



Cupertino Historical Society & Museum presents the **Cornerstone**

Winter 2018

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF MCCLELLAN RANCH PRESERVE

By Valerie Abid, Museum Docent

The 18-acre McClellan Ranch Preserve offers both residents and visitors a glimpse of Cupertino's past. The post war building boom brought housing subdivisions to Cupertino replacing the farms and ranches that had covered the valley for almost 100 years. And, before those homesteads were established, much of the city looked like today's McClellan Ranch.

The Ohlones were the first to inhabit the area. They settled along Stevens Creek where water and food were readily available. Walking along the creek with its native trees and vegetation, one can imagine the land as the Ohlone saw it 300 to 400 years ago.

The Spanish expedition led by Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza passed thru the area on its way to the San Francisco area to establish a presidio in 1776. They camped near an arroyo (dried up stream bed). Their cartographer, Padre Petrus Font, named the area and the creek after St. Joseph of Cupertino. (California Landmark 800 can be seen in the west parking lot at nearby Monta Vista High School.) After Mission Santa Clara was established in 1777, the area became part of the mission's grazing lands.

Spain gave up control of the area to Mexico in 1822. After the missions were secularized, Mexico proceeded to make land grants to favored individuals. These large ranchos covered thousands of acres primarily devoted to cattle ranching. Apparently the McClellan Ranch area was never part of any private land grant but was surrounded by them.



The photo is of the McClellan house in the late 1800's. Left to right is Joe McClellan standing, Frank McClellan with son Clayton, and Grace McClellan.



Image courtesy of Wikipedia

Cupertino's first white settler Captain Elisha Stephens settled on the west bank of Stevens Creek (then called Cupertino Creek) in the late 1840s. Stephens had come to California in 1844 when he led the Stephens-Murphy-Party-Townsend Party over the Sierra Nevada. Land ownership and titles weren't always clear during this time; however, Stephens did occupy, farm and later sell land that now part of the Preserve. He planted fruit trees, blackberries and mission grapes. Stephens was a "character" who had a taste for rattlesnake and was known for serving it to dinner guests. Declaring the area was becoming "too darn civilized", he sold his part of his land to George McCauley and the remaining acres to William Taylor McClellan in 1864 before moving on to the Bakersfield area where he spent the rest of his life.

The McClellan family were next to live on what is now McClellan Ranch Preserve. They traveled by wagon from Missouri to California in 1849. Mr. and Mrs. McClellan and their 10 children farmed the land growing grapes, prunes, apricots, pears, apples and peaches. They established the first west valley subscription school near their property and the school master boarded at their home. William and his neighbors petitioned the County Board of Supervisors to have the old wagon road that passed thru his ranch a county road—today's McClellan Road. They were prominent members of the Cupertino Union Church.

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Cupertino Historical Society & Museum

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Cupertino Historical Society and Museum is to preserve and share Cupertino's past, strengthen the sense of community and make Cupertino history available for all.

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The Cornerstone is published quarterly by the Cupertino Historical Society, a private, non-profit organization.

BULLETIN BOARD

CHS Board of Directors Meetings

The Third Wednesday of Every Month at 4pm

Holidays: QCC closed

Nov 11-12, 2018 - Veterans Day

Nov 22-25, 2018 - Thanksgiving

Dec 24 - 31, 2018 - Christmas Holidays

Jan 1, 2019 - New Year's Day

Museum Hours:

Located in the Quinlan Community Center, the museum is open to the public **Wednesday through Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is FREE.**

PRESIDENTS' CORNER

Dear Friends of Cupertino Historical Society and Museum,

Time has passed very quickly. We are almost at the end of 2018! I hope that all of you have had a wonderful year and look forward to the coming holidays. We are sad to say good bye to our previous Executive Director, Ragini Sangameswara; however, we welcome our new Executive Director, Jennifer Furlong, with open arms. Jennifer comes to us with experience at the Campbell Historical Museum and Ainsley House, Smithsonian Associates and Glenstone Museum. She enthusiastically embraces the Mission, Vision and Values of our organization, and we are excited to have her at the helm for this next chapter of CHSM.



As we move into the Christmas Season, our Collections Committee will transform the museum space into a Vintage Christmas Wonderland, as we host our Holiday Open House (November 30, coinciding with the Quinlan Tree Lighting) and Children's Event the morning of December 1. Please join us for both events. If you are interested in helping to decorate the museum for Christmas, or have items that you would like to loan us for our exhibit, please contact our Collections Committee Chairperson, Gail Fretwell-Hugger by calling the museum or emailing her directly.

We have revived our Speaker Series, which was re-inaugurated with a talk by local historian, Wes Morse on October 30. Wes discussed his book on the history of Cupertino High School. The event was a huge success, with many in attendance. Wes has also contributed to our newsletter. Come by the museum to purchase your copy of his work today!

As we enter the Thanksgiving season, I ask you to think of Cupertino Historical Society and Museum in your annual giving. We are participating in this year's Giving Tuesday. Celebrated on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving (in the U.S.) and the widely recognized shopping events Black Friday and Cyber Monday, #GivingTuesday kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving. #GivingTuesday provides a platform to encourage the donation of time, resources and talents to address local challenges. Please return the enclosed card to let us know how you would like to participate in our #GivingTuesday initiative.

Our Spring Exhibit (Opening February 2019) will feature the first part of a three-part series on the history of Apple Computers in Cupertino. I would like to start collecting stories and memorabilia for this event. Please send Jennifer, our Director, (Jennifer@cupertinohistoricalsociety.org) or me any stories, or photos you care to share of Apple computer products, people and any other information that you feel interesting. Please feel free to contact me with any questions about this event and your submissions at sun.cupertino@gmail.com or call us anytime. Board members David Fong and Fabrizio Vitagliano will work with our Collections Committee members to bring this thrilling story to life for our visitors.

I met with our next State Governor Gavin Newsom this week, told him that I am president of Cupertino Historical Society and he encourage us to do more education on history to our young generations. We strive to carry on his charge.

We have posted all upcoming events on our website and Facebook page. We appreciate your active participation to these in Society activities. Bring your families and friends to our events and have a wonderful holiday.

Don Sun, President Board of Directors

A BRIEF HISTOY OF MCCLELLAN RANCH PRESERVE (CONTINUED)

In later his years, Mr. McClellan suffered from severe rheumatism and in 1881 deeded the 40-acre home ranch to his unmarried son Joseph. He died in 1888. Joseph and his mother sold their properties parcel by parcel finally moving from the area in 1895.

Between 1895 and 1972 the property changed hands ten times. Most of the new owners were farmers growing fruit and/or grapes. However, in 1943 when H.X. and Dorothy Baxter acquired the property the orchards were gone, and the land was used as pasture for dairy cattle. The Baxters named their business Twin Farms and advertised "Specializing in artificial insemination service for dairy cattle."

Later Hirsute and Ruby Inouye developed a part of the property as a horse ranch. Horse stalls were built in the large barn and a small milking shed was used as a tack room. Racing thoroughbreds were boarded on the ranch between meets at local race tracks.

Plans were made beginning in the late 1960s to create a city park and nature preserve on the property then popularly known as the Horse Ranch. In 1970 the City of Cupertino passed a bond issue the finance buying the land and developing it. The parcel was purchased for \$540,000 jointly by the City, HUD and the Santa Clara Water District in 1972. While the original intention was to leave the property in relatively natural condition, a variety of plans were proposed including some for commercial development. After much debate over its actual usage, the Cupertino City Council adopted an ordinance designating McClellan Ranch Park as a nature and rural preserve on January 6, 1976. ``

There were four buildings on the property when it was purchased. The ranch house clearly was not the McClellan home as its architecture was more in keeping with the style developed during the 1930s. It is currently used as the Cupertino Environmental Center. Two non-profits, Friends of Stevens Creek Trail and Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, lease office and shop space in this building. . A variety of organizations use the small conference room for meetings.



Watercolor by Joseph Ribera

CORRECTION

In our previous issue, we discussed the possible relocation of the 1912 Butcher Family house. We have since learned that plans to save the house were not approved by city council, and the house was, ultimately, dismantled.

COLLECTIONS CORNER

By Gail Fretwell-Hugger, Chair, Collections Committee

The Cupertino Museum Collections and exhibit committee would love to display your vintage Christmas holiday decorations and family treasures in the December 2018 holiday exhibit. All loaned items will be safely and lovingly cared for and on view with your name attached. The exhibit will coincide with the annual Cupertino City annual Tree Lighting event to be held at Quinlan Center on Friday, November 30 from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. Join us for a museum open house with crafts for children.



Please contact our Director, Jennifer Furlong, at (408) 973-1495 or email: jennifer@cupertinohistoricalsociety.org by November 17. If you are emailing between November 18-23, please contact Gail Fretwell-Hugger at semi-sweet.2@netzero.net. Deadline for submissions: November 26.

NOW AVAILABLE IN OUR BOOKSTORE

The History of Cupertino High School: The First Sixty Years, 1958-2018

The book, written by alumnus and current social studies teacher Wes Morse (Class of '89) attempts to capture the spirit of each era, document amazing events, and champion those most responsible for shaping the school's culture. The book attempts to tell the academic and social history of Cupertino as well as its impact on the community.

Morse states: "I have been very fortunate to call Cupertino High School home for nearly 35 years. I was a student in the late 1980s



(Above) Wes Morse delivers his talk during our October Speaker Series.

and returned to coach and teach at the school. I first became interested in the school's history after being inspired by history teacher Bill Boggie who regaled us with stories of the school's early years. Little did I know as a 14 year-old freshman, that someday I would assume the mantle of "school historian." The History of Cupertino High School is an American story. It's about people, place, and the events that shape them. It is a record of amazing people who did great things. My goal was to tell the story of a high school from before it was built to current day. While I'm quick to note the differences that 60 years can make, I try not to judge. I'm very interested in telling the story of students from different eras attending a common school. How did the culture change? How did students change? How did education change? What are some of the things that make Cupertino High School unique. This is the story of nearly 24,000 Pioneers.

The 320 page book contains several hundred photos and is available for \$25 at the Cupertino Historical Society + Museum Gift Shop.



Cupertino Historical Society & Museum

Quinlan Community Center
10185 North Stelling Road
Cupertino, CA 95014
Telephone: (408)973-1495
E-mail: cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net

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SAVE THE DATE



#GIVINGTUESDAY™

Help us reach our fundraising goals by donating this November as part of Giving Tuesday. #GivingTuesday is a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media and collaboration.

Celebrated on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving (in the U.S.) and the widely recognized shopping events Black Friday and Cyber Monday, #GivingTuesday kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving.

We will be participating in this year's giving Tuesday by offering specific sponsorship opportunities for donors, as well as our usual Annual Fund Drive, which supports the general operating fund of the museum. Stay tuned on social media (and watch your mailboxes for pledge envelopes). Link directly to our donation page by visiting: www.cupertinohistoricalsociety.org/donate or through our Facebook Page. Thank you for your support and generosity!

Current resident or:



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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

AUGUST 2018 thru OCTOBER 2018

RENEWING MEMBERS NEW MEMBERS

Zorka Keenan
Vidovich Vineyards

Mary Raby
Jessica Zhao
Nika Zamani

Nieloufar Fahimi
Valerie Veronica
Asha Saraogee