

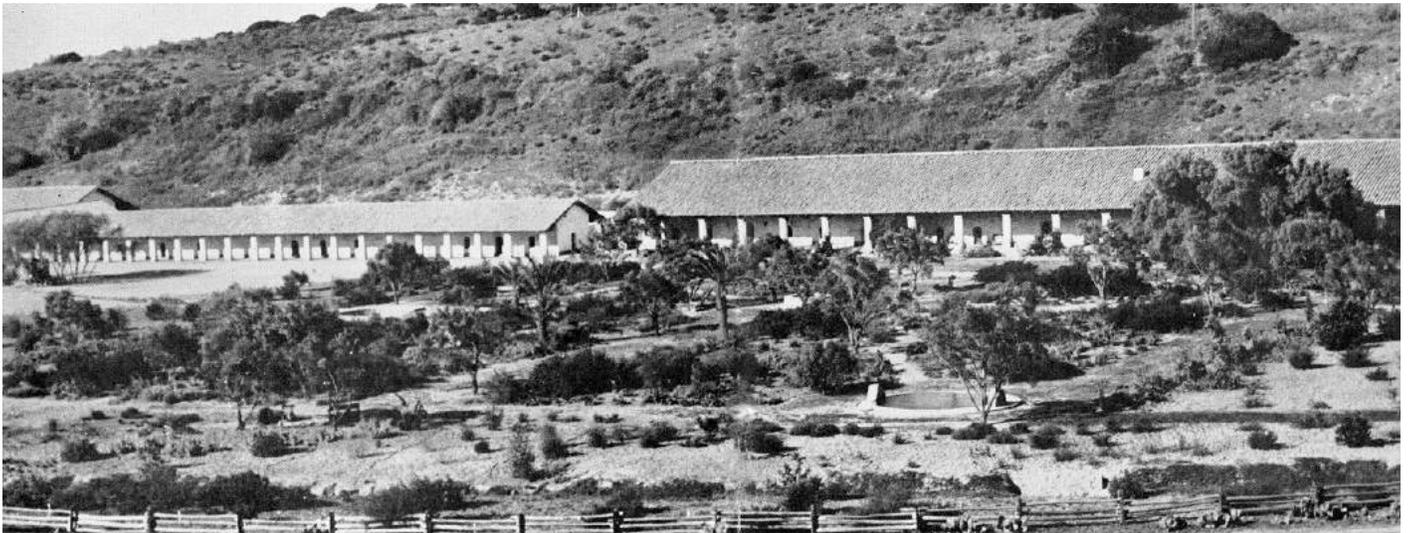
# THE LEGACY

Lompoc Valley Historical Society's Quarterly Newsletter

## The Work of CCC Landscape Architect Edwin Denys Rowe in Lompoc and his Pines on the Burton Mesa

By Susan Chamberlin

*This is the first part of a two part series*



The story of the Civilian Conservation Corps' reconstruction of Lompoc's Mission La Purisima Concepción in the 1930s is well known. Lost over the years was the story of the design by engineer Wallace C. Penfield and landscape architect Louis Brandt of what was called the "Mission Garden" and its installation in front of the Monastery Residence Building by landscape foreman-landscape architect Edwin Denys Rowe who researched, located, propagated, or moved in the plants grown there and planted them with the assistance of young men enrolled in the CCC. He and his team of men also installed the landscape for the entire mission grounds. <sup>1</sup>For full details see "The CCC 'Mission Garden' at La Purisima and its Forgotten Designers" in *Eden: The Journal of the California Garden & Landscape History Society* (vol. 22, no. 4) at <https://cglhs.org/resources/Documents/EDEN%20Fall%202019%20digital.pdf>. This article expands on the life of E. D. Rowe and his work in Lompoc.

*Completed about 1937, the "Mission Garden" featured trucked-in, mature olive and date palm trees that contributed an atmosphere of antiquity to the Civilian Conservation Corps' reconstruction of Mission La Purisima. The Burton Mesa is directly behind the buildings. Photo credit: Lompoc Valley Historical Society Archives*

From the beginning, the Mission Garden was meant to be an attractive "setting" for the reconstructed mission when it opened to the public. It was not intended to be a replica or restoration of the original garden at the mission—the location and layout of which was unknown. That garden was undoubtedly an informal, simple *huerta* for vegetables and herbs, not a large ornamental garden, which is the way the Mission Garden was envisioned by its many early planners, who were influenced by the Colonial Revival style popular at the time.

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Within its formal layout, the Mission Garden was conceived as a living museum of plants imported by the Franciscan colonizers of Alta California as well as native plants utilized by the Native American Indians who taught the Franciscans about medicinal and other uses for endemic plants. Rowe was already a well-regarded authority on native plants. His new research into their medicinal uses by Indians throughout California was based on what was known at the time. He did not have access to specific, local Chumash uses or the ethnographic notes compiled from about 1911 by John P. Harrington, which included his Lompoc area consultant, Fernando Librado.<sup>2</sup>



*Aerial view of the Civilian Conservation Corps' Twin Camps facilities on the Burton Mesa (top left) with (to the right) the reconstructed Monastery Residence Building and its romanticized, formal "Mission Garden" laid out in front of it. Ed Rowe's nursery beds, where plants were raised in cans recycled from the mess hall, is below the garden, and the keyhole-shaped, original parking area is above it. No other mission buildings had been reconstructed yet when this photo was taken.*

*Photo credit: Lompoc Valley Historical Society Archives.*

One of at least five children, Edwin Denys Rowe—known to everyone as Ed—was born in Finchley, England on January 18, 1881. His

father, Charles, was a hosier, a respectable trade that enabled the family to employ two servants. Ed attended Mill Hill School, and in 1897 began an unpaid horticultural apprenticeship at a commercial nursery, Cannel and Sons, in Swanley, England. In 1900 he undertook two years as a paid "journeyman" at a nursery in Germany. Not long after his return to England he boarded a ship for the U.S. and emigrated by himself in 1903 at age 22. His occupation on the passenger list is gardener. Rowe contributed notes on growing chrysanthemums in America to the prestigious British publication, *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, from Adrian, Michigan, where he was a propagator in the N. Smith and Son nursery.<sup>3</sup> Arriving in Santa Barbara in 1904, he went to work for the now legendary nurseryman Dr. Francesco Franceschi. Horticultural historian Harry M. Butterfield says that Rowe "restored" the patio (cloister) garden at the Santa Barbara Mission, and that Rowe told him "there was not a vestige of the early garden left." Butterfield dates Rowe's work to 1900, but because Rowe didn't arrive in Santa Barbara until 1904 (and had died before his friend Butterfield could consult him for this 1961 article) it is most likely that he was employed to install the 1903 redesign of the mission garden (or a version of it) by Newsom and Newsom Architects of San Francisco.<sup>4</sup>

On one of the many forms he filled out to work for the Department of the Interior, which administered the CCC, Rowe described himself as a landscaping general foreman in the period from 1904 to 1912 associated with nurseryman and landscape architect Peter Riedel. Yet in a family history compiled by one of Riedel's children it says that Riedel did not arrive in Santa Barbara until the summer of 1905 when he opened a nursery and later worked "in conjunction with" Rowe. Also thanks to his connection with Rowe and landscape architect Ralph T. Stevens, Riedel was able to "expand his nursery and begin his long career in garden design and construction."<sup>5</sup> I suspect that because Riedel took over Franceschi's nursery in



1909 and Franceschi returned to Italy in 1913, it was more practical for Rowe to put the now well-known Riedel's name in the tiny box on his 1935 government application for permanent employment.

In 1910 tall, slim, and handsome Ed Rowe married Frances Welch of Santa Barbara, whose parents were from Ireland. Perhaps his acquaintance with the family explains his reputed fondness for Bushmills Irish Whiskey. Their daughter, Barbara, was born in 1911. By 1912 Rowe was self-employed as a "landscape gardener" (the design-build title in wide use before the American Society of Landscape Architects was founded.) Also in 1912 Rowe

*Edwin Denys Rowe, who planted the "Mission Garden" at La Purisima, explains to high school girls Betty McLaughlin (left) and Gladys Pendley that these hollyhocks (Althea sp.) are among the plants that the Spanish introduced to the new world.*

*Photo by Wilkes, c. 1941, courtesy Community Development and Conservation Collection. SBHC Mss 1. Department of Special Research Collections, UCSB Library, University of California, Santa Barbara.*

compiled a booklet with Charlotte Bowditch entitled *Trees, Shrubs and Plants at Esquina d'Oro*, the name of her property located in the fashionable Upper East neighborhood near the mission in Santa Barbara.<sup>6</sup>

Rowe is described as the landscape architect in

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a 1916 professional journal for a residence being designed by architect Russell Ray for Edward Lowe on Sycamore Canyon Road in Montecito, the area favored by many wealthy residents of Santa Barbara. With newly added acreage, the project was actually a redesign of an earlier estate. Typical of the times, in 1920 it was dubbed *El Eliseo* and redesigned again, but Rowe was on to other things.<sup>7</sup> He developed and managed several of the ranches owned by C.B. and Mary Raymond in particular their 200-acre Montecito estate on East Valley Road called *Rancho San Carlos*.<sup>8</sup> In the 1920 census Rowe is listed as a landscape architect. The winter of 1926-1927 was spent in Honolulu, where he was in charge of the planting and construction of the grounds of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. The landscape design was by Ralph Stevens, and Peter Riedel did construction supervision here as well.

The Great Depression ruined the businesses of many landscape architects, and it apparently did not spare Rowe's. Fortunately for the unemployed, newly-elected president Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Emergency Conservation Work Act (soon to evolve into the Civilian Conservation Corps.) By then a naturalized U.S. citizen and a widower with a grown daughter, 53-year-old Rowe began temporary employment in July 1934 as a Landscape Foreman with the Department of the Interior National Park Service's Emergency Conservation Work Camp SP-29. He also participated in the early planning meetings for the La Purisima Mission reconstruction project. Less than two years later, he had 8,000 plants growing in containers in the nursery area of La Purisima, including 125 different kinds of native plants.<sup>9</sup>

Most of these plants were grown in cans recycled from the mess hall galley and were destined for the Mission Garden, but among them were numerous native California pine species that

Rowe would plant on the Burton Mesa by hook or by crook, one might say.

The botanically-unique Burton Mesa directly behind the La Purisima mission reconstruction project was the location of the CCC facilities and park headquarters. Called the Twin Camps, two CCC companies slept in barracks here. Years later Rowe recounted the story of his pine tree planting on the Mesa in a letter to a Co-Operative Extension Forester. In the late summer of 1935 I collected seed of *Pinus radiata*, *muricata*, *coulteri* and *sabiniana* from trees in Santa Barbara County, and procured seed of *torreyana* from Guy Fleming; these were sown in the fall and winter of 1935, and potted into small containers (milk cans) in the spring and summer of 1936, in the spring of 1937 they went into gallon cans and some were put into five gallon cans in the spring of 1938...I had hoped to plant these on the Mesa, but was unable to get authority to do so, since the policy of the State Park was not to plant anything not indigenous to the district.

In the summer whilst building a road through the brush on the Mesa I found a small group of *Pinus muricata*, young trees, evidently seedlings from a solitary tree that had been burnt off some years previously. This evidence was sufficient to warrant the drafting of a planting plan, on this plan we showed trees along the road and a larger planting on some land that had been cleared some years previously, and was gradually going back to its original condition. This plan was accepted, theoretically *Pinus muricata* was the only one that should have been planted, but I had the other and was very anxious to see how they would do under the conditions that existed.<sup>10</sup>

Noting the soil type was sand over clay, he goes

on to describe that the young trees had no subsequent care, including irrigation, when two or three hundred were planted on the Mesa in December 1938 following the first rain. Almost all survived with the exception of a couple of species that were not really ready to plant out, and he had poor success with piñon pine (*P. monophyla*; only one made it) and *Pinus remorata* (only four or five survived; Rowe raised them from seed collected by Guy Fleming.)<sup>11</sup>



*Native California pine tree of unknown species planted by Ed Rowe and his crew of CCC enrollees in December 1938 at the Twin Camps on the Burton Mesa with camp flag pole in the distance. Courtesy of California State Parks, Photo 090-31627.*

By 1938, when Rowe planted the pines on the Mesa, the Mission Garden was essentially complete as the setting for the reconstructed Monastery Residence Building. Rowe and his crew of CCC men had transplanted mature, mission-era appropriate olive and date palm trees from miles away to give the garden the appearance of antiquity. In September 1937 the La Purisima State Historical Monument opened to the public (later to become La Purisima Mission State Historic Park.) Rowe continued to maintain the garden, give tours, and work on other parts of the Monument grounds, but the full reconstruction of the rest of the major mission buildings would not be finished until 1941.

***The second part of this two part series will be continued in Legacy 143***

<sup>1</sup>Anon. "Mission Rebuilding Progresses Rapidly." *The Lompoc Record*, October 23, 1936, 1. I am omitting many citations and acknowledgments from this article as they can be found in my article, "The CCC 'Mission Garden' at La Purisima and its Forgotten Designers." *Eden: The Journal of the California Garden & Landscape History Society*, 22:4 (Fall 2019) 14-37. See also in the same issue Chamberlin, "Louis Brandt (1887-1939): Landscape Architect for the National Park Service in California," 38-39.

**The rest of Part 1's end notes (2-11) for this two-part article will appear in Legacy 143. Also the "Acknowledgments" for both parts will be included at the end of Part 2 in our next issue, Fall 2020.**

**February , March & April 2020  
Memorials & Membership**

**Total Number of Members: 377**

**Memorials**

**Janet Duncan DeGraf**

**Millie Dutra**

**Shirley Tognetti Morinini**

**Paul Tognetti**

**Richard Grossini**

## My name is Ken Ostini,

I am the new President of the Lompoc Historical Society, taking over from Karen Paaske who served for 8 years. It will be difficult replacing Karen as she has done an outstanding job, much thanks to her.

My family has very deep roots in the Lompoc Valley, both the Collier's and Ostini's go back over 100 years and worked on farms and ranches their entire lives. My grandfather Oscar Collier came to the Lompoc Valley in the very early 1900's from Kansas, while working in the Purisima oil fields, he met my grandmother Linnie Lee who came here from Minnesota, who helped her mother Carrie Lee cook for the workers. They were married in 1911 living and working in the Santa Barbara area on the Winchester ranch prior to moving to the Salsipuedes ranch in 1918 on Santa Rosa road. Here they raised 9 children: Harry (wife Florence Jensen), Robert (Bob) (wife Vista Viola Moon), Lawrence (wife Patricia), Virginia (husband Harland Wilkins), Barbara (Helen) (husband Reldon Dunlap, Ed Walter), Glenora (Glenny) (husband Charles Howard Ward), Oscar (Alan) (wife Mona Board), my mother, Frances (husband Joe Ostini, my parents) and John (Red) wife Janice Hanson).

My grandfather, Peter Ostini came to the Lompoc Valley in the very early 1900's from Bellinzona, Switzerland. In 1911 he married my grandmother Maria Dettamanti from Dervio, Italy. Peter and Maria raised 5 children; Hilda (Paaske) husband Deb, Alfred, Josie (Faletti) husband John, Joe (my father) wife Frances Collier and Harry, wife Mary Silva, who also lived on the ranch with their 2 children Larry and Susan (deceased). They were raised on farms on the west valley, Packard Ranch (now Vandenberg AFB), then finally on the Ostini ranch off of Hapgood road east of Lompoc (where my brother and sister and myself were raised). All my aunts and uncles are deceased, except my Aunt Janice in Buellton (who is related to the Manfrina's).



My parents raised me, my older brother Ed (deceased in 2007), he was married to Mariete Van Ryn of Santa Maria, they have 3 children, Peter Eddie and Anna, my sister Donica (Doni O'Laughlin) who lives in Chico, CA with her husband Kevin, they have 3 children, Zane, Meagan and Shannon. As for me I was married to Laura Minnery of Los Altos, CA until 1998, we had 4 children, Patrick (deceased in 2002), Nicholas, living in Portland, OR, Michael, living in Stony

Point, NC and Katie, living in Milford, KS with her husband Armando, who is in the US Army and their baby daughter Stella. I am now married, since 2006, to my wonderful wife Toni (Yuhas), who has 1 daughter Melissa, with her husband Mark have 4 children, Michelle, Mason, Maxwell and Madeleine. We love to travel, the theater, music and spending time with our 7 grandkids.

Growing up on a farm/ranch provided great freedom as a kid, we could roam thousands of acres, which included neighbors' ranches; Acin's, Luis's, Mendez's, Rivaldi's, Hayes, Machado's,

Campbell's (Bob and Geri now own our old family ranch), they have been life-long friends. I think some of the fondest memories I have growing up was not only the freedom to roam, but the many times all us kids from neighboring ranches would get together at someone's reservoir for swimming, or a baseball game, or a dance party, or a family BBQ or going swimming below the dam at Cachuma. It was always easy to create an adventure with my sister and cousin Larry. My Uncle Alfred, who never married, lived on the ranch and he could



also help provide us kids with crazy activities. Needless to say we never really had a dull moment, between ranch chores, cousins, neighbor friends and thousands of acres to roam, couldn't ask for a much better way to grow up.

## 1918 – 1919 Flu Epidemic at Huyckville by Myra Huyck Manfrina

At Huyckville during the 1918-19 Flu Epidemic the house on the West hillside in front of the long row of eucalyptus trees was occupied by two of Minnie Huyck's sons and their wives. Lloyd and Marie Pierce Huyck had married 23 Apr. 1918 and Edgar and Lillie Houghton Huyck had married in December 1918. Minnie, their mother and youngest son Cedric had moved into town at 1223 W Ocean in 1919 and Alma the youngest daughter was living with sister Etta Day in town. The hillside house had been made into a duplex by Dec. 1918 for the two boys, their wives and Edgar's infant daughter, Ilene. Edgar and Lloyd farmed the ranch which extended over the hill to



Surf.

They all came down with the flu, and everyone who came from town to help them, got it. All the beds in the house were full. Old Doctor Heiges trotted down in his horse and buggy from town, that was also full of sick flu victims. Back in town he had evidently run into Marie Huyck's dad, Al Pierce, and informed him of the situation. Al got his place at 612 W Locust (the Henry McCabe ranch) ready for his wife Rosy to take over the care of their animals, hopped on his horse and galloped to Huyckville to take care of the flu victims and all the ranch animals and do the daily chores.

Before he left his own home, Rosy secured a sock soaked in kerosene to his shirt as she had heard it was a deterrent against germs. Al wore it during his stay at Huyckville. It evidently worked because he didn't get the flu and all his patients eventually got well.

Another remedy keeping the germs away was an Asphidity Bag hung around the neck, filled with a bunch of herbs – fennel, poke weed, sassafras, sage, or likely whatever was handy, boiled up and mixed with a salve or honey—it was said to smell terrible – guess why. It worked was no one would come near you – might just work today with Covid 19. Anyway, these were used in the Polio epidemic in the 1940's and '50's also. I'm just guessing at the concoction; I don't have any first hand knowledge of a recipe. Don't know how my Grandfather didn't succumb to the kerosene fumes.

*Minnie Huyck family hillside home at Huyckville, husband Edgar, Sr. had died in 1906, leaving her with 8 kids. That home, and the other two that were on the 3000 acre ranch, ended up in the Camp Cooke mock village in 1941.*



*Newlyweds Lloyd and Marie Huyck seated at the top of the front stairs in 1918.*

## Up and Coming Events...

**Have been canceled or postponed until further notice. Check the Historical Society's Website for updates.**

**[Lompochistory.org](http://Lompochistory.org)**

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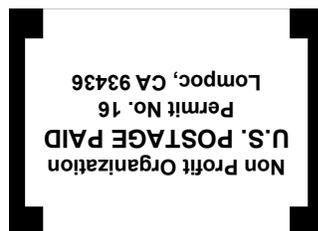
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