



Since 1971



◆ April-June, 2016 ◆

VOL. XXXXII No. 2

800 ALMA STREET, MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA 94025-3445

650/330-2522

Celebrating the Year of the Monkey

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No complaints from our guests who definitely enjoyed dinner at Fey's Restaurant. A nice crowd of members and guests kept up with lively conversation and good cheer. El Niño took a break for the event with our guests arriving dry and leaving in good spirits.

Guido Budelli held court with his family. Flo was with them in spirit.

Rosemary Yob did it again. Another year, winning the door prize yet another time. Rosi has a certain knack for this. Wish she would share her secret. Way to go, Rosie.

We thank you all for making MPHA's Annual Dinner another memorable event. Hope to see you next year. 🍀



The Budelli Family

Holy Cross Cemetery Tour

Due to the popularity of the Holy Cross Cemetery Tour, MPHA is looking forward to hosting a third annual tour with *Michael Svanevik* to be held on Saturday, May 28 from 3:30 to 5:00pm. Oh, the stories and secrets Michael has to share about the early history of Menlo Park and its inhabitants! 🍀

Please see page 7 for information and the reservation form.



Diane Morey and Moira Morey

Committees

Membership

Carol Schumacher

Newsletter

Lydia Cooper

(650) 327-7556

Bo Crane

Web Master

Jym Clendenin

President's Message

Jim Clendenin

MPHA launched its 45th year in January with the election of the Board officers and the setting of goals for 2016. The five goals are:

- 1) **Create a formal budget**
- 2) **Prepare for the Camp Fremont Centennial 2017-18**
- 3) **Participate in MPFPD Centennial in 2016**
- 4) **Work on membership growth and retention**
- 5) **Pursue the Menlo Gates project**

Increasing membership is a on-going job. We thank our members who have supported us through the years, but we continue to think of ways to further increase that membership so that MPHA can remain vital to the community. We would like to expand our membership this year to 300 and hope to accomplish this with your help. On this note, we ask you to be champions of our membership drive by inviting friends, relatives and business associates to join.

Camp Fremont was one of 32 Army training camps established when the U.S. entered WWI. By the end of 1917, a full Army Division (28,000 soldiers) was encamped in Menlo Park training for battle in the fields of France. Camp Fremont was rapidly dismantled following the armistice in November 1918. However, remnants of the camp remain both in structures and in memory, and certainly this experience factors into the incorporation of the City of Menlo Park in 1927. Expect to learn more details during the Centennial, but meanwhile Barbara Wilcox's just-published book, *World War I Army Training by San Francisco Bay* (2016), 143pp, provides a comprehensive review of the camp—including why it was sited in Menlo Park—and the role it played in a changing United States. It can be purchased at amazon.com, at Kepler's and at other local bookstores. **In the meantime, Barbara will be giving a talk on Camp Fremont at the Menlo Park Library, June 11 at 1 pm. Try to attend—you will not be disappointed.**

Finally, we welcome your thoughts to help make MPHA better than ever! 🌸

Calling All Writers...

Your editors would like to share the fun and excitement of putting together a quarterly bulletin of interesting historical news and preparing it for mailing to all members and friends. We would like to work closely with interested members to write and publish articles such as vignettes of family life, episodes involving civic events, or anything of historical interest to you.

You choose the format, add features, interesting art work...in other words, we need new ideas and a fresh approach to our Newsletter. If anyone would like to submit an article of historic local interest or suggest a subject for such an article, please let Lydia know by either calling the office, (650) 330-2522, or e-mailing her at ledioli@yahoo.com. Or, send her a note via mail: MPHA, 800 Alma Street, Menlo Park, 94025.

We look forward to hearing from many budding authors! 🌸

Thank you to those renewing their 2016 membership:

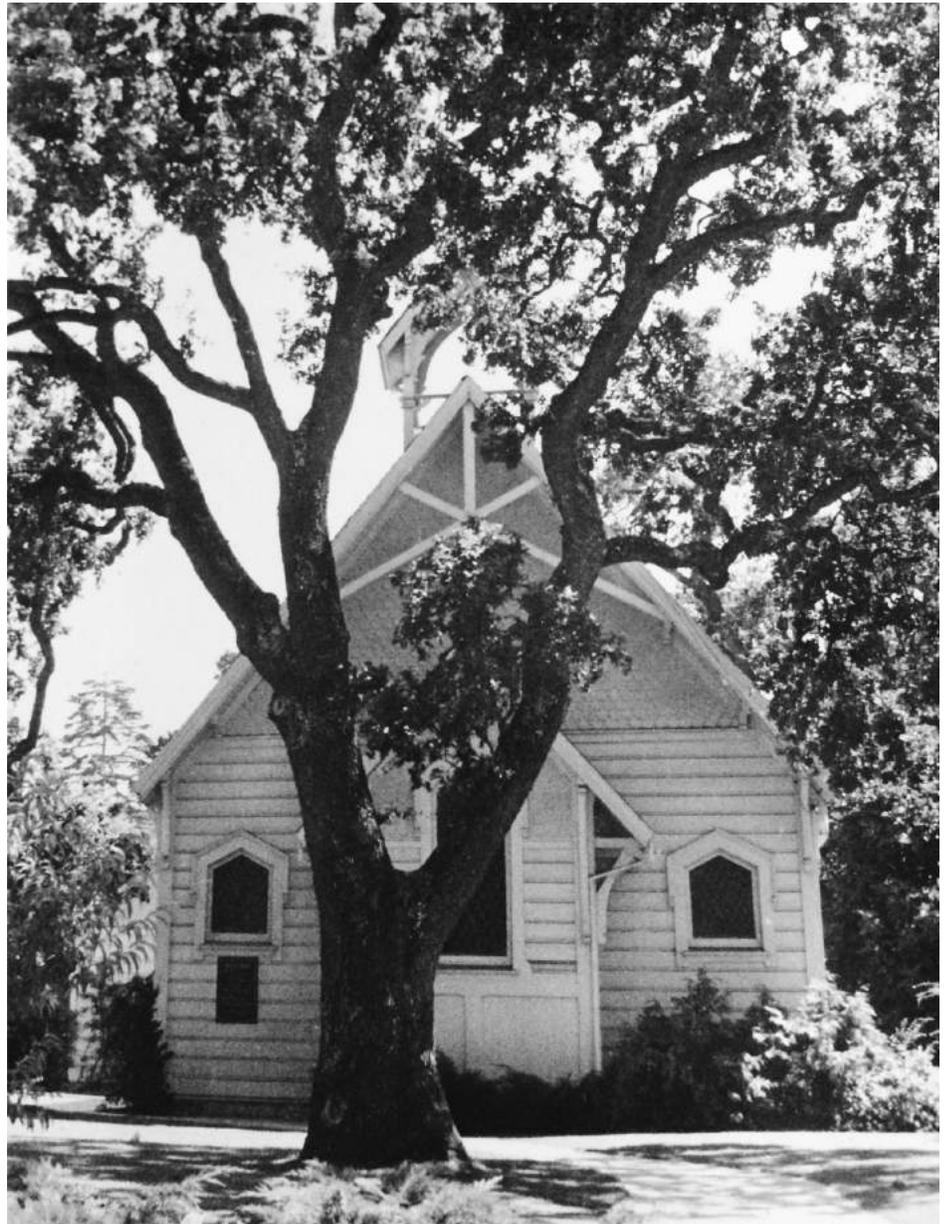
Frances Albrecht, George Andrews, Richard Angus, Jim Bigelow, Thomas Blanchard, Lynne Bramlett, Michael Brassea, Frances Bryner, Guido Budelli, Leta Beth Bunnenberg, Bernadette Callahan, Mrs. Frank Carney, Tom & Sharyl Carter, Robert Crane, James Clendenin, Mary Dahlberg, Lydia Dioli Cooper, Diane Ellsworth, Dr. Jo English, Mel Froli, Gail Gavello, Al & Theresa Genevro, Gene & Joy Giannotti, Robert Goodwin, Edward Graham, Roger Guy, Janet Hafner, Peter Hart, Patty Hjelm, Alan C. Jones. Antonette Kavanaugh, Patricia Labra, Martha & Peter Lancestremere, Jim Lewis, Norma Lyle, Robert McCarthy, Mark & Lane Maloney, Joanna Martin, Barbara Mason, Carol Massard, Louis Matas, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Matthews, Mrs. Joe McLoughlin, Susan Morey Mein, Fred & Kayleen Miller, Patrick Moran, Frank Morris, Joseph Merkert, Sandra Pachaud, Jack Parkhouse, Caroline Pease, Elena Lyn Reese, Mr. & Mrs. Rud Scholz, D. C. Sonnichsen, Nita Spangler, Stanford Park Nannies, Marjorie & Herbert Stone, Elizabeth Taft, Cecilia Tomei, Ann Classen Treadwell, Alan VanEss, Christopher Ver Planck, Grace Vitale, Sandy Walker, Betty Williams, Lowell Wolfe, Samuel Wright, Ralph & Rosie Yob. 🌸

Church of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin, Crane Street

By Bo Crane

In going through a childhood album created by my late mother I came upon a photo of what she titled “Trinity Episcopal Church,” where I was baptized in 1950, shortly after my birth. Intrigued to discover if the church still existed, I went online June 2015 and found a church of the same name located on Ravenswood Ave. and Pine St., not far from where my parents brought me home on West O’Connor St. 65 years ago.

The Holy Trinity Church that I now saw looked nothing like the 1950 photo, which I had retaken by cell phone. Oh well, I thought. The next day, I joined with Jym Clendenin, president of the Menlo Park Historical Assn. (MPHA), for a drive to Pescadero where we had both signed up for a bicycle tour. After the ride, I mentioned my disappointing search to Jym and showed him my cell phone photo. Sure enough, he knew exactly where the church building has been moved. Amazingly, it was now on Crane Street, just north of Oak Grove Ave. After dropping Jym off, I went by and discovered the small church matching almost exactly my 65-year-old photo. Suddenly, I was reconnected to an event that occurred one month into my life.



The Russian Orthodox church was now dedicated to the Nativity of the Holy Virgin with an Eastern double-cross on top, replacing the Celtic cross of the Holy Trinity Church and the Episcopalian church’s top mounted cupola was gone. Also, the massive oak tree in front of the Crane St. church did not match the massive oak tree location to the side of the Pine St. church.

All of this demonstrates to me the benefit of having an active historical society and, in this situation, my luck

at having the association’s president alongside just at the time. That the church was now on a street sharing my last name of Crane, no relation, was an off-the-charts coincidence.

Listed in the *Historic Tour of Menlo Park* pamphlet, November 2014 is the Nativity of the Holy Virgin Church. According to the pamphlet, the redwood chapel, then named Holy Trinity Church, was built on Encinal Ave. in 1886 from plans in Joseph Coleman Hart’s *Designs for Parish Churches*, published in 1857.

Church of the Nativity... *continued from page 3*

The Stanfords attended the church, with the Menlo Park location much closer to their San Francisquito Creek-side home than Episcopal St. Peter's in Redwood City. The MPHA photo collection site shows some pre-1900 photos taken of the church, before it was painted white, a color that has been retained.

According to an InMenlo.com article (8/1/09) the Holy Trinity church was moved to Oak Grove Ave. near Laurel St. in 1897. Fifty years later in 1947, it was moved again to the Pine St. location. The renamed Russian church has a similar name to the Catholic Church of the Nativity, which was a wooden church built in 1872 off Middlefield Avenue. The building was later moved and deposited at its present site on Oak Grove Ave. in 1878 with a brick foundation added in 1888. The Catholic Nativity Elementary School at Oak Grove and Laurel was founded in 1956 by the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, also similar in name to the Russian church.

The Russian Orthodox Nativity of the Holy Virgin website states that in 1950, a group that included Prince Vasily Romanov met in Palo Alto to discuss establishing a Russian Orthodox parish in Menlo Park. Services began in October of that year. In 1951 for \$25 a month, the Russian congregation

began renting the small Episcopalian church, now a chapel to a larger Holy Trinity Church. In 1957, the Episcopalian parish offered the chapel to the Russian parish under the condition that they take it away. On October 16, the building was moved in a two-day process. The MPHA collections site contain color photos of the chapel in 1957 being placed on its current site. A new foundation was not poured until the spring of 1958.

Prince Vasily Romanov, one of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin Church's founders, was the great grandson of Tsar Nicholas I, who was also the great grandfather of Tsar Nicholas II. Vasily's mother was the sister of Tsar Nicholas II, who was therefore both Vasily's second cousin and uncle. In 1919, eleven-year-old Vasily escaped Bolshevik Russia, got married and eventually found his way to Woodside around 1964 where he was a winemaker and chicken farmer. His only daughter, Marina, at age twenty-six, was married in Woodside in January 1967 (later divorced and moved to Aspen, Colorado). Vasily passed away at age 81 in his Woodside bed in 1989 and, for one final Crane connection, I discovered he died on the day of my forty-ninth birthday. 🍷

Bo Crane, member of MPHA, is the author of The Life and Times of Dennis Martin



Menlo Park Plaque No. 53

By Jym Clendenin

Traveling from Monterey to San Francisco, Juan Batista de Anza with a party of 13 crossed the San Francisquito Creek on March 26, 1776. On the north side of the creek was a wooden cross that had been left in Nov 1774 by the party of Don Fernando de Rivera y Moncada. The cross was to indicate a possible mission site, but the area proved unsuitable due to lack of year-round water. For the bicentennial of Batista's journey (1775-6), a plaque in the shape of the state of California was issued. The version in Menlo Park —mounted on a large rock located near the southwest side of the Civic Center garden pool—has the following wording:

LT. COLONEL JUAN BAUTISTA DE ANZA AND PARTY
CROSSED THIS AREA IN MARCH 1776,
EN ROUTE TO SELECT SITES FOR THE PRESIDIO
AND THE MISSION OF SAN FRANCISCO.

Searsville Lake Park

By Julie Cain

Searsville Lake was formed by the creation of a dam built by the Spring Valley Water Company between 1889 and 1891 as part of a water system intended for San Francisco's use. However, Leland Stanford claimed prior water rights to the site and negotiated a lease with Spring Valley that allowed his Palo Alto estate and Stanford University first rights to any water caught by the dam. Originally known as the Portola Reservoir—the dam was referred to as the Portola-Crespi Dam, shortened to the Portola Dam—by Spring Valley, locals instead referred to it as Searsville Lake, in honor of the nearby town of Searsville. The town had initially supported the local redwood logging industry, then evolved into a rustic destination used by those hankering to get away from San Francisco. The town had been largely vacated due to the dam's completion. Although local legend had it that Searsville was submerged underneath the lake's murky waters, which would have been true if the dam had been built to the height originally intended, the town site was instead immediately adjacent to the new lake. Most of the town buildings were relocated or sold for scrap lumber while the local school remained in operation for several more years.

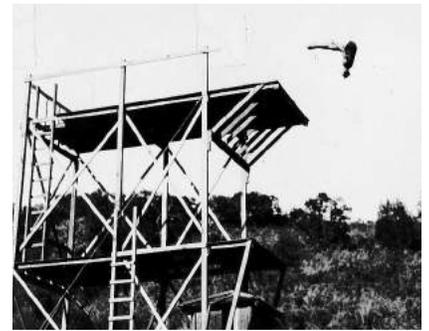
Stanford intended the water to be used for drinking and bathing by the new campus residents, but Searsville Lake water proved to be a muddy brownish-yellow in color and was odiferous to boot. Mrs. Stanford arranged for several wells to be dug on the campus grounds and Searsville water soon was relegated to irrigation and fire prevention uses. In the meantime, locals living in the area had treated the lake as an informal recreational site for boating, swimming, fishing and picnicking as soon as it had filled up.



Spring Valley had no problem with this, merely posting signs on the property warning against the careless use of fire in the form of campfires and cigars.

In 1917, Stanford University purchased the property and lake from Spring Valley and in 1922, Stanford swimming coaches Ernst and Greta Brandsten leased 150 acres, including the lake, to run a

part-time recreational park. They lived on-site in a small cabin that had no power, running water or telephone. Originally from Sweden, Ernst Brandsten was that country's National



Diving Champion in 1912 and Greta, *nee* Greta Johansson, won the gold medal for the women's high dive at the 1912 Stockholm Olympic Games; the 1912 Olympics were the first games where women were allowed to compete in water sports. The Brandstens coached Stanford swimmers and Ernst Brandsten would create a long string of Olympic and world champion Stanford swimmers over the next two decades. During the early 1920s, he built a high-dive platform on top of the dam and used it for training, along with hosting several important swimming meets there, including West Coast Olympic try-outs.

The Brandstens included swimming, boating, canoeing, picnicking, horseback riding, hiking, climbing and dancing among the various activities. The venture was first known as Camp Searsville and later became Searsville Lake Park. The use of the facility was seasonal, usually between April and September, with the holiday weekends of Memorial Day, the Fourth of July and Labor Day drawing tremendous crowds. Activities were initially focused on the east side of the lake:

It is not only the facilities for water sports which bring visitors to Searsville in large numbers. The place itself has great natural beauty, little appreciated before because there were no roads or walks along the eastern side [of the lake] and about all anyone ever saw there was what could be seen from the drive through the Spring Valley property bordering the west bank. Now there are trails all along the lake side and winding up the hills, with many delightful places for picnic parties. And on weekends hundreds of people spend the day there. On the days of the swimming meets the attendance mounted up to thousands. It is probably the only lake available for boating and swimming by the public within easy distance of San Francisco.

Searsville... continued from page 5

The resort was spread out over approximately 150 acres. Visitors arrived at the Whiskey Hill gate where they paid admission to Mrs. Brandsten, situated in a small admissions tent. Drivers proceeded straight down the dirt road and turned right before crossing over a bridge, then parking below the dam. A foot trail skirted the east side of the lake and led to a large bathhouse directly situated above the beach, a fifteen-minute walk from the site of the dam. Mrs. Brandsten quit her job coaching at Stanford to run the park and was literally the sole authority as Brandsten was often away from home coaching swimmers for numerous competitions. Known for his tongue-in-cheek sense of humor, Brandsten often warned divers to be careful not to hit their heads on the chimneys and rooftops supposedly submerged underneath the lake's chilly waters.

In 1926, the Brandstens moved out of their cabin into a house standing on the west side of the lake. They shifted operations from the east to the west side as well, putting in a new beach that would remain in use until the park closed in 1976. In 1929, Stanford University spent \$25,000 to dredge the lake, also putting in a dike and expanding the roadways, "for beauty and nature lovers" to better enjoy "one of the outstanding and scenic centers of Northern California."

Searsville Lake Park limped through the Great Depression and was closed for most of WWII. When the Brandstens reopened after the war, both locals and people from as far as San Francisco continued to flock there. The Brandstens retired in 1955 after running the park for some thirty-two years, and the leasehold was assumed by a former Stanford student, Austin Clapp. Clapp, under Brandsten's tutelage, had won a gold medal for the men's relay at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics and a bronze medal for water polo at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics. Clapp was an attorney and his wife Gloria, like Greta Brandsten before her, was often responsible for the day-to-day operations of the park. The Clapps and their two sons, like the Brandstens before them, lived on the property. One of the improvements Clapp made to the lake was roped-off swimming lanes with a turning wall, creating the only fifty-meter swimming course in the area. Competitive swimming and water polo training at Searsville Lake made a comeback and would persist through the 1970s.

Numerous community groups also used Searsville Lake Park over the years, starting with the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls in the 1920s. Local companies and clubs often used the site for picnics, as did local



schools. Kids who lived in the area sneaked into the park through various gaps in the fences and more than one made a forbidden jump into the lake from the dam or diving tower. The Woodside Trail Club, the Menlo Circus Club and the Shack Riders made use of the many bridle trails and Stanford community members were frequent users of the park. In 1957, local bicycle enthusiast, Charles Allert, persuaded the Clapps to put up \$5,000 to construct a velodrome near the lake. The bicycle bowl was immensely popular, as were the baseball diamonds and horseshoe pits. In 1963, hundreds attended a folk music concert featuring Pete Seeger that was held in the same meadow the Girl Scouts had camped in back in the 1920s.

Immediately adjacent to Searsville Lake Park was Stanford University's Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve. During the 1960s, as research at Jasper Ridge continued to expand, problems existed with the public straying from park property into preserve lands and destroying, inadvertently and otherwise, ongoing experiments. Despite Addison Janes and Don Beeson assuming the lease in 1973 and successfully making real improvements to the site, Stanford University closed the park in favor of Jasper Ridge in 1976. The single-most voiced regret of the 100s of locals who made going to Searsville Lake Park a regular part of their lives was their inability now to share that experience with their children. That said, many of the Jasper Ridge docents are locals who spent their childhoods coming to the lake, and they are happy to provide nature tours of Searsville Lake and the surrounding areas for the public today.

Julie Cain is the Program Coordinator for Heritage Services at Stanford University. She has worked for Stanford for nearly 30 years and has a deep interest in the history of California and of the University. 🐾

MENLO PARK HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Back by popular demand...

THIRD ANNUAL HOLY CROSS CEMETERY TOUR

SATURDAY, May 28, 2016

3:30 to 5:00pm

Due to the overwhelming success of MPHA's sponsored tour of Holy Cross Cemetery, Michael Svanevik has graciously accepted in conducting another tour Holy Cross Cemetery—Menlo Park's only cemetery—dating back to the early 1860's. This will be an excellent opportunity to learn about the early history of Menlo Park and its inhabitants from someone who has many stories to tell along with some secrets. The cost of the tour is again \$10 per person.



Michael Svanevik, a long-time professor of history at College of San Mateo, is recognized as one of the leading authorities on the history of San Mateo County. Over the past 25+ years, his articles—co-authored by his wife Shirley Burgett—have appeared in the *San Mateo Times*, the *Peninsula Independent*, the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *Daily News*. A popular lecturer in the community, he is currently involved with Little House in Menlo Park. 🍷

PLEASE FILL OUT THE FORM AND RETURN TO THE ASSOCIATION OFFICE WITH A \$10 CHECK

HOLY CROSS CEMETERY TOUR 2016 RESERVATION FORM

THE TOUR IS LIMITED TO THE FIRST 25 | NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN

Number: _____ @ \$10 each Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Name: _____ Guest: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Please make checks payable to **MENLO PARK HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

Send check and form to: MPHA, 800 Alma Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025



Since 1971

800 Alma Street, Lower Level
Menlo Park, CA 94025-3445
(650) 330-2522

E-mail: mphistorical@yahoo.com

Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/mphistorical>

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Become a Member of MPHA

Join those who care about Menlo Park and enjoy learning about its history. Dues help financially in preserving the archives, publication of the newsletter, and supporting our staff and other activities.

Annual Membership:

- Residential \$ 20.00
- Business 100.00
- Lifetime 200.00

Make check payable to MPHA at the above address.

TIME DATED MATERIAL

Or Current Resident

Thank You to Our Newest Members:

- David and Cheryl Bogart
- Bob and Tana Budelli
- Dick and Robyn Budelli
- Alex and Judith Komoroske
- Linda Lorenzetti
- Mary and Don Smith



CALENDAR of EVENTS

Fire District Centennial Parade
May 21, 2016

Holy Cross Cemetery Tour
Saturday, May 28, 2016
—See Reservation form on page 7—

Barbara Wilcox Talk on Camp Fremont
Menlo Park Library, June 11, 2016

—In Memoriam—

Larry Johnston

Long-time Member of the MPHA Board

Thank You Business Members!

Menlo Park Academy of Dance
Mid-Peninsula Animal Hospital
Stanford Park Nannies
Union Bank
for your contributions and
dedication to our local history.