

# If These Buckets Could Talk

## Tales from the Museum Collections



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## Curator's Statement

Often, we wonder what it was like to live in the past and sometimes, we even wish we could go back and experience the lives of those who have lived before us. Novels with historic themes and period films seem to be popular, transporting us to another time and place. Today, the study of the past as a hobby or interest by non-professionals is increasing, as the popularity of television programming like "The History Channel" and "Antiques Roadshow" attest. Collecting things, like quilts or Beetles lunch pails or baseball cards is a grand hobby – many people have the urge to gather together a group of interesting things from the past, and then learn something about history in the course of their collecting activities. The internet makes genealogy, the study of one's family tree, easy and fun. It is amazing that in many cases, increased technology – a reflection of "modernity" - makes all of this interest in and study of the past more accessible than ever before.

Here at the museum we view the artifacts in our history collections as a special kind of treasure with the power to transport visitors and researchers into the past in a unique way. These treasures have an historic and cultural value far greater than mere monetary worth. Each object or photograph has the power to tell a story of the past. In naming our upcoming exhibit "If Buckets Could Talk" we thought it would be fun to see what tales our artifacts could reveal. Speaking of buckets, a pair of unusual fire buckets used to throw water on flames by members of Fire Company #1 in San Bernardino will be included in this exhibit along with carbide lamps used to light the way for miners, and even unusual pieces from our costume collection.

This exhibit will give visitors a chance to see some of the interesting artifacts that are a part of our collections, but are not often on exhibit. In some cases, it is easy to figure out what the object was used for just by looking at it. In others, it is a bit trickier. In all cases, the meaning of each object goes deeper than just being a lighting device or a utilitarian bucket, or a piece of clothing, and reflects back to the viewer, a glimpse of the past and the lives of the individuals who actually used or wore the artifacts we have today.

*Michele Nielsen, Curator of History*

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## San Bernardino County Museum

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