



history|san José
silicon valley from a to z

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THE Exchange

HISTORY SAN JOSÉ

AUGUST 2004

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Fundraiser a Huge Success

As the evening of June 24 came to a close, everyone agreed, History San José had hit it big with another successful fundraiser. The event, which honored 150 years of Mirassou Family Winemaking in Santa Clara Valley, took place at La Rochelle Winery, formerly Mirassou Winery, on Aborn Road.

Set against a backdrop of the eastern foothills, approximately 400 guests and dignitaries enjoyed wine, hors d'oeuvres and an elegant dinner prepared by La Rochelle's Chef de Cuisine David Page. HSJ Board Chair Mark Ritchie and Judge John Ball emceed the evening's program, which included several acknowledgements. A resolution was presented to the Mirassou Family by San José Vice Mayor Pat Dando and San José Council Members Cindy Chavez, Judy Chirco, Dave Cortese, Chuck Reed and Forrest Williams. The family received an additional resolution from the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and commendations from The Office of Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren and The Office of State Senator John Vascancellos. The Magnolia Jazz Band provided music and Portraits of the Past members helped direct guests.

New to this year's fundraiser were silent and live auctions. Bidding was hot and heavy for live auction items with a three-day architectural trip to Chicago selling for \$2,900. The silent auction featured over 200 items ranging from an eight week dog obedience training session donated by Mike of Bay Area Dog Obedience to a dinner and theater package donated by City Lights Theater Company and Habana Cuba Restaurant. Proceeds benefit HSJ's Educational programs.



Alicia Dayton (left) and Nancy Martin from Portraits of the Past provided ambience and crowd control at the annual fundraiser.

TL Digital Photography

Local History is Hot

Spread the news. In national publishing circles, local history is hot! In fact, it has not been hotter since the publication of *Roots*, nearly four decades ago. The trend appears to have begun about six years ago with Edward Ball's *Slaves in the Family*, a book recounting the most personal of local histories—family genealogy (albeit, literally the black side of the family). A year later, Nathaniel Philbrick published *In the Heart of the Sea*. You can't get more local than a lone ship under sail that is rammed by a whale in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Both books won the National Book Award.

Now we have Henry Wiencek's *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves, and the Creation of America* (NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003) and Ben MacIntyre's *The Man Who Would be King: The First American in Afghanistan* (NY: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2004). Wiencek applies his years of research on the great families and estates of Virginia to argue persuasively that George Washington, the perfect Virginia aristocrat, was actually more revolutionary than his fellow Virginian who asserted that "all men are created equal."

Contrary to his breeding and social class, Washington not only freed his slaves through his will, but contemplated doing so at least twice while still alive, once while president. Why did Washington threaten to act in such a radical way? Why did he delay until after he was dead? The answers make for riveting reading.

MacIntyre writes about a totally different type of person. Josiah Harlan (1799-1871) was a Pennsylvania Quaker who responded to a broken engagement by spending 20 years filibustering through Central Asia. In 1838, he actually raised the American flag at the summit of the Hindu Kush and declared himself Prince of Ghor, Lord of the Hazarahs, and spiritual and military heir to Alexander the Great. Decades later, Rudyard Kipling used this American soldier of fortune as the model for a short story, *The Man Who Would Be King*, which has been made into a movie at least twice.

So what do these books about a national icon and an international brigand have to do with local history or San José, California?

First, both authors found their larger stories in the most local of historical resources. A British journalist-historian, MacIntyre stalked his subject through Europe, Asia, and the Indian subcontinent before he finally unearthed Harlan's journals in a local historical museum in Chester, Pennsylvania. Wiencek, on the other hand, rummaged through local sources that have been known and used for years: county assessor's records, property deeds, probate records, slave sale receipts.

Second, Wiencek's is the first serious history of which I am aware that accepts the credibility of the *living history* experience as scholarly documentation. Wiencek uses the famous slave sale at Colonial Williamsburg and the opportunity for visitors to work as field "slaves" at contemporary Mt. Vernon to help him better understand Washington's personal experiences and motivations. The audacity of accepting the value and venue of *living history* as historical evidence is as revolutionary as the findings he presents.

Most importantly, all of these books demonstrate once again that, no matter how grand, how abstract, how earth shattering, or how apparently impersonal, all history happens by specific people acting at a specific place at a specific time. To paraphrase Tip O'Neal, all history is local.

What hidden stories are we at HSJ holding that are just waiting to be discovered? We don't know. But we do know that, just as local history is all about us, it also is about us all. It explains the big picture in personal terms. It is about our future as much as our past. And it is hot!

David Crosson, President & CEO

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The Exchange is published four times a year by History San José.

Lynn Crocker
Editor

New Donations in FY04

Each year History San José accepts artifacts for the permanent collection that help tell the stories of Santa Clara Valley. The goal is to make every donation publicly accessible via the Research Library, in an exhibit or online. Here are just a few of the many donations HSJ received in fiscal year 2004. We wish to thank all of the generous donors who made gifts to the Museum.



Ashtray, "Mohawk Tires, The Tire Service Company 434 S. First ST., Phone Ballard 7547, San José, Calif." C. 1940.

HSJ has begun planning a new transportation exhibit in Dashaway Stables, in History Park. This and other D'Amico artifacts are included in the exhibit plan.

Gift of Jim D'Amico



"Abstract of Title Made By Garden City Abstract Company Searchers of Records, Office 15 West St. John Street, San José, Cal." March 14, 1912.

This artifact is available in the Research Library.

Gift of Jim Salata, Garden City Construction

Photos by Sarah Puckett



Sofa, and Chair, c. 1965

A new exhibit about San José in the 1960s will open this fall at the Chiechi House, History Park.

Gift of Carolyn Sinclair, HSJ Volunteer



Photograph of A.D.M. Cooper's Studio, San José, c. 1900

You can see this photograph in HSJ's exhibit *Artists For Hire: Painting for the Market in Santa Clara Valley*, which opened on July 16 in the Pacific Hotel Gallery, History Park.

Gift of Leonard McKay



Square Grand Piano, c. 1865

This piano is on display in the Fallon House.

Gift of the Estate of Rozellah Ryan Barnard



Coin Banks, c. 1923

Both banks will go on display in the Bank of Italy, History Park.

Gift of Dorothy and Howard Fleming, HSJ Docents



Pac-man Telephones, c. 1985

These phones will be a fun addition to future electronic exhibits.

Gift of Bart Lee

Who Slashed Victor Scheller?

by Jack Douglas

Victor A. Scheller was one of the most prominent men in the Santa Clara Valley during the early part of the last century. A former district attorney, he was also president of the Chamber of Commerce from 1901 to 1911, president of the County Bar Association and president of the University of Santa Clara Alumni Association. Beneath his high profile public life, however, Victor Scheller had some private affairs that he preferred to keep secret.

Some of these secrets began to unravel with a headline in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of October 19, 1908: "Woman Slashes Lawyer's Face, Vic Scheller of San José Badly Maimed in Mysterious Manner." The injury, which occurred in Scheller's San José office, required over twenty stitches, and the article went on to describe the assailant as a woman who had been seen in Scheller's company. At first Scheller attempted to hush the incident up, and the local San José papers were remarkably silent on the matter. Those who had heard the news wondered why Victor was so reluctant to name the perpetrator.

THE SCHELLER FAMILY

Victor Scheller was the only son of Louis Scheller, a German immigrant who had made his fortune in south Santa Clara County raising cattle. He moved with his family to San José's fashionable South Main Street (later Fifth Street) so that Victor and his three sisters could be close to the educational and cultural opportunities of San José.

Louis owned several lots on Main Street where his neighbor was Mayor Adolph Pfister, another prominent German immigrant.

In 1904 Louis commissioned Theodore Lenzen (yet another German immigrant) to design a magnificent large home at the corner of South Fifth and San Carlos Streets. It was to be the residence for Louis's bachelor son Victor and Louis's daughter Mary and her husband Robert Martin. (This home, now part of the SJSU campus was saved from demolition through the efforts of this author and the Preservation Action Council. It sits, proudly restored, as the home for the SJSU Student Body Association.)

Victor graduated from Santa Clara University and was granted a law degree from Hastings Law School in San

Francisco. When he was elected district attorney in Santa Clara County in 1890, he was the youngest man in the state to hold that position. He served two terms before going into private practice. Perhaps due to his father's south county connections, he was attorney for the wealthy cattle barons, Lady Diana Murphy/Hill and Viola K. Dunne.

"PRETTY NOTARY DENIES AFFRAY"

San Francisco Chronicle: October 15, 1908

The San Francisco reporters, smelling a tantalizing scandal, were not to be put off by Scheller's silence. The lady in question was discovered to be Mrs. Ceda De Zaldo, an attractive brunette who had a stenography business in San Francisco. According to the *Chronicle*: *she is a graduate of Stanford University and also Radcliffe College at Harvard, and she enjoys a large clientele in the Kohl building where her office is situated.*

Mrs. De Zaldo denied being involved in the incident, stating that she had been in San José visiting her mother, but had left for San Francisco hours before the attack. She admitted that she knew the attorney, having lived, some years before, with the Scheller family.

In order to divert attention away from Ceda, Victor was forced to explain what really happened on that fateful afternoon. The slasher, he said, was a member of a treacherous Chinese tong society. At first the story seemed far fetched, but

it became more plausible as the details emerged. In fact, Scheller's silence may have been for protection against further violence.

REVENGE OF THE TONGS

In an October 16th edition of the *Mercury Herald*, James B. Peckham, Scheller's clerk, explained Scheller's connection with the notorious Hip Sing and Hop Sing Tong. Scheller had formerly represented the Hip Sings, but he had decided to represent the Hop Sings instead. On the day of the incident, members of the Hip Sing Tong approached Scheller, asking that one of his Chinese clients supply an alibi for their leader Yee Foo who had been sentenced to life in prison for

Who Slashed Victor Scheller? continued on page 7



Victor A. Scheller, detail of group photograph.

From History San José's collection

HISTORY SAN JOSÉ HAPPENINGS

Thanks to all Fundraiser Supporters

History San José would like to extend recognition and appreciation to everyone who supported the June 24th fundraising event at La Rochelle Winery. Through sponsorships, donations, ticket sales and silent and live auction bids, HSJ doubled its net profit from last year.

Corporate Sponsors

Cinnabar Commons, LP
Affordable Housing for San Jose



Vice Mayor Pat Dando, Heritage Bank, Comcast

Event Donors

Bank of America, Dominic & Susan Cortese, John & Christine Davis, Jim D'Amico, Pahl & Gosselin, Yvonne Jacobsen, John Luckhardt, Ritchie Commercial, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Shephardson, Barry Swenson Builder, J. Rodney Templeton

In-Kind Donors

Bank of America, Bellarmine College Preparatory, Communication Rentals, Magnolia Jazz Band, Marcel & Henri, M.E. Fox Distributors, Silicon Valley Biz Ink, Special Events Productions, TL Digital Photography, Valley Scene

A big thank you to the 2004 event chairs, Bonnie Bamburg and Dan Shore. Their positive attitude and hard work resulted in a successful event. In addition, HSJ board members and staff played an active role in selling tickets and securing financial support and auction items.



In-kind contributor Magnolia Jazz Band provided entertainment for guests.



Guests enjoyed dinner outside against a backdrop of the eastern foothills.

Heritage 100 News

Heritage 100 membership continues to grow with new members William Lewis and Jeff & Sally Moore. Renewing members include Eric Brandenburg, Diane & Stan Chinchin, Paul Davies, Jr. and Paul & Marty Lion.

In June, Heritage 100 members enjoyed a private reception at History San José's Collection Center where they previewed recently conserved paintings now on view in the *Artists for Hire* exhibit, which opened July 16. In addition, historian and local art collector Leonard McKay was on hand to share his expertise and stories about the art and artists.

In the near future, Heritage 100 members will tour a historical site within Santa Clara Valley. Although the details have not been confirmed, it promises to be another memorable occasion.

Current Heritage 100 members continue to interest individuals whose families helped create the Valley that has become one of the most notable places in the world.

Improved Individual & Corporate Membership Benefits

As outlined in the May issue of *The Exchange*, the new individual membership benefits became effective July 1, 2004. The most notable changes begin at the Associate (\$100) level with free or reduced admission to over 120 participating Time Traveler museums throughout America and at the Partner (\$250) level with a subscription to California History, journal of the California Historical Society. Note: For all new and renewing members at the \$100+ level, you will receive information subsequent to the September open enrollment for Time Travelers.

In addition to the improved individual membership benefits, a newly restructured corporate membership program is in place. Refer to the individual/corporate membership application insert for membership levels, categories, and benefits. Call the membership office at 408-918-1053 for more information.

Thank you to all new and renewing members!

Don't Miss These Family Sundays

HIDDEN TREASURES

This event, which takes place on Sunday, August 22 from Noon–5:00 pm, will allow children and their families to discover how much fun it is to delve into the past. Upon arrival, families will be given a few clues, such as a photograph, letter or other historical memorabilia, and sent on a search to discover the answer to a mystery from the past. On their journey, they will visit various buildings in History Park and see many of the museum's hidden treasures. Along the way, children will be encouraged to participate in hands-on activities. After solving the mystery, the children will have an opportunity to make their own treasure box, in which to store the historical treasures they accumulated during this program. Children of all ages are invited to participate in this special day at History Park!

ANTIQUE AUTOS IN HISTORY PARK

Hosted by the Santa Clara Valley Model T Ford Club, the fourth annual Antique Autos in History Park takes place on Sunday, September 19 from Noon – 5:00 pm. This event features 75 to 100 antique autos dating from the turn-of-the-century to 1945, antique motorcycles, antique fire equipment, early-day gas engines and antique bicycles. In addition, there will be a variety of children's activities including a bucket brigade and arts and crafts projects. Riders on high-wheel bicycles, clowns, a keystone cop and auto owners and passengers dressed in vintage clothing help round out the festivities. Stop at the print shop and the blacksmith shop for demonstrations, enjoy a ride on an historic trolley and view the historic buildings. Videos featuring antique autos and other early day forms of transportation will be shown throughout the afternoon.

Both events are free.



Keystone cop from last year's event will return to entertain the crowd again this year.



Sarah Puckitt

Photo of watercolor of the Umberger House at History Park.

Local Art Group Paints at History Park

The Saratoga Community of Painters is a group of local artists who meet regularly to compliment and critique each other's work, swap tips, learn about techniques, and most importantly, to paint. On June 23–25 the group painted at History Park with Frank LaLumia a nationally recognized teacher of art in the plein-art style which means painting in the outdoors using the light. Contact Judy Puthuff at 408-857-2581 for additional information about the Saratoga Community of Painters.



Look for riders on high-wheel bicycles at this year's Antique Autos in History Park.

HISTORY SAN JOSÉ CALENDAR

AUGUST

History Makers The Last Frontier: Santa Clara Valley and the Exploration of Space

Thursday, August 12th

7:00 – 8:30pm

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

HSJ President David Crosson moderates a panel discussion with John W. Boyd, Senior Advisor for History at the NASA Ames Research Center, Walter G. Vincenti, author of *What Engineers Know and How They Know It: Analytical Studies from Aeronautical History*, Mark Wolverton, author of *The Depths of Space: The Story of the Pioneer Planetary Probes* and Glenn E. Bugos, author of *Atmosphere of Freedom: Sixty Years at the NASA Ames Research Center*.
Free

Walk n Wag

Saturday, August 14th

8:30am – Noon

Hosted by Happy Hollow Park & Zoo

and Kelley Park, Walk n Wag is a walk-a-thon for dogs and their families. The course runs through Kelley Park and provides numerous rest stops and activities along the way. Donations are encouraged and all proceeds benefit the Humane Society of Silicon Valley. Visit www.hssv.org for more information and to register.

Hidden Treasures

Sunday, August 22nd

Noon – 5:00pm

A day of family fun exploring and learning about the past. Take a discovery tour of History Park where treasures from San José's past are revealed.

Free

SEPTEMBER

Antique Autos in History Park

Sunday, September 19th

Noon – 5:00pm

Antique vehicles, working steam engines and trolley rides are part of this celebration sponsored by the Santa Clara Valley Model T Ford Club.

Free

OCTOBER

District 7 Family Days at History Park

Saturday, October 2nd

10:00am – 4:00pm

This fun filled day for families and children will feature resource booths, food and entertainment.

Free

San José Fire Fighter's Chili Cook Off

Sunday, October 3rd

10:00am – 6:00pm

Challenge your taste buds as fire-fighters from all over San José come together to put their culinary skills to the test.

Autumn Festival in History Park

Sunday, October 17

Noon – 5:00pm

As part of History Month, sponsored by the Heritage Council of Santa Clara County, this festival will feature activities for children of all ages.

Free

Ongoing

Be sure to stop by the Pacific Hotel Gallery to see the newly installed exhibit titled, *Artists for Hire: Painting for the Market in Santa Clara Valley*. Open Tuesday through Sunday. *Free*

Who Slashed Victor Scheller? continued from page 4

murder. When Scheller refused, probably citing attorney-client privilege, one of the men cut the attorney on the left cheek from just below the ear to a point opposite his mouth and along the lower line of the jaw.

A doctor was called to Scheller's office in the Ryland Block to minister to the attorney. Scheller then returned home with the intention of not informing the police. How he planned to explain his injury the next day is hard to imagine. Though Peckham was quoted as saying that he could identify the slasher, there seems to be no evidence that the perpetrator was sought or apprehended by the police. Another of Scheller's motives for silence may have been his desire to keep his wealthy clients from the knowledge of his connections with the Chinese underworld.

A CLANDESTINE AFFAIR?

Another question arises as to why Victor Scheller was so

secretive about his acquaintance with Ceda De Zaldo. As far as this author can discern, there was never a jealous Mr. De Zaldo in the wings. It would appear that Ceda may have attached the Mrs. to her name for professional reasons.

Not long after the attack, the San Francisco City Directory lists Victor Scheller as a resident on that city's Gough Street, next door to Ceda De Zaldo's residence. With seemingly little fanfare, they were married in 1913. There seems to be no marriage record in either city, so it is possible that they chose a quiet ceremony in some area where they were not known. Scheller would have been fifty-one years old.

The couple maintained a San Francisco address until the end of their lives. He died, age seventy-five, in September 1938 in San Francisco. Ceda followed in December 1940.

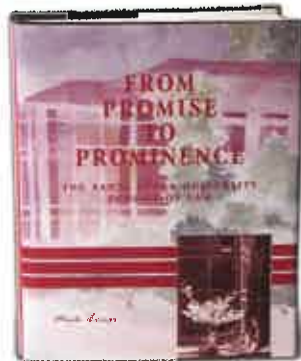
When one surveys the lack of information and evidence in this strange affair, do we really know who slashed Victor Scheller?

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU?

From Promise to Prominence, The Santa Clara University School of Law

By Mark Thomas

From *Promise to Prominence* chronicles the history of Santa Clara University School of Law from 1914-2002. It delves into the student body and its patterns of growth, the enrollment of women, the challenges of achieving diversity and the evolution of specialized programs. This book also includes zany student humor and tales of the law school's most colorful characters.



Cottages, Flats, Buildings & Bungalows, 102 Designs from Wolfe & McKenzie, 1907

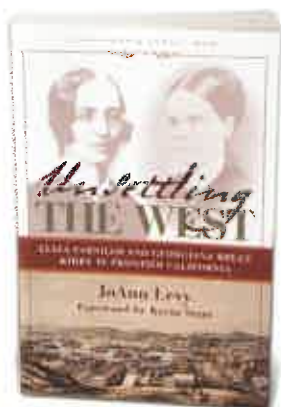
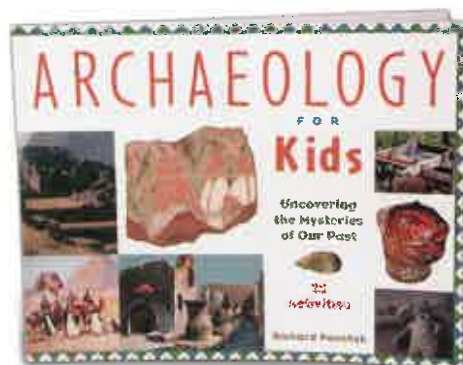
By George Espinola

This book is an insightful introduction to the Wolfe & McKenzie style and a wonderful snapshot of what was turn-of-the-century San José. Wolfe & McKenzie was the most prolific and one of the most prominent architectural firms practicing in San José during the first decade of the twentieth century.

Archaeology for Kids, Uncovering the Mysteries of Our Past

By Richard Panchyk

An excellent book for those budding archaeologists or for anyone with a curiosity about this science. This book includes 25 projects such as constructing a screen for sifting dirt and debris at a dig, counting tree rings to date a find and more. All projects teach kids the techniques that unearthed Neanderthal caves, Tutankhamun's tomb and the buried city of Pompeii.



Unsettling the West

By JoAnn Levy

Eliza Farnham and Georgiana Bruce Kirby were fervent on behalf of their causes such as prison reform, women's rights and abolitionism and were devout in their personal responsibility to point the way. Quoting extensively from their books and articles, author JoAnn Levy has assembled an entertaining work of two pioneer reformers.

MUSEUM INFORMATION

SITES

History Park

Kelley Park, 1650 Senter Road
San José, CA 95112
408-287-2290, Fax 408-287-2291

Peralta Adobe & Fallon House

175 W. St. John Street
San José, CA 95110
408-993-8182, Fax 408-993-8184

Administrative Offices

1650 Senter Road
San José, CA 95112
408-287-2290, Fax 408-287-2291

www.historysanjose.org

FEES

General Admission Fees

A ticket for both sites is valid two weeks from date of purchase.

	One site	Both sites
Adult	\$8.00	\$10.00
Senior (age 65+)	\$5.00	\$8.00
Youth (age 6-17)	\$4.00	\$6.00
Child (5 & under)	Free	Free

Group Tour Fees

10 or more individuals who have pre-scheduled a tour.

	One site	Both sites
Adult	\$5.00	\$8.00
Senior (age 65+)	\$4.00	\$6.00
Youth (age 6-17)	\$3.00	\$4.00
Child (5 & under)	Free	Free

HOURS

SATURDAY & SUNDAY

History Park & Gallery	12 - 5pm
Museum Store	12 - 4pm
O'Brien's Café	12 - 4pm
Peralta/Fallon	12 - 5pm

TUESDAY - FRIDAY

History Park & Gallery	11am - 5pm
<i>Self-guided tours, admission is free.</i>	
Museum Store	11am - 4pm
O'Brien's Café	11am - 3pm
Research Library	Wed. 1pm - 4pm
Office Hours	Mon. - Fri., 9am - 5pm

PROGRAMS

All school programs and group tours must be reserved. School programs and group tours are offered Tues. - Fri., 9am - 5pm. Group tours are offered Tues. - Sun. Call 408-918-1040.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

History Makers

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Portraits of the Past

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

A Child's Life in the 1890s, Experience Adobe Days, Experience Victorian Days, Explore the Peralta Adobe & Fallon House, Gold Rush Adventure Kit, Historic Transportation Experience, History Hike, History Park Tour, Immigration, People at Work, Peralta Adobe & Fallon House Tour, School Days in the 1890s, Valley of Heart's Delight, Victorian Family Life, Westward Ho!