

"LACE CURTAINS" are painted, above, on the windows of their "new-old" home by Mrs. Chuck Abbott, known professionally as Esther Henderson. The Abbotts are nationally known scenic photographers who have come to live here and have purchased the former Orchard home at the corner of Lincoln and Center streets. These two front windows of "lace" took her one whole day to do.

HER FURNITURE is just right too. Huge grandfather clock at left was a wedding gift to Mrs. Abbott's parents more than 50 years ago.

The Chuck Abbotts, 'Portraits Of America' Photo Team, Are Santa Cruz Newcomers

By MARGARET KOCH

They once spent 19 days waiting to photograph a rain forest . . . Three weeks to get a cowboy-guitar-campfire picture . . . and several years to get a Navajo family with just the right sunlit peaks in Monument valley. "They" are Chuck Abbott and his wife, Esther Henderson, nationally known photographers who specialize in "portraits of America." Their work has appeared on covers (and inside pages) of national magazines as well as book and record jackets and calendars.

Two months ago the talented Arizona couple, in pursuit of cooler summers, decided to settle in Santa Cruz. And their decorating job on the old-fashioned home they bought at the corner of Lincoln and Center streets is a story in itself.

When Chuck and Esther touch a camera it performs uniquely: Peaks seem to scrape the sky and lift you right up there too; desert sand looks so grainy it almost grits in your teeth.

Their touch on the old house is just as unique right down to Esther's "poor man's curtains." And they have had practice at that too, before they came here to live. In Tucson they restored an ancient house.

"We are great believers in preserving atmosphere in the form of old trees, old buildings and old homes," Chuck explained.

"Old houses are more fun—they present a challenge," Esther said. "We've planted a tree too—a weeping birch in the front yard."

There are many stories — all picturesque — about the Abbotts, their careers and their homes. Chuck's story began in Oregon where he was born, and in Palm Springs where he became known as the "cowboy photographer." But the main plot unfolded in Arizona where he took up cameras, met his wife and established a photo business as well as a national reputation for fine photography. He also became official photographer for Arizona Highways magazine and enjoyed his own personal auto license plate: CHUCK-1.

Esther, who goes by her maiden name for professional purposes, is a native of Oak Park, Ill., who came west in 1935 with a brand-new photography school diploma and a third-hand camera. She was a portrait photographer by intent but with her first outdoor assignments she found she couldn't resist the spectacular Arizona scenery.

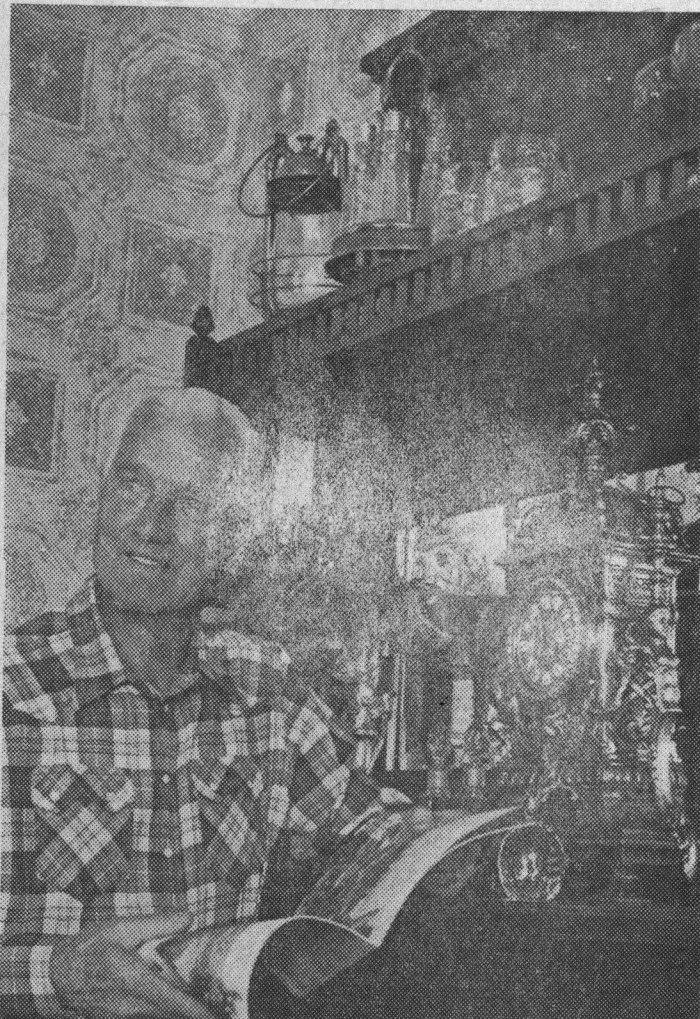
Before their two sons were born, the Abbotts drove miles each year to camp and hike all over the state taking the pictures for which they both became famous. Standard Oil, Kodak and Brown-Bigelow are some of the companies that use their pictures in advertising and calendars.

With the children, the Abbotts acquired a house trailer which made their traveling easier. As the boys got old enough to help carry tripods and camera cases, the work became a family project.

Today their youngest son, Mark, is a sophomore at Santa Cruz high school; their oldest son is away at school and the Abbotts appear to be getting pretty well settled. But they still expect to travel the western states and Canada a lot, looking for prospective pictures, and will visit their ranch in the Four-Corners country of Colorado. They are NOT in business locally.

One of Esther's photos appears in this month's Readers' Digest with an article on the "wide open spaces" by Eric Sevareid.

But right now Mrs. Abbott is busier with paint brushes than with cameras. (Her best-



OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER for Arizona Highways magazine when he and his wife lived in Arizona, Chuck Abbott holds one of the copies containing many of his scenic color shots.



WORKING EQUIPMENT for Chuck Abbott amounts to about \$7000 worth of cameras, part of which are above. He is holding a Linhof he takes on pack trips. The large camera on tripod is a Deardorff.

she paints in oils too, a new hobby she adopted a year and a half ago. She makes her own frames for her works which are mainly still-life.

Paint brushes seem to be the Abbotts' first-hand business at the moment. They call it their own private "urban redevelopment job."

with various repertory groups in Perth, Glasgow and Bristol. After three years of repertory activity, Prescott returned to London, determined to become a Shakespearean actor. Contrary to his plans, however, producers preferred to type him as an American.

The following three years Prescott tried his hand in numerous British television and film productions.

Eventually deciding that his interests lay more in writing than in acting, he returned to the United States to pursue a doctorate in comparative literature at the Cal campus. In assuming the role of "Don Juan," Prescott is acting for the first time since his professional engagements in Britain.

Tickets for the production are \$1 and may be purchased at the door the night of the performance.

Although they've been in existence for 13 seasons and are in the midst of their 18th production, the activities of the San Francisco Players guild may be a minor mystery to many Santa Cruzans.

But their work is no secret to thousands of California school children who have clapped for the hero, hissed the villain and sat bug-eyed at the beauty of the heroine during the past productions.

Their latest effort, "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," coming to the civic auditorium Sunday, March 31, again promises to enthrall both young and old in the audience.

As San Francisco critic Paul Speegle noted at the show's opening in the city last October, "The guild is bringing the wonderful creative world of the theater to youngsters who are being weaned on a steady diet of television and movies."

"The guild is one of the more worthwhile theatrical and educational ventures in the community and richly deserves whole hearted support from everyone."

The local performance, scheduled for 2 p.m., is being sponsored by the Santa Cruz branch, American Association of University Women. Mrs. Kenneth Lamb at MU 8-2002 is general chairman of advance ticket sales and her area chairmen include for the San Lorenzo valley, Mrs. Thomas Davis at DE 6-5703; Rio del Mar, Mrs. James DuMond, MU 8-3859; Pasatiempo, Mrs. Werner Fink, GA 3-4777; West Santa Cruz, Mrs. Ronald Godar, GA 3-4268; Opal Cliffs, Mrs. Katherine Merriam, GR 5-1626; Sequel Mrs. Lindsey Wright, GR 5-4718, and East Santa Cruz, Mrs. . . .

Parents Club Selects Homes For May Tour

Two Pasatiempo homes, one on Graham Hill road and another at Pleasure Point have been selected for the Holy Cross Parents club's annual tour-tea event May 4.

Dr. Enrico Raffanti, general chairman, yesterday announced that the itinerary will include the residences of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Rico, 3030 Pleasure Point drive; Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Armit, 50 South Circle drive; Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Griffen, 5 Clubhouse road, and Mr. and Mrs. Donald Hart, 615 Graham Hill road.

The theme, "Party Time Around the Clock," will be carried out in special decorations and table-settings at each of the homes, according to Mrs. Dan O'Connell and Mrs. Fred Carcello, co-chairmen with Dr. Raffanti.

A champagne-tea reception at Facelli's will follow the tour.

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Tickets may be reserved by calling either Mrs. Lavon Rogers at GA 3-7008 or Mrs. Leroy Pera at GA 6-0607.



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Speaking of paint brushes