



Voices of Gold: The Impact of the Gold Rush on Santa Clara Valley

The History Museums of San Jose will come alive with new interpretations of the Gold Rush. Voices of history will mingle with contemporary voices as visitors explore the many facets of this powerful period in California history. The museum is developing an exciting educational exhibition, *Voices of Gold: The Impact of the Gold Rush on Santa Clara Valley*, which will open April 8, 1999, with an exclusive members' preview. A series of public events and school programs that focus on the influence of California's Gold Rush on the Santa Clara Valley will accompany the new exhibition. The exhibit strives to dispel popular Hollywood myths, presenting instead the real challenges faced by the pioneer and the unique opportunities presented by the events of the era. *Voices of Gold* will also chart the course of irreversible change that affected native peoples and the environment. Through June 6, the museum will host a traveling exhibition from the Oakland Museum of California, *Gold Fever! The Lure and Legacy of the California Gold Rush*, which uses text panels and images to provide an overview of the Gold Rush.



Mr. Charles Otter, c. 1877

As visitors explore the two complimentary exhibitions, they will have a chance to view many never-before-seen historic documents, photographs, and artifacts; hear music of the period; engage in interactive elements; and take in contemporary photographs and voices that demonstrate how the Gold Rush continues to affect their lives and the Santa Clara Valley. *Voices of Gold* is the museum's first new gallery exhibition in more than a decade. The gallery will be completely renovated to kick off a series of changing exhibitions centered on annual themes.

In conjunction with the two Gold Rush exhibitions, the museum will present a variety of public events and school programs. The school tour program for this exhibition will be targeted at 4th, 5th, 8th and 11th grades and will feature an interpreted tour through the exhibition and will include a hands-on activity that explores issues raised in the exhibits. A teacher-training workshop will be offered to fourth grade teachers in collaboration with the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA). At the workshop teachers will receive a comprehensive new curriculum that OMCA produced in conjunction with their *Gold Fever* exhibition.

The History Museums of San Jose will present a major three-day festival, *Gold Rush Days*, where visitors can try their hand at panning gold, laugh at a melodrama, watch craft demonstrations, listen to music, and make old-time toys and crafts items. Lecture-discussions will explore the dynamics of diverse people living together during the Gold Rush era. Special summer *Golden Evenings* will fill the air with music and encourage visitors to view the exhibition with their families after hours. A series of *Sunday Fundays*, afternoon family programs, will engage youngsters and their families in storytelling, dancing, and creating artwork that relates to historical and cultural themes. An overview of the exhibition and a listing of the events and school programs will be posted on the museum's Internet website www.sj.com.history. Of course, all these wonderful plans are subject to full funding. The exhibit will open to the public on Saturday April 10th, but we look forward to seeing all members at the *Members' Preview Opening* the evening of April 8th.

FOUNDERS' DAY

November 14, 1998

photos by Lisa Falk



Hungry guests eagerly wait for cooked tortillas and grilled nopalitos, cacti.



Mayor Susan Hammer presents original founding documents from the National Archives of Mexico to HMSJ Board President Steve Cox.



Young visitor demonstrates the *mano y metate* by grinding corn to make a tortilla.



Dancers of Folklorico Nacional Juvenil swirl in colorful costumes on stage.

News from the Collections

The Research Center has acquired a new state-of-the-art Canon Microprinter, which reads both microfilm and microfiche and replaces two old and tired machines. This purchase was funded through the City's capital improvement budget. More new equipment and furniture will soon follow to help reconfigure the center to further organize and expand work areas for both volunteers and the public. Currently, the Research Center has a full house on Wednesdays with archaeologists, college students, scholars, city engineers, and Santa Clara Valley residents busy researching everything from personal genealogies to locations of old oil tanks for environmental impact reports. The new equipment and reconfiguration will help improve and increase service to the center.

The exhibit in the De Luz House has changed. Don't miss the installation of hand-made reproduction antique dolls and vignettes on loan from Mary Isabella Dolls, San Francisco. Catherine McCausland, owner of Mary Isabella Dolls, casts, fires and hand paints the forms of these charming dolls and makes wigs for them from angora goat hair. She finishes the dolls with faithful reproductions of Victorian costumes and period surroundings. In addition to the dolls, costumes from the museum's collection are featured with beautiful holiday decorations done by HMSJ volunteers. The doll exhibit will be in the De Luz House through the end of January.

Continuing the tradition of showcasing objects from the permanent collection, the Pacific Hotel lobby case has a new display. *Never Enough* is a fun mini-exhibit highlighting what San Jose collectors have amassed. HMSJ will show a mere sampling of its numerous souvenir plates, more than 100 miniature dogs, and over 1,000 salt and pepper shakers from the collection. However, the most significant change to exhibits will come in April with the opening of *Voices of Gold: The Impact of the Gold Rush on Santa Clara Valley*. The main Hotel gallery will close mid-January to begin renovation. The floors will be refinished, the walls reconfigured and painted, and custom exhibit cases installed to complete the new exhibition.

Finally, the fundraising goal for the restoration and framing of the Germania Verein Photographs has almost been reached. Made possible by generous donations from numerous individuals and corporations, \$4,900 has been raised toward the \$5,000 goal. Restoration and framing will soon be complete and a final report will follow.

From the President

I have just read an article that claims that General Motors consciously may have contributed to, and profited from, Nazi Germany's war machine, including the use of forced labor. Whether or not the "proof" is really there, once again it has been demonstrated that history is never certain, but constantly is in the process of being rewritten.

Why is this so? First, history is memory, and we all remember things differently. Which Civil War happened—the Civil War of the Daughters of the Confederacy or the Civil War as remembered by the descendants of Massachusetts' volunteers? Both? Neither?

Secondly, to paraphrase Napoleon, history usually is written by the victors. What often is derided as "revisionism" really is nothing more than history written by the victims, whether they be the Sioux Indians who defended their national boundaries at Little Big Horn or the descendants of Japanese-Americans herded into internment camps during World War II. But, without their stories, history is not complete.

Thirdly, new "facts" are discovered every day, while other facts are proven wrong. One of the great ironies of modern scholarship occurred when a liberal historian forced the FBI to open its records in his effort to prove Alger Hiss innocent of perjury—only to prove him guilty. The facts in the General Motors case are yet to be determined, but most certainly those facts are different today than they were yesterday.

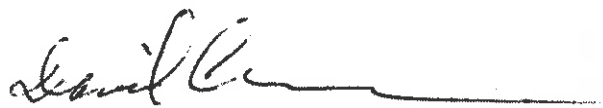
One of the great stories of historical revisionism focuses on a statue of an African American soldier in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, that was erected in the 1880s in a blatant case of historical revisionism to honor free Blacks who had fought for the Confederacy. In recent years, Civil Rights groups have gone to war again to remove the statue as a gross inaccuracy that is offensively racist. Others defend the statue as a historical document, itself, attesting to a particular period of American race relations that gave birth to Plessy vs. Ferguson and Jim Crow laws. History now is being rewritten by the victims of the victims of the victims.

There once was a time (or at least a time in some places) when history was not rewritten or re-remembered. But, when the regimes of Communist Europe fell, memories were unlocked along with their archives, and history has taken its proper place again, in a state of constant revision.

There are people dying in the Balkans today because one group of people wants to impose its collective memory on another. The struggle is not so much about the future as it is about the past. No group will accept the validity of the other's interpretation of history.

In the next year, the State of California will be adopting curricula and texts for teaching social studies in the state's elementary and secondary schools. Undoubtedly, cries of "revisionism" again will foul the air. All of us have the responsibility to challenge those who don't understand that the very nature of history is to be constantly revised. History may be the one thing that *must* be all things to all people, because history, unlike art, by nature is a collective experience.

So, join in celebrating the great, rich, American tradition of historical revisionism. We must not yield easily what others are giving their lives to obtain—the right to remember things differently, the right to tell our own story, the right to revise our history. Viva revisionism! It's the American way.



Endowment Fund

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

In Honor: O'Brien's Volunteers

Board of Directors

Board Adopts Strategic Plan

At its regularly scheduled meeting on October 28th, the HMSJ Board of Directors officially approved a five-year strategic plan for the organization. Titled "A Plan to Serve," the document identified five goals and four initiatives to set the course from 1999-2004.

In an effort directed by President & CEO David Crosson, the plan is a result of three months of work and input from volunteers, board members, employees, public officials, the affiliate organizations, and a variety of community groups and leaders. "As it is implemented, this plan will change who we are, what we do, and how we do it," said Crosson. "We are creating a market-oriented, service driven organization that will expand dramatically public involvement in creating and implementing all of our programs."

When the five-year expectations are met, by 2004 HMSJ will double the number of school children served on and off site, and dramatically increase gate admissions and membership revenues. Major exhibitions will be opened in new facilities downtown, and imaginative partnerships will take programs out into the communities.

The goals identify what the organization must accomplish on a continuing basis to fulfill its mission and realize its vision at the highest level.

- Improve and create educational and public programs and delivery systems that ensure quality and expand audiences.
- Reinvest in the care, management, and public accessibility of collections.
- Reposition HMSJ and its products, programs, and services within a competitive marketplace.
- Acquire the human and financial resources necessary to sustain a pre-eminent position of community service on a sound financial basis.
- Obtain professional accreditation by the American Association of Museums.

The four initiatives, on the other hand, constitute specific programs that HMSJ will undertake within the next five years to address special audiences, needs, and opportunities.

- Strengthen the relationships among HMSJ and the people and communities of San Jose.
- Secure the programmatic and physical viability of the museum in Kelley Park.
- Contribute to the growing cultural center downtown by expanding facilities and services at San Pedro Square.
- Capitalize on the marketing and programmatic opportunities offered by the Sesquicentennial of California Statehood.

Each goal and initiative is accompanied by very specific and measurable expectations.

"More important than creating a strategic plan is thinking and acting strategically," said Crosson. "For the next five years, HMSJ will prioritize those items that *increase the organizational capacity to produce programs and services that expand markets and increase resources*. Every existing and proposed activity and program will be evaluated on this basis.

The entire plan soon will be printed and mailed to public officials, community and business leaders, and other cultural organizations. It also will be available to members, volunteers, and the general public upon request at the HMSJ offices at both the San Jose Historical Museum and the Peralta-Fallon sites.

New Members

At its October and December meetings, the HMSJ Board of Directors elected four new members to the Board: Dan Orloff, John McEnery IV, Gerry DeYoung, and Mary Ellen Heising. They will begin their terms immediately.

John McEnery IV is development manager of San Pedro Square Properties. He has worked with DeMattei Construction Company and has served as a development officer for the San Jose Redevelopment Agency. McEnery is actively involved in downtown development.

Dan Orloff is vice president of Orloff/Williams & Co., a major downtown advertising and public relations firm. His clients include the San Jose Sharks, Knight-Ridder, Harker School, and the Cinequest Film Festival. Orloff is a member of the Downtown Rotary and board member for the Santa Clara Valley

Boy Scouts Association.

Gerry DeYoung is a former president of the San Jose Historical Museum Association with successful board and fundraising experience with a number of San Jose nonprofits, including vice president of development and board president of the San Jose Repertory Theatre. He also has been fundraising chairman of the Lincoln High School Foundation, major gifts fundraising chair for the YMCA Central Branch, and major gifts fundraising chair for the Silicon Valley chapter of the American Red Cross.

Mary Ellen Heising served as executive director of the Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara County for twenty years, where she developed an enviable reputation for sound management and successful fundraising. A member of the Downtown Rotary, Ms. Heising is a founding member of the Second Harvest Food Bank national board and past president of the local chapter of the American Association of University Women. She has served on the Health Trust Board and the capital campaign cabinet of the Sacred Heart Community Center, and is an HMSJ docent currently in training for the new schoolhouse program.

In addition to Ms. Atkinson, the Board Development Committee consists of Art Lund, John Davis, Patricia Borba McDonald, and HMSJ Board Chair Steve Cox. Nominations for directors who possess similar experience and abilities can be sent to Ms. Atkinson at the HMSJ address.

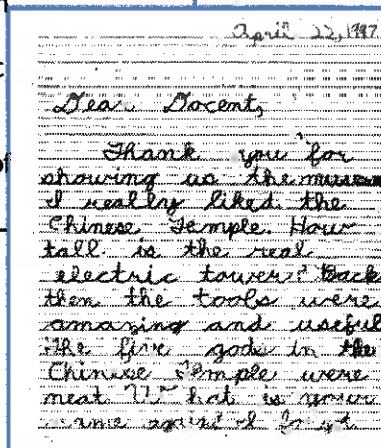
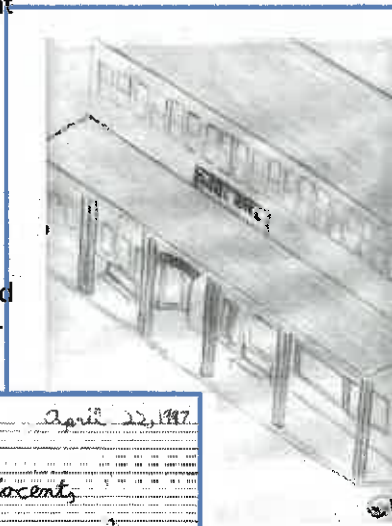
Welcome New Staff

Vice President of Institutional Advancement

On January 18th 1999, Judith Blasé will join the History Museums of San Jose as vice president for institutional advancement. Ms. Blasé will be in charge of all marketing, revenue generating, and fund development activities for the museums.

As director of development at the San Jose Repertory Theatre (the Rep) since 1991, Ms. Blasé increased annual fundraising dollars by 150% and number of annual gifts by 60%; increased annual contributions from corporations by 68%, from individuals by 108%, and from special events by 257%. Foundation gifts increased 647%. She also directed a \$5 million capital campaign that exceeded the campaign goal by 20% and helped build the eye-catching new Rep Theatre facility that opened last year in downtown San Jose. Prior to joining the Rep, Ms. Blasé served as director of development for the San Jose Symphony Orchestra for five years, with a similar record of success.

Ms. Blasé enjoys the challenge of building organizations and believes deeply in the importance of a vital and comprehensive cultural community in San Jose. HMSJ is fortunate to have attracted someone of Judith Blasé's experience, success, and commitment to the local arts community.



Young visitors often send thank you notes to the museum. The above letter was accompanied by a drawing of the hotel.

Historical Highlights of Santa Clara Valley

AMBROSE "BITTER" BIERCE

by Jack Douglas

Sixth in the Series of
Santa Cruz Mountain Writers

Ambrose Bierce was at the peak of his powers when he discovered the beauty and serenity of the mountains above Los Gatos. This crusading journalist, searing critic and creator of daringly realistic short fiction had suffered with bouts of asthma throughout his life. He needed to get away from the foggy dampness of the City by the Bay. During the 1890s he was to find solitude and enduring friendships in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Bierce gladly accepted the nickname "Bitter," for he made a career of being the sharpest, most cynical writer in the annals of literature. His pessimism was no pose, however, as it was rooted in a loveless childhood and the cruel reality of the Civil War.

He was born June 24, 1842 in rural Ohio and raised near the Indiana village of Warsaw. The narrow-mindedness of this small Calvinist-dominated community repelled young Bierce who would spend the rest of his life questioning orthodoxy. He was eighteen and the first in his community to volunteer in the Union Army when news came of the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter. He saw action in some of the War's fiercest battles: Shiloh, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Franklin and Chickamauga, and he was cited for his bravery. At the battle of Kennesaw Mountain he suffered a severe head wound.

During the war Bierce rose from private to Brevet Major, and he came west hoping to keep his rank with the peace-time Army. The older veterans would get the few positions in the shrinking military, so Bierce was left in San Francisco with no job and little formal education. Having had some experience working as a printer's devil, he decided to become a newspaperman, and he embarked upon an intensive self-study course of history and classical literature.

Rising Journalist

In 1868, at the age of 24, Bierce had his first articles published in *The Golden Era*, *The Californian* and *The Alta Californian*. Later that year he became an editor of the small but influential *Newsletter* where he created the satirical column "Town Crier." When asked what he did for a living Bierce responded: *I sell abuse*. Abuse wasn't taken lightly in the rowdy atmosphere of early San Francisco, and more than one prominent editor was shot by an irate reader. Bierce, an impressive, tall, handsome figure with piercing blue eyes, was a magnet to women and a formidable adversary to potential enemies. To discourage the latter he carried a revolver.

In the "Town Crier" Bierce excoriated poets, actors, politicians, preachers and suffragettes. At the height of one of his anti-feminist periods he met and fell in love with Ellen "Mollie" Day, daughter of a successful miner. Her father offered to pay all the expenses of a trip to England as a honeymoon gift, so the Bierces were off to what was to become an extended stay in London.

The English social elite were, at that time, enthralled with writers of the American West, and Bierce found himself among such literary luminaries as Mark Twain, Bret Harte and Joaquin Miller. His sardonic humor appealed to English sensibilities, and it was not long before he was contributing articles to London's *Figaro* and *Fun*. His first book, a collection of newspaper articles entitled *The Fiend's Delight*, was published in 1872. *Nuggets and Dust* came two years later and was followed by *Cobwebs from an Empty Skull*. (An empty skull became something of a trademark for Bierce whose more macabre works reminded readers of Poe. He kept a skull on his writing desk throughout his career.)

During this period Mollie, Bierce's wife, had two sons and was pregnant with a daughter. She was finally able to persuade the author to leave his

English friends and adoring readers and come back to California. But Bierce was not temperamentally suited to family life, nor was he a particularly affectionate father. Mollie and the children lived in St. Helena and Auburn, while Bierce resumed his editorial duties, this time with the prestigious new San Francisco periodical *The Argonaut*. He was further alienated from his family when his troublesome mother-in-law moved in with her daughter. The couple became officially separated when Bierce accused Mollie of seeing another man. Although dismissing conventional behavior in his columns and for himself, he held his wife to a much higher standard. Bierce was anything but consistent.



An early portrait of Ambrose Bierce.
Photo courtesy of the Bancroft Library.

The Giant Killer

Bierce and *Argonaut's* owner Frank Pixley made strange bedfellows, but they both agreed that the populist union organizer Denis Kearney and his Workingman's Party's anti-Chinese policies were bad for the City. Bierce would be instrumental in exposing their inequities. Pixley, on the other hand, was a supporter of Leland Stanford, one of the Big Four, who had a strangle hold on every aspect of California life through the Southern Pacific Railroad. Not so Bierce who referred to the Four as "Railroaders" and to Stanford as

"Stealand Landford."

Bierce found a more sympathetic editor in the twenty year-old William Randolph Hearst who had taken over the *San Francisco Examiner*. Together the two hounded Southern Pacific and their land schemes all the way to Washington D.C. where they helped to convince Congress not to deal with Collis P. Huntington nor to extend the Four's government loans. When Huntington met Bierce on the Capitol steps he inquired: *Every man has his price - what's yours? Bierce replied loudly to the assembled crowd: My price is \$75 million ... to be handed to the Treasurer of the United States.*

Literary Lion and Lady's Man

During the 1890s Ambrose Bierce discovered the village of Los Gatos, which was easily reached by the railroad. He found the sleepy village an excellent location in which to write his classic tales of horror and his numerous realistic accounts of war as he had experienced it. He was the first to write about the Civil War in non-romantic terms, and these tales are thought by critics to be the finest of their kind.

The El Monte Hotel was the author's watering place while in Los Gatos, but he spent many days at the country estate of Frank and Una Hume. Their home "Dotswood" became the gathering place of artistic types from the Bay Area. Bierce, whose criticism in the *Examiner* could make or break an emerging author or artist, was the principal guest at Una's salons. He had numerous admirers and proteges, and he frequently led the ladies on hikes and bicycle tours of the hills. Few of these ladies could resist his advances. Gertrude Atherton was one who did, but the two remained on good terms for many years.

The young eastern poet George Sterling became Bierce's most devoted protege, and he owed his celebrity to favorable reviews and promotion from his "God." The two fell out when Sterling became a close friend of Jack London. Bierce had liked London when they met at a Bohemian Grove retreat, but he was opposed to London's socialist philosophy. Bierce was also contemptuous of Edwin Markham's *The Man with the Hoe* for its socialist message.

To get farther into the forest Bierce began staying at the Jeffrey's Hotel at Wright's Station. Here he rented a cabin where he lived with numerous wild animals that he brought back from his walks. Some of his friends credited him with mystical powers relating to these creatures. Bierce took his meals at the Bohemia Hotel where he became good friends with the proprietors Mr. and Mrs. Cotton and their young daughter Leila.

It was at that time that he also became acquainted with Josephine Clifford McCrackin who lived with her husband at their nearby Rancho Paraiso. Mrs. McCrackin, whose articles boosted Andrew Hill's crusade to save the local redwood groves, was a founder of the Sempervirens Club. She was a woman of Bierce's generation who was raised in Missouri, and she could share some of his Civil War memories. Ironically a forest fire destroyed Rancho Paraiso.

As the new century progressed Bierce began to feel like a relic from the past. Authors such as Jack London and Frank Norris had eclipsed his fame, and the dragons (the Big Four) had been slain. The author's two sons, who had followed him into journalism, were both dead, one over a tragic love triangle and the other from alcoholism. A final book: *The Devil's Dictionary* was published as part of his collected works in 1913. This collection of wry and sulfuric definitions has remained in print and is his best known work.

Discouraged with his life Bierce set out on a final adventure. After a sentimental journey through the Civil War battlefields of his youth, he departed for Mexico to experience the bloody civil war that was raging there. He was never seen again.

In his last letter he wrote: *If you should hear of my being stood up against a Mexican stone wall and shot to rags please know that I think it is a pretty good way to depart from this life. It beats old age, disease or falling down cellar stairs. To be a Gringo in Mexico - ah, that is euthanasia!*



Wright's Station, c. 1900 (note tunnel in mountain)
Photo courtesy of Wm. Wulf



El Monte Hotel in Los Gatos, c. 1890. Photo courtesy of Wm. Wulf.

Volunteer Opportunities

New volunteer training is just around the corner – Spring 1999!

Each year, thousands of adults and children visit the History Museums of San Jose, and they need friendly faces to welcome them and help them find meaning in history. Make new friends, serve your community, and brush up on local history as a volunteer at HMSJ. Greet visitors, lead tours and programs, help with special events, scoop ice cream, sell souvenirs, or work behind the scenes—we'll help you find the right opportunity for you!



Volunteers do not need previous experience for most positions and specialized training is provided, including field trips, guest presentations, video showings, special readings, and opportunities to interact with visitors, staff and other volunteers.

If you are interested in joining the HMSJ team or would like more information about volunteer opportunities and training, please call Jennifer Warner, education specialist, at 408-918-1050. HMSJ is committed to a multicultural community and workplace, and volunteers who will contribute to that diversity are encouraged to participate.

Specials in City Stores

Get Ready for the Rush!

New books are arriving every day in anticipation of the *Voices of Gold* exhibition opening in April. We have a diverse selection of colorful and thought-provoking writings that provide insights into the Gold Rush era of California history.



Art of the Gold Rush, by Janet Driesbach, Harvey L. Jones and Katherine Church Holland, brings together significant artistic endeavors from the 19th century. The stories in *Women of the Gold Rush* by Frances Fuller Victor reveal the hearts and minds of the pioneer women coping on the frontier.



Days of Gold by Malcolm J. Rohrbough examines the multiethnic and multiracial society that made up the Gold Rush era; while Robert Levinson's book, *The Jews in the California Gold Rush*, looks at the involvement of Jewish immigrants during the period of 1849-80.



California Victorians by Kenneth Naversen is filled with beautiful photographs of Victorian homes in California. Check out page 41 for HMSJ's listing.

Visit the City Stores in January for the After-Holidays Sale. Enjoy fantastic savings on selected items up to 75% off!



Kids Korner

Creative kits from the museum stores will entertain and educate children of all ages. *Kids' Magnetic Poetry Book and Creativity Kit* is the poet's toolbox, and includes poems for groups, jigsaw poems, scrabble poems and the exotic haiku. *Legendary Worry Dolls* is an irresistible collection of special wooden dolls combining simple crafting with the myths and legends of global culture. *Artmaker Magnets* with pre-printed words, pictures and symbols lets your imagination run wild.

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