

by Gail Fretwell-Hugger

This year - 2015 - being the 100th anniversary of the famous Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) held in San Francisco in 1915, "ROOTS" would like to celebrate a local landmark of the PPIE. But first, the back story.

The 1915 PPIE was a grand celebration, commemorating the opening of the Panama Canal and also to showcase the City, newly rebuilt after the 1906 earthquake, not quite a decade before. The huge endeavor stretched for 3 miles along the shoreline of San Francisco from Fort Mason to the Presidio waterfront. On 630 acres of reclaimed Bayfront tidal marsh, 31 nations and almost every U.S. state built exhibit halls, pavilions and attractions connected by 47 miles of walkways. It was said it would take an individual year to see everything at this enormous fair.

The Palace of Machinery was the largest structure in the world at the time, so big a plane flew through it. The Horticulture Palace had a glass dome larger than St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The 40-story Tower of Light held 102,000 pieces of multicolored glass, illuminated by electric light at night. When the fog came in, 48 spotlights of 7 different colors illuminated the sky to resemble the Northern Lights. The exposition fair was not so much about history as it was about new technology - from farming to flying to Henry Ford's Model T auto and so much more.

The buildings were all made to be temporary and just 9 months after the fair opened, it closed in November 1915. Almost 19 million visitors had come from all over the U.S. and from countries around the world. In 1916, the buildings began to be destroyed or dismantled. Some were sold. The last surviving building in San Francisco is the beautiful Palace of Fine Arts. Local Cupertino resident and CHS member, Paula Quintero's grandfather, Federico Quintero was an Italian stone mason and did much of the decorative work on the Fine Arts building. His home in Monta Vista displayed columns and fountains showcasing his fine talents.

And now, a bit about the famous House of Hoo Hoo sponsored by the "Concatenated Order of Hoo Hoos", whose membership at one time extended throughout many of the U.S. states as well as extending into a number of foreign countries. The Hoo Hoos were a Lumberman's organization and commissioned the well-known architect, Bernard Maybeck, to design the building for the 1915 PPIE as a clubhouse for all lumbermen everywhere. It is said that the term or "Hoo Hoo!" is used as a warning signal when a tree-faller is about to topple a forest giant.

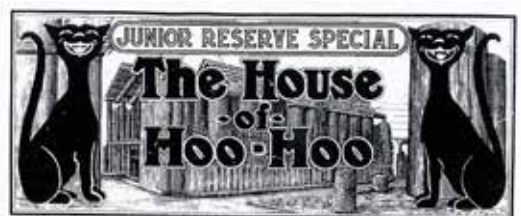
An early Cupertino developer, George Hensley, saw a gold-mine in the Hoo Hoo House, and planned to use it after the fair as a club house/dance pavilion to perk up interest in his newly acquired land in the Monta Vista area of Cupertino. The huge log structure was dismantled, placed on barges, unloaded onto horse drawn



wagons at Alviso port and was taken to the top of Stevens Creek Road and what was then known as Inspiration Heights - a high point near what is now Foothill Blvd with a then unobstructed view of nearly 50 miles on a clear day. The exterior logs weighed 8 to 10 tons and the structure included roof trusses and beams, wood partition walls balcony verandahs and interior hardwood paneling from all parts of the world. There was also an observation tower with stairway. The steep part of old Stevens Creek Road that now angles off to the right about halfway up the hill was known in the old days as Hoo Hoo Hill. Prospective auto buyers would tell salesmen, "If this car can climb Hoo Hoo Hill, I'll buy it!"

The Hoo Hoo House was a lively place on Saturday nights, featuring orchestras and bands playing the musical favorites of the era for some years. Sadly, on August 16, 1928, the Hoo Hoo building passed into oblivion and lit up the entire West Side in a blaze that was visible for miles and lasted for many hours. An era and a local landmark saved from the grand PPIE Fair passed into history.

There are quite a few on-line sites with wonderful histories and beautiful pictures of the 1915 PPIE and even pictures of the Hoo Hoo House.



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