

Cornerstone

The Overall Home

Echoes Of An Old Inn

The clomping of heavy boots on the stairs, the uproarious laughter from the bar room, the bouncy music from the dance floor — these are the sounds that echo in the house of Dick and Barbara Overall in Greely.

The building, which is home to the family cheese shop as well as the family home, was one of the few roadside inns along Highway 31.

In the early 1800's, the highway was a busy route to bustling Byward Market in Bytown where farmers sold and traded produce and supplies. For some, the long trip to the market meant a stopover with team and wagon at one of three popular resting spots along the way, including the Overall building. Colorful tables over frothy ale were the order of the evening as travellers mixed

with local folk in the cramped, crowded inns.

Despite an extensive search, Dick Overall was unable to trace the original builder or owner of the Greely inn. He did find out that the inn was built in the 1820's and added to in the 1850's. The addition turned the interior into a labyrinth of hallways and cubicle-rooms where the weary traveller could put his feet up and catch some shut-eye.

The house is a reflection of the past. There are slanted floors, hand-made doors. There is a row of original coat hooks in the front hallway and a double row (top for adults, bottom for children) in one of the rooms.

During minor renovations, the house gave up intriguing clues



The Overall Home, Greely — Originally a Wayside Rest For the Weary.

about its beginnings. Dick unearthed a clay pipe from the grouted kitchen walls (it was probably entombed during construction) and son John discovered a small hinged brass ring with a large opal.

Miraculously, past owners resisted the temptation of the paint era when anything resembling wood grain was lathered with a thick, milky coating to the

chagrin of old home buffs. Dick takes pride in pointing out the period finishes that have been maintained on baseboards, doors and doorjamb.

Although the outside of the house has been stripped of most signs of its original purpose, the inside retains the charm and character of a nineteenth-century inn. And the voices of regaling travellers echo on.



Hand-made doors, period finishes. (Paul Rodier photos)

The Immigrants

By Howard Fast

Mr. Fast's absorbing story about a man's quest for the American Dream is available at Russell Public Library.

The latter part of the 20th century marked the beginning of the influx of Europeans, who left their native land in pursuit of the prosperity and happiness they

prayed would be theirs in America.

Joseph and Anna Lavette, were among that wash of humanity to venture across the Atlantic and gradually blend into what's commonly referred to as the "American melting pot."

Their story unfolds in "The Immigrants," a novel by Howard

Fast, now available in the Russell Public Library.

The author succeeds in giving the reader a remarkable grasp of the optimistic feeling that reigned before the Great War. Prohibition and The Depression were thrust upon this young and fruitful country.

The smells, sounds, and the sights of San Francisco come alive as we become acquainted with this many-faceted city. The stark poverty and crime of the Tenderloin district is skillfully contrasted to the sumptuous grandeur of Nob Hill — the sanctuary of those families who "really mattered."

Fast introduces the reader to the San Francisco before April 18th, that beautiful spring morning when an earthquake rocked the unprepared city for 48 seconds, killing hundreds in a fire that raged for days.

Anna and Joseph Lavette were among the dead. Their son Daniel, an enterprising 16-year-old, ferried hordes of terrified San Franciscans to the safety of Oakland. The orphan was paid handsomely for the service.

Dan profited from his new-found capital to expand on his father's fishing business. He assured himself that the only difference between himself and those who lived on Nob Hill was a simple one. They owned the boats, he worked them.

Lavette dreamed of making it to Nob Hill, and before long, his empire would encompass an airline, a fleet of passenger ships and a hotel. Before his 30th year, he was one of the most powerful businessmen in the country.

Fast's theme of man's quest for the "American Dream" is not a new one. Jay Gatsby, the protagonist in F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, shared many of Dan Lavette's ambitions, but Gatsby's wealth ruled his life, leading to a death that was inevitable.

Lavette, however, saw that the acquisition of wealth was a game like "playing hop scotch to the top of Nob Hill". The winning streak would come to an end sooner or later, and for Lavette it was more than a lesson in humility; it was a reawakening of the real Dan Lavette.

Fast's narrative of the lives of the American settlers, their dreams and hopes for the future, develops into an unforgettable account. You'll be turning the pages in anticipation for the plot to unfold, yet hoping the tale won't come to an end. It does of course, but the characters you'll meet in the "Immigrants" will be with you for a long time to come.

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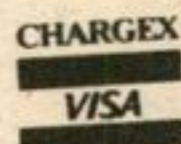
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