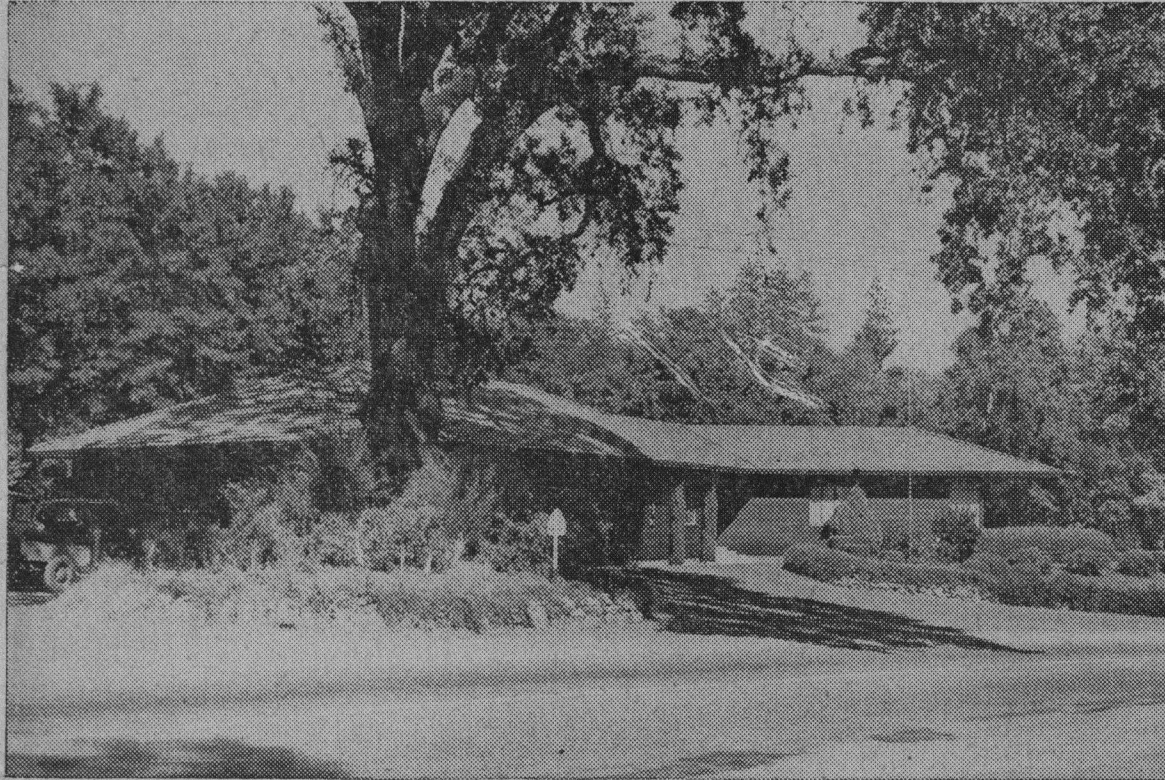


Ben Lomond's Famed Fire House



There may not be such a thing as a "perfect" building, but the closest thing to it in this part of the nation is the Ben Lomond

firehouse, with both beauty of line and clever utilitarian planning. It was designed by the late Timothy L. Pflueger of San Fran-

cisco and ever since its completion in 1940 has attracted wide acclaim. Pflueger donated his services.

Ben Lomond Fire House Is ★ Know Your County ★ Structure Par Excellence

Many are the inquiries directed to Ben Lomond residents by visitors about their remarkable firehouse.

It is no exaggeration to say it is one of the finest small town firehouses in California. It is not only a joy to look at, as it "just seems to blend in with the redwoods," but it is also outstanding from a utilitarian angle.

Ben Lomond, the beautiful little town on the banks of the San Lorenzo river in the valley of the same name, has of late been in the spotlight of state-wide publicity due to a legal difference between fire district commissioners and some of the citizens.

However, the controversy does not concern this story, which is the 12th in the "Know Your County" articles. This is an attempt to tell how Ben Lomond secured its firehouse.

The man who knows the story is Earl Lyon, fire chief for 18 years and an untiring worker for the department. On the front of the one-story rustic redwood structure is a plaque which states that Timothy L. Pflueger was the architect.

Pflueger was one of the nation's best architects. He died in November, 1946, after designing such structures as the San Francisco telephone building, Union Square garage, and the "Top of the Mark," unique saloon atop the Mark Hopkins hotel.

A resident of San Francisco and a friend of the Bay city's postmaster, W. H. McCarthy, Pflueger often visited the valley at the latter's summer home on Love creek. In the late 1930's he learned that the

Ben Lomond fire department was going to build a new building and he volunteered his services.

The noted architect became so interested he even planned the landscaping. Lyon never received a bill after the building was completed in 1940.

When finished the structure was estimated to be worth \$25,000 by the staff of Pflueger, although it only cost the department \$16,000. What it is worth today is anybody's guess.

From a utilitarian angle the building is just as well designed as it is from a viewpoint of beauty. It is situated on a knoll in downtown Ben Lomond with easy access in any direction for fire trucks. One of the features is the automatic doors system which pops them open with the alarm bell.

Lyon has pointed out: "Mr. Pflueger was an artist as well as an outstanding architect," which sums up the situation exactly.

Just as the Pflueger-designed "Top of the Mark" set the style for "skyrooms," so may the Ben Lomond building set a style for firehouses. At least one, the new Capitola community hall, is designed along the same lines.

Ben Lomond is about 10 miles from Santa Cruz in the San Lorenzo valley and the drive is one of the county's most scenic. Motorists may take either the Graham Hill road at the base of the Los Gatos highway, or go up the San Lorenzo river drive. The town joins three miles below Ben Lomond, at Felton. (F.N.J.)