WINTER HISTORY NIGHTS

Four evening lectures on topics of historic interest will be offered again this year to Museum Association members and guests during the months of January and February. Attendance at each lecture is limited to 75 people and reservations for any or all lectures should be made by phoning the Museum (287-2290). A donation of $1.00 is requested of all Association members and $2.00 from non-members at the door each evening. Coffee, tea, and cookies will be served. Lectures will be held in the Meeting Room of the Pacific Hotel, beginning at 7:30 PM.

Thursday, January 12 Kay Payne: “The Vatican Collections: An Overview”
This program is designed to complement and enhance your visit to the Vatican Collection Exhibit at the M.H. deYoung Museum in San Francisco. It will provide background information on the exhibition, with emphasis on the history of the papal collections and information on important works every visitor should see. Kay Payne is a docent at the deYoung Museum.

Thursday, January 26 Dwight Bentel: “James Lick vs. The San Jose Mercury: The Big Put-Down”
Dwight Bentel is a Professor Emeritus at San Jose State University where he founded and chaired the Department of Journalism and Advertising. His lecture will concern a libel suit brought against the San Jose Mercury-Herald by Mr. James Lick. This proved to be a milestone case that made law.

Thursday, February 9 Bob Doerr: “Berlin After World War II”
As a follow-up to his very popular lecture last year, Mr. Doerr will share with us his experiences in Berlin immediately after the War as a member of the U.S. Army Counter-Intelligence Unit. He will also entertain questions from the audience.

Thursday, February 23 Lee Ingraham: “An Historical Look at Oak Hill Cemetery”
Lee Ingraham is a genealogist whose studies have led her into the fascinating history contained in Oak Hill Cemetery. Mrs. Ingraham’s lecture will include a slide presentation highlighting some of the interesting people buried in the cemetery and their contributions to our local history.
ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Eric Bracher will be a hard act — make that an impossible act — to follow. We are all grateful for his outstanding contributions to the Association. He has been, for yours truly, an excellent role model.

We also owe a huge debt of gratitude to a trio of movers and shakers whose efforts have greatly enhanced the cause of the Historical Museum. Listed in alphabetical order, they are: CAROL CARLSON — The 1981 Vice President of this Association. Carol was the driving force in the opening of our new gift shop in the Sainte Claire Hilton Hotel. She also managed the Museum's gift shop and O'Brien's. Carol attended high school in Downey, Calif., and is a graduate of San Jose State University. Her first contact with the Museum occurred some 8 years ago when she was given a tour of the premises with the Junior League. She later responded to a letter requesting help in our gift shop and has been with us ever since. A former 4th grade school teacher at Sherman Oaks School, Carol credits her historical knowledge to the enthusiastic support provided by Mignon Gibson.

MIGNON GIBSON — Our fearless leader (official title, Museum Director) has the duty to keep our programs flying. While backing the odds of reduced staff and budget, Mignon was born in Maryland and has lived in Georgia, Florida, Kansas, and Virginia. She attended high school in Daytona Beach and is a history graduate of San Jose State University.

KATHLEEN MULLER — Her official title is “Coordinator of Museum Services”. In other words, she is the one charged with the job of making sure that the wheels turn efficiently. Kathleen handles our membership department and has successfully managed our membership in the past 2 years. Her special pleasure has been in providing members a specific reason for being worth their membership. Kathleen was born in Chicago and has been in San Jose for 2 years.

These changes occurred with Eric Bracher as Association President for 1982-83. Because ofby-laws restrictions Eric has had to step down as president and will be replaced by Judge Mark Thomas for 1984. Other changes on the Board include some very fine and hard-working members. Marty Lion and Patty Inman have both been with the Museum for many years in a variety of positions and will be sincerely missed at the meetings. In the past Marty had served as President and her advice will be sought in the future. Patty Inman was responsible for many of the 1983 Association events including a major portion of the planning for the fashion show. Mary Ann Herlihy, Jane McGovern and Terry Graff have all left and the Board appreciates their help and continued support.

I have enjoyed working with all the Board members and can’t thank them enough for the contributions that have been made to the Museum and the community. I look forward to another active year and working with the 1984 board on continuing and new projects. The 1984 Museum Association Board is as follows:

President — Judge Mark Thomas, Jr.
Executive Vice-President — Robert Doerr
Vice-President — Clyde Arbuckle
Secretary — Diane Paradiso
Treasurer — Edna Schmidt
Parliamentarian — Frances L. Fox
Helen Kuehne
Membership — Bruce Polhe
Corporate Membership — Jean Buckley
Sustaining Members — Betty Brown
Speakers Bureau
Publicity — Virginia Hammerman
Member at Large — Linda Larson
Member at Large — Sally Lampe
Member at Large — Cheryl Pohle
Member at Large — Betty Brown

Check the masthead for those who have agreed to serve on the Advisory Board and the Development Committee. You’ll hear more about them in the future.

Mignon Gibson
Museum Director

MUSEUM SERVICE COUNCIL

Volunteer coordinators are continuing to enter our programs to help the museum serve the community. The Museum Service Council volunteers donate about 600 hours each month at the lobby desk, O'Brien's and our two Gift Shops.

Janey Cheek, one of our Directors, was responsible for organizing and selling selected items from our shops at her elementary school Fall Boutique. It proved to be very successful and gave the Historical Museum additional exposure in the community. Thanks Janey, for the extra time and energy!

Current recruitment is for O'Brien's Ice Cream Shop which is open Tues-Fri from 11 to 4:00 and Sun from 12 to 4:30. Training will begin in the end of January for those wishing to volunteer in this unique shop. Please call 297-2290 for further information.

Dulce M. Jansen
Volunteer Coordinator

DOCENT REPORT

On behalf of all the members of the Docent Council I wish to extend our best wishes to the Association for a Happy New Year.

1983 was a year of progress for the Docent Council with about a 70% increase in the number of docents and the initiation of several creative programming plans to increase, both in quality and quantity, the museum presentations.

May I say, also, that it has been a privilege to serve on the Association Board with Eric Bracher. Your enthusiastic support of the Museum, Eric, is an inspiration to us all. I am looking forward to working with Mark Thomas as he begins his term as Association President.

Betty Brown
Docent President

FROM THE EDITOR

At the time of this writing there are still a few seats available on our buses for the Vatican exhibit at the de Young Museum on January 20. Those who have already viewed the exhibit describe it in glowing terms! If you can possibly join us, please call the Museum and add your name to the list. The cost is $21 for Association members and $25 for non-members. This includes entrance to the Vatican exhibit as well as the permanent collections at the de Young.

We are also looking always for new contributors to the Association News. If you like to write and enjoy local history, perhaps you would consider submitting articles for others to enjoy. Please contact me here at the Museum if you have an idea for an article or would like some help in thinking of a topic on which to write.

Thank you for your many favorable comments on the Association News in the last year. Happy 1984!

Kathy Muller
Editor

Museum Service Council
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION CORNER

ST. JAMES SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT
THE ALAMEDA

The City Council hearings for the St. James Square Historic District and the Alameda will be held in late December. The St. James Square District which includes St. James Park, the Scottish Rite Temple, the First Unitarian Church, Eagles Hall, Trinity Episcopal Church, the U.S. Post Office, the Santa Clara County Courthouse, the Odd Fellows Club, and the First Church of Christ Scientist will be the first historic district designated under the new provisions in the historic landmarks ordinance allowing creation of local historic districts.

THE GATES-MAYBECK HOUSE

The Gates-Maybeck House, located at 62 S. 13th Street, has been designated a city landmark. This three-story, Neo-Baroque style residence is one of the few examples of the work of the noted California architect, Bernard Maybeck. Built for Howard Gates, who was the son of San Jose Pioneer Freeman Gates and who is credited with the rebuilding of the County Hospital after the 1906 earthquake, the house has also been occupied by Paul Masson, by a fraternal organization at San Jose State College, and is presently a residence for a religious organization.

SAN JOSE PRESERVATION PLAN

The presentation of the "San Jose Preservation Plan" was received positively by the San Jose Community Development Board in November. The initial response is that the Redevelopment Agency work with the Landmarks Commission on listing structures to be targeted for preservation and for means of providing economic incentives to encourage preservation of many of our fine downtown buildings. The Preservation Plan at this point covers only those areas included in the City's Market Gateway, and San Antonio Redevelopment areas, roughly the area between Santa Clara, First Street, Williams, and Fourth Street.

COMMISSION MEETING DATE

The meeting date for the City Landmarks Commission has been moved to the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. in City Hall. The next meeting is on January 13. These public meetings and I would like to invite you to come to one and meet the commissioners and express your thoughts on preserving historic San Jose.

Leslie Masunaga
Commission President

PARK BENCH PROGRAM

In the last issue of the Association News there was an announcement of the "Park Bench Program". In case you missed it, we are running the offer again in this issue.

This program places up to fifty (50) benches within the Museum grounds for use by our visitors. If you have been to the park you will notice the lack of adequate resting places. With the creation of this Park Bench Program the Association hopes to improve the situation. This program will benefit you the donor with a tax deductible donation and honor someone if you wish, with a message of your choice.

Since the program was announced we have sold a substantial number of benches, which have already been assembled. The plaques will be cast and installed in the near future.

Help supply the Museum with the needed benches today by filling out the donation form on page 5 and purchasing a park bench.

Eric Bracher

KESTONE COMPANY
COFFEE SINCE 1897
COMPLETE RESTAURANT SERVICE
P.O. BOX 5460 - SAN JOSE, CA 95150

Hall & Rambo
INSURANCE
Established 1896
George Statbird
Tim Statbird

SAN JOSE'S FIRST SKYSCRAPER

San Jose's first skyscraper, the Bank of America building, First and Santa Clara streets, opened with a gala celebration on January 15, 1927. According to the San Jose Mercury-Herald, its lofty, marble-sheathed lobby echoed to the hum of hundreds of voices as bank officials and officials of other organizations assembled on the mezzanine floor for the ceremonies.

This new San Jose home of the Bank of Italy (as it was known until 1930) was considered one of the finest commercial structures in California. A 700-foot pyramid of marble surmounted the main business section of the building. A 46-foot-tall Art Deco statue of a woman was on hand for the ceremony. A San Jose native, he began his first bank in San Francisco, but selected San Jose as the location for his first out-of-town branch. Gianetti credited the success of his bank to the simple philosophy of attending strictly to business.

As he explained in the Mercury-Herald, "When the bank was organized, we outlined certain principles to serve as guide posts. Chief among these was the terse statement that the institution should be operated for the benefit of its customers and stockholders, and should not be used as the means for the personal enrichment of its officers."

When it was completed, the Bank of Italy building stood as the tallest structure in Santa Clara County, rising 283 feet above its foundation. It remains as the tallest building in the downtown area.

Considerable planning was necessary to construct a building of this height. Over 100 concrete piles support the steel framework and reinforced concrete walls and floors.

Constructed at a cost of nearly $1,000,000, the building is a fine example of Italian Renaissance architecture, elaborately executed in terra cotta and brick. A classic tower surmounts the structure, finished in terra cotta with an ornamental tile roof. The top of the tower is crowned with a copper lantern with a bronze flag pole.

The building was designed to house the bank in the first floor, with the remaining floors utilized as offices.

The interior of the structure also serves as a fine example of Italian Renaissance style of architecture. Italian, French, Belgian, and Tennessee marbles were skillfully employed to create the bank office interior. The bronze fixtures were finished in gold leaf and tinted relief, while the nearly 30 foot high ceiling coordinates with the other components of the room, paneled in tints of blue and cream, with gold leaf decorations.

Currently, the Bank of America building is being considered for city landmark status.

Linda S. Larson
COMING UP:
By the time my mother had moved us into "town," an apartment on West San Carlos Street, right past the Guadalupe River bridge. The Center for Performing Arts stands near this property now, but for me, a walk over that bridge meant crossing over the past to bury the pungent memories of sour milk and curtling cream. A cheese factory used to be there. We had to pass it every morning and night as we walked to and from school, and the smell would stick in our nostrils even on cold and rainy days.

During those days I really came to love downtown San Jose, as my own pre-adolescent playground. After school we'd head for Nextar's way, and there we'd fill our pop bottles with 10¢ and wander through the cosmetic section, picking the Tangee lipsticck. As we got bigger (6th graders now — almost 13) we'd stop at parked cars and twist our faces around in front of our side-view mirrors, so we could apply our forbidden lipstick. We did this until someone reported to our Principal (Sister Helen Cecilia) that "girls in St. Mary's uniforms" went downtown with "make-up on!" After that we had to go home and change, if we planned to perform such deeds in public.

I haunted the library those years — it was on the second floor of the old San Jose (the Art Museum today) — a two-story brownstone building, with the children's books upstairs and the adult section on the ground floor. The librarians hand-stamped our books with stamps that held little date stamps on them. Then they'd write our library card number on each book card — somehow it seemed just as efficient as today's electronic scanner method — and so much more personal.

Walking home from the library where we'd have to pass the ornate old City Hall building, with its city jail in the basement. We walked very cautiously past those barred windows, of course, and sometimes even got a "tour" of the jail — an over-imaginative nun's idea of preventing future criminal behavior, no doubt.

We'd meet to visit St. Joseph's Church. We didn't like the king from St. Joseph's, our arch rivals in volleyball, but we loved their gorgeous old church, the oldest one in San Jose. It seemed like a cathedral to us, with its multiple altars (did they have three or four Masses going on at the same time, we used to wonder), and its wonderful statuary.

The Chamber of Commerce had its offices in the same building as the Civic Auditorium, and some of the things going on were: demonstrations of spinning and weaving, rug braiding, quilting, bobbin-lace making, shoe repair, printing, blacksmitthing, still-walking, high-wheel bicycling and cloth-making "teas." The Civic War Association had a picnic beyond the firehouse. The Firemen's Muster Team brought an 1808 hand pump, an 1800 hose cart and the beautiful steam-powered Knox Martin. Entertainment was provided by the jubilant Hubin's piano playing, the players from the Opye House in New Almaden and the Benny Smith School of Dance. The real hit of the afternoon was the Dr. Sage's Medicine Show put together by Docents and entertainers. Their "medicine" was so popular that they sold all sixty bottles!

San Jose, 1833, truly came alive with townpeople strolling the streets. The widow Jones was selling cookies to support her fatherless children, while seeking "respectable" boarders. The town marshal kept an eye on the medicine show and the dance hall girl while Mrs. Morgan, the society lady, and Mrs. Martin, the mayor's wife, tried to ignore them all.

The new Living History Day is planned for Saturday, May 19, 1984. There is need for volunteers to help in a wide variety of ways: publicity, food sales, members of the steering committee, recipe collecting, and as "living historians." Meetings will be held in the spring. Interested individuals should contact Virginia Beck, Docent Coordinator, at the Museum (287-2290).
S E N I O R  C I T I Z E N S  O U T R E A C H  K I T  C A N  Y O U  H E L P?

One of the exciting things about being a docent and an Association member of the San Jose Historical Museum is watching the Museum grow and expand its services to the community. A new project of the Creative Programming Committee of the Docent Council is the preparation of a Senior Outreach Kit similar to our popular Victorian School Kit. This new kit will be available to the many Senior Citizens groups and organizations in our area.

A survey of these groups was made last year and this poll indicated they would be interested in artifacts from the period 1915-1939. There are some items we would like to include which we are unable to find. If you have any of the following items or you would like to donate them to this purpose, please contact Florence Haney, 225-4769. These items will be in a touch box, so they will be handled by many people.

Time Period: 1915-1939

Any WWI items
Political Buttons
Clothing articles
Evershard Pencil
Fountain Pen
Kitchen items
Grocery items (spice cans, Lux Soap, etc.)
Small Toys
Old Phonograph Records
Magazines
Sports items
Baseball Cards

DONATE A PARK BENCH TO THE MUSEUM

There is a great need to supply more comfortable resting places for our visitors! Currently the number of park benches on the Museum grounds is small and the number of visitors is continually increasing.

To remedy this situation, the Museum Association is undertaking a program to sponsor the sale of decorative oak and iron park benches for the grounds. Members and friends of the Museum may purchase a bench for $200 apiece. The price of the bench includes a durable metal plaque on which the donor's name or a short memorial message, an additional 100 letters, can be written.

If you are interested in donating a park bench, as an individual or group gift, or as a memorial, we would greatly appreciate your contribution! Your wishes will be considered when placing the bench in one of our suggested locations on the grounds.

Please call the Museum if you have questions about this program, or fill out the form below and return it to us with your tax-deductible donation.

Enclosed is a $200.00 donation to your Park Bench program.

NAME
ADDRESS
PHONE NUMBER
MESSAGE ON PLAQUE SHOULD READ

RECYCLING AN OLD CHURCH

Gavilan College celebrated the 1976 Bicentennial with a unique project — a building was recycled! The "newest" structure on the campus grounds was a restored 62 year old country church that lent a timely historical touch to all 1975-76 activities. But three years before, the future wasn't bright for the little rundown sanctuary. It had stood unwanting in a nearby field, abandoned since depression days and virtually falling apart when Gavilan's then president, Dr. Ralph Schroeder, first envisioned its restoration as an historical museum. Schroeder enlisted a financial sponsor, the Native Daughters of the Golden West, and then convinced the college Board of Trustees to adopt the project, allowing vocational students to complete the reconstruction.

At that point carpentry instructor Hal Dromensk took charge, directing student crews in dismantling, moving, and rebuilding the sagging old structure. They took it apart in coded sections, then straightened and reset the frame which was badly warped after years of settling on nothing more than 2 x 6 redwood sills. After that there were hundreds of shingles to be cut to match the original scalloped shingles and offset siding. And some major pieces were missing entirely. The double doors, nearly half of the window frames, parts of the spire caps, and a baluster or two had to be manufactured from scratch — custom designed if you will — handcrafted and fitted. However, "More of the building is original than not," Dromensk assures.

"The church," as everyone came to call it, eventually involved almost everyone at the college — from gardeners to public relations people — as well as many of the residents of the three-community college district. "But some of us wondered if it would ever be finished!" exclaims Schroeder's former secretary, Maxine Arnett. For instance, there was a minor delay when a determined swarm of bees moved in under a corner of the roof, but of course, it was difficult to get the weather to cooperate with the particular job that needed doing. But finally, on June 11, 1976, most of the details were completed and a rededication ceremony was held at the hillsite site overlooking the country campus. That event was special, bringing together young and old — even some members of the founding congregation were in attendance — and they were all touched by the moment's nostalgia. The occasion also proved to be a quiet lesson in community cooperation as well as a fine example of local ecumenism. One could only be impressed that the whole affair was "just what the doctor (Schroeder) ordered!"

The building was fitted with period pieces and old-time photographs provided by an advisory committee. A pipe organ was found in a local antique store and the church was opened for business even before the bicentennial year. It was called the Gavilan Memorial Chapel with hopes that the restored chapel would live again, serving its own and providing memories for future generations. Living up to that promise, the church has not served for more than 200 weddings alone — sometimes as many as three or four a day according to Donna Avina of the Community Services Office. The church seems to be a popular place for "small" weddings and for the over-forty crowd. However Avina reported some very large weddings, "One with a horseless carriage to deliver the wedding party and the wedding party were all dressed in authentic period costumes." Even several "rock" weddings have been held with ampliﬁed music, of course. And a big moment occurred in February of 1975 when scenes for a television version of John Steinbeck's "East of Eden" were filmed on site, with student and local people hired as extras.

With so many activities occurring it appears that the little chapel on the hill will continue to serve for a long, long time. Representing the essence of the past and holding the promise of the future the recycled church is hardly a monument. Instead it is history alive and well.

BETH WYMAN

HISTORICAL NEWS ITEM


An Automobile Trip to Oakland will soon come whizzing through San Jose from Oakland on a trial trip. A company is being formed in Oakland for the manufacture of automobiles and the trip of the first wagon will be to this city. The men interested are Oakland capitalists, and it is figured that the machines made shall be according to the designs furnished by an Oakland inventor. When in running order, the company will maintain a plant for the manufacture of any kind of vehicle with a power, from the light road wagons to the heavy trucks that may be used to haul loads of freight. The motive power used in the automobiles will be a gas engine which has been perfected by H. T. Bradley. Bradley, it is said, has been working for some time on his invention and has developed an engine, it is said, that will develop great speed.

(researched by Leolo Hasea)
NOTHING NEW

Thumbing through old San Jose newspapers can not only provide glimpses into the way it was, but can reinforce the old saying that there is “nothing new under the sun.”

Just skimming a few issues of the San Jose Mercury in early 1866 turns up all sorts of problems that are still with us.

Some folks back in those days just as now didn’t always think the administration in Washington was doing a good job. Land titles were in a mess, due to swindles, grants and other factors, and one J.C. Bland advertising 110 acres for sale south of Santa Clara noted in his ad:

“The whole or any part of the land will be sold and the terms made to suit the purchaser. Pede guarantees against everything except government.”

It wasn’t pigeons city dwellers were complaining about in 1866, but rather geese. It seems several families along Sixth street were pasturing their large flocks of geese on the street “to the great annoyance and discomfort of their neighbors. The side-walks are littered by the filthy vermin in an extent quite unbearable,” the complaint noted, and it was suggested the city fathers “abate the nuisance or repeal the ordinance prohibiting the discharge of firearms within the city limits.”

Continuous rain had caused much flooding in early 1866 and the Mercury editor noted late in January “the ground is now too wet for the plow, and when it dries out sufficiently the season will be so far advanced as to make a large crop a question of much uncertainty.”

(The editor facetiously noted the mud on Santa Clara street was so deep as to permit the loss of an eight mile team and wagon...“but that after touching bottom, the driver held his breath and kept right on, coming out by the Guadalupe bridge.”)

To protect city beautification efforts, the city council passed an ordinance in March, 1866, providing fines, and, or, imprisonment for anyone destroying or marring trees, shrubs, or picking flowers growing on the sidewalks of any of the public streets.

Some of the good things we enjoy today aren’t all that new either. For instance, hot air balloon rides were a featured attraction at fairs and carnivals in the mid-1860s, and San Joseans enjoyed an early version of "motion pictures" May 30, 1866, when Deaves' Mechanical Diorama of the American Rebellion was presented in Armory Hall.

The Civil War was long over and the diorama was the first California showing of scenes from the war, consisting of sets of translucent and opaque paintings shifted and changed by mechanical methods aided by lights and shutters.

Chain stores go back even further. As early as 1852 a man named Richard Carr had general merchandise stores (everything from harness to groceries to dress goods) in Alviso, Gilroy and Mountain View.

Patricia Loomis

Harry Farrell autographing copies of San Jose — And Other Famous Places at our annual Holiday Party. Seated on his left is Eric Bracher, 1983 Museum Association President. Photo by Wanda Post.

SAINTE CLAIRE HILTON GIFT SHOP

Our second Museum Association Gift Shop officially opened at the St. Claire Hilton Hotel in downtown San Jose on November 1, 1983. We wish to thank the many people whose donations of time and talent have made this lovely shop possible.

We especially thank Phil Smith, a young painter who did an outstanding job of painting the Gift Shop and donated half of his time in doing the job. We highly recommend Mr. Smith, if you should need some painting done!

Joe Curtis donated over half of his time to paint our name on the windows of the Gift Shop in gold leaf. He does all types of sign painting!

Patty McDonald, of McDonald & Moore Ltd., donated her expertise in the area of design to help us choose light fixtures, colors and otherwise decorate the shop. Patty specializes in designing office interiors.

Don Smith, owner of Central Cash Register Co., donated two cash registers at wholesale prices for our use at the St. Claire Hilton and the Gift Shop here at the Museum.

Wright's Lighting donated some track lighting and also restored some antique lighting fixtures for our use at the St. Claire.

Bob and Judy Forsberg spent their spare time wallpapering the shop, Eric Bracher moved the furniture in, Bruce Poble supplied the lumber and Marty Bamberg the skills needed to make a beautiful book case. And Bud Hansen has worked hard putting up shelves, repairing furniture and display cases, and hanging holiday decorations. Bud spends every Thursday here at the Museum helping with the carpentry jobs that need attention.

Chuck Buckley got more than he bargained for when he donated his time to put up the crown molding in the Gift Shop. Chuck found out that the walls at the St. Claire are made of brick, so it took him twice as long to complete what he thought we going to be an easy job!

Finally, Stephen Lin, by whose invitation we became involved at the St. Claire, donated all the electrical wiring work that enabled us to have additional lights in the shop. Mr. Lin also donated $100 towards our Open House celebration on November 14, which was arranged by Joan Buckley.

Thank you to all these special people and our faithful Museum Association members whose patronage of the new Gift Shop are making it a most successful venture.

Carol Carlson
Shops Manager

1402 S. FIRST ST. PHONE 294-1487

Southern
umber
Co.

DELIVERING PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND QUALITY MATERIALS SINCE 1904.
GATES/MAYBECK HOUSE: SAN JOSE’S LATEST REGISTERED LANDMARK

The San Jose City Council has recently confirmed the designation of the Howard B. Gates’ Bernard Maybeck designed, home as a City Landmark. This house, at 62 S. 13th Street, is the only structure in San Jose designed by the legendary California architect Bernard Maybeck (1862-1957). Dr. Gates, Director of the County Hospital, built this home in 1904 in what was then the exclusive Naples Park neighborhood. This unique home was for many years also the residence of the Paul Masson family. During the 50’s and 60’s the Gates/Maybeck House was occupied by a San Jose State Primate and is currently serving as the headquarters for a religious organization.

Bernard Raymond Maybeck, son of an immigrant woodcarver, was sent by his father to Paris in 1881 to learn furniture design. While in Paris, he decided to follow his true bent and enrolled in the famous Ecole des Beaux-Arts which was the seat of classicism in the arts. Maybeck’s classical training would serve him well when, as an architect in San Francisco, he combined a myriad of classical styles into romantic dream houses which his skeptical peers labeled “creative eclecticism.”

Using local materials, especially redwood, and extensive landscaping, Maybeck and others created California’s first original architecture, referred to as the San Francisco Bay Tradition. Maybeck’s two most outstanding landmarks in the Bay area are the Palace of Fine Arts, created for the Pan Pacific Exposition of 1914, and the Christian Science Church in Berkeley. The architect’s less imposing, but in many ways more fascinating creations were the many private homes he designed around the Bay Area. The greatest accumulation of these fanciful homes is in the hills on the north side of the Berkeley campus where Maybeck himself settled.

The Maybeck houses are adapted to northern California living, i.e., they conform to our regional climatic conditions, and they extend the free flow of space by eliminating the distinction between indoors and out of doors. His hill houses make extensive use of balconies, rooms which open onto gardens, and large cathedral height windows which make the rooms seem more spacious than they actually are. The lavish use of carved redwood on the interiors and exteriors, and the delicate gothic tracery windows were all evidence that Maybeck didn’t stray too far from his father’s profession. Maybeck believed, as did his internationally famous contemporary Frank Lloyd Wright, that the home should blend in with the natural landscape that surrounded it.

Much of Maybeck’s domestic work prior to the earthquake reflected his interest in Swiss, German and English medieval styles. The house he designed for Howard B. Gates in San Jose is a good example of his eclectic genius. Basically Italian in design, its extended roofline, forming a cover for elaborately sculptured and balconied balustrades, gives the upper portion of the house a Swiss flavor. What appears from the street to be a home of one and one half stories, is actually three stories high. The first story, lowered into the grade, includes the kitchen and dining room and servant’s room. A large oval shaped opening in the rear leads from the dining area onto what was a sunken garden. A circular stair leads from the lowered first floor to the spacious living room and on up to the bedrooms which are tucked neatly into what one would normally consider the attic space. Natural light comes in from the numerous rear windows and skylights.

The balustraded room to the right appears to be a porch, but is in reality just a well to mask the lower windows and a side entrance. Early photos indicate that the original balustraded finish was of a darker earthen tone, a technique Maybeck perfected to emphasize the historicity of his designs.

What the restored home lacks, is the extensive landscaping that characterizes most of Maybeck’s structures. Perhaps the owner will complete the restoration of this home by replacing the concrete that surrounds the side and rear with a rich mixture of trees and shrubs, in order to bring this architectural gem back to its original elegance.

If museum members are interested, the owners of the Gates/Maybeck House have indicated that they would be willing to open their unique home for pre-arranged tours.

Jack Douglas
San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission
(Member responsible for the preparation of the Gates/Maybeck Landmark designation)

DOCENT TRAINING TO BEGIN JANUARY 30

The members of the San Jose Historical Museum Docent Council act as interpretive tour guides to over 25,000 children and adults each year here at the Museum complex in Kelley Park and at the Peralta Adobe in downtown San Jose. The creative talents and deep commitment of these 95 men and women is evidenced by the thousands of service hours they contribute to the Museum.

Providing tours at the Museum complex is the primary function of the Docent Council, but this is only the beginning. For beyond this exciting service, the Docents create new education programs for children and adults. In the past two years, the Victorian Schoolkit, a hands-on-classroom presentation and the original filmstrip, “Over a Century Ago…” were completed. At the present time various creative projects are being developed by the Docents including a local history talk, an Indian schoolkit, a walking tour of downtown San Jose, an apothecary shop exhibit, an early 1900’s presentation for use with senior citizen groups, and exhibits for the fire house and fruit barn.

Each year the Docent Council conducts a training session for those individuals interested in becoming a Docent. This year’s training classes begin on January 30th and continue each Monday morning until April 30th. During these thirteen sessions, Docent trainees will hear lectures on Santa Clara Valley history, tour techniques, and communication skills as well as receive training in the Museum buildings and exhibits. Having completed their training, Docents, through their membership in the Docent Council, receive continuing enrichment through lectures, professional workshops, conferences and field trips.

Individuals interested in becoming a Docent are invited to a coffee at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 11 in the meeting room of the Pacific Hotel. At that time information will be presented on the Museum, the Docent Council, and the training program. Anyone wishing to attend the coffee or to learn more about the Docent Council may call either the Docent Coordinator at the Museum (287-2290) or Arlene Veteska, Docent Council Admissions Chairman (288-6212). We look forward to hearing from you!

Virginia Beck
Docent Council Coordinator

Selected Docent Training Lecture Schedule

February 6, 9:30 a.m. .......... The Ohlone Indians, Micki Ryan, Historical Research Consultant
February 21, 9:30 a.m. .......... Spanish Era, Phil Grasser, De Anza College
February 27, 9:30 a.m. .......... Mexican-Rancho Era, Phil Grasser
March 5, 9:30 a.m. .......... Peralta Adobe, its History and Restoration, Roberta Jamison
March 12, 9:30 a.m. .......... Migration to California, Early Valley Agriculture, Phil Grasser
March 19, 9:30 a.m. .......... Victorian Daily Life, Caroline Garrett, "Lectures on Americans"
March 26, 9:30 a.m. .......... Walking Tour to Downtown San Jose, Frances Fox
April 2, 9:30 a.m. .......... San Jose’s Chinese Community, Gloria Hom, Mission College
April 9, 9:30 a.m. .......... Oral Presentation Skills, Susan Botha
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING TO APPROVE PROPOSED BY-LAWS CHANGES

On Wednesday, February 15, a short General Membership meeting will be held at 12:00 PM prior to the regular Board of Directors meeting, in the Pacific Hotel Meeting Room. The purpose of this meeting is to approve the following changes to our Museum Association By-Laws, as submitted by the Board of Directors. Proposed additions to the by-laws are underlined and deletions are in parentheses.

It is necessary to revise our by-laws at this time to remain consistent with new state laws governing non-profit corporations and to be workable for our growing and changing organization.

If the membership approves the proposed by-laws changes, they will take effect immediately. Anyone with a question or concern regarding the by-laws should contact a Board member directly or call the Museum at 287-2290.

Only those articles of the by-laws which contain proposed changes have been cited below. Anyone wishing a complete copy of the existing by-laws should contact the Museum.

**Article II — Purpose**

The purpose of the Association shall be to support the San Jose Historical Museum through Association membership, fundraising, educational and volunteer services, development, and the image of the Museum in the community, and the acceptance of the social responsibility of the Museum.

The Association is organized for non-profit purposes and the individual members will not derive profit therefrom. No substantial part of the activities of this Association shall consist of carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The Association shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign (including the publishing or distribution of statements) on behalf of any candidate for public office.

The property of this Association is irrevocably dedicated to charitable purposes and no part of the net income or assets of this Association shall ever inure to the benefit of any private person.

Upon the dissolution of the Association, its assets remaining after payment, or provision for payment, of all debts and liabilities of this Association shall be distributed to a non-profit fund, foundation, corporation or organization which is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes and which has established its tax exempt status under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.