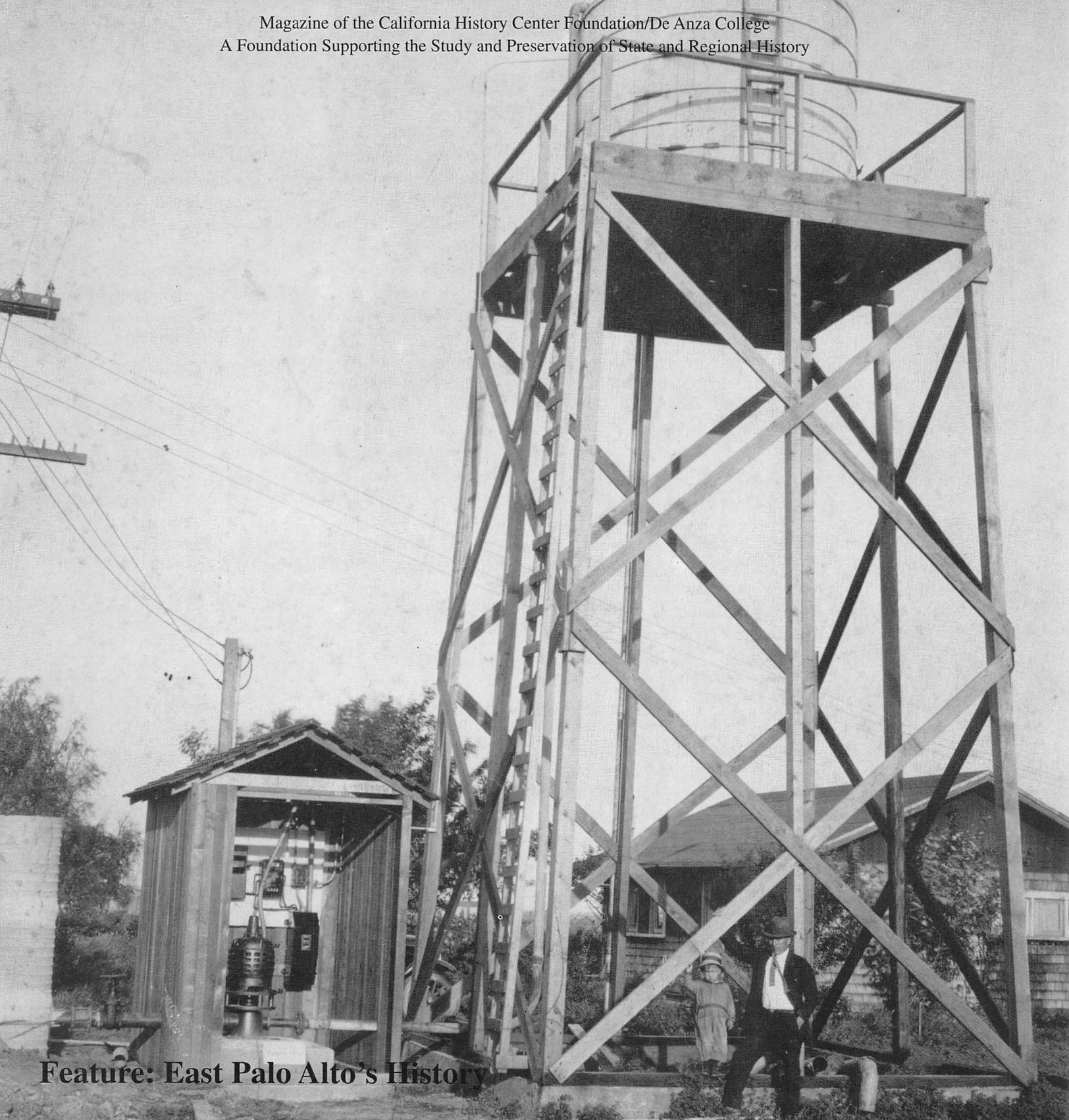


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CALIFORNIA THE FORNIAN

Magazine of the California History Center Foundation/De Anza College
A Foundation Supporting the Study and Preservation of State and Regional History



Feature: East Palo Alto's History

SHATTUCK PHOTOGRAPHY

EAST ALMOND COOPERATIVE

A Heartfelt Thanks

A very special afternoon tea is planned for Wednesday, April 19th when the history center celebrates National Volunteer Week by recognizing the many hours donated to the CHC by our volunteers. While the tea is being held to recognize everyone who gives time to the center, including a wonderfully dedicated Board of Trustees that volunteers untold hours, I want to take this opportunity to tell you about a typical week at the center and highlight those volunteers that you will find here, week in and week out, giving their time and energy. Without this group, it definitely would not be business as usual!

Monday is, in general, a fairly quiet day, and finds the staff on its own — in addition to the regular demands of our jobs you will find us greeting students and visitors, answering phones and questions, getting and distributing mail, etc. But when Tuesday rolls around . . .

Janet Hoffman is the first to arrive, usually around 8:30, and after putting her things away and getting a cup of hot water she staffs the front desk, greeting visitors and answering phones as well as doing various other clerical tasks.

Dee Liotta and Helen Riisberg are the other Tuesday volunteers. Dee, in addition to being volunteer coordinator for the center, processes all book orders that come in, and has recently been working on organizing the contemporary photo file. She also staffs the front desk and is noted for “grabbing” any and all visitors and telling them everything they ever wanted to know about the Trianon and CHC. Helen Riisberg works with the pamphlet files in the Stocklmeir library; clipping and coding newspapers and other items. She also produces the *Volunteer Voice*, our three-times-per-year volunteer newsletter.

We have two day-long volunteers on Wednesday as well. Trudy Frank is our front person, staffing the desk and handling general clerical duties. In addition, using her accounting background, Trudy processes our deposits for the district accountant and is great with any detailed assignment. More recently, when time allows, she has been inventorying a new acquisition, microfilm from the files of the defunct *Peninsula Times Tribune* newspaper.

Cover:

East Almond Cooperative Water Company's water tower and pumphouse on Myrtle Street, the last remaining old water tower in East Palo Alto, circa 1925. Photography by Shattuck Photography, Palo Alto. Courtesy East Palo Alto Historical and Agricultural Society.

Nancy Bratman works on Wednesdays also and has volunteered her time over the years exclusively in the Stocklmeir Library. Her current project is organizing and identifying the slide collection. A fun, but detailed, time-consuming task!

Three volunteers join us once again on Thursdays. Mary Strong is in a full day and has been doing all membership processing, from billing notices to computer updating to thank you letters in addition to staffing the front desk. Mary was also the creator and coordinator for “Little Shoppe of CHC” the volunteer-sponsored arts and crafts fundraiser held in October that raised \$1500 for the center. Trudy and Mary will be co-chairing the event next year.

Thursday afternoons see two more library volunteers, Elizabeth Archambeault and Maureen Kelly. Elizabeth does book processing and works with the clippings, and Maureen, a professional librarian in her other life, works with the library's Jacobson collection, describing and inventorying these irreplaceable archival materials.

It is fitting that we take the time to recognize the contributions of California History Center volunteers in general, and these volunteers in particular. There are no words that say thank you adequately enough for all of the wonderful work done for us by our faithful volunteers — they are indeed part of the CHC family.

Next time you are at the center, take the opportunity to say hello and thanks to these wonderful people.

Kathleen Peregrin

Director



Volunteers Mary Strong and Trudy Frank at 1994's Little Shoppe boutique.

CALENDAR

3/10 **Volunteers' and members' brown bag lunch for Women's History Month**, speaker Mary Jo Ignoffo.

3/16 **CHC students, faculty and members meeting to discuss future classes and programming. 7 p.m.** (See detailed explanation on page 4)

4/3 **De Anza College classes begin.**

4/17-21 **National Volunteer Week**

4/19 **Volunteer Day Tea.** As a special thank you to our many volunteers we would like to invite them to enjoy a pleasant afternoon of good company and refreshments starting at 1:00 p.m. RSVP to 408/864-8712.

5/20 **Game Day.** Culminating CHC's membership drive for the year is a special day of fun from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Come join a team and compete to win in the center's version of trivial pursuits featuring California name places and history. Match wits, wisdom, and creative thinking! Lunch available for a nominal fee.

5/29 **Memorial Day Holiday.** Classes do not meet and CHC will be closed.

6/1 **Ken Bruce Farewell Party & CHC Benefit.** CHC hosts a farewell/retirement party for Ken Bruce, long-time history instructor at De Anza College and special friend of CHC. The event will be at the center from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. with dessert and coffee served. A \$25 donation is requested. RSVP to 408/864-8712.

6/11 **De Anza Day.** CHC will hold its annual benefit used-book sale at the center between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. during this college-sponsored event. Proceeds from the book sale benefit the center's library.

6/23 **Spring Quarter ends**

6/30 **CHC closes for summer break**

Need more information about any of our upcoming events? Please call us at: 408/864-8712.



Panel from current exhibit, Silver Anniversary Golden Opportunity.

EDUCATION

State and Regional History

The following courses will be offered spring quarter through the California History Center. Please see the California History Center class listings section of *De Anza's Schedule of Classes* for detailed information (i.e., course ID #, call #, days, dates, time and units). **For additional course information, call the center at (408) 864-8712.**

Update

As mentioned in the December issue of *The Californian*, beginning in fall 1995, the CHC will suspend the regular offering of our small courses while we evaluate the program and begin the transition to California Studies. We plan to offer our small courses in the future, but will also be looking at offering some fee-based programs as another alternative for students. For many of you, in particular if you have a bachelor's degree, or are not interested in units and grades, fee-based may be an attractive option.

We want you to be part of this process with us. A meeting is planned at the center for 7:00 p.m., Thursday, March 16 for CHC students and members to get together with CHC staff and faculty and share ideas about what types of fee-based programming you would like to see offered. Get involved — be part of the future! See you there!

Neighborhoods of San Francisco Part II: *Betty Hirsch*

San Francisco is defined by its specific districts and neighborhoods. This class explores the evolution of such areas as Barbary Coast, Market Street, the Pacific Ocean areas including the San Francisco Zoo and Stern Grove. Students will learn about significant people who shaped each area's identity, the contributions made by various ethnic groups, important dates and events, and analyze how the geography and climate has impacted the growth and development in each area. One lecture, one field trip.

History of Bay Area Public Gardens: *Betty Hirsch*

The Bay Area is enhanced by a vast array of public gardens which are creations and outgrowths of the personalities of such historical figures as James Duval Phelan, William Bourne, and John McLaren. Students in this class will visit a variety of gardens and discuss how gardens serve as an art form; are a symbol of the Bay Area and what is grown here; and reflect the culture of different ethnic groups. In addition students will address some contemporary concerns brought about by limited rainfall and water rationing in the state, and the corresponding impact on environmental, political and social issues. Two lectures, two field trips.

Drake in California: *Hugh Thomas*

Drake in California traces the general background of European exploration and expansion in the 16th century; the development and growth of England during the Tudor period; antagonism between England and Spain; the English privateers and personal career of Drake, who circumnavigated the world, landing in California. Three lectures, one field trip.

Santa Barbara and the Channel Missions: *Chatham Forbes*

Santa Barbara was the last of four pueblos founded around a presidio, and the tenth of the chain of 21 Franciscan Missions founded by Spain in Alta California. Some 40,000 Native Americans lived on the Channel Coast served by the Santa Barbara and San Buenaventura Missions, hence both the religious and civil institutions were of great importance for Spain's purposes in California. Today, Santa Barbara is the major archival center for Mission historical studies. Two lectures, weekend field study to the Santa Barbara Area.

History of Sonoma County: *Chatham Forbes*

Students in this course will study and discuss the pivotal roles of Mariano Vallejo, Agoston Haraszthy, Jack London, and Luther Burbank in the development of Sonoma County. By tracing their lives and visiting their home and work sites students will have a fuller comprehension of the history and special character of Sonoma County. Two lectures, two field trips.

Creating New Partnerships

Threatened California: *Julie Phillips*

Join De Anza Environmental Studies faculty member Julie Phillips as she explores the wonders of the beautiful state of California. Students will visit and study a variety of California's ecosystems including the coastal redwood forest, marshlands, Pacific tidepools and the rugged and spectacular mountain regions of the Diablo range. Students will discuss the many environmental factors that threaten California flora and fauna including global warming, overpopulation, pollution, ozone depletion, deforestation and the biodiversity crisis. A major focus of the class will be sustainable use of California's varied resources. Three evening lectures and one day-long field trip.

January 6th found the CHC staff and two members from the Board of Trustees on a journey to the Center for California Studies, located on the campus of California State University, Sacramento. We wanted to visit the center not only because it too is located on a college campus, but it is also an organization committed to bringing together a variety of communities — academic, business, government and local citizens — for discussion, debate, and intellectual interchange about the past, present, and future of this state we call home.

We had an excellent meeting with the staff of the center and came away with a better understanding of each other's programs, strengths and differences. We also agreed that we very much want to do some collaborative projects in the future. As the California History Center begins its transition to a California Studies learning community, we hope to form more of these partnerships in order to enhance the educational opportunities we provide our members and students. We will keep you informed.



*Street scene
from 19th-
century San
Francisco.
Courtesy
California
History Center
Foundation,
Stockmeir
Library
Archive.*

FEATURE

A History of East Palo Alto

by the San Mateo County Historical Association with contributions by Alan Michelson and Katherine Solomonson

The following article is abridged from two chapters in East Palo Alto's historic resources survey. It tells the story of a rancho and one-time wharf, to its genesis as an agricultural utopian colony, through the building of the Bayshore Freeway that left it a segregated community. Today, through preservation of its historical landscape, it is creating a new community identity which includes its agricultural roots.

Before European settlers transformed the landscape that is now the city of East Palo Alto, arroyo, willows, cottonwoods, and blackberry thickets flourished in its meadows. Forests of elder and live oak were rooted in the rich, loamy soil.

The Ohlone tribal groups who made their home in the East Palo Alto area were a group known as the Puichon. Their territory stretched between the lower San Francisquito Creek and the foothills, perhaps reaching all the way back to Portola Valley. In 1776, Spanish visitors noted a village called Ssiputca, consisting of twenty to twenty-five huts clustered near the mouth of San Francisquito Creek.

In 1769, the Spanish explorer Don Gaspar de Portola, searching for Monterey Bay, sailed by accident into the much larger San Francisco Bay. Portola and his military party traveled to the south end of the bay and came ashore near East Palo Alto. They paddled their canoes up the San Francisquito Creek to a site marked by mature, twin redwood trees ("*El Palo Alto*"). Here the Portola expedition camped for five days and set up the first

Spanish territorial markers in the Bay Area. After this, Spanish settlers began to colonize the area.

Much of East Palo Alto was once part of the vast *Rancho de las Pulgas*, which according to some accounts, Spanish Governor Diego Borica granted in 1795 to Don Jose Dario Arguello. In 1824 and 1835, the government in Mexico City made two more land grants to the Arguello family. In 1852 they sold the section of its holdings that included the area that is now East Palo Alto. The land appears to have changed hands several times that year, finally landing in the hands of Rufus Rowe. Rowe then sold it off in large parcels.

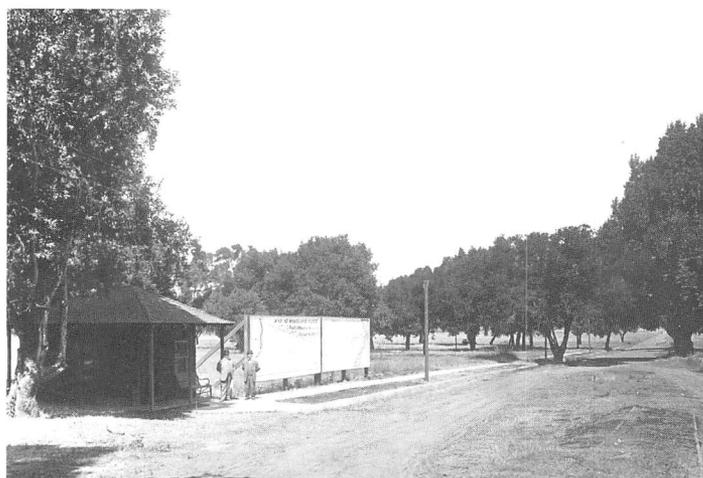
Ravenswood

During the early 1850s, Isaiah Churchill Woods, one of San Francisco's leading citizens, along with William Rowe, assembled a 3,674 acre parcel covering much of present-day East Palo Alto. Naming the area Ravenswood (supposedly combining his own name with a reference to the large number of ravens in the area), Woods constructed a house and farm for himself, called Woodside Dairy. It became a showplace, the first of many great summer houses built by wealthy San Francisco businessmen in the vicinity of Menlo Park and East Palo Alto.

During the final quarter of the nineteenth-century, Ravenswood grew very slowly, with little expansion of the town site platted along Bay Road near the wharf. The town supported little more than a small hotel, a dock, a few houses and saloons, and a handful of businesses. Though the dream of a thriving town and



Cooley's Landing, 1977. Photograph by Ken Yimm, Palo Alto Times. Courtesy Palo Alto Historical Association.



Woodland Place, East Palo Alto's first truly suburban development planned simultaneously as the new Dumbarton Railroad Bridge, circa 1910. Courtesy Palo Alto Historical Association.



Weeks Poultry Ranch. Courtesy Berton Crandall to Palo Alto Historical Association.

wharf at Ravenswood never materialized, the name Ravenswood continued to be used to identify the area well into the twentieth century.

Cooley's Landing

Lester Cooley arrived in California in 1859, and prospered in the gold fields of the Mother Lode country. After running a dairy in San Francisco, he resettled in Ravenswood in 1868. By 1878, he had assembled 400 acres which ran along Bay Road out to the San Francisco Bay. There he raised cattle and grain and established one of the best dairies in the area. The property also included the old Ravenswood wharf built by Isaiah Woods. He refurbished the wharf, which was known thereafter as "Cooley's Landing," for commercial use, and constructed a warehouse where the area's farmers could store their grain.

Woodland Place

Sometime before 1907, the Port Palo Alto Land and Town Company acquired the Crow and Cooley ranches. The company envisioned transforming their holdings into an area of "busy factories and wharves and warehouses, bathhouses, casino, theatre, schools, churches, stores, shops . . ." In 1907, their first step in developing the area was to subdivide the old Crow Ranch, which they renamed Woodland Place. It was to be built simultaneously as the Dumbarton Railroad Bridge. This subdivision, which follows the contours of the area in East Palo Alto that is still known as Woodland Place (but extending all the way to the creek), was planned as an exclusive suburban residential district with University Avenue shooting through its center. Woodland Place was never developed to the extent its originators intended.

Runnymede

Beginning in 1916, people were drawn to the East Palo Alto area from all over the United States. Many of them had seen ads

in agricultural newspapers or heard lectures or seen a float go by with a big banner advertising the agricultural colony of Runnymede, where anyone with a little money and a lot of motivation could come and make a living on one acre of land.

Runnymede was founded in the East Palo Alto area in 1916 by Charles Weeks, a former Indiana farmer who combined entrepreneurship with social vision. Also known as the Charles Weeks Poultry Colony after its founder, Runnymede once covered from Bay Road to the San Francisquito Creek, and from Cooley's Landing to Menalto. More than any previous phase of East Palo Alto's history, Runnymede has left a tangible imprint on the shape of the city as it is today.

While there were many utopian experiments in the western United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most of these colonies have all but vanished. But in East Palo Alto, the buildings and farms that once gave tangible form to a utopian vision still lie at the city's heart. As a result, Runnymede's residual landscape, embedded in East Palo Alto, provides an important conduit to a much larger movement that gained momentum in the early twentieth century. This gives East Palo Alto a significant position not only in the history of the Bay Area but in the history of the western United States.

Charles Weeks dreamed of a community consisting of independently-owned, one-acre farms whose members were drawn together through a shared approach to farming, community facilities, and cooperative marketing. He realized that a successful small holding would require an abundant water supply, excellent soil, and proximity to urban markets. The East Palo Alto area was ideal.



One Acre and Independence in California, a magazine published by Charles Weeks to advertise his poultry colony, November 1922. Courtesy East Palo Alto Historical and Agricultural Society. Inscription reads: "10/16/92 Gift to: Trevor Burrowes National Trust Conference Historical Society By: Charles Weeks, Jr. Born 4/25/19 Palo Alto, Calif. Charles Weeks Jr."

Trumpeting the slogan, "One Acre and Independence," Charles Weeks promoted his vision widely through a variety of books, pamphlets, and articles, and he ran ads in periodicals that reached people throughout the country. He also published a monthly periodical called *One Acre and Independence*, and a local newspaper called *Runnymede News*.

Within five years, Runnymede had attracted 1200 people drawn from all over the country, and it had become one of the largest poultry producers in the United States. When new colonists first arrived, they stayed in dormitories at Charles Weeks's own ranch to be trained in what Weeks modestly called

the "Charles Weeks Poultry System." There, they sat on benches outdoors while they listened to their teacher outline how new scientific methods and efficiency engineering techniques could maximize farm output, and how combining community cooperation and individual enterprise could bring prosperity to everyone. At Weeks's ranch, they also received practical experience in intensive farming and poultry raising. Many of them had never before done farming of any kind. With Weeks's training, they became more equipped to turn open fields of the East Palo Alto area into a checker board of intensively cultivated poultry farms.

Having come from a large Midwestern farm, Weeks remembered how lonely farm life could be when families were separated by vast tracts of land. For Runnymede, he envisioned a farming community that put neighbors as close to one another as if they were living in an ordinary suburb. To facilitate this, Runnymede's broad grid of unpaved streets was lined with long, narrow, one-acre lots, their short ends fronting the street. Though the lots were (and still are) extraordinarily deep, the width of their street frontages was similar to those in other modest suburban areas. With this layout, if a house had been constructed on every lot, a visitor walking down one of Runnymede's streets might have thought she or he was in an ordinary suburban neighborhood.

Among the most distinctive features of East Palo Alto's historic landscape are the tankhouses erected adjacent to Runnymede's original "garden homes." Charles Weeks believed that one of the most important keys to independence was an abundant, low-cost water supply. As he explained, "Independence as regards water is of the highest importance for the California farmer and the very essential of success." Tankhouses, many of which survive today, provided the center of each small farm's irrigation system. They are sturdy two-story structures that are rectilinear or slightly tapered in outline. During Runnymede's peak, their heavy framing, enclosed and reinforced with a protective siding, supported an elevated water tank resting on a platform that was slightly arched to allow for rainwater runoff. The elevated reservoirs, most of which were left exposed, provided a gravity induced pressure system for the farm family's needs. Similar tankhouses are still sprinkled throughout the Santa Clara Valley stretching down to Gilroy, south of San Jose.

A variety of factors contributed to Runnymede's demise by the 1930s. From the very beginning, the colony's land sold quickly, but there was also considerable turnover in property. Some people remained for no more than a year. Some of this may have

been due to people finding life and work in Runnymede less idyllic than they had anticipated, but it is also likely that some people were simply speculating in real estate. In 1919, *The Runnymede News* commented on how easy it was to sell Runnymede's farms, but warned that property values were going up and that he or she who sells now may never be able to buy back into the colony. The sale of Runnymede properties reportedly accelerated in the 1930s. In 1958, Collis Steere, who had held land in East Palo Alto since 1926, recalled that, "The poultry ranches began dying at the same time Bayshore [Highway 101] was built. The highway raised land values so it didn't pay to keep ranches." Charles Weeks' departure from the colony may also have contributed to its demise. In the early 1920s, Weeks' attention wandered from Runnymede to a new colony, named Owensmouth, which he established near Los Angeles. Sometime between 1921 and 1923 he left Runnymede, and a man named Edwin S. Williams was listed in the city directory as the proprietor of the Weeks Poultry Ranch in Palo Alto. It is likely that the loss of its dynamic leader disturbed Runnymede's equilibrium. In 1921, the cooperative Runnymede Poultry Farms, Inc. went into liquidation and a longtime Palo Alto resident, W. O. Horabin purchased the community warehouse on the railroad spur. The independent water supply that started out to be such an important component in the Charles Weeks Poultry System, grew less and less dependable. Gradually, salt water reportedly seeped into the wells, poisoning the chickens, and a local well-driller could no longer guarantee sweet water in Runnymede-area wells.

Highway 101

Highway 101, also known as Bayshore, began as a four-lane highway designed to supplement El Camino Real, which was already overloaded with automobile traffic by 1914. Construction commenced at 10:10 on September 11, 1924, on the highway that was expected to "forever crash 'the bottleneck' that has so long curbed peninsula development . . ." As its construction progressed from San Francisco southward, peninsula communities held festive ceremonies and hailed it for the growth and economic development they expected it would bring.

East Palo Alto's residents saw the benefits of improved motor transportation, but they were also apprehensive about the possible problems caused by a highway plunging through their community. Early on, there was some discussion about routing 101 along Middlefield Road in Palo Alto. Both Palo Altans and East Palo Altans objected, urging instead that the highway be constructed to the east rather than through a populated section of

Palo Alto. But East Palo Alto also wanted to avoid having their own community bisected. In 1923 and 1926, the Ravenswood Chamber of Commerce passed resolutions urging that the highway be routed as close to the bay as possible. Despite the Chamber of Commerce's efforts, by 1932 Highway 101 cut right through East Palo Alto, dividing it in two.

Floriculture

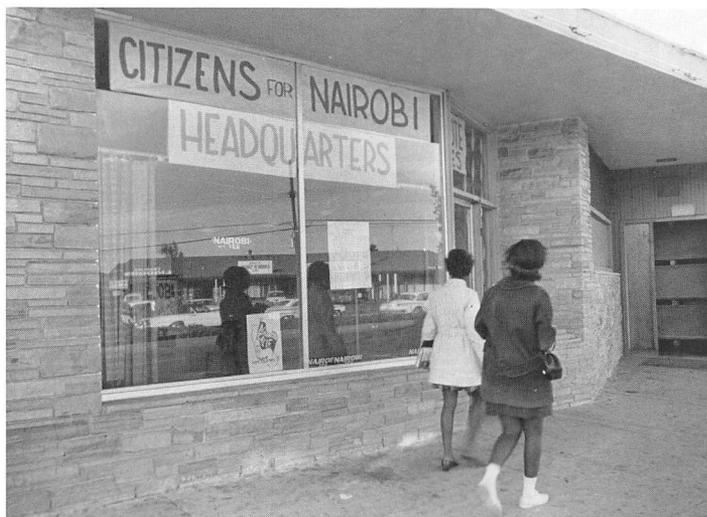
The period from the late 1930s through the 1950s was the heyday of flower-growing in East Palo Alto. During the first half of the twentieth century, the raising of chrysanthemums, violets, carnations, and lilies was San Mateo County's largest industry. Refrigerated "flower trains" transported the blooms grown in portions of Colma, Belmont, Redwood City and East Palo Alto back to Eastern markets.

At its peak, the business was dominated by Italian, and especially by Japanese-American families who built rows of long greenhouses on their properties. Many smaller mom-and-pop operations (mostly Japanese), filled in scattered lots in the former Runnymede colony.

The numbers of Japanese in East Palo Alto grew in the 1930s and 1940s, save for the period of war-time internment from 1942 to 1945. Most, if not all, of East Palo Alto's population of Japanese-Americans were part of a group of 144 sent from Palo Alto to the war-time internment camp at Heart Mountain, Wyoming, in May 1942. Following their humiliating war-time experience, many returned to the area. Some experienced a new level of prosperity, becoming land and business owners. In 1948, for example, four Japanese families had opened florist shops or nurseries on Bayshore Highway. By 1954, eighteen nurseries existed in East Palo Alto, and twenty were located there in 1957, the great majority owned by Japanese-American families. East Palo Alto possessed during the 1950s, one of the largest remaining concentrations of agricultural enterprises on the San Francisco Peninsula. The success of these flower-growing businesses continued well into the 1970s when, many of the older growers began to die off, and their children, many of them college educated, did not take up the family businesses.

Desegregation and Incorporation

In the Fall of 1954, William A. Bailey and his family became the first African-Americans to move into East Palo Alto's new Palo Alto Gardens subdivision. They may, in fact, have been the first black family to move into East Palo Alto after World War II. The Baileys' arrival on the 150 block of Wisteria Drive touched



University Village Shopping Center's name was changed to Nairobi Village in the late 1960s, when locals wanted to revitalize the area. The center was demolished in 1989. Photograph by Ken Yimm, Palo Alto Times. Courtesy Palo Alto Historical Association.

off bitter protests from the white property owners nearby. One hundred twenty-five neighborhood residents attended the usually placid meeting of the Palo Alto Gardens Improvement Association on November 29, 1954 to voice their outrage over the fact that a black family had moved into their neighborhood. Neighbors pooled their money and offered Bailey \$3750 to move out of Palo Alto Gardens. Bailey chose not to move, and was supported by such local organizations as the Palo Alto Fair Play Council, the N.A.A.C.P., the South Palo Alto Democratic Club, and the First Methodist Church of Palo Alto. Reportedly, when Bailey refused to leave, twenty percent of his Euro-American neighbors on Wisteria Drive put their houses on the market and departed.

As increasing numbers of African-Americans settled in East Palo Alto, the area became more isolated and more dependent upon nearby communities. Several events contributed to this. Though the widening of Highway 101 eased the flow of traffic moving along the peninsula's main high-speed artery, it also deepened the psychological and economic chasm separating East Palo Alto from its affluent western neighbors. During this period, East Palo Alto was the only city on the peninsula that had most of its land sandwiched between Highway 101 and the Bay. It is possible that its relatively isolated position, its preexisting separateness, made it a particularly desirable site for real estate

interests to target for block-busting, African-American relocation, and ultimately — segregation.

University Village Shopping Center, erected at the corner of Bay Road and University Avenue, operated for a number of years with a large grocery store as its anchor tenant. Gradual dilapidation befell the enterprise during the 1960s and 1970s. Its name was changed to Nairobi Village to suggest a new attitude of community spirit, but stores continued to vacate the development. By 1982, only two businesses remained at Nairobi. It was demolished in 1989.

East Palo Alto gained a measure of governmental autonomy by the late 1960s. In the wake of civil unrest in Watts and elsewhere across the United States, San Mateo County's Board of Supervisors realized that East Palo Alto's largely African-American population wanted and needed more self-government. An elected board of five members, called the East Palo Alto Municipal Council, was set up in 1967. San Mateo County continued to exert control over East Palo Alto's internal affairs, but the Municipal Council was widely seen as a step toward the ultimate incorporation of the area.

On June 7, 1983, an East Palo Alto incorporation initiative finally passed by a fifteen vote margin. Lawsuits waged in the courts between 1983-1987 over the incorporation vote exacerbated rancor in the community. California's Supreme Court decided on the validity of East Palo Alto's incorporation vote finally in 1986 and 1987, throwing out the anti-incorporationist lawsuits.

A Multicultural Community

In 1993 East Palo Alto was able to celebrate ten years of cityhood. During the previous two decades, the city's demographics had changed considerably. The arrival of Latinos and Pacific Islanders shifted East Palo Alto's ethnic balance, and the new populations began to leave their own mark on East Palo Alto's landscape. Recently, African-Americans, (most notably the members of the East Palo Alto Historical and Agricultural Society) have spearheaded a community garden movement, with Charles Weeks's vision for Runnymede as its historical anchor — a new vision for revitalized future.

Abridged from The City of East Palo Alto Historic Resources Inventory: Significant Historic Structures and Places, chapters 4-6 (reprinted with permission).

CULTURAL PRESERVATION

East Palo Alto Historical and Agricultural Society

East Palo Alto Historical and Agricultural Society (EPA HAS) is a multi-faceted organization which fosters sustainable development through land and historic preservation, urban agriculture, and ecologically sound urban planning.

EPA HAS, founded in 1990, aims to celebrate the strengths of the local community, the beauty and fertility of its land, and diversity and talent of its people and its rich history. The people of EPA HAS believe that land-based businesses are a good starting place for immediate economic regeneration. They also work with the city to ensure that the mainstream development it seeks is responsive to the needs of the community to preserve its essential character as well as adequate open space.

Despite its reputation for crime, East Palo Alto has a wealth of agricultural, human and historical resources that make it a rich bed of potential. The Charles Weeks Poultry Colony is a neighborhood which abounds with all these resources. Also known as Runnymede, the Charles Weeks Poultry Colony was created in 1916 as a utopian agricultural community and an idyllic alternative to urbanized industrial life. As Runnymede declined with the Depression, new immigrants succeeded the utopians and maintained agriculture in the 300 acre neighborhood up to the present time.



Trevor Burrowes, Executive Director of East Palo Alto Historical and Agricultural Society (EPA HAS) giving a tour of an organic community garden, 1993. Photograph by Yvonne Jacobson. Courtesy California History Center Foundation, Stockmeir Library Archive.

The Weeks neighborhood was passed over in the Silicon Valley development boom and this has helped to preserve its large home lots, historic buildings, open space and farming enterprises. Many rural African Americans moved up from the south during the 1950's and 60's and in recent years an influx of Latinos and Pacific Islanders have added to the cultural diversity and pool of agricultural skills to be found in the neighborhood.

In its attempts to bring about a renaissance of the East Palo Alto heritage, EPA HAS focuses on the Weeks Poultry Colony neighborhood which has enormous potential to become a model sustainable community. It is conceivable for East Palo Alto to become the "ORGANIC PRODUCE CAPITAL of the BAY AREA," as well as a major center of the region's history.

The main program areas for EPA HAS are to create, sponsor, promote and direct backyard gardens, mini-farms, community gardens, and East Palo Alto's new Certified Farmer's Market. The farmers' market, funded by the Peninsula Community Foundation, is an attempt to create pride in the city and demonstrate that urban agriculture is a viable economic resource. All sellers are from East Palo Alto or are growing produce here.

The community garden has also been a great success. Over twenty 100-square-foot beds are shared by mostly low-income members of the community. Twelve are used as demonstration market beds by EPA HAS. Neighboring children who played in this formerly garbage-strewn lot now participate in the garden, within a supportive atmosphere.

CAL TRANS has funded a tree planting project. This project involves planting approximately 1,250 trees in East Palo Alto and East-of-Bayshore Menlo Park. EPA HAS also advocates for the preservation and care of trees.

EPA HAS continues to provide advocacy and free consultation, particularly within the 300-acre Charles Weeks Poultry Colony neighborhood, a remnant of an early twentieth-century utopian agricultural community.

For more information about EPA HAS call (415) 329-0294.

Reprinted from membership brochure with permission.

PIONEER PROFILE

Faces of the Foundation (part three)

Some “pioneering people” have put a great deal of time and effort into the California History Center and Foundation over the course of the last twenty-five years. The CHCF is grateful to each individual mentioned in this three-part series and the many more not mentioned.

The current President of the Board of Trustees and three former presidents who are currently serving on the board share their views here.

Yvonne Jacobson, a board member since 1984, has served as president of the CHCF Board of Trustees from 1987 until 1989. She has published fiction, poetry, articles, photographs, book reviews, and her 1985 book *Passing Farms: Enduring Values, California’s Santa Clara Valley*.

Jacobson explains that the board has tried to accommodate the extraordinary change in the history center’s relationship with the college, primarily by creative new ways to raise funds and different approaches to teaching courses. She also identifies a need for increasingly active board members to “roll up their sleeves and work” to pick up where the college leaves off.

While acknowledging that the last few years have been a “dark period” for the center, she is happy she has been involved with history center people and has found the work rewarding. As for the future, Jacobson sees the prospect of interdisciplinary study, undertaken by the CHCF as the California Studies program, promises a very vibrant future.

Ward Winslow, former managing editor of the *Peninsula Times Tribune* and currently running his Palo Alto-based writing service has served on the CHCF board since 1984 and was president from 1989 until 1992. Among others, Winslow’s publications include co-authoring *Palo Alto: A Centennial History* (1993) and his own *Pages From a Palo Alto Editor’s Scrapbook*.

Winslow is concerned about some of the changes he has noticed in the last ten years, namely the need to bolster finances and the loss of membership. Nevertheless, he continues to be impressed by the quality of the publications and exhibits, as well as the staff



Yvonne Jacobson



Ward Winslow



Roy Roberts



Bill Lester

members who generate fresh ideas despite their shrinking numbers. He sees the California Studies program as an exciting way to bring in more diverse groups of the population and create a forum for discussion that does not often happen. Winslow notes with appreciation the recognition given the center by De Anza College President Martha Kanter.

Roy Roberts also joined the CHCF Board of Trustees in 1984 and his term as president was from 1992 to 1994. An Arkansas native and electrical engineer by profession, Roberts has a number of publications to his name and three patents in the field of microwave electronics. He has an interest in preserving early technical history of Silicon Valley.

Roberts finds the most significant change at the CHCF to be the decrease in funding from the college and the resulting decrease in the number of courses offered by the history center. He notes with optimism, however, the new role the center will play through the California Studies program. He contends that De Anza College administrators see the center as an academic arm as well as a link with the larger community. Roberts feels the CHCF is well on its way to achieving its new goals.

Although a relative newcomer to the CHCF board serving since 1991, **Bill Lester** is the current president. An investment property manager, he has degrees in biology and botany, and he has been an instructor of wilderness field study classes for UCSC.

The most dramatic change that Lester has observed is the downsizing of the college budget and shift in student fee structure which has impacted the number of staff people at the history center as well as the number of courses offered. The CHCF board members have had to focus their efforts, raise more money, and determine which programs are most important to the members.

The result of the last couple of years is a rejuvenated board that seeks to expand the library as well as make its data more accessible. The CHCF, like many non-profits, needs to seek more funding, perhaps in partnership with businesses. Lester hopes the emerging California Studies program has the capacity

to entice a younger, larger audience because it entails a wider range of historic and contemporary California topics.

FOUNDATION NOTES

Upcoming Events

Volunteers

Keep the following dates open for events for volunteers:

March 10: Brown bag lunch and program celebrating Women's History Month.

April 19: Volunteers' Tea

April 17-21 National Volunteer Week

For more information on these events contact Dee Liotta at (408) 864-8712. Pick up a copy of *The Volunteer Voice*, the newsletter for the volunteers of the CHCF. It recaps recent happenings at the center and gives information on upcoming events.

Women's History Month

Brown-bag lunch on March 10. Speaker Mary Jo Ignoffo will discuss her research on Laura Thane Whipple's role in the establishment of Moffett Field.

Reminder:

March 16, 7 p.m. meeting to discuss classes and programming. See full description on pg. 4.

Game Day

Saturday, May 20, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Test your knowledge of California's history and compete with team members in the CHCF's version of "trivial pursuits!" Even if you don't have time to "brush up" on people, places and dates, join the good fun as the CHCF wraps up its membership drive for the year. Lunch is available for a nominal fee. David Howard-Pitney is chairperson for this event. Invitations to follow. See you there!

Ken Bruce Retirement

Thursday, June 1, 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. What a combination! A retirement party for longtime De Anza College History Instructor Ken Bruce AND a benefit for the CHCF. A dessert and coffee reception will be held at the center to say thank you and good luck to our very good friend. A \$25 donation is requested. RSVP to (408) 864-8712.

De Anza Day

Sunday, June 11. During De Anza College's 1995 open house and day of entertainment, good food and fun the CHCF will hold its annual used-book sale from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Used books are donated by the community and proceeds benefit the center's Stockmeir Library and Archive.

Event Re-cap

Holiday Party

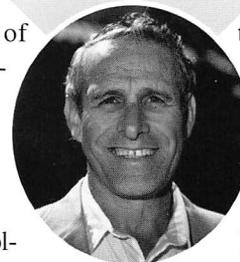
The 1994 holiday party at the history center was an open house on December 2. Delicious hors-d'oeuvres were accompanied by very talented De Anza student musicians under the direction of Instructor Bob Farrington. The event was well attended and an enjoyable entrée into the holiday season.



CHC's 1994 Christmas tree — the last real tree. De Anza College has stipulated that real Christmas trees may not be in any college buildings due to fire hazard.

Three Strikes and You're In New Member Reception Was a Big Hit!

The CHCF Board of trustees held a reception on February 24 welcoming new members. The baseball theme gathering preceded the Ken Burns lecture at Flint Center. There was a special tribute to Ed Bressoud, former major league player and longtime De Anza Col-



Ed Bressoud

lege baseball coach.

Library News

New this fall on the shelves of the Stockmeir Library are the following books:

Californian Catholicism by Kay Alexander (Vol. I of *The Religious Contours of California*)

California's Architectural Frontier: Style and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century by Harold Kirker

The Castros of Soquel by Ronald Powell

Citizen 13660 by Mine Okubo

Competing Visions of Paradise: The California Experience of 19th Century American Sectarianism by John K. Simmons and Brian Wilson (Vol. III of *The Religious Contours of California*)

Early Naturalists in the Far West by Roland H. Alden and John D. Ifft

Flutes of Fire: Essays on California Indian Languages by Leanne Hinton

Fruit of the Valley by California artists and writers of the San Joaquin Valley

The Health Seekers of Southern California, 1870-1900 by John E. Baur

History Outreach: Programs for Museums, Historical Organizations, and Academic History Departments edited by J. D. Britton and Diane F. Britton

Joe Jowell of Namaqualand: The Story of a Modern-day Pioneer by Phyllis Jowell (Ask about our connection with this book!)

Kinenhi: Reflections on Tule Lake

Life on the Edge: A Guide to California's Endangered Natural Resources: Wildlife

A List of California Nurseries and Their Catalogues 1850-1900 by Thomas A. Brown

New Deal Adobe: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Reconstruction of Mission La Purisima 1934-1942

Newcomers and Nomads in California by William T. Cross and Dorothy Embry Cross

Open to the Public: A Guide to the Museums of Northern California by Charlene Akers

Pages from a Palo Alto Editor's Scrapbook by Ward Winslow

Parks of Palo Alto by the Palo Alto Historical Association (from *The Tall Tree*, Vol. V, No. 1, October 1983)

Pat Jacobsen's Collector's Guide to Fruit Crate Labels by Thomas Patrick Jacobsen

Pilgrim Progression: The Protestant Experience in California by Eldon G. Ernst with Douglas Firth Anderson (Vol. II of *The Religious Contours of California*)

Sentinels of Love: Rural Churches of California by Bette R. Millis and Jeanne Mord

Struggle and Success: An Anthology of the Italian Immigrant Experience in California edited by Paola A. Sensi-Isolani and Phylis Cancilla Martinelli

Tahoe: An Environmental History by Douglas H. Strong

A Walk Through History: Women of Palo Alto by Margaret R. Feuer and Courtney Clements

The Water Seekers by Remi A. Nadeau

Wide Places in the California Roads by David W. Kean, Vol. 1: *Southern California Counties*

Wide Places in the California Roads by David W. Kean, Vol. 2: *The Mountain Counties*

A Wild Flower by Any Other Name: Sketches of Pioneer Naturalists Who Named Our Western Plants by Karen B. Nilsson



Volunteer Nancy Bratman and Librarian Lisa Christiansen in the library, 1994.

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The **California History Center Foundation (CHCF)**, established to support preservation and education efforts in state and regional history, is celebrating its silver anniversary year in 1994-95. Your tax-deductible contribution supports services not funded by De Anza College, i.e. the Louis Stocklmeir Regional History Library and Archive, Local History Studies book series, and a rotating exhibit program. The current exhibit, on display through June, is *Silver Anniversary — Golden Opportunity*, an exhibit showcasing the 25-year history of the California History Center Foundation and its partnership with the Foothill-De Anza Community College District.

A good way to increase your gift to the CHCF is through employer matching gift programs. Many times your donation or membership is doubled through a contribution by your employer. Check with your company because the CHCF qualifies as an educational institution.

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Errata:

The credit line on the photograph of the Garden Theatre entrance on page 4 of the last issue of the Californian was mistakenly omitted. The photograph was taken by Jenny Brookshire.

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Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. The value of goods received as a benefit of membership must be deducted from the amount of all contributions claimed as a deduction. CHCF members receive tri-annual issues of "The Californian" magazine and members who contribute at the \$45 level and above also receive a yearly Local History Studies publication.

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