

You're Invited to Take A Journey Back in Time

By MILDRED ANN SMITH
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Would you like to take a step backward into the days of more than a century ago?

The hustle and bustle of today's frantic pace suddenly fades as you open the picket gate which takes you into the spacious grounds of the 109-year-old Watsonville home of Frank and Zoe Ann Orr.

To mark National Historic Preservation Week, May 8-14, and to aid the Cabrillo Music Festival, Zoe is opening their home for a tour as well as the festival's annual plant sale and tea.

The event is planned for Wednesday, May 4, from noon to 4 at 332 East Beach Street, Watsonville. There will be no charge for the plant sale, but a donation of \$2 is asked for the tea and tour of the elegant home.

The home was built in 1868 by Godfrey M. Bockius, Frank Orr's great-grandfather, and one of the first Americans to settle in Watsonville (1852). He was a farmer, town trustee, county judge, assemblyman and one of the founders of the Bank of Watsonville.

His farm, of which the house was a part, extended from Marchant to Blackburn Street, and Third Street to the Pajaro River.

The foundation of the house is of concrete blocks,

supporting redwood posts which in turn support the frame. According to Frank, clearance allowed the Pajaro River floodings to wash underneath in the days before the levees.

The house has been occupied by three earlier generations including Frank's great-great-grandmother, great-grandparents, grandmother, two great-uncles and one great-aunt, Charlotte, who died in 1946.

Zoe explains that when she and her husband inherited the property their aim was to preserve the house as it was as much as possible. They did remove a front porch, combined two smaller rooms into the present huge living room, added a fireplace, and a modern kitchen.

Upstairs two bedrooms were retained, one was made into another bathroom, and the fourth into a dressing room with lots of closets. Some of the original furniture remains, but Zoe says the current furnishings are the end result of three different family homes.

The living room, with its gleaming hardwood floors, is done in soft greens and golds. One of the truly fine pieces is a piano which is a museum piece. Of rosewood, it is inlaid with moth-

er of pearl and has mother of pearl keys, and was supposedly created for an exposition.

The Orrs also have a melodeon, a small reed organ, which Zoe says sounds best when you play hymns.

The downstairs library and den, "where we really live," she notes, formerly was the parlor. Molding is of plaster as is the cast ceiling medallion. Here a calendar clock, brought by Godfrey Bockius from Philadelphia, strikes the hour. On the hearth by the marble fireplace is a plaster dog, a pug which has stood guard since the house was young.

In the downstairs hall stands a grandfather clock once owned by Charles Ford. It strikes on the hour and again three minutes later for people awakened in the middle of the first striking.

Pictures on the stairway are of family members who have lived in the house, starting with Frank's great-great-grandmother. Doors here and throughout the house are artificially-grained, an art involving a feather dipped in stain.

But you can't talk about the house without considering the exterior surroundings. Of the original farm, a picturesque tank house and two side buildings remain. The house is set back from the street and is almost completely concealed by huge live oak trees. In keeping with the period, the Orrs have many old-fashioned flowers and shrubs including wisteria, a snowball tree, a violet bed, poppies, peonies, foxgloves, ranunculas, sweet alyssums and roses as well as rhododendrons and Zoe's bonsai collection.



Historic home of Frank and Zoe Ann Orr of Watsonville dates back to 1868 and was built by his great-grandfather, Godfrey Bockius. It sits on an acre, all that remains of the Bockius family farm. The home and gardens will be open to the public Wednesday as a Cabrillo Festival benefit and a Victorian tea will be served. A plant sale also is slated.



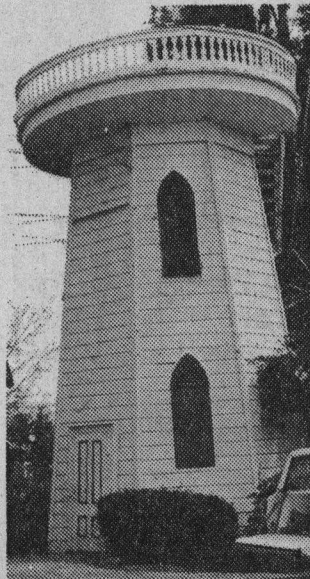


Former family parlor now is the Orr den and library. Calendar clock was brought from Philadelphia by Frank Orr's great-grandfather, Godfrey Bockius, and plaster pug dog is shown on the front porch in early photos of the house.

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Tickets for the tour will be available at the Orr home on Wednesday and Zoe notes that her "ankle-nipping" Welsh Corgis will be at the kennels for the afternoon.

Photos by Pete Amos



The tank house



The Orr living room, above, is furnished with antiques which belonged to both Frank's and Zoe's families. Included are a rosewood piano inlaid with mother of pearl as well as a melodion. At left, Betty Peters seated, and Zoe plan for Victorian tea to be a part of the tour. Painting in background is of Zoe's great-grandmother and her great-aunt.