



The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

Since 1913

Jan 2022 Volume 45, No 4

The Palo Alto Historical Association Presents via Zoom Webinar

PART: PALO ALTO “RAPID” TRANSIT

The History of Palo Alto’s Electric Trolley System



Trolley car by original Varsity Theatre on University Avenue, circa 1913

Sunday, January 30, 2022 2:00 – 3:00 pm

Webinar link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82151493965>

PAHA is proud to present, via Zoom, the history of the electric trolley system in Palo Alto. This popular program was first presented in 2007 when PAHA’s historian, Steve Staiger and PAHA videographer, Brian George, recorded a video on the topic. We are excited to share again this “electric” video via Zoom. The use of Zoom to present programs during the pandemic also provides a great way to share our past presentations to a broader audience. Steve will host the webinar and be available for questions and answers at the end of the presentation.

In the early 1900s, the Peninsular Railway, a subsidiary of Southern Pacific, operated several local electric lines in and near Palo Alto along University Avenue, Waverley Street, El Camino Real, and a track leased from Stanford University from the south side of Galvez

Street past the Stanford Stadium to Palm Drive. They also operated the Peninsular Interurban system that stretched from San Jose to Palo Alto.

The electric railway system answered the need for convenient, clean, and fast local



First street car on University Avenue, November 1906

transportation prior to the expansion of the automobile industry. The PAHA video features a ride on Peninsular Railways’ Number 52, a streetcar that once ran from Palo Alto to San Jose and is still in operation at the Western Railway Museum in Solano County.

PAHA has an archive of over 100 video recordings of its programs. Most are available as DVDs at the archives. Programs since October 2020 are also available on the Vimeo website. For more information about our programs, and for Zoom instructions, you can visit our website at www.pahistory.org.

Letter from the PAHA President

2022 PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Georgie Gleim
PAHA President

Welcome to 2022! After two disruptive and seemingly endless years, we are all looking forward to embarking on our two steps forward, one step back journey to whatever normalcy may look like. In the meantime, we may wish to start imagining how these past two years will be remembered in our archives of the future.

At PAHA, we are happy we have been able to continue our regular programs via Zoom, and we appreciate the fact we have had members sign on to enjoy them. We've been able to (virtually) tour the Hanna House, learn the history of the Alpine Beer Garden, learn more about the mysterious Frenchman, Peter Coutts, see the history of the Garden Club of Palo Alto, and more. We have more fascinating programs in the works for later this year. We also look forward to resuming in-person programming when safe, although our goal

is to continue including video access as it makes it so much more inclusive.

We are also thrilled to see the progress at last being made on the Palo Alto History Museum (at the Roth Building, 300 Homer Avenue), an idea originally suggested by the PAHA board. It will be an exciting journey to see this historic space devoted to such a fitting use.

We thank our members for continuing to support PAHA through renewing memberships and attending our programs. We are always looking for members who might be interested in becoming more involved, whether through suggesting or volunteering for programs, serving on a committee, or expressing interest in serving on our Board of Directors.

History is something that is constantly renewed. Today's controversy will become tomorrow's fascinating program, reminding us of where we come from and helping us learn how to move forward based on past experience. Thank you for being part of our journey!

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. PAHA continues to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic and no appointments are needed during public hours. To contact the Archive or to make an appointment to visit, email steve.staiger@cityofpaloalto.org or call (650) 329-2353.

Until further notice, PAHA board meetings are held via Zoom Meeting at 7pm on the first Wednesday of each month (except August). Public programs are held via Zoom Webinar at 2pm on the first Sunday of each month (October-December, February-May). Program information and webinar links are available in the Tall Tree newsletters and on our website, www.paha-history.org. The public is welcome to join all programs.

The History of the Guy Miller Archives

by PAHA Historian, Steve Staiger

A collection of old photographs, documents, and a mountain of newspaper clippings were the beginnings of our archives more than 100 years ago. Guy Miller, who came to Palo Alto from Oregon to study at Stanford, developed the collection while he ran a bookstore and served as a member of the City's Library Commission.



Guy Miller at the Carnegie Library, 1949

The Archives were originally housed in the basement of the Carnegie Library on Hamilton Avenue where City Hall is today. Guy Miller also wrote articles for the Palo Alto Times and edited the 1952 history "Palo Alto Community Book". He died at the Palo Alto Hospital in 1955 after undergoing minor surgery.

The Archives moved to the new Main Library on Newell Road in 1958 and

would remain there for over 50 years. When I began working at the History Desk in 1984 the tools available to assist researchers were unchanged from the days of Guy Miller, except that we had access to a photocopier.

The first technological advancement was a computer-generated index of obituaries in the early 1990s. A small group of volunteers entered the names and dates of obituaries that were reported in the local papers and had been clipped over the years – from the Palo Alto Times through the Peninsula Times-Tribune to the Palo Alto Weekly and Daily News. While the online database now searchable via the internet was still years away, one could check a printed index to verify the existence of a newspaper obituary in our (continued on page 3)

Green of Greenmeadow

by PAHA Board member, Bo Crane

At the west end of the track field at the Cubberley Community Center in Palo Alto, formerly Cubberley High School, is a bench with a plaque that reads: "1961-2012 BILL GREEN - WINGED FEET AND HEART - CUBBERLEY'S OLYMPIAN". Bill is and will forever remain the former high school's only Olympian.



Bill Green in 1979

Born in Pittsburgh, PA, William Ernest "Bill" Green V moved to Palo Alto with his family when he was ten. They soon settled into their home on Greenmeadow Way. Bill's parents, William E. Green IV, an attorney, and Loretta Martin Green, an award-winning journalist, still live in the Greenmeadow home along with Loretta's mother, Elise Martin, who celebrated her

106th birthday last February with a drive-by party due to COVID.

Bill was a student of Cubberley High School's last graduating class in 1979 prior to its closure. Over his three years at Cubberley he won multiple sprint races and relays. As a junior at the 1978 State track meet, he set a meet record in the 440-yard dash. In 1979, along with Bill's fellow senior sprinters, Cubberley enjoyed a last bit of school glory when it won its only CCS (California Central Coast Section) team title. At the State meet that year, Bill beat the previous year's winner in the 100-yard dash. He then ran the 440-yard dash and not only set a meet record, but recorded the fastest time by a high schooler. Unfortunately, he was disqualified due to his foot landing outside of his lane, a ruling which might have crushed others, but he quietly accepted.

In 1979, the Peninsula Times Tribune presented Bill with the Peninsula Male Athlete of the Year Award. That summer, he took third place in the U.S. National Championships in the 400 meters with the fastest time

by a high schooler, even though his high school was now inactive. Placing third enabled him to travel to Europe as part of the U.S. track team.

Bill attended USC in the fall where he continued his track career and trained for the 1980 Summer Olympics. At the U.S. Olympic trials, Bill took first place in the 400 meters with a strong finish. Unfortunately, Bill would not be able to compete in the 1980 Olympics held in Russia as the U.S. boycotted the event in protest of Russia's invasion of Afghanistan. President Carter vowed to organize an alternative Olympics for allied nations. Falling short of his promise, he replaced the iconic event with a 2-day track meet at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The meet, known as "The Liberty Bell Classic" included 370 athletes from 29 nations. At these pseudo-Olympics Bill won bronze in the 400 meters with a time of 45.79 behind Kenya and Sudan. He received an honorary medal in lieu of competing in the Olympics in Moscow.

He later trained for the 1984 Olympics but got adult chicken pox and could not make that year's Olympic trials. That was his last shot. Since track and field did not allow professionalism until 1986, Bill's track career came to an end.



Memorial plaque on bench at Cubberley

Green went back to the Bay Area where he worked for Hewlett-Packard and other companies. He eventually moved to Spokane, Washington where in August 2011, he was diagnosed with cancer. Sadly, he passed away the following March at the age of 50 but not without leaving his mark on Palo Alto history.

(continued from page 2) collection of more than 30,000 obituaries. When the obituary database became searchable online, people could search the collection and request an obituary from anywhere in the world. We still fulfill several requests per week by scanning the paper obituary and sending the scanned image to the requester. We also have been scanning our photographs and cataloging them - producing a searchable database that now has more than 15,000 images, with more being added. We are always looking for donations of local photographs to grow this collection. If you have snapshots, school photos, or other photographic images in any format, we would welcome them into the collection.

In 2013, The Main Library closed for a major remodel and the Guy Miller Archives were relocated to the Cubberley Community Center, Room K-7 where it remains today. We are open to the public two days a week and by appointment. Darla Secor or I are there to assist those who visit. We look forward to the day when the Guy Miller Archives will move to its final home on the second floor of the future Palo Alto Museum in the Roth building at 300 Homer Avenue. We plan to modernize our approach to the storage and access of our collection at the new facility which is expected to be complete sometime in 2023.

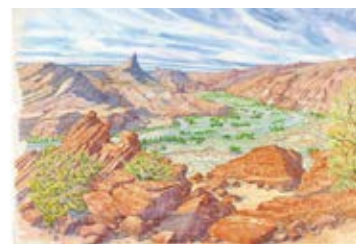
January Jaunts

The Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo re-opened to great fanfare and delight this past November. Visiting the Junior Museum and Zoo has been a tradition for Palo Altans with younger children and grandchildren since 1934! The Museum and Zoo host 50 species of animals, a tree house, a public art installation, and a wide variety of hands-on experiences.



Photo courtesy of CAW Architects

The Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo are located at 1451 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto, and are open Tues-Sun 10 am – 5 pm. There is a \$10 admission for visitors over 12 months, and reservations are recommended. For information, call 650-329-2111 or visit: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Community-Services/Arts-Sciences/Junior-Museum-Zoo>.



Watercolor by Tony Foster courtesy of The Foster

Three watercolor exhibitions are on display at **The Foster** featuring Richard Anthony Foster—a British artist, explorer, and environmentalist. Over the past 40 years, Tony Foster recorded in plein air, large scale, watercolor images of his “Journeys” including one through the Sierra and along the John Muir Trail.

The Foster is located at 940 Commercial Street in Palo Alto. Admission is free, but by appointment only. For information, call 650-209-7181 or visit <https://www.thefoster.org>.

Union Cemetery is a hidden gem waiting to be discovered and explored by local history buffs. The cemetery opened in 1859 with plots designated for the Grand Army of the Republic, Masons, Odd Fellows, local residents, and paupers. It closed for burials in 1918 and was unfortunately vandalized until rescue efforts were launched by many groups including the San Mateo Historic Association, Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Redwood City Council. Union Cemetery is now a California Historic Landmark and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Photo courtesy of Historic Union Cemetery Association (HUCA)

Union Cemetery is located at 316 Woodside Road in Redwood City and is free and open to the public. The next docent tours are scheduled for January 22 and February 27. For more information visit www.historicunioncemetery.org.

Welcome New PAHA Member
David Sadoff

Upcoming Programs

March 6
April 3
May 1

Check our website at www.pahistory.org for program information

Previous PAHA Programs

If you missed the Dec 5th program, *Life in the Frank Lloyd Wright Hanna House*, you can find it and other recent PAHA program videos on Vimeo by following this link: <https://vimeo.com/655210948>

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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Peggy McKee, Leslie Mills, Luana Staiger, Melissa Verber, *Editors*
Jon Kinyon, *Layout & Design*
Omega Printing, *Printing*

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