

CAMEL



TRACKS

Year 2010

Phone (707)745-5435 email: info@beniciahistoricalmuseum.org website: beniciahistoricalmuseum.org

Mar. / Apr.

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The mission of the Benicia Historical Museum is to engage the community in the evolving history of Benicia and the Arsenal and their influence in the development of our country.

The Museum complex is the center where history is seen, enjoyed and preserved. Through exhibits, events and educational programs we enlighten the public about the history of this unique city.

Revised and adopted 2006

THE PATWIN LEGACY

Five years ago, we had a hard choice to make. Faced with a shortage of around \$90,000 for completion of our exhibits with interactive elements we pondered options. We could wait until we had all the money to begin the renovation of the museum or we could build two or three "wow" exhibits or we could do a chronological rendition of all the exhibits and do the interactive as we could afford them. We believe that when we chose to do the entire chronological rendition that we made the right choice.



We received a grant from Valero Refining of Benicia this year that is providing the funds for the interactive elements of the Patwin exhibit and for finishing the Fire Department exhibit. Rose Hadaway was the initial donor for the Fire Department exhibit. The Board of Directors at their yearly retreat last Spring set as a major goal the completion of museum exhibits. In a time of economic downturn we knew we would be limited in what we could do so the grant from Valero is very much appreciated. Valero has sponsored other exhibits including the Industrial exhibit which was completed in 2008.



Having the funds does not equate to creating an exhibit. First to be consulted had to be the designers, Patrick McMillan and Anne Toxey, who moved from Benicia to Texas and so our email exchange picked up a rapid pace.

Anne and Patrick came up with plans. We knew the Patwin hut could not be built until the tule reached maturity. We knew we

needed to insure authenticity so we consulted with Marsh Ranch personnel who have created a hut on their premises. We enlisted the help of Virgil Sellers who is going to oversee the build. Then we had to get the materials.

So it was, that Beverly Phelan and her husband, Jim

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The Museum Welcomes our New Members

Michelle A. Chavez

♦
Susan Parker

Friend Level

♦
Michael & Donna Baldwin

Supporting Level

♦
Lorraine & Gerry Patten

♦
Louise Costa

Patron Level

♦
David Palik

Camel Corps Level

♦
Donna Worthington

&

Karl Uebel

Donna Benicia Level

♦
Thomas C. Benet

Museum Docents

Louis Alfeld

Brita Bautin

Glenn Boatman

Alexandra Borostyan

Tania Borostyan

David Galligan

Kimble Goodman

Toni Haughey

Gloria Lambousy

Jim Lessenger

Suzanne Lieban

Mary Marino

Leonide McKay

Elizabeth Murphy

Lorraine Patten

Bruce Quandt

Ron Rice

Eric Sargeson

Carol Scott

Margo Spaulding

Donna Worthington

Bill Venturelli

Notes from Ann

Sands of time Pile Up

The sands of time are piling up on the spent side for 2010 – just two months into the new year we place a big question mark above the pile asking how it got so high so fast!

This our banner anniversary year is being gobbled up very fast. We are off to a very good start, having had two very successful concerts, two wonderfully informative lectures and experienced three days of learning about the Civil War with our friends the National Civil War Association. And now we move into concentrating on the place of women in our society.

March will bring women's contributions to science and the success of our nation through lectures during national Women's History month. Elsewhere in this edition you will find information on the Kathy Williams lecture. You won't want to miss what Kathy has to say about women in science. Then we have the Women's Appreciation



luncheon. While we do not ordinarily trumpet other organizations' activities, we do want to mention the Solano County Women's History Month Luncheon. "Writing Women Back into History" is an apt theme. It is being held on March 12th in Suisun City.

April brings Easter and the beginning of the winding down of another school year. For us that means many school tours when we do the "hands on" that kids for years will identify as their visit to the museum. My birthday celebration will be my 82nd and I would dearly love to have 82 new members added to our rolls. Eighty two new volunteers or 82 more docents would really be icing on the cake. Bring a friend into our museum family and stop by for cake and camaraderie. You will be most welcome.

May, our actual anniversary month, will follow close on and we will certainly be in full swing of things. Our big celebration will be May 15th though the anniversary goes hand in hand with the city founding on May 19th. We will have more on that in the next edition. In the meantime, have a meaningful two months.

Curator's Corner

The museum has a new and exciting addition to our webpage related to our photo collection! This was an idea by Bob Kvasnicka who works in the Collections Department. As I mentioned in our previous Camel Tracks, he has scanned over 400 glass plate negatives from the John Molfino collection. He has also scanned other negatives for which we need identification. He created a Misplaced Memories section that you access by going to Virtual Exhibits on our webpage. We have a form on the page for you to respond if you have information on any of these photos. So far, we have had two responses from people who either know the place the photo was taken, the year or the person. This is so



beneficial to our collection! Please go to our webpage: www.beniciahistoricalmuseum.org and see if you can help us.

Our museum would not have a collection if it weren't for the generous donations we receive from citizens of Benicia and others. Many times people think that something is worthless to them and therefore it does not have value. However, it may be of importance to the museum because of its historical significance. There are those who have worked for the Benicia Arsenal, Yuba Mfg., Southern Pacific Railroad and other industries in Benicia. Some of you may have items of everyday living from their parents or grandparents. We need to hear from you if you have something to contribute to our collection. We have recently received books for our reference library, Boy Scout items and articles of historical interest for our reference files. Please contact Beverly or Ann at the museum 745-5435.

Patwin

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and faithful volunteers Brita and Nick Bautin assisted by the State Perk maintenance crew went harvesting tule. Once we had the tule, we had to be sure it is stored in such a way as to keep it pliable until the actual building begins. The next necessary element is the willow. Once again the crew went out to secure the needed materials. Now with tulle and willow at hand, construction can begin. It will take quite a few

volunteers under Virgil's direction to construct the hut. Upon completion it will be installed against a mural of Benicia hills. The hut will be accessible for young people to actually enter it and know a little more about the life of the Patwin Indian the early dwellers in Benicia.

The exhibit will be dedicated on our anniversary celebration day, May 15th, 2010.



In Honor of A Century of Scout Pledges

Hundreds of hours of planning and preparation, 1000 plus loaned objects, an overnight encampment, flag ceremony, more than 200 visitors on opening day –this is a quick sketch of the current exhibit in our Museum – the 100th Anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America.

This display, filling more than seventy per cent of the museum exhibit space, has been arranged by museum curator Beverly Phelan, with Dr. James Lessenger as exhibit co-chairman.

This project, as they say “came in on time and under budget”, and was funded by an anonymous donor.

Wander among the cases that display uniforms, badges, hats, handbooks, medals, stamps, neckerchief slides, sashes, pinewood derby cars, mementoes from local camping to national and international jamborees, all illustrating the stories of a scout experience from a young



cub to the attainment of the Eagle Badge.

And the displays pay homage to the volunteers, from Den Mothers and Scout Masters to Explorer Scout leaders, and back to the history of the movement from Ernest Thompson Seton and Daniel Carter Beard in the USA and Lord Baden Powell of England.

The famous historic covers of Boys Life magazines, done by Norman Rockwell, are part of a large wall display, as well as Scout “stuff”, canteens, first aid kits, cooking equipment, Morse code kits, axes and knives. Don't miss the special case of scout hats, from Stetsons to the current beret.

Local scouts, young and older, took part in the installation, Benicia Troop 8 took this on as a service project, and Venture Crew 78 installed entry arches. Bill Goshorn, of Vallejo has loaned over 700 items in the display.

Visitors include young and older scouts, and any scout attending in uniform will receive a \$1.00 off the admission fee.

Many groups are visiting as a troop activity, and we have had a Cub Scout group who had a planned “scavenger hunt” to enhance their visit. Groups are also welcome to visit the other sections of the complex.

The exhibit opened on Boy Scout Sunday, February 7, and will remain open until June 1. Visitors are welcomed Wednesday through Sunday from 1-4 pm, or by special arrangement.



Lecture Series Update

Continuing its 25th Anniversary Lecture Series, the Benicia Historical Museum will welcome Kathleen Williams, author of “Grace Hopper: Admiral of the Cyber Sea and “Improbable Warriors: Women Scientists and the US Navy in World War II on Sunday, March 21 at 2:00 pm in Stone Hall. She will discuss the contributions of these mostly unknown and unheralded women scientists, as a part of the Museum's Women's Month celebrations.

On Sunday, April 18th Dr. Robert Chandler, senior research historian for Wells Fargo Bank, and author of “Wells Fargo” will present a program on the Pony Express. April, 2010 is the 150th Anniversary of this famous organization, celebrated far longer than the eighteen months it existed. The original company was

closed when the telegraph opened from coast to coast and because of the start of the Civil War. The route and logo, however, was continued for a number of years as a part of Wells Fargo.

Benicia became a stop for the riders from Sacramento who would board the ferry to cross to what is now Martinez, then ride to Oakland and cross on another ferry to get the mail to San Francisco. The Pony Express covered the shipment of mail from east coast to west coast in about ten days. Horses ran about 10 miles an hour, were changed every 10 to 15 miles; riders every 75 miles. The mail was carried in special pouches that fit over the saddles, under the rider.

This event is part on a series of events celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Benicia Historical Museum. It will be held at 2:00 pm in Stone Hall. It is free of charge and open to the public and refreshments will be served.

Winter Quarters

Good seminars, good food, good entertainment but most of all good people. Bad weather but the show went on!

The ingenuity of the National Civil War Association members came into play more than once during the weekend. Airports being closed on the east coast made it difficult if not impossible for presenters to get here.

Some drove extra hours to get a flight out. Expecting to get here at midnight, they arrived still later at 2:00 a.m. and were ready with their presentations at 9:00.



Through the efforts and cooperation on both ends, telecommunication came to the rescue and we had live presentations over the internet. Fortunately, when the museum was rewired we had the foresight to include wireless so communication was maintained very well. We viewed hats of every kind and description worn during the 19th century. Nick Sekela, not being satisfied with his presentation revamped it overnight and gave an even greater variety to transmit to us on Sunday. Nick also had sent an inventory of his Civil War clothing which was displayed in the vendor area. Much interest was shown in the display.

All the subjects offered this year were new introductions

to the program. The Liberty High students in attendance enjoyed the presentation on swords at the high school. We had an amazing display and lecture on historic guns. Local architect Elizabeth Pigeon – Ontis dealt with the footprint of Benicia. Tours of the arsenal by Dr. Jim Lessenger proved popular as did the tours of the Capitol and the Fischer-Hanlon house. A real live blacksmith in the person of Scott Thomas from Ardenwood Farm brought the reality of hard work and the art of caring for horses to life.

We were fortunate again this year to have participation by restaurants and merchants who provided coupons for attendees to use. We are grateful to Venticellos, Issy's, Buon Apetito, Lucca, Union Hotel, Pizza Pirate, Christina S, Benicia Grill and Sahara. The participants were very grateful to the donors and knew that they were welcome here.

The National Civil War Association and the Benicia Historical

Museum have worked well together and appreciate all the cooperation given to them in this adventure. We especially appreciate the use of the High School classrooms and the Rotary Club for supporting the attendance of the Liberty High School students.



Volunteer of the Month



At times it is hard to know just who would be the best person for a task that we need done. There are always, however, those who fit almost any job description we can create. One of the couples who are willing to "pitch in" to accomplish almost anything needed are Brita and Nick Bautin. It is not

only for this reason that they are deserving of recognition as volunteers of the month but because of their major contribution in gathering materials for the Patwin Hut construction. Our curator, Beverly, didn't hesitate when looking for someone to help in gathering the tulle and the willow. Thanks, Brita and Nick, for all your support and faithfulness to the fulfilling of our mission.

Calendar of events

BOY SCOUT EXHIBIT

Until, June, 2010
Museum @ Museum hours

WOMEN WHO WORKED IN ARSENAL/

WOMEN IN SCIENCE

Lecture by Kathy Williams
Sunday, March 21, 2010
Stone Hall @ 2:00 pm

WOMEN'S APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

Monday, March 22, 2010
Stone Hall @ 11:30 am

ANN'S 82ND BIRTHDAY PARTY

Thursday, April 8, 2010
Stone Hall from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm

150TH PONY EXPRESS

Lecture by Dr. Robert Chandler
Sunday, April 18, 2010
Stone Hall @ 2:00 pm