



## SAN RAMON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March 2018

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### **The Four Corners Remembered was the topic at the January 18<sup>th</sup> Dinner Meeting**

**Beverly Lane, Don Wood, Steve Minniear, and Betty Dunlap presented the program.**

Longtime residents occasionally refer to Four Corners and newcomers have no idea what they are talking about. The Four Corners met along Tassajara Road where Sycamore and Dougherty Roads intersected. Today the street signs say Camino Tassajara, Old Blackhawk Road and Liverpool Road. Suburban homes and the Peace Lutheran Church meet at this corner in 2018.

How many of you have heard of Four Corners?

Map – go east from Danville via Sycamore Valley Road and Camino Tassajara – four Corners is the intersection just before Blackhawk Road, Camino Tassajara and Crow Canyon Road.

We heard from several historical society members and Steve Minniear from Dublin as we look at Four Corners, especially the NE corner during World War II. *(continued on page 2)*

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### **Root Family - Stories and History will be the subject of the March 15<sup>th</sup> Dinner Meeting**

Joan Witte Mahoe, descendant of the Root, Boone, and Love Families will share history and stories of the Root family.

In addition, information will be presented on Danville's Heritage Resource Commission.

The San Ramon Valley Historical Society will meet in the party room of the Black Bear Diner. We will gather at 6:30 pm, begin dinner at 7 pm, and then enjoy our speaker!

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The Black Bear Diner is located adjacent to the Best Western Motel in Danville at I-680 and Camino Ramon (Use the Sycamore Valley Road exit from I-680). The dinner cost is \$23.00 per person. Dessert is extra on your tab.

**Please make your reservation and share a great evening with us! *Over 47 Years Looking Back!***

## The Four Corners Remembered (Continued)

Four Corners is the head of Sycamore Valley where Bay Miwok Indians would have lived close to the Sycamore Creek. The area for over a century had been ranch lands with cattle grazing on all sides. The vast Wood Ranch covered the lands west of the intersection on both sides of Tassajara road.



### Goold

Evidently Gardner Goold (1818-1880) and Elizabeth B. Goold owned 160 acres of property in this area beginning in 1869 including the NE corner. The museum has photographs of the Goold house in this location which was dismantled in 1912. Their son Charles Goold was a charter member of the Odd Fellows Danville Lodge in 1892, belonged to the Danville Grange No. 85 and was prominent in the community as a bank director and school trustee. He and his wife Almira bought 70 acres of land south of Danville from the Boones in 1903 and moved there.

Their home and history is honored in the SRVH Society's third historic plaque next to a redwood grove in front of the Sycamore Square shopping center. Dougherty Road started in Dublin and extended north to this intersection prior to homes being developed in the late twentieth century.



SRVHS Archive Photos  
by Lee Halverson

*(continued on page 3)*

## Members' Corner

### *An Invitation to All:*

Join the Town of Danville's Heritage Resource Commission Plaque Unveiling

James Root and Austin Root Homes

Friday March 16, 2018

at 4:00 p.m.

at Sideboard, 90 Railroad Avenue

(corner of Linda Mesa)

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## The Four Corners Remembered (Continued)

In the 1930's Louis Kamp owned this land, as well as land further north on the other side of the Old Blackhawk Road. Evidently the federal government leased the NE corner from him and built a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp. There were barracks, officers' quarters, an infirmary, a recreation center, administrative buildings and a large redwood water tower constructed there. A stone fireplace stood there for years after the buildings were removed. See the map of the CCC camp donated by Virginia Jouris, called Camp San Ramon.

The CCC was part of FDR's experiment to put thousands of people to work, primarily young men. They built roads and dams, constructed schools and parks. They received additional education, learned to be on time, and were able to send most of their pay home to help their families. Tilden Park and Skyline Road were constructed by CCC workers with a camp in Tilden.

**Don Wood** recalls that the CCC workers installed bridges and improvements on Sycamore Creek for the Wood Ranch and has photographs of these projects. Another CCC camp was on Mount Diablo near Rocky City. They worked on projects primarily in Alamo and Danville.

### **WWII Camp San Ramon**

In World War II, the camp became a military facility used in several ways. Ralph Campitelli recalls coming to the camp for maneuvers on week-ends, with his boss directing troops to run up Mount Diablo for fitness. He also remembers getting a severe case of poison oak.

### **Betty Dunlap**

Betty recalled life as a young girl during World War II with food stamps and gas rationing. Since all nylon was going into parachutes, the girls used to buy cosmetic to color their legs. She remembered bus loads of soldiers from Camp Stoneman, Camp Parks and Camp San Ramon coming to the Henry Hotel in Alamo and local families collecting them to come for a home-cooked dinner. Two local girls (her cousins), Doris and Alice Jackson, met instructors at the Training Unit at a dinner which her aunt Frederiche Jackson made and romance blossomed. Doris married Fred Kjelland and Alice married *(continued on page 4)*

## The Four Corners Remembered (Continued)

Kenneth Hasbrouck. The Kjellands lived in Alameda and donated several books, pamphlets and correspondence related to the Special Training Unit at Camp San Ramon where Fred and Ken were teachers.

The NE corner camp was also the site of three sessions of an **Army Special Training Unit** from 1943-1944 (precise dates: Nov. 12, 1943-Feb. 4, 1944; Feb 10, 1944-May 12, 1944, May 12, 1944-Aug. 12, 1944). Young men entering the Army with little education (minimum of 4<sup>th</sup> grade) and no work experience were sent to these units to prepare them for Army life. They learned arithmetic, improved their reading skills and were taught the importance of getting places on time. Some of them went to dinner at local people's homes and local American Legion Hall dances. Fred Kjelland said they were paid \$21 a month and the school was more academic than military in focus. There were units like these all over the country.

**Steve Minniear** spoke about Camp Parks and World War II. Camp San Ramon and Camp Parks were linked by Dougherty Road. There were thousands of troops at Camp Parks and Camp Shoemaker in Dublin. Beverly Lane supplemented this information as well.

Toward the end of WWII Camp San Ramon became a prisoner of war location for Italians since the barracks were available. There were over 50,000 **Italian POW's** brought to the US in 1943. That fall there was much confusion over who was actually governing Italy. But the Italians did not want these POW's back right away since there was not enough food for people in the country. Those POWs who agreed to support the US war effort joined Italian Service Unit camps and worked out of the camps throughout the country. Many of the officers did not agree to support the Allies and went to more restrictive camps. In California the men were welcomed, Catholic Churches served them, Italian-Americans hosted them, and the men had freedom of movement. They worked all over in farming, fishing, dock work, etc.

**Don Wood** said that he remembers going by the camp as a boy and hearing opera being played. The neighboring camps said the prisoners used to sing opera while they worked. *(continued on page 5)*

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## Museum News

January 21 to March 18: **Great Frontier Odyssey, Sketching the American West.**

March 25 to June 10: **The Chinese and the Iron Road, Building the Transcontinental.**

**Town of Danville Tours:** To schedule a tour, please call Eve/Donna at the museum at (925) 837-3750.

**General:** When the Museum is open, a trained docent is always on duty and can provide exhibit tours for visitors. Reserved tours are available during open or closed hours by appointment. Large groups are encouraged to call ahead to assure that a docent is available specifically for your group.

**The Museum of the San Ramon Valley** is located on the southwest corner of Prospect & Railroad Avenues, and accessible via the Iron Horse Trail [P.O. Box 39, Danville, CA, 94526, (925) 837-3750]

**Hours: Tuesday-Friday 1-4 pm; Saturday 10 am-1 pm; Sunday 12-3 pm.**



## The Four Corners Remembered (Continued)

Many of the Italians thought being in these camps was paradise, with shelter, good food, freedom to move around and no more need to fight in a war. Note a DVD is available called "Prisoners in Paradise."

### After the war ended

#### **Beverly Lane gave this portion of the meeting.**

Another group recalls four corners: the **students of Tassajara Grammar School**. When the school closed in 1946, according to Betty Casey many of the students were taken to four corners to meet the school bus which transported them to their new school in town, Danville Elementary School.

Four corners was a common reference to this intersection.

Virginia and Don Jouris and her two brothers were the next owners of the NE corner. They bought the land from Kamp and kept most the buildings, living in some of them. She was interviewed in 1996 and 1997. She said that Kamp told her the Italians took down several prefab buildings, singing opera arias the whole time. Also that Maevis Wood told her many trucks carrying sand and peat moss had used Tassajara Road to create the central area of the CCC camp. Virginia remembered Maevis's son, Don, driving a tractor



Jerry Warren, Beverly Lane, Steve Minniear, Don Wood and Betty Dunlap

at age 11. (Don said he'd done this at an earlier age.)

Jouris said they became suburban farmers and learned mostly from books. They mowed grass with a power mower to start. The Woods helped them. She said Charlie Wood leaned over the fence and suggested they might try raising ewes and lambs, which they did. Plus they put in a lawn and a rose garden and, of course, raised chickens. She had plenty to say and knew so much. She had *(continued on page 8)*

## *In Memoriam*



**Al “Eddy” Gerhardt**  
 April 24, 1938 - November 21, 2017  
 Resident of Occidental

Al Gerhardt passed away unexpectedly November 21, 2017. Born in 1938 to Albert E. Gerhardt, Sr. and Kathleen (Nielsen) Gerhardt, Al was raised in Sebastopol, with his late sister, Susan (Gerhardt) Davis (Erwin), and brother, Dan Gerhardt (Shirley), and attended Green Valley School and Analy High School. He married Pat Jessee in 1963, moved to Petaluma and raised 4 children, Kathe, Gerry (Jeanne’), Diana and the late Anna Marie.

After Pat died, Al married Jan Smith in 2000, adding 3 more adult children to his family, Maureen, Jim and Tom. Together they realized his dream of living on his ranch near Occidental. He was a machinist at OCLI for 30+ years until he retired. That was just his job. Being a life-long rancher was in his blood. His life was the land in whose soil he planted hay, the beef cattle that he raised, and the men who worked alongside him like his late Uncle Fred and the “Frank-Vic guys”. He loved being a part of Sonoma County Agriculture and was a great supporter of FFA and 4-H encouraging young future farmers to keep farming alive, participating in auctions and AG Days where he treasured seeing many little ones get their first glimpse of a tractor and farm animals up close. Al actively served on many local boards to protect and serve the local AG community including 16 years as a Director of the Farm Bureau, North Coast Livestock Protection Association, Sonoma County Taxpayer’s Association, and the CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife to name a few. He attended meetings locally/statewide ensuring his fellow ranchers/farmers were well represented and keeping government entities on their toes. He was an active member of St. Philip’s in Occidental and worked tirelessly supporting their Rural Food Program. He enjoyed his membership in the So. Co. Trailblazers. His niece described him as “the last of the cowboys” and he will be truly missed by his wife, children, family, and friends including his grandchildren, Shane, Nathan, Jessee, Ashleigh, Cody, Angela and Justin.

A Memorial Mass was held Friday, January 12, 2018 at St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church in Occidental, followed by a Celebration of Life at the Sonoma County Farm Bureau in Santa Rosa. Private Interment.

*The information above was taken from ParentSorensen.com.*



**Lloyd E. Ramsey**  
 May 18, 1928 - January 12, 2018  
 Resident of Danville

Lloyd E. Ramsey died peacefully at the Reutlinger Center in Danville. Lloyd was born in Marysville, CA and spent most of his life in the Bay Area. He spent 22 years in the Air Force, serving in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Lloyd is survived by his wife, Nancy, his two daughters, Joanie and Kelly, one brother, Arthur, 8 grandchildren and 15 great grand-children. He was preceded in death by his eldest daughter, Sandy.

Lloyd’s family held a private service in celebration of his life.

*The information above was taken from the East Bay Times, January 28, 2018.*



Founded 1970  
 P.O. Box 521, Danville, CA 94526

OFFICERS

Jerry Warren	<i>President</i>
Ginny Ferreira	<i>Secretary</i>
Frances Lloyd	<i>Treasurer</i>

DIRECTORS

Lee Halversen  
 Kimberly Holmes  
 Steve Larmore  
 Bill Lloyd  
 Jean Mello  
 Karen Stepper

### The Sales Table ~~ Nancy Ramsey

Packets of cards depicting Mount Diablo, Front Street, Southern Pacific Depot, Tassajara School, "Grand Dames" of San Ramon, Alamo Grammar School 1876, and a collection of assorted historical scenes are available.

Each packet contains 8 cards and 8 envelopes.

Member Price - \$3.50 per 8 card packet

Historic scene postcards are \$0.20 each

*Do stop by the Sales Table*

**www.SRVHistoricalSociety.org**

### Member's Memorial Gift

NAMES HONORED BY MEMORIAL AND COMMEMORATIVE GIFTS, AND NAMES OF DONORS, ARE ENTERED IN A BOOK OF MEMORY AND WILL BE PLACED IN OUR MUSEUM. For tax purposes, we are a non-profit organization. You may make your donation to the society or to the Museum - Please check box below.

Make check to: San Ramon Valley Historical Society Memorial Fund. Please ✓ for:  SRVHS  MSRV

Mail to: SAN RAMON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY P. O. Box 521, Danville, CA 94526

This contribution  REMEMBERS  HONORS  EXPRESSES APPRECIATION  OTHER

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DONOR Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE NOTIFY Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Dinner Reservations

**Thursday  
March 15, 7 p.m.**

\$23.00 per person

Black Bear Dinner  
 807 Camino Ramon, in Danville  
 (at I-680 and Camino San Ramon in Danville)

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO S.R.V.H.S. (Deadline March 13, 2018)

Mail to: S.R.V.H.S., P. O. Box 521, Danville, CA 94526

NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_  
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## The Four Corners Remembered (Concluded)

served on the school board from unification in 1965 for about 15 years. She still recalls Blackhawk homes representatives presenting their plan to the Board (only electeds around then) and showing their access from her property without having talked with the Jourises beforehand. 1980 The Jourises sold 12 acres to the Catholic Church subject to it being used as a church, not for houses. Probably why the Peace Lutheran Church is there today.

And so we stop – hope you enjoyed this little excursion to Four Corners!

*Thank you Beverly Lane  
for writing this Four Corners Remembered Article  
for this newsletter!*

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**Need a Ride To The Society Meeting On March 15<sup>th</sup>? Contact Bill Lloyd  
Visit - [SRVHistoricalSociety.org](http://SRVHistoricalSociety.org)**



SAN RAMON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 521 · DANVILLE, CALIFORNIA 94526

**NEXT MEETING  
THURSDAY,  
MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup>  
The Root Family - Stories & History**