



**Los Altos Historical Commission and Los Altos History Museum
36th Annual Margaret Thompson Historical Essay Contest
3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Graders**

2020 Theme – “Peek into Your Past!”

Background:

A photograph can capture a moment in time and preserve it for future generations. Photos help us remember special occasions, loved ones, and family traditions. J. Gilbert Smith, an orchardist who built the 1905 Smith House at the Los Altos History Museum, was also a photographer. Mr. Smith and his wife, Margaret, enjoyed traveling around California photographing the natural beauty of our state. A few examples of his photography and cameras of the time will be on display in the upstairs gallery of the Smith House from mid-January through early spring. If you wish to visit, the Museum and the Smith House are open Thursday-Sunday, from 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Do you enjoy looking at photographs of when you were young? Have you seen photos of your parents, grandparents or other loved ones from years past? Were those photos in color or in black and white? Are these photos in frames, in albums, or on your parents' cell phones? How do these photographs help to tell your family's story?

Writing Prompt:

Talk with your family about some of the photographs you have in your home. Ask about the various stories that are behind these photographs. Think about the family photos you have seen and select one old photograph of your parent, your grandparent, or other family members from previous generations.

Begin your essay by telling us about this person or persons and their relationship to you. Write about the story or stories you learned when choosing this photograph. Tell us why this photo is important to your family history. How are you similar to this person and how are you different? In conclusion, what is the most valuable information you learned from connecting with this photograph?

As you write, use interesting vocabulary and communicate your ideas in a creative manner. Please attach a **COPY** (not the original) of this photograph to your essay.

Win Prizes

1st Place - \$50 2nd Place - \$30 3rd Place - \$20

3 Winners Per Grade Level!