

T. S. Gale

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Spring 2003

Wells-Cooley reception brings back fond memories

The Wells/Cooley Oral History reception, sponsored by Berkeley Architectural Heritage and Berkeley Historical Society, was held at the McCreary-Greer House in December to celebrate the publication of *Conversations with Helen Huggins Wells and Diane Porter Cooley*. Paul Grunland conducted the interview with these two descendants of Charles Loyal Huggins, who attended UC Berkeley and was Berkeley City Engineer at the turn of the 20th Century.



HELEN HUGGINS WELLS

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Time to fete *Early Berkeley Women: 1878-1953*

By Phyllis Gale
BHS Member

Please open up your hearts, scrap books, and attics and look around for the Early Berkeley Women in your family. As we conduct our research for this exhibit, we are beginning to suspect that quite a bit of the history of early Berkeley women may still be in the hearts and memories of their families.

Perhaps you've heard that your grandmother or great-grandmother belonged to the Mother's League, the Playground Committee, or the first PTA. Did your family have members in early women clubs or consumer organizations? Did they belong to the California (Berkeley) Political Equality League or the Young Women Christian Temperance Movement?

Do you have family pictures of the suffragette marches in this area? Did your family or friends participate in women's church groups or fraternal organizations? Women did much in the

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Please Share a Berkeley Memory

UPCOMING EVENTS ...

- March 26** — *The Black Panthers 1968: Photos by Ruth-Marion Baruch and Pirkle Jones*, Berkeley Art Museum/PFA until June 29.
- March 27** — Alameda Museum Lecture: *A. W. Smith: Architect*, by Betty Marvin, 7 pm. 510-523-5907
- April 1** — *Berkeley Civic Center Historical Tours*, 4-5 pm. Meet on steps of old City Hall
- April 1** — *Berkeley Community Photograph*, 4:30 pm. Meet on steps of old City Hall
- April 1** — *Berkeley City Council Party and Open House*, 5-7:30 pm.
- April 24** — Alameda Museum Lecture: *Red Tile Style*, by Arrol Gellner, 7 pm. 510-523-5907
- April 26** — BHS Walking Tour: *Berkeley Verses: Exploring the Cal Campus and Its Poems*, led by Steve Finacom, 10 am-noon. 510-848-0181
- April 27** — BHS Annual Meeting, Berkeley History Center, 3 pm.
- May 3** — BHS Walking Tour: *Stage Craft Studios and The Bay Architects*, led by James Novosel, 10 am-noon
- May 10** — BHS Walking Tour: *Fourth Street Tour and Spenger's History*, led by Denny Abrams, 10 am-noon. 510-848-0181
- May 11** — *Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association Walking Tour*, Tamalpais and Shasta, 1 pm-5 pm. 510-841-2242
- May 17** — BHS Walking Tour: *The Westbrae Commons*, led by John Dennis and Karl Linn, 10 am-noon, 510-848-0181
- May 19** — *Opening: Focus on Berkeley*, Berkeley History Center, 3 pm.
- May 25** — BHS Walking Tour: *Elmwood: Small Town in Berkeley*, led by Burl Willes, 10 am-noon, members only. 510-848-0181. Please see page 4 for details on this tour.
- May 29** — Alameda Museum Lecture: *Early Berkeley* by Richard Schwartz, 7 pm. 510-523-5907
- June 7** — BHS Bonus Walking Tour: *The Refurbished City Hall*, led by Allen Stross et al, 10 am-noon. 510-848-0181
- June 14** — BHS Walking Tour: *McCreary-Greer House and TDB*, led by Paul Grunland, 10 am-noon. 510-848-0181
- June 26** — Alameda Museum Lecture: *Percy & Hamilton: Color and Texture* by Bill Kostura, 7 pm. 510-523-5907
- July 31** — Alameda Museum Lecture: *Victorian Classics* by Alex Brammer, 7 pm. 510-523-5907
- Aug. 28** — Alameda Museum Lecture: *Queen Victoria Down Under* by Bruce Bradbury, 7 pm. 510-523-5907

Share Berkeley History

Do you have a story about Berkeley's past that you would like to share? Do you have memories of events, places you used to go, or things you used to do? What have your parents, grandparents, friends, and neighbors told you about "how it used to be"?

We welcome submissions for our newsletter. The deadline is May 15, 2003, for the next issue.

Mail your story to Margot Lind, Berkeley Historical Society, P.O. Box 1190, Berkeley 94701, or email it to mlind@lmi.net.

Articles printed are the research and opinion of the author and not necessarily that of the BHS.

if you want to write we would



From the President's desk...

By Linda Keilch
BHS President

Dear Fellow BHSers,
Spring rolls around again, the sun is shining fiercely in the cool spring weather, the birds are singing, and the flowers blooming. I hope this finds you and yours in good health! This will be my last letter, as I am stepping down as president of the Berkeley Historical Society. Tom Edwards has been nominated as the new president and we will be having a membership meeting on Sunday, April 27 at 3 pm at the Historical Center, 1931 Center Street. We hope that you will be able to attend and elect Tom and the new board to office.

At the annual membership meeting, April 27, we will have an excellent speaker. We are not at liberty to disclose who the speaker will be at this time, but promise that it will be someone who is knowledgeable and entertaining on the subject of Berkeley. This is our 25th year of operation as the Berkeley Historical Society and we would love for you to come and celebrate this worthy event.

Looking back on the past two years of my presidency, I am proud of the accomplish-

ments of the board, volunteers, and History Center during my term in office. We have witnessed several Gala events, including one featuring the Alexander String Quartet.

We have released a CD of the Campaign, published *Tales from the Elmwood*, co-published *Postcards of Berkeley*, and sponsored many exhibits: *The Decade of Change*; *From the Attic*, *Recent Acquisitions* and the most recent one on Bishop of Berkeley. Our walking tour committee, led by Tom Edwards, has sparkled and featured "sold out" events!

I would like to thank each and every one of you for supporting our organization, as a member and as a volunteer. I would not have been able to manage without all of your efforts, no matter how small your contribution.

As a strictly volunteer organization, we depend upon the labor of an unpaid staff and a helpful public. So thank you and please give your support to the board, volunteers and new president Tom Edwards.

We are now in the planning stages of Berkeley's Birthday Bash *Still Alive at 125!* Linda Keilch, Berkeley Historic Society, and Sally Sachs, Berkeley Architectural

Heritage Association, have been working closely with Weldon Rucker/Arrieta Chakos, the City of Berkeley; Tom Bates/Cisco DeVries, the Mayor's office; Mary Coplan, the Berkeley Unified School District; Sayre Van Young, the Berkeley Public Library; and many city businesses. Lisa Bulwinkle is helping to coordinate a citywide, year-long celebration of Berkeley's birthday.

Please watch the City of Berkeley website for the BUZZ on Berkeley's birthday. We are planning exhibits, receptions, parades, family nights, and art activities for children.

If you are involved in an organization, please bring this seed of an idea to your group and plan to do something on your part to celebrate our city's founding.

Come to the History Center and see our current exhibit on George Berkeley and the naming of the City. In the late spring we are going to have an exhibit of photos taken this year of Berkeley. The exhibit and photos are being planned in conjunction with the local camera clubs and the schools. If you are a photographer, please consider entering this show with your picture of Berkeley.

See you at our membership meeting, April 27 at 3 pm. Happy 125th birthday Berkeley!



Westbrae Commons, Cal Campus and Its Poems: Sounds like the spring walking tours

By Tom Edwards
BHS 1st Vice President

The Berkeley Historical Society begins its spring season of six newly-created walking tours with its Saturday, April 26, tour of the Cal Campus that concludes with special showing of the current BHS Center exhibit: *Time's Noblest Offspring'— George Berkeley and the Naming of Berkeley*. This tour will be led by the exhibit's curator, Steve Finacom.

The dates, titles and tour leaders for the six spring tours (the sixth tour is a free bonus tour for those signing up for at least three of the other tours) are:

April 26, Berkeley Verses: *Exploring the Cal Campus and Its Poems*, Steve Finacom
May 3, *Stage Craft Studios and The Bay Architects*, James Novosel and TBD

May 10, *Fourth Street Tour and Spengers History*, Denny Abrams and TBD

May 17, *The Westbrae Commons*, John Dennis and Karl Linn

June 7, Bonus Tour: *The Refurbished City Hall*, Allen Stross et al

June 14, *McCreary-Greer House*, and TDB, Paul Grunland et al (not wheelchair accessible).

Tours start at 10 am and end at approximately noon. Each tour is restricted to 30 paying participants. Prepaid reservations are required. The non-refundable donation for each tour is \$5 each for BHS members and \$10 each for the general public. Season tour tickets are available to BHS members only for \$20 for all six tours. Memberships are \$20/individual

and \$25/family. Tours are conducted in rain, shine, or Berkeley fog, and are generally wheelchair accessible unless otherwise noted. For more info, call 510-848-0181.

Docent John Stansfield Retiring

John Stansfield, a Berkeley native and our beloved docent extraordinaire, is retiring. We wish him well and can not begin to thank him enough for his invaluable service. Whenever anyone had a question, John had the answer. If he didn't know the answer, he could show you where to find it. John, along with his knowledge of Berkeley and the extensive resources at the Center, will be sorely missed!

If you are interested in becoming a docent, or any type of volunteer, please call 848-0181 and leave a message.



Paul Spenger Recalls the Earthquake of 1906

Reprinted from
The Berkeley Gazette, April 25, 1984

Editor's Note: This article contains excerpts from an interview with the late Paul Spenger conducted in 1978 by Lesley Emmington and Stephanie Manning of the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association.

“I was sleeping in the south bedroom. Frank was with me, and we thought it was a wind a heavy wind, you see.

“So I went over to San Francisco on the sternwheel steamer. I spent three days over there dragging a hose around. There was no water. But they had me dragging — the National Guard or whoever they are. Anyway, it was some of these people that are supposed to take charge of things when something dreadful happens. I stayed over there. I grabbed stuff out of the fire — cans. Didn't know what they were — all the labels were burned off. Chopped 'em open, got something to eat.

“Then three days later I was in Berkeley. [There was] a fellow by the name of Bill Williams. He worked for this house mover and wrecker, and he says, “Why don't you go over and see Sullivan?” They're still in [the wrecking] business, the company, I mean the family.

“I went over [to San Francisco] to ask them for a job, and he said, “Can you climb, Billy?” I don't know why he called — most big shots in those days called me Billy. Why? I don't know. Anyway, I went over there and I asked them if I could get a job. He says, “Can you climb, Billy?” I says, “Yessir.” ...

“... I worked as a wrecker, wrecking bank buildings — that is, brick buildings, that were burnt out on the inside. And nobody would go to work there because the

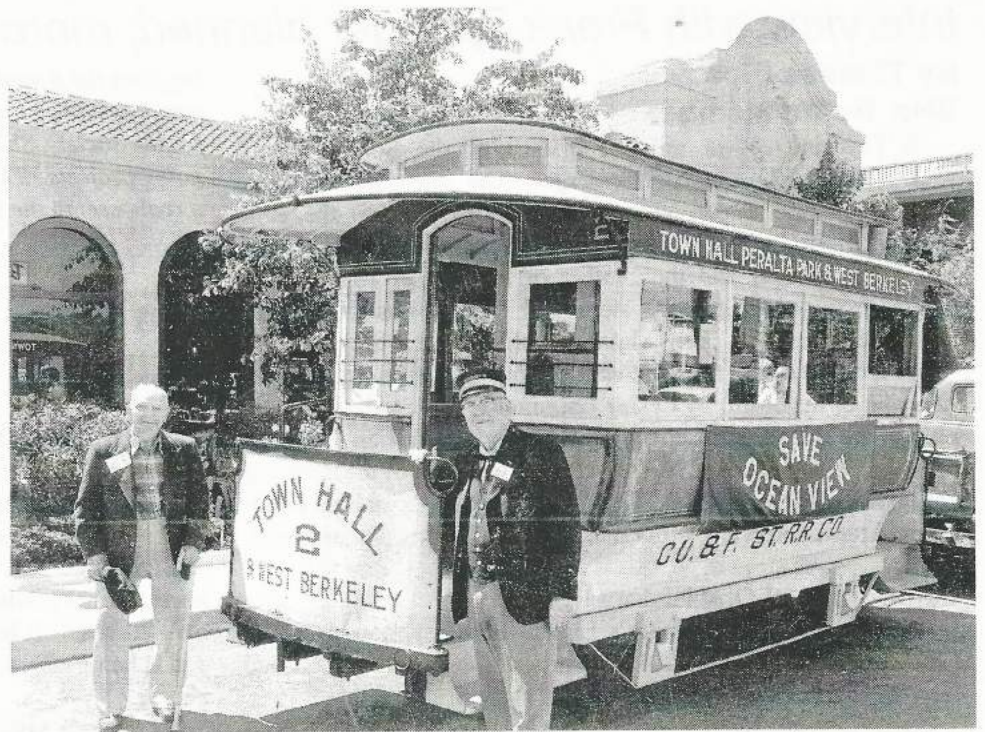


Photo by Curtis Manning/ Berkeley Historical Society photo #2081

BERKELEY ORIGINALS — Paul Spenger and historian Louis Stein with an original Berkeley horsecar. Spenger, whose brother Frank founded Spenger's Restaurant, was born in 1887 in West Berkeley. Collector/ historian Louis Stein was born here in 1902. For more news on the Spengers, please see page 4.

bricks were hanging over. And I got three and a half a day, and the boys that was doin' that kind of job, they said, “What are you gettin', buddy?” And I said, “Three and a half a day.” “Hell, we're getting' twenty-five dollars a day—” There's your shop, you know.

“[Sullivan] took me over to some bank building at ... [California Street] southwest corner of Sansome Street... What is the Merchant Exchange Building?... It was about a three-and-a-half-story building, a trust building, see, and just the brick walls. There was a tremendous amount of brick buildings, or brick industries making brick around the bay district. The first buildings were all brick with a wooden inside. Of course that all burned up, the inside, and left just the brick walls. And the windows were the arch-type windows.

“He took me over to that corner and he says, “Climb up there and shove that piece of wall over.” There was a piece of wall about 15-foot wide on the top and hanging right above the vault. Nobody would work

there, of course. Scared of those bricks. So he says, “Can you climb?” And I says, “Yessir.” “Well, climb up there.” All he had was a pipe to climb, to get a hold of, and no stairs and no fire escape, nothing like that. So I said, “Okay, sir.” So he walked away — tall man — and me with my short legs, I had to run to keep up with him.

“Anyway, I climbed the pipe, and when I got to the hole in the wall the pipe fell. And I hollered, “Look out below,” and everybody got out of the road. I tore all the bricks away and I pulled that thing down. Then, to get down I fell down about a story and a half to the next building. I went through the skylight and landed on the next floor. It still had a floor in that one which was hardwood; didn't burn completely.

“So I went over and told him. He swore like a trooper. He didn't believe me a bit. He thought I dawdled and otherwise would go home. But I didn't. I fooled him. I loved to climb, anyway.”



Interview with Frank Spenger planned; more on Bryant oral history

By Therese Pipe
BHS Board Member

New interest in an oral history of the Spenger family and business has emerged. The Spengers' business roots in historic Ocean View can be traced back to the 19th century. Born in 1887, Paul Spenger was the son of Johan and Elsie Spenger and the brother of Frank. In 1892, Johan Spenger opened a grocery store and fish market on Fourth Street that his son Frank later developed into a restaurant.

An interview with the late Paul Spenger was conducted in 1979 (the year of his death) by Lesley Emmington and Stephanie Manning of the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (BAHA). Through a grant from BAHA, transcription was done by the Berkeley Oral History Project (BHS), but publication is still pending. In addition, a taped interview with Frank Spenger is being planned soon.

Dorothy Bryant Oral History

Dorothy Bryant: A Writer's Life in Berkeley, conducted by Charlotte Nolan in 2000-2001, is in progress and will be published later this year.

Switch in Oral History Coordinator Position

Beginning in April, Therese Pipe will become Acting Coordinator of Oral History for the Berkeley Historical Society. To oversee some ongoing and all future interviews, a new Coordinator is needed by the summer of 2003. Assistance in clerical and production tasks for oral history work is also needed. For more information, contact Therese at tpipe@jps.net.

Editor's Note: Oral history chair, Therese Pipe, will be retir-



Candidates for the 2003-04 BHS Board

Officers

Tom Edwards — President
Shelley Rideout — 1st Vice President
AnaLuisa Quinonez — 2nd Vice President
John Aronovici — Secretary
Phil Gale — Treasurer
Linda Keilch — Immediate Past President
Linda Rosen — Past President

Members-at-large

Susan Austin
Steven Finacom
Karen Hata
Ed Herny
Margot Lind
Allen Stross
Daphne Tooke
Ken Cardwell
Greta Olsen
Judy Wilk

Look for more info about your board members in our next issue.

ing from the Board after serving over 15 years. . She and her committee have created a collection of sixteen rare oral histories for the Society. She will continue her work overseeing eight ongoing projects. Therese has done a wonderful job and has been a real asset to the board. Thank you from all of us!



For BHS members only: Willes to lead Elmwood tour

On Sunday, May 25, from 10 am to noon, Burl Willes, author, travel writer and longtime member of BHS, will lead a small contingent (20 maximum) of BHS members on a reprise of his sold-out 1998 *Elmwood: Small Town in Berkeley* walking tour. This tour will explore the Elmwood neighborhood that has retained its small-town character and characters for over 80 years. It is separate from our spring walking-tour series, and is being offered to members only for a donation of \$7.50 per person.

Please call 510-848-0181 to reserve your space now. Provide an e-mail address (preferred) or a telephone number for us to contact you with further information including the tour's starting point.

— Tom Edwards



Celebrating Berkeley women ...

Continued on Page 1

way of "civic" housekeeping. While prominent women are easy to find, we would like to honor all early women of Berkeley.

We are not concentrating on just civic deeds. We also want to capture the art and social side of these same women. Do you have pictures of the Boynton dance recitals and classes at the "Temple of the Wings"? Did your great aunt fence? Did the women in your family belong to the Piano Practice Club or the Short Story Club to encourage music and writing literacy?

Please talk with your family, friends and neighbors. It's time to celebrate all early Berkeley Women and let them out of those stuffy attics or chilly basements. If you have photos that can be digitized, memories to share, and memorabilia to exhibit (we promise to return it!), please call Phyllis Gale at (510) 548-0591 or, better yet, e-mail her at p2gale@juno.com.

Celebrating Early Berkeley Women exhibit will open at the History Center in early fall 2003.



Berkeley Historical Society fetes 25 years

By Linda Rosen
BHS Past President

The year 2003 marks the 25th anniversary of the Berkeley Historical Society, which was founded in the summer of 1978 from an ad-hoc committee for Berkeley's Centennial Celebration. In the beginning we had no permanent home, but still managed to sponsor programs, write a newspaper series, and publish books. In August 1992, after many years of existing in school-district bungalows, we finally moved to our current location in the Veterans Memorial Building.

BHS has published books, articles, postcards, oral histories, and the CD, *All Hail! Blue and Gold*. Various authors contributed to the Berkeley Daily Gazette series, *Berkeley's History*, which was later published in *Exactly Opposite the Golden Gate*. We had the Berkeley Voice series, *50 Years Ago* with Carl Wilson and currently *75 Years Ago* with Carl Wilson and now Ken Cardwell. Our publications include: *A History of Berkeley*, 1978, by the Centennial Committee; *The Berkeley History Project* teaching curriculum series, 1983, by Karen Jorgensen-Esmaili; *Exactly Opposite the Golden Gate*, 1984, edited by Phil McArdle; *Looking Back at Berkeley: A Pictorial History of a Diverse City*, 1984, by the Berkeley History Book Committee of the Berkeley Historical Society; *Tales From the Elmwood*, 2000, by Burl Willes, and *Picturing Berkeley: A Postcard History*, 2002, edited by Burl Willes. The oral-history committee, led by Therese Pipe, has completed 16 oral-history transcripts and there are eight more in process. Members also receive the Berkeley Historical Society Newsletter, published quarterly.

The BHS has had 21 exhibits. Richard Sargent curated a photo exhibit in Old City Hall for *A Berkeley Affair* in May 1984. Exhibits at the Berkeley History Center began in July 1993 with *History on the Park*. Others followed: *Three Decades of Berkeley Folk Music, 1950-1980*, *Berkeley on the Move: 100 Years of Public Transportation*; *Drawing A Line: A Postcard Exhibit*; *The Oakland-Berkeley Fire of 1991*; *The Japanese American Experience: A Berkeley Legacy, 1895-1995*; *Berkeley*

Literary Scene; *Treasures from the Archives*; *The Moving Wall* (Vietnam Memorial); *Berkeley Leads: Thirty-Five Years of Disability Rights*; *The Louis Stein Collection: The Neighborhoods of Berkeley*; *Twentieth Anniversary of the Berkeley Historical Society*; *Berkeley Burning, One Hundred Years of Artists in the Berkeley Community*; *Berkeley, Then and Now*; *Berkeley's Ethnic Heritage*, *The Decade of Change: 1900-1910*; *From the Attic! History of Sather Tower, Recent Acquisition*; and our current exhibit, *Time's Noblest Offspring - George Berkeley and the Naming of Berkeley, California*.

We have also produced several musical events. In 1993, Country Joe McDonald, Barry Olivier, and Burl Willes organized the Berkeley Renaissance Reunion Concert, featuring 32 folk musicians who played in Berkeley between 1950 and 1980. The Anniversary Folk Concert, featuring Alice Stuart and Prune Rooney, Mary Schmary, Ben-o Jones and Tanya Rosen, and Country Joe McDonald and Barry "The Fish" Melton, was held in 1997 at the Freight and Salvage and celebrated the anniversaries of both organizations. Last year's Gala Celebration Concert with the Alexander String Quartet and the Volta String Quartet was an artistic success.

Twice yearly we have given our popular walking tour series, totaling more than 73. The program committee has held Galas at the Hotel Shattuck Plaza and invited people to come dance in period costume. We also have had vintage film showings at the Pacific Film Archive and in Les Thomsen's home theater using his antique projectors, and previewed Berkeley in the Sixties before it was released. Over the years, our members and the public have been treated to summer picnics on Angel Island and other sites, informative talks about history and preservation, and house tours and lectures at the Temple of Wings and the Hume Cloister.

Wells-Cooley reception ...

Continued on Page 1

Wells, daughter of Charles Huggins and now 104 years young, was a delightful guest of honor, along with her niece, Diane Cooley and her husband, Donald. Other descendants of the Huggins family also attended. Copies of the oral history were presented to Wells and Cooley by Therese Pipe and Paul Grunland. After interviewer Grunland's brief remarks, some nostalgic memories were brought to life by Cooley.

She lived in Watsonville as a child, but often visited her aunt (Wells) and grandparents in Berkeley and the McCreary "girls" in the very house where this reception was held. Cooley mentioned the importance her grandfather Charles Huggins played in the design of Berkeley streets and pathways.

BHS and BAHA give their thanks to Mrs. Wells, Mrs. Cooley, and Paul Grunland for a lovely afternoon.

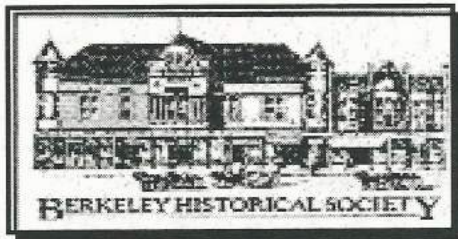
— Therese Pipe



**Become a volunteer
for BHS: We await your call!**

Interested in Berkeley History? Like working with people? Please consider volunteering at the Berkeley History Center.

We're open Thursday-Saturday from 1-4 pm. You can leave a message for Katie Wadell, volunteer coordinator, at 848-0181.



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History Center:

Veterans Memorial Building
1931 Center St.
Hours: 1-4 p.m., Thursday, Friday, Saturday

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 1190
Berkeley, Ca. 94701-1190
Phone: 510-848-0181, **FAX:** 510-848-8074
Web site: <http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/histsoc/>

If the date on your address label is **2/28/03** or earlier, your membership has expired. Please renew today. We appreciate your support. Your contributions are tax-deductible.

Yes! I want to renew my membership in the **Berkeley Historical Society** —

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Sponsor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Contributor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Life Member |

Name _____ Home Phone _____

Address _____ Bus. Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ E-mail _____

We need help filing our archives, preparing exhibits, organizing programs, cataloguing photographs, and staffing the History Center. Would you like to volunteer two or three hours a month to work with other members of the Society? Give us a call at (510) 848-0181, or drop us a note.

Yes! I would like to help with:

Name _____ Phone _____