

MADAME PRESIDENT, HONORED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: More than three decades have passed since that sunny afternoon when this building was dedicated; we are gathered here now, on San Diego's 194th birthday, not only to honor that occasion, but to honor the memory of the man who made possible the preservation of our earliest traditions.

No one was more interested in the preservation of American traditions and ideals than was George White Marston, and his interest went far beyond the point of merely talking about them. He was a man who believed in getting things done, and to him the logical place to do something about San Diego's history was the spot on which the history both of San Diego and of California began. Through his generosity and foresight ^{the} and dozens of little parcels of land surrounding the site of the old Presidio were procured; when it was done he had the area landscaped, and in it he built this handsome structure as a repository for historical records and artifacts, and presented the park and the museum to the city.

It has been said that a nation with no pride in its past has no hope for its future, and of this, Mr. Marston was keenly aware. And just as history is the record of man's achievement, so is the historical museum a physical, tangible link with the past. It provides, you might say, a means for attractively "packaging" your product -- which in this case is history -- and distributing it, through visual means, to the public.

Having provided a handsome building in an attractive setting, upon Mr. Marston fell the task of finding someone to take charge. With a wisdom which he himself perhaps did not realize then, he chose John Davidson. ^{and} in a way, a sort of a bonus deal, for in getting John, he also got  the Association of San Diego.