



Melissa Gordon sits on her antique bed. The quilt was made by her great-grandmother and grandmother.



People and Places

Up the Coast

Historic Ranch House on Tour

By MARGARET KOCH
Sentinel Staff Writer

One of the five houses that will be included in Cabrillo Music Festival's House and Garden Tour June 19 is the historic Wilder Ranch home, just north of Santa Cruz city limits, off Highway 1.

Homes will be open from 1 to 5 p.m. and may be toured in any order. For tickets call Cabrillo College Community Services at 425-6337 or Mary Spire at 426-4934. Donation is \$5.

The Wilder home is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gordon and is the property of the State of California.

The main part of the house was built in 1896 by the late Deloss Wilder Sr. who was so careful in his planning that the foundation for it was laid, then allowed to settle for a whole year before anything was built on top of it.

The Wilders were hard-working, early California

ranchers who were so innovative in their thinking that they developed their own generator for electricity — said to be the first ranch with electricity in Santa Cruz County.

Water wheels were run by Meder Creek, a rushing little stream that still powers a saw in the ranch shop, although the rest of the ranch electricity now comes from commercial sources.

In the kitchen the original wood burning stove still stands, showing the warped top it acquired from excessive heat when it was converted years ago to oil.

The tilt-out bins in the pantry are still there, the pass-through to the dining room and the Wilders' gun cabinet with its original lining.

Guns in the old ranch days were longer barreled than present-day guns, a fact that is evident from the holes in the top of the cabinet — no longer needed.

The living room was once

two rooms — the front and back parlors, with a small fireplace in the back parlor. It has a tile front and a portrait tile of President Grover Cleveland in the center. The large fireplace that centers one wall was built at the time the two rooms were opened to make one large room.

The Gordons have a harpsichord in the living room, a beautiful instrument they built — it took the better part of a year, they say.

Gordon also paints and sculpts in stone — his work is evident here and there throughout the house, and he builds model sailing ships, making his own tools in many cases, he notes.

A downstairs bedroom is now a library for Gordon who is a state park ranger with many books and works of reference.

The two upstairs bedrooms that will be open to the tour are those of Melissa, 4, and Mark, 7. The

Gordons have furnished them beautifully with fine French-Austrian antiques and in Melissa's room, there is a quilt begun by her great-grandmother and finished by her grandmother.

Out by the back door of the ranch house stands the very important Bolcoff Adobe, dating from sometime in the early 1840s it is believed, or perhaps even earlier. The adobe is not open to tour goers but may be seen from the walkway. The two concrete buttresses were added in recent years to strengthen the failing adobe walls by the Wilders, who prized the historic building highly.

Other outbuildings include another family home immediately adjacent to the tour house, a shop and bunkhouse and a large carriage house. The latter contains a blacktopped pavement floor that came from a bitumen mine on the ranch property.

Outbuildings will not be open to tour goers.



Dining room has Wilder family gun cabinet still intact. The ranch was at one time a dairy, then a cattle operation. Wilders sold it in 1969 because it was no longer a feasible operation. The family owned a portion of it in 1871, then acquired the entire 2330 acre property in 1885 when a partnership with L.R. Baldwin was dissolved. Six generations of Wilders operated and lived on the ranch.



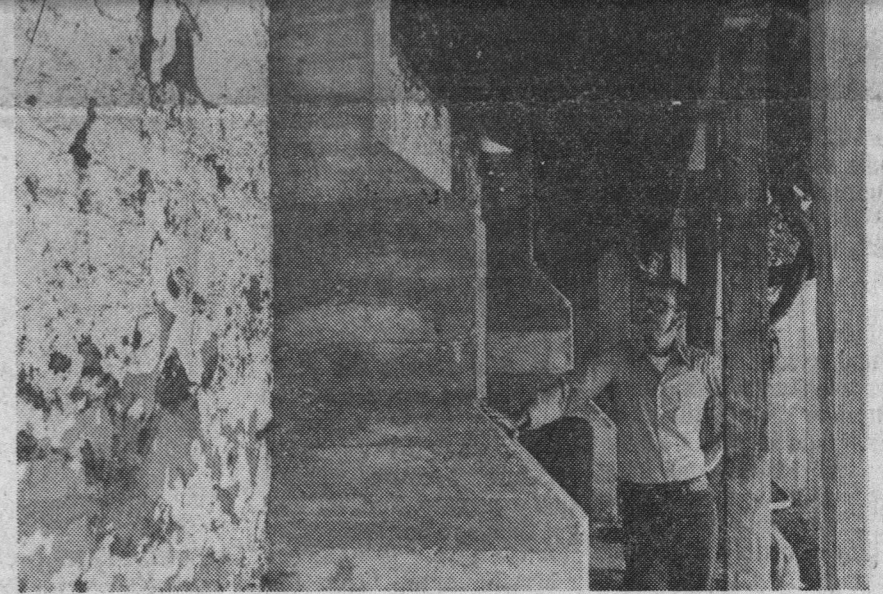
Original wood stove was converted to oil years ago, is purely an ornament today, but still in the kitchen.



Jeanne Gordon sits at the harpsichord she and her husband built, in the ranch house living room.

For Tickets

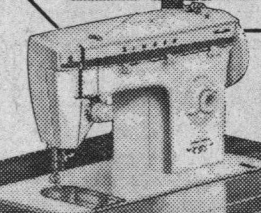
For tickets for the 425-6337 or Mary Spire June 19 home and at 426-4934. garden tour which benefits the Cabrillo Music



Bolcoff Adobe is at backdoor of ranchhouse, shown here with Charles Gordon, state ranger, who has led tours of the Wilder Ranch in past months. Tours are discontinued until after July due to the state budget, but may be continued later this year, he says.

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