This December, Friends of Banning Museum turns 45.

Founded by Phineas Banning’s great-granddaughter, Nancy Banning Call, the Friends group was originally established in 1974 as the tax exempt, non-profit corporation, The Friends of Banning Park. In an early memo to Banning family members, Mrs. Call writes,

“As the focal point for a lasting historical perspective, the Residence has yet to fulfill its inherited potential. Once fully restored the Residence will serve as a regional center for educational and cultural programs capturing both the “feel and facts” of one of the most colorful and exciting periods in our nation’s history.”

Before the establishment of the Friends, much groundwork needed to be laid for Mrs. Call’s vision for the Museum to be realized. On Oct. 1, 1970, the Department of Recreation and Parks convened the first meeting of the Banning Residence Community Advisory Council for planning and development of the house and grounds. By the end of 1972, recommendations were made and approved by the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners with a budget of $133,000 allocated by the City of Los Angeles for the structural restoration of the Residence. Los Angeles Mayor at the time, Tom Bradley, wrote to Mrs. Call,

“I share with you your goal of developing Banning Manor to achieve its full potential as an historical monument and I am truly grateful for your leadership in raising funds from the private sector towards this end.”

Plans for the complete structural and interior restoration of the Banning Residence were carefully advanced over the next two years. With the City contributing the funds necessary to complete the structural improvements, it was now up to the Friends to raise the estimated $161,000 needed to do the interior restorations including wallpapers, curtains, furniture, upholstering and acquisition of decorative items. Mrs. Call was up to the task. She worked with a local law firm to form Friends of Banning Park and set upon developing the first system of Friends membership to raise the private, tax-deductible funds needed.

Today, 45 years later, Friends of Banning Museum takes great pride in making sure that Mrs. Call’s vision for the Museum and the Friends’ role in ensuring its longevity and relevance to society is considered in everything we do. Our educational programs for schoolchildren, lectures and special events for the general public, docent-guided tours, special exhibits, period appropriate acquisitions, as well as furnishings restoration, demonstrate our unwavering commitment to our founding mission to support the Banning Museum to our best ability now and always. For over four decades, it has been the members of Friends of Banning Museum who have sustained the organization. Without our members none of what we do would be possible.
LA FLEET WEEK

Comes to the Banning

US Navy Sailors visiting during LA Fleet Week enjoyed food, drinks, and tours of the Museum during the Wilmington Community Welcome Reception held on a beautiful summer’s evening in late August. All those attending were treated to music provided by the amazing Navy Band. It’s always our pleasure to host this incredible event sponsored by the Port of Los Angeles and the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce.

FALL INTO LITERACY FAIR

Brings Hundreds of Local Families to the Museum

On September 28, the Banning Museum was the site of the United Way’s 9th Annual Fall Into Literacy Fair. The incomparable Banning High School Band kicked off the festivities with scores of exhibitors, including booksellers and community service providers filling the Banning grounds. The fair has always been about bringing the community together, sharing resources and having some fun at the historic home of the city’s founder. To the delight of many children, Friends of Banning Museum volunteers had lots of Banning Museum goodies to give out including rulers, pencils and enrichment booklets with interactive activities to learn more about Phineas Banning.

Bus Grants Make It Possible For More Schoolchildren to Visit the Museum

For the first time, Friends of Banning Museum with the support of Valero and Marathon will offer bus grants worth $500 to schools with limited financial resources to visit the Museum and participate in our 3rd and 4th grade educational programs. Schools eligible for the program must have Title 1 designation and not have visited the Museum within the last two years. This will enable students who may not have otherwise had the opportunity to visit, a chance to come and learn the amazing story of Phineas Banning and his impact on the development of Los Angeles and the Harbor.

Record Number of Guests Attend

11th Annual Phineas Banning Birthday Celebration

On August 17, over 350 guests filled the front lawn of the Museum in celebration of the General’s birthday. Looking to change things up from year’s past, we changed the format from a country western theme to one of Fiesta with a Mariachi band, Mariachi Ambiente, a local Ballet Folklorico dance troupe, Las Peritas and delicious Mexican fare provided by Monarca’s Restaurant. Our Phineas Banning Entrepreneurial Spirit Award winner, Kaj Palsson delighted guests by sharing with great humor the similarities between him and Mr. Banning. Thank you to all who joined us for this special evening!

THANK YOU TO OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS

Rosalie Manzo, Lori Roberts, Lorraine Gilbert and Helen Phillips for working the Friends booth!
First exhibited in October of 2012, the residence will once again look as it might have during the period following the death of General Banning in early March of 1885. The Banning Residence will be dressed in traditional Victorian Mourning fashion. Visitors will learn how Victorian society was bound and structured by elaborate rules of etiquette when it came to mourning the loss of family members. Highlighting the exhibit is an exact replica of a late 20th century casket in the Parlor.

We are so excited to share with you that through your generous support we were able to purchase ten new mannequins, three children, three males and four females. You may recall that we were in desperate need of the new conservation forms to protect and preserve our irreplaceable textile collection. The new mannequins will be dressed for Christmas and placed throughout the house. Seen here are volunteers and Textile Committee members, Janet Akman and Marsha Kelly dressing one of the female forms in a priceless late 1890s gown. Thank you for making this possible!

The Mannequins Cost an Arm and a Leg, But With Your Help We Got ‘Em!
KEEPING HISTORY ALIVE LECTURE SERIES:

VICTORIAN MOURNING LECTURE
October 26, 2019, 10:00am (Stagecoach Barn)

Come join us as we explore the social practices, superstitions, mourning attire, jewelry and rituals practiced by the American people during the Victorian Era. This lecture, presented by expert in Victorian mourning traditions and artifacts, Kathy Ralston, will include a walk-thru of the Museum’s Victorian Mourning Exhibition. There will be a question and answer period after the lecture. The lecture is free for FBM Members. General admission is $5.00.

KEEPING HISTORY ALIVE LECTURE SERIES:
IRON HIGHWAY THAT UNIFIED OUR COUNTRY
November 16, 2019, 10:00am (Stagecoach Barn)

Please join us while we learn about the 150th anniversary of when the “Golden Spike” was driven at Promontory Point, Utah and how the Transcontinental Railroad affected Los Angeles and our Nation. This lecture will be presented by Jay Kelly, a lifelong railroad enthusiast. There will be a question and answer period after the lecture. The lecture is free for FBM Members. General admission is $5.00.

VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION
December 7, 2019, 11:00am-4:00pm

The Banning Museum and grounds will be transformed into a Christmas festival featuring Victorian period entertainment, self-guided tours of the Museum, refreshments, children’s craft project, local food and craft vendors, blacksmith, a visit from jolly St. Nick himself and much more. One of the highlights of the festivities is a horse-drawn trolley ride between The Banning Museum and Drum Barracks Civil War Museum, also in Wilmington. FREE community event.

15TH ANNUAL VALENTINE’S TEA & TUNES LUNCHEON
February 8, 2020, 1:00pm-3:00pm (Stagecoach Barn)

Please join us in celebrating Valentine’s Day in our beautiful Stagecoach Barn. You will enjoy an elegant luncheon with lovely fine china tea sets and a special selection of teas, along with live music and complimentary tours of the Museum. Don’t forget to don your hats, gloves and finery as there will be a hat contest with prize. Reservations are required and space is limited. This event sells out very quickly so make your reservations NOW by calling (310) 548-2005. $65.00 for FBM members, $75.00 non-members.

WISTERIA REGALE:
“THE TIME MACHINE”
March 28, 2020, 5:00pm
(Museum, Grounds & Stagecoach Barn)

Wisteria Regale is the Friends of Banning Museum’s annual fundraiser. Travel back in time with us through the eyes of H.G. Wells. Wisteria Regale includes silent auction, elegant dinner, hosted bar, live entertainment and the Wisteria Scholarship presentation. Tickets: $150.00 per person. Space is limited. Contact FBM for more information or to reserve your seat.

For more information, please call (310) 548-2005 or visit
www.thebanningmuseum.org  facebook.com/banningmuseum  TheBanningMuseum

Thank you to these wonderful sponsors for helping keep the VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION FREE!