

November No. 1

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Coastal HOMES

The Real Estate and Home Specialty Magazine Serving Santa Cruz County

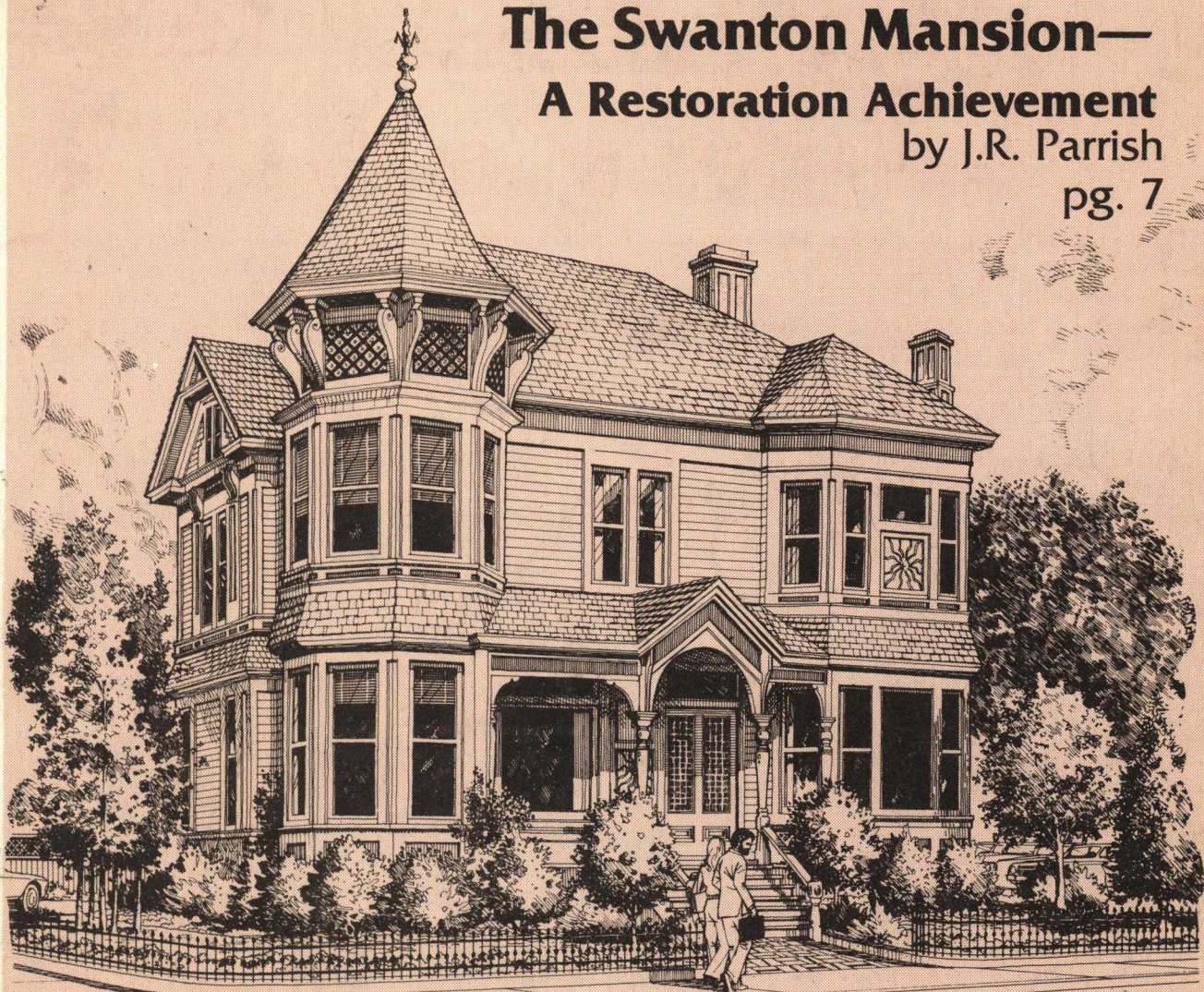
Historic houses

The Swanton Mansion—

A Restoration Achievement

by J.R. Parrish

pg. 7



B. SHOCKLEY

The Real Estate Trade Show
is coming to Santa Cruz

Winter Gardens

Homes, Condominiums,
Vacation Properties, Land,
Commercial and Investment
Properties for Sale

The Swanton House — *Monument to a Tycoon*

by Ron Lang

The Albion Paris Swanton house, built in 1889 by architect/builder Daniel Damkroeger, has recently been completely restored. It stands proudly on the southeast corner of Mission and Locust Streets, a spectacular monument to the pioneer Santa Cruz family who built it. A.P. Swanton, the home's first owner, and his son, Fred Swanton, were prominent members of Santa Cruz society in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Together, they entered several business ventures, including the building of the elite Swanton House Hotel (located on the site of the present post office), the Santa Cruz Electric Light and Power Company, and the Bonner Stables.

The formidable task of restoring the near century-old domicile of this famous Santa Cruz County tycoon family was accom-

plished by Barbara Parrish of J.R. Parrish, Inc. and some 100 Santa Cruz County craftspeople. Barbara discovered the old mansion in an extreme state of disrepair, divided into seven different living units. Barbara and Jim Parrish purchased it and the adjacent small building known as the Dekkert House (circa 1923) and integrated both buildings into a master plan that encompassed three separate parcels. Barbara's intention was, and continues to be, to purchase old Santa Cruz County buildings, restore them to their original beauty, and then lease them for appropriate commercial/business purposes.

Initially, it was doubtful as to whether the building could be saved. Cracked plaster, rotted flooring, broken windows, a leaking roof, and dangerous wiring gave evidence of years of neglect. It was

determined that the clear heart virgin redwood frame was still intact, however. With the help of Fred Baily, Barbara and Jim engaged some 100 craftspeople and artisans to begin the year-long period of reconstruction. Foreman of the project was SCOPE award winner Michael Zelter.

Art Rudy, master plasterer, knocked out the existing plaster walls and then replaced them through the painstaking process of applying lath, chickenwire, and *three coats* of plaster. He replaced all but two of the ceiling rosettes, casting them at the job site.

Using over 70 gallons of stripping solution, Jerry Cardinell (whose other projects include the Bogard home featured

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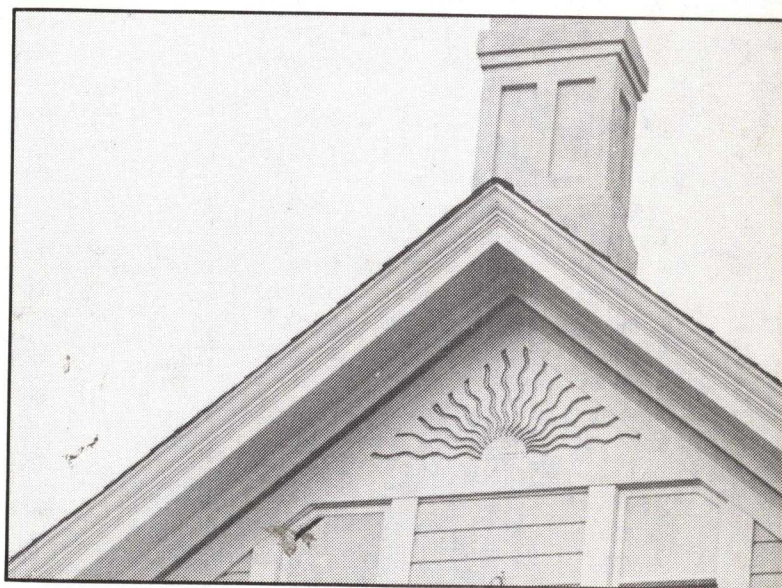
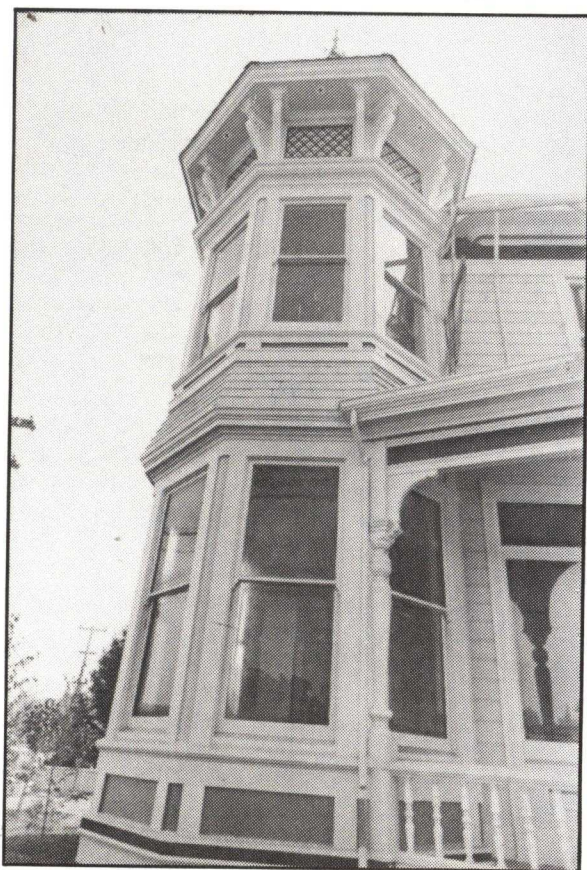


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Swanton House

by
J.R. Parrish



Upper left: *Elaborate iron fence surrounds house.* Upper center and lower right: *Paint and varnish was completely removed from interior woodwork.* Upper right and lower left: *Queen Anne Tower with "witch's cap" and finial.* Lower center: *Sunburst panel with gold leaf.*

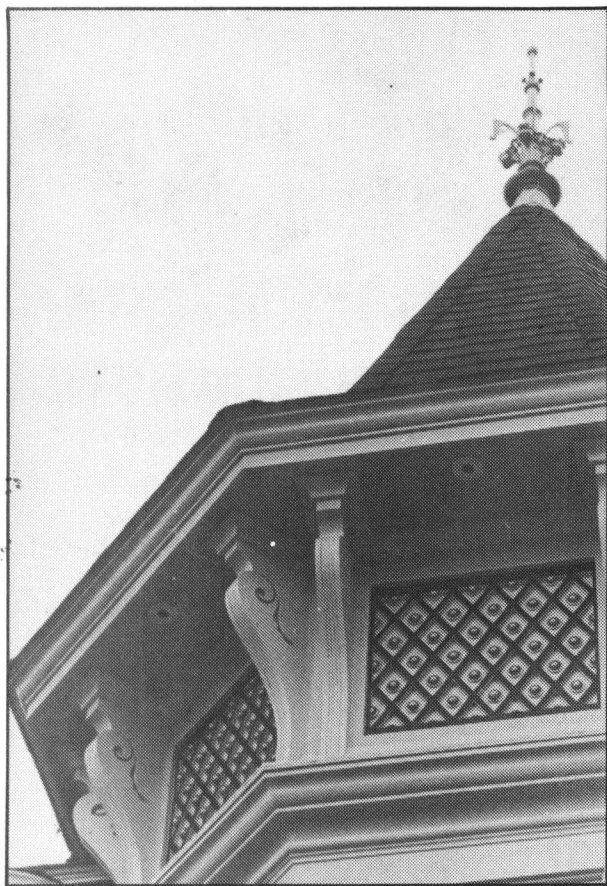


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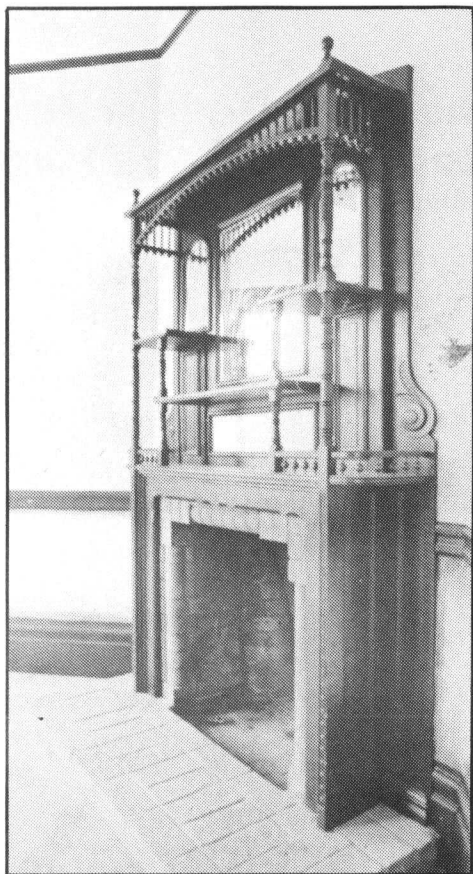
Fred W. Swanton, mayor of Santa Cruz from 1927 to 1933, was particularly prominent in the development and promotion of Santa Cruz. A millionaire by the age of 42, Fred Swanton was active in politics, real estate, transportation, electric power, communication, and tourism. He hosted President Theodore Roosevelt and General John C. Fremont on their visit to Santa Cruz, held gala affairs (one at which the great band leader John Phillips Sousa played) and promoted Santa Cruz throughout the state.

At the age of 21, he obtained the rights from Alexander Graham Bell and installed the first telephone system in Santa Cruz. He promoted the new incandescent lights, built what is believed to be one of the state's first power plants in 1889 (on Big Creek near the small community of Swanton) and, by 1890, had 4,000 homes on line. Eventually, his Big Creek Power Company supplied most of Santa Cruz with electricity. He brought the first street cars to Santa Cruz, forming the Union Traction Company in 1901.

Perhaps his most noteworthy achievement was the formation of the Santa Cruz Beach Cottage and Tent City Corporation, developing the first casino in 1904 and, after a fire, an even larger complex in 1907. In order to promote his venture, Fred Swanton persuaded the Southern Pacific Railroad to allow him to use several elaborate railroad cars in which he toured the state with brass bands, advertising men, and politicians. His promotions brought an estimated 100,000 tourists to Santa Cruz in 1905. The Seaside Company still owns and operates what remains today—The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. To complement his casino, he built the Casa del Rey Hotel in 1911, which today, serves as a retirement home.

Fred Swanton is responsible for having increased the population of Santa Cruz by at least 5,000, selling real estate on his tours (including the sale of \$80,000 worth of lots along West Cliff Drive in a single week).

Despite his great successes, a tragic fire which consumed his Swanton House Hotel, another which destroyed much of the original casino, and economic recessions caused his financial ruin. Fred Swanton died penniless at the age of 78 in 1940.



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in our premiere issue) removed the paint and varnish from all interior woodwork. He then repainted the entire structure, inside and out. Repainting included the embellishment of each of several exterior sunbursts with \$100 per gallon gold leaf. (Several of Jerry's homes are displayed in the book of restored Victorians *Painted Ladies*.)

The craftsmen of Bogner Sheet Metal duplicated, in iron, large sections of the original wooden cornice and front facade which had rotted away.

Even the task of rewiring the structure, from the ancient electrical system, to a modern system capable of accommodating a commercial tenant, seemed formidable. All wiring was completely removed and replaced, including the placement of all exterior utilities underground. This task took electrician Cecil Childress six months to complete.

An elaborate iron fence which surrounds the house was removed, sandblasted, repaired, repainted and is now, once again, in place.

In addition to the restoration of the structure, an inappropriate recent addition was removed and a wheelchair ramp was added.

The final integration of the building with its surroundings was accomplished through landscaping by Regan Barry of Coastal Evergreen Company.

Now completely restored, the details of this Queen Anne Tower House are apparent. It is a mixture of Queen Anne and Eastlake styles, blended so as to be quite pleasing to the eye. Most apparent is the Queen Anne Tower, complete with "witch's cap" and finial. Supporting the witches cap are evenly spaced brackets which are decorated and separated by a diamond-shaped waffle pattern of sawn wood. On the opposite corner of the front facade is an angled bay which serves both floors. Sunburst panels, now made more radiant with gold leaf, appear on the center panel of the angled bay on the second floor, just to the left of the double door entry, and at each gable.

In preserving this magnificent structure for future generations, Barbara and Jim Parrish may themselves be revered as contributors to the beauty and grace of Santa Cruz. For it is increasingly apparent that the heritage left by the Swantons, Stagnaros, Locatellis, Wilders and other pioneer Santa Cruz County families can only be fully transmitted to us through the efforts of the Chuck Abbotts, Max Waldons, Margaret Kochs, and Barbara Parrishes of today.