O'BRIEN'S RE-OPENS

The Museum Association is very pleased to announce the grand re-opening of O'Brien's Candy Store under the new management of the Museum Association itself. O'Brien's Candy Store, adjacent to the lobby of the Pacific Hotel, is a recreation of the original O'Brien's which once stood at 30 South First Street, San Jose.

O'Brien's Candy Store at the Historical Museum was a gift of the San Jose Rotary Club in 1976, under the direction of project chairman, Bruce A. McClelland. The Rotary Club of San Jose was closely associated with the original O'Brien's, the organization having been founded there in 1914. Charles M. O'Brien (son of the store's founder) was a charter member of Rotary as well as its first secretary, and the meetings of the club during its first year were at 30 South First Street. When O'Brien's opened its grand new store in 1928, (at 223 South First Street) Rotary Club members were the guests of Mr. O'Brien at an opening night dinner.

Acclaimed as "the prettiest and most attractive candy store on the Pacific Coast", the original O'Brien's Candy Store was more than a business to San Joseans. It was an institution— the natural spot to stroll after a show or the ideal place to meet a friend on a lazy afternoon.

O'Brien's was founded in 1868 by Maurice O'Brien, an Irish immigrant. With $500 in his pocket, he began selling baskets of candy in the doorway of the Pacific Hotel. A family business until the mid-1900's, O'Brien's symbolized "nothing but the very best" and remained in business on South First Street until January 1956.

Our O'Brien's is now being operated under the direction of Mrs. Carol Carlson, with all proceeds going directly back into the operations of the Museum. Freshly cleaned and attractive, O'Brien's is again serving quality ice cream, fountain drinks, and old-fashioned candies, with plans to also begin serving sandwiches soon.

The Museum Association wishes to thank the Rotary Club of San Jose for its donation of O'Brien's Candy Shop and invites all of you to come out to the Museum and visit O'Brien's soon. (O'Brien's Candy Shop will now be open during all normal operating hours of the Museum.)

LIGHTHOUSE LECTURE AND TOUR

WHEN: Saturday, October 1, 1983
WHO: Association Members and their Guests
HOW: Royal Coach Tour
      restroom equipped, air-conditioned buses
TIMES: 8:15 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
COST: $15.00 for Members
      $18.00 for Non-Members
      (bring your own bag lunch and beverage)

Join us for an exciting lecture/slide presentation on the history of lighthouses presented by Mr. Wayne Wheeler, Assistant Chief Aids to Navigation, U.S. Coast Guard, and President of the United States Lighthouse Society. We will enjoy Mr. Wheeler's humorous and informative history presentation at the Half Moon Bay Library in the morning.

Mr. Wheeler will then accompany us to Pigeon Point where we can have our picnic lunches and tour the lighthouse.

We will also tour the lighthouse at Point Montara before heading for home.

Please wear sensible shoes and bring a jacket or sweater.

Checks should be made payable to the San Jose Historical Museum Association and sent (along with the reservation form below) to: San Jose Historical Museum, 635 Phelan Avenue, San Jose, CA 95112, Attn: Kathy Muller. You will receive the reservation form by return mail as a confirmation.

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

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11. Willow Glen History Group

Number of Reservations: 
Reservation Confirmed: 

San Jose Historical Museum
Published by the San Jose Historical Museum Association
September, 1983
Good News!
The Empire Firehouse was completely funded and construction is going on right now. The building should be completed sometime in February of 1984 and then the furnishing of the upstairs meeting room and the downstairs exhibit installation will take place. I'm working on a solution of how to accomplish the exhibit installation without the exhibit staff the Museum once had, but am positive that the Firehouse will be completely opened to the public for use and tours by summer of 1984. The Firehouse has been such a long awaited addition that I think we'll celebrate all summer long with a series of events.

Any day now, construction on the restoration of the Fruit Barn will begin, the work including everything but the lighting. The Museum will be seeking donations for the lighting and will then be able to proceed with the installation of the exhibit. "G消费品: Enduring Values," which was produced by Yvonne Jacobson and the DeAnza History Center as a traveling exhibition. Donated to the Museum, the exhibit will be augmented by objects from the Museum's own collections and will interpret the agricultural heritage of the valley.

And a Trolley Barn Too!
Groundbreaking for the Trolley Car Barn donated by the Sombol Trolley Corporation will take place on September 1, 1983, 10:00 a.m. Designed by Prodas Associates, the barn will be an exciting addition to the atmosphere of the Museum. Restoration on trolleys to be used in the downtown Trolly Rally will take place in the barn.

Gift Store Addition
I would like to thank two very generous people for their contribution to the Association Gift Shop. Bruce Pohle of Southern Lumber donated some very wonderful oak materials that Chuck Buckley turned into a gorgeous, specially designed bookcase with storage underneath. Business in the Gift Shop keeps getting bigger and the shopkeepers are now able to display items in a better, more space-conscious way.

Chuck designed the case to take advantage of an awkward underutilized area that is now attractively displayable. Local history enthusiasts look forward to the finish on the cases is beautiful as well as the craftsmanship. They are truly a work of art and well worth a visit to the Museum. Please thank both Bruce and Chuck for their contributions to the Museum.

Plan Ahead to Use the Museum
In the past year the Museum has become increasingly popular as the location to have an event, picnic or fundraiser. So popular, in fact, that almost every weekend in May of 1984 is already booked. If anyone is desiring to use the Museum, please plan ahead to insure that the data is available. Special arrangements are being made so that parking does not prohibit the use of the grounds by large groups. All revenues offset the Museum's operating costs supplied by the City of San Jose Parks and Recreation Department.

Joe Cardinali Is Back
Joe Cardinali has been selected for the position of Family Park Supervisor for Happy Hollow Park and Zoo. Although he won't be at the Museum, he will be in Kelley Park keeping an eye on the park under control and will be revitalizing the Happy Hollow programs. Joe worked at Happy Hollow as the Designer Builder for more than 2 years before being transferred back to the Museum for over a 5 year period. Due to budget reductions he left to work at the Convention Center as an Events Coordinator with the special community assignment of organizing the downtown Christmas Display. Those who know Joe at the Museum know he be a tremendous asset and will help in getting Kelley Park organized again. I look forward to working with him in relation to my Kelley Park responsibilities. Welcome back, Joe!

MIGNON GIBSON
Museum Director

ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Be sure to join us on the evening of September 9th for "Elegance of Yesteryear," our only fundraising social event of the year! It will be a wonderful chance for you to visit with old friends, introduce new people to the Museum, and enjoy a professional showing of vintage clothing, while supporting the Museum's programs.

Our first Living History Day, last May, was such a success that another is being planned for Saturday, October 8th. See the article on page 3 for details, and plan to join in on the fun! The Museum grounds will come alive with people in period dress and, of course, the buildings will be open and O'Brien's will be serving refreshments. It is also planned to hold a new and exciting event in the fall, an exhibit of new Association officers for 1984. We are proud to be able to offer you such a strong Board to lead the Museum for the next year! At the rate of growth and with our continually expanding programs, this new Board will be leading us through an exciting year!

ERIC BRACHER
Association President

FROM THE EDITOR

Although it is still several months away, I urge you to sign up now for the trip on January 29th to the "Vatican Collections" exhibit at the deYoung Museum in San Francisco. The buses are filling up and you won't want to be left out!

To enable us to get the most from our visit to the exhibit, the Museum Association is sponsoring a lecture-side preview here at the Museum the evening of January 12th, for all those who are interested. It will be presented by a docent from the deYoung Museum, and a small fee will be charged for the program. Watch for more details in the Association News in the weeks ahead.

Kathy Muller
Editor

MUSEUM SERVICE COUNCIL

Many thanks to our valuable volunteers for the extra hours given to cover the variety of special events this summer.

We are excited about the plans for our second Living History Day, October 8th, and hope most of our volunteers will be participating in costume.

New volunteers are continually entering our program. Individual training is offered for Desk Attendant, Gift Shop and O'Brien's. On-going training for interpreting the buildings is scheduled for the second Saturday of each month at 9:30 a.m. Anyone interested in sharing at least one day a month, please call 297-2290 ext. 91 for an interview.

Dulcie Janzen
Volunteer Coordinator

DOCENT REPORT

The 1983-84 Docent Council Board has met twice with good results! At the first meeting, Virginia Beck presented brainstorming techniques as an approach to group meetings. Many liked the idea as a technique to be used in committee work. At the second meeting the board was treated to a visit, arranged by Joan Stomler, to Goldenhast Seed Company, a research facility.

Eileen Garboke arranged for a tour of the Kelly Park complex with a Ranger as a guide to acquaint us with the many facilities at the Park.

Many docents are doing the research and leg work for the creative program projects underway. Two that I have read, (1) the Senior Citizens outreach and (2) the Apothecary Shoppe sound exciting. The Community Relations group is busy at work stuffing and addressing envelopes to be mailed to the schools before September first.

Betty Brown
Docent Council Chairman
"THE VATICAN COLLECTIONS" TOUR  
M.H. 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, Pousin — 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 8:00 A.M. and returning at 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.

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LIVING HISTORY DAY  
OCTOBER 8TH

Our first Living History Day, last May, was such an enjoyable and successful event that another is being planned for Saturday, October 8, from Noon till 6:00 P.M. Chairman for the day is Roberta Rimbauld, a member of the Museum's Docent Council.

Living history is an interpretive program that uses historically accurate clothing and objects (usually reproductions) as props. Participants assume specific character roles and then reenact a typical but invented, day. Characters may include townspeople (all generations), farmers, tradespeople, or anyone who might have been in town.

Participants attend planning meetings, research their "personality", and provide their own costumes and props. The Museum will provide help and training. In addition, many behind the scenes people are needed to produce the Living History event.

The San Jose Historical Museum is the ideal setting for a living history program. On May 14 the streets of the Museum were alive with horse-drawn vehicles and high-wheel bicycles. Blacksmiths and weavers demonstrated their crafts and street vendors sold their wares. The presse in the Print Shop was operating all day, and of course the buildings were open for touring.

A housewife washed her clothing in an old-fashioned tub, and townpeople strolled through the grounds. We even had a Civil War Muster encampment over by the Firehouse.

A Living History Day is a wonderful way to introduce children to the way "things used to be" and its fun for the whole family. Plan to at least attend on October 8th, and consider becoming involved as an active participant. For more information please call, the Museum at 287-2290.

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FASHION SHOW  
SEPTEMBER 9th!

Remember Friday evening, September 9th, for the Museum Association's only fundraiser of the year! "Elegance of Yesteryear: 1850-1930" is a fashion show of authentic dresses and accessories presented by Goodwill Industries. The show features professional models, and will be staged on the lawn and walkway outside the Pacific Hotel. The evening will begin at 5:30 P.M. with complimentary wine and cheese. The hour-long fashion show will begin at 6:00 P.M. More socializing will follow! A raffle will also be held to enliven the evening and further benefit the Museum.

Tickets for this event are $7.50 each and are still available by calling the Museum office (287-2290). This is an excellent opportunity to introduce friends to the Museum, visit with fellow members of the Association, and raise money to support the Museum's activities.

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WASHTUB NEEDED!

The laundress for Living History Day needs to borrow, or have donated to the Museum, a galvanized tub. This is a flat-bottomed round metal container with two handles. The depth is 18-24". The inside width should be at least 3 feet. If you can be of assistance, please call the Museum, 287-2290. Thank you very much!

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VATICAN EXHIBIT 1/20/84

NAME
ADDRESS
PHONE
ASSOCIATION MEMBER?
NUMBER OF RESERVATIONS
RESERVATION CONFIRMED

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SAN JOSE AND OTHER FAMOUS PLACES

1984 Membership Premium

The San Jose Historical Museum Association is very pleased to announce that its 1984 Membership Premium will be San Jose and Other Famous Places by Harry Farrell. Every new and returning member of the Association will receive a copy with a minimum membership of $25.00. 1984 memberships will be available in November.

San Jose and Other Famous Places is a light and enjoyable reminiscence of the San Jose Mr. Farrell has observed during the 40 years he has covered the Valley for the San Jose Mercury-News. The book stretches in time from the old neighborhoods and crossroads - Goosetown, Tar Flats, College Park, Hyde Park, Robertsville, Meridian Corners - to the sarge of Silicon Valley. The political span of the book runs from the regime of old-time boss Charlie Bigley, through the go-get-em years of Dutch Hamann, to the new era of Tom McEnery. Farrell's sharp eye and familiarity with the lore of his region are complimented by his lively gift of anecdote.

The book is illustrated with many photographs from the author's files and the archives of the Mercury-News.

Harry Farrell was born and raised in San Jose. He began his career at the Mercury-News as a copyboy, moved up to general assignment reporter, and was political editor for two decades. His feature columns ("Farrell at Large" and "People and Politics"), front-page stories and investigative reports have kept thousands of local readers informed, amused, and sometimes agitated.

San Jose and Other Famous Places will be printed in a beautiful hard-cover edition by Smith McKay Printers in San Jose. It will be a limited edition, available only through membership in the San Jose Historical Museum Association. San Jose and Other Famous Places, like Signposts, our 1983 Premium, will not be found in area bookstores. We are very grateful to the Hugh Stuart Center Trust, the Stella Gress Trust Fund, the Sourisien Academy of San Jose State University, and the Graphic Design Service of the Junior League of San Jose for their generous assistance in making the publication of this book possible.
IN THE COLLECTION

The Museum has received several special collections in recent months. Charles Bowen has donated a fine collection of early movie cameras and projectors. Included are examples of almost every early model made by Eastman Kodak and Bell and Howell. Among the collection are a Kodak hand crank movie camera and a "newswire" type. Nearly all the cameras and projectors have carrying cases and instruction booklets. With the exception of one projector, all of the equipment is in working condition. Mr. Bowen also included equipment for taping and splicing films. This collection is especially interesting as we move into the era of the home video color recorder. We are very pleased to have this very interesting and valuable collection of equipment.

Another special donation is Mamie Dean's collection of miniature dogs. Given by her daughter, Clara Sampson, a portion of this very unusual collection will soon be on display in the hall of the Museum office area. Represented in the collection are dogs of every variety and made of many materials. In 1941 Mrs. Dean received a first place award for her collection at the Santa Clara County Hobby Fair. Plan to spend a little time enjoying Mrs. Dean's special dogs next time you are at the Museum.

Correspondence among members of the Budd family (Bernard lived in Santa Clara) was rescued from the trash by Joyce Weiler. This collection of letters, photographs, and clippings, when catalogued, will depict daily concerns and interests of this large family. We are very pleased to have this material.

If you have something you might be interested in donating to the Museum please call 287-2290 week day mornings for an appointment. Our collections include all types of materials and objects relating to the history of San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley. Donations to the San Jose Historical Museum are tax deductible.

Nancy Valby
Registrar

HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF?

Mrs. Fremont Older wrote a series of columns in the San Jose Evening News in which she interviewed early settlers of Santa Clara Valley and wrote of their experiences. Her columns were numbered and titled. Column Number 189-Early Weddings tells about an 1850 marriage ceremony delayed by floods. It is especially interesting to us because of this past winter's flooding.

"One of the brilliant social events of the early fifties was the wedding of Miss Romietta Burnett and William T. Wallace, afterward justice of the supreme court of California. The Burnetts lived in a large house in Alviso, which was later successfully moved to the Ryland place. The Rylands' garden is now Ryland Park. Miss Martha Reed, later Mrs. Frank Lewis of Capitola, and Miss Lizzie Branham, afterward Mrs. Jackson Lewis, wife of the first American jeweler in San Jose, were two of the bride's attendants.

The wedding occurred Mar. 23, 1850, when the floods of the Guadalupe were raging. Many of the guests had gone the previous day to Alviso, but Miss Martha Reed and her escort, John H. Gregory, did not start for Alviso till the day of the wedding. Miss Reed's dress was wrapped in oilskin and carried in a carpet bag. She had it suspended from her neck so that she could manage her horse and also so that the dress could escape the water of the river. Miss Reed and Gregory set out for Alviso.

So high had the Guadalupe risen that the horses had to swim from where stood the Notre Dame to The Alameda. While the horses were swimming Gregory suddenly feared that Miss Reed's dress was in danger of getting wet and so he ventured to take possession of the carpet bag. By a miracle the dress escaped accident, and after the young people landed safely on the far shore of the Guadalupe they went on to Alviso by way of Santa Clara. Before they reached their destination they found that several small streams had risen and must be forded.

The adventures of Miss Reed and Gregory while they swam to the Burnett-Wallace wedding retarded the ceremony for an hour, and when the attendants arrived they attracted almost as much attention as the bride and groom themselves."

Joyce Link

Joyce Link is a member of the Museum Service Council, having volunteered at the Museum since 1979.

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PRUNE TREES, RABBIT DRIVES, AND RIVERS RUNNING OPPOSITE!

The 400 acre parcel of land at Cochrane Road between Monterey Highway and the South Valley Freeway is currently under large scale development by Wiltron Corporation as the Morgan Hill Business Park. Landscaping, streets, lights and other major improvements have been installed and the first buildings to house high tech users are under construction. This effort is one of the most significant land use developments in Morgan Hill's history and, as such, follows a trend of significance on the same property over the years. The 400+ acres was first a forage ground for Costanoan Indians whose occupation along adjacent Coyote Creek is well documented. In 1834 the land was part of an original Mexican land grant deeded to Juan Alvarado de la Sagra. Was also credited to the famous Spanish Crown to the west side of the road. The site was probably chosen because of the excellent springs emerging from the hillsides along Hale Avenue between Tilton Avenue and Campoli Drive. The Butterfield Stage operated between 1849 and 1862 insuring the coming of the railroad and the present site buildings on the east side of the road. The first settlers established a livery stable, a hotel, a blacksmith shop, a wagon shed, a butcher shop, and a post office which was first called "Sherman." The hotel was called the 18 Mile House because it was 18 miles from San Jose. The Pajaro Railroad was completed in 1869 and the road was moved to the east side where it has remained. Today's Sinalo Restaurant is housed in what was once the "Queen" Hotel. The Saloon was in 1869 and the house next door was the "new" Madrone Hotel.

The Laguna Seca Ranch property opened up for sale in the 1870's and Wilton's 400 acres is listed as belonging to Ballard in 1876. But at the same time disillusionsioned gold seekers had moved into the eastern foothills and began shipping cattle from Madrone Station, the name Sherman was changed to Madrone in the 1880's when the Madrone Hot Springs was developed and guests who arrived by railroad changed at Madrone Station into horse-drawn buggies for the ride to the resort in the hills. The springs were noted for their curative powers for such ailments as dyspepsia, rheumatic diseases, and nervousness and disorders. Therefore, Cochrane Road became a busy two way thoroughfare, with cattle drives coming down the hills to holding corral along the railroad and Hot Springs visitors traveling back and forth from Madrone Station.

Joel W. Ransom, the next owner of the Ballard property, set out 270 prune trees and by 1892 he was in full operation with 19,000 trees — reportedly the "largest prune orchard in the world." This fact was often noted in the advertising for the 1892 subdivision of the Monterey Hot Springs, Ransom also developed the area with being the first to promote Santa Clara Valley products by attaching flying banners on the railroad cars going east that read "Prunes from the Santa Clara Valley!"

In 1896 these acres were the scene of an important community event, a Grand Rabbit Drive. The plan was described in the April 16 issue of the Morgan Hill Sun:

A Grand Rabbit Drive

A grand rabbit drive will be indulged in next Sunday, April 18. The starting point will begin at the crossing of the railroad track just above the Bender Ranch along the Cochrane Road, extending east to the South Hill Road, and west to Monterey Road, a distance of over two miles. Everybody in Morgan Hill and, in fact, the whole county is invited to take part in the drive and no doubt you will have more sport than you ever had in a hunt. The drive will begin at 1 o'clock and everyone should endeavor to be...on time. Don't miss the sport.

P.S. — Everybody is requested to bring a shotgun as it will be necessary to kill the rabbits this way first before the Coyote River lies for the reception. The hunt will be under the management of competent persons to see that no accidents occur. Two miles of wire fencing has been placed along Dunne Avenue southeast of town to prevent their escape.

The results were never reported!

At the turn of the century many Italian families had come into the area and planted vineyards and soon Madrone became an important wine shipping point. At the height of this era of viticulture the wine was pumped through a pipe under the road to waiting barrels on the railroad cars. Workmen used a measuring stick in a bung hold to determine when they were filled and after they were sealed, a metal federal tax stamp was tacked on the container. These shipments were discontinued after the Prohibition Act was passed in 1919 and also because the grapevines had become diseased.

Another unique aspect of this property is that a geographic divide occurs on it between San Francisco Bay drainage and Monterey Bay drainage, with Morgan Hill's elevation at 350 feet higher than that of San Jose to the north and 150 feet higher than Gilroy to the south. This is not readily apparent except in some rainy winters when certain water flows appear to be undecided about which direction to take. This peculiar line of cleavage was first noted by a Dutch geographer, J.O.M. Broek in 1932. In a detailed study of the Santa Clara Valley he pointed out the following:

One hardly realizes that the flat valley floor next Morgan Hill forms the divide between the drainage territory of the San Francisco Bay and the Monterey Bay. This fact is not noticeable at the hill by hill basis it is along the northeastern margin of the valley, hidden by orchards, and because Llagas Creek, draining to the southwest has, like the Coyote, seldom a water stream.

Thus, Morgan Hill can boast of having rivers running parallel but in opposite directions!

In 1978 Wiltron Corporation of Mountain View purchased the property and began preparations for a now-developing Business Park. The main loop street of the complex is appropriately called Ojo de Aguas circle in keeping with the name of the original Morgan Hill land grant, Rancho Ojo de Aguas de la Coche. Related developments still to occur include the opening of the final link of freeway from Morgan Hill to San Jose — the "Blood Alley Bypass" scheduled for completion in the last months of this year, the planned construction of a hotel and convention center complex at the corner of Cochrane Road and the new freeway, and the completion of the Malaguerra Historical Wine Museum by Friends of the Winemakers. This nearby museum, located at the end of Burnett Avenue, will be the only one of its kind west of the Appalachians with displays and working exhibits about the history of California winemaking.

Today none of Ransom's prune trees remain. No more dusty cattle drives thunder past, nor do tourists visit the Hot Springs. Wine is no longer shipped from Madrone Station, there are no complaints about rabbits, and, hopefully, the drainage complexities have been resolved. The Morgan Hill Business Park development is positive and exciting and will provide additional business and employment opportunities for the local community. It is certainly an historical event by any standard. But it is only the latest in a long line of occurrences at the junction of Monterey Road and Cochrane Road. It is probably not the last.

Beth Wyman
President
Morgan Hill Historical Society

HISTORICAL
NEWS ITEM

Evening News, March 29, 1899, p.1, col.1, Prominent in early California History! Dr. Chauncey Isabel and wife Olive M. came overland from Ohio with Capt. W. Aram in 1846 and settled in the San Joaquin Valley in 1847. Mrs. Isabel taught the first English school in Santa Clara — possibly the first in California. (researched by Leolo Hiwes)

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Jim's PRINTER'S MARK
Volunteering at the San Jose Historical Museum has inspired me to recall the days, forty years ago, when my family and I first came to the Santa Clara Valley. — to remember a time when there were more orchards and blossoming fruit trees than there were cars on the streets. I've lived in nearly every section of the area, from Santa Clara to Evergreen, and I've seen the valley change radically from an agricultural community to a vast urban sprawl. In keeping with the spirit behind the San Jose History Museum, I feel those "early" days should be preserved somehow — if only in the admittedly selective memories of a middle aged nostalgist. While forty years ago is hardly "ancient history," things that happened during that period (from 1945 on) brought so many changes so quickly, I hope it is appropriate to capture some of my remembrances for publication here in the Newsletter. I apologize for any inaccuracies — memory is only as reliable as the person it comes from — and I welcome any comments and/or corrections. Perhaps my memories will inspire other people to share their memories in the Newsletter also.

MY FIFTY-CENT SUNDAY

I babysat for my aunt the summer I was 11 (1949), and I earned 50 cents for each Saturday night. She lived on Alameda Court in San Jose, close to the Santa Clara city border. On Sunday, after early Mass at St. Claire's Church, I'd get on the Linda Vista/King Road bus, drop a nickel in the farebox and ride to downtown San Jose to see a movie. I loved the bus ride because it took me down the Alameda, my favorite street, lined with majestic, ivy-covered mansions.

Once downtown, I went first to First and Santa Clara at the Bank of America building and walked down First to the theater. Which theater I went to depended on what movie was playing. Roy Rogers and Dale Evans were my favorites (the double life romance the year before had thrilled us all in the fourth grade). So I always headed to the theater that showed the latest Republic Production. But there were other types of movies. I never called them "riff-raff" because Westerns — bright, splashy technicolor musicals starring Dan Dailey with either Jane Haver or Betty Grable showing us the days of early vaudeville, or Esther Williams spectacles in which she dove into a swimming pool full of fire and emerged smiling brilliantly with her hairdo still intact! There were lots of Charlie Chan and Abbott and Costello movies too, but they were in black and white and usually played only as second features or in the neighborhood theaters where they cost just 10¢ (for kids under 12). At the expensive theaters downtown, like the California or the Mission or the State, where the admission cost 25¢, I felt very luxurious handing half my weekly wages to the lady in the ticket booth to see a "first run" show.

With 25¢ budgeted for admission, I knew I had to save a nickel for the bus ride home, so I had 15¢ left. On the way to the theater, I stopped at Long's Drug Store and bought a huge bag of the best popcorn ever made — 10¢. I then spent my remaining nickel on a candy bar, usually a Three Musketeers (which actually had three little bars in it) or a Look bar or a Big Hunk. I knew from experience not to wait until I got to the theater to buy my "goodies" — the prices there would be much higher. No one in the box office ever objected when I came through loaded down with popcorn and candy! Most of the other kids did the same thing.

The movie itself wouldn't start until three or four "trailers" were shown — cartoons (my favorite was Scrooge McDuck and Donald's nephews), "Previews of Coming Attractions," a "Fatlie" newsreel, and always a serial — the latest episodes of Flash Gordon or a Gene Autry western cliff hanger. During each trailer the theater would reverberate with screams and shrieks — no one but the usherettes was over 15 years old — and we'd stomp our feet if the feature didn't come on soon enough. The usherettes were young women dressed in boxy male uniforms (probably WWII surplus) complete with epaulets and cord. They patroled the aisles warily, glaring in the direction of any show of feet on seats or legs dangling over the balcony. They'd beam their flashlights at the offensive child who would promptly scowl low into his cushioned seat and grin sheepishly.

I saw many wonderful movies those Sunday afternoons at the California or the Padre or Mission theaters. Or maybe I'd go to the new Studio down on 1st and San Salvador (the walls were decorated with exotic birds in shades of pink and purple — very "modern"). The State theater later became the UA, it was also very plush and comfortable and "expensive." The Crest Theater was a bit out of the way, on North First Street, but they had "Give-away" days, and sometimes I could go see a movie there and bring home a plate or a cup and saucer for my mother. I never went over to Second Street to the Lyric or Joe Theaters; they had become run-down and showed only second and third run movies. I concentrated on the first-run shows on First Street.

I'd emerge from the dark theater, blinking like a mole in the sudden sunlight, and would start to walk to the bus stop. Images of the movie still danced in my head. There was my "girl" in the black and white movies, my golden palomino stance, or Esther and her fellow swimmers twirling underwater. When I dropped my last nickel into the fare box, I could settle back into my seat knowing that I'd just spend another wonderful 50¢ Sunday.

Marcella Flynn

INTRODUCING DIANE PARADISO

Diane Paradiso, the Secretary of our Association Board, is another native of San Jose, whose roots go back three generations in our City. Diane grew up in the Willow Glen area, attending Lincoln Glen Elementary School, Willow Glen High School, and San Jose State University, where she earned a degree in social science, with an emphasis on history, and an elementary teaching credential.

Diane worked for the San Jose Parks and Recreation Department as a recreation leader throughout her high school and college years. She remembers working at Happy Hollow, here in Kelley Park, and regularly supervised the Camp programs. Her interest in working with children continued, and today Diane teaches the third grade at Atherton School in the Union School District.

Diane and her husband Larry, also a native of San Jose, now live in Almaden Valley with their two young children, Lisa and Larry III.

In addition to her volunteer service on our Museum Association Board, Diane also finds time to be an active member of the Junior League of San Jose. She has been trained to give tours of the Farrington House, the Victorian home on Dry Creek Road that is the headquarters of the Junior League. She has also worked there cataloging the extensive clothing collection left in the home.

Diane has also volunteered in the Victim Witness Program, which serves to ease the stress of innocent victims of crime when they must appear in court.

Finally, Diane actively participated in our Living History Day on May 14th. She reenacted the role of a flower vendor—a natural, since her family's business is Blossom Floral Shop!

The San Jose Historical Museum is very fortunate to have Diane Paradiso as a member of the Board. With her interest in history and natural enthusiasm, she is a great promoter of the Museum and its programs.
A small piece of land in the heart of San Jose, Peller Park honors the family which brought the prune to the Santa Clara Valley. It was dedicated on November 26, 1977, the 390th birthday of San Jose, and features 21 “petite prune d’Agen,” seven d’Anjou pear trees and five different varieties of grapes.

The creation of Peller Park became a reality through the efforts of Leonard McKay and Jim Arbuckle, two local history buffs. They organized fundraising activities to purchase a remnant of land that was not needed in the right-of-the-way extension for Guadalupe Expressway near Julian and St. James streets. The owner offered the land for half its value, and with the money the two men raised the city purchased the site. Mt. Charley Chapter of E Clampus Vitus provided much of the labor involved for only the cost of materials. The result is a tiny green island in a sea of concrete. Peller Park allows children and newcomers to see a miniature orchard, similar to that once covered the valley. It also contains kiosks that tell the history of the prune industry and the Peller family.

Louis Peller came to San Jose from his native France by way of Chile and then the goldfields of California. His first purchase of land in San Jose in 1850 included the location for the current park. His first agricultural endeavor was to grow vegetables, but when he learned the high prices that fresh fruit commanded, he sought to grow more lucrative crops. The highly inflated prices of the time included apples for $3 apiece, peaches for $3 to $5 per dozen, and cherries brought $2.50 per pound! In addition his neighbor Thomas Falon earned $800 from the produce of his 15 pear trees.

Pierre Peller joined his brother in 1853, bringing a few grape cuttings with him from France. But he soon grew homesick and wished to return to marry his sweetheart. Louis had difficulty obtaining good seeds and cuttings to make his orchards profitable, so he made a bargain with his brother. He offered to pay his roundtrip passage, along with the cost to bring his new sister-in-law and their brother, Jean, to San Jose if Pierre would deliver a long list of fruit tree cuttings, including the “petite prune d’Agen.”

Pierre agreed to the bargain, and set out for France. It took him nearly two years to locate all of the items on Louis’ list and to be married. By the fall of 1855, the Pellers were back in San Jose. Throughout the difficult journey, the cuttings were carefully packed away, each root placed in a potato and packed in sawdust to allow just the right amount of moisture.

During that winter the Peller brothers busied themselves grafting the delicate plants and preparing them for planting. Although Louis never lived to see the success of his favored prune, it left its mark on the Santa Clara Valley as one of the most successful agricultural crops. Peller Park honors their pioneering efforts.

Linda S. Larson

THE STEVENS RANCH FRUIT BARN

A relic from Santa Clara Valley’s great orchard era is being brought up to today’s safety code and will open to Museum visitors by mid-November.

The Old Stevens Ranch fruit barn used to store hundreds of trays of dried apricots and prunes in the summertime, back before houses and parking lots and freeways replaced fruit trees. The state cut a 40-acre swath through the old Orvis Stevens ranch in Coyote in 1979 and the barn was one of the buildings in its path. It was moved to the Museum and set down east of the fire house.

The funds for moving it from Coyote and for the work that was required to bring it up to code, $30,000, have come from the state.

The barn will house display panels depicting the history of agriculture in the valley. This display, “Passing Parma: Enduring Values,” has been given to the San Jose Historical Museum by the DeAnza History Center, and it will be supplemented by fruit boxes, trays, track and cars used on the Stevens ranch. Actually the barn was built in the 1930s and was used by the descendants of Orvis Stevens, a Vermonter who came to California in 1851 and settled on the land at Coyote in 1867.

Orvis started the family orchards and also operated the old 12 Mile House, a stage stop that became known as Coyote after the railroad was put through. The Stevens ranch was one of the first orchards in the Coyote area.

One of Orvis Stevens’ sons, Burt, continued to operate the orchards and his daughter, Ruth, married Earl Malech, who grew up on a prune ranch founded by his granddad in the Almaden Valley.

The Maleches were married in 1929 and besides a garage in Coyote they have continued to run the former Stevens ranch.

The big barn looks right at home on the Museum grounds with a section of track beside it and trees open for a backdrop. Most of the big barns have disappeared from the valley and it is good to know there will be one of the oldtimers to show the grandchildren.

It is also good to preserve a bit of the valley’s fabulous orchard era...to remind the oldtimers and inform the newcomers of summers when the whole family worked cutting apricots and picking prunes. From the 1880s until the 1960s Santa Clara Valley was the fruit basket of the world.

Many a youngster now greyhead can remember long weeks in the summer on his knees in a prune orchard, or the smell of sulphur as he lined wooden trays with golden halves of apricots. It was a way of life in the valley for many families, and those that did not work in the orchards, labored in the canneries to earn money for school clothes, for a new car or to pay off the mortgage.

The slogan, “Valley of Heart’s Delight,” was born and springtime saw the Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Blossom Tours through the fragrant miles of flowering cots and prunes.

Some of the oldtimers may remember another fragrance that beset the valley back in September, 1915. Two days of heavy rain at the height of the prune harvest turned orchards into a sea of mud and the rotting fruit gave off an aroma which San Jose historian Clyde Arbuckle has described as akin to “a distillery in distress.”

The 50-year-old barn with its memorabilia will be a small representation of one of Santa Clara Valley’s three great economic eras. Early settlers planted the valley floor to grain and hay. Then came Louis Peller and his little French prune, and the orchard period was born. It lasted until the great influx of new “settlers” and change to manufacturing after World War II.

There are still a few orchards left in the valley, and some fruit is still dried in the old way, but for most San Joseans the old Stevens fruit barn and its exhibits may be the closest they ever get to a way of life that is gone forever.

Patricia Loomis

Book Review


Ghost Towns of the Santa Cruz Mountains was actually begun as a series of Sunday feature articles in 1934 for the San Jose Mercury Herald by then-reporter, John V. Young. The stories collected by Mr. Young comprise one of the best sources for the history of the Santa Cruz Mountains that divide Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties. The author discovered an entire world of logging camps, railroad towns, and farming communities that had all but vanished. Anyone who has ever driven over Highway 17 will be fascinated to learn of the settlements, towns, and resorts that existed in profusion before the modern road spelled their doom.

Available in our Museum Gift Shop.

The San Jose Historical Museum is part of the City of San Jose Parks and Recreation Department.
prominent members of the San Jose Historical Museum are members and sponsors of the group. The group plans to make its collections available to the Museum.

Members of the Willow Glen Community Oral History Society represent a broad cross-section of the neighborhood from long-time residents to high school students. Persons interested in the activities or findings of the Society are invited to call Bob Beck at 408-998-6330 to have their names placed on the mailing list.

"It's our purpose to bring people together through a common sense of the past," Beck said recently. The society that he founded has won support from many merchants in Willow Glen as well as from the local merchants' and neighborhood associations, the Lions Club and the Willow Glen High Parent's Club.

The history society will be participating in the Willow Glen Founder's Day celebration which the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association will sponsor on September 18.

Gage McKinney

The Willow Glen Founders Day festival, Sunday, September 18, will be held on Lincoln Avenue (between Glen Eryie and Minnesota) from 12 noon-6:00 p.m. The festival will feature an old-fashioned parade with local dignitaries, vintage automobiles, unique booths and food booths, music and fun for all. The San Jose Historical Museum will be participating with special exhibits displayed and documents in costume.

For more information, call Nadine Cessarino at 277-5166.

SPECIAL THANKS!

A very special thank you to Chuck Buckley for building and installing the new book case in our Museum Gift Shop. He did a wonderful job and we're thrilled to have it!

Also a special thanks to Southern Lumber Company (Bruce and Sheri Pohle) who donated the oakwood and necessary materials.

This has been a beautiful addition to our Gift Shop. Be sure to stop by and browse through our extensive selection of books on local history.

NOTICE - San Jose Historical Museum Association
Annual Membership Meeting for Elections
Wednesday, October 26, 11:30 A.M.
Proceeding October Board Meeting
Pacific Hotel Meeting Room

Proposed 1984 Slate of Officers:

Judge Mark Thomas, Jr. .................. President
Robert Deery .......................... Vice-President
Clyde Arbuckle ......................... City Historian
Diane Paradise ......................... Secretary
Elena Schmidt ......................... Treasurer
Frances L. Fox ......................... Parliamnetarian
Helen Kruzel ......................... Membership
Bruce Pohle ......................... Corporate Membership
Joan Buckley ......................... Special Events
Betty Brown ......................... Docent/Volunteer Staffing
Earline Shibles ................. Gift Shop
Philip Grammer ......................... Speakers Bureau
Patricia Loomis ....................... Publicity
Virginia Hammermess ................ Member-at-Large
Linda Larson ......................... Member-at-Large
Bill Leonard ......................... Member-at-Large
Sheri Pohle ......................... Member-at-Large

SAN JOSE HISTORICAL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

Name ..................................................
Mail Address ...........................................
( ( ) ) Phone
( ( ) ) Fax

Individual Authorizing Contribution

TOTAL ANNUAL PLEDGE

AMOUNT PAID NOW

BALANCE

MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATIONS

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Patron Circle ($2,000)
Mission Circle ($1,000)
Pueblo Circle ($500)
Tower ($250)
Century Circle ($100)
Half-Century Circle ($50)
Quarter-Century Circle ($25)

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New Member

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Master Card customers: in addition to your account number, please list the four digits above your name.

*To receive your premium by mail, add $3.50 for handling charges.

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