



NEWS from the MUSEUM

Washington Township Museum of Local History, for the preservation
of the history of Fremont, Newark and Union City

190 Anza St., Fremont, CA 94539 — (510) 623-7907 — www.museumoflocalhistory.org

2021 General Membership Meeting

Please note the date of the 2021 General Membership Meeting will be **March 9th**. The meeting will be held on Zoom. If you are interested in attending the meeting, please email info@museumoflocalhistory.org

Thank you to the MSJ Chamber for the financial support during this difficult year!

From the December 2020 newsletter of the Mission San Jose Chamber of Commerce: Washington Township Museum of Local History, like many local Mission San Jose businesses, has been challenged by COVID-19. And on top of it, some have suffered vandalism. We at the Chamber strive to maintain the beauty of our neighborhood. Pictured are Dianne Holmes and Gerry Curry from the Museum of Local History receiving a small \$300 grant from Esther Gonzalez, President of the Mission San Jose Chamber of Commerce.



Along with other indoor museums in Alameda County, we remain closed to the public due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. We can't wait to welcome guests back to the museum and to once again host student tours at the museum and the rancho. The day will come, but for now we must be patient and continue to implement all the necessary safety measures in our personal lives.

Despite our closed doors, we have continued to work through our ever-growing collection of artifacts, papers, and photographs. The work is rewarding and much has been accomplished, including some major projects. We are hopeful that we will be able to share these fun learning opportunities with the community soon!

Board meetings were held over email April - June, then as backyard, socially distanced, mask-on meetings July - November, and finally over Zoom video conferencing since December. For now we will continue on Zoom.

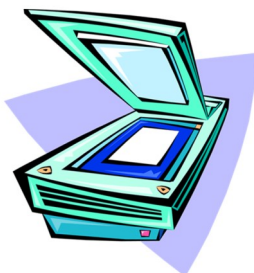
As we continue to move forward through this time of change, if you have any questions, requests, or just want to contribute to your local history, please contact us via phone or e-mail. We're ready and waiting.

We want to thank Niles Rotary Foundation for the additional \$1000 donated toward the purchase of a second Epson V850 flatbed scanner.

Thanks to Niles Rotary and Newark Rotary (who granted the museum \$900 to purchase the first scanner) we now have two brand new desktop scanners, both of which will be instrumental in helping us to digitize negatives and photo slides!

Rotary  Club of Niles (Fremont)

Rotary  Club of Newark



This is the official newsletter of the Washington Township Museum of Local History.

The Museum is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve Southern Alameda County memories, documents, artifacts, and structures from the past and share them with present and future generations.

— Board of Directors —

Kelsey Camello, *President*

Patty Lacy, *Vice President*

Gerry Curry, *Treasurer*

Tim Swenson, *Secretary*

Alan Nagy, *Stuart Guedon,*

Marjory Begley, *Libby*

Macris, *Tom Heater*

The Museum Board meets monthly on the second Tuesday at 6pm.

~~The Museum is open every Wednesday and Friday from 10am to 4pm, as well as the second weekend of each month from 10am to 4 pm.~~

~~Tours can also be scheduled by appointment. Contact the museum at (510) 623-7907 or email info@museumoflocalhistory.org for more information.~~

Notes from the Rancho

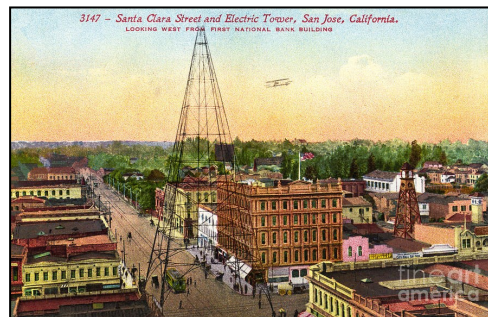
First of all, it seems most prudent to thank Gerry Curry for his tireless maintenance and

advocacy for Rancho Higuera Historical Park over the last several years. Gerry works weekly at the park to maintain the property and keep weeds to a minimum as well as pests at bay. His work is indispensable. Thank you Gerry!



How about some good news? In November 2020, after four full years of requesting work be done to repair a damaged wall on the south side of the adobe building, we were successful in getting the City of Fremont to repair the damaged wall, replace leaking downspouts and put a new coat of white on the entire exterior of the building. The work on the adobe bricks is ongoing, but it's getting done, and this is very exciting!

In other developments: In October, wood chips were delivered and a cleanup of the parkway along the street of tall, dead weeds was done. Some downed branches were also trimmed. And, as of January 16th we now have official horseshoe pits on the property. Thanks to Mission San Jose Rotary, most notably member Larry Anderson, for the work done to complete this project. As they say - pandemic or not, the work continues.



On January 25th, Washington Township Historical Society hosted a talk focusing on the long-gone San Jose Electric Light Tower. With an introduction by Paul Sethy, followed by a viewing of the 2019 documentary "The Light Between Two Towers", and finally a Q&A with Tom Wohlmuth, the producer, writer and director of the film, it shaped up to be an interesting, informative, and fun couple of hours.

The San Jose Electric Light Tower (1881-1915) was one of the most prominent structures of its era in the San Francisco Bay Area. The tower was possibly the world's tallest free-standing iron structure at the time it was built (237 feet). And, its light was visible as far away as San Francisco. Farmers and orchardists in Washington Township would have been very familiar with this central fixture since large quantities of local fruits and vegetables were transported to the canning and packing houses in the surrounding downtown San Jose area.

The film itself examines the circumstantial evidence directly linking the San Jose Electric Light Tower to the design of the Eiffel Tower (dedicated 1889) and the Statue of Liberty (dedicated 1886; whose interior framework was also designed by Gustave Eiffel).

If you missed the talk, you can still view the film by visiting this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loNP0oQYhic>. Alternately, a simple internet search for the title of the film will get you there.



Ducks 4 Bucks 2020 Results

Thank you to everyone who donated to Ducks 4 Bucks in our name! Due to the D4B privacy policy, personal identifying information for donations made directly through the D4B website are not shared with us.

Because of this we cannot thank you all individually. Please consider this a collective thank you for your support in our efforts to raise additional funds for our archiving work.

The 2020 results and Virtual Duck Race were held over Zoom on October 3rd. Thanks to all of you, the Museum was able to raise a grand total of \$1,225.00! That's 245 paid ducks / 294 race ducks. \$735.00 of our total went toward our continued archiving efforts, with the remainder going back into the community.

We want to make sure everyone knows how much we appreciate the support in this and every other fundraiser we do. Every penny donated helps us to continue our important work, archival or otherwise. We look forward to again participating in this great, community-minded event next year.

Major thanks go out to Tri-City Ecology Center and their dedicated garden crew volunteers.

Our awesome TCEC volunteers have remained focused on our front and side gardens all throughout the pandemic. Aside from general maintenance, they also took it upon themselves to repaint one of our vandalized benches (ex-pews from St. Joseph Church here in Mission San Jose) back in July. Thank you Steve Evans!

(see photos on page 8)

Then, for a fun twist in December, Phil Stob, Steve and Carol Evans and Caroline Harris dressed the "volunteer" Christmas tree and other California native plants in the museum garden with wildlife edible, beautifully crafted garlands and ornaments. Thanks also to Janis Stob, Ann Morrison and Daniel O'Donnell for stringing the garlands, and to Steve & Carol Evans for creating the pine cone ornaments. What fun!

And finally, we also want to thank the Ecology Center for their annual support of the museum via their special programs sharing fund.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the content or delivery of this newsletter, please contact us at info@museumoflocalhistory.org.

Thank you to our business members for their support of local history!

**THE CALENDAR
WILL RETURN IN
OUR SPRING 2021
NEWSLETTER**



Thank you to all of our members who are paid up through 12/31/2021!
If you do not see your name here, please pay dues as soon as you can.

Sarah Bentley - SETTLER
Deanna Cope - PATHFINDER
John & Antoinette Cordeniz - LIFE MEMBERS
Stephen & Carol Evans - TRAILBLAZER
Roberta & Patrick Fisher - LIFE MEMBERS
Tim Gavin - LIFE MEMBER
Jim & Patricia Griffin - LIFE MEMBERS
Philip & Terry Henry - RETIRED
Cheryl Holmes - LIFE MEMBER
Joann Horton - RETIRED
Preston Ly - GOLDMINER
Norma Macias - GOLDMINER
Gordon & Anne MacLeod - PATHFINDER
Alvin & LaVonne Minard - RETIRED
G. Barton Mowry - LIFE MEMBER
Jane Mueller & Doug Ford - LIFE MEMBERS
Roeding Family - LIFE MEMBERS
Sushil Shukla - GOLDMINER
Lynn Jensen Volp - PATHFINDER
Linette Young - RETIRED

Want to renew your membership or become a new member?



You can now sign up and pay online by visiting our website at <https://museumoflocalhistory.org/support/membership/>. You can also mail this form and a check to 190 Anza Street, Fremont, CA 94539.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Goldminer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Settler	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40
Trailblazer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50
Pathfinder	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Business Member	<input type="checkbox"/> \$300
Pioneer Patron	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500
Lifetime	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000
Senior/Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10
Senior Couple	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20
Donation	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____
Total Contribution:	_____ \$ _____

The **Chinese History Project** arm of the museum is working hard getting "Zoom-ready" for an upcoming talk by Victor Wong. Two of his new papers have been added to the reference section of our website, and one is printed in this very newsletter. When more information is available about the upcoming talk it will be shared freely.

The horse collar and bunkhouse pictures that the museum lent to the Museum of Chinese in America (located in New York City) will remain at the MOCA museum at least through March 31st. The exhibit may be extended even further, depending on how the pandemic plays out in the coming year. Follow this link to learn more about this exciting exhibit: https://www.mocanyc.org/exhibitions/gathering_collecting_and_documenting_chinese_american_history.



Remembering Charlie Scribner, longtime member of the museum and Fremont resident. Text taken from the Abode Services Aug 2020 newsletter:

As an Abode Services board member for many years, Charlie Scribner combined his ample intelligence, generosity, and warm sense of humor to make many contributions to our mission of ending homelessness.

Charlie was a Fremont resident who gave countless hours to help improve his community, and he did so much to help Abode participants. For that and many other reasons, we'd like to heartily and publicly thank Charlie, who sadly passed away in July 2020. He was 77. But Charlie's spirit and memory will live on, as will

his accomplishments with so many parts of his wonderful life, including his serving on our board of directors.

He had a long list of skills, said Doug Ford, Charlie's friend and fellow former Abode board member. "He was creative, loyal, and extremely intelligent," he said. "He had a very analytical mind and could cut through it all to get to the core of issues." But his best trait might have been his sociability, Doug said, as a simple trip to the store often turned into a fun, two-hour visit because Charlie would end up chatting with everyone in the store. "Charlie never met a stranger," he said. "And as a board member, he could get people to open up, share their thoughts, and talk about issues and their solutions."

Louis Chicoine, Abode's chief executive officer, has many fond memories of Charlie. "Charlie was always appreciated for his sense of humor and kind heart," Louis said. "He was a real gentleman."

Charlie and Pauline Weaver, his wife of 46 years, often gave time and service to help those less fortunate. Pauline, an attorney, is a longtime board member of Eden Housing, a Hayward-based nonprofit that builds and acquires affordable housing. The couple moved to the Bay Area in 1980. Charlie later spent more than 20 years working as marketing director of UC Berkeley's printing department, expanding its sales revenue by more than 600 percent before his retirement in 2007. After Charlie retired, he enjoyed traveling, a hobby enhanced by his easy-going personality. He also loved his dogs and other animals, supporting several animal rescue and humane society organizations over the years.

Charlie always wanted to be involved, often using his calming, collaborative personality and analytical abilities to plan policy or raise funds to help nonprofit groups like Abode. Charlie and Pauline had a shared sense of compassion and empathy for those less fortunate, which fueled their service for various charities. They both understood that anyone could suffer from homelessness and everyone is just a few bad breaks away from losing everything, Pauline said.

"The causes of someone's homelessness could be domestic violence, job loss, substance abuse, or simply not having enough support to stay where you live," she said. "This is a hard area for people to live marginally, and Charlie and I felt we were lucky and had an obligation to give back."

BOXING UP LOCAL HISTORY

BY STEPHANIE GERTSCH
PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE GERTSCH AND
COURTESY OF WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY

Since 2014, creative box art has enlivened the city of Fremont. However, these murals on city-owned traffic control boxes add more than just color. Many also highlight Fremont's unique community and landmarks. None do it better than four new boxes installed in December 2020, a

and bring me ice cream the day after [I had] surgery. She said, 'I've got to tell you about this new project we're doing – boxART! I've got to find sponsors.' I said, 'I'm in!' So, I was the first person to sponsor a box. I picked one down the street from my house and I visited the guy every day for three weeks while he was painting."

When asked to design the layout for the history boxes, Stambaugh had similar enthusiasm, responding, "I wanna do the layout! I'll be really offended if you invite somebody else to do this."

The decision to include people in the photos was deliberate, says Patricia Schaffarzyk, longtime volunteer at the museum, and who curated photos for the boxes along with Museum President Kelsey Camello. "We decided to focus mostly on having people in the pictures. Because people are interesting for others to look at, even if we don't know the exact history, you can always make your own story when you see people. Focusing on people - from ranchers, to local celebrities, to Chinese laborers flying kites - shows how people have come to the Tri-Cities over the years and grown the community."

When viewed together, the boxes create a walking tour through Fremont history. Each has a QR code that when scanned takes viewers to the museum website to learn more of the story behind each photo. "The four big boxes are all black and white, very historical looking," explains Stambaugh. By contrast the towers showcase color photos from Fremont's 50th anniversary event Hands Across the Lake in 2006. "It's like the Wizard of Oz!" she laughs.

Images were printed on vinyl wraps by Signs Unlimited, which also did the application. It took about three hours to wrap each box once the vinyl was printed.

Each box covers a different era of Fremont History, starting in the 1800s and ending at the year 2000

"Patricia [Schaffarzyk] and Kelsey [Camello] are going through photos and we're all gonna meet together in a couple of months to go over them"... obviously we were never able to meet. I think if we had not all known each other before it would have been a lot harder." A strong bond helped the women pull through and make the project a success.

When asked about which photos stand out, Schaffarzyk mentioned one of roller-skaters on a parade float with the skating rink in the background. "I went to school in Irvington and I remember that building. I don't remember when they did skating, this was before my time, but I really enjoy that picture." Stambaugh noticed pre-1920s photos of women riding bicycles and even a motor bike. Longini enjoys how all the photos are stitched together to create a sense of an era.

"Honestly they're even better than I thought they'd be," says Longini.



collaboration between the City of Fremont boxART! Program and the Washington Township Museum of Local History. With vintage photos laid out on a background of Fremont maps, these boxes and two towers feel like a public scrapbook for the city.

Lisa Stambaugh, web designer for the museum, was a fan of Fremont's boxART! program from day one. She recalls how program manager Susan Longini shared the news back in 2014. "Susan came to visit me

Each box covers a different era of Fremont History, starting in the 1800s and ending at the year 2000. Susan Longini saw people respond to the boxes right away: "The last morning of the installation, someone stopped by the box and said, 'I grew up there!' Because the background of the pictures is era specific maps. And he could find his street on that map... Then somebody else came by and recognized one of the people who was featured on the box."



The process of translating 2D photos to a 3D box was complicated, and Stambaugh says her technical background in web design helped her communicate with the printers. For example, many photos had faded over the years, so it took some digital processing to convert them all to greyscale and color balance for a consistent brightness level.

Then the wraps have to be assembled. "It's not just one big piece that gets wrapped around the box. It's all these different pieces that are cut to go around the edges and overlap. A huge amount of work on their part to turn what we had created into something you could use in that physical format." Also: Traffic control boxes aren't flat—they have door handles, knobs, and vents. That affects photo placement, as you don't want someone's face obscured by a vent.

Of course, a collaboration on this scale became more complicated during COVID-19. For Schaffarzyk, it was actually easier to sort through photos with the museum closed to the public. Stambaugh remembers, "There was an email in February from Susan [Longini] that said

"You see the idea on your computer but to experience it at a large scale puts it in a very different perspective."

Learn more at: <https://museumoflocal-history.org/>

Guide to History boxes:
Box 1 Pre-1920 and Tower
Corner of Paseo Padre Parkway and
Walnut Avenue
(In front of Chase Bank)

Box 2 1920 - 1956
Paseo Padre Parkway and Princeton
Plaza (Gateway Plaza)
(In front of Wells Fargo Bank)

Box 3 1956 - 1980
Paseo Padre Parkway and Capitol Av-
enue
(In front of Philz Coffee)

Box 4 1980 - 2000 and Tower
Fremont Boulevard and Capitol Avenue
(In front of Fremont Hub)

The City of Fremont BoxART! program transforms Fremont's traffic signal control boxes with compelling and creative imagery.

The boxes in Fremont's new downtown area chronicle Fremont history in four eras through representative photos and maps, selected from the museum archives.

To learn and explore online, please visit:
<https://museumoflocalhistory.org/boxart/>.



A tale of two junctions: the birthing of Niles, 4 June 1869 to 28 April 1870

by Victor K. Wong, <vkww@umich.edu>, December 20201

**Thank you for your
research Victor!**

Junction in the canyon

Fresh from the golden spike ceremony at Promontory Summit, where he cheered and toasted the Chinese railroad foreman and workers for their monumental contributions to the construction of Central Pacific's portion of the first transcontinental railroad, James Harvey Strobridge boarded the steamer *Yosemite* at Sacramento on 4 June 1869 with some men, horses, grading and camp tools. They were headed to San Francisco to construct a new railroad in Alameda County, from a point in the canyon one mile east of Vallejo's Mills to the designated western terminus at Oakland.

At the request of Samuel S. Montague, Chief Engineer of the Central Pacific, Alfred A. Cohen obtained a one-year lease of Vallejo's Mill and consent from Mill's owner, José de Jesús Vallejo, to shut down the Mill and tear out its flume, which carried water from Alameda Creek to power the Mill, in order to construct the new railroad. The new rail line, starting at a yet-to-be-built junction in the canyon on the old Western Pacific line about a mile upstream from Vallejo's Mill, generally followed the line of the old flume. Upon arrival, Strobridge and his Chinese work gang, which swelled to 500 strong, began to grade the new line, and the flume was rebuilt on the lower side of and about parallel with the new railroad line.

This first junction, started in June 1869, was in the canyon, about 100 yards above the eastern end of the first bridge over Alameda Creek, on the old Western Pacific line completed in October 1866, which led south to San José. Consequently the junction was known as the "San José junction", and the stop there was called Vallejo's Mills after the closest landmark, the Mills, even though it was about a mile away in the valley. From the junction in the canyon, the new rail line ran westward along the Creek's north side, hugging the hillsides, with a gentle sweep above the Mills into the valley, then northwesterly to Alameda/Oakland.

Three months later, the San José junction became operational with much ado, when the historic first through train from Sacramento to San Francisco Bay stopped there on 6 September 1869. The *Daily Alta California* described the train as consisting of "three locomotives and twelve first-class cars. One train switched off at Vallejo's Mills, and went on to San José and Gilroy...". According to Robert Ford (*Red trains in the East Bay*, 1977), Gov. Leland Stanford and Alfred A. Cohen were on the main train that continued on to Alameda wharf (and via ferry to San Francisco) -- thus inaugurating the first transcontinental railroad to the Pacific coast.²

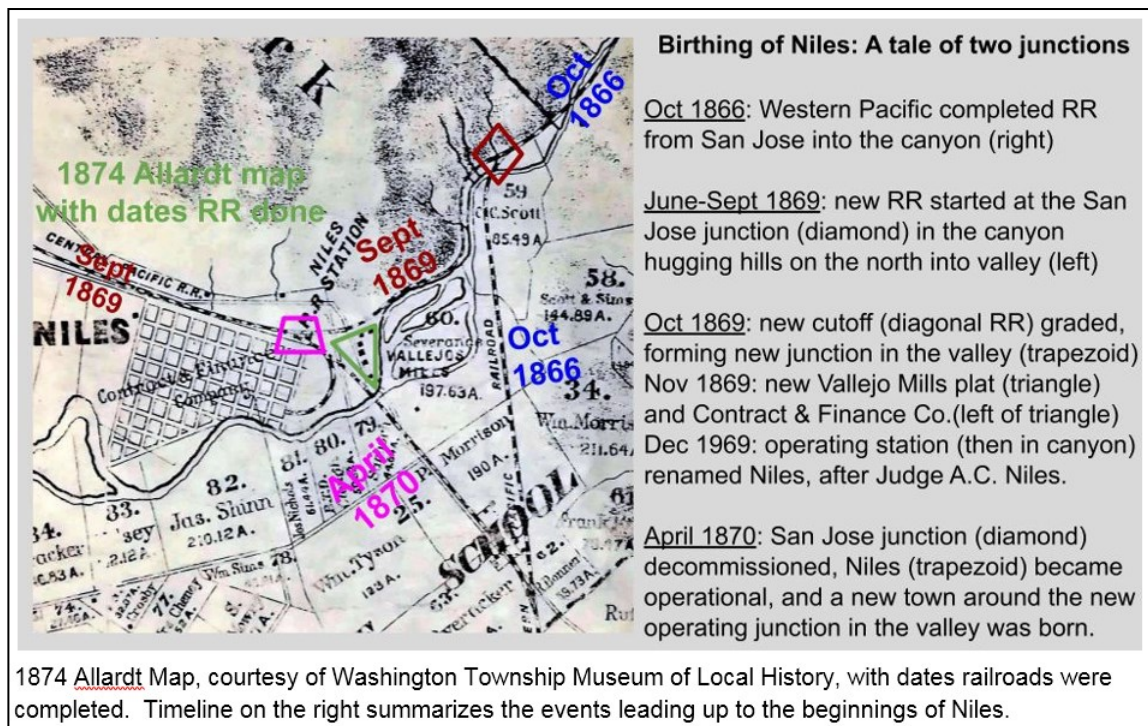
Junction in the valley

Because the San José Junction was in the canyon, the confinement made some operations impossible, like turning a locomotive around. The railroad solved this problem by building a second junction in the valley a mile away. While the San José junction had a memorable beginning, the second junction elicited hardly a mention. (We don't know yet who the contractor was nor how large the Chinese work gang was.)

1 This story of the beginnings of Niles emerged after months of searching and re-searching during the pandemic.

2 For further details, see "A brief tale of three Chinese gangs (1865-1869)", Victor K. Wong, December 2020, which is available on the website of the Washington Township Museum of Local History

But it was heralded in the 25 July 1869 *Daily Alta California*, revealing a junction in the valley west of the Mills: “Vallejo's Mills stand in a Y [lying on its left side] formed by the branch running to San Jose and that towards Oakland and San Francisco. This Y will be converted to a triangle by the construction, at an early day, of a short track from one road to the other, westward of the mills.” (See map.)



With the immense interest garnered by the first transcontinental train to the Pacific coast in September 1869, it wasn't until October 14th that some words came out in the *Alameda Gazette* about the short track from one road to the other: “The grading of the road between the two tracks at Vallejo's Mills is finished. The bridge across the [Alameda] creek is being constructed... Two express trains will run daily

each way, from San Jose and Oakland.” By then it became apparent to some that the long-term potential of a new junction in Alameda valley could be immense.

On 3 November 1869, Plutarco Vallejo -- a mining engineer, graduate of Santa Clara College, and son of J.J. Vallejo -- recorded the Vallejo Mills subdivision as the plat of 23 lots laid out by surveyor Luis Castro on a small triangular piece of land that included the Mills, adjacent to and east of the new junction. That same month, Contract & Finance Company, a Central Pacific subsidiary, purchased a quarter section of land, to be platted later, adjacent to and west of the same junction. (See map above)

Meanwhile,³ Central Pacific renamed the Vallejo Mills station at the San José junction in the canyon as “Niles”, after Nevada County judge and Central Pacific supporter, Addison C. Niles. This new name appeared in the 3 December 1869 *Daily Alta California*.

On 6 January 1870, the *Sacramento Daily Union* reported that the second junction, adjacent to Vallejo's Mills, was nearly completed. But several months had to pass before Central Pacific was ready to make the switchover. In contrast to the San José junction which became operational with the celebrated inauguration of the first Pacific railroad, the *Daily Alta California* published only a brief notice on **28 April 1870**: “The station known heretofore as “San José Junction,” will no longer be a stopping place for the trains either way. Passengers for San José will change cars at Niles.”⁴

Quietly without fanfare, the second junction “Niles” became operational, the San José junction in the canyon was decommissioned, and most importantly a new town adjacent to the newly operating junction in Alameda valley was born.

³ Probably between the opening date of the Western Pacific Railroad from Sacramento to Oakland, 8 November 1869, and 3 December 1869, the earliest use of the name “Niles Junction” found in *Daily Alta California*.

⁴ A similarly brief notice of the switchover appeared in the *San José Mercury News* on the day after.



WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
MUSEUM of LOCAL HISTORY

190 Anza St., Fremont, CA 94539

Return Service Requested

(...continued from page 3 – TCEC volunteers)



THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED TO VISITORS
EFFECTIVE MARCH 18TH, 2020
IN RESPONSE TO THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC.