Press Release

For Immediate Release
Contact: Eric Stanley
estanley@museumsc.org
(707) 579-1500 x103
Museum of Sonoma County
425 Seventh St
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
museumsc.org

MUSEUM of SONOMA COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELASE – IMAGES AVAILABLE

Contact: Eric Stanley, Curator of History
estanley@museumsc.org
(707) 579-1500 x 103

Press Release

The Museum of Sonoma County Announces Dedicated Space for Santa Rosa History.

Santa Rosa History

Opening reception February 12, 2026, 5-7 pm
History Museum of Sonoma County

(SANTA ROSA, CA)- February 5, 2026 – The Museum of Sonoma County is proud to present *Santa Rosa History*, an ongoing exhibition focused on the evolution of our city and local community. The exhibition serves as a companion to the Museum's *Sonoma County Stories* exhibition, offering a deeper exploration into the specific story of Santa Rosa. While the City of Santa Rosa features prominently in *Sonoma County Stories*, there has been demand for a dedicated space for Santa Rosa-specific content. The new *Santa Rosa History* room provides a place for visitors to think about our hometown and have conversations about our future.

Santa Rosa History explores our city's many-layered past. Officially incorporated in 1868, Santa Rosa is actually much older than that - the human history of the area extends into the deep past. It is the homeland of the Southern Pomo people, who were decimated by European, Mexican and American settlement.

Santa Rosa History features a deep exploration of what many view as the seminal Santa Rosa story – the history of the Carrillo Adobe, the 1830s Mexican-era building that was originally the home of Maria Carrillo, the owner of the *Rancho Cabeza de Santa Rosa*. The building later served as Santa Rosa's first post office, and had several other purposes before being largely neglected for decades.

In spite of its historical significance, and the efforts of many local residents to preserve it, the Carrillo Adobe has been slowly deteriorating. Although restoration and preservation efforts began in 1937, they never managed to fully save the structure or prevent its decline, and an entire wing was lost to heavy rains in 1944.

-MORE-

Historical and archaeological research in recent decades point to earlier layers of history, including both the deep Indigenous history of the property, and the possibility that the structure may have been started as an attempt to found a mission in the 1820s or '30s.

Santa Rosa History also explores the origin of the Santa Rosa place name in 1824, citing primary sources and clear evidence that visitors can explore.

Santa Rosa History also features the film, "*Santa Rosa: The Chosen Spot of all the Earth*," written, produced and directed by Don Cambou for the Historical Society of Santa Rosa. The film provides an overall chronology of Santa Rosa History.

We are grateful to the Historical Society of Santa Rosa for their support of the *Santa Rosa History* exhibition.

About the Curator: Eric Stanley is an historian and curator who has been with the Museum since 1999. An expert on the Carillo Adobe and the history of Sonoma County and the North Bay, Eric has collaborated with communities and scholars on dozens of exhibitions.

Reception
Thursday, February 12, 2026
5-7 pm
Free Admission
Additional public programs related to the exhibition will be posted at: www.museumsc.org/events

Museum of Sonoma County

425 Seventh Street
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
707-579-1500
www.museumsc.org

Museum Hours

Wednesday - Sunday, 11 am – 5 pm

Admission

Adults: $12
Seniors: $10
Students: $6
Museum Members: FREE
Children 12 & under: FREE
Through Museums for All, those receiving food assistance (SNAP benefits) can gain free admission for up to four (4) people to the Museum of Sonoma County simply by presenting their EBT card.

About the Museum of Sonoma County

Located in Downtown Santa Rosa on Seventh Street between A and B Streets, the Museum of Sonoma County is a private non-profit 501(c)3 offering permanent and temporary exhibitions of art, history and culture for residents and visitors. The Museum is open year-round with exhibitions, public programs, school tours, and special events including our annual *Dia de Los Muertos* exhibition, Block Party and Lunar New Year. The Museum preserves and manages a collection of regional art and history of over 18,000 objects, the largest collection of objects documenting Sonoma County's history and culture.

Mission

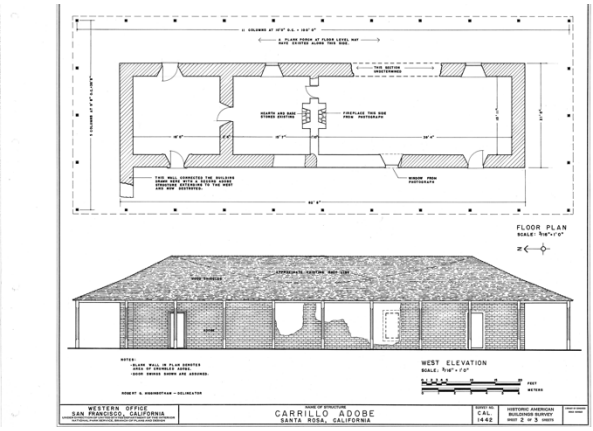
The Museum of Sonoma County engages and inspires our diverse community.

-MORE-

Smithsonian Affiliate

The Museum of Sonoma County has been a Smithsonian Affiliate since 2009. Smithsonian Affiliations establishes long-term partnerships with museums, education and cultural organizations to facilitate the loan of Smithsonian artifacts and traveling exhibitions, as well as to develop innovative educational collaborations locally and nationally. Created in 1996 by an act of the Smithsonian Board of Regents, the program is overseen by the Smithsonian's Assistant Secretary for Education and Access and is one of the pillars of the Institution's national outreach efforts. There are more than 200 Smithsonian Affiliates in nearly every state, Puerto Rico and Panama. Affiliates represent the diversity of America's museum community—size, location and subject— and serve all audiences. More than 8,000 Smithsonian artifacts have been displayed at Affiliate locations for the past 20 years.

Exhibition Images (click here to view and download)

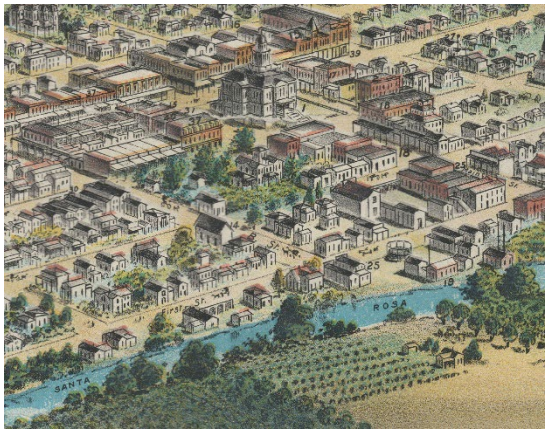


Carrillo Adobe drawing, 1936
Historic American Building Survey

Carrillo family daguerreotype, *ca. 1849*
This image likely includes one of Maria Carrillo's daughters (right) and possibly the Carrillo matriarch herself in one of the earlier photographs ever taken in California.
Museum of Sonoma County collection

Carrillo Adobe, ca 1870
Perhaps the earliest photograph of the adobe ever taken while it was part of the Hahman farm.

Carrillo Adobe, 1936
Historic American Building Survey



Santa Rosa map detail, *1897*
Detail shows 1895 courthouse in the town center
Crocker chromolithograph
Museum of Sonoma County Collection

Downtown Santa Rosa, ca 1930s
Museum of Sonoma County Collection

-###-