WINTER HISTORY NIGHTS & SPECIAL EVENTS

Two evening presentations and a special afternoon theatre party will be offered to Museum Association members and guests during the months of January and February. Attendance at the evening programs is limited to 75 people and reservations should be made by phoning the Museum (287-2289).

A donation of $1.00 is requested of all Association members and $2.00 from non-members at the door for each evening program. Coffee, tea, and cookies will be served. Lectures will be held in the Meeting Room of the Pacific Hotel, beginning at 7:30 PM.

The theatre party is a fundraising event with tickets for sale in advance from the Museum office.

Wednesday, January 22 Florence Haney: Presentation of the Adult Outreach Kit

Enter into the memories of the years between World War I and World War II. Relive the 1920's and 1930's in sight, sound and touch. The new Adult Outreach Kit of the San Jose Historical Museum Docent Council, "Decades of Change, 1919-1939," is designed to make this period of history come alive for young adults, as well as give senior citizens a time to share reminiscences. The kit contains not only touch items, clothing and photographs, but also a tape program of the sounds and music of the era.

The Adult Outreach Kit will be presented by Docent Florence Haney who was instrumental in its development. In addition, two other kits prepared by our Docent Council will be on display: the popular Victorian School kit and the new Obhione Indian School Kit which was developed during the past year.

Wednesday, February 5 Dwight Bental: "San Jose's Greatest Fire"

Dwight Bental, Professor Emeritus at San Jose State University, and a member of our Museum's Advisory Board, founded and chaired the Department of Journalism at SJSU. His lecture will concern the spectacular fire which destroyed the original Normal School building on February 10, 1880. Mr. Bental will show slides and analyze local newspaper coverage of this event in an evening which will be both informative and entertaining!

Sunday, February 9 Gaslighter Theater Party

Join us for a party at the Gaslighter Theater in Campbell where we can visit with friends and enjoy a melodrama entitled "Ah Sin" or "The Pulse of Chinatown." Set on the Barbary Coast, this delightful presentation will be followed by a vaudeville show. We will serve hors d'oeuvres from 1:30-2:30, the performance will follow at 2:30 p.m. Wear a period costume if you wish! Ticket Price: $12.50. Call 287-2290 for ticket information.
DIRECTOR'S REPORT

LOOKING FORWARD TO 1986 AND BACK ON 1985

It is important to look forward to a New Year with plans and plans for a better future. Because of all the activities that have occurred in the Museum in 1985, and because of all the careful and successful planning, 1986 is full of promise.

1985 should be remembered as a great year for the Museum. It was started with the publication of Ralph Robinson's Pen and Ink which developed our membership program into the biggest ever, with 1500 families or individuals joi

In February, due to the efforts of the Museum Association, we had the pleasure of hosting the entire San Jose City Council for a Committee of the Whole meeting. The Museum was invited to exhibit many objects and programs. They responded by voting unanimously for an increase in the annual operating budget by nine in 1986. Some of these employees won't be hired until March of this year, the additions are permanent and make for a brighter future for the Museum.

The spring and summer months of 1985 were busy with many special events, picnics, Living History Day and a spectacular 4th of July. While there were special events occurring, the Museum was still functioning as a Museum. We were building our collections, working on preserving our art objects, and researching the history of San Jose and the pieces of it that we have. For the first time, we were improving existing exhibits while locating objects for exhibits and also planning for future exhibits. We have integrated these efforts into the developing programs offered by our Docent Program, and promoted the Museum by direct mail and everything possible to spread the word.

One major and ongoing success is the growing level of community participation and involvement. There are so many people helping the Museum in so many different ways. Each person, whether a Board-member, docent, volunteer, visitor or just an interested person with a special topic in mind, brings something unique to the Museum and helps it grow. This is great pleasure in knowing that so many people enjoy their involvement in the Museum and look forward to their activities. The Museum is a public institution and this public participation is so important in making the Museum reflect and tell the story of the history of the community.

1985 was also the year of beginning to plan for the future growth of the Museum. An analysis of the Museum Master Plan and all the building elements is taking place. The planning will continue into 1986 with the building blocks for the Museum defined and methods of implementation worked out. Look forward to the Museum growing with streets, buildings, homes and special attractions brought in.

So while looking forward to all the great things to come in 1986, I'd like to thank everyone who helped us make it possible by all the hard work in 1985. I will always remember the year 1985 as outstanding.

Mignon Gibson
Museum Director

P.S. When you read the Association President's column, you'll realize that more than ever, just to keep up with the momentum, you need your help and continued support. Please stay with us.

ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is with great pride and anticipation that I begin my tenure as your Association's new President. Looking back, one of my very good friends, Terry Graff, was one of our Association's first Presidents. I have called upon Terry to renew his interest in the Museum by becoming a Director and Chair of the Historic Sites and Structures Committee.

In addition to Terry, we have a dynamic group of Board members this year, their names you have already seen.

Last year was most exciting. After many years of "taking-it-on-the-cheek" from the City, we decided to trot our horn loudly, and let them know we had been. Throughout the Presidency of Judge Mark Thomas, we let City Hall know who we were and how badly we had neglected us for too long. With some spectacular background work by our staff, several of our Board Members spent hundreds of hours talking with City leaders. In the end, the City Council cosponsored our marriage by funding $377,000 in new spaces placed at the Museum. They have provided us with the staff we have been crying about for so long. Now it is our task to prove to them that we are worthy of their investment.

Since our funds have been spent in the past to underwrite staff positions that the City should have covered, we were not able to move forward with the exhibits and structures we so desperately need. We can now see a light at the end of the tunnel, and it is not a train coming at us.

1986 will be a very fast-paced year for all of us. Mignon and Kathy are already strapping on their roller skates.

The Pasetta-Bettencourt house is sitting outside our fence line and will be moved onto a foundation during mid-year.

The Zanker house bids have been opened and approved by the Board of Directors. The Development Committee has approved a site, and we are working on a company to provide the concrete foundation work. The Museum Association has allocated $12,500 from its budget to help renovate the Zanker House. Another $5000 from outside the Museum has been pledged for this project. We anticipate that the Zanker House will be on a foundation at the Museum on April 1, 1986.

The Print Shop and the Umberto House are in desperate need of repainting. The City Public Works Department has agreed to have them completely repainted this Spring.

The Chiuchi House, which has been sitting unused for too long, will have its first floor completed. We are currently researching and logging this structure and plan to begin work by early summer.

The Markham House, on the San Jose State University campus, is an important historical landmark. The University Foundation, which owns the house, has agreed to have it moved to the Museum. We are expecting that this will be moved during 1986 also.

Many other projects are being researched for long-term implementation. These include the Jose House as well as the Fire House Annex. Both of these projects will require assistance from our Advisory Board. For 1986, our docents will have several of their buildings repaired, one of their houses completed, and 3 new houses added to the Museum collection. All of this will provide fresh and new structures for their tours.

We recognize the fact that we do not want to have our Museum grounds loaded with old, rundown houses, all of which need restoration from decades of abandonment. This is why we attempt to acquire or budget funds for restoration, prior to moving the structure.

Unfortunately, many of the older homes have builders running in, their front yard when the Museum is made aware of them.

Most important of all our projects is to repropate our Advisory Board. Both our Board of Directors and Advisory Board play major roles in the implementation of our annual goals.

During the Spring, come out to the Museum and see the changes. More importantly, bring some friends with you and get them involved. We are truly a "people's" Museum and we should share our historical experience with others.

Bruce Polio
Association President

FROM THE EDITOR

A warm welcome to the many new members of the Museum Association for 1986. I urge you to take full advantage of your membership—visit the Museum often, attend the lectures, join us on a bus tour, or become a volunteer or docent. You will meet many wonderful people as you enhance your knowledge of our local history.

At the December meeting of the Association's Board of Directors the outgoing Board Members were honored for their contributions to the Museum in the past four years. Judge Mark Thomas, Jr., Bob Doerr, Helen Kusel, Sheri Polio, and Eric Bracher each contributed a tremendous amount of time, energy, and expertise to our Association during their terms of office.

In addition, Roberta Jamison—who recently moved out of the area—was recognized for her service on the Advisory Board.

Thank you to the many employees of IBM and GR who have already taken advantage of their employer gift matching programs when renewing their memberships in the Association. It takes an effort for you to procure the form and fill it out properly and we are grateful for your cooperation. Please encourage your friends to take advantage of these programs as well.

Kathy Muller
Editor
DOCENT REPORT

In my first column, I posed the question of who we are and what we do. In this column, we will explore what motivates people to become docents.

The main loves of a docent are history, people, and the sharing of one with the other. Each year we give tours to school children and adults, displaying the city's treasures in period costume, which lets the dormant actor in each of us come out. We can transform into a character demonstrating the skills needed to exist in the days before twentieth century conveniences. On Living History Day, when we turn the clock back 100 years, the action comes out full bloom to bring yesterday alive to today's visitors.

Docents are teachers, so it is natural that we have many retired teachers who continue to share their experiences and expertise with children and help others to communicate with children through workshops and tour techniques training. Docents are also students; we continue to learn about San Jose (especially those new to the area) and how to pass that knowledge on to others.

Many docents are retired from professions that dealt with people. Their newfound freedom allows them time to share their life experiences with the community, the Museum in particular. As stewards of the past, they have a renewed sense of purpose to provide programs for people, to employ people, and to share their time with the Museum.

We want to thank our volunteers for a job well done. We especially want to thank the children and their families. Of course, the small children find the Museum an outlet for their energies as well as an activity to enrich themselves and their families. Older children are found a chance to reach out and touch a child's life, if only for an hour. We all work to make each Museum visit a fun experience so children will look forward to coming again soon.

Some docents become so involved at the Museum that they go beyond volunteer activities. A quick look at the current Museum staff will find several former docents engaged in the everyday workings of the Museum. This is the dry spell following prop 13, when docents helped the Museum continue operating by staffing the archives, warehouse and handling everyday duties. Several docents who were volunteering in these positions were excellent and we are very grateful to them for their efforts.

Being a docent has been personally rewarding. I have made many new friends, shared in camaraderie, and had a lot of fun! We welcome more people and would like to start a new training program. If you would enjoy combining costumes of yesteryear and sharing a bit of San Jose's history with personal growth, please consider joining us and find out for yourself what an interesting, outgoing group of people our docents are.

Joan Shamler
Docent Council President

MUSEUM SERVICE COUNCIL

The Museum Service Council is a volunteer service group organized to provide supplemental staffing at the Lobby Desk, O'Brien's Ice Cream Shop and Gift Shop, plus serving as “Information Specialist” in the various exhibits and historic buildings.

Limited numbers of selected volunteers serve in Collections, Curatorial, Library, and the office, under special supervision.

Many thanks to the special volunteers who helped set up and worked on the Museum Service Council Administrative Committee for 1964-65: Mary Holland as Chairman; Doris Goodwill, Leslie Mark, Linda Bell, Public Relations; Ethel Reingger and Velma Harris, Desk; Dee Colacecco, O'Brien's; Colleen Corte, and Marion Langley, Museum Gift Shop; and Maxine Fraz and Ida Raby, St. Claire Hilton Gift Shop.

We appreciate you serving the Museum in this way.

Now let's welcome and pledge our support to the new 1966 Committee!

General Chair — Andrea Dillmann
Recording Secretary — Nancy Welch
Public Relations — Ethel Reingger
Rita Sillan
SERVICE AREA CHAIRS & ASSISTANTS

Lobby Desk — Audrey Clark
O'Brien's — Gabrielle Gross
Mary Jo Gilger
Gift Shop — Marion Langley
Judith Elaine Moore
Special Projects — Beth Knowles
Hospitality — Dee Colacecco

Andrea Dillmann will represent the Museum Service Council on the Association Board as a part of her responsibilities as General Chair.

Dorothy Izuimi
Volunteer Coordinator

IN THE COLLECTIONS

"Remember When..." is an exhibit presented in conjunction with the Museum's new educational program, "The Adult Outreach Kit, 1919 to 1939." This exhibit is on display in the curved front case in the lobby of the Museum. The introduction of electricity into every aspect of daily life is emphasized by the selection of items on display. Electricity dramatically altered daily life, freeing women, especially, from much of the physical drudgery of household chores. Included are: the Edison phonograph, a battery-operated "portable" radio. And did you know television was developed in the 1920's? The exhibit is both nostalgic and informative. Do stop by to see it.

"A Child's First Christmas" could be the title for another new display in the lobby case. Featuring a lovely chrismas gown, hat, booties, and a cuddly bear, the exhibit matches the excitement of a child's first Christmas.

Currently on view in the Meeting Room of the Pacific Hotel is "Simpsons II Photo Album." This photo exhibit draws from the photographs used in this year's membership premium book "Simpsons II" by Patricia Loomis.

WANTED

Exterior photograph of the A & D Emporium located in the New Century Block from 1932-1953

IN (space currently occupied by Carroll & Bishop)

Willing to pay $25 + cost of copying the photo

Edward P. Allegritti
(408) 298-7924
(408) 259-7751 (h)

BLOSSOM VALLEY PICTURE HONORS DORIS IZUMI

"Santa Clara Valley in Blossom" by Charles H. Harmon, has been hung in the reception area of the second floor of the Pacific Hotel to honor Doris Izuimi, a Museum Docent who passed away in November 1984. Purchased with donations from Museum friends as well as co-workers of Mr. Izuimi at Intec, Inc., the picture represents Santa Clara Valley's beauty at blossom time. Doris, a Museum Docent from 1962-1984, was known by all as an active member of the Docent Council as well as serving the Museum Service Council as a desk and O'Brien's volunteer. "She was always someone you could count on to fill a need," remembers Dulcie Janzen, Volunteer Coordinator. The production of the picture, a photograph on canvas, was coordinated by Helen Kussel, Museum volunteer in the art collection.

Virginia Beck
Docent Coordinator

INTRODUCING BRUCE POHLE

Bruce Pohle, President of our Museum Association for 1966, is truly a local boy — born in San Jose, he grew up in nearby Saratoga.

Bruce attended Los Gatos High School and San Jose State University, where he majored in Business Administration.

Today Bruce is the President of Southern Pacific. The Company in San Jose and makes his home in Monte Sereno with his wife, Sheri, and three sons.

Bruce's introduction to the Museum came through Sheri, who has been a Docent and served on our Association Board. Bruce is currently Treasurer and Member-at-Large. Sheri has also been a volunteer in our Gift Shop.

Bruce has been a member of the Association's Board of Directors since 1984. He chaired our first Corporate Membership drive that year and served in 1985 as Member-at-Large, working primarily in the area of political lobbying. At the same time he was a member of the Board of Directors at Montalvo and at Happy Hollow Park & Zoo.

Currently Bruce also serves as a Vice President of the San Jose Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Christmas-in-the-Park Committee, and is an active member of the downtown Rotary Club.

One of Bruce's main goals for his term of office as our Association President is to give our Docents and Volunteers new tools to work with, in the form of new buildings and exhibits. He hopes to see the image of the Museum enhanced in the community — a goal which will be reached under his capable and enthusiastic leadership.
PROMOTIONAL VIDEO TAPE MADE FOR SAN JOSE HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Lights! Camera! Action! Those words echoed through the buildings on Friday, November 16 as the San Jose Historical Museum starred in its own Gibson and Fiddler theme, compliments of Lockheed Missiles and Space Corporation.

As a special Community Services project for the LMSC Management Association, two video programs will be edited from the seven hours of tape taken that Friday. A 10-15 minute version will be shown as promotional spots on local TV, to advertise the Museum, especially Living History Day. The longer, thirty-minute tape will be used as training for new docents and volunteers, and also to show groups a preview of their tours. It can also be sent with applications for foundation grants, showing the Museum’s “live” close-up and capturing all the special magic that only visual images can reveal.

The sky was grey and threatening that Friday, but that didn’t dampen the enthusiasm and spirit of the production crew and their “talent.” Four very patient docents, Lloyd Batchelder, Merle Metcalf, Doc Near and Jim Collins, waited “between takes” while the cameraman and the director, Bill Hewitt and Ruth Lee, both Lockheed employees, set up lights, adjusted lenses, tried different angles, etc. Then the fully costumed docents proudly described their buildings: the stables, the Umbarger House, the Print Shop, the Post Office and the Bank. Michael Murray spoke from the hotel lobby on behalf of City & Museum Association.

Several local “celebrities” who have special interests in the Museum took time from their busy schedules to appear in the videotape. Austen Warburton spoke lovingly about the Doctor’s office that belonged to his grandfather. Rod Diridon told of his involvement with the Trolley Car restoration project. Yvonne Baskin spoke, “The Values, a history of agriculture in Santa Clara Valley, appeared in the segment on the Stevens House.” Pat Housakos told all about the Empire Fire House and the San Jose Fire Department’s Master Team. We plan to ask Mayor Tom McEnery to introduce the video from his office citing the importance of history to a community.

The idea of a videotape to promote the Museum came to me one rainy Saturday afternoon as I was serving behind the desk in the Pacific Hotel, my usual volunteer spot once a month. I had just made a short promotional tape for a special function at Loma Prieta (their unique work — procedures writer and coordinator). I was eager to polish my scripting and editing skills and at the same time make a contribution to the Museum, which has given me so many enjoyable hours. As a 40-year resident in Santa Clara Valley, I’ve seen the radical changes those years have brought to our Valley of Heart’s Delight, and I truly applaud the Museum for seeking to preserve the best of San Jose’s history.

So I wrote a script, presented it to the Motion Pictures and Television Department at Lockheed, and enlisted their enthusiastic support. (Actually Living History Day convinced them — they were really impressed with all the color and pageantry!) I then had to persuade the Management Association to fund the project. They agreed to authorize the expense, in conjunction with the LMSC Public Relations department, as a true community service. The idea was to show the largest employee in Silicon Valley, still respects the historical heritage of this area and supports the preservation of that heritage at the San Jose Historical Museum.

We are now in the editing process of this project. That takes the most time, but we hope to have the whole thing completed sometime after the first of the year. At that time we will hold a “Grand Premiere” to rival any Hollywood spectacle! Watch for it!

Marcella Flynn
Museum Volunteer

ADULT OUTREACH KIT, “DECADES OF CHANGE, 1919-1939,” AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC

Docent Eva Jamieson presents the Adult Outreach Kit to a group of interested women at a recent meeting of the South Valley Women’s Exchange.

The Docent Council announces a second new education program, “Decades of Change, 1919-1939.” This Adult Outreach Kit focuses on life in San Jose between the World Wars through a discussion on the headlines of the era, clothing the home, transportation, and entertainment among others. Each topic is illustrated with photographs, artifacts, and music.

The kit is the creation of a Docent Council Creative Programming subcommittee headed by Florence Haney with assistance from committee members, Ann Kedoch, Kay Malavos, Mary Radke, and Jim O’Connor. This new program is 45 minutes in length and is appropriate as an extension of a high school history lesson, a program for a club or organization and a “Remember When” time for retirement or convalescent home residents. Brought to the site by Museum Docents, this informative and entertaining look at San Jose’s History costs $25.00. Proceeds go to the San Jose Historical Museum Association to help fund the Docent Council activities and future educational programs.

Reservations may be made for this exciting new program by calling the Museum at 287-5290 Monday through Thursday between 2:00-6:00 p.m. Reservations close the 15th of the month for each succeeding month.

The Adult Outreach Kit was funded by a grant from IBM.

Virginia Beck
Docent Coordinator

ART FOR COLLECTORS

- Michael Coleman
- Maynard Dixon
- Keith Ward
- Ted Christensen
- Langdon Smith
- ADM Cooper
- Julian Rix
- Gordon Coutts
- Keith Bird
- Grant Speed
- Max Harterstein

WANTED: Maynard Dixon paintings

WESTVIEW GALLERY
2206 Lincoln Ave. • San Jose • 265-3225

GRANDMA’S ATTIC

Come and visit “Grandma’s Attic” in our Gift Shop during January. Santa has left behind a wonderful selection of Christmas items. This is your opportunity to purchase that cute little angel or that grand gift wrap at half price. Other items will also be marked down. No membership discounts will be given on sale items. In order to prepare for this sale, the Gift Shop will be closed for inventory on January 2.

Will you volunteer for the Gift Shop and O’Brien’s? Can you help or recommend a friend? Carol Carlson, Artline Vetekah
HISTORICAL FOOTNOTES OF SANTA CLARA VALLEY

THE SMITH HOUSE: AN EVERGREEN LANDMARK

There is every indication that the 111 year old Smith House in Evergreen will become San Jose's latest historical landmark. The Historical Landmarks Commission, with the recommendation of Councilwoman Patricia Saucedo, has begun the process toward landmark status of the property.

The City of San Jose must have seemed very far away when Francis Smith and his brother Charles purchased the land near the east foothills that would become the center of the little community of Evergreen. This property, which the Smiths acquired in 1867, was part of the original Spanish land grant of the Antonio Cervantes family and was known as Rancho Yerba Buena. Some of the other families to settle the area into the property had names which are familiar as street names today: Hellyer, Cottle, Tulley and Quimby.

The Smith brothers were Germans who emigrated from Hesse-Darmstadt to Schenectady, New York in 1861. While in New York, Francis learned the cooper's trade and married Catherine Schiel, the daughter of another immigrant. Francis Smith arrived in Evergreen on Christmas Day 1867, and on May 10, 1868, he and his brother opened the first commercial establishment in the area, the J. W. Smith Store. Soon there would be a thriving blacksmith shop, and later, the first winery.

Francis, or Frank as he was known by his neighbors, became the Postmaster of Evergreen. He also delayed twice a week to San Jose to bring back the mail. Payment for this service was $12 per year. After the Weinhofen Vineyard and Winery were established in the 1890's, the mail deliveries were increased to three per week.

The little store became Frank's exclusively when, in the 1880's, Charles sold his holdings and moved to San Jose to become a developer. By then, the store had become the social center of Evergreen and Frank Smith became the settlement's titular mayor during the brief quicksilver boom on what was to become Silver Creek, it was Frank Smith who slashed and outfitted the prospectors and miners.

Many of the Sights of Santa Clara County's pioneer aviator, John J. Montgomery, were made in Evergreen, and it was from the Smith store that Montgomery received the fatal crash in October 31, 1911.

Frank Smith died in 1919, and the store he operated for 51 years burned in 1929.

As for the Smith House, Frank's daughter Kate remembered:

Our house was built in 1874. It is solid redwood. the walls are not plastered even though they look like they are. Mother was here when the 1868 earthquake came and she lived above the store and held her arms on the sills as though to keep them from falling down. She said, 'if I ever build a house it will be all lumber.' Father bought $400 to invest in a house and this redwood house was built for that sum. It has ten rooms and never succumbed to earthquake tremors.

Kate Smith, who lived in the house until her death at age 103 in 1973, had been one of the County's leading citizens. She was graduated from the rural Evergreen school (since turned into a church and now an apartment building), attended San Jose Normal and became a teacher. She taught in Evergreen School for 16 years and later taught 16 years at the old Grant School in downtown San Jose. Other teaching duties took her to Palo Alto and also to the Capitola Valley.

For many years she had the distinction of being San Jose State's oldest living graduate and rarely missed the annual Golden Grad luncheon at San Jose College. Many older people, who chose to high places, returned often to extend their hanks to "Aunt Kate." The K. R. Smith School and the park is named in her honor.

The Smith House stands today on a 4.7 acre lot surrounded by trees, near the corner of San Felipe and Fowler Roads, seemingly oblivious to the intense development arising on all sides. It is now owned by Mr. Charles Poston who purchased it from the Smith heirs as a site for a proposed historic park. The house is beginnging to show the effects of time; the porch is decaying and woodpeckers have made rows of holes along the roofline. The tank house has completely crumbled and the privy is leaning precariously to the east.

The beauty of the house from a preservationist's point of view is that it still looks very much as it did when it was built. There have only been minor alterations since it was constructed in 1874 (compare the 1878 Thompson and West drawing with the current photo), and the surrounding acreage with its orchard and garden plot add to its rural charm.

It is hoped that, when the San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission completes its research and the City Council designates the property a numbered City Landmark, the owner will have the added incentive and support from the planning officials to turn the house and grounds into a distinctive historic site.

With the rampant urbanization of the East Valley, such a peaceful place could be a reminder to the new residents of what a unique settlement Evergreen was in its early years.

Note: I am indebted to the following for helping me on this article: Frances Fox who had the foresight to interview Kate Smith before her death, and the descendants of Evergreen pioneers: Mr. and Mrs. Richard Nieman, Lucille Hassler, Merrit Hassler Bushnell, and Mr. Fred Gerds.

Jack Douglas
City Landmarks Commission

SAN JOSE: THE GARDEN CITY

Back before the turn of the century, San Jose was one of the show places in California because of its gardens. Huge park-like estates fronted on The Alameda where business buildings stood today. North First Street was another avenue of beautiful estates where wide lawns and formal flower beds flanked ornate old Victorians.

Some of the estates when later subdivided provided that small lots that now line the old streets, but back in great-grandma's day a lot was an acre and sometimes several.

As early as the 1850's, some of San Jose's wealthy families were building on The Alameda. There were the estates of several judges, including Craven P. Hester, A. J. Rhodes, John H. Moore and Samuel Leib.

The Hesters had 19 acres and planted an orchard as well as ornamental shrubs and trees.

Oldtimers used to speak of a yellow climbing rose they called the "Hester".

A grape arbor led from the Rhodes house back to the orchard, and the garden was a blaze of color at all seasons of the year.

Redwoods and magnolias were special features of Judge Moore's 14 acres and one of the streets bordering the property later was named Magnolia Street.

The Leib estate, added to in later years with the purchase of neighboring properties, featured all the well-known roses of the day, an avenue of white locusts and redwoods, huge fig trees, pepper trees, plum trees, apricots, cherry trees, and many others. There were fountains and benches in the shade of the trees, and a grape arbor with an array of grape vines grown in California.

In 1929, when the Santa Clara County Pioneers proposed the city buy the Leib property (which backed up to Cinnabar Street the grounds contained just five acres. The City Council turned down the Pioneers' suggestion contending the city could not spend $150,000 for a single park.

Two years later the Leib mansion was torn down and the grounds subdivided.

Up on North First Street were the lovely homes and gardens of such as Josiah Belden, San Jose's first mayor, and James A. Clayton and Samuel Henley, two of the city's early business leaders who had houses have been preserved on streets in the area.

The Henley 20 acres ran between First and Fourth streets where Henley Avenue is today, and was planted to rare and exotic plants brought from around the world. Frederick Hall in his "History of San Jose" described the flowers and shrubs as arraying "themselves in vernal splendor" when visited by Pluma to a May day festival of the goddessess.

Belden's 25-acre "house lot" was arranged as an English park with many walks and terraces. It later became the grounds of the famed Vendome Hotel.

The 11-acre estate of James Clayton had California laurel (bay) trees on either side of the gate, citrus trees, lawns, and many exotic trees and shrubs. It also had peonies, the cutting of which were brought from Clayton's house in Wisconsin.

Patricia Loomis

Residence of Charles C. Smith and Store & Residence of Frank J. Smith, as pictured in the Historical Atlas of Santa Clara County by Thompson & West, 1876.

The Frank J. Smith residence in Evergreen, as it appears today. Photo courtesy of Jack Douglas.
This time of year, when snow once again lies deep in the Sierra forests, history buffs are reminded of the tragedy that befell the large part of California-bound emigrants in the winter of 1846-7.

Since it was first published in 1980, Charles P. McGlashan's story of the Donner party tragedy, has run through twelve printings and continues to be the principal source for this episode in history.

Although it is noted in the foreword that McGlashan writes with "an oversentimentalized view of life", he doesn't dwell on the gruesome aspects of the tragedy. "It must be remembered he was writing a narrative of the sufferings of the Donner party, and not a historian's report." The reader isn't treated to a word picture of Rebecca Clark chomping on a human leg.

There were 48 survivors out of the 90 men, women and children who comprised the party crossing the plains to California. Diaries and interviews tell the story of the long nine-months ... from the end of October until the fourth and final relief party reached the snowbound camps in mid-April.

Many of the names of the relief parties and of those rescued are familiar to local historians because they made the Santa Clara Valley their homes.

McGlashan lived in Truckee and the first chapters of his book were printed in the Truckee Republican (the newspaper he bought in 1876) as an attempt at boosting circulation. He was familiar with the harsh winters in the mountains, and as well the topography.

Among his graphic description is the three-day blizzard at Starved Camp in which James Frazier Reed almost lost his life fighting to keep the fire going, and William O'Herlihy lost his shirt burned off his back without knowing it until he smelled burning flesh.

Her Mother and Grandmother were teachers. In spite of her Father's belief that women didn't need an education. Esther entered college at an early age at 15, attending the University of California, and later the University of Wisconsin.

Esther Talbot.

Esther Talbot soared into life on January 18 during the Coyote Creek flood on her parent's farm south of San Jose, in 1906, the year of the San Francisco Earthquake. She says, "Life has been exciting ever since.

Like her home, with her family moved when she was thirteen - an early 1900s immaculate bungalow wedged between two tall apartment buildings in Willow Glen - Esther is an anachronism. She comes from an era when rules in society were different and she expects proper behavior from folks today. Independent thinking and decisiveness, peppered with wit and humor, stirred with an unorthodox can-do spirit, and a lifetime commitment to service for others, characterize five-foot-tall Esther.

Erna Holzer, author and teacher, says, "What I admire about Esther Talbot is her readiness to tackle new roles and her versatility. She taught history at Mountain View High School (called Middle School today) for 43 years, traveled to exotic places, was a musician and painter. In retirement, she took up creative writing and journalism, wrote a weekly newspaper column, and articles which appeared in prestigious magazines."

Dorothy Strong, fellow teacher and friend, says Esther was an inspiring teacher. She quotes Esther's words, "I put salt on my students' education to give them a thirst for knowledge."

Esther attended Lowell Grammar School on 8th and Reed, and San Jose High School.

Especially Esther.

Esther Talbot passed away on January 18 during the Coyote Creek flood on her parent's farm south of San Jose, in 1906, the year of the San Francisco Earthquake. She says, "Life has been exciting ever since."
A TELEVISION NEWSREEL FILM INDEXING PROJECT

One of the Museum's best-kept secrets is an extensive archive of television newsreel film housed in the South Warehouse. Consisting of just under a million feet of local news broadcast between 1965 and 1979, the film was offered to the San Jose Historical Museum by KNTV Channel 11. Although the Museum lacked staff and funds at the time to process the large collection, the curators recognized the potential for historical significance of the film and were quick to accept the gift. The dates of coverage included years of significant events and change, and documented the Santa Clara Valley's transition, from a series of bedroom communities to an international center of electronics technology. All the growing pains of the community were recorded on those thousands of years of film — the dreams and denouncements of its politicians, the pleasures and tragedies of its citizens, and above all the daily progress and problems of a modern San Jose building its history in our lifetime.

With the assignment of a Museum intern to the curatorial department in the fall of 1985, some progress was begun in documenting the scope of the collection, and in making plans for its eventual use by the public. The first problem tackled was a simple inventory and description of the collection, noting what dates were covered and how much footage was involved. In order to accomplish this, the films were viewed via half-speed viewing, and cataloged on a computerized database. This organizational task provided an instant look at the time coverage, and revealed that, as suspected, not all days or even months within the range were fully covered in the collection.

Next, groups of dates were selected for the preparation of a subject index. The creation of a subject index was a crucial part of this project, since the collection would remain useless without a guide to the information contained in each day's newscast. The selection of identifying key words presented a difficult problem, because standardized library subject headings were too general for the very specific events and people recorded on the film. However, by incorporating the local headings already established by the Museum's Archives volunteers and using tried and true WPA-project rules for indexing newspapers, a cross-index was created for story subjects, people in the news, and story locations. The Museum was very fortunate to receive a number of newscast scripts with the film dating from 1966 through 1969, which provided a quick reference to filmed stories. The years 1970 through 1979 were also accompanied by written film logs, which identified the stories and time elapsed on each reel. The remainder of the film must await the time and funding for inspection by sound Cinescope and local events research.

With the scope and content of the collection now understood, the Museum now faces the challenging task of preparing the collection for public use. The news film holds the potential for creation of an important resource of images about the history, politics, economics, religion and sociology of the modern Santa Clara Valley. The user will be able to view local historical events as they happened, using the visual media to support written documentation and analysis. The racial strife of the 1960s, hippie love-ins in Spartan Stadium, the rise of local political figures, the mercurial growth of the semiconductor and computer industries, visiting dignitaries, local festivals, border strikes, record breaking sports events — all were recorded by Channel 11's diligent reporters, and now await review.

We join a select number of film archives across the nation in this innovative project, of whom many have broken new ground in the development of standards for processing, storing, and duplicating television news film. Following the lead of such institutions as the University of Baltimore, Cable News Network, CBS News Archives, the UCLA Television Film Archives, and San Francisco State's KQED collection, the Museum foresees transfer of the films to videotape with a published finding aid or subject index. Funding for such a project is not included in the Museum's normal operating budget; however, at the present time inquiries are being made to determine the cost of storage, cleaning, repairing, duplication, promotion & marketing, and user facilities in order to seek grant funding for this major project.

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SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN CALIFORNIA HISTORY

A few weeks ago while in the downtown public library, I happened across a book entitled Fifteen Key Events of California History by Rockwell D. Hunt. It is a 1959 publication of the Historical Society of Southern California. The table of contents listing those significant happenings appears below. I wondered why the election of Leland Stanford was included. It seems that Stanford was a strong unionist during the Civil War. The author felt that, but for Stanford's influence as Governor, California might have seceded. Hiram Johnson's election was important because of his many accomplishments in office, especially in curbing the power of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Recently, while working on other articles, I have encountered other achievements of this man. Under his program the concept of Worker's Compensation was initiated in California. In 1911 he sponsored legislation requiring judicial elections to be non-partisan. He also sponsored the Direct Primary, the Initiative, Referendum, and Recall.

Paul Jacobs, former President of our Association, had an inclusive comment about the list of events. He felt that the inventions of the automobile and motion picture had more of an impact upon this state than did several of the events cited by the author.

Can you think of anything of comparable impact that has transpired within the last 25 years?

Judge Mark Thomas, Jr. Advisory Board

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REMINISCENCES OF AN OUTGOING BOARD MEMBER

While Bruce Poble and the new Association Board members are looking forward to the challenges and goals of the future, it is only natural that those of us who are completing our four-year tenure on the Board are recalling events of the past.

Eric Bacher and Mark Thomas, each of whom served two years as President of the Association Board, can justifiably be proud of the accomplishments during their terms of office. Eric had hardly taken office in 1982 when the Museum was faced with perhaps its most serious challenge. The financial effects of Proposition 13 were being felt by the City, and the Council and Administration were seeking cuts in every service except public safety. No activity was exempt, and it was seriously considered that the Museum be closed. Under Eric’s leadership the City Council was persuaded to keep the Museum open, and the staff was cut from nine to two — the Director and a secretary. At this juncture the Association stepped in, hired people to run the recent program, special services, and later the gift shop and O’Brien’s.

The volunteers have always been the strength of the Museum, but staff people were needed to coordinate their activities.

To finance these programs membership drives was emphasized, and in the four ensuing years the membership was tripled. The taking over of the gift shop and O’Brien’s, which had been practically managed under previous management, provided another source of revenue, and the rental of certain facilities and community functions added still more. In the past couple of years a corporate membership drive was started, and although the surface has only been scratched, this should provide a major source of funds in the future.

Fortunately the salary that for the financial health of the Museum has not cloudered the major purpose — to preserve the history of the city. Our Director, Mignon Clark, has carefully guarded the Museum so that it would not simply become a miniature Disneyland. (No insult to Disneyland, it’s a fun place to visit, but its purpose is a little different than ours.) There is ample evidence to show that the public is interested in growing increasingly in the Museum and its functions.

The docent program and the volunteer group continue to grow, and in the past year, 1500 public tours bring literally thousands of visitors to the Museum grounds.

One of the major accomplishments during Mark Thomas’s Presidency was the successful drive to restore the nine employees, funded by the City. This will allow the Association to use its resources to expand its activities. At the beginning of 1986 the Association will have three employees, but it is certainly possible that this number may increase in the future. Special mention should be made of the Association’s supporters — Virginia Beck, Nancy Valby, Kathy Muller, Carol Carlson & Carol O’Brien — who have functioned so capably. The position of special activities coordinator has gradually evolved into that of Chief Administrator of Special Events. Kathy Muller, who began the year with a new title — Association Administrator.

There is a bit of nostalgia in looking back at the past four years. Not all of our goals were reached, but enough of them were so that there is a feeling of satisfaction and the major memories will always be the enthusiasm and cooperation of everyone involved with the Museum. Good luck, Bruce and the new Board members. I am sure that you will have the same feeling when your terms are finished.

Bob Dree
Advisory Board

WINTER HOPES

As winter is descending upon our valley, it brings with it for some of us our winter years again. Children have the unique facility to make a game of whatever situation they find themselves in, including the weather. Therein lies our story.

Years ago, before there was any thought of water conservation or even rain would pour, fill the creeks, and the water flow to the ocean. There were few dams to catch the run off. This led to flooding every winter around the creeks and in the lowlands.

Roosevelt Junior High School was located on the edge of Coyote Creek. Our view of the heavy storms, the creek would rise and threaten to overflow. We students would have to close watch, hoping for a flood. If it came, that would mean school would be dismissed. Such excitement as the flood waters rose, after a year or so at Roosevelt, we grew to know deep inside there would never be a flood, but our hopes were always high that this storm would be different.

Grammar school children had similar dreams. When the storm was severe enough, a Rainy Day Session was instituted. That meant we were dismissed much earlier in the day. In those times, children spent a few more hours in school each day than now, so getting out early was a real treat.

One of my most vivid memories of the weather in my childhood was the heavy fog we experienced each winter. Walking down San Carlos Street to San Jose High School, it was needed to be careful crossing streets. The fog would be so heavy, it was impossible to see the other side of the street. On foggy week out, the heavy mist hung over San Jose. Some days there would be a slight lifting of the fog and we could see well enough to improve our vision, but the sun never came out to brighten the day. Walking to school one felt as if the shrub trees and dim light was a scene set for a mystery movie. But coming back home in the afternoon, the sun would be shining brilliantly and the air crisp.

There was wonderful snow and all was sparkling. The contrast never ceased to amaze me.

Those who lived in the east foothills, as lows as White Road even, would look down on a sea of fog. Down in the drawing, the darkness made it seem as if the fog extended on forever. In reality it was quite low, but very dense.

Today we experience a light fog now and then that burns off quickly, not the weeks and months of darkness we had a long time ago.

One reason for the change. As San Jose grew and the farmlands gave way to buildings and parking, dampness of the ground appeared. Also, each building was heated and emitted enough heat to change the conditions that caused the fog. Only the building would know for sure, but it sounds like a good idea. Whatever the reason, the fog is back.

Children now make up other games to fit our modern time. Those who are depressed by foggy days will find the Alternative Book Club. The fog, foggy days, vacation place noted for the good foggy days.

Wilma Virgo Leo

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 22, 1986
Presentation of Adult Outreach Kit
Decades of Change: 1969-1989
Pacific Hotel Meeting Room
7:30 PM
February 5, 1986
San Jose’s Greatest Fire
Dwight Bentel
Pacific Hotel Meeting Room
7:30 PM
February 8, 1986
Gaslighter Theater Party
Gaslighter Theater — Campbell
2:30 PM Showtime

SPECIAL NOTE TO EMPLOYEES OF IBM AND GENERAL ELECTRIC!

You are invited to join the Museum as a participating in the matching gift programs of both IBM and the General Electric Foundation.

The IBM program, in which we have participated for two years, matches the donations of its employees on the basis of two to one. For example, IBM gives us $50 for every $25 membership donation we receive from an IBM employee. It is only necessary that the employee obtain the proper Matching Gift Form at work and include it with his membership application and check.

The General Electric Foundation matches dollar-for-dollar the amount of money employees give to an organization approved by the Foundation trustees. Former employees are also eligible to participate in the GE program, which is called “More Gifts. . . More Givers.” For an application, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to General Electric, 175 Currier Avenue, San Jose, CA 95120. The mail code (M/C) is 894.

If you are an employee of either IBM or GE, we urge you to take advantage of these generous matching gift programs when renewing your membership in the Museum Association for 1986.

The San Jose Historical Museum is part of the City of San Jose Parks and Recreation Department.

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