



Since 1971



◆ April-June, 2017 ◆

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800 ALMA STREET, MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA 94025-3445 •

650/330-2522

Walking Tour • August 5, 2017

At 11:00 am on Saturday, August 5, 2017, in conjunction with the San Mateo County History Museum Victorian Tours, MPHA Board Secretary, Bo Crane, will lead the group visiting some of Menlo Park's oldest historical sites. The tour will cover nine listings in the MPHA's Historic Tour

brochure. The tour will be about a mile-and-a-half. The tour begins at Menlo Park Railroad Station and will follow Oak Grove Ave out and Ravenswood Ave back. No reservations are required. Just be at the Merrill Street. Depot ready to walk and engage. 🌿

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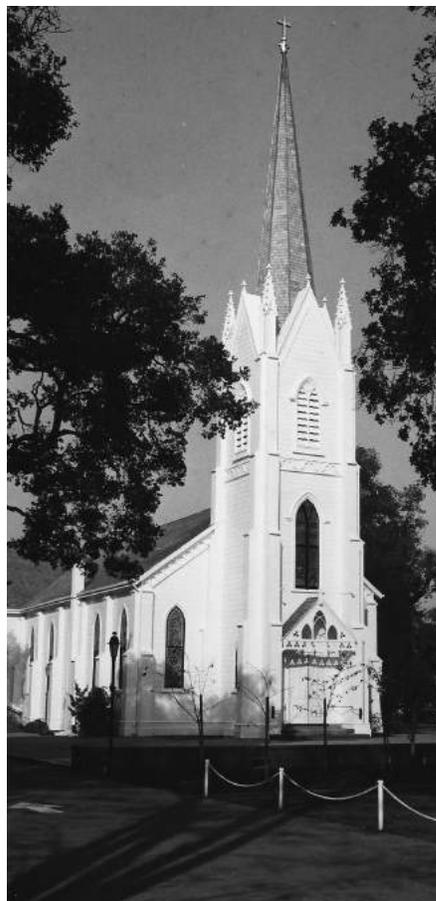
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Left:
Church of
the Nativity

Above:
Vallombrosa
Center

Right:
Corpus Cristi
Monastery



President's Remarks

By Jim Lewis

One part of being a member of the Menlo Park Historical Association that especially appeals to many are the number of activities made available to the general membership and to the public. For instance, recently the Fourth Annual Holy Cross Cemetery tour occurred on Saturday, May 13, 2017, led by Professor Michael Svanevik. On Sunday, June 25, 2017, the annual Ice Cream Social occurred. Many find this event extra special, being a wonderful summertime activity located "under the oak trees." This affords an opportunity to connect with Menlo Park friends who share a common interest in history.

Coming up on August 16, 2017, is the 11th Annual Downtown Block Party held on Santa Cruz Avenue. It's a great time for outdoor dining, and viewing a number of booths provided by local non-profits, various city departments and others. Also in August will be the annual Victorian Days with Menlo Park providing a Walking Tour by Bo Crane. A similar event was held last year with an interesting talk on many of Menlo Park's downtown must-see sites.

We were delighted to participate in the Gatehouse Open House sponsored by the Junior League. Thanks go to Martha for gathering and setting up an interesting display for all to see. The Mayor of Galway, Ireland (Menlo Park's Sister City) was in town on Thursday, May 11, 2017.

To help keep the Menlo Park City Council up to date on our activities, an oral report was given to them on Tuesday, May 2, 2017. Bo Crane also provided the City

Council with an update on our Space Needs as part of the Library's ongoing study on facilities and programs in the future. Annually we provide a display in the Library's lobby. This year's topic was on Camp Fremont.

Board meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month, at 2:00 pm. These meetings are open to the entire membership. In addition, our Annual Meeting and Speaker Event is held in November, with this year's guest speaker talking about "Prohibition in San Mateo County." Light refreshments will be served.

As active as we are, we are always open to suggestions from our membership. If there is a topic you'd like to see happen, please let us know. Our email address is mphistorical@yahoo.com; telephone (650) 330-2522; website: <https://sites.google.com/site/mphistorical>; www.facebook.com/menloparkhistorical 🍷



Loss of a Friend

By Lydia Cooper

It is with sadness to report that Bill Weseloh passed away on May 1. Bill was an MPHA Board member for over 15 years before retiring in 2015. He was a great promoter of all things Menlo but, more importantly, a friend to us all. Retiring from the Board did not stop Bill from working behind the scenes. Many on the Board would stop by his office looking for advice or just to chat on the comings and goings of the Association. He was always there for us. Bill's latest project was the reconstruction of the Menlo Gates. In the early stages of planning, Bill attended meetings, made a presentation to the Council and kept

the "idea" of the Gates moving forward. His work on this project will be completed hopefully by the end of 2017.

Thank you Bill for your years of service to MPHA. You are missed. 🍷

Wonderful photo of MPHA members. They have shown their support through the years. The photo was taken at the Annual Meeting in November, 2016. **Guido Budelli**, **Bill Weseloh** (former Board Member), **Dick Angus** (Board Member).



Menlo Memories

By Dick Barbour

(Dick Barbour, archivist and past president of the Menlo Park Historical Association [1980-82] wrote an entertaining column in the Menlo Atherton Recorder about the history of Menlo Park seen through his eyes. For two years he entertained his readers with colorful descriptions of the growing pains of Menlo Park. His columns covered local personalities, events, issues or just happenings that shaped Menlo. Occasionally the Gate Post will include one of his articles. The following was printed in the September 8, 1980 issue of the Recorder.)

Imagine how a current environmental impact report would read for the following project: Quiet village of 2300 citizens proposed as the site of a major military camp to train over 40,000 officers and enlisted personnel for combat duty.

Menlo Park's 2300 citizens took the news of Camp Fremont calmly—indeed proudly—for the location was deemed superior to one farther down County Road in Mayfield. But more importantly, Congress had declared war on Germany. The year was 1917.

In the summer of that year, the first surveys were made and construction of the camp, by Lindgren & Company of San Francisco, was started at once on 25,000 acres leased in and around Menlo Park. Generally the camp encompassed an area bounded by County Road (El Camino), Valparaiso, Alameda de las Pulgas and San Francisquito Creek. The main part of town, on both sides of Santa Cruz (Menlo Avenue to Oak Grove) and as far west as University, was surrounded by the 319th Engineers, the signal battalion and the Quartermaster units. The Field Artillery regiment was across the creek where the Stanford golf course is now, and a remount station for 10,000 horses and mules was east of the railroad in the Menalto/O'Connor neighborhood. The base hospital was located at the present site of the Veterans Hospital on Willow Road. Other nearby sites were

used for training such as bivouacs in Woodside and Felt Lake for the construction of pontoon bridges by the Engineers.

So much for Camp Fremont geography. To the old-timers among us, the camp, its boundaries and activities are well remembered. Yet many who have made the Menlo/Atherton vicinity their home in the past few decades seem unaware, or at best vague, about Camp Fremont's location or even its existence.

There are, of course, many interesting accounts about the people, their activities and the impact of Camp Fremont during its bustling but brief function as a training site. Some of these will be reported in future "Memories" and will reflect the impressions of those who remember the World War I years.

The soldiers' thoughts of the training site, at least as they were expressed in a booklet prepared for the folks at home, state that "Camp Fremont is probably the most aristocratic training camp in the United States. Or rather it is more immediately surrounded by aristocratic homes and cultured neighbors than any of the dozen or more camps that have sprung into existence though out the nation... You folks at home should see the camp for yourselves to really appreciate the beautiful health and nature spot it is."

Such was the "environmental impact" on soldiers in training at Camp Fremont. 🐾

John C. Fremont: The Good, the Bad, and Ugly

By Bo Crane

John C. Fremont, namesake of Camp Fremont (as well as the City of Fremont) was a man of many contradictions.

He was born out of wedlock. However, due to his grandfather squandering the family's Virginian estate, his mother was married off at 17 to a rich 62-year-old Richmond resident. She left her husband for a dashing French-Canadian and fled Virginia. Both lived happily in scandal in Savannah, never marrying and having young John.

A low ranking Army officer in Washington, D.C., 27-year-old Fremont fell in love with Jessie Benton, the 16-year-old daughter of a powerful U.S. Senator. He eloped with her a year later to the outrage of her father. The Senator, a proponent of the Nation's Westward movement, came to champion Fremont's explorations, which allowed for Jessie to be welcomed home during her husband's long absences.

Fremont the explorer, known as The Great Pathfinder, almost got himself and his band of sixty mountain men stranded in the desolate Eastern Sierra at mid-winter. Braving a desperate snowy gamble they pushed on to Sutter's Fort only to be chased out of the Mexican

territory in 1845 by officials wary of the rugged, rifle-toting crew.

In 1846, returning north of the Bay Area as the sole American Army officer in California, Fremont found himself leading American forces in California as part of the U.S.-Mexican War that had begun over the disputed Texas border. He negotiated the surrender of Mexican California forces while U.S. Army General Kearny was arriving from Santa Fe with his troops expecting to be in command. The stubborn Fremont was arrested by Kearny and court-martialed for mutiny. President Polk later overturned his sentence and he was dishonorably discharged.

In 1847, Fremont's agent bought land in the Sierra foothills that Fremont considered worthless once he learned of the purchase and then attempted without success to undo the sale. A year later, once gold was discovered, Fremont's unwanted land became the richest rancho in California. But while he was in Washington defending himself, miners jumped his land. Fremont spent a fortune having to fight in court over his property.

With California gaining Statehood in 1850, Fremont





Fremont was not a contender four years later at the 1860 Republican convention, thus missing a chance at the exalted position Lincoln holds by winning the election and seeing the Civil War through to victory. Once the war began in 1861, Lincoln promoted Fremont to Major General, appointing him commander of the vast Department of the West. From the start, Fremont created controversy by declaring rebellious Missouri under martial law and then issuing his own emancipation proclamation. Fearing those actions might tip the State into the Confederacy, Lincoln relieved Fremont of his duties in November 1861. Fremont later refused to serve under General Pope

and chose to wait in New York City for his next command, which never came. Grant and Sherman, only slightly younger than Fremont, are thus remembered as two great Union generals.

was elected the State's first Senator. Though well known and respected, Fremont was opposed to slavery, a controversial pre-Civil War stance even in California, and was not reelected.

Joining the newly formed Republican Party opposed to slavery, 43-year-old Fremont was then selected as the party's first presidential candidate. Abraham Lincoln of Illinois came in second on the VP ballots. In the 1856 election for President, Fremont did not even win California where he finished third behind Democratic and American Party candidates. But he won the New England and several Great Lake states while coming in a distant second to Buchanan, the Democrat.

Living in the Hudson Valley after the war, Fremont invested in a transcontinental railroad venture that failed, leaving him in financial difficulties. President Hayes appointed him Governor of Arizona Territory in 1878. But the territory was far from New York State and Fremont spent little time there, resigning in 1881.

Having achieved fame for writing in the 1840s about his explorations, Fremont depended mostly upon his wife co-authoring and solo authoring new books for their support. In 1890, Fremont was restored to his former rank of Major General with full pay but died suddenly in New York City that year, the ultimate good news-bad news episode so typical throughout his life.

Jessie died in 1902. Their son, John C. Fremont Jr., was born in San Francisco in 1851 and served as a Rear Admiral in the U.S. Navy before passing away in Boston in 1911. Six years after his death, Camp Fremont, named for his father, opened in our Menlo Park. 🍷

Above and left:
John and Jessie Fremont



Trader Joe's Menlo Park Mural Mystery Couple?



George B. Atherton

From *Menlo Park Beyond the Gate*



Gertrude Atherton

From *Menlo Park Beyond the Gate*



Mystery Couple

Trader Joe's Mural, Menlo Park

Inadvertently, the turn-of-the-century couple depicted in the Trader Joe's mural have a striking resemblance to George and Gertrude Atherton. See the following: "In 1876, Atherton's son, twenty-five-year-old **George H. Bowen Dean Atherton**, eloped with nineteen-year-old **Gertrude Franklin Horn**. In 1887, George died of kidney failure while sailing to Chile. Gertrude Atherton went on to become a distinguished California author, with works including *California: An Intimate History*, published in 1914." (From *The Life and Times of Dennis Martin* by Bo Crane, 2015.) 🍷

YOU QUALIFY AS AN OLD TIMER IF YOU REMEMBER...

- When the siren at the Fire Department blew at 8:00 am, 12:00 noon and 5:00 pm.
- Charlie O'Neal's Wagon on El Camino.
- The Little Green Door, with its wooden sidewalk.
- When the Chinese laundry, Wo Sing's, was on El Camino.
- When horses were pastured in fields at the corner of Roble Avenue and University Drive.
- A dairy at the end of Santa Cruz...The Golden Churn.
- When Tom Kearney was Police Chief.
- The "Busy Bee" grocery store on the corner of Oak Grove and El Camino.
- Central School on El Camino.
- Quayle's Pigeon Farm.
- When the Post Office was at Santa Cruz and Merrill Street.
- The Palm Hotel. The Blue Moon Dance Hall.
- When a penny post card cost one cent.
- When Menlo School was the William Warren School for Boys.
- Frank Roach's blacksmith shop at El Camino and Oak Grove.
- Chinatown, Glenwood at San Antonio.
- When all the mail was brought to Menlo by train. 🍷

Another Piece of Old Menlo Gone

By Lydia Cooper



In September 2015, Foster's Freeze closed its windows, to the lamenting of those who had fond memories of pineapple sundaes, chocolate dipped cones and hamburgers (*Gate Post* January-March 2016 issue). There the building sat for a couple years, reminding us of what we missed.

Here today, gone tomorrow: Foster's Freeze, Roger Reynolds, Johnny's Smoke Shop, the original French Laundry and soon to be Beltramo's. 🍷



Note From Diane Lovegrove Bader

Edited by Bo Crane

Having read the Dennis Facchino article (January-March, 2017), Diane Lovegrove Bader writes that Dennis and Jackie Giannotti were in her class at St. Joseph's.

Diane was born to Dr. Walter Lovegrove and Isabel Sweeney. The family moved to a tiny cabin at the corner of Oakley and Altschul Avenues, then a dirt road. At the time, the cabin was the summer home of her grandparents, Edward and Mary Sweeney, who lived in the Sunset District of San Francisco.

She has fond memories of growing up in West Menlo Park, out in the country. St. Joseph's was

a three-story wooden building on Emilie Avenue. Diane won the St. Madeline Sophie Scholarship to the Convent of the Sacred Heart, where she attended high school. She later graduated from the College of Notre Dame, majoring in music, and received her M.A. in education from Stanford.

In 2000, Diane began researching the life of her great-grandfather, Daniel McSweeney. He emigrated from Donegal, Ireland in 1851 and went on to open up a stockyard business south of San Francisco's downtown. He and his family, important to the history of South San Francisco, are the subject of a book she's written, *Donegal on Fire*, published in 2016. 🍷



Since 1971

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Thank You to Our Newest Members:

- Suzanne Bethard
- Scott Denny
- Sr. Joan Derry
- Pamela Jones



THANK YOU TO THOSE RENEWING THEIR 2017 MEMBERSHIP!

- Richard Angus, Dave Bragg,
- Frances Bryner, Nancy Couperus,
- Dianne Ellsworth, Anna Henderson,
- Alan Jones, Mark & Lane Maloney,
- Lauren Mercer, Nancy Morey

Thank You Business Members!

- Lasky Trade Printing*
- Mid-Peninsula Animal Hospital*
- Stanford Park Nannies*
- Waldo Graphics*
- Wetson & Lanctot, LLP*

*for your contributions and
dedication to our local history.*

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Walking Tour with Bo Crane
August 5, 2017, 11:00 am



San Mateo County History Museum

Victorian Days at the Old Courthouse
Sunday, August 13, 2017

Discover Peninsula at War!
Through February 4, 2019