

Peace Tree--Towering Hope For Future

By Margaret Koch
Sentinel Staff Writer

The tree stands tall and green today . . . proud and straight and reaching for the sun.

It was a 12-inch sprig when it was planted nearly 50 years ago by William Jennings Bryan and Joe Ferrere.

And therein lies a story — for this Sequoia sempervirens on the Louis and Robert Rittenhouse estate on High street has one of the most interesting histories of any tree in Santa Cruz county.

Ferrere goes up to see it once in awhile — sort of like visiting an old friend. It brings back memories of the days when he was employed as head gardener for Charles Caldwell Moore who owned and developed the High street estate when the tree was planted.

C. C. Moore, West coast executive and financier, was president of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915 in San Francisco. He was a director of Central California Creameries, of Babcock and Wilcox, manufacturers of steam boilers and fittings, and

he constructed most of the large power plants on the West coast and in Hawaii.

Moore was born in New York but spent part of his boyhood in Soquel. He and his wife bought the historic High street property in 1906, just after the great earthquake and fire. It was a portion of the Tres Ojos de Agua (Three Springs) Mexican grant made in 1844 to Nicolas Dodero.

The property had passed from the Dodero family to Nelson A. Bixby, early-day shipping man, then to Henry Meyrick, early-day real estate broker, before Moore acquired it.

Moore, whose personal fortunes grew from a \$50 per month job as apprentice in a San Francisco machine shop, was recognized as a mechanical genius of his day. He married the daughter of a Los Angeles millionaire, L. M. Breed, and the couple became famous for their lavish entertaining at their Santa Cruz estate.

They developed a tennis court, a private golf course, swimming pool and three lakes which were kept stocked

with trout and steelhead. Moore was a devoted trout fisherman.

The main house had 30 rooms; guest cottages and a huge lounge were added to accommodate the crowds. The garage held six cars. And a 45 by 70-foot hardwood floor upstairs in the barn served as a ballroom.

Cows furnished milk and cream; their own gardens furnished all flowers and vegetables. Five riding horses were stabled for the family and for many years Moore's fine black horse, Teddy, led Santa Cruz parades, usually ridden by Commissioner Elmer Geyer.

The estate was one of the showplaces of the West coast and every weekend from June to October there would be 30 or 40 houseguests.

Among the notables they entertained was William Jennings Bryan, famed for his "cross of gold" speech at the Democratic national convention in Chicago in 1896. Bryan, an avowed pacifist, also was three times a candidate for the U.S. presidency and had served as U.S. secretary of state.

During Bryan's visit with the Moores it was decided to plant a redwood tree dedicated to peace. Europe already was embroiled in World War I and the United States had just protested the German sinking of the Lusitania in May of that year (1915).

"I dug the hole and prepared the earth myself," Ferrere recalled. He had a staff of a dozen gardeners under him.

Bryan set the tree in place and earth was tamped around it. The ceremony was attended by Fred Howe, who served as mayor and postmaster of Santa Cruz, by Lt. Gov. William Jeter and C. H. van Torchiana, U.S. representative to the Netherlands.

"Nothing happened — the tree didn't grow an inch for two years," Ferrere said.

In 1917 Bryan visited Santa Cruz again and telephoned the gardener to ask about the tree.

"I tell him it hasn't done a thing yet and he says 'Well Joe, remember what it was planted for — peace.'"

The tree didn't start to grow until November of 1918, accord-



The Peace Tree — Sequoia sempervirens planted by William Jennings Bryan and Joe

Ferrere in 1915 — flourishes today on the former C. C. Moore estate at 660 High street.

ing to Ferrere. Then it grew 27 inches in six months.

Several years later, Bryan's daughter, Ruth Bryan Owens, visited Santa Cruz. She too called Joe Ferrere to ask about the redwood tree planted by her father.

Later Moore ordered an inscribed bronze plaque. Ferrere fastened it to a large limestone rock brought from Kalkar Johnson's quarry nearby and placed it at the base of the tree.

It's there today . . . reminder of a different age. Only the hope for the future is the same.

'Nothing Unusual,' Jury Says Of Hospital Probe

A county Grand Jury investigation of the financing of the Ferguson building at county hospital has turned up "nothing particularly unusual," District Attorney Richard Pease said Friday.

Pease declared a check of all available records shows that, in his opinion, "the building will revert back to county ownership in 1980, as expected."

The Grand Jury ordered the inquiry after a three-man citizens' group pointed out the lease agreement for the medical building contains no provision for county ownership.

A lease-purchase agreement was signed in 1959 between the county and a non-profit hospital corporation for construction of the building. The county pays \$89,000 yearly in rental payments, presumably over a 20-year period ending in 1980.

A three-man group composed of John Cavanaugh, John Cruz

ment on," Pease noted. "I suppose it's the best they could do at the time."

As to county ownership, Pease pointed out phrases in the lease, the holding company's articles of incorporation, deeds, and other papers add up to the county's right to own the building by 1980.

"These articles say the county will 'ultimately' own the building, and the time limit is spelled out in other places. I can see no problem here, nor any irregularities," Pease concluded.

Army Weather Instruments Land At Sunset Beach

Two U.S. army weather instrument packages floated down by parachute near Sunset Beach Friday.

Sheriff's deputies received

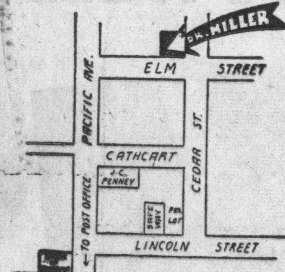
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