

# The Branch Line

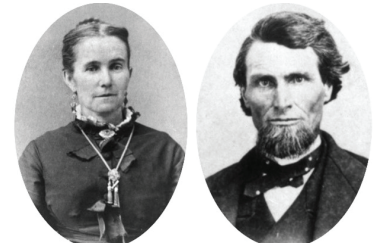
Newsletter of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley in the Depot

Fall/Winter 2021

## Holidays in the Valley

Our November-December exhibits will be unique this year. Christmas Memories is the highlight of the Freight Room, with a special bow to the books of Laura Ingalls Wilder planned by Sonya Borlandelli. Different holiday stories will be read on Saturdays. There will be a festive G Gauge Christmas train to please the model train-lovers, courtesy of Ed Best.

Traditional trees and ornaments and tales of some San Ramon Valley 1850s women will be shared. Four women who were here before the Gold Rush were Rafaela Soto de Pacheco (who owned the Rancho San Ramon after her husband was killed in an Indian fight) and three women who crossed the plains in 1846: Mary Jane Norris (with husband Leo), Minerva Fowler (with future husband Joel Harlan) and Mary Ann and John Jones.



Minerva Fowler and Joel Harlan

Under the guidance of Vivienne Wong and Kay Wang, the glories of a Chinese New Year will be on display in the Waiting and Baggage Rooms. One-sixth of the world's people celebrate this holiday which is a highlight for Chinese Americans in our valley. This festival, lasting 4 days in Hong Kong and up to a month in China, brings together family and friends, special foods, new gala clothes, lion and dragon parades, opera performances and a host of ancient and regional traditions.

2022 will be the Year of the Tiger with February 1 the festival date, based on a lunar calendar. People born in these years are under the sign of the Tiger: 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998 and 2010. Each year is part of a twelve-year cycle, with a different animal for each year. All twelve of the zodiac animal signs will be featured in the exhibit where visitors can find the animal from their birth year which influences their personality and personal fortune.

One of the most important and brightest holidays for the Chinese American residents in the valley, Chinese New Year, will be exhibited at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley. Visitors will see long red calligraphy banners expressing auspicious wishes, happy red envelopes, strings of Chinese coins, gold ingots and fire crackers, a family dinner with good luck foods.



Animals, real and mythical, are always part of Chinese New Year. Supreme in the exhibit will be the iconic Dragon, the power that dissipates evil spirits, the bestower of wealth and good luck. Come visit the Museum and have fun finding out if your personality and hopes for personal fortune match with your lunar animal sign!

## Exhibits at the Museum

This summer the museum hosted model trains in the freight and baggage room, again drawing many young and old visitors. Bob and Cheryl Miranda and many volunteers mounted a stunning model train set up with snappy air balloons, exhibits of private collections and intricate models of historic valley buildings. 2,723 people attended and over 200 family passes were sold.



Pioneer Portraits were displayed in the waiting room, with family portraits loaned to us from Don Wood, the Rasmussens and the Wiedemanns. Flora May Stone's 1900 wedding gown was shown for six weeks, brought from our textiles archives by Jan Habiger and Vivienne Wong.



Jan Habiger with Flora May Stone's wedding dress

# Around the Museum

## Museum of the San Ramon Valley's Virtual Programs

- The free virtual Third Thursday programs have been so successful that we will continue to bring the Museum to the masses from the convenience of your home. We offer great programs for audiences of all ages to enjoy. We present these informative programs for free and greatly appreciate your generous donations in support of the Museum. Scheduled virtual programs for the fall and winter include:
- October - Stephen Smith the president of the Mt Diablo Interpretive Association will speak on the human history of Mt Diablo. From the Native Americans, cattle ranching, auto racing and much more. Hear about the interesting stories and events that are part of the mountains human history.
  - November - Beverly Lane and Sharon Burke will talk about their book The History of Alamo. Learn about this community from its earliest beginnings to today.
  - December - we have a program on the history and story of the Caldecott Tunnel, a vital link in our transportation. The Caldecott has shaped and impacted Contra Costa County.
- If there is a topic you would like us to cover, please let us know as we seek interesting programs to present. To attend these free online presentations at 11:30 on the third Thursday of the month, please visit the Events section on [MuseumSRV.org](http://MuseumSRV.org) or call the Museum at 925 837-3750.

## Partners Play a Key Role for the Museum

One of the Museum's strongest partners is the Eugene O'Neill Foundation and Tao House. Most people are aware that the front of the museum is the bus stop for the National Park Service shuttle to Tao House. This important element is just a small part of the work between the museum and one of Danville most important and popular sits to visit.

This year Beverly Lane, past president of the Museum and curator, will be leading a tour of old town Danville as seen through Eugene O'Neill's eyes. This is done as part of the 2021 Eugene O'Neill Festival.

In addition, the Museum will host 2 presentations of "51 Plays in 51 Minutes" directed by Eric Fraisher Hays. If you are curious as to why 51, that is the number of plays O'Neill wrote. This event delivers a fresh, insightful, and entertaining evening all in less than an hour!

*Eugene O'Neill.*  
FOUNDATION, TAO HOUSE

## At Our Local Libraries



When you visit our now-open local libraries, please notice the small displays which feature the Museum's current

exhibits. Vivienne Wong places items in the San Ramon and Dougherty Valley libraries and Carmen Curtis takes care of the Danville Library. Also Bob Sada just installed the Suffrage "pop up" exhibit from the National Archives at the Danville Library on display for about 8 weeks.

## From the Store

Hurray for Totally Trains! This exhibit brought in many first-time visitors and shoppers to the store. As always, toy trains were a big hit and anything train related: whistles, engineers caps, souvenir hats, tee shirts, and more. We're restocking and they'll all be back with more to come.

Hikers and outdoor enthusiasts were able to pick up literature, hikers guides and maps of Mt. Diablo. For nature lovers we have a selection of publications on the flora and fauna found on our beautiful mountain.

Our local history books were and are popular items and Beverly Lane's newest Historic Tales of Alamo California, co-authored and researched by Sharon Burke brought in a number of local residents interested in the valley community. Come in and check out the many other local history books and think ahead to the holidays for gift giving.

**Beverly Lane and Sharon Burke will sign their new Alamo history book on November 20 from 11-1 in time for Christmas gifting.**





## Back to School Under the Stars Gala...Virtually Successful



Our 2021 virtual gala was successful, especially given all we had heard about Zoom fatigue and knowing that people could actually leave their homes to resume their busy schedules.

Thanks to all of the sponsors, donors, and auction participants, the Museum raised over \$45,000 to support the Museum financially and help continue the stewardship of the Museum's mission.

This year we were treated to some interesting items from our collections hosted by Beverly Lane and Brad Blackwell. In addition we heard about the role of the collections and the issues it faces.

Bill Clarkson told us an interesting story about a burial mound in the city of San Ramon. Dan Ashley of Channel 7 news joined via video emphasizing the role of the museum in the community and the issues the museum is facing.

A shout out to Renee Morgan who chairs the auction for us and our leader Candace Andersen. Great job!

We look forward to seeing you, our Museum friends and supporters, at the Tassajara One Room School "Back to School Under the Stars" on July 16, 2022!

## Special Indian American Jewelry Sale and Appraisals October 16, 2021



Don Phelps, lecturer on American Indian history and an authority on American Indian baskets, is holding a sale of Zuni and Navajo silver jewelry: necklaces, bracelets, rings and earrings at the Museum of San Ramon Valley on October 16th. Don is donating a percentage of the proceeds from appraisals and sales to the Museum to benefit its educational exhibits and programs.

Don will also give appraisals of American Indian artifacts: baskets, tools, knives, ceremonial regalia, etc. If you enjoy watching Antique Roadshow on television, you will like hearing Don's commentary on objects from various Indian nations across America. Bring your own objects for his professional appraisal and provenance. Don is a strong supporter of the Museum's First Peoples program, loaning for display handwoven one-of-kind baskets from his personal collection. He has been a lifelong collector, and gathered 19th and early 20th century baskets and baby carriers from groups throughout the United States.

Each year, during the Museum's annual First Peoples of California exhibit, he mounts a basket exhibit in the Museum, always varying the selection shown. The exhibit runs every year from September through November.

Indian Appraisals and Silver and Turquoise Jewelry Sale, Saturday, Oct 16, 10-1 p.m. Appraisals, up to 3 items, \$10.

## Shops & Hops Craft Brew Stroll - Postponed until 2022



Due to merchant concerns for the health and wellness of the public, the Museum has made the difficult decision to postpone the Shops & Hops Craft Brew Stroll until 2022.

Thank you to all who purchased tickets and were in support of this fun event, bringing together local craft breweries and merchants to promote shopping, dining and living locally.

We truly appreciate the enthusiasm and support of the local craft breweries and encourage Museum supporters to responsibly enjoy the breweries featured below.



# Indian Life Program

## by Vivienne Wong



This year the autumn exhibit at the Museum is entitled "The First Peoples of California". We will host fourth grade classes primarily in October for our popular Indian Life program.

The First Peoples exhibit provides a variety of information about the earliest inhabitants in what we now call California. For thousands of years, these people adapted themselves to California's multitude of climate zones, creating diverse but complete lifestyles. From housing made of wood, tule reeds, or bush, to harvesting the prolific vegetation in meadows, swamps and coasts, to hunting wildlife such as deer and ducks, they thrived and evolved civilizations

with complex social networks and economic systems involving extensive and profitable trading systems. By the 18th century, 90 languages and dialects were spoken among the 350,000 indigenous peoples. The longevity and the diversity of their history is indicated by the fact that the native languages of California derive from four of the 5 national linguistic families spoken in America.

In the baggage room area, we are showcasing the arrival of the Spanish in the 1700's. 'Two Cultures Collide' shows the meeting of two cultures that were dramatically different. Agricultural and work practices, the introduction of domesticated animals, spiritual beliefs, land ownership concepts, clothing, housing materials, foods, marital customs, music, art and values – all were widely divergent from one another. Juxtaposing these two cultures reveals how this event was momentous, initiating revolutionary changes for the First Peoples.

### A Note to Volunteers, Members and Friends of the Museum

I would like to personally thank every volunteer for stepping up and helping since the reopening this spring. So far, we have been able to staff the Docent and Greeter positions, with some people doing double and triple duty in order to keep the Museum open our regular hours.

We are, however, critically in need of Greeters, Docents, vaccinated volunteers for the education portion of "First Peoples of California" exhibit when we are able to have students come, and we also need a number of volunteers for the One Room School program in the spring (you do not need to be a teacher to volunteer).

If you have been a volunteer in the past, we would like to welcome you back in whatever capacity you are comfortable with. If you've ever "thought" about becoming a volunteer, this is a great time to start. Please let me know if you have a contact at any service organization, church or other group where I might present a case for new volunteers, or leave recruiting materials.

You can contact me through the Museum (837-3750), or go to the website, <http://www.museumsv.org>. At the top of the page is a brown banner; click on "support" and choose "volunteer opportunities", fill out the form, and I will contact you.

Thanks again to all the volunteers who have kept us afloat since reopening. We all appreciate your efforts.

Lynne Call

Volunteer Committee Chair

In addition, the Museum has been steadily ramping up its activities. We now have The Tassajara One-Room School Gala, Relics on Railroad Antique and Art Fair, Shops and Hops, Craft Brew Stroll, Eugene O'Neill partner events, The Branch Line newsletter, and virtual Third Thursday programs to name a few. These are in addition to our normal programs and exhibits. These additional activities are great but all need event management and marketing support.

The Museum's Marketing Committee welcomes new talent to coordinate the following events:

- Shops and Hops Craft Brew Stroll: This event coordination role involves inviting local craft breweries and downtown merchants, marketing, and press releases. This is an annual event.
- Relics on Railroad Antique and Art Fair: This role includes writing press releases and handling unplanned marketing activities. Relics is an annual event.

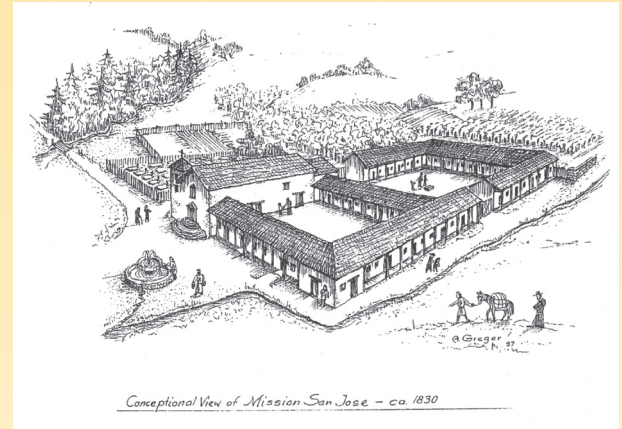
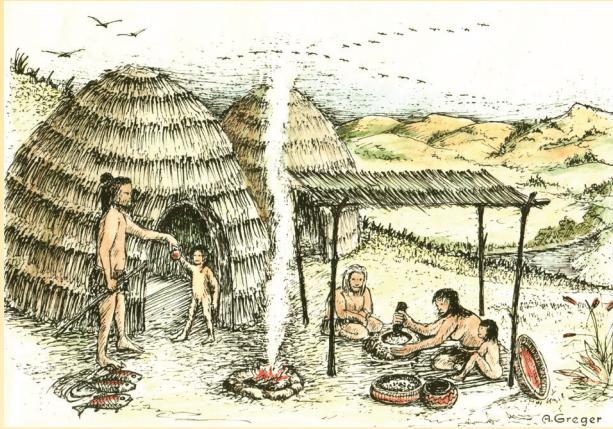




# First Peoples of California Two Cultures Collide

## The San Ramon Valley Before the Gold Rush

by Beverly Lane



Museum exhibits during October and November feature the "First Peoples of California and Two Cultures Collide". During these months, docents will be teaching fourth graders about California Indians, as school classes return to normal and field trips are planned. In the freight room, we display a wide variety of information, photographs, baskets and furs which interpret our state's native peoples before the Spanish arrived in 1769. Mortars and pestles with dried acorns and games have been set up as well.

In the baggage room, a small new exhibit addresses the collision between the cultures of California Indians and Spain in the 18th and 19th centuries. Some people are defacing Father Serra statues throughout the state and others assert that we should place Indian and Spanish statues side by side. In schools, at the legislature and in newspapers, narratives about California's colonial period are being debated as charges of genocide and slavery are freely made and the benign "Mission Myth" is being re-examined.

When the Spanish first entered California, initial Indian contacts included trade, formal meetings and mutual efforts to understand one another's language. The Spanish were certain that baptism would save the Indians from hell and valued them as laborers who would ultimately become full citizens of Alta California, loyal to their benefactors.

California Indians had developed complex cultures with unique languages and belief systems. They valued harmony with nature, had an intimate relationship to the land and a cycle of life which changed very gradually from generation to generation. An elaborate trade system supported each tribe. Tribes owned the rights to hunt, fish, gather and pray within clearly defined territories and were willing to fight their enemies.

Into this stable setting came the Spanish, bringing new ideas, powerful weapons, different labor systems, western diseases, unique animals, unusual trade goods and a European world view. The new grazing animals destroyed traditional Indian plants, baptized Indians could not leave the missions without permission, corporal punishment was used and European diseases and lifeways decimated the population. Soon the traditional village system dissolved as Indian laborers – men and women – were absorbed into missions, pueblo townships and eventually Mexican ranchos.

An Indian population of about 350,000 in 1770 fell to 100,000 by 1850. Fully 85% of the Indians who came to missions died. The California Gold Rush brought a whole new era in which both the Indians and Californios were overwhelmed. Unlike the Spanish, the gold miners rarely saw Indians as essential workers or souls to be saved. They murdered, kidnapped and enslaved native peoples in a unique blot on California's history of race relations.

In this exhibit we try to convey the challenges of the era before the California Gold Rush in 1848, using artifacts and information.





**The  
Branch Line**

The Museum of the San Ramon Valley in the Depot

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Visit [www.museumsrv.org](http://www.museumsrv.org)

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#### MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday - Friday 1:00 - 4:00 pm

Saturday 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Sunday 12:00 - 3:00 pm



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# THANK YOU



## RECENT DONATIONS TO THE MUSEUM

Books and California Memorabilia	Gail Faber
Framed photo of SRVHS students, 1934	Elaine Reisert
Masonic Lodge presentation item	Cub Morrison family
The Blackhawk Country Club book	Paul Zingg
Rakestraw Concerts scrapbook	Fred & Barbara Voltmer
Large collection of objects and archives (Maxcy, Coats, Doggett, and Wilson families)	Frances Edmonston
1981-2 Danville Incorporation memorabilia	Connie Tomcik
Shirley Temple doll and clothes, 1930s	June Bishop
Tassajara School librarian's book, 1920s	B. Scinto
Cast iron saw, tree holder	Pat Campbell
Signs and memorabilia from Covid 2020	Nicholas Harvey
Suffragete post card, 1915	Joe & Donna Hardman
Model trains and accessories	Mack Slight

Editor: Lani Aurelius