President’s Message

Our general membership meeting will be on March 29, 1978, at 7:30 p.m. in the Pacific Hotel Meeting Room. Following a short business meeting, we will be treated to a program on a current happening. Mrs. Barbara Nyden will brief us on the exhibit presently at the de Young Museum, "Treasures of Early Irish Art." Please plan to attend.

The Association is three-quarters of the way through the fiscal year. Our present membership is 450. The Board is constantly working to encourage new members. It is our hope that, as a member of the Association, you are also encouraging your friends to become members. Memberships are the main source of growth for the Association.

It was pleasing to see so many in attendance at the preview opening of the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit, "Photographing the Frontier". I would like to extend my appreciation to Marty Lion and Penny Lowe, our Special Events Chairpersons, for their work in making this an enjoyable evening and the Museum Staff for doing an excellent job of displaying the exhibit.

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce the Association was the recent recipient of $5,210.00 from the Stella B. Gross Charitable Trust. The Board is presently taking under consideration Capital Improvement projects where this money will best be utilized. We wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Duncan O’Neal, Mr. Louis O’Neal and Judge Marshall Hall for their consideration of the Association.

Plans are now being made for our Annual Stable Stomp. The date is May 12, 1978. We are hoping to offer a barbecue dinner in addition to an evening of square-dancing and fun. You will be receiving more information by mail.

Jean Jensen
President

Museum Director’s Report

New Entrance Plans Underway

For the potential visitors who have lost their way to the Museum or for those who have spent the better part of an afternoon grasing their teeth over trying to find their way into the Museum around the chain-link fence — relief is in sight!

Plans are now being prepared for the Museum’s new north entrance in the Division of Architectural Engineering of Public Works. Based on historical photographs, the new entrance structure, as shown here, follows a water-tower design. It will be built adjacent to the parking lot between the Museum and the Japanese Friendship Garden.

This design was selected because this type of architecture is indigenous to the Santa Clara Valley and is a fast-disappearing type of structure that is associated with our agricultural heritage. Plans call for public restrooms, ticket area, and office storage to be included in the building. Construction is slated to begin in May.

Visitation Rises Again

Maintaining the trend from the previous five months, Museum visitation increased an average of over 97% in December, January, and February (3,805 vs. 7,477) compared to last year. Publicity received for the exhibit, "Photographing the Frontier" and a very active tour program by the Museum Docents for school groups are some of the reasons for this increase.
Jarvis/Gann Looms

Quite a bit of attention has been focused lately on the controversial Jarvis/Gann initiative designed to reduce property taxes (Proposition 13). Most of the comment generated on this issue is the effect that its passage would have on school budgets. According to Dr. Glenn Hoffman, County Superintendent of Schools, if the initiative were passed, and if no new tax revenues were created by the passage of new taxes, over 11,000 employees would be reduced from the County school districts, representing cuts of $220 million.

The initiative's effect on some other public institutions, such as the Museum, is not as extensive, but in proportion will have the same serious results. From its relatively small budget of $204,000, the Museum would lose over $20,000 of its operating monies. This would mean our exhibit program and construction program would be drastically reduced.

We hope that the Association members weigh the alternatives carefully before voting on this issue.

Donald O. DeMers, Jr.
Museum Director

Changing Exhibit Room

Response to the new changing exhibit room in the Pacific Hotel has been very favorable and encouraging. The latest offering, "Photographing the Frontier," has been no exception.

Released through the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), the forty-panel display was researched and written by Eugene Ostritch, Curator of Photography at the Museum of Science and Technology in Washington, D.C. and a well-known authority on historic photographs. Over one hundred photographs are used to tell the story of life on the American frontier as it was drawing to a close in the last part of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth.

Grouped into such areas as "At Work," "At School," and "Taking It Easy," the photographs explore activities and settings of everyday life and provide a viewpoint unlike that of the average historical survey. Nothing of historical interest ever happened in the broom factory shown on one of the "At Work" panels, but that scene expresses the reality of life for thousands of pioneer Americans.

Credit for these extraordinary glimpses of our ancestors must be given to the frontier photographer and he is not forgotten in this exhibit. The uncertainty of the new process, the necessity of good lighting and the cumbersome equipment kept many photographers trapped in their studios but the more adventurous could not be walled in. Many brought their darkrooms into remote areas in horse-drawn wagons or developed their plates in tents and other makeshift shelters. They explored the possibilities of new techniques and never accepted conventional limitations placed on their equipment. The result is a tremendously valuable source of historical documentation and an incomparable contribution to the art of photography.

The photo panels have been supplemented here by objects from the Museum's collection in order to more closely associate the topics covered with daily life in the Santa Clara Valley at the same time in history.

The exhibit will be on display in the changing exhibit room through March 31.

Those who miss this exhibit will still have plenty of opportunity to see future offerings which will hopefully continue to be interesting and entertaining. Coming up next is an exhibition of oil portraits of early Valley residents, to open April 13.

Be sure to watch the newsletter for schedules of planned changing exhibits.

Who's Who at the Museum

Ann Whitesell works at the Museum in a number of demanding jobs. She is currently responsible for the Museum's Changing Exhibition area, the Museum's historical photograph collection, and the Museum's historical map collection.

Coming to the Museum from the California Historical Society, Ann worked as an assistant in the Exhibits Department researching, preparing and installing photographic and painting shows. She also served as registrar in charge of loans and acquisitions. In her home state of Michigan, Ann gained valuable experience working as a Tour Guide in Greenfield Village at the Edison Institute, an outdoor museum of homes and workshops of famous Americans. She holds a B.A. degree in Liberal Arts from Wayne State University (Detroit) and an M.A. degree in Recent U.S. History from San Francisco State University.

Her hobby interests include raising two black Labrador retrievers and serving as a volunteer Firefighter with the South Skyline Volunteer Fire Department.

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**Docent News**

**Love Letters:** The following letters were sent to Museum Docents by some satisfied customers at the Pomeroy School in Santa Clara.

Thank you for showing us around the museum. We thought the doctors office was neat because of the handcuffs to hold the patient to the chair. Last of all thank you for the hay.

Sincerely,
Jim and Tom

I want to thank you for guiding us through the museum. I like the Indians best because of the good baskets they make.

Yours truly,
Elvira

We want to thank you for taking us around the San Jose Historical Museum. And I like to thank you when you explained Black Smith. Do you know when we went in the bank there was a dummy that I thought was real.

Your friend,
Peter

**Remaining lectures for 1978:**

Tuesday, April 4th at 2:00 p.m.
Turn of the Century Mass Transit: Cycling — Clyde Arbuckle.

Tuesday, May 2nd at 7:00 p.m.
San Jose enters a New Century — Lynn Vermillion.

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**Out of Town**

**Sunday Drive:** If you are looking for something to do on a Sunday afternoon you might try driving North to Benicia. Situated on the Carquinez Straits a few miles east of Vallejo, Benicia is a fascinating town filled with homes and landmarks. There is the Benicia State Capital, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, the Clock Tower, and St. Paul's Rectory which was a 1790-vintage New England saltbox home. Restored Victorian homes are also prevalent in this unique town which recalls California's colorful past.

**Europe:** Join a group of museum members and friends for a 23 day tour of the castles and palaces of France, Austria, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. The tour will depart September 14, 1978 and will include a visit to Munich during Octoberfest and a steamer trip down the Rhine. The total cost is $2,250 (per person, double occupancy). To secure your place send a deposit of $250 to Lynda Sayre, Alpine Travel, 18800 Cox Avenue, Saratoga, CA 95070 by April 15. For further information contact Cathy Graff (358-2463) or Lynda Sayre (379-3853).
Say Cheese . . . Photos Please

The San Jose Historical Museum is not just a place to look at exhibits, it also has a large variety of primary source material available to researchers by appointment. One of these sources is the historic photograph collection. At the present time there are about 1300 cataloged photographs dating from approximately 1860 to 1950.

Anyone who has old photographs or even glass negatives of scenes or people in the Santa Clara Valley might consider donating them to the Museum's collection. It is a significant way to support your museum and can be invaluable to students, writers and other researchers. We are particularly interested in street scenes, business or buildings but any views or portraits can be valuable.

All prints and negatives are carefully stored using up-to-date methods to insure against deterioration or damage.

If you can't bear to part with your photographs, allowing us to copy them for our collection is also an idea. Interested donors can call Ann Whitesell at the Museum.

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