

The Old and the New

Stately Aptos Landmark

Historic Buildings

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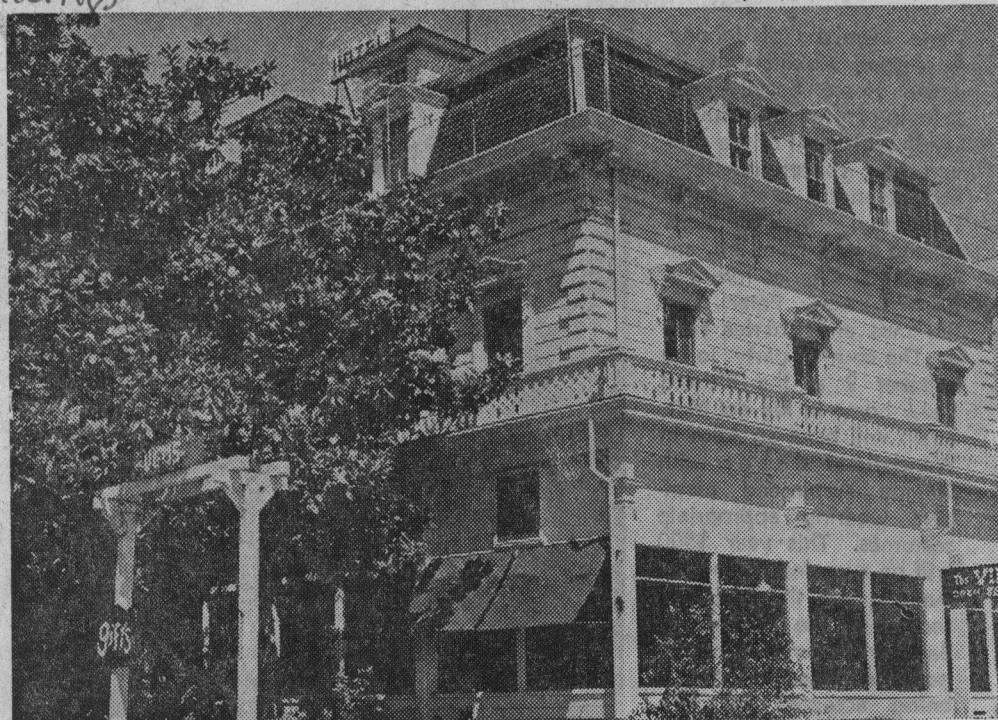
Mention the word Aptos — and the words "Bay View Hotel" immediately come to mind.

The hotel has been a landmark since it was built in 1870, but it became a special kind of landmark as well as a business when it was moved to its present location in 1946 by Fred Toney. It sits behind several old and elegant magnolia trees — an elegant reminder of yesteryear...

The Toney's bravely went ahead with their plan in a day when a building like the hotel was looked upon as a white elephant — or worse. They first jacked it up—and that was quite a task, then moved it out of its original location at the corner of Trout Gulch Road and the old highway.

It stood nearer the railroad tracks in those days — and although it moved away from them, the train tracks were to cause a running battle between the railroad company and the Aptos Ladies Tuesday Afternoon Club about three years ago. Mrs. Toney is a leading light in the club which planted some decorative bushes which became a bone of contention at the crossing. The Ladies threatened to lie down and be run over, during one warm skirmish. The railroad was loath to run over any citizens, and a truce of sorts has been in effect ever since, with the Ladies keeping vigilant watch.

The hotel was built about 1870 by Jose Arano, a French Basque from New Orleans who became famous for his Spanish food and the libations he concocted behind the polished bar. He came to Aptos in the late 1850s and in 1862 married Maria de las Augustias, youngest daughter of Rafael Castro. Rafael owned the huge Rancho Aptos.



Jose Arano fit right into the Aptos scene and became the settlement's first postmaster, grocer and its first hotel keeper. The original hotel he built had two stories; he added the third floor and mansard roof in 1883. For a time, Arano had his store and post office located in his hotel.

It is almost unbelievable today, but back in the 1870s Aptos was a good place to spend the night, when traveling between Santa Cruz and Watsonville or Salinas. Roads were mud tracks in winter and dust tracks in summer, and horses provided the power.

The hotel has seen some busy times. When F.A. Hihn's Valencia lumber mill and the Loma Prieta mill were operating, the lumber was shipped from Aptos, and the hotel was a center for all the mill men. When Claus Spreckels, the sugar beet millionaire, bought a large part of Rancho Aptos, he not only built lavish homes and guest houses, he also brought guests from all over the world

who stayed at the old hotel.

Three marble fireplaces on the main floor are originals. Some of the original furniture, which was hand-picked by Arano, is still in the hotel. Only the old commodes and kerosene lamps have been replaced with modern plumbing and electricity.

Mrs. Toney has installed a line of gift items, many are fine copies of antiques, including glassware, china and furniture.

The hotel has a wide reputation for good food and people come from all over California to eat at the "old hotel in Aptos."

A newer business has proved to be an added attraction — the Village Fair antiques and flea market, in an ancient barn behind the hotel, was started by Mrs. Toney.

Back in 1946, village scoffers told the Toney's the hotel couldn't be moved... it was old and creaky then.

The Toney's didn't listen — and they are glad they didn't.



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APTOS