



Old Gilroy City Hall - 1905

THE SOCIETY PAGE

Newsletter of the Gilroy Historical Society

March 2022

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Gilroy Museum Donors

GILROY MUSEUM

195 5th Street • Gilroy, CA 95020
(408) 846-0446

HOURS:

Tuesdays and Thursdays
10AM - 4PM

First and Second Saturdays
10AM - 2PM

Email the museum at:
Gilroy.Museum@cityofgilroy.org

IT'S ON AGAIN...

Please Join Us For Our Rescheduled

Gilroy Historical Society's

5TH ANNUAL HERITAGE LUNCHEON



SUNDAY, APRIL 24TH, 2022

Old City Hall Restaurant

7400 Monterey Street, Gilroy, California

11:30 Social Hour – 12 noon Lunch

followed by

152 West Productions Presents:

SENIORS WHO SHAPED GILROY

\$30.00 per person – advance purchase only – RSVP by April 16th

If you did not receive a mailed invitation, RSVP to

Joanie Lewis at 408-842-8698



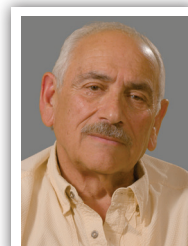
Barbara Dequin



Bob Elia



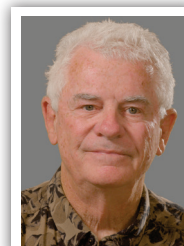
Dora Jean Enos



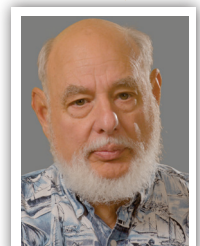
Tim Filice



Bobby Garcia



Joe Kline



Gary Rocchi

GILROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

www.gilroyhistoricalsociety.org (Follow the link on our website to reach our Facebook page)

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Lucy Solórzano		(408) 607-7722

Board meetings are held on the 1st Wednesday of the month at the Museum, 195 Fifth Street, 1:00 p.m.
Members are always welcome to attend or share ideas with the board.

MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

846-0446 ♦ gilroy.museum@ci.gilroy.ca.us

The following items are for sale with the proceeds going to benefit the Museum.

GHS Historical Footage DVD	\$ 5.00
GHS Gilroy 1950 DVD (55 mins.)	\$ 10.00
GHS Gilroy Museum Tour DVD	\$ 12.00
GHS Oral Histories DVD	\$ 10.00
Old City Hall Collector Spoon	\$ 1.00
Walking Tour Booklets	\$ 1.00
Packet Historical Homes Notecards	\$ 10.00
Single Historical Homes Notecards	\$ 1.00
Postcards	\$ 1.00
Souvenir Pencil	\$.25
Gilroy Museum Mouse Pad	\$ 10.00
Historic Home Prints by R. McGinnis	\$ 10.00/15.00
Tote Bags	\$ 5.00
Juan Bautista De Anza Booklet	\$ 5.00
<i>A Country Doctor in the Valley of Hearts Delight</i> by E. Barratt	\$ 5.00
<i>A Hundred Years of the Gilroy Hot Springs</i> by I. Sanderson	\$ 25.00
<i>John Gilroy</i> by Truda Cooling Nelson	\$ 15.00
<i>Gilroy's Old City Hall</i> by Woollacott, Pursell and Myer	\$ 5.00
<i>Images of Gilroy</i> by Claudia Salewske	\$ 20.00
<i>San Martin Then and Now</i> by D. Brodsky	\$ 20.00
Christmas Ornament (Globe)	\$ 10.00
Christmas Ornament (Ceramic)	\$ 10.00



When ordering from Amazon use **smile.amazon.com**, and they will send the Gilroy Historical Society a tiny percentage of your purchase!



Proceeds from Sales Directly Support the Gilroy Museum.

MUSEUM NEWS

MARK McPHERSON DISCOVERS GILROY'S RAILROAD HISTORY

By Susan Voss

Museum Volunteer Mark McPherson inherited his interest in trains. His father and grandfather, had 90 years of working in the industry between them! This definitely influenced his choice of research topics. His interest in the railroad's impact on Gilroy's growth and development has kept him engaged for the last six years. Using the Museum's microfilm reader, Mark began methodically searching the newspaper archives starting with the 1869 issues of the Gilroy Advocate. He has gradually worked his way through the many editions of the local newspaper, copying railroad advertisements and schedules, articles on derailments and train wrecks, and proud announcements of the construction of Gilroy train stations.

Through these newspaper articles Mark has documented the impact of improved transportation on the Gilroy community. Henry Miller is mentioned as shipping his cattle from his Bloomfield Ranch rail stop, rather than herding them to his South San Francisco slaughter house. Early passenger service to San Jose, San Francisco and eventually Monterey, enabled town folk to reach those destinations without a 40 mile or more stagecoach ride, and allowed them to return on the same day. During World War II, railroad advertisements heralded its services as the main transportation for soldiers and equipment to the Pacific theater, thus proving its worth in the war effort. Later on, farmers from the Salinas Valley and Gilroy are recorded as shipping fresh produce to eastern markets in refrigerated rail cars.

Mark's research has revealed that Gilroy has a connection to the early formation of the Southern Pacific railroad. In its early years Southern Pacific began by buying up small independent railroads or by creating the appearance of small companies through many different paper companies. The Santa Clara & Pajaro Valley Railroad (1868-1870) was one of these companies. The railroad was formed to lay track from San Jose to Gilroy, and it did so with Southern Pacific men, machinery, and rolling stock. A year-and-a half after its March 13, 1869 Gilroy arrival, the railroad was merged with Southern Pacific.

When he is finished, Mark will have documented over 150 years of Gilroy's railroad history. The railroad made Gilroy the early shipping hub of south county and until the rail line was extended, the terminus for goods traveling south by wagons to Hollister and west to Monterey. Mark's efforts in documenting Gilroy's railroad history is an important and lasting gift to his community.



**If you would like to give a gift of your time and talents,
come volunteer at the Gilroy Museum!**

Just submit the City volunteer form found at: <http://www.ci.gilroy.ca.us/524/Volunteer-Services>

You'll find a page where you can create an account and complete the application.

The instructions will inform you of the finger print process paid for by the City of Gilroy.

If you need help, drop by the museum, we're happy to get acquainted with new volunteers and assist you in the registration process!

NOMINATE A FAVORITE FOR OUR 2022 ARCHITECTURAL AWARDS!

Have you noticed an historic building that is “looking good” this year? We want to honor people who have invested in the preservation and beautification of their home or building, a significant effort that makes Gilroy a better place. You can easily nominate a building for the 2022 Architectural Awards. **Send your nomination by March 31st** using any of these methods:

E-mail: Gilroy.Museum@cityofgilroy.org

Mail: Gilroy Museum, 195 Fifth St., Gilroy, CA 95020

Phone: The Gilroy Museum at 408-846-0446

Please include your name; the street address of the nominee, and a brief explanation of why you think the building or residence deserves an award in one of these categories:

1. **HISTORIC DESIGN AWARD** - for a new building in the downtown area that complements the original historic buildings or enhances the Downtown Historic District area
2. **HISTORIC COMMERCIAL BUILDING AWARD** - for a building at least 50 years old in the downtown Historic District or on an Historic Site that restores, retains or preserves the building’s historical, cultural or architectural values.
3. **HISTORIC HOUSE AWARD** - for a home that is at least 50 years old that is an outstanding example of restoration and renovation. Exterior only.
4. **CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION** - for residential, commercial or “other”. This could be for new construction, restoration, renovation, additions, landscaping, painting or significant improvement.

If you can help by taking photos of these beautiful buildings for us, please contact **Dave Matuszak** (dmatuszak2@aol.com) or **Connie Rogers** (jrogers@garlic.com). Here are a few photos of past winners.



Who was Massey Thomas? Why is He Important?

By Connie Rogers

His name is probably on the deed to your home! In 1849 he crossed the plains to California for the gold rush. He visited the Gilroy area the next year and decided this would be a wonderful place to farm and raise his family. In 1852 Massey returned with his wife Phoebe and children, bringing 300 head of cattle with him. This time he stayed, buying nearly 500 acres and growing wheat, barley and fruit in addition to his livestock.

The family established their homestead south of the Luchessa Avenue (formerly Thomas Road) mostly on land where the Gilroy Sports Park is located. He bought this land from heirs of the Castro family who owned the Las Animas Rancho, a huge Spanish land grant covering the west side of Gilroy. Massey Thomas was not only one of our earliest settlers but was also a community leader. His was one of the families who founded the Christian Church in 1855.



Massey Thomas portrait.



Gilroy Museum photo – sign says 1853.

Henry Miller (the Cattle King) came to Gilroy in the 1860s and also bought a great deal of land in Gilroy. By 1871 he owned 80% of the former Las Animas Rancho and he wanted more exact definition of the boundaries of his land. In 1879 he sued Massey Thomas and 800 Gilroy property owners to settle the matter, resulting in the famous Las Animas Partition Suit (Henry Miller vs Massey Thomas et. al) It took nearly a decade to settle the suit, eventually settling the land titles to 260 parcels of property. And the result of this suit, thought to be the largest property lawsuit in California history, is the basis of our land titles today.

Sadly the historic home burned down in 1977. Some readers may remember Lynn and Jean Lance, both Gilroy teachers, and their five children who lived in the Massey Thomas Homestead from 1963 to 1977. They furnished this photo of the house which was located between the pathway and the new houses on Luchessa. Do you think the site and story deserve recognition?



Lance family photo of the Homestead in the 1970s.

SOCIETY NEWS

11th ANNUAL BOWL-A-THON IS RESCHEDULED

By Linda White

Since our postponement in February, due to the varying Covid regulations still in place, and the fact that our calendar is already full for April, May, and June, we have decided to wait until July for this year's event.

The exact date is still pending, but it will take place at Morgan Hill Bowl, 650 Tennant Station. Lots of time for you to practice your bowling and think about who you'll ask to sponsor you! The new date will be announced soon.

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

On **Thursday, May 12th** the Chamber of Commerce will join us for a **Night at the Museum**. From 5 to 7 PM Fifth Street will be blocked off from the alley to Church Street. There will be food and drink furnished by local Chamber Members, tours of the Museum, exhibit featuring the art work of Carol Peters for our new interpretive sign and a raffle. Even some historic Chamber of Commerce tables from the past! Join us for this Chamber Mixer and bring your friends.

MAY IS HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH

And we mean to celebrate! The County Historic Heritage Commission has teamed up with the Preservation Action Council of San Jose, California Pioneers, San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission and History San Jose. This collaboration is called the Santa Clara County Preservation Alliance and they are planning to honor the efforts of historic projects in every corner of our County! That means us! Did you know that we are the third oldest city in the county? Right after San Jose and Santa Clara. We plan to nominate some Gilroy efforts and people for recognition at the awards ceremony on May 21st at History San Jose.

WALKING TOURS ARE POPULAR

COVID has not kept us down. In fact, it has made some things more popular! Have you noticed how many people are out walking on the levee or enjoying our parks? Our monthly Historic Walking Tours are also seeing increased attendance, 101 participants last year! Please join us any first Saturday at 10 AM in front of the Museum. They are very informal and relaxing and we go to different locations each month.

REBUILDING TOGETHER STAFF DEVELOPMENT TOUR

Recently we had a special request for a custom walking tour for Rebuilding Together Silicon Valley. If you visit their website at <https://rebuildingtogethersv.org> you will find that they are a very fine non-profit agency that helps low-income homeowners make needed repairs to their homes. Having worked on some homes in Gilroy, their Executive Director, Deanne Everton, asked if we could provide a tour for their staff to help them learn about Gilroy's roots and older areas of town. She is a thoughtful leader who is trying to help her staff understand their clients and working environment.

WE WILL MISS GRACIE GARCIA

Gracie was a "fixture" in downtown and a character who operated the best antique store in Gilroy, a place many of us loved to visit. She had wonderful taste and loved beautiful things of all genres. She was also a Life Member of the Gilroy Historical Society. Last December she had a stroke, culminating in her death on February 10th at age 82. If you missed the wonderful front-page story about her in the Dispatch you can find it here: <https://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=7b1b6b80-116d-426b-b1d2-bb9b73524f1e>

DONORS

Our donors are the most thoughtful, generous people in Gilroy! They provide the basis for our work and the assurance of our future endeavors. The lists below will be on display at the Gilroy Museum for the coming year. We appreciate every penny and will try to use it wisely.

2021 MUSEUM BENEFACTORS – GOLD LEVEL

\$500 and above

Barbara & Bud Biafore

Dion Bracco

Tim Filice

Joanie Lewis

Lynda Trelut

IN MEMORIAM

*For Dorland & Riddell families
by Elizabeth McGlaulin*

*For Horace Fabing
by Cindee Sorenson*

2021 MUSEUM BENEFACTORS – SILVER LEVEL

Up to \$300

Angelo Benassi

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Donald Culver

Phyllis & Bob Dillon

Thomas & Becky Fisher

Ric & Jodi Heinzen

Jane Howard

Lenore Hailstone

John & Sarah Kelly

David & Mary Sturla

Linda White

2021 MUSEUM BENEFACTORS – BRONZE LEVEL

Up to \$100

Charles & Alice Anderson

Richard & Barbara

Armenta

Jay & Vicki Baksa

Elizabeth Barratt

Sam & Judy Bozzo

Trudie Conrotto

Donald & Mia DeLorenzo

Barbara Drewitz

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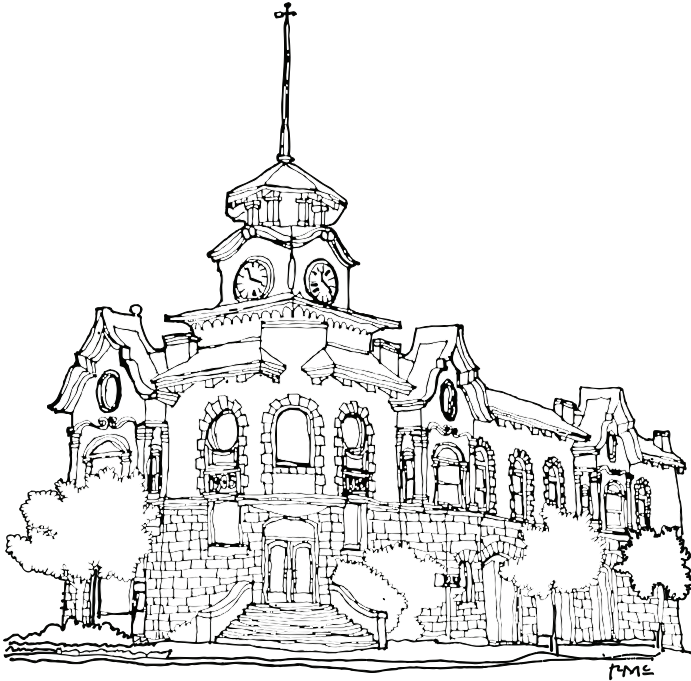
GILROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Old Gilroy City Hall (1905)

Thank You for your Membership!

Your membership or gift membership includes a subscription to *The Society Page*.

...Honoring the integrity of Gilroy Community History

Gilroy Historical Society, P.O. Box 1621, Gilroy, CA 95021-1621

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Individual \$35 Senior \$25 Family \$50 Business/Corporate \$500 Life \$500

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_____ Address _____

_____ Name _____

_____ Date _____

**GILROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**