



# Alameda PRESERVATION Press

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMEDA  
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

*John M. Jameson Construction:*  
**Foundations, Ground Water  
Management, and More**  
**Sunday, February 9, 2014 at 7:00 pm**

**Immanuel Lutheran Church: 1420 Lafayette Street, Alameda, CA**  
(Parking available at the corner of Chestnut Street and Santa Clara Avenue.)  
**Free for AAPS members; \$5 for non-members**

## Restoring Our Architectural Heritage From The Ground Up

*Story by Jim Smallman*

John M. Jameson Construction specializes in the repair of foundations and structural repairs of residential homes and commercial property. Located in Alameda, they serve all neighboring cities within the Bay Area and Northern California. The company believes that top quality work and service are a must with every job. Customer satisfaction is guaranteed.

John Jameson, born in San Francisco, came to Alameda as a baby and has lived here ever since. He attended Franklin School, Haight School and was in the last graduating class attending the Historic Alameda High School. Growing up, he lived in a Joseph A. Leonard Queen Anne on Clinton Avenue. As it happens, John and his family still live in a historic Joseph A. Leonard Queen Anne on Clinton Avenue, but that's getting ahead of his story. John's historic preservation credentials were established early in his life, and they continue today.

*continued on page 2...*

*John Jameson, well known for Alameda structural restoration will review some of his recent projects at the February lecture.*



*From The Ground Up...continued from page 1.*

John attended Laney College, and then began a twenty-year career as a Union iron worker, Local 378. He worked on construction of the BART system, the new Cypress structure, the Federal Building in downtown Oakland, and the 580/680 BART/Freeway interchange. These massive structures are, in a sense, the historic architecture of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Eventually John applied his talents and the skills he honed in heavy construction to the preservation and restoration of Alameda's historic legacy. From 2001 to 2003, John worked for Alameda foundation pioneer Ken Gutleben. In 2004 John started his own general contracting firm, which he owns and manages today. Although his specialty is foundation and structural work, he has completed many restorations, including 1837 Clinton Avenue, for which John was personally honored with a 2010 Preservation Award from AAPS.

Well beyond just foundation replacement, this project demonstrated the extraordinary skills of John and his team. They removed the stucco cocoon that had buried the Victorian details of this magnificent house, and restored the surviving original details. They removed a misguided 1950s era kitchen remodel, eliminating a lowered ceiling and inappropriate aluminum windows. While honoring the Victorian surroundings, the new kitchen also created a fully functional modern gourmet food preparation space—a combination often difficult to achieve.

During the construction period, John's wife, Jill, often visited the work. As the restoration progressed, John and Jill fell in love with the emerging Joseph A. Leonard masterpiece. Once the interior had been completed, they leased the house for their own family, including three teenagers and live there today.

We are so pleased that John will share his experience in preserving Alameda's architectural heritage, literally from the ground up.

**Jameson Contractors**  
**2515 Santa Clara Avenue, Ste. #206**  
**Alameda CA, 94501**

**Office: 510-749-8363**  
**Cell: 510-755-3975**

**john@jamesoncontractors.com**  
**www.jamesoncontractors.com**



*This is the business end of foundation construction. Image shows how the house is supported while the construction is proceeding.*



*The kitchen upgrade at 1837 Clinton Avenue involved several subcontractors, all coordinated by John Jameson.*

*Leonardville has regained two of its graceful Queen Annes at the corner of Clinton Avenue and Lafayette Street thanks to the Jameson Construction team.*





## IN APPRECIATION

After several years of serving as the AAPS website coordinator, Kevis Brownson is officially stepping down. In addition to being an active AAPS member and frequent volunteer, Kevis was the force behind getting the AAPS website fully functional and helped re-design the layout to its current form. Over the years, she has spent countless hours working to keep the site up-to-date with the latest articles, newsletters, and items of interest. She also made it possible for people to join AAPS or make donations electronically. In addition, Kevis launched our presence on Facebook and continued to look for ways to expand our presence online and in social media.

**Thank you Kevis for all your hard work!**

## AAPS Would Like to Welcome New Board Members Dennis Reno, Claudia Bowman, and Johanna Hall

### AAPS BOARD MEMBERS 2014

<i>President</i> Christopher Buckley 510-523-0411	<i>Corresponding Secretary</i> Claudia Bowman 510-393-1600
<i>1st Vice President</i> Jim Smallman 714-318-4106	<i>Recording Secretary</i> Patsy Baer 510-769-1143
<i>2nd Vice President</i> Dennis Reno 510-522-8208	<i>Member at Large</i> Johanna Hall 510-701-9392
<i>Treasurer</i> Bob Risley 510-864-1103	<i>Advisor to the Board</i> Nancy Hird 510-523-0825

For more information, please contact:  
Alameda Architectural Preservation Society  
P.O. Box 1677 • Alameda, CA 94501 • 510-479-6489  
www.alameda-preservation.org  
Newsletter Design: Valerie Turpen 510-522-3734

## GET INVOLVED & MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

The Preservation Action Committee meets at 7:00 pm usually on the first Monday of each month to address issues important to the architectural preservation of the City of Alameda.

If you would like to attend a meeting, be added to the Google Group list or would like obtain more information, please contact **Christopher Buckley** at 510-523-0411 or [cbuckleyAACP@att.net](mailto:cbuckleyAACP@att.net)



## THE ALAMEDA ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

**(AAPS)** has been protecting the architectural legacy of Alameda's historic buildings for more than 35 years. Through AAPS action committees, educational seminars and home tours, citizens of Alameda have learned to embrace their diverse older neighborhoods. Over 4,000 buildings are on the City's Historic Building Study List. Alameda City Hall, one of the oldest in California, is a historical monument.

Alameda retains the rich charm of a bygone era, in both residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. Alamedans responded to AAPS's preservation mission back in the early 1970s, when Victorians were being demolished in order to construct large apartment buildings. AAPS, then called the Alameda Victorian Preservation Society (AVPS), helped pass a local initiative, Measure A, that preserved vintage homes by forbidding the construction of buildings with more than two housing units. To learn more about Alameda architectural treasures and the organization, visit the AAPS website:

**[www.alameda-preservation.org](http://www.alameda-preservation.org)**

## AAPS MEMBERSHIP

Join the AAPS or renew your membership by sending this form back with your payment or visit our website and pay with PayPal. Call AAPS at 510-479-6489 if you have any questions.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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☐ Single \$30 ☐ Senior \$20 each ☐ Donation \$\_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: AAPS P.O. Box 1677, Alameda, CA 94501**

Credit cards accepted online. **[www.alameda-preservation.org](http://www.alameda-preservation.org)**

## Holiday Party a Glittering Success

Story by Jim Smallman

Some seventy AAPS members and guests gathered in Mary Jacak's beautiful home on Sunday evening, December 15, to celebrate the season. Sprays of greenery, intimate dining tables topped with red table clothes and candles highlighted the beautiful decorations.

The evening began with hors d'oeuvres distributed around the house. Charlie Howell hosted the bar, serving a wonderful selection of fine wines. In keeping with the season, Charlie looked suspiciously like Santa Claus with his spectacular white beard.

The main course, served buffet style from the dining room table, featured ham and turkey roasts,

with a cornucopia of side dishes: veggie dishes, potatoes au gratin, breads... really too much to list. It was a memorable feast.

The dessert table brought the evening to a marvelous conclusion: all manner of pies, bundt cakes, cookies, fruit platters competed for the attention of party-goers. Throughout the evening the crowd enjoyed a background of holiday music.

As the evening drew to a close, current president Erich Stiger thanked the outgoing board and introduced the new board. Erich also thanked Mary Jacak for sharing her home. It was truly a memorable evening.



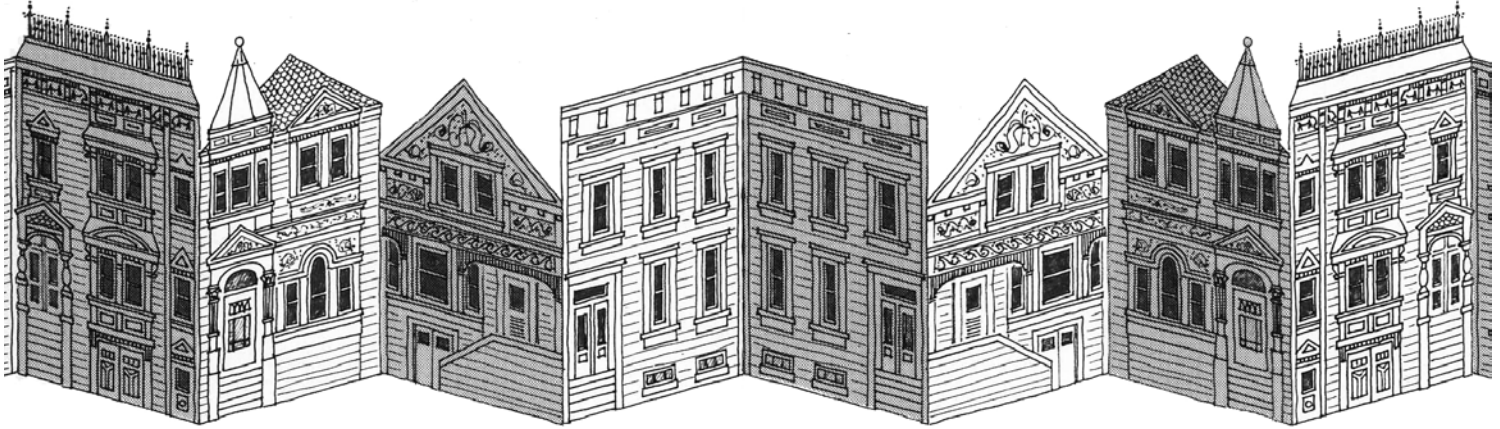
Mary Jacak hosted the AAPS holiday party at her Colonial Revival residence.



Good food, libations and holiday cheer made for a festive gathering at the AAPS annual holiday party. The event was attended by long-time and new members interested in preservation in Alameda. Left: Janice Cantu and John. Above: Charlie Howell and Patsy Baer. Bottom left: Ellen and Glen Chesnut. Bottom right: Denise Brady and new board member Johanna Hall. Photos: Jim Smallman & Valerie Turpen.







Victorian zigzag drawing: Richard Knight

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION SEASON IN ALAMEDA 2014

## **Tuesday, January 21, 2014, 7:00 pm**

Mayor Marie Gilmore declares Historic Preservation Season 2014 open.  
Council Chambers, City Hall, 2263 Santa Clara Avenue. Free.

## **Sunday, February 9, 2014, 7:00 pm**

**AAPS Lecture Series: John M. Jameson Construction Foundations, Ground Water Management and More**

A talk by Alameda contractor John Jameson. Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1420 Lafayette Street. Free for AAPS members; \$5 for others.

## **Thursday March 27, 2014, 7:00 pm**

**Twenty-seven Years Aglow** with architect Richard Rutter, who designed the lighting to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Golden Gate Bridge in 1987. Sponsor: the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS). Alameda Museum, 2324 Alameda Avenue. Free for Museum and AAPS members, \$10 for others.

## **Saturday April 12, 2014, 11:00 am – Noon**

**Kids & Queen Victoria**, the 17<sup>th</sup> annual show featuring the art of elementary students studying 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture, history, and culture. Special guest: Queen Victoria herself! Alameda Museum, 2324 Alameda Avenue. Free.

## **Thursday April 24, 2014, 7:00 pm**

**Bay Area Copper 1900 – 1950**

**Dirk van Erp & His Influence** by author Gus Bostrom, proprietor of the Craftsman mecca California Historical Design store in Berkeley. Sponsor: Judith Lynch, member City of Alameda Historical Advisory Board. Alameda Museum, 2324 Alameda Avenue. Free for Museum members, \$10 for others.

## **May 18, 2014, details TBD**

**Alameda Architectural Preservation Society Preservation Awards**  
17<sup>th</sup> annual ceremony and reception. Free.

## **Thursday May 29, 2014, 7:00 pm**

**Old Alameda** by Dennis Evanosky and Eric Kos, a slide lecture about the original three small towns consolidated into the City of Alameda. Sponsor: Peter Fletcher, Broker, Windermere Real Estate. Alameda Museum, 2324 Alameda Avenue. Free for Museum members, \$10 for others.

## **Saturday June 14, 2014**

**All Aboard! 3rd Annual Trolley Tour**

Curious about "Old Alameda," the early days of our former peninsula, only an island since 1902? Take the trolley tour, a benefit for the Alameda Museum. Narrators are *Alameda Sun* publishers and authors Dennis Evanosky and Eric Kos. Your \$50 ticket includes a two hour journey aboard a motorized cable car and a reception at the Naval Air Museum. Two flights, 10:00 am and 1:00 pm. Tour sponsor: Peter Fletcher, Broker, Windermere Real Estate. To reserve your seat, call 510-521-1177 or email [judithal@comcast.net](mailto:judithal@comcast.net).



Queen Victoria assumes the body each year to visit Alameda, where more than 4,000 buildings are named in her honor. Photo Judith Lynch.

## Colusa Sandstone and the Alameda Carnegie Library

By Corri Jimenez

One fine day this summer, I was walking pass the 1902 Alameda Carnegie Free Library where I stopped to admire the building's contrasting golden terracotta bricks and rich gray sandstone foundation. As I stared at the sandstone and its scored tool marks, it puzzled me because it looked really familiar. Quickly, I Googled on my iPhone the keywords: "Alameda Carnegie Library sandstone," and instantly the building's 1982 National Register of Historic Places nomination popped up. As I read the description, the words "Colusa County" caught my eye right away. "I KNEW IT!" I exclaimed outloud, stoked that I could recognize Colusa sandstone by sight.

The dark-colored gray sandstone was founded by Pioneer John Sites up north in Colusa County, not far from the town of Sites, sometime between 1887 and 1888 north of Stone Corral Creek. By 1891, the quarry was established as the Sites Sandstone Company, managed by David O'Neil of Alameda County, and by early as 1892, a mill with two gang saws, steam channelers, drills, and hoists was in place. Mill housing was also established in the small community of Quarrytown, which housed approximately 20 employees as laborers, drillers, and quarrymen in boarding houses by 1894. The quarried sandstone went via the Colusa & Lake Railroad (C&LRR), a railroad that connected the town of Sites to the county seat of Colusa, where it was shipped down barges on the Sacramento River from Colusa, or transported by the Southern Pacific Railroad from Colusa Junction, to an Oakland yard where it was finished as a building material.

During the quarry's early years, it was recorded as having financial troubles and laid idle. The Colusa Stone Company purchased the Sites Sandstone Company, and operated it under new management beginning sometime in 1895 to 1897. The Colusa Stone Company's biggest contribution was supplying sandstone for San Francisco's Union Depot & Ferry Building, the largest building constructed of Colusa sandstone in the city and still stands today. Sometime between 1902 and 1903, F.E. Knowles changed the company's name from the Colusa Stone Company to the Colusa Sandstone Company. Knowles, as early as 1878, owned the "Knowles & Co. Granite and Marble Works" on Seventh and Castro Streets in Oakland. The company secured an office on San Francisco's Townsend Street and it was from here, under Knowles' direction, that Colusa sandstone was heavily

*Macadam, a bituminous material mixed with stone aggregate and valued as an early form of asphaltting. Adjacent to the Alameda Free Library, a driveway off Santa Clara Avenue appears to be made with Colusa sandstone macadam.*



*San Francisco's Union Depot & Ferry Building was the largest construction of Colusa sandstone in the city. The building survived the 1906 earthquake, showcasing the strength of the product. The subsequent demand made Colusa Sandstone the leading provider of sandstone in the state. Photos: Corri Jimenez.*

marketed to master architects, such as Willis Polk, A. Page Brown, and Coxhead & Coxhead, to construct luxurious buildings in the City with Colusa sandstone.

Due to the success of the Colusa Sandstone Company, a second quarry face was exposed south of Stone Corral Creek. In the early 1900s, the McGilvray Stone Company, owned by John D. McGilvray, Sr. According to the *Colusa Sun*, the McGilvray Stone Company employed 10 to 20 men in 1900 to operate its Colusa quarry operations. In 1903, 146,828 cubic feet were quarried, grossing a total of \$312,500; this was the heyday for the both quarries.

The San Francisco Earthquake on April 18, 1906 devastated the city and all of the Bay Area, however among the rubble in the City, the 1896 Union Depot & Ferry Building stood and epitomized strength of Colusa sandstone as "earthquake proof." In May 1906, the *Colusa Sun* recorded "...demand for Colusa stone was never greater than now...the buildings in San Francisco that were of this stone stood the shake and the fire better than any other class of material, which is turning the attention of the builders in the direction of the Colusa product, and it will not be long until the quarries of Colusa County will be running day and night." The State Mining Bureau annual report of 1906 recorded that Colusa County was the "lead producer of fireproof sandstone." The Stone Corral Creek quarries hit a second boom between 1910 and 1911 with production grossing \$106,532. In 1911 alone, Colusa sandstone was recorded as the biggest sandstone provider in the state, with a year's production totaling 255,313 cubic feet, and was valued at \$127,314; an increase compared to the year before when 165,971 cubic feet was produced for \$80,443. The Stone Corral Creek quarries successfully grossed 776,492 cubic feet of sandstone with a total value of \$1,250,156 between 1903 and 1911.

Colusa sandstone as a product was overall respected as "very even-grained and is quite uniform in color, being a blue-gray which darkens but slightly in weathering [and] is exceptional for general use as a building material." Colusa sandstone buildings constructed in San Francisco include the Spreckles bandstand in Golden Gate Park (1900); three wings of the St. Francis Hotel (1904); the James Flood Building (1904); the 17-story Humboldt Savings Bank (1905); the Aronson Building (1906); the Italian-American Bank (1907); the Gunst Building

*continued on page 7...*



**Colusa Sandstone...***continued from page 6.*

(c. 1908); and three Home Telephone Buildings (1908). Besides the rich connection of Colusa sandstone to San Francisco, the product was shipped as far away as Honolulu, Hawaii. It was also used locally where it is best represented in the Colonial-Revival Colusa Carnegie Library (1906), a National Register-listed historic property, in addition to the 1902 Alameda Free Library. The unusable pieces of sandstone as stone particles were utilized as railroad ballast and road macadam, a preferred material for wagon roads. Macadam, a bituminous material mixed with stone aggregate was valued as an early form of asphalt. Adjacent to the Alameda Free Library, a driveway off Santa Clara Avenue appears to be made with Colusa sandstone macadam.



*The Colusa Carnegie Library, at 260 Sixth Street in Colusa, California, built of Colusa sandstone. The Carnegie library built in 1906 now houses the Colusa Police Department. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981, and is one of many local Colusa sandstone sites in the county.*



*The Alameda Free Library, a Carnegie library was built in 1902 with Colusa sandstone. It was the first designated building for the city's library, which had previously been housed on Park Street and at City Hall.*

In 1914, the C&LRR dissolved, and with no railroad to ship the material, both quarries ceased operations and all assets were liquidated by 1915. Some claim the use of innovative and less expensive building materials, such as Portland cement and an increased use of steel as lighter framing, caused massive solid stone buildings to become too costly and they were no longer being constructed.

Building materials and their significance are casually overlooked but have a rich unsung history. The Alameda Free Library is a witness to the great quality of Colusa sandstone and its fine craftsmanship with significance to not only the City of Alameda but also all of the Bay Area, especially the 1896 Ferry Building in San Francisco. In conclusion, I encourage all Alamedans to seek out the sandstone that probably exists all over Alameda.

**Sources:** Information in this article came from a larger built environment cultural resource report for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation that is currently not for the public use. To find the Alameda Free Library, National Register nomination, check out: <http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NRHP/Text/82002152.pdf>.



## MEYERS HOUSE & GARDEN OPEN TWICE EACH MONTH

The Meyers House is a City of Alameda Landmark, operated by the Alameda Museum. Located on a tree-lined residential street, the grounds of the Meyers House offer a beautiful and unique period venue for your wedding, reception or photo shoot. The house is also available for private group tours.

**The Meyers House is now open for tours twice each month, on the second and fourth Saturdays beginning Saturday, January 11, 2014 from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm.** Your \$5 admission includes a docent tour of the Meyers House Museum, a visit to a large display of Alameda house styles and details, and a glimpse into Henry Meyers' architectural studio.

**2021 ALAMEDA AVENUE • ALAMEDA CA 94501 • 510-521-1247**



P.O. Box 1677  
Alameda, CA 94501

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*In This Issue:*

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- *Colusa Sandstone and the Alameda Carnegie Library*

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FAMILY HISTORY FAIR**

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[www.alameda-preservation.org](http://www.alameda-preservation.org)  
for more details.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION  
CALL CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY  
AT 510-523-0411

**AAPS SCHEDULE of EVENTS 2014**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9**

**7:00 pm**

*John M. Jameson Construction  
Foundations, Ground Water Management, and More*  
IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

•

**SUNDAY, APRIL 13**

**7:00 PM**

*Painting Old Houses: Dealing with Lead Paint & Other Issues*  
IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

•

**SUNDAY, MAY 18**

**DETAILS TBD**

*17th Annual Preservation Award Gala*