



# The Cupola

## Newsletter of the Pardee Home Museum

Winter / Spring 2019

*Oakland City Landmark  
1975*

*National Register of Historical Places  
1976*

*Alameda County Historical Society Landmark  
1985*

*California Historic Landmark  
1998*

### The Camron-Stanford House By Ron Bachman



The Camron-Stanford House is one of the five historic homes in Oakland that can be toured. Dating from its construction in 1876, it has been an integral part of Oakland's history. As it is contemporary to the Pardee Home albeit six years younger, it is likely that Enoch and George Pardee crossed paths with the early occupants of the Camron-Stanford Home.

Mayor Samuel Merritt invested a great deal of his own money to form the man-made lake and first wild fowl refuge in the United States. Perhaps Merritt was thinking of residential development and his financial gain when he promoted and funded Lake Merritt. Originally he planned to name it Lake Peralta, but most every Oaklander referred to it as Merritt's Lake and then eventually as Lake Merritt.

There was one serious problem with the Lake. The city of Oakland emptied its sewer water into the Lake which led to a serious fecal stench in the area. In 1875 the sewage was redirected and with the help of the wide channel which allowed flow in both directions (based on the tidal levels of the Bay), the odor problem was solved (well most of the time).

Samuel Merritt built 30 homes for speculation on the shores of Lake Merritt. The Camron Stanford House is the only one remaining. Alice Marsh

Cameron and her husband William Walker Cameron were the first occupants in 1876. Alice had inherited a sizable estate from her father, John Marsh, who was the first successful physician in California. Her inheritance was used for their home purchase. In 1877 the couple's youngest daughter, Gracie, died. Alice no longer felt comfortable in the house and they moved. Her husband, William, squandered the rest of her inheritance on real estate schemes. They divorced in 1891. John Marsh and wife, Abigail, along with Alice and daughters Gracie and Amy are buried in Mountain View Cemetery.

In 1877 the Cameron's were unable to sell their house so it was rented to David Hewes who had made his fortune in construction and later the leveling of sand dunes in San Francisco. He was a good friend of the "Big Four" (Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, Charles Crocker, and Collis Huntington) who had invited him to join them in the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. Hewes demurred feeling he did not have the same wealth as the Big Four. Because of this friendship, Hewes donated the two Gold Spikes that were used in the ceremony after the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad at Promontory Point, Utah on May 10, 1869. In 1881 the Hewes family moved seeking a warmer climate for health reasons. In 1882 the Camron-Stanford House was purchased by Josiah Stanford, the older brother of Leland Stanford. He had come to California for the Gold Rush, but was unsuccessful. He and his brothers developed a successful wholesale and retail market in the Sacramento area that specialized in selling merchandise to gold miners. Josiah used the profits to invest in oil and kerosene production. Later he started the Stanford Brothers Winery with brother, Leland. It was

located in the Warm Springs area which later became Fremont, California. This winery later became the Weibel Winery. The Stanfords sold the house in 1903.

John and Terilla Wright purchased the CS House in 1903 and lived there until 1907. It was then acquired by the City of Oakland and became Oakland's First Public Museum which specialized in History and Anthropology. In 1965 its collection of artifacts were transferred to the collection of the Oakland Museum of California that was being built.

In 1971 the City of Oakland and the Camron Stanford House Restoration Association launched an effort to return it to its early charm. While it was a museum, much of the interior of the house was altered. Using old photographs as well as homes of the same period as examples, the house was returned to the time it was occupied by the Camrons and the Stanfords. Original artifacts (e.g. furniture and paintings) now owned by the descendants of the first owners were donated to be displayed.

The Camron-Stanford House is open to the public on Sunday afternoons. For more information: <https://cshouse.org/>

Additional Notes:

- The Cameron family changed their name to Camron
- William Walker Camron was on the Oakland City Council in 1877 at the same time Enoch Pardee was Mayor of Oakland
- In addition to the Marsh family (including Alice and her daughters) the Josiah Stanford Family and the David Hewes Family are also buried in Mountain View Cemetery.



## Sarah Kidder Joins Pardee Board

We are happy to have Oaklander Sarah Kidder as a new board director at the Pardee Historic Home Museum. Sarah Kidder is an event producer and etiquette trainer, experienced in running private and public events throughout the Bay Area and beyond. Sarah opened her business, Sarah Kidder Designs in 2000; SKD is an extension of the family business she grew up in, Sunshine and Flowers, which was run by her parents, Sharon and John Kidder. They created, planned, and teamed on many projects throughout the Bay Area, among them year-round events at Dunsmuir House and Gardens, including the holiday Christmas at Dunsmuir event. The Kidder family as a whole worked on the events, shaping Sarah's interest in historic buildings and event production. Sarah is a longtime member of the Lake Merritt Breakfast Club and has deep ties with groups in the community.

A graduate of UC Berkeley with a BA in English Literature, Sarah's education focused on literature, etiquette, history, and the ways in which the three overlap and complement each other. The importance and influence of etiquette has been a consistent part of her social and professional life. It grew into the development of etiquette training seminars. Sarah believes that etiquette works as a subtle and imperative force behind the success of all our interactions and ventures.

When Sarah has time she is walking the Lake, roller skating or hiking in the Oakland Hills. She has a most lovable cat, Tallulah Bell who is part Bengal and "full of personality".

She looks forward to finding ways to apply her knowledge and connections to the various needs of the Pardee Historic Home Museum.

## Pardee Home Maintenance

We have always had a priority on keeping the Pardee Home up regarding maintenance against the travails of time and deterioration (including bad drivers!). We recently had to repair the front picket fence when a driver took out a large part of it in a crash. Fortunately, no one was hurt. The insurance money as well as some from our accounts was used to fix the damage as well as upgrade the construction quality of the entire picket portion of the fence. The repair included all of the 11<sup>th</sup> St. side as well as that on Castro St. We were lucky to have a dedicated contractor, Tomas Guieon, who appreciated the quality and uniqueness of the Pardee Home. He went out of his way to find good wood and put his work crew on shaping pickets with a detailed point spending extra labor in securing the post in cement and steel. We appreciate his commitment to quality and his appreciation of the uniqueness of PHM. We believe his work added immensely to the appearance of the Pardee Home.

Jose Gutierrez of Gutierrez Painting Co in Castro Valley recently returned to PHM to repair some damage which occurred due to furniture movement. Jose had painted the first floor of our home and came back to do the repair free of charge.

We recommend both Tomas and Jose for their high-quality in any work you may need for your home.

### Upcoming Events at Pardee Home

March 24: Women Pioneers in Oakland  
4-6pm in Carriage House. See below.

July 4<sup>th</sup>: Traditional Fourth of July  
Noon-4pm in back garden.

September 15<sup>th</sup>: P.O.W.E.R Tea  
2-4pm in back garden

## The Power of Tea

Tea was originally derived from the leaves of a previously obscure Chinese camellia bush over 5000 years ago. Tea was later introduced in Japan but it was not until 500 years ago that Portuguese and Dutch merchants introduced the drink to Europe, America and Russia. Initially, it was so expensive that only the noble houses could afford it and Asian porcelain was also imported to serve it. It was not until the eighteenth century that the mystery of porcelain manufacture was solved in Meissen, Germany. Noted silversmiths like Paul Storr and Paul de Lamarie and the ceramic factories of Meissen, Sevres and Wedgwood were commissioned to produce elaborate pieces to serve tea and show off the wealth of the owners. When the East India Company established plantations in India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) the supply increased and the price of tea began to fall so that tea could be enjoyed by more than just the wealthy. Before that, however, in 1773 British settlers in North America, protesting the tax on their favorite brew, dumped 314 chests of tea into Boston harbor during the "Boston Tea Party." Three years later the Declaration of Independence was signed. Such was the power of tea!

Today, tea is enjoyed as a refreshing, relaxing or reviving break. As many of you know, we have a delightful private afternoon Tea served at PHM.

At the Pardee Home we are looking for more volunteers who can help with our famous Teas. If you are interested in being part of a wonderful group, please leave a message at 510-444-2187 or send an email to

[office@pardeehome.org](mailto:office@pardeehome.org)



### Women Pioneers in Oakland: The Afternoon Carriage House Salon continues!

On Sunday, March 24th the Carriage House Salon Lecture series continues at 4 PM with Michael Colbruno talking about women pioneers from Oakland and surrounding communities in honor of Women's History month. This will be an intriguing look into the lives of female pioneers in the arts, law, architecture, business, civil rights and botany who made a difference to our community.

Michael Colbruno is a docent at Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland, California. His popular blog Lives of the Dead includes biographies of over 350 people buried at Mountain View Cemetery (<https://mountainviewpeople.blogspot.com/>). Along with historian Dennis Evanovsky, he is co-author of the book Lives of the Dead, which marked the 150th anniversary of Mountain View Cemetery and was published by Stellar Media.

As a photographer, he has been professionally published in the book Street Art and the War on Terror, published by Rebellion U.K.. Michael has become the docent expert on the early lives of the gypsies who lived in the East Bay.

This fascinating program will conclude with a question and answer period and a lovely champagne reception with a generous offering of sweets, hors d'oeuvres and non-alcoholic beverages available, too. \$25 per person, all proceeds go to the Pardee Home Museum, call Richelle Lieberman for more information at 510.381.1973 and order tickets at <https://womenpioneers.brownpapertickets.com/>



## Museum Directors Note, with Sadness, the Passing of Two Outstanding Trustees

By David Nicolai, Former Museum Director at the Pardee Home Museum

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> of this year, friends and family gathered at the Richmond Country Club to celebrate the life of Ron Pardee Nielson, following his passing on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Ron served on the Pardee Home Museum's trustees for some 37 years and was the last of the life trustees named in Helen Pardee's will to sit on the board. Ron and his mother, Augusta Pardee Nielson (who was only a distant cousin of the Oakland Pardees, but the closest friend of Helen and Madeline, the two surviving sisters) were instrumental in seeking the financial support for our museum of the Rollin Gerstacker Foundation, whose representative on the Pardee Home board, Ned Brandt, died last year in Michigan.

Ron was born in Sacramento in 1940, but his family relocated to Richmond when he was young, and he graduated from Harry Ells High School there in 1958 and from the University of California at Berkeley, where he majored in physical education and minored in history, in 1962. That year Ron married Nancy Stone, his sweetheart from junior high in Richmond, as well as his neighbor in El Cerrito, who graduated from San Francisco State with a degree in drama, also in 1962. Always an excellent athlete, Ron went on to complete a Master's in Education from Cal and to coach a variety of sports and teach an occasional history class at King Jr. High School in Berkeley for 34 years.



Photo of Nancy and Ron Nielson taken at PHM on November 26, 2018 just prior to our Board Meeting

Ron was an exceptionally dedicated trustee of the Pardee Home, and he served as chairman of the board for approximately ten years, during the 1980's and early 1990's. It was at this time, in 1984, that Ron's mother received a letter from Carl Gerstacker, the retired Chairman of the Board of Dow Chemical Co., stating that he was very fond of "Uncle George and cousins Madeline and Helen." George Pardee – our George Pardee – was actually the first cousin of Gerstacker's beloved uncle, James Pardee, who had served as chairman of Dow years before his protégé, Carl (for more details on the complicated relationships between the Gerstackers and the Pardees, please refer to the winter, 1999 issue of our newsletter). Ron and his mother took the lead in responding to this letter and developing friendly relations with the folks back in Midland, Michigan which were to benefit the Oakland house significantly in following years (see below for the obituary of Ned Brandt and for more information on the Gerstacker donations to our museum).

Ron was also a generous financial donor to the museum and a frequent docent, who charmed visitors with his tales of coming to the house to visit Madeline and Helen for many years, particularly for their Thanksgiving dinners. Ron had a wonderful personality and he quickly became friends with everyone he knew, including his fellow trustees at the Pardee Home. His sound, common-sense judgment always served the museum well. Ron could be reserved about many other things in life, but he was never shy about his great love for the Pardee Home and its family and history.

David Nicolai, the former director of the museum, remembers amusingly two particular times Ron was called into extraordinary service for the house. The first time, on January 4, 2003, David was busy preparing for the candlelight soiree that evening to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of George Pardee's nomination as California governor. It was to be the fanciest and most important evening event at the Pardee Home in many a year, and, to feed the guests, David squeezed not one, but two turkeys into the oven, both in cheap aluminum pans he had bought at the store. He headed out to fetch the tuxedo he was wearing that evening to portray the Governor, but when he returned to the house, he was very dismayed to see members of the Oakland Fire Department – and Ron Nielson – outside!

It seemed that turkey grease had overflowed the cheap pans and begun a fire which could have spelled disaster for the museum, if not for the quick response of the firemen. Ron and David were greatly relieved there was no damage and very appreciative of the prompt fire department response, but they proceeded to have a bit of a disagreement. Ron insisted on going to a supermarket and buying sliced deli turkey for the dinner that night, but David, aghast at the notion of serving sliced turkey, insisted that if he carefully drained the two pans of their grease, he could continue roasting the fresh turkeys, and they could still be the centerpiece of the elegant soiree. David, fortunately, won the argument, and the turkeys were the centerpiece of a superb dinner served that evening in the dining room.

A bit over a year later, in March, 2004, David had to place an emergency call to Ron early in the morning asking him to get down to the Pardee Home as soon as possible. A crew had arrived at the house to film a TV commercial for the medication Enbrol, and David had told the trustees that he could handle supervising the crew himself. However, he had no idea of how many people were involved or the scope of their operations. Ron showed up promptly, and he and David had their hands full all day answering questions and setting limits for the 100 or so people working on the commercial. From the 7 a.m. gourmet brunch served buffet-style on Castro Street to the sit-down Mexican lunch feast served in the front gardens; from the morning session working on a haircutting scene filmed in the side porch (now the gift shop) to the afternoon working on a picnic scene near the water tower, replete with machine-generated rain and winds, the day was a whirlwind for both Ron and David. Only a few seconds of the haircutting scene actually made it into the final commercial, but David remembers the day as the most exciting one he ever enjoyed at the Pardee Home, and he is sure that Ron enjoyed it just as much.

### **Ned Brandt - Obituary:**

“A quiet giant of philanthropy,” in the words of the Midland (Michigan) *Daily News*, Ellis (Ned) N. Brandt died April 21, 2018 after a short illness. Brandt was born in Detroit in 1922 and grew up in the Detroit area, where he got his journalism career off to an early start by covering sports for his high school newspaper in Plymouth, a town outside Detroit once inhabited by Enoch Pardee.

He received a degree in journalism from Michigan State University, where he was editor of the student newspaper. During World War II he served as an Army officer in France and was awarded the Medal of the Reconnaissance Francaise by the French government for his outstanding service there. He continued working in France after the war, as a literary critic and English script writer for the French Broadcasting System, as a jazz show producer and UN reporter, and, for four years, as the press attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Paris promoting the Marshall Plan.

He met and married a French woman, Jeanette LeLay, in 1952, and the following year returned to the U.S. to join the public relations staff of Dow Chemical Co. in Midland, Michigan. He became director of public relations in 1965, senior counsel on Public Affairs in 1978, and company historian in 1983, before retiring in 1986.

During his retirement Brandt wrote four books on the company's history, including *Growth Company: Dow Chemical's First Century* (1997) and *C.E.O. A Biography of Carl Gerstacker* (2003). His philanthropic impact on Midland and beyond was legendary; as secretary and vice president for the Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation since 1980, he helped the foundation direct donations of well over \$238,000,000 to the Midland region, the state and the nation. Ned Brandt served as a trustee of the Pardee Home Museum for almost ten years, from 1993 to 2003, during which time he was responsible for directing over \$300,000 of Gerstacker Foundation donations to the museum, including funding for seismic retrofitting work before the 1989 earthquake, emergency repairs following that quake, ongoing work cataloging the museum's vast collections, and, in 1999, a \$250,000 endowment grant.



## Ron Pardee Nielson – Memories

By Kay Cheatham at Ron's  
Celebration of Life Memorial – 2/23/19



What a wonderful life we are here for! It is a real pleasure to talk about Ron and his dedication to the Pardee Historic Home Museum in Oakland. It is impossible to explain the constant contributions Ron made to the Pardee Home over the last 40 years but hopefully I can give you some highlights. Ron loved history and loved family and, for him, the Pardee Home was both history and family.

Ron is a Pardee through his mother, Augusta Pardee Nielson. This connected the Nielson family to the Pardee sisters, Madeline and Helen, who resided in the Pardee family home in Oakland until 1981. The Pardee Home was built by the sisters' grandfather Enoch Pardee. Enoch's son, George, was the father of Madeline and Helen and also governor of California 1903-1907.

The docents at the Pardee Home loved to hear Ron's family stories and retold them on their tours. Ron told about being a kid and coming to the Pardee Home often with his sister and cousins for Thanksgiving and other occasions. The children had a ritual. After arriving, they always greeted the elder Pardee sisters, played the symphonia in the music room and then ran upstairs to explore. They never tired of opening closets, pulling out drawers and finding treasures of days gone by, for example, carved ivory, lady's corsets, incense burners or a fussy mussy. As a child Ron never tired of these treasure hunts. Today these drawers and closets are still packed full of the treasures. The Pardee sisters and their mother never threw anything away ~ they were very serious collectors.

When Madeline and Helen decided to leave their home as a historic home museum, a board of Trustees was formed. Both of Ron's parents and Ron along with family friends were designated Trustees. So, Ron has been making significant decisions

about the Pardee Home Museum for about 40 years. At the same time, he was learning about every object in the house. His knowledge, often passed down by his mother, was amazing and he was always willing to pass it on to others, docents and the public.

At one time there was a transition period and during that time Ron responded to every tour request and gave all the tours. He also answered every phone message. When a docent training class was established Ron was at every one of the eight two-hour sessions, teaching the ten future docents about the items in the house, the history of the Pardee Home and the Pardee family. His devotion, knowledge and family stories made the home museum come alive to volunteers and visitors. Board member Ron Bachman said "I am a docent because of Ron and this experience has meant so much to me."

When I asked others to tell me a memory of Ron, many used the word helpful - helpful in so many ways. Nancy Henn gave the example of Ron helping a disabled visitor up the stairs even though he was struggling with Parkinson's himself. One person remembered Ron consoling a board member in a difficult situation. Sue Coffin said he always remembered to ask about her husband who has MS. Russ Nelson's memory was unusual - it was Ron objecting about something - he was objecting to the board holding stock in a cigarette company. The stock was sold immediately. Ron had good and deep values.

Many of our members and volunteers have memories of Ron standing behind the BBQ cooking burgers at the annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration in the Pardee Home garden. He was very hands-on - painting the picket fence, leading tours, teaching docents, and taking docents in training on practice tours. Ron never missed a monthly board meeting in the ten years I was involved. Even recently when he could not drive Nancy drove him to our board meetings the last few months.

Having Ron there was like having the "rock of Gibraltar" at our back. Helpful, wise, supportive, gracious, He was teacher and friend. Many lives have been enriched by Ron. I know for sure Ron's spirit will always be in the Pardee Historic Home Museum.



## Volunteer Application

Yes! I want to volunteer at the Pardee Historic Home Museum.

- Tea Committee  
 Docent  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Membership Application

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

- Student \$15  
 Individual \$35  
 Family \$50  
 Benefactor \$75  
 Patron \$100 - \$249  
 Sustaining \$250 - \$499  
 Sponsor \$500 - \$999  
 Visionary \$1,000 & up
- New Member     Renewing

Please make check payable to  
**Pardee Historic Home Museum**  
and mail to  
**Pardee Home Museum**  
672 11<sup>th</sup> St,  
Oakland, CA 94607-3651

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

\_\_\_\_\_  
1<sup>st</sup> Member's Name (or Gift Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
2<sup>nd</sup> Member's Name (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City                      State                      Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone                      Work Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail

**Thank You for your Help!**



**Pardee Home Museum**  
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### **The Cupola**

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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.

#### **Pardee Historic Home Museum, Inc. Directors**

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**Please Deliver Quickly - Time Sensitive Material**

### **Pardee Home Museum has Table at the SF History Days at the Old SF Mint**



Cynthia Foster, Nancy Henn and Cherie Donahue at the PHM table in the Old SF Mint