



The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

Since 1913

March 2018 Volume 41, No 5

The PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
presents

Boys & Girls Schools in Palo Alto

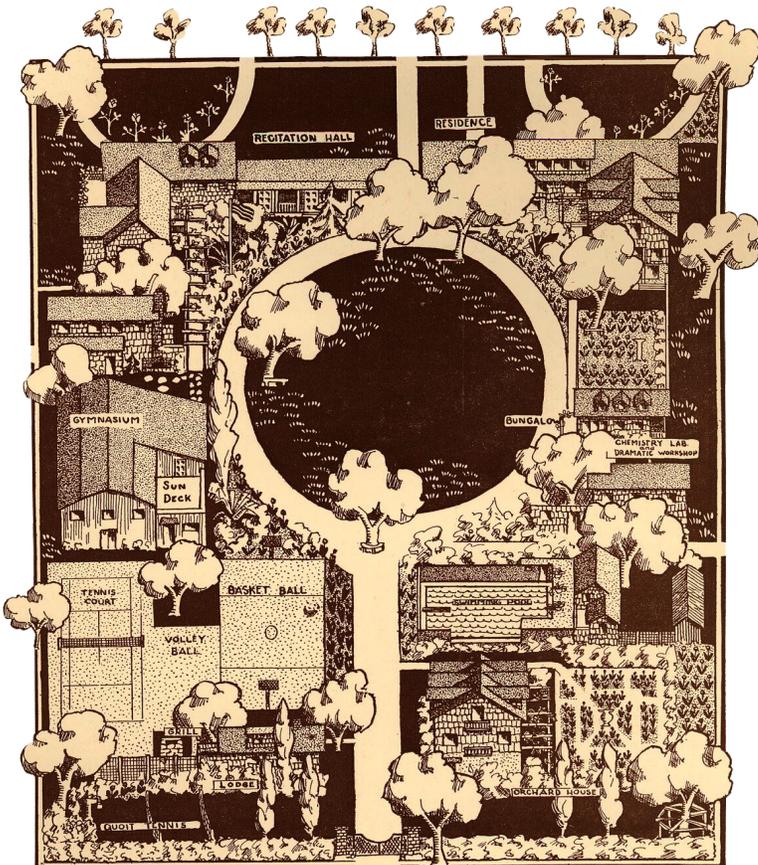
Sunday, March 4th, 2018, 2:00–4:00 pm

Lucie Stern Community Center ~ 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

For our March program, PAHA Board Member Heather Allen Pang will present the history of single-sex schools in this area, their expansion in the 20th century to meet increased demand, the influence of David Starr Jordan and Stanford University, and private school responses over the years to evolving educational trends.

Castilleja School, Manzanita Hall (later called the Palo Alto Military Academy), and Miss Harker's School are all

examples of these early schools. Heather will also comment on how educational trends have changed over the years. Many single-sex schools gave way to co-education, including Miss Harker's School and the Palo Alto Military Academy which combined. Heather's remarks will provide a window into understanding these evolving ideas, including coeducation and redefined gender roles, in the context of single-sex schools.



Castilleja School
history teacher and
archivist

Heather Allen Pang
was raised in Palo Alto.

Heather graduated
from Castilleja School,
Wesleyan University,
and earned a PhD in
history at UC Davis.



Harker Academy was once upon a time a girls' school, while Castilleja, whose campus is pictured left in a 1930s map, has been educating women since 1907.

Researching the (re-)naming of Palo Alto's schools



FROM THE DESK OF
Steve Staiger
City Historian

PALO ALTO **HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

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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:

- *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.

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.

Recently I have been helping members of a Palo Alto Unifid School District (PAUSD) committee research the history of several people with connection to Palo Alto's past. As you may be aware, the PAUSD School Board decided last year to rename the two middle schools due to David Starr Jordan's and Lewis Terman's interest in the study of eugenics.

The PAUSD committee is charged with reviewing the numerous names that have been provided by members of the community and submitting their recommendations to the school board. Several of the names being evaluated were also considered 25 years ago, when as part of the Palo Alto centennial celebration, Palo Alto's "Creators of the Legacy" was inaugurated. These names include Anna Zschokke, Doctors Edith Eugenie Johnson and Esther Clark, and Elinor Cogswell – all names worthy of consideration.

Terman Middle School is named for both Lewis Terman and his son Frederick Terman. It appears that Frederick will lose this honor through the "sins" of his father. Fred Terman grew up on the Stanford campus, the son of a well-known professor. As a young man, he was

excited by the new field of electrical (radio) engineering. He became the head of Stanford's electrical engineering department, and later the Dean of the School of Engineering. He wrote the textbook on radio engineering.

He is recognized for his encouragement of former students William Hewlett and David Packard to remain in California and develop their company locally. After WWII, he promoted the development of the Stanford Industrial Park. In our Centennial History book, PAHA called him the "intellectual father of Silicon Valley".

Terman Junior High School opened in 1958, named for his father, Lewis Terman. It closed in 1978. When the Terman Library opened in 1985, on the site of the former school, it was named for both the father and the son. When the Middle School reopened, the naming honor was extended to both father and son.

When public concern over the beliefs of early 20th century academics led to the school board's decision to drop the names of Jordan and Terman, Fred Terman became an innocent victim, guilty by his father's thoughts.

The wide world of Preschools

Readers of the *Tall Tree* will not be surprised to know that preschool education, what we used to call nursery school, is alive and well in Palo Alto and has a distinguished history. A simple Google search leads to a dizzying array of local preschool options: private, cooperative, religious, academically-oriented, play-oriented, foreign language-oriented; each has an informative website and rave reviews from satisfied parents.



Children at active play in Bing Nursery School, which remains a site for learning about preschool education. Courtesy Dr. Edith Dowley.

My own daughters attended Mrs. Hales in Menlo Park and First Congregational Church in Palo Alto; a popular nursery school for boys in the 1960s was Jim Wright's. Mrs. Hales and Jim Wright's are long gone, but First Congo, a play-based, parent participation preschool founded in 1963, is going strong.

One of Palo Alto's more venerable preschools is Bing Nursery School, founded in 1966 with gifts from Dr. Peter Bing and his mother. Bing Nursery school evolved from an earlier nursery lab school founded in 1949. It was and still functions as a laboratory for research in child development where professionals both study and provide a sound educational experience for young children. Bing's mission has always been to improve the lives of young children and their families. A decade or so ago, Bing expanded its program to include a "young fives" option to help parents determine if their child is ready for kindergarten. Bing is an ever-popular choice for parents of young children.

(article continues on next page)

Lick-Wilmerding High School, San Francisco

My father arrived in San Francisco in the summer of 1923 to attend a science teacher's course at UC Berkeley. At the time Lick-Wilmerding High School was looking for a physics teacher and he applied. He returned to his teaching job at a high school in Muscogee, Oklahoma but returned to start teaching at Lick in January 1924. That summer he married in Tulsa and brought his new bride to San Francisco. In 1926 they moved to Palo Alto and he commuted on the Southern Pacific from the Mayfield (now California Avenue) station until 1963.

Founded with a \$540,000 bequest from James Lick, the California School of Mechanical Arts opened in 1895. Its first Director, George A. Merrill, determined that it would provide a general intellectual preparation and vocational instruction. Graduates were to be "educated craftsmen." There was a wood shop, a machine shop and an electrical shop. Industrial Chemistry with its own laboratory was a unique offering. Merrill hired my father to teach Physics, Trigonometry and Strength of Materials; he also directed and accompanied the school's boys' chorus. Merrill remained until 1939 and during retirement served as Mayor of Redwood City.

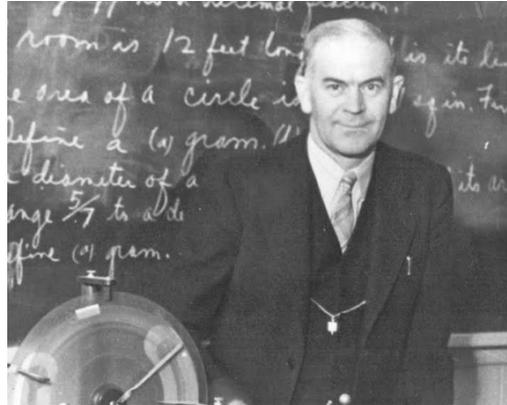
The original building was located at 17th and Utah in the Potrero District, close to the industrial heart of San Francisco. Merrill also became the first director of Wilmerding School of Industrial Arts, founded around 1900 with a bequest of \$400,000 from Jellis Wilmerding and located on the same property. The school partnered with the Lux School for Industrial Training, a girls' school that started in 1912 with a bequest from Miranda Lux. It closed in 1952. The Lux Building still exists at the corner of 17th and Potrero, while a UPS facility occupies the original Lick-Wilmerding site.

Lick-Wilmerding School moved from the Potrero area to Ocean Avenue adjacent to Highway 280 in 1955 as a boys' school. It became coeducational in 1972 at which time it started charging tuition. It is now a college prep school with a strong manual arts program, which is seen as balancing its curriculum. Admission is highly sought after and very selective.

The sources of the founders' wealth are an interesting bit of California history. Lick arrived in Yerba Buena, now San Francisco, in 1848. Many land owners were selling their land at a very cheap price to get money to pursue the quest for gold. Lick used the \$10,000 he had to invest buying up that land and soon had over \$3.5 million—about \$64 million in current value.

Jellis Wilmerding was the son of a wealthy New York merchant. He came to San Francisco and spent his summers prospecting for gold and his winters selling merchandise. He became a member of the Second Vigilante Committee of 1856 and the Society of California Pioneers. He was a delegate to the 1880 Republican Convention that nominated James Garfield for President.

Miranda Cranston married Charles Lux, an immigrant from Alsace, who was a butcher in San Francisco in 1857. In 1858 he and Henry Miller, another German butcher, formed the Miller and Lux Corporation in Los Baños to buy ranch land for raising cattle, as a source of beef for the meat business. Ultimately they became the largest land owner in California, Nevada and Oregon with direct holdings of some 1.4 million acres, and exercising control over some 22,000 square miles. It was said that you could drive cattle from the Mexican border into Oregon without ever leaving their property. Miranda Lux died in 1894 with an estate valued at \$20 million and in her will left about \$500,000 for education, ultimately used to found the Lux School. —Ralph Britton, PAHA President



The author's father, Ralph H. Britton, Sr., at Lick-Wilmerding in the 1940s, where he taught physics. In the left foreground is a Wimshurst machine, which generates a high-voltage electrical charge for instructional purposes. Courtesy author.



The Wilmerding School of the Industrial Arts in the late 1930s. Courtesy OpenHistory.org

(Preschools continued from page 2) Several local preschools have based their curriculum on the Reggio Emilia philosophy developed in Italy after World War II by psychologist Loris Malaguzzi; it spread into a world-wide phenomenon in the 1970s. The philosophy embodies these principles: children must have some control over the direction of their learning; be able to learn through touching, moving, listening, observing; be encouraged to explore and have endless opportunities to express themselves. Reggio Emilia preschools are committed to a child-centered, experiential program that integrates painting, sculpting, drama, music and play. A Google search can direct interested parents to the dozen or so Reggio Emilia preschools in Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Los Altos. —Peggy McKee



Tactile learning and interaction with nature (and natural materials) are part of Reggio Emilia preschoolers' daily experience. Courtesy Ventana Preschool.

History Jaunts

Take a quick jaunt to King Plaza, 250 Hamilton Ave. in Palo Alto, and experience **The Masterpiece Machine: a public-art project that dispenses art on demand**, thanks to Toby Atticus Fraley's installation. Children and adults can "create" their own work of art by popping 4 quarters into Artwork Forge II. Since coming to King Plaza in November 2017, Art Forge II has produced 1000 works of art. Participants rave about their experience! It will remain on site until April. Check out some of the examples [@artworkforge](#) on Instagram. More information on Toby Atticus Fraley and Artwork Forge II may be found on [paloaltoonline.com](#).

Make time this winter to visit the **Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park** at 1414 Harbour Way in Richmond. The park and museum opened in 2000 to tell the story of the American home front through the prism of Richmond's Kaiser Shipyards, where 747 ships were produced to support the war effort. Here, women replaced their sons, husbands, fathers, and brothers serving overseas and became known collectively as "Rosie the Riveter." The Visitor Center exhibits artifacts highlighting local and national tales. On most Fridays, visitors may meet with actual home front workers—a living, breathing "Rosie the Riveter"! The museum is free and open to the public daily, 10 am–5 pm. For more information, visit [nps.gov](#) or call (510) 232-5050.



After extensive renovation, the bells of **San Jose's Trinity Cathedral** have resumed their carillon. There is something extraordinarily "poignant about the joyous sound that streams...every Sunday morning from Trinity's tower, overlooking St. James Park..." Trinity Cathedral is located at 81 N. 2nd St. in San Jose. For a schedule of March services and to hear the bells ring out their glorious welcome to the community, visit [trinitysj.org](#) or call (408) 293-7953.

Jamestown, California, is considered the "gateway to the Mother Lode." Nestled in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Jamestown is a California Historical Landmark (#431) and well worth the drive to wander its streets, visit its museums, and soak up its 19th century boom and bust experience. For information about things to do and places to go or stay or eat in Jamestown, visit [jamestownca.org](#).

Become a Member of PAHA

We invite you to become a member of PAHA and join those who are interested in Palo Alto and enjoy learning about its history—while supporting our archiving, research and publishing efforts.

Individual \$40 ~ Family \$60 ~ Sustaining \$75 ~ Business/Sponsor \$150 ~ Life \$500

Make check payable to PAHA and mail to: PAHA, Box 193, Palo Alto, CA 94302. Or join online at [pahistory.org](#). Let us know if you wish to volunteer for a PAHA committee.

Welcome New Members!

Chris Leahy
Fara & Doug Marinkovich
Nina Marinkovich



Upcoming PAHA Programs

- March 4: Boys and Girls Schools in Palo Alto
- April 1: Palo Alto High School Archivist Bob French
- May 6: PAST Historic Preservation



The Heritage Program for March 2018 will feature

December 2017's
Vignette Panel
and more.

Weds. 8 pm, Thurs. 10 am
& Sats. 1 pm on Channel 30

DVDs of previous programs may be borrowed from PAHA's Guy Miller Archives at Cubberley, Room K-7. Hours: Tues. 4-8 pm, Thurs. 1-5 pm

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people!
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