



Vol. 2, No. 3

Published by the History Museums of San Jose

May 1998

Relive the American Civil War with re-enactments of the Battle of Fredericksburg

Civil War Memorial

Memorial Day Weekend May 23, 24 & 25, 1998

presented by the
History Museums of San Jose
and the
National Civil War Association

Saturday and Sunday
10:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Monday
10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

at the
Historical Museum at Kelley
Park
1650 Senter Road
San Jose, 95112

For more information call
(408) 287-2290



photo courtesy of Russ Lee

- ★ Thrill to daily battle re-enactments featuring Cavalry, Infantry and Artillery Units.
- ★ Explore Confederate, Union and Civilian camps.
- ★ Learn about politics, battle strategies and entertainment in the 1860s.
- ★ Experience era fashion shows, sutlers and demonstrations.
- ★ Honor veterans past and present with memorial services.
- ★ Play Town Ball, an early form of Baseball.
- ★ Listen to period music from the Centerville Players.
- ★ Make history come alive with horses, cannons and action at the Historical Museum!

see article on page 5

*** ADMISSION ***

Adult	\$8.00
Senior	\$6.00
Youth (4-17)	\$6.00
Child under 4	Free
Family Pass	\$30.00

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Welcome New Staff

Director of Marketing & Community Relations

Cecilia Clark brings nine years of experience in marketing, membership development, and special event fund raising to her new position of Director of Marketing and Community Relations for the History Museums of San Jose. Beginning with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and continuing with the Children's Discovery Museum, Ms. Clark has compiled an enviable record of success with Silicon Valley non-profit organizations. Most recently, she was assistant director of marketing at Mirassou Winery.



At the Children's Discovery Museum, Ms. Clark developed and implemented programs that identified, recruited, and retained Museum members, including direct mail campaigns, advertising, promotions, telemarketing, and community collaborations. She also was responsible for the highly successful corporate membership program. Her public relations experience includes direct mail packages, ad copy, posters, press releases, public service announcements, brochures, and marketing proposals. She secured print and radio sponsorships for special events and was responsible for membership and donor communications.

At HMSJ, Ms. Clark will be responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive marketing strategy, including both museum sites, educational programs, rentals, special events, sponsorships, and other marketing activities. She also will be responsible for image identification and development and public relations. She will work with a membership manager to evaluate HMSJ's membership program and increase its numbers and financial success.

Senior Curator of Education

Lisa Falk of Miami, Florida, has agreed to become the Senior Curator of Education with the History Museums of San Jose, effective Monday, May 4. Ms. Falk currently is an education and museum consultant working with the Wolfsonian Institution in Miami and other institutions around the country.



Ms. Falk received a B.A. from Oberlin College in Ohio and an M.A.T. degree in Museum Education from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., the premier museum education

program in the country. She has previous experience in the Bay Area with both the Oakland Museum and the Exploratorium in San Francisco.

Ms. Falk has strong experience and great success connecting cultural institutions with schools and creating program partnerships between multicultural communities and museums. She also has produced several on-line programs and is excited about the technological possibilities in Silicon Valley. As educational specialist with the Latin American Institute at the University of New Mexico from 1994-96, she produced a Latin America Data Base, organized teachers' workshops on Latin America internet usage, and designed and edited a curriculum book in both print and electronic versions.

Beginning as an intern in the American Indian Program and then serving as a program specialist in the Department of Public Programs, Ms. Falk was associated with the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, from 1987-93. While at the Smithsonian, she was a member of the American Encounters exhibition team that created an exhibition on exploring relations in New Mexico over the past 500 years. She also co-authored the companion book, consulted on video content, and directed audience based evaluation studies related to the exhibit. Also at the Smithsonian, Ms. Falk directed an educational outreach project, the Cultural Reporter, through which high school students investigated, documented, and presented the cultural traditions and issues within their communities.

From 1993-96, Ms. Falk has been associated with a collaboration of institutions that produced the exhibition and programs, *Through Women's Eyes: Southeast Asian American Women's Experiences*, which documents the experience of women from Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam now living in America.

Weekend Site Manager

Fernando Chavez is the new weekend site manager for the HMSJ. Mr. Chavez received a Degree in Social Science from San Jose State University and operates his own small business during the week. Mr. Chavez has been a volunteer with HMSJ since 1993, and also volunteers with the Big Brothers of America and the Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program.

Mr. Chavez will be providing site management services on weekends and Monday mornings. This will provide for a better continuity between the week day and weekend service. Mr. Chavez brings a continued dedication to the HMSJ operation and his own experience and emphasis on customer service.

Please join the volunteers, members, directors and employees in welcoming Cecilia Clark, Lisa Falk and Fernando Chavez to the HMSJ family.

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Board of Directors

Noman Mineta Appointed to Board

The History Museums of San Jose is pleased to announce the appointment of Norman Mineta, former U.S. congressman, to the Board of Directors. Mr. Mineta's appointment brings his involvement with HMSJ full circle. The San Jose Historical Museum became a reality during Mr. Mineta's tenure as city councilman (1968 to 1971), and mayor of San Jose (1971 to 1974). He was in large part responsible for the establishment of the San Jose Historical Museum Association. Mr. Mineta currently is working for Lockheed Martin in Washington, D.C.

Results of Elections

Your ballots have been tabulated and the results are final. The Bylaws revisions as noted in last month's *The News* have been approved by the membership. And congratulations are in order for the newly elected members of HMSJ's Board of Directors: Ann Atkinson, Steven M. Cox, Arthur Lund, Patricia Borba McDonald and Stephen Pahl.

Volunteer Program

Docents in Training

The Class of 1998 is about half way through training. This year's class is made up of nineteen men and women from all walks of life. Some are retired like Joan Rutherford and Marcia Hewitt who are retired teachers.

And we have some working people like Cheryl Cavanaugh who finished her Ph.D. in American Literature and Paul Hautz who is a software engineer and is into renovating 19th century houses with 19th century tools. Richard Stevenson is a history major at San Jose State and is now working on his M.A. as is Kathryn Semigaglio who has her Anthropology degree from San Jose State University.

Welcome to all the docent trainees in the Class of 1998.

History Museums of San Jose

VOLUME 2 • NUMBER 3 • MAY 1998



The History Museums of San Jose will involve diverse audiences in exploring the varieties of human experience that contribute to the continuing history of San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley.

Editor: Carol Provenzano

President/CEO: David Crosson

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San Jose, CA 95112-2599
(408) 287-2290 FAX (408) 277-3890
Website: www.serve.com/sj/history

Education Program

Local Women of Distinction, 1860-1930

The American Association of University Women, San Jose Branch, in collaboration with the History Museums of San Jose, announces a new education program which will be offered to the schools in the fall. Local Women of Distinction, 1860-1930 is a program geared for 4th grade students which teaches students about women who led non-traditional lives in a time when women were expected to be mothers and wives.

The program's concept began with the American Association of University Women. A study was undertaken by AAUW in 1992, which discovered that girls begin to lose self confidence in 5th grade, and begin to fall academically behind boys in the areas of science and math. Further study indicated that girls learn in a different way than boys, and react differently to information. A teacher asking a question of her class will result in boys raising their hands to respond whether or not they know the answer. Girls will wait until they know the answer before raising their hands.

In an effort to instill additional self confidence in girls, and a desire teach both boys and girls of the role women have played in our history, AAUW San Jose Branch asked the (then) San Jose Historical Museum to co-sponsor an education program geared to 4th grade. Local Women of Distinction, 1860-1930, examines the lives and accomplishments of women who led non-traditional lives in Santa Clara Valley.

Women from all walks of life, and all socio-economic levels are portrayed. The earliest woman, Maria Francisca Romero Bojorquez, walked from Arizona to California with the Anza party, and eventually settled in Santa Clara Valley in 1777 where she helped establish Pueblo de San Jose. The most recent woman is Lynne Shew who was born in San Jose, raised money in the United States to build a hospital in China for the poor. She moved to China and lived there as administrator of the hospital until Japan invaded China in the

1930s. Some of the other women examined are: education, Margaret Schallenberger McNaught, and Lucy Turner Johnson; agriculture, Henriette Pellier Mirassou Casalegno and Lena Abasolo; suffrage, Sarah Knox Goodrich and Sara Massey Overton; medicine and art, Euthanasia Meade and Mary Edmonia "Wildfire" Lewis.

Although this program will be available to the schools in the fall, the History Museums and AAUW consider it a "work in progress." Children are urged to return to their families and find their own women of distinction, and share that information with us. Who knows what women's stories are waiting to be told?

HMSJ Docent Martha Dignam leads the student demonstrating for women's rights.



AAUW members Barbara Bettencourt and Chris Hawkins with Betty Barnacle of the San Jose Mercury News watch a recent Women of Distinction program.



HMSJ Docent Lani Evans explains about fruit canning in the Fruit Barn at the History Museum.



HMSJ Docent Bonnie Rogers prepares for the Education segment of the program.

Special thanks is given to AAUW San Jose Branch, without whose help and dedication this program would not be available.

Christine Hawkins, Project Leader

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Joi Anderson | Myrl Metcalf |
| Barbara Bettencourt | Bonnie Rogers |
| Martha Dignam | Sandra Savage |
| Nancy Hooten | Trish Sebourn |
| Karen Klint | Rita Skillman |
| Jean Ann Luckhardt | Diana Taylor |
| Grace O'Leary | Joyce Towner |
| Helen Makler | Dorothy Uyenishi |
| Margie McBride | Mary Parks Washington |
| Jean McNamara | |

Several past and current volunteers and employees have been invaluable in their support and encouragement.

- Virginia Beck, Curator of Education
 Keith Cakebread, Interim Director of Education
 Leslie Masunaga, Archivist
 Carol Provenzano, Publications

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Harriett Arnold | Myrl Metcalf |
| Martha Dignam | Bonnie Rogers |
| Sister Inez Hernandez | Carolyn Sinclair |
| Evelyn Romero Martinez | Edith Walter |
| Margie McBride | Connie Young Yu |



Special Events

Havdalah

Beth-David Jewish Congregation rented our Kelley Park facilities for the evening of Saturday, March 28 from 7:00–10:00 P.M. This was a special day for members of the Congregation as they celebrated the end of the Sabbath.

Beth-David Congregation joined partners with volunteers of the Museum to tell about our history during the 1800s. HMSJ docents and Beth-David docents interpreted side-by-side in our historical buildings. This special event was meant to be a learning situation for all parties. Some five hundred people came through the gates for old time activities, Jewish crafts, riding the trolley and they all enjoyed the baked treats. We had rain showers that interrupted some of the functions but adjustments were made and the show continued. Our HMSJ docents learned many things including:



Rabbi Leslie Alexander of Congregation Beth-David.

- 1857 The City of San Jose gave the Jewish community in San Jose five acres of land in Oak Hill Cemetery.
- 1861 San Jose's first Hebrew congregation Bickur Cholim was founded.
- 1862 The Jewish population reached 50 people.
- 1865 A special meeting was held to acknowledge President Lincoln's death and a resolution was passed that the congregants would "wear the usual badge of mourning for 30 days."
- 1909 The Bank of Italy Branch in San Jose originally housed the Commercial and Savings Bank, of which Lazard Lion was Director and President.

Several exhibit buildings were open for visitors. Children delighted to many activities and craft demonstrators. O'Brien's and the City Store were opened for business and trolley barn volunteers kept the trolley cars rolling. Thanks to the many volunteers who participated.

Photos of the Havdalah event courtesy of Carolyn Sinclair.



Vintage VW Car Show & Swap Meet

HMSJ coordinated its first rental of the Museum grounds when the Golden Gate Chapter of Vintage Volkswagen Car Association held its car show and swap meet on April 5, 1998, from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Although this was HMSJ's very first rental, the VVWCA has held its show on the Historical Museum grounds each April since 1994.



The day began at 6:30 A.M., when Volkswagens were lined up two blocks down Senter Road waiting to enter the grounds. Many of the earliest types of VW's were on display—vans, Karman Ghias and the earliest Beetles. By far, though, the highlight of the show was the new VW "bugs," which have just recently been available for sale.

We in our fifties definitely have warm feelings about those staples from our youth. An estimated 576 Volkswagens were on display for judging, admiration of the crowd and for sale or trade. This was not only a show of VW's but a swap meet for sellers and VW enthusiasts, and a social event with tailgaters and picnicking visitors enjoying the day. Approximately 3,000 people attended this one-day event.



Photos from the Volkswagen Car Show courtesy of Lois Grace.



Special Events

Civil War Memorial 1998

Once again the cannons will boom, the horses will charge and the soldiers will thrill us with the sounds of battle. Over 3,000 costumed participants join with History Museum volunteers and other outside groups to offer a weekend experience unequalled in the Bay Area.

This year the Battle of Fredericksburg will be featured on the agricultural plains of Kelley Park. Six different skirmishes from that engagement will be re-enacted over the course of the three-day weekend. Battle times are planned for 12:30 P.M. and 4:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, and 11:00 A.M. and 2:30 P.M. on Monday. Written battle scenarios will set the stage for our visitors added enjoyment. Between the battle re-enactments, tour the Union and Confederate camps to see how the soldiers lived.

Refugee Row will portray tent life in a town by the edge of war. In the Zanker House, sit in on a Sanitary Commission or ladies relief society meeting. Watch bandages being rolled and wartime knitting and sewing performed. The Chiechi House presents lighter fare with Parlor Pastimes. Visitors can participate in parlor games, and other forms of home entertainment, which predate both radio and television. Refugee Row times are Saturday and Sunday 10:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. and Monday 10:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. (closed during battle times).

The Lecture Hall in the Firehouse will provide visitors with on-going speakers whose topics will range from battle strategy and politics to ladies underwear and popular music. Lecture Hall times are Saturday and Sunday 11:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. and Monday 11:00 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. (closed during battle times).

The Plaza and Bandstand areas will offer visitors plenty to see and do. Many of our regular craft demonstrators will give visitors a close-up view of a variety of traditional American handcrafts. Nineteenth century games and toys will be offered each day with many of the old-time favorites like sack races, hoop rolling and guerning (rubber face contest). A trio of traveling minstrels will

Photos of Civil War Memorial courtesy of Russ Lee.



Portuguese Festa

You are invited to enjoy the rich folklore of Portugal and find out about the history of California's huge Portuguese community at an all-day festival on Saturday, June 6, at the San Jose Historical Museum. Enter on Phelan Avenue for this free ideal-for-families activity, one of a series of annual events which celebrate Dia de Portugal.

Festivities begin at 10 A.M. with a grand parade featuring marching bands, floats, folk dancers, and wonderfully decorated carts pulled by teams of oxen. After the parade there will be stage performances of folk dancers, concert bands, string groups, and vocalists. (The Portuguese culture is particularly rich in music.) There will be storytelling in English of Portuguese tales.

Food booths (all of which benefit educational and cultural groups) will provide a varied menu: Portuguese-style doughnuts to start the day; linguiza and favas (sausage and beans) in the style of the Azores Islands (origin of most Americans of Portuguese descent); feijoada, the black bean stew which is Brazil's national dish; Portuguese food with a Chinese style from Macão and with an Indian flavor from Goa; delicacies from Cabo Verde (African islands); several seafood plates; caldo verde (potato and kale soup); the renowned Portuguese breads (rolls, cornbread, and sweetbread); and the popular sweet rice pudding.

The Imperio will be open all day with guided tours to inform visitors of Portuguese history and culture in America. This second annual festival is a joint effort of the Portuguese Heritage Society, the Dia de Portugal General Committee, and the History Museums of San Jose.

A good time for all—that's a promise!

Photo of the ox cart courtesy of Sylvia Carroll.

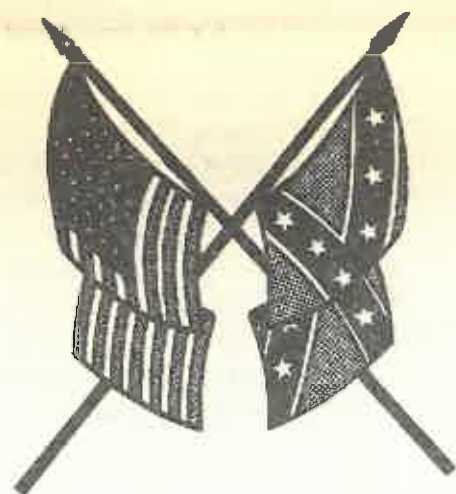
Los Altos Art & Wine Festival

The sunshine and warm weather will bring out the crowds at local arts and wine festivals. Downtown areas become weekend destination points for the people of Santa Clara County and the Bay Area.

On July 11 and 12, 1998, the History Museums of San Jose will collaborate efforts with the San Jose Museum of Art, the Tech Museum of Innovation, Children's Discovery Museum, and the San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles to participate in a two-day festival in downtown Los Altos. The museum booths will be in the "Kids Zone Hands-On Activities" area on Main and State Streets. Craft vendors will be located nearby. In addition, food and beverage booths will be located on adjoining streets.

Each of the San Jose museums will staff the booths and provide a simple hands-on activity for children. Traditionally, the local festivals bring in thousands of people, in turn giving HMSJ the exposure and opportunity to promote our museum sites.

If you're planning to attend the festival, be sure to stop by and say "hello." Be sure to wear your sunscreen and visor. It will surely be hot and sunny by mid-July!



Special Events

Sixth Annual Chinese Summer Festival

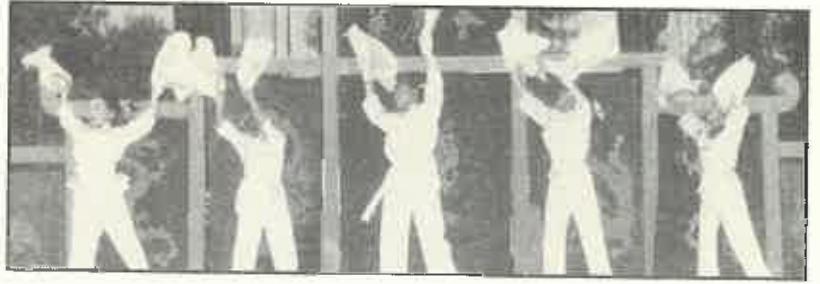
Back by popular demand, CHCP is hosting the Sixth Annual Chinese Summer Festival on July 19, 1998. China's rich history and culture are shared with the community in this popular event. Come experience the sights, sounds, and smells of a Chinese village. The Festival offers something for everyone! Admission to the Festival is free! Features of this year's Festival include: Asian food, martial arts, exotic entertainment, children's hands-on activities, demonstrations of science, arts and crafts, Chinese opera and acrobats, tours of the Ng Shing Gung Museum, a parade and Dragon of Heart's Delight dance.



Past festivals have been very successful due to the support of people like you. The Festival committee currently is working to plan and organize this year's Festival and needs your help to solicit sponsors and volunteers. Their goal is to develop new attractions and increase attendance while maintaining free admission. If you are interested in helping,

please contact Patrick Kwok at 408-945 5323 or Rodney Lum at 650-965-8694.

The Festival is organized by the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project (CHCP), a nonprofit educational organization. CHCP's mission is to promote and preserve the Chinese and Chinese American culture. It formed in 1987 to replicate the historic Ng Shing Gung, the cultural and religious center of San Jose's Chinatown. CHCP continues educating the public through numerous community outreach activities. Check CHCP's web site for more information about the organization and its activities (www.chcp.org).



Photos of last year's festival are courtesy of CHCP.



CHINESE SUMMER FESTIVAL '98

華慶會



JULY 19, SUNDAY
SIXTH ANNUAL

FREE ADMISSION

地時 包宗
點間 括旨
： 功廚宣
： 拉夫藝揚
： 七示範，中
： 月拉夫藝，華
： 荷十O示範，飲
： 西十九K等，食
： 歷史日等，遊
： 史公期有戲，販
： 園期日。有盡，化
： 舞獅，歌
： 舞，舞
： 龍，舞
： 舞，舞
： 獅，舞

第六屆華慶會
盛大戶外園遊會

Once again, the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project is pleased to present a Chinese Summer Festival at the San Jose Historical Museum.

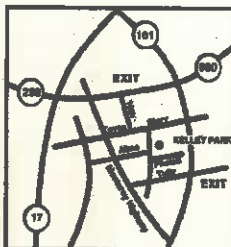
Mark your calendar and save the date because on Festival Day, Sunday, July 19, 1998, there will be music and dance, Asian food, children's hand-on activities, martial arts demonstrations, Ng Shing Gung Temple tours, trolley rides, dragon dance, Eastern arts and crafts exhibits, and much, much more. Best of all, admission to the Festival is free.

Look for future updates or call San Jose Historical Museum for more information.

San Jose Historical Museum

1600 Senter Road - Kelley Park
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 287-2290

San Jose Historical Museum is located in Kelley Park on Senter Road, near the Story Road West exit of Route 101, just past the intersection with Route 280. In addition to the San Jose Historical Museum, Kelley Park is home to the Happy Hollow Park & Zoo and the Japanese Friendship Garden.



CHINESE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PROJECT
P.O. Box 70746 Sunnyvale, CA 94086-0746 Phone: (408) 735-9417 <http://www.chcp.org/>

Web Site Info

HMSJ Goes 20th Century

Thanks to a member of the Board of Directors, who is also a volunteer, the History Museums of San Jose has a web site! Patrick Magee has been our very own web master for several months, and continues to update the information about the History Museums. Pat has recently added additional pages to the site to include the upcoming events at the museums. Check out www.serve.com/sjhistory for the latest information concerning Civil War Memorial, and print and bring the \$1.00 coupon for any one admission. Other events listed are the Portuguese Festa and Chinese Summer Festival. Thanks, Pat, for your dedication and perseverance!

HMSJ was saddened to learn of the death of San Jose Rotary Club member John Haliwell. In 1977 the San Jose Rotary Club donated the construction of O'Brien's Candy and Ice Cream Store to the (then) San Jose Historical Museum. John was the carpenter of the lovely cabinets which still grace the back wall of O'Brien's. His legacy lives on at the History Museums of San Jose.

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Historical Highlights of Santa Clara Valley

Santa Cruz Mountain Writers II SARA BARD FIELD AND CHARLES ERSKINE SCOTT WOOD

by Jack Douglas

Poets Sara Bard Field and Charles Erskine Scott Wood had led full and exciting lives prior to establishing their mountainside estate in Los Gatos. He was 73 and she 43 when they purchased the 34 acre tract and built the home that they would christen "The Cats." It would become the gathering place of famous and non-conformist artists and writers.

The Early Years

Sara Bard Field was only eighteen when she married Albert Ehrigott, a Baptist missionary, who shortly after took his wife to Asia to help bring Christianity to the Chinese and East Indians. She was appalled at what she perceived to be "Christian English exploitation of a brave, free, simple and essentially spiritual people." Her ill health required them to return to the United States where she audited classes in poetry at Yale University.

Sara and her husband then went to a poor parish in Cleveland where they became involved in the budding social reform movement. While visiting in Chicago, where her sister Mary was head of a settlement house, Sara met Clarence Darrow. By now firm believers in the Socialist cause, Sara and her husband moved to Portland, Oregon where she became an organizer of the College Equal Suffrage League. She traveled the whole state speaking in large and small towns. After victory in Oregon she moved on to Nevada, and soon she had become a national spokeswoman for the cause of women's suffrage. She journeyed by car, after a women's convocation at the Panama Pacific Exposition in 1915, across the nation speaking to mayors and governors and finally delivering a monster petition to President Wilson.



photo courtesy of A. Arkatov

Sara Bard Field

With the passage of the nineteenth amendment, Sara, now divorced from her husband and working as a reporter for the *Oregon Journal*, became interested in West Coast labor problems. Here she was once again involved with Clarence Darrow who introduced her to Charles Erskine Scott Wood.

Wood, an attorney who had a successful Portland practice in maritime law, was sympathetic with the cause of the IWW and oppressed dockworkers. He wrote satirical essays for the socialist, pacifist monthly *The Masses*.

Son of William Maxwell Wood, the first Surgeon General of the United States Navy, Wood attended West Point. Upon graduation he joined the staff of General O.O. Howard, supporter of African American rights and namesake of Howard University. Howard's command was then engaged in a running battle with the Nez Perce Indians and Chief Joseph. After several other campaigns Wood was assigned back to West Point, and while

there he saw the corrupt ways in which Indian affairs were being handled in Washington. Feeling that he had been supporting unworthy causes, he resigned with the rank of Colonel and took up the practice of law.



Charles Erskine Scott Wood

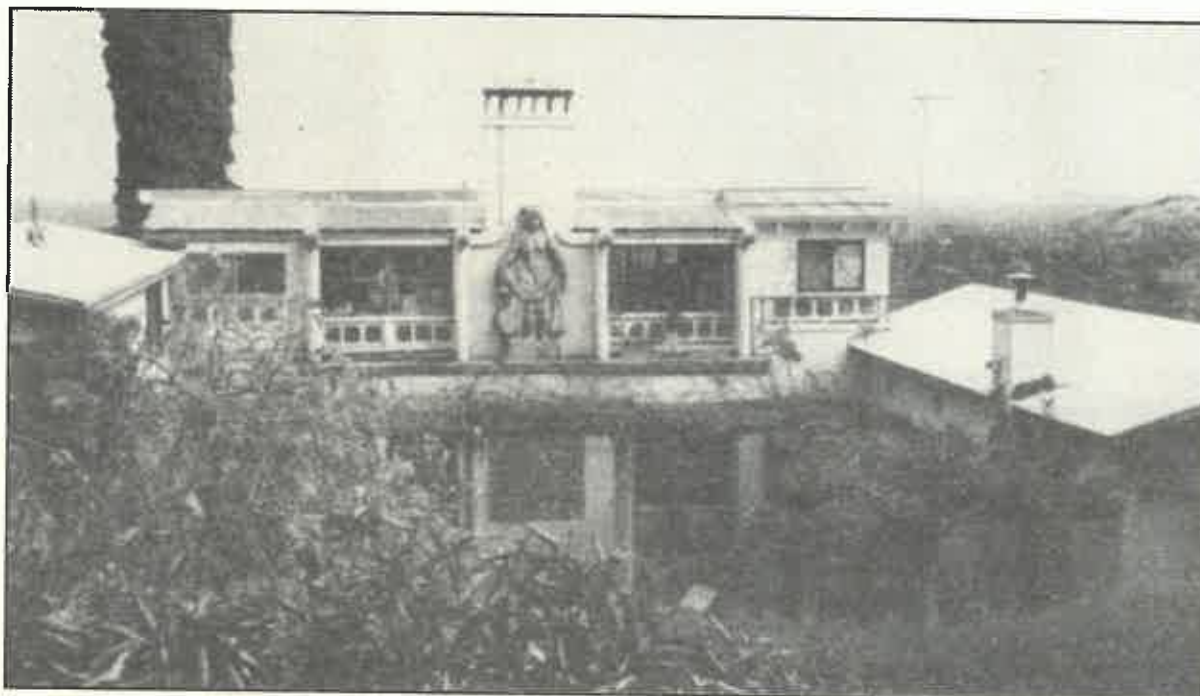


photo courtesy of Susan Shillinglaw

The chimney at the home of Sara Field and Erskine Wood was enhanced with a large sculpture by Benny Bufano entitled "Maia."

After the years of building his successful practice, the now elderly Wood was entranced by the much younger Sara as they worked together in the labor reform movement. Caught up in their mutual love of literature and social reform, Wood left his wife, gave up his law practice and joined Sara as partner and, later, husband.

Home in Los Gatos

After the Armistice of 1918 (both had bitterly opposed the war) the couple decided to settle in the Santa Clara Valley where their friend Fremont Older, crusading editor of the *San Francisco Bulletin*, was about to construct a new home. Building a new life and a new home was quite an undertaking for a seventy year old man, but Wood had such a buoyant, youthful spirit that anything seemed possible as the couple purchased land and planned their mountain aerie.

It was their intent to retreat from active participation in social reform and focus instead on their individual poetic and artistic pursuits. An ongoing work of art which they both shared was the development of their house and grounds at "The Cats."

The Cats

The couple chose architect Walter Steilbert, a student of Bernard Maybeck, to design their house. Wood, who was called Erskine by his friends, brought in a number of California's noted artists and sculptors to decorate the premises. Roy Boynton designed a mosaic for the interior. Ralph Stackpole, who had done great work for the Panama Pacific Exposition, carved medallions for over the fireplace and an enormous statue of a woman, called Maia, which was placed on the second story beside the chimney. Benny Bufano, the gnome-like sculptor from San Francisco, provided statues of children for the outdoor fountain.

Erskine, ignoring the fact that he might not live long enough to see them mature, planted a fig tree in his courtyard and wine grapes in an adjacent vineyard. Soon he was making and bottling his own wine (a bottle with the hand engraved "Princess" label is still in the possession of Willys Peck, Saratoga historian). In 1923 the couple had sculptor Robert Payne create the giant concrete cats which front the entryway to their estate. The statues have frequently been used to symbolize the town of Los Gatos.

A Cloud of Witnesses

Although aloof from the cares of the world, the world came to Sara and Erskine in the guise of old friends from their days as leading radicals. Younger artists such as John and Carol Steinbeck found good food, wine and company there in their years of poverty. William Rose Benét, a frequent visitor, described Erskine as follows: *Sometimes I seemed to see him a veritable wood god of his own Santa Cruz Mountains. His appearance was that of a patrician Whitman. ... His looks with his ruddy face and snowy hair and beard, had been compared to Zeus, to Father Christmas ... he had about him, too, a touch of Pan. And yet he was American as Mark Twain, whom he had known and admired.* He would sometimes greet his guests wearing Grecian robes and holding cups of his homemade wine.



Sleeping cat statue at the entrance to the estate of Sara Field and Erskine Wood.

In addition to the Olders, Sara and Erskine were in continual contact with Lincoln Steffens who lived with his wife and son in Carmel. They were also close friends with Robinson and Una Jeffers and the Bohemian poet George Sterling. Sara had known Senator Phelan back in her campaigning days, and though friendly, they were not close. Phelan's nephew, Noel Sullivan, was a frequent visitor however. Carl Sandburg, who Sara had known years before in Chicago, visited and shared poetry.

Both Sara and Erskine produced a number of memorable and critically acclaimed volumes of poetry. His collection of humorous essays from *The Masses* "Heavenly Discourse," published in 1927, was a popular classic. He followed this with a sequel "Earthly Discourse" and the "Poet in the Desert." Her major works were: "Pale Woman" (1927); "Barabbas" (1932); and "Darkling Plain" (1936). She was a front runner for the Pulitzer Prize in 1932 for "Barabbas" but lost out to her friend William Rose Benét.

Erskine Wood died in his heavenly villa in 1944 at the age of 92. Sara lived on until 1974, dying at the age of 91 at the home of her daughter in Berkeley. These two had created a unique environment in their hillside hideaway, where, after almost a life-time of activism and struggle, they could find the peace and solitude necessary for their artistic endeavors.

Members' News

Endowment Fund Donations

The Endowment Fund of the History Museums of San Jose gratefully acknowledges the receipt of the following donations:

In Recognition:

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Gifts to the History Museums of San Jose to honor someone on a special occasion, or as a memorial, may be sent to the History Museums of San Jose Endowment Fund, 1650 Senter Road, San Jose, CA 95112-2599. A letter of acknowledgement will be sent to the person being honored or the family of the deceased.



Save the Date
July 4, 1998
4th of July
Membership Event
at the Museum!
Fireworks at the
Municipal Stadium.
Watch your mailbox
for further information

Dates to Remember

- May 12, 1998**
The Voyage of the Frolic book lecture
- May 16, 1998**
Walk for Education
fundraiser for the Schoolhouse Project
- May 23, 24 & 25, 1998**
Civil War Memorial
- June 6, 1998**
Portuguese Festa
- July 4, 1998**
Members Event
- July 11 & 12, 1998**
Los Altos Art & Wine Festival
- July 19, 1998**
Chinese Summer Festival

Welcome
to the newest members of the
History Museums of San Jose.

- Dennis Backens
- Deborah Collins
- Patricia Dunning
- John & Gail Gordon
- Edward & Barbara Hass
- Charles & Paula Isaacs
- James & Sandra King
- Michael & Claire Kotowski
- Jim & Diane Santi
- Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Silveria
- Gregory & Susan Wageman

Opium to Gold—A Book Lecture

Sponsored by the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project, Professor Tom Layton will speak on his book, *The Voyage of the Frolic: New England Merchants and the Opium Trade*. The lecture will be held on Tuesday, May 12, 1998, at 7:30 P.M. in the Hotel Meeting Room. All members are invited to spend an evening learning about this fascinating period in California history.

The ship *Frolic* was bound for San Francisco. Laden with cargo from China to replenish the Gold Rush depleted stores in San Francisco and San Jose, and manned by a partly Chinese crew, the *Frolic* was eagerly expected. On July 25, 1850, the *Frolic* went aground off the Mendocino coast just one hundred miles north of San Francisco. Time blurred the facts and certainly the location of the ship's final resting place.

But in 1984, Tom Layton, noted California archeologist and professor at San Jose State University, took some students on a "dig" at Three Chop Ridge in Mendocino County where the Pomo Indians had lived. He found more than he expected: fragments of Chinese porcelain. Similar fragments were found at a local historical museum, but these were covered in barnacles. With the help of divers, local historians, descendants of the ship's crew, and a decade of detective-like research, Layton was able to explain the fascinating web of relationships between opium smuggling, Chinese commerce, the California Gold Rush and Pomo Indians who first salvaged Chinese goods from the *Frolic*.

History Museums of San Jose

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