

DECEMBER 2009
VOLUME 33, NUMBER 3

The Tall Tree

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING, FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Sunday, December 6 at 2:00 PM at the
Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

Vignettes



PROGRAM HOST:
KAREN HOLMAN
City Council Member

WHEN STANFORD UNIVERSITY WAS FOUNDED, JANE STANFORD saw to it that female students were admitted. This was both unique and progressive in the day.

Equally noteworthy are Stanford's early athletic activities. Remember that the first Big Game was held in 1892.

Fast forward to the 1930's when one young woman living in Wisconsin wanted to bring her tennis game to Stanford. Long before Title 9, Stanford provided a venue for young female athletes.

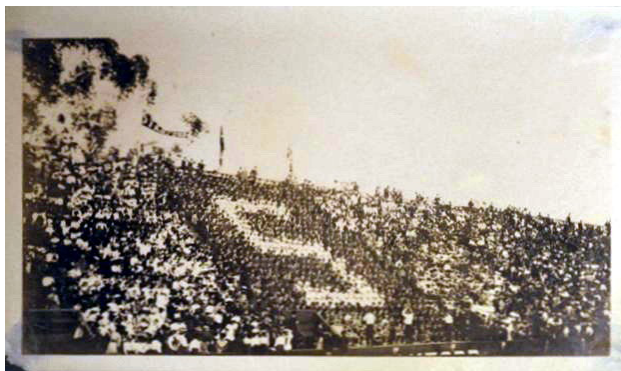
When the 1960's came to Palo Alto, some noted Palo Altans took to the mountains to establish a life style that for many of us defined

the era. Musicians, writers, and others established communes that changed lives and perhaps even the world.

Please join us on December 6 to hear these and more vignettes about our past as we prepare to meet the new year.



Jane Lathrop Stanford (from the Guy Miller Archives)



1905 Big Game (from the Guy Miller archives)

Part of the advantage of attending is chatting with the speakers and others over tea (or coffee, or fruit juice) and cookies, but if commitments intervene, Brian George's videotapes are shown on local cable public access—Channel 30, Wed. 8 PM, Thurs. NOON, Sat. 1 PM. Carol Blitzer's "This Old House", will be on TV in December, "Vignettes" will be shown in January. Tapes of programs of the past 4 years can be borrowed at the main library history desk, Tues. 6 to 9 PM and Thurs. 2 to 5 PM.

The Tall Tree is published eight times a year by the

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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650.326.3355 • www.pahistory.org

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Cemeteries Can Be News

WHILE SURFING THE INTERNET LOOKING FOR IDEAS FOR THIS COLUMN, I found www.findagrave.com which lists the burial sites of famous people by location. There were 12 hits for Palo Alto. Two were for LELAND and JANE STANFORD, buried in the Stanford Family Mausoleum on campus (technically



FROM THE
DESK OF THE
HISTORIAN
Steve Staiger

not in Palo Alto, but close enough for the internet).
The other ten “famous burials” were all at Alta Mesa Memorial Park, Palo Alto’s only recognized cemetery. Located at 695 Arastradero Road, across from Gunn High School, the cemetery is a 72 acre privately owned memorial park established by Palo Altans in 1904. There are more than 71,000 individuals interred at Alta Mesa according to a 2007 Palo Alto Weekly article. Joseph Eichler and Birge Clark should be but are not included in the *Findagrave.com* list.

Among the ten “famous burials” at Alta Mesa are DAVID PACKARD of H-P fame; RAY LYMAN WILBUR the former president of Stanford; CHARLES and KATHLEEN NORRIS, the celebrated author and her husband; and LEWIS and FREDERICK TERMAN, the father and son

who developed the Stanford I-Q test (the father) and the godfather of Silicon Valley (the son).

The remaining four Find a Grave names are an interesting mix: “TENNESSEE ERNIE” FORD, the singer and television host, lived his last years in Woodside and was buried at Alta Mesa in 1991.

RONALD “PIGPEN: MCKERNAN died in 1973 after an alcohol-shortened career with the Grateful Dead. His gravesite is reportedly the most frequently visited one at Alta Mesa.

HEROLD RUEL died of a heart attack while driving his automobile on



Kathleen Norris (courtesy of Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

University Avenue in 1963 at the age of 67. He had been living at 420 Maple Street for ten years following a long professional baseball career. He was a catcher for 19 years in the majors, playing for such teams as the Red Sox, Yankees and Washington Senators. He later managed the Browns for a year. His lifetime batting average of .275 put him above average, but not a superstar.

The final name on the list is actor WILLIAM CHALLEE, born in 1904, died in southern California in 1989. He appeared in plays, 50 movies and as many television shows. His credits included “Five Easy Pieces” with Jack Nicholson and several episodes of “Gunsmoke” though he was never a star. I found no

explanation for why he was buried at Alta Mesa. He was from the Midwest and

spent the last 40 years of his life in and around Los Angeles. I found no indication that a wife or other relative had connections to the Peninsula (Wyatt Earp was buried in Colma because his wife Josie’s family had local connections). Challee remains a mystery to me: one why he was buried in Palo Alto, and two, why *Findagrave.com* lists him among the 12 of the most famous buried here.



Gate to Alta Mesa Cemetery (courtesy Alta Mesa Cemetery)

WELCOME AND THANKS TO NEW MEMBERS

New Members

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Chet and Pat Frankenfield

New Life Members

Larry and Lyn Christenson

New Business Member

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- Business/Sponsor \$100
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PAHA Box 193
Palo Alto, CA 94302

Or you can join at

www.pahistory.org.

Let us know if you wish to volunteer for a PAHA committee.

Dusting off the Archives

by Douglas Graham

PAHA'S ARCHIVES ARE BEING RENOVATED THIS YEAR IN AN AGGRESSIVE project with the ultimate purpose of making the collection more available to the public.

An informal and enthusiastic team of PAHA Directors headed up by Second Vice

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

President Gwendolyn Barry is defining in detail the types of materials that PAHA will collect, organize, and preserve. Based on those decisions, they will inventory the entire collection, acquire storage space, and develop an overall plan that includes storage and archival policies.

Our document and image collections are currently divided between four locations; (1) the largest is well-organized in file and map cabinets in the Guy Miller Collection in 390 square feet on the ground floor of the Palo Alto Main Library, with some overflow storage in the basement.

(2) Another large collection is stored in banker boxes in two lockers at Public Storage on East Bayshore Road. (3) Bound copies of the Palo Alto Times are held at DataSafe on West Bayshore Road. (4) PAHA organizational files, book inventory, and some archival materials are located in the PAHA office at the Museum of American Heritage.

The team has made real progress in expanding and improving our collection storage since July. Beth Bunnberg arranged the rental of a second public storage locker, enabling us to partly empty out the original one and giving us space to work. Chris Botsford and Gwen Barry acquired and erected industrial-type shelving and set up new banker boxes to take the place of the old jumble of partially-crushed boxes in the old locker. The team, including Brian George, has been removing, examining, inventorying, and videotaping contents and placing them in new boxes with contents lists inside and clear labels outside. Materials from the library basement will be moved to spaces opened up by the revised arrangements.

PAHA's office layout at MOAH has been improved by the addition of a new desk, a file cabinet and shelves donated by the Palo Alto Weekly, and a large bookcase from MOAH. This effort was instigated by Bob Jack, organized by Gwen Barry and assisted by Bardy Wallace and Steve Staiger.

Treasures have been found in the old boxes, a bit like "going through the attic" with your grandmother. For one, the team found an original handwritten petition signed by more than 100 Palo Altans on July 30, 1895, asking the town trustees for the "expeditious setting up of a water system." Signers included John F. Parkinson who has often been called "the father of Palo Alto", Anna Zschokke "the mother of the Palo Alto school system", W.C. Thoits, John Squire and many other prominent citizens. Another gem was the contract drawn up by the Women's Club when they donated their library to found the city library system. Several boxes of memorabilia from the 75th Anniversary celebration in 1969 were filled with audio and video taped interviews with such notables as Frederick Terman, Russell Lee, Berton Crandall the photographer, Junior Museum co-founders Josephine O'Hara and Josephine Duvneck, Nobel Laureate William Shockley, and William Hewlett.

As soon as our inventorying and reorganizing of all these materials is finished, they will be catalogued for retrieval by the public upon request. We will also feature snippets from them in future issues of the *Tall Tree*.

Oral Histories—Save A Life

PAHA's project now trains volunteers and offers practice sessions. This month we will start recording personal histories and stories for our archives. We record at the Media Center in Palo Alto. Each participant receives a CD of their story to share with family and friends. To make a recording, contact PAHA at the website or by phone, or for more information, contact Brian George at briang8897@aol.com



Reorganized storage facility (photo courtesy of Beth Bunnberg)

IN MEMORIAM

FERDINAND LUSCHER

Died at age 91,
A long-time member



IN MEMORIAM

ROLAND DAVIS

1911-2009

Roland and his wife Harriet had deep roots in Palo Alto. Her pioneer family founded the Palo Alto Hardware in 1903 on University Avenue, he attended Stanford and Stanford Law School. He retired from his law practice at age 91, taking special pride in assisting a lawsuit for severance pay for ferry boatmen who lost their jobs when the Bay Bridge was built. Roland and Harriett were life members of this organization. Their family requested that friends donate in his memory to the PAHA Roland Davis fund.



Palo Alto History Museum

The Palo Alto History Museum held a donor event on October 24th at the Roth Building, when we were honored to have Dave Peery speak very eloquently about why the Peery family has pledged \$2 million to forward the museum project to reality. This museum will help us understand our past as valuable and authentic grounding to relate to our community and plan for the future. We are indeed grateful and honored to have the generous support of such a long-time Palo Alto family.

At that event we also unveiled several window graphics that feature a variety of topics and span of time. We invite you to go by to discover them and also to prompt your ideas for a next series. The windows have generated much interest with one even being included in a recent successful campaign effort.

If you would like to volunteer for the Museum, please contact Karen Holman (kholman@pahistorymuseum.org) or Steve Staiger (sstaiger@pahistorymuseum.org). As we approach the holidays, please keep us in mind when making your charitable gift decisions, and join the Peery family in making our local history accessible to everyone.

The Palo Alto History Museum is a 501(c)(3) organization.
PO Box 676, Palo Alto, CA 94302
650.322.3089 kholman@pahistorymuseum.org

New signage at the Roth Building, photo courtesy Beth Bunnenberg



PAHA's Public Meetings to Come

At Lucie Stern Community Center, 2:00 PM

COMING MEETINGS:

JANUARY 31

*Boy Scouts of America Centennial and
Lucie Stern's Local Influence*

Speaker: Larry Christensen
Vice President, Eagle Scout
Relationships for Pacific Skyline Council

PROGRAMS TO BE ANNOUNCED:

Sundays: March 7, April 4, May 2
Wednesday: June 2, Annual Banquet



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Refreshments will be served.

