



SARATOGA HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

PO BOX 172, SARATOGA, CALIFORNIA 95071
January 2010

Don't miss the special lecture on Villa Montalvo on January 18; Stop by the Saratoga History Museum and see the "Did You Know" exhibit; Sign up now for the John Steinbeck lecture on February 5

Montalvo Then and Now

The Saratoga Historical Foundation presents "Montalvo Then and Now" with a multimedia presentation by Jane Goldbach a Montalvo volunteer and member of the Montalvo Service Group, on Monday, January 18.

James Duval Phelan (1821-1892) was a three term mayor of San Francisco, former US senator, and art patron. He built the lovely Villa Montalvo in Saratoga in 1912 and later gifted it as a foundation to the arts.

"If I were given Heaven and California, I would rent Heaven and live in California" wrote James Phelan in a letter to his friend, noted author Gertrude Atherton.

The presentation will cover the Villa Montalvo and the many changes that have taken place over the years. The following are bits of information about Phelan and his home.--but attend the lecture and find out more. You can also read, "Legacy of a Native Son—James Duval Phelan and Villa Montalvo" by James P. Walsh and Timothy J. O'Keefe—a fascinating look at Phelan's life and home.

James Phelan was always a wealthy man with an enjoyment of the 'good life.' His father was once asked by a tobacco dealer why he always smoked a 5 cent cigar while his son (James Duval Phelan) enjoyed the best. He replied, "I don't have a wealthy father."

During the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco, Phelan, his sister, Mollie and their household were forced to leave their home and to camp at the Japanese Tea Garden in the Golden Gate Park. Always one for decorum, he retrieved a grand marquee tent from his parent's home to provide cover. He also believed everyone should carry their own weight so Phelan had the house dog pull an old dog cart with valuables along with several horse-drawn wagons. He was able to save some valuables but precious poems written

earlier and papers were destroyed along with the family home in the fire.

A sun lover, he chose to build a home in Saratoga. He described Villa Montalvo to Cora Older by saying, "it's my little box in the country."

Poet Henry Meade Bland glowingly described the Saratoga setting, "It is bounded on the north by the 'healing waters of Saratoga,' on the east by the 'gardens of the Santa Clara Valley,' on the south by Los Gatos, 'Gem City of the Santa Cruz foothills,' and on the west by ferns and 'Sequoia Sempervivons of the blue coast range'."

Known as an excellent writer as well as speaker, Phelan carried a special time-piece to ensure he ended speeches on time. By means of a gong, the time-piece could lightly strike the minutes. The gong could also be turned off.

His idea of roughing it was a beef barbecue held outside at Montalvo; chilled wine, linen and a uniformed staff. He was always meticulously dressed, no matter the occasion.

His well-known sense of humor was frequently demonstrated. During a visit to Italy, he bought an ancient Roman sarcophagus for his new home. He noted in his personal

account, "it might be equivocal to say I did not purchase it for my own purposes, but for the pleasure of my friends."

Phelan had famed portrait artist and neighbor Joseph de Sigall paint a portrait of his dog. It is not known if Sigall brought his pet lion, Pasha to the sitting.

The program will take place on January 18, at 7:00 PM. Those participating in the potluck dinner should arrive at 6:30 PM and bring food to share, your own dishes and eating utensils. Beverages of water, tea or coffee will be provided. The Immanuel Lutheran

Church is located at 14103 Saratoga Avenue in Saratoga. For reservations or additional information, call Nancy Anderson at 408-867-4383. The event is free and open to the public.



Don't Miss the Steinbeck Lecture on February 5

“Steinbeck's Wrath, 1936-1939: The Santa Clara Valley Years” by noted author and Steinbeck authority Susan Shillinglaw will be given on February 5 from 7-9 PM. The event will be held at the Foothill Club (20399 Park Place in Saratoga) and is a fundraiser for the Saratoga History Museum. Museum members will be charged \$15 and nonmembers, \$20. To purchase a ticket, call (408)255-1883—during the day.

Coffee and an assortment of tasty desserts will be served.

Steinbeck (1902-1968) grew up in Salinas, California, a culturally diverse place with a rich immigrant history. This upbringing provided a regional flavor to his writing, giving many of his works a distinct sense of place. Salinas, Monterey and parts of the San Joaquin Valley were the setting for many of his stories. The area is sometimes referred to as "Steinbeck Country".

John Steinbeck and his wife, Carol Henning, lived in a small house in Monte Sereno in the 1930's where he completed writing one of his most popular novels: *Of Mice and Men*. Because the area became increasingly populated and noisy (he complained of the noise in the journal he kept while writing *The Grapes of Wrath*), Steinbeck sold the house and built another on the old Biddle Ranch property some five miles south of Los Gatos in the Santa Cruz Mountains. His wife typed the manuscript and gave it its name which was taken from the song, the Battle Hymn of the Republic. The



Pulitzer-winning *Grapes of Wrath*, focused on the migrant worker during the 30's in Salinas and was very controversial.

Stories abound locally about Steinbeck, a larger than life person. One story was that he chilled beer for his friends on the bottom of his swimming pool.

Another story said he loved to boat in the San Francisco Bay, catching fish to keep his grocery bill from exceeding his \$25 per month budget. His parents funded his writing up until the age of 31 by providing an allowance.

He once toyed with the idea of shooting quail to augment his budget but he told a reporter from the *New York World Telegraph* in 1937 that “every time I see one around the house, I dash in and get a gun and get it to my shoulder, and then I can't shoot.” He was later so embarrassed by the comment that he swore it would be the last interview he ever held with a reporter...it wasn't.

Many of Steinbeck's works are on required reading lists in American high schools. A study by the Center for the Learning and Teaching of Literature in the United States found that *Of Mice and Men* was one of the ten most frequently read books in public high schools.

He wrote a total of twenty-seven books, including sixteen novels, six non-fiction books and five collections of short stories. In 1962, Steinbeck received the Nobel Prize for Literature. In September 1964, Steinbeck was awarded the United States Medal of Freedom by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Dr. Susan Shillinglaw is a professor of English at San Jose State University and Scholar-in-Residence at the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas. Previously, she was director of the Center for Steinbeck Studies at San Jose State University and edited the award-winning journal *Steinbeck Studies* (previously *The Steinbeck Newsletter*). She has published widely on Steinbeck, most recently *A Journey into Steinbeck's California* (2006), a travel guide and biography examining the impact of place on Steinbeck's vision. She has also published numerous articles, introductions and has co-edited other volumes on Steinbeck.

Safety First

The front windows and the exhibit cases in the Saratoga History Museum have been covered with film to protect the contents as well as provide protection in case the glass should shatter. This safety feature has been long needed. The film was professionally installed over the holidays and supervised by SHF President Bob Himel.

Heritage Resource Inventory Updated and Released

The City of Saratoga Planning department recently released the updated “Heritage Resources Inventory.” The comprehensive document provides preservation planning guidelines, the history of Saratoga as it relates to planning context, maps of the area, as well as the present inventory of historic buildings. The extensive report was prepared by Archives and Architecture. A copy of the report can be obtained by going to the city website and downloading a copy.

Saratoga Historical Foundation Officers

The mission of the Saratoga Historical Foundation is to preserve the unique history of Saratoga for the education and enjoyment of the community.

Executive Committee

Bob Himel, President
Annette Stransky, Vice President, Marketing
Ron Hagelin, Recording Secretary
Jane Asher, Treasurer, Fund Development Director

Newsletter

The Saratoga Historical Foundation newsletter is produced 6X a year. If you have comments or suggestions, please call 408-867-7468 or e-mail: annette@saratogahistory.com

Museum and Gift Shop

The Saratoga History Museum and McWilliams House are open from 1-4 PM Friday through Sunday. Call 408-867-4311 to arrange group or docent-led tours. Visit our website: <http://www.saratogahistory.com>.



Save These Dates!

- On-going** **Roots & Wings exhibit** at the California History Center
- On-going** **Did You Know exhibit** at the Saratoga History Museum
- Jan. 18** **Montalvo Then and Now**, membership meeting at Immanuel Lutheran church, 6:30 potluck; 7:00 PM lecture
- Feb. 5** **Steinbeck's Wrath, 1936-1939: The Santa Clara Valley Years**, lecture by Susan Shillinglaw, 7:00 PM at the Foothill Club
- Mar. 15** **Membership meeting** at the Immanuel Lutheran church. Speaker to be announced.

Every Monday Matters -- Volunteer Opportunities

It's a new year; the beginning of a new decade; and time to make a resolution or two. Get involved in the Saratoga Historical Foundation and volunteer! An interesting book, "Every Monday Matters" by Matthew Emerzian and Kelly Bozza outlines how you can make the most of each "Monday" in the year. Mondays have historically been dreaded—a time to go back to work or start a new week. Monday's (or any day) need not be dreaded. The book provides an outline of 52 ways to make a difference in your life, in the community, and in meaningful ways by setting aside one day each week.

We have some great opportunities for using each "Monday." If you see an area of interest, call Ray Cosyn at 408-741-1868 or e-mail Ray at ray.cosyn@sbcglobal.net. Got some special skills? Let us know. Make a difference in your life and in others, volunteer—even if it is for an hour or two! Guaranteed to make you feel better and you'll meet and make new friends.

Correspondence Secretary: We need someone to type or write thank you notes to key contributors and to handle other SHF correspondence. Time involved is estimated at one to two hours per month and would be on-going.

Research: Interested in learning more about people in Saratoga's history? Research William Haun or choose from a list of people and places and use the Museum's extensive resource files. This is a great opportunity to learn more about local history. Saratoga has a wealth of history—we need to get the word out.

Oral History: We have some great recorded local history pieces.—covering early California; the Army occupation of Saratoga; ghost towns in the Santa Cruz mountains—maybe you would like to hear them. They last about 1-1/2 hours.

Articles: Got a special memory about Saratoga or know about people or places in which the Museum would be interested? Send in the suggestion or write down the information. Hand written is fine! We are interested.

Photos: We are always looking for new photos to add to our photo file. The photos can be any period of time but must

concern Saratoga. These photos can be scanned and returned to you undamaged—in case you would like to keep the originals.

Telephone Skills: We need someone to take reservations for an event coming up. You can work from home.

Help Setup Special Exhibits at the Museum: Good at laying out items in exhibits? Or would you like to research information for use in a future exhibit? Any assistance would be appreciated.

Ambassador: Got a good smile? We need someone to greet people attending the next membership meeting on March 15. You would be smiling from 6:30 to 7:00 PM!!

Education Docent: Enjoy children? The education committee is always looking for people to help with demonstrations of life in the 1800's. Training provided.

Museum Docent: Learn about local history while becoming a docent—training provided. A commitment of 3 hours per month is required.

Did You Know—100 Unique Facts exhibit

CBS Eye on the Bay Correspondent Brian Hackney recently viewed the Did You Know—100 Unique Facts About



Saratoga exhibit at the Saratoga History Museum. He stopped by the Museum on January 4 to tape a Congress Springs bottle. He is including Saratoga in an upcoming program on how local cities received their name. "This is very interesting, very good" he said with special enjoyment of seeing the 1946 Life magazine article on Donna Reed in the exhibit. The article covered Reed's research of small town life by coming to Saratoga. The research was part of preparation for filming "It's a Wonderful Life" with Jimmy Stewart. Hackney grew up in Hollister and said he can remember visiting Saratoga as a child with his family.

Eye on the Bay is a popular evening program on CBS covering local people and places.

If you haven't seen the exhibit—which covers historic as well as contemporary people and places—come on by. It will remain open until the end of January. The Museum is open from 1-4 PM Friday, Saturday and Sunday.



Don't Forget!

Roots & Wings, a Saratoga Community Garden exhibit covering Betty Peck's work in establishing a community garden from 1972 to 1987 is a special exhibit at the California History Center (DeAnza College 21250 Stevens Creek Boulevard in Cupertino). The exhibit will run through mid year and is open to the

public. Betty is also leading a new project for the establishment of the Saratoga Creek Heritage Farm and Garden on Saratoga Avenue. For more information, go to www.saratogagardenfarm.org.

Coffeehouses: Then and Now in Saratoga

Saratoga is sprinkled with coffeehouses downtown today. Most of these establishments are concerned with coffee, tea and food sales—normal retail sales combined with food-restaurant sales. Fifty years ago this was less true.



There is one coffee house open now that has ties culturally and geographically with the past. The Blue Rock Shoot at 14523 Big Basin Way offers live music and comedy entertainment on a regular basis. Next door, about 50 years ago, was another, but somewhat less businesslike, musical venue—the Brass Knocker.

This was in the era between the beatniks and the hippies or hepcats in the

parlance of some.

At the Brass Knocker, Murray E. Brookman, Junior, held court. He sold coffee and tea in burlap bags by the pound. He also sold those items brewed. He sold “cheeseboards” which consisted of crackers with an arbitrary amount of cheese and an apple.

Things were different for young people in the ‘60’s. Each home had one television set if any at all. The television set was in a centrally located spot and watching it was a family affair. There were no video games. The only arcades of memory were the ones at the beach/Boardwalk in Santa Cruz and the basement of the Cliff House in San Francisco. The radio was AM (I remember the first local FM station, KMPX in San Francisco was introduced in the mid-1960’s).

So, if one wanted “hip” stimulus, one went to “the Knocker.” Bob Dylan was a song writer not a performer. Folk music was “the scene”—to be enjoyed and discussed.

Lee Mercer’s mother, Maxine, ran the art gallery that catered to the beat artists from San Francisco and Sausalito. This enterprise was located in what is now the Bella Saratoga restaurant.

Mercer’s mother introduced us to coffeehouse culture with live entertainment Friday and Saturday evenings. Often the next day there was a “hootenanny” (or open mike today) on Sunday afternoons.

At the Brass Knocker the musicians who entertained us were very famous—for a radius of about five miles.

One exception was Bill Munday. He was the owner of a guitar studio in Los Gatos offering lessons on guitar in partnership with a Saratoga High graduate, Alan Beilharz.

If one is fortunate enough to find an album (vinyl—33 1/3 RPM) by the duo “Joe and Eddie”, one will be able to read liner notes by their agent or manager, Bill Munday-- his 15 minutes of fame.

When famous “folkies” came to town to play Old Town in Los Gatos or Montalvo in Saratoga, it seemed that Bill Munday knew them all. He drove them around, introduced them to locals and acted as the emcee at their performances.

Another of the entertainers besides Joe and Eddie was Josh White.

Well known Saratoga High graduates from the early years performed at the Brass Knocker on Friday and Saturday nights. Marilyn Rosehill and Diane Arakelian (class of 1962); Alan Beilharz and Andy Godon (class of 1964) to name a few. The performances were almost always vocals backed up by acoustic guitar.

The two most well known of the early performers were Bill Munday (of the aforementioned guitar studio in Los Gatos) and Paul Zeigler, who also had a music business in Los Gatos—though these men were not strictly speaking Saratogans. Munday was married to Michelle Kocher, (class of 1963) whose parents owned the building housing the Brass Knocker. The Kocher name adorns the building on Big Basin Way.

Zeigler was married very briefly to Diane Arakelian. He achieved commercial success with a couple of top 40 chart numbers and then a world tour with the band, Hot Tuna.

Somewhat later there was a duo appearing which became associated with success—Owen Snyder and Pat Simmons. Snyder was the lead entertainer in this duo. Snyder is presently a chef in Capitola and Simmons remains world famous as a member of the Doobie Brothers.

The performers from the Saratoga High Class of 1964 had divergent life paths. Beilharz, after graduating from the University of Santa Clara entered the US Army and was sent



to Germany. He returned to Saratoga to open his own guitar studio upstairs at the old Clef House music store, also on Big Basin Way. He subsequently entered the State Park service as a park ranger. He spent his career in California’s gold country along SR49, retiring 10 years ago. He still performs locally in the gold country.

Andy Godon moved to British Columbia during the turbulent 1960’s. How his life played out is presently unknown to this author.

Times changed, culture changed and the Brass Knocker floundered financially. It closed its doors forever in the late 1960’s.

These devotees, my friends and peers, literally became adults listening to music, playing dominoes and discussing the state of the world and of our community at the Brass Knocker.

My parents would often ask my friends and me—“what is the attraction of that place?” The attraction was a place where the next generation was able to meet, talk and try to understand the rapidly changing world we were maturing in.

By Michael Whalen. SHF member and long-time Saratogan

And the beat goes on...the photo on this page is the building on Big Basin Way that housed the Brass Knocker—waiting for a new business enterprise.

Crash of 1929---

October 2009 marked the 80th anniversary of the stock market crash of 1929. The crash led to the Great Depression which lasted for approximately ten years. The 1920s had been a period of wealth and excess. Nothing but greed seemed to be in charge of the economy. Everything seemed to be in play during this period when serving someone a beer was an illegal act. Despite the high price multiples, the market was the place to be. Prosperity seemed to be a road without end. The market was on everyone's mind as it was on a roll. It didn't matter if you were a businessman or a waiter, for everyone had to be in the market. It was easy money by any standard. Shortly before the crash, economist Irving Fisher famously proclaimed, "Stock prices have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau".



The 1929 crash came during a period of declining real estate values in the United States. This has an eerie echo in the crash of 2008. Further comparisons can be seen in the volatility that existed in the run up to the crash. The market was in a whipsaw; one day saw a major decline and the next day an increase in the Dow Jones. The big bull market began in March of 1928 when buying was rampant; stocks like Radio (RCA) selling at 94.5 on March 3rd of 1928 was selling at 160 two weeks later. Who could resist the temptation to play the market? Coolidge after he left office in early 1929 said that stocks were cheap at current prices.

In early September 1929 the market began to break with Radio falling 32 points and GE 50. That led to the major declines on Black Thursday October 24th and the following Monday and Tuesday as panic set into the market. The erosion continued right into July 1932 when the Dow Jones which had been at 452 in September of 1929 fell to 58 at the bottom of the depression on July 8th 1932, during the waning days of the Hoover administration. GM had fallen from 73 to 8 and U.S. Steel went from 162 to 22.

The market crash played a major part in bringing on the depression as it shattered business confidence, ruined investors, and wiped out the many holding companies that held sway during the period. The parallels to October 2008 are startling however in 2008 the federal government did not allow the banks to fail. As onerous as it was to prop up these major institutions with tax payer dollars the effort on the part of both administrations softened the blow of the 2008 crash.

I remember vividly as a young child my mother pointing out the Steven Hotel in Chicago (Currently the Conrad Hilton on Michigan Avenue) where she said more than one person had jumped from the building during the height of the depression. It is fortunate this time around that fortunes did not decline so abruptly as to cause investors to jump in 2008. By Ray Cosyn, SHF historian

Depression in Saratoga in the '30's

"The Great Depression started with the stock market crash of 1929. Parenthetically, that was the year I started first grade at Saratoga Grammar School, but I don't remember any pupil discussion of the crash. That was a little over our heads.

But also I don't remember any Depression effects in the Village or community at large. Saratoga, of course, was not an industrial center with bread lines and other accoutrements of hard times. However, I do remember hearing of complaints among the growers about having difficulty in selling their prune and apricot crops, and the low prices they got when they could sell." Excerpt from a Willys Peck Stereopticon column first printed March 11, 1998 in the Saratoga News

An Important Addition to the Museum

Robert Kirkwood recently donated several boxes of important family items including papers associated with the Memorial Arch, deeds, newspaper articles relating to the Farwell and Blaney families. Bella Blaney can be seen in the bottom photo as the only female delegate from California for the 1912 Bull Moose party. Our thanks for this wonderful donation.



World War II Remembered— Saratoga Style

You could almost hear the bombs bursting as five World War II veterans gathered to share their war experiences last month in a panel discussion. The event, sponsored by the Saratoga Historical Foundation, marked the 68th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Over 70 people attended the discussion which was held at the Saratoga Community library. Ray Cosyn moderated the panel.

Mac McCaughey, one of the veterans said facetiously that speaking publicly was worse than getting shot at but then proceeded to tell his story of sitting watch after landing at Utah beach in Normandy. The Purple Heart recipient went on to recount a story of “friendly fire” during that watch.

Herbert Kwart, another veteran, flew the famed Flying Fortress, a B-17 during the war with the 8th Air Force. He flew 35 missions over Germany. The B-17, a four-engine plane was known for its sturdiness as well as for flying in formation which made the plane a significant bomber aircraft of the war. Kwart brought a model of the B-17 to explain its power. “It was a devastating delivery system,” said Kwart.

Veteran George Cooper, who flew the P-47 Thunderbolt said tongue-in-cheek, he wouldn’t have minded having a few more engines and the support of B-17’s during the war! Cooper flew 81 missions in the P-47—a single engine plane that had eight .50-caliber machine guns, four per wing. Unlike the B-17, the pilot was also the one who manned the machine gun. Cooper remembered witnessing the ships en route from England to Normandy during D-Day—a “sea of ships”. He also remembered one mission where they were to dive bomb a barge on the Rhine River. The “barge” could be seen only as a speck from their position. As they got closer, those “specks” turned out to be German planes!!

Veteran Ed Pack served in the 59th Signal Battalion—and smilingly said he considered “radio safer than being in the Air Force when he enlisted.” His job during the war was to maintain telephone systems and to repair aircraft radios. His

classes in high school French came in handy when he had to read some of the maps. He said the Germans would frequently turn the sign posts the wrong way to confuse the Allies. He recalled seeing Ohrdruf, a sub-camp of the Buchenwald concentration camp and the images have continued to stay with him. “War is the most terrible thing that man or animal can come up with,” he said.

Ransom “Bud” Rideout said he was sworn in by actor Jimmy Stewart when he enlisted. Rideout was a “Flying Tiger”, a Chinese and American unit that was founded to fight the Japanese military occupying China during the war. Rideout flew 38 missions in a P-51. His last mission was harrowing as he described how he had to bail out of his plane after it was shot down. “During flight training, they didn’t tell us how to do this part,” he said facetiously. He noted he dove over the side of the plane which spun him into the parachute. His parachute was fortunately caught in a stand of trees. As a result, his back was broken and he was captured on the



ground. Later he was freed and carried 100 miles by the Chinese to freedom.

Several people in the audience also shared their wartime experiences after the panel discussion. Moderator Ray Cosyn noted, “These folks are people who fearlessly fought in World War II. We salute and thank them.”

Special thanks to the homemade cookies provided by Linda Hagelin, Jane Asher and Annette Stransky.

Photos courtesy of Jim Sorden.

Thanks to the Digital Clubhouse Network for donating their time and taping the presentation.

Thanks also to KSAR (channel 15), local cable television



station who will be putting a copy of the tape on the air in January.

The Montalvo Obelisk, And a Quest for Answers

Anyone who has driven by or visited San Jose's Rosicrucian Park and its Egyptian Museum has likely noticed the obelisk standing at the corner of Park and Naglee Avenues. Its inscription is copied from the obelisk of the King Senusret I at Heliopolis (ancient Iunu), now a suburb of Cairo. But how many people are aware that there stands in Santa Clara County another obelisk--a real antiquity from the time of the pharaohs--in a public place for all to see? This obelisk, actually the upper portion of one, stands in the garden of Montalvo Center for the Arts, at the end of a path which leads from one end of James D. Phelan's venerable mansion.

The purpose of this brief account is to serve as an initial foray into the obelisk's history, ancient and modern, as well as a call for research assistance, particularly with respect to the obelisk's recent story. Several helpful leads have just been provided by local historians which should aid this writer, but as we all know in this field, it's better to have too much information than not enough. The aid of a Bay Area Egyptologist will be secured in the thorough clarification of the translated inscription carved on the stone.

The goals of this research are as follows:

1. To find out how and why the obelisk wound up on the Montalvo grounds.
2. To find out under which king the monument was carved and perhaps where it originally stood. No specific king's name is given in the inscription, but there are possible clues in the layout of the text itself.
3. To publish the results of this research within the corpus of the Egyptological record, as well as make the same information available to local historical archives.

The Inscription

The Horus, Strong Bull, Beloved of Ra, Lord of the Two Ladies, The Anointed Lord of The Black Land, Soldier (?)...

So read, in quadruplicate, the columns of hieroglyphs which survive on two sides of the obelisk. These are simply a litany of formulaic royal titles. Were the obelisk intact, an actual king's name, enclosed in the familiar oval cartouche, would appear further down. An explanation of what survives is as follows:

- The Horus--All kings were seen as the living embodiments of the god Horus, son of the god (and mythical first king of Egypt) Osiris.
- Strong Bull--A symbol of kingly power and virility, dating back to the tribal chieftains of Predynastic Egypt.
- Beloved of Ra--Beloved of the sun god.
- Lord of the Two Ladies--A symbolic way of saying the king was Lord of the North and South. The Two Ladies were the goddesses Wadjet and Nekhbet, symbolized by a cobra and a vulture, respectively.
- The Anointed Lord of the Black Land--Kemet, Egypt's ancient name, literally "The Black Land," refers to the

black alluvium of the Nile floodplain, which was replenished every year by the floodwaters of the river.

After hieroglyphs which seem to be an incomplete reference to military valor, the inscription ends at the break of the stone, where it rests on a concrete plinth dating to James Phelan's time.

The Obelisk's Condition

Today, the obelisk measures less than five feet in height, but when completed, it was possibly twice that high. It is carved of rose quartzite, which, along with pink or red granite, was one of the stones used by the Egyptians for monuments which had solar significance. Obelisks, which had pyramidal tops, were, like pyramids, solar symbols. Such monuments had their origins in the benben stone, a sacred monolith, long since lost, which stood at the heart of the sun temple at Iunu, the earlier-mentioned city later called Heliopolis (City of the Sun) by the Greeks, and still so-named today. The Montalvo obelisk's tip is somewhat roughly carved, with a lip or notch at the base of the pyramidion. This indicates that the top was likely encased in bronze, and then gilded. The hieroglyphs would have originally been painted, probably red, and the rest of the stone polished and allowed to show its natural surface. The two sides that are uninscribed

are the result of re-carving in modern times. Likely, these sides were badly damaged, and whoever intended to sell or present the obelisk as an objet d'art found this condition unacceptable, and so the damaged sides were trimmed down, smoothed, and decorated with a loose interpretation of what Egyptologists call a Palace Façade motif. The pyramidion was likewise trimmed on two sides to appear symmetrical.

The Obelisk in Modern Times

It is known that James Phelan collected antiquities. Two upended Corinthian column capitals of Roman date still exist on the grounds of Montalvo, and it is said that many ancient objects of his were deeded posthumously to art institutions in San Francisco. An early photo of the obelisk in the Montalvo Library shows a rectangular stone slab with an Egyptian figural inscription, leaning against the obelisk's concrete base. Its present whereabouts are unknown. Nothing on display among the Egyptian objects at San Francisco's Palace of the Legion of Honor matches it. Many objects there come from the Spreckles family, and none on display are noted as Phelan bequests.

Nearly ten years ago, I inquired at Montalvo about the obelisk. One staff member mentioned that Phelan's dogs are buried beneath it. Obelisks were not usually funerary monuments. Nevertheless, few beloved pets have been given a more noble tomb.

Gary Lee Parks is a board member of the Northern California Chapter of the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE). Go to hebsed@comcast.net for information on their events and programs. Gary can be contacted at Ptahhotep1@earthlink.net.





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A New Look!

SHF now has a nonprofit postal permit, enabling a cost savings on all mailings. Mailings can now be processed at a bulk rate which does not impact the timing of delivery significantly but provides big savings for SHF.

Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive

The Digital Clubhouse Network, a nonprofit organization, has joined a campaign to capture the memories of World War II—specifically August 14, 1945—the date the war ended. KEEP



THE SPIRIT OF 45 ALIVE is a non-profit program that is gathering personal recollections of August 14, 1945, the day WWII ended.

This yearlong initiative will run from August 14, 2009 to August 14, 2010, culminating in the commemoration of the 65th Anniversary of the end of World War II.

If you would like to share your memories—whether you were young, in the service, or participated in the war effort—you can add your memories to this campaign.

You can submit your story to: <http://www.spiritof45.org> or call the group at 408-481-0880.

Open House Entertainment



The Open House held at the Museum and as part of the Saratoga Village festivities in November was a big success. People enjoyed the toe-tapping sounds of the Skillet Lickers and the tasty treats of Nancy Anderson and Lyn Johnston.

They were also able to get in some special shopping at the Museum's gift shop. If you are looking for a special Saratoga gift for Valentine's day—stop by and choose from a wide selection of books; bookmarks; DVDs; T-shirts; polo shirts; silver jewelry and more. A new landmark charm of the Mountain Lodge was recently added to the jewelry line by local artisan Ann Johnston.

