

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010
VOLUME 33, NUMBER 4

The Tall Tree

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING, FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Sunday, January 31 at 2:00 PM at the
Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

Boy Scouts Still Thank Lucie Stern



SPEAKER:
LARRY R. CHRISTENSON
Eagle Scout

PAHA IS DELIGHTED TO WELCOME LARRY CHRISTENSON, our January 31 speaker, who will regale us with stories about “Lucie Stern and Her Boy Scouts,” 1935 to the present.

Larry has been involved with Boy Scouts since his own days in scouting, when he became an Eagle Scout and a Silver Beaver. He is now an Executive Board member of the Pacific Skyline Council, Vice President of Eagle Scout Relationships, and Chairman of the Council’s Endowment Committee.

The recipient of two Northwestern Mutual Foundation’s Community Service Award Grants, he has provided financial support and led the efforts to restore the Fire Circle and refurbish the Apartment. He has led Troop 57’s Capital Campaign to raise \$150,000 to build a new Camp Oljato Handicraft Lodge—the first major new structure since the camp opened in 1941.



Lucie Stern, thought to be previously unpublished. Circa 1940. (From Frank Livermore Scout Photo Journals)

As the Boy Scouts celebrate their 100th anniversary, Larry will look back and forward to reflect on the many gifts Lucie Stern gave our local Boy Scouts, including the Scout Hall, the Fire Circle, the Apartment, Camp Oljato, and the Sea Scout Headquarters. These gifts continue to provide fun and adventure for our community youth. Larry will present a chronology of Lucie Stern’s life and Scout history.

There’s nothing like being there, chatting after the talk and enjoying tea and such, but if you can’t make it, watch Channel 30, Wed. 8 PM, Thurs. noon, Sat. 1 PM on local cable, Channel 30. Programs show on TV a month after the original at Lucie Stern. Tapes of past programs can be borrowed at the Main Library’s History Desk, Tues. 6 to 9 PM and Thurs. 2 to 5 PM.



Photo of Scouts at opening Summer at Camp Oljato in high Sierra. Scout writes home, “Am having a swell time.”—Aug. 7, 1941, (Courtesy Larry Christenson).

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PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
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The Palo Alto Historical Association, is a non-profit organization. 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 PAHA are stored at the Main Library, 1213 Newell Road. See the calendar on p.4 for the schedule of public meetings.

**WELCOME
TO NEW MEMBERS**

Rob and Maggie Schutte

**BECOME A MEMBER
OF PAHA**

- Individual \$25
- Family \$49
- Sustaining \$60
- Business/Sponsor \$100
- Life \$350

Make check payable to PAHA and mail to: PAHA Box 193
Palo Alto, CA 94302

Or you can join at
www.pahistory.org.

Let us know if you wish to volunteer for a PAHA committee.

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

PAHA's Services: LIKE THE BOARDS OF MANY ORGANIZATIONS, the Palo Alto Historical Association (PAHA) Board of Directors devotes most of its time, energy and money to maintaining the status quo. We provide regular services to our membership, the City of Palo Alto, and the general public. This includes the

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:
Douglas Graham

services of City Historian Steve Staiger, the Guy Miller Archives at the main library and the PAHA website. However, PAHA also expends significant effort on initiatives to improve these services and offer new ones.

New Initiatives: For instance, in July we began, under the direction of Gwen Barry, to bring our subsidiary archives storage areas up to desirable standards of capacity, working space, and organization. This project, when finished, will provide inventories of document file categories, videotapes and artifacts. This will enable us to retrieve archival materials to answer information requests, which we currently can do only for the materials at the main library.

PAHA has long recognized the value of oral histories and maintains a small archive of them. In August, under the guidance of Committee Chair Carol Mitchell and through the technical know-how provided by Brian George, the committee began a new initiative by acquiring new technology, to be used at the Media Center in a concerted drive to capture more of our local knowledge. This project is time-driven in a special sense, as every year we lose interesting and illuminating vignettes through potential story-tellers passing from the scene.

In September, under the leadership of Beth Bunnenberg, we began to add more photographs to our website. We have more than 13,000 historical photographs, but only 2,000 are available on the website. About 1,200 more have been catalogued and are ready for uploading. PAHA's objectives are to upload these as soon as possible, and then to catalogue and upload the remaining 10,000-plus.

Another ongoing project, a new book, is the current focal point of the Publications Committee under Steve Staiger. The projected book, by PAHA Director Matt Bowling, is to include the best of his stories (as previously published in the Palo Alto Daily). It will be about 200 pages long and photograph-rich, with each story and the associated illustrations comprising a short "chapter".

We Need You! The board is entering 2010 with a short-term objective of staffing up to properly support these and future new initiatives. We need new board members to replace retirements and manage new initiatives. We also need more PAHA members to join and work on committees. Very specifically, we need a Website Committee Chair, a technically proficient webmaster, volunteers to take oral histories, to help with the storage project and to help keep the organization running smoothly. You do not need to know Palo Alto history—only to have some interest in it. If you are interested, please contact me at 650 493 0689 or at dgrahampaca@gmail.com.

Palo Alto History Museum

Check out some new window graphics at the Roth building on Homer Avenue. This Museum project moves ahead with the assistance of dedicated volunteers and donors. To help the museum happen with your time or contribution, contact Karen Holman, kholman@pahistorymuseum.org or Steve Staiger, sstaiger@pahistorymuseum.org, or write or call:



Palo Alto History Museum
P.O. Box 676
Palo Alto 94302
650 322 3089

Photographic Experiments Focused on Horses



FROM THE DESK OF THE HISTORIAN Steve Staiger

WE LOVE GOING TO THE MOVIES, AND MAKING MOVIES HAS been a major industry in California for more than 100 years. Early movie making history can be found in Niles, in the East Bay, where Charlie Chaplin and Bronco Billy Anderson shot their silent movies before moving on to Hollywood. But an earlier event in the history of motion pictures may have occurred here in Palo Alto (actually on the future Stanford campus). It is the story of Leland Stanford, Eadweard Muybridge, and the trotting horses.

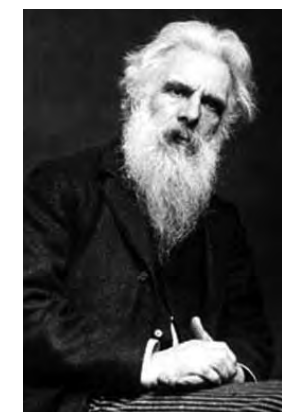
While California State Historical Landmark #834 (across Campus Drive from Stanford University Driving Range) celebrates the invention of the motion picture at Leland Stanford's Palo Alto Stock Farm, some historians contend that the actual photographic experiments occurred in Sacramento. Where may be debated, but not the story. Leland Stanford, attempting to prove that a galloping horse has all four of its hooves off the ground during its stride, hired the well-known photographer Muybridge to help him settle the question. It has been claimed that the experiments were conducted on a bet, but there is no evidence to support this.

Muybridge, with help from the chief engineer of Stanford's Central Pacific Railroad, developed the technology necessary to coordinate the firing of 24 cameras to take photographs in quick succession of a galloping horse. In 1877 a Muybridge image was published supporting Stanford's claim.

Muybridge went on to produce other photographic motion studies in the remaining years of his life. Stanford went on to develop one of the finest programs to breed and train trotting race horses, unaware that by the time he died in 1893 the earliest 'horseless' carriages were becoming a nuisance, and within a generation would be replacing the horse as a major means of transportation. In 1882, Leland Stanford published a book, *The Horse in Motion as Shown by Instantaneous Photography*. The book caused a rift between the two men, as Muybridge felt he was not receiving the proper level of credit for the success of their experiments.



Leland Stanford, (Guy Miller Archives, PAHA)



Motion Picture innovator, Eadweard Muybridge (Wikipedia)

Muybridge's "trotting horses" photographic experiment. (Courtesy "Genius Gallery," BBC)

Sunnyvale Connects to Palo Alto



Photo courtesy Lace Museum website, www.thelacemuseum.org.

A walking tour by the Sunnyvale Historical Society starts in Murphy Park and includes two very different stops, one a tall, heavy tool made of iron for crushing stones to recover gold, and another the Lace Museum, with an assortment of various styles. Part of the rail line Murphy put through his property still remains near the Iron Works. In Palo Alto, it is now a path from Barron Park to Gunn High School.

Mapping History

"PALO ALTO THROUGH TIME" is a map created by the Palo Alto Historical Association to show the city's history through an interactive map of geographic markers, photos and descriptions. The map allows you to:

- Zoom in on particular buildings to explore their history
- Explore neighborhoods in Palo Alto and discover historical points of significance
- View photos from the extensive photograph collection of the Palo Alto Historical Association archive.

It can be accessed at paloaltohistory.com.

Meccano-Mania Exhibit

Before LEGO, children assembled metal constructions like those at the Museum of American Heritage in an exhibit open until March 8. Models include a giant Ferris wheel, rocket-jet ride, and cable car railway. What we call erector sets in the U.S. are Meccano elsewhere.

Regular exhibit hours are 11 AM to 4 PM, Fri, Sat, Sun. For more information or to confirm open hours, call 650-321-1004. Admission to "Meccano-Mania" is free. MOAH is at 351 Homer Avenue.

Buildings Convey History

The Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission has asked Jeanne McDonnell to inform them at their monthly meeting of the status of the Juana Briones House in Palo Alto, one of the oldest buildings still intact in the County, and to suggest ways to preserve that treasure. Meeting Feb. 18 at 6:30 PM, San Jose City Hall, Board of Supervisors Chamber, 70 West Hedding Rd.

Authors' Forum at Old Mint in San Francisco

The San Francisco Museum and Historical Society will host four authors on Wed, February 3, 4 to 6 PM,

- ☛ Frances Dinkelspiel, *Towers of Gold: How One Jewish Immigrant Named Isaias Hellman Created California*
- ☛ Kevin Mullen, *Chinatown Squad: Policing the Dragon From the Gold Rush to the 21st Century*
- ☛ Jeanne Farr McDonnell, *Juana Briones of Nineteenth-Century California*
- ☛ Rand Richards, *Mud, Blood, and Gold: San Francisco in 1849.*

Also available for purchase will be Charles Fracchia's *When the Water Came Up to Montgomery Street: San Francisco During the Gold Rush*. Admission \$5, free for SFMHS members. RSVP at 415 537 1105 ext 100, or email rsvp@sfhistory.org. The Mint is at Fifth and Mission Streets.



PAHA's Public Meetings to Come

At Lucie Stern Community Center, 2:00 PM

MARCH 7

Gamble Garden Celebrates 25 Years

Speaker: Karen Olson

Chair, 25th Anniversary Events

PROGRAMS TO BE ANNOUNCED:

Sundays: April 4, May 2

Wednesday: June 2, Annual Dinner

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Refreshments will be served.