

Historic houses

Tree 'n Sea Living

This House Had a Birthday

One of Santa Cruz's handsome old Victorians celebrated its 100th birthday with a real party — with guests wearing jeans and enjoying beer and snacks.

The party was a two-fold event, also being the announcement of the marriage of the house owner, Richard Cutts.

The house, located at the corner of Walnut Avenue and Chestnut Street, is known as the Cope House and was built in October, November and December of 1877 as a wedding gift for the daughter of F.A. Hihn who is said to have been the county's first millionaire.

Richard, his wife Debbie and her son Ricky hosted the party which included soda pop for the small fry.

The house is included in the

illustrations in the Elliott history of Santa Cruz County which has been just reprinted by Cabrillo College and is on sale at the Octagon Museum.

Excerpts from newspapers of the 1870s tell of the progress of construction of the home, including the price.

"There are four very handsome residential lots, corners formed by the crossing one over the other of Walnut and Chestnut Avenues. Each of the avenues is sixty-six feet in width, and at their intersection the ground is high, and being protected from the ocean breeze by the high land on the south and west are choice home locations.

"On the southwest corner men are at work excavating for the foundation of a residence,

to be built by F.A. Hihn. From the plans shown to us by architect Burrows we learn that the extreme length of the building is to be 60 feet and its extreme width 37 feet. Main building two stories; lower ceiling, 12 feet; upper ceiling, 11 feet.

"The wing is 18 by 28 feet. The lower floor will be divided into five rooms, two halls, pantry, bath and closet. The second floor will be divided into three bed-rooms, dressing room, alcove and closets. On the Chestnut Avenue side there will be a conservatory, glass sides and roof; that, including the porch, will be 12 by 12 feet...

"Composite style of architecture observed. Building to be heated by a furnace. Supplied with water and illuminated

December 8, 1877: "F.A. Hihn's new residence, at the corner of Walnut and Chestnut Avenues, is nearing completion and were it all two stories it would be a model house..."

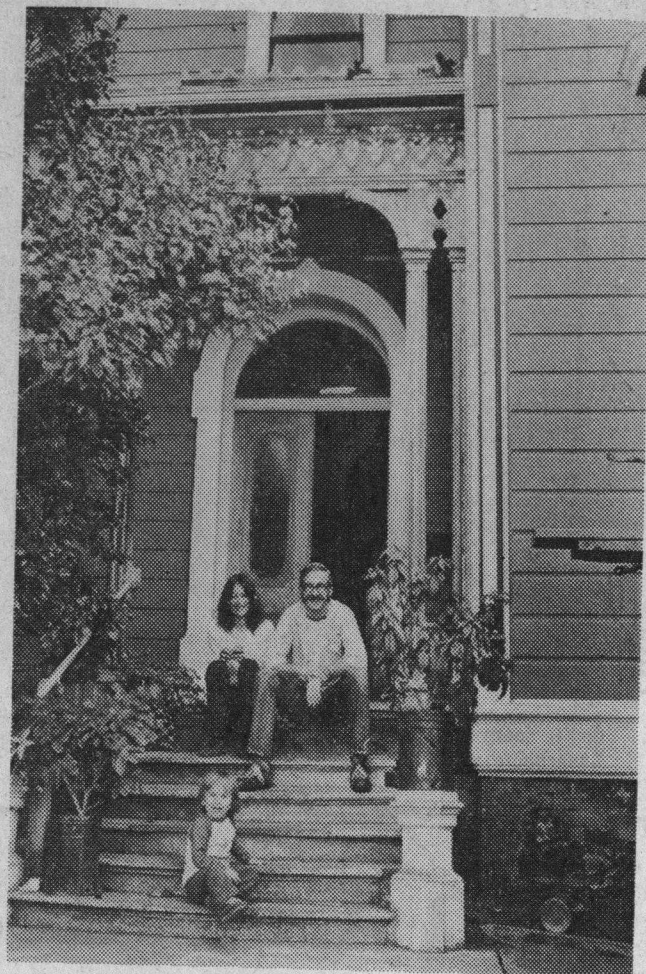
December 15, 1877: "The new residence being constructed for F.A. Hihn, corner of Walnut and Chestnut Avenues, narrowly escaped destruction by fire on Monday night. Beneath the back stoop is a furnace for heating the house, which is connected with the main flue by an iron pipe. A fire had been burning in the furnace during the day to dry the plaster, etc., and the flue became so heated as to ignite the joists and flooring surrounding it. The floor was considerably charred. The blaze was discovered in time and a few buckets of water put out the fire. Damage about \$25."

December 29, 1877: "Seaver, the plasterer, is doing a handsome job in F.A. Hihn's new residence..."

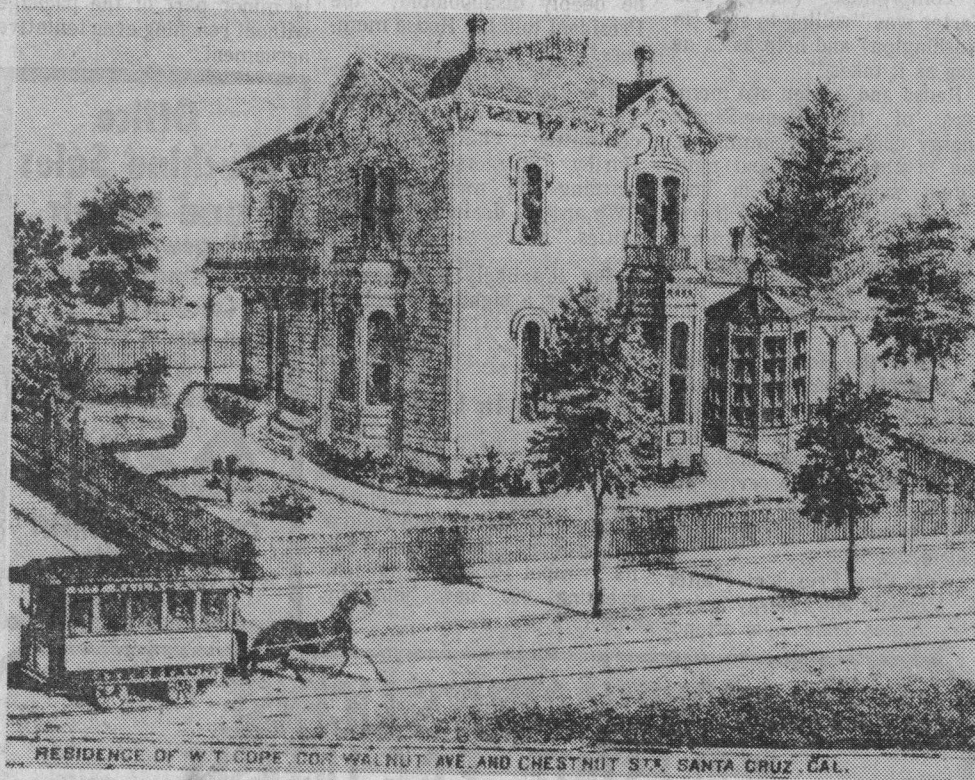
And finally, January 19, 1878: "Last Monday evening Schilling's Band discoursed sweet music at the residence of F.A. Hihn. The next morning Mr. Hihn's daughter Katie was married to W.T. Cope, the newly married going to Watsonville on a special train. After the marriage was performed Mr. Hihn presented Mrs. Cope with a deed to the beautiful new residence located at the corner of Walnut and Chestnut Avenues..."

Cutts, who acquired the house in May of 1970, has been working at restoring it authentically, doing all the work himself, since he bought it. He is a computer technologist and commutes to Santa Clara County, spending weekends and holidays working on his house.

He and Debbie were married last week.



Mr. and Mrs. Richard Cutts sit on the front porch of Cope House with son Ricky. The 100-year-old house is being restored by Cutts in his spare time. At left, old drawing of the house as it originally looked, from Elliott's HISTORY OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY.



RESIDENCE OF W.T. COPE COR. WALNUT AVE. AND CHESTNUT ST. SANTA CRUZ, CAL.

Music Study Tour Topic

Evelyn Andrews will show her slides of the August 1977 Old World Music study tour which she recently attended, when the Music Teachers Association of California meets Friday.

The session will be at 7:30

p.m. at main Santa Cruz Public Library, Church at Center Streets. The study tour was conducted through five European countries by the state organization of music teachers. All students, friends and music teachers are invited to view the program.