



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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NEWS RELEASE



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A PIECE OF QUAIL HOLLOW RANCH COUNTY PARK HISTORY RETURNS TO RANCH

Quail Hollow Ranch County Park has a long and important history of providing food for the San Lorenzo Valley and beyond during the early years of development of the northern part of Santa Cruz County. The park's cultural history is an important story to preserve, along with any historic equipment that was once part of this thriving ranch.

On March 5, 2023, Ben Lomond resident Karl H. Schaaf and his two sons, Don and Vaughn, returned a long missing mid- to-late 1800s pioneer blacksmith forge bellows that is part of Quail Hollow's history. This large bellows, made of wood, metal, and leather has surprisingly survived mostly intact for more than 150 years. This item will now be proudly displayed in the historic park's ranch house.

The Santa Cruz County Parks Department first became aware of the artifact when 87-year-old Mr. Karl H. Schaaf stopped by the park and mentioned to a park maintenance worker that he wished to return an antique blacksmith bellows that he'd had in his possession for more than 60 years. Park Docent Richard James, after talking further with Mr. Schaaf, realized that this was probably an item that had been in use at Quail Hollow ranch since perhaps the 1870s. Quail Hollow Ranch was first homesteaded beginning in 1866 by Joseph and America Kenville, and generally one of the first important buildings on a ranch was a blacksmith shop with its ever important furnace, anvil, and air source (bellows) to manufacture and repair all things metal. Judging from printed patent dates and style of design, the returned bellows most probably dates from that early time period.

Mr. Schaaf came into possession of this bellows sometime in the early 1960s during a visit to what was once the Ben Lomond open dump, located near the Quail Hollow Ranch property. In interviewing Mr. Schaaf, he explained that back in those days, the dump policy was to pretty much burn everything that was delivered to this dump, with certain items set aside if the "dump master" thought they might be valuable or

usable in the future. Karl Schaaf happened to visit the dump shortly after a person cleaning out "junk items" from Quail Hollow Ranch had deposited the bellows at the dump. Mr. Schaaf, having an interest in the old bellows, asked to collect this artifact and was allowed to take the bellows home with him. The dump master at the time told Mr. Schaaf that the bellows came from Quail Hollow Ranch and was left at the dump very recently. In the 1960s the Quail Hollow property was owned and operated by cattle ranchers Harry and Maude Owen, who operated the ranch from 1957 into the mid-1970s. For 60 plus years this Quail Hollow artifact languished in a shed on Mr. Schaaf's property, not far from Quail Hollow Ranch.

The Parks Department is pleased that this important artifact has been returned to its original use area, and thankful that Mr. Schaaf took care in storing the bellows and worked with Park Docent James to arrange its return.

