

Members' Corner

The Board of Directors and fellow members of the Society extend a warm welcome to one new member:

Beverly Stott

San Ramon, CA.

We hope that you will enjoy this organization. We urge you to attend the field trips and the bi-monthly dinner meetings with guest speakers discussing their areas of expertise, participate in the selection of historic sites in the San Ramon Valley, and share your views and experiences with other Society members. We also urge you to join and support the activities of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley and the San Ramon Historic Foundation.

Wishing Each Of Our Members A Very Happy And Enjoyable New Year!

Need a Ride To The Society Meeting On November 18th?
Contact Bill Lloyd: 837-9382.

Over 40 Years Looking Back!



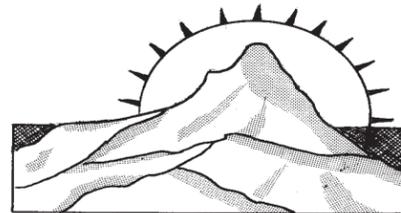
First Class Mail



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

**NEXT MEETING
THURSDAY,
JANUARY 20TH
"CALIFORNIA APPROVES
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE"**

SAN RAMON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



January 2011

ALAMO · BLACKHAWK · DANVILLE · DIABLO · SAN RAMON

Gordon Rasmussen Provided Enjoyable "History Lesson" Of His Family And The San Ramon Valley At November Dinner Meeting!

Gordon Rasmussen spoke at our November 18th dinner meeting. Gordon noted that our history in the San Ramon Valley is right now. Our history is only 160 years old. Before that there were some missions that were established to promote Christianity. That was really taken away from them. There were very few Spanish land grants. When Mexico took over the Spaniards in 1822, there were people that did little favors for the Mexican Governor. These people were given huge land grants. They were referred to as Spanish land grants, but they were really from Mexico.

In 1828, a person by the name of Juan Jose Maria Amador was granted 16,000 acres right where we stand today. Juan's father was an important person at the Presidio, and was involved in taking care of some problems at Mission San Jose between the missionaries and the Indians.

Juan was not able to make any money with this land. There was no market for hides. Spain blocked ships from coming to San Francisco.

So he sold 10,000 acres to James DeWitt Dougherty in 1853. In 1871, Gordon's great grandfather rented some land from Dougherty that is just about in the same spot where Gordon ranches today. His great grandfather was able to make a living. Many other families did the same thing. Dougherty leased out bits of this land to share croppers, who made a living from it. These bits of land always had a creek so that the cattle had water. Gordon's land is on Tassajara Creek. To Gordon, that was just yesterday.

Gordon mentioned the histories of China, Egypt, and Greece. These histories are at least 4,000 years old. In that time frame, the San Ramon Valley's history is just seconds.

The farmers in Tassajara grew barley and hay. They milked cows. They raised calves. At this time, a big farm was 200 acres. Most farms were smaller.

(Continued on Page 2)

History of California's Approving Women's Suffrage To Be Discussed At Interesting January 20th Dinner Meeting

Women's suffrage will be the topic at the Society's January 20, 2011, dinner meeting. The Museum of the San Ramon Valley has organized this 30-minute program to commemorate California's achievement in approving woman suffrage nearly a decade before votes for women were approved nationally. California was the sixth, and largest, Western state to approve woman suffrage on October 10, 1911.

Beverly Lane be the moderator. Betty Casey will portray Rose Peters of the Peters Ranch in north San Ramon. Stan Wharton will portray R. O. Baldwin, an early pioneer rancher and community leader. Sonja Seyler will portray Mary Cox Baldwin, one of five Cox sisters who arrived in the 1850s. (The Baldwin's were grandparents of Congressman John F. Baldwin, Jr.).

A Museum exhibit on this topic will open May 14, 2011.

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

Gordon Rasmussen's Enjoyable "History Lesson" (Continued)

If you were in Tassajara, you most likely were either Danish or Portuguese. The children attended a one room grammar school. Gordon likes the Portuguese sweet bread and guava beans. The Portuguese children liked the Danish pumpernickel bread and some egg preparations. They all loved one another.

In 1885, Gordon's grandfather on his mother's side of the family, John C. Rasmussen, came from Denmark at the age of 17. California was popular because of the gold rush. He settled in Dublin. He operated a hay press on a small ranch. Ground was available from the Dougherty's. Later he bought a little land off of Tassajara Road in Danville. There were speculators here at this time. There was a train planned to go to the Diablo Country Club area. John's land was in the way. So the speculators bought John's place in 1913. John took the money and bought land next to the home ranch now, which was a long way on horseback in those days. It was a good move because he got a very nice ranch. His hired help quit because it was too far from Eliot's bar in Danville. In 2013, Gordon's family will have been on that ranch for 100 years.

Tassajara is a good area for a ranch. People outside the area have no idea how good this area is for cattle and grains. The area has an annual rainfall of about 18 inches. This area has a particular type of rye grass that puts the weight on the cattle. This is very productive for cattle. The cattle don't have to be sent out to another area to put on weight.

Gordon's dad took over from his grandfather. He was Edward Rasmussen. The grandfather wanted to make a little extra money and he milked cows. His dad tried it for a couple of years, and he didn't like that. When Gordon took over, he didn't like milking cows either. Gordon did milk one cow. It was something a rancher had to do to prove that he was a rancher. Milking was a chore every morning and every night no matter what was going on. After Gordon got married, he never milked a cow again.

When Gordon got out of college and the Navy, they expanded the business and rented some ranches nearby. They had a little dry land walnut orchard like a lot of people in the valley. That was good, but the trees would only last so long because they got a disease. In some years, the walnuts were good when the cattle business was bad. So the walnuts helped balance out the process of making a living from a ranch.

In 1986, they bulldozed the walnut orchard down. Karen and Gordon took off for Hawaii. They never looked back. They were free from all of the responsibilities demanded by growing walnuts.

Gordon purchased the home ranch from his sister and his family. At this time speculators became owners of nearby land Gordon was renting. Through their actions, the speculators were influencing the nature of the business, which didn't work. So Gordon and Karen began purchasing land near Dixon, which had some advantages. The Dixon land is irrigated, fertilized, has gravel roads and less people. The rye grass of Tassajara and the irrigated pasture of Dixon is a good combination.



Jean Mello, Gordon Rasmussen, Sandee Wiedemann, and Karen Stepper enjoying the evening.

Next, Gordon mentioned cattle drives. They did drive cattle everywhere they went. In the early days, everything was done using horses. If cattle were to be sold, it was done two ways. They would try to find a buyer that would buy the cattle right where they were. If not, the cattle had to be weighed to be sold by the pound. They were seven miles away from the only scale that could weigh the cattle. It belonged to Charles Wood, Don's grandfather. Charles was the weigh master. The scale is still there.

Gordon's father made Gordon ride bareback because of fear of a riding accident. That was difficult for Gordon. Gordon quipped that his father was to cheap to buy a saddle for him, but he rode bareback.

A few years later they bought a truck. It was a

(Continued on Page 3)

The Sales Table Nancy Ramsey

Alamo Grammar School 1876 notes and envelopes are available. We have a supply of Mount Diablo, Front Street, Southern Pacific Depot, Tassajara School, the "Grand Dames" series of three San Ramon older homes and miscellaneous packages with eight historical scenes for sale. Our price to members is \$3.50 per package. Lots of postcards with historic scenes are available for \$0.20 each.

**Our Society is celebrating over
40 years in the Valley!**

Need a Ride To Our Society Meeting?
Contact Bill Lloyd at 837-9382.

R E C O R D

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

OFFICERS
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Judy Sandkhule *Danna Saunders*

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. This Donation for:
 SRVHS MSRV

NAME _____

DONOR(S): Name(s) _____

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PLEASE NOTIFY: Name _____

Address _____

Dinner Reservations

\$20.00 per person

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO S.R.V.H.S. (Deadline January 20, 2011)
Mail to: S.R.V.H.S., P.O. Box 521, Danville, CA 94526

NAMES: _____

Thursday, January 20, 7 p.m.

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

In Memoriam

**Hazel Hockins**

Former Resident of Alamo Hazel F. Hockins, 90, passed away on September 25th at her home in Phoenix, AZ. She is survived by her son Russell Hockins; two daughters Susan Anderson and Sheri Gomez; and her only granddaughter Marissa Gomez. At her request services were private at Oakmont Memorial Cemetery in Lafayette where she was laid to rest next to her husband, Bill Hockins.

Published in *Contra Costa Times* in November 2010

Arthur F. Lawton

Resident of Alamo Arthur F. Lawton, end of watch 0620 December 2, 2010 at the age of 89 years. Arthur was born on November 18, 1921 in Attleboro, MA. He enjoyed golf, woodcraft, hunting and camping. Arthur was a kind loving family man. He was a gentle giant who cared more for others than himself; a fun loving man with a crafty wit and an impish smile. Arthur was a [WWII](#) veteran and served in the USCG from 1942 to 1947; the USNR from 1947 to 1952 and was a Contra Costa Co. Sheriff's Dept. Reserve Lieutenant from 1965 to 1978. He was a Real Estate Agent in the San Ramon Valley from 1954 to 1990. Arthur was a member of the Community Presbyterian Church of Danville and served as Deacon; Assistant Scout Master of BSA Troop 236; Danville Lion since 1970; American Legion Post 246 since 1985; Museum of the San Ramon Valley and the San Ramon Valley Historical Society. Arthur is survived by his wife Dorothy I. Lawton; daughter Cheryl A. Lawton; son Richard A. Lawton and daughter-in-law Sheryl; and grandchildren Matthew P. and Kim N. Lawton. Celebration of Life Service will be at 1:00 pm, Saturday, January 15, 2010 at Wilson & Kratzer Chapel of San Ramon Valley, 825 Hartz Way, Danville, CA 94526. Final resting place will be in Sacramento Valley National Cemetery, Dixon, CA. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Veterans Memorial Building Fund, in Memory of Art Lawton, P.O. Box

Museum News

January 1 - 17 - Closed

January 18 - March 5, 2011, Honoring Valley Veterans, Heroes in Defense of Freedom.

While highlighting those veterans from our Valley who have served, the exhibit will also provide an educational perspective about 20th Century military history. There will be dramatic displays of uniformed mannequins with gear (male and female representing different branches of the service from WW I to the present. One display will feature a WW II motorcycle.

Various other parts of the exhibit will include a POW/MIA remembrance, photo boards of local veterans, medals and awards, and a wide variety of models, memorabilia and artifacts.

The rich history of our Veterans Memorial Building will be highlighted with the current renovation and expansion project in mind. There will be a children's activity center as well.

Several special programs of general interest will be offered. A Whistle Stop Presentation will be held on February 2, 2011 at 7:00 pm in The Village Theater featuring Pearl Harbor Survivor, Mr. Chuck Kohler, and a representative of the Town of Danville who will provide an update on the progress of the Veterans Memorial Building project.

Several consecutive Saturday programs are scheduled at 11:00 am in the Museum with presentations by local authors, Paula Boswell (January 29), Joe Callaway (February 5), the Concord Veterans Center (February 12), and local veterans Nate Greene and Doug Aitken (February 19).

March 8 -13 - Closed

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 and 10 am-1 pm Saturday.

Enjoy the SRVHS Christmas Tree on Page 5

**Gordon Rasmussen's Enjoyable "History Lesson" (Continued)**

and go right to the market. The market at this time was South San Francisco, the Union Stock Yards.

This activity would often happen in June. Gordon would dress in a short sleeved shirt, get over to the stock yards and freeze to death.

In Gordon's dad's days, Edward would drive the cattle from the home ranch to Castro Valley. He would go up Tassajara to the Wood's ranch. Then they would drive the cattle down Crow Canyon to D Street in Castro Valley to the packing house (slaughter house).

Edward did that for a few years. Then the housing came up in the Castro Valley area. Occasionally, a steer would get loose and go through back yards hitting the clothes lines and catching laundry on its

Gordon's kids thought the cattle drives were a lot of work too. At this time, the cattle were driven to nearby ranches that Gordon was leasing, where the cattle would be picked up. They would put one person in the lead and one following. It worked well for a while. Then the freeways would get clogged and folks would use the back roads to commute, which made cattle driving impossible.

One time they had a bunch of cattle coming out of the Brown ranch on Tassajara road. A bicyclist came up as they were crossing a bridge. Gordon warned the bicyclist, who paid no attention. The bicyclist came up on the herd and was petrified. The bicyclist was on the white line and he pumped away. There were about 400 head of cattle. The cattle parted just a little bit for him as he came through. If they touched, it was barely. The bicyclist went on his way like nothing had happened.

Gordon showed some bits used for riding horses.

The Spaniards that had the land grants were playboys. It is said that they were the finest cowboys anywhere. They rode with a spayed bit. A horse broken with a spayed bit was the most excellent horse you could ever ride. They often rode these horses at hard gallop. They often had wives or women friends that rode behind them as they attended their festivities. The Indians did the work on the ranch. This lasted until 1822, when Mexico took over.

Gordon showed his dad's old bit. It is a very plain simple bit.

Gordon showed his grand father's bit. When he came to Tassajara, he was starting out and went for an inexpensive bit. It is an old Calvary bit. It would be like war surplus today. His grand father used it for years.

Gordon showed his bit. He enjoyed it for years. He completely wore it out.

Gordon showed a branding iron. It is hand forged with ER. Gordon uses it today. In 1918, the State of California said that brands had to be registered. So Edward went to the licensing body to register a JR. This brand was taken earlier. So Edward took an ER.

Gordon was herding cattle in Dixon this fall. He used four people on Honda's and one on a horse. Horses still work cattle better than anything you've got. Honda's make a lot of noise and stir up the cattle and dust. But that's the way it's done today.

In response to a question from Sandee Wiedemann, Gordon's great grandfather was Peter Rasmussen. He had a farm in Dublin. There is a plaque there honoring him at the former Hayward Fishery restaurant site. Gordon's other grandfather, John C. Rasmussen came in 1885 and ended up in Dublin also.

Gordon related one other story about his grandfather. When he came from Denmark, he wanted to farm. He was told that he could cut hay on the Dougherty's land out on Tassajara on a share basis. So he took a team of horses and a mower and went out there to work for a few days. Gordon never learned how his grandfather sustained himself during these events. Then he rode his mower back to Dublin, got a rake, and went back to Tassajara to rake what he had cut. When he got there, another man was raking what his grandfather had cut. That's how free the ground was at that time. There were no fights. They got along great. One would cut a little (Continued on Page 4) the other would rake it. They made it work. That was real ranch life and the way people got along in those days.



Two Horse Bits

Gordon Rasmussen's Enjoyable "History Lesson" (Continued)

The Information below is taken from the San Ramon Historical Society *Record* of March, 2006.

Information on their mother's side of Gordon Rasmussen and Nancy Ramsey's family (brother and sister) is given below. This information was taken from a cookbook of Wilhelmine Rasmussen, provided by Nancy Ramsey.

HISTORY OF P.A. RASMUSSEN AND WILHELMINE RASMUSSEN

Grandpa Peter A. Rasmussen was born June 25, 1851 in Fudslette County in Langland, Denmark. When he was 20 years old, in 1871, he came to California with his cousin John Castersen. They came directly to Dublin and worked on the Dougherty Ranch. After two years he bought a ranch in Tassajara. Three years later he sold his ranch and bought a ticket to return to Denmark. He was working in Hayward for a man named Nissen, who owned a hotel, while he waited for a ship. The home of Nissen was a gathering place for young Danes. At a dance there he met Wilhelmine Augustine Lausten, who was born February 3, 1851 in Ostrup old town near Tonder, Slesvig Denmark. Wilhelmine had left her home in 1872 to sail around the horn to San Francisco to join her sister Marie, married to Hans Petersen. Wilhelmine worked for a family in San Francisco to learn English. When Peter and Wilhelmine met, Peter changed his mind about returning to Denmark. The young couple was married May 12, 1876 in San Francisco at the home, of Mr. and Mrs. Chris Dekker by a Danish priest, Pastor Carlsen. The couple moved into a house on Main Street at Pleasanton where the museum now stands. In the fall of the year they leased a ranch and moved to the first of many ranches worked by Peter in Pleasanton Livermore Valley.

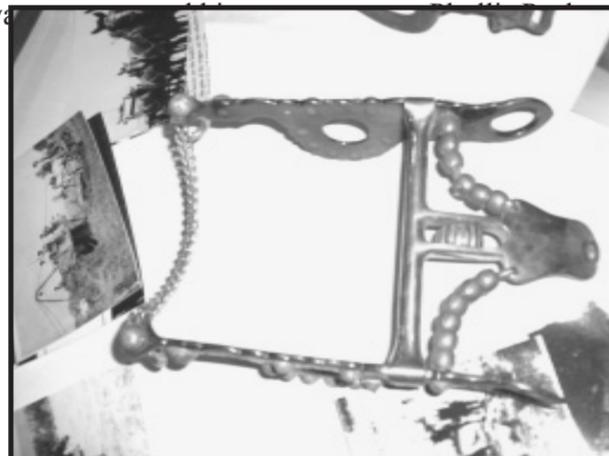
In 1877 another Lausten sister arrived from Denmark, Hansene (Sine) Tante. Sine married Hans Kamp.

Also 1877 the first of eleven children was born, a son named Rudolph Hans. One baby, Laust Carlo, died at two months old. But the 10 survived, married, and are our parents and grandparents. Second son Hans was in the army and fought in the Spanish American War going-as far as the Philippines. Hans was at the Presidio in San Francisco in 1906. Grandma and Grandpa had been visiting San Francisco. Hans rode home to the ranch to tell the children at home everyone was all right and that Grandma and Grandpa would be bringing home guests. The trip was around the south end of San Francisco Bay. Grandma and Grandpa opened their home to all Danes arriving in California.

In 1926 Peter and Wilhelmine celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. There were more than 400 guests at the little ranch on San Ramon Road. A large tent was set up that seated 200 tables and chairs with umbrellas. Lights festooned the grounds. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the wedding march was played. Starting with the smallest to the 6-foot tall Svane boys, the grandchildren led in the honorees. Much applause was given the loved couple. Oldest son Rudolph welcomed everyone and many speeches followed, as well as reading of telegrams from near and far: King of Denmark, Mayor Rolph of San Francisco, Police Chief of San Francisco to police sergeants. Singing followed the speeches both in English and Danish. Then there was live music and dancing until wee hours. Oldest grandson, Leland Svane

CHILDREN OF PETER AND WILHELMINE

Rudolph Hans Rasmussen (Rudolph)
 Hans Lausten Rasmussen (Hans)
 Caroline (Lena) Svane
 Marie Margrehe (Mayme) Andersen
 Grace (Gracie) Cope
 Christian Decker Rasmussen (Chris)
 Laust Carlo Rasmussen (died at 2 month old)
 Ella Hansine (Ella) Wordon
 Laura Amanda (Mandy) Barton
 Cora Helga (Cora) Kitson
 Victor Svane Rasmussen (Vic)



One Horse Bit

PETER AND WILHELMINE'S GRANDCHILDREN

(Rudolph)	(Mayme)	(Christian)
Lloyd Rasmussen	Selma (Sally) Andersen Rasmussen	Kristine Mason
Marian Hutchingson	Helen Mount	(Ella)
Rudolph (Dolph) Rasmussen	Avis Woodyott	Barbara Hurrell
Marjorie (died young)	Mildred (Millie) Mordock	(Mandy)
(Hans)	Stanley Andersen	Louise Barton
Harold (drowned at 20)	Blanche Hall	(Cora)
Dorothy Curnow	Russell Andersen	Phyllis Kincaid
Wilma Hogan	Alan Andersen	Read Kitson
(Lena)	(Grace)	Richard (Rich) Kitson
Leland Svane	Hedley Cope	(Victor)
Peter Vic Svane	Wilhelmine (Willa) Wicklow	Roberta Gullick
Ellen Marie Willie		Sam Rasmussen

GREAT GRANDCHILDREN

Peggy Love
 Roslyn Beam
 Bruce Hutchingson
 Stephen Rasmussen
 Cynthia (Cindy) Rockwood
 Peter Rasmussen
 Christian (Chris) Rasmussen
 Richard Currow
 Jean Railsbuck
 Stephen Curnow
 Linda Germany
 Susan Hogan Nordenflycht
 Thomas Hogan
 Peter Vic Svane Jr. (Happy)
 Christina Svane (Christi)
 Flank Wille
 Richard Wille
 Christopher Wille
 Peter Wille
 Michael Wille
 Caroline Wille
 Kirk Wille
 Joann Kiefer
 Claudia Juhl
 Gordon Rasmussen
 Nancy Ramsey



The Beautiful San Ramon Valley Historical Society tree
 in the MSRVC Christmas Memories Exhibit for 2010