

NEWS AND NOTES

from the Santa Cruz Historical Society

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Mrs. Margaret Koch.....Editor

● WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING

● FEBRUARY

Guest speakers at Santa Cruz main public library were Mr. and Mrs. Elio Orlando of Davenport who spoke about the history of that area and its whaling industry.

● MARCH

Charles Bella, former long-time resident of Davenport, discussed Pigeon Point and Franklin Point during the meeting at the library.

● APRIL

Dinner at the Santa Cruz hotel with Preston Sawyer of the Santa Cruz Sentinel giving highlights of the hotel's history. Sawyer for many years wrote "Santa Cruz Yesterdays," and has an extensive collection of information and pictures. Following his talk, members joined in an informal discussion period.

● MAY

Mrs. Phyllis Patten showed slides of local historical interest at the main public library.

K. K. KEVIL, LONG-TIME MEMBER DIES

Members of Santa Cruz Historical Society were saddened this past week to hear of the death of Kay Kavanaugh Kevil, long-time member and fellow historian.

Mr. Kevil, who had recently undergone surgery, died in San Francisco on June 12. He is survived by his wife, Rose Agnes Kevil; two daughters, Miss Marion Kevil of

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OCTAGONAL BUILDING

Anybody interested in moving an octagonal building?

Not immediately — but in the near future — Santa Cruz' unique octagonal Hall of Records will be retired from active service. The fascinating old piece of architecture — which took its form from the 1851 octagonal gold piece — is too small and entirely inadequate for the needs of the recorder of a rapidly growing county.

In recognition of this fact, Santa Cruz County board of supervisors recently passed Resolution Number 410-61. After stating that the brick building, erected in 1882, is not capable of being remodeled or enlarged but has historical significance, the resolution goes on to say in part . . .

"Now, therefore, be it resolved and ordered by the Board of Supervisors of Santa Cruz County that, in recognition of the unique character of the county recorder's office building in Santa Cruz, the county of Santa Cruz will provide a suitable site on other county-owned land to which said office building may be removed and erected, provided however that the cost of such removal and erection shall not be borne by the county.

"Be it further resolved and ordered that if so removed and erected, said building would be devoted to a use consistent with its character and significance."

(Copies of the resolution were sent to the Santa Cruz Historical society, to the California Historical society and to Santa Cruz parlor, Native Daughters of the Golden West.)

The building, which originally cost \$10,000, was dedicated and "corner-stoned" in June of 1882, in ceremonies conducted by Santa Cruz lodge, Free and Accepted Order of Masons.

Today the octagon shape of the structure is obscured by a brick addition that juts out toward Front street, and a connecting passageway to the court house annex.

Records go back to 1873 for births and burial certificates and back to 1807 for Spanish land grants. Everything is being microfilmed as a precaution against damage or loss.

As for the building itself, it is one of

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K. K. KEVIL

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Santa Cruz and Mrs. Edward J. Stark (Jeanne Kevil) of Fresno, and two grandchildren.

He was born July 2, 1884 at Dycusburg, Kentucky, where he attended grammar and high schools prior to entering the University of Kentucky where he studied engineering.

Mr. Kevil had a life-long interest in California's early-day history which stemmed from the years following college when he conducted surveys in Utah, Arizona, Nevada and California. He was particularly interested in the Arcan family, which crossed Death Valley before settling in Santa Cruz, and had gathered much information concerning it. He was the author of historical articles for the Santa Cruz Sentinel, the News and Notes and the state historical society's publication.

OCTAGONAL BUILDING

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the very few remaining brick octagonal buildings in the state of California. It is of considerable historical and architectural value and is certainly worthy of preservation.

But three questions loom large:

- 1—How much will it cost to move it?
- 2—Who will pay to have it moved?
- 3—What site will the Santa Cruz county board of supervisors consider appropriate?

Anyone with any ideas (preferably constructive ideas) may contact Roy Rydell of 201 Pine Flat road, Bonny Doon. Rydell, a landscape architect, has spear-headed several efforts to make the public conscious of the unique character of the old structure.

—MARGARET KOCH

WILLOW CREEK CEMETERY

Most of us have at some time visited or come in contact with the small, old-time and old-fashioned country cemetery. Many of the larger isolated ranches had their own cemeteries, where members of the family, ranch help, and friends were buried. This is easily understood as transportation was slow at all times and during storms, often impossible.

In those days, neighbors far and near came whether it be a birth, a death or an illness. If it be a death, the burial was held at the nearest burial ground of perhaps the nearest neighbor, if the family

did not have its own.

In time, ranches were sold, grave markers and fences were destroyed, new owners were disinterested in graves they knew nothing about. Thus many burial grounds were plowed under and forgotten.

For two years it has been my privilege to visit one of the few remaining old time burial grounds which is located in nearby San Benito county.

Each year on the Sunday preceding Memorial Day, a memorial barbecue is held in a grove on the Melendy ranch, near the Willow Creek cemetery in San Benito county. This barbecue was originated by the late George Melendy who looked forward to greeting the friends and relatives who came to care for, and place flowers on the graves of their dear ones buried there.

This Memorial Day tradition is today carried on by the two daughters and son of Mr. Melendy. Just as their father did before them, the daughters, Mrs. Lila Elliot and Mrs. Charlotte Berberick and brother Martin hold a barbecue in the oak grove across the road from the cemetery and only a short distance from the old Willow Creek school. With the help of their husbands and the daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, the Melendys make all who come feel welcome. It is the parents hope that the tradition will be carried on by the next generation.

In visiting the cemetery one finds a few graves marked "Unknown".

Others are marked with the names of Melendy, Bacon, McGrury, Smith and Moody, all early day settlers of San Benito county.

There is a Spanish-American War marker, and one with the simple inscription, "A Shepherd."

It was he, a Basque, who fell over a cliff in the Robbers Roost area while tending sheep. Now no one remembers his name.

When doctors couldn't be reached, small children often died. One grave bears this beautiful inscription:

CLINTON SMITH — 1877

2 Years - 6 Months - 3 Days

"Tis a little grave, but O, have a care
For world-wide hopes are buried there
How much of Light, How much of Joy
Is buried with a darling boy.

Mr. James B. McGrury was very instru-