

Museum News

The Art of Survival: Enduring the Turmoil of Tule Lake ends May 15, 2016.

Permanent Exhibit: In addition to a variety of programs and exhibits for all age groups, the Museum features a permanent exhibit of local valley history. This exhibit begins with geology and prehistoric times and concludes with contemporary times. A historical narrative frieze near the ceiling traces valley history in drawings, artifacts, illustrations, photographs and captions. History brochures and hands on opportunities enrich the visitor experience. Monday, May 16 to Thursday, May 19, and Monday, July 4 to Friday, July 15, 2016 are the dates for this exhibit.

Quilts will be on exhibit from Friday, May 20, to Sunday July 3, 2016.

Model Trains will be running through the Depot from Saturday, July 16, to Sunday, September 18, 2016.

Town of Danville Tours: To Schedule a tour, please call Eve/Donna at the museum at (925) 837-3750.

General: When the Museum is open, a trained docent is always on duty and can provide exhibit tours for visitors. Reserved tours are available during open or closed hours by appointment. Large groups are encouraged to call ahead to assure that a docent is available specifically for your group.

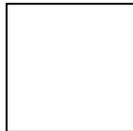
The Museum of the San Ramon Valley is located on the southwest corner of Prospect & Railroad Avenues, and accessible via the Iron Horse Trail [P.O. Box 39, Danville, CA, 94526, (925) 837-3750]

Hours: 1-4 pm Tuesday-Friday, 10 am-1 pm Saturday, 12-3 pm Sunday.

Need a Ride To The Society Meeting On May 19<sup>th</sup>? Contact Bill Lloyd

Visit - [SRVHistoricalSociety.org](http://SRVHistoricalSociety.org)

Over 45 Years Looking Back!



First Class Mail



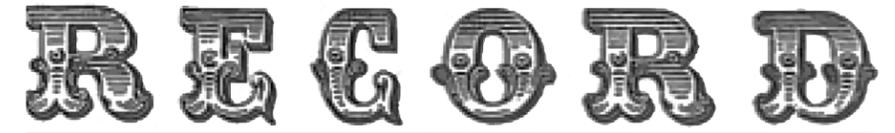
SAN RAMON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 521 · DANVILLE, CALIFORNIA 94526

NEXT MEETING  
THURSDAY,  
May 19<sup>TH</sup>  
"RESTORING AN 1850's BARN"

SAN RAMON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



May 2016



ALAMO · BLACKHAWK · DANVILLE · DIABLO · SAN RAMON

Pearl Harbor Was Remembered At Our March 17<sup>th</sup> Dinner Meeting

On Sunday, December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii. Chuck Kohler is a survivor of that attack. He spoke about his experience on that day, his later return visit to that place, and other experiences in his life.

Chuck spoke about his involvement in this historic event occurring over 74 years ago. He was a 17 year old seaman stationed on Ford Island at Pearl Harbor. The event began at about 7:51 a.m. Hawaiian time. Bombs, torpedoes, and machine gun fire from airplanes began raining down on ships, military installations and on the civilian population at Pearl Harbor. The battleships Utah, Oklahoma, and Arizona along with some of their crew slipped beneath the oil covered burning waters of Pearl Harbor forever.

On this day, Chuck was assigned to 0800 to 1200 security watch at a hanger Building 54 located on Ford Island at the center of Pearl Harbor. He had arrived at the hanger early and he was in an upper level office attempting to type a letter to his mother. Before joining the Navy, he had never seen a typewriter, much less used one. He was using the hunt and peck system.

At this time, if you could type forty words per minute, you were considered to be an expert typist. Chuck was much slower, but making progress and proud of what he was doing. He wanted to impress his family back on that farm in Minnesota with that typewritten letter.

He heard the sound of approaching aircraft in the background. That was not unusual at a Naval Air Station. Airplanes come and go, but not usually on a Sunday, and not that early in the morning.

As the sounds grew louder, Chuck remembered that a couple of carriers, the USS Lexington and the USS Enterprise, had left the harbor the previous week to deliver short range aircraft to Marine and Naval forces on Midway. at Wake Island. Chuck figured that they were returning from this mission. The planes would be launched at sea and land at a land air base while that carrier was in the harbor.

The sound of the airplane changed, and Chuck knew immediately that the plane was in a power dive. Chuck thought that the returning pilot was doing a little hot dogging and having a little fun. Chuck did not want to be in that pilot's shoes when the pilot's Captain got a hold of him, because that pilot was going to be in big trouble. Little did Chuck realize that it was he and others on the ground who (continued on page 2)

Learn About Restoring An 1850's Barn at May 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Did you know that an actual 1850's barn still proudly stands in the San Ramon Valley? Well it does, out on Forest Home Farms in San Ramon. Built on the Samuel Russell Ranch which later became part of the Boone Ranch, it was used to store hay, barley, and wheat and to shelter cattle. Pat Boom will tell the tale at our May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Today the "ole" barn needs a little bit of work, but is one of 18 buildings still standing at Forest Home Farms, all of which have been added to the National Register of Historic Places. It is interesting that the agricultural tradition that anchored our Valley for generations has not entirely been replaced with acres of sparkling homes and commercial centers. Pat Boom has long been involved in protecting historic buildings and preserving local history so that makes her an ideal choice to share this story with us.

The meeting will be held at the San Ramon Golf Club, 9430 Fircrest Lane in San Ramon. We will gather at 6:30 pm, eat at 7:00 pm, and enjoy our speaker. We hope to see you there!

### Pearl Harbor (Continued)

were going to be in big trouble.

Suddenly and almost simultaneously there was a tremendous roar and bomb fragments, explosive debris and window glass came crashing onto the back of Chuck's head, ears, neck and shoulders. Chuck still had the hot dogging theme in mind, but something was amiss. He decided to leave the office to see if he could be of help.

Chuck pushed himself back from the desk and debris covered typewriter, he shook off as much of the debris as he could, and started for the door. Then he realized that he wasn't supposed to be typing in the first place. So he removed that letter from the typewriter, crumpled it with his hand, and threw it in the waste basket as he went out the door. Today, Chuck wishes he would have kept that letter.

As Chuck got out the door, there was another airplane coming his way in a steep power dive. He observed blinking flashing lights on the front. He heard strange popping sounds around him. But he did not recognize any of this for what it was.

The blinking lights were machine gun fire. The sounds Chuck was hearing were the machine gun bullets striking and ricocheting off the steel hangar door and off the concrete apron on which he was standing.

When Chuck looked up, the plane was about 150 feet over his head. He saw the insignia on the wings. The plane had also dropped a bomb. All of this convinced Chuck that these were not the friendly fellows he envisioned.

Chuck hurried into the hanger hoping he could find someone with the keys to the ammunition shack where guns and ammunition were kept. He wanted to get this equipment and get at these attackers.

As Chuck came in the front door of the hangar, a voice shouted that Chuck should follow him. So Chuck did. Instead of heading for the ammo shack, the leader turned another way and went down into a construction ditch. Chuck followed, got himself stabilized in the ditch and looked up. There was a man in his white dress uniform. On the left sleeve of that uniform was a petty officer's rating badge.

Chuck asked if he was the duty ordinance man and if he had a key to the ordinance shack. Chuck suggested that they go get guns and shoot these blankety blank blanks. Chuck got up to leave the ditch. The officer ordered him to get back in the ditch.

Chuck realized that this was the beginning of that talked about war. He was a military man. He did not want to hide in a ditch. If he was going to lose his life, it would be in fighting the enemy. He wanted his family to know that he died fighting, not hiding.

Chuck left the ditch. The officer threatened to put Chuck on report for disobeying a direct order. With all of the activity going on around them, Chuck couldn't believe it.

Somehow Chuck and others made it to the ammo shack and got the door open. Chuck asked for a 50 caliber machine gun. This was not a shoulder fired weapon. It looked like a canon without wheels. He took it, cradled it in his arms as best he could, and started for the door. With him were a few other brave souls who didn't want to be in that ditch either. One person following Chuck came in the door. He was much taller and stronger than Chuck. Chuck gave him the weapon, and he carried it out the door. Chuck followed him with some ammunition.

The man with the machine gun was a second class petty officer at the time, and Chuck was a first class seaman. Chuck was thankful that the two of them could work together without regard to military rank, or none of this would have ever happened.

The two of them took the equipment to the rear end of an airplane in the front of the hanger, but positioned so that it could be fired at the attacking airplanes.

(continued on page 3)

### The Sales Table — ~~ Nancy Ramsey

Packets of cards depicting Mount Diablo, Front Street, Southern Pacific Depot, Tassajara School, "Grand Dames" of San Ramon, Alamo Grammar School 1876, and a collection of assorted historical scenes are available. Each packet contains 8 cards and 8 envelopes. Member Price - \$3.50 per packet. Historic scene postcards are \$0.20 each.

Do stop by the Sales Table

Need a Ride  
To The Society Meeting  
May 19<sup>th</sup>?

Contact Bill Lloyd

Visit — [SRVHistoricalSociety.org](http://SRVHistoricalSociety.org)

## RECORD

Published by  
San Ramon Valley Historical Society  
Founded 1970  
P.O. Box 521, Danville, CA 94526

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### Member's Memorial Gift

NAMES HONORED BY MEMORIAL AND COMMEMORATIVE GIFTS, AND NAMES OF DONORS, ARE ENTERED IN A BOOK OF MEMORY AND WILL BE PLACED IN OUR MUSEUM. For tax purposes, we are a non-profit organization. You may make your donation to the society or to the Museum - Please check box below.

Make check to: San Ramon Valley Historical Society Memorial Fund. Please ✓ for:  SRVHS  MSRV

Mail to: SAN RAMON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY P. O. Box 521, Danville, CA 94526

This contribution  REMEMBERS  HONORS  EXPRESSES APPRECIATION  OTHER

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DONOR Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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### Dinner Reservations

**Thursday**  
**May 19, 7 p.m.**

\$23.00 per person

San Ramon Royal Vista Golf Clubhouse  
9430 Fircrest Lane  
(North off Alcosta Blvd., San Ramon)

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO S.R.V.H.S. (Deadline May 17, 2016)

Mail to: S.R.V.H.S., P. O. Box 521, Danville, CA 94526

NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

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