

SARATOGA: LIFE IN THE 1950S



1950 – A NEW DECADE FOR SARATOGA



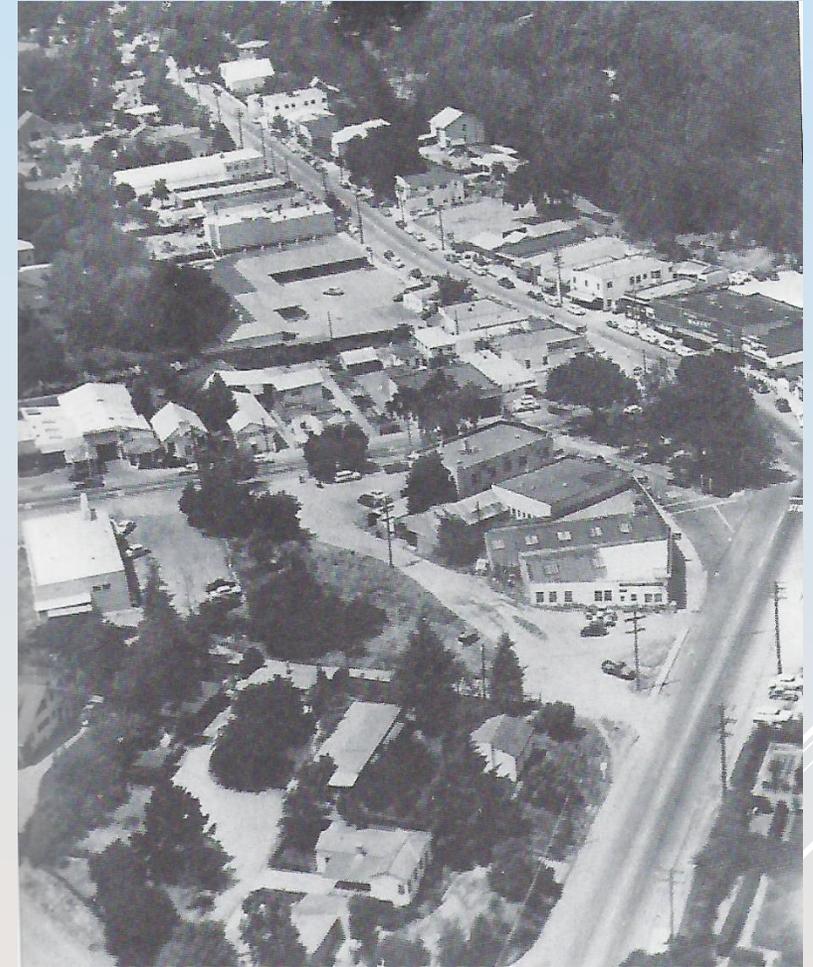
Saratoga began the decade with a celebration of its centennial and dedication of its Registered State Landmark, granting the town statewide historical significance

(the plaque can be found on the Memorial Arch in Blaney Plaza)



Saratoga Orchards

In the early 1950s, a majority of Saratoga was still filled with orchards



Residents voted in 1956 to incorporate, giving birth to the City of Saratoga

SARATOGA RESIDENTS



By the mid 1950s, farms and orchards were being replaced by new housing tracts.

The area experienced a population boom (from 1,329 residents in 1950 to 14,861 by 1960).



Children, children everywhere!

40% of Saratoga's growing population during the 1950s were young baby boomers under the age of 18.

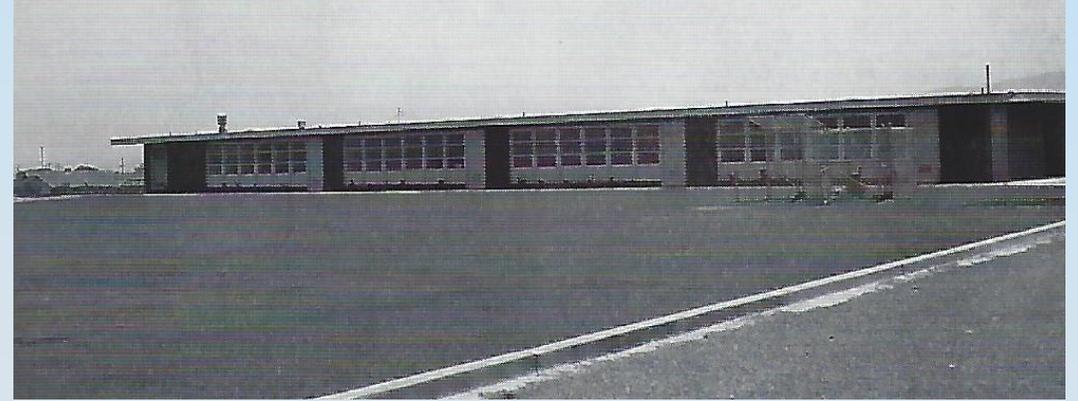


The Saratoga News was always on hand to record major events such as birthdays!



Education

Old schools were expanded and new schools were built to house the growing number of Baby Boomers.



New school - Argonaut Elementary



New school - Saratoga High



After School in the Village

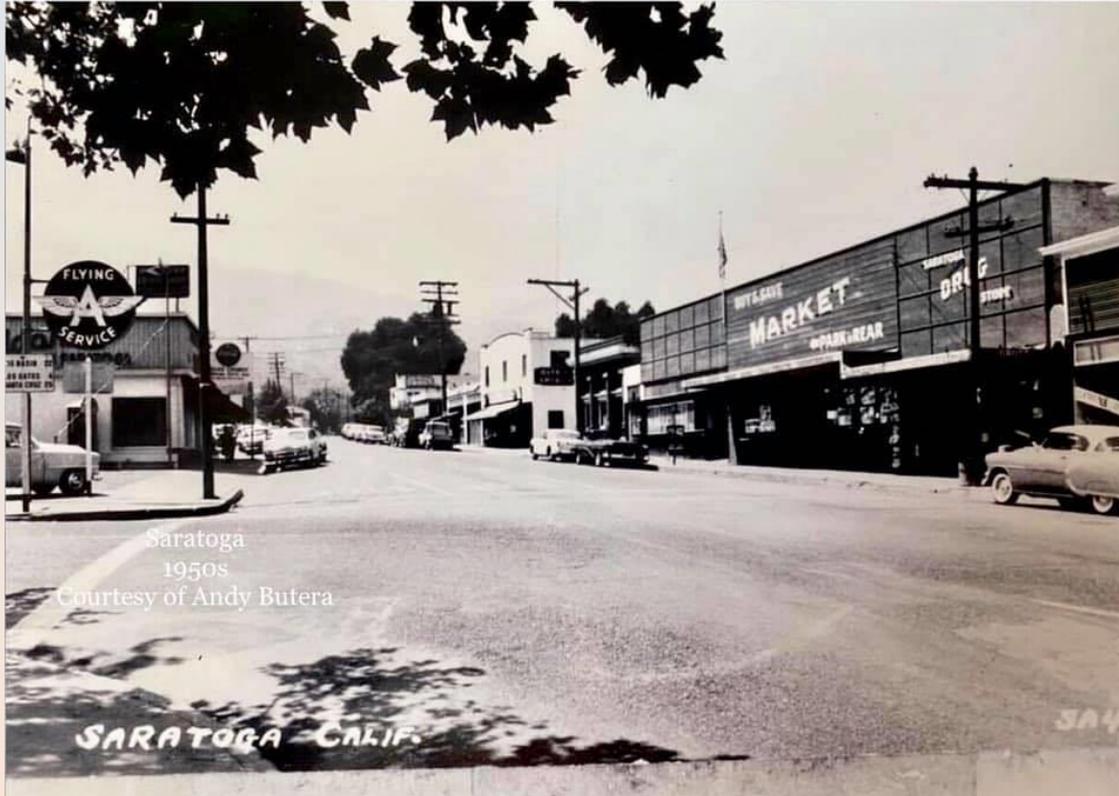
In the 1950s, the Saratoga Library (now the Book-Go-Round) was the perfect place to check out a good book!



The pharmacy on Big Basin Way was the place to go for a shake or a float at the “old fashioned” soda fountain.

Shopping

There were several small grocery stores around town, including the Buy and Save Market, Blue Hills, Quito and Family markets. The closest supermarket was the Safeway in Los Gatos (still there, although remodeled).



Whitlow's Department Store was the place to go for girl and boy Scout uniforms. It was also the area's only department store that sold jeans (men's Levi 501), a farmer's staple and a Baby Boomer's prize possession.

Expanding places of worship

The Catholic Church closed its 1895 church in the Village in 1957, when the Catholic school opened on Saratoga Avenue. The new school also served as the church for three years until the Church Hall was built.



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church was founded in the late 1950s



A booming artist's community

In 1953 the Montalvo Association took over trusteeship of the art center.



Local artists joined the Montalvo faculty and offered art classes for adults and children.



Local artists



Artists held open studios.



The annual Saratoga Rotary Art Show held its first event in the late 1950s.



At the Ruth Rainie Studio Workshop in the Village, local artists created and taught art.



Entertainment in the 1950s

Children often spent their Saturdays watching matinees at the Los Gatos Theater; adults and families enjoyed their nights out at the Quonset hut Saratoga Theater.



By the late 1950s, Saratoga residents could spend a lazy afternoon at the Paul Masson Mountain Winery, having a picnic while listening to some great music, as the winery property evolved into a concert venue.

Play time

In the 1950s, children spent much of their free time outdoors, riding bikes, playing Kick the Can, catching frogs and pollywogs in Saratoga creeks, building forts and horseback riding at the Cryder or Garrod ranches.

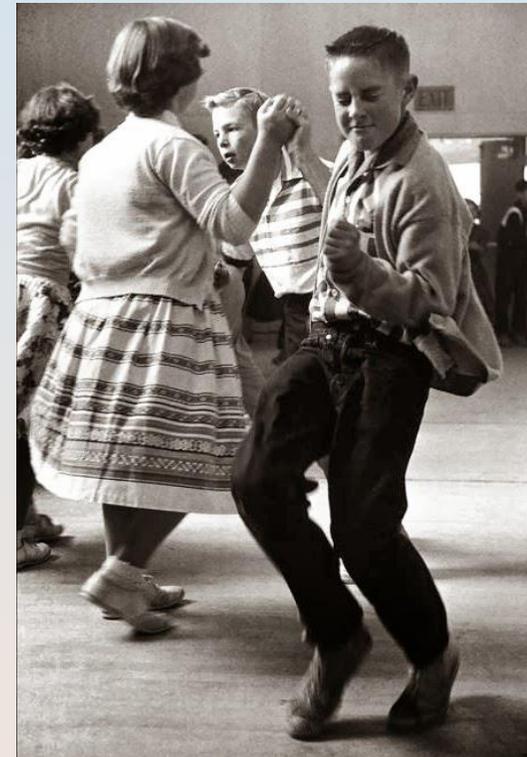


Saratoga Teens

For teens in the 1950s, music took center stage. Dick Clark's American Bandstand was all the rage. Dances were done individually, as couples or in groups.

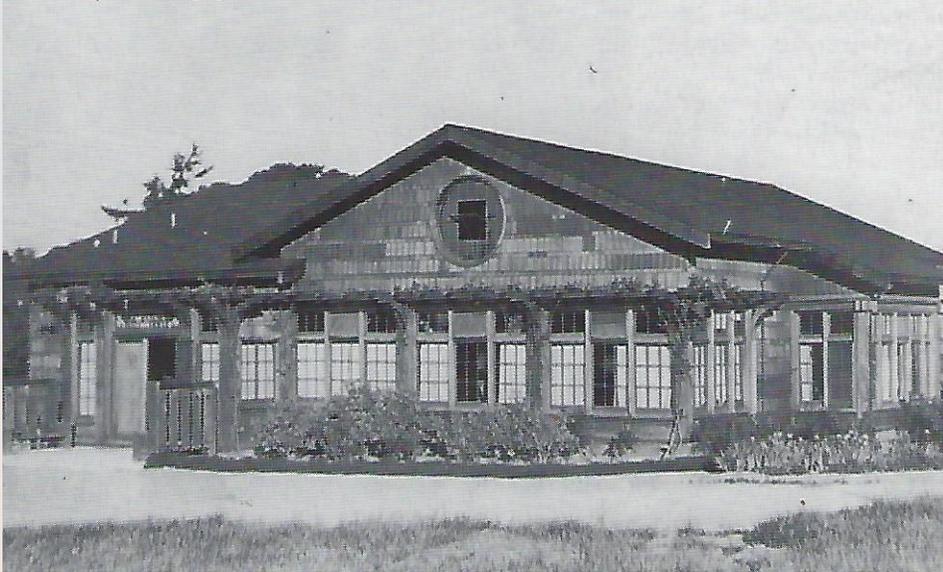


In 1952 there was "The Bunny Hop." Other notable dances included The Bop, Rock'n'Roll dancing and the Stroll.



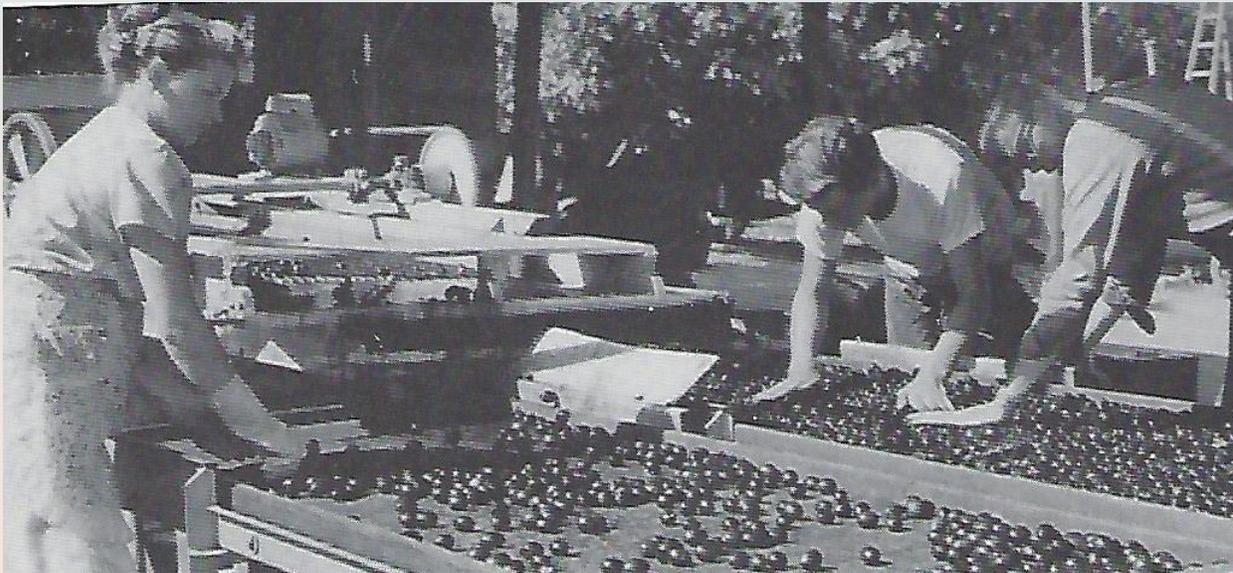
Social clubs for adults

There were an abundance of social clubs for adults during the 1950s, including the Lions, the Optimists, the Odd Fellows, the “Welcome” social groups, the Garden Club, Rotary, Kiwani's, Saratoga Men's Club and the Foothill Club



Life in an Orchard

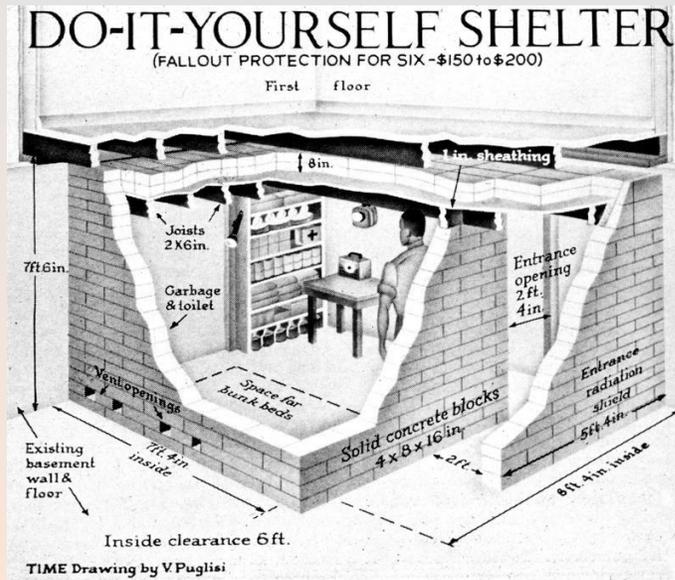
To many residents, Saratoga in the 1950s was still a rural farm town. People strolled through the orchards, artists painted the orchards, some residents worked picking fruit for local orchardists and everyone enjoyed great tasting local fruit.



(painting of Allendale
before West Valley College)

The Cold War

A look at life in the 1950s would not be complete without mention of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, which led to people building bomb shelters in their yards and children practicing "Duck and Cover" drills.



The Cold War also led to an influx of Russian immigrants and the creation of the St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Saratoga.

Saratoga: Life in the 1950s

Do you have a favorite photo to share about your life in Saratoga during the 1950s?

Send us your photo and a short description, by November 15, 2020 for inclusion in this exhibit!

Email: info@saratogahistory.com

