

Lithograph On Display At Historical Midcounty Home

By Margaret Koch
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What may prove to be one of the most important historical "finds" in Santa Cruz county is being shown to the public this week in a historical house located between Soquel and Aptos.

The find is an unusually large color lithograph by H. S. Crocker and company. It shows the "village" of San Francisco in 1849.

The lithograph is owned by David Esty and is on exhibit at The Family Tree, 2955 Park avenue. Esty's efforts to discover more about his historic "find" led him to the Crocker company in San Francisco. There he found an extensive collection of Crocker lithographs—but this particular one is not included.

Did other existing copies of the scene burn in the earthquake and fire of 1906? No one really knows. But Esty has been unable to discover another lithograph like this his—or anyone who knows of one.

The house where the lithograph is being shown, has an interesting history of its own. Esty's great-great-grandfather, Major Seward Dill, built it about 100 years ago. Esty, who is on the Capitola Police force, is operating an antique business in the house although it is no longer in family hands. He plans to acquire the property in the near future—thus the name, The Family Tree.

Major Dill lived in Phillips, Maine, was a personal friend of Abe Lincoln and was named after William Henry Seward, friend of the Dill family. Dill came to Soquel in 1864-65, bought property, built the home and settled down to retire and raise roses.

For years, the old name "Rose Acres" clung to the property. There were about 200 varieties originally, according to Esty.

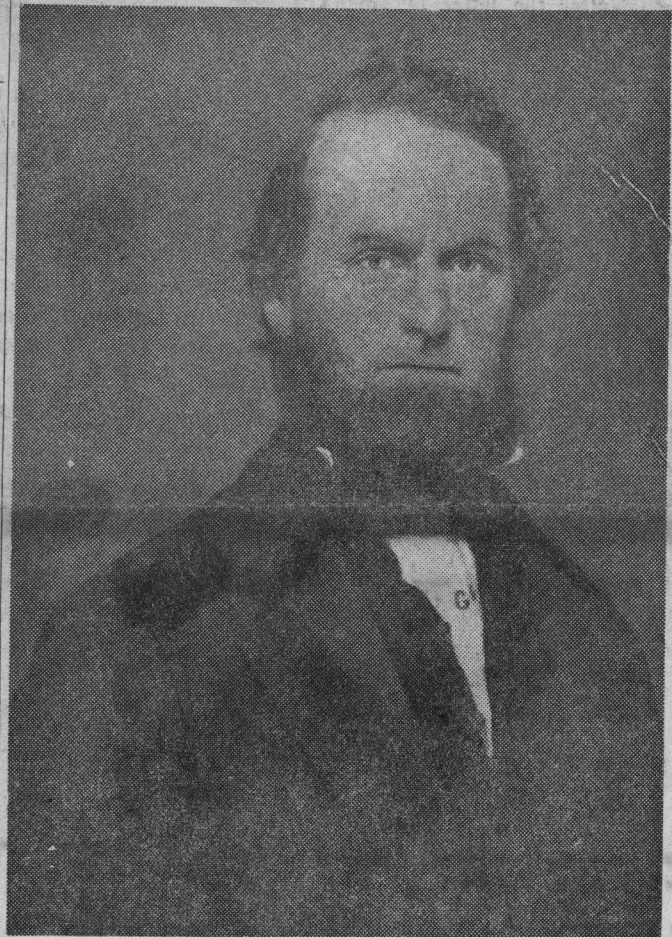
The Major's granddaughter, Cora Lurano, married Jarvis D. Esty in 1875 and they also made their home on the family place. Jarvis served six years as a Santa Cruz county supervisor and operated a store in Soquel.

Major Dill lived in the house all his life—to the well-seasoned age of 94. He is buried in Soquel cemetery.

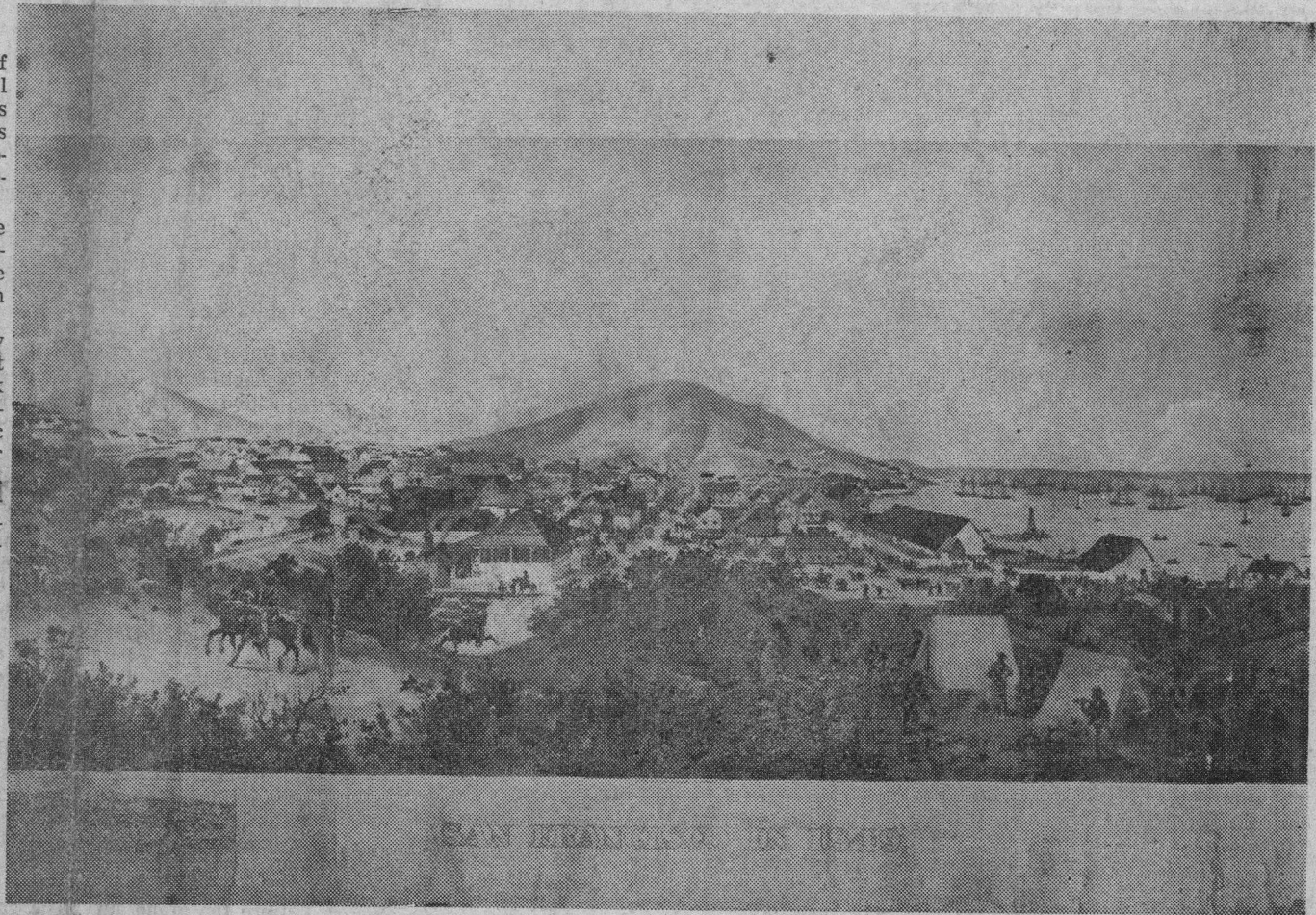
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Rose Acres as it looked in the early 1900s when it was the retirement home of Major Seward Dill.



Major Seward Dill



Lithograph showing the San Francisco of 1849, printed by H. S. Crocker and company, was unearthed recently in Santa Cruz by David Esty. Details include "Schooner Row,"

the Plaza (flag flying), the Merchants' Exchange (where man is on horseback), Telegraph Hill in background and Liedesdorf's cottage, central foreground.

Major Seward Dill

In the 1920s the property passed out of the Esty family and for a few years was operated as a riding stable. More recently it became the Trading Post. Now it is The Family Tree.

One part of the property which is gone, much to Esty's regret, is the huge fir tree which stood out in front at the corner of Park avenue and Soquel drive.

A family story goes that the Major and his wife, on their way West to California, picked up the tree when it was a mere switch. They brought it here and planted it; it flourished for years, but was felled recently in the widening of Park avenue.

Now the name of the shop serves a double purpose—signifying the return of the property to the "family tree" and commemorating the tree planted by the family.