

Alameda Museum

Quarterly

HOUSES OF THE HEARTLAND An Album of Architects *by Woody Minor*

THIS YEAR'S ALAMEDA LEGACY HOME TOUR on

September 23 pulled back the curtains on six homes in neighborhoods at the island's center, showcasing Alameda architecture from the heyday of the commuter trains. Houses spread to the heartland with the advent of the railroads, replacing native oaks with imported styles. The first consolidated train and ferry line opened during the Civil War, soon to be joined by a second. These steam-driven transit systems transformed what had been a Gold Rush farming community into a bustling suburb of San Francisco.

Three of the homes are located in the Gold Coast, the era's elite neighborhood, replete with the mansions of San Francisco businessmen. Two date from the 1890s, displaying different takes on Colonial Revival—the dwellings of attorney Robert B. Mitchell, 1221 Sherman Street (1896-97), and tobacco executive Daniel Bruton, 1240 St. Charles Street (1897). Last to be built was the half-timbered Arts and Crafts house at 1232 Bay Street, commissioned in 1909 by investment broker George L. Walker.

The remaining homes are in other midtown neighborhoods that grew in tandem with the commuter trains,



Greenleaf residence, 1724 Santa Clara Avenue, 1891. Ernest Coxhead, architect. Image: J.C. Newsom, Modern Homes, 1893. Courtesy Paul T. Roberts.

including once-impressive rows on Santa Clara Avenue. The shingled landmark at 1724 Santa Clara, built in 1891 for retired druggist David Greenleaf, is a rare survivor. Two others were the product of design-and-build firms responsible for scores of houses across the city. The 1885 Stick Eastlake cottage of Mary Ingerson, widow of a San Francisco physician, went up at 1901 Alameda Avenue.

The 1893 Queen Anne cottage at 934 Santa Clara was the home of San Francisco bookkeeper Leon B. Thomas.

A Bevy of Builders

These six houses were built in two traditional ways. One method treated design and construction as separate functions. The client hired an architect to produce plans and specifications

Continued on page 2 . . .

Heartland . . . Continued from page 1

which served as the basis for awarding a competitive contract. The Greenleaf, Mitchell, and Walker residences were all built in this way—the first by San Francisco contractor Joseph Norris, the second by Oakland contractor Charles E. Nichols, the last by the Alameda firm of Delanoy & Randlett. The other method combined design and construction under a single contract. This was the approach taken for the Ingerson, Thomas, and Bruton houses, the respective work of three of the city’s leading design-and-build firms—A.C. Gilbert & Co., Marcuse & Rimmel, and Denis Straub & Son.

The locally based builders all arrived with the railroads. The pioneer in this regard was Denis Straub (1822-1899), a German immigrant who settled in Alameda by 1866. He later took on his stepson as a partner and by the end of his career was the city’s oldest active builder. Most of the oth-



Walker residence, 1232 Bay Street, 1909-10. Julia Morgan, architect. Image: Alameda, California. Sunset Magazine Homeseekers Bureau, 1911.

ers arrived during the second railroad boom in the 1870s. Felix Marcuse (1847-1925) and Julius Rimmel (1855-1913) also had German roots, one a native of Berlin the other a son of Bavarian immigrants, and both had other careers before they became builders. Adam C. Gilbert (1832-1907), Fred N. Delanoy (1849-1927), and Edwin A. Randlett (1853-1930) were natives of New England.

Gilbert was the first to bundle real estate, insurance, design, and construction in a single enterprise, making him the city’s first large-scale homebuilder. He moved across the bay after a stint in San Francisco real estate, putting up his first house here in 1878. His crews went on to erect dozens more, but it finally proved too much to manage. “The failure of A.C. Gilbert is the all-absorbing topic,” the *Alameda Argus* reported early in 1885. “He ought to have made money. Instead he seems to be some thirty odd thousand dollars worse off than nothing.” The unfinished Ingerson contract was completed by Charles S. Shaner, a former Gilbert carpenter who went on to a successful career as an architect.

Gilbert’s business model emulated leading San Francisco developers like

The Real Estate Associates, and the same approach was adopted by A.W. Pattiani, A.R. Denke, Joseph A. Leonard, and others. Bay Station builders Marcuse & Rimmel took the practice to new levels in the 1890s, producing in excess of 500 houses in Alameda, Oakland, Berkeley, San Francisco, and elsewhere. Like Gilbert, however, they couldn’t keep pace with their creditors and finally went bankrupt in 1900. Delanoy & Randlett, founded the following year by two veteran builders, became known for stylish homes in upscale districts. In addition to design-and-build contracts, they bid on outside jobs of which the Walker residence is a prime example.

An Album of Architects

When we turn to design two categories are apparent. On one hand we have mainstream houses in standard styles, accounting for the bulk of the built environment; on the other, rare specimens by advanced architects defying easy categorization. Buildings in the first category are often grouped under style names based on age and appearance. Thus 1901 Alameda has the characteristic square bays and pierced bargeboards of the 1880s Stick

Continued on page 3 . . .

ALAMEDA
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Heartland . . .Continued from page 2

Eastlake style, while 934 Santa Clara displays the slanted bays and ornate appliqué of 1890s Queen Anne. The larger houses at 1221 Sherman and 1240 St. Charles show different sides of turn-of-the-century Colonial Revival, one a neoclassical box the other a less formal hybrid retaining Queen Anne traits.

1240 St. Charles (1897) was the work of Alameda native Fred P. Fischer (1862-1951), who began as his stepfather's apprentice and became his partner in 1886. Like most 19th-century builders Straub knew how to design and he tutored Fischer in the art. The young man played a dual role in the firm supervising construction and overseeing design (aside from outside contracts for buildings by other architects). His conservative approach, a trait common to locally based architects, is clearly seen in the Bruton residence. The design clung to precedent even though a new style was then in vogue.

This wasn't the case with 1221 Sherman (1896), a house where Colonial Revival is on full display with scant trace of Queen Anne. Like many other early specimens it was the work of a San Francisco architect. A

native of Maine, Joseph H. Littlefield (1831-1904) began his career as a designer-builder in Cambridge, Mass. He came to California via Colorado in the mid-1880s, taking up residence in the Palace Hotel and advertising himself solely as an architect. Littlefield catered to society clients like Mitchell, and the bold massing and confident décor of the Alameda mansion have a big-city feel.

Questions mount with the larger design-and-build firms. Who designed their houses? In Gilbert's case two names crop up. Seth Babson (1826-1907), a pioneer architect and recent resident, designed several early houses built by the firm under contract; he may also have provided services for design-and-build jobs. Gilbert & Co seems to have relied on the talents of its junior partner, engineer-turned-architect Frederick A. Ingersoll (1853-1903). "Mr. Ingersoll's work is scattered throughout the city, in the plans of the later and handsomer structures erected by Gilbert," the Argus noted helpfully, though one wishes the writer had been more specific. Marcuse & Remmel had a drafting department which included at various times Arthur Stenbiht (1867-1922), James W. Johnston (1857-?), Fred G. Cary (1868-1955),

William H. Armitage (1861-1944), and Bert E. Remmel (1872-1927), but we have little idea which employee produced which design in the firm's rapidly evolving output.

Alameda's abiding conservative nature made it a showcase of mainstream architecture of the rail era, but

Continued on page 4 . . .



Richly finished in wood and plaster, the façade of 934 Santa Clara features three gables with abstract applique; the uppermost caps an arched attic window framed by sunbursts. The delicate floral plasterwork in the bay transom is unlike anything else in town. Image: David Bock.



1221 Sherman ranks among the city's largest houses. A neoclassical block embellished with cornice, frieze, and pilasters, the design displays Colonial Revival at its most formal. Image: David Bock.



Four-square massing, hip roof, and classical trim are characteristic Colonial Revival features at 1240 St. Charles; the gabled dormers and floor plan are Queen Anne in spirit. Image: Valerie Turpen.



Square bays, perforated bargeboards, and fretwork porch are characteristic Stick Eastlake features, as are the brackets and batten frieze still visible at the rear of 1901 Alameda. Image: David Bock.

Heartland . . . Continued from page 3

it was less open to advanced designers like Bernard Maybeck (1862-1957) and Willis Polk (1867-1924). Maybeck produced nothing here, Polk one small house. The exception was Ernest A. Coxhead (1863-1933), an heir of English Arts and Crafts who left London for Los Angeles in 1886 and came north in 1890. His remarkable designs played with space and scale, time and place, rusticity and refinement, and three went up in Alameda—Christ Episcopal Church (1890-91) and the extant houses of David Greenleaf (1891) and George Whittell (1893), the last the Gold Coast getaway of a San Francisco millionaire.

Julia Morgan (1872-1957) carried on the legacy of the pathfinders. Born in San Francisco, raised in Oakland and educated at Berkeley, this consummate professional was a quintessential Bay Area architect. Maybeck mentored her at the university where she was the only woman in the civil engineering program, the closest thing to architecture Berkeley then offered. He encouraged her to attend the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, his elite alma mater, and she famously became its first woman graduate. To continental ideals of rational planning, classical order, and historical precedent she added a Californian's appreciation of forth-

right wood construction, the polarities of her vision.

Morgan had a lifelong association with Alameda, frequenting the bathing resorts as a child, and the town's down-to-earth qualities would have resonated with her. She found a ready market for pitch-perfect designs infusing a mainstream sensibility with artistic obsession, elevating the everyday to the timeless. Her houses in the Island City make up our largest trove by a master and there may be others, awaiting discovery.



Left: Julius Rummel in 1893. His partnership with Felix Marcuse created the prolific build-and-design team of Marcuse & Rummel. Image: R. Rutter.

Right: Fred N. Delaney with his wife and son. In 1901 he entered into a partnership with Edwin A. Randlett. Image: Alameda Museum.

Below: Alameda pioneer Denis Straub and family. Image: Alameda Museum.



A native of England, Ernest Coxhead came to California in 1886 as an architect for the Episcopal Church, settling in San Francisco in 1890. He partnered with his brother.

Bay Area native Julia Morgan became the first woman accepted to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. She designed over 700 buildings during her career. Images: Wikipedia.



FROM THE COLLECTION

Limoges Porcelain Set A Family Heirloom



A tea cup and saucer from the Peacock family dinner set.

A DISPLAY CASE holds a collection of Limoges China which once graced the table of the Albert Peacock family. The Peacocks came to Alameda from San Francisco in 1906 after the devastating earthquake there. His descendants, including museum docent Gayle Macaitis (see page 12) donated the set.

Limoges is a city in southwest-central France known for its decorated porcelain. Kaolin is the primary material from which porcelain is made. The manufacturing of hard-paste porcelain at Limoges followed the discovery of local supplies of the substance. The material was quarried there beginning in 1768.

Porcelain slowly evolved in China and the craft slowly spread to other East Asian countries, Europe, and the rest of the world. Its manufacturing process is more demanding than that for earthenware and stoneware, the two other types of pottery. Porcelain has been regarded as the most prestigious pottery for its delicacy, strength, and its white color. It can be modeled and is accepting of glazes and paints allowing a huge range of decorative treatments in tablewares, vessels and figurines.

The European name, porcelain comes from the old Italian *porcellana* meaning cowrie shell, because of its resemblance to the surface of the shell. Porcelain is also referred to as china or fine china, as it was first seen as an import from that country.

In 1771, the brothers Massié and Fourniera Grellet established the first Limoges porcelain factory. It was so successful that the King of France purchased the plant so it could exclusively make white porcelain for the royal family to be gilded and enameled by Parisian artisans.

The Limoges set in the museum collection is stamped with the Charles Ahrenfeldt brand. Ahrenfeldt was born in Germany in 1807. He began importing porcelain into New York City in the 1830s. Eventually he moved to Paris and opened a decorating studio. Between 1859 and the late 1860s he established an exporting firm in Limoges and developed a wide export market, with his focus being North America.

Around 1884 he started decorating porcelain in Limoges. His son Charles J. Ahrenfeldt took over this factory in 1894, upon the father's death. The son expanded in 1896 building a porcelain factory in the Montjovis district of Limoges. M. Grob was the manager of the new factory and was also

mentioned as the company's Zurich agent. He became the owner of the factory in 1917. His product was a high quality porcelain which won the Grand Prix at the Art Deco Exposition in 1925.

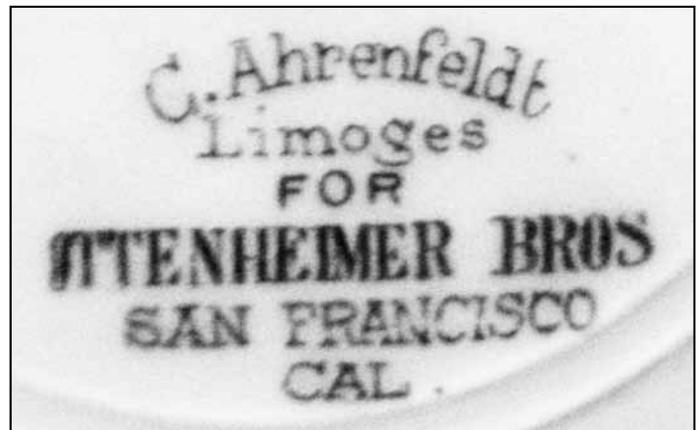
Grob died in 1934 and was succeeded by his widow. A finance group bought the factory in 1958, production diminished, and the factory closed in 1969.

The other identification shown on this porcelain set is that of the Oppenheimer Brothers of San Francisco. This family was selling and trading goods, particularly otter and beaver fur, from their store on Battery Street in 1857. They continued to prosper and expanded their inventory of products and locations.

Apparently surviving the devastating earthquake in April 1906 the company made another business move. The *San Francisco Call* proclaimed on July 12, 1906 "Invades Glassware Field. Ottenheimer Brothers have entered the business field in opposition to the firm of Poheim O'Grady & Solomon. They filed articles of incorporation yesterday stating that they purpose entering the crockery and glassware business. The directors are Martin C., Milton S., and Arthur W. Ottenheimer."



This Ahrenfeldt register mark which was in use starting in 1894.



The Ottenheimer mark below the Limoges name.

Another Addition to the Cohen Collection *by Valerie Turpen*

RECENTLY THE MUSEUM was visited by Carolyn Christian Matthias of Lafayette, California, a descendent of famed lawyer, railroad developer and Alameda resident Alfred A. Cohen. The purpose of her visit was to donate cherished family portraits of Alfred and his wife Emilie. Alfred passed away in Sydney, Nebraska in 1887 while traveling by train.

These images were passed down through the generations starting with A.A. and Emilie Cohen's son Donald Atherton Cohen and his wife Alice Hunter. Their daughter Emilie Alice Cohen married Milton Christian in 1925 and Carolyn is their daughter.

Curator George Gunn was pleased to receive the pair. "The photographs are very unusual due to their large size," he observed. "They are also in their original frames." The portraits are now proudly hanging in the Victorian parlor display at the museum.

Carolyn Christian Matthias at the Alameda Museum with the portraits of A.A. Cohen and his wife Emilie Gibbons Cohen her great grandparents. Image: Evelyn Kennedy.



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Please contact the
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Alameda Museum Quarterly is published four times a year and is available in electronic form on the museum website.

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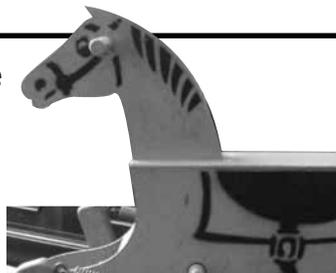
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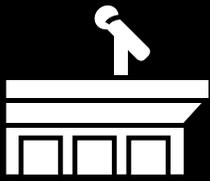
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NOTE: The Wonder Horse shown in the August *Alameda Museum Quarterly* "From the Collection" was a donation from Jean Wolslegel of Alameda who was given the horse as a child.





From the President's Podium *by Adam Gillitt*

It has been an eventful few months for us! First some unfortunate news – Dennis Evanosky has resigned as President and as a Museum Director. Until the end of 2018, I will be the acting President of the Board, when my term expires. Dennis will continue his work as the editor and publisher of the *Alameda Sun*, and is raising funds for a documentary about the 150th anniversary of the transcontinental railroad arriving in California. If you'd like to support his project, please visit gofundme.com/the-myth-of-the-golden-spike to learn more. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to wish Dennis well and thank him for his years of service to and support of the Alameda Museum. I have enjoyed our working relationship and have great respect for Dennis' encyclopedic knowledge and enthusiasm for Alameda's history.

I had the honor of representing the Museum in front of City Council on September 4, where I gave a presentation about the Museum's activities and plans, which was well received. After a brief discussion, the Council voted unanimously to renew our agreement to provide archival services for City records to the City of Alameda through 2023. We take our responsibility as the official repository for City records very seriously, and are proud to extend this relationship with the City.

The Alameda Legacy Home Tour was held on September 23. It was a beautiful day to walk and ride bikes around the island visiting the six locations staffed by volunteer docents, many in period dress. This annual collaboration between the Museum and the Architectural Preservation Society was yet another success, and our congratulations go out to Conchita Perales, Committee Chair, for managing the event and all the volunteers from both organizations for putting on a great 2018 Home Tour. If you're interested in participating next year, either by sharing your home or being a volunteer, please visit alameda-legacy-home-tour.org.

Now that it's autumn, it's Director nomination and membership renewal season. You should have recently received a letter from us with a ballot to nominate new Directors. This year we are especially in need of people to volunteer time to provide guidance and leadership for the Museum, the Meyers House and all our associated activities by joining our board of directors. As a Museum Director, duties include attending quarterly board meetings, participating in and responding to electronic communications, and committing time to a specific area of the Museum's operations, such as planning and staffing estate sales, supporting and managing our website and facebook page, creating educational programming for local students and many other activities. If you are interested in being nominated for the Board, and you have eight to ten hours a month to commit to Museum activities, please contact Adam Gillitt at info@alamedamuseum.org before Monday, October 30. Potential nominees will be interviewed by a committee from the Museum before the final ballot for 2019 Directors goes out to the membership in November.

We also are always looking for more volunteers to be docents while the Museum is open to the public, to help around the Meyers House and Gardens, and to assist with estate sales. If you have a few hours a month to spare and would like to share your time with us, please contact our Volunteer / Docent Coordinator, Evelyn Kennedy, at volunteer@alamedamuseum.org.

Although my tenure as President will be short, I am very interested in hearing from you concerning your thoughts and suggestions for the Museum and Meyers House. Please do not hesitate to contact me at info@alamedamuseum.org; I will reply as soon as I am able.


Adam Gillitt
Acting President, Alameda Museum

Explore Alameda's rich legacy with this self-guided tour of Gold Coast homes.

[1] 1015-1023 Morton. A stone's throw from Morton Station, the streets around the park developed early. This 1889 Queen Anne row includes a pair of two-story houses designed and built by A.W. Pattiani and a cottage by MacRae Bros.

[2] 1306 Sherman, NW San Antonio, 1901 (D.F. Oliver). Most Gold Coast homes lost their side gardens to later houses but this Colonial Revival residence retains its oak-shaded grounds. The design was by a noted Oakland architect with unspecified alterations by Julia Morgan.

[3] 1236 Sherman, 1912 (Julia Morgan). The shingled Arts and Crafts styling was a makeover of an 1891 Queen Anne residence, commissioned by the same owner.

[4] 1217 Sherman, 1895 (W.H. Lillie). The block's first Colonial Revival house forms a notable pair with the Mitchell residence on today's tour. Lillie was a well-known San Francisco architect.

[5] 1201 San Antonio, NE Bay, 1925 (V.E. Thorp, builder). This pristine example of postwar Colonial Revival demonstrates how the style evolved over four decades.

[6] 1200 San Antonio, SE Bay, 1909-10 (O'Brien & Werner). This manorial doctor's residence by Carl Werner and Matthew O'Brien bears comparison with the Walker residence on today's tour. Werner went on to design the neoclassical Alameda High School in the 1920s.

[7] SW corner San Antonio and Bay. Four 1970s houses occupy the site of the shingled Baum mansion, a 1904 landmark by Hermann Barth. The family owned the west frontage of Bay Street from Central Avenue to the bay.

This fine neighborhood retains a wealth of well-preserved houses primarily from the 1880s to the 1920s, giving it a character derived from the prevalent styles of the era – Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Arts and Crafts, and post-World War I revivalism. Don't miss the old globe lights on Bay and St. Charles, remnants of the city's first incandescent system, and specimens of the lovely live oaks that once covered the island.



- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 1015-1023 Morton | 6 1200 San Antonio | 11 1260 St. Charles | ★ Tour Houses |
| 2 1306 Sherman | 7 SW San Antonio & Bay | 12 1246 St. Charles | 1221 Sherman |
| 3 1236 Sherman | 8 1242 Bay | 13 1244 St. Charles | 1232 Bay |
| 4 1217 Sherman | 9 1243 Bay | 14 1223 & 1235 St. Charles | 1240 St. Charles |
| 5 1201 San Antonio | 10 1229 Bay | | |

Walking Tour by Woody Minor
Map layout: Meg Macri

[8] 1242 Bay, 1910 (Murdock & Smith). Longtime Alameda resident Hamilton Murdock left a legacy of Arts and Crafts houses including this up-to-date design with crisp detailing.

[9] 1243 Bay, 1909 (attributed to C.W. Dickey). The shingled residence of grain broker William Baehr, who moved to the Gold Coast from a Queen Anne mansion on Central Avenue.

[10] 1229 Bay, 1924 (Miller & Warnecke). The Baehrs' final home in Alameda was this demure storybook cottage across the street from the Walker residence, by a noted Oakland firm.

[11] 1260 St. Charles, 1900 (A.W. Smith). An early local specimen of Arts and Crafts by a leading Oakland Architect, with a chalet feel suggesting the influence of Maybeck. The gnarled oak is an old-timer.

[12] 1246 St. Charles, 1962 (Barbachano, Ivanitsky & Associates). This Eichler-inspired house by an El Cerrito firm replaced an 1899 Colonial Revival residence gutted by fire.

[13] 1244 St. Charles, 1899 (Henry H. Meyers). An early work by a well-known resident, the shingle veneer and gambrel roof display the less formal side of 1890s Colonial Revival.

[14] 1235 St. Charles, 1936 (Edwin L. Snyder); **1223 St. Charles,** 1958 (Jon Konigshofer). The side-by-side homes of florist Leno Piazza across from the Bruton residence encapsulate the mid-century shift in design. The modern house on the block's last vacant lot is the work of a Carmel architect born and raised in Alameda.

Home Tour a Great Success *by Jim Smallman*

ON SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 23, with glorious weather and six outstanding historic homes, the Alameda Legacy Home Tour was a great success. The homes themselves were the stars, of course. The Julia Morgan designed home and exquisite gardens on Bay Street attracted appreciative visitors all day, as did City Landmark Bruton House on St. Charles. Classic high-basement cottages on Alameda and Santa Clara Avenues shared attention with a marvelous Colonial Revival home on Sherman Street and a unique and impressive mansion designed by architect Ernest Coxhead on Santa Clara Avenue. The Coxhead house, now home to the Girls, Inc. organization, was enhanced by some of their teenage girls acting as docents while wearing period costumes, all provided by the talented Denise Brady and fitted by Lois Francis.

The Gold Coast was alight with visitors from Alameda and all around the Bay Area who enjoyed the extraordinary interiors and gardens of these impressive homes. A number of improvements were made in tour organization, guide-book design and marketing, under the direction of Tour Chair Conchita Perales. Kevis Brownson masterfully managed the website, social media and marketing,

spreading the word far and wide; and Jerry Schneider held a tight ship during tour day sales with the new credit card processing and a check-in app. Over 800 tickets were sold! However, this event would not be possible without the participation of over a hundred docents and volunteers who spend their day making sure it's a seamless and extraordinary experience for all tour goers. We want to give them all a big "Thank You" for all their hard work and for their support of our preservation efforts.

Contributing home owners, more than 100 volunteers and Legacy Home Tour Committee leadership had a chance to enjoy a celebratory dinner after the most successful Legacy Tour in memory. The volunteers shared a catered dinner, libations and a fun evening at the beautifully landscaped Meyers House garden, entertained by live period music and songs.

Funds raised by the Legacy Tour are divided equally by the Alameda Museum and the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society, assisting in the important work of these two organizations.



Girls Inc. students had an amazing day sharing the historic details of their headquarters, the stunning Ernest Coxhead house on Santa Clara Avenue. Image: Steve Davy.



*Dapper Docent Jeffrey Jenkins.
Image Linda Weinstock.*



Docent Ross Dileo shares his knowledge and experience with tour goers. Image: Steve Davy.



Left to right: Maria Muñoz, Vicky Bell, Janet Gibson Linda Weinstock, Conchita Perales, and Mely Perales, center at the Bay Street home.



Attendees lined up to see the beautifully restored Julia Morgan house on Bay Street. Image: Steve Davy.

Hosting the after-party, Adam Neville tells the story of the Meyers House and gardens. Image: Linda Weinstock.



Docents, committee members, and homeowners enjoy the after-party at the Meyers House. It was great weather for music, food, and socializing. Image: Steve Davy.



Docent Dossiers

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

Gayle Macaitis with her ancestor's Limoges dinner set on display which was donated to the museum.

Gayle Macaitis is a second generation native Alamedan. She and her parents were born and raised in the West End.

"Alameda certainly has changed over the years most evident in the number of apartments and houses in town now. In fact where I currently live used to be farms when I was a kid!" Gayle remembers.

After she retired, Gayle saw an ad in the paper that the Alameda Museum was looking for docents and thought it would be a fun way to learn more about the history of Alameda. In



fact, the family decided the museum was the perfect place to donate her grandmother's Limoges china to help preserve a piece of Alameda's history.

The Neptune Beach display is a favorite of Gayle's. "I can remember my parents stories about going there

when they were kids. My dad used to swim in to save the price of admission."

Gayle also enjoys meeting the people who visit the museum and telling them about the history of her hometown.



Sherman Lewis

The Museum Welcomes a New Board Member

Sherman Lewis has been unanimously approved as a member of the Alameda Museum Board.

Sherman moved to Alameda in 2005 and met his wife here. "I lived for seven years in San Francisco, and Alameda has the vast majority of the things I loved about it, minus the vast majority of the things I hated about it. I love being able to walk most places

and bike the rest. I really love the sense of community. Our girls are thriving and I look forward to every day here."

Sherman holds a BA from the University of Chicago and an MBA from the Hult International School of Business. He also serves as a public art commissioner for the City of Alameda.



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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 three hours to make new friends? Come and spend that time with us!

Docent Coordinator for Alameda Museum
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Join any time. Dues based on calendar year.
Renewals after September will continue through
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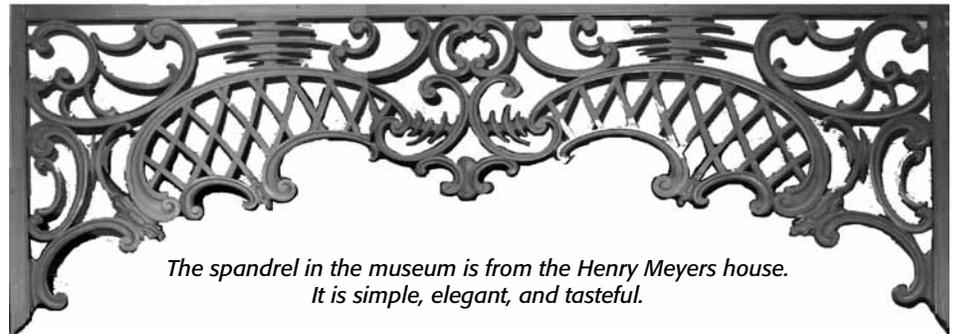
What in the World is it?

by Ron Ucovich

MANY TIMES WHEN VISITORS ENTER the Alameda Museum, after they sign the guest register, they look up and see a very elegantly-crafted, cherrywood latticework panel, and they ask, "What in the world is that thing for?" I have them sit down for a minute while I answer their question.

That, my friend, is called a spandrel. It was a very important piece of Victorian-Era architecture to show that your house is decorated in the best of taste, and that guests who enter the home are expected to closely adhere to all the rules of social etiquette of the time. During the Victorian Era, if you were to call at the door of a family of Society, a servant would answer the door. You would tell the servant the person you wished to see and the nature of the call. The servant would invite you to enter the anteroom.

The anteroom is a small area immediately inside the front door. It is like a waiting room, except it has no chairs or guest accommodations of any kind. It may have a hatrack, a coatrack, an umbrella stand, and maybe a small table with flowers. The anteroom may not look like a room at all. It may just look like the end of a hallway, but you will know



The spandrel in the museum is from the Henry Meyers house. It is simple, elegant, and tasteful.

that you are in the anteroom because a spandrel will define its boundaries.

Now, you are in the anteroom while the servant left to announce your presence. If you are a gentleman, you will remove your hat while you are in the house, but you may not place it on the hatrack. You may move about the room, but you must not go beyond the spandrel for any reason. If there are two callers, you may speak in hushed tones, but you must never speak loudly enough to be overheard.

The servant now returns. He may tell you that the owner is not interested in seeing you, at which time you must excuse yourself politely without asking questions. He may tell you to make an appointment to come again at another time. He may tell you to remain standing, and the owner will be there in a minute to conclude your business in the anteroom. Or, if you are making a social call and are a friend of the owner, the servant will give you permission to pass beyond the spandrel and enter the parlor.

Although you have been recognized as a friend of the owner, and you have been invited to pass the spandrel and enter the parlor, you must still comply with the demeanor that this Victorian home demands. If you are a gentleman, you must leave your hat, overcoat, gloves and cane in the anteroom. A lady is not required to remove her bonnet or wraps. If you are invited to seat yourself, you may do so, but you must be careful not to cross your

legs, nor rest your feet on any piece of furniture, nor sit with your elbows on your knees. Also, it would rude to touch or handle any figurines, ornaments, or room decorations.

If you are seated, you should stand when the host enters the room. Do not stand with your arms crossed, nor with hands on hips. Be careful not to stand in front of the fireplace where you might block heat from others in the room. When conversation begins, avoid speaking ill of others or spreading gossip. Avoid controversial topics regarding religion or politics. It is permissible to blow your nose, if necessary, providing you are facing the wall and away from other people, but never open your handkerchief to check the contents afterward. And if, per chance, someone should occasion a bout of flatulence, rules of etiquette dictate that this indiscretion should not be mentioned by anyone.

So we see that the spandrel not only creates a waiting room for visitors, but it also shows them that they have entered a home of decorum, and all the formalities of Victorian protocol must be observed. The spandrel does have one more function. It, quite powerfully, sets the mood and ambiance for the entire home. The one hanging in our museum is from the Henry Meyers estate. It is simple, elegant, and tasteful. It is not custom-designed, and was probably mass-produced in this generic style.



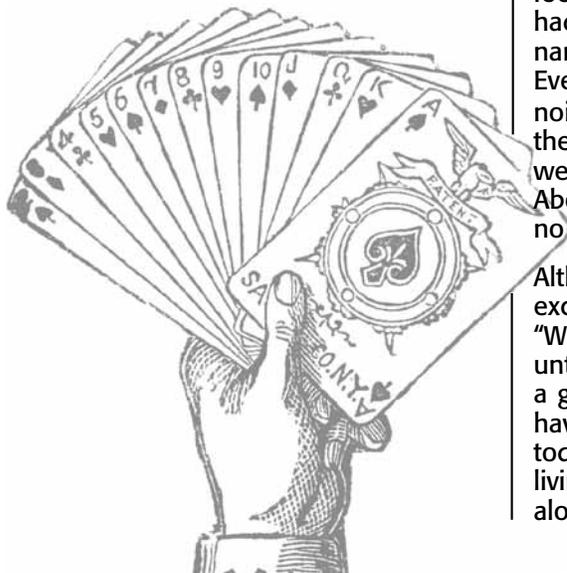
I'd like to see the lady of the house.

Continued on page 15. . .

What in the World... *Continued from page 14*

A more intricate spandrel might include turnings, dowels or beads, which would have to be machined on a lathe and fitted together like a jig-saw puzzle. A family of nobility may want their family crest, or possibly the family surname emblazoned in the center. A Christian cross, a Star of David, or Muslim scripture, could set a religious theme. An advocate of astrology might display the signs of the Zodiac. A Hawaiian family may use a pair of pineapples, their symbol meaning "welcome." A Chinese family may use a pair of Foo Dogs (creatures which are part dog and part lion), to indicate that friends are welcome, but enemies beware. In Sara Winchester's San Jose mansion, she used spiders and spiderwebs to set the mood for her home.

During the 1930s, Art Deco became the latest rage in home design. People started to modernize their homes by simplifying them and streamlining their architecture. The spandrel was considered a relic of Victorian ostentation, and was often eliminated. It is a shame, though, because when they removed the spandrel, with it they destroyed the dignity, formality, propriety, and majesty that made Victorian architecture so special.



Alameda in the News

What was happening in the Island City November 13, 1896

From the San Francisco Call

THE GHOST BARS CARD-PLAYING

Weird Stories Told by the Residents of an Alameda Home.

ALAMEDA — The house at 1158 Park Avenue is said to be haunted, and the wraith, or whatever it is that is responsible for the uncanny noises, only appears when the occupants of the house are playing cards. Mr. and Mrs. Broderick, C. H. Paxton and E. H. Nauman all bear testimony to the strange circumstances that have led them to swear off playing cards.

Mr. and Mrs. Alionso Green formerly owned and lived in the place. She was of a religious turn of mind and abhorred cards. Her husband and niece often enjoyed a quiet game. She could not prevent this defilement of her home. Other things led to more trouble, and finally she took a dose of poison about five years ago and ended her life. She died in the hallway, saying that she was one too many for the home. Green moved to Oakland and left the property to the two children, Helen and Bert Green. The latter has just come into the property by reaching his majority. The house has had many tenants, but none stayed in it long. It got the name of being haunted, but nothing definite was known until Mr. and Mrs. Broderick moved in.

Nothing unusual happened until they gave a card party. Early the next morning the doorbell rang. On being answered no one was in sight. This caused some talk, but not until the following week was anything serious thought of it. Another whist game was played, and about 10 o'clock, when the game was nearly completed, knocks as of knuckles upon the swinging doors between the dining-room and kitchen were heard. Upon investigation no one could be found. The whole party heard it, and were somewhat startled to find no one in the kitchen. While talking about it the knocking was repeated. It continued for some minutes. All were badly frightened and the game was discontinued.

Then the electric doorbell began to ring. It was a long ring, as if some one was holding the button. All efforts to locate the cause proved fruitless. A week later another party was arranged and all arrangements were made to catch any one fooling around the house. The basement was securely locked. After the game had progressed some time the knocking and ringing began. The young men named ran out and called loudly for help and looked around, but, saw no one. Even while standing by the bell it kept ringing. They resumed the game, when the noises were repeated, with loud moanings. This was enough for one night and they disbanded. A fourth night was selected and Recorder St. Sure and others were invited. All were present but the Recorder, who had no desire to investigate. About 11 o'clock the performance was repeated. This was the final warning and no cards have been played there since.

Although they often have a party in the house no disturbances have been known except when cards were played. Mr. and Mrs. Broderick are both young people. "We don't play cards now," she said in answer to a question today, "but we did until we were scared out of it. I am not at all afraid, but as I have to be here alone a good deal I don't want such uncanny things to think of. It's strange, and we have done everything in our power to fathom it, but we are as much in the dark today as we were the first time it happened. Mr. Paxton and Mr. Nauman were living in the house at the time, but both have gone now. I guess we'll leave cards alone, anyhow."



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IN THIS ISSUE

- *Houses of the Heartland*
- *From the Collection: Limoges Porcelain Set*
- *Another Addition to the Cohen Collection*
- *From the President's Podium*
- *Gold Coast Walking Tour Map*
- *Home Tour a Great Success*
- *Docent Dossiers*
- *What in the World is it?*
- *Alameda in the News*

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