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[www.pahistory.org](http://www.pahistory.org)

# The Tall Tree

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

## GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, October 7 at 2:00 p.m.

Free & open to the public

Lucie Stern Community Center  
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

## Funny How the Past Segues into the Present



**SPEAKER:**  
**Steve Staiger, Palo Alto Librarian & Historian, Member of PAHA Board of Directors**

a century ago, including innovation, which we continue to take pride in. Several young men who lived in town and studied at Stanford experimented with antennae on their house roofs and justifiably bragged about creating radio stations here where none had been before.

Steve was born in Mill Valley in Marin County, studied history at UC Davis and Library Science for a Master's degree at UC Berkeley. He has been the Palo Alto historian for 22 years.

### Steve Will Give Us a Perspective on Change and Similarity

—Between 1900 and 1910, the population of Palo Alto soared, tripling in those years to nearly 4,500, and another thousand if you count Mayfield, a separate community at the time. Palo Altans were finding it easier to get around on streetcars that started the year before. Horses were becoming more a sport than a necessity.

Five trustees oversaw the city, but change to charter government in a few years would put 15 men in charge. More than a decade later, two women joined the council.

Steve Staiger will flesh out all that in a national and world context of



*Palo Alto's tasteful City Hall on Ramona Avenue, 1907.*



*Corner of Hamilton and Emerson in 1907, not so different from auto repair shops that would come relatively soon.*

Images from the Palo Alto Historical Association online archives, [www.pahistory.org](http://www.pahistory.org).

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**PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

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The Palo Alto Historical Association, a 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 the Main Library, 1213 Newell Road.

Board meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month (except for August) at the Lucie Stern Community Center at 4 p.m.

Schedule of public meetings on page 4.

**PAHA HERITAGE PROGRAMS**

CHANNEL 30

SEPT: MEMOIRS OF WW II

OCT: PALO ALTO, 1907

**SCHEDULE**

Wednesdays 8:00 p.m.

Thursdays Noon

Saturdays 1:00 p.m.

Videos of past PAHA meetings can be checked out from the Main Library's History Desk:

Tuesday, 6-9 p.m.

Thursday, 2-5 p.m.

## Two Centuries and Counting

**Town Land in 1807**—By 1807, Spain had for 38 years claimed all of what they knew to be California, including what we now call Palo Alto. Except for Governor Jose Joaquin Arrillaga and the Franciscan missionaries, few Californians and no Indians could imagine Spain, the country that structured their daily lives in countless ways. Few individuals owned land in 1807, although residents of the only three pueblos, San Jose, Los Angeles, and Branciforte (now Santa Cruz), had been allocated small planting fields and a few farm animals.

### FROM THE EDITOR

JEANNE McDONNELL

Santa Clara Mission managed thousands of acres, including Palo Alto's present space. With more than 8,000 head of cattle in 1807, and similar success in all its other branches of agriculture, that Mission clearly made good use of its productive farmland. Some of the Indian workers continued to live at a distance from the Mission in villages where they could maintain elements of their own cultures. Archaeological finds and early records reveal a large Indian presence along San Francisquito and Adobe Creeks.

Much of present Palo Alto is on 8,400 acres granted to Jose Peña in 1822, the year that Californians first learned that henceforth Mexico, not Spain, would rule. Unlike Spain, Mexico encouraged trade and private land ownership. Peña taught school and had been the first mayor of San Jose. His Rancho Rincon de San Francisquito name survived on legal documents, but Indian tribal names along the waterway are difficult to locate.

## The Big If

**If the Story/Tradition is True, Wow!** Have you seen the PBS series "The History Detectives"? It is a show in which one of four hosts (2 appraisers, a sociologist and an architectural historian) tackles an interesting historical moment involving an obscure artifact or family legend. Examples from past shows have included determining whether a collection

### FROM THE BOARD

TOM WYMAN

STEVE STAIGER

of spent bullets were really among those extracted from the bodies of Bonnie and Clyde; whether a piece of fabric was from one of the first airplanes to fly across the Atlantic (years before Lindbergh); or does a Reno bar have on display the fight bell from a famous Jack Dempsey boxing match.

The PAHA program committee wonders if any of our members might have a story or an artifact that can be the basis of a local version of the "History Detectives". If you know of an interesting story that would be a suitable candidate for such an investigation, we want to hear from you. We hope to discover one or two such stories and, using local resources, duplicate the kind of fascinating discoveries that make the national show so popular. We want to document the process of investigating the puzzle and present the results as one of our spring programs.

If you think you have a story or puzzle please contact Tom Wyman, 325-9483, or PAHA Historian, Steve Staiger, 851-2248.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER

Ria E. MacCrisken

### IN MEMORIAM

Our Valued Members

Maya Eyerly

Hilda Weisberg





# BREAKING NEWS ON THE HISTORY FRONT

## Volunteers Have Long Made Palo Alto a Vibrant Community,

**So Can You**—PAHA is looking for volunteers to help mail this monthly newsletter: please contact Jeanne McDonnell, 321-5260, or Peggy McKee, 327-3539. Contact Carol Mitchell, 326-6951, if you can help with hospitality.

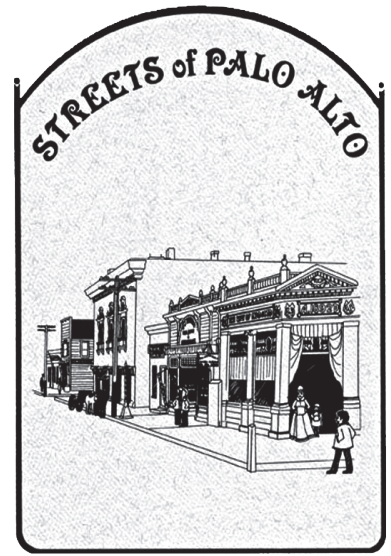
PAHA continues to update and publish its series of booklets on Palo Alto history. *Streets of Palo Alto*, just out, and the recently revised *Parks of Palo Alto* will be available for purchase at the October 7 general meeting.

PAHA's Archives at the Palo Alto Main Library are invaluable, and we thank Terry Jue and Lynn Murphy of Digital Fish Designs for their efforts there. Jerry Frank diligently searched our files and photographs of Mayfield for his recent publication, *1891: A Novel About Stanford University*.

Steve Staiger will describe Palo Alto in 1907 at the October 7 general meeting. This year we need to honor two venerable landmarks that originated then: Castilleja School at 1310 Bryant Street was founded and the Williams family built their home at 351 Homer Avenue, now the home of the Museum of American Heritage. PAST Heritage docents give architectural tours of the house on Saturday's at 2:00.

With its recent signing of the lease option agreement with the city, the Palo Alto History Museum has 2 years to raise the \$7 million needed to restore the original home of the Palo Alto Clinic. Designed in 1932 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style by Birge Clark, the Roth Building is the perfect site for a museum to preserve and showcase the rich heritage of the Palo Alto-Stanford community. For more information, contact Karen Holman, 322 3089, or [kholman@pahistorymuseum.org](mailto:kholman@pahistorymuseum.org).

PAST has extended its preservation efforts to include the historic Juana Briones House. Three rooms dating to 1844 make the structure the oldest in Palo Alto. A noted preservation attorney, Susan Brandt-Hawley, will represent PAST in court to make the case that California law requires an Environmental Impact Report on a property of such historic importance. Call PAST Board President Ralph Britton for information, 650-328-0760.



## Palo Alto Historical Association Membership Application Form

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP:  Individual \$25       Family \$40       Sustaining \$60  
 Business \$100       Sponsor \$100       Life \$350

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Payment Method:  Check  Mastercard  Visa

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

 Please make payment to PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION. Mail it with this form to PAHA at P.O. Box 193, Palo Alto, CA 94302. *Thank You!*



### Mark Your Calendar Now, Don't Miss One

Tom Wyman, Program Chair, 325-9483, welcomes suggestions for future subjects and speakers.

Programs are held at Lucie Stern Community Center, 2 p.m. on the first Sunday of the month unless otherwise noted. Stay for socializing and refreshments afterwards.

Brian George videotapes programs. See them on Channel 30 or borrow from archives, schedule on page 2.

## PAHA PUBLIC PROGRAMS 2007-2008

### Calendar of General Meetings

#### *Fall 2007*

October 7 Palo Alto a Century Ago  
Steve Staiger, Town Historian

November 4 Rise of Silicon Valley, Part II  
Steve Blank, Entrepreneur  
Professor, Stanford University

December 2 Palo Alto Vignettes;  
Brief Remembrances &  
Stories by Palo Altans

#### *Spring 2008*

Dates: February 3, March 2, April 6, May 4  
Programs and Speakers TBA

June 4 Wednesday dinner, Annual Meeting

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#### NEXT MEETING:

October 7, 2:00 p.m.

Free & open to the public  
Cookies & coffee

