

### Members' Corner

Dall Barley was elected to the Historical Society's board of directors to replace Judy Sandkuhle who recently resigned due to the press of her work. Dall worked as an analyst for the Clorox Corporation in Oakland until his retirement. For the last 11 years he was an active member of the Board of Directors of the San Ramon Historic Foundation that raises funds in support of Travis Boone's Forest Home Farm. Since all good things come to an end he retired from that board and we are very happy to welcome him to our Board of Directors. We also thank Judy for her great service on our board.



**Lambert Wille's interesting story about his grandfather's travels from Denmark to the San Ramon Valley is on Page 4. Lambert is shown here with articles his grandfather, a cobbler, had in his shoe shop on Highway 21.**

**Need a Ride To The Society Meeting On September 17th? Contact Bill Lloyd.  
Visit — [SRVHistoricalSociety.org](http://SRVHistoricalSociety.org)**

*Over 45 Years Looking Back!*



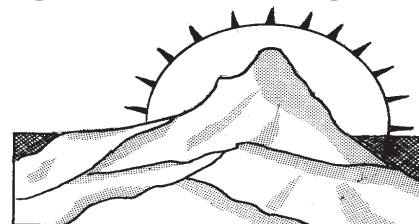
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SAN RAMON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 521 • DANVILLE, CALIFORNIA 94526

**NEXT MEETING  
THURSDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 17TH  
"THE McCAMLEY INHERITANCE"**

# SAN RAMON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



September 2015

ALAMO · BLACKHAWK · DANVILLE · DIABLO · SAN RAMON

## We Enjoyed Learning So Many Interesting Things About The Iron Horse Trail At Our May Meeting

For the last 124 years one of the major landmarks in the San Ramon Valley was first a railroad line and later a key hiking trail. Known today as the Iron Horse Trail, it was initially the route of the Southern Pacific San Ramon Branch Line Railroad. At our May meeting, Jim Townsend related the history of this fascinating piece of real estate that threads through the communities of the Valley. Jim is the East Bay Regional Parks Trails Development Program Manager overseeing all 32 miles of the trail.

The story of the Iron Horse Trail started in 1873. The Danville Grange was organized for the good of the valley ranchers. The Grange members backed the idea of a line to serve the valley ranchers. There were row and orchard crops and grain that needed to be moved to market. August Hemme, leader of the Danville Grange at this time, organized the farmers and ranchers. They approached the Southern Pacific Railroad to build a rail line for their use. Farmers, ranchers, and others interested in the project donated land. The rail line was to connect to the Martinez docks. Martinez was one of the largest shipping ports in the world at the time.

Charles Crocker, son of the famous Charles Crocker (who had died in the late 1870's), agreed to build 40 miles of rail line, from Martinez to Danville, in 90 days. (Government regulations weren't as extensive then.) The rail line began service in 1891.

The rail line spurred development. Lots 50' by 100' along the line sold for \$50 each.

Pictures of the San Ramon Station built in 1915, the Danville Station, used today as the historical Museum of the San Ramon Valley, and the Hemme Station in Alamo were shown,

The Walnut Creek Station was moved about 600 yards from its original spot and is now the home to the Vic Stewart Steak House.

The Pleasant Hill Station picture showed Theo Hookston, the stations namesake, on a horse.

The Concord Station, built in 1907, was the last station on the line.

A photo taken in the late 1890s showed sugar beets being loaded onto a rail car at the Baldwin Ranch. Horses dragged wagons loaded with beets up a ramp to the top of a rail car. The beets were dumped into the cars and hauled to a refinery where they were pressed into sugar.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## "The McCamley Inheritance" — Their Family Drama Is Our Topic At Our September 17th Dinner Meeting

So have you ever heard a story about siblings, cousins, horse thieves, scoundrels, and good citizens? Do you know what happened to George McCamley's estate? Once he owned a rich 375 acre ranch in San Ramon that he purchased in 1860 and was respected enough to get elected to the San Ramon School Board. Come listen to Claudia Nemir recount the tale about both the McCamley and Oswill families. George died in 1898 but some things just take forever to resolve. This family drama will capture your attention.

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.

### The Iron Horse Trail (Continued)

An 1895 picture showed the Shuey warehouses surrounded by orchards.

The gold miners who came to California were more successful at growing food than they were at mining. Arden Wood, near Fremont, was another successful farming area.

A trailhead to the Mount Diablo summit was also served by the San Ramon Branch Line. In 1913 Robert Burgess purchased land and planned to build a resort on the mountain. That land is now part of Mt. Diablo State Park.

Trucks displaced much of the rail traffic. Growing crops changed to ranching. The rail lines fell into disrepair. After WWII, freeways were built, and the use of the Branch Line as a rail corridor ended.

In 1976, the corridor was added to an area trails master plan. In 1978, the Interstate Commerce Commission granted Southern Pacific Railroad permission to end service on the Branch Line. In 1979, the steel rails and ties along with some bridges were removed and sold for scrap.

Bob Doyle was able to save one bridge that was scheduled for tear down. Another bridge that survived was a trestle in Walnut Creek.

1981 was the first segment of the Iron Horse Trail. No government was involved. A private developer at the Alamo Plaza Shopping Center installed 900 feet of gravel on the trail behind the Alamo Safeway - the first piece of the new trail. Community involvement was strong. A study was begun.

In 1982, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission funded more studies for the corridor. In 1983, Pleasant Hill built one mile of the trail.

In the 1980's, a number of community groups were formed to support the development of the trail. One of the groups, the Right of Way Trail Advocates, was led by Bick Hooper and Beverly Lane.

In 1984-1985, the county, which had acquired the corridor from the railroad, granted a license to East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) to install a large pipeline in the Alamo-Danville Area. EBMUD then offered the Park District a license to use their easement for a trail on top of the water line. This was the first trail license signed.

Contra Costa County and Alameda County purchased the right of way from the Southern Pacific, to use as a transportation corridor. The Iron Horse Trail was established in 1986. The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) was to maintain the trail.

In 1986, three more miles of the trail were completed in the Danville area by the Right of Way Trail Associates. EBRPD General Manager Dick Trudeau and his staff realized that the Iron Horse Trail was going to be constructed in pieces. The 32 miles from Martinez to Livermore was built when there was development, opportunity, or money available. The San Ramon Valley Iron Horse Regional Trail was the chosen name.

In 1987, the right of way was acquired from the Southern Pacific Railroad. Contra Costa County paid \$23.36 million for its share of the right of way. Alameda County paid for its share. Most of the funding for the Contra Costa portion came from transportation money. Contra Costa County insisted on a specific trail width for the right of way so that light rail transportation could be accommodated, if necessary.

At this time, the City of San Ramon is involved with some other agencies in attempting to build bridges at Bollinger Canyon and Crow Canyon. The Bollinger Canyon Bridge is part of the San Ramon Civic Center Project. It is challenging to bridge design to fit in everything and still include the possibility for light rail use.

In 1988, a joint policy statement was developed. These are statements made by funding agencies that do not have the force of law. They agreed that the right of way would be used as a non-motorized transportation and underground facility corridor. They requested CALTRANS and the MTC to save transportation options along the I-680 freeway. The right of way would remain unbroken under public ownership.

Contra Costa County has not sold any part of its Iron Horse Trail right of way. Alameda County has sold part of its Iron Horse Trail corridor right of way in Livermore and in Pleasanton.

In 1996, the Iron Horse Trail was extended beyond the San Ramon Valley. In 1997, the first major structure, the Ygnacio Valley Bridge, was constructed.

Beverley Lane was involved with the trail in the beginning, and she is involved with the trail today. Without the concern, pressure, and input from an elected official, the project would not have been as successful in getting the 32 miles of trail built.

(Continued on Page 3)

### The Sales Table — Nancy Ramsey

(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  
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On September 17th?  
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### RECORD

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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.

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

This contribution to the Society REMEMBERS ( ), HONORS ( ), EXPRESSES APPRECIATION ( ), OTHER ( ). Please check one.

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### Dinner Reservations

**Thursday,  
September 17, 7 p.m.**

\$20.00 per person

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO S.R.V.H.S. (Deadline September 15, 2015)  
Mail to: S.R.V.H.S., P.O. Box 521, Danville, CA 94526

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

## In Memoriam



### William Augustus Ghirardelli, II

July 20, 1923 - August 13, 2015

Resident of Emeryville



Bill went home to be with his Lord and Savior on August 13, 2015.

A third generation Californian, he was born at home in Oakland on July 20, 1923. He was a cowboy at heart, a member of the Will James Society, an accomplished horseman, and had read every Louis L'Amour book many times over.

He attended local schools and graduated from Oakland High where he was commissioner of boy's athletics and a track and football star. His athletic skills lead to many scholarship opportunities, and he chose Saint Mary's College, where he had an outstanding football career.

Bill delayed his education to serve his country in World War II as an Army Sergeant, and was called up again as a 1st Lieutenant in Korea, for a total of 5 years active service. He was proud of his time in the military, and was active in the San Ramon Valley Veteran's Association for many years. In 1948 he received his B. S. from St. Mary's in economics and business administration.

He married his sweetheart, Joanne Getchmann on August 8, 1947, and they recently celebrated 68 wonderful years together. After first settling in Oakland, they built a home in Danville, where they raised 3 children, as well as many dogs and assorted varmint.

Bill built a career in advertising, starting his own company, Aim-Ad, which he ran successfully from 1960 to 1997, with offices in Oakland and Danville. He was active in Lion's Club, serving as President, Zone Chairman, and a founder of the Leo Club. Bill and Joanne were pioneer members of Community Presbyterian Church in Danville, attending there for 54 years. He served as a deacon, an elder, and Bible Study Fellowship leader. He also followed God's call serving in the Prison Ministry for 4 years, significantly changing a man's life. In retirement, he tutored many people as an ESL instructor. He loved life, people, parties, and road trips with Joanne. They built 2 mountain cabins for family to gather at Bear River and then Dorrington.

Bill was devoted to his family above all. He was a loving and supportive father, and was the consummate Grandpa to his 6 grandchildren. He rarely missed their games, and performances, and coordinated many wonderful family vacations both in the U.S. and abroad, his favorite being trips to Italy. Grandpa "Delli" loved to gather his grandsons for the annual "Big Trees Camp" in Calaveras County. He served as camp & activities director, as well as chief cook and bottle washer, making memories that will last forever.

Moving to Emeryville in 2012, Bill & Joanne enjoyed being closer to family, as well as Fenton's. Bill was one of their most devoted customers since the 1920's, always ordering a chocolate all around, non-pour milkshake! He made many new friends, both in his neighborhood, the nearby Emeryville Senior Center, and at First Presbyterian Church in Berkeley. He liked to tell people he was 92 years old.

His parents, William A., Sr. and Elsie L. as well as his beloved sister Barbara precede Bill in death. He is survived by his wife Joanne, and his children William A. III (Jan), Jill (Steve), and Tim, his adored grandchildren, Matt, Ben, William A. IV "Bo", Nick, Genna, and Katie, as well as his brother Robert (Jan). There were no strangers to Bill, only friends he hadn't yet met. "Sempre Amici!"

A memorial service was held at First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, 2407 Dana Street, Berkeley, CA 94704 at 1 PM on August 28, 2015.

Family suggests that memorial contributions be made to Youth Business USA, a 501(c)3 nonprofit founded by his grandson, Bo, that assists underserved youth to develop new businesses. Their website is [www.ybusa.org](http://www.ybusa.org). Alternatively, please make donations to the deacon's fund at First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley.

Published in the *Contra Costa Times* on August 23, 2015.

## The Iron Horse Trail (Continued)

The bridges built over major streets are as much a traffic improvement as they are a trail improvement - safer for trail users and timed pedestrian crossing traffic lights are not required. There is more money available in transportation than there is in recreation.

In 2000, President and first lady Clinton made the Iron Horse Trail a millennium trail. Jim showed a picture of people attending the dedication ceremony. It involved a section of the trail that connects San Ramon to Alameda County.

In 2006, the first segment of the trail in Pleasanton was completed. It was an isolated segment near Santa Rita Road. This was done to convince land developers to put some money into the project.

A trail section near the Pleasant Hill BART Station including the Robert Schroeder Bridge was completed in 2010. The trail section threaded a needle between existing office buildings, a PGE substation and the BART station. The cost was about \$12 million. The bridge has been an asset to the traffic flow on Treat Blvd. and the trail users.

In 2014, the Iron Horse Trail in Pleasanton connected to the section near Santa Rita Road. This two mile section connected to the Pleasanton BART Station and cost about \$6 million. It was constructed with funds from a Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery grant - a "TIGER" grant.

This is an example of how the Park District has been able to gather data and successfully re-brand portions of its trail network as a part of the transportation infrastructure. The Park District secured \$10 million in TIGER funding that it has leveraged into \$19 million projects, with less than \$2 million of it being local taxpayer money.

With Federal money, if you send \$1 to Washington, you receive \$0.75 along with conditions that must be met that costs another \$.20. So you finally receive \$0.55.

Jim reported that 60,000 - 70,000 people use the Iron Horse Trail every month - people walking and riding bicycles. Trail project people are using this data to try to secure more money for trail projects. Project supporters hope to extend the trail through Livermore to Greenville Road.

There is an Alameda County tax measure that was an extension and an increase in the transportation sales tax that passed and provides more than \$50 million for regional trails in Alameda County. This includes the Iron Horse Trail and the San Francisco Bay Trails. Over the life of the measure \$650 million will be provided for non-motorized transportation projects in Alameda County.

Contra Costa County is considering doing a similar extension of Measure J that has been very helpful for both motorized and non-motorized transportation projects.

The Iron Horse Trail project has been working with the City of San Ramon on a bridge design in their area. The city went through a process that involved opening up a web site for design suggestions. The city has accepted a design. It looks to be cost effective and a good design statement.



**Jerry Warren and Jim Townsend at our May Meeting. We all learned so many interesting and informative facts about The Iron Horse Trail which many members walk often.**

## We Learned About Lambert Wille's Grandfather's History In San Ramon At Last Month's Summer Social

Lambert Wille told of his grandfather's travels from Denmark to the San Ramon Valley at the Society Summer Social at Oak Hill Park on Sunday, August 2, 2015.

In 1868 at age 18, Peder Anderson Thorup, came to the United States from Slesvig (Schleswig) Medolden, Denmark. This was a common occurrence to avoid conscription due to the ongoing war between Germany and Denmark. After arriving in New York, he traveled west to Peoria, Illinois. While living in Peoria for 4-5 years he learned the cobbler trade. He then traveled across the plains to San Francisco and then to the Hayward area. Hayward was not to his liking. He went east to the San Ramon Valley where Scandinavian families had settled, including several from Denmark.

Peder obtained a little store, a hole in the wall, just south of the Ferreria General Store.

Lambert showed a picture of the shoe shop on Highway 21, the original home, and large barn where Peder processed a variety of animals for his own use.

Ane Marie Rasmussen was born in Rudenkoben, Langeland, Denmark. Her parents, Hans and Anne Christine (Hansen) Rasmussen, were born at Trykalo, Northern Bro., Denmark.

Ane came to the United States with her brother in April, 1882. Hans left Denmark to avoid compulsory military service. After three months in Petaluma, Hans went to the Peter Rasmussen's in Livermore and Ane started working for the Moore family, of Moore Canyon (now Crow Canyon Road) in San Ramon.

Ane and Peder met and were married on January 8, 1884, at Peter Rasmussen's home in Livermore. They settled in San Ramon. Hans and Anne Christine celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary on January 8, 1909.

In 1883-1884 he was able to buy a piece of land near Highway 21 and what is now Crow Canyon Road. It was on the mail road between San Jose and Benicia (the California State Capitol). There was a hotel and stage coach stop on the land. His down payment was a cow. They developed the land by planting fruit and walnut trees and raised their own produce and livestock of horses, cows, pigs, and chickens.

By 1884, San Ramon had a store, school, church, blacksmith shop, and a saloon.

Peder had his own P. A. Thorup Boot and Shoe Manufacturing Shop in San Ramon next to the family home. Peder specialized in custom made shoes for everyone in the valley.

Peder and Ane had seven children, all born in San Ramon.

Their seventh child was Petrea Arnoldin, born October 3, 1906. She married Beryl Wille on May 25, 1925. Beryl was born on December 8, 1900.

Petrea and Beryl had four children. Their second child was Lambert P. Wille, born July 13, 1930.

Lambert attended local schools and then enrolled at Cal Poly. He studied architecture. After graduation, he worked as a carpenter and then general contractor. In a couple of years he received his California State contractor's license and a year later his architect's license. He practiced architecture over his career, specializing in residential house design. He lives in Danville.

One attendee remembered Lambert as a boy. Beryl used to deliver newspapers, and Lambert would sit on the car fender and put the newspaper in the newspaper tube mounted on the mail box post for each house.

Another attendee lives in a house Lambert designed. She loves the house.

The information above was taken from Lambert's talk and from *Historical Persons and Places in San Ramon Valley*, by Virgie V. Jones, Morris-Burt Press, Alamo, California, 1987.

## In Memoriam



**Arlene Gloria Pearson**  
October 27, 1920 - June 30, 2015  
Resident of Danville



Arlene was born in Oakland, CA. She attended Castlemont High School. She married Sheldon Pearson in 1939. The couple moved to Danville in 1951. Arlene was Director of Food Services for the San Ramon Valley School District for over 28 years. Arlene was President of the San Ramon Valley Historical Society in 1989. Arlene graduated from the Concord Clown School in April 2001. The Alamo-Danville Soroptimists presented a gift to her to attend this school. Arlene was the Danville Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year in 2002. Arlene's husband Sheldon and their daughters Ardy Deardorff (Mel) and Susan Archibald (Bob) predeceased her. Arlene is survived by her son Arnold (Margo), 10 grandchildren, 19 great grandchildren, and 4 great-great grandchildren. Services for Arlene were held at Community Presbyterian Church in Danville on July 25, 2015.

## Museum News

### August 29 - September 26: Journey Stories

Journey Stories examines how migration and transportation helped build our nation, how it has changed us, how our mobile world looked to travelers along the way. Our history is filled with stories of people leaving everything behind - families and possessions - to reach a new life in another state, across the continent, or even across an ocean. Journey Stories is an exhibition from the Smithsonian Institution and is part of their Museum on Main Street series.

### June 23 - November 8: The Museum at 30

Celebrating Three Decades of Service Telling Stories about the San Ramon Valley, a mini exhibit in the Waiting Room. The Museum of the San Ramon Valley has served the community for three decades. It was started by the San Ramon Valley Historical Society in 1985, and opened in Danville's Southern Pacific Depot as a museum in 1999. The exhibit tells the story of the valley's history and the museum's evolution from vision to reality. There are treasures from the archives and a video of the depot move.

### Town of Danville Tours

To schedule a tour, please call Eve or 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 who drop in. 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 and Railroad Avenues [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

