

Capitola Sunset

SPRING 2015

CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

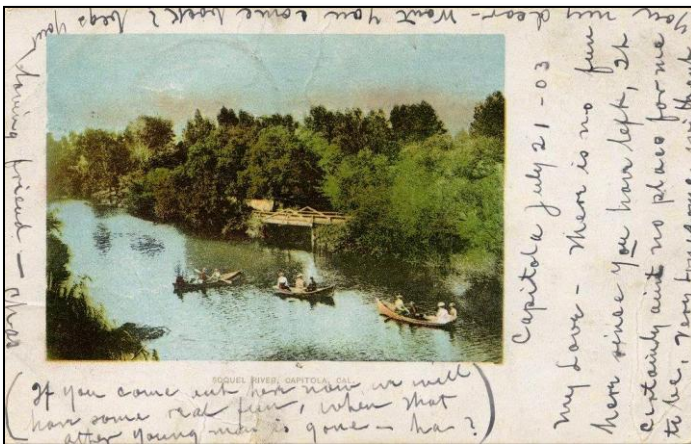
"Providing a future for our past"

Messages from the Past

By Frank Perry

These were supposed to be private, I realized, as I read through the messages scribbled on the backs of old Capitola postcards. It was almost like reading these people's diaries.

While researching the Museum's latest exhibition, **Postmarked Capitola: A History Through Postcards**, I came across some intriguing messages. Consequently, I decided to make them a component of the exhibition.



Early postcards, such as this one written on July 21, 1903, were designed for the message to be written on the same side as the picture. This one shows boats along Soquel Creek and is courtesy of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History.

Many extol the beauty of Capitola and the fun times people were having. This one, postmarked April 1, 1909, reads like it was written by the Chamber of Commerce: *"This is our hotel. It is beautifully situated. There are most beautiful places & scenes around here. We have mountains, rivers, meadows & the sea all here together. I never dreamed it would be so pretty. We go to the Big Trees this morning. We went to Santa Cruz & the Cliffs yesterday. —Beulah"*

This one postmarked Sept. 9, 1914, leaves the reader hanging: *"There is a story goes with this picture of the fish. I'll tell it later. We went after clams this morning & got a few. —Love from L."*

What was the story? Most likely we will never know.

Some are kind of funny: *"Thought I would send you a postal to see if you were still alive,"* wrote Gladys to Gertie, postmarked Sept. 13, 1909.

The majority of the cards were sent by women. However, here is one from a man to "Miss Mamie Hedstrom" in San Francisco, postmarked July 21, 1903. This is one of the earlier postcards from Capitola.

"My Love - There is no fun here since you have left. It certainly ain't no place for me to be. Very lonesome without you my dear - wont you come back? Beg you. Your Loving Friend, Chas. (If you come out here now, we will have some real fun when that other young man is gone - ha?)"

Did Chas and Mamie ever reconnect? Did they marry? Are there descendants? Somebody saved the postcard, so all of these seem possible.



Don't miss The Grand Opening of;
POSTMARKED CAPITOLA-
A History Through Postcards
on March 21 beginning at noon.

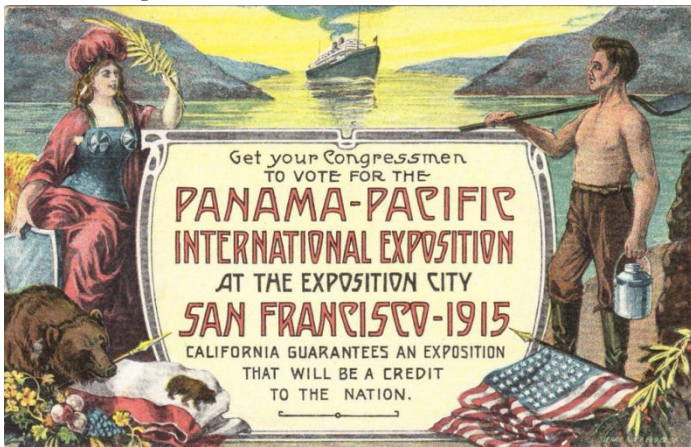
Celebrating the World's Fair

By Carolyn Swift

By the time the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (P.P.I.E.) opened in 1915, Santa Cruz County's school children were daydreaming about the world's fair in San Francisco, their excitement stirred, perhaps, by the simple act of writing a postcard.

That fall, the California Council of Education had asked for permission to declare October 14 as "School Children's Postcard Day." Children were given three postcards and asked to write messages promoting the P.P.I.E.

The exposition spread over 635 acres. It was a celebration of both the completion of the Panama Canal and San Francisco's recovery from the 1906 earthquake. People around the world were attracted, but this county felt a particularly strong connection. Charles E. Moore, the P.P.I.E. president, had a Santa Cruz summer estate, while William T. Sesnon, chair of the fair's reception committee, had a mansion in Soquel. Other committee members had homes in Aptos and Watsonville.



An early postcard promoting the Panama-Pacific International Exposition which began on March 2, 1915.

Living and entertaining here, fair organizers introduced the work of talented individuals to the county landscape. These were architects, artists, and landscapers who helped to bring the year-long exposition to life.

For example, although today it is a part of Cabrillo College in Aptos, the Sesnon house (and Soquel Porter Memorial Library) were planned by architects, Clarence R. Ward and J.H. Blohme, the team who would design the San Francisco exposition's largest structure, the Romanesque Style Palace of Machinery.

Capitola had its own connection to the great event. The person who guided the resort through its early years, Frank Reanier, resigned from the superintendent's position at Capitola in 1914. It was the year after the death of his employer, F. A. Hihn. Looking for work, he accepted a temporary position to direct the P.P.I. E.

exhibit for Santa Cruz County. Keeping his home in Capitola, he commuted several times a week to the City.

Reanier's job lasted until December 4.

Filled with elaborate courts and palaces of all descriptions, as well as the national and state buildings of the Avenue of Nations, the exposition also had what every fair-goer loves, a strip of amusement and concessions known as "The Zone." The landscape was glittering and beautiful in every direction, but it was not built to last. Constructed from material made from plaster and burlap fiber, the buildings were intended to come down quickly, and they did.



The Santa Cruz County pavilion at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition was ornate, complete with hand-carved signs, fancy pillars and lush landscaping. It was built knowing that the whole exhibit was destined to be removed just nine months later.

Only a few attractions survived. The best known is the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco, rebuilt and now seismically retrofitted. Locally, the small steam engines of the exposition's Overland Railroad are running today at the Swanton Pacific Ranch north of Santa Cruz.

Amazingly, Capitola Museum has its own treasure from the 1915 exposition. In 2009, Jeff and Cathie Thermond donated three pieces of stained glass window that had been removed from the Ohio building, a Greek Revival Style state capitol replica. The large edifice was saved and towed to San Mateo County, where it became the popular "Babylon Club," and then an airplane parts company. It was finally destroyed in 1956.

Stained glass windows were brought to Capitola in 1916 by Al Lent, who installed them in his rustic, Craftsman Style house on the north end of Prospect Avenue. The Lent home was a Capitola landmark until demolished and a new home built by the Thurmonds. The couple's gift to the museum is now on permanent display. All one needs to do here in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Pacific-Panama International Exhibition is to look up at the ceiling!

President's Corner

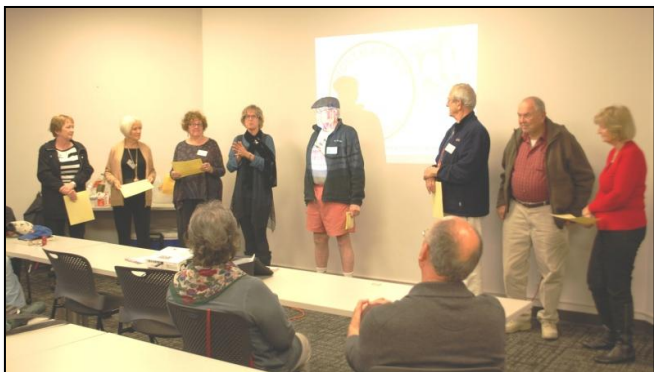
By Linda Smith

For the first time in several years, it is my pleasure to welcome a new Board Member to the museum! As you know, Tom McGranahan was a dedicated board member and our treasurer for over 20 years. Tom passed away in December, and we miss him every day.

Kristen Petersen started volunteering at the museum several months ago, and has really enjoyed sharing Capitola history with our visitors. She will bring a lot of energy and a passion for the community to her role as board treasurer. For more information on Kristen and her background in Capitola, see Niels Kisling's Volunteer Spotlight in the Fall, 2014 Capitola Sunset newsletter, available on our website, www.capitolamuseum.org.



We appreciate the efforts of all our volunteers—every two-hour shift you take really matters! There are several volunteers, however, whose exceptional efforts deserve special recognition. The '20+ Club' and 'Once a Month Club' awards for those volunteers who signed up for 20 or more shifts, or at least one shift every month during the 2014 exhibition. These volunteers were recognized with certificates at our recent volunteers training and reception. Marcia Biancalana received both the 20+ Club Award as well as the Once a Month Club Award. She was joined by 20+ Club Award recipients Bob Anderson, John Nicol, Paul Parsons, and Kathleen Sullivan, and Once a Month Club Award recipients Al and Marion Carlson. The Harry Hooper exhibition brought almost 8,000 visitors to the museum, setting a new record, and showing that every shift counts!



Linda Smith handing out the volunteer awards to: (left to right): Marcia Biancalana, Kathleen Sullivan, Anne Nicol (accepting for John Nicol), Bob Anderson, Paul Parsons, Al Carlson, Marian Carlson.

A big thank you goes out to all the volunteers who joined in the 'Each one Bring one' recruitment program. Six new volunteers were added to the roster for the 2015 exhibit at

our Feb. 28 volunteer event. Bob Anderson, Ron Beck, Marcia Biancalana, Kristen Petersen, and I brought guests that enjoyed Frank's training presentation and the luncheon that followed, and signed up to be museum volunteers. In addition, notices in the Santa Cruz Sentinel brought two individuals looking forward to getting more involved with the museum as volunteers. We welcome all these new volunteers: Stefan Biggs, Tony d'Amico, David Biancalana, John Manning, Dave Peyton, Harold Rafael, and Stephanie Tetter. They will help assure that we will continue to share Capitola history with thousands of visitors! The 'Each one Bring one' program continues throughout the year as we encourage all our volunteers to bring in a friend, neighbor, or family member to join our volunteer team.



To honor our volunteers, board member Stephanie Kirby made this beautiful poster decorated with postcards featuring each and every one of our volunteer's names plus key historical images from Capitola.

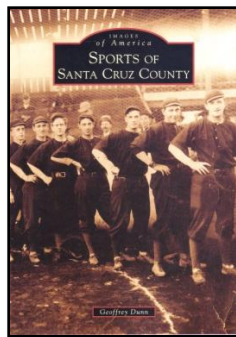
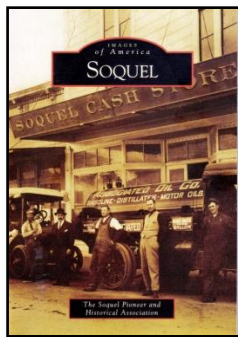
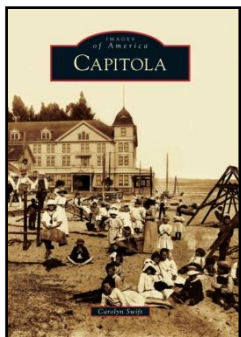
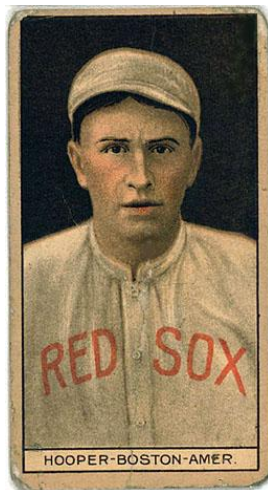
To keep things fun for everyone, Stephanie Kirby will be organizing a series of events in the coming months designed to enhance the volunteer experience, and add a new dimension to your knowledge of local history. These events will be fun and informative, and could include field trips and tours as well as classes and social events. Watch for details in the volunteer blog: capitolamuseumblog.weebly.com and future editions of Capitola Sunset newsletters.

Finally, we have added special events and extra shifts to coincide with Capitola festivities such as the Classic Car Show in June, the Begonia and Art and Wine Festivals in September, and a few holidays. These opportunities are shown on the calendar sheets in the volunteer binder on the desk. Please take a look and let us know if you would like to participate by signing up for those shifts. If you would like more information on any of the events, let us know. We look forward to having volunteers join in these fun filled events!

We are excited about the new exhibition, *Postmarked Capitola—A History Through Postcards*, and we hope to see you all on March 21 at noon for the Grand Opening Reception!

The Harry Hooper Exhibit Lives On . . .

Although last year's exhibition has closed, the companion website (www.takemeouttocapitola.weebly.com) remains online for those interested in learning more about Capitola's hometown sports hero. It includes a 1-hour video of historian Geoffrey Dunn's November lecture on Hooper and his importance to baseball and Capitola history. A slide show has been added that shows each of the displays in the exhibition with close-ups of the main texts and quotations. This website will remain available indefinitely.

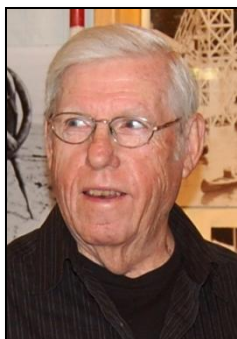


The Capitola Museum has these three Arcadia Publishing books in stock now. They make a fine gift for the historian in your life, and your \$22 donation helps support your favorite local museum!

- Arcadia Books "*Capitola*" is written by Carolyn Swift
- Arcadia Books "*Soquel*" is written by The Soquel Pioneer and Historical Association
- Arcadia Books "*Sports of Santa Cruz County*" is written by Geoffrey Dunn

In Memoriam

The community and the Capitola Museum Board recently lost Tom McGranahan who served as our board treasurer for over 20 years. We honor Tom and his surviving family by dedicating in his honor, the Postcard Timeline in the new exhibit. You will find the timeline on the right hand wall of the new exhibit. His service and dedication to the museum was timeless.



Postcard Exhibit Dedication

We lost Jim Reding in October. The current museum exhibit is dedicated to him in his honor and to honor his surviving family. Jim played many important roles in Capitola. Some are detailed on a wall just inside the museum. A special memorial is planned at the Capitola Museum on, Saturday, May 2 from 10:30- noon.



Recently Donated Artifacts

Karen Beaumont—Copies of Capitola architectural survey and heritage tree brochure

Ron Peterson—Historical photos and clock from the "Pleasure Point Road House."

Susan and Nels Westman—Fireman's helmet and antique telephone used locally

Ollie Hoefler—Scans of historical photographs of Capitola and Santa Cruz

Stan Stevens—Two more volumes for the Hihn Archive

David Biancalana—Collection of historic postcards



Capitola Museum has recently received generous donations from:

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|---|---------------------|
| Steven & Diane Burbank | Al & Marian Carlson |
| Coralie Ciraulo | Mike Clark |
| Cal Cornwell | Rick Feldner |
| Carol Fuller | Ron & Diane Graves |
| Joe & Gayle Ortiz | Barbara Reding |
| Debbie Vilotti | Richard Wilson |
| Santa Cruz County of Associated Realtors | |
| Mike & Nancy Davis (in memory of Tom McGranahan) | |
| Tony & Katheryn Gualtieri (in memory of Jim Reding) | |

Capitola Sunset is published by the Capitola Historical Museum
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Museum Hours: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday 12-4:P.M.
(Closed for new exhibit installation from December 29 to February 27)

Curator: Frank Perry

Board of Trustees: Linda Smith (President), Bob Anderson (Vice President), Stephanie Kirby (Secretary), Niels Kising, Kristen Petersen (Treasurer), David Shoaf, & Carolyn Swift