

VOLUME 30, NUMBER 10
NOVEMBER 2007
www.pahistory.org

The Tall Tree

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, November 4 at 2:00 p.m.

Free & open to the public

Lucie Stern Community Center
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

The Rise of Silicon Valley: Phase Two, After the War



SPEAKER:
**Steve Blank, Entrepreneur &
University Faculty Member**

One year ago Steve Blank was our November speaker and vividly recalled the vital work of MIT scientists and engineers as well as others during World War II in the Atlantic and European theaters of action in defeating the Axis. Steve returns this November to remind us of those war years and how they set the stage for the creation and explosive growth of Silicon Valley. He then goes on to describe the role of Frederick Terman and Stanford in working with government agencies, including the CIA and the National Security Agency (NSA), to set up "black" (top secret) companies in Silicon Valley which, in turn, sparked the creation of many hundreds of other enterprises.

Steve Blank is a retired entrepreneur with nearly 30 years experience as founder and executive in high technology companies. He has been involved in or co-founded eight Silicon Valley startups, with a focus ranging from semiconductors to video games and from personal computers to supercomputers.

Bird-watchers read on... Steve's last company was E.piphany, an enterprise software company. Currently, he teaches entrepreneurship at U.C. Berkeley's Haas School of Business, Columbia University and Stanford University's Graduate School of Engineering. As a business pioneer in Silicon Valley, he now sits on the boards of several public companies. In addition, Steve is a member of the board of directors of the Audubon Society and is Chair of the Audubon California Advisory Board.

The Tall Tree is published eight times a year by the

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 193 • Palo Alto, CA 94302
650.326.3355 • www.pahistory.org

Jeanne McDonnell & Peggy McKee
Editors

Harriette Shakes, *Design*
Omega Printing, *Printing*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dick Rosenbaum Jan Murphy
President First Vice President

Gwen Barry Bardy Wallace
Second Vice President Recording Secretary

Carol Murden Bob Jack
Corresponding Secretary Treasurer

Steve Staiger
Historian

Beth Bunnberg Vicky Ching
Brian George Betty Gerard
Georgie Gleim Karen Holman
Ruth Lacey Judy Leahy
Michael Litfin Jeanne McDonnell
Peggy McKee Carol Clifford Mitchell
Tom Wyman

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≡

OCT: *A Look at the Year 1907 and the Presence of the New in the Old*

Nov: *Rise of Silicon Valley: Phase Two, After the War*

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.

BREAKING NEWS ON THE HISTORY FRONT

Dedication of State Historic Plaque: On November 1 at 3:00, there will be a gathering to honor Juana Briones, a notable woman of 19th century California, at Esther Clark Park on Old Adobe Road. Esther Clark, well-known as a member of the medical profession early this century, owned and constructed a home on part of what had been Juana's ranch. Juana was also widely respected in the Bay Area as a healer, called a *curandera* among her people.

FROM THE EDITORS

JEANNE
MCDONNELL
&
PEGGY
MCKEE

Holiday House Tour December 9: PAST's 20th annual house tour will highlight the legacy in our community of architect Charles Sumner. For information and tickets, call 650.299.8878, or mail \$20 per ticket to PAST Heritage at P.O. Box 308, Palo Alto 94302. PAST allocated \$5,000 through Dec. 31 in matching funds to save the Briones House. To donate, specify *Briones* on the For line of your check. Mail to the above address.

Genealogy Sources: You will find many at the Main Library, check the City-Department-Library website for details.



1891: A Novel About Stanford University. I just finished reading a novel covering the early days of Stanford. Entitled *1891: A Novel about Stanford University*, it is part of a planned, four-volume saga by author Jerry Franks. He was 79 years old when he wrote this first installment, but he claims to be working hard on the subsequent volumes. The author did a great deal of

his early research using our Archives. Beth Bunnberg would help him as he searched through our files on Stanford and Mayfield.

Chapter One introduces major characters Orrin Leslie Elliott and his wife Ellen in Ithaca New York, but quickly moves them and the other characters such as Dr. Jordan and a group of male students living at Encina Hall to the brand new Stanford University campus. Franks vividly recreates everyday life for faculty and students on the campus as well as life in the town of Mayfield. Perhaps Palo Alto

FROM THE HISTORIAN

STEVE STAIGER

was too new to play a role in this first volume. I enjoyed his description and play-by-play of the first faculty-student baseball game, where the faculty led by captain and first baseman Dr. Jordan are defeated by the students in a long, hard fought battle. He has several students travel by train to San Francisco, visiting Chinatown at the time of the Tong wars. Over Thanksgiving holiday we see life in the South Bay as hikers and bicyclists climb Mount Hamilton with a hazardous outcome.

When we read historical fiction there is always the opportunity to be entertained while learning more about a time and place that interests the reader. I enjoyed the author's re-creation of historic events of which I had some degree of familiarity. For an author there is always the danger of introducing anachronistic elements into his storyline. A minor example in this novel was a visit to a Mayfield farmhouse discovered by finding a name on the mailbox. Home mail delivery in this area was still 13 years in the future, perhaps even longer for rural delivery.

A more significant example involves an attempted assassination of Leland Stanford by one of the characters, who blamed him, in his role as the Governor of California, for the death of her father in the Mussel Slough battle. Stanford was Governor in the early 1860s, nearly 20 years before that incident.

Putting these minor details aside, the author has created an interesting story and a group of characters that promise a great deal more in the future volumes. He left us hanging at the end of the first installment. Is Timothy Hopkins really the villain hinted to in this first volume? We will have to wait and see.

SAVING THE SEA SCOUT BUILDING

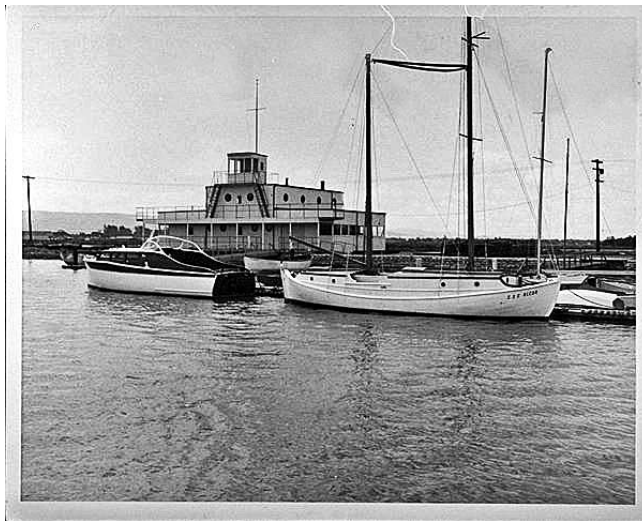
Excerpts From an Article by
Matt Bowling/Daily News Columnist

The lovely old structure was built facing the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor in 1941 by local architects and brothers, Birge and David Clark. Built in quintessential 1940s “streamlined modern” style, the Sea Scout Building—with its porthole windows, navigation bridge, flag hoist and smokestacks—was designed to resemble an actual ship. From its beginning, the building was home to the local Sea Scouts, an offshoot of the Boy Scouts, that taught youth ages 14 to 20 how to excel in water activities such as sailing, sea customs, riggings, compass reading and knot-tying.

Six months before Pearl Harbor: On the weekend of May 30, 1941, Palo Alto’s “fairy godmother” and greatest benefactor Lucie Stern—who had given \$13,000 for the base’s construction—christened the building by smashing a bottle of seawater from the Atlantic Ocean on the deck rail. As the largest Sea Scout base in the region, the Palo Alto structure hosted many regattas and rendezvous in subsequent years, bringing together Sea Scouts from around California. The building was even offered as a base for emergency use during World War II as an airplane spotting post.

But in 1985, after a contentious citywide election, the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor closed forever. Now the Environmental Volunteers, a group that provides environmental education to children, want to completely renovate the Sea Scout Building and use it as a headquarters.

For the full article and more Palo Alto history, go to www.paloaltohistory.com or contact Matt Bowling at mbowling@pausd.org.



The newly constructed Sea Scout Building of the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor with several boats, including S.S.S. Alcor. Lucie Stern gifted the building to the Stanford Area Council, 1941. (Courtesy of the Palo Alto Historical Association Archives.)

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Barry Lee Johnson
 Francine Montez



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!*

CELEBRATING PALO ALTO AT ONE HUNDRED

Castilleja School Celebrates its Centennial. Castilleja School has been a Palo Alto institution since it opened its first campus to sixty-eight young women in the fall of 1907. Encouraged by Stanford President, David Starr Jordan, Mary Ishbel Lockey founded a school that would prepare its students for admission to Stanford. Herself a Stanford alumna, Miss Lockey created a legacy that lives to this day: Castilleja continues to offer a strong academic program as well as providing experiences and opportunities appropriate in the 21st century. Castilleja moved to its present location at 1310 Bryant Street in 1910. On September 28, the school welcomed students, their families, alumnae, and neighbors to come and wish Castilleja a happy 100th birthday.

Williams House, on Palo Alto's historic Homer Corridor at #351, is also 100 years old! Dr. Thomas Williams, who practiced medicine for many years in Palo Alto, contracted architect Ernest Coxhead to build his family home at 351 Homer. In 1989, Rhona Williams gifted the Homer Street Property to the City of Palo Alto. It now houses the Museum of the American Heritage, which is presently featuring a Centennial Exhibit, "100 Years at the Williams House: Look at How Things Have Changed!"

Palo Alto of a Century Ago, until October 31, have a look at pictures and artifacts of a time when children in school wrote with chalk on slates and cars were a novelty. PAHA and the Palo Alto History Museum collaborated to create this lively display in the exhibit case by the fireplace at the MainLibrary on Newell Street.

PAHA Calendar of General Meetings

Fall 2007

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

December 2 Meeting: Palo Alto Vignettes, Brief Remembrances and Stories by Palo Altans.

Contact Karen Holman, 321-6170 or kcholman@sbcglobal.net if you would like to share briefly a special experience of yours for our program at Lucie Stern Community Center.

The Tall Tree

NOVEMBER 2007

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

www.pahistory.org

P.O. BOX 193

PALO ALTO, CA 94302

NEXT MEETING:

November 4, 2:00 p.m.

Free & open to the public

