Even a visitor who drops into Napa for a brief weekend fling will not help but eventually notice the old boarded up building at 810-816 Brown Street, just south of the very heart of the center of town. Even though it stands empty and bereft of any discernable occupancy or life, its stone façade and stately turn-of-the-last century grandeur still shines through.

Longtime residents of our town, however, will recognize this structure as the Napa Law Center Building (formerly the Martin-Center Building) owned by long-time Napa lawyer and real estate mogul and developer, Mr. Brian Silver. People will recall that on August 24, 2014, when a magnitude 6.1 earthquake struck Napa, it suffered significant damage, and red tagged by city officials ever since. The old York Building and former Napa City Hall that stood adjacent and immediately to the north, also suffered serious damage. This building, also owned by the Silver family, has since been completely dismantled and cleared.

I, like others in the community, have been wondering what was going on with this prominent and historical building located directly across from another historic building, the Napa County Courthouse. It, too, suffered significant damage, but has since been restored and is back in use by the county as a courthouse. For the last two years, the Center Building has been on Napa County Landmarks list of Ten Threatened Treasures of Napa County.

I decided that the best way to learn what might become of the Center Building would be to seek an interview with Mr. Silver to talk with him directly. After all, most of the other structures within the City of Napa that suffered damage six years ago from that earthquake have been renovated, restored, and put back into use.
Fall Greetings

2020’s Unexpected Unfolding

I do hope this Fall edition of Landmarks News finds you and yours in a safe and healthy place. Since I last wrote, so much has transpired in the world and here in Napa County. The novel Coronavirus has taken the world by surprise and changed virtually every aspect of our daily lives. With the vast impact of COVID-19 so top-of-mind, you’ll find a couple of articles in this issue dedicated to how the last pandemic, the “Spanish Flu,” influenced Napa County and its businesses and landmark buildings. And, it cannot be stressed more strongly how our good thoughts and support go out to our area businesses currently being affected. The hospitality industry, in particular, has been shaken to the core, and yet has responded with positivity and innovation to overcome this foreboding opponent. As a community-based group, we send our deep appreciation to our local front-line workers and hospitality professionals in this time of stress and uncertainty.

Amidst the pandemic, Napa County—and surrounding counties and states—are being hit with an early and fierce fire season. Record lightning strikes added to this year’s unexpected events and the fires that have ensued in our area have affected us all. For those whose property has been lost and whose families have been displaced, we send thoughts of comfort; for the first responders, our deepest respect and gratitude.

Now, October is upon us and the holiday season fast-approaching. Normally, we’d be speaking about our Holiday Candlelight Tour, the highlight of our organization’s event calendar. But 2020 has dictated that this home-grown, much-anticipated event will have to wait until next year. With that, as you embrace this season of giving when there is so much need, we do hope you’ll keep Napa County Landmarks in mind as we look to continue our advocacy for the preservation of historic structures and heritage sites.

Be well, remain safe, and thank you for your interest and support in our mission.

Ernie

Support Napa County Landmarks!

You can support Napa County Landmarks by becoming a member, making a donation, or by becoming a volunteer. As a non-profit organization, we rely on donations and annual membership dues to fulfill our mission. Join Napa County Landmarks today and start enjoying the benefits of membership, including our quarterly newsletter, invites to members-only events and discounted advance tickets to public events and tours. Volunteers are also essential!

Membership categories are: $36 Individual, $50 Family, $100 Supporter, $250 Sponsor, $500 Corporate and $1,000 Benefactor. All donations are tax deductible. For more information go to the Napa County Landmarks website, contact us at info@napacountylandmarks.org or call our office at 707-255-1836.

Your membership is vital in preserving our architectural heritage.
The Center Building
(continued from page 1)

early morning earthquake have been rebuilt. And obviously, until that structure is rebuilt, he isn’t earning a single penny on this investment. So, what are the plans?

I reached out to Mr. Silver, and was fortunate enough to spend over three hours not only discussing the Center Building, but also learning from him a considerable amount about his upbringing, background, education, and overall philosophy of life and living. Joining me during this time was his wife, Diane, and son, Noah.

Mr. Silver was born in Elyria, Ohio, in 1942. His father had a successful watch repair/jewelry store business and, at an early age, taught Brian and his brothers the trade. It quickly became evident to me that Mr. Silver's father had a profound influence on him.

When he was four, the family moved to Santa Ana, California, as the elder Mr. Silver and his wife were lured by the ideal climate of southern California. Mr. Silver opened a jewelry store in his adopted new home, and quickly grew it to be very successful. One of the biggest lessons young Brian received from his father (who, in turn, learned from his grandmother in Jerusalem), was the best path to prosperity is to own and develop real estate. In 1946 the family moved into a Craftsman-style home that they purchased for the princely sum of $12,000. Nine years later, as the nearby Disneyland theme park was being developed and new freeways were being constructed, they sold that home for $46,000. Seeing the profit his family made in a relatively short period of time proved to young Brian that his great grandmother was correct.

Mr. Silver excelled in high school and was solicited by Orange County alums to apply to Harvard. He was accepted there and began studies there as a Physics major. However, after his first couple of years study, he realized being a physicist wouldn't be his career path. Around this time, though, he saw the movie, “To Kill A Mockingbird,” and the Atticus Finch role inspired him to switch his major to law. After graduating from Harvard Law School and passing the California bar exam, he joined a large L.A. law firm. He was responsible for representing large corporate clients and winning large settlements. However, like Atticus, he decided that he'd rather represent people rather than large corporations.

So, after two years he and his wife decided to leave the firm and look for “the next Santa Ana”: A small town that was currently something of a “sleeper” but was destined to grow and be a good place to raise a family, practice law, and to invest in real estate. After researching and visiting several different locales, they selected to settle in Napa in 1971.

He found employment with the David York Law Firm located in the aforementioned York Building on Brown St. While being in court on another matter, the Center Building was mentioned and was being offered in a probate sale. There was one bid made on the building. On impulse, Silver raised his hand and offered a bid at the minimum 10% over the original approved price of $57,000, and no one countered with an amount over that bid price. This would be the first piece of property ever owned by the Brian Silver family. He told me that from the very first day he saw the Center Building, he “always wanted that building.” He grew up in older homes and always had an appreciation for history and the beauty of 19th century architecture.
The Center Building  
(continued from page 3)

Within two months after purchasing the Center Building, though, Silver and his other neighbors on the 800 block of Brown Street and south Main Street received a letter from then City of Napa Planning Director, John Whitridge. It stated that these blocks had been found with “no historical significance” and were therefore targeted for demolition as part of Napa’s redevelopment plans. Long story short, Mr. Silver told me that he led a campaign with his neighbors to oppose these plans. They were obviously successful in not having their properties purchased for planned demolition. This was at least partially due to their efforts, but also, he admitted, due to the fact that Napa was running out of redevelopment funding as well.

In the mid 2000’s, the City of Napa enacted an ordinance requiring property owners of unreinforced masonry buildings to have them retrofitted to withstand an earthquake and deadlines to have a plan submitted to be in satisfactory compliance. Mr. Silver, however, thought this ordinance should not have applied to 810 Brown St. His argument was that the architect who originally designed the Center Building in 1904 incorporated many of the features that are now required for seismic safety. According to him, some of these features included steel reinforced concrete and structural I-beams on the first floor and structural framing with steel on the second. A brick and stone veneer was added for fire suppression purposes only and it was further tied into the structure with steel plates and capping nuts. He believed that further work was unnecessary, and at that time there was no geological evidence that Napa was situated in an area that could or would ever sustain a magnitude 6.0 or greater earthquake. He also claimed it was only the brick veneer that came loose during the 2014 earthquake, and the interior was fully intact and undamaged.

Fast forward in time now to the last few years: 2010 Mr. Silver and his family purchase the York Building. His law practice has flourished, and, over the years, the family purchased many other properties within Napa County and beyond. All the while, he said that he was working with neighbors and designers to expand his Brown Street properties.

And then the earthquake of August 2014 occurred. Bricks and stones from the Center and York Buildings came tumbling down onto the adjacent parking areas and neighbors’ roof tops. The grand plans for a new vision for Brown Street came to a screeching halt. There was resentment from others in the area who had expended the time and money for the earthquake retrofitting, and that Mr. Silver had not.

When I asked if he and his family would ever consider selling 810 Brown Street “as is,” he offered an emphatic, “No way.” He stated that not only is this the first piece of property he ever purchased, it is his favorite property.

He proceeded to produce for me to view an architect’s rendering of his dream for that corner. For that to come to fruition, however, there are several huge hurdles to overcome. First, it would require city approval to build up five stories, and, secondly, he would have to acquire some of the neighboring properties. He projected the price tag for his grand vision to be in the $25M range.

As I previously noted, the visit I had with the Silvers lasted over three hours. Mr. Silver talked about many other matters and experiences that contributed in a significant way to where he is today and who he is at the core. He feels that at times he has been unfairly vilified by the local media and others. He was open and candid with me during our visit, as I endeavored to learn, firsthand, his plans and aspirations for this significant Napa landmark.

I would only like to add my thought as a takeaway: If, in the event the “grand dream” that Mr. Silver outlined does not become plausible, that he and his family will then consider a more modest rehabilitation and ultimately reopen 810 Brown Street.

I am very grateful for the opportunity I had for this visit and thank him for his time and insight in contributing to this article.
The Martin-Center Building: 
The History Behind an Architectural Gem

By Rebecca Yerger, Historian & Preservation Consultant

Built in 1904 along Brown Street in Napa, the Martin-Center Building is of historical significance due to its architectural style. Designed by local architect William H. Corlett, this building is a blend of two classically inspired styles: Renaissance Revival and Romanesque. Although altered over time, it continues to convey its distinctive architectural characteristics. It is also one of only five remaining late-1800s/early-1900s, native stone buildings still standing in downtown Napa.

Regarding its architectural details, its 1978 Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) form reports, “The two-story rectangular building of rough-cut native stone and brick has a finished facade of brown and gray stone. The decorative stone trim of the second-floor windows is a major feature, with quoins and radiating stones at the window heads in contrasting color accenting the windows. The first-floor facade has had major alterations (with the circa 1930s application of glazed tiles over the original stone surface.) A cornice with paneled frieze, dentil trim and bracket supports a triangular pediment; the name ‘F. Martin’ has been replaced by ‘Center Building.’”

Martin, the original property owner, was a locally prominent businessman and purveyor of alcoholic libations. According to a 1904 Napa Daily Journal article, Martin spared no expense to construct and outfit his building. The Journal continued, “On the first floor will be a store, equipped with all modern appliances and fixtures, and the saloon of Mr. Martin.” Regarding his drinking establishment, the Journal noted, “The floor, bar and back bar are all of hardwood oak, . . . finely polished and prepared.”

According to the Journal, a unique feature of the building was located on its second-floor. “Up-stairs will be the fraternal hall, with banquet room with fine oak chairs installed, kitchen, store-room and ante-room attached.” And, “the electric lights are provided with antique copper fixtures (and) a fine chandelier.” These spaces also had fresh air ventilators.

Special fraternal organization appointments were also added to this space. The Journal wrote, “There are four large canopies, each 10 feet high, for the fraternal officers and chairs. The walls near the ceiling are elaborately and artistically decorated with floral and mythological figures.”

With time, came alterations to the building. Following a change in ownership, the pediment inscription of “F. Martin” was changed to “Center Building,” as mentioned during Prohibition, the saloon became a commercial use space. Eventually, the entire Martin-Center Building became a professional office space, more so, after the current property owners, the Brian Silver family, purchased the Martin-Center Building in 1971.

At the left is the old City Hall and to the right of it is the Martin-Center building, circa 1906.
On January 10, 1919, E. J. Drusel, Mayor of the City of Napa, issued a flu proclamation. He declared there was an epidemic of a communicable disease, what we now call the Spanish Flu, and there would be regulations that would prevail. First, everyone would have to wear masks. Second, all theaters, churches (except on Sunday mornings), dances and schools would close. Third, all saloons, pool rooms, card rooms, bowling alleys, shooting galleries and ice cream parlors would be required to close at 6pm “it being understood that all candy shops operated in connection with ice cream parlors may continue as in the past.” Fourth, all lodge sessions and public assemblages shall discontinue with some exceptions. And fifth, all funerals would be conducted privately.

The type of establishments patronized in 1919 were different than today’s restaurants, wineries, breweries, gym and fitness studios, hair salons, barbers, nail salons, massage therapy and tattoo parlors. Only bars (saloons) schools and churches hold equal ground over the last century. During the last 100 years our lifestyles have influenced the businesses we frequent. Candy shops in 1919 were given priority and were even allowed to continue without changes to their hours. What was so special about candy shops in regard to all the other restrictions placed in 1919? Maybe it was because, unlike other businesses at the time, folks were in and out with a minimum of socializing after purchasing their much loved-sweet treats. Or perhaps denying folks this one pleasure was too much to ask.

The 20th century launched an unprecedented age where candy that was packaged in bright colors, with alluring scents, and flavors out of this world. One such candy shop in Napa was Bryant’s Candy and Ice Cream Parlor. Edward Bryant (1885-1937) came to Napa from Vallejo when he was 20 and opened a confectionary and ice cream shop. He operated his establishment
on Main Street where he made his own candies with his wife Emma (1886-1971). They later moved their shop and became the first to lease one of the two large stores in the newly-constructed Gordon Building on First Street and operated it from 1928 through the mid 1940’s. It was an impressive space and it was considered the most attractive and modern confectionary in the region outside of San Francisco. It was a scene of wonder with an elaborately appointed décor, marble floors, mahogany booths, ornate light fixtures, a fancy all-electric, 20-foot long soda fountain of pink and green marble and, a back bar with a mahogany framed plate glass mirror and service parts of German silver. And, of course, there were the glass showcases designed to display the choice Bryant hand-made candies.

Fashion trends and interests may have been different one hundred years ago, but one thing has stayed the same since the early 1900’s; people love candy and they probably always will. We just can’t get enough of the sweet stuff. It just doesn’t always come in the form of an old fashion candy shop anymore.

And that’s the way it was . . .

Below are some favorite manufactured gums and candies from the turn of the century you might recognize:

- **Beech-Nut chewing gum and mints fruit** (Imperial Packing Company; Canajoharie, NY; 1891)
- **Beeman’s/Beemans Original Pepsin Chewing Gum** (Dr. Edward Beeman, 1897/American Chicle Company; Trenton, NJ; 1899)
- **Black Jack** (Thomas Adams Company, 1870/American Chicle Company; Trenton, NJ; 1899)
- **Cadbury Dairy Milk Chocolate** (Cadbury; United Kingdom; 1905)
- **Chiclets peppermint chewing gum** (Fleer/American Chicle Company; Trenton, NJ; 1906)
- **Clark Bar** (D. L. Clark Company; Allegheny, PA; 1917)
- **Clove chewing gum** (Thomas Adams Company/American Chicle Company; Trenton, NJ; 1914)
- **Goetze’s Caramel Creams/ Bulls Eyes** (A & W Goetze; Baltimore, MD; 1917)
- **Good and Plenty** (Quaker City Confectionery Company; Philadelphia, PA; 1893)
- **Juicy Fruit and Wrigley’s Spearmint Gum** (Wrigley Company; Chicago, IL; 1893)
- **Lifesavers** (Clarence Crane; Cleveland, OH; 1912)
- **Necco Wafers** (Chase & Company, 1847/NECCO; Boston MA; 1912)
- **Tootsie Roll** (Leo Hirschfield-Tootsie Roll Industries; Chicago, IL; 1896)
- **Twizzlers licorice** (Young & Smiley Confectionery; Lancaster, PA; 1845)
From Tragedy to Tranquility

The Evans Memorial Mausoleum Story

By Rebecca Yerger, Historian & Preservation Consultant

From a double tragedy—World War I and Spanish Influenza Pandemic—came a gift to Napa in the form of a building. In response to these historical events, Luther and Elizabeth Evans gave Tulocay Cemetery a substantial bequest to construct the Art Moderne-WPA Art Deco style Evans (now Tulocay) Memorial Mausoleum.

This large edifice is easily seen from Coombsville Road. Nancy S. Brennan, Tulocay Historian and NCL member, notes, “It is literally the dividing line between the old and new sections of Tulocay as well as society’s changes in cemetery design philosophies.” Although when originally built, circa 1940, this dividing line was about a third to half of its current proportions. Since then, the mausoleum has received numerous alterations to meet Napa’s needs.

Brennan has compiled a considerable amount of historical information about Tulocay and its Evans Memorial Mausoleum during her nearly 30 years of researching and documenting Tulocay’s history, including the catalyst for its construction. Within her Tulocay Cemetery manuscript, she writes, “Causalities of World War I added to the population of Tulocay Cemetery as did the (Spanish) Influenza Epidemic of 1918–1919 because it took so long to dig graves by hand in the (cemetery’s) rocky soil. The receiving vault was overcrowded during the height of the epidemic.” Brennan continues, “This problem came to the attention of Luther and Elizabeth Evans and lead to their 1939 bequest to the cemetery.”

Luther Evans owned a local factory, Evans Shoe Company. Being civic-minded, the Evans left Tulocay Cemetery a posthumous gift of $10,000 in 1939 to construct what the cemetery...
records referred to as a “New Memorial Receiving Vault.” When completed in 1940, the building also housed a crematorium and chapel. Its final cost was about $26,000.

With regard to the design of the 1940 portion of the mausoleum, Brennan found a *Napa Daily Register* article that detailed those features. The 1940 article said, in part, “It [the mausoleum] has walls of Tennessee marble of soft gray tones . . . the fixtures and doors are bronze . . . the Evans Chapel has a beautiful art glass window titled, ‘Lead Kindly Light.’ The building is fireproof and is nearly earthquake-proof as possible.” The Depression-era article added that “all materials and labor that it was possible to attain here, were purchased and hired in [Napa].”

The exterior of the 1940 portion of the mausoleum conveys the greatest apportionment of its architectural style, especially the main entrance with its classic Art Moderne rounded corners and overall vertical massing. Its features also possess the restrained WPA Art Deco details of scoring the wall surfaces to create the appearance of towers, or pilasters, and grooves, or banding. These details also embellish the front, or east-facing, facade of the mausoleum.

Although the building has been altered over time, with the removal of the crematorium and chapel following the completion of new spaces elsewhere on the property, the Memorial Mausoleum is much more than just a building. Brennan explains through a personal experience: After she witnessed a man quietly sitting and reading his Sunday morning newspaper in the mausoleum, Brennan spoke to the staff about it. “They told me he and other people like to spend time with their loved ones by sitting alongside their final resting place.” Brennan muses, “I think it’s kind of lovely!”

### Goodman Mansion Restoration

*Napa County Landmarks* is including a special recognition to the owners of the Goodman Mansion at 1120 Oak Street, Napa, which suffered significant damage in the 2014 earthquake.

Working with Napa Design Partners LLP, Ms. Thi La and her husband have taken their time to provide the careful attention that this special structure deserves during the past 5 years. Starting with the foundation repair, the owners have worked their way up through the repainting process and more recently to the waterproofing and replacement of identical shingles on the slopes of the mansard roof.

Continuing the restoration work in progress, the owners intend to start work on the exterior landscaping which includes revitalizing the southside English garden and other open space areas surrounding the house.

We commend the owners for restoring the Goodman Mansion and we eagerly await the final completion of this jewel, one of Napa’s finest heritage sites.
To encourage the next generation of historic preservationists, Napa County Landmarks (NCL) is proud to announce the recipients of our annual scholarships for graduating 2020 Napa County high school seniors. NCL is a nonprofit organization that advocates for the appreciation and preservation of historic buildings, sites and districts through educational programs, public policy, research and technical assistance. NCL awards up to ten, $1,000 scholarships for the best applicant essays in response to the question: “Why is historic preservation important”?

Applicants were received from three Napa County High Schools. The winning recipients are:

**Napa High School**
- Angelina Adams
- Caitlyn Berryhill
- Maija Turjanis

**St. Helena High School**
- George Conwell
- Sofia Osborne
- Avery Roberts
- Holden Smith

**Vintage High School**
- Michael McDowell
- Zoe Murphry
- Sean Pratt

**Congratulations to all the 2020 recipients!**
**We wish you much success in your future endeavors.**

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**Event Calendar**

As we all know, the year 2020 has been exceptionally unpredictable!

**A Haunting We Will Go**

It has become quite transparent with the clarity of 2020 vision, this paranormal tour has been canceled.

**Holiday Home Tour**

The decades-long tradition of the Holiday Home Tour, previously known as the Holiday Candlight Tour, sadly has been canceled.

*See you in 2021!*