

## EXHIBIT REVIEWS

San Diego History Center, Exhibition Review, *The Lore Behind the Roar: 100 Years of the San Diego Zoo*, opened March 20, 2016.

Reviewed by Dr. Jennifer Hernandez, Lecturer in History at San Diego Mesa College, San Diego State University and Cuyamaca College.

*The Lore Behind the Roar: 100 Years of the San Diego Zoo* is a marvelous collaborative effort between the Zoo and the San Diego History Center. The story of the origins of the San Diego Zoo provides the visitor with a wealth of new information about the Zoo's founder Dr. Harry Wegeforth and the early leaders. The exhibit offers a rich array of photographs, artifacts, art works, and primary sources. It also explains what really goes on behind the scenes at the Zoo. In addition to the insightful and interesting information that is provided, this exhibit is family friendly and will appeal to young children as well as adults. There is something for everyone in the community.

The origin of the San Diego Zoo can be traced to late 1916 when the Panama-California Exposition ended, leaving behind many animals that had been exhibited in Balboa Park. Dr. Harry Wegeforth, an accomplished medical doctor, exclaimed that someone should start a zoo. Wegeforth's original desk is featured in the exhibit. With that, the seed for the San Diego Zoological Society was planted. One of Wegeforth's most important supporters was philanthropist Ellen Browning Scripps, who saw the value in creating a zoo for the growing city. Scripps famously donated money to build a fence enclosing the zoo at a cost of \$9,000 in 1916. She also provided funds for an aviary—which at the time was the biggest “flight cage” in the world—and funded the Research Hospital in 1928. Scripps and other local philanthropists continued to donate to Wegeforth's cause in the early years of its existence and set the course for continued expansion and improvement. Soon other philanthropists joined Wegeforth's cause. Dr. Wegeforth's son Milton recalled that the first monkey enclosure, which was one of the Zoo's most popular attractions, was built from funds contributed by all of the city's car dealerships.

This exhibit succeeds in capturing Harry Wegeforth's spirit and sense of adventure. Even in the early days, the San Diego Zoo experimented with new trends such as open enclosures and animal conservation. Wegeforth visited zoos across the country and around the world and incorporated the best ideas into the San Diego Zoo. He travelled around the world to collect animals to build the Zoo's collection. He also collected seeds to bring back and plant in the gardens outside the enclosures. As visitors will learn, the forward-thinking Wegeforth was an excellent fundraiser and manager who devoted his life to the Zoo.

Other members of the Zoological Society played important roles as well. Belle Benchley began working for the Zoo in 1925 as a bookkeeper, was promoted to the role of Executive Secretary two years later, and became the first female zoo director in the world, holding that job for twenty-six years. Under her leadership, Zoo attendance increased and so did the operating budget. Benchley was deeply committed to animal welfare and conservation; she wrote numerous books and was a leading expert on animal behavior and zoo design. The exhibit also pays tribute to Joan Embry who singlehandedly elevated the Zoo's status to superstardom with her numerous television appearances in the 1970s and 1980s. Those of us who are not native to San Diego were often first introduced to the Zoo's work through her.

This exhibition is interactive and one cannot help but be amazed at the research and care that went into its production. Visitors will be impressed with the recreated Research Hospital display that answers many of the questions we all have about the Zoo's animals--especially how much food they eat every day and just how much it costs to maintain their health. Stuffed animals in need of care beckon children to open the medical cages and assist the animals. There is also a "dress up in keeper's uniforms" area, and an arts-and-crafts center that invites children to extend their learning through play. The curators, a team from the History Center including Iris Engstrand, Tara Centybear, Matthew Schiff, Tina Zarpour, Sarah Matteson, Tammie Bennett, and Keith Busby, along with Karen Worley, Lisa Bissi, Beth Austin, and Amy Jankowski from the Zoo, should be congratulated for creating such an outstanding and fun exhibition. *The Lore Behind the Roar: 100 Years of the San Diego Zoo* opened on March 20, 2016, and runs to January 27, 2017, at the San Diego History Center.



Joan Embry with Johnny Carson on KFMB's *Tonight Show*, c. 1977.

*The Border: A Line that Divides*. San Diego History Center, San Diego, October 2015-July 2016.

Reviewed by Rich Schultz, Lecturer, Department of Liberal Studies, and Border and Regional Studies Program, California State University San Marcos.

Though no one bothered to inform the handful of men, women, and children who may have actually lived anywhere near the Tijuana River delta in the winter of 1847-48, their lands had become—with a few signatures—the future home of one of the world's most spectacular examples of a militarized obstacle course demarcating a boundary between two of the world's largest nation states. The 160-year transition from a tranquil and verdant river valley to a barbed wire and concrete wall that marks the line between the United States and Mexico, San Diego and Tijuana, is displayed in a relatively small yet powerful exhibit at the San Diego History Center. In *The Border: A Line that Divides*, the Center's collection staff, working with San Diego photographer Alejandro Tamayo, has created a clever display of the human ability to worry about, protect, protest, fight over, cross, monitor, block access to, and also document what is an imagined and yet boldly marked line.

Even as late as the 1890s, Tijuana was nothing more than a collection of a few dozen small homes congregated around a grove of shade-giving trees—a hamlet. San Diego, with a population of about 15,000, was not much more. Present-day San Diego grew as a result of the decision by politicians, cartographers, and diplomats to etch the U.S.-Mexico border along a straight line extending west from where the Gila River meets the Colorado (present-day Yuma) to a spot on the Pacific where it was certain the United States would have complete control of San Diego Bay. That map-making decision has played itself out according to plan. The military and associated businesses have been the city's economic engine, especially since World War II.

As the earliest of the photos in this exhibit depict, the real border for much of the 60 years that followed the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was the natural one—the Tijuana River, prone to flooding and periodically impassable without bridges. One image captures the aftermath of such a flood, a 1916 inundation that took out a toll bridge (charging its users 20 cents per vehicle, 5 cents per passenger) linking San Diego and Tijuana across the river. These were the years of the Mexican Revolution, when the local portion of the international border also saw its first fencing – a barbed-wire number effective only at stopping stray cattle from moving back and forth.

Prohibition has a prominent space in the exhibit, as well it should. Photos

showing contented-looking Americans seated along bars in Tijuana, and a few of the Agua Caliente casino, match up with scenes of increased border monitoring on the American side, all of them dating to the 1920s and early 1930s. Many of these “border enforcement” scenes, all the way into the 1960s, appear quaint by today’s standards. But the photos, as arranged, are effective in demonstrating how those who crossed the international boundary in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century sought to do business, visit family, and/or to re-invent themselves for a few hours or days, while a monitoring apparatus gradually began to manifest itself at the border.

By the 1970s, the celebrated economic boom known as the “Mexican Miracle” was over. So too was the American *bracero* guest-worker program. The Mexican government began to develop its border towns and cities for manufacturing; the United States began to monitor more effectively who and what was coming from Mexico. A 1966 image shows the first signs of staffed kiosks to check identification, a noticeable change from the older photos showing sleepy scenes of a crossing only periodically utilized. Photos tell us that Americans were increasingly associating the U.S.-Mexico border, and more specifically, the San Ysidro Port of Entry, with unauthorized immigration and narcotics. This association took on a decidedly racist tone, as shown in an image of David Duke, then Grand Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, riding in a car marked “Klan Border Watch.” Around the same time, the U.S. government began to use old sheet metal gathered from Cold War-era military pursuits in Vietnam and elsewhere, to begin to raise the wall at the border. This haphazard fencing featured indentations in the metal that allowed for convenient footholds for those coming stateside. One scene shows people waiting for nightfall – or at least for the right moment – to make their crossing.

The year 1994 marks the start of the contemporary period for San Diego, Tijuana, and the built environment that separates the two cities. Passage of NAFTA and the Clinton administration’s border militarization program Operation Gatekeeper, signaled both the beginnings of a new era of “free trade” and, ironically enough, the end of free movement from one city to the other. Gatekeeper has had deadly consequences. The advocacy group No More Deaths/ No Más Muertes puts the number at more than 6,000 dead trying to cross since the mid-1990s, most of them in remote desert areas far from cities. Artists have marked this cruel turn of events with crosses on the border fence, near the Tijuana International Airport. A 1993 photo taken from the Tijuana side shows the caption “Welcome to the New Berlin Wall” painted on the border fence.

Here is a reminder for a mostly American audience taking in this exhibit: what many in the United States regard as a symbol of security and law enforcement, the militarized border wall is something at which much of the rest of the world shakes its head. The Berlin Wall analogy is an interesting one. The East Germans

who built the wall apparently wanted to keep their best and brightest from leaving, and hoped to keep outside dangers from entering their territory. It was on the more open and democratic side of the barrier, in West Berlin, that artists and poets used the wall as a canvas to protest the world's injustices. The photos in *The Border: A Line that Divides* make it clear that for a better chance to see such creative forces at work on the local stretch of international border fencing, one must escape to Tijuana.

## BOOK NOTES

*A City for Children: Women, Architecture, and the Charitable Landscapes of Oakland, 1850–1950.* By Marta Gutman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. Illustration, notes, and index. xxi + 454 pp. \$45 cloth. *A City for Children* contributes to the literatures on the history of family, children, women, and charitable organizations by focusing on a case study of Oakland. Most of the city's efforts to aid needy children came from private organizations run primarily by women, and Gutman explores how aid programs often embodied the cultural and class-based expectations of those who ran them.

*Dance Floor Democracy: The Social Geography of Memory at the Hollywood Canteen.* By Sherrie Tucker. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. x + 408 pp. \$94.95 cloth, \$26.95 paper. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. Sherrie Tucker of the University of Kansas examines the history of the Hollywood Canteen during World War II, when civilian hostesses danced with enlisted men. The book makes extensive use of oral histories to explore the nightclub as a social space and to trace the development of historical memory pertaining to jitterbug swing culture, the war years, and the "Greatest Generation."

*Los Angeles Union Station.* By Marlyn Musicant. Contributions by William Deverell and Matthew W. Roth. Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2014. Illustrations, notes, and index. xvi + 109 pp. \$24.95 cloth. Published as an accompaniment to a 2014 exhibition at the Los Angeles Public Library, this book focuses on the legal and political struggles behind the creation of Union Station. While the completion of the station in 1939 represented a victory for those who saw the existing facilities of three railroad companies as obstacles to the city's expansion, the project at the same time involved the destruction of Los Angeles's Chinatown and attempted to build on the region's emerging Spanish Fantasy Past.

*Money Pits: British Mining Companies in the Californian and Australian Gold Rushes of the 1850s.* By John Woodland. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2014. Photographs, tables, appendices, bibliography, and index. xiv + 282 pp. \$149.95 cloth. John Woodland's monograph tells the story of British companies that raised more than £15 million from investors eager to cash in on gold mining in California and Australia. Woodland contends that most of these ventures failed to generate significant returns, especially because of the limits of communication technology and the inability of the companies to raise sufficient capital to finance long-term operations.

*Mono Lake: From Dead Sea to Environmental Treasure.* By Abraham Hoffman. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014. Photographs, bibliography, and index. xv + 168 pp. \$34.95 cloth. Abraham Hoffman, who wrote the oft-cited *Vision or Villainy* (1981) on the Los Angeles/Owens Valley water conflict, has now produced this volume on Mono Lake, a body of water that played a significant role in that now century-old controversy. This book traces the environmental and cultural history of the lake and its environs, exploring economic activities from northern Paiutes' hunting and gathering, to gold and oil extraction efforts, to the rise of tourism in recent decades.

*Reinventing Citizenship: Black Los Angeles, Korean Kawasaki, and Community Participation.* By Kazuyo Tsuchiya. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014. Photographs, tables, notes, and bibliography. 280 pp. \$75 cloth, \$25 paper. This book offers a comparative study of Los Angeles and Kawasaki to investigate how African Americans in the United States and Koreans in Japan attempted to establish themselves as citizens in the context of an expansion of welfare programs in the two nations in the 1960s and 1970s.