



Since 1913

# The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO  
HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION

Dec 2021 Volume 45, No 3

The Palo Alto Historical Association Presents via Zoom Webinar



Paul and Jean Hanna

## Life in the Frank Lloyd Wright Hanna House

Sunday, December 5, 2021 2:00 – 3:00 pm

Webinar link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89395590811>



John Hanna

PAHA is proud to present former Palo Alto Mayor Karen Holman with another installment of Palo Alto Vignettes. Karen's special guest will be Palo Alto John Hanna, son of Paul and Jean Hanna who commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to design their home on the Stanford campus.

and more recently, the likes of Frank Gehry. These architects carry local, state and even more expansive resumes.

The Hannas commissioned Wright to design their home after coming to Stanford from the Midwest. Thus began the saga of the Hanna House, also known as the Honeycomb House, with construction beginning in 1937.

Thanks to accommodation by Laura Jones, Stanford University Archeologist, our program will be Zoom broadcast directly from the Hanna House! Mr. Hanna will recount his life in the house and offer stories about Wright himself.



Karen Holman

Karen Holman is current Midpeninsula Regional Open Space Director, and former MidPen Board President. She has always had an interest in history and has moderated the December PAHA program for 15 of the last 17 years.

Palo Alto and Stanford have had the good fortune of great architects who have left their imprints on their landscapes: Birge Clark, Bernard Maybeck, Julia Morgan, Edward Durell Stone, A. Quincy Jones (one of Joseph Eichler's go-to architects), Charles Sumner,

*A brief annual PAHA membership meeting and election of directors will also be included in the afternoon's program. For more information about our programs, and for Zoom instructions, visit our website at [www.pahistory.org](http://www.pahistory.org).*

**2021 PALO ALTO  
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Georgie Gleim, *President*
- Rich Green, *Vice President*
- Molly Tinney, *Correspondence Secretary*
- Bo Crane, *Recording Secretary*
- Robert Strohecker, *Treasurer*
- Darla Secor, *Historian*
- Steve Staiger, *Historian*
- Colleen Braff
- Amanda Brown
- Jeff Day
- Anita Delaney
- Dennis Garcia
- Brian George
- Betty Gerard
- Catherine Hamrick-Down
- Lisa Krieger
- Leslie Mills
- Jerry Tinney
- Melissa Verber
- William Warrior

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](mailto: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.pahistory.org](http://www.pahistory.org). The public is welcome to join all programs.

# Popular Research Topics at the Archives



**Darla Secor**  
**PAHA Historian**

It's always fascinating to me to see what people are interested in researching or looking for when they come to the PAHA Archives. Common requests include property research, obituary requests, and accessing materials related to recent news or issues in Palo Alto.

Recently, I've noticed a trend in requests for aerial images of Palo Alto. The interest has been for a variety of reasons such as research on how streets were developed over the years, what a historic property that is now gone once looked like, locating areas that once contained Native American mounds, and general interest in how Palo Alto has grown over the years.



Aerial photo of Embarcadero Road, 1959

At the Archives, we have a number of different resources to explore when looking for these types of maps. One of our easiest accessible resources is our online photo collection at [pahistory.org](http://pahistory.org). We have over

350 aerial images of Palo Alto dating back to the 1920s. Once you find what you are looking for in our collection, you are welcome to come into the Archives and look at the original photograph, since our online images are low-resolution.



Aerial photo of University Avenue looking east, 1929

Another great resource you can check out at the Archives is the book *Over Time: Palo Alto*, authored by Ben Hatfield and Barry Anderson. This book contains aerial photographs of Palo Alto from 1947 to 1980. Author Ben Hatfield's father, Adrian Hatfield, was one of the first aerial photographers in the Bay Area, starting his business Hatfield Aerial Surveys in 1947. You can look at over 100 aerial photos of Palo Alto and read about the history of our rapid post war expansion.

For a more exhaustive resource, I've recently learned about the Aerial Photography Archives at UCSB. Their website has information on 2.5 million aerial images, mostly of California. You can find more information at: [www.library.ucsb.edu/geospatial](http://www.library.ucsb.edu/geospatial).

## Welcome to Our New Board Member!



Bill and his trusty sidekick Lilly

William Warrior is a fourth generation San Franciscan whose maternal grandmother was a survivor of the 1906 earthquake and fire.

A resident of Palo Alto from 1962, briefly absent from 1967-1970 to live in South Carolina, then returning to Palo Alto in 1970, Bill currently makes his home in Mountain View. Bill worked for the Palo Alto Police Department Animal Control Division from 1979 to 2020—a longevity record for the city that has yet to be broken!

Bill includes his love for Palo Alto history with his love for the Immigration Station National Landmark at Angel Island, where he is a volunteer docent for California State Parks.

# Palo Alto's Architectural Diversity

by PAHA Board member, Leslie Mills

Why does Palo Alto have so many different architectural styles? The answer begins with Leland Stanford's desire to open a University in an alcohol-free zone.



Queen Anne style in Professorville

Believing liquor would be a bad influence on his school's future students, Stanford asked the neighboring town of Mayfield to close its saloons. They scoffed at the idea. Undeterred, Stanford encouraged his long time friend and business partner, Timothy Hopkins, to purchase nearly 700 acres of land adjacent to Stanford's land to create a "dry" town with amenities to support his school. Hopkins purchased the land, sectioned it into lots, named the streets, and recorded the map in 1889, calling it University Park. The area stretched from San Francisquito Creek to Embarcadero Road and from El Camino Real to Middlefield Road. He sold off 106 lots to 3000 people—the highest price for a lot was \$287.



Colonial Revival style on Melville Avenue

The University opened in 1891 and attracted professors and students from all over the country. The area quickly became a popular location for raising families. New homes were constructed on once open fields, most were designed according to each owner's architectural preference. In 1894, University Park became incorporated under the name Palo Alto. As the city grew, so did the variation in architectural designs resulting in the mix of styles we see today.



Craftsman style on Melville Avenue

The city's first wave of development occurred between 1894 and the 1930s in an area just north of Embarcadero Road. Because of its proximity to the University, many professors purchased property in this area which became known as **Professorville**. By the 1920s, Professorville was almost fully built out. The architectural styles varied greatly reflecting the varying tastes of its first residents, many of which were from back east and the Midwest. Two of the most common styles of architecture at the time were the Colonial Revival and Craftsman. Other styles included the Queen Anne, Tudor, and Classical Revival among others.

**Old Palo Alto** lies just south of Professorville, between Embarcadero Road and Oregon Expressway. Once a borough owned by Alfred Seale in the early 1900s, Seale began subdividing the land into large lots for residential development in 1904. Edwin Gamble, son of the founder of Proctor & Gamble, was the neighborhood's first residence. Other wealthy families were drawn to the area, and built homes to their stylings. The area was incorporated into Palo Alto in 1917 and has a blend of old stately homes as well as newer contemporary reconstructed residences.



Spanish Colonial Revival style, Birge Clark designed home on Cowper Street

Although there are several architects who contributed to Palo Alto's landscape, none was more influential than Birge Clark. After opening his office in Palo Alto in 1922, he designed more than 200 commercial and residential buildings in the city and Stanford during his 50-year career. His designs were primarily in the Spanish Colonial Revival style with such notable works as the Lucie Stern Community Center on Middlefield Road and the U.S. Post Office on Hamilton Avenue.



Joseph Eichler designed home

The post WWII era brought an influx of new residents to the Bay Area in need of affordable housing. Developer Joseph Eichler saw the need and worked with architect Robert Anshen to come up with an affordable modernistic design. The radical design, which won national acclaim, included slab floors with radiant heating, flat roofs, windowless facades in the front and floor to ceiling windows in the back. Eichler had several developments in Palo Alto spanning from 1950 to 1974. Two of his most well known subdivisions were **Fairmeadow** and **Greenmeadow**, both located south of Oregon Expressway.

Those who ventured to the newly created city of Palo Alto to build their new homes and lives, created architecturally diverse neighborhoods. Further influenced by Birge Clark and Joseph Eichler, the City's buildings are as diverse as the people who live there.

# December Jaunts

Holiday fun is happening at **Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden!** Located at 1431 Waverley Street, for updates and ticket information call 650-329-1356 or visit [www.gamblegarden.org](http://www.gamblegarden.org).

**December 2, 3, and 4:** Make your reservation now to attend one of the events at Gamble's Festival of Trees! The Festival features a winter wonderland of trees, a silent auction, a holiday marketplace, fun for kids, and much more.

**Saturday, December 11, 2:00pm - 4:00pm:** Festive wreath making class



Image courtesy of Gamble Garden



Image courtesy of POST

As long as the weather is cooperative, take advantage by hiking some of the trails and loops recommended by **Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST)**. POST offers maps, tips, and details for 28 hikes, ranked as easy to moderate to difficult, as well as information about dogs, bikes, wheelchairs, etc. For more information, call 650-854-7696, or visit [www.openspacetrust.org](http://www.openspacetrust.org).

## Welcome New PAHA Members

Daniele Archambault  
Anne Gregor  
Patricia Zinola

## & New Lifetime PAHA Members

Monica Yeung Arima  
Leslie Mills

## Upcoming Programs

January 30  
March 6  
April 3

Check our website at  
[www.pahistory.org](http://www.pahistory.org) for  
program information

## Previous PAHA Programs

If you missed the Nov 7th program, *The 25th PAST Centennial Plaque and Historic Preservation Awards*, you can find it and other recent PAHA program videos on Vimeo by following this link: <https://vimeo.com/644979669>

## The Heritage Program

You can also watch the most recent PAHA program on local TV. Visit <https://midpenmedia.org/local-tv/> and enter the word "Heritage" in the search box to find the broadcast schedule for PAHA programs.

# Happy Holidays from PAHA!

Consider a renewal or upgrade to Lifetime Member for yourself, or a PAHA membership as a gift this holiday season! You can also make a tax-deductible donation for 2021! Memberships and donations may be made at: [pahistory.org/membership](http://pahistory.org/membership) or by mail at PAHA, PO Box 193, Palo Alto, CA 94302.

Need holiday gift ideas? How about a gift of Palo Alto history? PAHA publications would make great holiday gifts and are available at Bell's Books, Books Inc., and at the PAHA Archives!

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, *Editors*  
Jon Kinyon, *Layout & Design*  
Omega Printing, *Printing*

Photographs courtesy of PAHA Guy Miller Archives unless otherwise noted.

**GLEIM**  
THE  
**JEWELER**  
EST. 1931  
[gleimjewelers.com](http://gleimjewelers.com)

## BELL'S BOOKS

Fine New, Used & Rare Books  
Bought & Sold Since 1935

Open daily : 536 Emerson Street  
in downtown Palo Alto

650-323-7822 [www.bellsbooks.com](http://www.bellsbooks.com)