

Alameda Museum

Quarterly

HOW ALAMEDA BECAME AN ISLAND The Story of the Tidal Canal *by Woody Minor*



Excavation underway in the summer of 1889, looking north to Oakland. Image: Bay Area Electric Railroad Association [#37366a].

WE'RE AN ISLAND BECAUSE OF THE TIDAL CANAL—the name of the narrow stretch of water that extends from the vicinity of Park Street to the vicinity of High Street. This section of the harbor is actually a ditch laboriously cut through the neck of the Alameda peninsula and first filled with water in 1902. Consuming thirty years from conception to completion, the canal stretches more than a mile from the estuary to San Leandro Bay and is spanned by four bridges. It was planned and executed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as part of an elaborate harbor plan, and it was paid for with federal dollars.

The Harbor Plan

The natural inlet separating Alameda and Oakland, originally known as San Antonio Creek in deference to the rancho but commonly called "the estuary," was notoriously shallow. Shoaled channels and a sandbar had impeded navigation

since the gold rush. Local shipping interests lobbied Washington, and in 1873 Congress authorized a study by Army engineers. The board was headed by Col. George H. Mendell, a distinguished West Point graduate and Civil War veteran. As commander of the Corps of Engineers' western district from 1871 to 1895, Mendell would direct the implementation of the plan to make the estuary a functional harbor.

Approved by Congress in 1874, the plan sought to harness the tides to scour shipping channels. Parallel stone training walls would extend some two miles into the bay, cutting through the bar into deep water. A dredged channel would run between the jetties and divide into two channels beyond the Webster Street Bridge, terminating in a dredged tidal basin—a catchment area for tidal waters—at the estuary's east end (Brooklyn Basin).

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Tidal Canal . . . *Continued from page 1*

A tidal canal cut through the neck of the Alameda peninsula would connect the tidal basin to San Leandro Bay, enclosed by a dam by the Bay Farm Island Bridge.

Here's how it was supposed to work. During high tide water would gather in San Leandro Bay. The dam gates would close, funneling the accelerated ebb tide through the narrow canal to the estuary tidal basin. The combined outflow would enter the open bay between the jetties, scouring the channels along the way.

Between 1874 and 1900, Congress made around twenty appropriations totaling nearly \$2.5 million (at least \$100 million in today's dollars). The Army Corps directed the work of dozens of contractors. The training walls went in between 1874 and 1894, and dredging for the shipping channels and tidal basin began in 1877. The final construction project under the plan was the canal. Its cost with bridges approached \$700,000, or about 30 percent of the total budget. The dam was never built.

Phase I: 1874-1891

The canal route was surveyed in 1874. The 86.5-acre right-of-way extended through the neck of the peninsula, straddling the boundary between Alameda and Oakland—a treeless expanse bordered by marsh and traversed by Park Street and High Street as well as train tracks at Fruitvale Avenue. Condemnation proceedings began in 1876, and about \$40,000 was allocated among eleven landowners in 1882, exhausting funding for several years.

One of the landowners was A.A. Cohen whose Fernside estate bordered the route. He declined his share and sued the government, but he couldn't stop the project.

Congress made its first appropriation for excavation in 1888, allowing Col. Mendell to award a one-year contract for the west end of the cut. The successful bidder was the San Francisco Bridge Co., with the firm's chief engineer, Hermann Krusi, serving as project manager. Raised in New York, where his Swiss-born father taught college-level philosophy, languages, and mathematics, Krusi graduated from Cornell in 1882 with a degree in civil engineering. He joined the San Francisco Bridge Co. in 1885; two years later he married and moved to Alameda, residing in a mansion on Central Avenue.

On February 18, 1889, a rail-mounted steam shovel broke ground "at a point in a field of wild mustard" near Fruitvale Avenue. As the dig widened and deepened, tracks were laid and relaid along the bottom of the cut; the swivel bucket filled dump cars which were hauled onto spur lines along the shore where the material was used to build dikes and fill marshland tracts under contract to landowners. As the dig proceeded west, a floating dredge cut eastward through marsh, pumping material to build an earthen dam to keep out the estuary. The *Alameda Argus* noted in June that "the canal cut is so deep that the cars may ascend and descend with the tops of their smoke stacks still below the level of the banks." Krusi predicted that the cut would be finished by the end of the year.

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Looking west to the recently completed Fruitvale Bridge with the Park Street Bridge in the distance. The canal was nearing completion in this 1901 view. Image: Bay Area Electric Railroad Association [#42221].



Tidal Canal . . . *Continued from page 2*

But then the rains came and kept coming, eventually totaling 45 inches—one of the wettest winters on record. Disaster struck on a stormy night in January, when Sausal Creek overflowed its banks at Fruitvale Avenue and flooded the ditch and equipment. It took two months to pump out the water; then more storms set in. By the time the contract was completed, in November 1890, nine months behind schedule, SF Bridge had lost thousands of dollars on the job. Yet the firm promptly took on a second contract in 1891 for the other end of the cut, east of the High Street. This job went smoothly as the dredge ate its way up the slough from San Leandro Bay through tideland and marsh.

As the east cut drew to a close, construction was completed on the long-awaited Park Street Bridge, the first of the bridges to be built in conjunction with the canal. More than two years had passed since the steam shovel severed the road, disrupting traffic flow at the city's main entrance, but Mendell had refused to move on the project until the west cut attained full width. The Corps finally awarded contracts for a substantial iron draw, and the Park Street Bridge opened to vehicular traffic on December 7, 1891.

Hiatus: 1892-1898

Then all work on the canal ceased, not to resume for seven years. The reasons were both economic and political. Funding shrank as depression set in, and new appropriations were earmarked for channel dredging at the behest of Oakland shipping interests. Mendell's retirement in 1895 came in the midst of these setbacks, removing the project's chief advocate. At the same time, new studies suggested that plain old dredging was a more cost-effective way of maintaining channel depths—a view held by Mendell's successor as district engineer. The intra-agency dispute went on for years.

The impasse had noxious consequences. Alameda's and Oakland's new sewer systems discharged raw waste into the harbor under the assumption that the canal would flush the communal toilet. Instead, fetid water awash with dead fish lapped against the dam and seeped into the ditch, emitting a pervasive stench. The pollution was seen as Alameda's problem, since it fouled the main entrance to the city, and the canal became an Alameda cause; Oakland's priority, as ever, was the shipping channel. Alameda's health officer, Dr. John T. McLean, took the lead in lobbying for the canal's completion. He spoke at public meetings, penned letters to Congress, and made trips to Washington to no avail.

It didn't help that Mendell's successor was adamantly opposed. The canal's "only advocates are people who



The dredge "Olympian" alongside the High Street Bridge, October 1901. Image: Bay Area Electric Railroad Association [#23770].

object to the stench arising from the sewer-polluted waters of the tidal basin," he wrote in 1897. "This is very annoying, no doubt, but is strictly an issue of municipal sewerage, and not of harbor improvement...I can see no reason whatever for recommending the completion of this canal, but on the contrary, am of the opinion that the west end should be bulkheaded off and filled up by pump dredgers to at least high water mark. This would at least prevent it from remaining a stagnant cesspool."

Completion: 1899-1902

Federal policies have a way of shifting like the tides, and Washington came around. Following the appointment of a new district engineer, work resumed on the canal in 1899. The first contracts under the new appropriation were for drawbridges at High Street and Fruitvale Avenue. Both were built on dry land—pits were excavated and construction completed before water flowed under them. At High Street the excavation was done by a dredge working west through the marsh from the old cut which was dammed off. At landlocked Fruitvale Avenue, where a steam shovel did the work, the deeper cut and harder material increased the cost. The bridge at High Street was the first to open, in 1900, followed by Fruitvale in 1901, the latter a combination railroad-vehicular span.

The final bids for canal excavation were opened on May 23, 1901. Two weeks later the quarter-million-dollar contract was awarded to the Atlantic, Gulf & Pacific Co., a new firm co-owned by Hermann Krusi. The job called for the removal of 1.3 million cubic yards of material, mostly from the high-ground cut between Fruitvale Avenue and High Street—the last unexcavated section of the canal. In addition, all of the banks were to be trimmed to full width, the entire bed excavated to full depth, and the canal's west end widened at its juncture with the estuary. Once again Krusi was in charge.

Continued on page 4 . . .



Tidal Canal . . . Continued from page 3

The engineer did all at his command to expedite the work with modern methods and machinery. On-site coal bunkers and oil tanks provided for rapid fueling; arc lights enabled round-the-clock shifts. At least 125 men were employed, triple the workforce under earlier contracts. The steam shovel, an 80-ton brute with 30-ft. swing, crept along on flatcars as its three-ton bucket filled car after car on parallel tracks. Southern Pacific dirt trains hauled hundreds of these cars daily to the Oakland Mole where the material was dumped to expand the railyards. The shovel broke ground in September as crowds watched from the banks. "The machine is a monster," observed the *Argus*. "It cuts into the soil as though it were green cheese, and does not even groan or grunt in the effort."

Meanwhile the hydraulic dredge *Olympian* went to work fixing the fouled west cut, which had been flooded to alleviate the toxicity and stench. This meant opening the untended Park Street Bridge to provide access. The mechanism had long since rusted shut; when the draw was jacked up and swung open, the pivot cowl shattered and braces snapped. The dredge spent a couple of weeks pumping out the filth and rebuilding the levee dam before heading to San Leandro Bay to remove silt from the shoaled east cut. The vessel worked its way up to new

ground beyond the High Street Bridge, sending mud and sand to reclamation sites via floating pipeline. By the end of the year all that separated the flooded east cut from the dry ditch was a narrow wall of earth.

Water filled the canal in phases over the summer of 1902. It began with the removal of the levee dam. "The last barrier which held the waters of the estuary back from a free flow into the tidal canal was removed last evening," reported the *Argus* in July. "A torrent swept the length of the ditch and filled it to the high tide mark ... with a roar." The land separating the east and west cuts was breached on August 7th. "The last strip of earth that connected Alameda with the mainland was cut away yesterday ... and the peninsula became an island," exulted the *Argus*. The first maritime traffic consisted of three boys in a rowboat "cheered by the people along the banks."

After years of waiting and wrangling, the city lost no time celebrating. The Alameda Water Carnival in September kicked off with a parade up Park Street to fireworks at the bridge. Crowds strolled past canal-side concession booths over the weekend, regaled by brass bands, carnival acts, and feats of fancy diving. It ended with a procession of two hundred lighted boats. As the fleet passed the bridge, its refurbished draw swung open, a final flurry of fireworks lit the sky. The Island City had arrived.

Thank you Grant Ute for supplying Tidal Canal images from the Bay Area Electric Railroad Association collection. Visit their museum in Suisun City.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Annual Docent Luncheon

Free for volunteer staff. If you invite a guest who is not a volunteer please remit \$30 at the event for their meal.

Look for a notice with details soon.

To confirm your attendance call or email Evelyn Kennedy at 510-504-5612 or evelynsells@juno.com.



wrm.org

Year Round
Saturdays & Sundays
10:30 am – 5:00 pm

**5848 State Highway 12
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From the President's Podium

by Valerie Turpen

This year we have some familiar faces and a few new ones serving on the Museum board and filling executive positions. You likely know me as the designer of the museum publication *Alameda Museum Quarterly*, and I have served as Museum Secretary. I have now taken on the role of Museum President.

We have three new board members—Myrna van Lunteren, Linda Ivey, and Kim Dyer. Myrna will serve as Vice-President and Linda Ivey has taken on the role of Secretary. Completing our executive team is Bob Risley who has served as our Treasurer for many years. Our returning members are Evelyn Kennedy, Sherman Lewis, and Ashok Katdare. Evelyn will continue to manage the docent schedules and Sherman will apply his expertise to membership and web updates. It is great to have an enthusiastic group interested in the future of our museum. As Alameda continues to grow and evolve we look forward to working with Curator George Gunn to move the museum forward. It is important that Alameda's history remain relevant to the future generations shaping our city.

Many thanks to our departing board members Dennis Evanosky and Adam Gillitt for all their hard work leading to improvements at the museum. But don't worry, they will still be lending us a helping hand on many levels.

We currently need to increase our docent staff. It is our docents and other volunteers that keep the museum open, literally, if we do not have someone at the front desk we cannot open our doors to the public. Do you have a friend with free time? Do you attend social gatherings where you can spread the word? Please do! (See page 13 for details).

I look forward to this opportunity and am excited about the year ahead.



Valerie Turpen
President, Alameda Museum

Above: Valerie Turpen, Evelyn Kennedy, and Bob Risley.

Right: Linda Ivey, George Gunn, Kim Dyer, Sherman Lewis, and Myrna van Lunteren.





Alameda in the News

What was Happening in the Island City

San Francisco Call: September 16, 1902

WATER CARNIVAL IS INAUGURATED

Auspicious indeed, was the opening tonight of the three-days celebration by the people of this city in honor of the completion of the tidal canal, one of the most important engineering undertakings thus far carried out on greater San Francisco Bay. Every Alamedan appeared to realize that the occasion was an important epoch in the history of the municipality, as it marked the beginning of its career as an island city.

Local residents are alive to the fact that the finishing of the splendid channel from San Antonio Estuary to San Leandro Bay is an improvement that means much to Alameda in a commercial, sanitary and recreative way and they intend that the outside world shall know it. Though the city is aflutter with flags and bedecked with gorgeous bunting and though the carnival spirit is in the atmosphere, Alamedans who take pride in the island that contains their homes are reflective through it all. They are now prouder than ever of the beauty and natural advantages of the city that was once a peninsula, but around which the tidal currents now ceaselessly flow.

As soon as day broke this morning the decorators and workers at the booths and concessions on the carnival boulevard began operations and tonight the places were thronged with visitors and guests. The land parade that opened the carnival season tonight was the largest ever seen in Alameda. Nearly all of the fraternal, civic and military organizations in the city were represented

in the procession. It is estimated that more than 4,000 marchers were in line. Thousands of residents and visitors from outside cities crowded the sidewalks to view the pageant and follow it to the banks of the tidal canal, where a spectacular pyrotechnic display took place on the shore opposite the carnival boulevard. The fraternal organizations carried numerous banners and some of them had floats emblematical of the order. Queen Tot in her royal equipage, accompanied by her maid of honor Miss Ruby Schloss, and her Majesty's ladies in waiting, was the cynosure of all eyes.

Senator E. K. Taylor, grand marshal, started the parade at 8:30 o'clock from Central Avenue and Pearl Street. Prior to the starting of the procession Queen Tot, in her royal float, drawn by six horses and accompanied by the Alameda Press Club in an automobile, was driven up to the steps of the City Hall, where her Majesty received the keys of the city from President Joseph F. Forderer of the City Trustees.

Her Majesty graciously thanked President Forderer and was driven back to the head of the parade. The Queen's float was designed like a gondola with swans' heads at the prow. After the parade disbanded the marchers and spectators filled the booths and concessions or paraded along the boulevard and viewed the fireworks and the illuminated mosquito fleet tied up in the basin.

Tomorrow will be Children's day. The schools will close in the afternoon and also on Wednesday afternoon. That night the marine parade will occur on the canal.





Alameda Museum Lecture Series 2019

❖ **APRIL 25: ARRIVAL OF THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD – DENNIS EVANOSKY & ERIC KOS**

Join Dennis Evanosky and Eric J. Kos as they explore Alameda's role in the September 6, 1869, arrival of the transcontinental railroad on A.A. Cohen's San Francisco & Alameda Railroad. Discover the part that the "Curse of Dead Cow Curve" (if you believe in curses) may have played in stopping the transcontinental trains from running through Niles Canyon and onto San Jose and into San Francisco. Dennis and Eric will tell of the shenanigans that led to the 1882 murder of the man who some say placed the curse on the Western Pacific Railroad's 1866 attempt to traverse today's Niles Canyon.

Sponsor: Evelyn Kennedy, Alain Pinel Realtors, and Alameda Museum Board Member.

❖ **MAY 23: A CONCISE HISTORY OF ALAMEDA'S VINTAGE NEON SIGNS – GRETA DUTCHER**

Local Author Greta Dutcher known for the *Alameda Postcard History Series* and *Images of America – Alameda* presents an illustrated talk on the remaining vintage neon signs in the city of Alameda, with an emphasis on the beauty of neon as an art form; also, the documentation, preservation and restoration of neon signs.

Sponsor: Liz Rush, Realtor, McGuire Real Estate.

❖ **JUNE 27: BLACK MILITARY HISTORY – LEON WATKINS & LARRY THOMPSON**

As founding members of the group The Walking Ghosts of Black History, Watkins and Thompson promote awareness of African-Americans' roll in the military history of the United States, as well as community service and outreach to veterans and active duty military. The presentation will explore African-American service during war time, with a focus on WWII, as NAS Alameda served a major role in protection of the Pacific.

Sponsor: Pacific Coast Community Services.

❖ **JULY 25: ALAMEDA LEGENDS**

ATHLETES AND FIELDS OF DREAMS IN THE ISLAND CITY – JAMES FRANCIS MCGEE

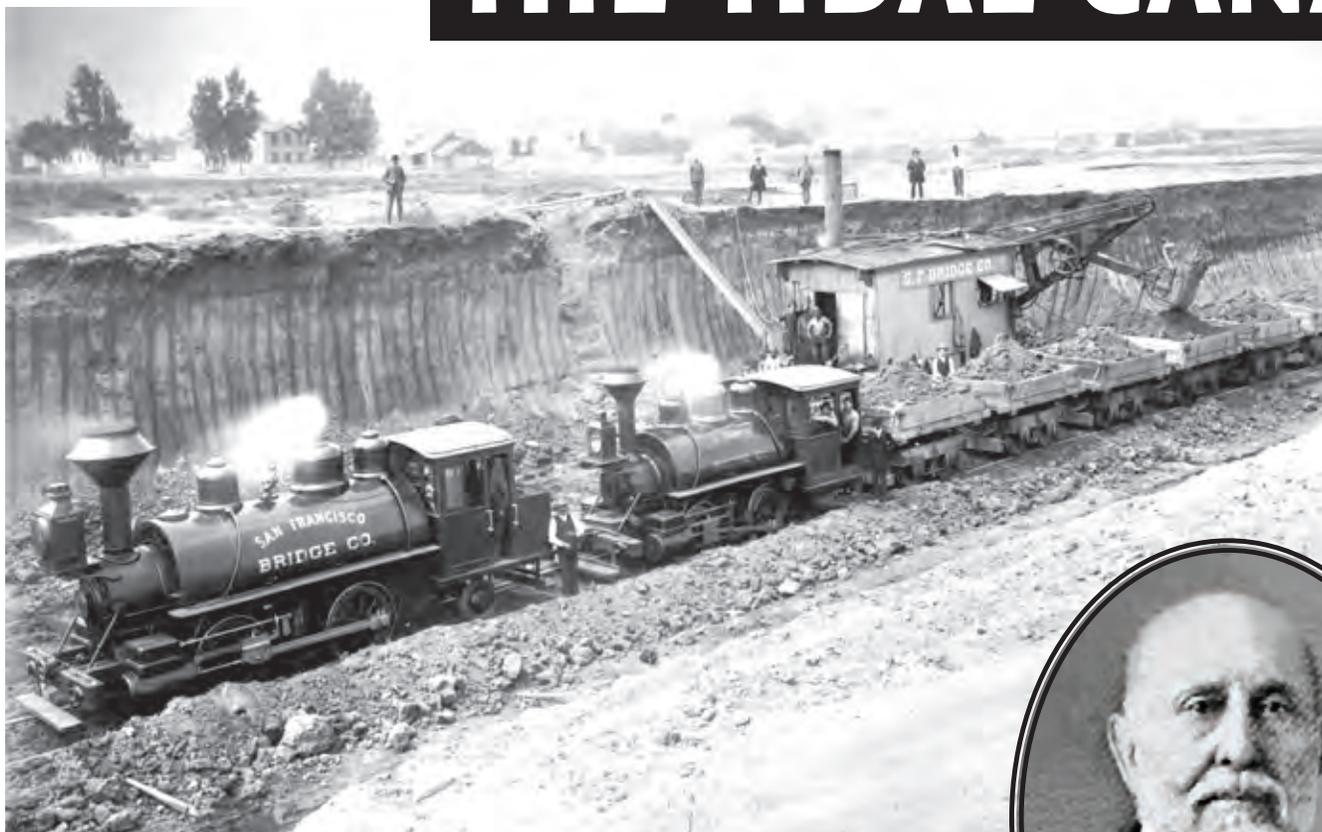
Former resident James Francis McGee will bring to life images and stories of yesteryear during his presentation about Alameda athletic legends of days gone by, with an emphasis on Japanese American players in the ATK League. McGee will honor the many athletes who competed on the field of play for the love of the game throughout the decades.

❖ **AUGUST 22: THE WEST END – WOODY MINOR**

This lecture will relate the history of the West End from the first land divisions during the Gold Rush to the present day. Vintage maps and photographs will help us track the first railroads, bathing resorts, and industries. Webster as the West End "Main Street" will receive due note, as will 20th century icons like Neptune Beach, Bethlehem shipyard, the Naval Air Station, and the wartime housing projects. Along the way we will see how the area's rich history is reflected in its wealth of well-preserved architecture. *Sponsor: Peter Fletcher, Broker, Windermere Real Estate.*

NOTE: Lectures take place at the Alameda Elk's Lodge: 2255 Santa Clara Avenue, downstairs. Parking is available behind the lodge building. Admission is free for museum members and \$10 for others. No reserved seats. We open at 6:30 pm on lecture nights. For information check alamedamuseum.org for updates.

THE TIDAL CANAL



In this posed view from 1889 looking south to Alameda, the steam shovel loads material onto a dirt train for delivery to marshland fill sites. Image: Bay Area Electric Railroad Association [#29836].



COL. GEORGE H. MENDELL

A graduate of West Point and a Civil War veteran, Col. Mendell served for many years in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In his 25 years as the western regional commander, from 1871 to 1895, he was responsible for fortifications on San Francisco Bay (including Alcatraz) and also superintended harbor projects up and down the Pacific Coast. Image: Find-a-Grave.com.



This early 20th century view shows the Park Street Bridge from the Oakland shore as a crowd gathers. The 1891 drawbridge was replaced by a modern bascule design in 1935, followed by a similar span at High Street in 1939. The Fruitvale Bridge was replaced in phases, beginning in the early 1950s with a vertical-lift railroad bridge; the adjoining highway bridge (bascule) opened to traffic in 1973. Image: Bay Area Electric Railroad Association [#35562].

THROUGH TIME

Captions provided by Woody Minor.



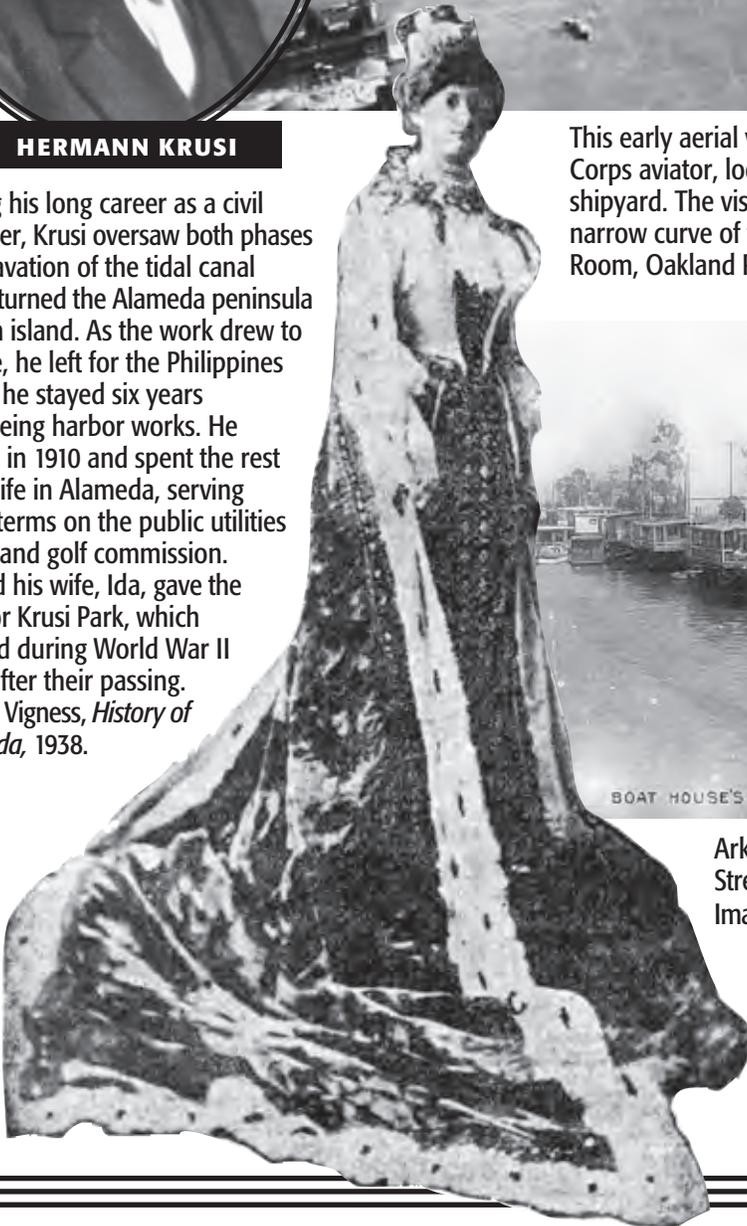
HERMANN KRUSI

During his long career as a civil engineer, Krusi oversaw both phases of excavation of the tidal canal which turned the Alameda peninsula into an island. As the work drew to a close, he left for the Philippines where he stayed six years overseeing harbor works. He retired in 1910 and spent the rest of his life in Alameda, serving many terms on the public utilities board and golf commission. He and his wife, Ida, gave the land for Krusi Park, which opened during World War II soon after their passing. Image: Vigness, *History of Alameda*, 1938.

This early aerial view of the estuary, taken in 1919 by an Army Air Corps aviator, looks east from the Webster Street Bridge and Bethlehem shipyard. The vista takes in Brooklyn Basin and, in the distance, the narrow curve of the tidal canal (upper left). Image: Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library; Joseph R. Knowland Collection.



Arks once lined the Alameda shore east from the Park Street Bridge, as show in this postcard view from about 1910. Image: Private collection.



Tot Decker, Empress of Alameda's Water Carnival in a gown of gold silk and satin set off with iridescent jewels. She reigned over the city's celebration of the opening of the Tidal Canal. Image: *San Francisco Call*, September 13, 1902.



The Ebb and Flow of Cash and Ice

by Myrna van Lunteren

THIS IS ONE OF THE ALAMEDA MUSEUM'S LATEST ACQUISITIONS: A CASH REGISTER!

But how old is it? Where did it come from? This cash register was an anonymous donation, reportedly in use by the Island Fuel and Ice Company, which at one time was located on 2308-2310 Encinal Avenue. It is missing the plaque at the top which should read: "This Registers the amount of your Purchase".

Our register has the brand name Lamson, and, although hard to see, has the letters 'L Co' on the sides in wood in-lay. It also has stamped on the metal frame on the fancy, wood-in-lay decorated, back: "Wilshire Safe & Scale Co. Agents." This gives us three businesses to trace, to get an idea of date of use.

William Stickney Lamson (1845-1912) was a shop-keeper in Lowell, Massachusetts. He invented a way to avoid having assistants going between the counter and the office, the Lamson Cash Carrier, and soon he owned a company to manufacture it, and other inventions of benefit to stores. This included cash registers, the first of which was invented by James Ritty, a saloonkeeper in Dayton, Ohio, in 1883. It (like our register), used metal taps with denominations pressed into them to indicate the amount of the sale. There was a total adder that summed all the cash values of the key presses during a day. There was a bell to "ring up" the sales.

That invention, limiting tampering and mistakes with the cash by sales staff, had caught the attention of another Dayton businessman, James Henry Patterson. Soon Patterson bought the patent and company, and in 1884 renamed the company National Cash Register Company. In 1893 Lamson's cash register business was bought by NCR.

William B. Willshire (abt. 1846-abt. 1919) was a son of a rich businessman from Cincinnati, Ohio, who started a business in safes in San Francisco around 1875. After some years he was joined by his young brother, Henry Gaylord (1861-1927). The business became very successful when young Gaylord rescued a local rich girl he had taken on a ride (the girl's horse got spooked by a wildcat, Henry Gaylord went after, got kicked by the horse). The brothers Wilshire sold the business to a competitor and left for Los Angeles in 1884. There Gaylord bought a barley field, then allowed the city to build a boulevard through it (provided it be called Wilshire Boulevard forever after). The brothers invested in a small Fullerton bank, the Fruit Growers Bank, which later became the First National Bank. Then Henry Gaylord met a girl and



married. However, William didn't get along with his new sister in law, and went back to San Francisco in 1890. There he opened a new business, again in safes (and scales), and apparently expanded to selling cash registers.

Theoretically, this would date our register to be from after 1890 (when William B. returned to San Francisco) and certainly before 1893 (when Lamson sold the cash register business to NCR).

The Island Fuel & Ice Company or Island Ice Company, was the result of a merger of the major ice vendors in Alameda around 1929. Especially involved were August Pearson (1871-1969), his one-time partner Hartwig Swanson (1883-1941), and Gottlieb Woehrle (1874-?).

Before the general acceptance of the need of a refrigerator (the first commercially available refrigerators for at-home were created by General Electric in 1927), richer households had an ice box, and typically the ice would last about a week. New blocks of ice sized for the ice box would be delivered at a regular schedule. We can see an example of such an ice box in our Meyers House.

In 1924 August Pearson, who had originally started the Encinal Ice Company at the location of Fred Coryell's feed business, sold his interest to his long-time (since 1907) partner Hartwig Swanson, and took his wife and two daughters on a trip to his native Sweden. Presumably at that time he handed over the inventory of the business to his partner, including any (by then) 20-odd-years old registers.

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Ebb and Flow . . .Continued from page 10

Sometime around 1920 Gottlieb Woehrle took over the ice, coal, feed, hay, grain, fuel, etc. business located at 1314-1316 High Street. There had been a fuel/feed business at that location at least as long ago as 1901. So it's equally possible Gottlieb found the register in a dark corner when he took over there.

Either way, Hartwig Swanson died in 1941, and Gottlieb's son George became the next manager of the Island Ice Company. So possibly at one time George Woehrle had custody of the register. None of this helps explain where the cash register has been hiding all these years...

The Island Ice Company at 2308-2310 Encinal was on the opposite corner of the Park Street Hotel, right next to the South Park Street station. Now the Fire Station fills that spot. In the 1880s, there was a livery stable on the north side of Encinal (between Park and Oak), and a horse-shoer opposite. A sign-maker also worked here for a while, and for many years in the early 1900s it housed a barber, B.F. Allbright. Now a parking lot for a restaurant is at this address.

Hartwig Swanson was very active in community life. He was—among other things—a charter member, and in 1933 vice president of the Kiwanis Club; a member of the Oak Grove Blue Lodge Masonic Temple; a member of the Elks No. 1015; and Director of the organization that built the Alameda Hotel. He was also past president of the Swedish Society of Oakland and the Swedish Patriotic League. Thus, his well-being was of interest to the Swedish community at the time. It was even reported in the Swedish newspaper *VESTKUSTEN* in 1924 that he received a severe bump to the head in a car-accident.

William B. Wilshire married Jennie E. in San Francisco, survived the 1906 earthquake, and continued to operate

his business. In 1918 the telephone directories only list the business, and in 1919 only Mrs. Wm B. Wilshire is listed, indicating William had died. The business is no longer listed after 1923.

Henry Gaylord Wilshire tried (and failed) for congress in Los Angeles for the Socialist Labor Party, moved to New York and tried (and failed) for Attorney General, moved to London, and back to L.A. He died on a trip to New York in 1921. Wilshire Boulevard is still exists in L.A.

William Lamson continued his cash carrier business, under varying names. He died in 1912. The business survived until the 1970s.

William Patterson of NCR pursued his business with single-minded ruthlessness. For instance, he would take competitor's machines in trade and resell them in stores next to target competitors', for slash-base prices. He pursued marketing, and was the first businessman to train sales staff on consistent practices.

Incidentally, Patterson took on a young salesman, Thomas Watson, who suggested electric, rather than mechanical, cash registers would be the way of the future. For this criticism, Patterson burned Watson's desk, indicating he was "fired". Watson went to a competitor, which was renamed to IBM, and became that company's CEO for 40 years.

Mechanical cash registers like ours have been replaced by electronic ones, communicating instantly and wirelessly details about the transactions to the accounting and inventory databases. In the future, any tampering or mistakes with cash by clerks will be eliminated by machines that do not accept cash at all. Will the clerk still be called a cashier? Will they still "ring" up your sales?



*Hartwig Swanson delivering ice, 1907.
Image: Alameda Museum. Donated by
Mrs. H. S. (Signe) Swanson, 1959.*



FROM THE COLLECTION

The Heyday of the Hatpin

by Valerie Turpen

HATPINS BELONGING TO FASHIONABLE LADIES of

Alameda are displayed in a case with an assortment of other important wardrobe accessories—purses, hair combs, and fans. The hatpin, was originally crafted by hand to hold wimples and veils in place in medieval times. During this era lengths of cloth were worn about the head and neck because it was unseemly for a married woman to show her hair.

In 1832 a machine was invented in America which could mass-produce the pins which made the product affordable to most women. Styles changed and bonnets that were tied under the chin gave way to hats affixed to the hair by a hatpin. The heyday of the hatpin was between the 1880s and 1920s. Late in the 19th century the popularity of the hatpin soared as music hall actresses like Lillian Russell and Lilly Langtry wore large elaborate hats pinned to their tresses. The hats became larger and more lavish, adorned with plumes of exotic birds, if not the entire bird itself. The Audubon Society was formed at this time in response to the wholesale slaughter of native birds for use in the millinery trade.



Actress Lillian Russell wearing a hat likely requiring several hatpins. Image: Wikipedia.

Hunters had devastated more than 60 species of birds to supply feathers for hats.

The extravagances of the hatpin was determined by your wealth. The mass produced white or black bead on a pin was the basic "working girl" hatpin. Many expensive hatpins were made by jewelers in gold or silver. Precious and semi-precious stones, porcelain, bone, ivory, and shell were also used to decorate the pieces. Hatpins spanned many styles including Baroque, Greek Revival, Egyptian Revival, Oriental influence, Arts & Crafts, Art Nouveau and even Art Deco. Of course ladies began to collect hatpin holders and boxes to adorn their dressing tables and store the pins.

By the turn of the 20th century, women joined the public workforce, spent more time unescorted on city streets, and were even demanding the right to vote. Hence other than its use as an attractive accessory, the hatpin served as a device for women to defend themselves. There was a particular concern they might be used by suffragettes as weapons.

Diverse hatpins in the museum collection.

Across America, ordinances were being passed requiring hatpin tips to be covered so as not to injure people accidentally. In Illinois in 1910 the papers reported, "It is a misdemeanor for any woman to wear a long hatpin in public places in Chicago. Any woman caught wearing one is liable to arrest and a fine of \$50". In Boston in 1913 it was declared "The wearing by women of hatpins that are a menace to the traveling public must stop in Massachusetts, is the conclusion of a legislative committee which recommended today the adoption of a law, making it a misdemeanor for a woman to permit the pointed end of a pin to protrude more than half an inch from the side of her hat, unless the end is covered with some device rendering it harmless".

The *San Francisco Call* reported in 1913 "War is Waged on Hatpins". Concern had also risen in Europe to the danger of hatpins. In Austria women were required to wear shielded pins on trains. The state railways asked conductors to compel such offenders to leave the car immediately when the hatpin "threatened to be dangerous to the other passengers". If they refuse, "the conductor will call in the police to remove them by force".

However, not everyone was worried by women's sudden assertive power. President Theodore Roosevelt remarked that he loved the "exhibition of strenuous life" by women who used their pins, saying that "No man, however courageous he may be, likes to face a resolute woman with a hatpin in her hand."

As fashioned changed once again the hatpin became a thing of the past. WWI brought in the military-style cap and by the 1920s hemlines went up, women's hair was bobbed, and hats diminished in size. Cloche hats fitting tightly to the head eliminated the need for a pin. Today the hatpin has become a collector's item often adorning a dresser as a memory of great-grandmother's time.





FREE **Local Lore Shines at the Library 2019**
Slide-talks on Alameda History and Architecture
Stafford Room, Main Library • Oak Street at Lincoln Avenue

Tuesday, June 11, 2019, 6:30 - 7:30 pm
How Railroads Shaped Alameda

Grant Ute, co-author *Alameda by Rail* and Associate Archivist, Western Railway Museum (WRM).

Passengers leave the Alameda ferry mole to board Southern Pacific electric trains, 1911. Image: Vernon J. Sappers Collection, WRM.



Tuesday, July 16, 2019, 6:30 - 7:30 pm
An Undiscovered Alameda Neighborhood, Post Street: Six Short Blocks Long on History



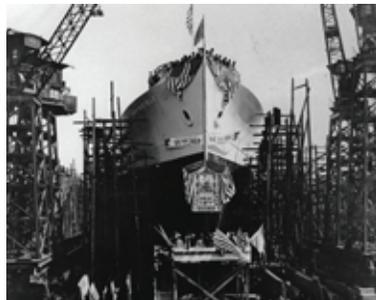
Robin Seeley, Post Street resident, retired attorney, and volunteer walk leader with San Francisco City Guides.

'Gold Rush Era' cottage on Post Street. Image: Robin Seeley.

Tuesday, August 13, 2019, 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Industry in Alameda, A Legacy of Enterprise and Innovation

Woody Minor, author *A Home in Alameda* and other books, walks, lectures, and articles about local history, culture, and architecture.

The freighter "Invincible" was launched in 1918 from Bethlehem's Alameda yard. Image: Alameda Museum.



WANTED

Audio Visual Tech

6:00 – 8:30 pm

4th Thursday, April – August

Call Valerie at 510-522-3734

Be a Goodwill Ambassador

The museum is on the look out for personable men and women who would like to put in a minimum of just two and a half hours a month to help out.



It's not hard to be a docent. It's fun to meet and greet people at our museum and enlighten them about our island city. The position also includes helping visitors purchasing items in our gift shop which is currently full of goodies.



SHIFTS AVAILABLE

1st Saturday
second shift

2nd Saturday
1st shift

3rd Saturday
2nd shift

1st Sunday & 3rd Sunday



CONTACT

Evelyn Kennedy
volunteer@alamedamuseum.org
510-504-5612



Alameda High School Gets a History Lesson

by Dennis Evanosky

MIKE O'MALLEY'S Alameda High School United States history class visited the museum on Valentine's Day for a tour and to work on an assignment. The students were preparing photo essays that involved museum artifacts and their stories.

Museum president emeritus Dennis Evanosky introduced the students to Alameda History. He touched on three topics: the Native American presence here, the role that Alameda's three railroads played in the city's history and the continuing presence of the maritime industry.

Evanosky explained the importance of the museum's Native American artifacts and of the shellmounds that Alameda's first residents built and used as burial grounds. He also explained the important roles that the city's railroads and marinas played,



AHS students and teacher Mike O'Malley learned a few things about Alameda history during a visit to the museum on Valentine's Day. Image: Dennis Evanosky.

especially the presence of the Alaska Packers and the various shipbuilders.

After Evanosky's talk the students fanned out to visit and photograph the museum's artifacts and displays. They showed special interest in the Native American artifacts, the photographs and paintings that touched on the maritime industry,

as well as World War I and how the people lived here in the past. O'Malley assigned the students broad topics based on the eras of American history. The students used their Smartphone cameras to photograph the museum's artifacts and asked questions to firm up information about their assigned photo essays.

Did You Know?

Estate sales and donations to the museum gift shop are two of our best sources of funding for museum programs.

Is a house in your neighborhood being prepped for sale? Let your neighbor or their realtor know about the museum sales team.

Did you have a yard sale and you have leftovers? Donate them to the museum gift shop.

For more information about our services call 510-521-1233.



Estate sales team members Gene Calhoun, Margy Silver, Ross Dileo, and Virgil Silver wrapping up the first sale of the year. We're off to a good start. Image: Valerie Turpen.



VOLUNTEERS: ALAMEDA MUSEUM & MEYERS HOUSE & GARDEN



- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Margaretha Augustine | Evelyn Kennedy |
| Margie Benko | Julie Kennedy |
| Ginnie Boscacci | Carole King |
| Gene Calhoun | Mary Lou Kurtz |
| Dora Calhoun | Jessica Lindsey |
| Janine Carr | Gayle Macaitis |
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| Gail Howell | Helen Wittman |
| Charles Kahler | Joe Young |
| Ashok Katdare | |

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
Evelyn Kennedy
volunteer@alamedamuseum.org
510-504-5612

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

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for over 65 Years

New Membership

- A one-time pass to the Meyers House

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- Free admission to the lecture series
- The *Alameda Museum Quarterly*
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For more information
alamedamuseum.org • 510-521-1233

Join any time. Dues based on calendar year.
 Renewals after September will continue through
 the next year. Tax I.D. #94-2464751 

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

- \$30 Adult
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 (one payment only, for life of the member)

**Person who resides with a paid Adult Member at same address, also gets voting privilege.*

To pay by credit card visit alamedamuseum.org

Make check payable to: Alameda Museum
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Meyers House and Garden Alameda Museum

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**ALAMEDA
MUSEUM**

2324 Alameda Avenue
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The Heyday of the Hatpin
- *Alameda High School Gets a
History Lesson*



*The Museum is saddened to
announce that three long time and
faithful docents and volunteers
have passed away.*

*Carla McGrogan, Charles Daly
and Virginia Jones
will be dearly missed.*

*Our condolences to their
family and friends.*

The Alameda Museum Board of Directors



ALAMEDA MUSEUM
2324 Alameda Avenue

HOURS

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

4th Saturdays
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

(Last tour at 3:00 pm)

alamedamuseum.org

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

Alameda Museum
2324 Alameda Avenue, Alameda, CA 94501
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510-521-1233

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Alameda Sun