



The Fountaingrove Round Barn, constructed in 1899 and lost in the 2017 Tubbs Fire, was designated a Santa Rosa Local Landmark in 2000.

*Photo Courtesy Sonoma County Library Collection*



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# A Long Road to Preservation: The DeTurk Round Barn

by Denise Hill

**1858-1909**

Located on Donahue Street in the West End Historic Preservation District, the DeTurk Round Barn was constructed in 1891 by Thomas Ludwig for Isaac DeTurk. It is one of the oldest of 11 such barns in California. Most round barns in the United States were built between 1890 and 1920 in the vicinity of railroads. Typically, they housed dairy cattle, with the location near railroad tracks allowing easy shipment of the milk they produced. However, Isaac DeTurk used his barn to house his prized trotting horses.

The son of German immigrants, DeTurk developed a love of wine from his father while growing up in Indiana. His father had tried experimenting with some European wine grape varieties when he was still in Indiana, but failed. Isaac DeTurk followed his brother to Santa Rosa in 1858. Four years later he started the Yulupa Vineyard in Bennett Valley. After his wood frame winery on Donahue Street burned down twice, Isaac built a substantial brick building



Isaac DeTurk  
*Santa Rosa Republican*

by the San Francisco and Northern Pacific Railroad tracks just west of Wilson Street so he could easily ship his wine.

During that time, DeTurk became a founding member and president of the State Viticultural Commission. By the 1870s, his winery, called Belle Mount, was producing 25,000 gallons per season, of which 20,000 was “shipped” to outlets outside the county. His vineyard grew to be one of the largest in the state.

In 1885 he sold his vineyard and concentrated his efforts on his winery. While involved in the winery business, DeTurk developed a passion for horseracing and became

one of the owners of a star trotter named Anteeo. Anteeo was owned by a consortium of prominent locals which included DeTurk, Guy Grosse, George Trowbridge, Robert Crane, and George Guerne. Anteeo was ranked one of the greatest trotting stallions in the United States in the 1880s. In 1885, Anteeo won a \$1,000 Match Race and set a track record. His performance on the track was so impressive that he was sold for \$20,000, the astounding equivalent of \$700,000 today.

**1910-1980**

When Isaac DeTurk died in 1896, William Lumsden purchased the winery and round barn, running a livery stable business until 1910. That year, the City of Santa Rosa bought the property for a supply depot, later to become the City Corporation Yard, and used it as such for the next 70 years. By the time the City built a new Corporation Yard on Stony Point Road in 1980, the DeTurk Round Barn was all but forgotten, even though at the time it was one of only three round barns remaining in Sonoma County. (Now there are only two, with the destruction of the Fountaingrove Round Barn by the 2017 Tubbs Fire. The other remaining round barn is in Windsor.)



Round Barn at left in City Corp. Yard, 1965  
*Courtesy Sonoma County Library Coll.*

**1981-1996**

In 1981, the City created a new list of local historic places and shockingly omitted the DeTurk Round Barn. When it was brought before the city council, Councilmember Donna Born pointed out the omission. The response from then Mayor Bill Borone had to frustrate preservationists. He stated he didn’t see much historical significance about the (now

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## Message from the Board

Historic sites and events can be officially recognized at the national, state, and/or local level, providing a link to the heritage of the United States. There are over 2,600 National Historic Landmarks across the United States. National landmarks may be places where a significant historic event occurred, places strongly associated with a nationally significant figures in American history, outstanding examples of an architectural style, or nationally significant archaeological locations. There are more than 95,000 properties on the National Register of Historic Places nationwide-these are historic places worthy of preservation.

California Historical Landmarks are buildings, structures, sites, or places that have been determined to have statewide historical significance because they are unique in a large geographic region, are associated with an individual or group having profound influence on the history of California, are architecturally significant or the work of a pioneering designer.

The City of Santa Rosa has designated 22 local landmarks, and this edition of the HSSR newsletter is devoted to highlighting a few of those. Only one Santa Rosa location is listed as a national, state, and local landmark: Luther Burbank Home & Gardens in central Santa Rosa. We hope this edition piques your interest about Santa Rosa's landmarks.

## Gone But Not Forgotten



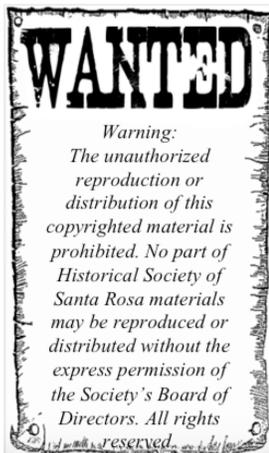
This image shows the Hoag House, the first house built by Europeans in Santa Rosa, in 1856. The house was damaged by fire in 1983 and was moved in 1995 to 6102 Sonoma Highway, where inadequate protection led to the remaining structure's deterioration and loss. The Museum of Sonoma County has the front door of the Hoag House, Santa Rosa Local Landmark No. 12, in its collection.

*Courtesy Sonoma State University Collection 1974-1976*

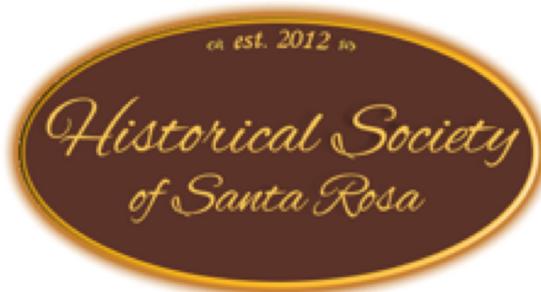
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# A Landmark Event: the Founding of Community Baptist Church

By Lisa Kranz

Most of Santa Rosa's designated landmarks recognize notable buildings or architecture. The Community Baptist Church at 1228 Grand Avenue, designated a local landmark in 2006, is a landmark because of a significant event: it is the first African American congregation in the United States to be recognized by the Southern Baptist Convention, on September 16, 1951.

The church was organized by the Rev. Washington E. Boyce. Boyce was a Black minister from Marin City who met local residents of Santa Rosa's South Park neighborhood (generally south Highway 12 and west of the Sonoma County Fairgrounds) to discuss the founding of a Black church in Santa Rosa.

The Community Baptist Church was organized in late 1951, meeting at a location on W. College Avenue with an initial congregation of six. The group later met at the Native Sons Hall on Mendocino Avenue. In 1953, land was purchased at 1228 Grand Avenue to build a church, and the church building was completed in 1956.

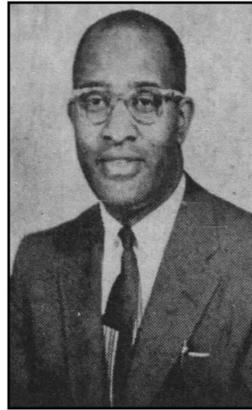
The Southern Baptist Convention was established in 1845 in the southern United States, and initially about one-third of its members were of African heritage (City of Santa Rosa staff report October 6, 2006). But by 1900, most Black Southern Baptists had found alternative membership in Black Baptist bodies. Few churches were integrated between 1865 and 1965. The first two African American congregations to join the Southern Baptist Convention after nearly a century of separatism were:

1. Greater Friendship Baptist Church, Anchorage, Alaska, June 22, 1951.
2. Community Baptist Church, Santa Rosa, September 16, 1951.

Although the Anchorage and Santa Rosa churches both joined the Southern Baptist Convention in 1951, Santa Rosa was technically the only church in the *United States* (Alaska was granted statehood in 1959), making Community Baptist Church the first Black Baptist Church in the Southern Baptist Convention. This notable recognition is why the Santa Rosa Cultural Heritage Board and City Council designated the Community Baptist

Church as a local landmark in 2006. While not part of the landmark designation, the building and site are significant due to the congregation's activities there.

Several pastors served the Community Baptist Church after Rev. Boyce, including the Rev. Charles Newsome and Rev. B.B. Banks, with Rev. Boyce returning for a year, and Rev. B.E. Love. In 1964, when the Rev. James Coffee became the pastor, the congregation numbered about 100. Reverend Coffee grew the congregation, and it was estimated to number 500 members by 1976. He led the congregation until his death in April 2010.

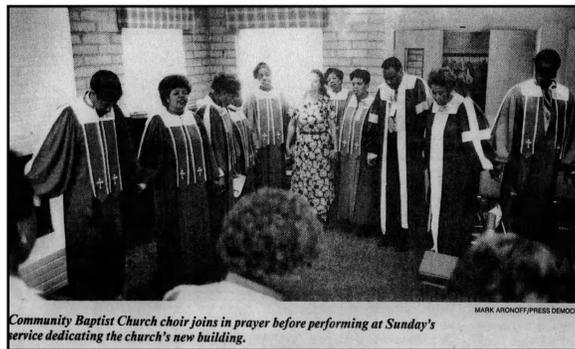


Rev. W.E. Boyce  
December 2, 1960

Over the years, the church was a focal point for the South Park community, hosting meetings on mental health, legal rights, and the U.S. Census, among many others. In April 1968 following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., more than 300 people packed the church after marching from Courthouse Square in protest of the murder.

Reverend Coffee established the first Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday celebration in 1981. It became an annual event with youth oration and continued this year with a Day of Service at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, with park cleanup and beautification.

In 1985, Coffee also took a role in persuading the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors to prohibit county funds from being invested in companies operating South Africa, which was then segregated by apartheid. In an interview with the *Press Democrat* later in his life, Coffee indicated that he believed the church had been targeted because of the stand on apartheid when the church was badly damaged by an arson fire in September 1985.



Community Baptist Church choir joins in prayer before performing at Sunday's service dedicating the church's new building.

Community Baptist Church Choir, Church Dedication  
*Press Democrat, September 10, 1990*

The church was rebuilt but was soon found to be too small for its congregation. On September 9, 1990, more than 1,000 well-wishers attended the dedication of a new, larger church on Sonoma Avenue. The Community Baptist Church remains at this location today.

Reverend Coffee lent his support to the designation of Community Baptist Church as a Santa Rosa landmark, and the City's Cultural Heritage Board recommended and the City Council acted to designate it a landmark on October 10, 2006.

# Bolton House Graces Sonoma Avenue

by Karen Stone

The Queen Anne-style house at 966 Sonoma Avenue (corner of Brookwood Avenue) was designed by architect Brainerd Jones. Built in 1904 for Walter and Isabella Bolton, it was designated a historic landmark by Santa Rosa's Cultural Heritage Board in 1989.

The house is one of several notable, older homes along Sonoma Avenue west of Brookwood Avenue, which were deemed to be "contributors" to a historic district in this area, according to a City of Santa Rosa survey from 1989. Large homes once graced Sonoma Avenue on both sides of the street, but the north side has mostly given way to public uses and multifamily development.

Before the Boltons owned the property, it was part of Jesse Powers's farm. Jesse Powers farmed the land until his death in 1893. The property was originally owned by Elijah Farmer. In the 19th Century, the Farmer's Addition created the subdivision on which the Sonoma Avenue houses were constructed.

In 1891, Walter A. Bolton (1867-1946) married Isabella Kline Bolton (1870-1962) in Santa Rosa. Both were Sonoma County natives. After their marriage, they moved to Arizona where Walter's family had farming and cattle interests. Their daughter Vivian was born there in 1895.

The family eventually returned to Santa Rosa, where daughter Isabel was born in 1899. In 1904, they moved into the Sonoma Avenue house. Walter got involved in real estate investments.

Walter and Isabella divorced in 1908. Isabella and her two daughters continued to live in the Sonoma Avenue house. Vivian Bolton graduated from Santa Rosa High School in 1915, became a teacher, and taught at Fremont School. Isabel graduated from Santa Rosa High School in 1917. In 1921, she married George Marvin at her mother's house.

In 1925, Mrs. Bolton moved to Berkeley to be with her daughter, Vivian, who was studying at California School of Arts and Crafts. At that time, the Sonoma Avenue house was sold to Lawrence C. Olson.

The Bolton House has had various uses during its existence through more than a century – single family home, office and currently a vacation rental. In 1967, the Fruitt and Tomasi Architecture Firm was housed at the site, where it remained for more than 30 years. The request for landmark designation was filed by Thomas Tomasi in 1989, and the house was designated Santa Rosa Landmark Number 5 on June 14, 1989.



The Bolton House, 2024  
Photo by Lisa Kranz

# "Big Bird" Burns Bright

by Lisa Kranz

The Flamingo Hotel opened on Fourth Street at Farmers Lane in June 1957 with 172 rooms, a restaurant, coffee shop, bar, a ballroom, meeting rooms and a private pool club. The hotel's sign was an 81' tall tower sign topped by a neon, rotating pink flamingo. The sign was designed by Homer Rissman, one of three he designed in a wheel-spoke pattern (Press Democrat 8-26-24). The hotel was affectionately known as the "Big Bird" because of the large, pink flamingo atop the sign.

The City of Santa Rosa adopted new sign regulations in 1971 disallowing flashing or rotating signs. The flamingo was removed from atop the tower sign in the mid-1980s.

In 1996, the Flamingo Resort Hotel's owner, Pierre Ehret, submitted an application to the City of Santa Rosa

requesting the tower sign be designated as a local landmark. The Cultural Heritage Board considered the application in October 1996 and recommended the return of the neon-outlined pink flamingo. The City Council agreed, and the sign was designated a landmark in early 1997. The owner had the neon flamingo remade, and it was reinstalled. The sign was refurbished in 2024 as part of a hotel renovation, and it continues to proudly rotate, illuminating the night sky.



Flamingo Hotel Sign, 2024  
Photo by Lisa Kranz

# Stone Farm Offers Glimpse of Santa Rosa's Rural Past

by Denise Hill

The Stone Family Farmhouse was built on property bordered by Occidental and Sanford Roads near the Laguna de Santa Rosa on the far western edge of Santa Rosa. The farmhouse is believed to be Sonoma County's oldest surviving farm building still in its original rural setting. The California Department of Historic Resources Inventory report on the property describes the house as "an excellent example of rural Homestead architecture during the settlement and early American period." The farm was one of over 5,000 in Sonoma County that were 50 acres or less according to the 1930 government census. That same year, Santa Rosa was second in the ranks of California cities per capita agricultural retail sales. Families were able to make a fair living on small acreage because of the county's proximity to the San Francisco markets.

In 1860, the original property owner was Harrison Valentine, one of Santa Rosa's earliest settlers and a founder of its first Protestant church, who purchased 320 acres in Santa Rosa which included the property that he called Valentine Ranch. Two years later, his widow sold the property to John Morrison who began construction of the farmhouse in approximately 1872. The owners of the property changed many times over the next 114 years. From 1903 to 1965 the owner was Stella "Birdie" Miller, and Miller's Dairy operated on the land. In 1930, Birdie's daughter and son-in-law - Emma and Louis Baker - moved to the farm with their 2-year-old daughter. In 1965, Emma sold 80 acres, including the house and barns, to Arleth Stone - hence the name Stone Farm. In 1984, The city bought 48 acres for wastewater reclamation purposes, assigning its stewardship to its Utilities Department. Now a city-owned property, there was concern that the farmhouse and other buildings would be destroyed, which almost happened until then-City Manager Ken Blackman put a hold on the fire department's plans to burn the buildings for firefighting practice.

In 1988, Santa Rosa's Cultural Heritage Board added the property to its list of city landmarks, considering it

significant due to its history as a rental farm which was used by a great many farmers of the area. Thus, it served as a monument to the common agriculturalist who made our county grow. The board went on record stating it should be used as an educational facility sometime in the future.

Unfortunately, an application for funding through a state grant made available by Proposition 70 (a park and preservation funding measure that had passed earlier in the year) was not granted. The funds would have been used to rehabilitate the farm buildings for a combined use as headquarters of the city's wastewater management program and the ag education center and park the Cultural Heritage Board had hoped for. It would take another 20 years of sitting unoccupied before that goal was achieved.



Stone Family Farmhouse, 2024  
Photo by Lisa Kranz

Enter the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation (established in 1989 following the State of the Laguna conference) which in 2004 leased 4 acres surrounding the historic house and outbuildings and developed plans for their rehabilitation as well as an environmental education center. The Foundation renovated the historic Stone Farm farmhouse, turning it into their administrative offices and an exhibit space. Major work included building a new entrance and driveway on the historic alignment of Old Occidental Road, moving the house and constructing a foundation and then placing the house on the new foundation, a complete "gutting" and rebuilding of the inside of the old structure and much more. Community support in both financial and in-kind donations made most of the work possible.

Today, the Laguna Environmental Center provides space for the Foundation's meetings, trainings, workshops, and events, and fulfills the Cultural Heritage Board's original goal through its Learning Laguna program along with their summer camp for youth. Participants of all ages can visit the historic house and see exhibits in the Great Blue Heron Hall (open during special events), and connect with the Laguna year-round through stewardship projects, workshops, art exhibits, presentations, and guided walks.



almost 100-year-old) round barn. Other council members also voiced reservations about putting the historic barn on the list. City Manager Ken Blackman appeased the council by announcing the City would make preservation of the barn a condition of the sale of the land it sat on.

In 1985 the City put the former Corporation Yard property, including the Round Barn, on the market. Preservationist and architect Dan Peterson purchased the property from the city with a goal to build affordable housing – even planning on turning the Round Barn into multiple living units. He was given five years to complete the project.

Many felt that if the DeTurk Round Barn could be saved, Dan was the person to do it. However, a year later there was still no progress. Instead, the City and Mr. Peterson were at logger heads as to who was going to pay for the cleanup of up to eleven abandoned fuel tanks left on the property by the City, even though by local Fire Department regulation, fuel tanks were to be removed within a year of abandoning the site. Peterson faulted the City for its slow planning process and threatened to sell the property, calling the project a financial burden. He was paying 11% on his loan - the high cost of borrowing money in the 1980s – resulting in payments of over \$7,000 a month. By April 1987 the relationship between Peterson and the City had become even more contentious. The City had offered Peterson \$50,000 to pay for the site cleanup. However, the quote came in at \$150,000 - three times that amount. Peterson filed a claim of \$900,000 with the City for reimbursement of his past loan payments and taxes. Six months later, the City (while still disputing who was financially responsible) decided to remove the tanks only to discover some had been leaking gasoline and hydraulic fluid that had contaminated the soil. To settle the suit Peterson had brought against it, the City agreed to pay Peterson \$200,000 and took back ownership of the property, including the DeTurk Round Barn. During all the turmoil and maybe because of it, the Cultural Heritage Board designated the Round Barn as a landmark on November 9, 1988, nearly a century after it was built.

### **1997-2000**

In 1997, affordable housing developer Burbank Housing took

on building the housing portion of the project called DeTurk Commons. The site cleanup had eventually cost the City more than \$2.5 million and the historic DeTurk Round Barn had sat dormant for another ten years. But in 1998, the City finally started to invest in preserving the barn, turning it over to the City's Recreation and Parks



The DeTurk Round Barn, above, before restoration  
*Courtesy TLCD Architects*

The DeTurk Round Barn, below, after restoration  
*Photo by Denise Hill*



Department, and providing \$150,000 to begin restoration work. The project was embraced by Parks Superintendent Rich Hovden who stated “It’s a landmark building, a state historic landmark. We needed to do some basic work to keep the structure intact and to keep the historic fabric intact.” By the next year the shingles on the roof had been replaced, the barn stabilized, new curved siding fabricated (laminated from three layers of clear Redwood glued together on an 8’ drum), and the cupola removed, disassembled, repaired and reassembled. The new freshly-painted gold cupola with a copper spire was reinstalled. Preservationists and nearby residents were thrilled. A one-acre neighborhood park with a dog run and a rose garden (with vintage Burbank varieties) was added near the barn in 1999.

### **2001-Present**

The 21st Century saw the most positive activity to date for the round barn. Of particular significance, in 2004 it was added to the National Register of

Historic Places. This followed a visit two years earlier when the barn was opened temporarily to host attendees of the 2002 California Preservation Conference held in Santa Rosa.

In 2009, Parks Superintendent Hovden organized a successful trip with community leaders to the California State Capitol to lobby for funding to continue renovation. In 2010, the City Council unanimously approved a use permit to turn the former but long-vacant horse stable into a community center making available \$2.1 million -- a combination of an \$822,000 from the California Cultural and Historic Endowment Fund, city park development fees, and other grants.

The funding was used to add some seismic stability, a new foundation, a wood floor over the original dirt floor, restrooms, and a space for caterers. The first step in the

*Continued on page 7*

# Coddington Sign's On-Again, Off-Again Story

By Lisa Kranz

The 70' tall Coddington Sign was constructed in 1960 with "Coddington" on one side and "Town" on the other on 55 acres that was to become Santa Rosa's first regional shopping center. The sign was built in a walnut orchard and was turning two years before the center was built, according to Hugh Coddington in an April 1993 interview with the Press Democrat.

Coddington was an influential developer, a two-term Santa Rosa City Council member (1964 – 1972) and former mayor. He developed the Coddington and Montgomery Village shopping centers, along with hundreds of houses in Montgomery Village and is often credited with changing the face of Santa Rosa through his many projects.

The City of Santa Rosa adopted a strict sign code in 1971 which did not allow rotating, moving or flashing signs. The tall sign at Coddington was given 10 years to continue rotating, at which time it was required to be still. The sign was switched off on the designated date.

But over the years, the sign was turned on and it rotated, in violation of the law, first as a Halloween joke, later as a fundraiser for charity, then on occasion to protest a government action, and in 1991, following the installation of the Petaluma Auto Mall sign. The construction of this sign caused general outrage in Sonoma County, which had no such lighted, tall signs along the freeway up to that time.

Hugh Coddington applied to the City of Santa Rosa to designate the sign as a landmark in order to allow it to continue revolving. The Santa Rosa Cultural Heritage Board heard the request at its December 10, 1992 meeting.

The Cultural Heritage Board voted 3-2 to deny the request for landmark designation, with the majority noting that the sign was too young, at 32 years old, to be considered historic. (Typically 50 years is the benchmark age for something to be considered historic.)



The Coddington Sign, 2024  
Photo by Lisa Kranz

The sign saga so captivated the attention of local residents that the Press Democrat conducted an informal phone-in poll to gauge public support for it. A December 11, 1992 article reported that 407 callers were in favor of allowing the sign to rotate while 79 opposed the idea. Emotions ran high, with one caller commenting, "Not just no, but hell, no!" Another caller noted Coddington should follow the same rules as others. Others thought the City had more important issues to worry about. Another voted no because she appreciated seeing the sign revolve on occasion, finding it an indication that there was an issue out there she needed to know about.

Coddington appealed the denial to the City Council, which heard the issue on January 19, 1993. The City Council voted 4-1 to designate the sign a landmark. The council members voting to approve the landmark designation had a soft spot for the sign, even if it didn't specifically follow the letter of the law. Maureen Casey, the only no vote for the landmark designation, found that other sign owners had to meet the sign ordinance and an exception for Coddington was not appropriate. The council's action reversed the recommendation of the Cultural Heritage Board.

In its last action related to the Coddington Sign, the City Council exempted the sign from City regulations which prohibited rotating signs. The Coddington Sign, Santa Rosa Landmark Number 9, continues its hard-fought rotation today.

*DeTurk Round Barn, continued from page 6*

renovation required raising the barn to allow workers to build a proper concrete foundation. The challenges of working with a round building required the contractor to insert 18 beams through the windows, turning the barn into a massive wagon wheel. Those beams were then connected to the roof joists and supports for the second-story walkway. Using this elaborate web of interlocking steel I-beams and 14 powerful jacks, the estimated 30-ton barn was lifted three feet off the dirt upon which it had rested for 119 years. Another engineering challenge was to find a way to affix square hardware to a round building. Custom fixtures were made to achieve this. Once the foundation

was poured, the barn was gently lowered on to it, anchored in place, and the rest of the full-scale renovation started. Once repurposed in this way, the 3,300-square-foot barn now called the DeTurk Round Barn Community Center became the centerpiece of the historic West End Neighborhood.

## Save the Date!

Free Event - Finding History Day 2025

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Santa Rosa Veterans' Memorial Bldg.

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