

# Saratoga Historical Foundation

PO Box 172, Saratoga CA 95071 November-December 2020

# Join Us for a Free Presentation on the History of San Francisco's Chinatown--- All From the Comfort of Your Home! Circle the Date of January 10 and Be Sure to Attend!

The Saratoga Historical Foundation and the Organization of Chinese American Women are cosponsoring "From Resilence to Celebration: An In-Depth, Pictorial Journey Inside San Francisco's Beloved Chinatown " on January 10 at 2:00 PM on zoom.

The presentation will be given by Dick Evans, a



noted San
Francisco
photographer
and Kathy Chin
Leong, an
award-winning
journalist. The
presentation
will cover the
history, culture
and traditions
of San
Francisco's

Chinatown and is based on their book, "San Francisco's Chinatown."

Did you know:

Gold Mountain was the Chinese name for San Francisco back in the 1800's. In 1848 two Chinese people arrived -- two years before the famed 49ers arrived for the gold rush and established residency.

San Francisco's Chinatown is the oldest and second largest in North America with over 100,000 people. SF also has the largest and oldest Japantown in the

United States. It's also one of only three Japantown's still that remain in the US.

Chinatown with its interesting architecture has served



as a backdrop for several films including the Maltese Falcon, Big Trouble in Little China and Godzilla!

Author Amy Tan (The Joy Luck Club) grew up here as well as kung fu movie star Bruce Lee.

According to San Francisco restaurateur George Chen, "chop suey, egg foo yung, moo goo gai pan, shrimp in lobster sauce were all invented in Chinatown. Alas the fortune cookie is a US invention!

The annual Chinese New Year Festival and Parade has been held since 1851. It is the oldest and largest event of its kind outside of Asia. Find out more on:

Date: January 10, 2021

Time: 2:00 PM Zoom Meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85857384612

Meeting ID: 859 5738 4612

Passcode: 533462

## What's Happening at the Museum?

As we move toward the end of a tumultuous year we want to thank you for your support.

The museum is closed and is in compliance with the current Santa Clara COVID restrictions. We miss being open to the public and plan to serve the community -- as soon as we can in 2021.

We need your continued support. We recently sent you a membership renewal notice and hope you will continue your monetary support. Funding for programs, exhibits, and the newsletter is generally funded by membership.

Included with this year's renewal notice is a survey.



We are interested in finding out your expectations of membership. Perhaps you would like to receive the newsletter more often or in a different format. Or

maybe you have a favorite speaker or topic for lectures. Or you want some special topics of local history explored. Please let us know your views, complete the survey and return with your renewal!

Unfortunately due to the COVID pandemic it may be some time before we can meet in person for exhibits or lectures. But hang in there with us. As soon as we can, we will be conducting tours and holding lectures in person!



# 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="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>.

You can presently donate money or renew your membership by going up to our website at www.saratogahistory.com. Click on the donation button and fill out the form!

And if you would like to receive the SHF newsletter

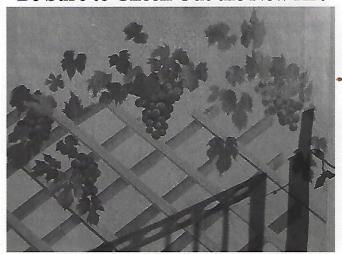


via e-mail-- please let us know your correct e-mail address. Be sure to print or type clearly. Unlike the US postal service which will let us know if your address is wrong and provide the current

address....emails just bounce back. So print carefully.

And don't forget we send out e-blasts to keep you informed of current events. If you are not receiving an e-blast and want to-- go up to www.saratogahistory.com and sign up! You can also see information on our Facebook page: facebook.com/saratogahistory.

#### Be Sure to Check Out the New Art



Thanks to the City of Saratoga and Councilmember Mary-Lynne Bernald and the Public Art Committee you can see a new mural on the outside wall of the Mint Leaf Café at 14420 Big Basin Way. The mural sports a trellis of grapes and was created by Michelle Wei of Saratoga.

Also thanks to the Public Art Committee-- check out the City of Saratoga nutty challenge...six bronze acorns have been hidden throughout the City! Put on your walking shoes, use the clues, and find them all. You can download and print a copy of the clues at: https://www.saratoga.ca.us/475/Nuts-About-Saratoga



#### **Current Exhibit**

Museum is closed until further notice due to the pandemic.

## Things to Do Around Town

Due to the current pandemic many more people can be seen walking around with their dogs or jogging. If you are looking for some ideas for a walk-- read on!



If you are looking for a self-guided tour-- go up to

www.saratogahistory.com and download the walking tour and the garden tour. The walking

tour will cover Oak Street, Big Basin Way and Park Avenue with descriptions of some of Saratoga's historic homes. The garden tour covers the plants growing at the Historical Park located at 20450 Saratoga-Los Gatos

Road.



If you are in the mood to bicycle, take the self-guided bicycle tour which you can download at www.saratogahistory.com.
The tour covers historic

homes in Saratoga. You can

also drive the tour...but then that defeats the purpose of fresh air and exercise!!

If you are interested in learning about the Interurban



Rail-- stop by the Historical Park (20450 Saratoga-Los Gatos Road) and see an original passenger stop that was formerly for the Nippon Mura resort. Next to the stop

there is an audio kiosk and you can hear the history of the Interurban along with the history of Nippon Mura. There is also a map of the original route for the Interurban rail.

If you have young children and want to keep them



busy- - you can download some Pioneer Activity pages that the education docents have prepared. You can also find them at www.saratogahistory.com. A fun

project to do while outside!

Also online at www.saratogahistory.com are the following presentations-- easy to download and watch at your leisure:

- "Looking back at Christmas in the 1950's"
- "Let's Stroll to Saratoga in the 1950's"
- "Remembering Bella Blaney, Suffragist"

#### Take a Roadside Point of Interest Marker Tour!!

The Heritage Preservation Commission has placed six markers over the last two years as part of a program to promote public knowledge and appreciation of sites of cultural interest in Saratoga. One requirement is that the structure, event or place is no longer in existence.





These handsome plaques have been placed at the following locations:

- 1. Corner of Park Place and Saratoga Avenue (Blossom Festival)
- 2. Across the street is a plaque commemorating the Theatre of the Glade
- 3. Big Basin Way and Sixth Street (The Saratoga Paper Mill)
- 4. Big Basin Way and Fifth Street (saluting the wild days of the lumber era and commemorating saloons)
- 5. Wildwood Park near the entrance/creek (Ohlone Indians)
- 6. Wildwood Park near the entrance (Caledonia Paper Mill).

## **Coming to Saratoga**

#### by Lisa Prince Newman

The Santa Clara Valley was filled with "ichs" during my childhood in Saratoga. Within the small city's 12 square miles, many orchard farm family names ended in "ich". I noticed back then but didn't question it, despite my own family name being Prince, and from my mother's side, Gardiner. Our mixed immigrant origins were from Scotland, Ireland, and France who settled in Washington State during the late 1800s and found work in the timber industry, homesteading a dairy farm, and confectioners (on both sides!). By the time our family arrived in the Santa Clara Valley, my father was a doctor. We were "gentleman farmers" living on an orchard property that provided us with an abundance of fruit, beauty, and joy. While our family enjoyed a fruitful rural life in Saratoga, we were not part of the vast enterprise producing the best stone fruit and nut crops in the world.



Yugoslavian immigrants to California (today called Croatians and Serbians), most often with an "ich" ending to their surnames, and many other Southern Europeans began to arrive in

California with the Gold Rush. This immigration wave peaked in 1910 and extended until WWII. Yugoslavians gradually made up a substantial part of the Santa Clara Valley's agricultural fabric. Bronzich, Cristich, Kucich, Matovich, Miletich, Miljevich, Novakovich, Spaich, Stepovich, Yakich, Yelavich and Zicovich were all family farmers in Saratoga who grew French prunes, apricots, cherries, almonds, and walnuts within a few miles of our home. In the greater Santa Clara Valley, there were many other Croatian immigrant farmers, including the Mariani (formerly Mariani-Marianovich), Bonacich, and Mardesich families. These immigrant families helped shape the region's agricultural growth into what became known around the world as The Valley of Heart's Delight.

In 1849, early Croatian settlers in the American East and South left for the goldfields of California. They worked as goldminers, bartenders, saloon keepers, restaurant owners, fruit, liquor and fish suppliers. When mining collapsed, they purchased farmland and were among the pioneers who established vineyards and

orchards. The Slavonian Benevolent American Society of Santa Clara County, organized in 1894, listed the Croatian family names, place of origin, and arrival date.

Jobs were plentiful in the fruit industry, whether as a grower, picker, dryer, canner or shipper. In just four decades after the Gold Rush, Santa Clara County had over 7,000 small family farms that ranged from ten to fifty acres in size. By the 1920's, Santa Clara Valley had more than 8 million fruit trees blossoming each spring with almonds, apricots, cherries, peaches, French prunes, and walnuts, in that order.



Matthew and Mary Novakovich immigrated to California from Serbian Yugoslavia in 1911, and purchased 11 orchard acres on Fruitvale Avenue in Saratoga in 1925 (the narrow red rectangle shown above). They cultivated Blenheim apricots and French prunes. In time, their son George and his wife Leah took over the orchard ranch while George also served as the Fire Captain

for the City of Saratoga. The Novakovich family eventually nearly doubled the size of their ranch and from 1975 onward, managed the 14-acre City of Saratoga's Heritage Orchard up until 2019.

After WWII, the rise of urban development and decline in the Santa Clara Valley's orchard and canning industry nearly ended family farming within a few decades. In 1966, the State of California purchased 143 acres of orchard land through eminent domain to create West Valley Community College in Saratoga. Implementing this regional plan impacted many small orchard farms. The Novakovich family held on to their remaining orchard heritage rather than sell the entire operation and relocate, as so many family farmers did during this era of rapid change.

Today, George and Leah's three sons Matt, George, and Dan continue to manage the orchard business. They sell Royal Blenheim apricots and French prunes year-round, both fresh and dried, and other summer fruits in season including cherries, peaches, and plums to loyal customers in Saratoga and beyond.

Continued on page 5

One of California's best known producers of fresh, dried, and canned fruit to this day is the Mariani family. Despite their Italian surname, the family's origins are from the quaint and beautiful Croatian island of Vis. This branch of the Mariani clan lived in the seaport town of Komiza, located on the west side of this westernmost island in the Croatian archipelago. Vis Island and all of Dalmatia and Istria, the coastal stretch of today's Croatia, had a strong Venetian-Italian influence. Citizens often adopted Latin-Italian versions of their Slavic names out of convenience.



Andy Mariani describes his family's Croatian heritage and deep roots in the Santa Clara Valley on his website. Andy's father Joseph Mariani emigrated from Vis, where he was a vineyard

farmer, in the early 1930's. Joseph spent two years working on his uncle's apricot orchard and fishing along the West Coast; earning enough money to send for his wife Simila and two children to join him. With his savings, he was able to purchase a small orchard and home in Cupertino and devoted his life to growing apricots and French prunes. In 1957, Joseph purchased the Mariani orchard in Morgan Hill. Today, their son Andy, in partnership with his siblings, grows some of the finest fruit in a region known around the world for the quality of its agricultural products. Andy's cousins Mark and David Mariani have carried on the family enterprise in fruit and nut processing, and land development. David has written an extensive tract about the Mariani family's heritage on the island of Vis.

As I got to know Andy Mariani while developing my cookbook For the Love of Apricots, I was surprised to learn about the Mariani's Slavic origins despite their Italian name. Andy introduced me to another prominent California apricot orchard producer and his close friend, George Bonacich. George's family roots were also in Komiza on Vis Island. In fact so many of the orchard "ichs", I have become acquainted with are either cousins or former neighbor farmers in Santa Clara County when it was carpeted by family farm orchards. The bonds among this orchard farming "diaspora" are still deep.

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the island of Vis.



George Bonacich's parents arrived in the Santa Clara Valley from Croatia during the early 1900s. George's father Luka (Louis) Bonacich left Brac Island for San Jose in 1912; his mother Magdalena (Lena) Mardesich left Komiza, Vis Island for Cupertino

in 1920. They met at Yugoslavian cultural events in the Santa Clara Valley, married, and settled in Sunnyvale where George was born. Their 5-acre parcel expanded over time to 50 acres by the 1930s, where they grew apricots, French prunes, and cherries. George recalls that the Croatian immigrant families were centered in Cupertino and Sunnyvale, the Italians in Mountain View, and the Portuguese lived mainly in Santa Clara. These disparate immigrant families counted themselves as "neighbors" given their European origins, and became friends.

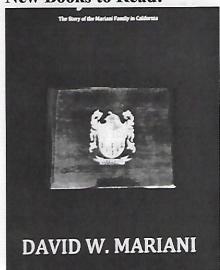
Written by Lisa Prince Newman, former Saratogan,



and author of "For the Love of Apricots." Visit her blog at: fortheloveofapricots.com and for the rest of the above story:

http://fortheloveofapricots.com/2020/12/apricots-abroad-croatia/

#### **New Books to Read!**



"Poverty of Affluence" by David W. Mariani David Mariani tells us about his family history in Silicon Valley. The Mariani story is of the origins and fulfillment of the entrepreneurial spirit that defined Silicon Valley. It

is a personal story that addresses the challenges of losing a patriarch, sibling rivalry, sexual abuse, pain and forgiveness. David reveals the major influences such as David Packard, Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Wozniak, Andy Grove, Gene Amdahl have had on him. Finally, it is the story of the discovery of oneself through life lessons.

According to Mariani, "In POVERTY OF AFFLUENCE, I follow the immigrant journeys of my distant and immediate ancestors as well as my journey all the while shedding light on the major trends and movements in the growth of the world around us. It's a story peopled not only by my family but by the major influencers such as David Packard, Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Wozniak, Andy Grove, Gene Amdahl with whom we crossed paths. Embedded in these stories are different meanings behind poverty and the meaning behind affluence whether entertaining royalty, heads of state, celebrities or the gardeners and janitors. It is a universal story of the discovery of oneself through life lessons. In this way, the book provides a detailed fabric of Silicon Valley's culture and a rare, inside, panoramic view of a place that continues to enthrall in popular media and the imagination."

For a copy of the book, contact: David W. Mariani 317 State Street Los Altos, California 94022 David@Mariani.net

## "Garden of the World" by Cecilia M. Tsu

Weaving together the story of three overlapping waves of Asian migration from China, Japan, and the Philippines in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Tsu offers a comparative history that sheds light on the



ways in which Asian farmers and laborers fundamentally altered the agricultural economy and landscape of the Santa Clara Valley, as well as white residents' ideas about race, gender, and what it meant to be an American family farmer.

For a copy of the book, contact: Amazon.com

## "I Haven't Written a Coronavirus Poem--Why Not"

I don't know what to say.

Even those in charge don't know what to say.

I am still sheltering in place.

Too many others won't. Or can't.

I wear a mask. Many don't.

The newspapers tell all every day.

Causes of the new surge remain unproven.

What more is there to say."

Poem by Saratoga Poet Mary Lou Taylor.



In Memory of:

Dan Tellup Bill Siebert

# Happy Birthday, Betty Peck

Educator, Author, Poet Betty Peck turned 99 years young in December. This article summarizes some of Betty Peck's many attributes!



"Tea at Betty Peck's house is at four thirty, and it is every day. Green tea, the simple bagged kind, is Betty's favorite and there is always a big, very well brewed pot of it at teatime. Betty provides the tea and inspiration, and I almost always bring the sweets: frosted cupcakes, peanut butter cookies, and chocolate chip

ones with ice cream to make sandwiches on the Fourth of July. She likes really, really sweet stuff, and even makes her Christmas ornaments from leftover Haagen-Daz ice cream sticks, spray-painted gold and formed into stars. They are surprisingly elegant; Betty is elegance personified, and everything she touches follows suit.

A big California oak tree shades most of her property in Saratoga, CA, and when you walk up the driveway you enter an enchanted land. It is a relatively small property, littered with crispy leaves the oak has dropped everywhere, and sprinkled throughout with things to delight: mourning doves coo in one corner, a childrens' narrow gauge train runs on its tracks, a regal peacock stands proud in The Great Hall, a small outdoor amphitheater sits ready for a variety of the annual performances, such as May Day when a hundred people dance around the pastel-ribboned pole then eat strawberry shortcake together at 8am.

Betty is a pioneer of holistic early childhood education, specializing in Kindergarten. She taught thousands of kindergarteners during her career, giving children all over northern California a magical and grounded start to their educational life. I met Betty through my dear friend Alec, one of her daughter Anna's former Kindergarten students, who invited me to one of Betty's teatimes. Alec had raved about the Kindergarten Bread he learned to make when he was four, and still makes to this day. I first went to Betty's to learn about this renowned bread, but what unfolded during our dozens of lengthy conversations was Betty's philosophy on learning and life.

In Betty's Kindergarten, everything came back to one of three things: the garden, the body, or the cosmos. Food-- the result of the garden and sustaining of the body-- was therefore a regular topic, and cooking a frequent activity. Earth Eggs (small, warm new potatoes, wrapped in foil, with a nob of butter tucked inside) were hidden on Easter for the children to find, Kindergarten Bread was made weekly, and Angel Food Cake with Betty's Quick Lemon Curd was served whenever there was a birthday to celebrate.

Things developed organically in Betty's Kindergarten out of the wisdom and creativity she found inherent in young children. For me, the Angel Food Cake was the most touching of these stories: One year, one of Betty's sweetest kindergarteners became very ill and was hospitalized. Each day the other Kindergarten children would gather together and draw a card to send her. One day, the little girl passed away. When Betty told the other children of the news she asked them "My dears, what should we do to celebrate the life of this little angel who has been in our midst." They became very quiet and then responded, "Why, we should have an Angel Food Cake and remember all the wonderful things about her." So that is what they did—they ate an Angel Food Cake, Betty creating the world's easiest lemon curd to go along with it. From that day on, whenever there is a birthday to be celebrated in Betty's classroom or home, it is done through cake and curd.

Special stories like this abound from Betty's teaching; however, the mainstay of Betty's classroom cooking was the Kindergarten Bread. Baked weekly, the making of the bread takes children through all the stages of wheat, from kernel to loaf. The children plant the wheat each year, harvest it, grind a small amount to add to the bread, and learn about kneading, rising, and baking, singing songs about the different stages along the way. Each student even practices the letter of the week by forming it with dough (the tactile, three-dimensionality of which has been found to help students with reading and writing skills.) Every little thing in Betty's classroom had its purpose- to show how everything in life is connected. The bread was a delicious, regular example of this." Written by Author Jessica Theroux on "cookingwith grandmothers.com"



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and often spoke of the joys of their childhood in rural Saratoga among the country orchards.

#### On the Street Where You Live

John Kerwin's parents immigrated from County



Mayo, Ireland to Cupertino in 1854. Thomas and Mary Boyston Reynolds, natives of Dublin, Ireland purchased the Saratoga property bordering Saratoga Avenue and Fruitvale as a summer home in 1870. It became the family home of John and Lucy Kerwin. When the property was bequeathed to them and the street bordering the property

named Kerwin Ranch Court.

John Kerwin was an attorney in San Jose. John and Lucy had five children: Leonie, Dorothy, Martha, Ted and Roland. The children attended Oak Street School (now known as Saratoga school) Leonie took over ownership and operation of the family orchard in 1934 following the death of her mother. With her brother, Roland, she continued farming until 1987 when Roland's death and her own poor health prevented her from continuing the work.

Leonie was a dedicated career educator who retired in 1969 after 42 years with the San Lorenzo School District. She received her bachelor's degree and teaching credential from San Jose state University in 1927 and her master's degree from Stanford University in 1961.

She was honored at her retirement by the governor and the state legislature for having taught three generations of second grade students in the same classroom. In her last seven years of teaching, she specialized in teaching a pioneering Spanish program for primary students