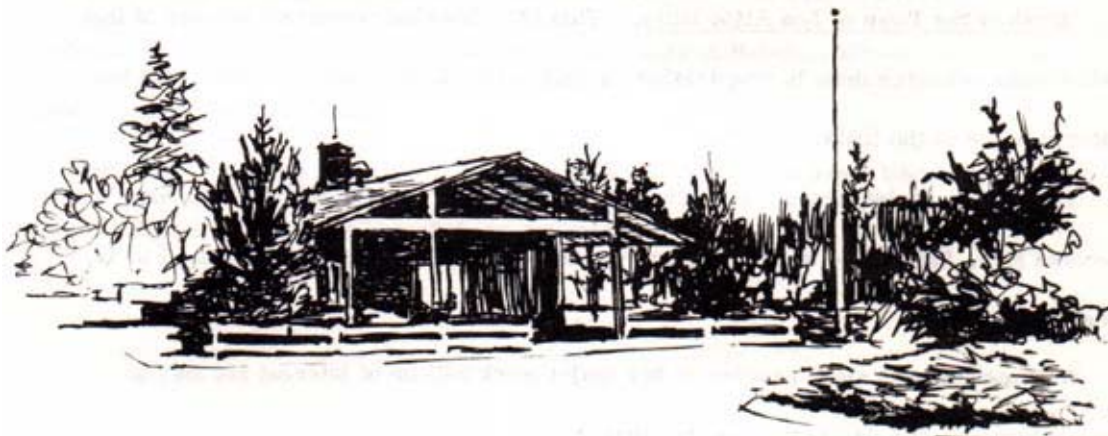


The Formation of The Town of Los Altos Hills



15th Anniversary

Inclosed material taken from forth coming book

by
Florence M. Fava , Town Historian

As you read this booklet and become aware of the many problems the "new town" faced in its first months and years...

As long as you live in Los Altos Hills and experience still more varied and unexpected and complicated problems...

Keep in mind that communication between the people governed and those doing the governing is the life blood behind the town.

This booklet is an attempt to record the development of the town, especially through the first year for the enlightenment and instruction of newcomers, for the nostalgic reminiscences of oldtimers, for the guidance of future Councilmen.

Bringing to mind an early meeting before incorporation when a discussion got entangled in a myriad of complications and caused Professor Wallace Stegner to bring the meeting to its senses with:

"After all, ladies and gentlemen, we are only
trying to save God's little acre."

Foreword

For the past 3 years, Florence M. Fava, Los Altos Hills' distinguished Town Historian has been engaged in working on her research for her forthcoming book, The Birth of the Town of Los Altos Hills. This little booklet presents a sample of that voluminous research done in preparation for that authoritative volume, concerning the incorporation of the Hills.

The history of the people, the region and institution of this interesting area has become Mrs. Fava's life work. Her energy and passion for detail are evidenced in this small booklet.

We hope that this short preview of her major work will be of interest not only to the serious scholar, but to the general citizen.

Walter G. Warren

Director of California History Center

Foothill Community College District

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In the Beginning

If you're an oldtimer (pre-1957), most of what follows is well known to you since nearly every one of you were deeply involved in the struggle to create the Town of Los Altos Hills and in the 1958 battle (disincorporation) to retain it. You all know the need to remember--why we are what we are and what could happen to our town if you forget.

If you're a newcomer, you'll be interested in the exciting history of Los Altos Hills, at its conception. In the beginning, Nature created what we now call Los Altos Hills. Then came man; first the Indians who enjoyed the land, but who left little enduring trace.

Next came the Spaniards who brought in the cattle and started some of the agriculture, but whose main legacy to us is the name of our town and the names of most of our streets. The old adobe house on Old Trace Road is one of the few physical things the Spaniards left behind here.

Then came the Americans and a scattered few from the four corners of the world. They built a few homes and barns, planted apricot trees, and carved a few winding roads around our hills and through our valleys. (Their stagecoach route from Woodside to Los Gatos stopped in what is now the Duvneck's front yard at Hidden Villa Ranch on Moody Road.)

During the first half of the century, a few more people moved into this area, enlarging the agriculture, developing a few more roads, erecting a few buildings. By 1950, something like 500 families lived in what is now Los Altos Hills.

Then the rush began. Then the pressure was on. Then came the greed of some men to cut up the hills into little jammed lots, as many as 4 to 6 an acre.

Now 15 years have passed since it all began. The town of Los Altos Hills functions well in a more seasoned way. But it is not perfect and never will be perfect. It is and always will be run by sincere men whose greatest problem is to know what the majority of people they represent really want them to do. It face the dangers of complacency by all of us who would rather prune the pyrocantha or saddle up the horse on a summer evening then attend a council meeting.

You know all this, Oldtimer, but perhaps you need to be reminded of it along with your Newcomer neighbor so you will both help our town--YOUR TOWN--by keeping yourself informed and by letting the councilmen know what you are thinking. You can do this best by attending Council meeting now and then, and Planning Commission meeting and by being a member of the Los Altos Hills Association, whose job it is to keep you informed of what our town officials are thinking and doing and to keep the officials informed of what you want done for the continued good development of the Town of Los Altos Hills.

The Village

By 1950, something like 500 families lived in this unique little area that is now, Los Altos Hills. They did not exist as a town, they were merely a charming part of Santa Clara County, nestled against the hills. The people in the area did not want a town. They wanted to be left alone in peace and quiet to enjoy the beauty of their rural hills. They had no desire to become a "city", in fact, they disliked the very word and the regulations and the work and the taxes it would mean.

But they had discovered by this time that they were not to be left alone in peace; certainly not in quiet, for the nervous angry sound of bulldozers were drowning out the more familiar steady purr of agricultural tractors discing the orchards. The inflowing population was pushing into their hills from all directions.

They awoke to the fact that land speculators and developers, in their desire to get as good a return as possible, wanted to build many more than one house per acre regardless of what it

would do to the hills and the character of the area. Furthermore, they soon learned that the developers with large sums of money at stake could devote more time than they to arguments before the County Planning Commission and the County Board of Supervisors, 14 miles away in San Jose.

Again and again, residents took time off from their regular work to journey to San Jose and plead their cases against the variances requested by the persuasive and persistent developers for whom this was regular work. Again and again, the residents lost and saw the results in severe grading of hills and closely-packed houses.

Reluctantly, some of them faced the inevitable and tackled the heavy tasks of: (1) learning the multitude of details that must be worked out to start a town, and (2) selling the idea to neighbors throughout the hills. None had political ambitions; none wanted to increase taxes, but all did want to preserve the hills as much as possible...at least to hold density to no more than ONE home per acre. Also, to preserve many of our historical beginnings and landmarks before they no longer existed. Many of our beautiful oak trees, laurels and willows were used in the early 1800's to identify boundaries.

The Property Owner's Association

This positive force toward what might well be called a negative goal, motivated more and more residents during 1954 and 1955; and really was an outgrowth of a drive started by four hill area property associations: Page Mill Road, Robleda Avenue, Moody Road and Purissima Hills associations. A group of 50 residents led the way toward this goal, including Joh P. Whitney, Charles McCandless, L. Cedric Macabee, Earl Dawson, Frank Duveneck, Henry Paulman, Thomas Sherlock, to name but a few.

Under the leadership of William Simrell Jr., of Stonebrook Drive, spokesman for the committee known as "The Los Altos Hills Incorporation Committee", they drew up a proposal for incorporating the area into a 6th Class City. (Ironically many of the

residents who opened the way toward incorporation then bowed out, preferring to remain as one resident remarked, "a rustic rube and to continue to feed the deer and the quail.") Others decided they were "satisfied with the situation as it exists and don't want further expense.", carrying with them others who would have liked to have become part of our city. John P. Whitney, attorney for incorporation proponents, for example, the historical Juana Briones de Miranda Adobe whose owners tried so hard to be included with the rest of this historical land grant which makes up part of the town. (It is now a part of neighboring Palo Alto by annexation) Thus reducing the proposed area by some 1,000 plus acres.

This proposal carried the names of 174 residents and included nearly every leading citizen. It set forth the reasons for incorporation, the kind of community they envisioned and it made an attempt to spell out how the town might function; even including a proposed budget. The last page included a straw ballot and asked the recipient to "cast his vote" and express his ideas. Enough favorable responses were received to encourage the committee to push ahead into the final steps for an election for incorporation.

The proposal for incorporation, the famous Green Sheet, was so basic to Los Altos Hills, so like a "constitution" that it is reproduced here in its entirety, in Appendix A, for all to study the intentions of the original incorporators, the goals and promises of the founding fathers. It is here to compare with the actual record that evolved. In it are the bedrock and the foundations of the town. It also includes un-intentional prognostications of some unhappy events that came to pass and nearly shattered the new town before its 2nd birthday.

The Formation of the Town

In a statement issued, William Simrell stated, "The Hills zoning began to show signs

of crumbling about 1950 and four neighborhood property owners associations were formed to defend it, namely:

Page Mill Road Ass'n...to combat quarrying, headed by Wallace Stegner.
 Robleda Ass'n.....to oppose variances and use permits for smaller parcels and non-residential uses, headed by Joseph McKenna.
 Moody Road Ass'n.....opposing resorts and quarrying, headed by Frank Duveneck.
 Purissima Hills Ass'n..to bring in Hetch Hetchy Water, but also concerned with zoning, headed by Carol Fortriede.

The San Antonio Hills Association had already been in existence for some time and was quite strong.

"Acting separately, these associations were meeting with only moderate success, and it was felt necessary to join together as the "United Foothills Property Owners Association" for greater effectiveness. Even this proved insufficient, however, and the idea of incorporation was brouched, studied, worked out and adopted. The initial Incorporation Committee consisted of the various associations. Ultimately the San Antonio Hills Association dropped out. Just before incorporation, the Committee had grown to about eighty persons, spreading the word, carrying petitions, discussing various aspects and problems, and a central "working core" as follows:

James C. Wilson, Attorney, who provided the report of the Coro Foundation on the proposed incorporation of Woodside, which formed the basis of our own studies.
John P. Whitney, Attorney, who provided the briefs on the legal aspects of incorporation and acted for the Committee at the Boundaries Hearings before the County Board of Supervisors, together with James Wilson. (John would have become Town Attorney but unfortunately his area opted out and is now part of Palo Alto.)
Rex Gardiner, who attended to all statistical work, regarding financing, return from gas taxes and "in lieu" taxes, road costs, etc.
L. Cedric Macabee, whose engineering office prepared the necessary maps.
Jayne Dungan, who had been on the Democratic and other various committees in the area, for years and had an extremely wide acquaintance and understanding.
William Simrell, Jr., compiling lists of property owners and assessed valuation of properties, developing circulars of information, conducting meetings as chairman of the Incorporation Committee, putting the combined thinking and data into the Proposal for Incorporation, and the Platform for Incorporation, etc.

"In addition, there were several advisors who briefed us on specific items:

Charles S. McCandless, Engineer, zoning, subdividing, subdivision ordinance, State law pertaining to same, etc.

Harold Baxter, Commissioner of the Los Altos Fire District, fire protection.

Melvin Hawley, Sheriff of Santa Clara County, police protection.

Arrangements were made with A. F. Duval of Palo Alto, the owner, for the use of the former one-room historic "Purissima School" located at 26140 Duval, off Robleda, which had been abandoned for school use, for the committee meetings and public meetings concerning the incorporation.

As the year 1955 ended, all of Northern California was busy mopping up after the heaviest rains on record. Christmas had been a wet affair because of 7.23 inches of rain that had fallen in a single week, bringing the seasons total to 14.81 inches as compared with the norm of only 5.30 inches.

The proposed Los Altos Hills had come through the storms better than the flat areas of Los Altos and Palo Alto, which had suffered real flood conditions. The 2,500 residents in the hills were thinking about casting their 1,200 registered votes in the coming January 10th election on the question of incorporation. The many questions involved with it had been discussed again and again at various public meetings.

(1) Was the budget realistic? Could \$42,900 pay all of the necessary bills?

A newspaper writer pointed out that such strictly residential cities as Atherton, Hillsborough and Ross, with more per capita wealth, carried tax loads from two to nine times greater than the 25 cents per hundred dollars of assessed valuation tax proposed for this new town. But the proponents of incorporation felt it could be done because they proposed an absolute minimum of government with but a single Town Clerk for "staff" with all other functions,

especially police and building inspection being contracted for with the County.

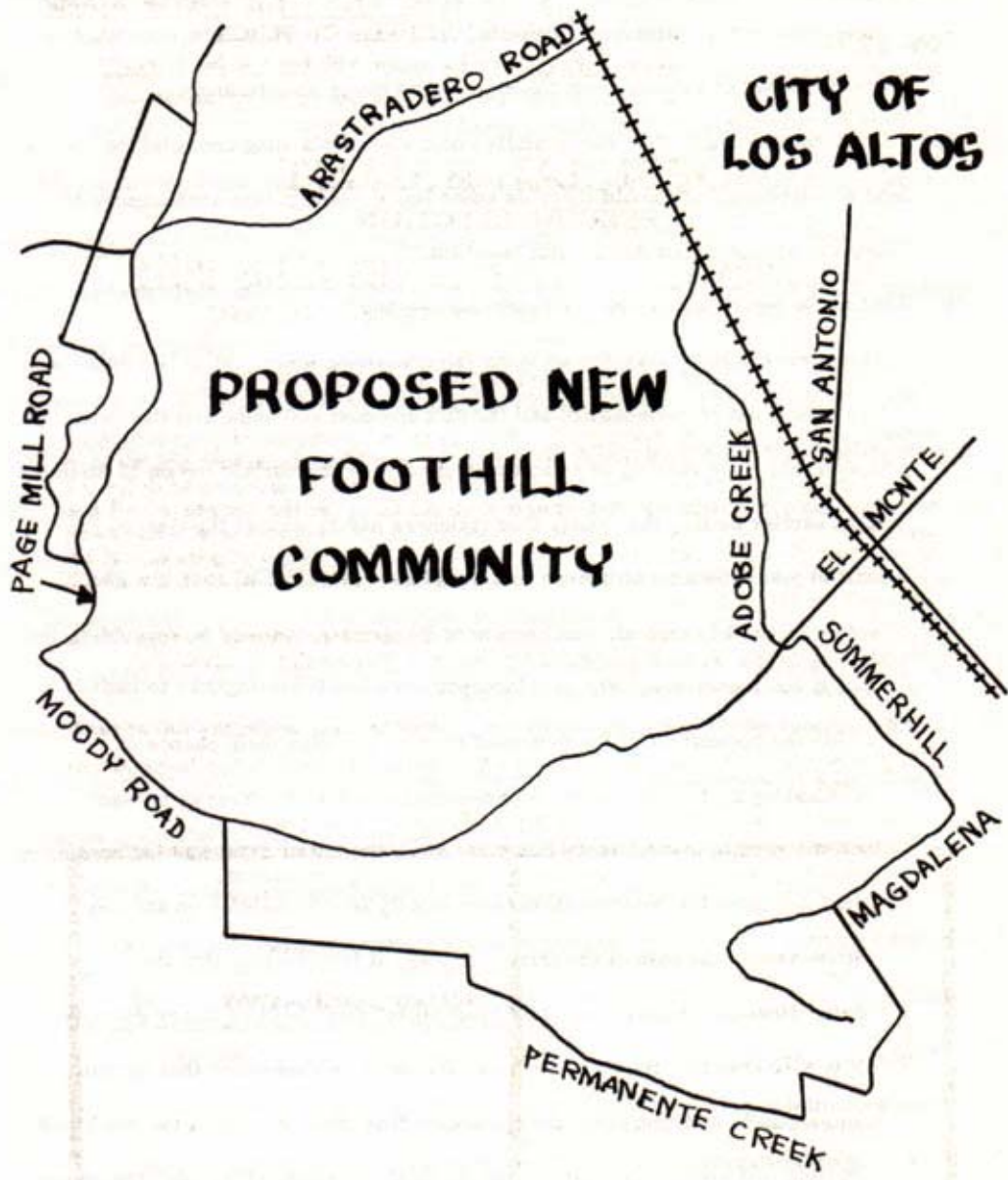
(2) Roads ?

Keep them rural, minimum, pleasant, inexpensive, and the \$26,000 Gasoline and License tax refunds from the State would cover maintenance.

(3) What about planning? How successfully could a local planning commission control land development, and could they, as some hoped, even police architecture to "keep the proposed Los Altos Hills beautiful?"

(4) What of the Neary Quarry up on Stonebrook Avenue?

There were some among the founding fathers whose main goal in life seemed to be to put it out of business, to end the dirt and dust and noise and the giant trucks that were roaring in a steady stream down Stonebrook and on El Monte. In an earlier battle, the County Commissioners had ruled that the Quarry had started just before an ordinance that would have outlawed it, that it would not be allowed to expand, that certain of its operations would be forbidden, but that it could continue. The pro-incorporators had tried mightily to include it within the boundaries of the proposed town to increase their chance of eliminating it, but the County Supervisors permitted the Nearys to "opt" out and remain under County domain. Since the initial drive and the continuing work and push for incorporation came mostly from residents on and near Stonebrook, the path of the Quarry trucks, it is quite true that the foundations of the proposed "Los Altos Hills" were built of Neary redrock. It is also true that the rock contained the seeds of dissention that sprouted immediately and nourished the opposition that created most of the headlined battles that rocked the hills during the first two years of its life, that came close to snuffing it out during the dis-incorporation election in 1958. These and a hundred other questions echoed around the hills.



(This number shall be
torn off by Inspector
and handed to the voter)

No. 1234

SAMPLE BALLOT

Mark Crosses (✚) on Ballot ONLY WITH RUBBER STAMP;
NEVER WITH PEN OR PENCIL

(Absentee Ballots may be marked with Pen and Ink or Pencil)

(Fold Ballot to this perforated line, leaving top margin exposed)

No. 1234

OFFICIAL BALLOT

SPECIAL ELECTION

INCORPORATION OF TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS
COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Tuesday, January 10, 1956

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS: To vote for a candidate of your selection, stamp a cross (X) in the voting square next to the right of the name of such candidate. Where two or more candidates for the same office are to be elected, stamp a cross (X) after the names of all the candidates for that office for whom you desire to vote not to exceed, however, the number of candidates who are to be elected. To vote for a person not on the ballot, write the name of such person under the title of the office in the blank space left for that purpose.

To vote "For Incorporation" or "Against Incorporation," stamp a cross (X) in the voting square next to the right of the answer you desire to give.

All marks except the cross (X) are forbidden.

All distinguishing marks or erasures are forbidden and make the ballot void.

If you wrongly stamp, tear or deface this ballot, return it to the Inspector of Election and obtain another.

On absent voters' ballots mark a cross (X) with pen or pencil.

MEMBER OF CITY COUNCIL	Vote for Five	MEASURE SUBMITTED TO VOTE OF VOTERS	
LEIGHTON BLEDSOE		FOR INCORPORATION	
T. A. DUNGAN Engineer		AGAINST INCORPORATION	
ARTHUR E. FOWLE			
HOWARD A. FRAME			
REX GARDINER Lighting Engineer			
C. EASTON ROTHWELL			
SIDNEY W. TREAT			
JAMES C. WILSON, JR. Attorney			

The Board of Supervisors gave authority to circulate petitions and the technical okay to the proposed boundaries. City lines would run along Summerhill Road to Magdalena Avenue, then to Ravensbury Avenue, along Permanente Creek to Moody Road, slightly west of Page Mill Road and finally follow Arastradero Road, the Southern Pacific right of way and Adobe Creek. Notice of Public Hearing of petition to incorporate the Town of Los Altos Hills was posted on Friday, October 21, 1955, and was heard on Monday, November 7, 1955 in the chambers of the Board of Supervisors, North First and Rosa Streets, San Jose, California. Thus setting the date of January 10, 1956, as the day of decision.

The Town is Incorporated

As the first week of January 1956 began, no voice had been raised against the idea of creating the new town. (Several properties along the proposed boundaries had protested, along with the Nearys, and the boundaries were drawn inside them.) At least 75% of the residents seemed in favor, according to local inquiries and judging from reaction at the several large meetings held and from the fact that 900 people had signed the proposals. Everything was quiet, and the newspapers indicated that successful incorporation seemed to be a foregone conclusion.

Suddenly, just before the last weekend previous to the Tuesday election, an unknown opposition burst out with a roar that echoed from every hill. Mailboxes were filled with printed circulars and postcards that indicated organization and relatively heavy expense. Some of the printed pieces were over the name of "Foothills Committee for Lower Taxes," but no individual names were included. This was a tactic that was to be repeated many times in later months when issues arose. It finally was revealed that the person responsible for this attack was Charles H. Prior, who was not even a resident of Los Altos Hills.

Such was the atmosphere of sudden controversy on Tuesday when voters moved along the winding roads of the hills to the two polling places, the home of L. P. Denne, Hillview Drive between Hilltop Drive and Magdalena Avenue; and the home of Irene A. Lockwood, 27231 Elena Avenue.

On that day also, the British were sending troops to Cyprus and Governor Knight



The present "City of Los Altos Hills" lost some 250 persons and 1,000 acres in hearings before the Board of Supervisors. The "opted out" areas are shown by lines dotted by small circles. They include the controversial Neary-Sondgroth quarry.

was preparing to call a special session of the California Legislature because of the recent floods.

On the rainy night of January 10, 1956, shortly after the polls closed at 7 p. m., the simple ballot was tallied and showed:

424 yes.....339 no.

Thus, the Town of Los Altos Hills became a "city", Santa Clara County's 14th city, by a close margin. The last minute opposition was well-timed and had taken its toll, had almost won. A total of 763 (65% of the eligible voters in the hills of some 1,200) had cast their ballots and 7 absentees, making a yes vote of 54%.

Within 24 hours the opposition threw down the tauntlet. Channing Cathcart, a subdivider announced that he planned to organize a group to take steps to delay or rescind incorporation. He claimed the "voters were misinformed." This new voice replaced the only previous voice in the opposition.

Sidney W. Treat, who was soon destined to preside as Mayor over the early stormy sessions of the Town Council, spoke for the Incorporationists. "I feel very strongly that the elected council will bring from their respective backgrounds the important practice of getting the facts before deciding, then moving carefully; I do hope those who voted "No" will now pitch in and help...bringing their wants and criticisms to the Council instead of bottling them up."

In this early statement, Mr. Treat put his finger on one of the major problems that would soon beset the new town--communication between the people governed and those doing the governing. This situation which plagues every President, Congress, Governor, Assembly and Mayor soon became critical as the new council struggled to create the laws that were needed to carry out the wishes of the small population scattered throughout the nine square miles of Los Altos Hills.

The ballot had carried the name of seven men from various sections of the hills area,

from which the voters were to choose five to form the first council:

- Leighton M. Bledsoe, Age 52.. of 25525 Moody Road, a lawyer.....(319 Votes)
Born in Bisbee, Arizona, graduate of Stanford, law practice in San Francisco, resident of Menlo Park and Palo Alto for many years before moving to the hills in 1951.
- T. A. Dungan, Age 46.. of 10285 Magdalena, a chemical engineer.....(384 Votes)
Born in Berkeley, graduate of University of California, chief engineer for the Permanente magnesium plant during World War II, later with the Bechtel Corporation's petroleum division in San Francisco, resident of the hills since 1947.
- Arthur E. Fowle, Age 85.. of 26311 West Fremont, a retired executive....(404 Votes)
Born in Massachusetts, graduate of M. I. T., one of the founders and officer of the Libby-Owens-Ford Glass Company, retired to Los Altos Hills in 1925, civic-minded leader and philanthropist who had given much work and money to the recently developed town of Los Altos, its civic center, its first swimming pool, its first Fire District.
- Howard A. Frame, Age 59.. of Yuba Avenue off Elena Avenue, retired investment counselor.....(251 Votes)
Born in Vermont, graduate of the University of Washington, business in Palo Alto, a director of the Palo Alto Y. M. C. A., resident of the hills since 1948.
- C. Easton Rothwell, Age 52.. of Page Mill Road, Director of Hoover Library..(317 Votes)
Born in Denver, Colorado, graduate of Reed College, master's from University of Oregon, doctorate from Stanford, executive secretary of the U. N. conference in 1945, secretary general of the U. S. delegation to the general assembly in London, 1945-46, secretary general of the U. S. delegation to the U. N. 1946, resident in the area since 1947, in Los Altos Hills since 1955.
- Sidney W. Treat, Age 70.. of 12870 Robleda Avenue, retired executive and teacher..(383 Votes)
Born in Chicago, graduate of Cornell University, executive vice president of the Signode Steel Strapping Company until retirement, then teacher of French and German at Thacher School in Ojai, active in several civic organizations in the Los Altos area, resident since 1948.
- James C. Wilson, Jr., Age 32.. of 10800 Magdalena Avenue, lawyer.....(229 Votes)
Born in Chicago, graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Air Corps officer in World War II, active in attempts to hold zoning to one acre, resident since 1951.
- Rex Gardner, Lighting engineer, had withdrawn too late to have his name removed from the ballot.....(151 Votes)

On January 23, 1956, the Santa Clara Board of Supervisors affirmed the incorporation documents. Incorporation of the town was then officially declared a sixth-class city on January 27, 1956. Sixth-class meaning cities having a population of more than three thousand three hundred and not exceeding eight thousand. Population determined and

FIRST TOWN COUNCIL



1st Row: Joseph McKenna, Gardner Bullis, Ted A. Dungan, C Easton Rothwell
2nd Row: John M. Fowle, Leighton Bledsoe, Sidney W. Treat, Margaret Lovett

classification based thereon.

History was made with the swearing in of the Town of Los Altos Hills first City Council, January 30, 1956. An audience of about sixty people gathered at the old Purissima School saw blackrobed Justice W. Shenk swear in the five winners. They were: C. Easton Rothwell, Leighton M. Bledsoe, Sidney W. Treat, Arthur E. Fowle and T. A. Dungan. As soon as documents could be gotten to the Secretary of State in Sacramento, and filed by him, this first council would meet and begin the work of creating and running a town, OUR TOWN.

Interpretations of the law that officials named in special elections must be confirmed at the next general election-----these in April of each "even year" vary, but three councilmen named had to stand for re-election, April, 1956.

On Saturday, January 28, 1956, at the hour of 9:30 A. M. the City Council held its first official meeting at the old Purissima Schoolhouse with a staff of unpaid officials, an outlay of \$112.10, and an invitation to foothill residents to serve on a citizens' advisory committee.

ARTHUR E. FOWLE, who had received the most votes in the election, was appointed as our FIRST MAYOR, but due to a recent heart attack he was unable to take his seat at the council table and appointed his son, John M. Fowle to fill the two-year council seat in his place.

SIDNEY W. TREAT, who received the third highest number of votes, was then elected as the Town's first officiating Mayor.

Other officers elected were:

T. A. Dungan.....	Deputy Mayor
J. M. Fowle.....	Acting Town Clerk
Mrs. E. R. Lovett.....	Acting Town Treasurer
Joseph McKenna.....	Acting Chief of Police
Gardner Bullis.....	Town Attorney

Gardner Bullis had acted as informal legal advisor to the Town Officials and was

currently Los Altos' City Attorney.

The three lowest members, votewise, of the new five-man council had to stand for re-election on April 10, 1956. Two councilmen, Mayor Sidney Treat and T. A. Dungan, deputy mayor, were tied for second spot and drew "straws" to determine who would drop to third position; this fell to Mayor Sidney Treat. Therefore, Mayor Treat, Dr. C. Eaton Rothwell, and Leighton Bledsoe had to stand for re-election.

By resolution, Town Council voted to continue present county services, except that of county planning commission, through June 30, 1956. Pre-incorporation services must be continued through the fiscal year, when desired, without further charge by the county.

Other actions taken were:

Authorization of 30-day "binder" insurance to protect the municipality until bids are called, the short-term protection not to exceed a cost of \$100.

Outlay of \$12.10 for an official town seal.

Setting 9:30 A. M. on the first Saturday of each month as time of regular meetings, place to be announced later.

Passage of a resolution to borrow "up to \$1,000 from First Western Bank and Trust Company, Los Altos, to supply officers with 'petty cash' until a State gas tax apportionment becomes available." The States funds will be received well before June 30th, Bullis advised.

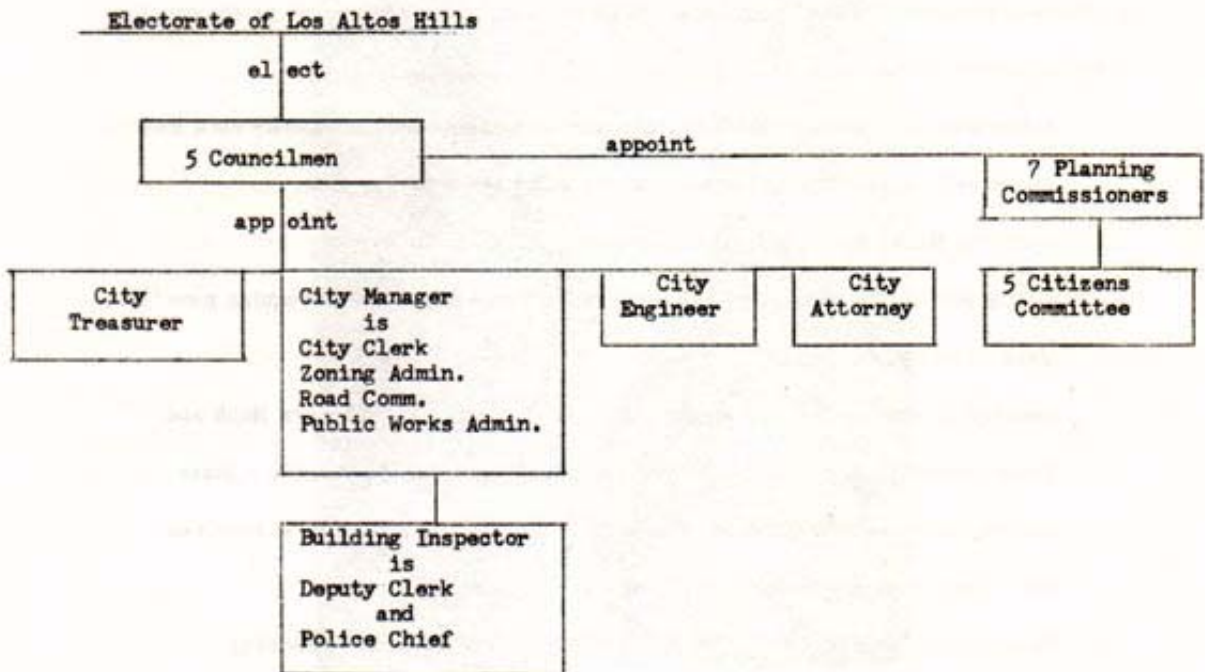
Passage of an "emergency" ordinance, effective immediately, retaining Santa Clara County zoning of the R-1 acre minimum community.

The Town's only paid position... Town Clerk... open for applications.

Salary to be a minimum \$5,000.

On February 9, 1956, Henry Paulman was selected as Los Altos Hills first Town Clerk, from among 22 applicants for the post. He served the town in this office at his

LOS ALTOS HILLS GOVERNMENT



home. 13211 Sunset Drive, and had office hours from 9:30 A. M. to 12 noon each Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.

The Council also appointed a seven-man Planning Commission and appointed the following to serve as Commissioners: Richard S. Bullis, Richard S. Dawson, Raymond O. Hoeffler, Proctor Melquist, Thomas Sherlock, William Simrell Jr., and James Stedman.

They also authorized a month-to-month lease of the old Purissima School at \$75 per month as a temporary Town Hall for meetings.

Agreed to ask Fire Chief Richard Bassett to act as an advisor in fire protection matters.

Cedric Macabee was named Road Commissioner and Charles McCandless as Town Engineer.

Arthur E. Fowle offered as a gift to the town a one-half acre parcel at the northeast corner of his thirty acre property at West Fremont and Concepcion Avenues. He also wrote " he hoped the Town Council would proceed immediately to take advantage of the gift." It was one of the greatest and the last act of generosity he performed, for on March 14, 1956, Arthur E. Fowle died at his home of a heart ailment and complications. He was buried at Alta Mesa Cemetery.

The offer of the one-half acre site given by Arthur Fowle before he died was renewed by his son, John, and on April 17 officials of the town were donated the sum of \$15,000 for construction of a Town Hall on the site. This gift was generously donated by Mr. and Mrs. C. Earl Dawson, 11627 Magdalena Avenue. This led to other donations and eventually our present Town Hall was being constructed with architect William Simrell Jr. at the helm, drawing up a plan for the proposed hall and donating his services, and Charles R. McCandless surveying the site and preparing a plot plan. On April 10, 1956,

LOS ALTOS HILLS TOWN HALL



Photo by
H. Lawrence Fava

Mayor Sidney Treat, Dr. C. Easton Rothwell and Leighton Bledsoe retained their posts at the municipal election, with an overwhelming majority of 5 to 1 against opponents Channing W. Cathcart, Fred E. Gutt and Richard A. Lockwood.

T. A. Dungan and Jack Fowle, also original councilmen, did not stand for re-election until 1958.

The 1st of July was the start of a new fiscal year. The town took over street work and set the first full year budget at \$46,816, more than half of it for road maintenance and repairs. The property tax rate was set at 25 cents per \$100 assessed valuation.

A long drawn out fight over a truck weight limitation arose, which was hotly contested by the nearby Neary Quarry, who were using the town's roads. The ordinance, No. 17, was designed to prevent trucks over 12 gross tons from using the town's roadways. It was culminated October 2, 1956 as voters upheld the restriction at the polls- 493-308.

A similar fight came after the proposed subdivision ordinance, as a group submitted the second referendum petition which was held in April, 1957.

The new Los Altos Hills Town Hall was completed and held its open house on February 23 and 24, 1957, at 26379 West Fremont Avenue. Its total cost of \$35,000 was a gift to the town from a score of residents:

The late, Arthur E. Fowle...	one-half acre of land.
Mr. and Mrs. C. Earl Dawson...	\$18,000 to cover the cost of the building contract.
Fremont Hills Development Corporation...	land
Architect William Simrell Jr...	Town Hall Design
Engineer Charles R. McCandless...	surveying and plot plan
Tom Sherlock.....	landscape design
Jessie Steinhart.....	donation of \$800
Martin Taaffe.....	grading for building and driveway
L. W. Bitney.....	cupola
Anonymous.....	roof
Mayor Sidney Treat.....	\$1000 toward furnishings
Anonymous Contractor.....	septic system installation
Ray Hoeffler.....	paint
Anonymous.....	\$500 toward furnishings
Mr. and Mrs. R. Lovett.....	coffee urn
Leighton Bledsoe.....	interim insurance
Jack Snell.....	\$250

George Evans II.....\$50
 Holger Sphor.....erected the building
 Los Altos Nursery.....plants
 George Pfeiffer.. the town historian, offered to print official stationary, including the new Town Hall address and phone number (Wh 8-7582) on his hobby printing press, in his Robleda Avenue home. He also printed the Los Altos Hills Bulletin without charge.

The first meeting was held in the new building on Monday, February 25, 1957, at the hour of 8:00 P. M. During the Town Hall housewarming, Mayor Sidney Treat delivered the following speech:

"Mr. Dawson and all donors to this project:

On behalf of the Town Council, our Officials and all of our Citizens, I accept this gift of our Town Hall...built, thanks to the generosity of you all, without using taxpayers money. May we and all those who hereafter work on it, match the spirit which prompted your many gifts.

It was William Simrell, who above all others was responsible for incorporation and who guided the Planning Commission through its early work; and it was he who not only donated the design and plans but also supervised the construction of this building. Bill, we thank you for all you have done.

To have this attractive and practical place to work in is going to be a great help and incentive for us all. It will be easier to get our work done and we can more easily coordinate the various jobs. I might add, it will be a great relief to Henry Paulman, who for thirteen months has contributed his living room for use as our Town Office.

At this point, I want to express my appreciation of the cooperation I have had from all with whom I have been working. Never, I am confident, has a mayor had a grander group to work with and never has a community had the good fortune to have such a collection of hard-working, dedicated experts in various fields as make up our Planning Commission.

As I look back, I am reminded of the cowboy's epitaph, "He done his durndest; angels

can do no more." I think I can safely say that our entire organization, Council, Officials, and Planners have done their darndest, and it has been a magnificent darndest they have done, night after night, Saturdays and Sundays, meetings and time-consuming conferences. Unbelievable till you talk with the individuals themselves.

Mistakes there have been, of course, all of us were freshmen at our jobs and we had no upper classmen to advise and guide us, though we were very fortunate in having as City Attorney, Gardner Bullis, and...Gardner we have at times leaned very heavily upon you. However, any mistake we made was an honest mistake and our aim has always been the greatest good for the Community, both at present and in the future.

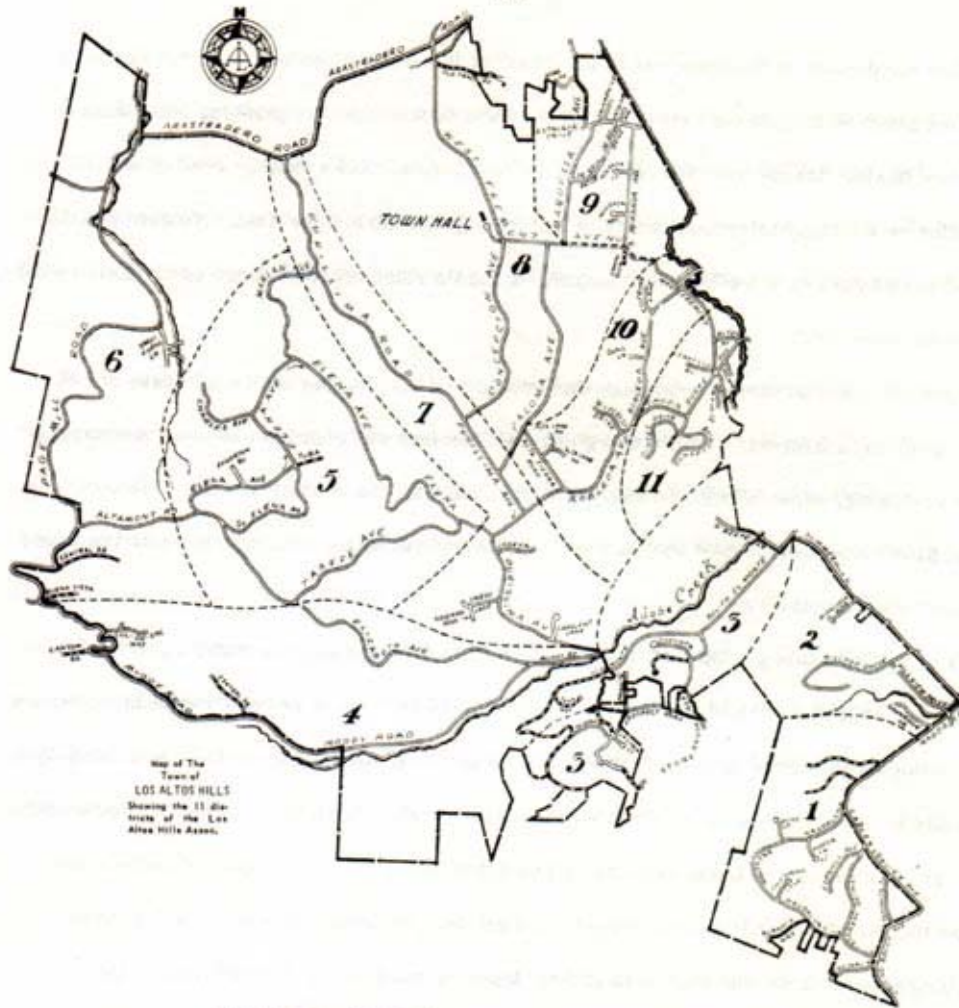
I would like to touch on what has been my feeling about this Town of ours...nine square miles of beautiful, rural settings, but...filled with problems and with conflicting ideas on how to settle them. For that very reason it is a challenge to every citizen to make of it something different, something that others could look to as offering ideas worthy of emulation. I quote from Washington's speech at the Constitutional Convention, "let us raise a standard to which the wise and the just shall repair."

And now, Mr. Chairman, I hope it is not out of order for me to speak seriously..... even on this happy occasion. International thinking is inevitable in these anxious days when another war is a possibility, however remote. Always in my mind and heart is this thought that I want to leave with you all. Los Altos Hills is only a tiny, tiny speck on the globe, but the world is made up of tiny, tiny specks and if in each of them, the people tried... really tried...to understand the problems of the adjoining groups and were willing to compromise in reaching solution, surely the world would be immeasurably close to the peace we all long for.

The omission of an invocation at this ceremony was not accidental, it was deliberate because of the many beliefs and faiths represented here. May I however, in closing,

ask for a minute's silent thought, or prayer, that this tiny speck on the globe, our Town of Los Altos Hills, may be peacefully solving its problems, help towards the larger Peace in the world.

..... Thank you."



Map of The
Town of
LOS ALTOS HILLS
Showing the 11 districts of the Los
Altos Hills Assoc.

THE LOS ALTOS HILLS ASSOCIATION

District Representatives forming the GENERAL COMMITTEE:

District 1. W. Rees Aiken, 10410 Magdalena Ave. WH 8-3725 Mrs. W.A. Benson, 11030 Magdalena Ave. WH 8-7931 James C. Wilson, 10800 Magdalena Ave. WH 8-6158 Alt. - Fred Brutschy, 11291 Magdalena Ave. WH 8-3215 Alt. - Mr. W.A. Benson, 11030 Magdalena Ave. WH 8-7931 Alt. - Joe D. Giulio, 11181 Magdalena Ave. WH 8-2691	Alt. - Mrs. Ralph M. Packer, 27271 Moody Rd. WH 8-3050	H.M. Lewis, 13861 La Paloma WH 8-7126 Alt. - Mrs. W. Geer, 25910 W. Fremont WH 8-3984 Alt. - Mrs. G. Sagden, 13940 La Paloma ... WH 8-6951 Alt. - Clarence Mezer, 26170 W. Fremont ... WH 8-5274
District 2. John Tyndall, II, 12606 Miraloma Way WH 8-3210 Freston Low, 12031 Hilltop Dr. WH 8-2713 Miss Barbara Lemons, 24250 Hillview Dr. WH 8-4094 Alt. - Mrs. John W. Barlow, 24150 Hillview Dr. WH 8-4099 Alt. - Mrs. D.C. McClanery, 24143 Hillview Dr. WH 8-4149	District 5. Mrs. Roger Goldsmith, 27330 Elena Ave. WH 8-2487 George Cowin, 26721 Taftle WH 8-8132 R.J. DeCristoforo 27861 Elena Ave. WH 8-6481 Alt. - Mrs. James Hicks, 27550 Edgeross Rd. WH 8-7019 Alt. - Mrs. Robt. Keayon, 27450 Edgeross Rd. WH 8-6474 Alt. - Mrs. R.J. DeCristoforo 27861 Elena Ave. WH 8-6481	District 9. Thomas Green, 14840 Manuella WH 8-7808 Wm. G. Pierce, 14380 Manuella WH 8-3687 Ralph Hayden, 14891 Miranda WH 8-3487
District 3. Edward L. Wasson, 24985 Ononta Dr. WH 8-6704 John R. Lohman, 12101 So. El Monte WH 8-2332 Mrs. C.L. Reed, 25010 La Loma Dr. WH 8-7772 Alt. - Walter Vincente, 25000 Ononta Dr. WH 8-6274 Alt. - R.W. Decker, 11815 Stonebrook WH 8-2924 Alt. - Louis F. Wilson, 25102 O'Keefe Ave. WH 8-5557	District 6. Andrew H. Cochran, 2235 Page Mill Rd. DA 5-2484 Chas. R. Garbett, 13900 Page Mill Rd. DA 2-9135 Alt. - Thomas A. Peris, 11820 Buena Vista ... WH 8-7286	District 10. George Pfeiffer, 3rd, 13647 Robledo WH 8-6188 Jack R. Benjamins, 13770 Robledo WH 8-5857 Wilfred R. George, 13750 Robledo WH 8-1189 Alt. - David Weeks, 13781 Cinnamon Lane ... WH 8-3592 Alt. - E.R. Lovett, 13070 Alta Lane, So. ... WH 8-2343
District 4. Frank Costello, Jr. 23750 Moody Rd. WH 8-5320 Raymond V. Teats, 27161 Moody Rd. WH 8-4985	District 7. Oscar R. Holm, 26775 Parisaina WH 8-2526 Ralph E. Lee, 26430 Parisaina WH 8-4103 Robt. M. Huff, 25870 Ridgewood Rd. WH 8-1015 Alt. - Lucas Holenky, 26861 Parisaina WH 8-5392 Alt. - Edna Andreino, 28050 Parisaina WH 8-7691	District 11. John Peter Daley, Hill Way WH 8-7079 James H. Zischke, 25610 Deerfield Dr. WH 8-5908 Mrs. M.D. Van Dyke, 40 Hill Way WH 8-6024 Alt. - Hans P. Deussen, W. Sunset Dr. WH 8-5308 Alt. - R.W. Lindsay, 13151 W. Sunset Dr. ... WH 8-5115 Alt. - R.B. Rutherford, 25551 Burke Circle ... WH 8-5864
District 8. Robt. Rockwell, 26475 Ascension Ave. WH 8-1370 R.W. Willis, 26550 Ascension Ave. WH 8-7587		

Now the destiny of the town was in the hands of its own residents. Land development policies could be argued out between neighbors and councilmen and planning commissioners on a new basis. Maybe over the fence, in the orchard, across a lane or road on a Saturday morning or a Sunday afternoon before bringing it up at a formal meeting. No need now to travel to San Jose on a weekday any longer. A man's voice could be more easily heard where it would do some good.

Another small problem developed--the problem of keeping the scattered residents of the "open" town informed of what was going on. Rumors and charges and counter-charges were confusing, especially since they were involved with the activities of the defeated Opposition forces whose goal was to win a dis-incorporation election that by State law could be held two years later.

It was during this period that the Los Altos Hills Association was born; a group of people active in the work of the incorporation decided to form an association of homeowners and residents to ensure self-government, following the platform (Green Sheets) as closely as possible to make certain of the Town's future as a rural, completely residential community. This group was formed from all parts of Los Altos Hills; they were residents who wanted to get together frequently to keep informed of all developments and report back to their neighbors, also those who wanted to gather together the ideas and complaints of their neighbors and take them to the Central Committee which could better organize them for presentation to the busy, struggling Town Council.

Sometimes, the Los Altos Hills Association opposed intended actions of the Council, sometimes it supported, but always it served the main purpose of helping the busy Councilmen to know what the people of the town were thinking and wanting. It is and always will be run by sincere men and women whose greatest problem is to know what the majority of the people they represent really want them to do.

Eleven districts were formed throughout the town, with six people of each district as representatives, and one chairman. Meetings were held throughout 1956 and early 1957. On February 5, 1957, a core group of these people (about sixty) met at Mr. Richard Dawson's home; aims and procedures were spelled out, and a summary of proposals were set up.

These people and many others named to important posts in the Association worked daily on instructional sheets, maps and agendas for use in membership meetings to be held in each of the eleven neighborhood districts set up. By March 15th, these meetings had been completed, and 250 family charter memberships were announced (500 individual members.) The By-Laws were prepared and approved and Articles of Incorporation as a non-profit organization were filed with the office of the California Secretary of State in April, 1957, with Mr. R. Dawson, Mrs. W. Benson, and Mrs. I. Goldsmith as Directors; thus completing the formation of the Los Altos Hills Association.