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Entertaining servicemen during WWII

SPRING, 2017 VOLUME LV, NO. 1

Unmentionable

The Indiscreet Stories of Artifacts





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HAHS!

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

I was recently asked about the Historical Society's operational priorities for the year and three came quickly to mind, a little initialism, not quite an acronym for areas of improvement: Three "M"s. Marketing, Membership and Money.

An upcoming issue of the San Francisco Business Times will feature the City of Hayward and include a short article and photos of the Museum of History and Culture. Whatever amount of traffic the Museum can generate through social media and the press, an equal measure of conversation about our archival and school-oriented resources and community-curated exhibitions multiplies the depth and sincerity of every person's experience.

385 individuals signed the official Charter Roll for the newly formed Hayward Area Historical Society and on February 28, 1957, 259 members assembled at Eden Congregation Church for the first formal program of the organization, a local history lecture by John Sandoval. 60 years later, membership hovers around 468 adults and families while more than 1,600 Facebook, Twitter, Instagram followers and 2,500 eNews readers connected with us in 2016. One would expect many more card carrying members. Converting our digital friends to dues paying and occasional visitors is point of pride for staff and volunteers.

Alden Oliver was "a certain type of pioneer," according to his nephew Gordon Oliver. The last of a breed of salt farmers, Oliver's bequest in the early 1990s enabled the Historical Society to hire its first director, add professional staff, take on the work of preserving and interpreting the historical and cultural hallmarks of our corner of the Bay, and in the last few years buying and expanding HAHS's physical presence along Foothill Boulevard. To date, the Museum and its outposts—McConaghy House, Meek Mansion and San Lorenzo Pioneer Cemetery—have logged 62,978 visitors since June 2014. Inversely, the costs of outreach to the community; classroom visits; local and regional partnerships; curated exhibitions and public programs draws more from reserves than deposits and donations. Future successes will depend upon some real and substantial grants and fundraising.

I wear progressive lenses. Mine are true "multifocal" lenses that provide a seamless progression of many lens powers for all viewing distances. What lies ahead for HAHS—far off, intermediate and near term—will require focus. Share what you love about HAHS. Renew and encourage new members to join. Give what you can when you can. I have.

—AT Stephens, *Executive Director*



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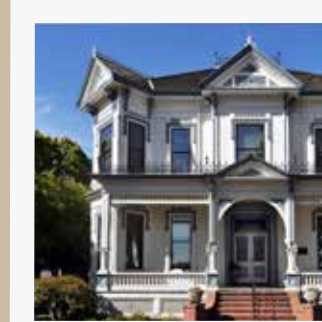
Dillon Harrison
Visitor Services Assistant



HAHS MUSEUM OF HISTORY & CULTURE

Historical and cultural exhibits and events plus a children's gallery, museum store, and cafe! Open Wed - Sun, 10AM - 4PM.

22380 FOOTHILL BOULEVARD, HAYWARD



McCONAGHY HOUSE

A lovingly preserved 1888 Eastlake style Victorian. School tours available. Open the first weekend of the month, 11AM-4PM.

Tours at the top of the hour, last tour at 3PM.

18701 HESPERIAN BOULEVARD, HAYWARD



MEEK MANSION

Built in 1869 by William Meek. Located on nearly 10 acres. Currently undergoing restoration. See web site for open times and tours.

17365 BOSTON ROAD, HAYWARD



SAN LORENZO PIONEER CEMETERY

Final resting place of over 2000 residents from politicians to paupers and Hayward area pioneers. Open on the second Saturday of the month, May through September, 10AM-2PM.

HESPERIAN BLVD. & COLLEGE STREET
SAN LORENZO

Spring **EVENTS & PROGRAMS @ HAHS**



22380 FOOTHILL BOULEVARD, HAYWARD

Toddler Time – Art is Education

THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 10:30 – 11:30 AM
Free with Museum Admission

Celebrate the creativity of the little ones around you by joining us for stories and crafts. For more information about Toddler Time, see page 13.



**SATURDAY
MARCH 11**

It's a perfect opportunity to check out the student art exhibition, *Identity*, featuring artwork by students in the Hayward Unified School District.



There's a lot going on at HAHS! Keep this section handy and join us for all the fun!



22380 FOOTHILL BOULEVARD, HAYWARD

History for Half Pints – Earth Day

SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Free with Museum Admission

Our planet is truly a magnificent place with vibrant ecosystems that support all forms of life. Join us in celebrating Earth Day by designing your own reusable bag, making a nature journal, and learning new ways we can respect our planet.

CA-15 Congressional Art Competition Exhibition and Award Ceremony

SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2017
2:00 – 3:00 PM

Each spring, the Congressional Institute sponsors a nationwide high school visual art competition to recognize and encourage artistic talent in the nation and in each congressional district. Since the Artistic Discovery competition began in 1982, more than 650,000 high school students have participated. Students submit entries to their representative's office, and panels of district artists select the winning entries. Winners are recognized both in their district and at an annual awards ceremony in Washington, DC. The winning works are displayed for one year at the U.S. Capitol. To participate, artwork must be submitted to Congressman Swalwell's District Office (3615 Castro Valley Blvd in Castro Valley) no later than 5:00 PM on Friday, April 21, 2017. For additional information on the competition and the 2017 student guidelines visit www.house.gov/content/educate/art_competition.

Third Annual Student Film Festival

THURSDAY, MAY 4, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Free Admission

Join us for the Third Annual Hayward Film Festival, featuring student films in the categories of Animation, Documentary, Experiments, Narrative, and Public Service Announcement. In collaboration with the Community MultiMedia Academy (CMMA) at Tennyson High School and Bay Area Digital Arts (BADA) at San Lorenzo High School. For information on the film festival and submitting work, see page {number}.



History for Half Pints: Art is Education

SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Free with Museum Admission

Bring the whole family down to the Museum to celebrate National Arts Education Month. Join us for arts and crafts where you can let your imagination run wild.

Toddler Time – Trees

THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 10:30 – 11:30AM
Free with Museum Admission

What's that tree? This Toddler Time explores the trees that surround us here in the Hayward area through stories, crafts, and activities.

SAVE THE DATE! 2017 History Awards

SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 5:00 PM

Save the Date! Join us as we honor the 2017 awardees in areas of longevity, historic preservation, and community service. Tickets available soon.



Toddler Time – Bears

THURSDAY, MAY 11, 10:30 – 11:30AM
Free with Museum Admission

Bears have long been a prominent symbol in California, just look to the state flag. Join us for crafts, stories and activities focused on these beautiful creatures.

Speaking for Ourselves: A Panel of Your Muslim Neighbors

SATURDAY, MAY 27, 2:00 – 4:00 PM
Free Admission

Fear has become toxic towards the stereotyping and marginalization of your Muslim-American neighbors. Hear from five practicing Muslims about being Muslim in America, Islamophobia, the challenges of ISIS, and how we can be better neighbors and friends in our community.



Spring EVENTS & PROGRAMS @ HAHS



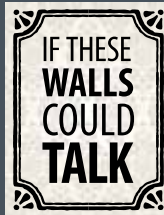
18701 HESPERIAN BLVD, HAYWARD



Spanish Tours at McConaghy House

SUNDAY, MARCH 5, TOURS AT 11:30AM & 1:30PM
\$5 General Admission, \$3 Seniors and Students,
Free for HAHS Members

Spanish tours of McConaghy House will now be offered on a quarterly basis. Please visit haywardareahistory.org/calendar/ for upcoming dates.



Join us monthly for these interesting and informative presentations on the history of the McConaghy House!

A Scots-Irish Immigration Tale

SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 9:00 AM
\$15 General Admission, \$10 HAHS Members, Seniors and Students

Learn the McConaghy family's immigration story: the happenings of their home countries causing them to leave, what we know of their immigration, and how their story relates to the American Dream. Proceeds support maintenance and preservation of McConaghy House.

Spring Cleaning: The Changing Role of Women and Technology

SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 9:00 AM
\$15 General Admission, \$10 HAHS Members, Seniors and Students

Did advances in technology really lighten the workload for women? Examine the changes in cleaning methods, technology and convenience that shaped women's daily lives from 1880 to 1940. Proceeds support maintenance and preservation of McConaghy House.

From Wood to Wool: An Architectural Tour

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 9:00 AM
\$15 General Admission, \$10 HAHS Members, Seniors and Students

Delve into the architectural styles and materials that make up McConaghy House and learn what makes this property unique. Proceeds support maintenance and preservation of McConaghy House.

Tickets must be purchased in advance and are available at www.haywardareahistory.org or by calling (510) 581-0223.

There's a lot going on at HAHS! Keep this section handy and join us for all the fun!



17365 BOSTON ROAD, HAYWARD



Meek Mansion Open House

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Free Admission

Enjoy a look inside the beautiful Meek Mansion.

Marble and Molding: An Architecture Tour

SATURDAY, MAY 6, 10:00 AM
\$15 General Admission, \$10 HAHS Members, Seniors and Students

An excellent way to learn about Victorian craftsmanship! Examine Meek Mansion's exterior and interior features, focusing on details such as columns, fireplaces and decorative plaster. Proceeds support maintenance and preservation of Meek Mansion. Tickets must be purchased in advance and are available at www.haywardareahistory.org or by calling (510) 581-0223.

Public Paranormal Investigation

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 7:00 PM – 3:00 AM
\$75 General Admission

Try your hand at discovering the paranormal at Meek Mansion! Explore alongside experienced paranormal investigators and learn the various tools and techniques associated with ghost hunting. Bring your own equipment if you like. Proceeds support the preservation and restoration of the \$15 General Admission, \$10 HAHS Members, Seniors and Students



HESPERIAN BLVD. & COLLEGE STREET, SAN LORENZO

Cemetery Clean Up

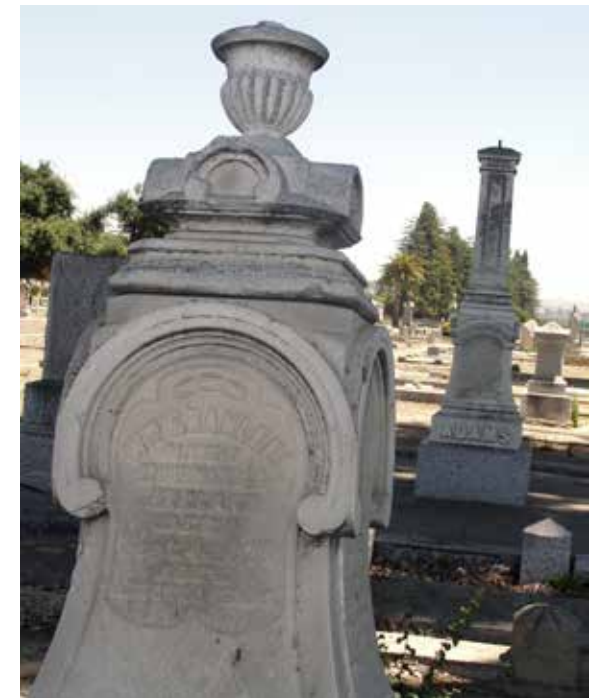
SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Volunteer Opportunity

HAHS and the Friends of the San Lorenzo Pioneer Cemetery need your help in cleaning up our beloved cemetery! Bring gloves and rakes. Water and light snacks will be provided.

Burials of Note: Part I

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 9:00 AM
\$15 General Admission, \$10 HAHS Members, Seniors, and Students

Dig deeper into local history with a guided tour of the San Lorenzo Pioneer Cemetery and learn new information about our local pioneers. Tickets must be purchased in advance. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.haywardareahistory.org or call (510) 581-0223. Proceeds support maintenance and preservation of the property.





HAHS Community Gallery

Identity

March 11 - April 16

This art show engages with race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, politics, world view, personality, individual characteristics, what we have in common, and how we differ. Students from Tennyson, Mt. Eden, and Hayward High schools express their view of Identity; how they see themselves and how they relate to the world. In conjunction with Art is Education Month.

HAHS Community Gallery

75 Years of Women's Empowerment

Celebrating AAUW's Contributions to the Bay Area

May 13 through July 2

For over 75 years, the Hayward/Castro Valley Branch of AAUW (American Association of University Women) has been dedicated to the growth and importance of education, equality, and community for Bay Area women. HAHS is proud to host the exhibition, "75 Years of Women's Empowerment," guest curated by members of the Hayward/Castro Valley Branch, to celebrate this milestone. The exhibit showcases vintage photos, letters, articles, clothing and other items that have never been displayed before. We invite you to come meet the local AAUW members, learn about their rich history, long standing community outreach efforts, and the bright future ahead for AAUW.

Above Left: Poster from Mr. Gurley's Class

Above Right: Early meeting of AAUW members

Collections Corner

By **Gretta Stimson**
Collections and Historic Properties Assistant



Exciting news! The Hayward Area Historical Society is one step closer to bringing the historic Meek Mansion back to life. This is thanks to a generous donation of original furniture from the Meek Family.

The furniture comes to us from Steve and Karen Meek, who continue to operate the family farm in Woodland, California. There are no images of the furniture in the house from before, but some of the mahogany

pieces bear gold border designs that closely resemble the wooden inlay in the corners of some rooms in the mansion. William Meek built the house in 1869. This furniture would have belonged to Harold Meek, William's great grandson who lived the house from 1910 to the 1940.

We know that several pieces of furniture were passed down from one generation to the next. The pieces in this donation moved to Knight's Landing when Harold chose to retain land there and sell the Hayward Mansion. Harold would then move to Woodland a few years later and begin the farm that is still operating today. Steve Meek, Harold's grandson, told us how, after Harold's death, his belongings were divided in the will between Harold's children and step child. The furniture that the family donated to the HAHS were pieces passed down through the step child's line and left to the Meek's in a will.

The Hayward Area Historical Society is in a unique position. Not only do we have a wonderful museum, we also manage three historic properties: Meek Mansion, McConaghy House and the San Lorenzo Pioneer Cemetery. In many ways, the properties are the largest objects in the HAHS collection. Therefore the Collections and Historic Properties department is tasked with facilitating maintenance and restoration; little by little we see ourselves moving forward. This steady progress would not be possible without the active support of family members and donations of community members like you.



Top: Upholstered love seat, Above: Coal Box, Right : End table.



Unmentionable

The Indiscreet Stories of Artifacts

By Diane Curry, Curator

“People have a right to be shocked, the mention of unmentionable things is a kind of participation in them.”

—Logan Pearsall Smith

We don't use the term “unmentionable” too much in this day and age. It seems like people are less prone to being shocked by things and there are few subjects that are considered “unsuitable for conversation.” Of course, there are topics that we would prefer not to talk about, but you're probably not going to be kicked out of the car if you bring up one of those topics on a long drive.

• • •

In a museum setting, those once “unmentionable” topics are connected to physical objects that illustrate a moment in time, or a social movement, or a person, or a place. While many subjects are no longer shocking per se, seeing the object that represents that story can be uncomfortable to look at. It can also be difficult for a museum to figure out when to display that item and how to tell its story.

And that's what *Unmentionable: The Indiscreet Stories of Artifacts* is all about. The unusual, icky, scandalous, disturbing, awful, uncomfortable and surprising artifacts in the HAHS collection all in one place.

Some of the artifacts are difficult to look at while others represent an idea or moment in time that is hard to comprehend in relation to our modern society and modern thinking.

A few artifacts we haven't displayed because the item represents or illustrates a controversial moment in history. Some artifacts have been displayed before, because they're cool looking or relate to a certain period, but the story of the artifact itself—what it is, what it was used for, who owned it—wasn't fully explored because that story was not necessarily a pleasant one.

Other items may not seem so scandalous now but were at one time because they are the type of item that was not generally discussed in “polite” society. There are artifacts that are commonplace, things we've all seen before, but don't really think about what the item is for or how it was used.

The exhibition highlights not only the stuff we don't talk about but gives a peek behind the curtain of museum collections and practices. Just because an artifact could be considered scandalous, outrageous, gross, unseemly, odd, disturbing, controversial or unimportant by some doesn't mean we shouldn't collect it. Those artifacts could and will become important to future generations to understand what a place, a people, a person, or eras were like. Those items are carefully cared for to the best of our abilities, but sometimes even our best can't entirely protect artifacts.

Curiosity peaked yet? I hope so. And I hope you'll come down to the Museum to explore the indiscreet stories of these curious artifacts!

un·men·tion·able

[uhn-men-shuh-nuh-buhl]

adj: unsuitable
or improper
as a subject of
conversation

• • •

CABINET *of* CURIOSITIES

Our modern museums derive from a 16th century hobby of the wealthy called the Cabinet of Curiosities or Wunderkammer (sometimes referred to as Cabinet of Wonders or Wonder Rooms). These were rooms, not necessarily cabinets, where collections of often disparate items were displayed. Most often they were antiquities or items considered to be of scientific value by their collector. They could also be whatever the “curator” or collector was interested in.

These artifacts were shown side by side in display cases. The items did not necessarily obviously relate to one another other than fitting into some criteria created by the curator. They were not open to the public for the most part but special places for the collector and a small group of like-minded friends to visit.

From this somewhat random display of artifacts came the modern history museum. But the idea of a “cabinet of curiosities”- of displaying objects that don't obviously connect to each other but fit together to illustrate an idea dreamed up by the Curator—is the inspiration behind *Unmentionable*.

Staff Spotlight: Tiffany Ramoneda

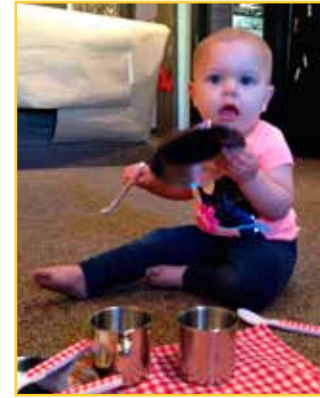


As the **Visitor Services Manager** for HAHS, I bring in new merchandise for the museum store, ensure that our patrons have everything they need to enjoy their stroll through the galleries, and I also manage our event rentals. A typical day can involve counting store inventory, ordering new inventory, and meeting with potential rental clients. I recently ordered some scented soaps and am really excited about creating a new display and getting them on the shelves for our patrons to enjoy. Part of my job is also merchandising, so don't be surprised if you come in and the store displays look a little different each time. I'll be bringing in new stuff all the time so if there is anything you would like to see in the store, please let me know!

Managing the event rentals means I show potential clients the different spaces that we have available and discuss what they would be renting it for, when, and how many people they expect to have. Some of our spaces allow for larger gatherings than others so knowing how many people they expect is important. I also work with our caterer to help ensure that our rental clients' needs are met. This means that when there is an event, I am here from beginning to end to help set up and clean up tables and ensure that the event itself goes smoothly.

A little about me: I am currently a student with Arizona State through their online program—go Sun Devils! I am in ASU's Religious Studies and Cultural Anthropology programs. I also have 15 years of retail experience and spent most of those years working/managing a small independent bookstore.

New Program: Toddler Time!



It is said that children are the future. They will be creating and shaping the nations of tomorrow; leading and taking actions that will make an impact on the world around them. That being said, isn't it our responsibility to start them off right by encouraging them to learn about the world and set them up with the tools they need to succeed?

The Hayward Area Historical Society is launching a new monthly program series to help provide those tools to that younger generation. Debuting this year, Toddler Time was developed to bring together young children and their caregivers to enjoy stories, songs, and arts and crafts activities. The main idea is to not only build a community but also to assist in advancing the language and motor skills of our tiny attendees. We hope you join us!

Toddler Time will be held in the Children's Gallery at the Museum of History & Culture on the second Thursday of each month (excluding January) from 10:30 to 11:30 AM. These programs are free with Museum Admission. Toddler Time crafts and activities are designed with children aged 0 to 5 years in mind, but older siblings are always welcome.

For more information call 510-581-0223 or email education@haywardareahistory.org

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Third Annual Hayward Film Festival

Launched in 2015 by the Community MultiMedia Academy (CMMA) in collaboration with the Hayward Area Historical Society and the Bay Area Digital Arts (BADA), the Hayward Film Festival is designed to give students the opportunity to tell their stories, develop their creativity, and further introduce them to the world of filmmaking.

Young filmmakers may submit films for the following categories: Animation, Documentary, Experimental, Narrative, and PSA (Public Service Announcement). In past festivals, we've shared laughs, shed tears, and celebrated experiences. Focused on bringing attention to the East Bay, the Hayward Film Festival is dedicated to the future storytellers within and surrounding the city of Hayward. Join us for our next festival showcase this spring and get to know the "Heart of the Bay."

Submissions for the Third Annual Student Film Festival will open on January 26 at 12:00 PM and close Thursday, April 6 at midnight.

To learn more visit haywardareahistory.org/haywardfilmfestival.



Hayward's Hospitality House

by John Christian, Associate Archivist



At the height of the Second World War, Hayward saw a massive increase in the number of servicemen passing through the area. Thousands of men were being funneled to various military installations around the Bay Area.

In March 1942, the Hayward Branch of the United Service Organizations (USO) was created to help entertain and boost the morale of troops stationed throughout the area. The goal of the organization was to raise money for dances and other events. The organization got off to a slow start, not quite reaching its goal of \$5,000 (about \$75,000 dollars today).

A major problem was that Hayward's USO had no permanent space to hold its events and coordinate its volunteers. That all changed however just a year later in March of 1943. With the help of Hayward's mayor Don Leidig, local businessman Milt Dohner, and the Hayward Lion's Club, the Hayward USO secured the Veteran's Memorial Building on Main Street

as the official home for the organization. Within days, plans were underway to hold multiple events at the newly crowned Hayward Hospitality House.

Throughout 1943 and 1944, the Hayward Hospitality House held weekly events for servicemen. These performances included hula dancers, radio DJ's as well as various dance and comedy tropes. The Camp Parks band from nearby Dublin was a regular house band. Seasonal Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas events were also hosted at the building. Other more serious events were held, such as Pearl Harbor commemoration.

The USO was operated by volunteers made of mostly women. A 1943 newspaper editorial praised Hayward area women for their work. These ladies ensured that events were financed, staffed and promoted. By the end of 1943, the USO was entertaining as many as 12,000 a month. The population of Hayward was only about 7,000 at the time. So many were coming to Hayward that at the start of 1944, signs had to be placed around town to guide servicemen to the Hayward Hospitality House they had heard so much about.

The high point for the Hayward USO came in November 1944. A Lion's Club sponsored event, drew 1,300 servicemen. The event set the record for the largest one-night crowd. In March 1945 the Hayward USO celebrated its third birthday—only a few months later the war would end. In September 1945, it was announced that the Hayward Hospitality House would be closed and the Veteran's Hall returned to the Veteran's groups. The closure was deemed necessary so that Veteran's groups could accommodate the influx of returning servicemen.



In October the USO conducted one last program to commemorate its work. The program featured a huge volunteer recognition party. More than 1,000 volunteers were recognized in all. The *Hayward Journal* neatly summarized the accomplishments of the USO in Hayward: 30 months of service, half a million servicemen hosted, and a total of 270,000 volunteer hours donated.

Next time to you drive past the Veteran's Memorial Building take a moment to imagine, almost 75 years ago, the 1,300 service members lined up around the block, anxiously waiting for their turn on the dance floor.



Above: A group poses for the camera at the Hayward Hospitality Hall, August 22, 1945. Vera Costa is second from the right.

Right: A sailor listens to a "Mrs. Elrod" play the harp at the Hospitality Hall, c. 1944.

Left: The Camp Parks "Seabees" provided the soundtrack for many dances between 1943 and 1945 for USO visitors.





HAYWARD
AREA
HISTORICAL
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JOIN US FOR THE
2017
HISTORY AWARDS

SATURDAY, APRIL 22
5:00 PM

HAHS MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND CULTURE