

**NATURAL
HISTORY
MUSEUM**
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

SEAVER CENTER FOR WESTERN HISTORY RESEARCH



Notes From the Archive

SUMMER 2024

This is a publication of the Seaver Center for Western History Research, a section of the History Department. If you are informed by what you read here, please share it with a friend or colleague.

The Olympics in Los Angeles - Back to the Future

Los Angeles first hosted the 1932 Summer Games for the Xth Olympiad. The museum, then called the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science and Art, provided the venue for the Olympic Art Exhibition.

This month marks the 40th anniversary of the 1984 Summer Olympics, officially known as the Games of the XXIII Olympiad held in Los Angeles from July 28 to August 12, and the museum served as a host hospitality center. As in 1932, a concurrent Olympics Arts Festival took place, and the History Department produced a three-prong exhibition covering a revisit of the 1932 Games, the Great Depression and the cars of 1932.

Senior Collections Manager, John Cahoon, was an integral member of the Arts Festival, and he also served as an Olympics volunteer! Here is a Q&A with John about his participation in 1984:

Could you tell us about your blue uniform?

The 1984 Los Angeles County Host Committee wanted the Volunteers to stand out from the crowd so that visitors who had questions or wanted assistance could easily spot them. I was issued the jacket, pants, a tie, two dress shirts and the shoes. Unusual pastel colors were selected for various uniforms. Even more noticeable than this off-shade of blue were the bright orange coats worn by another group of Volunteers.

What inspired you to volunteer at LAX while everyone was fearing a carmageddon?

Those who volunteered at events during the Games often found themselves outside the competition arena, didn't get to see the competition and could only hear the crowds. I wanted to be able to watch the events so I volunteered at LAX the two weeks before the Games started when teams were arriving. We'd meet them, direct them to accreditation, and then get them onto the buses that took them to the various Olympic housing locations.

Traffic was actually less congested during the 1984 Games because of the Organizing Committee's excellent busing system that brought spectators in from the suburbs reducing the number of cars on the roads. And they arranged with businesses to have trucks make deliveries early in the morning before rush hours which further reduced traffic.

Where there any memorable visitors whom you assisted as a Volunteer?

One evening I was stationed at the International Terminal, and a well-dressed woman in dark glasses and a scarf over her head inquired about an incoming flight from Rome, as she was waiting for arriving passengers. I informed the lady that the plane was now on the ground but that it was taking a little longer to

go through customs when I realized I was speaking to actress Audrey Hepburn.

I also saw singer Kenny Rogers at the Opening Ceremonies and actress Shelley Winters at one of the track & field competitions in the Coliseum.

What are you looking forward to at LA28?

I'd like to see the competitions of course -- but I'd also like to be a Volunteer again. It was a great experience last time.



This image of Sam the Olympic Eagle appeared on the cover of the July/August 1985 issue of TERRA, the museum members' magazine. "Sam" was featured in the 1985 Olympics Retrospective Exhibit and was modeled here by John Cahoon. Olympics photos by John De Leon

Among numerous collections pertaining to the Olympic Games include these primary resources:

[1932 Olympics Collection](#) (GC-1014)

[1984 Olympics Materials Collection](#) (GC-1138)

EXHIBITION NEWS

Seaver Center Gets an Exhibit Case

The permanent display opened on June 27th made possible by the generous support of the Seaver Institute. It tells the message of "Amazing Things Happen in Los Angeles," informs the public on how to go about using the research center and also directs visitors to the Becoming Los Angeles exhibition hall.



The case features the Olympics in Los Angeles, and early aviation, parades and amusements, with a backdrop of the Sixth Street Bridge as photographed by Gary Leonard



A fine collaboration between the History Department and Exhibitions. Pictured from left: Betty Uyeda, Dr. William Estrada, Chris Weisbart, Brent Riggs, Donna Pungprechawat, Andrea Mode Andrews, Lauren Cooper, Kristie Poon, and in the front, Taylor Peterson with her daughter Millie. Not pictured were Beth Werling, John Cahoon and Liam Mooney. Photo by Gary Leonard

NEW PUBLICATIONS

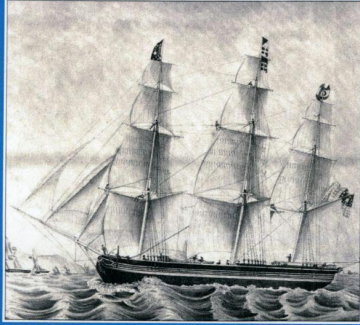
Seaver Center collection images are regularly used for a variety of topics. Here are two recent releases.

The Ship Duxbury and Other Vessels

Researcher Joe Duxbury was featured in the [May 2021 issue](#) of this newsletter. During that time he was hindered by inaccessible archives closed off by the pandemic, and he has now completed his book. It features an 1849 Boston port scene before the Duxbury set sail for San Francisco. It is from the Seaver Center's Manuscript Collection (MSS-507c).

The book is a labor of love uncovering voyages from its Atlantic crossings in the early 1830s through its later sugar trade movement in the West Indies and the East Indies routes, all between 1838 through 1848, before adding the California coast destination during the Gold Rush.

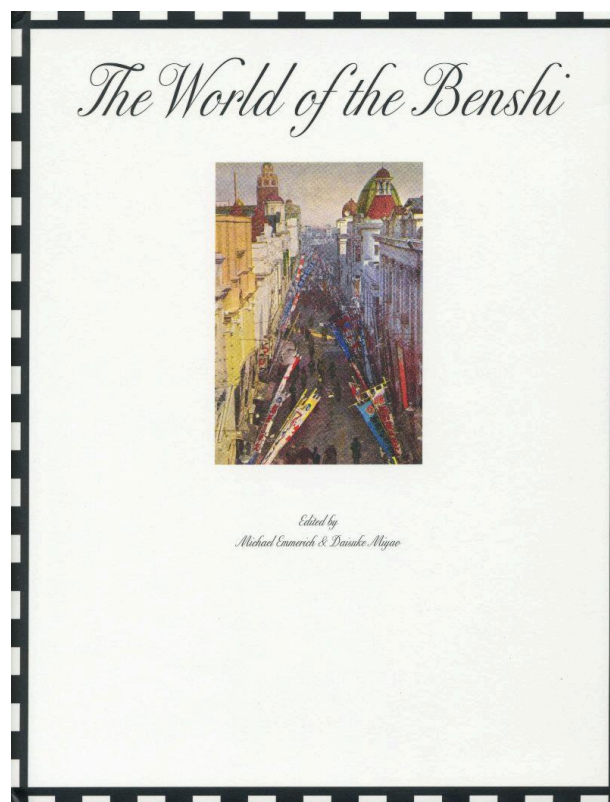
The Ship *Duxbury* and other vessels



Joe Duxbury

The World of the Benshi

The anthology of essays is published by The Yanai Initiative for Globalizing Japanese Humanities, a collaborative project of UCLA and Waseda University in Tokyo. Michael Emmerich, Director, stated that "*Benshi* were a regular feature of silent film screenings in Japan, in the territories Japan colonized, and in the United States, including in Los Angeles." *Benshi* were "the orators who interpreted and explained films, and often did the voices of characters." *Benshi* practitioners still continue today.



An image in the book from our Japanese American Collection is the 1910 International Theatre located in the Little Tokyo neighborhood of Los Angeles. (P-018-1-74)



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The collections are a part of the History Department of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

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The Seaver Center opened in 1986 through a generous grant from the Seaver Institute.



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