SAN JOSE CITY COUNCIL MEETS TO STUDY MUSEUM

On February 14, 1985 the San Jose City Council met as a Committee of the Whole to study the subject of the San Jose Historical Museum and its funding. This meeting was hosted by the Board of Directors of the Museum Association and came about as a result of the Association’s lobbying efforts prior to the City’s mid-year budget review.

In early January, members of the Association Board and Association funded staff visited each Councilmember to present requests for the restoration of staff positions and development funds for the Museum. Packets of information were left at each office, giving the Councilmember the background necessary to understand the history of the Museum’s funding as well as current programs and the accomplishments of recent years.

On January 24, Board member Bruce Pohle spoke before the assembled City Council on behalf of the Association membership. He clearly and forcefully expressed the frustration felt by Museum supporters as budget cuts have essentially wiped-out City-supported staffing at the Museum in recent years. He cited the issue of maintenance, as well, and called for a commitment by the Council to the future development of the Historical Museum as a city-wide attraction.

No funds were made available to the Museum at this mid-year budget review session, but under the direction of our Council liaison, Lola Williams, the Council did vote to hold a study session on the Museum and determine some recommendations prior to the next budget hearings in June.

At that study session, held on February 14 in the Firehouse Meeting Room on the Museum grounds, presentations were made by various members of the Association Board on the Museum’s Master Plan, its potential as a major City attraction, and the community involvement the Museum enjoys.

The program included a welcome by Association President Judge Mark Thomas who set the tone of the presentations when he described the Museum Association as merely “hanging-on.” In order to make the Historical Museum a premier attraction for the City of San Jose, he said, it will take the combined efforts of the City and the Association working together and making it a priority.

(Continued on page 8.)

VISIT FILOLI HOUSE AND GARDEN TOUR

WHEN: Thursday, April 25, 1985
WHO: Association Members & their Guests
HOW: Royal Coach Tours
TIMES: 12:30 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Leaving from, and returning to, the Museum
(Park on Phelan Avenue)
COST: Members: $15.00
Non-Members: $18.00
Includes bus transportation and entrance fee

We will be visiting Filoli at one of the loveliest times of the year, early spring, when azaleas, rhododendrons and other spring flowers are in bloom.

Our tour will include a docent-led tour of the modified Georgian-style mansion designed by Willis Polk for Mr. and Mrs. William B. Bourne II in 1916. The house is an outstanding and important example of country house architecture in the United States, and is one of the few in California that remains intact in its original setting.

We will also tour the 10 acres of formal gardens which were designed by Bruce Porter and Isabella Worn to take maximum advantage of the natural surroundings and vistas.

Tours are held at Filoli, rain or shine, so come prepared! Reservations are limited.

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

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

NAME:
Address:
Phone Number: 
Number of Reservations: 
Member? 
Reservation Confirmed: 

Visit Filoli Trip 4/25/85

[Image of Filoli House and Gardens]
MUSEUM SERVICE COUNCIL

The wonderful weather in February has increased weekend attendance and kept our tour guides extremely busy. Soon we will staff each building on weekends with "information specialists" and hand out literature to the public to tour at their own pace. Staffing requires many more volunteers than are needed for our regular scheduled tours. Our volunteer leaders interested in this special kind of community service, please have them call the Museum Service Council.

We are proud of our growth these past 2 years. Museum Service Council volunteers have recorded these hours for 1982

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>2,460</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>4,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>8,760</td>
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We enjoy sharing bits of our history with visitors from near and far. Bring your friends for a stroll through the park, lunch in our unique gift shop, and shopping in our own unique gift shop.

Dulcie Janzen
Volunteer Coordinator

DOCENT REPORT

Forty-five enthusiastic prospective docents have signed up to begin Docent Training. The training is from February 25 through May 20, and includes lectures by Phil Grasser on the Spanish Era and Mexican-Rancho Era, and a Victorian Daily Life lecture (Caroline M. O'Sullivan) plus a Hands-on lecture on "Pre-Technology," by Dennis Moyinhan, Frances Fox and several other qualified speakers will also be scheduled before the actual in-Gallery Training sessions take place each Monday morning. I am confident that each new docent that passes through this fine training series will emerge very well qualified to represent the Museum in every way.

Joe Near, our Continuing Education Chairman, has arranged for the docents to attend authors' readings at the Center on March 11, at the Tea House in the Japanese Friendship Gardens on the grounds of Kelley Park. We are looking forward to feedback on these.

It is close to impossible to list all the projects the docents are currently working on for the Museum. Believe me, they have all kept working hard. I am quite proud of the entire group and all they have accomplished these past few months.

Docent Council President

FROM THE EDITOR

The months of January and February were busy, filled with political lobbying by the Museum Association Board and Association-funded staff. We endeavored to meet with every member of the San Jose City Council individually in early January, and as we made those rounds, visiting with the Councilmembers and their aides and expanding our requests, it became clear that many of you had answered our plea in the last issue of this Newsletter. You contacted your Council representative in support of the Museum. Your letters were noticed! One Council aide even told us she had shown your signed letters written on behalf of the Historical Museum than on any other subject up for discussion at the meeting.

The Committee of the Whole session, which occurred as a result of our lobbying efforts, can only be viewed as a positive step for their determination to see the Museum's basic funding restored. Our staffing proposals will be addressed by the Council again in June when they are adopting a City budget for the next fiscal year.

The support and concern for the Museum, addressed to the Mayor and City Council, are therefore still appropriate and necessary in the coming months, to reinforce our determination to see the Museum's basic funding restored. Your expression of support do make a difference!

Kathy Muller
Editor
ANNUAL CORPORATE MEMBERS

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IBM

Join us for a showing of MAGGINI — THE TOP HAND

WHEN: Tuesday, March 26, 1985
WHERE: Good Samaritan Hospital Auditorium
WHEN: 7:00 PM Wine & Cheese
5:00 PM Remarks by Dr. Bert Johnson, Showing of film
COST: $5.00 per person

Maggini — Top Hand is a short documentary film produced under the direction of Bert Johnson, MD. in 1983. It tells the story of his friend, Charlie Maggini.

Charlie grew up in Tres Pinos, entered his first rodeo in San Jose in his early teens, and went on to become world champion cowboy in 1927. He was a foreman for Miller & Lux and enjoyed numerous exploits as a cowboy and on the rodeo circuit.

Dr. Johnson met Charlie when he was an aspiring cowboy and team roper and Charlie — then in his 90's — was far and away the best horseman and roper in the arena. In preparation for the production of this film, Dr. Johnson spent many hours at the old cowboy cook house on the Cone Ranch taping Charlie's life story. Charlie died in the spring of 1982 at the age of 97.

The film is set against a backdrop of the green hills and beautiful rural scenery of the Santa Clara Valley. Dr. Johnson says he attempted to capture the essence of the cowboy and to preserve in some way the Western history Charlie had experienced.

Join us for wine and cheese before the showing of the film in the reception area outside the Good Samaritan Hospital Auditorium. Reservations are necessary and space is limited. Checks should be made payable to the San Jose Historical Museum Association and sent (along with a self-addressed stamped envelope and the reservation form below) to San Jose Historical Museum, 650 Phelan Avenue, San Jose, CA 95123 Attn: Kathy Muller. You will receive your reservation form by return mail as a confirmation.

Maggini Film 3/26/85
NAME: _______________________________________________________
ADDRESS: ____________________________________________________
PHONE NUMBER: __________________ NUMBER OF RESERVATIONS: ___
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED ______ RESERVATION CONFIRMED: □

WANTED!
Individuals interested in public speaking, to be trained to make presentations on the Joss House — San Jose’s 1888 Chinese Temple which the Museum plans to reconstruct.

For information: 287-2290

IN THE COLLECTION

Already in 1985 the Museum has received two major donations. Both arrived in the same week. FMC donated a restored 1897 Anderson prune grader and the basket, levers and door for a prune dipper. The grader has the original stenciling of the Anderson Prune Dipping Company on the machine. This one was found in Los Gatos. Dry graders were widely used in this valley.

The Anderson Prune Dipper Company is a predecessor of Anderson-Barrgrove which merged with Bean Sprayer in 1926 to form Food Machinery Company. We are pleased to have this piece of equipment which represents a significant aspect of agricultural history here.

The other major donation is from Mrs. Joseph Hills Wythe. This is a very nice French victorian parlour set. The furniture has been used by the family here since around 1860. It has an interesting story that has been handed down in the family. It seems that Miles Hills (grandfather to Joseph Hills Wythe) went to the docks in San Francisco to purchase lumber for the home he was building in the “Willoes”. While there he met a Frenchman who was meeting his bride bringing her household furnishings. Unfortunately she had died enroute and had been buried at sea. Miles Hills then acquired the furniture for his home at 100 Minnesota Avenue. Another family story is that Minnesota was named for the home state of settlers in the area and Lincoln Avenue to show support for the President. The house built by Miles Hills has been replaced by the parking lot for Bergman’s Department store.

Donations to the San Jose Historical Museum are tax deductible. Please call the Museum at 287-2290 for an appointment if you have items of historical significance to donate.

Nancy Valley
Registrar

Artist's rendition of the restored 1897 Anderson prune grader recently donated to the Museum by FMC.
Dear Reader,

Pen & Inklings entered the scene amidst events that made it difficult to obtain immediate reader reactions and opinions. What is more diverting than the Holidays and Super Bowl? Many a Christmas card had the hastily added line "We have your new book but haven't had time to read it." However, a preview of certain positive reactions forecasts from good-to-enthusiastic reception.

I have always enjoyed a variety of readers from whom to draw conclusions. First, I prize the "Cover to Cover" readers who slowly absorb the entire book. They are my backbone friends. Then are the "Selective Readers" who shop through the book looking for a place to light. An ever-catchy cartoon may stop their hunt. Then come those "Collector Readers"? They collect pictures or characters. They fortify themselves conversationally with a fast skim through.

Pen & Inklings is not a complete anthology of my books and booklets. It has four divisions. The first is a representative selection of the books that we concluded would be of general interest. So far "Mr & Cy" appears to be most popular, having written this story more than any of the others.

In the Artist's Section, illustrations or cartoons play the most important part in Pen & Inklings. Readers have spotted the writer in the one-room Doyle School class of 1901 amongst the school's total attendance of 23 pupils. I am proud to say that I can still name 81 years later, 14 of the 23 pupils. I could be the sole survivor of this gang of prune pickers and apricot cutters.

The page on Dogs gets favorable attention as do other miscellaneous cartoons.

As stated in the book, I never presumed or endeavored to pose as a poet. I restrained myself and, in fact, the reader will see and read my absolute total output in Pen & Inklings, namely four poems or rimeuses, jingles, lyrics, as you please. My "Ode to the Prune" drew a few sharp objections because of my apparent intolerance for this lowly fruit. I admit that it was once the backbone support of the Valley of Heart's Delight and referred to revise one word of this caustic ditty. None of such critics ever screamed their knives packing this miserable fruit over sharp adobe clogs for hours and at 54 per box.

Maps? Always my particular pleasure and enjoyment in production. Practically all are out of print, but Pen & Inklings contains the collection almost in entirety.

Some required weeks or months of research, drawing first in pencil, then in ink, all under my grandfather's hand-held magnifying glass. No projects, no deadlines to meet. Indeed sometimes a delightful recess from writing. Book readers' reactions? They prefer the ones I animated, proving again that pictures are magnetic.

On the front and back inside covers many large books have pictures or designs used simply as decorations. Not so with Pen & Inklings! You see a reduction of my Cartoon Map of Santa Clara Valley. Many thousands of these have been sold in the last 20 years. What you see once actually existed. It deserves your close study with a large magnifying glass. New bookowners will be surprised at discoveries. As an example,
Passing Farms: Enduring Values
By Yvonne Jacobson

A project that Yvonne Jacobson began in 1979 recording stories of her father's farm, became a widely acclaimed photo-documentary exhibit, and has now become a fascinating book, Passing Farms: Enduring Values, released this past December.

Born and raised on a still-existing farm in Sunnyvale, Yvonne Jacobson grew up at the end of the agricultural era when Santa Clara Valley was a vast fruit bowl. Her parents and grandparents were orchardists, pledged to the valley's rich soil. She, herself, developed a total affection and intellectual commitment to preserving its history.

Although a humanities teacher, Yvonne has oriented her academic training since 1979 toward her own life experiences and that of her neighbors for the past three generations.

In Passing Farms: Enduring Values the history of agriculture is traced from the planting of the first fruit trees by the padres in 1771 down to the present Silicon Valley. Every phase of development is covered. Chapters include: Land Ownership and Early American Farming from 1848-1880, the Horticulturists and Family Farms, Labor, Immigration and the American Dream, Government and Co-operatives, Inventions as well as Technology and Research and Farming in Santa Clara County Today.

The book is a wonderful blend of solid research and human anecdotal history of the small farmer.

The author personally knew the ethnic groups that labored on the farms: the Californio, Mexican, Italian, Yugoslav, Yemenite, Scandinavian, French, Portuguese, Japanese, and Chinese. She investigates the immigration movement, describing how the workers formed neighborhoods and communities, some of which endure to this day.

Monumental research went into the chapter on farming technology, showing, perhaps for the first time, the significant agricultural contributions made by the Santa Clara Valley in canning techniques, among other advancements.

The book covers fifteen small towns in the county with their own stories and how they fed San Jose, bringing business and prosperity. In return, San Jose provided them with banking and manufacturing services, as well as supplies and technology.

The 1920's saw a peak of nearly 7,000 farm owners. This number decreased during the depression of the 1930's. By 1945 the number of farms dropped to 6,000. In 1978 there were only 1,427 (mostly small farms) remaining, totaling 21,000 acres of farm land. Today the farm families remain in small pockets throughout the valley, scattered like so many pieces of confetti waiting to be swept with the change.

Hard physical labor on the farms was often done by women. Widows or women who had inherited property determined to be farmers on their own, and often did the work themselves if there was no alternative. While the census of 1920 listed only 363 women farmers in Santa Clara County, less than ten percent of the total, most farm wives were an integral part of the system and could be considered farmers too. Children were an important factor in the seasonal work. Schools opened later in the fall so the children could help with the all-important harvest.

A bit of humor has it that Lewis Pellier, who introduced the French prune, was the best educator in the valley. The reason was that children picking prunes on their hands and knees had such a good taste of physical labor that they determined to go to college and avoid doing such menial work for life. Today we have come to rely more on laborers from Mexico and mechanical devices.

Looking back at the beauty of the valley the author comments, "The great masters of the farmers were still the weather, the markets, labor and money. Sometimes life seemed a series of conflicts and disasters tempered by endurance, patience, frugality and hard work. Even the beauty of the landscape and being part of nature's un-ending cycle were among the highest rewards for individuals and the community."

The camaraderie of farm families helping one another reveals the value of a closely knit community, which concern for one another is of prime importance.

The elegant 250 page 9" x 11" hardbound book has 140 photographs, twenty of them in color, helpful maps and drawings, a comprehensive bibliography, index, and a foreword by Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, Wallace Stegner. Rare photographs from private collections and images from photographers Ansel Adams and Dorothée Lange, bring an almost forgotten part of the Valley's past vividly to mind. The artistic end sheets are illustrated with bing cherries (twice their actual size) and Blenheim dried apricots.

Passing Farms: Enduring Values, published by William Kaufman, Inc. in cooperation with the California History Center, DeAnza College, with special discounts for $28.50 with a 10% discount if purchased by a member at the Museum's Gift Shop.

Yvonne Jacobson's photo-farm exhibit was donated to the San Jose Historical Museum and will be permanently displayed in the Steven's Ranch Fruit Storage Shed.

Frances Fox

HISTORICAL NEWS ITEM

The following is from a young girl's composition book, dated September 28, 1906, and found in the collections of the San Jose Historical Museum:

COMING TO SCHOOL

As I was riding to school this morning on the car, we passed the children of the lower grades coming to school. Little girls with their hats hanging on the back of their necks, with their lunch-boxes in their hands, shipping along merrily as if school was the greatest fun in the world. The boys, too, were throwing apples back and forth having a game of pitch and catch as they walked along while others were jumping on the backs of farm wagons to get a free ride; others were jumping ditches and running races, and all were in for all the sport there was, before school began.

(researched by Jane Hegart)
The San Jose Historical Museum Docent Council recently received a $1500.00 grant from IBM Corporation. This generous donation will be used to complete preparations for the new Docent Council educational program, the Adult Outreach Kit. This new outreach program, entitled Decades of Change, is designed to increase the appreciation of the years, 1919 - 1939. The program, begun as a 1964-65 Creative Programming project under Chairperson Ellen Garbokie, is being developed by Docents: Florence Harvey, chairperson, Jim O'Connor, and Ann Kadoch with the assistance of Kay Maloves and Mary Radio.

Having received the IBM donation, these Docents anticipate completion of the project by late spring. The Adult Outreach Kit will be offered to high school social classes, clubs and organizations, senior groups, retirement homes, convalescent hospitals and any other interested adult groups. There will be a reasonable fee charged for the 30 minute to one hour-long presentation. Through the sponsorship of IBM, the program will be offered free to the twenty-one Nutrition Sites in Santa Clara County.

Virginia Beck
Docent Coordinator

F.M.C. DONATES TO HAPPY HOLLOW

In December of 1964, the San Jose Mercury News requested that Happy Hollow Park and Zoo be included in their Christmas Wish Book program. The Christmas Wish Book is a special pullout section of the paper with a variety of possible donations that can be made by the public. Happy Hollow's wish was "a new set of clothes for Danny the Dragon" (refurbishing). As a result of the newspaper article, $1,500 in cash was raised by public donations. FMC Corporation, Central Engineering Division, of San Jose has volunteered to complete cosmetic restoration of Danny, FMC employee, Vernon Krueger, is coordinating the drive for the company.

FMC will repair, fiberglass and paint Danny. The project will use all volunteer FMC employees and is expected to be completed in six to eight weeks. The estimated value of this restoration project is $15,000. In addition, the Sherwin-Williams Paint Company of San Jose will donate all paints needed for the project ($1,500).

The Parks Division, Tuer Service Yard, is being used to transport Danny to and from FMC for the restoration project.

The happy dragon, sponsored by the Happy Hollow Corporation, will be held sometime in April. FMC employees and City representatives will be in attendance. The staff of Happy Hollow Park and Zoo wishes to thank FMC Corporation, Central Engineering, Sherwin-Williams Paint Company of San Jose and the general Public for their efforts to restore Danny. Thanks to you, Danny will be on display to entice visitors to explore the forests of Happy Hollow for many years to come.

San Jose has come a long way from adobe houses, mud streets and a population of 5,000, to celebrate her 150th birthday on March 27 as an incorporated city.

This is a date she shares with two other California municipalities, Benicia and San Diego.

San Jose is either California's second oldest city or its fourth, but the answer likely will never be known because nobody leaned over Gov. Peter H. Burnett's shoulder to see which act of incorporation he signed first in 1850. Sacramento had become the state's first incorporated municipality just one month earlier.

The new San Jose city government, headed by Mayor Joseph Boland, convened April 13 in a little adobe jardugo (City Hall) on the plaza within hollering distance of the statehouse where the first Legislature convened in session.

Counselmen at the first meeting were F.B. Clement, Benjamin Cory, James D. Culi, John H. Garrison, Julian Hanks, William Foster and Peter Scherebeck.

It is the latter, a seafaring Dane, who gained his experience in municipal affairs in pre-gold rush San Francisco days, that this story is about.

Scherebeck had been a San Jose resident only a couple of years. He had lived during most of the 1840s in San Francisco, where he had a home on the corner of Kearny and Washington streets and where he was engaged in trading, served in 1847 as county District Attorney and became involved in the life of the bustling little city by the bay.

He came to San Jose in 1848 with his wife, Mary, who with her three brothers, John, Michael and Robert Sullivan, had traveled overland to California in 1844. They had come with the Stevens-Townsend-Murphy party, which opened the way across the Sierra for later emigrant traffic over what is now Interstate 80.

How long Peter Scherebeck stayed in San Jose is not certain, but he served one year on the council, adding his vote to such city council actions as prohibiting gambling, closing all business houses on Sundays, and to fire prevention measures such as prohibiting construction of buildings of "canvas, willow, cotton cloth, tules or mustard." He died in San Francisco in 1862, according to a biographical sketch of his son, Thomas J. Scherebeck, written in 1888.

Tom was born in San Jose on Nov. 21, 1849, and was attending school at St. Ignatius in San Francisco at the time of his father's death, which forced him to abandon his studies and get a job as a clerk in a dry-goods store. He later became a carpenter and in 1878 worked in the lumber mills in Mendocino County.

The Scherebeck men had a fondness for girls named Mary Sullivan. Specifically, because in April 1888 Tom married Mary, daughter of an East San Jose farmer named Patrick Sullivan.

The wedding was held in St. Patrick's Church and the bride's parents gave the young couple a cottage on the ranch as a wedding gift.

The Patrick Sullivans, native of Ireland, came to California via Canada in 1850. They settled on land at King Road and Alum Rock Avenue, the latter constructed through Sullivan land that he gave for the right-of-way. Patrick Sullivan and his sons (there were nine children) operated a dairy, which after his death was continued by his sons.

Thomas J. Scherebeck and his wife were the parents of a daughter and son - Marie, who taught school in Napa, where she met and married Claud Harry Dean; and Thomas Peter Scherebeck, who was a streetcar motorman and conductor, worked as a fireman for the Southern Pacific Railroad, and later was a cab driver in San Jose. He died in 1964 at the age of 73.

When Peter Scherebeck sat on that first city council in the spring of 1850, the "city" boasted only 26 residences within its boundaries. The streets were hardly more than cow trails except for Market Street, which opened into the plaza that ran from the present Santa Clara to San Carlos streets. This was the center of life and business in San Jose. Here were the bullfight rings, garage dump, the ditch that furnished the water supply, the statehouse, Jacob Hoppe's store that housed the post office, and a few other buildings. Tents furnished quarters for the legislators. The jardugo was located on the west side of Market Street about where Post Street cuts in.

Yellow mustard 10 feet high fenced the little settlement and encroached on St. James Square and the swampy area that is now the San Jose State University campus.

If only Peter Scherebeck and his fellow councilmen could see it now.

Patricia Loomis

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR LIVING HISTORY DAY

San Jose Historical Museum, Kelley Park
MAY 13, 1985

Men Women Children

no experience needed To re-enact a day from 1885

For more info 408-282-2290

Planning meetings March 31 April 30 May 11
AESTHETICISM COMES TO SAN JOSE

It is amazing how quickly trends in style and fashion spread across the country and the world, and then are quickly passed over when the next wave hits the shore. Even without the help of radio and television, the fashions of the pioneer city of San Jose were influenced by the ideas of a small group of avant-garde artists and architects halfway around the world in England. I am speaking in particular about the changes in style of our local Victorians living in the reign of Victoria, (1837-1901) a series of architectural styles evolved in England, and were shortly copied or modified for use in America. All women, in America, unquestionably accepted by builders and homeowners in frontier San Jose.

The earliest was the Gothic style (1840-1860), later came the Italian Renaissance style (1860-1880), and even more ornate hybrids, referred to as the Stick or Eastlake style (1870-1900), the Queen Anne style (1880-1910), and lastly, the Craftsman style (1890-1914).

The changes in taste and style (fads and fashions) have always been a reflection of artistic and aesthetic theories, a reaction to the crasser effects of the industrialization that swept England during the reign of Victoria. The popular writer and critic John Ruskin, along with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (artists and poets which included the Rossettis, William Morris and others) started the movement off by extolling the many moral and artistic virtues of the Middle Ages.

By the 1870’s, the Italian Renaissance became the rage. It was originally based on the critic Walter Pater and the members of the Aesthetic Movement who believed in “art for its own sake,” a reaction to the era of plain houses. The excesses of Oscar Wilde who, to some, personified the aesthetic movement, were parodied by Gilbert and Sullivan in their operetta, “Patience, or Bunthorne’s Bride.” In the play, Bunthorne, the Wildean aesthetic poet, admits he’s “in a mood for a lot of the movement to which he no longer subscribes.”

Let me confess: A languid love of clothes does not blight me! Lank limbs and haggard cheeks do not delight me! I do not care for dirty greens! By every man may I do not long for all one sees

that’s Japanese.

I am not uttering platitudes.

In stained glass attitudes.

In short, my mediocrities affection.

But, a moon of love of admiration.

and later in the patter song that follows, Bunthorne states:

...you will rank as an apostle in the high aesthetic band, if you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a Lilly in your Medieval hand.

A British humorist described an aesthetic interior “in which the young intellectual woman could safely relax and lend a properly attentive ear to the patter of Pater and whispers of Wilde,” as one decorated with pendant Japanese fans. The cast iron mantelpiece, tastefully incised with sunflowers by Mr. Walter Crane, supported two Chinese ginger jars and a vase of silk flowers, in which a solitary lily bore witness to the high regard in which the Oriental ideals of flower arrangement were now held.

Wilde toured the U.S. in 1882, sponsored by the American “Parnassus.” One of the events of that year, Oscar lectured to San Joseans on the importance of home decoration. The talk, given at the California Theatre on Fourth and Street, was only moderately well attended. Journalists were naturally more comfortable writing about Oscar’s appearance that in dealing with the subject matter of his talk. Wilde encouraged this by offering up rather dull fare in a not particularly interesting presentation. The writer for the Mercury described him thus:

“For before the audience stood a most grotesque boilish-looking young man, whose dress may have been modeled after that of and one of some forgotten era, but in the absence of that, nevertheless, the most atrociously ugly part of wearing apparel he could well be devised by a man. A suit of dark velvet, with some suggestion of having been buried for centuries, with the coat worn round and round, and the vest exposed a literal of a shirtfront and knee breeches met a pair of thin black

stockings, through which showed another pair of white ones.” (This writer was obviously in the front row.)

The Mercury reporter clearly had his own standards for what constituted an aesthetic individual, and Oscar didn’t fit the bill.

“When we come to his face we see a heavy set countenance, devoid of all the mobile shades of expression which one would naturally associate with aesthetic aspirations and a poetic soul. A countenance that gives little or no evidence of the strong intellect and clear understanding of the man. A rather low but intellectual brow, a straight long nose, and large mouth, set with large disagreeable teeth, form a not very pleasant whole. There is something in his dark eyes however, which redeems this lack of beauty.”

Oscar, who engendered hoots and catcalls in the mining camps (where he gained the miners’ respect by drinking them all under the table), and in less civilized cities such as Stockton and San Francisco, found the staid citizens of San Jose proper and attentive, or as the Mercury reported the next day: “The audience throughout the evening expressed neither pleasure or displeasure, but listened in respectful and decorous silence to what the lecturer had to say.”

After such a sobering experience, Wilde probably went out afterward for a tassel of glass of General Henry M. Naglee’s famous local brandy.

One wonders if anyone in the crowd, who mainly gathered to see the controversial Wilde in his green velvet pantaloons, ever associated Wilde’s ideals and the ornate Gothic, Italianate and Queen Anne homes they lived in. Wilde must have been impressed to see so many lavish Victorian homes in what he expected to be a rustic frontier. Could the dreamy poets of the Pre-Raphaelite movement ever have imagined, in their most extravagant flights of fancy, that the ideals of aestheticism would ever find the way to San Jose?

Note: I am indebted to my friend Robert Pepper, emeritus Professor of English at San Jose State University, and Wilde scholar, for bringing to my attention Oscar Wilde’s historic appearance in San Jose. For further accounts of Wilde’s adventures in the West, I recommend that you read Pepper’s Oscar Wilde: Irish Poets and Poetry of the 20th Century, Book Club of California publication number 149, 1972.

Jack Douglas
Member, Landmarks Commission

HISTORICAL NEWS ITEM

The San Jose Herald, March 3, 1912
p. 3 col. 5

OLD SAINT CLAIRE MISSION CROSS BLOWN DOWN IN HAVOC OF GALE

The old mission cross was laid low after standing for 125 years before the sanctuary of St. Clare’s in San Jose. It was originally planted in 1777 in front of the mission. Floods from the Guadalupe overflowed the mission, washing away the roots of years of patient toil on the part of the fathers. In 1781 the mission was removed to the “grove of the oaks,” near where the Santa Clara College now stands. Then the cross was raised a second time. In 1818 earthquake destroyed the mission, its walls being cracked and the building rendered unsafe. Then the Goodwin brothers built the mission in the Auberry style in the 1840’s. Where there stood generations passed, until the first day of March, 1902. Recent rains bore it inside the gates of the college, where relic hunters could not reach it. So old and worn it was that what was once firm, hard wood, now may be squeezed in the hand like a sponge. The cross will be provided with a new protecting case and set in place again, probably with a cement foundation.

(researched by Leolo Hawes)

GOLD RUSH LIKE WAR

1849 is one of the best known dates in American history according to J.S. Holliday at his recent lecture for the League of Eastfield Celebrity. The author of The World Rushed In contends that the Gold Rush impacted our national consciousness like a war. In addition, it had a permanent effect on our perceptions of the nation and of the nature of California.

The Gold Rush derives its similarity with war from the fact that the main participants were men. In general, the men left their families behind and said, “Don’t worry, I’ll be back.” As in war, contact with home was maintained by letters. About a million letters were exchanged in 1850. This correspondence forms the basis of Mr. Holliday’s book.

At the same time the frontier moved to the Pacific and gave rise to the image of a continental nation. In time the center was filled. California was viewed as a place of “sin” by those remaining at home. It is Holliday’s view that the image of California as an immoral place, a place of opportunity and a place of freedom all stemmed from the wide-open days of the Gold Rush.

The World Rushed In uses the letters exchanged between William Swain and his family to illustrate this profound national experience.

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CITY COUNCIL MEETING

(Continued from p. 1)

Jim Norman, Assistant Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, spoke on the Museum from his Department's perspective, citing the recent lens years and noting how the city has organized to help his department keep the Museum's doors open.

Marvin Bamburg, Chairman of our Development Committee, presented an overview of the Museum's ambitious Master Plan adopted by the City Council in 1972. He explained the concept of a living-working Museum and urged that the city fund the necessary extension of the street system, the utilities, and a public toilet facility, so that the Association could then pursue private monies for the development of additional buildings and attractions.

Gerry DeYoung, Chairman of the Museum Association Advisory Board as well as a member of the Happy Hollow Board of Directors, described the potential of Kelley Park as a whole. Kelley Park he said, is composed of 176 under-utilized acres located in the central portion of the City, and he urged the Council to recognize the park's future possibilities and promote it.

Bob Doerr, Association Vice-President and an active Museum Docent, cited the Museum's widespread community support and the number of volunteers it has raised to maintain the Museum each year. He also noted the thousands of school children who tour the Museum and the Peralta Alive! annually and the general public who visit from all over the world.

Finally, Board Member Bruce Pohl called the attention of the Council back to the current, specific, funding requests of the Association which include the restoration of staff positions, maintenance of existing structures and development funds for the immediate extension of the street system with utilities and other basic site improvements.

In concluding the formal portion of this Committee of the Whole meeting, Mayor Tom McKinney said, "there is really no conclusion now — that will come in June."

It is in June, when the Council adopts a budget for next fiscal year, that the Museum Association hopes to see the concrete results of its lobbying efforts.

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BUFFALO HILL ROAD MEMOY

Before World War II, gas was plentiful and cheap. This made it possible for many families to use their cars for a variety of recreational activities. One simple form of entertainment was the Sunday afternoon drive.

We would put up on a Sunday morning, have a leisurely special breakfast, dress in our best clothes and go to church. Mother often would put a whole dinner in the oven to bake while we were gone. The children would set the table in readiness. All that was left was to serve the food when we came home.

No one rushed from church on Sunday, even though we anticipated a special afternoon. This was not only a place of worship, but a place to visit with friends, catch up on the latest events in their lives, and perhaps even find someone to share our dinner and day.

With the noon already cooked and the table set, we would sit down to eat as soon as everyone had changed from their church clothes to more casual ones. After eating, no one in the family argued over doing the dishes. The sooner they were done, the sooner we would be on our way for a "Sunday Afternoon Drive."

Driving was simple. A town of fifteen thousand people needed no freeways, overpasses, and few traffic signals. If you lived in town, you could be on the outskirts and on the country roads within minutes. Once on the edge of town, it was just a matter of choice where you went. In the ailing it was always a must to drive along Blossom Hill Road. The name was an obvious choice in those days, since one could look down on a sea of blossoms below. The prunus orchards were almost continuous from the edge of San Jose to Los Gatos. It was a breath-taking sight to view as we drove slowly down the road. No one was in a hurry; everyone was moving at snail's pace in order to feast their eyes on the wondrous sight below. A warm, spring breeze caressing the cheek, the fragrance of nectar, a glorious sight. Those who experienced it never forgot.

Wilma Virgo Lee

OUR HALCYON SUBURBS

If you're thinking of fleeing the city To escape all the clutter and din Come spend a day in the suburbs To discover the bedlam we're in.

Our beautifully manicured gardens May be a fine sight to behold, But the measures used to maintain them Are not by hand labor of old.

An ear-splitting roar breaks the silence Begins every weekday at dawn From edgers and mowers and pruners and blowers When power equipment goes on.

So when you make plans for your future In striving for pastoral quiet Give thought to our mechanized suburbs In fact we might dare you to try it.

Dr. Milton Chatton

DATES TO REMEMBER

March 26, 1985 "Magician — The Top Hat" Good Samaritan Hospital Auditorium 7:30 PM
March 30, 1985 Living History Day Planning Meeting Pacific Hotel Meeting Room 10:00 AM
April 30, 1985 Living History Day Planning Meeting Pacific Hotel Meeting Room 10:00 AM
April 25, 1985 Filloli House and Garden Tour Departure from Phelan Avenue Parking Lot 1:30 PM

SAN JOSE HISTORICAL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

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