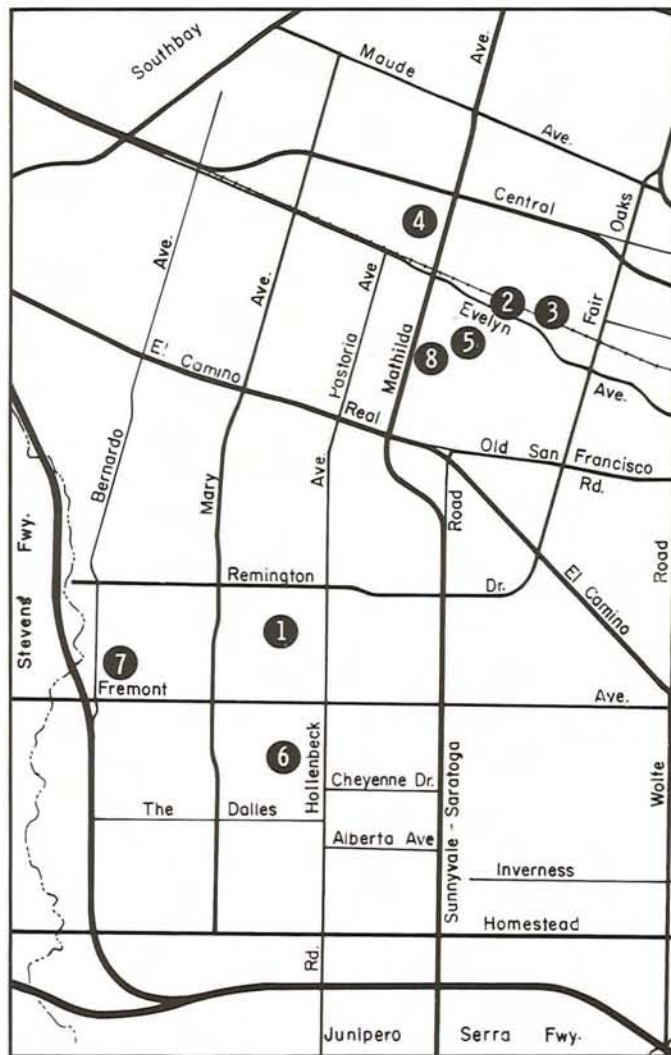


IV. Sunnyvale Landmarks

By definition a landmark should be the first, last, only, or most significant historic resource of a type in the community. It also is considered generally to be beyond the direct recall of living persons. Landmark status should require integrity of original location, context or setting, and intangible elements of feeling and association. Physical changes over time in a landmark may add to its historic worth by reflecting the changing values of the society it represents. The National Register of Historic Places, the United States' official listing of such cultural assets, considers worthy of inclusion districts, buildings, sites, structures, and objects of significance in America's history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture which are over 50 years old.

Sunnyvale's Landmarks represent a spectrum of building types and natural features associated with the evolution and growth of the community from its 19th century agricultural beginnings to its emergence as a major manufacturing center. Such landmarks include the William Wright (1870s) and Briggs-Stelling (1870s) homes and the Joshua Hendy Iron Works (1906). The community's rich history in agricultural production and processing is recognized by the Landmark status given the Scott-Collins Winery (1880s), the Madison and Bonner Dried Fruit Packing Company (1904), and the site of the original Libby, McNeil and Libby Canning Company (1907). The City's commercial development from 1907-1940 is recognized in the Murphy Avenue Historic District.

In the area of intangibles, some of the most important City of Sunnyvale Landmarks are its heritage trees, such as the Vargas Redwoods. These Landmarks pay tribute to the natural resources and human commitment, which together have made Sunnyvale what it is today.





BRIGGS-STELLING HOUSE

1175 Pome Drive

1

This large Redwood framed two and a half story Spanish Eclectic style residence with its stuccoed walls, flat-tiled roofline, and wrought iron balconet was erected in 1924. It was built essentially on the footprint of its predecessor, an Italianate style Victorian farmhouse dating from the 1870s which underwent substantial reconstruction after a fire in the 1890s. The current building's asymmetrical plan, the angled bay on the facade, and some grey and white ship-lap siding still visible in the basement are the only suggestions of its

earlier appearance.

George H. Briggs, the first owner-builder, was a Boston crockery merchant. He left Massachusetts in 1850, walked across the Isthmus of Panama, and acquired his first land in Santa Clara Valley in 1854 through "possessory right to 80 acres." His neighbor was another pioneer settler, William S. Hollenbeck, whose daughter Elsie married Briggs in 1858. Soon after George's father became sick, so he and Elsie returned to Boston to manage the crockery store. In early 1863

Hollenbeck wrote them and offered Briggs 160 acres of land if he would return to California and help remove squatters from his property. Briggs sold the crockery business and returned to the Santa Clara Valley.

Briggs' 160 acres were surveyed in 1866 and the final patent was approved in May 1870. At the time he had "30 acres under prunes, pears and cherries, and the balance under grain and hay." In 1881 he planted a vineyard. "At one time we could see seven wineries from our house," said Caroline E. Briggs in a 1960 newspaper interview: "The Delmas, Collins, Howe, Phelps, Montgomery, Heney, and Lawrence Station." But a drought in 1896 and 1897, coupled with phylloxera, required removal of the vines in 1898. The Briggs family then went into the fruit business and were the first farmers in Sunnyvale to employ a steam-powered engine for irrigation.

In 1906 Henry G. Stelling, son of one of San Jose's first orchardists, purchased 50 acres from Briggs, including the old home. Because of the rich build-up of loam, which went down

25 feet, Stelling determined to add cherries to existing fruit crops, and he built a packing shed on the property. His cherries found a nationwide market under the "Medal of Honor" label, which referred to awards he received at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco.

In the early 1920s the family began remodeling house, living under a tent in the yard while the work progressed. The new residence retained from the earlier home only the living room and hardwood floor with its inlaid strip of mahogany. Although the Stelling sold 32 acres of their ranch to subdivider Joseph Eichler in 1957 or 1958, they retained the house plus the extensive gardens which Mrs. Stelling had nurtured and maintained over the years. Her garden was a local showcase designed in part by an English landscape architect. Unfortunately the pools, fountains, and formal rose garden gave way to a 10 unit housing development which today surrounds the Landmark house.



Santa Clara County and Its Resources (1896).



DEL MONTE BUILDING

185 Evelyn Avenue

2

The Redwood framed, two and a half story Del Monte Packing Company building has a gabled roof. Irregular fenestration and varied entrees mark all its elevations. It is one of the few remaining visual reminders of Sunnyvale's turn of the century industrial complex along the Southern Pacific Railroad. Since demolition of the Jubilee Incubator Company in 1983, the Del Monte Building is the only Landmark industrial structure still standing south of the railroad and adjacent to the Downtown Historic District.

The Del Monte Building was constructed in 1904 on the site of a former winery. The Madison and Bonner Company used it as a packing house, where they received, graded, processed, and stored dried fruit from local orchards, principally apricots, peaches and prunes. The average wage for their packing house employees in the early 1900s ran \$1.25

for ten hours a day, six days a week. During the packing season Madison and Bonner had a workforce of about 150 men and women.

The firm merged in 1916 with other area fruit canning operations to form the California Packing Corporation. In 1967 this organization became known by its popular trademark, "Del Monte." The Sunnyvale plant received, graded, and stored dried fruit until 1926, when a more modern plant erected in San Jose eliminated the need for local receiving depots in outlying growing areas.

From 1926 to 1930 the building was used only for storage. Then the corporation moved its seed processing operation from Marin County to Sunnyvale, and the plant became the corporate seed department. The Sunnyvale Seed Germinating Laboratory produced high quality seed for Del Monte's

operations, enabling the company to rely on their own proven fruit and vegetable varieties. Del Monte became a wholly-owned subsidiary of the R. J. Reynolds Company in 1979.

The Del Monte Building weathered earthquakes in 1906, 1923, and 1953 without damage. It also survived a severe cyclonic windstorm that swept through Sunnyvale in 1954. A landmark in the history of Sunnyvale's industrial development, this sturdy, well designed structure located in a prime spot is an ideal candidate for adaptive re-use.



Madison and Bonner Company, c. 1910. *California History Center.*



**JOSHUA HENDY
IRON WORKS**

501 Hendy Avenue

3

The first major non-agriculturally oriented industry to establish in Sunnyvale was the Joshua Hendy Iron Works. W. E. Crossman gave John Hendy, the company's owner, 32 acres of prune, pear and apricot orchards adjacent to and north of the South Pacific Railroad's main line to re-establish the business after his foundry burned in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. Hendy's had operated in San Francisco

since 1849, first as the Benicia Saw Mill Company and after 1858 as an iron works producing mining machinery used worldwide.

The new plant consisted of 153,185 square feet of floor space. Six of the original 1906 structures remain, including the Landmark Water Tower. The 70 foot high standpipe rises over a 750 keep well that supplied Sunnyvale with free water

as well as meeting plant production needs. The main office building is an excellent example of the Mission Revival style, with a central tower capped by a dome and cupola. Rectangular in plan, its stuccoed, shaped parapets define the corners and central entrance. The original open arcade connected the parapets along the facade. It has since been enclosed.

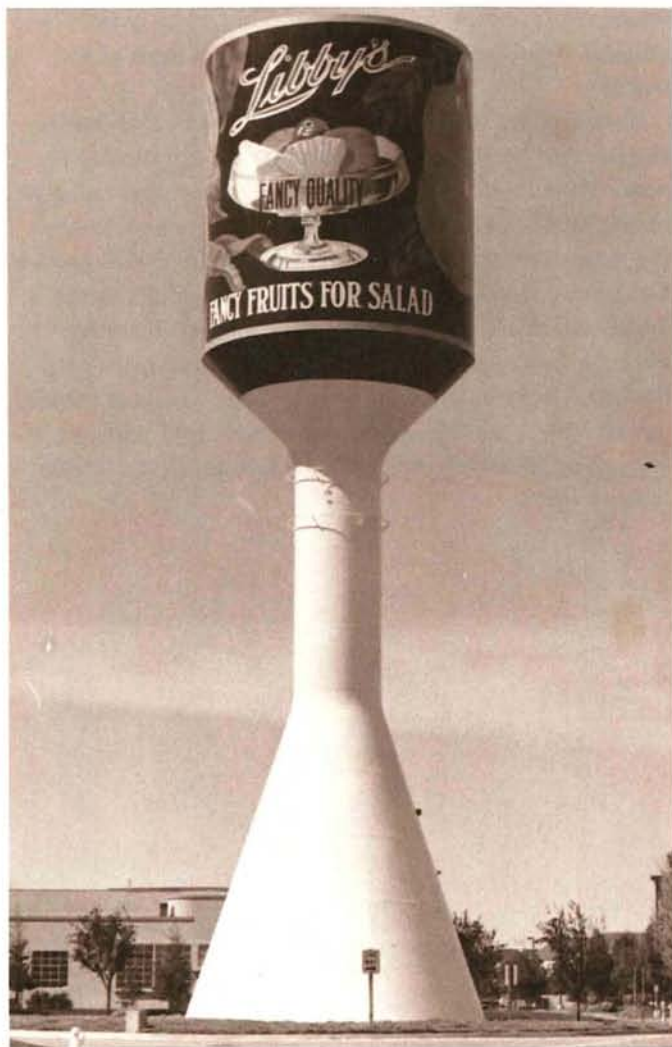
In 1907 the factory employed nearly 400 skilled mechanics. Hendy was in the forefront of modern mechanical design, which included a high pressure water nozzle, the Hydraulic Giant Monitor, that figured significantly in the construction of the Panama Canal. The factory also produced a series of municipal fixtures, such as the ornamental street lamps lining San Francisco's Chinatown and street lamps for Sunnyvale. World War One brought the plant's first significant expansion in 1917. The firm produced heavy naval armaments and 124

ton triple expansion marine engines. The factory ran a 24 hour schedule with a day force of 500 and night force of 400 workers.

During World War Two, Hendy's production of marine engines was listed as "an outstanding contribution to the national defense." At the war's end, after two years of relative inactivity, the company was leased and then sold to the Westinghouse Electric Corporation. Known as Westinghouse Sunnyvale, the factory is continuing successfully in the development and manufacture of naval missile systems. In 1978 the Joshua Hendy Iron Works was made a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark, recognizing in part the plant's continuous operation from 1906-1946 and its possession of the largest machining capabilities of any plant in the West.



Hendy employees about 1907. *California History Center.*



LIBBY, McNEIL AND LIBBY

(Water Tower)
444 California Street

4

In 1906 Libby, McNeil and Libby established their first west coast cannery in Sunnyvale, partially in response to realtor W. E. Crossman's generous terms and his glowing description of "a growing model town, close to San Francisco, where factories are sheltered by spreading oaks, and employees live among fruit and beautiful flowers."

Arthur and Archibald Libby established their meat packing partnership with Charles P. McNeil in Chicago during the late 1860s. With Arthur as the driving force in the business, they became the world's largest canned meat packer by the mid-1880s. At the turn of the century they branched out to canned soups, vegetables, fruits, bottled condiments, and condensed milk. They also decided to expand their operations, choosing California as the ideal fruit packing locale.

In March 1906 William Estes, a Mountain View contractor, began building the Sunnyvale facility on the north side of and adjacent to the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks. The original buildings were designed in the popular Mission Revival style, the wood framed end walls stuccoed over and capped with shaped parapets. Lumber came from Sunnyvale's Parkinson

Lumberyard, and the town's Century Paint and Roofing Company provided the roof and paint for the plant as well as for 20 worker's cottages. The cannery opened for business on June 12, 1907, one of the best equipped canning operations on the west coast.

Libby soon became a major employer in Sunnyvale. In 1923 its canning season workforce reached nearly 8,000, and Libby in time became the largest freezing and canning operation in the world. The social influence of the company was felt early in the community. It provided workers with neat, furnished cottages adjacent to the plant site. Trees were planted to provide shade during the summer canning season. In December 1912 Libby offered its workers a day's vacation

with pay to allow them ample opportunity to vote for Sunnyvale's incorporation as a city. Many company workers made the community their permanent home.

Little is left of the original cannery. It is now a large complex of one and two story rectangular industrial buildings running along the railroad tracks. Large areas of industrial sash windows distinguish the Evelyn Avenue facade of the main plant building. The principal reminder of Libby, McNeil and Libby's long term contribution to Sunnyvale's growth and economic well being is the enormous Libby fruit can water tower rising above the complex near the Mathilda Avenue overpass.



Canning plant, c. 1910. *The Camera Mart.*



MURPHY AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT

100 Block of the Murphy Avenue

5

A designated Landmark District, the 100 block of Murphy Avenue, has been the historic commercial core of Sunnyvale since the town was known as Encinal during the last decades of the 19th century. The community's "Main Street" developed perpendicular to the Southern Pacific Railroad's San Francisco-San Jose right of way.

In 1898 realtor Walter E. Crossman purchased 200 acres of the Murphy Bayview Farm and surveyed it for a town site. At the corner of Evelyn and Murphy avenues, the railroad station and Fred Cornell's combined grocery store and post

office constituted the community's initial business district. Cornell's building is still in place today as the Miramar at 101 South Murphy.

Encinal School was constructed in 1899 at the corner of McKinley and Frances Streets. Convenient access to education plus W. E. Crossman's promotional skills and easy real estate terms brought a number of new families close to the growing downtown. Well-established farmers and orchardists speculated in the emerging townsite, purchasing tracts of varying sizes and subdividing them.

By 1903 a few small stores oriented to personal services and land promotion had sprung up along the north end of Murphy Avenue. Nicolai Trubschenck's pioneer drug store and the Brown-Enright Real Estate Company were typical, sharing the same one story wood framed western false fronted structure. The building covered its 25 foot lot frontage and was set back from the dirt street by the width of its wood planked walkway. Signage was painted on the wall surface as well as appended from the facade.

When Crossman's efforts to draw industry to Sunnyvale began to pay off in 1907, more substantial buildings appeared along Murphy Avenue. One of the most impressive was C. C. Spalding's Bank of Sunnyvale, a two story reinforced masonry building anchoring the corner of Murphy and Washington avenues. An unusually exuberant example of the Mission Revival style with stuccoed surface, arched windows, and red tile roof, it joined the Stowell and Spalding Block



across the street in setting the architectural theme for later commercial development along the avenue.

Brother-in-laws C. C. Spalding and C. L. Stowell were successful orchardists and moving forces in the commercial development of Murphy Avenue. Their simple two story molded concrete S. and S. Block commercial building opposite the Bank of Sunnyvale was designed by M. C. Van Der Camp with projecting second story bay windows. It housed retail businesses on the first floor plus medical offices and Stowell Hall on the second. One of the first public meeting facilities in town, Stowell Hall hosted fraternal groups, the Grange, and the City's Chamber of Commerce. It was the site of Saturday night dances and moving picture shows, and today it is the Kirkish Store.

With City offices in the Bank of Sunnyvale and a meeting hall across the street, the municipal and social life of the City as well as its commercial core was well ensconced on Murphy Avenue. Everything necessary to the life of the community was available in its shops and stores, although in 1912 the business district still had dirt streets and wood planked sidewalks.

In 1917 C. L. Stowell had contractor George D. Huston build a new post office building on Washington Avenue adjacent to the Bank of Sunnyvale and in 1924 the Edythe Hotel with a large store front exposure along Murphy Avenue. One and two story commercial buildings filled in the street over time: in 1935 the Spanish Revival Jimenez Grocery appeared at 118, and in 1941 John and Augustine Seijo built the Moderne/Seijo Building at 121-133 to house their popular bakery. The latter

Looking east on Murphy at Washington Avenue, c. 1910, showing C. C. Spalding's Mission Revival style Bank of Sunnyvale building. The Camera Mart.

building's style was characterized by smooth stuccoed walls, some vertical projections with zigzags, and other simple geometric and stylized decorative motifs.

These one and two story structures lining both sides of Murphy Avenue on the 100 block still maintain the rhythm of the street and retain much of their original integrity. Despite

periodic remodeling dictated by fashion and the planning process, this cluster of modest commercial buildings survive, reflecting Sunnyvale's roots and evolution over time as a community. Their protection, preservation, and continued service in the commercial life of the City insure Sunnyvale's character and identity.



Looking west on Murphy from Evelyn Avenue, c. 1910.
The Camera Mart.

SCOTT-COLLINS WINERY

775 Cascade



6

This comfortable brick and stucco residence is graced by a gabled roofed, long shed dormer, and classical portico entrance. It was built in the early 1880s as a two story distillery, part of the successful Scott-Collins Winery.

Lemuel and Salvin Collins came to California from New York in the early 1850s. Salvin became a partner in a popular Montgomery Street saloon in San Francisco, and his brother took up farming, in 1862 purchasing 320 acres of land in what is now Sunnyvale. Lemuel died in 1879, and Salvin took over his brother's farm, planting 160 acres in grapes. He

soon constructed a four story brick winery and this landmark distillery building. From these he supplied his saloon and "chop house," by this time a quality restaurant known for its "fine wines and liquors."

Salvin died in 1884, and his widow Angelina Russell Collins assumed responsibility for the winery. By 1889 she shipped over 300 gallons of wine daily and brought a private railroad spur on to the property. Angelina married San Francisco importer Emerson Wesley Scott in 1890, and he assisted her in the business. Then known as the Pebbleside

Vineyards and Winery, they could produce 550,000 gallons of wine and 2,000 gallons of brandy annually. At San Francisco's 1894 Mid-Winter Fair in Golden Gate Park, Pebblestone won first prizes for its Petit Pinot and Zinfandel, and an 1895 *San Jose Mercury* souvenir booklet cited Angelina as "one of Santa Clara County's well known winemakers." Angelina died in 1896, and Emerson Scott passed away the next year.

During the mid-1890s, drought accelerated the spread of phylloxera, a root louse that began plaguing Santa Clara Valley vintners in 1892. The Scott estate continued to rent its vineyards, but diminishing productivity made the winery unprofitable. In 1906 the Pebbleside Poultry Farm took over

the former winery, and Marianni Orchards leased the buildings for fruit dehydration. A fire in 1927 destroyed the four story winery, and two years later the Ferguson family purchased the old distillery. They converted it to a summer home, adding the shed dormer windows which reflected the popular California Bungalow style. They designed the first floor, although asymmetrical in presentation, in the Georgian Revival style.

This landmark building was spared destruction by real estate development in the early 1960s, and a thick coat of white paint was removed, exposing the original brick construction. In May 1983 the City of Sunnyvale declared it a Landmark.



The Scott-Collins Distillery. *Santa Clara County and Its Resources* (1896).



WILLIAM WRIGHT HOUSE

1234 Cranberry

7

William Wright's redwood framed, two story, side-gabled farmhouse is the oldest extant residence in Sunnyvale. It probably was constructed in 1862 and certainly prior to 1876, when it appears as an illustration in Thompson and West's *Historical Atlas of Santa Clara County*.

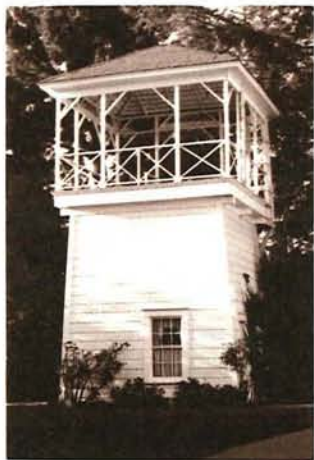
It is a simplified version of the Gothic Revival style. Its original centered gable, with a lancet window and a full-width

open porch, gave way to changing fashion through major remodeling in 1918. Three gabled wall dormer windows modified the second story appearance. The full-width porch was replaced with a central pedimented portico supported on slender Doric columns, helping transform the house into an excellent example of the Colonial Revival style. The portico framed a side-lighted doorway capped with a fanlight

transom. The living room was expanded in the 1930s and appears as a one story gabled wing at the east elevation.

William Wright left Maryland for California in 1849 at age 23, a victim of gold fever. His journey around the Horn from New York to San Francisco took seven months and eight days. He worked in San Francisco, saved his money, and obtained passage on a schooner to Stockton. He worked a claim on the Tuolumne River in 1850, until a spring flood washed out the mine and all the equipment. Wright moved to Chinese Camp, mined there until winter, and then entered the mercantile business.

In November 1851 he closed out his business and came to the Santa Clara Valley with a partner. They bought 160 acres, traveled back to Stockton to buy implements and a team, and returned to raise grain and stock. Wright hired a man for \$100 a month to teach him all there was to know about farming, and in a year's time he was able to buy out his partner and purchase an additional 160 acres.



In 1863 Wright returned to Maryland, where he married Helena Treadwell and brought her back to California. They had 2 children, William Tarleton and Dora (later Dora T. Gibson). After Wright's death on April 22, 1890, his widow Helena managed 220 acres of the property, raising large crops of wheat and tending a four acre plot of apples, pears, prunes, cherries, persimmons, walnuts, chestnuts, quinces, nectarines, almonds, and figs.

The property had been divided in such a way that Wright's son William T. inherited 25 acres and the house, and in 1895 he planted 18 acres in prunes, apricots, and peaches. Vegetables were grown between the rows until the fruit trees came into bearing. William T. was killed in an accident in 1912, when he descended into the well and his coat-tails became entangled in the pump motor machinery.

The Wright family lost the ranch and house during the Great Depression, and a retired GM executive subsequently purchased it during the 1930s and expanded the living room. A later owner was Ken Hunter, Sunnyvale's first City Manager. In 1979, the Wright House was listed as a California State Point of Historical Interest.

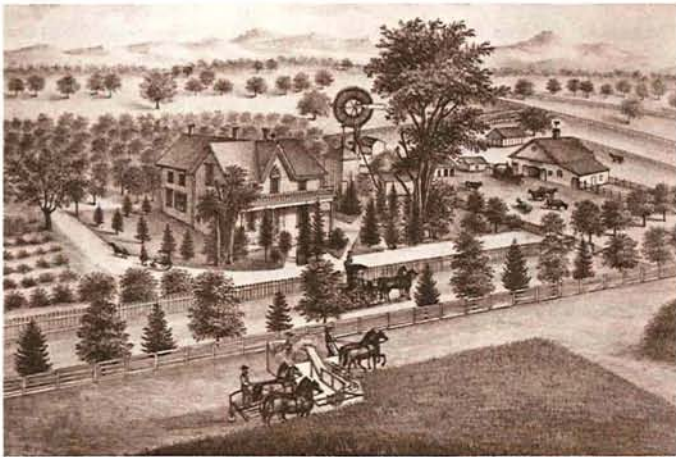
A notable feature of the Wright property is the tank house, one of the earliest of a few remaining such structures in Sunnyvale. The area's success as a fruit growing district resulted in large part to its location along a belt of artesian wells. This made water both plentiful and inexpensive. As the area developed and dry farming gave way to orchard crops at the beginning of the 20th century, smaller farmers were able to tap this exceptional resource without greatly diminishing the ground water supply. The Carl Olson family was typical, buying their first five acres of Sunnyvale land from W. E. Crossman for \$750 in 1899 and hiring George Free for \$150 to hand drill with an auger an 80 foot well.

When the Joshua Hendy Iron Works established its plant in 1906, they dropped a 700 foot well and used a pump to bring the water into their 50 foot high storage tower. For many years the firm supplied the City with part of this water for free. By the beginning of World War One, most local irrigation pumping was carried out by mechanical means, at first by windmills, then steam engines which were replaced in turn by gasoline engines and then electric motors.

As late as the 1930s, builder Gus Marinello spent much of his time constructing redwood water storage tanks for local

orchardists. Modern technology and rapid urban development, however, have removed the tank house as a familiar feature of the Sunnyvale city scape. Some industrial examples still stand along Hendy Avenue, but for the most part the rural farm and domestic tanks no longer exist.

The Wright tank house remains a distinctive reminder of Sunnyvale's long usage of its most critical natural resource, water. Current owners, in 1977 rehabilitation work, moved the structure to the street side of the house, making it more visually accessible to the public.



William Wright farm, 1876. *Historical Atlas Map of Santa Clara County* (1876).

MANUAL VARGAS REDWOOD TREES

1004 Carson Drive

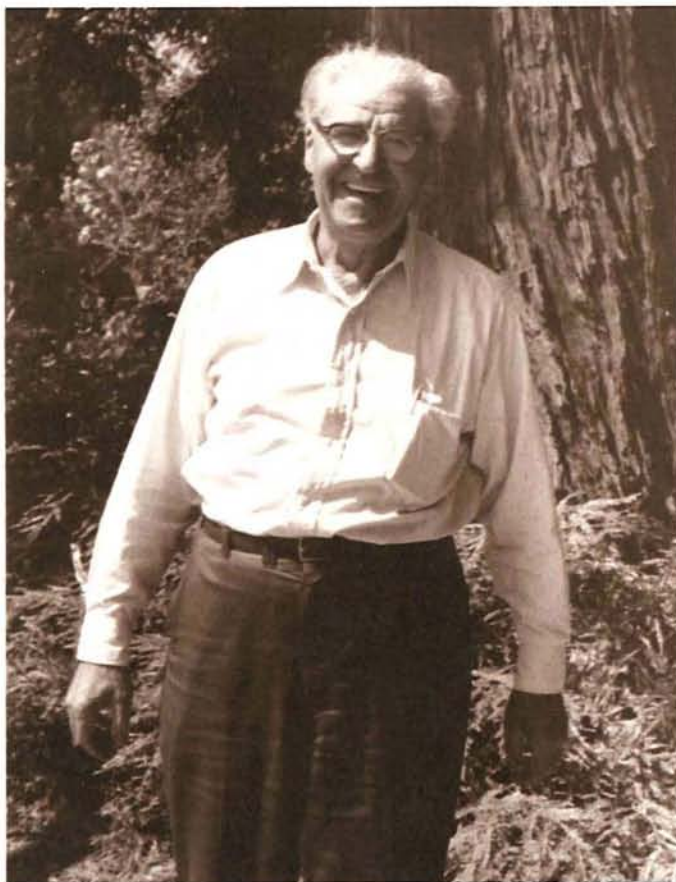
8



In 1900 Manuel Vargas planted the two Coast Redwoods (*Sequoia Semperviens*) standing at what is now the corner of Mary and Carson Avenues. He was seven years old at the time and had gathered the Redwood saplings on a family hunting and fishing trip to Pescadero. Manuel later said, "I like Redwoods and wanted to bring some trees home." His father warned him of the illegality of such an act, but Manuel brought them anyway, hidden in a brown paper bag under his shirt. He placed the young trees on each side of the entrance to the Vargas' 10 acre farm on Mary Avenue.

Manuel's father Antone had come to California from Portugal in 1880, and two years later he went to work for Martin Murphy at the Bayview Farm. In 1885, after Murphy's death, Antone cultivated wheat and barley on 200 acres leased from Patrick Murphy at a price of one out of every four sacks of harvested grain. Vargas wagoned his crops to the warehouse at Jagel's Landing on the Bay, where Moffett Field is located, for shipment to market. In 1898, when Patrick Murphy sold the 200 acres Antone was leasing to realtor W. E. Crossman, Vargas was one of the first to buy a parcel of land from the real estate broker.

Manuel Vargas, known locally for years as “Mr. Sunnyvale,” was the oldest living resident of the community before his death in December 1985. Born on his father’s ranch in 1893, he attended the City’s first school, Encina, opened in 1899. As a teenager in 1906 he worked as a carpenter for Libby



Cannery for nine cents an hour, and he later worked for ten cents an hour at Joshua Hendy’s Iron Works. But his lifetime occupation was farming.

He earned the nickname “Mr. Sunnyvale” through his visits with thousands of school children over the years. One of Manuel’s fondest school experiences was the year De Anza College opened and Walter Warren, the California History Center’s first director, invited him to come speak to one of his classes. Manuel stayed all day, speaking to all of the history classes, never tiring of sharing his remembrances of life “back in the good old days.” A recurring theme in all his stories was the bond of mutual trust that existed between people then, how a man’s word was his commitment, and that this was all that was needed for business deals: “It was just my word. I didn’t have to tell ‘em how many chickens I had . . . or how many eggs they laid, like they have to do today.”

Manuel always fought for the remnants of Sunnyvale’s proud past, starting with the battle to save the Murphy Farm in 1961. He was a charter member of the Sunnyvale Historical Society and Museum Association and served terms as its president, and he founded the “Old Timer’s Club” in 1957. Manuel and his wife, Mary, were wed in 1914 and honored as the longest married seniors in Santa Clara County (67 years). They had 10 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren.

The two Landmark Redwood trees flanking the former entrance to the Vargas Farm are a fitting tribute to his life on the land. They remain a continuing contribution to the character of the community which Manuel Vargas served so well.

Manuel Vargas. *California History Center.*