"THE VATICAN COLLECTIONS" TOUR
M.II. deYoung Memorial Museum

On Friday, January 20, 1984, the Museum Association is sponsoring a bus trip to the deYoung Museum in San Francisco for a viewing of "The Vatican Collections: The Papacy and Art". This exhibition opened in February at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, travels next to the Art Institute of Chicago, and will arrive in San Francisco in November of this year. "The Vatican Collections" is expected to attract one million visitors in each of these three cities. The Vatican exhibit contains some of the world’s greatest art: tapestries by Raphael, paintings by Leonardo da Vinci, Caravaggio, Fra Angelico, Poussin — and what is perhaps the most important classical Renaissance sculpture, "Appolo Belvedere," a Roman marble dating from A.D. 140. This exhibit marks the first time in history that the Vatican has ever sent abroad a collection of such magnitude.

The Museum Association has chartered two buses and made reservations for 100 people to view the exhibit. The cost will be $21.00 for members of the Association, and $25.00 for non-member guests. This price includes transportation and admission to the Vatican exhibit as well as the deYoung’s permanent collections and the Asian Art Museum. We will be departing from the Museum at 7:45 A.M. and returning by 5:00 P.M. Lunch will be on your own.

If you would like to reserve a spot on this trip, please send your check, along with the reservation form below, to San Jose Historical Museum, 635 Phelan Avenue, San Jose, CA 95112, Attn.: Kathy Muller. Checks should be made payable to the San Jose Historical Museum Association. You will receive the reservation form by return mail as a confirmation.

VATICAN EXHIBIT 1/20/84

NAME
ADDRESS
PHONE
ASSOCIATION MEMBER
NUMBER OF RESERVATIONS
RESERVATION CONFIRMED

1980’s picture postcard of the Hotel Sainte Claire. This beautifully restored hotel is the setting for our new Museum Gift Shop. Chamber of Commerce Postcard.

San Jose Historical Museum
635 Phelan Avenue
San Jose, California 95112

Inside Association News

San Jose Historical Gift Shop... 1
Staff & Volunteer Reports. ... 2
Schilling Portraits ... 2.5
Association Park Bench Program... 2.7
Vineyard Vignettes... 9
Worchester Office Typewriter... 9
Book Reviews ... 1.8
San Jose School District Program... 8.6
Introducing Betty Brown... 0
Historic Landmarks Corner... 6
Agricultural Photo... 4.5
East San Jose Police Court... 6
Winter History Nights... 3
Murphy Family Memorials... 6
Dates to Remember... 6
ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Time has passed so rapidly that it hardly seems that it has been two years that I have been serving as your President of the Association. It seems like only a short time ago we ran a headline about the Museum closing the gates due to budget cuts within the City of San Jose Parks and Recreation Department. Since that time, many changes have taken place and we are now on the leading edge of visible progress.

Let me briefly outline some of the changes taking place at the Museum. Through the support of the Association Board and other interested parties we have accomplished the following: moved the Association Gift Store to the present location in the changing exhibit room in the hotel and greatly expanded the merchandise and increased sales; obtained the O'Brien Candy store lease and taken over the operation of the store with a new line of food, clean premises, and courteous sales staff; opened a corporate picnic area with a paid staff position to schedule picnics and events; and other activities; encouraged participation of the blacksmith group to set up operations near the Stable and hopefully have a permanent building for their displays in the near future. In addition we have become involved in getting the Firehouse completion underway, which has been long overdue. The Firehouse can be rented out on the weekends, and the Stable will be able to rent out the upstairs meeting area, therefore bringing in additional revenues to offset park finances. Also the interior of the Fruit Barn is being completed with additional bricking to make it a functional display building. With the Firehouse and Fruit Barn nearing completion we will be able to schedule dedication ceremonies sometime in 1984.

In September 1 signed a contract with Mr. Richard Lin, owner of the St. Claire Hotel, for our second Association Gift Store. Carol Carlson will be stocking this new addition for a grand opening in the very near future. Plans are also underway for additional areas to be additions to the Museum, the Markham house, owned by San Jose State University, and also the Zanker House, presently owned by the City of San Jose. The Zanker House plans are still to be worked out. Our development committee is working on possible locations sites for these two buildings.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

The purpose of the San Jose Historical Museum Association is to support the San Jose Historical Museum through Association membership, fund raising, educational and volunteer services, development of the image of the Museum in the community and the acceptance of the Museum by the community.


DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: Jim Arbuckle, Eric Bracher, Chuck Buckley, Leonard McKay, Mary Sniezka

ADVISORY BOARD: Dwight Benedict, John Clark, Jerry DeYoung, Jack Douglas, Thoma Faxon, Diana Hawell, Robert Haskin, John D. Larkendet, Leonard McKay, John Neece, Duncan Gresal, Ernie Ranaldi, Al Smith, Gary Rabbard, Clif Swenson, Austin Warburton

Kathy Mullar, Executive Director

MIGNON GIBSON
Museum Director

Museum Director

JULY 1984

THE biggest event I have saved for last: the start of construction of the trolley restoration barn. Ground has been broken and the building is under construction with a crew hired to see to the restoration of the trolleys that will eventually be running on the city streets of San Jose. Eventually the barn will be turned over to the Museum for our use as a transportation display building.

In addition to all of the above we have had several social gatherings that have been an overwhelming success. In the membership area of the Museum has grown to where now the membership has reached the one thousand level. The yearly premium of offering books on local historical topics has been a real attention getter. Again for 1984 we have a book that you will just have to have for your library, "San Jose's Oldest Houses" by Stew Moller has several other manuscripts in the offering for years of forthcoming enjoyment. Plans for the 1985 book are underway, but I am not going to give away the ending at this time. It would be nice to take credit for all of the above but the credit really belongs to the staff, Board members and volunteers at the Museum for they have put in countless hours of their time to make the Museum an enjoyable place for all.

Eric Bracher
Association President

DOCENT REPORT

Our Docent Council has been busy establishing good public relations this fall. First of all, many of the docents, under the guidance of Sylvia Greweling, participated in Willow Glen's Fourth of July parade. After the parade, Ann Lindsay and Pat McCue handed out flyers on the Museum. They were encouraged by the interest generated among the viewers. Sylvia's committee is enthusiastically contemplating putting #2 in Lincoln Days in December!

Secondly, our Docent Council took on the task of staffing an entire day on Artrain in Palo Alto. On October 19th fifteen docents acted as gallery guides to school tours and public tours on the nation's only touring art museum. We have received a great deal of recognition for our prompt and whole-hearted support.

Another direct encounter with the public, Living History, on October 8th was an event that, in the words of one of our visitors, "made the museum come alive!" Much effort was put into the planning and coordinating of events. Of the many people who were involved in the development of Living History Day special mention goes to Ann Lindsay, Ellen Garboke, Dulcie Jansen and Nancy Valby.

Our docents really care about the Museum as was exhibited by the door-to-door cleaning efforts on October 10th. Twenty-seven of the docents were at the Museum handling the artifacts with TLC, dusting, cleaning and getting rid of cobwebs and dirt. Each building had special instructions for caring for the contents.

Betty Brown
Docent Council President

MUSEUM SERVICE COUNCIL

Thanks to the many volunteers who worked so hard on Living History Day and made it a smashing success again. We offer a great afternoon of fun and education for the community on this special days.

Volunteers are doing a super job in a variety of areas at the Museum. Now we have another opportunity with our new St. Claire Gift Shop opening in November. If you would be interested in working in one of our shops, please call the Museum. Just a reminder, our volunteer meetings on the second Saturday of each month are open to all prospective volunteers.

Dulcie Jansen
Volunteer Coordinator
FROM THE EDITOR

Membership in the San Jose Historical Museum Association is one of the greatest bargains in town, and November marks the beginning of our Membership Drive for 1964!

For a minimum membership of only $5.00 again this year you receive a delightful book on local history, free admission to the Museum, the Association News six times a year, a 10% discount in our Museum Gift Shops, and notification of lectures, trips and special events. At the same time you have the satisfaction of knowing that you are supporting the Museum's educational programs.

There will be three opportunities in December for you to come to the Museum, renew your membership, and have your premium book San Jose — And Other Famous Places autographed by the author, Harry Farrell. You may attend a Membership Drive on Tuesday afternoon, December 6th or on Sunday afternoon, December 11th, or our Holiday Party on the evening of December 8th.

Please continue your support of the Historical Museum and encourage others to join us also. 1984 will be an exciting year of growth for the Museum and we look forward to your participation.

Kathy Muller
Editor

IN THE COLLECTION

Recently two exhibits to promote the Museum have been installed. The first, for the Chamber of Commerce, is a kiosk on El Paseo de San Antonio between First and Market. It contains general background information and photographs on San Jose and the Museum, and features the Dashaway Stables with artifacts. The second exhibit highlights the Umparger House with artifacts and pictures. Located at the new Visitor Information Center on North First Street, the exhibit uses photographs and gives general historical information on San Jose and the Museum. Also included is a section on O'Brien's and the Gift Shop.

We are extremely pleased to report that we have received an extensive donation from F. Schilling and Son Sporting Goods. Schillings was in business in San Jose for over 120 years. Upon closing the store the family gave the Museum an excellent cross-section of artifacts from the store. Included are a large number of pieces of advertising art. Some are particularly noteworthy. We also received many of the old business records. They are invaluable as original source materials. Did you know that Barney Murphy had his knife sharpened at Schillings way back when? Please also read on this page about the portrait of Mr. Schilling now hanging at the Museum.

Last week Mrs. Mildred Wendall brought in a very fine collection of stone artifacts made by local Indians and found over a number of years by her husband in the Almaden area. They are in very good condition which makes them particularly nice to have. Remember that donations to the Museum are tax deductible. Please call for an appointment before bringing donations to the Museum.

Nancy Valby
Registrar

O'BRIENS ICE CREAM AND CANDY SHOP

Choose from our wide selection of holiday candies, cocoa, and cider mixes.

Gift packages available.

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

San Jose Historical Museum, Kelley Park

ASSOCIATION PARK BENCH PROGRAM

On page 7 of this issue you will find a subscription form for the purchase of a park bench for the Museum grounds. One of the things the Association does for the Museum is to provide programs such as this which are of benefit to the Museum.

If you have had the chance to visit the Museum I'm sure you have noticed the lack of places to sit for a while, either to rest your legs, or just to gaze at the surroundings and dream of the old times. To provide adequate resting places, the Museum Association is presenting a program which will accomplish two things. First, provide the needed benches and second, give the members a chance to support the Museum with a meaningful contribution that is tax-deductible. At the same time, the park bench can be a lasting memento to someone of your choice. Each bench will have a metal plaque which can contain a short message such as "In memory of my mother Jane Doe" and your name as donor if you so desire.

We have need of some forty or fifty benches that will be placed throughout the Museum grounds to provide adequate resting spots. Your support of this program will be most rewarding to you and the Museum.

Eric Brocher

SCHILLING PORTRAIT DONATED

Now on display in the lobby of the Pacific Hotel is a recently acquired portrait of Frank Schilling, one of San Jose's pioneer merchants. The portrait, rendered in pencil on paper on masonite, was done by John Hopes, a portrait artist who had a studio in San Francisco during the 1880's. This fine work is 22" x 27" in size and was done in 1885. We are grateful to Mr. Schilling's family for the donation of this important addition to our portrait collection.

Frank Schilling (1835-1916) was a native of Wittenberg, Germany who came to the United States at the age of 15. He worked on the East Coast as a gunsmith before coming to San Francisco in 1851. It was in San Francisco that he married Margaret Dooy of Ireland, with whom he had five children. The family moved to San Jose in 1860.

Schilling established a firearms and cutlery manufacturing business at 291 El Dorado Street. The business remained in this location for 121 years. (The street address was later changed to 27 Post Street.) In addition to the manufacturing operation, Mr. Schilling opened a retail store at the same location. The store was a primary source of outdoor and sporting equipment from its founding until its closure this year.

The Schilling children included three sons and two daughters. One son, Herbert E. Schilling, became a partner in his father's business in 1875 when the name of the company was changed to F. Schilling & Son. Herbert also served as Mayor of San Jose from 1892-94. Another son, Frank A. Schilling, was County Clerk in 1883. The third son, Raymond, was also active in the family business and was in charge of it after the senior Schilling's death on December 4, 1916.

The Schilling's daughters were Katherine and Lena. Lena Schilling Stewart was graduated from the California State Normal School (now San Jose State University) in 1925 and taught at the Sunol School.

Helen Kuesel

The San Jose Historical Museum gratefully acknowledges the generous assistance of the Framing Department personnel at Southern Lumber Company in preparing the frame for the Schilling portrait.

Portrait of Frank Schilling. Photo by Kathy Muller.
Today Delmas is remembered most for his defense of the infamous Harry Thaw, who had killed architect Stanford White in a row over Harry's wife, Evelyn Nesbit. The story was told recently in E.L. Doctorow's book *Ragtime* and in the later movie. Here Delmas was played by actor Pat O'Brien, who is hired by the Thaw family to convince the jury their son is insane.

What isn't so well known about Delphin Delmas is that he had his father's interest in winemaking and in the 1880s built what was to become the largest independent winery in the Santa Clara Valley, the Casa Delmas in Mountain View. Delmas controlled about 400 acres of vines, while his winery capacity was about a half million gallons. Prohibition, of course, eventually brought an end to the operation and Delphin died in 1928 at the age of eighty-four.

Another interesting connection between the Delmas family and the valley's wine history comes from the fact that his niece, Neltie, married Henry Lefranc, the son of the founder of Aimaden vineyards. Their death in 1909 shocked the residents of the valley, but that's another story.

Charles L. Sullivan

Antoine Delmas, San Jose's great French nurseryman, who had the best early collection of foreign grapes in the state. With him are his two sons, Joseph and Delphin. Photo courtesy of Charles Sullivan.

THE WARBURTON OFFICE TYPEWRITER

When I did Museum tours I liked to point out the typewriter in the Warburton Office. Unlike some of the artifacts in the Museum it is easily recognizable because of its relationship to the ones we use today. Even better, it is different enough to be intriguing. The typewriter is a Remington Smith Premier #10 from the 1905-1910 era, and was donated by Dr. Blaas. It had been part of his father-in-law's business equipment.

The interesting part of the typewriter is the keyboard. It has two sets of letter keys: one is upper-case, the other lower-case. Evidently the designer thought in aesthetic type or press terms, and arranged the keys similarly to the trays of loose type in the Print Shop across the street. Instead of having the numbers across the top as in the print case though, the Remington has the numbers arranged vertically on either side of the letter keys: 2,3,4,5, on the left and 6,7,8,9 on the right. There are also red keys on the right of the upper case letters marked 4,5,2,1.

The keyboard used the topmost row from left to right for fractions. It included 1/5, 3/5, 5/5, 7/8, 7/8 on the left, and 1/4, 1/2, 3/4 on the right. The inclusion of 7 keys for fractions certainly must have complicated learning the keyboard by touch!

For several years I thought about the machine. I had had a hard time learning to type and I still haven't learned fractions. The combination of typying and fractions made the Remington seem like a torture machine designed by a mad scientist.

Recently in some research I came across a bankruptcy case in which are listed the household goods reserved from the settlement for the bankrupt in 1845. Many of the prices were in fractions of cents. One jug 12 1/4¢, one coffee mill 37 1/4¢, 2 pepper boxes 64¢, three tin cups 12 1/4¢, one mug 91/4¢, two large boxes 37¢. The total of household goods including wagons, saddles, livestock and feed, was $193.50. All the fractions neatly worked out to an even number of cents.

As I tried to type those fractions for the first time it occurred to me that inflation has changed our price structure and our machine. The one I typed this on has 1/4 and 1/4, and I very seldom have to deal with those. Higher prices have some compensations!

Joyce Link
Harry Farrell was born and raised in San Jose, graduating from San Jose State University in 1948 with a degree in journalism. As a teenager, in the summer of 1938, he began writing church notices, obits, etc. for the old San Jose News with only an occasional theater pass for his remuneration. By 1942 he officially joined the staff of the Mercury-News as a copyboy, later moved up to general assignment reporter, and was political editor for two decades. His popular feature columns, "Farrell at Large" and "People and Politics", front page stories and investigative reporting have kept thousands of local readers informed, amused and sometimes disenchanted. During his 41-year newspaper career he has received 41 awards of national, state and regional importance including the prestigious National Headliners Award and the American Political Science Association award. He is married to Betty Regan, a native of San Juan Bautista, and they are members of the Historical Museum Association.

San Jose and Other Famous Places is of great value to any reader, and it is of double value to the new residents for its overview of San Jose's past and present, with a hint of the future.

Frances Fox

SCHOOL DISTRICT LAUNCHES SUNNYVALE HISTORY PROGRAM

Approximately 1½ years ago County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Glenn Hoffman, writing in the County Education Bulletin reported that surveys conducted by Stanford and San Jose State Universities concluded that elementary school children were not exposed to sufficient local history.

Kay Peterson, a member of our Historical Museum Association and an early retiree of the Sunnyvale School District is making efforts to change the survey results. Kay is the 1983 recipient of the Sunnyvale Historical Society Heritage Award for her outstanding contribution to historical preservation.

With the enthusiastic support of the Sunnyvale School District and the Sunnyvale Historical Society, Kay Peterson has recruited a group of volunteer docents from the community, who have been trained to give history presentations to the school children.

The colorfully costumed docents pull treasures out of an old leather trunk, sharing yesterday's toys, clothing, tools and implements of daily life. Also large photographs and slides and stories about life in Sunnyvale in the 1800's and early 1900's are shared with the children.

Students of all grade levels display a keen interest in the presentations, asking many intelligent, thoughtful questions.

The first program was presented at Cumberland School with several of Sunnyvale's long time residents attending and being honored with awards and a luncheon following the program. Succeeding presentations have been given at Lakewood, Hollenbeck, Ellis and West Valley Schools. All other schools in the district will have a presentation scheduled by mid-November.

Kay Peterson would particularly like more persons over 60 to become docents in her program. A mingling of old and young, men and women, is the essence of the success of the program. Persons wishing more information should phone the Sunnyvale School District Office, 798-4981, extension 13 or 26. Artifacts from early Sunnyvale are still being gratefully accepted for use in the history trunk.

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

For Unique Holiday Gifts
Visit Our San Jose Historical Museum Gifts

Museum Gift Shop
Tuesday - Friday 10:00 - 4:30
Saturday - Sunday 12:00 - 4:30
The Museum Gift Shop will be open for your convenience during our Holiday Party and Afternoon Teas on December 6, 8, & 11, 1983.
The Historic Landmarks Commission has recently received a generous grant from the Siorciseau Academy of San Jose State University to produce a slide/tape presentation of the Commission’s strategy for preserving the historic buildings in downtown San Jose and integrating them into the overall redevelopment of the area. Designed to show before the redevelopment Agency, the City Council, and the Planning Commission, this colorful and informative 12-minute presentation can educate a whole new generation of San Joseans to our historic past.

We plan to give this show as wide a circulation as possible to convince local citizens, developers, etc. of the advantages, in economic, aesthetic and historic terms of preservation. Naturally, Museum members will get an early viewing.

The Alameda: The Commission is initiating proceedings to have the Alameda made a historic landmark area. It is hoped that the statues will help preserve the historic integrity of this well-known thoroughfare. The City seems amenable to adapting the general plan to prevent runaway exploitation of this fragile neighborhood.

Update: As I predicted in an earlier issue of the Association News, the Hensley Historic District did get officially added to the U.S. Department of the Interior’s National Register of Historic Places. Congratulations to the energetic neighbors who have done such a wonderful job of making this area the showplace it was in the 1890s.

Dohrmann Building

The Dohrmann Building on South First (between the Fox Theatre and the St. Claire Building) is the City’s newest designated landmark. The old Dohrmann store, for years one of San Jose’s finest emporiums for wedding gifts and other luxury items, is soon to be reopened as an arcade featuring a variety of shops and restaurants. The architects, Marvin Bamburgh Associates, have carefully planned to retain the exterior of this fine commercial structure to its original configuration.

Hayes Mansion

The Hayes Mansion in Edenvale was again in the news when the City Redevelopment Agency purchased it for restoration and adaptive reuse. This long neglected structure is a City and National Register Historic landmark. Now that it can be saved from further decay, perhaps various groups who are interested in history and the arts can pull together and make this unique mansion a showplace for cultural functions and activities. Councilman Jerry Estruth, in whose district the home is situated, wants to see citizen input (and labor) in the planning and restoration of this gem of a resource.

New Commissioner

Elizabeth Mathieson, an active downtown preservationist, has been appointed to the seat on the Commission vacated by Arthur Sanders. The newly elected officers of the Historic Landmarks Commission are Leslie Masunaga, President; Gerry Metting, Vice-President; and Leslie Hurst, Secretary.
EAST SAN JOSE POLICE COURT?

Perhaps a reader can provide assistance in obtaining information about the Police Court of the former City of East San Jose which existed from its incorporation in 1908 until it was annexed into the City of San Jose in 1911.

The map of the city was obtained from the archives of our Museum. Incidentally, note how many of the streets have been changed from names to numbers. Indeed, the only streets that have retained their former names are Shortridge, Wooster, and Whittom.

In those days each incorporated city, no matter how tiny, was entitled to its own Police Court. Did the city of East San Jose have one? My guess is yes, but so far I am unable to fill in on one of the few clues that I have.

Cover number one is that a possible police judge was a C.A. Bates. As yet research on him has yielded virtually nothing. There was a building contractor by that name who left Santa Clara County in 1914, but query if this is the same person.

Another possibility as an East San Jose Police Judge was J.M. Robinson. There was a John M. Robinson, MD who lived on 46 South Priest St. who might have been our man, but since Priest St. didn't appear to be in the city, this may not be a valid lead after all.

The final clue arises from the fact that evidently the city had a jail constructed of wood. The story goes that in a prosecution by the East San Jose court an attorney by the name of William Biaggi had kept one of his clients from serving a term in that lockup by citing a state law which forbade incarceration of prisoners in a jail of such construction. Perhaps information about Biaggi would lead back to the story of the city and its court.

I would be extremely grateful to anyone with information about Bates, Robinson, Biaggi, or the police court of East San Jose if he/she would telephone me at 299-4971 or write c/o the Santa Clara County Municipal Court, 200 W. Hedding St., San Jose, CA 95110.

Judge Mark E. Thomas, Jr.

WINTER HISTORY NIGHTS

You may wish to make note on your new 1984 calendar of four evening lectures that will be offered to Museum Association members and guests during the months of January and February. Further information will appear in the January newsletter and reservations will be taken at that time. All lectures will be held beginning at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday evenings in the Meeting Room of the Pacific Hotel.

January 12 “The Vatican Collections: An Overview” Presented by a docent from the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum

January 26 Dwight Bentel: “James Lick vs. the San Jose Mercury”

February 9 Bob Doerr: “Berlin — 1945”

February 23 Lee Ingraham: “An Historical Look at Oak Hill Cemetery”

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 __________________________

Check should be made payable to: San Jose Historical Museum Association
Send to: San Jose Historical Museum
635 Phelan Avenue
San Jose, CA 95112

SPECIAL THANKS!

A very special thank you to Dorothy Hefner and the Keystone Company for the generous assistance they have given the Museum Association in the refurbishing of O’Brian’s Candy and Ice Cream Store. We are so proud of the way O’Brien’s now looks and the quality service being offered!
NOTICE

Neno Aiello was a recent recipient of an award for community service from KRON-TV for his work with Martha's Kitchen, a nonprofit organization which feeds the hungry in downtown San Jose. Neno donated $100 of his prize money to the San Jose Historical Museum. Now he is asking for help in finding a volunteer or volunteers to start a newsletter for Martha's Kitchen supporters. It could come out quarterly, monthly, or whatever. Can you help? If so, please call Neno Aiello at 288-7304 or 299-3061 and be sure to mention your involvement with the Historical Museum.

Martin Murphy Family
Place Name Memorial in
Morgan Hill and San Martin

It is probably no surprise that place name memorials honoring members of the Martin Murphy family abound in Morgan Hill and San Martin. After all, Martin Murphy Sr. was one of the earliest settlers in the valley and a trailblazer who first fled the economic and religious vicissitudes of nineteenth century Ireland to settle in Canada. Later, his growing family migrated to a better climate in western Missouri. And from there they embarked upon an arduous overland journey with California as their destination. In 1846 Martin Sr. and his four unmarried sons and daughters took up residence in the old Hermon homestead located at the present intersection of Llanoas Road and Hale Avenue. Their original purchase of land was the 8927.10 acre Rancho Ojo de Agua de la Coche but they quickly prospered and in less than twenty years the family had acquired more than 70,000 acres of land in south Santa Clara valley alone. Naturally, geographic landmarks began to take on a Murphy flavor, with El Toro mountain coming to be known as Murphy’s Peak during the fifty years of Murphy prominence. Newly created roads and streets were often named for members of the family, their wives, husbands, and offspring. In fact, the San Martin Avenue exists both in Morgan Hill and San Martin. However, because the Murphy presence has been absent since the early part of the century, the proper connection is often difficult to make. For instance, one might suppose that Hill Road in Morgan Hill was named because it runs along the base of the foothills. However, the fact is that Hill Road was laid out during the 1892 subdivision of the 10,000-acre Morgan Hill Ranch and named for a Murphy son-in-law, Hiram Morgan Hill, who was the area’s foremost citizen and first subdivider. Hill Road, Diana Avenue, Dunne Avenue and Main Avenue were the original roads in the tract and Diana Avenue was named after Morgan Hill’s wife, Diana Murphy, a granddaughter of Martin Sr.

Diana Hill inherited 4000 acres of property from her sister, Daniel, who was the “largest landowner in the world” at the time of his death in 1892. Dunne Avenue was named for a Murphy daughter-in-law, Catherine O’Toole Murphy Dunne, the owner of the adjacent San Martin Ranch. In 1833 Catherine inherited the area that is today San Martin and the Uvas Valley when her first husband, Bernard Murphy, was killed in a steamboat boiler explosion on San Francisco Bay. This unfortunate event left 25 year old Catherine a widow, mother of an infant son, and heiress to 15,000 acres. Main Avenue was intended to become the primary thoroughfare of a proposed townsite. The town was eventually named for Morgan Hill.

Other Murphy-related street names include two Church Streets. The one in San Martin led from Monterey Road to a family chapel and cemetery established by Martin Sr. at the present site of New and Church Streets and San Martin picked up its name from the little St. Martin’s Church. Church Street in Morgan Hill led to a parcel of land at Dunne and Church donated by Catherine Dunne to the first Presbyterian worshippers in Morgan Hill. She later gave another parcel to the local Catholic congregation for the first St. Catherine’s church at the corner of Dunne and Monterey. The church was named for Catherine’s own patron saint, St. Catherine of Alexandria.

Streets in the San Martin area include Fitzgerald Avenue named for Johanna Fitzgerald, a widowed daughter of Martin Sr.; Fisher Street for Maria Fisher, the wife of Daniel Murphy and the mother of Diana Murphy; Columbus Avenue honoring Maria Fisher’s second husband, Peter Colombe; Tucker and Masten for two of Catherine Dunne’s married daughters; and Marcella Street for Johanna Fitzgerald’s daughter, Marcella, who was a published poetess.

Although there is no Machado Street, a school bears the name of a Murphy granddaughter’s husband, Bernard Machado, who gave land to the Paradise Valley pioneer families for a school in 1895. Machado was a wealthy Mexican landowner whose gift remains today through the efforts of the Machado School Heritage Society’s recent restoration of the original school building.

The Murphys were early entrepreneurs who founded fortunes, but they were conscientious citizens, too, who also supported numerous schools and churches. Their generous nature was acknowledged by Eugene Sawyer, an early Santa Clara County historian, who concluded his biography of B.D. Murphy with this sentiment:

Santa Clara County may well be congratulated that it was her broad and fertile acres that induced the settlement of, and became the home of such a devoted, broad-minded, and large-hearted group as that of the Murphys.

Beth Wyman

SANE JOSE HISTORICAL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

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Individual Authorizing Contribution

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<td>Pioneer Circle ($5,000)</td>
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<td>Quarter-Century Circle ($5)</td>
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☑ Visa

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