

Historic club celebrates 75 years

'Pride in the past with faith in the future' their motto

By BARBARA BURKLO
Sentinel Staff Writer

THE SANTA CRUZ Woman's Club is celebrating its 75th anniversary this season with a long look back and an enthusiastic look forward, as well.

With 160 members strong, and retaining its active affiliation with the California Federation of Women's Clubs, the historic club is lending its strength to such needs as 'Save the Redwoods', drug abuse and the Mariposa House battered women's shelter.

Those needs were unheard of 75 years ago, when the club was formed with the object, printed in their yearbook, "To have a recognized center for furthering education in connection with moral, social, civic and fine arts subjects and to encourage all movements for the betterment of society; but pecuniary profit is not and shall not be the purpose of this association."

And so, while they were never pecuniary, they did spend themselves in improving the world around them.

Officially, the club has benefitted the Red Cross, Town Clock, Octagon, UCSC, Symphony Talent Bank, CARE, County Hospital, nursing scholarships, and flood relief, among others through the long years.

It all began in August, 1907, when Mrs. J. G. Tanner, Mrs. W. H. Williamson and Miss Ella Vivienne Noe met at the Williamson home to discuss the formation of a club — with a view to affiliating one day with the National Federation of Women's Clubs.

Their first group was called the Saturday Afternoon Club, and, at the organization meeting in the St. George Hotel, seven departments were formed, including art, music, drama, literature, home, social ethics and current events.

There were 30 women at the opening meeting and at the end of the year the new club boasted 210 members. The club early joined the NFWC, held their programs and meetings in the Santa Cruz Hotel and later in the parish house of Calvary Episcopal Church and the old Santa Cruz library.

In 1922, the club was hostess to the California Federation of Women's Clubs convention with Mrs. Fred McPherson Sr. as official hostess. At the close of the convention, Mrs. Alice Dixon marked a General Federation Tree as part of a ceremony in the redwoods. Preservation of the redwoods has been an ongoing project to this day. And, the local group will hostess a similar convention here next April.

In 1926 the name was changed to Santa Cruz Woman's Club. After extensive fund raising, the

club had a clubhouse built in 1937-39 on a lot they owned on Mission Street.

Last year, the building was sold to the Eagles Lodge but the club still holds its meetings there.

In 1957 the group organized its junior division, the Marri-Eds. And in 1960 it sponsored the formation of the Goodwill Auxiliary.

Three of its members have been named "Santa Cruz Woman of the Year."

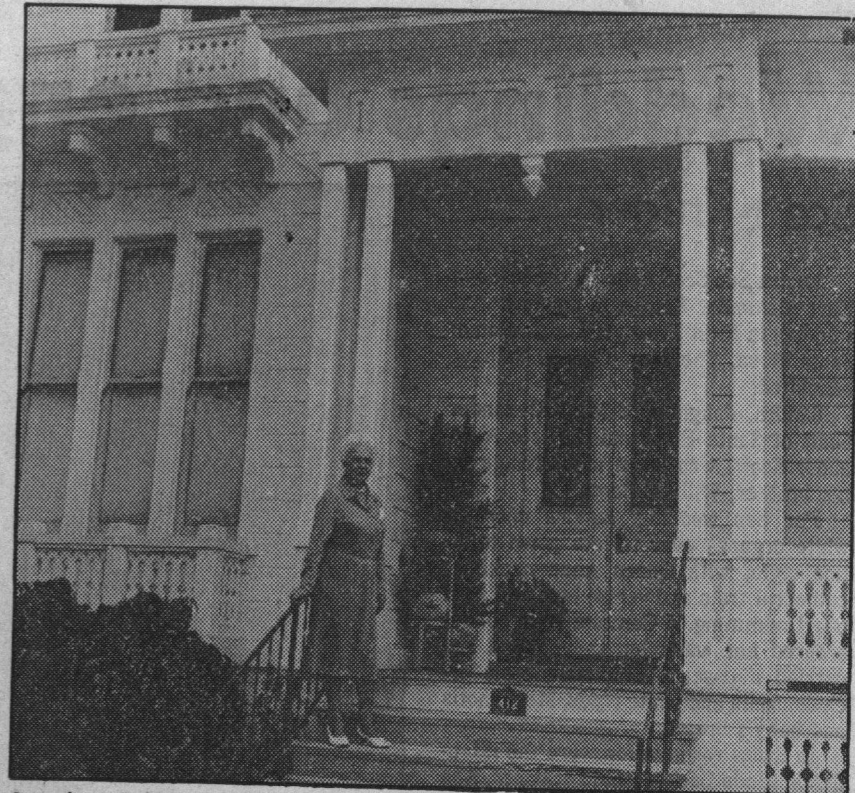
Member Barbara Burkhart is now state chairman for women's history and resources, a project of interest here since the local club hopes to help establish a women's history library at UCSC.

At the district level, these local members are active: Ruth Hefner is junior club coordinator, Doris Sargentini is bulletin chairman, Frances Jacobsen is treasurer, Barbara Burkhart is crime prevention chairman and Helen Berchtold is leadership chairman.

Oline Blanton, president of the Santa Cruz Woman's Club in this anniversary year, sees only growth in membership and in scope in the years to come.

Thus, her motto for the year — 'Pride in the past and faith in the future.'

First meeting of the season will be Thursday, beginning with a tea at 11:30 a.m., a business meeting and a lecture by Mary Dorr, television personality and storyteller.



Bertha Edmonds, club historian and member for nearly 50 years, stands on the porch of the Williamson home, where the club was formed in 1907. Bertha was named by sister members as Woman of the Year for 1980-81. The house, built in 1880, is located at the corner of Ocean View and Windsor Avenue.



Mrs. Selden Rockwell, left, club president in 1957-58, and Mrs. Fred McPherson Sr., president in 1924-25, were key figures in the club's 50th anniversary celebration 25 years ago.



This photo was taken in 1955 at a reunion luncheon for past presidents of the Santa Cruz Woman's Club at the home of Mrs. Fred D. McPherson Sr. Left to right, front row, Mrs. Frank Wilson, whose mother, Mrs. Minnie Tanner Gushee, was one of the club's founders; Mrs. McPherson, Mrs. Vera McKenna Clayton, Mrs. Blanche Keller, Mrs. Bert Snyder Sr., Mrs. Martin Larson and Mrs. Melvin Clark. Standing, from left, Mrs. Joseph Riordan, Mrs. Harold Hagler, Mrs. William Binsacca, Mrs. Walter Elmer, Mrs. Harvey Edmund, Mrs. I. L. Comstock, Mrs. Katherine Ringgold, Mrs. Patrick McDowell, Mrs. Norman Shockley, Mrs. Richard Snyder, Mrs. Laura Rawson, Mrs. Adrian Jensen, Mrs. Fred McPherson Jr. and Mrs. Selden Rockwell.