

Santa Cruz - History
(HOUSE - 5040)

a year-around
gymnasium and
baths for men
the guests were

Wm. Evert, President and
founder of Jiffy Food Stores
Company, is the owner and
developer.

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"Oh, That Reminds Me..."

MAY 11 '73

BY MARIAN GOODMAN, SORRENTO OAKS PARK

Perhaps you have already read, or know the author of the delightful book (now out of print) with the above provocative title. It is the story of Grover's Gulch, now Glen Haven, which projects off Main Street leading out of Soquel.

The author is Phyllis B. Patton, whose gentle modesty permits only one picture of herself in the book. She describes the area in the time of her youth. The title resulted from conversations with old friends when one recollection would lead to another by saying, "Oh, that reminds me--". Now Miss Patton is working on another book, about the Holy Cross Convent in Santa Cruz, and her great aim in life is to finish the book. She is 88.

Grover's Gulch was named for three brothers, Frealon, Lyman and Whitney Grover, who came to California from Maine in the early 1850s. Being well grounded in the lumber business, they were attracted to this area because of the stands of redwood in this protected valley.

The Grovers built several mills and became tycoons in the industry, later building large houses on the Walnut Avenue hill in Santa Cruz. In one of them (pictured) Has-

well Leask of Sorrento Oaks Park spent a couple of years of his childhood. Since he was only 7 or 8 at the time he recalls little about the house except its immensity.

He says the Grovers were also interested in the area up the coast where bitumen deposits (heavy oily sand and rock, useful in making sidewalks). He recalls the 8-horse (not mule) team which would naturally impress a youngster.

Anyone who has ever heard the melodious tinkle of hame bells will never forget the sound. As Miss Patton says, even the horses seemed to nod their heads with pleasure in the harmony created by the bells on the iron bows on the heavy collars. However the bells were not put there to create a symphony, they were a warning that a heavy load was coming.

The team that wore the bells had the right of way, and anything else must get off the road in a hurry.

The Grover house pictured, built in 1887 and destroyed by fire in 1911, was three stories, earthquake-proof, and built on a broad deep lot. It was a 6-bedroom Victorian castle, and children always had a ball playing in the attic in winter, especially the cupola from which at that time they

could see forever in all directions.

I can appreciate this, for as a child I was privileged to live in such a three-story house with a cupola and what joy it was to spend hours up there inventing stories, and situations involving our "tower".

Miss Patton relates that even the coast of Monterey was visible on clear days, and ships far out at sea looked sharp on the horizon.

Along with the "exterior pageantry" of wooden ornamentation (as Miss Patton puts it so perfectly), Frealon Grover also decorated the interior of his house with different handsome woods, especially on the first floor. One room was done in cherry, another in wavy pine, and foreign woods were also brought in.

An unusual feature about the Frealon Grover houses, as related by Lillie Grover Bibbins, was their "crooked chimneys". She asked her father why they were that way. He said, "Wait--someday you'll see".

He was extremely foresighted, for when the big quake of 1906 brought most chimneys in the area crashing to the ground, the "crooked chimneys" survived intact.

Now we wonder what his building secret was!

Reference

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