



OLD SACRAMENTO SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM

Front and L Streets, Sacramento

November 2009

To: Fourth Grade Teachers

From: Diana Vizzard and Suzanne Hicklin
Old Sacramento Schoolhouse Museum

Subject: 2010 Annual Essay Contest
A Day in School in 1875

The Old Sacramento Schoolhouse Museum, located at 1200 Front Street, Old Sacramento, is pleased to invite you and your students to participate in the 26th annual essay contest for fourth graders in California's public and private schools. The Schoolhouse is proud of this competition, which has been awarding prizes to students from as many as twenty area school districts since 1984. The popularity of this competition speaks for its value. Each year we expect more entries from more school districts from both GATE and Regular fourth grade students. We look forward to presenting awards to talented students and devoted teachers. Prizes include cash awards, certificates and more.

This contest meets the criteria for the narrative portion of the STAR testing program. **The deadline to submit essays is March 19, 2010.** Awards will be presented at a ceremony on April 22.

Enclosed you will find:

- The rules and criteria for judging / judging roster
- A master "slate" form that must be used by the students
- The official entry form that must be completed for all school winners
- A copy of Travis Whitaker's winning essay—for use as an example

Your questions can be answered by contacting a Schoolhouse coordinator at 916-923-9308 or 916-483-8818 or e-mail: info@oldschoolhouse.org.

All essays must be sent to: Old Sacramento Schoolhouse Museum,
c/o Suzanne Hicklin, 5325 Ridgefield Avenue, Carmichael, CA 95608

Old Sacramento Schoolhouse - Essay Contest

A large rectangular area with a hatched border, containing 20 horizontal lines for writing an essay.

Winner Entry Form

Old Sacramento Schoolhouse Museum Essay Contest

2010 School Winner Entry Form

- This entry form must be attached to each school winner entry.
- This form should be the only identifier on the essay.

Regular _____ GATE _____

Student's name _____

Title of essay _____

Number of words _____

Student's address (optional): Street _____

City _____ Zip _____

Student's phone number (____) _____

Teacher's name _____

Teacher's e-mail address _____

School name _____

School phone number (____) _____

School address: Street _____

City _____ Zip _____

School district name _____

► Teacher signature _____ Date _____

- For parent/guardian: I understand that my child's essay has been selected for entry in the 2010 Old Sacramento Schoolhouse Museum Essay Contest. I give my approval for his/her essay to be reproduced in Old Sacramento Schoolhouse Museum print and online educational materials.

Parent/guardian signature

Date



LETTER TO THE FUTURE

Dear friend in the Future,

My name is Abraham. I was named after President Lincoln. He was a great man, my mother tells me. I was born on the day he was killed in Washington, D.C., and my father died fightin' in the Union Army during the Rebellion.

I don't like school all that much. This is about my second full year. Only about half the kids my age go to school. Sometimes I go down to the River and fish or float on a log instead of goin' to school, especially in the spring. Last year, our state passed a law that requires all children to go to school, but not everyone pays attention to it yet. Some people like my step-father believe that the new law is un-American. No one should have to go to school. My mother says all children should go to school, even though she didn't either.

My teacher's name is Sarah Wier. She has us write a composition every Friday. This week we have to write a letter to someone our same age in the future. She said we should write about something we know, so I'm goin' to tell you about Sacramento Grammar School. This is a mighty fine school, build just three years ago at 16th and N Streets.

Before school each day, I have to clean out Mr. John Wagner's St. Louis Stable on 19th Street between I and J Streets. This is actually my step-father's job, but mostly he's been drunk so he can't get there. Mr. Wagner's a nice man. He's teaching me about fixin' wagons and carin' for horses. He doesn't have no children, but I think he likes me, so maybe someday I can take over his business. Sometimes when my step-father is drunk and my mother tells me to get out of the house, Mr. Wagner lets me sleep in his stable.

Each day we are supposed to have readin' from McGuffey's Fifth Reader or spellin' from Willson's Large Speller. I don't mind readin' but spellin' in borin'. We study arithmetic from Robinson's Progressive Practical. It's kind of borin', too. I didn't see much to numbers until Mr. Wagner showed me his ledger. Now I'm tryin' my best to understand numbers.

All of the children in my school are white. My friend who is also named Abraham, after President Lincoln, can't go to my school because his skin is a different color from mine. I don't understand why, because he wants to read and write too. I help him sound out words on posters an' signs. Sometimes we float down the river a piece together. My mother says if someone hasn't done you wrong, you have no call to be against them. But it seems like they are against Abraham just because of his skin. Maybe in the future this will change., I hope so.

Your friend,
Abraham

Travis Whitaker
Bret Harte School
1996