

# Renovated Sesnon House serves the community well

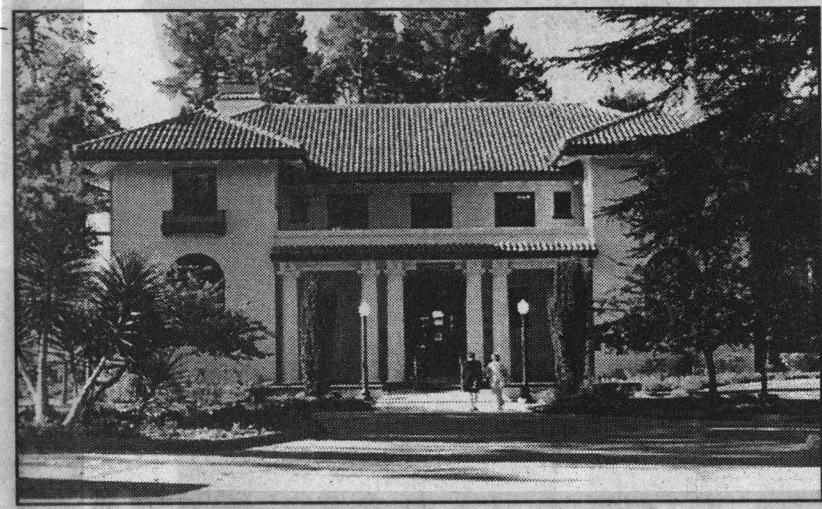
A while back I was invited to have lunch at the Sesnon House where delicious food is served on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday by students of Cabrillo's Culinary Art School during the school season. The restaurant is housed in a beautiful building constructed in 1911 for William and Mary Porter Sesnon. The structure has gone through many changes over the years since it was named Pino Alto by the owners.

The house was designed by the architectural firm of Ward & Bloom



**Betty Lewis**  
That was Watsonville

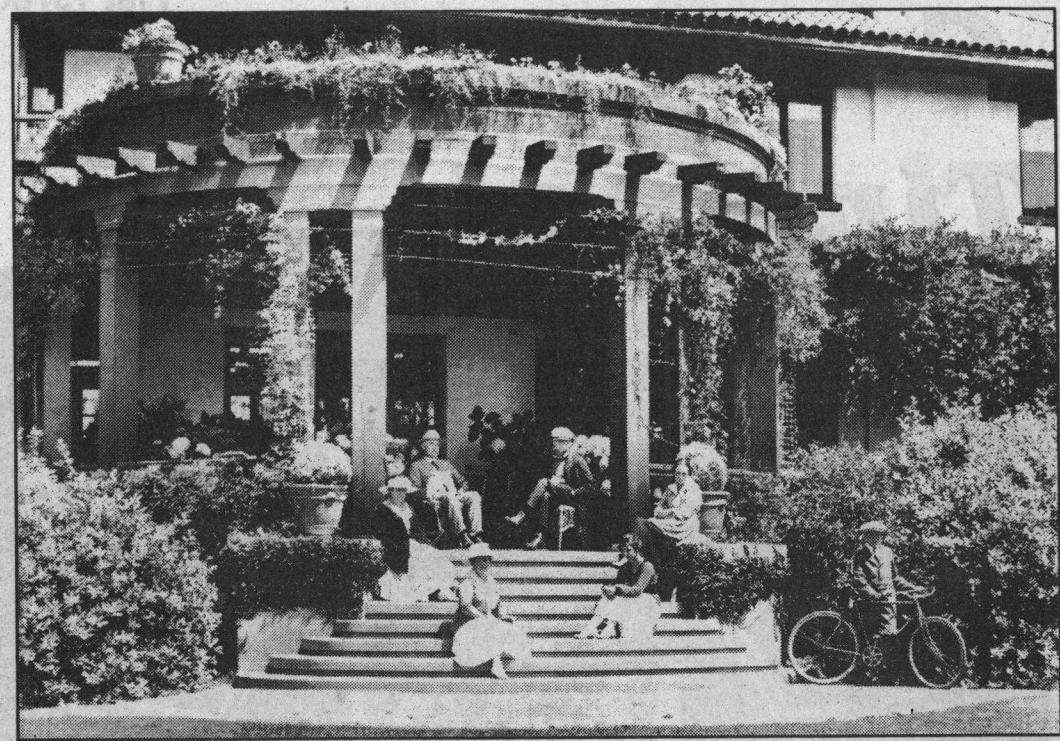
of San Francisco. The beautifully landscaped gardens were laid out with an Oriental theme including a



pergola, trout pond and ornamental reflecting pools. Inside there was a similar theme including Oriental rugs, a large Buddha and teak furniture. But tragedy struck when Mary and William died six months apart in July of 1929 and January of 1930. The family later sold the home to the Salesian Brothers after World War II and the house was occupied by the Salesian Sisters. In 1978, Cabrillo College acquired the house and surrounding property.

Because of a shortage of funds, the property was renovated on a very small scale. The house served as a community center from 1978 to 1989 when the disastrous earthquake did its damage including the crumbling of both fireplaces in the structure. The facility was closed for several years until it re-opened in September of 1996 after being renovated with funds from the college, the community and Sesnon family members — the latter includes Bernice Porter and Diane Porter Cooley of Watsonville.

The 100 year-old Japanese pavilion has been moved to the end of the pathway from the house and work is ongoing to bring the landscaping back to its original ele-



From left, Mary Carroll, Mary Porter Sesnon, William T. Sesnon, Porter Sesnon, Catherine Sesnon, Barbara Sesnon (Carter) and Wm. Sesnon, on the back porch.

gance. Also new to the grounds is a very handsome and colorful sign at the front entrance. The Pajaro Valley Quester's Club made a generous contribution towards this project.

A large meeting room, the McPherson Room, was once the Sesnon family's living room. It is available for meetings or small conferences featuring a stage area and fireplace plus lovely windows that overlook the gardens. The following is from the brochure published by Cabrillo College: "For your special wedding, reception, or celebra-

tion, the house makes a wonderful environment. The landscaped outdoor areas extend the usable space to make the most of our temperate central coast climate. Sesnon Catering is prepared to work with you to create your special event.

"Business meetings, management retreats, recognition dinners and holiday parties are comfortably presented in the newly restored and redecorated Sesnon meeting rooms. For reservation and rate information, call the Sesnon House Coordinator at 479-6229."

Reservations are needed for dinner but not for lunch and, since the dining area is small, you need to arrive early for lunch though plans are in the making to enlarge this area. This historic structure, the Sesnon House, graces the northern portion of Cabrillo property and is a handsome addition to the college campus to be enjoyed by all — students, teachers, business people and the general public.

Betty Lewis, a local historian, is a contributing columnist to the Register-Pajaronian.

REFERENCE

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