

INTRODUCTION



Old houses tell wonderful stories, and the histories of the early faculty homes at Stanford tell of the beginnings of a great university through the professors and families of those early years.

This book, the latest in a series about campus houses built before 1930, includes reports on 17 houses in what is generally known as the San Juan subdivision, district, or neighborhood (see map inside the front cover).

Today's San Juan neighborhood includes the residential area bounded by Alvarado Row on the northeast, Campus Drive to the northwest, Junipero Serra Boulevard to the southwest, and Frenchman's Road and Coronado Avenue on the east. The area also includes student residences, thus keeping alive the Stanfords' wish for a residential campus with faculty and students as neighbors.

The first house on San Juan Hill was built in 1900 by George B. and Linda Cooksey, friends of the Stanfords, as a winter home. It looked down at the main residential streets of Alvarado and Salvatierra. The neighborhood started growing in earnest in 1905, when Harris J. Ryan built his house at 9 (now 607) Cabrillo Street and William F. Durand built at 11 (now 623) Cabrillo.

In the early days, street names and numbers changed, but by 1930 most of them were set. The oldest houses in this book, built on a stretch of road on the north side of the reservoir at the apex of San Juan Hill, had three different addresses. From 1907 to 1910, the road was called Aibonito, but President David Starr Jordan considered the name unappealing and after 1910 renamed it Cabrillo. Between 1924 and 1928, it took on the name Santa Ynez Street, as an extension of the road that ran up from Alvarado Row (maps and telephone directories give conflicting names for those four years).

In the 1920s, the university, needing more faculty housing, pushed into a new area, known as San Juan Subdivision No. 3. It included lots along Gerona Road, Santa Maria Avenue, and El Escarpado Way.

All the houses featured here can be described as eclectic period style, which was dominant from the late 19th century up to about 1940. This movement borrowed from many architectural traditions. The five earliest houses, built before World War I, range from Craftsman and Italian Renaissance to California cottage and adobe, with two Tudors in the mix. More than half of the houses described here are in predominantly Tudor style and were built in the late 1920s. Spanish eclectic, English cottage, and French country also appear. The dominance of the Tudor style shows off spectacularly in the four houses on El Escarpado Way, off Gerona Road near Campus Drive. Three are by Charles Sumner, the fourth by Binder and Curtis; see the introduction to this street on page 14.

The houses in this book highlight the careers of several prominent Bay Area architects and builders of the early 20th century, in particular John Kennedy Branner, son of geology professor and Stanford's second president, John Casper Branner; Birge Clark, a Stanford graduate and son of art professor and architect Arthur Bridgeman Clark; and Charles Kaiser Sumner, who designed more than 30 campus houses, including seven (perhaps eight) of the houses in this book. Branner and Clark each designed two houses, and John Bakewell Jr. of Bakewell and Brown of San Francisco, Binder and Curtis of San Jose, A. W. Smith of Oakland, and Walter H. Ratcliff Jr. of Berkeley each designed one. Designer-contractor George Wilbert Mosher also designed and built one house.

Separate biographies of Branner, Clark, and Sumner begin on page 6.

We hope that those who read these accounts—researched over the past several years by numerous volunteers for the Stanford Historical Society—will enjoy them and develop an appreciation for Stanford's rich heritage of residential architecture.

—MARIAN LEIB ADAMS