Saving More Than the Sea: Reviving the Salton Sea History Museum

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The SSHM Story

- Founded by Jennie Kelly, local historian and Salton Sea advocate
- Opened May 1, 2010 at the North Shore Beach & Yacht Club grand reopening
- Forced to relocate in June 2011
Reopened February 3, 2012 at the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians Wetlands property.

Operated in this location until 2013.

The collection was then moved to the home of Kelly and her husband, Steve Johnson.

Some materials were moved to spare office space near Oasis.
Sadly, Jennie Kelly passed away in 2015

SSHM was never able to reopen and the collection remained in storage

SSHM board dissolved and its nonprofit status was suspended
Saving SSHM
MECCA, CALIFORNIA

Salton Sea History Museum

A museum dedicated to a sea that should have never been.

is uncertain. Currently, the Salton Sea History Museum does not have a permanent home, and has been waiting for the reinstatement of its lease at the North Shore Beach and Yacht Club community center since the center reopened. While it was temporarily located in Mecca, California, the museum’s lease was terminated by the property, and the museum remains in limbo.

Know Before You Go
Closed and currently awaiting a new location.
In fall of 2017, I decided to focus my capstone project at UCLA on the SSHM collection.

I struggled to find information about the collection, but was finally connected with a local journalist, Ann Japenga.

Through her extensive network, I was introduced to several beneficial community members.
Steve Johnson, Jennie Kelly’s widower, supported the project, but asked to be excluded from future planning.

Bruce Wilcox, Assistant Secretary for Salton Sea Policy at the California Natural Resources Agency, has provided assistance with legal and political issues.

Juan De Lara, President of the Salton Sea Action Committee, provided access to the collection materials.

Between October 2017 and February 2018, I conducted a collection survey and developed an inventory.
In total, I surveyed 116 boxes of material, plus several oversized items.

- 59 boxes of archival material,
- 46 boxes of SSHM merchandise,
- 11 boxes of giveaway pamphlets/maps
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box Number</th>
<th>Folder/Item</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Arrangement Notes</th>
<th>Condition/Housing Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;Archives Cabinet 1&quot;</td>
<td>1960-2010</td>
<td>Souvenirs, hotel room keys (replicas?), correspondence, historical postcards, maps, brochures, photographs (some of Ed Ainsworth)</td>
<td>Historical Archives, Memorabilia, Correspondence, Maps, Photographs, Ed Ainsworth</td>
<td>Some wear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;Salton Sea History Museum/Autos&quot;</td>
<td>1960-1994</td>
<td>Deed of gift forms for museum donations, posters, photographs, issues of Periscope (Coachella Valley Historical Society publication), Helldiver award trophy, North Shore Yacht Club (NSYC) wine list.</td>
<td>Historical Archives, SSHM Archives, SSHM Deed of Gifts, Photographs, North Shore Beach and Yacht Club</td>
<td>Some oversized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Books/Movies</td>
<td>1893-2005</td>
<td>Books, movies (VHS/DVD), and a CD labeled &quot;Leonard Knight's World Wide Revival&quot; - some feature films, not apparent why they were included; Gold Road to La Paz by Ross, On Desert Trails Today and Yesterday by Henderson, History and Directory of Riverside County, 1893-1894 by Bynon</td>
<td>Historical Archives, SSHM Merchandise, A/V Materials, Books</td>
<td>Some wear/damage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next Steps

- Reestablishing the board, finding permanent storage, and securing funding
- Currently, working on developing a processing plan
Possible exhibit through a partnership with the Sea and Desert Interpretive Association

Funding may be available through the Salton Sea Action Committee
 Representatives from College of the Desert and CSU San Bernardino have also shown interest in possible partnerships