

Golden Nuggets

October 2007

Tuesday, October 23, 7:00 PM

Childhood in Early California Chinatown

A Presentation by Wendy Jorae

SAMCC, 551 Sequoia Pacific Blvd., Sacramento



"Group of Chinese Children," photo by Edward H. Mitchell, San Francisco, circa 1912; postcard, W.R. Jorae collection

Historians have traditionally identified San Francisco's late nineteenth century Chinatown as a "bachelor society." While statistically accurate, this narrow designation ignores the importance of children in early Chinatown. Wendy Rouse Jorae, archeologist, historian, and educator, takes a broader look at the culture behind the numbers. She will demonstrate how images of childhood and family life promoted by various groups in early San Francisco's Chinatown significantly influenced the debate over Chinese immigration and the future of Chinese America.

A history teacher at St. Francis College Preparatory School for Girls, Jorae has a B.A. in history and an M.A. in public history and archaeology, both from CSUS, and a Ph.D. from UC Davis in American history, with an emphasis on Asian American Studies. She became interested in Chinese American history during her M.A. studies while helping to excavate a Chinese mining camp in Placer County. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend what promises to be a fresh new view of an ancient culture.

The Good Shepherd: A View of Jim Henley

By Bill Gaylord

My wife, Shirley, and I met Jim Henley shortly after we started a small business in the West End, or Skid Row, as that part of Sacramento was known as in 1970. We had heard that the area was going to be redeveloped into a re-creation of Sacramento as it had been in the 1870s, complete with horse-drawn street cars, wooden sidewalks, period signage, gas-lights and so on. We were familiar with Williamsburg, where the whole town is maintained as it was in colonial days, and thought we would like to participate in remaking a gold-rush era Old Sacramento.

Soon after we set up our shop, we met Jim, then a 26-year-old with a degree in history, working for the Historic Landmarks Commission, the agency responsible for establishing historical guidelines for the redevelopment of Old Sacramento. Jim explained that the area's 28 acres had a large number of buildings which were important to the history of Sacramento and California—more, in fact, than any other city in the country. Existing buildings were to be made earthquake-safe, and their facades returned to an assigned restoration date appearance. Business signage would be carefully controlled, drawn from a selection of period lettering styles, designs and placement.

Jim checked with us often, offering advice and suggestions about how our shop could fit into the overall plans for the historic district. As more businesses began to occupy spaces in the four block area, Jim's job became more and more demanding. Most of the buildings were privately owned, and one of the early and continual problems was a small number of owners concerned mostly with renting their space, without regard for whether the business was appropriate or if it followed the operating guidelines. Still, the 29 years we were in busi-

ness there were some of our best times, thanks to Jim's advice—and his friendship.

Jim also helped oversee the financing and construction of the Sacramento History Center, a reconstruction of the historic City Hall & Water Works building, next to the California State Railroad Museum. Now known as The Discovery Museum Gold Rush History Center, this museum had been a dream of the Friends of the Sacramento County Museum, an organization Jim had shepherded along in the 1970s.

Once the History Center opened in 1985, Jim turned his attention to the Sacramento Archives and Museum Collection Center, (SAMCC). It began as a tiny space on 7th Street, spent several years in the former Mayflower Moving building in Midtown, then moved to its present burgeoning warehouse off Richards Boulevard. SAMCC is recognized as the largest local archive of city and county records in the state. It is also one of the most diverse, a place where records, television films, photographic collections, and historic artifacts share space with your grandfather's toys and your grandmother's wedding dress.

Jim has many accomplishments to look back on. His extensive articles about local history have inspired greater local interest in preserving that history. He has been the driving force behind the **Sacramento History Journal**, the Sacramento County Historical Society's magnificently illustrated journal of regional history. He solicits articles from scholars, edits them, gathers graphics, and frequently finds ways to secure added funding for printing. He has been a member and/or officer of various regional history groups—and an unofficial advisor, facilitator, and 'answer guy' for many others. In the more than 40 years he has dedicated to the Sacramento area's collections, he has pursued and acquired many items which would otherwise have been lost.

Jim Henley has truly been the Good Shepherd of Sacramento County, rounding up many scattered pieces of our past. We wish him and his wife, Paula, a fruitful retirement. We know he'll stay busy. SCHS board member Bill and Shirley Gaylord operated Gaylord's Mercantile, a popular small emporium in Old Sacramento in years past.

Celebrating 150 Years of Sacramento Public Library History

By Clare Ellis



Sacramento City Library, completed 1918, postcard published by Frank McDougal, Sacramento, CA.

-Sacramento Public Library Collection

Sacramento in 1857 was a growing, vibrant city. Just nine years after the start of the California Gold Rush the city had a railroad (the R Street line), a City Hall, a newspaper, and levees along the river. The State Agricultural Exhibition—later known as the California State Fair—had been established five years earlier. Over 50 ships provided steamboat service, mostly between Sacramento and San Francisco. Sacramento theaters were thriving and so were the houses of prostitution. Ten churches existed, perhaps as a balance to the latter two diversions.

To enhance the intellectual climate of the city, a group of prominent citizens formed the Capital Library Association in October of 1857. Selling stock at \$25 a share, the Association raised \$25,000 to buy books, furnish the library, and purchase land for a permanent library building. The first Sacramento Library was located at 5th and J streets and had a collection of 800 books. The following year, another 800 books purchased from New York came around the Horn to Sacramento. Some of these originals—including a 13-volume *Natural History of New York* published in 1843—are still part of the library's rare book collection and may be seen in the Central Library Sacramento Room.

The library opened to its subscribing members on November 8, 1857. Members paid \$5 initially, plus \$2.50 quarterly. (In today's funds, this would equal nearly \$300 a year!) Patrons numbered about 50 a day, and circulation of books averaged about 150 books a week. This library, unfortunately, was damaged by fire and the association then built a new library on I Street between 6th and 7th streets. By September 1873, there were 260 memberships and an annual circulation of 4,234 books.

Unfortunately membership in the library association declined drastically over the next few years. In 1879 the Sacramento Library Association directors offered the property to the City of Sacramento to be used as a free public library. Residents soundly supported the idea in the next election, and the city assumed ownership on March 31, 1879. The grand opening of the Sacramento Free Library, then with over 6000 books, took place on June 14, 1879. Within six months, statistics showed an average of 100 patrons visiting during daily hours from 10 AM to 3 PM and from 5 PM to 10 PM.



“Free Public Library, Sacramento, Cal.”
Postcard from the internet exhibit, “Library Postcards: Civic Pride in a Lost America” by Judith Aulik.

For those of you with access to the internet, this is quite an interesting collection of library postcard images.-Editor
<http://home.comcast.net/~jaulik/miscpublib.html>

In May 1913, the Veteran Knights of Pythias of Sacramento applied to the Carnegie Corporation for a grant to be used to build the Sacramento City Library. Awarded \$100,000 on March 11, 1914, the city provided the library site on the corner of the corner of 9th and I streets. Loring Rixford of San Francisco was selected as the architect. The new library opened to the public on April 23, 1918, with some 65,000 volumes.

Library service continued to expand. Soon

branch libraries were opened. Walnut Grove opened in 1919, followed by Fruitridge in 1920, Carmichael in 1923, and Sylvan Oaks in 1926. In the 1930s, the Central Library developed a garden library as an outdoor reading environment for use between 10 AM and 5 PM. In 1940, the Ella K. McClatchy Library opened for young people.

In 1992, the current Central Library opened adjacent to the original Carnegie building. This beautiful six-story building and the library's 26 branches along with the Sacramento Room (in the original Carnegie building) are the current core public facilities. With the support of the Sacramento Public Library Foundation and the Friends of the Sacramento Public Library, and thousands of volunteer hours, the library continues to grow and change.

The library now offers much more than books. Patrons have access to CDs, DVDs, books on tape, and downloadable books. Literacy services are available, and questions can be answered by TELIS (telephone reference at 916-264-2920) any hour any library is open. Today's library is a community space offering exhibits, programs, book readings, and events.

The Sacramento Public Library celebrates its 150th anniversary this October with events scheduled throughout the entire library system. Highlights are below, more details on page 4. Clare Ellis is the Sacramento Room Librarian and an SCHS Board member.

1857 • 2007 **Sacramento Public Library**

150

150 Celebration Highlights

- ◆ **Looking at Jazz: America's Art Form**
Thursdays, including Oct. 11, 18, 25
- ◆ **Founding Celebration Family Weekend**
Central Library
Sat. Oct. 20 - Camellia Symphony & "zoo"
Sun. Oct 21 - Family Festival
- ◆ **Special Exhibits**
- ◆ **Road Shows**
Treasures from the Sacramento Room
brought out to branch libraries

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Pat Turse, Editorial & Layout
Email: newsletter@sachistoricalssociety.org

Please deliver by October 2, 2007!

Out & About

Date	Time	Event	Place & Contact												
October 6 Saturday	Opening Night 4 PM to 8 PM	Archives Month Events. Opening night features refreshments and free entry to rarely seen treasures and a "California Road Trip" exhibit. Family History Day- starter classes in family research with lots of helpful tips.	California State Archives 1020 O Street, Sacramento 916-653-7715 Class details: www.rootcellar.org												
13 Saturday	8:30 AM to 4 PM			11, 18 & 25 Thursdays	6:30 PM	Looking at Jazz. Films, conversations on cultural history of jazz, followed by live performances. 11th-Latin Jazz: Jazz as International Music 18th-Jazz Innovators: BeBop to Hard Bop to Cool 25th-Grand Finale: The Divine Divas. Free.	Central Library Galleria 828 I Street, Sacramento www.saclibrary.org 916-264-2920	20 Saturday	1 PM "zoo" 2 PM concert	Founders Day Weekend Events. Camellia Symphony family concert & "instrument petting zoo" Family Festival- Wells Fargo Stage rides, storytelling, music, historical characters & exhibits. Free.	Central Library 828 I Street, Sacramento (& Cesar Chavez Park, Sunday) 916-264-2920	21 Sunday	11 AM to 5 PM Festival activities	Continues through March 1, 2008	Friday 10 AM to 4 PM Sat & Sun, 10 AM to 5 PM
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