

Stonyford Museum makes grand debut

by Aimee Miles
of The Valley Mirror

STONYFORD — A collection of antique furniture, hand-wrought crafts, and curios chronicling the personal histories of a small ranching town, from California's tumultuous mining days to the World War II era, debuted Sunday to dozens of patrons.

The new Stonyford Museum unveiled a small, yet richly-displayed collection of personal artifacts which provide insightful glimpses into the lives of denizens of yore.

"When you are in here it's like a journey into the past," said Joyce Bond, who helps run the museum.

The museum is housed in the historic Stonyford town hall on Market Street; an airy, oblong room with a stage platform opposite the street entrance. Intricately composed tableaux of ancestral life — cooking implements, hand-woven basketry, framed sepia photographs, and other memorabilia artfully arranged on tables, piano tops, and cabinet shelves — invites not only inspection, but introspection.

The collection is presently comprised of loans and contributions from a few prominent ranching families; among them the Evanses, Moores, Bonds, and Walkups. Curators are hoping Sunday's open house will spur donations from other Stonyford families who have something of their own to share.

"The old-timers in Stonyford have always talked about wanting a museum," said Barbara Leach, president of the local Community Hall Association and a driving force behind the effort.

"This may not be the best of what's out there but it's our start," she said of the collection. She hopes it will continue to grow. "Maybe folks will think this is a worthwhile venture," Ms. Leach said.

The relics displayed on Sunday are a material testament to the lives and livelihoods of

Stonyford's native artisans, matriarchs, and patriarchs.

There's a set of Pomo Indian baskets handwoven by Ethel and Oscar McDaniel, an old wooden school desk from the Indian Valley School, and a saddle that carried Leroy Walkup and his shoebox full of bacon sandwiches to Snow Mountain for regular cattle check-ups.

Coiled around the saddlehorn is a decorative lead rope hand-braided by Stonyford fixture Lawrence "Sharky" Moore. His granddaughter, Zoe Brandenburger, remembers watching Sharky weave the ropes with strands of cord he'd buy at the store. He made them as gifts for friends and family, and in earlier days, he even dyed the strands himself. Several Sunday visitors professed to having received one.

There are older pieces in the collection: On one wall hangs a hand-stitched quilt facing, white with bands of colorful patchwork fabric sewn in interlocking rings. The handiwork of Sharky Moore's great great grandfather, a tailor by trade, the quilt dates to the mid 1800s, according to family lore.

Other pieces tell tales of heroes, eccentrics, and pathbreakers. Stonyford resident Jeff Applegate leant to the museum a small medical instrument cabinet that once belonged to his great, great aunt, osteopathist Nellie A. Allen. The first female doctor in northern California. Legend has it "Dr. Nellie" never married and never cut her hair; a photograph sitting atop the cabinet bears testament to the latter claim.

Much of the historical information accompanying the pieces has been provided by the families who donated. Museum staff are working to discover the provenance of a 19th century piano, well-kept by all appearances, that has long been a fixture of the old town hall.

David Isle, a retired Forest Service botanist who makes his home here, said he was "impressed with the variety and caliber of the descriptive mate-

rial" accompanying with the collection.

"It's just enough in depth to give detail to understand an item," he said, gesturing toward a Hoosier cabinet and a Sears & Roebuck ice box. Mr. Isle, too, has a lead rope from Sharky.

For Stonyford Museum's volunteer curators and planners, Sunday was the culmination of many months of planning.

Built in 1899 on land purchased with a \$1.00 gold coin from Stonyfordian John McDaniel, the old town hall building entertained decades of rodeo dances, traveling theatre productions, and other civic functions until a newer structure, planted a few paces away, heralded its temporary retirement.

The old hall languished, unoccupied, for several years. Funds made available by the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act provided the means for restoration.

Colusa County Supervisor Gary Evans, also a local contractor, did much of the work himself. Termite damage in the old building's foundation and rafters needed repairing; walls needed gutting to make room for new insulation and electrical wiring. Mr. Evans poured concrete around the outside of the building; refinished the original hardwood floors; installed shingled siding, and laid down a new roof.

The renovation ran from November to June, Mr. Evans calculates, and cost something in the neighborhood of \$120,000.

The new facade has a small, wheelchair-accessible portico and still smells of fresh paint.

"There's been...multi-generational folks from up here that had things from their families

wanted a place to display them and there was no such animal," Mr. Evans said.

"This gave them an opportunity."

The Stonyford Museum, a nonprofit venture, will be open every second and fourth Sunday from 1 p.m. To 4 p.m., or by appointment.

the citizens of Orland that the members of the Orland Police Officers' Association will continue to provide the highest level of service possible with the professionalism, integrity, and ethics that the members of this community have come to expect from their police department."

While her return has been announced, after a fashion, by the Orland City Manager, there are impediments: District Attorney Robert Maloney does not have the California Department of Justice report, the matter of criminal embezzlement charges has not been resolved and community confidence has not been fully addressed.

Still, said Acting Chief Tolle, many citizens were clamoring for her return. Mr. Poczubut still praises her public relations and fund raising efforts.

However, one senior law enforcement observer said yesterday that after the city released too much information, the details of internal affairs investigations and a separate

"They were taking their time taking stuff out of my car. I am standing outside in a sheer nightgown. I asked if I could get something to put on my body."

The officers of the law finally assented, she said, but in a smart-arsed way.

It seemed to Ms. Henderson that the process was drawn out for the convenience of the *Wild Justice* filmmakers.

She recalls being hand-

was to be reinstated last but so far, "Nobody's told nothing."

He said that matter had to be up in a closed session. He said that he thought Mr. Poczubut dragged the Carr matter out until he discovered his own which was non-renewal, moved in then.

Councilman Bruce Ro also did return a call.

But Councilman Charlie said, "I don't even know [former city attorney] The Andrews even commented is personnel issue, as we I been informed all along, can't even discuss it."

In another paper Mr. draws was quoted as saying Carr's dismissal would be "harsh."

Mr. Gee was not pleased. "Personally, I think he [Mr. draws] was way out of line. thought was all along she not going to be reinstated."

Mr. Gee was asked what the council could do to Poczubut if they didn't like action. "We've already done he said.

Found, from Page One

But it was not to be had.

The bomb squad detonated grenade at 5:14 p.m., and the ensuing fire was extinguished.

Within 24 hours of the report, the U.S. Forest Service received a second report of explosives and a possible gre-

Abuse, from Page One

because of being afraid of nearby campers and because of her physical condition. She wanted to be near a bathroom, she said, and not a "fragile Porta-Potty."

She was parked in "Recreation Circle" area near the

officers knew she was drunk because she was on probation for DUI. We are unclear on how this follows.

She freely admits that she had a probation for DUI but that was three years and 10 months ago and, in any event, she was not driving.

Reports show her blood alcohol

said, "Oh! Porta-Potties just too fragile."

She could not tell how many *Wild Justice* camera operators there were, but "At least two, a male and a female."

And, "They had huge square lights. I could not see the badges of the officers. They could have been anyone pretending