

# Newark Walking Tour



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**Alan Nagy**



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## Introduction

This walking tour is designed to allow the reader to walk down a few streets in Old Town Newark, leading the reader along with descriptions and pictures of the different historical buildings and sites. The tour starts at the corner of Thornton and Ash Streets. It proceeds down Ash Street to Snow Street, then from Snow Street to Wells Avenue and then to Filbert Street. At Filbert Street we head north to Carter Street and then to Sycamore Street. Once on Sycamore St., we head south to Graham Ave. to visit the original St. Edwards Church. We proceed to Rich Ave and then to Thornton Ave. where we make our way back to our starting point. The tour covers the core of old Newark as it existed for many years.

This walking tour came from my quest to capture the history of Newark from its inception to the bustling community that it is today. My vision is to someday have a “virtual” museum of the history of Newark that will be available online 24 hours a day. I found during this adventure that there are many others who appreciate the history of our community and have contributed greatly to this cause.

For the buildings that are now gone, I have noted where they once stood. A number of sources were used to research the material in the tour, including books, newspapers, and oral histories.

Alan Nagy  
Washington Township Museum of Local History  
Mayor of Newark, 2017

## **Acknowledgment**

Thanks to Bruce MacGregor, Develin Click and Timothy Swenson for their help in the production of this walking tour. Bruce and Develin are superb researchers of Newark history. Bruce has also written two books on Newark history. Timothy has created walking tours for various sites in Union City and his format has been used extensively in the creation of this book.

## **Historic Preservation**

It is my hope that this walking tour will serve as a reminder of the importance of historical preservation and in preserving the heritage and buildings of Newark.

## Newark, a Brief History

The roots of our community are more than 165 years old. By California's statehood in 1850, landings along the Bay in the vicinity of today's City of Newark had already begun to appear. In 1853, Mayhew's Landing included warehouses for wheat, hay, and coal. This activity triggered interest in the surrounding area, and by 1856 the Mayhew Ranch included 1,500 acres of farmland extending inland to present-day I-880. Less than 20 years later, the Perrin brothers had acquired the old Mayhew Ranch and extended their holdings to include property stretching from today's Jarvis Avenue on the north to south of Thornton Avenue. The Perrin brothers' "development project," the Green Point Dairy and Transportation Company, although slightly embellished, foretold of things to come for the area. It was the Perrin brothers who first drew up plans to subdivide the Green Point Dairy into a town site (located in the general vicinity of Thornton and Jarvis Avenues).

A gentleman by the name of Elias Beard started the early swamp reclamation project and patented the land in the area. Mr. Beard needed more capital, and in 1872 he sold 20,000 acres of swampland for \$300,000 to Mr. J. Ross Browne. Mr. Browne was an entrepreneur (he was a secret agent for the U.S. Government, diplomat to China (appointed by Andrew Johnson), and a friend of Mark Twain). Browne outlined his swamp lands project before the state legislature on February 3, 1872. At this point, Browne referred to the proposed town site as "Cralvo" or "Cariboo." Browne created a circular that was distributed around Europe to promote the swamp lands project. An English capitalist bought an interest in the property and hired Mr. J. Barr Robertson (a Scotsman) to oversee his interests. Robertson was a director of the California Land Investment Co., Ltd., London, England. Robertson then bought out the interest that Browne had in the land. The name "Newark" was chosen by Robertson, who named it after the castle "Newark" in Port Glasgow, Scotland (where the River Clyde enters the Atlantic Ocean). Please note that there are several different stories about the origins of the name "Newark".

Work began on a railroad through the town site from Dumbarton Point in 1875. That project was under-financed and never progressed beyond initial grading. In 1876, the railroad, together with the Green Point Dairy, was purchased by a San Francisco capitalist, Alfred Davis, and a Comstock millionaire, Jim Fair. They not only completed the South Pacific Coast Railroad, from Dumbarton Point south all the way to Santa Cruz, but also moved the town site to coincide with the curve on

the railroad where the tracks turned south toward San Jose. Soon, a railroad station, roundhouse, and railroad shop buildings were being erected in the center of Newark in the area between Thornton Avenue, Sycamore Street, and Carter Avenue.

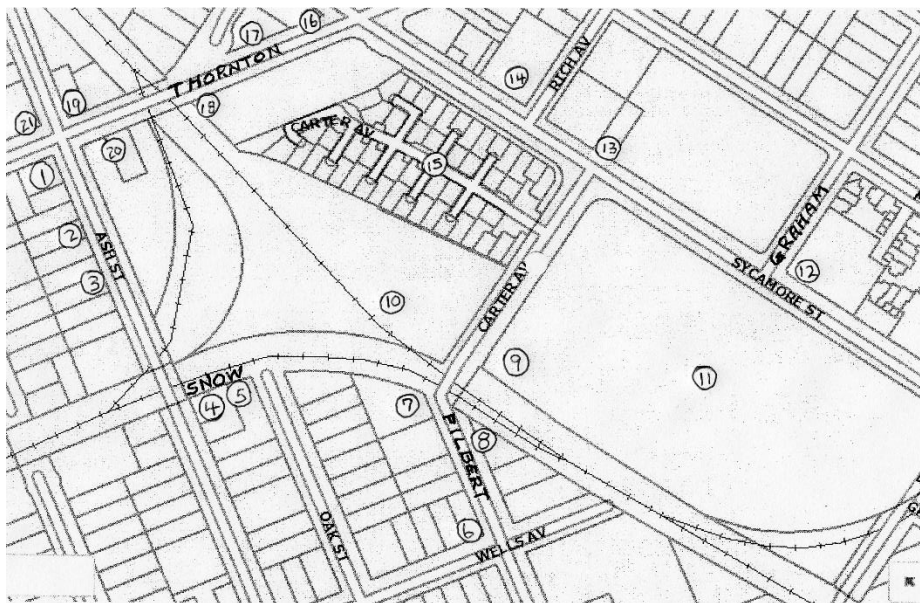
Eventually, the railroad was extended north from Newark to Alameda, providing direct ferry service to San Francisco.

The completion of the railroad precipitated additional development in Newark. Hotels and stores were soon erected, along with some of the first manufacturing industries, including a railroad car building firm operated by Thomas and Martin Carter and a foundry which later manufactured Wedgewood stoves. These enterprises joined the salt industry, which had been underway in the Newark area since the 1850s. Acquisitions and mergers of salt production companies throughout the Bay Area ultimately resulted in formation of the Arden Salt Company, predecessor to Leslie Salt Company and today's Cargill Salt.

Throughout the years, residents in Newark have retained a strong sense of independence and community. Thus, it was no surprise when, in the early 1950s, when subdivisions began sprouting throughout Southern Alameda County and talk of incorporation was in the air, leaders in Newark wanted to go it alone. In 1953, a group representing the chambers of commerce of Centerville, Irvington, Mission San Jose, Niles, Warm Springs, and Newark commissioned a study to incorporate all six communities into one city. However, during hearings on the matter, the Centerville and Niles proponents began pressuring Newark into accepting an industrial zoning for the entire town of Newark. Newark would therefore be the major industrial area for the proposed new Southern Alameda County city. Having already fought and won zoning battles with the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, Newark's Chamber of Commerce was not willing to roll over and lose its right of self-determination. Therefore, in the face of rapid progress toward the incorporation of all six communities into one, now being called Fremont, the Newark Chamber of Commerce began its own movement toward incorporation of Newark into its own city. In September 1955, this effort paid off with the incorporation of Newark as the first new city in Alameda County in 47 years, and defeating efforts to incorporate Newark as part of the Fremont metropolis.

Newark has retained this sense of self-determination and independence, priding itself on its ability to operate lean and fast.

These traits have resulted in benefits to its residents, from its success in securing NewPark Mall, with its jobs, tax revenues, and easily-accessible shopping, to completion of the new Dumbarton Bridge and improvements on the Nimitz Freeway. While other cities struggle with internal differences, Newark continually moves forward cohesively, working for the good of the community, our residents and businesses. We have come a long way from the early visions of the Perrin Brothers and their Green Point Dairy and Transportation Company, and we will continue to move into the future as a community that relishes its “small town” ambience.



# **1. Watkins Hall**

## **37013 Ash Street**



Built in 1889. Last known as the Knotty Pine Tavern. Now owned by City of Newark.

An imposing landmark at the heart of the original town, this place served as the center of commercial, civic activity, and social functions for 19th and early 20th century Newark. It is typical of buildings found in many small towns at the beginning of their development. The large upstairs meeting hall served for town meetings, community dances, and business enterprises. Too many railroad men were going to San Francisco on the weekends and not showing up for work the next week. To counter that, the hall offered local entertainment to the workers on the weekends.

The building design is a fine example of the Italianate frontier style.



## 2. Candy Annie's Store 37045 Ash St.



Built about 1890. One of the most popular places in town was the candy and confection store of Hattie White, which was later sold to “Candy Annie” Fowler. This store was the only place where ice cream could be purchased for miles around. Later use of the building included Las Cuatras Estrellas Bar.



Candy Annie Fowler's name has entered the folklore of Newark history. Annie Fowler's store was typical of the many individual commercial enterprises that began at the founding of Newark and continued into the twentieth century.

### 3. Lazzarini Saloon 37069/71 Ash Street



Built about 1890, originally a saloon serving the thirsty customers in old town. Later it served as the Oliver Barber Shop. This photo was taken in 1989.



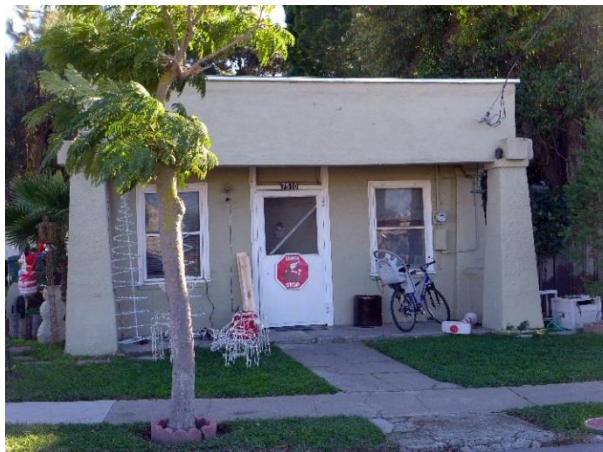
Now a residential unit. This 2016 photograph shows the old steps still remain..

#### **4. Henry A. “Del” Snow Residence 7570 Snow Avenue**



Henry A. “Del” Snow was one of Newark’s most famous citizens. He founded the Snow Museum of Natural Sciences in Oakland—now the Oakland Museum. Snow Elementary School is named in his honor.

#### **5. Snow Museum 7510 Snow Ave.**



The intrepid H.A. Snow housed his egg collection and artifacts from his worldwide travels in this building. Constructed in the early 1900s, the building served as a museum and warehouse until the bulk of his collection was deposited in the house which became the Snow Museum in Oakland. The building is significant in its relation to the development of the present Oakland Natural History Museum.

## **6. Early Saloon** **7419 Wells Ave.**



This building is one of six noted as a saloon on a 1908 Sanborn map of the area. Although the building lies close to the major industrial center of turn of the century Newark, historic records do not reveal how this building served in the everyday life of the working community.

## **7. Dugan's** **Hotel** **Filbert/Carter**

Also known as the Newark Hotel, this building sat at the end of Carter Avenue. The Dugan Annex, at the right of the hotel, included Newark's first post



office and general store. A greyhound racing track was set up in back of the hotel. The coursing park opened in the fall of 1882 on a 100 acre lot, and Dugan bred his own rabbits in a fenced compound. The hotel was demolished in 1936 to make way for a new wave of industry.



## 8. Pacific Land Investment Co. & Chamber of Commerce

**37270 Filbert  
(Filbert at  
Carter)**



### From A Local Newspaper of the Day....

“Newark , Sept. 24 - The opening of the Dumbarton cut-off is of great significance to this district. All the through freight on the Southern Pacific Railroad, east or west, will now go to San Francisco via the cut-off while freight intended for many northern and southern points in California will be cut out of the overland trains and attached to the interior trains.

This remaking of the trains here means that there will be constructed in the vicinity of Newark one of the biggest switching yards in the West. In addition, plans have already been made for the erection of a roundhouse ample enough to accommodate

hundreds of  
locomotives and  
extensive machine  
shops, requiring the  
employment of  
hundreds of  
mechanics.

The Southern Pacific  
Company has  
already purchased  
600 acres of land for  
the yard between  
here and Mowry's  
Landing and many

miles of tracks are laid. Newark yards and shops will become the main freight distributing point in California.”



## 9. Central Hotel, Marston's Hotel, Park Hotel Carter at Filbert



The railroad hotel, known as the Central, Marston's and later the Park Hotel was funded by the railroad and built about 1879. It served both the railroad and its passengers for more than 30 years. The hotel later burned down in a fire in the early 1900s.

### **OLD PARK HOTEL AT NEWARK BURNS**

#### **Property Was Part of the Fair Estate and Is a Total Loss**

**NEWARK, Sept. 10.** – The Park Hotel, at the old coursing park, which is part of the Fair estate, was burned at 4 o'clock this afternoon. The building contained twenty rooms and was occupied by a family named Bell. The furniture was owned by the Fair estate and so far as is known there was no insurance.

About two years ago the place was closed by the Sheriff. There are a great many stables on the place, but most of these were saved. The old place is well known and for years was a center for fast horses and dogs.

9-11-1903

## 10. Newark Train Depot

The original covered depot was built in 1877 and burned in 1902. Narrow gauge trains were able to stop under the cover of its roof. There were only four covered depots in the entire South Pacific Coast Railroad (Alameda, Newark, San Jose and Santa Cruz).

These were considered architecturally unique – a symbol of civic pride – so the fact that the railroad chose Newark for one of its four featured depots tells a lot about how it regarded Newark.



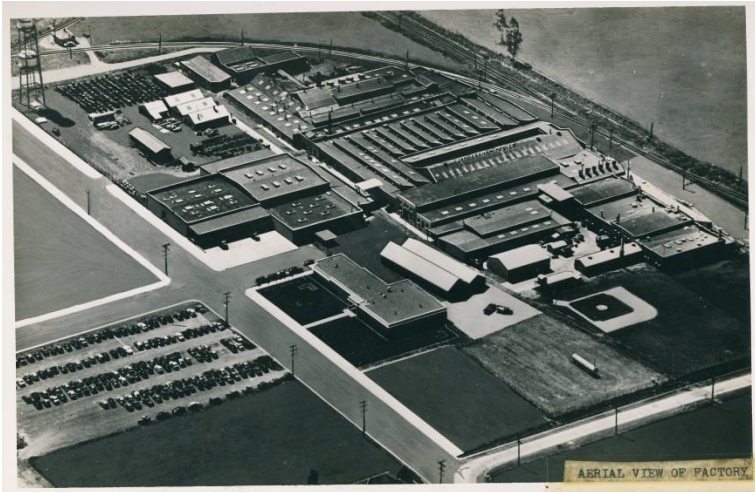
Newark train  
depot around  
1915



Same location in 2017 – note only the platform remains. The new Fire Station #1 is in the background.

## 11. Graham Foundry

E. of Railroad/South of Graham Ave.  
Sycamore Street



Moved from Alvarado in 1880. Did metal work for Carter brothers for train parts. After Carter closed, switched to manhole covers. In 1908, the first stove was designed. In 1910, started using the “Wedgewood” name for stoves.

Part of the War effort in the 1940’s saw mostly women workers making aircraft wings. In the 1950’s the factory made hot water heaters under the new ownership of the Rheem Manufacturing Company.



Now Sycamore Bay Apartments. Built in early 2000’s.



## **12. St. Edward's Catholic Church**

**7160 Graham Ave.**

The town was really an integrated development on the part of the railroad. Many of its original buildings (of which St. Edward is one of the last surviving examples) were either directly or indirectly funded by the railroad.

The Newark Enterprise was Newark's first newspaper. The paper documented well as the church beginnings sprung out of a fundraiser and into a build contract.

**From the Newark Enterprise May 15, 1880**—Mr. Samuel Davis

has raised upwards of \$250 for the new church about to be built in Newark. [Sam Davis is manager of the land development company, Pacific Improvement Co, and brother of the railroad's president, Alfred E. Davis].



**July 3**—Much just indignation is rife among our carpenters as to the course taken as regards the letting of a contract for building the Catholic Church. San Francisco parties have been awarded the contract and are going to bring their lumber from that city. The plans and specifications were not as much as submitted to our local contractors.

**August 7**—The Pacific Land Investment Company have deeded to Bishop Alemany the Catholic Church property in Newark.

**September 18**—The Catholic Church is at last partly erected. The building at present is forty by sixty feet, and built after an ancient Gothic style with a large steeple. The contractor, Mr. Slaven, hopes to have it completed in a little over a month.

**October 16**—The painting of the new Catholic Church was commenced the first of this week. The building will be ready for dedication in about two weeks. [paper stops publication by Nov 1]

**13. Station Agents House  
37110 Sycamore St.**



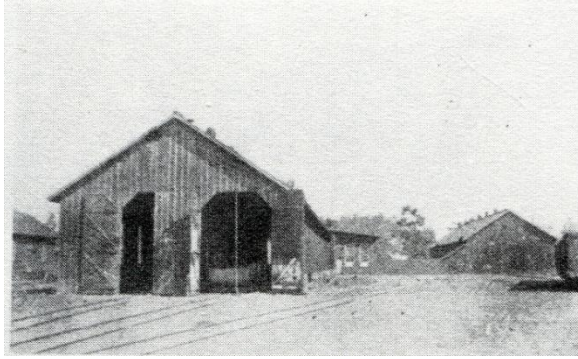
Built about 1900 by J.B. Terrill Station Agent and Inventor of a voting machine.

**14. Second Grammar School Buildings  
7115/7187 Rich Avenue**



The significance of this building lies more in its parts than in its present use and design. The wings were once part of the second grammar school built in 1916. The Spanish baroque gables correspond to the design of that building. The building has had many uses including; the original Newark City Hall and Police Station, a topless bar—the Booby Hatch, and currently houses an Adult bookstore, candy maker, restaurant and other small businesses.

## 15. Carter Brothers Shops Carter Station Housing



The Carter Brothers shops were also originally funded by the railroad. Thomas and Martin Carter were highly skilled carpenters and they opened their Newark plant in 1876. They built cars of every size and description, from box cars to electric cars. They were builders of some of the cable cars that still ply the streets of San Francisco. Their car shops were some of the largest on the West Coast.



The Carter Station housing development and commercial area now encompass the area formerly occupied by the Carter Brothers shops.

**16. Thornbury Building**  
**7327-7355 Thornton Ave.**



Built about 1926, this place was an important social center in that it housed the newly emergent form of popular entertainment, a motion picture theater. Later, part of the building served as the Newark Youth Center.

**OLD PHOTO'S WANTED**

If you have old photographs or other documents pertaining to Washington Township and would like to share them, please contact the Museum of Local History so that the documents can be digitally scanned.

Once scanned, we can either return the original documents to you or archive them using the latest archival software.

There is no cost for this service.

**[www.museumoflocalhistory.org](http://www.museumoflocalhistory.org)**

**17. State Bank**  
**7383 Thornton Avenue**



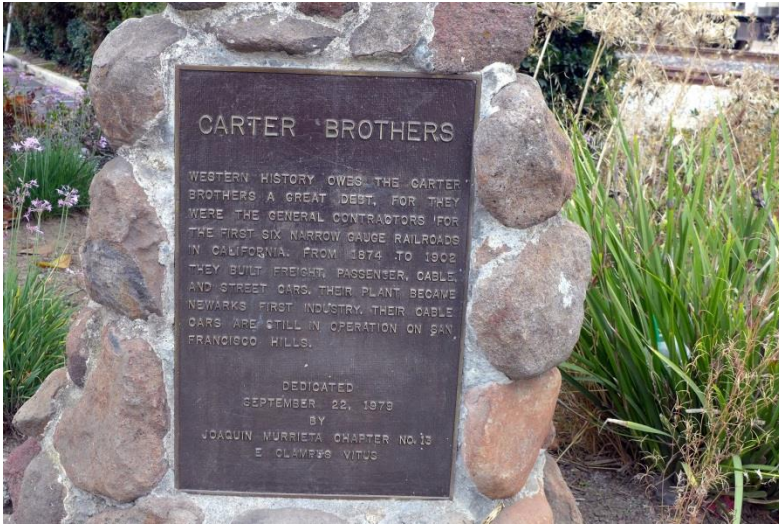
Built in 1926 as home of the first, if not too successful, financial institution in Newark. The bank building is a good example of historic architecture in adaptive use.



Current use as La Pinata Mexican Restaurant. The vault is still in the building.



## 18. Carter Brothers Monument Thornton at the Railroad Tracks



Western history owes the Carter Brothers a great debt, for they were the general contractor of the first six narrow gauge railroads in California. From 1874 to 1902, they built freight, passenger, cable, and street cars. Their plant became Newark's first industry. Their cable cars are still in operation on San Francisco hills.

**Dedicated**

**September 22, 1979**

**By**

**Joaquin Murrieta Chapter No. 13**

**E. Clampus Vitus**

## 19. Newark Fire Station #1—1939

7575 Thornton Avenue



Fire station #1 built in 1939. Newark celebrated with a parade as part of the dedication ceremony.

In March, 1939 the new modern fire hall was completed, after their old wooden structure on the corner of Thonton and Ash street served they for 29 years. In April 1939

The building was eventually sold to a private party and a new firehouse was constructed on the corner of Chestnut and Thornton.

Later, the new Newark Fire Station #1 was built on the southeast corner of Thornton/Ash (just across the street).



*This 1916 Pumper served the Newark Fire Dept. for many years.*

## 20. Fire Station #1/#28

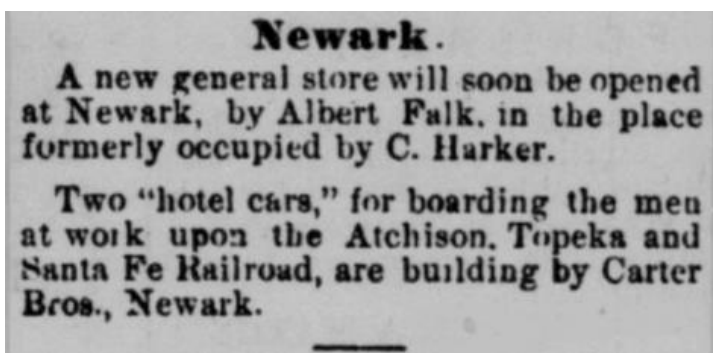
### 7564 Thornton Avenue

(Prior location of Falk General Store, Silva/Ruschin Saloon and the Foxy Lady Bar.)



Sitting on the Southeast corner of Thornton/Ash is a modern fire station built in 2001. This replaced the firehouse at Chestnut/Thornton.

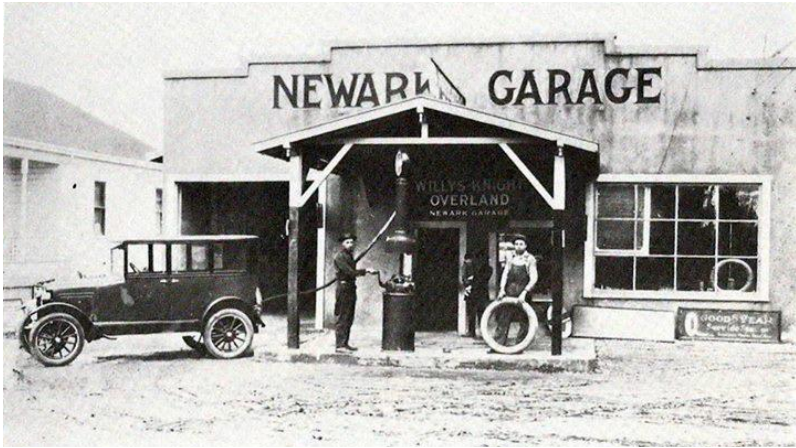
The prior occupant of this location was Falk General Store, which was the first general store and adjoining saloon, both essential to a robust growing community of hard working citizens. Another use was the Foxy Lady – a topless bar.



August 4, 1881



## 21. Newark Garage/Newark Collision Center 7609 Thornton Avenue



The Newark Garage was a dealer for the Willy's Overland Company and sold the Willy's Knight Automobile as seen in the picture. Later Ernie's Garage was at this location. The original building was eventually torn down and replaced with the structure below.



Now Newark Collision Center.

## Resources for History of Newark, CA

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## 1880 Oakland Tribune Article

### BEAUTIFUL SCENARY

Until it becomes dim and blue. Over San Francisco stands up boldly like a sentinel Mt. Tamalpais. To the north of the Mission is the celebrated Livermore Pass through which the Pacific Railroad runs. On a clear day, the sound of the trains passing through the canyon can be heard. I have made this description to show how prettily Newark is situated. Look in any direction a beautiful panorama is in view. Those who live here are not alone in the opinion, but those who have had the pleasure of visiting this town have observed and remarked upon it. We can add to this the extreme healthfulness of this town. The land is high and sloped gradually as it approaches the salt marsh and easily drained. No sickness known. Doctors are unknown; their acquaintance undesirable, except in a social way.



1900s horse drawn railroad car to Centerville

This walking tour has been presented by the Washington Township Museum of Local History. Our mission is to preserve Southern Alameda County memories, documents, artifacts and structures from the past and to share them with present and future generations.

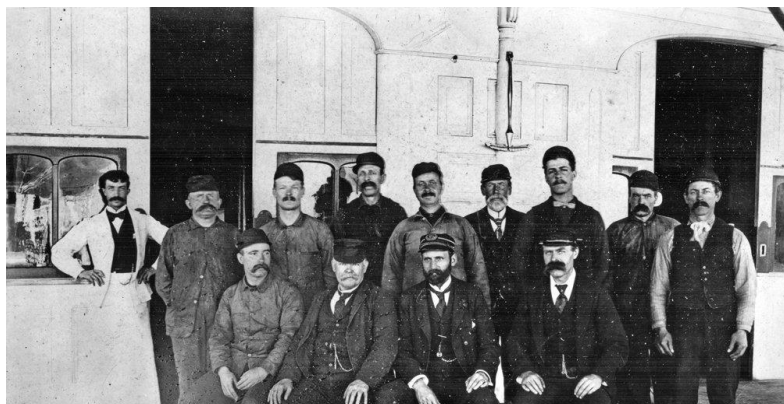
We maintain a large collection of artifacts, including books, photographs, documents, and maps, documenting the history of Fremont, Newark and Union City. From these archives, books have been published nationally. Museum authors contribute articles to local newspapers and websites. We are also expanding programs for students learning local history.

We welcome all visitors, volunteers and new members.

**For membership information, please visit our website or stop by the museum during our open hours.**

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Crew of Newark, Southern Pacific Company, 1882