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NOTICIAS de NUEVA ALMADÉN

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW ALMADEN
QUICKSILVER COUNTY PARK ASSOCIATION

Spring 2023

ISSUE 139

President's Message

One of the best parts of being the President of NAQCPA is getting to know so many talented, knowledgeable, dedicated people who have served and led NAQCPA for many, many years. Mike Cox is such a person.





**DISTINGUISHED
PRESERVATION SERVICE**

MICHAEL COX

**For Five Decades of Preserving
and Sharing New Almaden
Mining History**

Mike began his historic preservation work volunteering at Connie Perham's original New Almaden Museum in 1976. Mike was a co-founding member of the New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association (NAQCPA) that led the charge to convert nearly 4,200 acres of prior mining property into the Almaden Quicksilver County Park. Mike's geologic background and extensive knowledge of the area made him the perfect candidate to assist County Parks in closing tunnels, shafts and mitigating safety issues after the county purchased the land in the 1970's. Mike has led countless projects in NAQCPA's 40-year history and is a sought-after speaker on New Almaden quicksilver mining history.

Recognized by
**NEW ALMADEN QUICKSILVER
COUNTY PARK ASSOCIATION**

Because he has been associated with New Almaden since the '70s and personally knew many miners and local historians, Mike is arguably the most knowledgeable person alive regarding New Almaden's mining history.

Mike will be presented with the Santa Clara County Preservation Alliance (SCCPA) Distinguished Preservation Service Award for nearly half a century of New Almaden historic preservation work. The award will be presented at the SCCPA Awards Night to be held on **May 19th, 7:00 pm, at History San Jose Park**. Tickets for the event can be purchased here: [Tickets](#)

We invite you to come out and support Mike, along with eleven other preservation award winners who have made great contributions to Santa Clara County historic preservation.

Tere Johnson
NAQCPA President
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Southern Belles in the Casa Grande

Many of us have great memories of the New Almaden Casa Grande. They might include swimming in the Club Almaden pools, busting a gut during Vaudeville shows at the Opera House or, more recently, enjoying the amazing Mining Museum within the renovated Casa Grande.



Here is another wonderful, historic memory of the Casa Grande, that comes to us from **Harper Wright**, via **Art Boudreault**, NAQCPA Board Member. Wright is the great, great-grandson of **J B Randol**, who was the nephew of **Samuel Fowler Butterworth**, former General Manager of the Quicksilver Mining Company (QSMC).

When Samuel F. Butterworth arrived in New Almaden in 1864 to assume control of the mines, he was accompanied by his extended family. As a young man he had practiced law in Mississippi, where he met and married **Mary Emily Amis**. She had come to Mississippi a few years earlier when her family sold their plantations in North Carolina.

In 1851, **Sallie Amis**, sister-in-law of Mary Butterworth, died in Columbus, Mississippi leaving four young daughters. It was decided that it would be best for the four girls to go to live with their Aunt Mary. The Amis girls were quickly assimilated into the Butterworth family, and even travelled to Europe, where they continued their education. On their arrival in New Almaden, the extended family included Samuel and Mary Butterworth, their four surviving children, Mary's brother, Thomas Amis, and his four daughters, together with Sophia, a maid, and William, a coachman. Sophia and William were possibly some of the first African Americans to live in New Almaden.

Years later in her memoirs, **Mary Amis**, one of the four Amis sisters, described New Almaden as: "This house, (the Casa Grande), seemed more like a hotel than a private residence. A wide porch in front with a very large reception room, library, and dining room on the first floor. Upstairs a hall ran through the center with numberless bedrooms on either side. The house was set in a lovely garden with a brook running through it, crossed by a bridge leading to a pretty rustic summer house on a miniature island. The little group of houses in the valley where the Hacienda was located consisted of the Casa Grande, several cottages for the officers and employer, a store, and the smelting works."

Their social life was also very active as: "Many distinguished persons ... were entertained at the mines while we were there. The Barling home party consisting of Mr. B., and the first Chinese envoy ever sent to the U.S. by the

Chinese government.
Chopsticks had to be
provided for their meals
which were served by
Chinese cooks and waiters."

**The Emperor of China sent this
Pagoda, aka Ting, as a gift to
New Almaden.**

**Carleton Watkins photograph
circa 1862**



"Then the **Duke de Joinville** visited Almaden, stopping in San Francisco on his way around the world in his yacht. I recall his delight on hearing his own language spoken by us. Prima Donnas and Actors and in fact all persons of note visiting S.F. were entertained at Almaden.



I remember particularly the pleasant visit of **Adelaide Phillips**, the contralta. She remained several days and entertained us with her delightful songs – operatic and simple – such as “Mary had a little lamb.”

Adelaide Phillips circa 1858-1870 by Napoleon Sarony

Around 1867 or 1868 the constant entertaining became too much for Mrs. Butterworth, and the family moved to a house on Clay Street in San Francisco. After Samuel’s death in 1875, Mrs. Butterworth moved to San Rafael in Marin County, where she died in 1884. There is no evidence that she or the Amis sisters ever returned to Mississippi.

Why We Celebrate Cinco de Mayo

by Lynda Will

Why is Cinco de Mayo, a Mexican victory over the French at Puebla in 1862, so widely celebrated in California and the USA, when it is scarcely observed in Mexico?

El Cinco De Mayo Celebrations are local history! The Mexican government and its citizens were vehemently opposed to slavery and supported a woman’s right to own property and equal rights for all. Mexican people in California, including miners at the New Almaden Quicksilver Mines, concerned about the outcome of the American Civil War, banded together into local groups called

Juntos. They sent money to Mexican troops fighting the French on Mexican soil. If the French had prevailed, they would have supported Confederate troops and the Union may have lost institutionalizing slavery and destroying women's property rights. With the money from the many Juntos across California, the Union prevailed, and celebrations broke out. (Carleton Watkins photograph circa 1917)



The first California Cinco de Mayo Celebration took place 17 days after the first battle on May 22, 1862, in Columbia Mexican Gold Mining Camp near Sonora, California. The first documented Cinco de Mayo Celebration at Spanishtown, New Almaden Quicksilver Mines near San Jose took place on May 5, 1864 and such celebrations continued throughout the mining era, including the one pictured above in 1917.

For more information about Cinco de Mayo watch a Six-Minute Preview Video by Dr. David Hayes-Bautista: English with Spanish subtitles - History of Cinco de Mayo: [Vimeo](#), Password: **cinco**

Early New Almaden Photography by Mike Cox

The Billings Farm and Museum (Frederick H. Billings, 1823-1890) recently made available high-resolution scans of their collection of New Almaden photo-stereographs made by **Carlton Watkins** in and around 1863. Watkins was one of the first photographers of early New Almaden, during the last years for the operations of the New Almaden Company (Barron and Forbes) prior to the Quicksilver Mining Company of New York. The scans were provided by

Marianne Chalifoux Zephir, Archives & Curatorial Manager at the Billings Farm & Museum, operated by the Woodstock Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit institution that owns and operates Billings Farm & Museum. The scans were provided in response to requests from **Weston Naef**, emeritus curator at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, CA, and from Mr. Nick Wright of San Jose, an expert in digital modernization of 19th Century photographs.



Road to New Almaden. Note the old Hacienda School House, white building in left foreground. (Carleton Watkins photograph)

Weston Naef is a leading authority on the career and photographs of Carleton Watkins, and **Nick Wright** is known for his electronic restorations and interpretation of early California landscape photographs. The digitized stereographs can be accessed here: [Billings](#).

An additional and outstanding source of digitized works of Carleton Watkins can be accessed here: [Carleton Watkins](#). Museums with historical photography collections typically have at least some of Watkins' prints. The California State Library has an extensive collection. Over 1900 photographs can be accessed by searching their online photograph catalog for "Carleton E Watkins," or use this link: [California State Library](#).

Weston Naef recently, kindly, provided a fascinating lecture about Watkins and his photography to the New Almaden history discussion group. Weston Naef is a distinguished historical photography researcher, commentator, and the author of numerous books on historical fine art and landscape photography. In his position as Curator at the Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles (1984-2008), Weston Naef was one of the most important photography curators in the USA. Naef built the museum's photography department into a world-class facility.

One can read more about Weston in this *Los Angeles Times* article: [Weston Naef Article](#).

Nick Wright manages a Facebook website called "San Francisco Remembered" located online at [San Francisco Remembered](#). For a video report on Nick and his work, refer to: [NBC Bay Area](#).

Much has been written about Frederick Billings and much can be found online through a simple web search for the name. Our Association's own Art Beaudreault provided a summary of Billings' and one of his most significant activities in defense of the New Almaden Company's claim to the mine. See the Past Perfect archives of the County of Santa Clara here: [Art's Article](#).



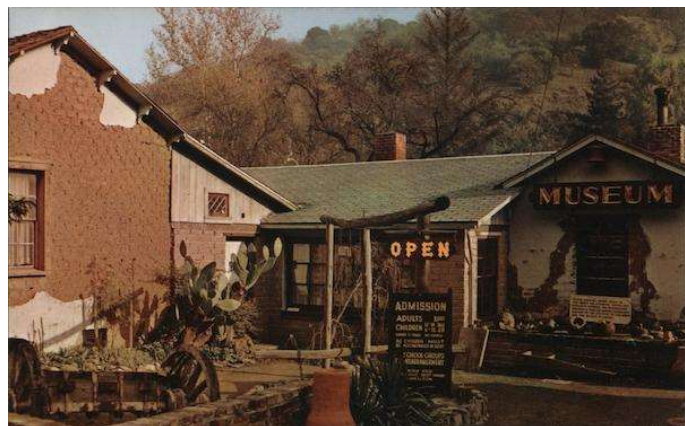
Remembering Connie Perham

Being the great-great granddaughter of one of California's "Los Fundadores," (first families of California), and descendant of Mariano Soberanes, (who traveled from

Mexico with the De Anza party in 1779), **Constance "Connie" Perham** inherited the desire and knowledge to preserve the works of her ancestors.

As a young girl, Connie fell in love with New Almaden when she used to accompany her father on business trips to the mines. On one occasion, in 1914, one of the miners said to Connie, "Put your hand in this liquid," "I can't," she replied. The man laughed and explained. "You can't because mercury is the fourth heaviest metal and the only one that remains in a liquid state after refining." It was then that her keen interest in the history of New Almaden began to take form.

In 1926, her parents, **James E. Healy** and **Adelaide E. Healy**, purchased the Carson House adobe for a vacation home. During this time, Connie began the diligent collection of artifacts from the mines, hoping one day to establish a museum. In November of 1949, the dream came true when the Original New Almaden Museum opened its doors.



With unwavering dedication and perseverance, together with her late husband, **Douglas A. Perham**, Connie expanded her collection into a world class

mercury mining museum and research facility. She worked tirelessly to bring to New Almaden the recognition it so rightfully deserves.



Douglas and Connie Perham



Clyde Arbuckle and Connie

Memories of Connie from Mike Cox ...

"When I first met Connie, she was running her private New Almaden Museum on her own. Her husband and partner **Doug Perham**, a noted electronics historian and collector, had passed about ten years earlier (1967). A close friend, **Mike McManus** was helping her with maintenance, and a San Jose State student majoring in history, **James Delgado**, a noted expert on early California ships, was assisting with keeping the collection together and giving tours. One method Connie used to support the museum was to lasso young students with interests in history and put them to work as volunteers. I joined the volunteer ranks in my senior year of high school.

Connie was always working the angles to stay financially afloat, she had to. Creating and running a private museum is not easy. Connie was a force to be reckoned with when it came to caretaking New Almaden's rich history. She was especially interested in educating young people, and the school groups were critically important to keeping the museum solvent. Nonetheless, the bills were large. Connie had to do what any museum must, trading and selling items from time to time to pay the bills and grow the collection. She took a lot of criticism for it, arguably unfairly. All museums of note are constantly churning their collections, trading and selling off lesser items to try to gain articles of greater significance. I think the criticism hurt Connie, but she was stoic and carried on. She did not dwell on the matter. Connie founded the oldest mercury mining museum in the world. She was proud of her accomplishments.

As a young student volunteer, I was acutely aware of Connie's power. She watched us young'uns with a keen eye and in the manner of a mother wolf. One had a sense that one would get a sharp snap if one strayed too far from the path. Connie was especially concerned about us kids venturing underground. Because of her long association with New Almaden and its miners, she knew

firsthand of the grizzly mining accidents and deaths. She would “interrogate” us volunteers from time to time about what we were doing on the Hill and admonish us to not go underground.

Connie’s path was about discipline, education, and contribution, but she also had a keen sense of humor, rather sly. She had a warm and frequent smile and loved to sit and talk about past and current events. She collected newspaper clippings on all manner of significant events, but especially New Almaden history. Connie was keen about discipline and education. She would also frequently tell us volunteers that we come with nothing into this world, and we take nothing when we go, we are just caretakers for the next generations. She was very sincere in this, and her helpers appreciated her perspective, especially her life experiences.

When “holding forth” with Connie, if you said something that made sense, she’d say, “well sure,” and then discuss the facts surrounding the topic. If you said something stupid, she’d grin and then, with a chuckle, say something about hitting the books and getting one’s learning and facts straightened out. Connie was a wealth of knowledge about California history and life in general. She also knew a great deal about electronics, thanks to her late husband. Her son, **Frank Kambish**, was one of the last miners on the Hill, so this too added to her knowledge and passion for New Almaden history.

Connie was multi-cultural. She maintained or lived in a small pensione in Oaxaca, Mexico at intervals. She had lived with the Yokut Indians in the Central Valley and there she was taught basket weaving by **Lucy Dick**. She had the first and last baskets woven by Lucy. These were proudly on display in the museum. Connie was related to the Sobranes family that came to California with the DeAnza Party. She was proud of her heritage. Connie made sure the museum featured the role of indigenous miners that long worked the cinnabar deposit before the early Californios. Her Indian collection eventually went to **Austen Warburton** and is now part of the collections at Santa Clara University.

A favorite memory I have is the Christmas nativity Connie would create in her home each year. For a young person, her creation was a magical place one could get lost in. I recall an Indian winnowing basket, large and flat with a raised edge. This was filled with clean sand. A mirror partly covered by the sand represented water and served the purpose well. Small hand-carved wooden figures and classical painted paper-mâché figures from Mexico populated the scene. Instead of camels, a black bear drank at a water hole and mule deer gathered. Padre Real from Mission Santa Clara was on hand, as well as indigenous miners. The indigenous Chichimeca, Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin, was there too, on his knees in front of La Nuestra Senora de la Guadalupe, the patroness of mines and miners. Love and care was plainly evident."

In 1984, Connie retired and sold her museum artifacts to Santa Clara County.

Her *original* New Almaden Museum collection is proudly preserved and displayed today at the *new* New Almaden Mining Museum, located at the historic Casa Grande.

Connie was a very civic-minded woman and has long been identified with numerous organizations such as the San Jose Coin Club, the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County, the New Almaden Historical Society, the New Almaden Community Club, and the New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association.

It's with a sincere debt of gratitude that we remember Connie for her many contributions to preserve the rich history of New Almaden.



New Trail for Kitty by Tere Johnson

Earlier this year, with the support of NAQCPA's Board, I submitted a formal request to Santa Clara County Parks to rename the Yellow Kid Trail, in Almaden Quicksilver County Park, after Kitty Monahan.

The trail is unique in that it connects Englishtown with Spanishtown, and passes near the location of the cave where cinnabar was first discovered by the indigenous peoples, and later became New Almaden's first mine.

Last month, I was invited to participate in a County Parks Trail Naming Subcommittee Meeting to review the request. All three members of the Subcommittee voted to approve it and will forward their recommendation to the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC). Assuming approval by the PRC, their recommendation will go to the County Board of Supervisors for final approval. Kitty was so well known and respected among Santa Clara County leadership, we have great optimism for all parties to approve her trail later this year. We will keep you posted.

Marv Tanner Tribute

Marvin (Marv) Everett Tanner, 89, a long time NAQCPA volunteer, transitioned to Heaven February 26, 2023. Marv was born Oct. 23, 1933, in Santa Monica, CA, into a family with a legacy of blacksmiths and adventure seekers.

Marv graduated from University High School, Los Angeles in 1951. Following graduation, he attended Santa Monica City College, receiving an associate degree in Machining.



Marv was drafted into the Army during the Korean War and served as a small arms mechanic at Fort Ord, Monterey. While at Fort Ord, Marv and his sweetheart, Ina, were married. Marv and Ina celebrated 68 years of marriage last September.

After serving in the Army, Marv attended Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, graduating with his Mechanical Engineering degree in 1959. Upon graduation, the Tanners moved to Schenectady, NY, where Marv worked as a nuclear engineer for General Electric, while also earning a master's degree in Nuclear Engineering. Marv and Ina returned to California, settling in San Jose in 1977. Marv enjoyed a rich, full life with his family, a fulfilling career, and many recreational activities. He enjoyed camping, square dancing, sailing, and visiting many historical sites along the east coast and across the United States. In retirement, Marv and Ina traveled with his church group, helping with hands-on projects in various churches. He also worked with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), rebuilding homes after natural disasters across the United States and Nassau, Bahamas.



Marv had a love of local history and volunteered with the Argonauts Historical Society and New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association (NAQCPA). He became an integral part of NAQCPA, volunteering for many projects, scanning archive material into the County Parks [online historical collections](#), and serving as Treasurer on the NAQCPA Board of Directors.

Marv was a kind, generous, talented man and will be greatly missed.

Support your NAQCPA Family

NAQCPA is the oldest park association in Santa Clara County. Established in 1983, NAQCPA exists to promote the protection and enhancement of the historical, recreational, and natural resources of Almaden Quicksilver County Park.



Membership fees and donations subsidize our Quarterly Newsletter, annual Pioneer Day, and many special projects we undertake throughout the year to enhance Almaden Quicksilver County Park for generations to come.

The COVID pandemic impacted our ability to communicate with our members and track membership dues. For those who have not renewed their NAQCPA membership in the last year, we would greatly appreciate your renewal fee of \$15.

You have the option to contribute online: [Online Giving](#) or click the button below to access a form you can print and mail with your contribution check:

Membership and Donations



- Santa Clara County Parks Events: [Parks Upcoming Events](#)
- Santa Clara County Preservation Alliance, *Preservation Awards Night*: **Friday, March 19 at 7:00 pm**, details: [Preservation Awards Night](#)
- County Parks, *Play Like a Miner Day*: **Sunday, July 16 at 11:00 am**
- New Almaden Community Club, *Almaden Day*, **Saturday, September 9**
- NAQCPA 39th Annual, *Pioneer Day*: **Saturday, October 14**

Contact Us:

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