



Petaluma Historical
Library & Museum

Petaluma Museum Association

Preserving the Unique History of Petaluma and Providing
Educational and Cultural Services to the Community

Quarterly Newsletter



Fall/Winter 2017

Volume 27, Issue 4

On the Cover

The cover shows a kindergarten class photo taken at Pepper School circa 1915 by photographer Joe Wayne. The photo is from the museum's collection of J.C. Wayne's B&W glass plate negatives that were donated by the Poehlmann family.

It is a reminder of the unique man who founded the school and the man who portrayed him for years as a leader of the Petalumans of Yesteryear. That man, Bill Hammerman, passed away recently and this article is a compilation of Bill's writings about Pepper the man and the Pepper School.



Bill Hammerman as "Mr. Pepper"

William Howard Pepper

by Bill Hammerman

Mr. Pepper came to California in 1850 like so many others in search of gold. Like so many others, he had only modest success in the gold fields and came to Petaluma in 1858. He established a very successful orchard and nursery business.

Over the next few years, he gradually acquired 255 acres of land six miles west of town.

His original house still stands near the intersection of Pepper Road and Pepper Lane. Mr. Pepper hired local boys to help him in his nursery business. For a brief period, a young lad named Luther Burbank worked for him; as well as Christopher Nissen, the founder of one of the area's prominent families. William Pepper married late in life (age 50), to a widow named Phoebe Perry who had a daughter. As was the custom of prominent and prosperous citizens in the 1880s, Mr. Pepper took a holiday in Europe and while visiting Germany, discovered Dr. Frederic Froebel, who had created a program called, "the children's garden," or in German "Kindergarten".

The Argus-Courier announced in its January 7, 1893 edition, "There is a movement on foot to establish a free kindergarten in the city with the primary teacher, Mrs. Kirkpatrick in charge." According to a March 1, 1893 article, Mrs. Gus Fairbanks was circulating a petition seeking pledges to support the kindergarten. In addition, Mr. Pepper offered the use of his property located on the southwest corner of Washington and Liberty Streets under the condition that the city would issue a bond, "the payment of which would not be oppressive to the taxpayers."

(Continued on page 8)

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The Petaluma Museum Association Newsletter is published quarterly and distributed to our members. Many thanks to all our contributors and to our proofreaders and volunteers who help with our mailings.

If you would like to contribute any news or item of interest to our newsletter you can email to mary@petalumamuseum.com

Deadline for submission is January 1, 2018

Mary Rowe, **Newsletter editor**

Petaluma Museum Association
20 Fourth St.
Petaluma, CA 94952

President's Message

Greetings, PMA Members,

Summer is always a busy time at the Museum (but when is it not?). In August, our Garden Court turned into a Wine Garden for Cinnabar's *Taste of Petaluma* event. Hundreds of guests enjoyed our beautiful setting while sipping, snacking and listening to live music. While the festivities were happening outside the Museum, inside the Sonoma County Genealogical Society visited our exhibit and held their meeting. A few of us represented the PMA at the Newcomers Social at Aquas Café later in the month.

In September we were hopping; Thanks to Outreach Director, Sarah Jochumson for installing and manning our booth at Art in the Park, offering historical conversation and membership opportunities. Our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon was held in the Garden Court, with a Day of the Dead theme, complete with a mariachi band and taco bar. Thank you to Volunteer Director, Dianne Ledou for heading up this special event, and to the board, staff and volunteers who helped in showing our appreciation. Without our volunteers we would not be able to complete our mission. The Petaluma Visitors Programs monthly City-wide Marketing Meeting was hosted by the Museum; meetings are held at a different location each month. The PMA participated in "Many Voices, Many Choices" at the Hotel Petaluma, sponsored by the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County. Thanks to Harry Nieuwboer and Cathy Teague for representing the Museum with me. The Museum hosted the Leadership Petaluma class for their "History Day" again this year. Thanks to our presenters: Paula Freund, John FitzGerald, the Petalumans of Yesteryear, Archaeologist Bill Roop, Adobe State Park and the Petaluma Trolley & Living History Museum, for a historically educating and entertaining day. The presentation by Santa Rosa historian, Jeff Elliott on "Petaluma's Three Crises" was fascinating and debunked a few "historical events" that I'd heard of for years. It was also with great sadness that the "Portraits of Petaluma's Pioneers" exhibit came to a close. The Museum was so honored to have such a professional and in-depth exhibit, and we cannot thank Paula Freund, curator, enough for all her efforts.

October 1 was the Heritage Homes & Landmarks Preservation Awards. Thank you to HH&L Director, Rob Girolo, and all the Heritage Homes committee members, for a lovely afternoon celebrating the preservation efforts in Petaluma. The following weekend we celebrated with El Dia de Los Muertos Artist Opening Reception. Then the devastating fires began, which affected all of us in some way. Those who were able continued to serve the Museum, offering a respite from the reality outside. A few PMA meetings and events were postponed, and after much discussion, we decided to hold our Tequila Pairing Fundraiser on October 19th. Although attendance was down, spirits were up. A festive evening was much needed, and the pairings didn't disappoint. Thanks to Public Service Director, Clint Gilbert, and all the volunteers who helped set-up, serve and then put it all away again. And special thanks to Preferred Sonoma Caterers and Willibee's for all their help and support with this fundraiser.

We invite you to our three holiday events: our PMA Annual Meeting & Holiday Party on Dec. 1; Heritage Homes Parlor Tour on Dec. 3 and our New Years Eve Concert on Dec. 31.

I, along with all of us at the Museum, Thank You for your support,

Kathy Barron-Fries

Regular Features

Petaluma
History &
Commentary:
*The Petaluma
Woman's Club After
Pearl Harbor*

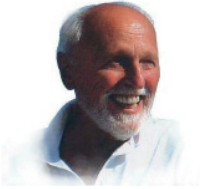
Museum
Highlights

Volunteer
Spotlight

Program of Public
Service (insert)

Museum Collection
Update

Historical News
of Petaluma



Petaluma History & Commentary

by Skip Sommer

THE PETALUMA WOMAN'S CLUB AFTER PEARL HARBOR

IN JANUARY OF 1942, Petaluma had become very busy mobilizing for war. It had been less than a month since President Roosevelt's "*Day that shall live in infamy*" speech about the tragedy at Pearl Harbor, and our community was in a fright. It was the beginning of the "trade butter for guns" campaign locally, as our Argus-Courier Editor, Duncan Olmsted, said: "We are going to have to do with less and less." Petaluma in '42 had a population of 9,000 and boasted several feed mills, packing plants, an incubator factory, a marble works, creameries, tanneries, hatcheries, a box factory and a line and twine manufacturer, among others. Over a quarter million tons of merchandise were shipped out of here by river, each year.



Petaluma Woman's Club ca. 1942

Petaluma women were among the first to organize into the Home Nurses Corps, the Motor Corps and the Red Cross Canteen. And the Petaluma Woman's Club led the way. More about those dynamic ladies later, but first, here is a glimpse of what was happening in our community in that frightening first month of 1942.

On January 2nd, Petaluma Mayor Woodson called for volunteer air wardens to supervise blackouts and to check residences for buckets of dry sand and availability of ladders, in case of incendiary attack. By January 8th, city workers had distributed piles of sand for "bomb control" around town and homeowners were told to pick it up. Petaluma Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts helped deliver it to the elderly and infirm.

It was also mandated that lights in chicken houses be eliminated, or that the chicken houses themselves be abandoned for the duration. And radio stations were

told to stop "all quiz-on-the-street" type programs, which might be "used by Axis agents to secretly communicate with submarines." Editor Olmsted stated: "We are going over the top in our civilian defense program. Petaluma is prepared!"

"Prepared" perhaps, but nerves were on edge as the following events occurred that month: The Hotel Petaluma was ordered to remove its neon sign hanging out over Washington Street because it may "impede military vehicles" and its fourth-story rooftop was designated an air observation post. A call was put out to farmers

and ranchers to register their horses and mules for potential military usage. Also, that month, the Sonoma County Rationing Board announced that our entire county would be allotted just 75 tires for private usage in February. Editor Olmsted warned: "Many of our pleasure cars will be laid-up for the duration." He also



quipped: "We may get back to the horse and buggy days."

At the same time, the manufacture of vehicles for private use had been drastically reduced and Petaluma auto dealers were told to freeze the sale of cars and trucks already on their lots, as the possibility of the government requisitioning existing cars was floated-out here. Mid-month, the Petaluma Rifle and Pistol Club held a target practice in the basement of Hunt and Behrens feed mill and asked everyone: "If you own a pistol or rifle, bring it." Open military target practice would also be held at the Mecham Ranch on Stony Point Road for army units and the public was ordered to "stay away".

To join in the war campaign, our Tomasini Hardware Co. pledged "hardware without profiteering" (i.e., no bump in pricing) and the Petaluma Lutheran Church thought it wise to ban their services in German "to free the church from all suspicion." Plus our Germanic Hermann Son's Hall held a dinner that month, advertising that, in case anyone doubted it: "The hall is equipped for black-outs."

But the Petaluma Woman's Club led the way. The Club, founded in 1895, with the motto to "do all in our power to make Petaluma an ideal town, that may be known as the home of good citizenship," boasted Mrs. George McNear (nee Ida Belle Denman), as President then. By 1913, the Club had purchased a lot on "B" Street for \$3,000 and hired famed architect Brainerd Jones to design the Craftsman-style clubhouse that sits there now. The construction cost was \$5,555 in gold coin. Membership at the time was just 40. But, during the First World War, members became very involved in Red Cross activities, as well as raising money for the war effort through Liberty Bonds. In responding to the Spanish Flu epidemic of those years, the clubhouse was utilized as an emergency hospital. By 1922, membership had reached 300.

As our town was swept into WWII, a Woman's Club rally raised over \$14,000 for war bonds and members wrapped over 20,000 bandages per month, plus sent

many Christmas gifts to servicemen. Club members were also early joiners in our air warden effort, as well as organizing commercial canning, victory gardens and blood banks.

As war tensions rose, Club membership grew to 336 and such prominent Petaluma names as Mae Tomasetti, Vivian Lasher, A. Tomasini, Shirley Lawrence, Louise Joerger, Dorothy Henris, Lillian Ramaticci, Dorothy Klemenok, Althea Olmsted, Mary Ronsheimer, Connie Mahoney, Ida Boysen and Ella Cavanagh were members. Past Presidents include Nellie Denman, Mrs. L.C. Byce, Mrs. Joseph Tuttle, Mahtee Olmsted and Lillian Fratini. These names reflected the founders and movers and shakers of this community.



1943 USO Dance at Petaluma Hospitality House

The Petaluma Woman's Club joined with the USO in sponsoring popular dances for men in uniform at their clubhouse and those dances became a really big deal. Promotional material said it would be: "A series of dances, to which service men in this area will be invited. Young women, who have been previously registered, will be present as partners." The girls were required to be at least 18 years of age and to register their names with our Chamber of Commerce. The Club even carried something called "War Risk Insurance" to cover any and all problems.

"100 GIRLS were accepted by the registration committee!" (Zowie!) The dance was to be a formal affair, the music was promised to be excellent and admission was by invitation only. The Argus review called the first dance event a "brilliant success with fashionably gowned women and much fun" and the Woman's Club continued holding those dances all through the war-time.

Okay, SO NOW,.... GET THIS! There was a re-staging of those great USO dances on November 10, 2017, produced by our now 119-year-old Petaluma Woman's Club! Swing music and 1940s costumes were encouraged. (I'm told, however, that 100 young hostesses were not furnished for this one.).... (Sigh).

MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS



Annual Volunteer Luncheon by Diane Ledou

THE PMA COURTYARD was the setting for a very relaxing Volunteer Luncheon that was catered by Nopalito, music by Los Gu'achis and Petit Fours by Divine Delights and Abraham Solar speaking on El Dia de los Muertos celebration 2017. My very appreciative "Thank You" to Paula Freund for

the lovely tables; Alice Rebizzio for making calls, and assembling the Volunteer badges; Solange Russek, Faith Ross, Liz Cohee, Mary Rowe and Harry Nieuwboer for their "behind the scene" help; Board of Directors, Angela Ryan, Kathy Fries, Clint Gilbert, Kate Hawker and Freyda Ravitz for your help throughout the luncheon. But, mostly I want to **thank ALL the volunteers** who have given of their time, support and enthusiasm to the Museum. We could not have done our events and exhibits without you!!

El Dia de los Muertos

This exhibit titled "Love Without Borders" opened on October 7 with an Artist Reception featuring the work of Sonoma County Latino Artists: Sammy Sanchez Monter, Angela Pryor and Nestor Torres Lupercio. There was a large Community Altar (shown on left), where one could leave a photo or write a message to a loved one. There were also four traditional altars.





Homer Johnstone, as Captain Thomas Baylis, gives his presentation on this prominent business man and civic leader.

“History Day”

On September 19, 2017 the museum hosted Leadership Petaluma’s “History Day”. Several presentations were given on that day. Paula Freund, as the curator of the Petaluma Museum Association’s recent exhibit, “Portraits of Petaluma Pioneers, Personal Images & Public Stories of A California Rivertown,” shared her intimate knowledge about many of our community’s early settlers. John FitzGerald, spoke about the river and its history. The Petalumans of Yesterday came dressed as our early pioneers and gave a presentation.

The leadership members enjoyed a lunch out back in our garden court under the magnificent oak tree.

October Fundraisers

The museum held three very successful fundraisers in October. The **Tequila Pairing** was enjoyed by everyone as they sampled the different tequilas along with the delicious bites that were paired to each tasting. The weather was beautiful for our **River Cruise** and everyone appreciated the narration by John FitzGerald and the refreshments. Thanks to Dolphin Charters for providing this wonderful experience to our members. The **Cemetery Tour** on the next day at Cypress Hill is always an enlightening experience with the Petalumans of Yesteryear. Thanks to all the volunteers who worked these events!



Passengers on the river cruise enjoy the beautiful weather and scenery. Photo credit Libby FitzGerald



Marshall West as Isaac Wickersham and Leif Ortegren as Lyman Byce

Photo credit Katherine Rinehart

Volunteer Spotlight update.....

Jeanne DeLucca, who was featured in our Spring-Summer 2017 issue, located these photos of her in Golden Gate Park. We had planned to include them with her story but did not have them available at that time. The first one on the right is Jeanne, 5 yrs old, with her uncles Sonny Psuik on left and Connie Psuik in 1949. Sonny served as a Corporal in WWII during the Pacific Campaign. Connie served as a Master Sergeant in both WWII and the Korean War. The other photo shows her at 7 yrs old feeding one of the many squirrels who occupied the park.





News from Heritage Homes & Landmarks

by Kit Schlich, your PMA representative to Petaluma's Historical and Cultural Preservation Committee



2017 Holiday Parlour Tour in Jeopardy, Again

At the time this newsletter goes to press, the annual Holiday Parlour Tour, scheduled for Sunday, December 3rd, lacks enough houses to hold the event. The committee seeks two more historic homes to open their living and dining rooms—decorated for the holidays—to tour-goers from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. All proceeds from the tour supports the Petaluma Museum Association, so it would be unfortunate to cancel it once again.

HH&L Committee Presents the 2017 Preservation Awards

HH&L is pleased to announce six award-winning properties and one distinguished craftsman honored at the October 1st award ceremony held at the PHL&M, attended by proud homeowners and PMA members.

Awards of Great Merit went to the restored Hotel Petaluma courtyard at 205 Kentucky Street (owners Dipak Patel and Satish Patel) and the rescued circa 1860s Victorian at 22 Bodega Avenue (owners Terry and Alena Kosewic).

Awards of Merit went to the Craftsman bungalow at 625 C Street (owners Keven and Rosemary Hart), the Craftsman house-now-office at 522 Petaluma Blvd. South (owners Karl and Michele Bundeson), and the new matching garage to the Victorian house at 315 Howard (owner Mary Tilbury).



Saving this Victorian at 22-24 Bodega Avenue earned its contractor an Award of Great Merit.

An Award of Honorable Mention went to the well-crafted garage door at 500 D Street (owners Rafael and Gabrielle Velez).

An Award for an Individual—Outstanding Talent in the Building Industry—honored Christopher Stevick, who did much of the restoration work on the Hotel Petaluma courtyard.

HH&L thanks these homeowners and the craftsmen who preserved and beautified these fine examples of Petaluma's architectural heritage. Thanks to committee members Rob Girolo, Terry and Alena Kosewic, John Perlis and Kit Schlich for their committee work.

View the slide show— including “before, during and after” photos— assembled for the award ceremony as a video on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Nc77LriuQw&t=87s>



Work restoring the courtyard of the Hotel Petaluma to its original splendor earned the owners an Award of Great Merit.

William Howard Pepper.....from pg 1

Unfortunately, the community and city government did not respond sufficiently to support this innovative educational venture, so Mr. Pepper then donated another \$13,000. to his earlier pledge of \$5,000 for construction purposes and established a trust fund. A Board of Trustees was organized in 1893 to oversee the requirements of the trust. The proposed school, which was to be opened to all children free of charge, regardless of race or creed, was to be built on the property that Mr. Pepper originally offered to the public school district in 1891.

During the second meeting of the Board of Trustees, it was announced that the endowment totaled \$18,003.50. This figure included \$3.50 that was raised by the sale of flowerpots by local community members. The kindergarten opened on December 3, 1894 with an enrollment of 28 pupils. The trust agreement stated that the school was established so that "young children under the age of six years may be trained and educat-

ed in habits of cleanliness, truth, industry, physical development and in all things that tend to make helpful and honorable men and women and a credit to this land of the free and that the said school shall be forever known and called the W. H. Pepper Kindergarten School of Petaluma.

Several pieces of furniture and the merry-go-round from the original Pepper Kindergarten are displayed in an exhibit at the Petaluma Historical Library and Museum at Fourth and B Streets. In addition, a portrait of Mr. Pepper, donated to the Kindergarten in 1917 (eleven years after his death) is on display. The original Pepper School was closed and torn down in 1960 due to fire safety concerns. The property was sold and a new building was constructed at 627 F Street. Pepper School is still operated as a pre-school and the Petaluma community celebrated the school's 100th Anniversary in 1994."



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Petaluma Historical Museum

Petaluma Museum Association
Board of Directors meetings are on the second
Monday of each month at 6:00 pm.

They are open to the public.

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Support your local museum!



HISTORICAL NEWS OF PETALUMA

by Solange Russek and Michael Slade

We would like to acknowledge the California Digital Newspaper (CDN) Program of UC Riverside, the source of all of the items that are going to be presented in this column. The CDN Collection is a project of the Center for Bibliographical Studies and Research (CBSR) at the University of California, Riverside. The CDN Collection is supported in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian.

Sausalito News, January 17, 1890

Petaluma has a body of White Caps, so it is stated, and a man who deserted his wife had to leave town Tuesday on an invitation from that body.

White Caps, who were one of the forerunners of the Ku Klux Klan, were members of a violent lawless movement among farmers during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They attacked people who were considered to be behaving against community standards. People such as men who neglected or abused their family and women who had children out of wedlock.

Daily Alta California, 1857 July 20

LYNCHED.—One Dr. Johnson, a dentist by profession, was tarréd and feathered, in Petaluma. The *Journal* says, that “the charge preferred is that of attempting to commit violence upon the person of a widowed lady from San Francisco, at present on a visit to this place. Of Johnson’s guilt, little or no doubt can be entertained. In addition to this, he is reported to have made similar attempts, at other places in this county, within a few months past. The only apology we can offer for the lawless manner of inflicting punishment adopted by our citizens, is the boasts of Johnson that he could and would whip his way through the entire town.”

*Sexual assault punishment,
19th Century style*


Santa Rosa Press Democrat, 1890 Sept 23

Following is Petaluma’s chapter of accidents: Mrs. James Arbuckle and two other ladies were knocked down by a runaway team Saturday morning. Mrs. Arbuckle had two ribs broken and was otherwise seriously injured. The other ladies escaped with a few bruises.

Mrs. Clara Ellsworth, while taking the cartridges from a loaded pistol, accidentally discharged it. The ball passed through the fleshy part of her arm above the elbow.

T. Cudigo was brought to Petaluma, Saturday, for treatment for injuries received at Bodega last Thursday during the Swiss celebration at that place. The accident was caused by a runaway team. Cudigo had one eye torn out of its socket and one ear torn off, besides other hurts.

*September 1890, clearly a
dangerous time to be in Petaluma*



Elder Financial Protection Network
Ruth W. Robeson, Esq.
Executive Director

17 Keller Street, Suite A
 Petaluma, CA 94952
 707.981.8403

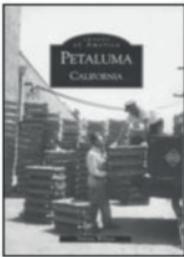
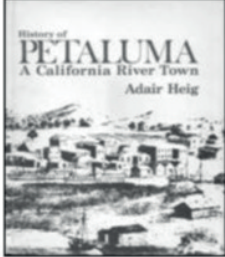
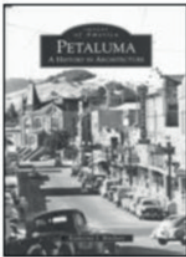
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We also carry CDs & DVDs including Ron Walters "Songs My Grandpa Taught Me"
Thanks to his family for their generous donation of CDs.

20 FOURTH ST., PETALUMA

The Masterpiece of Professor Eugene Urbain "California Yesterday and Today"



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The Curious Story of the Painting's Creation, Exhibition, Storage, Rediscovery and Conservation & An Explicit Analysis of its Antecedents and Iconography

A presentation by Paula Freund
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 Saturday, January 20, 2018, 2:00



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 CalBRE 01331391

BUNDESEN
 616 Petaluma Boulevard South
 Petaluma, CA 94952
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 Direct 707.769.7168
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**DEC. 31
NEW YEAR'S EVE
GALA CONCERT**

Sponsored by Sky Hill Cultural Alliance at the Petaluma Historical Library & Museum. A festive evening with music by the masters, performed by string players from the San Francisco Symphony and Elizabeth Walter, pianist. Don't miss this annual tradition in the "Carnegie Hall" of Petaluma. Complimentary wine and cheese! Balcony seating with elite beverage service.

6-8 pm

**Early Bird Cost (until Dec. 21) \$40/\$60
Buy early! This event sells out!
petalumamuseum.com**

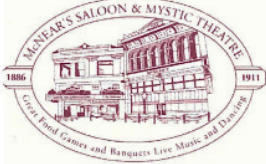


**DEC. 31
"A NIGHT IN VIENNA"**

Hermann Sons' Hall
860 Western Ave.
Magical New Year's Eve in Vienna! Buffet style gourmet dinner with many traditional Viennese dishes and deserts. Enjoy listening and dancing to Strauss Waltzes with live orchestra til midnight! Fine wines and champagne toast celebrate the New Year! Benefits Sky Hill Cultural Alliance-bringing high quality classical music to our community.

**8:30 pm
\$150.00**

**(707) 583-3340 or www.skyhill.org
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WARREN L. DRANIT
ATTORNEY AT LAW

90 South E Street Suite 200
Santa Rosa CA 95404

11 Western Avenue
Petaluma CA 94952
www.smlaw.com

Tel 707 524 1900 Santa Rosa
Tel 707 283 0000 Petaluma
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**Petaluma Historical Library & Museum
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Petaluma, CA 94952-3004

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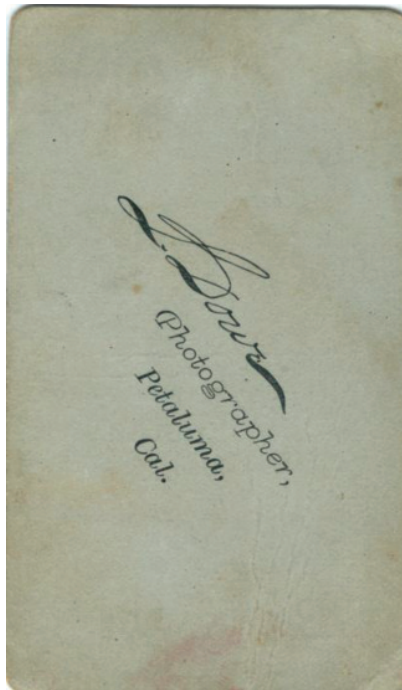
If you prefer, you can join online at petalumamuseum.com, or call 707-778-4398



Museum Collection Update

by Solange Russek
Museum Collections Manager

NEW DONATIONS



1879 Carte-de-Visite

We would like to thank Dolores De Mare for her latest donation of a very unique and whimsical 1879 Carte-de-Visite from Lewis Dowe Photographer from Petaluma. The man is unidentified. Could this be Mr. Dowe with a sense of artistic humor?



Early 1800's Silk Map of Tolay Lake

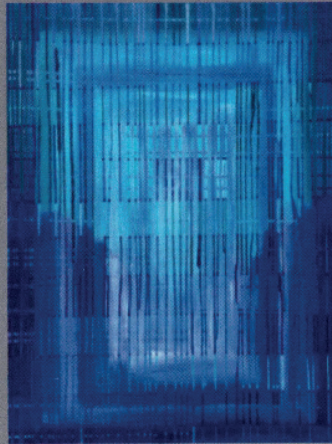
We also would like to thank Greg Grunstrom for donating this hand drawn silk map of Tolay Lake. The map was found by his grandfather Ernie Grunstrom in the early 1970's. The map was rolled and laying along Nemala Road near their Bell R Farm in the Lakeville area.

Thank you to Wayne Dunbar, Aftertec, for scanning and creating a high resolution digital image for our archives.

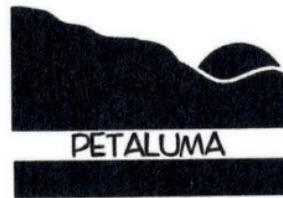
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To learn more, visit PetalumaArts.org.
*Postcard artwork from top left: Virginia Stevens-
Johnson, Mary Mahler, Renee Shipley, Marilyn Dizikes.*

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