Multicultural Festival: Sharing Family Stories

Join History San José (HSJ) and Resources for Families and Communities (RFC) for the Multicultural Festival: Sharing Family Stories from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Memorial Day weekend, Sunday and Monday, May 25th and 26th at History Park.

The goal of this premier multicultural family festival is to promote unity among the diverse populations that make up the Santa Clara Valley. This year's theme is Coming to the Valley. A variety of cultural groups will be on hand to share their stories of how they came to this area, what talents they imported, and how they helped to create the culturally rich environment we know today as the Silicon Valley. Activities based on the overland migration Americans made from the East to the West will be presented by HSJ. This includes playing trail games and making trail candy and corn husk dolls. In addition, indigenous cultures will present drumming demonstrations as well as provide an opportunity to learn about the spiritual significance behind their arts and dances.

There will be a Children's Area featuring interactive and educational arts, crafts and games; a Youth Area with music from popular bay area radio stations, Team 02, and interactive games; a variety of tasty food; and live performances from around the world. Numerous booths will provide families with information about community resources.

For details about the Multicultural Festival visit www.rfcommunity.org or www.historysanjose.org.
Financial Support is Everyone’s Responsibility

I am going to do something that all public relations trainers argue that you should never do—talk openly about the financial situation of this organization now and in the upcoming year. I am writing this at the end of March, when all economic news is bad—bad for individuals, bad for the state and city, and bad for all cultural organizations, including History San José. I don’t know what will happen between the time I write and the time you read, but it is obvious that all cultural organizations are facing severe financial challenges in the upcoming year.

As of 1 April, the situation is this. The State probably will not approve a budget until late fall, which means that the City must approve a budget by 30 June that assumes the worst case scenario, or a minimum of a $120 million reduction in City spending next year. The City has asked HJS and all other cultural organizations to project 15-25% reductions in City appropriations.

At the same time, private giving also is drying up, and the history museum has not to date marshaled the private financial support of other cultural institutions in the Valley. To be very blunt, people appear more willing to give blood than money to preserve our past.

At this writing, the situation is serious. Either the people who support what History San José is doing for our community step up and contribute significant funds, or we simply will have to eliminate certain activities. We cannot just cut back; we will have to stop doing some things. This is particularly disappointing when we have made so much progress on making the history of this great Valley available for the first time to the families who made and own that history.

What would you cut? The people who have made such progress in caring for our collections and making them available to all? The school programs? One of the sites? The Trolley Barn? The rental program that produces income to support those activities? Retail sales or the events that attract 1/3 of our visitors? Something will have to go if we cannot turn up significant private funds immediately and over the long term.

This is the challenge before us. And this is the challenge before you. We have argued for years that history is personal. Our history is your history. If that is true, then you cannot assume that it is someone else’s responsibility to pay for its preservation. Because you receive this newsletter, because you are a member, we know that you care. Now will you help in a concrete way by increasing your personal financial commitment to History San José? If not you, who? If not now, when? Tomorrow may be too late.

David Crosson
President & CEO
Market Street Chinatown Archaeologists Project at Stanford

Lynsie Ishimaru, pictured here, is a Stanford University student enrolled in the Laboratory Methods in Historical Archaeology class taught by Barbara Voss, Assistant Professor of Cultural and Social Anthropology. The class is part of a joint research and education project developed by the Stanford Archaeology Center, the Stanford Cultural and Social Anthropology Department, History San José, Past Forward, Inc., the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project, and the City of San José Redevelopment Agency.

The students are processing and analyzing a collection of archeological artifacts from the site of San José’s first Chinatown located at today’s Market and San Fernando streets. This site was excavated in 1985/6 in preparation for the construction of the Fairmont Hotel and the Silicon Valley Financial Center. A full description of the project along with project updates and photos are available online at www.stanford.edu/~cengel/SJCTR/.

Help Make These Paintings a Permanent Part of the Museum’s Collection

When the City of San José and the California Department of Transportation planned to expand Route 87 of the Guadalupe Parkway, they identified an “Area of Potential Effect” – about a three-mile long section adjacent the Guadalupe River where there potentially could be archeological remains. A team of archaeologists and historians were hired by Caltrans to thoroughly investigate the site. You can read about what they found, and see dozens of informative maps, artifacts, and photographs from the dig in *Life Along the Guadalupe River: An Archaeological and Historical Journey* by Rebecca Allen and Mark Hylkema available in the Museum Store.

The Woolen Mills Chinatown is part of what the experts discovered. Established in 1869, The San José Woolen Mills employed mainly Chinese men who, by 1887 established a “Chinatown” near the Mill. The authors, Allen and Hylkema wanted to bring to life finds from the dig site so they enlisted artist John A. Lytle. With years of experience doing just this kind of job, Lytle studied all of the data and images taken from the site. Then he visited the Ng Shing Gung Museum at History Park and other California Chinatowns like the town of Locke. Combining his observations and the site information he created these two paintings depicting what the Woolen Mills Chinatown may have looked like.

History San José would like to obtain this set of oil paintings for display in the Ng Shing Gung Museum at History Park. We need to raise $2,000 to accomplish this. If you can help us, please send a check or call Barbara Johnson, Director of Operations at 918-1053.
Photography in Early San José

BY JACK DOUGLAS

Photographic images are so much a part of our lives today that it is easy to forget that the art of photography was in its infancy when California became a state in 1850. The forty-niners and other recent immigrants to the Golden State, anxious to document their success in the "promised land," became eager clients of the early photo studios, or galleries as they were then called. Later, landscape photos were used to sell easterners on the beauties and benefits of California. Photos of the wonders of the Yosemite Valley did much to convince Congress to declare it a national park.

It should be no surprise that some of California's earliest photographers set up shop in San Jose. One of the first was Carlton E. Watkins. A native of New York, Watkins came to California by boat in 1851. He worked for several years as a salesman for the Collis P. Huntington store in Sacramento. This association with Huntington, who would become one of the Big Four railway magnates, would be useful to the young Watkins. In 1854 Watkins was hired by the San Francisco photographer Robert Vance to set up a branch of his gallery in San Jose. Two years later, Watkins began operating the gallery of photographer James May Ford which was located in the Bella Union on Santa Clara Street.

Watkins perfected a camera that could accommodate large glass plate negatives, and he was one of the first to capture vast landscapes on these negatives. Most of our earliest images of the New Almaden mines were products of his skill. Watkins, acclaimed the greatest landscape photographer of the west, saw his studio and a lifetime of work destroyed in the earthquake and fire of 1906. Distraught about his losses, he died in a mental hospital in 1916.

Many other photo galleries came and went in early day San Jose. One that dominated the scene from 1859 to 1873 was owned by John H. Heering. Like Watkins, he rented space at the Bella Union, and in ads proclaimed: "I am prepared to take likeness in every size, upon steel, glass, leather, linen, oil cloth, paper, etc., etc." Heering's great competitor was James A. Clayton. Both battled in the press over who had won the most premiums at the county fair. Heering claimed that Clayton's work was done by hirings, while Clayton criticized Heering's ability to colorize his photos.

James Clayton, who would fund the real estate and banking dynasty in Santa Clara County, came to California to dig for gold, but he wound up working as a clerk in his brother's store in Santa Clara. In 1854 he served as a town constable. By 1856 he had the resources to purchase the photo gallery of F.D. Hawkins that was located over the Loewy and Brothers book store and next to the Hoppe Building on Santa Clara Street. Later he moved to a space in the Bella Union that was formerly occupied Watkins. In order to advertise the quality of his own work and compare it to that of other photographers, Clayton published one of the first albums of photographs that included, besides his own, a number of the more noted practitioners, including Watkins, Ira French, James May Ford and I.S. Locke. In 1868 his photograph of our new courthouse appeared in Harper's Weekly. Clayton gave up his photo gallery in 1870 to pursue his new career in real estate and banking.

Artists such as New Almaden's Alexander Edouart and Andrew P. Hill were quick to adapt to this new art form. Hill's photos of the Big Basin redwoods were instrumental in the preservation of that area. Many of Hill's paintings were destroyed in 1906, but his photographs had a wide circulation in periodicals of the time.

Many other local photographers did excellent work in documenting the lives of our citizens and their surroundings. Some of the most notable, with dates from the city directories, were: Wilbur Wright (1874-1900), J. Macaulay and M. Loryea (1874-1889), Professor P. Haussler (1892-1901) and J.L. Tucker (1895-1900). In 1997, the life work of photographer John C. Gordon, who photographed our valley from 1915 to 1955, was acquired by the San Jose State University Library's Special Collections Department.

In 1890, the pioneer druggist Augustus S. Schoenheit acquired the exclusive right to sell and process Kodak products in San Jose. The field was now open to amateurs and hobbyists — a booming new industry was born.

* See article on page 5 titled "Early San José Photographs at HSJ"
Early San José Photographs at HSJ

History San José's photograph collection contains over 20,000 images ranging from the 1840s to the present. Among the outstanding earlier works in the collection are a unique set of Carleton E. Watkins portraiture, taken between 1857 and 1860, primarily of San José natives. Watkins created these portraits using a photographic process called salted paper prints. They are rare today because Watkins gave up portraiture early in his career to work exclusively on landscapes. Even Watkins scholars are surprised to find that he produced portraits so early in San José.

Also part of the collection, are a large number of cartes de visite taken by San José photographers James A. Clayton and John H. Heering. Cartes de visite (French for calling card) measure 4 1/2” x 2 1/2” and have an albumen photograph pasted on the front. The back is usually preprinted with an advertisement from the commercial studio that produced it.

Perhaps the crowning glory of HSJ’s photographic collection is the largest existing collection of Andrew Putnam Hill photographs. The jewel being a 90-page album containing images of the Sempervirens Club at what is now Big Basin State Park. Through Hill’s naturalist approach to photography, he is credited with saving Big Basin by sharing images of the magnificent redwoods to a broader audience at the time the woods were threatened.

Perham Collection on the Move

When History San José’s collections staff learned they had six weeks to move an estimated 20,000 objects, books and manuscripts out of 32 cargo containers, 3 offices and 2 self-storage spaces, the task seemed almost overwhelming.

“We had originally planned on having the move completed by June, but the property where the cargo containers were housed was sold, so we had to finish it quickly,” said Perham Project Coordinator Monica Tucker. In fact, the container move was accomplished in an impressive 13 days.

With the entire collection on site, staff has begun working with volunteers, Perham experts and SFSU graduate students to unpack, identify, clean and tag each object.

“Once completed, each object will be digitally photographed with a database record created,” Tucker said. “However, it will likely take a couple of months just to unpack and discover everything we have.”
HISTORY SAN JOSÉ HAPPENINGS

Oscar Party at HSJ

On Thursday March 20th, History San José hosted a press conference to introduce the press and city dignitaries to their newest resident, Oscar. The Oscar, originally presented in 1959 to Dr. Lee de Forest in recognition of his 1920 invention of the Phonofilm process, which made it possible to put a motion picture soundtrack directly on film, was acquired by HSJ as part of the Perham Foundation Collection of electronic technology.

The press conference kicked off with a champagne brunch followed by a brief presentation by Perham Project Coordinator Monica Tucker. Tucker shared stories of some of the objects uncovered so far including spy equipment; early radios and other vacuum tube electronics; and the Audion Amplifier that led the way to electronic developments such as computers and long distance communication. This presentation was followed by a dramatic unveiling of the Oscar, and comments from Tucker who thanked the academy for the honor.

Perham Foundation President Don Koijane and San José State University professor and radio historian Mike Adams joined HSJ curators and administrators to answer questions and tour guests through the Perham processing area.

Additional information about the Perham Foundation Collection can be found at www.perham.org, and information related to Lee de Forest’s Academy Award can be found at www.leeodeforest.org/hollywood.html.

Perham Project Coordinator Monica Tucker poses with the 1959 Lee de Forest Oscar. Photo: Mike Adams

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]______
Payment $____________ on [date]______
Payment $____________ on [date]______

Name __________________________ Phone __________________________
Address __________________________ Date __________________________
Signature __________________________
HSJ Welcomes Mary Liz Cortese to the Board

Mary Liz Cortese is a life long resident of Santa Clara Valley. Having earned a BA degree from San José State University’s Mass Communications Department, she will receive an MS degree from the same department in 2003 after finalizing primary research on Santa Clara County pioneer and legend Sarah Lockwood Winchester.

Mary Liz is currently a Communications Consultant and Managing Partner for The Cortese Group and has excelled in the fields of Broadcast Journalism and State Government. Among her accomplishments, Mary Liz became the first female News and Public Affairs Director in the Tri-county area, served as Campaign Chairperson, and supervised all fundraising, volunteer and marketing activities for her father former California Assemblyman Dominic Cortese.

History Makers: Generations Across the Pacific

The next installment of History Makers will be held on Thursday, May 8th at 7:00 p.m at Barnes and Noble Booksellers located on the corner of Almaden Expressway and Blossom Hill Road. In recognition of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, Generations Across the Pacific: Multigenerational Stories in the Chinese Community, is co-sponsored by the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project.

History San José’s President and CEO David Crosson will facilitate a panel discussion about the difficulty, importance, and struggles of finding one’s personal identity and family roots within the Chinese American Community. Panelists include: Journalist William Wong, whose recent book, "Yellow Journalist: Dispatches from Asian America" compiles 25 years of his columns and essays highlighting Chinese American issues; Pam Chun, author of “The Money Dragon,” a top selling novel based on the life of her great-grandfather, an immensely rich and powerful business man in turn-of-the-century Honolulu; and Ruthanne Lum McCunn, whose recent novel, “The Moon Pearl,” is based on interviews with silk workers and spinster women of rural China. All panelists currently live in the Bay Area.

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

Portuguese Spring Festival

Portuguese band plays in front of the Imperio during a recent celebration.

The Portuguese Historical Society of California’s (PHSC) Spring Festival on Sunday, May 4th, will bring together the elements of a traditional Portuguese Festa and a delightful day at History Park. The gates will open at 10:00 AM with food booths offering coffee and delicious Portuguese donuts called filhós.

Visit the Imperio and see the newest special exhibit, Portuguese Footprints in California. It tells the story of how Portuguese immigrants have left their mark on the cultural landscape of the State, The Freitas Parkway and Terra Linda in Marin County, Andrade and Vargas Roads in Alameda County, the Five Wounds Church and the numerous Portuguese Halls throughout the State are all reminders of the early arrival of Portuguese immigrants and their quiet determination to become part of the American Dream.

Throughout the day, enjoy Portuguese food and a full schedule of entertainment. At 11:00 AM there will be a parade through the Park featuring Portuguese Bands, Holy Ghost Societies and other organizations. In addition, a special car exhibit by Mr. Rui Brazil of San José will be featured. Be sure to enter the annual raffle for a first prize trip to Hawaii.
Family Sundays At History Park

History San José will celebrate families this summer with a series of monthly Family Sundays. Developed as a way for families to have fun together while learning new things, each of these events will focus on a different theme. Family Sundays are free and held from Noon – 5:00 p.m.

June 22 – Stories Are Us
Storytelling, art projects, and hands-on experiences will immerse families in the rich literary traditions of the many cultures living in the Santa Clara Valley and will promote family literacy. The afternoon will feature special activities at Poetry San José’s Edwin Markham House and tours and activities at the museum’s Schoolhouse, Print Shop and Post Office. A visit from a San José Public Library’s Info Bus and the Santa Clara County Library Bookmobile will provide the opportunity to obtain new library cards.

July 27 - Digging Your Past
Spend the afternoon in the fascinating world of archaeology. Family members as young as toddlers will have the opportunity to participate in many of the same activities that archaeologists use to uncover stories from our past. Activity stations will invite children to dig, sift, sort and reassemble artifacts. All who participate will be awarded certificates as “junior archaeologists.” Working archaeologists and volunteers from local sites will be on hand to facilitate many of these activities, as well as answer questions.

August 24 – We’re Still Here
Spend a family afternoon of hands-on activities meeting descendants of the native people who first settled in the Santa Clara Valley.

September 7 – Time Travel
Join Antique Autos in the Park, the California Trolley and Railroad Corporation and the Fire Muster Team in exploring the different ways that we have gotten from here to there.

Save the Date

Mark your calendars and be sure to join History San José staff and board on Wednesday, June 25th for the one night only re-opening of the legendary Manny’s Cellar bar and restaurant. Proceeds from this fundraising event benefit HSJ’s Children’s Educational Programs.

The evening includes cocktails and traditional Manny’s fare. In addition to many surprise guests, Judge John Ball, a Manny’s regular, will emcee a brief entertainment program including anecdotal reenactments of infamous “Manny’s Moments” from the 60’s, 70’s and 80’s. Save the Date postcards were mailed out at the end of March. If you received one, your invitation will be sent out mid May. If you did not receive one and would like to attend, be sure to call (408) 287-2290 and have your name added to the mailing list.

Exhibit Closing in August

Make sure to see the exhibit Valley of Heart’s Delight: From Orchards to Suburbs in Santa Clara County before it closes August 3rd. The exhibit gallery is located in the Pacific Hotel at History Park. For hours, visit www.historysanjose.org. Admission is FREE. The next new exhibit Overland: The California Emigrant Trail of 1841-1870 created by the California Council for the Humanities, features over 60 contemporary photographs by artist Greg MacGregor and moving emigrant diary excerpts. HSJ will add art and artifacts that document emigrants who settled in the Santa Clara Valley. The Member Opening is Thursday, September 18th!
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 March 10, 2003.

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(NEW OR GENTLY USED, PLEASE)
Linoleum, paint and labor for rest rooms
Carpet for redecorated Firehouse
Wallpaper supplies and labor for Pacific Hotel lobby
Equipment (drill motors, electric saws, battery screw gun, Sanders, extension cords, light bulbs, tool chest and cabinet, fiberglass step ladders, etc.)
Refrigerator, toaster and cash register for O'Brien's
Furniture dolly
Ergonomic desks chair for volunteers
Mahogany wood to rebuild History Park benches
Cilker Orchards Extra Virgin Olive Oil

This olive oil is cold pressed from Nevadillo olives grown by Cilker Orchards of San José. The Cilker family has been farming in the Santa Clara Valley since the early 1900's. This oil can be used for your finest dishes. It has a delicate, mild and fruity taste, suitable for dipping bread, salads, and elegant desserts.

Ten Feet Tall, Still

Julie Suhr was born in the Valley of Heart's Delight in 1924 and is considered the Grande Dame of endurance riding. She still competes and has been featured in Sports Illustrated, a TV special and numerous newspaper articles. Her story is not for horse lovers alone, but for people of all ages who have ever had a dream. This story takes the reader on a wild ride full of inspiration, motivation, laughter and tears.

Shades of California, The Hidden Beauty of Ordinary Life

A photo album of California families experiencing the beauty and value of everyday life. Each photo represents a unique emotional and historical archive of California residents and their lives – family picnics, high school graduations, a couple’s first dance and siblings at play.

New Year’s to Kwanzaa, Moon Cakes to Maize and Kids Around the World Create!

Take a fun journey to distant and exciting lands with stories, foods and crafts of people from around the world. Readers learn about culture, customs and celebrations through legends and folk tales, which keep these cultures alive.