



SARATOGA HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

PO BOX 172, SARATOGA, CALIFORNIA 95071
May 2014

Noteworthy and Notorious Women in California's History— Free Lecture by Historian Mary Jo Ignoffo

Too late for mother's day, but you might still bring your mother, daughter, or girl friend to this entertaining lecture on California women.



Local author and teacher Mary Jo Ignoffo will give a presentation entitled, *Noteworthy and Notorious Women in California's History*, on May 20 as part of the Saratoga Historical

Foundation's membership program.

The life stories and legacies of some nineteenth and twentieth-century California women are often absent from history books. But further investigation finds common ground in lives that demonstrated intellect, determination, resilience, and a belief in woman's ability to accomplish great deeds. Among the ladies to be covered in the presentation will include pioneer Tamsen Donner, Gold Rush-era abolitionist Mary Ellen Pleasant, novelist Gertrude Atherton, philanthropist Sarah Winchester, architect Julia Morgan, First Lady Lou Henry Hoover, and civil rights leader Dolores Huerta. Each of these lives sheds considerable light upon her time and place in California's past.

The presentation will take place at the Immanuel Lutheran Fellowship Hall at 14103 Saratoga Avenue in Saratoga. The potluck begins at 6:30 PM—be sure to bring your own plates, eating utensils and food to share. The lecture will begin at 7:30 PM. The event is free and open to the public.

Mary Jo Ignoffo has written articles on history for the *San Jose Mercury News*, *The Californian*, and *Santa Clara Magazine*. She is the author of six books about

California history: *La Verdad*; *Gold Rush Politics*; *Sunnyvale from the City of Destiny to the Heart of Silicon Valley*; *Milestones, A History of Mountain View, CA*; *A Meeting of the Minds—A Retrospective of the ToKalon Club of San Jose 1903-2003*; and *Reflections of the Past, An Anthology of San Jose*. She teaches history at De Anza College in Cupertino, California.

May Springs Forth!!

Following a 22-year tradition, Betty Peck and family held their traditional May Day celebration with hundreds of friends on May 1. The shady hand-built outdoor amphitheater provided the perfect setting for the crowning of May Queen Carolyn Armstrong, a short play about Spring, live music, May pole dancing and a repast of strawberries and cream. KRON 4 news was there to capture the festivities.

The invitation-only event began when Betty retired from teaching, although no one is sure she has retired! In true Peck tradition of celebrating-- the day was perfect. And everyone had a chance to dance around the May Pole with colorful yellow and green ribbons. Happy Spring!



Rocky Story—the Quarry Walk

On a gray but beautiful day in scenic Saratoga, Vice



Mayor Howard Miller led an informative walk of the quarry—soon to be Saratoga’s largest park. Over 40 interested

Saratogans joined Miller to hear how the 47 acres of land was first used as a quarry from 1907 to 1967. The rocks were mined by shovel and then later by bulldozer. When the gravel company was in operation, the land looked very different from today. Very little plant growth existed, just huge swatches of rocky land as the gravel was harvested. The gravel was used for most of the roads in Santa Clara Valley.

Miller joked, “Saratoga provided the bedrock of Silicon Valley.”

Walking along you can peek into tunnels used for conveying rock underground; see the remnants of a building used for loading the rock; ivy covered water tanks, a reflection pond where water falls once tumbled, and even a cat tail filled “lake.”

Only the crunch, crunch, crunch of steps on the gravel strewn path disturbs the tranquility as people eagerly walk from one scenic point to the next.

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

Annette Stransky, President

Bob Himel, Vice President

Ron Hagelin, Recording Secretary

Open, Treasurer

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

How to Reach Us

The Saratoga History Museum, McWilliams House and schoolhouse are located at 20450 Saratoga-Los Gatos Road and open from 1-4 PM Friday through Sunday. Call 408-867-4311 to arrange group or docent-led tours. Be sure to visit our gift shop. Visit our website: <http://www.saratogahistory.com> or [www.facebook.com/Saratoga Historical Foundation](http://www.facebook.com/SaratogaHistoricalFoundation)

The county purchased the gravel pit and, according to Miller, it became a recreational area for the county employees. Artifacts such as picnic tables and stone benches can be seen throughout the 1 ½ hour walk—a garbage can converted into a BBQ provides proof of some of the good times of the past.

The land has been planted with trees as part of the restoration. Pipes for carrying water to the plants are still visible.

The walk includes several scenic vistas. Wildflowers such as lace plant, monkey flower, California poppies, mustard and more brighten the trail. Cat tails lazily poke out of the remnants of a lake.

Miller said the county employees stocked the lake at one time with fish so children could go fishing.

The city of Saratoga purchased the land for creating a park so people could walk from the quarry to Sanborn Park to Santa Cruz or a walk of about 50 miles.



Miller predicts that a portion of the Quarry park might be open as early as 2015. Many of the existing gravel

strewn roads will be used as trails. Meetings are in progress and open to the public to discuss the types of recreation to be offered in the new park. Only docent-led walks are allowed now and are planned for each month. Check the city of Saratoga website for dates.

Memorial Day—A Saratoga Tradition



Join fellow Saratogans for Memorial Day on May 26. The colorful event begins at the Memorial Arch with a wreath-laying and flag ceremony at 9:30 AM. The

group will walk up Oak Street to Madronia Cemetery at 10:00 AM for speeches and music. People can also drive. Chairs are available for seating. Laurel sprays and American flags will be placed on the graves of military veterans. The Saratoga Foothill Club has organized the event every year since 1928 to honor the more than 850 veterans are buried at Madronia Cemetery.

2014 Calendar of Events

Now	School Daze—1850 to the Present exhibit at the Museum until the end of June.
May 20	Notorious & Notable Women lecture and potluck at 6:30 PM Immanuel Lutheran Fellowship hall
May 24,	Open House (3 dates including May 24, June 28 and July 26) at the Museum from 1-3 PM --membership and volunteer Drive
July 5	New Exhibit: "Pioneering the Valley: The Chinese American Legacy in Santa Clara Valley" at the Museum
July 13	Exhibit Reception at the Museum from 2-4
Sept. 6	Mid-Autumn Festival at the Museum
Oct. 4	Heritage Day

Membership & Volunteer Drive Kicks Off in May



Stop by the Saratoga History Museum on May 24 (also June 28 and July 26) between 1-3 and learn about the benefits of volunteering or joining the

Saratoga Historical Foundation. Light refreshments will be served. Already a member—bring a friend or come and find out about volunteer activities. Or learn about some of the many new projects. “Members are the lifeblood of any museum,” says SHF Membership Director Ann Waltonsmith. “Annual membership dues, which start at \$30 for individuals, provide us with a major source of unrestricted revenue, which means we can use those funds to cover our day-to-day needs, not just special projects or exhibitions.” In exchange for their support, SHF members receive special rates to events and programs, 8-page newsletter on local history six times a year and a discount in the museum’s gift shop, and more.

“Perhaps most important,” Waltonsmith adds, “SHF members know they are part of a large and growing community of people who appreciate and support preserving Saratoga’s rich history.”

Volunteers Needed

According to Museum Docent Director Michael Whalen, “Volunteers help us produce a wide range of events and services concerning Saratoga’s history. Stop by and see the number of ways you can volunteer and give back to the community.” Young and old are

welcome with a variety of services to fit a range of skills. Be sure to stop by and find out how you can help—if even for an hour or two each month.

Join Today

Everyone is invited to become a member of the museum and to volunteer. An annual membership drive takes place each year, but memberships are welcome at any time.

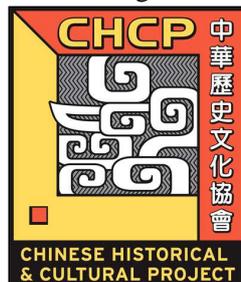
This support enables the museum to continue preserving our local heritage and serve as a valuable educational resource.

All Volunteer

The Saratoga Historical Foundation is an all-volunteer organization. The group manages the Saratoga History Museum and keeps the museum open three days a week; education docents teach pioneer living; and a host of services are provided to the community including docent-led walking tours. Stop by and see how you can help.

New Exhibit Opens July 5

“Pioneering the Valley: The Chinese American legacy in



Santa Clara Valley”, a new exhibit will open on July 5 and run through the end of October. The exhibit was developed by the Chinese Historical and Cultural Preservation Society located in San Jose. The story is told using 14 colorful panels of information and images on the history of

Chinese Americans in the Santa Clara Valley from the 19th century to today. Thank you Ping Li and Mayor Emily Lo for helping make this exhibit happen.

A reception for the exhibit is planned for July 13—open to the public and with light refreshments.

Put These Dates on Your Calendar

Join us at the Museum for a Mid-Autumn Festival on September 6 to celebrate family and munch moon cakes! This traditional Chinese celebration promises to be fun and informative.

And don’t forget Heritage Day on October 4 for an array of activities at the Museum!

In Memorium

Lillian Benson

Origin of the Memorial Arch



The Memorial Arch is the site of several events including Memorial Day and a tree-lighting ceremony in November. Known today as Blaney Plaza, prior to the 1950s

it was called Memorial Park. Many feel it was the first park in Saratoga.

Charles Blaney and several others decided that the Peninsular Railway station was unsightly with its tracks, poles and wires. The station was moved so a park could be built.

In 1916 Blaney led ten stockholders who each invested one thousand dollars to create the park. Those investing include, Mrs. JE Bell, GA Wood, Sheldon P. Patterson, Daniel and Neil Carmichael, Dr. RL Hogg, HP Dyer, JA Kerr, Bruce Bonney, JE Hollister and an unidentified subscriber.

The Memorial Arch was built and designed by Bruce Porter shortly after World War I and is dedicated to the memory of the Saratogans who lost their lives during the war. This WWI memorial was the first in the county.

The park also contains the town's official flag pole erected in 1947 by the Volunteer Fire Department and dedicated to the memory of one of their members, Martin Kane.

A bronze tablet was added in 1950 commemorating Saratoga's Centennial and the 174th anniversary of the arrival of Captain Juan Bautista de Anza and his exploring party—the first white settlers to pass through this area. The plaque also notes Saratoga as a state registered landmark #435.

State Landmark #435-- Saratoga

The landmark status was driven by two local historians Florence Cunningham and Father William Abeloe, a Jesuit priest at Santa Clara University who had grown up in Saratoga. The landmark application and a petition were displayed at a local drug store. The petition was signed by several dozen local citizens, and was then forwarded to the California Chamber of Commerce office in San Francisco. A packet of information accompanied the petition and the application; the documentation consisted primarily of weekly columns on local history written by Florence Cunningham taken from the local newspaper.

The formal designation of Saratoga came following the centennial of the discovery of gold in California. Shortly after Saratoga's designation, in May of 1949, Governor Earl Warren created the California Historical

Landmarks Advisory Commission which took over the statewide registration program. Formal registration criteria were adopted thirteen years later.

Bruce Porter, a Renaissance Man

Bruce Porter (1865-1953) was a designer, poet, stained-glass artist, metalworker, painter, and writer. His work was part of the Arts and Crafts movement in Northern California. He was born in San Francisco. His father edited a newspaper in Martinez, and became a state legislator for Marin and Contra Costa Counties.

His mother asked each of her three sons not to marry until after she died. Bruce was the only one who disobeyed and married at the age of 53—three years before his mother's death.



He married 27 year old Margaret May James, daughter of psychologist William James in 1917.

Landscape Designer

Porter created the landscaping for Fioli Gardens of

Woodside, Memorial Stadium at the University of California at Berkeley in 1923, and the Memorial Arch in 1919 in Saratoga. He and Willis Polk designed a monument in memory of Robert Louis Stevenson in San Francisco in 1897. Porter designed the gardens for several large homes including William Crocker's home, Charles Blaney (Saratoga), Henry Potter Russell house, courtyard garden of the Swedenborgian Church and many others.

Stained Glass Artist

Some of his stained glass designs are found at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Pacific Grove, Swedenborgian Church (1895), Le Petit Trianon mansion (1904), and churches in many towns locally. He



also created a series of stained glass windows for Una Hume in Saratoga (1896).

Writer

Porter wrote art criticisms for local newspapers. From 1895-1897, Porter along with Gelett Burgess and William Doxey,

published the literary magazine, *The Lark*. He also contributed to the book, *Arts in California*, a compilation of the art exhibited at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. Porter was good friends with writer Frank Norris and the character Vanamee in *The Octopus* is thought to be based upon Porter's personality.

Stranger in a Strange Land—Robert Heinlein, Author

Robert Heinlein, (1907-1988) often called the dean of science fiction writers, moved to Bonnie Doon, California in the 1960s. There he and his wife Ginny designed and built a unique round house on Bonnie Doon Road in a secluded area. The house still stands today and is managed by the Robert Heinlein Society.



Heinlein is credited with

influencing the public to believe that space exploration was a practical possibility. Later a crater on Mars was named after him by astronauts who grew up reading his books. The story *Rocket Ship Galileo* was initially rejected in the 1940s by publishers because it was “too far out” to consider people going to the moon.

Heinlein published 32 novels, 59 short stories, and 16 collections during his life. Four films, two television series, several episodes of a radio series, and a board game have been derived more or less directly from his work. He also wrote a screenplay for one of the films. Heinlein also edited an anthology of other writers' SF short stories.

He was the first science fiction writer to break into mainstream magazines by being published by the *Saturday Evening Post* in the 1940s. He is considered one of the three top science fiction authors. The other two authors are Arthur C. Clark and Isaac Asimov.

His writing coined the following words:

- moonbat—a pejorative referring to political leftists
- TANSTAAFL—There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch
- Space Marine—which later changed to starship troopers
- Waldo the protagonist in a short story (meaning short story)

Prior to becoming a science fiction writer he was in the Navy, sold real estate and was involved in silver mining.

He was in politics from about 1934 to 1938 when he supported Upton Sinclair's bid for Governor of California. Later he ran unsuccessfully for California

State Assembly. His political stance evolved over the years.

Heinlein repeatedly addressed certain social themes: the importance of individual liberty and self-reliance, the obligation individuals owe to their societies, the influence of organized religion on culture and government, and the tendency of society to repress nonconformist thought. He also speculated on the influence of space travel on human cultural practices.

On the Road

In the 1950s and earlier it was not unusual to see a side of beef or other such meat product delivered to a grocery store and hung outside. The beef would later be brought inside to be carved by the butcher. This meat hook can be seen on the side of the old Buy and Save Market on Big Basin Way. The original storage locker where the meat would have been stored is behind the building.



On The Street Where You Live



When neighbor Senator James Phelan needed medical attention, his staff would use a siren that could be heard throughout the countryside. The genial Dr. Mendelsohn would hustle to Senator Phelan's, home at nearby--Villa Montalvo.

Dr. Mendelsohn (1879-1950) a graduate of Harvard Medical School came to Saratoga to set up practice. He and his wife, Louise quickly became civic leaders.

Mendelsohn was president of the Chamber of Commerce and organized the Blossom Festival for many years. After Senator Phelan died, he was the first president of the Montalvo Association. Using the money given to him by Phelan, he established an outpatient clinic at Stanford University and the University of California, Berkeley. The original Plumed Horse restaurant was built by Dr. Mendelsohn's daughter Louise and her husband Norvel Thompson.

Betty Peck Plants Seeds for the Future



Betty Peck was recently featured in an article in the April issue of Bay Area Parent, entitled “*The Fairy Godmother of Kindergarten*” as well as in a new book, *Living Life in Full Bloom* by Elizabeth Murray.

The interesting Bay Area Parent magazine interview traces Peck’s 55 year teaching career as well

as the community garden established in Saratoga in 1972.

Author of two books, according to the interviewer, Peck, at age 92, is working on a third about how people learn to read. The popular former kindergarten teacher is also involved in a quarterly forum conducted with her daughter where teachers, administrators and parents learn new ideas for nurturing children.

Living Life in Full Bloom explains photographer and author Elizabeth Murray in the book, is about living life to its fullest-- by living with hope, purpose, imagination and vision. She provides over 120 interesting ways to accomplish that task. Murray also includes profiles of individuals such as Peck who exemplify this life and are contributing to their local community in special ways.

Old Orchard on Fruitvale Avenue

This historic folk Victorian house and land was



originally called Old Orchard. It was built by J. B. Ellis in 1885 on about 15 acres of land purchased from Frank Farwell, an

early landowner in Saratoga. The land surrounding the house consisted at that time of fruit trees including 150 prune, 430 peach, 10 cherry, 6 apricot and 50 pear trees. The house was later owned by George Foster and his wife Ethel who lived in the residence until 1907. Ethel

Foster was a founding member of the Saratoga Foothill Club. Today the home sits on two acres of land and is listed on the city’s heritage inventory list.

Remembering School Days

Do you remember the excitement of the first day of



school and the smell of freshly sharpened pencils, the taste of white paste for art projects? Seeing everyone in their new clothes and haircuts and waiting expectantly to see what the new school

year would bring. Back in the 1950’s, school might mean a new lunch box and pencil box.

Recall your school day memories by visiting the “School Daze—from 1850 to the Present” exhibit at the Saratoga History Museum (20450 Saratoga-Los Gatos Boulevard). The museum is open from 1-4 PM Friday-Sunday. The exhibit will run through the end of June.

Meet the Press

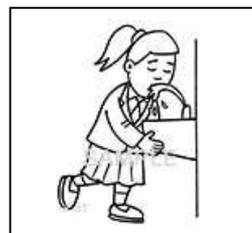


SHF President Annette Stransky recently gave a presentation to one of Mercury News Columnist Steve Yvaska’s classes. The topic? The benefits of membership in the Saratoga

Historical Foundation, of course!

New Improvements Coming to the Museum

Public Works Director John Cherbone reports that in the



May-June timeframe, the Saratoga Historical Park will have a new, large sign in front of the museum. The new dimensional sign is expected to draw more attention to the park.

The City of Saratoga is also putting in a drinking fountain for both people and animals in front of the Museum. Many joggers, bicyclists and dog walkers journey past the park and will appreciate the new “watering hole.”

One of the Supremes

Milton Myrick served as a justice of the peace from 1880-1887 while living in Saratoga. He was elected to the position. He would have commuted to the courthouse in San Jose. The courthouse was completed in 1868 for



the sum of \$200,000.

In 1992, during the earthquake restoration effort, engineers and construction workers made an interesting discovery. According to the Mercury News on July 20, 1992, "Deep in the bowels of the 124-year-old Santa Clara County Courthouse are two forgotten high-security jail cells..." The cells, with four-inch thick double safety-doors and steel ceilings, were heavy-duty and primitive. Though gas outlets indicated that heat was available, there were no plumbing facilities, so that function was probably taken care of by a bucket.

Attorneys were drawn to San Jose in the late 1800's, not necessarily because of the new courthouse, but due to the busy law trade involving land grants and other property issues, and the growing legal needs of the population. By the 1890's many California-born and educated attorneys were setting up practice locally.

Myrick was civic minded and became very active while living in the town. Myrick was president of the Saratoga Village Improvement Association, the town's first booster organization and forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce. The group was formed on March 7, 1887. The objective of the Association was to beautify the roads by planting shade trees, sprinkling roads and streets, grading and maintaining roads, planting hedges, encouraging lectures and programs promoting the health, prosperity of Saratoga.

Charcoal—A Burning Industry in Saratoga



Charcoal was an industry that flourished for a short period of time in the Saratoga mountains in the late 1800s.

Ferdinand Lotti, nephews Charlie, Pasquale and Constant who lived at Lottieville were involved in the industry along with Jack Mevi who lived above the Booker School.

According to RV Garrod in *Saratoga Story*, "any wood that could not be worked into something saleable, was used for making charcoal."

How to Make Charcoal

A lot of wood of various kinds was hauled to the spot selected for the pit. Heavy stumps that were too heavy to move by hand were dragged by horses and used at the bottom of the pit. Limbs of wood of all kinds and dimensions were piled on the sides and the tops of the stumps until the pile gradually assumed the shape of an Indian wigwam. The pile was completed by being thatched with smaller limbs and brush. The entire mound was then covered with dirt, except for a chimney hole at the peak and a fire hole at the bottom. The wood had been arranged to give it sufficient air channels so it would burn. The pile was watched night and day, first to see that it didn't generate too much heat and burn; secondly, to see that it did not stop burning. It took weeks to convert the wood to charcoal.

When the charcoal had cooled, it was shoveled into gunnysacks and delivered to where it would be used. The manufacture of charcoal furnished a source of revenue to those who worked at it, and it used up wood that would have otherwise disintegrated into the woods.

Uses for Charcoal

Charcoal was the traditional fuel of a blacksmith's forge and other applications where an intense heat is required.

Charcoal Road



West of Saratoga there is still a road called the Charcoal Road, which leaves the Santa Cruz Ridge about a mile west of the Saratoga-Santa Cruz Gap and terminates in Stevens Creek about two miles above Soda Rock. A flat area near the summit is known as "Charcoal Flat." This is reputed to have been one of the camping places for a band of Civil War guerrillas who went under the name of "Knights of the Golden Circle."



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New Donation Policy



The Saratoga History Museum is changing its policy regarding donations that are dropped off at the museum.

According to Archival and Collections Director Katie Alexander, “Due to space limitations and a renewed focus

on our mission statement to collect items that are significant to Saratoga, we will be accepting donations by appointment only.”

The Museum is still interested in adding items to the collection but would like to discuss it with you before it is dropped off. Items left at the museum, however, as a donation if it does not meet collection criteria may not be accepted and may be disposed of by the collection committee.

If you have a donation, please call the museum at 408-867-4311 and someone will get back to you for an appointment or you can e-mail katie@saratogahistory.com.

Recent Donation

SHF members Elaine and Ted Clabeaux recently donated some charming children’s books as well as other items that are on display at the museum for the School Daze exhibit.

