

Old homes, a look at history

By MARYBETH VARCADOS

One day, Lynn Dawson was in his front yard at 124 E. Beach Street and an old lady came walking by.

She stopped and said to him, "Young man, I took sewing lessons in that room," pointing to what is now his bedroom.

"I had to think for a while about that," smiles the airplane mechanic. "Finally I remembered that Mrs. Brunson used to give sewing lessons there, where the semi-circle of windows lets in a lot of light."

An old house continually reveals its secrets to the owner, and Dawson has enjoyed his six years of discoveries in the

East Lake style home that was built in 1893 for Josie Brunson.

Mrs. Brunson's husband left not long after the house was completed and her sister June Fletcher came from Boston to live with her. In 1941 the home was sold to Mario Stefani who owned it until Dawson captured it off the real estate market for a reasonable price. He lives there now with his lady friend Lorrie Kehn.

The home and four other historic buildings in the downtown area will be open to the public on Oct. 21 from 1 to 4 p.m. as a benefit for Watsonville YMCA and in conjunction with the third annual YMCA Antique Show and Sale at the Y building, 27 Sudden Street.

The antique show will be open for two days, Oct. 21 and 22, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. the first day and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the second.

Mrs. James Smith will be a hostess at the Dawson home, pointing out details of interest.

Virtually all the fixtures and construction work is original. Twelve-foot ceilings merge into the usually-papered walls, joining at the gold-leafed picture moldings. Windows are designed with individual woodwork touches. The entire home is built of redwood. Large carved sliding doors separate the living room and dining room, now a den. Even the door locks are original, with a key that bends. A deep fireplace in the den is edged with glossy green tiles in a "logs" motif.

Dawson's furnishings include many antiques, although he claims, "I collect junk, just junk." But in the bedroom, oak dressers accompany a large brass bed from his mother's family, the Bennetts of Sutter Creek. Dawson has cleaned and buffed the brass back to its original sheen.

The kitchen has been remodeled, a cheery orange and white place with a gas stove with wood burner and an overhead fan which Dawson brought back from the Virgin Islands. Throughout the house you see Dawson's airplane collections, models as well as collector's pieces.

Thus far, Dawson and his next door neighbor, local historian Betty Lewis, haven't pinpointed who was the architect of his house. Perry Andrews was the contractor.

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The Lewis home, at 128 E. Beach St., also will be open for the tour, with Mrs. Parr Eves and Mrs. Bob Winters as hostesses. The hostesses will be dressed in oldtime costumes.

Architect William H. Weeks designed the Lewis home and it was built in 1894 for Julius Lee, an attorney in Queen Anne style by J.S. Jennings, contractor.

The remaining tour stops will be:

— The D'Arcy Bonnet home, on the other side of the Lewis home, at 134 E. Beach St. Built in the 1860's as a one-story square building, it had a two-story front added in 1888 by Dr. Will Rodgers. Josie Smith purchased the property in 1905 and added six bedrooms to top and back. Mrs. Smith's husband died in 1918 and she married John Daly in 1920. Josie Daly's Boarding House for Men operated there until 1954 and Mrs. Smith died in 1964. The Bonnets purchased the old boarding house in 1970. Mrs. Craig Potter and Mrs. Norman Davis will be hostess here.

— The home of Marvin and Eileen Byers, 103 Jefferson St., belonged to Ira Fenton, a carriage painter, in 1906. Other history is still being traced. Hostess will be Mrs. Tom Spillman.

— Also open for the tour will be the William Volck Memorial Museum, 261 E. Beach St., a house built in 1901 for Richard Pearson, designed by architect Weeks. Theo Barnhouse was the contractor. The home was given to the Pajaro Valley Historical Assn. in 1964 by Helen Volck Tucker in memory of her first husband, William Volck.

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An old car will be stationed in front of each home and the museum by the Antique Car Club during the tour.

Also at the museum, a special exhibit will be up of the Apple Annual which was held in Watsonville each October from 1910 to 1914.

Donation for the house tour is \$5 and includes admission to the antique show and sale. Admission for the antique show only will be \$1.50. Tickets are available at the YWCA, 724-1161 and from committee workers.

JoAnn Mattingley is general chairwoman of the antique show; Mrs. Lewis is in charge of the house tour.



Door fixtures and overhead fan, two of Dawson's household favorites.



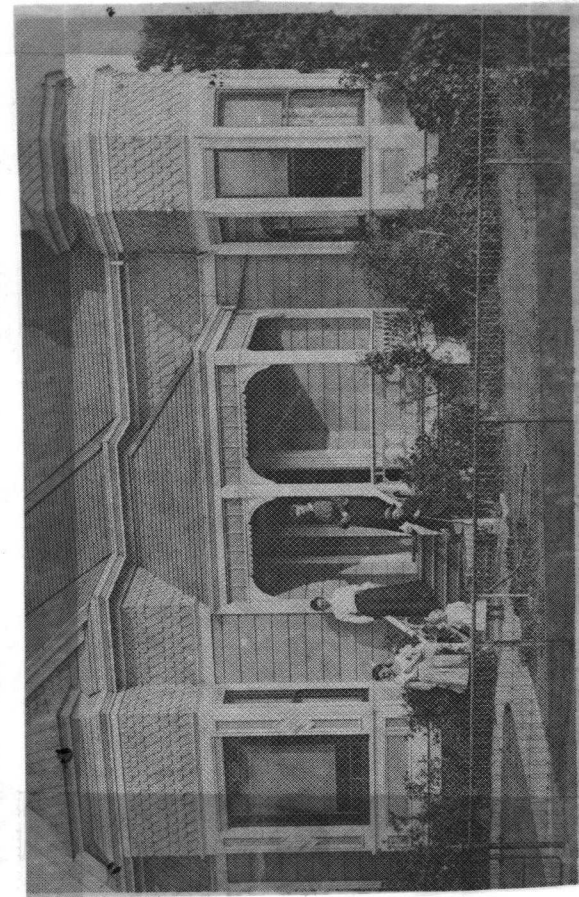
REGISTER-PAJARONIAN
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REFERENCE

ARTOS BRANCH
LIBRARY
7695 SOQUEL DRIVE
ARTOS, CALIFORNIA 95003



Lynn Dawson likes to sit and watch the world go by. —Photos by Sam Vestal
Lynn Dawson likes



Josie Brunson and June Fletcher were the original occupants.