



# The Cupola

## Newsletter of the Pardee Home Museum

Fall / Winter 2016

Oakland City Landmark  
1975

National Register of Historical Places  
1976

Alameda County Historical Society Landmark  
1985

California Historic Landmark  
1998

### Governor George Pardee Nomination – Election - Inauguration

By Ron Bachman

Dr. Pardee, our only physician governor, had one term as the political leader of California. He stood for election three times, but won only once (1903-1907). Hitting one time in three is a great batting average for a baseball player (.333), but it was not satisfactory for George. He loved being the center of attention and would have capably led our State as many times as he was elected.

It was the Southern Pacific Railroad that held sway over our State from the early 1860's through 1915 and figured in every one of Pardee's possible elections (1898, 1902, and 1906). George was a Progressive Republican while the other branch of the Republican Party was Railroad Republican.

In the nomination of 1897 George was pitted against Henry Cage, a candidate who was beholden and heavily supported by the railroad. George had fought against the railroad when he was Mayor of Oakland (1894-1896). Cage narrowly won the nomination and became Governor. George had enough support that it was thought he would even have more support in the following election (1902).



Pardee's election pin

Governor Cage did not do well and turned out to be an embarrassment to California as well as the Railroad Republicans. One of his major problems was the denial of a Bubonic Plague epidemic in 1900 that was centered in San Francisco's Chinatown. His denial was an attempt not to lose trade from the Port of San Francisco with ships leaving our Port and bringing cargo to other states and countries. Although the cause of plague was not known, there was a concern that rats that frequently stowed away on ships could transmit the disease. On the other hand George who was both a physician and formerly an Oakland Public Health Commissioner, was taking part in the eradication of the rat population in San Francisco's Chinatown.

Cage lost the support of the Railroad in the next gubernatorial nomination in 1902, and the Southern Pacific finally supported George as somewhat moderate towards the Railroad. In the election Pardee ran against Democrat Franklin Lane who was City Attorney of San Francisco. Interestingly, they both had attended Oakland High school. Pardee won by less than 3,000 votes (out of almost 300,000 voters). After losing, Lane went on to higher political accomplishments at a national level.

George was sworn into office on January 7<sup>th</sup> 1903, and after a parade where he was joined by the former Governor Cage, he gave his inaugural speech. The Inauguration Ball followed a few days later in the State Capital. Interestingly, it was open to the public and cost \$10 (about \$200 in today's value). The capital was decorated in Nile green and shrimp pink. All of the Pardee ladies wore beautiful dresses. Mrs. Helen Pardee wore a beautiful cream moiré dress with a long court

train; Florence (15 years old) a rose pink dress with a transparent lace yolk; Madeline (13) a white crepe dress; Carol (11) a light blue silk dress; and Helen (7) a gaslight green dress. Orchestras played in the Rotunda, the Senate and Assembly Chambers. The gala ball did not end until 2:00 AM the following morning.



Old Governor's Mansion as it looked in the 1930's

There was no Governor's mansion. One had been built some years before on the Capital Grounds but was never occupied and eventually became the State Printing Office and State Armory. Without a first family residence, the Pardee family lived at the Golden Eagle hotel until the State purchased the former mansion of Albert Gallatin, only 7-8 blocks from the Capital. George could walk to work or have his horse, Lady Jane, pull his carriage. The Governor's mansion was used by the first families of California from the Pardee family to the Reagan family, who moved out after seven weeks because it did not meet their standards. It is now the historic "Old Governor's Mansion" and currently is not open to the public and cannot be toured. It is at times occupied by our current Governor Jerry Brown, who lived in this house when his father, Pat Brown, was Governor. He also could have lived in it during his first term as Governor, but chose to live nearer the Capital.

**Concludes on next page.**

**Governor George Pardee  
Nomination – Election - Inauguration  
Concluded**

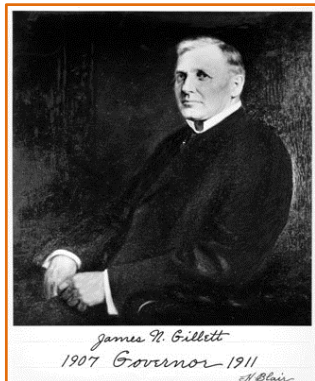


Old Governor's Mansion as it looks today



Pardee's office at the Capital can be visited today on Capital Tours. Governor Pardee's suite of offices was selected to be recreated as they looked during his term (1903-1907).

Despite only one term, George had a successful four years and should have been reelected. It was again the Railroad who determined the outcome. George was present at the nominating convention but did not head the Republican Party, again because of SP (Southern Pacific). Instead, backed by the Railroad and party machine boss Abe Ruef, James Gillett (Humboldt County) was nominated, won the election and became California's Governor (1908-1912). Next time, more about what Governor Pardee accomplished during his Governorship.



Before becoming Governor, James Gillett was a member of the US House of Representatives (1903-1906)



**Meet Our Talented New Helpers**

**Kyler Svendsgaard** has moved into the Pardee Historic Home Museum as caretaker and general helper.



Kyler was born in and brought up attending Oakland's public schools. As a teenager and in college he had summer jobs at Fairy Land and Lake Merritt Boat House. He graduated from U.C. Santa Cruz with a BA in Music.

By age eleven Kyler was playing the guitar. As a young person he studied with a teacher who taught chords and theory but no reading of notes. He began composing music at age fifteen and put out his first album as a teenager. He was passionate about Jimi Hendrix music. In college Kyler studied with a Turkish classical guitarist and learned to read music.

After graduating he made his way to Los Angeles and obtained his first teaching position in music at Pasadena Community College and then at Pasadena Polytechnic School. He returned to the Bay Area and is presently teaching at Pleasant Hill Village Music School. There He teaches several instruments including piano, guitar and drums. He adapts his teaching style and type of music to each individual student. Wherever Kyler is, he is composing, playing music and teaching. In the future he would like to do more performing.

Other interests are bike riding, building architectural models with Legos and hanging out with his many cousins in the area. Oakland history has forever been a special interest to him. He has watched Oakland change and grow. Kyler appreciates the history embedded in the Pardee home and its contribution to Oakland history. We are happy to have Kyler living in the Pardee house.

**Jay Morgan Crawford** has come on board at the Pardee Historic Home as grounds keeper and jack of all trades. Like Kyler he is a musician.



San Francisco was his first residence but not for long. Jay attended thirteen different schools before graduating from high school. A stepfather came into his life at age eight and at that time the family moved from a hippie commune in Guerneville, CA to France where his step father wrote and played music. Jay was then enrolled in a Catholic boy's school in full uniform and a new haircut - quite a transition from the hippie commune. Jay recalls the most difficult part of the adjustment was his not knowing a word of French. He became mute for several months trying to figure out what people were saying. Before too long he was quite fluent in French although the family began moving from country to country for his step father's music career.

At age fifteen he moved to San Jose to be in an American High School. Guitar was his love and he began playing with a band in California. The band did well and they made six recordings and toured the world playing shows for thirteen years. Jay composed for the band and also did some composing for Warner Brother's movies. He settled down in San Francisco where he continued his music and also did bartending, worked as a chef and did sound for big clubs.

Jay met Heide Svendsgaard (Kyler's mother) and they have been partners for several years. This puts Kyler and Jay in a family relationship. Together they play all kinds of music.

Right now Jay's project is to show his appreciation to the many drummers with whom he played that made his music better over the years while doing recordings for them. He also works out mathematical formulas for calculating the pollution going into the earth in hopes he will have a positive impact in some small way. Jay is known as an excellent handy man.

Kyler and Jay have brought their positive can-do attitude to the Pardee home which is appreciated by everyone at the house. Kyler and Jay appreciate the historical importance of the Pardee house and are happy to be a part of the preservation effort.



## Helen and the Merry Tramps

By Cynthia Foster

I just read a review in the New York Times of a book entitled "Under the Stars: How America Fell in Love with Camping." The review mentioned that the book referred to the "Merry Tramps of Oakland, a bohemian women's camping club formed in California in the 1880's." So, of course, I Googled "Merry Tramps" and found this:

During the 1880s, Oakland, California was poised to become a hub for manufacturing and transportation on the West Coast. The young city, founded in 1852, could boast of having six banks, three carriage manufacturers, a handful of successful iron foundries and companies that produced marble works, along with the East Oakland Planing Mills--the largest producer of wood interior furnishings on the West Coast. An east-west line of the Central Pacific Railroad ran through Oakland, and the railroad sought to add a north-south line, while the Water Front Company was improving wharves in the harbor to receive larger vessels. As a community, Oakland was growing and changing with each influx of skilled workers and artisans from other regions seeking year-round employment in this emerging urban center.

Within this mostly affluent suburb of San Francisco, a grassroots group of artistic, avant-garde campers--which also happened to include a future First Lady of California--came together and called themselves the Merry Tramps. They took advantage of the transportation available to them to head for the hills, coast, and forests in search of recreation and renewal, perhaps heeding the call of Reverend W.H.H. Murray (1840-1904), who encouraged an expanding middle class to take the railways to access wilderness areas that aroused spiritual renewal by experiencing nature first-hand. Their adventures in the wilderness preceded by a generation Jack London's (1876-1916) popularity, when urban dwellers began to romanticize natural lifestyles of the recent past. The Merry Tramps bridged the first American wave of recreational camping that occurred during the 1870s and the philosophic movement

that John Muir (1838-1914) energized toward environmentalism.

As luck would have it, among the Tramps' number was a talented photographer named Frank B. Rodolph, who captured the small community's camaraderie and good times. Other mementoes of the Merry Tramps can be found in an autograph book owned by Helen Penniman, who married George Pardee in 1887. Pardee would be governor of California from 1903 to 1907, and his wife's souvenirs and a crazy quilt that she made commemorating her adventures are preserved in the Pardee Home Museum in Oakland.



Master Bedroom showing Crazy Quilt on bed (see enlarged photo of quilt on back page)

Photographer Rodolph captured images of a community of friends enjoying themselves in the outdoors. This informal club called itself the Merry Tramps and for nearly a decade they organized lavish annual excursions to nature spots such as Calistoga, Yosemite, the Russian River, the Sonoma County coast, and even to the San Gabriel Mountains in southern California.



Rodolph's photo of the Merry Tramps



Close-up of Helen Penniman (later Pardee)



## Membership Application

**YES!** I want to become a member of the Pardee Home Museum.

- Student \$15
  - Individual \$35
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  - Benefactor \$75
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  - Sponsor \$500 - \$999
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1<sup>st</sup> Member's Name (or Gift Name)

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**Thank You for your Help!**



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**672 11<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Oakland, CA 94607-3651**



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### **The Cupola**

is published by the Pardee Home Museum  
672 11th Street, Oakland, CA 94607-3651  
Phone: (510) 444-2187  
Email: [office@pardeehome.org](mailto:office@pardeehome.org)

The Pardee Historic Home Museum, Inc. is a private non-profit organization originally established in 1981 as the Pardee Home Foundation to preserve, interpret, and keep the historic home and gardens of the Pardee family open to the public.

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