

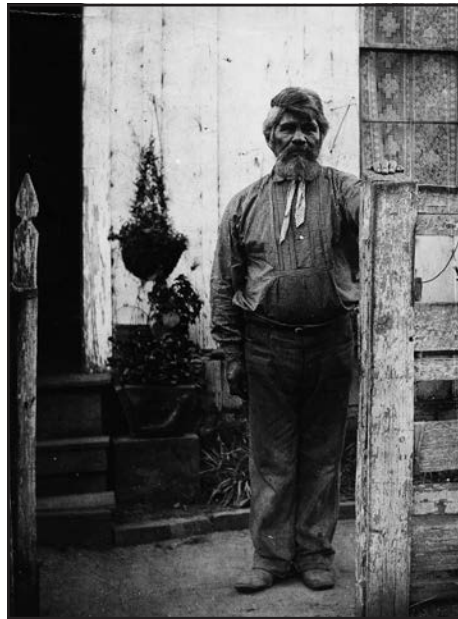
## Our Original Residents, the Muwekma Ohlone

*The History Museum is embarking on a significant renovation of the upstairs gallery organized around easily recognizable themes – creeks and hills, valleys and neighborhoods, towns and trains. This is a story about the people who lived along the creeks, and in the hills and valleys, long before there were towns and trains.*

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe has a deep 6000+ year presence in the San Francisco Bay Area. Muwekma means “the People” in the tribe’s language. The present-day tribe is comprised of all of the known surviving American Indian lineages aboriginal to the Bay Area who trace their ancestry through Missions Santa Clara, San Francisco, and San Jose, and who were also members of the Federally Recognized Verona Band of Alameda County. This large contiguous geographical area, which historically crosscuts several major linguistic and tribal boundaries, fell under the sphere of influence of those three missions between 1776 and 1836. The missionization policies deployed by the Catholic Church, and militarily supported by the Hispanic Empire, brought many distantly related, and in some cases, already inter-married tribal groups together at the missions.

Over the past year, the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe has worked with Museum staff and community members to update information about the history and heritage of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe and about the Museum’s collection from archaeological sites in the area. The majority of the artifacts in the collection came from the salvage excavations at a site near Adobe Creek and O’Keefe Lane, excavated by Dr. Harry Nelson from Foothill College in the early 1970s. Based on artifact typology, mortuary patterning, and radiocarbon dating, the site dates to 185-233 AD, and includes a nearby isolated find along Adobe Creek that dates to 2149 BC. Artifacts in the Florence Fava collection, presumably from the same site, include Olivella and clam shell beads dating to both pre- and post-Spanish Contact (1769).

The Adobe Creek site is a pre-contact ancestral Muwekma Ohlone cemetery within the time-period of the Puichon Thámien Ohlone Tribe. Dr. Randall Milliken described the Puichon Ohlone in his 1995 ethnographic study of the San Francisco Bay Ohlone tribal groups - The Puichon were the largest local tribe on the west shore of San Francisco Bay. Their



*Pedro Evencio at his home in San Mateo by Mary Sheldon Barnes, 1893. Courtesy, San Mateo County Historical Association.*

lands were along lower San Francisquito Creek and lower Stevens Creek, now Palo Alto, Los Altos, and Mountain View. Their San Francisquito Creek village of Ssipútca is mentioned in baptismal records. To the south of the Puichon Ohlone were the Thamien Ohlone whose village was near Mission Santa Clara, notably the only mission to issue land grants to emancipated Ohlone Indians. In 1840, Rancho La Purisima Concepcion was granted to emancipated Indians Jose Gorgonio and his son, Jose Ramon. This rancho comprised 4,440 acres around present-day Palo Alto and Los Altos Hills. Jose Gorgonio would eventually sell his rancho to Doña Juana Briones de Miranda. In 1844, Rancho Posolmi y Pozitas de las Animas (Little Wells of Souls) was granted to Lupe Yñigo. This rancho was near present day Moffett Field in Mountain View.

The Pedro Evencio story is interesting. He and his children were the last of the Mission San Francisco (Doloreño) Indians with documented aboriginal descent from the West Bay. Descended from the Puichon Ohlone speaking tribal groups of the West Bay, and the Saclan Bay Miwok speaking tribal group of the East Bay, they established a rancheria on San Mateo Rancho lands. Pedro Evencio and his family are listed in the 1880 Census for San Mateo County. He was identified as Pedro Abencio, age 58, (b. ca. 1822), Indian, Farm Laborer. Also listed, his son Paul Jose (Joseph), age 22, Indian is crossed out. In 1894, Stanford University anthropologist Mary Sheldon Barnes interviewed Pedro Evencio and wrote:

There lives in San Mateo, an old Indian, Pedro Evencio by name, the last of all the Indians born and bred at the Mission Dolores. Don Pablo Vasquez of Spanish town put us on his track one day when we were asking if there were still any living descendants of the old inhabitants of the valley. “His father was my father’s

*continued on page 2*

# The Muwekma Ohlone

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man," he said. "When my father was vaquero of the Mission Dolores, just before the Americans came in."

Pedro Evencio provided information about the survival of his family and community during the 19th century. He died in 1896. Pedro's son Joseph was identified in the 1900 Census as living in the City of San Mateo, age 40, born March 1860, Black, laborer, and single. He was listed as a "roomer" residing in the house of C.C. Moore, an engineer from New York and his family.

There were few areas that were safe for Indian people after the American takeover. The Indians from Mission San Jose and Santa Clara established rancherias in the East Bay on old Californio ranches at Pleasanton, Sunol, Niles, and other nearby areas. It was at these rancherias that the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe was enumerated in the Special Indian Census of 1905-06 taken by Agent Charles E. Kelsey. He recorded the Muwekma tribe as the Verona Band of Alameda County, named after the nearby railroad station. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries anthropologists from Berkeley and the Smithsonian interviewed the last fluent speakers of the Ohlone (Costanoan) languages. Beginning in 1928, tribal families were enrolled with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and in the 1930s and 40s children were shipped to Indian boarding schools. The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe began to organize in 1980. Of note, Indians have served overseas in the US Armed Forces from 1914 to this day.

The Muwekma Tribal leadership is proud to share their history and heritage with the Los Altos History Museum and we look forward to celebrating the opening of the new Permanent Exhibition.

~ Alan Leventhal, Dept. of Anthropology, San Jose State University  
Monica V. Arellano, Muwekma Vice Chairwoman

Join us Oct. 6 for a talk by Alan Leventhal on the Muwekma Ohlone story.

## Staff

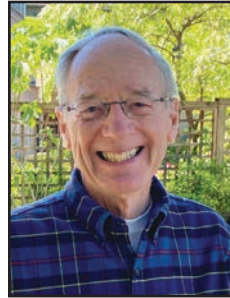
- Dr. Elisabeth Ward, *Executive Director*
- Georgianna Shea, *Museum Educator*
- Diane Holcomb, *Director of Communications*
- Jacqui Marchessini, *Events Manager*
- Farshad Fallah, *Bookkeeper and Office Administrator*
- Faustino Carrillo, *Gardener*

### LOS ALTOS HISTORY MUSEUM "UNDER THE OAKS"

Gary Hedden, *Editor*   Judi Eichler, *Graphic Design*

A publication of interest to citizens of Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, and neighboring communities, produced by the Association of the Los Altos Historical Museum. A special thanks to the newsletter mailing team!

# President's Pen



We are easing our way back to normal. *Dancing through the Decades* April 2 was a huge success. People were so ready to get out and enjoy a fun event and we delivered. We dropped our masks, had a good time and no one got COVID!

We are now holding our Board meetings in person, although some of us still wear our masks. We are holding Museum events in person and we are finally booking more weddings. No, we are not back to normal, but overall, the trend is in the right direction.

The Permanent Exhibit is moving in the right direction too. It has not been a quick process as plans, permits and procurements all take far too much time. This summer, the store and the docents will move to the Smith House and construction work should be well underway. In place of fresh exhibits in the lower gallery, we'll have a series of fun outdoor events - Apricot STEM Fair, Train Day and Creek Fest. Check our calendar and mark yours so you don't miss them!

In the fall we'll bring back the changing exhibitions with one on Wallace Stegner. Working with the Committee for Green Foothills, the focus will be on Stegner's support of wilderness preservation. I'm already looking forward to it.

This is my last President's Pen. It has been an honor and a joy to be your Board President for two years, but rest assured, I'm not going away!

See you at the Museum!

~ Gary Hedden

### Welcome to our new members:

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Lovanna Angelo         | Kim Farwell                |
| Diana and Gerald Brady | Edward John Khouri         |
| Barbara Campbell       | Teresa Titus               |
| Maria Crowder          | Michelle and Willard Wyman |
| Margaret Echerd        |                            |

### Business Members

- |  |   |
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| <b>Business Sponsorship</b>            | <b>Corporate Sponsorship</b>            |
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| Epicurean Group                        | Nicole Frelier Andrews<br>Fine Art, LLC |
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| HomeLight Inc.                         | Rainmaker Real Estate                   |
| Los Altos Town Crier                   |   |
| Young, Craig and Co., LLP CPAs         |   |

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## Meet The New Board Members

**Catherine Greenberg** serves on the Museum's marketing committee. She is an Information Technology leader who has held various positions at technology companies, and is currently working as an advisor for a startup. Catherine is a Los Altos resident. She holds a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Sociology, from York University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Her hobbies include running and hiking.

**Jan Thomas** is the board liaison for the membership committee. Her work experience spans over 50 years in the graphic design and advertising industry as a creative director and art director, including 38 years as an independent designer and consultant. Jan and her husband have been residents of Los Altos for 28 years and she has been a member, event volunteer, and docent for the Museum for six years. She devotes her leisure time to reading, classic films, travel, gardening, her West Highland White Terrier, and bluegrass music.



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## Meet Jacqui

Jacqui Marchessini is the Museum's Events Manager. A local of Mountain View, and a Los Altos High School alumna, Jacqui studied Communications at Cal State Hayward. She managed special events for San Jose Museum of Art and Mountain View Chamber of Commerce, among others, and ran her own event management business. Most recently, she expanded an online-candle business into a studio space experience in Mountain View.



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## Our Hidden Gems

The Muwekma people had a rich spiritual life. Their religion, known today as Kuksu, was a completely oral tradition. All knowledge was destroyed by the Spanish so we must rely on found objects to understand their faith. The Ohlone worshipped Nature and celebrated festivals by the seasons. They also had a great respect for animals, especially the eagle, coyote and hummingbird. We know the Kuksu religion was a type of shamanism where ceremonies and rites of passage were an important part of tribal life. Pre-contact, a shaman was a very distinguished member of the tribe with the ability to contact the spirit world for healing and guidance and in officiating important life milestones. Shamans had a kit of objects they used to perform various tasks. Among the most important were charmstones.



*A charmstone from our collection.*

We can define a charmstone as being made of stone, entirely shaped by human interactive processing, cylindrical or elongated in form, 2.5 – 8 inches in length, and often perforated. They have been found in almost every native habitat in the state. A shaman might also have a shaped piece of quartz crystal in their kit. A very common type of charm stone was phallic in shape and we have several of these in our collection carved from serpentine, the official mineral of California. Shamans who were interviewed by anthropologists in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century still possessed stones used by their ancestors. The stone was carved as a human body part as it was tradition that the stones had a strong life force and when buried could move about underground. It was said if a person in need called out to the stones, they would come close to the surface to be dug up for use in a ceremony.

Some archeologists claim they were merely fishing plumbs but enough tribal members mentioned the use of this kind of stone to bring rain to often dry California that anthropologists believe they were used in rituals. Whatever their use, these stones took much time and effort to carve and still evoke admiration.

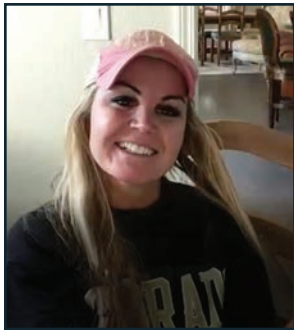
*~ Alecia Thomas*

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## Spotlight on the Oral History Project

It has been some months since COVID-19 vaccinations have been available. What is happening to those who get COVID-19 since the lockdown has been lifted? I wanted to hear from the people in healthcare – those on the front lines who must deal with the COVID illnesses.

In January 2022, I conducted a second interview with two healthcare providers: Dr. Jane Lombard and nurse Kim Komo. Both work at El Camino Hospital.



*Kim Komo interviewed in January. Photo credit, Eric Greenhut*

I spoke with Doctor Lombard, a heart specialist, about the care of her heart patients and particularly patients who had Long COVID (often called Long Haul). She said that it is an auto immune reaction that develops 3 to 6 months after the patient has an acute case of COVID-19. She related to me that there are many symptoms that can last for months. She listed shortness of breath, loss of taste, high or low blood pressure, fatigue,

and memory issues. It can be debilitating and affect many parts of the body and last for different periods of time. She stressed that Long COVID was the body having an auto immune reaction to the acute COVID illness, and not from a heart condition.

Kim Komo, an El Camino Hospital critical care nurse who took care of heart and COVID-19, patients expressed the ongoing stress and fatigue that the medical staff was dealing with daily. She said that before COVID vaccinations were available, most cleaning and dietary workers refused to enter rooms with COVID patients, leaving it to the nurses to do the cleaning and deliver food, as well as attend to their nursing duties. Some of the hardest moments were when the nurse was the only contact the patient had with anyone, even while they were dying. All they could do was hold their hand and say, "I'm here for you."

The Oral History Committee is documenting this major disruption to our community not only for future generations, but for a planned COVID-19 retrospective exhibit when this is all finally over.

*~ Eric Greenhut*

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## Volunteer Highlights & Activities

Museum membership has been a long-standing tradition, beginning when the founders of The History House formed an auxiliary who met on the porch of the J. Gilbert Smith House. Membership was required to join this group, and after Bob Grimm had underwritten free admission to the Museum, membership dues became an important way to support operations.

In 2015, Crystal Taylor introduced different levels of membership that offered perks, and public membership became a form of incentivized giving. Carole Flores, who has chaired the Membership Committee for 6 years, said, "The membership program is vital to the Museum, as dues support the general fund that pays for our wonderful staff, exhibits and programs."

After many discussions, the Membership Committee decided to roll out new benefits for members. Starting in July, the \$50 level will become the Family level, allowing anyone in the household to receive benefits for one year, including the quarterly newsletter and bi-monthly e-newsletter, free admission to our events, 10% off at the store, and an invitation to our summer BBQ. At the \$100 level and up, membership also includes the NARM benefit, giving free or discount admission to over 1000 cultural institutions across the country! "As a grandparent, I've used this benefit often, taking my two-year old grandson to the train museum in Sacramento, and my eight-year-old granddaughter to places she enjoys," Carole said. At the \$250 Friend level, we've added the ROAM benefit, similar to NARM but with more museums. And the perk of invitations to preview nights. Many members have joined



*Jan Thomas and Carole Flores working on letters to the members*

at this level to receive this benefit. At the \$500 level, Patrons also receive two free tickets to the summer BBQ. With limited seating, at this level you're sure to get in! Current members will receive these new benefits when their renewal comes up from July onward.

In addition to updating benefits, the Committee, which also includes Jan Thomas and myself, promotes the program at events, and plans membership events. This year's Members' BBQ will be held on August 21 from 5-8pm.

To volunteer to help the Museum grow its membership program, please email me at [dholcomb@losaltoshistory.org](mailto:dholcomb@losaltoshistory.org).

*~ Diane Holcomb*

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## History in the News

May was historic preservation month, and we had a lot to celebrate. Anne Roberts and Dick Liewer were honored by the City of Los Altos with the 2022 Historic Preservation Award. They are two of the longest-serving and most dedicated members of the Education Committee and they have reached countless thousands of elementary age students with their very personal and engaging history lessons.



*Dick Liewer and Anne Roberts dressed for the fourth-grade tours.*

Anne Roberts retired from Almond Elementary School in 2007 and immediately joined the Education Committee, becoming Chair in 2009. As Chair, Anne has been managing the Margaret Thompson essay contest in a joint effort with the Historical Commission.

Dick Liewer has been leading school tours for longer than he can remember. The third-grade tours were an established annual tradition when he joined the effort in the 90s. The tours then involved three stations, a visit with Annie Knapp Fitz to look at her art, a walk downtown to look at historic buildings, and a visit to the Smith House. After the History Museum's new home had been built in 2001, the fourth-grade tours were added. Dick and Don McDonald created four stations: Early City Hall, Take Me to the Movies, People Movers and Cal Aggies.

This year, with the help of the new Museum Educator, Georgianna Shea, the tour docents wear costumes. Anne Roberts dresses the part of A. Watson Conner, the first Mayor of Los Altos, and Dick Liewer wears a San Francisco Seals uniform when he talks about the early history of local baseball.

In other news, the Santa Clara County Preservation Alliance hosted their first annual awards night May 21. The Los Altos History Museum received an award from the Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission for the restoration of the Spagnoli Tank House and Daniil and Divya Reouk received an award from the City of Los Altos for the recent restoration of their 1915 farmhouse on Grant Road.

Congratulations everyone!

~ Gary Hedden

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## Director's Corner

### *Telling Untold Stories*

The words history and story both come from the same Old French word *estoire*, which means to recount something of wisdom or merit. Each individual's personal story is the beginning of a larger group's shared history. But which stories make it into history is a complicated process. We've all heard, "History is written by the victors," but what about the history of Santa Clara County? Are there winners and losers in our local history, and if so, who is the victor writing that history?



In 2018, the County of Santa Clara announced a grant to support efforts to document individuals and groups of individuals whose stories had not made it into the official history of the County. This can be quite literal; the three-volume encyclopedic *History of Santa Clara County from 1881* left Juana Briones de Miranda out! But it can also be more general, like stories that aren't told in schools or in museum exhibits.

Los Altos History Museum was pleased to be one of the many recipients in the County of this large, one-time grant program. Another recipient was the Stanford Historical Society.

In May, Nan Geschke and I attended a conference at Stanford funded by this grant, entitled *History in Community*. We shared with many other local history groups our efforts to ensure the information in the new Permanent Exhibition will give as accurate and as broad a picture as possible of the many people who have called this area home.

For local history in particular, people's individual stories intersect with stories about places. How often have we met someone from Los Altos and immediately started talking about a favorite restaurant or park? Sharing memories of a place help us feel connected to one another and to our community.

For the Muwekma Ohlone, whose ancestors were brought to the missions and whose families then had to go live on ranches far from their homes, being able to share stories of memorable places is one of the many, many things that have been lost. They never received designated land because a clerk in Washington D.C. decided to remove the Verona Band from the Department of Interior's list of California tribes; their story was left off the official history.

As we continue to work on the new Permanent Exhibition, our goal is to include as many individual stories as we can, leveraging technology to do more than we ever could before. There are many untold stories out there, waiting to be shared with our community, and brought into our history.

~ Dr. Elisabeth Ward

## Photo Gallery



Georgianna Shea, panel moderator for Aging In Place, There's No Place Like Home, with panelists David Klein and Mandy Brown.



Anne Roberts handing the Margaret Thompson trophy to Kate Goines, 4th grade teacher at Covington Elementary, the school with the most essay contest winners.



Teen docents at the closing party for Every Wrinkle Tells a Story.



Georgianna Shea taking a picture of Sam and Janet Harding and two of their grandchildren at the closing party.



Lindsay Carpenter and Carole Katz, playing the roles of J. Gilbert Smith and Margaret Smith for the third-grade tours.



Anne Macpherson describing agricultural equipment for the fourth-grade tours.

## Photo Gallery



*Kristin Puccini, Reynette Au, Jacob Valadez and Jeanine Valadez arriving at the Gala. Photo credit, Jason Pun of Paper Nautilus Studios.*



*Two guests checking in at the Dancing through the Decades Gala.*



*Christopher Fling and guests enjoying the dinner. Photo credit, Jason Pun of Paper Nautilus Studios.*



*Georgianna Shea and Michele Kirsch, dressed for the party.*



*Annie Ju, Shami Melk, and Duanni Hurd, three of our Rotary Club guests.*



*Dancing the night away at the Roaring Twenties Gala.*



# UNDER THE OAKS

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[www.losaltoshistory.org](http://www.losaltoshistory.org)

## Museum and Store Hours

*Thursday to Sunday, Noon-4pm.*

*We are closed New Year's Day, Easter, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.*

## General Inquiries

*(650) 948-9427 x14 or  
hello@losaltoshistory.org*

## Collections/Research

*(650) 948-9427 x11  
research@losaltoshistory.org*

## Event Rentals

*(650) 948-9427 x12  
weddings@losaltoshistory.org*

**Mission Statement** *The Los Altos History Museum gathers and presents compelling stories and artifacts that bridge the past and the present by fostering the creative energy of staff and volunteers to challenge established narratives and produce engaging educational programs and exhibits for the community.*

## On The Calendar

**Annual Members Meeting**, Thurs., June 16, 4:00pm, online and in person at the Museum.

**The Kiwanis Pet Parade: Celebrating 75 Years of Community**, through July 10, J. Gilbert Smith House.

**Apricot STEM Fair: A Tale of Two Valleys**, Sat., July 16, 10am-3pm, Museum courtyard.\*

**Member's BBQ**, Sunday, August 21, 5-8pm, Museum courtyard.

**Train Day: Making a Town**, Sat., Sept. 10, 10am-3pm, Museum courtyard.\*

**The Muwekma Ohlone Story** by Alan Leventhal, Thurs., Oct. 6, 7:00pm, online.

**Creek Fest: Playing with Water**, Sat., Oct. 22, 10am-3pm, Museum courtyard.\*

*\*Free to members. For non-members, there is a \$7 fee to support the new Permanent Exhibit.*



*Ed Taft making a bid at the Gala dinner party.*

**Board Meetings**, Third Wednesday each month, 4 pm, by Zoom, everyone welcome