

## Two Streets, One Creek and a Scoundrel

The life and history of early settlers in the Los Altos/Mountain View area are reflected today in the names of our neighborhoods, creeks, streets and schools. During the pandemic the Los Altos Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution investigated people who lived here before 1900 for the book *Early Settlers of Los Altos/Mountain View*. Here are some of their stories.

**Berry Avenue** - Cyrus Philbrick Berry (1842-1923) was born in Maine, one of 11 children. In 1861 he enlisted in the Union Army as a private. He fought in the Battle of Bull Run and was wounded in the right arm by a shell shot. After the war, he returned to Biddeford, Maine, where he worked as a machinist in the water power shop, as City Clerk, and as Inspector of Customs in Portland, Maine. He married Mary Jane Phillips; they had two children.

The Berry family's lives changed forever in 1889 when Cyrus' uncle, Silas Blake Emerson (his mother's brother), died in Santa Clara County, California. Silas owned large parcels of land along present-day Grant Road, where he ranched short-horn cattle, horses, sheep, and swine, and grew wheat, other grains, and orchards. He named his brother Carlos Emerson and nephew Cyrus (his sister's son) to inherit his estate valued at some \$7 million in 50/50 shares. The Berry family of four, plus Elizabeth Phillips (wife's mother), traveled to Santa Clara County by train.

Cyrus Berry built a home on his 80-acre portion of the inherited Emerson land. He was a director at the Memorial Baptist Church in Mountain View, and represented the 54th Assembly District in the California State Assembly (1895-1897). His wife died in 1919, and Cyrus moved to his daughter's home in San Francisco. He lived in the Yountville Veteran's Home, and drew a veteran's pension from 1918 until his death in 1923. He is buried at Alta Mesa Memorial Park in Palo Alto.

Today's Berry Avenue in Los Altos is the road he cut through his land. His home, 965 Berry Avenue, is a Los Altos Historic Landmark. ~ Ann Hepenstal

**Springer Road, Springer School** – The Springer brothers came to California from Washington County, Missouri. Peter Springer (1812-1861) first came in 1841 with the Bidwell-Bartleson party. After several trips, his brother Elias Springer (1831-1905) joined him in 1852. Peter settled in Saratoga and Elias eventually settled in Fremont Township (today's Los Altos/Mountain View).

A few weeks after his arrival Elias married Kate Shore, whom he had known in Washington County. Kate's brother, Thomas P. Shore, and father, Thomas B. Shore, had come to California in 1850 for mining. Unsuccessful, they came to Fremont Town-



Martha Wallace, editor, and contributors Ann Hepenstal, Liane Jensen, Donna Santistevan, and Juno Szalay.

ship and settled near the Bubb family (relatives, also from Washington County) and brought the rest of the Shore family from Missouri.

Elias first rented land for farming, then purchased land in Gilroy. He was successful there and sold it in 1872 to purchase 160 acres, bordering current-day Springer Road, the land where Springer School now stands.

In the spring of 1860, three young Springer children died; only the oldest, Eliza, survived. Three more children were born later. That same spring Elias' brother Peter, who represented Santa Clara County in the state legislature, died of pneumonia. Kate died in 1890 and Elias later moved to Los Angeles County where he was a fruit grower. He died in 1905. Elias, Kate, and other family members are buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in San Jose. ~ Liane Jensen

**Hale Creek, Hale Ranch** – Joseph P. Hale (1836-1893), born in Ireland, immigrated to California via Mexico, and became one of the largest landowners in the western United States. In 1859 he married Catarina Castro in Mexico, where daughters Catarina Josephina Maria and Anna were born.

Hale purchased 400 acres of the Rancho San Antonio in 1869, much of today's Los Altos and Los Altos Hills. He brought over Irish relatives to help manage the ranch. By 1873, he was

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listed as a merchant with an office in San Francisco. His wife died in 1876 and he married Anaïs of New Orleans. His youngest daughter, Anna, died in 1881. In 1883, he was naturalized and registered to vote in Santa Clara County, giving Mountain View as his address, and occupation as capitalist. In 1884 he was President of Flores, Hale and Company on Battery Street in San Francisco. The company harvested orchilla, a lichen which produces a purple-blue dye, and shipped it to Liverpool, via Panama. In 1893, the Hale Ranch included the area south of Fremont Road between Loyola Corners and Adobe Creek, where the country club is located today.

Hale spent much of his time at the Occidental Hotel in San Francisco where he died in 1893. He is buried in Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in San Mateo County. Newspapers at the time estimated his estate at \$2 million, spawning numerous lawsuits. Today, Hale Creek and Hale Ranch subdivision bear his name. ~ *Donna M. Santistevan*

**The Scoundrel** – Born in Pennsylvania, Charles McLaughlin (ca. 1820-1883) became one of the millionaires of his time. He came to California in the 1850s and helped establish the California Stage Company. In the 1860s he worked to build a railroad between San Francisco and San José. That failed, and in 1864 he signed a contract with Western Pacific Railroad Company for \$5,400,000 to construct a 123-mile railroad from San José through Stockton to Sacramento. Jerome B. Cox was contracted to grade the path, including masonry, bridge, and viaducts in preparation for the rails and ties. When the first 21 miles of work was finished, McLaughlin stopped payments to Cox.

This began McLaughlin's tendency to refuse to pay subcontractors. Over the next 16 years Cox brought lawsuits against McLaughlin, finally ending with a frustrated Cox shooting and killing McLaughlin in his Montgomery Avenue office on December 13, 1883.

McLaughlin had purchased land in San Francisco, Alameda, Amador, Contra Costa, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Sacramento, Stanislaus, Santa Clara, Solano, and Yolo counties, including 240 acres in Los Altos (sold to Newhall & Wise). Today's Almond Avenue runs down the middle of that land, which stretched between today's San Antonio Road/Clark Avenue and Edith Avenue/Jardin Drive ~ *Juno Anna Heine Szalay*

*To learn more, the book Early Settlers of Los Altos/Mountain View can be found at the Los Altos, Mountain View, and Santa Clara City libraries. ~ Martha Wallace*

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### LOS ALTOS HISTORY MUSEUM "UNDER THE OAKS"

Gary Hedden, *Editor*   Judi Eichler, *Graphic Design*

A publication of interest to citizens of Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, and neighboring communities, produced by the Association of the Los Altos Historical Museum. A special thanks to the newsletter mailing team!

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## President's Pen



It's my honor to greet you as the new president of the Los Altos History Museum. One of my favorite things about our Museum is the community gathered around it. The recent Members' Barbeque was a great opportunity to celebrate that community together. Thanks to everyone who helped create such a fun and memorable event.

On behalf of the entire Museum community, I want to express our sincere gratitude to outgoing president Gary Hedden. He served for two terms during challenging times, and his energetic leadership helped the Museum emerge from the pandemic with strong forward momentum. I'll continue to seek his thoughtful counsel, and we'll all continue to benefit from his ongoing involvement and commitment. Thank you, Gary!

The new Permanent Exhibit is well underway, and we're all eager to unveil this ambitious reimagining of the story of this beautiful place we call home. Some have lived here all their lives, while others (like my wife Katherine and I) are enthusiastic transplants. An important way to put down strong roots is understanding local history, especially when that story reflects everyone from the Muwekma Ohlone to the new neighbors who just moved in.

A particular priority for me is reinforcing our foundation of members and volunteers. All those Zoom calls helped get us through, but connecting in person can't be beat, particularly to support an institution as important as the Museum. When you renew your membership, take a moment to think of friends or neighbors who might also like to join. A gift membership would make a great housewarming present!

I look forward to working closely with our Executive Director Dr. Elisabeth Ward and the entire staff, whose talents and creativity continually impress me. And I look forward to hearing from you about your ideas for making our Museum even better.

~ *Larry Lang*

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## Staff

Dr. Elisabeth Ward, *Executive Director*

Georgianna Shea, *Museum Educator*

Diane Holcomb, *Director of Communications*

Jacqui Marchessini, *Events Manager*

Farshad Fallah, *Bookkeeper and Office Administrator*

Faustino Carrillo, *Gardener*

## Our Hidden Gems

In looking through the Shoup family scrapbooks for material for the new Permanent Exhibit, I discovered a telegram and letter from Elizabeth Morrow to Rose Shoup, wife of Paul Shoup, dated October 1932. Paul Shoup was a member of the Republican party and friends with Herbert Hoover. Rose used her influence to support Hoover and asked Elizabeth, wife to Dwight Morrow, the ambassador to Mexico, if she might lend her presence to the reelection effort by traveling to California from New Jersey to give a rally speech. She replied by telegram, "Thank you for your very kind and flattering letter which I have just received but my home duties are such that I could not possibly undertake what you have asked."

In a letter dated four days later she wrote, "As I telegraphed you, I cannot come out to California to help with President Hoover's campaign although I wish that I could. You and Mrs. Lucas wrote me such flattering letters. I really would like to keep them to read over in these moods when I feel I am not much good. I have a very plain duty here at home - it is to stand beside Anne and save her from every practical worry or decision. She and Colonel Lindbergh are to be with me this winter and this involves arrangements for the house in Hopewell, and decisions that are very difficult for Anne to make. She has come through the tragic months well, and has borne a healthy child, but the doctor tells us that she should be spared in every way for the results of emotional strain do not show themselves at once."

Mrs. Morrow was the mother-in-law of perhaps the most famous person on earth - Col. Charles Lindbergh. In 1927 he was the first to pilot a solo transatlantic flight. In the following two years he went on a goodwill tour of 48 states and 82 cities and an estimated one in four Americans turned out to see him. He married Anne Morrow in 1929 and she gave birth to Charles Lindbergh, Jr. in June, 1930. In March of 1932 their first born was kidnapped



*Alecia Thomas admiring Elizabeth Morrow's letter and telegram. Courtesy LAHM Collection.*

from his parent's home in Hopewell NJ in what was called "the crime of the century." The body of the toddler was discovered not far from the house in May of that year. Elizabeth Morrow's personal maid Violet Sharpe committed suicide in July after relentless questioning by authorities. By October, ransom money had been paid, worldwide press coverage was relentless and there was a constant police and military presence. A German immigrant, Bruno Hauptmann, was discovered passing off one of the ransom bills in 1934. He was convicted and executed in 1936, but there are conspiracy theories claiming it was not Hauptmann.

Our telegram and letter are real, and they offer us a glimpse of a monumental historical event, and serve as a reminder that our Collection is indeed very special.

*~ Alecia Thomas*

## Where's Waldo?

The Museum has been closed since May, but the Smith House has taken on a surge of activity with up to 50 visitors a day. The gift shop is temporarily in the House too, and a big attraction was the game of finding Waldo. Hundreds of children came in search of Waldo who hid quietly in the small gift shop. Once he was discovered, the fun continued. The kids were then challenged to find a new hiding spot for the next round of visitors. Waldo must be hidden in plain sight and that took some thoughtful creativity. Thanks to MaryShiela McMahn of Linden Tree Books for coming up with this game.

The children had fun and the store docents had fun watching them!

*~ Vicki Holman*



*Found him! Seven-year-old Julien spots Waldo, on the next-to-the-last day of the competition in July.*

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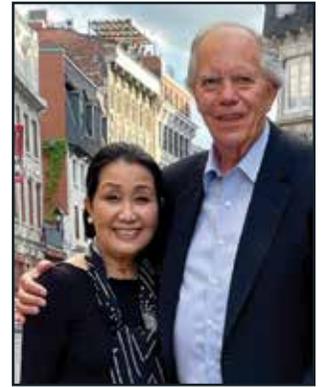
## Spotlight on the Oral History Project

Gary Cleary's wife, Nobuko, talks about a time they were dating: Gary showed up with a set of false teeth on the dash. Surprised, Nobuko thought he wore dentures, but wondered why he displayed them so prominently, on a date no less. She received her answer when he took the Crest tooth whitening strips to market. With his characteristic sense of humor, Cleary had been testing adhesive.

Testing adhesive was a constant endeavor for Cleary, who has devoted his life's work to inventing ways to deliver drugs through the skin without syringes. On a beach in Hawaii, he strolled or snorkeled covered in patches that resembled oversized Band Aids, to test in sun, sweat, water, and with sunscreen. The inventor of the transdermal Nicotine patch worked continuously -- questioning, testing, taking products through FDA approval.

Through all the patent filing, he never abandoned his love of painting, which he'd started as a child. In fact, in high school he wanted to be a Disney cartoonist. His father's nudge toward academics only meant that he joined a group of artists and teachers and, when his work schedule allowed or on holiday, traveled with them. New Mexico, New York, Los Angeles. Encouraged by his mentors, he tried new techniques, pushing himself in art as he did in medical science.

Inspired by the work of the American impressionist Edward Henry Potthast, Cleary said he tried to paint kids running in water. He liked action on the beach and the way light hit the water. His talent earned him his own show at the Community School of Music and Art, Mountain View, where he was already a board member. His paintings raised tens of thousands of dollars, which he donated to the school. Additionally, he donated money for an ensemble room, named after him.



*Nobuko and Gary Cleary taking a July vacation in Montevallo. Courtesy Cleary family.*

For his work, Cleary was recognized extensively. He won, among many others, the Entrepreneur of the Year award and the Controlled Release Society award, the top honor given by the Society. And the CSMA recognized him with the Outstanding Leadership in Arts award.

~ Suruchi Mohan

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## Volunteer Highlights & Activities

Since the Museum's main building closed in May, we are welcoming visitors to the Smith House for tours, exhibits, and shopping in the boutique. Some visitors, curious as to why their favorite Train Diorama is temporarily closed, are happy to discover the Museum's historic house where we first began in 1977.

Our recent Smith House exhibit focused on *Fabulous Food of the 30s and 40s: From Hunger to Hope*. Sharon Barkoff, chair of the Smith House committee, created the exhibit alongside Jordan Grealish, Collections specialist. "Food is my passion," said Sharon, "so it was great to go back in time and equate the similarities with what people ate then and what we eat now. The meager food items that were necessary when times were lean, today make gourmet meals offering a multi-sensory experience."

Sharon took some of the artifacts from the kitchen to display in the exhibit, gently cleaning off the accumulated grime. "The relics are so beautiful and need to be cared for and respected," she said.



*Sharon Barkoff serving delicious waffles outside the Smith House at the Apricot STEM Fair in July.*

The Store had an uptick in young visitors when the Museum participated in the Find Waldo in Los Altos contest in July. Vicki Holman, who manages the Store, reported, "Hundreds of children came in search of the cardboard cutout of Waldo."

At times, Docents lead two to three tours simultaneously. A third grader was so enamored by his tour of the Smith House, he returned on Rancho Day to conduct a tour with his parents, pointing out artifacts like the darned egg and the radio (and its purpose), while the docent followed in silence.

Vicki said, "One Friday afternoon, a family from the Ukraine arrived. They were offered a tour of the Smith House but didn't understand or speak English. One of our amazing Teen Docents, Michael, stepped up and, speaking Russian, proceeded to conduct an outstanding tour for this recently arrived family."

Volunteers are needed for the Smith House Committee and to be History Docents. To join, please email [hello@losaltoshistory.org](mailto:hello@losaltoshistory.org).

~ Diane Holcomb

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## History in the News

It is always a delight when one of our historic homes is restored. In August, the Historical Commission recommended approval of the restoration of the Craftsman-style home at 151 Hawthorne Avenue, offering us the opportunity to reflect on our heritage. The house was built *circa* 1922 in an orchard with few nearby houses. This was typical as Los Altos grew slowly after its start in 1908 by Paul Shoup and the Altos Land Company. Even into the 1950s there were few homes on Hawthorne.



*Curt Riffle and Karen Scussel in front of their Craftsman-style home, July, 2021*

The Craftsman-style home was popular in the 20s, especially with families who could move to “the country” and stay year-round, in contrast to the wealthy who built summer homes. The original owner of this house is unknown, but in keeping with the times, it may have been built from a “pattern book,” a set of plans for Craftsman bungalows. Some of these plans could even be ordered with pre-cut packages of lumber and detailed assembly instructions!

The new owners of this home, Curt Riffle and Karen Scussel, had seen the house while on their walks in the neighborhood and were delighted when it came on the market. They love the historic look, and their restoration will retain important architectural elements such as the front-facing gables and open eaves, and even better will improve the look by replacing two non-original picture windows with wood-framed windows. They are adding some living space, but again in keeping with the style. This “adaptive restoration” allows homeowners to make improvements and the rest of us to enjoy seeing nicely restored historic homes.

We applaud the small but important group of residents who have taken on the time-consuming and expensive effort to restore and maintain historic homes, and we thank them for their contribution to the charm of our town.

~ Gary Hedden

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## Director's Corner

### *The Time is Nigh!*

I want to thank the dear members and supporters of Los Altos History Museum for their incredible outpouring of support for our new Permanent Exhibition. Titled “Making Connections: Stories from the Land”, this new experience will revolutionize everyone’s visit to the Museum. With layers of rich content, beautiful images, engaging videos, fascinating objects, and fun interactives, we know the new Permanent Exhibition will amaze!



Over the last six issues of the newsletters, you have seen sneak peeks into the research that has gone into creating a new kind of history exhibition. Our *place-based storytelling* approach links specific locations in our local environment with important historical events. By breaking the exhibition up into Hills, Valley, Creeks, and Town, we are able to focus in on familiar landmarks and give them new meaning.

This is the beauty of a local history museum; history doesn’t just have to be about dates and names of people who died long ago! Instead, we want to share with everyone how decisions and actions in the past—even the very recent past—continue to shape our local environment in concrete ways. History comes alive as our visitors then see the connection between the past and the ground they walk on while living and working in Los Altos and surrounding communities.

You may be asking, “When will this great new exhibition open?” and the answer is, quite soon. But we are still waiting on confirmation regarding some of the components, so we are not yet ready to announce an opening date. Things are progressing very well for the research, design and development. However, global supply chain issues continue to make us unsure when the final installation will be complete.

This Permanent Exhibition is meant to last for at least 20 years, so I’m sure you can appreciate that we want to get every detail right. Thank you again for your support, your enthusiasm, and your patience! I should have a very happy announcement in the next issue of our newsletter.

~ Dr. Elisabeth Ward

*P.S. Thanks to the Board and Staff for all their help while I have been recovering from a broken clavicle. Hope to be back to 100% soon!*

# Photo Gallery



Elisabeth Ward thanking John Beman for his wonderful support for so many years, at the Members' BBQ and Volunteer Appreciation in August. The excellent band MaCajo is in the background.



Pilar Parducci, recognized as our **Volunteer of the Year** for her help with events, fundraising, oral histories and the nominating committee. Thank you Pilar!



Kiwanis Club at the Smith House with Jordan Grealish, Art Carmichael, Elisabeth Ward and Paul Van Buren, celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Kiwanis Pet Parade.



Julia Lovin, a very special volunteer with six years on the Board, one as President, followed by two years as Past President, and still volunteering!



Teen docent Adrian with our intrepid docent coordinator Janet Klinke at the Smith House.



Georgiana with two leaders of the Teen Docent Program, Anya McClatchie and Ghania Mehdi, at their farewell celebration in July.

# Photo Gallery



*Dancing the Folklorico at Rancho Day in June, a very popular event.*



*Taking a mighty swing at a Rancho Day piñata.*



*Bernard Lily, our local apricot expert with 47 years of experience growing and harvesting apricots, at the Apricot STEM Fair in July.*



*Two teen docents explaining the science of steam at the Apricot STEM Fair.*



*Delicious apricot-based mole served up by the owner of Tal Palo, a soon-to-open restaurant in downtown Los Altos.*



*Trying some science experiments in the "Incubator Lab" at the Apricot STEM Fair.*



# UNDER THE OAKS

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[www.losaltoshistory.org](http://www.losaltoshistory.org)

### Museum and Store Hours

Thursday to Sunday, Noon-4pm.

Smith House and Store open, Museum closed for construction.

We are closed Thanksgiving Day.

### General Inquiries

(650) 948-9427 x14 or  
[hello@losaltoshistory.org](mailto:hello@losaltoshistory.org)

### Collections/Research

(650) 948-9427 x11  
[research@losaltoshistory.org](mailto:research@losaltoshistory.org)

### Event Rentals

(650) 948-9427 x12  
[weddings@losaltoshistory.org](mailto:weddings@losaltoshistory.org)

**Mission Statement** *The Los Altos History Museum gathers and presents compelling stories and artifacts that bridge the past and the present by fostering the creative energy of staff and volunteers to challenge established narratives and produce engaging educational programs and exhibits for the community.*

## On The Calendar

**Peace, Love, Unity, 2022 Youth Art Contest**, now through Oct. 30, J. Gilbert Smith House.

**Archaeology, History, and Heritage of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe**, by Alan Leventhal, Thurs., Oct. 6, 7pm, online.

**Wallace Stegner: A Path to Conservation**, opens Thurs., Oct. 13, outside the Smith House.

**Creek Fest: Playing with Water**, Sat., Oct. 22, 10am - 3pm, Museum courtyard.

**Catch the Spirit**, Wed., Nov. 16, noon - 4pm

### Welcome to our new members:

Julia Clawson	Gill Lane	Raman Thirumalai
Clyde Coombs	Duncan Macmillan	Carol Warmington
Chetna Gaglani	Sri Subramanian	

### Business Members

#### Business Sponsorship

Janis Ahmadjian-Baer, Ph.D., Sereno  
Erika Ameri, Compass Real Estate  
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#### Partner Sponsorship

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Nicole Frelier Andrews, Fine Art, LLC  
Kiwanis Club of Los Altos



*Gary Hedden with a bottle of Icelandic Birch Liqueur, a truly unique thank you gift for his two years as Board President.*

**Board Meetings**, Third Wednesday each month, 4 pm, by Zoom, everyone welcome.