



Since 1913

The Tall Tree Newsletter

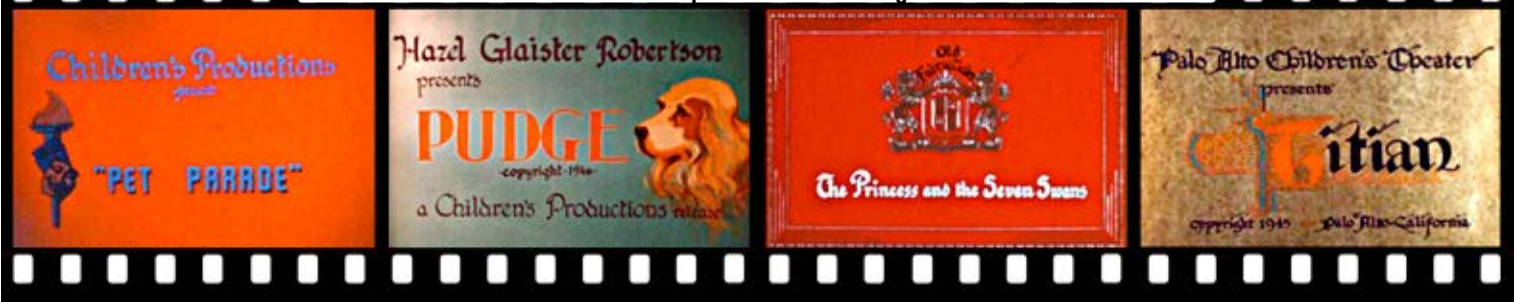
of the PALO ALTO
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

March 2021 Volume 44, No 5

The Palo Alto Historical Association presents via Zoom Webinar

Saving the Past: Preserving Palo Alto Children's Theatre's History

Title screens from a few of the preserved and digitized 16 mm PACT films



"Pet Parade" is a story about a children's parade of their pets, 1947

"Pudge" is a story about a boy and a wandering dog named Pudge, 1946

"The Princess and the Seven Swans" is a fairytale from a PACT screenplay, 1948

"Titan" is a feature production about Titan, the boy artist, 1945

Sunday March 7, 2021 2:00 to 3:00 pm

Webinar link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85183545594>

Join us via Zoom on Sunday, March 7, when audiovisual specialist Chris Castro will be speaking on the ongoing project intended to preserve the film, video, and photographic history of the Palo Alto Children's Theatre (PACT).

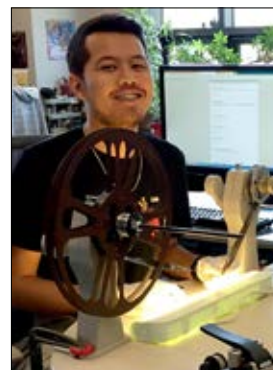
Over the last 18 months, Chris, an expert in the preservation of media, has been working with PAHA and PACT to digitize our at-risk film and video tape collection as well as appropriately prepare and store the original media.

Palo Alto's history is created by its citizens, organizations, buildings and environment. Decades before the city's founding in 1894, local activities were already instrumental in recording local history. To understand who we are and what we did, we depend on collected materials that preserve our history for today and the future. Palo Alto maintains a significant archive of documents, photographs, films, videos, audio recordings and artifacts that provide a record of our history. We cannot afford to lose that collection.

A major challenge in preserving archive material is the nonstop race against loss due to the impermanence of physical records, leading to deterioration. No matter what they are made of (paper, plastic, etc.) or how they were recorded (magnetic particles, chemical coatings, etc.), archive materials have a finite life.

The history of the Palo Alto Children's Theatre is found in the city's extensive archive collection. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers and staff for over almost 90 years, PACT's history has been preserved in the many documents, photos, films, video/audio recordings, and artifacts collected from the early 1930s to the 21st century.

Join us to hear about how this history is being preserved, including stories of the discoveries and challenges of saving historic media.. Examples of preserved PACT films/videos from 1937 to the 1990s will highlight the major successes so far.



Speaker Christopher Castro is the Audiovisual Preservation Specialist for PAHA. He has previously digitized deteriorating films at the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum in Fremont and has also volunteered at multiple Home Movie Days in the Bay Area. Chris earned his BA in Communication from UCLA with a minor in Film, Television and Digital Media.

For more information about our programs and for Zoom instructions, visit our website at www.pahistory.org.

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

Mac's Smoke Shop

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



Mac's Smoke Shop

If you grew up in Palo Alto, you know of Mac's Smoke Shop. It's been around for 87 years! Mac's derived its name from its founders, Glenn and Ruth McManus—Mac for short. Glenn was 39, and Ruth, 37 when they opened the business in 1934. A little known fact is that the original store was actually located across the street from its current location, in half the space occupied by the Thaiphoon restaurant today. Around 1939, Mac's moved to the current location at 534 Emerson Street.

Cigars and pipe tobacco were Mac's specialty. The storefront signage originally advertised Optimo cigars, popularized by Babe Ruth. Tobacco smoking increased from 1940 to 1970, mostly due to the glamorization of cigarette smoking by Hollywood, and reached a peak in 1954, when 45 percent of U.S. adults smoked tobacco. Mac's became the connoisseur shop for loose-leaf tobacco and, in fact, they created their own secret blend that has been passed on to each of the three ownerships over the years.

The store was also known for its newspaper assortment, carrying publications from all over the world, as well as paperback books and one of the best the peninsula. It's no wonder the shop was very popular among Stanford professors. There was a huge candy display, a two-chair barbershop in back, and a two-chair shoeshine stand in front, run by Mr. Flowers. When the barber retired, the rear space was turned into an impressive walk-in humidor where the tobacco and cigar stock is kept fresh.

Originally there were no glass entrance doors, as a metal retractable scissor gate secured the front. During off-hours, patrons would pick up a newspaper from the bundles dropped off from the vendors in front of the store and

toss their coin payment through the gates. In 1985, the city tried to have the iconic neon sign removed (no neon in Palo Alto), but due to public outcry the sign remains today for as long as the business remains.

Ruth and Glenn ran the store until their son, Alfred, purchased the business from them sometime after his return from military service during WWII. He married Kathleen Depew in 1944, and they had two daughters, Diana and Beverly. Diana recalls, when she was very young, her job was to collect the coins on the floor in the morning from the off-hours newspaper sales. Amazingly, her father never came up short over all those years! Her father worked long hours, she said. "The store opened at 7:30 AM and closed at 10 PM, seven days a week...for most of my childhood, my dad worked every one of those hours", Diana told me.



Original owners, Glenn and Ruth McManus inside Mac's Smoke Shop, '40s

Also interesting, is that Al was a private pilot and world champion skeet shooter. Diana recalls travelling all over the country as far as Rochester, New York, to competitions. Al operated the store until his retirement in 1979 when he sold it to Tom Del Sarto and Bob Duggun. Al and Kathleen later moved to Portland, Oregon, near their daughter, Diana, until their passing.

Tom Del Sarto and Bob Duggun ran the store for over 20 years, with Bob handling the day-to-day operations while Tom worked as a consultant for Coors National. Then, in 2000, at a chance encounter during a business meeting, Tom Del Sarto and Neil Khoury, the Vice President of 7-Eleven, struck up a conversation about Mac's. Neil reminisced that he would stop at Mac's for a candy bar after using the phones in the adjacent alley (continued on page 3)

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. Although PAHA continues to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the current restrictions, the Archive is only open for prearranged appointments. To contact the Archive or to make an appointment to visit, email steve.staiger@cityofpaloalto.org or call (650) 329-2353.

Until further notice, PAHA board meetings are held via Zoom Meeting at 4pm on the first Wednesday of each month (except August). Public programs are held via Zoom Webinar at 2pm on the first Sunday of each month (October-December, February-May). Program information and webinar links are available in the Tall Tree newsletters and on our website, www.paha-history.org. The public is welcome to join all programs.

Ray Hamm

By PAHA Board Member Bo Crane



Hamm, Raymond Clifford
Block P
Varsity Football
Varsity Basketball

Ray's yearbook photo

As a Palo Alto High School (Paly) alumnus myself, I had heard of the school football records set by Ray Hamm in the late 50s. I had never met Ray but knew of him by the numbers 9.5 and 1959, which are respectively his Paly football record for average yards per carry as a fullback, and the season in which he set the record. This past August, I met Ray while at a regular coffee group at Town & Country Village where we chatted several times about his life.

Ray didn't go out for sports until his junior year at Paly. He didn't see much play in football but starred as a backup on the basketball team that won the league title. In the spring, he competed in the long and high jump.

The following year as a senior and playing fullback, Ray gained 91 yards on 10 carries in Paly's non-league season opener and was named the Viking Athlete of the Week by the school newspaper. Against newly opened Woodside High School, Ray was credited with an astounding 155 yards in 8 carries, including a



Palo Alto HS vs Cubberley HS game, 1959

68-yard touchdown run. With Paly undefeated after four league games, Ray, nicknamed "the Rocket", led the Southern Peninsula Athletic League (SPAL) in rushing yards as well as yards per carry with an average of 11.2 yards. If not for the last two games with powerhouses Cubberley HS and Sequoia HS, which shut down Paly's running game, Ray would have led the league in total rushing yards, falling only 23 yards short of the rushing title. He still set the school record of 9.5 yards per carry.

Following the football season, Ray resumed his place on the basketball team that again won the league title. In the spring, he continued as Paly's best in the long and high jumps. After graduating from Paly, Ray attended Foothill Junior College and San Francisco State University before being inducted into the Army, where he served in Vietnam. Upon returning home, Ray went to work for Varian around 1970 and also played for the Palo Alto Rugby Club. The year 2020 would have been Ray's 60-year high school reunion if it weren't for the Coronavirus.



Ray Hamm, 2020

(continued from page 2)

to call in orders for the 7-Up Corporation, his first job out of college. He also recalled his wife's fond memories of going to Mac's with her uncle and Dad before the Stanford football games to get candy and cigars. A year later, Neil received a call from Tom inviting him out for a burger and beer. Tom's partner, Bob, wanted to retire and they wanted to know if Neil and Lori were interested in buying Mac's. Neil knew nothing about a smoke shop but when he told his wife Lori, a finance director at Stanford University, she loved the idea! Neil jokes, "I must have had too many beers (at that meal)... but buying Mac's was the best thing I ever did."

The employees run the shop and share in the profits, Neil says. Now retired from 7-Eleven, he works at Mac's two days a week. He does it for the camaraderie with locals



Glenn, Ruth and their son Al McManus at Mac's original location, 543 Emerson (currently Thaiphooon Restaurant)

and downtown merchants, which still gives him that small town feel and, oh yes, for the free cigars!

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, Mac's lost its magazine supplier and no longer sells magazines. In addition, last summer the City of Palo Alto banned the sale of "flavored" tobacco, so they no longer can make their 86-year old secret recipe. However, they haven't given up the fight and have filed a lawsuit against the City to exempt them for the sale of flavored tobacco (they do not sell vape). In the

meanwhile, Mac's continues to sell regular tobacco and newspapers along with other items including packaged pastries, candies, locally made Rocket Salsa, and a good cup of coffee for \$1.49, among other items. They also were recently approved for an off-sale beer and wine license to help make ends meet, and they plan to continue as long as financially possible.

Jaunting During the Pandemic

A year ago, while writing the jaunts for the March 2020 issue of the Tall Tree, the Coronavirus was just a blip on the horizon, and few were talking about a pandemic. Now in late February 2021, the pandemic is still with us. In planning your March 2021 jaunts, be sure to check telephone numbers and/or websites for latest public health guidelines.

Stairways: San Francisco is rich with 900 beautiful stairway options you can explore! Maps of self-guided tours are available for download on a number of websites. Here is a link to a helpful map site: <https://www.sfog.us/stairways/GGH.htm>. And here's another link with descriptions and images: <https://sf.curbed.com/maps/sf-staircases-beautiful-coolest-urban-steps-san-francisco>. Also, Alexandra Kenin has published two books on urban hikes in San Francisco and the East Bay. Both books are available on Amazon, or check your local bookstore.



16th Avenue Moraga Steps

Hidden Garden: In contrast to the harsh winter in much of the country, Californians are fortunate to be able to enjoy a number of horticultural delights this time of year—even in early February, paper whites and camellias are in bloom!



Photo courtesy: Santa Cruz Arboretum & Botanic Garden

Any time of the year is a good time to visit, but now is a great time to take a jaunt to the **Arboretum and Botanic Garden on the campus of UC Santa Cruz** to see what's blooming there in March. And don't miss the South African, Australian, and New Zealand gardens, or the Aroma and Succulent gardens.

The Arboretum and Botanic Garden are at 1156 High Street, Santa Cruz. For hours and policies during the pandemic, call (831) 502-2998, or visit the website <https://arboretum.ucsc.edu/index.html>

Appointments are required to visit, as are masks and social distancing. Admission is free for members.

Galleries:

- **The Pace Gallery** is open by appointment only and is featuring the work of Kenneth Noland through February 27. Their next exhibit opens March 12. 229 Hamilton Avenue in Palo Alto, www.pacegallery.com/galleries/palo-alto
- **The Qualia Contemporary Art Gallery** is a new gallery in downtown Palo Alto and is presently between exhibits. 328 University Avenue in Palo Alto, www.qualiacontemporaryart.com
- **The Gallery House** has a few of their exhibits on their website to view virtually. 320 California Avenue in Palo Alto, www.galleryhouse.art
- **The Palo Alto Art Center** is featuring a series of virtual artist talks presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Where the Heart Is: Contemporary Art by Immigrant Artists*. Free virtual artist talks are at 5:00pm on March 5 and 12, and April 2. Registration for the talks is required. For more information, call 650-329-2366, or visit the website www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/csd/artcenter

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Welcome New Members!

Bob Skolmen
Jennifer Mutz

Upcoming Zoom Webinar Programs

April 11, 2:00-3:00

May 2, 2:00-3:00

Check our website at www.pahistory.org for program information

Previous PAHA Programs

If you missed the January 24th program, *Palo Alto Athletes Prevail at the 1920 Olympics*, you can find this and other recent PAHA program videos on Vimeo at <https://vimeo.com/505081257>

The Heritage Program

This month's heritage program features *Palo Alto Athletes Prevail at the 1920 Olympics*, with Bo Crane.

This program airs on Channel 28 or 30 at various times and is simultaneously streamed on the Midpen Media Center website, midpenmedia.org/heritage. Check website for schedule.

In Memoriam

Shirley Mills

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



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