LIVING HISTORY DAYS
MAY 20 & 21, 1989
10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

The streets of old San Jose will come alive with the sights and sounds of the past during Living History Days, May 20 and 21, 1989.

This annual weekend event brought 18,000 visitors to the Museum grounds last year to enjoy entertainment, exhibits, historical re-enactments and visits with favorite KRON personalities.

Living History Days will once again be co-sponsored by KRON-TV4, Sylvia Chase, Suzanne Shaw, Mark Thompson, Catherine Iseman, Lloyd Patterson, Lila Peterson, Gary Radnich and Gary Graham of Newcenter 4, and will take turns strolling the grounds in turn-of-the-century costume. On Saturday, May 20, Pat Finn will give a live weather report from the Museum.

KRON is one of the event’s three major sponsors, together with the San Jose Department of Recreation, Parks & Community Services, and the San Jose Historical Museum Association. At KRON’s booth this year you can pick up free balloons and buttons, have your photograph taken with one of your favorite KRON personalities, and purchase souvenir Living History Days t-shirts.

Visitors to the Museum on this special weekend will want to arrive early and stay late to fully enjoy the hundreds of demonstrations, children’s activities, agricultural exhibits and entertainment acts. Demonstrations of vintage crafts will include spinning, quilting, weaving, hat making, blacksmithing, basket and broom making, rope and rug weaving. In the buildings and on the grounds visitors can see displays of antique fire engines, model railroads, miniature houses, horseless carriages and vintage form machinery in operation.

For the third year the Heritage Corner will feature displays by local ethnic, cultural and historical groups. The Chinese Historical and Cultural Project will present an informational display booth and traditional dances will be performed by the Chinese Cultural Center. Numerous Hispanic historical and performing arts groups will also be represented in dance, food and art displays.

The vignettes and “characters” which were such a popular part of the last Victorian Christmas will again make their appearance at Living History Days. Look for the gossip postmistress, the buggy salesman, delivery boys, Lily Langtree, Annie Oakley, and representatives of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Over at the Chi Chi House flappers will be planning a party while a game of croquet is played on the front lawn.

SAN FRANCISCO’S WATERFRONT
FORT POINT
AND
LIBERTY SHIP
SS JEREMIAH O'BRIEN

WHEN: Thursday, June 22, 1989
WHO: Association Members and their guests
HOW: Coach, leaving and returning to the Phelan Avenue parking lot of the San Jose Historical Museum
TIME: 8:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.

COST: Members $16.00 (lunch not included)
Non-members $20.00 (lunch not included)

Join us as we travel to San Francisco to explore the waterfront and compare the way America’s military lived and worked over two centuries.

Our first stop will be Fort Point. Located under the south end of the Golden Gate Bridge, it is a classic example of the brick forts built by the United States Army Engineers a century ago. Built in 1861, it was finished just in time for the Civil War. We will learn how it has protected our shores since then. Our docent, dressed in a Civil War uniform, will take us into the fort through a passageway protected with an inner and outer set of ironbound, nail-studded doors lined with gunholes. From there we will tour the three tiers of gunports, and the drafty rooms where men once slept and lived.

Next stop, Ghirardelli Square — You will have time to lunch on your own at any of the many restaurants. Ghirardelli Square was the site of a wooden mill during the Civil War and later the chocolate factory of Domenico Ghirardelli.

After lunch, we will board the bus and head for Fort Mason Center and the Liberty Ship, SS Jeremiah O'Brien. Liberty Ships were built as an emergency response to a critical shortage of cargo ships at the start of World War II, when enemy submarines were sinking Allied ships faster than they were being built. In one of the greatest mass production efforts in history, 2,751 Liberty Ships were constructed between 1941 and 1945. The Jeremiah O'Brien is America's last unaltered Liberty Ship in operating condition. The O'Brien was launched June 15, 1943 in South Portland, Maine. She carried food and ammunition to Britain, ferried troops and materiel during the Normandy invasion, and transported supplies to the South Pacific. The Jeremiah O'Brien is preserved as a memorial to the millions of men and women who built, sailed, defended, repaired, and supplied Liberty Ships during World War II. We will have a docent-led tour of the ship and have time to explore its deck displays.

Reservations for this trip are limited and refunds will be made only when there is a waiting list for the trip. Checks should be made payable to the San Jose Historical Museum Association (SJHMA) and sent (along with the coupon below and a SASE) to the San Jose Historical Museum, 635 Phelan Avenue, San Jose, CA 95112. Attn: Earline Shields.

SAN FRANCISCO: THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 1989
RESERVATION CONFIRMED [ ]
NAME: __________________________
ADDRESS: _______________________
PHONE: ____________ NUMBER OF RESERVATIONS: _______
WEAR WARM CLOTHING AND WALKING SHOES!!!!!!
ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

IBM Computer Donation

Over the past few years, our Association has become increasingly aware of the need for a computer to help us with the many computer-related activities that must be done on a regular basis. Now, thanks to Dick Sillan, an Association member and IBM employee, and IBM, we have such a computer! Dick, with the help of IBM, has convinced IBM of our need; he followed through when it appeared that we might not get all the equipment we had requested; and he finally completed the PFS/2-Mod 50 System to the Museum in April. The SJHMA plans to use this computer for membership data preparation, Vintage Reflections, word processing, inventory, and other applications that will be identified as we become more familiar with the capabilities of this new equipment. In the future, this computer will be a tremendous asset to the SJHMA. I want to thank IBM for their generous gift, the community service committee, and special thanks to Dick for initiating this request and for all the other support he and his wife Rita have given the Museum.

New Member Coffee

In my last article, I encouraged new SJHMA members to attend the first new member coffee on March 11, and this month, I am pleased to report that the event was a complete success. We had 25 new members in attendance, and we hope to take advantage of the opportunity to tour all our buildings, including the Archives. Laurel Trenchard is the new Membership Chairperson, along with her committee, did a great job in preparing and conducting this event. Special thanks to her, the Membership Committee, and Secretary, and to John Herlihy, SJHMA Board member who acted as master of ceremonies. Because of the success of our first New Member Coffee, we hope to make this an annual event.

Living History Days

Speaking of annual events, we are nearing the dates for our biggest and most popular: Living History Days, May 20–21. This year promises to be the largest and most exciting, with your favorite activities plus a few new ones to keep us all entertained. It's never too early to start planning activities so we can set yet another attendance record for this event. Also, if any of you are able to volunteer on a Saturday or Sunday, please contact Virginia Beck at 287-2290.

Brian Serna
President

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Staff Concentrates on Volunteerism

During the month of March both the City and Association Museum staff spent a morning discussing the participation of volunteers at the Historical Museum. Planning for the 1990s, given a larger Museum operation and a growing need for volunteers, anyone familiar with the Museum operation realizes that our institution is dependent on volunteer power. We currently count 454 volunteers who have devoted over 21,000 hours of service to the Association, Docent Council or Museum Auxiliary. Volunteers work in every Museum program area and bring energy, talent, skills and valuable community participation to the Historical Museum. Recorded volunteer hours for the 1990 year were 12,200—62% of the volunteers have been involved over 15 years. Many other volunteers can be seen almost daily at the Museum.

During the month we hope to work on developing new systems to improve our volunteer coordination. As usual we'll be asking for ideas.

An Invitation Will Come

To better acknowledge our volunteers, it was suggested and funded by the Museum Association Board to both expand and consolidate our recognition program.

Therefore, for the first time, an all Historical Museum volunteer luncheon will be held on June 12, 1989. Susan Harward, Rosa Fountain and Mary Schultz are chairing this event, which will be open to all volunteers who have been involved for at least one year. We hope that all our volunteers will be invited and will look forward to this special invitation in your mailbox in May. It will be a memorable occasion and one way we’d like to say “thank you.”

Mignon Gibson
Museum Director

IN THE COLLECTIONS

Every spring the new docent class is given a tour of the San Jose Historical Museum as part of their training. This year new Association members who attended the New Member Coffee also toured the collections. Preparing for the tours gave the curators an opportunity to re-examine our answer to the question: “How does this object use in collections?” Placing artifacts on exhibit is the most characteristic way in which museums use their collections, but there are a number of other functions of a collection often express concern that artifacts not on exhibit are not being used. The culture of the curator has been identified at least seven different ways that the San Jose Historical Museum uses its collections in addition to our exhibits.

Some of these additional uses are closely related to exhibits. The Museum uses its collections to illustrate its temporary displays for schools, libraries, businesses, and other public spaces. Artifacts are also loaned to other museums to enhance their exhibitions. These activities help the Museum to fulfill its purpose of promoting San Jose's history.

An important and less familiar use of artifact collections is research. The research function of archival collections is well known, but objects are also used as research sources. Research provides detailed information to support the Museum's exhibits and interpretive programs, but can also come from information in other museums and individuals. This type of activity is increasing as our knowledge of the collection grows.

An increasing emphasis on "living history" has created a demand for use of collection items in educational settings. Current curricula are currently being used in history classes, outreach kits, and programs such as Westward Ho. Certain artifacts have been specifically designed to enhance these activities such as Living History Days, Victorian Christmas, and parades. There are a growing number of requests for "living history" demonstrations and other "living history" activities. In support of these activities, the curators are developing guidelines for "living history" and enhancement interpretation without detriment to the object itself.

The San Jose Historical Museum uses its collections in a variety of ways to meet the needs of its many different programs and audiences. All of these uses contribute to the overall purpose of preserving and interpreting the history of San Jose.

Sarah Higko Nelson
Curator

FROM THE EDITOR

Thanks for the Wheelchairs

Thanks to observant and generous members of the Association Museum, the Museum now owns three more wheelchairs! Eric Bracher, Leonard McCoy, and Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Roderick noticed our plea in the last issue of the Association Newsletter for wheelchairs to accommodate guests at our events. On April 2nd, at the Historical Museum Ero, Leonard and the Rodericks each called us to offer a wheelchair they no longer needed.

Please remember that these wheelchairs are available and ask to use them, as necessary, when you visit the Museum in the future.

Yellow Pages Ad

When the March 1989–90 issue of the Pacific Bell Yellow Pages came out recently, the Museum Association decided to make an attempt to let the community know the services we provide, the Association has taken out listings on pages 120–121.

You will find our Gift Shop listed under "Books," with an ad that features our selection of local and California history books, as well as Victorian-style gifts, toys and games. O'Brien's Ice Cream & Candy Store is listed under "Ice Cream" and notes that O'Brien's features "all natural" ice cream, sodas, shakes, and candy, as well as sandwiches.

Vintage Reflections is listed under the heading "Costumes" and notes that we have reproduction period garments for sale.

We hope these efforts at advertising will attract new customers to our Shops and help to spread the word that we have a variety of services to offer.

Kathleen Muller
Association Administrator

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION CORNER

Through San Jose's rich history, many sites and structures of historical and cultural importance have been lost, but many that remain can be preserved. The Historic Landmarks Commission is currently reviewing its criteria to evaluate potential historic landmarks within the downtown core area and throughout our community.

On March 21, 1989, the City Council designated the National Guard Armory Building, located at 240 North Second Street, as a Historic Landmark, after it received a unanimous recommendation from the Historic Landmarks Commission and overwhelmingly supports the City Council’s position.

The Armory was built in 1933 and was funded by the U.S. Works Progress Administration. It was constructed of reinforced concrete in Spanish architectural style. The building is currently owned by the Veterans Building, Inc. plans to establish a Veterans Memorial Museum at the site to preserve our local military heritage.

The City Council also recommended that the City Council initiate proceedings to designate the Montgomery Hotel located at the southwest corner of Second Street and Almaden Boulevard as a Historic Landmark. The hotel was constructed of reinforced concrete and opened in 1911. It had 42 rooms, a dining room, a living room, two sitting rooms, a ballroom, and a restaurant. The Montgomery Hotel was considered to be one of the finest hotels in the area.

The San Jose Historical Commission's next two meetings will be held on Wednesday, May 3rd and June 7th, 1989 at 7:00 P.M. in Room 204, San Jose City Hall.

William Thomas
Historic Landmarks Commission
FROM THE ARCHIVES

Historical Biography: "Who Are You?"

Among the most popular genres of non-fiction is the biography. In bookstores, racks are devoted to the lives of movie stars, political figures, business personalities, sports idols and the like. These contemporary works often rely on interviews and personal recollections as well as "documented sources.

How does one go about reconstructing the life of an historic figure? The well-known leave trails of documentation insuring years of research and interpretation. The impact of such lives guarantees immediate collection of materials.

But we are also fascinated with ordinary lives, those individuals who share similar dreams and expectations as we do. This has led to the great interest in ordinary people being researched and written about.

The recreation of the portrait of an individual done? Vital records, when available, provide the skeleton; birth, school, occupation, family, and death records give concrete facts placing an individual in a time and place.

Other records may fill out the "body" of an individual. For example, the Great Registry, the voting registry, at the end of the nineteenth century provided not only the name, birthdate, and nativity, but also included the height, color of eyes, hair and complexion and any distinguishing marks. (Unfortunately, the registry only listed the registered males.) Other records such as the census records may provide additional information about an individual's life, friends, etc.

The sense of a life may only come through the individual himself. Through correspondence, diaries, speeches, photographs, and other personal documentation, a sense of the individual emerges. The autobiography of a Frank Bacon or the diaries of a Mary Hallock Foote may give a picture not only of the time but also a unique sense of the individual.

Colin Fletcher in his book, The Man from the Cave, researched the life of a somewhat ordinary individual and wrote, "he did not personally know and who was not an "historic figure." Through his research, Mr. Fletcher began to understand the individual world through this experience came to know himself better.

The strength of an historical biography is not only the accuracy of the data that it gives us, but also the personal link it provides us with others. We are fascinated with "smaller" historical characters because we identify with them, and they, in turn, need to be sought out from the dust of the past.

Leslie Masunaga
Archivist
Open Saturday Archives: Open from 1 to 4 p.m.
on April 29, May 13 and 27th. Please call aheadfor an appointment.

The San Jose Historical Museum is part of the City of San Jose Department of Recreation, Parks and Community Services.

MUSEUM STAFF

Mignon Gibson Director
Cheryl Wanda Foes Senior Steno
Jeanne Kondo Clerk/Typist
Archivist
Leah Masunaga Archivist
Virginia Beck Curator of Education
Volunteers
Diane Denen Volunteer Coordinator
Ellen Garbosek (p/t) Volunteer Project Coordinator
Events
Monte Duran Museum Events
Collections
Mabel Turmanimigo Curator
Sarah Heighgo Nunes Curator
Nancy Valby Curator

ASSOCIATION STAFF

Kathleen Muller Administrative Services
Barbara Biehl Administrative Aest
Carol Osellet Membership Secretary
Erlane Shields Manager
Anita Kasraja Supervisor
Carole Colacito Supervisor

DOCENT REPORT

The San Jose Historical Museum Docent Council Board is fortunate to have many talented and dedicated members. The Admissions Chairperson is an excellent example. With a committee of docents, the Admissions Chairperson is responsible for making the community aware of the docent training program. A person must train for thirteen consecutive Mondays to become a docent, but first they need information. The Admissions Chairperson and Committee must be knowledgeable and available to answer the questions of prospective docents. This is accomplished through telephone contact and two "Get-Acquainted" Coffees. The Admissions Chairperson communicates with each year share their enthusiasm with over 110 interested persons which results in a training class of about 50 individuals. They also coordinate the trainee Sponsor Program which matches experienced docents with trainees. This program is built on caring, sharing, and support for its"success.

The election of the Docent Council Board is held every June. Board members, according to the Docent Council By-laws, may not hold the same Board position for more than one year and, with the exception of the Past President, may not serve on the Docent Council Board for more than three consecutive years. The responsibility of presenting the slate of nominees to the Docent Council rests with the Nominations Chairperson and Committee. Each Board position must be evaluated, the 100-member Docent Council surveyed, and many contacts made before the slate of officers can be presented. Each year a talented, dedicated, and enthusiastic Board is elected.

Perhaps one of the most challenging and rewarding positions on the Docent Council Board is the Tour Coordinator. The Tour Coordinator is responsible for matching the monthly tour schedules and the available Docents. Each public tour, preschool tour, and outreach presentation must be staffed by the Tour Coordinator which can mean hundreds of slots to be filled each month. Because the docents are volunteers, individual needs must be taken into consideration and a balance of volunteer hours must be maintained. The popularity of the Museum Education Programs has increased each year and the spring touring calendar is booked 100% by mid-February. The Tour Coordinator must schedule Docents for each of these programs to ensure the quality of each presentation and that the Museum's excellent reputation for quality programs is maintained.

Linda Kelly
Docent Council President

MUSEUM AUXILIARY

The Museum has two very important service areas that the Auxiliary staff, the Museum Gift Shop and O'Brien's Candy Store.

In the Gift Shop, our volunteers greet the visiting public with a ready smile and cheerful dispositions. Here you will be introduced to unusual gifts for special holidays as well as gifts for any occasion. There is an excellent selection of history books that provide information about San Jose, the Santa Clara Valley, and California. Dolls, jewelry, greeting cards, and hats similar to those of yesteryear may be purchased here. The volunteers in the Gift Shop help with the pricing, display, and promotion of the merchandise found in this interesting corner of the Museum.

O'Brien's is another of our important shops on the Museum grounds. Here you will find gracious and friendly volunteers preparing delicious sandwichs and salads for visitors and staff alike. Unusual candles are favorites of the children who visit O'Brien's. A freshly baked cookie will add to the already flavorful ice cream that these hard working volunteers dish up every day.

Anyone with a desire to serve the public in either the Gift Shop or O'Brien's, please contact volunteer coordinator Dulce Jansen (267-2800). Come and join our enthusiastic Auxiliary shops staff!
HOW THE WEST WAS WORN: WASH AND WEAR

In 1849 gold was discovered in California and men eagerly seeking a fast fortune poured into the West. A grid system was a motley crew of people with everyone of life: criminals and prostitutes, judges, doctors, shop owners and fine young girls, all from high society. In the 1850s, women made up less than 10 percent of the population and in the mining region, the percentage dropped to 2 percent. But women did come to California, and with them came the domestic skills and little graces that meant home and family.

One of the domestic skills was the ability to make and maintain both her and her family’s wardrobe. Today it seems a small thing. We take the wash to the laundromat if we are not fortunate enough to own our own washers. When a dress or shirt looks or smells tired of the color or style, we discard it and buy a new one. But the domestic skills of the women were highly prized and were modeled in gold fields as is evidenced by this popular poem:

We miss thee ladies
We miss thy sexy washing tub
When our sore and blistered digits
Have been compelled to weekly rub—
Bringing blues, hysterics, digits.
*Tis then we miss thy timely aids
Oh, do have pitty gentle maid.
We miss thee when our Sunday shirts
Are sadly rent and bottomless,
With not a thimble, button, thread
To help us in our dire distress
*Tis then we miss thy timely aids
Oh, do have pitty gentle maid.
(quoted in Forty-niners by Archie Butler Halbert)

The care and construction of clothing was an important enough subject that it found its way into the letters of both men and women. Monday was the day typically set aside by women for washing. *Mon. Dec 12th have been washing most all day* (Clémentine Brainard). The men, when women were not present to do the work, set aside Sunday, the day of rest, for such important household chores. The washing would be done in large kettles heated over an outdoor fire or down on the rocks of the creek bed. As Clementine Brainard suggests, one commenced on a pair of white merino drawers which I sometimes used instead of pantaloons.* After beating them against the rocks, I washed them, one of details, one balsam. I shall make it all into broad aprons as I cannot go to make a dress, and when they get dirty enough to admit a chair.* (Maguire)

The simple dresses were, by our standards, quite complex—frequently hand sewn. The bodices were lined with a sturdy cotton/linen to hold the shape, and this fabric was not available, one made do. For example—the gown pictured above is lined with an old flax cloth, the shirt might be from a curtain. Raw seams were finished with blanket stitching or bound in bias trim. The hems of the dress were folded. On one brown dress the facings were a scrap of several different brown calico fabrics. The hem was edged with what hair braided to keep it from wearing out. Women were kept abreast of the fashions by lady’s magazines and fashion plates sent by

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friends in the East. Lady’s magazines would frequently use basic patterns laid out to aid those women unsure of how to construct their dresses.

The domestic skills and a woman’s importance were often satirized, and guiips such as the following often made their way into the local newspapers.

*Girls and other sewing machines: the new kind may be the best to hem, but the old fashioned ones are the best to stay with.*

(Mt. Demontor 2-8-62)

Barbara Murray

The author is on the faculty of Santa Clara University and a guest lecturer for Vintage Reflections.

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“GETTING THE PICTURE”
CAMERA HISTORY IN HOTEL LOBBY

In commemoration of the 150th anniversary of photography a collection of cameras is on exhibition in the lobby of the Pacific Hotel. Some twenty cameras from the personal collection of Marvin Marshall are on display. These cameras represent significant changes in the evolution of the camera over the last one hundred years. Included are early box cameras, the first camera with a self-contained flash, early “instant” cameras, and the recently obsolete disc camera.

Mr. Marshall has lent these pieces to promote interest in a project to develop a permanent exhibit on cameras and photography at the Museum. The camera exhibit will continue through June.

Susan Harward

INTRODUCING SUSAN HARWARD

Susan Harward joined the Board of Directors of the SJHMA in 1987 as chairperson of the Corporate Membership campaign. She brought to the job a long time interest in history and the necessary corporate connections through her work as a sales agent with the Fox and Carus-Kaden real estate agency.

Susan’s interest in corporate fund raising was born of a conviction that doing things right requires the right funds. She would like every building donated to the Museum in the future to have sufficient funds available for restoration at the time of the donation. At the very least she hopes we will never again have buildings waiting in the parking lot until funds become available for foundations and roofs.

Susan would like to encourage the kind of donation left to the Museum by Kristina Deluz. The restoration of her home on the Museum grounds is being financed by the sale of the land on which it stood. This house, which will soon become the home of the textile collection and the Vintage Reflections costume program, came with its own financial legacy which will ensure its rapid restoration. As more owners of significant but endangered properties awake to the value of the heritage in their care, Susan hopes more structures will be offered to the Museum with the support necessary to preserve them.

This year Susan is a Member-At-Large on the Board and the chairperson of the Volunteer Recognition Luncheon where, for the first time, all the Museum’s volunteers will be honored at once. San Jose expects this luncheon to be held June 12th at the Italian Gardens Restaurant, to become a regular and annual event. The Museum has more than 400 active volunteers whose impact is felt not only within the boundaries of Kelley Park, but all over the city, working in various capacities: walking tours and at the Peralta adobe. She hopes that City officials will recognize the importance of the Museum to the City and its citizens and increase future City support.

When the present structures in need of work have all been restored and have joined their fellows in the interpretive tours, Susan would like to see a church or chapel added to the grounds. Not only is it an important, but currently missing, element in the Museum’s early history, but Susan feels it would fill a real need as a location for weddings. The Museum grounds are already a lovely location for outdoor weddings, but for those who do not want to be dependent on the weather an indoor location would be a special and valuable addition to Museum facilities.

Susan is a native of Washington state, as are several other Board members. She came here about 25 years ago "to get out of the rain." She lives in Los Gatos with her daughter who is in college and studying to be a teacher.

We are very grateful to Susan for her involvement and commitment to the San Jose Historical Museum and acknowledge her efforts as a valuable member of the Association’s Board of Directors.

ASSOCIATION TO RECEIVE ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING GRANT

In early April the Board of Directors of the Museum Association received word that our organization had been selected as the recipient of an Accessibility Grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

This grant, to be matched 1:1 by the Museum Association, will be used to hire a consultant to write disability access guidelines for the San Jose Historical Museum. It is the Association’s intention that these guidelines will be submitted to the City for inclusion in the revised master plan for the Museum that is now under consideration.

The Association’s ability to apply for this grant came as a result of the attendance of Leslie Marunaga, Museum Archivist, and Craig Minneweber, Development Council Member and local utilities contractor, at a two-day seminar in San Francisco on Access to Historic Sites which was held at Filoli earlier this year. The purpose of the seminar was to familiarize attendees with the accessibility codes as they apply to historic sites, and to explore opportunities for making programs at such sites available to all members of the public.

To be selected for this grant by the National Trust for Historic Preservation is an honor for the San Jose Historical Museum Association that will enable us to plan for future development and new educational programs for maximum accessibility by all segments of the population.

ENDOWMENT FUND DONATIONS

During the months of March and April 1988, contributions were made to the Museum Association’s Endowment Fund/Special Projects Fund in honor of the following individuals:

In Memorium
Lloyd Batchelder
Fred Beitoan
Dorothy Cushman
Jane Doerr
Marilyn “Ming” Hecht
Mildred Kirkley
Joe Martinez
Joseph D. Muller
Bernardino Pescen
Dana Peitersen
Edie Vargas

In Honor
Dulcie Janzen
From the St. Francis Episcopal Churchwomen in gratitude for a presentation

Gifts to the San Jose Historical Museum Association to honor someone on a special occasion, or as a memorial, may be sent to the San Jose Historical Museum Association Endowment Fund, 635 Phelan Avenue, San Jose, CA 95112. A letter of acknowledgement will be sent to the person being honored or the family of the deceased.

LIVING HISTORY DAYS
SPECIAL BOOK SALE

For two days only — May 20 and May 21 — during Living History Days the following past permanent books will be available for only $10 each or three for $25.00. The books will be available in the Gift Shop and at a special table behind the Doctor’s Office.

- Barnstorming
- Sunshine, Fruit and Flowers
- San Jose and Other Famous Places
- Signposts I and II
- Pen and Inklings

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THE QUILT

"The quilt was reprinted with permission from Glimpses of the Past, the recentlypublished Home Who Lived Ten, a collection of stories written by the authors Writing Class, taught by Ann Thompson and of ferred through the Santa Clara Adult Education Center. Copies of Glimpses are available through the Center.

Grandma...Grandma? Undisturbed, the little lady in dust cap and shawl rocked gently back and forth. The crack, crack of the rocking chair was the only sound to be heard.

How pretty she looked in her lavender dress with her checkered warm and pink from the afternoon sun. Her was a dust cap made from white sugar sacking and hand crocheted lace, left only a fringe of soft waves framing her face.

I lit to watch her brush and put up her long white hair. She combed it up and away from her face, gathered it together at the top of her head, twisted it like a rope and coiled it into a round, flat knelt. She tied it in the ends and secured it with three expertly tied boned hairpins. Then she touched her fingers to her tongue and licked the stray hair back and under her neck. The final step was the dust cap, a relic of a busy time in her life when she was cleaning, cooking and sewing for her big family.

The crack, crack echoed in her plain room. She had kept only the furniture she wanted: her rocking chair, her dressing table, and her bed covered with the Leg Cabin cover which she had made many years before. She had carried it with her from Baltimore to San Francisco, to Oakland, to San Martin, and finally to Gilroy.

As long as I could remember, the zigzag-patterned quilt was on her bed. The tall brass bed, head and footboard. There were piles of pillows in hand-made pillow cases and the quilt made of light and dark rich wool and colorful designs. The big square, big square mirror in an oak frame and fancy brass drawer pulls dominated the wall next to the window. It stuck out from the wall and was delicately scented by the sachets of dried lavender.

Under the window the wooden trunk, leather straps buckled in place over a domed lid, protected books and clothes. It looked as though it was a treasure chest, and to us it was. I remember finding a portrait of my father in his first long pants, a dress shirt, and a bow tie. The lady in the mirror, locks of blond hair cut off for the first day of school. There was a long baptismal dress worn by my sister, Ida, who died the day the long piece of lace and ribbon she saved for reasons she no longer remembered.

The rocking chair, now creaking and cracking with age, once had a seat. It was an old lace-edged kitchen. It was a place to sit and rest while copper wash tubs bubbled on the wood stove. It was there she counted the quiet moments of babies or shell peas or visiting over a cup of coffee.

I watched my grandmother a moment longer. Frowning, she scribbled the sister only she could see, then giggled as if they were sharing some girlish secret. She had told me often about her brother and sisters and growing up in Pleasantvi lle, and about her early married life in Balti "We shared the cabin of her three little girls dying of smallpox within days of each other, earning an epidemic in Baltimore in the late 1860's.

In 1903, she and my grandfather left family behind and moved to San Jose with two little girls and five active boys. My grandfather loved to tell the tale of that train once they crossed the mountains. They were smoke and soot from the coal burning steam engines that turned white shirts grey, and of the pranks the boys played on each other when they couldn't still any longer. The train ride took nearly two weeks and seemed like two months. She was sure they had stepped off at least a dozen times along the tracks between Baltimore and San Francisco. She painted a picture of my grandfather, six foot four inches in black, doing laundry. I have never seen anyone count heads everytime the conductor called "All Aboard!"

She relived with us the San Francisco earthquake that began at 5:11:16 AM on April 18, 1906. We knew the terror of the moment when everything began to move. We heard the house creak, the gaslights fly, and saw ash shower from the floor. We could feel her panic when she realized her teenage son was on his way to work downtown. We could hear the fire bells and the horse drawn hook-and-ladder companies clambering over the cobblestones toward the flames that were destroying downtown San Francisco. The smell of smoke hung over the city for days. Their

HISTORICAL
FOONOTES OF
SANTA CLARA VALLEY

By Jack Douglas

THE PRATT HOME, 1891 - 1952

By the 1880's the pioneer settlement of San Jose had become a mature town of about 14,000 residents. With this growth came a need for institutions for the aid and comfort of orphans, indigent and old people. Facilities such as the county hospital, the alm house (now Kinnwood Hall) and Agnews State Hospital for the insane were established during this time.

In 1886 the Sheltering Arms Society was established to look to the needs of orphans and elderly women. A leader in these efforts was Mrs. Margaret Pratt, the widow of W.W. Pratt, a wealthy businessman and landowner in Almaden Township who had come to California during the gold rush. Mrs. Pratt contributed $9,000 toward the construction of a large three-story Queen Ann Victorian at 1159 South 1st (between Humbolt and Goodyear Streets). It was named the Pratt Home in recognition of her generous donation.

The home soon became a familiar local landmark. When the first Home of Benevolence was built at the corner of 11th and Margaret Streets, the orphans were transferred there, leaving the Pratt Home exclusively for elderly ladies. In the early days a fine of $1,000 entitled a resident to room and board and good personal care for life.

Unfortunately, inflation and unexpected longevity meant the need for raising more funds. In 1935, the home began raising funds to temporarily solve the upkeep problem.

In spite of its financial problems, the Pratt Home was a source of pride to San Joseans. A large photo of it appears in Sunshines, Pratt and Flowers, the 1896 pictorial souvenir book recently reprinted by the Museum Association. The home was usually mentioned in the early city and county histories and guidebooks, and it was featured on an early penny postcard (see below).

By the end of World War II the home had become woefully obsolete. New health and safety standards prohibited housing the elderly in cramped second floor frame buildings. It appeared that the structure would have to be abandoned. The board of directors found a better solution, however, by negotiating with the San Jose State College Corporation to turn the old home into a women's dormitory. An August 1945 issue of the Mercury describes the changeover: "The splendor of yesteryear is still prevalent in the faded tapestry and the azure patter of slumber feet along numerous hallways, the home will resound with young laughter."

Under the supervision of longtime chemistry professor Elwyn and Mrs. Pratt, the construction of a large three-story Queen Ann Victorian at 1159 South 1st (between Humboldt and Goodyear Streets). It was named the Pratt Home in recognition of her generous donation.

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Mystery photo
No, it's not a new dental technique. What the unknown lady is doing is pulling this vehicle and the men standing on it by her teeth as part of one of the downtown celebrations. The site is on First Street, and it is probably for one of the later Fiesta de Las Rosas parades. Thanks to Jane Brownston and Robert Lauritzen for some "clues" on this photo.

Association Publishes History of the Light Tower
SAN JOSE'S MONUMENT TO PROGRESS:
THE ELECTRIC LIGHT TOWER
By Linda Larson

The San Jose Electric Light Tower, preserved today as a half-scale replica at the Museum, once stood at the downtown intersection of Santa Clara and Market streets, a symbol of progress in turn-of-the-century San Jose. This month the Museum Association will publish a history of the Light Tower, written by member Linda Larson.

This informative 25-page paperback booklet gives background on the initial concept of a light tower, the development of public support, details of construction, and the reaction of Valley residents when the tower was lit, dominating the skyline of San Jose. Complete with historic photographs from the Museum's collection, this handsome publication will be an excellent souvenir of a Museum visit, an attractive gift for out-of-town guests, and a valuable addition to your library of publications on San Jose history. The cost of the booklet is $2.50, or $3.00 (including tax, postage and handling) for members who wish to use the coupon below and have the booklet mailed to them.

For your copy (#) of San Jose's Monument to Progress: The Electric Light Tower visit the Museum Gift Shop or use the handy coupon below!

Please send me copies of San Jose's Monument to Progress: The Electric Light Tower at $3.00 each.

Checks should be made payable to SJHMA Gift Shop and mailed to Gift Shop, San Jose Historical Museum, 635 Phelan Avenue, San Jose 95112.

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