

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM NEWS & NOTES

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MARCH 2021

The News & Notes is Back!

To Be Produced Monthly,
Distributed Digitally

Until Further Notice

After a year in hiatus, the San Joaquin County Historical Museum's newsletter, the News & Notes, returns. **We are excited to continue communicating with our members.**

Some new changes are in the works for the News & Notes: the publication will for the first time in five years **be published monthly**. As the ongoing health-crisis has created a hectic and unstable environment for business and recreation, we feel the need for a more consistent newsletter.

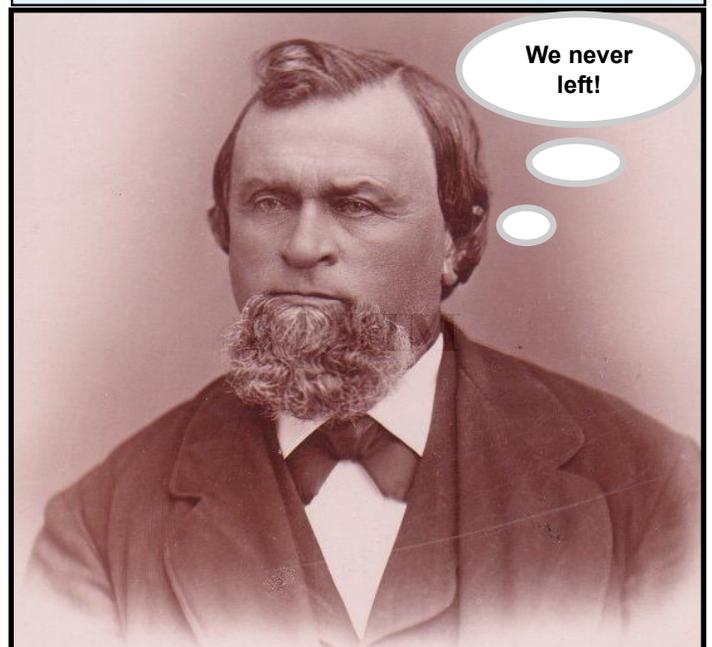
In addition to going monthly, the **News & Notes will be distributed digitally for the foreseeable future**. Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, the Museum does not have the resources for an extended print-run.

The theme of this edition of the News & Notes is "Reintroducing the Museum." Museum staff, trustees, and volunteers have been hard at work over the past twelve months, and we hope to share our progress with our membership in person, as soon as possible.

-The Staff

Calendar of Events

March 8	9 a.m. Docent Council Meeting
March 11	2 p.m. Digital Exhibit Launch
March 17	Happy St. Patrick's Day!
March 24	4 p.m. Board of Trustees Exec. mtg.
March 29	6:30 p.m. Community Lecture via Zoom
Apr. 2	San Joaquin Historian Published
Apr. 10	9 a.m. Docent Council mtg.
April 11	Happy Easter!
April 13	209 Gives Fundraiser: All Day!
Apr. 26	6:30 p.m. Quarterly Society Meeting
April 28	4 p.m. Board of Trustees mtg.



Museum Website Receives Major Facelift

Sass! Public Relations Works Wonders: Site Hailed as “Best-In-Class” by Local Educators

The San Joaquin County Historical Society & Museum website, sanjoaquinhistory.org, received a **major upgrade over the Fall and Winter**, courtesy of the exquisite craftsmanship and insightful design skills of the marketing consultants at Sass! Public Relations. With rich visual features, easy upgrade capacity, a “News & Events” calendar feature, and a snazzy take on the new logo, the site has been quite the hit in the Museum community.

Staff at the SUSD Curriculum Department referred to the new site as “beautiful” and “best-in-class.” One local history teacher and longtime veteran Valley Days educator was particularly excited for the digital membership option, where community members can join the Museum directly through our website. “This will help me advertise the Museum to my students’ parents,” she claimed.

If you haven’t already, **check out sanjoaquinhistory.org now!** In addition to plenty of rich visual content, you can also check out our “Artifact of the Month” page on the Collections page. For a sneak peek at the March Artifact, see page 7! This section will be updated monthly.

The screenshot shows the website's header with navigation links: VISIT, EXPLORE, EDUCATION, RESEARCH, JOIN & SUPPORT, NEWS & EVENTS, ABOUT, CONTACT. The main banner features a photo of a woman in a classroom with a chalkboard listing rules like 'Do not talk unless called upon' and 'Ask permission before leaving your seat'. The text 'AWARD WINNING EDUCATION' is overlaid on the photo. Below the photo is the 'SJCHOnline' section, which includes a description of the project and a 'VISIT NOW' button.

The new website includes several handy features, including the ability to make donations and become a member/renew membership online. Members subscribed online can access an exclusive “members page” by logging in, which includes old editions of the *San Joaquin Historian*, and in the future will also include invitations and announcements to special members-only events.

The Museum is a community institution, and it should come as no surprise that the community is heavily featured on the website. Folks should have fun seeing their favorite artifacts and volunteers featured.

New Trustees Voted to the Board

More to Join Soon!

The San Joaquin County Historical Society & Museum held a vote-by-mail election in June of 2020 to elect new trustees to the Board. Gillian Murphy, Annette Sanchez, and Dillon Delvo were elected to the Board, and Mike Machado was approved as Immediate-Past President. **Robert Ferguson was named President of the Historical Society.**

All newly elected Trustees and officers received 94% or more of the vote. More than 200 votes were cast for each candidate. The election was a complete success.

In the Summer of 2021, three new potential trustees will be voted on by the Society: Val Acoba, Bonner Mendez, and William Jeffery. Trustees are elected governors of the Society who manage the affairs of the institution. Elections are held annually in the Spring. Look out for more information concerning this years election.

We are excited for the good work of our newly elected trustees, and hopeful for the continued success of the institution.



Due to the dedication of **Museum Archivist Gail Erwin**, the Museum has been able to support dozens of local researchers in the past year.



Dillon Delvo, a longtime advocate for local history education, ethnic studies, and the preservation of the historic Little Manila neighborhood in Stockton, joined the Board of Trustees last May. Dillon is excited to work with the Museum concerning exhibits and outreach on Southeast Asian communities in San Joaquin County, and on expanding the Museum's collections.

Support the Museum at ...

209 Gives

April 13, 2021

A Digital Fundraiser

In Support of Museum
Programming

Email info@sanjoaquinhistory.org

to learn how to support
the Museum!

On April 13, the Museum will participate in the **209 Gives Fundraiser**, managed by the Community Foundation of San Joaquin.

Participants can visit the Museum's 209 Gives page at <https://www.209gives.org>, where they will have the chance to watch videos of museum volunteers explaining why they support the institution.

Here Comes Florence M II!

Museum Welcomes Stephens Boat

The Collections staff at the Museum has also kept busy throughout the health crisis, accessioning several major artifacts, including this **Stephens Brothers' Boat "Florence M II."** Originally owned by the Bewley family, the Tahoe Maritime Museum deaccessioned the boat (pictured right) in 2020, and the Museum happily welcomed her back to San Joaquin County. Look out for a full write-up on new artifacts, including "Florence M II," in April!

Wish List

The Museum is currently in need of the following items:

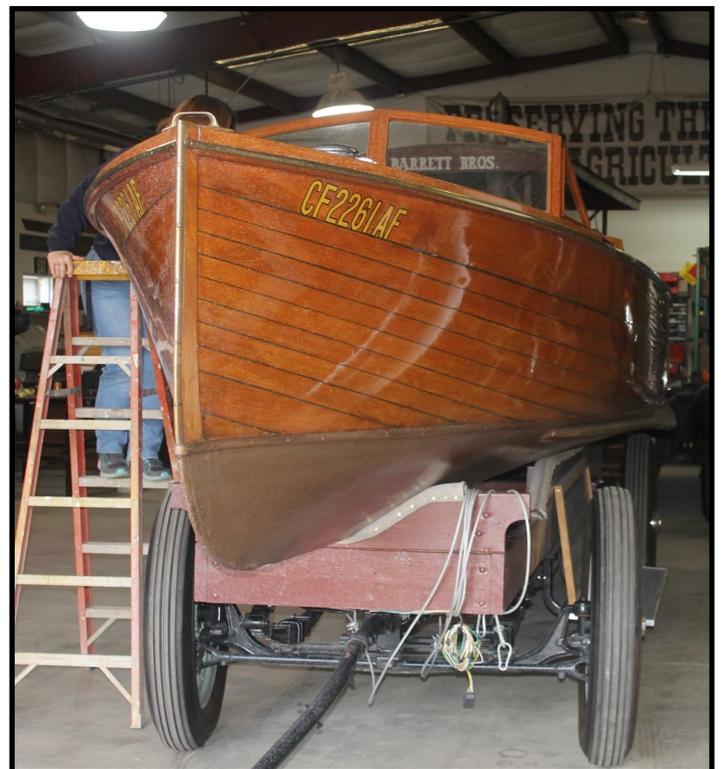
A Computer Monitor

Blueprint/poster Carriers

Email info@sanjoaquinhistory.org to help!



Chris Dancisak, co-chair of the Museum Docent Education program, is eager to return to the Museum. **We're with you, Chris!**



Docent Council Activities Staying Busy

And Ready to Rock & Roll This Fall

The Docent Council at the San Joaquin County Historical Museum has kept quite active during the course of the health crisis. After a short four week hibernation in April of 2020, the docents sprang into action, sewing and donating masks to the community at large. By June of 2020, 10,000 masks had been produced and donated by docents, with almost all going to local hospitals, emergency food banks, and shelters.

Throughout the long months of 2020, the Museum docents maintained regular order, conducting Docent Council Meetings and Executive Committee meetings over Zoom, and working on critical crafting activities when possible. Some docents also worked with Director of Education Phillip Merlo to relaunch the Museum's Oral History program, and to pilot a Museum Youtube Channel.

For the next month, the docent council will be working on preparatory activities so that the Museum can relaunch programming in normal order as soon as possible.



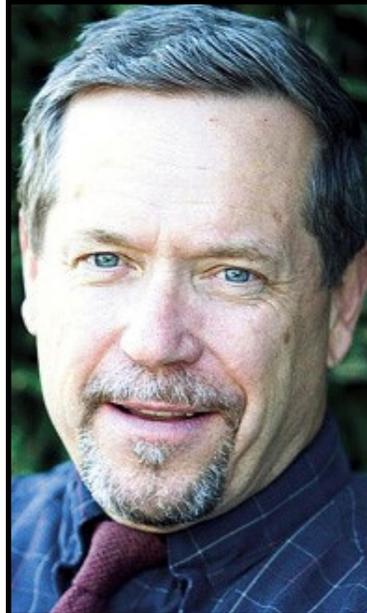
Look out for Festival of Trees 2021!

Introducing: The Museum Community Lectures

To provide **value to its members and maintain its relevance in the community**, the Museum is hosting a 2021 **Community Lecture Series**, where local luminaries and scholars of San Joaquin County can provide their insights and present their studies to the community.

The first speaker, Marty Weybret, was a longtime owner and manager of the *Lodi News-Sentinel*. He will be giving a lecture on the history of that venerable old paper on March 29, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. over Zoom. A general announcement will be made to the community soon, and all those interested in attending can receive a Zoom link by emailing Education@sanjoaquinhistory.org.

Speakers for the rest of the Spring and Summer include historians Ronald Isetti, Manuel Barajas, and Simone Cinotto, as well as longtime local professionals Tama Brisbane and Andy Chesley. A full press-release and menu of lectures is forthcoming.



Longtime Editor and Publisher of **the *News-Sentinel*** Marty Weybret will give the kick-off lecture of the Museum Community Lectures program, where he will present on the history of Lodi's historic newspaper. We hope to see you there—on Zoom!

SJCHOnline: The Museum's New Digital Program

In October of 2020 the San Joaquin County Historical Museum's Education Department launched its latest project, the SJCHOnline.org initiative. SJCHOnline, standing for "San Joaquin County History Online," is a digital museum project managed by Museum staff.

In April of 2020, just a month into the health crisis, Museum staff recognized the potential for long-term closures and decided to act. After receiving approval from the Board of Trustees, Museum staff designed and built a new website dedicated to sharing the rich histories and heritage of San Joaquin County with online audiences. This would allow the Museum to continue an exhibits program, outreach with communities and audiences living further away from the museum, and above all provide local educators with curriculum support during the challenges of remote-education.

SJCHOnline.org is a powerful tool that will allow the Museum to digitize exhibits in the future, so that hard-to-reach communities and audiences living further away have the opportunity to enjoy new exhibits at the Museum. Educators have the opportunity to subscribe to the project for a small fee, providing them access to lesson plans and primary sources for the classroom.

The next exhibit on SJCHOnline.org, focusing on local school architecture, will be launched on March 11, 2021.

A Digital Museum of San Joaquin County



The **SJCHOnline** homepage consists of links to various digital exhibits developed by Museum staff, as well as photos and collages from throughout the Museum's collections. The photo seen above, of a Holt Steam Engine driven by Pliny Holt in the 1910s, was donated by the Wells Fargo Museum and was the first piece in the historical collections of the Historical Museum. In addition to being the front-image on SJCHOnline.org, it also hangs proudly in the administrative office of the Museum, in the Erickson building.



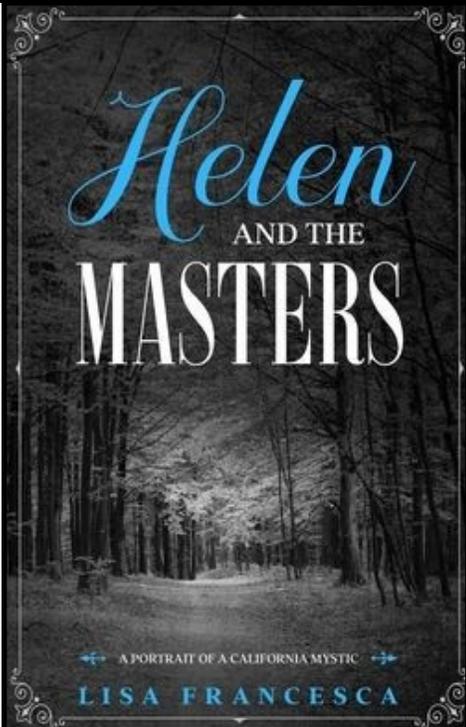
Museum Maintenance Staff Rigo Ruiz (pictured) and Tyler Mason continue to keep the grounds in tip-top shape, in preparation for reopening.



A compelling tale from the Sacramento River Delta

Quarterly Soup Supper: A Souper Success!

The Museum held its first Quarterly Society Meeting of the year on January 25, and in the process maintained the tradition of the annual Soup Supper. Forty-two Zoom accounts attended, enjoying a lecture by author Lisa Francesca, author of *Helen And The Masters*, an account of local area mystic known for her automatic writing. In addition, Museum staff put together a cook-booklet of popular soup recipes, which was appreciated by many in attendance. Look for announcements for the next meeting, in April 2021!



Helen And The Masters is a lyrical and poetic account of the life of Helen Ellesworth, a Delta heiress and mystic who lived in a Victorian mansion near the modern Delta town of Vorden. The text is available online.

Artifact of the Month: “Leather” Anniversary Cards

Is anyone you know getting married anytime soon? Are you celebrating an anniversary this month? It might be time to step up your friendship game!

Check out this “Leather” Wedding Anniversary Card in the Museum’s latest artifact of the month! You can see the full article on the Museum website.

“Artifact of the Month” is a new monthly feature on sanjoaquinhistory.org, where the Museum spotlights a new and unusual artifact from the Museum’s collections!

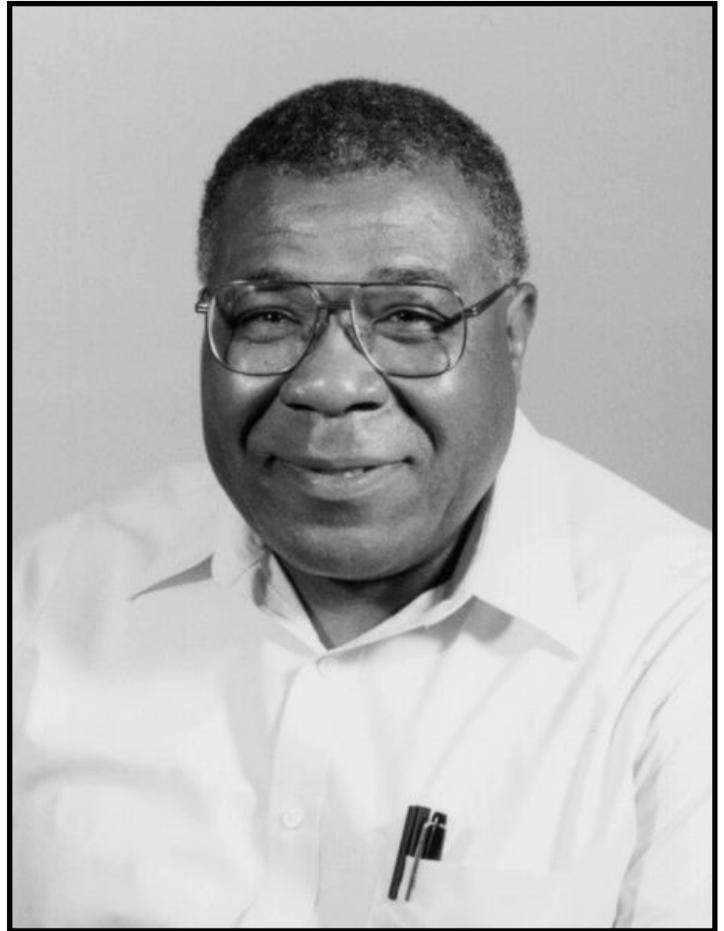


This white satin and leather heart-shaped card was given to locals Charles and Lillian Ferdun on their third “Leather” wedding anniversary on March 20, 1898 by friends.

Congratulations Julius!

Long-time Museum supporter and photographer extraordinaire, **Dr. Julius Hastings** (pictured) was named the first Professor Emeritus in the history of Delta College last month, on February 16. The Museum is proud of our longtime supporter and friend—a gentleman and a scholar of the first order to all who know him. Be sure to congratulate him at the next Festival of Trees!

Again, Congratulations Julius!



~Bits & Pieces~

- Our deepest thanks go to the countless donors who have stepped up during the COVID-19 health crisis to support the continued operations of the Museum. Your support will never be forgotten.
- Thanks to Eagle Scout Scott Wilson for his tenacity in completing an Eagle Scout Project at the Museum in December of 2020. The young Mr. Wilson was able to bring a small but determined troop of scouts to campus, where they rebuilt the 220 ft. perimeter Valley Days Garden fence to the specifications of Docent Mike Smedley.



JOIN OUR
24 HOUR GIVING DAY!

SAVE THE DATE

TUESDAY
April 13th, 2021

209GIVES

*Making a difference
where we live,
work and play*

Coming Soon:
The San Joaquin Historian

***“San Joaquin County
in the Roaring 20s”***

For the first time since 2016, the San Joaquin County Historical Society & Museum will be publishing a *San Joaquin Historian*. This upcoming edition of the Museum’s fifty-year old academic journal is titled “San Joaquin County in the Roaring 20s.” **Look forward to a release via email on April 2, 2021.**

The publication includes an essay on the role of Stockton as a major entertainment hub and “open city” in interior California prior to WWII, a map of nightclubs, theaters, and known speakeasies in downtown Stockton in 1927, and seven short features on major events in local entertainment between 1919 and 1941, including the first Lodi Legion Picnic at Micke Grove Park, major wrestling bouts at the Stockton Civic Auditorium, Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig’s barnstorming tour to Oak Park, the visits of major international entertainment acts to Stockton, Lodi, and Tracy, drinking parties after the repeal of prohibition, and more.

This Spring 2021 edition of the *San Joaquin Historian* will be the first in a new series published twice annually. It has been written by Museum staff. In the future, we will introduce an open call for submissions to local university undergraduates and graduate students, as well as to local historians of note.

Have a historical topic in mind for a future *Historian*? Send your ideas our way! We would love to hear from you. Feel free to send an email to education@sanjoaquinhistory.org or collections@sanjoaquinhistory.org.

**Museum Closed
Until Further Notice**

But...

**We Can’t Wait To
See You!**

**The Museum eagerly awaits
the day where we can safely
welcome you back. Until
then, feel free to visit our
website, say “hi” on
Facebook, or shoot a staff
member an email!**





In Memoriam: Connie Rice

On Saturday, April 4, the Museum lost one of its loved ones. Docent, Museum supporter, and dear friend Connie Rice passed away after a long and heroic battle with cancer. She passed away peacefully a little after 5:00 p.m., surrounded by people she loved.

Connie was a tireless advocate for students, the arts, and the Museum. A retired schoolteacher at St. Anne's School, she brought a fierce dedication and a teacher's eye to her volunteerism in museum programs. A multi-talented artist, she utilized her creative skills to supplement and benefit the museum in numerous endeavors. She loved Valley Days, Pioneer School, Farm-to-Fork, the Festival of Trees, and the Docent Council. She loved the San Joaquin County Historical Museum. Connie often remarked that volunteering with schoolchildren at the museum was where she wanted to be in life.

As a community, we will deeply miss her. It was our deeply felt privilege to have known and worked with her. Connie's dedication, passion, courage, and knowledge were supremely energizing, and her kindness and sense of humor could brighten any room. We hope she rests in peace. Connie Rice will never be forgotten.

In Memoriam:

Robert Bonta

As published in the *Stockton Record*:

Robert “Bob” Bonta passed away in Stockton, CA, on January 9, 2021, at the age of 94 after a long illness. Born and raised in Gustine, CA, he was preceded in death by his wife, Esther,

his sister Mary Jane, and brothers Floyd, George and Chester. He is survived by his children Susan, Steven, and Patricia (and husband Carl), as well as numerous relatives throughout California and Switzerland. Robert’s greatest joy was his close relationship with his grandchildren, Anthony and Alisia.

During WWII Robert served in the Army in the Philippine Islands and the occupation of Japan, including as a paratrooper, with a final rank of Sergeant. Following military service, Robert graduated from Modesto Jr. College, the College of the Pacific, and later San Jose State. He had a lengthy career as a high school history teacher and later as a librarian.

He was the author of two books as well as numerous articles on local history and was the recipient of three awards related to his

research and publications in California history. Robert was a lifetime member and Past President of the Pacific Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa and also a member of the UOP Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi. He was a lifetime member and past officer of the Stanislaus County Swiss Club, lifetime member of the San Joaquin Valley Swiss Club, and a member of Pro Ticino Nord California Society. He also was a long-time member of the Gustine City Band.

Robert was a founder, longtime member and Past President of the San Joaquin County Historical Society and Museum.

He will be sorely missed.

In Memoriam:

Benjamin Reddish

Longtime educator and leader in the Stockton community and San Joaquin County Historical Museum advocate and trustee Ben Reddish passed away on December 5, 2020.

Widely known in Stockton for transforming the lives of thousands of students, Reddish was an impactful leader in the community. He served on the boards of The Kiwanis Club of Stockton, the Stockton Symphony Association, Phi Delta Kappa International, Stockton Sister Cities Organization, Association of Filipino American Educators, The Esquire Club of Stockton, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., People to People International, SUSD Black Employees Association, National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and The San Joaquin County Historical Society. He was named Stocktonian of the Year in 2020.

A Trustee of the Society & Museum from 2008 to 2016, Reddish was an active advocate for the preservation of Black history and for expanding Museum programs so that as many students could attend as possible.

Beloved in the community, Benjamin Reddish will be deeply missed by many.

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Maria Barajas, Membership Coordinator

Tyler Mason, Maintenance Project Coordinator

This newsletter is mailed to all members of the Historical Society. We ask you to invite your relatives, friends and neighbors to join the Historical Society in support of your Museum. Individual/couple is \$40 and a family membership is only \$50 per year and which includes a waiver for the parking fee at Micke Grove Park, free admission to the Museum, the *Historian* and much more. Makes also a great gift! For further information or to have us mail a new member packet, call the Museum office at (209)331-2055 or 953-3460. The Museum is open to the public Wednesday through Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Nov to May) and 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (June to October).