



The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Since 1913

March 2023 Volume 46, No 5

The Palo Alto Historical Association presents

Palo Alto Teens Capture and Preserve Our History

Sunday, March 12, 2023 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Palo Alto Art Center ~ 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto



The Teen Council interviewing and videotaping Hal Mickelson for their Oral History project

Our March PAHA program will be a presentation by members of the Palo Alto Museum’s Teen Council—a dedicated group of local high school students who since 2019 has been volunteering their time and talents to capture and preserve Palo Alto history. Working with various local organizations, including PAHA, the Teen Council provides new insights into how to view and document our local history.

Examples of projects the Teen Council have worked on are the Palo Alto Time Capsule, promotions about learning Palo Alto history during the COVID lockdown, and creating self-guided walking tours of Palo Alto that explore historic structures and businesses in our community.

In conjunction with the Palo Alto Museum, and with help from video production professionals and oral history experts, the Teen Council also began a project of recording oral histories. This video documentation brings a human scale to Palo Alto’s history.

The Teen Council’s newest project is an “Object Memory” project celebrating Palo Alto’s culturally diverse and dynamic community by collecting images of sentimental objects that symbolize a family’s cultural experiences. This project is designed to demonstrate that cultural diversity has helped to shape and enrich the Palo Alto community.



Video professionals and oral history experts work with the teens

Join us on March 12 to learn more about these wonderful programs Palo Alto teens are creating to preserve the long and diverse history of Palo Alto.

Free and Open to the Public ~ Refreshments Served

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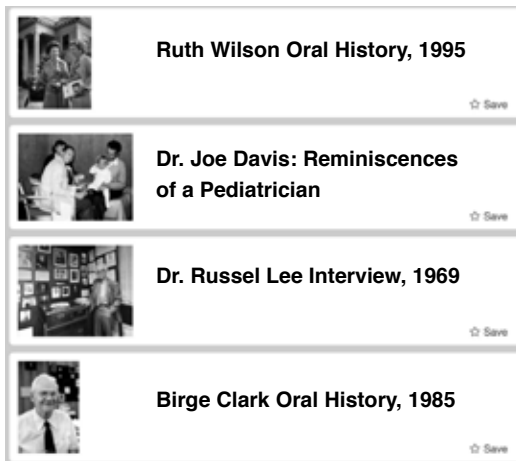
Announcing a New Moving Image and Audio Collection on the PAHA Website

By PAHA Historian, Darla Secor

PAHA has added a new Moving Image and Audio Collection to our Digital Collections at pahistory.org. The new collection features videos, film and audio recordings that have recently been digitized. This project was made possible by a grant from the Mario Family

Foundation in memory of Millie Mario. Millie was a staunch historic preservation advocate, serving on the boards of PAHA, Palo Alto Stanford Heritage, California Preservation Foundation, and also chairing the Palo Alto Historic Resource Board for eight years. One of her many achievements was the award-winning restoration of the Squire House on University Avenue.

In addition to making our moving image and audio materials accessible, this grant has also allowed us to inventory, digitize, and preserve hundreds of items, many of which were in danger of deterioration. This past fall we digitized hundreds of audio recordings of oral histories and PAHA programs, from the 1980s and 90s, and we have begun to add these to this collection. We encourage you to check them out—they include a lot of fascinating Palo Alto history. We look forward to continuing this important preservation work and making them available to the public.



A few of the items from PAHA's new Moving Image and Audio Collection

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.

A Tribute to Betty Gerard

By PAHA Historian, Steve Staiger

Long-time PAHA supporter and Board member, Betty Gerard, died in her Palo Alto home in November 2022 at the age of 97. I learned of her death when her family sent an announcement in the style of a Christmas letter, something Betty had done for 65 years. I always enjoyed her letters filled with news of her travels, adventures in local politics and community affairs, and her accounting of the latest accomplishments of her children and grandchildren. Her Christmas letters were the best.

She spent the majority of her 97 years in Palo Alto, living in her home on Greer Road for 61 years. Betty was a wordsmith, both in her career and her daily life. She worked in public relations for Westinghouse, Sunset Magazine, and Raychem. Later, she was a writer and editor for Hewlett-Packard for 22 years. She continued her love of writing and editing by volunteering for numerous



Betty Watkins Gerard, 1925–2022

organizations and causes such as the League of Women Voters, Neighbors Abroad, and PAHA.

Betty was a longtime PAHA Board member whose major contribution to PAHA was her editing of several of our more recent books. Board member Brian George reminded me the other day of the numerous publication meetings held at her dining room (continued on page 3)

Street Poets

By PAHA Board member Bo Crane

“God moves in a mysterious way.”
- William Cowper

In 1889, Timothy Hopkins mapped the town that became Palo Alto, naming it “University Park,” with its main street being University Avenue. A number of roads, such as Middlefield and Embarcadero, had already been named.

Various streets were named for authors such as Hawthorne and Melville, as well as Emerson, Bryant, Channing, Pope, Kingsley, Lytton, and Hale (*Man Without a Country*). Edgar Allen Poe, an original 1889 Palo Alto street namesake, wrote: “Believe nothing you hear, and only half of what you see.”

Waverley Street was originally spelled “Waverly,” presumably a misspelling of a novel by Sir Walter Scott. Scott Street was added in 1891.

University Park didn’t have a street named for William Shakespeare, but it did have one for Christopher Marlowe, author of: “Was this the face that launch’d a thousand ships And burned the topless towers of Illium?”

Homer Street is named for the attributed author of *The Iliad*, which includes Greek lines as translated: “Any moment may be our last... We will never be here again.”

Another street was named for Geoffrey Chaucer who wrote, “loue is blynd” (“love is blind”), quoted by Shakespeare in three of his plays.

The street named for poet William Cowper was part of the 1889 University Park map, but the streets named for Rudyard Kipling, George Gordon Byron, and the 16th century Neapolitan poet Torquato Tasso were not. Rather, their names were used for midblock subdivision segments. Kipling was noted for: “If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you.” Lord Byron wrote, “Love will find a way through paths where wolves fear to prey.”



Tennyson Avenue is named after Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Tasso was more direct with: “Any time not spent on love is wasted.”

A 1922 midblock alley between Waverley Street and Bryant Street later became Whitman Court, named for Walt Whitman who had passed away thirty years earlier, having written “The future is no more uncertain than the present.”

The street names on the Seale Addition maps south of Embarcadero continued the theme of writers with Missourian Winston Churchill (three years younger than Britain’s Sir Winston Churchill), who wrote the 1899 best

seller, *Richard Carvel*. Seale Avenue, renamed for the landowner, was originally Milton Avenue in honor of the blind poet, John Milton. Milton was the author of *Paradise Lost* in which he wrote “Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav’n.” Poet James Russell Lowell (no relation to Robert Lowell) wrote the more benign: “What is so rare as a day in June?”

Samuel Taylor Coleridge is known for *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and for his famous unfinished poem beginning: “In Xanadu did Kubla Khan A stately pleasure-dome decree...”

Alfred Tennyson’s middle name, if he ever had one, is unknown and so he’s Alfred, Lord Tennyson, though the comma is often forgotten. Tennyson wrote *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, and also penned, “Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.”

English literature on campus may have had its day, but the wordsmiths of the past live on in our street names.



(continued from page 2) table as we worked through the original and later drafts of our publications, including the updated Mayfield book.

In recent years, her age and her health made it more difficult for her to contribute. She still read five newspapers on a daily basis. Until recently when she was unable to attend PAHA board meetings, she was able to attend some Board meetings with the assistance of one of her grandsons, who would drop her off at the Archives.

Betty Gerard was one of those special Palo Altans who have helped make our community a great place to live. We will miss her.

There will be a virtual Celebration of Betty’s Life via Zoom on Sunday, February 26th at 4:00 PM PST. To register for the ceremony, go to: <https://www.remember.lightenarrangements.com/memorial-webpage/betty-watkins-gerard>.

March Jaunts

Thank goodness for the December-January rains, and now thank goodness for the onset of March's perfect "jaunting" weather! Anticipating California's balmy spring days, here are some suggestions: both indoors and outdoors, all free, all on the Stanford campus.

Begin your jaunt outside at Stanford's Science and Engineering Quad where international artist, Alicia Kwade, collaborated with Stanford students, faculty and staff to create and install the stunning **Pars pro Toto**—"a part for the whole"—outdoor exhibit, which "reaches for the cosmos while staying grounded in the geological history of our planet." **Pars Pro Toto** presents 12 stone spheres, sourced from 8 nations that "range from watermelon sized to one that could flatten Indiana Jones." Prepare for your visit by going to the website <https://news.stanford.edu/?p=39121> for summary and explanation of Kwade's vision.



Image credit: Andrew Brodhead



Image courtesy of Wikipedia

When you finish your jaunt though **Pars Pro Toto**, you might stroll over to the **Papua New Guinea Sculpture Garden**, 476 Lomita Drive. In 1994, Stanford Department of Anthropology graduate student, Jim Mason, arranged for 2 groups of men from Papua villages to carve the magnificent sculptures in the garden. It features a large wooden eagle atop the shoulders of an ancestress, elaborately carved tall wooden poles, large sculptures in pumice, to name just a few of its attractions. Free guided tours are available on the 4th Sunday of every month.

Meet at the corner of Santa Teresa and Lomita at 11:30 am. For more information, call 650-723-2300 or visit: <https://museum.stanford.edu/programs/public-tour-papua-new-guinea-sculpture-walk-0>

Complete your jaunt on Stanford campus by dropping in to the **Cantor Arts Center**, 328 Lomita Drive. In addition to its permanent collection, the Cantor offers 2 unusual exhibits. One is A young Wu's "Morning Rituals," a 22 minute video in which the artist engages with Korean folklore, ritual, and dance. . . and expresses how "the spirits of the deceased are cleansed and guided into the afterlife." The second is the newly installed exhibit, "A Change of Scenery: Photographs of Leisure in the Landscape." The 55 photographs from the Cantor's collection consider and reflect on "the importance of access to nature and leisure," and how they "shape identity." The Cantor is open 11am -5pm, Wed.-Sun. For more information and updates on Covid protocols, call 650-723-4177 or visit <https://museum.stanford.edu>

Welcome New PAHA Members

Kathryn McDermott
VerPlanck Historic Preservation
Consulting

2023 Program Dates

- May 7
- June 7*
- October 1
- December 3

*Unless otherwise noted, programs are held in person on the 1st Sunday of the month. Check our website at www.pahistory.org for program information.

Previous PAHA Programs

If you missed the January 22nd program, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Palo Alto History But Were Afraid to Ask (until now)*, you can find it and other recent PAHA program videos on Vimeo by following this link: <https://vimeo.com/794673999>

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.

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



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