

Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

The 1870s Rodgers House, now the centerpiece of the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds entrance, will be one of three area buildings to receive the Santa Cruz County Historical Blue Plaque presented by the Museum of Art & History on Sunday.

Historic buildings deemed landmarks

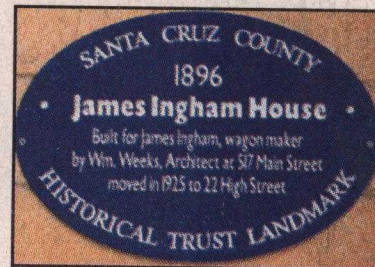
Historic Buildings - Santa County R.P. 5-1-04

Rodgers House, Miramar, Hauer Ranch to receive coveted Blue Plaques

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Three historic buildings in the Watsonville/Corralitos area will be awarded the historical Blue Plaque on Sunday: The 1870s Rodgers House, the majestic centerpiece of the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds entrance; the Miramar restaurant on Main Street in downtown Watsonville; and the Emma Hauer Ranch on Pleasant Valley Road.

"Of course we are delighted to receive the Blue Plaque award," Fair CEO Judith Panick said. "The Rodgers House was on the city of Watsonville historical structure registry, but since they moved the building and water tower to the



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Ten buildings in the Watsonville area currently have a Blue Plaque, including the Ingham house.

fairgrounds, we've had to re-register it as a historical landmark in Santa Cruz County. We are very

pleased to accept this award."

The Blue Plaques, which are self-nominating/self-pay, will be presented by Museum of Art & History and Historic Landmark Awards Committee. The plaques are awarded for historical, architectural and social significance, Pajaro Valley Historical Association archivist Jane Borg said.

"Though, for instance, the Miramar restaurant is no longer in existence, the level of social importance of the business in Watsonville, which operated from 1947 to 1998, is very important."

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The Miramar Restaurant (now the home of Lorenzini's restaurant), 526 Main St., is housed in the Derpich Building, which was built in 1915.

The Hauer Ranch in Corralitos was built around 1913. A variety of apple from that very ranch is named after Hauer, Borg said.

The Rodgers House, which was originally built on East Lake Avenue at Tuttle Street and later moved to the fairgrounds, has both historical and social significance with its ties to famed American

author John Steinbeck. Esther Steinbeck Rodgers, Steinbeck's sister, once lived in the stately home.

Ten buildings in the Watsonville area currently have a Blue Plaque:

- the bandstand in Watsonville Plaza, 1906;
- Coast Counties Building, 618 Main St., 1930 (currently Jalisco's Restaurant);
- Bockius-Orr house, 332 East Beach St., 1868 (currently the home of the Pajaro Valley Historical Association);
- Ingham house, 22 East High St., 1896;
- Julius Lee house, 128 East Beach St. (currently the home of

historian Betty Lewis);

- Mansion House, 419-424 Main St., 1871;
- Porter Building at Main and Maple streets;
- Madison House, 335 East Lake Ave. (currently the home of Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance);
- Thomas Leland House, 42 Riverside Drive, 1865; and
- Watsonville Woman's Club, 12 Brennan St., 1918.

The Blue Plaque program almost disappeared following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, Borg said. But registry for the plaques, which are commonly mounted in a visible spot on the front of the building, has been on the rise.