

If These Buckets Could Talk

Tales from the Museum Collections



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A Sampling of Artifacts

What could drawers full of false teeth, a medical device that “shocks” the patient, and a violin case possibly have in common? They are all examples of artifacts from the San Bernardino County Museum’s permanent collections, and will be a part of the exhibit *If Buckets Could Talk*. By reading the names of some of the unusual objects in this exhibit, you might have a hard time figuring out what they really are unless you look closely and think imaginatively. Is a powder horn something used to hold talcum powder on your bathroom sink? A flax comb looks like a torture device but it serves an entirely different and painless purpose. A miner’s candlestick – that sounds like an elegant way to light a mine shaft. What about a fire bucket? Do you carry smoldering embers from the fire pit or hot barbeque briquettes in it? Sometimes, names can be deceiving, but the history these objects illustrate is fascinating and informative. Believe it or not, wool cards are not something you play with on a cold day when you want your fingers to be warm.

A few examples:

- Horsehair bridle woven by “Willie Boy”
- Violin case used as a coffin by Mormon family coming to San Bernardino – baby revived and lived to be an extremely elderly lady
- Guitar belonging to Chico Ramirez, well-known musician in San Bernardino
- Lighting devices used for mining, including a miner’s candlestick and carbide lamp
- Doctor’s saddle bag – and contents
- Dentist’s cabinet full of false teeth
- Pair of leather fire buckets used by San Bernardino Fire Company #1 to hand-carry water and then dump it on a fire to put it out
- Fire company mark, attached to outside of building to determine which company should respond
- Quack medical device that utilizes electricity to “shock” yourself into health
- Cowhide-covered trunk and contents – what would you take with you if you were coming to California in a wagon?
- World War I Red Cross nurse’s uniform
- Flax comb and wool cards
- Powder horn



San Bernardino County Museum

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