

The Tall Tree

NOVEMBER 2011
VOLUME 35, No 2

NEWSLETTER of the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING * FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC * REFRESHMENTS SERVED

Speaker: Barbara Babcock

Judge John Crown Professor of Law, Emerita

Sunday, November 6 at 2:15 PM

Lucie Stern Community Center, Palo Alto

CLARA SHORTRIDGE FOLTZ— CALIFORNIA'S FIRST WOMAN LAWYER

PAHA CONTINUES TO CELEBRATE THE CENTENNIAL of California women earning the right to vote in 1911. Clara Shortridge Foltz, a leader in the California suffrage movement, was, as well, the first woman to practice law in California, the first woman admitted to the California bar. She earned many “firsts.”

Barbara Babcock, author of the recently published, *Woman Lawyer: The Trials of Clara Foltz*, is the speaker for the November 6 general meeting. Not only has Barbara Babcock studied and published on the life and career of Clara Shortridge Foltz, she is herself a recognized expert in criminal and civil procedure. During her career at Stanford, Professor Babcock was a four-time winner of the John Bingham Hurlbut Award for Excellence in Teaching at Stanford Law School. Please join us to hear Professor Babcock tell us about this important voice in “votes for woman” and a landmark figure in women’s achievements in the law.



Clara Shortridge Foltz, California's first woman lawyer.



Celebrating Our Mothers and Grandmothers

Suffragists played an influential role in securing the vote for California women almost a decade before the ratification of the 19th Amendment. California women and their male supporters worked indefatigably producing pamphlets, writing speeches, staging pageants and rallies, and going door-to-door across the state. Women from all walks of life and ethnicities united in this effort. "White middle-class women's groups, unions, church groups, black self-help groups, temperance groups, and Socialists incorporated the suffrage issue into their day-to-day... community work." Waitresses, laundry workers, factory workers, fruit pickers and teachers joined the cause. Maud Younger was one such activist; she founded the Wager Earners' Equal Suffrage League for Working Women;



Maud Younger (Bancroft Library)

she worked not only on securing the vote, but also on behalf of working women in her campaign for the 8 hour day. She created

a "suffrage float" and drove the six black horses herself. Katherine Reed Balentine founded The Yellow Ribbon to publicize the suffrage movement in 1906. The efforts of these and other California women influenced male voters in California to flock to the polls to approve women's right to vote in a statewide referendum. California was the 6th state to do so. —Peggy McKee

Yellow suffragist ribbon (Smithsonian website).

Palo Alto and Prohibition

As I write this column, I have just finished watching Ken Burns' latest PBS film "Prohibition." The 3-part series covered the misadventures that led to the passage of the 18th Amendment, and its eventual repeal 14 years later. The film reminded me that Palo Alto has had its own history concerning the desire to control access to alcohol.



FROM THE DESK OF THE HISTORIAN Steve Staiger

At the request of Leland Stanford, University Park, the new college town laid out by Timothy Hopkins, included a provision in all the property deeds prohibiting the sale or manufacture (but not possession or consumption) of alcohol. While Mayfield enjoyed the prosperity of its 13 saloons and 2 breweries, Leland Stanford was aware of the growing temperance movement, and as a politician, he wanted to be seen as one who tried to keep alcohol and the Stanford student apart. He was not a teetotaler personally, he drank the finest wines and in the upper Sacramento Valley he owned the world's largest vineyard (which unfortunately produced very poor wines).

While there is no record of anyone losing title to their property due to the enforcement of the deed restriction, the limited access to alcohol remained in force until 1920 when the entire country joined dry Palo Alto in making alcohol sales an illegal activity. The effect of Prohibition in Palo Alto was different from most other communities in the nation. Because there were no saloons or liquor stores in town to be shut down, the local economy did not take a hit as in many other communities. The restaurants on El Camino Real south of town could no longer offer a legal drink to Palo Alto residents willing to drive a few miles to enjoy a drink with their dinner.

Alcohol was available to those willing to break the law. The San Mateo County coast was a major source for importing bootlegged Canadian spirits. Cases of liquor were offloaded from large ships just outside the 3-mile legal limit of jurisdiction to smaller, faster boats that would run to remote coves and beaches. The liquor would soon be sold in San Francisco and throughout the Peninsula.

When the country finally had enough of the Prohibition experiment and repealed the 18th Amendment in 1934, Palo Alto did not celebrate in the same manner as other communities. The State of California had passed a law in 1909 prohibiting the sale of hard liquor and wines within 1½ miles of college campuses with a student body of more than 1,000 students. This ban included the communities around Stanford University as well as parts of Berkeley and other towns. The ban did foster an economic boon just beyond the 1½ mile limit. Liquor stores and restaurants thrived in these areas such as "Whiskey Gulch" in present day East Palo Alto and once again on El Camino Real in south Palo Alto.

There is some confusion as to how liquor sales became legal in downtown Palo Alto. We know that Frank Crist persuaded a judge to declare that liquor sales in the downtown district should be allowed since liquor was being served at the Faculty Club on campus. It is unclear whether this judicial overturning of the ban was a cancelling of the deed restrictions or the 1909 law since they occurred at roughly the same time. When Frank Crist took the first legal drink in downtown Palo Alto at Henry's (the restaurant in the President Hotel building), the real stuff had not arrived in time for the press photographer's photo shoot, so his drink was a fake.



Palo Alto's Leading Suffragists: Alice Park and Sarah Wallis

LAST MONTH WAS THE CENTENNIAL OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN CALIFORNIA, which became law by vote of the (male) citizens on October 11, 2011. I was fortunate enough to be a spectator at the closing ceremonies of the three-day Centennial Celebration in Sacramento on Monday afternoon, October 10. The part that I attended was held in the California History Museum, which includes a fine exhibit on California women's history that was the work of Maria Shriver during her husband's tenure as Governor.

In that exhibit, there are seven women pictured with captions describing the reasons they were selected to be so honored. One of them was Palo Alto's own



DOUG GRAHAM
President, PAHA

Alice Park, who was described as;

- a pacifist and feminist
- state Publicity Chair for the 1911 Suffrage Campaign
- campaigner for women's rights internationally
- wrote the law guaranteeing women equal rights of guardianship of their own children
- in 1932 proposed the Equal Rights Amendment (which finally failed passage by the states 50 years later in, 1982).

Nearly an entire page in PAHA's *Palo Alto: A Centennial History* is devoted to the many activities of Alice Park in promoting at least 15 different causes in Palo Alto during the second, third and fourth decades of the 20th century. These ranged from International Peace and votes for women to local causes such as saving the oak trees that still grew in some of our streets. The book quotes one of her arguments in support of a law dealing with the white slavery problem;

"...The codes protect clams and lobsters and fish and birds, but they fail to protect girls sufficiently, and the courts have failed to punish those who trade in girls as sex slaves. The maximum penalty for stealing a pig is five years. Until 1911 it was the same penalty for stealing a girl. Now girl stealing may be punished by ten years, the same as stealing a mule or a calf."

The Centennial History included a print of one of the three photographs of Alice Park that exist in the PAHA archives (see the illustration in this article).

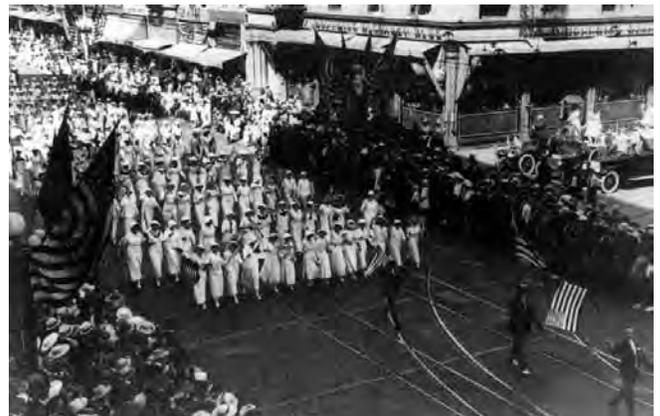
Although California women had full voting rights from 1911, Alice Park did not let up on beating the drum for woman suffrage until August 20, 1920, when enough states had passed the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, granting full suffrage to all women citizens of America.

Sarah Wallis was of an earlier generation. Sarah presided over the first state-wide meeting of woman suffrage societies in January, 1870. She was the founding President of the California Woman Suffrage Educational Association in 1873, and served in that office for most or all of the 1870s. She was implicitly acknowledged by Susan B. Anthony as the leader of the movement in California.

Unfortunately, no photograph, painting or drawing of Sarah Wallis is known to survive (if such ever existed). Sarah lost her fortune, lost her social standing after her husband died and she was evicted from their home, and died poor, unknown and ill in a small cottage in Los Gatos. Partly for these reasons, she has not been picked up by historians, even in Palo Alto. PAHA is now supporting efforts to get Sarah the recognition she deserves as the first of the great California suffragists. Maybe in the future, she will be added to the "suffragist wall" in the women's exhibit hall up at Sacramento. ❧



Alice Park, California suffragist and Palo Altan



Southern California Votes for Women March (courtesy of the Heritage Square Museum of Los Angeles)

Note to readers: as the editors of the Tall Tree become more "green," we offer you the option of receiving your Tall Tree digitally. If you're interested, please send your request electronically (include your preferred email address) to PAHA Secretary Bardy Wallace at bdgw@pacbell.net.

Our mission is to collect, preserve and make available to the public information about the history of Palo Alto.

History Jaunts

How to Do Oral Histories: PAHA is offering two classes on conducting interviews, an invaluable method to preserve local history. We encourage those who take a class to consider joining our oral history committee. Lucie Stern Community Center on Saturdays, Nov. 5 or 19 from 10 AM–1 PM. Contact Carol Mitchell, carolcmitchell@sbcglobal.net or (650) 326-6951.

Heritage House Tours

PAST's annual house tours will be Sunday, December 11 in College Terrace. More details will follow in our next newsletter, or see www.pastheritage.org.

San Mateo County History Museum—2 programs!

Communities in a Bountiful Landscape: Local archaeologist Mark Hylkema discusses the archaeology and ethnography of the ancestral Ohlone people. An "On the Courthouse Docket" Presentation: Saturday, Nov. 19 at 1 PM.

Sail Away, Little Boat—Stories of the Past, Ships of the World (Family Activity) Friday, Nov. 4 at 11AM. FREE to 5 and under. The San Mateo County History Museum is located at 2200 Broadway, Redwood City. General admission is \$3–\$5. Information: www.historysmc.org or call 650-299-0104.

Heritage Program on Channel 30

The TV cable program, *Heritage*, on Channel 30 in November will be Douglas Graham's October 2 program on suffragist **Sarah Wallis**. DVDs of previous programs can be borrowed at the history desk at the Palo Alto Main Library, Tuesday 4–8 PM and Thursday 1–4 PM.



Become a Member of PAHA

We invite you to become a member of the Association and join those who care about Palo Alto and enjoy learning about its history. Your dues support the preservation of our archives, assistance to researchers and dissemination of Palo Alto historical information through our publications. Join today!

Individual \$25 Family \$40
Sustaining \$60 Business/Sponsor \$100 Life \$350

Make check payable to PAHA and mail to: PAHA Box 193, Palo Alto, CA 94302. Or join online at www.pahistory.org. Let us know if you wish to volunteer for a PAHA committee.

PAHA's Public Meetings

Sundays at the
Lucie Stern Community Center
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

NOVEMBER 6 AT 2:15:
"CLARA SHORTRIDGE FOLTZ:
CALIFORNIA'S
FIRST WOMAN LAWYER"
Speaker: Prof. Barbara Babcock

**DECEMBER 4 AT 2:00: "VIGNETTES
OF LOCAL EXPERIENCES"**
Host: Karen Holman



Save these dates in 2012

JAN 15

MARCH 4

APRIL 1

MAY 6

JUNE: TBA, ANNUAL DINNER

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The Tall Tree is published eight times a year
by the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Jeanne McDonnell, Peggy McKee,
Mary Beth Cebedo Lefebvre
Editors
Harriette Shakes, *Design*
Omega Printing, *Printing*