



# Saratoga Historical Foundation

PO Box 172, Saratoga CA 95071

January 2018

## **“Soil Before Silicon: Glimpses of Our Agricultural Past” by the Fruit Cocktail Club on January 24! Calling all Prune Pickers and Cot Cutters!**

### **Start the New Year with a Rollicking Look at the Past**

The Fruit Cocktail Club will take a lighthearted look at films of Saratoga and the Santa Clara Valley when it was known as The Valley of Hearts Delight for our January membership program. The presentation includes clips from the 20s, 40s, and 60s showcasing locally shot orchard footage. These will be woven with some clips from newsreel, documentary, and corporate films over the decades to show the general change from agriculture to technology.

#### **Fruit Cocktail Club**



Members of the Fruit Cocktail Club---Jim Zetterquist, Tim Peddy, Joe Melehan and Bill Foley are ready for a great presentation on January 24. The presentation was created just for the Saratoga Historical Foundation.

The Fruit Cocktail Club provided a wonderful tour down memory lane two years ago covering the canning industry in the Santa Clara Valley. This presentation promises to be memorable. The club is the film preservation arm of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara Valley. The group preserves films donated by private, corporate and civic groups and have a large film archive. The archive has films dating from 1890 to the present.



#### **Audience Participation Encouraged**

The audience is encouraged to share their memories.

#### **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 which is located at 20399 Park Place in Saratoga. It is free for members and a \$5.00 donation is asked for nonmembers. Join us!

# Saratoga Historical Foundation Benefit to be Held at Old Grandview Ranch on May 19

This year's fund raiser is an opportunity to see one of the most unique estates in Northern California, Old Grandview Ranch, nestled in the foothills of Saratoga. The stunning historic estate includes three art galleries, housing one of the largest privately owned art collections in the West, and a 22-acre themed garden, beautifully landscaped with sculptures by internationally renowned artists.

Dr. W. Donald Head has graciously opened his estate for this event.

All monies raised will go towards the Saratoga Historical Foundation operation and projects.

## Wide Range of Art

The event includes the opportunity to see three art galleries showcasing a huge assortment of art spanning different areas: early California paintings, jade, glass, silver, Imari, and Japanese screens. Theodore Wores, an internationally known artist who had a gallery in Saratoga is also included. Items from the collection are frequently shared with museums around the world.

## Interesting Landscaped Gardens

The 22 acre themed gardens feature unique sculptures throughout the estate by many acclaimed artists such as Fletcher Benton, Glenna Goodacre, Ernesto Zuniga and others.



## 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 Friday and Sunday and 10-4 on Saturday. It is located at 20450 Saratoga-Los Gatos Road in Saratoga. Call 408-867-4311 for more information or go up to [www.saratogahistory.com](http://www.saratogahistory.com). For comments or suggestions concerning the newsletter, e-mail the newsletter editor at [annette@saratogahistory.com](mailto:annette@saratogahistory.com).



**Architecture and History**  
The French Normandy chateau was originally built in 1928 by Percy Pike as a summer home and later a permanent home. The home was built

to resemble homes seen after a 1926 tour to Europe. The estate was later bequeathed to Stanford University who in turn sold it in three parcels. Dr. Head purchased the estate in the late 1960s and restored most of the original property over the next 10 years.



The event is chaired by Bob Himel, SHF Fund Development Director.

## How to Attend

Sponsorship starts at \$2500 and includes a reception with refreshments inside Dr. Head's home; brief talk by Dr. Head and tours of the three galleries and gardens.

General admission tickets are \$175 before April 20 and \$200 after. General admission includes light refreshments, tours of the galleries and gardens.

## Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed for help with the event. For volunteer opportunities call 408-867-4311 or send an e-mail to [info@saratogahistory.com](mailto:info@saratogahistory.com).

For information on levels of sponsorship, tickets, go up to [www.saratogahistory.com](http://www.saratogahistory.com); or email [info@saratogahistory.com](mailto:info@saratogahistory.com) or call 408-867-4311. You can also see additional photos of the estate at [www.saratogahistory.com](http://www.saratogahistory.com).

## Upcoming Events

### January 24

6:30 potluck-7:30 film “Soil Before Silicon: Glimpses of Our Agricultural Past” Films --see page 1 for more information.

### February 16

New exhibit: The Ohlone Indians Past and Present at the Saratoga History Museum

### March 24

The Blossom Festival, 10-4 PM at the Civic Center and Heritage Orchard, Free

### March 28

Lecture: “The Peopling of Silicon Valley” by Author Tim Stanley, free membership lecture, Foothill Club

### May 19

Old Grandview Estate Fundraiser, 3-7 PM for sponsors; 4-7 PM for general attendees—see page 2 for more information. Must purchase ticket to attend.

4 PM Friday and Sunday and from 10-4 PM on Saturday.

## Blossom Festival Takes Place March 24



The sixth annual Blossom Festival will take place March 24 from 10-4 PM at the Civic Center and Heritage Orchard. Be sure to stop by this free event and see antique cars, listen to live music, craftspeople and more. The festival is fun for all ages. Volunteers are needed—so please call 408-867-4311 or e-mail [info@saratogahistory.com](mailto:info@saratogahistory.com).

## Holiday Fun Exhibit Ends January 28!

Be sure to stop by the Saratoga History Museum and see



“Holiday Fun”—18 collections from local residents covering comic books, marbles, mermaids, ground hogs and more. The museum is open from 1-4 PM Friday and Sunday and from

10-4 PM on Saturday.

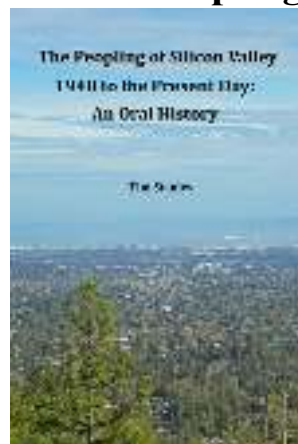
## February 16—New Exhibit at the Saratoga History Museum



“Ohlone Indians Past and Present”, a new exhibit will open February 16 at the Saratoga History Museum. Stop by and see images and artifacts of the Ohlone Indians in this special

exhibit. Admission is free. The museum is open from 1-

## “The Peopling of Silicon Valley”



The Saratoga Historical Foundation will host Author Tim Stanley who will give a presentation based on his new book “The People of Silicon Valley” on March 28 at the Saratoga Foothill Club. The lecture covers the migration of people and high tech companies to the Santa Clara Valley after World War II. Stanley, author of the “Last of the Prune Pickers,”

always delivers a great presentation. Join us on March 28 at the Saratoga Foothill Club—6:30 for potluck and 7:30 PM for the presentation. The Saratoga Foothill Club is located at 20399 Park Place in Saratoga.

## It’s Membership Renewal Time— Don’t Forget

Your membership dues help pay for events and services. Please renew today!!!



## Great Lakes Nursery--- in Saratoga

Steven S. and Sue Jarrett founded the Great Lakes Nursery in Saratoga during the 1930s. The nursery was located on Saratoga Avenue now a residential area.

The nursery derived its name from the miniature ponds on-site in which gold fish were raised. The ponds were made of stone and concrete and were interconnected just like the Great Lakes located in the upper mid-east region of North America on the Canada-US border.



In addition to the 70 varieties of begonias, 200 varieties of succulents and 50 varieties of cactus there were outstanding examples of pelargoniums for sale.

Sue Jarrett made a name for herself by developing over 500 varieties of pelargoniums including one called Joan Fontaine.

Sue was born near Felton and later moved to Watsonville where she graduated from high school. She met and married Stephen Jarrett of Tennessee. They had a restaurant business in Watsonville for several years. Her passion and hobby, however, was hybridizing pelargoniums and it continued for over 35 years.

After selling the restaurant the Jarrett's bought a small ranch outside of Watsonville where they sold fruit and cider and owned the Star Farm Nursery. Here she created the Sue Jarrett pelargonium. It is the first pelargonium to begin blooming, the last to cease and the hardiest.

The Joan Fontaine, named after the famous actress and incidently who grew up in Saratoga, has a large wine red blossom. Another attractive plant was the Jessie Jarrett named for her sister-in-law. One of the most popular was a white pelargonium named Mother's Day. Each petal has a touch of magenta. The bloom was so large it could be worn as a corsage.

After Mrs. Jarrett's husband died in 1937 she carried on the nursery business alone. She became the director of the American Pelargonium Society. Through her work she became a popular speaker and authority on pelargoniums and travelled the state. Orders for her seeds came from around the world.

After she died, her son sold all of the Great Lakes stock to the Leonard Coates Nursery in Morgan Hill in 1954. They had the unique tag line: "We grow everything worthwhile."

**Note:** The Saratoga History Museum would love to have a photo of the original Great Lakes Nursery or additional information about the family or the Joan Fontaine pelargonium. The only plant found with that name online is in England but the blossom coloring is different. If you have information, please e-mail [annette@saratogahistory.com](mailto:annette@saratogahistory.com).

## Volunteer Opportunities



Volunteers are needed for the following projects to help the Saratoga Historical Foundation:

- Typing data into Excel spreadsheets—you can do this at home or at the museum.
- Become a museum docent—meet people interested in Saratoga and Saratoga history. Training is provided. Can you spare three hours a month or become a substitute docent? Our docents say it is an enjoyable experience to give back to the community.
- Become an education docent--- most pioneer living classes for students in grades 2-5 take place during the week. Training is provided and you will be working with congenial people.

If you can help or want to learn more: call 408-867-4311 or e-mail [info@saratogahistory.com](mailto:info@saratogahistory.com). Thank you.

## Shady Oak Glen—in Saratoga



John Shumer retired from mining in Colorado and relocated to Saratoga in 1881 to become a gentleman farmer. He was an active leader in the community, serving on the school board and supporting the Congregational Church. The 49-acre parcel of land that John and his wife Susan bought was north of today's Reid Lane (formerly known as Shumer Road) and directly east of the foot of the Saratoga Hills Road.

The Shumers planted orchards and built a cottage and other buildings. Susan Shumer had a passion for gardening and the weather of Saratoga was perfect for that passion. She hired a gardener named John Shear who swapped cuttings and plants with Sarah Winchester. Sarah Winchester was a wealthy widow of gun magnate William Winchester and had moved to San Jose in 1882.

According to RV Garrod, the Shumer Ranch became one of Saratoga's garden showcases known as Shady Oak Glen. The ranch abounded with shady native oaks and other trees, a riot of blooming flowers and well maintained shrubbery all blended into a picturesque garden.

The land had an interesting history, it was later purchased by the Nelson's who tried to turn it into a garden-park. It was blocked by the city and later turned into a housing development.

### Museum Archive Project

Students attending Foothill College and taking an archive class have been helping the Saratoga History Museum. The students have been labelling and archiving photos donated by the Saratoga News covering the period 1950-1990. The students have archived over 12,000 photos since the program began in 2015. The indexing will help in researching photos for future newsletters, visitor research and for exhibits.

Comments from two students in the program: "I think what we were doing by documenting these photos in an archive is going to help people of the town of Saratoga see what life was like before some of them were even alive. They can see what has changed and what hasn't. They can see what events are being held today that were being held then. They can have an opportunity to see pictures of their grandparents or parents during a time that they wouldn't have otherwise been able to see. But most importantly, it gives people a chance to connect with history."

Another student did additional research and wrote: "I never would have thought that by doing this assignment



I would have gotten to know San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo and his family ancestry. The folder of photos I worked on showed Mayor Jerry Smith photographed with

a young Salvador Liccardo, father to San Jose's own Mayor Sam Liccardo. I saw the name Salvador Liccardo on the back of the photo and immediately wondered if this was a relative of the mayor. A few days later, I did some online research to see if I could prove 100% that Salvador was a family member. According to sanjoseca.gov website I learned that 'where Sam's father also grew up and where Sam's grandparents operated a neighborhood grocery store. Sam descended from the first Mexican settlers in the Bay Area, as well as from Sicilian and Irish immigrants.' This was taken from jointventure.org an online source, 'Liccardo was born in Saratoga, a descendant both of early Spanish explorers and Sicilian immigrants. His mother's ancestors were among the first Mexican settlers in the Bay Area. He is the youngest of five children of San Jose attorney Sal Liccardo and his wife, Laura, a registered nurse. Liccardo's father, now 80 is still active as a product liability lawyer with offices on the Alameda.' I learned a great deal about San Jose's mayor and his close ties to the South Bay. I did not dive any deeper into his ancestry, but this is exactly why we are archiving the photos."

## The Blossom Festival—the Book

Lawrence Coates, author of several novels about the Santa Clara Valley wrote the book, “The Blossom Festival” in 1999.

According to Coates, “This novel came from the



family stories that I heard when I was young. My mother’s family was from Saratoga, California, the home of The Blossom Festival. During the years she was growing up, the

Santa Clara Valley was home to one of the richest fruit growing regions in the world. In the springtime, millions of fruit trees blossomed across the valley, and visitors came from around the state to see the sights and enjoy the festivities.

### Family ties

My grandmother lived on Oak Street in Saratoga, and I visited there many times when I was growing up. By then, in the fifties and sixties, the orchards were being replaced at a rapid pace by subdivisions, and the Santa Clara Valley, once known as the Valley of Heart’s Delight, was on the way to becoming Silicon Valley. I heard my mother and my aunts talk about cutting apricots or picking prunes every year to earn money for school clothes, but those days seemed already in the distant past. The only time I ever worked in an orchard was once picking walnuts at my uncle’s walnut ranch near Gilroy. I don’t think I filled very many boxes.

My grandmother had passed away by the time I thought about writing a novel set during the times of the great orchards, but I found that a lot of people in Saratoga still remembered her and my grandfather, and that opened some doors for me. My grandfather, Bert Bertelsen, was the village blacksmith in Saratoga, and everyone in town would have had reason to visit the blacksmith’s shop in those days.

### Researching

Many people were generous, and were willing to share their time and their stories with me. Willys Peck, especially, was an invaluable source for stories about old Saratoga, and Betsy McClendon, who had danced at the Blossom Festival, happily spent an afternoon with me

and two other dancers, Sheila Stanfield Heid and Peggy Stanfield Stuart, reminiscing about their dance teachers.

### The Valley of Hearts Delight

It would have been easy to write a nostalgic book about those times. When I began doing research, I think I fell under the spell of all those fruit trees. I made it a point to go to the orchards around Yuba City to see a prune orchard in full bloom. And it was easy to fall into imagining living in a place that promised goodness and beauty, a Jeffersonian vision of yeoman farmers actually realized. Unlike the Great Central Valley, the Santa Clara Valley was a valley of small stakeholders. Because it was a region of tree and vine growers, it was actually possible to “climb the farm ladder.” Cases were described of a man saving his sufficient earnings as a laborer in one year to buy a team of horses, sharecropping the next year, and achieving land ownership the next. In the mid-1880s, more than half the farms were in tracts of 400 acres or more, but by 1910, the average size of an improved farm was 50 acres. Another nickname of the Santa Clara Valley then, in addition to “The Valley of Hearts Delight” was “The Poor Man’s Paradise.”

### Celebrating the good

As a novelist, The Blossom Festival, the celebration that seemed to epitomize all that was good about the Santa Clara, especially drew me in. It seemed that I could use that celebration as a way to bring together all that I might want to say. And it would have been very possible to write an elegy for a lost



pastoral space.

A nostalgic book about the Santa Clara Valley would have been of a Paradise Lost, a pastoral space complete and whole and wholly meaningful. What I hope I wrote finally is a book about a valley that is riven by competing desires and contending communities, that contains within it the seeds of its own change while also being part of the larger history of the state and the nation.

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“My original impulse in writing the book was to find the connection between the world of my grandparents and the very different suburban world in which I grew up. I hope readers will also be able to imagine themselves in this place more deeply, and perhaps feel connected in a way that they did not before.”

### About Lawrence Coates

Lawrence Coates grew up in El Cerrito, California. He spent four years as a Quartermaster in the Coast Guard, and four more years in the Merchant Marine, working as an Able-bodied Seaman and Third Mate. During his time at sea, he sailed in the North Atlantic, the Pacific Ocean, and the Indian Ocean, and he served aboard a fleet oiler in the Arabian Sea during the Iranian Hostage Crisis.

He holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of California at Santa Cruz and gained fluency in Spanish while studying abroad in Barcelona, Spain. He also worked for a brief period as a freelance journalist, placing a cover story about the U.S.-Mexican border in the Sunday supplement of *The Chicago Tribune*. After completing a master’s degree at Berkeley, he taught for a year in the Lycée Charlemagne in Paris and then went on to earn his doctorate at the University of Utah.

His first novel, *The Blossom Festival*, won the Western States Book Award for Fiction and was selected for the Barnes and Noble Discover Great New Writers Series. His second novel, *The Master of Monterey*, was published in 2003, and his third novel, *The Garden of the World*, was published in 2012 and won the Nancy Dasher Award from the College English Association of Ohio.

In 2015, he published *The Goodbye House*, a novel set amid the housing tracts of San José in the aftermath of the first dot com bust and the attacks of 9/11. Also in 2015, he published a novella, *Camp Olvido*, set in a labor camp in California’s Great Central Valley. He is currently a professor of creative writing at Bowling Green State University.



He says he will be attending the Blossom Festival this year—be sure to stop by and say “hello.”

## The History of the Blossom Festival

In 1900 Edwin Sidney (Everlasting Sunshine) Williams organized a celebration when the long drought ended



and called it the Blossom Festival. Wanting people to enjoy seeing the orchards in bloom, invitations were issued and hundreds responded. The day was filled with food, games, and a blossom and garden tour. Each succeeding year, the event grew in popularity with 20,000 attending one year. One year the San Francisco symphony provided the entertainment.

Another year ballets were performed. The Blossom Festival ended just before World War II. Williams is known as the “Father of the Blossom Festival.”

The Blossom Festival is unique to Saratoga—it is not an imitation of the Cherry Blossom Festival or any other festival. In fact it was so popular, San Jose started the Fiesta of Roses.

### ES Williams House

The site of ES Williams home is marked with the



following sign, “Sunshine Hill.” Williams used to conduct sunrise services each year during the Blossom Festival.

### Garden on Lutheria Way

An English garden and house on Lutheria Way was once dedicated to ES Williams in commemoration of the Blossom Festival.





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## **In Memory**



Two Saratogans passed away this month: Henry Clarke and Linda Callon. Clarke was a lifetime resident as well as a member of the Saratoga fire department for over 50 years including holding the position of fire chief.

Linda Callon was the first female mayor of Saratoga at a difficult time in its history.

Our condolences to the families.

## **What's New at the Museum?**

A souvenir spoon of Pacific Congress Springs, the largest resort in the West in Saratoga was recently donated. The popular resort was the site of fishing, hunting, and bubbling carbonated water. The water was also bottled and sold throughout the Western states. The spoon is now on display at the Saratoga History Museum.



