

# NINETY YEARS IN THE LUTHER BURBANK NEIGHBORHOOD

## THE 1916+ LEE AND LELIA JENSEN HOUSE

393 Rutland Ave., San Jose, California

An Essay  
Presented to  
The California Pioneers  
of Santa Clara County, California  
2003 Historical Essay Contest

June 7, 2003  
*Awarded \$100 for honorable mention.*

Written By  
Thomas M. King, owner 1976-2003+  
393 Rutland Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95128

Revised September 11 2003

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                             |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION.....                                           | 2  |
| DIVIDING THE LAND - RANCHO TO SUBDIVISION 1836 - 1904.....  | 2  |
| ELECTRIC STREETCAR SUBURBS BECOME BURBANK: 1904 -1906 ..... | 4  |
| FIRST OWNER OF THE Subdivided Lot: 1904 - 1913.....         | 6  |
| THE JENSEN - WALKER WEDDING.....                            | 8  |
| The Bride's Witness.....                                    | 9  |
| Witness for the Groom: A Family of Painters.....            | 9  |
| FIRST OCCUPANTS OF THE PROPERTY: 1912 -1914.....            | 10 |
| THE 1920 U. S. CENSUS AND FAMILY STORIES.....               | 12 |
| DESCRIPTION OF THE 1916+ JENSEN HOUSE.....                  | 13 |
| WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE BUILDERS AND THEIR OWNER? .....    | 16 |
| THE SECOND OWNERS: 1925 - 1939.....                         | 18 |
| THE OTHER 13 OWNERS AND RESIDENTS: 1940 - 1976.....         | 19 |
| CONCLUSION.....                                             | 21 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESOURCES.....                                | 22 |

Coches Rancho, one of the divisions of the former mission lands. It extends west on former mission fields into the fertile valley.

Los Coches is a Mexican colloquialism for "The Pigs." In 1844 Governor Manuel Micheltorena granted Rancho de Los Coches to Roberto, a Santa Clara Mission Indian who had received permission to occupy it as early as 1836. The Roberto Adobe still stands at the rear of an old two-story wooden-front building on modern Lincoln Avenue just south of the 280 freeway. The Peralta Adobe in downtown San Jose is older, dating from the 1790's, but it is east of the Guadalupe River on the pueblo lands.

In 1847 Roberto sold his adobe and rancho to Antonio Sunol, an immigrant who had fought in the French military before jumping ship and marrying a citizen in Mexican California. Sunol patented 2,219.34 acres under U. S. law in 1857. But he had already divided it into thirds, keeping a third for himself, and giving a third to his daughter and her husband (Paula Sunol and Pedro Sainsevain), and selling a third to Civil War General Henry Morris Naglee.<sup>1</sup>

Many other houses were built in the area of the Los Coches Rancho along San Carlos Street (then Stevens Creek Road) after the Roberto Adobe and some still exist. But the area just east of Bascom Avenue remained in fields and orchards with a few farm houses until it was subdivided. E. L. Bradley owned 220.04 acres on the western edge of the rancho, including the crossroads of Stevens Creek Road and Bascom Avenue in 1876.<sup>2</sup> After World War II ended in 1945 the "Bradley Subdivision" was plated west of Bascom Avenue<sup>3</sup> to recognize the man who had owned Burbank, just as Roberto once had.

and Olive Streets between Bascom Avenue and Wabash Street, almost a mirror subdivision to Rose Lawn. Wabash Street changes its name to "Leland Avenue" after it crosses to the south side of Stevens Creek Road and into Rose Lawn.<sup>7</sup>

**Orchard Park of 1906** continued the growth eastward of the streetcar suburbs in Burbank on the same side of Stevens Creek Road as Rose Lawn. Like Rose Lawn, Orchard Park extends two blocks south to Scott Street. It is parallel to Stevens Creek Road along the streetcar tracks between modern Leigh (originally "Porter ") Avenue and Mayellen Street.<sup>8</sup>

A one-street development named for its owner, Mr. Shafter, "Shafter's Subdivision" of December, 1904, separates Orchard Park from Rose Lawn. That street is Clifton Avenue, which lies between Leigh and Rutland Avenues,<sup>9</sup>

The **Luther Burbank Elementary School**, at the corner of Wabash and modern West San Carlos Streets, was founded in 1906.<sup>10</sup> It was named for the world famous horticulturist, Luther Burbank, who propagated many of his plants in the Santa Clara Valley but finally settled in Santa Rosa, north of San Francisco.<sup>11</sup> His wife planted a tree at the school but it was later removed. The current building is the third one built on the school grounds just across West San Carlos Street from the north end of Rutland Avenue.

The one-school elementary district is unusual in the county today. The Burbank Area to which it gave its name is also unusual because it is a neighborhood, including parts of the electric streetcar suburbs, that has not been taken in or annexed to the surrounding City of San Jose. The volunteer fire department is gone, but the school district and Burbank Sanitary District remain. Unincorporated Burbank has perhaps 3000 residents.

this story is on Jan. 10, 1910, when Henry F. Mann, a widower, grants to Mrs. Eva G. Moore 10 1/4th acres of land for \$10 gold.<sup>16</sup>

Henry F. Mann appears for the first time in San Jose City Directories in the 1905-1906 as an orchardist, living at "*Meridian rd opp Willow*". This is the identical address of a Mrs. Eva G. Conant Moore, widow of Jas. (James) S. Moore. Eva does not appear in city directories until her husband dies in 1903, as we can see below.

In 1900 Jas. S. Moore is "*orchardist r Meridian rd opp Willow*"

(Jas. S. Moore could not be found on Meridian Rd. in the 1900 Census.)

In 1902-1903 Moore, Jas. S. is "*orchardist r Meridian rd opp Willow*"

In 1903-1904 Moore Eva G, Mrs. "*r Meridian rd opp Willow*" -

*no Henry F. Mann found.*

Somehow the 1904 directory managed to omit all three people, the dead husband, the new widow, and the new arrival. In the following seven San Jose city directories the widow, Moore, and the widower, Mann, appear living on the same property, except for 1909-1910 when they both are missing.

1. 1905-1906 Henry F. Mann first appears: *r Meridian rd opp Willow*
2. Both appear in 1906-1907, Henry: "*foreman, Meridian cor Willow*".
3. Both again in 1907-1908, Henry: "*rancher, Meridian rd cor Willow*".
4. 1909 and 1910 Mann and Moore are missing from the directory.
5. In 1911 their separate listings are identical: "*(Mann & Moore) r Meridian rd opp Willow*".
6. The San Jose City Directories of 1911-1912 (p. 439) and
7. 1912-1913 (p. 421) report their move to the same new address:

Mann, Henry F. (Moore & Mann) *r n s Hamilton Ave 3 C of  
Leigh Ave, Campbell RFD 9,.*

Moore, both born in California, married **Lee Leon Jensen**, son of Fred John Jensen and Cassia Wehl, both born in Germany. The wedding took place at the Meridian Road home of the Conant family, in the Willow Glen area of modern San Jose. E. W. Conant,<sup>19</sup> the brother of our Eva G. Conant Moore, and W. D. Herman Jr. were witnesses. The pastor was John S. Troxell of the Centella Methodist Episcopal Church. Lee was 23. Lelia was 19.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Bride's Witness**

The witness for the bride, Earnest W. Conant, was the son of Timothy Conant and "Miss Martha Davis", arrivals to California from Minnesota February 17, 1874. The family developed an orchard in The Willows area, also known as the Willow Glen area, southwest of downtown San Jose.<sup>21</sup>

Earnest W. Conant graduated from San Jose High School and attended U. C. Berkeley briefly. When his parents died in 1889, Earnest returned home to tend the orchard. A Republican, Masonic Lodge Master, and member of the Campbell Grange, he was elected Santa Clara County Treasurer in 1902 and remained Treasurer until his death in 1934. He married Agnes Pender, a graduate of San Jose Normal School. They had three children.<sup>22</sup>

Most important for the 1916+ Jensen House on Rutland Avenue, Eva G. Conant Moore was Earnest W. Conant's older sister, born in Minnesota in 1860. The bride's mother is **Mary Moore**, most likely the sister-in-law of Eva G. Conant Moore. The wedding took place on Meridian Road near where Eva G. Moore was living with Henry F. Mann.<sup>23</sup>

### **Witness for the Groom: A Family of Painters**

The other witness to the Dec. 24, 1911 wedding was W. D. Herman Jr., a young painter from another family of painters and friend of the groom, Lee L.

1910-1911

1911-1912

with identical entries: *"fm Stevens Creek road, first E. of Leland"*, which it still is today.

The same three city directories listed above reveal a different place each year as the residence of Lee L. Jensen, a painter and single man. But then, a change was made in the description of the avenue in the 1912-1913 directory at the same time that the newly-weds began living on Rutland Avenue after their December 24, 1911 wedding:

*RUTLAND AVE: "Intrbn Tract 6 E of Infirmary Road  
fm Stevens Creek Road S to Scott x Elliott".*

Instead of using "Leland" in this city directory, the base street is changed to "Infirmary Road" or modern Bascom Avenue. Lee's name is no where to be found in the 1912-1913 directory itself, where Henry F. Mann appears with Eva G. Moore for the last time. But in the next city directory in 1913-1914 Lee reappears as:

*Jensen, Lee L (Lelia) painter, r Rutland Ave nw cor Elliott*

City directories were customarily compiled in the year before their date. Unless this 1913-1914 directory recorded its data after March 17, 1913, the Jensens must have lived on the lots in 1913 and earlier before Henry sold them to Eva G. Moore.

Eva G. Moore remained the owner of record for the two lots. Her ownership could be explained by a change in real estate practice. Today houses are sold with title and then mortgaged. In the early 1900's California real estate practice was to sign a mortgage and gain legal title after paying it off. A mortgage from Eva to the Jensens might exist in a so-far undiscovered

on the rear of the Jensens' two lots.<sup>29</sup> From the 1915 city directory, which reports a the new "79" Rutland Avenue address, and the 1915 Sandborn Map which shows only a small cottage, we learn that the property was given its address before the house was even started. The cottage out-back, which no longer exists. was no bigger than the existing one-bedroom cottage on the same site.

Daughter Eva told a family story about when her daddy was putting up the living room rafters and was on a ladder after he had consumed some alcohol. Mother Lelia was furious because he should not have been drinking and on a ladder. Lelia was completely against anyone drinking! In 1916 Eva was only 3 but by 1920 she would have been old enough to attend the Luther Burbank Elementary School a block from her parents' residence and to remember her mother's anger. The house could have been started as early as 1916, after the 1915 Sandborn Map reported it not there, with its construction continuing after 1920. Eva reported that they were finally able to move into the kitchen part of the house and that they lived in that area for a long time also.

It is delightful to view the 50th wedding anniversary photograph of the couple years later and realize that they had survived and prospered as a family. Youngest daughter, Barbara Ann, died in the house. Eva remembers being told to run to a neighbor for help, and seeing Barbara in the bathtub. Middle daughter, Lorina, grew up to marry and have a son whose wife became the family contact person for this writer.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE 1916+ JENSEN HOUSE**

The house is sited in the middle of the 80-foot wide frontage facing Rutland Avenue. Its wide eaves and graceful sloping roof from front to rear,

front porch. The metal hand railing on the steps from the front yard to the front porch was there in 1976 when this owner purchased the house. The metal railing on both sides of the porch was added in 2003 for safety.

The interior lath and plaster walls were originally covered with wallpaper. In the 1990s it was removed because it became old and discolored. Since this is water-based plaster, oil-based paint was used to glue the plaster together, followed by water-based paint over the oil. Picture railings around all the rooms except the kitchen and back porch allow decorations to be hung on hooks and wires. This avoids holes in the delicate old plaster and <sup>allows</sup> easy movement of wall hangings.

Only the fireplace and a kitchen cook stove heated the original house. A floor furnace was installed from the half-basement at some unknown time, and replaced in 1976 by a forced-air furnace with basement air ducts running under the house. The attic design serves only for ventilation. Its windows are for looks and for opening at the north and south sides in the summer.

The kitchen is vented to the attic by a wooden flapper door over the stove hood. Its two windows that looked out to the back porch addition were removed and a reach-through counter built between the two rooms. The kitchen also had a tall narrow "cold closet" that allowed fresh food to be shelved where outside air circulated. In 2003 a new wooden door was added to the front of this now closed-off former cold closet, and another door placed over the hole where the dishwasher once resided. Otherwise the kitchen cabinets are as they were in 1976.

The maple floors of the living-dining room were installed without benefit of subfloor, so that one thin board covers all, leaving enough room between the boards to see light from above. The half-basement below has been used as a workshop with a root cellar storage room for canned foods. Its

1. On Feb. 8, 1918, Florence Mann, Est. et al is grantor to Lewis E. Beacock (466-310). Florence got this property from Henry.
2. On Mar. 4, 1919, Eva G. Moore, of Palo Alto, sold the 10 1/4 acres acquired from Henry F. Mann Jan. 10, 1910, for the same \$10 gold to H. Davis Porter
3. Mar 31, 1919 Eva G. Moore bought a lot in Palo Alto (486-557) at 327 Lytton Avenue.

While living in Palo Alto she adopted a son, Gordon Mapes, who is listed in the Palo Alto city directories at this address. She appears in 1920 and 1921 selling her property in San Jose's Naglee Park area. Eva is living in Palo Alto as late as 1938 according to the city directories.

The Jensen's remained at 97 Rutland Avenue in the city directories a total of 10 years, to 1925. In the 1913-1914 city directory Rutland Avenue had only 3 house numbers, 108, 111, and 179, with the Jensen cottage identified as; "*cor Elliott*". In the next 1915 city directory this property finally got its first number; "97". Add the three years the Jensens lived there without an address, from 1912 to 1914, and their combined total was 13 years.

As recorded April 1, 1925, Mrs. Eva G. Moore, a widow, granted to B. E. Hinkley et ux (wife Clara A. Hinkley), as joint tenants, lots 29 & 30, block 7, of Rose Lawn, with the appurtenances--executed March 27, 1925 with California Pacific Title Company.<sup>34</sup> The "appurtenances" means the lots were not vacant.

Eva died on Dec. 25, 1938, at 79 years old, in the home of her "cousin", Lelia Eva Walker Jensen. By then Lelia lived with her family in Wooden Valley near Napa, California. Mrs. Moore was ill only one week. A funeral service was held in San Jose on Dec. 27, 1938. Survivors included a niece and

In 1920 Rutland Ave. had 11 house addresses. By 1925, when the Lee L. Jensens spent their last year there, Rutland had 25 house addresses. Phone books reveal no phones by 1925 on Rutland Ave.

Burt Hinkley's family is recorded in the 1920 U. S. Census at 38 Clifton Avenue in the "Roselawn Precinct of Santa Clara County".<sup>37</sup>

**Hinkley, Burt**, head, 42 years old, born in Ohio, a mill hand.

**Clara:** Wife, 38 years old, born in Calif., no occupation.

and four children, **Harvey** 16, **Grace** 14, **Mabel** 10, **Evelyn** 7.<sup>38</sup>

The Hinkleys also lived at 97 Rutland Avenue for 13 years, from 1925 to 1939. By 1939 their children were adults. Meantime Burt and Clara had paid off the loan on their Rutland Avenue house<sup>39</sup> and purchased Clifton Avenue property a block to the east.

In 1939 a **Eug. O. Hartley**, "*(Mina) mile Willow Glen Lib. Co. h 97 Rutland Av.*", occupies the 1913 Jensen House on Rutland Ave. and in 1940 Burt, the "*mill supt. S. H. Chase Lbr Co. h 8 Clifton av.*", is back on Clifton. Burt stayed at 312 Clifton Ave with son, Harry, until 1945.<sup>40</sup>

Burt Hinkley, the lumber company superintendent with three girls and a boy who grew to adulthood while they lived on Rutland Avenue, may have added the two rear rooms.

### **THE OTHER 13 OWNERS AND RESIDENTS: 1940 - 1976**

(World War II and the Cold War)

It is not easy to follow the ownership of 393 Rutland between 1940 and 1976 when this writer purchased the house. Some people listed at the address in the city directories and phone books were clearly renters. At other times ownership seemed to pass to relatives.

Palo Alto and San Francisco. They replaced Bascom and San Carlos/Stevens Creek as the major transportation interchange of the Burbank neighborhood. Rutland Avenue, cut off by the 280 highway, became its present 4 blocks long.

5. From 1973 to 1976 W. (William) Zabala & Nancy, retd h. 393 Rutland Avenue are listed in the two existing directories for that time period. William Zabala was the mortgage holder when the next owner sold 393 Rutland in 1976 to the current owner.

6. Diane P. Santa Cruz became the owner June 24, 1974<sup>42</sup> Diane stayed two years. An in-law still living on the street in 2003 claimed that his brother built the white "horse pasture" wooden fence across the 80 foot front.

7. Tom M. King, divorced, recorded his purchase of 393 Rutland on July 20, 1976, after moving in on July 4, and has been the owner for 25 years.<sup>43</sup> In 2001 he married Amy Southwick who moved here from Virginia after retiring from the Library of Congress. In September, 2003, he and Amy moved to Santa Rosa, California, and rented out 393 Rutland Avenue.

## **CONCLUSION**

This is a much more comfortable house than the one Lee and Lelia Jensen began building less than 90 years ago. The sewer system installed by the Burbank Sanitary Board in the 1940s has eliminated the outside privy or private septic tank. San Jose Water Company pipes in water to replace the old well behind the modern two-car garage. Insulation and an effective heating system respond to the mild temperature changes of the Santa Clara Valley. Wide eaves and mature trees protect the house from the sun.<sup>44</sup> The fruit canneries, orchards, and the interurban streetcars are gone. But loving maintenance and improvements by its 15 occupants over almost 90 years give

ROSE LAWN, Being a portion of the LOS COCHES RANCHO, Santa Clara Co., CAL. . . . T. B. Potter Realty Co. O W N E R S .

Written perpendicular to the title and south of Stevens Creek Road<sup>5</sup> on this map are the words: *"By order of the Board of Supervisors of Santa Clara County passed November 14, 1904, and ---- in this map acquired as public county roads."*

One of the roads acquired "as public county roads" was Rutland Avenue. The map then assumes its place in the filing system of the county. "RECORDED AT THE REQUEST OF

*"T. B. Potter Realty Co. Nov. 14, A D 1904 at 12 min. past 11*

*A. M. in Vol. K of maps, page 13 of the Recorder, Santa Clara County*

*signed: F. W. Freanor, By Mary F. Nero, Clerk And at the bottom of the recorded map is its creator's name: Compiled Oct. 12, 1904, by Curtis M. Barker Surveyor and C. E., San Jose, CAL.*

<sup>6</sup>Rose Lawn Subdivision, Book "K" of Maps, page 13, Santa Clara County Recorder's Office. 14 full blocks of thirty lots, each lot 40 feet wide and 100 feet deep. Add the two "half-blocks" with 15 lots each along the east side of Rutland Ave. and there are a total of 850 original lots.

<sup>7</sup>Santa Clara County Records, Book "K" of Maps, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup>Santa Clara County Records, Book "L" of Maps, p. 62.

<sup>9</sup>Santa Clara County Records, Book "K" of Maps, p. 37

<sup>10</sup>The first school building was completed in 1907, although it took until 1908-09 before the new Burbank Elementary School was first recorded in the city directory list of schools.

<sup>11</sup>There is another "Luther Burbank Elementary School" in Santa Rosa, California.

<sup>12</sup>The most recent attempt was rejected in 2002 when the San Jose Redevelopment Agency offered public works projects to improve "blighted areas" in Burbank.

<sup>13</sup>The current property description on the property deed remains: *All of Lots 29 & 30, in Block 7, as shown on that certain map entitled, "Map of Rose Lawn", which map was filed for record in the office of the Recorder of the County of Santa Clara, State of California, on November 14, 1904, in Book "K" of maps, at page 13.* The deed restrictions were removed. Several "Saloons" and "buildings made of rough lumber" exist in modern Rose Lawn.

<sup>14</sup>Local newspaper history writer, Pat Loomis, in her "Signposts" series published in the San Jose Mercury News, 7/19/1974, p. 29, says that a competition to sell vacant lots developed between the salesmen of the two first subdivisions, Interurban and Rose Lawn, and that this lead to a court case to settle a dispute.

<sup>15</sup>1. On March 8, 1905, he sold property to the Naglee Park Improvement Co., just east of downtown San Jose (Book of Deeds 290, page 203).

2. His next found reference is Jan. 9 and 11, 1909, when he sells, as "a single man", a lot in Naglee Park for \$10 (Bk. of Deeds 341, p. 196).

3. Then he is the Grantee by Naglee Park Improvement Co. (Bk. of Deeds 339, p. 412).

4. On Oct. 27, 1911 Henry F. Mann gets a re conveyance from the San Jose Abstract Co., Inc., 31 book of Trust Deeds, (Bk. of Deeds 376, p. 452).

<sup>16</sup>Santa Clara County Records, Book of Deeds 399, p. 248.

<sup>17</sup>Recorded at the request of T. S. Montgomery, Mar. 17, 1913.

<sup>18</sup>Efforts to find a death certificate or obituary have thus far been unsuccessful.

<sup>19</sup>Identified in the 1920 U. S. Census as "Earnest W. Conant", age 56, born Minnesota, no job, owning on Meridian Avenue with wife Agnes, 56, and son David J., 25, mechanical engineer. Earnest was the Santa Clara county treasurer for 25 years before his death in 1934 at age 70.

<sup>20</sup>January 1, 2003, all public access to vital records (births, deaths, marriages) became restricted by California state law. The documents can be found only if the researcher already knows the date and exact names of the people.

<sup>21</sup>Sawyer's 1922 History of Santa Clara County includes on page 847 a biography of Earnest Woodbury Conant (July 2, 1862-1934).

<sup>22</sup>1. Ernest Leslie Conant whose son was Ernest Roger Conant, 2. David Jordan Conant, an engineer at Berkeley during World War II. 3. Mabel Agnes Conant, a nurse who married Don King.