

The Palo Alto Historical Association presents

## ROCK AND ROLL IN PALO ALTO



Grateful Dead, El Camino Park, 1967

**Wednesday, June 5, 2019**

**6:00 – 9:00 pm**

**El Palo Alto Room  
Mitchell Park Community Center  
3700 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto**



Jefferson Airplane, 1967

### JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL DINNER EVENT!

**6:00 pm Social Hour**

**6:45 pm Gourmet Chinese Buffet catered by Chef Chu's**

**New this year: A raffle with fun prizes from local Palo Alto businesses**

**\$75.00 per person, free parking**

**Please make reservations before May 29 on Eventbrite: <https://paha-annual-dinner.eventbrite.com>**

Grace Slick described her Palo Alto neighborhood as “Leave It to Beaver,” referencing the TV series that began in 1957—the same year she graduated from Castilleja School. At the same time, the Kingston Trio, a local folk music group, got a gig at a local high school graduation dance. Eight years later, in August 1965, the Beatles spent the night in Palo Alto at the Cabaña after their concert at the Cow Palace. That December, the newly named Grateful Dead staged the first acid rock performance a little over two miles away. Many of the Palo Alto homes still exist where these handful of inspired ‘60s and ‘70s (and some ‘90s) rock musicians were raised—either in homes of the ‘40s,

in ‘50s subdivision homes, and a few in century-old homes.

Join us for an exciting evening with Bo Crane who will be sharing his look at the fun history of rock and roll in Palo Alto based on his new booklet, “Ticket to Rock Palo Alto.” Bo chronicles the many remarkable musicians who had their start or performed in our community, focusing on their homes and neighborhoods—the backdrop to a counterculture that began musically in this area. “Ticket to Rock” is a ticket to the past and Palo Alto’s historic contribution to rock and roll, helping shape Silicon Valley and the world in which we live.



Bo Crane grew up in Palo Alto, graduating from Paly in 1968 and Stanford University in 1972. Bo has been active in local historical associations including Palo Alto Stanford Heritage (PAST), the Menlo Park Historical Association, and is a PAHA member. His books include “The Life and Times of Dennis Martin” of which he spoke to PAHA in October 2015, and “The Streets of Menlo Park” published by the Menlo Park Historical Association.



**PRESIDENT'S LETTER**  
**Ralph Britton**

**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 at 4pm on the first Wednesday of each month (except August) at the Guy Miller Archives. Public programs are held at 2pm on the first Sunday of each month (October-December, February-May) at various locations in Palo Alto. 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.*

# Highlights of the Past Year

As PAHA's annual dinner program approaches, signifying the last of the PAHA programs until October, we briefly reflect on some highlights of the past year.

## PAHA Guy Miller Archives

This marks the end of our third year of Palo Alto Library's funding. The funding has helped with expenses related to PAHA's management of the city's archives. The Library has been an excellent partner and its funding has made feasible many things that would otherwise have been impossible.

## Digitization of archival photos

There are now more than 13,000 images available in our online Photograph Collection. These images are searchable, accessible, and free to the public. This has been an ongoing cooperative project with the Palo Alto Library.

## Finance

After several years of tight financial reserves, our financial position has improved. Our reserves are expected to grow modestly by the end of our financial year in June. Late in 2018, Bob Strohecker took over the treasurer's duties from long-serving Chris Botsford. Chris' dedication has truly been commendable and the Board thanks him for his excellent support! Chris also was instrumental in working with the Board and the library to get the very welcome funding for the archives.

## Programs

PAHA presented eight interesting and well-attended programs despite the challenge of using multiple venues (due to construction projects impacting access to the Lucie Stern Ballroom). The Palo Alto Art Center auditorium turned out to be a particularly satisfactory site for these programs.

# History of a History Book



**FROM THE DESK OF  
Steve Staiger  
City Historian**

In the fall of 1993, PAHA published its book "Palo Alto: A Centennial History" as part of the City's year long centennial celebration in 1994.

A group of PAHA members, including myself, spent six long years researching, writing, and re-writing the 300+ page book before it was unveiled at our Sunday meeting that fall.

Boyd Haight, a San Jose Mercury News writer and College Terrace resident, was our first leader in researching and writing this history book. There had been comprehensive histories of Palo Alto published in 1939 and 1952, a pictorial history in 1969, and a history of Palo Alto's early years in 1989; but there was a great deal of "new" history of Palo Alto post WWII

that needed coverage. Paul Gullixson (of the Peninsula Times Tribune and later Palo Alto Weekly) joined the team following Boyd Haight's death in 1989.

For several years we met in the kitchen of Gain John's home on Embarcadero Road, reviewing drafts of chapters on early history, religion, and schools. We asked local writers to research and prepare chapters on topics known to them. Jay Thorwaldson wrote the chapter on health, Gary Fazzino on Palo Alto's politics, and I researched and drafted the chapter on transportation. Ruth Wilson, the retired PAHA historian, researched and advised on many topics. Lois Brenner and Betty Rogaway (the PAHA president) were active members of the committee.

Eventually we had a manuscript that had been reviewed and revised numerous times, with an emphasis on historic accuracy. We sent the manuscript to community members with knowledge and interest in Palo Alto's history (Continued on page 3)

# Dig it with Albert

by Jerry Tinney, PAHA Board Member



Albert Wilson in the garden

I first met Albert Wilson at my friend Fred Brown's cabinet shop on Fife Avenue in Palo Alto. At the time, Albert was living a few doors down the street from the shop and would come over to hang out with Fred. I later built a new fireplace at Albert's house on Creek Drive in Menlo Park.

Albert Wilson (August 1903 - March 8, 1996) was an American botanist, landscape architect, author, teacher, and lecturer on gardening and landscaping, as well as a radio and TV personality. He wrote several books popularizing gardening including "Distinctive Trees, Shrubs and Vines in Gardens of the SF Peninsula" (1938), "How Does Your Garden Grow" (1949), and "Gardeners all in California" (1953). He also published an autobiography of his early life, "These Were the Children" (1963).

Wilson grew up in San Francisco at an orphanage. He earned his bachelor's degree in botany in 1934 and his master's degree in biology, both at Stanford University.

His first job in San Francisco was as a Saturday delivery boy for a Powell Street florist carrying greens, flowers

and potted plants along the sidewalks and up to the front doors of some of San Francisco's elegant mansions.

He landed in Palo Alto after encouragement from some older friends. There he found apricots to pick, lawns to cut, windows to wash, and botany to study at the university. He went to work at a local nursery after graduation. It was there he learned and enjoyed designing and sketching gardens for people.

Working on a garden in Palo Alto for John Elwood (manager for KNBC in northern California) led Albert to a microphone and a broadcasting career. Albert had a regular talk show, "Dig it with Albert" on KGO Radio which followed his original show called "How Does Your Garden Grow".

He was a frequent guest lecturer at garden and civic clubs in the Bay Area as he had a unique ability to make plants entertaining even to a non-gardener.

He designed and built a home in 1929 on Creek Drive in Menlo Park. As a landscape architect, Albert designed the landscape at Allied Arts and Fremont Park in Menlo Park, and countless gardens throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

Wilson died at the age of 93 after apparently falling down a steep bank into the San Francisquito Creek across from his Menlo Park home.



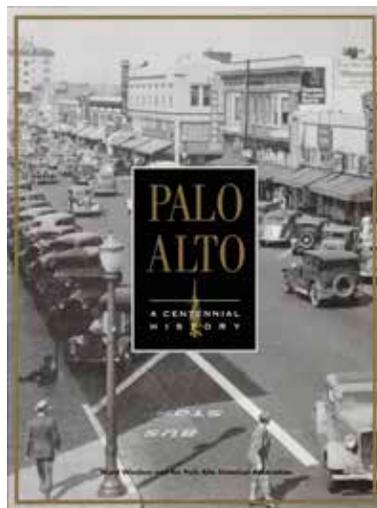
(Continued from page 2)

to review and comment. The consensus was the manuscript was full of interesting facts and stories but read as if it was written by a committee!

Ward Winslow who had recently retired as editor of the Peninsula Times Tribune and life-long Peninsula reporter, came to our rescue. He offered to give our manuscript "one voice" and added an introductory chapter and an epilogue.

Gloria Brown was a committee member with an interest in photography. She spent numerous hours selecting and reviewing photos in the PAHA archives for possible inclusion in the book as well as taking photographs of contemporary subjects.

After several long and sometimes tortuous years, the manuscript was finally ready for publication. With the help of Stanford Publication Services, the book was



Cover of the book, *Palo Alto: A Centennial History*

designed and sent off for printing and binding. Seven thousand copies were delivered to PAHA in time for holiday sales in the fall of 1993. The book was on the local best seller list for several weeks. Sales were strong for several years, providing the Association with a substantial cash reserve that helped finance PAHA operations for another decade.

The book has been out of print for several years now, although copies can usually be found at the monthly Friends of the Palo Alto Library (FOPAL) book sales at Cubberley Community Center, or through one

of the internet book dealers online.

As part of the celebration of Palo Alto's 125th anniversary, PAHA and the Palo Alto City Library have recently completed digitization of the book. It is now available with full-text searching via links on PAHA's website or the library's website.

# History Jaunts for the Spring & Summer

PAST (Palo Alto Stanford Heritage) offers its last walking tour of the season with a new outing, "Just Beyond Professorville". Join Bo Crane at 10:00 am on Saturday, June 1 at 1325 Cowper (corner of Melville) to learn about some of the more unusual houses and the families who lived there.

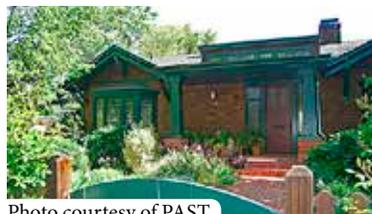


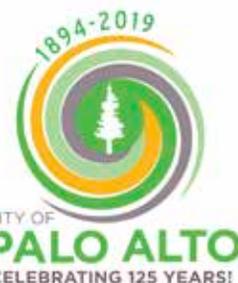
Photo courtesy of PAST

The Museum of American Heritage announces its annual summer concert series with events in June, July, and August. MOAH is located at 351 Homer Ave., in Palo Alto's "historic corridor." The performances include The Peralta Consort on June 6, classical guitarist Yuri Liberzon on July 11, and Rive Gauche on August 8. The events are free to MOAH members and \$10 (cash only) for non-members; wine and light refreshments are served at the events, which begin at 7:00 pm. For more information, call (650) 321-1004 or visit [www.moah.org](http://www.moah.org).

Celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad are continuing at various local locations. The Oakland Museum features an exhibit *Pushing West: The Photography of Andrew J. Russell* (through September 1), 1000 Oak Street, Oakland [www.museumca.org](http://www.museumca.org). The California Historical Society presents two concurrent exhibits—*Westward the Course of Empire* and *Overland to California* (through September 8), 678 Mission Street, San Francisco [www.californiahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.californiahistoricalsociety.org).



A.J. Russell image "Last Spike" - May 10, 1869



## Welcome New Members!

Kendall Dinwiddie  
Wyn Wachhorst  
Palo Alto Humane Society

## The Heritage Program

for June 2019 will feature PAHA's May 2019 program, "PAST Heritage Annual Awards" Airs on Channels 28 or 30 on various days and times. It is simultaneously streamed on the Media Center website [www.midpenmedia.org](http://www.midpenmedia.org) Check website for schedule

DVDs available from the Guy Miller Archives, Cubberley Community Center, K-7  
Tues. 4-8 pm, Thurs. 1-5 pm

## In Memoriam

Eric Nelson



The Tall Tree is published eight times a year by the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



Peggy McKee, Melissa Verber, Debbie Hapgood-Toscanelli, Luana Staiger, *Editorial* Jon Kinyon, *Design* Omega Printing, *Printing*

Photographs courtesy of PAHA Guy Miller Archives unless otherwise noted.



## PAHA President Ralph Britton is leaving the Board

After leading PAHA for five years, Ralph has decided to move to the San Diego area. His son and family live in San Diego, so it will be an enjoyable relocation. His current plan is to move in August or September. We are sad he cannot continue as President, but happy he will be near family and new friends.

The Board is starting a search for a new President to replace Ralph.

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