



# THE CAPITAL

*"Preserving Santa Barbara's historic sites of enduring community value"*

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## PEARL CHASE SOCIETY FEBRUARY SCHEDULED MEETINGS OF INTEREST

### PEARL CHASE SOCIETY

**Board Meetings** are typically held the first Thursday of the month at the MacVeagh House on the grounds of the Natural History Museum. Next meetings: February 4.

**Preservation Committee Meetings** are usually held the fourth Friday of the month at Wood Glen Hall, 3010 Foothill Road. Next meetings will be held February 25.

### CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

City meetings are broadcast live on City TV channel 18 and streamed live at [www.santabarbaraca.gov/Government/Video](http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Government/Video), where they are also archived and viewable on demand.

**City Council Meetings** are held on Tuesdays at 2 pm at Council Chambers, City Hall: February 2, 9, and 23.

**Planning Commission Meetings** are held on the first, second and third Thursdays of the month at 1 pm at Council Chambers, City Hall: February 4 and 11.

**Historic Landmarks Commission Meetings** are held every other Wednesday at 1:30 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street: February 10.

**Architectural Board of Review Meetings** are held Mondays at 3 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street. (Note: Consent calendar meetings are held every Monday at 1 pm.) Full Board meets on Tuesday February 16 this month.

### COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

County Board of Supervisor Meetings and Planning Commission meetings are broadcast live on CSBT20. They are also streamed at [www.countyofsb.org/ceo/media02.aspx](http://www.countyofsb.org/ceo/media02.aspx), where they are also archived and viewable on demand.

**County Board of Supervisors Meetings** are held on three Tuesdays of the month at 9 am. The first and third meetings are held in Santa Barbara in the Board of Supervisors Hearing Room, 105 East Anapamu St., 4th Floor. The second meeting is (typically) held in Santa Maria at 511 East Lakeside Parkway. February 2 (SB); February 9 (SM); February 16 (SB)

**County Planning Commission Meetings** are held three Wednesdays of the month at 9 am. The first and third meetings are held in Santa Barbara at 123 East Anapamu Street, Room 17, and the second meeting is (typically) held in Santa Maria at 511 East Lakeside Parkway: February 3 (SB), February 10 (SM)

**County Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission Meetings** are held the second Monday of the month at 10 am at 123 East Anapamu, Room 17 (unless specified otherwise): February 8.

## Society News and Notes *by Kelly Mahan*

The Pearl Chase Society Board is busy making plans for the 2016 Historic Homes Tour, which is scheduled for Sunday, May 15, from 11 am to 4 pm. While we will have much, much more in upcoming editions of this newsletter, what we can tell you is the tour will feature a mix of homes built in different architectural styles, including Craftsman, Mediterranean, and four charming Moody Sister Cottages. For the latest info about the tour, be sure you "like" the Pearl Chase Society Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/PearlChaseSociety](http://www.facebook.com/PearlChaseSociety).

The board also discussed some new items they're following, including the use of historic resources in the building of the new Miramar Resort; construction is expected to start this spring. A cottage with historic value in Rocky Nook park was also discussed; the County of SB once used the structure for offices, but it has since been abandoned and are looking into tearing it down. Board members will look into its condition, and report back at a future meeting. The board also discussed the Barnsdall Rio Grande Gas Station, which they would like to help restore.

Regarding the Franceschi House, the board continues to look into having an independent art conservator study the possibility of stabilizing and restoring the medallions on the site. A partnership with the City of Santa Barbara continues, and Board President Barbara Lowenthal plans on presenting a proposal for the house with the Parks & Recreation Department in the coming months. The Society garnered 1,192 signatures on the online petition to save the house.

PCS member Rick Closson spoke at a January 13 breakfast meeting of the Rotary Club of Santa Barbara Sunrise. The topic was the Franceschi house, specifically the "Movers & Makers" associated with the House and some Medallion examples. Rick gave a presentation that included much of the information he's outlined in this newsletter over the past few months. Attendance was approximately 50 Rotarians for the 30 minute PowerPoint presentation. Rick also had on display items from his archive of Franceschi House and Alden Freeman, as well as items relating to Medallion subjects: books, bronze medals and first day of issue stamps. Although time was short with only a few attendees able to stay for individual questions, tentative plans were made for a weekend Rotary outing to Franceschi Park to inspect the exterior of the House and learn more about the Medallions. With 85 different Medallions and their history to provide material, the range of topics is almost endless. If Pearl Chase Society members know of other organizations that might be interested in a similar presentation, please have them contact Rick at [rgclosson@gmail.com](mailto:rgclosson@gmail.com), and be sure to check out Rick's fourth (and final, for now) article on the house's background.

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# PRESERVATION WATCH

*By Kellam de Forest*

*(Initiated by popular request, Preservation Watch informs Pearl Chase Society members of community projects that may disturb historical structures and features, explains community preservation efforts, and/or lists opportunities for public input for those concerned with a particular issue.)*

**Casa Dorinda:** The Montecito Planning Commission, at its December 16 meeting, voted for a focused EIR to explore ways to retain the historic 1918 Entrance Bridge. Casa Dorinda has appealed this to the Board of Supervisors, and the hearing is scheduled for February 16. Historians Post Hazeltine, in their peer review of the Casa Dorinda expansion project's Historic Structures Report, deemed that the two 1918 stone bridges and the concrete and stone lined channel convey their historic function. The bridges and channel are a component of the estate's designed landscape and are eligible to be a County Structure of Merit. The demolition the 1918 Entrance Bridge would have a significant adverse effect on a historic resource. Post Hazeltine argues that this destruction would be mitigated by the installation of the proposed two-lane bridge if it is replicated in the style of the historic bridge.

**Rocky Nook, Oliver Cottage:** This currently stucco-clad cottage that is on the western edge of Rocky Nook Park adjacent to the Santa Barbara Women's Club predates the Club building by almost fifty years. In 1882 George S. J. Oliver bought nine acres of land in Mission Canyon. His wife Frances dubbed the boulder-strewn property Rocky Nook. The cottage was presumably built then. George died in 1904. Frances continued to live there until her death at 92 in 1926. Following her death a group of citizens purchased the property and gave it to the County as a park. The cottage was used as a residence for the park caretaker. In the 1990s the cottage was remodeled as the headquarters of the County Parks Department. Recently due to a consolidation the Department moved its offices from the cottage in Rocky Nook Park to the County Administration Building on Anapamu Street. The cottage is no longer needed. The bureaucratic solution for a vacant building is to demolish it. Thankfully Paddy Longland, who is in charge of County Parks, is willing to defer demolition if an acceptable nonprofit can be found that could use the cottage. Rent would be nominal but maintenance would be the tenant's responsibility.

**Montecito Street Bridge west of Five Points intersection:** City is proposing to demolish the 1923, 30-foot wide stone arch bridge and replace it with a bridge wide enough to accommodate pedestrians.

**Barnsdall Rio Grande Station:** Goleta City staff is including Barnsdall in preparing ordinances for local landmarks.

**Heath Ranch Park and Adobe, 3122 Chaparral Drive, Carpinteria:** Carpinteria Parks Department listened to HLAC and is having an arborist monitor the Eucalyptus trees.

**Mission Canyon Multimodal Plan and Natural History Museum:** Public Works will allow the SBMNH to have an asphalt walkway in front of the Museum from the entry to the corner of Puesta Del Sol and Mission Canyon Road. HLC approved proposed sound wall in parking lot.

**Biltmore Hotel & Resort:** Hotel owners are seeking Montecito Board of Architectural Review approval to remodel the exteriors and the patio areas of seven of the fourteen cottages that are on the grounds, requiring a series of walls to provide privacy for the hot tub spas that will be part of each cottage unit. Existing lawn areas will be impacted.

**Newsletter**

Kelly Mahan, *editor*

DanLevin.com, *graphics*

PCS Board Members, *distribution*

Printing Impressions, *press*

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# The Women of Franceschi House, Part II

by Rick Closson

**Editor's note:** Dr. Closson, past president of the Society and the founding editor of *The Capital*, has graciously volunteered to give us a historical context on the Franceschi House. This is the fourth and final in a series of historic articles about the storied estate.

While the common story of Franceschi House and Park centers on the men who inspired and donated the property to the City, the inevitable sustaining players included the women important in their lives. Both Dr. Francesco Franceschi [née Emanuele Fenzi] and Alden Freeman owed tremendous personal debts to family women, and in the last edition of *The Capital* we told you about Dr. Franceschi's wife and daughter. This time we'll focus on Mr. Freeman's mother, who played a major role in his life.

Alden Freeman was a "bachelor for life," a genteel euphemism of the period for possibly gay men never interested in masquerading through marriage. There were, however, many women in his life and his thoughts; he acknowledged some of them on medallions that visitors can see on the Franceschi House. Even by today's standards, Freeman's medallions display his remarkably broad worldview; it was astonishing for that time. Nowhere else would a 1920s viewer of public art have seen a single collection of memorialized women including a poet, a single mother, a feminist author, a muralist, a Nobel laureate, the queen of an entire civilization, a women's rights philosopher, a prison reformer, an anarchist and an American congresswoman! When commissioning art to signify the four major races of the world [a popular meme of the period], he chose a woman to represent Native Americans. Freeman was an ardent advocate of women's rights in a time when Americans struggled even with the basics of their suffrage. Some might say the strongest influences are those applied earliest. If true it certainly could apply to Freeman.

**Frances Maria Abbey Freeman [1840-1925].** Alden Freeman was an only child until he was 7. His father was already a moderately successful Cleveland merchant consumed with growing the business, while his mother offered her undivided attention. By the time he was 12, he had a brother and two sisters but her mark on him was made. Alden was interested in history and family lineage from an early age and his mother was their link to America's earliest European settlers.

Through his mother, Alden was descended from

the prominent Mayflower immigrant and his namesake, John Alden. So important was this link that he specified on his grave marker would be not the Freeman family crest but that of the Alden family. He grew up reading the 1858 narrative poem, "*The Courtship of Miles Standish*" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, himself a descendent of John Alden. When the poem was published in book form, it was extremely popular, selling tens of thousands of copies. It told the [possibly fictional] romantic story of a Pilgrim love triangle involving the eloquent carpenter-sailor John Alden, the gruff-but-shy Captain Miles Standish and the marriageable Puritan maiden Priscilla Mullins. The lesson Mrs. Freeman's son heard was to "Speak for yourself," as did his namesake, and reward will be yours. It was a lesson he would often use through his life as an outspoken advocate for people, ideals and causes he embraced.

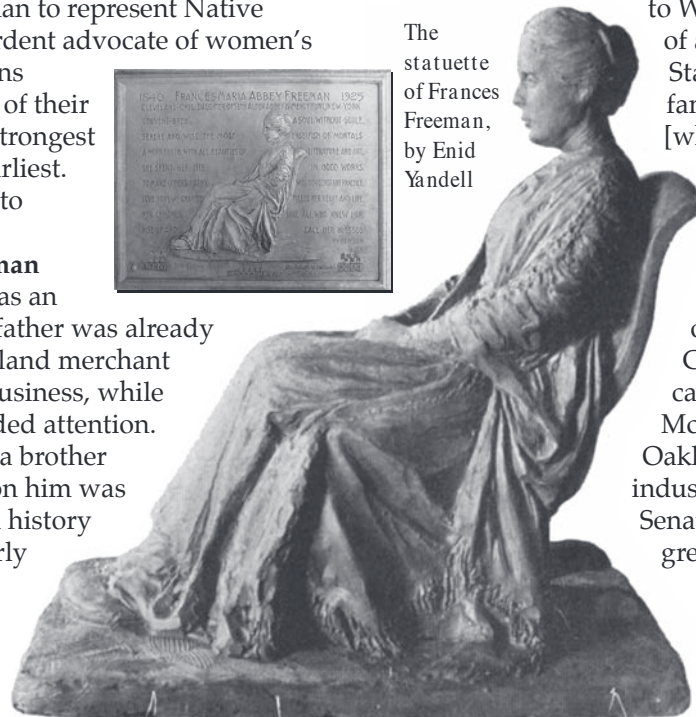
Frances Freeman was the mistress of the household and she grew with that responsibility as the family wealth and numbers increased. Eighteen months after marrying, Frances and Joel were parents; Alden was born when his mother was 22 years old and his father 26. Seven years later came Alden's brother [Francis, 1869], then a sister [Edith, 1871] and a second sister [Gertrude, 1874]. Frances was 34 years old with four children and a household to run as her husband rose steadily in solid business ventures that occupied much of his time.

During the three years following the birth of her last child, Frances's life changed dramatically. First, her husband Joel left his position as secretary-treasurer of the Cleveland Rubber Company to become special assistant to William Rockefeller, president of a newly formed corporation, Standard Oil of Ohio. Next, the family moved from Cleveland [where they had been relative neighbors of the Rockefellers] to the toney New York City outer suburb of East Orange NJ. In the Oranges they had neighbors the likes of inventor Thomas Edison, Civil War General, presidential candidate and NJ Governor George McClellan, sharpshooter Annie Oakley, publisher William Wiley and industrialist Samuel Bush [father of a Senator, grandfather of a President, great-grandfather of a President].

Frances Freeman took on new responsibilities in the society scene, as her husband was elevated first to treasurer of a second new corporation,



The statuette of Frances Freeman, by Enid Yandell





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The Women of Franceschi House  
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Standard Oil of New York, and then founding treasurer of the conglomerate Standard Oil Trust. These were heady times for the Freemans [1876-1882]. While the public records of Alden Freeman and his father are substantial due to their corporate and philanthropic activities, much less is shown about Alden's mother. The elder Freemans attended glitterati events such as the 1893 season opening of New York's Tuxedo Club, but Alden also accompanied his mother to other social events.

In 1916 Alden spearheaded his first large public philanthropic effort, creation of the Memorial of Captain Thomas Abbey in England. A number of the Montaroso Medallions were sculpted first as part of this memorial. The memorial was a major project that Alden credited to his mother [great-granddaughter of the honoree] as donor in his self-published 216-page book about it. The statuette of Frances Freeman by Enid Yandell [included in the book and shown in the image] was probably commissioned by her son Alden.

In 1925, Frances Maria Abbey Freeman died in New York City. She had outlived her husband and buried two children [Francis and Edith]. She had raised an intellectual freethinker in Alden with the resources to produce change. When Alden constructed Casa Casuarina in Miami Beach in 1930, he commissioned a large medallion specifically to his mother incorporating the Yandell statuette [see image].

The medallion inscription reads in part, "Convent-bred, a soul without guile, serene and wise, the most unselfish of mortals. A mind filled with all beauties of literature and art, she spent her life in good works. To make others happy was her constant practice. Love, hope and charity filled her heart and life. Her children, like all who knew her, rise up and call her blessed. (By her son Alden.)"

## MEMBERSHIP NOTES by Maureen Masson

- PCS Renewals for January '16  
 John and Alicia Bair  
 Peter Becker  
 David A. Bolton  
 Rick and Cathy Closson  
 Julia L. and Lee C. Carr  
 Steve Crozier/ Knecht  
 Joel and Vasanti Fithian  
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 Ann Winn  
 Alex and Gina Ziegler

- New Member  
 Pete Dal Bello  
 Diana Prola-Washburn

Note: Membership in the Pearl Chase Society provides the opportunity to be a part of an important organization dedicated to preserving sites of enduring value in and around Santa Barbara.