



# The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Since 1913

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In cooperation with



CITY OF PALO ALTO

The Palo Alto Historical Association presents

## PAHA Annual Celebration: Victory Party!

Wednesday, June 5, 2024 5:00 – 7:00 pm

El Palo Alto Room ~ Mitchell Park Community Center  
3700 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto



North Palo Alto scrap rubber collection for the war effort, circa 1941-1942



War Bond fundraiser at Fox Stanford Theater, 1942



Captured Japanese submarine traveled the U.S. as a War Bond fundraiser. Displayed on Ramona Steet, 1942

Every aspect of life was dramatically altered during World War II. Neighbors banded together, fostering a strong sense of camaraderie and dedication to patriotic duty. Scarcity and shortages were the norm. Civilians supported the military effort by rationing essential items like food, recycling scrap, and buying war bonds.

Palo Altans heeded the national calls for victory, adjusting their daily habits to include driving at 'victory speeds' to conserve fuel, planting 'victory gardens' to supplement their food supplies, and men wore simplified 'victory suits' that used less fabric. A 'victory cookbook' was even circulated to help families make do with the ingredients available under rationing.

Women, too, stepped into roles traditionally held by men, who had enlisted in the armed forces, taking up positions in factories and offices, which proved essential to maintaining the workforce.

The practice of darkening windows during air raid warnings became a regular part of life, a stark reminder of the global conflict directly impacting the home front. These adaptations by ordinary citizens played a crucial role in the collective war effort, reflecting a nation transformed by the exigencies of wartime demands.

We invite you to experience what Palo Alto was like during the war years. Touch and see artifacts, photographs, newspapers, and magazines of the day. Watch film clips and newsreels. Tune in to radio classics of songs that won the war and fireside chats with Franklin D. Roosevelt. Immerse yourself in firsthand accounts about life on the home front.

Join us as we remember the WWII years and celebrate Palo Alto's unmatched ability to unite for a cause. This fun and exciting event is free to all PAHA members!

RSVP by May 28th at Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-victory-party-tickets-888522553877>

# Bertie Risling

by PAHA board member, Bo Crane

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In 1900, Bertram August Risling, age 10, and his younger brother Ernest, age 8, were resident pupils at the Hoopa Valley Indian Boarding School on a reservation of the same name, located on the Trinity River in Northern California. Their father was a would-be gold miner, and their mother was part Native American. A decade later, both brothers were prominent athletes at Palo Alto High School.

In December, at the end of the 1909 Paly rugby season, “Bertie” was unanimously voted captain for the following year. Bert, 20, and Ernest, 18, were in the same backfield as the fall 1910 season began with Bert as the season-long acting coach. Paly went on to win the Northern California High School Championship and traveled south to play Los Angeles High for the State Championship, losing that game. Still, Bert was named by the Los Angeles Times as the State’s Player of the Year and also earned second team High School All-American honors, noted by a separate page in Paly’s *Madrono* publication, which predated Paly’s yearbooks.

The following year he enrolled at Stanford. A highlight of Bert’s college career was in an international match against an Australian team on October 16, 1912. He scored at the end of a 60-yard try as Stanford held on to win 13-12.

Graduating that June, Bert married Marie Harvey, the daughter of Irish immigrants, in January 1915. The newlyweds made their home in Palo Alto. He eventually went to work for the Roos Brothers clothing store on University Avenue, where he went from salesman to department manager.

His father, August Frank Risling, was born in Germany around 1850 and migrated with his family to the U.S. in about 1854. In the 1880s, August went after gold in California. He married Amelia Grace Buzzi, daughter of a Swiss father and a Karuk tribe mother. In 1900, while Bertie and his brother Ernest were at the Indian boarding school, their father was registering to vote in Palo Alto, working as a laborer



Bert "Bertie" Risling, from the 1910 Palo Alto High School *Madrono*

for the town with his address at 935 Webster Street, a block from Palo Alto High School’s then location at the corner of Channing Ave.

As of 1910, all of August’s family was at the Webster house as he worked as a municipal laborer while Amelia worked as a washerwoman. In 1916, he died and was buried at Alta Mesa. Bert later had his own house on Fulton Street, living with Marie and their three daughters. In 1940, Bert’s eldest child and daughter, Phyllis, married Ira Elmer Bonde, mayor of Menlo Park from 1969 to 1976.

Bert outlived his wife and retired from Roos-Atkins clothing store around 1972 before passing in 1974, joining his wife at Alta Mesa. In December 1910, Paly High’s *Madrono* wrote a fanciful article, as if looking back from 1960, in which a grandson asks his grandfather about the 1910 team. The fictional granddad says: “Our captain, Bertram Risling, was coach, peace-maker, boss, captain, all in one. And that was the one great big reason why we carried off the honors.”

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.



# Stanford Research Park

by PAHA board member, Jon Kinyon

Stanford Research Park (SRP) was established in 1951 through a collaboration between Stanford University and the City of Palo Alto. This technology-centered district spans 700 acres between Barron Park and College Terrace, from El Camino Real to the hills above Foothill Expressway, and is home to over 150 tech companies that occupy more than 10 million square feet of commercial space.

As the first university-affiliated industrial center of its kind, SRP has long served as a crucial hub of innovation in Silicon Valley. Some of the world's most prominent technology firms, including Hewlett-Packard, Lockheed Martin, Tesla, and VMware, have set up shop in this area. Other notable previous tenants include Steve Jobs' NeXT Computer, Xerox PARC, Syntex Corporation, Eastman Kodak, and Facebook. Due to its significant contributions to the region's success, the park is often referred to as "the engine of Silicon Valley."



Fred Terman, 1982

Initially called Stanford Industrial Park until the 1970s, the project was the brainchild of Frederick Terman, who served as Stanford University's Dean of Engineering (1948-1958). Terman envisioned creating a space that would attract top scientists, engineers, and academics, offer unique opportunities to Stanford graduates, and spur regional economic growth.

This led to Palo Alto's strategic annexation of Stanford-owned land, resulting in substantial tax revenues for local government and public schools.

Stanford University has meticulously managed the park since its inception, ensuring that all tenants comply with its goals. After Hewlett-Packard's arrival in 1956, SRP underwent significant expansion and growth. By 1960, the park had 40 tenants, and the population of Palo Alto had more than doubled from 25,475 in 1950 to 52,287, largely due to the technology boom spearheaded at SRP.

The success of the park is not just a story of corporate growth but also a profound community and cultural impact, greatly influencing local culture and economy. This includes the creation of countless high-skilled jobs and the integration of sustainable practices within the businesses that operate there. Many companies in the park are leaders in green technology, adopting sustainable solutions that mitigate environmental impacts and promote long-term ecological stewardship.



California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Elon Musk at Tesla's new global engineering and AI headquarters in Palo Alto on Feb. 22, 2023. Courtesy Office of Gov. Gavin Newsom.

Furthermore, the park's community is vibrant and interconnected, characterized by a network of talented Stanford graduates, innovative startups, and established industry leaders who foster a dynamic environment of collaboration and creativity. This community doesn't just innovate; it thrives on shared knowledge and collective ambition, pushing the boundaries of what's possible in technology and beyond.

Looking toward the future, Stanford Research Park remains steadfast in its commitment to Terman's original mission—to nurture an environment where innovation thrives. The park continues to adapt, embracing new technological trends such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and robotics. These advancements promise to keep the park at the forefront of global innovation and ensure its place as a beacon of technological development and economic prosperity.



## TELL US A STORY!

We are always interested in your stories and recollections of Palo Alto and the surrounding communities. Please consider writing your story down and submitting it for possible publication in a future Tall Tree newsletter! It is PAHA's mission to collect, preserve, and present Palo Alto's history, and we'd love to hear from you! Submit your article and/or story to [pahatalltree@gmail.com](mailto:pahatalltree@gmail.com).

The Morse family at their home, 523 Cowper Steet. Circa 1900. Photo courtesy of Jon Kinyon

## May and June Jaunt

In late May and early June, PAST—Palo Alto Stanford Heritage—offers two free docent-led walks of historic houses in Palo Alto. On **Sat, May 25**, meet in front of 526 Seneca Street at 10 am for a walking tour of several Crescent Park homes, including the Squire House and other homes on the 600 block of Seneca St and the 900 block of Forest Ave. The walking tour is about ¾ of a mile. On **Saturday, June 1**, meet at 10 am in front of 4010 Nelson Drive in the Greenmeadow area of Palo Alto. This 1-mile walking tour includes iconic Eichler homes and Greenmeadow’s unique community center. For details, visit the PAST website at <https://www.pastheritage.org>.



Squire House photo courtesy of PAST

### Welcome Our New Member!

David Campbell

### Upcoming Event

**Wed. June 5, 5pm-7pm**  
**1940s "Victory Party"**

El Palo Alto Room, Mitchell Park  
Community Center

Our programs will begin again in October.  
Check our website at [www.pahistory.org](http://www.pahistory.org)  
for program information.

### Previous PAHA Programs

If you missed the May 5th program, *The 28th Centennial Plaque & Historic Preservation Awards*, you can find it and other recent PAHA program videos on Vimeo by following this link:

<https://vimeo.com/945339625>

### 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.



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Bo Crane, Peggy McKee, Luana Staiger,  
Melissa Verber, *Editors*  
Jon Kinyon, *Lead Editor & Design*  
Copy Factory, *Printing*

*Photographs courtesy of PAHA Guy Miller  
Archives unless otherwise noted.*

## Thank you, Peggy!



Peggy McKee

The Tall Tree’s Jaunts have been a wonderful source of local activities and adventures! For many years, the woman behind these delightful suggestions and excursions has been PAHA member, Peggy McKee.

Never one to publicly take credit for her feature on page 4, Peggy has consistently come up with seasonal and fun things to do in the area since 2007, when it was first titled, "Places to Go".

Peggy joined the PAHA Board in 2002 and served three consecutive 3-year terms. For the past 17 years, she has volunteered in multiple capacities on the Tall Tree newsletter!

As Peggy takes a much-deserved retirement from her Tall Tree responsibilities, we want to publicly acknowledge and thank Peggy for all her creative contributions, her dedication, and her professionalism. We are grateful for her generous volunteerism and especially her friendship. Peggy’s voice will be missed in the Tall Tree.

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