

# Saratoga Historical Foundation

PO Box 172, Saratoga CA 95071 March-July 2020

## Remembering Saratoga's Railroad Connections--- Essay Contest Winner

This year's winner of the George and Louise Cooper Essay Contest was Anya Taneja of Saratoga Elementary school. Anya is in the fifth grade.



Her essay, "The Last Ride on the Saratoga Railroad" was written about the Interurban Railway.

"Ben waited eagerly on the wooden platform for the train to arrive. He remembers racing as the "Big Paly"

trolley with shining wheels of steel slowed to a crawl in front of his eyes. As people around gathered their belongings to board the train, his dream was coming true. "All aboard" yelled the conductor. Ben handed him \$1.65 for him and his grandparents, and they boarded the Peninsular Interurban (PI).

Though Ben had just given his yearly savings, he did not regret it. He was going on his first and last ever ride on the famous PI. The majestic trolley had long rows of wooden seating on each side. People were standing holding on to their briefcases and umbrellas. Ben managed to get a window seat and sat on a wooden bench holding

his grandmother's hand. He heard the grunt of an engine and they were on their way! He peered out the window and looked at the fields, animals, and the automobiles—they seemed to be all over.

Grandfather looked outside and pointed to a red automobile. "That's the future," he began. 'The PI is going away as the automobiles are taking over." Grandfather tried to hide his sadness and went on "The PI had a great run from 1904-1938. The railroad line has connected us with our neighboring towns of Saratoga, helped with travel and trade. And now they find it too expensive to keep the railroad."

Ben was excited about the automobiles, yet he wondered-- would the world be a better place without the PI or would we miss it! He smiled at his grandmother and they both knew that they would remember this day forever to come.

Each year, Education Director Linda Hagelin invites the children from grades fourth through fifth in Saratoga schools to participate in the Louise and George Cooper Essay contest through their schools. Students who are home-schooled in Saratoga may also participate. The contest is sponsored by the Saratoga Historical Foundation. The essay contest was first held in 2017.



# What's Happening At the Museum?

Dear SHF Member:

It has been an interesting year, hasn't it?!!! We had great plans for 2020 but it seems Covid19 had other plans for us.

#### When can I come to the museum?

The Museum has been closed since mid-March due to County health restrictions. We are not alone—all the museums are closed along with retail, restaurants and many businesses.

As you know, small museums, such as ours serve to reflect the community, keep memories of the past alive and assist with researching family and local history. We want to be open! What are you doing!!!!

In this time of social distancing, we are looking at ways to bring you Saratoga history by way of zoom meetings, website and Facebook: www.saratogahistory.com or facebook.com/saratogahistory

### Where's my newsletter?

Our plans are to have a newsletter in July, September and December. We will be providing it in both an electronic version as well as print. The next issue will have a form for you to fill



## 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 Saturday. For more information, i.e. group tours, you can call 408-867-4311 or e-mail <a href="mailto:info@saratogahistory.com">info@saratogahistory.com</a>. Be sure to also check the website at <a href="https://www.saratogahistory.com">www.saratogahistory.com</a> or see us on Facebook at facebook.com/saratogahistory. Newsletter suggestions can be sent to the editor at: <a href="mailto:info@saratogahistory.com">info@saratogahistory.com</a>.

out to choose the format.

### How Long Will This Go On?

We don't know but are trying our best to roll with the punches. We want to deliver local history programs and information to you. Plans for the blacksmith exhibit are under approval at the City. We hope to start work soon. We have renovated the Interurban Stop and had to postpone the ribbon cutting until we can meet in public.

We are all in this together. Shelter-in-place but don't give up. History keeps marching on.

See you soon and stay safe. Annette Stransky, President

# Remembering Olivia deHavilland in Saratoga

Olivia deHavilland won two Best Actress Oscars; was awarded the National Medal of Arts; received the Legion d'Honneur award; and has



the California
Labor Code
Section 2855
also known as
the deHavilland
Decision
named after
her. And she
has been an
inspiration to
Saratoga for
years.

Olivia deHavilland passed away on

July 25 in her home in France. The following are a few unique facts about her.

- Olivia deHavilland and her mother Lilian and sister Joan came to the US when she was 3 years old in 1919.
- They first stayed in San Francisco then moved to the Vendome Hotel in San Jose-- owned by George Fontaine. George would marry Lilian in 1925.

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- Lilian Fontaine moved to Saratoga where they stayed at the Lundblad Lodge on Oak Street in one of the cottages across the street. They lived there while waiting for their home to be built. They would remain life-long friends with owner Hazel Bargas.
- AP Hill, Jr. designed their home on La Paloma Avenue in Saratoga. The Tudor looking home still stands.
- Olivia and sister Joan went to the Hanchett day school on Oak Street. Olivia and her sister Joan had British accents which quickly disappeared after being teased by their classmates.
- Olivia went to Oak Street Grammar School where she was known as a prankster; for using her lovely contralto voice to imitate animals; as editor of the school newspaper; and as an actress.
- She was a Campfire Girl with the nickname Thunderbird.
- She was Saratoga Town Historian Willys Peck's baby sitter.
- She visited Isabelle Stine's Hakone estate frequently with her mother and sister, dressed in kimonos.
- She had fond memories of visiting Villa Montalvo as a child. Her mother Lilian Fontaine, was one of the director's.
- She used to drive to Los Gatos High School with friends where she was a straight A student.
- Had an acting award at Los Gatos High School named after her
- Got her start in acting with Producer Dorothea Johnston in the Theater of the Glade in Saratoga. She starred in the play "Alice in Wonderland". Willys Peck played a duck.
- The following year she was cast as Puck in Midsummer's Night Dream under Johnston's direction.
- With Johnston's encouragement, Olivia met Film Director Max Reinhardt and she was cast for the role of Hermia and soon signed a contract in Hollywood at the age of 18.
- DeHavilland has returned to Saratoga many times—notably in 1978 to help with a Saratoga

Historical Foundation fundraiser. SHF President Willys Peck had a Rolls Royce and driver chauffeur Olivia to Saratoga from the airport.



• In the Saratoga Community Theatre there is a mirror with lights that DeHavilland donated with a wish for successful productions.

- She was known for keeping friendships in Saratoga—including responding to letters from the annual Oak Street Grammar School Reunion, being a member of the Saratoga Historical Foundation and maintaining correspondence with many others.
- She has never forgotten Saratoga nor has Saratoga forgotten her—deHavilland Drive is named after her; a suite at the Inn at Saratoga is named Olivia deHavilland; and memorabilia can be found in the Saratoga History Museum.

For a 15 minute interview by Saratogan Jack Dunstan with Olivia from 1987 go up to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZzNqO1WOmE



In 1988, Olivia deHavilland said, "And in regard to high school students in general, the counsel I gave to the Class of 1988 still holds: Your best friend is your own mind. Take good care of it."

## 75 Years of Pioneering in Antiques

Saratogan Clarence Neale always enjoyed negotiating a bargain. Opening an antique store was a perfect fit.

The Barn was one of the first antique shops in Saratoga and opened in 1945. Originally it opened as a home repair service and used furniture store but quickly changed to selling antiques. At that time the population in Saratoga was approximately 600.



CW Neale was the son of Clarence Esmond Neale (1900-1972) and his wife Jennie (1903-1997). They came to Saratoga from Minnesota. Clarence Esmond Neale supported his family working as a repairperson. They had two children of their own: Clarence Wallace Neale (CW) and Robert James Neale. Later they adopted two of Clarence Esmond Neale's sister's (Dorothy) children when she died at an early age.

#### Clarence W. Neale family

Both CW and Robert Neale went to school in San Jose and later to San Jose High School. Prior to graduation CW Neale enlisted in the Navy. He served on the USS Honolulu and was on the ship when Pearl Harbor was bombed. He served in the Navy for six years, retiring with the rank of Chief Machinist Mate. He earned 9 battle stars in the Atlantic-Pacific campaign during WWII and the entire ship's crew received a Presidential Unit Citation for heroism.

When he returned after the war, the timing was perfect for selling antiques. In those early days, Neale counted among his many treasures, the original land grant issued to Hannah McCarty for McCartyville (Saratoga) and an additional 160 acres of public land near what is now Villa Montalvo. The document signed on May 2, 1870, bears the signature of the President of United States: Ulysses S. Grant.

Other treasures included John Steinbeck's desk from his Monte Sereno home upon which *The Grapes of Wrath* was written. The early Sheriff of Saratoga's original revolver hand guns included a Colt Model 1873 Peacemaker single action army revolver circa 1879 and a Colt Model 1849 percussion revolver circa 1857. One of the guns was used in a shootout on the streets of Saratoga in the late 19th century.

Other special items included an original copy of the newspaper declaring President Abraham Lincoln's assassination.

An original copy of the 1906 San Francisco Call Bulletin newspaper reporting the San Francisco earthquake.

### **Attracted Famous People**

Notable stars such as Joan Fontaine. Olivia deHavilland, John Steinbeck, Jane Powell, Zazu Pitts, Robert Horton and Yehudi Menuhin would stop to shop at The Barn as well as sell items to Neale. Items were amazing, quirky as well as mundane but best of all there so many!

The Barn also featured two donkeys affectionately named Sara and Toga who were always



ready for a photo opportunity. As described in the Feb. 16, 1953 edition of the San Francisco Call-

Bulletin: "Sara is not a perfect lady. She likes to eat cigarettes and chew tobacco, a habit she probably picked up from some old prospector." This was before PETA was formed.

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The structure was originally owned by the McCarty family from which Saratoga got its first name of McCartyville. The building was located at Austin Corners, and was a winery. The winery closed during the Prohibition era and was purchased by Oldham. They moved it to the corner of Oak Street and Saratoga-Los Gatos Road. In about 1900, it was moved to its final location on Highway 9. Bert Bertelsen used the site as a blacksmith shop on Saratoga-Sunnyvale Avenue.

In 1945 CW Neale leased it from the Oldham family for an antique store until its demise in 1964. In 1965 the highway bordering The Barn was widened and the antique store had to be torn down. Neale's Hollow was built across the creek, from where the Barn used to be located.

The state of California refused to give Neale money for his business as compensation under Eminent Domain laws since he was only a renter. The Oldham family refused to settle with the state until the Neale family was compensated. The state had a bulldozer on the property ready to demolish The Barn. Neale sat outside The Barn with a shotgun ready to stop the bulldozer.

The state finally settled with Neale deeding him a three acre plot of land, 15' deep known as "The Hollow", a property located 75 yards away from the original The Barn site, on the northwest side of the Saratoga Creek and Highway 9. The property known as "The Hollow" became known as Neale's Hollow.

It took CW Neale three years to get "the hollow" ready, starting with filling the 15' deep hole with 86,000 yards of dirt to bring it up to the height of the new highway.

According to son Doug, "Once he took ownership of the property, he contacted the construction company being used to build the new highway. My dad generously offered the "The Hollow" to them in exchange for parking if they dumped the excavated dirt and tamped it down each evening. He also promised the foreman a case of whiskey as a thank you gift."

Neale's Hollow came with 86,000 yards of dirt, tamped down and leveled to the height of the highway for the cost of a case of whiskey!



Clarence and Laura had Neale's Hollow designed by an architect as a recreation of an 1850-1870 Village. They travelled all over Montana, Oregon, Washington and parts of California to find the gingerbread façade, hitching post from Santa Cruz city hall and the exterior gas lights used at Neale's Hollow.



CW and his wife Laura had three children: daughter Dianna Espinosa of Saratoga; son Dan Neale of Coos Bay, OR and Doug Neale of Los Gatos, CA. In all, Clarence and Laura Neale had 3 children, 8 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren.

Doug continued with the family business appraising and auctioning antiques from 1974-2016. In 2003 the family tradition was strengthened by Doug's middle son; Austin Neale, becoming the fourth generation family member to run the family business. Currently Neale & Sons, Inc. just celebrated its 75th anniversary of doing business in Saratoga.

### Jim Rosenfeld Found His Cup of "Tea" in Saratoga

"A day without laughter is a day lost," says Jim Rosenfeld, the owner of the building where the popular Big Basin Café is located in Saratoga. His tenant, George Hinastrosa, is a very charming, bright, young man (who bought the lease from his mom Elsa) last year. A big smile and an optimistic attitude is a good summary of Rosenfeld's philosophy. He and his wife Arlene can be frequently seen taking a daily walk around Saratoga and of course, seen inside the Big Basin Café.

Jim Rosenfeld came to Saratoga just after 1945 when his father Ted was a civil servant in the Navy Department in Washington DC. Ted was later based in San Francisco. According to Jim they lived near Golden Gate Park and since it was foggy during the summer they would save gas rations and frequently drive to Saratoga for some sun.

Ted and Rose graduated from George Washington in DC. Rose went to graduate school in NY City and played violin in the Julliard orchestra. Ted studied the piano at Peabody Academy in Baltimore.

Ted and Rose Rosenfeld and their sons Bill, Jim and Richard moved to Saratoga and purchased the building that would become the Saratoga Clef House in 1946. The building was located where the



Big Basin Café is on Big Basin Way today.

This charming 1880 building was constructed by Hannah and her son Daniel McCarty in the 1880's as part of McCartyville. The top portion of the

building was used as residence and the bottom for commercial.

Initially the Saratoga Clef House was a dry goods store but changed merchandising directions and the Saratoga Clef Hose sold sheet music only. The name included a musical clef sign for the letter S. Rosenfeld said, "The name was a pun on The Cliff

House, a popular restaurant in San Francisco."



In 1976 public funding of music in schools was cancelled. The Clef House continued until 1983 when it closed.

At the time they moved to Saratoga, the valley had approximately eight million fruit trees. Rosenfeld recalls that being brought up in Saratoga was very idyllic. Saratoga had about 300 people and people were friendly. It was a time when people could leave home to go shopping and not lock their doors. And the climate was ideal.

It was also the beginning of growth as people returning from the WWII were attracted by job opportunities offered by GE, Lockheed, and Stanford University. And, besides, according to Rosenfeld, "why return home where there's snow when you could enjoy the warmth of California."

During the summer, Jim and his brothers earned money for school by picking up prunes and cutting apricots. He noted that depending on the fruit harvest, school could either open early or late.

He recalls being a Boy Scout and meeting in the basement of the Federated Church. And walking to the Village library on Oak Street which is now called BookGoRound.

A particular fond memory was when his third grade class visited Bruce Poley (he owned the first television set in Saratoga) to see the inauguration of Dwight Eisenhower on January 23, 1953 on television. The size of the screen at that time was about 17 inches in the black and white television set.

Rosenfeld and his two brothers attended Saratoga schools and went on to Los Gatos high school. Continued on page 7.

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Saratoga's high school did not open until fall of 1957. He remembers having Els Welch, WWII veteran as a science teacher at Los Gatos High.

The Village enjoyed a period of time when it was comprised mostly of privately owned "Mom and Pop" shops, according to Rosenfeld. The Purcells owned the Swanee dress shop. Ralph von Arsdale was "Mr. Fixit" both literally and figuratively with his shop. And Tiny Westphal ran the town's printshop. The Whitlows provided Scout uniforms and school essentials. And The Village Creamery, owned by Mickey Clear served up sizzling hamburgers and real ice cream sodas.

A fond memory was going to the popular Saratoga Theater located on Third and Big Basin Way during the 40's. The theater followed a nationwide trend after World War II of using Quonsets to build inexpensive movie theaters. The 485-seat theater was designed by architect A.A. Cantin. Mason Shaw and his wife opened the Saratoga Theater and was successful for over 25 years. Shaw had a passion for classic films and developed a subscription following of 1000's of people. Later owners Pat and Vi Moore changed the name to the Vitaphone.



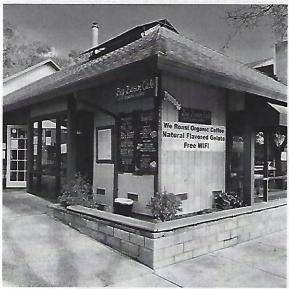
"The first film shown was Born Yesterday with Judy Holliday," said Rosenfeld. "It was an adults-only film. Shaw would talk about each film before showing it. He would also sell snacks-- he probably made more money from selling snacks than the movie tickets! His wife

had boxes of tissues ready in case it was a sad film."

Corinthian Antiques, located where Starbucks is today in the Village was also very successful.

According to Rosenfeld, "Owners Bob Kongsli and Vern Halcomb would go to France periodically and ship a cargo load of exquisite Louis XIV antiques worth over \$250,000 to sell in their Los Gatos and Saratoga stores!"

In 1983 the International Coffee Exchange was built on the site of where the Saratoga Clef House was located.



The coffee shop was one of the first coffee shops in the Village. Designed by Saratoga architect Warren Heid, the coffee shop quickly became the place for friends and neighbors to gather and exchange news. In 1985 the coffee shop changed its name to Big Basin Café.

Acording to Rosenfeld "Saratoga has a great intellectual capacity and the bright and warm weather contributes to its growth."

Arlene and Jim married in 1964 and have two children: son David and wife Jennifer have two children and live in Campbell. Daughter Debra lives in San Matero.

Is the glass half full or half empty?—Rosenfeld says the glass is always full.

In Memorium

Gary Campbell Lee Stone Jack Taylor



## Saratoga Historical Foundation

PO Box 172 Saratoga, CA 95071

Be sure to visit: www.saratogahistory.com or www.facebook.com/saratogahistory

32.3

"She Drove This Road Every Day"



Every day Louise Garrod Cooper (1917-2007) drove Pierce Road past this land on her way home. She was very active in the community. She was

the first PTA President at Foothill Elementary,

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at Fruitvale (now Redwood Middle) School, 1957-58, and Saratoga High School, 1959-60. She also helped organize the Saratoga-Los Gatos PTA District and then served 16 years (1963-79) on the Los Gatos Saratoga Joint Union High School District board, three of them as President. She later became a board member of the West Valley /Mission Colleges Foundation and represented this board on the Olympiad of the Arts committee.

Throughout her life, Louise was involved with the Saratoga Historical Foundation, serving as its president for many years. She was honored as Citizen of the Year by the Saratoga Chamber of Commerce in 1990.

When she passed away in 2007, the city planted a tree in her memory on the route she took each day.

### How Did Pierce Road Get Its Name?

Henry and William Pierce are the first known people by that name to reside on Pierce Road. They came and settled in 1875.