



Saratoga Historical Foundation

PO Box 172, Saratoga CA 95071

March 2019

Lectures, Blossoms, Aprons and More!! New Membership Drive Join in the fun!

Hum Along and Hear About the History of the Barbershop Quartet



The Saratoga Historical Foundation is hosting the Metro Gnomes barbershop quartet on March 26. The Metro Gnomes will take you on a journey through the world of close harmony to explain and demonstrate this art form, with wax-cylinder sound recordings, videos, and live performances. Learn how barbershop quartets helped to sell early phonographs, and of the nationwide radio broadcast of the 1939 New York barbershop singing contest. Hear how, through careful blending, four voices can sound like many times that number.

Time and Place

The lecture will begin at 7:30 PM and take place at the Saratoga Foothill Club located at 20399 Park Place

in Saratoga. The lecture is free for Saratoga Historical Foundation members and \$5.00 for nonmembers. For more information go up to www.saratogahistory.com or call 408-867-4311—no reservation needed.

Tasty Potluck

Come at 6:30 PM if you choose to participate in the potluck and bring food to share, your own utensils, plates, and beverage of choice. SHF will provide coffee and tea. The presentation starts at 7:30 PM.

Get Ready

The event takes place at the Saratoga Foothill Club located at 20399 Park Place in Saratoga. Join us!

Blossom Festival April 13

Join us as we recall the days of the Valley of Hearts Delight on April 13 from 10-4 in the Heritage Orchard and Civic Center. The orchard will be in full bloom and is a treasured reminder of the importance that agriculture once played in our history.



The Saratoga Link to the California Bells on El Camino Real

Longtime Saratoga resident John Kolstad is a man on a mission. He has spent the last nineteen years working to preserve the familiar Mission Bell Markers that have graced California's historic El Camino Real for the last century.

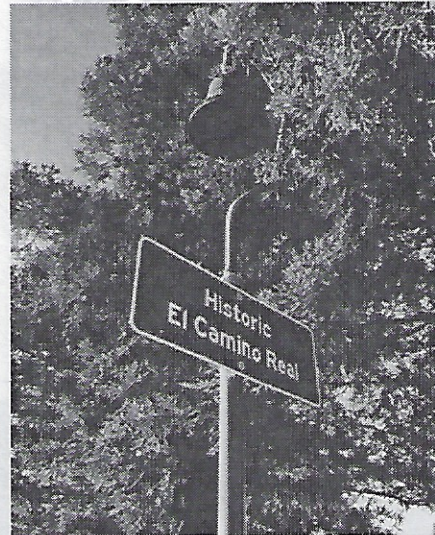
The original bells were designed by Mrs. A. S. C. Forbes in the early twentieth century, to mark the seven hundred-mile route traveled by the first Spanish-speaking immigrants to California. The poles recall the shape of the shepherd's staffs carried by some of the wayfarers, with each pole topped by an eighty-five-pound, cast-iron bell—evocative of the California missions. The original ones had directional signs on them and mileage to the next city. Installed in 1906, and paid for by private interests, they were, for many years, the only roadway signs in California. Mrs. Forbes had to buy her own foundry to forge them and became the sole woman bell-maker in the country. Simple in design and beautiful in execution, many of the markers were lost to theft and construction by the time the state took on their care in 1959.

In the year 2000, Saratoga's Kolstad—owner of Direct Mortgage—began a quest to find just one of the old bells for his garden. He discovered what remained of Mrs. Forbes' California Bell Company in the hands of its third owner, octogenarian Joe Rice, in La

Crescenta. "He had company files and old bells floor-to-ceiling in his garage," said Kolstad. "I made him an offer and bought the company."

Keith Robinson, Principal Landscape Architect for Caltrans, worked with Kolstad to restore the markers and, with the help of federal grants, Caltrans installed 585 new Mission Bell Markers up and down the old El Camino Real—from Sonoma to San Diego—many of them just in time for the signs' 2006 centennial. More were ordered by cities like Gilroy and for individual landmarks. Kolstad forged his bells from Mrs. Forbes' old patterns, uncovered from the jumble in Joe Rice's garage.

As you drive Route 82 on the Peninsula—known locally as "El Camino"—and U.S. 101 throughout the state, see if you can spot them, one-to-two miles apart. Thanks to the help of one Santa Clara Valley man, they stand as graceful reminders of the California story, along our green and golden landscape.



This Mission Bell Marker, nestled beneath a redwood, can be spotted as you drive south on El Camino Real at El Monte Avenue in Mountain View. Photo by Robin Chapman.

contact us

Saratoga Historical Foundation

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

The Saratoga Historical Park is open from 1-4 PM on Fridays and Sundays and from 10-4 PM on Saturdays. For more information, i.e. group tours, you can call 408-867-4311 or e-mail

info@saratogahistory.com or check the website at www.saratogahistory.com. Newsletter suggestions can be sent to the editor at: annette@saratogahistory.com.

Robin Chapman is the author of Historic Bay Area Visionaries and California Apricots: The Lost Orchards of Silicon Valley and this piece was first published in her column "Santa Clara Valley Lives" in the Los Altos Town Crier. She was inspired to write it after hearing John Kolstad's talk at our Saratoga Historical Foundation's January meeting. For more on the California Bell Company, visit www.californiabell.com.

Editor's Note: Two ladies were so inspired they were going to contact Kolstad's website to buy bells for THEIR backyards!!

UPCOMING Events

January-April 28

Apron Strings and Vintage Things exhibit at the museum

March 26

Metro Gnomes, 6:30 PM potluck, 7:30 lecture

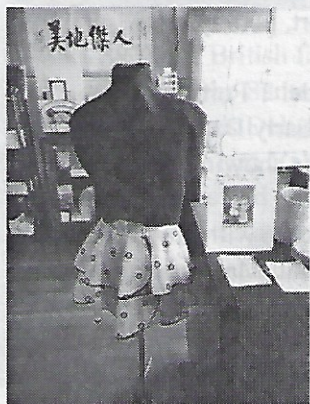
April 13- 10-4 PM

Blossom Festival at the Heritage Orchard and Civic Center- free

May 28

Save the date—the third lecture of our series!!

Apron Stories From the Heart



The new exhibit, “Apron Strings and Vintage Things,” has prompted many people to share their memories of aprons.

One person wrote, “I remember both of my grandmothers wearing aprons whenever we were there for a visit or dinner. This was in San Jose in the late 40’s and 50’s. The

one I remember the most was my dad’s mom. She always had big pockets in her apron and each time my sister and brother visited her she would reach into one of those pockets. What a treat. She would have a Hershey bar for each one of us!”! Thanks. Grandma G.

Docent Jenni Taylor wrote, “Betty Wesson Peck and I baked hearty loaves of bread every Thursday in her kindergarten class at the Saratoga Grammar School on Oak Street for 7 years! (1978-1984). While Nancy Payne taught the children gardening and composting in our play garden and Betty Peck taught singing games and told fairy tales to others, apron-clad boys and girls gathered around the baking table, grinding the wheat berries, barley, millet and rye seeds and kneading and shaping round loaves after watching the

miracle of dry yeast, warm water and honey cause the loaves to rise. We learned about tiny nibbles or the consequences—upset tummies and GAS! We celebrated out in the play garden, crowning the King or Queen of Ecology (hardest workers or gentle Little Teachers) and eating the wholesome bread! “I can taste the rain.. I can taste the labors of the Honey Bee...I can taste the sunshine.”

Bonnie Stone’s Lecture A Big Hit!



Bonnie Stone who loaned the museum her collection of aprons for this exhibit gave an informative lecture on March 16. She told many fascinating apron stories as well as talked about how those stories have influenced her art.

Of course she wore her favorite apron. Not shown but her husband, Lee wore his favorite apron.

A special thanks to Volunteers Jo

Rodgers, Gail Hugger and Arlene Bertellotti for helping with the reception.

Apron Essays

This year’s Cooper-Garrod essay contest had Saratoga fourth and fifth graders writing about “Apron Stories.” Some came to the museum to do some research. Winners received cash for placing 1, 2, 3 in fourth or fifth grade. Thanks to Education Director Linda Hagelin and her judges, Susie Campo, Tina Liddie, and Annette Stransky.



Seventh Annual Blossom Festival Blooms Again in Saratoga

Antique cars, crafts, live music, food trucks and more will provide family fun at the Seventh Annual Blossom Festival on Saturday April 13th. The event will be held in the Heritage Orchard and Civic Center area (13777 Fruitvale Avenue) from 10-4 PM. Produced by the Saratoga Historical Foundation and sponsored by the City of Saratoga, the free event is reminiscent of the original Blossom Festival that debuted in 1900 and was popular for over 40 years.

Highlights include orchard walks led by California



Apricots Author Robin Chapman, reminisces of the orchards of Santa Clara Valley by Deborah Olson of CJ Olson orchards, demonstrations by the Pollinator Posse, and an opportunity to meet the Mad Scientist.

Lively Dixieland music by Toot Sweet, bluegrass by the Muleskinner

Stomp, and many local bands will provide a musical backdrop for the event all day.

Many activities will be available for children



including a petting zoo, story time in the Warner Hutton House sponsored by the Saratoga Library, activity tables organized by Girl Scout Troop 6099, origami folding by Hakone Gardens, face painting by

the Youth Commission, and the Mad Scientist demonstrating how to make slime.



The Pollinator Posse leads a pack of local organizations that will be participating. The Posse, recently featured on television, creates pollinator-friendly landscaping and fosters appreciation of local ecosystems. Other organizations will be offering Children ID information, ecology tips, and more.

Many crafts people will be on hand including the Woodcarvers Society, artists from three local art organizations, jewelry, fiber art, pottery, and glassware.

The Santa Clara Valley Model T Ford, the Santa Clara Model A Ford, and the Early Day Gas Engine and Tractor Association will be showing shiny cars and oldtime motors.

Historical characters in costume will stroll the event from 12-2—you might meet Paul Masson, Sunshine Williams, Sarah Brown and Senator Phelan to mention a few.

The history corridor includes several local history museums and authors of local history books. Authors will be on hand to autograph books including Lisa Newman with her new cookbook "For the Love of Apricots," Glimpses of Saratoga yesteryear can be found in aerial and panorama views of Saratoga on display in the Warner Hutton house.

A variety of food trucks will be available offering tasty food. Tables and chairs will be available to sit and listen to the music. Free parking at West Valley College and free admission.

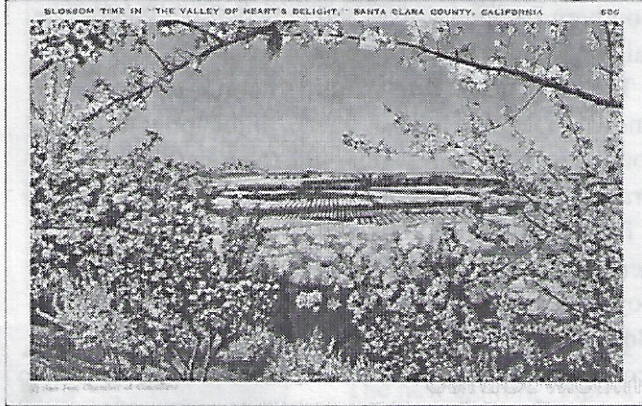
For more information go to www.saratogahistory.com or call 408-867-4311.

The History of the Heritage Orchard

The Heritage Orchard located at 13777 Fruitvale Avenue is rich in history and a symbol of Saratoga's agricultural roots.

The 13.9 acres surrounds the Saratoga Library which was designed to look like a fruit shed.

Vivid yellow mustard and oxalis grow in the orchard—a precursor to spring. The orchard has approximately 1400 apricot, prune and cherry trees.



In the 1890's the British field marshal, Lord Kitchener, visited the Santa Clara Valley and dubbed it The Valley of Heart's Delight. From the late 19th century the Santa Clara Valley was a major fruit growing area. Pears and apricots were grown but the Valley's specialty was a French plum that could be dried into prunes. Santa Clara Valley produced about 30 percent of the prunes of the world. Later it was a major producer of canned tomatoes and cut flowers. At that time fruit producing orchards could be seen from end to end.

Until the 1960s it was the largest fruit producing and packing region in the world with 39 canneries.

In Saratoga, orchards extended up to the Saratoga Village!

The land where the Heritage Orchard sits was originally part of the Mexican Land Grant. In the 1880s the Marion family purchased the property and farmed it until the 1920s. FC Cox grew apricots and prunes for the next 30 years until the Seagrave family acquired the property in the 1950s. The Seagrave family continued to farm the land until 1972 when the City of Saratoga purchased 11.4 acres of land for building the community library. Gradually over the next few years additional acreage was obtained.



Realizing that the orchard was a treasure, in 1984 the City of Saratoga designated the orchard as a heritage landmark. In 1986 the land was renamed Central Park,



Heritage Orchard. It was named Central Park because the park is centrally located within the city.

Saratogan Paul Hagelin designed and built a sign out of redwood for the orchard as part of an Eagle Scout project.



since 1986.

In 2000 the City of Saratoga declared the parcel to be a community orchard in perpetuity. Saratoga joined Sunnyvale and Los Altos in having a heritage orchard. The orchard has been maintained by neighbor Matt Novakovich

Story cont. from page 6

also had as members Superior Judge F.B. Brown of San Jose, Mrs. A.T. Herrmann, prominent San Jose citizen, Prof. A. B. Show of the Stanford University history department, D. T. Bateman, superintendent of county schools, and Rev. Edwin Sidney "Sunshine" Williams, who founded the Saratoga Blossom Festival.

Cabins were built in 1908 and 1910, a large concrete swimming and wading pool fed by spring water trapped in a large reservoir.

Leonard Coates, nurseryman, donated 2800 trees, owing to the fact that the place had previously been cleared of timber.

Theater plans—Bernard Maybeck, who designed the Palace of Fine Arts for the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition at San Francisco, drew plans for a Greek Theater, which was never completed after the interruption wrought by the World War.

Ruins of the unfinished structure are still gathering moss against a hillside which commands a sweeping view of the valley—a fitting headstone for the \$80,000 dollars Mrs. Rice estimates was "buried" on the site in an effort to create there a lasting playground for youth.

During its eventful, 30-year history, the Farm was supported entirely by donations, and money from benefits and lectures by its executive officer.

Then World War and later, the Depression, so affected the sources that today little remains to remind of the project save a faded camp banner, a bronze plaque and an engraved gold ring—cherished keepsakes of Roland Rice, a camp commander and son of the Farm's founder.

And the story of the Boys Outing Farm ended in a delinquent tax sale."

About Edward Liston

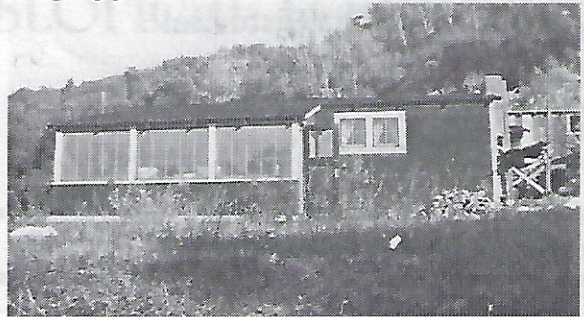
Edward Liston, was a doctor and surgeon and spoke both Spanish and English fluently. He lived in Buenos Aires, Argentina, before arriving in California in 1924. He married Anita Von Husen, November 20, 1927, in San Rafael.

They moved to Palo Alto where they started a family. When the Boy's Outing Farm came up for sale, Dr. Liston bought the property in 1939 to have a place to spend the summer.

He also used the summer home to write a book, *Bowl of Night—an Adventure*, a 246 page story of fiction.

The property had a cabin, a swimming pool and wading pool, the remains of an outdoor amphitheater,

sleeping porch and an outhouse!



The family sold the property to the Boy Scouts after WWII.

Son Jim Liston recalls many wonderful summers spent on the property. He especially remembers being able to look from Bohlman Road and seeing the orchards in bloom.



Caption: Photo taken from Bohlman Road by Photographer Alice Hare (1895-1912).



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Bertha Rice— Champion of Preservation

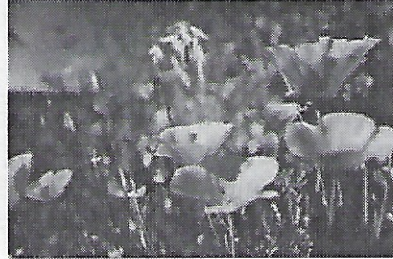
The date, April 24, 1915, was proclaimed California Wild Flower Day, by California Governor Hiram Johnson at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. This was initiated by Bertha Marguerite Rice, (1872-1962).

A dedicated philanthropist, Mrs. Rice was devoted to the preservation of native plants and natural resources. She founded the local Audubon Society; the Santa Clara Historical Society in 1906; the California Wildflower Conservation League in 1919; and the Saratoga Boys Outing Farm. She gave lectures and supervised programs for the protection of wild life throughout her life, championing the movement for National Wild Flower Protection Day.

She also met Suffragette Susan B. Anthony.
Rice wrote several books including "Popular Studies of California Wild Flowers" in 1920; "The Women of Our Valley, Volumes I and II in 1956; and Builders of Our Valley, in 1957.

Willys Peck had fond memories of Rice which he wrote about in one of his columns: "My own memories of Mrs. Rice are, to express it mildly, vivid. This is because she latched on to me at a time when, because of a laryngeal quirk, I was able to imitate birdcalls, a talent that disappeared with the years. But back in the mid-1930s, I was at my reluctant height and Mrs. Rice would include me in presentations she made at schools concerning nature study, wildflowers and bird lore.

As Roland Rice was driving us to one of these schools in their Model T Ford coupe, I remember Mrs. Rice



remarking that she was getting \$5 for the gig. What I got was fame, which was OK with me, only I wished she hadn't kept introducing me as "Willard."