Amedeo/Amadeo, A Correction

In the last issue of the Gate Post you may have noticed in the article about Amedeo Gado the first name was spelled two ways. In the narrative, Amedeo was spelled with an “e,” and the captions of the pictures had Amadeo with an “a.” Gado always went by Amedeo through his 99 years so the captions were an inadvertent error for which we are very sorry. But read on.

Another well known local banker by the name of Amadeo Peter Giannini always spelled his name with an “a” through the many years of his life with the development of the Bank of America. However, you may recall that in 1973 the United States Post Office issued a regular 21-cent stamp for the banker with his name and picture and “Amedeo” was spelled with an “e.” This, of course, was an error. The picture of the proposed stamp appeared nationwide in newspapers early in 1973 and the error was noted (“Giannini himself, noted for his sense of humor, probably would have chuckled at the error”). The National Postal Service destroyed the entire printing and a new corrected stamp was issued on June 27, 1973. Maybe Giannini had experienced this problem of the spelling of his name before—and perhaps that is why in later years he was better known as just “A.P.” Giannini.

—Frank Helfrich

Change in History Room Hours

For a month now, due to new hours for the Menlo Park Library, the Tuesday office hours for the History Room is from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.

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Board Meeting
Tues., 7 Oct., 2 p.m.
At History Room

MERRILL HISTORY ROOM (at library) office hours: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Tuesday & Wednesday except holidays. http://www.ci.menlo-park.ca/history.htm
Hidden Treasure

IN THE MAY/JUNE 2002 newsletter, we talked about the hidden treasures buried in the basement of the Menlo Park Library. Very small is the Menlo Park History Room, but it is a literal treasure of articles, pictures, oral histories, and artifacts that help tell the history of Menlo Park through the voices of those who helped shape that history.

To bring the voices of those who helped shape Menlo Park History, Martha Lancastermeme becomes for this community one more of its special treasures. Martha speaks with deep respect about the work of Nancy Lund and Pamela Gullard in their book, *Life on the San Andreas Fault: A History of Portola Valley*, which chronicled her family’s pioneering beginning. She admired the authors, who in writing about her relatives and others, let the people tell their own stories in their own voices. “It was like they were talking to you (the reader).”

This theme is what is evident in Martha’s work. She peruses newspapers, clips out stories of Menlo Park, organizing and filing them. She continues also to work on her mother’s oral history.

Most of Martha’s life has been spent living and working in Menlo Park. She went to local schools, Central, Encinal and Menlo-Atherton, and she worked for years at the Santa Cruz Branch of Bank of America. In fact, her only work outside of Menlo Park was as an Assistant Operations Manager in the Bank of America in Redwood City and in the Corporate Office of Peniniou Laundry in South San Francisco.

Martha brings a special understanding of the history of our area, which obviously influences the quality and efficiency of her work in the History Room. She works to let the people tell their own stories in their own words.

Proud of her parents, she speaks with honor when she recounts the story of her father, who came from France, who best times when she was “little and had the freedom to go anywhere in town without fear.” Now “we don’t have that small town feeling. It’s a city and kids can’t be allowed to roam free.”

Martha also recalls the strong neighborhood bonds. Her home on Mills Street has been in the family for 100 years. She remembers her neighbors as a youngster; they have remained close even today and even after families have long moved away. They have a network and return for special events and for sickness and death. In fact, both Martha and her mother speak of the character of Mills Street; in this neighborhood the homes retain the names of the original owners like the Carters, the McLoughlins and the MacBains, the Kearneys and the Paris family (whose fountain still remains), Mrs. Kucks, Casey the plumber, and the Melvins. The original homes may be apartment buildings, but the old names remain.

These memories of growing up are reminiscent of the stories of our newsletters of teenagers who rode their bikes all over the area and explored the mysteries of San Francisco Creek, or the porches which became the natural meeting places for passing neighbors...when Menlo Park was a town.

By working to let others tell their stories, Martha is enriching all our lives, as her family did.

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**Volunteers — Friends Book Fair**

The Friends of the Library BOOK FAIR 2003 is the weekend of September 20-21. Volunteers are needed to put books on the tables on Thursday afternoon and Friday until finished. Cashiers are needed from 9:00 to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The sign-up sheet are now outside the BOOKSTORE. Whatever help you can give, the Friends will be most appreciative; they are proud of this 43 year tradition.
Pioneer Family

Martha Lancestremeres, who now volunteers to help chronicle Menlo Park’s History in our History Room in the Library, is herself a descendant of one of the area’s pioneer families, the

William and Mary Stanton family of Portola Valley and Menlo Park.

At the age of 16 William Stanton came by boat from Ireland to Philadelphia, where he took odd jobs. Edgar Mills from Menlo Park happened to go to Philadelphia to buy two match horses. There Mills was impressed by the young man handling the horses. That young man was, of course, William Stanton, who then received an invitation to come west and work with Mr. Mills. William did and by the age of 20, thanks to his handling of cards (allegedly), William acquired two parcels of land in the Portola Valley area, one of which included the historic boarding house, now known as “Zot’s” (also known as Rossoiti’s or the Alpine Inn), a California Historical Site.

Mary Jeanne Serres was born in France and came to California by train, lived for a while in San Francisco and eventually moved to Mayfield (South Palo Alto) and there, while learning English, met William Stanton. They married in 1875, later moved to Menlo Park to be closer to schools for their daughter Mary, leased the boarding house and became a thriving dairyman family.

In Menlo Park another landmark became a part of the family history. The Menlo Park French Laundry established in 1893 had gained fame by being the laundry of choice for Jane Stanford. Its reputation of fine work still lasts.

In this laundry a native of Laas, France, came to work as a young man. Working there was Martha’s mother Eloise. Laurent met Eloise, fell in love and married in 1939. The laundry where they met became their very own in 1945. As a team they worked together in the laundry and in 1962 moved to its present location on Oak Grove Avenue.

Eloise and Laurent worked side by side until Laurent’s death in 1980. At that time the whole family was involved in the laundry, Peter, Martha’s younger brother, Martha and her parents. The family continued to run the business until 1990, at which time Martha began to work for the Peninou Corporation in South San Francisco until 1998.

The Stantons and Lancestremeres indeed found our area to be a wonderful opportunity to make a better life. In making their dream come true, they enriched the area with their devotion to family, commitment to hard work and responsibility to their community.
The History Detectives

The recent new release of the program, "History Detectives" on the educational channel has exposed some interesting facts to MPHA members. On a recent program a lady in Saratoga, Calif., asked the detective team to find out why her grandmother had letters and documents of Mary Brown, wife of John Brown of Harper's Ferry fame. The team found nothing other than a strong shared interest in antislavery and a bond of friendship between the two ladies, who both lived in Saratoga. However, this brings to mind a Menlo Park Historical connection with Mrs. Brown.

In the corner of our archive there stands a small carved table (about three feet high with a round top the size of a pie-pan). This table apparently once belonged to Mrs. Brown. The following story goes with the table:

This little handmade table once belonged to Mrs. John Brown, widow of the fierce Abolitionist, John Brown, of Harper's Ferry fame (West Virginia), who wanted to free the black people before Abraham Lincoln did. After he was killed by those who opposed him, Mrs. Brown started West with her family in a horse-drawn wagon as she feared for her life. This trouble, it is said, was the start of the Civil War.

The Browns had three daughters and one son. Going north from Sacramento, they reached Red Bluff, badly in need of food and shelter. There the people from far and wide helped them and provided a home at 135 Main Street where the family lived from 1866 to 1870.

The house is now a historical place to see. Someone made Mrs. Brown this little table. Two of the daughters became teachers and the son and his family moved to Humboldt County. Later Mrs. Brown moved to Saratoga, Calif., where she is buried in the Little Madronia Cemetery.

When she left Red Bluff, she gave this table to a friend, who later gave it to my mother, Mrs. Mary Meyer, Walnut and Lincoln Streets, where it was for many years. It was also in my Menlo Park home. It is now a museum piece.

—Mrs. J.A. Buchman (Elizabeth M.) Menlo Park, Calif.

On a more recent program on Monday, August 4th, a local historian in Dallas, Tex., wanted to know if an early train station was Texas' first and whether it led to the bustling metropolis that Dallas is today. In researching the answer, Menlo Park's Train Station was shown as an early comparative example. Stay tuned to the History Detectives.

—Frank Helfrich

Joseph Beh

On August 15, a great local leader, successful businessman and longtime member of the Menlo Park Historical Association, Joseph E. Beh, died at home.

He touched many lives. A World War II veteran, he in 1950 opened an accounting business that became his real estate agency, which he ran as a broker.

He lived in Atherton for more than 55 years and became a renowned civic leader. He supported young people, especially as the former president of the Herbert Hoover Boys Club and as a board president for Sacred Heart School. Many young men will remember him also as the sponsor of their Little League baseball team here in Menlo Park.

In business he was a director of the San Mateo County Savings and Loan and president of the Banner Development Co., and an active member of the Menlo Park Board of Realtors.

He continued to serve others through the Menlo Park Rotary and Exchange Club, as a trustee of St. Mary's Cathedral and St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park.

For his work in the Catholic Church, he was a member of the Knights of Malta and Knight of the Holy Sepulcher.

A vigil was held for him at St. Patrick's Seminary, and the Memorial Mass was held at the Church of the Nativity on August 20.

Joseph Beh has left a rich legacy, and our community will miss him deeply. We offer our prayers and condolences to Joseph, his wife Allanah, and his family.

Late news came in about the death of Gordon Barker, longtime MPHA member, in Kauai, Hawaii. We should have more details later.
Kelly Park

RECENTLY FRANK HELFRICH received a phone call from City Hall inquiring about the "Kelly" in Kelly Park. The Kelly is Joseph B. Kelly, who died in 1961 at the age of 69. Ten days after his death, the Menlo Park City Council named Belle Haven Park, then the city’s newest recreation park, after Joe Kelly.

Joe was a member of a pioneer Menlo Park family, settlers John B. and Elizabeth Kelly, who moved to Menlo Park around 1886. Joe's wife Esther also had pioneer roots in Menlo Park; she was the daughter of Magnus Polson, who had been the superintendent of farming at the Timothy Hopkins Estate.

It was not his pioneering roots that earned Joseph Kelly special recognition. In fact, it was not even his civic-mindedness that warranted his consideration. For 11 years he had been a member of Menlo Park's Civil Disaster Council, as reported in the May 18, 1961, Menlo Park Recorder. He was also a veteran of the Red Cross and a former officer in the American Legion.

No, it was primarily for his dedication to youth and recreation that Joe is so well respected. Before Little League and Babe Ruth baseball, Joe had organized and coached baseball. In many ways he was like local legend Frank Bettencourt, Menlo-Atherton and American Legion baseball coach, who for over 40 years coached and served youth.

Joe and Frank found Menlo Park becoming a city, as Martha Lancastermore noted in her article, and where "...kids can't be allowed to roam free." Menlo Park needed leaders to step in to help offer youth healthy opportunities.

Joe Kelly was a charter member of Menlo Park's first Recreation Commission, where he carried on his work to develop parks and programs for youth. In Joe Kelly's Menlo Park Recorder obituary, Vice-Mayor Michael L. Belanger was quoted, "...the children of the city have lost their best friend in recreation. Joe devoted many years to the city in expanding its recreational facilities."

Belle Haven's Community Center has for over 40 years now been a gem with its swimming pool, gymnasium, multi-use rooms and athletic fields and has served thousands, thanks in part to people like Joe Kelly, who worked tirelessly for the young people of the community.

It is a good time to reflect on those who have helped us so much in our past. Joe Kelly was an unselfish hero. His name may now bring knowing smiles of respect for what in his life he accomplished for recreation and youth.

—Tim Goode

A Glorious Fourth

ONCE AGAIN the old green 1924 Fageol of the Peninsula Charter Lines, this time without "push starts" (thanks to a new battery), carried in style members of Menlo Park Historical and AARP to the Redwood City Fourth of July parade. Thanks to Michael Demeter, whose interest in this historic bus retired from service in 1949, has kept in running condition what is believed to be the oldest bus in operating condition on its original property in the State of California. Mike Demeter and all the people at the Peninsula Charter Lines deserve thanks for the opportunity to ride in the bus for the parade, and for the bus that is History on wheels!

This year the bus was placed toward the front of the parade where it assumed unit number 26 with the other colorful units of the parade, and it was right behind the San Mateo County Emergency Units.

The bus was decorated with American flags both inside and out, which may have contributed to the smooth ride.

—from Frank Helfrich's report

BEAUTY

For beauty I am not a star.
I know that real ugly I are.
But my face I don't mind it
For I am behind it.
It's the folks out in front get the jar.

—JEANNE BONE
24 JUNE 2003
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Maggie Kimball, Stanford University Archivist, will be our speaker at the Annual Meeting Sunday, November 23rd.