

MIRROR

The Richmond Museum Association Newsletter

Richmond Museum of History

Winter 2016-2017

SS Red Oak Victory Ship

MEMBERS INVITED

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS HISTORY AND PRESERVATION

What do the *Red Oak Victory Ship*, East Brother Light Station and Alvarado Park have in common?

Why is it important to preserve history?

Is Historic Preservation only old buildings?

For the answers to these and other questions about local history and how to preserve it, come to the Richmond Museum Association (RMA) Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 26 at 2:00 p.m. at the Museum, 400 Nevin Avenue.

Tom Butt, who is not only the Mayor of Richmond but also the father of Richmond's Historic Preservation Commission and the moving force behind the creation of the Rosie the Riveter Trust as the support organization for the Rosie the Riveter WW II Home Front National Historical Park, will be the Guest Speaker.

The Annual Meeting is for members of the RMA and their non-voting guests. Non-members may join the RMA on that day (or before) and be included.

Also on the agenda will be reports of the 2016 activities of the Richmond Museum of History and the *SS Red Oak Victory* and the election of Directors to the RMA Board for three-year terms.

On the recommended slate are Micheal Davenport, Johannes Hoech, Karina Ioffe, Lynn Maack and incumbent Jeffrey Wright for another term.

Refreshments will be served and there is no charge for this event.

The Richmond Museum Association Board and members appreciate the service of retiring Board members Desiree Heveroh and Virgil Weekes.

REVEALING HIDDEN HISTORY AND THE GEORGE COLES COLLECTION

The Richmond Museum of History is excited to continue the success of our first fundraising dinner in early 2016 by announcing the 2017 event will be held on Friday, February 3, 2017, at the Richmond Country Club.

The theme of the dinner is *Revealing Hidden History* and all proceeds will benefit the renovation of the Native American exhibit in the Permanent Gallery.

We are delighted to announce the keynote speaker, Dr. Kent Lightfoot, Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, who will speak about his shellmound research with archaeologist and long-time Pt. Richmond resident George Coles and why the proposed Native American exhibit is important for our community. Dr. Lightfoot honors George's legacy by working with the Museum staff to create a permanent exhibit about the Ohlone people with artifacts from George's excavations on Brooks Island.

Tickets are \$75 per person or \$600 for a table of eight and can be purchased over the phone at (510) 235-7387, in person at the Museum (400 Nevin) or online at <http://richmondmuseum.org/events/2017benefitdinner/>.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to all of you! It's hard to believe that 2016 is already behind us. Time continues to pick up speed but I am convinced the reason is we are so busy at the Richmond Museum of History. Our webpage on VolunteerMatch continues to attract more skilled volunteers to work on various projects including the collections inventory, researching upcoming exhibits and the History Unfolded project (see box). Thank you to all the Museum volunteers because we cannot do the critical work of raising awareness and inspiring people about local history without you. I want to take this opportunity to also thank the Director of Ship Operations, Johannes Hoech, for his tireless efforts on behalf of the *SS Red Oak Victory* ship. Johannes, thank you for investing so much sweat and tears into the beloved *ROV*, the ship that Rosie built; the treasure of the City of Richmond.

I was recently honored to speak at a gathering of National Park Service employees, many of whom work at the Visitor Center of the Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park in Richmond. I am going to make the same appeal to you that I did to them. Join me in revitalizing the Richmond Museum of History so that we can capitalize on the excitement created by the Park about local history. The establishment of the National Park has changed the City of Richmond for the better and means the Richmond Museum of History must adapt, considering we are no longer the only organization interpreting the history of the WWII Home Front. The Richmond Museum Association is a small nonprofit with limited resources that can never match the capacity of the National Park Service, which invested millions of dollars into the exhibits at the Visitor Center. In response, the Richmond Museum of History can take on the role of filling in the story of Richmond before and after the war. There will always be a section of the permanent exhibit in the Richmond Museum of History dedicated to the accomplishments of World War II because it was transformational to the development of our City. However, the National Park Service already does an excellent job telling that story. So my vision for the Richmond Museum of History is to offer an informative and fun permanent exhibit that tells an authentic story of Richmond beyond the years 1941-45.

The branding and marketing study for the City of Richmond commissioned by Mayor Tom Butt early in 2016 shows that people consistently pick local history as one of the characteristics that make our City unique (Northstar, 02/19/2016). The Rosie Park plays a significant role in creating this attitude, which is now a significant benefit to the local economy. The Richmond Museum of History can contribute to further economic growth in Richmond by capitalizing on the interest in local history and reinvesting in the permanent exhibit and our historic Carnegie Library. Imagine how the economy of Richmond would benefit from two venues with modern, world-class, permanent exhibitions telling our inspirational history.

According to lead Ranger Elizabeth Tucker, an estimated

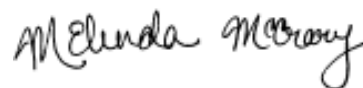
4,500 people visit the Rosie Visitor Center each month at the Richmond waterfront. My goal is to draw some of that traffic to the Richmond Museum of History and historic downtown. Reinvesting in the Richmond Museum of History will be a catalyst for economic growth and revitalization in the historic downtown area.

The permanent exhibit at the Richmond Museum of History was installed in 1980 and only a few sections have been updated in the ensuing 36 years. The updates are a testament to the dedication of past staff and volunteers who accomplished a great deal with few resources. My team and I are making plans for a major update to the permanent exhibit, but we cannot accomplish the renovation without help. The Museum needs the buy-in of the community, public agencies and corporate partners if we are going to see our plans materialize. Learn more about the content of the proposed permanent exhibit in **Revealing Hidden History** on page 6 in this issue.

If you haven't visited the Museum lately, please come to view the sketch of the proposed exhibition and make your comments. Public input is critical for us to be able to plan an exhibit that is relevant, educational and fun for the entire community. You can also email me at melinda@richmondmuseum.org.

Once again, thank you for continuing to support your local history museum. Remember, we cannot be a community museum without the partnership of the community.

Best wishes.



Melinda McCrary

HISTORY UNFOLDED

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) is asking citizen historians to help them track coverage of events in American newspapers leading up to the holocaust in Europe. The Richmond Museum of History is participating by contributing coverage from the Richmond Daily Independent and the Richmond Record Herald. Staff and volunteers have made significant progress, having finished 1933 to 1942. We hope to share the results of the research with the public in the form of an exhibit or lecture.

Learn more here: <https://newspapers.ushmm.org/>

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS

by Jeff Wright

As 2016 closes out and we embark upon 2017, let me begin by saying thank you to the RMA members, volunteers, supporters, staff and board of directors for all that you have done throughout the year. Your efforts have contributed greatly to the sustainability of the organization.

As a board, we alternate our monthly business meeting between the Museum on Nevin Avenue and the *Red Oak Victory* ship on Canal Blvd. We convened our November, 2016, meeting aboard the Ship and while there one of the crew members, Jan Keizer, inquired as to any special plans that the RMA may be putting in place to recognize the 75th anniversary of the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor. I conveyed to Jan that we did not have any special plans in place and was reminded by him that our organization was the steward of one of the great wartime artifacts built in Richmond, California, the result of tremendous effort put forth by men and women who worked tirelessly in our local wartime shipyards. Jan impressed upon me the need to do something to acknowledge our entry into WWII as a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor. I asked Jan if he would be willing to provide some information about the events relating to the attack and he graciously agreed to do so. The following text is courtesy of Jan Keizer, a crewmember aboard our very own *Red Oak Victory* ship:

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was a very rude wake-up call to the American people. We, the United States, were not prepared to fight a real war. We had an untrained Army with obsolete equipment and an uncoordinated industrial war effort. The news the first couple of months was all bad. Except, the Japanese did not destroy fuel dumps and dry docks at Pearl Harbor.

In the Pacific:

- Hong Kong falls to the Japanese
- Wake Island falls to the Japanese
- Malaya falls to the Japanese
- Singapore falls to the Japanese
- Dutch East Indies falls to the Japanese
- Philippines fall to the Japanese
- Corregidor falls to the Japanese
- Japanese subs shell U.S. west coast

In the Atlantic and on the Gulf Coast:

- U.S. does not organize merchant ships into convoys
- U.S. does not practice light discipline on shore (blackout)
- U.S. Navy does not escort merchant ships on coastal voyages

- U.S. loses many merchant ships unnecessarily
- German submarines "Happy Days" continue up to May of 1943

A glimmer of good news:

- April 18, 1942, Doolittle bombs Tokyo
- May 7-8, 1942, Navy fights the Battle of the Coral Sea to a draw; Stops the Japanese invasion of Port Moresby, New Guinea
- June 4-5, 1942, Battle of Midway "The Turning Point"
- August 7, 1942, Marines invade Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands
- Japanese expansion **stops**

As evidenced by the information put together by Jan Keizer which dealt with limited aspects of the war, one can clearly determine that a staggering amount of manpower and materiel was required in order to achieve victory. Richmond, California, played a critical role in helping our nation to become victorious in WWII with the construction of 747 ships right here in Richmond. Yes, the Museum is the proud owner of the *Red Oak Victory* ship, the only remaining ship built in the shipyards of Richmond as part of the great WWII ship building effort to support our resolve as a nation to preserve freedom and democracy.

Your continued support of the Richmond Museum Association (Richmond Museum of History and the *Red Oak Victory* ship) by way of spreading the news, attending programs and exhibits and of course through financial contributions, will enable us to share the rich, illustrious history that comprises Richmond. There is so much more diverse history to share and we have great plans for 2017 and beyond that will encompass and explore many other areas of Richmond's history. Please be a part of it.

Don't forget to get your tickets for our annual fundraising dinner/auction at the Richmond Country Club on Friday, February 3, 2017. Tickets are \$75.00 per person or \$600.00 for a table of eight and can be obtained by phone at (510) 235-7387 or online at <http://richmondmuseum.org/events/2017benefitdinner/>.

Thanks again for your support!

Jeff Wright
President
Richmond Museum Association

FROM THE *RED OAK VICTORY* SHIP

by Johannes Hoech, Director of Ship Operations

The time on the *Red Oak Victory* from September through November produced several firsts and other, very nice developments:

Coast Guard granted a dry dock extension:

The US Coast Guard came to the Ship again on November 22, this time for an interior spaces hull inspection to determine if we qualify for a dry dock extension. Technically the *Red Oak Victory* is supposed to go back into dry dock in 2017, but that comes with a \$1M to \$1.5M price tag, a sum we could not cover right now.

So, for the Nov. 22 inspection, the crew worked very hard to open all 22 tanks on the ship in time for the inspection (right before Thanksgiving), and made other interior spaces accessible where the hull plating below the waterline could be inspected. A big thank you to the engine room team, the deck department, and all the other folks involved in passing that inspection as smoothly as we did. Preparing for this inspection took several days.

The Coast Guard informed us that the Ship is structurally in excellent shape (“we have seen new ships that are not in as good a shape.”), and that they would grant us the needed extension. We are now waiting for their word whether the granted extension will be for 2.5 or 5 years, meaning we have that much more time to raise the needed funds to get the *ROV* back into dry dock. We all obviously breathed a massive sigh of relief as that determination will buy us the time needed to raise the money.

We clarified our organizational structure:

We spent September and October defining how we want to re-organize ourselves for 2017 and made several significant changes that are already bearing positive fruit:

- Tom Horsfall is Director of Technical Operations and manages the technical side of the Ship (i.e., Engine Room, Deck Dept., Electrical Dept., Radio Room), as well as the Hold 4/History aspects of the Ship. Angelo Barone will be leading Special Projects.

- Alan Burns will continue to manage all aspects of the *ROV* visitor experience and has been recruiting more docents very successfully, with several great new hires on the Ship.

- Lorraine Regier will continue managing the Ship’s Store as well as events, and she will be complemented by new hires as 2017 calls for more events to raise our operating revenues, and that requires more than one person to complete.

- Kristen Elford, a returning volunteer, is managing all aspects of Marketing, assisted by John Trtek as his health permits; Fred Klink is a recruit who agreed to manage our Community Outreach activities as part of the marketing department given his ties into the military and living history communities.

- Marjorie Hill agreed to head up recruiting, and has hit the ground running with well over 10 great new volunteers recruited since she took over that role.

- And Dave Penn is continuing in his role of purser, which includes also managing the Ship’s Keeper.

Everyone has assumed their new and old duties with gusto, and the progress and cultural rejuvenation of the Ship is palpable.

October 8 & 9 Events:

On October 8th we experimented with a new event format we had never done before by putting on a “1944 Shipyard Re-enactment” in honor of Fleet Week 2016. Turnout was great! Fred Klink and his “Living History Team” of WW II re-enactors staffed the Ship in period uniforms for an authentic shipboard experience. On the dock were several classic and military vehicles that provided a nice, historic backdrop for the event.

The highlight, however, was the honor of having no less than six of the real WW II Rosies to grace the Ship with their presence. We were deeply honored and glad to be able to repay their favor by having Rick Smith’s “Na Mamo No’eau” Hula Dance Team perform a special dance routine in full Rosie garb in front of the real Rosies. That was a wonderful honoring of the original Rosies by the younger Rosie dance team, and great fun was had by all.

And then on the next day we had the last pancake breakfast for the 2016 season, with record attendance of almost 400 meals served. Having these two back-to-back events put a great strain on all the volunteers. Our special thanks go out to Lorraine Regier, Rich Chivers and all the 25+ volunteers that helped on those two days.

Between those two events, October is going down as the second-highest revenue month for 2016 (July was the highest).

Audubon Society Osprey-cams on the Whirley Crane:

Together with the Port of Richmond, we have been working with the Audubon Society to install two webcams from which to view the ospreys when they return to their nest on top of the Whirley crane in February. The *ROV* will assist that effort by providing power, expert docenting for viewing from the Ship and general logistical assistance. The Audubon Society in turn agreed to provide links to the *ROV* site so we can benefit from the web traffic those Osprey-cams will generate.

Exciting new 2017 marketing ideas:

The newly-formed marketing team has been working on rolling out a series of exciting new marketing initiatives that should

CONGRATULATIONS, EVELYN!

Evelyn Santos, our Museum Technician, was awarded a highly competitive scholarship to attend the California Association of Museums Conference in Sacramento in March. Executive Director Melinda McCrary says of this honor: "I couldn't be more excited that RMH will be at the CAM conference in 2017. I can't think of a higher honor for an emerging professional in our field than to earn a CAM scholarship. We should all be very proud of her and this accomplishment, which will come with all sorts of good press for her and the Museum."



From the Red Oak continued

bring more publicity as well as visitor traffic to the Ship. Stay tuned for more details; you'll read about them here first.

Those are some of the key highlights for the last few months on the Ship, and going forward we'll continue to focus on our four core priorities:

1. Recruiting volunteers – That's our highest priority, and if you know of someone who wants to help us on the Ship, please send them our way.
2. Fundraising – The main update here is that we will hold a major fundraising event on the *ROV* in April, where private and corporate donors with wallets of all sizes will be invited to board the Ship for a special event of personal tours, light refreshments, good music and the opportunity to restore one of the nation's premier WW II assets.
3. Lighting off – All of this is aimed at getting us ready to "light off" the engine, i.e., fire up the boilers and put steam pressure in the engine room.
4. And finally, we need to ensure that we continue to comply with all the regulatory requirements and safety laws.

Come on down and visit us; we'll happily tell you about the great things that are happening now on the Ship and the wonderful head of steam we're building both literally and figuratively.

HOW WAS WORLD WAR I EXPERIENCED BY THE CITIZENS OF RICHMOND?

by Melinda McCrary

The WWI-related artifacts in the permanent collection at the Richmond Museum of History tell many stories about how local people from all walks of life experienced the Great War. Our research revealed that the artifacts are simply the tip of the iceberg when it comes to interesting stories about Richmond and World War I. We are excited to be able to share a few of these stories with you in the upcoming exhibit about Richmond and World War I opening March 11, 2017 (members-only preview on March 10th).

The exhibit will explore how local people and businesses contributed to the war both at home and on the front. The exhibit will open in the centennial year of the United States' involvement in World War I and is intended to raise awareness about this important time in our history that is often unintentionally overshadowed by the accomplishments during WWII. Some have even called World War I "The Forgotten War."

Volunteer Michelle Reeder has contributed heavily to researching the war in the Museum collection as well as in other local repositories and from digital resources. Michelle's knowledge, dedication and research have been a significant asset to the WWI research project and our overall understanding of the war. Thank you, Michelle!

The Museum is proud of our stunning artifacts related to World War I, many of which have been part of the permanent collection for over fifty years. There is a tremendous sense of excitement in the staff and volunteers about telling the story of this important time in Richmond history. Mark your calendars for this important exhibition coming to the Richmond Museum of History in spring 2017.

THE *RED OAK* NEEDS YOU...

...to be a greeter. It's a hard job -- you have to smile and welcome visitors to a great adventure. We especially need help on Saturdays and Sundays. Call the Ship at (510) 237-2933 for more information or to volunteer.

HISTORY HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

by Melinda McCrary

On a cool November day in 2015, a group of ten individuals gathered at the Richmond Museum of History with a common goal of telling an accurate and authentic portrayal of what life was like in the area of Richmond before the changes resulting from European contact. The group had begun on a path to reveal a part of Richmond history that had been hidden in plain sight for hundreds of years.

Prior to arrival of the Anza Party in 1776, the Richmond bay shore had been occupied for roughly 5,000 years by a people we know now as the Ohlone. The economy of their culture was based upon the natural world where they found abundant resources they made into tools with which they would hunt, fish and collect plant material. Ohlone villages were present along nearly the entire shore of the San Francisco Bay, and those who lived in the area of modern-day Richmond spoke the Choceno dialect before the arrival of the Spanish. Detailed accounts from the Spanish period record the location of contact area villages as well as the personal names and life stories of those Choceno Ohlone who lived and often died in Mission San Francisco de Assis. Scholar Randall Milliken calls the Spanish period “A Time of Little Choice” for the Native people in the San Francisco Bay Area as a combination of forced conversion to Christianity, hard labor and drastic environmental changes forever interrupted the traditional lifeways of the Ohlone people. The ensuing Mexican and early American periods were not kind to Native peoples of California, and the Ohlone suffered even more devastation through the late 1800s and early 1900s. More recently, the Ohlone have experienced a period of cultural revitalization that includes a renewed effort to gain federal recognition and bringing Choceno back from the brink of extinction.

The modern remnants of Ohlone villages existed in what is known today as a shellmound. Industrialization of the bayfront in the late 1800s and early 1900s effectively destroyed or covered most of the shellmound sites documented by archaeologist Nels Nelson in the important article “Shellmounds of the San Francisco Bay Area” published in 1909. George Ellis’ Landing, Marina Bay and Brooks Island were each once the site of Ohlone villages that have been investigated by archaeologists to learn more about the people who lived on the mounds. Collections of artifacts from shellmounds are held at museums and universities around northern California and beyond. The historical inventory of shellmound artifacts in the Museum’s permanent collection was increased in 2015 with a generous and sizeable donation by George Coles of many artifacts from shellmounds on Brooks Island.

The Richmond Museum of History was awarded a grant from the Christensen Fund to establish a Native American Advisory Council, which has been working closely with the staff to design an authentic and culturally-appropriate exhibition about the Ohlone. The Council consists of nine individuals, of whom

most are Ohlone from the East and South Bay, who can trace their ancestry back to the Choceno who lived and died in the Spanish Missions. The newly acquired Brooks Island collection along with the work of the Native American Advisory Council will lay the foundations for the new Native American section of the permanent exhibit at the Richmond Museum of History.

Installing a modern permanent exhibit telling the story of the Ohlone people is important because there is no exhibit about the indigenous people of the San Francisco Bay Area in West Contra Costa County. The few exhibitions about the Ohlone in the greater Bay Area focus primarily on shellmound archaeology rather than presenting comprehensive information about the Ohlone culture. Now the Richmond Museum of History will work to reveal the history that has been hidden in plain sight for several hundred years.

MUSEUM WISH LIST

Paper shredder
Extension cords
Folding chairs
Power strips
Photo scanner
Hand tools for gardening (claw, clippers, spades, watering bucket)

If you can donate these items or contribute toward their purchase, please call the Museum at (510) 235-7387.

RED OAK WISH LIST:

Spill kit
Emergency locker w/lid, 3’ x 4’
2 ink cartridges
AA batteries
LED penlights/laser pointers
and they really, really need SAFETY CONES

If you have questions about these items or about how to get them to the Ship, please call the Ship at (510) 237-2933.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS TO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION:

Dennis Wright, book: *Where the Sewage Meets the Sea: Stege Sanitary District and the Growth of the East Bay*, by D. Weinstein

Steve Freeman, collection of tools made and used by his father and associated documents from the Kaiser Richmond Shipyards

NORTH RICHMOND ON FILM

By *Chris Treadway*

An impoverished but resilient community in an unincorporated area just outside the Richmond city limits is facing possible major changes that could address decades of neglect, but also erase its unique character.

That's the issue raised by the 90-minute documentary "North Richmond: Past Present and Future" by award-winning filmmaker Doug Harris.

The film was shown to a standing-room-only crowd on Saturday, Jan. 14, at the Richmond Museum of History.

The screening comes as Richmond discusses annexation of North Richmond. According to Harris, neighboring San Pablo has also expressed an interest in annexing the area.

The question of annexation raises new questions the community must consider, according to Harris.

"The highly charged documentary ends with several cast members explaining the demographic shift in the area's population and their ongoing concerns about gentrification and North Richmond redevelopment efforts."

Harris has produced a number of acclaimed documentaries, including "Fair Legislation: The Byron Rumford Story" that aired on PBS, and "Basketball Guru: The Pete Newell Story" for Comcast SportsNet.

3RD THURSDAY HOME FRONT FILMS ON *THE RED OAK VICTORY*

Movies of the World War II era shown on our own World War II ship is one of the great pleasures of being part of a National Historical Park. Add to that the Ranger in charge, Craig Riordon, who shares insight and secrets about the movies, the stars and the times, and it is an adventure.

Boarding is at 6:30 PM. There is no fee but you are encouraged to make a donation of \$10. And don't forget the popcorn and other refreshments available.

The theme for the Spring 2017 schedule is "The War Through Childrens' Eyes."

February 9th: *The Search* (1948)

March 16th: *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (1971)

April 20th: *Chips the War Dog* (1990)

May 18th: *The Book Thief* (2013)

EMAIL PLEASE...

Like many organizations, the Richmond Museum Association needs to cut costs where we can. And as much as I personally prefer to hold a newsletter in my hand, that hard copy is expensive to print and mail.

So let us email you your copy of *The MIRROR*. For those members who do not have email, we will continue to print and mail your newsletter. But many of you have email addresses and we hope you will share them with us. We promise not to sell them or share them with anyone else.

Please email us at melinda@richmondmuseum.org with *The MIRROR* in the subject line, and don't forget to tell us who you are.

Thank you for helping us keep our costs down.
[Ed.]

EUGENE TREFETHEN: HE TURNED HENRY KAISER'S VISIONS INTO REALITY

by Steve Gilford

Speaking of the 20th-century industrialist Henry Kaiser, it has been said that there was a “man behind the man,” and that man was unquestionably Eugene Trefethen. Born in Oakland in 1909, Gene Trefethen spent his entire career working for Kaiser. His principal role was to put Kaiser’s ideas into practice by making financial arrangements, organizing construction of new plants and taking care of other behind-the-scenes work. As HJK’s chief operating officer, he was responsible for translating Henry Kaiser’s visions into the production of steel, cement, aluminum, homes, planes, cars and much, much more. He held a special place in the Kaiser organization — it was long understood that he was the only man who could speak for Henry Kaiser.

Trefethen’s Kaiser connection began while a student at UC Berkeley where he met HJK’s son Edgar pledging the same fraternity. Edgar introduced him to his father and soon both boys were working for Mr. Kaiser on vacations, weekends and holidays, starting as laborers in the sand and gravel pits in Livermore.

Edgar left Berkeley before graduation to manage a Kaiser pipeline project in Deer Lodge, Montana, and Gene headed East to attend Harvard Business School. After his first year at Harvard, Gene was on his way home to Oakland on vacation when he stopped in Deer Lodge to visit his college friend. Not long after that, Henry Kaiser called him at home and invited him to start his career immediately by joining Edgar in Deer Lodge. Trefethen agreed. He resigned from Harvard, left Oakland and headed for Deer Lodge on the next train. From there, he moved with the Kaisers to the Boulder (Hoover) Dam project, rising rapidly in the organization.

Trefethen’s organizational talents and his people skills earned him greater and greater responsibilities. During World War Two, he had overall responsibility for the Kaiser Shipyards where he played a key role in the development of what would become Kaiser Permanente.

Following the war, the Health Plan grew so rapidly that there were serious stresses building inside the organization. According to Trefethen, Henry “wanted the doctors as employees but that wasn’t right,” while the physicians felt they had an ethical obligation to be in charge of everything related to patient care. The split was serious enough to threaten the continued existence of the Program. Trefethen advanced another point of view that proved acceptable to both the managers of the health plan and to the physicians: “We really don’t want the doctors as employees, we want them as partners.” He was a leader in developing the structure of the unique partnership that remains in force today.

In the 1930s, Gene and his wife Catherine bought 145 acres of walnut groves in South Ignacio. One of his great joys was to

get out on the land and farm it, particularly on his tractor. This was to be their retreat and retirement home, but by 1958 nearby developments had sprung up. The neighborhood was becoming crowded. He and Catherine began looking for other agricultural land.

They found what they were looking for in Napa, where an old winery and some neighboring farms were for sale. It was good farmland where they could farm as well as live and they purchased it. It was their son John who moved his father into the wine business. For one of his classes at the Stanford Business School, John created a business plan for a hypothetical winery on the Trefethen land. Father and son concluded that this plan actually had a great deal of potential and began to implement it. That original property became the basis for the internationally-respected Trefethen Family Vineyards, now run by John Trefethen and his wife Janet. The world soon became aware of the quality of their wines when, in 1979 at the Paris Wine Olympics, Trefethen’s 1976 chardonnay earned the title Best in World. Today, there is a third generation working in the winery—John and Janet’s children, Loren and Hailey.

Eugene Trefethen passed away at the age of 86 in February of 1996. His obituaries in major newspapers across the country were hard-put to list all his achievements and honors. He was called “the financial and managerial genius who turned Henry J. Kaiser’s dreams into reality, creating one of the largest industrial forces of the 20th century.”

Trefethen was also a philanthropist, supporting with time and money Mills College, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, UC San Francisco and UC Berkeley. He held a fundraiser for Berkeley’s Haas School of Business each year on his wedding anniversary.

Among his honors, Trefethen was named Business Statesman of the year by the Harvard Business School in 1990 and was the first recipient of the United Way’s Alexis de Tocqueville Society Community Philanthropy Award in 1985. He was named alumnus of the year in 1979 by UC Berkeley.

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- ___ \$50 **Potrero Ave** –
 Individuals
- ___ \$100 **Cutting Blvd** –
 2 adults/2 youth –Benefits above & invites to member only events
- ___ \$250 **Garrard Ave** –Benefits above & “Behind the Scenes” tours of museum collection & ship archives
- ___ \$500 **Barrett Ave** – Benefits above & exclusive tour & luncheon with museum curator & ship captain

___ **New** ___ **Renew** ___ **Gift**

___ **I Would like to volunteer**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Date: _____

Join at www.richmondmuseum.org or mail a check to RMA at:
 Richmond Museum Association
 P.O. Box 1267
 Richmond CA 94802



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Join the Richmond Museum Association on social media! We are on Facebook under Richmond Museum of History and SS Red Oak Victory (2 separate pages). We are also on twitter @richmondhistory.

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Red Oak Victory Ship

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