



THE SOCIETY PAGE

Newsletter of the Gilroy Historical Society

JOIN US FOR AN ADVENTURE at

PACHECO PASS STATE PARK

SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2018, 12:00 NOON

Meet at the State Park parking lot on Dinosaur Point Road, 25 miles from Gilroy. It takes about 40 minutes to get there. Bring a picnic if you'd like to do that before our program begins at 1:00 PM. We'll have a few chairs, but if you can bring your own folding chair that will help. RSVP by calling Connie Rogers at 408-842-8494.

Our guide will be naturalist George Fohner, park volunteer who has done extensive research into history of the park and the roads traversing Pacheco Pass. Our program will be held in the surprising home of Pacheco heiress Paula Fatjo and we'll see the remains of the original adobe of Rancho San Luis Gonzaga. We'll walk about a one-mile loop along vestiges of four roads that crossed the pass, going back to the toll road built by Andrew Firebaugh in 1857, the route of the first transcontinental stage. Along the way we'll see one of Henry Miller's "line shacks" from the days of herding of Miller & Lux livestock over the pass from the Central Valley to Gilroy. The walking route is not steep or difficult, but sturdy shoes are recommended. We should see some wildflowers too!



All photos of Pacheco State Park by Connie Rogers



Henry Miller's line shack



Paula Fatjo's home



Wind turbines in the distance.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PACHECO PASS

By George Fohner

Pacheco Pass is a passage way and mixing place between coast and interior, past and present, wild and man-made. Here oak grasslands are draped over peaks and valleys, highlighted with wildflowers, streams, and scenic splendor little changed for centuries. In challenging contrast to this wildland beauty, there are wind turbines, a massive reservoir, historic roads, and other artifacts of human use that tell of the area's rich history and continuing economic importance. Heating of the interior valley pulls cool coastal air from the Pacific through the pass, creating a transitional climate and habitat for the diverse plants and animals that live here. Like the pull from contrasting air masses, the contrasting resources of the coast and interior for meeting human needs have pulled traders, pioneers and now commuters, back and forth over the pass for thousands of years. This is a place and a history of motion, inlaid with an unchanging serenity of quiet trails and open space.

AMAH MUTSUN PROGRAM

The Gilroy Library co-sponsored this well-attended program with the Historical Society on February 24th. Tribal Chairman Valentin Lopez presented the history of the tribe in our area, explaining how the early explorers, Mission period and arrival of overland settlers have impacted their culture and relationship with Mother Earth. He was joined by the executive director of the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, EkOngKar Singh Kalsa who described the work of the Land Trust in partnering with Pinnacles National Park, San Juan Bautista State Park, UC Santa Cruz and other

organizations protecting open space land. Through these noble efforts the Tribe is working to preserve their traditional ways and culture. To learn more, please visit their website at www.amahmutsun.org

We are very pleased to say that the Gilroy Museum is in the process of revising our Amah Mutsun exhibit with the expert help of volunteer Robyn Houts, an archeologist by training, with advice from Valentin. We are aiming to show the path of tribal history, including their continuing presence in our community today.



Valentin Lopez, Amah Mutsun tribal leader, explains their history. Photo by Phill Laursen.



EkOngKar Kalsa, executive director of the Amah Mutsun Land Trust. Photo by Phill Laursen.

OUR ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Old City Hall Restaurant was the scene of “Old Home Week” on January 21st when over one hundred members and friends joined us for our very first Heritage Luncheon. Judging by the reception given the honorees it was an outstanding success! Guests really enjoyed visiting with each other and the 45-minute film created by 152 West Film Productions. Each honoree received a DVD of the composite film and a DVD of their own interview. Many signed up to buy DVDs for \$10 each that were later made available at the Museum. If you would like one, there are still a few available.

Many thanks to Joanie Lewis who arranged for the interviews, filming and luncheon, to 152 West Productions for the wonderful DVD and Express Media Graphics for making copies of it for the Society.



Submitted by the Miller Red Barn Association

THE MILLER RED BARN HAS A NEW ROOF

Thanks to your support!

By Patti Perino

In May 2017, Jimmy Shrull Roofing, Inc. began work to replace the roof on The Barn. There were a number of rafters and cross beams that needed to be fixed before the new roof could be put on. Jimmy found a company that could supply him with the rough-cut redwood pieces that were needed, the same material used in the original barn. The roof is now completed and weather tight. What an improvement in looks and function!

The next stage in restoring the Barn is to put it on a reinforced cement footing and replace the flooring. At present the barn is sitting on a mudsill and has dirt, concrete and wood flooring. Mudsills were common in 1891 and were efficient. However, the squirrels and other critters have no problem digging under them and compromising the structure. In order to make the barn fully ADA compliant, keep out the critters, and stabilize the structure, a new foundation and new flooring are required.

We are anticipating that the cost of the next phase will be \$150,000. Towards this end, our grant writer is diligently working on sending out proposals and the board of directors is working on plans for fundraising events.

Our next event will be a dinner on June 23, 2018 at the VFW Hall in Gilroy. Tickets will again be on sale on our website themillerredbarn.org and at Ashford Heirlooms, 7547 Monterey Rd, Gilroy, CA 95020, (408) 842-8236.

On the third Tuesday of every month, join us for Lunch or Dinner (11am to 9pm) at Victoria's Mexican Restaurant at 757 First Street, Gilroy, CA 95020, 408-848-1052. 15% of your bill will be donated to The Miller Red Barn Restoration Fund. At dinner we usually gather tables in the middle of the dining room and all sit together, feel free to join us. People are usually coming and going starting about 6 pm. Hope to see you there!

The Miller Red Barn Association receives no financial support from the City of Gilroy. If you feel that this is a worthwhile project, please donate on our website: themillerredbarn.org

If you have any questions or comments, e-mail Patti Perino at millerredbarn@outlook.com.

Editor's Note: The Miller Red Barn Association is a separate 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization that the Gilroy Historical Society is proud to support.

150th ANNIVERSARY OF JOHN MUIR'S WALK THROUGH GILROY

By George Fohner

One hundred and fifty years ago in March, John Muir arrived in California for the first time and began his storied walk from Oakland to Gilroy, over Pacheco Pass, and on to Yosemite. Already well traveled in the wilds of North America by the time of his arrival in California at age thirty, Muir would go on to become the patron saint of the conservation movement, forever associated with the Sierra Nevada and the conservation of wild places. As Muir moved south of San Jose into the southern Santa Clara Valley on that walk to Yosemite, he was completely enthralled with his surroundings. He likened the fresh, springtime air spiced with fragrance of wildflowers to the "breath of angels", calling it the most invigorating that he had ever experienced. He describes the area as being an "Eden from end to end": air pure and bright, tempered with sunshine, alive with song of meadowlark and streams tumbling in sparkling rills down from hill to valley floor. Muir marveled at the forests of redwoods that cloaked the mountains to the west and mix of oaks and grasses to the east while he wandered through rich bottomlands that glowed with vast expanses of wildflowers of white, yellow, and purple, sparkling with highlights of red and blue in a tapestry with vivid green grasses. Muir equated his experience traveling through the southern Santa Clara Valley to a baptism that awakened in him a new capacity for happiness. His euphoric descriptions of the area rival the glorious descriptions of the Sierra Nevada that brought him international acclaim.

Exhilarated as he was about the natural wonders around him and captivated by the novelty and beauty of the California landscape that he was seeing for the first time, Muir in his writings about the trip barely mentions the names of the communities that he passed through on his way from Oakland to Pacheco Pass. He does mention Gilroy, however, because it was here that he turned east to leave the Santa Clara Valley on his way to the pass. Gilroy in 1868 was becoming a regional center for a diverse mix of agriculture, logging, and other enterprises, and was a key part of the Miller & Lux livestock empire that shaped California agriculture. If Muir spent time in Gilroy, he might well have encountered William Hanna, a leading citizen of Gilroy at the time and for many years thereafter. Hanna was one of the trustees when Gilroy incorporated as a town in 1868 just weeks before Muir passed through and was a councilman when Gilroy incorporated as a city in 1870, later becoming mayor. Almost forty years after Muir's 1868 journey, William Hanna's grandson, Tom Hanna, married Muir's daughter Wanda. Tom went on to manage Muir's farming business near Martinez during Muir's later years when Muir devoted his time and energies to advocating for the protection of Yosemite and other wildlands.

Muir's enthusiasm for his surroundings did not diminish as he headed east from Gilroy toward Pacheco Pass. Regaled with "shouts" of quail and the song of streams cascading into valley, Muir frequently departed the road to

explore the “rich garden” on sunlit hillsides, in shady, fern-filled grottos, and in the cobble streambed where Pacheco Creek meandered back and forth in the midst of sycamore, alder, and dogwood. Here Muir also likely saw cattle owned by Miller & Lux grazing on valley pastures and adjacent hillsides of grass, oak, and chaparral. Along the way Muir almost certainly crossed paths with freight and livestock that the company was constantly moving over the pass between Gilroy and its ranches in the San Joaquin Valley. Muir even may have seen Henry Miller on horseback on one of his regular treks between his Gilroy home ranch and those San Joaquin ranches.

Like Muir, Henry Miller recognized the rare value of the southern Santa Clara Valley. Of the million and a half acres that Miller owned, and the vastly larger area that he controlled by lease or other means in valleys and mountains throughout the west, he favored the Gilroy area as his business headquarters, home, and vacation retreat. He referred to his Bloomfield Ranch just south of the city of Gilroy as the “center place”, reflecting both its importance to his business as well as its geographic location. Miller’s life revolved around work, but he treasured spending Sundays and his brief vacations with family on his land at Mount Madonna, and took great pleasure in hosting employees and business associates there.

John Muir and Henry Miller are not generally thought of as having similar perspectives on the environment or its use, but they both clearly considered the southern Santa Clara valley to be a special place. Both also were in fact similarly frugal and conscious about using natural resources wisely and not squandering them.

The 150th anniversary of Muir’s arrival in California and walk through Gilroy comes at a time when land use decisions affecting Gilroy and its surroundings are being made under intense budgetary and development pressure. Blessed with a sense of community, fertile farmland, scenic productive rangeland, splendid parks and wild lands, and a strategic location among natural and manmade wonders that are known worldwide, few places on earth can match what this area still has to offer. Both Muir and Miller undoubtedly would agree that current residents of the area and their elected representatives should not undervalue this extraordinary area as they make decisions that will affect the quality of life here far into the future.

Author ID: George Fohner has lived and worked in Gilroy for thirty-four years.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

BOWL-A-THON RESULTS

Our eighth annual Bowl-a-thon was enjoyed by 25 participants on March 24th at Gilroy Bowl. Thanks to the considerable efforts of Linda White, aided by too-many-to-mention local businesses that donated prizes and especially Margene Peterson who topped her own record of obtaining pledges, over \$8,500 was raised for our Gilroy Museum Endowment Fund held by the Gilroy Foundation. That is incredible! And we had a lot of fun bowling too.

GENEALOGY SPEAKER AT GILROY MUSEUM

Sheila Benedict, genealogy expert, will hold training and information for our museum volunteers on Thursday, May 3rd from 10:30 to noon at the Museum. She will present a general overview of current genealogical research techniques, adequate source citations, repositories, archives, etc. In other words, basics along with answering questions for every level of experience. If you would like to join us for this free event, please call the Museum at 408-846-0446 or email the Museum at gilroymuseum@cityofgilroy.org Seating is limited.

FACEBOOK, GILROY GOLD, ETC.

Sean Barragan continues to help the Society and Museum by making interesting videos. We have some (on flash drives) that are shown on the monitor at the Museum and also on our Facebook page. We have the Old St. Mary Cemetery tour (22 minutes), Hot Springs Tour (21 minutes) and exterior tour of the IOOF Children's Home (11 minutes). Use our website at gilroyhistoricalsociety.org or access our Facebook page directly by entering Gilroy Historical Society in the search bar. Sean also posts these and other good things on the Gilroy Gold Facebook page.

REMINDER – AMAZON SMILE

If you order from Amazon you can also help the Society by placing your order through Amazon Smile. As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization we receive .5% of your order directly to our bank account. So far we've made about \$75. It works the same way as regular Amazon, so just list [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/Smile) as one of your Favorites or bookmark it.



Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs

Henry W. Coe State Park

“Healthy Living Through History”

**Saturday, May 19, 2018
9:00 AM to 4:30 PM**

Healthy Living is a part of Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs!

- * Enjoy fresh air & exercise at Coe park
- * Enjoy docent led tours, exhibits, activities for the family:
 - * Learn about the post WW II resettlement here,
 - * and about Captain Masuo Kitaji and his Bibles.
- * Bring a picnic & friends (pack-in/pack-out); parking on site
- * Cost for the event is \$20.00 per person / under 12 free with adult
 - * For reservations call or text: (408) 314-7185
 - or email: info@GilroyYamatoHotSprings.org

All proceeds go to GYHS protection & restoration efforts

- * Directions: travel east on Leavesley Rd, turn left on New Ave, right on Roop Rd, veer left onto Gilroy Hot Springs Rd, cross the big green bridge and continue to end of road.
 - * Please carpool. Limited parking will be available.
- * Call (408) 314-4185 to request special accommodations.



GYHS is a subgroup of the Pine Ridge Association, the official volunteer organization for Henry W. Coe State Park, and a qualified 501(c)(3) not for profit public benefit corporation.



www.GilroyYamatoHotSprings.org

info@GilroyYamatoHotSprings.org

Photos courtesy of the Fumi Kato, Aiko Kitaji, Betty Bowen, H K Sakata, and McDonald-Lundblade families