



Upcoming Events

- May 2: HSSRs Seventh Night at the Museum: Fighting the Great War at Home and Abroad
- May 21: Sonoma County Library Event at DeTurk Round Barn: Finding History in Sonoma County - A Day of Discovery.
- Summer 2017: HSSR Moderated Talks at Sixth Street Theater:
History of Horses in Sonoma County
Movie Theaters' Impact on Santa Rosa

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Founded 2012

The Story of Legalized Prostitution in Santa Rosa

by Ann Galantine

In the 1900s the City of Roses was feeling its growing pains and becoming more and more what was considered to be a "Wide Open Town." This meant that law enforcement turned a blind eye to criminal activities such as gambling and other illegal practices. Santa Rosa had established their new horse racing track which brought in throngs of people from throughout the state, especially San Francisco. The town welcomed the "City Swells" by throwing out the city and state gambling laws. The police took on the role of casino floor managers only monitoring the games for cheating.

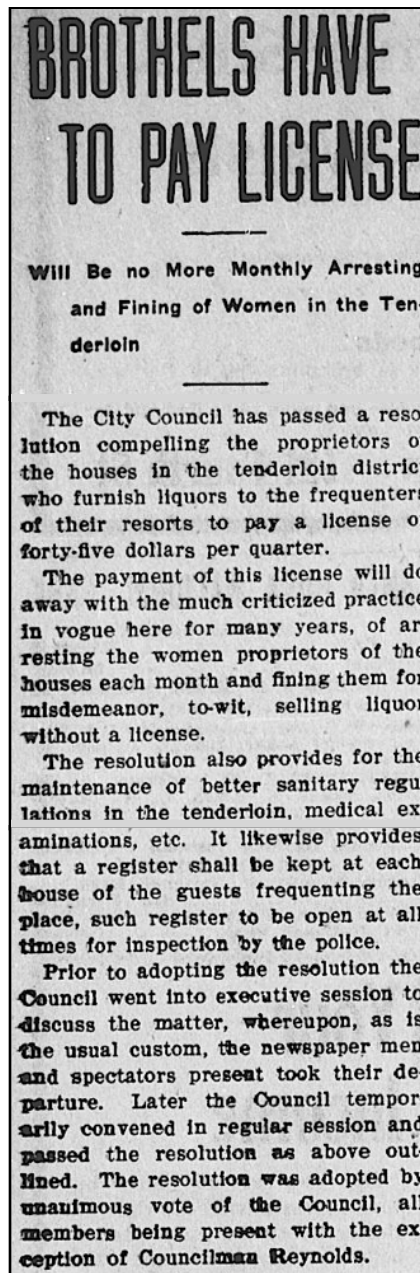
As gambling was overlooked, so was the oldest profession — prostitution. The red light district was primarily situated on First Street from Main Street (Santa Rosa Avenue) through E Street. This quaint area was called the "Tenderloin" and boasted of 11 "establishments."

Exactly one year after the 1906 earthquake the city took an irresponsible step to legalize and license these "female boarding" or "sporting" houses. Why would the City Council take on this controversial resolution? The Press Democrat reported the resolution did away with arresting the proprietors for selling liquor without a license and brought sanitary regulation of the tenderloin. More likely the unanimous decision had to do with the owners of the establishments, one of whom was a wealthy land owner and developer employed by a large local bank which was run by a city elected official.

At a closed session on April 11, 1907, brought together by City Attorney Geary, the City Council adopted a resolution. Resolution Number Two would be enforced a month later with the following provisions:

- A \$45 quarterly fee collected by the Chief of Police.
- Owner/lessee keeps a register of each boarding "guest" showing their arrivals and departures.
- Each "guest" would be inspected by a

doctor and if a contagious disease is found the "guest" to vacate premises.



The Press Democrat,
April 19, 1907

- Doctor would give a certificate to each "guest" inspected.
- Doctor would be shown guest registers every two weeks.
- Houses would be kept in a clean and sanitary manner and in a quiet and orderly way.
- Owners/lessees could dispense liquors under protection of said license without a specific dispensing permit.

As one would imagine, the respectable citizens were shocked at the resolution. Religious leaders, public figures and lawmen assembled a public meeting at the Presbyterian Church the Sunday following the decision to denounce the Council's resolution. There had never been such a standing room only outpouring of respectable citizens as those gathered at the church that day. Various speakers, church representatives, officers of the law and laymen listened to and expressed their opinions on the subject. In addition to the cries of indignity bestowed upon the community, an attorney brought to the floor evidence of the narrow-minded thought for the established law abiding saloon owners, who pay \$15 more per quarter for their licenses. The debate continued for months between the City Council members and community consciences. The local papers printed lots of talk to demanding overturn the resolution, yet nothing came to fruition until the summer of 1907.

The evening temperatures had risen to unbearable degrees — not only due to the heat, but due to the sounds of revelry, profanity and scents of cigar smoke permeating the home directly in back of the Behmer House of immorality. These haunting elements filled the one-time grand home of John H. Farmer, one of Santa Rosa's founding fathers. The grandeur of the home had succumbed to age as had dear

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President's Message

by Staci Pastis, HSSR President

If you are like me law enforcement is not something you consider on a daily basis. However, it is part of our daily lives even if we are not consciously affected by our neighbors who serve to protect. In fact, my only recent experience with law enforcement was seeing my husband in the back of a police car at one of our McDonald Avenue walks. Seems he was curious as to what a real police car was like and the Volunteer Officer, who had come to help us with our walk, indulged him. HSSR events are always surprising and enjoyable, as well as educational, and I hope you join us for our next event.

In February the HSSR hosted another moderated panel at the Sixth Street Playhouse highlighting stories of the Santa Rosa Police Department. This talk was as engaging and informative as all our past talks. If you missed it you can enjoy many stories recapped in this issue.

We have begun to post videos of our events on our web site so that everyone can view and experience them. Take some time to view the video from our police event and a moment to consider the history of law enforcement in our fair city.

Since our last issue two valuable HSSR Board Members, Mike Grace and Mike Daniels have stepped down. Their contributions have been great and we will miss them as they focus on other endeavors. Please join me in appreciating their contributions to the HSSR.

Mike Grace served two years as HSSR President and left his mark on all we do. He was instrumental in beginning the wonderful events that we hold throughout the year. We have him to thank for our talks, walks and our documentary movie. Mike's gift is helping us to remember that history is engaging. He brought an enthusiasm to all we do and guided the HSSR to grow into an active community group. Mike will never be replaced and for that reason we are hoping that he will continue to be a part of all of our events and our future.

Mike Daniels served as Editor of our newsletter since the fall of 2014. I think it is important to recognize that Mike grew the newsletter to the quality example of historical journalism that it has become. Under his leadership it became something to look forward to receiving and reading. It always includes articles that engage and inform and help us to see our history anew. We will continue to publish a newsletter that will honor Mike's legacy and all he did for the HSSR.

The Society has much to look forward to this year. Barb Beatie, Will Dunn and Hal Wright have joined our board and bring new energy and ideas. We will continue to show our documentary film, hold another history hunt, more walking tours and panels. Watch for our emails or visit our web site for more information.

In celebration of all that has come before,
Staci Pastis

HSSR Welcomes New Members

Lori Adams
Jeannette & Butch Anglin
Claude Boulware
John Burton
Walter & Kathryn Clark
Sally Evans & Stacey DeShazo
Paula Girolo
Mary Klein-Thompson & Rob
Thompson
Bob & Kathleen Mayes
Anton Negri
William Pedersen
Gary Rasche
Dennis Rogers
Patricia Ryan
LeeAnn Sacchi
Jim & Jean Schettler
Jim Soracco
Marcia Teuschler
Denny Thompson
Patrick Ward

**Join Today!
Become a member
of the HSSR**

HSSRs Seventh Night at the Museum

On May 2nd, beginning at 5:30, Historical Society Members are invited to join us for a free evening to see the History Museum of Sonoma County's latest exhibit:
Fighting the Great War at Home and Abroad

Eric Stanley, Exhibit Curator, will give a short introduction. Afterward, enjoy exploring the exhibit. This is a chance to view this exhibit marking the 100th anniversary of US entry into "the Great War," and to explore how the war touched so many lives, both at home and abroad. Hosted beverages. Reservations are required.

Reservations: info@HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.org

The HSSR Acknowledges Donors:

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Walter & Kathryn Clark
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Rick & Paulette Gomes
William Pedersen
Virginia Pyke
Gary Rasche
Lori Ross & Mark Feigal
Nick Tipon
Patrick Ward

**Our events and programs are
made possible through the
generosity of our members and
community partners.**

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Tales of Santa Rosa Police

by Kelly Carrillo Fernandez

On February 28 the HSSR hosted a lively program at the Sixth Street Playhouse. Chris Smith moderated guest speakers Rod Sverko and Santa Rosa historian, Gaye LeBaron who shared the great stories of a Santa Rosa's crime and policing past. Program introduction was made by Don Silverek and the scene was set with photos circa 1963-2003 showing uniformed officers, vintage squad cars, and favorite local hotspots. Rod "Smokey" Sverko's career with the SRPD spanned 40 years during which time he gathered many stories.

In 1963 the Chief of Police was Melvin F. "Dutch" Flohr. The population was little more than 30,000. Applying for the Department the first time, Flohr told Sverko to "get some whiskers and come back". Sverko did just that while enlisted in the Army. Flohr "had a lot of rules" and laughing Sverko suspected he'd be in jail today. Employment requirements included being unmarried and staying out of the bars both off and on duty. Officers were stewards of the City. Guns were to be kept holstered. The starting salary was \$426 a month.

A few things have changed. Out of the squad car three call boxes bordered the downtown area, connecting officers with the station. Dutch was known to call out through the dispatch radio "Pull over" — and all over town squad cars were doing just that — until they could determine which officer was being summoned.

There was no private security. It was the SRPD or no one. Dutch would personally deliver the \$1 million cash from the Sonoma County Fair to the bank vault loaded in the back of a station wagon. Squad cars would escort and stop traffic for quick transport.

The names of four SRPD officers filled the night's stories: Lee Gleason, George Scinto, Karl Meister and Walt Gesek. Their long careers required three to pull the trigger just once, and the fourth, Gleason, never did. Knowledge or sight of the officer's weapon would suffice. LeBaron told of one such apprehension. A suspect was fleeing over a fence, the officer shot the gun as a warning and out of sheer shock and fear the suspect fell to the ground. The officer gasped, fearing he'd actually shot him.

Very different times required marijuana seeds be gathered for "training and education purposes." They were taken to Santa Rosa Flower Shop owner, Tony Campiglia, where sample plants were grown. The plants and seeds were passed and shared for officer recognition. Anyone in possession of plants or seeds was arrested and sent down to San Quentin.

In the 60s there was just one homeless person. They called her "grey coat" and she slept in the downtown doorways. The officers did what they could to keep her alive.

The cruising on Fourth Street required SRPD attention. Noisy exhaust pipes were the primary concern. Teens were most often taken to the station and parents were called. One summer night Officer Homer Lee's attention was drawn to loud pipes cruising down Fourth Street. He hopped on his police cycle and sped off in hot pursuit to find his cycle had been chained to a pole. A local scene remarkably similar to one in locally filmed "American Graffiti".

The first 11 years with Dutch as chief, Santa Rosa experienced no murders. It was the mid 1960s that Santa Rosa began to be the scene of homicides. A love triangle ended badly at the Busy Bee when one man shot the other and the mutually desired woman with just one bullet. A man who failed to return home from a Fourth Street bar when summoned, was greeted with a shotgun at his tardy 5 am

arrival. A teenage boy suffering from mental illness attacked his single mother's boyfriend with a butcher knife. Santa Rosa saw a bit of the mob when Joey "The Animal" Barboza was placed under FBI protection as "Joe Bentley." Protected Joe fell back into crime when he chose a woman who also had another lover. Bentley shot the lover. Santa Rosa saw a double bank robbery — two related hold-ups within a ten minute span.

And finally, Monsignor Tillman's walk to the donut shop took a wrong turn when he was stabbed in the back. Bleeding heavily, he made it back to the St. Rose Rectory, knife still in place. SRPD took to the streets knocking on doors with the report of a woman assailant. One door opened with the woman exclaiming, "I did it!" Case solved.

The first gang incident was in '85 at Star Skate on Occidental Road. While Sverko was concerned, the school board at the time was not. There was great trust between the Department and the Press. When Smokey, the department spokesperson, reported the 2 am happening "was nothing" — it was nothing.

Sverko and LeBaron's stories of mayhem brought laughter throughout the theater. When teens were parked drinking beer, officers began by inquiring whose parents would be phoned. One such night Officer George Scinto knocked on the car window asking names. The first was a Keegan. The second was a Trione. The third sheepishly said, "Hello Uncle George."

Officers frequently delivered the drunks home. After 2 am the only ones out were the drunks. Officers Scinto and Meister were called to remove one such drunk from his post at the bar where he'd been sleeping for hours. Shoulder tapping failed, it turned to nudging, to find this drunk was not just sleeping. Rigor mortis had set in and he held his bar-sleeping position all the way to the morgue.

Dutch was on every case and never failed return while vacationing out of town, always there to aid. He "hired people to help people", directed traffic when necessary and kept the adult bookstores out of downtown. He'd give \$2 to long-haired teenagers who would report back post haircut. Dutch was known to say, "We did the laundry today" noting their success at cleaning up the town.

Sverko and LeBaron shared great SRPD stories. Stay tuned for future HSSR moderated talks which are certain to entertain.



SRPD Chief "Dutch" Flohr and two others standing by police car, 1959
Sonoma County Library Collection

Santa Rosa in the 1920s

by Barb Beatie

1920 The City of Santa Rosa has 8,758 residents. Rosenberg family constructs the tallest building to date between San Francisco and Portland at the corner of Fourth Street and Mendocino Avenue. Traffic issues push city to hire motorcycle police officer to pursue offending motorists — a task which had become impossible for policemen on bicycle or foot duty.

1921 Train crossings are confusing. Two motorcyclists are killed by freight train on Fourth Street — faulty crossings are blamed. Santa Rosa Rotary Club is established. Santa Rosa High School at Humboldt and Benton streets, burns to the ground in mysterious fire. The 700 students will meet at various locations — the library, in the Labor Temple, the courthouse, upstairs above Mailer Frey Hardware, and other places — to attend classes for four years. Science teacher Floyd Bailey is named Dean of SRJC, and holds the post until 1957. *Press Democrat* editor Ernest Finley, with help from SRHS grads, Armand Saare, and Mike Pardee, buy the first radio transmitted opera ever sung in California and play it for the town to hear. A 400 foot antenna is rigged on the *Press Democrat* building roof, and people gather below to listen.

1922 The Cline Theater (now the Roxy) holds *Abraham Lincoln*, a musical program featuring well-known San Francisco actor, Frank McGlynn. The place to see and be seen is the Santa Rosa Golf Club and Country Club, designed by Albert Farr, who also designed Wolf House for Jack London. The Club stands on fifty acres of the Austin Ranch on Los Alamos Road. May Stephenson and Anna Martin open the Anna May Tea Room over Baldwin's Drug Store in the 500 block of Fourth Street, providing a gathering spot for women of Santa Rosa.

1923 Santa Rosa Lions Club receives charter. Attorney Clarence "Red" Tauzer volunteers as SRJC football and basketball teams' coach. Frank Doyle calls first meeting of group that would become Bridging the Golden Gate Association.

1924 An automobile bridge is built over the Santa Rosa Creek at A Street as cars crowd the streets of Santa Rosa. The G&S Theater, later renamed the California Theater, that housed the beautiful Wurlitzer Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra Style D, opens on B Street. Walter Proctor and Raford Leggett begin selling building lots on Proctor Drive, Austin Way and Morley Way.

1925 Santa Rosa Kiwanis Club receives charter. Powder Puff Beauty Salon advertises



Santa Rosa Junior College, Circa 1926
Sonoma County Library Collection

marcelling and bobbing services — the newest hairstyles for the fashion forward set. SRHS names Nevers Field after great sportsman, Ernie Nevers, Class of 1921. Nevers would play for SRJC and the Santa Rosa Bonecrushers, as well as coach the teams.

1926 Luther Burbank dies. His funeral is held in Doyle Park. Highway 101 reaches Cloverdale. Honoria Tuomey publishes her two-volume history of Sonoma County. Tauzer's SRJC Bear Cubs football team defeats San Jose State Teachers College 12-6.

1927 Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railroad opens depot on Fourth and Wilson Streets. Santa Rosan George Sherwood flies from Los Angeles to Santa Rosa, (landing in Sebastopol) in four hours. George Trombley forms the Santa Rosa Symphony Orchestra which plays first concert the next year. Sonoma County judge rules girls with bare legs can be turned away from school. The *Press Democrat* purchased competitor newspaper, *The Santa Rosa Republican*.

1928 Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railways are purchased by the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. John Greeott buys ranch on Chalk Hill Road where his son invents horseshoe known as the Greeott Grabber. William McConnell, District Attorney for whom McConnell Street is named, dies.

Chamber of Commerce purchases 127 acres of the Fountaingrove Ranch property for new airport.

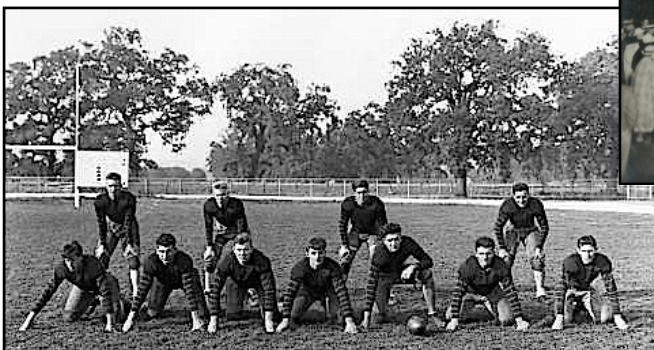
1929 Taking a ride on the wild side — for five cents, adventurous riders can purchase a ticket for a 10-minute electric trolley ride. The new and improved airport holds grand opening with air races and exhibitions. California State Senator Herbert Slater writes

Press Democrat column, "People taking stock of stocks and not of politics..."

reporting on the unfolding events of October 31, 1929.



The California Theater
Sonoma County Library Collection



Santa Rosa High School Football Squad, Circa 1927
Sonoma County Library Collection

United States in the 1920s

by Barb Beatie

- 1920 The U.S. Census reports, for first time, that more Americans live in urban areas than in rural areas. However, "urban" is defined as any town with more than 2,500 people. The census lists the U.S. population to be 106,021,537, an increase of 15% over the 1910 Census. The Volstead Act closes every tavern, bar and saloon making it illegal to sell any "intoxication beverages" with more than 0.5% alcohol. The Nineteenth Amendment is ratified, granting women the right to vote.
- 1921 Baseball's World Series broadcasts on radio for first time; New York Giants defeat New York Yankees, five games to three. Warren G. Harding becomes president. Former President William Harding Taft is sworn in as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. First Miss America pageant is held. Tomb of the Unknown Soldier dedicated during Armistice Day. The DeYoung Museum opens in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. Ziegfeld Follies star Fannie Brice records "My Man", originally a French hit, "Mon Homme." The O'Shaughnessy Dam is completed on the Tuolumne River and the Hetch Hetchy Project begins.
- 1922 Medical researcher Frederick Banting and research assistant Charles Best successfully begin testing insulin on diabetic dogs. Researcher John Macleod and chemist James Collip then begin to prepare insulin for human use. In 1923, Banting and Macleod are awarded the Nobel Prize for their work. The California grizzly bear becomes extinct as the last grizzly is shot in Tulare County.
- 1923 Germany, burdened by reparations payments imposed by Treaty of Versailles, suffers hyper-inflation. One American dollar is worth 7,000 German marks. *Time* Magazine is founded. President Warren G. Harding dies of a stroke in San Francisco hotel room. Vice President Calvin Coolidge becomes president. The Hollywood sign is created originally reading Hollywoodland.
- 1924 IBM is founded in New York. First Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade is held. J. Edgar Hoover is appointed head of the FBI. The first Gay Rights organization is established in Chicago. Kleenex disposable tissues are introduced. Dr. Benjamin Spock wins the Gold Medal in rowing at the Olympics.
- 1925 F. Scott Fitzgerald publishes *Gatsby*. First motel opens in San Luis Obispo, California, originally called the Milestone Mo-Tel. The rate is \$1.25 per night. Motel is used to describe an accommodation allows guests to park their vehicles directly outside their rooms. Nellie Tayloe Ross becomes governor of Wyoming, the first female U.S. governor. First issue of *New Yorker* magazine is published. The Grand Ole Opry begins broadcasting.
- 1926 Ernest Hemingway publishes *The Sun Also Rises*. Henry Ford announces five day, forty-hour work week. Physicist Robert Goddard successfully launches first liquid fueled rocket. Escape artist and famous entertainer Harry Houdini dies. The first SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) college admissions test is administered to high school students. Silent film star Rudolph Valentino dies.
- 1927 The first talking movie, *The Jazz Singer*, is released.

The first words Jolson recites are: "Wait a minute! Wait a minute! You ain't heard nothin' yet!" Aviator Charles Lindbergh completes the first solo

Charles Lindbergh and the "Spirit of Saint Louis", 1927

transatlantic flight, landing his "Spirit of Saint Louis" in Paris 33 hours after New York departure. The Holland Tunnel under the Hudson River opens connecting New York City with Jersey. Work begins on Mount Rushmore. The Mississippi River floods and levees break at 145 locations flooding an area of 27,000 square miles.



- 1928 Herbert Hoover is elected president, crushing Catholic Democrat Al Smith. Invention of the first successful bubble gum is credited to Walter Diemer. Cartoonist/ animator Walt Disney draws a new character — a mouse with round ears and a big smile. Philip Drinker and Louis A. Shaw, professors at Harvard University, invent the Iron Lung. The Boulder Dam Project Act is passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law.
- 1929 William Faulkner publishes *The Sound and the Fury*. The Museum of Modern Art opens in New York City. Motorola makes first car radio. The "Saint Valentine's Day Massacre," takes place and Al Capone's gang murders six followers of rival, George "Bugs" Moran. The American stock market collapses signaling the onset of the Great Depression. The Dow Jones Industrial Average peaks in September 1929 at 381.17 —a level that it would not reach again until 1954.



Nellie Tayloe Ross, 1926
WyoHistory.org

Crime and Punishment in Santa Rosa Newspapers

Speeders Arrested By Traffic Officer

Three speeders were hailed into court by the traffic officers over the week end and fined \$10 each by Justice Vaughan. Each was warned that a second offense would result in a stiffer sentence.

Complaint is heard from various portions of the county that farmers and other driving vehicles on the roads at night are ignoring the law requiring them to carry a light on the left hand side of their vehicle to warn autos and others approaching from the rear or front.

The light must be white in front and red to the rear.

The Press Democrat, April 12, 1916

Theft of Umbrella No Crime

Paterson, N. J., Jan. 5.—It is no crime to steal an umbrella on a rainy day, according to a decision by Recorder Carroll of this city. Robert McAuley of Philadelphia was tried for taking an umbrella from a hotel in Tuesday's rainstorm. The recorder dismissed the case.

The Press Democrat, January 6, 1911

Police Signal Was Used

The police signal from the top of the seventy foot pole in front of the telephone station, was used last night for the first time. The red light appeared once or twice during the evening and officers answered the calls which resulted in the appearance of the signal.

The Press Democrat, June 28, 1906

Reward.

Fifty dollars will be paid by us for information which will lead to the conviction and punishment of the person or persons who cut our wires last Saturday night. Pacific Coast Electrical Construction Company.

The Press Democrat, June 16, 1886

FAVOR ELECTROCUTION INSTEAD OF HANGING

Sacramento, May 5.—The Assembly bill substituting electrocution for hanging in cases of capital punishment was passed in the Assembly tonight by a vote of 42 to 18. The bill now goes to the Senate.

The Press Democrat, May 6, 1915

WHITNEY OBJECTED TO ANY DELAY OF SENTENCE

C. W. Whitney was sentenced to five years in Folsom prison for passing a worthless check on Fred J. Bertolani in this city when he came before Judge Seawell Monday morning. The Court had ordered the case continued to Thursday for further investigation, but Whitney declared he wanted no investigation or delay.

Whitney had also passed another worthless check here and he admitted having passed one in Sacramento, for which he was sent to prison, but had been paroled to Jack London eighteen months before his time was up. He declared he was drunk when he passed the checks here and did not know what he was doing.

The Press Democrat, January 12, 1915

Another Sneak Thief.

At about 9:30 o'clock Friday night someone brought the news up town that De Prim's house on Second street had been burglarized. Straightway officers Rainey and Harris, with several citizens following, proceeded to the scene of the robbery. After a thorough search, no traces could be found of the perpetrators of the crime. Nothing of value was found missing. The house has been locked up for some time and unoccupied.

The Sonoma Democrat, April 3, 1876

Not Guilty.

The County Board of Education had a special meeting, Saturday, to examine into the case of C. M. Watson, teacher of the Mountain View school, charged by A. Hall with immoral conduct. The complaint charges that Mr. Watson promised a prize of \$5 to the best scholar at the close of the term, which promise complainant claimed had not been fulfilled. But from the evidence introduced by the prosecution, it appeared that Mr. Watson had promised to give five dollars or its value, which promise had been fulfilled. The testimony given was conflicting and indefinite, and the accused was honorably acquitted.

The Sonoma Democrat, October 3, 1885

Wife Whipping.

That little pastime enjoyed by some men in whipping their wives will have to be given up now. The bill making it a crime punishable at the whipping post has been signed by Gov. Irwin and is now the law. For the benefit of strong-minded and strong-bodied ladies we will state that the law does not punish husband-whippers.

The Sonoma Democrat, April 1, 1876

FORMS OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

The Fresno *Inquirer* rightly condemns and applauds that by electricity as a step in progression worthy of our great Republic. All punishment is intended to be retributive to the individual and corrective of society, therefore that form of punishment which savors least of savagery will prove most effective among civilized communities. We do not think, however, that the present dread of the electrical machine as an instrument of capital punishment will last forever. That familiarity breeds contempt is one of the few maxims that invariable experience has changed into an axiom. A bloody death is terrible, hence the dread of the guillotine; a hanging is disgusting, hence the outraged feelings of the criminal classes revolt at it and doggedly defy it; a death by electricity is awe-inspiring, but its universality will eliminate its element of sublimity and humanity will go on in its bad old way of murdering through evil motives, and suffering death in return as a punishment and a correction. Imprisonment for life will be the ultimate substitute.

The Press Democrat, June 4, 1889

An Iowa farmer recently killed his son-in-law because the young man could not plow a straight furrow. The Willows Journal remarks that this form of punishment would make sons-in-law mighty scarce in California.

The Press Democrat, May 23, 1909

Odd Punishment.

Bigamists in Hungary get odd punishment. The man silly enough to marry two wives is legally forced to live with both of them in the same house.

The Press Democrat, November 18, 1907

Some Chicago papers express regret that policemen of that city are not good marksmen. One of them shot at a man in a bunch of 2,000 people the other day, but couldn't even hit the crowd.

Smoking cigarettes is a crime among the Abyssinians. These people are apparently not as bad as they have been represented.

The Press Democrat, December 16, 1899

Crime and Punishment in Santa Rosa Newspapers

Granted Another Trial.

Tom Woods, who has been tried four times in this county for arson, and convicted of the crime during the last term of the County Court, was granted a new trial by the County Judge on Monday last, and held to bail in the sum of \$1500. The District Attorney appealed the case directly to the Supreme Court upon the order of the County Judge granting a new trial.

The Sonoma Democrat, November 18, 1871

ON THE authority of the Williams Farmer we are informed that in Willows they have resorted to the whipping-post as a punishment for men who go about insulting girls. The form of punishment is even more objectionable than the offense.

The Press Democrat, June 4, 1889

Hissing is Not a Crime

Boston, April 18.—A decision has been rendered in the municipal Court here that a spectator has a right to express condemnation of a theatrical performance by hissing. In discharging a defendant the Justice remarked that hissing in a theatre is not a crime any more than applause.

The Press Democrat, April 19, 1903

PETALUMA SCHOOL BOY IS INJURED IN HAZING

Elmer Starke, a 14-year-old pupil of the Washington grammar school of Petaluma, lost three front teeth when he was the victim of an assault by a youth much older than himself, Friday morning shortly after recess. The small boy was given immediate medical and dental attention and the chief of police was notified of the affair. It is thought that no action will be taken against the aggressor if reimbursement is made by his parents for the expense incurred in remedying the injury sustained by the young victim.

It came to the attention of the principal and teachers of the school at the same time that much bullying and hazing of the younger pupils is being done by the older ones. It has been discovered that for the hazers to compel their victim to disrobe in the basement of the school is a frequent happening. The matter will be investigated and severe punishment meted out to the offenders.

The Press Democrat, January 9, 1915

T. C. Bishop vs. Sonoma County.

This case was tried in Justice Brown's court, on Wednesday morning, Rutledge & McConnell appearing for the prosecution and District Attorney Allen for the defense.

This is a claim which Sheriff Bishop has against the county for fees and expenses in arresting one J.C. Koop, under a charge of obtaining money under false pretenses. A warrant was sworn out and placed in the hands of the Sheriff, who arrested the prisoner in Los Angeles, and returned with and placed him in the County Jail. For this a charge for mileage and necessary expenses, amounting to \$215.60, was claimed. This itemized bill was cut down by the Board of Supervisors, at the last session, and the Sheriff not being satisfied brings this suit for the whole amount claimed.

After both sides had presented their case and submitted it, the following decision was rendered by Justice Brown:

"The Court is of the opinion that under the County Government Act, with reference to the sixth class counties, the Sheriff who has made the arrest, is entitled to his mileage for the same, and all necessary expenses in conveying the prisoner to the County Jail in this county. Judgment is, therefore, awarded to the plaintiff in full."

After the decision, District Attorney Allen gave notice of appeal. The matter will be brought up in Department No. II of the Superior Court next Monday, at which time a date will be set for trial.

The Sonoma Democrat, October 3, 1885

Ed. Note: The following excerpt is from "The Carrillo Family in Sonoma County: History and Memories," by Alma McDaniel Carrillo and Eleanora Carrillo de Haney. Number nine in a series.

Ranchos and Fiestas

To obtain a grant of land, one had to be a Spaniard or naturalized or baptized in the Catholic religion. The regular and very lengthy method of obtaining a land grant under the Spanish law was to petition the royal governor, who would petition the Viceroy in Mexico, who in turn would petition the King of Spain. Spanish grants were made under the "Act of Spanish Cortez in 1813."

No records were kept - just memoranda which were found in the archives. It was the same in the Mexican regime until 1836, and no records were kept. Sometimes the land grants were even registered with the Alcalde of the district in which the grants were made.

Between 1769 and 1800 there were eight hundred (800) land grants made and from 1769 to 1822 there were doubts as to the formalities. Some were made out, but often a man's word was simply taken and because of this carelessness, or trust, a great deal of confusion and endless lawsuits resulted, especially when California became a state.

United States land grants of 1851 required that all grantees of Ranchos present their claims within a certain time after the enactment of the law. The Spanish people did not understand the law. Some of them had no written proof that they were the grantees; some were not financially able to take their disputed claims through the courts and also it was difficult to determine boundaries.

The name of a Rancho demanded much thought and was never chosen at random. The names were suggested of romance, or if the grant was made on a Saint's Day the name of the Saint was given. Sometimes a particular feature of the rancho, such as an outstanding mountain or lake or lagoon would suggested name.

The priest would bless the Rancho, and it was time for the "Fiesta". Generally this lasted for two days. There were barbecue pits sending forth savory aromas. The long tables were out-doors with benches for the guests. Very soon the large platters of meat with spicy sauces and tortillas were placed on the tables.

A real rodeo filled day-time activities. There was competition in horsemanship, also races on horses and on foot. The fighting cocks attracted a lively betting crowd. The skill of target shooting was a favorite sport. The main event was for a rider to subdue a wild mustang or bronco, while holding a silver coin with his foot in each stirrup.

In the evening a large bonfire broiled meats and sauces and beans. The guests sat around the bonfire to sing those grand old favorite songs. The young crowd was soon on the platform for an evening of dancing. The music was furnished by the guests, who brought their guitars and violins. The "Fiesta" was always long remembered.

Dr. Burke's Dynamite and Sanitarium

by Staci Pastis

The land on Mark West Creek, about a mile east of Old Redwood Highway, is a beautiful spot which inspires healing and goodness. The area has been home to two different groups with good intentions in the last 150 years.

In the mid 1800s Auguste Comte, a French philosopher, developed what we know today as sociology. He envisioned a society based upon morality and living for the sake of others, introducing the term 'altruist'. In 1894 an Altruist organization purchased 150 acres on Mark West Creek with the intent to create a commune. They built a hotel and through internal arguments realized they could not live with each other, let alone for each other.

They sold the land to Willard P. Burke who turned the hotel into a sanitarium. And the story involving dynamite, an illegitimate child and an influential doctor began.

Burke's Sanitarium offered not just rest and relaxation but the latest medical technology to cure many ailments. Rest at this 'resort' was not cheap. On the grounds the main building housed patients behind which tents were erected so patients could stay near the tranquil creek. The sophisticated cuisine was an enticing advertisement. Dr. Willard P. Burke was an MD specializing in osteopathy, a drug free and non-invasive form of medicine, which treats the body's systems by strengthening musculature and skeletal health. Dr. Burke also had a practice with his brother in San Francisco and was a wealthy, well respected member of the community.

On the night of February 5, 1910 an explosion in a sanitarium tent led to the story of the decade. Luella Smith and her baby, hurled from their beds during the night, were seriously injured but not killed. A day later District Attorney Clarence Lea was called to the scene. Burke explained the delay in calling the police by stating that his staff could better handle the situation without outside interference; they were experienced at dealing with suicidal patients. DA

Lea determined that dynamite had been placed under Smith's bed and lit from a fuse on the outside of the tent. Someone had intended to harm Smith and child launching the homicide investigation.

The plot twisted when Smith claimed that Burke fathered her child born at the sanitarium after she arrived as a patient. Burke denied the accusation claiming it as evidence of her insanity. It was later shown that prior to seeking treatment she and Burke worked together at the sanitarium, she as an assistant nurse. Smith left his employ however the two met again after the earthquake in Oakland. There, she claimed, their relationship became intimate.

Key information included that Burke was the owner of the Phoenix Mine in Butte County where dynamite was used.

Burke left the mine in December with six sticks of dynamite and instructions on use. He had told mine workers it was needed to blow up a boulder on the sanitarium property

The night before the explosion an attorney visited the sanitarium taking Smith's statement for her intent to sue Burke for support for the child.



The Press Democrat, September 26, 1915

Burke was indicted on a charge of attempted murder of Luella Smith, and the surprise charge of performing an unrelated abortion. The abortion charge solely demonstrated Burke's willingness to commit murder. The sensational trial began with Smith testifying about her relationship with Burke; testimony corroborated by Mrs. Macey with whom she had lived. Macey testified that Burke had often visited Smith.

Sanitarium staff testified that Burke was often heard to say that Smith threatened to blow herself up and that he believed she would someday "do herself in".

Smith allegedly received money from Marian Derrigg, a friend of the Burke family, and sailed for Japan. The trial could not start without the star witness. She was threatened with an arrest warrant to encourage her return. Upon her return she stated that Derrigg had given her money and asked her to sign a few sheets of blank paper. While away authorities had received her signed statement that Burke had nothing to do with the explosion. Smith claimed never to have written such a statement.

The trial began December 1910 and DA Lea ran a masterful prosecution by all accounts. Burke did not help his case as he lied about his dynamite possession.

Trial testimony included Burke's use of arsenic to treat Smith's wound from the explosion. While use of arsenic on a wound that was not healing was a known treatment, it also could have killed Smith. This fact presented to the jury, did not result in a second attempted murder charge.

The community was surprised when the jury, without much deliberation, handed down a guilty verdict. Burke was sentenced to ten years in prison, but served only three before being pardoned by the Governor Johnson who had been part of Burke's original defense team. The pardon allowed Burke to continue to practice medicine, which he did in Sonoma County until his death in 1941.

continued on page 11



Above: Dr. Willard P. Burke, date unknown

Right: Postcard from Burke's Sanitarium, 1911

Both: Sonoma County Library Collection



Santa Rosa: Not Moist, nor Damp, but Wet

By Staci Pastis and Kelly Carrillo Fernandez

Prohibition was a major contributor to crime in Santa Rosa during the 1920s and early 30s as it turned ordinary citizens into criminals. California supported Prohibition for a variety of reasons — to promote health and well-being of its populace and to reduce crime. In fact California support was so strong, its citizens elected the only Prohibition Party member of the House of Representatives. As today, the large state represented considerable economic interests from alcohol, particularly from its northern region. For this reason, after the passage of Prohibition, alcohol remained accessible in Northern California and an important part of local historical culture. Thus began the chapter when alcohol consuming and producing citizens become outlaws.

We should recognize the experiment that was Prohibition and its origin. The 18th Amendment passed on a wave of a desire for a betterment of society. Temperance unions, the Anti Saloon League, women and even factory owners saw temperance as a means to improve the health of families, increase work production and a generally better society. It passed due to growing societal support.

At the end of 1917 the Act to prohibit alcohol was proposed by Congress for ratification by the states. The Act was ratified a year later when Nebraska became the 36th state to vote for passage. January 17, 1920 the 18th Amendment to the Constitution passed and the “manufacture, sale or transport of intoxicating liquors” became illegal. Key terms missing from the Act were ‘ownership’ and ‘consumption’. The Volstead Act was passed by Congress to carry out the intent of the 18th Amendment. President Wilson vetoed the bill but was immediately overridden by Congress.

At first, Prohibition was seen as a success for forces of

reform. Alcohol consumption dropped, arrests fell and the price for illegal liquor became so high that average citizens could not afford it. However, where there is a loophole and opportunity it will be exploited. Passage of the amendment did not change people’s tastes. Demand for alcohol continued and quickly illegal production and distribution began. Bootlegging, a 19th century term from the practice of smugglers hiding bottles in their boots, became big business leading to crime. A rise in mob activity and the inability of authorities to commit resources to combat illegal activities also followed. Speakeasies, named for the need to speak about such clubs quietly, became big business. Ultimately, life in America became more violent under Prohibition.



Santa Rosa automobile decorated for the Repeal of the 18th Amendment Campaign, 1932
Sonoma County Library Collection

Crime increased in Santa Rosa as well. Raiding of Sonoma County barns and farms for illegal alcohol was a daily occurrence. A guilty sentence meant four to six months in jail and a fine of up to \$1,000. It was the cause for most Santa Rosa arrests during the period. Judges were known to rule either wet or dry and wet judges were even known to suppress evidence, drawing suspicion from enforcement agents. A nationwide opinion poll reported our city was “not moist, nor damp, but wet by nearly 2 to 1.”

Regardless of the overwhelming local support and outlaw attitude, demand for grape and hops crops

plummeted. Livelihoods suffered. Fruit rotted, affected crops were removed and replaced, and Santa Rosa ached from the temporary loss of a legal industry.

The 18th Amendment was repealed in 1932 and the 21st Amendment ratified in '33. The country conceded that the experiment of Prohibition did not attain the goals set out by the “dry” movement and in fact had resulted in increased crime during Prohibition. Thus ended the try at dry.

WANTED

Memories involving the **Sonoma County Fair**: attending, working, showing livestock, carnival, horse racing or stories passed down through ancestors. Whether a simple recollection or a detailed memoir, authored or anonymous, we want to hear them.

Contact us at:
[Newsletter@
HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.org](mailto:Newsletter@HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.org)

Ed. Note: This piece is a clue and answer taken from the HSSRs Great History Hunt.

Tennessee Carter Bishop

June 12, 1831 - November 26, 1888

By today’s standards Tennessee Carter Bishop would be a controversial figure with respect to the company he kept and his use of the prison population.

Born in Carter County, Tennessee he moved to the town of Sonoma in 1853 and worked as a carpenter. The next year, he was elected the Deputy Sheriff of Mendocino County. He moved back to Sonoma County in 1855, married Eliza Smith and bought Rockpile Ranch above Dry Creek Valley. His wife Eliza died in 1870 and he married Mary Burtenshaw two years later.

In 1880 his brother, Jackson Bishop, an outlaw associated with Jesse James, went to Rock Pile Ranch to hide out. He was accused of murder. When Tennessee Bishop decided to run for Sonoma County Sheriff he gave his brother a horse and sent him to Oregon, where he changed his name.

In 1883, he was elected Sheriff of Sonoma County and served for three years. On his Rockpile Ranch he used convict labor to dig a 15 mile road up to the ranch. He called this “working on the rockpile”. Tennessee Carter Bishop died at his home and was laid to rest in the Santa Rosa Rural Cemetery, Western Half Circle, plot 28. His is considered one of the most beautiful headstones there.

Ed. Note: This is the first in a series of articles on Santa Rosa's historic neighborhoods. There are currently eight designated Preservation Districts in Santa Rosa: Burbank Gardens, Cherry Street, McDonald, Olive Park, Railroad Square, Ridgway, St. Rose and West End. The main purpose of preservation districts is to control the size, quality, and scale of new construction in the district and also prohibit or severely restrict demolition of historic structures, thus protecting the character and quality of an historic area for future generations.

The St. Rose Preservation District

by Denise Hill

In 1988, Santa Rosa adopted its Historic and Cultural Preservation Ordinance and created the City's Cultural Heritage Board. Recognizing the location of the St. Rose Neighborhood (near the freeway and the downtown mall) made the historic homes in the neighborhood vulnerable to demolition to make room for commercial development. The City Council directed the new Cultural Heritage Board to consider the St. Rose neighborhood as the highest-priority area for preservation. Just one year later in 1990 it became the city's first Preservation District.

The St. Rose Neighborhood includes a unique cross section of Santa Rosa's residential building types as well as a number of fine institutional and commercial buildings. The historic homes date from 1872 to the 1940s. Many of the homes, particularly the

well-maintained bungalows along Lincoln street, were built in the 1920s for Santa Rosa's small business owners such as bakers, auto mechanics, firemen, salesmen, and one of the city's treasure hunters. In addition, the district includes seven of Santa Rosa's grandest surviving nineteenth century homes and some of the few examples of Commercial Art Deco buildings in Santa Rosa.

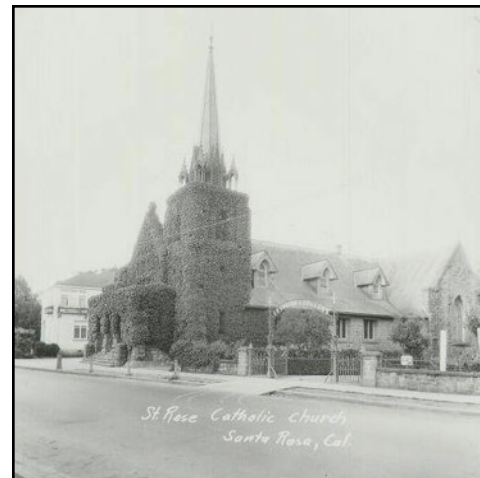
The district grew up around the St. Rose Church, a Gothic Revival stone structure built by local Italian stone masons in 1900. The St. Rose neighborhood was not part of the originally mapped town of Santa Rosa, although it included the eastern terminus of the old Green Valley Road (now Ninth Street). The

earliest known residents were Armstead and May Runyan, who moved from their prosperous Sacramento Valley orchard to Santa Rosa around 1871. They built the house at 535 B street and were benefactors of the Christian College, a school which preceded the St. Rose Church on the same site.

Many of Santa Rosa's finest nineteenth century downtown homes and buildings were saved by being moved into the St. Rose neighborhood by Augusta Metzger and others as the commercial areas of the city expanded. These include: Dr. John Franklin Boyce's house at 537 B Street, the house of Oregon lumber baron Cornelius Shea at 625 B Street, and the Post Office (now the Sonoma County History Museum) on Seventh Street.

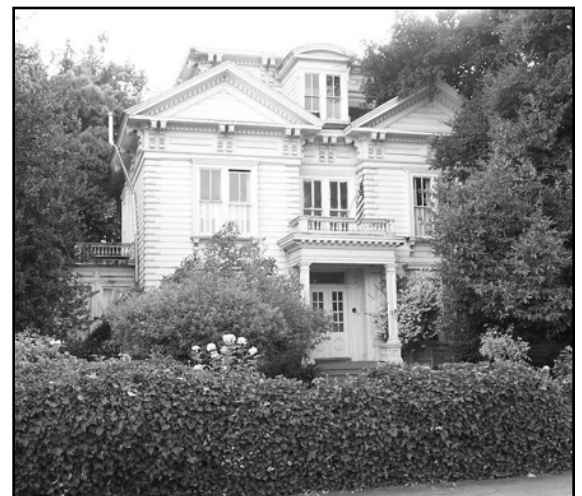


Residence at 625 B Street moved to the St. Rose Preservation District for preservation



St. Rose Catholic Church in the St. Rose Preservation District, 1928
Sonoma County Library Collection

Significant persons from Santa Rosa's history represented in the St. Rose district include: the Runyans, Augusta Metzger, lumber baron Cornelius Shea, William Carithers, T.J. Ludwig, lumberman Frank Berka, John Greott (winery and theater owner) and Dr. Boyce, Santa Rosa's first professional physician. There was also Julia Sweet who built a number of houses on Lincoln Street and was president of the Saturday Afternoon Club – Santa Rosa's first women's club.



Residence at 535 B Street in the St. Rose Preservation District today — The Runyan and Metzger House

National Gerber Heavyweight Joins HSSR Board

In 1947, Santa Rosa native Hal Wright was awarded Gerber's National Heavyweight crown for a one year old. Hal weighed in at 34 pounds on his first birthday beating the previous champ by two pounds. His photo and story made page one of the Press Democrat. The boxing gloves worn in the photo were lent to the Wrights by neighbor and Santa Rosa Police Chief, "Dutch" Flohr and his wife Wilma.



New Board Members Welcomed

The HSSR is excited to announce three new board members, Barb Beatie, Will Dunn and Hal Wright.

Barb Beatie, born and raised in Santa Rosa brings the board a sense of Santa Rosa history along with her out-going personality, wit and charm. She's a descendant of the Metzger family, owners of Metzger Brewery which sold to and became the Grace Brothers Brewery. Barb's ancestor Augusta Metzger saved many of the homes in the St. Rose area from destruction, including Dr. Boyce's B Street house. Barb inherited the will to preserve and treasure our past and credits her mother Barbara for instilling in her a commitment to volunteerism. She serves on the STP and Choir Boosters Boards at Santa Rosa High School and formerly on the Friends of ArtQuest Board. She works on the technical team of Transcendence Theatre Company and is a Sonoma County Theatre award-winning costume designer having designed for Jade Dragon and Sixth Street Playhouse. Most recently she created the hats for "My Fair Lady", basing designs upon photographs of her grandmother, local chanteuse and accomplished thespian, Millie Metzger. Barb earned a JD from Empire Law School, Paralegal Certificate from DeAnza College and researches and writes for a local law firm. She serves as a reader at the Church of the Incarnation of Santa Rosa and volunteers at Open Table, SAY, and Spreckles Theatre Youth Academy. Barb is a member of Redwood Writers and has just finished a novel set in Santa Rosa and hopes to publish it in the near future.

Will Dunn brings an appreciation for what the HSSR accomplishes and reminds us how universal our cultural history

is. Will adopted Santa Rosa as his new home town almost 50 years ago. He grew up in central New York's Finger Lakes region and says Sonoma County feels very familiar agriculturally and through the small town cultural vibe. There his mom wrote numerous articles and a book about local train history sparking his early fascination with local history. Soon after Will arrived in Santa Rosa, he began teaching history at Herbert Slater and Comstock Junior Highs, retiring from SRHS as a counselor ten years ago. In his first year teaching he had the great fortune to meet Gaye LeBaron and took several of her local history classes. Gaye's books and articles helped him understand how we came to be what we are here in beautiful Sonoma County. His appreciation makes Will such an important and positive member of our board.

Hal Wright was also born and raised in Santa Rosa and brings business acumen and professional communication skills to the HSSR board. He is a wonderful artist whose whimsical style brings a smile to the face of viewers. Hal has a deep connection to Santa Rosa history through his father's operating the California Theatre for 30 years. A graduate of SRHS and SRJC he attended UC Berkeley earning a BS and MBA in Business Administration. After college Hal worked in corporate research at Pacific Bell Telephone assessing customer needs and interests in new services. He later worked at a number of national and international market research firms in San Francisco and Portland where he advised on product improvement, services and customer satisfaction. Hal and his wife have recently returned to Santa Rosa from the Portland area.

Brothels... continued from page 1

Louise Farmer, a 49 year old school teacher who occupied the family home with her aged mother. Farmer brought suit against the primary renter of the Behmer House, Mrs. Sadie McLean. She would testify, the constant verbal assault of filth and vulgarity kept them awake through the night. The loud cussing was just a small part of the agonizing daily events that she and her frail mother had to endure; women of the home sitting out in front of the house with little or no clothing covering them.

Farmer's testimony told of one night when they witnessed a row of men, estimated at least fifty, that were barely evident from her view point except for the glowing red ends of their lighted cigars. Of the men waiting for admission to the Behmer House, 25 had entered within an hour. To prove to the court the vile practices to which they were subjected Farmer invited friends to witness from her backyard. Her testimony concluded with telling the courtroom that she and her mother were so weary of the nearness of the red light district and its reeking proximity to her property it had ruined the enjoyment of their family home. The law suit was her only option to seek relief.

Operator of the Behmer House, Mrs. McLean also took the witness stand. When asked if any women in her boarding

house were prostitutes, or if there were men that visited the house seeking prostitutes she diplomatically answered with, "Not to my knowledge." When asked if she was following the Resolution Number Two rules, she proudly testified that she dutifully paid \$45 per quarter, her girl "guests" were examined every two weeks and she routinely gave her guest registers to the doctor and the police chief. Registers read to the court were filled with ladies' names sounding like a floral shop filled with Daisies, Violets, Roses, Pansies and Lilies. The court found in favor of Louise Farmer and that the ordinance did not explicitly authorize "the occupation of prostitution."

The ruling put a damper on the entire red light district, and two of the 11 "Houses" closed immediately in the wake of the decision. On a lighter note, Louise Farmer was not as close to the Behmer House as claimed. The Farmer home stood on Second Street with a large backyard. A fence on the First Street side faced the noisy wood planing mill. When Miss Farmer invited friends to witness the affairs they would have had to be on a ladder or a large riser, stretching themselves into a sharp angle to peer into the windows of the "House." The 25 men that Farmer claimed to have seen enter the facility, would have had to have passed through her yard and scale her fence to be seen — perhaps they too used the ladders used by Miss Farmer's observing guests.

Burke... continued from page 8

Prior to his release Burke had appealed his sentence yet the original sentence was upheld by the Appellate Court. While awaiting the appeal Burke was released on a bail of \$50,000 paid for by some of Santa Rosa's most influential men of the time including Con Shea, John Overton and Frank Grace.

Luella Smith was supported for a time by the County of Sonoma but later lived in San Francisco with her son, who became a CPA. She lived to age 79.

The Burke trial, with its twists and turns, rivals today's television crime story plots. Did Dr. Willard P. Burke truly attempt to murder Luella Smith, the girl he had known for years having only a grade school education? Or was someone in his employ an accomplice or acting on his behalf? Perhaps Auguste Comte could have helped those fated to the Burke Sanitarium live an altruistic life, one living in harmony both with and for one another.



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