

the  
Exchange  
FALL 2006  
THE NEWSLETTER OF HISTORY SAN JOSÉ

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## Unmasking an Early California Hero

Exhibit kicks off exciting new partnership with the Mexican Heritage Corporation

Generations of readers and film-goers have been entertained by the story of Zorro, whose fictional heroic exploits were set in Old California. *Zorro Unmasked*, a new exhibit co-produced by History San José and the Mexican Heritage Corporation, weaves together the literary and Hollywood legend with real-life treasures from California history.

The exhibit draws on the remarkable private collection of John Gertz, President of Zorro Productions, and features artifacts such as the original 1920s poster of Douglas Fairbanks in the silent film *The Mark of Zorro* and costumes worn by Antonio Banderas and Catherine Zeta-Jones in the 2005 film *The Legend of Zorro*. Artifacts from the HSJ Research Library, including early California *disenos*, or maps, introduce visitors to *Californio* life, and to real historical figures

such as Tiburcio Vasquez and Joaquin Murieta, notorious bandits of the mid-19th century. The exhibit includes the actual 1875 document with the jury's guilty verdict in the murder trial of Vasquez, who was subsequently hanged.

*Zorro Unmasked* kicks off a new programmatic partnership between History San José and the Mexican Heritage Corporation. The match is a natural one, as both organizations strive to preserve and share the continuing and diverse cultural history of Santa Clara Valley. MHC showcases the arts with an eye on history, while HSJ showcases history with an eye on the arts. MHC operates the Mexican Heritage Plaza—a 55,000-square-foot cultural center with a state-of-the-art theatrical venue, beautiful gardens, and a Smithsonian-affiliate gallery. HSJ manages History Park,

Zorro, continued on page 6

## MUSEUM INFORMATION

### History Park

Kelley Park, 1650 Senter Road  
San José, CA 95112  
408.287.2290, Fax 408.287.2291

### Peralta Adobe-Fallon House Historic Site

175 W. St. John Street  
San José, CA 95110  
408.993.8300, Fax 408.993.8088

### Administrative Offices

Pacific Hotel, History Park  
1650 Senter Road  
San José, CA 95112  
408.287.2290, Fax 408.287.2291

[www.historysanjose.org](http://www.historysanjose.org)

### ADMISSION

Free public admission to History Park.

### HOURS

History Park & Gallery, Museum Store, and  
O'Brien's Café

Tuesday – Sunday, 12 pm – 5 pm

### Peralta Adobe-Fallon House Historic Site

To schedule a custom tour, call 408.918.1055

### Research Library

By appointment. Call 408.918.1054

### Administrative Office

Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm  
Call 408.287.2290

### GROUP TOURS

To schedule a custom tour for groups of  
10 or more, please call 408.918.1055

### PROGRAMS

Public Programs History Makers, Family Days,  
Portraits of the Past

School Programs All school programs must  
be reserved. Please call 408.918.1050.

### RENTALS AND EVENTS

Call 408.918.1055 for information.

### HSJ LEADERSHIP

#### Officers 2006-07

Margie Matthews, Chair; Jim Towery, Vice Chair;  
Steve Cox, Vice Chair; David Satterfield, Secretary;  
Tom Scott, Treasurer

#### Board Members 2006-07

Carl E. Cookson, Gerry DeYoung, Eddie Garcia,  
Joseph Head, Anne Louise Heigho, Jeanne Lazzarini,  
Steve Lopes, Ernest Malaspina, Stephen Moore,  
Dan Orloff, Mark Ritchie, Keith Alan Watt

### AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

California Pioneers of Santa Clara County  
California Trolley and Railroad Corporation  
Chinese Historical and Cultural Project  
Digital Clubhouse Network  
Hellenic Heritage Institute  
Immigrant Resettlement & Cultural Center, Inc.  
Poetry Center of San José  
Portuguese Heritage Society of California  
Rotary Club of San José  
SJSU College of Education Alumni Association  
Victorian Preservation Association

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Eva Guralnick, Editor; e.g. communications, Layout

## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

# Partnerships Make the Difference

by Alida Bray, Acting President & CEO

Partnerships, collaborations and volunteers are the foundation of History San José, so our new partnership with the Mexican Heritage Corporation, described in the cover story, should come as no surprise. This partnership will allow us to expand our programs and bring local history and culture to new audiences.

This partnership with the Mexican Heritage Corporation is just the latest of many such relationships. HSJ has 11 Affiliates located in History Park, which are listed in the museum information column at left. Thanks to our partnerships with these wonderful organizations, History Park is constantly alive with activities and events. Today, out my office window, I am watching children scurrying around History Park trying to solve a Family Sunday *History Mystery*. With the expertise of Anita Kwock and our Chinese Historical and Cultural Project partner we've created a mystery that unfolds into the story of a Chinese-American family's heritage. Print Shop volunteer Jim Gard even found and purchased Chinese type to run on the Liberty Press, and used it to print a handout that gives a brief introduction to Chinese language and characters. There are two more Family Sundays before 2006 is over! Please visit our website or mark your *Exchange* calendar so you remember to take advantage of these offerings, which are as educational as they are fun.

HSJ also collaborates with organizations such as the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens on their five-day San José Safari Summer Day Camp, a favorite program of my 10-year-old niece Madeline. Each day of camp takes place at a different location. Imagine playing at the Arena Green; learning about conservation and agriculture at the Guadalupe River Park, Historic Orchards and Rose Garden; touring City Hall and the MLK Library; participating in activities at the Intel Museum, Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, San Jose Quilt Museum and Winchester Mystery House; and last, but certainly not least, riding a trolley, packing a pioneer wagon, and going to a one-room school house in History Park—all in five days! Each day when I picked up Madeline from Safari Camp I learned something new from her. She told me about everything from what a worm's bladder is like, to how you can bypass electrical circuits, to how to load a wagon so it is balanced.

Of course, all this important work happens with another kind of partnership as well—our partnership with our volunteers. It would be impossible to create these unique and rich program experiences without our volunteers. On behalf of the HSJ Staff and Board I want to sincerely thank all of our volunteers for continually sharing their time, talent and creativity each day.

Edith Corrine Smith Trust was unintentionally excluded from HSJ's donor listing in the Summer Issue of *The Exchange*. History San José regrets the error and appreciates their continued support.

## SPONSORS



This issue of *The Exchange*  
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Quake Finders  
Sourisseau Academy

*The Last Harvest* Film  
Sorci Family Foundation

Label Legacy Online Exhibit  
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# A Prune by Any Other Name...

by Jack Douglas

Not that long ago those sweet Santa Clara Valley prunes were on the breakfast tables of almost every home in the land. These luscious morsels, loaded with vitamins and minerals, were available even when snow covered the land. You can bet that Admiral Byrd had a pouchfull on his Polar adventures. Everyone loved them, and most everyone was aware that much of the nation's supply came from our valley. But suddenly the prune is no more. When referred to at all, it is called a "dried plum."

## THE BEGINNING

The prune, and its development as a preeminent crop in our valley, pretty much defined us up until World War II. Granted, there were other fruit-growing establishments that grew up around the prune industry. Apricots, pears, apples and grapes fed our many canneries. The Food Machinery Corporation was our first heavy industry.

It all began when Louis Pellier, a French gold seeker, decided to settle in San José. On his downtown lot, (since made into a mini-park) Louis and his brother Pierre started to experiment with crops that they had grown in France. When Pierre returned to France in 1856 to claim his bride and bring her to San José, he also brought back cuttings. One was "La Petite Prune d'Agen." As these trees began to produce, the fruit was not that popular, as people preferred a larger plum. This did not deter the team of George Tarlton and B. Kamp, who decided to produce the French prune commercially by grafting it onto other stock. Meanwhile, a Yankee forty-niner named John Q. Ballou was experimenting with drying methods. He

shipped his first load of dried prunes to San Francisco in 1859, where the fruit-starved city folks swept them up.

Orchardists who had gone broke by over-planting perishable fruit quickly switched to a fruit that could be economically preserved for shipment to the east by ship or on the new transcontinental railroad. Production jumped from roughly 4 million pounds in 1886 to 174 million pounds in 1900. Rapid expansion led growers to see the value of combining their efforts by forming associations and unions to process, pack and ship their product. Foremost of these was California Prune and Apricot Growers Incorporated, established in 1917 by such local promoters as Jay Orley Hayes and T.S. Montgomery in its new William Binder designed classical building at the corner of San Antonio and Market Streets.

By 1920, however, the number of acres devoted to prunes began a gradual decline. In 1970 there were only 18,900 acres remaining—still, however, more than twice the number of all our other fruit varieties combined.

## THE DAYS OF PRUNES AND ROSES

Like the early San Franciscans, people in other parts of the country discovered our marvelous prunes. When our young trees were first flourishing, clever agents for the railroads tantalized the easterners with flashy ads about the wonders and mysteries of sunny California. Among these wonders, none were more tasty and healthful than the prunes and apricots of the Santa Clara Valley. There was delight for

the eye as well, said the publicists. Hundreds of tourists came to see our valley in spring bloom.

At the World's Columbia Exhibition in Chicago (1893), the most talked-about exhibit in the Agricultural Hall was Santa Clara Agricultural Society's larger-than-life knight on horseback made entirely from our prunes. The knight also appeared later that year in San Francisco's Mid-winter Fair. Also memorable, a few years later, was our intrepid baseball team: the San José Prune Eaters.

And our local cookery experts were busy creating recipes using prunes, many of which found their way into cookbooks such as Fanny Farmer's *Boston Cooking School Cookbook*. The 1910 cookbook of the San Francisco Saint Francis Hotel's master chef, Victor Hirtzler, lists a number of his prune recipes, including his prune soufflé, and Prunes Victor, which necessitated "a pony of good cognac."

## WHO KILLED THE PRUNE?

There are a lot of suspects out there. First among the culprits was the rise of the canning industry, which allowed all fresh fruit to be processed and shipped. Then there were the comedians among us: bootleggers sometimes referred to their product as "prune juice," and Dick Tracy's arch enemy was called "Prune Face." The most lethal blow came when late-night talk show hosts (remember Jack Paar?) and stage comedians began associating the power of prunes with elderly persons' regularity problems. Just the mention of prunes today engenders a smirk on the faces of most people under the age of fifty. So we have been reduced to calling the noble prune a dried plum.

Who knows the location of the real Silicon Valley? I long for the good old days when, if you said that you were from Prune Town, most everyone knew that you were from San José.



Portion of a Sun-Sweet Prune Juice label.

## NEH Grant Pays Early Dividends



The Unconditional S. Grant, 1863. History San José Collection.

History San José recently received a National Endowment for the Humanities grant of \$89,467 to stabilize and move the Research Library to the Collection Center. We have already raised \$44,000 toward matching that grant. A total of \$9,000 was raised at the Annual *Valley of Heart's Delight* fundraising dinner alone, during a special segment of the live auction

called *Last Historian Standing*. The auctioneer asked the guests “who will give \$50?” Those guests who did not want to give more than that sat down as the bids kept going up. We’d like to thank everyone who participated, and especially Coleen and Vincent Cortese, who contributed \$1,000 to become the “last historians standing.” Thanks also to all who sent contributions in

the remittance envelope that came in the last issue of the *Exchange*. We are off to a great start and only have \$45,467 left to go!

This funding is already producing fascinating results. While preparing for the Research Library move, Archivist Jim Reed opened a box of previously unprocessed papers. He found an unusual newspaper titled *The Unconditional S. Grant*, published in New Iberia, Louisiana, in October 1863 by an Illinois regiment of the Union Army. It is apparently a propaganda piece published by Northern troops as they fought their way through the South.

What makes this newspaper of special interest is that it was printed on the back of a sheet of wallpaper. Due to a widespread paper shortage in the South, printers sometimes were forced to use whatever materials they had at hand. Approximately 143 separate issues of “wallpaper newspapers” have survived in various repositories. We are puzzled how such an unusual treasure found its way to History San José’s collections, but are pleased to be able to preserve it and make it available for researchers.

## Speed City History Comes to Your Door

There’s nothing better than hearing about history from the people who made it. History San José is excited to announce a new collaboration with athletes featured in *Speed City: From Civil Rights to Black Power*, which opens January 12, 2007. These modern-day heroes are now businessmen, educators and authors who want to spread the word about their experiences during the Civil Rights Movement.

During 2007, History San José will offer eight different panel presentations that cover the Speed City era. The presentations will take place at locations around the Bay Area, but you can also book presentations for your college, university, library, community center or organization and bring history to your door. Topics range from the experiences of Japanese- and Hispanic-American athletes at San José State College during the 1940s, ’50s and ’60s; to the experiences of female athletes at SJSC during the 1960s; to the experiences of Black athletes during the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. For details, contact Marilyn Guida, Director of Education at History San José, at 408.918.1050 or [mguida@historysanjose.org](mailto:mguida@historysanjose.org).



Photo Courtesy of Ron Davis

### PANEL PRESENTATIONS

- Speed City: The Legacy
- The Post World War II Experiences of Japanese Americans in San José
- The Hispanic Experience at SJSC during the '40s, '50s, and '60s
- The Trailblazers (1956-1960)
- Free At Last (1960-1964)
- Black Power (1964-1969)
- The Black Women Behind the Protests
- Athletics at SJSC for Women
- Politics of the Olympic Games

Stanford Track Meet, c 1961. Left to Right, Front Row: Ron Davis, Jeff Fishback, Danny Murphy, Ben Tucker; Back Row: Horace Whitehead, Harry McCalla, Unknown, Unknown, Jose Azevedo.



## Label Legacy Tells Many Stories

A visit to HSJ's online exhibit *Label Legacy: The Muirson Label Company* reveals story after story about San José. Visitors can learn about the rise and fall of the fruit industry, examine old maps of the area, view luscious fruit labels, even assemble the various color plates needed for full-color printing—you never know what you might discover.

One of the stories you'll find is that of Ralph Rambo, who began at Muirson Label Company making \$7 per week in the foundry department. After a year, George Muirson heard that Rambo had "faint traces of art ability," and promoted him to the art department, thus beginning his 50-year career as an artist and art director for the company.

Rambo's designs were alternately realistic, whimsical, bold, brash, or lyrical—whatever was most pleasing to the client in the days before market testing. Rambo strove to create "reach appeal," his term for artwork that would encourage a prospective customer to choose a particular can on the supermarket shelf.

Upon his retirement, Rambo took up a second career as the Santa Clara Valley's honorary "nostalgician," creating artistic works that chronicled the anecdotal history of the Valley of Heart's Delight. He died in 1990, having watched the Valley transform from agricultural haven to high-tech mecca. His story and many more await you at *Label Legacy* at [www.historysanjose.org](http://www.historysanjose.org). *This project was generously sponsored by Cinnabar Commons, Ltd.*



Above, Ralph Rambo seated at his desk, c. 1935; Top, Original oil for Monarch Lion Head, by Ralph Rambo, c. 1950.

## Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner Honors HSJ Volunteers

Each year, History San José hosts a dinner in honor of the dedicated volunteers who help keep HSJ running. It is our small way to thank them for an entire year of incredible work done by an amazingly dedicated group of people.

The Volunteer Recognition Dinner brings together volunteers from every service area: retail and events, collections and archives, education and outreach, gardening and facilities—even window washing! Many of these volunteers contribute their time in more than one area of service. And, many have been instrumental in developing new programs and activities for our visitors. All of our volunteers' contributions—large and small—make it possible for History San José to preserve the Valley's history and bring it to the public.

We are pleased to congratulate the following volunteers for reaching milestone anniversaries of service in 2006. Thank you all for your dedication to History San José and the community we serve together.

### 25 YEARS

Dorothea Batchelder, Ethel Reinegger, Joan Shomler

### 20 YEARS

Mac Gaddis, Kathryn Hallin, Joan Helms, J.C. Holmes, Bob Kavanaugh, Charles Morrow, Pat Olson, Julie Pifer, Dick Sillan, Rita Sillan

### 15 YEARS

Gayle Frank Moore, Allan Greenberg

### 10 YEARS

Joyce Barsanti, Patrick Magee, Claire Markus, Jean Yates

### 5 YEARS

Al Adams, Jens Ullman

### 1 YEAR

Lucille Boone, Joyce Dreyer, Heiner Eichermuller, Beverly Fender, Amy Hickenbottom, Jim Lathrop, Edward Linggi, Gene Martin, Mary Martin, Michael McCleary, Robb Moore, Nadine Nelson, George Quentin, Lillian Swink, Terry Wilson



## San José Rocks and Rolls

From Count Five and Syndicate of Sound to Smash Mouth, from Ampex to iPod, the Santa Clara Valley has enriched America's largest cultural export: Rock 'n' Roll. In 1965, the Grateful Dead's first performance as the Grateful Dead occurred in a home in downtown San José, now the site of San José's new City Hall.

On Friday evening, October 20, 2006, History San José will present *San José Rocks*, the first annual ben-

efit celebrating the rich and diverse contributions made by local bands and musicians. This fundraising event featuring Syndicate of Sound, Count Five, and other surprise guests will be held at History Park. The evening will include 1960s Rock 'n' Roll, dinner, auctions, and an awards ceremony recognizing some of San José's very own local musicians and bands. Tickets will cost \$100; reservations are required.

History San José has begun to col-

lect artifacts and ephemera from local musicians to be included in the future *San José Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame* exhibit. Can you think of an organization better qualified than History San José to collect and share stories of the history of Rock 'n' Roll?

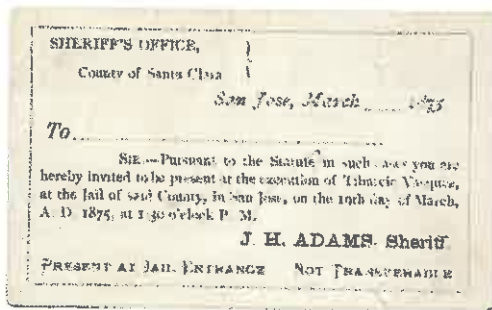
Dust off those bell-bottoms and join us for an evening of oldies but goodies at History Park. Check your mailbox for upcoming event details, or call us at 408.287.2290 for more information.

*The Syndicate of Sound: (left to right) Larry Ray, John Duckworth, John Sharkey, Don Baskin, Bob Gonzalez, c.1965.*

Zorro, continued from cover

the Peralta Adobe-Fallon House Historic Site, and a collection of over 500,000 artifacts. Put these amazing assets together and the possibilities are endless.

This year, the third day of MHC's 15th Annual Mariachi Festival in October will take place in History Park with the *Feria de Mariachi*. In addition, HSJ and MHC will work together on Founders Day at the Peralta Adobe, *Speed City: From Civil Rights to Black Power*, and a new exhibit featuring the art, design and technology behind low-rider cars. This partnership will help both organizations maximize resources, increase visibility, extend community ties, and provide more quality programming for the entire community.



History San José Collection

*Left, Tiburcio Vasquez mug shot from 1874-1887 ledger; Right, ticket issued to view Vasquez hanging, 1875. History San José Collection.*

## FREE FAMILY PORTRAIT

Membership in History San José has always had its privileges, but those privileges have just increased. John Paulson, Master Photographer, is offering a free 8x10 family or individual portrait (valued at \$370) to all HSJ members at the \$100 and above membership level. Portraits will be taken at an outdoor setting in History Park on Saturday, October 28, 2006, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. In case of inclement weather, portraits will be taken indoors.



All \$35 and \$50 members are eligible for this offer as well—just increase your membership to the \$100 level and you too will receive a portrait as our thank-you. When sending additional money to increase to the \$100 level, please attach a note stating, "increase for photograph." We'll take care of the rest!

Reservations are required. To reserve a time for your photo shoot, please call Cinda Olsen at 408.287.2290.

## SEPTEMBER

### Zorro Unmasked

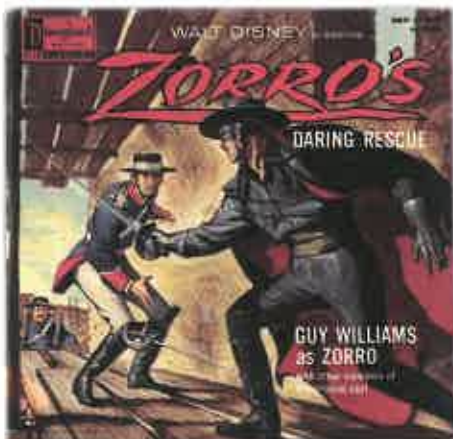
September 7 through December 30

Tuesdays to Thursdays, 1 – 5 pm

See cover story for more details.

Mexican Heritage Plaza, La Galería,

1700 Alum Rock Avenue, San José. Free



LP Record, "Zorro's Daring Rescue," c 1958, Walt Disney Productions.

## OCTOBER

### The Athletic Experiences of Japanese Americans at San José State following World War II

Thursday, October 5, 6:30 – 9 pm

Join panelists of Japanese descent as they relate their personal experiences in starting their athletic careers in San José during the 1940s, '50s, and '60s.

Northside Community Center, 488 North Sixth St., San José.

### 15th Annual San Jose International Mariachi Festival, Concerts and Conference

Sunday, October 8, 11 am – 6 pm

A community festival for the whole family, featuring two entertainment stages of live Mariachi music and dance, food booths, crafts, games and art activities for kids.

History Park. Free

### Family Day

Athletes United for Justice

Sunday, October 15, Noon to 5 pm

Meet local athletes holding national and world titles, and learn their coaching tips for track and field, cross country, judo, soccer, football, and life.

History Park. Free

## HISTORY MAKERS

### The Ohlone Today

Thursday, November 9, 7 – 9 pm

Three women who trace their ancestry to the Ohlone people of central California will explain how they have documented their ancestry and how they carry on their Ohlone culture and identity in the modern world. **Linda Yamane**, born and raised in San José, traces her ancestry to the Rumsien Ohlone, the native people of the Monterey Bay area. **Quirina Luna-Costillas** is one of the founders of the Mutsun Language Foundation. **Jakki Kehl** will share her experience of working with archaeologists in the San José and Santa Clara Valley area to protect the burials of ancient Ohlone people which are found as a result of excavation and property development.

The panel will be moderated by Karl Soltero who has been a columnist for local bilingual newspapers over the past 18 years. He has had a life-long interest in Bay Area Native American affairs and will be happy to incorporate questions from the audience, who can also engage the panelists in conversation at the close of the formal program.

Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Almaden Expressway and Blossom Hill Road, San José. Free



Linda Yamane (Rumsien Ohlone) with baskets she has woven. Linda is an artist, folklorist and author of Weaving a California Tradition: A Native American Basketmaker.

### San José Rocks Benefit for History San José

Friday, October 20, 5:30 – 9:30 pm

See page 6 for more information.

History Park. \$100 per person; reservations required.

### Membership Portraits

Saturday, October 28, 11 am – 3 pm

See page 6 for more information.

History Park.

## NOVEMBER

### History Makers

The Ohlone Today

Thursday, November 9, 7 – 9 pm

See story above.

### Family Day

Celebrate Founder's Day 1777

Sunday, November 19,

Noon – 5 pm

A public celebration with costumed interpreters, music, dance, food, exhibits and more marking the

founding of El Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe on November 29, 1777. Also visit Santa Teresa County Park's historic Bernal Ranch Founders Day Fandango on Saturday, November 18 from 11 am to 3 pm to complete the celebration.

Peralta Adobe-Fallon House Historic Site. Free

## DECEMBER

### Holiday Shopping Event!

Sunday, December 3,

Noon – 5 pm

History Park. Free

### Member's Holiday Party

Thursday, December 7,

6 – 8 pm

Kick off the holidays at History San José's annual membership holiday party. Enjoy a season of traditions, food and beverages, entertainment, and shopping.

History Park. Members only. Free





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[www.historysanjose.org](http://www.historysanjose.org)

## WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU?



### SUMMER BOUNTY IN THE MUSEUM STORE

Enjoy local products from the Santa Clara Valley! History San José honey with a hint of sage, delicious jams and vinegars from Village Harvest, and the veritable Cilker Olive Oil and DiNapoli tomatoes are some of the products you can find at the History San José Museum Store. Stock up and carry them home in our durable History San José canvas tote.

### FRUIT CRATE LABELS

Original labels from the Santa Clara Valley are available in the Museum Store. These colorful works of art come in a variety of sizes and a variety of fruit themes. Perfect for framing and enjoying on your kitchen wall.



### PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES

These three-dimensional puzzles provide hours of fun. Select from a variety of styles to captivate the builder in your family. After assembling, the builder can add a few artistic touches with a paint brush and the race is on!

### OUR BEST FRIENDS

Treat your furry friends to a colorful meal while you enjoy a good book. Bauer Ware bowls are durable and colorful and provide a distinctive table setting for your special friend. A collection of books in the Museum Store provide delightful stories and amusing photos of people and their animals.

