

HISTORY OF THE SONOMA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Having read the accounts written by Dr. Wm. Shipley, it is easier to understand how his interest would cause him to want to preserve the history of Sonoma County for posterity.

This interest led to the formation, in 1948, of the Sonoma County Museum and Art Gallery Association, with Dr. Shipley as president. The organization was quite active and many meetings were held, many plans were explored. Considerable enthusiasm was engendered and the organization flourished. After a half dozen years or so, when no immediate results to build or buy a museum building developed, apathy took the place of enthusiasm and the activities slowly came to a standstill. (Burton Travis, William Borba, and Edward Fratini were associated with Dr. Shipley in this organization.) This static condition existed for some time; then in 1962 a proposal was made by Mrs. Walter Nagle to form a new organization and a meeting was held June 10, 1962, by an interested group of eight people. This resulted in the birth of a new organization called the Sonoma County Historical Society. Officers were elected and a committee appointed to set up bylaws.

The purpose of the society primarily was to have a broader basis than just a museum and art gallery. Their purpose and objects were to operate as a Sonoma County historical service, to assist in naming streets, roads, parks, and buildings with historical names, to keep the public informed of families, etc. Also, if possible, to support a historical museum where articles and documents and books of historical interest and value could be exhibited.

The first officers elected were as follows: president, Mrs. Edward H. Connor, Santa Rosa; vice-president, William S. Borba, Sebastopol; treasurer, Burton M. Travis, Forestville; secretary, Mrs. Wm. Lippincott, Santa Rosa; recording secretary, Jeanne Thurlow Miller, Santa Rosa. Trustees in addition to the officers were Edward Fratini, Petaluma; Edwin Langhart, Healdsburg (not present at first meeting); Harvey Hansen, Santa Rosa; and Mrs. Walter Nagle (as guest.)

The officers and members pledged full support of President Connor, and her enthusiasm, vigor, and vitality were an inspiration to all. An indefatigable worker recognizing no obstacle as insurmountable, she assumed the leadership with grace. With the generous help of a dear lady, Mrs. Ruby Jewell Codding Hall and her son Hugh Codding, on behalf of the Codding Foundation, an educational and cultural trust, the sharing of a building for museum purposes, at 557 Summerfield Road, Santa Rosa, was offered to the society at a rental fee of \$1 a year.

Many members assisted in putting the museum in readiness (notably Mr. Travis) and it was opened publicly on January 19, 1964. Dr. and Mrs. Earle Rogers contributed generously to its success, keeping it open each Sunday from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

The society is incorporated and is a bona-fide concern. A journal issued quarterly to a rising membership of around 300, is edited by Mrs. Connor. Membership is \$2.50 annually, or \$50 for a life membership.

At the second annual dinner meeting January 15, 1965, at the Coddingtown Saddle and Sirloin Restaurant, at the beginning of the third official year of the existence of the society, new officers elected were William S. Borba, president; Edward Fratini, vice

president; Burton M. Travis, treasurer; Mrs. Edward Connor, corres. secretary; Edwin Langhart, recording secretary. The trustees were Dr. Earle Rogers, Santa Rosa; Mrs. James Weed, Monte Rio; Mrs. Cecil Fewel, Guerneville; Everett Chaney, Sebastopol; Mrs. Robert McClelland, Cloverdale; Miss Edna Cooper, Sonoma; and Mrs. Jeanne Miller and Harvey Hansen, Santa Rosa.

On April 5, 1965, a Rural Cemetery Association (for the care of the early day pioneer cemetery on Franklin Avenue, Santa Rosa) was formed. Dues are \$1 a year, and the chairman for 1965 is Mrs. Robert J. McMullen, Santa Rosa.

The Sonoma County Historical Society has enjoyed the generosity of many members, companies, and organizations, without whose help the measure of progress and success would not be possible. For this the society is most grateful. The society eagerly serves the whole county in keeping our history alive and at home where it belongs.

Our beloved Sonoma County is deserving of this consideration, and if everyone will serve in some way, we will be able to carry on.

=-Burton M. Travis, Treasurer
June 1965