MOUNTAIN REVIEW

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN VIEW HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Volume XV Issue 4 Fall 2026



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A Taste of Mountain View

11.1.26

Filled wine barrels from the John Snyder ranch awaiting shipment at the Mountain View depot.

Sunday, November 1, 2026 2 p.m. Mountain View Public Library

REGISTER ONLINE: https://mountainview.libcal.com/event/16841787

MOUNTAIN REVIEW

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Upcoming Walking tours of Downtown Mountain View

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Pamela Baird

President's Message

By Pamela Baird
MVHA President

Fall 2026

As we come to the end of 2026, the year in which we commemorate 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, it is still worth contemplating the document. Despite the obvious "flaws" in the Declaration, the radical notion that people can govern themselves (instead of a monarch) is an idea that carried our nation, and many others that followed, to a new place in the history of human civilization.

History is full of "what ifs." The events surrounding the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution are no different. What if King George III and the British government had been more accommodating to the concerns and complaints of the people living in the 13 colonies? In reading the Declaration, there is a long list of 27 complaints against the King. Or was the split with the King and the British government destined to happen anyway (perhaps a few years later)?

What if Thomas Paine hadn't written the pamphlet "Common Sense"? It is considered by many scholars to be a catalyst that captured public opinion and helped propel the Colonists toward independence. What if Thomas Jefferson (the primary author of the document) had not participated? Would the Declaration have the same eloquence if written by someone else? What if some of the signers of the Declaration been arrested and punished by the British for treason? Would this have delayed the Revolution?

A person can go on and on imagining the various twists and turns that might have occurred. But whatever we can imagine, it probably won't compare to the actual drama, communities and alliances that formed to create the United States that our ancestors were lucky to enjoy. And that we today and those that follow have a responsibility to maintain and enhance.

The special exhibit "Spirit of '76" at the Los Altos History Museum covers the Declaration, its influences and the reaction of historical figures. It also chronicles the Bicentennial activities in Mountain View and Los Altos. The last day to view the exhibit is November 8, 2026.
www.losaltoshistory.org/exhibit/commemorating-americas-250th/

Center for the Performing Arts Celebrates 35 Years

by Carol Donahue

"Mention Mountain View and most people think about dinner. At 7 p.m. ...Castro Street is jammed with the hungry….But by 10 p.m. the crowds evaporate" wrote Kathleen Donnelly, Mercury News Entertainment Writer in 1991.

The story was Mountain View's bold plan to keep people downtown. After years of work, a new downtown anchor was about to open. Our city's downtown revitalization planning ran through the 1980s to 1990. It started with a $11.7 million face lift of Castro Street and included a $44.5 million new city hall and live theater complex.

Planning for the downtown makeover began when the existing city hall was deemed unsafe due to new tighter earthquake building codes. Local leaders pushed the idea of building a theater as well to anchor a spiffed up downtown. There was a need. Sunnyvale was considering a large theater but ultimately dropped their plans. Nearby venues included Cupertino's Flint Center built in 1971, Palo Alto's Lucie Stern Theater, and Stanford University theaters on campus. Local high school orchestras had no place to perform where acoustics were good. The Community School of Music and Arts had no permanent place to showcase its musicians and students. Affordable theater space was tight.

"Mention Mountain View and most people think about dinner. At 7 p.m. Castro Street is jammed with the hungry—but by 10 p.m. the crowds evaporate"

—1991,
Kathleen Donnelly,
Mercury News
Entertainment
Writer

Ben DeBolt moved from San Francisco to Mountain View in 1954 and did not want to go to San Francisco to experience live performances in large venues. He joined the boards of local performing arts groups and worked to change that. DeBolt was joined by others to organize efforts to fill the void.

Mountain View launched a design contest for the city hall and theater complex. Five architecture firms were invited to submit entries in a competition for the design and engineering contract for Mountain View's largest building project to date—a city hall, theater and parking structure. Three submitted designs. Each entry included a model of the Civic Center and color renderings of the buildings plus a detailed cost estimate for the project. City Council and city staff weighed in. Several days of public comment also contributed to the selection process. Competing models were displayed at the Art & Wine Festival and the library. The public vote resulted in the selection of William Turnbull Associates of San Francisco.

The salmon stucco and teal tile were considered emblematic of a relaxed California style. In the original design, City Hall and the Center for the Performing Arts were planned at different heights.

— **continued on page 8**


Center for the Performing Arts, under construction

Treasurer's Report

Through Q3, 2026

Third Quarter Ended September 30, 2026

MVHA remains in a strong financial position, with $81,604 in total assets and no reported liabilities as of September 30, 2026. Assets include $15,570 in bank accounts and $66,034 in certificates of deposit.

Quarterly and Year to Date Results

Third-quarter revenue was $1,338 and expenses were $1,686, resulting in a $348 deficit. Through September 30, revenue totaled $5,070 and expenses totaled $2,922, yielding a year-to-date surplus of $2,148.

Membership dues ($2,245) and interest income ($1,799) were our largest revenue sources. Marketing and Events was our largest expense category ($2,001), primarily newsletter printing and postage and community events.

Budget Comparison

Through September 30, we achieved 97% of the annual revenue budget ($5,070 of $5,210) and spent 47% of the annual expense budget ($2,922 of $6,240). The annual budget anticipates a $1,030 deficit; year-to- date results show a $2,148 surplus.

Respectfully submitted,
—Anthea Chung, Treasurer
Mountain View
Historical Association

Membership Report

MVHA is pleased to add two new lifetime members—
David Hatt and Alex Amoroso.
David lives in the Monta Loma neighborhood. Alex lives on Moffett.

David and Sarah Burzillo are new annual members. They recently moved from New Hampshire and are excited to learn about their new "hometown".

We appreciate your support.

To join, or renew, you can always mail in the form (see page 9) with a check or visit—
www.mountainviewhistorical.org/memberships/

Please consider becoming a lifetime member. It's easy and you won't have to remember to send your dues each year!

Membership dues help us with our ongoing expenses— hosting meetings, newsletter production, mailing costs and insurance.

FALL

Summer Program Recap

The Spirit of '76

The August 9 "Spirit of '76 and more" history event was a fun look back at the many activities and events that residents of Mountain View planned for the Bicentennial year of 1976. Special snacks and a private showing of "The Spirit of '76" exhibit at the Los Altos History Museum started the late afternoon gathering.

The group then went upstairs to view a few Bicentennial artifacts from our collection. Dr. Amy Ellison, Curator and Director of Exhibitions, spoke about the exhibit and how it was developed. Pamela Baird followed with a PowerPoint presentation detailing the extensive planning that the special appointed Bicentennial Committee members planned and conducted. 1976 was truly a wonderful commemoration of the Bicentennial. And an example of how much the community worked together to educate, participate and celebrate that significant milestone.



Dr. Amy Ellison, Curator and Director of Exhibitions, speaking about the development of the special exhibit.

Mountain View Family History Spotlight

by Robert Cox, MVHA Vice President

Los Altos School District School Board Trustee Bryan Johnson belongs to a family who has made significant contributions to computer technology and progress through multiple generations.

Bryan's great-grandfather, John Alfred Johnson, was born in Bitterna, Skraborg, Sweden in 1863. In 1868, he immigrated to Meeker County, Minnesota with his parents, Swan and Mary Johnson. John was the fifth of ten children. He married Elizabeth Erickson, another Swedish immigrant, in 1888, and had ten children with her. Both John and Swan were farmers.


A farm in Bitterna, Sweden, near where John Alfred Johnson was born.

John and Elizabeth's ninth son Reynold Benjamin Johnson, was to follow a different path. On the farm, he displayed a keen talent for mechanics, inventing a submersible submarine, which he displayed in a horse trough. He graduated with a B.S. in education administration, from the University of Minnesota in 1929. He started teaching math and science at Ironwood High School in Michigan, and became convinced that there must be a way to automate the testing and grading of his students. He invented a machine that could automatically score tests where the answers were marked by students, first by punching holes into paper, and later using pencil marks.


Reynold Johnson

Thomas Watson, the president of IBM, purchased Reynold's invention and hired him as a senior engineer, moving him to Endicott, New York, helping him develop his idea into the IBM 805 test scoring machine. After being issued 53 patents, Reynold left for San Jose, California, in 1951, to manage IBM's West Coast Laboratory, where he led a research team that developed the first disk data storage technology in 1956. In retirement, Reynold developed the micro-phonograph technology used in Fisher-Price "Talk to Me" books. Reynold received the National Medal of Technology and Innovation from President Reagan in 1986.

Reynold and his wife Beatrice married in 1934 and had three children, a daughter Karen and twin boys Phillip and David. David graduated from Yale Law School in 1972, moving to Washington, D. C., joining the law firm Wilmer, Cutler, and Pickering, where he was named a partner in 1980. An electronic commerce expert, he helped write the Electronic Communications Privacy Act in 1986. He later co-founded the Cyberspace Law Institute and after that was the founding director of the Aspen Institute Internet Policy Project.

David and his wife Judith became the parents of LASD Trustee Bryan and his sister Kathryn. Bryan met his wife Jocelyn Goldfein while they were both computer science majors at Stanford. They lived in the same dorm and worked overlapping shifts at the computer science center.

Bryan worked as a software engineer at a variety of companies, the latest of which was Guidewire Software. He and Jocelyn had two daughters: Maya and Madelyn. After Madelyn was born, Bryan decided to be a stay-at-home dad. This is when he got involved in the Santa Rita PTA. Being PTA president gave Bryan a lot of interaction with the LASD Trustees. He was first elected to fill a vacancy, then was re-elected in 2018 and 2022. He is seeking reelection this fall.

Bryan was President of the LASD School Board when the COVID-19 crisis hit, and is proud of the district's ability to pivot to remote learning faster and more effectively than many other school districts in the state. He also notes the district's financial situation has consistently improved over the last decade, and the coming campus modernization work made possible by the Measure EE facilities bond will further reduce repair and maintenance costs. This will also allow the school PTAs to focus less on fundraising and more on the vital work of strengthening school communities.


David, Judith, Kathryn, and Bryan Johns

Bryan's wife Jocelyn is a managing director at an AI-focused venture capital fund. Their oldest child Maya is an anthropology major at Brandeis University, while younger sibling Madelyn will start college this fall at Johnson and Wales University, planning to major in Baking and Pastry Arts. Bryan's advice to young people is "Don't assume that you can achieve your goals by just checking the right boxes; figure out how to acquire the experiences and skills you will need, and then work diligently to achieve real mastery."


Madelyn, Jocelyn, Bryan, and Maya Johnson

The First National Bank of Mountain View

Cam Scheirer, Author

Even before Silicon Valley became the technological hub that it is today, financial instability in the banking sector has been an ever-present threat. For many of us, the 2023 regional banking crisis may be a hazy recollection. While its potential harm was largely avoided, the collapse of First Republic and Silicon Valley Banks, and the resulting economic concerns were a reminder of the instability inherent in the financial networks that run our modern world.

In looking back at our past, the story of the First National Bank of Mountain View is impressive and one that few people know. The institution weathered the growing pains of early twentieth-century Mountain View, the Great Depression, and the 1930s economic policy changes and challenges.

The National Banking System

The First National Bank of Mountain View was one of over 10,000 nationally chartered but locally run banks, having their origin in the financial constraints the Union faced during the Civil War. Despite the superior industrial technology and production capacity of the North, the early months and years of the war dragged on with no end in sight. Unprepared to fight a lengthy war, the Union government quickly began running low on money, thus prompting Congress to pass legislation to counteract the budget deficit.

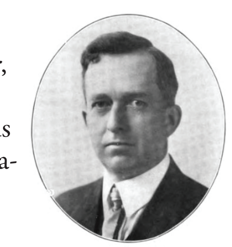
By 1863, however, the combined public mistrust of the non-specie money (banknotes unbacked by precious metals) issued as a temporary means to finance the war, and the expanding debts of the Union proved the necessity of establishing an entirely new banking system. The National Banking Act of 1863 was introduced to establish a program that gave individuals the authority to establish government-chartered banks provided they met certain requirements.

A minimum of $50,000 had to deposited into the U.S. Treasury which could be used to guarantee their bank notes. Up to 90% of this money (in the form of government bonds) could be used to back any notes the bank issued. By all measures, the National Banking System was extremely successful. The new system allowed the Union to finance the war and provide a trustworthy national money supply.

National Banks could be found in almost every city and unincorporated communities in the country. Most moderately sized to large cities had at least two such institutions. A provision in the Gold Standard Act of 1900 stipulated that banks in towns with a population of less than 3,000 could organize with a capitalization amount of $25,000. This stimulated the organization of numerous small-town banks across the country and began what is now called "The Golden Age of National Banking." The most tangible artifacts of these banks are their banknotes, each prominently featuring the town name and the signatures of the bank officers on the front. The National Banking System continued to operate in this same basic form until 1935.

Mountain View

In January 1913, the First National Bank of Mountain View was organized with the minimum capitalization of $25,000. (In 1910, the U.S. census listed the population of Mountain View at 1,161 people). There were two original officers for the bank.


B. W. HOLEMAN
Cashier First National Bank
Mountain View

Bert W. Holeman (1875–1951), served as cashier from 1913–15 and then president starting in 1917. According to his obituary, Holeman sold his stake in the company in 1925 and moved to Bishop, CA where he worked for the national banks there until about 1946, when he moved to San Jose.

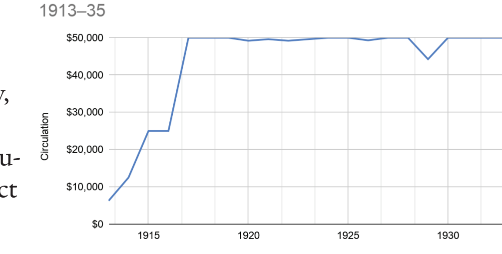
Charles C. Minton (born 1850) was president until his death in September 1914. Before moving to Mountain View, Minton worked at the Marion, Kansas State Bank, where, according to his obituary, he was very highly esteemed. The fact that both Holeman and Minton came from Kansas at around the same time suggests they may have known each other prior to moving to Mountain View.

Beginning in 1913 the First National Bank of Mountain View was housed at the corner of Castro and Villa Streets in an impressive Greek Revival styled building. Its prominence would have been conspicuous in early Mountain View. In a 1939 newspaper article in the Mountain View Register-Leader, the bank's long-time cashier John J. Taylor (who started as the only assistant cashier) recalled its grand opening reception. The building was decorated with floral arrangements sent by neighboring banks, whose leaders all made appearances at the event. Throughout the day, boys and girls guided many interested visitors through the building.



The First National Bank of Mountain View quickly achieved success. In a December 1916 advertisement in the Register-Leader, the bank reported a nearly 220% increase in total deposits, from $53,570 at its opening to $170,674 in November 1916. In 1916 the bank gained 174 new bank accounts.

Banknote circulation also increased quickly. These notes could be used the same as US currency. In 1913, the bank had $6,250 worth of their banknotes in circulation. By 1915, that number had increased to $25,000. Only two years later, $1, $2, $5, $10, $20, and $100 notes in circulation had reached its cap of $50,000. The bank would maintain this strong balance amount throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. The end of banknote issuances by nationally chartered banks occurred in 1935.

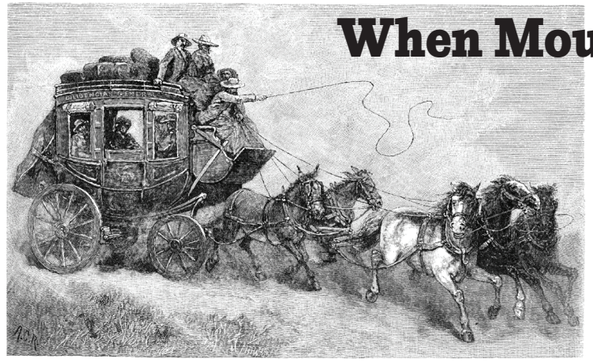


The bank was not immune to the effects of the Great Depression. Total assets decreased from $887,375 in 1929 to $711,028 in 1932, and $688,844 in 1934.

—continued on p.7

When Mountain View was a Stagecoach Town

by Joyce Larson

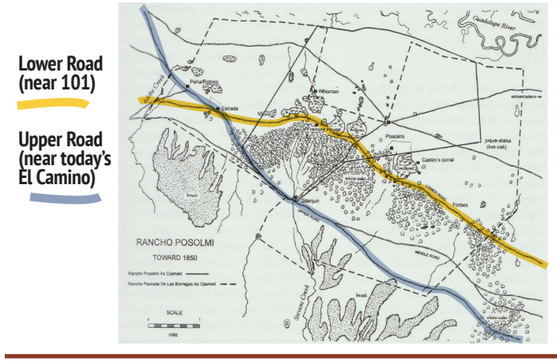


Mountain View was a dynamic hub in an early California transit network that depended on the stagecoach. The town, in its formative days, was a key stop on the pioneering stagecoach line between San Francisco and San Jose; a link in the first regular trans-continental mail route; and, after the railroad arrived, a strategic transfer point, so the story goes, from train to stagecoach (or stagecoach to train) for passengers traveling to and from the coast over the rugged Santa Cruz mountains.

In the mid-19th century, the influx of new people and a rapid increase in industry and commerce demanded enhanced means of transportation. In autumn 1849, Mountain View pioneer John Whisman started California's first stagecoach line, running between San Francisco and San Jose along the muddy Lower San Francisco Road (near today's Highway 101). The trip took nine hours (in good weather), and fare was two ounces of gold or $32, an exorbitant amount (over $1,000 today). The service provided by Whisman was quite rudimentary, based on an old French omnibus pulled by poorly cared-for mustangs and mules.

During the heavy winter rains of 1849–50, the road became so soft and muddy that stage wheels sank to their hubs. Whisman was forced to redirect his route, which ran temporarily from San Jose to Alviso as the northern terminus; passengers then made steamboat connections for San Francisco. The original route was restored in spring 1850. But Whisman's stagecoach enterprise was slow and inefficient, and in fall 1850 he sold out to the firm of Hall and Crandall.

The two San Francisco stage roads c. 1850



The Hall and Crandall line ran along the Upper San Francisco Road (El Camino Real). While passengers still endured a rough and jarring ride over the rutted, unpaved road, these proprietors were more experienced and had better horses and infrastructure. According to H.C. Ward, an early driver on the line, in March 1851 500 mares and 14 stallions were delivered to the firm, which they "immediately commenced to break to harness." The vehicles were also upgraded. Early passenger coaches used in the area were often make-shift wagons of various sorts.

Beginning in 1850 larger and more solidly constructed coaches came into use. One of the most common was the New Hampshire-built Concord coach, and in 1851 Hall and Crandall bought a supply specifically intended for the El Camino route. Building on this foundation, in May 1851 the firm was awarded a four-year contract to carry the U.S. mails between San Francisco and San Jose, ensuring a steady, reliable income.

According to historian Mary Jo Ignoffo in *Milestones: A History of Mountain View*, the Hall and Crandall stagecoaches made a rest stop in the shade of a large laurel tree about a half a mile southeast of Stevens Creek within today's Sunnyvale. Ignoffo notes that the location was a natural stopping point to switch horses. "As yet there was no bridge over Stevens Creek," she writes, "and coaches and wagons had to negotiate the slippery banks and ford the rock stream." In April 1853, Hall and Crandall sold their line to Dillon, Hedge and Company, interests that subsequently passed into the California Stage Company.

The Daily Alta California for December 6, 1851, described the condition of the road between San Francisco and San Jose as "wretched." Heavy winter rains spawned relentless mud. If a coach bogged down in the muck, passengers might have to climb out and push. In dry weather, billowing dust stirred up by the hammering horses permeated the coach. Travelers, including ladies wearing capacious skirts, were cramped inside sharing hard benches with random and sometimes unfriendly strangers. Wayside rest stops offered a few minutes' reprieve from the incessant shaking and jolting and a much-needed opportunity to stretch while the horses were changed (every ten or twelve miles).

Starting around 1852, a stage stop was constructed on El Camino west of Stevens Creek, near today's Grant Road, and gradually evolved into the village of Old Mountain View. A single huge oak tree marked the site. The location seemed a natural stopping point, where southbound stages might have to prepare to ford the creek. When the stagecoach pulled up, the scene must have (cont'd p.7)



Historical placard at intersection of El Camino and Grant Road



Whelan's blacksmith shop, El Camino at Grant Road

been a lively one, as sounds of commerce and community mixed with the bustle of sweating, snorting horses. A blacksmith shop serviced horses and coaches. At the hotel, passengers were picked up and discharged and could eat or stay overnight. Shumway's store also served as the post office, where local mail pouches were dropped off and collected.

The curved ash body of the commonly-used Concord rested on long leather, shock-absorbing thorough-braces. The braces reduced the road's sharp jolts and allowed the vehicle to rock back and forth and swing sideways, providing forward thrust for the team. Nine to twelve passengers rode inside, and up to a dozen or more could journey precariously on the roof. Stagecoaches were drawn by four or six horses, which required expert, sometimes entertaining and occasionally intimidating drivers, or 'whips.'

From 1858 to 1861, Mountain View was also an official station along the legendary Butterfield Overland Mail stage route. Mail to California from the rest of the country was painfully slow, and Californians clamored for a through line. The 2,800 mile trans-continental service eventually mandated by Congress carried both passengers and mail, running twice a week from St. Louis and Memphis to San Francisco. The trip took about 25 days, and coaches traveled day and night. Lighter mud (celerity) wagons were used on the section from Arkansas to Los Angeles, while the classic Concords were employed from Los Angeles to San Francisco. The route in California ran via Pacheco Pass, Gilroy and San Jose. The Butterfield coaches then merged onto the established thoroughfare along El Camino, sharing this vital corridor with local and regional lines.

The Overland Mail almost certainly used the thriving Grant Road settlement as its Mountain View station, utilizing the infrastructure already developed by local pioneers. Given the line's strict, round-the-clock timetable, station stops for the Butterfield stages were usually quick, to swap mail-pouches and obtain a fresh relay of horses. Travelers could transfer between the trans-continental route and the regular line, and "through" passengers could take a brief break.

The Butterfield coaches were painted in brilliant colors, usually red, green or canary yellow. Imagine Old Mountain View around 1859: dusty El Camino, scattered buildings, routine business mixed with the saloon's occasional hubbub, the troublesome Stevens Creek crossing—and then a large, brightly decorated Concord coach drawn by four or six horses is spotted coming up the road. It must have been quite a spectacle!



Butterfield Coach

The San Francisco & San Jose Railroad was completed in 1864, with a stop at Mountain View that bypassed the old Grant Road settlement. The center of civic and commercial life now shifted to the new town that coalesced around the railroad stop, and the primary stagecoach line that had operated along El Camino since 1849 wound down. But while the railroad's arrival reconfigured the area's transport framework, it did not erase Mountain View's importance as a stagecoach town.

See the Winter 2027 issue for the story of the likely stagecoach link between New Mountain View and the lumber and tourist town of Pescadero on the Pacific coast, with a notable nexus to the railroad.

The First National Bank of Mountain View

—continued from p.5

For the next twenty years First National Bank weathered both tough and later robust financial times.

The First National Bank of Mountain View was absorbed as a branch of the Central Bank of Oakland in May 1954, with assets of $250,000. Since then, the neoclassical exterior has been replaced by the current façade. The building is now occupied by the Independent Order of the Odd Fellows.

Yet, the legacy of the First National Bank lives on through the physical banknotes it issued, which are in high demand in the collector market (and typically sell for $2,000 to $4,000). More importantly, it serves as a reminder of the financial origins of Silicon Valley, when the area was a successful farming community.



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Notes on Sources and Acknowledgments

The information in this article was mostly drawn from articles and obituaries published in newspapers, 1910–1930, especially The Mountain View Register-Leader, made available by the Mountain View Library through DigitalReeL. Most of the circulation and assets figures came from the First National Bank of Mountain View's listing on the Society of Paper Money Collectors' National Bank Lookup (https://banklookup.spmc.org/bank/10324) website.

I am grateful to my father, Daniel Scheirer, for helping me in the revision process and to Pamela Baird for encouraging me to write this article.

Cam Scheirer is a freshman at Mountain View High School and is interested in all things history and numismatics.

On the Cover



A Taste of History

Remembering the wine history of Mountain View

Before Silicon Valley, before the apricot orchards, this region was wine country. From the first vines planted at Mission Santa Clara in 1798 to more than 100 wineries operating across Santa Clara County by the 1890s, the South Bay was once one of California's most productive wine regions.

Join us November 1 for a presentation by fourth-generation Mountain View resident and museum professional Julie Bly DeVere. She will present a lively look at the winemakers, vineyards, and forgotten history that shaped our local landscape long before the tech industry arrived.

Performing Arts continued from P. 3

However, a majority of voters opted to remove the theater's top floor so that City Hall would appear more prominent. As a result of that decision, the theater's fly loft ended up 20 feet shorter than what is typically required for a fully functional professional stage.

Features that made the Turnbull design stand out were city hall and theater buildings set facing one another diagonally. Carl Smith, a Turnbull partner, told City Council "We wanted to open the plaza to Castro and Mercy Streets and make it a gateway to Pioneer Park." Over the years many parades, cultural and holiday celebrations, and other events have flowed from the streets into the plaza and the park and served as a community gathering hub.

In late 1989, the Performing Arts Advisory Committee began work on fundraising and planning the gala opening. The gala was a black tie event at the Center. The evening included a reception, tours and formal dinner.

In its early years, the Center for the Performing Arts showcased a diverse calendar of local and national names of the day, including Della Reese, Dizzy Gillespie, and John Tesh. The National Theater of the Deaf offered its original presentation of Ophelia, a retelling of Hamlet from the heroine's point of view. Storyteller Brenda Wong Aoki was an early act. She went on to be a founding faculty member of the Institute for Diversity in the Arts at Stanford University. Queen Ida and the Bon Temps Zydeco Band brought New Orleans to Mountain View. International acts Mahlathini and Mahotella Queens, considered the Supremes of South Africa and Shanghai Acrobats and Dance Theater also performed on the mainstage. Closer to home, San Francisco's a cappella vocal ensemble Chanticleer and Mountain View High School Music Department's Winter Fest had an opportunity to perform in a venue with good acoustics.

Thanks to the foresight of civic leaders and community support in the 1980s, today the Center for the Performing Arts has more requests for dates from performing groups than it can accommodate. The Center is planning its 35th Anniversary Celebration in January 2027. Look for updates on the Center's website. https://www.mvcpa.com

Finding Your Family History

More on Court Records

By Robert Cox

Sometimes, we get the deepest look into our relatives' lives by looking at the court records in which they appear. Unfortunately, most court records document an incident where someone did wrong to someone else. If your relative was the wrongdoer, discovering the information in the court record can be embarrassing.

One thing to remember is if you cast a wide enough net in your search for distant relatives, you are bound to find someone who is a wrongdoer. I'm a fan of Alfred Hitchcock, but the kinds of wrongdoing I have seen while tracing distant relatives is more amazingly varied than what I have seen in watching many episodes of old Al's TV show.

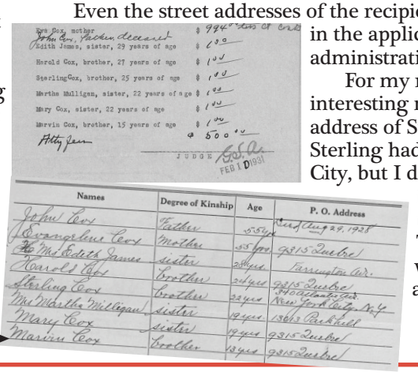
So as not to cast aspersions on my distant relatives as a whole, I will illustrate how valuable court records can be in family history research by selecting an incident where a distant cousin of mine, Thelma Cox, was the unfortunate recipient of bad fortune.

According to court records, Thelma "came to her death in the village of Garfield Heights, Ohio, due to an automobile in which she was riding being overturned in said village, sustaining injuries which resulted in her death."

Thelma's mother Eva Cox "brought suit against the village, resulting in a judgment against the village of $1500." The court records also include a distribution of the $1500 as follows. Note that names and relation to the deceased are listed as well as the amount due to each of the recipient.

Even the street addresses of the recipients are provided in the application for letters of administration for Thelma.

For my research, the most interesting new fact was the address of Sterling Cox. I knew Sterling had gone to New York City, but I did not have any idea where he lived there. This information was not available anywhere else.


Garfield Heights, Ohio court settlement included recipient's addresses ➤

History Happening Now

Proclamation! Arts and Humanities Month in Mountain View


Left to right: Mayor Emily Ramos, Carol Donahue, Valerie Fenwick (PAC Vice Chair). Back row: City Council Members Lucas Ramirez, Vice Mayor Chris Clark, Ellen Kamei, Alison Hicks, John McAlister, Pat Showalter (virtually).

MVHA Board member and Performing Arts Committee Chair Carol Donahue recently accepted a proclamation from the City Council declaring October as Arts and Humanities Month in Mountain View. Our city joins communities across the nation in highlighting the vital role the arts and humanities play in society. Everyone is encouraged to set aside time to express themselves creatively and to participate in local cultural events sponsored by our city, MHVA, and other organizations this year and beyond.

Community Outreach


Pamela Baird, MVHA President and Carol Donahue, MVHA Board Member, at the Harvest Festival

Members of the board and volunteers have been busy this past summer attending various community events. **The Harvest History Festival** held September 26 was a wonderful way to explain MVHA and the local history. Carol Donahue and Pamela Baird enjoyed sharing stories with visitors to our table.

Other events in which MVHA had an information table this past summer were **neighborhood socials** held at Mariposa, Bubb, Bush-Mercy and Monta Loma parks. Meeting people at neighborhood social events gives MVHA the opportunity to educate people about our organization and our mission to preserve the stories and history of Mountain View. The Volunteer Fair on August 22 was a great event. Board member Carol Donahue and Savitha Rao (MVHA volunteer) spoke to interested potential volunteers.

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2026

The MVHA welcomes new members! You can also join/renew online at **www.mountainviewhistorical.org**. The MVHA is a tax-exempt organization under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), Tax ID 94-6115407. Membership is tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

- ☐ New Membership
- ☐ Membership Renewal
- ☐ Household Annual Membership *$30/year*
- ☐ Individual Lifetime Membership *$300*
- ☐ *I'm interested in volunteer opportunities*

Name(s) _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

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Thank you

FALLWINTER

Calendar 2026 Fall

October 18
History Event hosted by the Library
"Spirit of '76- A Look Back at Mountain View's Bicentennial" 2 pm

October 25
Walking Tour 2 pm
meet at the train station
Registration is required

November 1
Quarterly History Event
"A Taste of Mountain View
The History of Wineries in Mountain View" 2 pm at the Library

November 2
MVHA Board meeting 6 pm on zoom

November 22
Walking Tour 2 pm
meet at the train station
Registration is required

February 7, 2027
Quarterly History Event

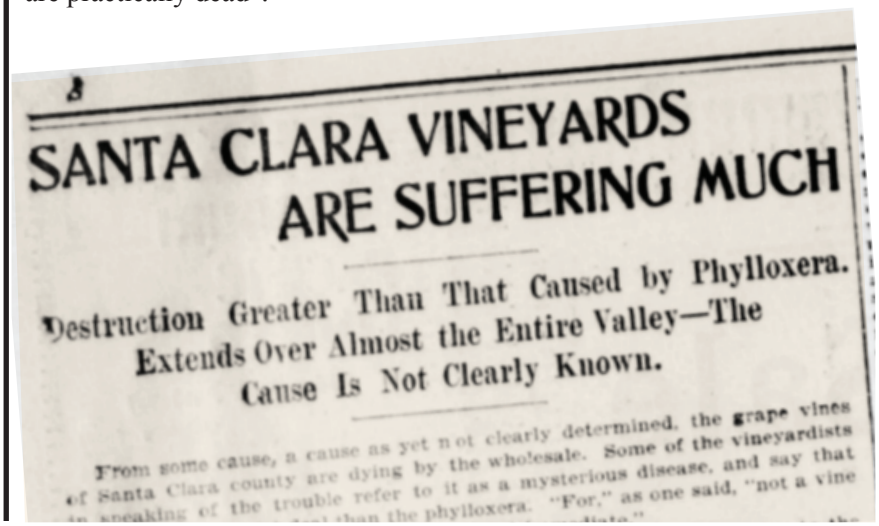
Looking Back:
Images from the Archives

This shocking headline was featured in the San Jose Daily Mercury newspaper on June 22,1901. The combination of several years of drought and the phylloxera infestation devastated the wine growing grapes in Mountain View and the surrounding area.

According to the San Jose Daily Mercury in an article published October 28, 1901 — "hundreds and hundreds of acres of vines are practically dead".



**"The phylloxera, a true gourmet, finds out the best vineyards and attaches itself to the best wines."
— Punch, 6 Sep. 1890**



SANTA CLARA VINEYARDS ARE SUFFERING MUCH

Destruction Greater Than That Caused by Phylloxera. Extends Over Almost the Entire Valley—The Cause Is Not Clearly Known.

From some cause, a cause as yet not clearly determined, the grape vines of Santa Clara county are dying by the wholesale. Some of the vineyardists in speaking of the trouble refer to it as a mysterious disease, and say that

EST. 1954
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