



Milpitas Muse

May 2025

The Milpitas Historical Society Newsletter

Volume XLVI, No. 4

Meeting: THURS May 15th at 7:00 pm
MILPITAS LIBRARY
COMPUTER TRAINING CENTER (Rm 136)
160 N. MAIN STREET, MILPITAS

The Presentation

The Dawn of the Digital Age: 100 Years of Computer History (1880s-1980s)

Today, computers are ubiquitous. They are in our cars and appliances, and our smartphones are tremendously powerful computers. However, computers were not accessible to ordinary people until the 1980s.

Dave Hoyt will describe the evolution of the computer from the 1880s to the 1980s, from computers the size of houses to those that sat on desks in houses.

His presentation will also describe how the Valley of Heart's Delight became Silicon Valley. It will feature stories drawn from artifacts on display at the Computer History Museum in Mountain View



The Hollerith Electronic Computer was designed by Raymond Bird of British Tabulating Machine (BTM). Hollerith founded a company in 1911 that was renamed International Business Machines (IBM) in 1924.



Computer scientists at Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) would invent the Alto Workstation (above), the Ethernet, laser printing, and the more advanced Xerox Star Workstation during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Our Presenter



Dave Hoyt has been a volunteer at the Computer History Museum since 2015. He has a degree in engineering and an MBA, both from Stanford University. In addition to volunteering at CHM, he is a volunteer at the Tech Interactive and Tech Challenge.

NOTABLE PERSONS

The First African Americans in Early Milpitas Township

To provide a very brief historical context, Milpitas Township began about 1852 with a small number of buildings along the road connecting Pueblo de San José with Mission San José (later the Oakland Highway and today's Main Street). My research shows that there were six African Americans living here in July 1860 and that none were slaves. I note this because, although California was formed as a free state in 1850, it was possible for slaveowners from other states to bring slaves with them.

JAMES LOZA was one of these first African Americans in Milpitas. His neighbor was Tito de la Rosa, who was married to Maria Inocencia Alviso, the daughter of Don José Maria de Jesus Alviso (grantee of Rancho Milpitas) and fourth of nine children. James (unmarried) and Tito (with family) were living along the southern boundary of what was known originally as Rancho Milpitas or later as Rancho San Miguel in the sale records of portions of the property during the American Period.

At that time (1860) James was a 24-year-old Black male born in the British West Indies, which makes his year of birth around 1836. He was free-born, but his parents were likely to have been born into slavery from either his grandparents or even earlier ancestors who were brought across the Middle Passage from Africa to the New World to work on the colonial plantations. The importation of slaves in the British West Indies ended in 1807, but slavery as an institution continued until the passage of the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, which took effect the next year, thus it is certain that James was free-born. Loza likely was the sur-name of the slaveholder of his parents.

James was a shoemaker, which was a very useful trade for an early resident of Milpitas Township. He may have served an apprenticeship to become a shoemaker before leaving the British West Indies. Most black slaves in the West Indies worked in sugar cane fields, so having a skilled trade such as that was unusual and very valuable. It probably was this leather working skill that enabled James to pay for or work as crew for passage on the ship(s) that brought him to California..

JAMES BROWN, originally from New York state, was a 30-year-old African American farm laborer working for Antonio Mesa. At this point I have no other information about James, but he probably was free-born.

And finally, there was a family group of four Mulattos, an adult couple with two young children.

HENRY LAURENE, head of household, was a 38-year-old male born in Tennessee and whose occupation was that of a cook. Henry might be the biological father of these two children (with the surname of Young) because officially slaves could not marry, so any children born by Angeline would have been property carrying the surname of their slavemaster. Henry's name suggests that he might have been Creole.

ANGELINE LAURENE, "wife" of Henry, was a 34-year-old female born in Kentucky (border slave state). Because Angeline was a mulatto she would have been the daughter of an African American female and a white slavemaster named Young. That she was living in Milpitas before the outbreak of the Civil War suggests, on the one hand, that she may have come to California with her slavemaster (seeking gold?) or, on the other hand, she may have had an earlier husband named Young. Because of California's Fugitive Slave Act of 1852, she and Henry must have been documented as free to avoid being sent back into slavery or maybe they in fact were escaped slaves seeking refuge in free-state California (of 1850-51) and were returned after Eliza's birth in 1855 because I have yet to find any subsequent records of their whereabouts.

MARY A. YOUNG was a 7-year-old female born in California, which means that the family had arrived somewhere in the state of California before July 1853.

ELIZA J. YOUNG was a 5-year-old male also born in California.

State of the Society Address

From your President, Bill Hare

Dearest Members and Friends of the Milpitas Historical Society,

I come before you today with some concerns for our Society's future, and ask for your ideas and observations to help us find some workable solutions.

Over recent years our participating membership has dwindled considerably. For example, in our regular meeting of June, 2017, fifty-one members attended. Recently, we are averaging twelve to fifteen members, of which roughly half of that number are also the Board of Directors of the Society!

As we are bringing in guest speakers who have spent much time preparing interesting presentations and sometimes traveling many miles to get to our meetings, it can be a bit disheartening for them to arrive to such a sparse crowd - and frankly, it's a little embarrassing to those of us who invited them.

I know there must be reasons for this change, and hopefully those of you who haven't been able to attend can help our Board of Directors to revitalize the Milpitas Historical Society as well as understand the underlying issues for the low attendance.

I *will* say that we get a MUCH greater attendance at our special events, such as the Installation Dinner, Christmas Party, and Summer Picnic, so we know you are all out there!

How can we get you to gather with us for our regular meetings?

At the moment, we are hosting 8 regular meetings per year, plus the aforementioned special events. Would a different day or time help? Maybe a Saturday morning or afternoon so people don't have to drive in the dark? Are we having *too many* meetings? Maybe our gatherings would feel more "special" if we spread them out.

Would you rather the subject matter of the presentations be more Milpitas-focused?

Is food an attraction? Those other well-attended events I mentioned all involve food. One model we could follow is the California Pioneers group, who meet four times per year for a Saturday luncheon and historical presentation. They consistently draw a good-sized attendance.

Please let us know what we can do to keep this going for as many of you as we can. Feel free to leave a message at the Society's voicemail box at 408-262-1776. You can also email us at tmhs@milpitashistoricalsociety.org.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Bill Hare

A FREE Society Membership Benefit

The Society continues to offer its commemorative floaty pen for free to all of its active members. To receive it we invite you to come to one of our monthly meetings to pick it up and also hear a great historical presentation.

We hope to see you soon.



Ongoing Renewal of Annual Society Dues

It's still that time of year. If your copy of the newsletter does NOT have a renewal form, this is confirmation that we have received your dues. Thank you!

If a renewal form is included, it means we have not received your dues as yet. No worry; this is still just a friendly reminder.

Our Society's Contact Information

You can contact the Milpitas Historical Society:

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