

A glance at history

High Street estate was tycoon's castle

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JAPANESE parasols were all the rage to protect ladies' complexions in 1915 when the Charles C. Moores entertained guests at their showplace home on High Street.

C.C. Moore was president of that year's Panama-Pacific Exposition, located in San Francisco where he and his wife maintained family headquarters. But from 1906 until his death of cerebral hemorrhage in 1932, they spent much of their time in Santa Cruz.

Moore's father, L.W. Moore, had been here years before. He came from New York in 1849 and spent time at Porter Gulch where he and George K. Porter established a tannery. Porter bought Moore's interest, however, and Moore returned to New York where he married and started his family.

Charles C. Moore came to California with his parents as an infant. He worked as a mechanic for \$50 a month in the San Francisco Tool Co., but when he died he was the millionaire president of that same company which was by then known as the Charles C. Moore and Co., Engineers, Inc.

In 1893, he married Lillian M. Breed of Los Angeles and they had three children: a crippled son, C.C. Moore Jr., and two daughters.

Moore and his wife knew Santa Cruz well and were often guests at the High Street home of Henry Meyrick, local realtor. Meyrick, an Englishman, owned 55 choice acres which were part of the original Tres Ojos de Agua, Mexican Land Grant. The name translated means "Three Eyes of Water" — or three springs.

Tres Ojos had been granted in 1844 to Nicolas Dodero who built himself an adobe house near today's Spring Street. Nelson A. Bixby was the next owner and he built himself a hilltop house. Meyrick was the third owner and he sold it to the Moores.



C.C. Moore, left, addresses guests at party.



Springs provided water for the natural setting.

REFERENCE

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The property with its beautiful streams and willow trees and meadows beyond, was a prized possession of C.C. Moore. He and his wife were nature lovers and they were determined to develop the estate as naturally as possible. In 1911 they engaged Lila Sweet Martin to plan their new buildings. Unsightly old out-buildings were removed and the first guest house was built. It was called The Log Cabin. The Moores returned from Europe to find it completed and it served as the family's first home on the property.

In 1915, when C.C. Moore became president of the Exposition, they built The Lounge and another guest house they called The Quarters. The Lounge was a huge room designed for entertaining. In The Quarters, there were two large rooms for entertaining also, one the Chinese Room, the other, the Pine Cone.

Superintendent's and servants' quarters were built along with a 30-room home for the Moores and an eight-room caretaker's house. In later years, Martin recalled that on one year alone she had spent \$50,000. That was in an era when carpenters' wages were \$4 a day and common laborers got \$2 a day. Eventually the estate included barns for the horses, cattle and sheep that roamed the pastures, a private golf course, a 65-

foot swimming pool and furniture that was made right on the spot — all except chairs which were purchased.

The late John McLaren, famous Scot horticulturist and designer of Golden Gate Park, was a close friend of the Moores and a frequent visitor. He helped plan the elaborate gardens which were cared for by Jaconde Ferrere and his crew of gardeners for many years. Shrubs and rarities came from many parts of the world to grace Moore's grounds.

When Moore Sr. wasn't in Santa Cruz, he could be anywhere in the

world. In 1906, he had been sent to Europe to persuade seven nations to send their warships to San Francisco's Portola Festival. It was a purely local celebration to spur the rebuilding of the city after the great earthquake. Moore was so persuasive that the battleships appeared on schedule. He was elected president of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and served in 1907-08, during a trying epidemic of bubonic plague when he also was serving as chairman of the Citizens Health Committee.

During World War I, he plunged

into war work and was named director of the state Council of Defense. In 1922, he tried for a seat in the senate, his only political ploy, but he was defeated by Hiram Johnson.

When he died, he was president of the California Society of Pioneers and also headed the campaign for the Hetch-Hetchy \$6 million bond issue. He was one of the most decorated men in the U.S. He had medals from Japan, China, Italy, Norway, Greece

and France, to name just a few, and he was a member of many prestigious clubs and organizations.

Moore died at his High Street estate and was buried from Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

In the late 1940s, Mrs. Moore sold the estate to Louis Rittenhouse. According to The Sentinel, "stamps affixed to the deeds on file...would indicate the purchase price was in the neighborhood of \$50,000.