



Cupertino Historical Society & Museum
creating a passion for the past

Cupertino Historical Society & Museum
presents

the Cornerstone

Summer 2025
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Quinlan Community Center 10185 N Stelling Rd, Cupertino, CA 95014
Museum open 10am-4pm Wednesday-Friday pending docent availability

1-408-973-1495
cupertinomuseum.org

HAVE YOU HEARD THE BUZZ?

Many stories have been told of the coming of honey bees to California. In 1925, Mrs. Fremont Older interviewed Mr. John Quincy Adams Ballou - then 99 years old – for his story on how honeybees came to our valley.

Mr. Ballou related that in 1852, Commodore Stockton sent a great shipment of plants, shrubs and trees to San Jose from a ranch that Stockton had bought from James A. Forbes. The large shipment was in the charge of a botanist named Christopher Shelton. Among Shelton's personal belongings were two swarms of bees accompanying the trees and shrubs - the first bees that ever came to the Pacific coast. The honeybees attracted little attention until April 1856, when the nursery stock imported by Stockton was sold at auction by James F. Kennedy, superintendent of the Stockton ranch.



*man holds skep hive with frames stacked inside
at bee market 1956*



*plaque
commemorating
first honeybees in
California, at San
Jose Mineta
International
Airport, where
Stockton Ranch
used to be*

Tragically Mr. Shelton was killed in the explosion of the steamship 'Jenny Lind' on April 11, 1853, as it was travelling to San Francisco from Alviso.

The late Mr. Shelton's two swarms of bees produced much amazement at the auction when they sold for \$100 - a huge sum in those days. The quick sale for such a large amount of money stirred the speculative

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instincts of one William Buck. Mr. Buck had very little money, but he collected all he could and started immediately for New York, where he bought 40 or 50 swarms of bees which made the trip safely on the deck of a steamer. Upon arriving back home, Mr. Buck sold half his bees to the Santa Clara County treasurer, Mr. Frederick G. Appleton. He was delighted to find that bees had more swarms in California than in the east - in this warm climate as many as 3 swarms came in one season.

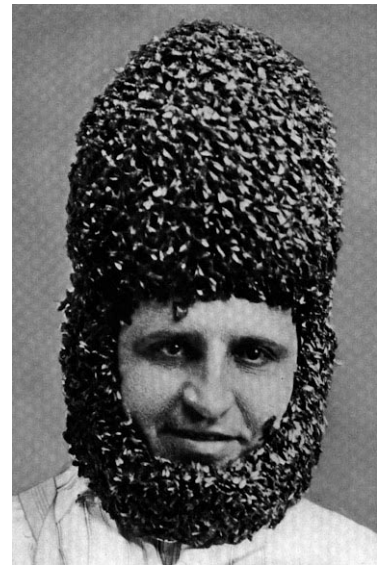
Buck took care of Appleton's bees as Appleton knew nothing of beekeeping and was afraid of them. Neither man sold any bees to others because they now had a monopoly on local bees and did not want to force down the price. However, a Mr. Freeman Gates, a resident of San Jose, also imported some bees.

Later in the 1860's the captains of passenger steamers brought swarms of bees to ports in this area on steamer decks and sold them at auction on the wharves of San Francisco for \$50 a swarm.

In 1857, Mr. Buck asked Mr. Ballou if he could keep his 40 swarms of bees on Mr. Ballou's ranch on Milpitas Rd. where he had established a nursery. To help feed the bees, Ballou sowed 4 acres of buckwheat. However, he was not much interested in being a beekeeper and besides he dreaded their stings.

Mr. Buck - a man of great enthusiasm - talked Ballou into going with him to Oregon to introduce bees there. Ballou was interested in the Oregon apple orchards, as he already sold Oregon apples in San Francisco for 25 cents each. So, putting 10 swarms of bees on a steamer bound for Oregon, off they went.

When the men arrived in Salem, the Oregonians were in the throes of their constitutional convention. Mr. Buck tried to stir up enthusiasm for the bees, but those who were interested had little money to pay \$100 a swarm. Mr. Ballou spent time inspecting the apple orchards. Lack of bee sales sent Buck back to California, while Ballou stayed behind and took 4 swarms of bees from Portland to the commandant at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River, which later became the state of Washington. The commandant did not care for the bees. Ballou left them with a Mr. Knight on the chance Knight might sell them and Ballou returned to San Jose. In the meantime, Ballou's brother had purchased 5 swarms from Buck, but was disgusted with the deal and Ballou purchased them.



*Beekeeper from Canton
Ohio 1929*



Beekeeper inspects frames, Canada 1920s



Man with pipe hole in veil



Woman inspects swarm, Denton Texas College 1905

Ballou then began learning all he could about bees. He studied the Langstroth system. All that Langstroth and others knew about bees was learned from a man named Huber - the great blind naturalist. In order to protect himself from bee stings, Ballou began to smoke cigars when working with the hives - "smoking" a hive to gain access is a common method in honey harvesting - though cigars are no longer used. He was so successful with the bees that in 1 year his 5 swarms grew to 22, and the 2nd year they multiplied to 109.

The fame of the San Jose honeybees began to spread. Around 1959, a Mr. Graves and Mr. Charles Reed of Sacramento came to San Jose with the object of buying bees for the orchards in Yolo County. From Mr. Ballou, the two men made the largest purchase known in San Jose - 60 swarms at \$85 a swarm.

By Gail Fretwell-Hugger & Alecia Thomas
 See more pictures, information, & upcoming article:
cupertinomuseum.org/museumExhibits.html



The World of the Honeybee at CHSM Summer 2025



L-R: Manuel Valerio, Jana Kilpatrick, Gail Fretwell Hugger, Alysa Sakkas, Jack Carter, Alecia Thomas

MORE PHOTOS FROM EXHIBIT



Above: smokers and queen carrier

Below: honeycomb in frame and burr comb



Above: parts of the honey bee hive

Below: World of the Honey Bee at CHSM



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy Summer
Historical Society
Members!

Thank you to those who joined us for our 2025 Fundraiser! Much fun was had, especially with a few diverting auction items that got everyone laughing. Many thanks again to our generous sponsors, bidders, and guests.



Our collections staff have been busy as bees! We invite you to visit the museum and see our latest exhibit, *The World of the Honeybee*, on view until September of this year. We are also in the process of updating our permanent exhibit to include more recent history of Cupertino since its incorporation in 1955. Look forward to an expanded story and more interesting artifacts on display.

We continue to outreach to our schools with our traveling trunk program, and are working on events and activities that will engage our community and showcase the history of Cupertino. We have also been collaborating with Mayor Liang Chao and her team on the Cupertino Stories initiative, a digital storytelling effort that aligns closely with our mission to preserve history, strengthen community, and make history available for all.

Of course, we are always looking for volunteers to help with our museum and events. Please reach out to me at president@cupertinomuseum.org, and we will find a good match for your time and interests.

We look forward to a great year ahead and thank you for your continuing support of the Cupertino Historical Society.

RECURRING EVENT: BLACKSMITH DEMONSTRATION



Blacksmith Lester Markarian explains his techniques (right, image by Alyssa Yang, El Estoque)

As part of a long-term partnership with McClellan Ranch Park, the restored Baer Blacksmith Shop at McClellan Ranch has most of CHSM's collection of blacksmithing artifacts. Blacksmithing demonstrations are usually scheduled for the last Saturday of every month, weather permitting. While the blacksmith works, docents from CHSM speak to visitors about Cupertino/Monta Vista history with a display of photos and texts on a table outside the shop.

Join us and learn a bit about early local history and the craft of blacksmithing. Free admission & free parking. The following dates have been posted:

July 26, 2025	11 AM – 3 PM
August 30, 2025	11 AM – 3 PM
September 27, 2025	11 AM – 3 PM

McClellan Ranch, 22221 McClellan Rd, Cupertino

If you like talking to people about local history, we would greatly appreciate your participation as a docent. We have 2 permanent volunteers but need substitutes willing to take a 2-hour shift on an occasional last Saturday of the month. One of the permanent docents will spend a 2-hour shift with you to get you started. If interested, please email Gail Fretwell-Hugger at gailhugger80@gmail.com.



Blacksmith Lester Markarian at the anvil

RECENT EVENTS: 2025 FUNDRAISER



*A Day on the Ranch
2025 Fundraiser at Blackberry Farm Picnic Area*



board member Gail Fretwell-Hugger and auctioneer Josh Selo facilitate a hilarious auction item guessing game



speaker John Ivankovich



auction items: signed lithographs



volunteers Emy, Medha, and Zorka Keenan



musician Johnny Reason

A big thank you to our sponsors, who made this event possible and support our museum operations!

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Janet Riddell

Kathy Stakey

Jim and Sharon Walker

See more images from the event at:

cupertinomuseum.org/events2025.html

TRAVELING TRUNK

CHSM's Traveling Trunk program is a free educational program, that teaches early local history by showcasing artifacts, telling stories, and inviting observation and inquiry from the audience. CHSM Traveling Trunk has recently presented at Sedgwick School, Cupertino's Morningstar and Live Oak Adult Care Center at St. Jude's. To learn more, visit cupertinomuseum.org/ttschool.html or send a message to tt@cupertinomuseum.org.



Some of the artifacts featured in the presentation (above)

CUPERTINO MAYOR'S INITIATIVE



Cupertino Mayor Liang Chao's Cupertino Stories initiative is a digital effort allowing everyone to help create history by sharing their stories of living, working, and doing business in Cupertino. Many organizations, including CHSM, are partnering to collect interviews, host a storytelling contest, and engage the community in capturing the history being made in the city today.

Learn more about Cupertino Stories at cupertinostories.org

AMUSEMENT FROM THE HISTORICAL CUPERTINO SCENE

An intriguing snippet from a 1975 issue of the Cupertino Scene newsletter:

" For those of you breathlessly waiting for the next chapter in the renaming of Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road (if such people exist), we can report that the overwhelming sentiment of Cupertino residents was in favor of the name "Old Highway Nine". However, the response from the County Communications Center, and from the Calif. Department of Transportation was rather underwhelming. These two agencies were both strongly against the change due to possible confusion with the real Highway 9 now located in Saratoga.[...] So, being back at the beginning, Cupertino's Council decided in favor of DeAnza Blvd. and sent the Mayor over to Sunnyvale to try to persuade the dignitaries there to join us. The Mayor apparently took his strategy from a textbook by General Custer, and got the predictable result. So on June 16, the Council voted 4-1 (Mayor Jackson dissenting) to rename that portion within Cupertino "DeAnza Blvd.", effective next year. "



Above: "Old Highway 9" as seen from the Cupertino Store

Issues from 2002-2005 are archived online here: cupertino.gov/Your-City/Divisions/Communications/Cupertino-SCENE-Newsletter



CUPERTINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC (THE)
10185 North Stelling Road
Cupertino, CA 95014

Telephone: (408)973-1495
E-mail: info@cupertinomuseum.org

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RECENT EVENTS: BEES EXHIBIT OPENING

Thank you for joining us for the grand opening of our latest exhibit, which shows all the wonderful things about bees and beekeeping. Learn about different types of bees, see some real hives (no live bees), a honey extractor, and more! Items on display generously loaned by Alysa Sakkas, Deb Conway, the Honey Ladies of Campbell, and Jack Carter.

Exhibit on view June 27, 2025 - September 2025

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this exhibit!

*Alyssa Sakkas, McClellan 4H
Deb Conway, GirlzWurk of Saratoga
Wendy Towner & The Honey Ladies of Campbell
Jack Carter, Third Acre Farm in Cupertino
Alecia Thomas, CHSM Collection Manager
Gail Hugger, CHSM Board Member
Jana Kilpatrick, CHSM Mellon Intern
Anya Nazarova, CHSM Staff*

The World of the Honey Bee
Our Latest Exhibit
All Summer Long
Cupertino Historical Museum
10185 N. Stelling Road
in the Robert Quinlan Center
Wed - Fri 10 AM - 4PM



