



(1) THE IHNKEN HOUSE

Owned by Mr. & Mrs. Frank Francis

Solidly built in 1844 of native limestone and cypress, by early Castro Colonists, this 3-room Alsatian house on Madrid Street was sold in 1850 to Charles Kieser, then again in 1851 to Joseph Koenig. A third owner, August Halbadier, sold the house in 1867 to Emily Pingenot. She and her sister ran the first Castroville Post Office from a separate building, the stone foundation of which can still be seen on the present driveway. Ms. Gertrude Noonan remembered the old hand bell rung to announce the arrival of the mail each day.

The unique Victorian addition of 2 rooms with gingerbread-trimmed porch was added in the 1880s. The original 12-ft beaded board ceilings and walls are still intact, as are the original wooden floors.

The Alsatian rancher and storeowner, Louis Ihnken, purchased the house in 1915 and it takes the name from this family who lived in it until 1973, when Floyd & Lou Cormier bought it and began restoration. Frank & Lorna Francis purchased the house in December, 1982.

The old barn, originally at the back of the property, was moved and reconstructed by the Cormiers and reconstructed at its present location. Mr. Francis is presently converting it into a studio for artwork. The old carriage house is still standing at the back of the property. With almost an acre of land, the Francises enjoy fruit trees, flowers, and gardening the year round.

The rock walls are 20 inches thick, and the fireplace with the original mantel has a center Star of David carved within a large Texas Star.

A pass-through window and an upstairs window lead from the living room. It is rumored that a cellar can be found beneath the small room off the original kitchen.

The Francises will enjoy overseeing further restorations.