

# —Fresno County— Historical Museum

Welcome to the Big Fresno Fair's Historical Museum. We are so glad that you have come to visit. We hope that while you are here you can look back at important parts of life in Fresno County, and that it will help you have a vision for how you can be a part of shaping Fresno's future.

Below, included in several of the notes on exhibits, are questions for students to consider during their visit, or write about when they return to school. It is our hope that these will enrich your students' learning during their visit to the museum.

## FIRST FLOOR – FRESNO COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

### 1. Mono Indian Display

- A self-taught photographer, A. W. Peters (1866-1959) produced a remarkable body of images throughout his lifetime including photographs showing the Mono (Monache) Indians from 1895-96 capturing their life during a time of transition.
- The display features a basket collection (54 baskets total) made by the Mono Indian Tribe acquired by the Fresno Historical Society. When it debuted in 2015, it was the first time this exhibit has ever been on public display with all of the 54 baskets together.
- Notice the Mono Indian Mural by one of the finest mural artists in the Western United States, Mike Collier depicting all the photos and baskets that were used at the turn of the century and before.

As you look at the baskets, consider the designs used by the Mono people. Can you determine what the inspiration for the different designs were? How can you match the purpose of the different baskets with items we use today that are made of different materials? Locate the type of baskets displayed within the photographs. How are the baskets being used? How do the baskets in the photographs highlight how lifestyles have changed from then to now? For example, find a cradleboard. What is its purpose? Why or why not, would it be useful today? Did the Mono Indians keep their babies with them as they worked? How does that compare to mothers and their babies today? What other baskets on display and in the photographs give you an insight into the changes in lifestyle in Fresno? Consider the materials used to make the baskets. What can you infer about the choice of materials?

### 2. General Store

- Exact replica of what a General Store in 1878 used to look like including:
  - Mail station

People came to pick up their mail at the General Store. Today, in most places, mailpersons bring the mail to our homes or neighborhood boxes. Considering what life was like in the Fresno area in 1878, in your opinion why was mail not delivered? Support your opinion. What other major changes have taken place in mail delivery since 1878?

- Laundry station
- Shoes

How have shoes changed over the years? Look at the shoes in the case, now look down at your shoes, or those of classmates, what differences do you notice? Does changing lifestyles, materials, or manufacturing account for the differences. Support your opinion with reasons.

- Chewing Tabaco
- Cleaning Supplies
- Anything we could have possibly needed was available here at the General Store
- 1867 Treasurer's Safe housed in the County Clerk's Office at the Millerton Courthouse  
*"If we don't have it, you don't need it."*
- This saying was taken from a fair patron who said the Museum's General Store brought her right back to her childhood – this sign was the only thing missing from the store she visited as a young girl!

Compare your experience at a big box store, such as Costco, with the General Store of 1878. Consider the difference between items we want and items we need. Considering the sign, "If we don't have it, you don't need it," what types of items are missing from the general store that fall into the category of items you need to survive. Are those items available at Costco? What items can you get at Costco that you may want, but don't need to survive? Are any of those items in the General Store of 1878? Are there any items that are not the same, but people may have wanted, but not needed to survive? Can you infer anything about how people spent their money then as compared with now?

There is a wood box on the wall to the right as you enter. You may have something for the same purpose with you. What is it? What are the advantages of the one you have as opposed to the one on the wall? Are there any disadvantages?

What is contained in the largest can on the top shelf? What can you infer from the size of the can about children in 1878? Are children today similar or different in this area? Can you determine by items in the store, ways that life has either stayed the same or changed?

Notice the 2 pumps in the store. (One has a cup on it, and the other has a bucket on it.) What can you determine was the purpose of these pumps? Cite evidence to support your assumptions. The Fresno area has been experiencing a severe drought over the last several years. Compare how people got water for bathing, washing clothes, cleaning, cooking, and drinking in 1878 and today. In your opinion would this make a difference in water usage and the drought conditions? Support your opinion with reasons using items in the exhibit.

### 3. Hotel Fresno Exhibit

- This was at one time among the grandest hotels in Fresno. It catered to the city's social elite and was the social center of Fresno.
- This particular exhibit has a variety of photos of Hotel Fresno in its heyday and includes exact replicas of items used in the hotel including:
  - Dinnerware and Flatware – Spoon, Plates, Teacups and Gravy Dishes
- NOTE: Upstairs in the Fresno County Historical Museum is an exquisite chandelier that at one time hung inside the historic Hotel Fresno

### 4. William Saroyan Exhibit

- This exhibit honors the famed Oscar- and Pulitzer-prize winning author, William Saroyan, who was an Armenian American whose family immigrated to Fresno.

- Saroyan wrote extensively about the Armenian immigrant life in California. Many of his stories and plays are set in his native Fresno. Some of his best-known works are *The Time of Your Life*, *My Name Is Aram* and *My Heart's in the Highlands*.
- The exhibit features a collection of 15 photos taken throughout William Saroyan's life.
- William Saroyan Statue graciously donated by Gregory Don Hunsucker and Linda Mae Balakian Hunsucker with the quote "I am no Armenian. I am no American. Well, the truth is I am both and neither. I love Armenia and I love America. And I belong to both, but I am only this: An inhabitant of the earth, and so are you, whoever you are." Inhale and Exhale (1936)

Write a paragraph describing in your own words what William Saroyan is saying in the passage from *Inhale and Exhale*, (1936)

Would you agree or disagree with his claim? How does it reflect who you are today?

#### 5. Clovis Radio Mural

- Mural by Claudia Fletcher (original painting) representing one of the most outstanding rodeos in the United States, the Clovis Rodeo, that was established in 1914

#### 6. Japanese American Citizens League Exhibit

- This exhibit honors the many Japanese American heroes and icons in the San Joaquin Valley that have made a positive impact on Fresno County. It also showcases the rich and diverse history of Japanese Americans and their culture.
- The exhibit includes storyboards dedicated to telling the story of the Japanese Immigration to California, Soldiers of WWII, Nisei Baseball, Satoshi "Fibber" Hirayama, Leaders in Law, Artists, Authors, Educators, Politicians and more.
- Various artifacts and photos are also part of the exhibit

#### 7. Racing Display

- This display honors the rich racing history of Fresno County, whether that was cars, motorcycles or cars racing against airplanes, an event that actually took place at the Fresno Fairgrounds in 1914 in which we had roughly 16 airplanes lined up inside the horseracing track. What a sight that was and we could only imagine trying to accomplish that today!
- Highlights of this area include:
  - 1914 Indian Motorcycle TT (Twin)
  - 1915 Harley Davidson Twin
  - Antique Board Racing Motorcycle from the early 1900s
  - Antique Farm Good Year Tires Sign
  - Antique Shell Sign
  - Gilmore Gasoline Clock
  - Antique Mobil Distributor Sign
  - Historical photos and memorabilia of racing from the early 1900s
  - A total of four antique gas pumps
  - Exact piece of granite that was once out at the Italian Entertainment Park known as the Kearny Bowl, which was once the location of the finest auto racing that ever took place in Fresno County. Granite is engraved with the names of those community members who purchased the property in 1928.
  - Antique trophies from those who raced at the Kearny Bowl – 1921

## 8. Veterans Exhibit

- No museum would be complete without a section dedicated to our Veterans; we are here because of them.
- This exhibit features the windows from the old Hammer Field, an airbase that was used by the United States Army Air Forces' Fourth Air Force during World War II. It was a training base specializing in night fighters and had three sub-bases and two gunnery ranges. Hammer Field also had an Army Air Forces regional hospital. Part of the airbase is now utilized by the California Air National Guard's 144th Fighter Wing (144 FW).
- Veterans Museum Memorial Sign from 1991
- The exhibit also features various memorabilia dedicated to United States Veterans and includes an old video of Hammer Field when it was in use during World War II.

## 9. Police and Sheriff's Department Exhibit

- Historical photo of Fresno's first-ever police department in 1901 taken by Pop Laval
- Historical photo of Fresno County's first-ever Sheriff James Walker in 1912
- Historical photo of Downtown Fresno Police Department's drunk tank in the 1940s with iron gate door pictured. The actual iron gate door from the Downtown Fresno Police Department's drunk tank is on display in this area.
- Fresno Police Department Motorcycle – a Harley Davidson Flat Head from 1955
- Other memorabilia includes historical photos as well as:
  - Badges and Helmets from both the Fresno Police Department and the Fresno County Sheriff's Department
  - Fresno County Sheriff's Department \$500 Reward Poster for Lew Cowan, wanted for murder, in 1916
  - Fresno Police Department Statistical Report from 1919
  - Fresno Police Department Photos from 1924
  - Resolution No. 5292 from the San Jose Police Department to the Fresno Police Department commending them for their courage in for apprehending Leo Saldovich, a vicious criminal, in 1931
  - Fresno Police Department Bulletin from 1942
  - Fresno Bee Newspaper with police sketches for the Police Plan Benefit Dance in 1945
  - Police Court Record/Ledger from 1886
  - Fresno Police Department Annual Magazine from 1951

## 10. Blackie Gejeian Exhibit

- Blackie Gejeian, born in Easton, California, would go on to be a famous racecar driver, racecar builder and hot rod enthusiast. Considered a racing "Industry Legend", Gejeian organized the Autorama, one of the largest custom car shows in North America, held annually in Fresno for more than 50 years. He was also a five-time NASCAR dirt track champion.
- This area is dedicated to Blackie's career and obvious love of racing complete with pictures of his car collections over the last 60 years, trophies and a replica of his 1926 Purple Hot Rod.

## 11. Fresno Athletic Hall of Fame Exhibit

- The 3-year partnership established with the Fresno Athletic Hall of Fame in 2015, provided the first permanent venue for them to display memorabilia from some of their 300 inductees for the public.
- Inductees include Major League Baseball player Frank LeRoy Chance; the late beloved coach Jerry Tarkanian; U.S. Olympic softball medalist Laura Berg; U.S. Olympic Wrestler Stephen Abas; National Football League player Trent Dilfer; former Fresno Mayor and 1936 silver Olympic discus champion Gordon “Slinger” Dunn; and one-time high jump world record holder Walter Marty.
- The exhibit features a timeline of famous Fresno Athletes from 1976 all the way until 2010 complete with detailed information on their accomplishments and accolades.
- Here are some of the featured items:
  - Automobile area showcasing Bill Vukovich’s 1950 red midget racecar.
  - 1969 Darryl Lamonica AFL MVP trophy
  - Jerry Tarkanian’s Naismith Hall of Fame Induction basketball
  - Laura Berg Olympic softball jersey
  - 1954 Fresno Rockets Amateur Softball Association World Championship plaque

## 12. 1914 Overland Display

- 4 Cylinder – 3 Speed, hand built, automobile donated by Bill Phillips (Fresno)
  - Only 3 of these cars are known to exist
  - Includes 1900s version of wheel clubs, which were used for safely locking parked cars

## 13. Shaver Flume Exhibit

- In 1893, Michigan lumbermen Charles B. Shaver and Lew P. Swift reorganized the lumber company under the name of Fresno Flume and Irrigation Company. John S. Eastwood, a young civil engineer, was hired to design a 42-mile V-shaped flume to run from the Shaver Mill to the new community of Clovis. The flume was completed in June 1894 and was constructed using nine million board feet of lumber at the cost of nearly \$200,000.
- This exhibit features a 10-foot piece of the Flume dating back to the 1800s donated by the Fresno Historical Society and Nick Ubick, which is one of the few existing sections that remain of the original flume.
- There are a variety of historical photos provided by the Fresno Historical Society, Pop Laval Foundation and the Dry Creek Museum in Clovis, showcasing how the flume was used to transport the nearly 200,000 board feet of lumber per day that floated down the flume, taking approximately six hours to reach the Clovis mill.

Consider the different artifacts in the flume display. If you were the supervisor in charge of seeing that the 200,000 board feet of lumber made it down the flume to the bottom without any delays, what would be several of your major concerns? What types of events could cause delays? What procedures could you put in place to avoid delays that cut into the profitability of the lumber company? Create a timeline or list the steps necessary to get lumber from the forest to market. Why is the flume a critical step?

- The exhibit also features hand-carved bears by popular artist
- Andrew Enzi positioned next to historical tree-saws and chains circa 1917

Why is appropriate to display the hand carved bears here? What is their habitat? Out of what materials are these bears created? What kinds of tools were used to create these bears? What other animals might be included in a similar display? Support your answer.

#### 14. World's Largest Sugar Pine

- An impressive slice of the World's Largest Sugar Pine Tree is on display, which is 11.5 feet in diameter (the widest ever recorded) and at one time stood 240 feet tall. Famed naturalist, John Muir was captured visiting this Sugar Pine Tree in 1900. The tree first started to fall ill and turn grey in September 2013 and ultimately fell a year later in October 2014.
- On the tree trunk there are plaques by each band providing a timeline of important historical events that happened each year. Those recorded events date back to 1492 when Christopher Columbus first discovered America.
- Also on exhibit are petrified trees rounds with estimated ages as old as 110,000 years old

Dendrochronology is the study of data from tree ring growth. Trees generally grow more during wetter growing seasons with favorable temperatures, forming wider rings. Narrow rings are caused by stressful periods such as droughts. So tree ring patterns can provide information about precipitation and other conditions during the time the tree was alive. Knowing this information, look at the rings on the tree. Locate the small plaque that marks Columbus' lifetime. Compare the growth rings every several inches. What generalizations can you make about weather patterns? Are the rings different widths? What does that tell you about climate conditions? Why would this data be important for scientists to know today? Locate the tree corkscrew dating back to the 1850s that was used to penetrate the large trees. Dynamite was placed in the hole created by the corkscrew. What would be the purpose of dynamiting a tree? What do you infer would be the purpose of this practice? What would be the pros and cons of this practice?

#### 15. Fresno Fire Department Display

- 1917 Sea Graves pumping unit
- Helmet from first appointed Fire Chief, James A. Ward, from 1902
- Historical photo of first appointed Fire Chief, James A. Ward, from 1902
- 1887 Hand Pumping Horse Carriage unit
- Fire box alarm used in the 1900's
- 1870's Bugle that was used to trumpet orders during emergency scenes
- Fire alarm tape system to alert firefighters of fires in Morris Code from 1920?
- Helmet worn by firefighter William Uren from 1902-1916
- Volunteer Fire Department Log from the 1900's
- Leather helmet shields from the 1900's with 4 Volume 1, 2, and 3 badges
- Firefighter suit from 1928
- Belts worn by Firefighter Volunteers in the 1870's
- Certificate of Affiliation from the International Association of Fire Fighters dated May 13, 1943

### **SECOND FLOOR – FRESNO COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

#### 16. J.E. O'Neill Mural

- Mural of J.E. O'Neill herding cattle on the Booth Ranch located in Orange Cove painted by famous artist Angelo Lanzini
- During Lanzini's lifetime, this artist traveled throughout the world painting chapels, churches, theaters and murals just like this one
  - In 1961, he was even commissioned by the Vatican to create a portrait of Pope John XXIII.
- Today, the J.E. O'Neill mural is valued between \$30,000 - \$50,000
- There is also a life-size picture of O'Neill on the door across the hall from his mural

### 17. Reo Gillette Display

- Born in Oakland, CA on Sept. 23, 1898, Rio Gillette began sketching at age 19 while hospitalized with an illness. By 1924 he had settled in Fresno, CA where he produced artwork for local theaters as well as major Hollywood motion pictures until 1935.
- The exhibit displays more than 10 original, full color movie posters sketched by Gillette from 1924 – 1935. There is also a collection of 14 of his black and white posters, also referred to as the “pen and ink” collection for the newspapers on Hollywood movies.
- An incredible chandelier from 1914 that once hung inside the famed Fresno Hotel displays the collections.

### 18. White Theatre Chandeliers

- There are 5 chandeliers from 1905 taken from the historic White Theatre in Downtown Fresno. White Theatre was not only a movie and theatre house, but it was the first building in Fresno to ever have air conditioning

### 19. Fresno Courthouse Display

- Restored Fresno Courthouse Cupola constructed in 1875 sits on the south side of the Paul Paul Theater
  - It was removed from the courthouse in 1966
- Complete furnishing of original California Superior Court 1 of Fresno that is over 100 years old
- Hand carved wood chairs
- Historical photos showcasing the timeline of the Fresno Courthouse and the Cupola
- Goddesses of Justice photographed on roofline of Fresno Courthouse, as well as two of the three original statues of the Goddesses of Justice from 1966
- Original Iron Post from bottom of Fresno Courthouse, weighing between 500-600 pounds
- Iconic 1895 Boy with the Leaky Boot statue, originally placed in front of the Fresno Courthouse
- Original hand-carved Clerk’s wooden desk complete with typewriter and letters from the Clerk from 1889 that were found in the drawer when the desk was moved to the Fresno County Historical Museum
- Original Superior Court 1 law books
- Mural of historic Fresno Courthouse by Mike Collier

Looking at the picture mural on the wall, follow the progression from the courthouse at Millerton in the first picture to the present day courthouse in the last picture. What words would you use to describe the Millerton courthouse? Compare it with the building from 1875. Describe the changes in the two buildings, and you're your opinion for the changes. In 1966, a new courthouse was built. Look at the last picture on the wall. This building looks very different from the previous courthouse. There was a controversy over repairing the old courthouse or replacing it with the new one. State your opinion on which building you prefer. Give reasons for your opinion. This is an actual room from the courthouse. What can you infer about the placement of the judge’s chair? Can you picture yourself in this display? What role would you be best suited to perform? (Judge, jury, prosecution or district attorney, defense attorney or defendant) Is each role equally important, or is one role more critical than the others? Why? Notice the statues of the Goddesses of Justice. Some similar statues have a blindfold. Should the Goddess of Justice have one? What would be the significance of the blindfold, the scales, and the sword?

## 20. Mars Drive-In Exhibit

- This exhibit truly takes people back to some incredibly fond and fun memories of Fresno.
- The exhibit showcases a photo of red 1957 Cadillac, which was always pictured in advertisements and logos of the Mars Drive-In
- The front of a 1957 Cadillac with restored the chrome and custom seating that features the 1940s “Battlin’ Bulldogs” Fresno State logo
- Original travertine sign from the front door of the Mars Drive-In building with inlayed brass on concrete
- The first-ever menu from the Mars Drive-In from owner Charlie Jensen showcasing original pricing of items like hamburgers, costing 25 cents

Just for fun: How much money would you have needed to buy lunch at the Mars Drive-In? How much do you need today to buy lunch?

- Just outside the doors sits the actual 1947 Mars Drive-in neon sign, which is now resting at the back of the Paul Paul Theater

## 21. Fresno County Farm Bureau Display

- Fresno scraper picture 1891
- First trainload of wine produced and sold by Fresno County pictured in 1891
- Historic Mule Train photos picturing the mule trains that pulled all of the grapes

Grapes are one of the major crops grown in the Fresno Area. What are three uses for grapes? (table grapes, wine, raisins, juice) Why are raisins laid out on brown papers on the floor? Grapes are laid out to dry in the fields, what might be problems the farmers would face? Think of the labor involved in September, picking the grapes, putting them on the papers in the fields, wrapping them up, turning them over, picking them up and putting them into the wooden boxes on display to send to the processing plant. Would you want to work in the fields doing these jobs? Justify your answer. Where was the world’s biggest raisin processing plant? Is it still there today? Cite your evidence from the display. Why was the facility located southeast of Fresno? In the Sun-Maid processing facility in downtown Fresno, the raisins followed a path through the floors of the facility. In an eight-hour day, 600 tons of seeded raisins could move through the plant. Describe the path that a raisin took. Why was this path the most efficient way to prepare the raisins for market? How did the raisins get to worldwide markets? Today, where are raisins processed? Next time you are in the grocery store, stop and look for Sun Maid raisins. How would buying a box help support agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley?

## 22. President’s Wall

- Wall showcasing photos of all United States Presidents who have come to Fresno to join in the celebration of Agriculture over the past 150 years, including:

Herbert Hoover	Harry Truman
Dwight Eisenhower	John F. Kennedy
Lyndon Johnson	Richard Nixon
Gerald Ford	Jimmy Carter
Ronald Reagan	George H.W. Bush
Bill Clinton	George W. Bush
Barack Obama	

How many of these presidents can you match with the pictures on the wall? Considering the list, what can you infer about Fresno agriculture?



### 23. California Chrome Display

- Display of the first-ever Fresno County born, bred and fed horse to win the Kentucky Derby in 2014, California Chrome who has bred and raised at Harris Farms in Coalinga, CA.
- In this display are the following:
  - Blinkers signed and autographed by Jockey Victor Espinoza
  - Original painting of pasture at Harris Farms by artist Pat Hunter, where California Chrome was born
  - Replica of California Chrome's head done by local artist Debbie Stevenson.
  - Picture collage signed by owners and trainers of California Chrome

### 24. Wonder Valley Ranch Display

- Wonder Valley Ranch Resort is located in a scenic Sierra foothills valley outside of Fresno.
- This display celebrating one of the first ever California Dude ranches in 1912
- Displays historical story of the Pioneers
- Rietta, a Mexican Cowboy rope, dating back to 1880s
- Rocks that were used in grinding stones to crush acorns in 1880s; this was part of the daily ritual of live for the Yokut Indian Tribe that made Wonder Valley their home in the 1800s

### 25. Wells Fargo Display

- Original, leather Wells Fargo U.S. Mail Bag from 1873

### 26. Armenian Exhibit

- This exhibit showcases Armenian Americans and events that have made an impact in Fresno County. The featured individuals and event include:
  - Armenian Genocide
  - William Saroyan
  - Cher
  - George Deukmejian
  - Alvin & The Chipmunks and many others

As you can see there are many other wonderful displays in the museum.

We hope that you will take the time to enjoy them all. They give the students a feel for Fresno's past.