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Casa de la Guerra reception to carry on tradition

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Kimberly Brooke Downey and Justin James Cowan from Los Angeles will be tying the knot in Santa Barbara on April 12 later this year.

The wedding ceremony will be held at 4 p.m. at the Presidio, and the reception will be held a few blocks away at the Casa de la Guerra, home of Kimberly's great-great-great-grandfather.

Miss Downey, or soon-to-be Mrs. Cowan, is the direct descendant of Jose de la Guerra, one of the early commandants of the Presidio in Santa Barbara and one of the city's founders.

The Casa de la Guerra was built between 1819 and 1826, and housed De la Guerra and his descendants until 1945. The home was a grand mansion compared to the one-room adobes around it.

The California lineage of the Downey family goes back many years, according to Kathleen Lillian Downey and confirmed by Santa Barbara historian and De la Guerra family heritage expert Alex Grzywacki.

Jose de la Guerra had a son named Francisco, who had a daughter named Diana Victoria, who had a

daughter named Rosita Maria Rebecca Rico, who had a daughter named Diana Jean, who changed her name to Suzanne when she turned 18 years old, who had a daughter named Kathleen, who is the mother of the bride, Kimberly Brooke Downey.

This wedding will not be the first time that a descendant of the De la Guerra line will be married at the Presidio.

The Presidio and the Casa de la Guerra have a long history of hosting events, for not just De la Guerra's family, but also to the families of many of the descendants of the soldiers who were stationed at the Presidio.

In 2011, the Casa de la Guerra and the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation held a reunion for the descendants of Jose de la Guerra. People from all over the country attended.

The trust is pleased to help continue the tradition, said Associate Director Anne Peterson in a statement.

"Casa de la Guerra has a long tradition of playing host to de la Guerra family wedding celebrations, including that of Jose de la Guerra's daughter Anita's wedding to the American Alfred Robinson in 1836, famously



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Preparing for an April 12 wedding at Casa de la Guerra are, from left, Haley Downey, John Downey, Kathleen Downey, Kimberly Downey and Justin Cowan. Haley, Lillian and Kimberly are direct descendants of Jose de la Guerra, who built Casa de la Guerra in the 1820s.

described by Richard Henry Dana Jr. in the book, "Two Years Before the Mast."

That same wedding is depicted in a mural on display at the Santa Barbara County Courthouse. Painted by Theodore Van Cina, it depicts Anita

and Alfred Robinson's wedding reception at the Casa de la Guerra.

For the Downey-Cowan wedding, they plan on keeping with a Mexican theme for the celebration by having the congregation walk from the Pre-

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Diana Jean and Donald Christian Klune, grandmother and grandfather of bride Kimberly Downey.

Woman dreamed of wedding in ancestral home



Diana Jean, the bride's grandmother.

WEDDING

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sidio to Casa de la Guerra, accompanied by a mariachi band.

Having a deep California heritage has a more significant meaning than having a popular lineage for the bride-to-be.

"It's a rarity in California to meet people who were born and raised here," Miss Downey told the News-Press. "There are a lot of transplants from all over who've relocated themselves, but I think there's something special about being so

deeply rooted."

This will literally be a dream wedding, Miss Downey said.

After she and her fiancée became engaged, she dreamed about a wedding ceremony at her ancestor's home.

"I woke up and told my fiancé, 'I want to get married in Santa Barbara,'" Miss Downey said. "We've always known we were descendants of De la Guerra, but it didn't hit me to have my wedding there until I actually had a dream about it."

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From left, Rosita Maria Rebecca Rico, great-grandmother of Kimberly Downey, Diana Jean, the Kimberly Downey's grandmother, and two bridesmaids.

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