“Why are there trains on the farm?”

Railroads linked farms and families together over a century ago. The South Pacific Coast Railroad connected Ardenwood to the world.

The railroads were not always welcome. In 1877, George Patterson tried to keep the mighty railroad from crossing his land. He built sturdy fences to keep the railroad from cutting through his fields. Before leaving on his honeymoon, George posted armed guards to enforce his will.

When he returned, George discovered that his guards, full of whiskey supplied by the railroad, couldn’t stop the rail crews from tearing down the fences and laying track across his land. The work was finished all in one night.

Trains still run along that line today. It’s the track you see along Ardenwood Boulevard.

The railroad at Ardenwood recreates a nearby branch line of the South Pacific Coast Railroad. Using only horse-drawn rail cars, the Centerville Branch carried both freight and passengers between the farming communities of Newark and Centerville (now a district of Fremont) between 1882 and 1909.