



Milpitas Muse

September 2013

The Milpitas Historical Society Newsletter

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September Meeting

The next meeting of the Milpitas Historical Society will be held on Wednesday, September 11, at 7:00 pm in the Community Room (auditorium) of the Milpitas Library, 160 N. Main Street.

Our presenter will be Jim Reynolds, the current president of the Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum and Historical Society. He will show and talk about a beautifully crafted film about the Murphy family called *The Forgotten Journey*, made by a team from PBS.

Martin Murphy Jr. came to California with his father and other family members as part of the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party in 1844, before the Donner party. In fact, he was a member of the group that helped to rescue the Donner party.

Around 1850, Murphy bought a piece of Rancho Pastoria de las Borregas, established a wheat farm and ranch, and later had the first wood frame house, which he had shipped in pieces around Cape Horn from New England, built in Santa Clara County, in what would later become Sunnyvale.

In fact, when Sunnyvale first established its own post office, in 1901, it assumed that the name of the town was going to be "Murphy." However, the postal system ruled that this name could not be used—there was already a community called Murphys with a post office, established in 1851, in Calaveras County. Ironically this other town was established by two of Martin Murphy Jr.'s brothers, John and Daniel.

Martin Murphy Jr.'s house was demolished in 1961, (after a serious fire) but was reconstructed in 2008 as the Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum

Another brother of Martin Murphy Jr. was James Murphy, who was the first bank commissioner in California, served in the California legislature and owned considerable property in the Milpitas area. He built a large beautiful home on his property called Ringwood, located on the old Milpitas Road. This house was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake. The Murphy

Ranch road and shopping center in Milpitas were named for him. We will learn a great deal more about this interesting family story at the meeting.



Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum

The Milpitas Historical Society will have a field trip to the Sunnyvale museum on Sunday afternoon, September 15, starting at 2:00 pm. You can sign up for this tour at the meeting.

Milpitas Historical Society Summer Picnic

The Society's Annual Summer Picnic, held at Kim Parker's Last Word Ranch on Sunday, August 25, was, as usual, an event enjoyed by all who attended. This year, music was provided by the Ku'u Aloha I Ke Akua band, which delighted the group with the music of Hawaii and even Hawaiian dance lessons, as well as great old standards of the past decades.



Ann Zeise, Michael Pelizzari, and Shirley Skuse learn a Hawaiian dance

Milpitas Community Tour

The Milpitas Historical Society's annual community tour, held on Saturday, July 6, successfully attracted nearly 50 attendees. The tour included a guided walk along historic Main Street, a visit to the newly opened Alviso Adobe Park, a visit to the Silva Apricot Ranch, with an explanation of the history and process of growing apricots in our area, an opportunity to see the original Laguna Schoolhouse. The tour ended with a delightful lunch and wine tasting at the Big Dog Winery.



Kelly Silva provides information about processing apricots



Irma and Steve Munzel, Haven Thompson, and Mort and Elaine Levine (facing away from camera) enjoy snacks and sips at the Big Dog Winery after the MHS Tour

The Milpitas Historical Society extends deep sympathies to the family of one of our founding members, Mabel Mattos, who died June 10. Mabel was a Milpitas resident since age 11, and was for many years the Hospitality Director and found presenters for us. She helped organize our garage sales, maintained Society records at her home for years, and contributed a majority of the items in the Great Mall. She served as the most important living historian we had. She collected and organized photos, clippings, audio recordings, interviews, and documents as far back as the 1930s and kept them safe over the years. In addition, she was also probably the most important contributor to Pat Loomis' book *Little Cornfields*, Bob Burrill's *Images of America: Milpitas* book, and Steve Munzel's MilpitasHistory.org website. We will always remember her with affection and gratitude for her kindness and service to the Milpitas Historical Society.

Milpitas Historical Society Contact Information

You can contact the Milpitas Historical Society:

- by phone at (408) 320-9587
- by mail at 160 N. Main Street, Milpitas CA 95035
- by email at: tmhs@milpitashistory.org.

There is new website for the Milpitas Historical Society: <http://milpitashistoricalsociety.org>, with information about the society and upcoming events.

The traditional Milpitas history web page is here: <http://www.milpitashistory.org/historicalsociety/society.html>

And there's a YouTube Channel with videos of tours and other historical information about Milpitas you can see here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/MilpitasHistory>

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First Class