



REDLANDS CHRONICLES

January 2021

THE BATTERY MAN-W.L. GILL AND THE GILL BATTERY

Presented by his granddaughter, Kathleen Beall

Monday, January 25, 2021

Zoom Webinar <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83799433054>

IN 1968, the *Prospect Park Book* referred to Gill Battery as, “perhaps Redlands’ oldest industry.” Today, on its 101st anniversary in the year 2021, the Gill Battery is still manufactured in Redlands by Teledyne Battery Products under the Gill Battery product name. Millions of batteries have left this town proudly stating “Made in Redlands, CA USA” and can be found in aircraft around the world, in space, and in the middle of military conflicts through the ages.

The Gill Battery story, however, is indeed a story of a man, Walter Lawrence Gill, 1900-1984. Overcoming tremendous obstacles, he developed and patented a battery that revolutionized the battery world, creating one of the first batteries without separators and later the first dry charge battery. These inspirations eventually led to more than 40 patents in his lifetime.

Kathleen Beall originally presented this program in January 2000 - the Society’s first Power Point program. Please join us twenty years later for this first meeting of 2021 with a look back into the past with an updated program as we learn more about the man, his eccentricities, his various inventions, and the importance of these inventions even today, as well as perhaps Gill’s greatest invention which is in every aircraft in the world.

Kathleen Beall, granddaughter of W.L. Gill is a native Redlander and 4th generation of her family to call Redlands home. She is a 42 year RAHS member, having been given her first membership as a Christmas gift by the late Sue Hills. Kathleen is a former 2+ term board member of RAHS, in addition to being a former member of the Heritage Awards Committee. Kathleen and her three sons have been active



Walter Lawrence Gill (1900-1984)

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Dear Redlands Area Historical Society Members,

AS WE START THIS NEW YEAR, let me extend our sincere appreciation to the Society members who graciously consented to have their homes on our first ever *Holiday House Mini Driving Tour*. You made this time of social distancing a joy for which we are most grateful. *Thank you!*

Our first meeting of the New Year is on Monday, January 25th beginning at 7 pm via Zoom. Former RAHS board member Kathy Beall is our featured speaker. We are in for a treat as Kathy shares with us the history of Gill Battery founded by her grandfather, Lawrence, in 1920 (since 1966 the Teledyne Company). To log in go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83799433054>.

In recent weeks several current and former members of the Society have passed away. We remember them with fondness, grateful for their encouragement and support over the years.

If you are in need of RAHS merchandise, including *Illustrated Redlands*, *Redlands Souvenir Book*, and *A Celebration of Redlands 125 Years of Historic Homes*, these items are available at Gerrard's Market. We sincerely appreciate owner Tom Reingrover's willingness to stock our items in his store.

Within this newsletter is information on renewing your annual membership, including a remittance envelope for your convenience. If you so choose, please feel free to go online and renew on the society's website at www.rahs.org.

With best wishes for a safe, healthy and joyous New Year!

Steve Spiller, President

Redlands Area Historical Society would like to thank our CORPORATE UNDERWRITERS:

Wes & Peggy Brier Tim Watson—Mission Pediatrics, Inc. Morgan Framing
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Esri



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advocates for local historic preservation of the Burrage Mansion, the Save the MOD movement, the former La Rosita (now Starbucks) building, Crystal Springs, and her sons have been members of the Save the Zanja Committee as researchers, photographers and co-authors of the book as well as recipients of the History Channel Grant. Her sons founded the Redlands Junior Historical Society while at RHS. Kathleen has been a featured speaker about design and historic preservation during Redlands Heritage Week.

Kathleen is a former volunteer architectural surveyor for the City of Redlands Historic Inventory Project of the 1980s: in high school she was a member of and

later, an advisor for the Kimberly Juniors. A 1981 graduate of RHS, in 1984 she received her degree in Environmental Design from U.C. Davis and is a professional certified interior designer. She is a nationally awarded and published design thought leader specializing in historic preservation and contemporary design trends. Her design work includes historic restoration by invitation of the cities at the Greystone Mansion in Beverly Hills and the Wattles Mansion in Hollywood, as well as many local Redlands historic properties.

A lifelong genealogist, Kathleen currently serves as the historian for the Jamestowne Society California Company and is a member of several genealogical societies through both sides of her parents' families, including that of her grandfather W.L. Gill. She is a volunteer with Find-A-Grave at Hillside Cemetery in Redlands. Kathleen has conducted research on American decorative arts going back 400 years and in 2019 completed an exhibit on 17th century silver in the colonial Mid-Atlantic at Dumbarton House in Washington, D.C.

Historical Society programs are free and open to the general public.

-by Ron Running



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Redlands Area Historical Society's purpose is to support and advance the many facets of the area's historic resources.

Historic resources, sites, and memorabilia provide tangible links and visible reminders to the past, and continuity to our daily lives. By perpetuating the past through the preservation of our historic resources, we maintain the rich diversity of our community life. By respecting and restoring the architectural integrity of historic structures, and by conserving the neighborhood environments, we preserve the unique character, and document the historical evolution of the geographical areas in which we live.

The Redlands Area Historical Society emphasizes the conservation of the past in terms of buildings, neighborhoods, written and oral history, and memorabilia. It also presents programs to educate citizens, young and old, on the significance of the values of Redlands' heritage.

Annual Heritage Awards Update

The Redlands Area Historical Society board had tentatively rescheduled the 2020 Heritage Awards to June of 2021.

We realize now that we were a bit optimistic. It is our goal to hold the Heritage Awards in the fall of 2021. Archives and other resources needed to conduct research of the historic properties remain inaccessible. As soon as they reopen our volunteers will be back at work documenting the unique histories of these exceptional properties.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.



THE REDLANDS AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
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 www.rahs.org

Address Correction Requested

Redlands Area Historical Society, Inc.
 Founded 1972, Incorporated 1974

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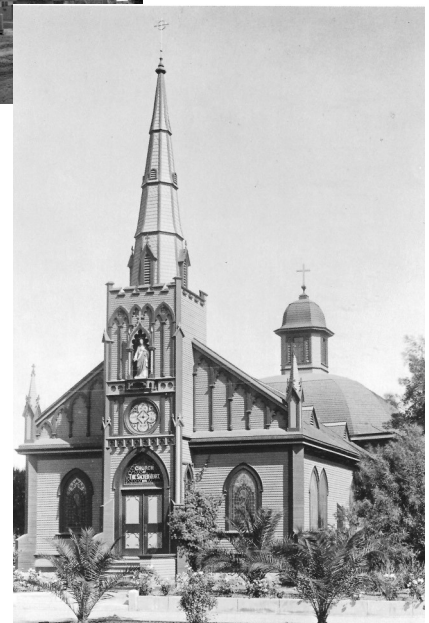
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Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.rahs.org. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

ORDER YOUR DVD/VIDEO
 All of our monthly programs and Heritage Awards ceremonies are dutifully recorded by Gerry and Linda Brassfield of Blue Eagle Video. Videos are \$5.⁰⁰ each.
 Order copies from **Blue Eagle Video** at:
 (909) 520-3830 or email: boomerger@aol.com

Early Churches of Redlands



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