



Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore-Tunneling through time

Lafayette Historical Society's Speaker Series

Tuesday, Tuesday, June 14th • 3:00 pm

The Caldecott Fourth Bore—Tunneling Through Time

**Speakers: Ivy Morrison, Caldecott Fourth Bore Information Officer
and Jim Allen, Geologist**

Arts and Science Room – Mezzanine Level

Lafayette Library and Learning Center – Limited seating

Donation requested: **\$10** members; **\$15** for non-members

All kids **under 14 free with paying adult**

The locale is the Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore between Orinda and Oakland. Imagine the time is the late Miocene period, about 10 million years ago. The climate is warmer and abundant greenery flourishes. Gone are the rugged, rocky hills, the freeways, the cities. In their place is a verdant river flood plain where small, rodent like creatures nest in the savannah grassland, and antelope and gazelle graze peacefully on lush foliage. Let your imagination move forward several million years to the Pleistocene period, a mere one million years ago. The scene is much the same, but suddenly the earth trembles. An enormous hairy creature emerges from the thick undergrowth and lumbers toward the river to drink. It's a giant sloth bigger than a 17-person van.

This is the picture geologist **Jim Allen** creates of what the tunnel locale used to look like, partially from fossils similar to those being found in the Caldecott Fourth Bore excavation. Jim will share the discoveries paleontologists have found at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center as part of the Lafayette Historical Society's (LHS) speakers series. "Tunneling Through Time" will be held at 3 p.m. on **June 14** and is open to the public. A donation of \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members is requested, kids under 14 are free with an adult.

Along with Jim, Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore public information officer **Ivy Morrison** will give an overview of the tunnel progress and a glimpse of the intricate excavation process. The Fourth Bore project is a partnership

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President's Message

It is with excitement and trepidation that I assume the leadership of the Historical Society. I am following in huge footsteps. Dorothy Walker has been our LHS President for the past seven years and has had the enormous task of taking our organization (sometimes kicking and screaming) into a new space and a new future. Dorothy's extraordinary work and dedication have made my transition an easier one. She is the daughter of Angela Broadhead, one of the founders of the Historical Society. I am grateful to Dorothy and to the Board of Directors for allowing me to lead this group.



Dorothy Walker, LHS President 2004-2011

History has always been my thing. For a few weeks as a freshman at Cal I was planning to be a French major but quickly realized that my interests and abilities lay elsewhere. I switched to History and found my passion. Like Dorothy I, too, grew up in Lafayette. For the past fifteen years I have taught the history of Lafayette to local third grade students. I love watching them realize that they are part of the on-going story of our community . . . when they realize that Peter Thomson's Blacksmith Shop is today the site of Bank of America . . . that Diablo Foods sits on the site of Jennie Bickerstaff's family home. . . and the redwood tree in the front of the store was planted by Jennie. I'm still learning too and am as excited about Lafayette history as they are.

Our **Annual Meeting and Potluck** just this week was a huge success. We had more attendees at this meeting than we did at last year's meeting. This is just one indication that more people are finding the Historical Society, and that we are offering very interesting programs to the community. (*Please see the article on Stu Swiedler's presentation – "What's Happened Since the Railroad's Been Gone" in this issue.*) Anne Schnoebelen, Vice President of the Treasure Island Museum Association, gave a talk on *Treasure Island's 1939 Golden Gate Exposition* and its interesting connection to the Lafayette Historical Society. Miquel Covarrubias was commissioned to paint very large murals symbolizing "Pacific Unity" the theme of the World's Fair. Portfolios of reproductions of these murals were sold as memorabilia at the Exposition and one of those portfolios mysteriously found its way into our History Room one day last year. Anne pulled all the pieces together and held the attention of every attendee.

LHS is always looking for new volunteers and history buffs, people who might like to interview locals for our oral history project, catalog photos from the past and present, and enter historical data on our new computer software. Help us keep the history light burning in Lafayette!

Please come by and visit our History Room in the **Lafayette Library and Learning Center** – our entry is on Golden Gate Way and we are open *Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday* from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm.

—Mary McCosker

Stu Sweidler Speaker Presentation Wrap-up

We hope you were among the more and 40 attendees at **Stuart Swiedler's** presentation "*What's Happened Since the Railroad's Been Gone*" and the debut of his website "**The East Bay Hills Project**". Stu's collection of



largely unpublished aerial images and ground-based photos follow the 17-mile right-of-way of the **Sacramento Northern Railroad**.

He made us feel as though we were actually hiking on the direct route from the base of the Oakland hills to the oldest section of Walnut Creek. We discovered changes in the landscape brought about by major public works projects, development and preservation efforts that came to a head in the

1950's and 1960's. He answered questions that had been curiosities for many years!

If you were not able to attend the presentation please feel free to visit Stu's site at **www.eastbayhillsproject.org** for a fascinating trip through time you're sure not to forget!

—**Judie Peterson**

Stories of Lafayette

The Lafayette Historical Society (LHS) has more than 50 Oral Histories in its collection. We have added 5 new histories recently and will be adding more over the next few months. If you are interested in helping with this project, which includes a choice of conducting interviews, doing research, and transcribing the interviews, please contact the History Room at 925-283-1848 or email Lafayette.history@comcast.net

I would like to share an excerpt from one that is actually from a "neighbor" of mine!

When we moved to our house on Martino Road in 1963 little did I realize we were moving to a very historic area or that I would someday be involved in interviewing long time residents of Lafayette and recording their remembrances of the area.

Until his death on November 12, 1977, Nat Martino lived up the road from us in a farm house (one of the oldest houses in Lafayette); Nat's sons, Louie (now deceased) and Jim built houses and raised their families on lots above the old farm house. Jim is still living in Martinez at the age of 90.

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Because of the long time efforts of the LHS Oral History Project, we have recordings and transcriptions from Nat, Louie and Jim providing the stories of this pioneer family and of the fruit orchards and farming in Lafayette.



Nat Martino picking plums in his Springhill Ranch

Nat came to California from Italy in 1912 and settled in Oakland near his brother until he moved to Lafayette in 1919. He was interviewed in 1975 and the following are some quotes:

From Nat, "...I was washing windows in Oakland for seven years. Then I bought this ranch here, and I had already three children and one, Jimmy, was born in the ranch.I wanted to ranch because I knew more about ranching...I came to the ranch, here, and didn't make much money, but at least we had all the milk (we could use) – we had five cows and all the fruit we could use. Because I was making my living on fruit, I was taking it (the fruit) from here to Oakland."

Question from the interviewer: How many people lived in Lafayette at that time?

Nat: "Well, let's see... I don't know, but I think it was about 300. There were only farms here and there, and I don't think there were more than 30 people in Lafayette proper, and only about a dozen buildings."

All of the Oral Histories in our collection are available in the LHS History Room and a selection is posted on our website at www.lafayettehistory.org

—**Betsy Willcuts**, *Oral History Project Chair*



Lafayette's Old Bridge gets New Life!



Old tunnel Road circa 1869

Many years ago travelers came to Lafayette from Oakland through the East Bay Hills along a road that was known as "Tunnel Road". We know it today as Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

This is a photo of Tunnel Road in 1869. *That is downtown Lafayette in the background!*



1915 bridge crossing Lafayette Creek

In 1915 a bridge was built on Tunnel Road to help travelers cross Lafayette Creek. The bridge is located west of downtown Lafayette near what is now the Lafayette Reservoir. This is now East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) property.

This is a photo of that bridge today!



Footbridge crossing Lafayette Creek completed in 1980

This footbridge crosses Lafayette Creek on the trail from Happy Valley Road to the Lafayette Reservoir and is very close to the 1915 bridge above. It was completed in 1980 at a cost of \$70,000. This trail was the first of many trail routes completed by Lafayette Parks & Recreation Commission. Walter Costa, former Lafayette Mayor is one of the people pictured in this photo.

This old bridge will soon be more viewable as residents of Lafayette begin efforts to transform this area into a community garden. Progress is being made as EBMUD, Lafayette City Council, Sustainable Lafayette and the Lafayette Community Garden Group work together to plan this effort. *Soon this old bridge will have new life!*

— **Marechal Duncan**

A Bit of History *(excerpted from an article by Dorothy Mutnick-1978)*

After Benjamin Shreve's store and post office at the bend in the road to Martinez was moved to the town site of Lafayette, he paid taxes for the first time in 1861. The store was run by family members until 1898 when it was sold to Henry Sweet. Part of the surrounding acreage was sold in 1902 and the rest in 1909. After Sweet's death his wife leased the store to Robert McNeil, who bought it in 1906 and remained for many years. The original building still remains behind the current façade.

A fire destroyed Brown's Mill in 1865. It was soon rebuilt under the management of Philander Standish. He was succeeded by others but the business did not prosper. The WaySide Inn was built on a portion of the mill lot in 1894 and had various owners until 1921. That original building is the WaySide Inn Thrift Shop.

Several blacksmiths had occupied the same site on the plaza but the shop established there in 1864 by Peter Thomson remained in Lafayette for 50 years. He acquired many acres of Rancho Acalanes then sold the bulk in 1911. Much of it was subdivided as Lafayette Terrace and Lafayette Terrace Extension.



By 1900 there were 51 households with 208 persons within Lafayette. The Rancho was finally being divided and lots were sold to both original and new residents. The name Happy Valley first appeared in 1887.

The first message from Lafayette over a branch telephone line run from Martinez was sent on January 7, 1881, to summon a doctor for a young man thrown from a gang plow. Never a financial success, the company was dissolved about ten years later.

At times various railroads were projected through Lafayette. In 1882, with Chinese labor, a tunnel was begun under Charles Hill, on the Orinda/Lafayette border. Like many similar efforts, it was later abandoned. A narrow gauge railroad came no closer to Lafayette than Bryant Station near the present Orinda Crossroads although there was another railroad stop at Willow Springs in Moraga in 1893.

In the survey for the partition of Rancho Laguna de los Palos Colorados the routes of three roads in Lafayette were established. Two were already well travelled. One over Jonah Hill joined the present Moraga Road at the Rancho Acalanes line. The other was the present St. Mary's Road-Glenside Drive-Reliez Station Road as far as Las Trampas Creek. It created a new road, now largely St. Mary's Road, from Moraga Road, which crossed the creek before it turned south. That portion of the road is now abandoned. New owners of generous acreages soon lived along the northerly side of this new route. It was not officially named St. Mary's Road until 1950.

A county ordinance of 1892 established Golden Gate Way as the name of the road to Oakland through Lafayette. The road connecting it with Alhambra Valley via the present Upper Happy Valley Road was to be called Briones. What is now Happy Valley Road was designated as Happy Valley Local. Near the cemetery the road branched to avoid rugged terrain, which was later leveled by the construction of Highway 24. The branch toward the north was named Pleasant Hill Road; Golden Gate Way curved southerly around the hill to cross Reliez Creek.

— Mary McCosker



Tunneling Through Time— *Continued from page 1*

between the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA). It will create a two-lane fourth tunnel north of the existing three Caldecott tunnels.

“We are lucky to have an abundance of fossils from the earlier tunnel excavations of the 1930’s and 1960’s,” he adds, “since there were no paleontologists involved. The construction guys at that time realized the importance of what they were finding and took it upon themselves to preserve and transport the specimens to the university.”

Jim will bring rock samples from both the eastern (Orinda) and the western (Oakland) excavations, showing how different the rock formations are on each side of the tunnel. The tunnel is projected to open to traffic in 2013 and to be completely finished with all landscaping in 2014. A complete history of the tunnel, the excavation process and photos are available on the website www.caldecott-tunnel.org.

To make reservations for the **June 14 presentation** call 925-283-1848 or send an email to lafayette.history@comcast.net.

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