

From: [Martha Wallace](#)
To: [Public Comment - HC](#)
Subject: Supporting the nomination of the Los Altos DAR chapter for the Los Altos Historic Preservation Award
Date: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 11:29:15 PM

Members of the Los Altos Historical Commission:
Regarding the nomination of the Los Altos DAR chapter for the Los Altos Historic Preservation Award

Do you know why Springer Road is called Springer Road? Where did Hale Creek get its name? Knowing the history of our community enriches our understanding of the world of our town today. Acquiring that knowledge gives us the opportunity to learn about the hardy and adventurous people who lived here and contributed their names and visions to our landscape today.

The clickable PDF book, *Early Settlers of Old Los Altos/Mountain View*, a project created during lockdown by the Los Altos Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, tells the stories of 35 early settlers. It was brought into being by the work of 16 DAR member-authors, plus others who assisted with the project. In 2022 and 2023 it went on to garner wide distribution online and in local libraries, along with awards for its fresh approach to telling the stories of individuals who were part of the early years of Los Altos. These people were not the famous people; they were the every-day people who met challenges and worked to improve their daily life. They developed the community in which we build our lives today.

I am a docent at the Rengstorff House at Shoreline in Mountain View. I knew that Henry Rengstorff and Peter Swall owned land between Adobe Creek and Giffin Road (now San Antonio Road). Who was Giffin? I investigated and wrote the story of Oscar Fitzgerald Giffin who came from Vermont and New York and began as a wholesale fruit merchant in San Francisco in 1851. He expanded into mining, banking, and real estate in Los Angeles – and, in Los Altos, he owned land which he sold to Rengstorff and Swall in 1881. I now understand the link between past and present; another connection through time!

When we share this knowledge, it makes us feel more a part of the place we live. We welcome knowing the history of this land and making it available to others to know the people and their stories: the legacy of the past in the present.

I support the nomination for the Los Altos Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution for the Los Altos Historic Preservation Award. This project meets the criteria outlined for the Los Altos Historic Preservation Award:

- has an innovative approach to history and education – one-page bios in a clickable PDF with printed versions.
- brings recognition to Los Altos – people in other places can learn about our history.
- encourages public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the City's past – knowing the source of the names of our streets and schools changes the way we drive down the street.
- fosters civic and neighborhood pride – who were the early residents of the neighborhood where *you* live?
- enhances a sense of identity based upon the recognition and use of the City's historic resources – the landscape of the past is seen in today's neighborhoods.



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