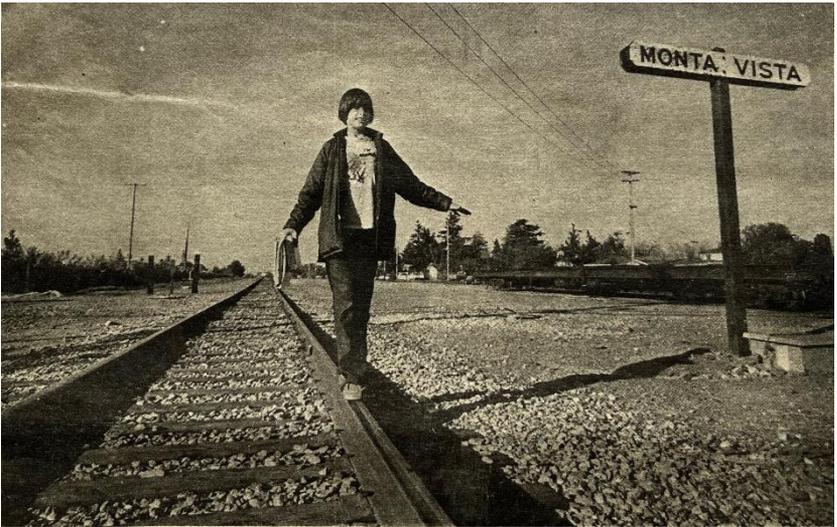


A Walking Tour  
of  
Cupertino's  
**Monta Vista**  
Neighborhood



Ed Tavaras of 10101 Adriana balances himself on the railroad track that runs through Monta Vista. Closely tied to Monta Vista's history, the track now services just the Lehigh Hansen cement plant.

Photo by Phil Nelson (Courier).

Prototype version – July4 ,2023

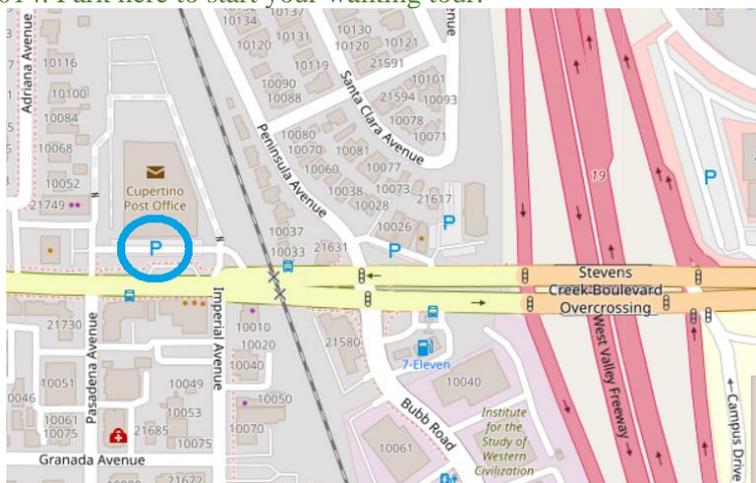
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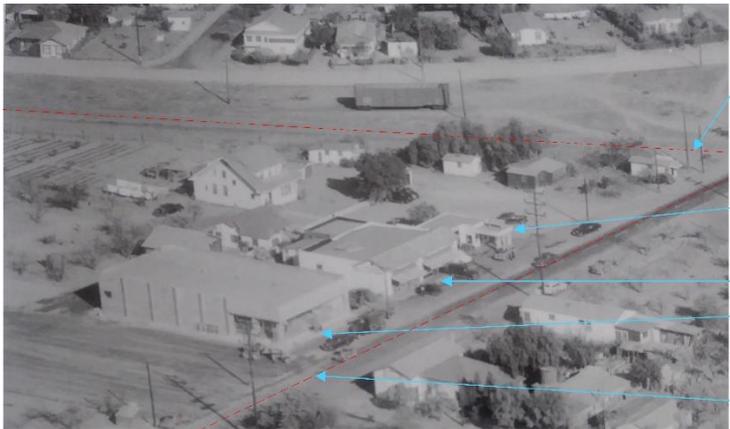
Monta Vista is the second settlement of what is now the modern City of Cupertino. The first settlement was Cupertino Crossroads which was at the intersection of Stevens Creek and the Sunnyvale-Saratoga Highway. Both settlements were on the rail line from San Jose to Los Altos and beyond. Monta Vista was at the next stop west of the commuter train. As the local farms prospered the need for services close by was served by an expanding number of businesses at this location.

## 1. Cupertino Post Office

Directions: Come to 21701 Stevens Creek Blvd, Cupertino, CA 95014. Park here to start your walking tour.



The full formal name is the Petty Officer 2nd Class (SEAL) Matthew G. Axelson Post Office Building. Axelson was a 1994 graduate of Monta Vista High School. He died in 2005 in Afghanistan at age 29. He was awarded the Navy Cross and the Purple Heart. There is a statue of him and another Cupertino soldier in Cupertino's Memorial Park further east. This building was built on 199x. It replaced Quintero's Shell Service Station and the old and new Rifredi's Market buildings.



## 2. Quintero's Shell Service

Directions: See the 1947 photo above to envision what it was like before the post office was built.

Adriana's Quintero's younger brother Paul opened this station but then was soon called away to serve in WWII in the US Army Infantry in Europe including the Battle of the Bulge. While he was away, his older brother Angelo "Cheet" Quintero ran the gas

*Straight from the Feed Box*

It's Certainly Satisfying To Find Service Station Boys With Horse-Sense To Keep An Auto-Buggy Buzzing Happily With Good Gas, Oil and Greasing.



**Quintero's SHELL SERVICE**

21677 STEVENS CREEK RD. **Monta Vista**

PHONE ALpine 2-1898 PICKUP and DELIVERY

THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 1955

QUINTERNO HAS THE FINEST ALL-TILE REST ROOMS THIS SIDE OF THE INTER-STELLAR SPACE PLATFORM

AUTOS PARK PARALLEL

PHONE 2-1898 PICKUP and DELIVERY

**Quintero's SHELL SERVICE**

21677 STEVENS CREEK RD. **Monta Vista**

station. At its peak the neighborhood had 5 gas stations, but after the 1973 oil embargo full service stations converted to self-serve and quickly disappeared as profit margins thinned and land prices soared.

### 3. Rifredi's Market

Rifredi's Market was established in 192x by Adriana Quintero and her husband Charlie Rifredi. Charlie was born in Italy and was an orphan. His adopted family gave him the name Rifredi after the



largest district in Florence where they lived. As a young girl Adriana waited by the railroad stop to sell commuters fruit and candy out of a wagon she pulled behind her. When they got married they sold groceries out of the living room of their rented Sunnyvale house. As their business grew, they borrowed money to start a store at this location. The store grew in the 1940s and eventually had 8 clerks and

3 butchers. Every early morning before the store opened Rifredi sent a truck down to the San Jose Produce Warehouse to acquire the day's fresh produce to sell. The other items at the store were acquired from United Grocers in San Francisco.



To keep customers from the growing competition around the area, Rifredi's had to give out Blue Chip Stamps. The larger chains had the better known S&H Green Stamps. Being smaller, Rifredi's was blocked from using them. Even though they had at least 9 other competitors, Blue Chip Stamps was very successful company and bought South San

Francisco based Sees Candy in 1972. Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway bought Blue Chip Stamps in 1985 and thus now has Sees Candies in their portfolio. Blue Chip Stamps has faded away as other less costly digital loyalty programs emerged.



In the 1950s a postal annex was created in the back of the store. The annex was run by Adriana's younger sister and Angelo's wife, Linda (Pianto) Quintero. It met a burgeoning demand creating about 6 mail sacks every day for the postal carriers to move to the main Cupertino post office. The main post office was south of the Crossroads (intersection) of Stevens Creek Road (now Boulevard) and the Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road (now DeAnza Boulevard).



#### 4. Kirkish's Dry Goods Store

By 1948 Rifredi's Market needed more space, so a larger store was built just west of the old store. The original Rifredi's was then occupied by Ed and Millie Kirkish for their dry goods store that sold clothes, appliances, kitchen ware and a variety of other items. Ed Kirkish was also a building contractor and built many of the homes in Monta Vista and Cupertino. Ed's brother Ned ran a shoe repair shop by the railroad tracks in a small building that was previously Stapp Real Estate. Mr. Stapp had a Stapp Sign on the building as a logo. After the Kirkishs closed their business, the building housed a hardware store first run by Mr. Brennan and later John Bettisworth and his wife. When their business grew and more space was needed the Bettisworths moved into the former Littleman's

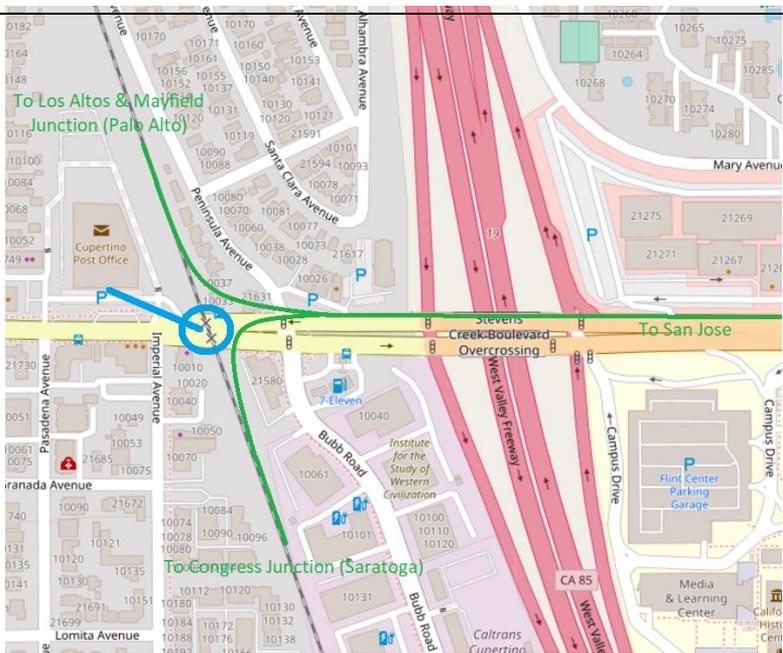


grocery store further west on Stevens Creek Road. The original Rifredi's building eventually became John Gachina's landscape business.



#### 5. Peninsula Interurban Railway

Directions: Walk east along Stevens Creek Boulevard until you get to the railroad track (300 feet from the post office entrance).



You are now next to a Union Pacific freight railroad track serving the cement plant up in the hills to the west, but only since 1996. This track way was laid by the Southern Pacific Railroad. Specifically, their subsidiary The Peninsula Interurban Railway which was in service between 1906 and 1934. What is now a wide high-capacity city street called Stevens Creek Boulevard used to be a commuter rail line between San Jose and Monta Vista in an easement just north of a much narrower Stevens Creek Road. It is common in history for towns to spring up at intersections of transportation and Monta Vista is no exception. Three different lines of the Peninsular Interurban Railway came together from different directions to meet at Monta Vista. From Monta Vista you could travel by rail to Los Altos and Mayfield Junction (now Palo Alto) to join up with the Southern Pacific line to San Francisco, you could go to Congress Junction (now in Saratoga), and you could parallel Stevens Creek Road through Cupertino all the way to San Jose. The tracks were heavy and the road bed was thick and solid. Trains on the San Jose to Monta Vista line could reach eighty miles an hour. Trains on the Monta Vista to Los Altos line (along what is now Foothill Expressway) could reach seventy miles per hour. This was a highly effective mode of transportation. After the interurban ceased operation, the northern & eastern easements were used to create or widen roads. People just preferred the convenience and privacy of their own automobile, even

if the speed is much slower. Only the southern easement has been kept as a freight rail to serve the nationally important cement plant.

## 6. Engles Grocery

Directions: Walk 400 feet to the east while crossing Peninsula Boulevard.

Elizabeth Engles established a grocery store in 193x. In 1943 it became Paul & Eddie's Monta Vista Inn, a sports bar with pool and darts.

## 7. Monta Vista Creamery

Directions:

What is now Starbucks was Monta Vista Creamery. The building was erected in 1949-50 and had several owners over the years. Louis Strini, George Frasche (who had worked at the Kaiser foil plant), and Israeli immigrants Uri & Batia Friedlander (aka Friedland) all had soda fountains of one kind or another. Typical fare was ice cream treats, banana splits, sundaes, ice cream sodas, ice cream cones, floats, hamburgers, sandwiches and pizzas. Uri also made falafels and had a special falafel pizza that was very popular. When Uri took over the business he renamed it Vivi's. The creamery building also had spaces for a beauty shop and a barber shop. Later on, Ned Kirkish moved his shoe repair business from near the railroad tracks into where the beauty shop was.

Uri's business was very successful and in 199x-200x he purchased the land west of Rifredi's Market all the way to Adriana Avenue. This included the creamery building and the strip mall building. A few years after that he sold the creamery building to Starbucks and they completely razed it and built their own building.

## 8. Strip Mall

Directions: Walk to.

This building started out with a barber shop, a beauty shop, a dry cleaner and Mr. Look's drug store relocated there. The pharmacy unit later became a Mitchell Brothers Auto Parts. Then that unit was split into Master Na's Martial Arts Studio and a Kumon Math & Reading Center.

## 9. Adriana Avenue

This residential street was named after Adriana Quintero Rifredi and the land was originally a prune orchard owned by the Rifredi & Quintero families. Unfortunately, because the families were so busy running the grocery store and gas station, the orchard was more of a liability than an asset. Thus, around 1949 the orchard land was subdivided and the lots were sold for \$300 to \$400 each (about \$5000 in 2022 dollars). Ed Kirkish built most of the homes and they sold for \$10,000 each (about \$125,000 in 2022 dollars).

## 10. Woelfful's Cannery

Directions: Walk to.

Richard and Blanche Woelfful's cannery specialized in prunes and they were known worldwide for their Monta Vista brand canned prunes. When Paul Quintero was serving in Europe he was issued Monta Vista canned prunes. Charlie Rifredi's son Robert served in the US Navy in Cuba and was also issued Monta Vista prunes in his rations.



In 1970 the land was sold to the paper mill sensor & control company Measurex which steadily built more buildings to match their growing business. Their own driveway was called Results Way. In 1997 the 2000 plus employee company was sold to Honeywell. By 2009 the property was being remodeled into a deluxe corporate campus with Apple leasing it in 2011.

## 11. Titsworth Dry Cleaning

Directions: Walk to.

What is now Passion Nail & Spa was a dry cleaning business started in 1945 by the native American Tittsworth family.

## 12. Look Pharmacy

Directions: Walk to.

Tony Look started a pharmacy in 194x. He was also extremely active in the Sierra Club. In recognition of all his service there is a trail named after him east of the Stevens Creek Reservoir in the Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve.

## 13. Koski's Grocery

Blah blah blah.

## 14. Medical Offices

Directions: Walk to.

Dr. Schwartly, MD, Dr. Rudolph Propach, MD, Dr. Harder, MD, and Dr. Cross, DDS.

## 15. Sam & Hazel's Five & Dime

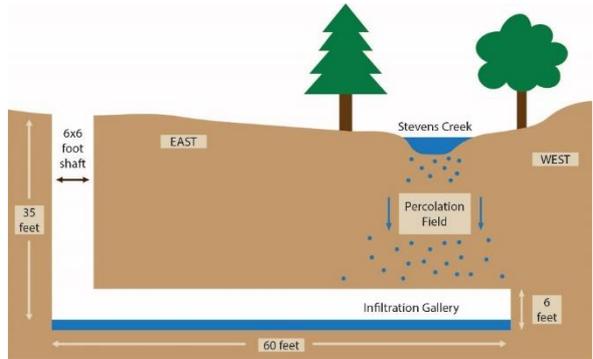
Directions: Walk to.

What today is an acupuncture & herbal store was a five & dime store run by Hazel & Sam Goldstone. Hazel ran the store in front. Sam was a barber in the back, and he also did illegal booking on horses by phone. In those days most phones were party lines so it was impossible for Sam to hide his business or for others on the party line to be able to make or receive phone calls when Sam was busy making book. One of the main attractions of the store was that Sam had a parrot that swore. Hazel was sweet and adopted all stray dogs. She also employed Bobby Bell starting at 8 years old. While Bobby's father had a good job at Kaiser Aluminum's foil plant, he was supporting four children. Bobby was the youngest and when he asked for a bike his dad suggested that he get a job to pay for it. Bobby stood on a crate when he ran the cash register. He had a natural ability for conversation, so he was a real asset for the store. With his wages he was able to afford the bike he always wanted and with that bike he was able to make additional tips by doing deliveries.

## 16. Water Works

Directions: Walk to.

Long before the county formed a far-reaching highly reliable water district, water was piped to houses, farms & businesses from nearby underground sources. In 1881 prominent San Francisco lawyer John T Doyle purchased land for a summer home and vineyards. He was well schooled in history and chose to call his place Cupertino. To provide water for his home and wine business he dug a gallery to collect water from Stevens Creek.



He also petitioned for and got a post office on his property with a Cupertino address. Doyle was very progressive and prosperous in his business. The 1906 earthquake damaged his wineries and he died later that year. In 1907 the Elevada Improvement Company subdivided 25 acres into the Town of Monta Vista. It presumably got its water from the Doyle gallery because there was no other source. In 1915 George Hensley, who had made half a million dollars subdividing land in San Bruno and San Jose, purchased the Doyle land and moved into Doyle's house. With his Santa Clara Valley Land Company, he purchased adjacent land and subdivided it as Monta Vista lots. Sales were good for a while, but WWI and prohibition dampen sales to the point where it was no longer profitable. Genoese immigrant and successful San Francisco automobile and hotel businessman Chester Damico, Sr. was induced into infusing capital into the organization. But the company still defaulted on its debts in 1925. Damico being an honorable man paid all the debts and took control of the company, the land and the winery. He moved his family into the Doyle house and operated the vineyards and winery successfully. The waterworks were left in the hands of Hensley. By 1929 Hensley could not operate the waterworks profitably and the State Railroad Commission (now called the CPUC) responding to numerous complaints of poor or no service made the waterworks the full responsibility of the Santa Clara Valley Land Company of which Damico was the sole owner. In 1930, once again Damico stepped up and did the right thing. The Water

Works of Monta Vista was formed and at the Commissions guidance rates were raised and the funds were used to invest in the necessary infrastructure and additional water sources in order to provide self-sufficient, reliable and consistent water to the community. The Damico family first ran the waterworks out of their winery building. When that business was sold to Paul Masson in 1945 the waterworks business was moved to their home and then to a new build on the northwest corner of Pasadena & Granada in 1947. In 1960 the Damico family sold the waterworks to the City of Cupertino.

## 17. Littleman's Grocery

Directions: Walk to.

In the early 1970s some thought there was enough population to support another grocery store. Littlemans opened a store a little further west than Rifredi's. It changed into Hob Knob, and then into Jim Dandee. They never were able to provide the personal and friendly service that Rifredi's gave. They and Rifredi's also had strong competition from the much larger supermarket chain All American Market store (now a Lucky's) located on Foothill Expressway and Arboretum Drive that was just 2.4 miles away. After the last grocery store closed, Bettisworth's hardware store moved in because it was a larger space. In 1965 the Monta Vista Branch of the Cupertino Post Office moved from Rifredi's Market to the new Bettisworth's Hardware location. The Bettisworth business also attracted a beauty shop and a bar on the west side of the building. After a long and successful run, the Bettisworths closed the shop and retired. For several years it then was Paul Wolf's furniture store. The property the became a liquor store and then other shorter-lived businesses. Eventually the land was turned into residential houses on Eaton Place.

## 18. Historical Marker for Elisha Stephens

Directions: Walk to.

The marker is located at the southwest corner of the Blue Pheasant's parking lot on a rubble stone pillar 37°19.35' North, 122°3.617' West. Elisha Stephens was elected the captain for the first settler wagon train through the Sierra Nevada mountains at what is now Truckee Pass. The Stephens-Murphy-Townsend party of 1844 had no casualties, unlike the latter Donner-Reed party of 1846. In 1848 Stephens was the first America homesteader in Cupertino. He named

his 160 acres Blackberry Farm. In 1859 he purchased an additional 155 acres from Rancho San Antonio. He relished eating roasted rattlesnake which was plentiful on his land. In 1862, he sold all his land to George McCauley & William McClellan. He claimed the place had become "Too Durn Civilized!" He moved to apparently less civilized Bakersfield.

## 19. Blackberry Farm - Blue Pheasant

Directions: Walk to.

In the 1950's the Eric Nelson family from Sweden turned Stephens' Blackberry Farm into a golf course with the Blue Pheasant restaurant above a golf pro shop. Today the golf course and the restaurant is owned by the City with its fate in limbo.

## 20. Stocklmeir Farm

Directions: Walk to.

Louis & Gladys Stocklmeir settled into a farm along Stevens Creek. Louis sold insurance. An elementary school in Sunnyvale is named after Louis and their great grand-daughter Kim Stocklmeir-Mercer was a third-grade teacher at that school for seven years. Gladys was memorably born in 1900.

## 21. Oak Dell Farm

Across Stevens Creek from the present Blue Pheasant restaurant was David J & Irene Davis's Oak Dell Farm which bred race horses. David was a serious and reserved guy, but Irene was more outgoing & friendly. Where their farm was is now Phar Lap Drive which is named after a famous New Zealand race horse of the era 1926-1932. The name Phar Lap is a word meaning lightning (literally sky flash) in the Southern Chinese language of Zhuang. The horse was located in Menlo Park when it died but it spent a lot of its time in North America at the Oak Dell Farm. Phar Lap was also the name of a well-known computer software company out of Massachusetts, with no relation to this area.

## 22. The House of Hoo Hoo

Directions: Walk to.

International Concatenated Order of Hoo-Hoo is a fraternal order of people working in the forest products industries. It was founded in 1892 and is still very much active today. The term hoo hoo was slang for lumberjacks (woodcutter or loggers). It is claimed that just before a tree they were cutting fell, the lumberjacks would call out “hoo hoo” as a warning. In 1909 the Hoo Hoos built a showcase wood house at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exhibition designed by architect Ellsworth Storey. It introduced Prairie Style (think Frank Lloyd Wright) architecture to Seattle. For the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco the Hoo Hoos chartered noted Architect Bernard Maybeck to again produce a structure to showcase their lumber industry. Many different kinds of trees and forms of wood products were used in a spectacular design. While the Hoo Hoos have an unconventional demeanor, their expo efforts were professional and effective.

Successful land developer George Hensley had purchased Renault’s \$17,000 showpiece chauffeur driven brougham car after the fair at discount, so he was aware of what assets were available. Recognizing the breathtaking nature of the house he purchased it for \$30,000, had it carefully taken to pieces and moved to Monte Vista and reassembled to become a dance club in 1917. Hensley used the opportunity to secure a striking promotional landmark for his Monta Vista subdivision. He positioned the house on a promontory in his subdivision overlooking the whole Santa Clara Valley for maximum community enhancing effect. Unfortunately, expo structures are often not designed with fire protection in mind (note the US pavilion of Expo 67) and it burned down completely in 1926.



## 23. The Varian House

Directions: Walk to 10114 Crescent Road.

This subdivision of houses, none of which have the original address, was the house and farm of Russell Varian. The Varian brothers Russell & Sigurd were inventors of the klystron tube that is used in microwaves, radar and at the Stanford Linear Accelerator (SLAC). They founded one of the most progressive and successful technology companies in the area. The family was very active in local conservation matters.

The Varian brothers came from a religious family that settled in the utopian community of Halcyon in the San Luis Obispo area. They

absorbed much of the communal teachings and implemented them in a practical way in their company.

## 24. Stevens Creek

Directions: Walk to.

In 1776, while Americans on the east coast were thinking of independence, democracy and other lofty things, on the west coast Basque Captain Juan Bautista de Anza in the service of the Spanish King Carlos III traveled along the coast of California to establish another outpost of the Spanish Empire on the strategically important San Francisco Bay. From the already established Franciscan post at Monterey, De Anza scouted unexplored territory north with some soldiers and Franciscan Priest Pedro Font as his religious and scientific advisor as well as an excellent recorder of the expedition. That role would have often been served by a Jesuit, but all Jesuits had been expelled from the Americas a decade before. Passing through the Santa Clara Valley, Font named the creek that passes through Monta Vista the Arroyo San Jose de Cupertino, in honor of a fellow Franciscan priest who had just been canonized (found to be a saint) a decade earlier. In 1848 Elijah Stephens named the creek on his property after himself. We now call it Stevens Creek. We Americans have never been great at spelling.

## 25. Stella's Bar

Directions: Walk to.

Wisconsin native Stella Kester visited Cupertino in 1917 with her husband who was a friend of Monta Vista Estates developer George Hensley. She was impressed enough to buy several lots. In 1933 she and her husband came back and opened a bar at this location. As her husband William was a master sergeant in the Army Air Corps he was sent overseas during WWII. In 1942, Stella closed the bar and signed up with the brand new Women's Army Corps and served for 5 years in the motor corps driving 15 passenger buses including duty in France and Germany. William wrote her "*That's the smartest thing you ever did outside of marrying me*". After her discharge with commendation from the Army she reopened the bar in 1948. In 1969 she profitably sold the liquor license and turn the building into an antiques shop which she ran until her death in 1979. She loved animals and had many pets including a donkey and a monkey. She had a rowdy sign in her bar offering to show her ass for one dollar.

Those who took her up on it were taken out back to see her donkey. Stella was a prudent investor and later in life made significant donations to Cupertino charities.

## 26. Kaiser Permanente Cement & Aluminum Foil Plants

**Directions:** none.

Looking to the west one can see the limestone quarry and part of the cement production complex. Before Henry J Kaiser acquired the plant, it was an employment source for Chinese workers who had complete the transcontinental railroad. For a while the plant also had an aluminum foil rolling operation. Kaiser had an aluminum smelting plant in Spokane and used this property to make a higher value product from all the raw aluminum he was making. Kaiser Aluminum had a big R&D lab in nearby Sunol that took advantage of all the talented and highly educated people in the area (way more than what was in Spokane). The name Permanente used for several of Kaiser's businesses including his health care system came from the creek that runs through the plant property. The creek had water flowing year round, which is unusual for the area, so the Spanish settlers had called it a permanent creek.

## Who we are

A local cultural organization founded in 1966 whose purpose is to preserve and present Cupertino's unique history. Our museum was opened in 1990 at the newly built City of Cupertino Quinlan Community Center. Cupertino started as one of the fruit farming communities of Santa Clara's "Valley of Hearts Delight" and has now become one of the cities of Silicon Valley. That growth has been fueled in no small part by almost fanatical emphasis on education. We are one of the many educational organizations in the region keeping that effort going.

## Authors



Paula Quintero

Third generation Cupertino resident.  
Retired geologist, United States Geological Survey.  
Specialized in Oceanic Micropalaeontology (small fossils).

Lives on a street named after her aunt. (how many people can claim that?)



Edwin El-Kareh

Not a real Cupertino resident. Just a carpet-bagger from across the border in Sunnyvale.

Applications engineer for electrical products.  
A minimalist mid-century modern kind of guy.  
Enjoys art, history & libraries.



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