San Diego at 250

PIVOTAL MOMENTS IN OUR REGION’S HISTORY
Who Says the Past Is Boring?

Our region is rich in history, cultural diversity, ingenuity, and innovation. But how did San Diego become what it is today—the eighth largest city in the nation? We invite you to come explore and find the answers at the San Diego History Center museum and archives in historic Balboa Park, as well as the iconic Junípero Serra Museum in Presidio Park.

We are honored to be the stewards of the county’s history, dedicated to creating an understanding of how the San Diego of today has been shaped by its past, and encouraging an ongoing dialogue about where we as a community are headed in the future—and we’ve been doing so for more than 90 years.

We’re now pleased to partner with San Diego Magazine—a regional institution in its own right—to bring you this new and expanded format of The Times. So whether you’ve just arrived in San Diego or it’s been your home for generations: Welcome. We invite you to join us and make your own place in San Diego history.
Banking on Local Color

Wells Fargo and the San Diego History Center Paint the Town

SAN DIEGO HAS SPROUTED 30 unlikely new art galleries: local branches of Wells Fargo, whose walls are adorned with murals of colorized black-and-white images reflecting the history of each bank’s neighborhood. The San Diego History Center opened up its trove to designers who’ve transformed the material into original works—some as large as 38 feet by 9 feet. Branches all across the US sport similar murals as part of the Wells Fargo Community Mural Program, which recently celebrated its 20-year anniversary, rolling out several new large-format San Diego designs—including in Mission Hills, La Jolla, downtown, Solana Beach, Mira Mesa, Coronado, Alpine, Chula Vista, and San Ysidro—late last year.

“We look for images that convey a sense of history, diversity, optimism, and progress,” says Kelsey Holmes, one of the bank’s dedicated mural researchers. Wells Fargo has been creating murals from images supplied by SDHC since 2005. “The History Center’s archive of historical photographs is unparalleled in the region.”

The murals feature images from the late 19th to mid-20th century. Each piece of art is accompanied by a key with explanatory captions. The 4’ by 7’ piece in Mission Hills, for example, depicts Kate Sessions, the pioneering botanist and landscape architect known as “the Mother of Balboa Park,” alongside a streetcar, the Grant School building (Now Grant K-8), and historic photos and maps of the area, circa 1920.

“We’ve been working with the content acquisition and design teams at Wells Fargo for over a decade,” says Chris Travers, archivist of SDHC’s photograph collection. “The use of colorized historic images in their community murals is beautifully and sensitively done.”

Wells Fargo has proudly served the San Diego community since 1855. “Our murals allow us to celebrate San Diego’s rich history and the diverse communities we serve,” says San Diego Region Bank President Brian Lee.

LIKE WHAT YOU SEE?

Order prints of the historical photos shown in *The Times*, and thousands more, at the San Diego History Center’s online photo store: photostore.sandiegohistory.org
Celebrating Makers of San Diego History

TONI ATKINS AND CHRISTINE KEHOE have a lot in common. These remarkable women are well known in political circles: They’ve both served on the San Diego City Council, in the State Assembly, and in the State Senate, and are prominent champions for LGBTQ+ causes. Kehoe broke barriers when she became San Diego’s first openly gay elected official upon her induction into the city council in 1993. Atkins celebrated her own first years later, becoming the first LGBTQ+ president pro tempore of the State Senate.

Atkins and Kehoe now share yet another designation—that of the San Diego History Center’s Makers of San Diego History. The two were honored during the History Center’s annual awards dinner on March 23. Each year, the History Center recognizes the local institutions, communities, and individuals who have helped make our city what it is today. Atkins and Kehoe exemplify what it takes to be a leader and a civic change-maker. Far into the future they undoubtedly will be remembered fondly for their role in our region’s history.

The San Diego History Center also recognized the LGBTQ+ community for their struggles and triumphs.

Leave Your Mark in Balboa Park

FIRST CAME GEORGE MARSTON, KATE SESSIONS, AND CHARLES LINDBERGH, then San Diego notables like Malin and Roberta Burnham, Gayle and Pete Wilson, and Bill and Lori Walton. Now it’s your turn to claim your stake in San Diego’s history with a commemorative floor tile in the atrium of the San Diego History Center in Balboa Park.

In honor of its 90th anniversary, the History Center has made 90 of its prime atrium spots available for those who wish to immortalize their own or a loved one’s impact on our region. In addition to a tile that will greet guests for generations to come, patrons will have the opportunity to share their own San Diego experiences, which will become part of the History Center’s permanent collection.

Help the History Center preserve the past and safeguard its future. Proceeds from each tax-deductible donation support the History Center’s endowment, helping build a lasting legacy for future San Diegans to enjoy.

To reserve your place in history, visit sandiegohistory.org/anniversary-tile-campaign.

Why History Matters

Now in its 90th year, the San Diego History Center is building on the legacy of those who have helped preserve, reveal, and promote our region’s history. We’re taking a fresh look at how the past has influenced the present, and where we should go from here.

We have retained the internationally recognized Gallagher and Associates (also envisioning the new Comic-Con Museum) to create a world-class visitor experience at our Balboa Park museum and archives. As we reach the final stages, we look forward to sharing our plan to enrich and engage our community in dynamic ways and create a new level of sustainability that will propel the History Center into the future.

We are also investing over $1 million to transform the visitor experience at our historic home, the Junípero Serra Museum at Presidio Park. Working with the San Diego River Conservancy, the State Coastal Conservancy, and the Kumeyaay Digueño Land Conservancy, we are turning our focus to our region’s namesake river and those who have used it as a source of life for millennia.

Plans are underway for new ADA accessibility for the museum and Presidio Park, too. The project is set to start next year.

The San Diego History Center is also taking the lead for “San Diego’s 250th Anniversary: Commemorating the Past and Celebrating the Future.” Expect more on this in the weeks ahead.

Our success is directly dependent on you: our neighbors, friends, members, and donors. The San Diego History Center is, and will be, a place where visitors and locals can discover, discuss, and determine why history matters today, and we invite you to join us in this invigorating effort to preserve our past for the future.
San Diego and Tijuana share the busiest land border crossing in the world. If we go back in time, today’s border was once only an intermittent river, disappearing in the dry season. This was Kumeyaay homeland, and perhaps the biggest impediment to them, or to the early Spanish, Mexican, and American crossers, was mud. Today, the boundary between Tijuana and San Ysidro, part of our 1,954-mile southern border established by the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, is a militarized crossing that sees millions of people and thousands of tons of freight each year. It is at the center point of an economic engine that produces more than $250 billion in the San Diego-Tijuana mega-region. In light of the heightened political focus on its future, it’s critical to look back on how this divide evolved and how it has, in turn, both separated and connected the people on either side. In the 1800s, Mexico relied on the border to prevent gold miners from heading south from the frontier town of San Diego. At other times, the border has been seen as a safeguard of American land from grazing Mexican cattle. During Prohibition, it was viewed by Americans as a buffer from (or a place to find) alcohol-fueled “immorality.” Throughout the early and mid-20th century, a new invention—the automobile—along with America’s growing wealth and Southern California’s booming population, boosted cross-border traffic and commerce. With that came heightened restrictions. Likewise, the growth of Tijuana’s population and economy increased the demand to cross for economic reasons and family visits. The border was further fortified after the Mexican Revolution and the First and Second World Wars.
The Color of a Community in Black and White

Photographer Mary Wickline took on an array of diverse subjects over the course of her career, but her work documenting the LGBTQ+ community is both haunting and historic.

MARY WICKLINE (1955–2018) FIRST ARRIVED in San Diego in 1974 as a young sailor armed with a camera and a can-do attitude. The New York native became the first woman in her particular Combat Camera unit. Following her stint in the Navy, her ambition and photographic prowess landed her a job as the first female staff photographer at Rohr Industries in Chula Vista. She also volunteered her services for the San Diego Gayzette, photographing pride parades, protests, community events, the music scene, nightlife, women’s rights conferences, speeches by San Diego’s first female mayor, Maureen O’Connor, and the work of the Blood Sisters, a group of mostly lesbian women who came together to donate blood at the height of the AIDS crisis.

Wickline’s career as a professional photographer ended in 2001, but her affinity for her craft continued through the years, even while working as a librarian at UC San Diego. Though she never had the chance to marry her life partner, Sharon Grant-Henry, who died in 2004, she embarked on a project documenting couples after the Supreme Court’s landmark 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges decision recognizing same-sex marriage as a constitutional right. She also passed along her skills to aspiring photographers at San Diego City College.

Before Wickline passed away in December, she donated numerous prints and negatives to the San Diego History Center. In its exhibit LGBTQ+ San Diego, the History Center honors the contributions of pioneers such as Wickline, along with the struggles and triumphs the LGBTQ+ community has seen over the decades.

GO ONLINE TO LEARN MORE
Find out about the History Center’s LGBTQ+ education programs at sandiegohistory.org

LGBTQ+ San Diego: Stories of Struggles and Triumphs is currently on display at the History Center in Balboa Park, through January 2020.

SAN DIEGO JOINS THE BIG LEAGUE in 1936, a relatively unknown rookie joined a minor league team that had just moved to his hometown, San Diego. The slugger was Ted Williams. The team was the San Diego Padres, a ball club named for the Franciscan friars who founded Mission San Diego de Alcalá in 1769. Williams, a graduate of mid-city’s Herbert Hoover High School, went on to Boston and became one of the greatest names in baseball. But his maiden team stayed here, joining the Major League in 1969. Williams was the first of 14 Hall of Famers who at one time had graced the Padres roster. The next local who rose to Williams’s level was Tony Gwynn. Over 20 years, “Mr. Padre” became one of the most decorated hitters in history. The 15-time All-Star played in the team’s two World Series appearances, in 1984 and 1998. The Pads originally shared their Major League stadium with the Chargers in Mission Valley (the minor league team played at Lane Field on San Diego Bay), but in 2004 they headed downtown to their current home, Petco Park. Incorporating the historic Western Metal Supply Co. building into its more modern elements, the $450 million stadium is considered one of the best in baseball.
FOR NORTH PARK RESIDENTS, the morning of December 7, 1941 started out much like any other. The neighborhood was looking forward to the North Park Toyland Parade, still a few days away. Craftsmen, merchants, and other community members were putting the finishing touches on their parade floats, including an ode to the beloved Tin Woodsman character of L. Frank Baum’s Oz series—several of which were written right here in San Diego County—and the classic 1939 film.

As news quickly spread that Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawai‘i, thrusting the US into World War II, the anticipation of a holiday parade quickly and solemnly vanished. San Diego and the rest of the West Coast hunkered down under blackout conditions and San Diego’s military and wartime defense industry went into overdrive. The military activated anti-aircraft batteries along Point Loma and stationed troops atop El Cortez Hotel to prepare for a possible mainland attack. There would be no Toyland Parade that year, or any as long as the world was at war.

After the parade was canceled, its floats and displays were broken down and packed up. That Tin Man, however, was destined for something more than collecting dust as the years passed. Julius “Judge” Sabol, proprietor of Sabol’s Service (Service with a Smile!) at the corner of University Avenue and Bancroft Street, came across the 10-foot metal tribute, replaced his axe with a wrench, and christened him a landmark at his business. He stood watch over the shop through the late 60s until the business was leased, then sold, to Harry Vinal. The Tin Man found a new home greeting customers at Harry Vinal’s Auto Repair, which relocated to 35th Street and University. At some point during the Vinal years, the Tin Man’s original unpainted or silver exterior was changed to the red, white, and blue that adorn him today.

The Tin Man’s stint as a North Park landmark eventually came to an end, and he resided in a private home until he was donated to the San Diego History Center in 1991. Now on display in the History Center’s atrium, the Tin Man is again greeting guests with his open arms and gleaming grin.

The replica Oz resident originally meant to delight parade-goers found a second life as a North Park landmark.
The Panama–California Exposition put San Diego on the map. The two-year celebration of the Panama Canal’s opening and the city’s prime spot as first US port of call for northbound ships welcomed more than 3.7 million visitors. Its legacy can still be seen today, as it was the creation of Balboa Park.

Bethel African American Methodist Episcopal church was founded. It became the first organized black religious institution in San Diego.

San Diego State University was founded as the San Diego Normal School—a teaching college.

The first Filipino students arrived as part of an exchange program and attended San Diego High School.

San Diego’s population had more than doubled since 1900. The first US naval aviation school had been established the year before, tuna was big business, and New Town was the heart of the city.
San Diego is celebrating a birthday this year—and a big one.

The San Diego History Center is proud to be the official custodian of the region’s history, and in honor of San Diego’s historic 250th birthday we combed through the archives to find rarely seen photographs of some of the region’s most pivotal moments. From visiting dignitaries and groundbreaking innovations (“Did you know the Spirit of St. Louis was built here?”) to protests that upended the status quo, here’s a snapshot of our journey to become the San Diego we love today, captured through a historical lens and told from diverse perspectives. If you’d like to search our archives, donate, or purchase vintage photographs, please visit sandiegohistory.org to learn more or call 619-232-6203 x126.

FROM MISSION TO METROPOLIS: SAN DIEGO’S STORY IN PICTURES

1917
World War I prompted a military buildup. Camp Kearny was established, named for Gen. Stephen Kearny, who led the Army of the West to San Diego in 1846. It cost $4.5 million to build and was closed in 1920.

1927
San Diego’s first black volunteer fire unit was formed. The group was later hired as the first African Americans in the San Diego Fire Department.

1930
Roberto Alvarez vs. the Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District was the first successful school desegregation lawsuit in the U.S. Parents organized against a separate school for Mexican children.
Hotel del Coronado opened its doors in 1888, three years after the first transcontinental railroad reached San Diego, paving the way for Easterners to reach the shores of the Pacific. Local travelers had it easier, too—electric streetcars began operating in 1887.

The Kumeyaay creation story tells of a long and mystical link to what is now San Diego. Archeological evidence tells us that Kumeyaay have inhabited this landscape for 12,000 years or more. Many Kumeyaay elders believe that their ancestors have been here far longer, from time immemorial.

“Our population was, conservatively, between 20,000 and 30,000 before the start of San Diego history as most know it,” says Ethan L. Banegas, Kumeyaay Community College professor of history.

San Diego’s nonindigenous history began in 1769, when Spanish friars Junipero Serra and Father Juan Crespi dedicated the Mission San Diego de Alcala. Their stated purpose in the New World was to spread Christianity and introduce European agricultural methods to its inhabitants, according to Iris Engstrand, author of San Diego: California's Cornerstone and former professor of history at University of San Diego for 48 years.

Despite their intentions, what followed was harrowing for the Kumeyaay people. “The loss of culture, language, and tradition is destructive physically,” Banegas says. By 1800, only about 5,900 Kumeyaay remained. By 1847, in the American period, there were 1,200. “The majority of the Kumeyaay nation looks on the Mission period as the beginning of the end of our people,” Banegas says.

Though the Kumeyaay population suffered a decline, Kumeyaay people, language, and culture persisted, and survive today.

The city of San Diego’s population in the midst of the Great Depression was 147,995. The county population was 209,659.

President Roosevelt’s WPA established hundreds of public works projects here. By 1938, construction was six times that of any other city. The Depression ended sooner here than in most of the nation.

The US entered World War II and forever changed the region. San Diego Naval Air Station began training Air Force pilots. In 1942, the Navy acquired Rancho Santa Margarita to build Camp Pendleton.
In 1927, Charles Lindbergh, a 25-year-old US Air Mail pilot, stunned the world with the first nonstop solo transatlantic flight. His plane, Spirit of St. Louis, was built in San Diego by Ryan Airlines, founded just two years earlier. In 1928, San Diego’s new municipal airport was christened Lindbergh Field.

**1920s**

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**1903**

The Marine Biological Association of San Diego was founded. It became part of the University of California nine years later, and in 1925 was renamed the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, in honor of benefactor and philanthropist Ellen Browning Scripps. Today it remains one of the world’s foremost centers of earth science and climate research.

**1942**

Initiated in WWII, the Bracero Program allowed for the temporary migration of Mexican contract workers to ease labor shortages. Local farmers initially requested 300 workers, and more followed.

**1947**

The first Colorado River water was delivered to a thirsty region.

**1960**

UC San Diego was founded.

**1970s**

Across the US, members of the LGBTQ+ community were rising up and fighting against discrimination. The Gay Liberation Front held San Diego’s first public pride event—a “gay-in”—in 1970.
### 1950s

Several notable San Diegans made their mark on history in the '50s. Under the pen name Dr. Seuss, Theodor Geisel (pictured here in 1958), published his beloved children's book *The Cat in the Hat* in 1957. His future La Jolla neighbor, Jonas Salk, developed the polio vaccine in 1955, and in 1954 Sol Price revolutionized retailing by opening Fedmart, the forerunner to Price Club and Costco.

### 1960s

Mission Bay Park was dedicated. It's now the largest aquatic park of its kind in the country. SeaWorld was built on Mission Bay two years later. San Diego Stadium and the Sports Arena were built in 1966.

### 1970

After construction of Interstate 5 cut the neighborhood in two and the state rescinded its promise of a park, outraged Barrio Logan residents staged a protest that lasted 12 days. Emerging from tense negotiations with city government, state officials agreed to set aside land under the Coronado Bridge for what's now the vibrant, mural-filled Chicano Park. Residents celebrate the triumph at Chicano Park Day each April.

### 1972

Three-term mayor Pete Wilson declared San Diego “America’s Finest City.” He also fought to prevent the Padres from moving to Washington, DC. Ray Kroc of McDonald’s fame bought the team in 1974.

### 1978

PSA Flight 182 collided with a Cessna in midair, and both aircraft crashed into North Park, killing 144 people. Also in 1978, San Diego’s first biotech company, Hybritech, was founded.

### 1998

With an all-star lineup that featured Tony Gwynn and Trevor Hoffman, the Padres headed to their second World Series. Despite their stellar season, the Pads were swept by the New York Yankees.
The pop culture phenomenon Comic-Con began in the basement of The US Grant Hotel with just 100 attendees. Word spread and its popularity has skyrocketed. The annual convention (seen here in 1974), now synonymous with San Diego, brings over 130,000 visitors and hundreds of millions of dollars into our economy every year.

After the fall of Saigon, 50,000 Vietnamese refugees came through Camp Pendleton. The local Vietnamese population has thrived since, and San Diego has opened its doors to the world. The county welcomed 4,532 refugees in 2016; that number fell to just 1,695 the following year.

Three San Diegans on why they support the San Diego History Center

**THE PHILANTHROPIST**

“All of us have scrapbooks and keep pictures of our families. The same thing is important for the city—we provide the family history of San Diego. That’s the role we play.”

TOM FETTER, philanthropist, owner of T. Fetter & Co., and past chairman of the History Center’s board of trustees

**THE VOLUNTEER**

“When I started I thought the history of the area was pretty blah, but it’s anything but. The more I learned, the more questions I had. Our history is the story of how we came to be.”

BARRY GOLDLUST, a former pharmaceutical researcher and, since 2007, a volunteer docent at The Junípero Serra Museum, which is run by the San Diego History Center

**THE MEMBER**

“The History Center has great exhibits and a huge archive, and the education programs are interesting and informative.”

BOB MORRIS, San Diego History Center member

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The craft brewing industry hit the jackpot when Ballast Point was bought for $1 billion. San Diego has become “Capital of the Craft,” with over 150 breweries and an economic impact of over $850 million.

After 56 years in San Diego, the Chargers moved back to Los Angeles after failing to secure a replacement for the Mission Valley stadium. They were originally brought to San Diego by then-owner Barron Hilton.
OURAGE CAN TAKE YOU A LONG WAY. Just ask Lynn Schenk.

Before she became San Diego’s first female member of Congress, the state’s first female secretary of business, transportation and housing, and first female chief of staff to a California governor, she was a plucky young lawyer just looking for lunch.

There weren’t many options near the attorney general’s office where Schenk worked—grab-and-go sandwich shops, a couple high-end options, “and the Grant Grill, which is where the power brokers were,” she says. “The judges, the city council members, the leading lights of San Diego ate lunch there—and that was off limits” to all but men. No women allowed.

That was the vibe in 1971. But women around the country were working to change that. In New York, the “no women” policy at a historic bar was challenged on the grounds that it violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Schenk got a copy of the lawsuit, enlisted fellow lawyers Judy McConnell and Elaine Alexander, and headed to the Grant Grill. “Our hearts were pounding,” Schenk says.

The perplexed maître d’ pointed to the sign: Men only until 3:00 p.m. “I don’t know where I got the courage—it was the courage of youth, I guess—I waved the papers at him.” He first conceded a table in the garden room, noting it’d be far from any coarse language. “I won’t repeat what Judy said to assure him that our ears wouldn’t be offended.”

As they walked in, some of the men started to boo them. Undeterred, the triumphant trio took a seat in the dining room proper and indulged in bowls of the Grant’s renowned mock turtle soup. On their second visit they were seated in a vestibule separate from the dining room. “We took the table and decided we were going to keep doing this.” By the third or fourth visit, the sign came down and the men-only policy was no more.

Schenk and McConnell’s next challenge to gender segregation was at the riverboat restaurant Reuben E. Lee. This time they were accompanied by Sister Sally Furay, provost of USD, dressed in full habit. “You could tell the maître d’ was an altar boy,” Schenk laughs. “He looked like he was going to faint.” Again, they were successful.

“It’s funny now, but it was pretty tough then,” she says of her restaurant renegade days. “I think women today have it a lot harder than I did, because the discrimination was so obvious. Now, no one would dare say those things, but you can’t get inside a person’s head.”

Schenk was one of only 48 women when she was elected to Congress; now there are over 100. To today’s congresswomen, she advises: “Stand up and speak out, but do it respectfully.” It’s about “making a difference for yourself, but also for those who will come after you, and hoping they will do the same for future generations.”
The generosity of our community enables us to connect people with our shared past through preserving, educating, and promoting the rich stories of the San Diego region.

Here are some ways to help the San Diego History Center fulfill this mission:

- **BECOME A MEMBER**
- **VOLUNTEER WITH US**
- **SUPPORT OUR MISSION**

For more information about how you can help preserve, promote, and reveal our region’s rich history, please contact Sheila Thomas at: sthomas@sandiegohistory.org or 619-232-6203 x 126

The San Diego History Center, located in the heart of Balboa Park, offers a grand atrium, theater, conference room, and nine galleries. The beautiful and spacious venue is ideal for weddings, cocktail receptions, social hours, meetings, and fundraisers.

The Junípero Serra Museum, located in Presidio Park, offers an iconic outdoor terrace, intimate interior gallery, and incredible views of the city skyline and sparkling coast. The historic mission-style museum is ideal for weddings, retreats, cocktail parties, and corporate events.

Start planning today! Please contact our event coordinator: events@sandiegohistory.org or 619-232-6203 x 126

**Make history at the San Diego History Center and the Junípero Serra Museum!**
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Dwight D. Eisenhower
ticker tape parade, 1960