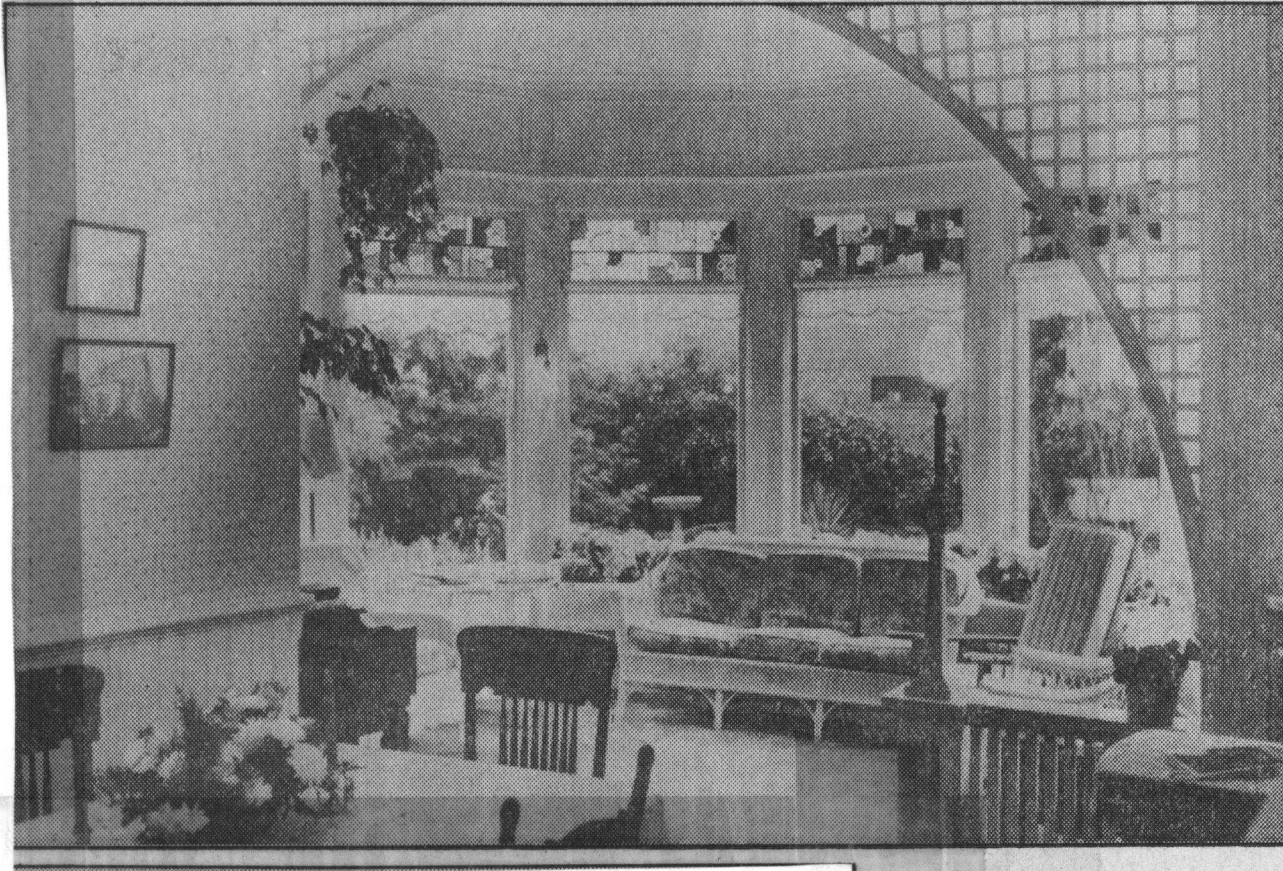


Cliff Crest — touch of history on the hill



By GREG LATHROP

It's not often that one can say, "If they were still alive today, they wouldn't recognize the place." But that's not true of Cliff Crest.

Nearly a century after it was created in 1887, the historical landmark — it is the former private residence of William Jeter, the Lt. Governor of California and the Mayor of Santa Cruz in the 1890s — is now "Cliff Crest Bed & Breakfast Inn," and despite the change, the all-redwood structure stands atop Beach Hill with the same intimate charm and style of the Victorian Era as it did 96 years ago.

Even though much has been done — four bathrooms added, and the living room and library are now two bedrooms — little changed in the way of appearance. All the original woodwork was saved during the remodeling to use for the doors and trim, and the detail of the bathrooms which were constructed in the bedrooms followed the original so closely that it's hard for the untrained eye to tell where the old ends and the new begins.

"The whole house was tastefully done," says owner Mae Lund, who, along with her husband Bert, opened on New Year's Eve of 1982 after two months of renovation. "It wasn't overly done. Some Victorian houses go into so much they're garish and you can't stomach them."

The five bedrooms (two downstairs and three up) each have their own personality, ranging from the fireplace in the "plum room" downstairs to the bridal suite-like atmosphere of the "rose room" upstairs overlooking the entire Monterey Bay.



Nearly a century after it was created in 1887, Cliff Crest (above) stands atop Beach Hill with the same intimate charm and style of the Victorian Era as it did 96 years ago. Probably the most impressive room in the inn is the solarium (left). Fresh flowers line the box beneath the windows with stained glass above that is truly unusual, echoing the colors and feeling of Gauguin paintings.

Pete Amos/Sentinel

Probably the most impressive room in the inn is the solarium (see photo above left). Built in 1903 and renovated in 1973 and again last year, it is the favorite of everyone who visits. Fresh flowers line the box beneath the windows — there are also fresh flowers in each bedroom — with stained glass above that is truly unusual, echoing the colors and feeling of Gauguin paintings.

Through the windows of the solarium one can view the gardens which include two 100-year-old ginkgo trees (male and female), a Japanese camelia, persimmon tree and a deep purple tulip tree among others. "Those interested in landscape can relate to the place," Mae says of the spacious grounds which were influenced by Jeter's personal friend, John McLaren, the landscape designer of Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

Overlooking the garden atop the solarium is a belvedere, which was also added in 1903 and has since been remodeled. Visitors may enjoy breakfast during the summer.

But to really appreciate the beauty of Cliff Crest, one must see it. There will be an open house today at Cliff Crest (407 Cliff St.) from 2 to 5 p.m. to do just that.



Bert and Mae Lund, owners of Cliff Crest atop Beach Hill.