

For Immediate Release

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY OPENS NEW EXHIBITION FEATURING HIGHLIGHTS FROM ITS PERMANENT COLLECTION

- *From the Gold Rush to the Earthquake: Selections from the Collection* presents rarely seen artworks from the California Historical Society's holdings of paintings, photographs, manuscripts, and ephemera.
- Exhibition content focuses on key topics in California's late-nineteenth-century history, featuring works from the Gold Rush, the exploration of the Sierra Nevada mountains and coastal regions, the rise of agriculture and industry in the state, San Francisco's Chinatown, and the city's devastating 1906 earthquake and fires.

SAN FRANCISCO, California, October 28, 2019 – *From the Gold Rush to the Earthquake: Selections from the Collection* will be on view at the California Historical Society (678 Mission Street, San Francisco) through March 29, 2020. The galleries are open Tuesday through Sunday, 11 am to 5 pm.

The Gold Rush that began in 1848 marked the beginning of a period of dramatic transformation in California. *From the Gold Rush to the Earthquake: Selections from the Collection* considers themes that quickly became important subject matter for numerous US and European artists throughout the next half century: the Gold Rush, exploration of the Sierras, the burgeoning agricultural industry, Chinatown, and the Great San Francisco Earthquake. Drawn exclusively from the California Historical Society's collection, the show presents paintings by well known artists like William Keith, William Hahn, Raymond Dabb Yelland, and Theodore Wores, as well as lesser known, but equally impactful artists, like Bertha Lee Stringer and Nellie Hopps. Also included alongside paintings are archival materials—photographs, letters, books, and ephemera—that offer a deepened understanding of these subjects and a window into the lives touched by these events.

“The California Historical Society has a remarkable collection of late nineteenth century paintings,” says Erin Garcia California Historical Society's Director of Exhibitions. “But they do not provide a whole picture of what it was like to live in California during those first decades of statehood. Archival material included alongside the paintings in the exhibition help us to focus on and understand some of those personal stories.”

Among the objects that tell those stories are a rare set of letters exchanged by a husband and wife, William and Mary Monroe, that provide observations about Gold Rush era California, as well as insight into the emotional and financial hardships of a woman left behind to manage the family farm and household. Another piece of correspondence, written on a detached shirt collar in lieu of stationery, gives a firsthand account of the 1906 earthquake and fires. Several rare books and magazines illuminate the early debate between naturalist John Muir and state geologist Josiah Whitney about the role of glaciers in forming Yosemite Valley, and an issue of the first Chinese-language newspaper to be published in the United States, the *Golden Hills' News*, tells the story of Chinese self-representation in San Francisco.

About the California Historical Society

Founded in 1871, the California Historical Society (CHS) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to inspire and empower people to make California's richly diverse past a meaningful part of their contemporary lives. In 1979 Governor Jerry Brown designated CHS the official historical society of the State of California. Today, CHS enacts its mission with a wide range of library, exhibition, publication, education, and public outreach programs that explore the complex and continuing history of the state and represent the diversity of the California experience, past and present. Our treasured collection—documenting the history of the entire state from the Spanish Era to the present day—is brought to life through these innovative public history projects that expand and diversify our audience and broaden our public impact. Learn more at californiahistoricalsociety.org.

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