BEGIN THE HOLIDAY SEASON WITH A VISIT TO “CHRISTMAS AT DUNSMUIR”

When: Monday, December 3, 1984
Who: Association Members & Their Guests
How: Royal Coach Tours
Times: 9:30 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.
Cost: Members — $22.00
Non-Members — $24.00
(Price includes lunch)

The beautiful Dunsmuir House in Oakland is an impressive example of Victorian Colonial Revival architecture, built in 1899 and situated on forty-eight acres in the Oakland hills. It consists of 37 rooms. Three floors have been restored and furnished for today’s visitor to enjoy. A Tiffany-style dome-skylight topping the central staircase is a particular attraction.

This year marks the fourteenth presentation of “Christmas at Dunsmuir”, a benefit event sponsored by the Dunsmuir House and Gardene non-profit group to aid in the preservation and restoration of the House. The show is a recreation of Victorian Christmas celebrations.

On Monday, December 3rd, we will tour the ornate Mansion, which will be decorated in old-fashioned Christmas splendor, and enjoy box lunches served in the Carriage House on the grounds. There will be time to stroll the one-mile loop of the 48-acre estate, to enjoy the entertainment, and to shop for gifts, collectibles, and decorations provided by local artists and craftsmen.

Reservations are limited, so make your plans soon to join us for this lovely day. Checks should be made payable to the San Jose Historical Museum Association and sent along with the reservation form below and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to San Jose Historical Museum, 635 Phelan Avenue, San Jose, CA 95112. Attn.: Kathy Muller.

You will receive the reservation form by return mail as a confirmation.

Christmas at Dunsmuir 12/3/84
Name: ____________________________
Address: ___________________________
Phone Number: ____________________
Number of Reservations: ___________
Choice of box lunches: □ Ham □ Turkey
Reservation confirmed □

San Jose Historical Museum
635 Phelan Avenue
San Jose, California 95112
1984 Was a Great Museum Year

The November newsletter is the last for 1984 and helps to mark another successful year for the San Jose Historical Museum. All the Board Members, Docents, Volunteers and Staff should be thankful for their outstanding efforts. The Museum has kept the doors open and been able to grow because of all this help. Our future vision of a major living/working Museum becomes clearer all the time. Thanks to everyone involved for a good Museum year.

Mignon Gibson
Museum Director

ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Some years ago I began writing articles about the old police and justice court of this county. The past developments in this area are so different from the present that I am compelled to write articles about the Association and the Museum. The purpose of the Association is to be a repository for the history of San Jose and the Silicon Valley, and will be a resource for anyone interested in the history of the area.

With each subsequent article I realized more and more that the tale of the town and its courts could not be separated. Indeed, the saga of the community was generally more interesting and significant than that of its court system.

Ultimately I learned that for an article to be interesting, one must be able to answer the question: What is the story of the town? In the case of all the town's courts, the answer was simple, but the question was much more complex. The story of the town is the story of its people, and the story of the people is the story of their community. The story of the town is the story of its history, and the story of its history is the story of its people.

With your help in 1985 the San Jose Historical Museum Association will continue its efforts on that story.

Judge Mark Thomas, Jr.
Association President

MUSEUM SERVICE COUNCIL

We begin our winter schedule this month - docents give tours of the buildings on weekends as they regularly do Tuesday through Friday.

Volunteers staff the lobby desk, both gift shops and O'Brien's Ice Cream Shop Tuesday through Sunday.

Individual training is offered for each area of service as needed, with the greatest current need for volunteers in O'Brien's, weekdays or weekends.

Many thanks to the 90 valuable volunteers who have given an average of 872 hours a month to the Museum, and to all who helped make our Living History Day another fantastic event!

Don't forget to start your Christmas shopping early in our gift shops and stop in for lunch at O'Brien's. Let's keep the profits for our Museum!

Dulcie Janzen
Volunteer Coordinator

The San Jose Historical Museum is part of the City of San Jose and Parks and Recreation Department.
1984 CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP LIST GROWS

PATRON
Rosicrucian Press

BENEFactors
CPS, Commercial Real Estate Co.
Santa Clara County Title Co.
Southern Lumber Co.

ASSOCIATE
Alexander Grant & Co.
CRI Properties
KBAY-KEEN
Lima Family Mortuaries
McClintock Metal Fabricators
Morse-Nesveldt Inc.
Muller Construction Supply, Inc.
Pacific Bell
Plaza Bank of Commerce
Vanderson Construction

SUSTAINING
Barnes (Martin) & Associates
Beauzay, Hammer, Eagar, Bledsoe & Spreinkle
Best Electrical Co., Inc.
Bloomom Portable Shop, Inc.
Buck's Butane-Propane Service, Inc.
Burke Industries
Calio Oil Co.
Coakley Heagerty Co., Ltd.
Cortese Company
Estate Homes
Ferrara Meat Co., Inc.
Gagliardi Bros. Insurance
Jensens Scales
Kreyton Co.
Main Hardman
March Development Co.
Marchese Farms
Markovits & Fox
Mirascas Vineyards
Normandin Chrysler-Plymouth
O'Brien Travel Service, Inc.
Paul Massen Winey
Pepper Tree Inns
Pfeiffer Electric Co., Inc.
Provenanza Brothers Building Material
Raiach Equipment Leasing
San Jose Blue Print Service & Supply Co.
South Bay Construction & Development Co.
Stapleton Spence Packing Co.
Valley View Packing Co.
Western Sales Engineering
Western States Oil
Wool, Richardson & Graff
Wyllie, Blunt, McBride & Jesinga

TRUSTS & FOUNDATIONS
Hugh Stuart Center Charitable Trust
Stella B. Gross Trust Fund
Sourses Academy

ADVERTISING SPACE AVAILABLE

for information (408) 287-2290

O'BRIEN'S ICE CREAM AND CANDY SHOP

Enjoy a delicious lunch in O'Brien's when visiting the Museum to view the exhibits or to do your holiday shopping.

Hours: Tues. - Fri.
10:00 - 4:30
Sat. - Sun.
12:00 - 4:30

San Jose Historical Museum, Kelley Park

SUGARIEE

MAYFAIR PACKING COMPANY
dried fruit and walnuts
2070 SOUTH SEVENTH STREET • P.O. BOX 5879
• SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA 95150
• PHONE 408 / 280-2300

Hall & Rambo INSURANCE
Established 1896
George Starbird. Tim Starbird

PARK BENCH PROGRAM

One year ago, in the November 1983 issue of this newspaper, Eric Bracher announced a new program offering park benches for sale on the Museum grounds. The success of that program has been phenomenal! Today all forty of the new benches we hoped to acquire already grace the property. They have been donated to honor loved ones, living and dead; to honor service clubs and organizations; and to honor the friends and families of our Association members.

We will not be offering more benches for awhile — we need time to "catch our breath" and find additional appropriate locations. Thank you to all who have contributed to the success of this program!

In the following article, Patricia Loomis continues to highlight the donors of our new park benches.

Six more shiny park benches adorn the San Jose Historical Museum grounds, attesting to the growing number of friends of the Museum at the south end of Kelley Park.

Two of the benches honor the Fred Menichetti and Tom Lopez families. One honors ToKalon, a "ladies' cultural and educational group" founded in San Jose in 1963. Two benches were given in memory of loved ones, and one for San Jose pioneer Tyler Beach.

The Menichetti family came to San Jose from Illinois after Fred left the Army at the end of World War II. Both Fred and his wife, Betty are members of the Museum Association. Their son, Joe, is with the Irish music group, "Isle of Skye" which played for the Museum Author's Party last March.

Other members of the Menichetti family are daughter Carol Brocato and her children, Gina and Dominic. Tom Lopez is a native San Josean, football star and graduate of San Jose State University, honored two years ago for his community involvement. Lopez, who owns the Western States Oil Co. he founded in 1965, was Chairman of United Way last year. His family includes wife, Janet, and children Steve, Jeff and Shelly.

To Kalon still adheres to its original purpose — furthering intellectual and cultural knowledge for its 80 members, many of whom belong to the Museum Association. They still serve tea at the meetings in member's homes or in churches, and each year present a gift to a worthy local organization.

Joe H. Baler has donated a bench in memory of his parents, John and Clara Haler, who came to San Jose from Illinois in 1949, celebrating their Golden Wedding of lovers here in 1959.

Leo H. Hayes has given a bench in memory of his wife, Orville, who died last January. The couple moved here from Minnesota several years ago and became Docents at the Museum, later inaugurating the huge task of paging through old newspapers to make a card file of obituaries of pioneer San Joseans.

Hawes was a printer, teacher and athletic coach, and was executive director of the Society for Crippled Children and Adults in four states before retiring and moving to San Jose.

Mrs. Dorothy Farrington donated the bench which honors the memory of her grandfather, pioneer hotel man Tyler Beach. He came to San Jose from Wisconsin in 1861, and reportedly established the city's first ice cream business before becoming proprietor of the fashionable St. James Hotel on N. First Street across from St. James Park.

Mrs. Farrington in 1979 gave the old Victorian Kirk Farrington home on Dry Creek Road to the Junior League of San Jose for its headquarters.

Patricia Loomis

IN THE COLLECTION

1984 has seen more than 100 donations added to the collections of the San Jose Historical Museum.

The closure of the W.C. Lean Jewellers has resulted in the Museum receiving some nice items. Included are a foot powered polishing lathe (over 100 years old), two jewelers' work benches, and a watch repair bench. One of the benches had been in use some 80 years. The top had worn out and been turned over for a new surface. Mr. Jung of W.C. Lean has been most generous.

In August, Carolyn Saty and her family donated a fine collection of harnes. A portion is displayed on the west wall of the Doughaway Stables. Also included in the donation was a cream and green enamel woodburning cookstove.

Another new donation was an AMTRX fire alarm demonstration unit. This early system is very interesting. It was given by the inventor's grandson.
LECHTER GARAGE: SCENE OF TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

In the roster of historic buildings surrounding St. James Park (the County Courthouse, the Scottish Rite Temple, San Jose Athletic Club, Trinity Church, etc.), the uninitiated are amazed to see the old Four Wheel Brake Garage at the corner of First and St. James among the elect. Few realize the important role this ordinary looking garage played in the automotive history of Santa Clara County. It was also the scene of what was probably the most sensational event in San Jose’s history, prior to the infamous lynchings in 1933.

The Four Wheel Brake Garage and the garage building next door (which has recently been converted to several Victorian shops) were built between the years of 1906 and 1908 by Clarence Letcher. In 1906, Letcher, who was one of California’s first auto enthusiasts, owned and operated, at Market and San Carlos, what was acclaimed to be the first automobile garage on the West Coast. Prior to his development of the cheap assemblyline auto production, many autos were built locally by enterprising tinkers. Clarence Letcher, Frank and Arthur Holmes, George Owen and William Hunt all made custom built autos in the late 1800’s and had their Riveroys at the rear of their bicycle shop at 69 South 2nd Street.

Clarence Letcher was the first to see that the real opportunities were in the maintenance and repair of the ever increasing number of cars in the valley. By 1906, Letcher had outgrown the Market and San Carlos facility and had moved into the new North and San Carlos building. Letcher, no longer a car builder, now became a dealer of Detroit built luxury cars: Cadillac, Packard and Pierce Arrow.

Among his many other pioneering achievements one might add: the first gas station, the first rental cars in the Valley, and the first major statewide advertising campaigns for their sales.

Long before Burma Shave and Anderson Split Faux roadside advertising, California motorists throughout the state were greeted everywhere by coiled milepost signs announcing the number of miles to San Jose’s Letcher Garage. Not since the heyday of General Henry Hagnell’s famous hippo race, had the West attention been focused, through advertising, on the city of San Jose.

Hardly had he moved into his new facility, when Letcher began planning an even more elaborate garage and showroom next door. The new building, designed by Frank and Mervin Flansburg, was in the popular Mission style, with room for offices above the front entrance. Sketches of the proposed building were shown in a Fall 1907 issue of the Mercury Herald. Sometime between the building’s construction and the 1914 fire (which destroyed most of Santa Clara), the building was renamed after the second son of Mr. and Mrs. Letcher, a popular and dapper hood ornament called Tudor appearance. When Letcher moved into the new building, Owen and Hunter purchased the corner location from Letcher for their Dodge dealership.

During his early success, Letcher divorced his first wife, by whom he had had his only child, George Thomas Letcher, and married Helen Perfmann. After living for a time in the affluent Niguel Park neighborhood, the Letchers purchased a ranch in the Santa Cruz Mountains. They also kept a suite at the Vendome Hotel, three blocks from the garage, for use while in town. With business duties distracting, Letcher was able to devote a good deal of his time to local politics, the Elks and Exchange Clubs, and various outdoor activities. His closest friends were his lawyer and attorney was Louis O’Neal, a local rancher and powerful political figure. Letcher was also a neighbor and friend of San Francisco Mayor and later Governor “Sunny” Jim Rolph.

By the mid-twenties, the Letchers’ marriage had fallen on hard times: Clarence was maintaining a separate domicile in the old Saint James Hotel, and keeping company with Mrs. Ann Bennett, a blonde divorcee who worked in the beauty salon. Helen Letcher had confronted her husband about this affair on several occasions, and each time came to an argument. On one occasion she pushed him over the afternoon of July 2, 1928, after spending the day with her favorite niece, who coincidentally lived in the same Redwood apartment building as Mrs. Bennett. Helen drove to the garage for what was to be her final attempt to, ‘regain her husband’s love’.

Letcher’s Garage as it appeared in 1914, San Jose Historical Museum. Photo #596.

Letcher and his wife spoke briefly at the entrance of the garage while men worked on a scaffold just above their heads. Garage employees and people on the street were surprised when a series of shots rang out, and Clarence Letcher was seen alternately trying to dodge the hail of bullets with the weapon in his right hand, the revolver from his wife’s hand. Two non-fatal shots struck him in the head causing him to stagger to the rear of the garage where he fell into the arms of an employee, Mrs. Letcher, who immediately fired again at her husband and the bullet struck him just below the heart. In a final act of anguish, she brushed away her hat and shot herself in the temple.

Clarence Letcher was driven, still conscious, to the San Jose Hospital where he lingered until the following day. A young reporter, Theron Fox, was on the scene in time to help put the lifeless body of Helen Letcher into an ambulance. The front page of Saturday’s Mercury Herald correspondingly displayed a photo montage of Clarence, Helen and the “other woman,” Mrs. Ann Bennett, with the title: “Double Tragedy Closes Marital Differences.”

Helen’s outraged relatives tried to, no avail, to bring criminal proceedings against Mrs. Bennett who had gone into hiding. It was with great effort that Letcher’s attorney, Louis O’Neal, convinced the distraught relatives that Clarence and Helen should be laid to rest side by side in a double burial at Oakland.

Fate stepped in, however, to separate them forever. Shortly after the burial service, conducted by the Elks Lodge and attended by hundreds of local dignitaries as O’Neal and Letcher’s will was discovered. In the will, Letcher had requested that his remains be cremated and the ashes spread over Mt. Hamilton. The bodies were disinterred to carry out Clarence’s wishes, and Helen was buried beside her mother in an Oakland cemetery.

Prominently displayed on the sign above the entrance to the Letcher Garage was an illustration of the ubiquitous milepost marker with a zero painted on it, along with the words: “The End of the Road.” And so it was for Clarence Letcher.

Jack Douglas
Member
Historic Landmarks Commission

RECORD ATTENDANCE MARKS SUCCESSFUL SUMMER SEASON AT HAPPY HOLLOW

This summer Happy Hollow Park and Zoo surpassed all previous attendance records for a summer season. In addition, 94,000 are an estimated revenue for the season was recovered. Highlights of the summer included appearances at the park by the Fairyland Players of Oakland and the Northside Theatre Co. of San Jose.

An Imnination Fair, sponsored by KGO T.V. channel 7 and the Santa Clara County Health Department in conjunction with Happy Hollow, was the most successful in Santa Clara this year, in terms of immunizations given (469). Our annual Snowman Building contest was held on September 16 and was well attended. A special thanks to those people who contributed their time and energy to make this event a success, members of the Happy Hollow Corporation Board and the staff of Happy Hollow Park.

The fun at Happy Hollow continues throughout the year. We are now open daily. For current information on hours of operation and admission prices, please call 292-8181.

HISTORICAL NEWS ITEM

The San Jose Herald, July 18, 1901, p. 8, col. 3.

BIG CAMP IN BASIN FOREST

Andrew P. Hill, the artist and father of the Big Basin reserve movement and Sempervirens club, has arranged for an expedition of those interested in the Basin to spend ten days camping among the forest giants early in August. Mr. Hill proposes to establish a camp large enough to accommodate a hundred or more people. He will have complete charge of all arrangements and those who go to the camp will have nothing to think of or worry about from the time they leave San Jose until they return. The party will be obliged to furnish their own bedding and towels, which will be freighted to and from the camp without cost. The expedition will leave the city on a special train, and will be taken by carriage from Boulder Creek to the camp in the very center of the Basin forest. Tents will be furnished by Mr. Hill and pitched seven days in advance. A large kitchen and dining hall will be presided over by Jack Averton and five new girl waitresses.

The entire cost will be only $22.50 as the object of the expedition is not to make money and the Basineer himself is not to open to any further cost. The party will have the forest practically to itself, as the party will be selected by the state to arrange for the party. The Basin will cost that region and spend several days at the camp. Mr. Hill will do considerable photographing and make innumerable sketches for water color paintings.

(Researched by Leolo Hawes)
MY ACOUItANCE WITH RALPH RAMBO dates back to the early 1950s when I was driving for the American Railway Express, and he was an artist for the Mairson Label Company at 281 Stockton Avenue.

I was standing in front of the Mairson cashier window, collecting express charges from that company’s bookkeeper, Mrs. Lillian Dorka. I turned around just in time to see Ralph going into the art department four or five steps away. His long yellow smock accented by dark trousers caught my eye; his friendly nod was acknowledged in kind.

I met Ralph many times after that—either at Mairson’s or elsewhere. But it was that initial eye-to-eye nod that led to a friendship that I have treasured ever since.

Clyde Arbachuck
City Historian

RALPH RAMBO was born in the Santa Clara Valley of a different era. He was a neighbor of San Jose’s John Clay, usually picked prune on his hands and knees, and attended a one-room school in Cupertino.

To record some of these memories for his grandchildren, Ralph wrote his first “book”—mimographed pages in a binder—after his retirement from 50 years of regular employment. This marked the beginning of his second career, as artist and nostalgic historian of the Santa Clara Valley.

During the years 1963-1973, Ralph published ten popular paperback books related to Valley history and gained a following of faithful readers. He also illustrated books for his author-friends Frances Fox and Clyde Arbachuck and created an immensely popular Cartoon Map of the Santa Clara Valley which is still a top seller. In addition he contributed to the Peralta Adobe Project of the Junior League of San Jose with illustrated maps and other educational materials.

Ralph Rambo’s Pen & Inklings, the 1985 Museum Association Membership Premium Book, is a 192-page hardbound keepsake volume published this year to honor Ralph Rambo on the occasion of his 90th birthday. It consists of four major sections, designed to illustrate Ralph’s unique talents as writer, artist, poet and calligrapher. Major portions of the book are hand-lettered and it is heavily illustrated throughout. It includes a great deal of previously unpublished material, including informative letters to the reader that will give you insight into Ralph’s work.

We have included virtually all of Ralph’s illustrated maps of the Old Valley, even his map of California, an original of which was presented to President Ford upon his visit to San Jose in 1976. This California Map is 21" x 18" in size and is folded into a back pocket of the book.

As another special feature, Ralph has designed and hand-autographed bookplates to be included with each copy of Pen & Inklings. He undertook this monumental effort because of his physical inability to be present at our Holiday parties and his desire to give each of us an autographed copy of his book.

He might like a membership in the Museum Association which includes six issues of the newsletter and the 1985 premium book which just happens to be Ralph Rambo’s memories of the last 90 years Uncle Lute remembers...when they still watered the county roads, trout streams in Stevens Creek, and the fruit trees outnumbered the people.

The Museum’s gift shop is full of books about the Santa Clara Valley, as well as other gift items, that might appeal to mom and dad, or you might wish to send a check to the Museum’s Endowment Fund in their name. This would also be appropriate for grandma.

The Museum Association has a long “wish list” for the historic turn-of-the-century town being constructed at the south end of Kelley Park. The Association is like most families, in that its needs do not match the bank account. In its case the City of San Jose is the banker and funds are a little tight.

There are already 12 buildings on the Museum grounds and the “wish list” includes several others, including a one-room schoolhouse, replica of the old statehouse where state government began in 1849, a blacksmith shop, a shed to display the many antique wagons and coaches, an annex to the firehouse, a theater, and a replica of the old brick Joes House which stood for half a century on Sixth and Taylor Streets.

Besides funds for those buildings, the Museum Association’s “wish list” includes donations of time and effort on the part of professional bricklayers, cabinet makers, painters, and carpenters, to stage prompt change the light bulbs in the electric tower, printers and photographers, and volunteers to staff Old Jim’s soda fountain. Shelving and display cases, a 16 mm movie projector, electric typewriters, dollies to move heavy objects from place to place on the Museum grounds, a hose trough to decorate the front of the Dashaway Stable, etc. are other items on the Museum’s wish list.

Organizations which find themselves with spare cash at the end of the year might consider sponsoring an issue of the Museum newsletter, or taking part in a performance of the San Jose Municipal Band for a special occasion on the Museum grounds.

The San Jose Historical Museum is the caretaker of San Jose’s past, the keeper of memorabilia that represent a long and colorful history in which many old timers and their families have a part.

The Museum’s “wish list” chronicles some of the needs to keep it going and building.

Patricia Loomis

For Unique Holiday Gifts
Visit Our San Jose Historical Museum Gift Shops

Christmas stockings & stuffers
Holiday postcards & gift wrap
Victorian dolls & furniture
Hand-crafted rocking horses, cradles & reindeer
Antique paper dolls
Old-fashioned wooden toys
Victorian ornaments
A wide selection of books on:
Santa Clara Valley history
The Victorian Era
Bay Area Recreation & Travel Guides

Museum Gift Shop
Tues. - Fri.
10:00 - 4:30
Sat. - Sun.
12:00 - 4:30
The Museum Gift Shop will be open for your convenience during our Holiday Party and Membership Party on December 4, 6 & 8, 1986.

Santo Claire Hotel Gift Shop
Daily: 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM

JIM’S PRINTING & LITHOGRAPHY, INCORPORATED
24330 DE LA CEA RD., SAN JOSE, CA 95129 \ (408) 983-1116
THE MAGNESITE MINES OF MADRONE

With the last vital link of Highway 101 completed in April, history was both made and recalled. Only one day after the opening, half a dozen fruit stands lined along an almost empty "Blood Alley," closing forever a chapter of colorful local tradition and long-standing controversy. At the same time, gravel pits and a golf course were revealed along the new stretch of road. It was also a surprise to discover the sheriff's abating range and Rancho Laguna Seca, the county's alcoholic rehabilitation center that more resembles a guillochrome. Tucked within its groves, however, is one of the oldest structures in the county, an 1846-era grist mill that was for many years called "Island Mill" before it was evaluated to determine age and use. And some oldtimer's memories were stirred at the place between Barnett Avenue and Meatcup Road along the east side of Riverside Golf Course where rocky road cuts provide evidence of the short-lived magnesite mining industry in the Morgan Hill area.

Apparently before 1908 an unsuccessful attempt was made to "calcane" the magnesite for use in high heat resistant furnace linings and for the manufacture of refractory brick. One bed, belonging to Bay Cities Water Company, was located about 100 feet up the hill from Coyote Creek, approximately at an extension of Kirby Avenue. This deposit yielded very little and after a few railroad carbides of ore were shipped in 1915 the mine was shut down.

However, higher up in the slope, just north of Pico Road, a Prosperous Warren San Francisco developed a deposit just below the ridge. Several tens were produced there, leaving a telltale white rock outcrop discerned.

According to Louise Traverso, a former local resident, the magnesite ore was hauled by hand with drills, picks, and shovels, taken down hill by sled, then loaded into wagons for the trip to Madrone station at Monterey Road and Peckles Avenue, the present-day site of the Sinbad Restaurant. Later an aerial tram replaced the sled and the ore was stored on wooden platforms beside Coyote Creek until it was taken to the station.

At the height of this operation a crew of 15 to 20 workers were housed in a bunkhouse located just below the lower diggings. These men were mostly of Italian descent and the road to the site led from Cookham Road along the hillside. Traverso's brother was a tram operator for Warwick.

After 1919 all mining activity ceased and part of the tramway cable was removed, although some support poles remained in place until recent years. A rusting mine car could also be seen at the mine entrance until recently when it was evidently pushed off the track and wrecked.

According to Traverso and another former resident, Albert Pruzzo, a W.H. Cone of San Francisco intended to reopen the mine in 1925 but nothing came of this and the property was sold, instead, to the O'Connell Brothers for ranching purposes. O'Connell purchased most of the former Weber Ranch portion of the original Rancho Laguna Seca (Coyote Valley today) from Bay Cities Water. In 1922, 89 acres of this parcel was sold to Germans and Angelo Pruzzo who planted orchards and vineyards on the flat, farmable land at the foot of Kirby Canyon. In 1960 the property was sold to Cook and Cook and later to developer Dan Goldberg who hoped to create a planned community called Hamilton. His plans did not materialize and the property is owned today by Lake Anderson Corporation and Oceanic California Properties.

In 1961 the Kirby Canyon area was designated as the future waste disposal site for the City of San Jose. These plans are connected to a promise by Oceanic to pay for a Scheller Avenue offshore to provide access but to the proposed dump and to Oceanic's proper. Opposing this plan is the City's current waste management contractor, Browning Ferris Industries, the City of Morgan Hill, and local residents whose properties lie immediately to the south.

An early century map of the Morgan Hill Madrone-Coyote Valley area. Note Madrone Station, just above the title "BURNETT" and J. Kirby property. The X to the left of Pigeon Hill denotes the approximate site of the Warwick Magnesite Mine. Coyote Creek runs beneath the title "LAGUNA SECIA." Courtesy of Beth Wyman.

Before World War I, magnesite was mostly imported and used as furnace linings and in the sulfite process of paper manufacturing. After the war began, a demand for a domestic supply was created and California became a chief source. In 1916 Santa Clara County was listed as the second largest producer of magnesite in the state with 23,207 tons. Another more important deposit, the Red Mountain Works, was located along the Santa Clara County-San Benito County boundary line. Ore was sufficient there to continue mining operations until 1938.

Today the only recollection of Warwick's Mine rests in the memories of long time residents and in a 1983 report by Charlene Delafo, historian for Archiological Resource Management. But in the quiet early morning hours one can pause along the freeway and cast backward in time to imagine the loaded buckets swinging in the air and the squeaky tram traveling downhill, with horses, wagons, and teamsters waiting impatiently at creekside to transport the chalilke ore across the bridge to Madrone station. And in the same quiet time you can almost hear the old country bunkhouse banter between the likes of hardworking immigrant men with names such as Traverso, Pruzzo, Locarnini, Raggio, Bevilacqua, Malagueria, Guigliari, Bolli, and Pitti.

Beth Wyman

1402 S. FIRST ST. PHONE 294-1487
DELIVERING PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND QUALITY MATERIALS SINCE 1904.
Westways, a publication of the Southern California Auto Club, expounded in 1938 on this crusader’s oratory. He had often lectured at the elite Lyceum in San Francisco. “Here before red plush curtains its gestures and sonorous voice drew immense throngs to hear him. His style was grace and inspiring, his eloquence then interrupted by frantic applause with thumping of cones and clapping of exquisitely gloved palms.” The disadvantage of this, of course, was that in need of such a lecture never attended the Lyceum, although the occasions were free. Thesiger, Holst, Sun-San Luis Obispo, and the fashionable shore line about Santa Cruz were frequent areas where his anti-drink campaign again reached inappropriate audiences.

Leading prohibitionists in the East hailed this crusading doctor as true patriarch for his head-on clash with drink. However, he was tagged as overly peculiar by multitudes for his discontent at their relaxation from hard work with a ‘pick-me-up’ at their favorite bar.

Unrelenting, in 1882 Cogswell assigned a foundry in Bridgeport, Connecticut with the task of turning out a quantity of statues. As many as twenty were donated to California communities, with San Jose, San Francisco, Pacific Grove, and San Luis Obispo among them. Considered to be artistic monstrosities, some were occasionally lassoed with crashing results.

Robert O’Brien’s This Is San Francisco paints out any claim to romance in the doctor’s life begins and ends with a mentioned tour with his wife to the Holy Land, Egypt and Europe. He will sold $100,000 to be expended in publishing his autobiography; however, book sources narrowly have much to offer on the man.

This submerged reformer died at San Francisco on July 15, 1900 at the age of 68. The San Francisco Evening News of the day reported he was related to Oliver Wendell Holmes and Ralph Waldo Emerson. His father had been a soldier during the War of 1812 and his grandfather fought in the Revolution.

He founded the Dental College of San Francisco, prominent in the teaching arm of the University of California. This was considered his most praiseworthy memorial. He established a fund for students at the University and the Cogswell Philanthropic Society.

A large man, he was described as handsome but overly boring and unlovable, with extreme perseverance and a light purged. Accounts tell of his infamous thrift and how he would descend upon his dental classrooms to take count of the chalk being used. He often voiced how he considered happiness a waste of time.

Today this pioneer who refused to abandon a cause less than two hundred acres Knoll Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland, California, he helped to establish in 1863. His own remains are interred designed and executed twenty-three years before he died. It was considered one of the largest and costliest in the country at the time. Over fifty railroad cars, some of which had to be especially made, carried the mass across the country.

After a stand of some fifty years the San Jose fountain-statue, long considered “grotesque and unpatriotic” by civic and veteran groups, was condemned by the city. On November 7, 1934 the long familiar landmark vanished from the scene. What has ever become of the Cogswells? Not as much as a pinch of dust or a fleck of rust has ever been hit upon.

San Jose was frequently defamed in a city with utmost patience in permitting the last statue to remain aloof for so long. Nonetheless, in a turnabout, nostalgia reached out in 1972 when the San Jose Hospital’s recently acquired included a well defined location for a replica of one of the most unique pioneers this area ever chose to forget — Henry Daniel Cogswell.

Cogswell’s impressive mausoleum in Oakland, California. Photo by Hank Calloway.

INTRODUCING VIRGINIA HAMMERSNESS

Virginia Hammersness, our delightful new Membership Chairman for 1963, was born in San Francisco. She is the granddaughter of A.P. Giannini, founder of the Bank of America, and herself a native of San Jose.

Virginia has been a valuable member of our Museum Association Board of Directors for two years already, serving as a member at large. She is enthusiastic about chairing our membership drive this year especially because of her admiration for Ralph Runge and his works. She expects to see our numbers grow tremendously again this year as new members join to receive a copy of Ralph’s book!

Virginia was raised in San Mateo and Menlo Park — areas she describes as “rural” when she was growing up. She received her high school education at Dominican Convent in San Rafael and majored in history in Hollins College in Virginia. After earning her elementary teaching credential at San Francisco State College, Virginia taught for two years in Sonoma.

In addition to her activities here at the Museum, Virginia is active in the O’Conner Hospital Auxiliary, and the Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association. She also enjoys driving an antique village cart drawn by her pony, Rodeo, and has been known to do this while her pony and pony with us on Living History Days.

Virginia resides in the Willow Glen area of San Jose with her husband, Phillip, and their two sons.

Virginia Hammersness. Photo by Nancy Valley.

TEETOTALER WITHOUT GLORY

Relentless forty-niner dentist, Dr. Henry Daniel Cogswell, scorned as an eccentric California millionaire, philanthropist and staunch prohibitionist, published to just about every California city in 1883, that statues of himself, with a fountain attached, were free for the asking.

San Jose felt no city should be without one, and since it was a freebie, agreed to take one. The community was said to have qualified solely because it harbored a population of at least twenty-five saloons.

Cogswell’s plan of action was to reduce the saloon blight by providing conveniently located water fountains for the relaxation and refreshment of all. This zealous temperance leader’s gift to sobriety was embedded within the Market Street City Plaza in 1884. It was topped with a cast iron image of himself, in full beard and Prince Albert attire, with an extended hand offering passersby creation’s only delightful beverage, water.

The San Jose Morning Times of July 18, 1884 reported the Cogswell contribution was discussed at the city council meeting. The bulky gift measured sixteen feet from its granite pedestal to the top of the statue, with the base measuring eighteen feet four inches square. There were to be four lamps, one at each corner, to be lighted until sunset. The city cost was responsible for freight from San Francisco amounting to $7.50. It was also required to pay for pipes and installation and to maintain the fountain according to Cogswell’s wishes.

This tyrannical foe of the “little brown jug” was born in Tolland, Connecticut in 1819 where he survived a poverty stricken childhood by working in a cotton factory and teaching a village school. He became a dentist’s apprentice in Providence, Rhode Island where he went on to open an office of his own at the age of 23.

Sparked by the gold rush, he sailed around the Horn making land at San Francisco in 1849. It was here where he pitched a three story tent and turned to making miners’ molars with their own gold. Being an adventurous sort he soon stocked up with miner’s vendibles and headed for the gold country where he peddled from horseback. In haste he had realized $3000; With this nest egg young Cogswell was back in San Francisco where he opened a more pretentious workplace on Portsmouth Square. Here an ornate shingle spewed out, “The Sign of the Golden Tooth.”

Henry was making money at a record pace and investing in property, city scrip, and mining stock. In 1878 after thirty years as a tooth doctor and a net worth of millions, he withdrew from the profession to devote his time and efforts towards the eradicating of strong drink.

The doctor’s liquor clashing circuit was most always the realm of the rich abstainers where his orations on ancient spirits attracted full houses.
WHERE DID THEY GO?

A young girl stands in the door of a store building looking down the street as if anticipating the arrival of something or someone. As she watches the two-way traffic, the cool crisp air of the early morning hour brings a briskness to her face. The traffic is light because of the early morning hour; stores are just beginning to open. Clerks are putting up the sale signs and new window displays. Suddenly her face lights up as she spots the object of her attention. Slowly a truck on the main street distinctive appearance comes down the street, coming to a stop before the entrance of a restaurant-cum-time store. The driver begins unloading the contents. It is not the product that the truck carries that fascinates the young girl, it is the truck itself. The sides have been painted with the most fantastic scenes. Mountains, waterfalls, a lush, green forest—all places that look so inviting the young girl hopes that someday she will be able to see them for herself. If she would only stop and look, however, she could see another world that existed before hers. The truck is filled with all kinds of fruits and vegetables from the local farms all around San Jose. The people have placed them so artistically in lug boxes, making a most lovely geometric design in bright colors. Luscious vegetables are applied: apples, melons, cucumbers, next to bright oranges.

For the little girl standing in the store doorway, it is the highlight of the morning. Many years later, all grown up and thinking back to those days, she wonders what ever happened to "her" truck. Trucks were an important part of a child's life in the 1920's and 30's in San Jose. They were very personal vehicles, driven by "friends" who took the time to know their customers. That truck, along with other colorful trucks, gives us a chance to remember a way of life quite different from today.

Another memory is associated with trucks years ago on hot summer days. Children then had a simple solution to keeping cool. No one really knew much about air-conditioning since it was quite uncommon, even in the big department stores. But, the ice truck didn't wait for the ice man to make deliveries more often and this was the joy of all the children. They were on the lookout for the ice truck, and when it rounded the corner of the street, they followed it like the children in the story of the Pied Piper. At every stop the ice man had to chip off a block of ice the size needed by the houses. In doing so, there were always large blocks of ice or slivers left on the bottom of the truck. If the ice man were the friendly type, he would tease the children and hand them hunks of ice. If not, they had to watch carefully and pick up pieces of ice from their own. Nothing tasted quite so good on a hot summer day as that stick of ice.

Perhaps the last truck we go out of style was the milk truck. Many mornings the milk man drove his truck up the street stopping at homes and leaving a delivery of dairy products—fresh milk in glass bottles with cardboard lids, cheese, cream, cottage cheese, and butter. It seems like a long time ago that milk came in glass containers with heavy cream floating on the top. What a treat when mother siphoned off the cream to whip for a special dessert for someone's birthday. Many housewives even had an arrangement with the milk man to come into their kitchens and put the products directly into the ice box when they knew they would not be home to put the milk away before it spoiled.

Children of today have no idea what kind of personal service we used to have and how much each of these deliveries meant to our family. For some people it was the only contact with others during the day, and for the children it usually meant a friendly meeting with grownups. For the child who was home sick, it was a happy break in the monotony of recovery.

Whether it was the sight of a beautifully painted truck, or the gentle hand of the ice man, or the greeting of the mailman twice a day, it was the people that made it a wonderful time to grow up in San Jose. There was the small town feeling expressed by the friendliness of those we met everyday as they came to our homes and to the necessities of life. San Jose has grown into a huge metropolis and has lost much of the friendly contact we used to have—the trade off for a "better" way of life.

Wilma Virgo Lea

HISTORICAL NEWS ITEM

Reprinted from the Omaha Herald, October 3, 1877

TIPS FOR STAGECOACH TRAVELERS

"The best seat inside a stage is the one next to the driver. Even if you have a tendency to seasickness when navigating backwaters—you'll get over it and will get less jolts and jostling. Don't let any sleep elude you either."

In cold weather don't ride with tight-fitting boots, shoes, or gloves. When the driver asks you to get off and walk do so without grumbling, or you won't request it unless absolutely necessary. If the team runs away—sit still and take your chances. If you jump, nine out of ten times you will get hurt.

In very cold weather abstain entirely from liquor. It will also cause the horses to run twice as fast when under its influence. Don't groat at the food received at the stage; companies generally provide the best they can get.

Don't keep the stage waiting. Don't smoke a strong pipe inside the coach—spit on the leeward side. If you have anything to drink in a bottle pass it around. Procure your stimulants before starting its launch." (Stage Depot) whiskey is not "nectar."

Don't suggest or talk over neighbors when stopping. Take small change to pay expenses. Never shoot on the road as the noise might frighten the horses, don't dispute your religion. Don't point out where murders have been committed especially if there are women passengers.

Don't lag at the wash basin. Don't grease your hair, because travel is dusty. Don't imagine for a moment that you are going to a party. Expect amusement, discomfort, and some hardships.

Courtesy of Wells Fargo Bank