



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

2022 General Membership Meeting

Please note the date of the 2022 General Membership Meeting will be **March 8th**. The meeting will be held on Zoom. If you are interested in attending the meeting, please email info@museumoflocalhistory.org to obtain a copy of the Zoom link.

Board Election 21-22

Please note that there will be no election this year. No current board positions are set to expire until the end of 2022. You can look for your ballot in your winter newsletter Dec 2022 – January 2023 – one year from now.

Memberships Are Due!

2022 memberships are due. If you do not see your name listed in this newsletter as a “paid through 12/31/2022 member”, please send us your membership payment as soon as you can. If you would like additional information, such as the last date you paid, amount, or any other pertinent information, please contact us via phone or email.

THANK YOU!



Museum Raffle

Please pay your membership before March 7th. We will hold a raffle at our general membership board meeting on March 8th, 2022. If you are the winner of the raffle prize, you will hear from us in March.

President's Message

Here we are, seven months into reopening our doors to the public, and we're smack dab in the middle of another Covid-19 surge. Everyone is being asked to continue wearing face masks and to get vaccinated if you are able. We remain open here on Wednesdays and the second Sunday of each month.

As we approach the two year mark of this pandemic, I want to reflect on what has worked for us here at the museum. While we have mostly said goodbye (for now) to in-person gatherings, and our calendar has been quiet for almost two years now, we have happily embraced Zoom and outdoor gatherings.

We are bringing back walking tours this year, and we are working hard on getting back to normal. We've had great success with retaining our small set of dedicated in-house volunteers who keep everything afloat. Everyone continues to do their part to keep the archives growing as well as to help with putting parts of our archives online.

We have done some great work with California Revealed and BoxART!, and we've collaborated with over 30 patrons between 2020-2021. These are people who have paid us to do research or pull images for their personal or business use. We are currently working with BART on plans for the Irvington Station.

The work keeps coming, even without events and get-togethers. This is a good thing, but it is also a difficult reality. We miss seeing all of our history friends and saying thank you for your constant support financially and in-kind.

Please know that even if you are not hearing from us often or seeing our faces in real life, we are here. We are still working hard, and we aren't going anywhere.

Happy 2022 to you all!

-Kelsey Camello, President

NEWS from the MUSEUM Winter 2021-22

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*
 Marjory Begley, Alan Nagy,
 Stuart Guedon,
 Libby Macris, Tom Heater

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

The Museum is open every Wednesday from 10am to 4pm, as well as the second Sunday 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.

[01 05 2022]

We want to recognize and acknowledge our museum members and supporters who have passed away since our last newsletter, or who were mistakenly left out of a previous communication. We will work to properly recognize and remember these people in our spring newsletter.

BJ Bunting - Dec 2021
 John Cordeniz - Aug 2020
 Gerry Low-Sabado - Sept 2021
 John Melendez - Aug 2021
 Myrla Raymundo - Nov 2021



Learn more about Passport to Adventure by visiting:
<https://museumoflocalhistory.org/passport-to-adventure/>

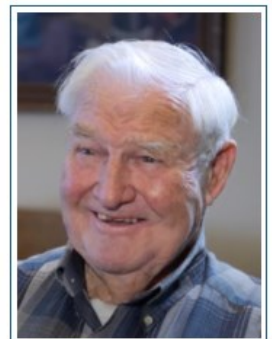
Tri-City History Queries

12 articles focusing on the history of Fremont, Newark and Union City — published in the Tri-City Voice from January through December 2021. Read each one by visiting: <https://museumoflocalhistory.org/tri-city-history-queries/>

Visit: <https://museumoflocalhistory.org/niles-memories-2016/> for an extended interview from Niles local BJ Bunting.

New! Niles History Story

Read this [interview with BJ Bunting](#), a descendent of pioneers to the area. BJ tells the story of his family history and living in Niles. Interview conducted by Lila Bringhurst.



WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY – MEMBERS PAID THROUGH 12 / 31 / 2022

Archaeological / Historical

Consultants

Margaret Balk

Janet Barton

Barbara Baxter

Marjory & Bob Begley

Sarah & Daniel Bentley

Laura Calvillo

Kelsey Camello

Leslie Carle

Deanna Cope

Antoinette Cordeniz

Stephen & Carol Evans

Roberta & Patrick Fisher

Tim Gavin

Jim & Patricia Griffin

Cheryl Holmes

Dianne Holmes & Gerry Curry

Elizabeth Macris

G. Barton Mowry

Jane Mueller & Doug Ford

Al & Connie Nagy

The Roeding Family

Lynn Jensen Volp

For the most up to date list of PAID members, please visit this page: <https://museumoflocalhistory.org/support/membership/>.

If you have not paid your membership through 12/31/22, please do so as soon as you can.

Our membership dollars are more important now than ever before!

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

Thanks to our business members for their support of local history!



Upcoming Calendar of Events

Saturday, Feb 12th // Lecture - - Mission San Jose: Then & Now, from 9:30 – 10:30 AM inside the old Mission Church / / In conjunction with Mission San Jose 225, a celebration of the 225th anniversary since the Mission was founded. / / Explore the town of Mission San Jose, as well as the greater Mission area, through pictures and stories. This talk will focus on 1850 to present day. Learn and explore what was here “then” and what remains to this day.
Speakers: Patricia Schaffarczyk & Kelsey Camello

<https://mission225.org/>

Save the Date: Saturday, March 19th for Women of Washington Township – a talk and planned in-person gathering to celebrate Women’s History Month.

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:	_____ \$ _____



Docents work on our new “Field Trip in a Box” - a creative way to get educational materials into the hands of teachers and students. Each rancho history box gives 4th grade students an overview of what life was like on the rancho. Included in the box is a binder and flash drive with educational information, cow hide and raw hide, photographs, and an animal matching game. Students are given the opportunity to make a candle, design their own “metal” brand, use air dry clay to make a brick or make adobe brick using dirt from their school, and brand a piece of felt using the Higuera brand and paint.

This project, and the additional history boxes that will follow is funded by: The Regena Dennie Legacy Fund and The Newark Rotary Foundation.



Museum volunteers show off the brand new paint job on the flagpole – recently sanded, repainted and no longer covered in rust. Thank you to the City of Fremont Maintenance Department for taking care of this task for us. The museum front yard is better and much more beautiful for it.



Mission San Jose Rotarian Larry Anderson stands aside our new aerial of Fremont and Union City, taken in the 1930s-40s looking northeast toward the town of Niles. Larry, as well as some other volunteers worked to get this overlarge aerial screwed into the wall for us. Thank you also to those who transported the aerial, helped with covering it in plastic, and getting it framed. A long and arduous process, but definitely worth it.

Larry also designed and built a new table to assist with handwashing at the rancho. Thank you Larry!

TRI-CITY TOWNS: THEN AND NOW



CALIFORNIA
REVEALED

Today we know them as districts, sections or areas of our larger cities – **Fremont, Newark and Union City**, but they were once individual towns. Independent of each other in many respects, the towns and the people who inhabited them also came together as one place, known as **Washington Township**. Now commonly referred to as the Tri-City Area, the southern portion of the **East Bay**, and the lowest geographic section of **Alameda County**, these eight towns still have much history left standing. Explore each place in turn and learn about some of what stood “then” and remains to this day.

Have a place in mind that you’d like to see featured here? Email us at info@museumoflocalhistory.org and we’ll do our best to add your historic place suggestions to this ongoing “then and now” project.

This project is supported by [California Revealed](https://california-revealed.org/) and administered in California by the State Librarian. The program is made possible by funding from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.

For more information and to explore this new project, visit: <https://museumoflocalhistory.org/tri-city-towns-then-and-now/>



Evolution of an adobe wall repair –

Top: Dec 2015

Middle: July 2021

Bottom: August 2021

Thank you to the City of Fremont Maintenance Department for this good work!

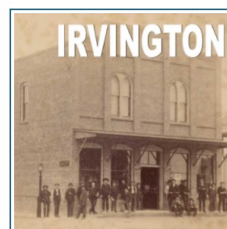
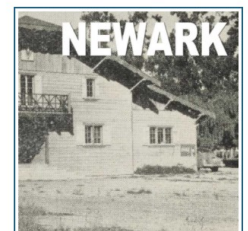
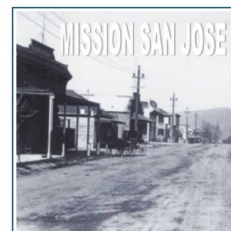
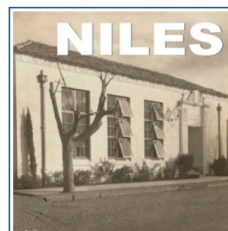
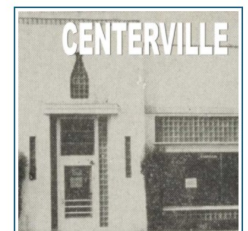
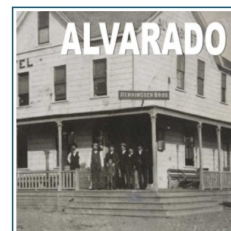
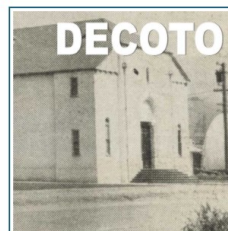


Fig Research, oh my! — from the desks of Janet Barton & Jacob Roberts

Over the summer (2021), Jacob Roberts, Portland State graduate student, came to Fremont to investigate the Smyrna fig history in California. Jacob writes about the history of science and is pursuing an MFA in creative nonfiction writing. Our local archives hold a wealth of information about one of the big questions at the end of the 1800s that consumed many people in the fruit industry.

Why did the Smyrna fig fall off the tree before it ripened?

The Smyrna fig was imported--and sometimes smuggled--in the early 1880s to California. It is a superior fig for drying. However, in California the fig fell off the tree before it matured. Many people attempted to discover why including James Shinn and John Rock, locally.

Gustav Eisen, a member of the California Academy of Sciences, was also trying to unravel the mystery. He had heard about an ancient superstition from a friend who had attended school in Portugal: just before harvesting season, fig farmers in Mediterranean countries strung inedible wild figs, called caprifigs, in the branches of their Smyrna trees. Shortly after, millions of nearly microscopic insects flew from the caprifigs and crawled inside the Smyrna figs. These farmers called the process caprifigation, and swore that their crop would not ripen without the insects. But European and American scientists were skeptical.

After the failure of California's fig crop, Eisen decided to investigate the odd practice of caprifigation. He discovered references to it from over 2,000 years earlier in the writings of Aristotle, Theophrastus, and other Greek naturalists. Soon he became convinced that this insect, the fig wasp, was the missing ingredient for Smyrna figs. When he presented his findings at an 1887 horticultural convention in Fresno, he later wrote, "I was hooted down and some of the mob whistled." Eisen was vindicated a few years later when experiments with artificial pollination proved that the Smyrna fig would ripen when pollen from the caprifig was carefully inserted with a toothpick, a laborious and time-consuming process that needed to be repeated for each individual fruit. Large-scale Smyrna fig cultivation would be impossible without the wasp to carry the pollen.

Then the question became how to make sure that the wasp was present when the figs needed to be pollinated.



Pictured beneath the fig tree L to R:
Jacob Roberts, Dianne Holmes,
Gerry Curry, Barry Balk

Pictured by: Janet Barton

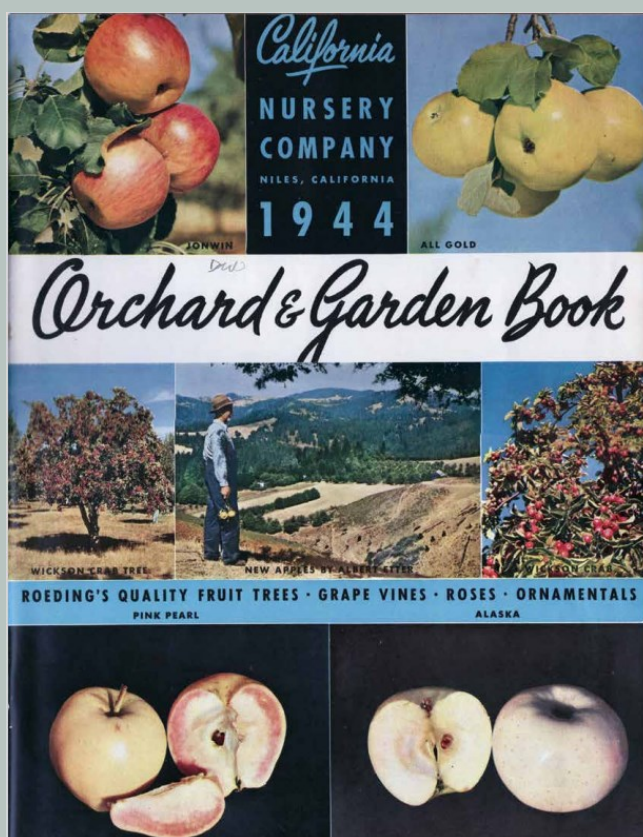
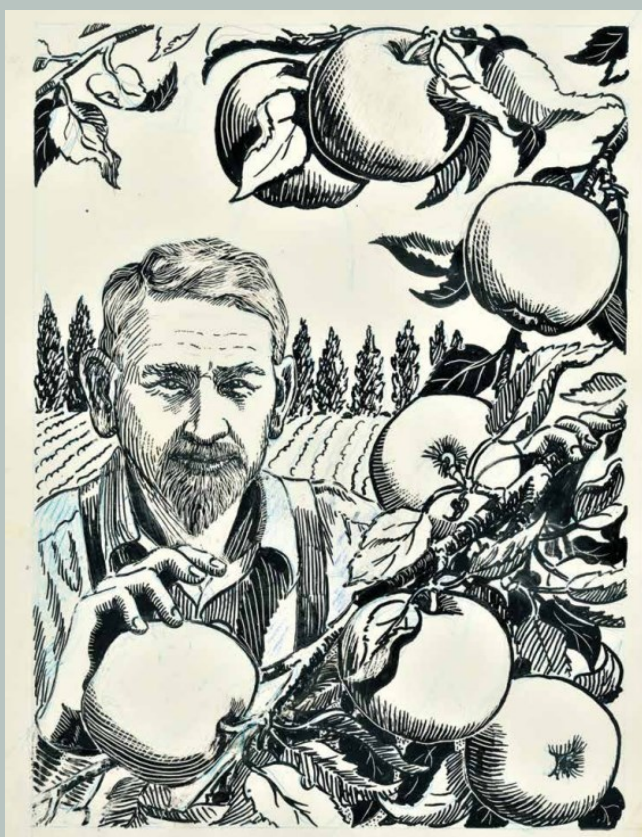
*When George C. Roeding saw this tree
in the 1920s he estimated it to be over
100 years old, which would make the
tree almost 200 years old today!*

In 1898 a USDA entomologist chose Fancher Creek Nurseries in Fresno, managed by George C. Roeding, as the most suitable location for the introduction of the fig wasp. Roeding had maintained a Smyrna fig orchard there for over a decade, but outside of artificial pollination the trees had never borne ripe fruit. Numerous shipments of wasps were sent to Fresno, but many didn't survive the trip--by steamship and railroad--of more than 7,000 miles from the Mediterranean. Others failed to arrive when the figs were receptive to their eggs. Finally, Walter T. Swingle, an agricultural explorer for the USDA's newly-minted Section of Plant and Seed Introduction, sent a box full of caprifigs preserved in tinfoil that had been harvested in the mountains near Algiers. They arrived in Fresno on March 31, 1899. A handful of surviving wasps laid their eggs in Roeding's trees, and the fig wasp has been pollinating California's figs ever since.

George C. Roeding was Jacob's focus. Jacob spent many days at the California Nursery archives looking through letters, journals, photos, and other documents. He also visited the Fremont Main Library and the Museum of Local History. Of course, we had to take him to see the 200 year old fig tree at Rancho Higuera.

We expect to see his thesis in early 2022.

Explore the History of Albert Etter, Apples, the Shinns and the Roedings



Both Charles Howard Shinn and George Roeding, Jr. participated in this experiment that created such luscious red-fleshed apples like the 'Pink Pearl.' Albert Etter's apple experiments were made in Humboldt County with 600 apple varieties obtained by Charles Howard Shinn. From those, he created 15,000 seedlings. In the 1930s about 60 apples were tested at the California Nursery Company. The apples were tested/selected/patented right here in Niles.

Learn more about Albert Etter by visiting the Winter 2021 Journal *Eden* of the California Garden & Landscape History Society:

<https://cglhs.org/resources/Documents/EDEN%20Winter%202021.Vol24.No1.DIGITAL.pdf>



190 Anza St., Fremont, CA 94539

Return Service Requested

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

Photo from Jan 2019



Visit us at the Rancho when we open again in April!

Photo by Kel Kanady, Aug 2021

