



Los Altos Historical Commission and Los Altos History Museum
38th Annual Margaret Thompson Historical Essay Contest
For 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Graders

2022 Theme – “History is Happening Now... Inspired by Annie Knapp Fitz”

Essay Prompt

Background:

Anna Knapp Fitz, known as Annie, moved from San Francisco to a farm in Los Altos in 1921. A self-taught artist, she loved to sketch scenes from everyday life. When asked what it was like in those bygone days, Annie responded with her paintbrush. Her portraits, historic sites, and landscapes capture the enduring spirit of early Santa Clara Valley and the towns of Los Altos, Mountain View, and Palo Alto. At a party celebrating 50 years living on her farm, she was asked what life had been like a half-century before. Her response is illustrated in the current Los Altos History Museum exhibit, titled “Annie Knapp Fitz Paints: A Legacy in Art.” Her sketches, oil paintings, and sculptures, as well as the photographs that inspired her provide us with a picture of our past.

Come to the Museum to view this exhibit by February 6, 2022. You can also view an online tour of Annie’s paintings by downloading “The Wondrous World of Anna Knapp Fitz” found on this page: losaltoshistory.org/StudentTours.

Writing Prompt:

Have a conversation with family members about favorite memories or events that have happened at your home, your school, or in your community. In your conversation, include activities which involved family members, friends, extended family, and community members. Select ONE favorite memory that you would like to write about. We encourage you to share a photograph, a sketch, or a painting to bring your memory to life...just like Annie did! If you choose to draw a sketch or paint, try to include as much detail in your picture as possible, so that future generations can imagine what life was like in Los Altos, Mountain View, or Palo Alto in the early 21st century.

Once you have selected your photograph or drawn your sketch, begin to write your essay. Tell us about your experience, explain what happened, who was involved, and why it was special and important to you. Explain how this important memory impacted your life as you move forward in the 21st century. Memories, stories, conversations with family and friends, and sketches and photographs...all of these help to create the building blocks of history.

***Use interesting vocabulary and communicate your ideas in a creative manner

Win Prizes

1st Place - \$50 2nd Place - \$30 3rd Place - \$20
3 Winners Per Grade Level!