

the Exchange

THE NEWSLETTER OF HISTORY SAN JOSÉ

FEBRUARY 2006

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When the Ground Shook

Centennial exhibition examines impact of 1906 earthquake on the South Bay

“The Elks building on Santa Clara collapsed. An Italian hotel at 30 Locust street collapsed and was soon in flames....The back of the St. Claire Club building fell out...The Vendome [Hotel] annex collapsed...St. Patrick’s church at 9th and Santa Clara collapsed. The Peckham residence at 12th and Santa Clara went through to the basement...Native Sons building, partially wrecked...A baby was killed; his mother is reported dying; the father had a leg broken...The High School is a mass of ruins. Had the calamity occurred at a later hour, when the school was full of students, the death list would have been appalling.”

So reported the *San José Evening News* on April 19, 1906, about the massive seismic event known inaccurately the world over as the “San Francisco Earthquake.”

Indeed, San Francisco lost thousands of residents and hundreds of millions of dollars in real estate to the earthquake and

When the Ground Shook, continued on page 6

MUSEUM INFORMATION

History Park

Kelley Park, 1650 Senter Road
San José, CA 95112
408.287.2290, Fax 408.287.2291

Peralta Adobe-Fallon House Historic Site

175 W. St. John Street
San José, CA 95110
408.993.8300, Fax 408.993.8088

Administrative Offices

Pacific Hotel, History Park
1650 Senter Road
San José, CA 95112
408.287.2290, Fax 408.287.2291

www.historysanjose.org

ADMISSION

Free public admission to History Park and the Peralta Adobe-Fallon House Historic Site.

HOURS

History Park & Gallery
Tuesday – Sunday, 12 pm – 5 pm

Museum Store

Tuesday – Sunday, 12 pm – 5 pm

O'Brien's Café

Tuesday – Sunday, 12 pm – 5 pm

Peralta Adobe-Fallon House Historic Site

Saturday – Sunday, 12 pm – 5 pm

Research Library

By appointment. Call 408.918.1054

Administrative Office

Monday – Friday, 8am – 5 pm

GROUP TOURS

To schedule a custom tour for groups of 10 or more, please call 408.918.1040.

PROGRAMS

Public Programs
History Makers, Portraits of the Past,
Family Days

School Programs

All school programs must be reserved.
Please call 408.918.1050.

RENTALS AND EVENTS

Call 408.918.1055 for information.

HSJ LEADERSHIP

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

A Meaningful Centennial

by David Crosson, President & CEO

Centennials are interesting things. They can be used to celebrate, memorialize, ponder, reconsider, gloss over, or promote. Too often they are used solely for shameless commercial gain. One Midwest town applied its most infamous historic tragedy (a mass murder in the 19th century) to its annual community festival, Valisca Axe Days. Another used a state grant to celebrate the United States Bicentennial in 1976 by investing in red, white, and blue pancakes. That's special.

According to Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Michael Kamman's study, *The Mystic Chords of Memory*, centennials validate and cement into public consciousness a particular view of the past. This is what we want to remember and what we want future generations to remember. Unless we can make money off of it, everything else is forgotten. In the enthusiastic celebrations and reenactments of the Civil War Centennial, you could not have known that slavery played any role in the struggle. Centennials become central events in how we understand history and how we picture ourselves.

So, what to do with the centennial of the 1906 "San Francisco" Earthquake? First of all, rename it: San Francisco Bay Earthquake or San Francisco Peninsula Earthquake—anything that is more accurate. The quake stretched several hundred miles. Its epicenter was just off the coast of San Mateo County. Its destruction was regional, its impact national and international. Call it what it was.

Second, take the time to get the facts right. The earthquake did not destroy San Francisco; the fire did. What city was most destroyed by the earthquake itself? If you answered Santa Rosa, give yourself a star.

How did the 1906 quake affect Santa Clara Valley? Why didn't San José have major fires? How did Santa Clara County towns rebuild? How did political leadership respond? How did we respond to the needs of our neighbors? For the historically accurate answer to these and other questions, visit the only exhibit in the South Bay on the 1906 earthquake: *It's Our Fault, Too: The Impact of the 1906 Earthquake on Santa Clara Valley*. The facts will be right.

Third, really learn from it. That might mean not rebuilding as quickly as possible after a natural disaster, because rebuilding fast means rebuilding cheap, which means repeating the same experience again some time. If we actually learn from the past, we have to admit that we live in a dangerous earthquake zone. Warnings of a future quake much larger in scale are not irrational cries of calamity but the prudent voices of reason in the face of the inevitable.

I have tried to refrain from any references to the recent Gulf Coast disasters. But, there are too many similarities to avoid: long-term warnings, plans ignored, under-funded infrastructure, political incompetence, and the inevitable call to rebuild, "better than ever," as fast as possible. What, oh what, have we learned? Apparently, not much. Maybe, at the very least, I should stop collecting glass.

SPONSORS

Free admission for one year to History Park and Peralta Adobe-Fallon House Historic Site generously sponsored by

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It's Our Fault, Too Exhibit
Quake Finders
Sourisseau Academy

The Last Harvest Film
Sorci Family Foundation

Dairy Hill Online Exhibit
Summerhill Homes

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Eva Guralnick
EDITOR

e.g. communications
LAYOUT

Tragedy in Eden

by Jack Douglas

It may seem hard to believe now, but one hundred years ago, Alum Rock Park was considered one of the state's most wonderful natural settings. It was compared favorably with the grandeur of Yosemite, and since Yosemite Valley was not very accessible in the horse and buggy days, few people had a chance to compare the two for themselves. Alum Rock Reservation, as it was first called, was easily reached by buggy, and, in 1896, by a narrow gauge steam railroad. In 1901 the rail line was electrified.

Like Yosemite, Alum Rock boasted a romantic waterfall, steep canyon walls, fishing and camping. It also had two things not found in Yosemite—mineral springs, and a giant manganese boulder that was touted by the locals as a meteorite. With the rail link came a hotel, mineral baths, a merry-go-round, natatorium (indoor swimming pool), and eventually a small zoo. It was definitely a destination that had something for everyone.

ALUM ROCK TROLLEY LINE

For many, the ride on the “Toonerville Trolley” line, out across the open fields, through the olive groves and into the East foothills, was equal to any other thing that the park offered. Getting there and back was half the fun, and all for fifty cents round trip. But not every trip ended so happily, for on the sunny Saturday afternoon of June 6, 1903, death rode the rails on the Alum Rock line.

MR. GOODRICH TAKES A HOLIDAY

As the sun rose that Saturday morning, it was evident that San José was in for another hot sultry day. Mr. Edwin Goodrich, who for a week had suffered from an ulcerated tooth, thought that a day in Alum Rock Park would ease his suffering. Perhaps he would take a soothing mineral bath. Born in San José in 1857, Edwin was the son of noted architect Levi Goodrich

and stepson of Sarah Knox Goodrich. He was a prominent member of the Native Sons and was the owner of the Goodrich sandstone quarry. He had also been recently appointed to the post of Deputy County Assessor. It is not clear why his wife, son and daughter were not with him on this warm Saturday.



Advertisement, *Sunset Magazine*, n.d.

As the afternoon wore on, groups of people began to gather around the Alum Rock Park station for the return ride home. On busy weekends, the electrified trolleys pulled trailers of passengers into and out of the Park. The trailers looked much like the trolleys, but were without motors. As the trolleys filled, passengers began boarding the trailer that stood alone on a nearby siding, expecting that it would be attached to the trolley. Edwin had joined this group.

A WILD RIDE

Conductor Bob Grant removed the wooden block from the under the trailer wheels and jumped aboard, hoping to control it with the hand

brake. The car, being on an incline, began to move, and Grant realized that the brake was not holding. He jumped off and attempted to block the wheels again, but to no avail. Realizing the danger, he jumped back on again. Some of the passengers began to laugh, thinking that they were on a joyride, but as the car gained speed, fear replaced the laughter. Conductor Grant ordered passengers not to jump, as they might likely be killed, and Mr. Goodrich also helped to calm the panic-stricken.

The car hurtled through the railway tunnel at lightening speed, swerved around jagged rock formations, then left the tracks and struck a pole and a tree. The impact was so great that it ripped the top off the car, sending glass fragments over those inside. The force of the impact threw fourteen-year-old Alice Meyers forty feet, causing serious abrasions and internal injuries. Another young lady, Mamie Baker, traveling with her eleven-year-old brother, crawled from the wreckage, and thinking him dead, raced back toward the park to get help. She was brought back by Bob Grant, who told her that no one had been killed. This was only temporarily true, for Edwin Goodrich was found, seriously injured, under the severed top of the car.

A motorized trolley was dispatched from the park to carry the injured into San José, where Hugh Center, owner of the railroad, had arranged to have vehicles to get the injured to local infirmaries or to their homes. Mr. Goodrich, his body crushed, died before the trolley reached San José.

The following Monday morning, the Unitarian Church on St. James Square was crowded for the funeral of Edwin Goodrich. Members of the Native Sons served as pallbearers. Interment was at Oak Hill. The trip to Alum Rock Park was a rare day off for Edwin. Unfortunately, death did not take a holiday.

A Great Year of Learning and Fun Ahead!

The Education Department has created exciting new programs for 2006. We invite you to take out your calendars and mark these dates so you don't miss out on the fun. All events are free and open to the public. For more details on any of these programs, contact Marilyn Guida, Director of Education, at 408.918.1050 or mguida@historysanjose.org.



Sarah Puckitt

A Discovery in the Dig Box, Archaeology Day.

FAMILY DAY SERIES

Family Days take place on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon from noon to 5 p.m. at History Park, with the exception of the November 19 event which takes place in downtown San José at the Peralta Adobe-Fallon House Historic Site. The Family Day Series schedule for summer and fall 2006 will include the following events:

- May 7 Archaeology Day
- June 10 Dia de Portugal Festival
- July 16 History Mystery
- August 13 Take the Quake & Shake Challenge
- September 10 Antique Autos in History Park
- October 15 Athletes United for Justice
- November 19 Celebrating San José Founders Day 1777 at Peralta Adobe

SHAKES & QUAKES WORKSHOP SERIES

History San José and the Schmahl Science Workshop are offering six Saturday workshops exploring the history and science of earthquakes for parents and children. Workshops take place in the Empire Firehouse in History Park on three Saturdays: April 29, May 6 or May 27. Each day offers a choice of times: either 10:30 a.m. to noon or 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. The \$18 fee per child includes materials and a tour of the 1906 earthquake exhibition *It's Our Fault Too*, and there is no charge for adults accompanying children.

HISTORY MAKERS SERIES

History Makers events take place at Barnes & Noble Book-sellers, Almaden Expressway and Blossom Hill Road, San José, 7 to 9 p.m.

February 16 Leigh Weimers

Leigh Weimers, retired *San José Mercury News* columnist, will join David Crosson for the first individual interview in the six-year history of the *History Makers* series. See calendar listing on page 7 for more details.

May 11 Zorro: Fact and Fantasy

Zorro the fox returns in July 2006 in an exhibit curated by History San José at the Mexican Heritage Plaza. The history of the Zorro character and assumed similarities with historical Santa Clara County figures will be explored by the President of Zorro Productions, John Gertz and two professors of Mexican American Studies, Gregorio Mora-Torres and Humberto Garza.

August 10 Speed City: The Roots and the Legacy

To introduce History San José's exhibit *Speed City: From Civil Rights to Black Power* opening in October 2006, this panel will relate stories of athletic triumphs, community hostility, and mutual support among the coaches and athletes of diverse ethnicities in the San José State College athletic program in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s.

November 9 The Ohlone Today

Three women who trace their ancestry to the Ohlone people of central California will explain how they document their ancestry and how they carry on their Ohlone culture and identity in the modern world.



Antique Autos in History Park.

Allan Greenberg



New and Exciting Exhibit Enhancements Coming Soon

With generous support from the community, new exhibit enhancements in the Ng Shing Gung Museum will be completed in the Spring of 2006. Daniel Quan, highly esteemed Exhibit Designer, will add his respected creative knowledge and skills to this exciting and unique project.

The re-discovery of the Woolen Mills Chinatown near the banks of the Guadalupe River in San José will be the focus of one display case. Historic documents of Wells Fargo Express Company show the prominence of Chinese commerce in San José in the 19th century. Artifacts from this Chinatown will tell the story of the people who lived here.

While the inhabitants of Chinatowns throughout the area toiled long and hard to make a living, they also looked forward to an occasional evening of entertainment. In the 1800's, traveling Cantonese opera troupes provided this respite to the weary workers. CHCP is fortunate to be the recipient of some rare 19th century opera costumes. Having "the real thing" is far more significant than fabricating a model as originally planned. A display case large enough to house two robes is being designed and fabricated. In order to show each of the 5 unique and magnificent costumes, the plan is to have the garments exhibited on a rotating basis. This will give patrons something new to see when they return. Because of the value and rarity of the costumes, they will be shown in a climate-controlled case.

The upstairs temple altar area will be enhanced with a light and audio system. With the touch of a button, the altar area will cue the lights and an audio explanation of each area of the component.

Daniel Quan designed the original Ng Shing Gung Exhibit for CHCP fifteen years ago. He also planned and produced the Traveling Exhibit for CHCP. We are thrilled to have Daniel work with the exhibit enhancements. Currently, he is designing visitor centers for the National Park Service in Guam, Saipan, Kona, Maui and the Redwoods National Park to name a few.

Nineteenth Century Cantonese Opera Robe.

Intriguing New Items Donated to Collection

Each year the community generously donates family belongings and business materials that collectively represent the history of San José and the Santa Clara Valley. This year was no exception. History San José received more than one thousand items from 119 donors.

The mysterious object below is without a doubt the oldest and largest donation we received. This six-foot-tall, half-ton wine press was donated by Peter Mirassou; made of olivewood, it was shipped to California from Spain in 1853 and is believed to be one of only two in existence.

Perhaps the most contemporary donation this year was a "zine" or bi-monthly periodical published in English and Spanish by the *Pacific News Service* titled *Silicon Valley De-Bug: The Voice of the Young and Temporary*. Our thanks to all of the generous donors of 2005!

Daniel Quan



Wine Press with detail showing the date, donated by Peter Mirassou.

Sarah Fuchitt

Members Open the Doors to History

Did you hear how wonderful the History San José annual member's holiday party was? Held on December 8th, it was a great holiday season kick-off. More than 200 attendees packed the Pacific Hotel at History Park, enjoying food, socializing and discounted shopping. The hotel and grounds were glowing with decorations, and the museum store was packed with tempting gift items, all 20 percent off for members. Perhaps best of all, O'Brien's Ice Cream and Candy Store was transformed into a bar and food tasting concession, with delicious appetizers and desserts provided by Catered Too. Members of Portraits of the Past strolled the grounds in costume and coordinated the decorations.

The holiday party is just one of the ways we thank our members, who are truly key to the success of History San José. Our members are our advocates, helping recruit individual and corporate members, expanding our collection and research library, and serving as ambassadors in the community to spread the word about exhibits and programs. Thank you for all you do for History San José! Your support keeps the lights on and the doors open.



Portraits of the Past group at the HSJ annual member's holiday party.

John Eric Paulson

When the Ground Shook, continued from cover

resulting fire. Histories of the quake usually relegate but a page or two to Santa Clara County, mentioning the deaths and damage at Stanford, the collapse of buildings at Agnews State Hospital that cost more than 100 lives, and the loss of buildings in downtown San José.

But as the upcoming History San José centennial exhibition opening April 11, 2006, demonstrates, Santa Clara County was much harder hit by the quake than is commonly known today. *It's Our Fault Too: The Impact of the 1906 Earthquake on Santa Clara Valley* in *The Leonard and David McKay Gallery* at the Pasetta house will examine the 1906 earthquake as it affected San José and the surrounding Santa Clara Valley.

This exhibition will bring new information to the public about the magnitude of the disaster in the South Bay. At the time of the quake, newspaper reports estimated that damage to buildings in San José was some \$30 million, which adjusted for inflation would approach \$590 million today. The exhibition will showcase the holdings of History San José's Research Library, including photographs, diaries, letters, maps, newspaper accounts, posters, city and county records, and personal reminiscences of that traumatic day and its aftermath. But the exhibition also will draw on other area resources as well, including those of San José State University's Geology Department, Mt. Hamilton's Lick Observatory, the U.S. Geological Survey in Menlo Park, and the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in Los Altos

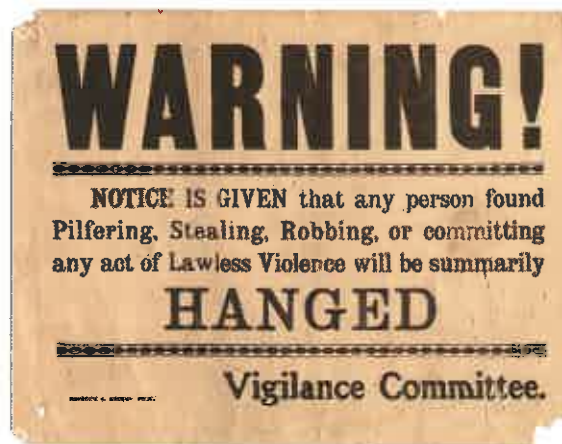
Hills. Most of the material has never been exhibited before.

The exhibit will first look at the geology and seismology of the Santa Clara Valley, and then at what San José and Santa Clara County were like in the years immediately preceding the quake. The next section of the exhibit will include maps, photos, and newspaper and personal accounts of the damage that resulted from the quake.

The effects of the quake will be put in context by geologist Nan Shostak's research on earthquake engineering and the economic damage wrought by the quake, including why some buildings collapsed and their immediate neighbors remained standing. Shostak, who consulted on the exhibition, is a graduate student in geology at San José State University researching the extent of building damage in San José as a result of the 1906 earthquake. By examining damage patterns to buildings and the underlying geological structure, it is hoped that we can learn lessons that can be applied to prevent or mitigate damage in future such events.

The exhibit will then turn to an overview of how communities responded and rebuilt in the aftermath of the tremors. It ends with a display and discussion on what individuals can do to prepare in anticipation of the next, inevitable major earthquake.

Don't miss the members' opening on April 8, 2006! And keep an eye out for more details about HSJ's August 13 Family Day: Take the Quake & Shake Challenge!



Vigilance Committee Warning, April, 1906.

FEBRUARY – APRIL

History Makers

Leigh Weimers

Thursday, February 16

7:00 – 9:00 pm

See description at right.

Barnes & Noble Booksellers at the corner of Almaden Expressway and Blossom Hill Road Free



Phelan Building, Second Street, north of San Fernando, San José, 1906.

New Exhibit!

It's Our Fault, Too: The 1906 Earthquake in Santa Clara Valley

This exhibit brings new information to the public about the magnitude of the earthquake in the South Bay. See cover story for more details.

History Park, The Leonard and David McKay Gallery at the Pasetta House

Heritage 100 Preview

Thursday, April 6

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Heritage 100 Members Only

Members' Opening

Saturday, April 8

1:00 – 3:00 pm

Members Only

Exhibit Opens to the Public

April 11 through December 30, 2006

Tuesday – Sunday

12:00 – 5:00 pm

Free



Lick Observatory Seismogram, April 18, 1906.

AN EVENING WITH LEIGH WEIMERS

History Makers breaks with a five-year tradition to present an individual interview for our next event—and we think you'll find the singular attention is warranted. David Crosson will interview Leigh Weimers on February 16 at 7 p.m. Weimers retired in November 2005 after a 47-year career with the *San José Mercury News*. Weimers served in such varied capacities as general assignment reporter, assistant city editor, founding editor of the newspaper's lifestyle section, and, beginning in 1965, featured columnist. He has contributed articles to regional and national magazines and is author of *Leigh Weimers' Guide to Silicon Valley* (1986 and 1993).



courtesy of San José Mercury News

For 40 years, Weimers' column was the first- and most-read item in the paper, as he balanced in-the-know cultural and social reporting with reflective commentary and outright San José boosterism. According to a resolution of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors upon Weimers' retirement, "there has not been a person or cause in this city that he has not helped by his kindness, generous nature, and clever way of weaving our community needs into a great story..." In the process, Weimers became the most public and revered historian of the contemporary moment.

Despite a year of retirement celebrations, the public has not had a chance to hear directly from Weimers about his personal experiences and insights. He brings a uniquely intimate personal and professional view of the transformation of agricultural Valley of Hearts' Delight to digital Silicon Valley. Join us for February *History Makers* and hear from the man himself.

ONGOING

San José City Hall Exhibits

Silicon Valley A to Z

In Full View: Historic and Contemporary Panoramas

San José: Generations of Innovation and Diversity

Monday – Friday

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

New San José City Hall,
200 East Santa Clara Street
Free

Dairy Hill Online Exhibit

Visit HSJ's first online exhibit at www.historysanjose.org/dairyhill.

LAST CHANCE!

The Leonard and David McKay Gallery at the Pasetta House

Through February 12, 2006

Saturday & Sunday

12:00 – 5:00 pm

Free



Bill Graham Special Events poster, November 14, 1997.

SAVE THE DATE

San José Rocks

Thursday, June 22

Bring out your bell bottom jeans and put on your tie-die shirt. Relive your younger days at HSJ's annual fund-raising event, which will feature the history, music and contributions of Santa Clara Valley's rock bands from the 1960s on. Be prepared for an evening of nostalgia, music and fun. Tickets will go on sale in May.

San José Civic Auditorium



history|san José
silicon valley from a to z

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SAN JOSE, CA 95112-2599

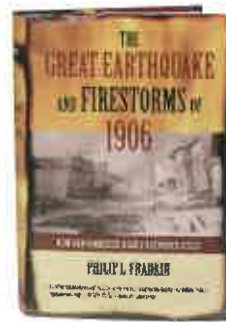
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WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU?

THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE AND FIRESTORMS OF 1906

A gripping account of the earthquake, the devastating firestorms that followed, and the city's subsequent reconstruction vividly shows how, after the shaking stopped, humans—not the forces of nature—nearly destroyed San Francisco. Bolstered by previously unpublished eyewitness accounts and photographs, this definitive history recounts how this fascinating city was caught in the grip of one of the country's greatest urban disasters.

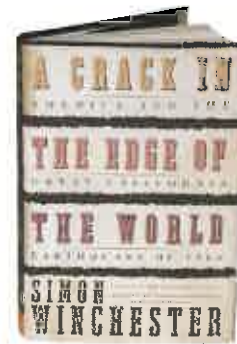


TIE ONE ON
The San Andreas Fault is cleverly depicted as it runs the length of California on this 100% silk tie.



A CRACK IN THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

Simon Winchester brings his storytelling abilities as well as his understanding of geology to this extraordinary event, exploring not only what happened in 1906 but what we have learned since about the geological underpinnings that caused the earthquake in the first place. He positions the quake's significance along the earth's geological timeline and shows the effect it had on the rest of twentieth-century California and American history.



1906

Set during the San Francisco earthquake and fire, this page-turning tale of political corruption, vendettas, romance, rescue and murder is based on recently uncovered facts that will forever change our understanding of what really happened.

1906 EARTHQUAKE PLAYING CARDS

Did you know that the 1906 earthquake affected 375,000 square miles, half of which were in the Pacific Ocean? Learn 54 amazing facts, stories and scandals of the 1906 event while you play cards.



1906