

# Milpitas Muse

April 2024

The Milpitas Historical Society Newsletter

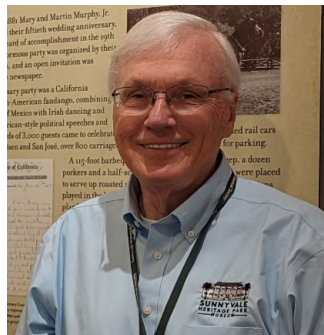
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**Our Next Meeting will be on April 10, at 7:00 pm**



The April meeting of the Milpitas Historical Society will be held at 7 pm, on Wednesday, April 10 in the auditorium of the Milpitas Library, 160 North Main Street.

This month’s speaker, Robert Keahey, will discuss, in fascinating detail, the history of the westward journey of emigrants to California in his presentation titled “California Bound: Opening the West 1840-1846.”



*Robert Keahey is a docent at the Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum in Sunnyvale, CA. He is also a member of the Oregon-California Trail Association (OCTA) and an active member of the CA-NV Chapter.*

He will discuss the westward migration to California, the largest in U.S. history, with over 250,000 people making the journey across the Great American Desert from 1840 to 1870, acknowledging that the Donner Party, the California Gold Rush, and the Intercontinental Railroad are indelibly inscribed events in the annals of western history. But before the Donners, the Forty-Niners and the Golden Spike, there were the Bidwells, Bartlesons, Walkers and Murphys who blazed a 2,000-mile trail across the rugged western plains and mountains to California. Robert will shine the spotlight on

these early pioneers who mostly have been relegated to the footnotes of California history.

Starting with a discussion of the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails, key aspects in the development of the California Trail, Keahey examines the drivers that ignited the spark to “go west”: (1) key people – both famous and infamous – who dared to venture into new frontiers; (2) the essential elements of a wagon train; (3) the notable migrations from 1840 to 1846. Finally, an important question is examined: “What was the impact of these early pioneers on the westward expansion?”

Afterward, there will be time for questions and social time (as we usually do after meetings), so you can catch up with friends and find out what’s going on. Masks are no longer required to enter the library, but the county still requires that no food be served at these meetings. We hope to see you there!

### Meeting group from March 20

Last month’s meeting, with the help of presenter Connie Young Yu, was a most interesting one. It prompted a good conversation about Chinese history and Milpitas history after her presentation. Some of the participants are shown in the photo below.



*Left to Right: Catherine Pelizzari, Michael Pelizzari, Robert Burrill, Daniel Cospser, Connie Young Yu, Bill Hare, Brenda Hee Wong, Joseph Ehardt, Jathin Ullal*

## Update on the Society's Project to restore the old safe from the 1912 Bank of Milpitas

It all began about 9 years ago. We began discussions with the Milpitas branch of U. S. Bank proposing their donating the old Bank of Milpitas safe to the Society. In May 2023, that donation was completed and we arranged for transport of the safe to a firm in Hayward, SecuritySafe USA, at which (hopefully) repairs were to be made. The door on this estimated 3,500-4,000 lb monster would not properly close, and a professional diagnosis was needed to determine what was wrong and an assessment of whether or not it could be fixed.



Several problems were identified and repaired, but the key issue was the main right hinge rod was no longer straight. The door needs perfect alignment to close, which required the custom machining of a replacement rod, which is now installed and the safe's door is fully functional. The antique lettering and decorative elements you see in the previous photo will be the final flourish in our "restoration." But there will be another installment to this story, the best of all.

## SCCPA Awards Night

The date for this year's Santa Clara County Preservation Awards night, at History Park, has already been chosen: this festive event will take place on Saturday, May 17, 7-10 pm. Stay tuned for more information.



*Society President Bill Hare presents his nomination of the City of Milpitas to Renee Lorentzen (left), Milpitas Community Enrichment Coordinator at last year's Santa Clara County Preservation*

## Our Society's Contact Information

You can contact the Milpitas Historical Society:

- by mail at 160 N. Main Street, Milpitas CA 95035
- by email at [tmhs@milpitashistoricalsociety.org](mailto:tmhs@milpitashistoricalsociety.org)
- by land-line at 1-408-262-1776 (Bill Hare)
- or our website: <http://milpitashistoricalsociety.org>

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**160 North Main St.**  
**Milpitas, CA 95035**

**First Class**