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The Tall Tree

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, December 7 at 2:00 p.m.
Free & open to the public

Lucie Stern Community Center
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

Vignettes A Little Means a Lot



EMCEE for Meeting:
Karen Holman
Executive Director,
Palo Alto History
Museum Project

or David Packard or Silicon Valley or Facebook, Spanish land grants were nearly unthinkable large sections of land here. Over time, they have been broken up into much smaller developments and incorporated into a variety of Peninsula towns. December 7th you will hear about one such land grant of some 13,000 acres that was the neighboring property to that of Juana Briones.

The when and why story of the local Red Cross as well as other tales will also be of interest to those with even an inkling of interest in our community's roots.

We have appreciated your participation in the past and invite you once again to join us for PAHA's annual vignettes program to be reminded of old memories or to learn something unexpected. 🌲

HISTORY IS TOLD IN EPICS AND IN THE SMALLEST of tales. Both relate life in a given time regarding particular individuals from specific points of view. Interestingly, both are equally important in recording the patchwork that is a community's history.

Join us again as we continue our tradition of providing the forum for our storytellers to weave together more of our past, this time going back much further than previous reports.

In the time before anyone had heard of Leland Stanford



Six uniformed Palo Alto Red Cross Chapter workers, 1918. (Guy Miller Archives)



Palo Alto Red Cross workers, 1917. (Guy Miller Archives)



Juana Briones,
courtesy of Point Reyes
National Seashore Archives.

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PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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The board meets first Wednesdays (except August) at Lucie Stern Community Center at 4:00.

IN MEMORIAM

Valued Life Member
MARION GRIMM

WELCOME TO OUR NEW LIFE MEMBER

Sidney Espinosa



PAHA Heritage TV Programs Cable Channel 30

WEDNESDAYS 8:00 PM,
THURSDAYS NOON,
SATURDAYS 1:00 PM

In December, see Carole Hyde's November 2 presentation about the Centennial of the Palo Alto Humane Society.

An Invitation From the Archivist

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM OF SHARED VIGNETTES REMINDS me of how much history has changed over the years. I don't mean the actual history but rather how we look at history, and what is noted and recorded as a part of our history.

When we were in school, the history that was taught to us was the history of kings and queens, generals, presidents and other famous people.

Historians in the last quarter of a century or so have begun to take a stronger interest in the history of everyday people—the history of people like us. Local historians were among the first to adapt this new manner of looking at the history of a community by examining the lives of all the community's residents.

Our annual December program of individuals' sharing stories from their past is an example of this new history. Except for the story of a president (Hoover), the stories reveal the history of local residents experiencing local events. It is the story of the circus coming to town and putting up its tent on the Greer property on Embarcadero Road. Or the teenage escapade of faking a robbery on University Avenue. The stories tell a part of the history of our community previously ignored.

The Association's efforts in conducting oral histories of longtime Palo Alto residents are also a significant contribution to this 'new' history as well as self-published autobiographies written by residents such as Birge Clark.

I would like to encourage all of our members to consider making a contribution to this effort by writing (on paper or on a keyboard) stories of their past. How do you remember Palo Alto in your younger days (be it 60 years or 6 years ago). While an extensive life story would be nice, I am really looking to solicit brief 1–3 page descriptions of particular events, places or people that defined, in part, the Palo Alto you recall. These stories could include accounts of what you remember about your childhood summers in Palo Alto; activities in your teen years that went unnoticed by the adults in the community; or memorable teachers or remarkable characters that made an impression on you.

I would urge you to grab a pen or keyboard and tell us your stories. I will report back on some of the more interesting accounts, but all of the stories will go into the Archives to enrich the history of Palo Alto. ☞



FROM THE
DESK OF THE
HISTORIAN
STEVE STAIGER



Birge Clark, architect of the Palo Alto Post Office and Roth Building. (Guy Miller Archives)



Greer Park, without circus tent. (Guy Miller Archives)

Next Year at MOAH

THE MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HERITAGE will feature an exhibit opening April 17, 2009 about California living from the 1930s through the 1950s as seen through the pages of *Sunset Magazine*.

Palo Alto History Museum



Photograph of Birge Clark's Roth Building, original home of Palo Alto Medical Foundation. (Courtesy of Matt Bowling)

by **Karen Holman**

IN A BRIEF UPDATE ON PROGRESS, we are pleased to report that the architects and engineers are working on plans to install the Museum in the Roth Building. As part of that work, it appears that we will be able to accomplish one of our early goals: to make the building a green building. This is not only the right thing to do but also the practical thing to do in order to gain efficiencies in operating costs once the Museum opens. And how appropriate for a local history

museum in the community that launched the first Earth Day.

Many thanks to the Garavaglia Architecture and Salas O'Brien Engineers team for their work to help us realize this goal. Appreciation is also extended to the City of Palo Alto for its cooperative interest in opportunities that may exist to further our common environmental goals.

While work on the Founding Members program is progressing, many of you will hear from us in the near future as part of our

annual appeal to help with operating costs while we continue our work to make the Museum a reality.

Look in the next issue of *Tall Tree* for announcements. In the meantime, may each of you enjoy a wonderful holiday season.

We invite you to keep us in mind when making your charitable gift decisions. The Palo Alto History Museum is a 501(c)(3) organization.

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BECOME A MEMBER OF PAHA

YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE MEMBERSHIP HELPS PAY FOR PRESERVING INFORMATION about the history of Palo Alto and informing the public about that history. Annual membership dues are: Individual \$25, Family \$40, Sustaining \$60, Business/Sponsor \$100 and Life Member \$350. Members receive this newsletter in the mail and a renewal notice in July.

You can join by mail or online. Make checks payable to Palo Alto Historical Association, mail to PAHA Membership, P. O. Box 193, Palo Alto, CA 94302-0193. Let us know if you require a receipt.

Or go to our web site *www.pahistory.org*. Click on MEMBERSHIP, then on Network for Good. Once on that site, press Donate Now, and put "membership" in the designation field. Give us your name and address. For gift memberships, also e-mail us at *PAHistoricalAssn@aol.com* with the name, address, and e-mail address of the recipient.



21st Annual Holiday House Tours

PALO ALTO STANFORD HERITAGE'S TOURS THIS YEAR honor historic modernism in Palo Alto's two newest National Historic districts, Greenmeadow and Green Gables. Seven mid-century properties of 1950 to 1974 will be open in those Joseph Eichler neighborhoods on Sunday Dec. 14 from



1 to 4:00 PM. Light refreshments. Tickets are \$25 each, available at Greenmeadow Community Center, 303 Parkside Drive, the day of the tour. Or contact PAST at 650 299 8878, www.pastheritage.org, or P.O. Box 308, Palo Alto 94302.



Invitation with architect's drawing (below) and Eichler home (above). Images courtesy of PAST.

PAHA Public Meetings

2008-2009

Most of our public meetings are on the first Sunday from October-May at 2:00 PM at the Lucie Stern Community Center. The Annual Dinner is held in June. Exceptions will be noted here and in newspaper items.

NEXT MEETINGS:

JANUARY 25, 2009 AT 2:00 PM

Ben Hatfield and Barry Anderson,
Authors of

Over Time: Palo Alto 1947-1980

MARCH 1 AT 2:00 PM

Geology of the Bay Area

Speaker: Bonnie Murchey

U.S. Geological Survey

JUNE (date to be decided)

Annual Dinner

The Tall Tree

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NEXT MEETING:

December 7 at 2:00 p.m.

Followed by a social hour
and refreshments