

Here Today; Gone Tomorrow?

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The Famous Wined And Dined At Bay View Hotel In Aptos

Editor's Note: This article appears in a Sentinel series on old homes and buildings in Santa Cruz and surrounding areas. The series is being written in conjunction with efforts by SCOPE and Santa Cruz Historical society to preserve local and area history and foster the preservation of historic buildings where feasible.

By Margaret Koch
Sentinel Staff Writer

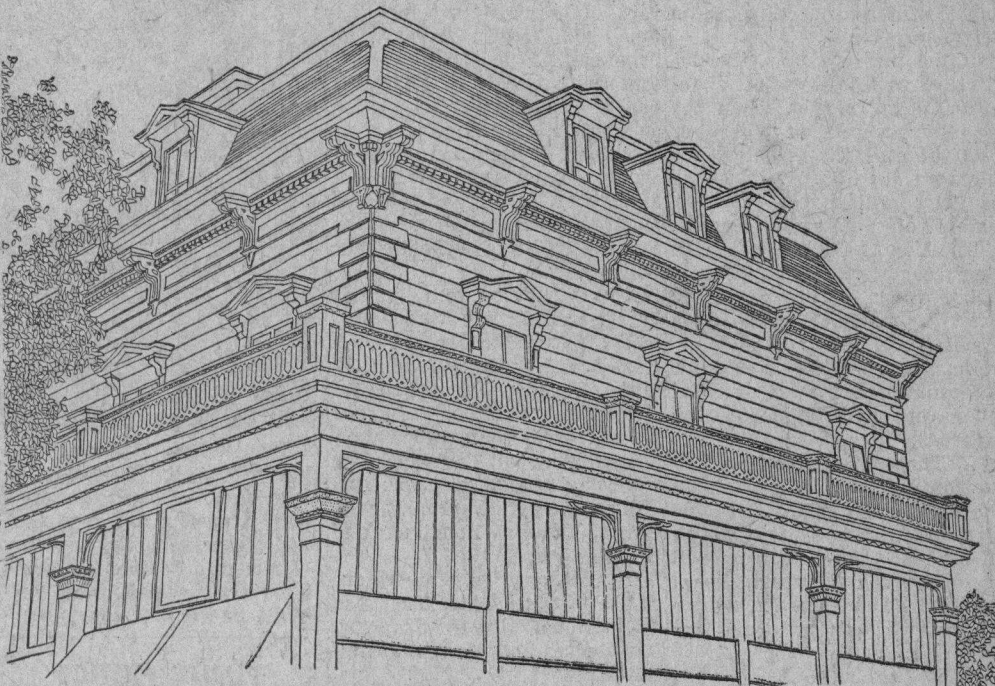
Mention "Aptos" and immediately a picture of the old Bay View Hotel flashes into one's mind.

It sits stately but comfortable behind its huge magnolia tree, a picture page out of Santa Cruz County's historic past.

The hotel was built in 1870 by Jose Arano. It was two stories originally. And under Arano's proprietorship it soon became famous for its fine Spanish food.

Jose was a New Orleans boy who made good. A French Basque, he came to Aptos in 1852 from Louisiana and married Augusta Marie Castro, dark-eyed Spanish daughter of Rafael. This put him in line with other heirs to Rafael's vast Rancho Aptos land holdings of nearly 7000 acres.

Rafael was a go-getter, too. He had built a wharf for shipping from Aptos in the early 1850s. He also gave land for a Catholic church and cemetery and for an Aptos school. Rafael was able to read and write Spanish, considered a rather unusual accomplishment among many of



This is a view of Bay View Hotel in Aptos seldom noted by visitors. Artist Will Shepherd wanted to emphasize the old

hotel's finely detailed trim. The historic hotel is located at 8041 Soquel Drive, Aptos.

the county's earliest settlers.

In 1833 Rafael had been granted the huge hunk of property. Rafael himself was born in 1803 in Villa de Branciforte; he was the son of Joaquin Castro who came to California as a boy with the DeAnza party. Rafael built a wharf at Aptos in the early 1850s.

Jose Arano not only married Rafael's daughter, he also became Aptos' first postmaster and grocer. It is said that when he built the hotel he personally inspected every board that went into its construction. He also selected every stick of furniture for the hotel, most of which is still in use there today. The four handsome marble fireplaces on the first floor also are originals. In 1883 the third floor was added.

For more than 40 years the hotel was a popular watering place for wealthy and prominent people, including among its guests King Kalakaua of Hawaii and the curvaceous Lillian Russell.

It also became the center of Aptos village activities for a time when Arano located the post office and his grocery store in it.

When Claus Spreckels, sugar beet king, bought a large part

of Rancho Aptos, he brought many famous visitors there. Spreckels built several elaborate homes and a guest house. He raised race horses on his ranch.

The hotel was a busy place when the Loma Prieta Lumber Company was running full blast. F. A. Hihn's Valencia lumber mill also shipped from Aptos. Busiest time was from 1880 to 1900. However, the lumber was finally logged out, railroad activity was curtailed and shortly before World War I the hotel went out of business.

In 1944 Fred W. Toney bought the old building. The main section of it was intact but a large service wing had been destroyed by fire in 1929. When Toney bought it, the hotel stood on its original site, the corner of the old highway and Trout Gulch road, nearer the railroad tracks.

In spite of warnings that the hotel couldn't be moved, in 1946 Toney gathered a crew of Aptos men, excavated beneath it, placed timbers and rollers under it and moved it to the present site.

"Commodore and kerosene lamps were replaced with plumbing and electricity," as the hotel's brochure states. But the marble fireplaces and pieces of antique furniture were preserved as they were.

Today, Castros and Aranos lie side by side in the Mount Carmel cemetery that Don Rafael Castro established. The first little church is gone. It stood beside the cemetery at the corner of Soquel drive and Seaciff Beach State Park drive. Legend has it that the original church bell was cast of almost pure silver. It was stolen in later years. Ed Arano in 1889 headed a committee of donors who bought a second bell to replace the stolen one. Today, that second bell hangs in Holy Cross Mission in Santa Cruz.

Contestant



PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF HEARING PETITION FOR PROBATE OF WILL No. 21101

Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Santa Cruz Estate of PATRICK J. FINN, Deceased.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that A. GARDNER FINN has filed herein a petition for probate of the will of the above named decedent and for issuance of letters testamentary thereon to said petitioner, reference to which is made for further particulars, and that the time and place of hearing the same has been set for April 14, 1967 at 9:30 a.m., in the courtroom of Department No. 2 of said court, at the Veterans Memorial Building, in the city of Santa Cruz, California.

Dated March 28, 1967

TOM M. KELLEY, Clerk
By VIVIAN JACKSON,
Deputy Clerk
J. FRANK MURPHY, FRANK MURPHY JR., and LLOYD R. WILLIAMS
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Mar. 31; Apr. 2, 9 (8721)

SHOE SALE