

Sonoma Library preserves Luther Burbank archive

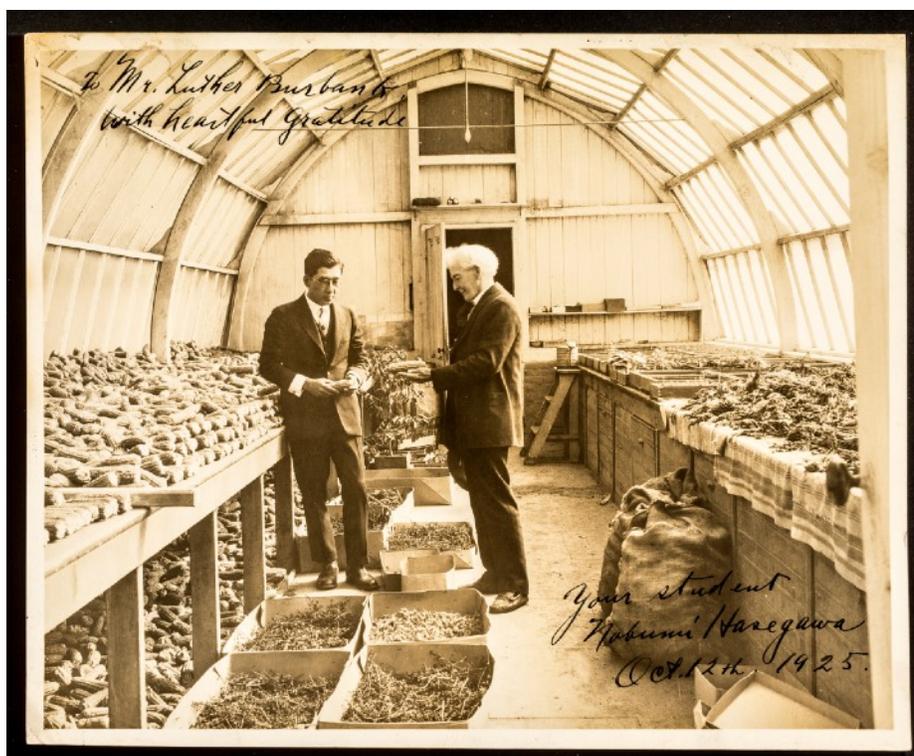
Act3 Partners captures over 2000 images on site!

The Sonoma County Library recently completed a major digitization project that resulted in over 2,000 images belonging to Santa Rosa's famed Luther Burbank Home & Gardens being captured using the services of ACT3 Partners. The project preserves the locally and nationally significant collection of pioneer horticulturist Luther Burbank and provides unprecedented online access.

Luther Burbank lived in Santa Rosa for 50 years and developed more than 800 varieties of plants, including fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, and flowers, such as the Russet Burbank Potato, the July Elberta peach, the Santa Rosa Plum and the Shasta Daisy.

One of Burbank's primary goals was to improve the world's food supply. His earliest experiments created the Burbank Russet Potato, a blight resistant potato that helped Europe recover from a devastating potato disease and famine in the mid 1800's. He produced new varieties of apples and other fruits by crossing different foreign and native plant strains. He grafted seedlings onto fully developed plants to create his desired hybrid characteristics. His work was known around the world.

Burbank was very generous with his knowledge and acted as a mentor to many horticulturists. Here with his famous student Nobumi Hasegawa.



Burbank's home and unique urban gardens are now owned by the City of Santa Rosa and operated by the non-profit Luther Burbank Home and Gardens Association. The project is a partnership between the Sonoma County Library and the City of Santa Rosa, and serves as an excellent way in which to honor Santa Rosa's 150 birthday this year.

"For people to be able to easily access these historic photos and other images is such an exciting development," says Rachel Spaeth, the Curator of the collection for the Luther Burbank Home and Gardens Association. "Access to the collection was previously restricted, and with

a 'white glove' only process in place, to protect the historic and fragile images. But now the collection is open to anyone with an internet connection! It's reassuring to have the nationally significant collection now safely preserved in digital form and housed online by the Sonoma County Library".

The image collection consists of photographs, daguerreotypes, slides, panoramic and stereographic images as well as postcards, greeting cards, printed materials and negatives dating from the 1860s to the 1980s.



"Packing and transporting a delicate and eclectic collection of this size was not an option for us", comments Katherine Rinehart, Manager of the Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library, a special collection of the Sonoma County Library "so we were pleased to be able to have Jack Schaeffer and Jeff Hurn of ACT3 Partners digitize on site at our library, working closely with Luther Burbank Home and Gardens Association Archivist Rebecca Baker".

"We do enjoy the efficiency of working at our client's location", adds Jack. "It not only eliminates all the packing and un-packing, but allows the collection archivists to partner with us in the process, answering questions and supervising the handling of the assets. Our high resolution photographic system is easily transported, and can capture a wide variety of asset sizes, shapes and types in the same location at the same time."

After the high resolution "raw" files were processed (cropping, image enhancement and color correction) and converted to .tiff format, they were delivered to Cataloging and Metadata Supervising Librarian Geoffrey Skinner to oversee the completion of the project, ensuring existing metadata was correct and enhanced in some instances.

The digital images were then uploaded to the Sonoma County Library's 'Sonoma Heritage Collection' - providing access to the historic collection and preserving Santa Rosa history and that of the nation for future generations.

See collection overview here: <http://heritage.sonomalibrary.org/digital/collection/p15763coll22>).



"What a joy life is when you have made a close working partnership with Nature, helping her to produce for the benefit of mankind new forms, colors, and perfumes in flowers which were never known before; fruits in form, size, and flavor never before seen on this globe; and grains of enormously increased productiveness, whose fat kernels are filled with more and better nourishment, a veritable storehouse of perfect food—new food for all the world's untold millions for all time to come".

—Luther Burbank at age 77, shortly before his death in 1926

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