Heritage 100 Visits Collection Center

On December 11th, Heritage 100 members and their guests were treated to a Curator-led tour of History San José's Collection Center. After sipping champagne and sparkling cider, attendees were escorted through the Collection Center and given the opportunity to view artifacts being processed, including the newly discovered Brand Book, centuries-old maps, and personal accessories. A highlight of the evening was a demonstration of the digital imaging process, which will ultimately provide the public with online access to HSJ's collection.

In addition to the tour of the Collection Center, on December 5th Heritage 100 members enjoyed a behind the scenes peek at the Improv Theater (the newly restored José Theater in downtown San José) and are looking forward to other upcoming events including a 2003 Summer bus trip to the Steinbeck Museum, with on-board curatorial narration, catered refreshments and private tours.

Heritage 100 is a new membership group formed to provide ongoing support of History San José's important preservation, education and public access programs. For an annual tax-deductible donation of $1,500, members of families who have lived in Santa Clara Valley since 1950 can join. Charter members include: Sharron and Carl Cookson (chair), Steve Lopes, Leonard McKay, Lee and Bill Cilker, Bobbe George, Bill Del Biaggio, Jr., and Sherry and Steve Cox.

If you are interested in joining or learning more about Heritage 100, please contact Linda Spencer at (408) 918-1042, or lspencer@historysanjose.org.
Perham Foundation Passes Torch to HSJ

I probably had been in San José less than ninety days when Perham Foundation president Don Kojiane, journalist and Silicon Valley historian Mike Malone, HSJ board vice president Steve Cox, and I met with boxed lunches in the shade near the Bar-B-Q pits in Autumn 1997. That is when I was first introduced to the Perham Foundation.

I learned that the Perham Foundation was dedicated to preserving the history of pre-transistor (thus, pre-chip) electronic technology from San Francisco to San José. Perham, I learned, had operated a state-of-the-art technology museum at Foothill College for many years, and architect Marvin Bamberg had designed a facility for them at the San José Historical Museum.

At that meeting for the first time I was introduced to people, places, and things that since have become commonplace: the Homebrew Computer Club, Doc Herrold, Frederick Terman, the Traitorous Eight. I learned that a silicon chip was just a whole bunch of tiny-bitty transistors. I was shown what a ten-foot tall Klystron tube looked like. I was hooked.

Over the next four years, we met with Don Kojiane often and with Perham’s board several times. We helped them write grants, and they patiently taught us about the electronic heritage that belonged to this Valley long before the silicon chip.

In a meeting at the Tech Museum of Innovation in March 2001, the Perham Foundation formally withdrew their plans for an independent museum, and entered into discussions to transfer both the collection and the vision to the history San José. Those discussions concluded successfully in Agreement in November 2002.

What does this Agreement mean? First, and most importantly, it means that the long and rich history of electronic technology in this Valley will be preserved—here, where that history happened. Second, it means that History San José will have the collections to tell a critical part of the Santa Clara Valley story. Without these collections, we would be unable to address the defining story of the last seventy years of this Valley. Third, it means that we will take the next twenty-four months to unpack, sort, record, and integrate the Perham Collection into the HSJ collection.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Peter Giles, the founding director of the Tech Museum of Innovation, for first referring me to the Perham Foundation even before I had moved to San José. It is the type of selfless and gracious gesture that we all have come to expect out of this very special gentleman. It now is HSJ’s task to fulfill the vision and the potential that has been the Perham Foundation’s for decades—to tell the complete story of the development of electronic technology over its nearly 100 year history in Santa Clara County.

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Perham Collection Finds a New Home at HSJ

At the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair George Westinghouse handed six year old Douglas Perham a burned out light bulb and proclaimed, “Young man, get your hands on some of these things and save them. They will have valuable historical significance some day.” That light bulb and over 20,000 other artifacts and documents comprise what is now one of the largest electronic history collections in the United States. Perham was an engineer who worked with numerous great pioneers. Among them was Dr. Lee de Forest who developed the first electronic amplifier – the triode or as he named it the “Audion.” The development of the Audion led the way to almost every electronic device we take for granted today, such as radio, television, computers and long distance communication.

The collection was on display in New Almaden for a number of years until Foothill College could no longer host the Museum. Perham Foundation preserved and expanded the collections and archives for the next twelve years, seeking a new museum. HSJ has worked with the Perham Foundation for more than four years to secure these world-class collections and archives.

With the contract between the Perham Foundation and History San José signed, staff and volunteers from both organizations are working together to plan the move. The entire collection will be moved to the HSJ Collection Center where staff, volunteers, and a variety of consultants will process the collection doing inventory, cataloging, digital imaging, and creating archival custom storage. HSJ is already receiving inquiries asking when and where the collection will be available. We are busy planning both virtual and physical access, but the first step to making this world-class collection available to the public is to make it physically safe and get it fully cataloged. An exhibition is planned for fall 2004.
The Jose Theater: The Show Goes On

BY JACK DOUGLAS

The reopening of the remodeled Jose Theater celebrates its 100 years of service as an entertainment venue in downtown San Jose. Built in the heyday of traveling vaudeville shows, the Jose is probably the only remaining theater in the Bay Area from that era. As such, it reflects the many changes that have occurred in the entertainment industry in the last century.

The construction of the Theatre Jose, as it was called then, was financed by David Jacks, the Scotsman who came to California during the Gold Rush and stayed to become one of the largest landholders in the State. At one time he owned the City of Monterey. (Monterey Jack cheese was a product of one of his enterprises.)

The building, designed by William Binder, was in the Spanish eclectic mode which was just becoming fashionable. Binder and his partner, Ernest Curtis, were allied with T.S. Montgomery, and they would go on to do plans for most of our downtown structures for the next thirty years.

The Jose opened under the management of William Nolan and Joseph Blum in 1904. It was a showplace for a number of local theatrical companies, including Ed Redmond’s stock company and the San Jose Stock Company. Local actor Frank Bacon, whose characterization of “Lightnin’ Bill” would make him a sensation on Broadway, opened his Bacon Stock Company in the Jose shortly after the great earthquake of ‘06.

Stars of the international circuit, such as Al Jolson and Harry Houdini would frequently do shows at the Jose prior to engagements in San Francisco.

David Jack’s ownership passed to Chicago speculator William Warren after Jack’s death in 1909. An absentee landlord, Warren would soon discover that theater goers were being lured away from live performances by silent motion pictures.

The Movie Era

In 1921 the Jose Theater was purchased by James Beatty, the local movie mogul, who also owned the Liberty on Market Street and the Hippodrome on South First, which he renamed “Beatty’s American Theater.” An article in the Mercury Herald announced the plans for the renovation of the Jose to emphasize motion pictures. With the advent of the “talkies” in 1929, Beatty made further changes to the theater, including new seats, remodeled lobby, new projection equipment and the neon marquee which remains to this day.

Beatty’s National Theater Syndicate, which included nineteen northern California theaters, began to lose out to the Hollywood studio owned movie palaces, and by the mid-1930’s his San Jose theaters became venues for second run and “B” films.

All through the 1950’s, 60’s and 70’s, while the movie-going public was retreating to rural drive-in theaters and suburban mall complexes, the Jose Theater was the only well attended movie house downtown. In spite of its gritty appearance and the surrounding blighted neighborhood, or perhaps because of it, the Jose, with its action films and kung fu dramas brought in numerous young people and ethnic families.

The Jose suffered from two fires, one in 1977 and another in 1989. Later in 1989 it suffered the coup de grace with the Loma Prieta earthquake. Closed since then, the old theater seemed destined to be demolished. A consortium of old San Joseans, history buffs and preservationists were incensed by the notion of losing this historic theater, and with the support of the City’s Historic Landmarks Commission they had the Jose made a City Landmark on April 16, 1990. A new City Council under Mayor Ron Gonzales approved the restoration, and the results are what you see today.

Now, with the occupancy by the Improv Comedy Club, the old theater has made a full circle back to live acts. On With The Show.
HISTORY SAN JOSÉ HAPPENINGS

Academic Film Archive of North America Comes to HSJ

History San José is pleased to announce a programmatic partnership with the Academic Film Archive of North America (AFA). Operating under the name Ciné16 since October 1996, the AFA was incorporated as a non-profit organization in February 2001.

The mission of the AFA is to acquire, preserve, document, and promote academic film by providing an archive, resource, and forum for continuing scholarly advancement and public exhibition.

The term "academic" film incorporates over 100,000 educational films made in North America between the early 1900's and 1985 that cover the subjects of art, history, social science, literature and science. Such films are rapidly being discarded by film libraries and destroyed or dispersed into private ownership, jeopardizing their accessibility to film historians and scholars, and the public at large. The Archive's mission includes public advocacy of preserving films within libraries when possible, and accepting donations, space permitting, when not.

Beginning in April and continuing through September, the AFA will host a monthly screening of select films at History Park.

The April Program Titled: San Jose Lost & Found: a Past Look at Our Present will be shown on Sunday, April 27th from 1:00pm – 4:00pm in the Firehouse at History Park. Featured films are: "Quicksilver" (1967), a 30 minute film directed by Alex Zanini and produced at KNTV. This film documents the history of New Almaden and ends with the upbeat note that mining will soon return to New Almaden!

"Valley of Heart's Delight" (1948), an 18 minute film by an unknown director, is not to be confused with the 1925 film by the same name. This version tells the story of the Clapp's Baby Food factory, the American Can Company plant, FMC, San José Steel, and Moffett Field.

"San José '70/71" (1971) is a 27 minute film with the credits removed. Referring to San José as a city with a future, this brightly optimistic film is indicative of the youthful energy of this city of only 500,000 people. Footage shows the new Park Center Plaza development, and the beginning construction of the Performing Arts Center.

"Roads Across the Bay" (1963) is 30 minutes long and directed by Frank Robinson. This well-made documentary chronicles the building of the Bay Bridge through contemporary footage, with cursory mention of the Golden Gate Bridge and Richmond San Rafael span.

Future AFA screenings will be held in conjunction with Family Sundays at History Park programs and activities. Look for details in the May issue of The Exchange.

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Family Sundays At History Park

With a "seed grant" from Air Systems Foundation, HSJ is offering a new family-oriented series of programs at History Park. Called Family Sundays at History Park, the series will kick off with the Multicultural Festival on May 25th and draw upon the rich cultural and historical experiences of people who live in the Santa Clara Valley. The programs feature activities, performances, and presentations that appeal to multi-generational families with children up to age twelve. Interactive stations, multi-sensory experiences, discovery learning and participatory activities will encourage people to share stories about their personal experiences from the past and compare them to the present. Each Sunday event will be based on a different theme with unique interpretive elements so visitors can attend several programs in the series and know they will be learning something new at each one.

May 25 & 26
Multicultural Festival: This festival will feature a variety of cultural groups sharing, through art, dance and music, the unique way they traveled and settled in Santa Clara Valley. June 22
Multicultural Stories: This program will highlight literacy in the broadest sense by focusing on the diverse literary traditions of many of the cultures living here in the Valley, and offering access to literary resources in the area. In partnership with local libraries, the program will feature activities like community readers, storytelling, performances, and hands-on experiences for children. The program will feature special activities at Poetry San José, located in History Park, and interpretive tours of the museum's Schoolhouse, Print Shop and Post Office. There will also be a visit from a Bookmobile, and an opportunity for visitors to obtain new library cards.

Upcoming Family Sunday dates include: July 27, August 24, September 7

Look for program details in the May Issue of The Exchange.
Manny’s Cellar - Open One-Night Only

Plans are shaping up for the one-night only reopening of Manny’s Cellar. On June 25th from 6:00pm - 9:00pm the legendary neighborhood bar and restaurant will come back to life in the transformed parking lot adjacent to the former entrance on West St. John Street. A cocktail reception, dinner and entertainment are on the evening’s agenda.

The Manny’s Cellar planning committee is staying on track recreating the ambience of the original restaurant.

“We have to be careful not to get too fancy,” said Vilma Pallette, Chairperson for the event and former HSJ board member. “As the most popular watering hole, Mannys was all about no frills.” The nostalgia surrounding Manny’s has surprised everyone involved.

“People are coming out of the woodwork with photographs, collectibles and stories to share. Vilma said. “We are still nailing down the details- but one thing’s for sure – there are many surprises in store for the evening.”

Holiday Party Kicked off the Season

On December 11th, HSJ members, volunteers, staff and board members rang in the holidays with a party at History Park. Attendees enjoyed a delicious dessert buffet, wine and cider. Gourmet coffee was provided compliments of Willow Glen Coffee Roasting Company. Entertainment included the Hellenic Heritage Institute Choir, Chinese Performing Artists of America, Ballet Folklorico Milpitas, the Hellenic Heritage Institute Folk Dancers, and Nils Peterson from Poetry Center San José. Special thanks to San José Fire Department Choir, Portuguese Band of San José, and the Cathedral of Faith Children’s Choir.

HELP US MAKE HISTORY

New membership: Amount: $______ Additional gift/upgrade: Amount: $______

My check is enclosed (payable to History San José)

Charge my: ___ Visa ___ Mastercard Card #: ___________________ Exp: ___________

Pledge (of $100 or more) to be paid as follows:

Payment $______ on (date) ______ Payment $______ on (date) ______

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Name ___________________________________________ Phone _________________________

Address ______________________________________________________________________

Signature ________________________________ Date _____________________________
Printers Guild Keeps Print Shop Open for Business

History San José's Print Shop is home to a wide variety of letterpress printing presses and tools.

Built in 1884, the Print Shop was originally a residence on the corner of North San Pedro and St. John Streets in downtown San José. Moved to History Park's grounds in 1972, the building's interior has been modified to accommodate the Print Shop exhibit. The F.M. Weiler Liberty (patent 1874) and an 1886 Pearl are two examples of job printing equipment used in the shop. These manually operated machines print books, invoices, brochures, flyers, stationery, business cards, business cards and other small jobs.

On selected weekends and at special events, members of the Printers' Guild, a group of printing professionals and enthusiasts, volunteer to help interpret the Print Shop for visitors to History Park. At special events visitors can participate in making their own hand-printed souvenir.

In 2002 the Printers' Guild attended three book-arts fairs. At each event they took some of their favorite table presses and set them up to print multiple-impression cards for visitors to take home.

HSJ at the Improv

On December 5th, management of the new Improv comedy club on First Street opened its doors to HSJ for lunch and an inside inspection of the newly restored José Theater. Jim Salata, President of Garden City Construction, the company responsible for the meticulous restoration of the 100-year old building, told stories of the process which took two and a half years.

Guests, who included Heritage 100 members and prospects, were allowed access to all areas of the club, including the stage and back stage areas.

Multicultural Festival

Crowds enjoyed the performances at last year's festival.

For over five years, HSJ has hosted a Memorial Day festival highlighting the history of the Santa Clara Valley. In the past, the festival focused on the gold rush in California, but last year HSJ decided to alter the focus of the festival to include the various cultural groups that populate the Valley. Called the Valley Heritage Festival, the two-day event sought to raise awareness of these different cultures and promote a feeling of oneness.

This year, in an effort to include even more of the Valley's diverse cultures, HSJ will team with Resources for Families and Communities (RFC) to bring the Multicultural Festival to History Park on May 25th and 26th. The combined goal of the organizations is to present and build the premier multicultural family event in the Bay Area.

RFC is a nonprofit agency specializing in community development and family advocacy and, for the past five years, has hosted an annual multicultural conference and festival designed to promote unity among diverse populations, celebrate these different cultures, and provide families and communities with resources.
History Makers: The African-American Experience in San José

The next installment of History Makers will be held on Thursday, February 13th at 7:00pm at Barnes & Noble located on the corner of Almaden Expressway and Blossom Hill Road. HJS’s President and CEO David Cossen will facilitate a panel discussion on the historical perspective of the African-American experience in San José. Panelists include: Harriett Arnold an Associate Professor at the University of the Pacific, who wrote a history of the Antioch Baptist Church of San José; Henry Gage who was president of the San José Branch of the NAACP during the early 1970’s; and Joyce Ellington whose family has lived in San José since the 1870’s and was recognized for her role as a library advocate during the 1970’s with the naming of the Joyce Ellington Branch Library in 1977.

History Makers is a FREE quarterly series sponsored by HJS and Barnes & Noble Booksellers. For more information, visit our website at www.historysanjose.org or call (408) 287-2290.

HSJ Board Welcomes Steve Lopes

Steve Lopes and his family have been active in the San José community for decades operating the successful Western States Oil Company. Steve, current president of Western States Oil, and his father, Tom, are strong supporters of HJS and donated a 1927 Kleber oil truck which was impeccably restored by Trolley Barn volunteers with funds from the Lopes family. Steve was the first member of HJS’s new Heritage 100 membership group. We look forward to working with him as we work to achieve the organization’s

Brand Book Conserved

Some may remember the article last summer in the August 2002 Exchange about the recently discovered Brand Book that lists all the cattle brands used in Santa Clara County from 1850 to 1917. The Book was in serious need of conservation, so HJS asked its membership for help. Two members, Rob Bettencourt and Peter Doyle, answered the call by donating the funds needed for conservation. Kathy Olenko, paper and rare book Conservator, completed the work.

The next step was making the Brand Book accessible to the public. Volunteers Joan Helms and Jessica Herzeg-Konecny entered all the dates and names listed in the Book, and the pages where they appear, in a database. Next HJS Visual Resource Manager, Sarah Puckett took digital images of each page and created a CD. Researchers visiting the HJS Research Library can now search the database for a name and get a list of pages where that name appears in the Brand Book, then view those pages via CD.

Spring Fling Takes a Step Back in Time

HSJ members who are parents or grandparents should mark their calendars for this year’s Spring Fling which will take place on April 13th from 1:00pm - 4:00pm at the Peralta Adobe on St. James Street at the end of San Pedro Square. This event for $100+ members will provide plenty of hands-on learning activities as well as plain good fun.

With the theme “Experience Adobe Days,” youngsters will experience first hand the daily life of residents in the El Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe of the early 1800’s. This may include making adobe bricks, dipping candles, designing brands, roping a steer, carding wool, weaving fabric, grinding maize, frying a tortilla and making yerba buena tea. “Play-time” of the period could include shooting marbles, spinning a top and creating a corn husk figure. Children may also dress up in Californio clothing and have their pictures taken in front of Comisionado Peralta’s adobe home, the oldest address in San Jose.
A WORLD OF GRATITUDE

History San José is grateful for the support of all its members. Listed below are gifts of $1,000 or more received between July 1, 2001 and November 30, 2002.

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Appliances for O'Brien's (refrigerator, toaster oven)
Cash register for O'Brien's
Furniture dolly
Ergonomic desk chair for volunteers
Computer hardware - various
Mahogany wood to rebuild History Park benches
WHAT’S IN STORE FOR YOU?

New Book

_Telling the Santa Clara Story. Sesquicentennial Voices_

This book contains stories about yesterday, today and tomorrow. Through oral history, stories are told by eye witnesses or reconstructed using a combination of archeology and primary source documentary research. The book was edited by Russell K. Skowronek, Associate Professor of Anthropology at Santa Clara University and was published as a cooperative effort by the City of Santa Clara and Santa Clara University in honor of the sesquicentennial celebration of Santa Clara.

Bounty of Fruit

Fruit crate labels from the History San José Collection once again provide the inspiration for journals, dishtowels, magnets and note cards. These colorful images will brighten your kitchen, desk and notes to your friends.

Mariani Fruit

A selection of Mariani fruits and nuts are available in the Museum Store. Decorative gift packs featuring specialties of the Santa Clara Valley are ready for gift giving or shipping, and one-pound bags are available for healthy and delicious snacking.

Birds, Birds, Birds

In the tradition of Peterson’s _ABC of Birds_, follows Peterson’s _Colors_, the most recent delightful book for little bird watchers. Charmingy illustrated with paintings by Roger Tory Peterson, legendary bird authority and artist, these books will not only help young children learn their colors and numbers, but also foster their interest in birds and nature.

Photos: Sarah Puckitt