



City of Los Altos

2025 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD NOMINATION

I am nominating Los Altos Chapter, DAR for the 2025 Historic Preservation Award.

Describe the reasons why the nominee should receive the Historic Preservation Award and how the nominee meets the following criteria:

1. Demonstration of pioneering or innovative efforts in historic preservation or education.
2. Conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation.
3. Public Benefit received (educational, beautification, advocacy, etc.).
4. Impact on the City of Los Altos.

The Los Altos Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution completed an innovative project to preserve 75 years of local history, documenting the history of the DAR chapter in context of the history of Los Altos and the nation. 10 DAR members combed through 4 large bins in the Los Altos Museum's archives (45 scrapbooks and photo albums filled with newspaper clippings, photos, flyers, notecards, ephemera) and researched Los Altos history and national news over 75 years. The book took the innovative approach of telling the chapter's history decade-by-decade--but within the broader historical context of the local community and national events. The Los Altos History Museum benefited from the digitizing, organizing, and preservation of their records. The public benefited from this documentation of Los Altos history and the preservation of the contributions of Los Altos DAR and its members to the community. Book copies are currently available through the Museum and Mayor Dailey, and will be at other sites soon.

If applicable, submit copies of letters of commendation or any other supporting documentation (not required). Attach additional sheets as needed.

Nominated by: Ann Hepenstal Date: 22 April 2025

In order to officially submit a nomination for the 2025 Historic Preservation Award, please submit documentation supporting the nomination compiled into a single copy. Submit this documentation to the Historical Commission's staff liaison, Sean Gallegos, at sgallegos@losaltosca.gov. Materials may also be submitted at City Hall, 1 North San Antonio Road, Los Altos, CA 94022. All nominations must be received by **Wednesday, April 23, 2025 at 5:00 pm.**

Nominations will be considered at an upcoming Historical Commission meeting on April 28, 2025. The 2025 Historic Preservation Award winner will be recognized by the City Council with a proclamation at a future meeting.

Description of Historic Preservation Project:
Los Altos Chapter, DAR 75th Year History Book
Information from the Book's Editor:
Melanie Ercoli, Regent, Los Altos Chapter DAR

The records of the Los Altos Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution have been stored in 4 large bins at the Los Altos History Museum in their vault. These records include legal documents such as minutes and financial records, but they also contain 45 scrapbooks and photo albums filled with newspaper clippings, flyers, and photos over the Chapter's 75 years of operation since its founding in 1950.

The purpose of this project was to document the stories and history of both the Los Altos chapter and the City of Los Altos. It also included information about what was going on in America during these years. Both text and photos were used to tell these stories. The book was written by 10 talented authors and edited by Martha Wallace and Melanie Ercoli. Each decade had a separate author. The book was published using digital publishing by Lulu Publishing that kept the cost down to \$8.59 for the 74 page paperback bound full color book. This type of publishing was new to all of us, but this low cost option allowed everyone in the chapter to purchase one and the chapter to distribute the book to many libraries and historical and genealogical societies. It will also allow us to provide a copy to future members so they can appreciate the history of the chapter and Los Altos.

The process to create the book evolved from earlier projects where the chapter created a pamphlet for previous decades. These primarily covered a few chapter projects and program highlights and lists of the Chapter Regents. Local award winners for annual chapter awards were listed along with National and State DAR activities. We shifted the focus for our 75th Memory Book to what made the chapter different over the years and how it reflected the activities in the Los Altos community. We also included a list of all members since the founding of the chapter and a list with photos and highlights of all the regents (i.e. presidents) of the Chapter.

The Memory Book project started with cataloging the information available for us to use in researching the book. This included labeling each binder and separating material into decades. Further research was then needed to understand the history of Los Altos and how it changed over the 75 years. This included using local books, newspapers, and internet research. Each author included their own experiences as well having lived through their decade. Significant numbers of documents were then scanned and edited to include in the book. Transcription was often needed to translate handwritten cards, notes, and minutes into useable text. Much of this material, including the final document, was then stored on the Chapter's Google drive for historical use. The final digital version can be used by future generations as the basis for new memory books, programs, and projects.

Public Benefit: The 75th Memory Book has been distributed to several local organizations including the Los Altos History Museum, the City of Los Altos (through Mayor Dailey), the Mountain View Historical Society, and the California State Society of NSDAR library. The chapter plans to donate copies of the book to other organizations and libraries, including the Los Altos Library, the National DAR Library in Washington, DC, and the Library of Congress.

Impact on Los Altos: The 75th Memory Book provides a window into the early years of Los Altos through the eyes of the women that focused on the community's education, music, arts, and veteran's support as it evolved from a bedroom community to San Francisco to the hub of Silicon Valley it is today.

Support for Nomination of Los Altos DAR for Historic Preservation Award

Ann Hepenstal

First Vice Regent, Los Altos Chapter, DAR

The Los Altos Chapter, DAR undertook a project to celebrate the chapter's 2025 75th Anniversary: documenting the chapter's history in Los Altos within the context of local Los Altos history and national history, while telling the story of the contributions of DAR members to the community and their service in the chapter.

Ten chapter members worked on this significant historic preservation project, which required research in the Los Altos History Museum's archives, on the internet, in historical newspapers, in the library, and other resources. They went through 4 large storage bins at the Museum, organizing the information and restoring the materials. They scanned photos and documents, labeled materials, transcribed handwriting, and other work. Their service benefited the Los Altos History Museum by helping to preserve these records and to make them more accessible.

Rather than a simple recitation of chapter members and activities, the team took an innovative decade-by-decade approach. For each decade since the chapter's founding in February 1950, the team wrote a history: what was going on in the world and the nation, what were the trends and issues; what was happening locally in the City of Los Altos, and what was it like to live here; what were the activities of the local chapter and what service did they provide to the community.

The resulting book benefits the Los Altos community through its documentation of the local Los Altos history and the activities, leadership, and contributions of a women's service organization, Los Altos Chapter of DAR. The chapter is distributing the book to local libraries and other organizations so local residents may view it (the Los Altos Museum and Mayor Dailey already have copies).