

Capitola Sunset

Winter 2016

CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

"Providing a future for our past"

Searching for Ravnos

By Frank Perry

There are always challenges when preparing a new exhibition. The challenge two years ago with the Harry Hooper exhibition was selecting a few photographs from among hundreds taken of the famous Capitola baseball player. With the "Photos by Ravnos" exhibition, I had the opposite problem: there was no known photograph of Mr. Ravnos.

Several historians gathered information on Ole Ravnos through the years and generously shared their research for this exhibition. A photo of Mrs. Amelia Ravnos was located, but Ole's portrait remained elusive.

I kept trying to think of where I might find a picture of him. A newspaper article I discovered from 1924 said that he was a member of the Santa Cruz Male Chorus. I searched through more old newspapers hoping to find an article with a photograph of the group. Eventually I found one—taken by Ravnos. Unfortunately, the members were not individually identified. It seemed likely he was one of the men in the picture, but which one?



Ole Ravnos, second row, far right, with the Santa Cruz Male Chorus, November 1926. You will have to visit the new exhibition to get a better look at him.

The pianist for the chorus was Vera McKenna Clayton, well known Santa Cruz area music teacher during the early to middle 1900s. I had done research about her several years ago for an exhibit and book titled "Notes from Santa Cruz: The County's Music History." Clayton's scrapbooks, preserved at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, had been a wonderful source of information.

I wondered if these scrapbooks might help me again. Curator of Collections Marla Novo kindly let me examine some of the scrapbooks, each preserved in an archival box and wrapped in acid-free tissue. I carefully looked through the one from the middle 1920s. It wasn't long before I discovered a newspaper clipping about the chorus. This one had a different photo, also taken by Ravnos. Lo and behold, it had a caption that identified the men. There, in the second row, far right, was Ole Ravnos!

With this knowledge, I was also able to identify him in the first newspaper photo with a fair amount of certainty. Although only newspaper images, at least we now have some idea of what he looked like.

In some respects, historical research is like gold mining: every so often one discovers a big nugget. I savored my discovery of the Ravnos nugget as I drove back to Capitola. Who knows what other nuggets still lie buried?

Board member Gordon van Zuiden, who located many of the exhibition photographs, is also working on a book about Ravnos. If you know of interesting information or some Capitola Ravnos photographs not included in the exhibition, please contact the museum.

Don't miss the **Grand Opening** of
"Photos by Ravnos—Capitola in the Early 1900s"
Hosted by the Capitola Historical Museum
Noon-2 P.M. on Saturday, March 19, 2016.

Inspired by Ole Ravnos

By Gordon van Zuiden

To celebrate its 50th anniversary, the Capitola Museum is hosting an exhibition on the extraordinary photographs taken of Capitola in the early 1900s by Ole Ravnos.

As a Capitola Museum board member and avid collector of historical Capitola items, I became fascinated with the work of Ole Ravnos about 15 years ago when I first saw some of his photos at the museum. You could argue that my love of Capitola history sprang from viewing his photographic work.

The richness of history emerges when you tell a compelling story about the past that can make you feel like you were there. In my opinion the photos of Ole Ravnos do that better than those of any other photographer of Capitola at the beginning of the 20th century. Ole's high resolution photos captured the life and times in California's oldest resort city. His photographic style was unique in that his images told the real Capitola story—not just the scenes that always showed up in postcards showcasing the majestic Capitola Hotel, the Boat House, or the Mediterranean-like beauty of our town's skyline.

He also turned his camera around and gave us unique glimpses of the working side of Capitola—the Italian fishing village at the wharf, the meeting of the League of the Cross Cadets along the Soquel Creek across the street from our current city hall, and fishermen proudly displaying their catch at the end of the Capitola Wharf. Ole was not only a photographer of sites that would please the Chamber of Commerce, but he also shared with us the richness of everyday life in our town—parades that marched down the Esplanade, children on the swing sets and teeter totters on the beach, and boaters sailing on the Monterey Bay.



This image of a playground on the beach with the Grand Hotel Capitola in the background is one of Gordon's favorite images by Ole Ravnos. It was used on the cover of the Arcadia book, 'Capitola.'

The magic of history, like watching a great movie, is when the images and story are so compelling that you feel like you are there. Through the lens of his camera, Ole Ravnos accomplishes that goal and gives us a visual treat of what it was like to live in our beautiful coastal town at the turn of the last century.

Seventeen Years Serving the Museum

Ettamae Shaffer accomplished in life many things we all may desire. She lived gracefully for 96 years with pride and dignity, giving back to her community and enjoying the respect of others. On top of that she lived a very interesting life where the world evolved faster than in any other period in history.



For 17 years, she drove her beloved, forest green, Chrysler LaBaron convertible to her permanent Friday afternoon shift at the Capitola Museum. She did this right up until the day she retired from museum service in October 2013. The world lost Ettamae on February 2, 2016.

An ever-faithful volunteer and great companion to then museum curator Carolyn Swift, Ettamae served each Friday on 'Ettamae's Shift.' She was proud to be the only museum volunteer with a permanent placeholder in the museum's volunteer schedule. No other museum volunteer ever had their own key to the museum either—something else Ettamae took great pride in.



Ettamae is surrounded by family during the council meeting in December 2013 where she received a Mayor's Proclamation. To her left is daughter Carole Verch of Aptos.

Museum volunteer and then Mayor of Capitola, Stephanie Harlan, read her proclamation at a ceremony on December 12, 2013, saying, "Now, therefore, I, Stephanie Harlan, Mayor for the City of Capitola, on behalf of the entire City Council, do hereby acknowledge and extend our deepest appreciation to Ettamae Shaffer for seventeen years of service to the community as a Capitola Historical Museum volunteer."

Ettamae not only had her permanent spot on the museum schedule, she holds a permanent spot in the hearts of those who knew and loved her. The current exhibition is dedicated to Ettamae Shaffer.

Welcome Stephanie Tetter!

New Board member Stephanie Tetter grew up at the beach in southern Orange County, and after living in various places along the coast of California from San Diego to Eureka, she and her husband Terry settled in Capitola in the early 1980s.



Stephanie commuted weekly to Davis for several years, working during the week for UC Davis in the Office of Research and Information and the County of Yolo as a Regional Librarian. Following several years in public libraries, she worked for more than a decade for software companies helping libraries of all sizes throughout North America (including many affiliated with archival collections and museums) move into the Internet age.

As she looks back on those years, she notes *“these institutions are all about information – acquiring it, making it accessible, storing it, preserving it, and ensuring the public has access to it either physically or digitally or (best of all) both!”*

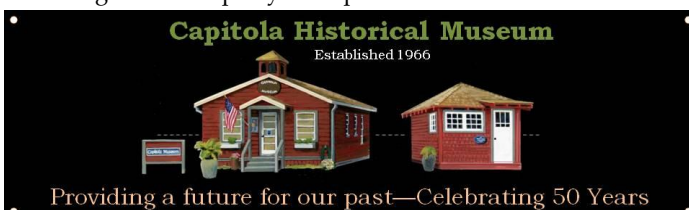
For thirteen years prior to her recent retirement, Stephanie was a faculty librarian at Monterey Peninsula College, focusing on instruction and library administration. *“Discovering the MPC archives and the hidden treasures there (photos and recordings of visits by Eleanor Roosevelt and Margaret Mead for starters!) made me appreciate the knowledge and skills of people who work to make history come alive for the community. During my years traveling throughout North America, I always loved trips to local and regional museums to learn more about the communities I visited, and I am so happy to be a part of the Capitola History Museum’s efforts.”*

The Big Five-O

Mark your calendars for the great big birthday bash at the Capitola Museum on July 9, 2016 from 10 A.M. until 2 P.M.

The Capitola Historical Museum opened on July 9, 1966, featuring photographs, artifacts, and other items to help preserve and share the story of Capitola’s fascinating past. Its first home was a rented storeroom behind 115 Capitola Avenue.

This year the Museum will mark the 50th birthday of its founding. The Museum curator, board, and volunteers are just starting to plan some special events for the occasion. If you have old photos, clippings, or stories relating to the Museum’s early years, please contact curator Frank Perry at 831-464-0322 or by e-mailing Frank at: fperry@ci.capitola.ca.us.



Pop Up Museum is Your Museum

By Niels Kisling

What is a Pop Up Museum? MAH, the Museum of Art and History in Santa Cruz, may define it best when they say, “A Pop Up Museum is a temporary museum created by the people who show up to participate. It works by creating a theme and location, and inviting people to bring something on topic to share.”

I participated in a Pop Up Museum organized by MAH celebrating the 40-year Anniversary of the Santa Cruz Harbor in 2014. People brought their best photos and artifacts to share with the public and it made for a super-fun day.

As part of your Capitola Museum’s 50th birthday celebration, we are planning to host our own Pop Up Museum this summer on Sunday, June 5 at the Capitola Rod and Custom Car Show from 10 A.M. until 3 P.M.



You might see this California license plate on display at the Pop Up Museum on Sunday, June 5 at the Capitola Rod and Custom Car Show. While not from the 1960s, it is special to the Kisling Family because we found it in Soquel Creek many years ago. Items from the 1960s are encouraged, but all items related to cars and Capitola are welcome.

Please dust off your best artifacts from the middle 1960s. The theme will be “Cars, Capitola, and The 1960s.” Anything that’s important to you will be important to exhibit on Sunday—you are the museum!



The Capitola Museum will provide tables on which to display your special memorabilia. Please note that if you bring anything valuable or irreplaceable, you will want to remain on-hand to talk about it and keep it safe. Sharing your stories with others is the best feature of any Pop Up Museum.

For more information you can contact me at:
nkisling@pacbell.net.

Volunteer Orientation & Appreciation

Museum Curator Frank Perry and the Capitola Museum Board organized a volunteer orientation for the new exhibition, "Photos by Ravnos—Capitola in the Early 1900s." The orientation was also a volunteer appreciation, and board member Kathleen Church went over the top by organizing refreshments featuring home-baked goods and pinwheel sandwiches that were a real crowd pleaser. Deborah Lorber also provided home-baked brownies.

Five volunteers were singled out for taking more than 20 shifts last year. Dave Peyton had 31 shifts, John Nicol 28, Paul Parsons 26, Linda Smith 23 and Stephanie Tetter 22. The museum board also recognized all of our volunteers for their service to the museum and to the community.



Frank Perry was recognized by the volunteers with the Outstanding Curator award—he won by unanimous vote. The award was given for organizing the museum exhibit that set the record for all-time most visitors ever. Last year, *Postmarked Capitola—A History Through Postcards* drew 8831 visitors from all over the world.

Long time board member Gordon van Zuiden shared with the group his passion in collecting Ravnos images. Early Ravnos work actually inspired the van Zuiden Family to buy their 1930s Sears kit home on Fanmar Way, and Gordon spoke with a passion about Ravnos and how he captured life in Capitola 100 years ago. Gordon is a major contributor to this exhibit with several images that have not yet been seen by the general public.

Frank Perry took us through the history of Ole and Amelia Ravnos in Santa Cruz County. This history includes a period of time in Capitola where they leased a photographic shop and studio from then owner of Capitola, Frederick Hihn. Ravnos took most of his iconic images of Capitola from 1907 to 1915.

Ole Ravnos lived in Santa Cruz until his death in 1945. Using his detective skills, Frank Perry identified two different properties where he lived, including one house on Laurent Street that has not been altered much since the 1940s. Not much gets by Perry who also most-likely proves that the Capitola Museum has an image on display taken of the Ravnos' shop in Capitola.

Perry's biggest discovery might be his research into finding an actual image of Ravnos—something thought not to exist. Again, 'detective Perry' dug in and found reference to the Santa Cruz Male Chorus where Ravnos was a member. Further research 'found' Ravnos in a captioned image appearing in the Oakland Tribune in November 1926.

The museum soft opening followed the orientation with volunteer Ron Beck taking the very first shift of the new exhibition.

The Capitola Museum has recently received generous donations from:

Steven and Diane Burbank	Coralie Ciraulo
Calvin & Carla Comwell	Marv Jensen
Sally & Brian Legakis	Betty Mello
Joe and Gayle Ortiz	Barbara Reding
John Law Smith	Larry & Linda Smith
Maria Smith	Deborah Velotti
Susan and Nels Westman	Richard Wilson
Frank Perry in memory of Lillie Heebner	

Recently, the following artifacts were generously donated to the Capitola Museum:

Minna Hertel: Postcard

Marvin Jensen: Biography of George Vogt

John Pilge: Collection of old telephone books on CD

Vincent Barabba: Collection of old cameras and equipment

Thank you to all of our great volunteers for staffing the museum and contributing at special events. Volunteerism is your gift to the community.

Capitola Sunset is published by:

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NEW Museum Hours:
Thursday through Sunday 12-4 P.M.

Curator: Frank Perry

Board Members: Niels Kisling (President), Pam Greeninger (Vice President & Secretary), Kristen Petersen (Treasurer), Kathleen Church, Stephanie Tetter & Gordon van Zuiden