

Petaluma Museum Association

Petaluma Historical Library & Museum

Preserving the Unique History of Petaluma and Providing
Educational and Cultural Services to the Community

Quarterly Newsletter



Fall/Winter 2020

Volume 30, Issue 3

On the Cover

by Terry Park



Center Park, ca.1930s

Parade of the Witches

In 1926, Harry Benton began a beloved Petaluma tradition, a children's favorite: the Halloween Parade of the Witches. The starting point of this annual parade was at Center Park and initially ended there but over the years the route was lengthened to end at various locations including McNear Park, Spartan Hall (Western and Upham), the school gym and football stadium on Fair Street.

The police safely led the children along the route and the Boy Scouts marked intersections casting an eerie light from their red and green flares. Music from the Petaluma Municipal Band and later the American Legion Drum Corps often accompanied the children and delighted neighbors along the way.

The parade costs — including prizes and pumpkins — were funded by the merchants who paid \$2 each in 1930 (\$30 today).

Every participant received a bag containing candy, a noisemaker, and sometimes an apple. Prizes were awarded for costumes, sometimes for designated categories and other times at the discretion of the judges. Pumpkin-carving contests at Walnut Park also added to the festivities.

The parade was held every year except for 1944 because of WWII. The fair and Armistice Day celebration were also canceled that year. Harry closed his Petaluma advertising agency in 1942 and went to work at a shipyard to support the war effort at the age of 68.

Harry Benton, a widower, arrived in Petaluma in 1924 at the age of 51 and was very civic minded. He also initiated in 1931 the Frolic of the Rabbits which attracted over 2,000 children and adults at Hill Plaza Park becoming an annual Easter event into the 1950s.

Even though Benton had no children, his efforts to create enjoyable family events earned him the well-earned nick name of Uncle Harry from thousands of children.

By 1959 the City Recreation Commission decided to drop the Halloween Parade of Witches and add the money savings of \$175 to the fireworks budget, boosting it to \$450. The last year of the parade, the participating attendance was 180 children amounted to an expenditure of about one dollar per child.

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The Petaluma Museum Association Newsletter is published quarterly and distributed to its members. Many thanks to all the contributors and the proofreaders and volunteers who help with mailings.

If you would like to contribute any news or items of interest to our newsletter, you can email

mary@petalumamuseum.com

Deadline for submission is Dec 1, 2020

Petaluma Museum Association
20 Fourth St.
Petaluma, CA 94952

Message from the President



President 2.0

The morning after submitting my most recent President's letter, I checked into the hospital for open-heart surgery. Afraid of dying? Sure, but I also hoped that the procedure would fill me with boundless energy and new abilities; in short I'd be President 2.0.

This belief — that hardship would improve me — was not unlike my notion about our Museum improving as a result of the need for changes wrought by the pandemic. But improvement isn't guaranteed because of suffering and hardship, it just becomes a possibility. I followed up my surgery by adding exercise and diet changes. Others at the PMA responded by working to submit many new grant applications and by working to embrace new technologies to keep our visitors safe.

I am the same president as before surgery, just stronger and with more stamina. Your Museum will be back with the same mission, and hopefully with Covid-safe systems that will enhance your museum-going experience, and this is where you come in. It's hard for me to ask for help of any kind and especially for money, but we need your help if we are going to rise to the challenge of making the PMA a viable Museum 2.0.

Frankly, we need new funding. Our income is down by \$11,556.00. With the exception of a few smaller grants that paid for accessioning new photos, most of our grant applications did not bear fruit. And since we were not able to hold our annual gala fundraiser, we need your help more than ever.

Your donations will go toward the creation of the following important programs listed on the next page. You may earmark your gift for a particular program or give a donation to our General Fund to support all our programs.

I know this is a lot to ask, these are hard times to be asking for money with so many good causes vying for your attention and dollars. It's my hope that you will continue to believe in and support our Museum as much as I do.

Sincerely,

Clint Gilbert

NEW PROGRAMS

1. HistoryTellers Program

Today's waves of disasters are changing the world in many ways. Never has the fragility and preciousness of life been more apparent, and it's in that spirit we have begun the History Tellers Project. This program will document the stories of our town that are day by day slipping away. The form combines old fashioned storytelling with video and the voice of the storyteller interwoven with still and moving images as well as sounds to make a movie. This is Petaluma history told as it was experienced!

Personal histories are included in these stories, but so are the thoughts and emotions of the people who lived them. Once completed, the stories will be available on our website, and they will be accessioned by our staff to be used in future Museum exhibits as we begin to incorporate more digital assets. We have been waiting for our first storyteller to recover from surgery. The production of this first story will begin in late September.

Use your Smartphone camera to view an example of what our HistoryTeller Stories will be like:



THE PMA OFFERS A SPECIAL INCENTIVE to become a CULTURAL HISTORIAN (!): For donations of \$3,000.00 or greater we will make a HistoryTeller Story about you or a person of your choosing. You will be designated a Cultural Historian and your story will live on our website along with our HistoryTellers.

2. A new video series for third and fourth graders will star our Petalumans of Yesteryear. Use your Smartphone camera to view the story of Addie Atwater, one of the Museum's early benefactors:



3. A new podcast series about our permanent collection will facilitate physical distancing during future tours while increasing interest and understanding for visitors of all ages. Imagine using your Smartphone camera to learn about our Knickerbocker No. 5 fire pumper while in the Museum:



4. The PMA will hire new part-time staff in Collections to facilitate our transition to new digital assets and to combine them with our traditional exhibits.

5. Buy iPads to use in exhibit displays and as loaners for those patrons who don't own Smartphones to use while touring our exhibits.

The following article has been edited by museum staff for clarity.

Leveraging Smartphone Technology to Protect Museum Visitors

When museums and other cultural venues reopen, smartphones will be crucial to keeping guests safe and enhancing their experiences.

Kim Spencer, Listen Technologies

Everyone is eager for a return to normal, which includes access to museums and other cultural venues. While countless people likely have been inspired and sustained by virtual museum tours these past few months, there is something very powerful about visiting galleries and venues and being in the presence of physical exhibits that many crave. Artist Maira Kalman says “a visit to a museum is a search for beauty, truth, and meaning in our lives,” and she advises us to “go to museums as often as you can.” What will museum visits be like as venues reopen in the context of the novel coronavirus and new public health safety guidelines? The answer might be found on your smartphone.

Anyone who has been to a museum, zoo, aquarium, or other cultural venue in the last decade probably noticed the same thing: almost every visitor had a smartphone. According to the [Pew Research Center](#), 93 percent of Millennials own a smartphone and other generations aren't far behind. 90 percent of Gen Xers and 68 percent of Baby Boomers own one.

This is good news for museums as they reopen and look for ways to keep visitors safe and engaged during the pandemic. Smartphones will enable visitors to maintain physical distance from others, avoid shared touchpoints, and increase accessibility.

Enable Physical Distancing

Maintaining physical distance from others and wearing masks help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. But it can be difficult to hear others when they are far away and speaking behind a mask, especially if speakers are also competing with HVAC units and other background noises. Shouting can strain the speaker's voice and is believed to [increase risk of spreading the virus](#) if speakers are infected.

Eliminate Shared Touchpoints

In an effort to inform and engage visitors pre-pandemic, many museums offered interactive touchscreens, flipbooks, and pushbutton or other tactile displays. Some may have even reused programs and information guides designed to help visitors navigate the venue and optimize their visits. Unfortunately, each of these is a conduit for spreading germs and could increase exposure to the coronavirus. Smartphones and other personal smart devices that guests already have on hand can enable museums to eliminate shared touchpoints and deliver information to guests safely.

One way museums can do this is with QR codes displayed throughout a venue. When visitors take a picture of the code with their smartphone, they are directed to a specific site that could feature information about the exhibits and artists. Similarly, museum-specific apps can provide visitor maps and programs as well as information about current and future exhibits and events. They also can link to visitor surveys that provide museums valuable insight about guest experiences.

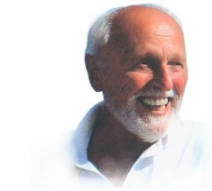
The prevalence of smartphones may once have been considered immaterial or even a distraction in museums, zoos, aquariums, and other venues, but the benefits of smartphones in this new environment are clear. When museums reopen, smartphones will help keep guests safe and deliver an even better, more inclusive, and engaging experience. Imagine that—feeling closer and more connected than ever, while staying safely apart.

About the author:

Kim Spencer is the marketing director at [Listen Technologies](#), a wireless audio manufacturer that provides solutions for assistive listening, multilingual audio transmission, and guided or self-guided tour groups and conferences.

This article originally appeared in the American Alliance of Museums member newsletter.

Here's the original link for it: <https://www.aam-us.org/2020/07/03/leveraging-smartphone-technology-to-protect-museum-visitors/>



Petaluma History & Commentary

by Skip Sommer, Historian

THE PETALUMA CREEK IN THE EARLY 1850s

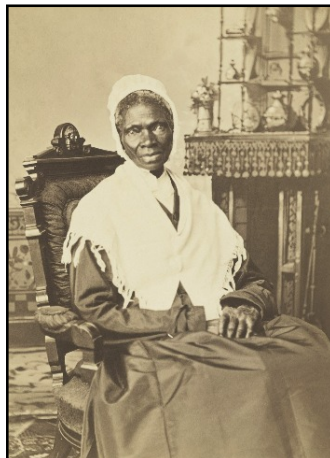
IN 1851, CALIFORNIA was just one year into statehood as the 31st state, with a population of 91,000. The Gold Rush was into its third year. No railroads or banks had been built as yet. Portland, Oregon, had just been named (after Portland, Maine), the first settlers had just arrived in what would be called Seattle, only white men were allowed to vote, the poll tax was \$5, and the village of Petaluma was soon to become the northern nexus of inland navigation to San Francisco Bay.

In San Francisco that year, a man named Levi Strauss had started making durable pants with copper rivets and a couple of dudes named Mr. Wells and Mr. Fargo founded something they would call American Express. There were a lot of complaints then about immigrants too, as nearly 19,000 Chinese had flocked here for what they called "Gold Mountain." The population of the gold fields was then described as "incalculable." The gold yield however, was estimated at \$70 million dollars. (That's about \$3 billion in today's dollars!) That was the same time a New York newsman named Horace Greeley, told America to: "Go West, young man, go West!"



Chinese immigrants traveling to the Gold Fields. ca. 1851

Unbelievably, 11 percent of the U.S. population then were black, with almost all of those living in slavery. Writer Harriet Beecher Stowe, had just written about that, in her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and that great tome was to become a force in the coming fight against slavery. That was also the year that the emancipated slave, Sojourner Truth, gave her much moving speech entitled "Ain't I A Woman?" at the Ohio Woman's Rights Convention in Akron.



Sojourner Truth

Our Petaluma River is a tributary of San Pablo Bay, and in 1852 it was just a small creek, only navigable at high tide and then, only by shallow draft craft for 16 miles upstream. The water was clearer then, and schools of sturgeon and steelhead trout were abundant. The skies were filled with

clouds of feathered game. Deer, elk, cougar and bear freely roamed our countryside.

Due to ease of living here, our native Pomo and Miwok tribes had become "gatherers" rather than warriors, and they cultivated blackberries, apples, grapes and oats. Tragically, thousands of those Native Americans became victims to the white man's diseases of smallpox and cholera, contributing to their demise in California.

Petaluma's ranches were growing in the early 1850s, as successful '49ers settled in our valley, bringing with them skills and trades, as well as their gold.

In Petaluma, the best way of making a living then was to supply the fast-growing communities of San Francisco, Sacramento and Stockton with needed food, and game hunters trapped, shot and fished here, for those markets. Petaluma Pioneers Thom Lockwood, Thomas Baylis and David Flogdell had sailed their whale boat up the creek with rods, nets, traps and firearms. The men had pooled their money and skills and set-up camp on our creek. A deer carcass went for \$20. (In today's money that's \$670!) But often, game was traded for items needed here in Petaluma, items such as matches, whiskey, bullets and cigars. (Not a good mix, I think).

By late 1852, new settlers were bringing in hogs, sheep, cattle and . . . *chickens!* "Dr." August Heyermann built one of the first cabins along the creek. Heyermann had been a "trail doc" for a wagon train and had found that dispensing opium for 25 cents a pop had staked him to mining equipment. (Well, sure!)

Meanwhile, San Francisco and Sacramento became even more in need of meat, hides and all agricultural products from Sonoma County and environs.

Baylis and Flogdell then set-up a trading post on the creek, at what is now the river-end of B Street. It was kind of a wilderness 7-Eleven, and it thrived.

Soon, Garrett Keller had built a warehouse near it and added a



A stone wall of the Great Petaluma Mill, constructed in 1854 by Thom Baylis

bunkhouse and "eatery" to that. The following year, our pioneer Mr. Keller laid out a plot of 40 acres for our town and that *really* put progress in gear. In 1854, Baylis built the large stone wild-game warehouse that that still stands on B Street, as now part of The Great Petaluma Mill. Then, as a sign of needed municipal stability, William Zartman, John Fritsch and James Reed established Petaluma's first blacksmith shop. Mr. Zartman eventually became Mayor.



William Zartman

Our town's inhabitants were almost all male then (with the

exception of the ladies "working" upstairs, over the saloons). Sanitation and hygiene were almost non-existent. No sewers, no penicillin, not even band-aids. Doctors were under-educated and unskilled, and typhus, cholera and smallpox were major killers. If you acquired a simple cut or burn, you could die from it in 1852.

Even by 1853, Petaluma was still just a frontier outpost, with streets deep in mud. Drinking water was brought in by the barrel from mountain springs, but you could buy a bath in a tin tub, upstairs over the saloons. Your bath choices included "cold water, warm water, first water or second water." If you wanted a saloon lady to wash your back, that was "extra." If you wanted more than that from her, it was a *lot* extra. And you didn't get that "more" if you hadn't taken that bath first. There were a lot of saloons in Petaluma then, as our town's population had soared to 1,185 in 1853.

Just five years after that, our community became officially incorporated and such things as "wives of good character," churches, schools and a fire truck pulled by horses, had arrived. (That fire truck, the Knickerbocker pumper, is on display in our Museum today). Our town's growth had been amazing in those first five years of the 1850s and Petaluma was no longer just an outpost, from 1855 forward. And that, of course, meant TAXES, were just around the corner! (Hardly anything is perfect, I've found).

How Petalumans Made History 1869

by Linda Buffo, POY member

The Petalumans of Yesteryear (POY) have not let the pandemic slow them down for long. Currently the group has been working on a very special presentation. On October 14th in conjunction with the current exhibit and events around the suffrage movement the POY will present "A Conversation Among Petaluma Suffragists." Here is the link to the video presentation:

<https://www.petalumamuseum.com/calendar-event/a-conversation-among-petaluma-suffragists-video/>

You will meet Petalumans who were at the forefront of the movement here in Petaluma during the 1869 -1879 period.



Abigail Ainsley Goodwin Haskell
from the collection of Ann Nisson

Led by Abigail Ainsley Goodwin Haskell and several other prominent local citizens, the Sonoma County Woman Suffrage Association was created in Abigail's house on 4th Street between B and D Streets in 1869. You will be able to attend that meeting virtually and see the wide variety of men and women who came together here in Petaluma to support the movement. They will make plans to gather signatures on a petition to be carried by Abigail and others to the California State Assembly asking for an amendment that would allow women to vote. Abigail will speak before the all-male state assembly. You will find the meeting interesting as citizens from differing points of view come together to support one cause.

Let's Meet the Cast

Josie Hill (Dale O'Connor) represents the Grange, Josie was well off and a mover and shaker who hosted many meetings to spread the word. Josie was convincing, but not everyone was on the same page.

Mayor Veale (Marshall West) and **Edward Lippitt** (Steve Buffo) do not support woman's suffrage and say so!

Lucretia Ann Newton Hatch and husband Chester (Sherri and Leif Ortegren) Spiritualists, they are joined in purpose and use their wide net of influence to gain support.

Hiram Fairbanks (Leif Ortegren) is outnumbered by women in his D Street mansion; will he support them? Attend to hear his unusual story.

Kate Lovejoy (Binky Thorsson) Kate is a member of the temperance movement and accompanied Abigail to the inaugural meeting of the California Woman Suffragist Association in San Francisco.

Rev Lorenzo Waugh (Jerry Pozo) will be there, with his staunch dedication to the Temperance Movement and his support of Abigail.

Sarah Myers Latimer (Susan Coolidge) travels from her hot springs resort outside of Windsor to participate in the meeting. She indicates that there is interest by some in the Black community, then called the "colored community," to participate in signing the petition. Faith Ross will tell who in the "colored community" signed the petition and why.

Thaddeus Edgar Peckinpah (Mike Glose) his mother is voted president of Sonoma County Woman Suffrage Association and her whole family supports her. What does Thaddeus think?

Freeman Parker (Mike Glose) will give us the abolitionist reason for support of the movement.

Anna Morrison Reed (Sherri Ortegren) makes a complete turnaround in her opinion on the issue of suffrage. What makes her change her position and become a suffragist leader?

Abigail Ainsley Goodwin Haskell (Linda Buffo) is a born leader who will address the California State Assembly on behalf of woman's right to vote. What is she doing there?

Narrator (Homer Johnstone)

Donors underwrite the PMA efforts as it joins nationwide 'Forward into Light'



The façade of the Petaluma Historical Library & Museum was illuminated in purple and gold on August 24 through 26, 2020, as part of the "Forward into Light" campaign. PMA donors came together to fund the necessary equipment and electrical labor to light the façade to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and women's constitutional right to vote.

The campaign takes its name from the historic suffrage slogan, "Forward through the Darkness, Forward into Light." Officially it was named "The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission's Nationwide Forward Into Light Campaign." The original suffragists adopted the colors purple and gold for their messaging, which were replicated for this event.

Our new lighting equipment was funded by an anonymous donor. Rodney and Laurie Maus of Maus Electric filed for our permits and installed the new outdoor electrical service for the occasion. PMA President Clint Gilbert donated the lighting design and installed the lights each evening.

Local photographer **Scott Hess** donated his skills and time to make an amazing photo of the event.

Thanks to everyone involved!

MAJOR MILESTONE ■ Celebrating women's suffrage

Petaluma Museum exhibit, month of events, highlight Petaluma's role in women securing right to vote

By KATHRYN PALMER
ARIZONA COURIER STAFF

When a group of local history buffs started planning how to mark the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, there was no way to predict that their Petaluma Museum exhibit would be forced to adapt to an unforeseen public health crisis.

But for co-curator Paula Freund, there's a striking parallel between the conditions that forced the museum event into the digital realm, and the lives of the women activists it chronicles.

"What's so fascinating is that the women's suffrage movement, toward the end, was working during the 1918 flu pandemic," she said. "They were working during this time to get their message out, and in a way, so are we."

The Petaluma Museum's virtual suffrage centennial exhibit kicked off last week, exploring Petaluma's involvement in the movement to give women the right to vote and the Aug. 18, 1920 ratification of the 19th Amendment.

The exhibit kicked off Aug. 20 with a live-streamed dedication to former Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey and former Mayor Helen Putnam, presided by current Rep. Jared Huffman and Mayor Teresa Barnett.

It was the first in a handful of modified, virtual



The Petaluma Museum has an exhibit celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment which was curated by Katherine J. Nichols, left, and Paula Freund, who stand outside the museum with president Clint Gilbert.

Current Museum exhibit "Petaluma's Participation in the Women's Suffrage Movement" on the front page of Argus Courier

This article appeared in the Sept. 3, 2020, issue of the Argus Courier.

To read the article in its entirety please go to the link below:

<https://www.petaluma360.com/article/news/petaluma-museum-celebrates-womens-suffrage/>

Heritage Homes & Landmarks Announces Winners of the 2020 Preservation Awards

Heritage Homes of Petaluma, a committee of the Petaluma Museum Association, was originally a nonprofit founded over 50 years ago with the goal of raising awareness of Petaluma's fabulous architectural heritage and encouraging the preservation of these treasures. Recently we added "Landmarks" to our title (HH&L) because our city has many commercial and civic buildings worthy of preservation.

To encourage responsible preservation, HH&L periodically recognizes and confers awards to building owners who have made thoughtful improvements and restoration of their historic properties. This year's awards reflect work done over the last three years.

HH&L extends gratitude to the three judges who made these winning selections from a number of fine nominations: architect Daniel Backman, preservationist/craftsman Christopher Stevick and architect Bill Wolpert. And we thank all the nominees for caring about their historic properties enough to put effort and money in restoring our priceless vintage buildings.

Renovation of an Existing Residence



Before



After

Award of Great Merit: 520 Kent Street

Homeowners: Alan Good & Karen Brown

Immense thought and care went into the rehabilitation and creative re-imagining of this previously distressed and overlooked property. What impresses us the most about this project is the owner's restraint. The exterior design of the home was kept very minimal, from the simple exterior details to the white paint without accents. The project respected the original building footprints: locating the addition on the site of a long-gone outbuilding. The addition was clearly delineated with different materials that reference the area's agricultural heritage. One can clearly see how this property must have appeared when it was originally built, yet it exemplifies a modern aesthetic.



Award of Merit: 501 Keller Street

Homeowners: Edwin Hamilton & Tammara Norman

Second-story additions are difficult to design and execute; rarely do they look like they were built as part of the original house. This project excels with a second-story design that looks like it has always been there. The addition captured the essence of the original one story, and took it to new heights. The detailing of the roof line is excellent. The home is welcoming and approachable, and has succeeded in adding area and height while maintaining a sense of scale and proportion appropriate for its context. The homeowners wish to acknowledge architect Rick Brereton of ADR for a job well done.

Honorable Mention: 847 B Street

Homeowner: Paul Petersen

This homeowner has taken great care to preserve the significant architectural details and improve the home while keeping within the architectural context of the neighborhood.

Honorable Mention: 215 Fifth Street

Homeowner: Suzanne Clarke

The front porch remodel added a much nicer entry walkway from the sidewalk and kept to the historic details inherent to the original house. The added fence and garden are a wonderful amenity.

Construction of a New Residence***Honorable Mention: 314 Erwin Street***

Homeowner: James Meyer

While being the only entry within the New Residence category, it nonetheless exemplifies an appropriate design that maintains the scale and contextual details of the surrounding of what originally was a thriving working-class neighborhood.

Renovation of an Existing Commercial Building

Before



After

Award of Great Merit: Linch Jewelry Neon Sign at 10 Western Avenue

Owner: Garth Bixler

The restoration of the Linch Jewelry Building was an exemplary at the time it was completed and was granted Historic Tax credits for the owner. The only thing not completed was the neon signage. We are aware of the great lengths the owner went through to permit the signage and assure that the sign would be restored and not simply replaced. We are also pleased that this award recognizes the contribution of the Barber Sign Company. This project put the finishing touches on a perfect building restoration.

Award of Merit: The Silk Mill, 450 Jefferson Street

Owner: Hampton Inn

This former factory on the National Register of Historic Places has spent many years in the hands of various developers all wanting it to be something different. Now it is finally complete and functioning again, now as a hotel. Care was taken to preserve the significant architectural elements, including outbuildings.

Outstanding Talent in the Construction Business***Award of Great Merit: MAD Architecture***

Mary Dooley and Chris Lynch have been working to produce excellent architecture in Petaluma for over 20 years. They have produced exemplary projects in residential development, modest remodels, historic rehabilitation, and commercial and civic projects. For a small office, they produce an abundance of high-quality work.



Alexander J. "Zan" Stark (1889-1967)
 "Public Library - Petaluma Calif."
 Real photo postcard #738, March 1941

You have made the Petaluma Museum a part of your life.
 Now, we hope you will consider making the Petaluma
 Museum Association a part of your lasting legacy by leaving
 a gift in your will or trust.

Your bequest will ensure that the PMA remains a vibrant organization that welcomes our community in the historic Carnegie Library Building and passes down our history to the next generation of Petalumans. To make the PMA a part of your estate plans, contact your financial planner. To find out more about how your will or trust might sustain our educational mission, contact Clint Gilbert, PMA Board President, at clint@petalumamuseum.com



Help the museum and reduce your taxes!

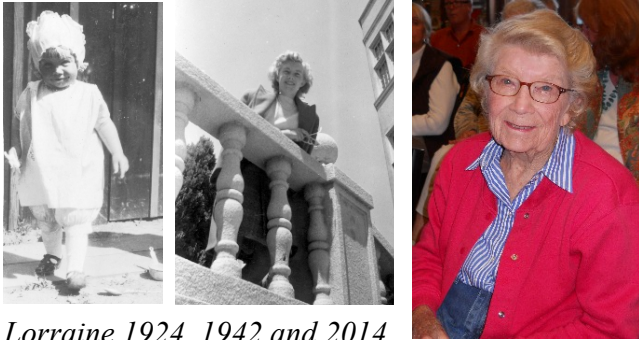
Under the CARES Act, an eligible individual may take a qualified charitable contribution deduction of up to \$300 against their AGI in 2020. An eligible individual is any individual taxpayer who does not elect to itemize his or her deductions. A qualified charitable contribution is a charitable contribution (i) made in cash, (ii) for which a charitable contribution deduction is otherwise allowed, and (iii) that is made to certain publicly supported charities. The PMA is a qualified publicly supported charity.

Our Federal Tax ID is #94-2826729.

Please consult your tax advisor.

Museum Collection Update

Solange Russek
Museum Collections Manager



Lorraine 1924, 1942 and 2014

Remembering Lorraine Byce Skoog

The PMA will deeply miss Lorraine. She was part of a family that had deep Petaluma roots including her grandfather Lyman Byce that helped to improve the incubator industry during the late 19th and early 20th century. Lorraine was a docent at the museum for many years. She was always ready to greet you with a "Welcome to the Museum!" and offer help to visitors.

We would like to thank her daughters Kathy and Kristine in sharing their family collection of scrapbooks and photo albums along with many pages of the Byce legacy in the world of chicken and eggs in Petaluma.



The dapper Mr. Byce in tin type

Among the many documents we came across was a curious letter that was written by Lyman himself. He started to write his memoirs in third person, but by the fourth paragraph the "I" statement started to appear. On the second page, third paragraph, Mr. Byce wrote the following about his youthful days. Now we know that Mr. Byce was a bit of a showman and enjoyed telling his tales whether they are facts or fiction.

In my youthful days I came in contact with Thos A Edison while he was a telegraph operator at Sturford, at the junction of two prominent Railroads, and with Alexander Graham Bell. My Father took me to Brentford to the plant of Watrous Engine Co. to purchase a boiler and engine for one of his mills and while he was talking to one man as to capacities and prices of the engines, I was interested in watching a machinist boring out a cylinder for an engine. A young man came in whom the machinist addressed as Aleck, and to whom he introduced me. We began to mention some of things that each of us had invented and when he spoke about his telephone experiments I told him of my Acoustic telephone made from two wide hoops used to be put around churns made in fathers barrel factory, on which I stretched raw Lamb skins with the wool removed, and which resembled two tamborines one placed in the Saw Mill and the other at home and connected by a wire suspended on poles, to the two instruments as mentioned being about a quarter of a mile apart. The noise of the big circular Saw made such a noise that it was necessary to cover the instrument over at the house.

Second Floor Gallery Update

by Solange Russek

During this time of closure due to the coronavirus threat, we are utilizing the time to rethink and freshen up the second story galleries that house our permanent Petaluma history collections. This will include removing items that can be touched by visitors, enhancing the exhibit text to correct misleading information and add QR codes, repurposing display cases and or artifacts, reducing clutter and rearranging items in the galleries to allow easier movement.



2020 Poultry Display Update

A \$3800 grant from California Revealed allowed us to revamp this area. The grant provided funds for writing text and installing new interpretive panels on “How the Chicken Came to Sonoma and the U.S.” The grant also purchased new display boards and labels to use throughout the upstairs galleries, electronic display monitors to show more sites and information. We are rotating photos, storing some away and installing new images. It is still a work in progress.

The first story we highlighted features the partnership of Lyman Byce and Jacob Dias who developed the egg incubator. It now tells the story better, with the figures of the two men standing at the incubator. We do not have any pictures of Mr. Dias, so we had a stand-in, then photo-shopped the face. (Byce slowly removed all evidence of Dias’s contribution and took most of the credit. It

was unfortunate that Dias was mysteriously killed in a hunting accident in December of 1883.)

The wall in the Poultry Display will feature photos and stories of the ethnic chicken ranchers and egg producers.

Historian John Sheehy gave us articles from his book *On a River Winding Home* to use for some captions. We are creating extended digital files to be used with the QR codes for further reading.

Paul Praetzel loaned us two images to scan: one is of his grandfather, Desmond Praetzel, who created the Whirl Way egg-washing machine; the other is of Paul’s mother, Bertha, who actually hatched the idea of the egg washer.

Historian Terry Park is writing a chronological list of Petaluma hatcheries, their addresses, years of operations and ownership.



Miwok/Vallejo Displays Update

To reduce clutter in the Miwok Display, we moved the bust of Chief Solano into the display case along with the picture of the Indian woman at the Vallejo Adobe. It is also more historically appropriate area to place him there.

In the Miwok Display, volunteer Teresa Saltzman will create extended files for more information about the Miwoks and their stories accessed by QR codes.

So, once the Museum building is open again, make a bee line for the east side of the upstairs gallery and see our history afresh!

2020 Holiday Parlor Tour Canceled

With regret, Heritage Homes & Landmarks canceled this December's beloved Holiday Parlor Tour due to covid-19 concerns. We already had some fine houses lined up. Keep your fingers crossed for 2021. Stay tuned!



Special Thanks to Advanced Business Equipment Technologies for their generosity and ongoing support of our copier needs in our Hoppy Hopkins Research Library and beyond. History is continually being researched and preserved thanks to the workhorse of a copier, the Konica Minolta Bizhub C454e which they have donated recently and which they currently maintain for us. Very much appreciated!

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