



The Sentinel

Spring 2010

Newsletter of the San Ramon Historic Foundation

BEFORE IT WAS CALIFORNIA: The Mission Period

Continued from the Winter 2010 Issue

Mission San Jose was the closest mission to the San Ramon Valley. "Spanish outposts in the Bay Area were always somewhat precarious. Sitting on the northern tip of the empire, supplies, military order and news reached them only sporadically. The Missions of Santa Clara and San Jose were expected to provide a regular food supply."¹ The brunt of the work fell on local Indians. The Spanish colonization plans included education and Christianization of the native population, and the Spanish committed many resources to convert and train the Indians. The life they offered the Indians was to the Spanish much superior to their current life. The Indians' contributions are recognized in a cemetery not far from Mission San Jose, there is a sign which reads "Here sleep Four Thousand of the Ohlone tribe who helped the Padres build this Mission San Jose. **Sacred to their Memory.**"²

However, it must be noted that not all of the indigenous people appreciated the Spanish and the forced labor they imposed on the Indians. Converted (Neophyte) Indians were not allowed to leave the mission; the work was hard, and disease often killed many of them. Some Indians refused to go to the mission. *Cont'd on pg. 2*



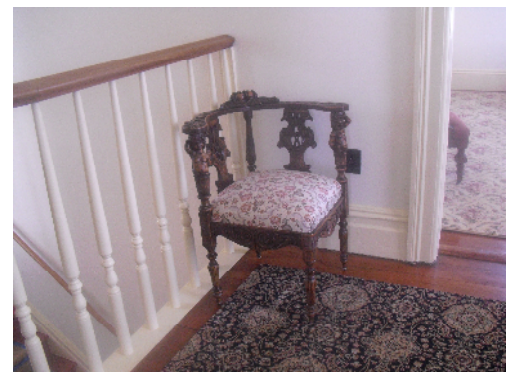
The Glass House Opens on May 15

The opening celebration for the Glass House has finally arrived. The mysterious house, very visible from the freeway and the object of much speculation will open its doors to the public as a house museum on May 15 at 1:00pm. The opening ceremony is at 1:30p.m., and the public may view the house until 4:00pm. The house museum will be open the second Saturday of each month from 10am to 2:00pm in conjunction with the Farmers Market and

the Gift Shoppe. The Shoppe will be open during the Glass House grand opening.

The Glass House was built in 1877 by David Glass. It is an Italian Victorian that has been meticulously restored inside and out. The exterior landscaping reflects plantings from the 1900 era and is based on early pictures of the house. It contains some original Glass family furniture and a painting by Anita Glass that has been restored. Additional authentic period furniture was donated by interested community members and some was purchased by the Foundation, including the master bedroom dresser, bed and wash stand.

City employees Kim Guiliano, Mary Ann Wilkman, Stephanie Herscu and Nancy Young deserve congratulations for their efforts. Thanks to all the many others, employees and volunteers, who have put many hours of research, planning and just plain muscle into seeing the dream realized.



Mission Period *Cont'd from page 1*

Jose Amador recalled his early military interactions with the Indians. He stated that “the [scouting] party invited the wild Indians and their Christian companions to come and have a feast of pinole and dried meat... the troops, civilians and the auxiliaries surrounded them and tied them up we separated 100 Christians, we baptized all the Indians (non Christian) and afterward they were shot in the back”.³ At another encounter, Amador and Agostin Bernal were injured when attempting to recover stolen horses taken from the mission. That skirmish left 20 Indians dead, 20 wounded and 16 were taken prisoner.⁴

Many Indians did adapt to mission life and gained new skills. They became carpenters, blacksmiths, tanners, weavers and soap makers. They herded cattle and sheep throughout the valley. Ramon, an Indian valley herder became the inspiration for the valley’s name. As mentioned in the Fall 2009 issue of *The Sentinel*, buildings on San Ramon Rancho, Jose Amador’s granted land, were built by Indians and skilled Indian craftsmen, and women provided necessities for the Rancho.⁵ However, Central Valley Indians continued to threaten valley settlers throughout the first half of the 19th century.

These people who played such an important role in the development of the San Ramon Valley were quickly almost eliminated. Approximately 300,000 Indians lived in California when the Europeans arrived. Within 50 years that number was down to 100,000. In Contra Costa County there were over 30,000 Indians in 1820. A cholera epidemic severely decimated the population. In 1879 the publishers, Smith and Elliott stated that “there are scarcely 50 (Indians) left in the entire county.”⁶

¹Beverly Lane “They Came First: The Tatcan, Seunen and Souyen Peoples of the San Ramon Valley.” (Museum of the San Ramon Valley, 1999), p8.

²Reginald Ray Stuart *Corridor County vol. 1.* (Amador-Livermore Valley Historical Society, 1966), pp. 29-31.

³http://www.nps.gov/history/histoy/online_Books/5_views/5views1b.htm. “A History of American Indians in California: 1769-1848.” Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California (American Indians) pp. 3-4.

⁴Stuart, p78.

⁵Stuart, pp. 10-11.

⁶ George Emanuels. *Ignacio Valley 1837-1970.* (Panaroma West Books, 1982), p. iv.

Abraham Lincoln: Self-made in America

The Museum of the San Ramon Valley is hosting an impressive Abraham Lincoln event from April 9 to May 7, 2010. The exhibit includes reproductions of artifacts and documents from the Abraham Lincoln Library in Springfield, Illinois. In addition to this noteworthy exhibit are a number of related events planned for spring 2010.

Civil War Re-enactment Day on April 24 is sponsored by the San Ramon Historic Foundation and the City of San Ramon and will take place at Forest Home Farms Historic Park from 10am – 4pm. Remember that Foundation members are eligible for special discounts at the door and a 10% discount in the Gift Shoppe.

Other events have preceded this publication, but there are still many special activities such as the Alamo cemetery tour on April 24 and a chocolate and champagne social April 15 to commemorate the 145th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s death. Other lectures and debates are also scheduled. Visit <http://www.museumsvr.org> for further information.

The City of San Ramon will host an exhibit entitled “Ladies of the Lincoln Era” from May 15 to October 10 at the Glass House at Forest Home Farms Historic Park.

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Book Review

Recollections. Early Life in the San Ramon Valley

as related by Prof. James Dale Smith Headmaster, Livermore College

The lengthy title of the newest addition to the Gift Shoppe at Forest Home Farms book rack is actually a collection of news articles edited by G. B. Drummond. James Smith was raised in the San Ramon Valley, having arrived as a child in 1850. James knew everyone and his experiences with many still familiar names make for a very good read.

As a child he ate his first peach at the home of Joshua March. He described how Seth Lewelling brought the first cherry trees into San Lorenzo. He was chased by a grizzly bear and described the band of mustangs that roamed from Marsh Creek to Bay Point. The abundant game he described and the redwood trees in Moraga Valley all give a vivid picture of another era.

And as he grew up and received his education, he met and interacted with more people. He became a teacher and for one year taught the Glass and Harlan children and boarded with both families. He bought property from Bollinger. His tales go on and on, and the reader comes to know not only the land but the nature of the settlers James knew.

To purchase a copy of **Recollections**, visit the Gift Shoppe at Forest Home Farms which is open on Saturdays from 9:00am to 1:00pm, May 1 through October and during special events such as the Civil Re-enactment Day and Sheep Shearing. It is located in the same building as the Welcome Center.

San Ramon Historic Foundation Auxiliary

Recently Dall Barley, SRHF Vice President, conducted the first meeting of the SRHF Auxiliary formed to involve more community members who have specific interests to pursue and who wish to support the Foundation's goal of preserving and protecting our historical buildings and landscapes. Auxiliary positions still open include Management of Event Supplies, Coordinator of Construction Projects and Co-chair of the Victorian Tea, or you may apply to be a member of any committee. Call Dall Barley at 828-735-7855 or email him at dall.barley@sbcglobal.net for more information. Dall has list of potential volunteers who are emailed when a project is identified that needs volunteer assistance. You can decide whether that project is right for you and email him.

Or perhaps you prefer volunteering at events. The Foundation sponsors a number of San Ramon events and co-sponsors some with the city. Again there is variety. One event not mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter is the Pioneer Picnic scheduled for late September. It is a casual potluck attended by invitation only. Those invitations go out only to long-time residents who are descendants of San Ramon Valley pioneers. Volunteers who help that day get to hear tales of riding through the valley by horse, fixing tractors with Travis Boone in his machine shop, visiting with Ruth Boone on her porch, and what it was like to attend a one room school house.

Or perhaps you enjoy the retail business and would like to become a member of our sales team at the Gift Shoppe. There is always changing merchandise, and the sales team is important in deciding what merchandise to purchase. It is a place to see your neighbors who come to the Farmers Market or meet new people who come into the shop and chat.

Please remember that the Foundation is non-profit and however you decide to participate, proceeds from all events benefit Forest Home Farms Historic Park and the education programs and events sponsored by the city or our Foundation.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR SPRING 2010

April 9 - May 7: *Abraham Lincoln: Self-made in America* at the Museum of San Ramon Valley
Visit their website for other events www.museumsv.org

April 24, 10:00am – 4:00pm: Civil War Re-enactment Day at Forest Home Farms Historic Park
Gift Shoppe is open.

May 1, 9:00am - 1:00pm: Farmers Market opens for the season.
Gift Shoppe is open every Saturday morning also.

May 2, 11:00am - 3:00pm: Sheep Shearing Day.
Gift Shoppe is open.

May 15, 1:00pm - 4:00pm: Grand Opening of the Glass House; ribbon cutting at 1:30pm
Gift Shoppe is open during the Grand Opening.

May 15 – October 10: *Ladies of Lincoln's Era* at the Glass House. Open second Saturday of each month in conjunction with the Farmers Market and the Gift Shoppe

Visit <http://www.SRHF.org> for more information regarding Foundation events