

Santa Clara Verein
1082 Alviso Street
Santa Clara
Santa Clara County
California

HABS No. CA-2068

HABS,
CAL.
43-SANCLA,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

1960
1961

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Architectural and Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20243

SANTA CLARA VEREIN

Location: 1082 Alviso Street, Santa Clara, Santa Clara County, California (between Franklin and Benton Streets).
(Note: The county Assessor's rolls has the location of the property at 1072 Alviso and the billing to 1082 Alviso. However, this is the same property.)

USGS San Jose West Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 10.593780, 4134160.

Present Owner: Handicapped War Veterans.

Present Use: Thrift shop

Significance: German immigrants were among the early settlers in the Santa Clara Valley. Bringing their traditional social customs to the Valley, the Germans soon began to form a number of organizations including athletic and social clubs. In the 1870s, the German community built the oldest extant Turn Verein in Northern California. Its construction was financed by funds raised from the German clubs' membership. The wooden Santa Clara Verein was erected in several stages and has a front with decorative corner pilasters, brackets and a low curved parapet. The interior of the main room is elaborately decorated; of particular interest is the hand stenciled plaster ceiling.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 1880. The Trustees of the Santa Clara Verein purchased one lot on Alviso Street on March 27, 1872, (Book 25, page 14), and another in October 1880. The decorated hall was completed by 1881. (Refer to #5.)
2. Architect: None known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: This is an incomplete chain of title found in the Santa Clara County Recorder's office.

Date: March 27, 1872, Book 25, page 14. Cost \$300. Description of the property: On Alviso Street 40 feet to a stake, then 97.88' to a stake in a board fence, then 40.25; then 97.33 feet to the place of beginning, being Lot No, 1, Block 1, North Range 2 East.

Grantor: Hermann Leibe, et ux.
Grantees: Charles Welk, Henry Uhrbroock and Hermann Leibe,
as trustees of the Santa Clara Verein.

Date: October 14, 1880, Book 55, page 520.

Grantor: Jacob Everhard.

Grantee: Santa Clara Verein. Price: \$800.

A parcel of land on Alviso and Benton measuring 110 feet by 100 feet, being part of Lot No. 1 in Block No. 1, North Range 2 East. Deed: Prior to World War I membership in the Santa Clara Verein dwindled. Only five active members remained. Of these, Mr. Lewis Kline was the only member who had any interest in the property. Kline rented the property to a steel metal fabricator and to other commercial users. Kline's second cousin, Delos Druffel inherited the property in 1966 and donated it to the Handicapped War Veterans in 1971.

Book 9489, p. 584. August 20, 1971.

Grantor: Delos Druffel

Grantee: Handicapped War Crafts and Salvage Shops.

"Being all of Lot #1, Block 1 North, Range 2 East, Measuring 151' x 100'."

4. Builder or contractor: Not known.
5. Notes on original plan and construction of building: An 1881 book on the History of Santa Clara County said, "Their hall, a neat structure, is frescoed and tastefully ornamented, and is 60 feet by 34 feet with a commodious stage at one end. The Club is divided into a turn-verein for gymnastic exercises, as well as being for dramatic and musical affairs. The building was entirely built by private subscription." (Munro-Fraser, History of Santa Clara County, p. 552).
6. Additions: If Munro-Fraser is accurate, it appears that the "commodious Hall" was built circa 1880 by Eberhard. However, as Eberhard was a member of the Santa Clara Verein, it is possible that construction would have taken place as early as 1872, when the adjacent parcel of land had been purchased. The first Sanborn Map for Santa Clara, dated 1887 which includes the Santa Clara Verein shows two rooms, the "Dance Hall" (right) and the smaller "Bar and Club Room" (left). Examination of the structure indicates that it is entirely possible that the "Bar and Club Room" could have been added after 1881 as indicated in Munro-Fraser. The windows on the left have plain trim and those on the hall, architrave trim. The floor level on the left is slightly lower than on the right. In the roof construction, the truss system on the left is nailed into the original roof. In the parapet, (from the back side), the delineation between the old and new parts is visible. However, this addition must have been completed by 1887, as the Sanborn map shows the Hall on the right-hand side and the smaller "Bar and Club Room" on the left. After the "Bar and Club Room" was added on, the front facade was made harmonious.

The 1891 Sanborn Map shows a porch added at the back of the "Bar and Club Room." The 1915 Sanborn Maps indicated a small addition on the left side towards the back. The present one story addition across most of the back of the Verein was also indicated. The shoddy shed additions around the three sides of the building were added after World War I when the Santa Clara Verein's original function as a club ceased.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

In the mid-1850s Germans started settling in Santa Clara. The numbers rose dramatically in the 1860s through the 1880s. The Germans were very influential in Santa Clara and in April 1868 the Santa Clara Verein was established. The Charter Members were: "C.W. Werner; F.C. Franck; Jacob Eberhard; C. Leibe; John Hetty; August Habich; Leopold Hart; William and August Gabriel; Henry Uhrbroock and Henry Albert." (Munro-Fraser, op cit.) In 1872 the members purchased a piece of land where they erected their club. By 1881 there were forty-five members. Its membership represented the most important people, economically and politically, in Santa Clara. The Eberhards started the tannery across from Santa Clara University and produced the "finest saddle and harness leather in California." (Cox, "Santa Clara's German Colony Mostly Memories Now," San Jose Mercury News, Oct. 6, 1858). The Klines owned the brewery around the corner from the Santa Clara Verein. Frederick Franck, a Mexican war veteran, gold-miner and former saddlemaker, helped organize the Santa Clara Fire Department in 1851, developed real estate in Santa Clara and was a State Senator. August Habich ran a steam feed mill. Anton Doll was a baker. George Lauch's Brewery was also near the Santa Clara Verein. Its members were also involved with nearby Santa Clara College, (now the University of Santa Clara). The College's Golden Jubilee was celebrated in 1901. Druffel acted as president on this occasion, and one of his aids was J.J. Eberhard.

Many activities took place at the Verein. Exercising, physical fitness, dramas, musicals, dances, graduation exercises were some of these activities. In interviews with old residents of the community, the most vivid recollection was of the social events. One lady fondly recalled how festive the Verein was at Christmas with its decorations, tree and parties.

Many of the old timers commented that the Verein was the "in" place in town. The Verein also rented their hall to other organizations. It must have been a popular place, as the paper is filled with activities taking place there. Headlines in the paper read "Native Sons of the Golden West will hold Annual Grand Ball in Turn Verein Hall" (December 7, 1909, page 1.); "Prominent Speakers will address Public on Behalf of the Commercial League at the Santa Clara Verein - Music will be furnished both vocal and instrumental" (April 1, 1902); "Mrs. Mary Weaver McCauley will appear in concert Friday, May 23 at the Santa Clara Verein Hall for this concert and dramatic recital. Whistling solos and recitative numbers." (May 13, 1902.)

Prior to World War I, membership in the club dwindled as many Germans moved away from the area. Anti-German feeling because of the war also was a factor. Only five members remained. One of them, Mr. Lewis Kline, ended up owning the Verein and rented it out to a sheet metal fabricator, which made gutters, and also for other commercial users. However, prior to World War II, Mr. Kline, a beer distributor, had a big masquerade party there, which is still talked about. After World War II, the Santa Clara Verein became a furniture warehouse, and more recently it was donated to the Handicapped War Veterans, who maintain a thrift shop here.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deeds, Tax Assessments and Maps, Santa Clara County Recorder's Office, 70 West Hedding Street, San Jose, California.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Butler, Phyllis F., The Valley of Santa Clara. Junior League of Santa Clara. San Jose, California, 1974

Gage, A.C., Editor, Santa Clara News. "Golden Jubilee - Santa Clara College, 1851-1901."

Munro-Fraser, J.P., History of Santa Clara County. San Francisco, California: Alley Bowen & Company, 1881.

Sanborn Maps, 1887 to present. Located at the City of Santa Clara, Planning Department, 1500 Warburton Avenue, Santa Clara, California.

San Jose City Directories, San Jose Public Library, 180 West San Carlos Street, San Jose, California.

Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission, Santa Clara County Heritage Resource Inventory, 1975 and 1979.

Sawyer, Eugene T., History of Santa Clara County. Historic Record Company, Los Angeles, 1922. (Reprint San Jose Historical Museum, undated.)

3. Newspapers:

Cox, Dick, "Santa Clara's German Colony Mostly Memories Now." San Jose Mercury News, October 6, 1958, no page.

Wise, Roger, "Santa Clara Renewal Hearing Spotlights Old City." San Jose Mercury News, April 8, 1969, p. 7.

Santa Clara News 1901-1910.

4. Interviews:

Irving Cabral, 1196 Jackson Street, Santa Clara, together with Mrs. Delia Binder, (Granddaughter, Senator F.C. Franck); Jack O'Neill, (former Chief of Police); and Mrs. Mabel Winberg, (long time resident of Santa Clara, aged 92), July 1979.

Telephone conversation: Mr. Delos Druffel, 75 St. Germain, San Francisco. His grandparents helped establish the Santa Clara Verein and were most influential in Santa Clara. Druffel inherited and donated the Santa Clara Verein to the present owners.

Prepared by: Sibyl McCormac Groff
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Summer 1979

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Santa Clara Verein has a parapeted front with large openings, and a noteworthy interior stenciled ceiling.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: With all three major building periods considered, the structure measures 60'-2" x 62'-2 3/4. With six bays, this one storied building is nearly square in plan.
2. Foundations: The foundation is sheathed with flush siding and is composed of wooden posts which sit on mud sills, supporting a joist and beam system that supports the first floor.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The building is sheathed with novelty siding and is painted white.
4. Structural system: The building is an example of balloon frame construction.

5. Porches, stoops: The main entrance door at the left of the street front is reached by three wooden steps flanked by pipe handrailing. The corrugated metal addition in the back, (west), has a recessed porch. Both the north and the south walls have shacks and open sheds built in a lean-to fashion against the building. These sheds and shacks are not architectural appendages of the original building, but are clumsy expedient structures built with salvaged materials.
6. Chimneys: There is a brick chimney supported on a wooden shelf at the south wall as well as a brick chimney at the ridge of the southern-most gable roof. Cylindrical metal ventilators with conical and circular caps rise from the peaks of both gable roofs. There are three ventilators on the northern gable and two ventilators on the southern gable,
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Both sets of paired doors in the street front have architrave trim with a cornice of cyma reversa molding. Over each door is a transom with two lights, separated by a vertical muntin. Both sets of double doors have two recessed panels and may be modern. The double door on the right side of the street front is no longer used, and the steps to it have been removed. The south wall has a door with transom above. The transom has three lights and two vertical muntins. The door is of crude construction.
 - b. Windows: The front doors are flanked by large windows with double-hung two-over-two-light sash now covered with wire screen. These four windows have the same cornice ornamentation of cyma reversa curve at the same level as the cornices of the doors, making for a unified front. The north wall has four windows of the same quality as those windows on the front, but these openings are considerably battered, and all are boarded up. The south wall has two double-hung windows with plain trim and two-over-two lights, but these windows are smaller than the windows on the north and east. Further back on the south wall there are two double-hung windows with plain trim, one with two-over-two lights and the other with four-over-four-lights. In the west wall there is one small window above the recessed porch. This flat roofed addition also has a double-hung window with the two-over-two-lights facing north from the stage area. In the rear of the original social hall, there is a window with plain trim and six-over-six-lights. This window is at the right-hand side of the stage in the social hall. It should be noted, that when the social hall stood by itself, without any of the additions, there was a row of four windows, exactly the same as the windows in the north wall, in its south side. These windows have become doors, or have simply become openings into the added rooms.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The building was apparently built in three stages, causing a complicated roof shape. The large social hall has a gable roof at the north section of the structure, and another gable roof structure was added parallel to this hall at the south. The parapet of the original social hall was then extended across the street front to unify the composition. At the rear of this addition, which is not as long as the original gabled roof structure, a one story flat-roofed structure was added that extends beyond the original gabled-roof structure. All roofs are covered with asbestos shingles.

9. Other features: The front is composed of two distinct sections, the original facade of the social hall to the right, and the left portion, which is a narrower imitator of the original elevation. Two pilasters mark the edges of the building, and one pilaster marks the seam where the addition took place. The middle pilaster is not at the center of the composition. The pilasters have decorative inset panels and applied circles that are surrounded by moldings. The pilasters terminate in large wide brackets that support a cornice below which is a plain frieze. The cornice has a small shed roof that slopes from the parapet. The cornice extends a small dimension beyond the sides of the building, where it is also supported on brackets. The parapet attempts to establish some symmetry for the street front and has two scooped-out end sections.

C. Descriptions of Interior:

1. Floor plan: Public access to the current thrift shop that occupies the building is at the left door. The left-hand side of the structure consists of five rooms sharing a maze-like relationship because of the needs of the present owners. From the first room on the left side of the building, a room used for storage and the cashier, the door on the right-hand wall leads to the former social hall, which is still not divided. The stage at the west wall is immediately apparent.
2. Stairways: Five wooden steps lead from the floor of the social hall to the stage level.
3. Flooring: The former social hall has 2 1/2" tongue-and groove hardwood flooring arranged in a decorative pattern. The former club rooms at one time had similar flooring, but are now covered with vinyl flooring tiles or linoleum. One former club room has 3 1/2" tongue-and groove hardwood flooring. The floors of the clubrooms are damaged.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are lath and plaster and are painted. The most important decorative features of the social hall is the hand-stenciled ceiling. The ceiling was apparently decorated when Eastlake design was fashionable. The plaster wall curves into the ceiling, the cove ceiling being supported from behind by 2 x 2's and 4 x 4's. The stenciled decoration on the wall begins at approximately the point where the wall starts bending, where there is a lambrequin border that includes a grape leaf motif. Above this, there is a Greek key band. Above this is a trompe l'oeil cornice and then a wide band that includes roundels and panels, all elaborately ornamented with linework. The colors of the painting are subdued, being cool grays, muted yellows and maroons with an occasional accent of bright red linework. There are roundels and panels repeated in patterns across the length of the ceiling. The vertical beaded wainscoting remains in the former social hall.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: Between the first two club rooms on the left leading into the former social hall, there are two doors with architrave trim and transoms. It should be noted that when the club rooms were added to the social hall, the quality of detail in the social hall was not repeated. The trim at the doors and windows in the club rooms does not match the original details. There is a modern door with architrave trim leading from the social hall to the westernmost club room.
 - b. Windows: The windows of the original Verein have architrave trim.
6. Decorative features: The proscenium arch of the former stage has a rectangular opening and is framed with architrave trim. A decorative arch hangs from the ceiling about twelve feet from the stage and forms one of the sides of the coved ceiling. The flat arch is stepped up at the center by quirked quarter circles and is framed by heavy moldings.
7. Mechanical equipment: The heating system is hung from the ceiling in the center of the former social hall. Some of the painted roundels have been removed to place mechanical ductwork. Cables, from which were suspended original lighting fixtures, are still hanging from the ceiling.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The tall trees shown on the Sanborn Map of 1887 are still standing. Directly across the street from the Santa Clara Verein is the Larder House which is also known as the German Colony House. Reputed to have been built in the 1860s, it was a stage stop. (Santa Clara County Heritage Resource Inventory). The surrounding area is both residential and commercial, and is one-half block from the University of Santa Clara campus. The Verein and the Larder House are the only survivors of urban renewal demolition that took Santa Clara's historic downtown in the 1960s.

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July 1979

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION:

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the County of Santa Clara. The 1979 summer project, the last of a three-year recording project in Santa Clara County, was completed under the general direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS; Kenneth L. Anderson, Principal Architect; and Sibyl McCormac Groff, Project Supervisor (Columbia University); with David Schaaf, Architectural foreman (Carnegie-Mellon University); Jan Cigliano (Oberlin College); and student architects William Coppa (University of Virginia), Jon Lourie (University of Maryland), Anne Munly (Princeton University), John Murphy (Texas Tech University), and Matthew Poe (Virginia Polytechnic University), at the HABS field office in Santa Clara, California. The drawings were edited in the HABS Washington Office in the summer of 1979 by architect David Schaaf. The historical and architectural data were edited by Jan Cigliano and Denys Peter Myers, architectural historians on the HABS staff in 1979 and 1981. Photographs were taken by photographer Jane Lidz in the summer of 1980.

Addendum to:
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