

THE HISTORIAN San Juan Bautista Historical Society  
Newsletter from "The City of History" September 2011

Join Us for an OPEN HOUSE in the  
Carl Martín Luck Memorial Park  
Monterey at Second and Third Streets



The San Juan Bautista Historical  
Society Quarterly Meeting  
Saturday, October 1  
9:00 – 1:00

"Come See Who We Are" is the theme of the event. As we near our 50<sup>th</sup> year, take a retrospective look at where we've been and help us realize our vision of keeping the past present, long into the future.

Learn more about the people, places and events of San Juan Bautista, City of History. See short samples from our video files, digitized by Ken Halla. Ken will also demonstrate techniques of scanning and encourage you to join in our efforts to preserve as much of San

Juan's history as possible, utilizing 21st century methods of archiving.

**The Historical Society** has served this community since August 1965 (46 years) as a non-profit organization. The **Luck Museum** houses our

collection of historical photos, documents, and memorabilia. The Mission News issues from 1917 through November 1969, its last issue, are housed in the Museum along with the Cultural Resources materials gathered since 1979 specifically related to the historic buildings in town and many other local treasures.

Books will be available for purchase at the Museum. *Bandido: The Life and Times of Tiburcio Vasquez* is a recent best seller, in addition to the Mylar and Clough publications, written especially about San Juan Bautista and published by the SJBHS.

Enjoy coffee and refreshments with your children, grandchildren, friends and neighbors (restrooms available in the Library). Merchants are encouraged to get an idea of the resources available and make an appointment to explore in more depth.

After browsing through the **Museum**, take a look at the **Jim Jack Cabin** and the **Library**, which houses current best sellers for all ages, California History reference books, DVDs, 6 public-use computers, wireless internet access, daily newspapers, and more. Make it a point to look up and view the four beautiful

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Dues: \$15.00 [sjb95045@att.net](mailto:sjb95045@att.net)

32-foot-wide “folk art” panels depicting the history of San Juan Bautista, prepared in the 1990s by the children of our own San Juan School. What a treasure! In the foyer is a wide array of used paperbacks (50 cents) and hardbacks (75 cents) as well as VHS tapes (who knows – there might even be a special sale that day!) The Library is happy to accept donations of used books, audio-books, VHS tapes, DVDs, etc.

### The Jim Jack Cabin

Jim Jack, “the Mustard King,” lived a humble life in a tiny one-room cabin built circa 1875 and originally located on Mission Vineyard. According to a June 21, 1919 article appearing in the San Juan Mission News, as a Chinese pioneer and farmer, he negotiated with his employer (the Flint-Bixby Company) to clean all the wild mustard that had overgrown the crops in exchange for being allowed to glean the mustard seeds. With 100 Chinese recruits, he cleaned up 10,000 acres, netting \$40,000 after selling to French mustard manufacturers. Jim Jack then became a generous philanthropist, sharing his bounty with those in the community. Isaac Mylar (Early Days in San Juan Bautista) referred to Jim Jack as “a most generous and well-liked man by children and families in need.”



The Historical Society purchased the cabin from Mary Ghiorzi in 1973 for \$5.00 and moved it later that year to a temporary location at the “Indian Village” site in the San Juan Bautista State Historic Park. Because the State planned to complete an archaeological survey at that location, the cabin was moved once again in 1974 and remained in the City Corporation Yard until 2006 when it was

moved to its permanent location in the Luck Memorial Park. We hope to launch the Jim Jack cabin interpretation by landscaping this year. Can we count on help from our members again: time, talent or treasure?

*History in Place*

By Sheila Prader

Thank you to Anne Morris and the Morris/Baumgartner family members for your heartwarming John Baumgartner presentation at our annual meeting. Thank you also to guest Diane Porter Cooley from the Pajaro Valley, who generously donated to our Jim Jack Landscaping Project. Diane’s family history offers several interesting parallels for us. Her great grandfather John T. Porter was one of the early supporters of the Chinese in California, and employed many of them in the raising of sugar beets. He owned the Watsonville property at Maple and Union Streets where Chinatown was developing in 1868. In 1888, when public sentiment against the Chinese grew, he offered the property across the river around his Pajaro home (a National Register structure known as the Porter-Vallejo Mansion and now the home of the Pajaro Branch of the Monterey County Free Library) as a relocation site for the Watsonville Chinatown residents. Several structures and their inhabitants moved across the bridge to the new Chinatown which became known as Brooklyn.

Our 1965 Articles of Incorporation state our purposes for formation. “a) **The specific and primary purposes are to discover, procure and preserve whatever may relate to the natural, civil, ecclesiastical and architectural history of San Juan Bautista; to**

**establish and maintain collections of photographs, information and memorabilia of every kind relating to the City of San Juan Bautista; to arouse interest and appreciation in the historical heritage of San Juan Bautista, and to compile and publish books relating to the history of said city."**

Our 1965 Charter states that one of our projects is "[t]o **cause the citizens of this community to become more fully aware of the fascinating historical heritage that surrounds them here in the town of San Juan Bautista.**"

I encourage each of you to attend our **October 1 Open House** to become more fully aware of what we have collected and of how we plan to preserve our collection, in keeping with our purposes and our projects. We need more volunteers besides Ken Halla and others who have offered to help. We would love to include you and your talents in these plans for our future.

I would also like to thank Tim and Susan Kefauver for their generous donations, matched by Hewlett Packard, which have already assisted us in the preservation of our holdings.

The Digital San Juan Bautista Project

By Ken Halla

Over the years, members of the Historical Society have voluntarily collected a wide range of materials documenting the history of San Juan Bautista. As a result of these efforts, the San Juan Bautista Historical Society maintains an important collection of books, manuscripts, newspapers,



photographs, and audio and video recordings documenting much of the town's history.

The Society's success in compiling the history of the town has created a need for increased efforts to preserve the collection. Important documents and photographs must be protected from the elements and, as much as possible, from the effects of time. In addition, the Society has more than 100 hours of interviews, presentations, and events recorded on audio and video tapes that are deteriorating with time and are recorded in formats that are nearly obsolete.

To address this concern, the Historical Society initiated The Digital San Juan Bautista Project. The goal of the project is to preserve the existing collection of historical materials. As the first step, videotapes are being digitized with video editing software. All of the digital copies are being stored on hard drives and DVDs. Future plans are for documents and photos to be digitized with scanners and for oral interviews, originally recorded on audiotapes, to be converted to computer files.

Future plans also include training volunteers to help digitize and preserve the historical materials.

To date, I have digitized and saved to a dedicated hard drive 11 hours of videotape containing interviews with several long time San Juan residents. An important collection of photographic slides documenting the 1975-76 restoration of the Mission, primarily by local residents, has also been scanned and stored electronically. Photographed by Jewel Spangler Smaus, a journalist for

United Press International, the slide collection contains images of the Mission prior to the restoration, the making of adobe bricks on the former Rodeo Grounds, and construction of the Mission's two side aisles.

To support the Digital San Juan Bautista Project, at its July meeting the Board of Directors approved the expenditure of \$3000 for the purchase of computer equipment. Currently, much of the work is being completed with cooperation from the Community Media Access Partnership (CMAP) located at Gavilan College.

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- Are you interested in learning how to scan and willing to help scan some historic documents or photos? Would you like to be able to scan some of your own photos in exchange? Sign up at the meeting!
- Do you have old photos, newspaper clippings, documents, family histories, 35 mm movie films or videotapes of San Juan-related events/families/places you would like to donate to the SJBHS? If so, contact us so we can set up a time to meet with you.

*Where the Past is Always Present*  
by Wanda Guibert

The Hollister Free Lance Evening edition of Thursday, June 3, 1982, published the following article upon the unveiling of the Luck Library sign, which unfolds the history of the Luck Museum and Library project.

Between 75 and 100 people gathered outside Carl Martin Luck Memorial Sunday to celebrate the completion of the final phase of

work on San Juan Bautista's newest facility.

The highlight of the afternoon festivities was the unveiling of the stained wood sign carved for the building by San Juan Bavarian sign painting specialist Alex Zeller. The unveiling was conducted by Mayor Harvey Nyland.

Anne Baccala and Renee Holthouse of the library landscaping committee bestowed words of thanks on the library's benefactors, who include the Luck Estate, which gave \$4,538 left over from the construction of the building; the American Bicentennial committee, which gave \$4,122; and various other smaller donators, who chipped in another \$8,000.

The lion's share of the funds -- \$10,872 -- were spent on landscaping the grounds and installing park benches. Other expenses included \$3,711 for the parking lot, \$1,410 for the building's drapery and \$769 for painting of the old service station at which Carl Luck made his fortune.

The station was the only building on the property donated to the city by the late Francesca Luck. When she died in May, 1974, she left the city an entire block bounded by Second, Monterey, Third, and Tualami Streets, with the provision the land be used for a new public park, museum and library as a memorial to her father, Carl Martin Luck.



Construction on the \$100,000 library was completed midway through 1979, and the facility was dedicated in June of that year. But the extras – drapes, sign, parking lot and landscaping – took another three years and \$17,000 to complete.

The Grand Opening of the Luck Museum was celebrated with a BBQ on June 3, 2000. To restore the gas station building (previously used for City storage), the **Library Auxiliary** donated to the City over \$20,000 raised by their community BBQs. Various other civic organizations also contributed their time, talent and treasure to this project, which included landscaping an entire city block “to provide both visual interest, color, open space and shade” (Hollister Free Lance 6/11/81). Continuing the legacy of craftsman Alex Zeller, Valerie Eglund, who trained under Alex, carved the Luck Museum sign.

**The San Juan Bautista Library Auxiliary**  
According to documents shared by Library Auxiliary member Glenny Farney, the organization was founded sometime in the late 1800s when it was then a literary and social club called The Ladies Library Auxiliary. The ladies, keen on self-education, met weekly in their homes, acquired books, loaned them to each other, and discussed them at the meetings. They moved into the Reading Room of the Texas Lodge Masonic Lodge on Second Street in 1896, where they remained until 1979 when the Luck Library opened. (The late Joe Cullumber had been awarded the library building contract on a low bid.) In 1906, the Town Board of Trustees issued Ordinance 15, establishing the Free Library of San Juan Bautista. The Bylaws of the Auxiliary

indicate that their object is to continue the work of their founders, acquiring books and equipment, providing administrative assistance to the librarian and working in conjunction with the City staff for the good of the Library. Applications for membership are available at the Library and all are invited to become members (men are now welcome!)

Donations 2011

In her will, Historical Society member and former President Carla Hendershot left the SJBHS a cash donation, for which we are deeply grateful. We also acquired some of her personal memorabilia, including books. Special thanks also to Diane Porter Cooley for her cash donation.

We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. CA Charitable Trust #7673

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Upcoming Local Events

**Sept. 16–18:** Civil War Days Re-enactment at San Benito County Historical Park near Tres Pinos

**Sept. 30:** Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail: Free ranger-led hike. Meet at 6:00 pm at trailhead.

**Sept. 30:** Movies in the Park The final movie of the 2011 season, Vertigo, will be presented at sunset at the SJB Soccer Field

**Oct. 1:** Luck Memorial Park **Open House**

**Oct. 1:** Living History Days at SJB State  
Historic

Park 11-4 p.m.

**Oct. 1:** "Fall Fair" in downtown SJB 10-5  
sponsored by San Juan Committee  
623-9275

**Oct. 28-29:** San Juan Bautista Ghost Walk  
hosted by the SJB Rotary Club. Tickets  
required and going fast. Tours leave at  
6:30, 7:00 and 7:30 pm

**Nov. 5:** Living History Days at SJB State  
Historic

Park 11-4 p.m.

**Nov. 5:** Pasta Dinner at the historic Native  
Daughters of the Golden West Adobe on  
Fourth Street. Proceeds go toward the  
new roof.

The Historian, named by Bill Roddy  
(descendant of Encarnacion Sanchez,  
early owner of the Crane House - learn  
more in the engaging The Sanchez  
Treasure by Nita Harrell) is distributed  
quarterly to over 350 people. E-mail us  
so we can email you the newsletter and  
save the printing/postage expenses.