

Calendar of Events

June 15th through November 4th, 2007
**100 Years at the Williams House:
Look How Things Have Changed!**
Museum of American Heritage
351 Homer Avenue, Palo Alto
For more information call (650) 321-1004
or visit their website at www.moah.org

Sunday, December 9th, 2007
Annual PAST Holiday House Tour

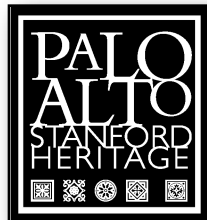
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Jinny Henke, Secretary
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Betty Britton Terry Rice
Natalie Loukianoff Scott Smithwick
Janet Peacock Steve Staiger

HELP WANTED: Webmaster

PAST is looking for someone to take over the management of our Website. We need someone familiar with basic HTML and CSS. The current webmaster will be available for consultation. If you are interested, please contact PAST President, Ralph Britton by email at ralphbritton@sbcglobal.net

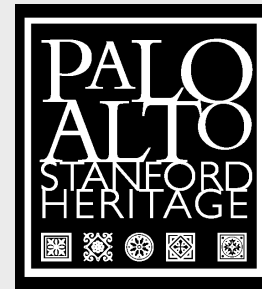


Palo Alto Stanford Heritage
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Palo Alto, CA 94302
(650) 299-8878
www.pastheritage.org

PAST Heritage is a nonprofit organization advocating the preservation of the historic architecture, neighborhoods, and character of the greater Palo Alto Stanford area through informed citizen involvement and education.

PAST NEWSLETTER

Editor: Scott Smithwick
Contributors: Jeanne McDonnell & Susan Kirk
Ralph Britton & Grace Hinton
Photographs: PAST Heritage
Susan Kirk
Jeanne Farr McDonnell
Point Reyes National Park



PAST NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 21 - NUMBER 2

FALL 2007

Come Join us at our 20th Annual HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR

**Charles Sumner Homes of Palo Alto
December 9th - 1 to 4pm**

As you know, PAST organizes a house tour every December where our membership can spend an afternoon learning about the history of the city's neighborhoods, housing stock, builders, and architects through exploring some of the charming homes in our area. In this year's tour our subject is Charles Sumner, a local architect who built over 70 buildings in Palo Alto and Stanford during the first three decades of the 20th century. He designed



mainly residences, some of the loveliest examples of which can be found in the Crescent Park neighborhood, where the tour will take place. We hope to see you on this informative and enjoyable tour!

If you are interested in being a docent at one of these wonderful homes, please email Grace Hinton at grace_hinton@yahoo.com. You'll earn a free ticket, work half the afternoon, and be able to see all the remaining houses in the other half.

President's Column



As you will see by reading this issue, this is a busy time for PAST. With the Holiday House Tour coming on December 9th, the committee has been busy lining up houses, and there will be the usual need for docents to help our visitors enjoy the tour. As always, this not only raises funds for PAST and its preservation efforts, but also dramatically demonstrates how pleasant it can be to live in a historic house.

One of the most interesting things to come to light lately has been finding an actual picture of Juana Briones in an archive at Point Reyes National Seashore. This helps to give impetus to the effort to preserve the Briones House

in Palo Alto. Right now that effort is legal, directed toward requiring the owner to file an environmental impact statement and to obtain a negative declaration before any demolition of the structure is possible. PAST is supporting this effort by accepting donations for the legal costs on behalf of the group of Friends of Briones. As previously reported, PAST has already made a \$4,000 contribution of its own. Just recently, the PAST board unanimously decided to donate up to an additional \$5,000 to match all contributions made to The Briones Fund before December 31, 2007. If the legal battle is won, the legal costs will be awarded to reimburse these funds, but of course there is no guarantee.

Not only is this building tied to one of the most interesting of the old *Californios*, but the construction details are unique as well. The walls of the original building are formed of cribbing made of slats of wood nailed on timber vertical members, then packed with earth. Even the nails are of a type cut out of sheet stock, very different from modern round nails which are formed from wire stock.

If the effort to save the Briones House is won, and we are hopeful that it will be, there will be much more to do and many more expenses related to its possible acquisition and restoration so that it can serve as the historic, educational and community resource it needs to become.

~ Ralph Britton

~ SAVE THE DATE ~

Join us on April 27, 2008 from 1-4 p.m. on the Stanford campus when the Stanford Historical Society's Historic House Project opens the homes and gardens of some of Stanford's oldest faculty homes on San Juan Hill. Included in the tour will be a 1905 home, inspired by A.B. Clark; a second A.B. Clark house (1914), now on the National Register; and a 1908 home, that has been preserved beautifully despite the exterior conversion from shingle style to a New England farmhouse, necessitated by dry rot in the original eaves. These and more will entice you into Preservation month. Stay tuned for details on the Stanford Historical Society's web site at: <http://histsoc.stanford.edu/>

Treasurer's Report - 2006-2007

Thank you all once again for your support for preservation in our community. Your membership dues, and the revenue we take in during the Holiday House Tour, go to support many worthy causes. Over the last several years, due to strong membership numbers and a string of successful Holiday House Tours, we have built up a size-able reserve fund. As was the case last year, we are making an effort to spend down some of our reserve, so that we made expenditures beyond our total revenues for the year. While we spent more in 2007 than usual on the newsletter because of increase printing cost, most of our operating deficit is the result of significant donations we made in the name of preservation.

In the Donation category, this year our largest gift (\$5,000) went to the Stanford Historical Society in support of their ongoing project to document the history of the houses on the Stanford campus built prior to the Second World War. They are presently working on their fifth book in the series. They've been so successful with this project that on November 9, the California State Historic Resources Commission and the Governor's Office will announce that the Society's Historic Houses Committee has been selected to receive a Governor's Historic Preservation Award for 2007. We look forward to our continuing collaboration with the SHS.

PAST gave a \$500 gift to Kiwanis toward their project of restoring the historic flagpole and base that sits in front of McArthur Park Restaurant, the adapted army building originally by famed bay area architect Julia Morgan. You may have read about its rededication in an earlier newsletter this year, and it's worth a visit.

In the category of Advocacy, our major effort is assisting the Friends of Juana Briones in their difficult task of saving the Juana Briones House from demolition. We gave \$4,000 toward their legal fees. They are making good progress in their endeavors, having won the first legal round earlier this year. (As an aside, we are currently offering matching grants for any donations to this cause, up to \$5,000). Last year we gave the Friends of the Griffin House \$20 in support of their effort to save the 1901 building, located on the Foothill College Campus. We are happy to report that they were successful in their endeavor, so much so that they returned the money to our coffers.

As part of our Outreach & Education program, Board member Terry Rice spearheaded an effort to alert the real estate community to the resources we offer to them and prospective buyers of historical properties. Absolute Mortgage organized a general real estate seminar during which folders organized by Terry and former board member Dianne MacDaniels were distributed. These folders contained information on remodeling historic homes and using preservation as a "green" tool. They also included PAST's brochures on historic buildings in our community and self-guided history walks.

As you can see from our "Assets" data, we still have a goodly reserve fund. The Board is discussing ways to dip into it to further support local preservation projects. We welcome member input, and will keep you informed as the current fiscal year progresses.

~ Grace Hinton, Treasurer

2006-2007 BUDGET SUMMARY

| | PROPOSED | ACTUAL |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| REVENUE | | |
| HOLIDAY HOUSE TICKETS | \$3,000.00 | \$6,985.00 |
| INTEREST | \$350.00 | \$360.54 |
| MEMBERSHIP DUES | \$12,000.00 | \$10,970.00 |
| PRODUCT SALES | \$0.00 | \$35.00 |
| MISCELLANEOUS | \$0.00 | \$256.00 |
| TOTAL REVENUES | \$15,350.00 | \$18,606.54 |
| EXPENDITURES | | |
| ADMINISTRATION | \$20.00 | \$215.73 |
| ADVOCACY | \$200.00 | \$3,800.00 |
| BANK CHARGE | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| COMMUNICATIONS: | | |
| NEWSLETTER | \$2,500.00 | \$3,510.65 |
| P.O. BOX | \$75.00 | \$68.00 |
| TELEPHONE | \$400.00 | \$332.55 |
| WEBSITE | \$120.00 | \$165.00 |
| CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS | \$100.00 | \$21.12 |
| DONATIONS TO OTHERS | \$1,000.00 | \$5,505.00 |
| DUES/SUBSCRIPTIONS | \$200.00 | \$725.00 |
| EVENTS: | | |
| HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR | \$2,500.00 | \$2,425.11 |
| MEMBERSHIP EVENT | \$1,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| PRESERVATION WEEK | \$2,500.00 | \$2,076.22 |
| GIFTS | \$0.00 | \$240.00 |
| INSURANCE | \$2,000.00 | \$2,009.00 |
| MEMBERSHIP | \$225.00 | \$244.01 |
| OFFICE SUPPLIES | \$40.00 | \$0.00 |
| OUTREACH / EDUCATION | \$1,570.00 | \$210.77 |
| RENT | \$900.00 | \$0.00 |
| TAX | \$0.00 | \$14.00 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURES | \$15,350.00 | \$21,562.16 |
| ACCOUNTS | | |
| CHECKING | \$2,741.88 | |
| MONEY MARKET | \$18,394.83 | |
| | \$21,136.71 | |

wonderful old plants and trees. There is no end to what could be created there. Of course all activities have to meet guidelines, which is the way all activities were always conducted there. There is so much history entwined in the years since Juana. If we protect and honor history we have a guide for our future.

Our world is changing so fast and so much is being lost. Shall we drive up Old Adobe Road and point to a “theme park” house and tell the children what was once there? How can we hold our heads up and say we didn’t save her? This house has stood for history, particularly Women’s History. Yet even if there was no history, the house itself provides great inspiration. People are changed by walking there, breathing there, standing still for a moment there. The Native Americans chose that land for a reason and I believe they felt some inherent power in the land under their feet. That power still exists and is as much of a treasure as anything else. We must not allow the money of a few to erase what is truly significant for the many.

~ Susan Kirk



~ CONGRATULATIONS ~

PAST would like to congratulate the Stanford Historical Society for receiving a Governor’s Historic Preservation Award for 2007 for the Historic Houses Project of Faculty Houses on the Stanford University campus. This prestigious award is the only official preservation award presented by the State of California to worthy recipients in recognition of outstanding achievements in the field of historic preservation. There will be a presentation ceremony held in November.

Photograph Discovered

It is a challenge to select a theme in regard to the Juana Briones house because of its complexity, including former and current people and places. For example, Gorgonio, born in the late 1700s, was so important to Santa Clara Mission that the padres gave him the largest of four land grants allotted to Indians in what is now Santa Clara County. Juana purchased that land from him and built her house there. Or consider the oral history of a man who lived on the property for fifty years, Tom Hunt. He mentioned such notables as General Douglas MacArthur and the sculptor, Louise Nevelson in speaking of his life there.

I continue to experience amazing surprises about Juana Briones herself, like one this year. A photograph believed to be of her, of whom no image had been known to exist, was donated to the archives at Point Reyes National Seashore. The donors brought a form of validation in a genealogy showing seven generations of their ancestors who had been entrusted with the image. The trail began with a granddaughter of Rafael Garcia, who was the brother of Juana’s sister-in-law, the step-son of Juana’s sister, and the owner of the Tomales ranch in the Point Reyes area.

The complexity photo to be found in an of memorabilia. This and beauty of a being handsomely prominently on a living unidentified subject about Juana’s age in the time when this kind glass-wet-plate An artist brought out and a preservative, adding to the portrayal, comparing it to the back.

The photograph reveals character, as history y Tapia de Miranda. A Old Adobe Road to be 1 will honor her. Her from the marker, certainly in 1844 when from Gorgonio, has good condition as a forceful emblem of a character still remembered for her many achievements.

Three rooms, of rare crib and wattle construction, date to Juana’s time. The additions that made the house more comfortable for modern times, are a century old. The building’s possible preservation will be discussed soon in a court case to be defended by attorney, Susan Brandt-Hawley.

~ Jeanne Farr McDonnell

Jeanne is the author of the soon to be released book *Juana Briones of 19th Century California*, which will be published in the fall 2008 by the University of Arizona Press



continues. This is not a old box with a collection photograph is of the size painting, worthy of framed and placed room wall. The looks about 50, that is, 1852, which was about of expensive, rare, photography originated. the image with charcoal strengthening but not as can be seen by untreated picture on the

a person of strong describes Juana Briones state historic marker on dedicated on November house down the street constructed almost she purchased the ranch endured in reasonably

Growing up in "History"

The following is a personal memoir written by Susan Kirk, who grew up in and who has lived a substantial portion of her life in the Juana Briones house.



From the time my great Aunt, Edith Cox-Eaton (San Francisco's leading couturier in the early 1900's) and great Uncle Dr. George Eaton purchased the Briones property in 1924, until I was forced to sell it in 1993, the house and grounds were always open to the public for historic tours, weddings, garden events and musical evenings.

As a child I was told repeatedly that we lived in history, that this was more than a house, it had intrinsic value and it's history was to be shared with the community for all time. A value I hold true today.

During my Aunt Edith's time-1924 to 1972, droves of school children came to the house on tours to be enthralled by the wonderfully rich stories of Juana's time there and the history of their town. Edward Weston photographed my great Aunt sitting in the patio with her little Pekinese dog. The Matthew's of California Arts and Crafts fame built much of the furniture that decorated the house, including the dining room table and chairs that hundreds of visitors enjoyed during a meal there.

My aunt, the painter and actress, Marjorie Eaton, lived in the house from 1924 until she built her own adobe on adjacent property in the 1970's. Marjorie brought many well-known artists there to share in the rich California heritage. Constance Mackey created a beautiful oil painting featuring the front view of the house with my great-grannie Ward in the foreground. Diego Rivera and Frieda Kahlo were close friends of my aunt and most likely came to "the rancho" once or twice.

My mother and father, Charlie and Sally Cox lived in the house until their deaths (1974 and 1980). Our friends, two time Nobel Prize winner Linus Pauling and his wife Eva Helen often came to visit us there. Senator Alan Cranston lived near by and was a frequent guest. Alan said this was his favorite house of all time, a sentiment I have heard from many people.

The famous sculptress Louise Nevelson would come from New York, some of her work was inspired by the architecture of the house. Painters Consuelo Cloos (one of Salvadore Dali's favorite) and Lucretia VanHorn, who came to visit and never left because she was so entranced by the place. I remember well the day Juan Mirabal, head of the Taos Native American tribe came to pay his respects to Marjorie. He said the house had a powerful spirit and held an important place in history. Marjorie was one of the first women to paint the Indians of the Taos Pueblo in the 1920's. Her work has been exhibited in San Francisco's Palace of Fine Arts, The Oakland Museum and The Millicent Rogers Museum of Taos, New Mexico to name a few. Marjorie also had a long acting career in over



40 films and numerous stage plays. Marjorie always opened the house for many community activities and tours and was featured in newspaper interviews about her life and the life of the house.

I lived in the house on and off all my life since 1945. After Marjorie passed away I inherited the property along with my brothers. While I lived there with my then husband and accompanist, Denny Berthiaume, we worked with the Women's Heritage Museum in order to continue the tours, deepening the experience for the community by having trained docents. These tours were very successful and well loved by the community, young and old alike. The emphasis on the educational benefits to children cannot be over stated, especially those of Hispanic decent. I saw children taken into a world that they would never know otherwise. Such experience changes a young person's perspective of the world, forever.

I made my living as a jazz singer and held many impromptu concerts in the music room, which because of the hollow space underneath (old root cellar) had absolutely marvelous acoustics. Denny and I then created Soiree Musical. We hosted these pre-arranged evenings for 12 to 20 people, beginning with a tour of the house and gardens, sharing the history going back to Juana and right through to our time. Then dinner would be served in the elegant dining room. The view of the hills and garden seen through the old rolled glass windows gave one the feeling the world was gently moving and changing with each new glance. The walls and ceiling crafted in beautiful dark wood gave an impression of being in an old English manor home while being warmed on cool evenings by the large fireplace. After dinner we would adjourn to the music room where Denny and I would perform a concert of jazz standards. We were often booked many months ahead. We hosted such luminaries as Wallace Stegner and his wife, and if my memory serves me, Steve Jobs as well as many interesting people from Palo Alto and Bay area. At one point, the Palo Alto City Council gathered at the house for their Christmas dinner. People still tell me that what they experienced on those evenings in THAT house, will live with them forever.



The gardens were extraordinary. The wisteria on the back porch is at least 150 years old. Tom Hunt who lived and still owns the cottage on the property and I worked with the natural beauty to create a stunning array of plants and flowers. This could be re-created. Mr. Hunt became a world-renowned mosaic artist during his time there.



What does the future hold?

I have always held the belief that this house belongs to the community and can be used as a history museum and also as a special place for small weddings, memorials and meetings. Painters, sculptors, historian, writers, poets, composers all can benefit from the restoration of this timeless place. Architects have marveled at the ingenious beam construction and many features of the design. This house is a study in architectural design. Horticulturists, arborists and garden enthusiasts could come to enjoy and study the