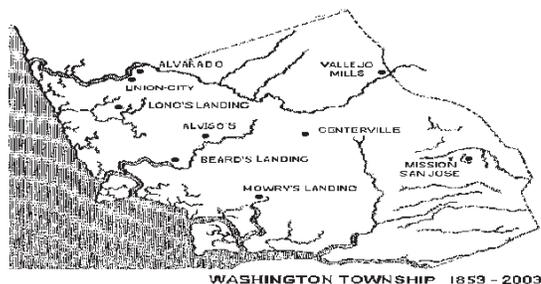


# Washington Township Historical



## MAR-APR 2011

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**MEETING DATE: MONDAY, March 28, 2011 TIME: 7:15 PM**  
**PLACE: MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY, 190 ANZA ST., FREMONT**

Washington Township Historical Society Editors: Regena Dennie and Al Minard

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to announce that Phil Holmes and Jill Singleton's book on "Centerville" has arrived and is being sold. We will have a book signing before the Washington Township Historical Society meeting from 6-7 PM on Monday evening, March 28, 2010. Our regular meeting will follow with Patricia Schaffarczyk providing us a slide show of some of the pictures from the book. Our plans to nominate buildings to place historical plaques on have run into a problem. Our winners of last issues plaque locations, the Best House and the Starr House at Sisters of the Holy Family, do not want plaques put on these buildings. It appears that we may have to contact the individual owners to promote our plaque idea and then ask if they will allow us to place a plaque on their site. I mourn the passing of Warren Wilson and I hope that some of you were able to make his memorial service, I will be out of town and unable to attend. I would also like to thank all of our members who have so quickly responded with their dues and donations for this year. Please let me know if you would like to receive this newsletter by email as a pdf file. The cost of printing and mailing is nearly \$1.00 per issue and those funds will go a long way towards placing plaques on our historic buildings. At our May 23, 2011 meeting we will enjoy having Andy Galvin talk to us about the cemeteries in the Mission San Jose Area. Please make sure you put this date on your calendar.

*Al Minard*

**Phil Holmes** will be signing the Centerville Book from 6 PM to 7 PM before our regular meeting and **Patricial Schaffarczyk** will be doing a slide show of the pictures in the book. Please come early enough to talk to Phil about his book. Phil does not plan on staying for the meeting.

The tale of Centerville, Fremont--part of the sprawling landscape of the southeast San Francisco Bay--begins with near forgotten histories such as the once sprawling grandeur of the Alviso rancho and the California 100, a battalion raised in Centerville for the Civil War. Centerville celebrates a sporting-mad past, centrally located on the "Way to San Jose" from Oakland on the long, straight stretch once famed for horse and then bicycle racing and later as a motor-touring destination on the early Route 17. By the 1890s, Centerville was home to Washington Union High School and the Centerville Athletic Club and began collecting trophies in football, rugby, baseball, and other sports. Fabled athletes of later eras include Wimbledon tennis queen Helen Wills Moody, football coach Bill Walsh, and hall of fame pitcher Dennis Eckersley.

**"To Collect, Preserve and Diffuse Information Relating to the History of Washington Township"**

## FROM THE MAILBAG

A letter from the Sisters of the Holy Family, dated, January 31, 2011, asking Washington Township Historical Society not to consider the Starr and Best homes, located on convent property, for historical plaques. Sister Sharon Flannigan, Chairperson, asks, "The Sisters ask that you refrain from considering our two homes and allow us to pursue our plans to preserve the property."

**ALAMEDA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY**, 2011, writes, "The heart of Oakland's parks," the Lakeside Park Garden Center began in 1951, to bring the 64 area garden clubs together. Dennis Evanosky also tells how squatters came to farm the land starting in 1852 in his story, "The Story of Alameda's Bay Farm Island". Oystermen began establishing oyster beds in the 1870's. Pollution from Standard Oil's operations later damaged the beds.

**MISSION PEAK REPORTER**, January/March, 2001, features a story by Milicent Shinn, entitled, "To the Farmers and Fruit Growers of California"> It's Milicent Shinn's story for her fight for equal rights for women.

**UNION CITY HISTORICAL MUSEUM**, March 2011, Myrla Raymundo writes, "About the old Town, Alvarado". Settled in 1850, and first known as Union City. It was also the first county seat of Alameda County.

**THE CLUB CAR**, February 2011, held a Photographers Special on March 13, 2011 to honor their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**ASSOCIATION FOR CALIFORNIA RESEARCH** is featuring a book by Nancy Leek, entitled, "John Bidwell: the adventurous life of a California Pioneer". John Bidwell was a pioneer in California agriculture, a state Senator and Congressman. Nancy Leek's website is: [www.csuchico.edu/anchr](http://www.csuchico.edu/anchr)

### MEMBERS WHO HAVE PAID THEIR DUES

The following 45 members have paid their dues for calendar year 2011: Doug Avery, Pat Bagwell, John & Rose Barr, Donald Barsi, Beth Booth, Dorothy Bradley, Wilma Cabontac (new member), Alan Cerro, Ardis Edwards, Knute Furtado, James Griffin, Bruce Hevelin, Hayward Area Historical Society, Betty & Herman Hebel, Katie Janssen, Patricia Kite, Patty Lacy, Marlene & Bernie Leal (new member), Nancy Lorigan, Dan & Page Mosier, Herb Mullerleile, John & Norma Neto, Jack Parry, Edward & Debra Pentaleri, William & Ann Power, Myrla Raymundo, Bruce Roeding, David Schipul, Paul & Berenice Sethy, Sergio & Carol Zilli, Joan Ashton, B.J. Bunting, Nabil Matta, Patricia Schaffarzyk, Regena Dennie, Gaylene Vincent, Sister Loretta Morback, Linda Freitas, Jean Messick, Brian & Kathy O'Connor, Mollie Sinclair, Joseph Betchart, Mike & Ginger Gorski, John & Gloria Herschkorn, and Priscilla Whitaker.

These members have given in dues and donations, a total of \$900.00 as of February 20, 2011.

Thank You! Your Treasurer, Regena Dennie

There are still 37 members listed on our ACTIVE membership list who have not taken care of their dues

.....  
FAMILY MEMBERSHIP: \$10.00 per year

.....  
PATRONS MEMBERS: \$50.00 for one year

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL CHECK TO: Washington Township Historical Society      PO BOX 3045      FREMONT, CA 94539

## MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

*Argus*, January 15, 2011, in a Letter to the Editor, **Norma Neto** tells her reason for not repealing the health care law.

*The Tri-City Voice*, January 18, 2011, **Phil Holmes** writes, “Mayhew Canyon”, the dirt road that connected Mission San Jose to the present Oakland area along the foothills.

*The Tri-City Voice*, February 1, 2011, **Phil Holmes** writes, “Temperance”, the story about the Temperance societies that were organized in the United States in the early 1800’s to combat the problems created by alcoholic beverages.

*The Tri-City Voice*, February 8, 2011, **Myrla Raymundo** writes, “The Lions Club of Union City”. The Union City Lions Club was started in 1963, with Kenny Garcia elected as the Charter President and Jim Duncan as charter Secretary. In 1978, the Union City Lioness Club was chartered with Joan Honebein as the first president.

*The Tri-City Voice*, February 15, 2011, **Tim Swenson** reviews the new Centerville Book, written by Phil Holmes and Jill Singleton. Book signing took place at the Centerville Train Depot on February 19, 2011

*The Tri-City Voice*, February 15, 2011, **Phil Holmes** writes, “Centerville Book”. In the book Phil tells how he and Jill Singleton covered the history of Centerville from 1868 to the present time, for Arcadia books, “Images of America”.

*Argus*, February 19, 2011, Matthew Artz also reviews the book, “Centerville”.

*The Tri-City Voice*, February 22, 2011, The Union City Historical Museum held its tenth anniversary on February 24, 2011, with a reception and open house. Founder, **Myrla Raymundo** was on hand to welcome all who attended.

*The Tri-City Voice*, February 22, 2011, **Tim Swenson** writes, “Artesian wells in Alvarado”. When drilling a well below Alvarado, in the late 1850’s, an artesian well was discovered that produced water without pumping.

*The Tri-City Voice*, March 1, 2011, **Pat Kite** writes, “Lemon life”. Lemons are said to originate in India, and there are about 25 varieties in existence.

*The Tri-City Voice*, March 1, 2011, **Phil Holmes** writes, “Squatters vs Bosqui”. Edward Bosqui was employed by Joseph Palmer, who gave him authority to protect Palmer’s interests in the Mission area. There were large grape orchards in the area that needed protection from squatters.

California State Finals for History Day will be held from Thursday, April 28 to Sunday, May 1, 2011 at the Doubletree Hotel in San Jose. The subject this year for History Day is, “Debate & Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences”. This competition is open to all 4<sup>th</sup> graders thru 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students enter posters on the subject; the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students enter one of the following categories: an individual historical paper; an individual or group of up to 5 students may enter a museum exhibit; an individual or group of up to 5 students may present a performance; an individual or group of up to 5 students may present a documentary; or an individual or group may present a website. Senior High students of 9<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> grade may make the same choices as the junior high students, but each group is judged in their own group

Last year there were over 1,000 students who entered projects for history day. The presentation of the documentaries, websites, performances, exhibits and posters is open to the public at no charge. The awards ceremony is on Sunday. This is an excellent chance for you to see what the future leaders of this nation are capable of doing.

### *May He Rest in Peace*

Warren Wilson, a Washington Township Historical Society member since 2003, passed away on February 26, 2011. His memorial service is at St. Anne’s Episcopal Church, 2791 Driscoll Road, Fremont on Friday, March 18, 2011. Warren will be remembered for his interest in history.

**Tim Swenson**, member of Washington Township Historical Society and President of The Museum of Local History has asked us to support the Museum's nomination of the Dry Creek Cottage and Gardens. We will have an opportunity to discuss this nomination and then vote to support or deny our support of the nomination. The building is owned by East Bay Regional Parks and the park is open on Thursday thru Saturday from about Noon to 4 PM. It is off of Mission Boulevard just past the Masonic Home and right next to the Dry Creek Apartments. The gardens are beautiful and the house is also very nice although no one is allowed inside the house. There is a large parking area and a gently uphill walk to the gardens and house.

## **Museum of Local History**

190 Anza Street  
Fremont, CA 94539  
[www.museumoflocalhistory.org](http://www.museumoflocalhistory.org)

February 21, 2011

The Museum of Local History, working with a number of local citizens, is in the process of submitting Dry Creek Cottage and Gardens to the California Register of Historic Resources. With the submittal of the nominating package, the Museum of Local History would like to include a number of Letters of Support from other local historical groups. Below is a brief history of Dry Creek Cottage and Gardens.

### **Dry Creek Cottage and Gardens**

Dry Creek Cottage and Gardens is a small parcel of land that was part of a larger parcel. It was originally part of Rancho Arroyo de la Alameda, granted to Jose de Jesus Vallejo in 1842. By 1862, Jonas Clark owned a large portion of Rancho Arroyo de la Alameda. In 1868, the Cosmopolitan School District was formed and a school house was built on land owned by Jonas Clark. During the 1860's and 1870's, an area of this land, just west of the where Dry Creek Cottage now stands, was used as a picnic grounds. Large events were held on the property with stages running to the Decoto train station to transport celebrants.

In the early 1880's, August May purchased a parcel of land from Jonas Clark. This parcel included the picnic grounds, the now vacant school house, and a large ranch in the hills to the east. August turned the schoolhouse into a home for his son, Henry.

August May's daughter, Bertha, married Henry Haight Meyer, a well-known architect. They had three daughters, Mildred, Edith, and Jeanette. In 1900, Sophia May, had Henry Meyer design and build Dry Creek Cottage utilizing a tree shaded area near a bend in Dry Creek.

Bertha Meyer inherited the property from her mother. In 1928, Bertha's daughter, Jeanette started designing the gardens around the cottage. Footpaths and a footbridge was installed. The front gate was made by Pacific Iron Works and was installed in 1930. The Meyers used the cottage as a summer home while living in their house in Alameda (now the Meyers House Museum).

In 1951, the first fund-raiser for the Alameda Welfare Council was hosted by the sisters at Dry Creek Cottage. This fund-raiser was held every August from 1951 to 1972. In 1973, Mildred and Jeanette (Edith has passed away), donated 1,200 acres of the ranch to the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), creating Dry Creek/Pioneer Regional Park. The land around Dry Creek Cottage was not donated to the EBRPD until 1995, after the last living sister, Jeanette, passed away.

There has been quite a bit of publicity about the Niles Canyon Safety Improvement Project that is being done by Caltrans. Al Minard sent the following letter to all of the local newspapers, the Board of Supervisors, The Fremont City Council and the Alameda County Water District. Just because a site is on a historic list does not stop demolition or destruction. The only thing that can stop the destruction of historic sites is public outrage.

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March 14, 2011

Letter to the Editor,

I am the Chairperson for the Alameda County Parks, Recreation and Historic Commission that reviewed the "Niles Canyon Safety Improvement Project" proposed by Caltrans at its regularly scheduled meeting on August 8, 2010. The Commission provided comments for inclusion in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that was being prepared by Caltrans for the project. The Commission made inquiries into the 440 trees slated for removal as part of the project and the "tree replacement program" proposed by Caltrans. A request was made that the trees should be replanted within the Niles Canyon area as many of the trees are within the Historic View Corridor of this Scenic Highway. The Commission was also concerned about the visual impact of the retaining walls and the increased vehicle speed after the roads were widened.

Personally, I oppose the project as an unnecessary use of funds. The accident rate with bodily injury is less than the average on comparable roads. I feel that the widening of the road would encourage higher speeds than the posted 45 MPH, and that there would be more injury accidents. I consider this to be a scenic highway that should be driven slowly to enjoy the scenery not as a transit corridor to get from one place to another in the shortest amount of time. The widening of the roadway will still be restricted by the historic overpasses and bridges and these choke points will, in my opinion, cause more bodily injury accidents, or lead to the eventual demolition of these historic bridges and overpasses.

EIR's are written to address the impact of a project on the environment. The historical significance of a building, bridge, or even a view corridor is part of the environment that must be addressed. I disagree with Caltrans about the removal of the trees as improving the view corridor, that is a subjective opinion, the current view corridor is the historic view corridor and that will not be protected by this project.

I am also concerned about the impact of this project on Alameda Creek which is one of the sources of drinking water in Alameda County. There widened roadway will be an intrusion into the water way that in high water times will cause erosion to the opposing side of the canyon and will add to the pollution of this water source.

I am also concerned about the safety of the bikers who use this road way as a scenic road to travel and enjoy biking. I think with the widening of the road it will endanger the bikers and result in either less bikers using this road or more bike/vehicle accidents.

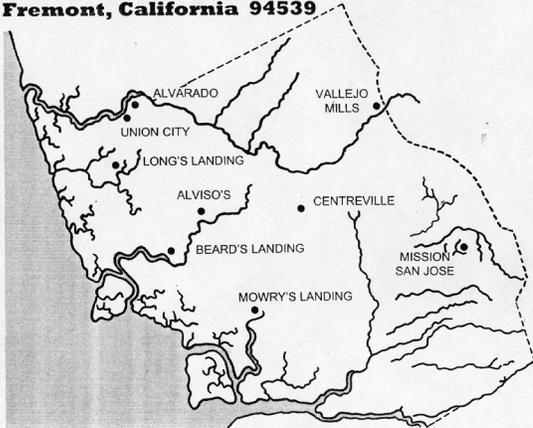
I would have preferred putting in pull-outs so the people who travel this road could safely stop and enjoy this beautiful road and the scenic hills, trees, historic rail and a creek that has been reasonably unchanged for over 100 years. This is the road that Charlie Chaplin walked down in the final frames of "The Tramp" with the only major changes the paving of this road. I do not believe that Charlie Chaplin would recognize this road after this project and this disappoints me.

Sincerely yours  
Al Minard



Mattos house in Centerville district of Fremont

**Washington Township Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 3045**  
**Fremont, California 94539**



WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP 1853 - 2003