



We are dedicating this issue of our Newsletter to Mountain View Cemetery & Mausoleum, Altadena's oldest business, established in 1883. In 2023 Altadena Heritage staged a grand party for the centennial of the Mausoleum, Altadena's most magnificent building. In the following pages we highlight the remarkable lives of a few of the many who have found final resting places here and in the Cemetery and Mausoleum. Photo: Michele Zack

Mountain View and the American Cemetery

by Mark Goldschmidt

In the early years of the Indiana Colony that was to become Pasadena, settlers buried their dead in their yards down by the Arroyo. It soon became obvious that this was not working out after a rainy winter when several graves washed out, exposing coffins. Pasadena began forbidding in-town burials.

Levi Giddings, an early settler on future Altadena land saw a need and an opportunity, and set aside 23 acres of the family land for a cemetery three and a half miles north of Pasadena where Raymond Avenue dead-ended into Woodbury, east of the dusty road that was Fair Oaks. With Levi Giddings as president, and with his sons, the Hartwell brothers, E. H. Royce and other members of these inter-married families, they incorporated the Pasadena Cemetery Association. They laid out the grounds in 1882 as a "Park Cemetery", a style first established in 1831 by the Mount Auburn Cemetery

in Cambridge Massachusetts. Prior to Mt Auburn there were no managed cemeteries in the US, only burying grounds, graveyards, and churchyards. Churchyards had limited capacity, they were smelly and unsanitary; coffins often had to be stacked several high. In the following decades new managed cemeteries were set up in cities all over the US, unaffiliated with any church, always well out of town where a park-like setting could be created.

The Park Cemetery featured curvilinear roadways, lawn, trees, and picturesque vistas — a style emulating the 18th century English Garden then the rage among the manor house set — a landscape of idyllic meadows and groves, a sort of Eden. As the Garden of Eden was walled, so too was the Park Cemetery, fenced off from the mundane world and accessed through an elaborate entry gate. Thus a bucolic landscape was created where remains of the departed could rest undisturbed.

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Letter from the Chair

Val Zavala

Dear Members,

As a new year approaches, I thought this would be the perfect time to look back at 2023, one of AH's most eventful and successful years. Here are the highlights that you – our members – made possible.

Mountain View Mausoleum centennial celebration brought more than 350 Altadenans to our community's most stunning architectural treasure. Music, dancing, food and drink, historical reenactors, and an art contest brought life into the usually quiet halls of this magnificent mausoleum.

Golden Poppy Awards once again honored gardeners whose front yards “give to the street.” Six gardeners were honored with a plaque and recognition at our Golden Poppy spring gathering held in the elegant backyard of Mark and Carol Forbush. A few days later a bike tour gave cyclists a chance to talk to the gardeners and see the winning front yards up close.

Third Thursday panel presentations continued with a look at the history of the plant-exploring Poponoe family in Altadena. Another panel revealed the beauty that can emerge from fallen or cut lumber when it is salvaged and crafted into stunning furniture by talented artisans and lumber experts. Altadena was designated an official **Tree City**, an honor given to communities who plant, promote and protect trees that enhance our environment and our community. It's a real honor to be named a Tree City.

2023 also included our fourth successful **Tree Giveaway**. Thanks to a grant from SoCal Edison 43 nursery-grown trees

were given away to AH members and non-members alike. Trees mitigate rising temperatures, help clean the air and create a more beautiful environment.

Our semi-annual **Newsletter** arrived in your mailboxes, continuing AH's commitment to original local journalism. This year's themes were the history of land use in Altadena and the history of Mountain View Mausoleum.

Two new interpretive signs will enhance the trail to **Owen Brown's gravesite**. One tells about Owen Brown, the last survivor of the raid at Harper's Ferry and a staunch abolitionist. The other tells about Robert Owen, a former slave who bought his own freedom, settled in El Prieto Canyon and started a successful lumber business. The Owen Brown Committee is also working with Supervisor Kathryn Barger to nominate the site as an LA Historic Landmark.

Triangle Park on the corner of Woodbury and Marengo was spruced up and is now getting regular maintenance to keep this busy corner looking clean and weeded.

Finally, we are very pleased to have four “**Heritage Heroes**”. These are members who stepped up their memberships to AH. Special thanks to Charles Hay, Michael Bicay and Leslie Lowe, Judy and Dick Rubin and Judy & Paul Wallace for their generous support.

If the past is prelude, I can say with complete confidence that 2024 will be an even more exciting year than 2023.

Many thanks to all and Happy New Year!



Thank You, Tree Committee!



Altadena Heritage's Tree Committee, with support from Southern California Edison, found homes for more trees to shade our town with this year's tree giveaway — bringing the total over the past four years to 163! Committee member Lisa Heftman and chair Anne Chomyn led the effort to have Altadena designated as a “Tree City USA” in 2023. Other committee members are Janet Castro, Kathleen McDonnell, Kathy Musial, Mark Goldschmidt, Michele Zack, and Val Zavala. Pictured below are Kathleen and Lisa on Altadena Tree Day, designated by Supervisor Kathryn Barger to coincide with our Tree Giveaway, which was Nov. 18th this year.

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The Giddings Family and Mountain View

By Mark Goldschmidt

In 1874 Levi W. Giddings and his family of 12, including married sons and daughters, set out from Marshalltown, Iowa to Omaha some two hundred miles away in four covered wagons. There they loaded horses and wagons onto a boxcar on a train bound for California, disembarked in Sacramento, then drove south to the Indiana Colony (which would soon become Pasadena), arriving in the summer of 1874.

Sarah Noble Ives wrote in her 1938 history *Altadena* (published by the *Altadena Historical and Beautification Society*):

“They purchased...the old Millard claim, about one hundred acres in all, and settled there in 1878. This location was at the mouth of Millard Cañon, at the head of Lincoln Avenue, a rough wagon road in that day. ... The Giddings had water from Millard Cañon, and the lived at first in small cottages. They set out citrus fruit, shade trees, cherries, and a strawberry patch. They planted two chestnuts brought out in their pockets, which grew to be lofty trees. They did in these early days, a great deal of the first breaking of the land, or ploughing, for the Orange Grove Association and others. They lived on the bench of land that came to be called “Gidding’s Heights.”

Beginning in the 1880s, Pasadena was at the center of a land boom driven by westward expansion and a rail connection to the Trans Continental Railroad in Sacramento. Many came for the climate, which was not only pleasant but also healthful for consumptives; tuberculosis was widespread in the 19th century. Many new arrivals were quite well

off, and land that was formerly considered worthless was selling for high prices. The Giddings extensive clan, having arrived a few year earlier, bought land, worked hard, and prospered mightily.

Levi’s son, Eugene, purchased 100 acres just uphill from the family’s land and planted

grapes. He named his place “La Viña”, and the name endures. Eugene, an avid hunter, cut a trail up a branch of Millard Cañon to the top of a mountain just west and named it Giddings Peak honoring his illustrious grand-uncle, Joshua Reed Giddings, a pre-Civil War anti-slavery congressman.



The first Giddings house, built in 1874 by Levi and Luna Giddings. The approximate location is the current intersection of Lincoln and Loma Alta. Note the tent-house on the left. Photo: Altadena Heritage Society.



Eugene Giddings built this much fancier home in 1886; probable location was the current Loma Alta Park. Photo: Altadena Heritage Society.

Margaret Collier Graham - Foothills First Lady 1877 -1913

By Michele Zack

Our area was a cultural and literary vortex even before Altadena existed. Margaret Collier Graham was often at its center — attracting writers, artists, thinkers and luminaries as friends. She is buried in Mountain View Cemetery, and we are fortunate to have her literary light shining on us.

She, her husband Don, and sister Jenny arrived in the Indiana Colony in 1876, within two years of its founding; the college-educated pioneers' first home was a tent pitched on seven and half acres on North Orange Grove. With \$423 dollars they built their first home — the only one in the colony facing the mountains, instead of the street. "It was a bungalow, but we didn't know it," Maggie wrote later. "Everyone who passed stopped, and asked my husband why he didn't set it with the compass." Their liveliness and wit quickly endeared them to the community, and she and Jenny and Literary Society friends published *The Reservoir*, the colony's first newspaper. In a letter home, Maggie commented: "most of the women in the colony are women's rights women who agreed on the importance of keeping the issue alive."

Don suffered from tuberculosis, which was the reason for their move west. From Iowa, and like most of early Pasadena, they were progressive-minded people who had supported the Union cause, abolitionism, and Temperance (to a degree.). Within a few years, this became the town that welcomed Owen and Jason Brown, their sister Ruth Brown Thompson, and husband Henry. Owen was a long-time fugitive

from the law, escaping after the raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia, failed to start the slave rebellion his father, John Brown, had planned. Residents created a "safe space" for the outlaw, universally described as "shy and gentle."

Don and Margaret were lovers of nature, and Don became the area's first mailman. He made three trips a week to Los Angeles to pick up mail and passengers; during these, he was fond of reciting Shakespeare and Homer, and discussing the Latin roots of local place names. When a passenger suggested that as a stage driver, he must be able to "cuss awful," Don replied with dignity that, to the contrary, he drove "a great moral hack."

Margaret devoted herself to writing, and soon found success, publishing five stories in the *Argonaut* and Frank Leslie's *Popular Monthly*, two early California periodicals, in 1877. Her prose, early examples of "social realism", were said by the poet of the Sierra Joaquin Miller to be so Californian, "he could smell the sagebrush" in them. She also taught at Pasadena's first school, where five of her students were Benjamin Eaton's. Eaton was a founder of Pasadena, built the school, and lived on future Altadena land next to the canyon named for him — before moving to South Pasadena.

Maggie and Don also moved to South Pasadena, where Don, before he died in 1890 at age 42, became that city's first mayor. As health permitted, he'd managed to become wealthy as the real estate developer of both Elsinore and Wildomar in Riverside County. They built a flamboyant and picturesque mansion, Wynyate (Welsh for Vineyard), in 1887, where Maggie held salons attended by litterati, local and visiting, every Sunday — long after Don's death.

Mary Austin, western writer and high priestess of prose, California Poet Laureate Ina Coolbrith, Los Angeles Times flamboyant editor Charles Lummis; and naturalist John Muir all were regulars. Muir would set out from Wynyate on walkabouts lasting a few days, taking only bread and cheese with him. He wrote about his hikes in such places as the San Gabriels, where he camped in Eaton Canyon, calling its falls, lined with moss and ferns, "A little poem of wildness."

After Don's death, Maggie became as least as famous as most of her visitors, appearing in national publications such as *Harpers* and *Atlantic Monthly*. She published several volumes of short stories, including "The Wizard's Daughter," and wrote a monthly column for *Land of Sunshine*, discussing manners, morals, women's issues, and the necessity of good taste.

Her lovely final resting spot in Mountain View Cemetery would have pleased her — she once wrote: "I have lived in California since 1876 and have in consequence no desire to go to heaven."



Photo: Altadena Historical Society

John Corneby Wilson Austin 1870 - 1963

Master Architect of Southern California

John Corneby Wilson Austin was born and educated in Oxfordshire England. He apprenticed with architectural offices in England, Philadelphia and San Francisco before arriving in Los Angeles in 1895. Without college or academic architectural training, Austin nevertheless began a stellar career in Southern California that spanned more than 50 years. He is responsible for the design of many large public projects, including two of LA's most iconic buildings, City Hall and the Griffith Observatory.

Austin became a major mover and shaker in booming 20th century Los Angeles, and beyond his architectural practice, was active in many civic organizations. At various times he served as president of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the Southern California Historical Society, the Board of Architectural Examiners, and the local American Institute of Architects chapter. He also served on the National Labor Relations Board, and was a founding member of LA's exclusive Johnathan Club. Engagement in so many civic organizations must certainly have helped Austin secure a range of prominent large-scale projects. Being a prominent Shriner (he was a 32nd degree Mason), may have helped him secure one of his major projects: the Shrine Auditorium. However, it was certainly the quality of his work that cemented his reputation.

As the Great Depression deepened, Austin advocated for federal spending as a way to stimulate the economy. In April 1930, a letter from Austin to President Herbert Hoover was published in the Los Angeles Times. In it, Austin proposed the creation of an emergency fund, raised by taxation or appropriation, to be used to develop public improvements and provide needed employment. He followed up with a trip to Washington to



lobby Congress and the Hoover administration to initiate federal construction projects in Los Angeles, arguing that such programs were needed so good citizens would not "fall prey to the propaganda of Communists and agitators against our institutions." Hoover put him in charge of coordinating the federal government's unemployment relief efforts in ten Southern California counties.

Austin died at the home he had built for his family on Arden Road in Pasadena in 1963.



Kate Crane Gartz - 1865-1949 - Altadena's Parlor Provocateur Was More Than That

By Michele Zack

Among the most notable of many prominent Chicagoans settling in Altadena after the turn of the century were Kate Crane Gartz and her husband Adolf, who arrived in 1908 with two sons and a daughter. Kate, born in 1865, was the heiress of the Crane Plumbing Company; the couple built a \$25,000 showplace, "The Cloister," on the northwest corner of Mariposa and Santa Rosa Street. They soon extended the planting of deodars up Santa Rosa from Mariposa to Altadena Drive.

Adolf applied himself to useful, conventional, kinds of civic engagement such leading the Improvement Association, adding pavement and lights to Altadena streets (which he characterized as "dark as the Egyptian night"), and chairing the Rubio Cañon Land and Water Company Board for 20 years until his death in 1930.

Kate was less orthodox: she aimed at nothing less than changing the world for the better — from Altadena. She came by her Progressive Era fervor honestly: in Chicago her father Richard was a major philanthropist and founding supporter of Hull House, among the first settlement houses in America that provided child care, employment, education, legal advice, and arts and culture to new immigrants. He also supported Upton Sinclair as the muckraker worked on *The Jungle*, his famous expose of Chicago's meatpacking industry, which led directly to the establishment of the Food and Drug Administration to protect America's food supply.

Kate's brand of social and government reform was further activated by tragedy: two of her young daughters perished in the infamous Iroquois Theatre Fire in 1903 in Chicago — in which escape routes were locked, 602 died, and another 250 survived terrible burns. Public safety reforms, along with women's and

workers' rights, found in her a life-long champion.

Kate established a salon under the rose arbor at The Cloister, which became the center for intellectual, cultural, and civic activities in Altadena from the teens, and continued long after Adolf's death. Regular salonistas included Upton Sinclair and his publisher wife Mary, Charlie Chaplin, Albert Einstein, Aline Barnsdall, King Gillette, and a raft of leftie publishers and intellectuals. They batted about socialist-minded solutions to society's problems, and supported numerous Progressive projects and candidates for 30 years. Kate bailed Sinclair out of jail several times, most famously after his arrest for reading the Constitution to unionizing San Pedro dockworkers in 1923; she was also a key supporter in his failed bid for governor in 1934.

Well into old age, she penned letters of advice to Franklin Delano Roosevelt widely published in newspapers; these were anthologized in booklets and published by Mary Sinclair. Kate lived in the Cloister until her death in 1949, and is entombed in Mountain View Mausoleum with Adolf.

Deprecatingly, detractors dubbed her a Parlor Pinko, or Parlor Provocateur, for the progressive and outspoken positions she took that belied her class and privilege. This moniker, however, ignores a life of real work and accomplishment, far from parlor, in an activist career that spanned more than five decades.



Kate Crane - Gartz

Photos: Altadena Historical Society

The Cloisters occupied the north-west corner of Mariposa and Santa Anita Avenue.

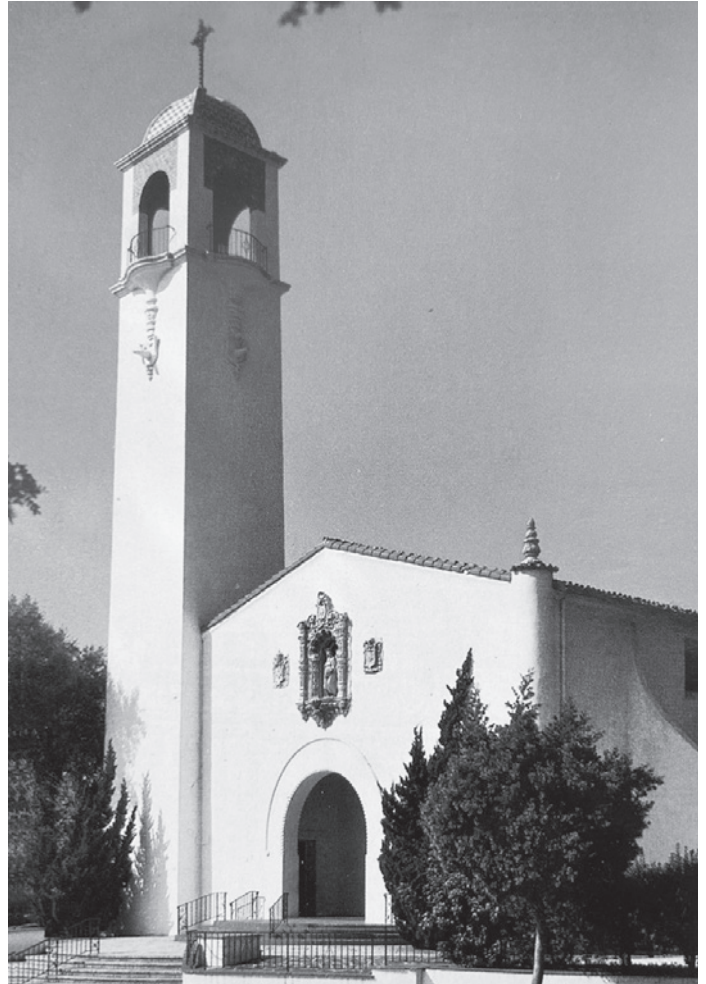
Wallace Neff - Architect of a Golden Era 1895-1982

By Huan Gu

Wallace Neff was born in Southern California on his family's ranch in La Mirada, south of Los Angeles. His maternal grandfather, Andrew McNally, made a fortune as co-founder of the renowned Rand McNally Map Co. As a young boy, Neff gathered with his family for Sunday dinners at his grandfather's house in Altadena, a magnificent creation by architect Frederick Roehrig. This experience allowed Neff to immerse himself in the world of design, exploring the Turkish Room and absorbing the diverse influences from distant lands. The Andrew McNally House, with its emphasis on a horizontal orientation, blended harmoniously with its lush surroundings, a principle that Neff would come to embrace in his own work.

In 1909 the whole family decamped for Europe, first to Switzerland for two years, then to Germany. Neff toured most of Western Europe with his family, and later on his own, sketching buildings, urban scenes, and landscapes. At the outbreak of World War I, in the summer of 1914, the family returned to Altadena.

Back in the US, Neff studied architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, but when the US entered the war, he returned to Southern California and found war-related work at a shipyard in Wilmington. After the war, he received his first architectural commission: a vacation cottage in Santa Barbara for his mother. From then on his architectural career took off. He is most famous for designing high-end homes in a Mediterranean style, which he felt appropriate to the place and climate; he said "I just built California houses for California



Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, Catholic Church in Altadena



*Bourne Residence, Palm Springs.
Water color rendering by Carl Oscar Borg*

people." There are 13 homes listed in the Altadena Heritage's Architectural Database (ahad.altadenaheritagepdb.org) attributed or known to be by Neff.

Neff's architectural talents extended beyond residential projects. One notable creation is St. Elizabeth's Church of Altadena, a Spanish Medieval masterpiece built in 1926. This stunning structure, featuring a bell tower patterned after a Spanish watchtower, showcased Neff's ability to blend historical elements with timeless design.

While Neff gained renown for his elegant Spanish Colonial-revival homes for Hollywood stars, he considered his most significant contribution to be the Bubble Houses/Airforms. Designed as a response to a post-war global housing crisis, these structures made of concrete formed over a balloon, attest to Neff's creativity and his desire help those in need.

From 1919 to 1975, Neff left an indelible mark on Southern California's architectural landscape, creating both residential and institutional buildings of note. His passion for design and his commitment to his craft were evident in every project he undertook.

Octavia Butler - She Imagined Other Worlds 1947-2006

By Kathleen McDonnell

Octavia Butler was a highly celebrated and influential writer in the genre of science fiction, known for thought-provoking works that explored themes of race, gender, power, and ecological destruction. As an African American woman in a predominantly white and male genre, she brought new perspectives to the forefront.

Butler was born in Pasadena and grew up in predominately Black neighborhoods in Pasadena and Altadena. She faced discrimination and bullying both at school and in society at large. As an introverted and dyslexic child, she found solace in creating her own stories. Her passion for writing began at a young age, and she often sought refuge in the local library, where she consumed science fiction and fantasy novels.

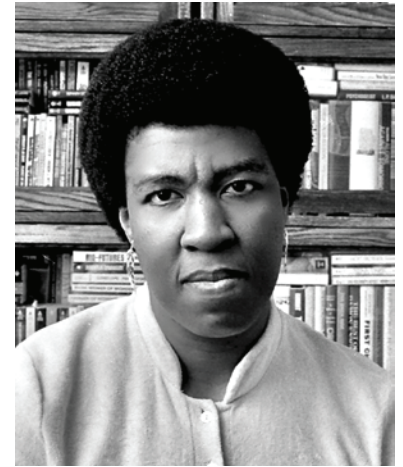
After graduating from John Muir High School she attended Pasadena City College, where she studied various subjects, including psychology, astronomy, and creative writing. To make money she worked with her mother, a house cleaner, and dedicated her evenings and weekends to writing.

In the 1970s enough money was coming in from her short stories that she was able to write full time. In 1976, Butler published her first novel, *Patternmaster*, which marked the beginning of her highly acclaimed *Patternist* series. However, it was her 1979 novel,

Kindred, a groundbreaking exploration of racial dynamics and time travel, that established her reputation as a talented writer.

Butler's most well-known novel is *Parable of the Sower*, published in 1993; in it she envisions a dystopian future ravaged by climate change, economic instability, and social unrest. The book, along with its sequel, *Parables of the Talents*, won several major awards and established Butler as a visionary writer adept at predicting and dissecting societal trends. Her success gave her the means to purchase a home in Altadena.

Octavia Butler passed away on February 24, 2006, at the age of 58. Her untimely death was a huge loss to the science fiction community, but her legacy lives on.



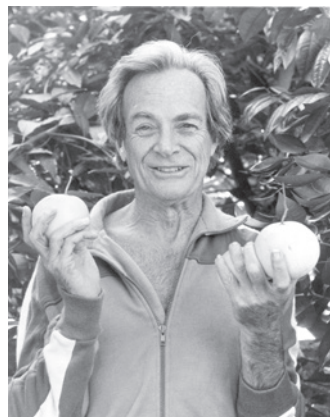
Richard Feynman - Physicist, Artist, Nobel Laureate 1918-1988

By Kathleen McDonnell

Richard Feynman is among most illustrious occupants of Mountain View cemetery. As a theoretical physicist Feynman made numerous cutting edge contributions to human understanding of the universe. One of the most significant was his development of a new formulation of quantum mechanics called quantum electrodynamics (QED).

Through his groundbreaking research, he developed a mathematical framework that allowed for the precise calculation of particle interactions and their corresponding probabilities. In recognition of his influential work, Feynman received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1965, jointly awarded with Julian Schwinger and Sin-Itiro Tomonaga

As a high school student Feynman was a math prodigy, but as an undergraduate at Massachusetts Institute of Technology he decided he preferred physics, and earned a PhD from Princeton in 1942. During the war he was drafted to work on the Manhattan project in Los Alamos, and afterwards joined the faculty at Cornell, but left for a position at CalTech in 1950. He lived in Altadena



until his death in 1988, and was a leading light among a bohemian mixture of local scientists and artists who socialized together. While at Cornell he spent a sabbatical year in Rio de Janeiro where he learned Portuguese and how to play the bongos, and he was always ready to play at parties. He famously made a deal with Altadena artist Jirayr Zorthrian to teach him quantum physics in return for lessons in art. Zorthian never learned much physics, but Feynman became quite an accomplished artist.

Richard Feynman attained popular televised fame when he was called to testify at the Rogers Commission investigating the space shuttle Challenger disaster. He dropped an o-ring seal used on the rocket engine into a glass of ice water, demonstrating how cold temperature caused the seal to lose elasticity and thus its effectiveness as a gasket, causing a fuel leak that led to the fatal explosion.

Feynman's dedication to teaching was evident throughout his career. His *Feynman's Lectures on Physics*, published in 1964, remains a cornerstone of physics education worldwide. His innovative and intuitive approach to physics, as well as his ability to communicate complex concepts in a simple and entertaining manner, made him a beloved figure in the scientific community and beyond.

Those who would like to know more about this amazing man should read his highly entertaining autobiographies: *Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman* and *What Do You Care What Other People Think*.

Mountain View Continued

After Altadena was established in 1887, the Pasadena Cemetery was renamed Mountain View. From its inception visitors have been welcome to drive their carriages up from town and pass through the gates, perhaps to park and picnic next to the grave of a loved one. Alternately, visitors could take the trolley running up Raymond from Pasadena terminating at its gates. Within, to this day, it is a pleasant, restful place; it feels special, removed from everyday life. For the first 20 years or so, Mountain View was way up in the country, but even then the cemetery's looping layout, clipped lawn, and groves of trees contrasted with the surrounding rectilinear roads, orchards, and fields. Now, it's all paved streets and frame houses, Mountain View is a quiet and cooling expanse of green, welcome in this built-up world, a gift to the neighborhood.

There is a feeling of security in knowing that the dead are contained. We can only visit, and I know that whenever I do, I find that the awareness of being surrounded by the departed leads me to ponder my own mortality. Thinking about our short time on earth is a good way to gain perspective on life and motivation to not waste precious time.

In the Victorian era, when Mountain View was founded, people were more familiar with death than most of us in the current era. People usually died at home and many died young. Mourning was more ritualized then, with black clothing, homes decorated with black wreaths and draped with black crinoline, mirrors turned to the wall, and formal engraved black-edged funeral invitations sent out. There was great ceremony as the coffin was conveyed to the cemetery, often in a special hearse streetcar. Like weddings, funerals offered a way to attest to a family's wealth and standing, with somber orations and stone monuments. Celebrations of the life and death of the departed were taken very seriously by middle class Americans.

The 19th century also saw much preoccupation with the paranormal, a prevalent belief in spirits and a feeling that the dead may still be around in some form, and watching, from heaven,

hopefully. A proper respectful send-off was important, and so was confidence that a bucolic dedicated space has been provided for them in eternity. Good to keep any stray spirits in there, not out in the living world.



Giddings house at Mountain View Cemetery. The existing gate is just visible on the extreme right.

As the new century began, a move to take a more modern approach of memorializing the deceased was called for. In the words of Cecil Bryan, architect and mausoleum builder: "Superstition could be washed away with the new, civilized approaches to sanitation and hygiene." In the past, mausolea had been built for great men and heroes; now the "Community Mausoleum" was the sensible way to house the deceased in a stately, dignified manner, in a structure for the ages.

No one could say it better than Cecil Bryan, architect of the Mountain View Mausoleum and builder of at least 80 other mausolea across the country:

"My goal in building Mountain View Mausoleum was to create the grandest, most artistic mausoleum in the United States. This particular mausoleum is breathtaking in its details: Tiffany stained glass, marble veneers, carved Spanish and Italian ornamentation outside; and inside, elaborate murals depicting

scenes from the Old and New Testaments to rival those in the Sistine Chapel. Our ceiling mural took four years to complete."

With its fortified concrete structure, I wanted it to not only be beautiful, but strong enough to withstand the forces of nature, so that no matter what torrential storms or earthquakes come, this building will be here in a hundred years, and another hundred after that. No constant, fussy mowing of lawns around tombstones required! I invested maximum capital to create long-lasting, low-maintenance

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Mountain View Cemetery gate when it was new.

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beauty in the public areas of the institution, making spaces everyone would enjoy visiting.“

Mountain View Mausoleum is, indeed, a most beautiful and commodious building, solidly built, no expense spared in 1923. Bryan created a building that would give all who chose a fine tomb, no need to pay a stone mason for a personal monument. It offered convenience --- visitors can visit no matter the weather -- and awesome beauty --- magnificent interiors, acres of marble, gorgeous stained glass and artwork. And all quite democratic, one big tomb for all rather than a clutter headstones, monuments, or family crypts. Of course, a variety of sizes and features are offered at prices that denote family status and income.

Mountain View Cemetery, 1882; Mountain View Mausoleum, 1925. As the 20th century progressed, a new kind of cemetery came into style. A change of name, no longer a cemetery, but a “Memorial Park” --- basically a Park Cemetery, but with few monuments or embellishments, streamlined for maintenance with simple identifying slabs flush to the lawn to identify graves. Families are more scattered across the country now, and family plots and tombs have given way to uniformity; the Memorial Park is arguably more efficient and democratic. Most Americans now die in hospitals, not at home, and the rituals around death prevalent in the past are much abbreviated in our current era. Some wish no lasting memorial, and direct their survivors to have their ashes scattered. Many, however, would like to know where their departed has been laid to rest, enabling the living to visit and to retain a connection to a loved one.

Beyond providing a large, quiet green space in Altadena, Mountain View cemetery and Mausoleum offer views into the history of our community. The tombs and graves in both cemetery and mausoleum are a link to the past, to our pioneer families, our forebears, plus many leading lights, former residents who have given much to our world.

Mountain View opened before our town even had a name, it is the oldest continually operating business in Altadena and still run by descendants of its founders. It remains a thriving business and an integral part of our community. Both the cemetery and the mausoleum are open for visitors daily. They are used regularly for movie shoots, and the Mausoleum lawn is a favored dog exercising spot. The beautiful building contains an art gallery and is open for events; recently Altadena Heritage hosted a fabulous celebration to honor its 100th birthday. May the next 100 years see Mountain View continue to thrive as it welcomes the living as well as the dead.

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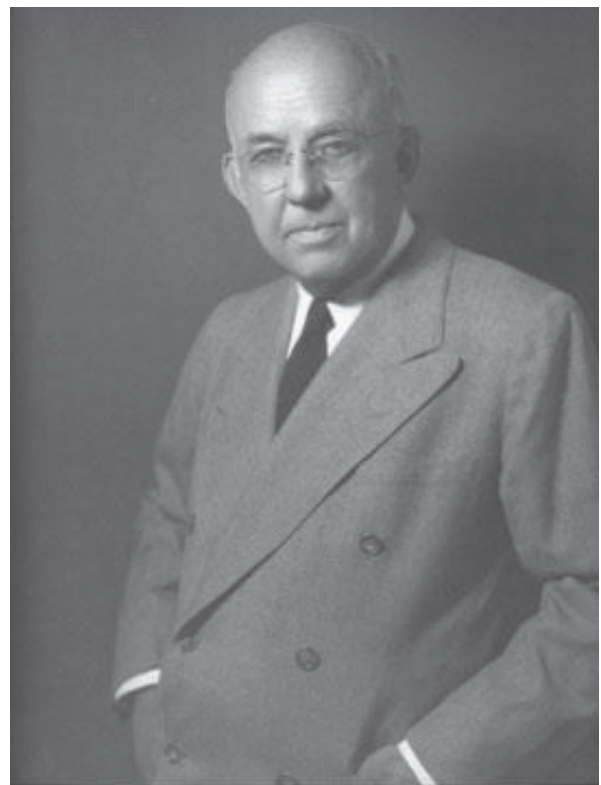
Cecil Bryan 1878 - 1951 - Master Mausoleum Builder

Cecil E. Bryan, the architect who built our magnificent Mountain View Mausoleum, became famous for designing over 80 mausoleums in seventeen states. Born in Illinois, he apprenticed with Frank Lloyd Wright for a year, then with master bridge designer Ralph Modjeski.

In 1912 Bryan joined the International Mausoleum Company and became an eloquent proselytizer for the adoption of the “Community Mausoleum,” a building type introduced in the early 20th century as a modern, sanitary, way to replace the cemetery, which he claimed wasted valuable land and were a maintenance nightmare. In his own words:

“The Community Mausoleum is built to last forever. Constructed of the solidest material, put together with the most punctilious workmanship, it is designed to be as permanent as any work of man can be. Our children’s children shall see the respect we have for our Beloved. It shall inspire them to greater, still more beautiful memorials, as we have seen inspired by the great memorials of antiquity.”

Bryan pronounced Altadena’s Mountain View Mausoleum his finest achievement. At some point he moved to Altadena with his family, and at his death he was laid to rest in a marble sarcophagus in a prominent location he reserved for himself in the building he had designed.



Mountain View Mausoleum 100th Anniversary Celebration

Altadena Heritage staged a joyful celebration to honor the centenary anniversary of Mountain View Mausoleum. The theme was “1923.” The halls echoed with 1920s jazz, people danced the dances of the time, drank Prohibition era cocktails, and partook of delicious food, wine and barrel beer. Spirits of the past, now resting in the Mausoleum or Cemetery, were brought to life by re-enactors.

Over 60 paintings by local artists depicting “Mountain Views” were mounted in the gallery for the day, and cash prizes were awarded to local students who participated in an Altadena Heritage sponsored art contest. Nearly 400 people joined in the once-in-a-lifetime festivities. It was great!



Clockwise, from top left: 1920s revelers; art show winners Sarah Suzuki, Rosa Gonzalez, and Tao Chen; band Marcus Howell and the Hollywood Howlers; crowd in the Grand Hall; Claire Smith, AH Board Member interprets “Parlor” “Provocateur Kate Crane Gartz; and Sherri Snyder, who portrayed actress Barbara LaMar, the “Too Beautiful Girl” with biography she wrote on LaMar.




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An Abolitionist Comes West

Owen Brown is buried at the top of this hill, "Little Round Top," named for the heroic stand by Union troops at the Battle of Gettysburg. He and his brother Jason lived nearby on land they homesteaded in the 1880s. He was the last survivor of the 1859 raid on the U.S. Army at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, led by his father, abolitionist John Brown, who hoped to spark an insurrection to end American slavery.



the words "John Brown's body lies a moulderin' in the grave, but his soul goes marchin' on" were sung as the Union's anthem.


Owen and Jason carved paths into these mountains that remain to this day. They entertained a stream of visitors, their family as closely associated with the end of slavery as were their friends Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and Frederick Douglass. When Owen caught pneumonia and died in January 1889, 2,000 people attended his funeral. A simple wood tablet marked his grave; nine years later this was replaced by the granite stone that has commemorated the gravesite ever since.

Later, this raid was called the first battle of the Civil War. Ten raiders, including two of Owen's brothers, were killed in action. John Brown was among seven captured, tried, and hanged for treason. Owen escaped with four others. Yet, in the war that followed,


...But Why to Pasadena?

After living more than 20 years as a fugitive from the law for his role in the Harpers Ferry raid, Owen Brown, his brother Jason, their sister Ruth and her husband Henry Thompson moved to Pasadena, founded shortly after the Civil War by Union Army veterans and supporters. Many had been abolitionists who shared the Browns' progressive and temperance-minded beliefs. Admirers including locals, visiting Union veterans, and former slaves and their descendants trekked to Owen's remote cabin, wanting to shake his hand. Since Owen's death in 1889, this grave has been a pilgrimage site and memorial to the sacrifices of the Civil War and the battle to end slavery.

The funeral procession of Owen Brown on Colorado Street looking east from Raymond Avenue in Pasadena, 1889.

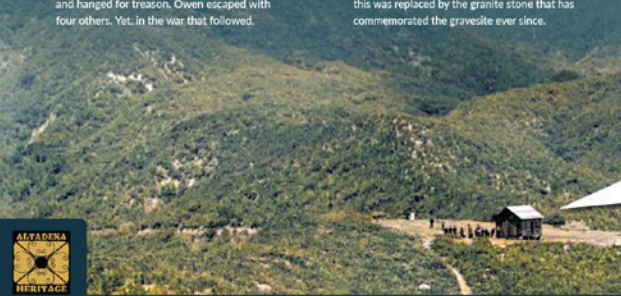



The granite headstone was added to Owen's grave in 1898 by Horatio N. Rust. On this occasion Rust said, "His service to his fellow man is a more lasting memorial... He gave the best years of his life... to uphold the cause of human freedom."




Owen and Jason Brown outside their cabin, looking south.

Little Round Top

Sign developed by the Owen Brown Gravesite Committee. | Colored photos | Design by Jeremy Murrie.



To learn more about Owen Brown, his family, and the abolitionist cause of ending slavery, visit Owen Brown's pages at altadenaheritage.org.

On December 9, the Owen Brown Gravesite Committee unveiled interpretive signs on El Prieto Fire Road Trail. The sign above tells the story of Owen Brown and his family, and why they settled in the Pasadena area 20 years after the failed raid on Harpers Ferry. Altadena Heritage is a partner on this project, represented by Michele Zack, who chairs the committee.

A "website within a website" on Brown Family history will be launched as part of the AH website — for the general public, and students and teachers who will soon be learning this history of local and national significance as part of the curriculum at public and private schools.