



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

Fall 2025

Volume 35, Issue 1

Edited by: Jana Kilpatrick

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

CUPERTINO'S 70TH BIRTHDAY

On October 10, 2025, Cupertino celebrated its 70th year as the 13th incorporated city in Santa Clara county. Originally called the “West Side“ in earlier years - Cupertino was an unincorporated area of the county without specific boundaries up until the mid-1950s. Surrounded by the cities of Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, Los Altos and San Jose - all of which were eager to annex Cupertino's orchards and farms. San Jose was particularly aggressive and annexed unincorporated property all the way up to the east side of Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road (now De Anza Blvd.). An early map shows the aforementioned cities as a giant octopus, its tentacles encircling the Cupertino area.

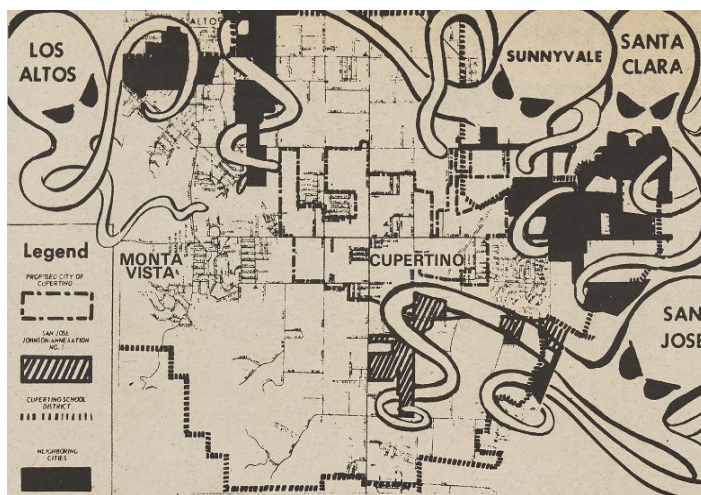


Illustration and map of Octopus Annexation from the Cupertino Courier 1955

In 1954, a group concerned citizens formed the Cupertino / Monta Vista Improvement Association to gather support for incorporation for the Cupertino area. The Association wanted the 1,476 residents (excluding Monta Vista) to vote to become their own town - with local control, their own say on development, and a self-determined tax structure.



*Cupertino Improvement Group circa 1950s:
Clyde Noel, Warner Wilson, Blanche Woeffel, Jerry Fitzgerald, Norman Nathanson, Tony Pelosi, J. Robert Dempster, Gary Stokes, Paul Finch*

Although the land was still mostly orchards and a few vineyards, the landscape was changing by the week, following the end of the World War II. A huge migration of people was pouring into the valley, looking for land to build homes or buy already-built houses. Most of the local fruit ranches were sold, a million trees uprooted, and subdivisions grew up almost overnight. The new residents wanted housing, utility services, schools, space for businesses, parks, and better streets and roads. It was the largest migration of people since the 1848-49 Gold Rush era.

On Oct. 10, 1955, residents voted. There were over 400 registered voters in the designated area. Incorporation won by a very slim margin - 231 voted YES and 203 voted NO. Monta Vista residents didn't want to be included as part of Cupertino. They wanted to stay with the county, since unincorporated zoning gave them a lower tax structure and lower building permit cost.

Cupertino's first city council consisted of Mayor Ralph Lindenmayer - local printer, Warner Wilson - advertising executive, John Saich - who continued in the orchardist tradition started by his father, Anton Saich; Ivan Meyerholz - engineer, and Norman Nathanson - local rancher.

From 1955 onward, the building industry transformed the 4 mile wide boundaries of newly incorporated Cupertino. One of the very first businesses was Gemco (which pre-dated Target). High school students by the dozens applied for after-school and weekend jobs at the new store. By 1958 - 59, Cupertino had its own high school with several hundred students. Between 1948 and 1961, some local students went to as many as 6 different schools as the student population boomed and district boundaries were re-drawn several times. In 1972, there were 13,800 students from elementary schools through middle schools and two high schools in the Cupertino Union School District.



Illustration, aerial view of shopping centers near Wolfe Stevens Creek and Homestead, including VALLCO

A major business milestone in the 1960's was the creation of VALLCO Business & Industrial Park. Twenty-five landowners (mostly former orchardists) had properties that were impacted. 17 of those landowners pooled their properties to form the park. 6 landowners sold their portions to Russel Varian of Varian Associates, an early tech company in the area.

The name VALLCO was taken from the first letter of the six landowner's last names - Varian, Lester, Leonard, Craft & Orlando. In the 1970's the land for the business park became Vallco Shopping Center, the first indoor shopping mall in the Cupertino area.



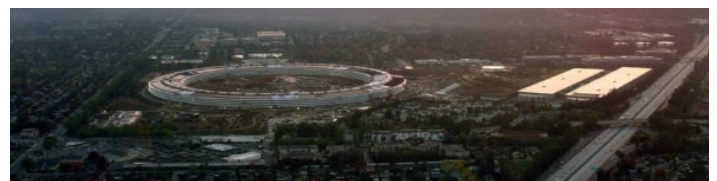
VALLCO 1990s, image from Wikimedia Commons

In 1967, the 112 acres formerly owned by Cupertino's first millionaire - Charles Baldwin - was purchased as the site of De Anza Community College. The property had been known at "Beaulieu Winery" in the earlier 1900's. The Baldwin family home - "Le Petit Trianon" (a replica of the original in France) still stands on the college campus as the California History Center. The need for advanced technology for the college was a factor in attracting tech companies to Cupertino.



Le Petit Trianon, now home of the California History Center

Apple Computer - co-founded by Homestead High School graduates Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs - first opened its doors in 1977. There are Apple buildings throughout Cupertino (and Monta Vista). Apple's spectacular "space ship" headquarters is on Homestead Road and Wolfe Road in Cupertino. Other well-known tech companies in Cupertino are Fairchild, NetManage, Symantec, and Hewlett Packard.



Aerial of Cupertino, with Apple Park

Michael Foulkes
President

Neeraj Mathur
Past President

Claudio Bono
Vice President

Bruce Parsons
Treasurer

Valerie Abid
Secretary

Board of Directors

Kalpana Aroda
Donna Austin
Brittany Barnes
Clarie Becker
Gail Fretwell-Hugger
Wendell Kerr
Janet Riddell

Advisory Board

Jane Alvarado
Helene Davis
Meenu Devrani
J.R. Fruen
Richard Lowenthal
Mark McKenna
Paula Quinterno
Crystal Tai
Steve Ting

Sonja Cook
*Traveling Trunk
Coordinator*

Staff

Alecia Thomas
Collections
Jana Kilpatrick
Exhibit & Admin
Anya Nazarova
Website & Admin

It is amazing to contemplate that only 250 years ago, the local Mukwema Ohlone tribes were startled by the sight of men on horseback traveling near Stevens Creek on March 26-27, 1776. The De Anza expedition priest & cartographer noted in his diary, "This place of San Joseph Cupertino has good water and much firewood, but nothing suitable for settlement...". The priest, Fr. Petrus Font, named modern day Stevens Creek "Arroyo San Joseph of Cupertino" after a saint from Copertino, Italy.

Today, Cupertino is an internationally known city with a growing and diverse population. The city has world class schools, many tech businesses, good parks and open spaces for biking and hiking, beautiful wineries in the Monte Bello area and close proximity to Bay Area cultural attractions. The climate is wonderfully temperate thanks to nearby mountains and the Pacific Ocean. Cupertino welcomes future generations and their contributions to this place that so many call "home". Happy 70th Anniversary, Cupertino!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy Fall Historical Society Members!

Thanks to Alysa Sakkas of McClellan 4H, Wendy Towner and the Honey Ladies of Campbell, Deb Conway of GirlzWurk Saratoga, and Jack Carter of Third Acre farm for generously loaning beekeeping items and sharing their expertise for our latest exhibit *The World of the Honeybee*!

We are 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 artifacts on display.

We continue to outreach to our schools with our Traveling Trunk program, and are working on events such as Tavern Talks and activities that will engage our community and show 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.

Thanks to our staff, Alecia Thomas, Jana Kilpatrick, and Anya Nazarova for their great work on the museum collection, exhibits, and operations.

Excited to celebrate with you this holiday season!



Ohlone in a tule (reed) boat

By Gail Fretwell-Hugger & Alecia Thomas
See more pictures, information, & full article at
cupertinomuseum.org/articles.html



A glimpse of the current permanent exhibit

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:

November 29, 2025	11 AM – 3 PM
December 20, 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

UPCOMING TAVERN TALK AT FLORENTINE'S TRATTORIA



6-8 PM Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Florentine's Trattoria

14510 Big Basin Way #11 Saratoga, CA 95070

Join us as we celebrate sixty-one years of community, history, and deliciousness at our next Tavern Talk at Florentine Trattoria! Tickets include: a complimentary glass of wine in addition to accounts from longtime Florentine's staff on the eatery's six decades of history in the community, starting with their very first location in Cupertino, as well as presentations on local history from the CHSM! Reception to begin at 6:00pm with opening remarks planned at 6:30pm. Closing remarks planned for 7:30pm. Those wishing to enjoy the menu are advised to seek reservations pre/post event.

Get tickets at Eventbrite: bit.ly/TavernTalkTrattoria

UPCOMING EVENT: CHSM HOLIDAY PARTY

Wednesday December 3, 2025

Cupertino Hotel

Members & invited guests, please join us for our annual holiday party to celebrate our community & another great year full of accomplishments!



Right: holiday exhibit at the museum 2022

UPCOMING EVENT: QUINLAN TREE LIGHTING



6 PM Friday December 5, 2025
Quinlan Community Center
10185 North Stelling Road

Kick off the holiday season! Experience the moment when the tree comes alive with hundreds of twinkling lights, filling the air with a magical glow. Stay for holiday photo opportunities including a photo with Santa, our snowball room, holiday movie watching, and kids activities. This is a free event open to the community. No registration is required.

UPCOMING EVENT: BREAKFAST WITH SANTA



8:30 – 11:15 AM Saturday December 6, 2025
Quinlan Community Center
10185 North Stelling Road

You and your family are invited to a breakfast celebration with Santa! The elves will be cooking up some delicious North Pole Pancakes and Santa will be posing for pictures. The elves have also set-up a workshop with holiday crafts and fun for the children.

Register at bit.ly/BreakfastWithSanta2025

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. Visit cupertinomuseum.org/ttschool.html or send a message to tt@cupertinomuseum.org.



Some of the artifacts featured in the presentation

MAYOR'S INITIATIVE



Cupertino Mayor Liang Chao's Cupertino Stories initiative is a digital effort to record and share people's experiences of living, working, and doing business in Cupertino. Many organizations, including CHSM, are partnering to engage the community in capturing the history being made in the city today.

October 26 marked the conclusion of the Cupertino Stories Contest which collected over 530 stories from residents, workers, students, and community members through events, partners, and the newly developed Media Convert app.

Learn more & read stories at cupertinostories.org

FROM THE CUPERTINO SCENE

“Jaws - For those of you who have seen the movie or read the book, the Mayor wishes to announce that he will immediately close all Cupertino beaches upon any shark sightings (movies like that give Mayors a bad image and obviously strong, positive action is needed).”

Cupertino Scene 1975 Vol. IV No. IV

The Jaws movie celebrated its 50th anniversary with the July release of a documentary film about Steven Spielberg’s original 1975 film.



Huge Basking Shark near Fisherman's Wharf Monterey California circa 1912. Image from the Monterey County Historical Society

Scene Issues from 2002-2005 are archived here:

cupertino.gov/Your-City/Divisions/Communications/Cupertino-SCENE-Newsletter



Union Church of Cupertino, undated

THANKSGIVING

“...Almost everyone knows the story of that first “day of thanks-giving” in 1621, when Pilgrims and Wampanoags sat down together to feast on food brought and prepared by both groups, played games and at least for some years thereafter were able to live in peace...”

Later on, in early New England, it was the custom at Thanksgiving time to place five kernels of corn at every place at the table as a reminder of that horrible first winter when their food had been used up and the Pilgrims were rationed five kernels of corn to each individual still living. It was all they had...

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln, weary and heartsick over the Civil War, wrote, “...that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates our land ... may be punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people?” He reminded Americans how blessed they have been as a country but that they have become “intoxicated with unbroken success” growing in wealth and power, but becoming too proud. He asked Americans to set apart the last Thursday in November as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to God, thanking him for all our blessings...

The Union Church of Cupertino (pictured at left, the first non-denominational house of worship in Cupertino) celebrated its first Thanksgiving service in 1888. That was only 24 years after the Civil War. While California and Santa Clara County were far removed from those states where battles were fought, many from those affected areas came here after to begin anew. Memories were still fresh and there was much to be thankful for in this new place, much as the Pilgrims had given thanks over 250 years before...”

Resources:

Five Grains of Corn by Bliss Forbush, *Thanksgiving Proclamation* (1863) President Abraham Lincoln.

From “Thanksgiving Day History”, a Roots article by Gail Fretwell-Hugger, Cupertino Scene 2005

HONEY FOR THE HOLIDAYS



Get some **locally produced honey** for your Holiday Gifts! Available at the Cupertino Museum, **pick up before November 20** during museum open hours.

MUSEUM OPEN HOURS:

Wednesdays	10 AM – 4 PM
Thursdays	10 AM – 4 PM
Fridays	10 AM – 5 PM

HONEY PRODUCERS:

Alysa Sakkas, McClellan 4H and Cupertino Rotarian
Deb Conway, GirlzWurk of Saratoga
Wendy Towner and The Honey Ladies of Campbell
Jack Carter, Third Acre Farm in Cupertino



THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

City of Cupertino	Donna Austin
Apple	Sharon & Richard Blaine
PG&E	Andy Butcher
Ron Cali	Janet Riddell
Richard Lowenthal	Kathy Stakey
Martin Sorensen	Jim & Sharon Walker
San Jose Water	

And thanks to all our members, volunteers, and supporters who make CHSM operations possible!

2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ 2 Exhibits: *Gadgets Galore & World of the Honeybee*
- ✓ Contributed historical narratives for Mayor Liang Chao's [Cupertino Stories](#) project.
- ✓ Provided photos for 3 short films produced by the Chamber of Commerce for Cupertino's 70th anniversary
- ✓ Provided photos and research for Cupertino Scene feature article on Cupertino's 70th anniversary.
- ✓ Participated in Parks & Rec. Cherry Blossom Festival with pop-up exhibit highlighting the stories of 3 local Japanese-American families, with curated images and narratives translated in both Japanese and English.
- ✓ Participated in Parks & Rec. Diwali Festival
- ✓ Catalogued almost every issue of the Cupertino Scene, with notes about contained historical information.
- ✓ 3 Traveling Trunk program presentations for Mandarin immersion classes at Sedgwick School in the summer of 2025. 6 Traveling Trunk programs booked for 2026.
- ✓ Hosted 2 Tavern Talks at local restaurants
- ✓ Hosted a History Tour at McClellan Ranch
- ✓ Annual Fundraiser at Blackberry Farm, Cupertino's first commercial business and an early swim resort established in the late 1800s.
- ✓ Released 3 issues of Cornerstone newsletter
- ✓ CHSM was featured in other newspapers such as the Mercury News and Cupertino Matters.
- ✓ Collaborating with West Valley Presbyterian Church to digitize and organize archives (ongoing).
- ✓ Accepting historical objects into collection (ongoing).
- ✓ Digitizing archives (ongoing).



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

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

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S.POSTAGE
PAID
SAN JOSE, CA
PERMIT NO.8266

Current Resident

CUPERTINO'S NAME

"In March, 1776, Col. Juan Bautista de Anza and his party of Spanish explorers set up camp along a fresh-water creek in Santa Clara Valley enroute from Monterey to establish the presidio of San Francisco. Padre Petrus Font, De Anza's diarist and cartographer, named the creek "Arroyo de San Jose Cupertino" to honor his patron saint, San Guiseppe di Cupertino. Today, the saint is known as St. Joseph and the Italian city of his birth is known as Copertino."



From Cupertino Roots, Cupertino Scene 1986

