

Window on Boulder Creek

Guide offers walking tour of town

By **DONNA KIMURA**
Sentinel staff writer

BOULDER CREEK — A hundred years of history are in the wood and bricks of Boulder Creek.

Sometimes it is just hidden in the splinters and mortar covered by new facades.

From one of the passing trucks rolling down Highway 9, the town may seem nothing more than another mountain village anchored by a lumberyard on one end and a grocery store on the other.

It is only on foot that the town comes into sharp focus.

Local residents have seized this understanding and created a historic amble through town. Even the most pedestrian of visitors can find one of the self-guided walking tour brochures and drift back to a world of brothels and saloons, loggers and blacksmiths.

"We felt that tourists would not only appreciate knowing about the history, but some of our own towns people didn't know all the history," said Barbara Kennedy, president of the San Lorenzo Valley Main Street program, which produced the free guide.

Everyone, she said, has enjoyed passing each building and knowing its past.

The tour features 28 stops for pedestrians to experience during their short journey through town.

One stop is the Sincerely Yours business service store. From the outside, it looks like a neat, modern business where copies are made and typesetting is performed.

The building, however, turns 100 this year.

Elaine Jackson has had her business at this site for the past two years. It was first built as a Middleton's Blacksmith Shop.

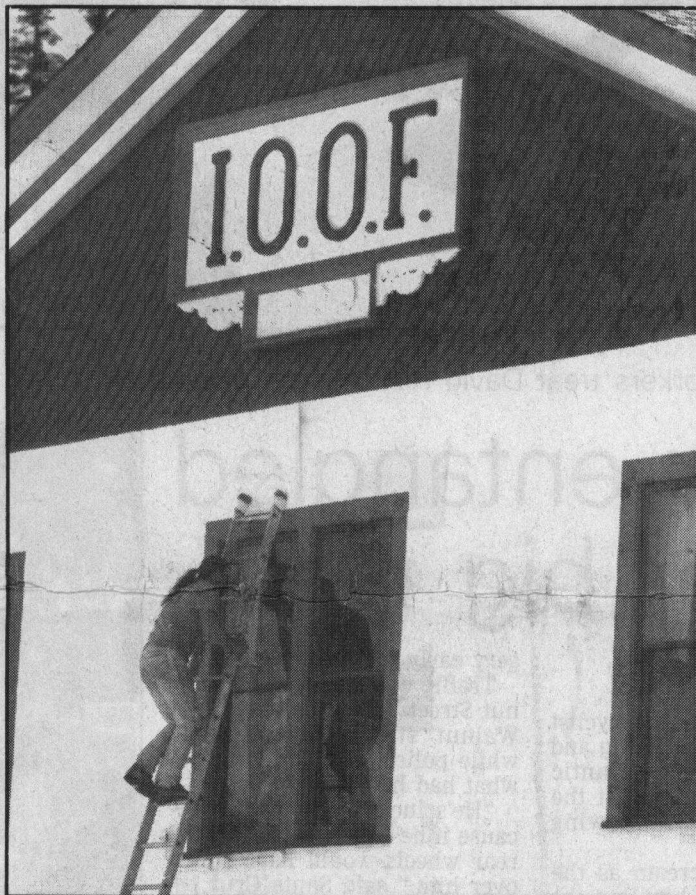
"From blacksmith to high tech," Jackson said.

In 1930, the same site became a drug store. The pharmacist's platform was still there when Sincerely Yours took over.

"I've seen a dramatic increase in the upgrading of property," she said, standing outside her door.

Sure enough. The 96-year-old Odd Fellows Hall across the street is being painted as she speaks.

Not far away, there is the 105-year-old Fireman's Hall, which is now home



Elaine Jackson's business is housed in a 100-year-old Boulder Creek building that's part of the new walking tour. At left, Dae Hill put a final touch on the Odd Fellows Hall.

Bill Lovejoy
Sentinel photo

to Rumpel's and Pinnacle Grouse.

"I like the small-town ambience," said Bill, the bearded owner of Pinnacle Grouse jewelry store. "I like to look at people in the eye and talk to them."

He is just Bill in this town. People get his last name wrong anyway, he says.

Bill can talk about the history of the town and knows the importance of the new tour.

"I believe this is part of building a strong community, knowing where your roots are," he said.

He has sold jewelry and other adornments for about 10 years at this locale in Boulder Creek.

Built in 1891, the Fireman's Hall came too late to help with the July 17, 1891, fire that raged through downtown. Many of today's Boulder Creek buildings were built right after that blaze.

Nancy McCarthy, local historian and owner of the Boulder Creek Book Co.,

can show visitors a 1914 picture of Central Avenue. The photo is in black and white and the buildings are a little rough around the edges, but they are the same as what is outside her window.

Today, there are examples of modern life — a fitness center, a popular pizza chain.

Still, maybe life doesn't change all that much. What was once an old saloon is now a trendy brewing supply business.

"It's come full circle," said Marilyn Henslee, owner of Big Basin Brewing Supplies.

The old wood plank floors inside give the store added character.

She has been there for two years, and when the store is closed Henslee is still available for brewing emergencies.

Henslee has heard different tales about the history of the 106-year-old building.

