

The Albany Historical Society

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September 2011

President's Message

Our thank yous to our wonderful panel of Youth Group Story Tellers! In order of appearance; Ben Hanes, Adam Osborn, Don Ford, Kristina Osborn, Dorena Osborn, Walt Corvello, Eldon Wolf, Beth Pun, Pam Suess and Joyce Valli, who contributed some special memories to the delight of our audience. Thanks to the audience who shared their experiences during the open mike period. Thanks, too, to fellow Albany Historical Society Board members for support & refreshments and special thanks to Jewel Okawachi for organizing this event. Many thanks go to Beth Pollard for arranging a location and to Clay Larson for videotaping the event. **A premier showing of the film will occur on October 16, 2011 in the Edith Stone Room from 9:00am till 1:00pm.** – Joan Larson

Ruth Meniketti, Volunteer Extraordinaire



Moving to Albany, California in 1958, Ruth Nickles Meniketti began nearly a half of a century of lasting contributions that make Albany a special place to live today. Her gifts to our community were diverse and always admirable. Ruth was a woman of calm deliberation, unique insight and fortitude who spoke with just a hint of her native Virginia accent.

She holds the amazing record of serving on the Albany Parks & Recreation Commission for 28 years. During this time Ruth and her peers established the visions of Albany's future laying much of the groundwork for the next generation. Not one to be idle she also served our community as a member of the Waterfront Committee for 7 years.

As a founding member of Friends of Five Creeks her dedication to the local environment knew no bounds. She was a lifelong Board member of FFC and was a dedicated volunteer. Benches honoring Ruth's commitment were installed at Albany's Creekside Park by the FFC in 2008.

Ruth was an active member of Boy Scout Troop 12 Mother's Club. Clearly, her support worked its magic as her son Marco went on to become a Troop 12 Scout Master.

Her numerous contributions to the Albany School District, attended by Marco and her daughter Nancy, were generous. As a result of her volunteer efforts in our schools, she earned the respected highest PTA recognition the Honorary Service Award in 1972.

Her love of reading made her a natural as a member of a book club with neighbors on her block. It was also likely the reason she was such a strong supporter of the Albany Library and a Friends of the Albany Library volunteer. As an FAL volunteer Ruth not only participated in the sales but helped sort and price on a weekly basis.

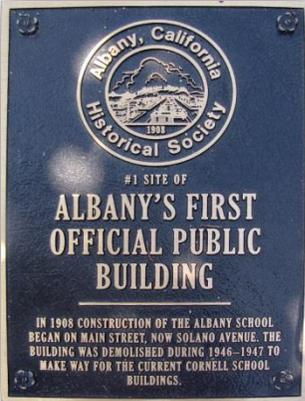
She never owned or drove a car but any given day could be seen walking along Albany streets or waiting at a bus stop. Ruth's own two feet were her preferred mode of transportation. Tragically, she was struck by a pickup truck and killed while crossing Marin in 2007.

She left us too soon and all we can say is thank you, we are so grateful to you, Ruth, for being such a strong, dedicated part of our Albany history.

Albany Historical Society Plaques

In 2009, the Albany Historical Society (AHS) with installation support from the City of Albany placed four historical plaques in Albany. The Albany Historical Society plans to donate more plaques to the City in the coming years. Please be sure to visit our web site, www.albanycahistory.org and our Facebook page for further information about the AHS historical plaque projects and to see a map of current locations.

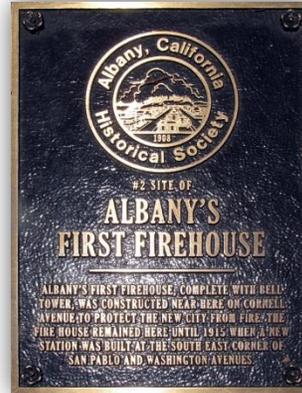
#1 Site of Albany's First Official Public Building



Located on Solano Avenue, east of Cornell Avenue, this plaque commemorates the first official public building. In

1908 construction of the Albany School began on Main Street, now Solano Avenue. The building was demolished during 1946 – 1947 to make way for the current Cornell School buildings.

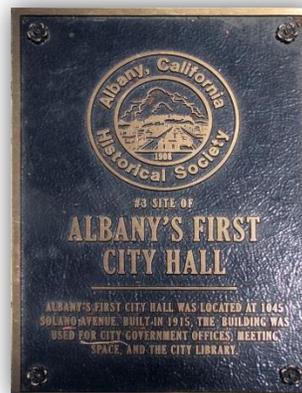
#2 Site of Albany's First Firehouse



Located on Cornell Avenue, south of Solano Avenue, this plaque commemorates Albany's first firehouse which was

constructed to protect the new city from fire. The fire house remained at that location until 1915 when a new station was built at the south east corner of San Pablo and Washington Avenues.

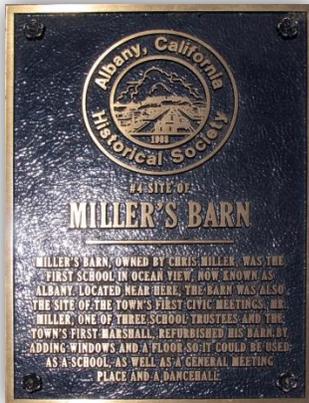
#3 Site of First City Hall



Albany's first City Hall was located at 1045 Solano Avenue, between San Pablo Avenue and Adams Street. Built in 1915, this

building was used for city government offices, including the police department, meeting space, and the city library.

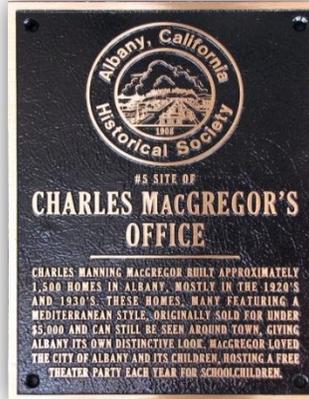
#4 Site of Miller's Barn



Miller's Barn, owned by Chris Miller, was the first school in Ocean View. Located near the northeast corner of San Pablo and Brighton Avenues, the

barn was also the site of the town's first civic meetings. Mr. Miller, one of three school trustees and the town's first Marshall, refurbished his barn by adding windows and a floor so it could be used as a school, as well as a general meeting place and a dancehall.

#5 MacGregor's Office



In June, 2011, our most recent plaque honoring Charles MacGregor was installed near the northwest corner of

Solano and Carmel. The original office of "One Nail MacGregor", the builder of many Albany homes was located in the corner building.

Mr. MacGregor built approximately 1,500 homes in Albany, mostly in the 1920's and 1930's. These homes—many featuring a Mediterranean style—originally sold for under \$5,000 and can still be seen around town, giving Albany its own distinctive look. MacGregor loved the city of Albany and its children, hosting a free theater party each year for schoolchildren.

The site of the old Albany Hospital (now the Community Center/Library) will be the next location for a plaque. Watch our website, www.albanycahistory.org and our face book page for information about its installation.

Where do you think future plaques should be located? Please let us know through the "contact us" page on our website.

75 Years Ago

October 23, 1936

Members of the California Toll Bridge Authority met to consider automobile rates for the almost-completed San Francisco Bay Bridge. The Department of Public Works recommended a fee of 65c for pleasure automobiles holding no more than five persons, while the San Francisco Board of Supervisors maintained that a fee of 50c, regardless of the number of passengers, was sufficient, and would speed drivers through the toll plaza as they would be able to pay with a single coin.

October 30, 1936

Architectural drawings were released showing the planned appearance of Albany High School after completion of a multi-year "pay-as--you-go" construction project. A cafeteria and several classrooms were under construction.

Hydraulic and hand grape presses, as well as electrical grape crushers, were available to rent from A. Lazeretti

50 Years Ago

September 13, 1961

Polio shots were available for \$1 at a clinic sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Albany - North Berkeley

September 20, 1961

Albany celebrated its 53rd anniversary.

The Department of Public works branded Albany High's band building, woodshop, and home economics "cottage" as unsafe. Originally built as a church, the band building was described as "lopsided"

Under the leadership of President Hubert Call, Albany Lions used picks and shovels to install drain piping for the Kiddies

Wading Pool in Memorial Park.

September 27, 1961

Harry Price was welcomed as the new principal of Albany High

October 4, 1961

The future of Junior Traffic Patrol was the subject of a joint meeting of the City Council and the Board of Education. A new educational television program made participation a handicap for the boys, as they missed a portion of each program. A teacher at each site was needed to supervise the boys' uniforms and equipment. The possibility of a traffic light at Marin and Santa Fe Avenues to ease the junior patrol burden there was discussed.

Plans were being drawn for construction of a Senior Center.

October 18, 1961

The City Council unanimously approved the proposed establishment of the State Orientation Center for the Blind west of San Pablo at the north city limits.

Costs of \$6.39 per month per employee were approved for new Blue Cross coverage for city employees.

The City was in negotiations for property which could be used as a new civic center site. An 80 foot right of way extending Marin Avenue through to Buchanan was proposed, leaving a triangular site as an ideal spot for city headquarters.

October 25, 1961

Albany senior citizens reported that they were "on the home stretch" of the building fund goal. Co-sponsored by the Soroptimists and the city's Recreation Department, the group reported that their membership had grown to 171.

