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CUPERTINO'S HOO-HOO HOUSE

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## CUPERTINO'S "HOO-HOO HOUSE"

If it were not for fortuitous circumstances and the coincidental timing of events and personalities, a colorful era in the annals of the historical background of Cupertino's early pioneering days would never have occurred.

Certainly, when Padre Petrus Font in New Spain on that fateful day in the year of 1777 designated a small arroyo as being the "Arroyo de San Joseph Cupertino" history was set in motion. Who could have foretold that this simple appellation at the time would eventually imprint upon the maps of "Alto California," later to be given the name of California, an entire area of dense habitations, industrial complexes, educational facilities, highway systems and other facets of modern civilization too numerous to mention.

Even Padre Font who received his degrees in the Universities of Spain, a scientist, a mathematician, and a cartographer without a peer probably related his image of this area to that day on March 25th and 26th 1776 when in company with Col. Juan Bautista de Anza, he rested for a day at the Arroyo and made a note inferring that the area was not conducive to the best interests for rancho purposes or the pursuits of early colonization.

Spain, who ruled half of the then known world in 1775, too, could not anticipate that an Archduke and his wife would meet their death at a City (Sarajevo) not far distant from their own national boundaries, on June 28, 1914.

Neither could they anticipate that California, which they were ambitious and considered necessary to colonize would have their City of San Francisco which Col. DeAnza and Padre Font founded, eventually be governed, by a foreign group of settlers occupying the eastern coastal region of North America.

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San Francisco (dedicated to St. Francis) in the year of 1914 watched with trepidation the darkening war clouds gradually spreading over the continent of Europe.

They had ample reasons for being alarmed for they had looked forward to holding a Fair, an Exposition for the period February 20th through Dec. 4th, 1915 in honor of the opening to traffic of the Panama Canal on August 15, 1914.

Too, many of the countries of the world had accepted invitations to participate in the event and much of the preliminary plans and work on the projects had been started.

Time was of the essence.

The Marina area on which the Fine Arts Palace (as it was then called) now stands, had been filled with earth and sand and the huge area was humming with activity. The Tower of Jewels was being completed, and the moving elliptical platform with seats for viewer's accommodations enclosing a miniature-to-scale Panama Canal with all its fixings was nearing completion.

State after State were completing their buildings and their exhibits.

The Pacific Northwest and other producing timber areas with their incomparable lumber assets was representatively indentified with the Hoo-Hoo Building, it being an Exposition Club House for all Lumbermen.

It is said that the term or word Hoo-Hoo is used as a warning signal when a tree-faller is about to topple a forest giant.

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Actually it is the name of the "Concatenated Order of Hoo-Hoo" with membership at one time extending throughout many of the States of our Republic as well as extending into a number of foreign countries.

Primarily it is a Lumbermens Organization (organized circa 1891) and according to one of their publications in the year of 1910 (5 years before the Panama-Pacific Exposition) the object of the Order was "the promotion of Health, Happiness and Long Life of its Members". (A most worthy objective, as anyone must admit, to be desired by everyone.)

These few events, among many spanning almost a century and a half, formed the stage back-drop which through the mingling of various historical happenings opened the door to personalities.

He was a young athletic appearing man whose radiant energy seemed to be projected from every pore of his healthy tanned skin.

His mind, equally active, was keen and inquisitive and worked like a present-day computer. He was about 35 years old at the time of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, vigorous and dedicated and he had already made a half-million dollars in real estate development.

I marvelled at his confidence and his plans for I knew him well. As a real estate developer and promoter he had no one his equal.

His name was George Hensley.

Through San Francisco business-men he became aware of properties in what is now called the Monta Vista area (actually the original Cupertino area).

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Notably large contiguous acreages were either through estate changes or through lowering grape and fruit production income, open to acquisition.

George Hensley's first acquisition in the area was about 20 acres East of the S. P. R. R. and North of Stevens Creek Road which formerly was homesteaded by pioneer Nathan J. Hall, in the 1850's.

This acreage was subdivided and named Sub-Division "A" of Monta Vista.

The Panama-Pacific Exposition was in full swing.

And then in rapid succession over several following years acquisitions were made of Sub-Division "B" of Monta Vista, The Colony Tract, Inspiration Heights, Russellhurst, Las Palmas, Altos Park, etc.

It is of interest to know that George Hensley occupied the old John T. Doyle home on Stevens Creek for several years, (Original Cupertino,) and journeyed to and fro from his Monta Vista Development operations to San Jose and elsewhere in a chauffeur-driven Renault Brougham, with a wooden body of hardwood deeply engraved with ornamental frescoes and designs. This automobile was Renault's show piece on display at the Exposition and was said to have cost \$17,000. to place on exhibition.

Mention has been made of a sub-division area named Inspiration Heights.

Today this spot is situated just North of Stevens Creek Road at its junction with Carmen Road. Dwellings now occupy the area.

Something spectacular was needed to perk up development and the fertile mind of George Hensley dreamed of the advantages which would inure to his development by having as an asset a club house.

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How about the Lumbermen's Hoo Hoo Building at the Exposition!

A magnificent \$30,000. idea - which was considered well worth the cost in the year of 1916.

The year was 1916 and the Fair buildings were either being razed or sold for other purposes.

George Hensley effected the purchase of the Lumbermen's Hoo-Hoo Club Building.

Carefully razing the structure, marking and packaging the segments for rail transportation, the packaged material was shipped to Monta Vista.

Inspiration Point of the Heights, with unobstructed view, and in those days with 50 or more miles of clear visibility daily, was the selected site.

Individual contractors, builders and carpenters put together the immense structure from the marked package materials.

Logs weighing eight to ten tons, roof trusses and beams, wood partition walls separating cubicles from dance pavilion, balcony verandas, interior hardwood wall paneling from all parts of the world, outside rustic tree bark covering and a tall observation tower with stairway all fell into place.

The Hoo-Hoo House was a reality.

The Stevens Creek Road grade was better known to most people as Hoo-Hoo Hill than was the name of Stevens Creek Road.

A prospective new auto buyer usually stipulated "if your car can climb Hoo-Hoo Hill I'll buy it".

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It was a ponderous immense structure. The dance pavilion was large and commodious for those days - the floor was polished oak-and there were refreshments!

Saturday nights - named orchestras played the favorites of the era, and on occassion "One Eyed Joe" brought forth from his accordian those lingering melodies which still impregnate on a balmy midnight air its echoes, providing your hearing is attuned to the proper wave length and your mood is in consonance.

What became of the Hoo-Hoo Building? - On August 16, 1928 the west side of the Valley was brilliantly lighted, the blaze was visible for many miles - and when the display ended after many hours - The Hoo-Hoo Building had passed into oblivion.

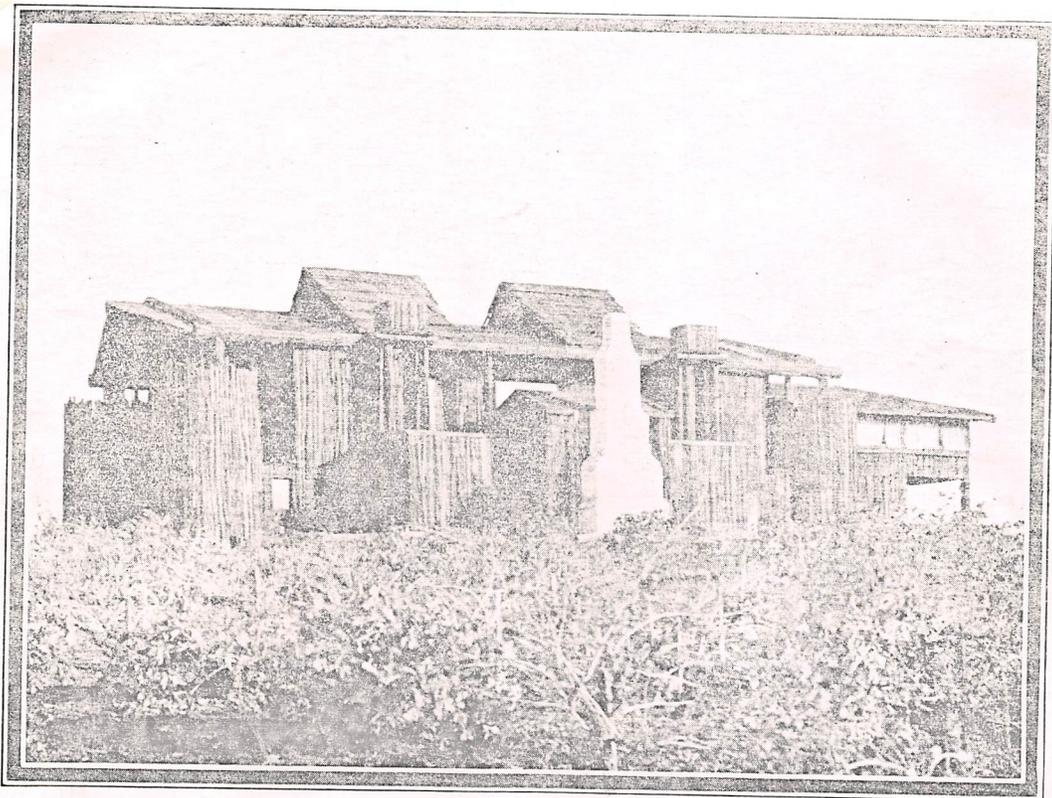
An era, a landmark, a period that a relatively small number of individuals recall today from their individually nostalgic memories.

George Hensley - Pioneer; Initiator of dreams and realistic promotions, some successful, some not so. An individualist, a personality of unusual stature, one who was active in America, Europe and Cupertino, I can best describe him by a small verse which I dedicate to his memory:-

His mind was geared to monumental things  
His eyes envisioned spires to pierce the sky  
His touch to potter's clay gained small  
response  
And worthwhile dreams began to fade and die.  
(He was born fifty years too soon)

*Louis Stockmeir*

LOUIS STOCKMEIR, SR.  
CITY HISTORIAN - CITY OF CUPERTINO  
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THE HOUSE OF HOO HOO