



Upcoming Events

- February 27: Ninth HSSR Museum Night
March 17: Public unveiling of 50 year time capsule in Courthouse Square
May 12: Finding History Day sponsored event: Preserving Family Archives
Spring 2018: West End History Walk
Throughout 2018: Santa Rosa Sesquicentennial and SRJC Centennial Events
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Founded 2012

Saving Santa Rosa's Old Post Office — A Moving Story

by Denise Hill

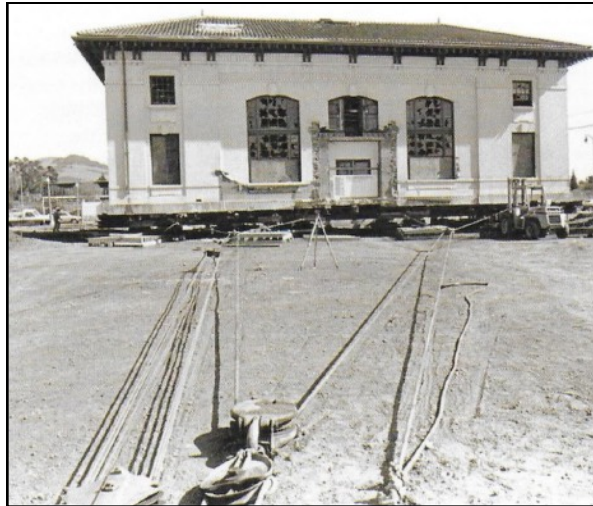
It was 1976 and the fate of the old Santa Rosa post office was in limbo. The county had just approved a resolution to sell it to the City of Santa Rosa to “do what they want with it”. Supervisor William Kortum moved the resolution by stating “the old post office may have nostalgia value for Santa Rosans, but not for residents of the rest of the county”.

Built in 1909, the post office was designed by supervising architect for the U.S. Treasury Department, James Knox Taylor, who was hired by the federal government to address the inferiority of the country's national architecture. After the 1906 earthquake, local hops dealer CC Donovan wrote Taylor asking him to give priority to the city's “first”

post office noting that a temporary post office was housed in a tin building surrounded by rubble left from the earthquake. One of twelve federal buildings Taylor designed for California (all now on the National Register), it was the first federal building built in a rural area. Designed in the Roman Renaissance Revival style with a Spanish tile roof, two foot thick limestone walls, solid granite steps, and a lobby floor of marble terrazzo it was an impressive addition to the city's downtown area. Its construction boosted Santa Rosans still recovering from the earthquake who saw it as a mark of faith in the future.

Fast forward to the 1970s. Urban renewal was in full swing in Santa Rosa's downtown area after the 1969 earthquake event. The post office located at Fifth and A Streets was slated to be moved or demolished to make room for a new shopping mall. Talks of re-purposing the post office to serve as the new Sonoma County Museum had stalled. The Sonoma County Bicentennial Committee, formed to promote the 200th anniversary of the United States, wanted a museum as a major bicentennial project. But the majority of committee members felt that while the city was willing to donate land, it wasn't enough land for desired outdoor monuments for the County's history. The committee was now considering sites outside the downtown area — including Summerfield Road near Spring Lake or the Sonoma County Fairgrounds property. The City began considering demolishing the post office instead of moving it.

When architect Dan Peterson became aware of its possible imminent destruction, he submitted a document to the U.S.



Santa Rosa's Post Office makes a 750 foot journey in 1979
Source: *Sonoma County Museum Newsletter*

General Service Administration with his concerns. He was advised to start the process of evaluation for historical significance by the National Registry. In 1971, President Richard Nixon had signed Executive Order 11593 — Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment — that directed all federal agencies to take a leadership role in preserving, restoring, and maintaining the historic cultural environment of the Nation. The Order stated that all federal buildings over 50 years old were to be evaluated as potentially historic. Once the evaluation process began, a building could not be sold, transformed, or demolished.

Needless to say, some of Santa Rosa's Council members were not at all pleased with having to spend money to move the building rather than demolish it. One council member grouched “We are trapped into this enormous expense just because someone felt the building had architectural significance.” On October 12, 1976, the Santa Rosa Redevelopment Agency agreed to pay \$148,500 for the post office with the understanding that it would be moved to a new location and used as a museum. However, when the bids came in for the relocation, the lowest bid was \$500,000 over the estimated cost of \$250,000-\$400,000. The high cost of relocation again put the post office at risk of demolition. Executive Order 11593 only protected the building while it was being evaluated for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. Once on the list, the building could be torn down if it was first documented thoroughly. The City petitioned the Federal government asking for the additional \$500,000 or permission to demolish the post office. In January of 1978, the Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation approved the demolition option.

With the fate of both the post office and the museum uncertain, a new citizen's group formed to carry out the Bicentennial Commission's plan. The newly formed Historical Museum Foundation was able to raise significant funds which, along with community contributions (from the likes of Henry Trione, the Estate of Fred Rosenberg, the Exchange Bank Foundation, and a donation and loan from the mall developer Ernest Hahn) were enough to save the old post office once again.

On April 14, 1979, the 10,000 square... *Continued page 11*

President's Message



*Staci with a vintage car
at HSSRs 2017 Great
Santa Rosa History Hunt*

We experienced an event that changed our community and our history this past October. As we come together to rebuild, it is important to remember that Santa Rosa has faced other natural disasters, the Great Depression, rapid growth, and periods of recovery. How we move forward can be influenced by how we, as a city and a community, reacted to past events.

Of Santa Rosa's many natural disasters, best known might be the fire of 1964. But we experienced another large fire in the early 1900s. We cannot forget the earthquake of 1906, nor the pair of earthquakes in 1969. Floods affected us in the 1930s and 40s, in 1955, and then in 1964 when flood control was first instituted. Our recent tragedy gives us an opportunity to rebuild, become stronger, and build a framework where future Santa Rosans can benefit from the hard lessons learned.

The Historical Society was honored to participate in an event with KQED and KSRO which raised money for the Redwood Credit Union Fire Relief Fund. Held at the Roxy Theater, we heard speakers that celebrated how Santa Rosans overcame past disasters. It was a night of healing.

This coming year we have much to look forward to. 2018 is the sesquicentennial for the City of Santa Rosa, our 150th birthday. The Santa Rosa Junior College is simultaneously celebrating its centennial anniversary, or 100th birthday. Many events are planned to celebrate both; please keep watch on our website for announcement of events, or look for our emails. Mark September 8th on your calendar as this will be the City's birthday celebrated on Courthouse Square. In addition our documentary 'Santa Rosa: The Chosen Spot of all the Earth', will be featured at the Sonoma County History Museum. It will be shown to celebrate our city's history from January 21st until April 1st. A member's only reception will occur on February 27th at 5:30. Please join us.

In celebration of all that has come before,
Staci Pastis, HSSR President

The HSSR Acknowledges Our Donors:

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

HSSR Welcomes New Members

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Moira Bessette
Molly Buckley
Thomas Buzzard
Bill Gittins
Alana Kelly
Robin Lavin
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Become a Member! Join or Renew at:

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

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Pair of Earthquakes Form City as Building Code Model

by Lisa Kranz

On the first evening of October 1969 two earthquakes intensely shook Santa Rosa. The first struck at 9:56 — a magnitude 5.6 on the Richter Scale. Fourteen minutes later the second followed with a magnitude of 5.7. The quakes were felt from Clearlake Oaks on the north to Davenport (near Santa Cruz) on the south, and from Sacramento to the Sonoma Coast. The epicenter of the pair of earthquakes and their aftershocks was about 2 miles north of Santa Rosa, then a city of about 49,000 residents. While there were reports of light objects toppling around the Bay Area, only Santa Rosa experienced major damage. The damage was estimated at more than \$8 million, which in today's dollars is about \$48 million.

The most serious damage was to buildings in downtown Santa Rosa and surrounding neighborhoods. Windows in many buildings broke and fell to adjacent sidewalks, and stores had merchandise spill into the aisles, leaving huge piles of broken glass, food, and other goods. There were several injuries and heart attacks, but fortunately no deaths. The quakes' timing on a Wednesday evening contributed to the relatively minor injury toll since there were few pedestrians on downtown sidewalks.

Many buildings, some which had been constructed after the 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed Santa Rosa's downtown, were deemed as damaged beyond repair. Buildings built of unreinforced masonry, of which there were many, were particularly vulnerable to damage or collapse. Many two-story wood frame buildings constructed before uniform building standards were effective also had significant damage. Many were shaken off their foundations. Immediately after the quakes, it was estimated that 99 buildings had serious damage

(49 downtown, 50 in residential areas), of which about 45 of these were demolished. As inspections continued and damage was further assessed, around 100 structures were eventually removed.

Redevelopment had commenced ten years preceding the earthquakes in downtown Santa Rosa. Reports had projected the need for various improvements, including a full-line department store, which was predicted to increase the area's overall share of retail sales potential. Development of a civic center had been prioritized to consolidate many separate government office buildings around the city. The civic center was to include state and federal offices, along with a new city hall and county hall of justice. While the 1959 redevelopment process was underway, the 1969 quakes caused an expansion of the effort.

Ken Blackman, initially the City's Planning Director, became City Manager in 1970. He was instrumental in the effort to secure additional federal funding for redevelopment efforts after the earthquakes. He would later serve on the state Seismic Safety Commission and contribute to state publications devoted to seismic safety given his experience in our earthquake recovery.

On October 12, 1971, the Santa Rosa City Council adopted Resolution 9820 to evaluate the safety of buildings in the City. Adoption of the resolution commenced a systematic and years long safety evaluation of all buildings built prior to December 31, 1957. Public schools, single family houses, and duplexes were exempted from the resolution.

The building inspections focused on... *Continued page 11*

1950 – The Year Suburbia Reached Santa Rosa

by Denise Hill

Builder Hugh Coddling left his mark in many ways on our city, but probably one of the most well-known moments of his career was his attempt to build a house in one day. Hugh started his career as a home builder when he returned from WWII, a time when the demand for housing in Santa Rosa was booming. Eventually, he started building shopping centers near his residential properties. The 1950 publicity stunt coincided with the opening of his Montgomery Village Shopping Center.



Postcard of Montgomery Village home built in one day as publicity stunt by Hugh Coddling

The foundation had already been laid on the lot at the corner of Hahman and Montgomery Drive. On June 2 the work started promptly at 8 am. More than forty carpenters, electricians, and plumbers were on the site. By 8:05 all the wall framing studs were up and two minutes later the garage door was hung. By 8:23 the fireplace was complete. They were constructing the roof by 8:30 and the first window went in at 8:45. And so it went until the 855 square foot, two bedroom home was finished just 6 1/2 hours later! An estimated 15,000 people watched the progress. The new owners, Mr. & Mrs. Hillard, moved into the home immediately.

Having been well promoted, the Montgomery Village

Shopping Center, with its 19 shops and a farmers market, opened to great fanfare the next day.

City's 50 Year Time Capsule Unearthed — Contents to be Displayed

One of the two Time Capsules buried by the City of Santa Rosa in 1968 was carefully excavated on January 31. The capsule has been placed in the care of the Sonoma State University Anthropology Lab where it will be opened, cataloged, and prepared for viewing.

The contents will be publicly unveiled at Courthouse Square on March 17 at 10-11 am as part of the City's Sesquicentennial Celebratory activities. The contents will be displayed at the Museum of Sonoma County beginning March 24. Many are anxious to learn of and view the contents.

The second Time Capsule will remain in the ground until 2068, the City's Bicentennial.



New Deal Aids Santa Rosa Recovery

by Kelly Carrillo Fernández

The Great Depression had lingered four long years. One in four Americans was unemployed. President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in 1933 and responded to the country's hardship. The New Deal, a program that would last nine years, until entry into World War II, impacted every state, city, and town and Santa Rosa was no exception. Stately buildings, stone bridges and commemorative plaques remain visible today.

President Roosevelt and Congress, via The New Deal, launched federal programs with four major goals: economic recovery, job creation, investment in public works, and civic uplift. Programs stabilized the banks and financial crisis resulting from the Stock Market Crash of 1929. Agriculture was subsidized and regulated shielding farmers from bankruptcy. State and local governments too were injected with funds to prevent their collapse. Federal spending was the key. Dozens of programs and agencies, many of which remain well known today, were created. With the acts and programs came a myriad of divisions soon to be well-known by acronyms. New acts included the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) of 1933, Securities Act of 1933 and Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (SEC), Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA) of 1933 and Social Security Act of 1935. Many existing programs were expanded.

The Public Works Administration (PWA) was created in 1933. The agency began with \$3.3 billion, "the largest amount ever allotted to a public works scheme" at the time. The amount was subsequently supplemented. Over ten years it radically transformed national infrastructure. By 1939, it contributed over \$3.8 billion to the construction of 34,000 projects nationwide. The agency administered grants and loans to state and local governments for projects completed via private contractors.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was created in 1935 in order to distribute funds for state and local public works projects. The unemployed were specifically hired to facilitate the projects. As of 1937 43% of those employed via the program were at least 45 years of age. The WPA became the largest of all of the public works programs tied to The New Deal.

During its nine years The New Deal changed the face of America and prepared the country for war-time and post-war-time success. The impact on Santa Rosa was no less, and its legacy is visible 85 years later. Parks, schools, the airport, roads, sewer systems, and municipal buildings were among the impacts.

In the beginning local officials refused aid via the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and State Emergency Relief. Independence and local appropriation of funds was stated —

pride was believed to play a significant role. But Sonoma County farmers were among the hardest hit in the nation, and the local mortgage crisis was said to be among the worst in the nation. As time passed, both skilled and unskilled workers joined the professionals in unemployment. Farming incomes had continued to decline through the early 1930s.

The WPA addressed unemployment through short-term projects and immediate needs. It employed labor, artists, writers, actors, and teachers in their trained fields. The result was maintenance of self-respect and dignity throughout industries. By the mid-1930s aid was unavoidable. The WPA was accepted and local impact began.

The first project in the county was a water reclamation project within the Bellevue-Willfred Drainage District. On October 15, 1935 forty

men began working via the county's relief roll. Ditches were dug and channels were created. Eventually increased to 60 men the project took two months to complete.

The campus of the Santa Rosa Junior College houses lasting improvements from The New Deal.

Through a Public Works Administration (PWA) grant and bonds buildings were constructed, trees were trimmed, and improvements made. Construction of permanent bleachers in the football stadium (later named Bailey Field), Analy Hall (completed 1939), and the Burbank Auditorium (completed 1940) were funded in whole or part by New Deal agencies and projects. The Jesse Park Museum of Native American artifacts was created, as was an exhibit of Californian flora, fauna, and rock specimens. The two grew into a biological, cultural, and historical center. The college was the first site of an archeological project in the state which looked at prehistoric Sonoma, Napa and Marin Counties.

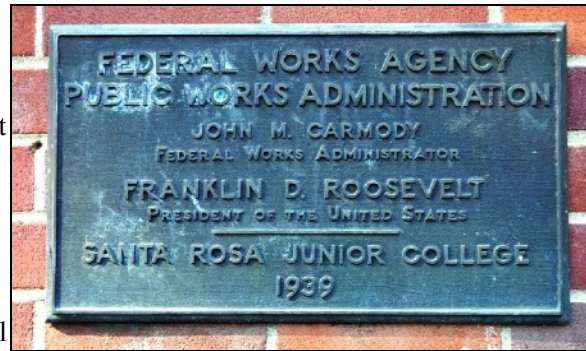
City streets, sidewalks, curbs, and gutters were improved or installed. Projects resulted in 8,875 feet of streets, 20,122 feet of curbs and gutters, and 15,792 square feet of sidewalks. WPA records identify Mendocino Avenue from College Avenue to the north city limit, and Fourth Street from E. Street to the east city limit.

The site of today's Charles M. Schulz—Sonoma County Airport is believed to have benefited from WPA efforts. The improvements, including drainage ditches, fences, a new hangar roof, and addition or improvement of runways would have occurred between 1935 and 1939.

A one room schoolhouse on Brush Creek (Brush School) received stone retaining walls, a playground and possibly a tennis court. The site, now private property, can be viewed today from Brush Creek Road at the.... *Continued page 11*



Santa Rosa Junior College's Analy Hall, completed 1939, with Public Works Administration funds



Public Works Administration plaque on east side of Analy Hall at Santa Rosa Junior College



Stone footbridge, one of several New Deal improvements at Santa Rosa's Julliard Park

Coffey Park's Namesake

by Mike Daniels

The Coffey Park area, so devastated by recent fires, was burned once before, in 1939. Then the area was rural—open fields, orchards, farmhouses, barns, and outbuildings. That '39 fire, also spread by sudden winds, was the unfortunate result of a maintenance task gone wild at the old Santa Rosa Municipal Airfield that lay between Highway 101, Hopper Avenue, Piner Road and Coffey Lane.

Coffey Lane and its neighboring lands remained primarily rural until the early 1960s when Piner Road began to fill with a variety of businesses. Subdivisions of new homes soon followed and swallowed the fields and orchards westward to the Northwestern Pacific railroad tracks and beyond.

Threading through this northwestern section of Santa Rosa, Coffey Lane took its name from Henry Coffey, who with his family arrived in Santa Rosa from Mendocino County in 1885. The lane, its northernmost section today lopped off by the 101 freeway, once meandered from Steele Lane on the south through farms and such to take an easterly jog on the north to end at today's Old Redwood Highway. That eastern section is today's Alba Lane, opposite Cardinal Newman High School.

Henry Coffey took a wandering route to get here. Born in New York in 1832, his father died when Henry was very young. His mother packed up the family and moved to Michigan where she "took up government land" and began a farm.

When he was 18, Henry went to Indiana where he worked in a sawmill. There he married Nancy Gitchel. Soon, they returned to Michigan where their son, James H., was born. Within a year of their return, Nancy died. Two years later, Henry married Rebecca Davis. Their relationship lasted 52 years and produced an additional eight children: William M., Mary, Charles H., Joanna, Samuel A., Adeline, Minnie, and Octavia.

In 1862 the Coffey family moved overland to California. After farming in the Sacramento area, they traveled to Contra Costa and then Mendocino County always actively involved in agricultural and real estate pursuits.

Henry bought 320 acres in northwestern Santa Rosa, formerly known as the Sampson Wright place, in 1885. The land was quickly subdivided with each of the Coffey children

being given 20 acres upon which they established their residence. The land was well suited for farming and was mainly planted with hay and grain, but there was also a sizeable orchard which produced prunes, apples, pears, peaches, and nectarines. The family vineyard consisted of table grapes of the Sweetwater, Muscat, and Rose of Peru variety.

Mr. Coffey's industrious spirit included real estate. He bought and sold lots in the Farmer's Addition and traded for property located in the old San Miguel Rancho.

Two of Henry and Rebecca's daughters married Santa Rosans— Joanna aka Cynthia Josephine married into the Barnes family, developers of the first trading post outside of Sonoma (think Barnes Road), and Mary wed O.M. Tuttle, whose family would figure largely in Santa Rosa's pharmaceutical trade.

By 1900 Henry was again on the move, this time leaving Santa Rosa for the East Bay. There, with Rebecca and daughter Octavia, he engaged in the real estate business. The family

bought and sold properties in Oakland's Brooklyn township, a lucrative geographical area between Lake Merritt and Oakland's future bay side port.

Rebecca became ill not long after she and Henry celebrated their 50th anniversary in 1908. Daughter Minnie had earlier married Charles Smith, a minister and had moved to Orange in southern California. There Minnie cared for her ill mother who passed away in 1910.

Henry lived on in Oakland until his death in 1916. Seventy-two years later a Santa Rosa residential subdivision and neighborhood park constructed by Condiotti Enterprises would bear his name. Sadly a large number of these houses were lost to the

2017 Tubbs fire, but for those who wish to rebuild, many of the original architectural drawings for these residences are on file with Drafttech Blueprinting, Inc., located at 1544 Terrace Way, Santa Rosa. Their phone number is (707) 578-9442.

Information for this article came from a variety of sources including An Illustrated History of Sonoma County published by the Lewis Publishing Company in 1889, which is available in book form at the Sonoma County History & Genealogy Library and online through the Internet Archive.



1897 Illustrated Atlas of Sonoma County California
published by Reynolds & Proctor
Sonoma County Library

HSSR Board Welcomes Lisa Kranz

The HSSR Board of Directors is excited to welcome Lisa Kranz to the Board. Lisa has lived in Santa Rosa for nearly 30 years. She received a BS in City and Regional Planning from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and worked in municipal planning for the cities of Merced and Sacramento before arriving in Santa Rosa. Here she worked for the City's Community Development Department until 2017. Her work focused on development of long range land use plans. A member of the American Institute of Certified Planners she currently works part time at the City of Healdsburg Planning and Building Department.

Her interest in history and historic homes led Lisa to Luther Burbank Home and Gardens where she has volunteered since 1992, serving as a docent and also as part of the archives team. Inspired by her mother's meticulous genealogical research, she is a member of the Daughters of the American Colonists and the Colonial Dames of the 17th Century. She and her husband Brian have lived in the Cherry Street Preservation District for 25 years, where they restored an 1895 Queen Anne Victorian home. Lisa has a great deal to add to the HSSR and we anxious to enjoy her experience and ideas.

Santa Rosa in the 1950s

by Barb Beatie

In the book, *Santa Rosa A Twentieth Century Town*, Gaye LeBaron writes that the 1950's mark the end of the Hops Era in Santa Rosa. They also mark an incredible period of growth and change for the town.

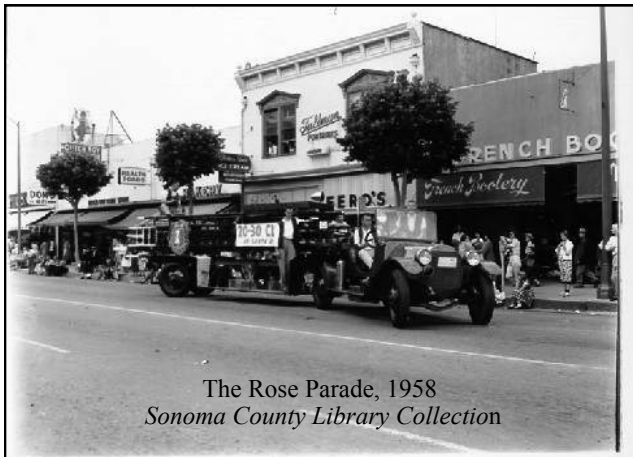
1950 Roby Gemmell's column in the *Press Democrat* reports all of the social happenings of the post-war boom. Rolf Illsley starts Optical Coating in Santa Rosa. Montgomery Village opens 1950. Memorial Hospital opens.

1951 Mac's Deli opens. The *Press Democrat* "Letters to the Editor" detail the growing problem of the overgrowth of brush and the acts of vandalism at the Rural Cemetery.



The Peck family at the Church of the Roses, 1957
Sonoma County Library Collection

1952 The Church of the Roses is built in a single day. Santa Rosa Junior College wins the state basketball championship. The Village Pool is the place to cool off.



The Rose Parade, 1958
Sonoma County Library Collection

1953 The Coney family builds Lake Ilsanjo. St. Eugene's Parish opens. SRJC has 200 graduates for their Spring ceremony.

1954 Gilbert and Alice Gray begin the Gray Foundation to assist underprivileged youth in the community. Santa Rosa celebrates its centennial.

1955 Montgomery Village is annexed to Santa Rosa and population jumps to 30,000. Gaye LeBaron joins the *Press Democrat* staff. Slater Junior High opens. *Storm Center* with Bette Davis is filmed in Santa Rosa.

1956 Earthquake is felt in Santa Rosa. SRJC Theatre Department stages *The Glass Menagerie* and ticket prices are 25 cents with a student body card, 75 cents for general admission.

1957 The Flamingo Garden Hotel opens. The "Liberty" telephone prefixes begin. The sack dress is the fashion that the girls at Santa Rosa High are talking about.



In 1957 *The Press Democrat* polled hundreds of County residents for changes they wanted to see in '58. A concern revealed was recreation opportunities for children.

Source: *PressDemocrat.com*

1958 The U.S. Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization designates Santa Rosa as a regional headquarters. Charles Schultz moves to Sebastopol. Montgomery High opens.

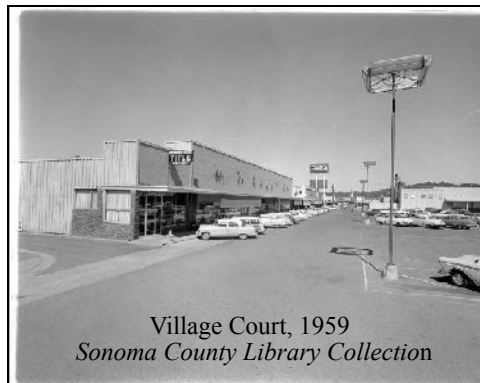


In 1958 Swanson Pot Pies were available two for 59 cents and Blue Chip Stamps were redeemable for groceries

Source: *PressDemocrat.com*

1959 A new dilemma for Santa Rosa — Which team sits on the Home side of Bailey Field?

Whatever the answer, SRHS and Montgomery hold a joint Junior Senior prom at the Vet's Memorial building. Over 1642 students register for Fall Semester at SRJC.



Village Court, 1959
Sonoma County Library Collection

The World in the 1950s

by Barb Beatie

- 1950 Best selling nonfiction book of 1950 is *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*. "In the still of the Night" tops the charts. Minimum wage is 75 cents an hour. Disposable diapers are invented. Silly Putty is the most popular toy this year.
- 1951 Top of the best seller list-- *From Here to Eternity*. Nat King Cole croons, "Too Young". "I Love Lucy" premieres on T.V. The 22nd Amendment is ratified limiting a U.S. President to two terms of office.



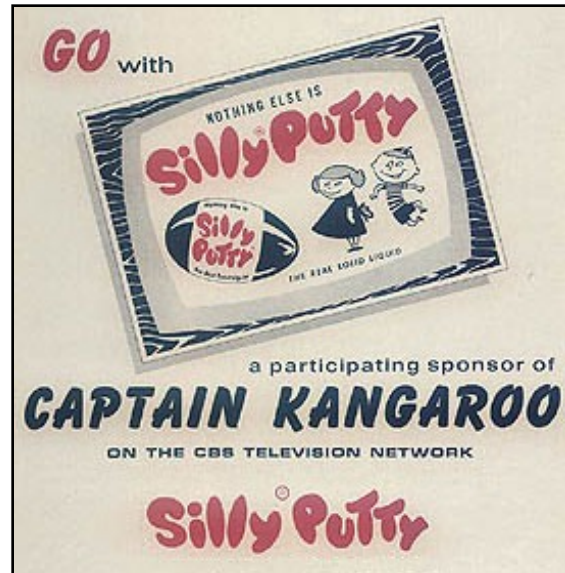
February, 1952 cover of *Time Magazine* showing Queen Elizabeth II coronated at the age of 26.

Source: OldLifeMagazines.com

- 1952 Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* is published. "Your Cheatin' Heart" by Hank Williams Sr is playing. Car seat belts first appear. Princess Elizabeth becomes Queen Elizabeth.
- 1953 *The Power of Positive Thinking* tops the book lists. "That's Amore", sung by Dean Martin, is the song playing. Earl Warren is sworn in as U.S. Chief Justice. The Korean War ends.
- 1954 Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is published. The Penguins are singing "Earth Angel". Hey kids, what time is it? "It's Howdy Doody Time!" The first successful organ transplant is made.
- 1955 *Gift from the Sea* tops the nonfiction list. Bill Haley And His Comets inspire dancing with "Rock Around the Clock." *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* wins the Pulitzer Prize. The cost of a gallon of gas is 23 cents.
- 1956 *Peyton Place* is published. "Why Do Fools Fall in Love" is on the radio. Marilyn Monroe marries Arthur Miller. IBM invents the first hard disk. Elvis Presley appears on the Ed Sullivan Show.
- 1957 *On the Road* is the critically acclaimed book of the year. The Everly Brothers sing, "Bye, Bye Love." Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* is telecast

live. Bay Area earthquake rocks San Francisco. Wham-O releases the first Frisbee.

- 1958 *Breakfast at Tiffany's* is published. "Since I Don't Have You" tops the Billboard charts. Bobby Fischer becomes the youngest Grandmaster Champion. *Bridge on the River Kwai* wins seven Academy Awards.



1950s CBS broadcast ad for Silly Putty

Source: ClickAmericana.com



- 1959 *The Elements of Style* makes the Top Ten Bestselling list of 1959. The Falcons sing, "You're So Fine." *The Sound of Music* opens on Broadway. Alaska and Hawaii are both admitted as states. The Twilight Zone debuts on T.V.

Left: Elvis Presley appears on the Ed Sullivan Show, 1956
Source: [Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images](http://MichaelOchsArchives/GettyImages)

Below: Rod Serling, host and writer of *The Twilight Zone*, 1959
Image credit: [Joey Paur](http://JoeyPaur.com)



Space Age Luxury at Down to Earth Rates

by Denise Hill

The first AstroMotel was built in Pasadena, California in 1963. In March of the preceding year, William Mageer purchased a half acre of land next to Julliard Park with the intent to build one of these Space Age-themed motels. The Julliard Park area had been targeted for urban renewal and fit well with the chain's desired location near restaurants, stores, and civic buildings.

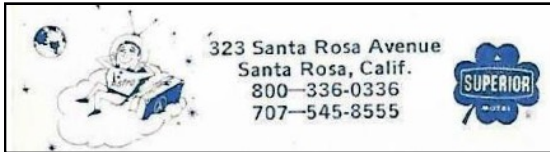
Less than a year later and at a cost of \$275,000, the 30-unit motel held its grand opening. The motel featured free coffee and tea, continental breakfasts, a sauna steam room, and a heated pool. A January 1964 Press Democrat article on the opening stated "original paintings depicting the Burbank Gardens, the winery in Asti, and Clearlake highlight bedroom decors". The managers were Jack and Molly Schmidt.

The chain's goal was to open one hundred themed motels nationwide, but only an estimated 15 motels were ever constructed. The demise occurred roughly ten years after building the first motel. In an effort to stay current and compete in a saturated market, the Santa Rosa AstroMotel added waterbeds in the 1970s and other amenities, but eventually fell on hard times. For decades it remained rundown and a neighborhood blight — often a center for drugs and prostitution.

Purchased by the team responsible for the nearby popular restaurant Spinster Sisters, the motel has undergone an

ambitious \$10 million remodel during the last year. Aware of the growing appreciation for the original motel's mid-century modern design, great pains were taken to maintain it, including furnishing all 34 rooms with authentic 1960-period furniture and accessories and the addition of a fantastic retro spaceship-shaped sign.

Rushed into use at space-travel speeds to house victims of the October 2017 wildfires, the "new" AstroMotel is a great example of a mindful remodel of an historic commercial building.



ASTROMOTEL - SANTA ROSA

The charming decor of our rooms is typical of AstroMotel. Enjoy these many free extras: room TV, heated swimming pool, AstroLounge, coffee and sweets, advance reservations, Sauna Room — all part of our tradition of "Space Age Luxury at Down to Earth Rates". Downtown exits from Hwy. 101 to Santa Rosa Ave., then 2 blocks south.

Excerpts from a vintage postcard for the Santa Rosa AstroMotel



The \$10 million remodeled Santa Rosa AstroMotel today



Images from a vintage postcard for the Santa Rosa AstroMotel

Ninth Night at the Museum: "Santa Rosa: The Chosen Spot of all the Earth" and More

Members are invited to join us for a special evening at the History Museum of Sonoma County on February 27. At 5:30 pm our documentary movie "Santa Rosa: The Chosen Spot of all the Earth" will be shown.

Also enjoy the objects in the 'Santa Rosa' room which highlight different events discussed in the movie.

The event, which is free to HSSR members, will give you a chance to speak to the director Don Cambou and the museum curator Eric Stanley.

We are proud to announce that the movie will continue to be shown at the museum from January 21 until April 1 as part of the larger exhibit "Bear in Mind" which is a look at the bear as a symbol of, and a part of Sonoma County's history. As part of the City's sesquicentennial celebratory activities the museum will be open and our film shown to the public on March 24.

Reservations for the February 27 member only event can be made via our website <http://historicalsocietysantarosa.org> We invite members to reserve a ticket soon and join us.

Smithsonian Project Maps Threatened Memories

The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural heritage has produced a memory mapping project as part of their digital magazine for Sonoma County. The digital magazine of music, food, craft and culture tells unforgettable stories about people, ideas, and a wide array of arts and traditions that help us explore where we have come from and where we are going.

The map has been set up to preserve the memories that have been threatened by the October 2017 wildfires. You can view or share via the site at <https://folklife.si.edu>. Search "Sonoma County" for the article and map Mapping Our Memories: A Digitized Archive of Place and Loss in Sonoma County, California.

Santa Rosa Junior College Celebrating 100th Anniversary with Pride, Purpose, and Progress

by Karen Weeks

Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC), the dream of seven women that came to fruition in 1918, is celebrating 100 years of excellence throughout 2018. Events will run from January through December, 2018, beginning with 100th Anniversary Opening Reception on January 24. The year will include celebrations, lectures, art exhibits, theatre performances, athletic events, fundraisers and more, hosted throughout the Sonoma County Junior College District (SRJCD).

With a theme of “Pride, Purpose and Progress,” the SRJC college community is looking back with pride at past accomplishments, focusing on its purpose of providing an excellent education to all, and its progress looking forward toward the future.

The 100th Anniversary Opening Reception took place on January 24 at the Lawrence A. Bertolini Student Center on the Santa Rosa Campus. The entire community was invited. The reception featured music, theatre and cheerleading performances by SRJC students, honored guests including Superintendent/President Dr. Frank Chong, Board of Trustees President Maggie Fishman, and Honorary 100th Anniversary Chair and former Board of Trustees President Rick Call, whose family has a long and deep history with the college.

General information on the 100th Anniversary is listed on the website at SRJC100.SantaRosa.edu, with specific events listed at SRJC100.SantaRosa.edu/events-activities-2018. Admission to most events is free of charge. A few notable exceptions are fundraisers including:

- 100th Anniversary Celebration Dinner, May 31, Santa Rosa Campus, sponsored by the SRJC Foundation
- 7th Annual Building Community Breakfast, June 7, Petaluma Campus, sponsored by the Friends of Petaluma Campus Trust
- 20th in History Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Dinner, April 7, Santa Rosa Campus, sponsored by the Bear Cub Athletic Trust.

Other notable events during the year include:



• Jesse Peter Multicultural Museum History: From 1939 to Now. Reception, Thursday, February 22, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. (Exhibit continues through April 12). Jesse Peter Multicultural Museum, Santa

Rosa Campus.

- In conjunction with SRJC Women’s History Month:
 - “The Challenges of Creating the National Women’s History Project,” Molly McGregor, Founder, National Women’s History Month. March 5, Petaluma Campus.
 - “History of Women at SRJC: By the Numbers,” Dr. KC Greaney, SRJC Director of Institutional Research, March 14, Santa Rosa Campus.
 - “What if women built a community college – and EVERYone came?” Gaye Le Baron, Sonoma County historian, and long-time SRJC community member. March 29, 12 noon Santa Rosa Campus.
 - “100 Years: Countless Stories,” Art Reception & Exhibit, featuring SRJC alumni and their stories of life-changing impact of the College. April date TBA. Petaluma Campus.
 - “Veritas” sculpture and time capsule, a collaboration between SRJC students, instructor Michael McGinnis, a world-renowned artist and inventor, and The Engineering Club (TEC). April 18, afternoon time to be announced, Santa Rosa Campus.
 - The Spirit of SRJC Picnic, an old-fashioned event with games, barbecue and birthday cake. September 22, Santa Rosa Campus.
 - *The History of Santa Rosa Junior College*, a new book of photos and images representing each decade of SRJC’s history. Release date, event and location to be announced.

Additional information is available via the College’s website, <https://SRJC100.SantaRosa.edu>, or by sending an email

Santa Rosa Celebrates Sesquicentennial Throughout 2018

For a list of events in celebration of the City of Santa Rosa’s 150th birthday visit our website or Facebook page!
HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.org or Facebook.com/HistoricalSocietySantaRosa/

Commemorative events continue to be added throughout the year!

Historical Discussion Panel Event Raises \$5,400 for Fire Relief and Food Bank

Santa Rosa’s fires left large portions of the city devastated, with enormous challenges ahead. But if you ask local historians, we’ve been here before. A partnership between KQED, the Historical Society of Santa Rosa, and KSRO held a discussion about fires, earthquakes and floods in Sonoma County and Santa Rosa’s history, and the many ways the community came together then – and how we can recover.

The event was held on November 14, 2017 at the Roxy

Stadium 14. Panelists included: Gaye LeBaron, Press Democrat; John Schubert, Historian; and Pat Kerrigan, of KSRO. The panel discussion was moderated by Gabe Meline of KQED.

All ticket proceeds — 100% of gross ticket sales — and additional donations collected at the event – were donated directly to the Redwood Credit Union Fire Recovery Fund and Redwood Empire Food Bank. The night generated more than \$5,400 for the recovery fund and food bank.

Rebuilding After 'The Great Quake'

by Staci Pastis

In April of 1906 an earthquake changed the course of Santa Rosa's future. We have all heard it: The earthquake hit Santa Rosa harder than any other city. Upward of 100 lives were lost. Our city did not experience fires on the scale of San Francisco, but we suffered a nearly total loss of downtown buildings, integral to every day life, and more expensive to rebuild than private homes. This concentrated destruction made the damage seem particularly extensive. In the downtown area eight city blocks were lost to the earthquake and five to fire. One great scene to imagine is the banks leveled with only their safes standing amongst the rubble, filled with coinage.

City leaders had taken note of the fires that burned buildings in San Francisco in the mid-1900s and encouraged building brick structures downtown. The mortar used in these structures was naturally made from lime sand from the local creeks. The loam in our sand, while great for our agriculture industry, made awful mortar. When the earthquake hit, the loam in the mortar crumbled and buildings collapsed. The business center of Santa Rosa was gone in a minute.

William H. Willcox had settled in Santa Rosa before the earthquake. His greatest claim to fame might be that he was the Civil War topographer who prepared the map of the Battle of Antietam. In the early 1900s, he came to Santa Rosa with a vision of what the city could be. His plans would have revitalized the downtown red light district with a pavilion on the creek, which was planned to be so large it could have housed the state fair. He had almost gathered the funding needed for his plan when the earthquake hit.

Willcox became the local building inspector after the earthquake. Funds slated to revamp the downtown instead went into rebuilding the decimated commercial center of the city. Estimates on the dollar value of damage of the quake vary greatly. Governor Pardee was quoted in the Santa Rosa interim paper estimating the damage at a measly \$137,000, which the city naturally took issue with. Local estimates ranged from \$3.5 to \$5 million. Only seven buildings survived in the downtown area: the 1903 Train Depot, the Western Hotel, now Flying Goat Coffee, and a few brick warehouses. In the ten years after the earthquake, \$2.7 million was spent rebuilding the city. From 1906 to 1907 alone, \$894,020 was spent on building. The Southern Pacific Railroad asked for the number of building permits issued for advertising efforts to bring tourists back to the area. The city boasted that over a 1,000 building permits were issued the year after the earthquake. In addition, the city added paved streets, curbs and cement sidewalks. Frank Doyle, who founded the Exchange Bank and was instrumental in building the bridge to

span the Golden Gate, encouraged property owners along Fourth Street to donate land to widen the street as part of a civic improvement project.

The process of rebuilding began with carting off trainloads of debris, which left via the California Northwestern to Mirabel Park in Guerneville. Businesses operated out of lean-to's or used standing walls and corrugated metal roofs. Downtown was a dangerous place in the months after the quake. There were holes, construction materials and debris to avoid. All stages of clean up and rebuilding offered employment opportunities for a community in recovery.



The collapsed cupola of the Sonoma County Courthouse, 1906 — *Sonoma County Library Collection*



View of 500 Block of Fourth Street, 1907
Sonoma County Library Collection

Despite the knowledge that poor construction contributed to the destruction by the quake, some builders constructed with the same pre-quake mortar. The Republican Democrat sited Building Inspector Willcox leaving town for a couple of days to return and find a builder used mortar deemed substandard. This prompted city counsel threats that infringement of building codes was punishable by fines and jail. To this point, violations had not been punished. The Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce was therefore created in 1906 to help the city transition.

During this rebuilding period, the community was impressed by attempts to construct buildings that would stand up to the forces of nature. The Lee Brothers were in the warehousing and drayage business, transportation of goods over short distances. The Lee Brothers Building near Railroad Square was reconstructed with 18 inch thick walls to help withstand future natural disasters. Mayor Overton owned an entire block on the south side of Fourth Street, had his building constructed of reinforced concrete. The Empire Building, which still stands today on

Courthouse Square, was constructed as the Santa Rosa Bank Building to replace what the quake destroyed. The architect, John Galen Howard, was responsible for many UC Berkeley buildings such as the Hearst Mining Building, the Campanile, and Sather Gate. The Empire Building was noted by the Press Democrat as a "Class A" steel structure, which was "solid and massive".

In the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake, City Hall opened on a card table on Hinton Avenue. 1908 plans to rebuild were scrapped. A temporary City Hall operated on Third Street, which would have been better called a barn with a corrugated roof. The new building was finally completed seven years later. In 1913 City Hall opened on the site which is currently home to a bank building, at 50 Old Courthouse Square.

The iconic image of the collapsed cupola of the Sonoma County Courthouse has become a symbol of the 1906 earthquake devastation to our town. It symbolizes of the collapse of a way of life and a need to rebuild. The courthouse that replaced it was completed in 1910,... *Continued page 11*

Move... continued from page 1

foot, 1,700 ton building began its 750 foot journey to its current location on Seventh Street, between A and B Streets. Using a network of steel beams and rollers — a method believed used by the pyramid builders over 45 centuries ago — the building was moved just 25-40 feet a day, ultimately taking 75 days (with rain delays) to reach its final destination. Six years later,

on January 12, 1985 the Sonoma County Museum opened its doors to the public in a grand old building thankfully saved from the wrecking ball. Fortunately, enough citizens, activists, and philanthropists shared the feeling that the building had architectural significance worth saving, greater than the enormous expense required to do so.

1969 Quakes... continued from page 3

safety and compliance with the Uniform Building Code (UBC), which provides standardized requirements for safe construction that does not vary by city. Priority for inspection were buildings where large groups of people would congregate, such as theaters, hotels and hospitals, followed by buildings adjacent to sidewalks with large volumes of pedestrian traffic, stores, restaurants and office buildings, and apartments, garages and warehouses. One of the first buildings addressed by the program was the St. Rose Church and Parish Hall, due to the construction of unreinforced masonry and high occupancy levels.

Santa Rosa's program was one of the first in California to address the vulnerability of unreinforced masonry structures. From the early 1970s through and beyond the 1980s, the City continued to implement the program, and property owners upgraded and strengthened their buildings. Hundreds of buildings were inspected, and property owners hired structural engineers to ensure safe buildings that might have otherwise been lost. In the first 20 years of the program, 128 buildings were repaired, 24 were undergoing repair, and 22 met the resolution's safety requirements.

Property owners of buildings which did not meet the requirements of the UBC were required to prepare more detailed inspections and engineering reports about their building's condition. Most of these evaluations resulted in required rehabilitation. Owners were typically given a year to complete the rehabilitation and abate the hazard. Over time, the City deferred the retrofit requirement until buildings were sold.

The Santa Rosa program was modeled by other California cities, and its structural requirements later became part of the state building code requirements for unreinforced masonry buildings. The results of this program can be seen today in some of the older, unreinforced masonry buildings downtown, including the Russian River Brewing Company and Barnes and Noble, which have visible steel beams fortifying their walls. The pair of 1969 earthquakes that shook Santa Rosa reshaped California cities' building requirements far beyond the local damage that resulted.

New Deal... continued from page 4

intersection of Los Olivos Road.

Juilliard Park was the site of several improvements. The stone footbridge, platform and flagpole, stone walls and a fountain were WPA projects. Doyle Park Bridge, including its stone masonry guardrails were WPA projects.

the site for residential construction. Construction of the hospital (completed 1937) and Sanatorium (1939) were contingent upon PWA funds, which contributed 45% of the hospital construction costs. Today, one can view plaques and markers on buildings and retaining walls. One can only hope that they will be saved and displayed honoring Santa Rosa's recovery from the Great Depression via The New Deal programs.

Santa Rosa's then "new" City Hall was the site of improvements. Completed in 1913, it replaced the original grand structure toppled in the Great 1906 Earthquake. The scope of maintenance and improvements at the site is unknown.



Sonoma County Hospital, completed 1937
Source: Calisphere.org



WPA monument stands at the site of the Sonoma County Hospital

The Sonoma County Hospital and Oak Knoll (Tuberculosis) Sanatorium on Chanate Road remain today. However portions are slated for demolition in preparation of

Images for 'New Deal Aids Santa Rosa Recovery' LivingNewDeal.org

Great Quake... continued from page 10

designed by architect J. W. Dolliver, stood proudly more than 50 years until it was demolished. The Barnett-Mailer Building was built in 1907 or 1910, depending on the source. It stands strong more than one hundred years later on a block of Fourth Street that was reduced to rubble. Some of our downtown buildings were replaced quickly, whereas others took years and multiple planning attempts. Some stood for fifty years and redefined the Santa Rosa Downtown



core until the next pair of earthquakes deemed them unsafe. The Barnett-Mailer, Lee Brothers, and Empire Buildings stand more than 110 years after the great quake as reminders of Santa Rosans before us, who rebuilt and

Left: The "new" Sonoma County Courthouse shortly after completion, circa 1908-9
Sonoma County Library Collection

recovered from a natural disaster, where devastation greater than they could have imagined.



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Historical Society of Santa Rosa

Membership Application

The Historical Society of Santa Rosa intends to build a strong and diverse organization of individuals, families and groups to investigate, record and relate the history of the City of Santa Rosa. Membership includes subscription to the newsletter and priority invitations to HSSR sponsored events.

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