

Alameda Museum

Quarterly



ALAMEDA'S HIDDEN HISTORY

From the new book *Bay Farm Island: A Hidden History of Alameda* by Eric J. Kos and Dennis Evanosky

The Ratto family gathered for this photograph on their Bay Farm Island farm about 1920. The Rattos were among the third wave of Bay Farm settlers. The first wave began in the 1850s with the arrival of Northern European farmers like Asaph Cleveland. The Portuguese followed about 20 years later and the Italians, like the Ratto family, were members of the third and final wave to arrive around the turn of the 19th to the 20th century. Image: Ratto Family.

NATIVE AMERICANS called Bay Farm Island "Wind Whistle Island," an isolated spot that originally held some 1,600 acres of marshland and 230 acres of upland.

Don Antonio Peralta did not include these acres in the sale to W.W. Chipman and Gideon Aughinbaugh. In fact the maps show Antonio's lands do not include Bay Farm Island. Many maps of Alameda followed suit and exclude the place.

Bay Farm's first Northern European settlers were squatters: Powell E. McDonell, Benjah Benedict, William S. Lea and Asaph Cleveland. McDonell may have been Bay

Farm's first settler. Benedict, Cleveland and McDonell were professional farmers. Cleveland and Benedict were Vermont natives. Cleveland was said to bear a close resemblance to George Washington.

Alameda County made Bay Farm Island part of Alameda Township on October 2, 1854. This marks the first time the place name Bay Farm Island ("the place referred to as the Bay Farm") appeared in an official document. From the start asparagus was the major cash crop. An 1875 advertisement for the sale of reclaimed marshland

Continued on page 2...

Hidden History . . . Continued from page 1

mentioned asparagus (and nothing else). By 1891 the *Argus* newspaper was reporting that Bay Farm Island's principal industry was raising asparagus.

In 1854 W.W. Chipman and Gideon Aughinbaugh built a bridge to Bay Farm, as well as a roadway across the marshland and sloughs toward San Leandro, the Alameda County seat at the time. They dismantled the bridge in 1860 and transported its remains to the West End where they used them to build Peralta Wharf near today's Encinal High School.

Henry Bowman arrived in the 1860s. We know little about him other than he moved to El Dorado County in 1878; in 1882 he sold his Bay Farm property to Benedict. We do know that Captain Anderson operated three boats: the *Bonita*, *Caroline* and *Jenny Gray*.

Daniel Swett purchased 10 acres of upland from Benedict and built a home for himself and his wife, Sarah. He listed himself as a "capitalist" in the city directories. We know from the first assessment records in 1872 that the original squatters Benedict, Cleveland and McDonell each owned 60 acres; Bowman, about 20 acres and Lea's widow, 15 acres. The Lea property was at the western tip of the upland island, followed by the Benedict and McDonell farms. Cleveland's farm stood on the island's northeast corner; Bowman's on the southeast corner.

With the 1870s came four key developments:

- The first major reclamation of the marshland
- The introduction of commercial oyster farming
- The construction of a permanent bridge to San Leandro
- The rebuilding of Chipman and Aughinbaugh's road to San Leandro



W. W. CHIPMAN

Alameda co-founders William Worthington Chipman, pictured, and Gideon Aughinbaugh's land grant did not include modern-day Bay Farm Island. Image: Alameda Museum.

Reclamation of the marshland began in 1872 when Amos Mecartney arrived. Mecartney had not only had "seen the Elephant," but made it a success. The gold miner, who joined both the California and British Columbia gold rushes brought his wealth to Alameda in 1872. He purchased 300 Bay Farm Island acres at \$1 an acre. He then hired some 100 Chinese (some sources say Japanese) laborers to build the drainage ditches that transformed marshland to farmland.

He lived here with his wife, Dolly. They raised five daughters on Bay Farm Island: Pearl, Meda, Myrtle, Mignon and Leta.

In 1874 when Amos learned that the old Tivoli Opera House was about to be razed, he arranged to purchase all the building's undamaged wood and have it delivered to his Bay Farm property using Anderson's packet *Bonita*. He built a two-story home shaped like an octagon complete with a bell tower. It was said that the furnishings in the home cost Amos a whopping \$25,000 (several million dollars in today's money.)

Oystermen began establishing oyster beds in the 1870s. The Mulford



BENJAH BENEDICT

Benjah Benedict counted himself among one of Bay Farm Island's first Northern European settlers. Image: Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Room.

Company beds extended from Bay Farm Island's south shore to today's Oakland International Airport. Oyster pirates plagued the enterprise until the state of California established "fish patrols." Jack London took a job as a member of these patrols. His boat *The Starlight* was swamped and washed up on Bay Farm Island while he was patrolling the oyster beds. Pollution from Standard Oil's operations on the West End and later from Oakland's airport irreparably damaged the beds.

Among the other settlers in the 1870s were George Anderson, Adrian Hamlin, J.E. Ellis, Daniel Swett, Thomas Miranda and John Titlow. Strangely George Anderson and Thomas Miranda were brothers, Portuguese emigrants from the Azores. George decided to take the last name of captain of the ship they traveled on. The brothers were the first of a growing community of Portuguese who farmed here. By the 1890s the list included the Duarte, Flores, de Souza and Silva families.

In 1874 a restaurant and saloon "The Beach House" opened on the Lea property on the western tip of the upland. The place became a

Continued on page 3 . . .



Hidden History . . . *Continued from page 2*

popular resort and stayed open for about 10 years.

An 1890s syndicate wanted to buy the entire island to create a new city. The Mecartney and Miranda families refused to sell.

In 1892 the Salt Lake Railroad Company wanted to establish a transcontinental railroad terminus on Bay Farm Island. The Mecartney family reportedly refused the company's offer of \$90,000 for 600 acres.

At first children on Bay Farm attended Wilson School on Van Buren Street in Alameda. They made the daily trip by wagon. In October 1882 Amos Mecartney offered to build a

school on Bay Farm if the Alameda school trustees would provide a teacher. The offer was accepted and construction began in December on a one-room school house on the northern end of the upland. The school opened in February 1883; dwindling enrollment forced closure seven or eight years later.

1902 saw the replacement of the old timber bridge. By then most of the pioneer settlers had died or moved away. Italian farmers moved in and joined the Portuguese who by this time included Mike Silva, Thomas de Souza; Manuel and Joseph Miranda and the Duarte brothers.

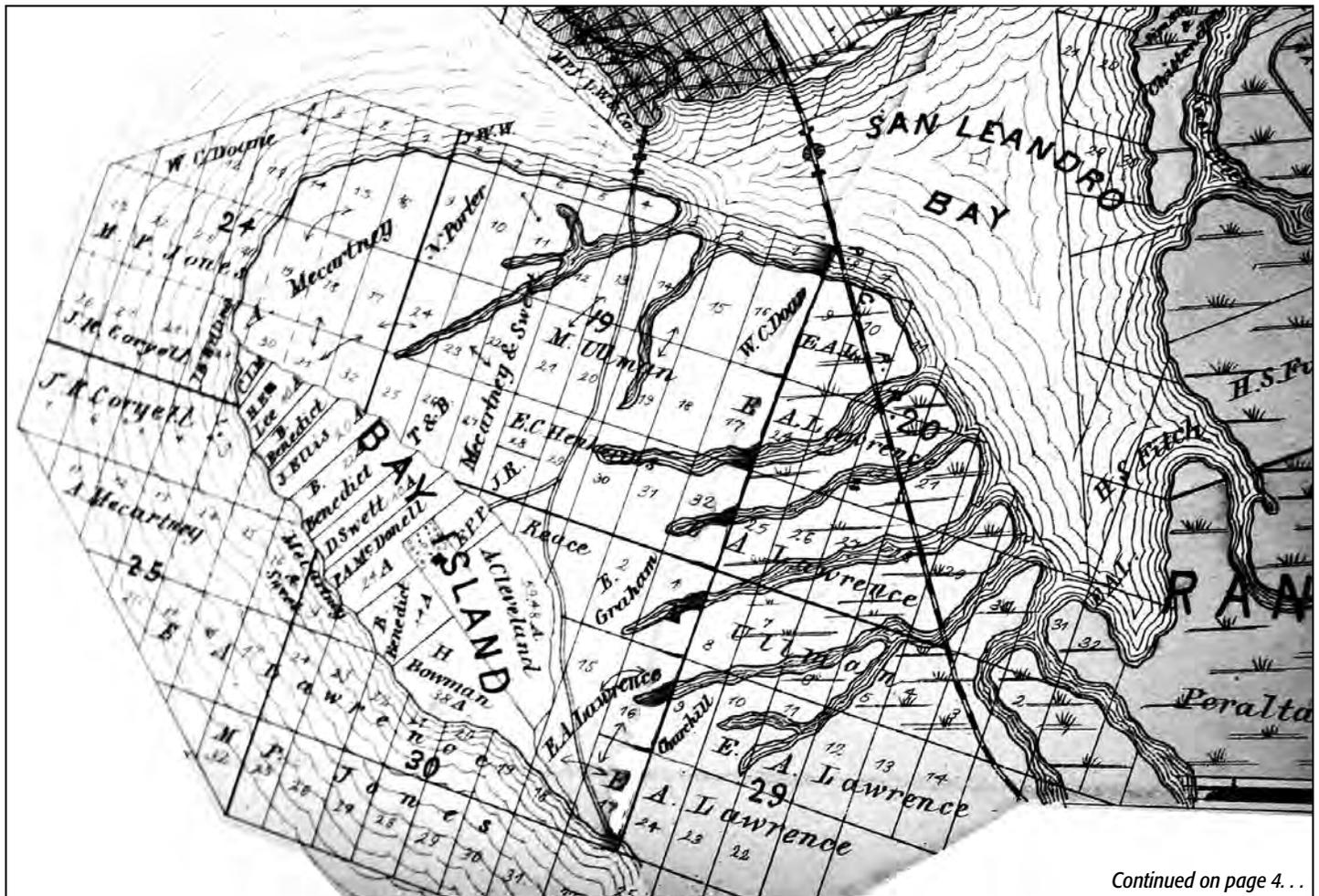
The Italian newcomers included Thomas and Vittorio Lagoria; Giacomo

and Domenico Lavagetto; Domingo Parodi; Carlo Cotella; Antonio Ferro; and Antone, Andrew and Joe Ratto.

While these families were farming all of the uplands, the Stone brothers, Edgar and Albert, formed the E.B. & A.L. Stone Company—a precursor to the later developers. They purchased and brought under cultivation the tract that now houses the Chuck Corica Golf Complex. This prevented the frequent flooding that occurred there.

By 1920 the brothers owned more than one thousand of Bay Farm's one thousand six-hundred acres of marshland. Amos Mecartney's family owned the rest. In 1914, Dollie Mecartney sold all but ten acres to A.M. Parsons.

Thompson and West's 1878 map depicts the uplands surrounded by marsh along with the names and initials of the property owners. Image: Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Room.



Continued on page 4 . . .



Hidden History . . .Continued from page 3



By 1920, developers Andrew and Edgar Stone owned more than 1,000 of Bay Farm's 1,600 acres of marshland. They built homes on the edge of the marsh, including those depicted here, likely on Maitland Drive. Image: Alameda Museum.

Four years later, Parsons sold the land to the Alameda City Land Company. The company planned to build a 300-acre subdivision called "Alameda Acres" on reclaimed marshland north of the uplands. Around 1920, the company sunk six surplus destroyers to act as a bulkhead along a deteriorating dike.

On April 20, 1932, fire destroyed the Mecartney mansion

One by one the farming families left. By the summer of 1972 forty-two acres were all that remained of the truck farms: sixteen acres owned by the Silva family and twenty-six acres owned by the Ratto family.

Ben Ratto ("Benny" to his friends), who came from Alpicella, Italy, in 1930 at the age of 10, also said he was set to sell. In 1936 he dropped out of Alameda High School to take over the Ratto farm, which was located on the old Lea property at the western tip of the upland, when his father died.

Ben's Uncle Giacomo came to Bay Farm Island after World War I. He had served in the Italian army.

A July 3, 1980, *San Francisco Examiner* article reported that Ben was still farming four acres of land. His crops varied with demand. In

the 1980s they included collards, mustard greens, spinach, beets and lettuce. He remembered focusing on celery, potatoes and carrots in the 1930s and radishes and greens in the '40s and '50s.

"There were nine farms on 220 acres when I started in the 1930," Ben told the *Examiner*. "A few houses were built in 1923 over on Maitland and Garden roads," he said. "Maybe 500 people lived here (then) at the most."

He and his wife, Teresa, had lived on Garden Road since 1952. They were still living there when he spoke to the *Examiner*. He remembered the plots of land he farmed over the years, including seventeen acres off Maitland Road that he had recently lost to developers.

"I've been saying this is the last year for the last three or four years," Ratto said. The Ratto farm was demolished in 1986. By then Ron Cowan was busy transforming Bay Farm into the development we know today as Harbor Bay.



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Please contact the
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THANKS TO OUR HERITAGE PARTNER

Alameda Sun



From the President's Podium *by Valerie Turpen*

Already 2019 has ended and we have moved into 2020. I have served one year as museum president and have learned so many new things. In November I presented our yearly report to the Alameda City Council (visible on our website under News and Resources/Publication Archive/Presentations.) The city supports the museum with a yearly stipend for archiving historic city records. This includes block books, assessment records, and records from the fire and police departments, schools, and more. The council generously approved our request for 2020 and we will be working to broaden our outreach to our community.

Ballots were mailed to museum members and the votes were counted by The League of Women Voters to seat five new board members. We are welcoming Lynn Houlihan, Melissa Marchi, Robert Matz, Sarah Veters, and Melissa Warren-Hagaman. I am very excited about the knowledge and experience they will be contributing during their terms. We met January 25 to start on projects for the upcoming year.

Thanks to Myrna van Lunteren, Vice President, the Imelda Merlin book *Alameda: A Geographical History* is now available on the museum website under News and Resources/Publication Archive. This book was created by Merlin in 1964 as a college thesis. It was later published by the Friends of the Alameda Library as a fundraising tool. Her original manuscript is housed in the Alameda Library reference section. Although many things have changed in Alameda and the world in general since its creation, the book remains a great resource for historical data about the place we call Alameda. The online version was formatted and uploaded by Myrna as a free resource for researchers. See page 7 for more of the story.

Also handled by Myrna was a grant application to the Alameda Rotary Club. The Alameda Museum was awarded a \$500 grant to use toward digitizing our museum catalog and images collection. The Season of Giving Award Reception was held December 3 at the Elks Lodge. Presentations were given by the 23 Alameda groups receiving grants (page 14). Thank you Rotary Club!

The museum and Meyers House was closed as usual during the holiday season. However, that does not mean we are idle behind the scenes. Curator, George Gunn was busy in the museum warehouse. Shelving was modified to better house our large leather-bound newspaper collection. These books are very heavy and are now easier to retrieve for research. Additional shelving was installed and large framed images were hung in more accessible locations. A number of archived items were added to exhibits in the galleries.

We sold out of the Bay Farm Island book and received a new supply. Our other Alameda history books have also been replenished at the front desk. We have two estate sales on the horizon—watch for announcements and new merchandise coming to the gift shop. At the Meyers House state required inspections have taken place and systems around the grounds were checked for the Winter weather.



Looking forward to the year ahead!



Valerie Turpen
President, Alameda Museum

At our January 25 meeting the museum's new board members took a tour through the galleries and warehouse to assess our work ahead. Pictured above (front row) Lynn Houlihan, Myrna van Lunteren, Melissa Marchi, Melissa Warren-Hagaman, (back row) Valerie Turpen, Robert Matz, and Sarah Veters.

Alameda in the News

What was Happening in the Island City

San Francisco Call: August 7, 1898

FREE OYSTER BEDS ON THE ALAMEDA SHORE

They Were Accidentally Discovered by a Small Boy Hunting for Clams

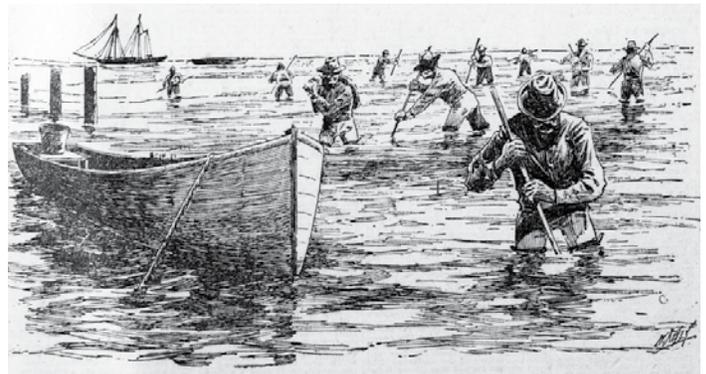
Among many other blessings California can now boast of a public oyster bed, absolutely free to everybody. Go over and help yourself. You will find the bivalves as fine as any you ever tasted and be perfectly sure that they are fresh. This oyster bed is about two or three miles below Bay Farm Island on the Alameda shore. There are two ways of reaching it. One is to take a boat and row around Bay Farm Island; the other is to cross the creek in Alameda, walk down the road a few hundred feet and then cut over the marsh to the bay shore.

There will be no trouble about finding the place, provided you get there at low tide, for the surface of the water will be covered with people, all bent on obtaining the luscious shell fish from its resting place on the bottom of the bay. The existence of this oyster bed has only been known for about two weeks and during that interval it has been most liberally patronized. It was "discovered" by a small boy who went out in that direction to dig clams. It so happened that he was sent out on the day of the big low tide and consequently could go farther from shore than usual.

Of course he found plenty of clams and then wandered far out in search of larger ones. In a pool about twelve inches deep he unexpectedly spied a "bunch" of shells. At first he thought they were clams and proceeded to raise them. On succeeding in this he was more surprised to find that they were oysters and of a good size.

It is needless to say that he threw away his clams and filled his bucket with oysters. This was an easy matter at the time, as the tide being so very low he had only to pick them up from the puddles. When he got to Alameda with his oysters he found on counting them that he had nearly 200. The next day he and another boy went out together and brought back about 400. The boys sold these and told people where they got them. Then the "rush" to the free oyster beds began.

At first a number of people were inclined to look upon the oyster beds as entirely natural, forgetting that the bivalves were much too large to be of the native California variety. Investigation, however, showed that many years ago the same company that now has oyster beds at Alvarado attempted to grow them off the shore of Bay Farm Island. For some reason the venture was not a success and after a loss of several thousand dollars



Fishing for oysters on the new free oyster beds. Off the shore of Bay Farm Island, Alameda. Image: San Francisco Call.

spent for Eastern oyster "seed" the beds were abandoned. It was said at the time that the larger portion of the young oysters died in a few days, and that the others absolutely refused to grow any bigger than a 10-cent piece. It was impossible to find any reason for this, as the bed only a few miles farther away did splendidly. One Eastern expert gave it as his reason that the proper nourishment was lacking in the water. Which may or may not have been the reason.

At any rate, there are plenty of good oysters over there now that are not much trouble to get. A number of the oyster fishers who have gone there recently have been fully prepared for the work, even to a genuine oyster grapple. Thus equipped they have only to sit in their sail boat and at their leisure work over the sides.

The greater number of people, however, fish with all sorts of things. On the average the oysters lie beneath from eighteen to twenty-four inches of water. Since large numbers of people have been fishing the latter figure is the more nearly correct. And it naturally follows that the oysters will be taken from the shallow places first, so that the average depth will constantly increase until it will be impossible to obtain any without the proper equipment.

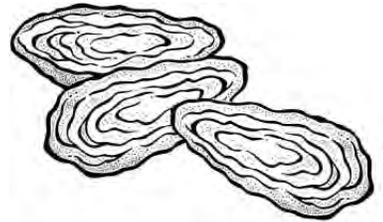
One day last week there were at least 200 people fishing for the mollusks on these public oyster beds. Some came in row

Continued on page 7 . .

Free Oysters . . .Continued from page 6

boats and some in large sail boats. These were anchored in convenient places and produced a most animated effect as they bobbed merrily about on the surface of the waves. Some of the fishers used fire shovels, some used hoes and a number put the garden rakes into service. These latter proved most efficacious in removing the bivalves, but had the disadvantage of crushing the shells and so ruining large numbers. Without the proper oyster grapples or tongs it is next to impossible to fish from a boat. As a consequence most of the people waded around in water about waist deep, and after tearing the oysters loose

from the bottom with a stick or hook reach down with their hands and lift them out. Of course this is a wet job, but those who go after oysters do not mind it. In fact, they rather seem to enjoy it, as at low tide the water is warm and not at all unpleasant. And, besides, they are getting the oysters free of all cost from what is, most likely, the only public oyster bed in the country.



Revived History Classic Available Online *by Judith Lynch*

ALAMEDA: A GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY, has jumpstarted many love matches with local lore and has been a significant reference source since it was first issued in 1977. Now it has been rejuvenated by the Alameda Museum for the electronic age, and many astonishing facts and ideas await readers, whether newcomers or longtime natives!

Background: The author was Imelda Binneboese Merlin; the book was her M.A. thesis from UC Berkeley. After her husband, Naval Officer Paul, died during World War II, she enrolled in geography to learn how property is used and valued. "I knew that land was not just a pile of dirt!" she joked during an interview.



IMELDA MERLIN

Her manually-typewritten manuscript was completed in 1964. Because Mrs. Merlin was an active Friends of the Library volunteer; she donated it to them.

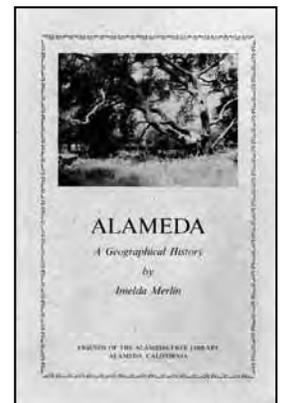
It was prepared for publication by the mother of local author-historian Woody Minor, Betty. She used a then innovative device, a Selectric typewriter with drop-in font balls. First published in 1977, it was fondly nicknamed "the green Bible," testament to its low-key production values. The volume was an important fundraiser for decades for the Friends. More than 6,000 copies were sold, and a reference copy was donated to each Alameda school library.

Retiring by nature and largely unheralded, Mrs. Merlin died in 2016, two clicks short of a century. I interviewed her a few years earlier and then spoke at the Home of Truth memorial before her remains went

to Iowa for burial: "Alameda history has lost its founding 'mother.' Her thoroughly researched text, comprehensive footnotes, maps, and diagrams provided a foundation for understanding how the Island city developed, grew, and changed: Examples: Alameda only became an island in 1902, when the tidal canal severed us from Oakland. Extensive land fill almost doubled island land mass, providing sites for South Shore and other developments. Details about steam railroad routes explain the enigmatic "station" signs embedded in sidewalks and median strips along Lincoln and Encinal-Central Avenues.

New Life: Mrs. Merlin's Ohio family presented Reference Librarian Beth Sibley with a yellowed onion-skin manuscript complete with Mrs. Merlin's hand-jotted revisions. That carbon duplicate was made available to the Alameda Museum. According to Museum President Valerie Turpen, "Our Vice President Myrna van Lunteren keyboarded and reformatted it, revising according to Mrs. Merlin's notes. The book provides a tremendous historic record that we thought should be available electronically. Find it posted under publications on the Museum website. Happy discoveries!"

Myrna van Lunteren felt that the book had too much value for people interested in the history of Alameda to remain out of print. When it became clear that the cost of a new edition was greater than anticipated sales, she created a digital version, after conferring with the Alameda Free Library and the Board of the Alameda Museum.



EARLY BRIDGES OF



BAY FARM: A toll bridge at this location was first built in 1854. Falling into disrepair, Alameda County constructed a second bridge in 1875. The image at the left shows one of the toll takers at his station. Image: Greta Dutcher. The third bridge at this location was a swing-type bridge (below).

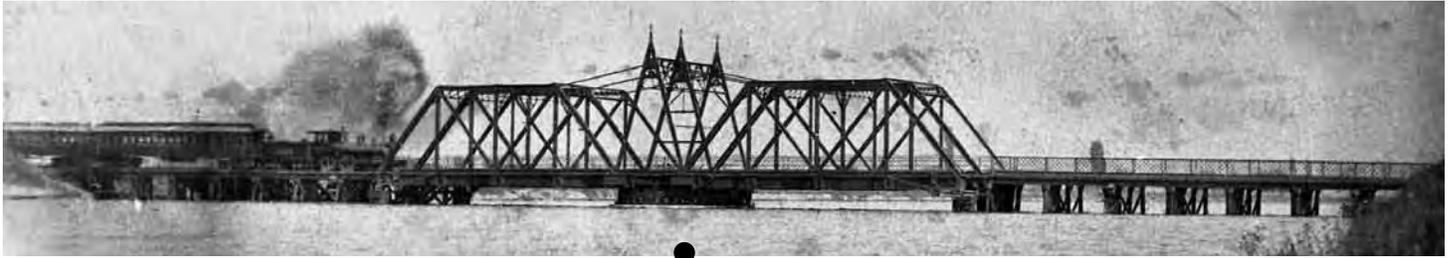
What travelers cross today between Alameda, Bay Farm and the peninsula beyond is a bascule bridge built in 1953. It is maintained by the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) as part of State Route 61.

WEBSTER STREET: The original bridge over San Antonio Creek was completed in 1871 connecting Alameda with Oakland. Both trains and vehicles crossed parallel (below). In 1898 it was replaced with a larger bridge with a revolving span to let maritime traffic through (below right, c. 1919). On January 7, 1926, the bridge's central span was hit by the steamer *Lancaster* and destroyed. It was rebuilt, but soon the days of the bridge were no more. The Posey Tube was completed in 1928. The second underwater tunnel the Webster Street Tube was not added until 1963.



ALAMEDA

Images: Alameda Museum except where noted.
Captions: Based on research by Dennis Evanosky.



FRUITVALE AVENUE: A bridge initially opened at this location in 1894, carrying rail traffic. Above a locomotive (c. 1890) can be seen approaching the crossing. The tracks were eventually removed and it was resurfaced to accommodate vehicles. Today, known as the Miller-Sweeney Bridge at Fruitvale Avenue it runs parallel to the vertical-lift rail bridge built in 1951 known as the Fruitvale Avenue Railroad Bridge.



The bridges at Park Street, High Street, and Fruitvale Avenue were built by the U.S. Government in exchange for permission and rights-of-way to dredge the channel making Alameda an island in 1902.

HIGH STREET: The Harrison Bridge Company built the iron-swing bridge in 1894 for \$24,747. On May 22, 1909 a fire destroyed the swing span and part of the approaches to the bridge, which was rebuilt in 1910.
Image: Online archives.

A bascule bridge replaced the span in 1939.



PARK STREET: The original Park Street bridge was completed in 1893. It had a wooden deck, a wrought iron through truss swing span and wooden trestle approach spans. Riding the bridge as it opened to let water traffic through, as well as fishing off the bridge, were popular activities. It was the first bridge built by the Army Corp of Engineers before the tidal canal was dredged.

The present bridge is a double-leaf bascule drawbridge designed by the County of Alameda Surveyors Office and constructed under the Federal WPA Program. It was opened in 1935 with a grand opening celebration that included a public wedding of a man from Oakland and woman from Alameda to symbolize the unity of the two cities with the building of the bridge.



FROM THE COLLECTION

How to Catch a Fly at the Corner Grocery

by Myrna van Lunteren

IN ANY HUMAN CULTURE THERE ARE OBJECTS which resemble objects we still use today and for which the usage is obvious. The knife, for instance, is always recognizable. On the other hand, there are objects for which the use at the time was obvious, but which now are mysterious.

One such object is in our museum. There is a mesh outer tube, slightly tapered to the top, held in place by two iron rings, and supported in an upright position by three legs, with the top ring open. The other ring however has a cone pointing upwards. The other ring however has a cone pointing upwards. It could be a wire mesh paper trash can, except that it has that cone. On close inspection, the top of the cone is not closed.

We are told that this is a fly trap, used circa 1904 by Hickman's Grocery Store located at the corner of Webster Street and Railroad Avenue (now Lincoln). It turns out that our fly trap is missing the lid that's supposed to go on top. The theory is that flies come up from the bottom, out through the hole in the cone, and then cannot find their way down again. Of course, without the missing lid any flies coming through the hole would just fly up and away. Our trap is also missing the metal bait tray that would have been filled with some foodstuffs attractive to flies, and placed under the cone.

This type of fly trap was called a Harper fly trap. The inventor was James M. Harper of El Paso, Illinois, and the patent was US No. 131,098 (9/3/1872), reissued 6,493 (6/22/1875). Exactly why El Paso, Illinois was a hotbed for fly trap inventions is not clear, but Jacob Hicks Burtis (jr.), a gunsmith, invented a modified fly trap, US patent No. 158,623 (1/12/1875). The two men evidently knew each other, living as they did in the same small town for a period. They were also both members of the Knights Templar fraternity in El Paso. In 1881 Burtis sold the rights

to his invention to Harper. Harper and his brother-in-law, Samuel Mitchell, were partners in the hardware firm of Mitchell, Harper & Company. A disastrous fire in 1882 destroyed the business, along with that of a number of other prominent businesses in the center of El Paso.

Harper moved to Peoria, and tried again, founding the Harper & Company grain commission in 1885, and in 1888 he joined with his nephew Robert Harper as Harper & Harper Company, grain dealers. By 1890 Robert had set up a second office in Des Moines and they had broadened the merchandise, although in 1891 the assets were confiscated to pay for loans. The company went through some further name changes, the Harper Manufacturing Company (1891) and again Harper & Company grain commission (1894), and, after moving to Chicago, the Harper Supply Company (1897-1928). Harper copyrighted many of his designs. He contracted with the Chicago Hardware Foundry Company to produce his iron goods. Our fly trap could have been made any time after 1875.

According to the donation record from 1954, this fly trap stood in front of Hickman's Grocery on Webster around 1904. Ignoring the obvious question of how then the donor obtained the fly trap, this location may be 1552 or 1546 Webster (then 7th Street). Hickman's Grocery was located on the corner of Webster and Railroad (Lincoln), in the Neptune Palace Hotel building, from 1907 to 1934 when Forrest Brown took over. In 1904, the corner spot may have been empty, after being occupied by the West End Grocery in 1892. Hickman was manager in Hauch's Grocery, a couple of doors down at 1546 Webster. Hauch had taken over the Holtz West End Grocery by 1892 and in 1903 the address was 1546 7th. After 1907 Hauch focused on his other store, at 1411 Park Street until his death in 1920.

The trio of buildings at 1544-1552 Webster were erected between 1875 and 1880 by William Holtz, born in Germany in 1829, and arrived in California in 1852. He first opened a grocery store in San Francisco. In 1875 he built the two-story building on the corner of Webster and Railroad and moved the grocery store in.

For a while the space above the store was a meeting hall, but later it was converted to a family residence. In 1879 he built the second building, and in 1880 he built the structure known as Holtz Hall, with space for two stores at ground floor.

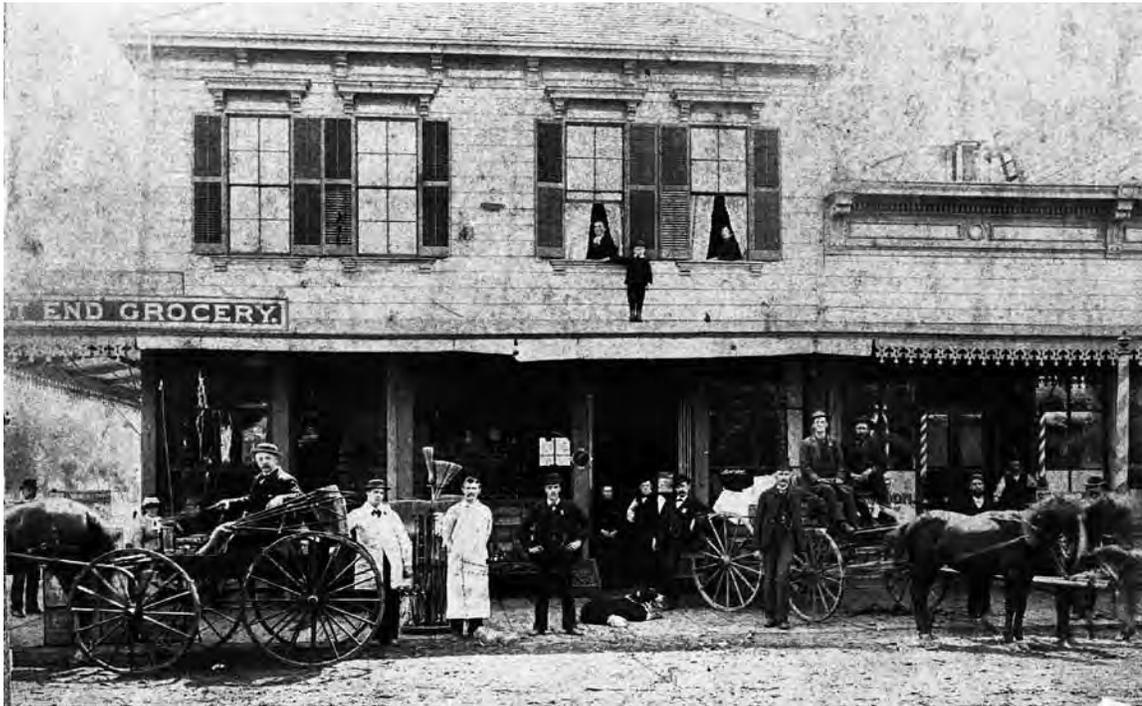


Above: Harper fly trap from the WM Frankfurth Catalog. Below: The Alameda Museum fly trap is missing its lid and base.



Continued on page 11. . .

Catch a Fly... *Continued from page 10*



William Holtz's West End Grocery at Webster Street and then Railroad Avenue. The display windows are open with clerks, patrons, wares, dogs, horses, and their droppings along the boardwalk in front—all elements that would call for a fly trap. Image: Alameda Museum.

In 1882 Holtz handed the grocery business over to his son and focused on real estate and insurance. He involved himself in public affairs: Board of Education (1872-1875), Justice of the Peace (1873-1875, 1888-1890), and Notary Public (1885-1893). He died of 'apoplexy' in the Alameda Sanatorium on August 8, 1899. Son Frederik Holtz however had already given up the business. He died in December 1899 of consumption. William's wife, Augusta died in 1903 and daughter Johanna, moved away from Alameda.

By 1892 the grocery business had been taken over by Halvor Hauch. Halvor Hauch came to California from Denmark in 1888. He met and married his wife Agnes around 1902, and they had three children. He operated the grocery store on Webster, as well as one on Park Street. Halvor became a well-known figure in the California State Grocery Association. Being the President of that organization in 1912, he made a trip that year to the East Coast on its behalf. Son Halvor Henry Hauch lied about his age to go to Europe in 1917 and join the WWI effort at age 16, and on return, joined his father in the Park Street location. Halvor Sr. died in 1920 and in 1922 the Webster location was handed over to the manager, George W. Hickman.

Halvor Henry Hauch's business continued on Park Street for a while, but the 1930 Census finds him with his mother and wife in Palo Alto, where he worked as a automobile salesman. He died in 1939.

George William Hickman's father George Hickman (1845-1927), hailed from Nova Scotia, came to California in

1877, and worked for Derby D & E Lumberyard. He started in Alameda as a lumberman, then worked his way up until he was a foreman in Oakland. He had married a young widow in Nova Scotia, Sarah Jane O'Brien. In Alameda, the family lived at 1713 Sherman Street.

George William Hickman (1877-1952) had joined H. Hauch and by 1903 he was managing the Webster Street grocery store at number 1546. By 1907 he had taken over the Webster store, and it was moved to the corner spot at number 1552.

George married Lillie May Sykes (1880-1953) and they had one daughter, Lorinda (1903-1970). By 1908 the young family had moved out of the Sherman house and moved into their own premises at 629 Haight Avenue. Lorinda married, and divorced, and lived all her life in Alameda. George William Hickman stayed in business until 1934, when he sold the business to Forrest Brown.

So, just around the time when Hickman took over the grocery business from Hauch in 1922, is when our Harper fly trap was moved from its location outside the store. The donation record does not say whether the lid came along and was lost later, or the fly trap was sitting outside because it had lost its lid. Luckily, the Alameda Museum does not allow food nor drink inside, and we do not have windows that open, so we do not need the fly trap to actually work.





Renowned Museum Speaker Honored with Scholarship Fund

by Judith Lynch

INTERIOR ARCHITECT, historian, and college professor Hank Dunlop was a Museum regular whose slide lectures on the Fernside estate, the A.A. Cohen family, vintage interiors, and statewide historic renovations captivated our audiences for years. Here is a chance to thank him for his distinguished career and his willingness to share his learning and his passions

Hank and the Cohens

Alfred Andrew Cohen was an enterprising attorney who bought 110 acres in Alameda after he and his wife Emilie were beguiled by the scenery during a picnic here. Their 1873 mansion, Fernside, was a multi-room villa designed by prominent architects Wright and Saunders with interiors planned by the Herter Brothers. The Herter's work at Fernside showcased their customary sumptuous furnishings, lavish appointments, and classical details.

According to Bruce, founder of Bradbury & Bradbury Wallpaper, "The Herters designed homes in New York for the Vanderbilts, the Goulds, and 'everybody who was anybody.'"

In the Bay Area, they decorated Nob Hill palaces for the Silver Bonanza Kings and the four Railroad Barons, In Alameda they were responsible for Fernside for A.A. Cohen, nicknamed Railroad Baron four and a half for his pioneering exploits with trains as early as 1864!"

Majestic Fernside was charred to cinders in 1897. The water supply was woefully inadequate; luckily the flames moved slowly so many of its contents were hauled off to safety. Obsessed with Fernside and the Cohen family for years, Hank prepared a story about the family and their estate for an antiques magazine. He gathered much information from the Cohen's insurance claims, public records, and family documents, and relatives.

Professor Dunlop

Hank launched his academic endeavors by joining Victorian Alliance SF co-founder Judith Lynch to teach historic architecture for UC Berkeley Extension. He joined the California College of the Arts faculty and taught there from 1979–2012, chaired the Interiors Department, and was

anointed Professor Emeritus. There he was renowned for mentoring both colleagues and students, with his customary generosity of spirit.

Dunlop as "Clerk of the Works"

Hank employed his talent for painstaking research and his vast knowledge of vintage interiors in supervising many major restoration ventures: Ahwahnee Hotel, Yosemite; Larkin House, Monterey; Haas-Lilienthal House, San Francisco; David Glass House, San Ramon; and Antonio Peralta and Cohen Bray Houses in Oakland are among his many achievements.

His most arduous task was historic consultant for the restoration of the Leland Stanford house in Sacramento, a job that cost \$22 million and took 14 years to complete. Stanford a railroad baron, served as California governor, and founded Stanford University. Hank's demanding responsibilities for this reclamation included supervising the renovation of furniture, wallpapers, draperies, and other vintage paraphernalia depicting the life of the family. Hank flung himself into this project with his usual zeal and refreshing enthusiasm. Of course, Hank gleefully brought the project to life at the Alameda Museum as a well-received slide talk.

His Humor Remembered

Hank's sister Louise recalled that his passion for interior design began when he was growing up with four sisters. Hank used his paper route money to buy furniture for their doll-house, but would not allow the girls to disturb the arrangements he made to the interior!

Joshing about his tendency to overwhelm audiences with images, during the introduction to his Alameda Museum talk on 19th and 20th Century interiors in 2005, Hank laughed, "Rather than my 'usual' onslaught of 10,000 slides, I will flash

Continued on page 13. . .



This American Renaissance Revival dining table and chairs graced a room at Fernside and was saved from the conflagration. It was sold at auction and current whereabouts unknown. Image: Pinterest.



Smiling Hank is in the center flanked left by Michael Bodziner Principal, head of Gensler HR, and former CCA student, and by Arthur Gensler, firm founder. Image: Jared Elizares, CCA Architecture Division.

only a couple of hundred pictures of existing period interiors. Short and sweet and fun, I hope."

His Early Profession

Hank began his distinguished career at Gensler, the global design and architecture firm, where he helped develop their Interior Design Department. Among his earliest successes was a forerunner of many major projects to come. Undaunted by the scale of the job, he designed

interiors for seven floors of the Bank of America world headquarters at 555 California Street, San Francisco.

In recognition of his tenure with them plus his other attainments, Gensler honored Hank Dunlop recently by contributing to the Interior Design Scholarship Fund at the California College of the Arts (CCA).

Contributions to the CCA Hank Dunlop Scholarship Fund may be

made online at givecampus.com/campaigns/8206/donations/new.

Or mail a check to:
Carolyn Salcido, Advancement
California College of the Arts
1111 Eighth Street
San Francisco, CA 94100

Be sure to mention Hank Dunlop's name when you make a donation!

A Personal Note from Judith

Hank and I did several different classes and presentations together. I think the most memorable one was a session at Filoli Historic House and Garden, Woodside. We had half a hundred students, and it was a gorgeous spring day there. However, Hank and I were so relentless that we did not let the students out even for lunch. We made them eat bag lunches in their seats and watch at least 40 trays of slides. . . .



HEY YOU!



Do you like meeting new people and learning about Alameda history?

- Be a docent at the Alameda Museum or Meyers House.
- Greet newcomers and inspire zest for Alameda's rich and fantastic history.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Tell your friends and family, the more the merrier. To get involved call Evelyn 510-504-5612.

ANNOUNCEMENT: ALAMEDA LEGACY HOME TOUR 2020

At the Alameda Museum board meeting on January 25, a list of duties and projects in need of attention in the upcoming year was discussed. The list is extensive and it became apparent that our participation as co-host of the Alameda Legacy Home Tour would make it very difficult to accomplish in-house tasks. After a long discussion, a decision was made to withdraw from participating as co-host of the Home Tour.

We have taken into consideration that the Home Tour was created by AAPS in 1973 and the Home Tour is the major fundraiser for the organization.

The Alameda Museum and AAPS have worked together many years organizing the Home Tour and we have enjoyed our role in making it a successful event. We encourage all those interested in Alameda's history and the preservation of historic homes to be involved in planning and executing the tour to be held September 27, 2020. To volunteer visit alameda-legacy-home-tour.org.

Won't You Buy My Valentine?

Esther Howland was an artist and business-woman who was responsible for popularizing Valentine's Day greeting cards in America.

Esther was born in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1828. Her father operated S.A. Howland & Sons, the largest book and stationery store in the city. Her mother was known for the popular cookbook, *The New England Economical Housekeeper and Family Receipt Book*.

Shortly after graduating from Mount Holyoke College at the age of 19, Esther received a valentine from a business associate of her father's. At this time elaborate Valentine greeting cards were imported from Europe and not affordable to many Americans.

Determined that she could make a better valentine, she convinced her father to order supplies from New York City and England. She made a dozen samples which her salesman brother added to his inventory for his next sales trip. Hoping for \$200 worth of orders, she was elated when he returned with over \$5,000 worth of business for her.

Howland employed friends and developed a thriving business in Worcester using an assembly line. In the Howland's residence a guest bedroom was set up for Esther's newly formed business. She was in charge of cutting the basic designs for the individual valentines while the assembly group was responsible for carefully copying each card.

The entrepreneur also hired women who could work from home by packing a portable box with all the materials required. A week later the cards would be picked up by a driver and returned to Esther for inspection.

In 1870 Esther incorporated her business as the New England Valentine Company moving to a factory in 1879. Her valentines became renowned throughout the United States and she was known as "The Mother of the American Valentine." The business eventually grossed over \$100,000 per year, a considerable sum for that time.

A detail of a courting couple from a Howland Valentine circa 1870.



Museum Receives Grant from the Rotary Club of Alameda

TWENTY-THREE RECIPIENTS were honored at the Elks Lodge on December 3. Each spoke about their organizations and the projects the grants will help to achieve. Myrna van Lunteren completed the paperwork explaining the museum's digital archive plan. After being chosen for the grant, she was interviewed at the Alameda Museum near the Neptune

Beach display, summarizing how donations to the collection are currently recorded and the benefits of a digital conversion. The video interviews for all recipients can be seen online at facebook.com/jeffcambraalameda/videos/461238728091562/ or search for Alameda Rotary Club Season of Giving Community Grants.



Rotary grant recipients pose for a group photo after the award ceremony. Museum Vice President, Myrna van Lunteren (front center) received a grant for the museum to use toward digitizing our archives. Image: Rotary Club of Alameda.



Charles E. Austin Traveling Organ

Circa 1880s

From the company established by Charles Austin of Concord, New Hampshire, the oldest manufacturers of melodeons & organs in the US. His son, Charles E. Austin later managed the business.

....

Easily folded into box form, the organs were commonly used by traveling preachers for camp revivals.

\$98

AT THE MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

A unique antique, the woodwork and keys are in good condition. The decorative felt and nameplate are not original. One pedal is disconnected.



VOLUNTEERS: ALAMEDA MUSEUM & MEYERS HOUSE & GARDEN



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Ashok Katdare	Joe Young

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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- *Alameda's Hidden History*
- *From the President's Podium*
- *Alameda in the News*
- *Revived History Classic Available Online*
- *Early Bridges of Alameda*
- *From the Collection: How to Catch a Fly at the Corner Grocery*
- *Renowned Museum Speaker Honored with Scholarship Fund*
- *Museum Receives Rotary Grant*

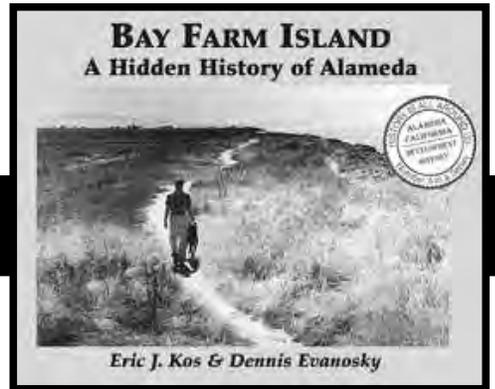
AVAILABLE AT THE MUSEUM

**BAY FARM ISLAND:
A Hidden History of Alameda**

by Eric J. Kos & Dennis Evanosky

Years in the making, the book presents a series of stories of the history of Bay Farm Island, from the Native American presence to the development of Harbor Bay. The book features 125 pages of photos and history bound to delight residents of Bay Farm, and Alameda fans in general.

\$25



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2324 Alameda Avenue

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