

# The Heritage Society of Pacific Grove NEWSLETTER

*Dedicated to Maintaining the Beauty and Individuality of Pacific Grove*

Volume 10, Issue 1

January 2010



## Annual Meeting February 21 at Forest Hill Manor



*Forest Hill Manor from old postcard*

The Heritage Society Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 21 at 2:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room at Forest Hill Manor, located at the corner of Forest and Gibson Avenues in Pacific Grove. Retired college professor Joe Bragdon will show slides and give a talk, "Cannery Row When It Was," about the days of the sardine industry on the row and his acquaintance with Ed "Doc" Ricketts and other actual characters from John Steinbeck's books. Refreshments will be served. Board members will be introduced and new officers for 2010 will be elected, so please plan to attend this important and interesting meeting.

The Forest Hill Manor building was erected in 1926 by Samuel Parsons. When the El Carmelo/Pacific Grove Hotel was dismantled in 1918, the town was left with only small inns and rooming houses to house visitors. Mr. Parsons, an active member of the local Chamber of Commerce, saw the need for a first-class hotel and built the Forest Hill Hotel on a lot at the southwest corner of Forest and Gibson. Prior to that time, the whole block had been forest.

After Mr. Parsons's death in 1946, his family sold the hotel to Louis Gross and Harry Berk of San Francisco, who operated

it as a hotel for several more years. In 1954, the 100-room building was sold to the Methodist Church for use, according to a spokesman at the time, as "a deluxe old people's home, not a charity institution." Plans for the facility included maintaining its function as Pacific Grove's top social center. Civic organizations such as the Rotary Club were encouraged to continue holding meetings there.

Heritage Society members who attend the Annual Meeting will have the opportunity to get a close-up look at this beautiful building, which has been so prominent in Pacific Grove history.

### Calendar

#### FEBRUARY

##### HERITAGE SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

Pacific Grove – Forest Hill Manor  
February 21

#### APRIL

##### SOUTHWEST ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

Boulder City, Nevada  
April 9-11

#### MAY

##### CALIFORNIA PRESERVATION FOUNDATION CONFERENCE

Nevada City, California  
May 12-15

##### ANNUAL HERITAGE HOUSE AWARDS

Pacific Grove – Museum of Natural  
History  
May 28

#### JUNE

##### ASSOCIATION OF GRAVESTONE STUDIES CONFERENCE

Granville, Ohio – Denison University  
June 22-27

(Historical information about Forest Hill Hotel was taken from the Heritage Society's "Board and Batten," August/September 1999 issue.)

*All opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the Board of Directors, but are meant to stimulate interest in and discussion of preservation issues.*

# A Short History of the Lighthouse

by Dennis Tarmina

Pacific Grove's Point Pinos Lighthouse was constructed in 1853-54, lighted in 1855, and partially rebuilt following the 1906 earthquake. It is the oldest continually operating lighthouse on the Pacific coast. It has been a beacon of hope and safety, serving both civilian and military seafarers with honor and distinction for more than 150 years.

Until 2006, Point Pinos Lighthouse was under the ownership of the U.S. Coast Guard and maintained by many dedicated groups and volunteers. Recently, the lighthouse and the adjacent land were deeded to Pacific Grove under the provision that the lighthouse "shall be preserved and maintained...in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for rehabilitation."

## Volunteers Needed for Lighthouse Preservation

by Dennis Tarmina

A little over a year ago, the Heritage Society ordered an historic structures report on the Point Pinos Lighthouse from Lighthouse Preservationists, LLC. With this

report, we now have a detailed outline of the condition of the lighthouse, how and in what order it is to be repaired, materials to be used, what should be saved and what must be saved in order to comply with Secretary of the Interior Standards.

Work is underway (see "Work Begins on Point Pinos Lighthouse," this issue). It is the goal of the Heritage Society to form a "Friends of the Lighthouse" group to assist the City of Pacific Grove in this worthwhile endeavor. Over the years, we will need volunteers skilled in metal fabricating, metal rehabilitation, carpentry, electrical and masonry, as well as volunteers who are willing to contribute their labor for other jobs, including fundraising and grant writing.

If you are interested in being part of this important project, please call the Heritage Society at 831-372-2898 and leave a message.

95—Point Pinos Light House, Pacific Grove, California



## Work Begins on Point Pinos Lighthouse

by Ken Hinsbaw

The talking and wrangling is over and the action has begun (albeit cautiously). After two years of planning, tool belts have been strapped on and construction has begun.

The first workday in early November was more of a testing and probing session. Some months back, our consultants identified the leaky lantern room as most in need of attention. A large storm in October confirmed their conclusion: it really leaks! Rain leaks through the copper roof panels, through the window panels, and through the outside walkway onto the masonry walls. Where it leaks, it rusts. In order to begin work on the leaks, we needed to open

the topside iron hatch door, but that leaks so badly that it almost wouldn't open. Enough corroded metal was removed to ease the situation.

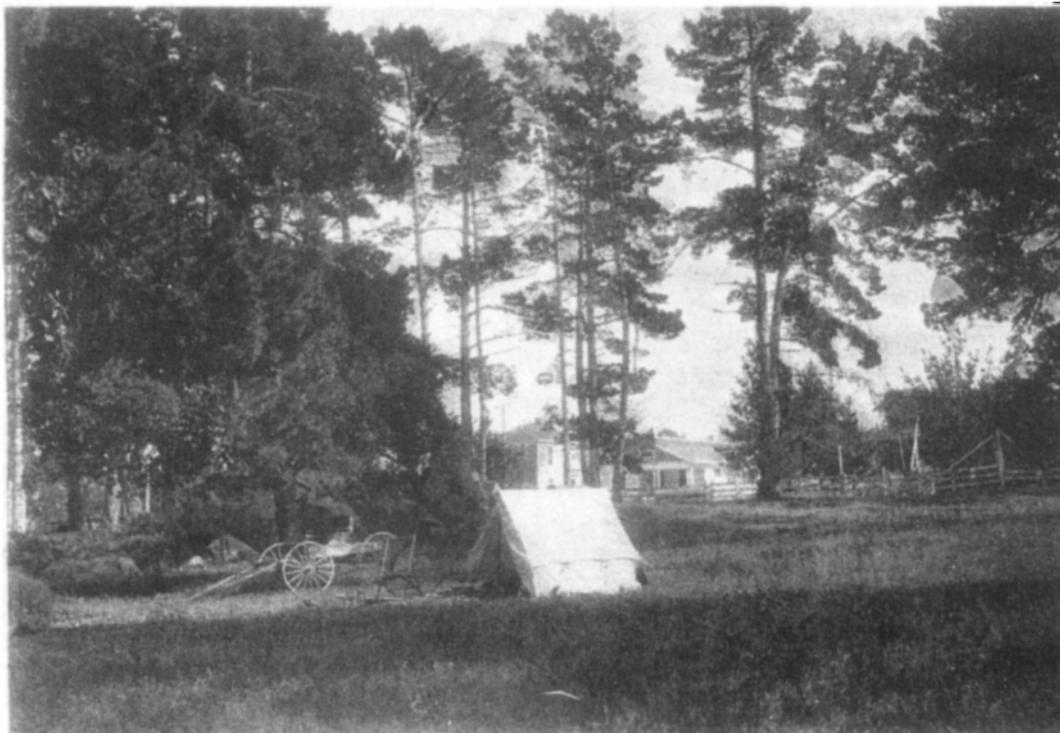
At the same time that work was being done at the top of the lighthouse, Lighthouse Preservation Committee Chairman Dennis Tarmina was surveying the grounds for the location of the lost 10,000 gallon cistern. He found an open chamber under an abandoned manhole cover. However, it proved too small for water storage. His quest continues.

Master problem solver Lowell Northrop arrived with a video camera on an extension pole that he and I used to peer at the problem areas on the roof.

Overall, progress is being made. Architect, photographer and artist Jeff Becom is working to complete the drawings needed for permits to begin the landscaping improvements. Doug Howe has taken measurements to create a 3D computer model of the lighthouse.



*Volunteer Lowell Northrop uses a special tool in a process to lower the lip on the deck of the lighthouse to allow the door to the lantern room to open and close.*



*In Camp at Pacific Grove*

*This photograph of a PG campsite in the early 1900s was brought to our attention by Steve Honegger. It is from "California: An Englishman's Impressions of the Golden State," by Arthur T. Johnson, published in London in 1913.*

## Upcoming Events Elsewhere

**Southwest Oral History Association Conference** - April 9-11, Boulder City, Nevada. With emphasis on Arizona, California, Nevada and New Mexico, the conference will feature sessions on oral history work, including interviewing, processing, digital and archival collection methods, and use of oral histories in publications, exhibits, films and theater. Includes a tour of Boulder Dam and a walking tour of the town, which was built in the 1930s. For information, visit [www.southwestoralhistory.org](http://www.southwestoralhistory.org)

**California Preservation 2010 Conference** - May 12-15, Nevada City, California. More than 30 sessions, tours and workshops on issues facing California's historic, cultural and natural resources. "Three-Minute Success Stories" are among the highlights. Topics include evaluation of historic resources, preservation planning, and financing historic preservation. Registration fee \$255 for members, \$295 for non-members. For information, visit [www.californiapreservation.org](http://www.californiapreservation.org)

**Association of Gravestone Studies Conference** - June 22-27, Denison University in Granville, Ohio. This event will appeal to those interested in genealogy, history, historic preservation, and anthropology. The conference will include lectures, demonstrations, exhibits, conservation and documentation workshops, and guided cemetery tours. For more information, visit [www.gravestonestudies.org](http://www.gravestonestudies.org)

# New Members

Patty and Gene Brennan  
Jacqueline Colbert  
Bill and Alice Englander  
(returning members)  
Stefanie Midlock  
Torie and George Thacher  
Nina Williams

Membership Count:  
**1033**

Support the  
Heritage Society  
**Thank You!**

Paul Finnegan  
Bill Whitney  
already have

# Letters, We Get Letters

**T**he Heritage Society recently received three letters of praise for our volunteers, programs and services.

From Moe Ammar, President of the Pacific Grove Chamber of Commerce: "For the past 17 years, I had the privilege of working with several great volunteers on the Historic Home Tour. Every year the event gets better due to the capable volunteers of the Heritage Society. Barbara Lazarony and Claudia Sawyer represented the Society the last two years. I am writing to compliment the ladies on their organization, direction and positive energy..Their attention to detail is beyond belief! They were totally committed to ensuring a very successful event. Consider your Society blessed and lucky to have such wonderful volunteers."

From Lesley Agostino of Martinez, California, who made a trip to Pacific Grove with her mother to research her great-grandfather's life here: "We met up with some very nice ladies at the museum, and a gentleman (Don Beals) at the Barn. They had so much information for us. We found houses that belonged to our family and made a trip to the El Carmelo Cemetery...Plus, on direction of the Barn, we were able to find the "Pine Island Inn," which is part of my favorite movie, so that was an unexpected surprise...Thank you! We just fell in love with Pacific Grove!"

Finally, from a woman who requested information about the Pine Grove Sanitarium: "You are wonderful. I really appreciate the trouble you have gone to. Please thank Don Beals for me. I am so thrilled. I knew for years that I was born there, but knew nothing about the place. I never thought about contacting the Heritage Society until recently. Thank you so much."

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