



The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

Since 1913

October 2020 Volume 44, Nº 1

The Palo Alto Historical Association presents *via Zoom Webinar*

Palo Alto: Then and Now

Sunday October 4, 2020 2:00 to 4:00 pm

Webinar link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81387901308>



Girl Scout Float

May Fête Parade

1938



2019



PAHA is Grand Marshal

On October 4th, PAHA will conduct its first virtual program using Zoom Video Webinar! Because of COVID-19 and the need to remain cautious about gatherings, we are excited to be able to bring this to you via webinar. Join us to see and hear a presentation of images and stories of **Palo Alto: Then and Now**. PAHA historians Darla Secor and Steve Staiger will be presenting Palo Alto images of the past from our collection and contrasting them with the same locations today. The earliest image is a Carleton Watkins photograph from 1875 of El Palo Alto at a time before the town of Palo Alto existed.

Darla and Steve plan to share numerous tales of the sights and events of Palo Alto from its early days to today, showing how things have changed, sometime for the better, sometimes not. The many photographs of early city buildings, churches, neighborhoods, parks, and more, show the dramatic changes that have occurred in the city over the past 145 years.

Zoom Instructions

The webinar will be aired live via Zoom with the opportunity for audience members to participate using Q&A. You can join with any internet-connected computer, tablet, or smart phone using the Zoom app. A few minutes before the program starts, simply type the following address into your web browser (e.g. Google, Safari), click on the link and you'll be taken to the webinar.

Webinar link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81387901308>

If you've not used Zoom previously, you might want to log in about 10 minutes early as you will need to download the Zoom app before it will run.

If a question comes to mind during the presentation, send it in using the Zoom Q&A button at the bottom of your screen. Simply click the button and type in your question and at the end of the presentation, the speakers will address the questions. Because audience microphones and cameras will be turned off during the presentation, our audience won't be able to speak to the presenters.

We will be sending an email reminder with an easy link to allow you to click directly to Zoom. If you are not currently receiving the Tall Tree via email, please send us your address so you can receive this as well as other reminders of programs and activities. Send your email to pahatalltree@gmail.com and request to be added to the email distribution list.

On Page 4 of this newsletter, you will find a preview of some of the locations that will be highlighted in the presentation. We encourage you to visit the sites prior to the talk.

On behalf of PAHA and our distinguished presenters, thank you for your ongoing support of PAHA and for attending our events. We regret that Jerry Tinney's cookies will not be served during this program.



PRESIDENT'S LETTER
GEORGIE GLEIM

- 2020 PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
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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.

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.

Welcome to Georgie Gleim as the New PAHA President

I am honored to assume leadership of the Palo Alto Historical Association in this virtual year. Like many on our board, I am a Palo Alto native and resident. I attended local schools, Walter Hays and Castilleja. Each day at work I park in the lot where I first learned to drive at Stanford Shopping Center. I can walk through neighborhoods where I attended grade school birthday parties, or the Community Center, where I took clay classes as a child and visited the Junior Museum, or visited the Girl Scout House and Children's Library.

The Palo Alto Historical Association works to preserve and honor those memories, while continuing to move into the future. Projects currently on the table are continuing to digitize the vast collection of photographs in

the Archives as well as preserving some of the many films and videos in our collection. How can we all help? In this current age of downsizing, many of us have been decluttering. As you pursue that goal, any time you find something to do with Palo Alto put it aside to donate to the Archives. As our City Historians Steve Staiger and Darla Secor confirm, they will be happy to take them off your hands. They will recycle anything that duplicates items in our collections and archive the rest. All of these can be valuable to future historians.

And imagine... what will this strange year 2020 look like from the perspective of 50, 75, or 100 years from now? Preserve the present for the sake of the future.

Ye Olde Shoppe: Spotlight on longtime family businesses in Palo Alto Gleim the Jeweler

#1 in a series by PAHA Board member, Leslie Mills

Gleim the Jeweler (Gleim's) has been a Palo Alto institution since 1931 when Frederick Gleim opened his first store on University Avenue. Prior to their move to Palo Alto, Frederick and his wife, Cora, lived in Larned, Kansas where he and his brother owned a jewelry store. They had a daughter, Gretchen, and son Arthur (born in 1916). Seeking opportunities elsewhere, Frederick and Cora settled in Palo Alto in 1928. In 1931, he borrowed \$500 to buy the bankrupt inventory of another jeweler and opened his shop at 205 University Avenue on April Fools' Day.

Arthur was a student at Palo Alto High School (Paly) when his father started the business. He worked at the jewelry shop every day after class learning the craft of watch making. After high school, Arthur continued his education, graduating from UC Berkeley with a degree in Optometry in 1940. For a time, he operated his optometry office from within the jewelry store.

In 1938, Frederick died suddenly from a heart attack and Cora took over the

business. During World War II, Arthur served at the Letterman Army Hospital's Eye Clinic in San Francisco, driving to Palo Alto every weekend to help his mother. After his military service, Arthur entered the jewelry business full time. He expanded the business and by 1948 he opened a second store on California Avenue and in 1956 a third store



Arthur Gleim in his University Ave. store, 1981

at the Stanford Shopping Center as one of the original tenants. After closing their California Avenue store in the 1970s, in 1980 Arthur opened another store on Main Street in Los Altos where it remained for 30 years.

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Arthur and his future wife, Marjorie, both attended Paly at the same time. They formally met when Marjorie took a job in the jewelry store as temporary Christmas help in 1941. Marjorie and Arthur ran the store together until their eldest son, Arthur Jr., was born in 1945. Staying home to raise their three children, Art Jr., Bruce, and Georgie, Marjorie was very involved in community service. Art Jr was earning a business degree in college in preparation to join the family business but was drafted into the US Army in 1969 and ordered to Viet Nam where he was tragically killed by a sniper bullet in 1970. Bruce would go on to pursue other interests, and Georgie would later follow in her father's footsteps.



Arthur and Georgie Gleim in their University Ave. store, 1991

Arthur grew Gleim the Jeweler to a national reputation in the industry. He was actively involved in all facets of the jewelry industry and was the original author of the American Gem Society Appraisal Guidelines. Some of the positions he held included President of the California Jewelers' Association in 1967, President of the American Gem Society from 1973 to 1975, Chairman of the Board of the Gemological Institute of America from 1974 to 1981, and President of the Jewelers of America from 1981 to 1983. In 1980, he won the industry's most coveted honor, the Robert M. Shipley Award. He was again recognized in 2004 with the California Jewelers' Robert B. Westover Award. Always open to new ideas, Arthur established a market for buying and selling estate jewelry and opened a diamond cutting operation in the repair shop setting Gleim's a step above the competition. He and a business acquaintance also arranged to buy a very large uncut emerald, which they had cut into what is now the world's largest carved emerald, listed in the Guinness Book of World Records! It may still be seen today at the Stanford store.

Gleim's has always been active in the community, supporting many nonprofit organizations and over the decades has donated over \$1 million to local charities. In 1994, Gleim's won the prestigious Tall Tree Award from the Chamber of Commerce, as the Outstanding Company in Palo Alto. Arthur and Marjorie also received

the Avenidas Lifetimes of Achievement Award in 2004 in recognition of their years of work within the community.

Georgie Gleim began working at Gleim's in 1971 and took over as President in 1985. Arthur never formally "retired," but remained active in the business, tapering his involvement over the years until his passing in 2007 at the age of 91. Like her father, Georgie also received the coveted Robert M. Shipley award and served as President of the American Gem Society and Board Chair of the Jewelers of America, proving that the apple does not fall far from the tree! She is also past President of the Palo Alto University Rotary Club and past Board Chair of the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce. She won the Athena Award from the Chamber of Commerce in 2007, and the Triple Zero Award from the American Gem Society in 2015. Georgie loves what she does saying "there are really good people in the industry" which makes it enjoyable. She still has the original ledgers and watch repair records which are fun to look at and see the costs back then as well as names of families still in the area.

Gleim's has had various locations on University Avenue in Palo Alto over their 89 years in business including their original location at 205 University Ave., 219 University Ave. in 1933, and 266 University Ave. in 1935 where Georgie recalls they shared the space with Hage's House of Music. Their next move was to 360 University Ave., a space they had to vacate around 1949 to make space for the "new" Woolworth redevelopment (now CVS). They then resided at 322 University Ave. for 60 years before moving to their most recent location downtown at 540 University Ave.



Georgie Gleim holding a photograph of an emerald before it was carved. The carved emerald beside her is the world's largest cut emerald, weighing 38 lbs.

In August of this year, Gleim's decided to close their downtown Palo Alto store. With "COVID and staffing issues" Georgie says, it is time to consolidate to one store at the Stanford Shopping Center. "You have to learn to make changes (to stay in business) and adapt to the times". She's happy about the change and says "Gleim's has enjoyed being a part of innumerable important family celebrations and expressions of love over the decades and looks forward to being part of many more."

Then and Now Preview:

Here's a sneak-peak of our October 4th program and a few places that you might want to check out in advance.

El Palo Alto: Many of you have probably visited the tree from which Palo Alto received its name, but if you haven't been there recently, it's worth another trip. Because of the numerous trees that now surround it, the once-double trunk tree might best be viewed from the bike/pedestrian bridge that spans San Francisquito Creek. Six interpretive plaques provide a history of the tree, including the earliest that was placed in 1926. The tree is in El Palo Alto Park located at 117 Palo Alto Avenue (between El Camino Real and Alma Street).



El Palo Alto, 1963



Greg Brown painting cat burglars at 281 University Avenue, 1985

Greg Brown murals: For 20 years, the painting of the cat burglars by local artist Greg Brown graced the front façade of Wiedemann's Department Store on University Avenue. The painting was destroyed in 1995 when the building was remodeled (it is now Restoration Hardware), but luckily many other whimsical paintings by Greg Brown remain in Palo Alto. The cat burglars were repainted on the side of the bank building at 300 Hamilton Avenue. Instead of using himself and his wife as the models, Greg repainted the two images using his children as the burglars.

Sarah Wallis Park: One of Palo Alto's least known parks is named for one of the most interesting persons who ever lived in what is now Palo Alto. Sarah Wallis Park is located at 202 Ash Street at the corner of Grant Avenue. Sarah Wallis was a Mayfield pioneer who championed women's rights and was a leader in local and state suffrage movements. The park is the site of the cottage where she lived with her husband in their later years. Sarah and her husband are buried in Union Cemetery, Redwood City.

Squire House: This 7,000 sq. ft. home at 900 University Avenue was originally built in 1904 at a cost of \$18,000. The first owner, John Adams Squire, was a lecturer in Classics at Stanford University and a direct descendent of President John Adams. John Squire erected a weather station in the back yard and for forty years he recorded the daily weather for Palo Alto. For a number of years before he died in 1930, he was the official US weather observer in Palo Alto. The house was threatened by demolition in 1973, but a public campaign convinced the city to grant it protection. It is now in private ownership. More information on the history and images of the home's interior and exterior can be found at <https://www.pastheritage.org/Articles/SquireMF.html>.



Fund drive to preserve Squire House, 1972

New Members

Sherryl Casella
Phyllis Wedwick

PAHA Upcoming Programs

For the duration of the current COVID-19 restrictions, PAHA plans to continue with Zoom webinar presentations each month. Stay tuned for notices about future programs.

The Heritage Program

Throughout October, there will be a rebroadcast of Doug Graham's 2011 talk about the life of Sarah Wallis. Sarah was a pioneer Mayfield suffragist who founded the California Woman Suffrage movement.

Airs on Channel 28 or 30 on various days and times. It is simultaneously streamed on the Media Center website midpenmedia.org/heritage. Check website for schedule.

PAHA Archives

Due to the current restrictions, the PAHA Archives at Cubberley Community Center, Room K-7 is only open for prearranged appointments. To contact the Archives or to make an appointment to visit, email steve.staiger@cityofpaloalto.org or call (650) 329-2353.



In Memorium

Tom Collins
Vincent Lefebvre

The Tall Tree is published eight times a year by the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
Betty Gerard, Peggy McKee, Leslie Mills, Luana Staiger, Melissa Verber, Editorial
Jon Kinyon, Layout & Design
Omega Printing, Printing

Photographs courtesy of PAHA Guy Miller Archives unless otherwise noted.

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