



SARATOGA HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

POST OFFICE BOX 172, SARATOGA, CALIFORNIA 95071

January 2008

Please join us in
“Remembering Old Saratoga”
6:30 PM Monday, January 21st, at the Immanuel Lutheran Church

Slide Show and Pot Luck Dinner

"Remembering Old Saratoga" will be the theme of the first 2008 meeting of the Saratoga Historical Foundation on Monday, Jan. 21, at 6:30 PM in the Immanuel Lutheran Church at 14103 Saratoga Avenue.

"Old" is one of those adjectives that can have many connotations, depending on one's age. As a lifelong resident of Saratoga - if memory serves, my last birthday was the 84th - "old" to me involves taking the streetcar to the dentist in San Jose and walking up the wooden steps on the stub end of Fourth Street to get to Saratoga Grammar School. To me, that was Old Saratoga. But really Old Saratoga has to do with numerous saloons where the lumberjacks went for r.&r., with pre-Big Basin Way Lumber Street, with the early days of the Blossom Festival, with the millionaire James D. Phelan and his artistically focused Villa Montalvo, built in 1912, etc., etc.

Our program will consist of a showing of slides depicting some of these early features and landmarks. It should really set you back a few years. We'll be having our usual potluck meal beforehand, so bring your own plates and eating implements. Coffee and tea will be provided; bring your own wine.

—Willys Peck, SHF Historian

President's January Message

The tree is still up at our house – the last vestige of the 2007 Christmas season. Probably a sign that we're not yet ready to leave the memories of being with family and friends and the pleasantries of the holidays behind. But with the days, activities and events of 2007 now just memories, we look forward - just as we do every January - to a new year ahead, with the spirit and the urge to begin anew.

If you're the type to make New Year's Resolutions, you probably have started your list. Personally, I don't make resolutions, but I do set some personal goals for myself. This year I am hoping that my "normal" routine will be better than it has been, and with better organization, I will attempt to pare down the clutter in my life and to concentrate on those things, those activities, and those people that really matter.

Your SHF Officers and Board members, and committee people will be making plans for 2008 activities and events. Of course, with each year comes change. During the past couple of years we have made changes to the Museum, our programs and activities, hopefully not so great as to be disruptive, but rather to be more attractive to you as members and to our Museum visitors. We will keep that thought in mind as we work to make 2008 even better

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than 2007. Those of you who frequent our website will see change there as well. Our very capable and creative webmaster, Jeff Johnson, has made suggestions that will make this popular Internet destination even more attractive and educational.

What our Saratoga Historical Foundation will not change is our commitment to our mission – to preserve, to showcase, and to promote the historical legacy of Saratoga. The Saratoga History Museum has been, and will continue to be, an attractive educational resource, and will hopefully provide to our friends, neighbors, visitors, and others, a sense of place, and a sense of pride.

By now, you have received your membership renewal notice, and if you have already sent it in, thank you! But if not, please take a moment and do so now.

Happy New Year!

---Chuck Schoppe

Mustard Faire – Sunday, February 10

Saratoga's historic Warner Hutton House and the Heritage Orchard - probably the last remaining orchard in Saratoga – will be the location of the 7th annual Mustard Faire, presented by the Saratoga Heritage Preservation Commission and co-sponsored by your SHF. This event will occur a week later than in years past so that it does not conflict with Super Bowl Sunday! Timed for the lavish display of the mustard plant in flower about that time, this popular event always attracts a large crowd, and our plans are to produce an equally exciting event this time.

Activities and displays will include history reenactments, local artists, arts & crafts, a variety of musical groups and folk-dancers with live music, Rick and Ann Waltons-Smith's donkey cart rides through the orchard, many antique cars, old farm equipment and tractors, wine tasting by local winemakers, food vendors, informational tours of the Heritage Orchard, and much more. Your Saratoga Historical

Foundation will feature the Saratoga pioneer James McWilliams family and house. This event is especially popular with kids, so if you are looking for an excuse to get out with the kids or grandkids, this is it! Our own Betty Peck will be there representing Mother Earth!

The Heritage Orchard is located at the corner of Fruitvale and Saratoga Avenues near the library and the Saratoga Civic Center. This one-day event will be held between 11AM and 3PM. In case of rain the event will be cancelled and not rescheduled. However, in years past we've enjoyed dry weather, so let's hope for yet another sunny day! Local press coverage of previous events may be seen by pointing your Internet browser to: <http://www.svcn.com/archives/saratoganews/20060215/>. For answers to your questions call Mechanicals Chairperson Chuck Schoppe, or 2008 Mustard Faire Chairperson Nancy Anderson.

Nancy Anderson will be contacting last year's Mustard Faire docents. Anyone reading this that would like to participate as a docent to take people along the path in the orchard and give the history of Saratoga's agriculture (you are given the information!) and to point out the mustard (!) and which trees are apricots, cherry or plum (!) please contact Nancy as described above.

---Chuck Schoppe

A Delightful Historic House Tour

On a brisk December morning, more than 2 dozen people met at the Museum for our first Holiday Historic House Tour. This date was selected so that we could see 3 beautiful houses with the added bonus of Christmas decorations. The day was sure to fill us with festive spirits. We started with coffee, tea, and scones, then a private viewing of our McWilliams House decorated for a simple pioneer family Christmas.

We boarded the bus filled with excitement and headed for the Patterson House at Ardenwood, a stately Queen Anne nestled in a large grove of trees, built in 1889. We were warmly welcomed by docents in vintage-style attire. We heard about the history of the house and farm, and the fascinating people who had lived there. The Christmas decorations exceeded our expectations. A few people purchased items to bring home as mementos. This was a wonderful start to our day's adventure.

From there we headed to the Shinn house in Fremont, a Victorian-style farmhouse with Bavarian accents, built in 1876. We toured this farmhouse, again with wonderfully costumed docents. After viewing both floors and learning about the family, we enjoyed a wonderful luncheon, complete with gingerbread and peppermint tea. Our tummies were full, so we headed for the gift shop! Almost everyone found a treasure or two to take home.

Our final stop was at the McConaghy Estate in Hayward, built in 1886. This lovely 12-room Victorian was filled with vintage decorations in every room, hall, and landing. While many of the women enjoyed the gift shop after the tour, most of the men headed for the carriage house. We saw the mill within the carriage house, along with the horse stalls, buggies, farm equipment and tools. The worn floorboards added to the sense of history we felt all day.

Everyone agreed that it was wonderful day, and all want to go if we plan another tour in the spring. And the best part, in addition to having fun, was the satisfaction that we contributed to the McWilliams House project for 2008.

Special thanks go to McWilliams House Committee Co-chair Marilyn Marchetti for making all the arrangements and our early morning coffee and tea, and to Committee members Linda Benenati and Judy Moring for the tasty scones and festive table presentation.

—Peggy Schoppe, *McWilliams House Committee Co-chair*

As Exhibits Chair and Co-Chair of the McWilliams House Committee, the biggest reward for me was to see the reaction from our donors when they first viewed the furnished McWilliams House. During the set-up and at our Donor Reception, several of these generous people had tears in their eyes when they saw how we displayed their family treasures in telling the McWilliams family story. They appreciated how their donations were utilized and they felt that their ancestors were honored by their contributions to our house museum.

Our Committee's goal was to make the house look as though the McWilliams family had just stepped out for a few minutes, and we have been told that this is exactly how the house looks and feels. That is the ultimate reward for the fantastic work done by the Committee: Co-Chair Marilyn Marchetti, Linda Benenati, Judy Moring, and Linda Williamson. When you see these ladies, please thank them for their hard work and a job exceedingly well done.

We have had our first 2 groups of children visit the McWilliams House, a Brownie Troop and a third grade class. We have an adult history group scheduled in January, and 3 more elementary classes!

The third grade teacher sent the following comments:

" . . . I just wanted to let you know how much we enjoyed the field trip to the Saratoga History Museum today. I only had a short time to poll the students on their favorite things about the trip. Of course, ALL the games made the list! But in addition, they brought up these items: the 1870's school, ice boxes, chamber pots, rope-making, quiet parlor games, making your own dolls, candles/mold, iron stove, the number of kids sleeping in one bed, living without electricity, your enthusiastic docents, washing your face without a sink, and curtsying to the teacher!"

"All of the parents commented that they thought the trip was wonderful, and how they

never knew about a museum in Saratoga. From a teacher's point of view, I also thought it was a fantastic learning experience that made many connections to what is in our curriculum. I can't even think of any suggestions!"

"I did send an email to teachers in our district in schools bordering Saratoga and sent them some pictures from our visit. Hopefully you will get some inquiries from other Cupertino teachers. You really have great programs to offer."

Special acknowledgment must go to Education Director Linda Hagelin and the Education Docents for creating an outstanding program. They are doing an outstanding job with our young visitors to the McWilliams House!

One very surprising comment came from a man who visited the house during the Village Open House in November. He said he felt like he just stepped into his grandparents' home, and that it even smelled the same. He smiled through his visit, with tears in his eyes at the happy memories the house brought back to him.

---Peggy Schoppe, Exhibits Chair and McWilliams House Furnishings Co-Chair

McWilliams House Charm Available

Jewelry designer Ann Johnson has completed the latest release in the Saratoga Heritage Jewelry Collection. The newly restored McWilliams House is available as a silver charm to add to your bracelet or to wear as a pendant, and a lapel pin. Prices are still only \$25 for non-members or \$22.50 for SHF members.

Please visit the Saratoga History Museum Shop and see all the wonderful new items

---Peggy Schoppe, Museum Shop Manager

Museum Director's Recent Activities

The greatest accomplishment for the year was the realization of an important milestone for the

Foundation, re-opening the McWilliams House. Guests at the Grand Re-opening included the mayor of Saratoga, Aileen Kao along with several council members, the Saratoga city manager and Santa Clara County Supervisor Liz Kniss, representing the county agency that provided the grant money to do the restoration work. Architect Warren Heid helped cut the ribbon.

Special thanks should go to Chuck and Peggy Schoppe for making this happen on schedule, and for orchestrating both a donor's reception and an opening celebration that attracted hundreds of visitors. Chuck's calliope was a big hit.

Donations: We have received copies of video stories about Saratoga that were prepared by Mercury-News photographer Jim Gensheimer as part of a special feature on Saratoga that ran in September of this year. Jim has been a resident of Saratoga for many years, so the films are a very special tribute to his home town. Willys and Betty Peck are featured in one segment, as Willys reads a poem that he wrote to Betty.

Facilities: We have seen several contractors come to look at the trenching project between the McWilliams House and the Museum, but another month has passed with no progress toward getting the conduit for the alarm system installed. The City keeps assuring us that trenching and installation are imminent.

Board Member Jim Sorden has installed additional lighting in the Resource Center, the garden and the exterior. Thank you Jim, for the much needed illumination.

Keys: It took some work, but we think we have finally identified and tagged all of the appropriate keys for the Museum, the McWilliams House and the various display cases. We have also rounded up all of the keys that are outdated and ready for disposal, so they will not confuse us any more.

The keys are all tagged and hung on a rack so that they can be retrieved by the Board members or docents as needed. While this key arrangement is not an optimum solution, it does get us organized a bit better.

Volunteers: We have had several students from Mr. Torrens' class in to help us, and I anticipate something of a rush toward the end of the year as the semester ends. We are averaging one a weekend, and they have been very helpful with the filing and other archival organization.

In addition, we have two adult volunteers who are working on two very different projects and exciting projects. Artist Ginny Sampson has been working on some illustrations for a children's story that the late Louise Cooper liked to tell. Louise told about a cat that liked to go fishing for goldfish in the pond under the Memorial Arch. Louise's mother offered to take the cat to the ranch, a good five miles away from town on Mt. Eden Road. The smart cat was back fishing a day later.

When the drawings are completed, the story and drawings can go on our website along with the story of Peeper. This will be a Saratoga story that local teachers can download.

A second volunteer, Katie Alexander, will be working with our historic photos for a regular feature in the Saratoga News. Editor Dick Sparrer contacted us some months ago with a request that we do this type of feature, and we now have someone who is interested in putting this together for us.

And finally, it is with sadness that we report the passing of a very colorful Saratoga resident and donor, Steffi Abbott Sims. Steffi donated a number of items to the Museum including our antique dress form, an original telephone, and several of her fabulous dresses that she wore to Montalvo events. A large number of her household items were also donated for our "tag sale" which netted us several thousand dollars, thanks to her largesse.

---Historically Yours, April Halberstadt

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