

Alameda Museum

Quarterly

CRAZY THINGS I'VE FOUND IN THE MUSEUM

by Nancy Martin



figure 1

HAVE A RECURRING DREAM in which it is revealed to me that somehow all the toys from my childhood have been saved. I am looking back into my past remembering the preciousness of those objects, more so now that they are actually gone. Working in the museum collections is a sometimes weird, unworldly experience. What will I find in that dusty old box? Some crazy realia from the past: sunglasses from the 1920s, a tambourine played by dancing girl Eugenie Clinehard, or samples of borax. Did you know that borax used to be refined in Alameda?

For the last year, my job has been to sew accession labels in the Alameda Museum's costume collection garments. The accession number is the filing system used by museums that links the object to the card catalog. This is where information about the object is housed, for example, its provenance, the donor, and why it's important. In sewing labels into clothing from the 19th century, there are some challenges. Sometimes, due to the construction, it can be difficult to tell the front from the back. Most of the time, I can recognize at least the types of garment. Once though, I did find something that

I could not identify (fig 1). What is it? Nursing bra? Baby carrier? Infant corset? As crazy as it sounds, during the Victorian era, (Queen Victoria was crowned in 1837 and died in 1901) little girls did wear corsets. Vertical channeling filled with soft cording provided the training and fortification needed to support what medically were considered the delicate reproductive organs. Although it is similar, our item does not quite match this description. It is simply a white rectangle with two holes in the middle. Accession number 83.46.6 gives us some information, stating that this "halter" was worn by Henry Masters (future owner of Sunny Cove Beach) in the 1880s.

When I measured the piece I found that it would fit a nine month old baby's body. Details about Victorian baby underwear are a bit hard to come by, but when beginning my research, I came across an article from the *New York Times* reviewing Ruth Goodman's book, *How to Be a Victorian*. This fascinating account of everyday life in the middle of the 19th century reports on the more intimate details of life, like feminine hygiene and birth control, things you

Continued on page 2...

Crazy Things . . . Continued from page 1

always wanted to know about but were afraid to ask. Goodman names this sleeveless halter a *barrow coat* or a *pinning blanket*. Another resource, *Authentic Victorian Dressmaking Techniques*, reveals an example closer to our museum specimen. What is it? First a petticoat (boys wore skirts until they were "breeched" at about six years old) is wrapped around the baby's chest. The baby's arms fit through the holes of the pinning blanket and ties in the back with a bow. The back is left open like a hospital gown for convenient nappy changing. Earlier versions use pins instead of more handy buttons or ties.

An 1897 *New York Observer* article that begins "what is there more interesting to womankind than a baby's outfit..." (!) continues, "What a wonderful revolution there has been in baby clothes in the last ten or fifteen years. The long, heavy shirts... and the useless pinning blanket has been done away with." This declaration of modernism recommends the relatively new machine-knitted baby clothes. Aside from fabrication, though, the basic swaddling remains the same. There are no less than five layers including belly band, diaper, flannel, pinning jacket, then outer dress.

Queen Victoria, upon the death of husband Prince Albert, initiated extensive mourning etiquette prescribed in dress and behavior by remaining in visible mourning dress for the rest of her life. Men, typically, did not have to do much more than wear an armband. Women, though, had to go through stages of mourning, which included wearing black outward and sometimes underwear for three years.

Babies and children also had to participate in mourning rituals. The museum owns an example of the appropriate infant mourning dress of the 1860s (fig 2). Accession number 86.51.145 comes from the large Carol Heche collection. This pinafore is made of *crape*, a taffeta like fabric



figure 2

An infant mourning dress.

with crinkled texture. Known today as crepe, this special term was used specifically when worn for mourning. The interesting scallop trim uses the cut edge of the fabric and is known as dagging. It's use goes all the way back to Medieval times.

The most bizarre thing I found in the museum was a pillowcase containing fox stoles with heads and feet included (fig 3). Let me say it was pretty disturbing to open the bag and see all those beady eyes. Full pelt fox stoles were all the rage in the late Victorian era. By seaming them mouth to tail, they appear to be chasing each other. Often their little claws were made to act as a closure. This fairly

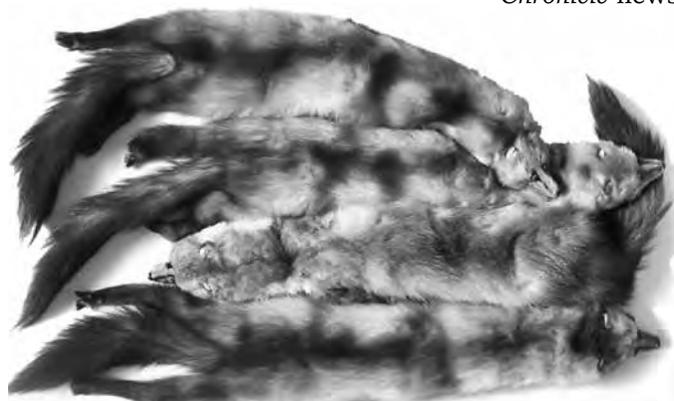


figure 3

Four fox stoles.

elaborate stole is made up of four foxes stitched together. The popularity of fur garments and using different types of animal skins increased in the 19th century for a couple of reasons. Jews, known for their work as clothiers and furriers, began in the 1870s to migrate to London to escape European persecution. They brought their expertise with them. Accompanying this came growing economic prosperity and the fashion of wearing rather freakish types of furs and feathers.

The Young Ladies Journal from the 1880s describes "a tiny stuffed mouse nestling on the shoulder of an evening dress," and makes the reflective statement that "it was not necessary for smartness to wear cats heads, tiny monkeys, and large perroquets (French for parrot) upon one's bonnet." The popularity of these essentially nonfunctional accessories was one factor that led Thorstein Veblen, in 1899 to advance the concept of conspicuous consumption. On the other hand, interesting feminist studies have conjectured that the wearing of fur by women communicates the desire to express the repressed power within themselves!

Another, what we would consider creepy, Victorian trend was to save your own hair. This image (fig 4) shows a doll owned by Alameda native resident and progressive, Adeline Toye Cox. The wig she wears is made from her own human hair. The card catalog tells us that it was dated from 1903 from the *San Francisco Chronicle* newspapers found inside the doll's head.

Continued on page 3 . . .



figure 4

Bisque doll with human hair.

Some of the boxes contain quite an amalgam of items. This corset (fig 5) for example, was found alongside a pair of pink silk Munsingwear long underwear. It is interesting to note that rarely do I find any kind of manufacturer labels in our collection. Of course, much of the clothing in the museum was sewn before the aid and invention of the first practical sewing machine in 1851. Even the later items, though, do not contain ready-to-wear labels. What can be inferred from this? Women's clothing donated to the Alameda Museum, regardless of the era was probably made by a dressmaker or the women themselves. A quick perusal through the card catalog will verify that most of the clothing has been donated from important Alameda icons such as transportation magnates or business tycoons. Generally speaking, a museum's inventory contains the dress of the more well-heeled members of a society. We are fortunate that our museum, a reflection of our community, contains more middle-class relics.

The museum collection includes only a few corsets. I chose this one (fig 5) not only because it is so pretty, but also because it is so small. Accession number 89.24.14 informs us that this corset was purchased from the City of Paris (now the location of Neiman Marcus) in San Francisco and worn by Eleanor Jane

Lott on her wedding day. It measures 8 ½" across which today might fit a seven-year-old girl. Different from today's highly sexualized version of the corset, at the time of this purchase, the convention was less about exaggerating proportions than just holding everything in. I can't explain why this corset is so small, other than Ms. Lott was just a tiny little person.

Accession number 83.53.3 is a pair of frilly, but crotchless, pantalets (fig 6) that were popular for a short time in the 1860s. This pair also comes from the Sunny Cove Beach collection. The museum owns quite a lot of both open- and closed-crotched bloomers. In this case, it is interesting to consider what is not found in the museum. For example, I haven't found any men's underwear, or even the everyday, stretched-out grey knickers that make up most women's more realistic panty assortments. In her article "Three Sides to Every Story," Jill Fields makes an interesting argument about how the role of undergarments changed over time from body shapers that are hidden from view but essential to the silhouette of the outer garment, to more exposed lingerie which reveal the natural silhouette. She postulates with this theory that underwear can be an expression of the change in how women have defined and identi-



figure 5

A diminutive corset.



figure 6

An open pantalet.

fied themselves over time. She asks why, in the 1850s, crotchless pantalets were considered a convenient answer to the call of nature, but later came to be perceived as erotic. At first, I thought this hypothesis was bogus, but based on the items that have been saved versus not, the idea, I believe, has some credence. This photo, courtesy of the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising Museum archives, is an example of a pantalets and chemise set that would be worn under a corset. While it does seem weird for us moderns to imagine the reason for constructing a set of open drawers, keep in mind that the concept of wearing any undies at all was new for Victorian women.

Dress and material culture can address a myriad of concepts left undocumented in printed research. These few pieces show us another side of Victorian culture, such as the medical rationalization for wearing corsets and swaddling babies, the romantic practice of saving locks of hair for adornment, or memories, and the rites of bereavement. Like in my dream, these objects are real. Old, used, damaged, or repaired, they are imbued and saturated with reminiscences of their owners.



Docents Gather at Museum

by *Olivia Bauman*

ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 31ST, the docents of the Alameda Museum met for a training and luncheon at the museum with the Board of Directors. The luncheon, catered by Juanita's on Park Street, was a wonderful opportunity for everyone to get to know each other better and connect. Twenty-eight volunteers were present, some of whom who have been volunteering at the museum for over 20 years, and some of whom are new to our community!

The President of the Board of Directors, Dennis Evanosky, and Vice President, Adam Gillitt, led the meeting. Adam walked the docents through the nuts and bolts of opening and closing the museum and took questions on protocols and procedures. During lunch, Dennis discussed a number of topics, including how to get the Alameda community more involved in the museum and our events, including the Park and Webster Street fairs, estate sales, and the Alameda Point Antiques Faire.

There have been a lot of new developments and activities at the museum, which we briefed our

volunteers on. Alameda Museum is now part of the Online Archive of California and we are currently working on getting our collection updated and online with them. The museum is also hoping to reach out to local schools to talk to students and get them involved with local history and the museum. Another new development for the museum is that our President has been pursuing a grant from the State of California to help modernize our archives and facilities, which we are all very excited about. We are especially grateful for the assistance of former board member, Chuck Millar, for his help diagramming the building.

Our Vice President has started a new project of recording oral histories of Alameda residents, and we are looking for volunteers to share their stories on video. We are looking for anyone from age two to 102, lifelong residents, former inhabitants and new transplants, to share stories they have about our beloved Alameda. It will take about an hour of your time and we can meet at the museum or a location of your choice. Please

contact Adam Gillitt by email at membership@alamedamuseum.org.

The Alameda Museum runs off the generous contributions of our volunteers and community members, and we are always looking for volunteers to docent, help with special projects, and to join the museum's Board of Directors. We LOVE our volunteers, so if you are interested, please email volunteer@alamedamuseum.org and let us know how you'd like to help.

Right now, we especially need a new Docent Coordinator. We would be happy to have one person step up, or for two people to share the responsibilities. The Docent Coordinator is the point person for our docents, and their responsibilities would include recruiting docents, finding replacements when a shift needs to be covered, maintaining the docent contact list and calendar, and liaising with the Board of Directors.

Keep your eyes peeled for upcoming docent events, including our annual docent luncheon, which will be happening in April, and a later meeting about our city's history.

Docents were updated on museum procedures and had a chance to meet each other over lunch in the museum gallery.





BE A MUSEUM DOCENT

MAKE SOME NEW FRIENDS

Please contact the
Docent Coordinator

volunteer@alamedamuseum.org
650-799-4913

Alameda Museum Quarterly is published in the spring, summer, fall, and winter of each year and is available in electronic form on the museum website.

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Alameda Sun

DAMES AUX GATEAUX



IslandAllianceOfTheArts.org
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From the President's Podium

by Dennis Evanosky

The Alameda Museum, like the ancient Romans, begins its official year in March. The votes are tallied, the new board is seated and the new officers are elected.

I am honored to serve the museum as its president for another year and am pleased that Adam Gillitt will serve as the vice-president, Bob Risley as treasurer and Valerie Turpen as secretary. Olivia Bauman and Evelyn Kennedy will return as board members.

We hosted a luncheon for the docents at the museum enjoying a delicious lunch from Juanita's while getting caught up and refreshed on opening and closing the museum, as well as learning about some of the upcoming events. These include the more formal luncheon to thank the docents for their service and hold a swearing-in ceremony for the board of directors.

This year we plan on hosting the luncheon at Pier 29. We had such a good time there celebrating George Gunn's fortieth anniversary as our curator that we decided to go back. We have a tentative date of Saturday, April 9 for the affair, but we still need to work out some wrinkles.

The museum will be represented in San Francisco at that city's "History Day" on Saturday, March 5, and Sunday, March 6. I contacted the folks at the mayor's office about Alameda having a table at the event. They hesitated because they only wanted organizations with connections to San Francisco's history. After I explained that our city's founders, Gideon Aughinbaugh and William Worthington Chipman, conceived of Alameda at Aughinbaughs' grocery store on Market Street and Chipman's "intelligence" office on Clay Street, we were in. (We would call an "intelligence" office a newspaper stand today.) "History Day" is particularly interesting for history buffs because the city is hosting it at the Old Mint, which is normally closed to the public.

I am very excited to tell you that the museum now has an account with the Online Archive of California, a research gateway to historical materials at archives, libraries, and museums throughout California, and access to Calisphere, which offers access to digital collections from California's libraries, archives, and museums.

This account will allow us to share the museum's collections with a broad online audience. The museum will also be able to post photographs and interviews on Calisphere. We are looking for people who can help us get our collections online. If you are interested give me a call at 510-772-5209.

We are also hoping to find people in the community—young and old—willing to sit down with Vice-President Adam Gillitt and share their memories about Alameda. Adam will digitally record your memories to share with the community. He started these interviews by sitting down with George Gunn. Check it out at facebook.com/AlamedaMuseum/?target_post=947074268706261&ref=story_permalink. If are interested in becoming an Alameda Museum Facebook celebrity call me at 510-772-5209.

Dennis Evanosky
President, Alameda Museum



FROM THE COLLECTION

Bell Once Sounded for Trains and Farm Hands

by Dennis Evanosky

THE ALAMEDA MUSEUM HAS A BELL from a South Pacific Coast Railroad locomotive in its collection. The railroad, which ran down Encinal and Central avenues and along Main Street, carried passengers from its wharf on San Francisco Bay to Santa Cruz from 1878 to 1906. The railroad also offered ferry service to San Francisco. Locomotive #22, pictured here at the railroad's High Street station with its engineer and fireman, was manufactured at the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Baldwin took great pride in its locomotives, not only in the way they performed, but in the way they looked. The photo of #22 does not do justice to the colors and Victorian-era design the locomotive displayed. This included the "order" atop the locomotive. In #22's case this order consisted of (from front to back): headlamp, stack, sand dome, bell, and steam dome.

The headlamp, of course, lit the way. Look closely at the car behind the locomotive—called the tender—and you'll notice the top of a second lamp use to light the way if the locomotive ever traveled in reverse.

The stack is the avenue through with the smoke left the locomotive's boiler. The shape of the stack suggests that the



South Pacific Coast Railroad's Locomotive #22 stands at the ready on Encinal Avenue next to the Encinal Hotel (today's High Street Station). The locomotive has a bell similar to the one on display at the Alameda Museum. Image: Gerald M. Best Collection.

locomotive used coal as fuel. (Locomotives with cone-like stacks burned wood.) The next element, the sand dome, held sand that the engineer could send down to the rails to help with traction. The bell, of course, warned that the train was coming. Railroads later replaced these with whistles. Finally the steam dome housed the opening to the boiler's steam pipe.

We do not know which South Pacific Coast locomotive the museum's bell came from. We do know that when the bell was taken from the locomotive, it took on a new life, calling farm hands from the fields on Bay Farm Island.



The museum's locomotive bell. Image: Dennis Evanosky.

WANTED: DOCENT COORDINATOR

Interested? email volunteer@alamedamuseum.org or call Olivia Bauman 650-799-4913.

The responsibilities would include:

- Scheduling shifts & calling replacements if needed
- Maintaining the docent contact list
- Recruiting docents
- Liaising with the Board of Directors





The West End Served as a Mecca for Bathers *by Dennis Evanosky*

YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD OF NEPTUNE BEACH but did you know that a number of other baths once stretched along Alameda's south shore. Bathers found the waters along Alameda's south shore a source of relaxation. In 1877—some forty years before James Strehlow opened Neptune Beach—word reached Alameda that the South Pacific Coast Railroad would be coming to town. It didn't take long for entrepreneurs to cash in on the fact that this new railroad practically hugged the bays shore, helping nurture a new industry: the baths.

In 1877, even before the advent of the railroad, a certain "Mr. Salara" started the Alameda Salt Water Baths. The entrance to the baths stood on the southwest corner of Central Avenue and Fifth Street.) Perhaps Salara knew that the South Pacific Coast planned to build a station at that very spot. The following February Salara sold his enterprise to John P. Wonderlich. Joseph Baker in *Past and Present of Alameda County* wrote that Wonderlich "at once commenced elaborate improvements, no less than \$28,000 being spent on them."

Wonderlich soon took on a partner, Alonzo W. Bryan; the pair renamed their venture the Newport Baths. According to the 1878 *Husted's Directory* Wonderlich and Bryan soon had company. G.W. Trover opened the Sunny Cove Baths right next door.

Wonderlich, Bryan and Trover soon had even more rivals for the bathers' money. Robert Cook opened Sandy Beach Baths, and John T. Gilman invited bathers to enjoy the waters at his Green Arbor Baths.

In the meantime bathing fever had spread east down Central Avenue. Robert Haley wanted to cash in. He opened the Terrace Baths on the southeast corner of Sixth Street. And a group of investors pooled their money — \$21,000, a tidy sum in 1878 — and purchased Patrick Britt's seven-acre farm at the foot of Webster Street. The buyers transformed the Britt farm into the Long Branch Baths.

"The Long Branch Swimming Baths were the largest of the famous Alameda swimming baths, with comfortable rooms and elegantly appointed grounds," Baker wrote. J.W. Pearson was among the Oakland

investors who spent \$70,000—this after handing Britt \$21,000 for the property—building the Long Branch Baths. "There are a dancing-pavilion, swings, shooting-ranges, etc., all being leased by Capt. George Cantus, a gentleman well known all over the State of California," Baker gushed.

This way to the **ALAMEDA BATHS**



In the Museum Art Gallery

■ MARCH

**Studio 820
San Lorenzo Adult School**
Mixed Media.

■ APRIL

**Alameda Artist
Chris Rummell**
Mixed media paintings
and gold leaf on
glass work.

■ MAY

Alameda Photo Society

Watch the Alameda Museum Quarterly for more details on these and other shows and events in the gallery.
Or visit alamedamuseum.org/alameda-museum/art-gallery/

BATHING RESORTS ON ALAMEDA'S SOUTH SHORE

ANNOTATED MAP

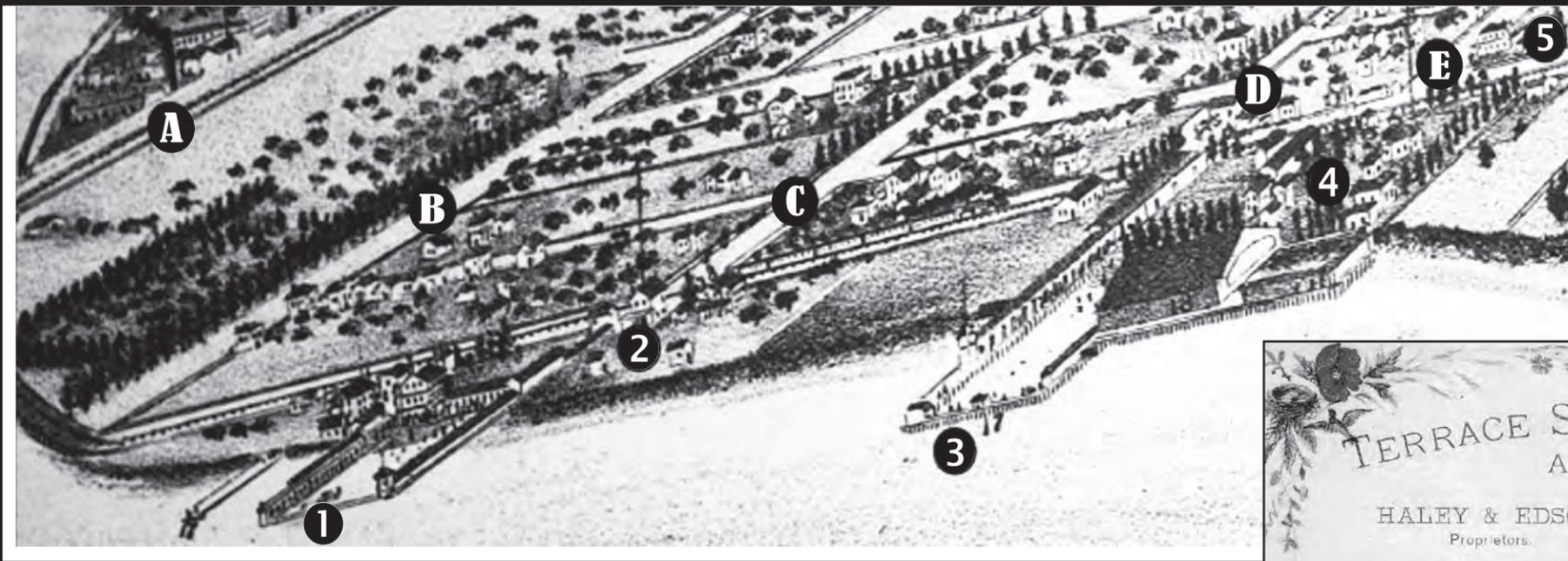
Beaches, called "baths" in Victorian times dotted Alameda's southern shore when *The Alameda Argus* commissioned this map in 1888.

This detail shows the railroad tracks on today's Central Avenue near the Pacific Coast Oil Works (A). Baths lined the shoreline between Fourth Street (B) and Fifth Street (C) and at the foot of Sixth Street (D).

- (1) Newport Baths
- (2) Railroad station
- (3) Terrace Baths

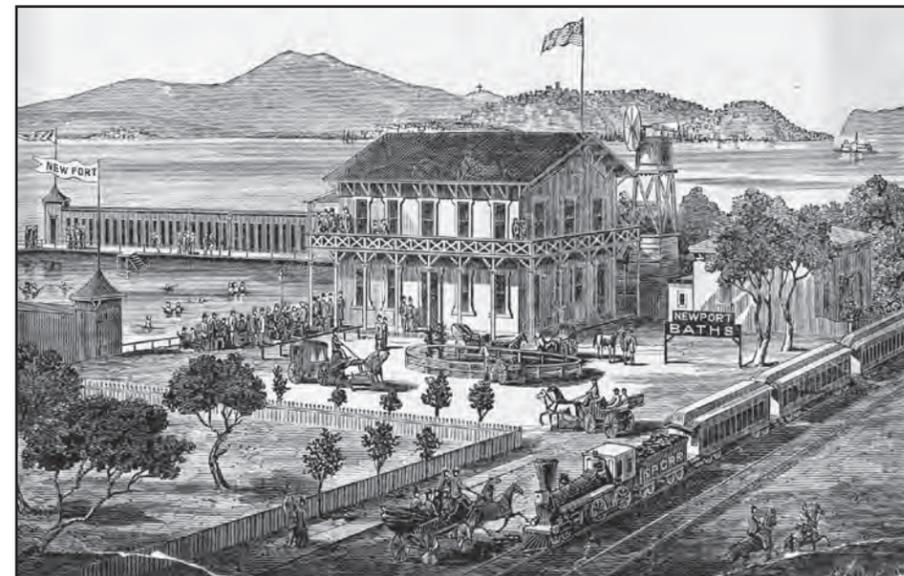
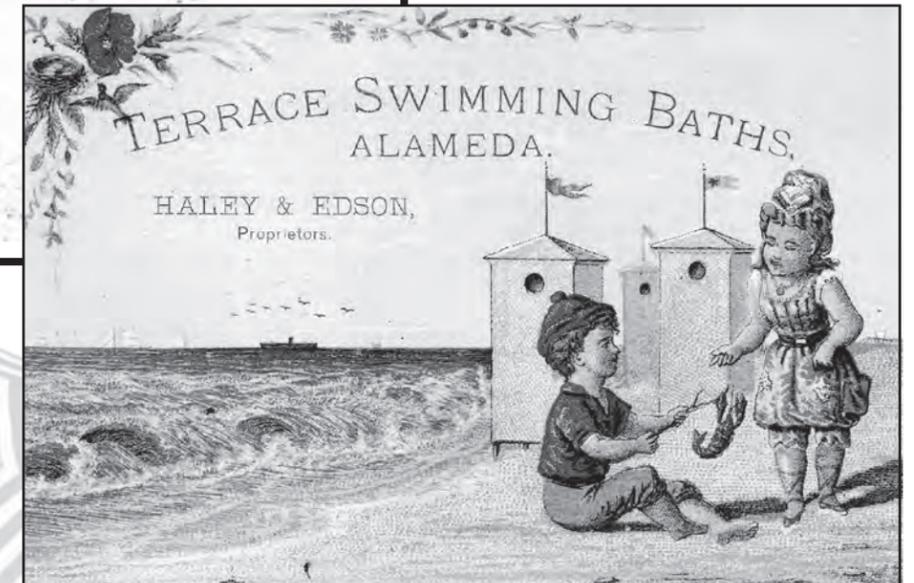
At the foot of Webster Street (E) stood:

- (4) Neptune Gardens
- (5) Britt Hotel



TERRACE BATHS

Children examine a lobster in this fanciful postcard featuring Alameda's Terrace Baths. Image: Gary Lenhart.



NEWPORT BATHS

The Newport Swimming Baths opened in 1877 as the Alameda Salt Water Baths. The facility boasted two hundred dressing-rooms, had some twelve hundred bathing-suits, and well as a conservatory with a seating capacity for three hundred persons. Image: *San Francisco Call*.

TERRACE BATHS

Robert Haley and Clinton Augustus Edson owned the Terrace Baths, where taking the waters at night was all the rage. "The premises are lighted by twenty-two gas-lamps, each having an eighty-candle power," a contemporary advertisement boasted. Haley died in an accident at the baths. An unhappy employee gunned Edson down in a Webster Street saloon. Image: Gary Lenhart.



SURF BEACH PARK

Nellie Schmidt poses for the camera at Surf Beach Park. Her mother owned Cottage Bath further west down Central Avenue. Nellie gained fame as a champion swimmer.



What's New at the Meyers House



Meyers Family Rooted in Switzerland

Story by Dennis Evanosky

Henry Haight Meyers and his family trace their paternal ancestry to a family caught up in the whirlpool that the birth of Protestantism created. Henry's wife and three daughters worshipped as Presbyterians, but the family's paternal ancestors chose another path. Genealogists have traced that lineage to a nine-time great-grandfather, Johannes Meyers, who was born about the year 1500 in the Swiss town of Schleithem. Records show that over time the family spelled its surname variously as Meyer, Meyers, Moyer, Moyers and Meiers.

In 1517 Martin Luther sparked the Protestant Reformation by nailing a copy of his 95 Theses to the church door at Wittenberg Castle. Eight years later worshippers in Zurich, Switzerland, who agreed with Luther, decided to take his precepts a bit further. They decreed they would baptize their adherents not as infants, but as adults, when they were mature and ready enough to profess their faith. Their name, Anabaptist, began as a pejorative coined by those who criticized these people for wanting to be baptized again (ana- in Greek means "again").

In 1630 Swiss documents listed the family's six-time paternal great-grandfather, Sebastian Meyer, as an "Anabaptist cabinetmaker" who had

settled with his wife, Otilia, in Stallikon in the Canton of Zurich. Sebastian had moved from Lucerne, where he had suffered religious persecution.

The document that recorded Sebastian and Otilia's existence, states that Sebastian had moved to Stallikon without permission and that he owned no property. Otilia's family, the Mullers, were also professed Anabaptists. In fact, in 1639 Otilia found herself imprisoned for professing her faith in Zurich along with the sisters of an Anabaptist minister. By this time, the Anabaptists were openly disavowing infant baptism, and Catholics, Calvinists and Lutherans viewed Anabaptists as heretics.

After authorities released Otilia, she and Sebastian fled with their son Johannes to the Palatinate in Germany. They lived peacefully for a time, worshipping in freedom with Anabaptists who followed the teachings of Dutch reformer Menno Simons, calling themselves Mennonites after their leader.

When persecution flared up in the early 18th century Johannes and Otilia's son Rudolph decided to flee to America. He went first to Rotterdam, where he joined 363 fellow believers. They set sail for Philadelphia aboard three ships. This Meyers' family ancestor arrived in America in late summer 1717 and became a member of an already established Mennonite community in Pennsylvania.



Henry Haight Meyers in later years. Image: Meyers family album, Meyers House Collection.



Meyers family 18th century ancestor Rudolf Meyers would have recognized this scene in a painting by Pavel Petrovich Svinin. The painting depicts adult Mennonites being baptized in Philadelphia. Rudolph arrived in Philadelphia in 1717 from Rotterdam with 363 fellow Mennonites. Image: Metropolitan Museum of Art.



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ALAMEDA ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

THE ALAMEDA ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY (AAPS)

has been protecting the architectural legacy of Alameda's historic buildings for more than 40 years. Through AAPS action committees, educational seminars and home tours, citizens of Alameda have learned to embrace their diverse older neighborhoods. To learn more visit alameda-preservation.org

To sponsor a museum lecture call Valerie Turpen at 510-522-3734 or email v.turpen@att.net
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The Alameda Museum wishes to recognize a generous donation in memory of

MARILYN BARR

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Save the Date: Sunday, September 25

ALAMEDA LEGACY HOME TOUR

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Fitch Tract Recalls Early Settlers *by Dennis Evanosky*

TIME HAS ALL BUT ERASED

the memory of a family that played an important role in Alameda's early history. Colonel Henry Fitch paid a boat owner to take him and some friends to Marin County in 1850. The tide, poor navigation skills or, perhaps, fate carried the party instead into the San Antonio Slough. The colonel and his friends spent their first night under one of the trees that would lend the town of Oakland its name two years later.

Colonel Fitch liked what he saw. So much so that he made two attempts in vain to purchase land from the Peralta brothers. First he approached Domingo with idea of purchasing the lands that stretched from today's Temescal District in Oakland to the bay. When he couldn't garner the funds to make that deal, Henry approached Domingo's brother Antonio with the proposition of buying lands that included much of today's Alameda.

This time he had a backer, a certain Colonel Whitney. (Henry also styled himself a colonel. He had served with distinction in the war with Mexico in 1848. However he had only attained the rank of captain.) At the last minute Whitney backed out and for the second time Henry walked away from the Peralta family with nothing more than his hat in his hand.

Antonio cared little for Henry's promised money. Two other Yankees had approached him as well, and it looked like they could pay. On October 22, 1851 William Worthington Chipman and Gideon Aughinbaugh paid Antonio \$2,000 as down payment on a \$14,000 deed. A week later, true to their word, the pair returned with \$5,000. Antonio gave the men a year to come up with the balance. To raise this money Chipman and Aughinbaugh sold off portions of the land.



Mary Fitch paid the publishing company Thompson and West a fee to have this sketch of her home at today's Morton Street and Lincoln Avenue published in its 1878 map book of Alameda County. Image: Oakland Public Library.

Henry Fitch had gone into the real estate business with the future United States Senator from Nevada William Sharon. If we take Henry's obituary at its word, we would believe that he and Sharon "owned nearly all the land in the Nob hill district." His obituary also informs us that, "When the vigilantes took the law in their own hands to protect property and lives (Henry) became one of the division commanders." This may be where he acquired the rank of colonel.

Fitch and Sharon ponied up \$3,000 for a share of Chipman and Aughinbaugh's new holdings. Henry soon acquired the land from Sharon and christened the property the "Fitch Tract." Henry lived in San Francisco. He invited his brother Charles Latham Fitch and Charles's wife, Mary, to move onto his new property across the bay.

The Fitch family laid out streets in the tract running from north to south. They named them for saints, from east to west: St. Mary, St. John,

St. Paul, St. George and St. Charles. Bay Street already existed and ran between St. George and St. Charles. Henry moved on not long afterwards and deeded the tract to Charles and Mary.

Henry's later accomplishments included founding the town of Fitchburg along the Central Pacific Railroad's right-of-way, centering on today's Seventieth Avenue in Oakland.

His brother Charles passed away in 1864. He rests at Mountain View Cemetery.

In 1877, the city of Alameda began changing street names:

- St. Mary Street in the Fitch Tract became Stanton Street.
- St. John turned into Benton Street.
- St. Paul switched names to Morton Street.
- St. George became Sherman Street.

The two western streets in the Fitch Tract, Bay and St. Charles, survived the name change.

Continued on page 13 . . .



Fitch Tract . . . Continued from page 12

Until 1877, Mary was living on the northwest corner of the intersection formed by St. Paul Street and the Central Pacific Railroad tracks. After the change, without having to move, she found herself on Morton Street and Railroad Avenue. (Railroad Avenue underwent a second name change in 1909 to Lincoln Avenue.)

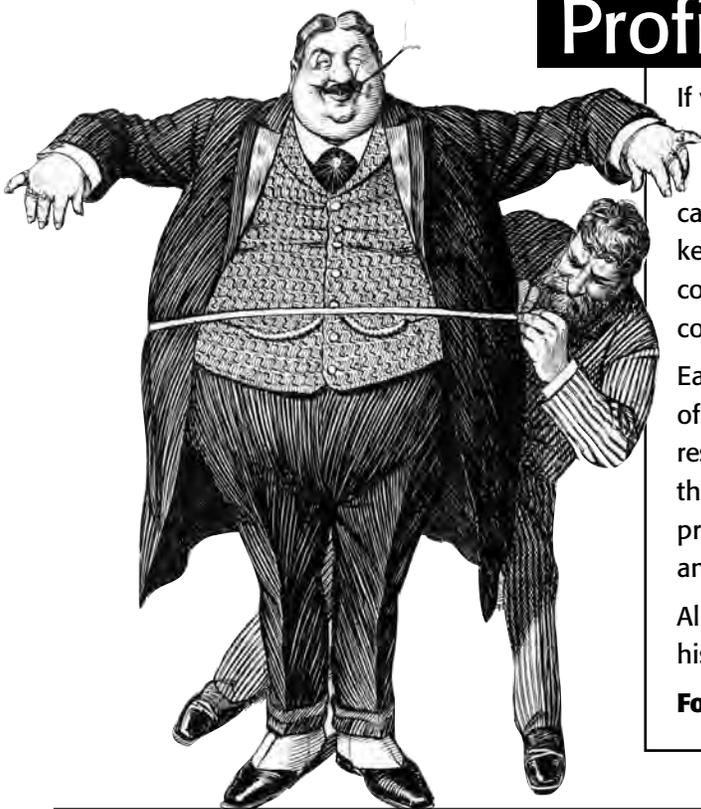
In 1878 Thompson and West published a map book of Alameda County. The publisher approached wealthy property owners with showcase homes in the county. The book included a map of the six-year-old city of Alameda. Mary Fitch agreed to pay Thompson and West the fee for the privilege of seeing her home in the book.

(Thompson and West billed the city of Alameda \$500 to include a map of the city that covered two full pages in the immense tome. The city's board of trustees—the equivalent of today's city council—voted not to pay. The publishers included the map anyway.)

Scarcely a trace of the Fitch name remains today. Homeowners who live in the area within the Fitch Tract might find mention of the tract in their title papers. A visit to Mountain View Cemetery reveals a family plot with the remains of the Mary's husband, Charles; Charles's father, Ezekiel; and Charles and Mary's son, Charles M. The three men originally rested in in a family plot with no stone to mark them.

Charles and Mary's daughter, Mary Rosette Fitch, married Joseph Wood Mastick on July 25, 1873. Joseph, Harvard Law, class of 1871, was the son of another pioneer couple in Alameda, Edwin Baird and Lucretia Wood Mastick. When her mother died, Mary Rosette laid her to rest in the Joseph Mastick family plot at Mountain View.

Mary Fitch laid her husband, Charles; her father-in-law, Ezekiel; and her son, Charles to rest beneath this stone monument at Mountain View Cemetery. Image: Dennis Evanosky.



Profit from Down-sizing

If you are recovering from the loss of a loved one, moving to smaller quarters, or awash in clutter, the Alameda Museum has an expert estate and consignment sales team that can take care of everything for you. When you engage us, not only do you keep more of the revenue than by utilizing a for-profit estate sale company; you also may be eligible for a tax deduction (please consult your tax advisor for more information).

Each sale is orchestrated by Curator George Gunn and his team of experts in jewelry, books, art, collectibles, and tools. They also research items for up-to-date information about values. Most notably, the team meticulously inventories your belongings, establishes prices for seemingly insignificant items to increase your revenues, and goes to great lengths to preserve your privacy.

All of your donations are vital to the Museum's educational and historic preservation programs.

For more information please call George Gunn at 510-521-1233.

Docent Dossiers

Who's aboard, what are they doing, and why?

Joanne McKay

A native of Alameda, Joanne's family roots have long been in the island city. Her great-grandmother came to San Francisco as a young bride, but like many others, moved across the bay after the 1906 earthquake.

Joanne remembers a wonderful childhood growing up in a Craftsman house on Wood Street. "You could ride your bicycle safely all over the island. It was very natural here—there were many more wildflowers and butterflies than today. Wild berries grew near the Fortman Marina. Our family had a vegetable garden in the backyard and rabbits. My father was from the Midwest and loved the soil in Alameda."

After marriage, a career, and raising a family Joanne became interested in several historical and charitable organizations—Native Daughters of the Golden West, the Montclair Women's Club of Oakland, and the Alameda Museum to name a few. At the museum, she not only volunteers her time as a docent, she has created many of the floral displays for the annual Docent Luncheon. Her artistic workspace is in a Colonial Revival house she is restoring. Joanne found after living in a few modern residences she longed for the feel and comfort of a home made when times were more elegant and gracious.



▲
Joanne McKay often lends her creative talents to the Alameda Museum.



▲
Marilyn Dodge by the museum book display. Good cookbooks are always a find!

Marilyn Dodge

Marilyn is also a native of Alameda, born at the Mabel Tennant's Maternity Home on Chestnut Street. Her mother's family owned the largest cleaning plant in Alameda—The Owl. It was located on Chestnut Street at Encinal Avenue where Art Sails frame shop is today.

"There were lot's of things to do in Alameda. There were places to hang out after school and not do your homework. Where Pappos is today there was a soda fountain. You could have lemon Cokes, ice cream, buy cigarettes out of a machine," she remembers. "We went to Neptune Beach to swim. People would come from Sacramento on the train to go there."

Marilyn's first job after graduating from Alameda High School was at the Naval Air Station. She was a mail and file clerk for the Board of Civil Service Examiners. When she married she moved to Seattle with her husband, but came back to her hometown when he took a teaching position at the high school. Marilyn returned to NAS Alameda and worked there until the base closed. "I was in charge of relocating people to other government locations. It was very sad."

Marilyn had never been to the Alameda Museum until 2005 when she met Joanne McKay at the Native Daughters of the Golden West. Joanne suggested she volunteer as a docent. Marilyn thought, "it looked like a place that would be fun to work at. I like all the exhibits and the paintings in the gallery. People who stop by are surprised how quaint it is!"



VOLUNTEERS: ALAMEDA MUSEUM & MEYERS HOUSE & GARDEN

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Margaretha Augustine | Mary Lou Kurtz |
| Chad Barr | Gayle Macaitis |
| Margie Benko | Nancy Martin |
| Yvonne Blackburn | Jeannie McCaffery |
| Ginnie Boscacci | Carla McGrogan |
| Gene Calhoun | Jim McGrogan |
| Dora Calhoun | Joanne McKay |
| Janine Carr | Damary Melendez |
| Katherine Cavanaugh | Chuck Millar |
| Barbara Coapman | Lloyd Novakowski |
| Diane Coler-Dark | Susan Potter |
| Cathy Conley | Carl Ramos |
| Charles Daly | Shirley Ramos |
| Lin Datz | Patricia Rios |
| Robbie Dileo | Virginia Rivera |
| Ross Dileo | Holly Schmalenberger-Haugen |
| Marilyn Dodge | Katie Schoenrank |
| Linda Domholt | Margy Silver |
| Joanne Dykema | Virgil Silver |
| Pamela Ferrero | Lois Singley |
| Cameron Gill | Marcy Skala |
| Sean Heyliger | Trish Herrera Spencer |
| Debra Hilding | Ellen Tilden |
| Charlie Howell | Gerry Warner |
| Gail Howell | Robert Welch |
| Virginia Jones | Joe Young |
| Julie Kennedy | Karen Zimmerman |
| Carole King | |

Volunteer docents are the folks who keep our doors open. An enthusiastic group, they help run the gift shop, and on occasion, do tasks like help with mailings. Training is available. Do you have three hours to make new friends? Come and spend that time with us!

Docent Coordinator for Alameda Museum
Olivia Bauman
volunteer@alamedamuseum.org
650-799-4913

Docent Coordinator for Meyers House
George Gunn, 510-521-1233

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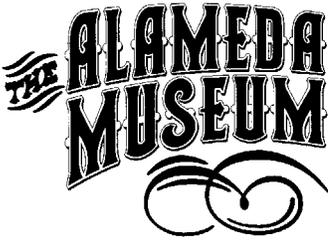
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ALAMEDA MUSEUM
2324 Alameda Avenue

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Wed. – Fri., Sunday
1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Saturday
11:00 am – 4:00 pm

510-521-1233

MEYERS HOUSE & GARDEN
2021 Alameda Avenue

HOURS

2nd & 4th Saturdays
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

(Last tour at 3:00 pm)

510-521-1247

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ALAMEDA MUSEUM LECTURES 2016

❖ MARCH 24

Development of Transportation in 19th Century California

Dennis Evanosky and Eric J. Kos will begin with the introduction of the wheel and horse to Native Americans by the Spanish, the development of the stagecoach and ferry systems, and conclude with the transcontinental railroad. They will focus on the important role Alameda played in the railroad coming to San Francisco and surprise you with how an insane asylum contributed to the story. *Sponsor: Evelyn Kennedy, Alain Pinel Realtors, and Alameda Museum Board Member.*

❖ APRIL 28

The Downeasters 1869-1925

Presented by Alameda architect Richard Rutter. Following the Clippers, came a unique American type of deep water ship which was without a doubt, the highest development of the square rigged sailing vessel. Maine built, this type combined great speed, maneuverability, cargo carrying capacity, and low operating costs never before obtained. Known as "Downeasters", these ships, today forgotten, have never received the full recognition they deserve. *Sponsor: The Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS).*

❖ MAY 26

Early Pinball Art from the '30s to '50s

Michael Scheiss of the Pacific Pinball Museum will feature examples of early pinball art with a rare glimpse into a forgotten world of once illegal albeit beautiful gambling machines. During prohibition thousands of pre-flipper machines were banned and destroyed. Because of this, few examples survive. Thanks to the efforts of collectors and historians we are able to examine these incredible forgotten cultural art pieces.

❖ JUNE 23

History and Mystery: Freemasonry & the Alameda Masonic Temple

Island City Lodge, Number 215 will enlighten us about freemasonry and the masons in Alameda. The temple on Park Street was built in 1895. The newer lodge on Alameda Avenue was constructed in 1926 and the street level is home to the Alameda Museum.

❖ JULY 28

Alameda Architectural Topic TBD

Paul Roberts, former Alameda Main Street director and past president Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (when it was AVPS).

❖ AUGUST 25

Alameda Topic TBD

Alameda author and historian Woody Minor. *Sponsor: Jim Smallman, Alameda Preservationist.*

❖ SEPTEMBER 22

Jack London

Oakland historians Annalee Allen and Gene Anderson will discuss writer Jack London's early days in Oakland and Alameda. 2016 is the 100th year since his death at age forty at his Beauty Ranch in Glen Ellen, Sonoma County, California. *Sponsor: Evelyn Kennedy, Alain Pinel Realtors, and Alameda Museum Board Member.*

NOTE: Lectures take place at the Alameda Museum, 2324 Alameda Avenue off Park Street. Admission is free for museum members and \$10 for others. No reserved seats. We open at 6:30 pm on lecture nights. Come early to save a seat and enjoy the displays in the History and Art Galleries.