



# The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO  
HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION

December 2016 Volume 40, No 3

Since  
1913

**GENERAL MEETING**  
**Sunday, December 4, 2:00–4:00 pm**  
**Lucie Stern Community Center**  
**1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto**

**FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**



**REFRESHMENTS SERVED**

## PAHA's Public Meetings

### GENERAL PROGRAM MEETINGS

are held monthly  
2:00–4:00 PM  
October – May  
at the  
Lucie Stern Community Center  
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

### PAHA'S DECEMBER MEETING

December 4, 2016  
"Mayfield Vignettes"  
a panel moderated by  
Karen Holman  
former mayor of Palo Alto

\*\*\* Please note that with other events  
occurring at Lucie Stern on December  
4th, parking will be tight. Please plan  
to arrive early!

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

Venue will change in first  
quarter of 2017 to:

Palo Alto Art Center  
1313 Newell Road

January 29, 2017  
March 5, 2017  
April 2, 2017



The PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION presents

# Mayfield Vignettes



**KAREN HOLMAN**  
City council member,  
will moderate the  
Mayfield Vignettes  
Panel

**ALTHOUGH THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE  
ALIVE TODAY WHO REMEMBER THE TOWN  
OF MAYFIELD, THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE  
WHO CONTINUE TO HAVE A LASTING  
CONNECTION TO THAT COMMUNITY.**

Join us at the December meeting for a  
discussion with a number of long time  
residents who will tell their Mayfield stories.

The town of Mayfield came into being in  
the mid-1800s and was well established by  
the time Palo Alto took shape in the early  
1890s. While Mayfield continued to thrive,  
Palo Alto's growth exploded, primarily due  
to the influence of Stanford University.  
Palo Alto and Mayfield were very different  
towns, with very different reputations. Long  
time Palo Alto resident, Tom Wyman often

talked about the 'toughies' from Mayfield  
who would come to Palo Alto, causing some  
trepidation for the professors' kids from Palo  
Alto. Although the town of Mayfield ceased  
to exist in 1925, the identity of Mayfield and  
its link with Palo Alto continue for many  
people today.

This year's Palo Alto Vignettes will again be  
hosted by Palo Alto Councilmember, Karen  
Holman. Panelists will include Steve Staiger  
who will summarize Mayfield's history, and  
be joined by Dennis Garcia, Jerry Tinney,  
Rich Green, and others who will talk about  
their connections to Mayfield.

We hope you are able to join us to learn  
more about one of the earliest communities  
in Palo Alto, as well as to share your own  
remembrances of Mayfield.

### Do you remember...

- Monette's Pet Shop
- Patterson's Variety & Toys
- The multiple businesses at 260 California Avenue (Purity market / Zinzannati Oom Pah Pah / Keystone / Edge / Icon)?





**PRESIDENT'S LETTER**  
Ralph Britton

**PALO ALTO  
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Ralph Britton, *President*
- Rich Green, *Vice President*
- Robert Strohecker, *Secretary*
- Chris Botsford, *Treasurer*
- Steve Staiger, *Historian*
- Patricia Briggs
- Dennis Garcia
- Brian George
- Betty Gerard
- Georgie Gleim
- Douglas Graham
- Rachel Kellerman
- Alan Loveless
- Leah McGarrigle
- Raye Ringholz
- Jerry Tinney



**FROM THE DESK OF**  
Steve Staiger  
City Historian

*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 Cubberley Community Center, K-7.*

*Board meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month (except August) at the Lucie Stern Community Center at 4 pm. General meetings are held the first Sunday of each month (October–December, February–May) at the Lucie Stern Community Center at 2 pm. Meetings include speakers. The final general meeting of the year is held in June and includes a dinner and a program. The public is welcome at all meetings.*

# The Palo Alto Library, a longstanding partner

**THE EARLIEST RECORD OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PAHA AND THE LIBRARY IS A ONE-PAGE CONTRACT AND COVERING RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL DATED JULY 22, 1957.** It called for a payment of \$75 per month for a period of one year, renewable annually. It was signed by Mayor Noel Porter for the City and Linn Winterbotham for PAHA. After that, the record is sketchy and the relationship appears to have been at times rather informal.

As the size of the PAHA archives and the scope of duties increased, more funds were needed. Some of those costs had been covered by PAHA from monies derived from publication sales. About three years ago the Board realized that more revenue was needed from the city to truly cover the cost of maintaining the archives and making them available to the public. By then, requested payments exceeded \$25,000 per year, at which point the city required a formal contract. The PAHA Board formed a committee to meet with the city Library, Purchasing and Legal staffs to work out a contract consistent with the duties of PAHA and

the City's contracting standards. We wish to thank Library Director Monique le Conge Ziesenhenné for her continued support and appreciation of the value of PAHA's work for the Library and its archives, which proved very helpful.

PAHA now operates under a three-year contract providing for sufficient funds for us to maintain the archives, add thousands of digital images (made available on-line) and provide assistance to members of the public wishing to access material in the archives. In addition, the Library provides space at Cubberley, storage lockers for some material and supplies digital resources to make material available on-line. We are very pleased to have this cooperative and supportive relationship with the Library.

One final note: The contract with the Library applies only to the management of the archives. All other activities of PAHA, such as our Sunday programs, remain PAHA's exclusive responsibility and are supported by memberships, donations, and publications sales.

## Creators of the Legacy

As part of the 1994 Palo Alto Centennial Celebration, a committee selected 55 individuals whose extraordinary contributions qualified them to be members of Palo Alto's "Creators of the Legacy." The list included Jane and Leland Stanford, Fred Ter-

man, Dr. Russel Lee, and three members of the Clark family (Arthur Clark, his son Birge, and his daughter Esther). In future columns, I hope to highlight some of their remarkable lives and stories, especially those not as familiar to Palo Altans today. Timothy Hopkins can be called the Father of Palo Alto. Although he initially named the town University Park, he bought land, developed a street plan (including naming the first streets), and began selling lots to potential residents and investors.

Born Timothy Noland to Irish immigrants in Maine, his father drowned in San Francisco Bay shortly after the family arrived in California. His widowed mother found work with Mark Hopkins and his wife in Sacramento. The childless Hopkins couple treated young Timothy as a son and he grew up in a world of wealth

and opportunity. After the death of her husband in 1878, Mrs. Mark Hopkins officially adopted him.

While Leland and Jane Stanford were busy building the university, they realized it would need a college town. Stanford considered nearby Mayfield an improper environment for his forthcoming students due to its 13 saloons and two breweries. Because May-



*Timothy Hopkins, 1880s, a "Creator of Legacy"*

field refused his request to close the saloons, Stanford asked Timothy Hopkins to create a new town on land across the County Road (El Camino Real) from the new university.

Hopkins sold off lots as fast as he could. Prospective buyers could buy whatever their budgets afforded: an entire block, a half or quarter block, or a smaller parcel. Eventually, he sold the remaining properties to two real estate concerns. He continued to work for the Southern Pacific Railroad, living on his Menlo Park estate (where the Menlo Park Civic Center is today). Hopkins served as a trustee of Stanford University for many decades. He made significant contributions to the university, including funding the marine lab in Pacific Grove, and a major donation of books on transportation. He died in 1936.

*The plaque commemorating the Creators of the Legacy can be seen in downtown Palo Alto on Centennial Way (alley off Hamilton Avenue across from City Hall).*



# Christmas Tree Lane: A Resident's Perspective

by Larry Christenson, former PAHA Board Member

**IN 1920, CITIZENS OF ALTADENA, CALIFORNIA, CELEBRATED THE HOLIDAY SEASON BY LIGHTING UP SEVERAL BLOCKS OF MATURE CEDAR TREES, PLANTED FROM SEEDS BROUGHT FROM ITALY IN THE 1880s.** The sight inspired Edward Hardy and George English to form The 1940 Committee and to launch "Christmas Fairyland Lane" on Fulton Street, beyond which lay open fields. They summarized their goals:



Car headlights stream through Fulton Street as people tour the Christmas decorations on the houses there, 1983.

*"In a common desire to promote Christmas joy throughout the holidays, particularly for the children of the 1700 and 1800 blocks on Fulton Street, and to foster a similar spirit throughout the community and Palo Alto, it has been decided by the residents of these two blocks to have, in addition to their individual decorations, illuminated Christmas trees maintained in the parking areas throughout the Christmas holidays."*

The 1940 Committee set to work: they arranged for pipes to be laid on the ground 25 feet apart, marked by 7 foot tall trees decked with colored lights, a single white light at the top of each tree. The City's Public Works changed the street lamps from white to red.



1726 Fulton Street decorated for Christmas Tree Lane in the early 1980s.

In 1942, Christmas Tree Lane "dimmed its lights" due to blackout restrictions of World War II. However, the next year, the City relaxed the regulations. Although both trees and bulbs were scarce, Fulton Street shone again. The *Palo Alto Times* called it a "Symbol of the Star of Peace." The Committee advised Fulton Street resi-

dents, "If for any reason you plan to be out for an evening, please... call upon one of your neighbors to assume the easy task of turning on and off your lights. They will be... glad to do so.... May we suggest that when a resident leases or sells his home he make some arrangement whereby his lessee or buyer can retain the use of the equipment."

In May, 1980, we purchased our home on Fulton Street, having fallen in love with both Palo Alto and this charming street. The realtor told us only a little of its history. There was no neighborhood covenant or disclosures to sign. However, as Edward Hardy and George English had requested in 1943, we



The holiday party napkin that inspired the Nutcracker theme on the author's lawn. Courtesy Larry Christenson.

found a small box in the garage filled with brittle, black extension cords and four strands of old-fashioned multi-color Christmas tree lights. Each strand contained one white light bulb, to go—according to long-time resident, Gloria Brown—at the top of the tree. As the holidays approached, we received our first Christmas Tree Lane flyer announcing a neighborhood coffee, opening day, and when to pick-up our trees, which cost \$3.14 each.

Our Nutcracker theme was inspired by a holiday party napkin, and we later added the Seven Headed Mouse King and Clara the ballerina that we found in a children's coloring book. We were newbies to the tradition, but everyone was friendly and helpful as we made our home on Fulton Street and participated in Christmas Tree Lane. For more information and vivid images of past displays, visit [www.christmastreelane.org](http://www.christmastreelane.org).



The resulting display has been part of the legacy of Fulton Street every December since 1980. Courtesy Larry Christenson.

*This year, Christmas Tree Lane will be alight 5:00 to 11:00 pm, December 17 through December 31. Enjoy the holidays with a stroll down Fulton Street, when only the brilliance of the trees and the red globes of the street lights are visible.*

## Last chance to pick up the 2017 PAHA Calendar at December 4th meeting!

Free to members and \$15 for non-members, available at Bell's Books, Books, Inc., and the PAHA Archives—while supplies last!

## City's 125th Anniversary in 2019

by Brian George

Surprised? I was. While preparing photos for the PAHA website's collection I found many images from Palo Alto's Centennial celebration in 1994. Among them were a series showing the installation of four time capsules in the basement of City Hall. These items were labeled indicating that one should be opened every 25 years as part of anniversary celebrations until 2094! You can find a plaque describing the capsules if you check the walls of the unused elevator structure on the plaza in front of City Hall.

What should PAHA do to help celebrate 125 years? In 1993 PAHA published "Palo Alto: A Centennial History" which is still the best resource for the first 100+ years of our city. That project took many years to complete, so what can we do in the next 24 months? Another publication or special public programs/tours or a video documentary or...? Let's be creative and suggest projects that will help preserve Palo Alto's unique 125 year history. Please send your ideas to Brian at [briang8897@aol.com](mailto:briang8897@aol.com).



## History Jaunts



**Gamble Garden's "Grinch-mas"** Grow your heart three sizes this holiday season on Saturday, December 10, 10:30 am – 12:00 noon at Gamble Garden Center. Good deeds, a short reading of the classic story "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," face painting, holiday treats, and other fun Seuss-ical activities will be on offer. Don't miss this holiday event your children will be sure to love. Prepurchase tickets at the following rates: Member child/adult \$30/\$25; Non-member child/adult \$35/\$30; or \$40 on day of event, subject to availability. Children must be accompanied by a ticketed adult. Gamble Garden Center is located at 1431 Waverley St. in Palo Alto. Details at [www.gamblegarden.org/event/grinch-mas-gamble-garden/](http://www.gamblegarden.org/event/grinch-mas-gamble-garden/).

**Palo Alto's Museum of American Heritage (MOAH)** at 351 Homer Avenue, launched its new exhibition, "The Evolution of Film," on September 16. Step into time by visiting this "unique reverse chronological presentation of artifacts." The exhibit features a wide variety of motion picture clips dating from the late 1800s to the 1980s. MOAH is open Friday-Sunday, 11 am - 4 pm. Admission is free. For details about the exhibit, visit [www.moah.org/currentExhibit.html](http://www.moah.org/currentExhibit.html).

**"Seaweed, Salmon, & Manzanita Cider: A California Indian Feast,"** the current exhibition at the **Los Altos History Museum**, runs until April 16, 2017. Featuring foods important in the lives of Native Californians including fish, shellfish, seaweed, meat, vegetables, berries, fruits, flowers, nuts, seeds, and salt, this delicious look at Native foods is based on Margaret Dubin's and Sara-Larus Tolley's 2008 book of the same name. The museum is located at 51 S. San Antonio Rd., Los Altos and open Thursday – Sunday, noon – 4:00 pm; admission is free. More details may be found by visiting [www.losaltoshistory.org](http://www.losaltoshistory.org) or calling (650) 948-9427.

## Heritage Program on Channel 30

The Heritage Program for December 2016 will feature

"The Christmas Bureau" with Board President, Pat Einfalt.

The schedule is

Wednesdays at 8 pm,  
Thursdays at 10:30 am, and  
Saturdays at 1 pm  
on Channel 30.

DVDs of previous programs may be borrowed from the PAHA's Guy Miller Archives, which are located at Cubberley, Room K-7.

Hours: Tuesdays, 4-8 pm,  
Thursdays, 1-5 pm

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



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Photographs courtesy of PAHA Guy Miller Archives unless otherwise noted.