



Petaluma Museum Association

Preserving the Unique History of Petaluma and Providing Educational and Cultural Services to the Community

Petaluma Historical Library & Museum

Quarterly Newsletter



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Ida Belle McNear



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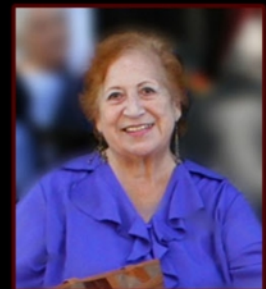
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**WOMEN OF PETALUMA
CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

Winter/Spring 2016

VOLUME 26, ISSUE 1

On the Cover

Women's History Month

by John Benanti

COME JOIN THE Petaluma Historical Library and Museum in recognizing and celebrating some of the women who have influenced and impacted our community and the world in which we live. Our cover shows some of the women who will be honored during the upcoming exhibit.

The contributions of all the women honored in the exhibit are many and varied. Some of the women on the cover are easily recognizable. Some are less so. Some of those in the exhibit made their influences and impacts in very public ways. Some worked, and continue to work behind the scenes, their contributions not in the public eye, but no less significant.

Some of the women on the cover and in the exhibit are members of pioneer settler families. They came to Petaluma and the Sonoma County area in the earliest days of the emergence of the area in the years following the gold rush and the admission of California as a state. Two examples in this group are Ida Belle McNear and Addie Atwater. Ida Belle McNear linked two early pioneer families and was widely influential in the community. She was the driving force behind the establishment of the Petaluma Woman's Club and served as the first president of the PWC from 1895 to 1900. Addie Atwater was the leader of a group of women who founded the Ladies' Improvement Club and initiated many community projects, perhaps most notably turning what is today Walnut Park from a place where citizens dumped their garbage into a oasis in the heart of the city. She also owned the city lot upon which the Carnegie Library sits today and sold it to the city at a bargain price so the Carnegie Library could be built. Others in the exhibit left their mark on the twentieth century. Some span the last century and are making continuing contributions to the twenty-first century.

What all these women accomplished, and some continue to accomplish, must not be overlooked or lost in the dusty recesses of times past. Please celebrate the contributions of the women featured in the exhibit by visiting the museum and becoming involved in the activities the exhibit committee has planned throughout the month of March.

Exhibit opens March 10 - 26
Please see the story of how Women's History Month started and the schedule of events on page 7.

K. Rinehart portrait - photo credit Jeff Kan Lee

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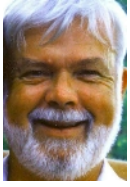
The Petaluma Museum Association Newsletter is published quarterly and distributed to our members. Many thanks to all our contributors and to our proofreaders and volunteers who help with our mailings.

If you would like to contribute any news or item of interest to our newsletter you can email to mary@petalumamuseum.com
Deadline for submission is April. 1, 2016

Newsletter editor: Mary Rowe

Petauma Museum Association
20 Fourth St.
Petaluma, CA 94952

President's Message



Happy 2016, Everyone! And aren't we happy to have *El Nino* visit? It's nice, dry and warm inside your Museum though, and we have a full program of educating and entertaining exhibits and events for you this Winter and Spring. Please take a look at the enclosed Winter/Spring 2016 Program Of Public Service.

Thank you very much for your recent donations to our newly named 'Collection Preservation Campaign Fund'. So named to be sure your donations will be available not only to preserve the building (perhaps our biggest artifact), but also all the rest of our collection. Some of of the collection will have to be moved to get out of the way of earthquake retrofit. Many responded to our need for donations to our general fund and we thank you for that as well. You keep us moving forward.

We are gaining new members as you will see on page 12, but we still need

more. With all the folks moving to Petaluma perhaps you have a new neighbor. Don't forget to tell them about the Museum, our fine exhibits and events, and about the special benefit we provide to our members. With your Supporter level or higher membership comes access to over 700 museums in North America. We maintain membership in NARM, the North American Reciprocal Museum Association, which provides this fine benefit for you and that new neighbor. You members of the Petaluma Museum Association are the heart and soul of our Museum. We do what we do to please you, and the more of you there are the better we will please the whole of our lovely town.

So, tell your neighbors about your Museum, and tell US what you like and what we can do better. That's how you help your Museum to serve Petaluma and you.

Thanks for all you do,

Harry
President, PMA



Regular Features

Petaluma History & Commentary:
"The Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882-1943"

Museum Highlights

Volunteer Spotlight

Program of Public Service (insert)

Museum Collection Update

The Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882-1943

THERE IS A great deal of hubbub in the news these days about fencing-off our borders and deporting certain immigrants from this country. It has brought to mind that singular legislation in which the U.S.A. actually legislated the shutting-out of an entire ethnic group from our borders. One has to consider the times leading up to that 1882 event, to begin to understand its evolution.

The great California Gold Rush of 1849-56 brought immigrants flooding to our shores from many different lands and cultures. Some of those came from China, fleeing hardship and famine in their own country.

The Chinese possessed a different language, culture and dress and they called California "Gold Mountain." These men were much resented by the "white" miners, for taking gold away from those whom (they believed) "deserved it." That was the start of prejudice against the Chinese on the West Coast, and most of those miners were forced to relinquish their gold claims, as they were physically pushed out of the Sierra.

Chinese prejudice increased in the late 1860s when railroad entrepreneur Charles Crocker imported thousands more to work on his Transcontinental Rail-

road. Crocker told his "Big Four" partners—Leland Stanford, Collis Huntington and Mark



Nellie Denman of Penngrove buying asparagus from Chinese peddler. ca. 1882.

Hopkins—that the Chinese worked "harder, longer and for less money" than the "white" laborer. There was also great danger in blasting railroad beds out of mountainsides and the Chinese were "fearless." Crocker said. Eventually, Crocker had imported over 15,000 Chinese men to work the railroad. About 10% of those were to die in the process. (Sadly, the only records kept were of bodies and body parts, shipped back to China).

In Petaluma, animosity also grew as the situation was labeled "The Chinese Problem." The Petaluma Argus newspaper suggested a boycott of anyone

hiring Chinese here. That idea foundered, however, when it was noted that wealthy mill owner John McNear had employed several Chinese. (*No one* challenged Mr. McNear in Petaluma). However, fights, beatings and even murders ensued in this increasingly bad social climate, and as jobs became more scarce, in the recession following the Civil War, the Chinese were blamed for those woes, as well.

By the late 1860s, Petaluma had grown its own Chinatown that contained shops, laundries and many shanties, housing approximately 500 souls. Many of these Chinese worked in private homes and on ranches, but roaming Chinese peddlers were also prevalent.



Denman cook, Yan



By 1878, thousands of unemployed Californians were begging for \$1.00-a-day jobs, and Petaluma leaders moved to *cut off the water supply* to our Chinese District at Main and B Streets, extending to Kentucky. Many Chinese fled to San Francisco as the U.S. Congress attempted legislation banning Chinese from our country. It was vetoed, at the time, by President Rutherford B. Hayes.

In 1882, a California Senator introduced a bill entitled "The Chinese Exclusion Act." It passed, and was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Act had a ten year expiration date, but in 1892, it was extended for an additional ten years, effectively excluding an entire ethnic group from our country. This caused the Chinese already here to create an underground economy, centered in San Francisco's Chinatown, as they established Secret Societies (Tongs) for self-protection.

Then, in 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt extended the Exclusion Act *indefinitely*, further requiring that all Chinese already here must register and obtain certificates to be displayed whenever asked or to face deportation! (Sound familiar?) Port Inspectors were the designated authority. American labor unions loudly applauded this 1902 move for the increase in jobs it provided.

A look back at what happened in 1902 world-wide: Edward VII succeeded Queen Victoria on the throne of England, the first

Sherlock Holmes story was published, the first J. C. Penney store opened (in Wyoming), Teddy Roosevelt became our first President to ride in a motorized vehicle, Empress Tsu-his of China banned foot-binding for girls, and (unlike the U.S.A.), Tasmania had just allowed women to vote. (Tasmania?)

The first Rose Bowl game was played in Pasadena in 1902. (Michigan wiped out Stanford 49-0). Sonoma County's big crops that year were hops, grapes and prunes, and, speaking of hops, the giant Santa Rosa brewer, Grace Brothers, became unionized that year. Santa Rosa's Nickelodeon became the first movie theater in our county. In Petaluma, young Architect Brainerd Jones, was burnishing his fame, as he combined the styles of the 19th- and 20th-century architecture into his unique Craftsman mode. Sebastopol also made news by incorporating in 1902 in an effort to find funds to solve their nasty

sewer issues. (I'm told it worked.)

The U.S. Chinese Exclusion Act was in force for 61 years, right-up to October 1943, when President Franklin Roosevelt repealed it. (Ironically, just 20 months prior, FDR had initiated the 1942 Japanese Relocation Act). Why then, the repeal? Because China had come on board as our WWII ally, and Japan, attempting to split the Allies over prejudice, propagandized to China that the Exclusion Act was based upon "America's evil and enduring Anti-Asian views."



The two Acts were both prejudicial errors. In his effort to repeal the Exclusion Act in 1943, FDR labeled it "an historic mistake." It had been the only time in U.S. history that an entire ethnic group was deported and that action had been based on *fear* of losing jobs to Chinese. FDR's 1942 Japanese Relocation Act had been based upon intense *fear* of a Pearl Harbor type event for our coast. Too often, in history, fear has caused grief and mistakes. But, often, those mistakes have molded better ideas. Everything takes time, especially history.

MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS

THE MUSEUM WAS filled with both Art and Music during the Holidays. Gary Kaplan's exhibit *Petaluma Artist and Artisans* was well attended and brought a few of our local artists and artisans together to show their work. Gary Kaplan photographed each artist in their work environment and these portraits were shown along with each piece of work.

Our concerts were very popular in our very own Carnegie Hall. We had a Holiday Season Concert Series that included the Navarro Trio and "A Renaissance Christmas" performed by the Festival Consort, joined by singers Carol Menke & Chris Fritzche. Also the Santa Rosa Children's Chorus filled the museum with beautiful voices.

We had our annual Members Holiday Party on Dec. 4. On Dec. 5 a fundraiser for the museum titled "It's a Wonderful Life" put on by Aqus Community with big band music, dancing and a limbo contest was a great success.



Santa Rosa Children's Chorus



John Crowley doing the limbo at "It's a Wonderful Life" Holiday Party - photo credit Jim Johnson



Ruth Robeson, Kit Schlich and Elizabeth Walter tend bar at the Members Holiday Party.

WE CELEBRATED THE end of one year and the start of another with our annual New Years Eve Gala Concert. Elizabeth Walter, pianist, and string players from the San Francisco Symphony, Alicia Yang, violin, Yun Chu, violin, Nancy Severance, viola, Amos Yang, cello and Shu-Yi Pai, cello delighted our attendees with a wonderful evening of music. Elizabeth Walter, of Sky Hill Cultural Alliance continued the evening with a magical New Year's Eve Ball, "A Night In Vienna" at Hermann Sons Hall. Guest were treated to a gourmet dinner, a night of dancing to Strauss Waltzes with a live orchestra and Champagne toast at midnight.



2015 NYE Gala Concert - photo credit Jim Johnson

Call for Candidates

How would you like to do something fulfilling and enriching for your Petaluma community?

The Petaluma Museum Association (PMA) is issuing a call for candidates to run for seats on the 2016-2018 Board of Directors. As usual, we seek to elect approximately half of the Board each year to allow as much continuity as possible. The following positions will be open in 2016:

Vice President

Treasurer (urgent!)

Between two and five new directors

Recent boards have reflected a diverse group of individuals from various backgrounds who unite in a common cause: to support the work of the PMA in works great and small, from establishing a two-year working agenda and slate of exhibits to organizing docents and annual events such as Veterans' Day, the Butter and Egg Days Parade and the River Cruise. It is rewarding and stimulating work, and we could use the skills you bring to bear!

The upcoming election is in May 2016 and the new board will gather in early July.

An application will be sent to any interested PMA member. Your wealth of experience in life, professions, schools, non-profits and other cultural organizations would enhance your candidacy for a

Director's position. The application will ask you to list your skills in organizing, working with others, and goals for the Museum. We are looking for people who understand development, organization, and volunteer coordinating for our education programs, installations and events. Grant writing would be a great benefit.

Whatever your talents, we are open and we welcome your response to serve your community and thank you for your consideration. Request your application by calling [707-778-4398](tel:707-778-4398) or emailing mary@petalumamuseum.com.

Applications will be accepted until March 1, 2016, for election to a two year term.

If you would like to serve on the Board as a Director sooner than this, we do have three positions available for appointment immediately. These terms would run until the end of June 2016 when the elections take place, in which you would run for election. Please contact us if you are interested in above. We could use your talents!


Volunteers keep our Museum as a vital center of Petaluma life and being a Board of Directors Member is one of the greatest gifts you can give to your community. You might find that gift to be its own reward!



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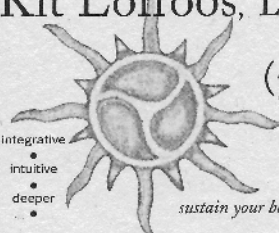
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MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

In 1978 in Sonoma County, the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women began a "Women's History Week" celebration. The week was chosen to coincide with International Women's Day which is March 8. After that, schools began to host their own Women's History Week programs.

The next year, leaders from the California group shared their project at a Women's History Institute at Sarah Lawrence College, Yonkers, New York. Other participants not only determined to begin their own local Women's History Week projects, but agreed to support an effort to have Congress declare a national Women's History Week.

Three years later, the United States Congress passed a resolution establishing National Women's History Week. Co-sponsors of the resolution, demonstrating bipartisan support, were Senator Orrin Hatch, a Republican from Utah, and Representative Barbara Mikulski, a Democrat from Maryland.

In 1987, after being petitioned by the [National Women's History Project](#), Congress passed

[Pub. L. 100-9](#) which designated the month of March 1987 as Women's History Month. Between 1988 and 1994, Congress passed additional resolutions requesting and authorizing the President to proclaim March of each year as Women's History Month. Since 1995, U.S. presidents have issued annual proclamations designating the month of March as Women's History Month.

A group of local Petaluma women have started to work on a 2016 celebration of Women History Month here in Petaluma. Dates already planned are:

March 11 – Reception at the Petaluma Historical Library and Museum – 6:00 p.m.

March 19 – All Women's Concert at 7:00 pm

March 20 – Tea – Recognizing local Sonoma County women in public service and government – Women's Club 3:00 p.m.

March 26 - Movie *Suffragette* at Cinema West and conversation about women's history. Time TBA

For additional information, please contact Faith Ross – missross-056@comcast.net.

Women Composers and Artists: Wednesdays, March 2, 9 and 16

In honor of Women's History Month, the Petaluma Historical Library & Museum will be hosting a return engagement of cultural historian Kayleen Asbo, Ph.D for a three week series entitled "**Flowers in the Shadows**". This Wednesday salon series will bring together fascinating lectures and performances on women composers and painters throughout history. Two classes each day, 10:30-12:00pm & 1:00pm-2:30 pm with a lunch break.

Each class is \$25 at the door, or the entire six class series can be purchased for \$120.00. To learn more and register, go to www.kayleenasbo.com

March 2, morning: **The Music of Kasia and Hildegard of Bingen**

March 2, afternoon: **The Art of Hildegard of Bingen**

With guest performer Karen Clark, contralto

March 9, morning: **Fanny Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann**

March 9, afternoon: **The Art of Artemisia Gentileschi**

With guest performer Bonnie Brooks, mezzo-soprano

March 16, morning:

The Musical Inspirations of Georgia O'Keefe

March 16, afternoon: **Hidden Gems of Music and Art** With guest performer Julija Zibrat, violin



Karen Clark



Bonnie Brooks



Julija Zibrat



Kayleen Asbo



Are You Interested In History?
Do you live in the Petaluma area?
Would you like to learn more Petaluma History?
Can you devote 3-6 hours a week?

We're looking for volunteers to assist the public with finding their Petaluma History. Our research library, which is staffed by volunteers, is open on Monday & Thursday, 1:00 - 4:00 pm. We take in requests such as "My grandparents lived on 'B' St. back in the 1920's, can you tell me which house they lived in?" Most of the time we find the answers to a wide variety of questions. It's a lot of fun to help people and we also are rewarded by learning. Give us a call at 707-778-4398 if you would like to help.

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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

by Mary Rowe

Linda Shelton Shoemaker-Christensen

Six generations of Petalumans



Linda was raised in Petaluma on a chicken ranch on Corona Road. She has fond memories of growing up on the five acre ranch, which her family the Harriotts shared with the Baddeleys. So, along with her three siblings and five cousins from the Baddeley family, the ranch earned the name Camp-Run-Amok.

In the 1960's her parents ran Bob's Smoke Shop downtown. That became the new hang out for "most of the kids" in town. Linda went to Petaluma High School. She said that one of the regular events in town

for teenagers was the Roost Dance at the Kennilworth Recreation Auditorium, which took place every Friday night. Another popular activity was Toolin (cruising she explained) the Boulevard. She and her brother Steven Shelton took turns borrowing their mother's maroon Cyclone convertible.

Linda worked for the Petaluma School district for 25 years as a bus driver, school bus instructor and dispatcher. Also, during that time she was a first grade class aide at McNear. She loved her work and the people, but had to retire due to an injury. After recouping at home for a few years she went back to work at the Hertz car rental in town. She remarked, "It was perfect because I could also act like a 'tourist promoter' for our great town."

Linda says she finally retired for real, but wanted to keep busy. She decided to volunteer at the Petaluma museum along with other volunteer jobs at Alphabet Soup and the Redwood Food Bank. Linda has helped Faith Ross with several exhibits lending her creative skills to display the collections. Some of the exhibits she helped put together were Pass in Review, Children's Art Exhibitions and Winter Wonderland to name a few. Winter Wonderland was an idea that Linda brought to Faith and was very well received. It included many of the doll houses Linda's family has collected over many years.

Linda and her husband live in a west side bungalow they have been restoring with a lot of love. Linda says "I love my town and knowing so much about it. I love being involved in my community."

Museum Highlights from page 5

Children's Art Show and Reception

by Freyda Ravitz

The third Children's Art Show demonstrated the children's creativity with different mediums, colors and styles. It was a pleasure to see such happy faces at the Artists' Reception...and proud parents. About 65 people came out on a very rainy Sunday afternoon to see the artwork and congratulate children from the elementary schools and Mentor Me. Entertainment was provided by members of The Petaluma Children's Chorus under the direction of Elizabeth Robertson and accompanied by Colleen O'Malley on the piano.

I want to thank Linda Shoemaker-Christensen and Jeanne De Lucca who did a great job of displaying the art and the teachers from the Petaluma City School District, Cara Markovich from St. Vincent Elementary School and Laurie Cameron of Mentor Me for gathering the art and bringing it to the Museum. I also want to thank Faith Ross for her help and guidance with the exhibit and reception.



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Support your local museum!

“The Roads to Petaluma” now available at the Museum Store

Those attending the January meeting of the Petaluma Sages were treated to a delightful presentation by Petaluma native and author George Baur, who discussed his newly released book “The Roads to Petaluma”, which traces Baur’s family heritage, through historical photographs and text of how they intertwined their lives into the fabric of Petaluma history after arriving in Petaluma in 1914.

Mr. Baur graciously presented everyone present a complimentary copy of the book which describes in detail the challenges, involvement and operation faced by his family in the poultry industry, the experiences of his mother, Marie Baur, who worked as a housekeeper for Swiss American Bank president Thomas McClay, and a general overview of what life was like in Petaluma in the early and mid-20th century.

Pages filled with old sales tags, receipts, and invoices bring to life many of the long-forgotten stores, shops, and feed mills that fueled the local economy. Destined to be a collector’s item for local historians, the book is now available at the Museum store for \$22.00 including tax. Get yours today.

The Sages meet at the museum, from 10:30-12 noon, on the last Wednesday of the month. Everyone’s welcome to attend.




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Russian Virtuoso **Jura Margulis** in Concert
May 14, 2016 at 8:00 pm

Performing works by Schumann and Barber

Presented by Sky Hill Cultural Alliance & the
Petaluma Museum Association.



Petaluma Museum Association Board of Directors meetings are on the second Monday of each month at 6:00 pm. They are open to the public.

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Membership

NEW MEMBERS

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Join or Renew - It's easy to do!

1. Visit our website, petalumamuseum.com, complete the membership form and make a PayPal, Visa or Mastercard payment
2. Complete the attached form, pay with Visa or Mastercard or enclose your check made payable to the **Petaluma Museum Association** and mail it to our address on the payment form
3. Call the **PMA** office at (707) 778-4398 Monday through Friday, between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM, and pay with your Visa or MasterCard.

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BASIC BENEFITS OF ALL MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:

- Discounted admission to temporary exhibits (admission to the library & permanent exhibits is free to all)
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Petaluma Museum Association
Petaluma Historical Library & Museum
20 Fourth Street
Petaluma, CA 94952-3004

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PETALUMA MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
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Museum Collection Update

by Solange Russek

The Case of the Missing "T" will continue to be a mystery!

In the Summer/Fall 2015 Edition we featured a donation from Joe Schoeningh whose father and uncle owned The Ark and later the "Fair" dry goods and stationary stores. One of the donations was the very sign "The Ark". The article mentioned that "Uncle Joe" needed a piece of wood for some shelving in the basement of 153 Kentucky St.



In July of 2015 I received permission from Michelle McCauley owner of Summer Cottage Antiques on 153 Kentucky St. to allow us to explore the depths of the store's basement. John FitzGerald, Barbara Maxwell and I inspected every corner and piece of wood that could be our "little mystery piece of the puzzle". After an hour we realized that it will

continue to be a mystery! The Petaluma Historic Library & Museum would like to thank the staff at Summer Cottage for the exploration.



What's bugging us? A universe waits to be seen!!

Many museums are always challenged with the many ways pest and rodent infestation occurs. With aging buildings there are many entry points that allow creepy crawlies and spores to enter the building. Thus causing a threat to the collection of textiles along with our rare books and photographs. Some of these species cannot be seen with the naked eye or with a hand lens. My goal for 2016-2017 is to increase the integrated Pest Management Program for the PHL&M and identify the insect population that tries to consume our treasures of days gone by. We can then implement the best and green methods for prevention.

I will be setting out small non-toxic insect traps and document the "catch of the day". In order to identify the smallest of the creatures, we would like to purchase an electron microscope to better aid us. If any of our members would like to make a small donation to

meet our goal of \$300.00 it would be greatly appreciated. Please call us at 778-4398 or mail your donation to:

Petaluma Museum Association
20 Fourth St.
Petaluma, CA 94952

Please make your check out to Petaluma Museum Association and indicate that this donation is for the electron microscope.

Thank you!



Insect Trap

PETALUMA MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
Petaluma Historical Library & Museum
20 4th St.
Petaluma, CA 94952
www.petalumamuseum.com

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This photo taken in S.F. is from the McNear collection of scanned photos that were donated by Ted Lehmann

1906 Earthquake Retrospective

April 8 - May 8, 2016

Dan Brown will share his collection of postcards from the 1906 Earthquake