



PASADENA PERMIT CENTER

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REQUEST FOR APPEAL

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Project Address: 552 ELDORA RD

Case Type (MCUP, TTM, etc.) and Number:

Hearing Date: April 24th 2012 Appeal Deadline: May 04 2012

APPELLANT INFORMATION

APPELLANT: Gary Prezeau

Telephone: (626) 616-5257

Address: 552 ELDORA RD

Fax: (626) 797-0171

City: PASADENA State: CA Zip: 91104

Email: garycogito@yahoo.com

APPLICANT (IF DIFFERENT):

I hereby appeal the decision of the:

- Hearing Officer, Design Commission, Historic Preservation, Zoning Administrator, Director of Planning and Development, Film Liaison

REASON FOR APPEAL

The decision maker failed to comply with the provisions of the Zoning Code, General Plan or other applicable plans in the following manner (use additional sheets if necessary):

- 1) Have additional information regarding house in Foresta: The house currently there postdates her significant work
2) Have additional information regarding 552 Eldora Rd: See document: 552 Eldora Rd, the Sargent house
3) Her deep roots in Pasadena, as expressed by her biographer, Fernando Peña losa, and Pasadena should honor her

Signature of Appellant

Date 05/03/12

OFFICE USE ONLY
PLN # 2012-00097 CASE # PRJ #
DESCRIPTION Application for Landmark Designation of 552 Eldora Rd.
DATE APPEAL RECEIVED 5/03/2012 APPEAL FEES \$ 792.00 + 22.56 = 814.56 RECEIVED BY JAW

ATTACHMENT D

2-RFA Rev: 1/18/07

05/03/2012

Gary Prézeau
552 Eldora Rd
Pasadena CA, 91104
May 3rd 2012

Pasadena Permit Office
175 N. Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for your consideration of 552 Eldora Rd as a landmark honoring Shirley Sargent. Please see attached summary of Shirley Sargent's strong connection to Pasadena: *552 Eldora Rd, the Sargent house*. We would like to emphasize three things:

- 552 Eldora Rd in Pasadena is the house where Shirley Sargent came of age as a writer and as an adult who overcame the crippling disease of dystonia to become the foremost historian of Yosemite.
- The home she built in Foresta in 1961 and where she wrote her most famous work on John Muir burned down in 1990. She built a new house on that location after the fire, but that new structure post-dates her most significant work.
- Shirley won a number of awards during her lifetime, but we would like to mention the one she was awarded posthumously: the 2005 Courage Award created to recognize people with dystonia who inspire others with their vitality (please see <http://www.dystonia-foundation.org/filebin/pdf/ddsummer05.pdf>). Shirley became wheelchair-bound at the young age of 14 and would die at the ripe old age of 77 after inspiring countless people, including her biographer, Fernando Peñalosa, who we cite liberally in the attached document.

Shirley Sargent's roots in Pasadena were as deep as anywhere else in America and we should be proud to claim her as one of our own.

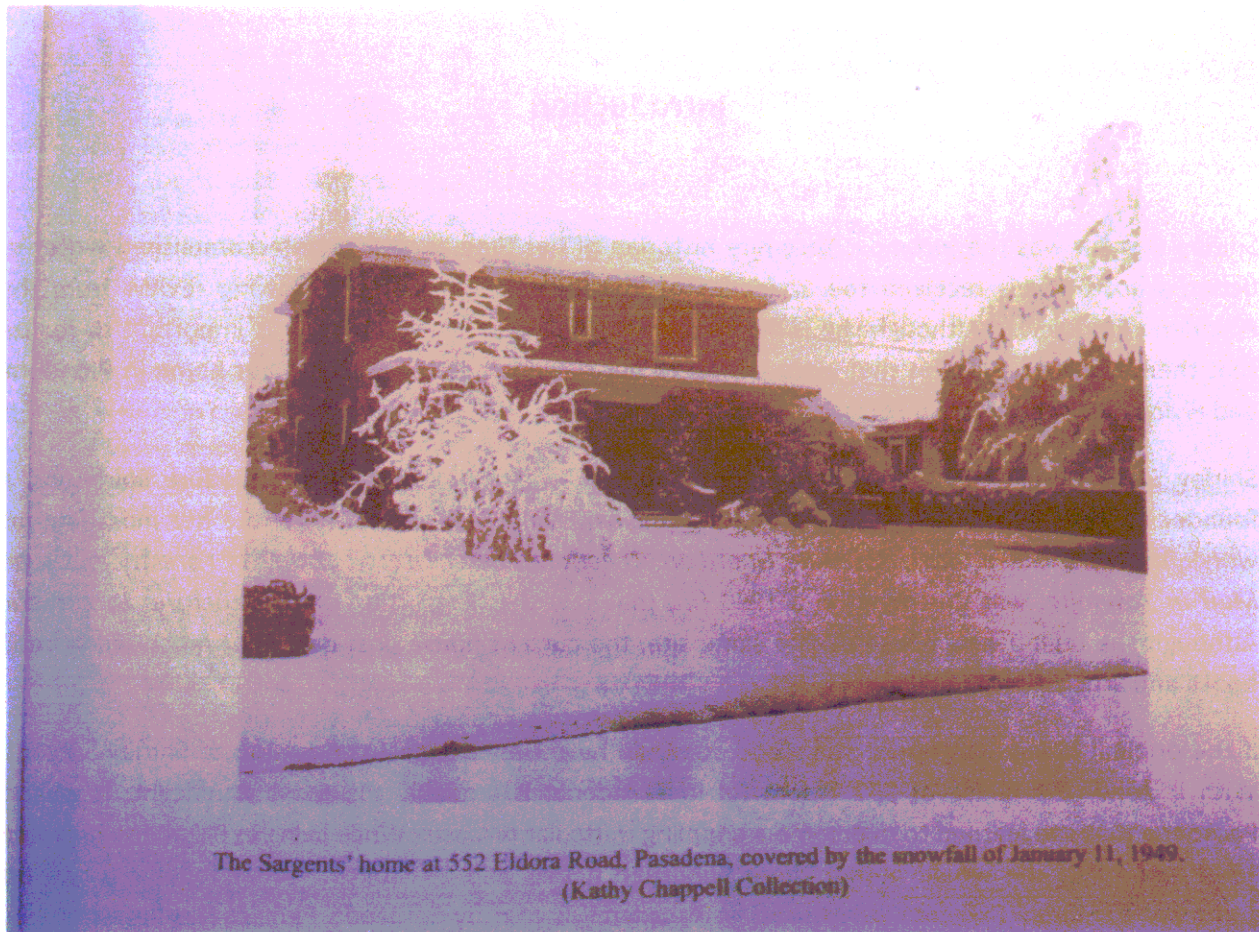
Sincerely,

Gary Prézeau

Enc: *552 Eldora Rd, the Sargent house*.



552 Eldora Rd Today.



552 Eldora Rd when the Sargents lived there.

Introduction

Shirley Sargent was the foremost Yosemite historian of her time as well as an accomplished writer of fiction whose novels received the accolades of literary critics including a glowing review from the *Pasadena Star-News*. Although she is best known for her work on Yosemite, it is important to realize that there exists two locales that were critical to her development as a writer: her home in Pasadena and *Flying Spur*, her home in Foresta.

Shirley Sargent built *Flying Spur* in 1961 on land that originally belonged to Theodore Solomons, a founder of the *Sierra Club*. Unfortunately, the original *Flying Spur* where she wrote her most famous works, including *Galen Clark*, *Yosemite Guardian*, *Theodore Parker Lukens: Father of Forestry* and *John Muir in Yosemite*, was destroyed in a 1990 fire that saw the destruction of 45 structures in Foresta. Although she built a new house on the same site, the current house post-dates her most widely read books and articles which no longer exists.

If the original *Flying Spur* house still stood, it would have the strongest connection to Shirley Sargent. With it gone, the house at 552 Eldora Rd in Pasadena, is arguably the most significant. It was in Pasadena that she learned to overcome a crippling muscular disease. While living in Pasadena between 1940 and 1960, she would author three published novels and 29 stories. What follows is a short summary of Shirley Sargent's deep roots in Pasadena as told by Fernando Peñalosa in his biography titled *Shirley Sargent: Yosemite Historian*. The page number locating specific information in the biography is given in parenthesis.

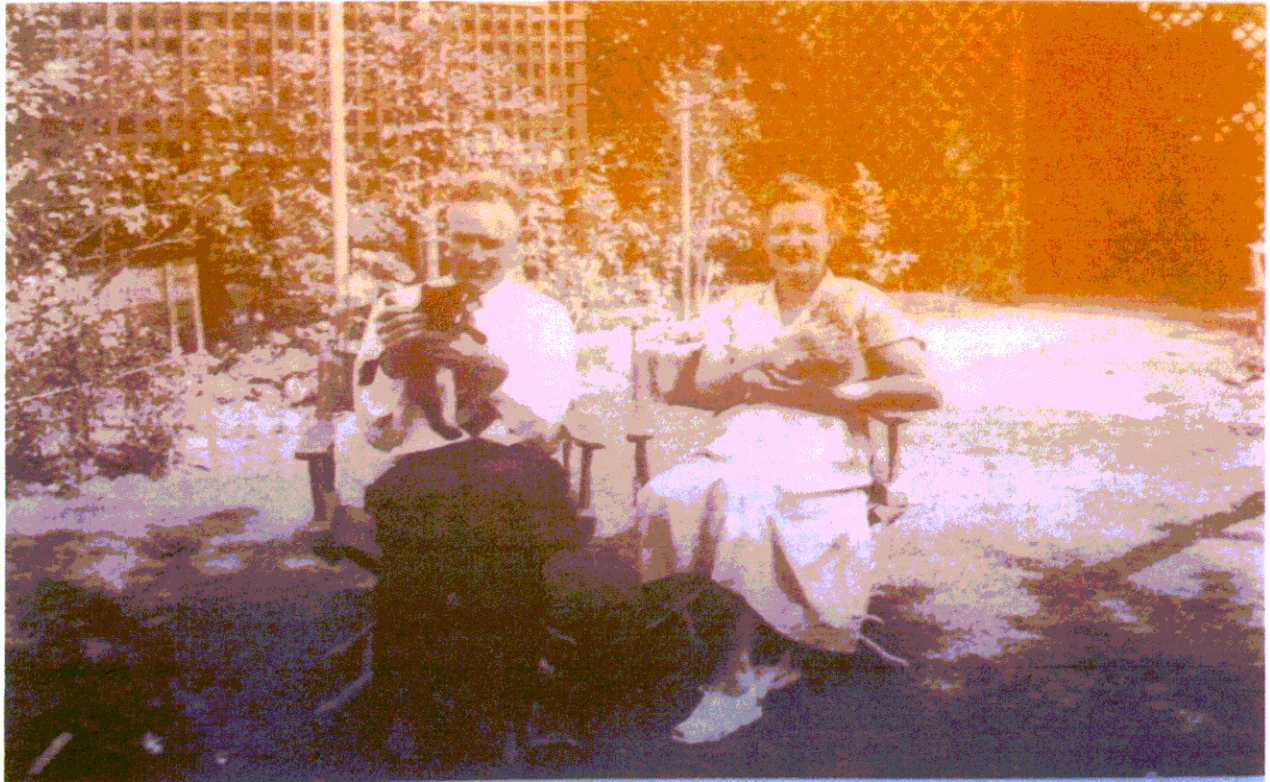
Shirley Sargent and Pasadena

The Sargent's family roots in Pasadena spanned three generations. Her paternal grandparents (Chester Davis Sargent and his wife Iola née Nuckolls) moved to Pasadena from Nebraska shortly after their wedding on January 3rd, 1884. Iola, in particular, took an instant liking to Pasadena. When Chester briefly left Pasadena for Downey to try his hand at farming, they returned in part because she missed Pasadena (P-1). Chester would thrive as "an up-and-coming businessman in Pasadena and in 1906 was elected President of the Merchants Association and a Director of the Board of Trade" (P-1). Shirley's father, Robert Sargent, was born in Pasadena on March 16th, 1903. Father and grandfather were "two of the most important role models" in Shirley's life (P-3).



13 W. Colorado is currently occupied by a Sephora store.

Chester and Robert Sargent would both know hard work, success and failure. Chester's shoe business would eventually go bust although he would regain his fortune later in life. As for Shirley's father, the depression meant that in her early years, Robert Sargent and his family would move at least twenty-eight times around California (including Glendale, Tujunga, Banning, Indio, Long Barn, Oakland, Twain Harte, Whitewater) and Nevada (Currant Creek and Charleston Park) between 1927 and 1939 (P-9). Shirley, born July 12th 1927, would attend twelve different schools during this period (P-7). The family settled permanently in Pasadena in 1937 (P-12) and would buy 552 Eldora Rd in 1940.



Robert and Alice Sargent with cats. (Nancy Hardwick Collection)

Robert and Alice Sargent in their backyard at 552 Eldora Rd and the old shed



The same perspective at 552 Eldora Rd with the old shed (torn down in 2011)

The stability she enjoyed growing up in Pasadena gave her the opportunity to belong to groups such as the Camp Fire Girls where she enjoyed wilderness experiences in the San Gabriel mountains (P-12), fondly recalled in a letter published in *Wasie Trails* in 1987, the newsletter of the Wasewagan Alumni Association of the Camp Fire Council of the Foothills in Pasadena:

... the fun began, especially going downhill. As we careened wildly down the hillside, there were magnificent wrecks, during which the mattresses went one way, the wheelbarrow another, and I ended up unhurt and laughing upon pine needles.

While living at 552 Eldora Rd, she would also learn to overcome her biggest challenge, dystonia, a neurological muscular disorder for which she was misdiagnosed as a child. To quote Fernando Peñalosa (P-11):

The family moved into a two-storey house in Pasadena. Shirley was unable to walk up the stairs, but found a way to crawl up to the second storey when her parents were not around. Years later, at her home at Flying Spur, she would crawl up to the second storey to sleep on the outdoors balcony, which she always loved doing.



The stairwell at 552 Eldora Rd.

It is fascinating to think that a trick she learned at 552 Eldora Rd would provide pleasure her entire life. Dystonia provokes repeated movements, abnormal postures and uncontrollable muscle contractions which make her accomplishments all the more extraordinary, considering that she would go on to publish dozens of articles, stories and books; those achievements, and the extensive research involved,

would turn her into the foremost historian of Yosemite National Park. To achieve her success, Shirley would need to learn two things in particular: how to put down words on paper when her hands would not cooperate, and how to move around independently in order to perform her research activities. As for the first point, she taught herself to type by experimenting "until she could peck with the index finger of her right hand" while living at 552 Eldora Rd (P-17). As for mobility, she would settle on a golf cart to get around Pasadena. To again quote Fernando Peñalosa:

The first vehicle she settled on was a battery-powered golf cart, which would get her around Pasadena. At first there were arguments with her parents, especially her mother, probably because they feared for her safety. With the golf cart Shirley was no longer dependent on others for transportation. She enjoyed the freedom of movement, which she had long cherished. It was an important milestone in her life. The golf cart also extended the range of her baby-sitting jobs and Christmas card sales, important sources of income for her. Like all her later vehicles, the little green electric car had a name now forgotten.



Shirley in her golf cart with family and cats, July 1949. (Kathy Chappell Collection)



The Sargent family about 1949. Shirley in her signature blue jeans. (Nancy Hardwick collection)



The Sargents in their backyard at 552 Eldora Rd; Shirley seated on the left. The same perspective today.

Writing and going to school in Pasadena

Coming of age in Pasadena, Shirley's first experience with writing involved publishing her own neighborhood paper that featured her stories:

She claimed that the neighbors subscribed "in self-defense," and the paper was available by paid subscription only.

Shirley would eventually attend John Marshall Junior High School after her father moved into a "better paying, stationary employment with a Pasadena construction firm, American Pipe and Construction Co., later a subsidiary of Ameron International Corporation, which is still headquartered in Pasadena" (P-16). After graduation, she attended a private coed prep school located at 985 E. California Blvd, less than two blocks from Caltech. In 1945, Shirley entered Pasadena City College and studied early childhood

education as well as journalism; in 1950 she enrolled in a creative writing course at PCC (P-18). It was also at PCC that she had her first work published: "The Mail Train" (P-19).

The Topsy Turvy Nursery School

The training from PCC qualified Shirley to teach at a nursery school. She chose to start her own school at 552 Eldora Rd in 1948: the *Topsy Turvy Nursery School*. She would run it for 11 years. Once more from Fernando Peñalosa:

The fact that she knew many of the children on her block, and had baby sat many of them, gave her a head start in recruiting students for her school. Parents knew she was responsible and trusted her to take care of the children. In 1951 Shirley and her nursery school began to be listed separately in the Pasadena City Directory. Then from 1956 to 1960 she was listed as "writer."

Although a talented teacher as recalled by some of her former students, her colleagues never considered her a good businesswoman. When Pasadena authorities discovered that she was operating a nursery without the necessary permits, a variance or a proper bathroom, public hearings were held that were traumatic for Shirley even though she was eventually allowed to keep her school after making the necessary changes (see attached Pasadena archive document for permit copy). This licensing process was fictionalized in her 1958 teenage novel: *Pat Hawly; Preschool Teacher*.

Teenage novels and Pasadena Star-News review

The only novel she ever published intended for teenage boys was *Pipeline Down the Valley* (1955). Published by Dodd, Mead, it won honorable mention in the Boys' Life-Dodd, Mead Competition. When the book was published, a review in the *Pasadena Star-News* (April 17, 1955) described Shirley as (P-41):

"one of Pasadena's youngest authors and living proof that blondes are not dumb, and Miss Sargent seems on her way up"

The original unpublished version of *Stop the typewriters* (1963) was originally called *The Neighborly Reporter* written in Pasadena in 1959. It chronicles the experiences of an 11 year old who starts a neighborhood newspaper, produced on a hectograph; this is obviously based on her experiences on

Eldora Rd! For a more exhaustive list of her writings while living in Pasadena between 1940 and 1960, see the bibliography below.

Shirley Sargent's deep roots in Pasadena

We conclude this note on Shirley Sargent's formative years in Pasadena with the following passage from Fernando Peñalosa (P-25):

During the 1950's Shirley went back and forth between Yosemite's Foresta enclave, where she spent her summers, and Pasadena, where she spent the rest of the year. She had deep roots in Pasadena, and became active in the local Sierra Club. During 1957 and 1958 she wrote the "Pasadena Reports" (sometimes titled "Pasadena Group") column for the Southern Sierran, newsletter of the Southern California Chapter of the Sierra Club, written with her usual humor. Shirley wrote enthusiastically about various chapter events. Other members took over the column during the summer months, when Shirley was in Foresta. The July, 1957 column noted Shirley's absence in the first sentence: "Shirley Sargent wasn't there---missed you, Shirley."



Dear Shirley -
ON THESE MOUNTAINS
NOT INSIDE BUT IS NOT
I LEARN YOUR LETTER
RECEIVED A VERY GOOD
TOO. I WILL BEAT THE
CARD HOME PROBABLY.
LOVE LAD

MISS SHIRLEY BURGENT
EL CAJON RD.
P.O. BOX 1000 CALIF.

A postcard to Shirley.

Selected Bibliography from list compiled by Fernando Peñalosa

BOOKS

FICTION

- 1956 *Pipeline Down the Valley*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company.
1958 *Pat Hawly: Pre-School Teacher*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company.
1960 *Three Names for Katherine*. (With Hannah Smith). New York: Julian Messner, Inc.
1961 *The Heart-Holding Mountains*. New York: Julian Messner.
→ 1963 *Stop the Typewriters*. Illustrated by Prue Theobalds. New York: Abelard-Schuman.
1965 *Treasure at Flying Spur*. Illustrated by Susannah Holden. New York: Abelard-Schuman.
1966 *Ranger in Skirts*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
1967 *Yosemite Tomboy*. Illustrated by Victoria de Larrea. New York: Abelard-Schuman.
1994 *Yosemite Tomboy*. Illustrated by Aileen Allen. Second edition. Mariposa: Ponderosa Press.

STORIES

SYNDICATED STORIES

All stories were published in December of the year indicated. None of these syndicates is still in business, so it is not possible to ascertain in which newspapers the stories may have appeared.

1949

- "Christmas Present," Western Newspaper Union.
"One Track Mind," Western Newspaper Union.

1950

- "An Old-Fashioned Christmas Eve," Western Newspaper Union.
"That's for Sure," Western Newspaper Union.
"The Gondola," Western Newspaper Union.

1951

- "Christmas in January," Western Newspaper Union.
"Romance in an Elevator," Western Newspaper Union.
"The Magic Moment," Western Newspaper Union.
"Trombone for Paris," Western Newspaper Union.

1952

- "Christmas Out," Western Newspaper Union.
"Homemade Santa," Western Newspaper Union.
"One of Them," Western Newspaper Union.
"Sitter's Eve -- 1952," Western Newspaper Union.

1953

- "Anniversary Present," Western Newspaper Union.

1955

- "Christmas Promise," Community Press Service.
"Christmas Spirit," Feature Publications, Inc.

1956

- "On the Town," Community Press Service.
"Ridiculous Present," Community Press Service.

1957

- "Cabin Christmas," Feature Publications, Inc.
"Holes in the Ground," Feature Publications, Inc.
"Point in Time," Feature Publications, Inc.

1958

- "Assignment Christmas," American Features.
- "Minor vs. an MG," Feature Publications, Inc.
- "Mountain Christmas," Feature Publications, Inc.
- "Mrs. Applegate's Revolt," Feature Publications, Inc.
- "New Year, 1959," American Features.
- "Two Christmases," American Features.

1959

- "First Whiskers," Feature Publications, Inc.
- "Ready for Christmas," Feature Publications, Inc.

1960

- "Christmas Isn't Every Day," Feature Publications, Inc.
- "Desert Christmas," Feature Publications, Inc.

1961

- "Henry and the 24 Incher," Feature Publications, Inc.

OTHER STORIES

- "Charlie's Wife," *Relief Society Magazine*, February, 1953, pp. 89-94.
- "Early Present," *Relief Society Magazine*, October, 1956, pp. 664-665.
- "Jasper, the '34 Model," *Jack and Jill*, January, 1950, pp. 65-67.
- "Middle Child," *The Christian Home*, June, 1952, pp. 16-17, 50.
- "The Mail Train," *Pipes of Pan*, June, 1947, p. 11.
- "The Winner," *Improvement Era*, November, 1951, pp. 800, 814, 816.
- "25th Anniversary," *Swing*, June, 1953, pp. 115-117.
- "Twenty-One!" *The Ave Maria*, April 17, 1954, pp. 11-14.

POEMS

- "Bless His Dear Little Pointed Head," *Pipes of Pan*, June, 1948, p. 41.
- "Evolution," *Woman's Home Companion*, November 1948, p. 1
- "Evolution," *Pipes of Pan*, June, 1949, p. 31

Addendum

The following pages provide additional information for the historical landmark designation of 552 Eldora Rd stemming from Shirley Sargent spending her formative years there. Here is a summary of that information:

1. In the email dated 08/16/2012, Jason Wasmund refers to Shirley Sargent living at 552 Eldora Rd until 1950. This is not correct since Shirley Sargent obtained a permit from the city of Pasadena for the *Topsy Turvy* pre-school in November 1951. In addition, it is clear from her biographer that she continued to spend a substantial amount of time at 552 Eldora Rd even after she bought the house on El Molino. On P-27 of her biography, Shirley is described as spending 1957 at Eldora Rd after surgery, all the while being a very productive writer.
2. Starting after the death of her father Robert, Shirley began spending more and more time in Mariposa with her mother Alice. In particular, after her mother's death in 1990, Shirley inherits her house in Mariposa where she would spend most of her time until her death. The rebuilt structure in Foresta became a part-time residence diminishing the importance of the new *Flying Spur*.
3. An letter written by Shirley to a friend in 1997 refers to her life on Eldora Rd. This shows that Eldora Rd remained a touchstone in Shirley Sargent's life during her declining years.
4. In his email of August 16th 2012, Jason Wasmund argues the following: Yes, the house at Foresta burned down in 1990 and was rebuilt at a somewhat larger size. The significance of the location in Foresta for Shirley Sargent is not the particular house structure but the *Flying Spur* location. The location or land in Foresta is certainly strongly associated with Shirley Sargent. However, the application for the 552 Eldora Rd is based on designating the structure as the landmark because of her formative years. The structure associated with her most productive years in Foresta no longer exists having burned down in 1990. As shown in point 2 above, her primary residence was in Mariposa in the 1990's, **not** the new *Flying Spur*. The original and rebuilt *Flying Spurs* are shown at the end of this document; the structures share the same style but with clear differences.

herself. This was another chapter in her ongoing, lifelong struggle to be independent.

Shirley tried various drugs to induce relaxation, but none of them were effective; some provoked muscle spasms, jerking, or drowsiness. Finally a mixture of phenobarbital and sodium amital helped her to relax, but her head shook and her muscle spasms did not go away.

Six years later in 1957, when Shirley was thirty, her mother, out of sheer desperation, took Shirley to Iowa City to undergo a procedure known as cryosurgery. It was hoped that the surgery would stop the constant movement of her head and neck. When Shirley had her surgery, it was feared that it might result in some sort of personality change or memory impairment. Fortunately, this did not happen. The first thing the surgeon had done was to stop the palsy. As a result, Shirley relaxed and fell asleep, making it impossible for him to pinpoint the exact place in the brain causing her problems. Unfortunately the surgery was only partially successful. The jerky movement of head and neck

was gone, but the function of her right arm and hand was impaired, and her speech, which had been perfect before, became slurred. The surgery also left her in a weakened condition, and she found it necessary to move back with her parents again until she regained her strength. Having to live with her parents was terribly discouraging to Shirley. She had barely begun to live a life of her own, when she found herself again in the situation of dependency which she so thoroughly disliked.

Astonishingly, with all these difficulties, Shirley managed to write sixteen columns and articles for the *Mariposa Gazette* from February through December, 1957. What cannot be emphasized enough is the achievements of Shirley, who as a handicapped person living in remote locations for many years, often alone, in good health and bad, managed to do her research and writing, and still had time to enjoy her friends and family. Of course, she did not want to be any place other than Yosemite. Her writing kept her going despite the incredible difficulties she faced.

Still desperate after the mainly unsuccessful surgery, and disillusioned by the inability of medical doctors, Shirley turned to physical therapy, but with little in the way of improvement in her condition. In January, 1960 her frustrated physical therapist called Professor Margaret S. Rood, a distinguished pioneer in the field at the University of Southern California, telling her she had an impossible case. Professor Rood agreed to see Shirley.⁴

ROODY

The following month Shirley became a demonstration patient in Professor Rood's graduate course "Neurophysiology in the Treatment of Neuromuscular Dysfunction."⁵ With her help, Shirley eventually learned to use her left hand, foot and leg, and to cook and feed herself, and even to stand alone, which she had not been able to do since childhood. Meeting and working with this fine therapist, whom she came to call "Roody," and who became her lifelong friend, were among the most significant influences in Shirley's entire life. I have been told that Shirley and Roody "adored" each other. She described her initial experience with Roody as follows:



Professor Margaret S. Rood

P-27: Shirley Sargent moves back in with her parents at 552 Eldora Rd and continues to be a productive writer.

P-68: After her father's death, Shirley spent more and more time in Mariposa with her mother.

he wanted to do," she told Shirley, who finally gave in.

After Robert's death, Alice Sargent became even more active in community affairs. She volunteered at the Mariposa Museum and History Center and at the John C. Fremont Hospital. Later, an Alice Sargent Memorial Fitness Center at the hospital was named in her honor. After Robert's death, Shirley and Alice became better friends. And as Shirley's health deteriorated or the winters became more severe, Shirley spent more and more time in Mariposa with her mother.

DEATH OF ROSALIE DAVIES

For over twenty years, Shirley and Rosalie had gone their separate ways. Yet, there were some similarities in their lives. Perhaps most significantly, like Shirley, Rosalie had opened up a day care center in her home in Artadia. Like Shirley, Rosalie had also attended Pasadena City College and earned a certificate that qualified her to work in a nursery school, and like Shirley, she loved children. She would have liked to have held a regular job, but was unable to work because of her trembling hands.

68

P-93: Shirley's mother Alice dies in 1990. Shirley inherits her mother's home in Mariposa. P-68: After her father's death, Shirley spent more and more time in Mariposa with her mother.

FAMILY CHANGES

Shirley was just coming to grips with the loss of her home and her possessions when she suffered the loss of her mother on October 14, 1990. Alice Sargent had been a valued and honored resident of Mariposa, and her death was a great loss to the community. The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors ended its meeting of October 23, 1990 with a tribute to Alice. They also issued a memorial certificate, which they sent to Shirley. Among other activities, Alice had served on the Board of Directors of the Mariposa County Historical Society, (along

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The 1990s saw Shirley still active in historical meetings and events. She was an enthusiastic, contributing charter member of the Yosemite Historical Club, founded in 1991 in Mariposa by Yosemite history buffs, particularly those interested in collecting Yosemite memorabilia. The club sometimes met at Shirley's home in Mariposa and enjoyed her storytelling, at which she excelled. She

101

P-101: Shirley Sargent was a charter member of the Mariposa *Yosemite Historical Club* founded in 1991 which occasionally met at her home in Mariposa.

led the club on a number of historical tours, often with a colleague. She and Scott Pinkerton led a tour of historical sites in Mariposa in April, 1994. In October of the same year, Shirley and Park Interpreter Dean Shenk guided the group around the site of the Old Village, and again in October, 1998. In October, 1995, she assisted in a tour of Hetch Hetchy and Carl Inn. In October, 1996, she led a tour of historical sites and restored barns in the Foresta-Big Meadow area, then hosted a barbecue at her Flying Spur home. In July, 1999, Shirley and Dean conducted a Centennial tour of Camp Curry for the Yosemite Historical Club and produced a little brochure with vintage photos. In April, 2001, Shirley and Dean conducted a tour of the Ahwahnee Hotel and grounds. This was her last service as tour leader for the club. However, she continued to attend many other meetings on a regular basis, generously contributing her knowledge. She also gave the club permission to publish any of her writings it wished in its *Yosemite Collector & Historical Quarterly* under the heading "Shirley's Segments." These short selections from her books have continued to enhance the interest and attractiveness of the *Quarterly*.

In the late 1990s Dean Shenk often took a half-dozen volunteers and interpreters from the Wawona

History Center, which he directs, to Shirley's home for lunch. Here she presented an informal lecture and graciously answered questions. Someone once asked if she had any advice for writers. Shirley said writers should do their research, then start writing, and as they write they will see what additional research needs to be done. That is, when they discover a blank spot they will know it needs to be filled. There are people who keep researching and never start writing, because there is always more to learn, she noted. Shirley was always approachable and helpful. She edited a couple of Dean's articles for him for the quarterly of the Yosemite Association. Her advice to him was: "Don't show off your research, write the story."⁹ She also urged writers to be forthright and direct, and to avoid euphemisms. Once when Dean wrote that a certain pioneer had "passed away" in a certain year, Shirley emphatically said, "No, he didn't pass away, he died!" She said writers should not gloss over things, but be frank.

Shirley was not only generous in sharing her knowledge of Yosemite, she shared her methodology, as noted above. At the 2005 Spring Forum of the Yosemite Association, Yosemite historian and photographer, Leroy Radanovich, noted:

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P-102: Shirley Sargent gave tours on a regular basis for the Mariposa Yosemite Historical Club.

On the other hand, Shirley's letters to her friends sometimes offer insight into her mental state, and how she was coping with her physical and other problems. In a letter dated June 8, 1997 she wrote:

You a world traveler and me almost a recluse, but back, since April 26th, in the place I love best, sustained and inspired by nature and beauty. Infirmities, immobility rule, but my mind, though not my hearing or eyesight, still works and my book sometimes is touched by eloquence. Pessimistic, maybe realistic, absolutely. A fall, a stroke and this life of limited dependence is over. I doubt if I will be lucky enough to simply die, and I will loathe losing any more control, but I'm a survivor. Friends, family, forest have always been my comfort, and you high among them ever since Eldora Road days when we were young and I didn't know the word can't. Any [way] you listed ways to circumvent can't's Heaven knows what got into me tonight and why I write so negatively.¹²

Shirley reciprocated the good feelings shown toward her. I have been unable to find anything negative she ever said about anybody in any of her letters or articles, except when she criticized National Park Service officials for their actions or policies. Her letters are always upbeat, and any criticism is normally reserved for herself.

FLYING SPUR: THE LATER YEARS, 1970-1989



(original 1970s photo collection)

The original *Flying Spur*.



The new rebuilt *Flying Spur*.