

# Capitola Sunset

December 2013

CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

*Providing a future for our past.*

## Village Palms

By Frank Perry

Capitola has two famous “palms” in its history: an artist and a tree. An entire book has been written about artist Olaf Palm, and the Museum did an exhibit of his work in 1994. But little has been written about the life of Capitola’s historic Canary Island Date Palm (C.I.D. Palm).

The year of birth and early life of the C.I.D. Palm remain a mystery. It would have been planted from a seed (the only way to propagate its kind), perhaps at a nursery. This was likely around a hundred years ago. The C.I.D. Palm enjoyed its formative years at the entrance to Depot Hill.

In about 1921, Teddy Woodhouse, manager of the Grand Hotel Capitola, moved the C.I.D. Palm to its current location at the confluence of The Esplanade and Monterey Avenue. This put it squarely in front of the hotel. Quite likely Woodhouse thought it would serve to promote Capitola’s year-round mild climate. Indeed, the palm and hotel appear together in countless early-day photos and postcards.



This is an early photograph of the Canary Island Date Palm after it was transplanted from the entrance to Depot Hill to its present day location at The Esplanade and Monterey Avenue. It was probably meant to symbolize our mild, Mediterranean climate.

As the name implies, the C.I.D. Palm’s ancestors came from the Canary Islands. This species has become one of the most widely planted garden trees in the world. It thrives in the temperate parts of North America, Europe, and Asia. As long as the temperature does not dip for long periods below about 20° F, it does just fine.



The ‘Village Palm Tree’ witnessed the hotel fire in 1929, the incorporation of Capitola in 1949, the great storm of 1983, and dozens of festivals, fireworks shows, beach concerts, and special events along The Esplanade. The ruins of the Hotel Capitola are seen at the bottom of this image.

Today, however, the most common palm species in Capitola Village is the Queen Palm. The city planted a number of these along village streets a few years ago. Mexican Fan Palms are also common. Two of these were planted near the C.I.D. Palm less than 30 years ago but, because they grow faster, are now almost as tall.

Next time you take a walk around Capitola Village, watch for palm trees. There are a surprising number of them. They are also depicted on many of the 1,200 seawall tiles. Some of these tiles ring the base of the Canary Island Date Palm, making a perfect picture frame for this majestic and historic tree.

## Historic Photos Donated

Soquel resident Alice Daubenbis recently granted the Museum permission to scan photos from her family collection. Her great, great grandfather, Henry Daubenbis, came to the U.S. from Germany in 1853 and settled in Soquel where his brother, John, had put down roots a few years earlier. Many of the photos depict Capitola in the early 1900s with various family members in the foreground. Rather than being the typical tourist views, they show a Capitola through the eyes of the locals. We thank Alice for sharing some of her rich family history with the Museum.



Thomas Lindsay with his tour boat, the *Shamrock*, on Soquel Creek in the early 1900s. The railroad trestle can be seen in the background. (Daubenbis collection)

## Museum Receives Historic Print

Emily Koeneman recently donated this signed and numbered print of Camp Capitola. It was drawn in the 1970s by artist Robert Otis Holter, who based it on an 1879 lithograph. Research shows that the drawing appeared on a 1975 calendar.



## Just in Time for Christmas!



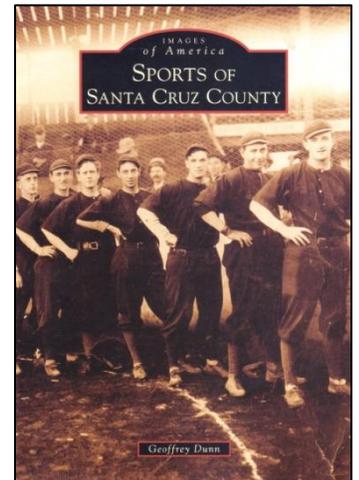
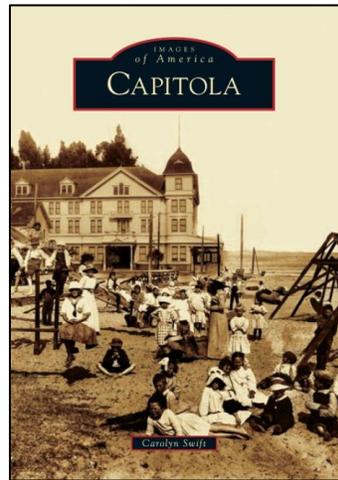
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*Save the date!*

*December 22, from 1:00-3:PM.*

*Carolyn Swift will be signing her book  
at the Capitola Museum.*

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# The Name Behind the Name

By Frank Perry

A few months ago a Museum visitor asked me how the City of Capitola got its name. I shared the story of how it was named for the heroine in the E.D.E.N. Southworth novel, *The Hidden Hand*. Then the visitor asked the derivation of the girl's name. I had no idea. So that evening I set out to find the answer.

An especially enlightening source was a website called "Nancy's Baby Names." Nancy tried to find the answer to this same question. She says the name may have come from Capitolium, the temple of Jupiter, on Capitoline Hill in ancient Rome. It is from this that we get the word "capitol" for the building where the government meets.

Nancy could not find out why Southworth chose that particular name, but points out that she clearly had fun with it. Chapter titles include "Cap in Captivity," and "Capitola the Capitalist." Part two was titled "Capitola the Madcap."

Capitola was an uncommon but certainly not rare name in the late 1800s, thanks to the popularity of the novel. Even today, there are a few Capitolas out there, and from time to time someone named Capitola will contact the Museum. A quick search of Facebook members reveals a surprising number of women named Capitola, and a few people who have it as a surname.

Museum board member Stephanie Kirby, who is a genealogist, found a woman named Capitola on an outer branch of her own family tree.

Visitors to the website posted some interesting comments. One woman named her daughter Capitola for a great aunt, now 106, who was named for the character in the book. Another was named for a woman her mother met in Switzerland.

Still another Capitola said she is 25 and the third generation to have the name. But that was surpassed by another who reported that the name goes back at least five generations in her family and perhaps nine, predating the Southworth book. That reader said her family always presumed the name came from Saint Capitolina, who was executed by the Romans in the 300s for being a Christian.

Some of the Capitolas shared their nicknames: Capi, Cappy, and Tola. Southworth liked "Cap." One contributor said her name is Captola—presumably a variant.

"Nancy's Baby Names" website concludes by pointing out that there is also a town in California called Capitola. Not so well known here is that there is also a tiny town in Florida named Capitola. You can tour it via Google Maps.

The Museum welcomes more stories about the name "Capitola."

## President's Corner

By Linda Smith

When daylight saving time kicks in each fall, I am reminded of the cycle of change that comes with a new year. Some years are colored with major events, and others bring more subtle realizations—a new wrinkle here and there, a new friend made, another candle on the birthday cake. Things change, and yet they stay the same. That is the story for the Capitola Museum for 2013.

This year our good friend Carolyn Swift retired, bringing in a new friend, Frank Perry. Frank has begun engaging a new audience through social media. Now, you can like us on Facebook, and follow the Friday History Mystery videos on YouTube! Soon, Capitola will be introducing an app for IOS devices that will enable an interactive 'now and then' look at some of your favorite history spots around Capitola, as well as offer a walking tour of public art installations. Although we miss Carolyn, it seems we are enjoying the prospect of exciting changes ahead!

We have said goodbye to a few volunteers this year, but have gained a few new ones as well. We continue to look for those in the community who are willing to spend just two hours once or twice a month to help us keep the doors open so we can share Capitola history with visitors. Each year we change the exhibit, keeping it fresh with new perspectives on how Capitola has come to be the special place that we call "home." If you would like to volunteer, or know someone who might have the time, please contact us at [capitolamuseum@gmail.com](mailto:capitolamuseum@gmail.com) or stop by the museum. We would love to have you!

2013 was a good year. We wonder what 2014 will bring!

Look for our new **Facebook Page** and  
**You Tube Channel** under:  
*Capitola Historical Museum*  
Participate in our video history quiz.

# Ettamae Shaffer Retires

By Niels Kisling

Only one museum volunteer has ever had their own key to the place. That's Ettamae, who started volunteering back in the last century. No one at the museum, including Ettamae, seems to know how long she's been there. She's held a permanent Friday slot on the weekly schedule, a slot that is now open.

"I will be 95 next June and just don't have the energy to renew my driver's license. If it weren't for that I would not be giving up my volunteer Friday afternoon shift," says Ettamae.



In the 1930s she met her future husband, Howard Shaffer, when he was hired to play baseball by the company where Ettamae's father worked. Company baseball teams were popular back then, and recreation was probably scarce when you lived "somewhere 40 miles west of Bakersfield, in a place that didn't even have a name."

In 1952, she and her husband came to live in Santa Cruz County from those oilfields west of Bakersfield that they once called home. They settled in the house in Live Oak where Ettamae still lives today.

Prior to 1952, the couple enjoyed trips to the coast to visit Capitola, Cayucos, Morro Bay, and Cambria to escape the inland valley heat. They vacationed in Capitola where they had friends and relatives. Howard Shaffer even had a family baseball connection here. According to Ettamae, his Uncle Harry used to live on California Avenue, next door to our local baseball hero and hall-of-famer Harry Hooper.

Carolyn Swift, who was the Capitola Museum Director during Ettamae's tenure recently said, "Ettamae was my friend and Friday afternoon companion for at least 17 years and was a part of my museum experience that I now miss very much."

Ettamae recently discovered a 2007 copy of Capitola Museum's newsletter where she was featured in the Volunteer Spotlight. According to that piece, we can honor Ettamae Shaffer for over 17 years of service to the museum—the longest standing run by any volunteer.

*(Please Note: Ettamae Shaffer will be recognized by the Capitola City Council for her service to the Capitola Museum at 7:PM on December 12, 2013 in council chambers. You can also honor Ettamae by attending the meeting.)*

## Capitola Museum has recently received generous donations from:

Lorie Bross	Dianne & Steven Burbank
Al & Marian Carlson	Gayle and Joe Ortiz
Paul Parsons	Jim & Barbara Reding
Karen Ruland	Topsy Smalley
Kathleen Sullivan	Carolyn Swift
Dorothy Lent Washam	
Ron Olmstead to honor Carolyn Swift	

## New Acquisitions:

- history of Capitola video stores by John Pilge
- The Life of F. A. Hihn: A Family History* by Joe Welch Jr., a report on F. A. Hihn loaned by Ron Graves for copying
- collection of wharf photos from the City Hall files

Thanks to the following volunteers who gave their time to keep the museum open during the past few months. You are helping us set new visitor attendance records!

Bob Anderson	Paul Parsons
Joan Armstrong	Harrison Pugh
Ron Beck	Ettamae Shaffer
Marcia Biancalana	David Shoaf
Al & Marion Carlson	Linda Smith
Minna Hertel	Kathleen Sullivan
Steve Kayser	Sandy Wadhams
Niels Kisling	Valerie Webb
Joan McNair	Gordon van Zuiden
John Nicol	Marilee White

## Published by the Capitola Historical Museum

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Museum Hours:

Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 12 to 4 p.m.

*Closed January and February 2014 for installation of new exhibit.*

**Museum Curator:** Frank Perry

**Board of Trustees:** Linda Smith (president), Bob Anderson (vice president), Tom McGranahan (treasurer), Stephanie Kirby (secretary), Gordon van Zuiden, David Shoaf, and Niels Kisling