

Santa Cruz Yesterdays



THE AVERON HOUSE

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

A 17-year-old French lad, Jose Averon, was a steward on the U.S. S. Savannah under Commodore Sloat when that vessel joined the Cyane and Portsmouth at Monterey on July 1, 1846, and was among the sailors who cheered when the American flag was hoisted six days later.

Mining did not attract the young Frenchman but Guadalupe Lodge, 15-year-old daughter of Martina Castro and her Irish husband, Michael Lodge, did. By the middle fifties Averon was directing farming operations on the several hundred acres deeded his young wife in Martina's division of Soquel and Soquel Augmentacion ranchos.

Guadalupe's share of Soquel rancho was the flat land east of the Soquel river below the present town and the hill above it where Capitola avenue runs.

Averon and his wife sold some of their portion of the Augmentacion rancho to the Porters and Grovers for their saw mills and with the proceeds in the seventies built the big house which still stands, facing Capitola avenue, only a few yards from the highway now under construction.

On the land in what is today known as Glen Haven Averon raised hay in the seventies but his French background made him an experimenter. He replaced hay with grapes and on the flat below his big house in Soquel erected a \$5000 winery, which was razed for its lumber about 15 years ago.

On the level land below his house Averon experimented with hops, replaced them with pink beans, and then set out the orchard which still extends as far as Bay avenue.

In 1879 Averon and his wife

made a trip to visit his native France.

Mother Died In 1890

In 1880 Mrs. Averon's 83-year-old mother was ensconced in a little cabin which Averon built for her below the big house, where she lived until her final illness when she was moved into the Averon home where she died on December 14, 1890.

Mrs. Averon's sisters had all married men prominent in Soquel and Santa Cruz, Tom Fallon, Jose Littlejohn, Francois Lajeunesse, Henry W. Peck, Jean Richard Fourcade and Lambert B. Clements. A brother, Michael Jr., who married Margarita Castillo, lived until 17 years ago. Two of Michael's daughters, Lulu and Julia, still live in the fine old Averon house whose sturdy timbers have survived with little change the three quarters of a century since it was built.

Averon died March 9, 1897. His wife lived until March 10, 1920, when she was almost 79 years old. In her will she left bequests of more than \$5000, including \$1000 to Holy Cross church.