



Lafayette Historical Society

NEWS

Enlightening Our Community

Lafayette, California

January 2019

Vol. 46, No. 1

**The History Room is Open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10-2
Located on the Lower Level of the Lafayette Library**

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

Many thanks to all who attended and supported our First Annual Breakfast with Santa. The food was delicious, the donations abundant, and Santa was there to visit! Thanks too to Sideboard who provided a wonderful venue for the event and to those businesses who generously donated items: The Gap, Clocks, Etc., Chow, Blodgett's Carpet, 18/8 Fine Men's Salon, Lafayette Car Wash, El Charro, Ace Hardware, Whole Foods, Cuesta Company, Hank & Frank, Sharp Bicycle, Town Hall Theater, Orchard Nursery, Epicurean Exchange, Bistro Burger, Great Wall Restaurant, and Local Food Adventures. Additional kudos go to Lauren Herpich for her efforts in organizing this event and to LHS Board members for their assistance in making this event a success!!



ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Oral Histories which date from the 1970's have been stored on tapes and disks in the History Room. Many of these tapes have recently been digitized and are available for viewing on the Historical Society Website – lafayettehistory.org. In the top row on the website you will find Archives/Oral Histories which will take you to the oral histories. Below is a list of the tapes that have recently been added to the website. The committee continues to work to make additional tapes available.

Mary Machado Ginocchio: The Machado family has long been associated with the Alta Crest Dairy which once existed on the former Hamlin property in the Silver Springs area of Lafayette. The dairy was actually started by Mary's older sister, Cecilia. When Mary was in third grade, she would get up at 3 am to help Cecilia deliver fresh milk to customers in Lafayette, Walnut Creek, Pleasant Hill, and Concord. In this interview she also recalls major events of her life including taking part every year in the Holy Ghost Feast at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Walnut Creek and the Lafayette Horse Show.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE 2018

Welcome to our new members and to those who have renewed memberships since July 2018:

Ashley Rodrigues	Barbara Collaro	Eric Pollard	Erin Brindley
Jazmin Solorzano	Jennifer Martin	Lacey Deal	Lindsay Ashworth
Sophia Tsiouris	Jeffrey Klurfeld	Kirk Allen	Caren Armstrong
The Azalde Family	Angie Bailie	Frank Barham	Jeffrey Crenshaw
Sue Cross	Amy Duling	The Exley Family	Linda Ferrarotti
Nancy Goodmiller	The Harrigan Family	The Hiden Family	Sande Hubbs
Rebecca Mallon	John Kennett	Mary Louise Kimball	
Barbara Levander	Alice Lynn-Wilkinson	Tami Mullins	
David Ogden	Stanley Pedder	Charmagne Pedroni	
The Peterson Family	Sheila Rogstad	Trudy Salter	
Carol Singer	The Ungar Family	The Van Etten Family	
Cecily Wood	Glen Zamanian	The Saragusa Family	

Please watch the mail for an upcoming membership renewal mailing.

LAFAYETTE'S FIRST GROCERY STORE

Benjamin Shreve was Lafayette's first official grocer. He was born in Crawford County, Pennsylvania, on August 2, 1828, and received his education in the local school and later at the Waterford Academy. In 1850, he went to the southern part of Kentucky, where he was employed in teaching school. In 1852, he joined a party of Kentuckians to cross the plains to California, and after an uneventful trip of six months, arrived in Placerville in September of the same year. Later that Fall he came to Contra Costa County where he stayed for a short time in Ygnacio Valley.



Benjamin Shreve's General Store

Shreve then traveled to Oregon where he remained until May of 1853, when he returned to the mines of the Middle Fork of the American River. After a short stay there, he decided to return to the East and started to San Francisco with that intention, but passing through Contra Costa County again, he was hired to teach school in Lafayette by town founder Elam Brown where he taught during the Winters of 1853 and 1854. In 1855, he built a general store. In 1857, he petitioned Congress to establish a post office at his store, requesting the name of Centerville for the settlement.

Mr. Hough's Recd of J. Shreve

1878	Feb 1	To 2 lbs candles ⁰⁰	10 lbs Beans ⁰⁰	1 00
"	"	30 lbs of Potatoes at 0.12 1/2		50
"	6	" 1 bottle Sarsaparilla		35
"	7	" 1 pair of Boys Boots		3 00
"	14	" Potatoes 50	Quick Apples	1 50
"	19	" 1 Rock Butter		65
"	25	" 12 lbs potatoes at 0.12 1/2		30
March	1	" 30 "	" "	50
"	13	" Potatoes 50	Beans	62
"	15	" 1 package of Starch		25
"	16	" 1 Rock Butter		50
"	20	" Thinard		20
"	25	" 10 lbs Beans at 0.12 1/2		50
"	30	" 1 sack Wheat		1 90
Apr	1	" Potatoes		50
"	3	" 1 bag Syrup		50
"	5	" Soap		12 37
Recd. Payment \$12.37				
B. Shreve				

In 1855, he established a general store. In 1857, he petitioned Congress to establish a post office at his store, requesting the name of Centerville for the settlement. As there was already a settlement in California with this name, he chose the name La Fayette for the community, probably because his wife Adaline Gorham and her family had come from La Fayette County, Illinois. In 1857, he received his appointment as postmaster and mail agent. In addition to his general store, Shreve farmed two hundred and fifty acres the site of Shreve's original general store.

A Receipt from Shreve's Store-1878

POST OFFICES OF LAFAYETTE

The first Lafayette post office was built in 1854 as part of Milo Hough's hotel when it was still known as the Acalanus settlement. Benjamin Shreve came from Kentucky in search of gold but settled in the area building a general store and school. He became the first postmaster when he named the town La Fayette after the famous French General. Shreve and his son Milton were postmasters for 41 years. The building still stands near the Plaza Park and is home to Sideboard Restaurant.



The Pony Express used Lafayette as a change-of-horse station for a year and a half during 1860-61 at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road.



The second post office was located on Mt. Diablo Boulevard near Moraga Road and served eleven families who received their mail in post office boxes rented for a nickel each month. Carrie Hough Van Meter was postmaster from 1904-1927. In 1915, a town library of 60 books was installed in the post office with Carrie serving as town librarian.

In 1925, the post office moved into the second schoolhouse building that had been relocated to Mt. Diablo Boulevard from its prior location on Moraga Road. The building also served as the telephone exchange and library. In 1927 there were 200 mail deliveries in the town. Funds to build this post office were raised by dances sponsored by the Lafayette Improvement Club. This building has been a restaurant, various clothing shops, and today is an interior design firm.



The town's name changed from La Fayette to Lafayette on March 1, 1932. Completion of the Broadway Low Level Tunnel in the mid-1930s triggered a population boom. By 1939, the office served 2,000 persons, and by 1949, 7,500. In that year the post office attained first class status. Emelia Schutt served as postmaster for 25 years during the period from 1927 to 1952. This post office was located next to the brick Garrett Building on Mt. Diablo Boulevard, today's Postino Restaurant.

In 1951, a new post office was built at 973 Moraga Road next to Mangia Restaurant. Emelia Schutt and Doc Crandell served as postmasters during this period. In February 1951, urban delivery by auto was introduced. In May 1957, door-to-door foot delivery began in the downtown business district.



The next post office was opened in 1958 on the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and First Street. Prior to building this post office, the entire hill had to be removed before construction. There were 9,178 mail deliveries from this post office in 1975. The postmasters during this period were Doc Crandell, Pierce Powers, and Arne Nielsen.

Our current post office was built in 1979 in the shopping center near Trader Joe's Grocery Store. The mail carriers outgrew this building and were relocated to work out of Walnut Creek. After several years the Lafayette mail carriers returned to a new dedicated annex facility located at the east end of Lafayette.



BOY SCOUT EAGLE PROJECTS

Two Lafayette Boy Scouts have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout and in doing so completed projects for the Lafayette Historical Society:

Henry Huchingson build a wooden cabinet that is in the fire engine cage in the Library garage and is being used to store supplies and parts for Old Betsy, our 1920s Model T fire engine. Henry and other scouts from Troop #219 participated in this project. Thank you Henry!!



Donovan Fuller of Troop #200 built a wooden bench that is in the window of the fire engine cage to be used to display historical artifacts. Donovan organized the project and scouts from his troop assisted him with its completion.

The Historical Society is very appreciative of the work these two scouts did.



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LHS

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2019

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Return Service Requested

