



# Saratoga Historical Foundation

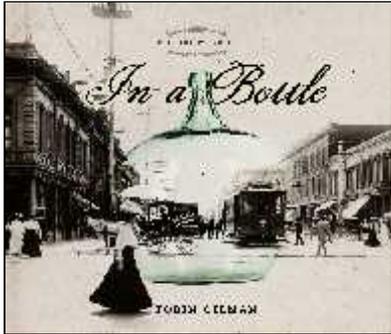
PO Box 172, Saratoga CA 95071

March 2016

## Pacific Congress Springs—Special Presentation on March 23

The Saratoga Historical Foundation will host a presentation on March 23 by Ian Sanders and Michael Brookman on the Pacific Congress Springs at 7:30 PM. The event will take place at the Foothill Club located at 20399 Park Place in Saratoga. The potluck will start at 6:30 PM. Bring your own plate and eating utensils and food to share. Coffee or tea will be provided.

An added bonus to the presentation will be a display by Tobin Gilman of Congress Springs bottles. Gilman has written a book, *In a Bottle*, showing the history and photos of bottles he has found in the Santa Clara County. The book will be offered for sale at the event. The



Almaden author's book is the result of his passion for bottle collecting, which started in the 1960s when a fellow eighth-grader at Bret Harte Middle School brought an old bottle he'd dug up to class.

### *The History of Pacific Congress Springs*

The Pacific Congress Springs was one of the largest resorts on the West Coast in the 1860s. Darius Ogden Mills, the West's outstanding banker, and Alvinza Hayward, a San Francisco mining tycoon, formed a corporation and purchased 720 acres of land from George Cross, a Saratoga pioneer, for \$2,000 in 1865.

Mills and Hayward bottled the water and marketed it for its "medicinal qualities and invigorating flavor."

To finance building a hotel with a long veranda and cottages, the owners sold stock. Mills and Hayward built themselves palatial summer cottages with the intention of using the property as a private resort, but settled on the idea of a public resort.

Take your choice: Riding, walking, hunting, fishing and, of course, the waters were yours to drink or bathe. The waters were positioned as a cure-all.

In 1872, Lewis P. Sage and his son, Louis A. Sage, bought the entire resort for \$15,000. Under their management, the resort obtained its greatest popularity.

Their dairy, orchard and vineyard furnished milk, butter, fruit and wine for the hotel's table.

In 1881, the 14-room Congress Hotel was expanded.



The resort was advertised as easily accessible for railroad travelers and only six miles from Los Gatos and about 12 miles from San Jose. Stages connected railroad travelers with the Springs.

Sage advertised the baths, now called Pacific Congress Springs, as "efficacious in cutaneous diseases and rheumatic afflictions. The waters, similar to Congress Springs, NY, are tonic, purgative, diuretic alternatives." In short, a cure-all for man's diseases and afflictions.

Old timers recalled picnics at the Springs and bringing along sugar and lemons to mix with the spring water, which "fizzed up."

Come to the presentation and find out more! Sanders and Brookman have written a book on the Pacific Congress Springs and will let us know the availability date.

## Special Presentations at the Blossom Festival, March 19

Come listen to these special history presentations that will take place in the Warner Hutton house:

12:00 Historian Darlene Thorne will give a presentation on the Valley of Heart's Delight using postcard images

1:30 The Fruit Cocktail Club will show a film of the Santa Clara Valley and the Saratoga Blossom Festival

3:00 Historian Jean Libby will give a presentation of Mary Day, Abolitionist John Brown's wife who once lived in Saratoga.

## How Rodoni Court Got its Name



It is believed that Rodoni Court was named after pioneer John Rodoni.

His parents, Alexander and Sarah Rodoni had 11 children with John being the

oldest. Alexander had been born in the Alps region of Switzerland and came to San Francisco when he was a teenager. He became a miner in Eldorado and Placer counties for many years. Later he moved to Mountain View and then to Saratoga. He was one of the organizers of Booker school district and helped build the school. He was a well-educated man and could read and write in five different languages.

John, along with his siblings, went to school in Mountain View and Booker. After graduation he became an independent teamster and then worked for Hubbard and Carmichael. It was during this time he hauled the largest load of lumber on two wagons over to San Jose pulled over the mountains with seven horses. The load contained 18,250 feet of lumber.

He met Estella Nickell on the schoolground and used to push her in a swing. The childhood sweethearts married on April 9, 1898 and had three children: Willis, Lloyd, and Rita.

In 1906 he quit teaming and began general contracting, road building, cement and concrete work. He had an office and home on Fourth Street at Big Basin Way.

### 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

Recording Secretary, Open position

Yuchi Wang, Treasurer

### Newsletter

The Saratoga Historical Foundation newsletter is produced 6X a year. If you have comments or suggestions, e-mail: [annette@saratogahistory.com](mailto:annette@saratogahistory.com)  
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>.

He built the Hogg building and several commercial buildings in the Village—designing and drawing his own building plans. He also built residential homes including Luther Cunningham's famous stone house on Saratoga Avenue.

He was one of the first contractors in the West Valley to own a road grader.

He owned a 120 acre farm in Santa Cruz. His wife had a cotton candy concession on the Santa Cruz boardwalk during the summer!

Civic minded, John Rodoni was also a long time volunteer firefighter. The bell used to call the firefighters was once located in his yard. He later donated the 600 pound bell to the Saratoga fire station where it resides today.

John Rodoni died on April 28, 1948 and is buried in Madronia cemetery.



### Thank you!

A big thank you to Saratogan John Che and his wife, Pei Fang for a donation of \$10,000 towards the building of the blacksmith exhibit. The Saratoga Historical Foundation appreciates his generosity to the community and the Foundation. And thank you to Moe Baniani, who connected the foundation with John. Fundraising for the blacksmith exhibit will continue until we meet our goal. It is expected that building can begin in the 2017 timeframe.



## Calendar at a Glance

<b>Feb. 12</b>	Exhibit covers
<b>- June 26</b>	Sanborn Park and its Pioneers
<b>March 19</b>	Blossom Festival March 23
<b>Membership Program: Pacific</b>	
	Congress Springs by Ian Sanders and Michael Brookman. Author Tobin Gilman will bring, In a Bottle books for purchase and Congress Springs bottles to see
<b>April 10</b>	Reception
<b>May 22</b>	Honoring Saratogans- Save the date!
<b>May 25</b>	Membership program: Flash-How Silicon Valley Provided the Foundation for Mobile Computing
<b>August 13</b>	Fund raiser: estate sale at the Museum—donate your stuff!



Three poet laureates and one poet will be giving a poetry reading as part of the Blossom Festival, March 19. The poetry reading will begin at 11 AM in the Warner Hutton House (13777 Fruitvale Avenue). Saratogan Mary Lou Taylor, long time resident, poet and published author has written this special poem just for the event:

### The Valley of Heart's Delight

*"From the vantage of lush hills  
Santa Clara Valley unveils fields  
of yellow mustard in wild disarray  
between row upon row  
of pale pink cherry blossoms.  
Plum trees offer the first whisper  
of spring, the valley bursting  
with delicate, fruity scents.*

*A drought ended, brought on the first celebration, the first Blossom Festival, invitations to view the blossoming. Hundreds responded. Invitations are out again forty years later for this true celebration—music, vintage cars, food, arts and crafts, poetry—and memories of a peach, pink, and white world."*

### Photo shown taken from Bohlman Road in Saratoga.



**See article on the cover of this newsletter. Hope to see you at the meeting!**

### Reception on April 10

Join us on April 10 at 1 PM for light refreshments and to see the exhibit, Pioneers of the Santa Cruz Mountains and Sanborn Park at 1:00 PM. The museum is located at 20450 Saratoga-Los Gatos Road in Saratoga.



### Foundation for Mobile Computing on May 25

Two Saratogans will share their views on the mobile computing revolution. Join us on May 25 when Brian Berg will describe Silicon Valley history that led to flash memory's enabling the mobile computing revolution. He will also interview SanDisk founder Dr. Eli Harari. The presentation will begin at 7:30—potluck at 6:30 PM at the Foothill Club at 20399 Park Place in Saratoga, CA.

## Florence Cunningham-- Historian

“Much of the graceful and pleasant atmosphere of the city (Saratoga) is due to its lovely trees and picturesque roadways,” said Florence Cunningham.



Cunningham, unofficial historian, had a life-long passion for Saratoga and California history. She is responsible for writing and documenting the first hundred years of Saratoga in a book; for Saratoga becoming California

Landmark #435—the only city in California to become a landmark; for being one of the founders of the Saratoga Historical Foundation and for providing the seed money for the Saratoga museum.

Cunningham was born in Suisin Valley, California on December 31, 1880 to Amanda and Ebenezer (EM) Cunningham. The family moved to Saratoga in 1881 where they lived on Saratoga Avenue on a fruit ranch. Cunningham could trace four great grandparents who crossed the plains starting in 1848 to come to California. Her father also crossed the plains to get to California.

Cunningham’s brother, Charles was born in 1885 in Saratoga in the family home on Saratoga Avenue. He is noted for writing an unpublished history of the Madronia cemetery.

She was educated at Saratoga School on Oak Street and at San Jose Normal College where she graduated in 1901. Today women have many opportunities for employment. In the 1900s women were teachers,



dressmakers, nurses or went into domestic service. Cunningham taught school for many years—including a one-room schoolhouse near Castlerock where she taught all grades to a class of 35. She also taught at Saratoga School on

Oak Street and school in the gold country in Jacksonville.

In 1915 she took a correspondence course from the American School of Home Economics in Chicago, IL. The class was advertised for homemakers, professional courses for teachers, dietitians, institution managers,

nurses, and caterers. The course covered food, health, housekeeping, clothing and childcare.

Cunningham kept notebooks documenting the wildlife and plants while covering her travels to the Sierras, Yellowstone and the western United States from 1920-1924. She saved Saratoga memorabilia with the dream of opening a history museum.

### *History and Landmark Committee-the Beginning*

Cunningham was an early member of the Saratoga Foothill Club and started the History and Landmark Committee in 1938. She served on the committee for almost thirty years and is credited with preserving many of the records of the Foothill Club’s history.

Cunningham gained knowledge of Saratoga’s history by studying the Frank Farwell diaries, deeds, newspaper files, and other records.

“It’s as exciting as a whodunit,” she was quoted in an interview. “You get a little clue and work on it. You may come up against a blank wall on that, but get some information that starts you off on a new trail.”

She wrote a series of articles for the local newspaper in 1948 called, Our First Hundred Years that became the basis of a book by the same title. Her health was poor and Frances Fox was asked to edit the book which was published after her death. She also wrote a book about Abolitionist John Brown called After Harper’s Ferry. She began to research and write extensively about local history—responding to queries in the public regarding local history. She was a popular speaker about local history at PTA meetings and in schools.



Cunningham, along with 15-year old Saratogan William Abeloe, was instrumental in getting the town of Saratoga declared California landmark #435 (the area believed to be Oak Street and Big Basin Way). The plaque

was placed on the Memorial Arch on March 25, 1950 to commemorate when Juan Bautista de Anza came through in 1776. Abeloe would also go on to write many books and articles about local history and become a leading local historian.

The 1960’s appeared to be a time when many local history organizations were founded including Mountain View, Cupertino, Campbell and others. She started a history club that met at her house for a few years until the Saratoga Historical Foundation was formed in 1960—one of the first local history organizations in the area.

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She was a founding member of the organization. Although her passion sparked interest in history in both the Foothill Club and the Saratoga Historical Foundation, she was a modest woman and preferred to stay with researching and writing rather than pursue a leading role in either organization.

Cunningham was an active member of the Pioneer Society of California as well as enjoyed historical tours produced by the San Jose Adult Center.

She died on May 31, 1960 after a short illness at the age of 84. She remained single all her life and left money in her estate towards the founding of a museum as well as donated items to be put in the museum. Many of the books on history that she had collected during her lifetime were given to the Saratoga library.

## Reverend William Abeloe— Saving Souls and History

William Nicholas Abeloe was able to combine his love of California history with his faith in his short lifetime.

He was born in Oakland, California on May 24, 1933 and grew up in Saratoga. He attended Bellarmine and at the age of 15 began petitioning the State Department of Natural Resources for official recognition of such sites as the town of Saratoga, El Pueblo de San Jose de Guadalupe and Louis Pellier's City Gardens Nursery.

He graduated from the University of Santa Clara and



St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park where he obtained his AB in philosophy.

He was ordained to the priesthood in 1959 and served as

pastor in several churches.

He is known best, however, for his interest in historical landmarks of California which first began as a hobby and later blossomed into a professional avocation. Considered an authority on the subject, he wrote four books and was a popular speaker on many topics.

He authored *To the Top of the Mountain*, *St. Anthony's Church Yesterday and Today*, *St. Leander's from 1864-1964*, *Historic Spots in California* (with Hoover, Rensch and Rensch) and *St. John's Golden Jubilee Album*.

*Historic Spots* is the bible for California history buffs as it takes California county by county and provides complete history based on existent historic sites. His brother helped photograph many of those sites.

During his lifetime he was a regional vice-president of the California Heritage Council; a recipient of the Exalted Order of the Grizzly; a member of the Board of Directors of the Contra Costa County Historical Society; an active member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and was listed in *Who's Who in Religion*.

He passed away on October 9, 1982 at the age of 49. Prior to his death, he was supervising the \$1.5 million restoration of Mission San Jose, the oldest building in Alameda County.

## New SHF Correspondence Secretary



Lynette Breed is the new correspondence secretary for the Saratoga Historical Foundation board of directors.

A native of San Francisco, Lynette has history in her blood with her mother's side of California pioneer families and father's traveling and Missouri and Kansas settler families. She married into the Allen Breed family of Breed's Hill, Boston and Saratoga fame. Her late mother-

in-law, Becky, re-sparked Lynette's interest in history. Lynette has been working on tracing the family's tree.

## Congratulations Saratoga Historical Foundation!

The Saratoga Historical Foundation was awarded a



certificate of appreciation by Mayor Manny Cappello along with several other organizations during the "state of the city" address on February 27. The foundation was recognized for dedicated service to the city of Saratoga.

Also recognized was Annette Stransky, president

of the Saratoga Historical Foundation, as Citizen of the Year. Mayor Cappello presented her with a commendation for outstanding service to Saratoga, commitment to volunteerism, and extensive involvement in community activities. Congresswoman Anna Eschoo also awarded a certificate of special recognition for outstanding and invaluable service to the community. Stransky has been active as a volunteer in the Saratoga Historical Foundation, Blossom Festival Coordinator, BookGoRound, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Committee as well as in other organizations. She also serves on the Heritage Preservation Commission.

## 2016 Blossom Festival for March 19— Free Fun for the Family

The Blossom Festival opens March 19 from 10-4 PM and is held in the blossoming Saratoga Heritage Orchard and Civic Center. Produced by the Saratoga Historical Foundation, the event is free and includes live music, vintage cars, crafts, art, history, poetry and more.

### *Live Music all Day*

Mayor Manny Cappello will emcee the entertainment. Led by Aki Okuno, the Saratoga Taiko Drum group will open the festival with several drum and dance numbers. Dolce Musica provides a mix of Motown, pop; Toot Sweet, a Dixieland jazz band, evokes the sounds of New Orleans and Cayuga Station will provide toe tapping blue grass music. A variety of bands including the Celtic Harmony Band, LeeAnn Welch Fiddlers, and more will be on hand to provide ambiance.

### *Interesting Presentations in the Warner Hutton House*

Historian Darlene Thorne will give a presentation on the Valley of Heart's Delight at 12; the Fruit Cocktail Club will show old time films of Santa Clara Valley including some of the Saratoga Blossom Festival at 1:30 and Historian Jean Libby will talk about Mary Brown, wife of Abolitionist John Brown at 3:00 PM. Mary Brown lived in Saratoga and is buried in Madronia cemetery.

### *Antique Cars and More*

Greater South Bay Chapter; the Santa Clara Valley Model A Ford Club and the Santa Clara Valley Model T Ford Club and independent antique car owners will showcase their cars. The early Day Gas Engine and Tractor Association will also provide an assortment of old time engines and farm equipment.



### *Learn About Local History*

Take a docent-led history walk through the Heritage Orchard; buy a local history book; look at aerial photos of Saratoga yesteryear and see the old time Blossom Festival photo display. A special display on the history of Saratoga incorporation and celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday will also be on display. San Lorenzo Museum, California Pioneers of Santa Clara Valley and Cupertino History Museum will have displays. Authors Tim Stanley, Last of the Prunepickers; Jean Libby, author of John Brown; Krista Van Laan, author of Frank Delos Wolfe California Prairie Architecture; and Janet Schwind, author of South Skyline Story will be on hand to autograph and sell books.



### *Crafts and More Crafts*

Local artisans will be selling lavender sachet, hand crafted pillows and straw art items, pottery, bags, silk scarves, jewelry, vintage button

jewelry, aprons and hand crafted olive oil and Balsamic vinegar.

### *Children's Activities!*

Children and adults can choose to enjoy a wide range of activities including gardening, straw art, face painting, origami, straw figure making, bee hive creating and flower plate making. The Saratoga Library has a special story hour each hour in the Warner Hutton House. And the petting zoo will have a wide variety of baby animals. The Cub Scouts and Girls Scouts will have several activities for children to enjoy.



### *Local Art on Display*

Artists from local art organizations will display and sell favorite paintings, cards and other items. Organizations participating include Saratoga Community of Painters, Saratoga Contemporary Artists and Los Gatos Art Association En Plein Air, and Santa Clara Valley Water Color Art Association.

### *Poets*

Former Poet Laureates Parthenia Hicks, Dave Denny, Nils Peterson, and Saratoga poet Mary Lou Taylor will hold original poetry readings and will be selling some of their books from 11-12 PM in the Warner Hutton House.



## **Many Organizations Participating in the Blossom Festival**

Many organizations will have informative displays



including the Santa Clara Valley Beekeeper Guild, Master Gardeners, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space, Japanese American Museum, Hakone Gardens, Science and Nature, West Valley Clean Water, CERT, BookGoRound and Youth Science Institute. Local organizations such as the Saratoga Rotary, American Association of University Women, West Valley Kiwanis, Saratoga Lions, Silicon Valley Shakespeare, Sister City, Boys Charity Team, Peninsula Youth Theatre, Parks and Recreation Commission, Girl Scout troops, America in Bloom, Saratoga Amateur Radio Association and the City of Saratoga.

### **Gourmet Food Trucks**

A wide selection of gourmet food trucks will be on hand near the music. Tables and chairs are also available for enjoying a meal and enjoying the day.

### **Saratoga Historical Figures**

Saratoga has always been a city with talented artists, writers, community leaders, and more. Over



20 costumed historical characters representing those areas will be on hand to tell you their story. Got a

question for Charles Blaney (hint he was responsible for our roads as the first highway commissioner) or Bella Blaney, a suffragette. Or maybe Sarah Brown, daughter of abolitionist John Brown. Or how about Sunshine Williams who originated the idea for the Blossom Festival? Bring a camera and have your picture taken or come with a question or two and test their mettle!

### **More Information**

For specific times for events, please go up to [www.saratogahistory.com](http://www.saratogahistory.com) or call 408-867-4311.

### **Thank you!**

A special thank you to the many participants who have helped make this day extraordinary. Thank you Chuck Schoppe for rallying the antique cars; Jane Asher, organizing the food trucks; Laurel Perusa, the Saratoga historical figures; Cathie Thermond, the Rotary volunteers; Kathy Pulley and Ray Froess, volunteers of the Church of Jesus Christ and LDS; Shinku Sharma, Interact Club volunteers; Boys Charity Team; and National Charity League; Saratoga Historical Foundation volunteers; and Annette Stransky, Blossom Festival Coordinator.

### **Let's Walk and Learn About History!**

Helen Connolly has joined the Walking Tour team and recently took a troop of Cub Scouts around the Village



on a walking tour--- of course they brought their siblings, and a few adults. Connolly tailors the tour to the age of the group. Helen said "I gave each Scout a map to see

where the Spanish explorers and Irish settlers came from, and then to find out where their ancestors came from to get to Saratoga - that made a big impression!" Only \$3.00 per person and a great way to burn off calories. Call 408-867-4311 to reserve a walking tour on the day of your choice!

### **AmazonSmile Makes the Saratoga Historical Foundation Smile**

The Saratoga Historical Foundation is now on the AmazonSmile list. Visit [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) when you want to purchase an item from Amazon.com. Select the Saratoga Historical Foundation as a charity you would like to support and by doing so, .5% of your purchase will be donated to the Saratoga Historical Foundation.



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[www.facebook.com/SaratogaHistorical Foundation](https://www.facebook.com/SaratogaHistoricalFoundation)

**Donate Kitchen Tools to the McWilliams House**

The McWilliams House Committee is seeking kitchen tools to outfit the McWilliams House. The hardworking committee recently completed the laundryroom.



Some of the items sought include: mixing bowls of various sizes, wooden salt box to hang up, earthenware pan for baking bread, juicer, candle snuffer, extinguisher, scrubbing brush, tea kettle, flour dredger, salt and

pepper boxes, 12 patty pans, pie pan, apple roaster, bread box, cake box, cheese box, spice mill, coffee toaster, funnel, pint, quart, gallon measure, gravy strainer, bread board, stew pan, bread toaster, potato peeler, fruit pitter, every day dishes (enough for 6), drinking glasses (enough for 6), mugs (4 or more), 3 wooden

spoons, serving spoons, and measuring spoons Keep in mind these items should be in the 1860-1880 era.

The McWilliams House is located in the Saratoga Historical Park next to the museum. It is one of the oldest homes in Saratoga. The 1860s pioneer cottage is open to the public on weekends and used by the education docents to teach pioneer living.

**Membership Renewal Letters**



A second and final round of membership renewal letters will be sent during the month of March. Your membership helps the Saratoga Historical Foundation fund programs and events. Don't let your membership lapse! And if you like our activities, please renew at a higher level.

