

Spring 2020

Arcata

HISTORICAL SITES SOCIETY OF



Arcata: Then and Now



A new series by Tamara Wolski showcases some "then" and "now" comparison photos from locations around Arcata. (left) **Northwest Plaza** building that houses Arcata Liquors was built in 1876) (Top: Humboldt State University Library/ Bottom: Tamara Wolski)

(right) Creamery Building, built in 1917

(Top: Ericson Collection, HSU Library, Bottom: Tamara Wolski)



(left) **Noah Falk mansion**, built in 1887, current site of Wildberries Marketplace

(Top: Peter Hess, Bottom: Tamara Wolski) See more at



<https://www.facebook.com/arcatahistory.org/>

Unfortunately our museum will be closed until at least June 6. We will keep members informed of changes.

COVID-19 Reflections

by Alex Stillman

Each day I choose a different walking route in order to photograph Arcata's built environment. I take photographs of buildings and homes to post daily on Instagram under the account, "arcatahistory". Eureka Heritage Society is doing the same. These postings portray a glimpse of what historical structures make up these two towns. Historic buildings give our communities a sense of place.

Recently I gave a talk about *This Place Matters*, a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It's a national campaign that encourages people to post to social media the places that are meaningful to them and to their communities. Places could be a bridge, culvert, house, landscape, statue, marker - the list goes on.

One guest at my talk said, "Should I be looking at the buildings I pass?" The answer was, "of course". I wanted her to look at windows. Windows are the eyes of a house. How many panes of glass do they have? Look at the front door's position. Are there transom windows? These elements help to determine the year the house was built.

Other important features to look for are roof types, siding materials, porch posts and ornamentation. With time, one begins to recognize the styles of architecture making up our communities. It's a good exercise for our minds to look for details within our built environment. Historic structures are meaningful and beautiful places and are a large part of why we feel good about where we live.



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Mission

Historical Sites Society of Arcata promotes recognition of the cultural heritage of Arcata and its environs, identify historical and architecturally significant structures and sites within Arcata planning area and encourages their preservation

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President's Message

An age-old adage of the industrial revolution "wash on Monday, iron on Tuesday, mend on Wednesday, shop on Thursday, clean on Friday, cook on Saturday, rest on Sunday," applies to the early days of Arcata. Newcomers were warned to always do their laundry on Mondays. Those who did not adhere to the advice quickly found the reason. On other days of the week, their clothes would be completely covered in ash from the teepee burners throughout Arcata. I have heard numerous stories about the teepee burners. Walkways at Arcata High School had to be swept twice a day due to the ash. Maybe some of you remember those times.

Board member Tamara Wolski has started "Then and Now" photographs of Arcata. She is posting them on Arcata history Facebook site. View the full collection on our Facebook page.

Karole Ely created a lovely display of the Arcata Women's Club dishes for the annual meeting's presentation to The Sanctuary as Preservationist of the Year.

We had a fascinating talk by Jerry Rohde on the California Barrel Company. This newsletter is full of photographs from the annual meeting.

HSSA has a small board who does a fantastic job. Thank you to the historic preservation community for your support.

Alex

Ann McClary

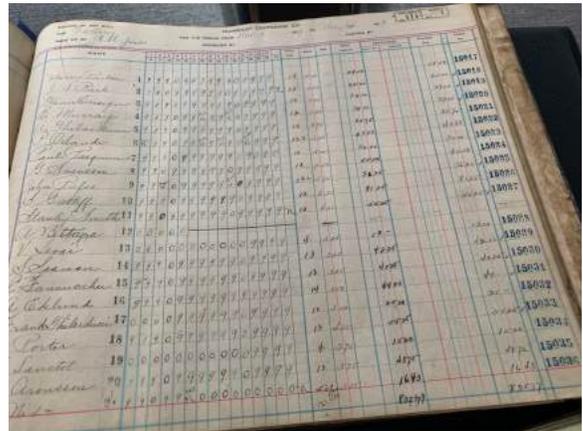
Recently Ann had a weird feeling in her leg that turned out to be a stroke that affected her left side. Her sons are trying to figure out the next steps. She would welcome mail from her dear friends at HSSA.

You can reach her at

Oak River Rehab Center
Attn: Ann McClary, Rm 73
3300 Franklin St.
Anderson, CA 96007



When Tom Perret bought the Arcata Bowling Alley building on K Street and began poking around in all the nooks and crannies of the building, he came across several items from the California Barrel Company including the payroll ledger (pictured at right). He donated these items to HSSA. We hope that HSSA and Edith Butler can work with the HSU Humboldt Room to house the artifacts to be used as research material for students when probing into Arcata's largest employer.



The California Barrel Company: Arcata's Biggest Business

HSSA thanks Jerry Rohde for presenting an outstanding program about the California Barrel Company. Informative as always and full of photographs. We are so blessed to have this wonderful historian in our midst providing us with the history of our past. Here are some photographs showing the factory and the smoke from the teepee burners covering Arcata with ash.



of

For decades, the California Barrel Company (CABCO), was the biggest employer in Arcata. Early on, it made barrels for the Spreckles Sugar Company, later expanding to supply containers to China and to provide wire-bound crates for produce and machinery in the United States.

The company cut spruce and other trees in several parts of Humboldt County, including Fickle Hill and a portion of what later became Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park. Much of its mill, just northwest of Samoa Boulevard and L Street in Arcata, still stands, recalling the days when it provided the paychecks for 1,142 workers.

Architecture enthusiasts will welcome an account of the Koster Mansion, the San Francisco residence of John Koster, CABCO's founder. The Kosters were probably the cleanest family in the City, since their twin-turreted home had 13 bathrooms. Only one bathroom was provided at the factory in Arcata for several hundred employees.

HSSA Annual Meeting, March 2020

HSSA held our annual meeting and luncheon on March 14, 2020. It was a festive occasion held at Baywood Country Club. Local history expert Jerry Rohde spoke about the California Barrel Company. See the article on page 3 for more information. Several awards were presented at the luncheon.

Photos: L-R: Jaffa Dugan presenting the Docent of the Year Award to Dan Hauser, our speaker Jerry Rhode and his wife Gisela, Doug Nitsch, who worked at the California Barrel Company in the late 1940s and Andy Alm, Volunteer of the Year Award winner, pictured with board member Tamara Wolski's mother Mary Ann Madej.



Katie Belknap and Solomon Lowenstein, owners of the Sanctuary, received the Historic Preservation Award

The Arcata Women's Club built their clubhouse, at 13th and J Street, with publicly raised funds in 1926. In 1970 the building was sold to the Church of Christ. In 2013, Katie Belknap and Solomon Lowenstein bought the building and started the Sanctuary to preserve and encourage

the creative sprit of their neighborhood. Creative Sanctuary became a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit in 2015. The Sanctuary exists to creatively connect people with resources, experiences, ideas and each other. It is a bustling community center, gallery, artist residency, library, music venue and workshop with lab facilities that include printmaking, ceramics, textiles, small metals, book arts, woodworking, music recording, bicycle repair, culinary arts, gardening, homesteading and more.



Arcata Women's Club plate set prepared by Karole Ely for the Sanctuary, the former home of the Arcata Women's Club

Katie and Solomon moved to Arcata in 2001 from Austin, Texas and Fort Wayne, Indiana to attend HSU, and stayed for the people, natural beauty and mild climate. They came from generations of community service oriented artists and musicians and see community as created through action. They restore old buildings in Arcata to affordable places for people to live and work. Creative use of neighborhood resources from people, buildings or discarded items fill their time. For Solomon, this includes repairing items, be it cars or sewing machines, helping out at Arcata Arts Institute as a sewing class aide and participating in the HSU Annual Donation Dash. Katie enjoys doing things with her hands—beyond the building projects, her recent work uses letterpress and lino cut printmaking and collage with old paper. She also sings traditional jazz and plays folk music with piano and guitar.



Mom's Silver Spoons

By Bob Felter

My mother was an amazing woman. I didn't realize that until she was near death at 91 and was going through her possessions. In the process, I pulled a weighty shoebox out of a closet. Inside were 60-some old spoons and tableware. The spoons all had little tags stating the maker, his village, the likely date of manufacture and maybe a little information. All were early 1800's and on through that century, and in going through my mother's collection, I learned some things about silver and also about my mother.

Aside from sterling, which is 92.5% silver, some of mom's spoons were coin silver. Colonists would go to lengths to avoid anything British and since silverware came from England they invented a way to make their own. They melted low value silver coins, often Spanish reales and produced similar silver. Utensils made from coins are usually about 90% silver, with copper added to lend strength. The amount of silver varied depending on the coins used. Coin silver was made in the United States from the earliest times until just after the Civil War and was a uniquely American technique. In 1859 silver was discovered in the Comstock Lode in Nevada and it became no longer prohibitive to make the more desirable sterling silver.

Another type of spoon in the box was Nickel silver, sometimes called German silver. This has a silvery appearance but is a combination of copper, nickel and zinc and only contained silver if it was plated. Electroplating this alloy was developed in England in the 1840's and similar methods are still in use today. Because of no or low silver content, such spoons have little value other than historic.

There was a Brilliant cut cheese fork in its own holder. This was post Civil War and I imagine the highly carved decorations became popular at the beginning of the Victorian era. And a very bendable pewter spoon, most of which were melted down to make new pewter.

One spoon was made in Fishkill, N.Y., a town I grew up in. Because of this I was tempted to keep it, but it belonged with its brethren. I finally decided to donate the collection to an organization she loved.

Editors note: This excerpt from an article by Bob Felter (the entire article is available on the HSSA website). It did start us thinking, however, about how important collections are to us and how much fun it might be to give collectors an opportunity to share their collections and talk about them. If you have a collection--of anything--let us know, we would love to feature you and your collection live and in person on a future Sunday when the museum is open!



This Firkin belonged to Mary Biehn's father who worked at the Arcata Barrel Company and is a sample of the Firkins used for storing butter



Prairie creek Cabco truck discovered by the Rohdes on a hike



This is a very pleasing craftsman house with a stone retaining wall and appropriate planting.



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History never really says goodbye. History says, 'See you later.' -Eduardo Galeano

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