

HISTORY OF THE

NEW ALMADEN CASA GRANDE

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by:
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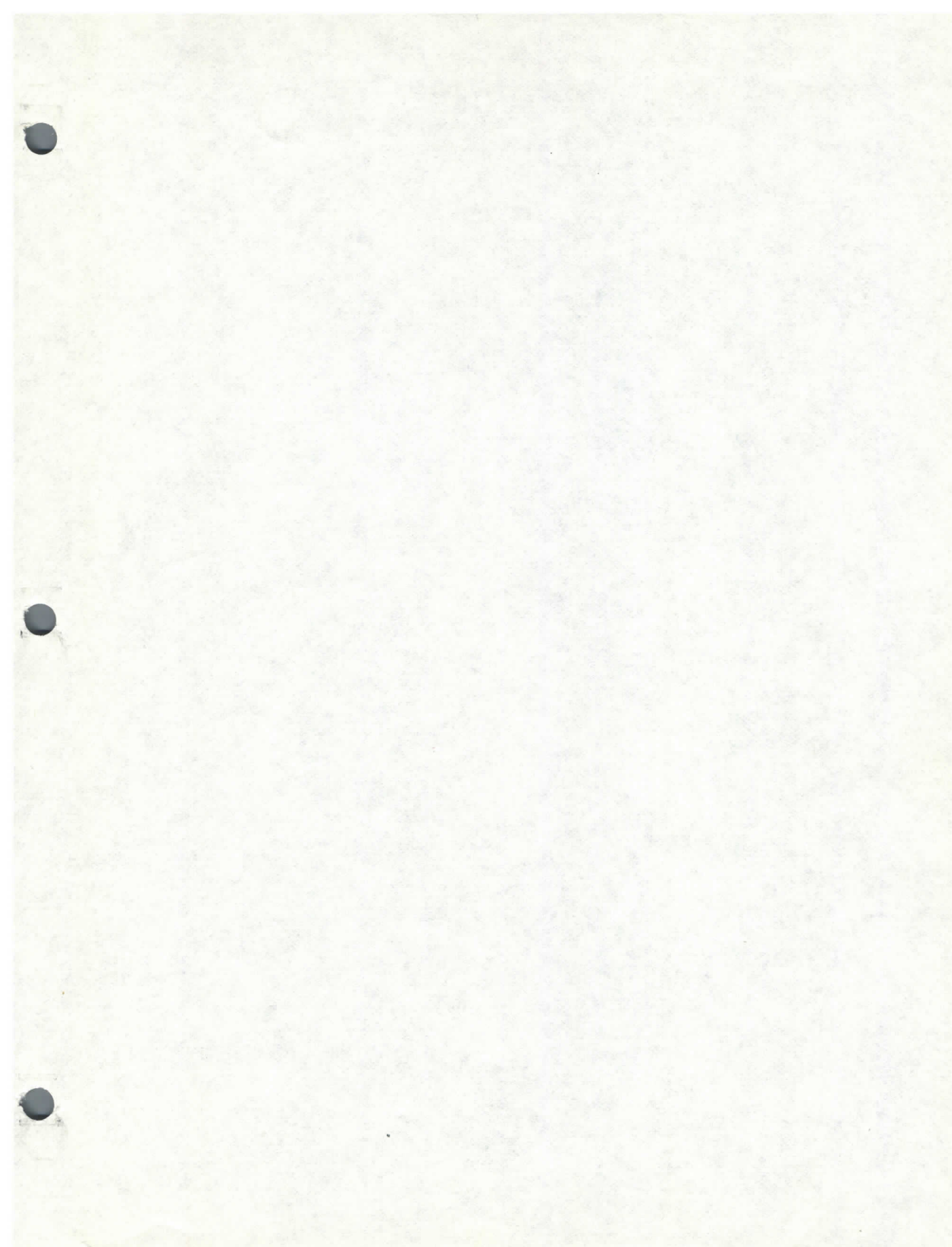
PREFACE

You are probaly wondering why a seventeen year old would be interested enough in an old house like the Casa Grande to dig into it's past. Well the answer is simple. My family has lived in New Almaden for 12 years on Bertram road, directly behind the Casa Grande. I realize that this is no great period of time when compared with the generations that some families have lived in New Almaden, but it has been enough for me to develop a great interest in the local history, especially that of the Casa Grande's. Our family has been told that the barn located next to our house used to be the stables for the Casa Grande; and ever since I was a little girl, I have wondered whose horses had been stabled in our yard. With much help from Mr. Norman Pope, Mr. Laurence Bulmore, and Mrs. Connie Perham, I was able to answer my childhood question as you will soon read.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

"Gold" was the cry which lured men to California. They came on foot, by mule, by ship around the horn, and overland on wagons. Many even uprooted their entire families and left everything behind to gamble on the precious metal. Most left behind solitary wives, often with young children, to fend for themselves. Men brought just what would keep them alive until they could settle down and strike it rich.

Thousands were struck with gold fever; however only a handful found their dreams. Others found theirs in silver and mercury. It was mercury that brought these fortune seekers to a previously insignificant area 12 miles south of San Jose called New Almaden. Huge mining operations were built in New Almaden to run the mine. Homes, furnaces, schools, tunnels, churches, powder houses, stores and shafts were all constructed to support the mine and people who worked it. Most of the miner's homes were simple affairs, but the pride of the community was the mine manager's home. It was from this house, called Casa Grande, that the mining operations were directed. The Casa

Grande was not just a home and not just one of the outstanding mansions of early California. Casa Grande has not just been an office or a place of work. It has been an elegant social gathering place for glamorous and dynamic early California financial giants, a place where decisions were made which affected all of the development of early California and thereby the entire United States. It has been a home, a growing up place for children, a desolate road house of questionable activities, a spa for the relaxation of urban dwellers. But throughout it's entire hundred and eleven years it always has been the Big House - the Casa Grande.

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

The first to discover this vast abundance of wealth were the Olhone Indians who lived in the New Almaden area.¹ To them it was not the precious cinnabar ore from which mercury is obtained, but a vermilion colored rock which they could use as paint to protect themselves from evil spirits. Secundio Robles was the first white man to discover the hills above the Los Alamitos creek as a possible area of mineral wealth.² But he was concerned only with the discovery of gold or silver and didn't recognize the potential value of the red rocks. In 1824 Sunol and Chabolla visited the area of the red rock which they had heard about from Robles. They too were looking primarily for gold or silver and lacked the knowledge of minerals to recognize the mercury ore, cinnabar.

It wasn't until 1845 that Andres Castellero, a cavalry officer in the Mexican army,³ visited Mission Santa Clara and learned of the red rock.

¹ Laurence Bulmore and Milton Lanyon, Cinnabar Hills, (California, 1967), p. 1.

² Bulmore and Lanyon, p. 2.

³ J. Ross Browne, Mining Adventures California and Nevada 1863-1865, (California, 1961), p. 161.

Castillero conducted a primitive experiment with the ore and discovered it contained quicksilver, a metal which was to play a role of vast importance in the development of this new land since it was essential in the extraction of gold from its ore. After a few more experiments he made the necessary arrangements to declare title to the mineral deposits. With plans to mine the ore himself, Castillero formed a partnership consisting of twenty four shares. "Father Jose Maria del Real was to receive four shares, four shares would be given to Don Juan Castro and four to Secundio and Teodoro Robles. The twelve remaining shares were to be retained by Castillero."⁴ Over 3,000 pounds of ore had been fired through the crude methods Castillero had devised.⁵ But he realized that further expansion would require financial help for the necessary labor and equipment. "Castillero decided to sell his shares in the Santa Clara mine. It was not long before a ready customer was available - Barron, Forbes Company - industrial operators, who were located in Tepic, Mexico."⁶ Their goal was to make this

⁴ Bulmore and Lanyon, p. 4.

⁵ Bulmore and Lanyon, p. 6.

⁶ Bulmore and Lanyon, p. 6.

mine as famous as the Almaden mine in Spain which had been operating for centuries. So the Santa Clara mine of Castellero became the New Almaden mine.

With the mine Barron, Forbes inherited not only the land itself, but also the controversy of boundry lines and legal ownership. The litigation carried through the United States District Courts to the United States Supreme Court and lasted for 12 years.⁷ "The United States vs. Castellero" until recently was the longest report of a decision in the history of the Supreme Court.⁸ "The transcripts of one of the cases before the United States District Court amounts to 3,584 pages in four large volumes."⁹

However, during those twelve years of legal strife work did not come to a stand still at the mine. Plans were made to improve the facilities and inefficent methods of mining and processing the cinnabar ore. Alexander Forbes realized the needs for a reorganized method of operations and hired Captain Henry Halleck, a graduate of West Point and a member of the Halleck, Billings and Peachy law firm as the new manager of the mine.¹⁰

⁷ Bulmore and Lanyon p. 15.

⁸ Kenneth M. Johnson, The New Almaden Quicksilver Mine, (California, 1963), p. 9.

⁹ Johnson, p. 9.

¹⁰ Bulmore and Lanyon, p. 12.

Halleck improved the methods for extracting ore by constructing tunnels, installing a track system for ore cars, a small steam hoist, brick and cement furnaces, machine and blacksmith shops, and a water wheel measuring 22 feet in diameter and 5 feet wide.¹¹ All of these changes increased the extraction of cinnabar ore from the mine and processing the quicksilver from it.

But what was so unique about this substance which was as "Fluid as water, brilliant as silver and heavier than lead ... the only metal that is liquid at room temperature."¹² What was so unique about it that "Aristotle, in the fourth century B.C. ... left a written record of the element itself."¹³ The Greeks used it as a medicine to heal burns and eye irritations. Chinese wise men believed it to be the secret of immortality.¹⁴ Today some of it's many uses are in thermometers, barometers, agricultural and industrial fungicides, mercury batteries, mercury vapor lamps and in the electrolytic purification of nuclear wastes.¹⁵

¹¹ Bulmore and Lanyon, p. 13.

¹² John J. Putman and Robert Madden, "Mercury Mans Deadly Servant", National Geographic, (October, 1972), p. 507.

¹³ Putman and Madden, "Mercury, Mans Deadly Servant", p. 510.

¹⁴ Putman and Madden, "Mercury, Mans Deadly Servant", p. 510.

¹⁵ "Mercury", Encyclopedia Britannica, (Chicago, 1971) Vol. 15, p. 183-184.

The Roman's were the first to discover it's economic value. They found it could be used "as a refining agent to separate gold from dust and dirt."¹⁶ "It is the only known substance which unites readily with gold, silver, tin, lead, zinc, bismuth, and other metals and gathers them into the form of an amalgam."¹⁷ Prior to the discovery of the California quicksilver mines, the owners of the old Almaden mine in Spain controlled the bullion of the world. This monopoly, if it had continued, would have been a serious drawback to the development of our mineral regions and our gold based economic system. In the event of a war this foreign control could have proved to be disastrous beyond all other influences to the finances of the developing United States.¹⁸ Mercury played such an important role in the nation's economy that

during the Civil War ... (it) could well have determined the fate of the nation. It is impossible to over estimate the importance of the mine to the Union during the Civil War. New Almaden's timely discovery saved the western gold fields ... and their wealth flowed into the Northern banks. ¹⁹

If California had seceded from the Union with her

¹⁶ Pulman and Madden, "Mercury, Mans Deadly Servant", p. 510.

¹⁷ Browne, p. 157.

¹⁸ Browne, p. 157

¹⁹ Norman J. Pope, "Crisis at Quicksilver Hill", Hughes Rigway, (Spring, 1975), p. 23.

mineral wealth, the consequence could have well been a mortal blow to the Union cause.

It was this economic wealth that had the power to play such a decisive role in the development of our country and that made the extension of the mining operations so important. Halleck realized this and continued the expansion of the mining operations.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

It was under Halleck's expansion that the Casa Grande was built. Originally meant to be an hotel,²⁰ construction was started on the Casa Grande in 1852 by Francis Meyers who had been commissioned to do so, and it was completed in 1854.²¹

Casa Grande was originally in southern colonial style but without the customary columns. It was constructed of stone and wood. The outer walls are brick 17 inches thick which came to the New Almaden as Ballast in the sailing ships that came around Cape Horn from England. Bricks have been found with the kiln mark "Greateenough, Scotland" where they were fired.²² The structure was constructed on a rectangular foundation and consisted of two full stories in the front, but because of the contour of the ground, three in the rear. The ground floor contained spacious storerooms, the living quarters for the Chinese servants, the kitchen, and a large vault. Entering the front door, on

20 Laurence Bulmore, letter to the author, New Almaden, California, April 4, 1975.

21 Norman J. Pope, "The Casa Grande of Nuevo Almaden", San Jose Mercury and News California Today, (May 14, 1972) p. 16.

22 Norman J. Pope, "The Casa Grande of Nuevo Almaden" p. 16.

the first floor, was a hallway leading to a door at the rear. To the left were two rooms, a small parlor and the library, each with an onyx grate fireplace. A door at the right of the main stairs opened into the large drawing room which ran the depth of the house. This room contained a most elaborate chandelier with glass spangles hanging in tiers giving the effect of myriads of diamonds. The door in the north side of the drawing room opened into the dining room with high paneled walls, a beautiful built in buffet and an ornate fireplace. There were two other doors in this room, one opening onto the porch and the other to a hallway leading to the kitchen stairs and the butler's pantry in which was a dumb waiter to the kitchen which transported the piping hot food from the kitchen to the dining room. The banistered stairs from the main entry led to the upper floor, and under them was a stairway to the basement.

The upper floor consisted of eight bedrooms and a central bathroom. The four corner bedrooms were equipped with fireplaces. Each bedroom was furnished with a heavy highboard wooden bed, wardrobe, dresser, and a basin and pitcher on a commode. ²³

Fireplaces were inlaid with mother of pearl. They had come from Spain around the horn. Every room

23 Bulmore and Lanyon, p. 98.

was completed with the most luxurious rugs and there were candel crystal chandeliers. Samuel Butterworth (a later resident) refurnished with nothing but mahogany and rose wood including a concert grand piano and all this too had come around the horn.²⁴ "The floors throughout were 1 1/4 inch cedar, clear and knot free, and are exquisite when polished. Common dirt was poured into the space under the floor joists as fire protection."²⁵ The Casa Grande was a true expression of gracious living and is considered to have been one of the most outstanding mansions in California at that time.²⁶

It was not long after the completion of the Casa Grande that an emissary of the Chinese Emperor arrived at the New Almaden mine to purchase mercury. He was received and treated so warmly that in appreciation the Chinese Emperor sent a pagoda to New Almaden. The pagoda was originally constructed on the east side of the Los Alamitos creek (see photograph, appendix) and was later moved when the grounds were landscaped. The pagoda which served so well as a tea house and a social focal point on nice days

²⁴ Jimmie Schneider, "The Famous New Almaden Mine", The Pony Express, (October, 1949), p. 4.

²⁵ Pope "The Casa Grande of Nuevo Almaden", p.16.

²⁶ Norman J. Pope, interview with author, New Almaden, California, May 23, 1975.

was ornately built. The delicate hand carved pillars and windows were painted in tones of green, red and blue. The painted glass gave an appearance of mother of pearl. Many a leisurly hour must have been spent in idle conversation in this fairly tale setting at the Casa Grande.

It was Halleck who decided that the building should be the official residence of the mine manager.²⁷ Halleck, as general manager for the mine, was the first resident of the Casa Grande. His wife was Elizabeth Hamilton, grand-daughter of Alexander Hamilton who was the first Secretary of the Treasury in President George Washington's Cabinet. President Lincoln drafted Henry Halleck in 1863 to serve as the Commander-in-Chief of the Union armies until replaced by Ulysses S. Grant.²⁸ This association with the Union through Halleck was the main reason for the New Almaden mine's continued support to the North during the Civil war.

In 1863 Barron, Forbes Company dissolved its interests in Nuevo Almaden and the Quick-silver Mining Company gained possession. Samuel Butterworth was the next mine manager, and he occupied the Casa Grande from 1864 until July of 1870.²⁹

²⁷ Laurence Bulmore, letter to the author, New Almaden, California, April 4, 1975

²⁸ Pope, "The Casa Grande of Nuevo Almaden", p. 18.

²⁹ Laurence Bulmore, letter to the author, New Almaden, California, April 4, 1975

It was at this time that many notables were lavishly entertained in the Casa Grande. William Ralston, founder of the Bank of California in 1864, President of it in 1872 and builder of the Palace Hotel in San Francisco;³⁰ James Fair, Comstock silver king; William Sharon, financier and builder of the Virginia and Truckee Railroad into Virginia city, Nevada; Baron Rothschild, a strong manipulator in the worlds quicksilver market;³¹ and D.O. Mills, President of the Bank of California from 1864-1872 and again in 1873.³² If only the walls of the Casa Grande could talk, what conversations it could relate concerning politics and economics of the time. Who knows what ideas were discussed at those after dinner conversations that would effect the economy of California. Possibly the Bank of California originated right there in the Casa Grande. Bank of California historians have recently been trying to document this.³³ What a tale the house could tell.

James B. Randol was the next mine manager from 1870 to 1892 to continue the history of the Casa Grande.³⁴ "It was he that had the formal

30 Joseph G.E. Hopkins, Concise Dictionary of American Biography, (New York, 1964), p. 838.

31 Bulmore and Lanyon, P. 95 and 98.

32 Hopkins, p. 680.

33. Richard Hayes, Bank of California, interview with Don Dulmage, New Almaden, California, June 1974.

34. Bulmore and Lanyon, p. 98.

gardens laid out and the lake added."³⁵ The following description is taken from the book Cinnabar Hills by Laurence Bulmore and Milton Lanyon.

The Casa Grande was "situated upon a setting of five acres, landscaped with lawns, flower gardens, trees, shrubs and a family orchard ... Many of the garden specimens were imported from foreign countries and the prolific blossom and foliage showed a natural affinity for the rugged environment. John McLaren, assistant superintendent of the Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, in 1886 visited the property many times and contributed his services as an advisor ... a short distance from the rear of the building, the Los Alamitos creek was diverted by pipes into a large man made lake. Robert Scott, the designer and builder of the furnaces, created this colorful addition to the property. The water, averaging five feet in depth, was sufficient to accommodate many swimmers and small row boats. Within the lake a large tree trunk provided too difficult to remove and was converted into a small island."³⁶

J. Ross Browne who visited the Casa Grande further described the grounds.

"Flowers of rich and variegated hues bloom in the gardens, graveled walks traverse the orchards and graperies and wind through the umbrageous groves that fringe the Alamitos."³⁷

Today the Monkey Tree from Australia, still stands in the middle of the present lawn.³⁸ It was when the grounds were landscaped that the Chinese pagoda was moved from its original position on the

35 Bulmore, letter to the author, New Almaden, April 4, 197

36 Bulmore and Lanyon, p. 98.

37. Browne, p. 171.

38. Pope, "The Casa Grande of Nuevo Almaden", p. 38.

east bank of the creek to the north side of the house, not far from where the tank house stands today.³⁹ The entire cost for having the grounds of the Casa Grande landscaped came to apx. \$25,000.00.⁴⁰ These gardens were cared for until the very early 1900's by professional gardeners.⁴¹

When Mr. Randol retired he was followed by Robert R. Bulmore, who with his family occupied the Casa Grande until 1900.⁴³ The only President of the Quicksilver Mining Company to visit New Almaden was David Mahany. He along with his son and daughter were guests at the Casa Grande. It was also during the 1890's that the Spanish council of Guatemala, Senor Tinoco and Senor Montagle Chilian council at San Francisco stayed in the Casa Grande for a few days.⁴⁴

Robert Bulmore's son, Laurence, can remember driving the carriages from the Casa Grande over the north bridge and to the barn. Here his sister's pony "Pet", his brother Dave's saddle horse "Dan", and his father's trotter "Dexter" were stabled. Laurence Bulmore would then return to the Casa Grande

39 Laurence Bulmore, letter to the author, New Almaden, California, April 4, 1975.

40 Bulmore, letter to the author, April 4, 1975.

41 Bulmore, letter to the author, April 4, 1975

42 Bulmore, letter to the author, April 4, 1975

43 Bulmore, letter to the author, April 4, 1975

44 Bulmore, letter to the author, April 4, 1975

gardens by way of a suspension bridge which crossed the creek.⁴⁵ (see photograph, appendix) This barn, with it's hand hammered hinges and square nails, is still standing and is currently being used as a barn and garage by my family, the Don Dulmages. The suspension bridge is no longer there but traces of where it was can be seen in our back yard by the creek.

After Robert R. Bulmore left, Charles Derby, who was the superintendent of the mine, was placed in full charge, but he did not live in the Casa Grande.⁴⁶ In 1912 the Quicksilver Mining Company was declared bankrupt and the part known as the Hacienda (today known as New Almaden) which included the Casa Grande was sold.⁴⁷

According to Norman Pope,⁴⁸ former owner of the Casa Grande, when the mine closed, New Almaden came close to becoming another mining ghost town, only to be remembered in the pages of history. Then in 1926 a family by the name of Black bought most of the New Almaden area, which included the Casa Grande, for development. No one seems to know what happened to the Casa Grande between 1912-1926. It is suspected that the house just remained empty during these yars. I have

45 Bulmore letter to the author, April 4, 1975.

46 Bulmore, letter to the author, April 4, 1975.

47 Norman J. Pope, interview with author, New Almaden, California, May 23, 1975.

made several attempts to document this fact, (see bibliography, phone calls) but as of now no definite conclusions can be made.

The Black brothers Dave and Ben (Ben Black was known for his song writing with 20th Century Fox and probaly is best remembered for his song "Moonlight and Roses") were the first to use the Casa Grande as a swim club. They charged the public general admission to use the grounds and swim in the lagoon. Then it was sometime in the late twenties when the first pool (the shallow one) was installed. 1935 was the year when the second pool (the diving pool) was added. It was during this time that the lagoon was removed and most of the beautiful grounds destroyed.

Later, the Black brothers made a deal with a man by the name of Christiani who then gained control of the Casa Grande. Christiani spent many thousands of dollars, mostly of his wife's money, turning the Casa Grande into an outstanding, formal dress, restaurant. From the day he opened things went down hill. What was once an elegant social gathering place for the early California financial giants had become a deslute road house of questionable activities. Christiani was, to put it bluntly, unsuccessful. He was bankrupt. Finally, he wound up under indictment for tax evasion.

The Black family regained control of the Casa Grande, where it remained closed from 1945 until 1949. Then in 1949 Robert Gray went in as an operator with an option to buy if he was successful. The pools which had been previously installed had no filtering system until this time. To keep the pools clean before this time, one would be filled with the well water and the necessary chemicals would be added, (chlorine, etc.). People would then swim in this pool while the other one was filling. The filling process took four days. When this was completed the people would swim in the second pool while the first was drained into the Los Alamitos creek and filled again with well water. The new filtering system which Gray installed was a big step forward.

Gray had borrowed \$2,000.00 from a friend of his, Norman Pope, to start operations. Mr. Pope did not hear from Gray for a year and one day decided to drive from his home in Hillsborough to see what his money had been invested in. Upon his arrival at the Casa Grande, Mr. Pope found the Casa Grande to be an excellent resort area. There was a fairly good size crowd enjoying the sun and things looked good to him. However Gray was having financial difficulties and once again in 1950 the Casa Grande was up for sale.

Mr. Pope had been so impressed, that he decided to make a go of the Casa Grande as a swim club. He bought the place from Gray and in 1951 started operations with the help of a manager. The second floor of the Casa Grande was remodeled in 1956 into living quarters and in 1957 the Pope family moved into the Casa Grande. Mr. Pope turned the Casa Grande into a very successful operation. Many times it was too popular. The crowds were so large that on many weekends they had to limit the number of people who came in. The Casa Grande was once again a popular place to which urban dwellers came from miles around to enjoy a relaxing day in the sun, a swim in the pools, or to see an old time melodrama at the "Theatre under the Stars". Things went well until 1968 when because of a severe illness Mr. Pope was unable to do the necessary work called for by a place of its size. Arrangements were made with Harry Fromm who took over the Casa Grande in 1968.

48 Norman J. Pope, interview with author, New Almaden, California, May 23, 1975.

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

CASA GRANDE TODAY⁴⁹

Today a hundred and eleven years later the Casa Grande bears little resemblance to what it once was. The outside physical appearance of the building is the same but the inside has been converted to fit the many business adventures, most of them short lived. The once elegant ball room is now the Opry House where every friday and saturday night (if you are over 21) you can "boo" the villian and "cheer" the hero during old time melodramas. Mr. Cleve Dayton owner and director of these melodramas, has been very successful. What used to be the kitchen is now a wine cellar, snack bar for the summer swimmers and the Old California Restaurant. Other rooms have been used for dress shops, art gallery, beauty salon, kitchen shop, gift shop, childrens store, and florist shop. Recently the plans for a proposed Health Spa were made, but fell through. The majority of these adventures lasted only a short time. Other activities such as art shows and political campaign picnics and company or family gatherings have been held. Even the popularity of the Casa Grande as a swim club seems to be

diminished.

The once beautiful grounds and lagoon are long gone and a single lawn and two cement pools remain. The "monkey tree" from Australia still stands as a reminder to what the Casa Grande and it's grounds must have been.

It may be the Casa Grande will become an historical monument. Discussions have been inaugurated by the Historic Landmarks Commission and the Santa Clara County Planning Commission and the County Board of Supervisors to acquire this grand old building.⁵⁰ It may well be this famous and historical Casa Grande will end its days as a restored and publicly owned showplace for all to visit and enjoy.

49 Debbie Dulmage, author and 12 year resident of New Almaden, California.

50 Norman J. Pope, interview with the author, New Almaden, California, May 23, 1975.

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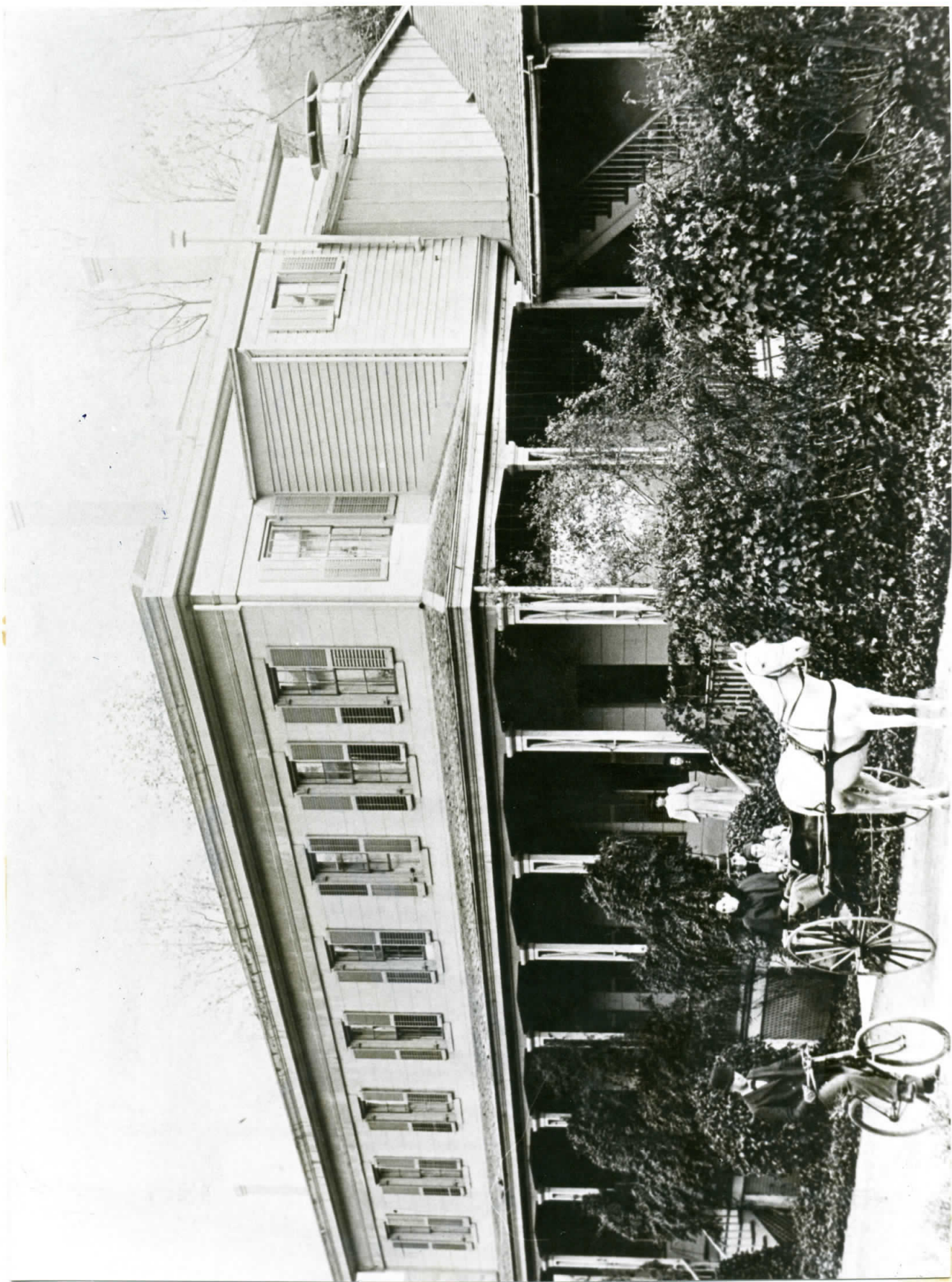
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A P P E N D I X

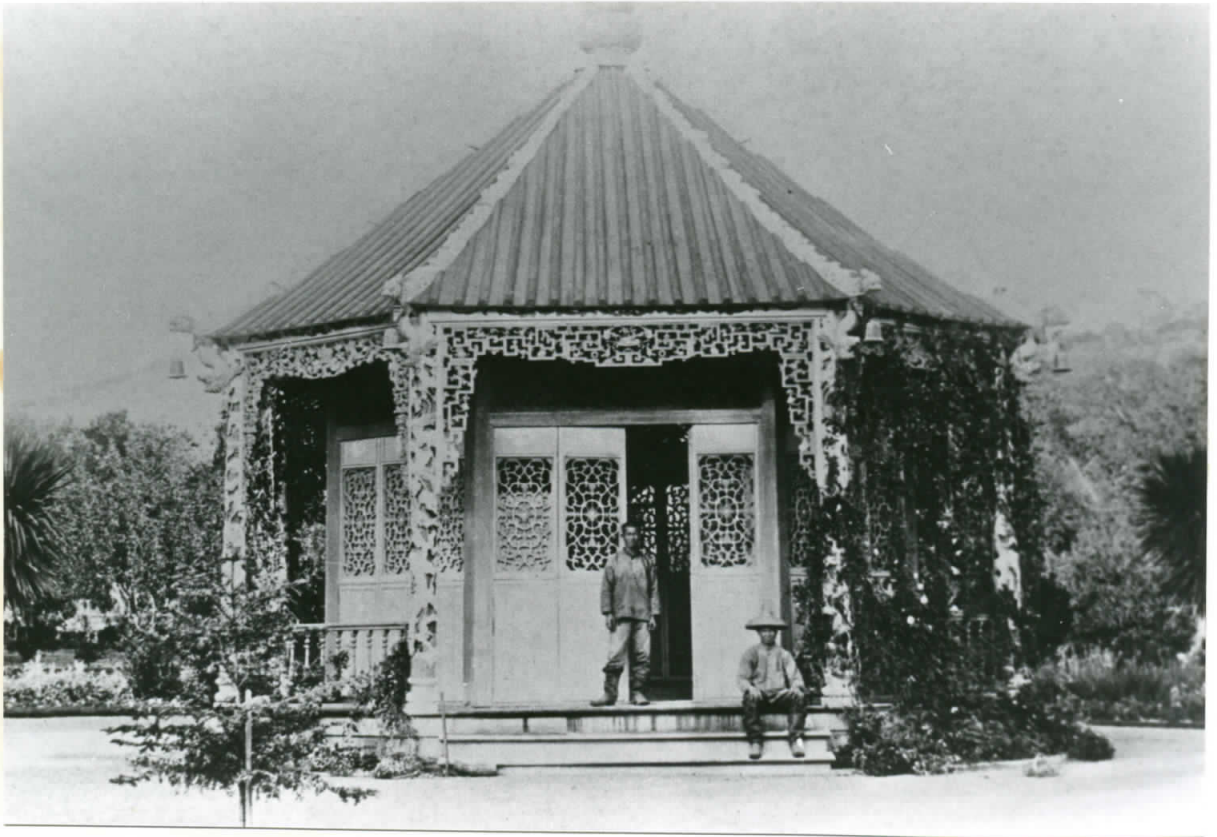
To whom it may concern -
To the best of my knowledge this is
an authentic story of Casa Grande
Laurence E Bulmore
27 May 1975

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN -
TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE THIS IS
AN AUTHENTIC STORY OF CASA GRANDE

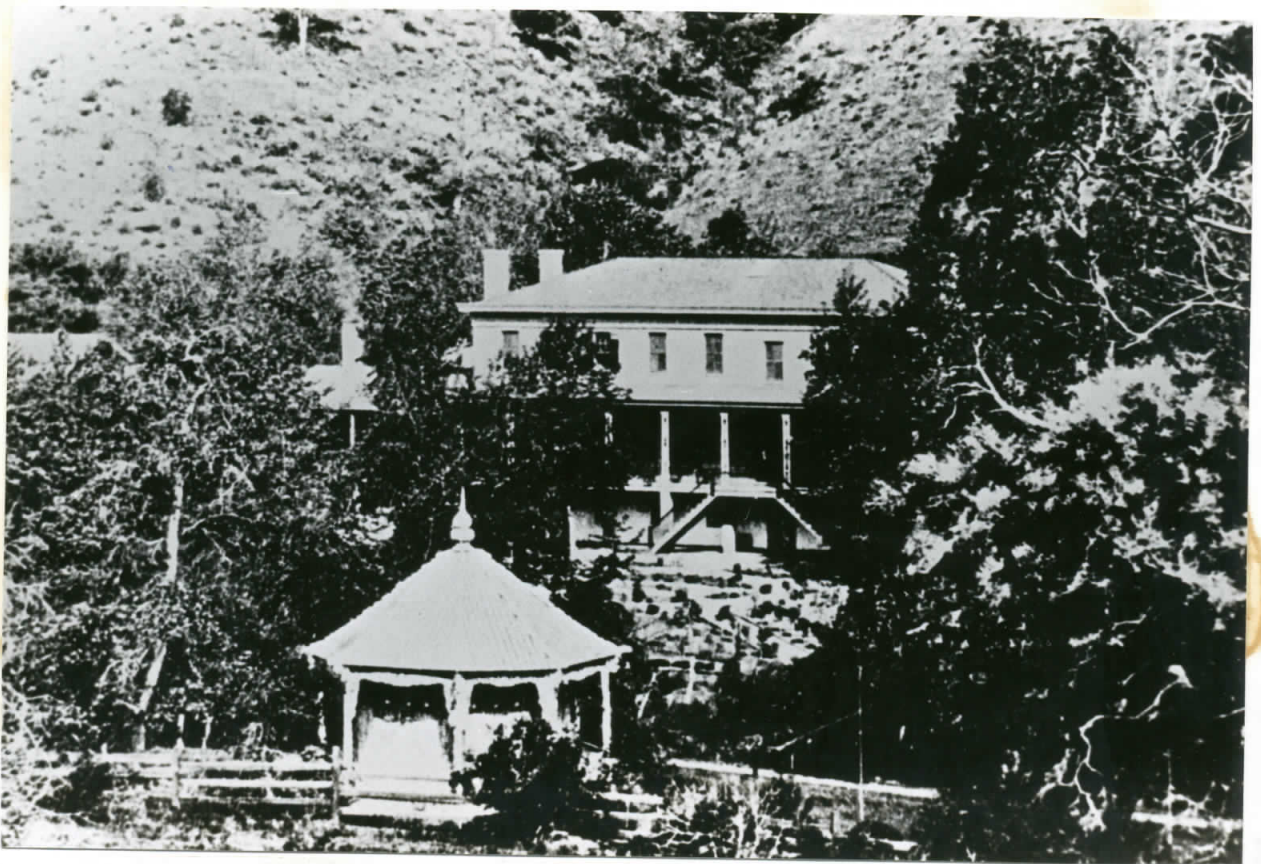
LAURENCE E BULMORE
27 MAY 1975



THE CASA GRANDE



CHINESE PAGODA



Chinese pagoda at the original location on the
east side of the Casa Grande.



The gardens at the exit of the Casa Grande.



The gardens to the entrance of the Casa Grande.



The little boy seated on the bench is Laurence Bulmore who lived at the Casa Grande. This picture was taken on the grounds with his mother (second from the right) and her friends.



The lagoon 1892



677 Lord Court
Concord, Calif. 94518

4th April 1975

Dear Debbie,

Thank you for your letter, that was forwarded from San Jose, and which I found waiting for me when my wife and I returned from visiting our son and his family in Denver, Colorado.

I was pleased to learn that you are interested in the Casa Grande of New Almaden. I know that your family has a copy of Cinnabar Hills which Milton and I wrote in 1967 and from it learned that I once lived in Casa Grande. Just how much I can help you in preparing a paper on the history of Casa Grande I do not know.

When we moved up here from San Jose I gave the greater part of my New Almaden material to the San Jose Historical Museum. I also gave Mr. Pope, the New Almaden Postmaster, some material concerning Casa Grande. You might contact both him and the museum.

You ask about the former owners of Casa Grande. Here are some facts. It was built, originally to be an hotel, during the time the Baron, Forbes and Company owned the New Almaden Quicksilver ^{mines} ~~mines~~. The builder was Francis Myers in 1854. The manager of the mines at that time was Captain (later General) Henry Halleck of the United States Army, on leave at the time. (do not confuse this man with Mary HALLOCK Foote, who wrote an article about New Almaden, published in the February 1878 issue of Schribner's Monthly.) It was Halleck who decided that the building should be the official residence of the mine manager. He was followed by Samuel Butterworth, manager of the mines from 1864 until July 1870. It was during his administration that many notables were lavishly entertained in Casa Grande, among them, William Sharon, D. O. Mills, William Ralston and James Fair. Obviously for political reasons.

The next person to occupy the residence was James B. X. Randol, manager 1870 - 1892. It was he that had the formal

gradens laid out and the lake added. (It had been said that John McLaren of Golden Gate fame did the work. That is not correct. He acted in an advisory capacity only) To the best of my knowledge the gardens were cared for until, at least, the very early 1900's by professional gardeners.

When Mr Randol retired he was followed by Robert R. Bulmore, my father, and we occupied the Casa Grande until 1900. The only time a president of the Quicksilver Mining Company visited New Almaden was in 1897, when David Mahany with his son and daughter were guests at Casa Grande. It was also during the middle 1890's that the Spanish and Chilean Counselors stayed in Casa Grande for a few days.

Thomas Derby's son, ^{Charles} Superintendent since 1895, ~~followed~~ was placed in full charge of the mines when Robert R. Bulmore left but he did not live in Casa Grande. I believe that the next family to live in Casa Grande was that of Jefferson Tatham.

In 1912 the Quicksilver Mining Company was declared bankrupt and the part known as the Hacienda which included Casa Grande was sold. From then on Casa Grande with its lake and gardens became a summer resort, changing hands several times.

Casa Grande was, originally, in Southern Colonial style but without the customary columns. It was two full stories in front but, because of the contour of the ground, three in the rear. The ground floor contained spacious storerooms, the servants' quarters and the kitchen. Entering the front door, on the first floor, you came into a hall leading to a door at the rear. To the left were two rooms, a small parlor and the library each with an onyx grate. At the right were the banistered stairs to the upper floor and under then the stair way to the basement. A door at the right of the main stairs opened into the large drawing room which ran the depth of the house. This room contained a most elaborate chandelier, glass spangles hanging in tiers giving the effect of myriads of diamonds.

The door in the north side of the drawing room opened into the dining room with high paneled walls, a beautiful built in buffet and an ornate fireplace. There were two other



(3)

doors in this room, one opening onto the the porch and the other to a hallway leading to the kitchen stairs and the butler's pantry in which was the dumb waiter to the kitchen

The upper floor contained eight rooms, ~~all opening into a hall that ran the width of the house~~, a bathroo and two linnen closets all opening into the hall that ran the width of the house. The two rooms on the north and south had fire grates.

Now concerning the barn on or adjacent to your family home. I do not know when or by whom it was built, but when the Bulmores lived in Casa Grande my sister's pony "Pet", my brother Dave's saddle hourse "Dan" and father's trotter "Dexter" were stabled there. At that time Bertram road did not go through the cemetery, but from the boarding house on the south and from the bridge on the north. So one went to the barn ^{by} from the road from the north bridge. However there was a suspension footbridge across the creek from the Casa Grande gardens. You may find evidence of it if you look at the east of the swiming pool.

Well Debbie that is about all I can do to assist you. I suggest you read, "Up and Down California in 1860-1864" by William Brewer, "Down in the Cinnabar Mines" by J. Ross Browne, Harper's New Monthly Magazine, October 1864, and "A Contested Election in California in 1887" page 52. There is a copy of this book in the San Jose Historical Museum.

The Chinese pagoda in the gardens of Casa Grande was first on the east bank of the creek and when the grounds were landscaped it was moved to the north side of the house, not far from where the ~~tax~~ house stands. In your research you may come upon the statement that the pagoda was given to the mining company after a visit of the Emperor of China's son visited the mines. That is incorrect. The Emperor's son never visited New Almaden, but a Chinese delegation did.

I will appreciate the opportunity of reading your paper before you present it, if convient.

Good luck

Lawrence E. Bulman

Please excuse poor
typing



20th May 1975

Dear Debbie,

Your letter, with the many questions, dated 17th May came with this morning's mail. Had it come a few days earlier I might have had time to answer it more fully.

When we lived in Casa Grande all the cooking was done in the kitchen which was on the ground floor in the rear. All foods were sent up to the butler's pantry by a dumb waiter (look that up. Its not a joke) and served in the main dining room which was at the south end of the house, on the front ground floor. We had a male Chinese cook and a white maid who served the meals and did all the regular housework. Both were paid by my father, but I do not know how much, I doubt it being more than ten or 15 dollars a month. The gardens were cared for by a gardener at the Company's expense. Oh, yes. The cook and maid "lived in" and had rooms in the adobe part at the south of the main house. One room in that adobe was also father's billiards room.

I suggest you re-read Gannabar Hills and also that you go to the California room in the main Library of San Jose and read "A Contested Election in California" published in 1887, by the San Jose Mercury.

If you plan to drive up here it will be best if you phone first to be sure I will be home.

As ever,

Lawrence & Bulmore

19th April 1975

Dear Debbie,

In my letter concerning Casa Grande I mentioned occupants and visitors. Among the lattera Spanish and Chilian Councilor. At the time I wrote I did not remember the names of the gentlemen.

Today I came upon some old notes of mine and found the names. One was Senor Tinoco, Spanish Council at Guatamala and the other, Senor Montagle Châlian Council at San Francisco.

As ever,

Lauren & Bulmer

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