



Living History

— SCHOOL PROGRAM —

Pre-Visit Materials

The Banning Museum is a facility of the City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks and is operated in cooperation with Friends of Banning Museum.

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The Banning Museum Living History School Program Questions and Answers for Teachers

What is the Living History School Program?

It is a program designed by The Banning Museum especially for fourth-grade students in the Greater Los Angeles area. This is the optimal age group because fourth grade is the time when students are studying California history.

What is the purpose of the Living History School Program?

There are three main goals:

1. To acquaint the visiting students with the many contributions Phineas Banning made to the growth and development of Southern California
2. To help the children understand the background of Mr. Banning and other American pioneers and the impact of this background on the family life and culture of California
3. To provide the participants with some insight into the way children lived in the 19th century and how their lives differed from the lives of children today

What activities are included?

- **A tour of the Banning Residence**, during which the students see what life was like during the 1880s and learn the differences between homes of the 19th century and today.
- **An 1880s school lesson**, taught by a period-costumed schoolmarm in our one-room schoolhouse. The children will have the option to don aprons or white starched collars while they read from McGuffey's Readers, do an arithmetic lesson on their slates and discover how children learned over a hundred years ago.
- **A game**, similar to bingo, reinforces the information the students learn during the field trip.
- **A visit to the Stagecoach Barn**, where the students see the Museum's beautifully restored carriages and a reproduction blacksmith shop, learn about a working ranch and play traditional games.



What is the Program Schedule?

The schedule for the day is as follows:

Check-in: 9:30 a.m.

Activities: 10:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m. (Approximately)

Museum staff will greet your school upon arrival to review the schedule and activity rules. During the program, the students visit a series of four 25-minute activity stations. We have found that having the children go through the activities in groups of 15 optimizes the learning experience. Therefore, depending on the number of students participating in the program that day, your group may be combined with another school or be divided into smaller groups to achieve this group size. After the last activity, students are welcome to eat lunch on the lawn within the fenced Museum grounds or at the picnic tables in the park.

Items Brought to the Museum

Backpacks, lunches, water bottles, etc. will not be allowed in the house. A bin will be provided before the activities begin and articles can be retrieved after the activities end. The Museum has no secured storage areas and is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

How can we make this event an enjoyable experience for all?

In order to make this event an enjoyable experience for all, we ask that you adhere to the following rules during your visit:

- Discipline of the class is the responsibility of the visiting teacher.
- Please turn off cell phones during the program. Photography is not allowed inside the house.
- No touching of objects or walls is permitted unless your tour guide instructs you otherwise.
- No food or gum during the program.
- An adult must accompany children going to the restrooms.

Souvenir Bags

At the end of your visit you will be provided with a souvenir bag for each child. It is up to the teacher how you wish to distribute them. A box will be provided for your convenience.

Special Accommodations

Persons with disabilities are welcome to participate in our programs. Reasonable accommodations will be made with prior arrangements.



What if you need to cancel?

Please notify us immediately at (310) 548-7777 if your class cannot attend the Living History School Program tour so that we may accommodate other guests on our waiting list. In the event of inclement weather, the Banning Museum staff will contact each school to advise of cancellation.

More Information

Please call (310) 548-7777 for more information regarding group reservations or this event.



Teacher Supplement

Suggested Activities for Before Your Visit

During your visit to The Banning Museum, your class will be learning about the history of Los Angeles and the accomplishments of one of its most prominent citizens, Phineas Banning. To help your students get the most out of the time they spend at the Museum, we have put together some suggested activities you can work on with your class before their visit. The pre-visit activities will help them become acquainted with the things they will be learning.

You will receive separate booklets for your students with post-visit activities that will help reinforce their educational experience at the beginning of your visit. You may distribute these booklets to your students when you return to school.

Included are:

Phineas Banning Biography

This brief biography of Phineas Banning will familiarize your students with General Banning's background, vision, goals, accomplishments and help your class gain some basic understanding of Banning and the time in which he lived.

Early Los Angeles Historic Timeline

These pages focus on early Los Angeles History and the influence and achievements of Phineas Banning. We recommend this material be shared with your class before your visit so the students have a frame of reference for what they will be hearing and doing during the Living History School Program.

Vocabulary for Students

These pages will help familiarize your class with words they may hear during their visit.

We hope you and your students enjoy these activities and that they will enhance the learning experience your class will have during the Living History School Program at The Banning Museum.

Worksheets

- Greek Revival Style
- Ways of Transportation in the 1870's
- Popular Names of Today and the Past



Phineas Banning, 1830-1885



When Phineas Banning was born near Wilmington, Delaware in 1830, California was part of the Mexican Republic, and Los Angeles was only a dusty adobe pueblo with a population of about 1,600 people. Twenty miles to the south of Los Angeles lay the shallow, muddy tide flat called the San Pedro Bay. By 1885, the year of Banning's death, Los Angeles was well on its way to becoming the most successful commercial center in the West and Wilmington had been transformed into a busy international port. The astounding growth of these communities was, in large part, due to the efforts of Phineas Banning.

The son of a gentleman farmer, Phineas Banning was the ninth of 11 children. At the age of 13, he left home with 50 cents in his pocket, walked to Philadelphia, and went to work in an older brother's law firm. Like so many other ambitious young men of his generation, Banning wanted to go West, where many opportunities were available to determined young Easterners. He sailed to Panama, crossed the jungles of the isthmus by foot and burro, and sailed 3,000 miles north to San Diego and later to San Pedro. There he took a job driving a stagecoach, where he transported freight and passengers between the tiny port of San Pedro and the city of Los Angeles. It was one of the first staging and freighting lines in the area, and the business quickly made Banning a successful man. He purchased large barges, called lighters, and began a ship-to-shore cargo transporting business. Eventually, he operated businesses in oil, wool, lumber, coal, and newspaper publishing.



Banning and his partners soon bought enough land to build a wharf and warehouses, and then founded the town of Wilmington, named after his birthplace. He led the effort that saw the extension of telegraph lines to Southern California. He ran for public office, and as a state Senator, authored legislation funding the construction of a railway between Los Angeles and the harbor. Banning was among those linking Los Angeles to the rest of the nation by persuading the Southern Pacific Railway to route its trains heading east through Los Angeles. Convinced that Los Angeles would become a great city that needed a full-scale port, he traveled to Washington, D.C. and personally secured government funding for the dredging of San Pedro bay and the construction of a breakwater.

When the Civil War broke out, Banning remained a staunch supporter of the Union and an advocate of the abolition of slavery. As state Senator, he signed California's constitutional amendment to abolish slavery. In recognition of his efforts in establishing Southern California as a supply center for the Union Army, Governor Frederick Low appointed Banning Brigadier General of the First Brigade of the State Militia. In fact, Banning enjoyed being called "General" throughout the rest of his life.

In the midst of the war, Banning began the construction of his amazing Greek Revival home near the muddy tide flat that was the early Los Angeles Harbor. Banning's family, with the help of their servants, kept the home bustling with daily chores during a time when there was no electricity, natural gas or indoor plumbing. The grand home soon became the social center of the community where Banning, his wife and children hosted many celebrations. California residents of all ages and cultures came to celebrate weddings, birthdays, the 4th of July, political rallies and other social events, some of which would last for several days.

Phineas Banning died in 1885 at the age of 54. For over 30 years he had been a pivotal figure in creating the communications and transportation network that made the development of Los Angeles and the harbor area possible. If he were to return to Wilmington today, it would probably please him greatly that his once isolated house is now a historic monument set in a green park surrounded by a metropolis of millions.



Early Los Angeles History: The Influence and Achievements of Phineas Banning

- 1781** *El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles* is founded just weeks before the end of the American Revolution.
- 1830** Phineas Banning is born near Wilmington, Delaware.
- 1848** Gold is discovered at Sutter's Mill, California.
- 1849** People arrive in California from all over the world, and many from Los Angeles leave for the gold fields.
Phineas Banning makes an address against slavery to the American Literary Union in Philadelphia.
- 1850** California is admitted to the Union.
- 1851** Phineas Banning travels across the Isthmus of Panama and arrives in San Diego.
Later that year, he moves to San Pedro to drive for Douglass and Sanford, a stage and freighting business.
- 1853** Banning is taken into partnership by stage and freight competitor George Alexander to form Alexander & Banning. He continues to drive horse and mule teams from the San Pedro harbor to Los Angeles.
Banning and other prominent citizens join a local volunteer law enforcement group called the Rangers.
- 1854** Phineas Banning marries Rebecca Sanford, the sister of his former employer and competitor in San Pedro.
- 1855** Banning establishes new freight routes to Salt Lake City and Yuma.
- 1857** Storms damage the Banning Wharf, and Banning has difficulties with nearby businessmen. This convinces him to proceed with plans for New San Pedro.
- 1858** Banning founds the town of New San Pedro and later names it Wilmington.
The Butterfield Stage comes to Los Angeles.



- 1860** Phineas Banning is named to help build a telegraph connecting Los Angeles with San Francisco.
Banning & Hinchman partnership was formed in lumber, coal and freighting.
Political tensions increase as the Civil War becomes a threat.
- 1861** The transcontinental telegraph is connected to Wilmington.
First troops land in Wilmington and stay in tents near the water.
Banning's business suffers due to competition and due to his Unionist activities in a community sympathetic to the Southern cause.
Civil War erupts in April.
- 1862** Construction of Drum Barracks begins on land sold to the government for \$1 by B.D. Wilson and Banning.
- 1864** Banning buys the printing equipment from a Los Angeles newspaper and renames it *Wilmington Journal*.
The Banning Residence is built.
- 1865** Pioneer Oil Co. is organized with Banning as President.
The Civil War ends. News reaches Wilmington by telegraph.
Banning is elected to the state Senate for a two-year term.
- 1867** Banning is re-elected to state Senate, where he introduced and passed legislation for a railroad that would connect Los Angeles to the harbor.
- 1868** Rebecca Banning dies in childbirth at age 33.
Ground is broken in Wilmington for the Los Angeles & San Pedro Railroad.
It opens to the public the following year.
- 1870** Phineas Banning marries Mary Hollister.
- 1872** Wilmington is incorporated.
Voters approve giving Southern Pacific the local railroad (LA&SP), additional land and money to connect Los Angeles to the transcontinental railroad in San Francisco, CA.
- 1873** Banning helps to secure \$150,000 from the U. S. government for a Wilmington breakwater.



- 1876** Los Angeles is connected by railroad to San Francisco and the east coast, as well as to Yuma, El Paso and New Orleans.
Point Fermin Lighthouse begins operation.
Banning begins a wool business.
- 1881** Demand for a large breakwater begins in earnest as the need for a larger deepwater port is apparent.
- 1884** Banning is injured by an express wagon in San Francisco.
- 1885** Phineas Banning dies on March 8th.
- 1899** U.S. Congress appropriates funds and the outer breakwater is begun.
- 1910** The present 9,250-foot-long breakwater is completed. The engineering triumph, which took 11 years to complete, stands 65 feet wide at its top and 200 feet thick at its base.



Vocabulary for Students

Here are some interesting words to learn in preparation for the Living History School Program at The Banning Museum. Following its definition, each word is used in a sentence that gives some information on the time and people introduced in the program.

abolish: to do away with completely

Mr. Banning was proud to sign California's ratification of the constitutional amendment to abolish slavery.

adobe: sun-dried clay brick; a building made of adobe

In the 1800s, most of the homes in Southern California were made of adobe.

boarding school: a school where students live away from home while at school.

I missed my family while I stayed at the boarding school all year long.

blacksmith: a person who works, repairs and shapes iron with a forge

Mr. Banning employed many blacksmiths to make horseshoes and fix metal objects.

breakwater: a barrier to break the impact of waves

Mr. Banning worked hard to get a breakwater built so that Los Angeles could have a harbor.

Civil War: war between the North and the South fought in the United States (1861-1865)

Mr. Banning was on the side of the North during the Civil War.

decoupage: the art of cutting and pasting pictures on something with cutouts of paper

A girl could use decoupage to decorate the changing or dressing screen in her bedroom.

docent: a volunteer who guide tours in a museum.

My grandmother was a docent when she retired.

frontier: that part of a settled country which lies next to an unexplored or undeveloped region

Pioneers traveled through the frontier to reach California.

grammar: a system of rules for speaking and writing a given language

Children learned grammar in the one-room schoolhouse.

Greek Revival: a style of architecture used in the construction of the Banning Residence

Columns on the front of a building and moldings at the roofline are clues to identifying Greek Revival-style buildings.



hand-me-down: a piece of clothing that someone out grew and gave to a smaller child.
This hand-me-down dress from my older cousin fits me perfectly.

harbor: a protected inlet or a branch of a sea used as a shelter; an anchorage for ships
Phineas Banning was instrumental in the construction of a man-made deep-water harbor for Los Angeles.

hoops: circular metal rings, often the remains of disintegrated barrels
Children used a stick to push a hoop ahead of them in a game they sometimes called "bowling a hoop"

interpreter: a trained Volunteer who interprets (explains) the people and events that shape history
The Interpreter will explain how Mr. Banning worked to improve the harbor so that large ships could dock here.

lighter: a large open barge used chiefly in loading or unloading larger ships wherever shallow water prevents them from coming into shore
Mr. Banning owned several lighters in his lighterage business.

lighthouse: a tower located at some place important to navigation; it has a very bright light at the top, by which ships are guided and warned at night
Mr. Banning worked hard to get a lighthouse built at Point Fermin.

McGuffey Reader: a series of school readers used in the 1800's that also taught children to be honest, dependable, and good citizens.
The teacher had the class memorize the poem they had read in their McGuffey Readers.

milk house: a dark, cool room with thick walls where milk, milk products, and meats were stored to keep them fresh longer before refrigerators were invented.
Mother asked me to go to the milk house to get butter and cheese for dinner.

museum: a building or place where works of art or objects of historical value are kept and displayed
We are going to The Banning Museum.

parlor: a room set aside for the entertainment of guests
Mr. and Mrs. Banning enjoyed being with good friends in the Parlor.

population: the number of people in a country or region
The population of Southern California increased after the railroad came to Los Angeles.



recite: to repeat or read aloud something memorized or prepared
Pupils always had to be ready to recite their lessons.

regale: Mr. Banning's name for a party
People enjoyed coming to the Bannings' home for a regale.

residence: the place where a person lives
The Banning Residence was home to several generations of the Banning family.

schoolmarm: what children called their teacher in the 1800's
The schoolmarm was young but very smart.

slate: a dark blue-gray rock that splits into smooth layers and can be used for a small blackboard
Children used chalk or slate pencils to write their lessons on their slate boards.

stagecoach: a horse-drawn coach carrying passengers, parcels and mail on scheduled trips over a regular route
Mr. Banning was one of the best stagecoach drivers in the West.

Victorian: characteristic of the time when Victoria was Queen of England (1837-1901)
The Parlor in the Banning Residence is typical of the Victorian period.



Greek Revival Style

Remember: The Greek Revival Style consists of symmetry and balance. Its characteristics are: evenly spaced columns, a triangular shape above the columns called a pediment, and an equal number of windows on each side of an imaginary line dividing the house in half.

Instructions: Circle the buildings that are styled in the Greek Revival Style.



Tip: When you visit the Banning Museum, take a good look at the front part of the house, so that you may draw it from memory when you return to school.



Ways of Transportation in the 1870's

Directions: Circle the pictures that show ways of transportation in the 1870's and put an "X" on the on the pictures of items not invented in that period.



