

**President:
Dorothy Walker
283-3303**



NEWS

Lafayette, California

September 2008

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President's Message

There are a lot of things in the works for the Historical Society this Fall, and we expect it to get busier in the future.

We are looking forward to meeting with many of you at the Art and Wine Festival in mid-September, the 20th and 21st. This is an annual event for us and this year we are showing off "Old Betsy." She will be joining us in our new location close to the children's area so that the kids can ring her bell. Please come and talk with us about your ideas for our organization.

Sometime in mid-October, we expect to have a tour of the refurbished Bancroft Library. We plan to take advantage of an offer by our last pot luck speaker, Dr. Robert Hirst, editor of the Mark Twain papers at the Bancroft Library, to take a tour of the Library. Look for a postcard in the mail when we settle on the date and time.

The Board has again been asked to review proposed modifications to historic buildings in Lafayette. This summer we reviewed a request to look at minor changes to the Town Hall theater building. Previously, we were asked to assess proposed changes to the Pioneer Store on the Plaza. That project has not moved forward, but we expect to send representatives to the Planning Commission to monitor the project when it comes up. It is a requirement of Lafayette's municipal code that the Historical Society review changes to designated historic buildings.

The new Lafayette library is progressing well. Read more about it in the article later in the newsletter. We are making major efforts to organize the materials the Society has acquired over the years. Many of the artifacts, articles and photos have been in storage among our members. Now we are slowly trying to bring them to our office space for documenting and cataloging. In the major article in this newsletter, Mary Solon highlights the newest acquisitions we have received. Mary is willing to take her portable scanner to your home and scan photos that you have that document the growth of our city. We hope to engage many of you in this and other tasks as we get nearer to our move-in date.

We are resuming a tradition of historic photos at the old Albertson's. The next time you're at the Plaza Shopping Center stop by and see them.

The members of the Board were saddened to hear of the passing of Joan Merriman earlier this year. Joan was a founding member of our organization. We extend our sympathy to her family.

—Dorothy Walker, President of the Board

Recent Acquisitions

The Lafayette Historical Society has been fortunate over the years to have numerous devoted members collecting historical artifacts, a true legacy. One of the Society's tasks in the next year will be to catalog the many maps, documents, oral histories, articles of clothing and photographs for our office in the new library.

Yet our collection is not static, members are always on the lookout for new artifacts. These last few months have brought a small treasure trove of photos to the Society.

After a small notice in the newsletter, Angelo and Gloria Rossi contacted LHS and offered to let us scan their family photos. I went to their home with a scanner and imaged 32 photos from their scrapbook. Possibly the best of the lot is of Angelo's father, Serafino Rossi, on a horse with a rifle and coyote skin taken in 1909 on his Reliez Valley property.



This process of imaging does no harm to the photographs and the photographs remain with the owner. The digital imaging can produce wonderful photos and preserve our Lafayette heritage.

Rayette Repetto donated a beautiful aerial photograph of Mt. Diablo Blvd., Julie Lane and Carol Lane as houses were being built in 1950.



Aerial photos have many uses. LHS was recently contacted to view photos of when BART was built.

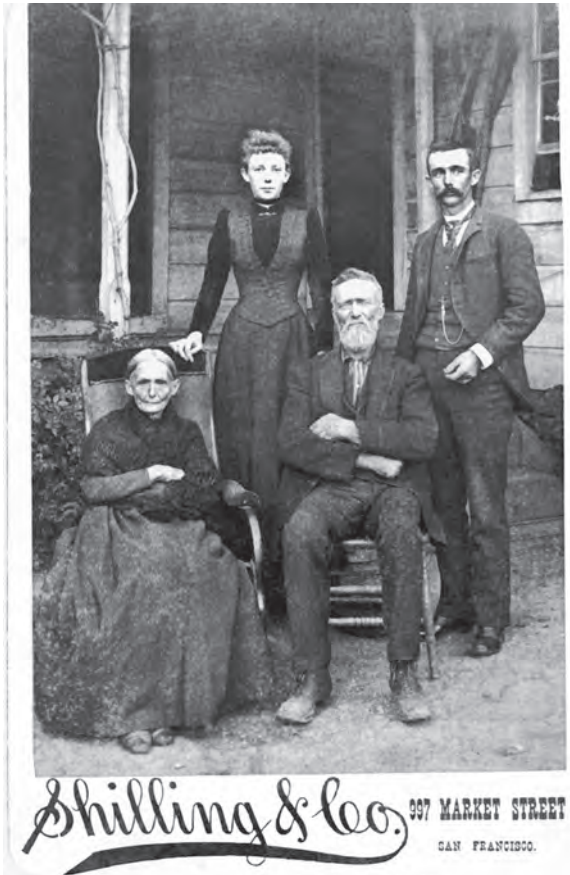
Sadly, in April, Joan Merryman, one of the co-founders of the Lafayette Historical Society, died. Her family left us numerous books and artifacts. Joan previously had given us 2 boxes of clippings for our files. Joan also left 17,000+ bookmarks collected through the years from the Friends of the Library Book Room. One of them was a postcard, shown here, from Carrie Van Meter to Alice McNeil, dated June 9, 1921.

The humor of the card is that Carrie was the post-mistress and would have written the card, canceled the 1 cent stamp and possibly placed the card in a mailbox or delivered it to Alice McNeil.



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Mary McCosker was contacted by Tami Mullins who was doing research on the Allen family. Mary put together a meeting of Tami and her husband Peter with Donna Colombo. Tami and Donna are descendants of Margaret and Isaac Allen but through different progeny. We estimated they were cousins, 5 times removed. Both let us image photographs.



Tami's photo shown here is of top left, Sophia Bradley Eachus and her brother George Albert Bradley. Lower left are their parents, Rebecca Allen Bradley and Thomas Wesley Bradley who died in 1898 and 1902 respectively.

Rebecca came to California in 1846 with her mother and father. Since her mother, Margaret Allen, was sick on the trail and her father, Isaac, died on the trail, Rebecca had to drive a team on the way to California. Thomas Bradley had come to Fort Sutter in 1843 and is said to have helped rescue the Donner Party. His life story is interesting and too long to mention here.

Amongst Donna Colombo's photos is one of Chief Shirley Peak and George Allen (right) with a fire truck from the Lafayette Fire Department. The fire engine is not Old Betsy.



A few weeks later, Donna set up a meeting with (Aunt) Bette Allen of Fremont, the wife of the late Edward Allen, another Margaret Allen descendent. Her daughters Barbara and Carol were there along with Donna's mother, Joyce Allen Stewart. Edward was Joyce's first cousin. Once again we were allowed to image photographs. The photo here is of Charles Albert Allen and Adelaide Victoria (Gerow) Allen.



The children are Etta May Allen and Joseph Edward Allen. Etta was born in 1886 and Joseph was born in 1887. Based on the ages of the children the photo could be dated to about 1888. More children were born to Charles and Adelaide after this photo was taken.

Julie Sullivan donated a number of photos while working on a book covering Lafayette businesses which is due out in a few months. Warren Gavey owned the Gavey Auto Shop which did car repairs. He is shown here in Reno with a snowman on the hood of his car.



Sallie Gavey Rasmussen, Warren Gavey's daughter, gave Julie an oral history and a number of photos.

We thank the above people for sharing photos with us. Perhaps you have a photo or could give us an oral history. Contact any of the board members, we would like to see what you have and hear what you say.

—Mary Solon

UPDATE ON THE NEW LAFAYETTE LIBRARY & LEARNING CENTER

According to Ann Merideth, Director of Lafayette Community Development, the construction of our new Library is proceeding without any major problems. The interior walls are being installed on the ground and middle levels, and rooms are becoming recognizable. All the utilities (electrical, data, water) are stubbed into the subfloors. The next big change that will be noticeable are the walls for the Community Hall and Staff Wing.

Once they are up, people should have a good sense about size of the building and the plazas. There is no date for completion yet, but she is hoping that the Lafayette Historical Society and others can start moving in next summer.

—Marechal Duncan

LAFAYETTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTO DISPLAY

There is a very nice photo display of older buildings in Lafayette in the display case located at the old Albertsons store in the Plaza Shopping Center. There are three display cases located on the west side of the building. The LHS display is in the second display case. Stop by and take a look.

—Marechal Duncan

THIS OLD HOUSE

I am researching three of the oldest (still standing) houses in Lafayette. They are located at: 3306 Moraga Blvd. (built 1850?), 1324 Martino Rd. (1876), and 811 Topper Lane (1886). If any of you have any data, details, or information (pictures, owners, early occupants, etc.) of these three houses or any other very old structures in Lafayette. Please telephone me at 925-283-6812, or e-mail at: m.d.dunc@sbcglobal.net

—Marechal Duncan

Old Betsy Shows Off

When you get a new set of "shoes" you want to wear them and show them off. So it is with OLD BETSY and the new wheels and tires!

Marchael Duncan was contacted by a photographer in Clayton that had a request to photograph a family of FOUR GENERATIONS OF FIREFIGHTERS. Somehow the photographer had heard about our existence and wondered whether the fire engine could be used in a photograph of the firefighters.

There were discussions about how to get the whole group together, the logistics of having the family come to Lafayette, and the difficulty of OLD BETSY driving to Clayton. Here is where the friends of OLD BETSY again come to the rescue. It turns out that John Kallio had purchased a model "T" car and equipment that Lee Volquardsen owned, including a trailer that Lee used to transport his cars. With a test run, OLD BETSY fit on the trailer and my truck was able to transport the fire engine to the firefighters.

The firefighters are four generations of Oakland firefighters; the great grandfather a retired Oakland firefighter in his nineties, his son an Oakland retired firefighter, a grandson retired Oakland firefighter, and a great-grandson currently an Oakland firefighter. Those four members of the family, their wives and children all gathered at a Clayton park and climbed on OLD BETSY for the photo shoot. Interestingly enough, other than the wives, all the members of the families are male except for one great grand daughter about age five.

It was a great group and all (including the photographer who made a contribution to the OLD BETSY

restoration fund) appreciated the opportunity to be photographed with the vintage fire engine. Further, we now know that OLD BETSY can be transported without too much difficulty to nearby locations all dressed up and looking good.

Unfortunately, the promised copies of the photo shoot have not arrived in time for the newsletter.

—George Wasson

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Vice President: Marechal Duncan.....	283-6812
Treasurer: Paul Sheehan	284-1287
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Corresponding Secretary: Oliver Hamlin	283-6822
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Photo Retrieval: Mary Solon	283-7335
George Wasson	284-4603
Tom Titmus	299-2030
Nancy Flood.....	283-3409
Keith Blakeney.....	788-0195

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Walking Tours: Mary McCosker.....	284-5376
Fire Engine: George Wasson	284-4603
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Lafayette Historical Society Member Information (Please photocopy form for additional names)

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Membership Categories and Annual Dues: *(please check one)*

____ Life membership \$100.00 (one time fee) ____ Family membership \$10.00

____ Business membership \$50.00 ____ Student membership \$2.50

Please indicate areas of special interest:

____ Annual dinner ____ Archives ____ LHS Online ____ Displays ____ Photo collection

____ Landmarks ____ News Clips ____ Oral History ____ Fire Engine ____ Programs

____ Research ____ Telephoning ____ Walking Tours ____ Other _____