



Alameda Museum

Quarterly

MORE THAN JUST PRETTY FACES AT THE MEYERS HOUSE

by Jane Burgelin



Portrait of Evelyn Nesbitt who became one of the most in-demand artist's models in New York. Her image can be seen in one of the new displays at the refurbished Meyers House basement.

SCANDALOUS STORIES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH TWO PICTURES at the Meyers House Museum. Our docents frequently receive questions about various artifacts on display in this beautiful historic home, but two pictures in particular seem to draw a great deal of interest and both depict beautiful young women of the Victorian age—Florence Evelyn Nesbitt and Helene Anna Held. What makes these pictures particularly interesting is that both of these “pretty faces” were the subjects of very public, scandalous love affairs and in fact, one of them involved a dramatic and very public murder. We’ll save Helene Anna Held’s story (who is pictured in the “Servants Bedroom” as one of the thirteen “Gibson Girls”) for another issue.

Florence Evelyn Nesbitt (December 25, 1884 – January 17, 1967) was an American artist’s model and chorus girl born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Evelyn became one of the most in-demand artist’s models in New York. She was seductively beautiful with long wavy red hair and a slender shapely figure. Charles Dana Gibson, one of the most popular artists in the country at that time, rendered a pen and ink profile of Evelyn with her red hair arranged in the form of a question mark. The work, entitled “The Eternal Question” remains one of Gibson’s best known works and Evelyn entered the ranks of one of the famous turn-of-the-century “Gibson Girls”.

Hailed by some as the “loveliest looking girl who ever breathed”, writer Irvin S. Cobb described her in print as having “the slim, quick grace of a fawn, a head that sat on her flawless throat as a lily on its stem, eyes that were the color of blue-brown pansies and the size of silver dollars,

Continued on page 2 . .



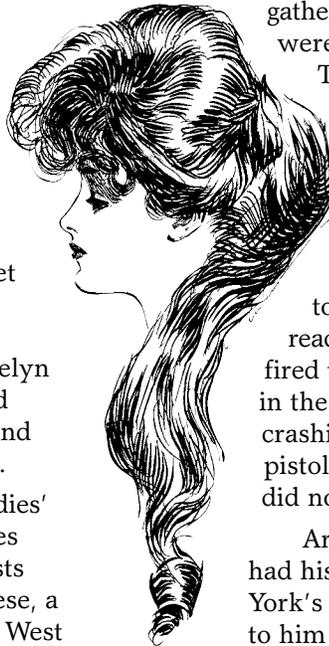
Pretty Faces . . .Continued from page 1

and a mouth made of ruffled rose petals. She looked innocent, but her gentle beauty hid a more sultry side. Now everyone loves a scandal... especially one that ends in murder, so much so, that in 1955, Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation produced a film entitled "The Girl In the Red Velvet Swing" starring Joan Collins, as Evelyn Nesbitt and Ray Milland, as millionaire architect Stanford White, with whom Evelyn had an affair at the age of 16. Collins and Milland simply sizzle in this shocking—and true—tale of jealousy and forbidden love.

White was known as a spectacular ladies' man, who kept several different mistresses at once, secreted in a number of love nests throughout New York City. In one of these, a heavily curtained pleasure palace on the West Side, he was alleged to keep a red velvet swing hanging from the ceiling. In this swing, he would place his young women dressed like little girls, and would wildly push them back and forth, peering under their lasciviously billowing skirts in prelude to more adult passions.

Evelyn only had eyes for the older, suave, "Stanny" White. Despite White's marriage and their significant age difference, they became secret lovers until White decided it was best to break off the affair. Though she was desperate to remain close to her true love, Evelyn instead married Harry K. Thaw, the son of an ambitious Pittsburgh family and heir to a vast fortune earned in the coke market, a product necessary to make steel.

A fierce competitor of White's, it was a known fact that at the age of 34, Harry Thaw was slowly going insane. Thaw, haunted by his wife's past relationship with White, couldn't rest until he was sure that he, Harry Thaw, was the only man in her life. Revenge came on the night of June 25, 1906 when he and Evelyn attended a play called "Mam'zelle Champagne" at the dining theatre on the roof of the Madison Square gardens, a frequent



gathering place for New York Society where the illuminati were all in attendance. Soon after taking their seats, Thaw noticed Stanford White being ushered to a table in the privileged section near the footlights of the stage and was angered. When Thaw rose to leave the theatre, he saw White framed dramatically at the end of the aisle.

While the chorus girls sang a production number, Thaw walked down and stopped next to White, who pretended not to see him. Calmly reaching into his coat, Thaw withdrew a revolver and fired three shots at White. The architect took two bullets in the brain and died immediately—his heavy frame crashing to the floor. Thaw changed his grip on the pistol, holding it by the muzzle so that it was plain he did not intend to shoot anyone else.

Arrested and charged with murder, while in jail, Thaw had his meals catered from Delmonico's, one of New York's finest restaurants. He also had whiskey smuggled to him and was allowed to continue playing the stock market, meeting with his broker in jail at all hours of the day and night. After being arraigned for murder, Thaw's mother publicly declared that she would spend her entire fortune to keep Harry out of the electric chair. She hired a high-powered trial lawyer, Delphin Delmas from California, to defend her son. Although the case seemed open and shut, the trial lasted more than seven months with the jury returning a verdict of "not guilty, on the grounds of insanity at the time of the commission of the act". Thaw had been saved from the electric chair, but was to be imprisoned for life at the New York State Asylum for the Criminally Insane at Matteawan, New York.

Thaw's mother had bargained with Evelyn to testify on her husband's behalf at the trial in order for her to receive an uncontested divorce and a settlement of one million dollars after the trial was settled. Unfortunately for Evelyn, the divorce did not occur until after Thaw was released from the Asylum in 1915, and the "promised" million-dollar settlement never occurred. As for Thaw, he had escaped to Canada in 1913 but was captured and returned to the Asylum. In 1915, a court pronounced

Continued on page 3 . . .



Pretty Faces . . . *Continued from page 2*

Thaw sane and released him to continue his uninterrupted career of high living until his death in 1947.

Evelyn had given birth to a male child she claimed was Thaw's during his confinement, but her husband vehemently denied the boy was his. The financially strapped Evelyn returned to Vaudeville and Broadway and her life was a constant struggle marred by drug addiction and alcoholism. She died in 1966 at the age of eighty-one.

Evelyn's picture will be part of the new, almost completed, Meyers Sisters Clothing Exhibit opening this summer in the basement.

The Meyers House is open on 4th Saturdays of each month, from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Free for Guild members, \$5 for others. Anyone interested in becoming a docent at the house should call Jane at 510-865-3402.

Guild members get to visit the Meyers House FREE and attend opening celebrations, like the clothing display, for FREE.

We'll keep you up-to-date with progress on the museum's web site or via FACEBOOK. If you'd like to join the Guild, annual memberships are \$25 – see form page 4.

The house is open on the 4th Saturday of each month from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Cost is \$5.00 per person

Curator George Gunn and Ross Dileo put the finishing touches on the remodeled basement space. Photo: Valerie Turpen.



From the Curator's Desk

by George C. Gunn

*W*ot wanting to take a chance that I might leave out someone's name, I am collectively thanking all who participated in our recent estate sale of May 7th. As you might be aware, a loyal and devoted group of museum volunteers help in the myriad details of preparing a home for an estate sale. This sale, as in the past—a major fundraiser for the museum, was obtained through Troy Stanten of Gallagher & Lindsey Realtors. Mr. Stanten was great to work for and really appreciated our services. We have had almost 99% satisfaction from our clients in the past. After the sale, with owner permission, items not sold are donated to the homeless shelter and other agencies providing similar services. Much of the clothing took the same route, which filters down into the community for those less fortunate. If you would like to consider having us do your estate sale, please call Robbie, 510-865-1767.

It was good to see all the docent/volunteers at the Annual Luncheon and I enjoyed all the kind words about my 40 years as curator. I have been told there is a dinner celebration coming July 16th where I hope to see many others. My goal is to raise funds to help preserve the collection.

The next big project is the opening of the refurbished Meyers House basement where we will showcase the Meyers' sisters clothing and decorative arts. The estate sale crew is mostly the same group who do the new exhibits at the house. They are now back to work finishing the details and I hope everyone will come see it when completed.

Curator, Alameda Museum





MEYERS HOUSE GUILD

is a separate membership and donation category from Alameda Museum. Funds are used for the sole purpose of maintaining this gorgeous property. Guild members get invitations to MHG special events.

For more information call Jane 510-865-3402.

Renewals after September continue your membership through the entire following year.



Thank you for your support!

Make check payable to Meyers House Guild.

Mail to: **Alameda Museum**

2324 Alameda Avenue, Alameda CA 94501

Annual Guild Membership \$25

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Additional Contribution \$ _____

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I would like to:

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Garden

Clean & Maintain Artifacts

Help with Special Events

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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 3 hours to make new friends? Come and spend it with us!

**Docent coordinator for main museum
Ellen Chesnut, 510-865-1204**

**Docent coordinator for Meyers House
Jane Burgelin, 510-865-3402**



From the President's Desk

by Robbie Dileo

Springtime is always busy and there were many enjoyable events. The Annual Membership Luncheon on April 2nd was a wonderful afternoon with over 100 guests. We were all "Fans" of the Museum and George Gunn, who was thanked for his 40 years of service as Curator. PBS Catering prepared an extra fine meal and created the dessert cake featuring the Meyers House with George. The M & M's with George's face were a big hit. Vice Mayor Rob Bonta shared Alameda City news and the mayor's Preservation Season Proclamation. Raffle items were awarded followed by conclusion of the silent auction, as always, abundant with an excellent variety of items. A huge success, thank you members!

The lecture series began on the 28th and continues on the last Thursday of each month through September. Members attend free—why not join us? Our opening lecture with witty repartee from Dennis Evanosky and Dick Rutter was musings on the Fernside Estate and Cohen ancestors that may well have been pirates a few hundred years ago. These two also gave a walk and talk through the Wedgewood neighborhood, that triangle area off Park Street that includes the old Island High School site and Jimmy Doolittle's early home, on May 14th.

April 30 was the re-dedication of Paul's Newsstand. The Franz-Nichols band welcomed about 150 people who enjoyed the ceremony, speakers, and plaque unveiling. The Alameda Antique Fire Truck was a great backdrop for the family members who came to honor the various past newsboys. Lil Arnerich regaled us with fabricated newspaper sales pitches from earlier times while Jack Lubeck from the Roschitsch family pitched his tale of being family to Lil, due to marriage of some distant cousins. After much laughter, we moved down the street to enjoy refreshments at the Museum. My thanks to the committee: AAPS, newsboy families, and City of Alameda for a great "could only happen in Alameda" preservation effort and celebration. We are still accepting donations for on-going maintenance. Make checks payable to Alameda Museum and put newsstand on the memo line. Your donation is tax deductible.

President, Alameda Museum



The grandchildren of Paul Manning, left to right: Cheryl Berg, Rodney Manning jr., and Polly Gogert unveil the historic sign.



Jack Lubeck, nephew of Joe Roschitsch tells a few stories to the crowd. Event photos: Valerie Turpen.



The Franz-Nichols band provided lively music for the gathering on the corner of Santa Clara Avenue and Park Street.

Keeping Up Appearances

by Ron Ucovich

DURING THE VICTORIAN ERA, there was a rule of etiquette that said, "One must be dressed properly to use the front door of the house." Hobos and beggars knew the rule. If they asked for a handout at the front door they would be rebuffed for insulting the homeowner, but if they went to the back door they could count on getting at least a sandwich and an apple.

When you entered a Victorian home, you did not go directly into the parlor. You entered an entry hall which had a hall tree for fine wool coats and felt hats. When you went to the back door, however, you entered a mud room. This room also had hooks for hanging coats and hats, but here you found bib overalls, raincoats, and straw hats. The front door was formal, and the back door informal.

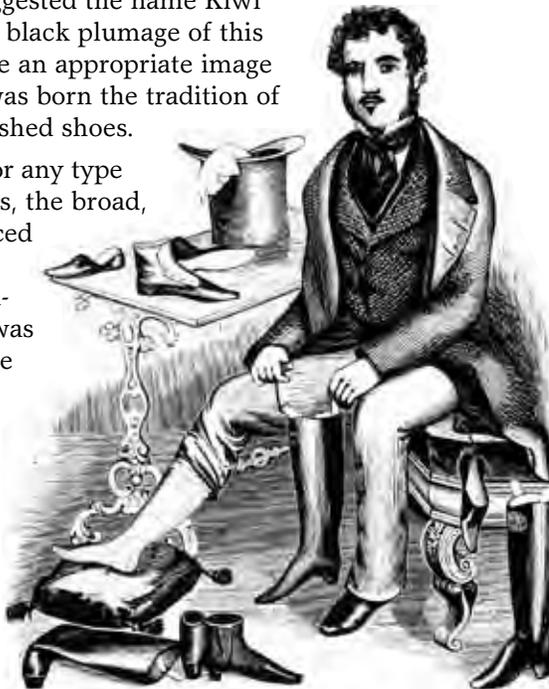
The Industrial Revolution of the 1800s gave rise to a wealthier working class. Even an average home was built to resemble a miniature Victorian palace. Workers with a modest disposable income could give the pretense of wealth. Storekeepers, tailors, clerks and accountants always went to work wearing a suit and tie. And when they left home, they always went out the front door as a statement of their social success.

Shoes were another mark of success. New shoes were bought coated with "dubbin," (a mixture of tallow and lampblack) used to soften and waterproof the leather. With use, shoes would soon lose their luster. Having shiny shoes was a statement that you were wealthy enough to ride a horse and not have to walk on dirt roads. In fact, the French word *chevalier* and the Spanish word *caballero*, (both referring to horseback riders) translate to English as "gentleman."

Before shoe polish was invented, a banana skin could be used to keep your shoes clean and shiny. In 1906, William Ramsay patented the first commercial shoe polish. His wife was a native of New Zealand, where their national emblem is the kiwi bird. She suggested the name Kiwi for the new product. The glossy black plumage of this plump, wingless bird seemed like an appropriate image for the new shoe cream. Thus was born the tradition of businessmen wearing clean, polished shoes.

The necktie was a necessity for any type of white-collar work. In the 1860s, the broad, ruffled, French cravat was replaced by a long, slender scarf. A knot was invented to replace the traditional scarf ring, and because it was tied, they called it a "necktie." The knot was called a "four-in-hand" because it resembled the reins of the four-horse carriage used by upper class gentlemen. The necktie was used to hide your buttons, which were considered unsightly, and also to add a dash of color to your white cotton shirt.

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BE A MUSEUM DOCENT

Make some new friends.

Please contact Ellen Chesnut

510-865-1204 for details.

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

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Preserving the Past for the Future
for over 60 Years

Appearances . . . Continued from page 6

A necktie was often used in conjunction with a cap to identify your job. In a hotel, for example, you could use the necktie and cap to identify a doorman, a steward, a chef, a bellhop, a waiter, or an elevator operator. In the Neptune Beach exhibit of our museum, visitors are often surprised to see the photograph where the rollercoaster attendants are dressed in the uniform of a streetcar conductor. Even the most menial job had its dignity when you wore a necktie.

Hats were also a necessity when you were outdoors. Women not only wore a sunbonnet, they would also carry a parasol. Although she may not be wealthy, a lady could give the appearance of being wealthy if she had a porcelain white complexion. Tanned skin was a sure sign of a laborer who toiled all day in the sun.

Casual footwear was permitted at home, but never in public. You would never be seen on the streets wearing sandals, thongs, moccasins, or sneakers. The Albert slipper (named after Prince Albert) was the most elegant slipper you could buy during the Victorian era.



It was made of velvet with a leather sole, and it had a quilted silk lining, but even this slipper was too casual for outdoor use. In fact, they coined a word which referred to any person who was rude enough to be seen wearing his slippers in public. The

word means "wearing slippers," ...slipshod.

Your Annual Membership helps:

- Fund Children Programs
- Support Local Artists
- Free Monthly Lectures
- Receive *Alameda Museum Quarterly*
- Free Meyers House Pass (new members only)

**For more information call 510-523-5907
or visit www.alamedamuseum.org**

Join any time. Dues based on calendar year.
Renewals after September will continue through the next year.



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Membership levels are annual, except one-time Lifetime. Please check the appropriate box or boxes. Thank you for your support.

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Legacy Society

THE COMPLETE FLYER IS AVAILABLE AT THE MUSEUM. Gifts from your estate must be \$1,000 or more to be a part of the program. Lesser amounts may be donations to a specific project or archival fund. Perhaps a \$500 Lifetime Membership would be appropriate?

For questions about donations, please call Robbie at 510-865-1767.





A Closer Look at Portraits

by Ron Ucovich

IN OUR MUSEUM YOU WILL FIND A PORTRAIT of Henry Haight, the tenth Governor of California. This portrait hung in the Haight mansion until his death in 1878. Mr. Haight earned his fortune as a practicing attorney and owner of a law firm. Wealthy people of that time would commission an artist to do a portrait of them wearing their finest clothing, which would be displayed over the fireplace in the parlor. If you were not wealthy, this spot usually displayed a photograph of the man of the house, or the husband and wife on their wedding day. Paintings were far more expensive, but they offered several advantages over photographs: they offered color, while photographs were sepia toned; they could be made very large; and they could be customized, for example you could include family members who were deceased.

The price of a portrait would be determined by how much detail you wanted to include. The cheapest portrait would include just the head. The most expensive portrait would include the whole body, in which case the owner could claim that he paid "an arm and a leg" for the painting.

Residents of a large city had the advantage of contracting a local artist with an established reputation. People who lived in small towns had to rely upon the salesmanship of an itinerant artist. These artists would travel from town to town during the summer months offering their services. During the winter months they would paint blanks, (portraits of people without a head). The customer could select a torso that he liked, and the artist would complete the blank with the customer's head.

The portrait in our museum which attracts the most attention is one of a very proper Victorian-Era mistress with an unbelievably petite waistline. It is possible that she commissioned the artist to paint her that way, or it is also possible that she was wearing a very stylish Victorian-Era corset. The corset would be designed for her measurements. It was made of canvas with steel ribs and leather lacings.



A photographic portrait of Henry Haight, attorney and Governor of California.

It was laced in the back, and it took a dressing attendant to apply it. Ladies of society always had a personal dressing attendant. This is why women's clothes button from the left, and men's clothes from the right. Men buttoned their own clothes, while proper women had an attendant who would fasten Milady's buttons while facing her.

To achieve a svelte waistline, Milady could have her bottom two ribs removed surgically. The dressing attendant would use a corset cincher... a mechanical winch with a large crank on the side. She would tighten the corset until Milady could barely

breathe. Her form-fitting dress would have a bustle on the back to accentuate her hour-glass figure. High-fashioned homes were designed to accommodate the ladies of society who had their breathing thus restricted. Fainting couches could be found near dance floors in case Milady had to sit down to catch her breath. Elegant homes were equipped with benches on stairway landings because Milady could not climb an entire flight of stairs without resting.

In the early 20th Century, bustles and canvas corsets had faded out of style. They were replaced by rubber undergarments which could perform the same function more efficiently. They were put on like underpants, and they extended over the belly, so they could hold in the stomach as well as firming up the buttocks. They were not, however, without a concomitant hazard. When Milady needed to attend to a problem which, at that time, was called "the vapors," she would politely excuse herself from the room, and she would return within minutes feeling somewhat relieved. Her dignity was short-lived, however, because she soon discovered that her rubber undergarment was hermetically impervious until she sat down. This discovery led to the modern party pleasantries which today we call the "whoopee cushion."

A revolution in artwork took place in the 1950s. The President of the United States, Dwight Eisenhower, loved to paint. Unfortunately, Mr. President had very limited artistic talent. To compensate, he used to mount a large photograph on an easel, and paint over the photograph. Seeing this sparked an idea in the mind of a talented artist named Dan Robbins. Mr. Robbins would sketch a portrait or landscape, then he would outline small sections of it with light blue lines, then he would number each small section to indicate a paint

Continued on page 9. . .



A Closer Look . . .Continued from page 8



The museum's painting of a proper Victorian lady with an hourglass waist.

color. He called this new style of artwork "paint-by-number," and a sample was sent to the President as a gift. President Eisenhower tried it and was delighted with the outcome.

Critics lambasted this procedure as an insult to the art world and a mindless corruption of artistic creativity, but the public figured that if it was good enough for the President, it was good enough for them. In the first two years of sales, twelve million kits were sold. Any talentless dolt could become an artist overnight. It was the Fad of the Fifties. Homes across America were decorated with portraits torn from the pages of... what amounts to... a very fancy coloring book.



40
YEARS

The annual luncheon was just the beginning for thanking our curator for his four decades of dedicated service. Watch your mail in June for an invitation to

GEORGE GUNN'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER PARTY

The price will be \$40 per person for the Saturday, July 16th sit-down affair that will begin with a no-host social hour at 5:30 pm.

We will be creating a Memory Book. Even if you cannot attend the dinner, we'd like you to send your reminiscences by mail or "porch" material to Judith Lynch, 1372 Versailles Avenue.

You can lend us images that we will scan and return. You can email both words and images to judithal@comcast.net. You can also bring text and pictures to the party! Don't miss the chance to tell him how much he is appreciated.



FREE SUMMER CLASS: VICTORIA'S LEGACY ON THE ISLAND

During the second half of the 19th Century, a felicitous amalgam of redwood, gentle climate, skilled artisans, and automated milling machinery fueled the development of fancywork buildings on the West Coast. Because they were built during the 64-year reign of Queen Victoria, these buildings are dubbed Victorians in her honor, and Alameda is home to more than 4,000 of them!

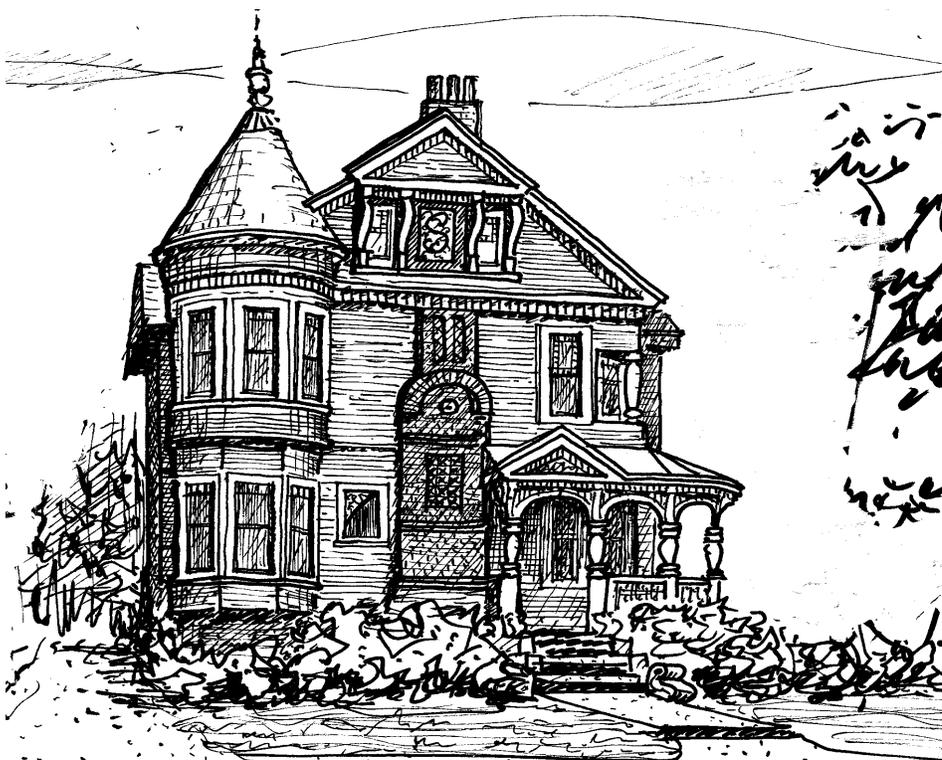
A free summer class offers six Tuesday morning sessions on Victorian culture, history and architecture. Four slide shows and two walking tours will help you recognize architectural details and distinguish amongst the various 19th century styles that abound here. The course is taught by local author and teacher Judith Lynch.

You have to join Mastick Center to take the class.

Joining is free and easy; just visit them at 1155 Santa Clara Avenue.

Space in the class is very limited; please call to reserve a slot: 510-747-7506.

This Queen Anne tower house on Grand Street is a splendid example of the "riotous run of architectural fancy" that was a hallmark of the 1890s. Image: Richard Knight.



Victoria Memorial, London

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Kids & Queen Victoria piano music played by retired Alameda teacher **LILIAN CUNNINGHAM.**

Keyboard courtesy of **Starland Music Center, 1631 Park Street, Alameda.**

They offer instruments and instruction for children and adults.

For a free consultation about lessons call 510-523-4797.

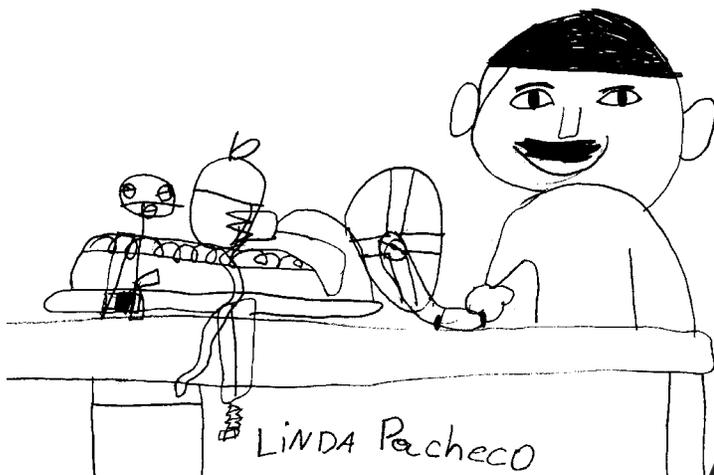


Kids' Show Features Alameda Victorian History and Homes

by Judith Lynch

THE MUSEUM HAS WELCOMED this marvelous display of paintings, sculpture, writing and drawings since 1998. This "only in Alameda" event is the result of teachers in Kindergarten through fifth grade using an exemplary curriculum that includes local history, literature, inventions, architectural styles and details on the Island during the 64 years Victoria reigned, from 1837 until 1901. City luminaries have always been involved: mayors and council members have taken turns presiding; this year that honor went to Kirsten Vital, Alameda Superintendent of Schools. She had the pleasure of introducing Queen Victoria to students and families. The Queen (embodied by Edison teacher Connie Turner) was gowned in authentic dress by A.C.T. in San Francisco and sported a sash of decorations and badges sewn by her daughter Laura. Her crown, adorned with faux ermine and glass jewels and topped by disco balls, was concocted by the late Richard Knight.

Alameda Museum board members have always helped students learn about our Island history. Bill Galli, nicknamed "The Man Who Saves Victorians—by admiring children, showed Washington School students how to use an antique invention that peels apples. This moment was memorialized in the drawing by Linda Pacheco.



Queen Victoria, Washington School students Mianna, Paloma, and Samuel Pena, and Superintendent of Schools Kirsten Vital.



Chuck Millar dazzles the children at Otis School with glass marbles from his collection. Photo: Judith Lynch.

This year Museum Vice President Chuck Millar took his boyhood marble collection to Otis School, where first graders were mesmerized by the different kinds and colors. While the game itself is many centuries old, the development of mass produced glass marbles made it a popular game during her era, and the children added marbles to the other 19th century games they learned to play.





A Victorian Breakfast

by Ron Ucovich

DURING COLONIAL DAYS, breakfast usually consisted of fried cornmeal or buttered cornbread. The Victorian Age, however, reflected the birth of the middle class with more disposable income. Menus could be patterned after the diet of Queen Victoria herself. A typical breakfast for the queen might include hot cereal, eggs, fish, meat, breads, and fruit. A formal Victorian breakfast would be equivalent of brunch today, with items such as orange juice, poached eggs with asparagus tips, toast, lamb chops, green peas, English muffins, and crackers with Brie or Roquefort, and finished with coffee. The common people, of course, would not eat like this, but the idea of considering orange juice, bacon and eggs, toast and coffee, as breakfast foods has since been an American tradition.

For commoners, cornmeal was used frequently because it grows easily and stores well. A simple pioneer breakfast might consist of cornbread and coffee. Cornmeal gruel was popular, or for variety, they might have corn pone (cornmeal pan-fried in oil), johnnycakes (cornmeal flattened and griddle-fried), or ashcakes (cornmeal wrapped in cabbage leaves and cooked in the ashes of a campfire).

In the middle 1800s, they started using flour to make pancakes. These were very labor-intensive because you would have to make the batter the night before so the yeast could work, otherwise you would have just fried flour. In 1889 a journalist named Chris Rutt had the idea of selling a premixed, self-rising pancake flour. He called it "pancake mix" and he sold it in a brown paper bag. Sales were poor. He needed a marketing gimmick.

One evening Mr. Rutt attended a Southern-style comedy where a pair of black-face minstrel comedians sang a New Orleans cakewalk tune called "Aunt Jemima." Mr. Rutt liked the idea of using a Southern mammy for his product, so he appropriated the name and the image. At the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, they decided to open a snack concession of pancakes topped with Vermont maple syrup. They employed an affable black lady, Nancy Green, to be the cook. Bedecked in a white apron and red bandanna, Miss Green, made and sold over a million pancakes for the fair's visitors. The success of this new product was so extraordinary that Miss Green, now known as Aunt Jemima, toured the country promoting her product until her death in 1923 at age 89.

Oatmeal was not a popular breakfast food until the 20th Century. Prior to rolled oats, whole-grain oats had to

be soaked for a day, then rinsed and slow-cooked for about four hours. They were simmered with vegetables and condiments and served for dinner, much as you would serve beans or rice. In 1885 the Quaker Company devised a way to steam and crush the oats so they would cook faster. Instant oatmeal came in 1922, and in 1970 they introduced flavored oatmeal.



In the 1890s, Dr. John H. Kellogg ran a sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan. His brother, Will K. Kellogg, was in charge of the bookkeeping, supplies and diet. Serendipitously, while Will was looking for a bread substitute, he left a pot of boiled wheat to stand and dry. When it was put through the crushing rollers, each grain of wheat emerged as a large thin flake. These new wheat flakes were such a success at the sanitarium that Mr. Kellogg decided to open a small food packaging company. A guest at the sanitarium, Mr. C. W. Post, copied Mr. Kellogg's process and opened his own cereal company. This infuriated Mr. Kellogg so much that he quit his job at the sanitarium, and in 1897 he opened the Kellogg Company which went on to manufacture a large variety of breakfast cereals.

At a time when America was searching for new ways to prepare hot cereals, there was a New England minister named Sylvester Graham who extolled the virtues of a Spartan lifestyle. He preached impassioned lectures condemning the use of red meat, fats, alcohol, and refined sugar and flour. His diet consisted of raw fruits and vegetables, and he drank only water. Reverend Graham was congenitally prone to poor health, and he believed that this diet could help him overcome his deficit. He produced a line of high-fiber products made of bran: Graham bread, Graham cookies, Graham crackers, and a breakfast cereal called Granula... a name compressed from Graham and granular. Although Reverend Graham's following was strong during his lifetime, his religion known as "Grahamism" dissolved soon after his death in 1851.

Despite his low-fat, high-fiber diet, Reverend Graham remained a sickly man and died at age 57.





City of Alameda Historic Preservation Season 2011

► **Thursday, May 26, 7:00 pm**

Storybook Style

Author and architect Arrol Gellner with slides from his book. Featuring Stonehenge and Stoneleigh on Santa Clara Avenue. Alameda Museum, 2324 Alameda Avenue.

*Free for members; \$10 for others.
Information: 510-748-0796.*



► **Saturday, July 16th, 5:30 pm**

George C. Gunn Celebration

40 years of George C. Gunn as Curator of the Alameda Museum. A special fund raising dinner is being planned for July. Seating is limited—plan to reserve early. All museum members should receive an invitation by mail in June.

Stonehenge and Stoneleigh on Santa Clara Avenue are splendid examples of the Storybook Style that is the topic of Arrol Gellner's lecture May 26.

► **May 28, & June 25**

All 4th Saturdays, 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Meyers House Museum & Gardens

City Monument #26, a Colonial Revival style home on three parcels, was built in 1897 for Henry H. Meyers, a renowned East Bay architect. Tour includes Mediterranean style Studio with Meyers' office and the former garage now an Architectural Exhibit featuring building elements found in older Alameda homes like doors, hardware, plaster medallions, and stained glass windows. 2021 Alameda Avenue, near Chestnut Street.

*Free for Guild members; \$5 for others.
Information: 510-865-3402.
www.alamedamuseum.org/museum/meyers/meyers.html*

ALAMEDA MUSEUM LEGACY SOCIETY



Notify us of your future bequest and the museum will honor you with a Life Membership and place your name on the ALAMEDA MUSEUM LEGACY SOCIETY PLAQUE in the Alameda Museum.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL 510-523-5907.

■ **LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL** for the nonprofit and charitable organizations that make a difference in your life. Less than 6% of American households have included nonprofits in their estate plan even though many of these households support and care about these organizations during their lifetime. Imagine the positive impact on our community if everyone made a donation to support their favorite nonprofit organization.



How Come the Hospital was a Quiet Zone?

by Ron Ucovich

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO HOSPITALS were posted as quiet zones because it was believed that relaxation and uninterrupted sleep was the best cure for illness, but who used to make noise? There were no jet planes, motorcycles or leaf blowers, so who made all that noise? They were salesmen! In those days, there were dozens of street vendors who used sirens, whistles, bells, bugles, horns and drums to attract attention to their products and services. In fact, they used to refer to travelling salesmen as "drummers."



There were a few vendors who didn't need to announce their arrival, since their clients were regular customers. The milkman was one such vendor. If you wanted two quarts of milk, you would leave two empty bottles on your porch, that way the milkman could see your order without walking to the door. Your milk choices were homogenized, with the milk and cream mixed together, and pasteurized, where the cream floated on top in a separate compartment. Chocolate milk was created in 1939 at the World's Fair on Treasure Island.

The garbage man did not have to announce his arrival. He was a big, burly Italian fellow who used to

go into your backyard, pick up your trashcan, carry it out to the street, climb the six stairs on the garbage wagon, dump it, then carry the empty can back into the yard, and replace the lid. He didn't need to announce his arrival...the neighborhood dogs did that for him. Did you ever wonder why garbage men started working at 4:00 in the morning? They worked a 12-hour day. They collected trash all morning, and the afternoons were spent collecting bills, keeping records, and maintaining service vehicles. They did it all.

Another silent vendor was the paperboy. There was no such thing as a "papergirl". He was always a young boy who delivered the daily news on his bicycle. By the way, the words *peddle* and *pedal* are not related. A peddler is a person who asks or solicits. He has nothing to do with bicycles.

The ice man had to blow his horn because you needed to open your door for him and let him into your house. He would carry the 25-pound block of ice and place it in your ice box for you. After WWII, electric refrigerators replaced the ice box, and people could store perishable foods more safely. By the late 1950s, ice delivery was a thing of the past. And, because of the electric refrigerator, a new word was born: *leftovers*.

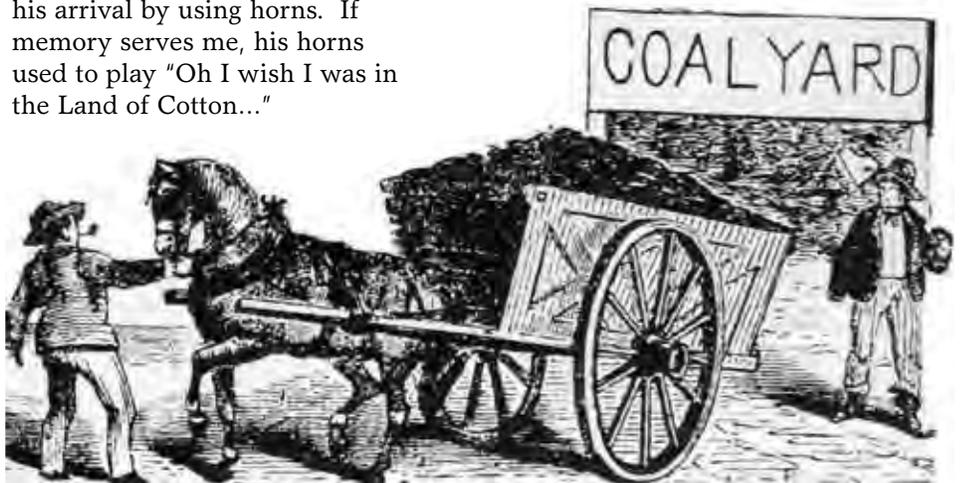
The Peter Wheat man came around every couple of days selling bakery goods. He used to announce his arrival by using horns. If memory serves me, his horns used to play "Oh I wish I was in the Land of Cotton..."

The fuel merchant would roll down the street shouting "COAL... WOOD!" Victorian homes of Alameda were originally heated by wood or coal. Methane gas was used for cooking and lighting, but was unsafe for heating. The coal shortage during WWI caused us to turn to fuel oil, and after WWII, methane gas heaters became safe and reliable enough to use for heating. You might remember the methane storage tank near the intersection of High Street and the Nimitz Freeway. It was there until the 1960s, when gas storage was put underground.

In 1893 a large textile mill was built near Embarcadero Cove in Oakland. Here cotton was carded, spun into thread, and woven into fabric. After clothing was worn out, it could be shredded and recycled into new textiles. The rag collector would be found pulling his wagon through neighborhood streets ringing a hand bell and shouting, "RAA-BOH... any RAA-BOH!" This distinctive shout goes back to Colonial days when the rag collector would also collect bones, which were boiled down to make glue. Although the rag collector no longer collected bones, he retained the universally-recognized cry.

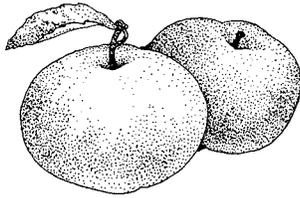
The produce man was called a "costermonger." He rang a bell and could be easily identified by his *kingsman*, (a brightly-colored necker-

Continued on page 15 . .





Quiet Zone. . . Continued from page 14



chief). The word "costermonger" means the seller of *costers* (a large ribbed apple).

The *glazier* used to pass through the streets of town shouting, "WINDOWS, fix your WINDOWS!" The glazier might also have to do light carpentry, like loosening stuck windows or repairing a broken cord that holds the counterweight.

The town *farrier* would travel around town tending to all the horses. His main job was to shoe the horses, but he was also the local expert on animal care. He was the man you called for any type of veterinary service.

The scissors grinder rang a bell as he slowly passed down the street. He didn't come by very often, so he gave people plenty of time to search their homes for knives, shears and saws which need to be sharpened.

Victorian homes frequently had an abundance of wrought iron grille work: handrails, verandas, balconies, fences, widow's walks, etc. Even cemetery plots were fenced in with ironwork. During World Wars I and II, there was a severe shortage of iron. The village junkie used to blow his horn and shout "JUNK...JUNK FOR THE WAR EFFORT!" All types of scrap iron, as well as tons of wrought iron grille work, were handed over to the *junkie*. After World War II, the traveling junk collector had disappeared, and the name "junkie" was given a new definition: drug addict.

A hundred years ago, the streets of Alameda were peaceful and quiet only to be interrupted by the din of the hawkers who clamored for your attention.

~ FAREWELL TO JIM KORN ~

Sadly, one of our favorite docents, Jim Korn, passed away in late March, after a January diagnosis of advanced cancer. Surrounded by family, he died peacefully at home, with no regrets for a life well lived. Jim's last year was one of his best. It may have been a blessing to not know sooner, instead thoroughly enjoying the trip to Mexico with partner and traveling companion of 13 years, Paula Kinahon.

Gregarious and talented, Jim became involved with the museum around 1991. He designed the Architectural Wall near the Victorian parlor. It's no easy task to make hinges, doorknobs and wooden trims look interesting, but Jim, with his keen engineer's eye and talent as an accomplished artist, made it work. On that end wall hangs his pen and ink drawing of Park Street near the turn of the century. When it was time to create a Barber Shop exhibit, Jim did the design work, placed the objects, and even painted a picture of what it would look like in the front window, where we now have the Gift Shop.

When Archie Waterbury retired as Editor of the newsletter, Jim took over for several years. He did newsletters for other groups and helped with our home tour publicity in recent years. The former owner of an old Cadillac and part of an antique car club, he was an avid skier, but it was his trips around the world and his great energy that set him apart from most all the rest of us. The perfect example of a volunteer, creating his own niche, giving us his precious time and talents, living life to its fullest. Our condolences to Paula, son Jim Jr., daughter Julie Humphrey, and of course, all the many friends and family who shared his life. Thank you Jim, for being part of Alameda Museum.

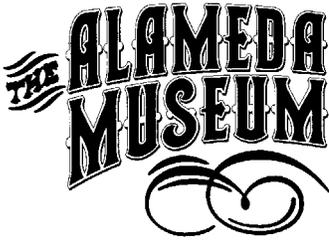
Chevys

THE 1950s WAS THE ERA of the automobile boom in America. Cars were huge and luxurious. They almost became mobile living rooms. You could do just about anything without getting out of your comfortable car. You had drive-in movie theaters, drive through hamburger stands...banks, dairy depots, newspaper kiosks, postal services, pharmacies, liquor stores, coffee shops, film developing, flower shops...even funeral parlors. When it came to the drive-through taco stand, an Alameda man named Warren Simmons said, "Enough is enough!"



As a reaction to Taco Bell's prefabricated food and drive-through restaurants, Mr. Simmons created a real sit-down restaurant in the style of a Mexican border town cantina. All the food had to be authentically Mexican, and it had to be prepared fresh from scratch every day. In the middle of the restaurant he wanted a tortilla machine cranking out fresh tortillas so customers could watch them come right from the press and onto the table.

The menu had to include upscale items, such as fresh catch of the day, mesquite grilled steak, and shrimp fajitas. The location had to be picturesque. For his first restaurant he chose Mariner Square, right on the water with a panoramic view of the estuary. The restaurant was a tremendous success, and Mr. Simmons opened one restaurant after another until his chain of 37 spread all across California. In 1997 Mr. Simmons retired a very wealthy man when he sold his enterprise, ironically, to...Taco Bell.



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Saturday
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MEYERS HOUSE & GARDENS HOURS

2021 Alameda Avenue

HOURS

4th Saturdays
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

510-521-1233

www.alamedamuseum.org



ALAMEDA MUSEUM LECTURES 2011

- ❖ **THURSDAY, MAY 26**
Storybook Style
Author and architect Arrol Gellner.
Underwritten by Diane Coler-Dark, former
President, Alameda Museum.
- ❖ **THURSDAY, JUNE 30**
A. W. Meets Queen Victoria
Historian and former AAPS president Paul
Roberts on renowned Alameda architect
A. W. Pattiani. Underwritten by Judith Lynch,
member, Historical Advisory Board.
- ❖ **THURSDAY JULY 28**
**Imperial San Francisco:
Urban Power, Earthly Ruin**
Author-historian-gadfly Gray Brechin.
Underwritten by the law offices of Susan Jeffries.
- ❖ **THURSDAY, AUGUST 25**
Victoria's Legacy in Alameda
Designer and author Paul Duscherer.
Underwritten by Erik and Ginger Schuler,
Realtors, Harbor Bay.
- ❖ **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29**
**The Centennial of the Red Train:
Vintage Transportation on the Island**
Grant Ute, coauthor of *Alameda by Rail*.
Underwritten by Peter Fletcher, Real Estate
Broker, Prudential California Realty.

NOTE: All lectures start at 7:00 p.m. at the Alameda Museum, 2324 Alameda Avenue near Park Street. No reserved seats; come early to save a place and enjoy the exhibits in the History Hall and the Art Gallery. Admission is free for Museum members and \$10 for others. Topics may change without notice. For lecture information leave a message at 510-748-0796 or check www.alamedamuseum.org.