

1407 Hamilton Way
San Jose, California 95125
August 16, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

As a long time resident of Willow Glen, family genealogist/historian and preservationist, I am writing in support of the San Jose Parks Foundation for the Willow Glen Trestle grant application to research and document the history of the Willow Glen Trestle.

There is very little left here in this Valley that is a reminder of our rich agricultural past, but memories of this imposing 210 foot train trestle, located a short distance from Lincoln Avenue in Willow Glen, are still very much alive to many long time residents. Not so long ago, Santa Clara County was the largest fruit producing and packing region in the world and was known as the "Valley of Hearts Delight". This hub was linked to the world by the railroads that transported our canned products to distant markets. It is this Willow Glen train trestle that the Western Pacific Railroad used to cross over the Los Gatos Creek in Willow Glen in order to reach the canneries on Auzerais Street.

The Valley's orchards have disappeared along with the canneries. However, this train trestle remains an important representation of our local history during that time period. It is a connecting link to those Santa Clara County residents who once had those vast orchards; to the thousands, including women and children, who labored picking fruit in those orchards; to the thousands, including women, who worked in the local canneries, and to those connected to the railroad within our county. This 97 year old train trestle in Willow Glen is an important symbol of not only our local history, but also a representation of Santa Clara County's cultural heritage from that almost forgotten agricultural era.

The Willow Glen Trestle is listed on the California Register of Historical Resources, and it can provide many educational opportunities for students to study environmental, biological and earth sciences, along with the past histories of the railroad and canning industries, in addition to the personal histories of our local ancestors and their once rich agricultural past. It is only when we tell the stories of our ancestors as they relate to a historic event and the preserved historic site that we can really see the true picture of what made us all what we are today.

As a compiler of my own family history, I realize that it is through researching, documenting and preservation that our resources are then recognized, appreciated and protected so that future generations will understand and value that long ago time period. This is why I am in support of the San Jose Parks Foundation for the Willow Glen Trestle grant application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Martha (Howard) Heinrichs
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