



Upcoming Events

- August 15: HSSR Moderated Talk at the Saturday Afternoon Club: History of the Horse in Sonoma County
- September 9: The HSSRs 4th Great History Hunt: McDonald Avenue Historical District
- Fall 2017: HSSRs Eighth Night at the Museum: Equine Epochs, History of Sonoma County Horses

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Founded 2012

The Story of the Sonoma County Fair

by Kelly Carrillo Fernández

It is widely believed that the seed of the Sonoma County Fair was planted in 1936 by friends over cocktails. The three decreed to revive the county fair at an Alexander Valley ranch. They were prominent local citizens — businessman and ranch owner Joseph Grace, Exchange Bank president Frank Doyle, and Press Democrat publisher Ernest Finley.

The fair had been halted since 1922 when the California legislature outlawed horse racing. An event for livestock and agricultural aspects alone had failed. There were, however, many years of annual events enjoyed which moved about the county prior to the Sonoma County Fair.

A single day event in front of the old courthouse in October 1855 is the earliest known. Thereafter, annual fairs rotated between Healdsburg, Petaluma, Santa Rosa, and Sonoma. Efforts

to include Marin, Napa, and Mendocino Counties in the rotation failed after Napa County hosted in 1863. The fair ceased for three years.

In 1867 the Sonoma and Marin District

Agricultural Society hosted a fair in Petaluma which lasted for 20 years. During the period efforts to relocate the fair in Santa Rosa began in 1879 with the purchase of land to develop a site for horse racing and breeding. The Sonoma County Agricultural Park Association purchased 83 acres from the estate of Dr. John Hendley.

The property changed hands a few times. Using the property for a permanent fair site garnered much discussion among owners. The property was acquired by brothers Ney and C.C. Donovan and community leaders in 1912 for \$10. The following two years a fair with horse racing was finally held on the site. World War I interrupted the annual event from 1914 to 1917. It returned in years 1918 through 1921 until the 1922 decision by the California legislature to outlaw horse racing. Without horse racing a fair of livestock and

agriculture exhibits could not endure.

Fortunately Grace, Doyle and Finley discovered a way to return a fair including horse racing during their 1936 social hour. In 1933 the state legislature had legalized parimutuel betting at horse races. Racing proceeds would support the livestock and agricultural exhibits. The Sonoma County Fair “founding fathers” including Joseph T. Grace, Emil Kraft, V.G. Garrett, and Ernest Finley with the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce formed the Sonoma County Fair Association. The Association then obtained the site and land previously used for horse racing, car racing and horse breeding. By July a 30-member supervisory board was appointed, a \$60,000 state grant was obtained, and efforts to develop the racetrack and build horse barns was underway. Their efforts were realized two short months later when the five day fair opened on October 8, 1936. It was attended by more than 70,000 people who placed over \$20,000 in bets.

Speaking to the success with their eye on the future, the city bought the fairgrounds from the Association the following month. The County of Sonoma assumed supervision and leased the property from the city. And within two years, the county bought the property from the city for \$35,000 and began acquiring additional adjacent property. Today the site totals 185 acres.

By 1941 the main pavilion, also designed to be used as a National Guard armory, was erected and dedication ceremonies took place. Years later it was named Grace Pavilion in honor of Joseph T. Grace. In 1944 the U.S. Army utilized the fairgrounds for weapon, ammunition, and vehicle storage and no fair was held. National Guard troops bunked in

the pavilion, the administration building became a mess hall, and training exercises took place on the site.

A former B-29 bomber airplane hanger was acquired in 1949 as the Farm and Machinery Building but in 1952 was re-designated as the Hall of Flowers.

The first flower show occurred in 1950, housed in the main pavilion. In 1953 Mr. and Mrs. Theron Hedgpeth donated the landmark *continued on page 11*



Horse racing at the Sonoma County Fair in the 1950s
Sonoma County Library Collection



Carnival at the Sonoma County Fair, Circa 1947-1955
Sonoma County Library Collection

President's Message

by Staci Pastis, HSSR President



Staci and Red Cloud Bee, Santa Rosa mustard field, circa 1980

I grew up loving everything horse. I now realize I had the opportunity to fall in love because I grew up in Santa Rosa, a place that offers amazing places to ride, learn about and interact

during the 1950s and 60s. What a pleasant way to pass an evening, sharing memories and stories with our panelists, Hal Wright and Dan Tocchini, and our audience. If you missed it you can watch the video on our site.

Our next event is a talk on the History of the Horse at the Saturday Afternoon Club on August 15th. We will explore stories about the famous horses who graced our city and how horses made an impact on daily life. In addition, the Museums of Sonoma County has an exhibit chronicling the horse in our area and we will have a members only night to view that as well. We will also be hosting our Fourth Annual Great Santa Rosa History Hunt on September 9th on McDonald Avenue, which is a fun event for the entire family. If you haven't yet participated in one of our hunts you should.

It is with a heavy heart that I announce the resignation of Dave Franzman from our board. Without Dave the Historical Society would not exist and we owe him an incredible debt.

Dave served as the first president and it was Dave's vision and leadership that got the HSSR going. We are only continuing what he began. His commitment to the history of our city can not be replaced.

I am happy to welcome Karen Weeks to our board. Karen comes to our board with a love of history and a positive attitude about achieving success. She is a wonderful addition and the HSSR is lucky to have her.

Looking forward to seeing you at our next event.

In celebration of all that has come before,
Staci Pastis

with horses. Horses are integral to our history. We are after all an agricultural community at heart.

After wine, horses are the second largest agricultural contributor to Sonoma County's economy, contributing approximately \$600 million dollars to the local economy annually. This tells me there are others that have an interest in the horse and its place in our community. For me, the HSSR is all about building a community and finding connections with our members and our greater society. I hope our upcoming events and stories will do just that.

We have recently hosted an event at the Roxy Theater exploring the importance of movie theaters in Santa Rosa

HSSR Welcomes New Members

Bud Anderson
Jeannette & Butch Anglin
Grant & Claudia Baughman
Cheri Biggers
Grace Harris & Fernando Dizon
Elaine Huth
Wayne & Carolyn Kradjan
Stephen Langs
Bonnie Mastrocola
Carolyn Meduski
Tony Mills
Carl & Beverly Mitchell
Tom Monahan
Patrick Murray
Jennifer Parnell
Dennis Rogers
Kristen Skold
Margaret Spruce
Lynn Valentine
Jeffrey & Caprice Weber

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Barb Beatie
Kelly Carrillo Fernández
Denise Hill
Staci Pastis

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

Have you visited the HSSRs new website?

Start with a password reset using the email address you receive communication from us.

Not receiving our emails? Please let us know:
info@HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.org

The History and Genealogy Annex of the Sonoma County Library has new extended hours

Monday & Wednesday
10 am to 9 pm

Tuesday, Thursday & Friday
10 am to 6 pm

Saturday
10 am to 4 pm

HSSRs “A Night at the Movies” Enjoyed by Many

On June 13 HSSR members and guests enjoyed “A Night at the Movies”, the Society’s latest moderated panel featuring the local theater experience in the 1950s and 60s. Panelists Hal Wright and Dan Tocchini were led by Gaye LeBaron. Wright and Tocchini have great personal experience in Santa Rosa theaters, Wright’s father was a theater manager and Tocchini continues to operate several theaters in the Santa Rosa area. The two are from respecting, yet rivaling theaters, The Roxy and The California, later Cal.

Santa Rosa’s theaters, like most, were built and began as vaudeville venues. Motion picture shows were an addition, eventually replacing the live entertainment. Tocchini told of the days when there was a single film copy shared between theaters. The reels would be biked, sometimes town to town, as the reels completed at one theater and began at the other. Multi-reel films made this a complicated courier experience.

The projection room was hot. So hot, one projectionist



The California Theater, 1945 — the marquee advertises the Junior Miss contest,
Sonoma County Library Collection

was spotted by a patron working solely in his boxers. They’d watch the screen for the dot, push the button to change reel one to reel two. If done correctly, no one could detect. As a teen Tocchini’s perfected skill allowed him to skip a reel, shortening his shift. Movie goers were left wondering if they had “missed something”.

Movies ran for days, not weeks, as the reels were contracted with the production companies. Concessions were separately operated businesses next to the theater like Wolcott’s. Live acts like magicians and hypnotists were attractions. One learned about the world from the news reel. The cartoon opener was remembered fondly.

Give-aways included dishes, groceries and cash in the depression era, toasters, bicycles,

even a couch. Competing theaters were constantly one-upping each other. A couch at one became two at the other. Movie patrons lined up early and around the block. Friendly rivalry between the Roxy and the Cal lasted decades.

Wright’s father was a stickler for rules. He was known to stop the film until the theater was quiet. He’d refer to Dan as “that young Tocchini” marveling at his creative and ingenious ideas. Today Dan Tocchini remains on the edge of innovations. Theaters are being renovated. Reserved seating and power recliners are being installed. The theater experience continues to evolve.



The Roxy Theater on cash night, 1936 — the marquee reads “350 dollars in cash given away free”
Sonoma County Library Collection

HSSRs moderated talks always entertain. If you haven’t attended one yet, another is coming soon. The History of the Horse in Sonoma County will be held on August 15 at the Saturday Afternoon Club. Reservations required — email info@HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.com to reserve your seat.

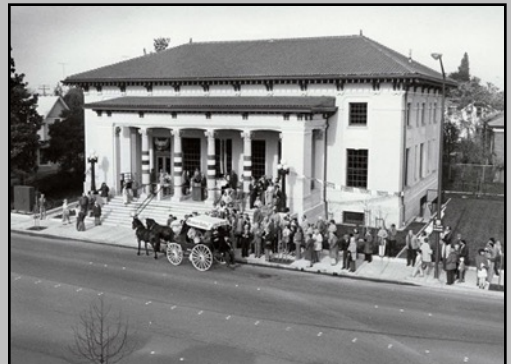
HSSRs Nights at the Museum

On May 2nd Historical Society members enjoyed the HSSRs Seventh Night at the Museum at the History Museum of Sonoma County. A private viewing followed an introduction of the exhibit by the museum curator.

The exhibit, *Fighting the Great War at Home and Abroad*, included a collection of WWI posters used as instruments of persuasion, artifacts of the war including trench art and uniforms, and letters and diaries of Sonoma County citizens and soldiers. The exhibit was enjoyed by all who attended.

Our Eighth Night at the Museum will be held this fall and feature the exhibit *Equine Epochs, History of Sonoma County Horses*, which corresponds with our August 15 moderated talk featuring the History of the Horse in Sonoma County, to be held at the Saturday Afternoon Club.

The museum exhibit runs July 22 to November 5 and will display photos, narratives and films of famous Sonoma County horses, ranches, and breeders. Watch your email inbox for your invitation to our private viewing event. We hope you join us.



The History Museum of Sonoma County
Sonoma County Library Collection

History of the Horse in Sonoma County

The HSSR will host a moderated talk on The History of the Horse in Sonoma County. Panelists, author Wanda Smith, local horse trainer Ted Draper, and Cloverleaf Ranch owner Ginger DeGrange will share stories about famous locally bred and trained champions and discuss the impact of the horse throughout our local history. Following are excerpts, reprinted with permission, from Wanda's 2009 book, *Horses of the Wine Country*, for an introduction to Sonoma County equine history.

Join us August 15 at the Saturday Afternoon Club

Reservations are required — Email: info@HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.com

History of Sonoma Horses — Early Days

The history of horses in Sonoma County begins in the mid 1770s with the arrival of the Hispanics who used horses mainly for transport and controlling cattle. Settlers who were recipients of Spanish Land Grants were required to have at least 2,000 head of cattle, and horses were needed to control the cattle. These settlers were known as Californios.

Because of their extensive and highly developed riding skills, Californios were considered among the finest horsemen in the world.

Wealthy Californio families entertained guests by hosting a variety of horsemanship competitions on their ranches. One of the more popular events was horse racing which initiated a long tradition in Sonoma County.

The Californio cowboys were known as vaqueros and developed equipment, riding styles and training techniques that produced some of the best stock courses in the world.

The vaqueros used leather from tanned cattle hides to make riding equipment. Their intricate interweaving of thin strips of leather and horsehair

made equipment stronger and became highly prized for its creative appearance. Horsemen coveted vaquero hand-braided rawhide reins, riatas, hobbles, bull whips, and hackamores. Vaquero leather weaving became an art and led to an entire culture of California style horsemanship. The California Reined Cowhorse Association and the equipment used in its competitions were based on this vaquero craft.



Horses hauling logs in Guerneville, 1883
Sonoma County Library Collection

By the mid 1800s, horses were being used for commercial purposes such as the transport of logs and coal.

At the same time, wealthy ranchers started importing horses from Europe and breeding them for refined riding horses and harness

racing. One of the breeders importing horses from Europe to improve his horse stock was Theodore Skillman (after whom Skillman Lane in Petaluma was named).

In the 1860s, several ranches were promoting the breeding of their stallions in local newspapers. In 1863, six breeding stations in Sonoma County were advertising stallion services. By 1885, horse breeding was one of the largest sources of revenue in the county.

Service Horses

In the early 1900s, horses were also being used for public services and recreational transport for the expanding Sonoma County resident and tourist populations. Horse drawn carriages transported people to and from the county and through its scenic wonders like the geysers in Geyserville and the redwood forest at Armstrong Woods near Guerneville.

As the size of Sonoma County towns increased, so did the number of horses and carriages. Even in those days there were often overcrowded parking lots in the downtown areas.

To avoid congestion, many people preferred to saddle a horse to ride to town rather than deal with hitching up their horse to a buggy and finding convenient parking space in town.



Geyserville postal wagon, Circa 1901
Sonoma County Library Collection



Above: Four Redwood Rangers (L to R: Leo O'Connors, John F. "Jack" Luttrell, David Grant and Jack Williams) leave for state Horsemen's Association Convention. Standing: Joseph Pedersen, Mayor, Clifton McClusky, president Sonoma County Driving and Riding Club and regional vice-president of California State Horsemen's Association, Warren Richardson, Pres. Sonoma County Trailblazers & founder California Centaurs, and Herbert J. Waters, Editor Press Democrat, 1947
Sonoma County Library Collection

Race Tracks

Many Sonoma County ranches had private tracks for conditioning horses for racing and for local competitions. The first official race track was built in 1853 at the foot of Taylor Mountain in Santa Rosa. The track was built by the Agricultural Park Association. It was considered to be the fastest track on the Pacific Coast and could seat 500 spectators. In 1869, a large track was constructed in Bloomfield and in 1879, the track at the Sonoma County

Fairgrounds was built. By the 1900s, there were several other race tracks in the county in Anderson Valley and the towns of Bodega, Wikiup, and Petaluma.



Harness racing at the Sonoma County Fair, 1936
Sonoma County Library Collection

Continues next page

History of the Horse in Sonoma County

The Racing Era

By the late 1800s, many ranchers had created excellent horse breeding programs. It wasn't long before Sonoma County became known as one of the best producers of harness racing trotters in the nation. It all began with a trotting horse named *Anteeo* from the Isaac DeTurk stable in Santa Rosa. The DeTurk stable was known for its round barn — structures popular at that time for their strength, low construction cost, and labor efficiency.

The DeTurk stallion, *Anteeo*, was produced by the mare *Columbine* — reportedly one of the finest bred mares in America and owned by Leland Stanford (then governor and founder of Stanford University). *Anteeo* was a successful Trotter who never wore shoes, but only tips and toe weights, and reportedly had feet of soundness and perfection. This might have contributed to his winning racing career. He was so successful on the track that he was syndicated to the Santa Rosa Breeders Association. The Breeders Association paid \$10,000 for *Anteeo* and later sold him for \$20,000 (equivalent to about \$250,000 in 2009 dollars).

The Breeders Association included family names that are still well known in Sonoma County: George Guerne (founder of Guerneville), George Trowbridge (associated with

Mirabelle Park), and Captain Robert Crane (founder of the Crane Ranch in Santa Rosa and after whom Crane Canyon Road and Crane Creek regional Park were named).

In 1885, *Anteeo* won a \$1,000 dollar match race, all three heats, and set a track record of 2:16 3/4 minutes for California bred horses in the first heat. *Anteeo* soon became the *King of California Trotting Horses*. He was then sent to the East coast

to race where he was sold for \$65,000 (about \$821,000 in 2009 dollars). One of *Anteeo*'s sons was *Alfred G* who was owned by the Sonoma County stock Breeder's Association. After racing a time of 2:19 3/4 minutes, Alfred G was leased to a ranch in Kentucky with a purchase option of \$25,000. In 1890, his stud book was filled at \$200 a mare.

As if *Anteeo* hadn't done enough to establish Sonoma County and California in the national racing scene, a stallion named *Sidney Dillon* secured international fame for the county, the state of California, and the nation. Two



Horse racing at the Sonoma County Fair, 1937
Sonoma County Library Collection

of *Sidney Dillon's* daughters, *Dolly* and *Janice*, were considered the fastest runners in the United States until another daughter, *Lou Dillon*, started racing.

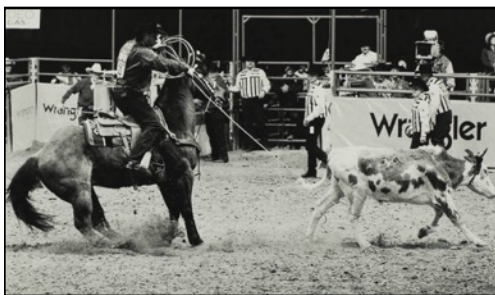
End of an Era

From the 1960s to the 1970s, horse ranch and show expenses could be used as tax deductions for primary or alternative businesses. This resulted in a huge boom in horse breeding, training, and showing. The law was then changed to disallow these deductions except for primary businesses. Subsequently, many people who had taken deductions for alternative businesses closed their ranches and sold their horses. Attendance at horse shows significantly declined and put an end to Sonoma County as the Center of horse shows on the West Coast.

Since the 1990s, the influx of people and wealth into Sonoma County once again resulted in an increase in horse ownership and equine events. There are now efforts to restore Sonoma County to the equine event center of the west coast.

The Show Era

With the increasing use of automobiles in the early 1900s, the need for horses for transportation declined. However, the use of horses for entertainment and competitions in horse shows, and in particular rodeos, started to become popular. From 1929 to the early 1950s, the largest and longest-running rodeo in the bay area was the Sonoma Rodeo held at the Circle M (Millerick) Ranch in the Carneros wine region of Sonoma. It was the event of the year in Sonoma with up to 8,000 people filling the grandstand.



Calf-roping competition,
Sonoma County Fair, 1947
Sonoma County Library Collection

Each year the rodeo began with a trail drive of 50 bucking horses down the highway into the rodeo arena. World Champion and Hall of Fame cowboys were frequent visitors

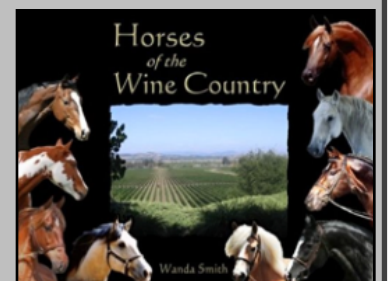
competing against local riders who held their own. One year vintner August Sebastiani won a roping trophy. The rodeo also often hosted Hollywood stars like Tom Mix and Will Rogers.

In addition to its rodeo grounds, the Millerick Ranch also had stables and a track which was often used for conditioning race horses including Native Diver and Seabiscuit. The Circle M Ranch owner, Buster Millerick, trained Native Diver, the first California bred race horse to win a million dollars. Buster was recruited to train Seabiscuit, but declined the offer.

In the 1950s, Sonoma County once again surfaced as a horse event Center. But instead of racing, the county became known for its prestigious horse shows which attracted contestants from the Western and Central states. The shows were held at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds and mainly consisted of Saddlebred riding and driving competitions.

By the 1960s, other breeds of horse (like Quarter Horses and Arabians) and other riding disciplines (like Western and English riding) dominated the shows.

“History of the Horse
in Sonoma County”
features
excerpts from
*Horses of the Wine
Country*
by
Wanda Smith



Dedications at the Fairgrounds

By Kelly Carrillo Fernández

The “founding fathers” of the Sonoma County Fair worked with the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce to form the Sonoma County Fair Association. It was 1936 and they included Joseph T. Grace, Emil Kraft, V.G. Garrett, and Ernest L. Finley. Their dedication to the its success, along with others who followed in their footsteps, is honored by the buildings dedicated in their names.

The main pavilion, Grace Pavilion, honors Joseph T. Grace who was influential in the county making the dream to return the fair to a reality. A banker, brewer and real estate investor he served as president of the fair board for almost 20 years, until 1955.

Emil Kraft was the first fair manager. He was involved in creating a site that could accommodate multiple and simultaneous events during the year, as well as building construction and ensuring planting and location of shade trees. The owner of E.C. Kraft, a wholesale auto parts supply company, is honored with the building housing fine arts exhibits, named the E.C. Kraft Building in 1971.

Ernest L. Finley was a cattle rancher and publisher of the Press Democrat, who also campaigned for construction of the Golden Gate Bridge. Finley was instrumental in revival of a livestock and agricultural festival. he served as the fair vice president and was an active board member. The building where junior exhibitors entries are displayed was named Finley Hall in his honor in 1987.

Vernon C. Garrett was the co-owner of White House department stores in Santa Rosa. Serving as president, vice-president, chairman and on many committees, Garrett was active on the fair board for 28 years. He was also involved in revival of the Rose Festival Parade in the early 1930s. Arts and crafts entries are

displayed in the building named in his honor.

Chris Beck was the second fair president and long-time board member. The Chris Beck Arena, a horse show and rodeo arena, was dedicated in his honor in 1959. Three years earlier Beck died in a tragic plan crash which also took the lives of the fair manager Ken Carter and concession operator Lou Basso.



Joseph and May Grace and Ernest and Ruth Finley dining at the Sonoma County Fair, 1941
Sonoma County Library Collection

In 1971 the livestock judging arena was originally named the Oak Ring. It was later dedicated to J. Wesley Jamison.

James “Jim” Lyttle worked with Will Forni to transform the flower show in the early 1960s. Little Cow Palace honors Jim Lyttle’s lasting impact on the fair. Gay’s Park, now Reynold’s Park, is next to the Swine Barn. Gaylord Reynolds was a long-time fair worker.

Sam Nisson, a past Fair Director, is honored through the naming of Uncle Sam’s Farm.

In 2016 a new, state of the art “barn” was built on the fairgrounds. Saralee McClelland Kunde, raised on her family’s dairy, grew up at the fair. She worked tirelessly serving on the fair board, as vice-chair and director supporting all things agricultural in Sonoma County. Richard Kunde, businessman and grape grower, has also been called a pivotal figure in the shaping of county agriculture. Saralee and Richard’s Barn hosts ag education during the fair. The building includes kitchen facilities and can accommodate catered events throughout the year.



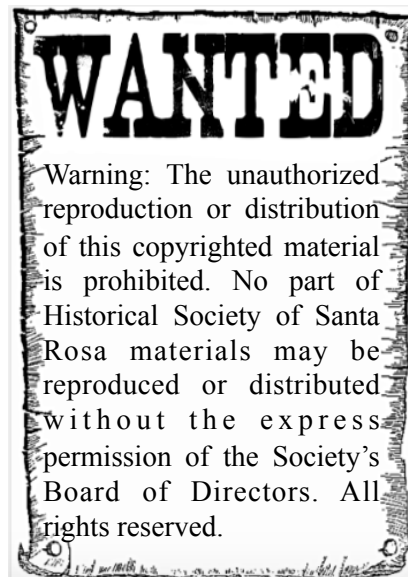
James F. Lyttle posing with Sonoma County Fair promotional materials, 1969
Sonoma County Library Collection

A walk through the Sonoma County Fairgrounds today is a walk through its 81 year history. The names on the buildings honor key individuals who made it happen or worked to improve the experience: horse racing, 4-H and FFA, community exhibits, rodeos, entertainment, carnival rides, flower shows, and more.

Karen Weeks Welcomed by Board

Karen Weeks is a proud third generation Sonoma County native. Her maternal great grandparents came to Santa Rosa from the Swiss-Italian Canton of Ticino in the 1880’s. Her paternal roots also involve Santa Rosa - her paternal great grandfather was the architect William H. Weeks who was the architect of Santa Rosa High School, Lincoln Primary School and buildings on the SRJC campus. Karen was born and raised in Petaluma and attended St. Vincent’s Grade School and High School. She went to Cal Poly San Louis Obispo and Sonoma State University where she graduated with a BA in History. In her professional experience includes Wells Fargo Mortgage Company, the City of Santa Rosa (Housing and Redevelopment and the Police Department). With the City of Santa Rosa, she was

selected for Leadership Santa Rosa Class 9, received an award from Burbank Housing Development Corporation and was a driving force behind the development of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, Homeless Service Center, and Family Support Center. Since her retirement in 2013, Karen has volunteered with the city’s Visitor’s Center, Sesquicentennial Committee, and Habitat for Humanity of Sonoma County. She has also been active in local government - as a member of the Measure O Citizens Oversight Committee from 2013 to 2017, the Mayor’s Open Government Taskforce and recently appointed to the Planning Commission. Karen and the HSSR Board are mutually pleased and excited to be working together!



Ed. Note: This is the second 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

The Cherry Street Preservation District and Notable Residents

by Denise Hill

The Cherry Street District extends from College Avenue to Seventh Street and King Street to Mendocino Avenue in downtown Santa Rosa. One of the oldest neighborhoods, it contains the highest concentration of 19th century buildings in the city. Many of the earliest homes are Queen Anne and Colonial Revival style while most of the homes built in the 1920's and 30's are Craftsman bungalows.



818 Cherry Street today, originally home of Congressman Duncan McFinlay

The establishment of a major through-county railroad in 1872 created a tremendous growth boom. Almost half of the existing homes in the district today are pre-1905 vintage. Most homes built in the 1800s were large, prestigious houses, built on large lots. Divisions of lots occurred in the 1905-1930 era when many Bungalow style in-fill houses were added.

While a significant advantage of the area was its close walking proximity to downtown, in 1892 and for more than a decade after, a horse-drawn trolley served residents. The wide alleys permitted stables and carriage houses. Many evolved into garages. Three church structures built between 1873 and 1911 remain, and the district housed the first County Hospital occupying the entire block between Humboldt and Riley Street. Built in 1866, it was used until the site on Chante Road was opened in 1886. Home to the Chase Girls Academy and the nearby Pacific Methodist College (today's Santa Rosa Junior High School site) the neighborhood was inhabited with an unusual number of teachers, doctors, and students. Other houses were owned by lawyers, judges, County officials, bankers, and a mix of carpenters, clerks, teamsters, and store proprietors.

Notable past residents included Arthur Corrick (509 Orchard Street), founder of Corrick's, Stanley Hosmer (508 Beaver Street) of King's Stationery, J.D. Barnett (725 Cherry Street), founder of Santa Rosa Savings and Loan, and Congressman Duncan McKinlay (818 Cherry Street). In the late 1890s, the 14-room mansion at 818 Cherry Street was used as the clubhouse for the Wheelman's Bicycle Club. They divided the house with the Santa Rosa Bachelor's Club. If only walls could talk.

Among the most prominent residents were James and Julia Sweet (607 Cherry Street). They were the power couple of their time.

James Sweet was born in a log cabin in Wisconsin in 1853. His family had roots deep in colonial America. A paternal ancestor

was a member of the party Governor Winthrop led to Salem, Massachusetts in 1630. On his mother's side, Jonathan Fairbank was one of the original settlers of Dedham, Massachusetts in 1636.

At 17 he received his teaching license, later Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the National University of Illinois. In 1877 at the age of 22, he came west, appointed principal for the public schools of Unionville, Nevada and later Winnemucca, Nevada. In 1879, he moved to Oregon serving as principal of several public schools before being chosen as president of the teacher's college which became Southern Oregon State University in 1887. In the fall of 1890, Sweet moved to Santa Rosa to teach literature and the sciences at Santa Rosa High School.

In 1891, he married Julia Melvina Goodyear and opened the Santa Rosa Business College. The newspaper stated "the new college housed in the "elegant rooms" at 510 Fourth Street (later it moved to 555 Ross Street), offered "every facility for teaching a thorough business course, including shorthand, typewriting, and telegraphy...as complete as any business college in San Francisco." The beginning of Sweet's college was not auspicious. Only one student responded to the ad. However, by the time the school closed in 1935 over 4,000 students had graduated going on to hold prominent positions in local businesses. About half the students were of immigrant families. Local historian Gaye LeBaron noted that "for this second generation, a Sweet's certificate was a passport out of the cannery". A strong majority were women who were needed in the workplace as business techniques and new technology, especially the typewriter, required more skilled workers.

In addition to running his business college, Sweet authored and published a line of commercial college text books, used in hundreds of business colleges across the US and Canada. The books, consisted of texts on bookkeeping, arithmetic, business



508 Beaver Street today, originally home of Stanley Hosmer of King's Stationery

correspondence and spelling. In 1897, the population of Santa Rosa was 6,500 - an increase of 25% from a decade earlier. This phenomenal growth put a tremendous strain on the city's resources and the typical Gilded Age politics which resulted in bitterly partisan campaigns and the awarding of exclusive franchises such as water and gas lighting. In 1896, a physician became Santa Rosa's first non-merchant mayor. In 1898, James Sweet was nominated for the position of mayor by the Democrats, again going beyond the ranks of the city's merchants. On April 6, 1898, Sweet was elected Santa Rosa's tenth mayor after campaigning on a platform that urged the city to adopt competitive bidding procedures

continued on page 11

Santa Rosa in the 1930s

by Barb Beatie

1930 The US census lists the Santa Rosa population as 10,636. The average Sonoma County farm is 118 acres. Santa Rosa is second in retail sales per capita in the Bank of America 1930 census. Bouk's Ice Cream Parlour is the teenage place to see and be seen.

1931 Pioneer Hall, the first Santa Rosa Junior College building, is constructed for \$30,000. Ursuline College opens with 235 students. The Juilliard family donates land to create Juilliard Park.



Stone bridge in Juilliard Park, Circa 1930s
Sonoma County Library Collection

1932 Traverso's Market opens. The City Council votes in favor of repealing the 18th Amendment.

1933 Post-Prohibition, there are only 160 operating wineries in Sonoma County. Santa Rosa High Alumnus Robert Ripley opens his "Odditorium" at the Chicago World's Fair. The Sonoma County Chapter of the League of Western Writers publishes the *Singing Years*, an anthology featuring local poets and writers. Nobel Prize winning author Sinclair Lewis visits Santa Rosa.

1934 Floyd Bailey becomes President of Santa Rosa Junior College after having served as Dean since 1921. Winemaker and follower of Thomas Lake Harris, Kanaye Nagasawa, dies.



Carmen Finley in the Santa Rosa Library reading room, 1934
Sonoma County Library Collection

1935 Lena Bonfigli opens Lena's Restaurant. Santa Rosa Police Chief Charlie O'Neal is shot by distraught rancher Al Chamberlain.

1936 The Sonoma County Fair Association is formed by local leaders including Joseph T. Grace, Ernest Finley, Emil Kraft and V.G. Garrett. Rosenberg's Department Store is destroyed by fire.



Rosenberg's Department Store in flames, 1936
Sonoma County Library Collection

1937 KSRO radio is born, created by Ernest L. Finley. Glen Guyman joins the Santa Rosa High faculty as the drama teacher, and debate coach. William "Dad" Burchell who created a soup kitchen on an empty lot on First Street to feed families during the Depression, dies. Arrigoni's Market opens at the corner of Fourth and D Streets.

1938 Santa Rosa Junior College Bear Cubs, with players Gene Benedetti, Bob Acorne and Ken Battaglia, win their first conference pennant. Attorneys Nick and Charles DeMeo, and Dewey Baldocchi, President of the Sonoma County Grape Growers, travel to Washington, D.C. to argue that grapes should not be included in the Prorate Act of 1935. Their efforts separate eleven northern counties from the prorate, as suggested by Joseph Vercelli. The separation creates the foundation for the California appellations.

1939 Florian Dauenhauer invents the hop picking machine revolutionizing the industry. Demeo Park opens on West Seventh Street. J.T. Grace builds a hockey rink and creates a winning hockey team. The Tower Theater opens on Fourth Street.



Cars driving southwest on Fourth Street Santa Rosa, Circa 1939
Sonoma County Library Collection

United States in the 1930s

by Barb Beatie

1930 Popular songs of the year include "Tiger Rag" by the Mills brothers and "You Brought a New Kind of Love to me" by Maurice Chavelier. 3M employee Richard Drew invents Scotch Brand Cellulose, "Scotch Tape." Hostess Twinkies, Snickers and Wonderbread are introduced. The US Census reports a gallon of gas is 10 cents. Betty Boop appears in a cartoon. Pluto is discovered. Charles Birdseye invents frozen foods. Clint Eastwood, Sean Connery, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, Stephen Sondheim, Neil Armstrong, and Buzz Aldrin are born. William Howard Taft dies. Herbert Hoover is the 31st President.

1931 Popular songs are "Goodnight Sweetheart," by Ruth Etting, and "Just a Gigolo," by Bing Crosby. The electric razor is invented by Colonel Jacob Schick. The Empire State building is finished. The worst drought in history to date occurs. *Mourning Becomes Electra* by Eugene O'Neill debuts. *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck wins the Pulitzer prize. Toni Morrison, Dan Rather are born. Thomas Edison dies.



Construction phases of the Empire State Building. Shown: June 26, 1930 through November 10, 1930
History.com

1932 "It Don't Mean a Thing if it Ain't Got that Swing" by Duke Ellington, is the big hit. The Lindbergh baby is kidnapped from the family home. *Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons is published. Elizabeth Taylor and Debbie Reynolds are born. John Philip Sousa dies.

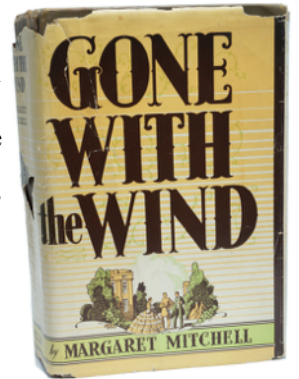
1933 Jack Benny is on the radio. "Stormy Weather" by Ethel Waters tops the charts. The 21st Amendment passes repealing Prohibition. "Forty Second Street" by Hal Kemp is the song to dance to that year. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is born. Calvin Coolidge dies. California passes Proposition 3 legalizing Parimutuel betting on horse racing in California. Franklin D. Roosevelt is inaugurated and delivers "We have nothing to fear but fear itself" speech.

1934 John Dillinger is killed in Chicago. Buck Roger's Ray Gun is the most wished for toy for boys. Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow die in a shoot out. Alcatraz opens. "Let's Fall in Love" by Eddy Duchin is on the radio. *Tender is the Night* by F.Scott Fitzgerald debuts. The first Masters Golf Tournament then known as the Augusta National Invitational is held at Augusta Golf Club. Horton Smith wins. Jane Goodall and Hank Aaron are born.

1935 Rumba is the dance craze. "Fibber McGee" debuts on the radio. Fred Astaire sings "Cheek to Cheek" and Ozzie Nelson sings "Oregon Trail." Boulder Dam,

renamed the Hoover Dam in 1947, is completed. Social Security signed into law. Elvis Presley and Julie Andrews are born. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes dies.

1936 *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell wins Pulitzer Prize. "No Regrets" by Billie Holiday is the popular song, and Fred Astaire tells everyone "Let's Face the Music and Dance." Jesse Owens wins four gold medals at the Summer Olympics in Berlin. Wilt Chamberlain and Robert Redford are born. John Heisman, coach, actor, sportswriter, and athlete, dies. Franklin Delano Roosevelt beats Alf Landon in the Presidential Election.



Cover of First Edition *Gone With the Wind*, by Margaret Mitchell, 1936

Valued today at over \$3,000

1937 John D. Rockefeller dies. "Have you Met Miss Jones?" by Sammy Kaye, and "Someone to Care for Me" by Deanna Durbin are heard. Amelia Earhart disappears. Memorial Day massacre erupts during the Little Steel strike in Chicago. The Golden Gate Bridge opens. The Marihuana Tax Act of 1937 (spelling later changed) places a tax on the sale of cannabis. *Their Eyes Are Watching God* by Zora Neale Thurston is published. Morgan Freeman and Jane Fonda are born. Writer Edith Wharton dies.

1938 The Jefferson Nickel is introduced. The hit songs are "One O'Clock Jump" by Harry James and "A Tisket A Tasket" by Chick Webb and Ella Fitzgerald. *Superman* comic debuts. Seabiscuit beats War Admiral in the "Match of the Century." The National Minimum Wage Act goes into effect and Congress sets the minimum wage at 25 cents per hour. Orson Welles radio drama "War of the Worlds" creates a panic when listeners think an actual alien invasion is broadcast. Natalie Wood and Etta James are born. Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo dies.

1939 Judy Garland with "Over the Rainbow" and "In the Mood" by Glenn Miller top the charts. University of Oregon wins the first March Madness tournament. *The Wizard of Oz* movie premieres. Tina Turner and Wes Craven are born. Author Zane Grey dies. The US declares neutrality in World War II, passes the Neutrality Act.



Opening Day, Golden Gate Bridge, 1937
GoldenGate.org

Sonoma County 4-H and FFA

By Barb Beatie

"Being a member of FFA gave me a way of life that has served me well. Because of that, I wanted to give something back to this organization. We are first and foremost a farming community and this program which educates and guides Sonoma youth into agriculture should be applauded." — Steve Ledson

"4-H is about building better citizens, teaching values and developing the skills necessary to leading a good and profitable life. And it doesn't matter if you're from a farm environment or from a big city. 4-H worked for me and I've continued to work for it." — Orville Redenbacher, California 4-H Alumni

It is reported that agriculture and tourism are the two major drivers of our local economy. Despite the hustle and bustle of the technological age, agriculture, the original draw to the area, continues to thrive. 4-H and the Future Farmers of America organizations have played important roles in local agriculture as it passes from one generation to the next. Fair time nears, and community 4-H and FFA members year long efforts will be on display for all to enjoy.

If you're like me, you may appreciate understanding the difference between 4-H and FFA. The local 4-H website states that "4-H is part of the University of California Cooperative Extension and is coordinated by local extension agents through county governments and by volunteers. 4-H is not limited to agriculture and livestock, but takes things like family and consumer sciences and other areas as well."

Tim Tesconi, an important figure in local agricultural differentiated the two: "4-H is for youth from 9 to 19 years of age and offers a range of projects in community clubs. It's not just agriculture but these days includes projects like rocketry, computers, etc. The idea is for people in the community to share and volunteer their skills to educate youth.

FFA is for high school students seeking a career in agriculture and food science. Agriculture classes are taught in high school. Students taking ag classes can join the FFA, which offers many opportunities in leadership and public speaking, etc."

4-H began nationally in the late 1800's, as a way for researchers to teach an old dog new tricks, as it were. While older farmers were not enthusiastically open to new ideas and new methods, researchers found that that younger people would experiment with new ideas and pass these onto their family members. And about that green clover, — It dates to 1910 with the development of a pin with an H on each leaf. It caught on and by 1912 they were called 4-H clubs.

FFA and 4-H intersect in the next years. The passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 created the Cooperative Extension System at USDA and nationalized 4-H. In 1917, The Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act established vocational agriculture courses. A model started at Virginia Tech would come to be the model for our modern FFA.

4-H arrived in Sonoma County in 1926. Its purpose was "to help provide clubs for rural youth...teach better home economics and agricultural techniques, and to foster character development and good citizenship," says Jesenia Mendoza of the Sonoma County Cooperative Extension 4-H Office. Over the years the program expanded to include urban and suburban youth. Mendoza also reports that the first Sonoma County club is thought to be Canfield 4-H, and the dissolved Roblar Club was also one of the first.

Art Volkerts, of the Cantfield Club, son of founder and first leader of the club in the late 1920s, was an icon in the local 4-H community. Art was involved from age 8 to 96, remaining active until his passing in 2016. Diana Stornetta Past President of the 2016-17 Sonoma County 4-H Community Club Council Executive Board, recalled that meetings were held in the 4-H office kitchen area and the Santa Rosa Vets Memorial building (built in 1950) until the Foundation was built. "Most of our events were held at the Vets with the exception of Presentation Day and it was held at Slater Jr High."

The Santa Rosa Chapter of FFA began in 1928, becoming the third chapter in California. There are certainly many winning stories of FFA members at Santa Rosa High School through the last century. Of note, in

1988, FFA changed its name to National Organization of FFA "to reflect the growing diversity of agriculture." The Elsie Allen FFA program was started in 1994. Healdsburg High also has a chapter that debuted in 1952.



Annette Lawson (back, center) and other FFA winners at the Sonoma County Fair, 1975
Sonoma County Library Collection

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

George Harrison Shull

April 15th, 1874 — September 28th, 1954

George Harrison Shull was an eminent plant geneticist who was born in Ohio and received his Ph.D in 1904 from the University of Chicago and was influenced by Luther Burbank's work.

Shull played an important role in the development of hybrid maize or corn, which had a large impact on global agriculture. He bred pure strains of corn and then crossed the strains, usually weak, to produce healthy hybrid offspring, vigorous and certain. He also identified and termed 'heterosis', the tendency of a cross bred individual to show qualities superior to both parents. Shull was an important pioneer in the burgeoning field of plant genetics.

Shull worked with Burbank from 1906 until 1914, attempting to publish Burbank's work but was unable, lacking Burbank's full cooperation.

Shull's first wife, Ella Hollar, and their daughter died within days of each other. Although he remarried having six children with his second wife, his remains were cremated and buried beside his first wife. George Harrison Shull is buried in Lot 52 in the Odd Fellows Lawn of the Santa Rosa Rural Cemetery.

Cherry Street... continued from page 7

and called for an expansion of city services – sewers, paved streets, concrete sidewalks and building public parks.

During his first term, Mayor Sweet, urged the council to purchase a rock quarry and crusher for the city, eliminating the dependence on private suppliers. He also supported the city's purchase of a

crematory to dispose of the city's rubbish. Next, Sweet proceeded to fight a federal court injunction preventing the city from running a municipal water system by obtaining the best legal talent available. All done in attempt to void the city's contract with Col. Mark McDonald. Santa Rosa prevailed and a notable legal

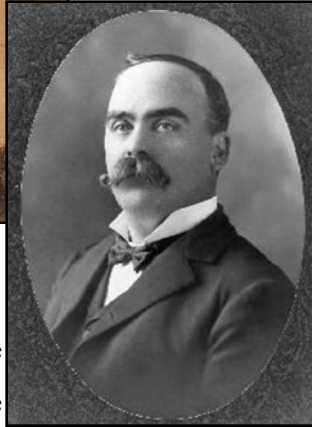


Shown: Santa Rosa Business College, 1910, and James S. Sweet, 1898
Sonoma County Library Collection

precedent was set — allowing California's municipalities the legal base for their city water systems. Sweet was also ahead of his time in his support of city parks. Parks, he stated, were just as much "necessaries" as were roads or sidewalks.

His first term was so satisfactory that he was reelected in 1900 garnering 67% of the votes. In his second term, Sweet argued for reforming the city's antiquated charter. Elements of the new charter included creating a Board of Health, a 20-year limit on franchises, appointing a city attorney, and a paid mayor and council. In 1901, Sweet called for "rigid enforcement of the liquor laws" and authority to "order the police force to suppress all gambling devices". The next day Sweet and a policeman

visited the saloons and cigar stands in which slot machines had been operated. They formally notified the proprietors use must be discontinued at midnight. Predictably, this move did not endure him to the gambling society of the town. Saloon and cigar stores formed a mutual protective association. The next mayor was a cigar shop owner. Possibly Sweet's crowning achievement and most notable legacy as mayor was when he was able to present the library Board of Trustees with an Andrew Carnegie grant to build a new free public library, a successful outcome of his two years of effort.



James Sweet was also an active civic leader holding several offices on civic minded organizations. When James Sweet died in 1930, He was hailed as "one who had a preeminent part in establishing Santa Rosa as an educational center". The flags on public buildings were flown at half-staff in appreciation of the long-term public service of Santa Rosa's first 20th-century mayor.

Not one to live in the shadow of her husband, Julia Sweet was also active in a number of important civic projects including being the first president of the city's Chamber of Commerce Women's Auxiliary (first in state), founding the city's Women's Improvement Club, and serving as president or chairman of many civic minded organizations. She served as president two terms for the Saturday afternoon Club during the building of their clubhouse which remains on Tenth Street. Julia Sweet died in 1954 at the age of 88.

A walking tour of the Cherry Street Historic District can be found on the HSSR website, www.HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.org/newsletters/

Fair... continued from page 1

meeting place, the giant butt-cut of a 30-foot redwood log weighing 60 tons, estimated at 2,000 years old. Tragedy befell the fair in 1956 when a plane crash took the lives of three key figures, fair president Chris Beck, fair manager Ken Carter, and concession operator Lou Basso. The Arts and Crafts Building was constructed in 1958, later named in honor of Ernest Finley.

A fire damaged the wood racing grandstand in 1960 and a steel frame structure was constructed the following year. Also in 1961 the Redwood Theater opened and in 1962 the golf course opened. In 1964 the interchange of Highways 12 and 101 opened inviting increased fair traffic and attendance.

The first Harvest Fair highlighting local products, fall crops and harvest time was established by the fair board in 1975. The Mexican Village opened in 1976 featuring ethnic food, dancers, and music. In 1978 a Sonoma County grand jury questioned financial irregularities at the fair, but no charges were brought. Also that year The Tea Room, a popular cafeteria style eatery operated by volunteers from the Episcopal Church of Incarnation closed. The following year another grand jury reviewed a practice wherein 69,000 free fair passes distributed to fair administrators and directors.



Sonoma County Fair's Freckle Face Contest winners, 1958
Sonoma County Library Collection

A scandal called "Williegate" preceded the 1981 fair opening. All 1,500 tickets to two Willie Nelson concerts were purchased by fair administrators before ticket sales opened to the public. Fans were furious, Willie refused to perform, and several fair directors were terminated or resigned. In its 50th year, 1986, the grounds became an emergency Red Cross shelter housing the county's residents evacuated and displaced from their homes as a result of heavy rain and flooding.

In the '90s the fair experimented with a 16-day run which included three weekends. The mascot, Barnabee was selected via a publicized contest.

In 2005 the golf course was updated and a \$3 million turf track placed inside the existing dirt racetrack.

This year, the 81st year of the Sonoma County Fair will be held August 3-13. It has grown to be one of the most popular county fairs in the state. The Sonoma County Harvest Fair celebrates its 43rd year highlighting Sonoma County's own world class wines, beers, culinary specialties and products. This fair of family friendly and harvest oriented activities will be held October 6-8.

A forty year span of fairgrounds aerial views can be found on the HSSR website: www.HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.org/newsletters/



DeGarro The Stilt Man, Sonoma County Fair, 1975
Sonoma County Library



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