

San Pedro Bay Historical Society Newsletter

WINTER 2020

JANUARY

Two Talks for the New Year

January 12, Richard Foss, acclaimed speaker, writer, and culinary historian, presents "How Prohibition Changed America."

The 18th Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1919 and enacted a year later, banned the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages. Since its repeal in 1933, misunderstandings about Prohibition remain. His talk takes a sometimes humorous look at attitudes leading to Prohibition, including what America was like before, during and afterward, and how that era still affects us today.

Foss has contributed to over thirty publications, including the *Encyclopedia of World Food Cultures* and the *Oxford Companion to Sweets*. His book on the history of rum was published in 2012. Presently he is curating an exhibit at the Autry Museum called "Cooking Up a New West," which will open in 2021.

The venue for the talk is the historic Red Man's Wigwam on Shepard Street. Time: 11:00 – 1:00. See calendar on back for address.



February 1, Jim MacLellan, Forum 21 Director and past Director of Trade Development for the Port of Los Angeles, will present "One Hundred Years of Trade through the San Pedro Bay."

MacLellan explains that trade through the San Pedro Bay ports has seen periodic surges, a prime example being WW I and its aftermath during the "Roaring Twenties." The talk will focus on main markets and products, then and now, to uncover some surprising facts and trends.

The historic implications for local and regional economy in a few key trade products will also be explored. In cooperation with the SPBHS, MacLellan conducted new research this past year in the SPBHS Archives and in the City's Archives in Downtown LA.

The venue is Rm. 452 of the Municipal Building in San Pedro. Time 11:00 – 12:30. Address in calendar on back.

A Timely Rescue in the Archives



The intersection of Seventh Street and Pacific Avenue, with the S. H. Kress 5-10-25 Cent Store anchoring the corner and J. C. Penney's further up Pacific. Date around 1940.

Our participation in the "L.A. as Subject" digitization project through CSU Dominguez Hills has helped us start the rescue of vulnerable large-format negatives in the Archives. The negatives are being scanned individually to produce positive images, many of which will be printed. All scans will be maintained digitally and eventually accompanied by full metadata, in other words, by all the important information about the images that can be provided, such as date, persons and places in the photo, occasion, photographer, and key words that one might use in online searches.

The acetate negatives, which were once considered a safety improvement over the old nitrate stock, are particularly susceptible to vinegarization, a process that causes the film layers to delaminate. The start of the deterioration is signaled by a characteristic strong vinegar odor, and it was discovered that a handful of the Archives acetates had headed in that direction.

The image above is from a recent scan and was roughly dated on the basis of the visible autos. The latest model shown is a 1940 Dodge parked in front of the S.H. Kress store and was identified by Chuck Short.

Other valuable images being discovered during the rescue process are helping to fill in the gaps of our collective San Pedro memory.

Muller House Porch & Flagpole Project Nearing Completion

In the fall we were able to begin work on the Muller House porch and the historic flagpole in the front yard. The historic preservation grant of \$4,485 from the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, made possible through the sponsorship of the Point Vicente Chapter of the DAR, was the catalyst needed to launch these preservation efforts.

In some ways, strengthening the porch with new decking and restoring the rails, banisters, and newel posts was the more straightforward endeavor. The historic fir flagpole from the E. K. Wood Lumber Company, however, presented some formidable challenges, which new board member and retired engineer John Smith met with unfailing resolve and good will as he took on the restoration.

Foremost, perhaps, was conquering the height of the flagpole, measured at about 37 feet. When first installed, a truck-mounted crane had boomed it over the perimeter fence. Now a different piece of equipment was needed. A 12,000 pound lift was rented and wrestled into place. That took hours—both

getting it on and off the property. John's previous experience with lifts stood him in good stead, for this piece of equipment was not an easy drive.



Upon reaching the top of the flagpole, John discovered that the wind vane in the form

of a gaff-rigged sailboat had lost its mainsail. Our good fortune was to have John's neighbor Hudel Holmes volunteer to clean the little boat and find a way to replace the mainsail. Time was of the essence, because the rental expenses for the lift were steep. Hudel called upon a local business, Coppa Woodworking, which agreed to fabricate a new mainsail, and in a few days the restored wind vane was ready to remount, but this time with stainless hardware and fittings that would better protect the pole. The end result, shown above, closely matches the original.

Far more insect damage than first met the eye required extensive sanding and multiple applications of epoxy filler. No live termites were found, but an unidentified species of tiny ant (not the usual carpenter ant), had

made the flagpole its home. The ants were possibly responsible for the countless tunnels and divots that opened during each sanding.

The scene at the right gives some idea of John's work, which was mostly accomplished on the lift, except for the last ten feet at the bottom. Four weeks from the start and many coats of paint later, the flagpole is nearly finished. A trim-looking sailboat now rotates with the wind, and the body of the flagpole positively gleams.



Colin Anderson, owner of Blue Water Property Maintenance and Development, undertook the work on the porch, and the fine carpentry work was done by Peter E. Matthews, owner of PEMCO, a construction company in Harbor City. Durable woods were used for all the newly fabricated pieces. The decking is fine-grained cedar, installed at a slight slope to drain rain and moisture. The recreated newel posts are African mahogany as are parts of the railings. Original wood that could be repaired or salvaged has been integrated with the new.

The *Daily Breeze* ran a story on the preservation projects in its December 4th edition. It can be located online by searching under "San Pedro's historic Muller House" on the paper's website.

The project activity at the Muller House Museum has generated interest from passersby and neighbors.



A section of new cedar decking before primer paint and before side rails were installed.

One neighborhood resident, James Moebus, stepped in to help with clean-up around the property and tackled some difficult areas where old furniture and refuse had been abandoned. Thank you, James! Meanwhile, John has almost daily been single-handedly cleaning up the parking lot, the whole Gulch Road area, and along the Crescent Avenue curve near the museum. We owe him a new "grabber" and of course immense thanks.

For 2020, we hope to have the Muller House and its garage repainted and the landscaping renewed with colorful, drought-resistant plantings.



Restored banisters and railings, new finials and newel posts await more primer and top coats of paint.

Festivities of the season: decorating cookies in the Muller House kitchen, sharing a turkey dinner with all the trimmings, and visiting the Riverside Mission Inn by bus, provided courtesy of County Supervisor Janice Hahn.



A Splendid Donation



President Mona Dallas Reddick and Vice President Bob Bartlett with the Bank of America table.

The Society is proud to become the custodians of an ornate early twentieth-century bronze bank table that for years served customers at the Bank of America in the Park Plaza shopping center on Western Avenue. Zelice Staples, branch manager, made the donation possible, for which we are very grateful. More research remains to be done on the exact provenance of the table—was it once in the downtown San Pedro branch of the Bank of Italy or at the old Bank of America on Pacific Avenue? The table will go on loan to Trani's Dockside Station (a restaurant), opening in the old Immigration Station at the foot of 22nd Street, also the site of the former Canetti's Seafood. Our thanks to Jim Trani for covering the moving expenses and also to his partners who helped in the tremendous effort of handling a piece that weighs well over a ton.

The Dog Returns for Muller House Beer Taste

To top off the October 12 Beer Taste, Andres Tamayo of Harbor Equipment Restoration, brought home the dog. All buffed up and repainted, the old Hamburger Hut (and Bonello's) wiener dog sign was a labor of love for Andres, who volunteered his time and expertise to restore the steel surface and apply protective paint. The final color was closely matched to the innermost layer of old paint and to the color showing in an old photo retrieved from the Archives. Next up is finding funds for the restoration of the neon tubing.

Photos at right: At the start of sanding, the dog still sports the Italian tricolor paint from its days advertising Bonello's. At bottom, Andres with the finished dog.

Annual Meeting & Election

Our thanks to Marifrances Trivelli, director of the Los Angeles Maritime Museum, and to the staff for making the museum's Brass Room available for the 2019 annual meeting, November 16. The meeting featured a slide show of the Society's activities throughout the past year, and nominations committee chair, Linda Howat, presented the candidates for board positions and offices. All were elected by acclamation. Following the meeting, Marifrances and museum archivist Derek Spinei gave everyone a behind the scenes tour of the north-side offices of the museum and the research library.

Elected to Serve in 2020

President: Mona Dallas Reddick

Vice President: Linda Howat

Secretary: Frank Anderson

Chief Financial Officer: Mary Jo Walker

Board of Directors at Large

Irene Almeida

John Mattson

Bob Bartlett

Kara McLeod

Gina Bellous

Toni O'Donnell

Donna Dragich

Chuck Short

Amy Epperhart

John Smith

Andrea Luse

Ann Tompkins

Toni Martinovich



An Invitation & Thanks

Writing on the eve of the New Year, I'd like to thank everyone who has made donations or renewed their memberships. Though we keep our membership dues low, they are a vital source of funds for our operating expenses.

Have you ever thought about joining in the work of the SPBHS? There's the enjoyment of being immersed in the history of San Pedro and the satisfaction of making a contribution towards preserving that history or sharing it with others.

Operating both a museum and an archives means there are many interest areas and naturally always something that needs doing. To the right is a check list of volunteer opportunities, where you might find something that fits with your interests or expertise. The list is not the entire story but suggests places to start.

If you would like to explore volunteering, please contact Doug Hansford at the Archives. He will connect you with the right person. Archives hours are 1:00 to 4:00 Mondays and Wednesdays, and the first Saturday of the month, from 11:00 to 2:00. The phone number there is (310) 548-3208. I can be reached by email at mdalred@gmail.com and would be happy to speak with you. All the best for the New Year!

Mona Dallas Reddick,
President, SPBHS

Members of the San Pedro Bay Historical Society receive the newsletter by mail or upon request by email.

Those interested in preserving and celebrating San Pedro's rich heritage are invited to join the Society. Membership information is available on our website. See back of newsletter.

Newsletter written and produced by Mona Dallas Reddick.

Thank you to mailing volunteers: Mary Jo Walker, John Mattson, Robert Reddick, and volunteers at the Archives.

Interest Areas for Volunteers

Archives

- ___ Identification of photos, negatives, & slides
- ___ Compile metadata for digitized materials online
- ___ Maintain newspaper clipping and document files
- ___ Repair documents and books
- ___ Assist visitors
- ___ Assess items in collection for damage & repair
- ___ Assist intake of new items
- ___ Organize storage areas
- ___ Staff Archives on open Saturdays (11:00 – 2:00)

Muller House Museum

- ___ Greet visitors
- ___ Lead tours
- ___ Staff gift shop
- ___ Maintain house exhibit items
- ___ Assist with special projects
- ___ Garden design, planting & maintenance

Events

- ___ Help set up for programs & events
- ___ Record (audio and video) speakers and events.
- ___ Help with event publicity
- ___ Participate in fundraiser organizing
- ___ Contribute ideas and suggestions for events

Oral History

- ___ Learn oral history methods
- ___ Participate in oral history interviews
- ___ Operate recording equipment

Publications & Outreach

- ___ Assist with newsletter production
- ___ Write articles for newsletter
- ___ Participate in newsletter mailing
- ___ Help with SPBHS website



Panorama of the Southern Pacific slip, with lumber piled along the far side and the E. K. Wood Lumber Company in the background left of center. Photo: Library of Congress

San Pedro Bay Historical Society

P.O. Box 1568

San Pedro, CA 90733-1568

Winter 2020 Calendar

Sunday, January 12: "How Prohibition Changed America," a talk by culinary historian Richard Foss.

Location: Wigwam of the Improved Order of Red Men, 543 Shepard Street, San Pedro.

Time: 11:00 – 1:00.

Saturday, February 1: "One Hundred Years of Trade though the San Pedro Bay: Markets, Imports, Exports, & Dollar Value," a talk by Jim MacLellan, former Director of Trade Development for the Port of Los Angeles and Director of Forum 21.

Location: Rm. 452, John S. Gibson, Jr. Municipal Building, 638 S. Beacon Street, San Pedro.

Time: 11:00–12:30. The SPBHS Archives on the 6th floor will be open afterwards.

Sunday, March 1: San Pedro's 132nd Birthday Celebration at the Muller House Museum, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

San Pedro Bay Historical Society's Archives

6th Floor of the

John S. Gibson, Jr. Municipal Building
638 S. Beacon Street, San Pedro, CA 90731

Phone: (310) 548-3208

Open Mondays & Wednesdays, 1:00-4:00
The first Saturday of the month, 11:00-2:00

The Muller House Museum

1542 S. Beacon Street
San Pedro, CA 90731

Phone: (310) 831-1788

Open the first two Sundays of the month
1:00 to 4:00

The last house tour starts at 3:30

Visit the Muller House Gift Shop for SPBHS publications, china, glassware, and the unexpected.

[www. sanpedrobayhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.sanpedrobayhistoricalsociety.com)

Contact us at sanpedrohistory@gmail.com