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In cooperation with



# The Tall Tree

Newsletter  
of the PALO ALTO  
HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION

March 2026 Volume 49, No 4

Palo Alto Historical Association presents

## The Palo Alto Museum: A Long Strange Trip



Roth Building just prior to undergoing a complete renovation. Photo by Kyu Young Kim in 2023

**Sunday, March 1, 2026 2:00 – 4:00 pm**  
**Palo Alto Art Center ~ 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto**

“A Long Strange Trip” is the title of the definitive biography of the Grateful Dead, detailing their thirty-year journey from their 1960s San Francisco (and Palo Alto) beginnings to their legendary status as one of rock and roll’s GOATs (greatest of all time). It is also the title of our March 2026 program detailing the long strange journey we have traveled from the earliest dreams to the grand opening of the Palo Alto History Museum later this spring (hopefully).

Our panel of speakers will recall the early days when the idea of a history museum was just a dream. That dream led to years of planning, fundraising efforts, and actually designing a museum to fit in an old medical building at the corner of Homer and Bryant.

The new museum hopes to utilize new technologies to tell old—and not-so-old—stories of Palo Alto, Stanford, and their surroundings.

Former museum president Steve Staiger and museum board member Karen Holman will discuss many of the ups and downs of planning a new museum. Brian George has cultivated a number of audio and visual elements that show how the museum’s plans changed over time.

Museum President and CEO Marguerite Hancock will conclude the program, sharing the latest news on the museum’s opening and what you will see on your first visit.

Free and Open to the Public ~ Refreshments Served

2026 PALO ALTO  
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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 conducted using Zoom at 5 pm the first Wednesday of each month (except August).

Public programs are held at 2 pm on the first Sunday of October, December, February, March, and May at the Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Road. 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.

# Agnes Herzinger House

By Bo Crane (1950-2024), former PAHA Board Member



Herzinger House (photo by Bo Crane 2022)



Herzinger House c1900

One of Palo Alto's grandest Victorian homes is the Queen Anne-style house at 1023 Forest Avenue, built in 1896 for Mrs. A. G. Herzinger. Researching her family required untangling surname misspellings.

Agnes G. Tiarks, born in Germany, immigrated to the U.S. in 1865 and married Prussian-born miner Adam G. Herzinger in Missouri on February 13, 1871. In 1885, they lived in Ouray, Colorado, with their four children.

Adam died in February 1891. Agnes moved to California with two of her children, where she bought a lot from Delmar Ashby (part of Flint Court), and built the house. Her two oldest sons stayed in Colorado. Frederick later owned a mine in Ouray, dying in Denver in 1930, and William in Denver in 1900.

The third child, Eleanor Agnes (known

as Leo), graduated from Stanford in 1901 with a B.A. in English. The 1906 earthquake destroyed the tower dome, and in 1907, Agnes and Leo moved to Kern County. At 35, Leo married a slightly older farmer (no children); Agnes lived with them until her death in 1928.

Youngest child Belle worked in metal crafts in Denver in 1910, then moved to Sausalito, where she entered real estate and owned a small hotel by 1920. By 1930, she rented on Main Street in Ouray. In 1940, at age 57, she was a waitress earning \$150/year. In 1950, she lived in an Ouray apartment house and was listed as unable to work.

As an interesting contemporary update, this wonderful house is currently being restored to its former glory, including rebuilding the long-missing tower dome to match the original design.

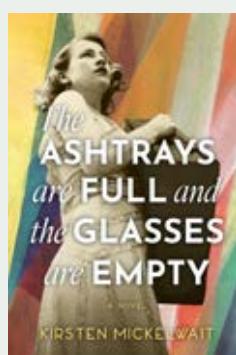
## Author Spotlight



Kirsten Mickelwait

Author Kirsten Mickelwait, who grew up in Palo Alto and attended Cubberley High School, has a new historical novel out. *The Ashtrays Are Full and the Glasses Are Empty* is based on real-life Sara Wiborg Murphy and her husband, Gerald, who were lesser-known members of the fabled Lost Generation in Paris in the 1920s. After the couple builds a life of creativity and beauty in France, tragedy strikes their family not once but twice, teaching them that we don't

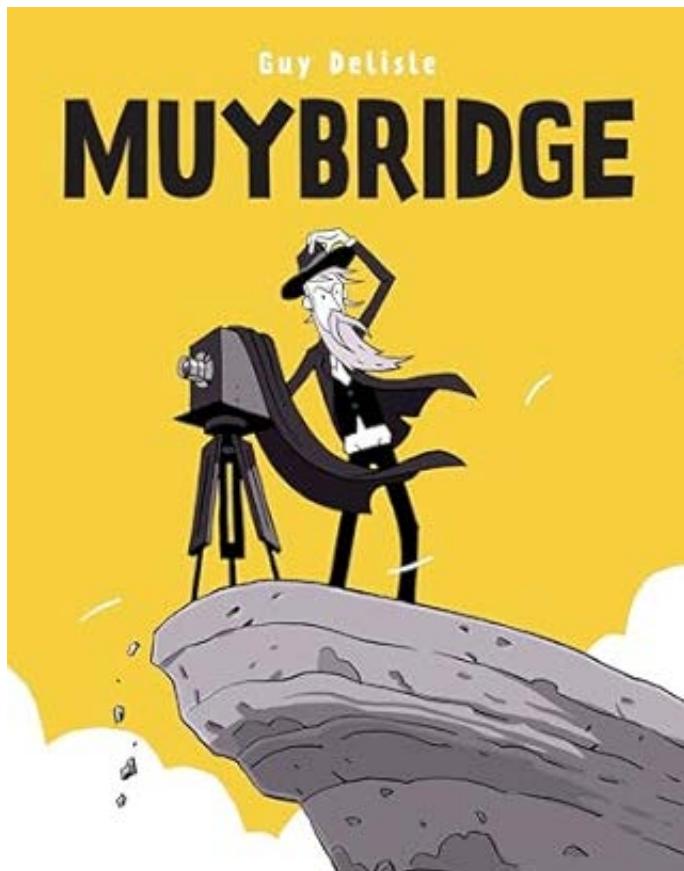
have total control over our lives—true happiness comes from the acceptance of an imperfect world. Mickelwait is also the author of a memoir, *The Ghost Marriage*.



Both books are available at Books, Inc. and all online retailers. To inquire about Mickelwait's availability to meet with Peninsula book groups, you can contact her via her website [kirstenmickelwait.com](http://kirstenmickelwait.com)

# Book Review: Muybridge by Guy Delisle

Reviewed by Steve Staiger, PAHA Historian



Published in 2025 by Drawn & Quarterly  
Translated from French by Helge Dascher & Rob Aspinall

I recently finished reading my first “graphic novel,” which, according to Google, is “a book-length work of sequential art telling a story through a combination of images and text, similar to comics...[but] more substantial in length and complexity.”

The book, entitled *Muybridge* by Guy Delisle, a French Canadian cartoonist, is a new graphic biography of Eadweard Muybridge, the celebrated and innovative photographer who worked with Leland Stanford to develop “moving pictures.” This innovative work was conducted on Leland Stanford’s Palo Alto Stock Farm, which we know today as Stanford University.

In a book of 210 pages, the author details the many adventures of the eccentric Muybridge. Included are his successful early photographic views of Yosemite, Alaska, and the Modoc Wars, but also the fatal shooting of his wife’s lover in Napa County and his stagecoach accident, which altered his personality.

A significant portion of the book details his efforts to successfully photograph a racehorse with all four hooves off the ground at one point in its gait. It was a long-held hypothesis of equine hobbyist Leland Stanford that a racehorse briefly “flew,” although such detail could not be observed by the human eye or early photography.

Over a period of many years experimenting in both Sacramento and on the Palo Alto Stock Farm, Muybridge was finally able to document Stanford’s long-held belief. Stanford had spent thousands of dollars financing Muybridge’s experiments, but Stanford was a very wealthy man and was excited to have his theory proved. Today there is a California State Landmark rock on the campus that recognizes this work as a significant contribution to the development of motion pictures.



Eadweard Muybridge series of photographs, *The Horse in Motion*. “Sallie Gardner” owned by Leland Stanford; running at the Palo Alto Track, 19th June 1878

It’s not unusual to find minor historic facts that are ignored or misrepresented in history books—an irritation to a local historian. In his story, the author has the railroad’s “Big Four” (Stanford, Crocker, Hopkins, and Huntington) living as neighbors on San Francisco’s Nob Hill. While Stanford and Crocker did live atop Nob Hill, Hopkins preferred to garden in the backyard of his more modest home located at the bottom of the hill (his widow later built a mansion atop Nob Hill). Huntington, who spent most of his time on the East Coast, did buy a mansion atop Nob Hill many years later but spent very little time there. All four of the mansions were lost in the 1906 earthquake.

Overall, I found the book quite entertaining and informative. While I was familiar with Muybridge and his involvement in the development of motion pictures at the Palo Alto Stock Farm, the use of “comic strip” imaging adds to the story of Muybridge’s life in a novel way.



Two panels from the graphic novel, showing the birth of motion picture projection

## Progress on the New PAHA Archives

Photos by Brian George, PAHA board member

We thought you'd like to see photos of the major progress made on the PAHA archive space located on the second floor of the Roth Building, home of the new history museum. After installing the all-important shelving it was discovered that there was space for

more, which is very good news as we can use all the space we can get. It won't be too much longer before the archives are moved from their long-time home at Room K7 on the old Cubberley campus and opened to the public in this beautiful space.



### In Memoriam:

Joan Jack

### Upcoming Program Dates

- May 3

Unless otherwise noted, programs are held in person on the first Sunday of the months we present programs. Check our website at [www.pahistory.org](http://www.pahistory.org) for program information.

### Previous PAHA Program

If you missed the February 1st program, *Letters Home from Stanford - The History Students Wrote Home*, you can find it and other recent PAHA program videos on Vimeo by following this link: <https://vimeo.com/1160067145>

## Got Pics?

We are always on the lookout for old Palo Alto pics, and they don't have to be 100 years old for us to be interested! Please consider donating your old photos of Palo Alto to PAHA.

Contact: Darla Secor  
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Photographs courtesy of PAHA Guy Miller Archives unless otherwise noted.