

# Santa Cruz County Preserves Its Past

## *Step Back In Time At A Historical Museum*

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**T**ired of basking at the beach? Or maybe you've fallen in love with the area and are dying to find out a bit about its history? Whatever the reason, Historic Preservation Week, May 9-15, is an ideal time to explore Santa Cruz County's three historic museums.

Situated in the heart of downtown Santa Cruz at 118 Cooper Street, the **Santa Cruz County Historical Museum**, perhaps better known as the **Octagon**, offers a wide variety of changing exhibits throughout the year. The Octagon was dedicated in 1972 and is located in one of the county's historically significant buildings, the former Hall of Records. In addition to rotating exhibits, the Octagon maintains local archives and offers reference assistance to students, teachers and historians.

Currently on display is an exhibit titled "Re-hab, Re-Use & Adapt," a look at innovative approaches to recycling older, but still useful structures. Included are artists' renderings, photographs, video displays and blueprints of such locally "recycled" structures as the Felton Covered Bridge, the Cowell Ranch Buildings at UCSC, and the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk Casino and Plunge. This summer's exhibit will highlight Santa Cruz County at the turn of the century, as visualized by contemporary local artists. The museum is open to the public, free of charge, Monday through Saturday from noon to 5 pm. Tour groups may visit by appointment.

The **William Volck Memorial Museum** at 261 East Beach Street in Watsonville is located in a charming five-room stone cottage dating back to 1901. Dedicated in 1964 by the Pajaro Valley Historical Association, the William Volck Museum offers a continuous display of local photographs and books, as well as artifacts of significant historic interest. All artifacts in the museum come exclusively from the Pajaro Valley, and the building boasts one

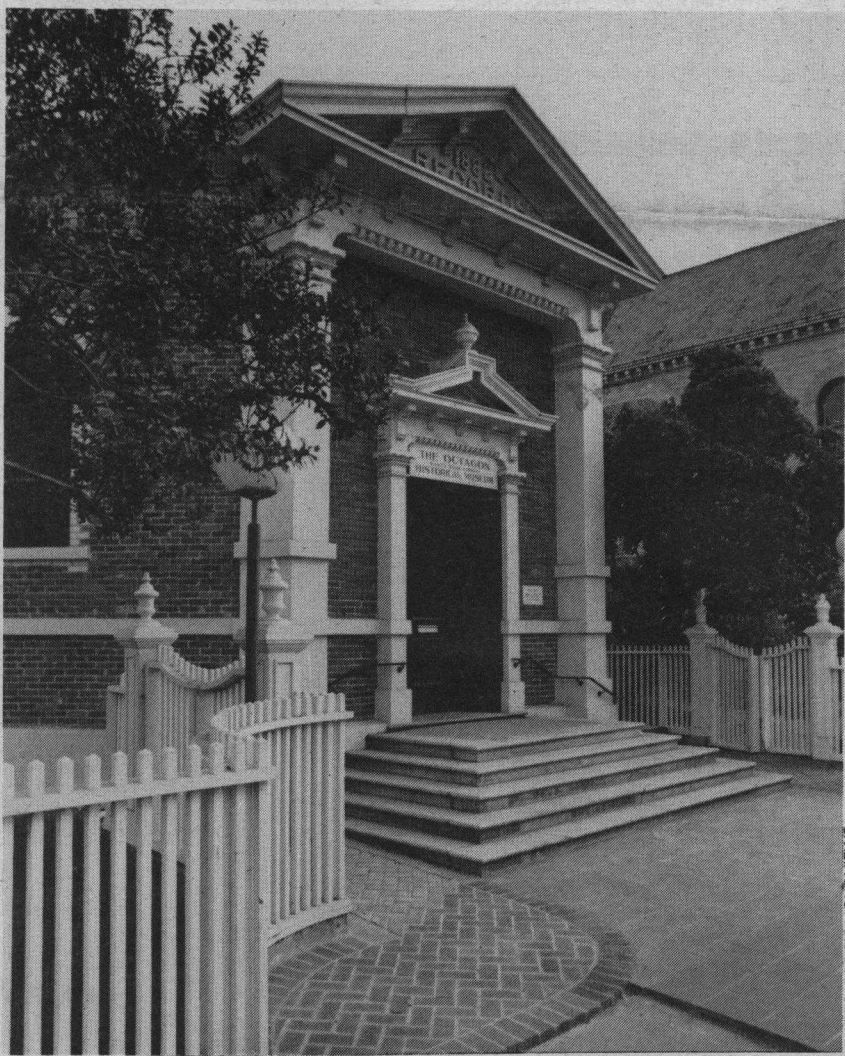
of the most extensive historic costume collections to be found in a museum of comparable size. Research requests are honored when possible. The museum is open to the public, free of charge, Tuesday through Thursday from 11 am to 3 pm, and special tours may be arranged.

The county's third historic museum is tucked away in Capitola Village in a traditional "little red schoolhouse" at 410 Capitola Ave. The museum was dedicated in 1968, after being rescued from its

village. Future displays will include recently-unearthed Soquel Indian artifacts dating back 200 to 2000 years, which were discovered by Capitola historian Carolyn Swift.

Reference material is available. The museum is open to the public, free of charge, daily from 9:30 am to 4 pm.

Hardcore local history enthusiasts will want to note that the annual meeting of the California Conference of Historical Societies takes place in Santa Cruz, June 28-30.



*The Octagon is one of three museums offering a historical perspective to Santa Cruz County.*

former Brommer Street location by then Capitola mayor Philip Walker, who purchased the cottage for the grand sum of \$25. The museum has just undergone a major renovation.

Ongoing displays include photographs, news clippings and Victorian artifacts that portray an overview of the history of Capitola

So whether you're burning to delve into local lore, curious to view the "type of clothes Great-Grandmother wore" or just looking for a nice quiet place to rest your sunburn, you are sure to find something to explore at one of the local historical museums.