



history|san José
silicon valley from a to z

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THE Exchange

HISTORY SAN JOSÉ

NOVEMBER 2005

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Solving the Fallon House Mystery

Rehabilitation work can now target and correct problems plaguing structure

The historic home of Thomas and Carmel Fallon has suffered from design and structural inadequacies since the City of San José restored the structure and opened it as a house museum in the early 1990s. The beautiful home had stood proud for many years, yet suddenly it became plagued with flooding and dry rot that forced closure of the basement exhibit.

History San José has been seeking City assistance in tracking down and correcting these mysterious problems since assuming responsibility for the House in 1998. The mystery is now solved, and thanks to two separate appropriations, the Redevelopment Agency of San José is moving to rehabilitate the historic Fallon House in downtown San José. Scaffolding and repair crews will make their appearance around the roof of the House within weeks.

Paired with the Peralta Adobe across St. John Street, the Fallon House is one of the most important historical structures in San José, as well as an integral component in History San José's school and public programs, such as Victorian Days, one of our most popular school programs.

Thanks to the leadership of Vice Mayor Cindy Chavez, and unanimous support of the entire Council, the City



Residence of Thomas Fallon, corner of San Pedro and San Augustine Streets, San José.

New Historical Atlas of Santa Clara County, California, 1876

appropriated \$250,000 to the Redevelopment Agency in October 2004 to fix structural and design problems associated with the original restoration. A year later, in September 2005, the Redevelopment Agency requested and received an additional \$350,000 to complete the structural work,

Fallon House, continued on page 4

Celebrating the Turn of a Special Year

by David Crosson, President & CEO

Fiscal years (not to be confused with calendar years) are not normally things that you remember, let alone celebrate. No one dons hats and blows tiny horns at the turn of the first of July. But you will want to remember and celebrate FY 2005 (July 1, 2004 - June 30, 2005). That was the year that History San José directly served over 100,000 people for the first time in its history. An additional 98,000 people visited HSJ's various websites, for a grand total of 199,801 people served last fiscal year.

What does this mean? First, it documents a tremendous increase in total service over FY 1998, the first year for which HSJ was responsible for the City's historic resources. Total FY 2005 direct public use increased 110% from 48,272 in FY 1998 and 59% from 63,811 in FY 2004. Website visits increased by 2,430% from beginning at 3,890 visits in FY 1998 and 88% over FY 2004.

We have increased service in every area. General admission public visitation has increased over 100% over the seven-year period, and over 60% in the last year alone. Programs and services (festivals and events, rentals, *History Makers*, etc.) have increased from 38,484 to 72,733 (89%) over the same period. Although records are not available for FY 1998, 1,592 people used the historical collections for research purposes in FY 2005—nearly seven researchers each available day!

The only exception to this pattern of growth was in the area of school tours, where a combination of dramatically

increased transportation costs combined with an emphatic emphasis on standardized testing. We hope to attract grant support to address the transportation issue.

This remarkable record of growth means that our commitment to, and strategies for, expanding services to the community are working. History belongs to everyone, and everyone is welcome at the Peralta Adobe, History Park, the Fallon House, and the Collection Center, whether they arrive in person or use the Internet as their access point.

Such success also means more work for our dedicated volunteers and employees. However, the nature of that work has changed. After many years of administering triage measures to the collections, repairing and opening buildings, expanding community partnerships, structuring school curricula, energizing the sites, creating finding aids, and designing web access, now we increasingly are spending larger portions of our time directly delivering services. And that is what we want to do.

But, as our public services expand, the financial and human services that deliver those services continue to stretch even more. This is the true test of the future. Now that we have arrived at this particular spot in the river, we are going to have to swim even harder to just stay put, let alone continue to progress.

In the meantime, note, enjoy, and remember the moment. And, as Yogi (Berra, not Bear) was wont to say, "Thank you for making this moment necessary."

HSJ LEADERSHIP

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Free admission for one year to History Park and Peralta Adobe-Fallon House Historic Site



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Senator James D. Phelan and Villa Montalvo

by Jack Douglas

James D. Phelan, U.S. Senator, three-term reform mayor of San Francisco, business tycoon and connoisseur of the arts, left his beautiful mountainside estate to the San Francisco Art Association when he died in 1930. The Villa Montalvo was, in his words, to be used as far as possible for the development of art, literature, music and architecture by promising students.

Through the efforts of the Montalvo Association, the estate has risen to become a major center for the arts.



Senator James D. Phelan.

With its artist-in-residence program, permanent art gallery, carriage house concert room, outdoor performance stage, literary arts program and aesthetic surroundings, Villa Montalvo has more than met the hopes expressed in the Senator's will.

With all of this activity, however, it was easy to lose sight of the history of the Villa, and of the great man whose dream it was. To help resolve this, the Montalvo board of directors formed a committee to reconstruct the Senator's library in its original location on the

north side of the Villa, adjacent to the entrance. The restored library would serve as a small museum, recalling the gracious era of Phelan's residency.

The library committee was made up of local historians, former librarians, antiquarian booksellers and devoted bibliophiles. Once the shelves were replaced and the room redecorated, it became the task of the committee to fill the shelves.

The Senator's books were dispersed shortly after his death, and the only record of the holdings was a list made of the volumes that were given to the Bancroft Library. Since the Bancroft was reluctant to return the books, the list was used to acquire duplicates when they were available, and in editions that pre-dated Phelan's death. As useful as this list is, it does not include volumes from authors whom the Senator supported, or from the many literary people who congregated at the Villa.

The most notable of his writer friends was Gertrude Atherton, whose novels and historical non-fiction brought the California experience to readers throughout the English-speaking world. It is said that the Senator decorated each of her new volumes with a little flag when it was put on the library shelf. Mrs.

Atherton was probably the only non-family member who had a suite in the Villa. As grande dame of Northern California Pen Women, she officiated at numerous literary soirees in San Francisco and at the Villa.

Many important writers followed the Senator's example and built homes nearby in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Prominent among these were Fremont and Cora Older, Charles and Kathleen Norris, Ruth Comfort Mitchell, Charles Erskine Scott Wood and his partner, Sara Bard Field.

As a would-be poet himself, Phelan

frequently entertained the poets Edwin Markham, Joaquin Miller, George Sterling and San José State professor-poet Henry Meade Bland. With the backing of Mrs. Atherton and Phelan, Dr. Bland became Poet Laureate of California, succeeding Ina Coolbrith.

The Senator's library must have contained all the works of these authors, as well as many others. At present the library has serviceable copies of a number of titles, but it is now the goal to acquire as many of the original signed copies as can be located. Funds to purchase volumes have always been in short supply, but thanks to the antiquarian book dealers on the committee, eight annual antiquarian book fairs were held at the Villa, with over two dozen carefully selected booksellers participating. A number of volumes with the Senator's book plate surfaced at these fairs and were added to the collection. The book fair was discontinued for a variety of reasons in 2001.

The library committee has been successful, through its publicity efforts, in acquiring many appropriate gifts. A good example was the collected plays of the Bohemian Club. Phelan was a devoted Bohemian, and some of his happiest memories included his tenure as the club president, and his participation in the summer activities at the Grove.

If any of our readers have volumes with Senator Phelan's distinctive book plate, the committee would be delighted if the owners would consider contributing or selling them to the Library so that they might once again grace the Senator's book shelves. And by all means visit the library when you come to the Villa. The books do not circulate, but they are available for perusal by persons interested in the life and times of a great Californian.

The address for Villa Montalvo is 15400 Montalvo Road, P.O. Box 158, Saratoga, CA 95071-0158. Further information can be found online at www.villamontalvo.org.

School Programs Delight Teachers and Students

Volunteers Needed

The History San José Education Department is in the midst of the work of serving the upwards of 23,000 children who come to our sites to learn about the history of the Valley. The groundwork for our 2005-2006 school year is laid during the period from mid-July to mid-October when a deluge of requests for school tours arrive and are scheduled. For example, our Experience Adobe Days tour sold out for the school year within just seventeen minutes of opening at midnight!

Another of our most popular programs is Westward Ho! Children are involved in the decisions that would have faced the pioneers on a wagon train west such as selecting a leader, deciding upon the route west, and packing a life-size recreation of an authentic wagon of the period with the necessary items for the trip. Life on the trail was not all work—children play marbles, roll hoops, churn butter, and make prairie candy. Each student goes home with real insight into the pioneer experience.



Volunteer Alicelee Ewan with Elizabeth Graybeal and Corbin Crosson.

As a result of a nomination by one of our volunteers, our Westward Ho! school program received an award in 2002 from the Oregon-California Trails Association as an outstanding educational program. The program continues to thrive thanks to the dedication of our docents and paid interpreters. The

available school dates for Westward Ho! fill quickly and teachers clamor for a place on the waiting list. We currently offer the program two days per week. With more volunteer docents, HSJ could offer this program four days per week. This expansion would serve almost every class on our waiting list.

Like many other areas of our work at History San José, additional volunteers are needed in order to provide more people access to the fantastic programs and activities that we offer. HSJ is recognized as an outstanding educator that offers unique hands-on experiences which meet California State curriculum standards. As a member and supporter, you allow us to continue offering young people these experiences. As a volunteer, you can help us bring history alive for even more students! Please contact the new Director of Education, Marilyn Guida, at either 408-918-1050 or mguida@historysanjose.org if you would like to become a docent or can connect us with individuals who would be ideal candidates.

Fallon House, continued from cover

which had grown far beyond original expectations. Work is expected to continue through summer 2006.

“HSJ actively sought the initial appropriation,” said President and CEO David Crosson. “But Redevelopment Agency Director Harry Mavrogenes initiated the request for supplemental funds himself. We are very grateful for his leadership.”

The agency contracted with preservation architect Craig Mineweaser in April 2005 to investigate the problems, and his assessment solved the mystery: as a result of the new roof

design installed during the City’s renovation of the building, the gutters cannot adequately handle the runoff during the rainy season. This results in rainwater seeping back under the flashing and into the roof, causing dry rot problems in the roof structure and issues with excess water rolling off the roof in sheets, soaking the area around the foundation, flooding the basement and damaging all the porches.

“Manny’s Cellar restaurant was located in that same space,” said Crosson. “We always wondered why Manny’s never flooded—now we know.” All exhibits were removed from the basement, which has been empty and closed to school groups and the public since November 2003.

The Redevelopment Agency will first repair the roof, and then address the foundation, drainage and other structural issues. HSJ will seek private funds to address non-structural repairs, such as external and internal paint, wood replacement, and internal plaster work. HSJ is working to place the Fallon House on the National Register of Historic Places in order to be eligible for state grant funds. “We look forward to returning Fallon House to the condition that the restorations of the 1990s were intended to ensure,” said Crosson. Completion of HSJ’s portion of the project is scheduled for 2007—when the Fallon House will stand proud once again.



Mineweaser & Associates inspecting the Fallon House.



From A to Z

26 Rare Artifacts and Stories on Exhibit at City Hall

Silicon Valley A to Z is History San José's third exhibit at San José's new City Hall. The exhibit highlights the history of San José and the Santa Clara Valley through an amazingly diverse range of 26 historic artifacts that have helped to define the region. Here's a preview peek at three "letters" from the exhibit which show just how far and fast times have changed.

SPEED CITY

Because of the large number of outstanding athletes in its track and field program, San José State College became synonymous with the name "Speed City" between 1956 and 1969. Coach Lloyd "Bud" Winter produced 37 world record holders, 102 NCAA All-Americans, 49 NCAA record holders, and 27 Olympians throughout his 35-year coaching career in San José. In 1968, his athletes won a record five track medals at the Olympic Games held in Mexico City—more than any other university. Two of those athletes, sprinters John Carlos and Tommie Smith, made headlines around the world with their "Black Power" protest on the winners' podium. History San José plans to open an exhibit titled *Speed City: From Civil Rights to Black Power* in fall of 2006, guest curated by Urla Hill.



TAMIEN BASKET

The San José area is the homeland of the Tamien Ohlone people. The Tamien were one of numerous tribal groups, each with their own language, that today are often collectively referred to as Ohlone. The Tamien people were land managers who used hundreds of plant and animal species in their economy. They practiced controlled burning, selective harvesting, irrigation, sowing, weeding and pruning to keep fires, weeds, insects and diseases in check and to promote the growth of specific plants used in basket making. This basket is made from a wide variety of carefully cultivated materials.



ROBOT

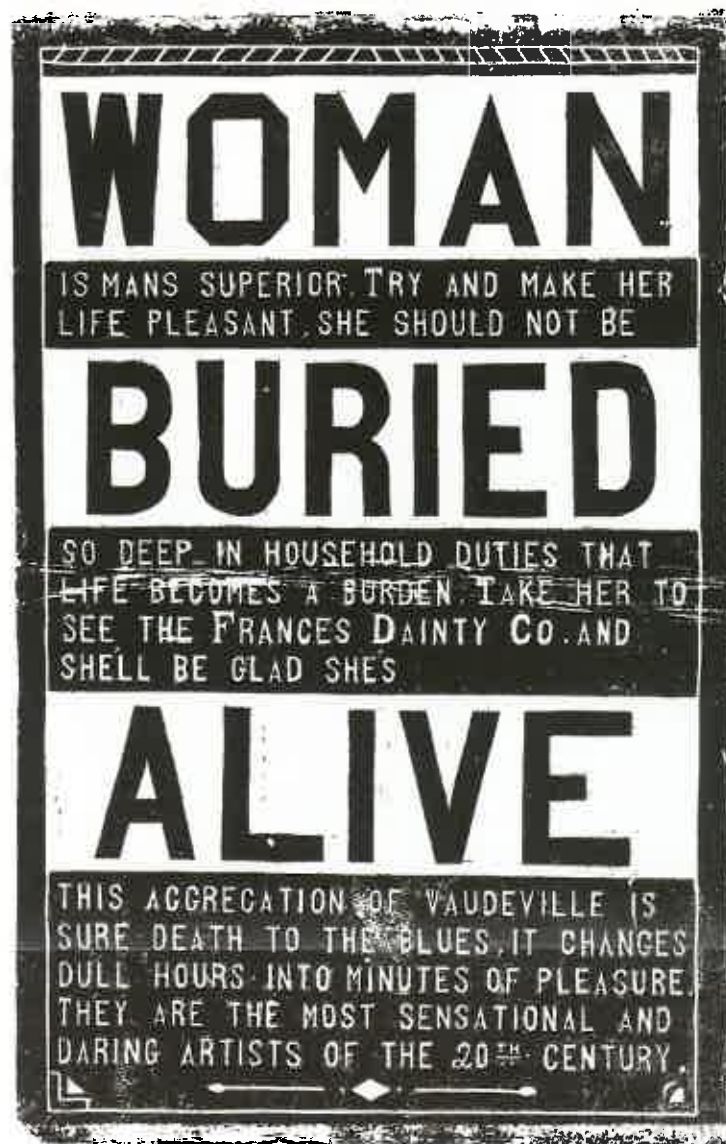
The robot TOPO I was created by Androbot Inc. under the guidance of Atari founder Nolan Bushnell. TOPO was introduced to the educational market in 1983, selling for \$495. Androbot's promotional brochure explained that "a personal robot—as we see it at Androbot—should be play-oriented, rather than work oriented. Not an appliance, but a friend." The robot was designed to be an extension of a personal computer and was controlled by a remote control program from an Apple II system. There were three TOPO models built, with models II and III being more complex, including some text-to-speech talking. One prototype model of TOPO was created with a built-in vacuum. Sadly, Androbot's vision of personal robot friends delivering us refreshments, entertaining and educating our children, and helping with tasks around the house was never realized.

Own a Piece of the Past

Membership in History San José has its benefits: supporting the preservation of local culture, joining a community of like-minded peers...and receiving a reprint of the historic poster at right. What could be better?

Although the poster's bold message seems contemporary, it was printed circa 1918 by the Frances Dainty Co., a troupe of traveling vaudeville performers. In a 1926 advertisement, they billed themselves as "the World's Greatest Cyclists in Extraordinary Feats of Cycle Riding and Balancing." The act was performed by three generations of the Geer family, who traveled throughout the United States, Europe and Asia performing daring feats with bicycles and ladders atop a slack wire. When they weren't traveling, the Geer family resided in San José's Willow Glen neighborhood at the same location from 1886 to 1999. Memorabilia from the Frances Dainty, Co. act, including traveling trunks and a bicycle, are currently on display at San José City Hall in *San José: Generations of Innovation and Diversity*.

Frances Dainty, the stage name of one of the Geer children, printed his own posters to advertise his act. History Park Printers' Guild members Eric Butler and Jim Gard have brought this image back to life by making a print from Dainty's original linoleum block from the HSJ Dainty Collection. Due to the block's delicate condition, HSJ staff photographed the new print to make copies for members. To obtain a copy of "Woman Buried Alive," please renew your HSJ membership—or join! For membership information, call 408-287-2290.



History San José Dainty Collection

LEAVING A LEGACY

As we near the end of 2005, there are numerous opportunities for giving a traditional year-end charitable gift. Year-end gifts to nonprofit agencies such as History San José provide a tax benefit to donors, allowing each of us to make every dollar work a little harder. Cash is still the most popular way to make a gift, followed by stocks, bonds, mutual funds, real estate and life insurance.

A charitable bequest through a will is another way of giving. Charitable bequests offer tax benefits and are an opportunity to define your legacy and make a gift that lasts beyond your lifetime. History San José staff can help you decide what type of gift and legacy you would like to leave for your community.

If you would like to support HSJ by

making a legacy or other gift, please send your donation to History San José, attention Barbara Johnson, or call 408-918-1053 for more information. Thank you!

MATCHING GIFTS

If you are an employee or retiree of a corporation that has a matching gift program, the dollars you give to History San José throughout the year in memberships, fundraising or extra donations may be matched one-to-one or one-half-to-one. Many HSJ members already participate in matching programs, but many others are not aware that their employers offer them. We're looking for YOU!

In particular, we are looking for current or retired employees of General Electric. Since GE changed their matching gift program criteria

HSJ must now identify at least five GE employees or retirees in order to receive additional funds. If you are a GE employee or retiree, please let us know. Your single gift to HSJ can leverage far more funds for our community programs!

Also, if you are an employee of a company with a matching gift program and hold stock in the company, you can sell the stock and donate the profit to HSJ. The stock profit will be matched by the company. We currently have a GE retiree who does just that, but since we cannot identify at least five GE employees or retirees, the gift is not matched. Please come forward and identify yourself. You will be doing a great service to the cause of historic preservation and education—and possibly obtaining tax benefits for yourself as well.

NOVEMBER -- JANUARY

History Makers

It's Our Fault Too:

The 1906 Earthquake in
Santa Clara Valley

Thursday, November 10

7:00 – 8:30 pm

See description below.

*Barnes & Noble Booksellers at the
corner of Almaden Expressway and
Blossom Hill Road*

Free

Poetry Workshop

Nils Peterson and Sally Ashton

Saturdays, November 12 & 19

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

History Park,

Empire Firehouse upstairs

\$150 per workshop

History San José

Members' Holiday Party!

Thursday, December 8

6:00 – 8:00 pm

History Park, Pacific Hotel

Members Only



Courtesy of Ayrshire Breeders Association

Image from the Dairy Hill Online Exhibit.

ONGOING

Artists For Hire:

Painting for the Market in
Santa Clara Valley

Through December 2005

Tuesday – Sunday

12:00 – 5:00 pm

History Park, Pacific Hotel Gallery 1

Free

The Leonard and David McKay
Gallery at the Pasetta House

Through February 12, 2006

Saturday & Sunday

12:00 – 5:00 pm

Free

Dairy Hill Online Exhibit

Visit HSJ's first online exhibit at
www.historysanjose.org/dairyhill.

San José City Hall Exhibits:
Silicon Valley A to Z

In Full View: Historic and
Contemporary Panoramas

San José: Generations
of Innovation and Diversity

Monday – Friday

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

New San José City Hall

Free



Courtesy of San José Fire Museum, Inc.

James Smith Squirrel Tail Hand Pumper, 1808.

IT'S OUR FAULT TOO: THE 1906 EARTHQUAKE IN SANTA CLARA VALLEY LOOKS AT LOCAL IMPACT OF HISTORIC QUAKE

HSJ President and CEO David Crosson will lead a lively discussion of the effects of the April 1906 earthquake on the Santa Clara Valley as the popular History Makers series continues. Crosson will interview three expert panelists: authors James Dalessandro and Philip L. Fradkin, and geologist Nan Shostak.



History San José Collection

Earthquake damage, Post Office, Market and San Fernando Streets, San José.

Dalessandro is author of the popular novel *1906*, and Fradkin is author of *The Great Earthquake* and *Firestorms of 1906: How San Francisco Nearly Destroyed Itself*. Shostak is completing a geology thesis at San José State University on the economic impact of the 1906 quake on Santa Clara County.

The discussion will provide a peek at the upcoming HSJ exhibit: *It's Our Fault, Too: The 1906 Earthquake in Santa Clara Valley*, which will open in History Park's Leonard and David McKay Galleries in March 2006. HSJ Archivist Jim Reed is curating this exhibit, which tells Santa Clara Valley's earthquake story as never seen before.

Crosson will direct questions for the panelists in the first hour and then open the floor to audience participation.

Great Gift Ideas!



Your Home Library

The New York Public Library Home Library System provides solutions with custom-designed software to help keep track of a growing home library, high-quality paper to print out and save your book list, and a beautiful binder in which to display your list of well-loved books. Also included is *The New York Public Library Guide to Organizing a Home Library* by Kathie Coblenz, Special Collections Cataloger at the New York Public Library.



The Complete Wine Cellar System

This kit includes custom-designed software to record important information about every bottle of wine in your collection, a beautiful binder to preserve and display your wine list, and lovely parchment paper on which to print your list. The complete Wine Cellar also includes the informative new book *All About Wine Cellars*.

The Illuminated Lettering Kit

Combining calligraphy, painting and gilding, illuminated lettering is a skill that's surprisingly easy to learn. In this kit, you have everything you need to create your own illuminated masterpieces—perfect for holidays, birthday gifts, or to decorate your home.



The Calligraphy Kit

If you can write, you can convert your scribbles into stunning calligraphic text, and this kit will show you how. Included is an easy-to-follow, step-by-step instruction booklet, and all the materials you'll need to get started. Personalize all your holiday correspondence and gift tags with exquisite script using The Calligraphy Kit.

MUSEUM INFORMATION

SITES

History Park

Kelley Park, 1650 Senter Road
San José, CA 95112
408-287-2290, Fax 408-287-2291

Peralta Adobe-Fallon House Historic Site

175 W. St., John Street
San José, CA 95110
408-993-8300, Fax 408-993-8088

Administrative Offices

1650 Senter Road
San José, CA 95112
408-287-2290, Fax 408-287-2291

www.historysanjose.org

RENTALS AND EVENTS

Call 408-918-1055 for information.

ADMISSION

Free public admission to History Park and the Peralta Adobe-Fallon House Historic Site.

GROUP TOURS

Groups of 10 or more who are interested in scheduling a custom tour should contact 408-918-1040.

HOURS

SATURDAY & SUNDAY

History Park & Gallery	12 pm – 5 pm
Museum Store	12 pm – 5 pm
O'Brien's Café	12 pm – 5 pm
Peralta/Fallon	12 pm – 5 pm

TUESDAY – FRIDAY

History Park & Gallery	12 pm – 5 pm
Museum Store	12 pm – 5 pm
O'Brien's Café	12 pm – 5 pm

Research Library by appointment

Office Hours (Mon. – Fri.) 9 am – 5 pm

PROGRAMS

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

History Makers
Family Days
Portraits of the Past

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

All school programs must be reserved. Call 408-918-1040.

A Child's Life in the 1890s
Experience Adobe Days
Experience Victorian Days
Explore the Peralta Adobe-Fallon House
Gold Rush Adventure Kit
Historic Transportation Experience
History Hike
History Park Tour
Immigration
People at Work
Peralta Adobe-Fallon House Tour
School Days in the 1890s
Valley of Heart's Delight
Victorian-Family Life
Westward Ho!