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# The Tall Tree

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

## GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, March 1 at 2:00 p.m.

Free & open to the Public

Lucie Stern Community Center

1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

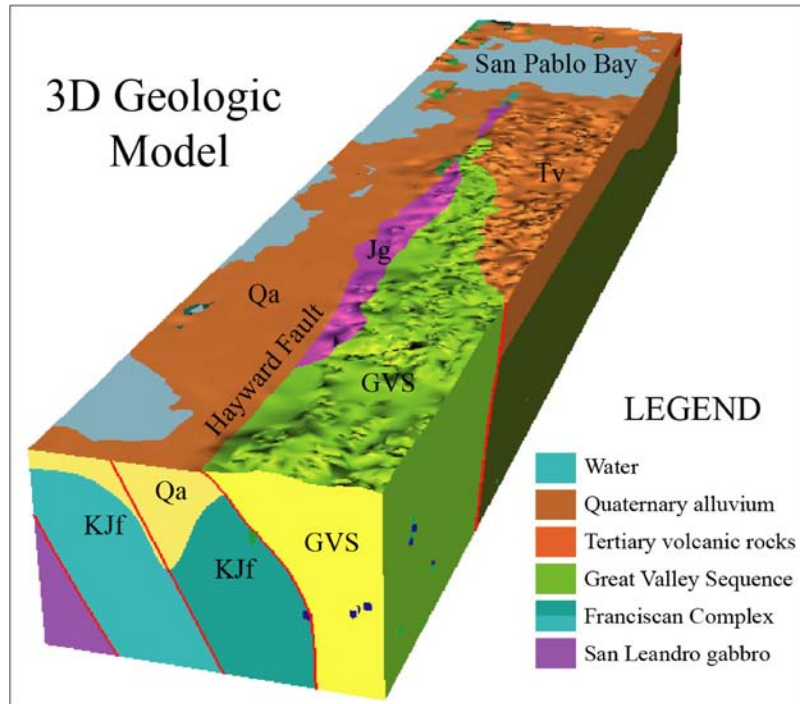
## The Geologic History of the Bay Area

Speaker: Benita Murchey, Ph.D.

Chief Scientist

USGS Western Earth Surface Processes team.

How, when, and why did one of the most spectacularly scenic areas in the world come to be?



While dinosaurs were roaming across Colorado, mud and plankton accumulated on the Pacific ocean floor. These oceanic materials form the basement rocks of the Bay Region. Did you know that the limestone quarried off the coastal mountains formed on tropical submarine mountains, that the Ohlones and early Mexican settlers mined mercury in the South Bay, and that there's petroleum under Los Gatos? Benita Murchey will describe the surprisingly dynamic geologic history of the Bay Area, beginning about 180 million years ago.

*The Tall Tree* is published eight times a year by the

**PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

P.O. Box 193 • Palo Alto, CA 94302

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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:

- ④ Collect, organize, and preserve materials pertaining to the history and heritage of Palo Alto.
- ④ Spread information about Palo Alto's history by means of programs, displays, and publications.
- ④ 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 on the first Wednesday of each month (except August) at the Lucie Stern Community Center at 4 PM. Schedule of public meetings on p.4.

## Update: Palo Alto's Past on eBay

LAST YEAR I REPORTED ON A PROGRAM of capturing artifacts from Palo Alto's past through purchases on eBay. At that time I promised you an update on our achievements. The Association, primarily through the efforts and generosity of board member Brian George, has acquired a number of interesting items reflecting Palo Alto's history as offered by various vendors on eBay.



FROM THE  
DESK OF THE  
HISTORIAN  
Steve Staiger

Brian regularly scans recent offerings on eBay, and then seeks my advice for potential acquisitions. Following a successful bid, he buys the item and donates the artifact to the Association. The donated materials are either added to the Archives or stored for the future Palo Alto History Museum collection.

A wide range of items have been acquired. The largest groups include post cards and photographs. Some of the post cards are images of Dinah's Shack restaurant, El Palo Alto, various residences (some identified and others not), and one advertisement for the Currier Motel on El Camino Real.

Among others, we have acquired a Palo Alto Military Academy banner with buttons, badges and patches attached (presumably by the student-cadet in the 1960's).

One of the earliest purchases was a doctor's bag owned by Doctor Granville Wood, a Palo Alto physician active in the first decades of the 20th century. The bag came complete with numerous vials of drugs. More recently, Brian bid on an embossing stamp seal used by architect Henry E. Collins. When Brian brought the stamp to the History Desk for review, we discovered a coincidence, that among the Palo Alto buildings Collins designed was the medical office of Dr. Wood in the 2000 block of El Camino Real.

We will continue to acquire pieces of Palo Alto's past, often at reasonable prices. To help, please do not bid independently, by which you may compete against us. Instead, consider making a donation to the Association to fund these acquisitions, and we will keep you informed about our progress.



*Tall Tree postcard acquired on eBay.*



### PAHA Heritage TV Programs Cable Channel 30

WEDNESDAYS 8:00 PM,

THURSDAYS NOON,

SATURDAYS 1:00 PM

The March program features Ben Hatfield and Barry Anderson, who share photos from the Hatfield aerial photography archive. Ben tells the story of his father's 30+ years photographing views of Palo Alto, Stanford and surrounding areas.



## BECOME A MEMBER OF PAHA

YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE MEMBERSHIP HELPS PAY FOR PRESERVING INFORMATION about the history of Palo Alto and informing the public about that history. Annual membership dues are: Individual \$25, Family \$40, Sustaining \$60, Business/Sponsor \$100 and Life Member \$350. Members receive this newsletter in the mail and a renewal notice in July.

You can join by mail or online. Make checks payable to Palo Alto Historical Association, mail to PAHA Membership, P.O. Box 193, Palo Alto, CA 94302-0193. Let us know if you require a receipt.

Or go to our web site [www.pahistory.org](http://www.pahistory.org). Click on MEMBERSHIP, then on Network for Good. Once on that site, press Donate Now, and put "membership" in the designation field. Give us your name and address. For gift memberships, also email us at [PAHHistoricalAssn@aol.com](mailto:PAHHistoricalAssn@aol.com) with the name, address, and e-mail address of the recipient.

# A Streamline to the Past

Now that the community is discussing the high speed rail to Los Angeles, Matt Bowling's article about the opening of the new train station building at University Avenue lends a touch of history to the subject. See the article online. An abbreviated version of the online article follows:

IN 1941, THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD replaced Palo Alto's aging depot with a sleek, modern station worthy of the city's hard-earned hub status.

The base of University Avenue at Alma Street has long been the transportation center of Palo Alto. In the city's infancy, an original sheltered station—no more than a bench and overhanging roof really—was constructed for an auction sale of town lots. In 1896, a second larger, yellow-tinged station was constructed around the original, built with archways and some of the spectacle of the nearby university. This new station served Stanford's 400 students and Palo Alto's 318 residents.

As early as the 1920s, the Palo Alto Times had been calling for a more "pretentious depot." Eventually in conjunction with the construction of the University/Alma Street underpass, plans for a new station were announced. On March 8, 1941, a grand parade of 2,000 people, 400 horses, and a 40 x 75 foot flag marched down the Avenue to the new station. The station was designed to resemble a streamlined train, fitting into an architectural craze called Streamline Moderne, closely related to Art Deco. The style conjured up a sense of the movement and speed of an automated world.

From: *Matt Bowling's Palo Alto History Project Online* ([www.paloaltohistory.com/trainstation.html](http://www.paloaltohistory.com/trainstation.html))



*Train station in 1895, a shed-like Depot. Courtesy PAHA*



*Palo Alto depot in 1930s, complete with shoeshine stand. Courtesy PAHA.*

## Palo Alto History Museum

THE ARCHITECTURAL FIRM OF GARAVAGLIA ARCHITECTS has now assessed the various spaces in the Roth Building, and the process of assigning these spaces to needs and exhibits is beginning. This is both an important and exciting stage in project progress.

This stage additionally offers a number of ways to support the Museum through significant naming opportunities as broad as Rotating and Permanent Exhibit spaces and as specific as locations to tell stories such as those of our local Merchants, Biotechnology, and Education. Education, for instance, has always been central to life in Palo Alto beginning with the founding of Stanford University and sacrifice by early educator Anna Zschokke to recent bond measures supported by the community. Please contact us if you would like to discuss naming opportunities to support your area of interest.

In planning for a spring event to launch our Founding Members campaign, we seek volunteers in several areas including mailings, data collection and management, event planning. Your assistance in support will be most gratefully appreciated.

The turn in the economy, while challenging to many of us, also offers an opportunity to restore the Roth Building at a time of lower construction costs. Your assistance would be gratefully appreciated. Make your charitable gift to: **The Palo Alto History Museum**, a 501(c)(3) organization, at P.O. Box 676, Palo Alto, CA 94302. Contact: 650.322.3089, [kholman@pahistorymuseum.org](mailto:kholman@pahistorymuseum.org).



*Anna Zschokke's house, home of first Palo Alto High School. Courtesy PAHA.*

## Get Out and About with *PARKS OF PALO ALTO*

DID YOU EVER WONDER how some Palo Alto parks got their names? Who was Donaldina Cameron and why was a community center in San Francisco's Chinatown named for her? Who was Don Jesus Ramos? Dr. Edith Eugenie Johnson was known as the "white angel" and delivered 3,500 Palo Alto babies. Cameron, Ramos, and Johnson are three of Palo Alto's 34 parks—many named for community founders and activists.

The city's first park, El Camino, was created in 1914 on land leased from Stanford, but the area's first four parks (Mayfield, Cameron, Weisshaar, Werry) were established in 1888 in old Mayfield and became part of Palo Alto's park system when it was incorporated in 1925.

*Parks of Palo Alto* is a publication of the Palo Alto Historical Association with the support of the Friends of the Palo Alto Parks. Reading it is wonderful way to learn about Palo Alto and its colorful history. Why not initiate a family project of visiting all the parks listed and learning about people named Elinor Cogswell, Timothy Hopkins, Alexander Peers, and many more? The booklet is available for sale at Village Stationers and Bell's Books or at PAHA meetings on the 1st Sunday of the month.



## PAHA's Public Meetings to Come

Most of our public meetings are on the first Sunday from October–May at 2:00 PM at the Lucie Stern Community Center.

### NEXT MEETINGS:

APRIL 5 AT 2:00 PM

*Mayfield Brewing Company*

Speaker: John P. Alderete  
President/CEO

MAY 3 AT 2:00 PM

*Palo Alto Women's Club History*

Speaker: Margaret Feuer  
Former Club Board President

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 AT 6PM

*Annual Meeting*

Dinner at the Palo Alto Sheraton

Speaker: Paul Saffo  
Technology Forecaster

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NEXT MEETING:

March 1 at 2:00 PM

Followed by a social hour  
and refreshments