

From: [Mary Takahashi](#)
To: [Public Comment - HC](#)
Subject: Los Altos Historic Preservation Award
Date: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 5:18:55 PM

I'm writing in support of the Los Altos Chapter, DAR's nomination for the Los Altos Historic Preservation Award.

My neighbor, Ann Hepenstal, wrote two of the profiles in the Early Settlers project, researching Silas Emerson and Cyrus Berry, who owned the land on which our homes sit today in Los Altos.

Silas Emerson came from Maine for the Gold Rush, but found it difficult to he switch to buying land and farming. He won prizes at the California State Fair for his livestock, was influential in breeding shorthorn cattle in California, and grew wheat and orchards. He died in 1889 and left an estate worth several million dollars to his nephew Cyrus Berry. Berry's great grandson still lives in the area, and his home is on the City's historic registrar. Berry Avenue is named after him. The Settlers Project helps make all these names and history seem more real, and connected to our homes and our city.

The "Settlers Project" met several of the award criteria:

- Demonstration of pioneering or innovative efforts in historic preservation or education--this project took creative approaches to local history research during a pandemic, engaged over 20 people in researching local settlers and writing up their profiles, and took a fresh look at distributing the information in printed and virtual form*
- Public Benefit received (educational, beautification, advocacy, etc.)--this early local history is now documented and broadly available to the public. The project profiled local residents, even ones who are not famous, and documented their lives. It engaged descendants of the Berry family and other early settlers in the research, and connected the researchers with the current residents of historic homes. The project documented the namesakes of local streets, schools, and other facilities, bringing the meaning back to these names and keeping the early residents' memories alive*
- Impact to the City of Los Altos--the project preserves the early history of the City of Los Altos, brings meaning to local place names, and brings the Los Altos community to the world through the broad distribution of the work on the web and in national and state libraries.*

Please name the Los Altos Chapter, DAR project as winner of this year's Los Altos Historic Preservation Award.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mary Takahashi
Los Altos