

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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HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT:

SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT
BY TOM DAWDY



For this Millbrae history article I did something that is getting very popular, but as far as I know this is a first for the Millbrae Historical Society! The following article about Millbrae history is written via Artificial Intelligence (AI) - yes, a robot created this article! In this case it was a "chatbot" from **ChatGPT**. ChatGPT was developed by **Open AI** in November 2022 and is changing the world very fast (like it or not, it's here).

What I did for this article was to ask the chatbot a few questions about Millbrae history and our future and to write a poem about "our place in the sun". Just for the record, ChatGPT does not use **Google** for data, although they do use everything they can find from **Wikipedia** to **Facebook**. Open AI is headquartered in the Mission District. Let's see what he (or she) has to say about Millbrae!

Question #1: Write me a short essay about the history of City of Millbrae, CA

The Town of Millbrae, California, has a rich history that dates back to the mid-19th century. Here is an overview of how Millbrae got started:

Early History

1. Spanish and Mexican Era:

The area that is now Millbrae was originally part of a large land grant given by the Spanish government. It was known as **Rancho Buri Buri**, granted in 1827 to **José**

(Continued on Page 4)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT JOHN MUNIZ

Who is this Italian Stallion? He graduated from **Mission High School** (barely) on June 10, 1964 at the **Opera House** in San Francisco. Other notables who graduated from Mission High School include Millbrae residents **George Habeeb**, **Mary Vella Treseler**, and



Gino Bava; **Carlos Santana**, **Maya Angelou**, **Giants** third baseman **Alan Gallagher**, former SF Mayor "**Sunny Jim**" **Rolph**, and former State Senator **Leland Yee**.

In 1964, **Lyndon Johnson** was President, the **Vietnam War** was just starting, gas was 25 cents a gallon at **Tops Gas Station**, and the **Millbrae Lions Club** was 26 years old. A '64 **Chevrolet Impala Super**



Sport two-door hardtop was \$2,947. San Francisco still had **Playland-at-the-Beach**, **Sutro Baths**, **Fleishhacker Pool** (the largest saltwater pool in the world),

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Candlestick Park, the Mission and Geneva Drive-In movie theaters. The US population was 190,895,000, and Millbrae had a population of 15,873. Millbrae had two bowling alleys - the **Millbrae Bowl** and **Kings Bowl**. You could catch *My Fair Lady* at the **Millbrae Theater**, and then go for dinner and drinks at **Martinelli's Steak Pit**. You could catch the **Southern Pacific** commuter train at the Millbrae Station on Millbrae Avenue to San Francisco or San Jose. Parking was available in front of **SFO Airport** right under the **Peace Statue** created by **Benny Bufano**, now located on Brotherhood Way in SF. You could buy a suit at **Schneider's** or pick up a pair of shoes at **Belvini's**. Fill up your tank at **Dawdy's Shell Station** on Broadway. Cruise the El Camino and stop by **Shaw's** for ice cream. Stock up on shrubs, flowers and trees at **Peters and Wilson's Nursery** or order lumber to build a room addition at

Millbrae Lumber. Read the *Millbrae Sun* in the **Mermaid Room** at the **El Rancho Inn** on El Camino.

There you go, now sixty years later, the Millbrae you love and remember is "gone with the wind". No matter how much Millbrae has changed, in the words of **Dorothy Gale** in 1939's *The Wizard of Oz*, "There's no place like home!"

Have you figured out who the dude in the picture is?

Thank you,
John Muniz
 Millbrae Historical Society President
 2009 - Present
 "The Past is our Key to the Future"



MILLBRAE NEWS JULY 12, 2024

Upcoming Events



Aug 13

11:30 AM

Senior Lunch
Millbrae Recreation Center
477 Lincoln Circle
Call 650-259-2360 to RSVP



Aug 15

6:00 PM

Beats Brews & Vines
Downtown Millbrae
Broadway and Hillcrest

VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PAUL LARSON

Greetings MHS Trustees, members and friends!

Our community has a good number of organizations with great historical significance, and I am honored to be active in a few listed here:

1. Since I grew up with this organization, I'll begin with **Chapel of the Highlands Mortuary**, now in its seventh decade of serving the community. We are the oldest business in Millbrae, owned by the **Larson Family** since **October 5, 1952**.
2. The **Millbrae Lions Club** was chartered in 1938, roughly a decade before Millbrae became a city, and has been actively supporting the community with fundraisers and projects designed to help those in need, moving the community in a positive direction, and having fun while doing so. Many "movers and shakers" that made Millbrae the place it is today have been prominent members of the Millbrae Lions Club.
3. The **Millbrae Historical Society** was founded in 1970 as a result of the controversial demolition of the original and historic **16 Mile House**, built as a road house in 1872 on what is now the corner of El Camino Real and Center Street. The Millbrae Historical Society has a dynamic membership and is focused on protecting and acknowledging Millbrae's history and historical locations via three community museums: the **Millbrae Museum**, the **Carrriage House** and the **Millbrae Train Museum**.
4. The **Italian Catholic Federation** Branch 403 at **Saint Dunstan's Church**, established on February 25, 1990, has its roots going back to 1924. Recently celebrating 100 years, the ICF began in San Francisco as an organization celebrating and remembering the community's Italian heritage (most members have an Italian background but everyone is wel-




come, and you don't have to be Italian to belong).

The entities listed above are just the tip of the iceberg. Most communities have volunteer organizations like Millbrae's: groups focused on educational, civic, youth, senior, or spiritual needs that you too can be a part of. Each are noted for helping enrich the lives of those living here and contribute to the vibrant fabric of Millbrae.

All my well wishes to you, your family and friends,!

MHS 1st VP Paul Larson.





WORKS

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iOS and Android Phone Apps
are now available for
download!

The City of Millbrae has launched request management software **Millbrae Works** powered by SeeClickFix. The application is available for all residents to download on any Apple or Android device. The **Millbrae Works** app allows Millbrae residents who identify community repair or service request needs to submit photos, location information, and details directly to City of Millbrae administrative staff members.

Please patronize our Millbrae Historical Society Lifetime Business Members:



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SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Antonio Sánchez. Rancho Buri Buri encompassed much of what is now San Mateo County, including the future site of Millbrae.

2. Early American Settlement:

After the Mexican-American War and the subsequent cession of California to the United States in 1848, the land began to be divided and sold. The estate of **Darius Ogden Mills**, a prominent financier and philanthropist, played a key role in the development of Millbrae.

Development of Millbrae

1. Darius Ogden Mills:

In the 1860s, Darius Ogden Mills purchased a large portion of the **Rancho Buri Buri** land. Mills developed his estate, named "Millbrae," combining his name with the Scottish word "brae," meaning "hillside." His estate included a mansion, gardens, and farmland, and became a notable feature of the area.

2. Railroad and Growth:

The construction of the railroad through the San Francisco Peninsula in the late 19th century significantly influenced the development of Millbrae. A station was established in Millbrae, facilitating access and transportation, and attracting settlers and businesses.

3. Suburban Development:

In the early 20th century, Millbrae began to transform from a rural area into a suburban community. The area's proximity to San Francisco and the availability of land made it an attractive location for residential development. Real estate development accelerated in the 1920s and 1930s, leading to a growing population.

Incorporation and Modern Era

1. Incorporation:

Millbrae was officially incorporated as a city on **January 14, 1948**. The incorporation allowed Millbrae to better manage its growth, infrastructure, and services.

2. Post-War Boom:

Following World War II, Millbrae experienced a population boom, reflecting broader national trends of suburbanization. The development of schools, parks, and other community amenities supported the growing population.

3. Modern Millbrae:

Today, Millbrae is known for its diverse community, excellent schools, and convenient location near **San Francisco International Airport**. The city has continued to evolve, balancing residential, commercial, and industrial development. Millbrae's history is a testament to the transformative effects of transportation infrastructure and strategic land development, which have shaped its growth from a rural estate into a vibrant suburban city.

Question 2: What do you think the future will be like in our town of Millbrae, California?

Here are some educated guesses about what the future might hold for Millbrae:

1. Transportation and Infrastructure Development

Caltrain and BART Expansion: Continued improvements and expansions to the Caltrain and BART systems could enhance connectivity to San Francisco and Silicon Valley, making Millbrae an even more attractive location for commuters.

High-Speed Rail: If California's high-speed rail project progresses, Millbrae could become a significant hub, increasing its importance in the region's transportation network.

Airport Proximity: The proximity to San Francisco International Airport (SFO) will remain a key asset, potentially leading to more economic opportunities and businesses catering to travelers.

2. Residential and Commercial Growth

Housing Demand: The demand for housing in the Bay Area is likely to remain high. Millbrae could see further residential development, including high-density housing and mixed-use developments, to accommodate growth.

Commercial Development: With increasing population and transportation links, there could be more commercial and retail development to support the needs of residents and visitors.

3. Economic and Job Market Trends

Tech and Innovation: Given its location near Silicon Valley, Millbrae might attract tech companies and startups, contributing to job growth and economic vitality.

Remote Work: The rise of remote work could change the dynamics of residential demand, with more people choosing to live in Millbrae for its quality of life while working for companies based elsewhere.

4. Community and Quality of Life

Public Services and Amenities: As the population grows, the city will likely invest in improving public services, including schools, parks, and recreational facilities.

Sustainability Initiatives: Millbrae may adopt more sustainability initiatives, such as green building standards, renewable energy projects, and improved public transportation options to reduce environmental impact.

5. Cultural and Social Developments

Diversity: Millbrae is known as a diverse community. This diversity will likely continue to be a defining characteristic, enriching the cultural and social fabric of the town.

Community Engagement: Active community engagement and local government initiatives will play a crucial role in shaping the town's future, ensuring that growth and development align with residents' needs and values.

6. Challenges and Solutions

Affordable Housing: Ensuring affordable housing remains a significant challenge. Innovative housing solutions and policies will be necessary to maintain socio-economic diversity.

CURATOR'S REPORT

DOROTHY SEMKE

I hope that all of you had a very happy 4th of July!

Thanks for the generosity of our MHS President **John Muniz**, who funded the framing of the newly acquired Surveyor's Map (donated to us by David Shea and his mother of Burlingame). You may now view it in our Museum Dining Room.

You may have heard about our Carriage House Museum now having a

beautiful entrance sign. This all came about due to our Facilitator **Ray Gier** presenting the idea to the Society Board of Directors and with the help of **Tom Dawdy, John Muniz**, and Ray's 13-year-old granddaughter creating the art work. It is a definite must-see!

Stay well,
Dorothy Semke
Curator



SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

Traffic and Congestion: Managing traffic and congestion will be important as the population grows. Investments in public transportation and infrastructure improvements will be key.

Climate Change: Addressing climate change impacts, such as rising sea levels and extreme weather events, will be critical for future planning and resilience.

Overall, the future of Millbrae is likely to be shaped by its strategic location, transportation infrastructure, and community initiatives. With thoughtful planning and community involvement, Millbrae can continue to thrive as a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable community.

Question 3: Write me a poem about Millbrae

In Millbrae, where the sun meets the bay, our city shines in its own special way. A tapestry woven with threads of delight, a place where diverse hearts unite.

Nestled by the waters of San Francisco's embrace, a haven of warmth, a welcoming space. Here, in the glow of each golden day, we find our place in the sun, come what may.

From dawn's first light to the evening's soft hue, our community blossoms, vibrant and true. Neighbors and friends, in unity bound, in every corner, shared hopes are found.

With voices from lands both near and afar, we gather together under one guiding star. From cultures unique, a harmony we weave, in Millbrae's embrace, it's easy to believe.

Our streets are alive with the rhythm of life, in laughter and joy, in moments of strife. Through parks and schools, in each heartfelt cheer, the spirit of Millbrae is ever so clear.

Together we strive, with hands open wide, involvement and care, our hearts' greatest pride. Building a future, both bright and serene, where every soul's dream can be clearly seen.

On the edge of the bay, where waters softly kiss, Millbrae stands strong, a beacon of bliss. A city of hope, where all can become, a shining example, our place in the sun.

So in conclusion, all of these historical facts, predictions, and lyrics made me think a lot about Millbrae. I think when people read my article 50 years from now, they will probably find it humorous, like when we look back at the cassette tape replacing vinyl records, then the high-tech CD's were born, what happened to them & Tower Records?

Have a nice Summer in "Our Place in the Sun",
Tom



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WWW.MILLBRAEHS.ORG



**MILLBRAE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

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MHS OFFICERS – 2024-25

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Dorothy Semke, Curator

Tom Dawdy, Historian & Carriage House Curator

Ray Gier, Museum Facilitator

Joe Teresi, Newsletter Editor

C A L E N D A R O F E V E N T S

Saturday, August 17: Millbrae Machines Car & Truck Show

- 8:00 am–3:00 pm; Broadway, Downtown Millbrae
- Enjoy this special event sponsored by the Millbrae Lions Club!

Saturday, September 21: Relay for Life of North Peninsula

- 9:00 am–8:30 pm; Millbrae Central Park
- Attend this community event to support the programs of the American Cancer Society

Friday, October 18: Millbrae Volunteers of the Year Dinner

- 6:00–9:00 pm; Green Hills Country Club, 500 Ludeman Lane, Millbrae
- Please attend this special event honoring Millbrae volunteers; RSVP required

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)