

# History Lives Here

**FALL 2021**



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## Community Turns Out for Vintage Picnic

200 attend event with Sandy Lydon as guest speaker

By Claudia Mize

We were excited to have hosted 220 guests at our picnic this year! Sandy Lydon, emeritus historian at Cabrillo College, was our guest speaker and was accompanied by his wife Anne. His presentation was about the development of Cabrillo College on the Watsonville High campus and the stewardship of T.S. MacQuiddy and Hal Hyde. It is available on video at PVHA by request.

The honored guests included representatives from four local museums: Scotts Valley Historical Museum Director Debra Muth; Capitola Museum Director Frank Perry and his wife Jill, and former Director, Carolyn Swift and her husband Steve; Wapple House Museum and San Benito County Historical Park Director John Wrobel and his wife Mariel; and Santa Cruz County Ag History Director John Kegebein and his wife Jeannie. Other special guests included Geri Anne Simmons, former President of PVHA; Alex



PHOTO BY: RODGER SERPA

Solano, former PVHA Board member; John Lukrich, the last of the Croation farmers in Pajaro Valley. Watsonville City dignitaries: Jimmy Dutra, Mayor; Aurelio Gonzalez, City Councilman; and Francisco Estrada, Community Health Trust.

We also send a huge thank you to our many volunteers that made our picnic possible. Ken Dobler and his family for all their help. Coming the farthest from Lake



PHOTO BY: RODGER SERPA



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# PICNIC

From Page 1

Osago, Oregon, was Sharon Bystran and two of her friends Cire and Lucy Aguire.

Virginia Avila and Jodi Frensley provided the centerpieces and table decorations. Anthony, DeAnne, Claire and Lindsay Cagnacci helped with the raffle and greeting visitors. Thanks to our mixologists Shaz Roth, Phil Ybarra and Ralph Jacobs. We had awesome archive volunteers: Alina Aguilar, Elija Ezeji-Okoye, Georg Romero, Bruce & Maria Barnett and their daughter Julia, Susan Jacobs, and Bill Beecher. The Archive was open and one attraction was a film of the history of Moss Landing by Robert Robledo with pictures of the area taken by drone. Monterey Bay Caterers with Ken Schwan and crew provided a delicious lunch, which was served in a timely manner. Thank you also to Martha and Dominic Muzzi for their help. All said and done, the Vintage Picnic was a big success. Thanks to all!



## 7TH ANNUAL STAY AT HOME FUNDRAISER RAFFLE



### BEE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR YOUR

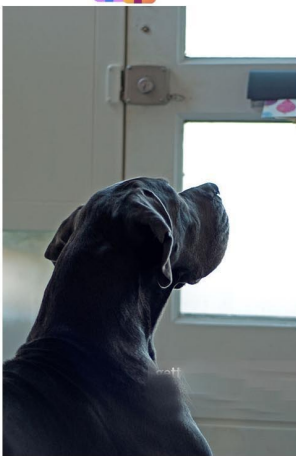


### MAILER WITH TICKETS



6 Exciting Prizes each **\$1k** or more in value

- 2 Dining Out Packages [A & B]
- Golf package – two courses [C]
- 2 Weekend getaways, Mission Ranch Carmel, Capitola Suites [D & E]
- Wine-Food- and Flowers [F]  
(Full descriptions in mailer)





## Bockius-Orr House: The Elegant Old Lady of the Pajaro Valley

Not to be forgotten, our elegant old lady the Bockius-Orr house — the home of the Pajaro Valley Historical Association. This is one of the oldest homes in Watsonville that is open to the public. Built over 136 years ago, it was “out in the country” but since then the town has grown up around it. The house sits back from the street about 200 feet, which makes for a grand entrance.

The Italianate style is a popular subset of the Romantic styles of the early 1800s. The house embodies many classic Italianate decorative elements, down to the shape of the house itself. It

See **ELEGANT** Page 5



## Plein Air Watercolor Class Held in the Bockius-Orr House Garden

By Claudia Mize

Bonni Carver, local artist and teacher, led a plein air watercolor class in the Bockius-Orr House garden in July. Bonni said they appreciate the opportunity to paint at such a lovely venue. Thank you to the volunteers and everyone that keeps the garden so beautiful. Bonni teaches classes through Cabrillo College, too.

Pictured are Bonni Carver, Sarah Howell, Cathie Colson and Jan McDonell.



## Community Action Board Santa Cruz County Seeks Collaboration

by Lou Arbanas

The Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc. (CAB) is celebrating over 55 years of Community Action! CAB operates six programs assisting close to 10,000 low-income people with emergency, sustaining/self-sufficiency services and serves an additional 7,000+ with requests for information and referrals. Over three quarters of CAB's clients have family incomes below the Federal Poverty Guidelines and the remainder are not far above that level.

CAB's mission is to partner with the community to eliminate poverty and create social change through advocacy and essential services.

PVHA was approached by Rocio Sanchez a youth navigator, to determine if we could be good fit in educating this underserved group about the history of the Pajaro Valley and community they live in. We are willing to design an interpretive plan for our materials to shadow their varying syllabus. As paid members of PVHA, you help this worthwhile cause and our community outreach.



# Items of Note *As of August 17, 2021*

## New Members

K. Adam Kaiser  
 Barry and Susan Pearlman  
 Paul and Courtney Mohun  
 Henry and Rose Marie Cardona  
 Frank and Corinne Griswold  
 Peter Miljanich  
 Stephen and Sally Ann Ezeji- Okoye  
 Bob and Renee Mello  
 Eric and Teresa Del Piero

## Donations In Honor of

### Gerry Martin

- Silicon Valley Comm. Foundation (Ann Rando)

### Christine McGraths Birthday

- Doris Goon

## Garden Fund

- Carol Large (Large metal Fabrication, Inc)

## In Memory of

### Alice Montgomery for her love of flowers

- Jane Parks- McKay

### James R. Montgomery Garden Fund: For his mother's Love of flowers)

- Jane Parks McKay

## In Memorial

### John Ivanovich

- Marvin and Elaine Del Chiaro

### Linda Maitoza Gordon

- Peter and Kristy Bobeda
- Doug and Noris Anderson
- Estelle Basor

## Bob Van Galder

- Nancy Van Galder

## Dr. Janet Bell

- Helen Ukestad
- Diana Casini Keith

## Patrick Carey

- John and Judy Eiskamp
- Louis Arbanas

## Peter Kovacich

- Ken and Anne Dobler

## Virginia Vukasovich

- Joyce Kalich

## Kathleen Henrichsen Bradley

- Hugh and Patricia Hudson

## Shirley and Gene Friend

- Shirley Kane
- Ed and Kathleen Banks

## Louis and Louise Bilicich

- Nancy Bilicich

## Peggy Ernst

- Nancy Bilicich

## Hank Schimpeler

- Lou Arbanas
- Ken and Anne Dobler
- Dominic and Martha Muzzi
- Stan and Judy Nielsen
- Ralph and Susan Jacobs

## John Gospodnetich

- Ken and Anne Dobler
- Rocky and Judy Franich

## Dan Rowan

- Bob Dickie

## Arnold Brunetti

- Glenn Kramer

## Alice Montgomery

- Ralph and Susan Jacobs
- Louis Arbanas

## General

- Sharon Bystran
- Rocky and Judy Franich
- Pajaro Valley Stamp Club
- Large Metal Fabrication, Inc.
- Hugh and Pat Hudson

## Research

- Chuck Allen

## Memberships

### Renewed in April

- Margaret M. Amrhein
- Allen and Betty Bjur
- Stephanie Bulich
- Sandra Davidson
- Marvin and Elaine Del Chiaro
- Laura Hofmeister
- Nita Gizdich
- Sandy Jurach
- Patricia Lester
- Elizabeth Ehm Lobay
- Tamia Marg
- Gerry Martin
- David and Steffany McCabe
- Mike and Bertie McElroy
- Dan and Ann McGrath
- Cathy Mello
- Priscilla Partridge & David Kikuchi
- Alex Solano
- Jo Ann Vear
- Leinaala S. Waikiki
- John and Mary Altier Walker
- Samuel and Terese Wright, Jr

### Renewed in May

- Lou Arbanas
- David and Claire Baum
- Alvin and Ruby Beilby
- Nancy Buoy
- Bob and Judi Burick
- Daniel Cheatham and Lynn Sullivan
- Bob Edwards and Julie Olsen
- Mabel Cole

- Kenneth and Anne Horner
- Hugh Hudson and Family
- Edward and Jean Kelly
- Brandon and Trisha Kett
- Diane McElroy
- Geneva Mehl
- Kathleen A. Moe
- Kathy Oliver
- Barry and Susan Pearlman
- SACO
- Kerry Stringari
- Nancy Van Galder
- Robert Wall (The Grunsky Law Firm)

### Renewed in June

- Nancy Bilicich
- Dan Carrillo
- Rita Christiansen
- David and Frances Delfino
- Bonny Hawley (Friends of S.C. State Parks)
- Gayle Ivanovich
- Lorraine Jurach
- Roseann Kalich
- Bob Katz and Leola Lapides
- Donald and Brenda Lauritson
- Antoinette Lukrich
- John and Megan Martinelli
- Leon and JoAnn Mattingley
- Thoma Mitchell
- Bill and Tanya Passey (Passey Construction)
- Patrick and Pauahi Sheehy
- David and Maryann Schnitter
- Stephen Taylor (Taylors Office Supply)

### Renewed in July

- Tom and Virginia Avila
- Tina Baine
- Robert and Jean Boeddiker
- Hans Claus
- Barbara Corrigan
- Ken and Anne Dobler
- Jesus and Lupe Flores
- Stan and Judy Nielsen
- Dr. David South
- Phil Ybarra and Chaz Roth

### Renewed in August

- Alice Bankhead
- Jody Belgard
- Nancy Codiga
- Ron and Connie Deller
- Eric and Teresa Del Piero
- Bob Dickie
- John and Judy Eiskamp
- Glenn Kramer
- Patricia Lester
- Vic Lewis
- Jane Parks McKay
- Kathleen Moore
- Dominic and Martha Muzzi
- Rita Pope
- Les and Joyce Roth
- Barbara Stringari
- Charles and Spomenka Zaninovich



# Watsonville's Historic Mansion House Turns 150 years old in 2021

By Susan Jacobs

It's time to wish a happy 150th birthday to the Mansion House located at 418-424 Main St. sandwiched between the Lettunich Building and the Kalich Building. It's mind boggling when one realizes that the wood and woodwork on that building came out of the Corralitos stand of local lumber. It happened while we (Pajaro Valley and Watsonville) were trying on our "big boy" pants having just seen our admission to statehood 21 years earlier, and the village of Watsonville being newly incorporated just three years earlier. Nationally the struggle between the states and recovery from a bitter Civil War were ongoing in the East. 1871 bequeathed:

- President Ulysses S. Grant creates the Civil Service Commission.
- The Indian Appropriation Act of 1871 is passed. Tribes will no longer be seen as independent but as wards of the State.
- The Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871 is passed. This act allows the president to send

in troops to enforce the 14th amendment.

- The Treaty of Washington between the United States and Great Britain is ratified. This treaty allows for a commission to settle fishing and boundary disputes between the two countries.

- The New York Times writes investigated articles about William "Boss" Tweed

that reveal the level of corruption in New York City. He is eventually brought to trial.

- Brigham Young is arrested for polygamy.

- The Chicago fire leads to the destruction of most of the city.

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## ELEGANT

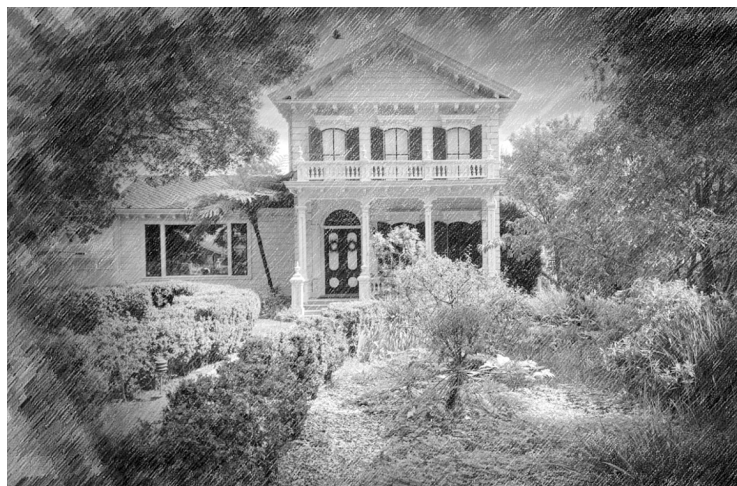
From Page 3

has an end-gable roof (the roof gable is at the front of the house). The roof eaves are wide and overhang the outside walls. They are embellished and supported with decorative brackets. The tall, narrow windows are another sign of the Italianate style. The windows are curved at the top, an inverted U. The porch runs the width of the front of the house. The support columns are restrained in their decoration. Another element common in the Italianate style are the use of quoins on the corners of buildings. This can be seen on the corner edges of this house.

The large picture window was put in so the beautiful oak trees could be seen. These trees are over 125 years old. The living room windows on the east side of the house are the original windows. The parlor serves as the office for PVHA and has the original fireplace mantle and surround. The original carriage house and tank house are still on the property.

There are a few pieces of furniture that were originally in the house. One is the Haines Brothers square case grand piano that originally belonged to the Spreckels family and was said to have been shipped from New York to San Francisco around 1858. Carlo, the dog figure, is as old as the house.

The Bockius-Orr house is home to the costume collection consisting of clothing, hats, uniforms and other items worn by local citizenry. Some items date back to the 1860s. The clothing exhibits are changed about three times each year.



This was a working farm for the first three generations living here. The farm produced a variety of fruits and was especially known for its rhubarb crop. In 1940s the flower garden was put in. The Bockius-Orr house was in the same family for four generations. Judge Godfrey Bockius came from Philadelphia with his family in 1852.

The original house was a plain farm house, then about 20 years later it was remodeled to look like it does today. After World War II the inside was remodeled by Frank Orr, great grandson of Judge Bockius, and his wife Zoe Ann. The house and property were donated to the PVHA in 1992 by Zoe Orr after Frank's death. It was originally about an 100-acre parcel. The current PVHA property occupies about one acre.



# Godfrey Bockius Fletcher

## Pajaro Valley Fine Artist's Life Was Cut Short

Compiled by Claudia Mize

Godfrey Bockius Fletcher (1888-1923), born in Watsonville, was an extremely talented artist. Had he lived longer, he would have ranked among California's finest artists. Godfrey Fletcher won the silver medal for watercolor in 1918 and the gold medal for watercolor in 1920 at the Annual Exhibitions of the San Francisco Art Association.

He graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, Faculty of Architecture, in 1913. He studied at the Art Students' League in New York, and in Paris at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière.

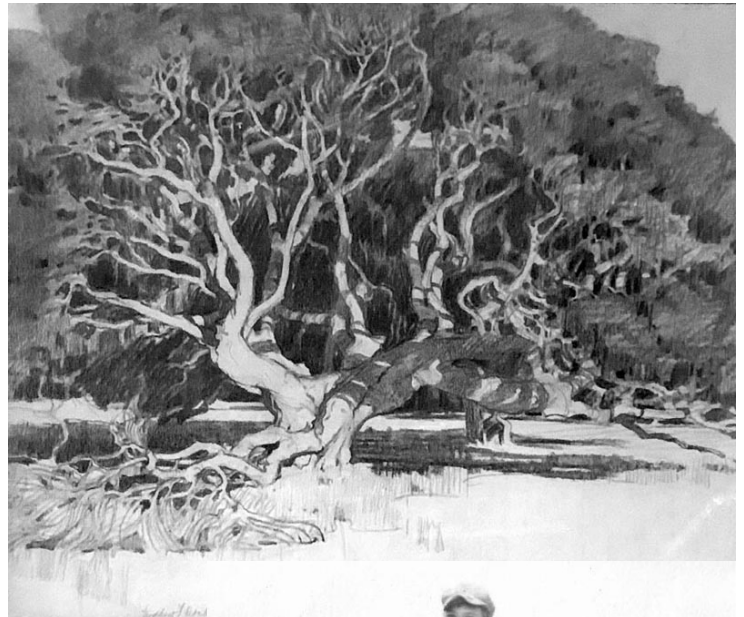
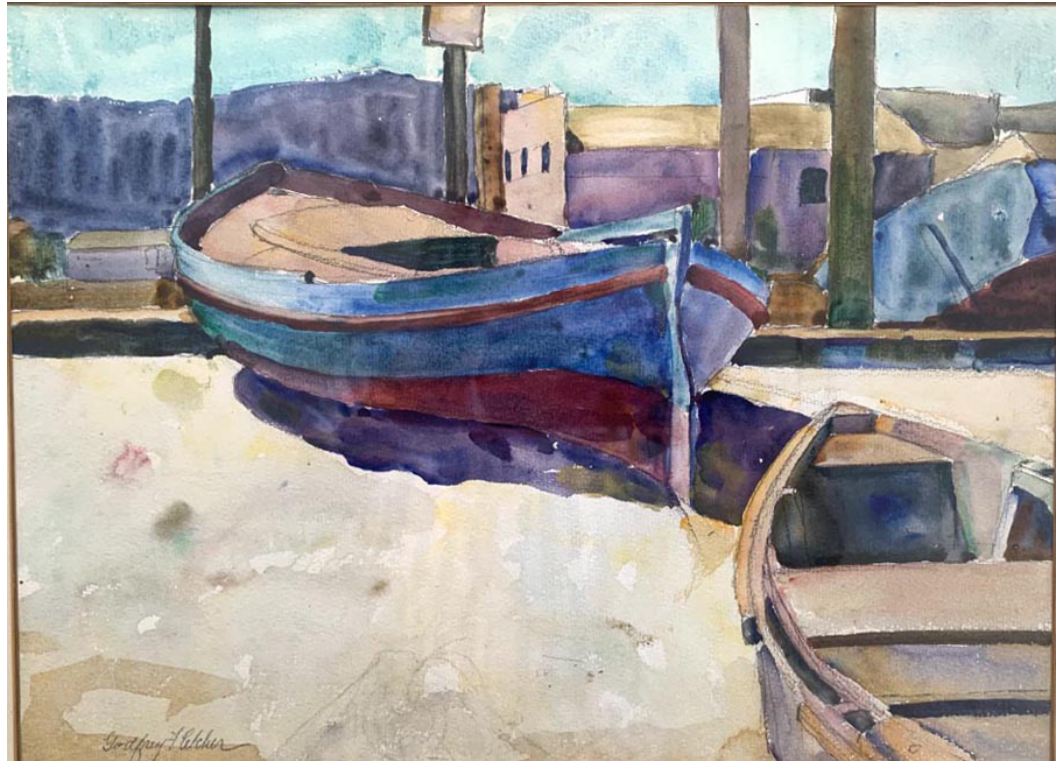
Fletcher was born into a prosperous Watsonville banking family. His family made their home at 322 Union, which is the current site of the Cabrillo College Office across from the park. His maternal grandfather was Godfrey M. Bockius (1818-1905) who purchased 70 acres in Watsonville in 1852. The Pajaro Valley Historical Association is on a portion of his original property. Godfrey Bockius was instrumental in founding the Bank of Watsonville, and later was to become its President. His daughter, Belle Bockius, is thought to be the first European to be born in Watsonville. Belle Bockius married Henry Fletcher, handsome and cavalier, and artist Godfrey Fletcher was born to that union. Henry S. Fletcher inherited the Bank of Watsonville from his father-in-law.

Godfrey died of tuberculosis when he was 35. He was greatly mourned in the front page obituary in the Evening Pajaronian, December 13, 1923:

"Godfrey Fletcher was developing into an artist who, it was recognized, would one day rank with the very highest of California artists. This was because of the individuality and sweep of his painting, particularly in his handling of sunshine and color. But it was also because of the keenness and breadth of his intellect, because of the sympathy and fineness of his nature.

Probably no artist ever lived in the Monterey peninsula who had so many friends of all ages, of all classes, as had Godfrey Fletcher. And certainly no one ever loved more with a more understanding and discerning eye, the out-of-doors of this section of California in which he was born. We grieve at the passing of this boy."

There are seven watercolor paintings in the possession of Godfrey's Orr family descendants and two oils done by Fletcher are in the possession of Fletcher family descendants. These two oils measure some 40" x 50" and they are both more "modernistic" than the Impressionistic painting of his sister Belle. One, carrying the title "Fisherman's Houses" is illustrated on page 52 of the catalogue of the 43rd Annual Exhibition of the



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# It's Tea Time Again!

By Gerry Martin

On Friday, August 6 the Pajaro Valley Historical Association was back in the business of guided tours. Twelve ladies from the Corralitos Women's Club enjoyed a tour of the facility with the promise of getting a peek into the nooks and crannies that contribute to making the Historical Association such a special place.

Starting in the Bockius House living room with a little historic Martinelli bubbly, the scene was set for this visit. There were stories of the grand piano, lovely designer suits, and old-fashioned bathing suits, and then it was on to the archives to learn a few facts of Pajaro Valley history with an emphasis on Corralitos. From there,



the group split into two smaller groups to get up close to the thousands of items included in the costume collection. From a Civil War outfit worn by a soldier's widow to a Norman Norell little black dress from the 1970's, their interest was piqued and then it was on to try on a few of the hundreds of hats in the collection.

All of this history was followed up by a congenial respite on the patio to enjoy refreshments provided by some talented members of the Women's Club. The smiling faces and words of appreciation reminded the volunteers of why we do this. A special thank you to Jodi Frensley for her attention to some of the details we have forgotten about in the last year and a half.

Following Covid protocols, good museum practices and very special culinary skills, our first foray into inside tours after the pandemic lockdown, allowed us to come together around the fascinating history of our region.

Guided tours returned to the Bockius-Orr House on Aug.6 when the Corralitos Women's Club visited.



## ARTIST

From Previous Page

San Francisco Art Association in 1919.

The whereabouts of three of Fletcher's oil paintings are unknown. Fletcher painted a magnificent Impressionist style oil painting, depicting his sister, Belle, holding a parasol in a garden setting. This painting follows closely the Impressionist formula

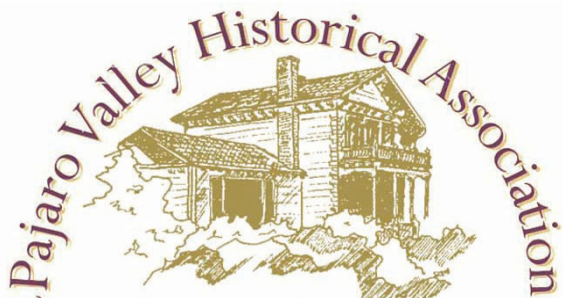
of the period: shallow picture plane, flat and slightly up-tilted, with dappled sunlight, and a loose bravura handling. The color is strong, and the artist worked with a loaded brush. This painting reflects sophisticated Eastern training. The family would welcome a photograph or any information on the location of this painting or any other by Fletcher.

...

This article was written by Corinne Gris-

wold, wife of Frank Orr Griswold, whose Uncle and Aunt were Frank and Zoe Orr. Corinne also wrote a children's book about the artist, Godfrey Bockius Fletcher. Some of his water color paintings are displayed in the Orr house. The family would love to see a photo of Godfrey's oil painting of his sister Belle Fletcher. If any of our readers know where this painting is, please contact PVHA. The family would be very grateful.





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## MANSION

From Page 5

- The Mansion House is built.

Constructed by Thomas Beck, the Mansion House is the oldest surviving commercial facility in the Pajaro Valley. It is the only Second Empire building in Watsonville built by Thomas Beck. (The Second Empire style was inspired by buildings constructed in Paris during the reign of Napoleon III from 1852 to 1870. The enlargement of the Louvre between 1852 and 1857 revived the roof form developed by the 17th century French architect François Mansart.)

When it was new, the Mansion House was the leading first class hotel in central California and housed such dignitaries as Ulysses S. Grant. In 1906, Mateo and M.N.

Lettunich purchased the property. They decided to move the hotel north 110 feet and construct an office building in its place. In 1914 the old hotel was jacked up and lowered onto a series of 100-foot-long log rollers. As it inched along and one log would roll out from the back of the building, it would be picked up and placed under the front.

In 1978, the Mansion House seemed doomed for the wrecking ball, but was saved when the owners donated it to the Pajaro Valley Historical Association. It has been sold various times since. The Mansion House is one of the oldest wooden buildings in the heart of downtown Watsonville.

Happy Birthday Mansion House and fond recollections of the local history it continues to tell by its elegant presence.



Want to join now or need to renew? We'd love to have you become a member of PVHA

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please Make Checks Payable to "PVHA"  
PO BOX 623 Watsonville CA 95077

Or join via our website at [www.pajarovalleyhistory.org](http://www.pajarovalleyhistory.org) (Visa or Mastercard)

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- Become a Member
- Upgrade your Membership Level
- Make a general donation to the PVHA
- Make a donation to our endowment funds: The Historic Preservation Fund or Archive Fund, both established at The Community Foundation

WE ACCEPT

