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MUSEUM'S NEWEST EXHIBIT

Transforming the Irvine Ranch

From cowboys, cattle and
crops to new town

BY PETE WEITZNER - EXECUTIVE PRODUCER,
"THE GOLDEN AGE OF NEWPORT HARBOR"

There are precious few seminal names, events, institutions that are on **Tiffany Pepys Hoey's** short list for an exhibit at the **Balboa Island Museum Newport Beach**.

The Irvine Ranch and all its players was surely one of those. Then coincidence happened.

"Mike Stockstill walked into the museum," Pepys Hoey said, "just as I was planning the winter Gallery Exhibit."

Summer of 2022, **Former Irvine Company Planner and Executive C. Mike Stockstill and H. Pike Oliver** published "Transforming the Irvine Ranch: Joan Irvine, William Pereira, Ray Watson and THE BIG PLAN."

Pepys Hoey and the museum now depict that story in a new exhibit that features photos and memorabilia that stretch back more than 100 years. And Stockstill is scheduled to be the featured speaker at the Museum's centerpiece event for the Exhibit on Feb. 29.

"We've seen more people taking in the Irvine Ranch exhibit than any other before," Pepys Hoey said. "People don't know the whole story, or early parts of the story."

AMONG THE CENTRAL CHARACTERS:

- **James Irvine Sr.**, who leaves Ireland in 1846, part of the California Gold Rush, but finds his gold when he purchases three land grants in Southern California.
- **James "JJ" Irvine**, who inherited the ranch in 1886, and "saw opportunity for cultivation," growing the 110,000 acres into one of California's first major agricultural growers: grains, citrus, vegetables. In 1898 he incorporated the ranch holdings under the **Irvine Company**.



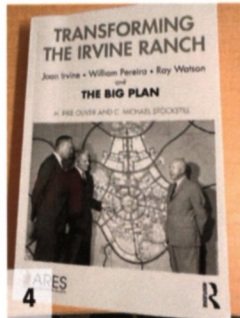
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- **Joan Irvine Smith**, the heiress and daughter of James Irvine III.
- **William Pereira**, the visionary architect who master planned the UC-Irvine campus and the city of Irvine, a master-planned community where residents could walk to schools, parks, and shopping. "This place is six times the size of Manhattan," Pereira famously said of Irvine in a **Time Magazine** cover story.
- **Ray Watson**, whose nearly century-long life took him from an Oakland boarding house to the Irvine Company and Walt Disney Company boardrooms – as planner and president of The Irvine Co., Watson built on Pereira's

- 1 / Ranch Hands: Irvine Ranch in 1910, cowboys and cattle roamed the 100,000+ acres.
- 2 / Fashion Forward: Irvine Co. execs at groundbreaking of Newport Town Center, later named Fashion Island, 1966.
- 3 / Back Story: Irvine Ranch exhibit is captivating, "most people don't know the early history," Pepsy Hoey said.
- 4 / How it Happened: Stockstill and Oliver's book tells the story of James Irvine and the transformation from Irvine Ranch to New Town.
- 5 / James II: "JJ" inherited and transformed The Ranch
- 6 / The Planner: Architect and Visionary Pereira on the cover of Time Magazine



vision in developing the city of Irvine, the iconic Fashion Island.

Today the Irvine Company is wholly owned by **Chairman Donald Bren**, who is generally regarded as Orange County's wealthiest resident.

The Irvine Ranch exhibit went live in January in the Museum's upfront gallery, where it will remain through the end of March.

The Museum is holding a Mardi-Gras themed Sunday Supper on March 3.

Visit Balboa Island Museum Newport Beach. Open daily. Free general admission. Become a member. balboaislandmuseum.org/become-a-member



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