



## Upcoming Webinar

### The People Behind Santa Rosa Street Names

November 16, 2023, 6 p.m.  
See HSSR Website for details

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## Talbot Family Lends Its Name to Four Streets

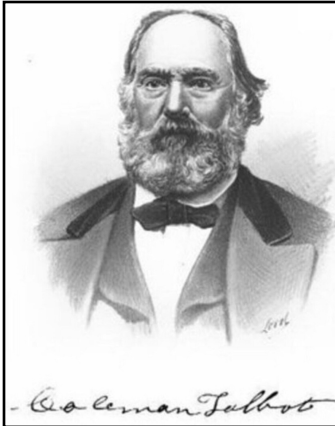
by Denise Hill

I'm sure most of us have driven down a street in Santa Rosa Bennett Valley Cemetery – a small cemetery with just 287 and wondered who it was named after. Surely, an important plots located on Bennett Valley Road, generally across from person. Of course, some of our local streets were named Galvin Community Park. after people who had national significance (i.e., Washington, Lincoln, Adams). However, the majority of streets are named for pioneers – those residents who arrived from other states and countries in the 1800s, around the time Santa Rosa became a recognized town.

Those names and stories are familiar to many long-time residents – DeTurk, Doyle, Farmer, Hahman, Juilliard, Burbank. Important movers and shakers of the community who were rewarded with a street named after them. But did you know there is a family that had *four* streets named for its members? The family name was Talbot, and they arrived in October of 1852.

The patriarch of the family was Coleman Reagan Talbot. Born in Bourbon County Kentucky in 1809, he married Drusilla Bowles at the age of 21, and the union produced eight children. From Kentucky, the family moved to Illinois, but after a brief stay, they set out for California by ox team, joining others in a sixteen-wagon train. The trip was difficult, with some dying of cholera and others from exposure, but the Talbot family survived the six-month trip.

The next year, Coleman Talbot bought 600 acres of land in Bennett Valley previously owned by James Bennett and originally part of the Mexican Land Grant awarded to General Vallejo. There Coleman engaged in stock raising and grain farming until shortly before his death in 1896. He is buried in the



Family Patriarch Coleman  
Talbot, undated image  
[findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com)



Joseph Martin Talbot,  
undated photo  
[findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com)

Coleman Talbot's youngest son, Joseph Martin Talbot (born in 1854) followed in his father's footsteps continuing to farm the family's land. He was a great believer in education, and all five of his children from his two marriages graduated from college. For years he wrote a weekly column on Bennett Valley for the Press Democrat called "Bennett Valley News." Because of his wide acquaintanceship and his knowledge of locals he won the title of "Sage of Bennett Valley." He was a member of the Grange, believing that the principals for which it stood represented the highest ideals in American citizenship. (The first successful national farming organization was the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry, better known as the Grange, founded in 1867.) His brother Holman was one of the founding members who came together in 1873 and built the Bennett Valley Grange. When Joseph died in 1935, his ashes were scattered on the campus of that grange.

Next in the Talbot family to leave his imprint on the community was Joseph's son Leonard Ayer Talbot. Born in Santa Rosa in 1899, Leonard did not follow in his father and grandfather's footsteps when it came to farming. Although he was a Future Farmers of America member in his youth, he entered the financial world and became a bonds salesman and stock broker.

Starting in 1922 at the age of 23, he was the first stock broker in Santa Rosa. It had not

*Continued on page 6*

## Message from the Board

This edition of the Historical Society of Santa Rosa's quarterly newsletter focuses on people behind Santa Rosa street names. We hope you'll find some new information about why some of our local streets bear the names they do.

If this topic interests you, you won't want to miss HSSR's November webinar. In it, you'll learn many more stories of people for whom Santa Rosa roadways are named. The webinar will be broadcast via Zoom on Thursday, November 16 at 6 p.m. As the event nears, you'll find registration information on HSSR's homepage ([historicalsocietysantarosa.org](http://historicalsocietysantarosa.org)).

At this writing, many HSSR and community members are concerned about the painting of the historic Stonehouse building on Sonoma Highway. While paint color of historic buildings is not regulated in Santa Rosa, this incident has highlighted the fact that many notable structures, including the Stonehouse, are not designated as local historic landmarks. This is a topic the HSSR board will be discussing in coming months.

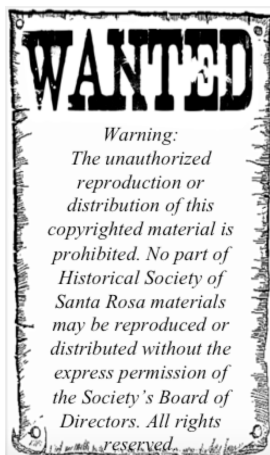
## Where in Santa Rosa?



Do you recognize this Santa Rosa location? If so, send an email to [newsletter@historicalsocietysantarosa.org](mailto:newsletter@historicalsocietysantarosa.org) identifying it. The first five correct answers will win a copy of *Santa Rosa: The Chosen Spot of All the Earth* DVD. The location will be revealed in the Winter 2024 newsletter.

*Courtesy Sonoma County Library Photograph Collection*

*Answer to Summer 2023 "Where in Santa Rosa?" - Courtyard of Sonoma County Library in downtown Santa Rosa*



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### Want to Contribute Content for the HSSR Newsletter?

The HSSR seeks Santa Rosa-centric memoirs and research-based articles for the newsletter. For more information, contact us at [Newsletter@HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.org](mailto:Newsletter@HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.org)

### The HSSR Acknowledges Its Donors

**Kim Marois & Randy Kenworthy  
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in memory of  
Jane Albertson Bavo**

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

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photos and  
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history

### Welcome New HSSR Members

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## HSSR Board of Directors

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# Guy Grosse - Veteran and Entrepreneur

by Lisa Kranz

Guy Emanuel Grosse was born in Bern, Switzerland in 1839. He came to the United States around the age of 13 and settled in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He worked as an errand boy in a store and was later promoted to a clerk, supporting himself in these endeavors. In May 1856 he came to California, but returned to Pittsburgh about 6 months later. He became a United States citizen in October 1860.

During the Civil War, he enlisted and joined the Pittsburgh Zouaves. The Zouaves' heritage was North African, from indigenous Berber fighters of Algiers prior to the French occupation of 1830, and they were known for their distinctive uniforms. U.S. Army Captain George McClellan, stationed in Europe as an observer of the Crimean War, had observed French Zouaves in action and had praised them as "the finest light infantry that Europe can produce."

Grosse later enlisted with Company D, 63rd Pennsylvania Infantry as a private. He was promoted through all the ranks to Captain of his company. His company fought many battles, including at Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Antietam, and Gettysburg. After three years of active service and after being wounded three times, he was honorably discharged from military service.

He returned to Pennsylvania, eventually moving to Massillon, Ohio, where he worked as a clerk. He went into business, operating the "Bee Hive," a mercantile store with several partners. He also became a member of the Masonic Lodge. In 1876 he sold his business interest and returned to California. According to the 1891 History of Northern California Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World, Grosse scouted many locations in the state, finally settling on Santa Rosa as his chosen home.

He married Elizabeth Wright Gibbs in July 1888, and they had two children, Guy Emanuel Nicklaus Grosse and Alberta Katherine Grosse.



Guy Emanuel Grosse, undated photographs  
*familysearch.org*

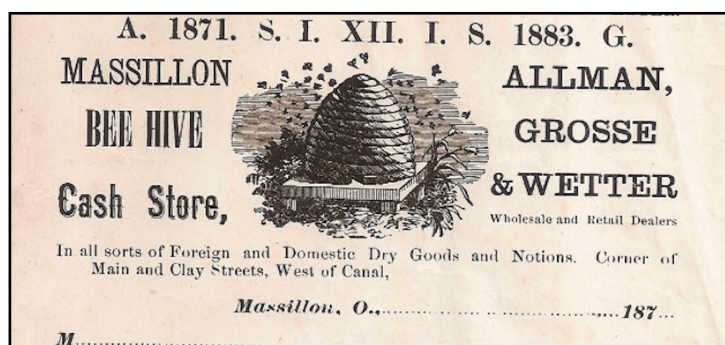
In Santa Rosa, Grosse acquired land and built residential and commercial structures which he sold. He later entered the real estate profession, with offices on the ground floor of the Athenaeum building, the 2,000-seat theater that he and partners Spencer, DeTurk, Hahman, and Wright had built in 1884. He is noted as an early real estate tycoon and great promoter of Santa Rosa, bringing many home buyers to the area.

He acquired about 560 acres east of downtown, which he dubbed "Rincon Heights" and where he built his home. He planted 100 acres in olives, 100 acres in grapes and many acres in prunes, pears, and other fruit, along with hops and nuts. Grosse cured olives and pressed oil for many years in hopes that Santa Rosa could become the olive oil capital of the United States. The olive orchard was ultimately offered as subdivision land near the end of the 19th century.

The Rincon Heights Addition to the City of Santa Rosa was platted in 1893, with lots fronting on Grosse Avenue. The map noted its location at the head of Fourth Street, the principal business street, less than one mile distant from the courthouse in the "City of Roses."

Grosse died in May 1907 at age 68. According to his obituary, he had long struggled with ill health, particularly inflammatory rheumatism. His funeral was held from the Masonic Hall under the auspices of Commandery No. 14, Knights Templar, of which Grosse was a member and had served a term as

Commander. His obituary notes that Grosse cherished the order and its teachings and enjoyed noting that he and President McKinley were both knighted at Massillon, Ohio.



Portion of letterhead for Bee Hive Store  
*familysearch.org*

## Puzzling Street Names Explained



Have you noticed the three streets running south off Fourth Street east of downtown: Leland, Stanford, and Junior? If you're traveling east, they're right in a row, and the 1908 Sanborn map at left shows a former street further east: University.

Local legend about these street names is that Santa Rosa almost became the site of Stanford University. But that is only legend. The area was subdivided in the early 1890s and was known as Pipher's addition. According to Gaye LeBaron's history of Santa Rosa, the streets were named for the institution where developer Pipher had learned to play football: "Leland Stanford Junior University." When the bridge over Santa Rosa Creek was built connecting to Talbot Avenue, University Street's name was changed to Talbot.

Leland Stanford Junior University's namesake was the only child of Jane and Leland Stanford. He died of typhoid fever at age 15. His parents founded the university in his memory in 1885, creating a coeducational institution that was not associated with any religious organization, both unique features at the time.

Leland Stanford, who had been governor of California and had earned his fortune by providing provisions to '49ers mining for gold and as a partner in the Central Pacific Railroad which helped construct the intercontinental railroad, built the university on the family's stock farm in Palo Alto.

## Board Welcomes Curt Groninga

Curt Groninga has resided in Santa Rosa for 41 years. Curt served 27 years at Santa Rosa Junior College and retired in 2009 as Vice-President/Asst. Superintendent. He then spent ten years serving the City of Santa Rosa as a member of the Cultural Heritage Board (two stints) and the Planning Commission (six years).

While at SRJC, Curt was instrumental in having the Board of Trustees return to its W.H. Weeks Heritage Facilities Design concept. Among structures built during his tenure, the Call Child Development Center, Doyle Library and Bertolini Student Center best reflect W.H. Weeks's intent. Curt is hopeful the current Board and new president will protect Week's heritage design and original structures. While a member of the planning commission, he was most proud of the Roseland annexation plan.

Curt graduated from Glendale College, CSU Long Beach, UCLA and USC. He has a master's degree in public administration with an emphasis on the administration of local government. His doctorate is in political economics. Curt was a member of the Leadership Santa Rosa Class 1

which expanded his Santa Rosa and Sonoma County horizons.

His interests include family, local, and world history. He recently reunited the remains of an uncle, who at 7, had witnessed his father's (Curt's grandfather) death as he was struck by a train while walking on tracks from their village to town in September 1910. In 1968, his uncle, a drifter long missing, was himself found dead by the side of railroad tracks in South Dakota. It took 53 years of research to understand his personal journey, locate his remains in a potter's field and obtain permission for his reburial to a family cemetery 250 miles away. In September 2021, Curt carried his uncle's ashes on those railroad tracks and completed his journey to town (Worthington, Minnesota). One hundred eleven years after the horrific accident, Curt was invited to join the Nobles County, Minnesota Historical Society and the Simonswolde Parish (Germany) Historical Society.

Curt looks forward to an educational and enlightening tenure with the Historical Society of Santa Rosa.



## Tisserand Family Farmed Walnuts

by Karen Stone

In 1913, John Tisserand (1872-1942), his wife, Lovicy "Louisa" Doom Tisserand (1865-1931), and their three sons, Augustus ("Gus"), Johnny, and Joseph, moved from Modoc County to Santa Rosa, where they purchased a small walnut orchard on Hoen Avenue.

John was born in the Alsace-Lorraine region of France. He was a teenager when he and his parents immigrated to the United States in 1889. His three sons were born in Alturas, Modoc County.



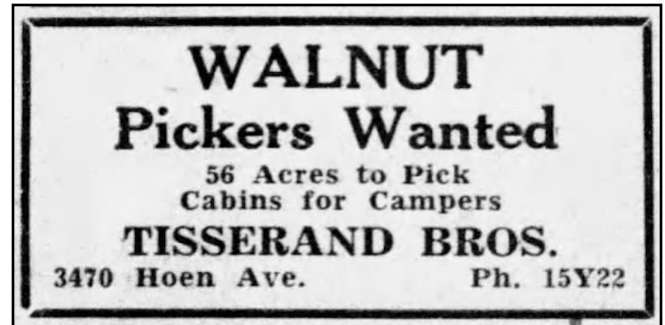
Sons Gus and John Tisserand, undated photographs  
*ancestry.com*

The 1920 census records the family living on Theresa Street, which is near Barham Avenue. In 1924, John purchased property - a chicken ranch and more walnut trees - adjacent to his Hoen Avenue walnut orchard. A family home was built on the Hoen Avenue property in 1928. The Tisserand home at 3470 Hoen Avenue is now surrounded by a subdivision built in the 1950s.

The oldest son, Gus, was a self-employed mechanic who

owned local garages. Johnny was a local musician. Joseph was a mechanic and pilot. After John died in 1942, his sons Johnny and Gus continued to work the walnut orchard. Son Joseph had died in 1938. In 1955, the Tisserand brothers sold their property to Coddling Homes, which had purchased surrounding land and planned to build a subdivision.

Tisserand family members are buried in Santa Rosa Odd Fellows Cemetery. Tisserand Drive, a gently curving roadway, is located in Bennett Valley southeast of the original family home on Hoen Avenue.



## Wagner Place Housed Variety of Farm Pursuits

by Karen Stone

If you blink, you'll miss Wagner Place as you travel west on Sonoma Highway toward Farmers Lane and the Flamingo Hotel. It's located on the north side of the road between Farmers Lane and Sunridge Drive. Wagner Place is named for Frank H. Wagner (1855-1933), who was born in Germany and came to Santa Rosa in the late 1800s. In 1895, he purchased property on Sonoma Highway (Highway 12), east of Farmers Lane. He and Hattie Kieffer married in 1896.

In 1908, Wagner built a house on the Sonoma Highway property. The house was set back into an excavation in the side of the hill. He raised cattle, and had a butcher shop and slaughterhouse on the property.

In 1913, Frank and Hattie divorced. The next year, he married Rosina Barsi. They had two children: Frances (1916-1952) and Frank Jr. (1919-2012). Neither of the Wagner children married.

Frances raised flowers and sold them at the Montgomery Village farmers' market. Frank Jr. was an auto mechanic. He also raised bees and sold apple blossom honey. His bees, honey, and beeswax won awards at the Sonoma County Fair.

Frank Sr. died in 1933 and is buried in Santa Rosa Rural Cemetery. Rosina, Frances, and Frank are buried in Calvary Catholic Cemetery.

Frank Wagner won many awards for his bee products  
*Press Democrat, August 1, 1950*

### Apiarist Walks Off With Show

Frank Wagner, Santa Rosa apiarist at 3155 Sonoma Highway, practically walked off with the show with his bee and honey display at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds.

Mr. Wagner took first for his feature display, firsts for all types of bees entered and firsts for all classes of honey.

Here are the results of judging yesterday in this division:

first. Caucasian—Frank Wagner, first.  
BEE: Carniolan — Frank Wagner, first.  
Leather colored Italian—Frank Wagner, first.

HONEY: Extracted honey — Frank Wagner, first; Leroy Dove, second; W. J. Mangis, third. Comb honey — Frank Wagner, first; Leroy Dove, second. Bulk comb honey — Frank Wagner, first; Leroy Dove, first; W. J. Mangis, third. Creamed or crystallized honey — Frank Wagner, first; Golden Italian—Frank Wagner, first; first: W. J. Mangis, second.

BEEWAX: Natural or sunbleached — W. J. Mangis, first; Frank Wagner, second.

FEATURE DISPLAY BY CLUB OR INDIVIDUAL: Most original attractive and comprehensive display of bees, beeswax and honey by a bee club or individual, at least 50 square feet—Frank Wagner, first.

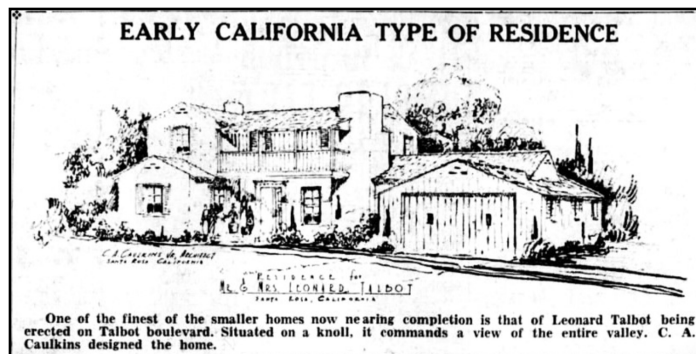
## Talbot Family, continued from page 1

been an easy road to get there. He worked the night shift at a hotel six days a week while putting himself through college and got his first job at a brokerage in San Francisco by offering to work for free until they could put him on the payroll. After a number of years working for other companies, he formed his own with Duke Hannaford, eventually growing it to 50 salesmen. He had married Joyce White in 1925 and had two children by then.

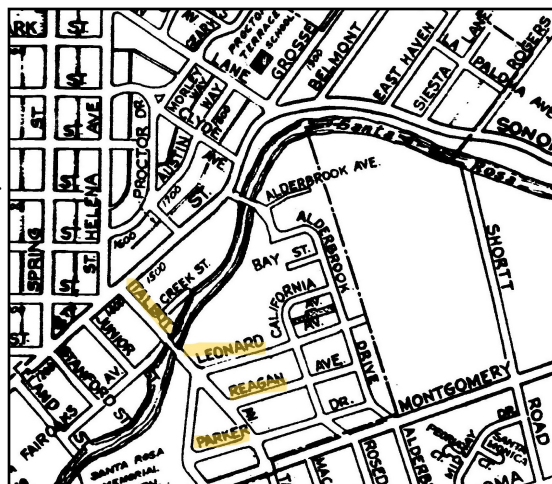


Leonard Talbot, 1946  
School Board Candidate Photo  
*Press Democrat*

In 1935, Leonard moved forward with converting 20 acres of his father's farmland just east of downtown Santa Rosa into a new subdivision. The subdivision covered eight city blocks and offered lots for over 80 homes. Many prominent families purchased lots and built homes in the subdivision often using C. A. Caulkins, a well-known Santa Rosa architect. In fact, Leonard and his family built one of the first homes (which still stands today) on, of course, Talbot Avenue at the corner of Leonard Avenue. But those aren't the only streets named after the family. Two more street names honor family members – Raegan Way



Drawing of Leonard Talbot Home, designed by C.A. Caulkins  
*Press Democrat*



Talbot Family Street Names  
Today's Raegan Way is shown here as "Raegan"  
1948 Thomas Brothers Map

and Parker Drive. The name Raegan (sometimes spelled Raegan) and Parker date back to relatives from the 1700s in the Talbot family. The subdivision was annexed into the city in September 1938. Leonard was an avid supporter of the local Rotary, Boys and Girls Club, and the Boy Scouts for many years. At the age of 88 he was still working as a broker – the oldest broker still working in

California. He died seven years later at the age of 95.

## Shortt Road Named for Short-Time Santa Rosan

by Karen Stone

Alexis Delbert "Del" Shortt lived in Santa Rosa from 1934 until his death in 1939. Del was a wealthy businessman and world traveler who had moved to California after his retirement in 1921. He initially purchased a 2,000-acre ranch in Mendocino County where he built a mansion and guest cottages. In 1934, he sold his ranch before arriving in Santa Rosa.

Soon after their arrival in Santa Rosa in 1934, Del and his wife, Ethel King Shortt, purchased a home and 40-acre walnut orchard from Peter Frey. The property was part of the old Farmer family ranch south of Santa Rosa Creek.

According to his obituary, Del Shortt had been a ranking official with the Alexander Hamilton Institute, an organization for business education in New York City engaged in collecting, organizing and transmitting business

information. It was through this work that he traveled the world, living for a time in Manila. Shortt also had extensive property holdings and was involved in the development of Birmingham, Alabama. He was an executive in the Browning-King Company, a large clothing manufacturer associated with his wife's father.

In 1934, the Shortts built a Mediterranean-style home on their Santa Rosa property, described as a "palatial home overlooking Santa Rosa Creek." They lived there with Ethel's parents, Andrew and Mabel King. Andrew died in 1938; Del in 1939. In 1942, Ethel and her mother moved to San Francisco, and Ethel sold her Santa Rosa property to Dr. Lewis Michelson.

Shortt Road runs from Sonoma Avenue to Santa Rosa Creek, and is illustrated on the right side of the map above.



# Grace Tract Streets Memorialize Family Members

By Kelly Carrillo Fernández

The Grace Addition replaced the orchards between Guy Grosse's (see page 3) development and William Grahn's Montecito Villas, each having streets bearing their names. It remains one of the few Santa Rosa developments affectionately referenced by the original subdivision map name, "Grace Tract" for the family who developed it.

A handful of post-World War II developments contributed to Santa Rosa's greatest population boom. Population nearly doubled as Santa Rosa evolved out of its wartime activity and farm-town reputation toward a California urban city.

The Grace Brothers Brewery dates from 1897 when it rooted from brothers Frank and Joe Grace's grocery store on Fourth and A Streets. The sons of Irish immigrants bought the Metzger Brewery that would grow to produce a fine product distributed throughout the state. The business survived Prohibition by producing carbonated beverages and ice cream and operating an ice house. Frank simultaneously managed juxtaposing positions: brewery owner and county sheriff and was the father of five sons (Frank Jr. "Moses," Thomas, James, John "Jack," and William). In 1953 the brewery's doors closed but were reopened five years later by Frank's son Thomas.

The walnut orchards, prune orchards, and truck farm that became the Grace Addition were managed by Frank Jr. until his death in 1940. His farmhouse sat near today's intersection of East Foothill Drive and Grosse Avenue. The farm, hillside, and dynamite cave provided great childhood entertainment before and after the addition. The homes under construction provided for new exploration, and teens picked the prunes during harvest in the remaining orchards nearby.

Plans for the addition began in 1939, but progress was slow until after the war. Lots sold for \$1,000 to \$1,500. Many of the homes were built by Lewis Meyers and sold for less than \$10,000. Though there were models, homes were customized and varied, built to suit, not like the "ticky-tacky" construction in urban areas across the country. As the development progressed from Bryden Lane toward the farmhouse, the appetite for larger homes grew. Homes were evolving, adding family and living rooms that resembled "parlors." Two-car garages arrived with two-car families. Hugh Coddington's Town and Country Shopping Center was a short walk away. As the name suggested, the surrounding neighborhood offered the conveniences of living in town while retaining county freedoms.

The brewery closed for good in 1966 with the passing of Thomas, the last of the five brothers. The farmhouse was torn down, and the neighborhood evolved. The wide streets, laid out for families and walking, honor the Grace family with Grace Drive as well as family members and friends.

James Avenue honors Sergeant James C. Grace, one of the

five brothers who died in 1943 in WW II. He had requested duty overseas and was said to be popular and well-liked.

Finlaw Street and Geary Drive are named for Finlaw Geary, a trial lawyer possessing great skill at reading witnesses, judge, and jury. He was the son of Congressman Thomas Geary and brother to Superior Court Judge Donald Geary. A bachelor, he was among Santa Rosa's greatest sports fans and gamblers. Some suspect the two streets named for him are justified for the many times he aided the Grace brothers with the law.

Julianne Place and Pamela Drive are named for the daughters of William Grace, one of the five brothers. The girls' mother was Juliette Proctor, whose branch of the Proctor family was active in the local hop growing and brewery industry. Patricia Place was named for the daughter of John "Jack" Grace, another of the five brothers. Patricia's maternal grandfather, Cornelius Shea, had lent her paternal grandfather and his brother \$5,000 to purchase the Metzger Brewery in 1897.

The source of the naming of El Camino Way (Spanish for "The Road") is unknown. It perhaps is a reference to El Camino Real, the historic 600 mile path connecting California's Franciscan missions.

The origin of Norte Way is disputed. Some allege it was named for Norton "Nort" Forsyth, the owner of Forsyth Tire, and SRJC Trustee and Foundation Director. Forsyth Hall, the SRJC music building, honors him. Another possibility points to the Spanish translation of "north" as the two "Ways" in the Grace Tract run parallel and share a Spanish meaning where "North Way" is north of "The Road Way." Delevan Way was named for the Graces' Colusa County ranch. Upward of 350 acres of rice and corn were grown there for use as a lightening adjunct in beer production. There, the family and friends hunted waterfowl among the crops.

Mendota Way was named for the 1,400-acre family cotton ranch in Fresno County, likely acquired for oil and gas rights. The family also owned and operated the nearby Fresno Brewery.

Today, the Grace Tract continues to offer a family-oriented environment where residents walk to the neighborhood market and children ride bikes and play. Original residents share fences with new generations. The labels "Proctor Terrace" (from Walter Proctor's 1920s development east of the McDonald Addition) and "Grace Tract" have evolved to encompass several developments from Rogers Way to Franklin Avenue.



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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.

Memberships make wonderful gifts! Share the benefits of membership with your family and friends. Dues are paid annually, and membership is valid for one year.

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