625 LA 90012

Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition (make sure we get a copy!!):

swmcoalition@pacbell.net or 755 Crane Blvd., LA 90065

2. **SIGN THE COALITION’S ONLINE PETITION** – Join others who have signed:
<http://www.petitiononline.com/SWM/petition.html> and sign electronically!

3. **EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT THIS CONTROVERSY:**

Charles Lummis – www.charleslummis.com A man’s whose legacy is disrespected by the Autry.

Autry National Center – The Southwest Museum’s separate identity as a museum has been removed from the Internet. Whether you enter www.autrynationalcenter.org or www.autry-museum.org or www.southwestmuseum.org, you are taken to **the same Autry National Center content** with a different home page picture! In the Merger Agreement, Autry promised separate operations.

Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition – www.friendsofthesouthwestmuseum.com

Contact us to offer your help, comments, and suggestions: swmcoalition@pacbell.net

4. **ATTEND CITY-SPONSORED SOUTHWEST MUSEUM FORUM:**

June 22, 2006 – *Plaza de la Raza*, 3540 N. Mission Rd.,
in Lincoln Heights at 6:30 p.m.

June 29, 2006 – *Ramona Hall*, 4580 N. Figueroa Street,
in Highland Park/Mount Washington at 6:30 p.m.

Charles Lummis would not have remained silent. We need to speak for him, his legacy, and the treasure of the Southwest Museum!