

Millbrae Life & Times

M I L L B R A E H I S T O R I C A L S O C I E T Y N E W S L E T T E R

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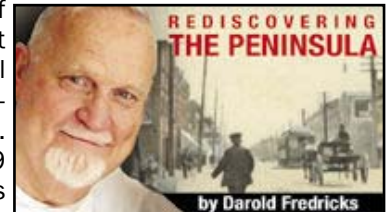
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HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT:
DAROLD E. FREDRICKS'
 "MILLBRAE HISTORICAL TIMELINE"
 BY TOM DAWDY



Darold Fredricks was a great local historian. Even though he lived in San Bruno, he also had a passion for Millbrae history. Darold taught Chemistry and Biology at **Westmoor High School** for thirty years, after which he retired and turned to his true love – writing history. He wrote a book on San Bruno history and in 1991 published *Millbrae: A Place in the Sun*. I had the pleasure of knowing Darold and even helping him a little with his Millbrae history book. Darold often gave lectures on local history, and up until his death in 2015 he wrote a history column for the *San Mateo Daily Journal*.

Not long ago, I was digging through some historical documents at the Millbrae Museum and found one of Darold's journals full of his very well organized notes referencing a lot of Millbrae history. Inside I found a "timeline of Millbrae" that Darold had put together. I believe that Darold donated this journal to the Millbrae Historical Society shortly before his death. I now have the privilege of sharing this timeline with our Society members. The list of dates includes recorded history from 1769 through 1999. The following entries are the highlights that cover Millbrae and the surrounding area.



(continued on Page 3)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
JOHN MUNIZ

In the sixth month of the COVID-19 pandemic, it looks like the light at end of the tunnel is very dim. I hope everyone is keeping safe and thriving. Schools, museums, and indoor dining remain closed. When we do open, the **Millbrae Train Museum**, under the leadership of Director **Vern Bruce** and his staff of docents, are working tirelessly to prepare new exhibits which will prove exciting. Technology is the

driving force in the Train Museum's new exhibits, which will be designed for railroad buffs of all ages.

Fantastic news! Nearly four years after the **Millbrae Recreation Center** was destroyed by fire, the **Millbrae City Council** signed a contract with **Blach Construction** to lead the process of rebuilding the new recreation center. I keep hearing that the groundbreaking will take place sometime in September. I



mention the recreation center because the Millbrae Historical Society Board of Directors might be interested in donating towards a room with our logo and name on the wall. The City is contemplating hiring a profes-

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

sional fundraising firm to manage fundraising. So that is the good news!

Have you seen the latest **Millbrae History Walk** video? Check it out by clicking the link below (place your cursor on the link, hold down your Ctrl key, and click your mouse):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sly95GEKIYg>

The video provides some insights into the history of Millbrae with narrations by community luminaries such as **President John Muniz, David Massolo, Vern Bruce**, and the former and current occupants of the oldest house in Millbrae at 1 Lewis Avenue. Thank you to **Peter Sheerin**, the cinematographer and video editor for the project, as well as to **Joe Teresi**, who served as the video narrator.

Please be sure to read **Tom Dawdy's Millbrae Timeline** in this issue, which is remarkably interesting. Thank you, Tom!

Thank you to all our members who work tirelessly to keep the history of Millbrae alive and relevant!

John Muniz
Millbrae Historical Society President
2009—present
“The Past is our Key to the Future”



Images of the new Millbrae Recreation Center



MILLBRAE GOES TO THE DRIVE-IN
 FRI. SEPTEMBER 25TH
 ENTRY: 6:00 PM | SHOW: 7:00 PM
FREE SIGN UP STARTS SEP 14
 Disney · PIXAR
ONWARD
 ALL PROCEEDS WILL BE USED BY THE MILLBRAE LIONS CLUB TO SUPPORT THE GREATER MILLBRAE COMMUNITY
 ADVANCE REGISTRATION & SNACK PURCHASES: bit.ly/milrec
 MILLBRAE SQUARE'S PARKING LOT @ 739 MAGNOLIA AVE. MILLBRAE
 MILLBRAE RECREATION

Please patronize our Millbrae Historical Society Lifetime Business Members:



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VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PAUL LARSON

Greetings MHS Trustees, members, volunteers and friends!

Yes, September is here and so is COVID-19. Nobody realized seven months ago that it would still be in our midst, but we are enduring. It seems that most of us are following health rules and doing our best by staying safe and keeping others safe. This is a learning experience and we have adapted.

Our Millbrae Historical Society Past President and Parliamentarian **Mary Vella Treseler** had her 90th birthday this past August 26th. Since COVID-19 restrictions are keeping everyone away from each other, and staying at home is still the best way to avoid sickness, many of us were invited to upload our Happy Birthday wishes by partic-

ipating in a warm video compilation that Mary was very surprised to receive. Thanks to Mary's daughter **Adonna** and her niece **Heidi** for setting up this special "video hug". Computer Zoom meetings, drive-by birthday parades, and video hugs have become our temporary normal.... and we're having fun by making the best of it!

Speaking of videos, I just finished watching our MHS's Virtual History Walk contribution to the **San Mateo County Historical Association** website. Go to <https://historysmc.org/victorian-days-walking-tours> and watch (and listen to) MHS President **John Muniz**, Second VP **Joe Teresi**, Treasurer/Train Museum Director **Vern Bruce**, Trustee **Dave Massolo**, and other con-



tributors provide a wealth of information on various Millbrae historical locations. Great Job!

So, with all of the above in mind, I send my wishes of health, safety and happiness along with bidding you a wonderful fall pre-holiday season.

**Take care and stay safe, from
MHS 1st VP Paul Larson**

DAROLD E. FREDRICKS'

"MILLBRAE HISTORICAL TIMELINE"

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

1769... Gaspar de Portola discovers the Bay from Sweeney Ridge

1776... Anza expedition pioneers El Camino Real

1770's –1820's... Rancho Buri Buri used to graze cattle and horses of Mission and Presidio

1822... Mexico takes over Spanish Empire in New World

1835... Rancho Buri Buri granted to Jose Antonio Sanchez

1830's... Sanchez Adobe Hacienda built (Dylan Hotel and Nothing Bundt Cakes are there today)

1840's... Breakup of the Rancho Buri Buri after the death of Antonio Sanchez

1850's... Perry Jones moves to Millbrae, buys 300 acres (Millbrae Villa), and builds Millbrae Hotel (El Camino Real & Millbrae Avenue)

1840's-1850's... Morgan Oyster Company operates in Millbrae growing oysters in the Bay (their hut was east of the 17 Mile House until 1940)

1850's... D.O Mills buys property for his future Mills Estate from James Wilson. Wilson had recently purchased the "Jose de la Cruz property" at a Sheriff's auction for \$1,000. Wilson sold the property to Mills for \$10,000.

1859... D.O. Mills and brother-in-law Ansel Ashton acquire over 6,000 acres of the former Rancho Buri Buri property

1860's... Jose de la Cruz was still living in Millbrae (where Ludeman Lane is today)

1861... The 17 Mile house was sold

1862... Alfred F. Green moves to Millbrae and becomes a partner with D.O. Mills in the Millbrae Dairy. Green builds his house at 1 Lewis Avenue (still standing today)

1863... San Francisco & San Jose Railroad is up and running, making the stagecoach obsolete

1867... H. Garnot General Merchandise opens at Millbrae Avenue & El Camino Real

1872... Juan Sanchez builds the 16 Mile House for his Mother Francisca Sanchez (wife of Manuel)

1872... Silva buys land near current I-380 in San Bruno and buys land in the middle of Millbrae known as the "Silva Tract" from Cornelius K. Garrison

1872... Mills drains marshlands east of the railroad tracks (using Chinese labor)

1870... Mills builds his famous "Mills Mansion"

1880... Johann Fredrick Ludemann buys 72 acres from Maria C.S. Sanchez for \$5,000 (future site of the Union Golf Club, later Green Hills Country Club)

1882... Millbrae Hotel is now open to the public as a branch of the "San Bruno House" with Dick Cunningham serving as the proprietor

(continued on Page 4)

DAROLD E. FREDRICKS'
"MILLBRAE HISTORICAL TIMELINE"
 (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

1889... Famous boxer James Corbett leases and runs the Millbrae Hotel. He was a World Heavyweight Champion and the only boxer to defeat John L. Sullivan. After that, the famous boxing phrase "The man who beat the man" was coined. Corbett was also known as the "Father of modern boxing".

1890's... Spring Valley Water Company buys Silva Tract
1895... William F. Dunphy residence burns at Linden & Serra Avenues

1896... Chadbourne Avenue School built (Poplar & Chadbourne Avenues)

1902... Antonio Massolo rents land for farming

1903... #40 Interurban Line opens from San Francisco to San Mateo (1903-1949)

1905... 16 families live in Millbrae

1906... The Great 1906 Earthquake

1907... Millbrae Hotel destroyed by fire

1910... Alfred F. Green dies January 6; D.O. Mills dies January 13

1914... St Dunstan Church built on the corner of Hermosa Avenue & El Camino Real

1919... West Coast Porcelain Works opens (1919-1930's)

1920's... Dr. Leider builds Capuchino Golf Course

1922... New Chadbourne School built, on corner of Magnolia & Chadbourne Avenues

1920's... Mills estate rents their land for Mills Airfield

1924... Phillips Family opens up Burlingame Lumber Co. on El Camino (where Safeway stands today)

1927... Gus Moeller & Neil Schultz purchase the Ed Taylor property and begin developing Millbrae Highlands

1928... Spring Valley Water Co. sold to City/County of San Francisco, becomes San Francisco Water Dept.

1930's... Royal Container moves into West Coast Porcelain site on Millbrae Avenue

1931... Millbrae Volunteer Fire Dept. — Les Pallas, Art Snider, H. Terrill (Art Snider was 1st Captain '32-38)

1934... Millbrae Fire District formed

1936... Millbrae Community Methodist Church opens

1936... 401 Broadway becomes first commercial building built on Broadway

1937... Fire House built at 225 Broadway; American La France fire truck donated by the Mills Estate

1937... Millbrae Community Center opens on SF Water Dept. property; WPA project built with adobe bricks

1938... Millbrae Lions Club chartered on February 25

1938... Taylor School built

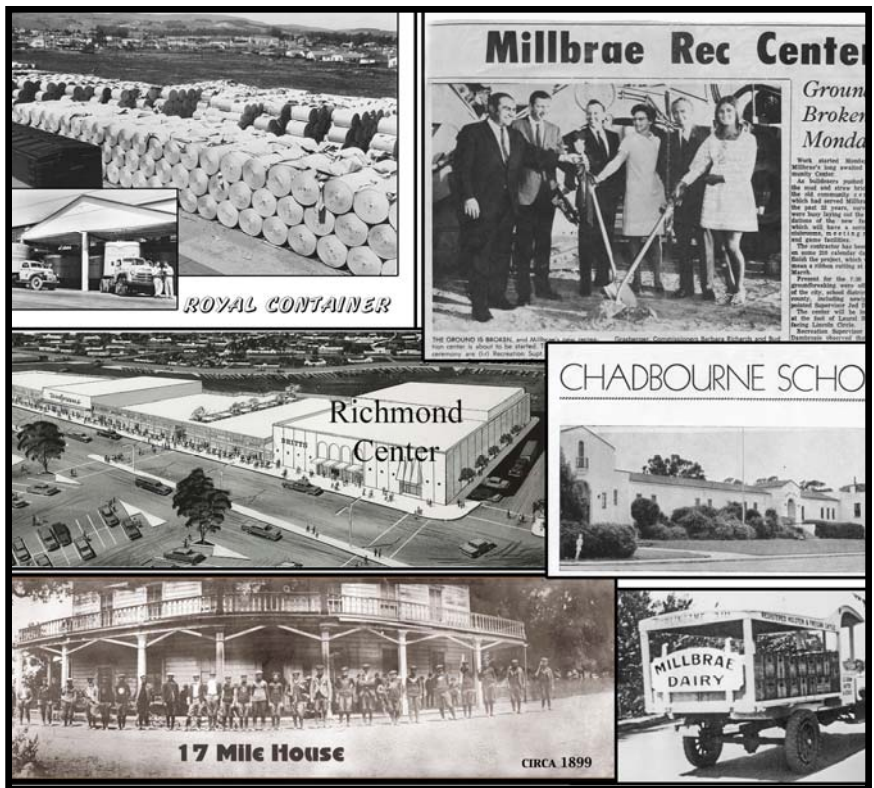
1938... Les Pallas becomes Millbrae's first paid firefighter at \$80/month

1943... Neil Schulz builds Bayside Manor during war

1946... Max Schmidt builds Meadow Glen

1947... The famous Gypsy's burns down (Santa Barbara & Lomita Avenues)

1948... Incorporation of Millbrae on January 15; W.F. Leutenegger 1st Mayor; Walter Swope appointed Police Chief; Green Hills School opens



1949... Neighborhoods change in Millbrae; Barcelona Ave. changed to Palm Ave.; Santa Barbara and Santa Anita Aves. built in Capuchino Tract; Millbrae Theater opens (demolished in 1994); #40 Street Car line ceases operation on Peninsula

1950... Capuchino High school opens; James Kilpatrick becomes third Mayor of Millbrae; St. Dunstan Church and Rectory is built on Broadway

1952... Larry Pickett is appointed Police Chief; Highlands Elementary School opens

1953... St. Dunstan School is built

1954... Glen Oaks School opens

(continued on Page 5)

CURATOR'S REPORT

DOROTHY SEMKE

Once again we find ourselves secluded and not able to go about our usual routine. We really miss seeing all of you and do hope that you are all well and happy.

We want to welcome new members **Rich & Mary McLinden, Ben Guz-**

zardi, and Charlie Hegarty. Looking forward to being able to see all of you in person and our Museum soon.

Dorothy Semke
Millbrae Museum Curator



TRAIN MUSEUM NEWS

ELIZABETH FURBER, EDITOR
VERN BRUCE, REPORTER

Hello everyone! Even though we have been closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, our volunteers have been showing up to help out and have been working on projects from home.

Be on the lookout for very special operating exhibits that have been spearheaded by our own **Peter Sheerin.** We will keep you in suspense until they are unveiled, but rest assured, they will be of substantial interest to everyone. These exhibits will depict how railroads used various systems to facilitate moving people and goods throughout their lines. The displays will have historic photos, videos, models, and actual

operating equipment, such as a complete telegraph station. (Okay, so I gave one of the secrets away!)

With regards to the **Borel Estate** carriage, much progress has been made. Most of the old paint has been removed, primarily by Peter. In addition, one of our other members took most of the carefully categorized nuts, bolts and other miscellaneous parts to his shop to carefully clean and apply a rust-preventative coating to them.

We want to thank the following volunteers for their hard work: **Ben Guzardi, Charlie Hegarty, Jay King, Peter Sheerin, Charles Smith, and Vern Bruce.** We also want to thank



President **John Muniz** for the donation of a fan & vacuum cleaner.

Lastly, we now have YouTube channels for our museums. The link for the Millbrae Museum is: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkKT8CSHRGPRsQa8VWtWuKg>.

The link for the Train Museum is: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvdmjOKmizE-WCZGeABne5w>.

Until next time - Stay safe and healthy!!

DAROLD E. FREDRICKS'

"MILLBRAE HISTORICAL TIMELINE"

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

1955... Stoneson Development Co. completes the first houses in the Millbrae Meadows; landfill begins for Millsdale Industrial Park

1958... Millbrae celebrates the City's 10th Anniversary; New City Hall & Police Station dedicated; Mills High School opens

Late 1950's... San Francisco Water Dept. declares Silva Tract surplus land (auctioned off 1960)

1962... \$1,368,000 permit issued to Barton Development Co. to build Richmond Square Shopping Center

1965... American Housing Guild buys Silva Ranch for \$3,000,000 to build 197 units & apartments

1966... Fire Chief Les Pallas retires; Robert Kohler becomes new Chief; Rotary Club of Millbrae is chartered

1967... Royal Container (now Georgia Pacific) moves to South San Francisco; Millbrae Elementary School built on Springfield Drive

1968... Millbrae declares Azalea "Official City Flower"

1970... New Recreation Center built on Richmond Drive; Millbrae Historical Society is chartered

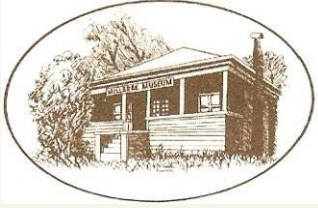
1983... St Dunstan Parish Hall built

1985... Millbrae Historical Society negotiates the acquisition of the six-room Victorian home of the SF Water Dept. Supervisor and moves it to Constitution Square where extensive renovation takes place to become the Millbrae Museum

1990's-2000... Millbrae Avenue Overpass built and BART Station under construction

This is the end of Darold's timeline, and I am also running out of space for this article. This was also the end of the century. Millbrae survived "Y2K" with none of the major havoc that was predicted, and our City of Millbrae made it safely into the 21st Century!

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
WWW.MILLBRAEHS.ORG



**MILLBRAE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

Post Office Box 511
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Phone: 650-692-5786

MHS OFFICERS – 2020-21

John Muniz, President

Paul Larson, 1st Vice-President

Joe Teresi, 2nd Vice-President

Gaetane Andrews, Secretary

Vern Bruce, Treasurer

Mary Vella Treseler, Parliamentarian

Dorothy Semke, Curator

Tom Dawdy, Historian & Carriage House Curator

Ray Gier, Museum Facilitator

Joe Teresi, Newsletter Editor

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Fourth Wednesdays of the Month: Millbrae Historical Society Board Meetings, 7:00 pm,
Millbrae Museum, 420 Poplar Avenue. MHS members and guests are welcome to attend!
(Please note that Board meetings are being held online via Zoom until further notice)

Millbrae Historical Society Museum Operating Hours

Millbrae Museum: Saturdays, 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm

Millbrae Train Museum: Saturdays, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

(Please note that the Museums are closed to the public until further notice)