



The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

Since 1913

December 2022 Volume 46, No 3

The Palo Alto Historical Association presents
Another in the series of Palo Alto Vignettes, with emcee Karen Holman

A CLIMATE OF UNREST GAVE RISE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

Sunday, December 4, 2022 2:00 – 4:00 pm

In-person at Mitchell Park Community Center, El Palo Alto Room
3700 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto



Image courtesy of Midpen Regional Open Space
Jeffrey Schwegman photographer

The 1960s and '70s were among the most tumultuous decades with the war in Vietnam, civil rights, and political assassinations creating headlines and activism. There was also a growing awakening that pollution was having major effects on the planet, prominently on display by rivers repeatedly catching fire in Ohio.

Human activities were cited as the cause of pollution as well as other environmental harm to the planet as clearly described by Rachel Carson in her 1962 publication *Silent Spring*. The book is largely credited with starting the modern environmental movement.

In response to the rise of planetary concerns, President Nixon created the Environmental Protection Act in 1970. Nixon also signed the Clean Air Act in 1970 and the Clean Water Act in 1972.

Locally, the environmental movement was taking hold in major ways. Individuals were inspired to take initiative and form organizations to focus their energies on some of the most threatened and threatening of actions that had previously gone largely unchecked.

At the December PAHA Vignettes program, we will hear from some of these local organizations, each of them celebrating a significant anniversary in the year 2022: Green Foothills, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Environmental Volunteers, and Canopy.

Why and how were these organizations formed and by whom? How has their work changed since formation and what has been accomplished? What do they see as major challenges ahead for the environment and their work? Please join us for a lively discussion about their missions, their work, their successes, and challenges to make this a better place that, for some, literally means a livable place.



Karen Holman is current Midpeninsula Regional Open Space Director, and former MidPen Board President.

She has always had an interest in history and has moderated the December PAHA program for 16 of the last 18 years.

We are excited to be hosting our monthly programs in-person! Join us in the spacious El Palo Alto Room of the Mitchell Park Community Center for this wonderful free program, followed by refreshments. We look forward to seeing you!

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The History of the Palo Alto Medical Clinic, Part 2: 1960–1999

By PAHA historian, Darla Secor

(This article is the continuation of an article written in the October issue of the Tall Tree)

In 1960, Dr. Russel Lee turned 65, the mandatory retirement age according to Clinic rules for physician partners of the Palo Alto Medical Clinic. Although he tried to convince them to raise the age to 70, he was outvoted, and stepped down as the executive director of the Clinic. After he stepped down, Dr. Edward Liston was elected for a term of five years. Dr. Robert Jamplis, a thoracic surgeon, won the election in 1965 and would continue to lead the organization until his retirement in 1999.

By the mid-1960s, the Clinic had to make a decision whether or not to build its own hospital facility for their growing number of patients. The Clinic's staff were often frustrated at their inability to get their patients admitted to the Stanford University Hospital. In 1968, the Clinic received a grant from the U.S. Public Health Service for an initial study to explore the idea of developing a hospital of the future. Plans were developed for a \$21 million, 300 bed building on a two-block site between Bryant and Waverley streets, south of the Clinic, located on Homer Avenue and Bryant Street. Opposition arose from residents in the neighborhood who didn't relish the idea of a hospital in their backyard.

The city approved the rezoning for the hospital, but residents succeeded in putting the proposal to a citywide election, where it was narrowly defeated. A few years later, the Clinic would view the defeat as serendipitous, as health care evolved to more outpatient medicine. Hospitals everywhere saw the demand for beds decline dramatically. In 1974, an outpatient surgery facility called Surgecenter opened at Waverley Street and Forest Avenue. By the 1980s more than half of the Clinic's surgeries were performed there on patients who went home after a few hours. The Clinic would eventually take ownership of the center in 1986.

Dr. Jamplis recognized the Clinic would not be able to cover new technologies and buildings out of pocket and in 1981, he was successful in creating the Palo Alto Medical Foundation (PAMF), a not-for-profit, tax-exempt, charitable foundation that would be able to access low cost financing and

philanthropy that had not been available to the Clinic as a for-profit business.



Dr. Robert Jamplis, 1981

By the 1980s, the Medical Foundation had over 5,000 patients who came from the East Bay. Some of the doctors at PAMF began to advocate for a

satellite clinic to better serve their patients. Although not everyone at PAMF agreed, the Fremont Center opened its doors in 1984 in Fremont across the bay, with four primary doctors and seven staff members. By the late 90s, the Foundation had opened three more satellite centers in Los Altos, Portola Valley, and Redwood City.

The next big change came in 1993 when PAMF decided to affiliate with Sutter Health, a not-for-profit network of hospitals and medical groups across Northern California. By the late 1980s, managed care was the predominant type of health insurance in California. Partnering with Sutter Health gave PAMF better leverage with insurance and medical supply companies, as well as assistance with business management and capital to bring in more physicians.

By the 1990s, the group had more than 150 doctors, and their cramped facilities were spread across a nine-block area in Palo Alto. Various plans for expansion had been discussed for years, but now with its affiliation with Sutter and better access to capital the Foundation was able to buy property across from the CalTrain tracks on El Camino Real where it could build a facility large enough to consolidate all of its services in one place. Ground breaking for the new campus happened in April 1997 and the doors to their 305,000 square foot facility were officially opened in 1999.

A wonderful resource on the history of the Palo Alto Clinic is "Palo Alto Medical Clinic: The First 75 Years," written by Dr. Francis A. Marzoni. PAHA has a copy of this publication for those interested in learning more about the fascinating history of the Clinic.

The Palo Alto Historical Association, a 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit organization, was established in 1948 as successor to an earlier organization founded in 1913. Its main objectives are:

- Collect, organize, and preserve materials pertaining to the history and heritage of Palo Alto.
- Spread information about Palo Alto's history by means of programs, displays, and publications.
- Recognize and preserve historic sites and structures.

The Guy Miller Archives of the Palo Alto Historical Association are stored at Cubberley Community Center, K-7, Phone (650) 329-2353.

PAHA Board meetings are held at 5pm on the first Wednesday of each month (except August) at the Guy Miller Archives.

Public programs are held at 2pm on the first Sunday of each month (October-December and February-May) at various locations in Palo Alto. Programs include speakers. The final program of the year is held in June and includes a dinner and a program. The public is welcome at all programs.

Arastradero Road: Past to Present

By PAHA Board member Bo Crane

Arastradero Road isn't as old as the hills, but it ribbons through them, serving as a timeline from the past to the present.

Redwood trees were harvested from the Cañada del Corte de Madero, or "the Valley of the Place of Wood Cutting" (once an early name for Portola Valley). These redwoods were used for construction of the pueblo in San Jose before Mexico took over from Spain in the early 1820s. The road was mapped as a Camino Arrastradero, or "haul road," more literally, a "dragging road." Arrastrar means "to drag" and oxen were used to drag logs over dirt trails.

That Los Trancos Creek ford was a halting spot for Mexican teamsters, making it a convenient location for a tavern, established in 1852. That tavern evolved into the Alpine Inn, known also as Rossotti's or Zott's, a good place to start a tour of Arastradero.

Leaving Alpine Road in San Mateo County, Arastradero Road dips downslope as it crosses Los Trancos Creek, entering Santa Clara County. Ahead on the left is S.P. McClenahan Tree Service, founded in 1911 in San Francisco. Across the road on the right is Palo Alto University, at which point the road takes an uphill right-hand bend and then descends past the Portola Pastures stables to what is now the Enid W. Pearson-Arastradero Preserve.

The preserve property had been acquired by Arastra, Ltd., who proposed building 1,776 housing units on then 500-plus acres, triple its existing zoning. Palo Alto rezoned the property to 10-acre lots in 1972, at which point Arastra sued and won. As a result of the suit, the city paid Arastra \$7.5 million and acquired the property. The preserve now has 10.25 miles of trails for hiking, bicycling and horseback riding. Arastradero Creek flows through a small lake that is open to fishing year-round.

Leaving the park, Arastradero Road then meets, and is offset by a section of Page Mill Road, which was a separate haul road down from William Page's sawmill beyond Skyline Ridge. Page Mill Road crosses Matadero Creek as it passes by the resumption of Arastradero Road on the right.

The original Arastradero Road ascended where I-280 is now and then drops, meeting the current alignment where it crosses Deer Creek. Deer Creek Road on the left has the former headquarters of Tesla, a juxtaposition of the newest technologies and a former oxen log haul road. Congregation Beth-Am is on the right, just before Fremont Road, recalling the former Fremont Township.

A right turn on Old Adobe Road leads up to the former Juana Briones de Miranda homesite on top of the hill. In 1844, she acquired Rancho La Purisima Concepcion from two mission Indians to whom it had been granted.



This muddy road is Arastradero Road on the way to Zott's, 1930

Fearful of losing their land to either local Mexicans or immigrant Americans, the two sold their land to Juana. When her husband died in 1847, Juana moved her family of eight children to the hilltop. She was known as a curandero, or healer, and her home was a well-known refuge. Over the years the adobe-walled house was much remodeled and eventually demolished.

Back on Arastradero Road, Barron Creek runs along the right side of the road before entering a culvert at a remnant concrete bridge. Arastradero Road once formed the boundary between Juana's Rancho Purisima and Ranch Rincon, where the future Barron Park would be located. Previously, railroad tracks made their way out of Barron Park through the site of Gunn High School, requiring a railroad crossing at Arastradero Road. In 1963, the railroad right of way to the south was converted for vehicles into Foothill Expressway. Beyond the tracks, Alta Mesa Memorial Park was established in 1904 on former Rancho Purisima land.

Past the cemetery is a pedestrian-bicycle pathway over the Hetch Hetchy aqueduct pipeline. The original Arastradero Road was intended to continue straight, but the Adobe Creek gully was so steep that a bridge would have been required. To avoid the cost of a bridge, the haul road turned to the left and made straight for El Camino Real, intersecting with land owned since 1852 by George Charleston, the namesake of Charleston Road. The longer detour added a half-mile to what was a twelve-mile trek to Santa Clara.

On the right, past the Hetch Hetchy pathway is Terman Drive, the entrance to Ellen Fletcher Middle School. Previously named for Lewis Terman, the school opened in 1957 as Terman Junior High. It was closed in 1978, but reopened in 2001 with Terman's son, Frederick Terman, "the Father of Silicon Valley," added as a co-namesake. However, Lewis Terman's involvement in eugenics caused the school to be renamed for the 2018 school year.

More eclectic sites remain as the road continues eastward: King Arthur's Court is on the left, the only street of the Camelot Gardens subdivision, mapped in 1955. Juana Briones Park comes up on the left, followed by Fire Station 5 and the seven-story Tan Plaza Apartments, built in 1965. The McLaren car dealership is on the left-hand corner of El Camino, displaying all types of sports cars – a sharp contrast to the historical ox teams that once turned right to San Jose.

No matter which direction you travel on Arastradero Road, it is full of history and reminders of the past that led early settlers to such a treasured area.



December Jaunts

All that's left of the town of Purissima near San Mateo County's coast is the town's cemetery. The cemetery, located at 1165 Verde Road, off Highway 1 south of Half Moon Bay, is open to the public. In 2017, some restoration was done to the site and paths cleared among the old gravestones. Various gravesite monuments dot the hill that overlooks Purissima Creek. A sign now states that it is a Natural Burial Cemetery, meaning no embalming fluids, no vaults, only natural coffins or shrouds.

The town was founded in the 1850s and by the 1870s it had a post office, several stores, a one-story hotel called the Purissima House. Henry Dobbel, a Holstein immigrant, owned the general store and had a 2-story 17-room house on the south bank of Purissima Creek. His mansion had gas lighting and running water, unique for the town.



Henry Dobbel went bankrupt after a series of crop failures and in 1890, he sold his estate to Henry Cowell, the namesake of the **Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park**—best known for its 40-acre grove of towering old-growth redwood trees. Dobbel died the following year and is buried along with his wife in the cemetery.

Purissima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve is another nearby place to hike and explore year-round. This 5,412-acre preserve has multiple peaceful trails through glorious redwoods, ferns, banana slugs, a creek and wildflowers. It is thoroughly shaded and has several picnic tables and areas where you can pick berries. Restrooms and a small parking lot are available at the Cowell-Purissima coastal trailhead off Highway 1.

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Welcome New PAHA Member
Deborah Martin
Cathy Berwaldt

Upcoming Programs

Jan 22: TBD

March 5: TBD

Unless otherwise noted, programs are held in person on the first Sunday of the month. Check our website at www.pahistory.org for program information

Previous PAHA Programs

If you missed the October 2nd program, *Palo Alto Clinic: Stories from the Physicians*, you can find it and other recent PAHA program videos on Vimeo by following this link:

<https://vimeo.com/758023138>

The Heritage Program

You can also watch the most recent PAHA program on local TV. Visit <https://midpenmedia.org/local-tv/> and enter the word "Heritage" in the search box to find the broadcast schedule for PAHA programs.

In Memoriam

Bob Christiansen
Jeanne McDonnell
Merrill Newman

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