

If Trees Could Talk

The Mystery on School Street

By MARGARET KOCH
Sentinel Staff Writer ...

Once upon a time there was ancient fig tree in the garden behind the School Street Adobe. It died of gopher damage and fell down in 1955.

The fig is said to have been planted by the Franciscan Fathers who founded Mission Santa Cruz in 1793 and dedicated it in 1794. The old tree bore fruit right up to its demise, according to residents of the Adobe.

At present, there are redwood trees, good sized, and an aurucaria (monkey tree) on the old garden. Years ago there were a few fruit trees in addition to the old fig, cypress trees and a hedge.

The garden, lovely at one time when it was maintained by private residents of the old Adobe, served as the locale for many parties and benefits and afternoon teas and musicales.

This garden, now long neglected, is still a quiet, lovely place if one does not mind

its raggle-taggle appearance. It seems to be waiting quietly through the years under the sun and in the rain, for a day when someone who loves gardens will rescue it from oblivion. Until then, it is known best by the birds and the bees — and a few, historically-minded humans.

The Adobe is without doubt the most important single structure in Santa Cruz, historically speaking. It is the only remaining building of the original Santa Cruz Mission compound. Everything else of a structural nature is long gone except a few floor tiles which were uncovered, and have been preserved near the Rectory. There are a couple of roof tiles on view in the Mission replica ca, also.

In its heyday Santa Cruz Mission must have been something to see ... the main mission building stood almost exactly where Holy Cross Church is today, with a low wing of related storage rooms and offices and

living quarters stretching out to the West. An Adobe wall reached toward the East and behind it was the Indian graveyard. Adobes surrounded the plaza which was used more as a pasture for cows and horses in those days.

The Indian neophytes lived in surrounding adobes, and worked in the crops raised "down the hill" where the center of town is now. They gathered in the Mission at mealtime to receive their portions of atole, the grain gruel that was cooked there in huge pots.

When the Mission was secularized and the Padres left, some of its lands were turned over to the few Indians who remained. The School Street Adobe went to several of the native Californians, then was bought from them for two cows and two mules by Jose de la Rodriguez. That was in 1838.

In 1865 Rodriguez sold half his adobe to Patrick Neary (for whom Neary Lagoon is named.) The two families

and their descendants continued to live in the adobe, separated by a five-foot thick adobe wall until 1957 when the State of California purchased the building for preservation purposes.

Mrs. Cornelia Hopcroft, heir of the Rodriguez family, still lives in her half of the building under a life tenancy grant.

There is more than this, however, to the fascinating history of this historic structure, which with its neglected garden, seems to be waiting patiently for something to happen.

No one knows for sure when the adobe was built. And no one can say for sure what its purpose was, back in Mission days. Educated guessers like Mrs. Phyllis Patten say it must have been built about 1791, as she also believes it was the guard house for the Mission. Guard houses were always built first, to house the Spanish soldiers who protected the priests from unfriendly Indians.

Others believe it was built about 1810 and was used as the Indian women's dormitory. But no one really knows for sure.

The adobe is credited with a list of distinguished list of historic "firsts" as Mrs. Patten points out. It was

Santa Cruz' first "duplex," it was where Santa Cruz Masonic Lodge was organized (upstairs) in 1854, and Santa Cruz' first city water supply flowed down School Street at its front door. The adobe also looked northward over at the city's first "real" jail, built of granite blocks. The little square jail had a fabulous view out over the edge of the chalk rock bluff, which the prisoners no doubt did not appreciate.

The adobe looked East at another "first," the town's first reservoir near the edge of the cliff.

In addition to its list of firsts, the adobe has a new mystery, discovered in 1965 when California State Beaches and Parks gave the building a new roof. Always thought to be a two-story adobe as it now is, the workmen uncovered firm evidence that showed it to be one-story originally.

And so the questions add up: when was it built and for what purpose? When was the second floor added, and why?

No one knows, and even the oldest tree out back, which is an avocado in Mrs. Hopcraft's yard that was planted by her foster grandparents, can't give a clue to the answers.

Coping With Change Subject Of Wednesday Book Review

Ways to adapt, understand and cope with the overwhelming changes of today and tomorrow are detailed in the book, FUTURE SHOCK, by Alvin Toffler, which will be reviewed by Mrs. Carl Tjerandsen at the book review Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. at the Santa Cruz Public Library.

Co-sponsored by the library and the American Association of University Women, the review will be in the library's community room.

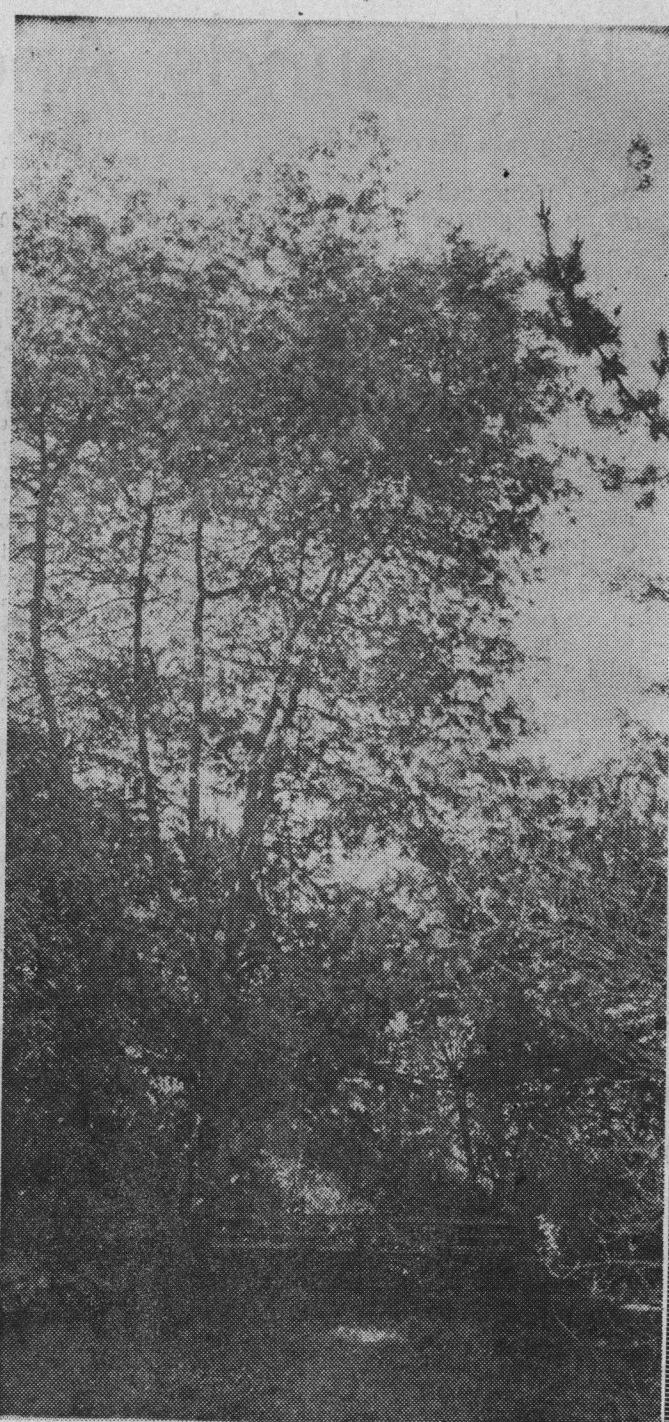
The author discusses the "Throwaway Society", "New Nomads", "Fractured Family" and "Education in Future Tense", all in the framework of change

correspondent, the author also wrote THE CULTURAL CONSUMER and is editor of the prize-winning volume, THE SCHOOLHOUSE IN THE CITY.

In 1969 he was appointed a visiting professor at Cornell University and currently is a visiting scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation.

Mrs. Tjerandsen is a graduate of the Stanford University School of Nursing, served as a stewardess nurse on the San Francisco Streamliner in the 1930s, and played viola with the Stockton Symphony.

She now makes her home in Santa Cruz with her husband, Dr. Carl Tjerandsen,



Peaceful corner of old garden with "modern" acacia in bloom. Franciscan priests planted fruit trees here, later adobe owners planted Rose of Glazenwood along back of adobe, avocado, ivy, cypress trees and lawn.

At the Library

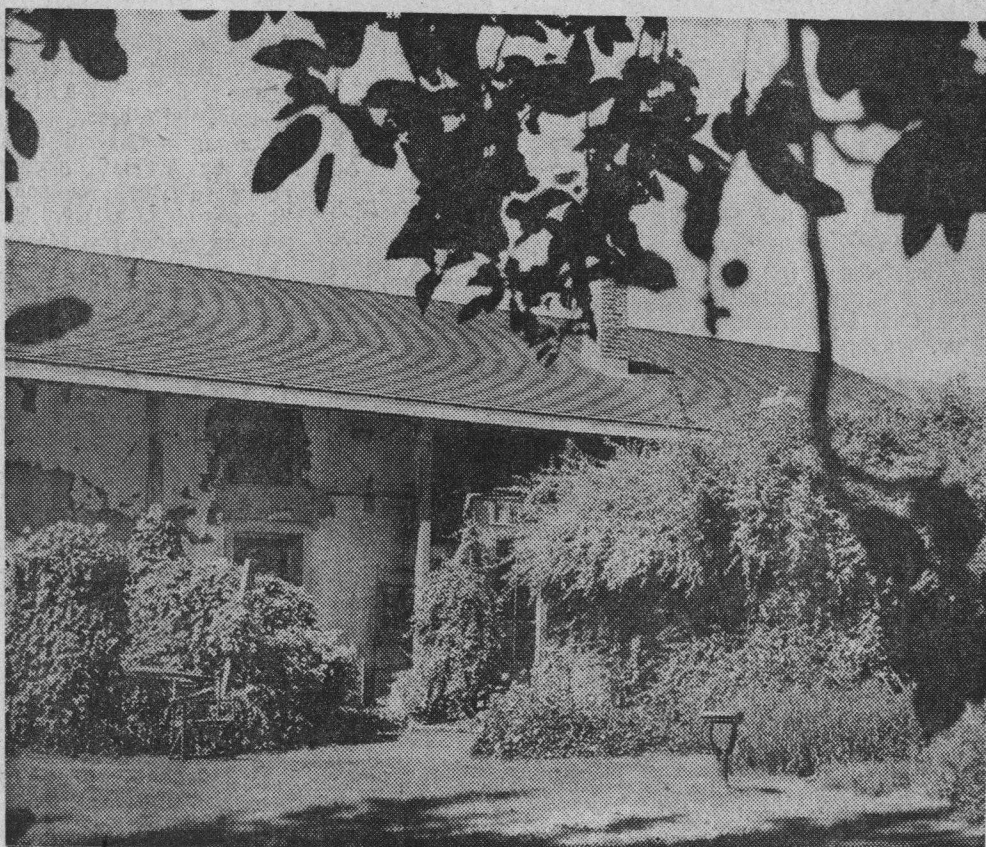
The Main Library and its branches will be closed Monday, February 15, for Washington's Birthday.

As today is St. Valentine's Day, we thought it would be fitting to list a few of the love stories which have been published in the past.

Stone. And we must include LOVE STORY, by Segal. Many others are available at the Library.

—Rosemary Milburn

Statewide



School Street Adobe, backyard view above, photo made before repairs to roof disclosed "mystery" of second story.

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