



ABOVE: This photo of the Rentmeister family, taken around 1900, is on display in the Syracuse Museum and Cultural Center.

RIGHT: A three-dimensional town map is also part of the "Pathfinders" exhibit.



PREVIEW

- **WHAT:** 'Pathfinders' exhibit
- **WHEN:** Open house, noon-5 p.m. Saturday
- **WHERE:** Syracuse Museum and Cultural Center, 1891 W. 1700 South
- **ADMISSION:** Free; 801-825-3633

Museum salutes Syracuse's 'Pathfinders'

By **BECKY WRIGHT**
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Don Rentmeister blazed the trail for the creation of the Syracuse Museum and Cultural Center.

"He is the one, really, that started doing all this research, and is responsible for this museum," said Bev Gooch, the museum's director. "We have about 400 histories of people, and he interviewed them. ... You just can't imagine all the things this man's done."

In honor of the Rentmeister family, the museum hosts an open house from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday for a new library inside the museum. The open house also kicks off a year of "Pathfinders" exhibits, starting with an interactive map.

The small library contains more than 2,000 books collected by Don Rentmeister's uncle, John Rentmeister.

"They're mostly first editions," said Gooch, adding that many are signed. "They're books of the West; he liked Western books."

In addition to novels and biographies, there are history books and books about the counties in Utah.

Don Rentmeister passed away in the summer of 2010. Because of the Rentmeister connection to the Syracuse museum, it was decided his uncle's books would be housed there with the stipulation that visitors could read them and use them for research.

"That's what he really wanted, so we decorated the room with comfortable chairs in there, where you can sit," said Gooch, adding that Western

artifacts, such as American Indian rugs, collected by Rentmeister also are on display.

The Rentmeister family, originally from Belgium, settled in Syracuse in 1902. It wasn't long before they were actively involved in the community, with Don's father, Eli Rentmeister, organizing a musical Scout group in 1921.

In addition to books donated by the family, the museum has a display of original bar stools and other items from a Rentmeister family business, Jim's Sport Center. The eatery, started in the 1930s but now gone, served burgers and fries. Farmers often took their coffee breaks there.

Mapping history

The museum's newly completed interactive map shows where homes and businesses were located in the town between the years 1887 and 1910.

Made possible with a grant from the Utah Humanities Council, the three-dimensional map was built with small models. Visitors can push buttons, which trigger lights on the map, and listen to audio recordings about the buildings.

"It shows where all the old schools were," said Gooch. "We also have RC Willey on there."

The furniture store still exists, but some of the businesses on the map are long gone.

"A lot of people didn't know there was a resort here, and the map tells about that, and about the salt works," said Gooch.

The map is a permanent addition to the museum. Other exhibits, with a "Pathfinders" theme, will change throughout the year.

THEATER NEWS

'Our Country's Good' opening at USU

LOGAN — A historical drama about the sometimes-brutal existence of English convicts in 18th-century Australia opens at Utah State University next week.

"Our Country's Good" follows a group of settlers, consisting of convicts and Royal Marines, who are sent to New South Wales in 1788 as part of the first penal colony in Australia.

After arriving in Australia, which was occupied by the British, the brutal officers begin planning a play. The convicts are cast in the play, which is to be performed for the penal colony's governor. The play-within-a-play showcases the class system in the convict camp and addresses themes such as sexuality, punishment, the judicial system and the impact of theater upon society.

The characters are based upon real-life characters who spent nearly nine months

traveling by sea from England to the penal colony, according to costume designer and USU faculty member Nancy Hills.

"Our Country's Good" contains mild language and sexual references and is not recommended for age 16 and younger. It will be performed at 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Feb. 18, 19 and 23-26, at USU's Morgan Theatre in the Chase Fine Arts Center, 400 N. 1200 East.

Tickets are \$13 for reserved seating; \$11 for USU faculty, staff and non-USU students;

and free for USU students.

WSU students part of regional competition

LOS ANGELES — Weber State University theater students who worked behind the scenes are currently competing in the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival at the Los Angeles Theatre Center. The regional competition began Tuesday and concludes on Saturday.

The students and their

productions include Sean Bishop (costumes), Austin Hull, (scenic design) and Josh Mortensen (lighting design) for "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee"; Hull (scenic design), Kait Bennett (makeup) and Michell Casteel (sound) for "Five Carols for Christmas/Jingle Jacks"; Katrina Dransfield (costumes) and Andy Davis (makeup) for "Our Town"; and Bishop (costumes), Jaime Frank (scenery), and Nicole Finney and Derek Walden (sound) for "Under Construction."