The San Diego History Center and History Center Store are where you will discover changing exhibitions, programs and an extensive archive collection that chronicle San Diego’s fascinating history as well as explore its present diversity and future potential.

Research Library and Archives

Home to more than three miles of shelved documents and over two million historic photographs—one of the largest collections on the West Coast.

W–F, 9:30–1 pm Walk-In Research
M & T, 9–5 pm; W–F, 1:30–5 pm
One-on-One Appointments

Junípero Serra Museum

The Serra Museum, in Presidio Park, is one of the most familiar landmarks in San Diego. As a major symbol of the city, it stands atop the hill recognized as the site where California began.

Japanese American Historical Society of SD

JAHSSD recognizes the contributions Japanese Americans have made to the San Diego region by preserving and making available artifacts, photographs, and other information chronicling their history and experiences.

We invite the public of all ages to come into our museum without paying a traditional admission price.

Your admission has been paid by an anonymous supporter of the San Diego History Center and we ask you to determine the value of your visit and demonstrate that with a tax-deductible donation should you choose. We offer the opportunity for visitors to Give Forward to future visitors but it is not mandatory.

For more information on museum programs and exhibitions visit SanDiegoHistory.org
AJA PROJECT: OUR COLLECTIVE TRUTH – EXAMINING CIVIL LIBERTIES IN AMERICA

GALLERY 5A: This exhibit presents the work of four artists who are each affected by the legacies of the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans. Their work reflects on the parallels between the historic experiences from over 70 years ago and their own experiences now. Organized by The AjA Project and generously funded by the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program, this project connects participants to the history of the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans and invites them to create their own work after reflecting on how the historical experiences were photographed, documented, and narrated.

WELCOME TO THE MIX: EACH OF US HAS A STORY

GALLERY 5B: With the help of a grant from California Humanities, the San Diego History Center has collected over 50 new oral histories that will broaden and diversify our oral history collection, telling the stories of everyone in our community. Through first-person perspectives, this exhibit will provide a glimpse into some of the fascinating people and stories that will now be part of SDHC’s collection, reflecting the San Diego of today and leaving a representative legacy for tomorrow.

HER-STORY: PIONEERS OF SAN DIEGO

GALLERY 6: The women of the Ladies Pioneer Society arrived in San Diego in the late 1800s from places around the country. Discover the stories of their journeys and their impressions of San Diego through first person accounts. These early female pioneers provide a glimpse into the small, dusty town San Diego once was and invite you to imagine their reality.

PLACE OF PROMISE: THE STORY OF SAN DIEGO

GALLERY 7: This permanent exhibition showcases San Diego history from 10,000 BCE up to the late 1800s. It traces the extensive transformations this region has undergone as the native peoples, Spanish, Mexican, and American cultures have all shaped the region.

THE PATH OF THE MYSTIC: ART AND THEOSOPHY AT LOMALAND

GALLERY 8: In 1897, Katherine Tingley established her cultural and communal experiment, the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society, in Point Loma. This exhibit features a selection of artworks, objects, photographs and archival documents from the collections that bring to light the remarkable legacy of art and cultural production at Lomaland and how Tingley’s utopian experiment profoundly shaped San Diego’s cultural landscape.

FILM: BALBOA PARK: THE JEWEL OF SAN DIEGO

T: Daily screenings at 11am, 12pm, 1pm, 2pm, 3pm, 4pm
This entertaining 30-minute documentary on the history and wonder of Balboa Park, San Diego’s cultural epicenter, features stunning vistas, motion graphics, aerial photography and an original sound track. Screening times subject to change.

JAHSSD GALLERY:

Letters from Santa Anita: Children’s Thoughts on Internment
Clara Breed, a librarian with San Diego Public Library, corresponded with many of the young Japanese Americans interned at Santa Anita Relocation Center. Using these letters and others, their own words will reveal their thoughts and opinions on internment.

Japanese Businesses in Pre-WWII Downtown San Diego
The featured map shows the location of the various businesses and the diversity of services they provided.

A Window into History: Curiosities from our Collections
See our new artifact exhibition space including a portable forge and anvil.