

Next Program... Everyone Invited!

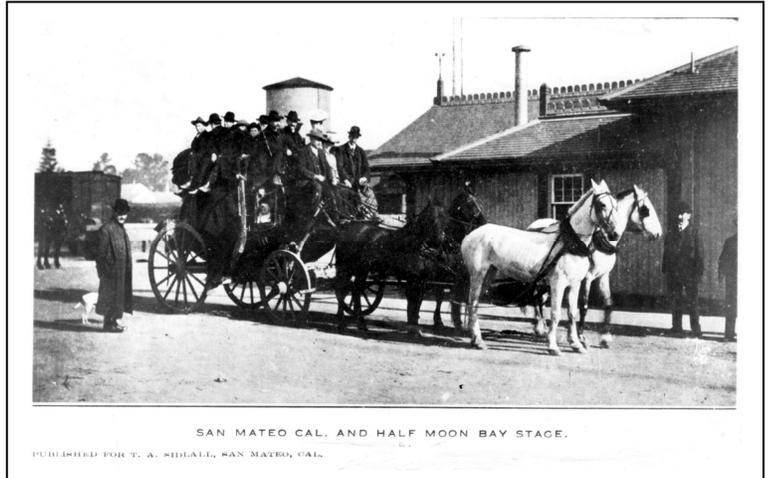
HMB History Association proudly presents . . .

“Our Early Transportation History”

Half Moon Bay History Association MEETING – Thursday, August 11

Our Early Transportation History...

David Crabbe will be following the changes of local transportation since the earliest of the days the Spanish Fathers coming to establish their presence in Northern California. He traces the importance of each step of transportation improvement from the native trails and the Spaniards' El Camino Real to prospectors and settlers – and on. Here, as in the rest of the country, transportation evolved from simple personal wagons on to stagecoaches and the Railroads and modern cars and trucks. At the same times, the infrastructures evolved to support the vehicles – Light duty dirt paths were improved with government guidance and action into today's roads and modern freeways.



David Crabbe describes the steps – and some interesting wrinkles within the steps – of the succession of local transportation and infrastructure. He weaves an insightful perspective exploring the impact of the changing forms of local mobility on our economic, environmental, and community development.

Speaker...

As an architect, David Crabbe has dedicated much of his time to such clients as Habitat for Humanity and the Human Investment Project in San Mateo. He is founding member of the non-profit organization, Sustainable San Mateo County (SSMC), and he is the Chair of the SSMC Indicators Report Committee. HMBHA is pleased that he is presenting the history of transportation, as reported in an earlier “Indicators Report.”

He earned his Architecture degree from the Rhode Island School of Design.

Sustainable San Mateo County (SSMC) is a non-profit organization established in 1992 by a group of San Mateo County citizens who were concerned about the long-term health of our county's economy, environment, and social equity. The SSMC annual “*Indicators Report*” presents indicators that raise government and stakeholder awareness of progress to improve our ability to make sound decisions for posterity.

Topic: “Our Early Transportation History”

Presenter: David Crabbe

Place 724 Kelly Street, HMB, “Portuguese Cultural Center”

Date: Thursday, August 11

Time: 5:30 Doors open – finger snacks and refreshments

Public welcome – No charge

Meeting begins: 6:00

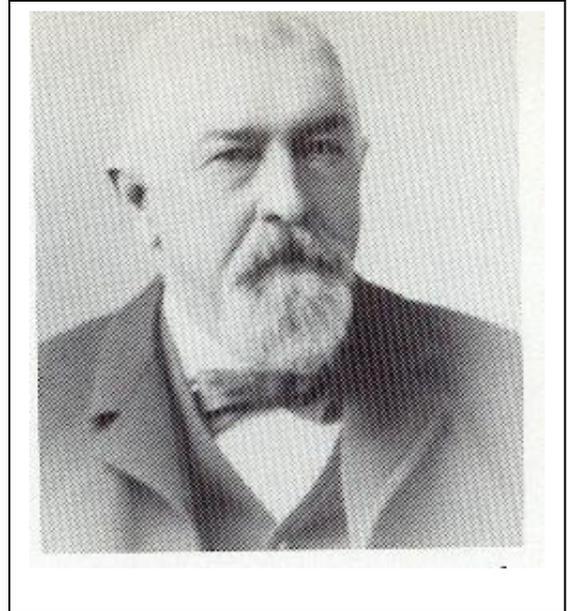
HISTORY BEHIND AMESPORT LANDING...

JOSIAH P. AMES

By June Morrall

The few clusters of Americans scattered in the bureaucratically named *Department of California* felt threatened on the brink of the U.S. war with Mexico in 1846. The settlers smelled invasion in the air. But from whom? They weren't certain. They feared the Indians who could set fire to their homes and crops; they feared the Mexicans who could take away their livelihood but for a time these isolated Americans whipped themselves into a frenzy against their old enemy, England.

And why not fear England? At that very moment Admiral Seymour of the British Fleet was rumored to be sailing for the Pacific Coast. The settlers wondered if his orders were to take California. The editors of English publications supported the efforts of any country but America in a California takeover. The nerves of Americans were not soothed by the fact that until 1846, England and the U.S. jointly held Oregon.



However, the English decided that California was not a plum worth fighting over; or else, as Josiah Royce, author of *California*, published in 1888, suggests, the British agents were not ready when the time came to strike. After all, it was the United States that went to war with Mexico and won handily in 1848.

Josiah Parker Ames was an Englishman who did not alarm the settlers when he appeared in Half Moon Bay about 1858. Born in England - but reared in New York City - Ames was twenty when he joined Colonel Jonathan Stevenson's special regiment that sailed around Cape Horn to California in 1847. The colonel's instructions were to take part in the American occupation and to make the inhabitants "feel that we come as deliverers." With the completion of the mission, Colonel Stevenson bought a rancho in Contra Costa County. His objective was to turn the land into a large, prosperous city. Josiah Ames followed in the colonel's footsteps when he cast his eye on Half Moon Bay.

Already Ames had tasted the life of tents and cloth houses in San Francisco and the rawness of life in the gold mines. Filled with energy, he was now ready to buy land, start up businesses, and launch a political career.

Perhaps fellow Regiment member James Denniston invited him to the Coastside; they were close friends. After marrying into the Guerrero family, Denniston had found himself the wealthy owner of an immense tract of land, called *El Corral de Tierra*, stretching from Montara to the Arroyo del Medio in Miramar. A creek running through the property in Princeton, where the family resided in an adobe, was named Denniston Creek. He operated *Old Landing*, where little steamers stopped to load produce in the 1850's. Denniston was politically powerful. During a trial in which he was the defendant, the jury did not bother to rise from their seats to deliberate elsewhere. They acquitted him on the spot.

While living in Half Moon Bay, Josiah Ames found romance. In 1861 he married Elizabeth Freeman at St. Patrick's Cathedral in San Francisco. The happy couple lived in a new twelve-room house with ocean views. The *San Mateo County Times & Gazette* gave the house the nod: "It is decidedly the finest dwelling on the other side of the mountain." Already a County Supervisor, Ames now took office as County Treasurer.

Josiah Ames was involved in much of Half Moon Bay's minuscule economy. In 1873, when seven hundred citizens lived in Half Moon Bay, the flour mill he owned turned out fifty barrels of flour per day. He supplied the town with water. He was the proprietor of the Half Moon Bay Livery Stable at Main and Kelly Streets.

"J.P. Ames has selected and stocked one of the best equine establishments on the coast," boasted the *Gazette*. Perhaps he rented horses for the Fourth of July races at the Half Moon Bay Trotting Track. But there were hard times, too; in 1869 his friend James Denniston died at age forty-five of Bright's Disease. Ames's wife died in 1871; he remarried later.

His most significant contribution was the building of a wharf and warehouse at the mouth of the Arroyo del Medio Creek in 1868. Denniston's Old Landing had fallen into serious disrepair, and the new wharf, soon called Amesport Landing, opened up a vital economic link with the outside world. Amesport prospered in the 1870's. It seemed that San Franciscans could not buy enough Half Moon Bay potatoes; in 1874 the *Monterey* sailed off with six thousand sacks full. "This is almost like shipping coals to Newcastle," remarked an amused newspaper correspondent.

The political star of J.P. Ames was rising, when he donated a new flag-staff to Half Moon Bay in 1876. The newspaper described it as "a beautiful stick, with a small platform around the base." The flagpole was planted on the southwest corner of Main and Kelly Streets.

While Ames reached new political heights as a state legislator, the booming potato business at Amesport fell into decline. A pesty worm destroyed the future of the crop; the little steamers stopped less frequently at the wharf, and Ames sold the business to the Pacific Coast Steamship Company. They were never able to duplicate the heady days of the 1870's. The connection between Ames and Half Moon Bay was severed.

Finally Josiah Ames was appointed the Warden of San Quentin Prison; he is noted for introducing the manufacture of jute bags there. This energetic citizen died at the age of 76 in Martinez.

(Editor's Note: June Morrall was the author of *Half Moon Bay memories: The Coastsides' Colorful Past* (1978) She contributed to a column called *Coastside Memories* in the *Half Moon Bay Review* and wrote for other San Francisco Bay Area publications. In 2010, those of us who enjoy good writing and rich stories about local history lost a friend. June Morrall passed away and left a large void.)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Watching Current Events!



Our Half Moon Bay History Association has been around for quite a few years now. For me – and I hope for all – it has been fun riding along. We have summed our goal up as **celebrating, educating, and preserving our Coastside history.**

This is a community that is particularly involved in its own and California history. Unique for small towns, I think. This place has reflected nearly every important aspect of the development of the state – not just a few interesting elements. Natives lived and left their marks here. The earliest Spanish explorers walked within a few feet of where I am writing this note. The milestones go on – land grants, maritime history, the great earthquake, military activities, bootlegging, breakwater, dams, economics, drag strips, and more. Big stories and smaller individual achievements. Our history deserves to be celebrated!

The Association has been busy for years – and nice things continue.

Founders Group...

The news that the our efforts to open a real local history museum are getting some traction is welcome . And more of our neighbors have offered to join the support group - "**The Founders Group,**" These people are saying they will be willing to help along the way of establishing the history museum. Many hands will help present the history story. The museum location is right in center of Half Moon Bay. It is large enough to keep us challenged in collecting and developing the displays. Appropriately enough – the structures themselves are steeped in history... The 1877 Johnston Barn and the old 1911 County Jail.

Art in Coastside history...

The Coastside has long been an attraction to talented people. Several high level writers, poets, and artists have spent parts of their lives here. One who has been particularly embraced is artist Galen Wolf. He is noted as a painter – but he so enjoyed the Coastside that he penned pleasant essays about its history. His writings and his paintings have become parts of the fabric of the community **A few weeks ago,** neighbors – from Los Altos – **Marilyn and Steve Peck** - reached out and offered to allow us the opportunity to preserve examples of Wolf's art. They donated a number of his working sketches to the history association. They further said that they look forward to placing Wolf's finished works from their collection into our association.

Memories from a Coastside Activist – George Dunn...

Few small towns can find such a history of individual activists as the Coastside. Among the earliest – and perhaps most tireless - was George Dunn. His resume includes years as the publisher and editor of the local newspaper – the Half Moon Bay Review. That platform certainly allowed his voice to be heard. Dunn passed away some years ago. Often, with the passing of our neighbors, papers and artifacts can stray away. They can become lost. With such loss goes understanding and illustration of details of history. **A few weeks ago** nearby neighbor – from Montara – **Greg Keeney** - contacted the Dunn estate. We all were fortunate that he received their blessings to preserve important memorabilia and documentation. Greg then went on to place the materials into the history association archives.

Busy with ongoing efforts...

These current events have the background of the ongoing energy. Program Committee (Quarterly talks to the community), Education (Going to local schools), Walking Tours (Groups hearing about local places), and now the Historic Markers group – designing and placing plaques, also, perhaps a Field Trips Committee (Putting together trips around our surrounding areas)... all these and other exciting ways to **celebrate, educate, and preserve our Coastside history..**

Looking forward to looking back,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Dave Cresson
President

City Hall - (History Museum Progress Report)

Representing HMBHA, Clyde Beffa and Bonnie Dunham have been meeting with Marina Fraser and the Young Actors Workshop members and working with President Dave to make the dream of a museum a reality.

Out of positive discussions, the following agreements have been made so far:

As of January 1, 2017, HMBHA will have the lease from the City on the jail and the Red Barn, including the artifacts that are there.

A tribute to Mary Lou Orange would be included in the new museum exhibits.

The Young Actors Workshop will hold its fundraiser at the 2016 Pumpkin Festival.

Meetings will continue to be held with YAW and with Marina to work out the legal and practical aspects of the transfer and transition. Marina has been a helpful liaison with YAW in this process. Dave prepared a Nonbinding Letter of Intent for the lease arrangements that is the current topic of discussion with Marina.

Although it is a little more than five months to January, Bonnie and Clyde are confident that the necessary agreements will be in place, having been arrived at amicably.



What is the association?

Half Moon Bay History Association is a non-profit – tax deductible 501(c) (3) corporation. (Since 2006)

It plans to...

- Try to find answers to any questions asked about Coastside history,
- Publish books and papers about the community's historic places, events, cultures,
- Publish a newsletter about current activities of the group (On-line, free to all who request it)... And Programs too!
- Manage the History Room in the Zaballa House,
- Manage a website devoted to Coastside history,
- And whatever an idea person comes up with...

See form on front page

FREE! TO ALL 2016 MEMBERS – Pick up your free copy at the Zaballa House – 326 Main St., HMB

GUIDE BOOK OF HALF MOON BAY

A book for locals and visitors...

A souvenir for friends and visitors to remember the Coastside. It is easy to read – even easier to follow - a guide to historic places..

Printed on fine quality paper, the book is a handy, descriptive and colorful piece, showing and briefly describing nearly seventy historic places in town Half Moon Bay. Short, but informative descriptions of each place are combined with pictures of the historic sites as they are today - - and as they appeared in days gone by.

