Vintage Vehicle Hits the Tracks Again!

On Thursday, August 20, at the California Trolley and Railroad Corporation's (CTRC) volunteer and dedication ceremony at the San Jose Historical Museum, Vice Mayor Margie Fernandes smashed a commemorative champagne bottle into the front bumper of the newly restored Birney trolley car. If this sounds somewhat violent, it wasn't. To the contrary, Vice Mayor Fernandes was properly dedicating the Birney car—a long-standing ceremonial tradition for these vintage vehicles.

Rod Driddon, president of CTRC, in partnership with HMSJ, spearheaded the four-year restoration project of the 1922 Birney car. The project, completed through the efforts of thousands of volunteer hours and generous cash and in-kind donations, required the replacement of almost every piece of wood and all of the missing electrical and mechanical equipment. Materials and parts came from over 100 companies as far away as Australia, Italy, and Canada, as well as local vendors. Committed volunteers even brought in used wood from their decks to old flooring to recycle in the restoration project.

The Birney car design had many safety features that made it unique for its time. Deadman's controls including automatic doors and brakes, power that would shut off in the case of an emergency, an extended front bumper and a people scope all made the little Birney a desirable car for many cities, including San Jose.

Originally numbered 68, volunteers renumbered the 30-person car 143 for nostalgia reasons—a similar car with the same number once operated in downtown San Jose. However, this Birney car 143 will only operate at the San Jose Historical Museum.

Staffed by volunteers, the trolley will join two other restored trolleys at the museum in offering rides and delight to our visitors from around the world.

Living History Day on the Alameda

Come celebrate San Jose’s past at Living History Day on the Alameda! This exciting family event, co-sponsored by HMSJ, will feature food, music, crafts, and much more. Mark your calendar for Sunday, October 4, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., and plan to join us at The Alameda between Hanacht and Hester avenues.

Living History Day highlights the rich and diverse cultural history of The Alameda and San Jose. Attendees may dance to a swing band, take carriage rides, view historic photos and memorabilia, and enjoy neighborhood history walks. Children will have fun making crafts in the children’s activity area, while adults can shop at the craft booths.

As one of the sponsors of the event, HMSJ will have a strong presence. The 1916 Detroit Electric Car will be on display, and Portraits of the Past will entertain attendees with a vintage fashion show. In the activity area, HMSJ volunteers will help children craft corn-husk dolls, make old-fashioned button toys, and weave their own designs on cardboard looms. The City Store will have two booths; one will feature book signings by local history authors, and the other will sell a selection of quality gift items.

The Alameda, as part of El Camino Real, was the original route traveled between the Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe and Mission Santa Clara. Over the years, mansions were built along the route. Many of these buildings are now offices, including San Jose’s only surviving Julia Morgan building.

Schoolhouse Dedication

Join us on Saturday, September 26, as we ring in the new school year by celebrating the dedication of the new exhibit building, the One-Room Schoolhouse, at the San Jose Historical Museum. The day-long celebration commemorates the completion of the three-year collaborative project between the San José State University College of Education Alumni Association and the History Museums of San Jose.

The family event from 10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. will include a dedication ceremony with remarks from local dignitaries, live music, food, children’s games, and tours of the schoolhouse. Museum tours through the buildings will be offered. There will be no admission fee to the museum on this day.

The restored One-Room Schoolhouse will act as a monument to honor teachers and education. The gallery area will feature name plaques of honored teachers and donors, and artifacts from the museum’s collection.

Mexican Celebration

The Consulate of Mexico and the History Museums of San Jose invite HMSJ members to celebrate 188 years of Mexican Independence, El Grito de la Independencia. Join us on September 15, 1998 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Peralta Adobe for a special ceremony, mariachi music and refreshments. Please RSVP to the Mexican Consulate at 408-297-1942.

The actual grito lasts about three minutes and will be given by Consul Titular Sergio Casanueva at exactly 9:00 p.m., to correspond with the 11:00 p.m. grito given by the President of Mexico Ernesto Cedillo Ponce de Leon.
President's Report

It is now twelve months since I first entered the world of history museums in San Jose. Forgive me if I take the opportunity to look both backwards and forwards.

Often I have felt like there was an anchor tied around my leg, but in fact, the organization has accomplished much in the last 365 days. First, and most importantly, we have entered into an equitable agreement with the city of San Jose to manage the history museums here for the next 30 years. The city council’s unanimous approval indicates the community support for the museums and the level of commitment by our elected civic leaders.

Second, we have established a new corporate office. When the Board of Directors adopted new mission and vision statements in January, they committed the museums to recognize, welcome, and represent the multiple cultures and multiplicity of stories that continue to define our collective history. This is a profound change that immediately altered one program already in progress—Local Women of Distinction/ Women Who Made a Difference—and will direct our programmatics initiatives for years to come.

Third, from financial and personnel systems to offices and exhibitions and communications technology, we have established the infrastructure necessary to move forward. This is very much like re-plumbing your home. You can't see it, and no one knows it is there until it is missing. But it is absolutely essential to all daily activities.

Fourth, we have recruited a wonderful new staff that possesses the vision, professional training, practical experience, and personal vigor to lead us into the future. We now have the human resources to begin making the board’s vision of creating “a national model of a regional history museum” a reality.

Where now? When will all of this investment bring forth fruit? Soon. And you will be part of the process. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, you will receive a membership survey in September that will solicit your input into the strategic plan. O.K., you say. Planning is wonderful, but what about programs? Without being specific, this is what I can promise you:

- You will see a new exhibition and program cycle in the spring.
- We will host a summer full of programs, activities, and special events in 1999.
- We will institute our programmatics theme year in September 1999.
- You will witness a rehabilitation of the structures at both Kelley Park and the Peralta-Fallon site over the next year.
- The Markham House will be completed and open in 1999.
- We will enter into programmatics partnerships with other cultural institutions and community organizations to produce new programs and serve new audiences both on and off-site.
- You will be able to access programs on-line.
- We will reinvest in the collections.
- The Peralta Square building next to the Peralta-Fallon site will be acquired as an exhibit incubator and future archives center.

Through all of this, we will redefine who we are, what subjects, and what years are included within the history. Perhaps most importantly, as a member, you will be recipients of a renewed commitment to membership services and programming, beginning in December this year. So, stick around. Even better, come join us. It's going to be a great year.

Welcome New Staff

Peralta Adobe/Fallon House Site Administrator

Wells Twombly, an employee of the History Museums of San Jose at the Peralta Adobe and Fallon House for two years, was promoted into the position of Historic Site Administrator on August 3, 1998. He manages the Peralta/Fallon site on a daily basis, overseeing operations and educational programs and tours. This position is part of the education department.

At the Peralta/Fallon site, Wells helped develop and presented the highly successful Experience Adobe Days 4th grade school program and is currently developing a similar experience Victorian Days 3rd grade school program.

Wells holds a master of science in living history and open-air museum management from Utah State University. He has a bachelor of arts in anthropology from the University of California at Berkeley. He has experience producing special events, exhibitions and programs at various living history museums, including the Yuma Crossing Living History Museum, the Pioneer Arizona Living History Museum and the R.V. Jenkins Living Historical Farm.

Education Assistant

Don Vaught joined the education department as education assistant this August. She is responsible for scheduling docent service, school programs and reserved group tours. Doni is the key contact for schools. She will send pre-visit materials to teachers and maintain the necessary supplies for school programs. In addition, she will maintain the volunteer and school programs computer databases.

Doni worked in the education and community department of the Baltimore Museum of Art where she designed gallery games for children, conducted research, wrote articles for newsletters, helped organize special events and worked with docents. She also has office experience through her work in the anthropology department at Johns Hopkins University. Also at Johns Hopkins, Doni was responsible for scheduling speakers and planning programs for the Phi Mu Fraternity. She has a bachelor of arts in art history and is a native of San Diego, CA.

Members' Survey

As a loyal and committed supporter of the museums, you are an important and valued audience to us. As we embark upon redesigning our membership program, it makes sense that we first look to you for input. Our goal this year is to create an exciting and meaningful membership program that is attractive to you, our current members. We also need to balance this with an enticing package that will draw new members to our institution—thus, helping to ensure the financial viability of the museums as a community resource.

In late September, you will receive a membership survey asking you specific questions about our current program, as well as ideas for the future. We want your opinion, we need your honesty and we look forward to reading your responses. We hope when you receive your survey, that you'll take a few minutes out of your busy schedule to complete the survey and forward it to the museum.

Thank you for your anticipated attention to this request!

Endowment Fund

The History Museums of San Jose gratefully acknowledges the receipt of the following donations:

In Memory:
- Carl Noack
- Stella Sullivan
- volunteers of O’Brian’s Ice Cream
- Cindy Vargas
- Forrest & Marjorie Horn

In Honor:
- volunteers of O’Brian’s Ice Cream
- Candy Parlor

Welcome to the new members of the History Museums of San Jose:
- David & Penny Barcelos
- Betty Danielson
- George & Melinda Dobbs
- Cindy Vargas
- Forrest & Marjorie Horn
- Suzanne Layne

Chinese Historical & Cultural Project Honored

The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) proudly announced that the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project (CHCP) has been awarded the Albert B. Corey Award in its 54th Annual Awards Program. This award is a most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of local, state and regional history. The Albert B. Corey Award is presented for very deserving, small, primarily volunteer-operated, historical organizations in America and carries with it a modest financial award, which is granted only when an organization meets the high standards of excellence set by Albert B. Corey, a founding member and one-time president of AASLH, thus it is not awarded annually. The 1998 Awards Committee reviewed volumes of supporting material and concurred that the CHCP indeed met those high standards and deserved this recognition.

Other AASLH Awards for 1998 represent 62 organizations and individuals from the United States. Award winners will be celebrated at a special banquet during the 1998 AASLH/Caifornia Council for the Promotion of History Joint annual meeting in Sacramento, CA on September 11.

The awards program was initiated in 1943 to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout America. The AASLH Awards Program not only honors significant achievement in the field of local history, but also brings public recognition of the opportunities for small and large organizations, institutions, and programs to make contributions to the development of the historical profession. The AASLH is a not-for-profit professional organization of individuals and institutions working to preserve and promote history. From its headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee, AASLH works to advance knowledge, understanding and appreciation of local history in America. AASLH publishes books, technical publications, a bimonthly magazine and monthly newsletter, and sponsors regional and national training workshops and an annual meeting.

Thank You, Donors!

HMSJ Receives Generous In-Kind Donations

The administrative offices of the History Museums of San Jose received several in-kind donations. The museums received over $42,000 worth of in-kind donations of office furniture, paint, carpet and labor. David Stidley, President of Stidley & Associates, specializing in new and used office furniture, took a personal interest in HMSJ and donated $25,000 worth of furniture toward the refurbishing of the administrative offices.

Kelly Moore Paints
on Bascom Avenue

donated 200 gallons of paint, valued at $1,000, and painting contractor Baudista Velez partially donated his labor. The crown molding came when Cisco Systems Inc., donated 100 square yards of carpeting, including the installation, at a meeting about one third of the museum's needs. DuPont Flooring Systems, who installs carpet at Cisco, will install the museum's carpet, and also will provide new carpeting at below cost for the balance of the museum's needs. Thank you to Stidley & Associates, Kelly Moore, Cisco Systems and DuPont Flooring Systems!
To include Gertrude Atherton in this series is, perhaps, stretching a point. She didn’t own a home in the Santa Cruz Mountains, but she was raised in our Valley, and as an adult she was often in residence in the household of Senator Phelan at the Villa Montalvo. Her early struggles and feminist proclivities had much in common with the other women writers of this area.

Gertrude was born to Gertrude Franklin Horn and Thomas L. Horn in San Francisco’s exclusive Rincon Hill neighborhood on October 30, 1857. Her mother, a Southern belle, had followed her father, Stephen Franklin, from New Orleans to California. He had come in 1849 to participate in the Gold Rush. Her marriage to Horn was short lived, and baby Gertrude was sent to spend her childhood on her grandfather Franklin’s ranch near San Jose. Gertrude’s mother’s second marriage to John F. Ulholm provided Gertrude with two half sisters, but that marriage also was doomed to failure.

This complicated and stressful family situation may have been the reason that Gertrude became an obstreperous and independent child. She was dismissed from a succession of schools. Grandfather Franklin, in desperation, required her to read aloud to him some of the great classics from his library. The young girl, who admired her grandfather greatly, acquired a willingness in this routine and soon became a voracious reader. At the age of seventeen she was sent East to attend a finishing school in Lexington, Kentucky, but her relationships there found Gertrude too unconventional and unladylike, and she was sent home.

Upon her return Gertrude found that her mother was aching for a third husband. The object of her affection was the much younger George Henry Bowen Atherton, son of the wealthy peninsula landowner, Faxon Dean Atherton. George Atherton’s affections soon turned to the eighteen-year-old Gertrude, and the two were married in 1876. With the death of George’s father soon after the wedding the control of family affairs was relinquished by Gertrude’s dominating Chiles-born “mischief-in-law, Domingue.”

George Atherton proved to be as hapless as Gertrude’s father and stepfather. He drank and gambled and failed at every project his mother provided. The couple had two children: George Jr. and Muriel Florence, but family life under such conditions drove the temperamental Gertrude to explore ways to become independent.

She chose writing, and her first effort, entitled Randolph of the Redwoods, was serialized in San Francisco’s The Argonaut. This was a fictionalized account of the life of San Francisco financier George Gordon and his alcoholic wife Nelly, Gordon, who founded California’s first sugar refinery, owned the huge ranch which was later acquired by Leland Stanford. The novel found a ready audience and was later reprinted as Daughter of the Vine.

Gertrude, whose husband had gone on a long sea voyage, was surprised (and perhaps elated) on March 8, 1887, when a brandy barrel was delivered to her door. Inside it was the picked body of George who had died aboard ship. Taking this opportunity to free herself from the Athertons, Gertrude left her daughter with Domingue (George Jr. had succumbed to childhood disease) and departed for New York where she would pursue a career as a writer.

**Popular Novels**

Upon arrival in New York in 1887 Gertrude began making a modest living writing articles for California newspapers such as The Argonaut and The Hearst’s Examiner. Her novels were being published, but they weren’t well received by the Eastern critics. In 1891 she married the famous illustrator, the crusty writer and critic who daily valedictoried his spleen in the San Francisco Examiner. Perhaps recognizing another social outsider, Bierce befriended the budding novelist, made suggestions on how she could improve her writing and wrote a highly positive review of her novel *The Doorwoman* for the Examiner. The rejection of her next novel, *Potemken Spahwelt*, which was based on a sensational contemporary murder case, made Gertrude decide to move to England. The English were anxious to hear tales of early California, and Gertrude found a receptive audience. As she achieved success the author would live in many locales before returning to her native state.

**Fighting Lady**

Gertrude, who did not accept criticism of her novel *Ivy* with the best of friends and the Prince of Hosts.**

...Gertrude Atherton lost a great friend with the death of Senator Phelan in 1930. He left her a sum of $20,000 in his will, but her beautiful refuge at Villa Montalvo and its genial host would be gone forever. She would continue writing until her death in San Francisco in 1948 at the age of 91.

Gertrude Atherton, like most of the authors in this series, is not much read now. Of these women writers she made the greatest impact on the international scene. Though not an ardent feminist she helped the cause by her personal example and the numerous strong women characters in her novels. Many of her books deserve to be read today, especially the stories of early California.

Note: For more detailed information on this fascinating personality I would recommend: *California’s Daughter: Gertrude Atherton* by Emily Worts Lesley, Stanford University Press, 1997.
Volunteer Opportunities

The History Museums of San Jose (HMSJ) invites volunteers to work with us in serving our communities. Volunteers help us fulfill our mission by participating in a variety of ways:

- **Behind the Scenes**
  - work on projects in archives and collections

- **City Stores**
  - provide retail and customer service in HMSJ gift shops

- **Docents**
  - give tours of the San Jose Historical Museum and of the Peralta Adobe & Fallon House

- **Exhibit Interpreters**
  - interact with museum visitors inside historic buildings

- **Garden Club**
  - work on landscape projects on museum grounds

- **O'Brien's Candy & Ice Cream Parlour**
  - provide retail and customer service and simple food preparation

- **Portraits of the Past**
  - participate in historic fashion shows at scheduled venues throughout Santa Clara Valley

- **Print Shop**
  - learn how to print on vintage equipment and interact with museum visitors

- **School Programs**
  - present thematic programs to elementary school students at the San Jose Historical Museum and the Peralta Adobe & Fallon House

- **Trolley Barn**
  - be a part of vehicle restoration projects and trolley service at the San Jose Historical Museum

If you are interested in joining the HMSJ team or would like more information about volunteer opportunities, please call Jennifer Warner, education specialist, at (408) 918-1050. Volunteers do not need previous experience for most positions and specialized training is provided. HMSJ is committed to a multicultural community and workplace, and volunteers who will contribute to that diversity are encouraged to participate.

City Store Sidewalk Sale
September 21, 1998
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
San Jose Historical Museum

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Specials in City Stores

**Members-Only 15% Off Sale!**
September 24-26, 1998
Start your holiday shopping early! Take an additional 5% off your standard members’ 10% discount on selected items.

- **Salt Clay Pottery**
  - $13.50 to $29.50

- **HMSJ Tee-Shirts, Tote Bags & Sweatshirts**
  - Tee Shirts $15.98
  - Tote Bags $16.98
  - Sweatshirts $28.98

- **Food Gift Items**
  - $3.95 to $6.25

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A Walk Through the Past

**$25.00**
Pat Loomis’s latest book about early gravestones of prominent people in San Jose’s history.

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**Annual Corporate Members**